

# FORM B – BUILDING

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

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

3-15       OAK.B    OAK.414

**Town/City:**    Oak Bluffs

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):    East Chop

## Photograph



**Address:**    7 Arlington Avenue

**Historic Name:** Ann C. Brodhead Cottage

**Uses: Present:**    Single-family residential

**Original:**    Single-family residential

**Date of Construction:**    ca. 1875

**Source:**    Deed records; OAK.414 (1978)

**Style/Form:**    Victorian Eclectic

**Architect/Builder:**    Unknown

### Exterior Material:

**Foundation:**    Wood and brick piers; concrete block

**Wall/Trim:**    Wood shingle

**Roof:**    Asphalt shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:**    Garage (1988)

**Major Alterations (*with dates*):** Building is ½ of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage, aka the "Palmer Villa," divided and relocated (ca. 1917); tower, porch, and dormers modified, and loss of all exterior ornamentation (early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century); windows and doors replaced (20<sup>th</sup> century); two rear additions (ca. 1917 and ca. 1950).

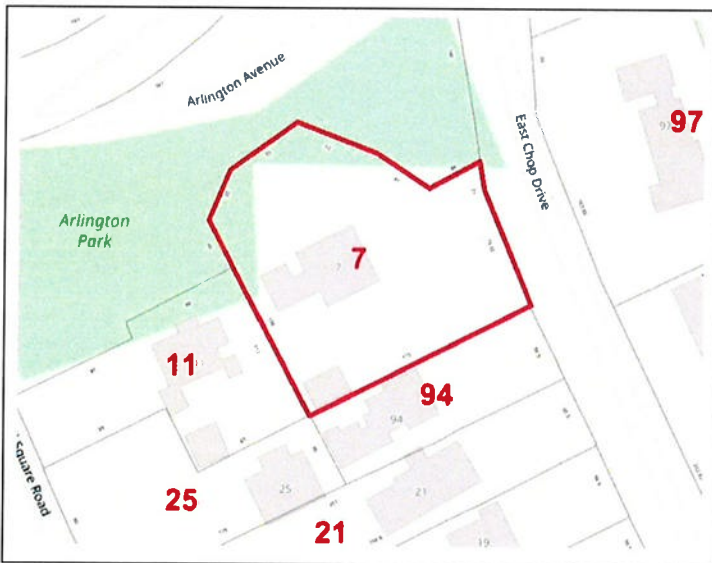
**Condition:**    Good

**Moved:** no     yes     **Date:**    ca. 1917

**Acreage:**    Less than one acre

**Setting:**    The property is located along a residential corridor running parallel to and overlooking Vineyard Sound. The area is wooded and sparsely settled, generally characterized by single-family frame cottage residences from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:**    Tonya Loveday Merrem

**Organization:**    Epsilon Associates, Inc.

**Date (*month / year*):**    April 2023

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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.*

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

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

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

The Ann C. Brodhead Cottage, 7 Arlington Avenue, is a two-story cottage residence located in the Vineyard Highlands section of Oak Bluffs, a resort community on the northeast shore of Martha's Vineyard in Dukes County. Originally part of a larger cottage built ca. 1875 at 108 Beecher Park (today part of the parcel at 7 Dempster Park), commonly referred to as the "Palmer Villa," the building at 7 Arlington Avenue was split from its other half and relocated to its present site about 1917. The other half of the ca. 1875 cottage is located on the adjacent parcel at 11 Arlington Avenue (OAK.416).

The cottage at 7 Arlington Avenue is located on a 25,700 square foot lot. It is set back from the south side of Arlington Avenue behind an approximately 1.5-acre parcel of forested conservation land called Arlington Park that obscures much of the visibility from the unpaved road. Visibility from East Chop Drive, which runs along the east property line, is also limited due to the trees and shrubbery extending along the property's eastern and southern borders. A gravel driveway provides access to the cottage from Arlington Avenue. It runs along the building's west elevation to a freestanding, single-story garage at the southwest corner of the parcel that dates to 1988 based on the Assessor's database.

The original ca. 1875 portion of the cottage is located in the building's easternmost section, which is roughly square in footprint. A 1-story shingled porch with bracketed, overhanging eaves and square post wood supports wraps around this block on its north, east, and south elevations. Extending west of that is a two-story addition seemingly dating to the building's ca. 1917 relocation, based on the 1923 Sanborn map (Figure 6). Projecting from the north and west of that is a single-story addition dating to ca. 1950; it is not depicted on a 1947 plan of the property (Figure 8), but is visible in an aerial photograph from 1969.

The entire building envelope is sheathed in wood shingles, and the fenestration pattern and rooflines are irregular. The building has four exterior entrances: on the north elevation, a fully glazed, double leaf door is accessed via the porch from a single run of wood stairs with square post wood railings; on the south elevation, a similar set of doors is located to the west of a red brick chimney and accessed via the west end of the porch, and two matching, partially glazed, single leaf doors are located on the 1917 addition in the building's southwest corner.

The north and east elevations of the building are united in the building's northeast corner by a square tower, which is flanked by square dormers with jerkinhead roofs that project over the porch roof on the second floor of both elevations. The north elevation of the ca. 1875 block includes modern windows to the west and east of the previously described double leaf entrance on the first floor; a 2/2 window in a square opening on the second floor; and a single-light window in a rectangular opening near the roofline of the tower. The 1917 addition is set back from the ca. 1875 block and contains a central, tripartite window with 2/2 sash in a rectangular opening on its north elevation. The ca. 1950 block to the west includes two square 4-light windows near the roofline and a square door on its north elevation.

