

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

34-112	Boston North	AT	BLM.730
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Town/City: Belmont

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Belmont Center

Photograph



Address: 55 Alexander Avenue

Historic Name: W.H. Locke House

Uses: Present: single family dwelling

Original: single family dwelling

Date of Construction: by 1875

Source: maps

Style/Form: French Second Empire

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard

Roof: slate, asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

1929- front porch

1936-vestibule on front of house

2004-rear addition

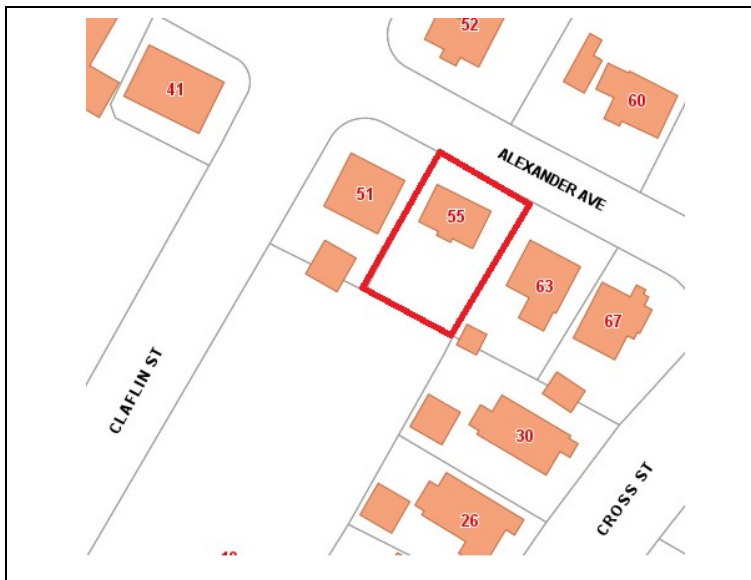
Condition: good

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 5,897 SF

Setting: mixed residential neighborhood in Belmont Center

Locus Map (north at top)



Recorded by: Lisa Mausolf

Organization: Belmont Historic District Commission

Date (*month / year*): October 2014

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

BELMONT

55 ALEXANDER AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Located just east of the commercial district along Leonard Street, 55 Alexander Avenue is a mid 19th century cottage in the French Second Empire style. The small clapboarded building is capped by a character-defining mansard roof which has seen the application of asphalt shingles to the top roof but retains polychromatic patterned slate shingles with flower designs on the side slopes. The shed dormers have a small, simple bracket at each end of the overhang. A single-story porch spanning the façade was first added to the building in 1929. The present three-bay porch has simple posts with necks and a stick balustrade. The 3 x 2 bay house has a center entrance with projecting vestibule (1936) and glazed door. Windows contain double-hung 2/2 sash. The original chimney has been removed and a modern exterior brick chimney is centered on the east wall. The rear addition was constructed in 2004.

In contrast to its original multi-acre siting, the house occupies a 5,897 square foot lot with driveways extending along both of the side elevations. It is setback slightly from the road with a small area of lawn and modern fieldstone wall extending along the sidewalk.

The house is of interest as a modest, scaled-down example of the French Second Empire style which was utilized in Belmont in a more elaborate fashion for a number of mansions along Pleasant Street and houses in Waverley.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This mid 19th century cottage was built on the farmland of W.H. Locke and was in place by the time of the 1875 map. He had married his wife Sarah in 1869 and it is possible that the house was built at that time. W.H. Locke is also shown as the owner on the 1889 map. William H. Locke died on July 23, 1889 and the 1898 Atlas indicates that the property was still owned by his heirs. In the early 20th century the house was rented out to various tenants. Creighton Logan, a gardener, was living here in 1918.

The extensions of Claflin and Cross Streets south of Alexander Avenue were laid out in 1926 as part of the redevelopment of the Wellington Farms property by the Belmont Trust (see Area form BLM.BS). At this time the land around the cottage was subdivided and new homes built. William I. Locke still owned the house in the 1920s and 1930s; he lived at 67 Leonard Street. Town records indicate that he applied for a building permit in 1929 to build the front "piazza". In 1936 he was granted a building permit to construct a 6' x 2' vestibule on the front of the house and to demolish a rear ell. In the 1920s and 30s 55 Alexander Avenue was the home of Ralph and Florence Packard and their six children. He worked as a market gardener. Sargent and Olive Ricker lived here in the 1940s and 1950s. He was employed as a bookkeeper and paid \$40/month in rent in 1940.

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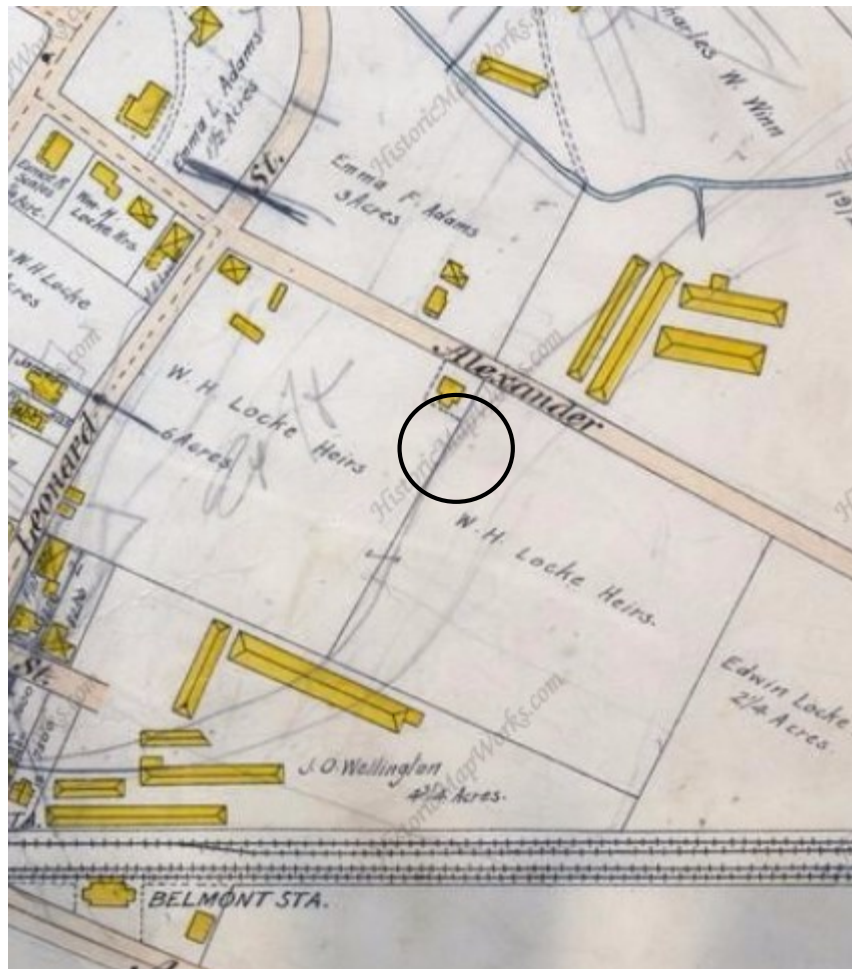
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BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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- Stadley, George W. *Atlas of the Towns of Watertown, Belmont, Arlington, and Lexington*. 1898.
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1898 Stadley map