

**Summary Sheet:**

**Local Historic District for the King House, 21 Touro Avenue, Medford MA**

July 11, 2016

**Study Committee:**

Christopher Bader, Chair  
Charlotte Scuderi  
Frederick Soule  
Nino Susi

Expected Date of Public Hearing: September 12, 2016

Expected Date of City Council Meeting: October 11, 2016

Total Number of Properties Included in the Proposed Local Historic District: ONE

The Study Committee recommends the creation of a single-building local historic district, administered by the existing Historic District Commission, to protect this important historic property.

**Preliminary Report:****Local Historic District for King House, 21 Touro Avenue, Medford MA****Introduction:**

In Massachusetts since 1955 and in Medford since 1985, Local Historic Districts have been used to protect valued historic resources. As noted in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40 C, LHDs have three major purposes:

- to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;
- to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places;
- and to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

Local Historic District Commissions oversee these districts, and their chief concerns are to avoid demolition of significant buildings and to review proposed changes to those buildings and landscapes. LHDs do not halt change or development, but rather by managing change within them, seek to maintain community character.

Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws is the framework under which cities and towns establish districts within their communities, outlining the process for identifying districts and gaining approval for their designation. Over 120 cities and towns have embraced this planning tool, protecting thousands of the Commonwealth's most valued properties. In Medford, Chapter 48, Article III of the Municipal Ordinances established two local historic districts in 1985: the Hillside Avenue Local Historic District and the Marm Simonds Local Historic District (<http://www.medfordhdc.org/>). Among the strongest forms of protection offered to the historic environment, the LHD ordinance functions with other planning tools in Medford, including the ordinance establishing the Medford Historical Commission in 1974 (Revised Ordinances 1974, c. 21, § 1) and the Demolition Delay Ordinance in 1992 (Revised Ordinances, c. 48, art. IV).

**Methodology:**

Medford's Historic District Commission and Historical Commission have been particularly active in the last eight years, launching an effort that has reinvigorated existing programs and added new ones to the City's preservation planning efforts. Functioning as a single board since 1985, an increased workload suggested that two commissions and more members could work more effectively. Since 2010, the Historical Commission and Historic District Commission have pursued their particular goals with increasing budgets and more professional membership. In 2011, the City earned designation as a Certified Local Government, a testament to these improvements and earning the City more autonomy in planning and improved access to state and federal funding opportunities. The Historical Commission has received five years of funding from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to underwrite the preparation of a Survey Plan for the City and to undertake systematic research and evaluation of the City's historic resources.

The Survey Plan provided an important list of recommendations for the identification and evaluation of critical properties and areas in the City, suggesting planning priorities that would emphasize both the individual buildings that survive from the City's earliest history as well as

aggregations of resources associated with larger-scale development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In subsequent years, four of the City's eight identified preservation planning neighborhoods, West Medford, Hillside, Medford Square, and East Medford, have been surveyed and future work will be undertaken in Medford Square South, South Medford, Fulton Heights, and Wellington, and in the extensive 20<sup>th</sup> century neighborhoods of the City. Research in these neighborhoods has provided a master list of properties within each that are eligible for demo-delay review (i.e., those buildings built before 1900) as well as inventory forms that present intensive research on hundreds of buildings and places, increasing their profile in the City.

One of the greatest concerns for both Medford commissions has been the recent losses and alterations to the City's historic environment. In spite of the demo-delay ordinance, there has been a significant rise in tear-downs of historic properties in Medford. The Historical Commission has reviewed 19 cases for demolition since 2011 and in all but two of those cases, the building was demolished after the delay period expired. Over the same period, the erosion of the historic landscape has been the result of both these losses and the addition of disruptive new elements into the streetscapes of the City. In the view of many interested in maintaining and improving the quality of life in the City, the City's zoning ordinance is antiquated and in need of review, and the willingness of the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant liberal variances has had a negative impact on historic resources and neighborhood character. Therefore, the revitalized District Commission began planning to expand the protection offered to the City's significant sites in the two existing LHDs by adding a series of single-building districts across the City, initially focusing on National Register-listed properties, and the City Council has encouraged them in this endeavor. On August 12, 2014 the City Council passed a motion requesting that the Historic District Commission forward to the City Council a list of properties that should be eligible for Single House Historic Districts and begin the process of establishing such districts.

With these broad patterns as a frame of reference, the Commissions were concerned when in May of 2015 they learned of the plans of Walnut Hill Properties/Tufts University to sell its property at 21 Touro Avenue. Recent changes to the neighborhood following the earlier sale by Tufts of 114 South Street, the Paul Curtis House constructed in 1839 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, provide the context for heightened anxiety about preservation in this neighborhood. Although the Commissions and neighbors approached the University with their concerns about the Curtis House, no efforts were made to effectively preserve the building or its setting, and today a large building with a parking-lot front yard intrudes on the streetscape of buildings associated with Medford's seafaring past. When a developer offered to purchase 21 Touro, that concerned neighbors and Commissioners. Their proposal of October and November of 2015 would have added two buildings to the site, while keeping the building itself intact, but over 45 individual abutters and community members desired greater protections for the entire lot. Public meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Historic District Commission attracted attention, and concerned and vocal neighbors came together in January 2016 to encourage Tufts to do better with 21 Touro Avenue than they had with 114 South Street. In a letter to the neighbors (22 February 2016) Tufts agreed to not oppose the creation of a single-building district for the property and discussions continue about including preservation language into the property deeds.

The Commissions' efforts to designate 21 Touro Avenue as a single-building LHD began in the spring of 2015 and recently accelerated with neighborhood support and encouragement. John

Clemson and Claire Dempsey prepared an updated MHC B (Building Inventory) form in the summer of 2015, revealing more details of the property's history and significance. They were later contracted to assist the Commissions in moving forward toward single-building designation, with the District Commission serving as the study committee, pursuant to Mass. Gen. L. c. 40C, § 3. The consultants discussed the process with Ryan D. Hayward and members of an ad-hoc committee representing community interests; gathered sample study reports; and began drafting the study report in March 2016. While this report was being prepared, additional volunteers continued to research the property, greatly improving our understanding of 21 Touro Avenue and the larger neighborhood.

Local historic districts are more commonly composed of clusters of related historic resources and can extend to hundreds of properties in some cases. But single properties have also been so-designated, and the consultants concurred with the Commissions that this was a tool suitable to the circumstances of this property and its historic neighborhood. The surroundings of 21 Touro have experienced several phases of development and change over their long history, creating a dense and complex landscape over three centuries. Located west of the Cradock Bridge and the town's earliest transportation routes, the area was primarily open marsh and farmland for its first two centuries of English and American settlement. But as the town became larger in population and the density of settlement increased around Medford Square, houses were constructed along South Street facing the River and later a grid of streets was laid out and ample houses were added on large suburban style lots, among them the Curtis house noted above, 21 Touro Avenue, and other houses of the town's elite. Later in the nineteenth century and especially during the early twentieth century, growth in the City was extraordinary, and across the neighborhoods, density increased and hundreds of houses were constructed in the decade of the 1920s. This was the case here in the neighborhood bound by South Street to the north and Winthrop Street to the west, where new building linked the development from Medford Square to Hillside Village. The area was once a loose clustering of single-family residences, but these trends brought the construction of significant numbers of two-family and three-decker houses. Resources like these are historic in their own right, but they can obscure evidence of earlier historic processes, and make that earlier cluster more difficult to discern in the landscape. Because of this familiar pattern in the City, both the survey method and planning guidelines have suggested that these now-isolated resources from Medford's colonial and early national past are best considered one at a time or in small groups.