The east elevation of the ca. 1875 block is a mirror image of the north elevation, but the fenestration varies. On the first floor, a central bay window is flanked by 2/2 windows in rectangular openings. On the second floor, all three elevations of the projecting block over the porch include modern 2/2 windows. On the east elevation of the tower, a small 2/2 window is located on the second floor and a rectangular single-light window with 2/2 sidelights is located near the roofline.

The south elevation is dominated by a centrally located cross gable and a red brick chimney to its east. On the first floor of the ca. 1875 block, 2/2 windows are located to the west of the previously described double leaf door and to the east of the chimney; on the second floor, paired 2/2 windows are centered within the cross gable and sheltered beneath a shed roof awning with delicate arched corbel; on the tower, a single-light window in a rectangular opening is located near the roofline. The 1917 addition is set back from the ca. 1875 block and contains a 1-story shed roof awning supported by square post columns. On the

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first floor of the 1917 addition, a rectangular window with paired, square 4-light windows above is located between the previously described doors; on the second floor, two square 6-light windows are located near the roofline.

On the west elevation, a paired 2/2 window is centered within the gable end of the ca. 1917 addition. The ca. 1950 addition below has a bracketed shed roof and three square 4-light windows near the roofline.

A shingled freestanding garage structure is located to the south of the house and accessed via a gravel drive.

**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.*

In its entirety, the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage was originally located less than ¼-mile southwest from 7 Arlington Avenue on the north side of Beecher Park at its intersection with Massachusetts Avenue, today part of the expanded and redeveloped parcel at 7 Dempster Park. Beecher Park was laid out as part of the Vineyard Grove Company's summer residential development. The Vineyard Grove Company was founded in 1870 by leaders of the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association, which operated the Wesleyan Grove (OAK.E; NRDIS 1978; NHL 2005) Methodist campgrounds to the southeast of Vineyard Highlands on the opposite side of Sunset Lake. The impetus for the formation of the Vineyard Grove Company was the fear of non-secular and commercial development around Wesleyan Grove. At the heart of what was intended to be at least a semi-religious cottage development was a venue for worship surrounded by a circular drive, Church Avenue, from which residential roads would extend and meander. Beecher Park was one such road laid out as part of the planned development, and lots were subsequently made available for purchase.

Ann C. (Brooks) Brodhead (abt. 1817-1904) purchased lot number 108 on the north side of Beecher Park from the Vineyard Grove Company in 1872. Born in Harwich, MA, Ann was married to Major William Brodhead (abt. 1816-1895), a native of Utica, NY who served in the Union Army during the Civil War before finding success as a hotel proprietor in New York. The couple resided in New Bedford, MA and summered in Oak Bluffs. The original Form B for 7 Arlington Avenue (OAK.414) from 1978 dates the cottage to 1875, however this exact date could not be confirmed. A second adjacent parcel, lot number 109, was purchased by Ann Brodhead in 1880, seemingly for the construction of a rear ell addition (no longer extant; see Figure 1). Numerous lots within the Vineyard Grove Company's Vineyard Highlands development remained unsold and vacant at that time. The initial wave of excitement for the new resort area waned as a result of the financial crisis of the Panic of 1873. Wesleyan Grove, East Chop, and the Highlands separated from Edgartown in 1880. The new town was originally called Cottage City but was renamed Oak Bluffs in 1907.

In 1895, Ann C. Brodhead conveyed the property to her son, Rev. William Henry Brodhead (1848-1912). Census records show that Rev. Brodhead was born and raised in Massachusetts. In 1870, he married Catharine Jeanette Mellis with whom he had a daughter, Edith H. Brodhead (1875-N/A), while living in New York; the family moved around between New York and New Jersey. Ownership of the Brodhead cottage in Oak Bluffs was transferred to Edith H. Brodhead in August 1900. She subsequently sold it to James D. Montgomery that October. Due to the commonality of his name, little information on Montgomery could be confirmed, however he is listed in the 1907 Oak Bluffs directory as the proprietor of the New Sea View House at the corner of Tuckernuck Avenue and Seaview Avenue (no longer extant). James D. Montgomery conveyed the Brodhead Cottage to a Charles Montgomery (familial relationship unclear) in 1901, before it was again under his name in 1903. It is likely that the cottage was rented out during this period.

In July 1903, James D. Montgomery sold the Brodhead Cottage to Aaron Blake Palmer (1867-1942). Born in Stoneham, MA, Palmer received his early education in Wakefield, NH then attended the Bridgewood Normal School (now Bridgewater State University) in 1888. He worked as a teacher at schools in West Barnstable, MA and Manchester, NH before becoming the principal of the Tracy Grammar School in Lynn in 1900. Palmer became the Master of the Highland School in West Somerville in 1905. He, his wife, Eliza C. Palmer, and their four children lived in Somerville at the time he purchased the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage. Palmer operated the cottage as a rental property called the "Palmer Villa," advertised as a place with "cool rooms; good service, [and] without tips and frills."<sup>1</sup> Palmer filed for bankruptcy in December 1906 and the property was conveyed that month to Clodus L. Gonyon (1845-1921) through a mortgage foreclosure.

<sup>1</sup> Boston Evening Transcript, June 30, 1906. See Figure 3.

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Clofus L. Gonyon continued to operate the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage as a summer rental property called the "Palmer Villa" through at least 1915 based on newspaper reports. A French-Canadian, Gonyon immigrated to the United States as a child. By 1880 he and his wife, Matilda W. Gonyon, resided in Tisbury on Martha's Vineyard where he worked as a farmer. He is listed in the 1910 census as being an ice dealer with a home on Circuit Avenue in Oak Bluffs. The couple moved around but remained in Oak Bluffs with residences on School Street then on New York Avenue. Before managing the "Palmer Villa," Gonyon was a co-owner of the Highland House (no longer extant) and according to MHC Form A for Vineyard Highlands (OAK.B) was amongst a group of local businessmen involved in the profitable enterprise of moving buildings from the Vineyard Highlands development.

