

# FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

16-168

Marion

MRN.L

MRN.165

**Town/City:** Marion

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Marion Village

**Address:** 5 (formerly 11) Water Street

**Historic Name:** Richard S. Dow House

**Uses:** Present: Residential

Original: Residential

**Date of Construction:** 1894

**Source:** Map & deed research

**Style/Form:** Shingle Style

**Architect/Builder:** William Gibbons Preston

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Wood shingle / Wood

Roof: Wood shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**

Cottage (1900)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*):

Façade and rear porch redesign (after 1938)

**Condition:** Excellent

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.58

**Setting:** Homogeneous residential neighborhood of predominately high-style Shingle Style and Queen Anne houses, principally developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Surrounded mostly by large, wood-frame, single-family houses on generous lots. Borders a rocky shoreline along Sippican Harbor.

## Photograph



## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Lynn Smiledge

**Organization:** Marion Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2021

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MARION

5 Water Street

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

**5 Water Street** occupies a sizeable, irregularly-shaped, waterfront lot on the western shore of Sippican Harbor. The house faces west and is positioned in the eastern half of the parcel, deeply set back from Water Street. It fronts small areas of grass, a wide gravel driveway, and scattered trees dotting the western half of the parcel. The western property boundary has a low stone wall and is densely lined with mature trees. Foundation plantings encircle the house. The eastern, harbor-facing portion of the property is maintained in grass. A combination of tall trees and low vegetation line the southern property boundary leading east to Nye's Wharf, a stone and gravel dock that extends into the harbor off the southeast corner of the property. The owners of this property and the adjoining property to the south (1 Water Street, MRN.162) each own one-half interest in the wharf. A short concrete wharf associated solely with 5 Water Street reaches into the harbor north of Nye's Wharf.

The building is a two-story, hip-roofed, wood-frame house with a strong horizontal emphasis. It was constructed ca. 1895 in the Shingle Style and although significantly altered (see the historic image below), it retains many of its original character-defining features. It has a long, shallow, rectangular plan with paired, connected cross gables at the center bay at the façade (west elevation) containing the main entry portico. The rear (east) elevation has a single cross gable flanked by semi-hexagonal towers and a one-story, full-width, hip-roofed porch. The house rests on a brick foundation. The walls and the roof are sheathed in weathered wood shingles finished with minimal contrasting trim. A brick chimney rises from the roof ridge at the south cross gable.

Narrow band courses of tightly-spaced wood shingles encircle the house to delineate the first and second stories and mark the attic level below the cross gables at the façade. Fenestration at the façade is varied with irregularly-sized and placed windows with molded surrounds. They include single and paired eight-over-two and six-over-one double-hung windows along with fixed sash. Numerous windows at the cross gabled bay have decorative divided lights at the upper sash over single-light lower sash. A roundel with divided lights occupies the third most northerly bay at the second story. A deeply recessed tripartite window with rounded corners and diamond-shaped lights in the upper sash aligns over the entrance portico. Triangular vents occupy the cross-gable peaks and surmount shallow tripartite fixed sash with diamond lights. The portico has a flared hip roof, wood-shingled knee walls, and paired Doric columns supporting a stepped entablature. The trim at the wood-paneled door is continuous with that of the flanking windows.

The irregular wall surface at the east, harbor-facing elevation contrasts sharply with the flat aspect of the façade. The cross-gabled bay projects over the porch roof at the second story and is pedimented with modillions. It is flanked by towers with flared conical roofs; the towers are semi-hexagonal at the first story and circular at the second story. The porch is supported by Doric columns and has a wood-shingled knee wall. Paired columns flank a two-step wood stair that approaches the porch from the lawn at the gabled bay. The house sustained significant damage during the 1938 hurricane including the loss of the porch and extensive damage to the first floor. The Colonial Revival features at the house were likely introduced when post-storm repairs and alterations were made. The appearance of the house prior to the storm can be seen in the historic images that follow.

A north-facing, one-story, cross-gabled cottage (MRN.500) with an attached garage is sited in front of the house at the western property line. Built in 1900 according to the assessor's card, it has a curved hip roof with flared eaves and exposed rafter tails. The cottage is clad in weathered wood shingles and has a wood shingle roof. The west elevation is embellished with a deep Tudor-arched fascia board and contains paired sliding doors with decorative glazing in the upper panels. A port cochere along the north elevation shelters the main entry. Fenestration at the cottage includes single and mullied windows with decorative multi-light upper sash. A gravel driveway bordered by granite pavers enters the property from Water Street at the northwest corner of the property, widens in front of the house, and then narrows to access the garage opening and the unpaved alley along the southern boundary that leads to Nye's Wharf.

