

Asher Benjamin Begins: The Samuel and Dorothy Hinckley House

The young architect's house designed for the Federalist Samuel Hinckley, perhaps the first neoclassical dwelling in Massachusetts's Connecticut Valley, may have been a stepping-stone in securing a federal commission from a Republican administration.

In August of 1802 a twenty-nine-year-old carpenter named Asher Benjamin entered the competition for the design and construction of a naval hospital to be built in the vicinity of Boston. He sent his design to Thomas Jefferson's secretary of the treasury, Albert Gallatin, but he also wrote a letter to the postmaster general, Gideon Granger, asking if he might be able to intercede with Secretary Gallatin. Benjamin's letter included a list of his completed works:

Sir, I have since I left Suffield, Conn. built the following houses, Viz. Samuel Hinckley, Northampton, William Coleman's Greenfield, Luke Baldwin's Esq., Brookfield, and a Meeting House and Three other large houses in Windsor, Vermont, The Academy at Deerfield.

This list is well known to Benjamin scholars as the single most important piece of evidence pertaining to his early career. But this letter raises several questions that have yet to be explored. Did Benjamin detect an opportunity in the fact that there

was a Democratic Republican administration in Washington when he entered the competition for the naval hospital? Did he quietly favor the Democratic Republicans in politics? And why did Benjamin solicit the help of the postmaster general, given that the post office had no connection with the construction of public buildings? The answers to these questions may be found in Benjamin's earliest known commission as an independent housewright, the house of Samuel Hinckley in Northampton, Massachusetts.¹

The Hinckley house was demolished at the beginning of the twentieth century, and our knowledge of its character has been very limited. Only a handful of photographs survive, all of the exterior. Additional information is gained from the room-by-room probate inventory of Samuel Hinckley's estate, done on October 3, 1840, and from four Sanborn Insurance maps made between 1884 and 1902.² Limited as these sources are, they have led to the identification of an unsigned floor plan in the collections of SPNEA as being a preliminary drawing for the Hinckley house (fig. 1). This drawing becomes the earliest datable drawing by Asher Benjamin and reveals a great deal about his working methods and one of his earliest commissions.

ARCHITECT AND CLIENT

Very little is known of Asher Benjamin's upbringing in rural Hartland, Connecticut, in northwestern Hartford County, or about his early training. In late 1794 and early 1795, when Benjamin was twenty-one, he carved the Ionic capitals for the

doorway of the new wing of the Oliver Phelps house in Suffield, Connecticut. This door, part of the finish work overseen by the master builder Thomas Hayden, was based closely on a plate in William Pain's *Practical House Carpenter* (London, 1788), a key work in the promotion of the neoclassical style in Britain. Later in 1795 Benjamin designed and supervised the construction of a circular stair in the new state house in Hartford. But for reasons that are still not entirely clear, Benjamin moved north into the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. In Northampton he found the client whose name would be first on the list Benjamin sent to Granger in 1802, Samuel Hinckley.³

Hinckley was born in North Brookfield, Massachusetts, in 1757, the son of Samuel and Abigail Hinckley. His father was a merchant and a farmer and could thus send his son to college and destine him for a career in the law. The younger Hinckley attended Dummer Academy but also studied with Fisher Ames, a recent graduate of Harvard who later became a leading Federalist congressman. Before college, however, young Samuel enlisted in the Revolutionary army and was wounded at the Battle of White Plains in 1776. The next year he entered Yale, from which he graduated in 1781. He continued his preparation for the law by studying with Caleb Strong who, like Fisher Ames, later became a bastion of New England Federalism. In 1786 Hinckley married Strong's sister, Dorothy, thus cementing his alliance with the Strong family. He was admitted to the bar

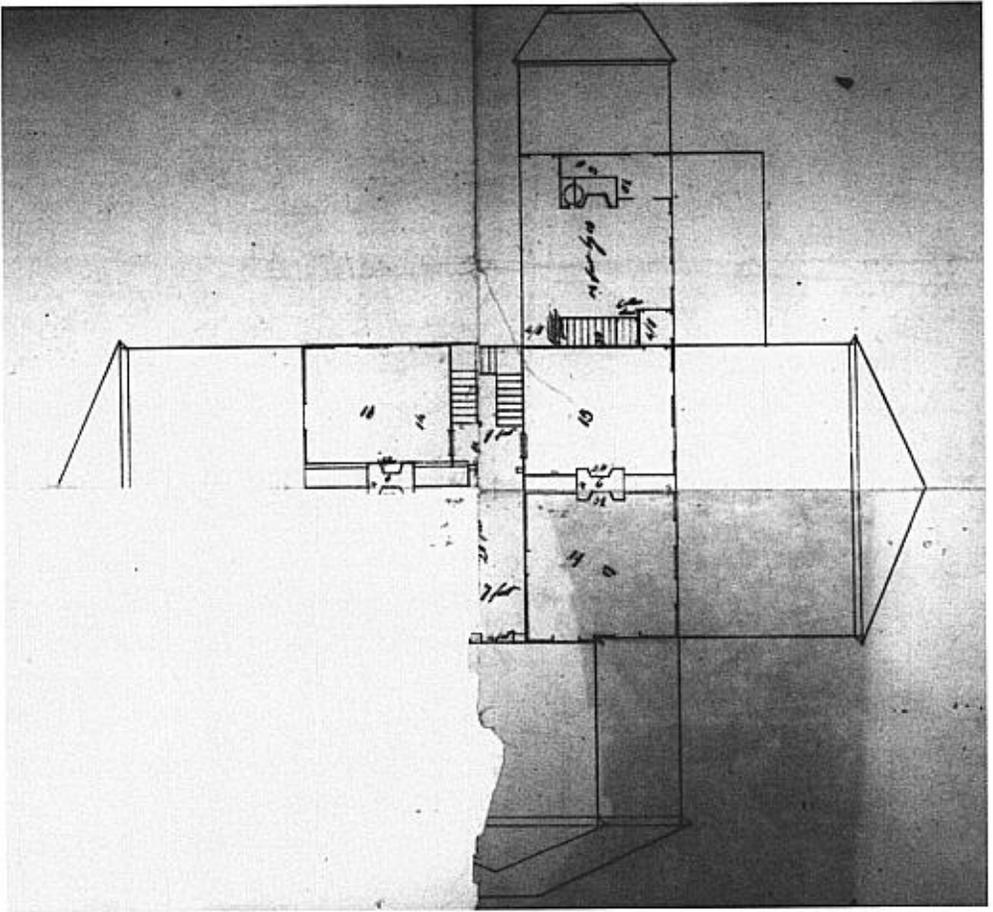


Fig. 1. Asher Benjamin, preliminary floor plan for the Samuel and Dorothy Hinckley house, Northampton, Massachusetts, about 1796. Courtesy SPNEA Library and Archives.