It appears as though Gonyon assisted with the relocation of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage ca. 1917. He sold the property in October 1916 to Emma B. Seeberger (1857-1937), the wife of elevator inventor Charles D. Seeberger (1857-1931) of New York. Initially through their daughter, Lucia Seeberger (abt. 1883-1967), the Seeberger family owned the adjacent cottage at 7 Dempster Park, called the Buckminster House (1869/1883; OAK.375; no longer extant), since 1904.<sup>2</sup> Historical maps suggest that the Seebergers purchased the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage and had it moved to construct an addition to the Buckminster House, which extended southeast into the former parcel at 108 Beecher Park (see Figures 4 and 5). The southern section of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage (outlined red in Figure 4) was relocated to 7 Arlington Avenue, while the northern section was moved to an adjacent parcel at 11 Arlington Avenue (see Figure 6). The undeveloped lot at 7 Arlington Avenue was owned by the Seeberger family by 1909.

The extent to which the Seebergers used the two halves of the former Ann C. Brodhead Cottage is unknown. The Seebergers' ownership of 7 Arlington Avenue only extended through 1920 when it was sold to Rachel J. Bennell (1839-1921), and 11 Arlington Avenue appears to have been sold in the early 1920s, eventually falling under the ownership of the Rice School of the Spoken Word and Theatre Work Shop, Inc. Charles and Emma Seeberger were significantly associated with the property at 7 Dempster Park, for which a life estate was created in 1926.

A resident of Scranton, PA, Rachel J. Bennell purchased 7 Arlington Avenue in September 1920. She died shortly thereafter in February 1921, and therefore likely spent little to no time at the summer cottage. Bennell's estate, including 7 Arlington Avenue, was left to her daughter Caroline Bennell (later Treat; 1878-1965). Caroline, who went by "Carrie" according to deed records, owned the property until 1928. That year, it was bought by Goulding Kumler Wight (1891-1958), a general attorney from Montclair, NJ. Per the 1930 census, Wight had two children wife his wife, Dorothy. The family presumably summered in Oak Bluffs.

Wight sold 7 Arlington Avenue to Theodore (T.) Cortlandt Williams (1897-1982) and Evelyn D. Williams (1900-1989) in 1947. Originally from New Jersey, the Williams family resided in Norwood, MA at the time their Oak Bluffs summer home was purchased. T. Cortlandt Williams was a mechanical engineer who joined the Stone & Webster Engineering Corporation in 1923. He was involved in the planning and development of the Oak Ridge plant in Tennessee at which the first atomic bomb was produced. Williams worked his way up to president of the company in 1955. It was under the ownership of the Williams family that the present configuration of the parcel at 7 Arlington Avenue was formed through the acquisition of land to the north and east of the cottage in 1950 (see Figure 8).

The Williamses sold the property in 1971 to Earl G. Page (1921-2002) and Joan V. Page (1921-2016), then of Warwick, RI. Earl Page was an Army Air Forces veteran of World War II who went on to serve as president and CEO of Grinnell Fire Protection Systems, Inc. before retiring in 1983. The couple sold 7 Arlington Avenue the following year and relocated to Florida. The new owner was Pauline (Polly) E. Friedrichs. She and her husband, Williams College professor emeritus Bob Friedrichs, were longtime residents of Williamstown, MA who moved to Exeter, NH in 2004. They had three children, Carl T. Friedrichs, Paul E. Friedrichs, and Robin F. Moriarty, who were also listed as grantors when 7 Arlington Avenue was sold to its present owners, Lisa H. Kim and Eunu Chun of New York, in 2011.

The ownership history of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage is typical of other late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century resort homes in Oak Bluffs, and Martha's Vineyard more broadly, in that it was developed by and owned by seemingly wealthy individuals and families from the Northeastern US who either summer at the cottage or rented it out. It was relatively common for cottages in Vineyard Highlands to be relocated; a section specifically addressing the subject was included in the 1978 MHC Form A for

<sup>2</sup> The Buckminster House, 7 Dempster Park, was demolished in the early 2000s based on historical aerial photographs, and replaced with the present dwelling on the parcel in 2009 according to the Oak Bluffs Assessor's records.

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Vineyard Highlands (OAK.B). Economically viable at the time, house moving was enabled by light framing and a lack of foundations and utility lines seen in later builds. Another known example in close proximity to 7 Arlington Avenue is the Albert P. Pitkin House, 21 Mill Square Road (OAK.417), built in 1874 and relocated in 1891 according to the 1978 survey form. The Ann C. Brodhead Cottage's story is relatively unique within the context of Oak Bluffs only because the house was divided. The relocated Pitkin House and the two halves of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage contribute to the anachronism of the streetscape along and abutting East Chop Avenue which is generally homogenous in terms of scale and siting. While most of these buildings date to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the former Otis C. Johnson House, 19 Mill Square Road (ca. 1897; OAK.418) was demolished in 2021-2022 and a replacement home is under construction. This modern intrusion erodes any architectural or historical significance that the buildings overlooking East Chop Avenue might have as a small collection.

