



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:	9 Sunnyside Avenue Barn and Garage
Case:	HPC 2016.084
Applicant Name:	Gregory & Paris Barker
Date of Application:	October 17, 2016
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	November 15, 2016



I. Historical Association

Historical Context: The wood barn at 9 Sunnyside Avenue was constructed sometime before 1884 on land belonging to William Veazie. He was both a bookseller and landowner who developed several parcels around the City, notably the rowhouses on Central Street and some of Sunnyside Avenue and Walnut Street. The 1920 Census has a Margaret Giroux, a 65 year old widow with 2 children living at home. The son, Louis was a commercial traveler dealing in drygoods and the daughter, Cecile was a public school teacher. By 1930 Cecile is the only family member living at 9 Sunnyside. She teaches at the High School and has one servant.

Evolution of Site:

As is typical of Somerville, Sunnyside Avenue was carved out of larger estates on Walnut Street after 1874. Barns and carriage houses were once common throughout the city for people who had businesses that could not be easily dealt with using the extensive streetcar system. By 1920, the Model T came into ascendance and garages were constructed throughout the city. This one is unusual because it is made of wood and does not appear to be a kit.

Architectural Description: The building proposed for demolition is a circa 1884 barn with a later 1921 wood automotive addition with a brick foundation by P. Giroux or Geraux. The barn has a hoist and a large hay loft door, a wagon door and a pedestrian door. The garage has a sharply pitched roof. Both sections of the building back onto MacGregor Avenue.

Summary: The building proposed for demolition is a circa 1884 barn with a later 1921 wood automotive addition with a brick foundation by P. Giroux. Barns and carriage houses were once common throughout the city for people who had businesses that could not be easily dealt with using the extensive streetcar system. By 1920, the Model T came into ascendance and garages were constructed throughout the city. This one is unusual because it is made of wood and does not appear to be a kit.

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 the barn and garage at 9 Sunnyside Avenue Street 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.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its use as a barn or carriage house and the pre-automotive as early automotive history.

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 or structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

The period of significance for 9 Sunnyside Avenue begins before 1884 with its construction as a barn or carriage house attached to the house at the same address.

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 identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

- a. Location: The building has not been moved.
- b. Design: The building appears to be a basic gable end barn with hoist and hayloft on the upper floor. A pedestrian and barn door on the façade complete the building. It is not known whether there were windows since staff did not enter the building nor could the sides be seen from the yard. The garage is a simple shed with entry doors onto the yard.
- c. Materials: The barn and garage addition are made of wood.
- d. Alterations: The only major alteration was the 1921 addition of the garage.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building retains all the characteristics as a barn through its form, massing openings and additions. There have been no major alterations beyond the addition to one side of the garage. The barn is typical of its time and location.

Does the subject parcel represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or region due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape?

For those who walk down McGregor Street, the back wall of the barn and the accompanying garages and outbuildings form a distinctive streetscape found nowhere else in the City.

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 *Finding 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 9 Sunnyside Avenue Barn and Garage historically or architecturally significant.

The subject barn is found historically and architecturally significant due to its method of building construction and its association with pre-automotive Somerville. The addition is found significant as a rare wood framed garage.

III. Recommendation

Recommendations are based upon an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and the required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance,

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.

The period of significance for 9 Sunnyside Avenue begins before 1884 with its construction as a barn or carriage house attached to the house at the same address.

(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, circa 1874 with a circa 1921 addition, 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.

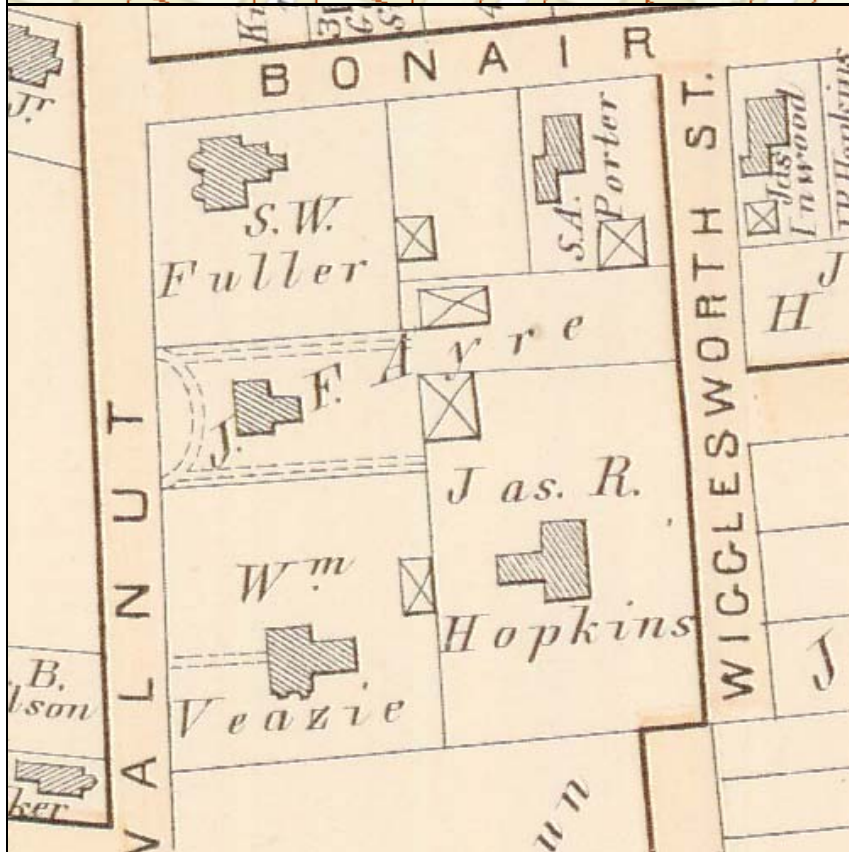
(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 9 Sunnyside Avenue Barn and Garage 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.**

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its use as a barn or carriage house and the pre- automotive as early automotive history.

