

FORM A - AREA

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

Assessor's Sheets

USGS Quad

Area
Letter

Form
Numbers in
Area

R076 002

Newton

AR

WLT.651-
656,1174

Town/City: Waltham

Place: (neighborhood or village):

Name of Area: Orange Street Area

Present Use: Residential

Construction Date or Period: c.1883-86,

Overall Condition: Fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations: Siding and sash altered on most building, some fenestration changes

Acreage: 1.67 acres

Recorded By: Zachary Violette

Organization: Consultant, Waltham Historical Commission

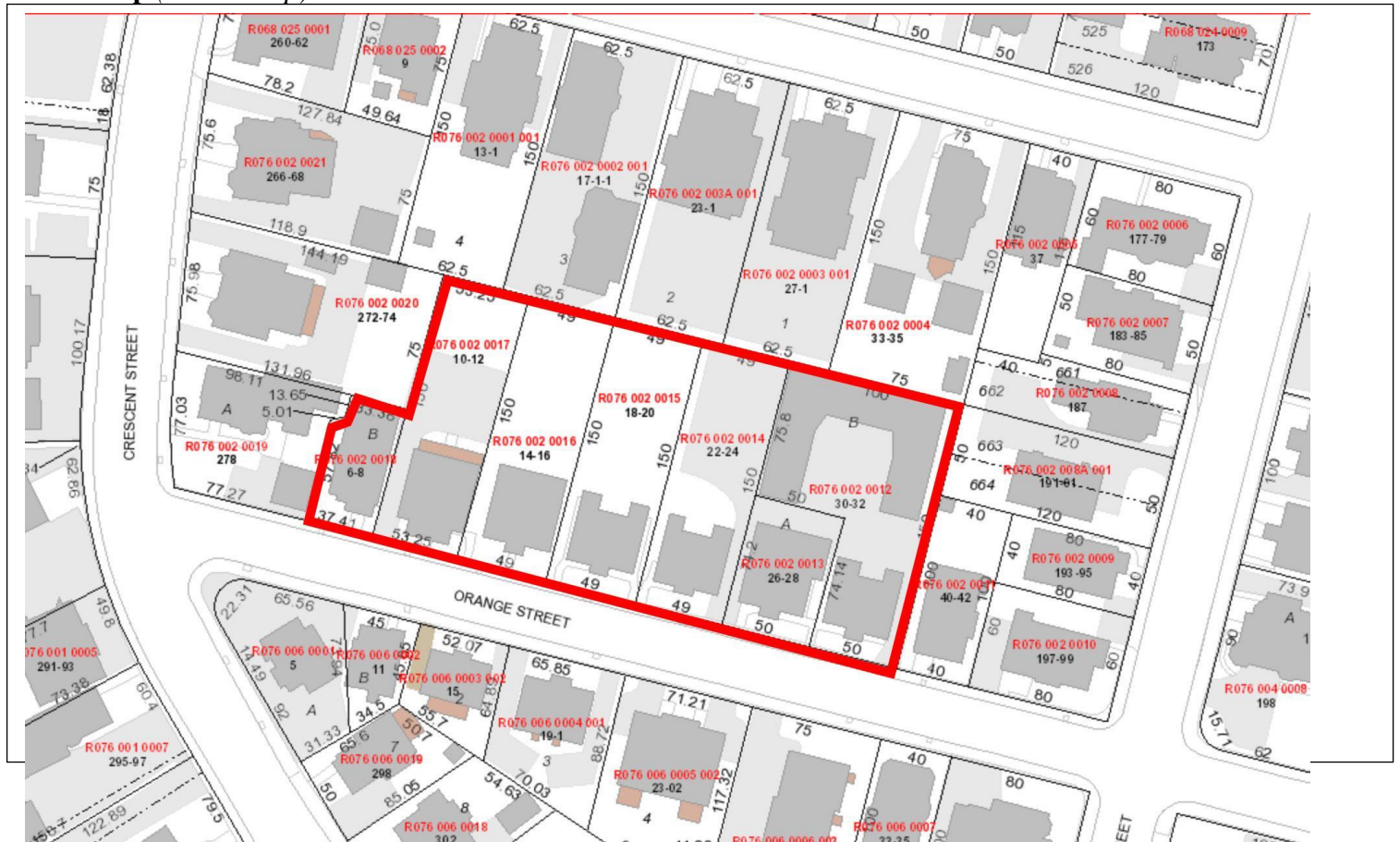
Date (month/year): September 2021

Photograph



Brown Street looking west from Adams showing (R-L) 30-32, 26-28, 22-24, 18-20, 14-16. Photo by Zachary Violette March 2021

Locus Map (North is up)



INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area
Letter

AR

Form Nos.

