



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	44 & 46 Medford Street
Case:	HPC 2016.065
Applicant Name:	Block Properties LLC
Date of Application:	August 10, 2016
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	September 20, 2016

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**I. Historical Association**



***44 Medford Street***



***46 Medford Street, 1-3 Ward Street***

*Historical Context:* The neighborhood on the east side of Medford Street has been home to workers of the meat packing plants that arose along the Millers River and the Fitchburg Railroad line. The convenience of the railroad bringing animals for slaughter from the West thence to the wharves of Boston to the south, and the Millers River to ostensibly wash away the remains of the slaughter led to Somerville's pre-eminence for a time as having more animals slaughtered than even Chicago or Omaha. Within a short walk of the neighborhood were the Charles H. North Meat Packing Plant, the Squires Meat Packing Plant, the New England Dressed Meat and Wool, The Boynton Meat Packing Company and numerous other smaller enterprises. Other industries such as glass and furniture making also flourished nearby in Somerville and East Cambridge.

The slaughterhouses gave the area a particular character that made it undesirable except for only the poorest and most recent immigrants. The odors produced by the animals in life and death were so noxious that after a many-year battle steps were finally taken to fill in the Millers River in 1874.

Both buildings appear on the 1874 Hopkins Map. The owners are shown to be M. Roc and P. Barrett. They do not live on the property. Due to the lack of street addresses it is difficult to precisely track the tenants at this time while noting that the 1870 Census and the 1880 Census list grease collectors, slaughter house workers and laborers as living on Medford Street near South and Ward Streets. There is no census material available for Massachusetts in 1890. There are also no searchable City Directories online after 1884 making it impossible to find the tenants of Somerville homes before 1903. The owners noted on the Atlases have not been traceable through Census or other on-line resources due to insufficient information. See Table below for known ownership, tenancy and building permit records of 44 and 46 Medford Street.

In 1906, the noted photographer Lewis Hine shot a series on child labor practices. A large number of photos located on Medford, South, Ward and Horace Streets primarily show girls producing crocheted edging for undergarments. Many of the images include the houses and other buildings in the neighborhood but not of either of these properties. Unfortunately, these two properties were not among the houses documented by him.

#### *Evolution of Site:*

44 and 46 Medford Street are shown on the 1874, 1884 and 1895 atlases directly across Medford Street from the Squires and North slaughter houses and meat packing plants. Over time the plants closed and other food related industries relocated nearby. At some point between 1900 and 1925 both buildings were altered from two-story to three-story buildings. Barns were located at the rear of the properties. In order to continue access while maximizing the livable space at 44 Medford Street, the building was enlarged over posts at the property line. During this same period the building at 46 Medford began to have a series of enlargements that now comprise La Hacienda with kitchens and back rooms. The barns have been replaced by these additions on both properties.

Both houses were homes to workers. The house at 46 Medford Street also has a 1 Ward Street address. See attached tables.

The Di Cecco family have owned 46 Medford Street since at least 1910. It is not known when they acquired the house next door.

According to one informant La Hacienda was a neighborhood bar that was well-managed and loved until through fourth generation of the family. As the current brothers aged and became tired with no younger family member interested in continuing the business it was recently sold.

*Architectural Description:* The 1900 Sanborn map indicates that both properties were two-story dwelling units and were altered sometime before 1925 to become taller buildings. 44 Medford Street is a three story flat roof structure supported one side by a brick fire wall with a passage leading to the backyard which once had stables. The original footprint is retained on the ground floor level. The structure has a side hall entry plan.

46 Medford Street marks the address of La Hacienda Restaurant while a 2 ½ story was raised to sit upon a ¾ story brick basement/floor. It was quite common in the 1920s to raise up an early structure a full story to insert a storefront beneath it. The house sits with its gable end toward Medford Street with a second floor center entry on Ward Street. Windows are disposed symmetrically on both sides. The roof pitch is similar to that of a Greek Revival however due to the synthetic siding, it is not possible to tell whether there are any architectural details that would indicate a particular style. Numerous brick additions can be seen on the Ward street side of the building while the additions can be seen to have been built of wood and concrete behind 44 Medford Street.

*Summary:* 44 and 46 Medford Street are intimately associated with the Squire and North Meat Packing plants located across the road. While 19<sup>th</sup> Century

### **Findings on Historical Association**

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (b) are at the end of the next section.*

(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff find 44 & 46 Medford Street to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.

The subject buildings are found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to their relationship to the meat packing industry and immigration. Most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century residents of these two buildings came directly from Italy and most worked in the packing plants nearby.

