

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

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Town/City: Medford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Winter Hill

Photograph



Address: 91 Winchester Street

Historic Name: Cook Tenant House and Obed Carpentry Workshop

Uses: Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

Date of Construction: 1879-1881

Source: deeds, maps

Style/Form: Italianate/ end house

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: cementitious shingle/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: detached workshop or barn

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Siding, 20th century.

Condition: fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.12 acre

Setting: Dense mix of late-19th through early 20th century residential and commercial uses.

Locus Map (*north is up*)



Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): March 2019

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

91 WINCHESTER STREET

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Area(s) Form No.

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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:

The Cook Tenant House, 1879-1881, is a diminutive example of a gabled end house massed in one-and-a-half stories with knee-wall massing. This type of design is characterized by an extension of the eave-wall studs beyond and the placement of the main plate above the second floor atop a low "knee wall." It is usually indicative of "balloon" framing but timber frame houses were also built in this manner well into the 19th century. The low upper story is expanded by a pair of gabled dormers on the left (south) roof slope. The façade is also expanded by a single-story canted bay to the left of the right-side entry. The interior plan is suggested by the entry sequence and bay, which suggest a narrow side entrance and stair hall to the right and reception rooms on the left. A stove chimney centered on the rear-right quarter suggests there is a kitchen in that location, and period maps depict a rear ell that projects right, not visible, may expand the house in this direction. The house sits on a high foundation with a high stoop in front of the main entrance.

Although the house was altered during the 20th century by a residing with cementitious shingles, it retains original molded rake and fascia boards and decorative eave returns, a nominal reference to Italianate fashion. Although casings may have been lost, evidence for their profile likely survives beneath later siding and original two-over-two sash, as well as an early, large-light door, appear to survive. Sanborn maps suggest a porch wrapping the façade and right side was originally present (see figures).

The house is sited near the frontage on the right half of its minimal lot. High hedgerows line the frontage. A narrow drive leads to a gable front outbuilding with a double-leaf door and loft door above. This building was in place by 1898 but possibly before and evidently served as a work space for the house's occupants, initially a carpenter but later two painting contractors. This type of ancillary work space was characteristic of skilled trades' activity during the 19th century but has largely disappeared from the built landscape and is an exceptionally rare survival. This example, sided in wood clapboarding with plain trim, is well-preserved and serves as an important document of 19th century work customs and practices. Although a lower wing to the south was depicted as early as 1898, it appears to have been replaced during the 20th century with a cinderblock, flat roofed garage.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

For much of the 19th century large sections of Winter Hill remained in the ownership of the Tufts family. They included Nathan Tufts, his nephews Joseph Frothingham, William and Edward Tufts, who inherited the land from their uncle, and Joseph's sons George F. and Edward Tufts.¹ In 1861 lots 63 and 64 depicted on the 1854 Tufts subdivision plan reproduced below were purchased by Samuel L. Downing from Alfred Tufts for \$834. There is evidence that Downing purchased other property nearby at 92 Winchester Street (MDF.1924), where he may have resided. Downing (1822-1877) worked as a laborer in 1850, a landlord in 1860 and a teamster in 1870.²

In 1863 Downing lost the property to his creditor, George W Chapman of Dorchester. The balance on the mortgage of \$6,000 at 6%, suggests considerable improvements had been made to the property by this time.³ Indeed a large "French" roofed, or mansard building of three stories was depicted on the 1875 Beers county atlas, half in Somerville and oriented toward Broadway. Other map evidence identified this building as "Willowbridge," as was the neighboring railroad station to the west on Broadway. The Willowbridge House, a railway hotel, is illustrated below. An 1871 advertisement included the following details:

boarders accommodated by the day or week; spacious halls for dancing and billiard playing; pleasant and airy rooms...the Willowbridge House...is one of the most cozy retreats in the world. The proprietor, Benjamin

¹ Dempsey: Survey Plan for South Medford, 2017; see: Edward C. Booth, "The Tufts Family in Somerville," *Historic Leaves*, Vol. 1, April 1902-03, Perseus; Ancestry. Com: Boucher and Hollytree family trees; Middlesex County Probate for Joseph Frothingham Tufts and Nathan Tufts.

