



## CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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November 23, 2016

To: Members of the Historical Commission

From: Charles Sullivan

Re: D-1413: Frank A. Kennedy coachman's house, 16 Kennedy Road

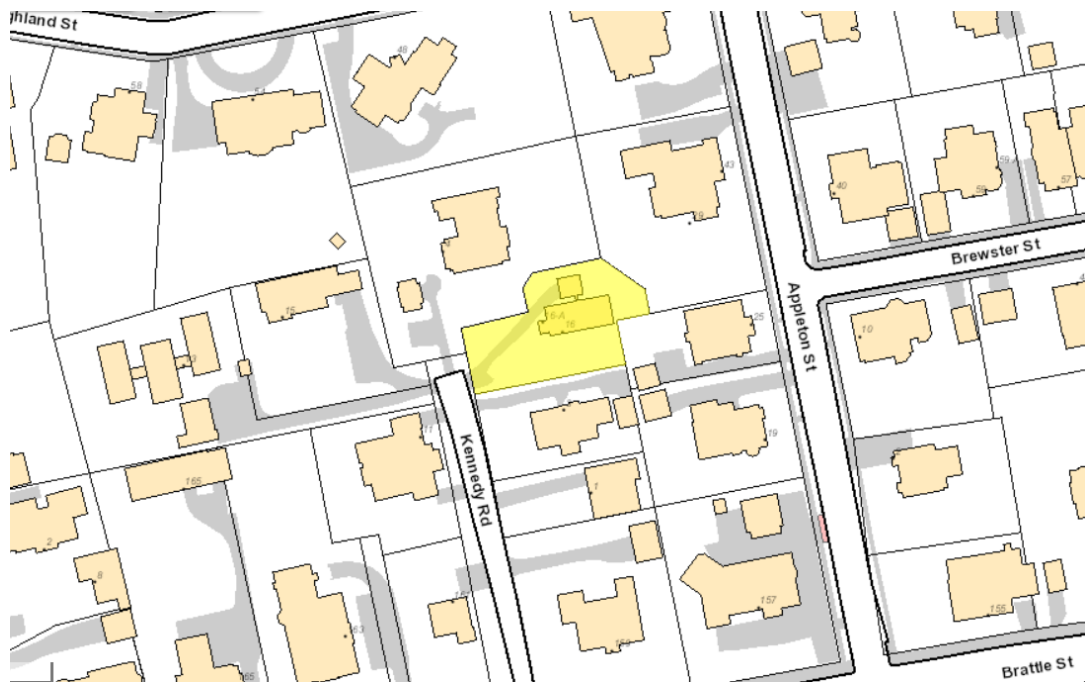
An application to demolish the house at 16 Kennedy Road was received on November 9, 2016. The applicants, Jacob Farmer and Jenna Moskowitz, were notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for December 1.



