

UNION #2 ENGINE HOUSE
787-789 MAIN STREET

LANDMARK DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT
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CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
AUGUST 14, 1989

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Union #2 Engine House is significant as the oldest intact fire station in the city. Built in the Italianate style, it is a good example of the simple but sturdy buildings the city constructed for its first municipal institutions. Historically, Engine #2 is associated with the Union #2 fire company, one of the city's original three fire companies, established in 1832, and with the settlement and growth of the Cambridgeport neighborhood.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address

Union #2 Engine House is located at 787-789 Main Street in the Cambridgeport section of the city. It occupies parcel 9 of assessors' map 74, a lot of 9,900 square feet with dimensions of 34 feet x 93 feet. Sited with its narrow end toward Main Street, the property is zoned Business A (BA), allowing for a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.0 and a maximum height of 35 feet. Business, neighborhood retail, and office uses are allowed; residential uses are governed as per Residence C-2 zoning. C-2 would allow for multiple-family uses with an FAR of 1.75 and a maximum height of 85 feet.

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The Christian Mission Holiness Church is the present owner of the structure. This religious society purchased the property on December 8, 1916 (book 4107, page 430) and has owned and occupied the building ever since. It has been used since that time as a sanctuary for the church's worship.

C. Area Description

Engine #2 stands in an area characterized by a variety of uses and building types. The north side of Main Street and Bishop Allen Drive are zoned Business A, and a mix of retail buildings, including restaurants, a night club, small businesses and parking lots, are interspersed with a few remaining residential structures. Opposite on Main Street is an Industrial B zone, with large reinforced concrete factories of the early 20th century lining much of the south side of the street. At Main and Windsor Streets are the Newtowne Court apartments, a brick public housing complex constructed 1936-38. Just west of the engine house, at Lafayette Square, is the Central Square Business B zone, with three-, four- and five-story commercial buildings. Vacant lots, now used for parking, punctuate the blocks between Windsor and Columbia Streets. North of the engine house are the remaining blocks of a small-scale early to mid-19th-century neighborhood of vernacular frame workers' houses, the remnant of the earliest-settled portion of Cambridgeport. To the south is a large tract of cleared land slated for the University Park research and development complex.

D. Planning Issues

There are two major issues that are likely to have an impact on the engine house. The first is the ongoing

corridor, of which the University Park development is a part. The second is the implementation of the Central Square Action Plan (adopted in 1989). The centerpiece of the plan is the Central Square Overlay District, a zoning ordinance that shapes development along Massachusetts Avenue by imposing height and FAR limits, restricting non-pedestrian and entertainment uses, establishing a special permit review process for large or exceptional projects, and creating a citizens' advisory group to review special permits and variances.

The first process is an ongoing, market-driven trend toward higher density commercial development along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor. Pressure for new office and residential space is radiating out along the avenue and Main Street from Harvard and Kendall Squares, threatening to create canyons of high-rise construction. While this process has slowed somewhat, the University Park development, for example, which covers an extensive site and includes hotel, retail and residential space in addition to R&D construction, is likely to spur further development interest in its surroundings. At the least, the University Park complex will represent a shift away from the haphazard mix of buildings in the area and encourage a more uniform and corporate atmosphere.