The consultants and the Commissions therefore determined that a single-building local historic district was an appropriate preservation tool for this important property. This tool is frequently associated with the City of Somerville, Medford's near neighbor, which shares a similarly dense and layered landscape. Somerville pioneered the use of this targeted preservation strategy, and has designated both large districts and more than 100 single-building districts. See <http://www.somervillema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/hpc-local-historic-districts-address-12-2014.pdf> for a complete list of all Somerville's LHDs. Medford's Commissions have been considering the application of this tool in the City, and the crisis at 21 Touro suggested it as the first property to be designated as a single property Local Historic District.

### Significance:

The King House, likely constructed in about 1839, is a highly evolved and elaborate example of the Greek Revival-style 'cottage' form. The current rectangular volume includes two stories and a small garret under its high gable roof, with an ample center-hall plan on its interior. Its exterior is covered in clapboard and retains a fine Doric porch and period frontispiece and casings, and many period features survive on its interior. The house was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when the town's shipbuilders and other leaders were building new houses, within the village and on farmsteads but also in new residential neighborhoods and suburban contexts. While some built large mansions, it became more common for some members of the elite and the rising middle class to construct fashionable but compact houses like this one. It demonstrates the architectural refinement associated with the evolving domesticity of the early national and Victorian eras. The King house is a well-preserved, exceptional example of its style and type and retains a high degree of integrity, including its exceptional siting.

The King house is also associated with a new phase of residential and suburban development that took place in the City as its commercial centers in Medford Square and West Medford were surrounded by rings of ambitious houses on the hills and overlooking the Mystic River. Located not far north of Boston and well served by the river, the Middlesex Canal, several turnpikes, and the new railroad, the town was a growing transportation hub that provided varied employment to locals and newcomers alike in its expanding and diversifying economy. Medford emerged as a center of regional industry, particularly with regard to shipbuilding, and its importance to the economic development of Boston and the entire region through mercantile and commercial development during the first half of the nineteenth century cannot be overemphasized. During this period, builders such as Paul Curtis, Jotham Stetson (both immediate neighbors of the subject property), Thatcher Magoun, Joshua T. Foster, and Hayden & Cudworth built approximately 500 merchant ships in the town, and many made their homes in these expanding residential neighborhoods. This house is a significant artifact of this important phase of Medford's history.

Although the precise date of construction is not known, the property's first established resident was John King (1772-1845), a retired captain and his family, providing a direct link between this house and the town's maritime traditions. King first owned a farm in South Medford as well as land on Walnut Hill in the Hillside section of Medford, and in 1839 he acquired this property where he spent his later years. His sons had followed him to sea and his daughters Susan and Harriet both married into prominent, wealthy local families, the Halls and the Mannings, both of whom had a significant impact, through the development of industry and real estate, on the history of Medford. Several of the building's subsequent owners, including Gardner P. Gates (b. 1826), Joseph A. Chapin (1839-1924), and John M. Doherty (1848-1915) were successful Boston merchants and were examples of the kind of affluent, commuting professionals that played an important role in the later development of Medford. Chapin later contributed to the administration and growth of an important local financial institution, the Medford Saving Bank, for which he served as chair of the auditing department. The King house presents a long history closely linked to Medford's distinctive nineteenth and twentieth century history.

Justification of the Boundaries:

The current boundaries of the property have been those associated with it since 1854. We propose to use the existing property lines as the district boundary.

Options and Recommendations for the Bylaw:

The existing bylaw, adopted by the Medford City Council, will be modified to incorporate the King House Historic District. We have included both the existing and proposed bylaws in attachment 1 and 2.

Property Index for the Proposed District:

King House, 21 Touro Avenue, Assessors lot: N-07-54, Greek Revival, ca. 1839.

Attachments:

1. Existing Historic District Bylaw
2. Proposed Historic District Bylaw
3. MHC B form for 21 Touro Avenue
4. Letter from Tufts about LHD
5. Map of the King house Historic District
6. A PowerPoint Presentation of Images of the King House and the Neighborhood.



# City of Medford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

City Hall – Room 308  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

## **Existing Historic District Bylaw adopted 10-15-1985 Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford**

Chapter 48 – Historic Preservation:

Article III – Historic District Commission:

Sec. 48-51. - Establishment.

(a) Under the authority of M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 3, there is hereby established a Hillside Avenue Historic District and the Marm Simonds Historic District, bounded as respectively shown on the map entitled "Hillside Avenue Historic District" and "Marm Simonds Historic District" which are on file in the city clerk's office and made a part of this article by reference.

(b) Under the authority of M.G.L.A. c. 40C, §§ 4 and 14, c. [40](#), § 8D and M.G.L.A. c. [43](#), § 5, there is hereby established a historic district commission, as a commission of the city.  
(Ord. No. 489, § 1, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-52. - Function.

(a) It shall be the function of the historic district commission to administer the Hillside Avenue Historic District and Marm Simonds Historic District consistent with general laws, and any additional historic districts established in accordance with law.

(b) It shall be the function of the historic district commission to preserve, promote and develop historical or archaeological assets of the city in accordance with law.  
(Ord. No. 489, § 2, 10-15-1985)

State Law reference— Establishment of historical districts, M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 2.

Sec. 48-53. - Number of commissioners; appointing authority; term.

(a) The historic district commission shall consist of five members and two alternates appointed by the mayor for terms of three years.

(b) If additional historic districts are established by the city council, provision is hereby made for an increase in membership on the historic district commission to include residents of the additional districts. The maximum number of historic district commission members added in this manner shall be two commissioners and one alternate. Additional commissioners and alternates shall be appointed by the mayor in the same manner as the original appointments to the historic district commission.



(c) In case of absence, inability to act or unwillingness to act because of self-interest on the part of a member of the historic district commission, his place shall be taken by an alternate member designated by the chairman.  
(Ord. No. 489, § 3, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-54. - Duties and responsibilities.

It shall be the duty and responsibility of the historic district commission to:

- (1) Issue certificates of appropriateness, certificates of nonapplicability and certificates of hardship with respect to construction or alteration of buildings and structures within the historic district when such construction or alteration affects exterior architectural features. Such certificates shall be issued as prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 6.
  - (2) Consider factors as prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 7, in passing upon matters before it.
  - (3) Issue such certificates, make such recommendations, keep such records and have such powers, functions and duties as are prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 10, except that officers and employees necessary for the proper administration of the historic district commission shall be appointed and removed by the mayor in accordance with M.G.L.A. c. 43, § 105. All gifts shall be subject to approval of the mayor and city council.
  - (4) Call and conduct meetings and to hold such public hearings as are prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 11.
  - (5) Conduct researches for places of historic value; to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes; to advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which it deems necessary for its work; and to make such recommendations as are described in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 8D.
  - (6) Propose from time to time to the mayor as it deems appropriate, the establishment in accordance with the provisions of this article and M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 3, of additional historic districts and changes in historic districts.
  - (7) Cooperate with and advise the planning board, the office of community development and other city agencies in matters involving historic sites and buildings.
  - (8) Advise owners of historic buildings in the city on problems of preservation.
  - (9) Perform such other duties as may be prescribed under state law.
- (Ord. No. 489, § 4, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-55. - Exclusions from review.