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## **II. Historical and Architectural Significance**

*The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).*

The period of significance for 44 and 46 Medford Street begins with their construction as workers housing prior to 1874 for immigrants who worked in the meat packing industries.

### ***Integrity***

*The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.*

- a. **Location:** The buildings are located within an industrial zone. There were once 9 slaughter and meat packing houses nearby as well numerous other industries. The buildings have not been moved.
- b. **Design:** 44 Medford Street has a very simple rectangular form cantilevered over a passageway to the rear of the property. 46 Medford Street is a center entry gable sided house lifted over a high brick foundation and brick faced ells along the Ward Street side. Major alterations in form were done between 1900 and 1925 per Sanborn maps for both buildings.
- c. **Materials:** Both buildings have been sided with vinyl and have replacement windows. Foundations are made of brick. Some of the additions on 46 Medford Street are composed of concrete block and wood with a brick facing on the Ward Street side.

- d. Alterations: Both buildings have been raised a story from their original heights. Vinyl siding and replacement windows replace the original wood materials.

*Evaluation of Integrity*: The buildings have little architectural integrity having been altered in from their original massing and possibly in form as well.

The buildings are more distinguished by their purpose than their architectural integrity, as workers housing for both buildings and as a well-loved local business on the part of La Hacienda where generations of Somerville and East Cambridge residents went for the eggplant parmesan and the pizza since at least 1955.

### **Findings for Historical and Architectural Significance**

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (a) can be found at the end of the previous section.*

**(b)** In accordance with the *Finding on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff do not find 44 and 46 Medford Street architecturally significant but do find 44 and 46 Medford Street historically significant for their role in the community as workers housing and as a restaurant.

The subject buildings are not found architecturally significant due to numerous alterations over the years. The subject buildings are found historically significant due to their role in the community as workers housing and as a restaurant

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### **III. Recommendation**

*Recommendations are based upon an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and the required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance, conducted prior to the public meeting for a Determination of Significance. This report may be revised or updated with a new recommendation and/or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through further research.*

*For a Determination of Significance, the structure must be either (A) listed on the National Register or (B) at least 50 years old.*

(A) The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.

**OR**

(B) The structure, circa 1874, is at least 50 years old.

**AND**

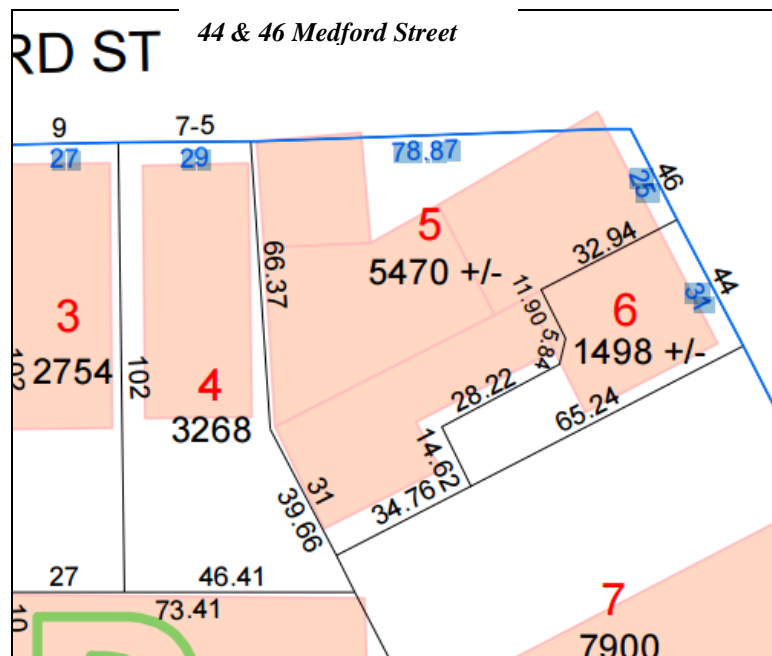
*For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.*

