

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

G-04-32	Boston North		
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Town/City: Medford

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Brooks Estate

Photograph



Address: 587 Winthrop Street

Historic Name: Lorenzo and Rachel G Chase House

Uses: Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

Date of Construction: prior to 1850

Source: deeds, maps

Style/Form: Gothic Revival/ end house

Architect/Builder: unknown, possibly partially by Lorenzo Chase

Exterior Material:

Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Porch enclosure, residing and some sash replacement: 20th century.

Condition: fair

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 0.16 acre

Setting: Mix of late-19th through early 20th century planned residential development.

Locus Map (*north is up*)



Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): September 2023

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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 Chase House, built shortly prior to 1850 according to documentary evidence discussed in the narrative that is consistent with a stylistic analysis, is an example of the end house form at a story-and-a-half height. End houses are characterized by a narrow, generally three-bay gabled façade with the longer eave elevation oriented perpendicular to the frontage, as is the case here. This form was initially popularized when temple fronts became popular with the Greek Revival movement beginning in ca 1825, but is also commonly associated with other style movements that favored prominent gables such as Gothic Revival (ca 1840), of which this is an example. Narrower end houses also lent themselves to denser planned residential development which began to prevail by the middle of the 19th century in inner suburbs such as Medford. End houses were commonly expanded with rear ells, as is the case here. This house, with dimensions of 22 feet wide by 30 feet deep and a left (north) side entry, likely has a side-hall plan. The four symmetrically arranged windows in the right elevation suggests this half of the house is filled with two reception spaces. The 13-foot-wide, 24-foot-deep rear ell aligned with the left elevation likely houses a kitchen and other work spaces. The half story above the main body is framed in a knee-wall, a common plan during the second half of the 19th century that provided second-story space more economically than a full second level.

Although this likely originally clapboarded house was resided with wood shingles and the porch was enclosed during the early to mid-20th century, it retains a distinctive decorative treatment consisting of a stepped verge-board in the front gable capped by a turned drop finial. This device evidently references what is known as a corbie step, which can be observed on many late-medieval buildings of northern European and here contributes to this house's Gothic styling. Other minor alterations include some sash and door replacement. Despite changes this example of the style is rare throughout the Boston area and is worthy of study, documentation and preservation.

The house is centered on its generous corner lot elevated above street grade on a gently sloping earthen platform retained by a stone wall that lines the Winthrop and Franklin frontages. A gap in the front wall where a concrete stair leads to the front stoop is currently decorated by cast-stone finials that appear to be of recent vintage. The yard is landscaped in open lawn, giving the house a prominent presence within the streetscape. It is one of the few surviving 19th century houses on this block on the east side of Winthrop, where other examples including 25 Franklin (MDF.1802), 523 Winthrop (MDF.1829), 541 Winthrop (MDF.1830) and 551 Winthrop (MDF.1831) have been lost to demolition during recent years.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The ownership history of this property has been traced to the purchase of a residential lot by Lorenzo Chase from Benjamin F Parker in 1852 (see MDF.1802, 25 Franklin Avenue, demolished). The description of the lot on Purchase Street, the former name of Winthrop, conforms closely to its depiction on the 1855 Walling Medford Map, reproduced below. Consideration was \$400. By 1855 a house was depicted on this lot labeled "Lorenzo Chase." The 1850 census, however, recorded Lorenzo Chase's household next to Benjamin Parker and William Russell, both neighbors according to the 1855 Walling town map, suggesting Chase was a tenant at the property prior to his 1852 purchase. Stylistic analysis suggests the house was built shortly before Chase was recorded as living there in 1850. Chase (1818-1882) was a native of Plymouth and a son of John and Abigail Chase of that town who worked as a brick mason. He was married to Rachel G (Lothrop, 1819-1893), a daughter of Calvin G and Betsy (Cobb) Lothrop of Boston. According to period maps the immediate neighbor to the east was David W Lothrop, likely related (possibly a brother-in-law). It is tempting to speculate that both Parker and Chase, both masons, had a hand in this house's construction. In 1850 Chase's household included his wife and two daughters, Julianna and Ella, and father-in-law Calvin Lothrop (born ca. 1781). Ten years later the household included a third daughter, Maria, and mother-in-law Betsy Lothrop. Through 1870-1880 the household was joined by nephew Jesse Bassett (born ca. 1839), also a brick mason so likely an employee. Chase's probate records reveal further details regarding his material life. His personal property included a

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horse, carriage and stable worth \$110; household furniture, apparel, and watch and chain worth \$182; tools worth \$15; and cash and other securities worth \$673.52. His real estate included a house and land on Purchase (Winthrop) Street valued at \$2,400.¹

