



## CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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Date: September 1, 2023

To: Members of the Historical Commission

From: Allison Crosbie, Preservation Administrator

Re: Case D-1665: 42-46 Lincoln Street

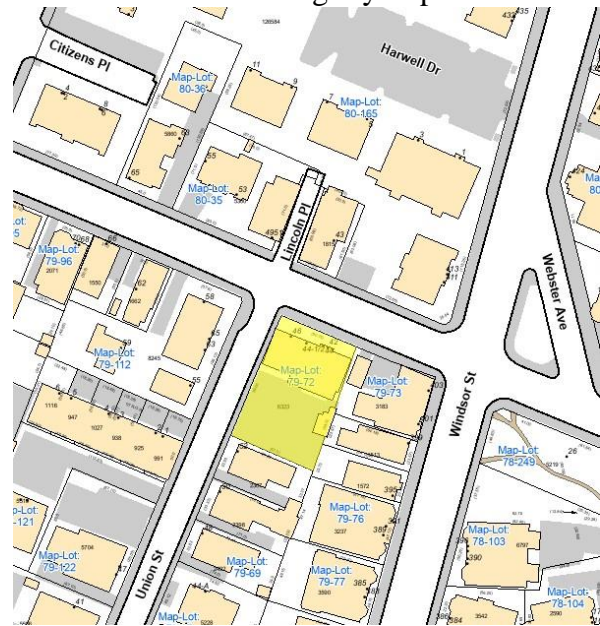
An application to demolish a building at 42-46 Lincoln Street and construct a 3-story, multi-unit residence was received on August 14, 2023. The applicant was notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for September 7, 2023.



42-46 Lincoln Street, CHC photon, 9/1/2023

## Site

The building at 42-46 Lincoln Street, with a total of 5 units, is located at the south side of Lincoln Street, at the corner of Union Street. It occupies a 6,323 square-foot lot (Map 79/Lot 72) that extends 99.5' on Union Street and 60.7' on Lincoln Street. The lot is slightly trapezoidal and widens toward the rear. The assessors value the land at \$1,374,000 and the building at \$1,461,900. The building occupies the northern portion of the site, roughly 10' from the sidewalk on Lincoln Street and 2' from the sidewalk on Union Street. The site also contains a paved parking area with 11 spaces and a roughly 180 square-foot, 1-story structure at the eastern edge of the site. The street is mostly residential including other double houses along with triple-deckers and single-family homes. The property is located between Cambridge Street to the north and Hampshire Street to the south.



*Zoning map of 42-46 Lincoln Street*

The building is located in a C-1 zoning district. The current proposal is to demolish the building and rear structure and replace with a new 3-story multi-unit residential building.

## Architectural Description and Condition

The building at 42-46 Lincoln Street is a simple row house with a total of 5 units, two of which were added later. The two-and-a-half story structure is of wood frame construction on a raised brick foundation. The gable roof with eave returns is covered with asphalt shingles, and the gable end faces Union Street. The structure is clad with synthetic siding which might be obscuring the original cladding. Three main entrances facing Lincoln Street have porch hoods supported by brackets; the original doors have been replaced. Two entrances are adjacent to each other with additional column supports, most likely added when the railings and steps were reconstructed. The brackets on the paired entrances are smaller than the ones on the single entrance. A below-grade entrance to the lower level was added to the front façade in 1971 when the basement was renovated into apartments. Windows were originally 2/2 and have been replaced with what appear to be vinyl double-hung windows. At the southeast corner of the building, a second-story addition was constructed, and the lower level was built out as well. Second- and third-floor porches in the rear are connected by stairs providing emergency egress from a roof dormer. Another below grade entrance leads to the basement level. Two brick chimneys were removed, and one remains in the center of the roof.

The site is bounded by a 3-foot high chain link fence along Lincoln Street and part of Union Street. Shrubs are interspersed along the narrow front yard with paving at the edges. A 4-foot high vinyl fence encloses the parking lot.