Unfortunately, any historical significance that 7 Arlington Avenue may have either individually or within the historical boundaries of the Vineyard Highlands development is overshadowed by its loss of architectural integrity, the level of which precludes eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The cottage retains some discernable elements of its original form including the corner tower, jerkinhead dormers, and wrap-around porch, however all these character-defining architectural elements have been significantly modified and stripped of important ornamental trim. Originally a blend of the Second Empire and Queen Ann styles, this half of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage no longer embodies its former Victorian Eclectic essence. The tower anchoring the building's southeast corner has been enlarged (possibly rebuilt) and its Mansard roof, characteristic of the Second Empire style, was replaced with a low hipped roof. The ornate, Queen Anne-style integral porches at the second story dormers have been infilled. The porch has been rebuilt with simple square posts. Originally located at the corner and dominated by a clipped roof recalling the second story porches, the entrance to the wrap-around porch was relocated to the east elevation and architecturally simplified. While in keeping with historic configurations, the 2/2 double-hung windows all appear to be replacements.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Ancestry.com. Special Collections: Birth, Marriage & Death Records; U.S. Census Records; and U.S. City Directories.

Duke County Registry of Deeds. Recorded land records for 7 Arlington Avenue: bk. 122, pg. 202 (1909); bk. 49, pg. 455 (1920); bk. 176, pg. 436 (1928); bk. 213, pg. 219 (1947); bk. 217, pg. 375 (1950); bk. 417, pg. 770 (1984); bk. 1255, pg. 146 (2011); and bk. 81, pg. 291 (2020).

Duke County Registry of Deeds. Recorded land records for 108/109 Beecher Park (original building location): bk. 47, pg. 274 (1872); bk. 66, pg. 546 (1880); bk. 94, pg. 160 (1895); bk. 99, pg. 523 (1900); bk. 100, pg. 560 (1900); bk. 102, pg. 389 (1901); bk. 109, pg. 28 (1903); bk. 105, pg. 472 (1903); bk. 115, pg. 313 (1906); and bk. 144, pg. 79 (1916).

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Jacobson, Donald. Vineyard Highlands. MHC A Form OAK.B. November 1978.

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Massachusetts Historical Commission. Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS). <http://mhc-macris.net/index.htm>.

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**Maps, Atlases & Plans**

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**Newspaper Articles**

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*Death of Maj Wm. Brodhead*. The Boston Globe. January 31, 1895.

*Goes to Somerville*. The Boston Globe. June 27, 1905.

*Oak Bluffs*. Fall River Daily Evening News. August 9, 1915.

Untitled advertisements for the "Palmer Villa." Boston Evening Transcript. June 24, 1905, and June 30, 1906.

*VHS Grad Who Set Pole Vault Record Sets Mark in Field of Engineering*. Vineland Times Journal (Vineland, NJ). August 20, 1958.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**



Photo 1. North elevation of 7 Arlington Avenue, view south.



Photo 2. North and east elevations of 7 Arlington Avenue, view southwest.

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Photo 3. East and south elevations of 7 Arlington Avenue, view northwest.



Photo 4. South elevation of 7 Arlington Avenue, view north.



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Photo 5. South and partial west elevations of 7 Arlington Avenue, view northeast.

