

FORM A - AREA

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

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| Z-11 | Boston North | | |
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Photograph



29, 27, 25, 23, 19, 17 Edward Street

Town/City: Medford
Place (neighborhood or village): Winter Hill

Name of Area:
Present Use: commercial and residential

Construction Dates or Period: ca 1887
Overall Condition: fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations: multiple layers of renovation
Acreage: 0.3 acre
Recorded by: John D Clemson and Claire W Dempsey
Organization: Medford Historical Commission
Date (month/year): October 2021

Locus Map



☐ see continuation sheet

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

EDWARD STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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

INTRODUCTION

The Edward Street Area is located in the Winter Hill neighborhood of South Medford, a short block-face of identical small end houses, an unusual surviving streetscape here. The larger neighborhood had been held by members of the Tufts family since the early decades of the 19th century, and they created three large subdivisions in 1854 and 61, eventually dividing the lots among themselves. The subject area was part of section #5, a portion of which was reorganized by George Tufts in 1880. He sold the four lots here in 1886 to two purchasers who then further divided them into six lots. Six identical or nearly identical houses were in place by 1889.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Nathan Tufts (1764-1839) was a Charlestown butcher and tanner who purchased significant acreage in the two neighboring towns, valued at nearly \$120,000 at the time of his death; of this, 630 acres were in six Medford holdings, valued at \$51,000. This real estate Nathan Tufts bequeathed to the sons of his two brothers Daniel and Amos, and it appears that it was the sons of Amos (1762-1839) who took charge of the land in this vicinity known as Dexter Farm. The largest of the Medford holdings, Nathan had purchased it from Samuel Dexter, described in 1835 as including 300 acres, two dwelling houses, three barns, "other buildings," and a mill for "sawing and grinding." It appears to be the large property shown on the Walling Map of 1855, figure 1.¹

The larger area was subdivided in the 1850s and 60s, plans that can be traced on the Beers Atlas of 1875 (figure 2) and labeled "W E G F & A Tufts," William, Edward, George F, and Alfred Tufts. William (1802-1862) and Edward (1806-1875) were the two youngest of Amos's seven sons. William Tufts lived in Charlestown and was a clerk and later secretary of an insurance company; Edward Tufts was also a clerk and lived in Lowell. George and Alfred were sons of Joseph Frothingham Tufts (1790-1854) the oldest of Amos's sons. George F Tufts (1825-1920) was a civil engineer and later a bank president; Alfred Tufts (1829-1882) was a clerk, an engineer, and a bank teller. It may have been Joseph's death that led to the subdivision of the property, which was described in his probate record as one-third of a 150-acre farm in Medford and Somerville valued at \$11,000. The property was divided into at least five subdivision sections, and numbers 2, 3 and 5 were in the Winter Hill neighborhood; Alfred was surveyor for the recorded plans.² The subject area was part of section #5, subdivided into 69 lots in 1861, located north of Main Street and extending from Tufts Square and the Mystic Trotting Park south to the Somerville line. The north part was divided into very large lots, at the base was a grid running between Main and Albion. Dexter Street ran east-west through it from the west side of Main and linking to the adjacent subdivision. Joseph and Edward streets ran parallel to Main, Henry from Main to Joseph. Many of the lots were about 70 by 150 feet and averaged about 10,000 square feet, moderate-sized for this era and typical of the Tufts subdivisions. See figure 3 and 4. Streets were named for members of the Tufts family, Dexter after the earlier owner.

The Tufts began to sell lots right away, but also divided the lots among themselves in a series of interlocking deeds in 1858 and 1861. These deeds included several restrictions, including fencing along Broadway, 12 feet back so as not to obstruct traffic, and precluding any "offensive or nauseous trade whatever nor for any purpose that shall tend to disrupt the quiet and comfort of the

¹ Edward C. Booth, "The Tufts Family in Somerville," *Historic Leaves*, Vol. 1, April 1902-03, Perseus. Ancestry.com: Boucher and Hollytree family trees. Americanancestors.org: Middlesex County Probate for Nathan Tufts (#22989).

² The westernmost of the three plats (#2) was a triangular area southwest of Medford Street, included three streets parallel to Medford Street, Charles (now lower Winchester), Alfred, and William, and was bisected by Albion Street; 85 lots were located there (MCSR Plans 7:19, plan #2, 1854). The central section (#3) was located between Medford and Main streets, Broadway, and the Somerville line and subdivided into 98 lots in (MCSR Plans 9a:9, 1854/ 1861).