*View of the rear of 42-46 Lincoln Street, CHC photo, 9/1/2023*



*42-46 Lincoln Street, CHC Photo, 1968.*

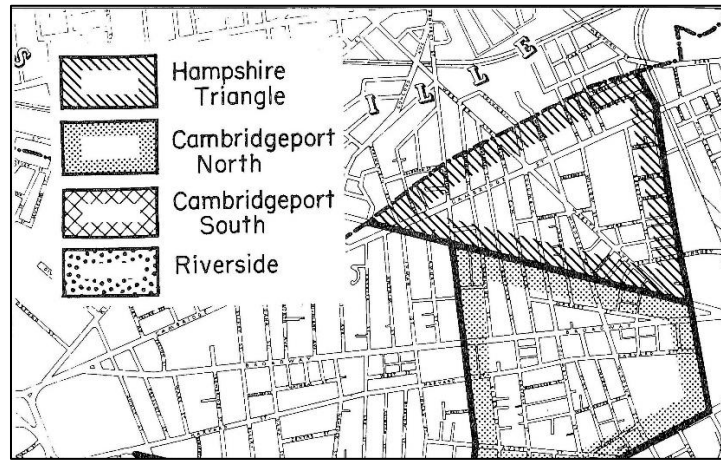


*42-46 Lincoln Street, CHC photo, 1984.*

### History

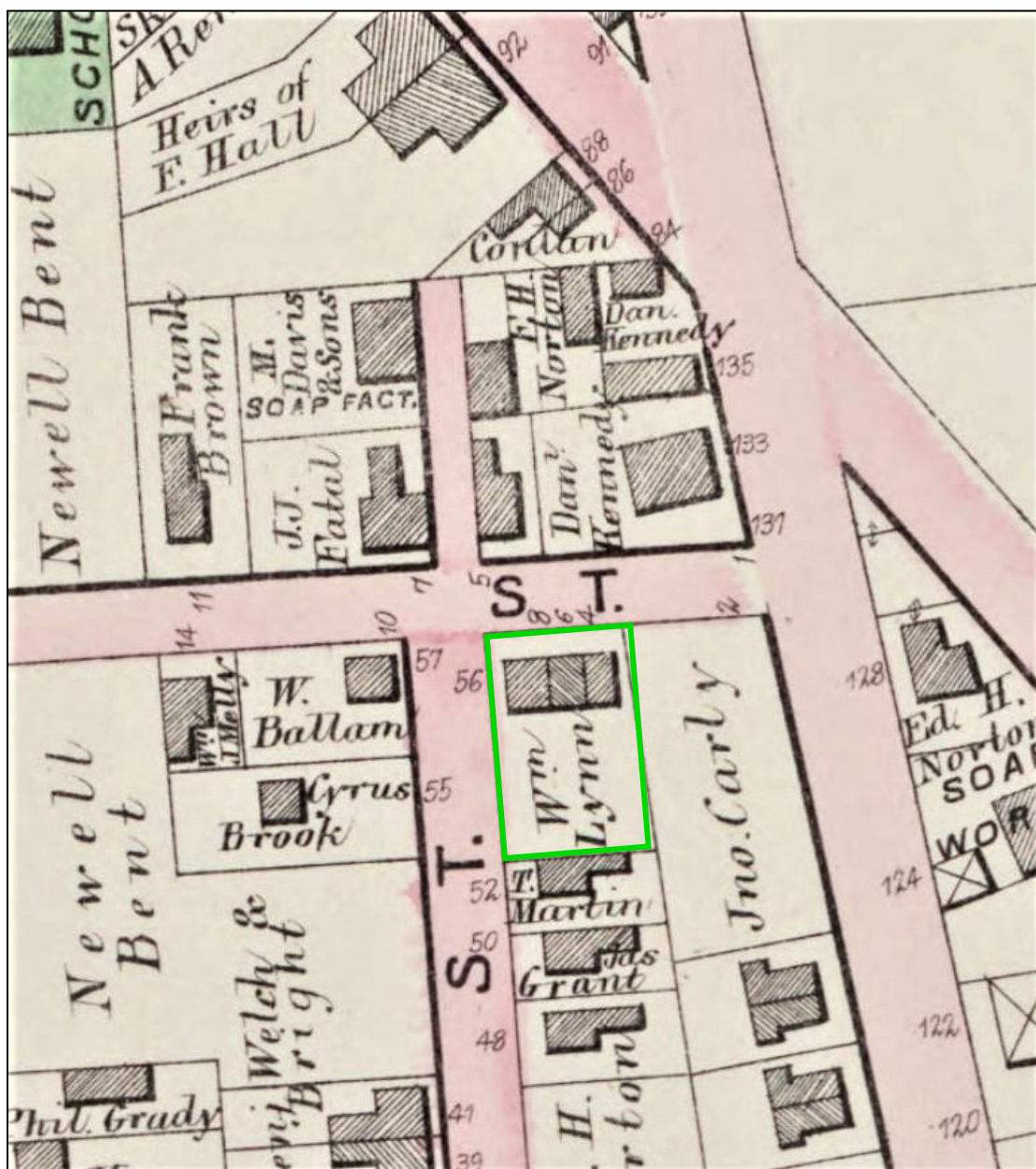
The Cambridgeport area was primarily agricultural until the nineteenth century when it developed as a residential suburb and commercial link between Boston and the inland farming

communities of Middlesex County. In the latter half of the nineteenth century significant growth occurred when industry moved in, resulting in a high demand for housing. In the twentieth century MIT established its campus in Cambridge and continues to expand into Cambridgeport. Today Cambridgeport continues to maintain its industrial-residential character.



*Map of Hampshire Triangle in Cambridgeport*

According to the Commission's *Report Three: Cambridgeport of the Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge* (1971), the building at 42-46 Lincoln Street is located in a residential sub-area known as the Hampshire Triangle. This area had no distinct boundaries; it flowed into Somerville to the north and merged with the neighborhood to the south. It is traversed by two east-west traffic routes, Cambridge and Hampshire Streets, lined with commercial buildings. A hodgepodge of smaller streets made up the area in between with a variety of housing types. Lincoln and Union Streets included Bracketed Italianate houses and triple-deckers as well as row houses. Lincoln Street is a short wide street where some lots had gardens that gave the neighborhood a suburban feel, but some of these have since been further developed.



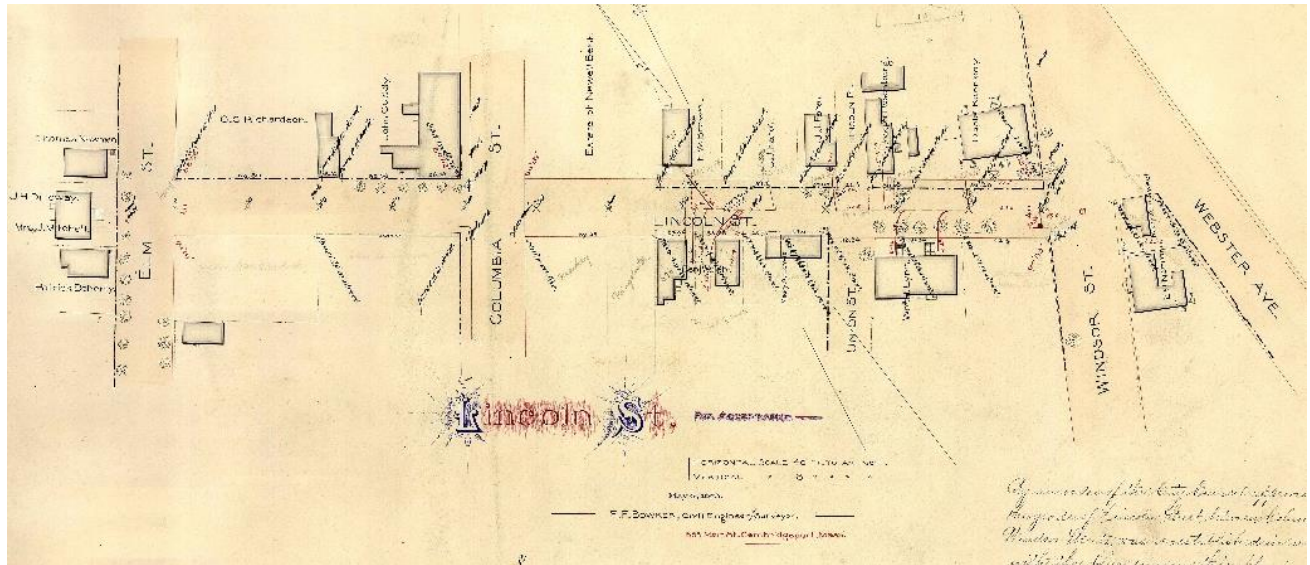
1873 Hopkins atlas map showing 42-46 Lincoln Street outlined in green. To the northwest was the Teele Soap Factory.