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**FIGURES**

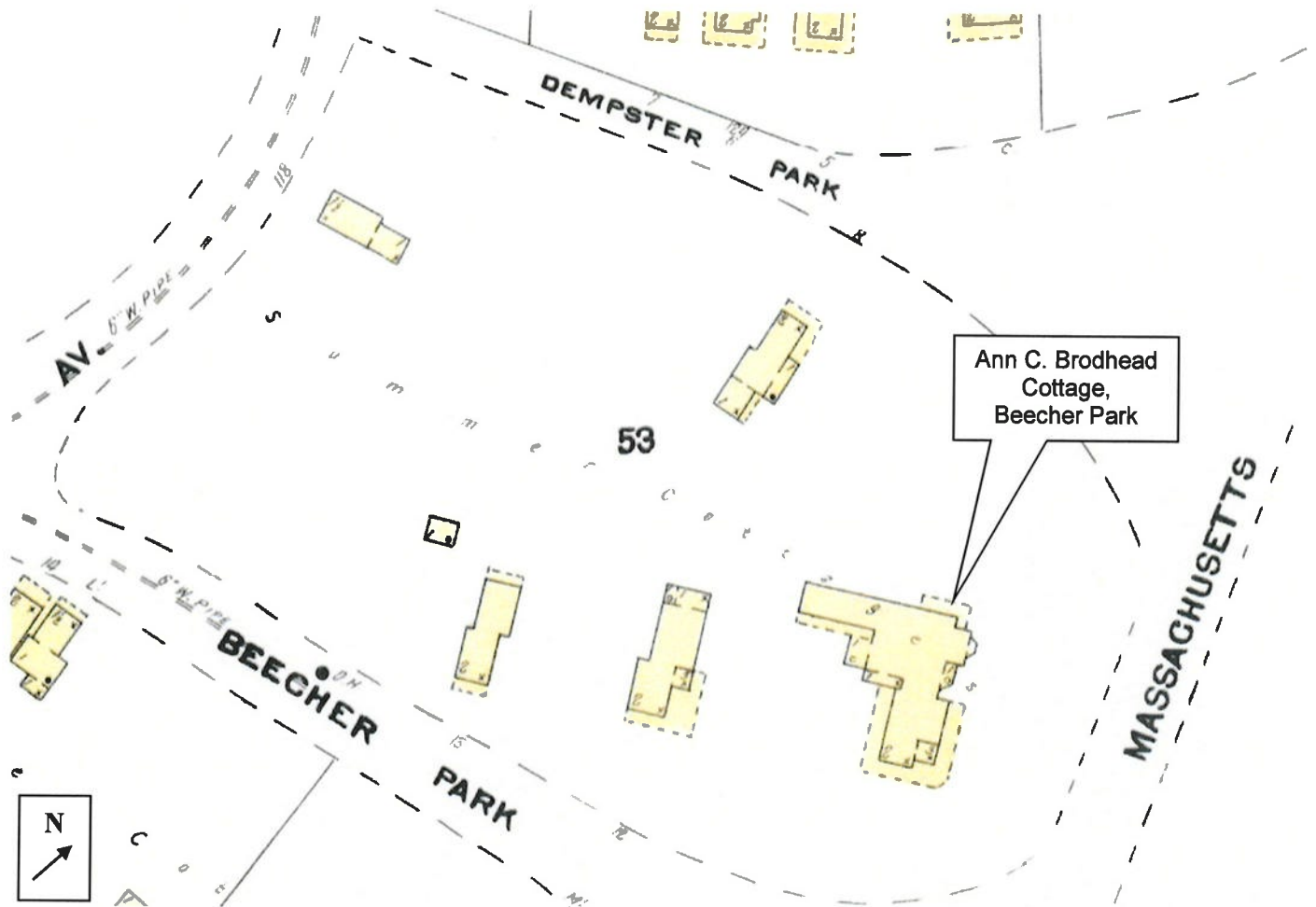


Figure 1. 1904 map showing the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage at its original location on Beecher Park. Source: Sanborn Map Company, "Cottage City, Dukes County, Massachusetts" (New York, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1904), sheet 3.

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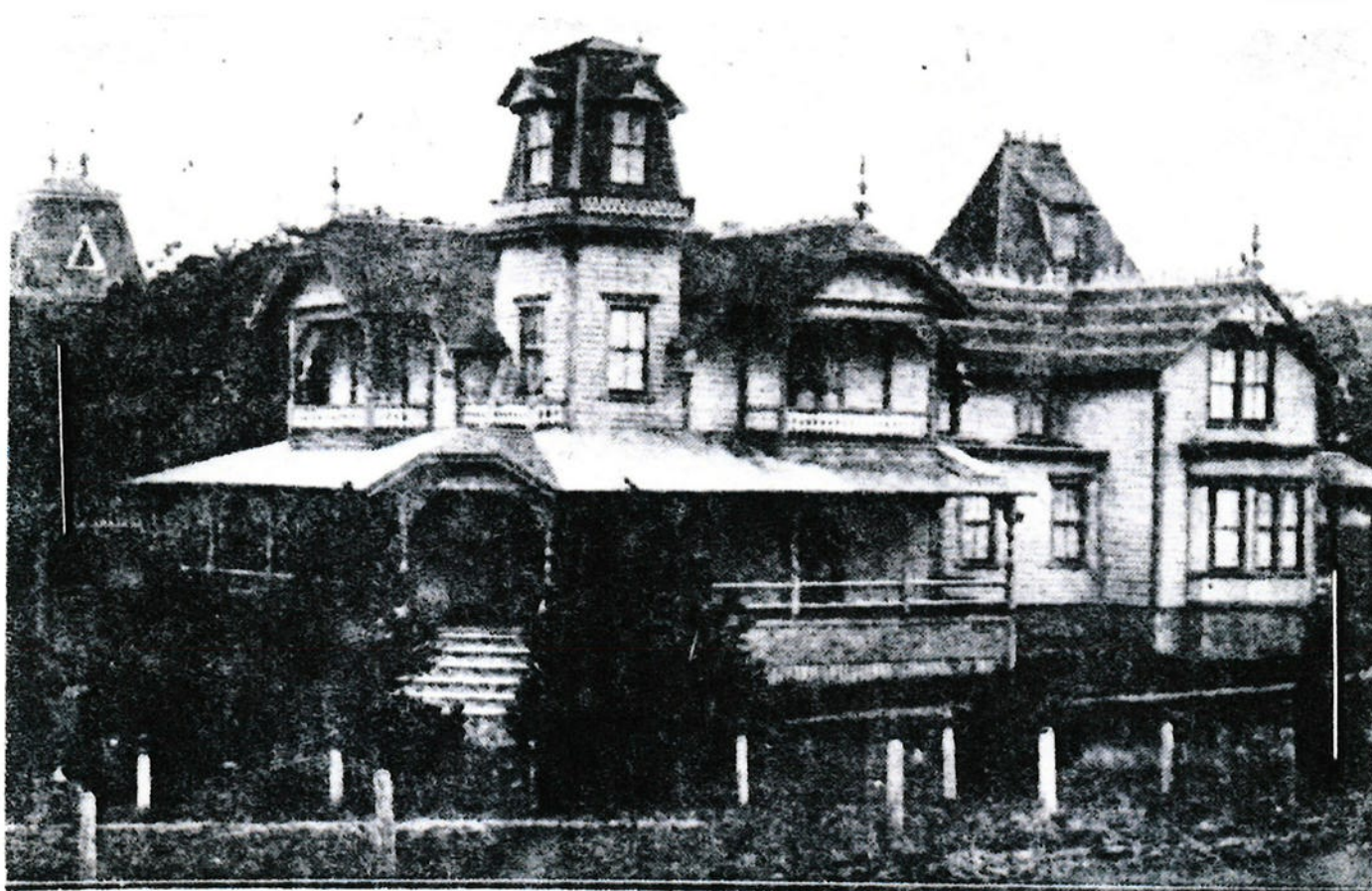
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**PALMER VILLA.**

Figure 2. Undated (likely early 20<sup>th</sup> century) photograph of the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage, labeled the "Palmer Villa" and then located on Beecher Park. Source: Alice Robinson, MHC B Form OAK.414 (1978); original repository unknown.