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neighborhood." Some deeds included a requirement for houses of at least two stories and only one dwelling per lot, but these were later lifted. An early deed noted that Adams Street would be opened and graded by October of 1861, and the distribution of sections 3 and 5 noted the presence of old farm buildings that could remain until the majority "deemed it expedient." Soon after, Alfred, Edward and William's heirs sold many of their lots to George.³

George Tufts then reorganized a portion of section #5 in 1880, adding additional streets to the section between Dexter, Edward, Henry, and Albion streets to increase the density of the area; see figure 4. With the addition of Sanger and Marshall, the lots were reduced in size to about 50 by 100 feet and many were reoriented to these new streets. In March of 1886, he sold the four lots covering the subject area, two to Abby B Costelow, wife of Edward (lots 37 and 38), and two to Augustus F. Dickson (lots 39 and 40), who each paid \$1,035. Augustus F. Dickson (1844 - post-1930) was a resident of Malden at 86 Seaview Avenue for his entire adult life. His father, also Augustus (born ca. 1813), brothers Benjamin (born ca. 1846) and later Thomas (born ca. 1864) were carpenters or contractors. At the time of the 1870 census Augustus F. Dickson was also a carpenter but by 1900 was identified as a landlord, in 1920 as an agent of real estate, and in 1930 again as a carpenter.⁴ Abby B Carle Costelow (1836-1898) was the second wife of Edward Costelow (1819-1903) who like Dickson was a carpenter and later was in real estate. Born in Gardiner, ME, he worked there as a farmer (1850) but then relocated to Boston with his first wife Emily Smith (1821-1866) and their four children and reported his occupation as joiner and later as carpenter; by 1870 he was in Somerville and he and his two sons worked as carpenters. From at least 1880 until his death he lived in Medford on Main Street or on Edwards Street. In 1880 he was on Main Street reporting his occupation as "hawker," but in 1890, he was a carpenter/builder and in real estate, living at 314 Main Street. He was in real estate living in a house in the subject area in 1895 (at 19 Edward) and in 1897 (at 23 Edward); in 1900 and 1902 he was living at 616 Main Street with his daughter Clara, her commercial traveler husband J Wesley Dow, and her five children.⁵

Dickson and the Costellows both reorganized their two lots into three and when they sold them, they each had buildings in place. See figure 5. It is of course interesting that these two individuals each contracted for three identical or nearly identical buildings in this area. Perhaps they coordinated their efforts or simply selected the same design and builder. The Costellows sold two of the lots and houses quite soon, 17 Edward in 1887 to James W and Anson B Hobbs of Boston for \$2300 and a year later the lot of 19 Edward to Clara S Allen, wife of William Allen of Cambridge, for \$2500. They retained 23 Edward for a time. Dickson sold one lot to James H Higgins (see below) in 1887 and sold 25 Edward to Frederick A Norris of Medford in 1891 and 27 Edward to Joseph Davis of Medford in 1892.⁶ The atlas of 1889 misidentifies Dickson as the owner of 23 Edward. Most of the properties were still held by these individuals in 1898, with the exception of 25 Edward labelled Chandler; see figure 6.

By 1900, the houses were occupied by nuclear families whose heads were in their 40s and 50s and most held blue-collar positions; except where noted, most were born in Massachusetts. Half of the households here in 1900 were property owners. William and Clara Allen lived at 19 Edward, he a New York born "paper ruler," and joined by their daughter Larena and her husband William Anderson an English-immigrant commercial traveler. Joseph and Mary Davis lived at 27 Edward (apparently mis-identified as renters) with their four adult children, all but the youngest born in English Canada. Joseph and his son William were "cold iron" workers, two of the daughters described employment, one as a "sewer," one as a dressmaker. James and Mary Higgins and their adult children lived at

³ Parcels in section #2 were distributed among William, Edward, and Arthur, 18 lots each, in three deeds in 1858 (MCSRD 784: 444, 446, 447). George does not seem to have received lots here (though he too sold lots to the others) and not all lots are accounted for in these exchanges; this latter may reflect earlier sales along Broadway at the western end of the section. Parcels in sections #3 and #5 were distributed among Edward, Alfred's wife Sarah, William, and George, in four deeds (MCSRD 858:311, 312, 314, 315). This time, the number of lots varied more significantly: 26 to Sarah, 30 to George, 36 to Edward, and 51 to William. Alfred sold his lots in section 3 and his share in the portion of the farm in Somerville to George in 844:567 in 1860; Edward sold lots in all three sections to George in 968:441 in 1866; the heirs of William sold lots in sections 2, 3, and 5 in 1016:500, 510, 511 in 1867. Changes to the restrictions is found in 804:220.