The building 42-46 Lincoln Street was constructed in 1856 for William H. Lynn (or Linn), a plasterer, on land purchased from the glass manufacturer and real estate entrepreneur Amory Houghton. After Lynn died in 1875 for property passed through a succession of owners.

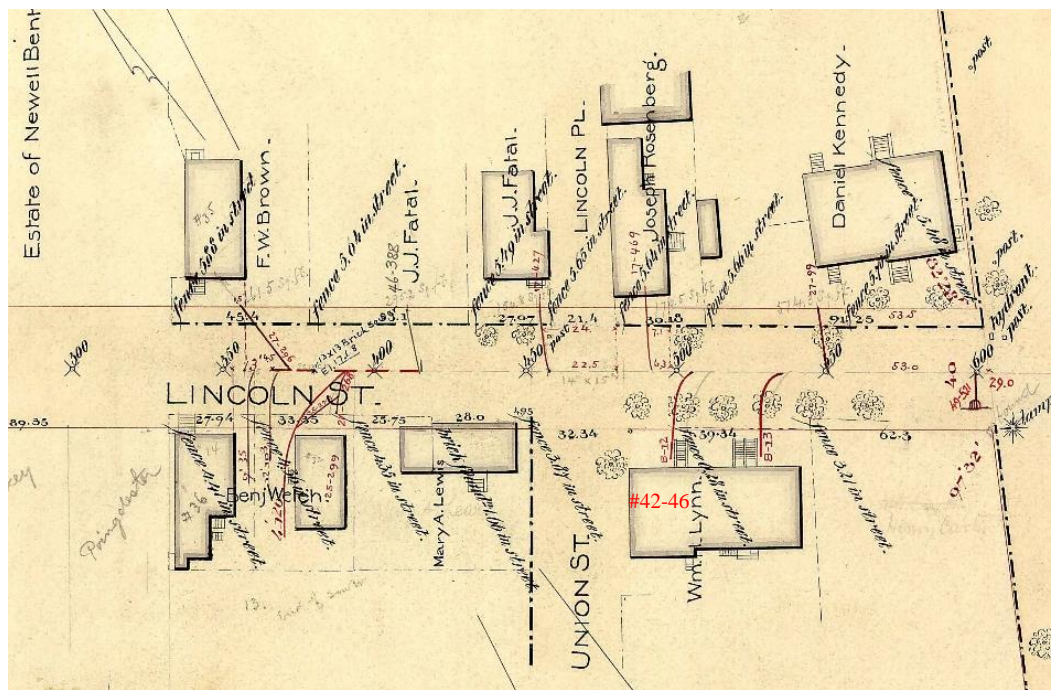
The Lynn house was constructed as a row house with three units. Row houses typically consisted of three or more narrow, vertically oriented single-family houses separated by party walls. The unit at #46 was slightly larger made evident by the entrance located further away from the paired entrances. In Cambridgeport, most row houses were constructed between the 1850s and the 1880s, although a few brick rows that included commercial and residential uses were built at the beginning of the nineteenth century on Main Street and Massachusetts Avenue. Cambridgeport

row houses were also usually built in groups of three or more with one owner and builder for each group.