16 Kennedy Road, south and west elevations

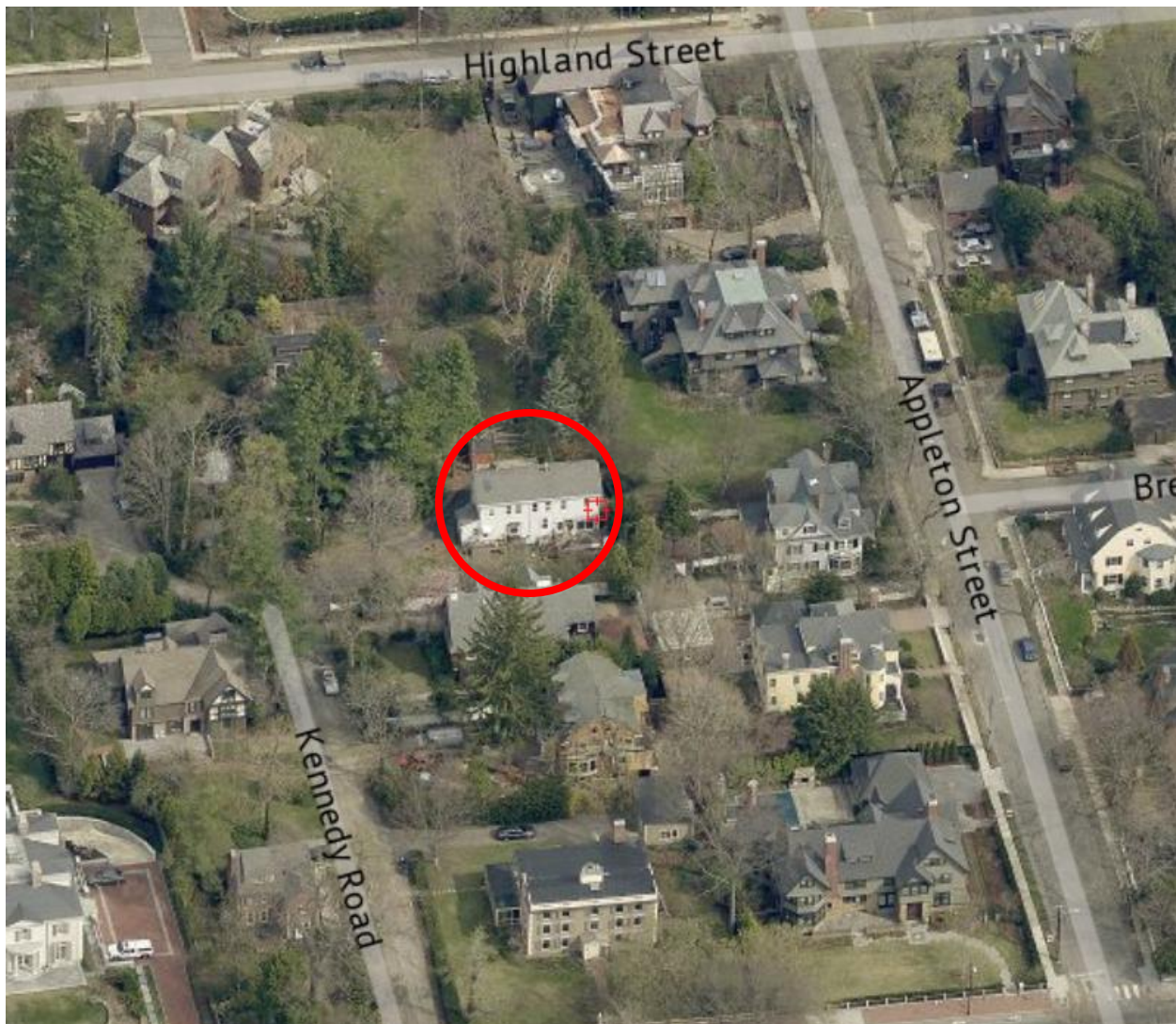
CHC photo, 2016





16 Kennedy Road

City of Cambridge GIS



16 Kennedy Road (center)

Cambridge GIS

## Site

The Frank A. Kennedy coachman's house is located at the north end of Kennedy Road, a dead-end unaccepted public way off Brattle Street. Constructed about 1875, this 2½-story, single-family dwelling is situated on a lot of 9,931 square feet in an A-1 residential district. This district allows single family dwellings with a 0.5 FAR, a 35-foot height limit, and a minimum density of 6,000 square feet per dwelling unit.

The Kennedy coachman's house sits at the center of an irregularly-shaped lot with maximum dimensions of approximately 150' by 80'. One corner of the house sits about 4' from a property line. The assessed value for the land and buildings (Map 283/Parcel 83), according to the online Assessor's database, was \$2,099,100: \$258,200 for the building, and the balance for the land.

## Condition

The Kennedy coachman's house contains a gross floor area of about 2,820 square feet on two floors and an attic. The building appears to be in fair condition; the Assessing Department also rates it "fair." The exterior is covered with vinyl siding. The house was renovated and the windows were replaced with insulated units in 1999. The roof could not be inspected, nor could the foundation. An interior inspection made in 2015 found unsafe staircases and several incomplete renovation projects.

The applicant proposes to demolish the building and replace it with a 2½-story, single-family dwelling with the appearance of two conjoined gable-roofed houses. The structure would incorporate a garage and would have wood clapboards, awning windows, and a standing-seam metal roof. The proposed house would conform to zoning setback and height requirements.