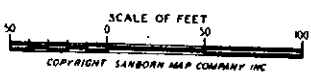
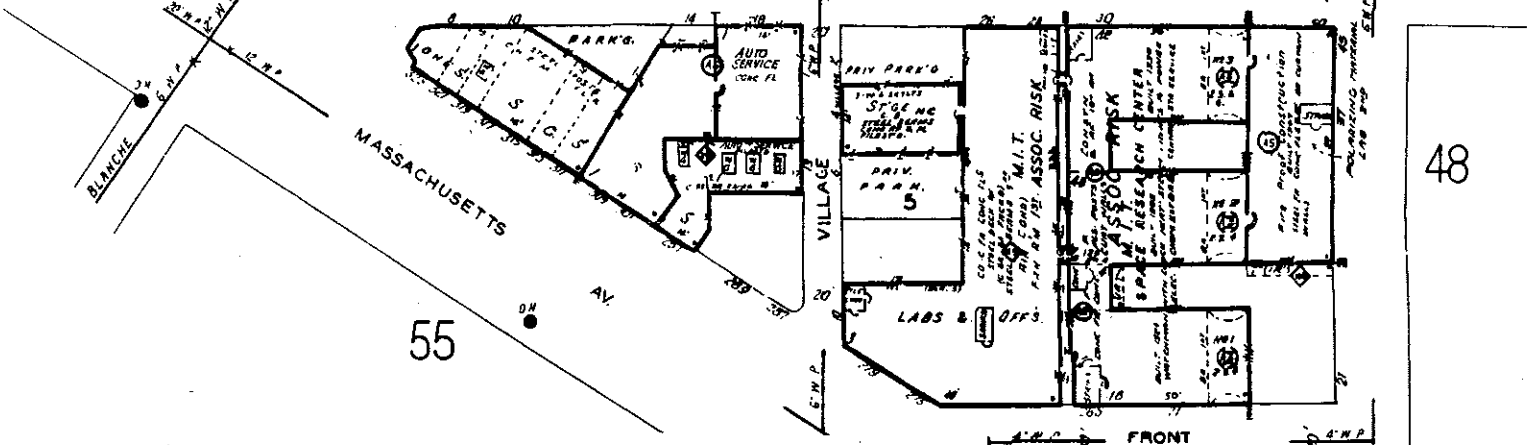
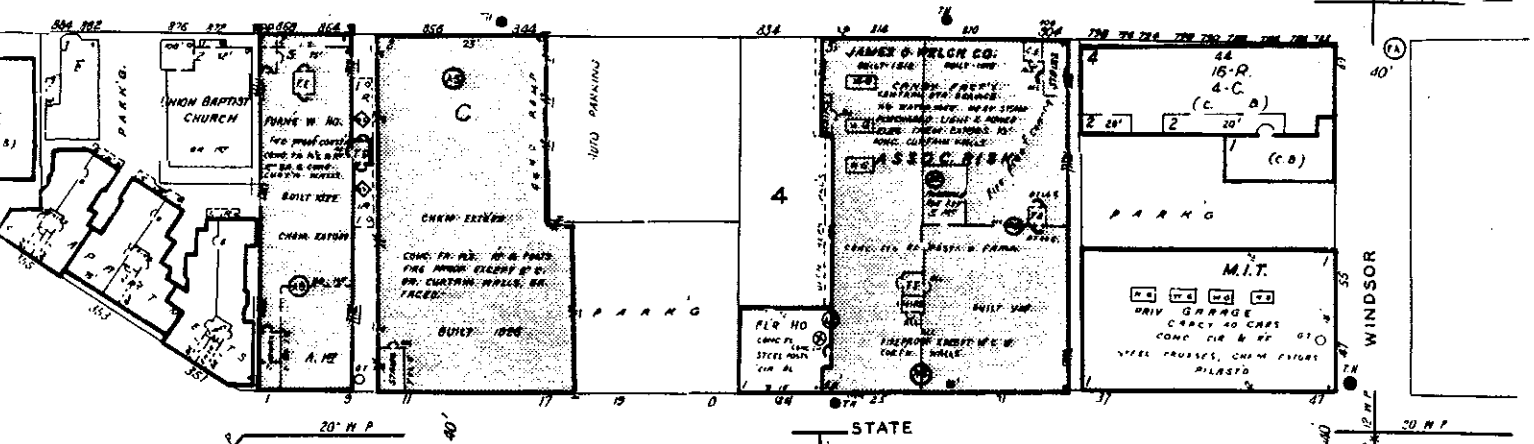
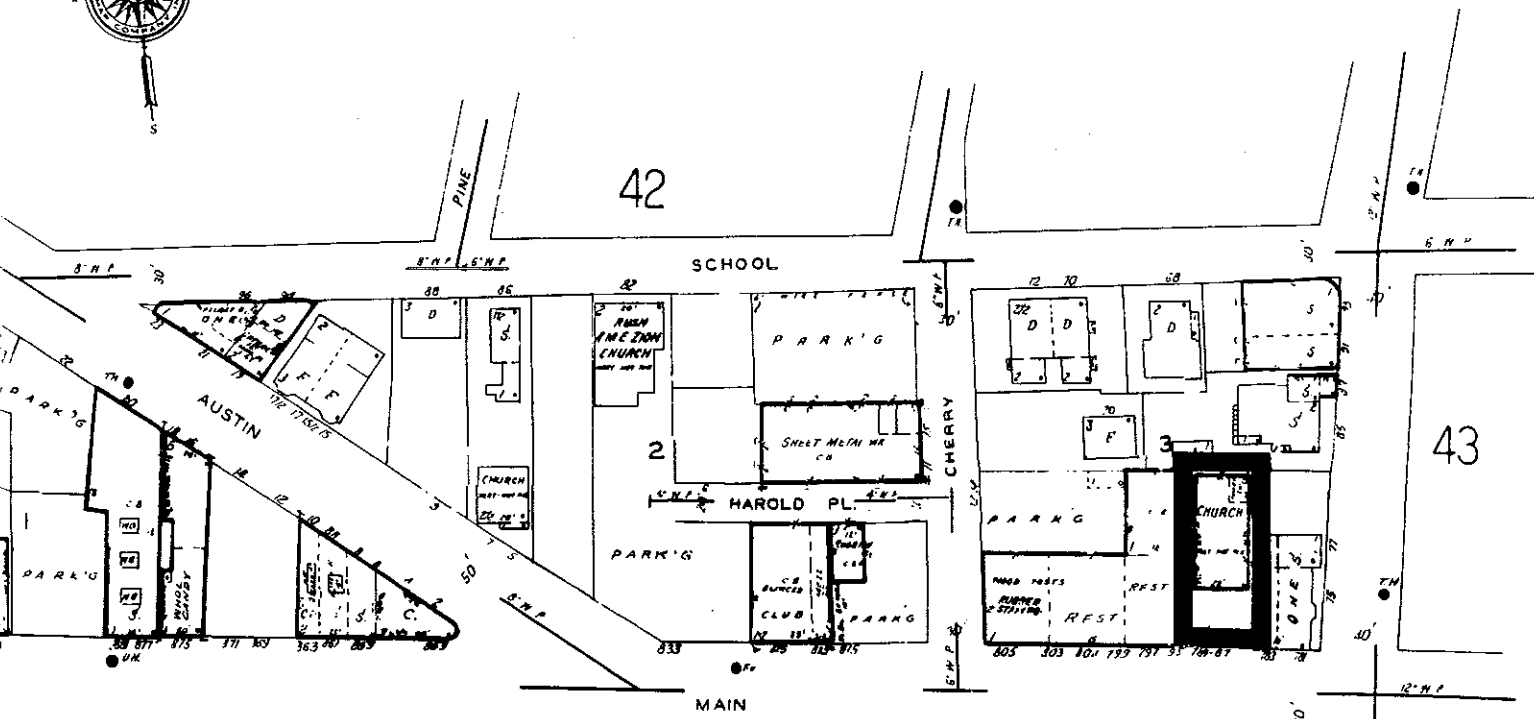
The Central Square Action Plan, which covers the south side of Main Street opposite the engine house, will have the effect of stabilizing and directing future activity in Central Square. Specific goals for the section of Central Square adjacent to the engine house (identified as the Central to MIT District) include encouraging retail frontage along Main Street, developing additional mixed-income housing on Bishop Allen Drive and improving the pedestrian and retail environment of Lafayette Square.

The Overlay District would impose a 55 foot height limit on Main Street, with additional height to 80 feet allowed by special permit. This could have the effect of overwhelming the smaller-scale buildings on the north side of Main Street. Mitigating this effect would be the preservation of low-rise buildings such as the Hovey Estate rowhouses at 782-798 Main Street and the Bright and Wentworth Buildings at 853-857 and 859-863 Main Street. One of the goals of the Action Plan is to encourage preservation of such structures.

With regard to the specific engine house property, the small size of the lot and the fact that the existing building does not conform to the current setback requirements (it sits directly on its side and rear property lines) make it unlikely that the individual site would be redeveloped. There is a possibility that a larger parcel,

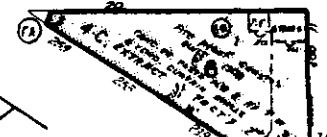
783, 787-789, and 795-805 Main Street, could be assembled for development, if market conditions supported such construction.

