

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

K-08-45	Boston North		MDF.85
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Town/City: Medford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Medford Square

Photograph



Address: 17 Green Road

Historic Name: Dr. Charles M and Helen L Green House
(Charles Green MD House)

Uses: Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

Date of Construction: ca. 1889

Source: deeds, maps

Style/Form: Shingle/ gambrel block

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: vinyl clapboard and wood shingle/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: two detached garden sheds

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Vinyl siding application, recent decades.

Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 9,680 square feet

Setting: 19th century estate or country residences interspersed with early 20th century infill.

Locus Map (*north is up*)



Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2023

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MDF.85
--	--------

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Green House, ca. 1889, is a representative example of the Shingle style that remains, despite minor alterations, in a condition of good preservation. This comfortably scaled house, with dimensions of 40 wide by 30 feet deep, is massed in a single full story enclosed under a high side-gambrel roof. The rectangular main body is surrounded on three sides by a deep open porch. The upper level is expanded by large gabled dormers on the front and rear and a single-story canted bay fills the right half of the façade next to the center entrance. A shallow rear ell expands the right (south) side of the house (facing front) and the right-rear corner is recessed, where the corner of the upper slope of the roof is supported by a large bracket.

The high gambrel is characteristic of the Shingle style, so coined by architectural historian Vincent Scully to distinguish it from the period term "Modern Colonial," thus avoiding confusion with the contemporary Colonial Revival style. This type of house is well known for its association with seaside resorts so was an appropriate choice for the Green family as a recreational second home. Although the house has undergone a recent vinyl siding application, its character remains legible; early or original building fabric or its evidence likely survives beneath later layers of covering. This may be especially true of the right-rear bracket. The porch, supported by Tuscan columns with a plain balustrade, appears to be original and casings with edge molding survive as well. Although sash appears to have been replaced, the likely original ten-over-one light configurations were reproduced, and the original paneled front door remains in place.

The plan of the house, as revealed in on-line photographs reproduced below, is characteristic of Shingle style and 1880s planning. The main central entrance opens into a large "living hall" filling the left-front quadrant with a fireplace and main stair. The space to the right of the living hall, accessed through a wide cased opening, is filled by a broad dining room. Behind is a large kitchen and the smaller room in the left-rear corner on the other side of the stair, accessed by a narrow doorway, is a den. All of the reception spaces on the main level and the bedrooms are entirely finished, walls and ceilings, with stained matchboard and wainscoting.

The house is sited on a gentle rise facing west-northwest toward Green and Powder House roads. The property is a fraction of an originally larger lot fronting on Powder House depicted on the 1898 map reproduced below. Landscaping includes open lawn with specimen plantings. The west edge of the property is raised above the path of House Terrace by an outcropping of ledge. This dramatic siting likely provided expansive views to the west over what was at the time open agricultural land in the ownership of Samuel C. Lawrence (see MDF.37, 353 Lawrence Road). A broad asphalt drive fills the north side yard, where there are two wood-frame garden sheds of recent vintage. Building permits indicate an above-ground pool was constructed in 1976.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Historic maps combined with a history of ownership suggests that this section of Medford Square on the north, up-hill side of High Street originally housed several large rural estates or 'country seats' flanking Powder House Road, originally named Highland Avenue. The ownership history of the subject property and period maps demonstrates that the land on both sides of Powder House was owned by Samuel Train during the early 19th century. Train (1781-1874) and his brother and business partner Enoch Train (1801-1868) were prominent Boston shipping merchants heavily involved in trans-Atlantic packet trade and passenger service. They commissioned six clipper ships from builder Donald McKay of East Boston during the 1850s, including record holder *Flying Cloud* (New York to San Francisco, consult BOS.1713, Faneuil Hall Market, South Building, 100-199 Faneuil Hall Marketplace for a more complete profile). The 1830 and 1850 Federal Census placed Train on High Street where he was listed with his wife, Hannah P (Flint, married 1811), children Gorham and Ellen, and three domestic servants. Probate records recorded an estate valued at over \$85,000 and a large brick house (not extant) labeled with his name and those of

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

MDF.85

subsequent owners was depicted in 1855 through 1898 two doors west of the First Unitarian Church (147 High Street, MDF.89).¹

