

**Architectural & Historical Report  
 for  
 4 Sankaty Road  
 Siasconset, Massachusetts**

February 19, 2021

Prepared by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and  
 Betsy Tyler, Historian for The 'Sconset Trust, Inc.



## THE 'SCONSET TRUST, INC.

### Preservation Easements

The 'Sconset Trust preserves the unique character of the east end of Nantucket Island in Massachusetts through conservation of areas of open land and preservation of structures of historical and architectural significance in 'Sconset. The Trust works with the entire island community and collaborates with conservation and historic preservation groups to achieve its goals.

This report was prepared to highlight the important architectural and historic features of this house. The Trust hopes that emphasizing such features will encourage current and future owners of historically significant houses to preserve important interior and exterior building features for future generations. The Trust stands ready to assist homeowners in assessing the appropriateness of tools like preservation restrictions and rights of first refusal, which may include tax benefits.

For more information on how the Trust can help, please contact the Executive Director, Elizabeth G. Grubbs.

The 'Sconset Trust is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please visit the web site at [sconsettrust.org](http://sconsettrust.org).

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## 1. SUMMARY AND PROJECT SCOPE

Built as a summer house in the Aurora Heights subdivision of 1892, the property at 4 Sankaty Road known as “Minimum” and “Sallimac” in Siasconset is a contributing resource within the Nantucket Historic District, a National Historic Landmark District, which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places as well as a local historic district.

The intent of this study is to present the history of the dwelling at 4 Sankaty Road and establish its architectural and cultural significance. This study includes a survey and study of the architecture, form and materials of the existing structure, a survey of historical maps and photographs of the property, an examination of the records on file at the town of Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Probate Court and Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS) records, as well as published and archival sources.

This report was prepared for The ‘Sconset Trust, Inc. by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and Betsy Tyler, Historian.

## 2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 4 Sankaty Road is significant as a good example of an early 20th century, modest summer dwelling. This house was designed to fit on a small lot with a scale both harmonious and rich in historic detail. This ca. 1890s design features a distinctive front door, windows, plaster ceiling medallions and interior trim and staircase elements.

## 3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

4 Sankaty Avenue, “Sallimac”, aka “Minimum”, built by William J. Flagg between 1893 and 1898, and expanded by Caroline Cassidy before 1911

William J. Flagg (1818-98), an attorney, author, and vintner from Ohio, purchased a small strip of land from Robert B. Coffin in 1893. It was part of Lot 1 of Coffin’s second Aurora Heights subdivision, shown on *Plan of Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights*, surveyed in 1892 by William F. Codd. Flagg had first visited ‘Sconset in the 1870s. He built his first house on the bluff in 1877 just south of Nosegay, but sold that property in 1883 and built the cottage known as “Flaggship” at 55 Baxter Road in 1885. Flagg acquired most of the north bluff of ‘Sconset, which he divided into dozens of house-lots as shown on plans recorded in the Nantucket Registry of Deeds in 1883 (Butterfly Lane to Rosaly’s Lane) and 1885 (Sankoty [sic] Heights). As a large property owner in ‘Sconset, it is not clear why he bought the tiny lot at 4 Sankaty Avenue in 1893 and built a small cottage called “Minimum” before 1898.

Flagg’s niece, Georgina Flagg Judkins, inherited 4 Sankaty and other property from her uncle. She sold the cottage “Minimum” at 4 Sankaty to Martha Abbie Coffin, wife of Obed C. Coffin, in 1902. In her deed of sale to Coffin, Judkins states that the small lot and “buildings thereon” were inherited from her uncle, William J. Flagg, whose probate account was settled in 1902. A notice in the *Inquirer and Mirror* April 5, 1902, states: “Mrs. Judkins has also sold her cottage ‘Minimum’ at ‘Sconset, to Mrs. Martha Abbie Coffin.” Apparently, William J. Flagg built the cottage “Minimum” at 4 Sankaty between 1893 and 1898, when he died on his eightieth birthday.

Martha Abbie Coffin rented the cottage “Minimum” to vacationers in the summers of 1902 and 1903, according to newspaper notices. In 1908 the cottage was listed for sale: “Minimum cottage at Siasconset for sale or to let, furnished. Fine water view. Apply to Mrs. Obed C. Coffin,” and in August the *I&M* reported: “Mrs. Obed C. Coffin has sold her cottage ‘Minimum’ to Mrs. Caroline M. Cassidy of New York.” The deed states that the property included “buildings thereon,” but in 1918, when Cassidy sold the property to her sisters—Ruth, Irene, and Eliza Macdermott—there is no mention of buildings. This omission may be an error in the deed, since subsequent deeds issued in 1922 and 1923 copy that language, even though the *Inquirer and Mirror* reports that Edward Scott Macdermott and his bride were occupying the renamed cottage, “Sallimac,” in 1921.