**A Week of Real Rest for Tired Body and Brain.**  
FARE from Boston to Cottage City, Martha's Vineyard, and return, one week's room and board, two in a room, at Palmer villa, Vineyard Highlands, week beginning July 1, \$10. Write for booklet before planning your vacation. AARON B. PALMER, Prop., principal Tracy School, West Lynn, Mass.  
SWS Je 17

**REST, RECREATION, PLEASURE—Palmer Villa, Cottage City Highlands, Martha's Vineyard, Mass**  
Special rates for last two weeks in June and first two in July; excellent table; cool rooms; good service, without tips and frills. Write for booklet and terms before planning your vacation. Open June 16. AARON B. PALMER, Prop., Master Highland School, W. Somerville, Mass.  
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Figure 3. Newspaper advertisements for the "Palmer Villa." Source: Boston Evening Transcript, June 24, 1905 (left) and June 30, 1906 (right).

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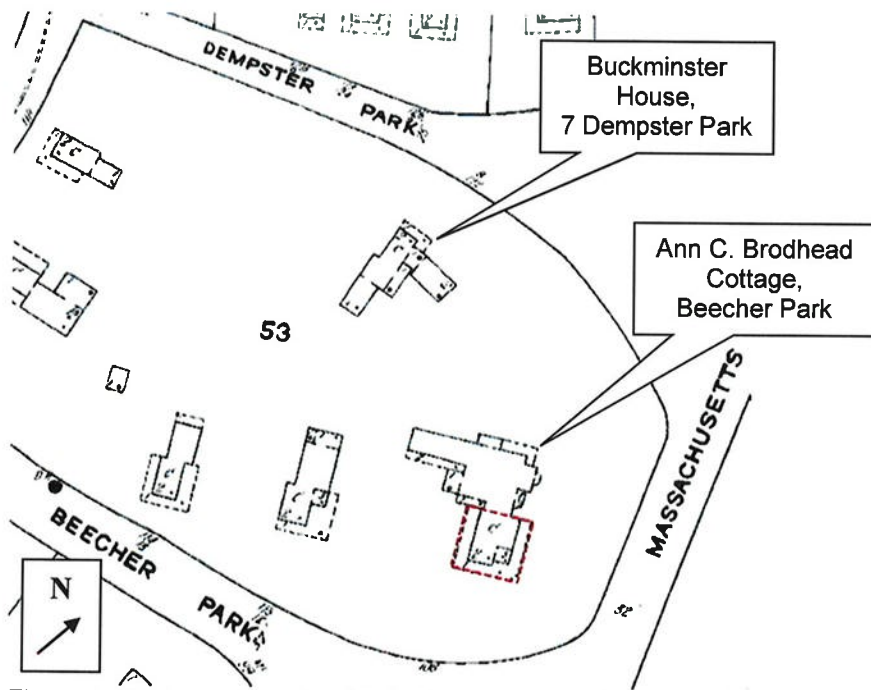


Figure 4. 1914 map showing the Ann C. Brodhead Cottage at its original location on Beecher Park. The section of the building presently part of the dwelling at 7 Arlington Avenue is outlined in red. Source: Sanborn Map Company, "Oak Bluffs, Dukes County, Massachusetts" (New York, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1914), sheet 3.

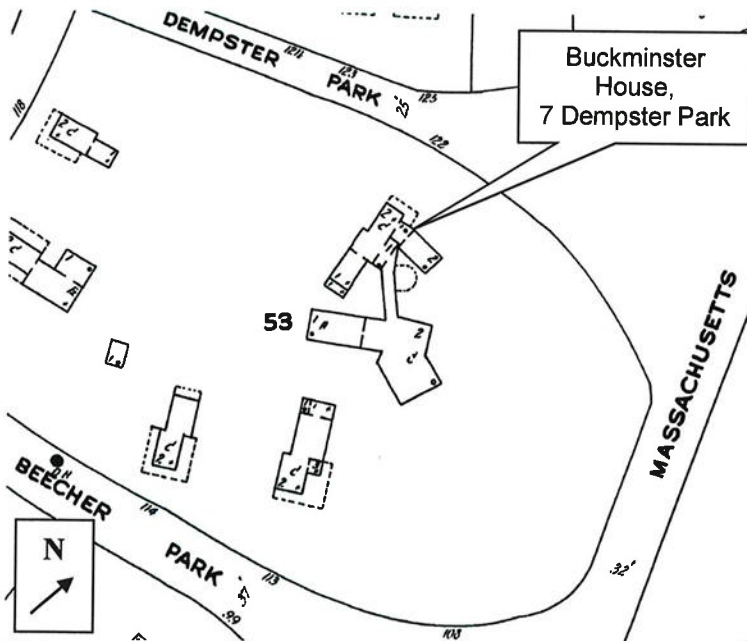


Figure 5. 1923 map showing the enlarged Buckminster House, 7 Dempster Park (no longer extant). The Ann C. Brodhead Cottage was relocated to its present location at 7 Arlington Avenue by this time. Source: Sanborn Map Company, "Oak Bluffs, Dukes County, Massachusetts" (New York, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1923), sheet 12.