The authority of the historic district commission shall not extend to a review of the following:

- (1) Temporary structures or signs; subject, however, to such conditions as to duration of use, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the historic district commission may reasonably specify.
  - (2) Terraces, walks, driveways, sidewalks and similar structures, or any one or more of them, provided that any such structure is substantially at grade level.
  - (3) Storm doors and windows, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae and similar appurtenances, or any one or more of them.
  - (4) The color of paint.
  - (5) The color of materials used on roofs.
  - (6) Signs of not more than one square foot in area in connection with use of a residence for a customary home occupation or for professional purposes, provided only one such sign is displayed in connection with each residence and, if illuminated, is illuminated only indirectly; and one sign in connection with the nonresidential use of each building or structure which is not more than 12 square feet in area, consisting of letters painted on wood without a symbol or trademark and, if illuminated, is illuminated only indirectly; or either of them.
  - (7) Reconstruction of a building, structure or exterior architectural feature which has been damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided that the exterior design is substantially similar to the original.
- (Ord. No. 489, § 5, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-56. - Rules and regulations.

The historic district commission, under the authority of M.G.L.A. c. 40C, shall keep a permanent record of its resolutions, transactions and determinations and of the vote of each member participating therein, and may adopt and amend such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of M.G.L.A. c. 40C and prescribe such forms as it shall deem desirable and necessary for the regulation of its affairs and the conduct of its business.

(Ord. No. 489, § 6, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-57. - Maintenance and repair.

Nothing in this article shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance and repair of buildings, structures or grounds within the district, nor prevent actions by duly authorized public officers as described in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 9.

(Ord. No. 489, § 7, 10-15-1985)

Sec. 48-58. - Appeals.

Any applicant aggrieved by a determination of the historic district commission may file a written request with the historic district commission for review by a person or persons of competence and experience in such matters designated by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council as prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 12 and may further appeal such determination to the county superior court as prescribed in M.G.L.A. c. 40C, § 12A.

(Ord. No. 489, § 8, 10-15-1985)



# City of Medford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

City Hall – Room 308  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

## Proposed King House Historic District Amendment

For Review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission  
and Adoption by Medford City Council

Note: any proposed changes to this bylaw are highlighted in yellow.

Chapter 48 – Historic Preservation:

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(c) In case of absence, inability to act or unwillingness to act because of self-interest on the part of a member of the historic district commission, his place shall be taken by an alternate member designated by the chairman.  
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- (3) Storm doors and windows, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae and similar appurtenances, or any one or more of them.
- (4) The color of paint.
- (5) The color of materials used on roofs.
- (6) Signs of not more than one square foot in area in connection with use of a residence for a customary home occupation or for professional purposes, provided only one such sign is displayed in connection with each residence and, if illuminated, is illuminated only indirectly; and one sign in connection with the nonresidential use of each building or structure which is not more than 12 square feet in area, consisting of letters painted on wood without a symbol or trademark and, if illuminated, is illuminated only indirectly; or either of them.

(7) Reconstruction of a building, structure or exterior architectural feature which has been damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided that the exterior design is substantially similar to the original.

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(Ord. No. 489, § 8, 10-15-1985)

## FORM B – BUILDING

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

### Photograph



### Locus Map (north is up)



**Recorded by:** John D. Clemson and Claire W. Dempsey

**Organization:** Medford Historical Commission and  
Medford Historic District Commission

**Date (month / year):** June, 2016

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

N-07-54

Boston  
North

MDF.54

**Town/City:** Medford

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): Medford Square South

**Address:** 21 Touro Avenue

**Historic Name:** King House

**Uses:** Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

**Date of Construction:** probably 1839

**Source:** atlas, deeds

**Style/Form:** Greek Revival/ center hall cottage

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation: granite

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard/ wood

Roof: asphalt

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): removal of the original side wing to the left (south) of the main body of the house between 1910 and 1930; possible addition of a shed dormer to the forward slope of the roof, date unknown.

**Condition:** good

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 15,900 square feet

**Setting:** densely settled suburban residential within an early, mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century subdivision; located within a grid street pattern on an even topography near the south bank of the Mystic River, which is located to the north.

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

21 TOURO AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MDF.54

☒ 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.*

The King House, probably constructed in 1839, is an example of the Greek Revival-style 'cottage' form, a popular option among middle-class builders in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This example is a larger-scale version of the type, with a wide five-bay façade and a two-pile depth. The position of the two symmetrically located chimney stacks, centered in each half of the building slightly behind the roof ridge, suggests a four-room first-story plan with a broad center circulation and stair hall, with deep front rooms and a rank of shallower rooms across the back of the building. This plan is confirmed by interior photographs available on the website Zillow: There are three major rooms on the first floor, plus a kitchen, complete with its early firebox, oven, and metal doors, in the southwest corner; four bedrooms are located on the second floor. The large footprint of the building and high roof also permit a nearly full second story and a narrow garret within the main gable of the building. The full front porch, recessed into the body of the house, is an ambitious if familiar feature on buildings of this form and helps provide additional space for the second story. This high roof resembles another important Medford example, the Felt-Young house at 78 Coting Street (MDF 789). The house is a very well-preserved example of this type, an exceptional survival in the City.

The house is also elaborately finished in high-style Greek Revival details, and these Grecian features, particularly the stout Doric columns and deep entablature, are almost archaeologically correct. The fluted and baseless columns support a substantial entablature that encircles the entire building, creating the characteristic enclosed pediments in each side elevation. The main entrance centered in the five-bay façade is elaborately lit by full sidelights and transom. The window and door architraves on the façade have characteristic molding profiles stopped by corner blocks; the rest of the openings are finished with simpler stock moldings. Similar features are found on the interior of the house: marble mantels survive in the three first floor rooms, of the pilaster-and-entablature type with paneled friezes and corner blocks, while the chambers have wood versions, with reeded pilasters. The finish is uniform throughout, with many surviving five-panel doors and corner-block trim on the windows and doors. The upper rooms have built-in storage drawers and cupboards extending into the eaves, but their date is not known. The skills exhibited by its craftsmen builders were likely achieved with the assistance of print sources popular at the time, including those of Asher Benjamin (*The Practical House Carpenter; The Builder's Guide*) and Minard Lafever (*The Modern Builder's Guide; The Beauties of Modern Architecture*).

The house has also undergone some alterations. Its depiction on period commercial and Sanborn atlases and maps indicates it had a large side wing set back from the principal façade extending from the left or south side of the building that was connected to a small barn or carriage house. The wing disappeared between 1910 and 1936 and was replaced by a small, enclosed, hip-roofed entry porch on that side of the house. The carriage house survived until as late as 2005, according to the most recent assessor's map, but is not extant. The broad shed dormer on the forward slope of the roof does not appear to be original as its molding profiles and the reveal of its verge boards do not match those of the rest of the building. Although it is not entirely clear from the on-line photographs, it appears that this addition provides space for a bath and dressing room. Other changes that seem to be 20<sup>th</sup> century in date include narrow hard-wood floors and some glazed interior doors.