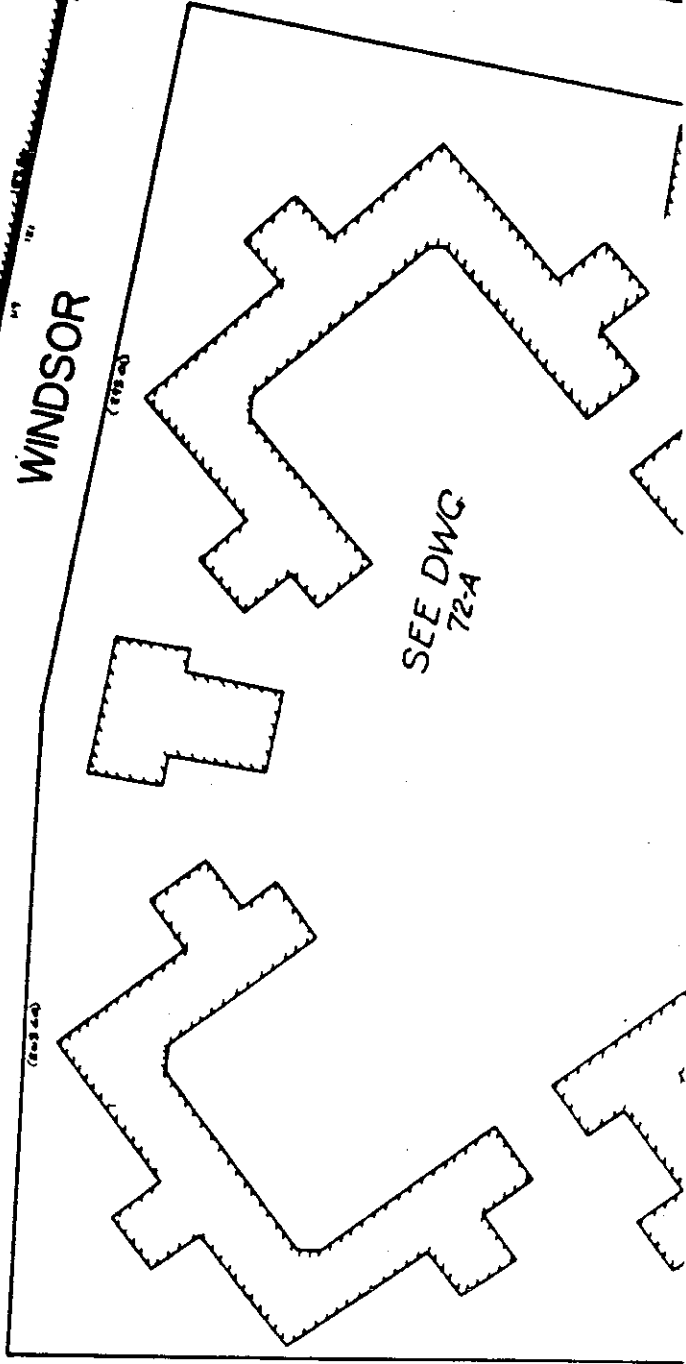
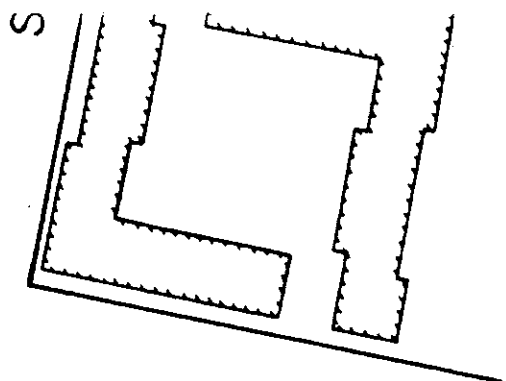
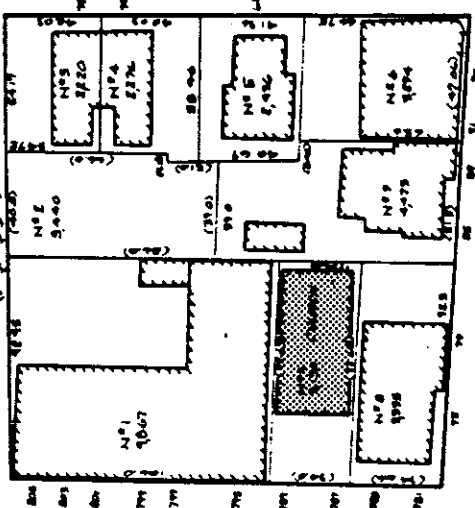
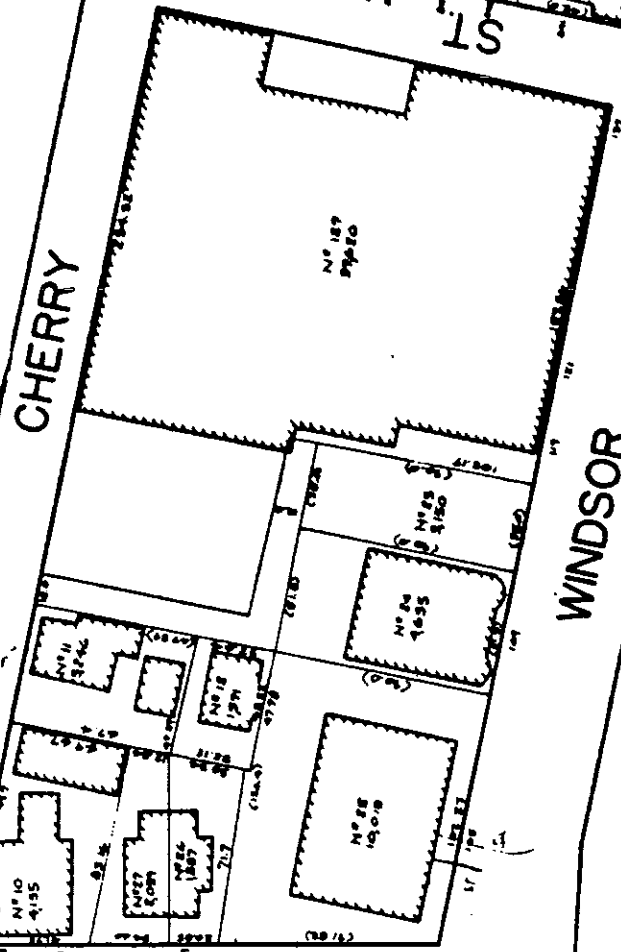
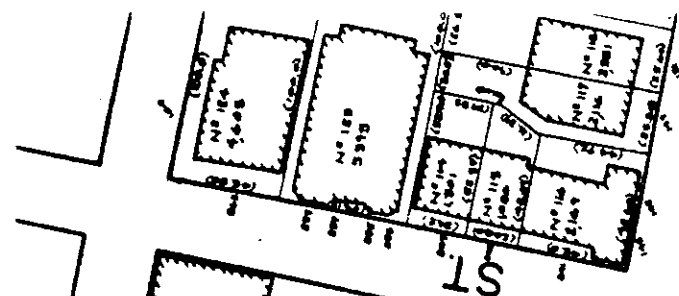
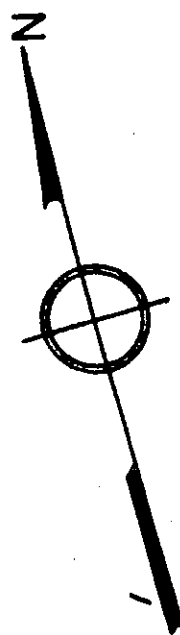
E. Map



Union #2 Engine House
787-789 Main Street

Location map





MAIN ST.

70

Union #2 Engine House
787-789 Main Street

Assessors' Map

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
SCALE: 1"=40' NOVEMBER-1977
DIMENSIONS FROM DEED, LAND COURT
OR LAYOUT PLANS ARE IN BRACKETS ()
LAND COURT MARKED L.C. ALL OTHER
DIMENSIONS ARE MEASURED.
DRAWN BY: AL THOMPSON

II. Description

Union #2 Engine House is a two-story brick building, four bays wide by five bays deep, with a gable roof of moderate pitch. Built in 1852 according to plans drawn by Melvin and Young, it is a good example of the vernacular Italianate style of architecture. The building, which is rectangular in plan, is oriented with its narrow gable end toward Main Street and is set back on its lot some twenty feet. The front setback is paved and used for parking. There is no landscaping on the lot.