WLT.651-
656,1174

- ☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

Situated on the north side of Orange Street, between Adams and Crescent, the Orange Street area consists of seven buildings, six nineteenth-century company duplexes, and one early twentieth-century two-family house, on the north side of Orange Street.¹ The six company duplexes --**American Watch Company Duplex, 10 - 12 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.651, American Watch Company Duplex, 14 - 16 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.652, American Watch Company Duplex, 18 - 20 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.653, American Watch Company Duplex, 22 - 24 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.654, American Watch Company Duplex, 26 - 28 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.655, American Watch Company Duplex, 30 - 32 Orange Street (c.1883 - 1886) WLT.656** -- are notable for their near identical-original appearance, varying only in the roofline. The duplexes are one-and-one-half story, wood-frame buildings with side-gabled rooflines. Each is 34 feet wide along Orange Street and 28 feet deep. On three of the six, these are extended by an 8-foot deep lean-to at the rear. These buildings have a sharply-sloping rear roofline. Each duplex, of both types, has a pair of shed roof wall dormers on the front elevation. Entrances are paired at the center of the building. The first-floor fenestration, in its original configuration, consisted of five symmetrical bays, with two windows flanking the paired doors. A brick chimney pierced the ridge of the roof in the center of each unit, a feature that contributes to the regularity of the streetscape.

All of the building have been modified to a greater or lesser degree. The building at 10-12 Orange Street retains the greatest amount of surface material. That building rises from a rubblestone foundation. On the other duplexes, this has been parged or substituted altogether with pour concrete or other materials. At 10-12 Orange Street a set of poured concrete steps rises to a hip-roof porch. Set on a lattice skirt, this porch has closed balustrades onto which are placed Tuscan columns. This is likely an early twentieth century intervention. The other duplexes have smaller porches, sheltering only the two doors. These alternate between hip and shed roofs. All have had their original porch posts replaced. No building retains its original siding. While 10-12 Orange has asbestos cement shingles, it has wooden backband architraves. The other buildings have been covered in a variety of substitute materials: shingles both wood and vinyl; vinyl clapboards; and asphalt in a faux brick pattern. As a result it is difficult to ascertain the row's original appearance. The duplexes massing, however, suggest a Queen Anne style treatment. Fenestration has been altered on a number of the duplexes. This consists primarily of joining the two first floor windows into a wider casement or oriel.

Later infill, the **Laura G. Johnson Two Family, 6 - 8 Orange Street (c.1903 - 1911) WLT.1174**, is a substantially larger and more highly developed two-family house. The contrast between this early-twentieth-century building and the older duplexes of the late nineteenth century to the east of it is noteworthy. Rising from a rubblestone foundation, the building has a footprint of 25 feet along Orange Street and is 50 feet in depth. It appears to have what has been called a "Progressive era plan" with five or six-room flats, stacked one on top of each other, with entrances arranged toward the east side of the building. The front is marked by stacked, canted bay windows. Another stack of canted bays is set in the second pile along the west elevation of the building. These are likely indicative of the location of parlors and dining rooms. The building has a front-gabled roof broken by a gabled dormer set above the side bay window, suggestive of finished space in the attic. The varying sizes of windows in the rear pile of the west elevation indicate the location of bathrooms, pantries, and the kitchen. Entrance is reached through a porch set on a fieldstone foundation. It has an enclosed, shingled balustrade with Tuscan columns rising to a corbel cornice. A shed-roof, second-floor porch is placed atop this; its materials are later in date. The building retains most of its original surface material. It is clad in wooden clapboards, while the line between the first and second floor is marked, on the bays, by a flared band of wood shingles. Windows are trimmed with wooden backhands. The paired attic window has a decorative sash, flanked by pilasters and a denticulated architrave. The front of the building retains its wooden 2/2 sash windows with aluminum storms. These have been substituted with vinyl replacements in some openings on the side elevation.