It is possible that the cottage “Minimum” was removed after 1908 and a new cottage called “Sallimac” was built before 1911. Although there is no documentary evidence to clarify when the cottage may have

evolved, there are architectural elements suggesting that the 1890s cottage “Minimum” is likely to be the oldest portion of “Sallimac.” The house appears to have been enlarged twice before reaching its current configuration: once with the addition of a stair in the front living room and a second time with a rear stair to a third bedroom. Both changes are confirmed on the earliest Sanborn map of the area, in 1923. Aerial views from the 1930s also show the completion of this long narrow cottage.

Town of Nantucket *Valuation and Tax Lists* for 1911, 1916, and 1921 show that the value of the cottage remained essentially the same during this period, indicating that changes were made prior to 1911.

Caroline Macdermott Cassidy purchased the cottage at 6 Sankaty Avenue, known as “The Hollow by the Flare”, in 1901, along with property on the west and north sides, comprising Lots 2,3,11, and 12 on *Plan of Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights*. In 1908, she purchased a portion of Lot 1, with the cottage “Minimum” thereon, at 4 Sankaty. Cassidy sold 4 Sankaty to her three sisters—Eliza, Ruth, and Irene Macdermott in 1919, the same year her husband, George L. Cassidy, died. Caroline, Eliza, Ruth, and Irene were children of William C. and Sara Macdermott, and presumably named “Sallimac” for their mother.

The two properties made a family compound for a number of years, until 6 Sankaty was sold at auction in 1935, during the Great Depression. Edward Scott Macdermott (1895-1952), became the owner of 4 Sankaty in 1948, when his last surviving aunt, Ruth Macdermott, deeded the house to him. He sold it in 1950 to Ralph and Edith Lindsay. The Sanborn maps of 1923 and 1949 show no changes to the footprint of the building from 1923 to 1949.

Ralph and Edith Lindsay of Boston owned 4 Sankaty from 1950 to 1953. They also owned houses at 15 Cliff Road and 19 Baxter Road during the same period. They sold 4 Sankaty to other short-term owners Joseph and Evelyn Lennon, who were near neighbors in town at 8 Cliff Road. The Lennons sold 4 Sankaty to Marguerite P. Heath in 1955. She, her husband Curtis, and three children kept “Sallimac” their summer home for more than forty years.

Current owner Gregory Nichols purchased the house in 1998. According to plans filed with the Nantucket building department, he added two gable dormers and renovated a bedroom and bathroom at the west end of the second floor, and installed a French door at the west end of the first floor.

A one-room studio was added at the rear of the property after 1998. The cottage has retained the name “Sallimac” to the present day.

## 4. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### 4.1 Description

The main house is a long and narrow, 1-1/2 story, wood-framed house with its gable end facing Sankaty Road. There is a hip-roofed front porch, one brick chimney, a pergola at the west end, and gable facade dormers on both sides of the asphalt roof. The house is approximately 18 feet by 42 feet, totaling approximately 750 square feet. The entry to the house is through a gated arbor flanked by privet hedge. At the west rear of the property is a separate studio structure.

The house consists of two floors. The first floor includes an entry living room, dining room, laundry space, kitchen and two stairs to the second floor. There are three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the second floor.

The front porch roof is supported by five painted columns with detailed capitals on a shingled half-wall. The roof and dormers are constructed with overhangs with moulded trim detail. The front door and large front window are distinguished by their small-paned designs. The front door has 16 panes over two panels and the window has 24 panes over three glass sections.

The majority of windows are configured with 16 panes of glass over 2 panes with a moulding perimeter at the interior trim. A few of the windows in the kitchen and the west bedroom are the more typical 2/2 window sash. There is beaded-board, capped wainscot in the living and dining rooms with a wide, 5-light transom wall opening connecting the two rooms. Both rooms have decorative plaster medallions and built-in cabinets of unknown date. The Kitchen at the west end of the first floor was renovated by Gregory Nichols.

The front entry/living room contains three elements that suggest early 20th century changes: a 9-light window in the west wall, a central east-west ceiling beam cut off at its west end, and a staircase in the north-west corner. These elements suggest that the wall between the living and dining rooms was, at some time, a rear, exterior wall. The ceiling beam would have been supported on that wall and the window would have provided exterior daylight. The existing chimney with wood stove heat may have existed throughout the changes. This one-room cottage may have been the earliest cottage when it was named 'Minimum'.

The addition of an L-shaped stair with distinctive early 20th century style rail, balusters, and newel posts suggests an early 20th century date of change. This may have occurred during the Cassidy & Macdermott family ownership after 1908.

#### **4.2 Alterations/Evolution**

The cottage may have been originally built as a one room cottage with a loft when it was named 'Minimum' in the 1890s. By the time it was owned by the Cassidy family in 1908 or soon after, additions would have been constructed. These changes include the addition of roof dormers (providing height in the bedrooms) and an interior staircase. The third/west bedroom may also have been a separate, later addition together with a second stair allowing for access to the third bedroom without passing through the middle bedroom.

