

FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

N-14-37

Boston
North

Town/City: Medford

Place: (neighborhood or village): East Medford

Photograph



Address: 58 Myrtle Street

Historic Name: Matthew and Anna L Boothby House

Uses: Present: single-family residential

Original: single-family residential

Date of Construction: 1855-1858

Source: deeds, maps

Style/Form: none discernable/ end house

Architect/Builder: evidently Horatio Williams or William Sinnott

Exterior Material:

Foundation: veneered

Wall/Trim: vinyl/ vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: detached garage

Major Alterations (with dates): Siding, sash and doors, late-20th century.

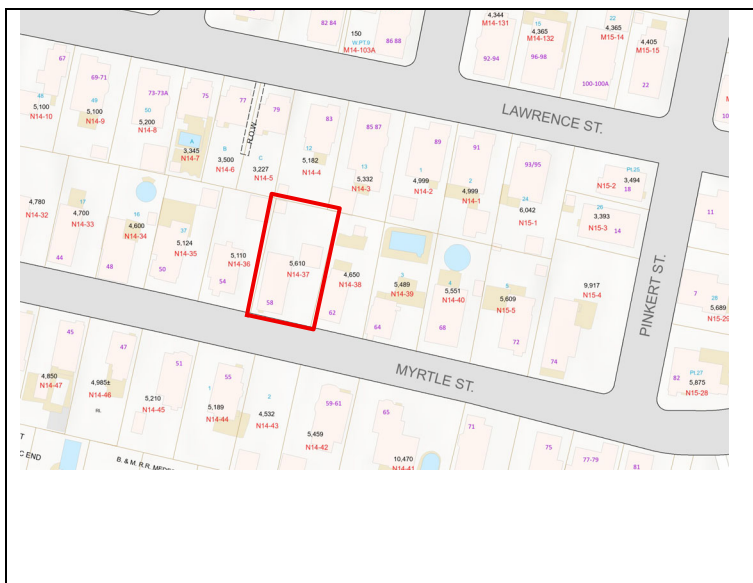
Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ Date:

Acreage: 0.13 acre

Setting: Dense mix of mid-19th century residential use with some industrial and recent high-density residential in-fill.

Locus Map (north is up)



Recorded by: John D. Clemson

Organization: Medford Historical Commission

Date (month / year): October 2025

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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 Boothby House, 1855-1858, is an example of a story-and-a-half gabled end house. The end house form developed during the middle decades of the 19th century, generally thought to have evolved to accommodate Greek Revival temple fronts popular at the time, but were generally adopted to other period styles such as Italianate, Second Empire and Queen Anne. Narrower gabled facades also accommodated themselves to increasingly dense residential developments associated with emerging transportation technology. The historic development of this neighborhood, for example, was driven by access to two depots of the Medford branch of the Boston and Main Railroad that crossed the south bound of this neighborhood (see MDF.958, MDF.88, MDF.AR and MDF.AT).

This house is framed with a knee wall, whereby the plates are placed a half story above the second floor, providing greater headroom within the upper story. The entry sequence within the left (west) of three bays, combined with a stove chimney centered on the right slope near the ridge, suggests a side-hall plan with reception rooms filling the right side. Dimensions of 21 feet wide by 28 feet deep, with a 16-foot-wide by 23-foot-deep rear ell aligned with the left side, suggest a four-room plan with cooking and work spaces in the ell. Interior on-line photos depict a surviving turned, hardwood balustrade in the entrance hall. During the 20th century the re-entrant rear-right corner was enclosed with a lower porch. In this manner this end house strongly resembles the others lining Myrtle Street, resulting in a harmonious and balanced streetscape.

Although covered in vinyl siding and panning, with replaced sash and doors, original finishes or their evidence likely survives underneath. The open soffit eaves with a fairly deep overhang suggest an original Italianate treatment, but other houses within the Myrtle streetscape have been documented as originally having Gothic Revival trim, another possibility here (see MDF.B). Despite minor alterations this house contributes to an exceptionally early ca 1850 planned residential subdivision lining Myrtle Street and reflects planning and construction patterns of its period.