¹ NB: Two similar houses, 23 and 25 Orange Street, included in the previous MHC Area form for WLT.AR, but not documented, were demolished c.2011-2019. The boundary of the present form has been redrawn to encompass only the buildings on the north side of Orange Street

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area
Letter

Form Nos.

AR

WLT.651-
656,1174

All of the houses in the area are set along the steep slope of Orange Street. Most are marked with retaining walls, some of considerable height. These vary in material from faux stone block, to poured concrete, to textured concrete block. Most have inset stairs of poured concrete; in most instances, these steps are paired between the two buildings. Only the buildings at 6-8 and 10-12 lack a retaining wall. Driveways are set west of 10-12 Orange Street and east of 30-32 Orange Street. These provide access to what appears to be a shared parking area at rear. A large, multi-bay garage of concrete block, likely shared between a number of units, is not visible from the street.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

Among the things that were notable about the American (later Waltham) Watch Company's development of the former Bemis estate on the South Side of Waltham (annexed from Newton in 1849) was the company's sale of individual lots on gridded streets to company employees. On most of these parcels, individuals generally built commodious houses that gave the neighborhood an appearance of a middle-class suburb, that contrasted sharply with the lower quality of housing found, for instance around the Boston Manufacturing Company on the north side of the Charles River, conditions that were more typical of industrial worker housing of the nineteenth century. As one later observer noted of the watch company's employees, whose skills tended to be in high demand: "The operatives were of a class of men who did not care to be denizens of boarding-houses, but aspired to own and live in their own homes. They bought land of the Company and erected separate independent houses on ample lots and thus took the first steps to establish an individual community, unsurpassed in the country."² While houses built by workers on land purchased from the company was most common in this neighborhood, the company built a number of tenements, of between two and eight units, for rental to employees. Most of this construction occurred during the period of the company's great growth in the decades after the American Civil War. After operating on precarious financial footings for the decade after its founding around 1854, the American Watch Company (previously Boston Watch Company, later the American Waltham Watch Company, and the Waltham Watch Company) grew rapidly during the Civil War and subsequent decades. The war had increased demand for affordable timepieces for soldiers; after the war, the increasing use of time inspection on major American railroads created an unprecedented demand for timepieces with a high degree of accuracy and performance. These markets formed the foundation of the company's business, which grew from a capital stock of \$300,000 in 1860 to \$750,000 by 1865 and \$3 million by 1889. By 1884 the company had produced 2.5 million watches; its total output would rise to 12 million by the end of the century when nearly 16,000 were made each week. By 1904 the company employed 3600 people in its Waltham Factory.³ The rapid growth of the company brought about a greater demand for housing that was met both by private individuals and the company's construction of housing on its own land. One sociological study of the area in 1888 went so far as to call the watch company neighborhood as a "model city." It noted that one-fourth of all married workers in the watch factory were homeowners (190 out of 729) and that this percentage was on the increase. The author of that study, a prominent progressive journalist and *New York Times* editor named John Swinton (1829-1901) forcefully described the neighborhood as "the most beautiful manufacturing village in the country." The houses, which were valued between \$2000 and \$5000, and "nothing could be more noteworthy than the contrasts between them and the tenement houses of New York, in which myriad of families cluster." The company's policy, Swinton asserted, "induced every man in the factory to become the owner of his own house ... while doing this it has refrained from interfering in the slightest with the spirit of independence which out to be the pride of every American citizen." "All this," he concluded, "is greatly to the advantage of the employees, who are now owners of nearly the whole place ... the chief value of agreeable and wholesome surrounding was their moral influence on the workplace."⁴

Sometime between 1883 and 1886 the company built these six nearly-identical duplexes on the north side of Orange Street. The company built a seventh (23-25 Orange St., WLT.657, now demolished) on the south side of the street around the same time. This appears to have been the largest single development of worker housing the company ever undertook to build. Its construction came about at a moment it was in the process of selling most of its older housing blocks, such as those on Ash and Brown streets. The company, unlike many industrial corporations of the nineteenth century, did not appear inclined to act as landlord for its employees. While the 1886 Waltham map shows the houses completed and owned by the company, the Orange Street houses appear to have been erected for fairly quick sale. In 1887, for instance, the American Waltham Watch Company

² Nathan Warren "The Development of Waltham's South Side" *Publications of the Waltham Historical Society* Vol 1 (1919), 57-58

³ Henry G. Abbot *A History of the American Waltham Watch Company* Chicago: American Jeweler Print, 1905, 23-27

⁴ John Swinton *A Model Factory in A Model City: A Social Study* New York: Brown, Green, and Adams, 1888: 13, 16

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area
Letter

Form Nos.