⁴ MCSRD 1740:510 (1886); Ancestry.com: 1870, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 Federal Census.

⁵ MCSRD 1740: 505 (1886); Ancestry.com: Roffey Family Tree https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/174128964/person/142262688423/facts?_phsrc=JEV17&_phstart=successSource ; MA Census 1865; US Census 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900; US Directories Medford 1890, 1895, 1897, 1902.

⁶ MCSRD: 1796:276 (1887); 1864:39 (1888); 1802:437 (1887); 2050:568 (1891); 2150:468 (1892).

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29 Edward (see below). Three households were renters. Robert RW and Isabella C Gill had immigrated from Scotland, he a tinsmith whose household at 17 Edward included his teenage daughter and mother. William Hackett, also from Scotland, was a minister to a Baptist church and lived at 23 Edward with his wife and daughter. James W Cathcart and his family lived at 25 Edward, he a hotel steward, two sons employed as a machinist and at job printing.

The ownership history of 29 Edward Street is instructive. Just over a year after he purchased the lots, in June of 1887, Dickson sold a smaller, reconfigured parcel measuring 34 by 100 feet "with buildings thereon" on the corner of Edward and Sanger streets with frontage on Edward for consideration of \$2,100. The grantee of the new house in 1887 was James H. Higgins of Boston. Higgins (born ca. 1856), a native of Massachusetts whose parents were natives of Ireland and who was a hack or carriage driver in Boston. His household, located at 29 Edward Street, included his wife, Sarah J., sons William J. (b 1878), a "gypsy moth man," (evidently employed in the eradication of that insect; see MDF.B, Myrtle Street Area regarding Etienne-Leopold Trouvelot), James (b 1880), a cold iron worker, and daughter Sarah A. (born 1881). In 1903 James' creditor, Merchants Co-Operative Bank, took the property in possession for failure to meet the terms of a 1901 mortgage.⁷ Later the same year the property was acquired by James M. Fitts from the bank. James Monroe Fitts (1847-1934), a native of Vermont, worked as a receiver in a department store in Boston. His household included his wife, Grace J. (Place) and two adult children. Ten years later in 1913 the property was acquired by Louis Palumbo from Fitts.⁸ Palumbo (born 1876) was a native of Palermo, Sicily who immigrated in 1902 and was admitted to naturalized citizenship in 1909. According to directory and census listings he began operating a barber shop and grocery at the subject property between 1916 and 1918, suggesting he had the commercial storefront addition built at that time. He remained active as both a barber and grocer at the location until selling the property in 1929, afterward moving to Summer Street. Both his wife Lena, also a native of Italy, and his daughter Rose worked as furriers and may also have made use of the small commercial space at the property.⁹ Subsequent owner Louis Paladin (born ca. 1881, owner 1929-1971) also resided and operated a "general" and later a variety store here.¹⁰

Census research suggests that the block included both homeowners and renters through the mid-20th century, with homeowners perhaps becoming more common. The Allens continued at 19 Edward until at least 1910 and were succeeded by German-born cigarmaker Rudolph Beckman in 1930. The Babineaus lived at 25 Edward in 1910, 1920, and 1930 (owners); Henry was a plumber from Nova Scotia, whose household included his wife and children and sister-in-law. Next door at 27 Edward was another family from Nova Scotia, Alton C Perry a restaurant manager in 1920; his children working as an auto mechanic and a stenographer a decade later (owners). Henry A Jenks, night superintendent at a stable, lived at 27 Edward as a renter with his mother and sister in 1910 and at 25 Edward in 1920 as an owner with his wife and young son, then working as a milkman. He was succeeded by the Mettoli family, Domenic and Theresa born in Italy with three children; he was a machine operator at a felt factory in 1930 (owner). The house at 17 Edward had been rented in 1910 and 1920 before being purchased by Sylvester Filamond by 1930, an Italian-born barber married to a woman of Irish decent whose son was a photoengraver, in residence with his wife and child, and whose cousin was a truck driver. All of these families from 1930 remained in residence in 1940.

