

68 Welles Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02124

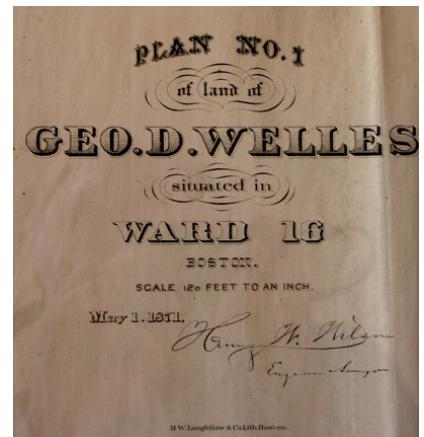
Dorchester Historical Society
December 1, 2020



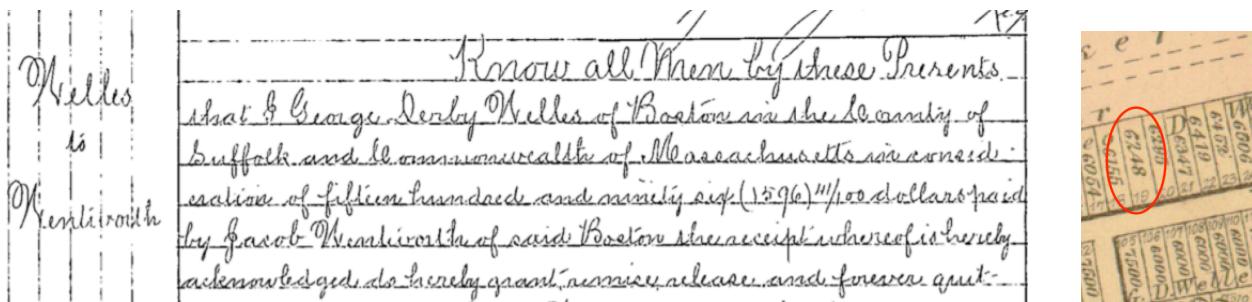
Questions asked:

- What is known about the original owner?
- Did an architect design the house? If so, who was it and what is known about him/her?
- Who was the builder?
- Does the house sit on all of its original land? If not, when and in what way did the lot size change?

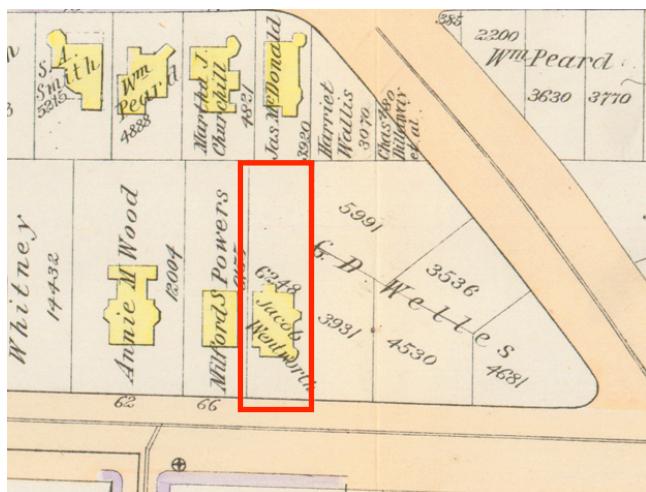
The neighborhood now known as Ashmont Hill had its origins in 1870, when George Derby Welles, who was 26 years old and living in Paris, inherited extensive landholdings in this area from his grandfather's estate. Welles engaged attorney Edward Ingersoll Browne to be his representative, with the responsibility and authority to manage the sale of his property. Browne in turn hired the engineer and surveyor H. W. Wilson to draw up a plot plan of house lots and streets to begin the process of selling the land. Deeds to Ashmont Hill properties to this day include the original lot number(s) and a reference to "Plan No. 1 of Geo. D. Welles....dated May 1, 1871 by Henry W. Wilson, Engineer and Surveyor...." in the description of the property.