AR

WLT.651-
656,1174

sold the land and buildings at 10-12 Orange Street for \$2500 to George B. Heyworth.⁵ The following year the company sold the two houses to the east of this to Mary B. Whitney for \$5200.⁶ The other company houses on the street appear to have been sold in a similar manner, within a decade of their construction. The purchasers agreed not to use the land for offensive trades such as butcher, tanners, varnish makers, brewers, soap boilers, or other uses that would disturb the peace of the neighborhood. They also agreed not to erect a church, livery stable, or meeting houses on the land, nor build anything within 15 feet of the road. These restrictions were typical of Watch Company deeds. These documents, however, did not prohibit the sale or rental of the property to foreign-born persons, a restriction that the company had often put in its earlier deeds for properties in this neighborhood.

The 1900 census finds the street occupied by a mixture of renters and owner-occupants, many of whom appear to have lived at this location for years. The residents were mostly American-born, and most, although not all, were employed by the watch company. George Heyworth lived in one unit of the building he owned at 10-12 Orange Street (interestingly, that document listed him as a renter that year). He shared that unit with his wife Bella and two lodgers. George was a painter, one lodger, an engineer, the other worked in the watch factory. Herbert Arnold rented the unit at 14 Orange Street. He was a boat builder and lived here with his wife. At 16 Orange Street, Orry Othsby lived with his adult son and daughter. Othsby worked at the watch factory, his son was a machinist. At 18 Orange Street, widow Mary Hastings lived with her adult son, the latter of whom worked at the watch factory. Twenty Orange Street was home to Abbie Kennard, also a widow, who lived with her son who also worked at the watch factory. At 22 Orange Street watch company worker Fred Gerritson, who owned the building, lived with his wife Eliza and their daughter. The unit at 26 Orange Street was home to Otto Morse, a watch company worker, who lived with his wife. Next door at 28 Orange Street was widow Corrie Mills, who lived with her three adult children, a daughter, and two sons, all of whom worked at the watch factory. Thirty Orange Street was home to Joseph Adams, an English-born watch company worker, who lived with his wife and three school-age children. Finally, 32 Orange Street was the home to widow Margaret Amsbury who lived with her daughter Mable, employed by the watch company.⁷

The last major change on the street occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century when 6-8 Orange Street was erected between 1903 and 1911. The building occupied the rear yard of the house of William Johnson, who had owned and occupied the ambitious house at 278 Crescent Street since the 1870s. Johnson was a watch company employee. After his death in 1892, the property was passed to his daughter Laura Gertrude Johnson, under whose tenure the new two-family house was built in the family's back yard.⁸ The 1910 US Census describes Johnson as unmarried. She worked as an inspector in the watch factory. She appears to have run a lodging house in the family's house at 278 Crescent Street that year, living with four other single women, all of whom worked in the watch factory, three of whom as inspectors. Among these was Johnson's cousin Helen Tarbell, who would inherit both properties after Johnson's death.

The nature of the occupancy of the street appears to have changed little over the next four decades, as it continued to be occupied by a majority of which were company employees. Through the twentieth century, many of the properties were held by long-term owners, many of whom retained them for decades. The street continued to host a mix of renters and owner-occupants.

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Waltham MA. City of Waltham Building Department. Building Permit Records

Waltham Poll/Voting/Street Lists.

Maps

⁵ MSRD 1822:497, 1887

⁶ MSRD 1857:293, 1888

⁷ 1900 US Census

⁸ See reference MSRD 7466:414, 1949

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area
Letter

AR

Form Nos.