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**5 Water Street** exemplifies the Shingle Style with Colonial Revival accents. While it resembles the house at 6 Allen Street (MRN.305) with its strong horizontal emphasis and relatively flat façade, it has more ornamentation. The Shingle Style is a uniquely American form which was introduced in the northeastern United States in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and reached its zenith of expression in New England seaside resorts and country estates. It was a high-fashion style favored by architects and was primarily employed from 1880 to 1900. The focus of the style was on complex shapes and forms encased within a surface of continuous, naturally weathered shingles on the roof and walls. The shingles ran uninterrupted around corners and projections, creating an enclosed, unified shape and color with little or no applied ornamentation. Other defining features of the Shingle Style seen in this house include its asymmetry, irregular fenestration, and window sash configurations. The entrance portico and treatment of the porch at the rear elevation are Colonial Revival in spirit.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The Village of Marion, the commercial and residential center of the town, is set on the western shore of Sippican Harbor. The town has historically consisted of a northern portion, often referred to as the Old Landing, and a southern portion, known once as Wharf Village but more commonly referred to today as The Village or Marion Village. This house is located in the southernmost section of Marion Village near the waterfront, which before 1860 was largely uninhabited. Prior to that time Marion, like other coastal towns, was dependent on fishing, coastal shipping and related businesses such as the production of salt from sea water. Salt was a vital commodity for fisheries, and this section of Marion Village was the site of several salt works. Maritime industries were dominant in Marion until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when the advent of rail service began to facilitate tourism. At the same time, new cultural and educational institutions endowed by the founder of Tabor Academy, Elizabeth P. Taber, dramatically enriched the community.

Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were now able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion. The town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures seeking a genteel seaside respite. Initially visitors stayed at hotels or rented private houses, but as the end of the century neared and Marion became nationally known as a desirable vacation destination, wealthy individuals began to build their own permanent summer residences. This desirable waterfront area, once home to salt works, became the site of grand summer cottages. These imposing houses include an outstanding collection of Shingle Style residences and fine examples of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. Several of these residences were designed by prominent American architects including Charles A. Coolidge, James T. Kelley and William Gibbons Preston, to whom the design for this house is attributed. Henry Hobson Richardson, the most celebrated American architect of the day, designed the first Shingle Style house in Marion. It was built in 1881 for the Reverend Percy Browne at 192 Front Street (1881, Rev. Percy Browne-Sidney Hosmer House, MRN. 211) just north of this waterfront neighborhood.

Richard S. Dow purchased the land for this house from Amelia Frances and George A. Nickerson in 1893. It appears on the 1903 map with Dow shown as owner. Richard Sylvester Dow (1863-1940) was the son of George S.C. and Elizabeth Sylvester Dow of Bangor, Maine. He graduated from Swarthmore College and received his law degree from Harvard School of Law. The house was for many years the summer residence of this successful Boston lawyer who lived on Marlborough Street in the Back Bay neighborhood of Boston with his wife Abbie Rawson Dow (1865-1956). The Shingle Style dwelling was designed by William Gibbons Preston (1842-1910), a prolific Boston-based architect who designed a variety of building types from institutional structures to country houses. Along with Henry Hobson Richardson, he was one of the first Americans to study architecture at Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Preston's Boston works include the Hotel Vendome, 160 Commonwealth Avenue (1871, BOS.3502), the Museum of Natural History, Boylston Street (1863, BOS.2639), the Chadwick Lead Works Building, 176-84 High Street (1887, BOS.1790), and numerous upscale residences in the Back Bay neighborhood. Preston summered in Marion and is credited with more than 20 projects in the town, although not all of these buildings have been officially attributed to him. They include the Marion Music Hall, 164 Front Street (1891, MRN.23), four houses on Water Street, and possibly the Marion Town House, 2 Spring Street (1875, Tabor Academy Recitation Building, MRN.59). Preston briefly owned (1885-1888) and made improvements to the Sippican Hotel (no longer extant). Preston's plans for 5 Water Street are held by the Art Department at the Boston Public Library.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

5 Water Street

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220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MRN.L	MRN.165
-------	---------

The house sustained significant damage during the 1938 hurricane as described in an article in the *Wareham Courier*, which reported that "the beautiful estates of Miss Edith Austin and of Richard S. Dow suffered unestimated damage when verandahs, boat houses and garages were demolished and the first floors of the main houses were wrecked."

