



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: April 28, 2017
To: Cambridge Historical Commission
From: Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner
Re: D-1446: 247 Lakeview Ave (1899)

An application was received on April 11, 2017 to relocate, on its existing lot, the house at 247 Lakeview Avenue. The applicant, Duncan MacArthur, was notified of an initial determination of significance, and a public hearing was scheduled for May 4, 2017.

Site Condition and Context

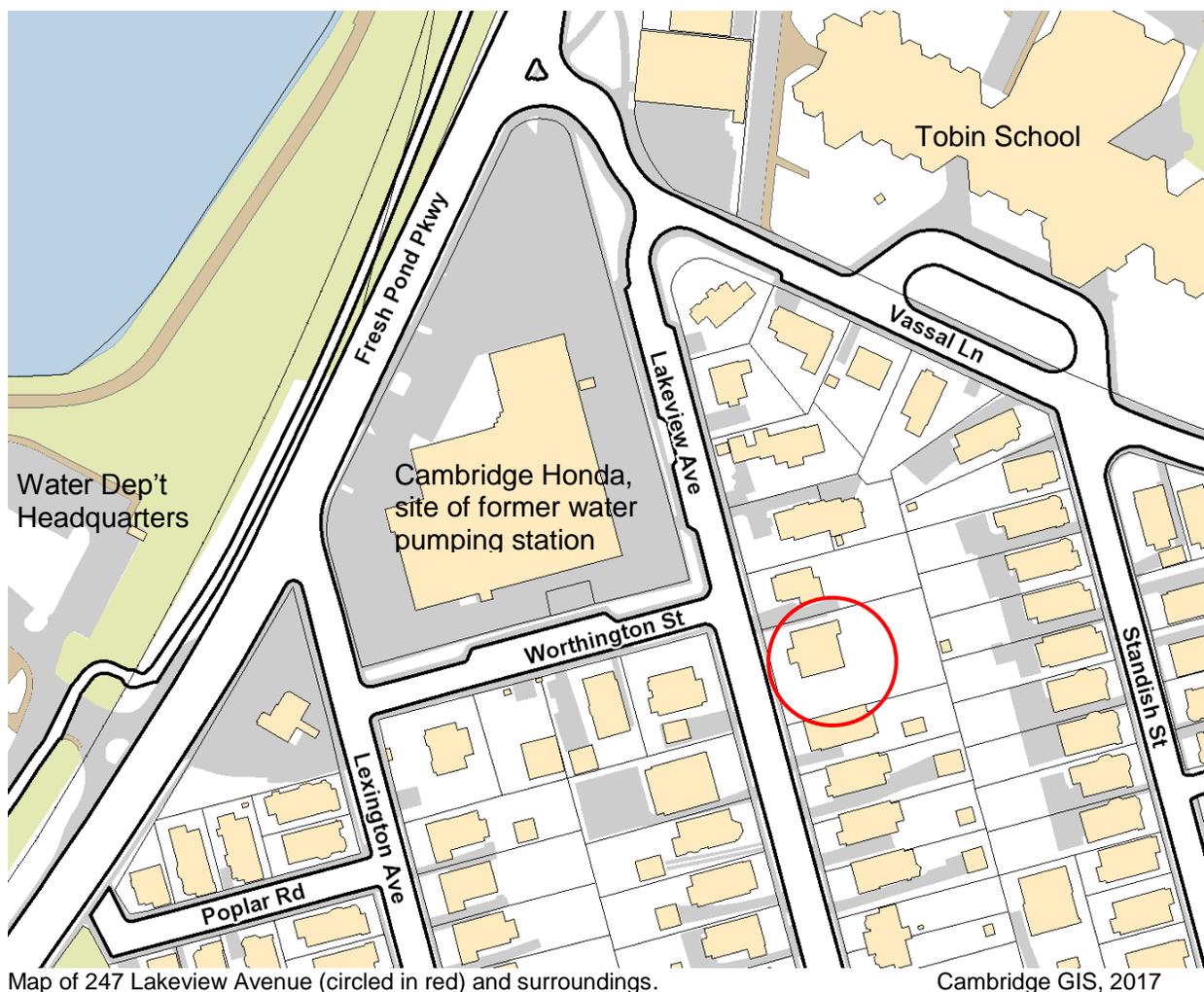
The structure, a 2½-story shingled home with a hipped roof and concrete-parged foundation, is located on the east side of Lakeview Avenue, approximately 400 feet south of Vassal Lane. It is situated on a large lot of 13,350 square feet (Map 234/Parcel 190) in a Residence B zoning district. This district allows one and two family houses and townhomes with an FAR maximum of .50 and a minimum of 2,500 square feet per dwelling unit. The height limit in this zone is 35 feet. Neighboring residential properties include other 2½-story single and two-family homes as well as the 3-story former Fresh Pond Hotel building at 234 Lakeview Avenue which was relocated from the banks of the pond in 1892 and is now in shared condominium ownership (nine units).