As late as 1898 the property remained under the ownership of "heirs of Robert Chase" according to map evidence, whose identity is not known. In 1908 it was acquired by Thomas Connell of Bourne from William L Tufts of Boston. Connell (born ca 1871) was a native of Ireland, as was his wife, Mary, and worked as a farm laborer. Census and directory listings indicate Connell resided at 11 Franklin Avenue during his period of ownership between 1908 and 1924 (not extant) and leased the subject property to tenants. Tenants have not been identified but in 1924 the house was occupied by Alfred Nelson, occupation unknown.²

Between 1924 and 2018 the property was owned by several generations of the Connors family. In 1924 it was acquired by John Connors (1886-1962) from Connell. Connors was a native of Waterford, Ireland, immigrating in 1904. In 1912 he married Annie Keenan (born ca 1886), a native of County Fermanagh, Ireland. By 1930 through 1940 Connors worked as a cemetery foreman at Oak Grove in the employ of the City of Medford. The property remained in the ownership of his sons John A Connors (1915-1994) and James F Connors (1921-1991) and other evident heirs until 2018.³

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 MCSRD 634:42 (1852); Ancestry.com: vital records, birth, marriage, death; 1850-1880 Federal Census, inclusive. Lorenzo Chase died of tuberculosis and Rachel Chase died by suicide, "result of mental disease...probably from croton oil."

² MCSRD 3397:456 (1908); Ancestry.com: 1920 Federal Census; 1920, 1924 Medford city directories.

³ MCSRD 4693:338 (1924); 44435:70 (2005); 70503:442-444 (2018); 79799:351 (2022); 81329:364 (2023); Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage, death; 1930, 1940 Federal Census; US World War II Draft Registration Card.

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FIGURES



1855 Walling map of Medford depicting the subject house in the ownership of Lorenzo Chase indicated by a red arrow. North is up.

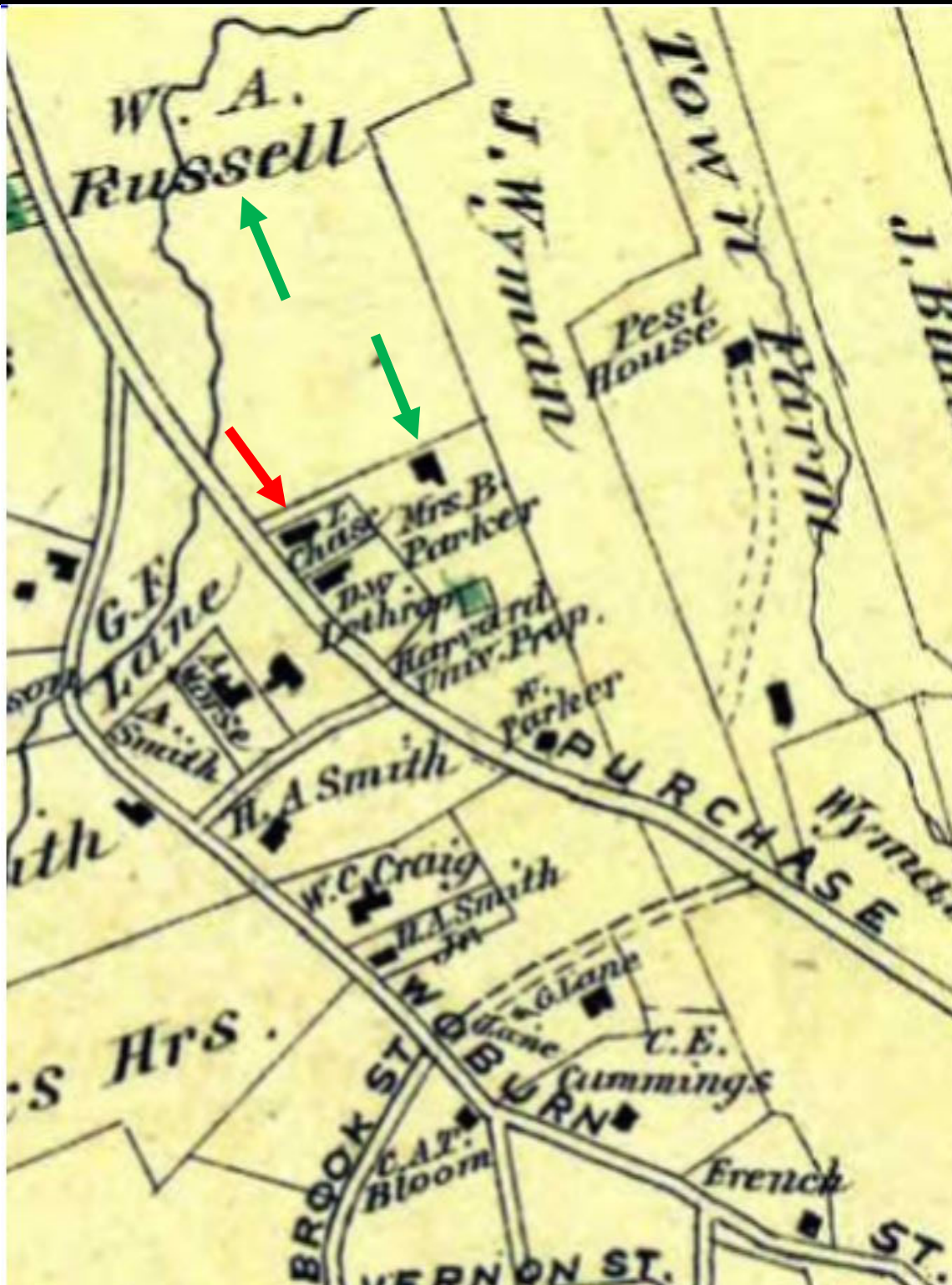
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1875 Beers county atlas depicting the property in the ownership of "L Chase" indicated by a red arrow. Note the abutters WA Russell and Mrs B Parker indicated by green arrows that are also listed in the 1850 census with Chase. North is up.

