



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site: 19 Kent Court
Case: HPC 2016.074
Applicant Name: Eamon Fee

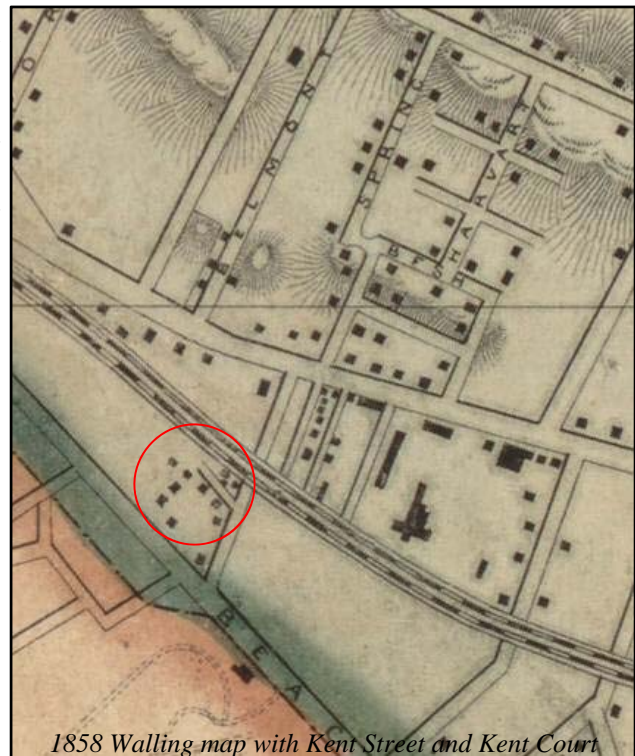
Date of Application: August 30, 2016
Recommendation: Significant
Hearing Date: September 20, 2016

I. Historical Association

Context: Kent Street connected Beacon Street with Somerville Avenue, then Milk Row, as early as 1813, according to *Beyond the Neck*. In 1835, the first passenger railroad station in Somerville opened and in 1842, the Kent Street Station opened near the Harvard Branch railway spur, which encouraged development of the southern slope of Spring Hill. Nearby, Kent Court developed near the Fitchburg Railroad tracks after the Civil War.

According to the 1858 Walling map, a small collection of mid nineteenth century structures along this portion of Kent Street and Kent Court appears to remain existent. Being located near the Bleachery, these dwellings likely housed employees of the Bleachery as well industries that developed later along the railroad or within the immediate area.

Several dwellings with raised basements along Kent Court appear similar to the workers cottages located near the brickyards, such as Clyde Street. Raised basements were often useful for cooking or for use as a shop. Another similarity is having three



*1858 Walling map with Kent Street and Kent Court
circled in red*

bays on the primary facade and the one room of depth for the main massing. This type of structure was small, inexpensive, easy to construct and often used in marshy areas where excavating a cellar was not practical.

Architectural Description: The building is a 2½ story, side hall plan two-family dwelling with a front gable and an enclosed front stoop. This building likely has a third quarter of the nineteenth century construction date. It does not appear on the 1852 Draper Map but can be seen on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas. The main block is three bays in width and two bays deep with shallow eaves. There is also a rear ell with an enclosed side door. Alterations include replacement windows and doors, an enclosed entries, vinyl siding. The roof has asphalt shingles and the foundation appears to be composed of brick.



Historical Description: The subject property is not illustrated on the 1852 Draper map (see below). The 1874 Hopkins Atlas (Plate J) lists Kennedy as the property owner. The 1884 (Plate 9) Hopkins Atlas continues to list B. Kennedy as the property owner, illustrating the building located along the left side properly line; there is no the rear ell. See the table at the end of the document for a complete listing of the owners through 1940. It is interesting to note that from 1874 through 1940 the building was inhabited by members of the Kennedy family.