The house is sited near the frontage of its minimal narrow, deep lot. An open garden is surrounded by a low chain-link fence. A drive filling the east side yard leads to a detached, two-bay, hip roofed garage constructed of metal that appears to date to the early to-mid 20th century.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

A history of ownership has established that the subject house was part of a residential development lining Myrtle Street undertaken by carpenter, builder Horatio Williams during the 1850s and 1860s. Williams (1814-1894) is firmly attributed with many of the houses on Myrtle Street recorded as MDF.B. A native of Newfane, Vermont, Williams was active as a builder in Medford with his father, Nahon (1786-1872), and brother Orrison (born ca 1823), all carpenters. Another property at 64 Myrtle Street related to this development was also recently documented that is likely by the hand of his brother, Orrison (MDF.2512). The neighborhood was accessed by the Medford branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad, whose depot off of Spring Street named Glenwood (not extant) provided the common name of the neighborhood between 1847 and the middle of the 20th century (see MDF.958, B&M Medford Branch Right-of-Way and MDF.AR, Glenwood Area). Horatio Williams resided in the neighborhood at 103 Spring Street before moving to Everett.¹

The ownership history of this property has been established to 1852, when Williams took a mortgage from local property owner Elizabeth Bradbury for \$1,547 due in five years at 6%. The description of the collateral, owned by Williams, was 3 acres, 15 square rods and 36 square feet bound by the Medford branch railroad right-of-way to the south (see MDF.958).² Elizabeth (Floyd) Bradbury (1768-1854) was the widow of cooper William Bradbury (1770-1848), both associated with 1 Walnut Street (MDF.176) and large land holders in this neighborhood. In 1858 the administrator of the estate of Elizabeth Bradbury released her mortgage interest in the property, described as 150 feet of frontage on Myrtle including lots 34, 35 and 36, to following owner

¹ See MDF.B; Ancestry.com: vital records, birth, marriage, death; 1850-1870 Federal Census, inclusive.

² MCSRD 636:286 (1852).

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William H Sinnott. The description included "buildings thereon."³ Sinnott (1828-1897), a native of Saco, Maine, was a housewright active in Medford and elsewhere in Middlesex County. Census returns placed him in the immediate neighborhood on Myrtle Street as early as 1855 but evidently not in the subject house based on a comparison of abutting occupants with land ownership maps. His wife was Mary Jane (Boothby, 1830-1897), a native of Buxton, Maine. Circumstances suggest Sinnott could have built the subject house but it was more likely Williams, to whom almost identical houses to the west lining both sides of Myrtle Street are firmly attributed (MDF.B).⁴

In 1860 Sinnott conveyed the subject property to his brother-in-law, teamster Matthew Boothby (1833-1892), a younger brother of his wife, Mary Jane. He owned the property and resided on Myrtle Street until 1882, when, with his wife Anna L Boothby, at the time residing in Lynn, sold it to its subsequent owner. Between 1882 and 1883 the property was owned by a series of three absentee owners, but between 1883 and 1912 was owned and occupied by Isabella (Dunlap) Clifford (1837-1912), a Massachusetts native, and her husband, carpenter Laurin Marston Clifford (1837-1907), a native of Brentwood, NH, but the title was held in her name. In 1910 Isabella Clifford conveyed the property to her daughter, Abbie Caroline Maling, with a life estate. With her husband, lobsterman Israel F Maling, she resided in Kennebunkport, Maine.⁵