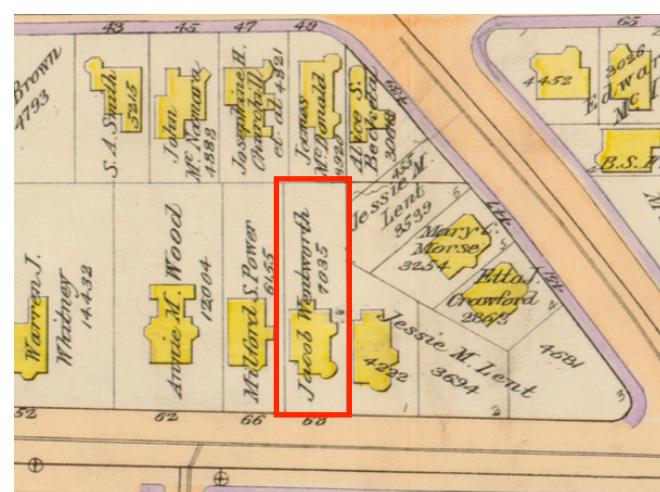
On October 2, 1893, George Derby Welles and his wife, Armandine V. Welles, through their attorney Edward Ingersoll Browne, deeded Lot 19, as bounded and described on Plan No. 1, to Jacob Wentworth of Boston for \$1,596.41. (Welles to Wentworth Suffolk County Registry of Deeds 2155.598)



Talbot Avenue did not exist on the 1871 plan. However, a plan for this new street, dated April 15, 1893, was made by Henry W. Wilson (now termed Civil Engineer) to create a Talbot Avenue subdivision. The new plan altered a number of building lots in this area, and for reasons that aren't clear, an additional five-foot strip of land was sold to Jacob Wentworth that ran along the eastern edge of lot 19 and contained 787.15 square feet of land. (September 24, 1896 from W. Ashford Lent and Jessie M. Lent 2390.91 to Jacob Wentworth 2390.91, described as "a parcel of land southerly by Welles Avenue 5 ft, westerly by land of Wentworth 157.43 ft, northerly by land of Harriet Wallis and others 5 feet, and easterly by lots 40 and 36 157.43 feet containing 787.15, being a portion of lots 40 and 36.") As a result of this purchase, the documented lot size of 48 Welles Avenue increased from 6248 square feet to 7035 square feet, and the description of "Parcel II" appears on all subsequent deeds.



1894 Insurance Atlas showing 68 Welles Avenue



1898 Insurance Atlas showing 68 Welles Avenue

The sale by George Welles to Jacob Wentworth was noted in the "Real Estate Matters" column of the *Dorchester Beacon* newspaper the week after the sale. Then in May of 1894, the *Dorchester Beacon*, in its "Shawmut" column, reported that "Mr. Jacob Wentworth of Roxbury is having a handsome colonial residence built on Welles avenue. Mr. Eaton, the well-known architect and builder, will have charge of it."

SHAWMUT.	
Mr. Fred Holmes of Pittsburgh, Pa., is staying at the residence of Mr. Morse on Moultrie avenue. He is at present completing his musical education under the direction of Prof. Herman Chelius of the Boston Conservatory of Music.	
Mr. Jacob Wentworth of Roxbury is having a handsome colonial residence built on Welles avenue. Mr. Eaton, the well-known architect and builder, will have charge of it.	

Cricket teams have been formed in Shawmut and Ashmont, and interesting matches will soon be in order.

The Application for Permit to Build was submitted to the Boston Inspector of Buildings by Joseph G. Eaton of 8 Atlantic Street on May 10, 1894. The plans were approved on May 15, and the permit was granted on May 19. On July 18, 1894 Wentworth gave a mortgage to George W. Snow with the phrase "with the dwelling house thereon now in process of erection." (July 18, 1894 from Jacob Wentworth to George W. Snow 2213.406, lot 19 together with the dwelling house thereon now in process of erection.)

While a building inspector's report to document completion of the house is not available, the 1894 insurance atlas shows the footprint of the house, and tax records for 1894 include both land and building, indicating that construction was completed that year.

1894.