WLT.651-
656,1174

Map Sources: WHC: Waltham Historical Commission; DC: Digital Commonwealth; LOC: Library of Congress; NYPL: New York Public Library

1831 Hales Map of Waltham (WHC)
1831 Hales Map of Newton- Waltham Section (WHC)
1854 E.M. Woodford Village of Waltham Map (DC)
1856 Walling Map of Middlesex County (LOC)
1867 Map of Middlesex County (NYPL)
1875 Map of Town of Waltham (DC)
1877 Birds' Eye View, O.H. Bailey (LOC)
1883 Bird's Eye View (DC)
1886 J.B. Beers Map of the City of Waltham (LOC)
1886 Map of Middlesex County (WHC)
1892 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1897 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1898 Bird's Eye View, O.H. Bailey (LOC)
1900 Atlas of Middlesex County (WHC)
1903 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1911 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1918 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1918 City Engineers Atlas (WHC)
1923 City Engineers Atlas (WHC)
1950 Sanborn Map (LOC)
1956 City Engineers Atlas (WHC)

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INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area
Letter

Form Nos.

AR

WLT.651-
656,1174

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DATA SHEET

See Research Protocol	Name, Address, Date Assessor's Number MHC # Style type/form features Materials (roofs assume asphalt unless noted) Notes on alterations Map and deed date and owner/builder
	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 18 - 20 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0015 WLT.653</p> <p>Queen Anne / duplex Salt box roof duplex Wall Material: Faux brick Faux brick siding, mid-20th century porch</p> <p>Sold by Company to Mary B. Whitney 1888</p>
	<p>Laura G. Johnson Two Family, 6 - 8 Orange Street, c.1903 - 1911 R076 002 0018 WLT.1174</p> <p>Classical Revival / two-family Large two-family Wall Material: Clapboards Retains siding, trim, most windows</p> <p>Built on rear lot of 278 Crescent Street</p>
	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 14 - 16 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0016 WLT.652</p> <p>Queen Anne / duplex Side gabled roof duplex Wall Material: Vinyl Vinyl siding, fenestration changes, mid-20th century porch</p> <p>Sold by company to Mary B. Whitney 1888</p>

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area
Letter

Form Nos.

AR

WLT.651-
656,1174

	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 22 - 24 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0014 WLT.654 Queen Anne / duplex Salt box roof duplex Wall Material: Shingles Siding, fenestration, and porches altered</p>
	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 10 - 12 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0017 WLT.651 Queen Anne / duplex Saltbox roof duplex Wall Material: Asbestos Asbestos siding, sash altered, early 20th century porch Sold by company to George Heyworth 1887</p>
	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 30 - 32 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0012 WLT.656 Queen Anne / duplex Side gabled roof duplex. Garage at rear Wall Material: Shingles Siding, sash, and porches altered</p>
	<p>American Watch Company Duplex, 26 - 28 Orange Street, c.1883 - 1886 R076 002 0013 WLT.655 Queen Anne / duplex Salt box roof duplex Wall Material: Vinyl Siding, sash, and porches altered</p>

Area Letter	Form Nos.
AR	WLT.651- 656,1174

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 2. Brown Street looking north showing (L-R) 18-20, 22-24, 26-28. Photo by Zachary Violette March 2021



Figure 3. View from Crescent Street looking east up Orange Street. Photo by Zachary Violette March 2021

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area
Letter

AR

Form Nos.