In 1834 Samuel Train, "merchant," sold a large parcel on the east side of Powder House with 7 rods, 24 links frontage on High Street to John Angier, "gentleman," who built a house at 129 High Street (see MDF.55). In 1846 Angier sold the property to Henry A Page. Page's property is depicted on the 1855 map reproduced below in detail. This map depicts three large houses; one survives at 6 Powder House Road, identified as the George Bent Green House (MDF.79). Page's house, a large building with a complex H-shaped footprint, does not survive (depicted below on period maps). Henry A Page (1811-1883) was a Boston wholesale hardware merchant with the firm of George H Gray & Co. In 1860 he controlled a fortune valued at \$41,000 in real estate and personal property.²

In 1888 a large parcel on the east side of Highland Avenue (Powder House Road) with 273 feet of frontage was acquired by Dr. Charles M Green from the heirs of Henry A Page. Circumstances suggest he immediately built the subject house as a country retreat. Green was a son of Medford grain merchant George Bent Green (see MDF.66, 28-32 Main Street and MDF.79, 6 Powder House Road); circumstances suggest the second generation of the Green family, including George M's brother Lorenzo, acquired properties in the immediate area near their father's pre-1855 house at about this time (see maps reproduced below). Charles Montraville Green (1850-1928) was a prominent Boston physician specializing in obstetrics, gynecology and surgery. He graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1877 and studied medicine in Vienna, Paris and London until 1879. He was elected physician in charge, Boston Lying-In Hospital in 1907 and served as a professor at Harvard Medical School from 1894, heading the department of obstetrics and gynecology in 1907 and later served as dean of medicine there. With his wife Helen Lincoln (Ware, 1838-1911) and son Robert Montraville Green, also a Harvard educated physician (1902 and 1906), he resided full time and practiced out of 78 Marlborough Street, Boston, evidently using the Medford house as a country retreat. The Medford house remained in the family's ownership until it was sold by Robert M Green in 1950.³

The property originally had 273 feet of frontage on Powder House (at the time called Highland) and was over 300 feet deep. This parcel was subdivided in 1931 by Robert M Green. The plan, recorded with MCSRD 6564:537 with revisions in 1933, has not been located. Subsequent owners included Leon P and Deidre Curry (1950-1970), Joseph C and Guilda L Tranfaglia (1970-1978) and Mary L and Guild Stanley Louanis (1978-1993), who sold to the current owners of record.⁴

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

- 1855 H.F. Walling. "Map of Medford...."
- 1875 F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*.
- 1880 O. H. Bailey [Bird's Eye View of] Medford.
- 1889 Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*.
- 1898 Geo. W. Stady & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford...*
- 1900 Geo. W. Stady & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1*.
- 1892, 1897, 1903, 1910, 1936, 1936-1950 Sanborn Insurance Atlases.

Ancestry.com: see footnotes

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 (date).

¹ See BOS.1713; Ancestry.com: vital records, birth, marriage, death; 1830, 1850 Federal Census; Mass US Wills and Probate Records: https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/9069/images/007553509_00681?treeid=&personid=&rc=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=MxP99&phstart=successSource&pld=2517915.

² MCSRD 331:455 (1834); 482:124 (1846); *Exhibition and Fair of the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanic Association, at Faneuil and Quincy Halls, in the City of Boston, September 18, 1837* (Dutton & Wentworth, 1837) p. 59; Ancestry.com: 1850-1880 Federal Census, inclusive.

³ MCSRD 1868:2 (1888); 7638:296 (1950); Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage; 1900-1920 Federal Census, inclusive; backbayhouses.org: 78 Marlborough Street; *Class of 1874 Harvard College Tenth Report, June, 1874-June, 1914* (University Press, 1914) pp. 44-45.

⁴ MCSRD 11884:10 (1970); 13492:695 (1978); 21199:37 (1991); 23689:304 (1993); 65102:53 (2015); 65102:56 (2015); 72535:549 (2019).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MDF.85

FIGURES



1855 Walling Medford map. The Page estate is indicated by a red arrow. Note that the estate of Samuel Train is located to the west on High Street. North is up.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

