



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	18 Autumn Street
Case:	HPC 2012.130
Applicant Name:	Anthony Howard, ABH Services
Date of Application:	November 29, 2012
Recommendation:	Not Significant
Hearing Date:	December 18, 2012

I. Historical Association

Architectural Description:

The subject structure, a c. 1895 stable/garage, is located at the back of the 18 Autumn Street parcel. This structure is a wood frame construction with a gable roof that is two bays wide. The primary façade is shingled while the remaining facades are synthetically sided. One window is located beneath both the north and south gable. The north façade no longer has the upper sash, but both windows are six over six. A six over one window is located near the ground on the right side. Although style is difficult to understand, due to the condition of the structure, the deep eaves and construction date suggest the Italianate style. This is consistent with the two-family dwelling on the lot, which is also likely to have been Italianate.



Historical Description:

The dwelling at 18 Autumn Street is c.1874, according to the 1874 Hopkins Map. The subject stable/garage structure is first depicted on the 1895 Bromley Atlas, Plate 11; however, the structure is connected at the rear of the dwelling. By 1900 (Sanborn map, sheet 96), the building has been moved to the present location and is listed as two stories. In 1933 (Sanborn map, sheet 49) the structure is identified as 1½ stories with a single story addition on the right side. A building permit for John O'Neil from 1925 refers to the construction of a wagon shed with a pitched roof (cement block is also mentioned on this permit), which suggests the subject structure was substantially altered at this time. John O'Neil is the owner of the subject parcel from 1900 through the 1940s. He is listed in directories as a vegetable retailer.

Context/Evolution:

This neighborhood has a number of stable-type structures that are illustrated on historic maps and atlases, beginning in 1874. A number of these secondary buildings no longer exist or are in very poor condition.

Summary:

The c. 1895 stable structure was originally attached to the two-family dwelling at 18 Autumn Street. By 1900 this building was moved to the present location. According to a 1925 building permit, which is consistent with the 1933 Sanborn map, this building was expanded to the right to accommodate a wagon and given a pitched roof. John O'Neil, a vegetable retailer, is the owner of this property from 1900 to at least 1940.

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) can be found at the end of the next section.*

(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from *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, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff **do not** find the stable-type structure at 18 Autumn 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.

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 the stable-type structure at 18 Autumn Street begins at the time of construction, c. 1895, and ends in the mid twentieth century when stable/barn structures, such as the subject structure, are no longer desirable.

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 location of the subject structure is at the rear of a long and narrow lot along Autumn Street. The structure was originally attached to the two-family dwelling and was moved to the present location between 1895 and 1900.
- b. Design: The original design is unknown due to a 1925 building permit which suggests this structure was largely modified at this time. These alterations, which include a wagon shed and pitched roof, along with historic maps, which illustrate the stable was two stories in 1900 and 1½ stories in 1933 with a right side addition, detail how the structure was modified.
- c. Materials: Wood is the predominant material that composes this stable-type structure. Original windows exist on the rear and right side façades while only the lower sash exists on the front façade. The front façade is shingled while the remaining three facades are sheathed in synthetic siding. The roofing material is significantly deteriorated and has exposed sections of plywood, but appears to have been asphalt shingles.
- d. Alterations: Major alterations occurred in 1925 when the stable structure was expanded and given a pitch roof. Other alterations include synthetic siding, plywood on the roof and in the right side bay, and beadboard in the left side bay.

Evaluation of Integrity:

Since a large modification likely occurred in 1925 and the original design is largely unknown, the integrity of the structure is compromised. However, as later changes often become significant (depending on the nature of the changes) and this structure has existed in the present form for almost 100 years, the 1925 alterations are considered significant in terms of the evolution of the building.

Other alterations to the structure since 1925 include synthetic siding, asphalt shingles, plywood, and beadboard. These materials have significantly altered the appearance and remaining integrity of the structure. Structurally, the building appears in extremely poor condition and is not safe. While components such as original windows still exist, the structure has been moved, significantly modified in 1925 as well as materially altered throughout the last several decades, and is most likely not currently stable.



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 **do not** find the stable-type structure at 18 Autumn Street historically or architecturally significant.

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.

(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 1895, 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/atlasses, 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 do not find the stable-type structure at 18 Autumn Street 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.**

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 do not find the stable-type structure at 18 Autumn Street historically and architecturally significant.**

18 Autumn Street