Aerial photos from the 1930s show two chimneys. At some unknown date, the western chimney was removed. The front porch supporting columns have been changed from the screened-in porch shown in a 1989 HDC/MACRIS photo survey.

There are minor changes to the exterior elevations found on 1998 HDC and Building Permits and a 1998 plan drawing. The late 1998 date of the permits suggests an actual 1999 construction date. The changes include the following:

- Two dormers added: one on the north and one on the south, both at the west bedroom;
- Second floor windows added at the west gable end;
- First floor French doors, transom and pergola added at the west facade;
- Rigid insulation added in ceilings

#### **4.3 Character-Defining Features**

The size of the house and its lot have defined its character with a potential historical reference to the Old Historic District where the lot size also created very small houses. This house, however, was built in the Aurora Heights subdivision of large lots which created a neighborhood singularity for 4 Sankaty Road. It was built by an entrepreneur with extensive land and homes.

Character-defining features include:

- A long and narrow profile on a small lot;
- A symmetrical arrangement of facade dormers on both sides of a small gable roof;
- Windows and doors with unique combinations of glass size and quantities such as 24 panes over 3;
- Roof and dormer overhangs with moulded details;
- Interior wood stair elements: newel posts, balusters, and railing;
- Plaster ceiling medallions.

#### **4.4 Outbuildings**

A hipped roof, one-story studio/guest house structure is located at the westernmost portion of the property. It was built by the current owner, Gregory Nichols.

The 1902 and 1908 deeds reference 'buildings'. The 1923 Sanborn map includes a 1-story structure labeled "Tiny Tim" to the north and west of 4 Sankaty Road. Even though the property had been sold to the Macdermotts, there is no property division between 4 and 6 Sankaty Road on the 1923 Sanborn map. The 1930s aerial photos do show an additional structure straddling the northern property line that no longer exists.



## 5. PROPERTY INFORMATION

5.1 **Property Identification:** 4 Sankaty Road, Nantucket Assessor's Map: 73.1.4 37, .05 acres, zone SR20.

## 6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### 6.1 Published and Archival Resources

*Inquirer and Mirror:*

4/5/1902: Mrs. Judkins has also sold her cottage "Minimum" at 'Sconset, to Mrs. Martha Abbie Coffin.

6/14/1902: Mrs. Martha A. Coffin has rented her cottage "Minimum" for the season.

4/25/1903: Mrs. Martha A. Coffin has rented her cottage "Minimum" for the season.

10/20/1906: Mrs. Obed C. Coffin entertained her pupils last Saturday at her cottage "Minimum".

7/11/1908: Minimum cottage at Siasconset for sale or to let, furnished. Fine water view. Apply to Mrs. Obed C. Coffin

8/1/1908: Mrs. Obed C. Coffin has sold her cottage "minimum" to Mrs. Caroline M. Cassidy of New York.

9/4/1909: George L. Cassidy and his cousin Scott Macdermott moved from Minimum to Master Cassidy's home, The Vale of Rest, rented from W. B. Gardner

11/5/1921: Edward Scott Macdermott and bride occupying Sallimac.

Other Resources:

Town of Nantucket *Valuation and Tax Lists*, 1911, 1916, 1921

U. S. Federal Census 1880, 1900, 1910, 1930 for Macdermotts in Woonsocket, Rhode Island

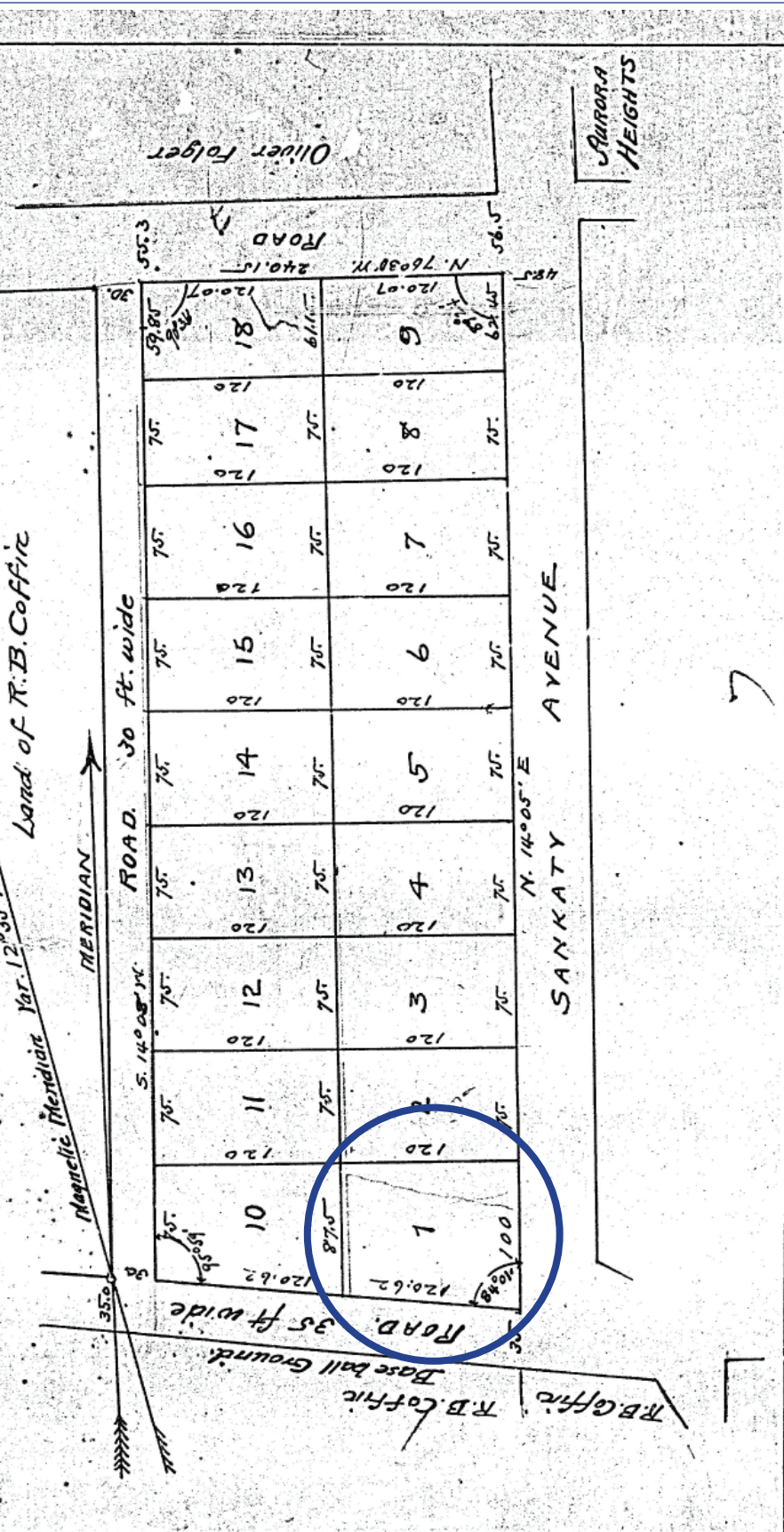
### 6.2 Historical Maps & Plans

*Plan of Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights, Siasconset, Nantucket, Mass., belonging to Robert B. Coffin.* Surveyed by Wm. F. Codd, Nov. 7, 1892. (Recorded 1919).

Sanborn Insurance Company maps, sheet 22, 1923, 1949

Mortgage Plot Plan, 1998, by Charles W. Hart & Associates, Inc.

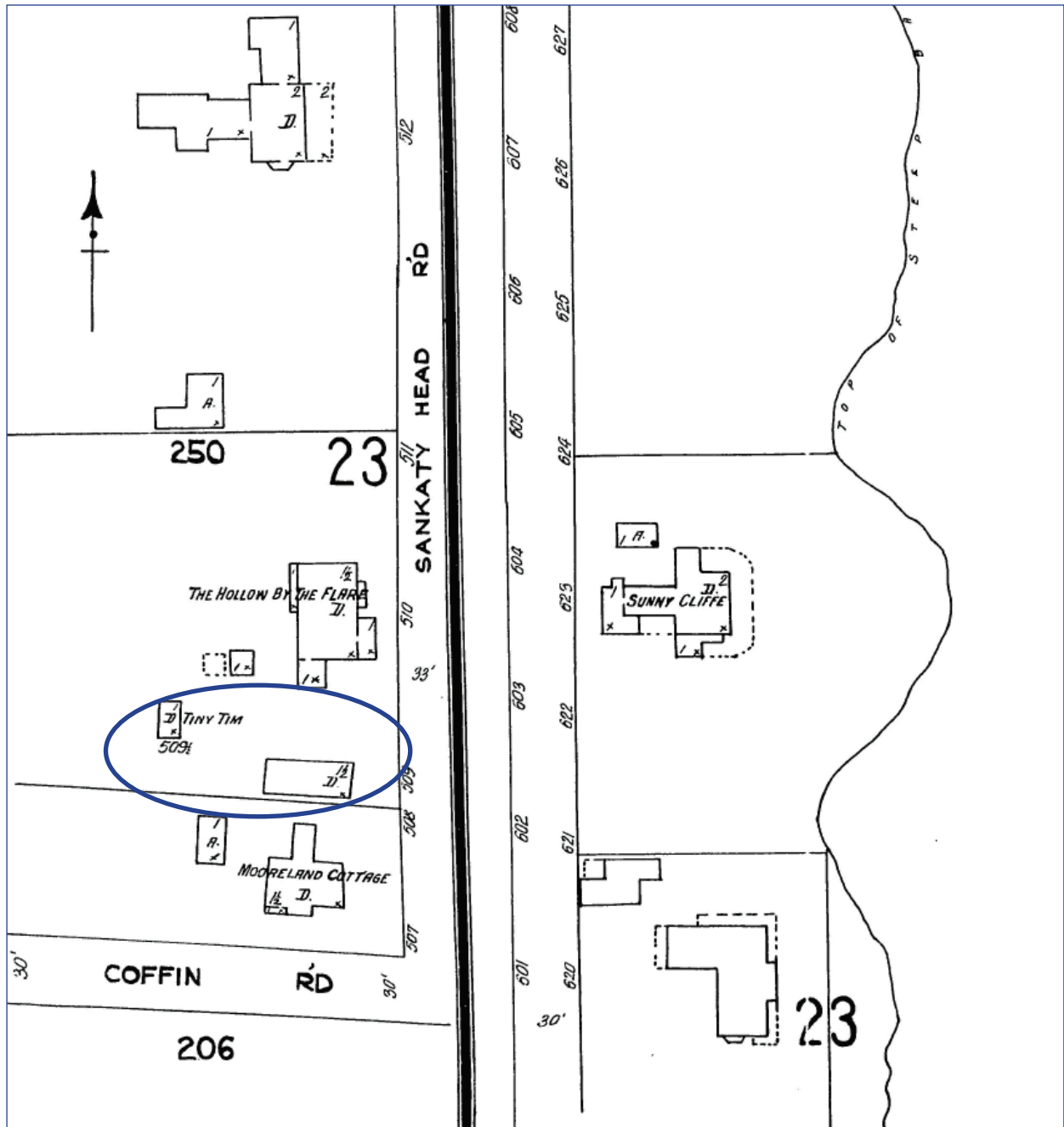
PLAN of Addition No. 1. to  
**AURORA HEIGHTS**  
 SIASCONSET, NANTUCKET, MASS  
 Belonging to Robert B. Coffin  
 by Wm. F. Codd Nov. 7. 1892  
 Surveyed SCALE: 80 FT to 1 INCH  
 Land of R. B. Coffin