No. 567

Each building on separate Application Blank.
Plans must be submitted with this Application.
Write legibly. OWNERSHIP and detail must be complete.

Application for Permit to Build.

(WOOD AND FRAME.)

Boston, May 10, 1894.

To THE
INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS:

The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build, according to the following specifications: —

1. If in a block, how many buildings will be erected?
2. Material?..... *Wood*

3. What is the Owner's name?..... *Jacob Wentworth*

4. " " Architect's "..... *J. G. Eaton*

5. " " Builder's "..... *Welles Ave.*

6. " " Location?..... *Welles Ave. Ward 5th*

7. " " nearest street?..... *near 68 Orleans St*

8. " purpose of building?..... *dwelling*

George Welles was determined that the character and quality of the houses being built comply with the very high standards that he himself set. The deed for 68 Welles Avenue stipulated that for ten years only one dwelling house, stable building, and ancillary structure could be built on the property; that no building or fence over six feet high could be erected within 20 feet of Welles Avenue (features such as porches, cornices, and bay windows could extend into that space); and that no dwelling house "shall be inferior in appearance to those heretofore erected by said Welles on Roslin and Harley streets."** Welles also reserved the right during that ten-year period for himself or his agents to enter the property and to remove or alter, at the expense of the party at fault, any changes that were made in violation of these stipulations. Similar language appears in the deeds to all the house lots sold by Welles. It is not known whether he or his agents ever had to exercise this right.

*This refers to the French mansard "cottages" at 16 Harley Street and 49 Roslin Street that Welles had built in the fashionable architectural style of the time, soon after the 1871 plan was completed.

The Original Owner and His Family

Jacob Wentworth was born in 1844/5. At age 23, he and May Wilson, age 22, were married in Orleans, Mass., on December 7, 1868. Jacob's residence was listed as Berwick, Maine; May's was Orleans. (A later Census report says she was born in New Hampshire.) Jacob's occupation was listed as "Painter."

In the 1870 Census (dated August 9), Jacob and May lived in South Boston in what appears to be a rooming house; Jacob was a Dry Goods Clerk. Their son Charles's biography in the Harvard Class of 1894 report says he was born on September 18, 1870, "on Cape Cod," so May must have been home and

quite pregnant when the census taker came to their door, and she presumably went to her parents' home in Orleans to have her baby.

In the 1880 Census, Jacob and May lived at 28 Sherman Street in Boston's Ward 21 (Roxbury). He was 38 years old; his occupation was "Salesman, Dry Goods." Also in his household were his wife, May, age 35, and their son, Chas. T. Prior to moving to Welles Avenue, the family lived at 46 Sherman Street in Roxbury.

The 1900 Census confirms that Jacob, age 58, and May, age 55, were living at 68 Welles Avenue, along with Hannah Johnson, age 25, who had immigrated from English-speaking Canada (i.e. not Quebec) and was listed as Servant/Cook. In the 1910 Census, the family was still at 68 Welles Avenue (with no cook), and Jacob was listed as a leather merchant. Charles, age 39 and a public school teacher, and his wife, Hannah, age 37, were also in residence; although not listed, they had a daughter, Marion, who was born in 1906. (See below for more about Charles.)

The Boston Directories of 1893 and 1894 list Jacob Wentworth as "supt." at 450 Washington Street, which was the address of the Jordan Marsh department store. In 1900 he is listed as "buyer" at the same address, and then specifically at Jordan Marsh & Co., and dealing in "dry goods." He appears in City of Boston business directories from 1897 through 1916 with the occupation of either "Commission, Salesman" or "Commercial Merchant." Thus it seems likely that he spent most of his working life in various positions at Jordan Marsh & Co.

Jacob Wentworth died on October 31, 1927, in his 86th year. Services were held at his home on November 2, with the request "Please omit flowers." A newspaper notice dated December 8, 1927, stated that the administrator of his estate was Charles T. Wentworth of 8 Carruth Street, Dorchester, Mass. Jacob's heirs, May, Charles, and Hannah, sold 68 Welles Avenue to May Lambert Voye of Boston on March 14, 1931. Herbert M. Voye and and Hannah Lambert Voye, his wife "in her own right," granted a mortgage in the amount of \$5,000 to the Massachusetts Cooperative Bank.

