



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: September 25, 2020
To: Cambridge Historical Commission
From: Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner
Re: D-1558: 9-11 Jackson Street (by 1872)

An application to demolish the three-family house at 9-11 Jackson Street was received on September 10, 2020. The applicant, Greg Matteosian of Design Synergy Group, LLC, was notified of an initial determination of significance, and a public hearing was scheduled for October 1, 2020.

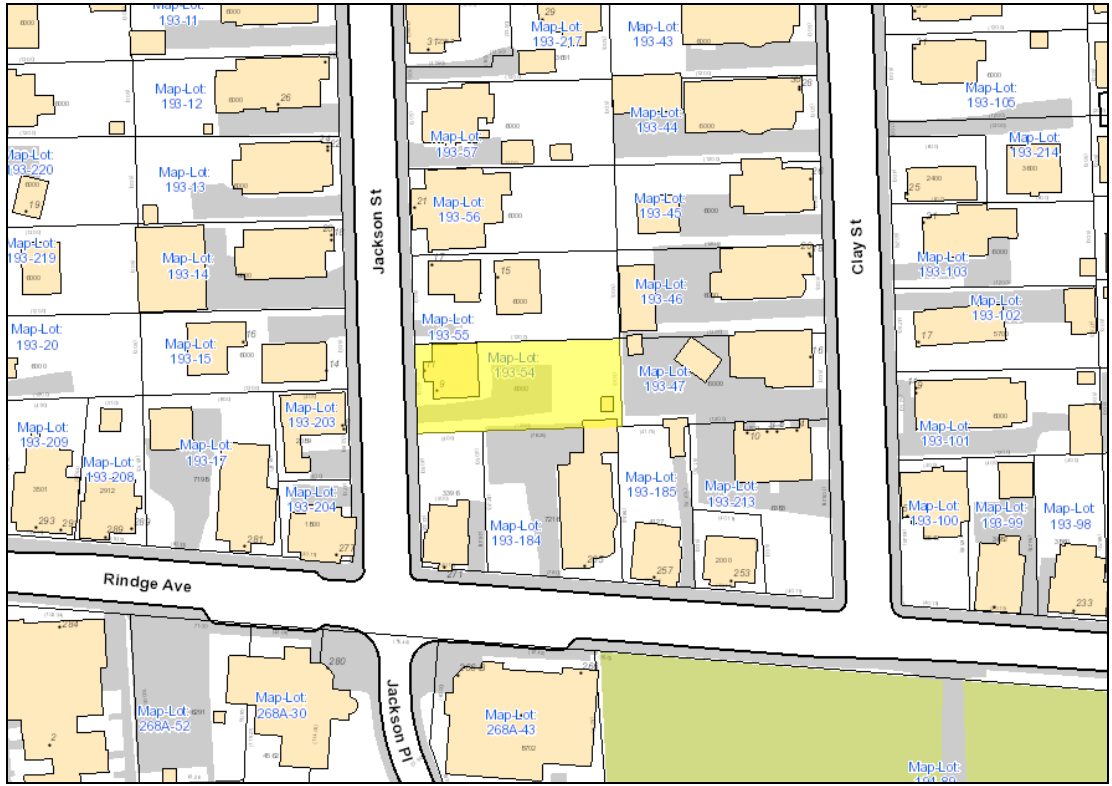


9-11 Jackson Street, Assessor's photo, 2013

Description and Current Condition

The structure is a two-story, frame dwelling located on the east side of Jackson Street in the block near the corner of Rindge Avenue. The lot measures 6,000 square-foot lot (Assessor's Map 193/Lot 54) and is located in a Residence B zoning district. The Residence B district permits two-family construction and has a height limit of 35 feet and a Floor Area Ratio of 0.50 (0.35 FAR for that portion of the lot exceeding 5,000).

The assessed value of the land and building, according to the online assessor's property database, is \$1,023,000.



Assessor's Map, Cambridge GIS, 2018. (9-11 Jackson Street highlighted in yellow)



9-11 Jackson St., Nearmap aerial view, 2020 (Rindge Ave is at bottom of this view).

