



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: | 34 Cameron Avenue |
| Case: | HPC 2015.027 |
| Applicant Name: | Christopher Mack |
| Date of Application: | June 3, 2015 |
| Recommendation: | Not Significant |
| Hearing Date: | June 16, 2015 |



I. Historical Association

Historical Context:

During the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, Henry Ford and other manufacturers perfected the mass production of automobiles which became affordable to all. As a consequence, garages became a fixture in backyards throughout the country.

This 4-bay garage was constructed in 2 parts. The first 2 bays were constructed of brick circa 1915-1916 by J. Lord according to Building Permits. This is likely the portion of the garage picture with the flat roof as brick walls are visible through the open doors. The next addition was constructed of concrete block with a brick façade and sports a stepped parapet circa 1921 also by J. Lord. John A. Lord, was a mason and bricklayer according to the City Directories.

1930 Census information reveals that John A. Lord was born in French-speaking Canada in 1868. His wife, Delia was 9 years younger. They had 2 sons, Henry and Louis, and a daughter, Blanch. They also took in a roomer, Willard Sanborn.

Architectural Description:

The structure is a 4 bay brick and concrete block garage with a stepped parapet of the northern most 2 bays. At some time, the garage was deepened by the addition of a shed roof and the doors were relocated. The shed appears to be supported by wood supports which have wood clapboard. The shed roofed section is clad with 3-tab asphalt shingles. Most of the doors are now missing. New wood supports have been added to the southern section of the structure.

Summary:

This brick and concrete block structure was constructed between 1915 and 1921 to house 4 cars by John A Lord, bricklayer and mason. It is typical in form of automotive structures constructed at that time, although brick was not a common material for such buildings.

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/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 34 Cameron Street garage 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 not found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City. Although the garage is typical of the type of structure constructed at this time for the housing of cars and other automotive uses, it is not importantly associated with any particular aspect of the history of Somerville.

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 34 Cameron Avenue garage begins with its original construction in 1915-1916 for automotive purposes.

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 garage has not been moved. It sits behind a circa 1895 house in a residential neighborhood on a local arterial. The garage is located at the rear southern corner of the lot as far from the residence as was feasible.

b. Design:

The design is simple and composed of two sections; one flat roofed; the other flat-roofed with a stepped parapet. A shed roofed wood addition was added later to accommodate longer vehicles at an unknown date.

c. Materials:

The garage is constructed of brick for 2 bays and brick and concrete block for 2-bays with a wood shed roofed addition.

d. Alterations:

A shed roofed wood addition was added later to accommodate longer vehicles at an unknown date.

Evaluation of Integrity:

With the exception of the shed addition on the front of the garage, the building is unaltered and retains its architectural integrity. Unfortunately the physical integrity of the building is much compromised by neglect.

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

The garage is not part of a group similar buildings.

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?

Located at the rear of the lot, the structure does not contribute a special presence to area.

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 34 Cameron Avenue garage historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to its lack of presence on the street or architectural importance. The building is a common type found through the region. It may have been constructed by John A. Lord, the owner since his occupation was mason and bricklayer.

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 1915-1921, 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 34 Cameron Avenue 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.**

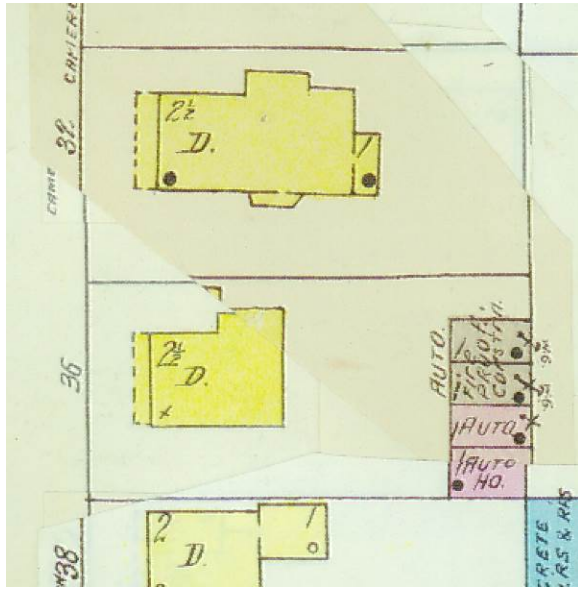
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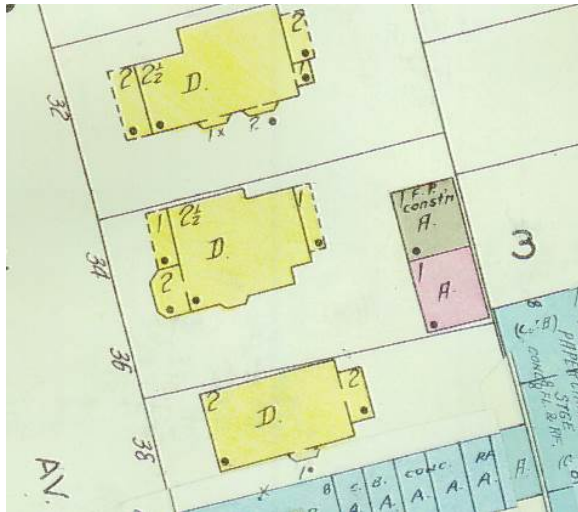
(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 34 Cameron Avenue garage historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to its lack of presence on the street or architectural importance. The building is a common type found through the region. It may have been constructed by John A. Lord, the owner since his occupation was mason and bricklayer.





1925 Sanborn Plate 5



1959 Sanborn Plate 208