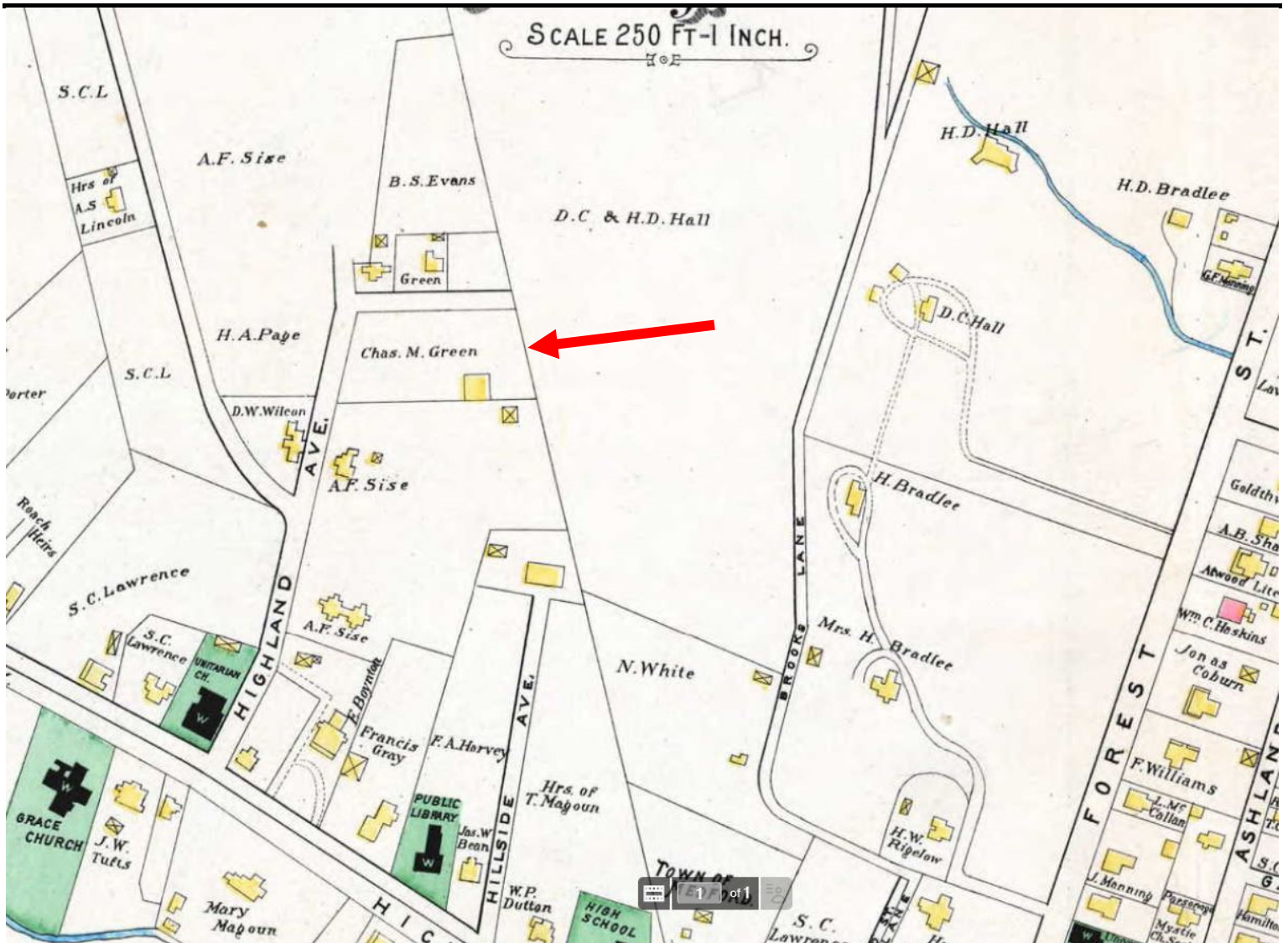
17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

MDF.85



1889 Walker county atlas depicting the property of Charles M Green (red arrow). The building depicted is a crude rendering of the subject building's footprint, suggesting it was planned or under construction at the time. North is up.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

