

**PRELIMINARY
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT**

**Ivory Sands House
145 Elm Street
Cambridge, Mass.**



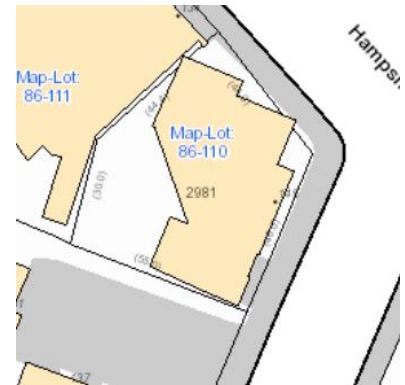
The 1839 Ivory Sands house was the first of three brick houses constructed in Cambridge by the Sands family of brickmakers; the others were at 22 Putnam Avenue (1848) and 97 Huron Avenue (1850, demolished). The surviving houses built by members of the Sands family are significant for their associations with the brick industry in Cambridge in the 19th century. Both the Ivory Sands house at 145 Elm Street and the Hiram Sands house at 22 Putnam Avenue are listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the Hiram Sands house has been protected by a preservation restriction since 1978. Designation of the Ivory Sands house as a Cambridge landmark will protect it for posterity

Charles Sullivan
Cambridge Historical Commission
July 1, 2016

Location and Status

A. Address and Zoning

The Ivory Sands house at 145 Elm Street (aka 132 Hampshire Street) occupies a 2,980 square foot lot (Map 86, Lot 110) at the southwest corner of Elm and Hampshire streets. The zoning is Residence C-1, a multi-family district with a height limit of 35' and a requirement of 1,500 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit. The building is non-conforming due to limited setbacks. It also encroaches on to the Hampshire Street right-of-way by about 3'. The assessed value in 2016 was \$910,200, of which \$471,600 was attributed to the building.



145 Elm Street, showing the garage, greenhouse, front entries, and retaining wall, May 11, 2015

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B. Ownership and Occupancy

The Cambridge Assessing Department lists the current owner of record as Edward B. Seldin. However, Dr. Seldin sold the property in July 2015 to the current occupant, Shawn R. Henry (Middlesex South Registry of Deeds 65819/24). The structure is assessed as a single-family house.



145 Elm Street/132 Hampshire Street

Cambridge Assessing Department

C. Area Description

Elm Street developed in the late 1830s and early 1840s in the period when Broadway Common (now Sennott Park) was the civic center of Cambridgeport. Elaborate Greek Revival houses lined Broadway facing the park, while Tremont, Norfolk and Elm streets behind them were filled with substantial but less elaborate Greek Revival houses, widely separated on generous lots. There was very little development north of Hampshire Street until after the Civil War, when both Hampshire and Cambridge Streets and the streets between them rapidly filled with small single-family houses in a variety of vernacular styles. Beginning in the 1890s the growing industrialization of Cambridge attracted waves of immigrants from Europe, and the development community responded by constructing three-deckers wherever a vacant lot could be found. During this period many older houses were moved back from the street so a three-decker could be constructed in the front yard. Industries infiltrated the area until Cambridge adopted zoning in 1924, and persisted for many years after. Housing conditions deteriorated from the 1920s through the 1970s, but recent decades have seen much rehabilitation and some new construction in the vicinity.

D. Context of this Designation Report

The Ivory Sands house was identified during the Cambridge Historical Commission's 1965 survey of Cambridgeport as having exceptional significance, and the Commission nominated it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. Dr. Edward Seldin purchased the property in 1979. In 1982 he requested zoning permission to subdivide the lot, which was also occupied by the large 1882 three-decker at 134-136 Hampshire Street. The City Engineer noted the encroachment of the house on Hampshire Street, and the BZA requested the Historical Commission to monitor alterations to the house. A preservation restriction was drafted but never executed, and Dr. Seldin reviewed exterior alterations with the staff until he sold the property in 2015. Before the sale he requested the Commission to initiate a landmark designation study, which commenced on June 4, 2015.

I. Description

The Sands house is a gable-roofed 2½-story Federal-style single-family house with a center entrance and five bays across the front façade. The waterstruck brick exterior is surmounted by a slightly projecting entablature and a sawtooth brick cornice. The windows are trimmed with brownstone lintels and 2+2 sash. The flush-boarded pediments have half-round windows in the attic. A two-story shingled addition projects from the northwest corner on Hampshire Street. The uncharacteristically high brick basement, which raises the house almost a full story above the sidewalk, may have resulted from a regrading of the surrounding area to level the grade of Hampshire Street.



