

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

M-11-1

Boston  
North

**Town/City:** Medford

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*): East Medford

## Photograph



View from SE.

**Address:** 20 Otis Street

**Historic Name:** Tupper-Rutter House

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

Original: single-family residential

**Date of Construction:** ca. 1892

**Source:** maps, deeds

**Style/Form:** Queen Anne/ end house, complex

**Architect/Builder:** unknown

**Exterior Material:**

Foundation:

Wall/Trim: vinyl/ vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** carriage house  
constructed 1892-1903

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Siding and sash  
replacement, recent decades.

**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.19 acre

**Setting:** Dense mix of late-19<sup>th</sup> through early 20<sup>th</sup>  
century residential buildings.

## Locus Map (*north is up*)



**Recorded by:** John D. Clemson

**Organization:** Medford Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): May 2022

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

MEDFORD

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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.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Tupper-Rutter House, constructed ca. 1892, is a complex example of Queen Anne design of the end house form with additional massing typical of the style and surrounding neighborhood. The narrow, deep house is two-and-a-half stories under a steeply pitched front gable. A two-story hipped bay fills the left two thirds of the façade balanced against the right- (north) side entrance and a deep hipped porch fills the façade and wraps around the forward pile on the left side. The house is expanded in the rear of two piles by gabled bays on each side. Each of the three bays is canted on the first level but expanded above into rectangles. On the right side large scrolled brackets that support the upper rectangle survive. The generous dimensions of the main body are 24 by 32 feet. A lower rear gabled ell 16 feet square is aligned with the right side elevation.

Despite having undergone a recent re-siding with vinyl and sash replacement, the house remains a legible component of a well-preserved streetscape. Evidence of original finishes which would support a restoration likely survives beneath recent layers of covering. An early 20<sup>th</sup>-century hardwood front door appears to survive. Interior on-line real estate marketing photographs suggest the house retains its generous side-hall plan. Large reception spaces fill the canted bays in each direction and the stair with a turned hardwood balustrade survives.

The house is sited on a narrow, deep, minimal suburban lot within a planned subdivision. A shallow setback matches the surrounding contemporary houses, which contribute to a well-preserved, harmonious historic streetscape. A narrow drive on the left leads to a carriage house which was built shortly after the house by 1903. This rare-surviving example of its type with knee-wall framing in the upper loft is well preserved. A narrow carriageway door survives, as well as a loft door centered on a façade gable above. This is a significant resource in a neighborhood where other examples depicted in 1903 appear to have disappeared.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Tupper-Rutter house, ca. 1892, was built within a planned residential subdivision recorded in 1886 which fills the blocks flanking Washington Street. This land was owned. The subdivision was generally built out by 1898. The earlier owners of a large amount of real estate in the area, the estate of Thatcher Magoun, were the well-known eponymous ship-builder (1775-1856), his son and namesake (1808-1883), and a third generation, grandson Thatcher Magoun Adams (1837-1919) (see Clemson, *A History of the Development of The Glenwood Section of East Medford*, prepared for the first phase of East Medford survey, 2016, p. 6, for a detailed history and genealogy of the Magoun family).

In 1891 trustees of the Magoun Estate sold the subject property, described as lot 23 of plan 49:13 (1886) reproduced below, to Sarah H. Tupper, the wife of Charles L. Tupper, and her sister, Drusilla F. Rutter. The consideration was \$840, suggesting the land was unimproved at the time, but by the time following year's Sanborn map was prepared, a completed house was depicted (see below). A detailed set of restrictions prohibited a long list of industrial uses and protected the grantees from "forfeiture," but permitted the grantors to enter the property and "abate" any nuisance at the expense of the grantees "without being held responsible for any trespass." Sarah H. (Rutter) Tupper (1857-1926) was the second wife of machinist Charles Lewelling Tupper (1842-1915), a native of East Haddam, CT. Charles Tupper was a Civil War veteran and worked as a machinist for the Wellman Company, 58 Swan Street, Medford, which specialized in machinery for cutting rubber for shoes but also provided engineering and machining for other devices. The company developed a boring bit for railroad car wheels ca. 1911. The Tuppers and Sarah's sister resided at 20 Otis Street throughout the 1890s and 1910s. One daughter from Tupper's first marriage, Annie Isabella (born ca. 1868), married Boston salesman Willard Allen Newell in 1897.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MCSRD 2077:102 (1891); Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage, death; 1900, 1910 Federal Census; regarding Wellman Company: *The India Rubber World* (India Rubber Publishing Co., 1906) p. 200; *American Machinist*, Vol. XXXI (Jan.-Jun., 1908) p. 143; *Railway and Locomotive Engineering*, Vol. XXIV (Jan. 1911) p. 456. The *Boston Daily Globe*, Apr. 2, 1895, p. 71, reported a robbery attempt at the Tupper house. A neighbor, William R. Pattison, chased the burglar, who fired gunshots; Pattison returned shots, indicating both were armed, "neither of the

