

CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

831 Massachusetts Avenue, 2nd Fl., Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Telephone: 617 349 4683 TTY: 617 349 6112 Fax: 617-349-6165

E-mail: histcomm@cambridgema.gov URL: <http://www.cambridgema.gov/Historic>

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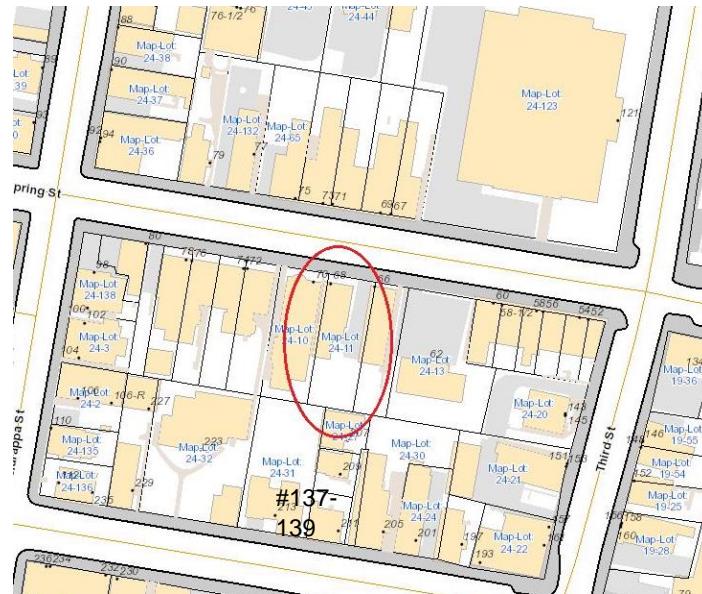
April 29, 2019

To: Members of the Historical Commission
From: Eric Hill, Survey Director
Re: D-1524: Pendexter-Pacheco House, 68 Spring Street (1844)

An application to demolish the building at 68 Spring Street was received on April 9, 2019. The applicant, David Appleby, was notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for May 13, 2019.

Site

The Pendexter-Pacheco house is located on the south side of Spring Street, mid-block between Third and Sciarappa streets. The property is located within the East Cambridge National Register District, which was designated in June 1983.



68 Spring Street Cambridge Assessor's map, April 2019.

The two-family house is sited on a 3,499 square foot lot in a Residential C-1 zoning district. This is a multi-family residential district, which permits an FAR of .75 and has a height limit of 35 feet. The assessed value of the land and building, according to the online assessor's property database, is \$1,093,100 (Map 24/Parcel 11).

The neighboring properties on Spring Street have a variety of roof forms and in overall scale with the two adjacent properties being a squat Mansard home to the left and a taller triple-decker to the right. Across Spring Street, five Greek Revival rowhomes showcase the side-gabled variation of the style.



68 Spring Street.



CHC staff photos, taken 04/29/19.

Architectural Description

The 1844 Pendexter-Pacheco house is a two-story side-hall house with a steeply-pitched gable roof, oriented gable end to the street. The façade is organized into three bays, with the entry door located on the right. The original fenestration at the first floor has been altered with a picture window with three panes. A gabled ell extends toward the rear with a lower ridge than the main roof. The rear outside staircase is a later addition.

The Pendexter house appears to have been constructed in the Greek Revival Style, although almost all such details have been removed or covered over. In 1876 the City Engineer recorded a full-width front porch, but this was removed at some point between 1900 and 1929. Comparing the footprint from 1876 with the footprint today, the rear of the house appears to have been significantly altered; however, the main structure has retained its original massing and form. The original clapboards were covered with shingles in 1937; the vinyl siding was added in 1973. The bargeboard does not appear to be original to the structure and would not be seen on Greek Revival homes of the time.

All visible windows are vinyl replacements, mostly with a 1+1 configuration replacement units, but some with interior stick-on muntins in 6+6 and 4+4 configurations. The picture window on the first floor is a post-war alteration and consists of a single fixed light with casement windows flanking it.

