



## CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139  
Telephone: 617 349 4683 Fax: 617 349 3116 TTY: 617 349 6112  
E-mail: [histcomm@cambridgema.gov](mailto:histcomm@cambridgema.gov) URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>



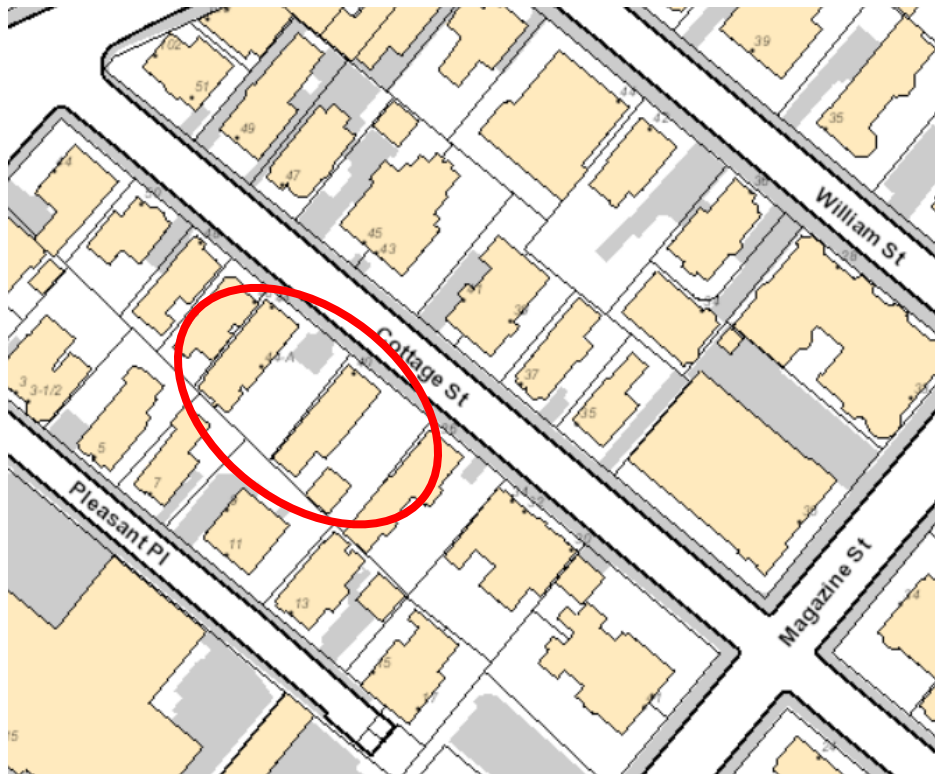
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December 30, 2016

To: Members of the Historical Commission  
From: Charles Sullivan  
Re: 40 and 44 Cottage Street, Evaluation for Landmark Designation Study

### Background

On December 21, 2016 the Commission received petitions requesting the initiation of landmark designation studies of the buildings at 40 and 44 Cottage Street. Pending confirmation from the Election Commission that the petitions contain the names of at least ten registered voters, the staff placed the matter on the agenda of the January 5 meeting of the Commission.



40 and 44 Cottage Street

Cambridge GIS

The Commission may accept the petitions immediately, or may simply acknowledge their receipt. In either case the Commission should vote to schedule a public hearing at its next meeting on February 2. Once the petitions are accepted the buildings will be protected for up to twelve months while the commission considers designation and prepares a recommendation to the City Council.



40 and 44 Cottage Street

CHC staff photo

### 40 and 44 Cottage Street

Cottage Street was laid out in 1816, five years after the opening of the River Street bridge, but saw no development for another twenty years. The first house on this block was no. 24 at the corner of Magazine Street, which was constructed in 1838. This was soon followed by the two Greek Revival cottages at 40 and 44 Cottage Street in 1839. Most of the street was built up between 1840 and 1870, with a few infill three-deckers around the turn of the twentieth century.

In May 1839 architect William Hovey and housewright Leonard Markham purchased a parcel of land on Cottage Street measuring 126' wide by 83' deep from Abraham Watson and others. They quickly designed and built 40 and 44 Cottage Street and sold them later that year to Andrew H. Newell, a Boston merchant, and to William Page, a merchant who became a banker. Hovey and Markham collaborated on 48 Cottage Street as well as several other houses on nearby Green and William streets. The cottages at 40 and 44 Cottage Street are important examples of the Greek Revival style as applied to the workers' cottage form, and are considered to have given the street its name.

The house at 40 Cottage Street was found significant and preferably preserved in March 2016. The owners subsequently revised their plans so that only the ell would be demolished and rebuilt, and the Commission suspended the delay in August. An application to the Board of Zoning Appeal ended recently with a withdrawal by the applicants, who cannot reapply for two years.

## Landmark Criteria and Goals

Landmarks are enacted by the City Council upon recommendation of the Historical Commission. The Commission commences a landmark designation study process by its own initiative or by voting to accept a petition of ten registered voters.

The criteria provided in the ordinance outlines eligible properties as:

any property within the city being or containing a place, structure, feature, or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the City or the Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures... (2.78.180.A)

The purpose of landmark designation is described in the ordinance, which was enacted to,

preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of neighborhoods, sites and structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such neighborhoods, areas, or structures; and by furthering these purposes to promote the public welfare by making the city a more desirable place in which to live and work. (2.78.140)

## Relationship to Criteria

The Hovey & Markham cottages meet criterion (1) for their association with the economic and social history of Cambridge. They also meet criterion (2) as being architecturally significant examples of the Greek Revival style. The staff considers them eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Staff Recommendations

The Hovey & Markham cottages are excellent examples of the Greek Revival style that represented an early phase of suburban development in the Cambridgeport neighborhood. They are flanked by other houses of similar age and style. Both individually and as a group, these houses positively contribute to the historic character of the street and the neighborhood.

For the reasons stated, the staff believes that the Hovey & Markham cottages are eligible for landmark designation. However, the owners' intentions for 40 Cottage are unclear, as is whether landmarking is warranted at this time. The Commission should consider whether initiating a designation study would be effective in accomplishing the long-term preservation of the buildings.

cc: Roy Russell, Jr. and Robin Chase  
Charlie Allen