² MCSRD 869:404 (1861); Ancestry.com: vital records, death; 1850, 1860, 1870 Federal Census.

³ MCSRD 907:7 (1863, mortgage deed).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Area(s) Form No.

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Doughty, Esq., has an interesting little family, all natural musicians, and they entertain company in the most agreeable manner. His larder is well stocked, his viands capital, and it is seldom one gets in such comfortable quarters. Choice wines, liquors and cigars always on hand for family use.⁴

In 1867 the property was acquired by Benjamin Doughty at auction from Downing's creditor George W Chapman. It again changed hands in 1872 but at this time for consideration of \$10,000, subject to a mortgage of \$4,000. After again changing hands four times in rapid succession between 1872 and 1874 it was acquired by Jerome B Judkins of Winchester for \$13,000. Judkins (1822-1896) was a carpet merchant in Boston who invested heavily in real estate, operating as a developer in both municipalities (see WNT.J, Winchester Park). His ca 1876 bankruptcy may have precipitated another sale in 1878.⁵

After passing through two more hands during 1878-1879 the property was subdivided and the "easterly end" of lot 63, the subject property, was acquired by Charles H Cook of Somerville from Harrison A Aldrich of Boston for \$600 in 1879. When Cook gave a mortgage of \$1,516 to Samuel M Cook of Maplewood, Malden in 1881 the description included "buildings thereon." Circumstances therefore suggest the house was built at this time. It has not been possible to identify either of these parties; listings for Cook in Medford directories for the years 1879 to 1894, when it was owned by Charles H Cook, did not place anybody by that name on Winchester or Charles, its former name (changed by 1889).⁶

The owner between 1894 and 1897, carpenter Beverly S Obed, resided here; the initial depiction of the workshop at the back of the property by 1898 suggests it served Obed's business and its use as a carpentry shop. Subsequent owner between 1897 and 1905, painter Silas E Baker, also resided here. The following owners Harry Cushing Brown (owner 1905-1923), Lars Larsen (owner 1923-1934) and Willard E Harris (1934-1948) did not reside here, but tenants during that time included painter Aaron S Knox and wife Mary A (1924); painter Leander P Adams and wife Annie E (1930); and William H Canfield, a clerk with Boston poultry processor Thorndike & Gerrish Co, and wife Frances. The occupations of the tenants during the 1920s and 1930s suggests the workshop drew them to the property.⁷

Between 1948 and 1978 the property was owned by Theodor W and Helen Elder; 1978-1995 by John J and Ellen J Maloney; and 1996-2007 by Anthony Tappe III and Ruth EC Prince, who sold to the current owner of record.⁸

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. 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.

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.

⁴ Amazon.com: 1871 Somerville city directory, p. 8.

⁵ MCSRD 1023:565 (1867); 1200:64 (1872); 1206:390 (1872); 1241:495 (1873); 1206:395 (1872); 1327:591 (1874, Horatio Davis Boyden to Jerome B Judkins).

⁶ MCSRD 1526:201 (1879); 1587:515 (1881, mortgage deed); 1616:131 (1882, mortgage deed); both mortgages were given by Charles H Cook of Medford or Boston to Samuel M Cook of Maplewood, Malden.

⁷ MCSRD 2267:210 and 2291:432 (1894); 2560:198 (1897); 2969:306 (1902); 3014:597 (1903); 3151:313 (1905); 4691:509 (1923); 5869:457 (1934); 6182:140-141 (1938); 6270:233 (1939); Ancestry.com: 1924, 1930, 1938 Medford city directories.

⁸ MCSRD 7355:533 (1948); 7357:462 (1948); 13613:83 (1978); 25840:166 (1995); 26575:217 (1996); 49647:67 (2007).

