

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

L-02-27	Boston North		
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**Town/City:** Medford

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

## Photograph



**Address:** 17 Sharon Street

**Historic Name:** Gooch Tenant House

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

Original: single-family residential

**Date of Construction:** 1872-1889

**Source:** deeds, maps

**Style/Form:** not discernable/ end house

**Architect/Builder:** evidently Joseph L Gooch, builder

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: not visible

Wall/Trim: vinyl/ vinyl

Roof: asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** none

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): Siding, sash and door replacement; window opening alteration, 20<sup>th</sup> century.

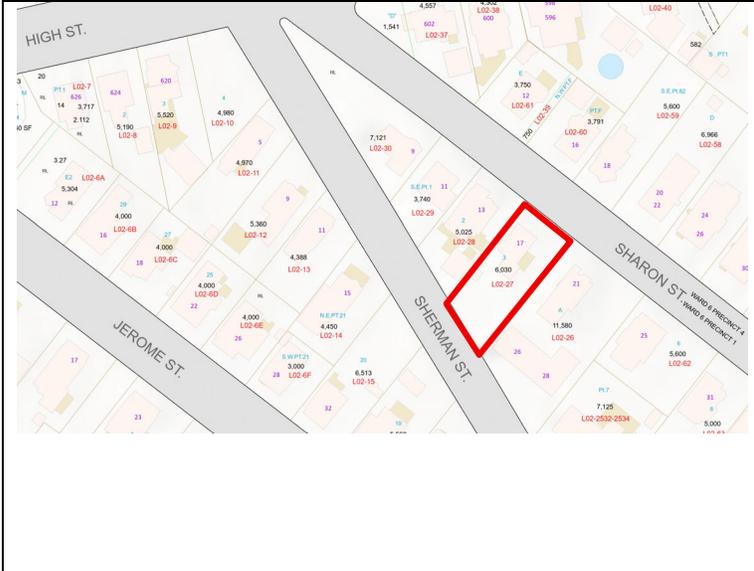
**Condition:** fair

**Moved:** no  **yes**  **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.14 acre

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

## Locus Map (*north is up*)



**Recorded by:** John D. Clemson

**Organization:** Medford Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): January 2026

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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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 Gooch Tenant House, built ca 1872-1889, is an example of the end house type massed in a story-and-a-half under a steeply pitched front gable. The house is also massed with a knee-wall, whereby the main eave plate is placed a half story above the second floor. This is indicative of "balloon" framing, characterized by joists tied to the sides of side-elevation studs that extend to the main plate, supported by a thin ledger board. Additional massing is provided by an off-set ell under a lower gable that extends from the left (east) side, and a single-story rectangular bay under a shed in the rear pile on the right side. A shed wall dormer on the left side is likely a later addition. Dimensions are 21 feet wide by 28 feet deep, with a 15-foot-square rear ell. The main entrance in the right bay of the façade and an expanse of blank wall beyond in the right elevation suggests a side-hall plan with a stair and a kitchen, accessed by a forward-facing rear door in the ell.

A vinyl siding, door replacement, and the alteration of the first-story-façade windows with a tri-part "picture" window precludes a stylistic analysis, although the rear-right bay, with an open-soffit shed roof, is suggestive of what is known as Stick styling. Two-over-two sash may survive elsewhere in standard openings, two symmetrically arranged in the upper façade and in a regular pattern in the left elevation.

Landscaping of this minimal lot includes open lawn and foundation plantings. A concrete walk leads to a brick stoop, which is integrated into a two-tier concrete-block planting bed that surrounds the front and left side, where it meets a concrete patio filling the left-rear re-entrant angle. The left side yard is filled by an asphalt-pave drive.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The Gooch Tenant House was constructed within a planned residential subdivision dating to 1855 known as the Smith Estate. The developer of this early, large subdivision was merchant Thomas P. Smith of Roxbury. The area had previously, during the 17<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, been part of the large holdings in West Medford of several generations of the Brooks family.<sup>1</sup> By the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century much of the Smith Estate subdivision had come under the ownership of Samuel S Holton of Winchester and other partners, who reorganized the Smith plan in 1870, adding streets and increasing density by creating much smaller lots. In 1872 Holton sold this lot, described as number 3 on plan 17B:51, B of 2, recorded in 1870. The grantee was Joseph L Gooch of Medford. The history of this house suggests it remained, with a few exceptions, in absentee ownership and rented to tenants.<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Lowe Gooch (1849-1933), a native of Lyman, Maine, was a prominent building contractor active in Middlesex County during the fourth quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Circumstances suggest he built the subject house; it was initially depicted on the 1889 Walker county atlas, so it is not possible to determine precisely when, but likely after Gooch's 1872 acquisition. With his wife, Sarah A (Dennis, born ca 1852) and six sons, he lived in West Medford at what is currently 28 Brooks Street during the period he owned the subject property between 1872 and 1893, likely renting it to tenants who have not been identified. Gooch, according to an account of his life published at the time of his death in 1933, can be attributed with prominent commissions throughout Middlesex County that included Winchester Town Hall (71 Mount Vernon Street, WNT.150, NR IND); Brooks School, West Medford (not extant, replaced by a new building at 388 High Street); Malden YMCA; Abington Savings Bank; Concord Savings Bank; Angier Chemical Company of Boston; "and many large industrial plants including the building of the Forbes Lithograph Company at Revere and the Boston Rubber Shoe Company's plant at Fell's (Malden and Melrose) besides buildings in various parts of New England."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed discussion of the Brooks family and their holdings can be found with Oak Grove Cemetery, Playstead Road, MDF.801; Thomas Brooks Park, Grove Street, MDF.966; and Pomp's Wall, Grove Street, MDF.905.