Summary: The subject building is likely c.1870, which is understood through relationships to the surrounding buildings along Kent Court. The 2 1/2 single-family dwelling has a front-gable roof and an unidentifiable style due to the siding but notes a familiar two-bay primary facade, short return eaves on the gable end with a single-bay profile, and shallow eaves along the primary facade. Retaining the simple form and massing, including the rear ell, also demonstrates this was working class housing. Most other features appear to have been either removed or are covered over in modern materials, such as the window casing. A small collection of mid nineteenth century structures is located along the south side of Kent Court; these buildings appear to relate to each other due to their location, similar features, and date of construction, however several of the buildings at the end of the street are either been demolished for redevelopment or are new construction.

Findings on Historical Association

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** or (b) **historically or architecturally significant** (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (b) are at the end of the next section.*

- (a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from ***Findings on Historical Association***, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff find 19 Kent Court to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.

Findings: The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to a likely c.1870 construction date; simple form and massing including the rear ell; three-bay primary and side fenestration patterns. This building is a third quarter-nineteenth century example of working class housing and is part of a collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.

II. Historical and Architectural Significance

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings of structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

The period of significance for 19 Kent Court begins with the likely c.1870 date of construction as a modest single-family dwelling in an unknown style and continues into the present day as the use of this structure remains consistent.

Integrity: *The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an evaluation of 1) Location, 2) Design, 3) Material, and 4) Alteration, as these qualities relate to the ability to convey significance.*

Location: The subject structure is located near the end of Kent Court, next to Star Market and near Cambridge. The location has not been altered and the dwelling is sited to the far left side of the lot. The location of this dwelling, as well as others along Kent Court, illustrate an early to third quarter of the nineteenth century collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.

Design: The original form, massing and fenestration patterns (front and sides) are clearly evident. Remaining architectural features include the shallow eaves on the primary facade, and possibly window trim beneath the exterior casing. However, working class cottages often did not include much detail. While doors and windows have been replaced, the building retains integrity of design.

Materials: The materials that compose this structure are predominantly wood with a masonry foundation while asphalt shingles were added to the roof at a later period. Vinyl siding hides the clapboard as can be seen in the depth of the window casing exposures.

Alterations: Various modern materials have been added to the building over the years such as siding, windows, doors, and roofing material.

Evaluation of Integrity: The subject structure retains a high level of historical and architectural integrity due to the likely c. 1852 date of construction; retention of simple form, massing, and fenestration patterns, which clearly illustrates the form, function and massing of the structure; and as part of a small collection of mid nineteenth century working class housing that represents the early development and industry of Somerville.

Findings for Historical and Architectural Significance

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (a) can be found at the end of the previous section.

(b) In accordance with the **Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance**, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff find 18 Kent Court historically or architecturally significant.

Findings: The subject dwelling is found historically and architecturally significant as a representative of third quarter 19th century working class housing stock due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to original form, massing, and visible fenestration patterns. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a small collection of structures that represent the same cultural context, this dwelling is significant within the context of the group of buildings which, together, represent the early development and industry of Somerville.

III. Recommendation

Recommendations are based on an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance to be conducted prior to the public meeting for a Determination of Significance. This report may be revised or updated with a new recommendation and/or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through further research.

For a Determination of Significance, the structure must be either (A) listed on the National Register or (B) at least 50 years old.

(A) The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.

OR

(B) The structure, c. 1870, is at least 50 years old.

AND

For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.