145 Elm Street, showing the garage, greenhouse, solar panel, May 11, 2015

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Publicly visible alterations and additions to the building include a new front door and sidelights in a traditional pattern; a covered front porch with a brick platform and arched opening to the cellar door; a perimeter stone wall that turns the corner on Elm and Hampshire streets; a garage; and a greenhouse.

Structures and elements not visible to the public include a sloping triangular glass roof behind the house, an exterior staircase, a garden trellis, and a rooftop HVAC condenser. Interior alterations also not subject to review include a two-level basement with a circular staircase that was occupied by Dr. Seldin's machine shop.



Basement entrance and front door



145 Elm Street, showing structures and elements not visible from any public way



Cambridge GIS

II. History and Significance of the Property

The 1839 Ivory Sands house was the first of three brick houses constructed in Cambridge by members of the Sands family of brickmakers; the others were at 22 Putman Avenue (1848) and 97 Huron Avenue (1850, now demolished). The Ivory Sands house has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1986.

Ivory Sands was born in Lyman, York County, Maine about 1806, and was one of several sons of Thomas and Eunice Sands. He married Eliza Ward in Plymouth, N.H. in 1835. The couple moved to Cambridgeport, where he and his brother John entered the brick business with a clay pit and kilns along the Millers River north of Cambridge Street, making bricks primarily for the Boston market. Ivory built 145 Elm Street in 1839, probably as an advertisement for his products, and sold it in 1840.

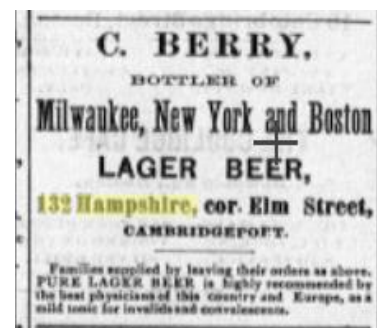
In 1842 Sands entered a partnership with two other brickmakers to lease an acre of the William Winthrop farm in the vicinity of Flag and Banks streets, with the right to extract clay and manufacture bricks on the property. His brother Hiram joined him in 1845 in leasing another two acres from the Winthrop heirs, and in 1848 Hiram and John built the brick house at 22 Putnam Avenue. Hiram retained this house until 1854, when he left the brick business. Ivory Sands continued making bricks in the neighborhood through the 1860s, and died in 1878. John Sands developed clay pits on Garden Street and Concord Avenue in North Cambridge, where he built a brick house at 97 Huron Avenue that was demolished in 1940. His son Martin merged the Sands Brick Company into the New England Brick Company in 1900.

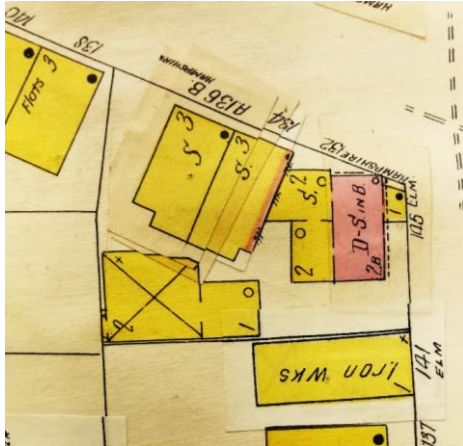


145 Elm Street and a nearby brickyard in 1854

The house at 145 Elm was probably built to advertise the products of the Sands brickyard. Ivory Sands purchased a vacant lot on the southwest corner of Elm and Hampshire Streets in 1838. A year later, he was taxed for “one unfinished house,” which he evidently completed and sold in 1840 to Jonathan Dexter and Corbin Gould. Nothing is known about Dexter, but Corbin Gould was a baker by trade whose firm, Gould & Wood, was located at 50 Myrtle Street in Boston in 1842. According to Cambridge directories Gould never lived in the house, but in 1848 he petitioned the City Council “for liberty to enclose within his yard a small portion of Hampshire Street” (*Cambridge Chronicle*, April 19, 1849). Corbin sold the place in 1866 to Elizabeth Holden, who defaulted two years later on a mortgage held by Levi Prescott, a customs inspector and “claims agent” in Boston. Prescott died in 1874

The high foundation of the Sands house allowed a variety of commercial uses to occupy the basement. Most notably, Casper Berry, a Swiss immigrant, and his wife Lizzie bought the property in 1882 and used it for their business of bottling lager beer. In 1887 the *Cambridge Tribune* reported that they were one of 113 saloons still operating in Cambridge despite the recent passage of a No-License law. The Berrys built the wood frame tenement next door on Hampshire Street in 1882 and prospered sufficiently to build a multi-family block in Boston and a house on Highland Avenue.





