

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

W-08-54	Boston North		
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**Town/City:** Medford

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Winter Hill/ Boynton  
Subdivision

## Photograph



**Address:** 56 Wareham Street

**Historic Name:** Wholley House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

**Date of Construction:** 1882-1884

**Source:** deeds, maps

**Style/Form:** Stick/ end house

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

## Locus Map (*north is up*)



**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** detached garage  
and garden sheds (2)

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Residing, porch enclosure,  
20<sup>th</sup> century; partial sash replacement, recent.

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no  yes  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.19 acre

**Setting:** Dense mix of late-19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup>  
century residential use.

**Recorded by:** John D. Clemson

**Organization:** Medford Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): August 2023

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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 Wholley House, built between 1882 and 1884, is an example of a common form of housing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century known as an end house. End houses, defined by a gable front, were an innovation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century when residential buildings began to be oriented with their gables rather than eave elevations facing the street. This was driven partly by fashion as temple fronts characteristic of the Greek Revival style emerged. The re-orientation of the narrow elevations of buildings frontward also became practical as increased density and urbanization were introduced into planning for Boston and its inner suburbs. This example, with three-bay, two-pile massing, has a knee-wall upper story, whereby the main plates are raised a half story above the second floor in order to create additional space there at less expense than a full second story. The upper level space is further expanded by gabled dormers, two on the right and one in the rear pile on the left that are flush with the side elevations and interrupt the main eave line. The house is expanded by single-story rectangular bays centered on the right (west) half of the façade and rear pile of the right elevation. This, combined with a left-side entrance and dimensions of 24 by 24, suggests a side-hall plan with reception rooms filling the right side. A narrower rear ell, evidently expanded during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, likely houses a kitchen and other service spaces. A deep entrance porch, whose finishes suggest it was an early addition, was later enclosed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sanborn maps indicate the porch was added between 1910 and 1936.

Despite minor alterations the house retains original or early building fabric. The shed roofs covering the bays in the façade and right side are covered by steeply pitched sheds; this, combined with the open soffits at the main eave, is evocative of the Stick style. The house retains wood shingle siding, which may represent an early alteration, plain casings and molded rake boards. Original two-over-two sash behind aluminum triple-track storms survive on the first story but the second-floor sash has recently been replaced with six-over-six light configurations. The flat-roofed porch retains square columns with molded capitals. This house is representative of the earliest phase of development of the Boynton Subdivision (see narrative) during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and contributes to an intact historic streetscape.

Like its neighbors the Wholley House is landscaped in open lawn with abundant mature trees, creating an open, park-like setting throughout the densely developed block. A narrow asphalt drive skirts the left side, leading to a detached, two-bay, hip-roofed garage constructed of rusticated concrete blocks. The garage retains early wood sliding doors. Sanborn maps demonstrate that this garage replaced a large rear shed between 1910 and 1936. Two small garden sheds of recent vintage are located at the right-rear corner of the lot.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Wholley House was constructed within a large planned residential subdivision undertaken by Winchester real estate developer William Boynton in 1873, when he recorded a plan for 138 lots lining three blocks bound by Harvard to the north, Main to the east, the right-of-way of, at the time the Boston, Lowell & Nashua Railroad, later Boston & Maine, to the west and currently Tufts Park to the south, reproduced below. Originally three east-west streets accessed the subdivision, named Washington Avenue (subsequently renamed Wareham), Maple Street (subsequently renamed Marion) and Warren, which was never built and is now part of Tufts Park.

In 1868 Boynton and business partners James Phillips and Charles L. Hosmer purchased a large parcel on the west side of Main Street below Harvard Street that encompassed the blocks lining Wareham and Marion streets and extending west to the Boston and Lowell Railroad right-of-way (the parcel is depicted on the plan and maps reproduced below, continuation sheet 3). Phillips and Hosmer sold out to Boynton in 1870.<sup>1</sup> Boynton recorded the plan for subdivision into residential lots in 1873 (reproduced below). William Boynton (1820-1901) was a well-known Boston real estate developer who was active in the northern suburbs, including neighboring Winchester. Born in Framingham, he trained as a carpenter and later was in the lumber

<sup>1</sup> MCSRD 1121:111 (1870) refers to two uncited previous deeds from Robert Burrows and TC Banks to Boynton and Phillips. Preliminary research shows the purchase at MCSRD 1053:360 (1868) and earlier transactions, as yet fully untangled, trace the land back to George Adams.