Richard Dow's widow, Abbie Rawson Dow, continued to live in the house until it was purchased in 1950 by Amory and Laura R. Houghton. Houghton also owned the Edward O. Hamlin House on the neighboring property at 23 Water Street (ca.1895, Edward O. Hamlin House, MRN.167), which he had purchased in 1936. Amory Houghton (1899-1981), scion of the Houghton family which had founded the Corning Glass Works in 1851, was educated at St. Paul's School and Harvard College. He spent his entire business career at Corning, ultimately serving as its president and then as chairman of the board. During WWII he served on the board of Franklin Roosevelt's Office of Lend-Lease Administration. Houghton was selected by president Dwight Eisenhower to be the United States ambassador to France from 1957-1961. He was the president of the Boy Scouts of America from 1946 until 1951.

Lucius Tuttle Hill (1900-1972) purchased the house from Armory Houghton in 1951. He was a grandson of Lucius Tuttle, president of the Boston & Maine Railroad. After graduating from Phillips Academy, Andover and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Hill led an artillery unit in France during WWI. He began his career in the investment business with Loomis-Sayles and John Hancock companies. He then worked for utilities providers, serving as treasurer for the Eastern Utilities Associates and later as president of the Fall River Electric Company. Hill was a life-long resident of Brookline and was a town meeting member and served on the planning board. He was married to Helen Isham and owned this property until her death in 1969, when it was sold to C. Vincent Vappi of Milford.

In 1965 Vappi and his wife Nancy had purchased 8 Water Street (ca.1904, Frederick B. Cutler House, MRN.164), which they owned for seven years. Vappi was an enthusiastic sailor and presumably they purchased this house because of its location on the water. Chester Vincent Vappi (1927-2007) was the son of Italian immigrant and carpenter, Caesar Vappi, who in 1927 started a small construction company. After growing up in Milton, Vincent Vappi graduated from MIT and served in the merchant marine. He went to work for his father's business and eventually became its chief executive officer, growing the company into one of the largest construction firms in the northeast. The company was purchased in 1971 by Technical Operations of Burlington, which Vappi led as chairman of the board. He also served as president of New England Deaconess Hospital and president of the Boston Chamber of Commerce. The property was sold to Sidney J. Weinberg, Jr. and his wife Elizabeth Houghton Weinberg in 1987.

Sidney Weinberg, Jr. (1923-2010) was the son of Sidney Weinberg Sr., chief executive officer of the New York investment banking firm of Goldman Sachs from 1939 until 1969. The younger Weinberg graduated from Princeton University, served in the Philippines during WWII, and worked for the firm as a senior director. Sidney Weinberg, Jr. was an active philanthropist and established a large charitable foundation. In 1951 he married Elizabeth Houghton, daughter of Amory and Laura Houghton. In addition to this property, Sidney and Elizabeth Weinberg purchased her parent's summer cottage at 23 Water Street (ca.1895, Edward O. Hamlin House, MRN.167). Both properties remain in Weinberg family ownership.

Deed Research

Date	Book-Page	Grantor	Grantee
06-04-2012	LCC 117532	Estate of Sidney J. Weinberg, Jr.	Elizabeth W. Smith & Elizabeth H. Weinberg
01-14-1987	LCC 266576	Mary H. Clark	Sidney J., Jr. & Elizabeth H. Weinberg
10-22-1985	LCC 72303	Chester V. & Nancy A. Vappi	Mary H. Clark
11-17-1969	LCC 36896	Lucius T. Hill	Chester V. & Nancy A. Vappi
06-05-1951	LCC 37904	Amory & Laura R. Houghton	Lucius T. Hill
10-06-1950	LCC 2120	Abbie Rawson Dow	Amory & Laura R. Houghton
07-07-1893	659-325	Estate of Albert W. Nickerson	Abbie Rawson Dow

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org: census records, vital records, city directories  
*Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: George H. Walker & Co., 1879  
*Atlas of Plymouth County*, Boston, MA: L.J. Richards Co., 1903  
*Map of the Town of Marion, Plymouth County, Massachusetts* 1855 H.F. Walling