The facade of the engine house, though altered to accommodate new uses in 1894 and 1918, nonetheless retains ample evidence of its original design. It is organized with two large entry bays on the first floor, each of which is surmounted with two windows on the second floor. The two bays, which retain their granite lintels (now parged with concrete), have been bricked in to create a solid wall. A new entrance with a Georgian style pedimented surround and modern flush doors has been placed off-center in the right-hand entry bay. Five small lights in a cross pattern ornament the doors. A gable-roofed canopy supported on lally columns projects from the entrance.

The windows, which now contain two-over-two aluminum replacement sash but had six-over-six originally, have brownstone lintels and sills. There is a circular window in the gable end, set into a simple brick surround with brownstone keystones. The glazing in that window was replaced with art glass as part of the church renovations. All of the brownstone trim on the facade has been painted; elsewhere, the brownstone is unpainted and shows varying degrees of spalling. The cornice consists of a wide, slightly projecting frieze of five bricks' width topped with a fascia of two brick courses and a dentil course of header brick. There are gable returns at the base of the cornice. An aluminum and glass announcement board for the church, placed on the central pier of the building and to the left of the present entrance, is the only other feature of the facade.

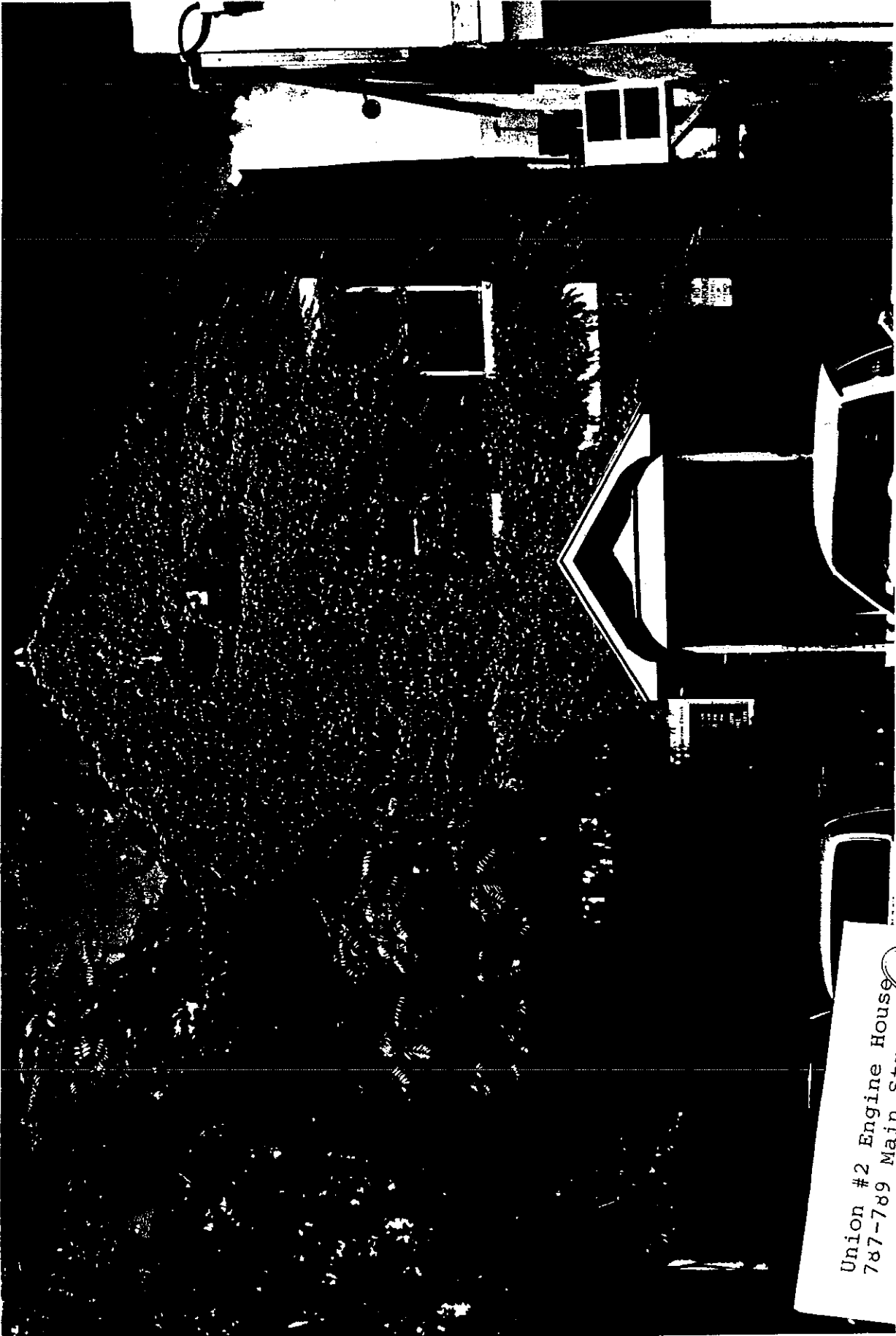
The west elevation is five bays wide and contains eight windows arranged symmetrically on the first and second floors. All of the sash have been replaced with modern one-over-one sash. The first floor windows have been partially bricked up to reduce their size. A door in the fifth (southernmost) bay has been bricked in, but retains its original brownstone lintel. The dentilled cornice of the facade is carried along the eave on this elevation. There is a badly deteriorated chimney at the rear of the building, adjacent to the bricked-in entrance bay.

The east elevation is more asymmetrically arranged. Six bays wide, it appears to have been the location of a hose tower added to the building in 1890 and thus has seen more alteration than the facade or west elevation. The first bay has a window opening on the first story only, the second bay on the second story only. Windows in the next three bays are evenly spaced on both floors. The sixth bay has no window openings and is the location of the hose tower base. The fact that the original dentilled cornice extends across the first five bays and ends at the sixth also corroborates the rebuilding of the last bay for the hose tower. Additional evidence of the changes to this elevation is the presence of tie rods with square and star plates on the back half of the wall. These were probably added to stabilize the structure when the additional weight of the hose tower was added. All the sash on this elevation have been replaced with one-over-ones.

The rear (north) elevation is nearly blank, with a single door at the northeast corner.

Originally, the engine house had a small wooden cupola (presumably to house an alarm bell) at the front of the gable roof. Early photos show the cupola to have been a square open structure with round arches topped with a flaring, hipped roof and a turned finial. A major alteration to upgrade the station was made in 1890 when a hose tower was constructed at the northeast corner of the building. Built of brick and handsomely detailed in the Gothic style, the hose tower must have represented a considerable expense to the city. Extending approximately one story above the roof, the tower featured a corbelled cornice and a round window on the face, corresponding to the circular gable end window on the original building, but at that point, similarities between the 1852 building and the addition ceased. The tower culminated in a flared corbelled cornice surmounted by an open stage with a pyramidal hipped roof supported on chamfered piers. Ornamental cresting completed the design. Presumably, the tower and belfry were removed when the building's use changed, possibly taken down in the alterations of 1918.