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trade in East Cambridge. His Boston real estate speculation began in the North and West Ends, and his later 'negotiations' included the South End, Back Bay (including the site of the Boston Art Museum), Dorchester and Roxbury. In Winchester he was identified as 'a power to beautify and expand the town' and credited with seeing 'the future of the west side' (see WNT.P).<sup>2</sup> Boynton resided in Winchester at 117 Cambridge Street (WNT.24), where his household included, in 1880, wife Sarah Augusta, sons William E. and Edward K., widowed daughter Katherine Sawtelle, and her son, Paul.<sup>3</sup> The chain of title demonstrates that Boynton was heavily leveraged and lost the parcel occupied by the eponymous building (379-381 Main Street, MDF.74) to his creditors in 1878. He had given a mortgage to Wareham Savings Bank in 1873 at 8%, a high rate for the period, suggesting he posed a perceived significant risk.

In 1882 youthful Boston real estate agent Charles Henry Bacall (1854-1907) acquired approximately 115 lots from the receivers of the bank that had been assigned Boynton's mortgage by that time, Lancaster Savings Bank. Bacall, a resident of Boston and later Brookline, was a son of Boston furniture dealer William C Bacall (born ca 1813). He later moved to Hartford Connecticut, where he worked as an insurance executive.<sup>4</sup>

In 1884 the subject property at 56 Wareham, described as lot 56 on the 1873 subdivision plan in deeds, was acquired by Dennis P Wholley from intervening short-term owner John T Pope. According to period directories Wholley (born ca 1857), a salesman of butter and eggs, resided at the property with his wife, Ellen, between 1884 and 1888 (later during the 1920s and 1930s they resided at 59 Wareham). Between 1888 and 1919 the property was owned by a series of absentee landlords, including George H Wiggin of Medford and Emma Louisa Small of Boston. Widow Emma L Small owned the property between 1888 and 1914. Little could be ascertained regarding her life other than the identity of her husband Aratus Small (1847-1886), an engineer and veteran of the Civil War. It has not been possible to identify her tenants.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1914 and 1919 the house was owned and occupied by William A Warner, whose household included William R and Russell W Warner. William A Warner worked as a superintendent and Russell as a salesman for the Agar Manufacturing Corp, a box manufacturer located at 15 Winchester Street.<sup>6</sup> Between 1919 and 1926 the house was owned and occupied by Thomas Bradley (born ca 1869) and his wife, Annie B (born ca 1867), both natives of Canada immigrating in 1891. The property was held in Annie's name and Thomas worked as a mechanic in a boiler works.<sup>7</sup>

The property subsequently underwent frequent changes in ownership between 1926 and 1929, but between 1929 and 1945 was owned by Eugene P Carr of Somerville, evidently an absentee landlord. His tenants in 1930 were the family of William P Cook (born ca 1876), a trucking company proprietor, his wife, Gertrude (born ca 1895) and a blended family of seven minor children and an uncle. The Cooks paid \$50 in rent. Subsequent long-term owners included Herbert D, Harry A and Jeanne B Goodman (1946-1963), and two generations of the Henderson family (1963-2005).<sup>8</sup>

## 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*.

<sup>2</sup> *Boston Globe*, May 27, 1901 (first quotation); *Winchester Star*, Jun., 1901, "William Boynton" (third quote) and "Tribute to a Good Man" (second quote).

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com: 1880 Federal Census.

<sup>4</sup> MCSR 1605:95 (1882); the receivers of Lancaster Savings Bank included William H McNeil, Elisha Brimhall and Benjamin Snow. Regarding Bacall: Ancestry.com: 1870, 1880, 1900 Federal Census; *New York Daily Tribune*, Mar. 17, 1907, p. 9 (Library of Congress); the identity of Bacall's wife Mabel is consistent across census records and deeds.

<sup>5</sup> MCSR 1673:278 (1884); 1872:279 (1888); 1881:329 (1888); 3862:281 (1914); Ancestry.com: vital records, death (Aratus Small); 1890 Veterans Schedules of the US Federal Census.

<sup>6</sup> MCSR 3862:281 (1914); Ancestry.com: 1916, 1924 Medford city directories.

<sup>7</sup> MCSR 4256:180 (1919); Ancestry.com: 1920 Federal Census.

<sup>8</sup> MCSR 4953:422 (1926); 5006:137 (1926); 5340:583 (1929); 6840:318 (1945); 7007:2358 (1946); 7893:6 (1952); 10340:505 (1963); 28595:124 (1998); 46752:305 (2005); Ancestry.com: 1930 Federal Census.