at Northampton in 1784 and two years later became register of probate.⁴

In 1785 Hinckley bought the Mather place in Northampton from Seth Lyman. This house had been built in 1659–60 for Eleazar Mather, Northampton's first permanently settled minister. Situated at the center of town, the house dominated the southwest corner of Main and Pleasant Streets, just across Main Street from the meeting house. Mather's house was two stories and wood-framed, with a central chimney, a

hall-and-parlor plan, a two-story enclosed "porch" on the front facade, and a lean-to at the rear.⁵

In 1796, after ten years of living in one of the oldest houses in town, Samuel and Dorothy Hinckley decided to build a new house and hired Asher Benjamin to build it for them. Hinckley was thirty-nine years old, had held a position of responsibility in the community for a decade, was married, and had a six-year-old son and another child on the way. Benjamin was twenty-three years old,

unmarried, and without any previous houses to his credit. But he was ambitious, had worked on one of the most important houses and the most important public building in Connecticut, and had been to Boston and studied its latest buildings. The house he built for Hinckley was to be a statement that he hoped would bring in other clients looking for an equally high level of design and craftsmanship.

Hinckley's new house was on the west side of Pleasant Street, apparently just south of his old house and the center of town. It had four rooms on the first floor, divided by a central passage and stair hall (fig. 2). Hinckley's probate inventory indicates that the two front rooms were called the south front room and the north front room. Behind the south front room was the south rear chamber, and behind the north front room was the dining room. An ell on the north side contained the kitchen and a pantry. Upstairs were two large front chambers, four small back chambers, and a garret over the kitchen. A back staircase between the dining room and kitchen provided secondary access to the chambers; underneath this staircase were stairs leading to the cellar. Direct access from the outside into the kitchen was provided by a door on the north side which the inventory takers called the "little entry."

The central passage was divided into front and rear sections by an arch. The front section was seven feet by twenty-one feet; the rear section, containing the stairs, broadened to nine feet, having borrowed the extra two feet from the rear chamber

on the southwest. The stairway began its ascent on the left side of the back hall. Eight steps led to the first landing against the back wall, another four steps ran parallel to the back wall, and another eight steps returned toward the front of the house. This stairway was neither as small and cramped as those found in central-chimney houses nor as dramatic and expansive as the stairways found in more up-to-date houses, including that in the new wing of the Phelps house in Suffield. Nor does this stair hint that Benjamin had built a circular stair in the State House in Hartford just one year before or that he would build one the next year for William Coleman in Greenfield. Nevertheless, the very existence of a central passage made the house one of the more progressive in the valley, where the form began to appear only in the 1750s and where central chimneys persisted into the next century.⁶

The main block of the house had two chimneys, one shared by each front and back room. The kitchen had its fireplace on the west wall, but the chimney stack was entirely within the ell because the pantry wrapped around on the west side. The kitchen hearth was quite traditional, but the bake oven was built flush with the face of the hearth. This entailed considerable extra expense. When the bake oven was placed on the back wall of the hearth, as in most houses in colonial New England, the smoke from the bake oven could escape up the flue of the main hearth. This newer arrangement required the construction of two separate flues, but it exposed the housewife to less heat and smoke and fewer dangerous cinders.