The house is sited on a lot that is roughly triple the size of those commonly found throughout the neighborhood, but is historically continuous to the sale of the house in 1854 (see below under historical narrative). The surrounding area is characterized by a mix of housing constructed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and includes several other surviving ambitious Greek Revival examples, including the Paul Curtis House at 114 South Street (MDF.51), the Jotham Stetson House at 102 South Street (MDF.59), the Stetson-Redman House at 12 Maple Avenue (MDF.60), and the South Streetscape (MDF.G) including seven houses to the east on South Street (23, 30, 31, 36, 42, 48, 54).



**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MEDFORD

21 TOURO AVENUE

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MDF.54

**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.*

The King house is located south of the Mystic River, in a section of Medford that was first developed in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This section of the City had been known as the Stinted Pasture, providing much-needed grazing land for the residents of Charlestown, and while it was divided into large parcels at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, much of it remained unimproved for many decades; it was part of Charlestown until 1754. South Street was one of the earliest roads in this area to the west of the bridge over the river, originally continuing on its curve to the south to follow the path that was initially one of the "rangeways" within the pasture and is now known as Winthrop Street. Development quickened after the Revolution and with the construction of the Middlesex Canal, when South Street was first developed with large homes of merchants and shipbuilders. With the continued growth and development of Medford in the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century, the area was subdivided into a denser grid of streets and gradually developed with houses over the decades of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The previous MHC Inventory Form suggested the house was consistently occupied by commuting professionals who worked in Boston, and subsequent research has born this out for several of the later property's owners. But recent research has identified the property's first long-term occupant as John King (1773-1845), a master mariner, who likely lived in the house constructed in about 1839.

The house is located on part of the 4½ acre homestead lot of Abraham Touro (1777-1822), a Boston merchant and member of the well-known Jewish family known for its philanthropy and support of synagogues. Touro purchased land and built a house overlooking the Mystic River probably in the 1810s. The property extended south to the Middlesex Canal, now Summer Street, and the house faced South Street near the corner of Touro; it stood until the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Touro's heir sold the property in 1836, and it was owned briefly by George W. Cutting, a Weston trader, from May of 1836 to March of 1838, and by William S. Barker, a Medford trader, from March through November. Both of these men seem to have experienced financial setbacks during this period of depression following the financial crisis of 1837. At the same time, Cutting and later owners began to subdivide the Touro property, as their neighbors were subdividing their properties, to create the ladder of parallel streets that eventually connected South Street to what became Summer Street.<sup>1</sup> This development coincided with Medford's emergence as a center of regional industry, particularly with regard to shipbuilding. Approximately 500 merchant ships were constructed in the town by builders such as Paul Curtis, Jotham Stetson (both immediate neighbors), Thatcher Magoun, Joshua T. Foster, and Hayden & Cudworth, among others.<sup>2</sup> These successful businesses contributed to the expansion of residential neighborhoods emerging at mid-century in the vicinity of Medford Square, subdivided by investors like these and occupied by affluent and middle-class residents of the growing and diversifying town.

John King bought a section of the Touro property in 1839 from William Barker and a number of Barker's creditors, land with buildings that may have already included the house, and he and his family were the first to take up residence here over time. Cutting had laid out a new court that would gradually extend to Summer Street as the adjacent parcels were divided and houses built on them over the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; this is Touro Avenue. At this time, the parcel was located just south of the court and ran south to the Middlesex Canal. John King's former occupation, he was also called captain in some of his deed transactions, links him to Medford's various maritime industries. His early life remains unknown, but he married Susan Morey (1793-1844), the daughter of a sea captain, in Boston in 1813. The couple had eight children between 1814 and 1834, five boys and three girls. Three of King's sons followed him to the sea, and two were lost at sea; another died young. King had lived further south in Medford near the Royal house, on a 35-acre farm with a brick dwelling house, two barns and other outbuildings that he had purchased in four transactions between 1822 and 1835; he sold that property in the same month he bought this one.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Galebach, "Historical research..." 2016; Dempsey, "Preliminary Report..." 2016. This depression was precipitated by President Andrew Jackson's economic policies and in particular the demise of the Second Bank of the United States. Cutting and Barker did not hold the property for long, and after taking several mortgages, each sold the property to one of their creditors.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Elliot Morrison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860* (Hard Press reprint of the Houghton Mifflin 1921 edition); Glenn A. Knoblock, *The American Clipper Ship, 1845-1920* (McFarland & Co., 2014); Hall Gleason, "Old Ships and Ship-Building Days of Medford," *Medford Historical Register*, Vol. XXVI (The Society, Dec., 1923) pp. 61-71.

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com: Bible Record in the possession of Dudley Hall; MA Census 1855; US Census 1830, 1840, 1850. AmericanAncestry.org: Massachusetts Vital Records to 1850. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, 383:435.



**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

MEDFORD

21 TOURO AVENUE

**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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MDF.54

The 1840 Federal Census indicates John King, a pensioner or veteran, was employed in agriculture and a second member of his household was employed in "navigation of the ocean." His neighbors appear to be those in the vicinity of this property, included Jotham Stetson and Paul Curtis, confirmed in the deeds' notations on abutting property owners. Two of the King daughters married into well-known Medford families: Susan Bassett married James Manning Jr., first a wholesale grocer and later a lumber dealer, in 1839, and Harriet Winslow married Dudley Cotton Hall in 1848, whose family ran the Medford Square distillery but shifted to other investments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Oldest son William was a farmer who later moved from Medford, while youngest daughter Mary Ellen remained single, living with family members in Medford. It appears the Mannings lived nearby in the Touro house, which Manning had purchased at about the time King purchased this property and at the time of his marriage (see 33 Forest Street, MDF.1096, for the Mannings' later residence). King sold a portion of this property to Manning in 1845, marking the date by which Touro Avenue was extended past King's house. At his death, King owned this property, worth \$3500, as well as a house and land in East Cambridge (\$5000), two pews in the Unitarian meetinghouse (town not named), and 600 acres of bounty land in Maine on Marrs Hill, valued at \$150. Although not taken room-by-room, the inventory of his personal property can generally be grouped into spaces on the property, providing exceptional information on the mid-century dwelling; that document is attached here. King's wife had died in May of 1844, and six of his children survived, William, Susan Manning, Charles, George, Harriet, and Mary Ellen; Harriet and Mary Ellen were minors and Manning served as guardian, probably for both of them. By 1850, William and George lived with the Mannings and their four sons (Charles may have been at sea), while Mary Ellen lived with her recently married sister Harriet and her husband Dudley C. Hall, apparently in the King house, based on the census evidence; both households had Irish servants in residence.<sup>4</sup>