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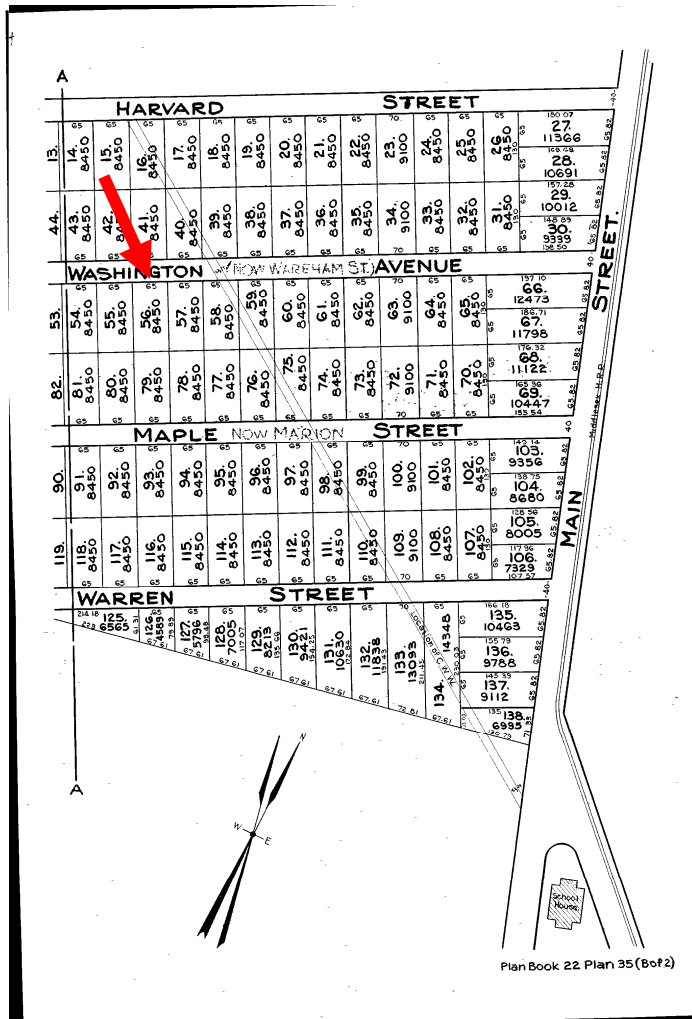
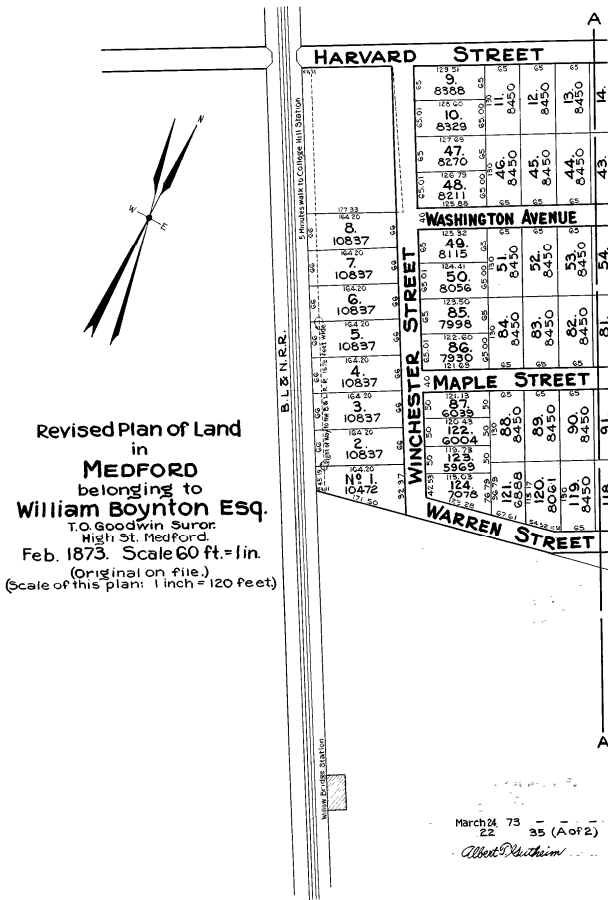
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1898 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford...*  
 1900 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1.*  
 1892, 1897, 1903, 1910, 1936, 1936-1950 Sanborn Insurance Atlases.

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 (date).