About Charles

Charles T. Wentworth, age 29, of 68 Welles Avenue, married Hanzie A. (sic) Denison, 27, of Mechanics Falls, ME, on July 2, 1899. Although Charles and Hannah (in all other listings she is Hannah Adnah) lived at 68 Welles Avenue according to the 1910 Census, the Boston List of Residents has them at 8 Carruth Street in 1909. Hannah's mother had purchased the Carruth Street house in 1902; in 1921 Charles and Hannah purchased the house from her mother for a dollar. Charles had an impressive career as an educator. He attended Roxbury Latin School and graduated from English High School, then entered MIT in the Class of 1892, where he studied mining engineering. He decided he didn't care for the subject so transferred to Harvard, where he entered as a junior in the Class of 1894, graduating with Final Honors in History. He received a Master's in History from Harvard, where he was also a teaching fellow, then taught at the University of Wisconsin, MIT, and Fall River High School. In 1900 he began teaching at Dorchester High School, where he was head of the History Department from 1901 until his death in 1937. Hannah sold 8 Carruth Street in 1938.

The Architect and Builder

The 1894 building permit for 68 Welles Avenue lists Joseph G. Eaton of 8 Atlantic Street, South Boston, as both architect and builder. Eaton was born in 1844 in Searsport, Maine, which was a major shipbuilding center on Penobscot Bay. In both the 1850 and 1860 Census, his father, Otis Eaton, listed his occupation as Joiner, so Joseph must have grown up around people who knew how to build, whether it was boats or buildings.

In the 1880 Census Joseph, age 36 and single, was a boarder at 139 Dorchester Street in Dorchester and his occupation was carpenter. On December 21, 1881, Joseph, now 37, married Elvina E. Merrill, age 23, who born in Richmond, Maine, but whose family was living in Boston by 1860. A son, Frederick Albert Eaton, was born in February 1883; he died three weeks later.

City directories show Joseph and Elvina living in Ward 15 (South Boston) in 1900 and 1910. This is confirmed by the 1910 Census, which lists them at 8 Atlantic Street in South Boston, from which Joseph ran his business; he listed his occupation as Carpenter and the “general nature” of his work was “Buildings.” Two additional residents at that address in 1910 were Mary C. Merrill, Elvina’s mother, a widow, who had “Own Income,” and John A. Merrill, Elvina’s unmarried brother, whose occupation was “superintendent, bedding factory.” Atlantic Street is a block-long street that runs between East 4th Street and Thomas Park in South Boston; 8 Atlantic Street is still there.

According to Boston City Directories, from 1912 on the Eatons were homeowners at 15 Nelson Street in Dorchester, with Joseph still identified as a carpenter. (Nelson Street is near the intersection of Norfolk Street and Morton Street.) Joseph died in 1926, but Elvina continued to live at that address until 1939.

Little information was found regarding Eaton’s work, but it is likely that he was among the many builders who provided their own house designs, whether from a pattern book or drawing on previous experience, during this period of intense residential development in Boston. One brief article from the South Boston Inquirer, March 17, 1906, informs of the following:

Excavations are being made at Bowdoin and Quincy streets, Dorchester, for a block to contain eight stores and eight apartments for A. H. Copley, 554 Columbia road, Dorchester. Day work by **J. G. Eaton**, 8 Atlantic street, South Boston. Louis A. Dow, 131 Upham street, Melrose, architect.