Another early feature that has been lost are the names of the companies that were carved into the lintels above the entrances to the engine house. The carvings survived into the early 20th century according to a 1921 Cambridge Chronicle article on the history of the fire department and appear to have been parged over when the Mission Holiness Church took ownership of the building.



Union #2 Engine House
787-789 Main Street

South facade
August 1989

III. History of the Property

The early history of the engine house lot is connected with the first efforts to develop Cambridgeport in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The engine house property stands just at the edge of Pelham's Island, a small area of high ground in the Charles River's tidal marshlands at present-day Lafayette Square. The property came into Leonard Jarvis' possession in the mid-1790s and was part of his efforts, with Judge Francis Dana, to drain the surrounding marshes with dikes and canals, thereby opening the area for development. Jarvis' holdings were seized in 1798 for failure to pay a \$40,000 debt to the U.S. government and were sold at auction in 1801. In 1830, the inhabitants of the town of Cambridge purchased the engine house land from Eliphalet Davis of Cambridge, a soap boiler (book 302, page 307) whose house was located next door to the engine house at the corner of Windsor Street. Two years later, the Union 2 engine house was constructed on the lot for the Cambridge Hook and Ladder Company.

The present brick building, built in 1852, replaced the first, wooden, engine house, which burned ca. 1851. It remained in use as the Engine #2 fire house until 1894, when it was superceded by the present Engine #2, a brick Renaissance Revival station (Condon and Greco, 1893) built at Lafayette Square (378 Massachusetts Avenue). By that point, more up-to-date fire-fighting facilities were needed to protect the burgeoning industries of Cambridgeport and the obsolete 1852 engine house was sold. The building passed in quick succession from Thomas Warren of Cambridge to the Harvard lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows, which made "general alterations" to the building in 1894. The Harvard lodge sold the property to the Cambridge Benefit Association in 1901, which in turn conveyed the engine house to the Christian Mission Holiness Church in 1916. In 1918, the church made additional alterations to the building, which has remained in their ownership since then.

IV. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

Historically, the Union #2 Engine House is associated with two processes in the growth of the city: the first is the establishment of organized fire companies in Cambridge and the second is the early development of the city's municipal institutions. The earliest fire companies organized in Cambridge were private societies established for the mutual protection of their members. Beginning in the 1790s, such volunteer brigades began to be organized in Cambridge. In 1803, the "first fully organized fire company in Cambridge" (Lancaster, p. 79) was formed. Owners of Cambridge's first fire engine (a hand-operated water pump), the 1803 society formed the nucleus of what was to become the Cambridge fire department.

The Cambridge Fire Department was formally incorporated by an act of the Great and General Court on March 17, 1832. At that point, the department comprised three hand engine companies of forty men each and one ladder company of twenty-two men. The four original companies were: Cambridge Engine #1, Church Street, Union Engine #2, Main Street, Niagara Engine #3, Cambridge Street, and Franklin Hook and Ladder #1, housed with Engine #2 on Main Street. Hydrant #4 was organized seven years later at Western and River Streets.

The town appears to have undertaken the construction of frame engine houses for each of the companies in 1832, but shortly after the 1846 incorporation of the city, the need for more substantial fire engine houses became apparent. In his first address to city government, Cambridge Mayor James D. Green noted that although two of the city's engine houses were in good repair, the other two (Engine #2 and Engine #4) were not. A new engine house for Engine #4 was proposed and funds were allocated in 1847 for the repair of Engine #2.

Within a few years of incorporation, the city had moved to upgrade all of its old frame fire engine houses. The first engine house built after incorporation was Engine #1, a two-story brick station built in 1847 and demolished in 1922. All of the city's subsequent fire engine houses were constructed of brick, a decision whose validity was proven in 1851, when the 1832 frame Engine #2 burned.

The earliest surviving fire engine house in the city is Niagara Engine #3, built in 1850 and still standing, in much altered condition, at 251 Cambridge Street. Engine #2, constructed in 1851, was the third fire engine house built by the city after incorporation. Engine #4, a station whose design was nearly identical to Engine #1, was constructed in

1852 and demolished in 1910 to make room for the Cambridge Theatre in Central Square.

In 1854, when the first annual report of the Cambridge Fire Department was filed, Engine #2 listed thirty-six members. While the house was in good condition, the company foreman, Albert R. Goodnow, stated that the Howard and Davis engine was in bad condition. He reported the company had "26 feet of suction hose, 450 feet of good leading hose, 150 feet poor, 4 buckets, 2 pikes, 2 axes, 1 crowbar, 1 hose carriage, 1 blunderbuss, in good condition, 1 drag rope, indifferent, and 2 buckets, ordinary." The foreman of the Franklin Hook and Ladder Company #1, Joseph S. Day, reported having sixteen members, a carriage "in good condition; carries 11 ladders of various lengths, 4 hooks with chains and ropes, 5 pike poles, 2 rakes, 2 axes, 1 drag rope; also 12 buckets." Each engine company received \$955 compensation in 1854 and the hook and ladder company, \$845.

The city's three earliest fire companies were formed within the three major villages of early 19th-century Cambridge. The first was located in Old Cambridge, the second in Cambridgeport, and the third in East Cambridge. Their engine houses were constructed at the institutional centers of these communities and reflect the locations of the original settlement areas of the three villages. Engine #2 stands just east of Lafayette Square, where the first church and schoolhouse in Cambridgeport were located. In its location, then, Engine #2 is an important reminder of the early settlement of Cambridgeport.

As settlement expanded, additional fire companies were formed, new stations constructed, and the early engine houses subsumed within the growth of the city. By the turn of the century, all of the early engine houses had ceased to function as such, having been replaced by more modern facilities. As stated earlier, Engine #2 remained in service until 1894.

Engine #2 is now the best-preserved of the city's first generation of municipal structures. Surviving nearly intact, it is a good example of the type of substantial brick structure the city constructed to house its fire department in the first years after incorporation in 1846. In addition, it is second oldest municipal building surviving in the city.

B. Architectural Significance

The Union #2 Engine House is architecturally significant as a good example of vernacular Italianate architecture, as the work of Melvin and Young, one of the

representative example illustrating the fundamental elements of early fire engine house design.

In the years immediately following incorporation, the City of Cambridge erected a series of brick fire engine houses to accommodate its engine and hook and ladder companies around the city. Between 1847 and 1857, five engine houses were built. These were Engine #1, 23-25 Church Street (1847; enlarged 1864; in service until 1871; demolished 1922); Engine #3, 251 Cambridge Street (1850; in service until 1871; third floor added 1871; first floor altered ca. 1900, 1950); Engine #2, 787-789 Main Street (1851; in service until 1894; altered 1894, 1918); Engine #4, River Street and Western Avenue (1852; in service until 1887; demolished 1910); and Engine #6, Main and Dock Streets (1857; demolished by 1873). The next generation of engine houses was not constructed until the late 1870s.