⁷ MCSRD 2326:99-102 (1894, this series of transactions included a mortgage from Higgins to the Merchants Co-Op Bank for principal of \$1,650 payable in monthly instalments of \$17.70, a very early example of a long-term amortized mortgage); 2903:319 (1901, a second mortgage); 3021:497 (1903, possession); Ancestry.com: 1900 Federal Census.

⁸ MCSRD 3047:530 (1903); 3814:116 (1913); Ancestry.com: 1910 Federal Census; US Death Index.

⁹ Ancestry.com: Petition for Naturalization and US Admissions of Naturalizations; 1920, 1930 Federal Census; 1914, 1916, 1918, 1920, 1924, 1928 Medford city directories.

¹⁰ Later owners included Romeo S. and Frances A. Trebino (1971-2004) and Marli DeSouza Johnson and Reinold C. Paulo (2004-2008), who sold to the current owner of record. MCSRD 5348:469 (1929); 7836:575-576 (1951); 12138:574 (1971); 31329:204 (2000); 44340:500 (2004); 47173:522 (2006); 51568:104 (2008); Ancestry.com (Paladin): 1930, 1940 Federal Census; 1938 Medford city directory.

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Figure 1: Walling Map of 1855, showing the southernmost part of Medford, labelled Tufts and showing two houses.

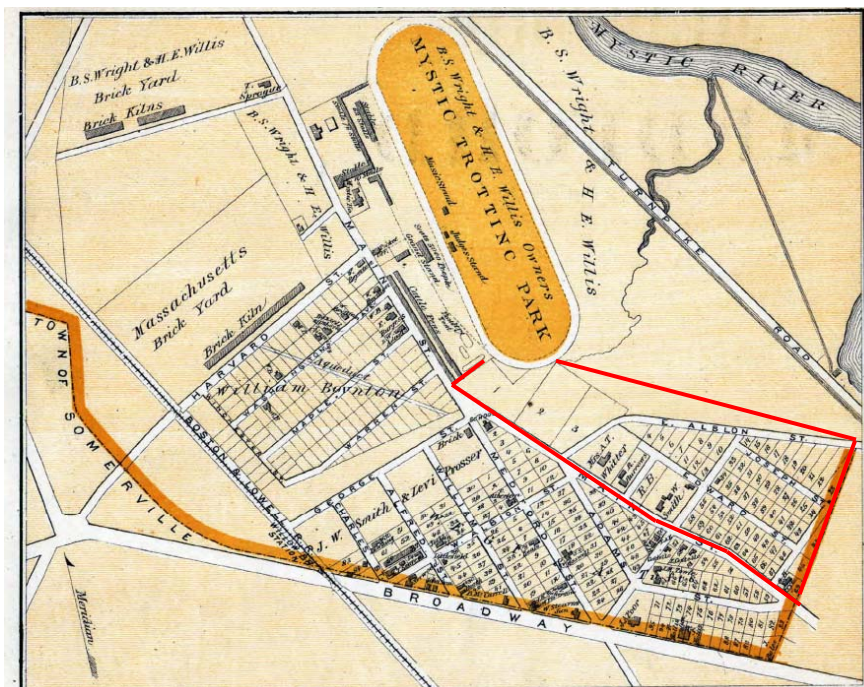


Figure 2: South Medford Plate, Middlesex County Atlas of 1875. Red lines show bounds of Plan #5 (MCSR book 10 plan 17 A and B); The land to the south west was covered by plans #2 and #3; sections 1 and 4 may have been in Somerville.