Source Materials:

City of Boston Historical Building Permits

Dorchester Historical Society Insurance Atlas Collection

Family Search genealogical website for Suffolk County Tax Records, Part 2, valuation books,
1822-1918, also Deeds

Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915

My Heritage genealogical website for U.S. Federal Census 1850-1920, family trees, City of Boston
directories, newspaper articles

Suffolk County Registry of Deeds

~~Henry Louis K. Black, Pearce D. Dyar and one seal. In presence
of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Suffolk as Boston before
19th, 1893. I have personally appeared the above named Frederick
de Moore and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his
free act and deed, before me Walter C. Brown, Justice of the
Peace. October 2, 1893 at twelve o'clock and eight minutes
P.M. Received, entered & examined. W.C.B. [Signature]~~

O'Welles
to
Wentworth

I know all these by these presents
that George Derby O'Welles of Boston in the County of
Suffolk and Commonwealth of Massachusetts in consideration
of fifteen hundred and ninety six (\$1596) $\frac{1}{100}$ dollars paid
by Jacob Wentworth of said Boston the receipt whereof is hereby
acknowledged to hereby grant, demise, release and forever quit-
claim unto the said Jacob Wentworth and his heirs and assigns
a certain parcel of land situate in the Dorchester District of
said Boston bounded and described as follows reference being
had to a plan entitled "Plan No. 1 of land of George D. O'Welles
situate in Ward 16, Boston" dated May 1, 1871 drawn by H. W.
Wilson Surveyor and recorded in the Suffolk Registry of
Deeds Southwicks on O'Welles Avenue forty (40) feet Westerly on lot
numbered eighteen (18), on said plan heretofore conveyed by me
to Willard L. Powers one hundred and fifty four $\frac{9}{100}$ (154.99)
feet Northerly on land now or formerly of Baker forty $\frac{7}{100}$ (40.7)
feet and Easterly on lot numbered twenty (20) on said plan be-
ing other land of mine one hundred and fifty seven $\frac{43}{100}$ (157.43)
feet, the granted premises being lot numbered nineteen (19) set
laid down on said plan and containing eighty two hundred
and forty eight (824.8) square feet of land, be any or all of
said measurements more or less or however otherwise said
premises may be bounded measured or described, the said
O'Welles Avenue having been conveyed in fee to the testy. of
Boston by deed of said O'Welles also dated May 1, 1871 and re-
corded with Suffolk Deeds lib. 1219 folio 179 to which deed refer-
ence is hereby made. To have and to hold the above granted
premises with the privileges and appurtenances to the same
belonging to the said Jacob Wentworth and his heirs and as-
signs to his and their use and behoof forever. This conveyance
is made on the following stipulations and agreements. That
the said grantee his heirs and assigns shall not for a period
of ten years from the first day of January A.D. 1893 erect on the
granted premises any buildings or parts thereof, which shall be

215596
3991

used or occupied for any other purpose than dwelling houses
and private stables belonging to the same and buildings
necessarily appurtenant to private dwelling houses, that for
the same period no building or part of any and no fence
over six feet high shall be erected within twenty(20) feet
of said Welles premises except that door steps, porches, cornices,
piazzas and bay windows may project into said reserved space
of twenty(20) feet, that for the same period, not more than one
dwelling house with its stables and outbuildings as aforesaid
will be permitted to stand on the premises at any one
time, over and apart from dwelling house during said period to be
erected on the premises which shall be inferior in appearance
to those heretofore erected by said Welles on Roslyn and Hanley
streets and said Welles reserves for himself his heirs and as
successors the right to enter upon the premises by his or their
agents and at the expense of the party at fault to remove or
alter in conformity with the above stipulations any building
or portion thereof which may be erected on the premises by
said grantee his heirs or assigns in a manner or to a manner
contrary to the above stipulations. The granted premises are
conveyed subject to taxes and all assessments thereon
with the exception of the taxes assessed by the City of
Boston thereon as of May 1st last which taxes the said Welles
alone is to pay. And I the said grantor for myself, my heirs
and executors and administrators, do covenant with the
said grantee and his heirs and assigns that the aforesaid
premises are free from all encumbrances made by me except
as aforesaid, and that I will and may his executors and
administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the
said grantee and his heirs and assigns against the lawful
claims and demands of all persons claiming by, through or
under me except as aforesaid, but against none other. I do witness
whereof I the said George Derby Welles and Annaandine
Welles my wife in token of her release of all right and
title of or to both dwyer and houses laid in the granted
premises have hereunto set our hands and seals this second
day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand and eight
hundred and ninety three, by Edward Ingencoll Brown our attorney
hereby duly authorized by our Power of Attorney to have dated
the thirtieth day of May A.D. 1873 and recorded in the Suffolk
Deeds lib. 1164 folio 258. George Derby Welles by Edward
Brown his attorney and a seal Annaandine Welles by