THE SAMUEL HINCKLEY HOUSE
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
ASHER BENJAMIN, BUILDER 1796

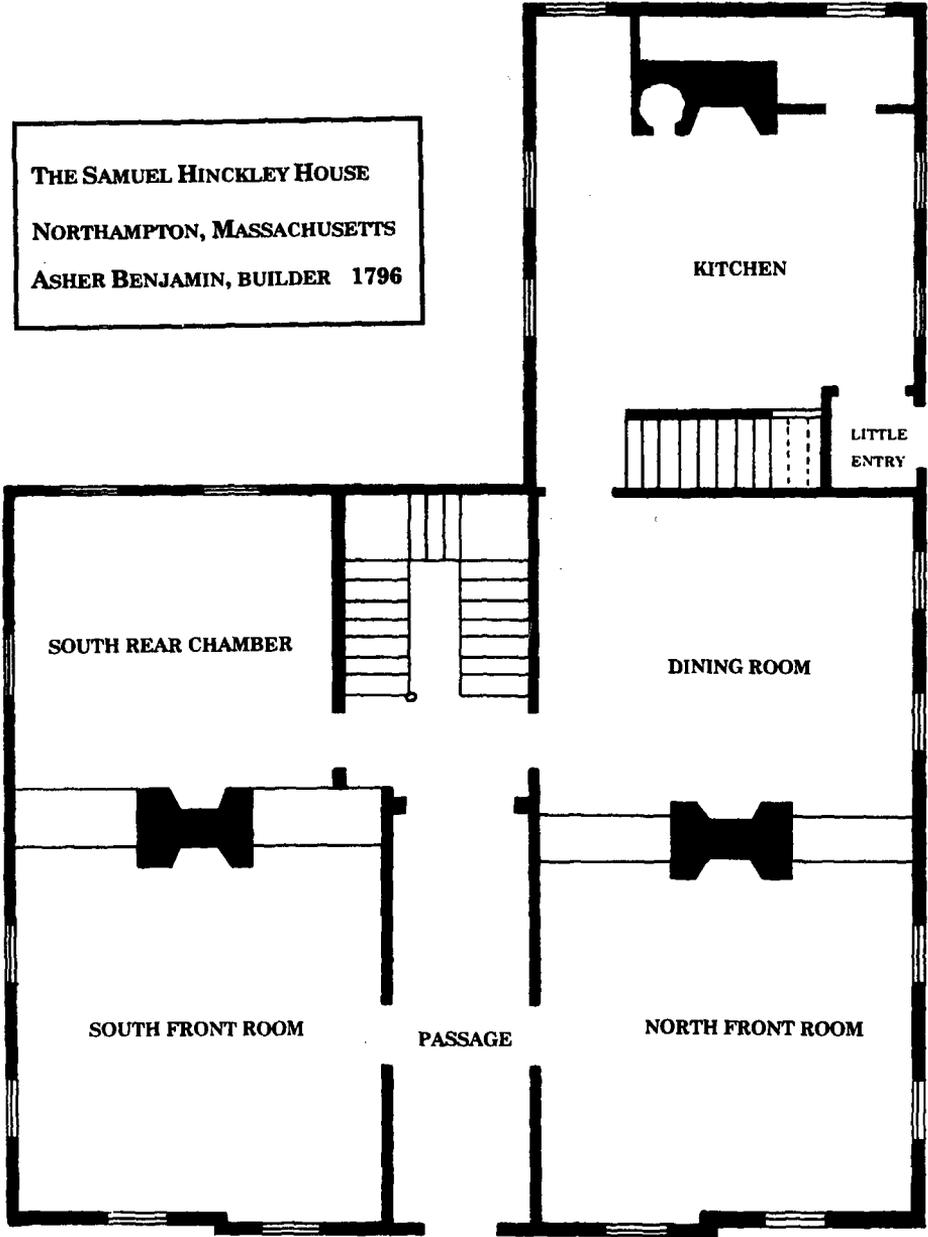


Fig. 2. Preliminary floor plan for the Hinckley house, with room designations from Samuel Hinckley's 1840 probate inventory. Drawing by the author.

The principal facade of the house was five bays wide with a door in the center, typical of Georgian and Federal houses (figs. 3 and 4). The three central bays projected forward approximately six inches; above this was the central pediment. Unfortunately, none of the extant photographs clearly show the principal doorway or the window above it. The main block had a low hipped roof, which, though common in coastal New England, was in 1796 quite uncommon in the Connecticut River Valley, where most houses had simple pitched roofs and some elite houses had gambrel roofs. A balustrade encased the roof, atop which were neo-classical urns. Above the first-floor windows were Doric overlintels.

Hinckley's probate inventory, dated

October 3, 1840, not only provides the names of each room but also other critical information about room use. The south front room was Hinckley's best parlor, containing a sofa and a Brussels carpet—two of the most important icons of gentility in early nineteenth-century America—a pair of card tables, and twelve rosewood chairs. The fact that the chairs were made of rosewood, a popular material for chairs of the mid-nineteenth century, suggests that they were a fairly recent purchase, but they probably replaced an equally large number of chairs in an earlier style.⁷

Across the hall was the family parlor, referred to on the inventory as the north front room. Here again were a sofa and numerous chairs, but they were of less monetary value than those across the hall.

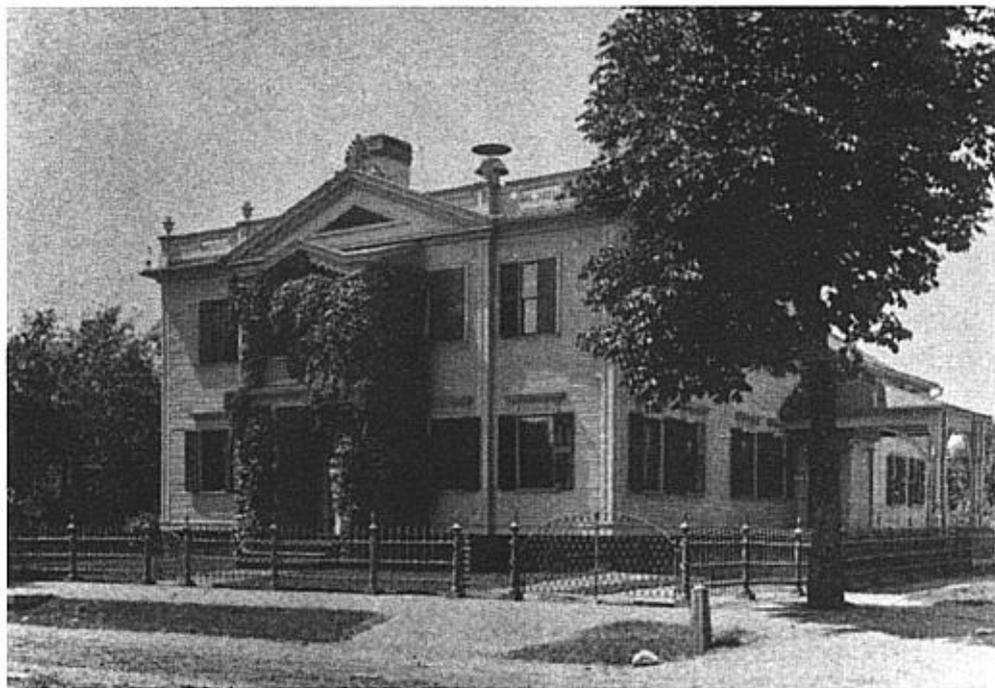


Fig. 3. *Samuel and Dorothy Hinckley house, Northampton, view from northeast, 1884-94. Photograph published in Northampton: The Meadow City (Northampton, 1894).*



Fig. 4. *Samuel and Dorothy Hinckley house, Northampton, view from southeast, 1895–1903.*
Private collection.

In this room were two rocking chairs, one of the most important icons of comfort in early nineteenth-century America. The room was not, however, devoid of artistic touches: the walls were graced with two framed pictures (valued at only \$1.50 each), a silver tankard, and a pair of plates, one Chinese and one Japanese, both presumably of porcelain.

Behind the north front room was the dining room. Such terminology was common in the Connecticut River Valley by the time this inventory was taken, but the Hinckley house may have been one of the first in the valley to have a room designed specifically for dining. It had three tables and another eighteen chairs, a sideboard, and an oil cloth on the floor, but the rest of the contents of

the room pale next to the silver, which was valued at \$175.00. Across the hall the south rear chamber, floored with straw matting, had bedroom furniture but also a desk and bookcase.