By 1918 the house was occupied by Belgian native and cigar maker Cyril, aka Cyrille Heymans (1869-1925) and his wife, Leontine. Although the title was initially held by cigar packer Henry Isemann and his wife Louisa, there is no record of the Isemann's residence in Medford (natives of Germany, they resided in Everett and later Boston). But by 1929 the property was in the ownership of Cyril Heymans. Between 1929 and 1936 the property was owned and occupied by cigar maker Edward Hoppenbrowers (also spelled Hoppenbrouwers) and his wife, Mary. Mary Teresa (Heymans) Hoppenbrowers (born ca 1893) was a daughter of and administrator of previous owner Cyril Heymans' estate.⁶ Both the Heymans and Hoppenbrowers families were members of a group of cigar makers who resided on Myrtle Street during the early 20th century; the 1924 Medford city directory demonstrates that 8 of the 17 residents of the nearby subdivision (MDF.B) were cigar makers with surnames that suggested a Flemish origin. Records identified their employer as Waitt & Bond Company, a major Boston manufacturer of cigars established in 1870 by Charles Henry Bond (1846-1908) and Henry Waitt. The firm's plant was located within the Blackstone Block and it adopted "Blackstone" as a brand name. According to several sources the firm recruited a large number of Belgian refugees in ca 1917 to hand-make cigars in their factory, a highly skilled occupation. One source suggests many of these workers held Socialist leanings; another source (Cooper) confirms that many were members of the CMIU, Cigar Makers' International Union of America. Cooper's account also describes the skills required of cigar makers in great detail.⁷

In 1918...Waitt & Bond, Inc., found themselves facing a serious labor situation. They operated in Boston the largest cigar factory in the world under one roof, their principal brand, 'Blackstone,' had been known to smokers for half a century, their sales in 1918 reached the respectable total of some 73,000,000 cigars. They suffered under the handicap of operating in a city where the industry was 100% unionized. This condition had been aggravated by the importation early in the war of several hundred expert cigar-makers who were refugees from Belgium. These brought with them not only expert skill at the trade but a generous measure of extreme socialist ideas. The \$45 a week average wage that they were able to earn under the union scale represented an increase of several hundred per cent over their wage in Belgium, but this merely increased their eagerness for a more generous split with their employers.⁸

According to the *Boston Globe*, Waitt & Bond's workforce struck in July of 1919 over wages and walked off in defiance of their parent union, CMIU: "They have since rejected every offer of compromise and now propose to open a cigar factory upon a

³ Although this deed, MCSRD 805:258 (1858) references plan 4B:64, the available plan is evidently not complete, depicting only lots 1 through 30.

⁴ MCSRD 802:258 (1858); Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage, death; 1860-1880 Federal Census, inclusive; 1855-1865 Massachusetts State Census.

⁵ MCSRD 832:410 (1860); 1575:65 (1882); 1611:118 (1882); 1616:9 (1882); 1623:202-204 (1883); Ancestry.com: vital records, death; 1900 Federal Census.

⁶ MCSRD 3754:521 (1912); 5348:558-559 (1929); Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage, death (Mary Teresa Heymans, born ca 1893, was initially married to Belgian native and cigar maker Adrien Luyts, 1885-1923, and second to Edward Hoppenbrowers); 1930 Federal Census; 1930, 1938 Medford city directories. Edward Hoppenbrouwers (1888-1976) served in World War I between 1917 and 1919 with the rank of private, 1st class (Ancestry.com: US Headstone Applications for Military Veterans).

⁷ Patricia A. Cooper, *Once a Cigar Maker, Men, Women, and Work Culture in American Cigar Factories, 1900-1919* (University of Illinois Press, 1987).

⁸ "Can the Cigar Come Back?: A Great Industry in Process of Evolution," *Barron's* (April 21, 1924) pp. 3 and 5.

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cooperative basis." Waitt & Bond immediately abandoned their "almost new half-million-dollar factory on Columbus av," moving to Newark, New Jersey to open an automated factory producing machine-made cigars, abandoning hand-made manufacturing permanently, where "women only will be employed...[and] the union label will no longer appear on the company's product." The fate of Medford's Belgian cigar makers is not yet known.⁹

In 1937 the subject property was acquired by Fannie M Ellis from the Medford Co-Op Bank, who had foreclosed on the Hoppenbrowers family the previous year. Fannie M Ellis (various dates, early 1890s – 1957) held African American heritage. Her parents Thomas T and Edith E (Pedford) were natives of Winston-Salem North Carolina. Until 1930 she resided with her sister and brother-in-law, May and George W Broome, at 23 Clayton Avenue in West Medford. By 1938 she resided at the subject property with her nephew Charles E Broome (1906-1993). Fannie Ellis did not have an occupation; her nephew Charles Broome worked as a laborer and construction worker. During World War II Broome's employer was C&R Construction Company, 75 Bradeen Street, Roslindale, and in 1950 the Templeton Company. In 1993 Charles Broome conveyed the property to himself and Linda L Keene, who remains the owner of record.¹⁰

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.