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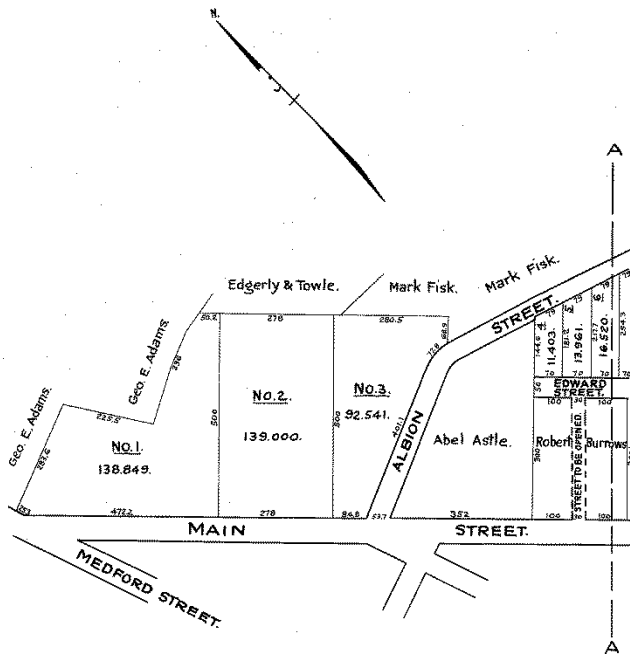
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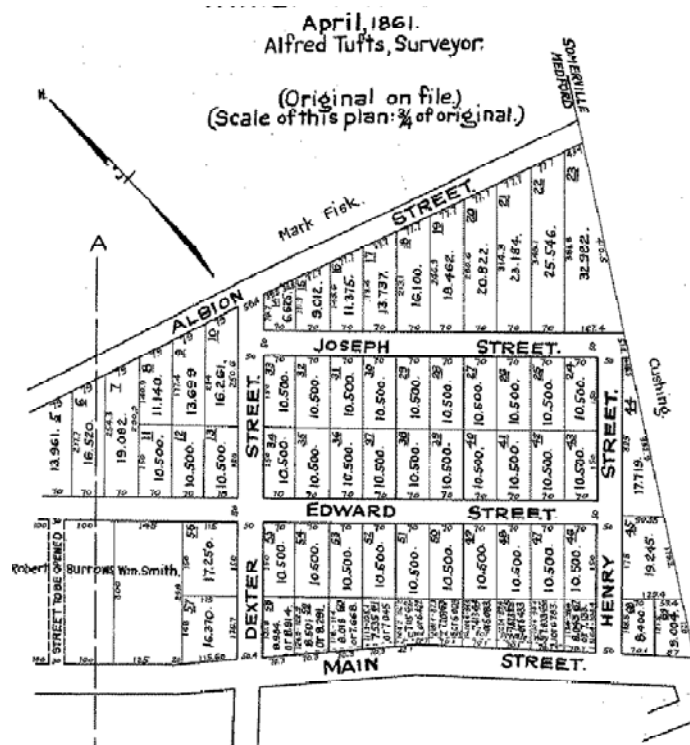


Figure 3: Section #5 of the land subdivided by the Tufts family; MCSRD plan book 10, plan 17 A and B. Sixty-nine lots.

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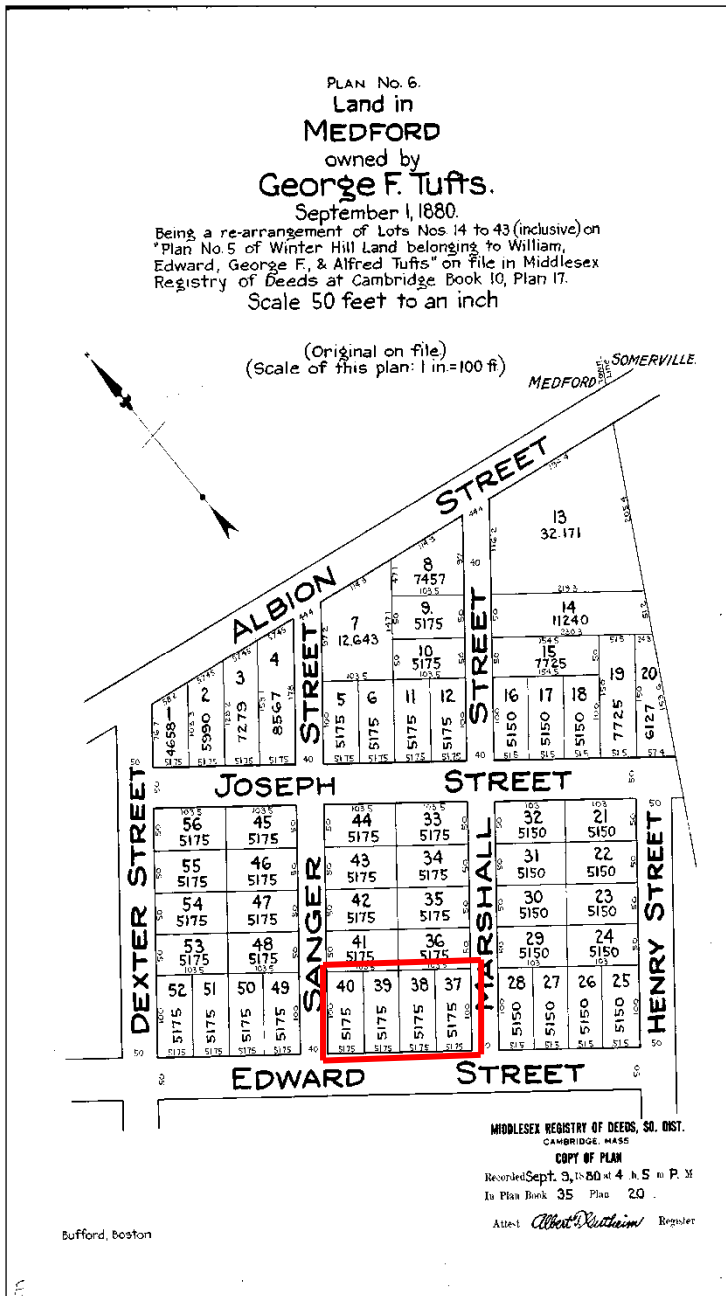