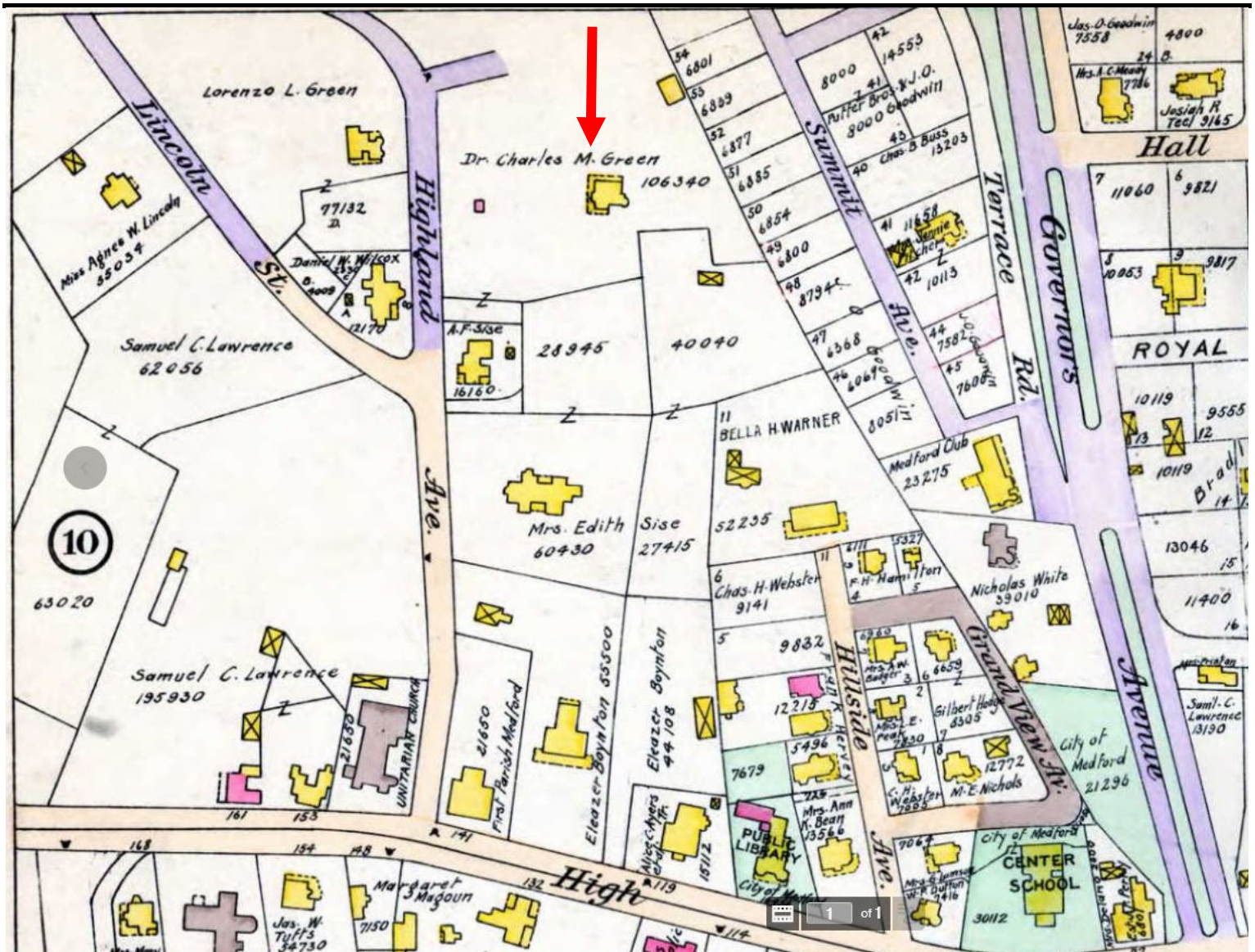
17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MDF.85



1898 Stadly city atlas accurately depicting the Green estate (red arrow). Lorenzo L Green on the west side of Highland Ave (Powder House) is a brother.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MDF.85
--	--------



Front left "living hall." All interior images were captured from Zillow 3/16/2023.



Front right dining room. Note the canted bay filling the right third of the image.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

