

SSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
ROYLSTON STREET
MA 02116

Spring Hill

213



SOMERVILLE

23 Porter Street

Name

Present

residential

Original

residential

ATION

ca. 1850

visual analysis

Gothic Revival / rural

ect

atch Map: Draw map showing property's location
relation to nearest cross streets and/or
omorphical features. Indicate all buildings
inventoried property and nearest
intersection(s).
Indicate north

Exterior Wall Fabric

clapboard

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

window

sash

Condition

good/fair

Moved

Date

Acreage

13,630 sq. ft.

Setting

Similar to #22 Porter with larg
side yard, although landscaping has
deteriorated on this property, rural

quality on residential suburban stree

Carole Zellie - 1980

Recorded by

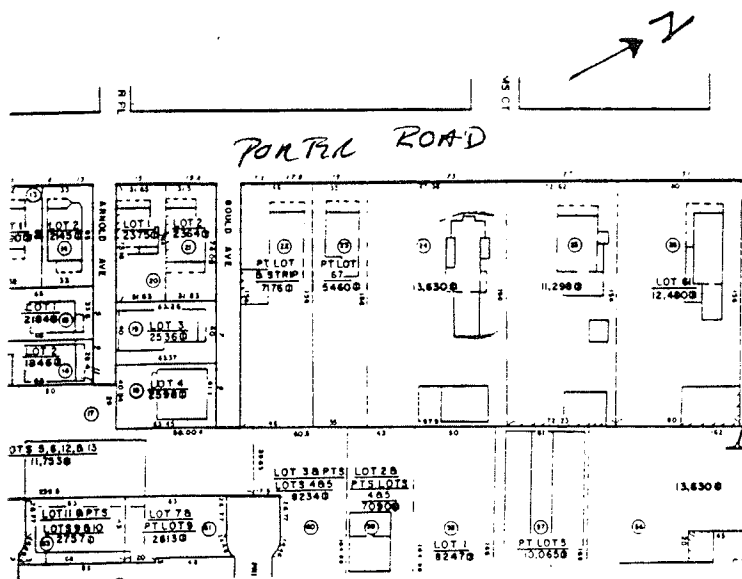
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization

Somerville Historic
Preservation Commission

Date

May, 1988



REFERENCE

DRANGLE

FILE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The asymmetrical plan with steeply pointed gables is characteristic of the Gothic cottages drawn by Andrew J. Downing in his popular Cottage Residences of 1850. The house is sited on the slope, facing south for the once fine vistas looking to Cambridge. It has been slightly altered with the addition of a second story balustrade over the enclosed side entrance porch. Some of the fenestration of this house has been slightly altered, only in sash configuration.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how building relates to the development of the community.

Once divided into large agricultural tracts for Charlestown residents, Spring Hill evolved into a prime residential neighborhood of Somerville from the mid 1800s. Its topography lent itself to well drained soil for agriculture and to fine vistas for the residential subdivisions that began with George Brastow's 1843 rectilinear plan for 72 house lots on Spring Hill. With the exception of early farmhouses and the first Greek Revival double houses, the first houses built in the Spring Hill subdivisions were substantial single family homes built on ample lots. By the 1870s, with the expansion of the industries on Milk Row (now Somerville Avenue), and the horsecar and later the streetcar on Summer Street from Union to Davis Square came the expanded development of this area with smaller single-family worker's housing and attached rowhouses and larger tenements, built near the bottom of the hill on small court or terrace streets.

Porter and Linden Streets were subdivided in 1844 having been the estate of A. Brackett. Porter Street, an original rangeway, has a number of pre-1855 between Elm and Summer Streets. The Downing-Style cottages at #22 and #23 were probably built at the same time and once both had well-designed side yards. This is evident at #22. #23 retains its large side lot, however the landscaping has not been maintained.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES