



## CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: March 26, 2021  
To: Cambridge Historical Commission  
From: Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner  
Re: D-1570: 204-206 Fayerweather Street (1927)

An application to demolish the two-family house at 204-206 Fayerweather Street was received on March 9, 2021. The applicants, Tom & Keya Dannenbaum, were notified of an initial determination of significance, and a public hearing was scheduled for April 1, 2021.



204-206 Fayerweather Street, CHC staff photo 2021

### General Description and Current Condition

The structure is a two-story, frame dwelling located on the south side of Fayerweather Street near Walden Street. The lot measures 4,718 square-foot lot (Assessor's Map 262/Lot 90) and is located in a Residence B zoning district. The Residence B district permits two-family construction and has a height limit of 35 feet and a Floor Area





204-206 Fayerweather Street, CHC staff photo 2021



204-206 Fayerweather Street, CHC staff photo 2021

divided light double hung sash pattern of 6-over-1 (except on the porch which has 1-over-1 windows). The Bungalow-style features that are present in this example include the low-pitched roof, projecting eaves, exposed rafter tails and paired windows. Very few California style Bungalows existing in Cambridge. This two-family, two-story version of the Bungalow is typical of the style in Cambridge, especially in West Cambridge. Many of the houses on this block of Fayerweather Street were built at about the same time with similar massing and details. This example also has some Colonial Revival touches such as the diamond pane fixed sash window on the west side.

The house is an example of the two-family suburban house type that became the dominant house form in North and West Cambridge around the turn of the twentieth century. Over a thousand two-family houses were built for middle and working-class families between 1885-1935. (*Northwest Cambridge*, p. 74). Standardized plans and stock construction materials made it possible for many houses to be constructed at the same time by a single developer. The rising costs of materials and labor in the years following World War I resulted in smaller houses with less ornamentation. Two-family house construction stopped during the Great Depression, but the form left a lasting mark on these neighborhoods. (*Northwest Cambridge*, p. 75).

Other than enclosure of the second-floor porch and replacement of windows, alterations to the house have been few. The concrete block garage was added in 1951.

### History

Fayerweather Street is named for Thomas Fayerweather, a Revolutionary-era land owner. He purchased the Ruggles house at 175 Brattle Street and the accompanying land that reached north to Vassal Lane. The first section of Fayerweather Street was laid out in 1847 from Brattle Street to Vassal Lane. A second section of the street was laid out in 1896 from Concord Avenue to Walden Street. The two sections were not joined (Vassal Lane to Concord Avenue) until 1911.

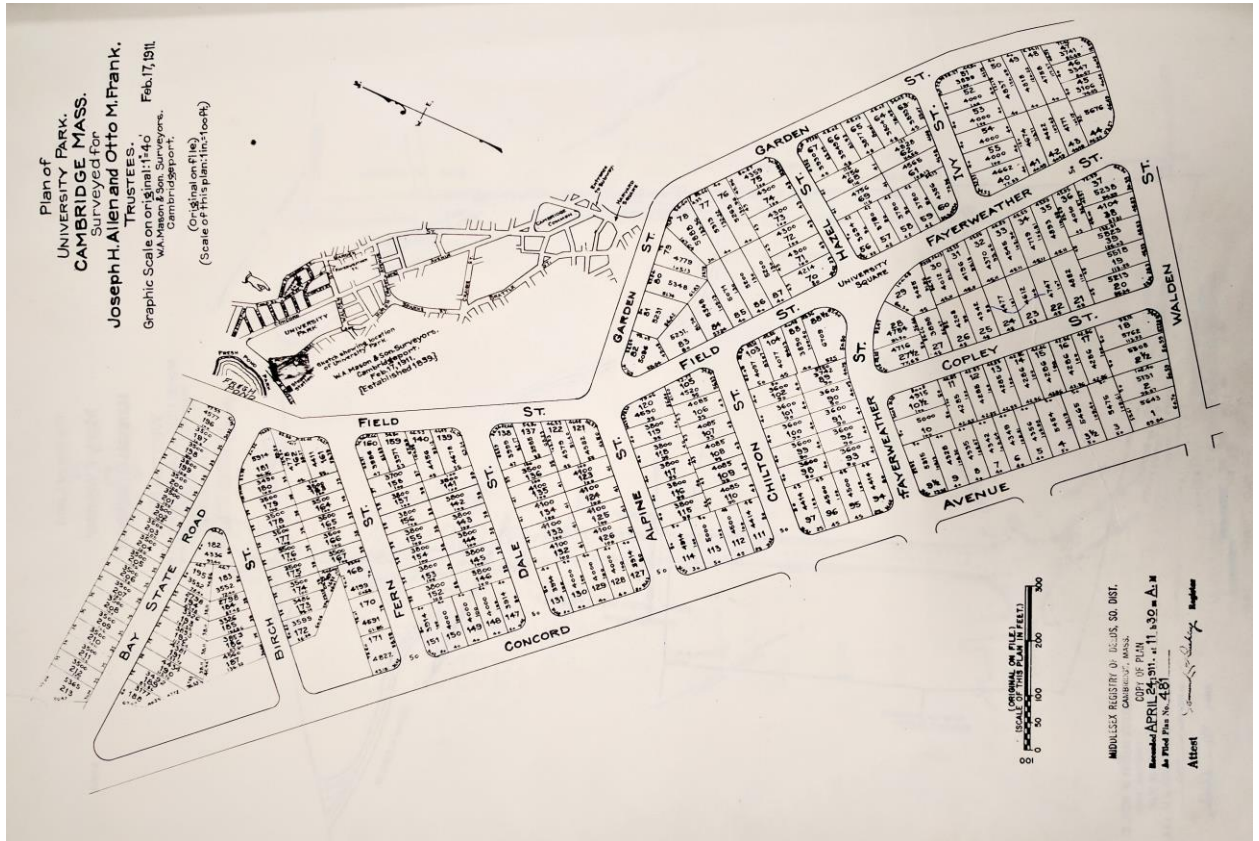
In the 1890s, the Huron Avenue streetcar line brought new development interest to the Huron Avenue neighborhood, which was built up around the turn of the century with Queen Anne two-family houses and Colonial Revival triple-deckers. But the area along either side of Concord Avenue, between Vassal Lane on the south and Garden Street on the north, did not develop until after World War I.

