

# George Washburn House (1855)



*Detail from the 1856 map of Needham showing Washburn's house and the rail track*

George W. C. Washburn built this house in 1855. He was a banker, probably coming to Needham from Boston sometime shortly before that year. By 1854 he had bought up numerous house lots in the area surrounding the Center train station for development and resale. His own residential property extended beyond his own house on Nehoiden Street all the way to the corner of Great Plain Avenue and westward almost to Marshall Street.

The Washburn House is very different in style to its neighbor, the Kingsbury-Whitaker House (#4), even though the two differ in age by only 15 years. The railroad into Needham brought new residents, taking of advantage of the easy commute to move out of the city and into the more pleasant and roomy outlying towns. They also brought new styles. The Kingsbury-Whitaker House, built before the railroad, is an excellent example of the spare colonial style of building that prevailed in Needham since the 1700s. The Washburn House, built only two years after the railroad, is an elegant Italianate Victorian, with an abundance of interior and exterior detail. In the two decades that followed, a number of Victorian-style houses were built in Needham Center near the railway station (Site #7), but the Washburn House was the first such example, and one of the best.