



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>

Bruce A. Irving, *Chair*; Susannah Barton Tobin, *Vice Chair*; Charles M. Sullivan, *Executive Director*
William G. Barry, Jr., Joseph V. Ferrara, Chandra Harrington, Jo M. Solet, *Members*
Gavin W. Kleespies, Paula A. Paris, Kyle Sheffield, *Alternates*

Date: November 27, 2019

To: Members and Alternates of the Historical Commission

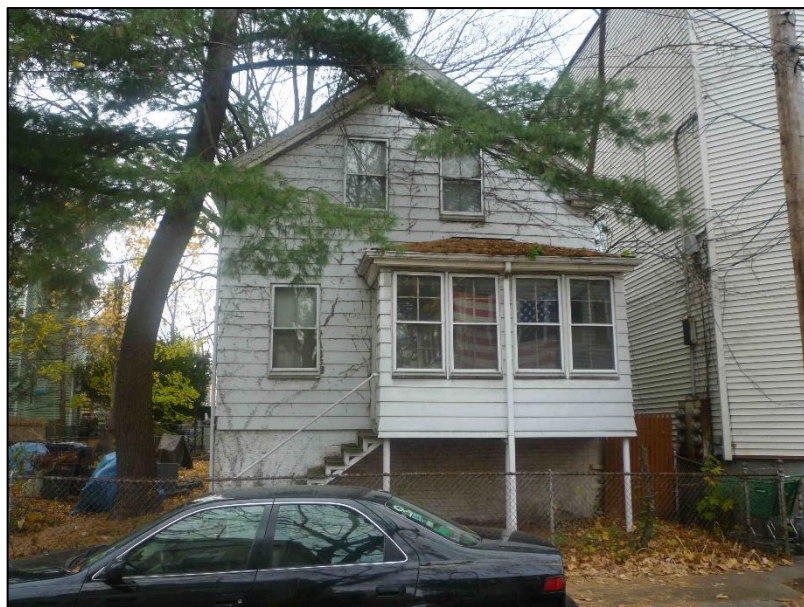
From: Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner

Re: Case D-1544: Stevenson House, 9 Pine St. (1845)

An application to demolish the Stevenson House at 9 Pine Street was received on November 8, 2019. The owner, Nine Pine Cambridge LLC, was notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for December 5, 2019.

Current Conditions

The Stevenson house occupies a 3,314 square-foot lot (75/15) on the west side of Pine Street, near the corner of School Street. This lot measures approximately 50 feet wide by 65 feet deep. The house is a 1 ½-story frame building with a front facing gable roof on a high brick foundation. The zoning is Residence C-1, a multi-family housing district that requires 1,500 square feet per dwelling unit. The FAR and height limits in this district are 0.75 and 35 feet. The assessed value of the land and building, according to the Assessors database, is \$966,000 - \$164,800 for the building, and \$801,200 for the land. The property sold in October 2018 for \$1,250,000.



9 Pine Street

Cambridge Assessing Dept. photo

The front porch is set back 5 feet from the sidewalk. The house is situated on the lot with non-conforming north side and rear setback conditions.

The house is in fair condition but has not been renovated in many years. It is covered with white aluminum siding, gutters, cornice trim, and storm windows.



9 Pine Street

Cambridge GIS

The property is located midway between Central and Kendall squares and near Main Street and Lafayette Square. There are two parks down the street, Clement Morgan Park and the Chief Anthony Paolillo Tot Lot. The desirability of the location and age and condition of some of the building stock makes this a fragile neighborhood. There are other mid to late-nineteenth century residential buildings at this corner of School and Pine Street, but there are also parking lots and a lot of high-density new construction nearby. An 1830s workers cottage at 86 School Street was demolished in 2016 and replaced with a 3-story contemporary single-family home.

The applicant proposes to raze the existing house and construct two attached homes, one of two stories and the other of three stories. The plan and elevation drawings for the proposed project are on file and have been distributed to the commission. Two parking spaces would be provided.



9 Pine Street, 2019



9 Pine Street (at center with red dot)

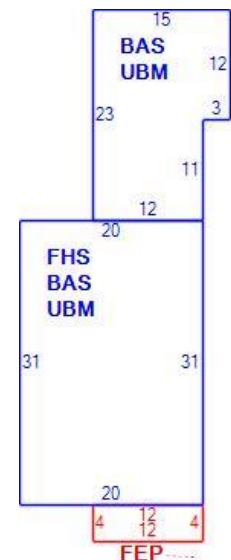
Cambridge GIS/Pictometry

Description

The Stevenson House is a 1½-story wood frame home with a pitched roof, oriented gable end facing the street. The cornice returns on the left and right sides of the gable but does not create a full pediment. The front entrance is located on the right bay of the three-bay façade and is now covered by the enclosed front porch. The main block of the house measures 20 feet across and 31 feet deep with an ell measuring 12 x 11. A rear addition of 15 x 12 is a later addition. The house sits on a high basement foundation of approximately 4' in height. The large pine tree in the photos has since been removed. The existing windows, likely original, are wood 2-over-2 double hung sash.

The house was covered with aluminum siding sometime after 1948. Wood clapboards are visible where the siding has been removed on the south facing dormer and on the north side of the ell. The enclosed front porch was added in 1926. The flat-roofed rear addition, which has sometimes been used as a separate residence, was added in 1886.