A driveway on the east side of the lot is accessed from Spring Street. A 1954 permit shows approval for the construction of a one-car garage; however, there is no evidence that this was ever built.



68 Spring Street

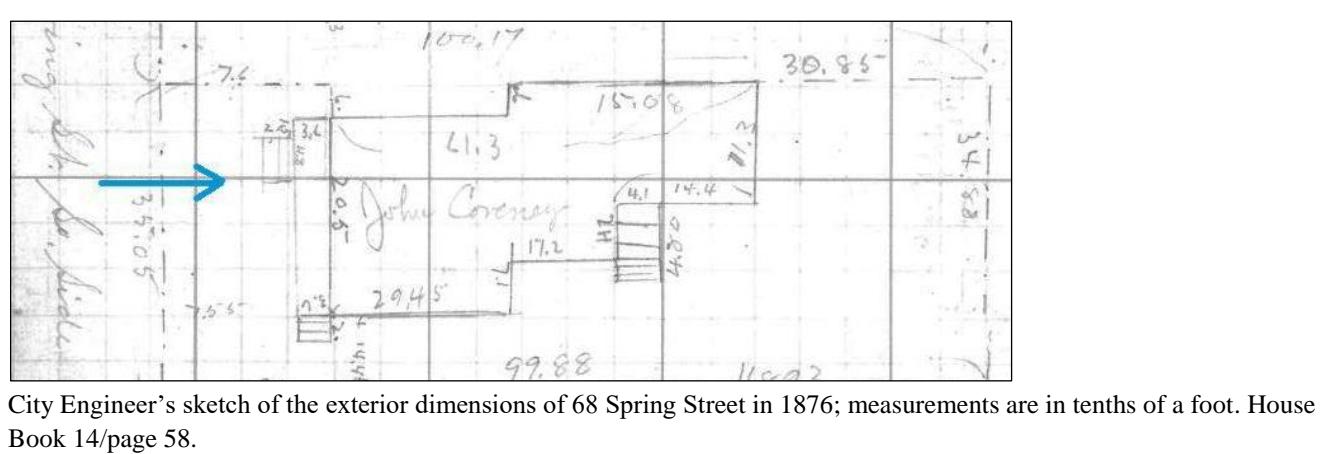


CHC staff photos, taken 04/29/19.

Examples of what 68 Spring Street may have originally looked like can be found at 69 and 102 Thorndike Street, both also constructed in 1844.



69 Thorndike Street and 102 Thorndike Street (both 1844) are variants of the side-hall Greek Revival house,
built with and without a front portico.



City Engineer's sketch of the exterior dimensions of 68 Spring Street in 1876; measurements are in tenths of a foot. House Book 14/page 58.

The proposed project would remove the roof and increase the attic level clearance from 8'- 3 7/8" to 11'- 1 1/4". Plans also call for the demolition of the rear exterior stairs and entries with the replacement as usable enclosed space. The one-story addition at the rear is proposed to be replaced with a raised deck with steps to a rear door with the existing foundation to remain.



68 Spring Street, rear additions and deck.

Zillow.com, downloaded 04/29/19.