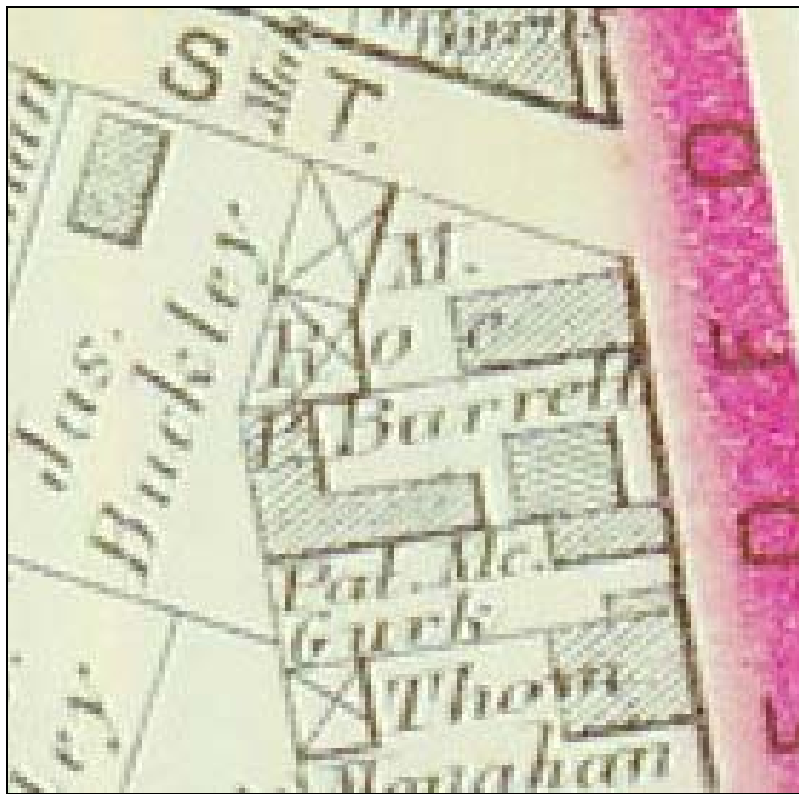
- The subject buildings are found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to their relationship to the meat packing industry and immigration. Most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century residents of these two buildings came directly from Italy and most worked in the packing plants nearby.

(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 44 and 46 Medford Street historically and but not architecturally significant.**

The buildings are more distinguished by their purpose than their architectural integrity, as workers housing for both buildings and as a well-loved local business on the part of La Hacienda where generations of Somerville and East Cambridge residents went for the eggplant parmesan and the pizza since at least 1955.

The subject buildings are not found architecturally significant due to numerous alterations over the years. The subject buildings are found historically significant due to their role in the community as workers housing and as a restaurant.