In 1854, the King heirs sold the property to Gardner P. Gates in an exchange involving multiple deeds. The description of the property, including meets and bounds, as well as its abutters, indicates the lot has remained the same size since this time, "being part of the premises which we [the heirs] inherited from the late John King, deceased."<sup>5</sup> Gardner P. Gates (b. 1826) was a bookkeeper and later merchant with the shipping firm of N.H. Emmons, Jr. & Co., "...for many years a prominent and highly respected merchant of Boston, engaged in the East India and China trade," which was located at 70 State Street in Boston. He married Mar. 4, 1851, in Boston, Frances A. Tolman. The couple had two children, George E. (b. 1853) and Amy E. (b. 1862), resided with Gates' brother, Artimas, a book binder who was deaf and dumb, and between one and two domestic staff, all young women born in Ireland, including Hanna White (b. 1830), Elizabeth Glynn (b. 1836), and Elizabeth Adams (b. 1850). The disappearance of the children from later enumerations of the state and federal census suggests they may not have survived childhood. The Gates family occupied and owned the house, which in 1860 was valued at \$3,000 and in 1870 at \$3,500, until 1871. Later in life, in 1900, Gates resided in Boston where he boarded at 190 Commonwealth Avenue, the Abbotsford Apartments, and remained active as treasurer of the Lawrence Gas Company, a supplier of lighting gas.<sup>6</sup>

From 1871 to 1890, the house was owned by Joseph Augustus Chapin (1839 – Dec. 8, 1924) a native of Vermont who was a leather dealer and later a bank executive. Between 1880 and c. 1900 he worked for the National Bank of North America, later the Boston National Bank, located at 106 Franklin Street in Boston, first as a messenger and later as a teller. After 1900 he was a trustee and chair of the Auditing Department of the Medford Savings Bank.<sup>7</sup> He was a veteran of the Civil War, serving as a corporal in the Mass. Light Artillery Battery from 1862-1864. With his wife, Julia (b. 1843), he had two children, George F. (b. 1871) and Susan F. (b. 1869).

Between 1890 and 1919, the house was owned by John M. Doherty (b. 1848- Feb. 13, 1915), who lived here with his family including his wife, Katherine E. (Mahoney), son Edward J. (b. 1876), a lawyer; Helen F. (b. 1877); Katherine E. (b. 1878); and May A. (b. 1879). The household included a domestic servant, Florence Holland (b. 1876), a native of Ireland. John Doherty and his wife were also natives of Ireland; John became a naturalized citizen in 1864. By profession, John Doherty was a liquor merchant who operated out of 24 Causeway Street in Boston. By 1900 he had changed careers, becoming a real estate broker.

From 1919 until 1980 the house was owned and occupied by members of the Lindner family, owned first by Celia and after 1963 by Celia and her daughter Priscilla. In 1926 the household included Charles R. Lindner, a ship fitter, his wife, Celia, brother Robert, a machinist, and three children: Carl, Clarence and Priscilla. The property was sold by Robert E. Linder, Jr., as

<sup>4</sup> AmericanAncestors.org: Middlesex Country Probate, John King, No. 35891, 1845, Harriet W. King et al, No. 35887, 1845, George C. King, No. 35886, 1859.

<sup>5</sup> Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 683, page 90 et seq. and 689/180.

<sup>6</sup> *National Academy of Sciences Biographical Memoirs*, Vol. VII (The Academy, 1913) p. 309. Ancestry.com: MA Census 1855, 1865; US Census 1960, 1870; US Directories: Medford 1868, 70, Boston 1865, 70;

<sup>7</sup> *Boston Daily Globe*, Jan. 1, 1925, p. 26 (obituary).

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

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conservator for Priscilla's property, to Tufts University for \$25,000 in 1987. Period Sanborn maps indicate that the original side wing which connected the main body of the house to a carriage house removed between 1910 and 1936; the carriage house survived until 2005 but is not extant today.

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Boston City Directories, 1855, 1865, 1870, 1872, 1875

U.S. Census, 1840, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1920

Zillow, 21 Touro Street, Medford MA; accessed 1 August 2015.

### Maps and Atlases:

1855 H.F. Walling Map of Medford

1875 F. W. Beers Atlas, P. 108, Medford Square

1889 Atlas of Medford by George H. Walker Co., Boston

1898 Atlas of Medford by George A. Stadley Co., Boston

1900 Atlas of Medford by George A. Stadley Co., Boston

Medford Sanborn Maps: 1910, 1936



Main entrance detail showing original side light, transom, entablature. and column details

## INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Detail of Walling Map of Medford (courtesy of Harvard University), showing subject property then owned by G.P. Gates and the development of properties along South Street by prominent members of the community.

## INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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## Inventory of the Personal Property of John King

1 Brown Mare	75
1 Chair & Harness	25
1 Chair & Harness	20
1 Sleigh & Extra Harness	5
5 Buffal. Robes	2
Saddl Bells Suits	2
1 Ladders	50
1 Tow Haul	15
1 Small Wagon	750
1 Farming & Carpenter Tools	7
2 or Kitchen Furniture	20
2 Pembroke Tables	5
1 Side Board	5
1 Secretary	5
1 Carpet & Rug	450
1 Looking Glass	150
4 Day Bottom & 4 arm chairs	3
Crochery & glass Ware in closets	7
1 Sofa. p 5. 1 Dining Table 150	1650
1 Olmstead Stove p 5 1 Carpet p 5.	10
1 Pr. Lamp 75 8 Chairs p 5	475
1 Piano. p 20. 1 8 day clock p 10	30
1 Cotton Lamb p 1. 1 Pr. Bedstead 2 Beds 2	3
1 Sofa p 10. 1 Pr. Card Table p 5.	14
1 Looking Glass p 5 1 Astral Lamp p 2	5
1 Pr. Glass Lamp 75 1 Carpet p 8.	875
2 No. 1 Chairs (Lamp) 150. 2 Small do do	2
Crochery in closets p 2. 1 Work Table p 5	275
1 High Post Bedstead. 1 Bedstead Bed Mattress	20
1 Bedding Complete	150
1 Easy Chair 150 1 Straw Carpet Rug 3.	150
1 Looking Glass 100. 1 Pot Bedstead 50	150
1 High Chair 2. 6 Corn flug Chairs 1.	3
3 Leather Sprunks (Lamp)	3
1 Bedstead Bed & Bedding Complete	15
1 Bureau p 5. 1 Dressing Table & Looking Glass	450
Wash Stand & Furniture 150. 1 Straw Mattress Rug 3.	450
20 Pairs Cotton Shirts & 20 Pairs Pillow Cases	10
10 Linen Table Cloths	10
1 Bedstead Bed & Bedding	12
1 Bureau 250. 1 Wash Stand & Basin	350
1 Sofa 75 1 Bureau 2.	275
1 Bedstead & 1 Bed Mattress & Bedding Complete	25
1 Dressing Table & 1 Wash Stand & Basin	2
6 Painted chairs	1
1 Bedstead Bed & Bedding	10
1 Round Table p 1. Bureau 150	250
Amount Carried over,	43250

Inventory of personal estate of John King, Middlesex County Probate, No. 35891, 1845, page 1

## INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Amounts Brought over	433 50
1 Bedstead & Bed & Bedding	20
6 Blankets & Quilt	10
1 Feather Bed & Bolster	3
Stairs, Carpeting & Rods	40
Wearing Apparel of the Deceased	30
Silver Plate	100
<del>Receivable from insurance company</del>	<del>100</del>
" " "	<del>100</del>
Y Manning the photo aug 4. 1845	3.00
Sub m. do	7.12 307 12
Cash in Room Book	40
	<del>100</del>
	\$ 883 62

Medford Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 1845  
 James G. Lewis  
 Saml L. Abham } Appraisers  
 Oliver Blake

Inventory of personal estate of John King, Middlesex County Probate, No. 35891, 1845, page 2

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

21 TOURO AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

MDF.54

[Delete this page if no Criteria Statement is prepared]

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible      ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district
- ☐ Contributing to a potential historic district      ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria:    ☒ **A**    ☐ **B**    ☒ **C**    ☐ **D**

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ **A**    ☐ **B**    ☐ **C**    ☐ **D**    ☐ **E**    ☐ **F**    ☐ **G**

Statement of Significance by John D. Clemson and Claire W. Dempsey  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The King house, likely constructed in about 1839, is an elaborate, large-scale example of the Greek Revival-style 'cottage' form. The house is a well-preserved and exceptional representative example of its style and type, one of a limited number of examples of its period and style surviving in Medford. It retains integrity of workmanship, design, materials, association, location, setting, and feeling. Its initial owner, John King (1772-1845), was a master mariner who retired to Medford at a time when the city emerged as a center of regional industry, particularly with regard to shipbuilding. The house is located within a residential neighborhood emerging at mid-century in the vicinity of Medford Square, occupied by affluent and middle-class residents of the growing and diversifying town. Several of the building's subsequent owners, including Gardner P. Gates (b. 1826), Joseph A. Chapin (1839-1924), and John M. Doherty (1848-1915) were successful Boston merchants and were examples of the kind of affluent, commuting professionals that played an important role in the development of Medford. Therefore the King house is eligible to the National Register under criteria A and C at the local level.





February 22, 2016

**Re: 21 Touro Avenue**

Dear Medford Neighbors:

In response to significant email and message board activity, and important concerns about the future of 21 Touro Avenue, we would like to reassure concerned citizens regarding the activities related to Walnut Hill Properties' sale of the premises.

We at Tufts and Walnut Hill Properties absolutely have heard the valid concerns regarding the preservation of 21 Touro. We have always had a commitment to prevent the property from demolition; that commitment continues. In response to concerns regarding the construction of additional homes on the same lot with the historic house, we have very clearly heard those concerns and would like to re-iterate our commitment to prevent subdivision of the property or additional homes being constructed on the property.

As such:

- We fully support the Medford Historic District Commission proceeding with implementation of a single-lot historic district at 21 Touro Avenue.
- We are not listing the property as "potentially sub-dividable" and are not entertaining offers from any person or group with an interest in subdividing the property. If a listing exists that contains such language, please alert us and we will have it removed. We have double-checked the leading real estate websites and have been unable to find any listing that has language regarding subdivision.
- We will negotiate with any buyer to include a restriction preventing demolition in the deed.
- We will discuss with a potential buyer how to ensure the property is not subdivided in advance of the implementation of a single lot historic district.

As always, we support the passion and concern of the Medford citizenry. We will be in attendance at this evening's Historic District Commission meeting and will be happy to answer questions and address concerns at that time.

Best Regards,

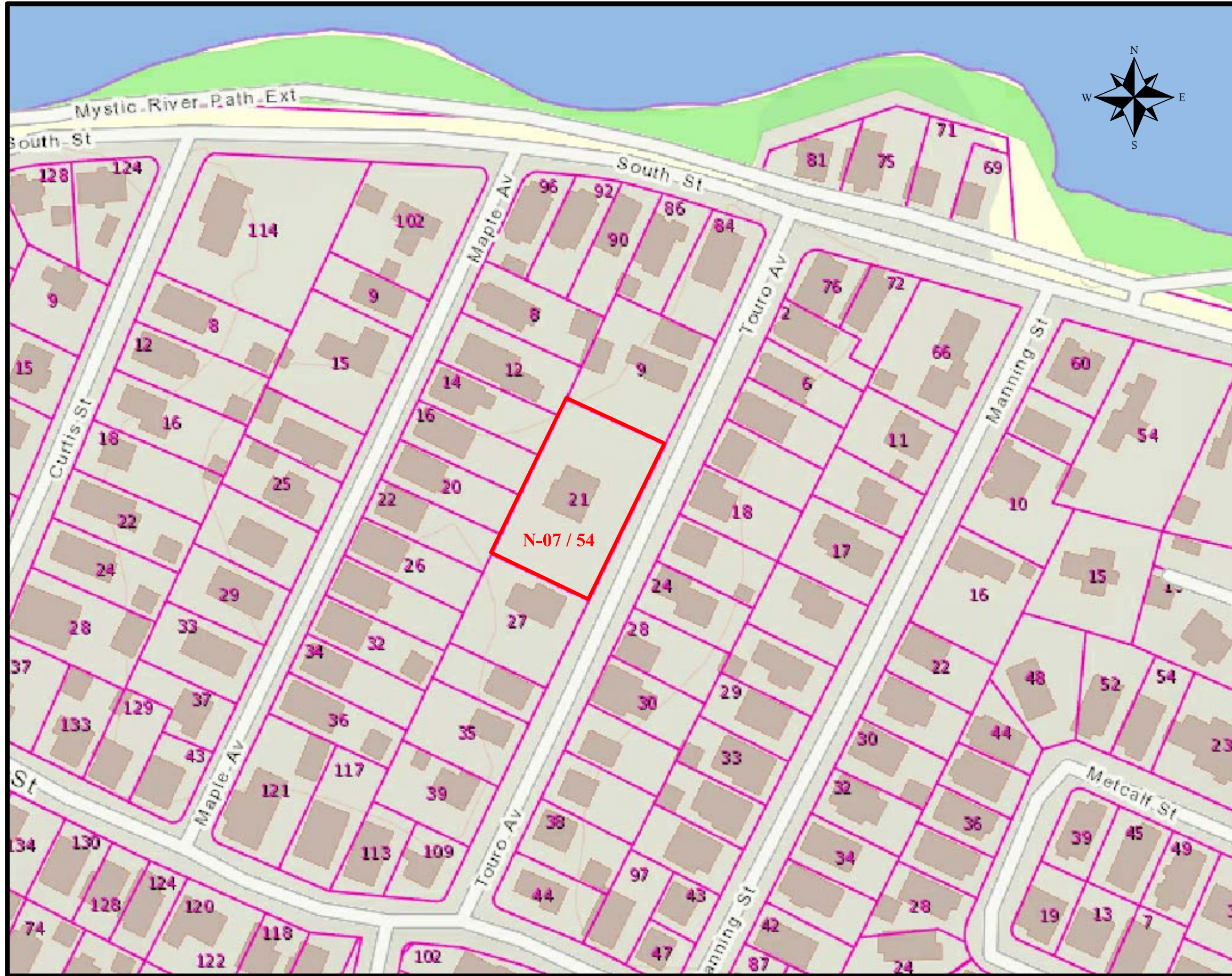
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Rubel".

Barbara Rubel  
Director of Community Relations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Chihade".