Nantucket, December 16, 1919, 3 h. P. m. Received and entered with Nantucket Deeds Book of Plans No. 5 page 50  
 Attest:

1892 subdivision known as Aurora Heights,  
 A small, northern portion of Lot 1 became 4 Sankaty Road





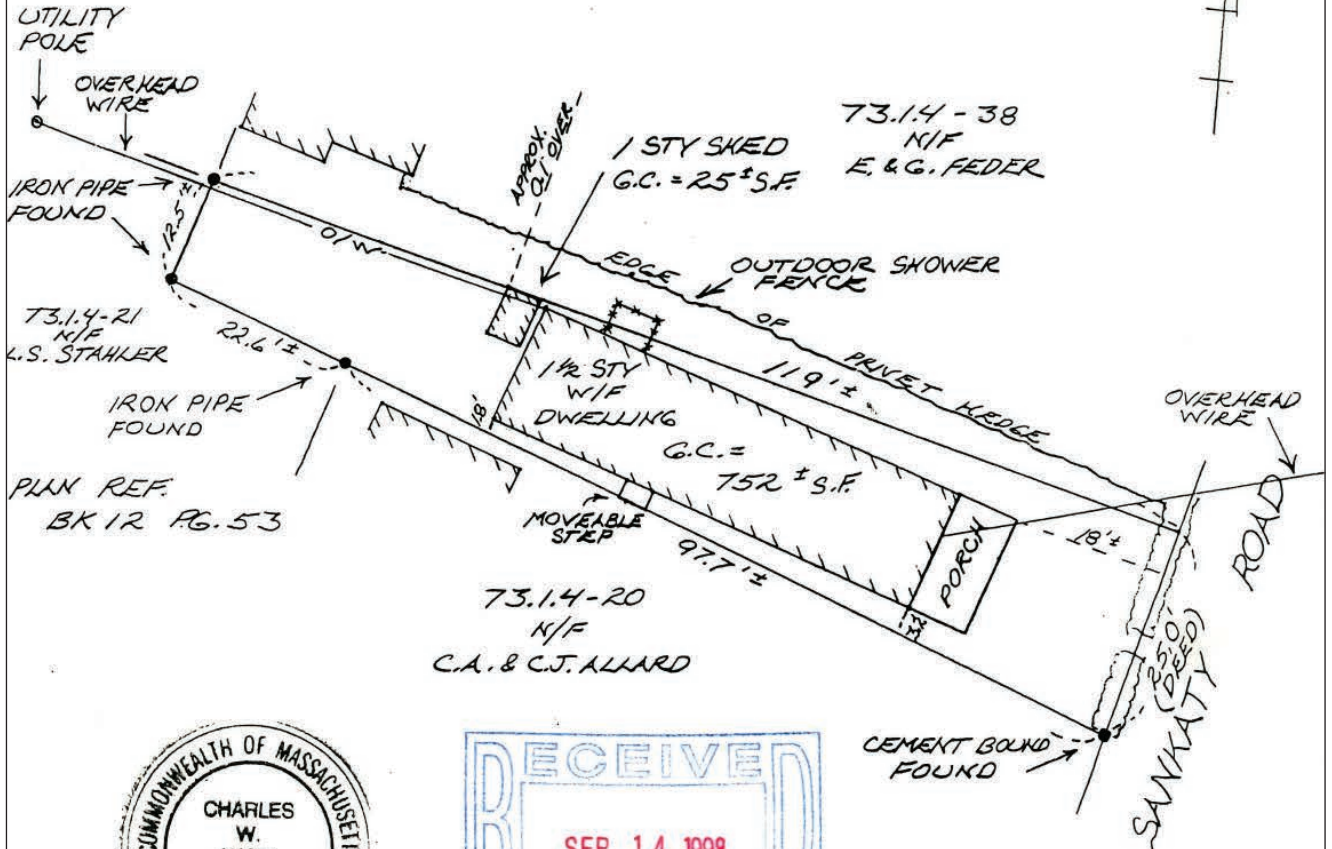
1923 Sanborn map showing 4 Sankaty Road as part of the same lot as “The Hollow By the Flare” with a dwelling known as “Tiny Tim”