Upstairs, the south front chamber, immediately over the best parlor, was the best chamber. Its bed and bedding were the most expensive in the house at fifty dollars, and it had an expensive dressing table with looking glass, an expensive carpet, and again a sofa and twelve chairs.

In the later nineteenth century the proximity of the house to the center of town began to endanger the dwelling. By 1875 business blocks had been built from Main Street right up to the property line on the north side of the house. The house, too, was changing. By 1884 the kitchen ell

had been raised to two full stories, and two one-story rooms were added to the south and west sides of the ell. Between 1884 and 1889 a porte cochere was added to the north side of the house, which allowed a covered entry into the kitchen. And between 1895 and 1902 a two-story porch was added to the central bay and bay windows to the southwest rooms of the first and second stories. Sometime in late 1902 or early 1903 the house was removed from the site to make way for a new post office, begun in the latter year.⁸

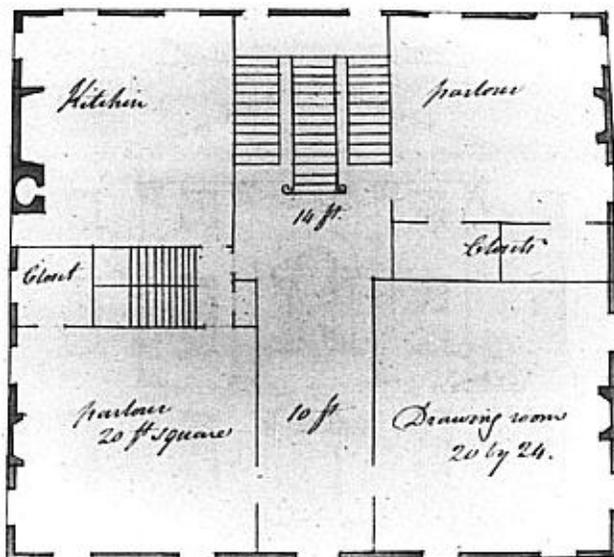
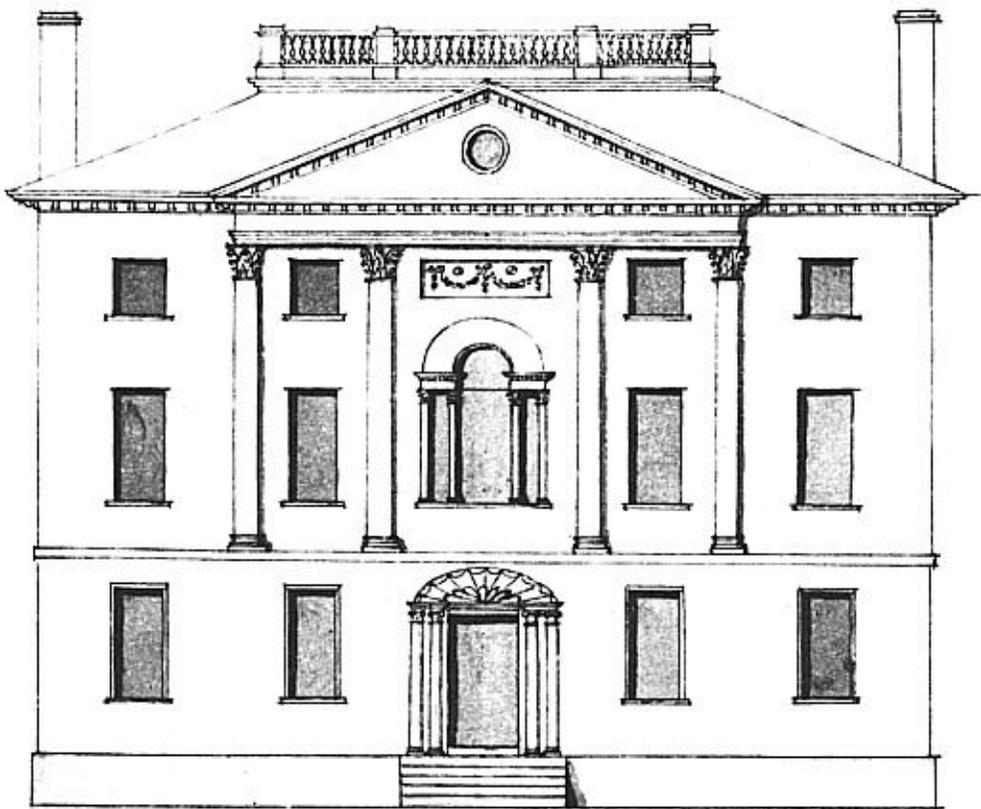
BENJAMIN'S SOURCES

In its prominent pediment, its neoclassical detailing, and its abandonment of the gambrel roof, the Hinckley house was perhaps the earliest neoclassical house in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts. The form of the house is also compelling evidence that by 1796 Asher Benjamin had not only worked on a building by Charles Bulfinch—the State House in Hartford—but had also been to Boston himself and had seen the early works of Bulfinch firsthand. In particular, the Hinckley House strongly suggests that Benjamin was familiar with the house of Joseph Coolidge Sr. near Bowdoin Square in the old West End of Boston. This three-story house with hipped roof and a pediment three bays wide was designed by Bulfinch and built 1791–92 (fig. 5). The central passage in this house broadened from ten feet to fourteen to make way for the grand staircase, and the kitchen featured a bake oven flush with the front of the hearth, requiring two flues (fig. 6). The Coolidge house did not have Doric

overlintels, but Benjamin could see those on another, quite similar house, that of Thomas Dawes Jr., built in the Fort Hill neighborhood of Boston about 1795.⁹

The Coolidge house strongly suggests that Bulfinch was familiar with William Pain's *Practical House Carpenter* by 1791, and the Hinckley house similarly suggests that Benjamin had closely studied Pain by 1796 (fig. 7). Here Bulfinch and Benjamin could find the accentuation of the central three bays through a pediment and a slight projection of the wall, the low hipped roof, and even a circular staircase. In their hands these forms took on a highly restrained character, less ornamented yet more monumental than the earlier, Georgian houses of New England. Benjamin must have seen Thomas Hayden's copy of the *Practical House Carpenter* when he was carving the capitals of the Pain-type doorway on the Phelps house in Suffield in 1794–95, and Pain was the source of many of the design motifs in Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant*, published in Greenfield in 1797.

