

## FORM B – BUILDING

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

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
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54-G-22

Boston North	
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SMV.BM

SMV.1356

**Town** Somerville

**Place** Duck Village

## Photograph



**Address** 92 Properzi Way

**Historic Name** James W. Maloy – Albert L. Marchant House

**Uses** Present: Two-family dwelling

Original: Single-family dwelling

**Date of Construction** ca. 1850

**Source** 1852 Draper map

**Style/Form** One-and-one-half-story end-gable

**Architect/Builder** Unknown

## Exterior Material

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Clapboard

Roof: Asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures** None

## Major Alterations

1906 - kitchen ell;  
1928 - sun porch;  
1990 - doors and fenestration on facade

Condition Good

Moved   x   no        yes      Date

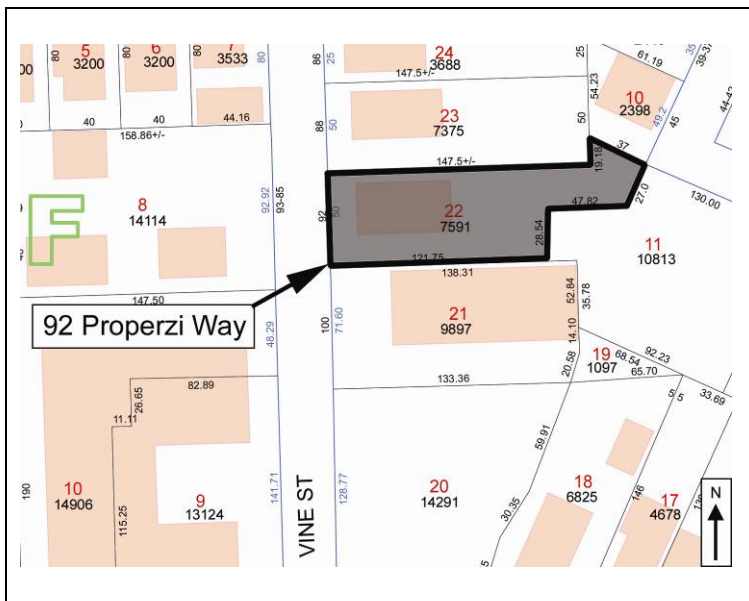
**Acreage** 7,591 S.F.

**Setting** Closely settled, small-scale residential neighborhood of mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup>-century workers' cottages off Beacon Street.

**Recorded by** Laura Kline, Melissa Antonelli, and Quinn R. Stuart

**Organization:** PAL

**Date** June 2010



## **BUILDING FORM**

### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**   X   *see continuation sheet*

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

### **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**   X   *see continuation sheet*

*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.*

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**   X   *see continuation sheet*

       Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

SOMERVILLE

92 Properzi Way

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The James W. Maloy – Albert L. Marchant House at 92 Properzi Way is a one-and-one-half-story, end-gable structure, built as a single-family house but currently listed in the Assessor's Database as a two-family house. It is set close to the southern end of the street, near the intersection with Beacon Street, and faces west. The area between the house and the sidewalk is paved with asphalt for parking, although there is no curb cut. Tall trees and dense shrubbery enclose the house on the sides and rear. A chain-link fence surrounds the rear yard, which is minimally visible from Skehan Street to the east.

The house has a brick foundation, painted clapboard siding, flat wood trim, and asphalt-shingled roofs. The upper portion of the facade (west) elevation is clad in vertical boards painted to match the clapboards. A wide board entablature runs along the two primary side elevations, and the slightly overhanging eaves have small cornice returns at the gable end, above flat corner boards.

The original 16 feet wide by 24 feet long rectangular section of the building likely contained a typical two-room side-hall plan on the interior. A kitchen ell dating to ca. 1906 is located at the rear of the house, and the assessor's database indicates two more rear additions. A flat-roof enclosed porch, 8 feet wide by 14 feet long, extends from the front south side of the house, and a small colonnaded side porch is visible through the trees behind the enclosed portion.