145 Elm and 134-136 Hampshire Street, 1934-60. "D-S in B" means "Dwelling, Store in Basement." Sanborn Atlas



145 Elm Street. 1965

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A store occupied the old saloon until the mid-20th century, but the property was essentially derelict by the 1960s. About 1976 a new owner removed the saloon entrance, front porch, and steps, leaving the house stripped of accretions. The Cambridge Historical Commission provided a Preservation Grant in 1978 to fabricate and install new half-round windows in the gable ends. Dr. Edward Seldin purchased the house in 1979 and was responsible for many recent improvements.



145 Elm Street, 1979

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All of the surviving houses built by members of the Sands family are significant for their associations with the brick industry in Cambridge in the 19th century. Both the Ivory Sands house at 145 Elm Street and the Hiram Sands house at 22 Putnam Avenue are on the National Register of Historic Places. The Hiram Sands house has been protected by a preservation restriction since 1978, and the Ivory Sands house deserves similar recognition.

IV. Relationship to the Criteria

A. Criteria for Landmark Designation

The enabling ordinance for landmark designation states:

The Historical Commission by majority vote may recommend for designation as a landmark 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 its 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 . . . (City Code, Article III, Chapter 2.78.180.A)

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

The Ivory Sands house is significant under Criterion 1 for its association with the original property owner, who was an early practitioner in Cambridge's signature brick industry. It is also significant under Criterion 2 as a rare example of brick construction in Cambridge in the late Federal Period.

V. Recommendations

A. Article III, Chapter 2.78.140

The purpose of landmark designation is contained in the enabling ordinance, which is 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 . . . 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; [and] to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such . . . structures . . .

B. Preservation Options

Landmark designation or donation of a preservation easement are the only two options for the permanent long-term protection and preservation of the Sands house. National Register listing alone will not permanently protect and preserve the building.

C. Staff Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Commission find that the Ivory Sands house meets the criteria for landmark designation and should be a protected landmark under Article III, Chapter 2.78.

VI. Standards and Criteria

Under Article III, the Historical Commission is charged with reviewing any construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features (other than color) of a designated landmark. This section of the report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics that led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, the exterior architectural features described in this report should be preserved and/or enhanced in any proposed alteration or construction that affects those features of the landmark. The standards following in paragraphs A and B of this section provide guidelines for the treatment of the landmark described in this report.

A. General Standards and Criteria

Subject to review and approval of exterior architectural features under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. Significant historic and architectural features of the landmark should 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 may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, 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, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
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 generally discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark should be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. Additions should not destroy significant exterior architectural features and should not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinct character of the landmark, neighborhood, and environment.
8. Additions should be designed in a way that, if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark would be unimpaired.

B. Suggested Review Guidelines

1. Site Development.

Additions to the Ivory Sands house, if allowed, should respect the form, massing and materials of the original without slavishly imitating it.

Alterations to publicly visible landscape structures, including walls, paths, driveways, and the like, should be compatible with the original design and materials.

2. Alterations

a. Exterior surfaces

Exterior materials should be preserved insofar as practicable. Special care should be taken to protect and maintain the appearance of the masonry and fenestration. Repointing the mortar joints should be done with special care to maintain the color and texture of the mortar and the

profile of the joints. Cleaning the brick exterior should occur under carefully controlled conditions to ensure the least possible damage to the surface. The brick masonry should never be painted.

b. Fenestration

Introduction of new window openings on the visible facades should not be allowed. Existing sash should be maintained, but when replaced should conform to the original design of the steel sash as closely as possible. Storm windows may be installed or upgraded without review in conformance with current Commission guidelines.

c. Interior features

Although interior features are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Cambridge Historical Commission, the owner should be encouraged to preserve original spaces, materials and detailing.

d. Secondary Structures

The garage, greenhouse, front retaining wall, steps and canopy have all been constructed since 1979. Their idiosyncratic design should be respected when changes are considered.

VII. Proposed Order

That the Ivory Sands House, 145 Elm Street, be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on _____, __, 2016. The premises so designated is the land defined as parcel 86 on assessor's map 110 and the structures thereon and the premises described in a deed recorded in Book 65819, Page 24 at the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds.

This designation is justified by the important architectural and historical associations the property embodies as a distinctive structure erected by early brickmaker Ivory Sands in 1839.

The effect of this designation shall be that review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability shall be required before any construction activity can take place within the designated premises or any action can be taken affecting the appearance of the premises, that would in either case be visible from a public way. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of the Final Landmark Designation Report, dated _____, 2016 with respect to the designated premises, by Section VII, Standards and Criteria of said report, and by the applicable sections of Chapter 2.78, Article III, of the Cambridge Municipal Code.