The kitchen ell of the Hinckley house had a gambrel roof, a form that had been popular on elite houses in the Connecticut River Valley since the 1750s, such as the Joseph Webb house in Wethersfield, the Burbank-Phelps house in Suffield, and the Jonathan Ashley house in Deerfield, but the Hinckley house was an early example of the form being relegated to a subsidiary use. Benjamin's drawing showed two windows on the north and one on the west side of the kitchen but none on the south. Of course, this drawing was a rough sketch



Figs. 5 and 6. Charles Bulfinch, elevation and floor plan of the Joseph Coolidge Sr. house, Boston, 1791-92. Courtesy Print Collection, Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs, the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation.

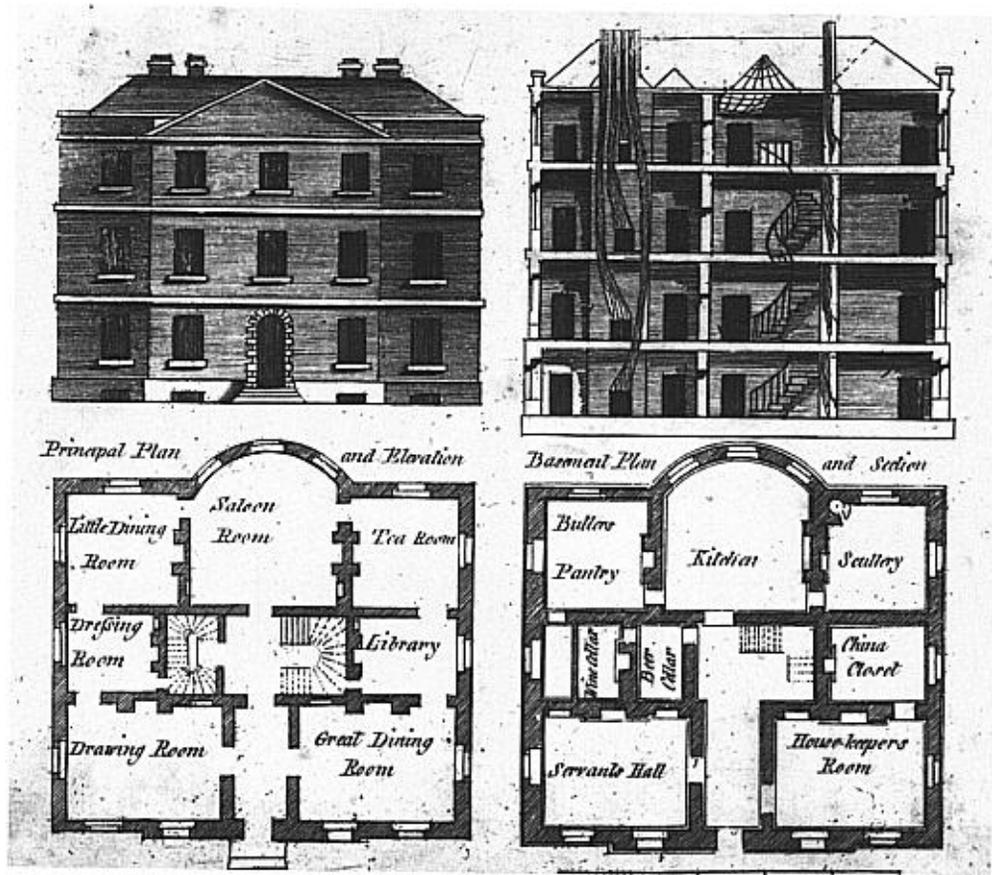


Fig. 7. Plate 107, William Pain, *The Practical House Carpenter* (London, 1788). Courtesy SPNEA Library and Archives.

rather than a presentation drawing, but it points out that Federal-era designers were not always meticulously symmetrical. It seems strange as well that the north wall of the kitchen had an external door facing toward the center of town, thus placing the dooryard, where much of the smelly, messy work was to be done, on the more public side of the house.¹⁰

Benjamin's drawing of the Hinckley house is in itself fairly rudimentary and may well have been a preliminary drawing, intended to be replaced by a more finished version. It shows the arrangement of

spaces, the placement of windows, the size of the rooms, and the outline of the roof, but it does not deal with framing, the depth of the walls, access into closets, or the direction in which any of the doors would open. The drawing is quite linear and sketchy, and a professionally trained British architect would have considered it unfinished, but it may well have been a working document and not a statement of the completed building.

This drawing begs the question of where young Benjamin learned to do architectural drawings of any sort. It is

known that Thomas Hayden, with whom Benjamin worked on the Oliver Phelps house in 1794 and 1795, was capable of making architectural drawings. However, all thirteen of Hayden's surviving drawings are of moldings and other details; no elevations or floor plans survive.¹¹

Although the plan of the Hinckley house is Benjamin's earliest surviving effort at architectural drawing, we know that it was not his first: in claiming the design of the circular staircase in the state house at Hartford, Benjamin specified that he "made the drawings and superintended the erection." Given the minimal detail of the drawing for the

Hinckley house, one might imagine a drawing equally sketchy for the state house, followed up by intense personal supervision. Nevertheless, even the drawings of Charles Bulfinch in the 1790s, such as that for the Joseph Coolidge house, are quite simple and no more sophisticated than those of Benjamin in these early years.¹²

The identification of the Benjamin drawing as the Hinckley house casts new light upon the plans for two houses in *The Country Builder's Assistant*, which Benjamin published at Greenfield in 1797 (figs. 8 and 9). Plate 26 shows a house fifty-four by forty feet and three