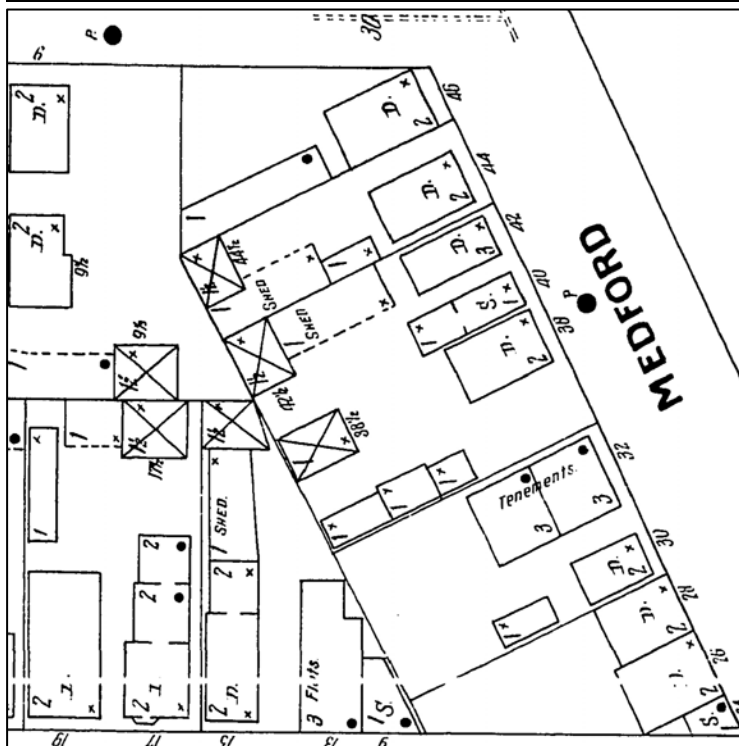
1874 Hopkins Plate 27



1884 Hopkins Plate 7

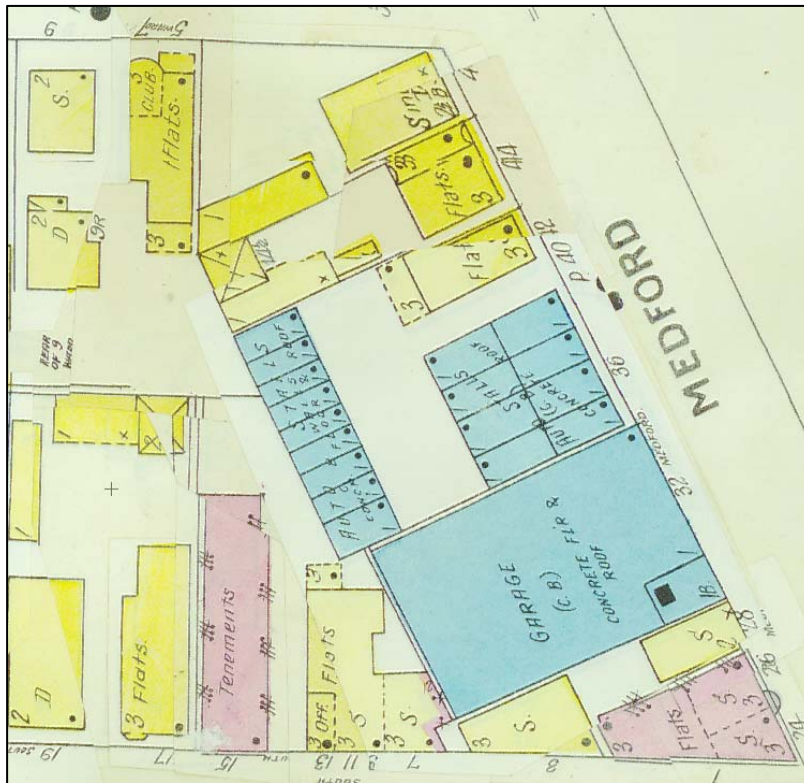


1895 Bromley Plate 27

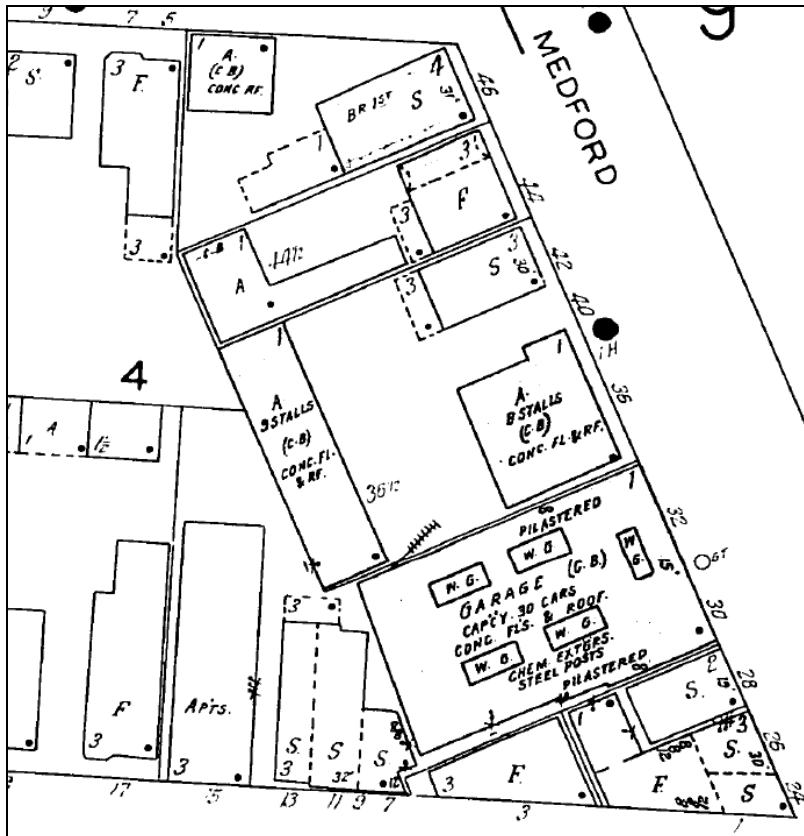


1900 Sanborn Plate 107



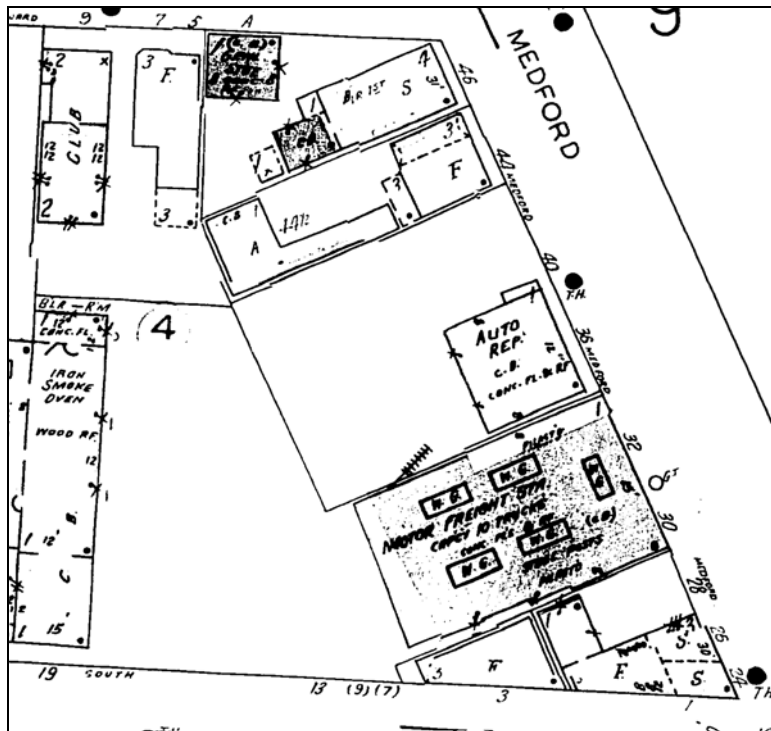


1925 Sanborn Plate 107

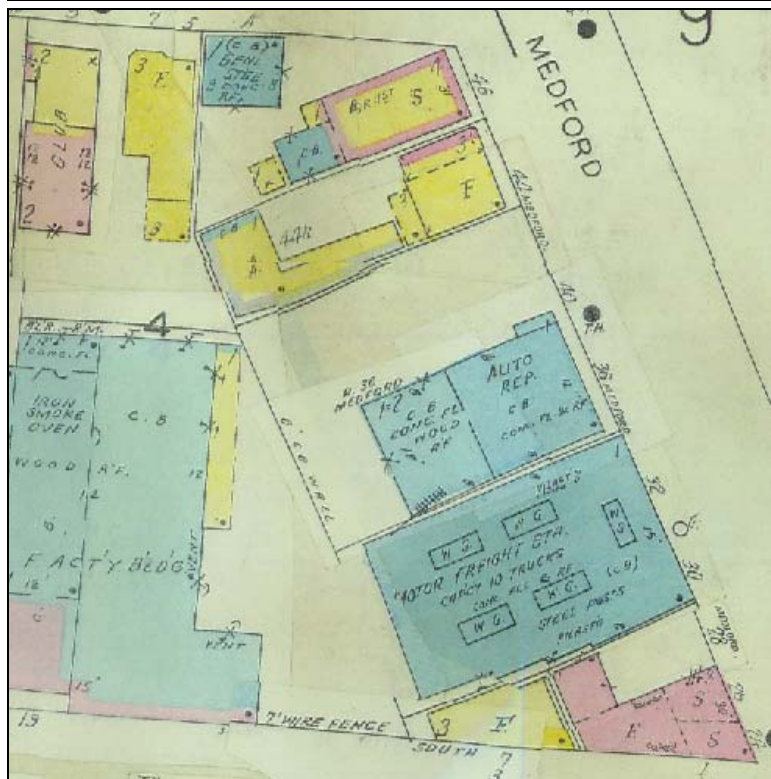


1933 Sanborn Plate 22

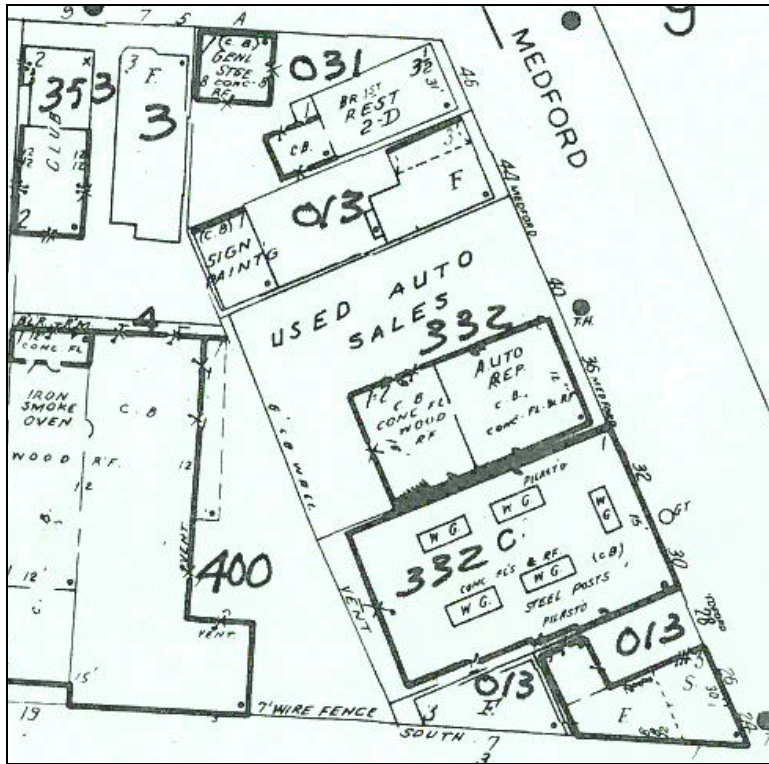




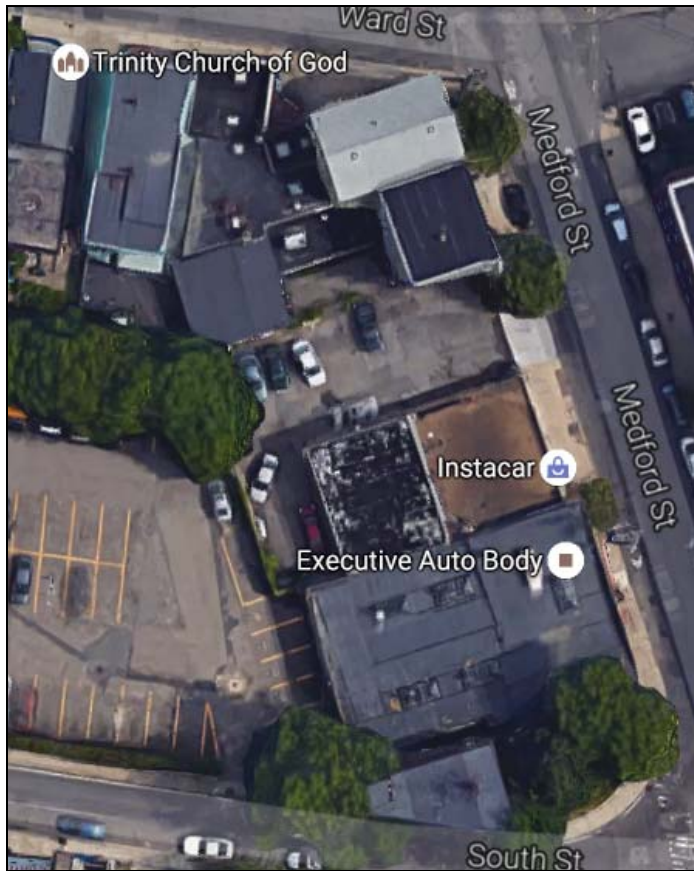
1950 Sanborn Plate 22



1959 Sanborn Plate 22



1969-1985 Sanborn Plate 22



2016 Google Earth

46 Medford Street, 1-3 Ward Street



46 Medford Street





*44 Medford Street*



<i>Dwelling/ Family No.</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>O / R</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>PLA CE OF BIR TH</i>	<i>Immig ration Year</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