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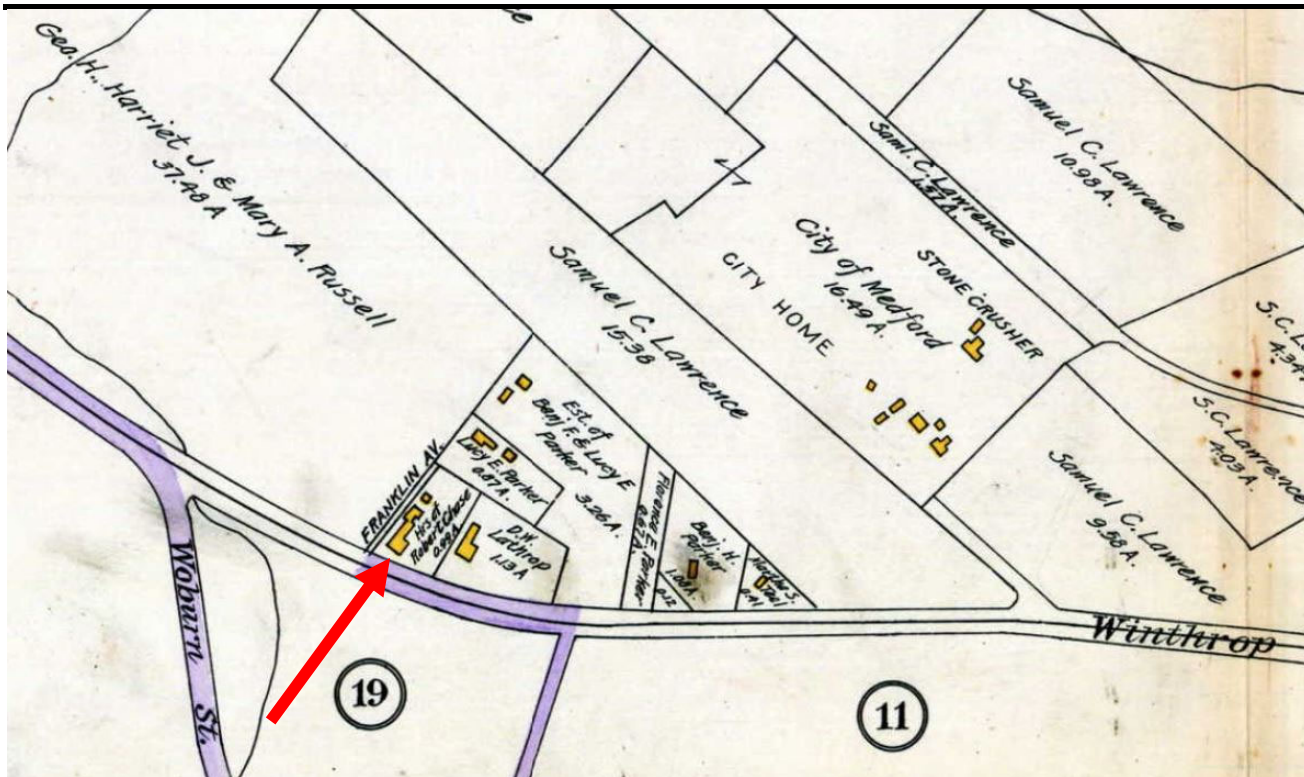
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Two empty rectangular boxes for area and form number.



1898 Stadly city atlas. The notation reads "Hrs of Robert Chase." North is upper left.



1936 Sanborn plate 78 depicting the property prior to further subdivision in 1908.

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PHOTOGRAPHS



View from N.



View from E.