Edward F. Brown our attorney and a seal, designed sealed
and delivered in presence of the painted word "stree" having
been first struck out on first page, Roger Wolcott, Common-
wealth of Massachusetts, Suffolk sc October 2nd 1893. There-
personally appeared the above named Edward Ingerson Brown
and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be the free act
and deed of the said George Derby Weller before me Roger
Wolcott Justice of the Peace. (October 2, 1893 at twelve
o'clock and fourty minutes PM Received & entered & examined)

Weller

Clinton

Market les

to:

Mass. Hos.

Life Ins. les

The word hereby
cancelled in 20th line

Weller

Am.

2556 p. 535

Dec 3040. 192

Know all Men by these Presents

that the Clinton Market Company a Corporation duly
established under the law of the Commonwealth of Massa-
chusetts and doing business in Boston in the County of
Suffolk in said Commonwealth in consideration of one hun-
dred and ten thousand dollars to it paid by the Massachu-
setts Hospital Life Insurance Company a Corporation estab-
lished by authority of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

the receipt whereof is fully acknowledged doth hereby give

grant, bargain, sell and convey unto the said last named

Corporation and its successors and assigns all that lot of
land in said Boston containing according to L. H. Ellis plan

dated March 8, 1881 recorded with Suffolk Deeds lib. 1609

between pages 612 and 613, fifty one thousand and eleven 6/10

square feet, be the same more or less with the Market Cone

thereon standing bounded North by Clinton street three hun-

drd eighty one 13/100 feet West by Mercantile street sometimes

called Quincy Rose one hundred and five 63/100 feet South by

Boston Market street three hundred twenty two 7/100 feet and

East by Atlantic Avenue one hundred six 47/100 feet or however

otherwise said premises may be bounded measured or described

being the premises conveyed to the grantor by George F. Weller

by deed dated October 1, 1884 recorded with Suffolk Deeds

lib. 1653 page 341 and by Martin Brimmer and others by deeds

dated January 1, 1887 duly recorded lib. 1756 pages 97, 99 and 101

see also confirmatory deed duly recorded lib. 1763 page 482 P.O.

have and to hold the granted premises to the said named

Corporation, its successors and assigns, to it and them in use

and behoof forever. And the grantor doth hereby, for itself

and its successors and assigns covenant with the said grantee

Corporation, its successors and assigns, that it is lawfully es-
tablished

1894.

Each building on separate Application Blank.
Plans must be submitted with this Application.
Write legibly. OWNERSHIP and detail must be complete.

No. 567

Application for Permit to Build.

(WOOD AND FRAME.)

Boston, May 10 1894.

To THE

INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS:

The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build, according to the following specifications: —

