NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

1. NAME
   COMMON: Mawdsley (Captain John) House
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Bull (Jirch)--Mawdsley (Captain John) House

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: 228 Spring Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02810

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY: [ ] District [ ] Site [ ] Building [ ] Structure [ ] Object
   OWNERSHIP: [ ] Public [ ] Private [ ] Both
   PUBLIC ACQUISITION: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered
   STATUS: [ ] Occupied [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Preservation work in progress [ ] Yes
   ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: [ ] Restricted [ ] Unrestricted [ ] No
   PRESENT USE: [ ] Agricultural [ ] Commercial [ ] Educational [ ] Entertainment [ ] Industrial [ ] Military [ ] Private Residence [ ] Park [ ] Religious [ ] Transportation [ ] Other (Specify) [ ] Museum [ ] Scientific [ ] Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNER'S NAME: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
   STREET AND NUMBER: 111 Cambridge Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Boston
   STATE: Massachusetts
   CODE: 25

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: City Hall
   STREET AND NUMBER: Broadway
   CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02810
   CODE: 005

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY: Statewide Survey of Historic Buildings
   DATE OF SURVEY: 1970
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
   STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02903
   CODE: 005
The Bull-Mawdsley House is a two-and-one-half-story, five-bay-wide, clapboarded house capped by a gable-on-hip roof. It rests on a fieldstone foundation and faces west. Although the present exterior appearance dates from c. 1750-1760, a two-room, two-story house, dating from c. 1689, has been incorporated within the later shell. Directly in front of this earlier house (which was of "mansion-sized" dimensions for its period), a two-story, two-room section with a central stairway was built. The original central chimney and steep stairway of the earlier house were removed and two brick interior chimneys were constructed to provide fireplaces for each room of this extended structure. Thus the present two-story, four-room, center-hall plan was obtained, and the whole building was then capped by the gable-on-hip roof.

The exterior is decorated with a modillion-and-dentil cornice, broken-out above the second-story windows, and there are panelled cornerboards. On the front, two triangularly-pedimented dormers, flanking a middle orner with broken-scroll pediment, light the garret. Although their original sashes have been replaced by ones of six lights, the windows retain their old frames with heavy molded sills and cornices. The handsome doorway with its leaded fanlight dates from c. 1795 (as do the front steps of imported marble); the eight-panelled door and fanlight are enframed by a broken pediment supported on applied, fluted columns. Although the exterior of the earlier portion of the rear wing is identical in detail to the front section, the first-story windows at the rear are set at a slightly higher level.

The heavy framing of the original seventeenth-century rear rooms remains intact. Some of the beams there have been extensively panelled, but those in the old hall—how the kitchen—remain exposed. Here, the great summer-beam (running perpendicular to the old chimney) and the girts are beautifully finished with lamb’s-tongue chamfers. The rear corner-post in the north-east chamber is also exposed and has been chamfered where it increases in depth near the top. Fireplaces in these rooms date from the mid-eighteenth century, although some of their mantels are later. Space left after removal of the original chimney and stair allowed the creation of a back hall.

Although the front rooms on the second story are at the same level as the earlier ones to the rear, the first-story rooms of the front section are several steps lower. Thus the ceilings in the first-story front parlors are unusually high. The south-west parlor is quite elegant, with paneling to the ceiling on all four walls, a dentil cornice, a marble-faced fireplace with a two-story mantelpiece—its "eared" panel surmounted by a beautifully carved broken-scroll pediment. Splayed window reveals contain the original folding interior shutters. The north-west parlor is of similar, though simplified, design. A triple-run stairway rises...
against the rear wall of the wainscoted front hall. Its ramped rail, supported on turned balusters, ends in a half-turn at the newel.

The detail in the second-story rooms is more simple than in those of the first story. The south-west chamber retains its two-story mantelpiece with an "eared" panel, but the original fireplace treatments in the other rooms have been altered. The simple Federal mantels in the two rear rooms came from the (demolished) Benjamin Pitman house on Broadway; they were installed here in the early twentieth century and have been attributed to Benjamin Pitman, master builder, who erected St. Paul's Methodist Church (1806) on Broadway. The original six-panel doors and old hardware have been preserved throughout.