## Description

The Frank A. Kennedy coachman's house was constructed about 1875 in conjunction with the 1861 Kennedy mansion at 48 Highland Street. It is a wood frame former stable and coachman's residence, 2½- stories high with a gable roof. The building originally measured fifty feet long and twenty feet wide, with ramps for access on the north and west elevations. A 7' x 10' addition was put up on the west elevation in 1999.

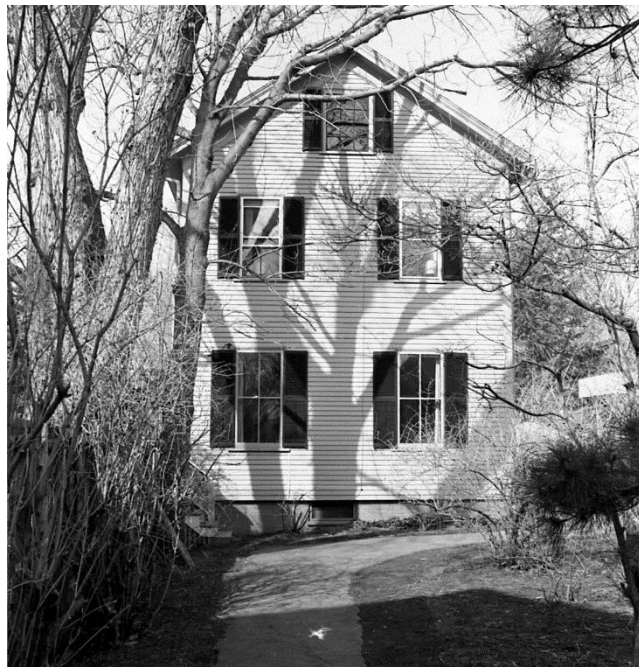
The original configuration and use of the Kennedy coachman's house is unclear. Photos taken in 1966 show a configuration probably similar to the original. At that time the building had wood clapboards, narrow corner boards, and a broad frieze board at the cornice that was typical of vernacular Italianate structures of the 1870s. Windows were a mixture of sizes with 2+2 and 6+6 sash and shutters throughout. The west elevation appears to include a woodshed or similar utilitarian space. Sliding glass doors have been added to access a deck on the south elevation. The house at that time had pedestrian access from Appleton Street, and this elevation had regularly spaced windows. There are no early photos of the north façade.

The current appearance of the house dates from 1999, when the windows were replaced and the clapboards covered with vinyl siding; a 7' x 10' addition accommodated a "mother-in-law studio". The original part of the building was renovated with new stairs and bathroom; two barn doors were removed and a new entrance was created.