The main entrance in the northern bay of the facade is set within a simple rectangular wood surround. It is sheltered by a modern door hood supported by S-shaped metal rods and opens onto a narrow concrete porch overlaid with brick pavers that extends across the front of the house, including the enclosed side porch. A large, double-leaf wood door fills the south facade bay and enables the front porch to be used as a loading dock. Steps at the north end of the porch lead down to the pavement, which wraps around the north side of the house to a side entrance located in a small projecting shed-roof ell near the rear.

The fenestration on the house consists primarily of multi-paned metal casement sash with rectangular plate-glass transoms, all set within the original rectangular wood-framed window openings. An over-sized metal casement window is centered in the facade gable end, and a rectangular, glass-block window lights the enclosed porch extending from the south side.

While many elements of the original fenestration and entrances have been altered, the house retains the form, massing, and proportions of the original structure, as well as the original exterior materials.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

### History of the Properzi Way Area (taken from MHC Inventory Form SMV.BM)

The Properzi Way area is a pre-Civil War residential neighborhood in Somerville where worker's housing predominates. It is a relatively intact grouping of mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century structures close to their original form. The houses that remain in this area provide physical evidence of and a strong link to mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century life prior to the outbreak of the Civil War.

The southernmost end of Somerville remained largely undeveloped until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Commercial and residential development grew with the expansion of railroad service. In 1835, the Boston and Lowell Railroad opened the first passenger railroad station in Somerville on the south side of Washington Street. In 1836, the Charlestown Branch Railroad (later called the Fitchburg Railroad) began running between Boston and Cambridge. Its route roughly paralleled Milk Row (Somerville Avenue) and helped to create an industrial corridor through the area. Passenger service began on the Fitchburg line about 1842, which is also the year that Somerville became an independent town. Over the next eight years the population tripled to reach a total of 3,540 people in 1850.

The town continued to grow steadily throughout the 1850s and 1860s, as the area's job opportunities attracted many immigrants from Ireland, Portugal, Italy, and Canada. Small factories and meat packing plants built alongside the railroads created new development centers. As the population increased and industrial production grew, developers gradually filled in the Miller's River and covered it with vast railroad yards, roads, residential development, and industrial space. With the opening of the

*Continuation sheet 1*

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Fitchburg Railroad Line, local tradesmen and members of the working class settled near their jobs in the less desirable flat land near the railroads and the now-buried Miller's River.

Properzi Way was known as Vine Street until sometime between 1960 and 1965, when the name was changed to honor Fra. Nazareno Properzi, the first rector of St. Anthony's Roman Catholic Church at 12 Vine Street. A plan prepared by D. A. Sanborn in 1848 shows the east side of Vine Street platted with seven lots owned by S. T. Frost. The 1852 Draper map shows five buildings constructed on six of the lots. (The street numbers run in reverse order to the platted lots.) These correspond to the houses presently standing at 76, 80, 88, and 92 Properzi Way (SMV.1351, SMV.1352, SMV.1355, and SMV.1356), as well as a building on the northeast corner (Lot 7 on the Frost plat) that was lost to fire. The house at 84-86 Properzi Way (SMV.1353) appears on the 1874 Hopkins map, and the house at 72 Properzi Way (SMV.1350) appears on the 1895 Bromley map. The large lot at the southeast corner of Beacon Street had a house and barn on it by 1874, belonging to Jason F. Keating and later Partridge, although neither owner lived in Somerville. By 1895, Henry W. Holland and William E. Daniels had replaced the residence with a window shade manufactory. The majority of the factory buildings were gone by 1950; a single brick building remains at 100 Properzi Way (not included in the Properzi Way area) and is now used by an architectural firm.

Three landowners, George Kaan, Daniel E. Chase, and R. Easterbrook (or Estabrook), held the west side of Vine Street in 1874. The disposition of these estates greatly influenced subsequent development of the block. George Kaan owned the southwest Beacon Street corner. He sold his property about 1880 to the Charles River Street Railroad Company (later renamed the Boston Elevated Railroad Company) and moved to Pleasant Avenue on Prospect Hill. While his house remained in existence on Beacon Street until after 1885, the railroad car barn and stables took up much of the lot. By the 1930s, the railroad buildings had been converted to various other uses, including a steam laundry and a gas station/auto service station. The opposite end of the street, adjacent to the railroad tracks, remained undeveloped through 1900. R. Estabrook subdivided his property near the middle of the block by 1884, and Eliot Street was laid out about the same time. Only the south side of Eliot Street was developed with houses by 1895.