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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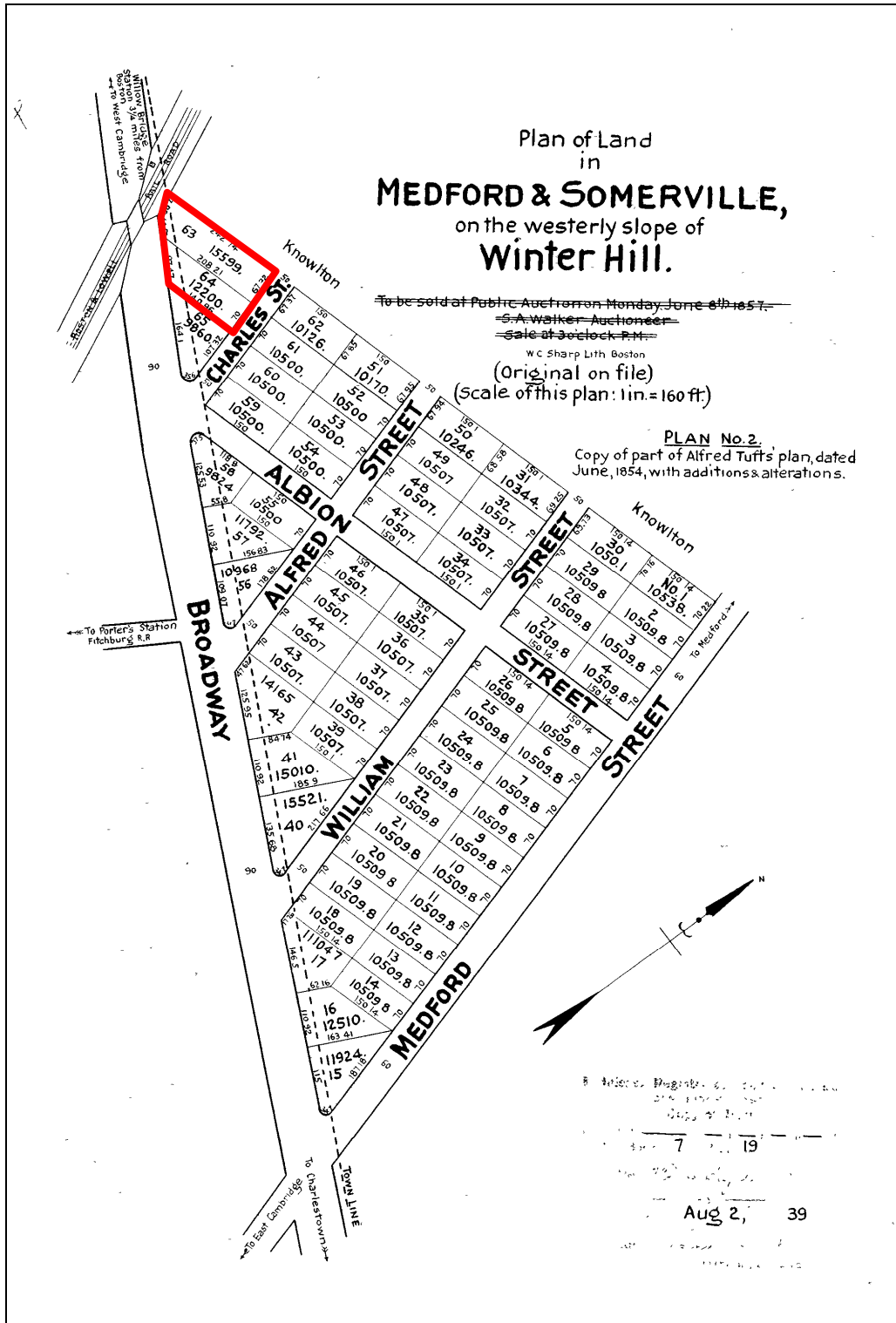
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Area(s) Form No.

Empty rectangular boxes for area and form number.