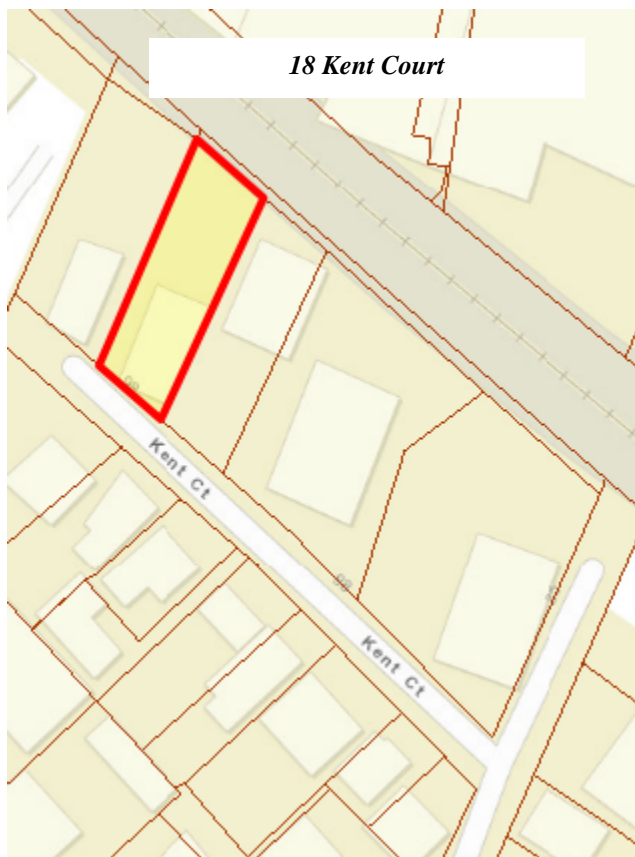
(a) In accordance with the **Findings on Historical Association**, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 19 Kent Court importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.**

Findings: The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to a likely c.1870 construction date; simple form and massing including the rear ell; three-bay primary and side fenestration patterns. This building is a third quarter-nineteenth century example of working class housing and is part of a collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.

OR

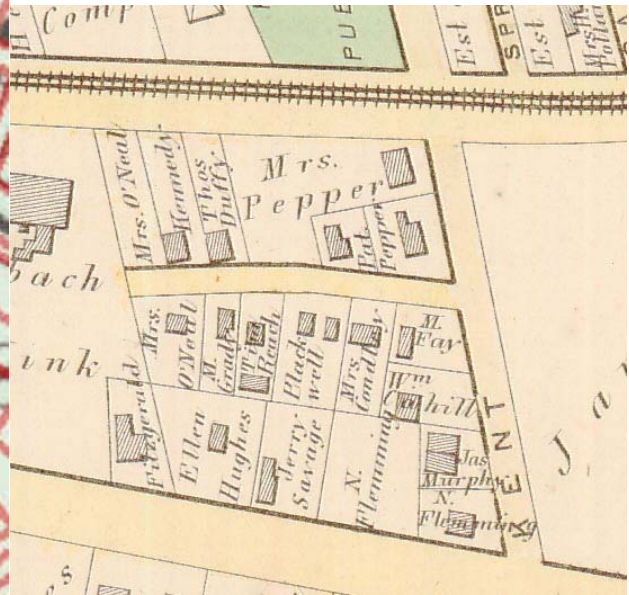
(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 19 Kent Court historically or architecturally significant.**

Findings: The subject dwelling is found historically and architecturally significant as a representative of third quarter 19th century working class housing stock due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to original form, massing, and visible fenestration patterns. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a small collection of structures that represent the same cultural context, this dwelling is significant within the context of the group of buildings which, together, represent the early development and industry of Somerville.





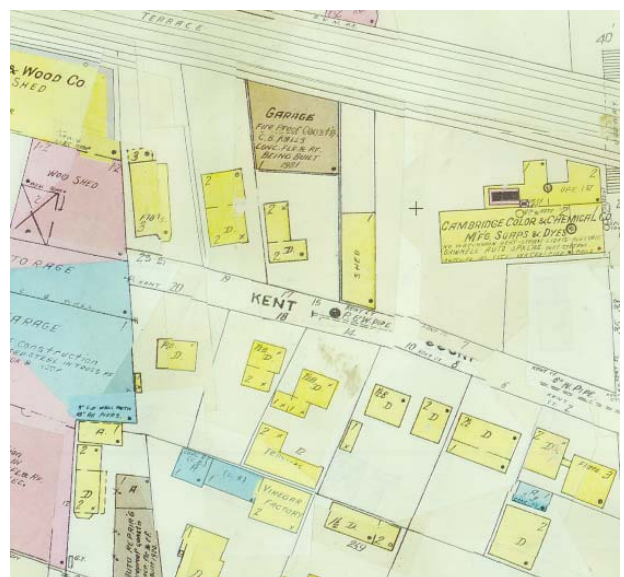
1852



1874



1895



1925