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After the deaths of her husband and sister, Sarah Tupper sold the house to subsequent owners in 1916. It underwent frequent turnover until 1922, but between 1922 and 1941 it was owned and occupied by Lambert O. and Beatrice H. Nichols. Nichols was a manufacturer of burlap bags. Other subsequent owners included Jerome R. and Julia C. Belair (1941-1965), Joseph W. and Mary G. Penny (1965-1973), and Francis J. and Catherine V McGrath (1973-2000).<sup>2</sup>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps and atlases:

- 1855 H.F. Walling. "Map of Medford...."
- 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 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)

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



View from NE.

shots fired took effect...during the excitement a wicked looking double-edged knife was left behind...The police are of the opinion that it was the work of a novice."

<sup>2</sup> MCSRD 4032:323 (1916); 4376:397 (1920); 4565:481 (1922); 6519:221 (1941); 10949:7 (1965); 12533:318 (1973); 23356:22 (1993); 31177:237 (2000); 41753:227 (2003); 48853:391 (2007); 73782:188 (2019); 76827:580 (2021); 1924 Medford city directory.



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Carriage house from E.

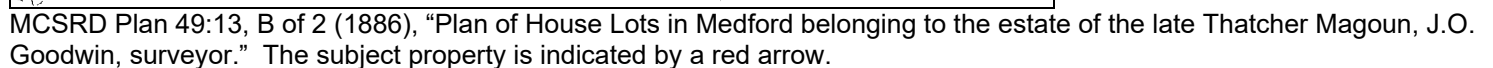


Carriage house from NE. Note early or original wood clapboard siding, doors and trim. The exterior light fixture above the main door is also an early surviving feature. The building appears to rest on wood sleepers.

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1903 Sanborn map depicting the house and new carriage house, indicated by a red arrow. Although this map depicts four lots in single ownership, the history of title supports individual ownership of the lot by Tupper and Rutter.

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*[If appropriate, cut and paste the text below into an inventory form's last continuation sheet.]*

## 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

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Tupper-Rutter House at 20 Otis Street, c.1892, is an integral part of an intact grouping of substantial, suburban single- and multi-family houses constructed during the 1890s on Dudley and Otis streets, which are arranged in a grid street pattern. All distinctive but nicely keyed to each other with modest detailing evocative of the Queen Anne and other late-19<sup>th</sup> century styles, most houses have picturesque massing and footprints. In addition to their varied massing, the houses demonstrate a wide range of housing solutions in terms of plan, circulation, and fenestration, and serve as a physical document illustrating late-19<sup>th</sup>-century housing in both Medford and the broader region. This variety contrasts with the more uniform types of suburban development common in Medford and other similar inner suburbs during a slightly later period. Although some examples documented as part of a 2016 survey project (East Medford Phase I) within the Dudley Street and Otis Street blocks have undergone minor alterations such as porch, siding and window replacement, many retain a substantial degree of integrity of workmanship, design, materials, association, location, setting, and feeling, especially on a collective basis; the quality and integrity of the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Also, although the examples retaining the most integrity are not directly contiguous geographically, being interspersed with buildings that have lost some aspects of integrity, all are in close proximity, and many abut each other. National Register designation of this area could act as a catalyst for the restoration of many less-well-preserved examples within the district that, although they have lost some integrity, are nevertheless worthy of preservation and remain potentially restorable. Areas of significance include architecture, community planning and development, landscape architecture and social history.