This neighborhood is one block away from the busy thoroughfare of Fresh Pond Parkway, but is protected by the one-way flow of traffic on the residential streets. Both Lakeview and Lexington avenues are one-way with only northbound travel.

The John M. Tobin school building houses both the Tobin Montessori School and the Vassal Lane Upper School (grades 6-8). The large building on the triangular lot bounded by Worthington Street, Lakeview Avenue and Fresh Pond Parkway is the Cambridge Honda dealership at 275 Fresh Pond Parkway. The water department's pumping station occupied that site from 1872-1953.

The condition of the house is very good. The previous owners had purchased the house in 1972 and it appears to have been well maintained. There is a rear and south side yards are generous in size. The house is situated closer to the north lot line where the curb cut and driveway are located.

The property's most recent assessed value was \$1,743,200 and the property sold in October 2016 for \$2,200,000. The current owner, Duncan MacArthur of Harry & Lili LLC, is a builder and is renovating the property for a client who plans on buying the home.



Map of 247 Lakeview Avenue (circled in red) and surroundings.

Cambridge GIS, 2017

Architectural Description

The house is a center entrance Colonial Revival home with symmetrical window placement, a center porch and two dormers on each side of the steeply pitched hip roof. The roof flares out near the eaves, which are wide but unornamented. The walls are shingled with tapered corners and a thin belt course between the first and second floors. The front entrance porch is generously proportioned. Round columns on paneled bases support the flat roof of the porch. The solid paneled door is flanked by two sidelights. Above the porch is a three sided bay window. The predominant window pattern is 8-over-1 lights double hung sash. Two chimneys are located approximately halfway back on the roof, but are not exactly symmetrical in their placement.

The house was designed by architect Charles Herbert Bartlett, a busy local architect with an office in Central Square with partner Ralph Dow. Bartlett was born in England and moved to the United States as a child. He took a job in Minneapolis in the early part of his architectural career but returned to Cambridge, got married and settled in Arlington. He designed single family homes and apartment buildings in Arlington, Brookline, Cambridge, and surrounding towns. He also designed Dr. Albert Tuttle's private hospital at 350 Memorial Drive, now owned by M.I.T. Bartlett retired in 1921.



