

# BARTLETT-CUSHMAN HOUSE

82 PORTSMOUTH AVENUE, STRATHAM



**B**uilt around 1810, the Bartlett-Cushman House is one of the most stately of Stratham's surviving early homes and embodies much of the town's social, medical and political history.

The Bartlett-Cushman House is an example of what early builders called a "double" house, having a broad central stairhall flanked by two rooms on each side on both floors. The house has a later wing at the rear, connected to a small but early barn or stable.

The house is characterized by fine detailing in the Federal architectural style of the early 1800s. The finish carpenter who completed the house provided a distinguished front doorway and twin side entrances that provide direct access to the

front and rear rooms of the house. The front doorway has an arched and louvered fanlight and glazed sidelights set within a classical enframement, as seen below (left).



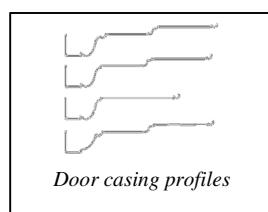
*Front Entrance*

*South Side Doorway*

Inside, the house displays a variety of Federal-style mantelpieces, with the rooms on the northern side of the house being slightly more elaborate in finish than those on the south.

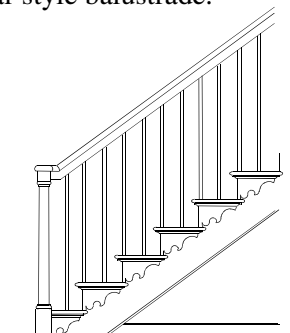


Similarly, the door and window casings of the house differ from room to room, imparting a varied character to the interiors. One room retains impressive painted “graining” on the pine woodwork (above, lower right). Other rooms certainly hide similar decorative evidence under modern coats of paint.



*Door casing profiles*

A focal point of the house is the broad staircase that ascends to the second floor in the central stairhall. This has a classic though restrained Federal-style balustrade.



The Bartlett-Cushman House is strongly framed, largely with hand-hewn timber, and the frame of the house appears to be in excellent condition from basement to attic.



*Attic framing*

Around 1850, a later owner updated the two principal rooms on the southern side of the house by adding a two-story bay window. This feature transformed the appearance of these spaces, as seen below.



*South bedchamber*

The same remodeling added the arched-top dormers to the front slope of the hipped roof and underpinned the house with new split and hammered granite. The wing at the rear of the house may have been added at this time.

The Bartlett-Cushman House is rich in craftsmanship and history. It is a significant and tangible embodiment of much of Stratham’s past that reflects the lives of some of the town’s most accomplished families. The town would be enriched by the preservation and further study of this property.