**FIGURES**



MCSRD Plan 22:35 A&B (1873) depicting the Boynton Subdivision. The subject property is identified by a red arrow. Washington Street was later changed to Wareham Avenue and Maple to Marion Avenue. The lots lining Warren Street were later taken by the city in several transactions between 1925 and 1930 (see MDF.BZ, MDF.968). North is upper right.



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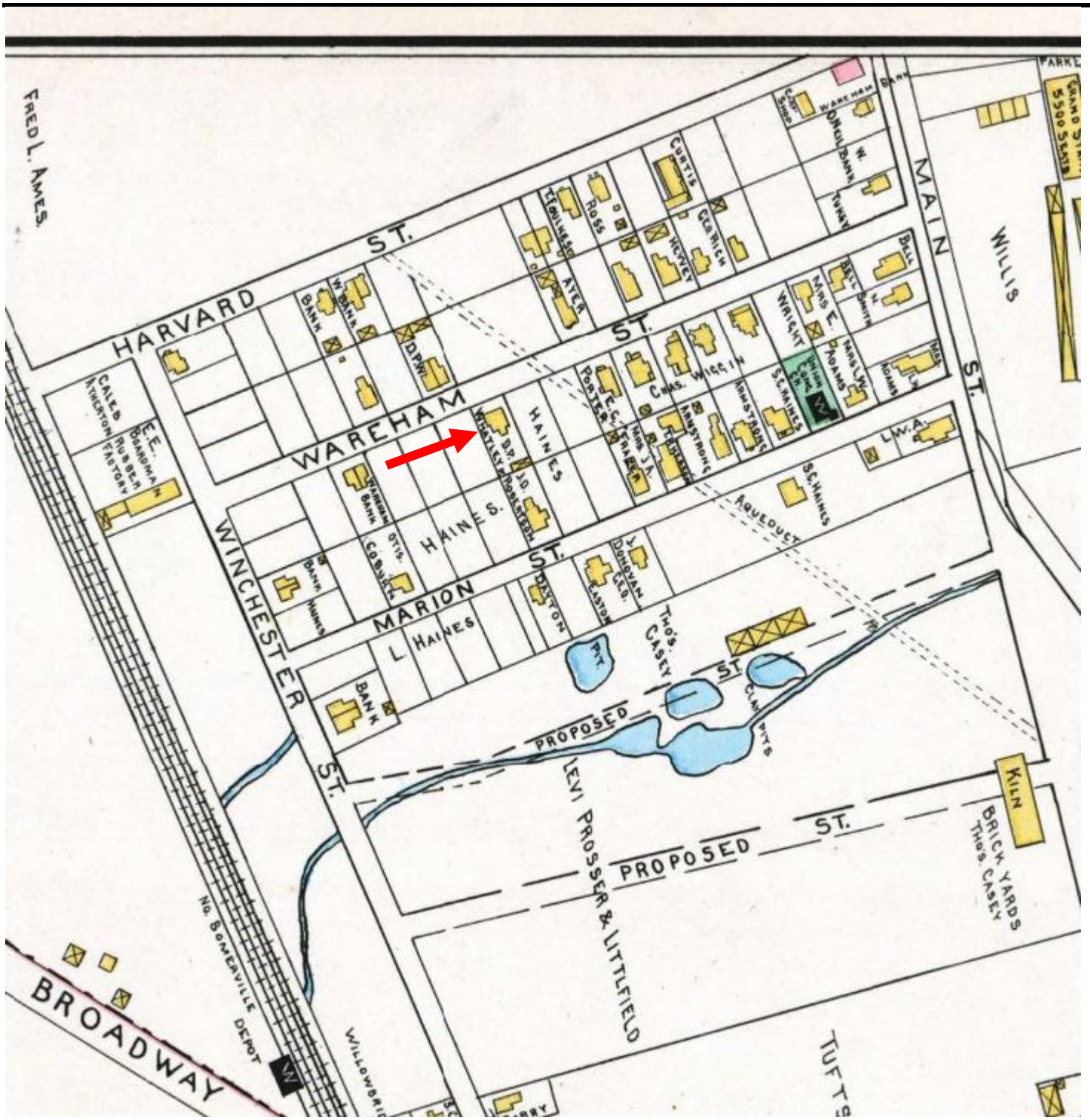
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1889 Walker county atlas depicting the house, indicated by a red arrow, in the ownership of "DP Whatley," evidently an error, correctly "DP Wholley," indicated by a red arrow. The image has been oriented to the compass, north is up.