The house sits close to the street and very near the northern property line. A curb cut and driveway are located to the south of the house. Tax records and early atlases indicate that the house was moved to this location in 1872. The gable-roofed house is situated with its flank side toward the street. It measures 30' wide by 25' deep. The front is centered on the west elevation and is enclosed by a gable-roofed entrance addition. In 1877, when the house was measured and sketched by a city engineer, the front steps extended straight out toward the street.

The exterior of the house is in good condition though the vinyl siding obscures most of the original building materials. An interior inspection has not been made. The owner proposes to construct two detached homes with two at grade parking spaces. Plans are on file.

Architectural Description

The house at 9-11 Jackson Street is a two-story frame house on a high brick basement. There are presently two front entrances, one to unit 9 at grade and one to units 11A and 11B at the first floor. The house is covered with yellow vinyl siding and the windows are mostly vinyl 1-over-1 replacement units. The brick has been painted gray. A one-story shed addition is located at the back of the house, as is a dormer and roof deck. The house is organized into three bays wide and two bays deep. The fenestration is symmetrical with two windows on each floor on either side of a center entrance on the front elevation. Each side elevation has two evenly spaced windows per floor. One window was replaced with a three-part window on the north side wall but otherwise the original pattern remains.

Several architectural characteristics speak to a construction date of the early nineteenth century, possibly the 1810s or 20s. These include the small size of the second-floor windows on the front elevation, the way these windows are flush with the cornice, a very minimal projection of the eaves and a transom light over the original front door (which has since been covered by the entrance vestibule).



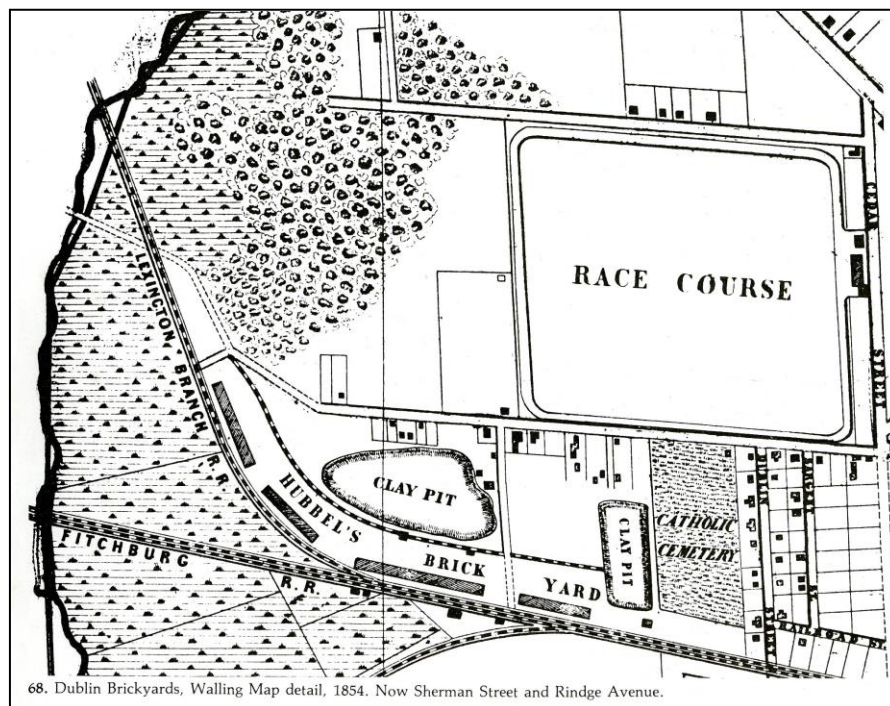
9-11 Jackson Street, CHC photo, 2020

It's not clear exactly how the interior of the house is arranged but it was a three-family house by at least 1929. The house had been numbered 6 Jackson until about 1928 when it was renumbered 9-11.

History

The 1842 extension of the Charlestown Branch Railroad from Miller's River to Fresh and Spy Ponds opened up North Cambridge for the brick industry and for suburban development. Several subdivisions were platted in the 1840s and early 1850s by owners of the brickyards to accommodate the mostly-Irish worker population.