Daniel E. Chase owned the property between Kaan's and Estabrook's, which extended through to Park Street. Chase owned a distillery in Boston and then at 15 Bleachery Court in Somerville where he specialized in molasses rum. The main Chase house fronted on Park Street, but the estate also had several stables and a small house at the rear that fronted on Vine Street, which is likely the house at the current address of 93 Properzi Way (SMV.1357). The house at 85 Properzi Way (SMV.1354) dates to ca. 1890 and appears to have been built for Mary E. Chase. D. E. Chase and Company remained in business at least until 1915. Members of the Chase family are associated with both properties through 1910 and with 85 Properzi Way through 1940.

After the Civil War, industry expanded in areas east, south, and west of Union Square from its modest beginnings in the 1830s and 1840s. After 1880, the car barns, stables, and factory uses at the Beacon Street (south) end of Vine Street, as well as a tannery and bleachery at the east end near the railway, decreased the desirability of the area as a residential neighborhood. During Prohibition, locals referred to the area as Duck Village because of the ease with which speakeasy patrons could "duck" the authorities by hiding amidst the "jumble of multi-family homes" (Daley 2004). Many of the residents of the houses on Vine Street were recent immigrants from Ireland, Italy, and Portugal. Some stayed for decades, and one family for almost 100 years. Most were laborers, barbers, foremen, machinists, mechanics, and plumbers. Some worked in offices. The buildings were primarily owner-occupied, giving the families their own plot of ground in contrast to those who lived in tenements in the North and West Ends of Boston. The history of the neighborhood through the present day continues to reflect its origins as a small enclave of small-scale, working-class housing, both single-family and multi-family, that remains relatively unaltered.

### History of 92 Properzi Way

The James W. Maloy – Albert L. Marchant House at 92 Properzi Way (previously Vine Street) was one of six houses constructed around 1850, as it appears on the 1852 Draper map. Samuel Trull purchased the property from Francis Tufts in 1865 and immediately re-sold it to James W. Maloy, a machinist at 63 Beverly Street in Boston from 1871 until the late 1880s. Maloy and his wife, Mary, owned the properties at both 88 and 92 Properzi Way from 1865 until the 1890s. They appear to

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have lived at 92 Properzi Way, presumably renting the adjacent house for additional income. Maloy also owned a variety or grocery store at 518 Somerville Avenue, run by his wife.

The Maloys sold their Vine Street properties in the early 1890s. Joseph Frodevaux bought 92 Vine Street from M. R. Maloy in 1893 and sold it two years later to Lamont Marchant, a plumber who also purchased 88 Vine Street in 1895. Albert L. Marchant, possibly a brother or cousin of Lamont's, bought 92 Vine Street in 1896. Marchant, a hairdresser and barber, worked out of a barber shop located at 15 Union Square. He, his wife Victoria, and other family members lived in the house at 92 Vine Street through 1961. Clarence O. Marchant owned a variety shop, Evelyn Marchant worked as a stenographer, James Marchant was a student, and Irving C. Marchant was a mariner. In 1961, Marshall W. Simmons purchased the house from Jules L. Marchant and is listed as a resident at this address in 1965.

The property changed hands several more times over the next decade, passing to Fred Meyer in 1969, David M. Avonivitz in 1971, and two women, Kelly P. Faloon and Christine A. Japely, in 1986. Since 1990, the house has belonged to the Moshe Safdie architectural firm located in the building immediately to the west (100 Properzi Way). It has been used as living space for the firm's principal and for visiting project architects and family members. The current owners were responsible for the alterations to the fenestration and doorways. The concrete front porch was added sometime between 1960 and 1990.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS



**Photograph 1.**  
View of the north and west elevations looking southeast from the west side of Properzi Way.



**Photograph 2.**  
View of the north and east elevations looking southwest from the west side of Properzi Way.

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### Photograph 3.

Detail of windows on west elevation looking south from the west side of Properzi Way.

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## Photograph 4.

Closer view of west elevation  
looking northeast from  
east side of Properzi Way.