16 Kennedy Road, south and west elevations

CHC photo, ca. 1966



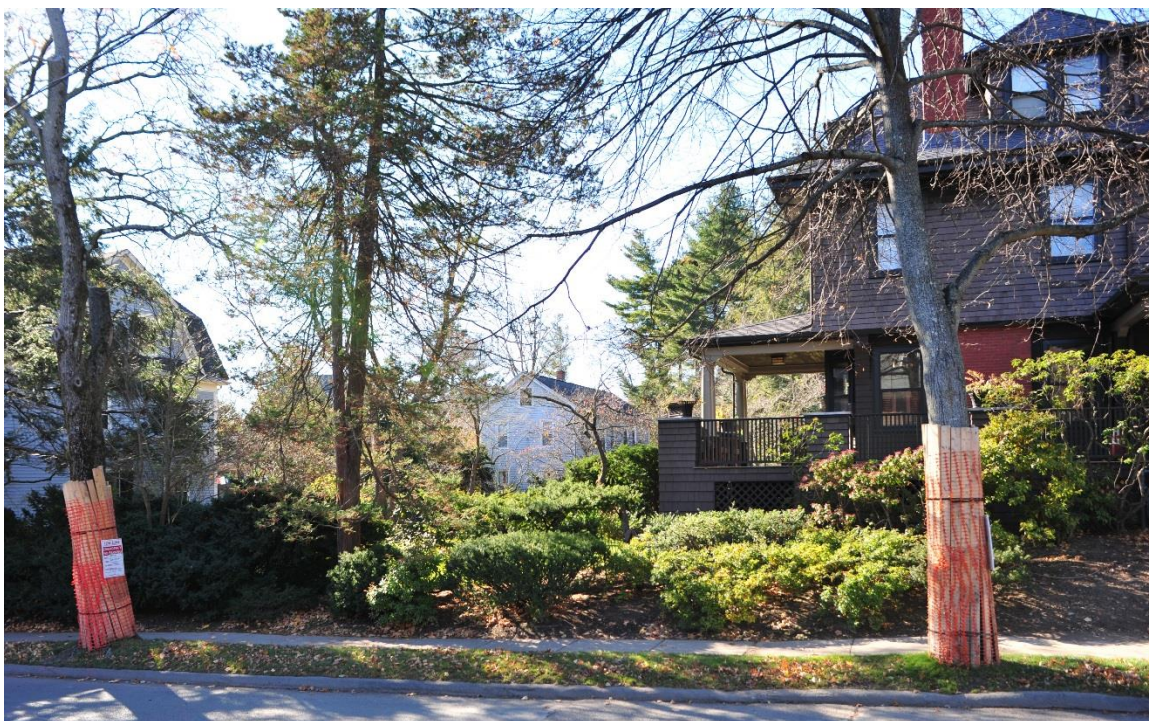
Appleton Street elevation, ca. 1966





North Elevation

Redfin.com, 2015



16 Kennedy Road as seen from Appleton Street, with the Frank L. Kennedy house at right.

CHC photo, 2016

### History

The Frank A. Kennedy property was originally part of the 25-acre Joseph Lee estate, of which the ca. 1684 Hooper-Lee-Nichols house is the most visible reminder. The property originally extended from the Charles River to Vassall Lane, and as it was subdivided the land behind the house on what is now Kennedy Road remained intact until the 1850s. Appleton and Highland streets were laid out in 1858, and John Reed, a hardware merchant, bought the southwest corner

about 1860. Charles C. Little, the publisher and real estate dealer, bought the entire remaining northwest portion of the land, about 72,000 square feet in all, gaining frontage on both Highland – where he built a large house at #48 in 1861 – and on Appleton, where a Kennedy descendant, Prof. Frank L. Kennedy, built #43 in 1904.

Highland Street is at a considerably higher elevation than Brattle Street, so Little or Kennedy laid out Kennedy Road to reach the stables at the foot of the slope. The surviving building is one of at least four service structures on the Kennedy estate; these included a greenhouse on Appleton Street and two large, connected stables that stood immediately west of the coachman's house.

Frank A. Kennedy (1841-1926) inherited a Cambridgeport bakery from his father, Artemas Kennedy, in 1861. The younger Kennedy mechanized the baking ovens and expanded his distribution network, building a new factory on Franklin Street in 1875 and one in Chicago in 1878. In 1890 Kennedy retired and sold the company to the New York Biscuit Company, which a year later merged with the National Biscuit Company; Nabisco operated the Cambridge plant until the 1960s. Frank L. Kennedy, a professor of engineering and mechanical drawing at Harvard, acquired 19,000 on Appleton Street from his father and built #43 in 1904.



The Frank A. and Charlotte Kennedy estate in 1886. Kennedy's stables are marked with x's; the coachman's house is circled.

Frank A. Kennedy subsequently lived in Vermont and in Florida, but retained balance of the Cambridge property. His heirs sold the Highland Street house immediately after his death, and it was torn down and replaced by the present house at #48 in 1927. They retained the lot behind it that contained the stables and coachman's house. Another descendant, Sargent Kennedy, razed the stables and in 1966 put up the present Deck Associates house at 20 Kennedy Road. The coachman's house at 16 apparently belonged to Kennedy descendants until recently.

### Significance and Recommendation

The Kennedy coachman's house at 16 Kennedy Road is significant for its associations with Frank A. Kennedy, a nationally-prominent Cambridge industrialist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as a rare surviving estate support building.

I recommend that the Commission review the applicant's proposal and hear public testimony from the neighborhood before making a further determination.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services Commissioner  
Jacob Farmer and Jenna Moskowitz