

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

V-09-120-121	Boston North		
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Town/City: Medford

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

Photograph (view from)



Address: 368-374 Main Street

Historic Name: DePasquale's Restaurant

Uses: Present: mixed-use commercial and residential

Original: two-family residential

Date of Construction: 1903-1910 and 1926-1930

Source: directories, maps

Style/Form: Art Deco/ one-part commercial block

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete and brick

Wall/Trim: brick, stucco, wood, cementitious shingle/ casts stone, wood

Roof: asphalt shingle and likely tar-and-gravel hidden behind a parapet

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Porch enclosure, residing, mid-20th century; partial stucco application, recent decades.

Condition: Poor to good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 7,400 square feet

Setting: Dense commercial strip with a mix of commerce and high-density housing lining Main Street for several blocks north and south of its intersection with Harvard Street.

Locus Map (north is up)



Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): May 2018

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

368-374 MAIN STREET

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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.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

DePasquale's Restaurant building and its immediate neighbor to the north, currently under the same ownership, is a row of originally five shopfronts arranged in two one-part commercial blocks; two in 368-370 and three in 372-374, built between 1926 and 1930. Nos. 372-374 includes two upper levels of a two-family constructed between 1903 and 1910. The one-part commercial block is a building type that has been identified and described by Richard Longstreth. Longstreth distinguishes between "two-part" and "one-part" commercial blocks; one-part buildings being defined as a single-story, single-use commercial structures (two-part commercial blocks generally have mixed uses and form their own typology).¹ One-part commercial buildings are also colloquially known as "taxpayer blocks," less-expensive buildings constructed to temporarily "pay taxes," in this case local property taxes, while the land awaited higher-use development. Many taxpayer blocks became permanent fixtures in the landscape, however, when more elaborate schemes never came to fruition. This building type is also often associated with streetcar-driven real estate development between c. 1890 and 1930. A streetcar line was indeed located on this stretch of Main Street between Medford Square and Somerville during the early 20th century. Because each building has a separate history and finish each will be described individually.

368-370 Main Street

This two-bay, one-part commercial block has been altered during recent decades and has lost much of its original decorative façade to a stucco residing. The form of the building remains visible, however. Two separate entrances survive in a central, recessed entrance bay with a long angled reveal in the left half. The original window wall and doors have disappeared and have been replaced by contemporary extruded aluminum frames. The mullions at either end of the façade have been parged, as have the signage freeze and parapet above. Part of the parapet above the reveal is supported by a pair of lally columns that were either original or added later. The original appearance of the façade is suggested by the left (north-facing) side elevation, where panels of buff brick are held in place by a frame of concrete mullions and a high parapet topped by a molding. The mullions are topped by short, parabolic, copper-clad pylons which are still partially visible behind stucco in the façade.

372-374 Main Street

A similar one-part shopfront that was built in front of an earlier two-family, this example retains much of its original façade and window wall arranged around a recessed entry with a splayed reveal. The façade is constructed of buff brick enlivened by seven horizontal stripes of two courses of red brick for every six courses of buff. Just below the top of the parapet is a course of molded cast stone. The largely intact shopfront includes a solid glass window wall supported by a cast-stone base or possibly marble panels and held in place by molded stainless steel. Flanking the window wall are sections of glass block. The whole composition is evocative of Art Deco commercial architecture of the 1920s and 1930s, of which it is a well-preserved example. The left bay has been altered to accept what appears to be a retractable wood window wall and a contemporary fiberglass door on the far left gives access to the apartments above. The commercial front is integrated into an earlier wood-frame, two-family house positioned just behind the plane of the façade and built between 1903 and 1910, a not-uncommon conversion of the period. The upper stories of the two-family, composed of a two-bay façade under an overhanging gambrel high enough to accommodate third-level living space, remain visible above the parapet. Still visible under the overhang in the right half is a canted bay; the left half was altered during the 20th century by the insertion of a forward-projecting bay or enclosed porch lit by a contemporary picture window with fixed flankers. Although some of the two-family's building fabric remains, such as the molded trim, window casings and a distinctive rake board in the shape of a gable, this section of the building was resided with cementitious shingles, likely mid-20th century.