Figure 4: MCSRD Plan 35:20, 1880, George F Tufts' reorganization of a portion of section #5 with the addition of two east-west streets, Sanger and Marshall. The subject area is marked in red. These lots were then reconfigured to accommodate still greater density within this block, for six rather than four house lots.

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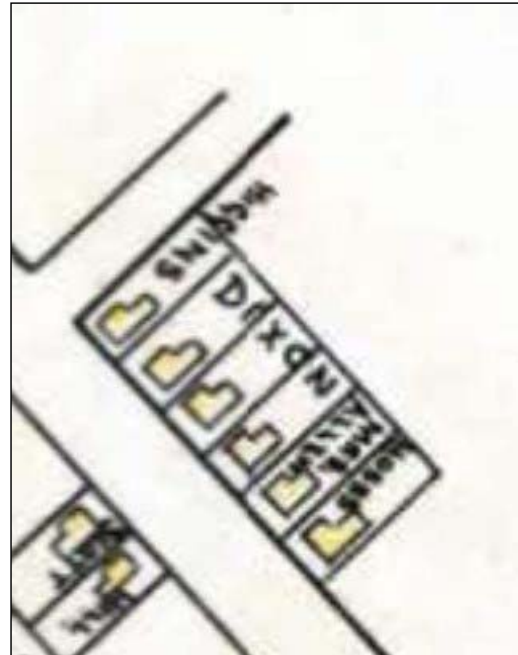
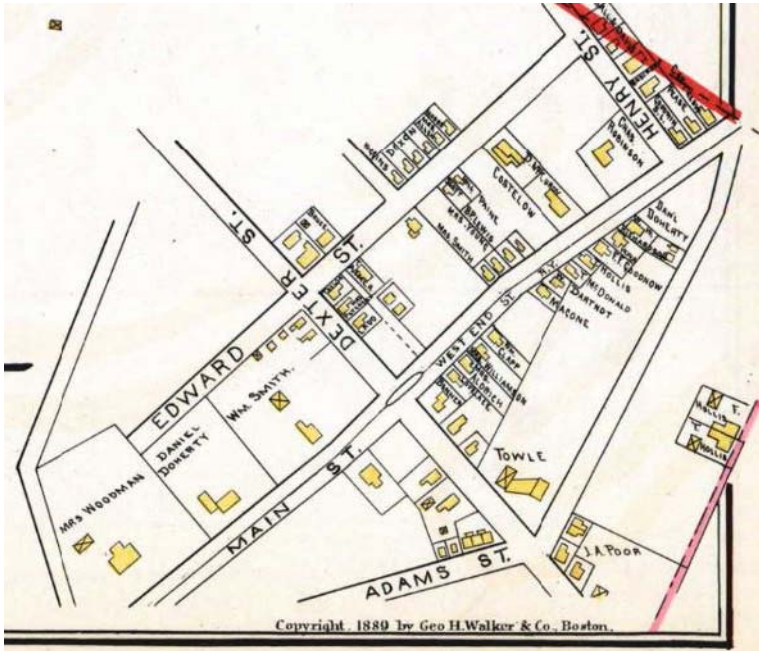


Figure 5: Walker county atlas of 1889 (right) showing the early development of the Tufts subdivisions, and left showing initial depiction of the Sanger-Marshall/Leyden block of Edward Street, built out with six identical end houses. Marshall/Leyden Street is not shown. The right detail has been rotated to orient north up.