<sup>2</sup> MCSRD 1216:252 (1872).

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage; 1890 Medford city directory; 1900 Federal Census; *The Hopewell News*, "Virginia's Inland Ocean-Port" Mar. 28, 1933.

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Between 1893 and 1901 the house, acquired from short-term owner Lewis H Lovering, another prominent Medford building contractor (see Medford Women's Club, 17 Governors Avenue, MDF.1103), was owned and occupied by Annie Sarah and George Hughes (1860-1932); George Hughes worked as a locksmith.<sup>4</sup> Between 1901 and 1919 the house was owned by Irish native Patrick J Condon (born ca 1857) and his wife, Annie, a daughter of Irish natives. Condon worked as a brass molder, possibly at the brass foundry of William P Clark on Main Street (see Hancock Subdivision, MDF.BD). While they owned the subject property the Condon family resided at 18 Sharon, directly across the street. In 1910 Condon's tenant at 17 Sharon was the family of house carpenter James J Beaudreu (born ca 1874 in Canada), his wife, Delia, three children, sister-in-law Katherine O'Tool, a garment stitcher, and lodger Lulu Campbell, a chocolate dipper in a candy factory.<sup>5</sup>

Between 1919 and 1935 the property was owned by Asa M Ross of Thompson, Connecticut. His tenants included, according to directory listings, Frank A and Adelaide Plotner during much of the 1920s. Plotner worked as a foreman at HP Hood at 422 High Street, which served as a distribution center for the home delivery of their dairy products before it was moved to 7 Canal Street in the following decade (see MDF.724). During the 1930s, when the house was owned by the Suburban Management Company and others, the house remained vacant. Subsequent ownership was generally short term with the exception of Dorothy Mabel Gallagher, owner 1948-1971; Karl V and Kathleen E Farmer (1973-1986); and Conrado Vellve (1986-1999), who sold to the current owners of record.<sup>6</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. Stady & Co., *Atlas of the City of Medford....*
- 1900 Geo. W. Stady & 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).

<sup>4</sup> MCSRD 2210:228 (Jul. 1893); 2211:442 (Aug. 1893); Ancestry.com: 1900 Federal Census.

<sup>5</sup> MCSRD 2937:108 (1901); Ancestry.com: 1900, 1910 Federal Census; 1902, 1905, 1907 Medford city directories.

<sup>6</sup> MCSRD 4280:59 (1919); 5955:315 (1935); 6035:598 (1936); 6293:302 (1939, foreclosure); 6420:584 (1940); 6940:285 (1946); 7244:288 (1948); 12009:130 (1971); 12213:268 (1972, foreclosure); 12242:268 (1972); 12372:119 (1973); 16804:336 (1986); 31055:479 (1999); 62566:529 (2013); Regarding Frank A and Adelaide L Plotner: Ancestry.com: 1924-1938 Medford city directories, inclusive.

**INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET**

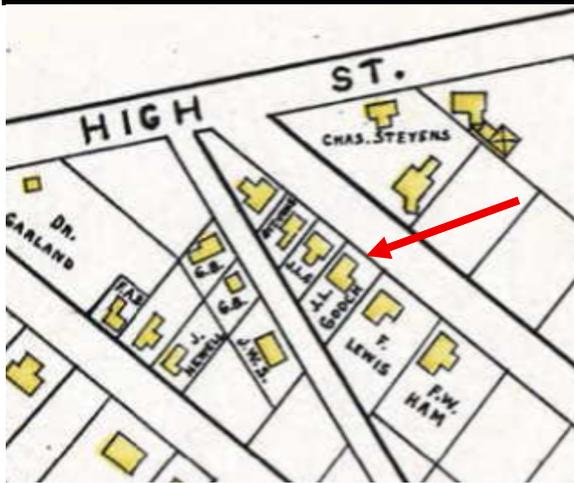
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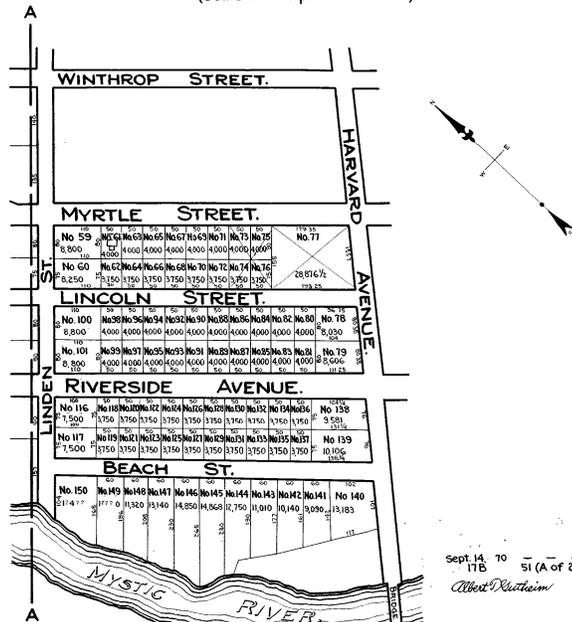
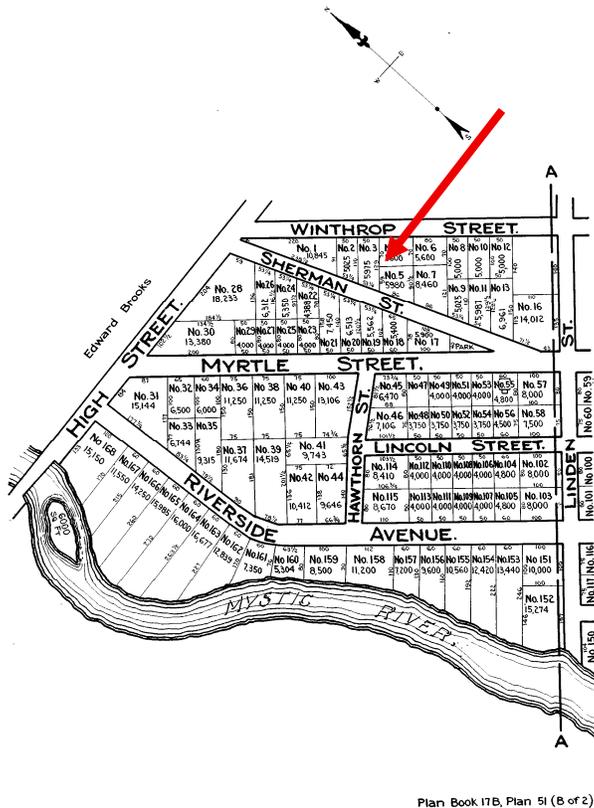
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The initial depiction of the house on the 1889 Walker county atlas labeled “JL Gooch,” indicated by a red arrow. North is up.

Plan of Building Lots  
in  
**W. MEDFORD, MASS.**  
(Being a portion of the Smith Estate)  
To be sold at auction  
on  
Monday Sept 5<sup>th</sup> 1870  
at 3 o'clock P.M.  
Cars leave Boston & Lowell R.R Depot at 2.30 P.M.  
Scale, 100 feet = 1 inch Aug. 1870  
Josiah Hovey Surveyor  
Woburn

(Original on file.)  
(Scale of this plan: 1 in. = 150 ft.)



MCSR Plan 17B:51 A-B (1870) depicting the Holton subdivision plan of part of the Smith Estate of 1855. The subject property, described as lot 3, is indicated by a red arrow. Note that Wintthrop Street was later renamed Sharon, and that north is upper left.

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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 Gooch Tenant House at 17 Sharon Street, ca. 1881, is located within a planned residential subdivision known as the Smith Estate dating to 1855. This subdivision was largely reorganized and developed by later owner Samuel S. Holton and others in 1870. This house was owned and evidently built by prominent Middlesex County building contractor Joseph Lowe Gooch. According to an account of his life published at the time of his death in 1933, Gooch can be attributed with prominent commissions that included Winchester Town Hall (71 Mount Vernon Street, WNT.150, NR IND); Brooks School, West Medford (not extant, replaced by a new building at 388 High Street); Malden YMCA; Abington Savings Bank; Concord Savings Bank; Angier Chemical Company of Boston; "and many large industrial plants including the building of the Forbes Lithograph Company at Revere and the Boston Rubber Shoe Company's plant at Fell's (Malden and Melrose) besides buildings in various parts of New England."<sup>7</sup> The neighborhood was documented in 2012 by Grover and Larson using individual MHC Inventory forms. This documentation effort centered largely on Jerome and to a lesser extent on Lincoln and Arlington streets. All were recommended for listing as a district that could fill the blocks of West Medford bounded by High Street (west), Boston Avenue (north) and the Mystic River (south and east).

The subject property would contribute to a historic district "that is significant for its representation of an early railroad suburb where a sizeable number of African American families formed a distinguishable community at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century." The area, organized in a grid street plan platted with minimal lots, retains many similar examples of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century design in diverse but harmonious streetscapes. It retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Applicable criteria include A and C for its architecture and associations. Areas of significance include architecture, community planning and development, ethnic heritage and social history.

<sup>7</sup> Ancestry.com: vital records, marriage; 1890 Medford city directory; 1900 Federal Census; *The Hopewell News*, "Virginia's Inland Ocean-Port" Mar. 28, 1933.