	44 Medford Street	O	P. Barrett					1874 Hopkins Plate 27	
	44 Medford Street	O	Dalrymple					1884 Hopkins Plate 7	
	44 Medford Street	O	Frank E. Clark					1895 Bromley Plate 7	
265/ 408	44 Medford Street	R	John Costa (head)	48	Fruit Peddler	Italy	1887	1900 Census	
			Mary Costa (wife)	37		Italy	1887	1900 Census	
			Angelo Costa (son)	12	at school	Massachusetts		1900 Census	
			Castina Costa (daughter)	5		Massachusetts		1900 Census	
			Catherine Costa (daughter)	3		Massachusetts		1900 Census	
				8					
			John Costa (son)	mos.		Massachusetts		1900 Census	
315/ 692	44 Medford Street	R	Tony Palmach (head)	25	Laborer - Odd Work	Italy	1907	1910 Census	
315/ 693		O	John Costa (head)	55	Fruit Peddler	Italy	1875	1910 Census	
			Mary Costa (wife)	46		Italy	1887	1910 Census	
					Floor Girl - Candy Factory	Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Rose Costa (daughter)	16		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Catherine Costa (daughter)	13		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			John Costa (son)	10		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Frank Costa (son)	8		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Salvatore Costa (son)	5		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			J. Costa					1916-1-182 Building Permit	T&G Flat roof, brick & gravel foundation
172/ 399	44 Medford Street	R	Daniel Talma (head)	28	Laborer - Packing House	Italy	1903	1920 Census	
			Catherine Talma (wife)	22		Massachusetts		1920 Census	
			Thomas (son)	3		Massachusetts		1920 Census	
			Mary (daughter)	2		Massachusetts		1920 Census	
172/ 400	44 Medford Street	O	John Costa (head)	68	Retail Dealer - Fruit Business	Italy	1889	1920 Census	