This row of commercial blocks is sited directly on the frontage and fills the block on the east side of Main Street between Wright Avenue and Harvard Street. An open rear court is paved for parking.

¹ Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street, A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Alta Mira Press, updated edition, 2000) pp. 24-53.

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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

During the last quarter of the 19th century a large section of frontage on the east side of Main Street was occupied by the Mystic Trotting Park. By 1910 the park had disappeared and the land subdivided into grid-pattern cross streets, including Wright Avenue, Harvard Street (an earlier street to the west now extended eastward between Main Street and Mystic Avenue), and Alexander Avenue in the immediate vicinity. Also by 1910 lots identified as 368 and 372, depicted under the same ownership, had been improved with two-family houses; 368 (not extant) appears to have been a wider duplex or two-family and 372 (partially extant), a more-conventional two-family, had been constructed. Similar buildings continue to occupy the blocks to the immediate north between and lining Wright, Golden and Bowen streets. Between 1924 and the late 1920s these buildings were occupied by skilled tradesmen, including a compositor, a carpenter, a railroad worker and a restaurant owner.

By 1930, according to directory listings, the transformation of the block from residential to commercial/ mixed use had taken place. That year 368 was occupied by a branch of the Economy Grocery Stores (a forerunner of Stop and Shop); 368a by the fruit stand of Luigi Zampeli; 370 by barber Robert Sgueglia and a laundry; and 374 by a branch of the Manhattan Self Service Stores. Turnover appears to have been complete only eight years later. At that time tenants of the stores included Adams Spa (a regional name for a convenience store, No. 368); Mystic 5c to \$1 Store (No. 370); Hollywood Tailors (#370); Harvard Beauty Salon (No. 372a); and at no. 374, a, and b: vacant, Howell Sisters bakery, and Snow White Cleaners and Dryers.²

In 1950, according to his obituary, Philip DePasquale (1917-1996) established an Italian restaurant under the family name at 374 Main Street. Since 1938 he had operated a bakery, DePasquale Brothers, at 418 Main Street. His partners included brothers Joseph P. and Rocco; Philip later established a catering company independently. Their father, Rocco (1896-1974), a native of Italy, began making pizza at his bakery on Charter Street in Boston's north end in ca. 1921, later moving to Wilmington, where he operated his own restaurant and resided at 193 Main Street. According to a recent interview published in the restaurant remained in business for 68 years, indicating it closed only recently. In 1986 the restaurant won a Globe award for best pizza in Medford. In 1981 Philip DePasquale, "a generous contributor and an avid supporter of religious charities and philanthropic causes, was awarded, with his brother, Joseph, Man of the Year by Middlesex County.³ The space currently houses another Italian restaurant, Bocelli's.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Ancestry.com: see footnotes

Maps and atlases:

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1880 O. H. Bailey [Bird's Eye View of] Medford.

1889 Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*.

1898 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford....*

1900 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1*.

1892, 1897, 1903, 1910, 1936, 1936-1950 Sanborn Insurance Atlases.

Charles Brooks and James M. Usher, *History of the Town of Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From its First Settlement in 1630 to 1855; Revised, Enlarged and Brought Down to 1885* (Rand, Avery & Co., 1886)

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, in notes as MCSRD book:page.

² 1910 Sanborn map; 1924, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1938 Medford city directories.

³ *Boston Daily Globe*, May 19, 1974, obituary, Rocco DePasquale; Aug. 6, 1986, p. 61, Diane White, "Why not Mediocre," Feb. 27, 1996, obituary, Philip DePasquale, April 19, 2018.