WLT.651-
656,1174



Figure 4. Google Maps Pictometry view of the Area

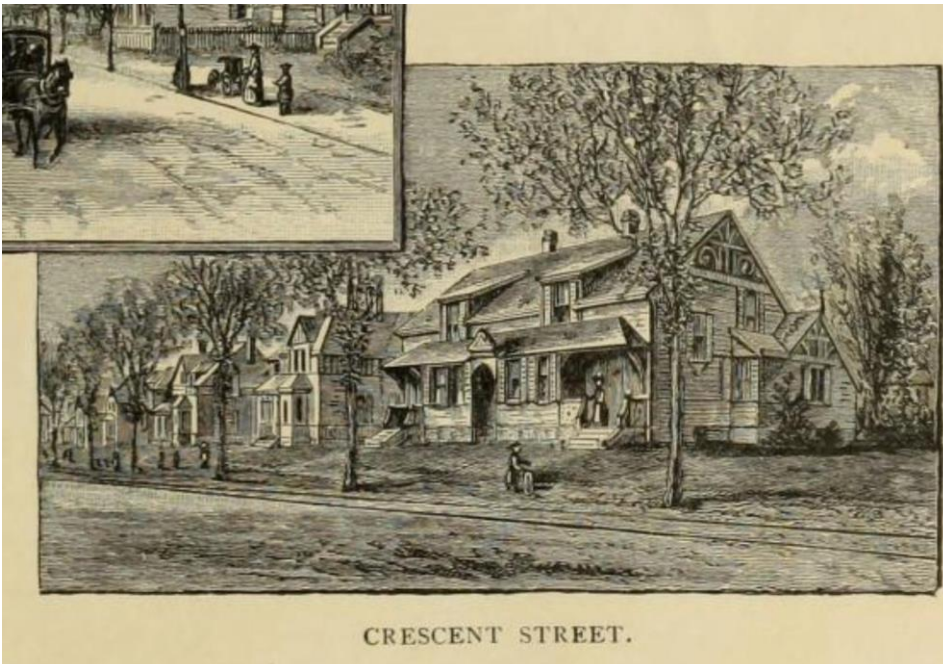


Figure 5. This 1888 woodcut depicts a similar, if somewhat more highly developed company duplex on nearby Crescent Street, and may suggest some of the trim that may have been found on the Orange Street duplexes. From John Swinton *A Model Factory in a Model City: A Social Study* New York: Brown, Green, and Adams, 1888, 15.

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

WALTHAM

ORANGE STREET AREA

Area Letter	Form Nos.
AR	WLT.651-656,1174

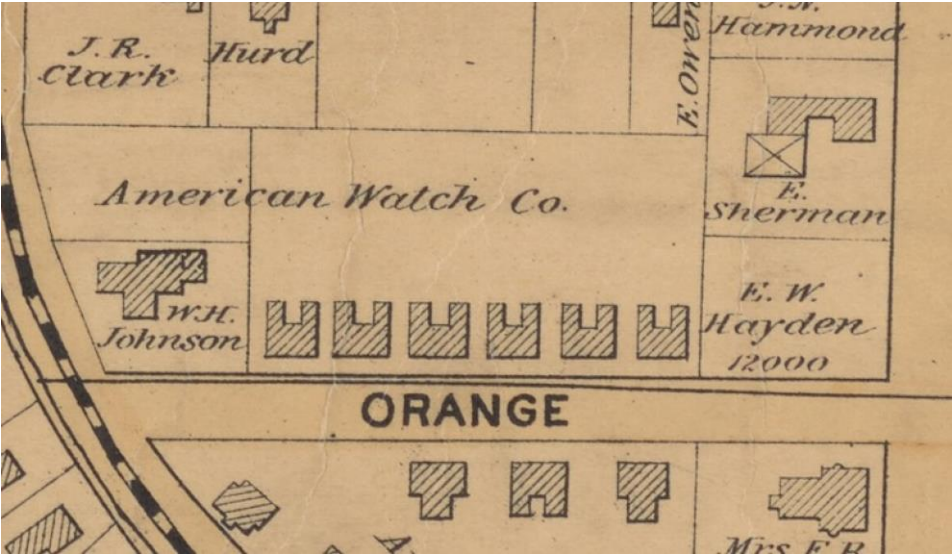


Figure 6. 1886 Waltham Map showing completed buildings owned by the Watch Company