FIGURES



MCSR Plan 7:19 (1854) depicting lots 63 and 64 outlined in red. The subject property is the east portion of lot 63. North is upper right.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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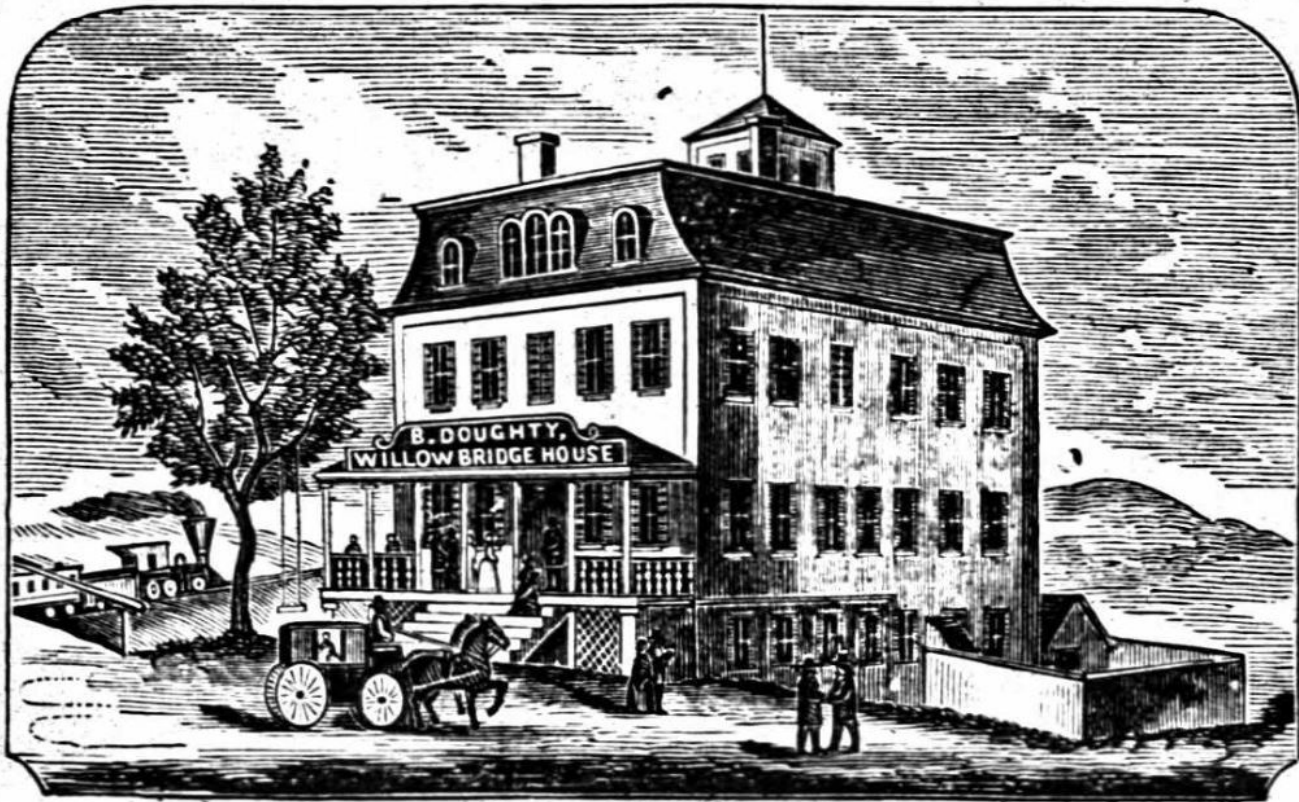
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Area(s) Form No.



1903 Sanborn map showing the configuration of outbuildings at that time (red arrow).



Ancestry.com: 1871 Somerville city directory, p. 8.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Area(s) Form No.

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Anthony Mitchell Sammarco, *Images of America, Somerville* (Arcadia, 1997) p. 21: "The Old Willow Bridge House."



INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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