Architecturally, these early engine houses (excepting Engine #6, whose appearance is unknown) were quite similar in appearance. All were two-story brick structures, rectangular in plan and sited with their narrow ends to the street. With the exception of Engine #2, all housed a single fire company and thus had a single center entrance for the hand- or horse-drawn engine and hose carriage. Because Engine #2 also accommodated the Franklin #1 Hook and Ladder Company, it was a larger structure, with two entrance bays. The second story provided storage space and housing for the fire company members on call.

In terms of style, the engine houses were vernacular Italianate buildings. Built of red brick, the engine houses all had brownstone window trim, typical of mid-century romantic revival design. Engines #1, #2, and #4 all had gable roofs with dentil cornices reminiscent of the bracketted cornices of frame structures. While on engine houses #1 and #3, the cornice extended across the facade forming a pedimented end gable, at engine house #2, the cornice returned only at the eave, in classic Italianate style. Engine #2 also had a small cupola originally, a feature none of the other engine houses seems to have shared. In all cases, the original sash were six-over-six and the lintels were granite, inscribed with the name of the company.

Engine #2 is one of two engine houses for which the architectural firm of Melvin and Young provided plans, the other being Engine #3 on Cambridge Street. The Annual Documents for the year 1852 show that the firm was paid \$50.00 to provide plans for the engine house, which was built by Rufus Lamson, Simon P. Clark, and Spencer and Pollard, all Cambridgeport masons and carpenters. Melvin and Young, or Isaac Melvin practicing alone either as a

responsible for plans for the Otis Street School (1848), as well as numerous residences and other buildings in the city, including the North Avenue Congregational Church (1845). Melvin, whose work in Cambridge spanned a fifteen-year period between 1837 and 1852, worked initially as a carpenter and housewright. But from 1848 to 1852, he is listed in Boston directories as an architect, in practice with Isaiah B. Young.

In addition to his work in Cambridge, Melvin had a fairly extensive practice in Middlesex County and was responsible for the design of several churches, town halls, and schools in the surrounding communities, including Lexington and Arlington. His work is in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles and tends to be emphatic and heavily ornamented, as his own house at 19 Centre Street, a robust Greek Revival mansion, demonstrates. Melvin's work, though generally known in the region, is not well-catalogued and as an early designer, he deserves further study.

C. Bibliography

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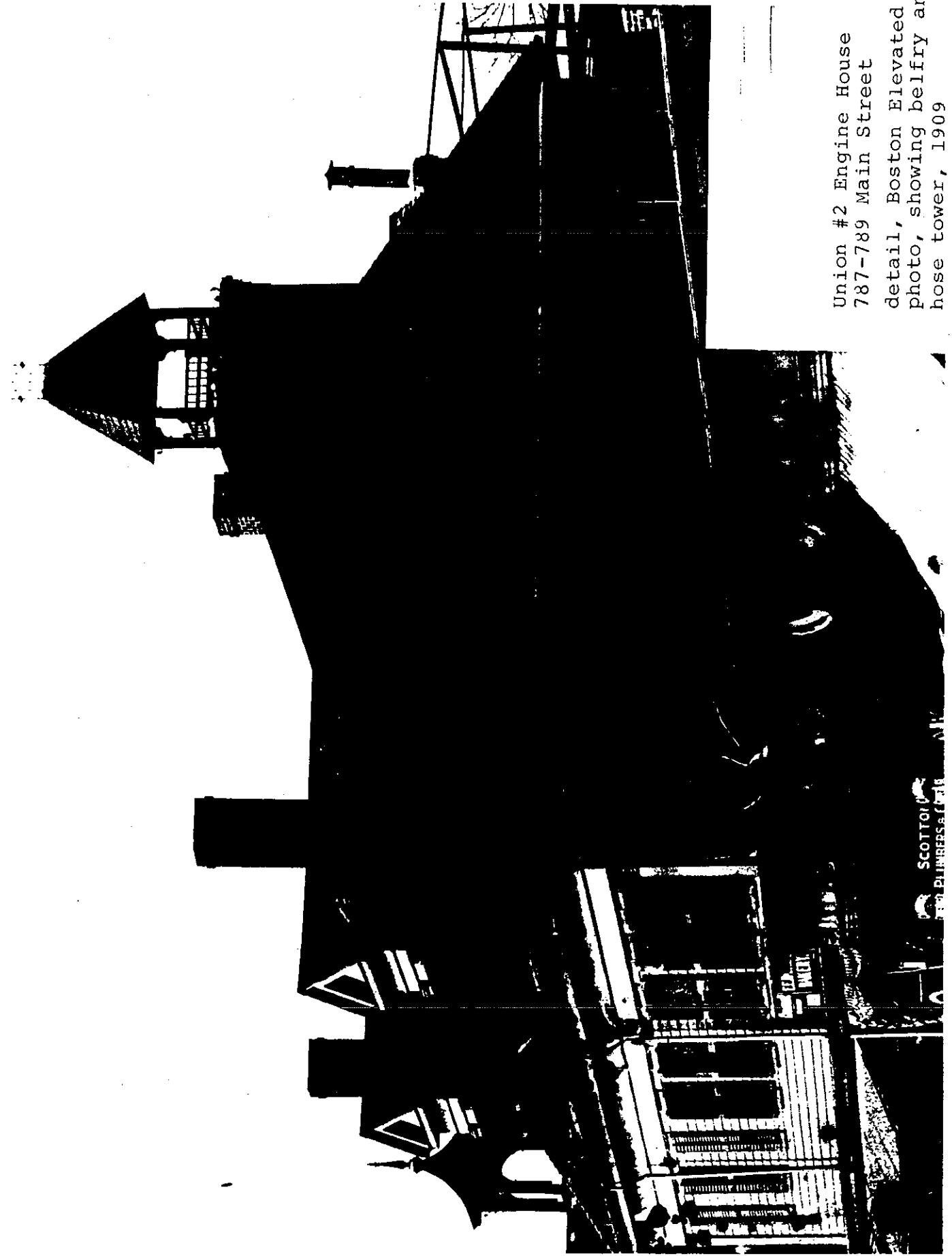
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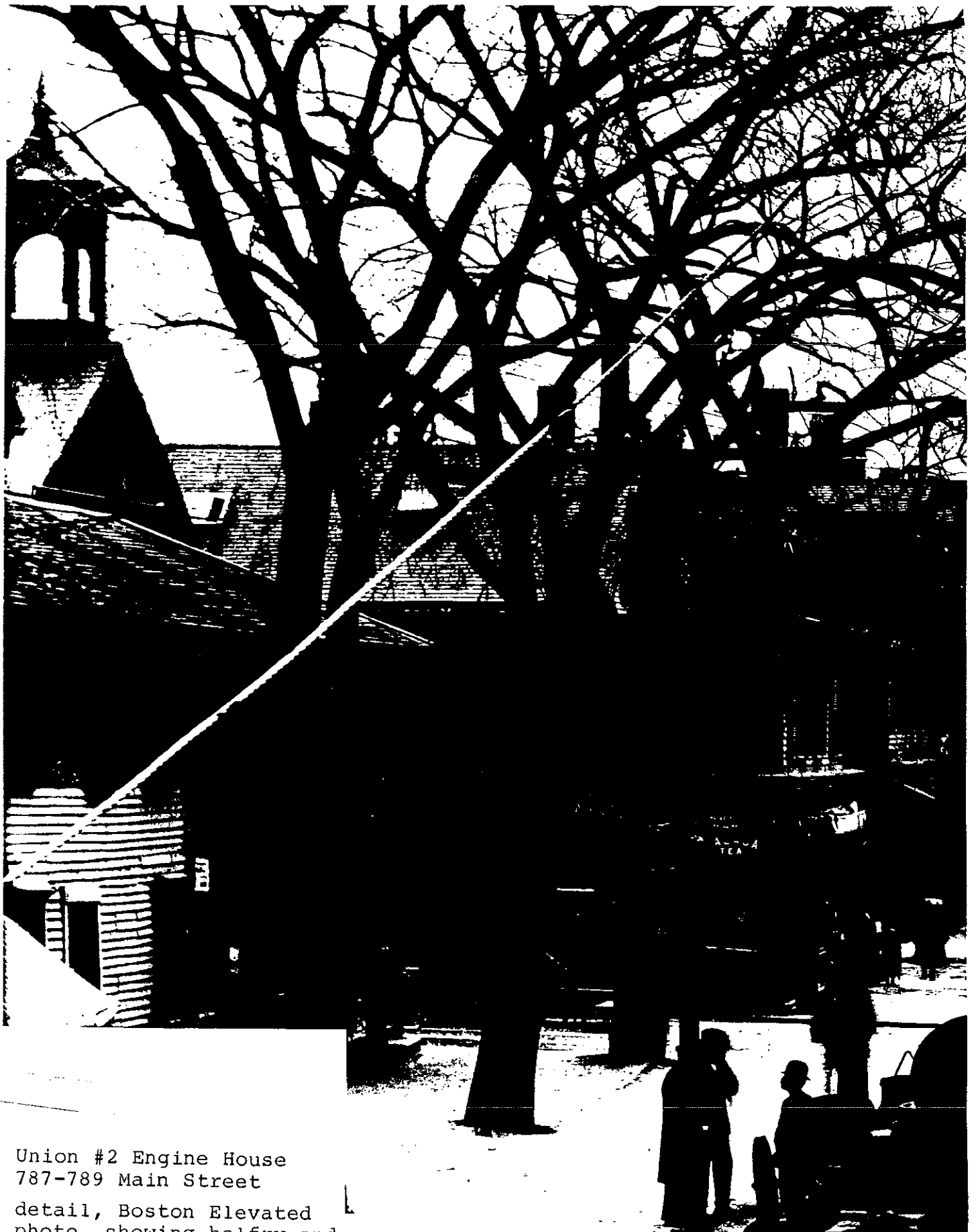
Government Records