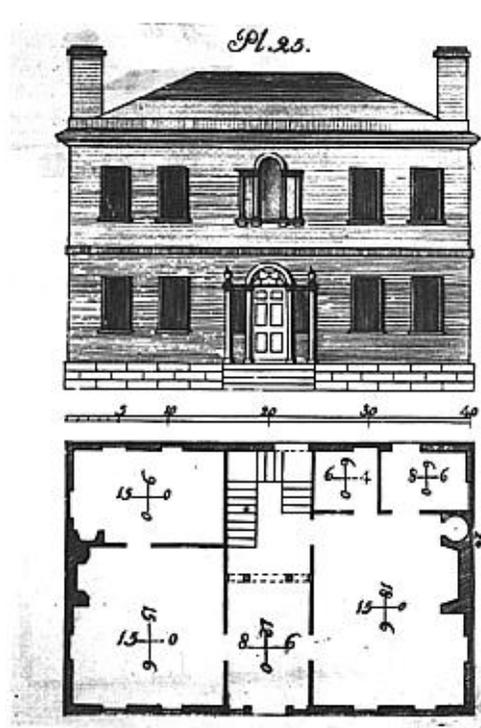


Fig. 8. Plate 25, Asher Benjamin, *The Country Builder's Assistant* (Greenfield, 1797). Courtesy SPNEA Library and Archives.

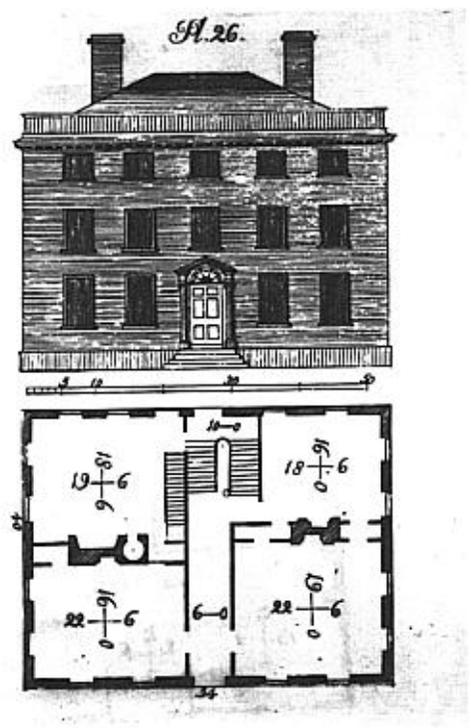


Fig. 9. Plate 26, Asher Benjamin, *The Country Builder's Assistant* (Greenfield, 1797). Courtesy SPNEA Library and Archives.

stories high; plate 25 shows a house forty by twenty-six feet and only two stories high. The Hinckley house fits in between these two, roughly forty-two by thirty-five and two stories. (The Hinckley house also had a fourteen-by-eighteen-foot kitchen ell, adding another 252 square feet.) Both plates in *The Country Builder's Assistant* have hipped roofs, and neither featured giant pilasters as did such early Bulfinch work as the Joseph Coolidge Sr. house in Boston.

Plate 25 featured a Palladian entryway with a Palladian window above; the principal decorative element of plate 26 is a doorway in the manner of William Pain, not unlike the door on the new wing of Oliver Phelps's house in Suffield. It is unclear how Benjamin handled the entryway of the Hinckley house or the window above it, because in all extant photos the central bay is obscured by a later porch. However, the relative widths of the two central passages in Benjamin's book provide a clue. The Palladian entrance in plate 25, which featured a fanlight above and a window on each side of the door, required a central passage of eight feet six inches. The Pain-type doorway in plate 26, with only a fanlight above, fit a narrower central passage of six feet. Given that the front passage in the Hinckley House was seven feet, it seems more likely that Benjamin used a Pain-type doorway, with a fanlight above but no side lights.

Plate 26 showed a central passage broadening from six feet to ten feet to accommodate the stairs, much like the Hinckley house; unlike the Hinckley house, this stair rose on the right side, had

a longer run, and had only a single landing. The stair in plate 25, however, had three shorter runs and two landings. Both of these designs placed the kitchen within the main block; indeed, plate 25 showed a large kitchen (eighteen feet six inches by fifteen feet) as the right front room, dominating the right half of the house. This feature seems rather old-fashioned, given the tendency in the latter half of the eighteenth century to move cooking and other less genteel functions to the rear of the house, but both this and plate 26 showed kitchen hearths with discrete bake ovens, in the up-to-date manner used by Mrs. Joseph Coolidge in Boston, or at least by Mrs. Coolidge's servants.

The drawing of the Hinckley house may also force a rethinking of certain aspects of Benjamin's next major commission, the William and Mehitable Coleman house in Greenfield (figs. 10 and 11). Architectural historians have long thought that the present ell was an addition of the mid-nineteenth century and that the northwest room in the main block was Coleman's law office. Benjamin's plan of the Hinckley house compels a reassessment of these assumptions. The northwest room of the Coleman house is rather too large and grand to be an office—it would be a profligate waste of space that no New Englander would tolerate. It is much more likely to have been the dining room. As with the Hinckley house, the Coleman house was one of the first in the area to set aside a room for dining, which was usually done in other multifunctional spaces in this era.

Similarly, there is no evidence of a



Fig. 10. *Coleman-Hollister house, 1797, Greenfield, photograph by the Historic American Building Survey. Courtesy Library of Congress.*

cooking hearth in any of the rooms in the main block of the Coleman house. It seems likely that the south rear room was a bed room and that the kitchen was in an ell, whether the current or an earlier one. This possibility makes considerable sense if one accepts that the northwest room was the dining room, because the two would then have been adjacent. Moreover, the Coleman house had—and still has—a little entry on the north side, just where Benjamin placed it on the Hinckley house.¹³

THE GRANGER CONNECTION

Asher Benjamin was justifiably proud of

the house he built for Hinckley and listed it first among the works on his list to Gideon Granger. This makes sense chronologically as well as politically. Granger, like Hinckley, was a graduate of Yale and went on to study law in Northampton with Hinckley. When Granger graduated in 1787 Hinckley had been an attorney for three years and register of probate for one. Granger would have studied with him for nearly two years and most likely lived with the Hinckleys in their 125-year-old house, as he was admitted to the bar in 1789.