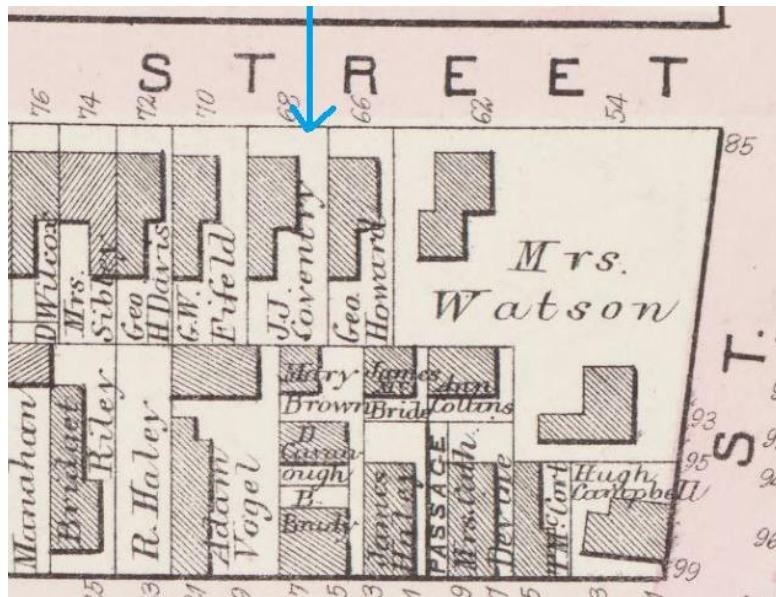
History

East Cambridge originated as a speculative real estate development at the beginning of the 19th century. A grid of streets was laid out on the salt-marsh island known as Lechmere's Point, and residential construction began near the top of the hill along Otis and Thorndike Streets. Early industry developed along the Miller's River north of East Cambridge, and the marshes south and west of the neighborhood remained undeveloped until after the Civil War.

Much of the development of East Cambridge was undertaken by corporations and trusts, rather than individuals. Andrew Craigie, the speculator who conceived of East Cambridge and who secretly purchased much of the Lechmere estate, soon organized the Lechmere Point Corporation as a means of attracting other investors. The expense of filling large tracts of marsh land and building streets and utilities was beyond the resources of most individuals, and companies such as the Canal Bridge Corporation and the Cambridge Wharf Company undertook these projects with varying success in the first half of the 19th century.

Spring Street was laid out in 1811 between Second and Sixth streets. The lot on which the house at 68 Spring Street now stands was part of Lot 213 on the 1819 "Plan of Cambridgeport Parish" by Peter Tufts, Jr. The lot was located a block from the Middlesex County Jail and House of Correction complex, which encompassed the block bounded by Second, Spring, Third, and Thorndike streets. The first jail built here in 1816 was greatly expanded by the middle of the century. The Middlesex County Superior Courthouse that occupies the block today was constructed from 1968-1974.

Lot 213 was originally owned by Amos Binney, a merchant and major landholder in East Cambridge as a member of the Lechmere Point Corporation. The lot was subdivided and sold in 1844 to Alfred Pendexter, a housewright who constructed a home on the lot that year.



68 Spring Street., 1873 Hopkins Atlas showing J.J. Coventry as owner.

According to city directories, Pendexter occupied the house until at least 1850. By 1872 the house was owned by John J. Coveney (also spelled Coveny), a salesman at Walker & Co. in Boston. Jeremiah J. Coveney also is listed in the directories as living at 68 Spring Street. The *Cambridge Chronicle* that year lists a "John J. Coveney, aged 26 years old" under a list of deaths for the month of December 1872. The 1875 Cambridge Directory shows Jeremiah Coveny owning the property and working at a saloon on Causeway Street in Boston; also boarding in the home is Daniel F. Coveny, a machinist. City Directories up until 1898 list upwards of four Coveny men living in the home at a time.

In 1898, William J. Coveny is listed as the owner; he resided there with his wife Anna. William worked as an upholsterer and cabinetmaker at 1100 Massachusetts Avenue. William's sister Mary Gertrude, a stenographer, also boarded at the house. By 1903 the house was owned by Coveny's heirs

After 1930 the house was owned by Jacinto Pacheco and his wife Maria Pacheco. Jacinto and his son Jacinto Jr. worked as candy makers. Jacinto died in 1947, and the house was owned by his descendants until it was sold to the applicant, Mr. Appleby.

Significance and Recommendation

I recommend that the Greek Revival house at 68 Spring Street be found significant for its association with the early residential development by the Lechmere Point Corporation and as an early example of a gable-end Greek Revival home which typifies this section of East Cambridge

The Commission should hear testimony from the applicants and neighbors and review the plans for replacement construction before making a further determination.

cc: David Appleby