Cambridge. Historical Commission. Survey files for 287-289 Main Street; 23-25 Church Street; 251 Cambridge Street.

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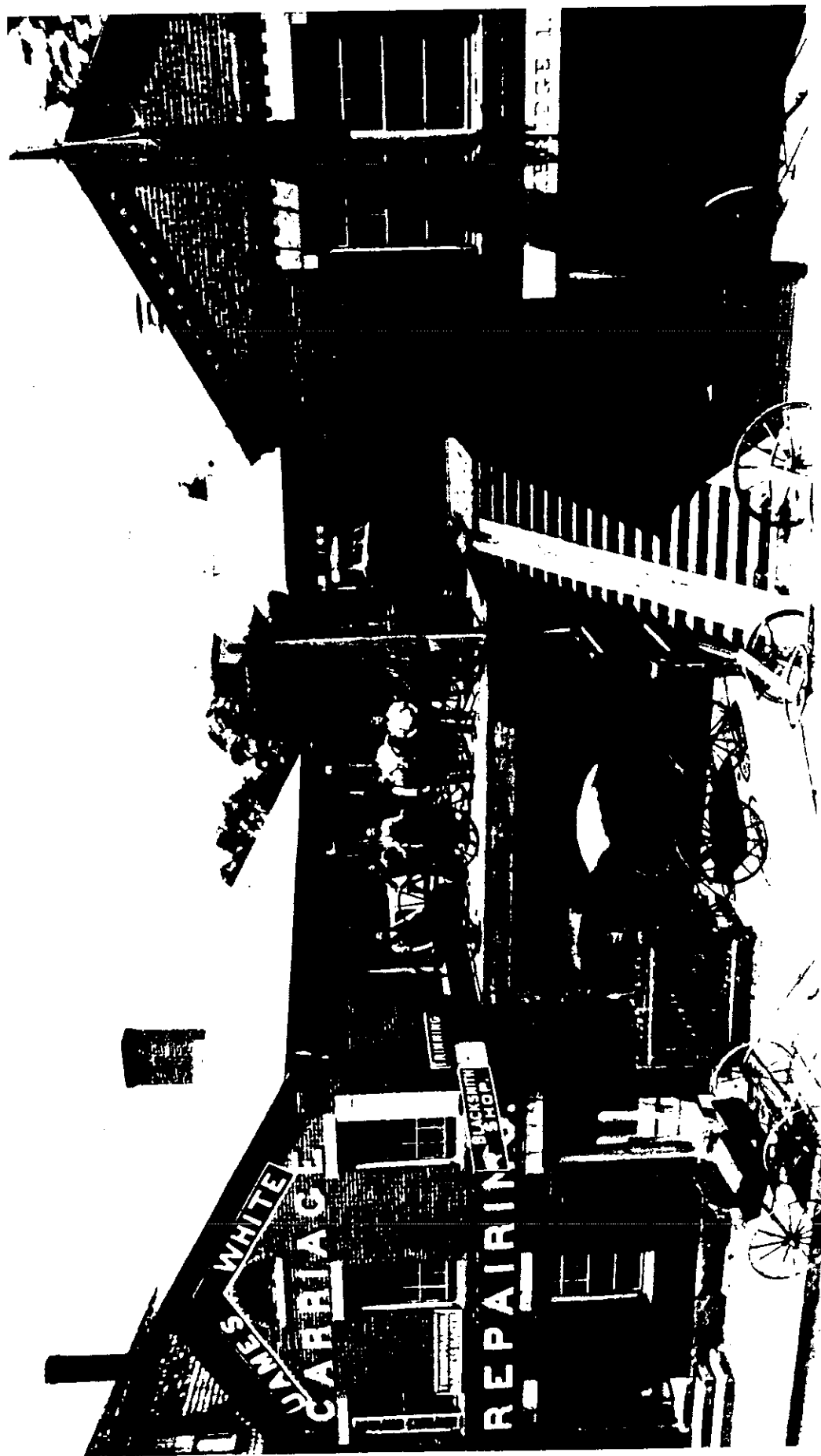


Union #2 Engine House
787-789 Main Street
detail, Boston Elevated
photo, showing belfry and
hose tower, 1909



Union #2 Engine House
787-789 Main Street

detail, Boston Elevated
photo, showing belfry and
driveway, 1910



Engine #1 (1847), I.,
Police Station (1864), I.
photo, 1890-1893



Engine #3 (1850)
251 Cambridge Street
photo, 1989

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Section 4, Ordinance 1002

Section 4 states the criteria for landmark designation. It states that the Commission:

. . . may recommend for designation as a landmark any . . . structure . . . either (a) 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 (b) 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.