Perhaps just as important are the facts that Granger was a native of Suffield,

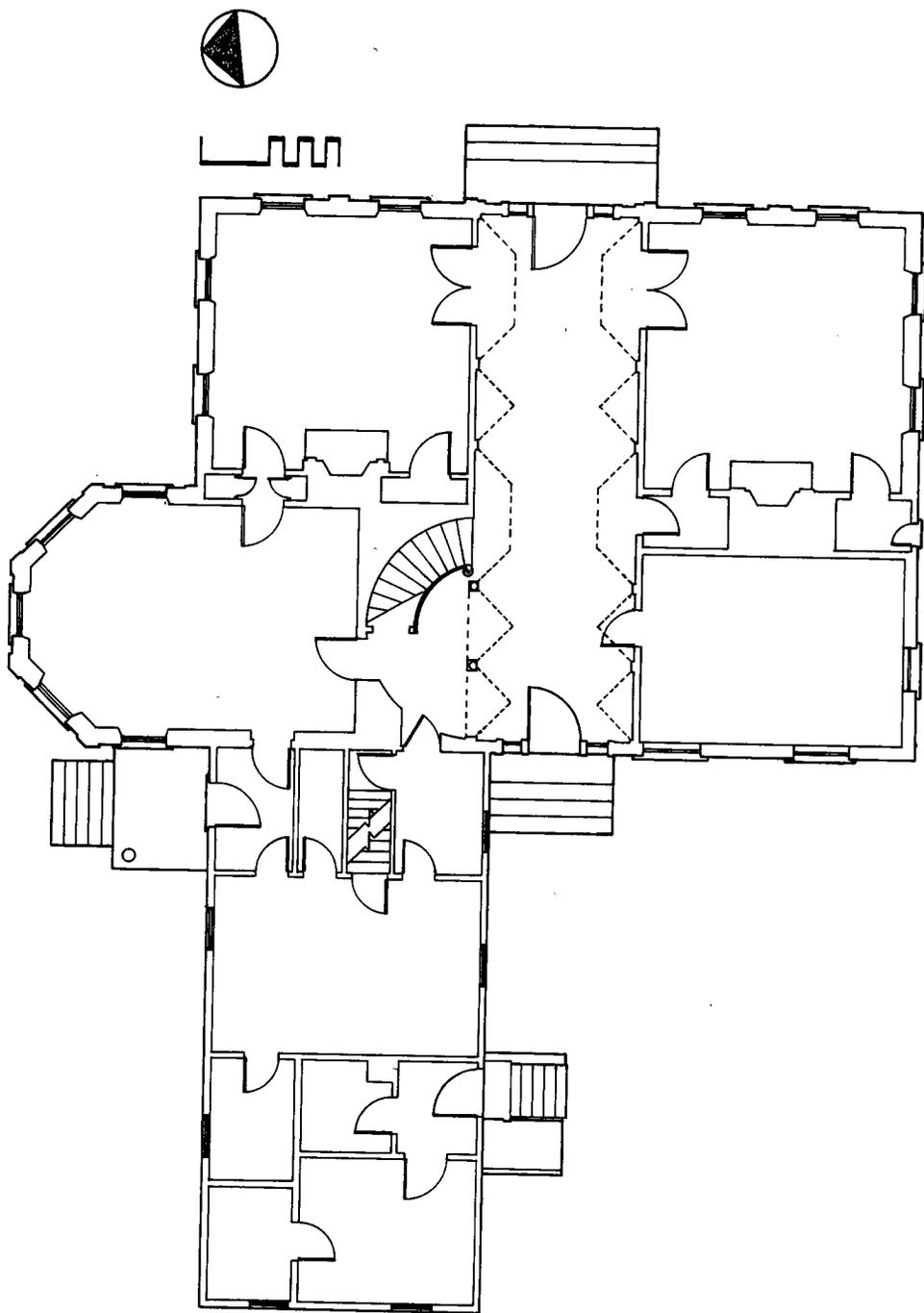


Fig. 11. Floor plan of Coleman-Hollister House, *Historic American Building Survey* drawing by Fred E. S. Sawyer, 1934, redrawn by J. Ritchie Garrison. Original drawing courtesy Library of Congress.

took up the practice of law in that town in 1789, and represented the town in the legislature from 1792 to 1801. Granger was thus in a position to have known Benjamin personally while he was living in Suffield and working on the Phelps house. Indeed, when Benjamin wrote to Granger "since I left Suffield" he implied that Granger was well aware of what he had done in that town.

Granger may well have been helpful to Benjamin in securing work on the state house in Hartford. It was, on the face of it, quite extraordinary that a twenty-two-year-old who had recently completed his apprenticeship suddenly won a subcontract on the most important public building in the state to construct a type of stairway he had never built before. In Benjamin's 1802 letter seeking the naval hospital commission he did not even bother to mention his work on the State House, which suggests that Granger had firsthand knowledge of that work. And, indeed, Granger is the only known connection between Benjamin and Samuel Hinckley. Given that Granger had studied with Hinckley and was familiar with Benjamin's Suffield work, his role in bringing together housewright and client seems extremely likely.¹⁴

Samuel Hinckley remained a staunch Federalist throughout his life, but his pupil Granger became a leading Jeffersonian Republican in Connecticut. When Jefferson became president in 1801 he appointed Granger postmaster general. When Granger received Benjamin's request for intercession in August 1802 he almost immediately sent notes to Treasury

Secretary Gallatin and, for good measure, to the president. To Gallatin he wrote, "Gideon Granger presents his compliments to the Secretary of the Treasury and takes the liberty of inclosing a letter from a young gentleman who he knows to be one of the first mechanicks of New England. From a poor boy unaided by friends, by his indefatigable industry and talents in a few years he has raised himself to the first rank of his profession." Granger presented Benjamin as a Horatio Alger of his day, which made for a nice story but did not really explain why Benjamin's design should be chosen. But Granger may have been subtly telling Gallatin and Jefferson that Benjamin was no gentleman architect from a wealthy New England family, like Charles Bulfinch. Indeed, Granger may have been telling them that Benjamin was not a Federalist.¹⁵

Benjamin's design for the naval hospital was a very respectful copy of Bulfinch's almshouse in Boston. Although this may have recommended the plan to other New Englanders, it did not necessarily do so for critics from other parts of the country. When Jefferson saw Benjamin's drawing, he was singularly unimpressed. "Altho the plan of the hospital has but moderate merit, yet having no other I suppose we must use it and using it, pay for it. I presume therefore we may at once adopt it and call for estimates and undertakers." Apparently, Benjamin's was the only entry submitted for the hospital. At this juncture Jefferson might have called for a new competition, but the plan's "moderate merit" and Granger's endorsement seem to have won Benjamin

the prize.