The interior has been slightly altered in recent years to accommodate apartments. The rear ell, built in the 1920's, is of sympathetic style; its fanlighted doorway on the north side was brought from the John Pitman house at 229 Spring Street.

Sketch-plan (based on one by Norman Isham), with the older portion of the house indicated in black and its original chimney and hearths indicated by dotted lines.
### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On land which Benedict Arnold had bought after coming to Newport in 1654, Jireh Bull, husband of Arnold’s daughter, Godsgift, originally built— it is thought, around 1680—the two-room, two-story house now incorporated in the present structure. In the middle of the eighteenth century it came into the possession of Captain John Mawdsley, a wealthy merchant, who enlarged it greatly to the fine house preserved today. During the Revolution it served as headquarters for François Jean, Marquis de Chastellux, second-in-command of the French soldiers in Newport. Caleb Gardner, another rich merchant, bought the house in 1795; he was a Revolutionary War hero who played an important part in the expulsion of British forces from the city; he became a trusted advisor to the French and was made French consul in Newport; it was he who in 1795 added the present front-door trim, so typical of Rhode Island.

The house has great intrinsic architectural significance. The beautifully chamfered seventeenth-century timber framing of one of the earliest houses still preserved in the state remains intact in the rear portion of the Bull-Mawdsley house. Its first, two-story, two-room plan was of great dimensions dimensions for its very early date. Increased to four rooms in plan in the middle of the eighteenth century, the house was remodelled into one of the most pretentious merchant-mansions of the city. Its handsome exterior, of this latter phase, and much of its extremely beautiful interior detail remain in an excellent state of preservation.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Clifford M. Renshaw, III, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02903

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [X] Local [ ]

Name

Title

Date

STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

DATE: June 28, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. NAME</th>
<th>4. IDENTIFICATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mawdsley (Captain John) House</td>
<td>View through doorway in south-west drawing-room towards older part of the house at a level above.</td>
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<tr>
<th>2. LOCATION</th>
<th>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</th>
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<tr>
<td>STATE: Rhode Island</td>
<td>PHOTO CREDIT: Richard Cheek</td>
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<td>COUNTY: Newport</td>
<td>DATE: December, 1972</td>
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<td>TOWN: Newport</td>
<td>NEGATIVE FILED AT: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1 Mile Cambridge Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02116</td>
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<td>STREET AND NUMBER: 228 Spring Street</td>
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GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 29' 06" N
Longitude: 71° 18' 49" W
| **STATE** | Rhode Island |
| **COUNTY** | Newport |

**PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Submitted entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. **NAME**
   - COMMON: Mawdsley (Captain John) House
   - AND/OR HISTORIC: Bull (Jireh)-Mawdsley (Captain John) House

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER: 228 Spring Street
   - CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   - STATE: Rhode Island

3. **MAP REFERENCE**
   - SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey
   - SCALE: 1:24,000
   - DATE: 1957

4. **REQUIREMENTS**
   - TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
     1. Property boundaries where required.
     2. North arrow.
     3. Latitude and longitude reference.
1. NAME
   COMMON: Mawdsley (Captain John) House
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Bull (Jireh) -- Mawdsley (Captain John) House

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: 228 Spring Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Newport
   STATE: Rhode Island
   CODE: 44
   COUNTY: Newport
   CODE: 005

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities
   DATE OF PHOTO: Not supplied, but recent
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 14 Cambridge Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02114

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: East wall of south parlour.
**Name**

COMMON: Mawdsley (Captain John) House  
AND/OR HISTORIC: Bull (Jireh)--Mawdsley (Captain John) House

**Location**

STREET AND NUMBER: 228 Spring Street  
CITY OR TOWN: Newport  
STATE: Rhode Island

**Photo Reference**

PHOTO CREDIT: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities  
DATE OF PHOTO: C. 1971  
NEGATIVE FILED AT: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities,  
141 Cambridge Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02114

**Identification**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: Exterior from the south-west.