Robert Chihade  
Director of Real Estate





# King House Historic District

## City of Medford Historic District Commission

Office of Community Development  
Room 308, Medford City Hall  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, MA 02155

Map Created: May 31, 2016

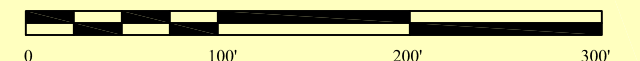
### Legend:



Proposed boundary of the King House (21 Turo Avenue) Historic District

### Graphic Scale:

Scale 1" = 100'





King House  
21 Touro Avenue

Local Historic District

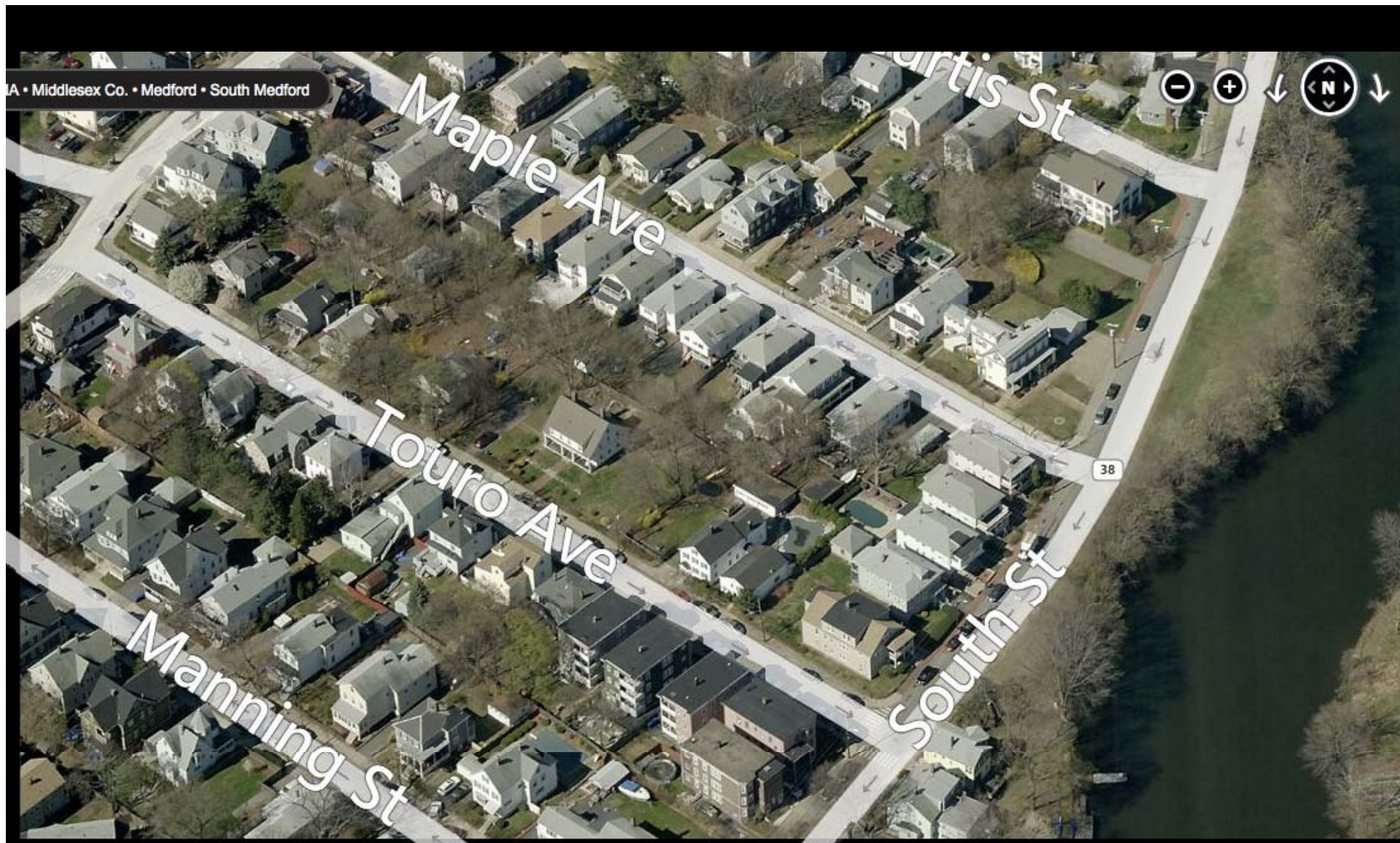


King House, 21 Touro Avenue



### Assessors Map showing parcel for 21 Touro Avenue





Vicinity of 21 Touro, Bing Maps















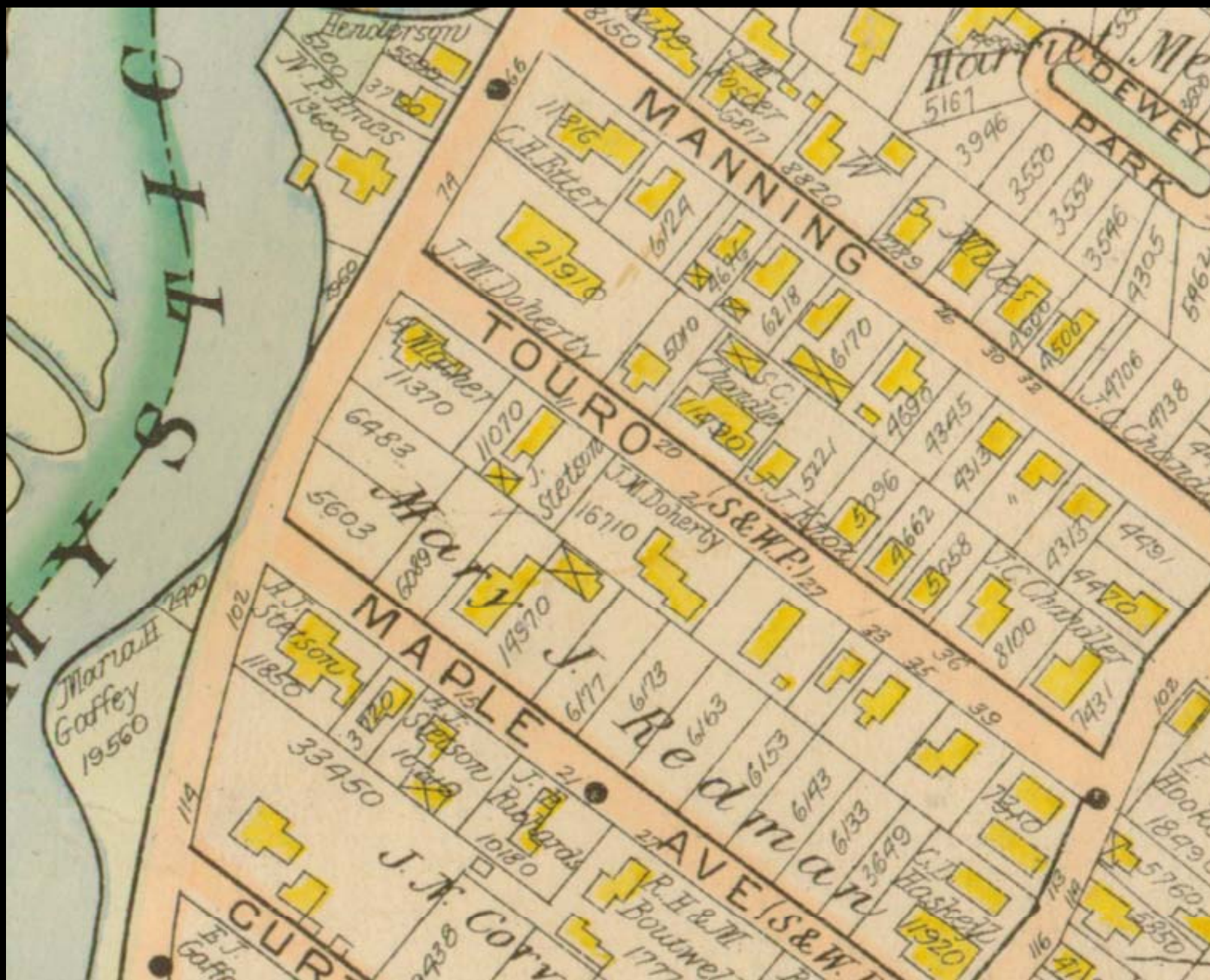