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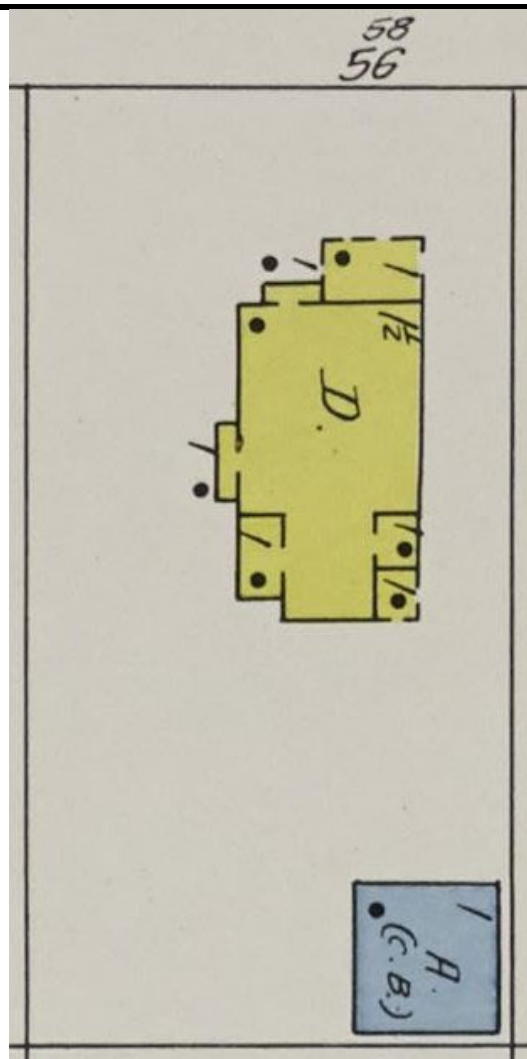
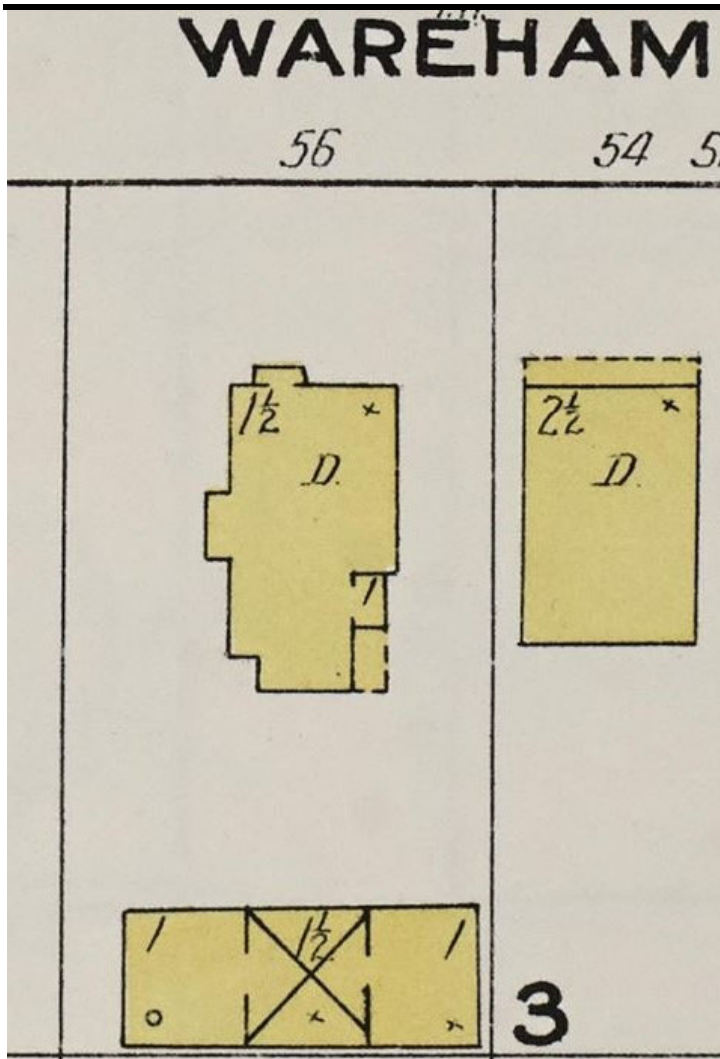
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1910 and 1936 Sanborn maps, L-R, showing the addition of the entrance porch and replacement of sheds with a concrete auto ("A") building. North is upper right.



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