1. If in a block, how many buildings will be erected? *1*
2. Material? *Wood*
3. What is the Owner's name? *Jacob Sturtz west*
4. " " Architect's " *J. G. Eaton*
5. " " Builder's " *Walter Fox*
6. " " Location? *near off Ocean St Ward 3rd*
7. " " nearest street? *Nearest street?*
8. " purpose of building? *Dwelling*
9. If a dwelling, for how many families? *one*
10. Is there to be a store in lower story? *—*
11. Size of lot, No. of feet front, *28' 3"*; No. of feet rear, *—*; No. of feet deep, *—*
12. Size of Building, No. of feet front, *28' 3"*; No. of feet rear, *14' 4"*; No. of feet deep, *41' 5"*
13. No. of stories, front, *2*; rear, *2*
14. No. of feet in height from the level of the ground to the highest part of the roof? *34'*
15. Does the proposed structure stand within 18 inches of the lines of adjoining premises? *—* distance, *18"*
If so, what is the thickness of the wall to be built? *—*
16. Distance from surrounding buildings, front *12* feet; side *11* feet; rear *10* feet;
17. Distance back from line of street? *35'*
18. What is the height of nearest building? *34'* What is nearest building used for? *same*
19. Will the building be erected on solid or filled land? *solid earth*
20. Will the foundation be laid on earth, rock, or piles? *earth*
21. If on piles, No. of rows.....distance on centres?.....length of?.....
22. Diameter, top of?.....diameter, bottom of?.....
23. Size of posts? *4 x 8*
24. " girts? *4 x 8*
25. " floor timbers? *3 x 9* *12' floor 12" - 0*
26. Braces, how put in? *bracing*
27. Building, how framed? *Mansard & flat*
28. What is the material of foundation? *stone* thickness of? *10"* Is the foundation laid with mortar? *yes*
29. Underpinning, material of? *stone* height of? *4'*
30. Will the roof be flat, pitch, mansard, or hip? *Pitch*
31. Will the building be heated by steam, furnaces, stoves, or grates? *Furnace* are all the flues lined? *yes*
32. Will the building conform to the requirements of the law? *yes*
33. No. of brick walls? *—* and where placed? *—*
34. Probable cost above land? *—*

Plans submitted? *no*

Show location by diagram on back of this form, giving relative distances from adjoining buildings.

[SIGN HERE.]

[ADDRESS.]

Joseph G. Eaton
3 Atlantic St Boston

NOTICE.

To obtain permission to occupy the street or sidewalk during construction, present your permit to build at office of Superintendent of Streets, City Hall.

No. 667 1894.

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO BUILD.
(WOOD AND FRAME.)

LOCATION. W.D. 34
68 *Wellington*
one off Ocean St.
F.O.S. 80 ft.
S.C. 10 ft.
E.C. 10 ft.
R.C. 10 ft.

PERMIT GRANTED.

For MAY 19 1894.

Condition of plans must be endorsed on back
of this application.

Referred to Assistant Inspector,

Daventhorpe

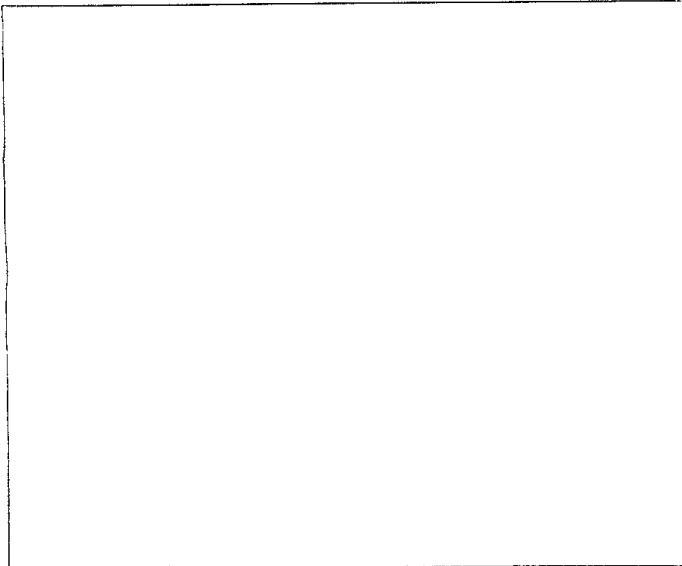
BOSTON, May 14 1894.
Approved. *M. Daventhorpe*
Assistant Inspector.

Memoranda for Assistant Inspector.

Dec 24 1894

Memoranda.

DIAGRAM.



Approved of Plans
J. M. Fletcher
For egress MAY 1894
For Department MAY 15 1894
Asst. Inspector.
Asst. Inspector.
"M. Daventhorpe"
Endicott 10' x 10' R.

Approved of Plans
J. M. Fletcher
For egress MAY 1894
For Department MAY 15 1894
Asst. Inspector.
Asst. Inspector.
"M. Daventhorpe"
Endicott 10' x 10' R.