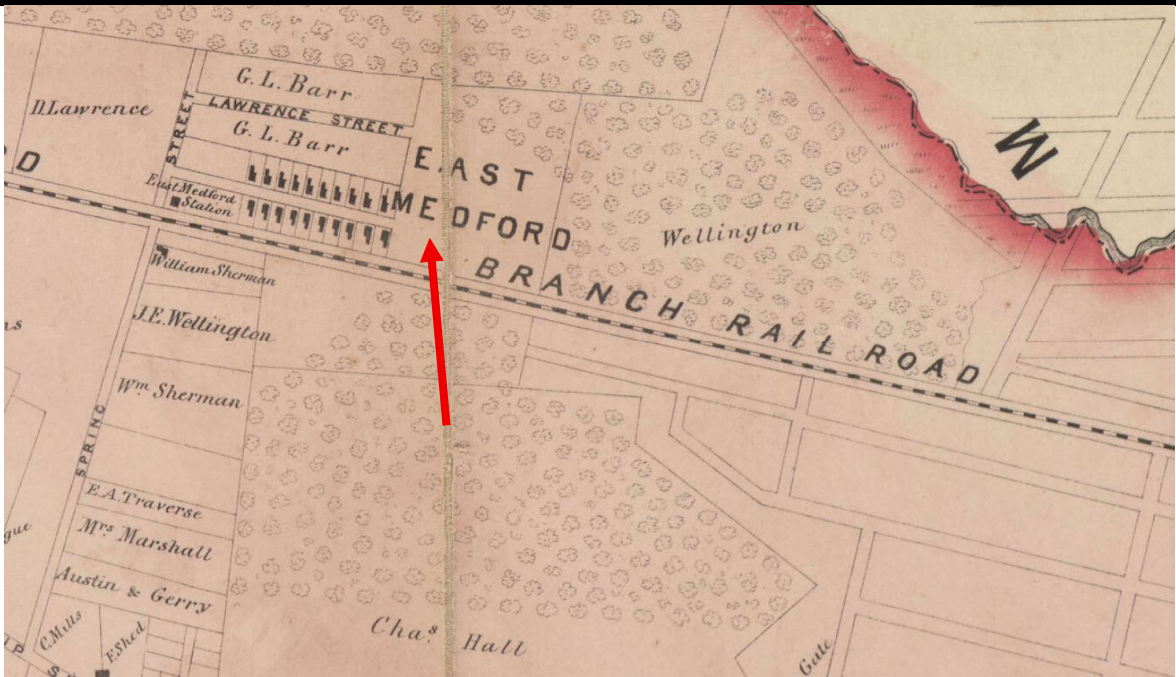
Ancestry.com: see footnotes

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)