**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MARION

5 Water Street

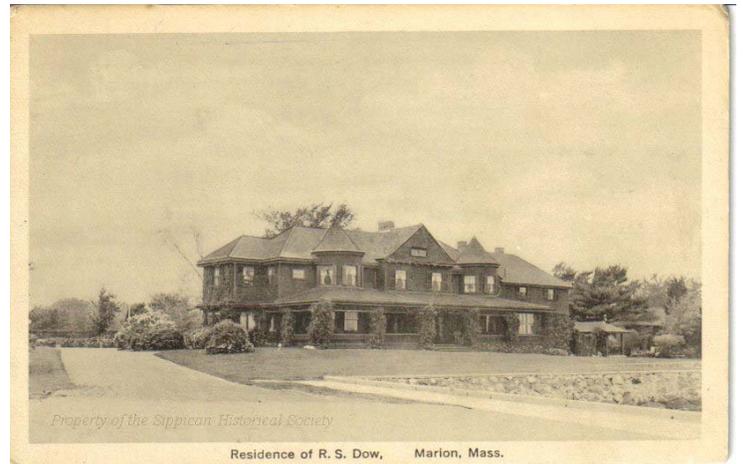
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Area(s) Form No.

MRN.L	MRN.165
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Cottage, east elevation. (MRN.500)



Façade (west elevation), dated 1907. Appearance prior to the 1938 hurricane repairs and alterations. Photograph courtesy of the Sippican Historical Society.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible  Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district  Potential historic district

Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Statement of Significance by Lynn Smiledge

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

This house is recommended as a contributing element in a potential National Register Historic District for the Water Street Area of Marion Village. The Water Street Area (MRN.L) is recommended as eligible for listing as a National Register District at the local level under Criterion A for Social History and Criterion C for Architecture. The area constitutes a grid along Water Street running north-south between Vine and Lewis Streets and including the eastern portions of the adjoining east-west streets (Allen, Holmes and Lewis), and a short alley (Pie Alley) running north-south between Holmes and Lewis. The potential district's boundaries are those defined in the 1998 survey for the Water Street Area (MRN.L), to which four properties on Water and Lewis Streets have been added.

**Under Criterion A**, the area is recommended as eligible at the local level for its association with the economic revitalization of the town. Marion saw dramatic growth in tourism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century facilitated by the advent of rail service and the rise of new cultural and educational institutions that enriched the community. Affluent urban dwellers from cities like Boston and New York were able to travel in comfort to seaside destinations like Marion, and the town began to attract many notable political, literary, and art world figures who built large summer residences along the Sippican Harbor waterfront. The construction and maintenance of these grand properties sparked demand for a variety of skilled trades and service industries along with the need for housing for this new class of workers and prompted the rapid growth of adjacent neighborhoods to accommodate these workers and their families.

Numbered among the prominent summer residents of the Water Street Area during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Marion was a highly desirable and nationally-known summer destination, were President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland (46 Water Street, MRN.9); the Reverend John Brooks and his brother and frequent visitor, Reverend Phillips Brooks (1 Allen Street, MRN. 304 and 9 Allen Street, MRN. 306); Henry Kendall, founder of the Kendall (medical supply) Company (35 Water Street, MRN.307); James Austin, chief justice of the Hawaii Supreme Court (MRN.171); Amory Houghton, chairman of Corning Glass Works, ambassador to France, and president of the Boy Scouts of America (23 Water Street, MRN.167); and Stanley R. McCormick, son of the inventor and founder of the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company (10 Lewis Street, MRN.491).

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Additionally, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century residence at 60 Water Street (MRN.169) was originally owned by Captain Henry M. Allen, one of the pioneers of Marion's salt-making industry.

**Under Criterion C**, the area is recommended as eligible at the local, and possibly the state, level in the area of Architecture for its outstanding and exceptionally well-preserved collection of high-style houses on generous lots which date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The area includes distinguished examples of the Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival styles, several of which were designed by prominent American architects including Charles A. Coolidge, James T. Kelley and William Gibbons Preston. The only non-residential building in the area is the Craftsman-style, Charles A. Coolidge-designed Sippican Tennis Club at 20 Holmes Street (MRN.157).

The resources here retain substantial integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, design, feeling, and association. The district would likely meet Criteria A at the local level and Criterion C at the local, and possibly state level, with areas of significance in architecture and social history.