172/ 401	44 Medford Street	R	Mary Costa (wife)	55	House	Italy	1884	1920 Census	
					Laborer - Packing				
			John Costa (son)	21	House	Massachusetts	1920 Census		
					Laborer - Packing				
			Francis Costa (son)	19	House	Massachusetts	1920 Census		
			Salvadore Costa (son)	16	Laborer - Bakery	Massachusetts	1920 Census		
					Laborer -				
			Francis Palmacci (head)	29	Packing House	Italy	1913	1920 Census	
			Mary Palmacci (wife)	29		Italy	1913	1920 Census	
			Anna Palmacci (daughter)	5		Massachusetts	1920 Census		
Thomas Palmacci (son)	2		Massachusetts	1920 Census					
		5							
		Louis Palmacci (son)	mos.		Massachusetts	1920 Census			
				Laborer - Rubber					
		Alfred Morino (lodger)	41	Factory	Italy	1915	1920 Census		
	44 Medford Street		A.Grassia				1920-1-268 Building Permit	off & store room, flat roof, concrete foundation	
	44 Medford Street		A.Grassia				1921-1-249 Building Permit	T&G covering, 8 cars garage concrete block, flat roof	
57/9 8	44 Medford Street	O	John Costa (head)	76		Italy	1886	1930 Census	
			Mary Costa (wife)	73		Italy	1896	1930 Census	
					Laborer - Packing				
			John Collie (boarder)	31	House	Italy	1910	1930 Census	
			Mary Tolma (grand-daughter)	13		Massachusetts	1930 Census		
57/9 9	44 Medford Street	R	Salvatore Fiorano (head)	37	Laborer - Packing House	Italy	1911	1930 Census	
			Daniel Gaffenlalla (boarder)	49	Laborer - Packing House	Italy	1918	1930 Census	
					Laborer - Rubber				
			John Perglisi (boarder)	31	Factory	Italy	1910	1930 Census	
	44 Medford Street		J. Casta					1948-1-145 Building Permit	
	44 Medford Street		V. Natola					1954-1-359 Building Permit	Rear porch 16'X8' 3flrs, roof, 3' high baluster
	44 Medford Street		H. Romanowski					1973-1-264 Building Permit	Remove 1st fl window, install door for egress



Dwelling / Family No.	LOCATION	O / R	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	IMMI GRAT ION YEAR	SOURCE	NOTES
	46 Medford Street	O	M R o c					1874 Hopkins Plate 27	
	46 Medford Street	O	Stevens					1884 Hopkins Plate 7	
	46 Medford Street	O	Dennis C. Mahoney					1895 Bromley Plate 7	
244/403	1 Ward Street	R	John Capodonia (head)	55	Laborer Factory	Italy	1890	1900 Census	
			Mary Capodonia (wife)	50		Italy	1890	1900 Census	
			Mary Capodonia (daughter)	16	Candymaking	Italy	1890	1900 Census	
			Lena Capodonia (daughter)	13	Candymaking	Italy	1890	1900 Census	
			Annie Capodonia (daughter)	11		Italy	1890	1900 Census	
			Jennie Capodonia (daughter)	9		Massachusetts		1900 Census	
			Catherine Capodonia (daughter)	6		Italy		1900 Census	
244/404	1 Ward Street	R	Peter Fay (head)	40	Concreator	England	1890	1900 Census	
			Ellen Fay (wife)	40		Ireland	1890	1900 Census	
			James Fay (son)	14		England	1890	1900 Census	
244/405	1 Ward Street	R	Patrick Ceconia (head)	39	Laborer Factory	Italy	1891	1900 Census	
			Mary Ceconia (wife)	36		Italy	1897	1900 Census	
			Joseph Ceconia (son)	11		Italy	1897	1900 Census	
			Raphael Ceoconia (son)	2				1900 Census	
244/406	1 Ward Street	R	Paulie Mealey (head)	40	Laborer Factory	Italy	1899	1900 Census	
			Gennarie Mealey (boarder)	60	Laborer Factory	Italy	1896	1900 Census	
			Hughie Mealy (boarder)	49	Laborer Factory	Italy	1899	1900 Census	
244/407	1 Ward Street	R	Patrick Cronin (head)	40	Laborer Factory	Ireland	1882	1900 Census	
			Mary Cronin (wife)	38		Ireland	1882	1900 Census	
			Jamie Cronin (son)	3		Massachusetts		1900 Census	