Figure 6: Stadley Atlas city atlas of 1898 showing the subject area left of center. Marshall has been renamed Leyden.

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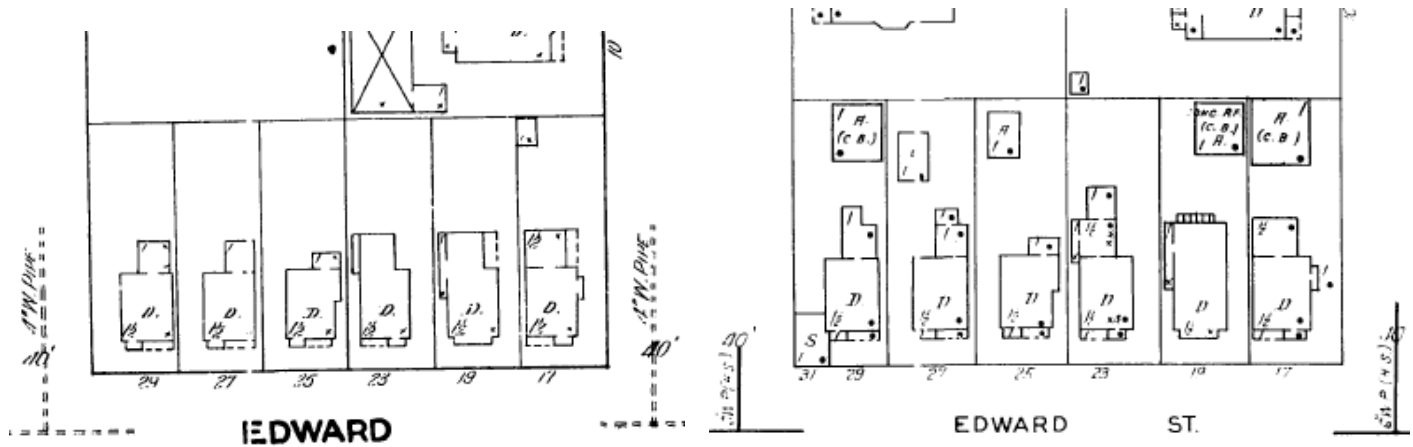


Figure 7: Sanborn Fire Insurance atlas details, 1910, left, and 1936, right.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Edward Street area is a unified streetscape of diminutive end houses that fills the northeast side of the block of Edward Street between Sanger and Leyden streets. The houses are sited at a modest setback on a minimal narrow, deep lot. The front gardens are fenced, often by low retaining walls and posts that support a metal fence, all of recent vintage. The front and rear gardens are landscaped in open fenced lawn and driveways.

Each of these houses (with the possible exception of 19 Edward) is a story-and-a-half gabled end house massed in an upper-story knee-wall with dimensions of 17 feet wide by 28 feet deep. The main body is expanded by a shed-roofed rectangular bay filling 2/3s of the façade with the main entry located in the opposite bay and sheltered by an extension of the bay roof which expands across most of the façade. The north three houses have their entries to the left/southeast side, the south three have their entries to the right/northwest side. The gable end above is lit by two regularly spaced window openings. Each had a small rear ell with the right/southeast aligned with the south elevation on the three north houses and to the left/northwest elevation on the three south houses.

The house at **29 Edward** appears to be the best preserved, and despite a porch re-build that includes a concrete deck and wrought-iron posts, the house appears to retain considerable original or in-kind building fabric. This includes wood-shingle siding; the top of the gable above the window lintels is filled with a decorative staggered shingle pattern that is likely an original treatment. The trim appears to have been simplified in a recent partial remodeling. The left-side elevation includes a shed-roofed wall dormer and the rear ell; has an asymmetrical roof line. The building also includes a small one-part commercial shopfront that fills the corner at the southwest end of the block. The 14-foot-wide, 20-foot-deep, flat-roofed addition is sited against the frontage and left lot line, projecting forward of the house's main façade. The parking area terminates at the northeast corner of the property in a low cinderblock enclosure that may be the remnants of a detached two-bay garage depicted in this location between 1936 and 1950.