Vassal Lane had long marked the boundary between the residential neighborhoods north of Brattle Street and the large brickyards of North Cambridge. The property at 204-206 Fayerweather Street was part of a larger parcel of land owned by the Bay State Brick Company (later the New England Brick Company). Though the parcel was subdivided as early as 1900, street acceptances, sewers, and utility construction took some time.

Joseph H. Allen and Otto M. Frank partnered to buy the Bay State Brick Company land. In 1911 they hired W. A. Mason to make a new survey of the subdivision. They embarked on a marketing plan for what they called University Park, emphasizing the convenience to Harvard University and the new Harvard Square subway station. Lot prices started at \$280. Allen and Frank advertised a very optimistic claim that residents could board the streetcar to Harvard Square and arrive at Park Street station via the subway within thirteen minutes. Despite their efforts, sales and house construction remained slow until after World War I. Construction in this new neighborhood finally boomed in the 1920s.



1900 Stanley Atlas of Middlesex County



1911 Subdivision plan of University Park, W. A. Mason Co., surveyor.

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and select your house lot at **UNIVERSITY PARK**, Cambridge, Mass., before they are all sold to the people of Boston and of other nearby cities, who realize the importance of the HARVARD SQUARE SUBWAY. We are offering "subway values" at "horse-car" prices.

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Office on ground open daily. Take Huron Avenue car and get off at corner of Huron and Concord Avenues.

## UNIVERSITY PARK LAND COMPANY

JOSEPH H. ALLEN and OTTO M. FRANK, Trustees

Cor. Concord Ave. and Walden St., Cambridge, Mass.

Tel. Cambridge 2112-M

BOSTON OFFICE, 1053 OLD SOUTH BUILDING

Tel. Main 6193

1911 advertisement for lots in the University Park subdivision.

John R. Casso developed the lot at 204-206 Fayerweather Street in 1927. Casso sold the finished house to Rebecca & Harry Boyer with a mortgage in 1928. As the nation entered the Great Depression years, the Boyers defaulted on their loan in 1930. Eugene A. Thompson, Sr. and Gladys Clarke Thompson purchased the house from the Whitman Savings Bank in 1931 "for consideration paid" but not specified in the deed.

Eugene Augustus Thompson and Gladys Ophelia Clarke were both born in Barbados, B.W.I. They immigrated in 1915 and 1909, respectively, and settled in Cambridge. Eugene worked in a number of jobs including as a ship riveter. Gladys worked as a draper in a dressmaking shop. They lived separately with family members in Cambridgeport. They married in 1920 and moved to West Cambridge, living first on Ivy Street and then on Concord Avenue. Eugene began a career as a car salesman in Boston and Brookline.

Eugene and Gladys raised three children at 204-206 Fayerweather Street: Grayce, Eugene Jr., and Harold. The children went to the Russell School and graduated from Cambridge High & Latin. Grayce worked for the Mass. Department of Corporations and Taxation and was active in the YWCA's Marian Anderson Club and the Episcopal Church. Eugene Jr. served in the Navy during WWII and then was employed by the Mass. Division of Employment Security Review Board for 38 years. He married Elizabeth Reavis and had son Craig S. Thompson. Craig served in the Air Force and then took a job as a technician at Polaroid. Harold Thompson earned a business degree from Northeastern and moved to nearby Copley Street. He served as a member of the Cambridge Housing Authority and on the Advisory Council of the Cambridge Civic Association.



204-206 Fayerweather Street (looking east toward Walden Street), 29 April 1935. Cambridge Engineering Department photograph.

Gladys Thompson died in 1963 and Eugene Sr. died in 1966. The house remained in Thompson family ownership for three generations. It was sold to Eric N. Reyburn in 2005. The Reyburn Holdings LLC recently sold the property to the Dannenbaums in January 2021.

### Significance and Recommendation

The structure at 204-206 Fayerweather Street is significant for its associations with the broad social history of the City and the Thompson family, an upwardly mobile middle class Black family. The house is also significant for its architecture, as a representative example of the Bungalow style in Cambridge and as an example of the two-family house type that was prevalent in the North and West Cambridge neighborhoods between 1885-1935. It is the staff recommendation that the structure be found significant for these reasons.

The proposed new single-family house is contextual in its height, massing, and roof form but exhibits a clearly contemporary architectural expression with its fenestration as an expression of interior plan rather than exterior features, and mix of siding materials.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services  
Tom & Keya Dannenbaum  
Sam Kachmare & Mike Fields, SKA