By the mid-1850s most available land near the brickyards on Kidder's Lane (now Rindge Avenue) had been platted for residential development. The only remaining large parcel was the Race Course, fifty acres of flat land west of Cedar Street bounded by Harvey Street on the north and Rindge Avenue on the south. Opened in 1837, the Race Course operated on a seasonal basis during the 1840s, catering to cattle drovers and Cambridge traders and hosting a variety of racing events, the most popular being horse trotting, which was a competition of the horses' endurance not just their speed. Transportation via omnibus was available from Harvard Square.

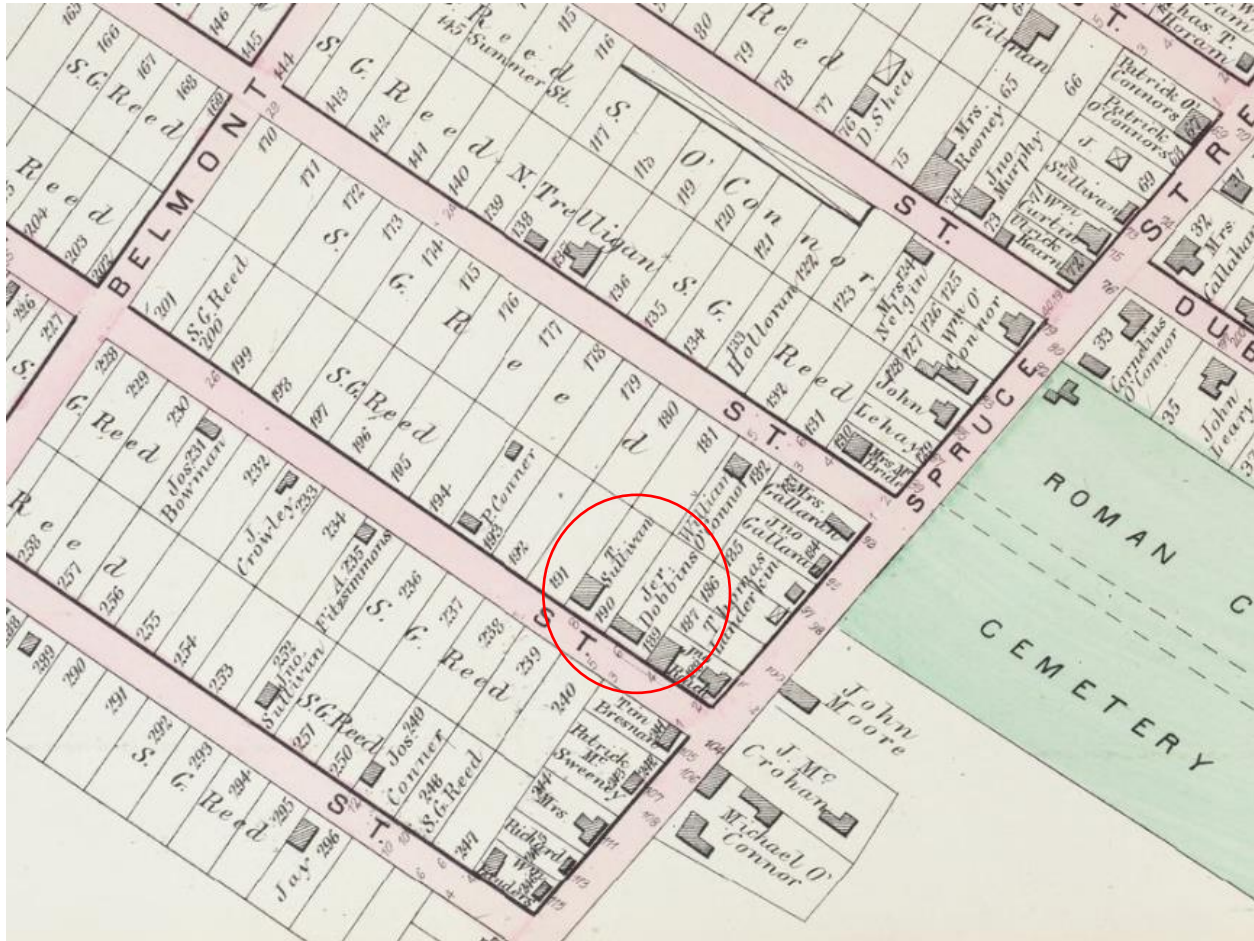


Detail of the Walling map of 1854, showing the location of the race course, later subdivided for residential development.