The house at **17 Edward** has been covered in asphalt and was expanded at the right rear by another shed-roofed square bay window and with a small shed-roofed dormer on the opposite side. Its front yard is enclosed by a chain-link fence and includes a hip-roofed cinderblock two-car garage at the rear accessed from Leyden.

The house **19 Edward** may have been slightly different from the others or has been altered. The majority of gable end of the façade extends beyond the main block to the same depth as the square bay window; its wall cover and sash are vinyl. Its front yard is enclosed by a cinderblock and chain-link fence with a flat-roofed brick two-car garage at the rear.

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The house at **23 Edward** was expanded with a small shed-roofed dormer on the left side of its rear ell; it has vinyl wall cover and sash. Its front yard is enclosed by a brick wall with posts at the entry and topped by iron fencing and includes a hip-roofed single-bay garage.

The house at **25 Edward** has no expansions to its main block and appears to have lost its rear ell, though there is a small shed-roofed enclosed porch; it has vinyl wall cover and sash. Its front yard is enclosed by a combination of chain-link and ornamental metal fencing.

The house at **27 Edward** was expanded at the rear with a full-width ell that is slightly higher than the front block; it has vinyl wall cover and sash and the porch walls have a brick veneer. Its front yard is enclosed by a brick wall with posts at the entry and corners topped by low metal fencing.

Two quite similar houses survive across the street from these at 20 and 36 Edward Street, and others may be found in the neighborhood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- 1875 F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Middlesex, Massachusetts*.
- 1880 O. H. Bailey, [Bird's Eye View of] Medford.
- 1889 Geo. H. Walker & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts*.
- 1898 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford....*
- 1900 Geo. W. Stadly & Co., *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1*.
- 1892, 1897, 1903, 1910, 1936, 1936-1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases.

Ancestry.com: see footnotes

Charles Brooks and James M. Usher, *History of the Town of Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, From its First Settlement in 1630 to 1855; Revised, Enlarged and Brought Down to 1885* (Rand, Avery & Co., 1886)

Edward Augustus Samuels, Henry Hastings Kimball, *Somerville, Past and Present: An Illustrated Historical Souvenir Commemorative of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Establishment of the City Government of Somerville, Mass.*, (Samuels and Kimball, 1897)

Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, in notes as MCSRD book:page.

Research protocol: Names from atlases of 1889 and 1898; census research for 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940 in text.

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29, 27, 15, 23, 19, and 17 Edward Street.



Rear view of the subject area: 17, 19, 21, and 23 Edward Street.

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DATA SHEET

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| See Research Protocol | <p>Name, Address, Date, Assessor's No., MHC No.</p> <p>Style/ Form, architecture Materials Alterations</p> <p>History: (see footnotes)</p> |
|  | <p>House, 17 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-120 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house, pent roof on façade, square bay windows front and side Asbestos shingles Siding and some sash replacement.</p> <p>1889 atlas: Hobbs 1898 atlas: Hobbs</p> |
|  | <p>House, 19 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-121 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house some alterations Vinyl siding Siding, window replacement; expansion of end gable over porch & square bay window</p> <p>1889 atlas: Mrs Allen 1898 atlas: Allen</p> |
|  | <p>House, 23 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-122 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house, pent roof on façade, square bay window on front Vinyl siding Siding and sash replacement.</p> <p>1889 atlas: Dixon 1898 atlas: Costello</p> |
|  | <p>House, 25 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-123 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house, pent roof on façade, square bay window front and bay to side Vinly siding Siding and sash replacement.</p> <p>1889 atlas: Dixon 1898 atlas: Chandler</p> |

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|  | <p>House, 27 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-124 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house, pent roof on façade, square bay window front Vinyl siding Siding and sash replacement; brick veneer around entry, expanded rear ell.</p> <p>1889 atlas: Dixon 1898 atlas: Davis</p> |
|  | <p>House, 29 Edward Street, 1886-89 Y-11-125 MDF.</p> <p>Queen Anne end house, pent roof on façade, square bay window and side wall dormer Asbestos shingles Siding and some sash replacement. Store addition.</p> <p>1889 atlas: Higgins 1898 atlas: Higgins</p> |