



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: 176 Broadway
Case: HPC 2013.009
Applicant Name: Ferrigno & Vito Silvestro

Date of Application: April 2, 2013
Recommendation: Significant
Hearing Date: May 21, 2013

I. Historical Association

Architectural Description: The subject structure, c.1895, is a 2½ story gable-end dwelling in the Queen Anne style. The front, or primary façade, features a two-story polygonal bay with an enclosed front porch (c.1926) and, beneath a projecting roof ridge, is a polygonal bay window. The left side façade also features a two-story polygonal bay, capped with a gable. The rear façade has a small gable addition with a two-story open porch that extends across the width of the façade. The right side façade features a cross gable with a small projecting wing at the rear and a shed dormer. The built out flare between the first and second stories continues around a majority of the structure and several of the polygonal bays feature a squared overhang.

Historical Description: The subject property is first illustrated on the 1895 Stadly map (Plate 11). Under ownership of Lucretia Burns, the parcel is 9,900 square feet and encompasses the existing dwelling and a rear stable. The 1884 directory notes that Mrs. Burns is a teacher at Tufts Street School and resides at 2 New Cross Street. Mrs. Burns began teaching in 1882 and was principal of the Tufts Street School from 1884-1896.



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According to directory information, Edmund W. Curtis, a Boston salesman, resides at this location in 1895. The Sanborn map of 1900 (Sheet 96) notes the rear eight (8) stall concrete garage as a separate address (#176½) and the main building illustrates a two-story rear porch. The map also identifies the construction of a triple-decker on the same lot, to the left of the subject dwelling. Curtis continues to reside at this location, along with William Crowell (and wife Ellen) through 1919. Curtis is a commercial traveler, but Crowell does not have an occupation listed. A 1922 building permit, issued to Curtis, permits a new front entrance and railing to the second story porch. The 1925 directory notes that Mark McHugh, a fruit handler, also resides at this location with his wife, Ethel.

A building permit issued to Barnett Titelbaum in 1926 permits enclosing the piazza on the first floor for a sun parlor. Titelbaum is identified as a physician in the 1929-30 directory and resides at the subject dwelling. Saul Biller, a dentist, also has a business at this location, but lives at 353 Lowell Street. Biller is noted at this address through the mid-1930s; however, by 1945 only the Titelbaum family resides at this location. Barnett (age 47) continues to be listed as a physician while LeRoy Titelbaum (age 25) is also listed as a physician.

By 1960, Sylvester and Ida Braden, a maintenance occupation and an elevator operator, reside at the subject dwelling as well as Shirley Mullan, a housewife. However, a building permit to strip the slate roof and replace with asphalt shingles was issued to Barnett Titlerbaum in 1960. This suggests the property is still under ownership of the Titelbaum family.

Context/Evolution:

East Somerville is one of the oldest settlement areas in the City and, over time, has been expanded by filling in the Mystic and Miller's rivers. Dense residential development in this neighborhood dates from the early 19th century and was constructed to provide housing for laborers who worked in nearby factories and brickyards. Commercial development along Broadway developed late in the 19th century with the arrival of the streetcar and trolley service along Broadway.

Summary:

The subject dwelling, c.1895, is currently a mixed-use building in the Queen Anne style with typical features, similar to those found on other dwellings of the same style and period. The dwelling appears to have been constructed alone, as opposed to in a group of dwellings. The property is associated with Lucretia Burns, a principal at Tufts Street School from 1884-1896, as maps illustrate she is the owner; however, this structure is more closely associated with Edmund Curtis, commercial traveler, who lived at this location from 1895 through 1925. The structure became mixed use approximately 1926 with the establishment of a physician and dentist office at this location.

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 does not find 176 Broadway 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 176 Broadway begins with the date of construction, c.1895, and continues into the present day, as the use of this structure, which has evolved from residential to mixed use, has remained consistent since the early to mid twentieth century.

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 Broadway in East Somerville. This location has not been altered; however, a triple-decker was constructed between 1900 and 1933 which likely altered how the site was used.



176 Broadway, rear façade

- b. Design: The original design, with regard to massing and the fenestration pattern, is largely intact. While doors and windows have been replaced, and typical modifications such as the two-story rear porch and front porch enclosure have occurred, the original design intent is still evident. The built out flare between the first and second stories and the squared overhang above the polygonal bays illustrate existent architectural details; however, other features, such as decorative shingles, have either been removed or covered over.
- c. Materials: The materials that compose this structure are predominantly wood, with materials such as aluminum and/or vinyl windows and doors, and asphalt shingles added at a later period. While the current siding potentially covers window and/or door casings, there is very little that remains visible with regard to remaining evidence of these components. However, a number of details could remain existent beneath the current siding.

- d. Alterations: Aside from material alterations, such as replacement doors, windows, shingles and exterior cladding, the structure retains the original massing and design. While small additions such as the front porch enclosure, rear porch, side entry, and right side shed dormer have been added, these do not alter the original building form. A majority of the original fenestration pattern also appears to remain intact, though some windows have been added over time.

Evaluation of Integrity:

Material alterations and various small additions have moderately changed the exterior appearance of this mixed use structure over the years. While some of the architectural detail has been lost, the original form and design intent remains clear as well as the original fenestration pattern.

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 176 Broadway historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found architecturally significant due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to the original form, design intent, and fenestration pattern.

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/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 do not find 176 Broadway 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 find 176 Broadway historically or architecturally significant.**

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