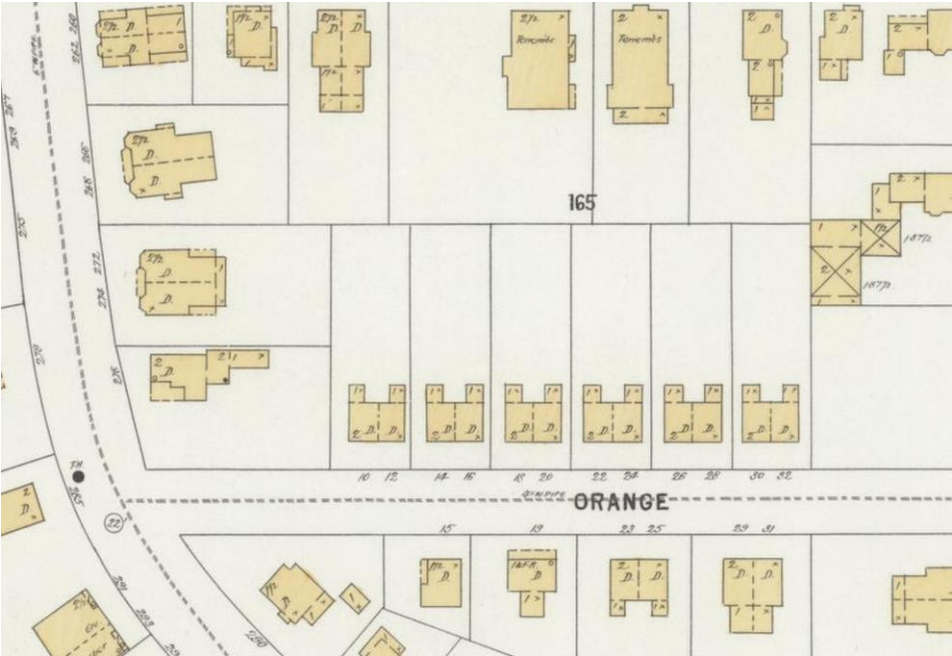


Figure 7. 1892 Sanborn Map

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

ORANGE STREET AREA

Form Nos.

WLT.651-
656,1174

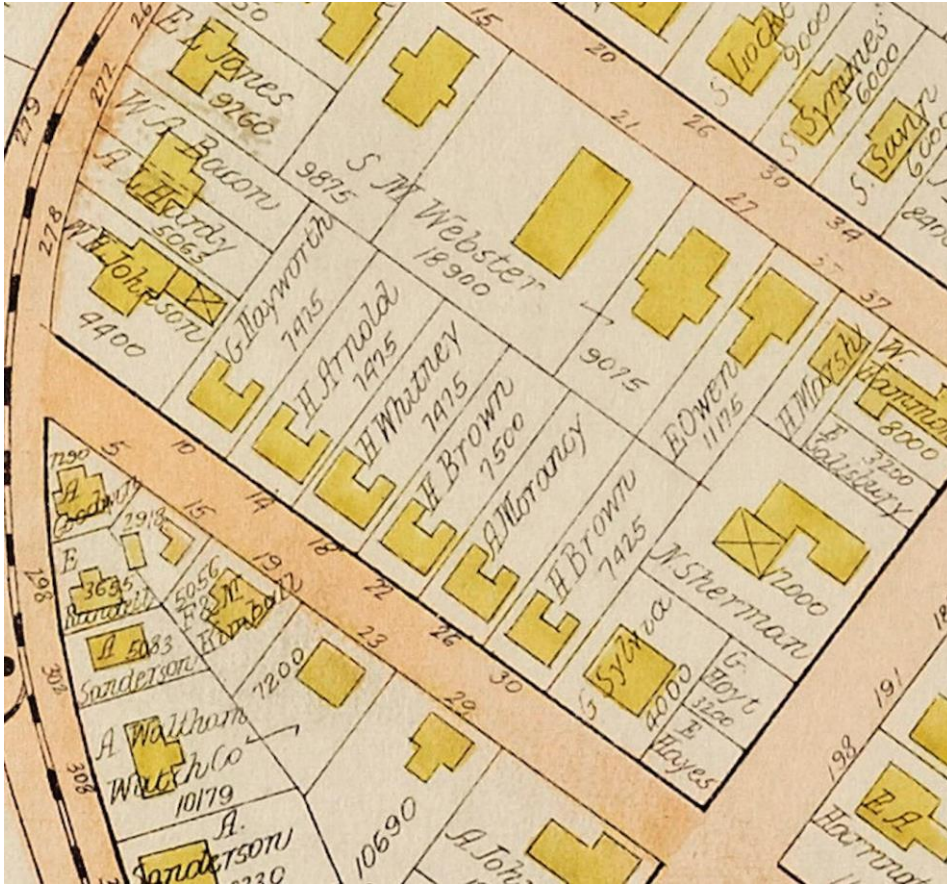


Figure 8. 1900 Middlesex County atlas showing properties sold to individual owners