The house has the massing of a small Greek Revival cottage, but some characteristics of the Italianate style including the short gable end returns and 2-over-2 windows. More information might be found beneath the siding, such as whether there were once brackets along the eaves or at the entry. There is no documentation in our records of a Greek Revival portico across the front.



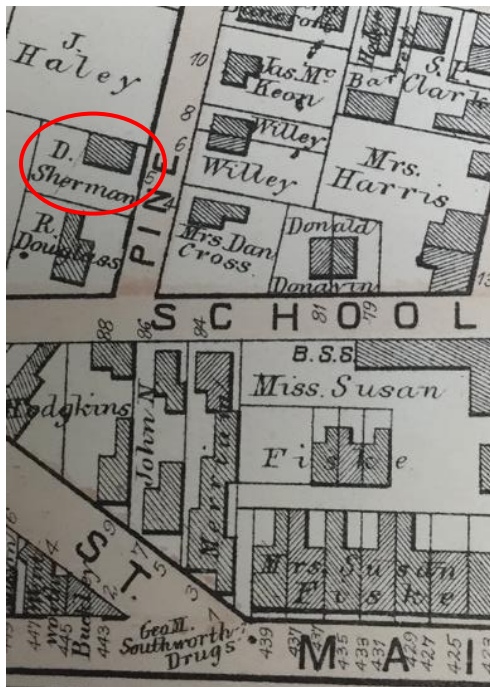


9 Pine Street, front (east) elevation with enclosed porch addition

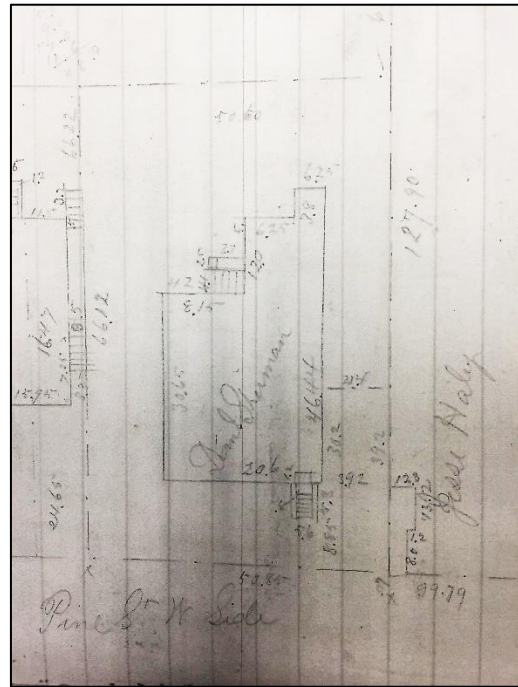
History

The opening of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 opened up a new transportation option from Old Cambridge and points west to Boston. Formerly occupied by only four homesteads, Cambridgeport started to grow soon after the opening of the bridge. Main Street was built along a causeway to the bridge from Pelham's Island and Lafayette Square (where the earliest development in Cambridgeport took place). Taverns and stores were the first structures built along Main Street. The commercial nature of the street continued through the nineteenth century, as it was a busy thoroughfare between Boston and Harvard Square.

Pine Street was laid out along with School and Cherry Streets in 1803. The Old Cambridgeport residential neighborhood developed in and around Cherry and Pine streets during the first half of the nineteenth century. Some of Cambridgeport's oldest houses, dating to the Federal period, survive in this historic neighborhood including the Margaret Fuller House of 1806-07. The area's development then slowed due to financial troubles caused by the Embargo of 1807. The economy picked up again and growth of this neighborhood was in full swing again by the 1840s, when many of the Greek Revival style houses were constructed.



1873 Hopkins Atlas of Cambridge



1875 House Book entry for 9 Pine

The property at 9 Pine Street was purchased by James Stevenson, a laborer, from housewright Samuel Sanders in 1844. Stevenson was taxed for the finished house the following year. Stevenson and his wife Margaret were born in Ireland in about 1795/1792. They resided at 9 Pine Street until 1854, then disappear from the Cambridge directories.

By 1872, Daniel Sherman, took ownership of the property. A former bacon curer and provision dealer, Sherman had accepted a position with the Police Department and worked in Station 2 in Central Square. He was born in Marlborough, Mass. in about 1827 and married wife Louisa Harriman of New Hampshire in 1849; they had at least three children. He died in 1889 in Marlborough.



9 Pine Street (middle house), 2019



9 Pine Street, south side of the ell and 1886 rear addition, 2019



9 Pine St., north side of the ell (beyond tree trunk) and rear addition, 2019

Later owners and residents of 9 Pine Street included tailor John Bowles, harnessmaker Edmund S. Taylor and his wife Edna G. Taylor, mechanic Patrick Leeman and his wife Margaret, and community activist Patricia Loder.

Significance and Recommendation

The Stevenson House is a modest side hall late Greek Revival workers cottage. It is significant for its associations with the second phase of development in Cambridgeport in the 1830s and 1840s and for its associations with the Stevenson and Sherman families, both early residents. The house still retains some characteristic architectural features including its high brick foundation, side entrance, small dormers, and wood windows, though later alterations and deferred maintenance have been detrimental to the building's appearance.

I recommend that the Commission review the proposed plans for new construction and hear public testimony from the neighbors before making a further determination.

cc: Scott Kenton, owner representative
Ranjit Singanayagam, ISD