Granger continued to serve as post-master general through both of Jefferson's terms and the first six years of James Madison's administration. Having resigned in 1814 over a patronage dispute, Granger moved to Oneida County, New York, where he had legal responsibility for the Phelps and Gorham purchase. One of the principals of this tract, consisting of a large part of western New York, was Oliver Phelps of Suffield, on whose house Asher Benjamin had worked many years before.

Although he was not a member of the Federalist elite as was his hero Bulfinch,¹⁶ Benjamin was able to secure commissions from a staunch Federalist such as Hinckley owing in part to his personal connection with Granger. His next major client, William Coleman of Greenfield, was also a very committed Federalist who in the next decade founded the *New York Post* as a forum for the views of Alexander Hamilton.

Benjamin himself did not take a public stand on politics during his years in the Connecticut River Valley or during his first two decades in Boston. But when he was nearly fifty years old, he did enter the political arena. After Boston abandoned the town meeting and adopted a mayor-council system, he ran for alderman as part of the "Middling Interest," a coalition of middle-class entrepreneurs and artisans who were opposed to the old Federalist order and who supported Josiah Quincy for mayor. Benjamin was elected in 1823 and again in 1824 and worked closely with Mayor Quincy and Alexander Parris on the planning of the new market beside

Faneuil Hall, now known as Quincy Market. Benjamin's political career was cut short by personal financial problems, which led to his bankruptcy in 1825.¹⁷

The Hinckley house was but the first of many commissions for Asher Benjamin, but it proved to be a crucial one to his later career. It helped him to develop the plans that would appear in *The Country Builder's Assistant* and solidified the contacts he already had with Hinckley's former pupil, Gideon Granger. In so doing he won the contract for the naval hospital, which established him as a rising young architect/builder in Boston. It also paved the way for other important commissions such as the West Church in Boston. And it was these experiences that culminated in the publication, in 1806, of *The American Builder's Companion*, the key source for the dissemination of the Federal style in America and the book that made Benjamin's reputation as both an author and an architect. ✻

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NOTES

1. This letter is among the Albert Gallatin Papers at the New-York Historical Society. The correspondence has been reprinted in Florence Thompson Howe, "More About Asher Benjamin," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 13, 3 (October 1954): 16–17.
2. Between 1867 and 1950 the Sanborn Map Company of Pelham, N.Y., produced detailed maps of the central parts of American cities and towns for insurance purposes. The maps traced the footprint (that is, the outline on the ground) of all buildings, noted the number of floors, and identified the principal materials used in their construction.
3. On the Burbank-Phelps house, see William N. Hosley Jr.'s entry in *The Great River: Art & Society of the Connecticut River Valley, 1635–1820*, eds. Gerald W. R. Ward and William N. Hosley Jr. (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1985), 115–18. My understanding of Benjamin's early years has been very much influenced by Abbott Lowell Cummings's lecture, "Asher Benjamin's Apprenticeship and Training: The State of Current Knowledge" ("Asher Benjamin: The State of Scholarship" colloquium, Historic Deerfield, Inc., Deerfield, Mass., Nov. 12, 1993).
4. *Hampshire Gazette*, June 17 and 24, 1840, Nov. 16, 1886, and Dec. 2, 1892; Franklin Bowditch Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College* (New York: Henry Holt, 1907), 4:188.
5. On the Mather House, see James Russell Trumbull, *History of Northampton, Massachusetts, from Its Settlement in 1654* (Northampton, Mass.: Gazette Printing Company, 1898–1902), 1:76, and William N. Hosley Jr., "Architecture," in *The Great River*, 63–64.
6. Early Connecticut River Valley houses with central passages included the Joseph Webb house in Wethersfield (1752), the Ebenezer Grant house in East Windsor (1757–58), and the Jonathan Ashley house in Deerfield (remodeled 1750s).
7. The Hinckley inventory was analyzed as part of a probate inventory study conducted by John MacDonald, Martha Noblick, Gretchen Owens, and myself for Historic Deerfield, Inc., for the interpretation of the Hinsdale and Anna Williams house in 1992. Martha Noblick transcribed the Hinckley inventory at the Registry of Deeds, Hampshire County Courthouse, Northampton, Mass.
8. Sanborn Insurance Maps, Northampton, Mass., June 1884, 7; May 1889, 7; March 1895, 10; and July 1902, 5; Northampton city directories, 1875–1905; and the cornerstone on the United State Post Office, Northampton.
9. Harold Kirker, *The Architecture of Charles Bulfinch* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), plate 14; Frederic C. Detwiller, "Thomas Dawes: Boston's Patriot Architect," *Old-Time New England* 68 (Summer–Fall 1977): 14–15.
10. It is unclear what outbuildings Benjamin constructed, but by 1840 the property included a wood house, a chaise house (that is, a carriage house), a wagon house (with a chamber above), a bacon house, and a shed.
11. Hosley, "Architecture," 111–13, especially fig. 15, where the drawing is labeled in the lower right corner.
12. Asher Benjamin, *The Builder's Guide* (Boston: B. B. Mussey, 1839), 40; Kirker,

Architecture of Charles Bulfinch, plate 14.

13. On the Coleman house, see Courtney M. Ritter, "The House That William Coleman Built" (Paper, Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Program, 1990).
14. *Hampshire Gazette*, Dec. 2, 1892; on Granger, see *The Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Gideon Granger," and Dexter, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College*, 4: 546–47.
15. Howe, "More About Asher Benjamin," 17.
16. In 1833 Benjamin stated, "The first individual who laid claim to that character [architect] was Charles Bulfinch, Esq. of this city; to whose classical taste we are indebted for many fine buildings." See Asher Benjamin, *Practice of Architecture* (Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey, 1833), iii.
17. Josiah Quincy, *A Municipal History of the Town and City of Boston* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1852), 74–87, 134–37, 434–37; on the "Middling Interest," see Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s–1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 181–87.