



**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: 260 Beacon Street  
Case: HPC 2014.062  
Applicant Name: Highland Development Inc.  
Date of Application: August 9, 2014  
Hearing Date: September 16, 2014  
Recommendation: Not Significant



*260 Beacon Street, assessor photo*

---

**I. Historical Association**

Context:

Ward II is located in the southeastern section of the City, bounded roughly by Somerville Avenue and Medford Street on the north and east and the boundary with Cambridge on the south and west. The area is a very densely settled section of the City bisected by the Fitchburg line of the B&M railroad (1836), and residential dwellings coexist with large industrial complexes along both sides of the right-of-way. Ward II, which abuts Union Square, also has some localized commercial development along its three important roads - Washington Street, Somerville Avenue, and Beacon Street. The area, which initially developed in the early nineteenth century, is, along with Industrial Park, the oldest industrial area in the city with the most well-preserved examples of Somerville's industrial past.

Historical Description:

In 1903, this property is identified with Mrs. Am. McLaughly. In 1915, John Flynn (carpenter) is located here while in 1919, John Riley, a rubber worker, appears to be housed at this location. This address is not specified in 1925, but in 1929 Thomas Walsh and Son, truckmen, are located here. In 1928, Walsh & Sons received a permit to add a one-story cement block addition, which still exists. This building first appears on the 1933 Sanborn map (sheet 264) as a masonry garage with steel trusses for 50 cars. Walsh & Sons are still located here in 1940.



*260 Beacon Street, assessor photo (front) and right side facade*

Architectural Description:

The structure is a simple rectangular building sheathed in brick and concrete. The structure fronts Beacon Street with a parking lot located along the side facade. The primary facade features several infilled windows with a second floor parapet addition in a different masonry material. The right side facade has several first-story windows and the second-story addition continues the length of the building. This building is difficult to understand due to the extent of the alterations, specifically, the second story addition.

Summary:

The area, which initially developed in the early nineteenth century, is the oldest industrial area in the city with various examples of Somerville's industrial past. Building permit records and directory research indicate a construction date of 1920s. The original brick facade has been altered to include a masonry second story addition while windows have been infilled.

**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, Staff **do not** find 260 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.

---

## 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 260 Beacon Street begins with the c.1920s date of construction as a single-story commercial masonry structure and ends with the removal or covering of historic fabric, as the building is changed from the original conditions.

### ***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 subject structure is located along Beacon Street, near Cambridge. The location has not been altered and the structure is sited at the front and side of the lot.
- b. Design:* The original form and massing appears to have been altered through an unusual second story addition. While the windows have been infilled, the fenestration pattern can still be inferred.
- c. Materials:* The materials that compose this structure are masonry and concrete, with replacement doors and windows.
- d. Alterations:* The building has a second story parapet addition in a masonry material.

### *Evaluation of Integrity:*

The subject structure retains a low level of historical and architectural integrity due to the second story addition, altered exterior sheathing, and a lack of remaining architectural detail.

## **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 260 Beacon 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, c. 1928, 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 260 Beacon 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 260 Beacon Street historically or architecturally significant.**