ZONING CLASSIFICATION: R-2

EXISTING:  
APPROXIMATE  
2240 S.F.  
25'±  
SEE PLAN

\* INSTRUMENT SURVEY  
RECOMMENDED

MIN. AREA: 20,000 S.F.  
MIN. FRONTAGE: 75 FT.  
FRONT YARD S.B.: 30 FT.  
REAR & SIDE S.B.: 10 FT.  
GROUND COVER (%): 12.5%



73.1.4-21  
N/F  
U.S. STAHLER

73.1.4-38  
N/F  
E. & G. FEDER

73.1.4-20  
N/F  
C.A. & C.J. ALLARD

PLAN REF.  
BK 12 PG. 53

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
 CHARLES W. HART  
 No. 32485  
 REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL SURVEYOR  
*Charles W. Hart*  
 3-11-98

RECEIVED  
 SEP 14 1998

TO: NANTUCKET BANK

### MORTGAGE PLOT PLAN OF LAND IN NANTUCKET, MASS.

I CERTIFY, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, THAT THE PREMISES SHOWN ARE LOCATED IN FLOOD HAZARD ZONE: . . . X . . . DELINEATED ON F.I.R.M. / COMMUNITY PANEL NUMBER: 250230-00 . . . 4 . . . JD, BY THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY. EFFECTIVE DATE OF MAPS: JUNE 3, 1986, AND AS PERIODICALLY REVISED.

SCALE: 1" = 20' DATE: MAR. 11, 1998  
 THE TRUSTEE OF THE  
 Owner: MARGUERITE B. HEATH TRUST.  
 Deed: BK. 417 PG. 91 . . . Plan: BK. 5. PG. 50  
 Tax Map: 73.1.4. - 37. Locus: SANKATY RD.

THIS PLOT PLAN WAS PREPARED FOR MORTGAGE PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED A FULL INSTRUMENT SURVEY. THIS PLAN SHOULD NOT BE USED TO ESTABLISH PROPERTY LINES, FENCES, HEDGES OR ANY ANCILLARY STRUCTURES ON THE PREMISES. THE PROPERTY LINES SHOWN RELY ON CURRENT DEEDS AND PLANS OF RECORD. THIS PLOT PLAN IS NOT A CERTIFICATION AS TO THE TITLE OR OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY SHOWN. OWNERS OF ADJOINING PROPERTIES ARE SHOWN ACCORDING TO CURRENT ASSESSOR RECORDS OF THE TOWN OF NANTUCKET.

CHARLES W. HART & ASSOCIATES, Inc.  
 SANFORD BOAT BUILDING  
 49 SPARKS AVENUE  
 NANTUCKET, MASS. 02554  
 (508) 228-8910 H-5529

NOT TO BE RECORDED.