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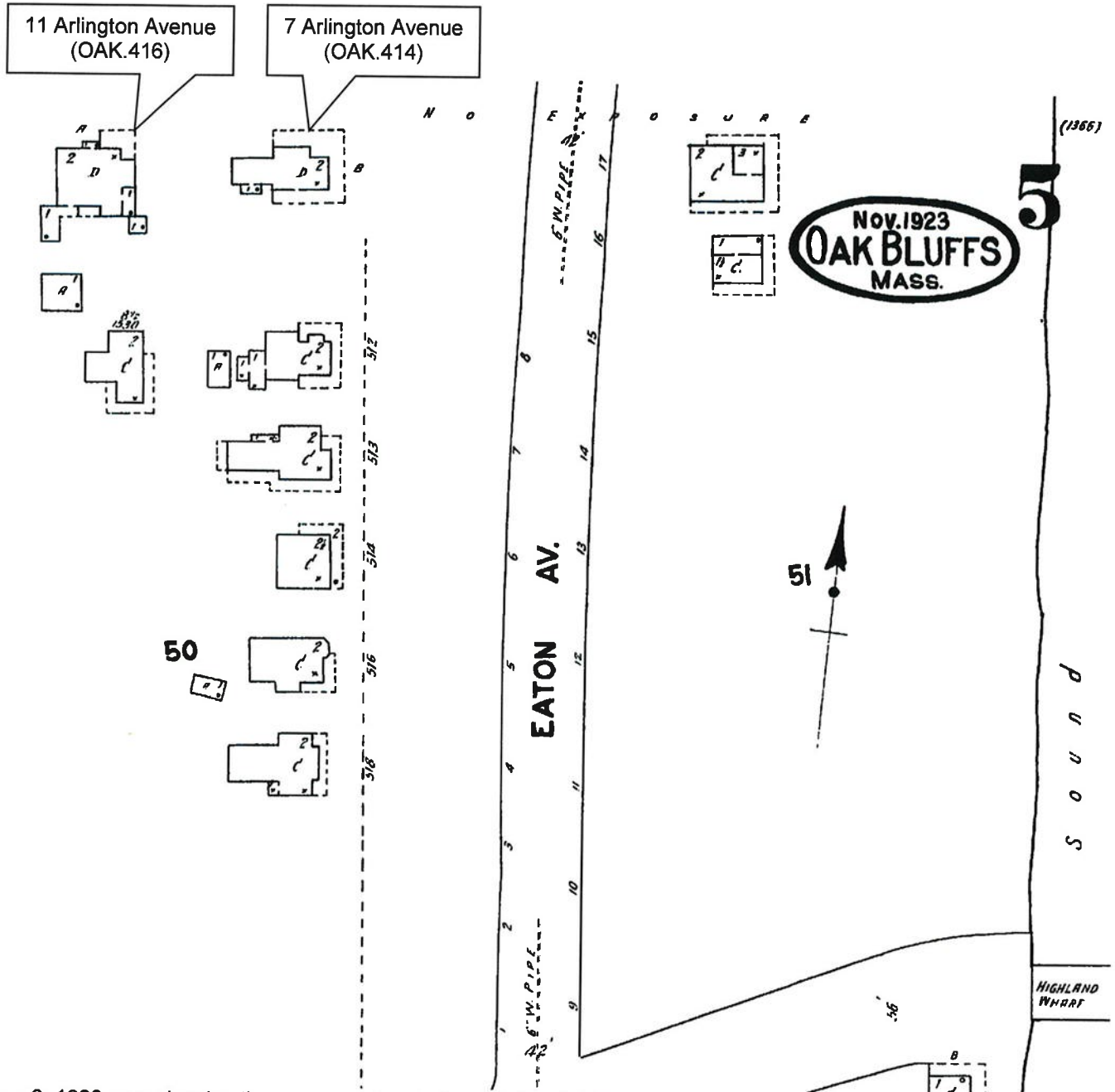


Figure 6. 1923 map showing the two relocated sections of the divided Ann C. Brodhead Cottage along Arlington Street. Note: Eaton Avenue is presently called East Chop Drive. Source: Sanborn Map Company, "Oak Bluffs, Dukes County, Massachusetts" (New York, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1923), sheet 5.

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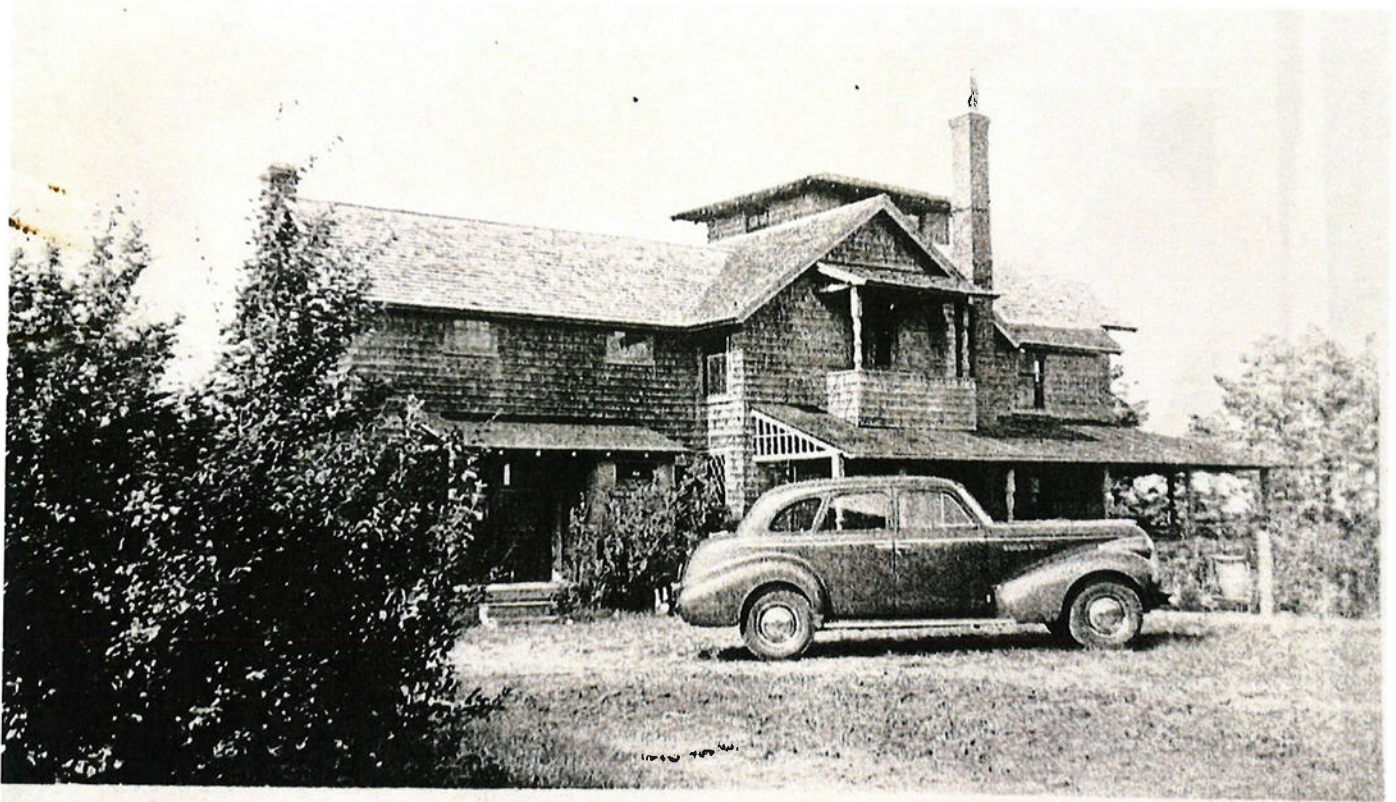
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1942

