



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	22 Beacon Place	
Case:	HPC 2014.033	
Applicant Name:	Irene Mizrahi, Trustee, Ding Properties	
Date of Application:	May 28, 2014	HPC received: May 28, 2014
Recommendation:	Not Significant	
Hearing Date:	June 18, 2014	

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**I. Historical Association**

*Architectural Description:* This 2 ½ story vernacular house has a pitched roof similar to that of an Italianate. There are no eave returns. It is clad in wood shingle and aluminum siding. The original front façade is obscured by additions on each floor. The fenestration pattern and location of the main door indicates a side hall plan. The two inset front doors indicate a side-hall floor plan.

A ell on the rear of the building appears to have been enclosed porches.

See photos at the end of the report.



22 Beacon Place, June 2014

*Historical Description:* The 1874 Hopkins Atlas shows ownership of this property to Mrs. Rose Kelly, widow of Lawrence. The 1874 and 1884 Atlases show 2 houses on the site with # 22 set closer to Tiger Court (Beacon Place) the lot line. The 1895 Bromley Atlas shows 3 houses owned by Thomas A. Bent, carpenter. 22 Beacon Place is shown with the same footprint as 24 Beacon Place set forward on the lot and with a bay window. The 1900 Stadley Atlas shows the property conjoined with a large property at 384 Washington Street and owned by a jeweler, Charles F. Schubeler, Schuebler or Schnebler. This Atlas is more schematic and shows the building to be wider than 24 Beacon Place and set slightly closer to the front lot line.

The 1869 City Directory places the owner, Mrs. Kelly's residence on Beacon Street near Dimmick Street. Her house in subsequent directories is further identified as being at the foot of Tiger Court (now Beacon Place). Living with her are James Kelly, gardener (1877) and provisions (1881); and John H Kelly, junk dealer (1884). Mrs. Kelly is not found in the 1890 City Directory which lists John H. Kelly at 22 Tiger Court. City Directories up to this date did not necessarily include street addresses. It is not known whether the family lived in one or both buildings at different dates.

Thomas A. Bent, carpenter and owner in 1895 did not live on Beacon Place but at 120 Summer Street. The next known owner, Charles F. Schuebeler, lived at 384 Washington Street in 1900.

It is unknown who all the residents of #22 were prior to 1903 when the Directories included a street listing with heads of household, however, James B. Steadman, carpenter could be found in the directories of 1895 at #24 and 1903 as living at 24 Beacon Place and at 24a in 1900. No one was listed at #22 Beacon Place.

By 1910, John McGlynn, laborer is listed at 22 Beacon Place. He is still there in 1915.

The 1924 Directory shows Abraham W. Lawrence and his wife Jessie E. to be in residence.

By 1930, James J. Manning, chauffeur and his wife Mabel F can all be found at #22.

The 1940 Directory has William P. Bowen, maintenance man and his wife Mary E. in residence and notes a vacant second unit.

In 1950, John J. Ryan, laborer aged 33 and his wife Rose Ryan, housewife aged 31 are in one unit. John Rogers, moulder aged 42, Gertrude, housewife aged 40, and Phyllis Rogers, at home aged 21 live in the second unit.

Directory research through 1965 reveals a similar pattern of workers and their wives living at 22 Beacon Place.

*Architect:* Unknown

*Context/Evolution:* Beacon Place is a small cul de sac of workers housing off Beacon Street, a major thoroughfare since colonial times. Tiger Court of Beacon Place was not developed until the late 1860s. All the cottages and houses appear to have been constructed to house workers. The different atlases show differing configurations and locations on the lot for the house. It is possible that the house gained a bay, then gained a rear addition, had added porches on the rear that were later enclosed. It is also possible that there were different buildings on this site

During the summer of 2013, several houses on Calvin Street and Beacon Place burned as a result of arson. The Beacon Place buildings are still standing. The Owner had intended to rehabilitate this property however his structural engineer found the building too unsound to continue.

*Summary:* The dates of construction and alterations are unclear. The building has been home to generations of predominantly Irish workers. The much-altered house is in very poor condition due to the fire last summer. See Structural Report.