247 Lakeview Avenue, front

MLS # 72016621 listing photo from Estate.com



247 Lakeview Avenue, southwest corner

MLS # 72016621 listing photo from Estate.com



247 Lakeview Avenue, rear yard and southeast corner MLS # 72016621 listing photo from Estately.com

History

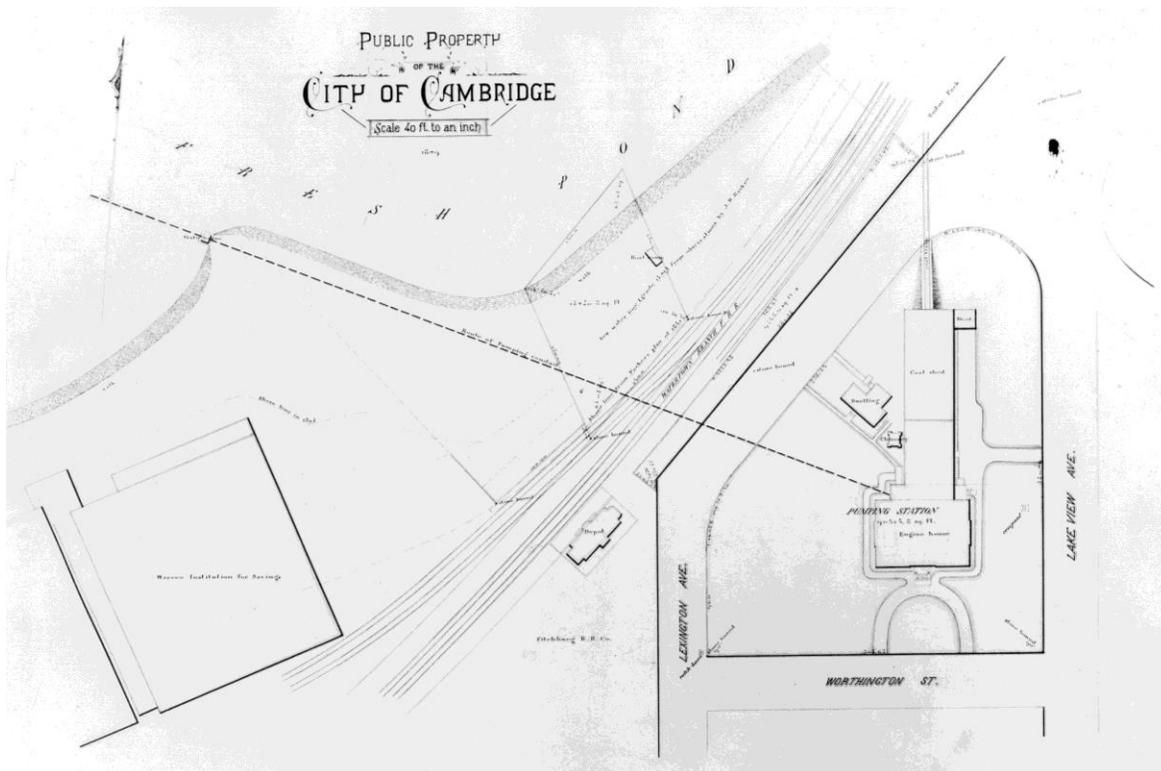
This comfortable suburban single-family was built in this location to be close to the Fresh Pond pumping station across the street. The City of Cambridge built the house for the engineer of the pumping station, Ellery T. Harris. Harris was hired for the job in 1898 when the former engineer was promoted to superintendent of the water department. He had worked as an assistant engineer at the Cambridge water works in the 1880s before leaving to work for George F. Blake Manufacturing Company and the De La Vergne Refrigerator Machine Company.

The private Cambridge Water Works was purchased by the City in 1865-1866. The development of the municipal water system is described in the Northwest Cambridge volume of the *Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge* (CHC, 1977).