316/ 694	46 Medford Street	O	Daniel Cronin (son)	0 mos.		Massachusetts	1900 Census
			<b>Vincenz Di Cecca (head)</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Grocer, Own store</b>	<b>Italy 1901</b>	<b>1910 Census</b>
			Annunziata Di Cecca (wife)	37		Italy 1902	1910 Census
			John Di Cecca (son)	6		Massachusetts	1910 Census
			Antonio Di Cecca (son)	3		Massachusetts	1910 Census
			Cosmo Di Cecca (son)	1		Massachusetts	1910 Census
316/ 695	46 Medford Street	R	<b>Salvatore Caruso (head)</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>Laborer - Hose Factory</b>	<b>Italy 1906</b>	<b>1910 Census</b>
			Pietro Vaglietto (partner)	50	Laborer - Slaughterhouse	Italy 1909	1910 Census
			Beneditto Di Cecca (partner)	32	Laborer - Tube Works	Italy 1909	1910 Census
316/ 696	46 Medford Street	R	<b>Joseph Restucci (head)</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Laborer - Bleachery</b>	<b>Italy 1908</b>	<b>1910 Census</b>
			Bernardo Restucci (brother)	25	Laborer - Slaughterhouse	Italy 1909	1910 Census
			Joseph Picone (partner)	28	Laborer - Iron Foundry	Italy 1909	1910 Census
316/ 697	46 Medford Street	R	<b>John Caferelli (head)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Fruit Dealer, Own Store</b>	<b>Italy 1908</b>	<b>1910 Census</b>
			Rose Caferelli (wife)	35		Italy 1908	1910 Census
			Angelina Caferelli (daughter)	4		Italy 1908	1910 Census
			Joseph Caferelli (son)	6		Italy 1908	1910 Census
381	1 Ward Street	O	<b>Vincent Di Cecca (head)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>Storekeeper, Grocery Store</b>	<b>Italy 1894</b>	<b>1920 US Census</b>
			Annunziata Di Cecca (wife)	45		Italy 1901	1920 US Census
			John Di Cecca (son)	16		Massachusetts	1920 US Census
			Antonio Di Cecca (son)	13		Massachusetts	1920 US Census
			Cosmo Di Cecca (son)	11		Massachusetts	1920 US Census
			Francis Di Cecca (son)	10		Massachusetts	1920 US Census
			Eleanor Di Cecca (daughter)	5		Massachusetts	1920 US Census
382	1 Ward Street	R	<b>Antonio Sceniarello (head)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Laborer, Packing House</b>	<b>Italy 1904</b>	<b>1920 US Census</b>
			Salvatore Di Russo (partner)	40	Laborer, Packing House	Italy 1907	1920 US Census
383	1 Ward Street	R	<b>Santo Pinto (head)</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>Laborer, Packing</b>	<b>Italy 1909</b>	<b>1920 US Census</b>

384	1 Ward Street	R	Francis Mazzelli (head)	38	House Laborer, Ice Cream Factory	Italy	1909	1920 US Census	
385	1 Ward Street	R	Peter Biagione (head)	47	Laborer, Packing House	Italy	1915	1920 US Census	
			John Minatto (partner)	42	Laborer, Packing House	Italy	1915	1920 US Census	
386	1 Ward Street	R	Ferdinand Trani (head)	48	Laborer, Rubber Factory	Italy	1902	1920 US Census	
			Amelia Trani (wife)	25		Italy	1912	1920 US Census	
			Joseph Proani (lodger)	32	Laborer, Shoe Factory	Italy	1901	1920 US Census	
			Patrick Capocecca (lodger)	36	Laborer, Packing House	Italy	1912	1920 US Census	
			C. Di Cecca					1929-1-74 Building Permit	Tar & Gravel covered , flat roof, concrete foundations
46 Medford Street			P. Carboni					1931-1-510 Building Permit	Dormer on 3rd fl to ext rear piazza from 2nd to ...
46 Medford Street			La Hacienda					1955-1-98 Building Permit	Erect double-faced sign
46 Medford Street			La Hacienda					1961-1-252 Building Permit	Erect double-faced plastic sign
46 Medford Street			V. Dicellia					1978-1-169 Building Permit	Strip roof & reroof shingles
46 Medford Street			V. De Cecca					1979-2-532 Building Permit	Alterations according to plans submitted.
			C. Di Cecca					1983-1-89 Building Permit	Remodel 2 fl/1 bath kitchen
46 Medford Street			C. DiCecca					1987-2-932 Building Permit	Addition to existing kitchen.
46 Medford Street			V. De Cecca					1998-1-40 Building Permit	Reshingle roof