As the suburban population of North Cambridge grew, the Race Course area came increasingly under pressure for reuse. The flat land of the course was perfectly suited for residential development, and in 1855 owners Kidder and Reed divided the parcel into 275 house lots, the largest residential subdivision in North Cambridge. Five new north-south streets were created between Harvey Street and Rindge Avenue. From east to west, they were Reed, Montgomery, Clay, Jackson, and Clifton streets.

The house lots were first marketed to middle-class Irish in Boston and Charlestown, and half the lots were soon sold, but only three of the buyers built houses on their lots. Kidder & Reed found a much more receptive market when they redirected sales toward Cambridge brickyard laborers. The areas closest to the brickyards were the first to be developed. The interior streets, such as Clay and Jackson streets, remained

sparsely populated until after the Civil War. A number of houses were built along Dudley Street (then Belmont Street) when it was put through in 1870, but the Panic of 1873 abruptly terminated residential construction in the area. Another building boom occurred in the 1890s, when an influx of French Canadians arrived to work in the brickyards and other nearby industries.



Hopkins atlas, Plate G, 1873. 9-11 Jackson is identified with the owner's name spelled "Jer. Dobbins" in this case.

Jackson Street was part of Kidder and Reed's subdivision laid out in uniform 6000 square foot (50 x 120) lots. By 1873, only six houses had been built on this block of Jackson Street (not counting the buildings facing Rindge Avenue (then Spruce Street)).

Jeremiah Davein purchased lot 189 of the Kidder & Reed subdivision from Samuel G. Reed in 1872, as recorded in a deed in book 1206, page 227. Note that the spelling of his surname varies widely and includes these variations: Davein, Dobbins, Davin, Devine, Devans, and Devens. The family seems to have settled on the spelling Davin by the late 1870s. Jeremiah was taxed in 1872 for "1 ho. moving brick base't" on lot 189. He purchased the lot for \$480 and took out a \$500 mortgage from Samuel F. Woodbridge, a cattle broker with considerable land holdings in North Cambridge. This could serve as a clue to the house's original location, but I am unable to find documentation in the newspapers to solve this mystery.

Davin is listed in city directories as a laborer. He and his wife, Honora ("Nanno"), were born in Ireland in about 1815 and 1820 respectively. After immigrating to America they had a daughter, Mary, and two sons, Thomas and William. Thomas worked as a house painter and William worked in a pottery. Jeremiah died of Tuberculosis in 1883

at the age of 67. The family moved to nearby Dublin Street (now Sherman Street) by 1890.

The property was acquired by William E. Stacey by 1893. William was a carpenter and a labor activist. He ran for the Board of Alderman on the Socialist Labor party in the 1890s. Mrs. Mary Stacey was granted a divorce from William in 1914, his address being listed as unknown in the court papers. Their children included Edward, Fank, and John. He sought but lost a seat as a state representative in 1938. He had worked in the local office of the Works Progress Administration.

Significance and Recommendation

The Davin-Stacey House at 9-11 Jackson Street is an early nineteenth century house relocated to the Race Course subdivision in 1872 by an upwardly mobile Irish immigrant family. It is the staff recommendation that the Commission find the house significant in terms of Chapter 2.78.080 of the Municipal Code, for its important associations with the architectural and social history of the city. It is an example of a recycled building moved from one location to another and kept in constant use, which speaks to the value of building materials in the nineteenth century. The associations with the Staceys are significant for the family's political activism and support for unionized labor.

The proposed new construction should be evaluated and public testimony heard before making a further determination.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services
Greg Matteosian
Robert Linn