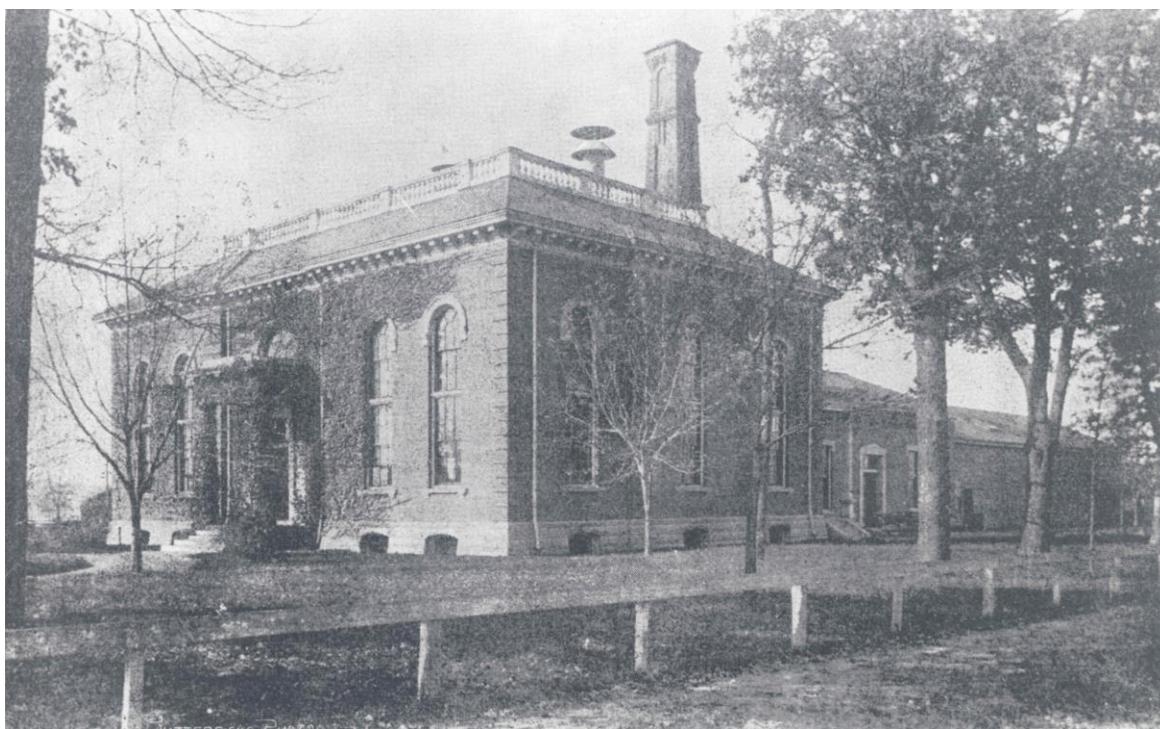
The post-Civil War prosperity pointed out the inadequacies of the Fresh Pond water supply, which was limited in quantity and subject to pollution from the ice houses and farms along the shore, particularly on the Belmont side. As part of an expansion program a new pumping station was built in 1872. In 1875 the City also put into effect an earlier plan to tap the surrounding ice ponds by means of a conduit linking Little and Spy Ponds in Belmont and Arlington with Fresh Pond at Black Nook. Unfortunately, ever present sewage from the ice industry and other businesses quickly contaminated this new source, and the line was rarely used after 1878. As a short-term measure to control water purity on Fresh Pond, the City annexed the Belmont shore in 1880 after five years of repeated efforts. This brought the ice businesses under regulation while a thorough search could be made for more reliable supplies of water in rural areas beyond the limits of suburban expansion. ...

...In 1894 the entire Fresh Pond shore was cleared of ice houses, and most of the existing dwellings were moved to Strawberry Hill or Concord Avenue. At the same time, the City purchased the farms along Hobbs Brook [in Lincoln and Waltham] for a larger reservoir and bought the Payson Park highlands in Belmont, immediately west of Fresh Pond, for a new storage reservoir...Both Hobbs Brook and Payson Park were connected to the existing system in 1897.

Water now flowed some ten miles from Hobbs and Stony Brooks through a large conduit to Fresh Pond, whence it was pumped to the Payson Park reservoir for storage and pressure stability. As a protective measure against sudden demand or drought, Cambridge was linked in 1904 to the Metropolitan District Commission water system and fully joined to the M. D. C. in 1950. In 1915 construction of a modern filtration plant and pumping system was begun in Kingsley Park, on the site of Wyeth's brick ice house, and was completed in 1922.



Fresh Pond Pumping Station, Engineering Plan, 1879. Site now 275 Fresh Pond Parkway.



Fresh Pond Pumping Station, ca. 1890.

The house shown on the engineering plan of the pumping station on page 5, was built in 1868 and razed in 1900 after the construction of the new house 247 Lakeview Avenue was completed for the new engineer, Mr. Harris.

The house originally had a broader porch stretching across the full front of the house with a Colonial Revival railing around the deck above the porch. The house was described in the Cambridge Chronicle in 1899 in this way, "The house is of modern style, with a few colonial features, especially the deck roof and railing. There are eight dormer windows in the roof. At the front of the house there is a long and broad veranda." The existing three-sided bay window on the second floor likely replaced a door at the same location.

Significance and Recommendation

It is the staff recommendation that the building at 247 Lakeview Avenue is significant for its associations with the Cambridge Pumping Station and its engineer, Ellery T. Harris as well as for its architectural design in the Colonial Revival style by a respected local architect, Charles H. Bartlett.

The proposal for the house is not demolition, but to relocate it 10' 3" to the south to allow for a more generous driveway set apart from that of the abutter. The house will be restored in much the same manner as it exists at present. A separate unit would be built to the rear of the main house and connected by a narrow breezeway. The design is by Moskow Linn Architects and is for a particular buyer, not for speculation.

The Commission should hear testimony from the owner and neighbors before making a further determination.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services Department
Duncan MacArthur, MacArthur Construction Co.