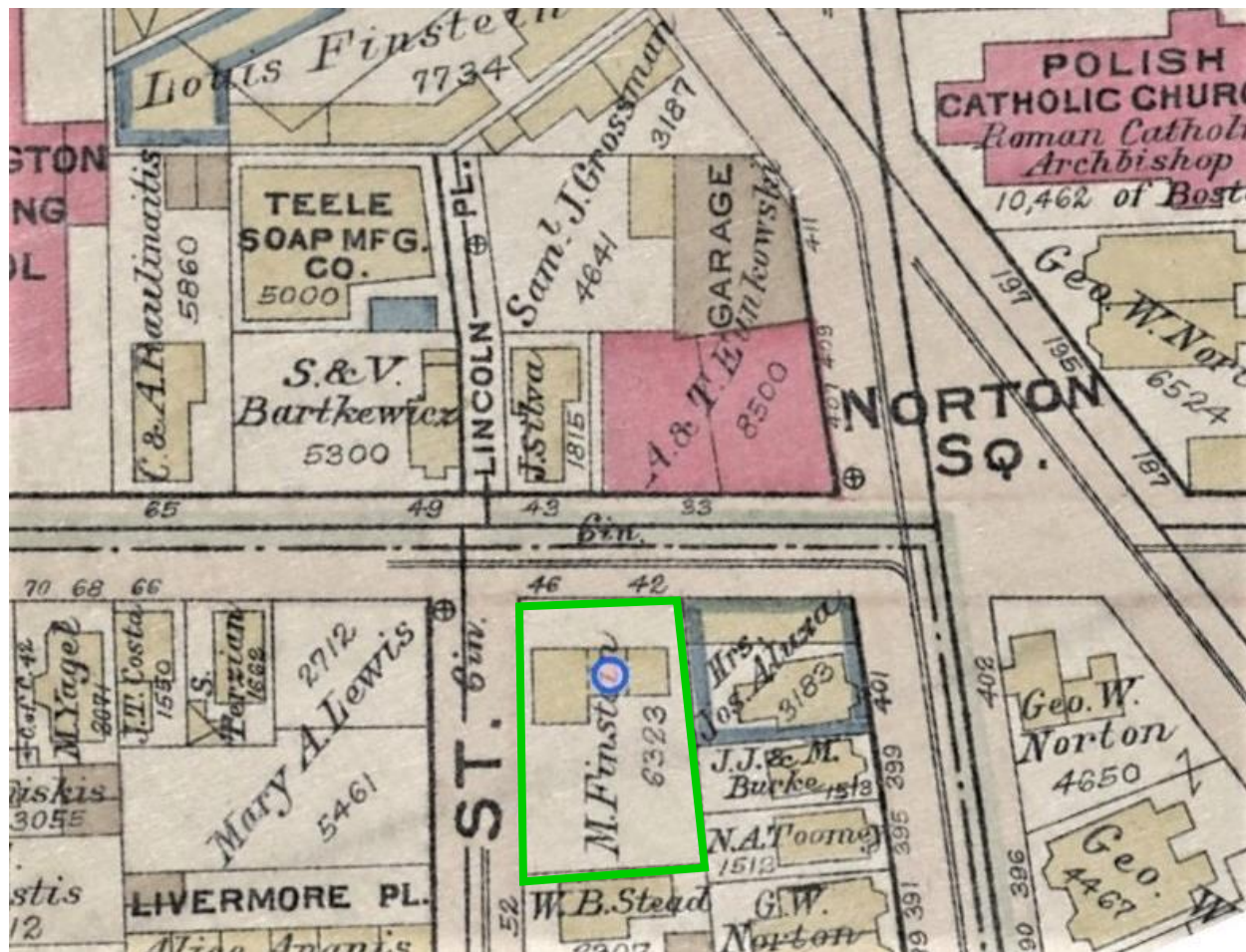
Just to the northwest of the property was the Teele Soap Factory, established in 1881, one of many flourishing soap factories in Cambridge. The areas around factories like these were home to the workers who labored there, including Irish, French Canadians, and Italians. In the first half of the twentieth century, in addition to Polish and Portuguese immigrants, Black Southerners also settled in the area as part of the Great Migration.



City Engineer's survey of Lincoln Street, 1873



Enlargement of survey plan of Lincoln Street, 1873



1930 map of 42-46 Lincoln Street, outlined in green.

### Significance and Recommendation

The building at 42-46 Lincoln Street is significant as an example of row house architecture in Cambridge. Most Cambridgeport row houses were built between the 1850s and 1880s, giving way to emerging multiple housing types toward the end of the century. They are significant because of the relation between the row group and the tenement block which is one of the earliest of these multi-unit types. The building is also significant in the context of the relatively low-density Lincoln and Union streets neighborhood.

The Commission should hear testimony from the applicants and neighbors and review the plans for demolition and new construction before making a further determination.

cc: Peter McLaughlin, Inspectional Services  
Sligo Realty Co., Owners