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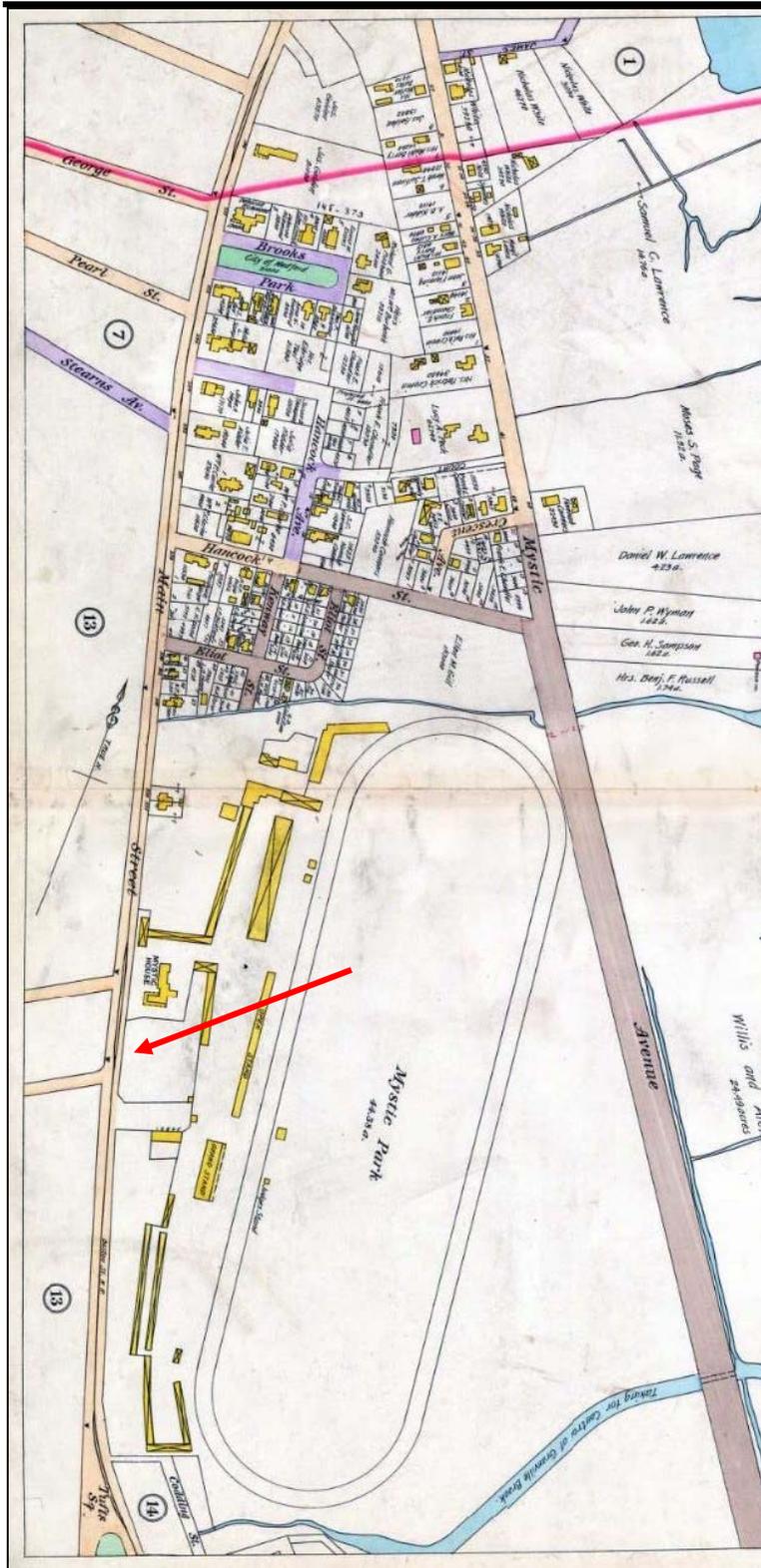
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1898 Stadly county atlas showing the location of Mystic Trotting Park. The subject location is indicated by a red arrow.

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View from W showing the best-preserved shopfront and two-family that formerly housed DePasquale's Restaurant.



View from NE showing rear elevations.