

FORM B – BUILDING

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

Photograph



Locus Map



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

26-I-5

Town/City: Somerville

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

Address: 18 Cottage Avenue

Historic Name: Nancy Willson Boarding House

Uses: Present: 2-Family House

Original: Boarding House

Date of Construction: *prior to 1852*

Source: Maps and Directories

Style/Form: Vernacular/ rectangular

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Vinyl

Roof: Asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

1925 Concrete Block Garage

Major Alterations (*with dates*): 2 houses added to front yard by 1895.

Condition:

Moved: no ☐ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 4392 SF

Setting: On a residential street

Recorded by: Kristi Chase

Organization: Som. Historic Preservation Commission

Date (*month / year*): 12/2011

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWN SOMERVILLE ADDRESS 18 Cottage Avenue

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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.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Situated at the rear of the lot, this five bay center entrance Greek Revival House has a design similar to that of the three houses on the National Register of Historic Places on Mount Vernon Street. It currently has vinyl siding, fake shutters and an asphalt roof.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Deed research was not done. Map research indicates that this house was in existence in 1852 and was probably the cottage for which Cottage Avenue was named. The earliest owner found in the directories was Mrs. Nancy Willson who had several boarders in 1869. These were two carriage makers, Thomas Blackburn and Joseph Greer, two carpenters; John McLean and Nathan Willson; a painter, John G. Bacon; and a Patent Rights (clerk or attorney) who worked in Boston, John Cram.

In 1877, the cottage is still listed to Nancy Willson. Nathan Willson is now the sexton for the Baptist Church in Davis Square. The only other tenant is Charles R. Hollis, carriage maker. The 1884 Hopkins atlas notes the owner of 18 Cottage Avenue is the Wilson estate which includes a carriage house on (103-105) Orchard Street.

By 1895, there are 3 buildings on the property with the address 16-20 Cottage Avenue. These are listed as belonging to Samuel F Woodbridge. Woodbridge was the President of the North Avenue Savings Bank. It is unlikely that he was ever a resident and more likely the developer of these buildings. The Orchard Street property has a different owner.

The 1900 Stadley Atlas on line does not include the owners of Cottage Avenue. The lot was further subdivided in the early 20th century as can be seen in the Sanborn atlas plates.

In 1925, a two room addition with stairs was added to the building for the cost of \$700. In the same year, a 2-car concrete block garage was also constructed for the cost of \$1000.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Primary Sources

City of Somerville, Building Permits.

City of Somerville Directories and Municipal Manuals

Secondary Sources

Gilman, Arthur. **The Cambridge of eighteen hundred and ninety-six. A picture of the city and its industries fifty years after its incorporation.** Cambridge, Riverside press, 1896

Samuels, Edward A., **Somerville: Past and Present.** Boston: Samuels and Kimball Company, 1897.

Maps & Atlases

Bromley, Geo. W. & Co. *Atlas of Somerville, MA* 1895.