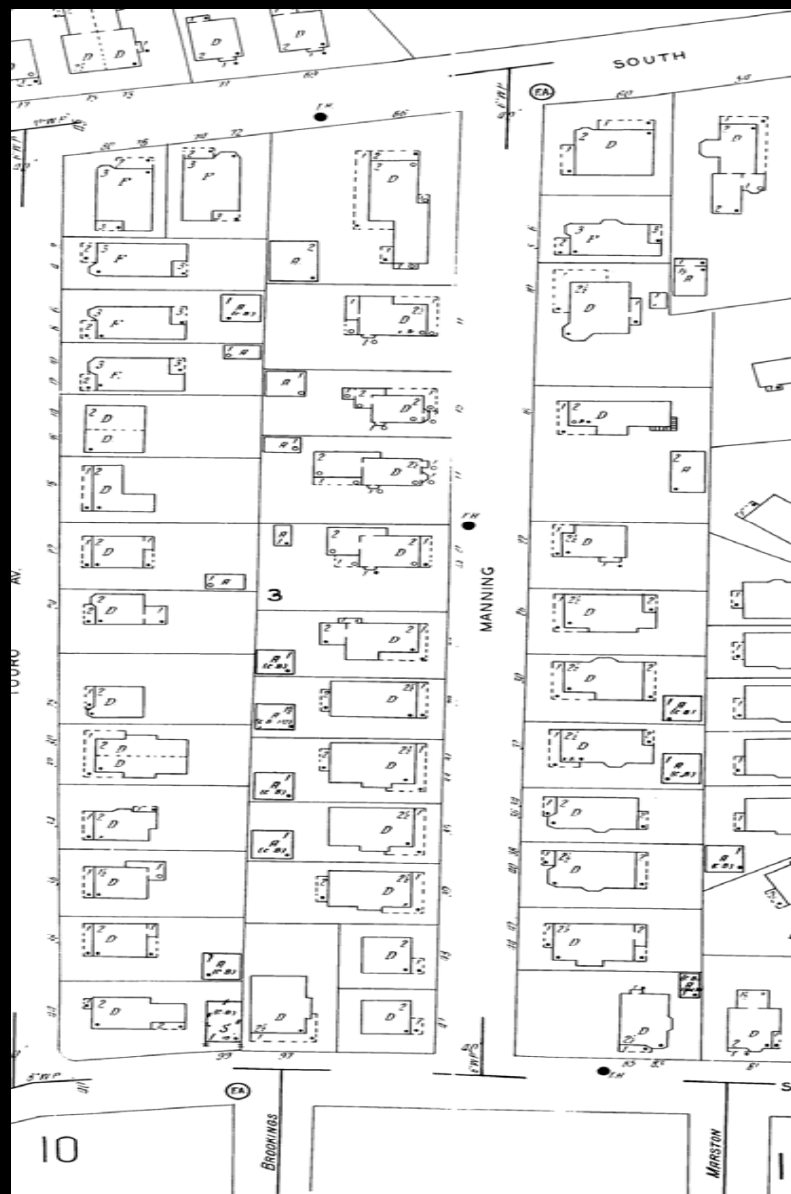
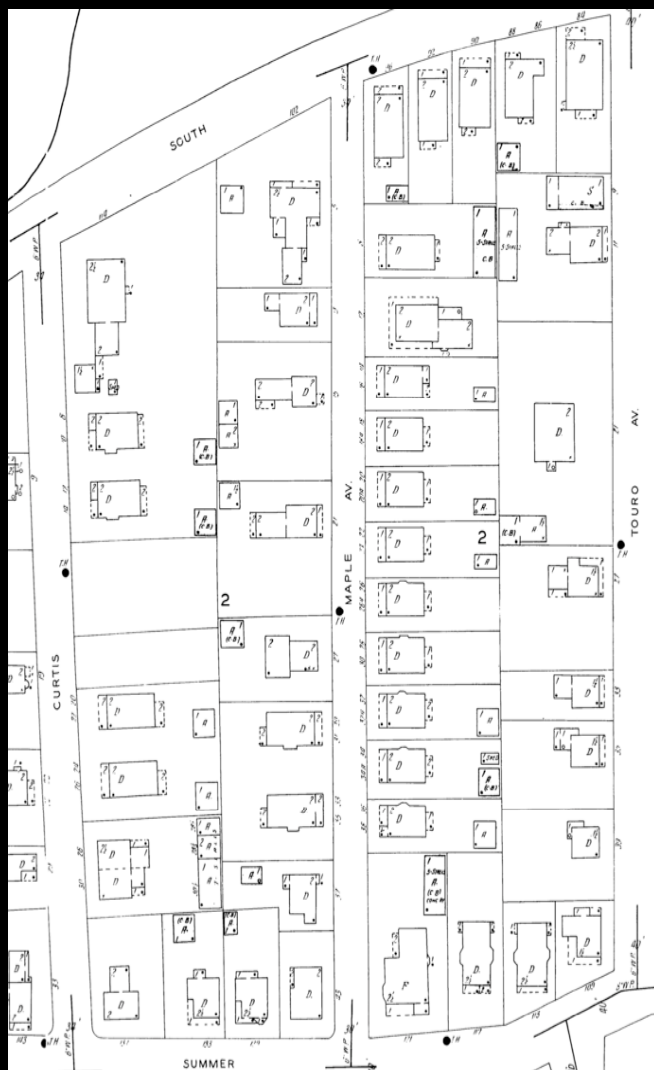


vicinity of 21 Touro in 1855



vicinity of 21 Touro, 1900





vicinity of 21 Touro in 1936







vicinity of 21 Touro Avenue





vicinity of 21 Touro Avenue





vicinity of 21 Touro Avenue





new construction adjacent to 114 South Street





new construction on South Street





recent rehab work on Winthrop Street

# ESTABLISHING LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

*(DRAFT-3/3/2016)*



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Chair, Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, MA 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)  
[mhc@sec.state.ma.us](mailto:mhc@sec.state.ma.us) / 617-727-8470