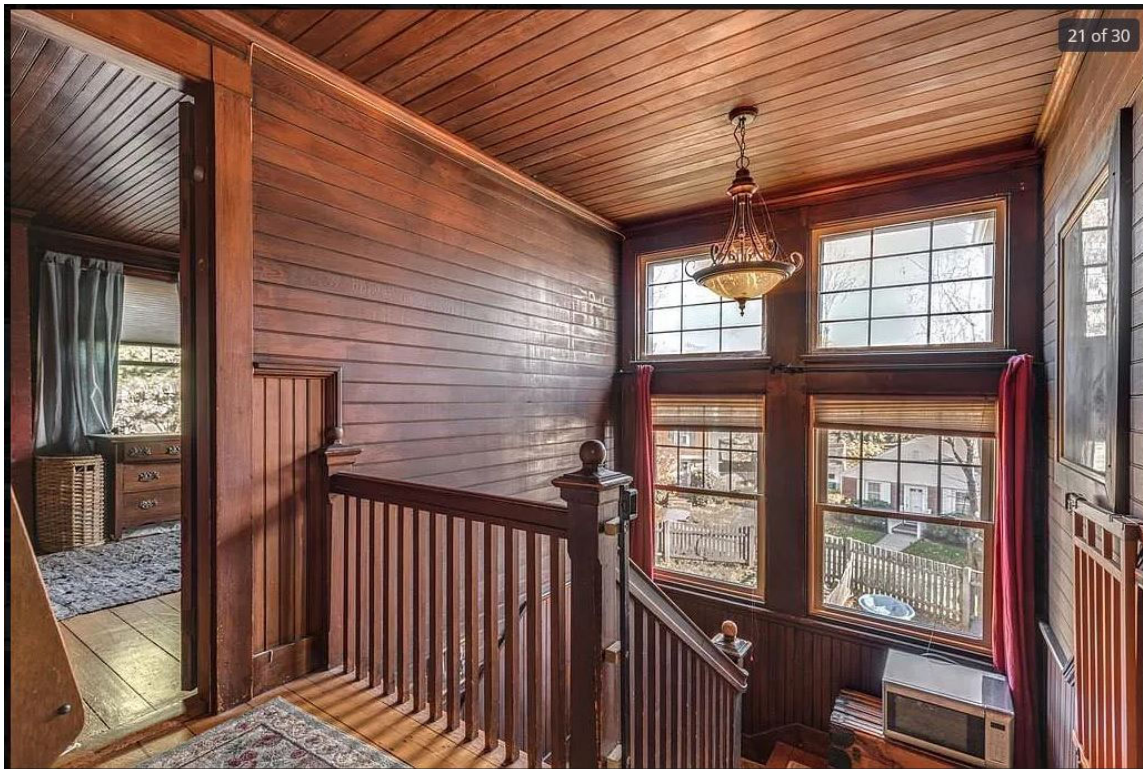
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MDF.85
--	--------



Rear left den.



Upper stair hall.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

17 GREEN ROAD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

	MDF.85
--	--------



Rear elevation from the SE.



View of façade from SW.

[If appropriate, cut and paste the text below into an inventory form's last continuation sheet.]

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

The Dr. Charles M and Helen L Green House (Charles Green MD House) at 17 Green Road, ca. 1889, is a well-preserved example of the Shingle Style and, despite minor alterations, remains a legible component of the north side of High Street's initial phase of development as a country retreat for prominent Boston merchants during the second half of the 19th century. It is associated with three generations of the local Green family, the first generation of whom prospered as grain merchants and lived in the neighborhood. This house was built for prominent Harvard-trained Boston physician Dr. Charles M Green and remained in the ownership of the Green family until 1950. The property retains integrity of workmanship, design, materials, association, location, setting and feeling. It would contribute to a potential National Register district that would encompass Medford Square and its surroundings.

Medford Square has been the center of religious, institutional, commercial, residential, and transportation activity for the town and later city (incorporated 1892) of Medford since the earliest period of settlement beginning in 1629. Over nearly four centuries, the area expanded, was built and rebuilt, and extended along important regional transportation corridors during riverine-, canal-, railroad-, streetcar- and finally automobile-dominated periods. The Square retains a broad diversity of building types and styles prevalent throughout its entire history, including a small number of early 18th-century examples through to the present. The area displays an exceptionally complex layering of development and has undergone extensive demolition and rebuilding throughout its entire history. It retains many of the city's most important cultural resources, including churches, schools, a library, other important institutional buildings, and many outstanding examples of both commercial and residential architecture from each period of development. During its initial three centuries of history the area housed a large number of the town's and later city's elites whose activities had a pivotal impact on the history of both local and regional development. Among the most important industries built by Medford Square residents connected to economic development at the national level during the 18th and 19th centuries were shipbuilding and the distillation of rum. Given the length of time the area has been the site of human activity, it is likely to yield information important in history or prehistory. In spite of the degree of loss and renewal, the area retains integrity of workmanship, design, materials, association, location, setting, and feeling. It meets criteria A, C and D for listing at the regional level.