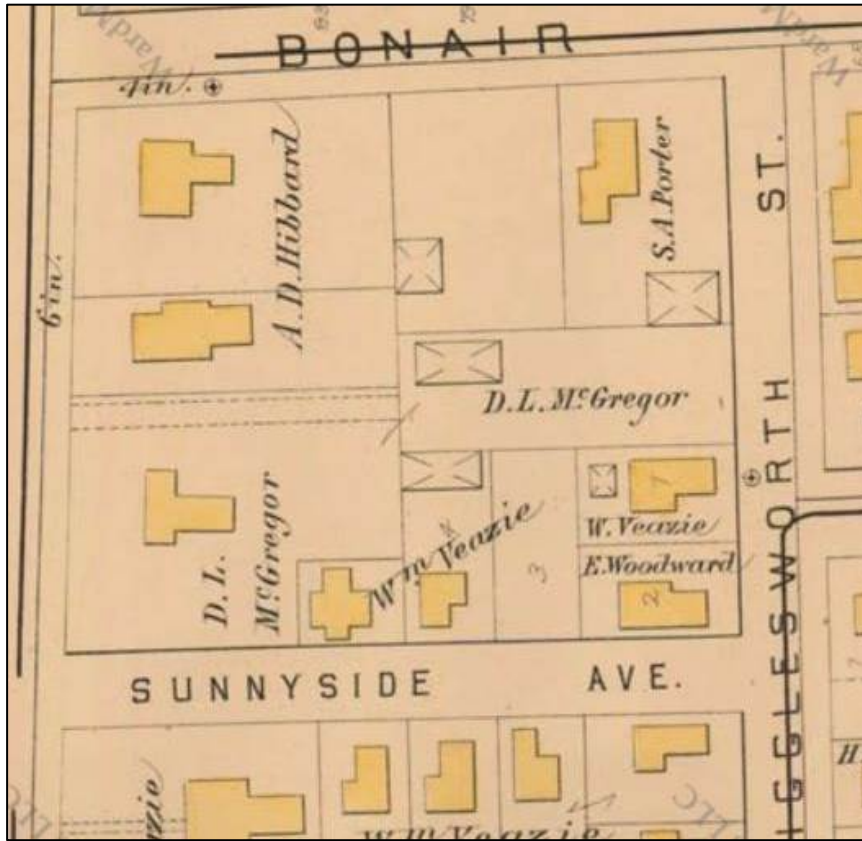
OR

(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 9 Sunnyside Avenue Barn and Garage historically and architecturally significant.**

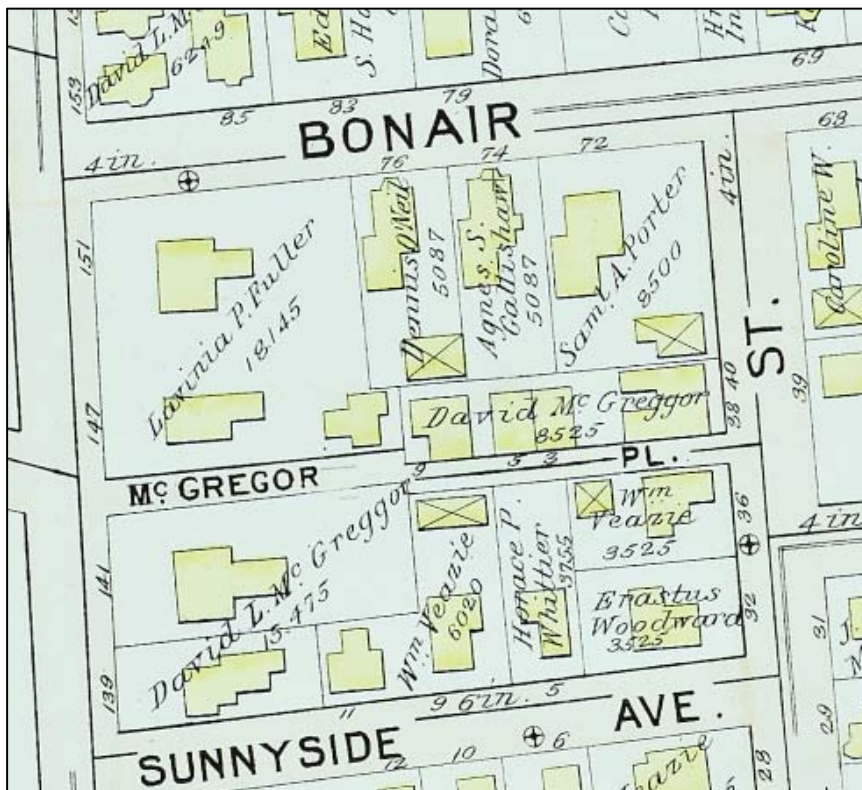
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1874 Hopkins Plate 33



1884 Hopkins Plate 3



1895 Bromley Plate 11