Figure 7. 1942 photograph showing the south elevation of 7 Arlington Avenue. Photograph courtesy of the present property owners, Lisa Kim and Eunu Chun.

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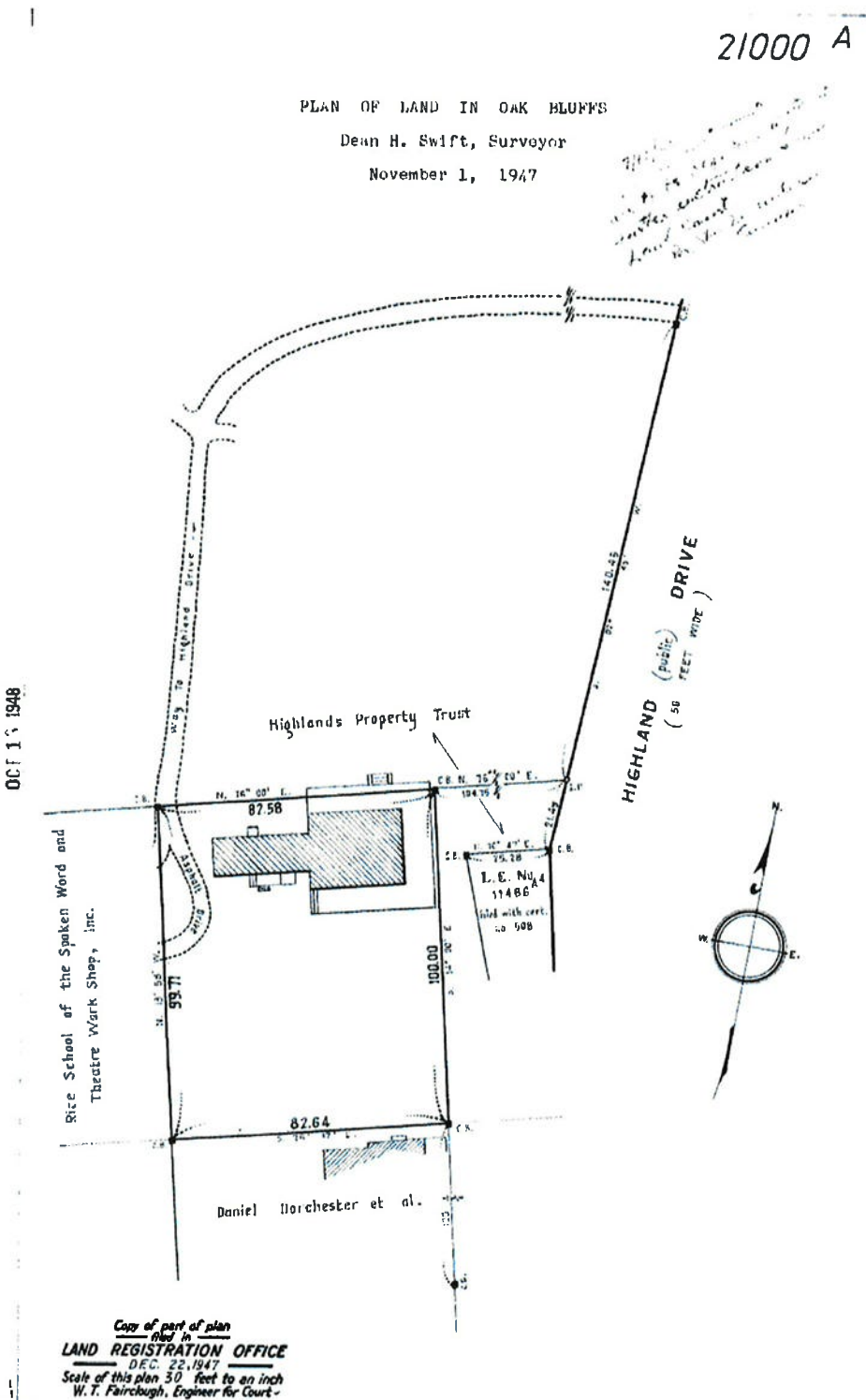


Figure 8. 1947 plan showing the property at 7 Arlington Avenue before it was expanded in 1950 to include the adjacent parcels to the north and east. Source: Dukes County Registry of Deeds, registered land records bk. 8, pg. 125 (1948).