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

Engine House #2 is importantly associated with the broad architectural and social history of the city and is historically and architecturally significant in terms of its period and style of construction and associations with a famous builder/architect.

Under criterion (a), Engine #2 is significant as the oldest intact fire station in the city. When it was built, in 1851, it was the largest of the city's three fire stations. Engine #2 housed two fire companies, Union Engine #2 and Franklin Hook and Ladder #1. Historically, it is also significant as a reflection of the city's early commitment to building sturdy and substantial stations for its fire companies, a commitment that became evident when the city built its first brick fire station in Harvard Square (Engine #1; demolished 1922) in 1847, just one year after incorporation as a city. While a fragment (the second story) of the Engine #3 (East Cambridge) fire house remains, there are no other municipal buildings of the earliest period of the city's history still standing.

The Engine House is also historically significant as it reflects the city's historic development patterns, specifically, the rivalry that grew up in the early 19th century between Old Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and East Cambridge. The original three fire companies for the city were located in each of the three villages and reflect in their presence the autonomy of those three communities in the early 19th century.

It is also important in the social history of the city for its associations with the development of organized fire

When the town petitioned the General Court to form the Cambridge Fire Department in 1832, Union Engine #2 was one of the original three companies included. The Engine #2 company survives today in the present Engine #2 fire station at Lafayette Square.

Under criterion (b), Engine #2 is architecturally and historically important as an excellent example of vernacular Italianate design and an intact example of the type of simple but sturdy building the city constructed for the use of its agencies in its first years. It is also architecturally significant as the work of a notable Cambridge builder/architect, Isaac Melvin.

The brick building incorporates simple details of the Italianate style, most notably, a dentilled cornice with gable end returns, a round window with keystones in the gable end, and brownstone trim. The simplicity of the building's rectangular plan and minimal detailing were typical of municipal buildings of the 1840s, '50s, and '60s, and such designs could be adapted to a variety of uses, most notably, police and fire stations and schoolhouses. Engine #2 is the only example of its type surviving in Cambridge.

As a design of Isaac Melvin's, the Engine House is also significant as one of perhaps a half dozen public buildings by Melvin to survive in the Boston area. It is his only known surviving intact brick building, the bulk of his work having been frame construction residences, churches and schools in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles.

VI. Recommendations

A. Section 1, Ordinance 1002

The purpose of landmark designation is stated in Section 1 of Ordinance 1002:

. . . 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 . . . structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; [and] to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose.

B. Preservation Options

There are currently no preservation designations on Engine #2. It appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C, for its historic and architectural significance on the local level. If it were to be listed on the National Register, it would be protected from the adverse effects of federally licensed, permitted, or funded projects and, through listing on the parallel State Register of Historic Places, from the adverse effects of state funded, licensed or permitted projects. The National and State Registers provide limited protection from public projects through review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's powers do not allow for review of privately-funded projects.

Other options for the preservation of Engine #2 include designation as a Landmark under Ordinance 1002, or placement of a Preservation Easement on the property under the provisions of MGL Chapter 184. The property is now owned by a non-profit religious organization and therefore it is unlikely that a preservation easement would yield any value to the owner. If ownership of the property should change in the future, this option could be re-examined.

The other two major protective designations, a Neighborhood Conservation District or a Local Historic District are not viable for this property since its surrounding context no longer retains architectural continuity or integrity.

C. Recommendations

It is the staff recommendation that Engine #2 be recommended to the City Council for designation as a protected landmark under ordinance 1002

VII. Standards for Design Review

A. Introduction

The Commission's primary charge under Ordinance 1002 is to review "all construction, demolition, or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features, other than color, of any landmark." This landmark study report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics which led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, those features should be preserved and/or enhanced in any construction, demolition, or alteration of a landmark.

Section 8 of the ordinance sets general guidelines to be considered by the Historical Commission in reviewing changes to landmarks. Among other things, the Commission is directed to consider:

the historic and architectural value and significance of the site or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture and material of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features or structures in the surrounding area.

In all cases, a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability must be issued by the Historical Commission prior to making any changes to a landmark. The Commission does not have authority to regulate the interiors of landmarks nor can they control changes to exterior architectural features not subject to public view. Nonetheless, Certificates of Non-Applicability must be issued for those changes. All applications are carefully reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, in accordance with Ordinance 1002.

B. General Standards

1. Historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.

2. Changes and additions to the landmark which have taken place over time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and that significance should be recognized and respected.

3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.

4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary,

5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.

6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.

7. New additions must not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinctive character of the landmark, neighborhood and environment.

8. New additions should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would be unimpaired.

C. Statement of Standards

1. General

a. Prepare an historic structures report to evaluate the current structural condition of the Engine House, noting particularly the status of the masonry walls, especially at the hose tower location, and brownstone trim, much of which is spalling and in poor condition.

b. Reconstruct original belfry and remove concrete parging from granite entrance lintels, if possible.

2. Exterior Walls

a. Remove virginia creeper which now covers much of the structure and may be contributing to masonry deterioration.

b. Repoint masonry and repair or replace brownstone.

c. Relocate aluminum sign board if possible.

3. Windows

a. Restore six-over-six wooden sash in their original openings on the east and south walls if possible.

VIII. Proposed Order

ORDERED:

That Union #2 Engine House, 787-789 Main Street, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter Two, Article XVI, Section 2-147(k) of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on _____ . The premises so designated are defined as Parcel 9 of Assessors' Map 74.

This designation is justified by the important associations of the building with the broad architectural and social history of the City of Cambridge. Specifically, it is associated with growth of the city's fire department, with the settlement of Cambridgeport, and with the early municipal history of the City. Engine #2 housed one of the city's original three fire companies from 1851 to 1894. Its location, just outside Lafayette Square, is a reminder that Lafayette Square was a center of Cambridgeport settlement in the early 19th century. Engine #2 is now the oldest intact fire station standing in the city and may be the earliest intact city-built structure now surviving.

Architecturally, Engine #2 is important in terms of its period and style of construction and for its associations with Isaac Melvin, a prominent Cambridge builder/architect of the mid 19th century. It is a good example of the Italianate style and is typical of the simple, sturdy, utilitarian structures the city built for its agencies after it incorporated in 1846. Engine #2 is one of eleven structures designed by Melvin to survive in the city and the only intact brick structure of his design still standing.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated landmark area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of Union #2 Engine House, that would in either case be visible from a public way, without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the landmark designation report, and by section VII, Standards for Design Review, and by the applicable sections of Ordinance 1002.