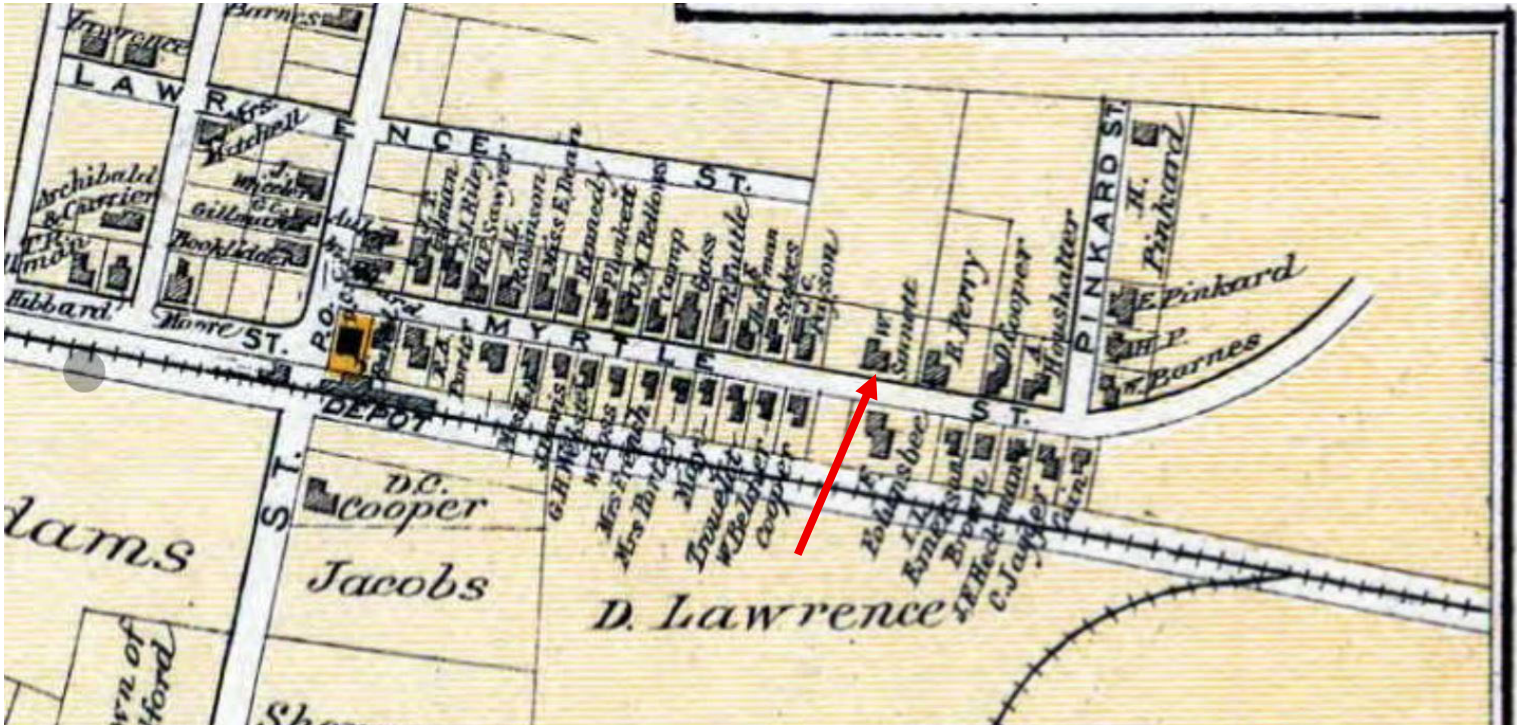
Middlesex County South Registry of Deeds, in notes as MCSRD book:page (date).

⁹ *Boston Daily Globe*, Aug. 14, 1919, p. 2, "Waitt & Bond, Inc, to Leave Boston, Labor Troubles Cause of Removal to Newark, Old Cigar Firm, Before the Strike, Employed 1,200 Hands Here;" Jul. 5, 1908, p. 9, "Bond Drowns in Bathtub, No Suicide Evidence, Says Pinkham. End Comes at Splendid Summer Home on North Shore. Wide Business Interests and Patron of Art." See also "When Labor Goes Too Far," Manufacturing and Industrial Management, *Business Digest and Investment Weekly* (Jul. 2, 1920) p. 835.

¹⁰ MCSRD 6002:214 (1936); 6149:77-78 (1937); 6632:255-256 (1942); 8793:543 (1956); 8905:251-252 (1957); 23057:164-165 (1993); Ancestry.com: 1920-1950 Federal Census, inclusive; 1938 Medford city directory; World War II Draft Registration Card, Charles Ellis Broome.



1855 Walling Medford map depicting the Myrtle Street subdivision of Horatio Williams just to the west. The subject building is approximately where the E in Medford is located. North is up.