**6.3 Historical Photographs:** Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association

PH23-46, aerial view, Nobadeer Airfield Photographic Collection, 1930s

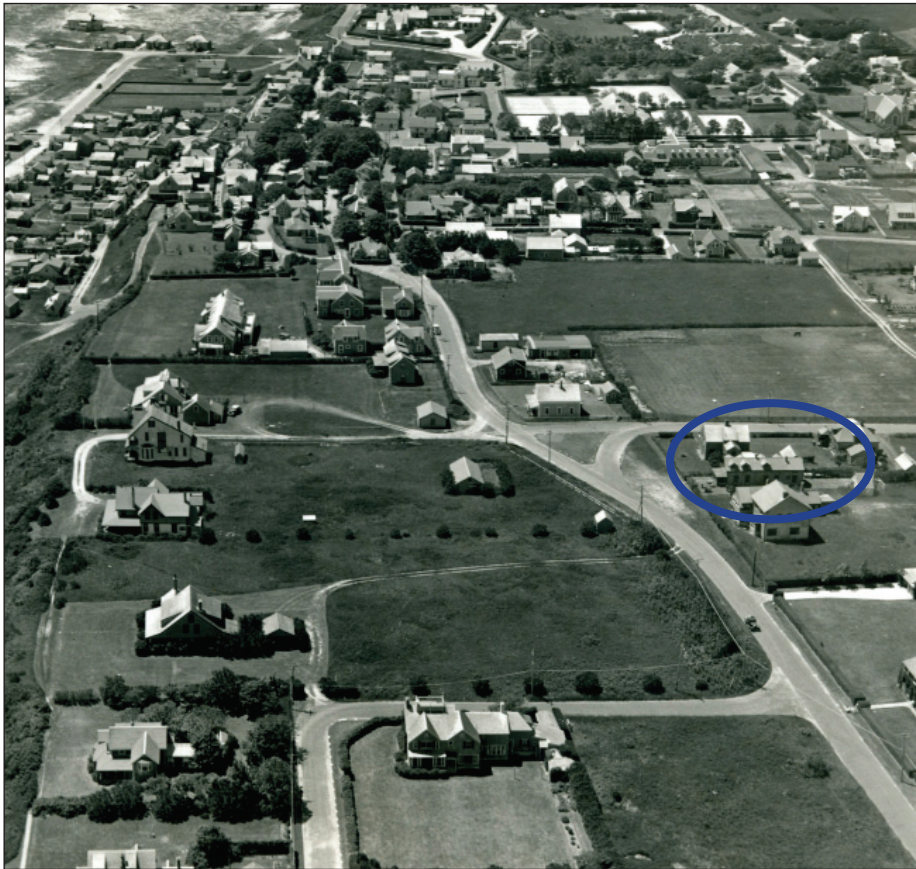
PH23-48, aerial view, Nobadeer Airfield Photographic Collection, 1930s

P7975, aerial view, sheet 45, 1935

P8000, aerial view, sheet 71, 1935

AP1940-71, aerial view, 1940

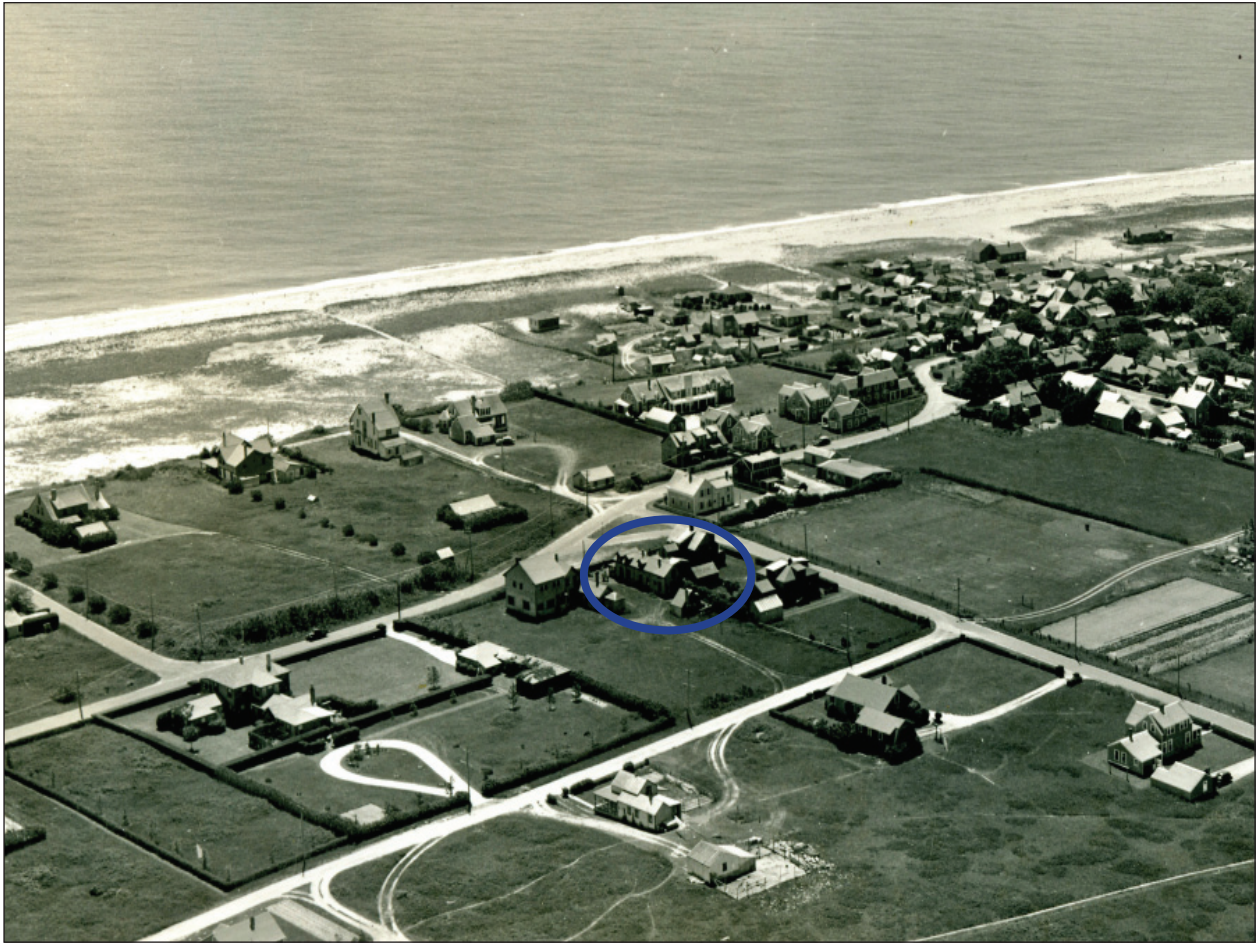
Nantucket Historic District Commission Survey (MACRIS) Photo, 1989, East & North Elevations