Draper, Martin *Map of Somerville* 1852

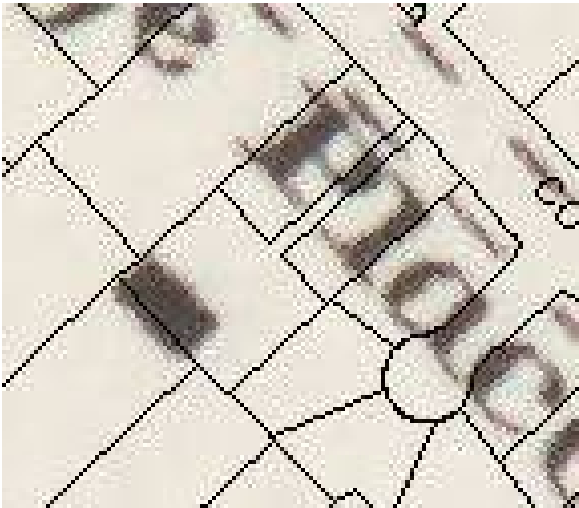
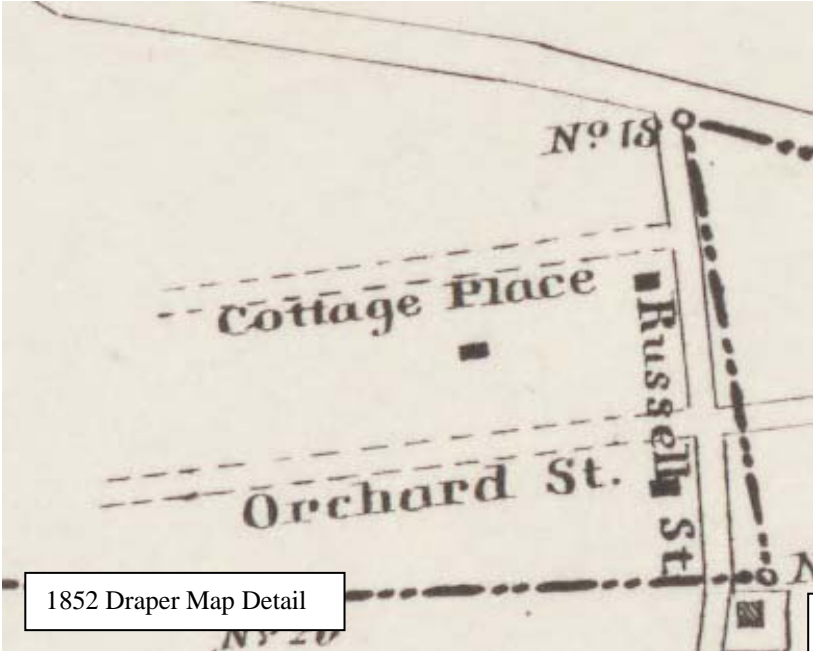
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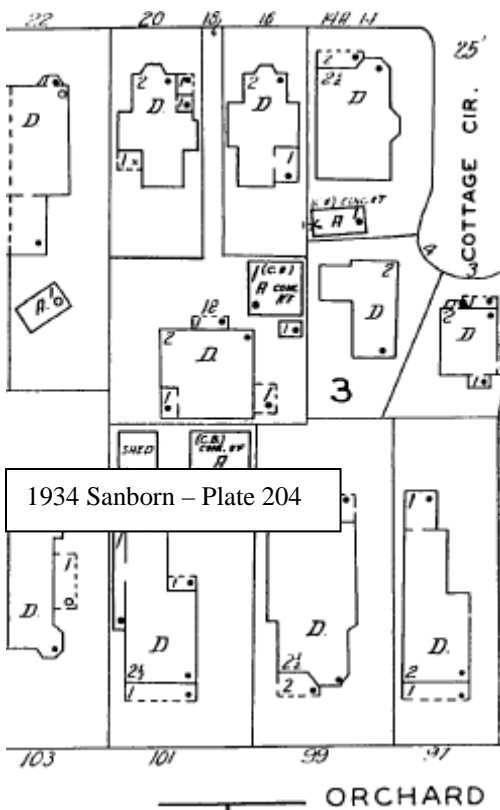
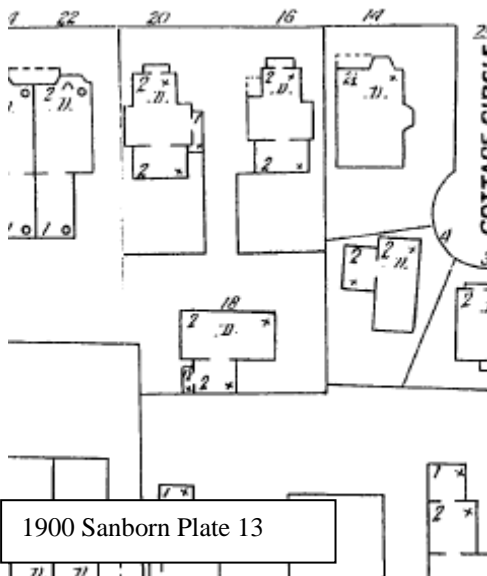
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Hopkins, G.M., CE. *Atlas of Somerville, MA* 1874, 1884.
Stadley, Geo. W. and Co. *Atlas of Middlesex County*. 1900.





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