1875 Beers county atlas showing the initial depiction of 58 Myrtle labeled "W. Sinnott."

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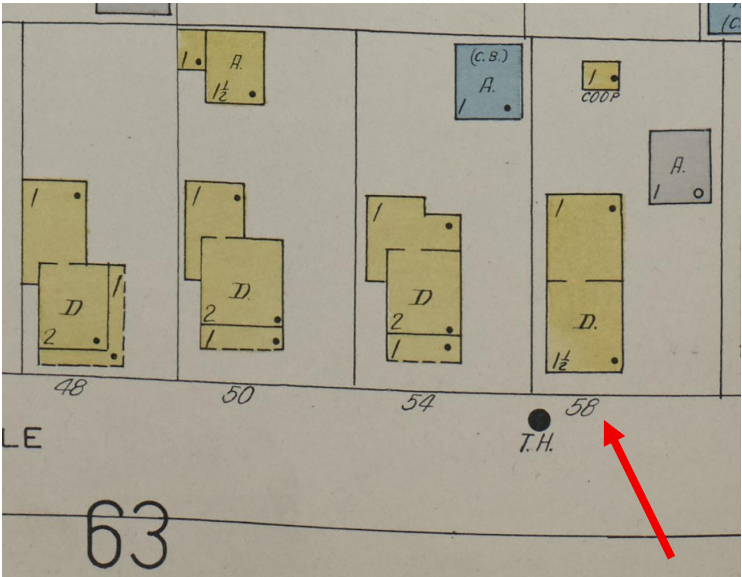
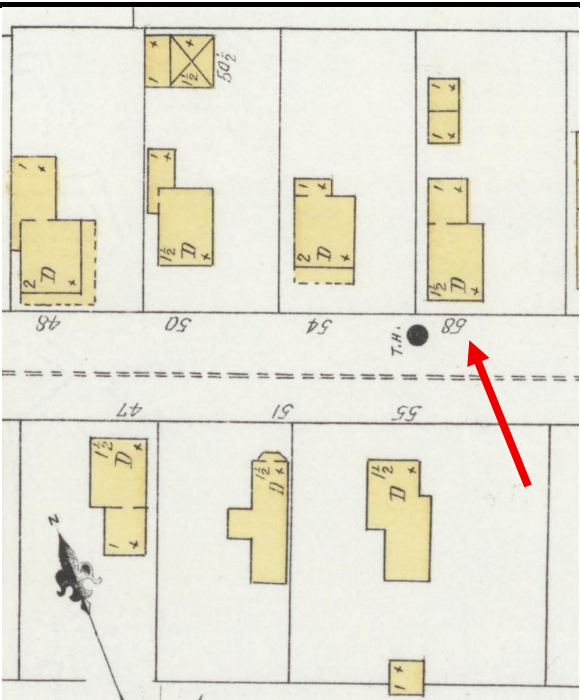
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1903 Sanborn, left, and 1950, right, showing the evolution of the site and buildings.



Photography by Medford HC member Ryan Hayward, October 2025.

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Assessor



Google street view depicting detached metal garage.

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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 Boothby House at 58 Myrtle Street, 1855-1858, would contribute to a potential National Register District that would include a generally intact streetscape constructed between ca 1850 and 1860 lining both sides of Myrtle Street between Spring Street to the west and Pinkert Street to the east. This remarkably uniform streetscape of diminutive gabled end houses includes a planned residential subdivision recorded as MDF.B. In addition to its distinctive built landscape retaining integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, feeling and association, it is associated with its builders, members of the Williams family, carpenters and housewrights, credited with the neighborhood's design and development. Although collectively these buildings lack integrity of materials, original building fabric or its evidence likely survives beneath 20th century layers of change such as aluminum and vinyl siding. In addition, evidence suggests that during the early 20th century between ca 1917 and 1940 this neighborhood was almost uniformly occupied by a group of Belgian cigar makers recruited by the Waitt & Bond Cigar Company. The experience of these highly skilled workers and their labor struggles with their employer reflect a conflict between their socialist ideals and the interests of capital during this period that deserves further research. These aspects of the area support listing under criteria A and C. Areas of significance include architecture, community planning and development, and social history.