NHA PH23-46, aerial view, Nobadeer Airfield Photographic Collection, 1930s  
Looking southwest at the north elevation



Enlarged site from above aerial view



NHA PH23-48, aerial view, Nobadeer Airfield Photographic Collection, 1930s  
Looking southeast at the north and west elevations



Enlarged site from above aerial view





Nantucket Historic District Commission Survey (MACRIS) Photo, 1989,  
East & North Elevations

#### 6.4 Current Year 2021 Photographs

##### EXTERIOR



East /Front Elevation



East/Front Porch Window



East/Front Door





East/Front & North Elevations



West/Rear Elevation

INTERIOR



Entry/Living Room



Living Room looking west





Staircase in Living Room



Stair Newel Detail



Living Room East Window



Closet Under Staircase



Living Room Ceiling Beam Cut



Transom Passageway looking east





Dining Room looking southeast



Dining Room looking northeast





Dining Room looking southwest



Kitchen looking northwest



Kitchen looking southeast



East Bedroom





Middle Bedroom



West Bedroom



STUDIO



Studio, East Elevation



## 6.5 Chain of Title

Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Book 77, pp. 294-95: Robert B. Coffin to William J. Flagg, 1893

Nantucket Probate, William J. Flagg, 1902

Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Book 84 pp. 251-252: Georgina Flagg Judkins to Martha Abbie Coffin, 1902

A certain small strip of land with the buildings thereon, situated in that part of Nantucket known as Plainfield, and being a portion of Lot 1 as designated on a plan of land of Robert B. Coffin entitled "Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights, Siasconset, Mass." Plan Book 5, p. 50

Nantucket Registry of deeds, Book 89, pp. 185-86: Martha Abbie Coffin to Caroline M. Cassidy, 1908

A certain small strip of land with the buildings thereon, situated in that part of Nantucket known as Plainfield, and being a portion of Lot 1 as designated on a plan of land of Robert B. Coffin entitled "Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights, Siasconset, Mass." Plan Book 5, p. 50

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 98, p. 391: Caroline M. Cassidy to Eliza C. Macdermott, Ruth N. Macdermott and Irene H. Macdermott, 1919

The land, situated in that part of Nantucket known as Plainfield, and being a portion of Lot 1 a shown on a plan of land of Robert B. Coffin entitled "Addition No. 1 to Aurora Heights, Siasconset, Mass." Plan Book 5, p. 50

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 100, p. 253: Ruth N. Macdermott to Eliza C. Macdermott, 1922

One-third interest in and to the land

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 100, p. 596: Ruth N. Macdermott, E. Scott Macdermott, and Caroline W. Cassidy to Eliza C. Macdermott, 1923

All right, title, and interest in and to the land

Nantucket Probate: Eliza C. Macdermott

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 112, pp. 48-49: Ruth N. Macdermott to E. Scott Macdermott, 1948

A certain lot or parcel of land with all buildings and improvements

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 113, p. 86: E. Scott to Ralph H. Lindsay and Edith D. Lindsay, 1950

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 114, p. 458: Ralph H. Lindsay and Edith D. Lindsay to Joseph P. Lennon and Evelyn M. Lennon, 1953

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 116, p. 120: Joseph P. Lennon and Evelyn M. Lennon to Virginia B. Adams and Marguerite B. Heath, 1955

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 157, p. 187: Marguerite B. Heath to Marguerite B. Heath and Curtis F. Heath, 1977

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 417, p. 91: Marguerite B. Heath to the Trustee of the Marguerite B. Heath Trust Agreement of 1992, 1993

Nantucket Registry of Deeds Book 566, p. 276: Marguerite B. Heath, Trustee, to Gregory R. Nichols, 1998