### 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 **do not** find 22 Beacon 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.

While the subject building is found associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its association with Irish workers in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, no important associations were found to a particular wave of immigration.

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## 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 22 Beacon Place begins around 1870 and continues to the present day as a home for workers.

### ***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: While the roof pitch of the house is that of an Italianate and has a two story bay on the front facade, there are no details visible. The depth of the eaves suggests that the building may have had brackets. Alterations of the front and rear additions, the siding, and the fenestration do not convey a sense of the original design. Only one building permit was found which was to side the building with wood shingles in 1961. This change is not visible and no other permits were found.
- c. Materials: Vinyl siding, modern doors and windows do not contribute to the sense of age.

- d. Alterations: The alterations to the building are such that no particular style or period dominates. The vinyl cladding and white vinyl replacement windows obscure any details. The entry hood porch is enclosed with a metal front door. The western elevation has a few window penetrations on the side nearest 24 Beacon Place (now demolished). The east side adjacent to a driveway has more windows and a side door. The rear of the building with enclosed porches was heavily damaged by fire and remains open to the elements. A major fire has significantly damaged the structure.

*Evaluation of Integrity:*

*Does the subject parcel represent a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction?*

The scale of the building fits with others on the street, all of which have replacement siding.

*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?*

The building is typical in its size and location. It has a gable end toward the street, a common feature of New England architecture.

### **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 do not find 22 Beacon Place historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to its lack of association with any important historic figure or event and its lack of cohesive architecture. The building is unable to convey a coherent story of immigrant history due to its condition and numerous alterations.

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### **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.*

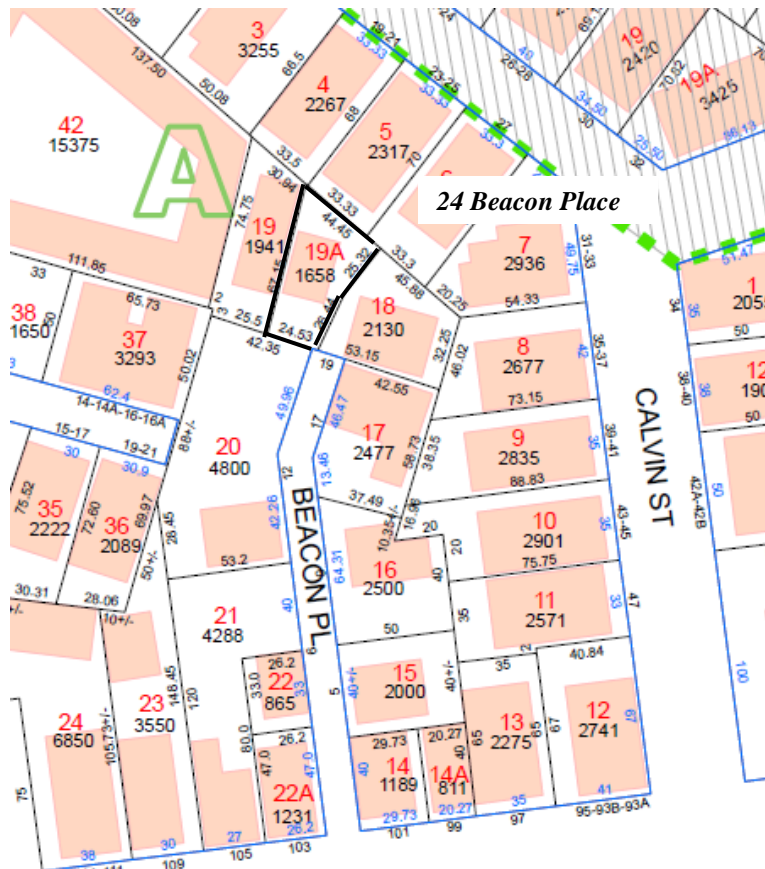
(A) The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.

(B) The structure, circa 1874, is at least 50 years old.

*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.*

**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 22 Beacon Place historically and architecturally significant.**







22 Beacon Place

