



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

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT

Site:	88 Dover Street
Case:	HPC 2013.050
Applicant Name:	Mui Sin Chow & Nam Cheung
Date of Application:	July 30, 2013
Date of Significance:	August 20, 2013
Recommendation:	Preferably Preserved
Hearing Date:	September 17, 2013



**A determination of Preferably Preserved begins a nine month Demolition Delay.*

I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, August 20, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 88 Dover Street is Significant. Per Section 2.17.B, this decision is found on the following criteria:

Section 2.17.B - The structure is at least 50 years old;

and is both

- (i) The structure is 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;*
- and**
- (ii) The structure is historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.*

According to *Criteria 2.17.B*, listed above, historic map and directory research identifies the structure as c.1874. The dwelling at 88 Dover Street is not clear to have been present on the 1860 Walling Map of Boston and Vicinity.

In accordance with *Criteria (i)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings as a two-story gable end dwelling that is a comprehensive component of the residential portion of the Dover streetscape



which, as a context of buildings, illustrates the suburbanization of West Somerville at the end of the 19th century.

In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings, due to the location of the building within a context of structures which, together, create a setting that reflects the character of the place in which the subject building played a historical role as well as the ability of the subject structure to convey significance regarding location, form and massing as well as integrity of design.

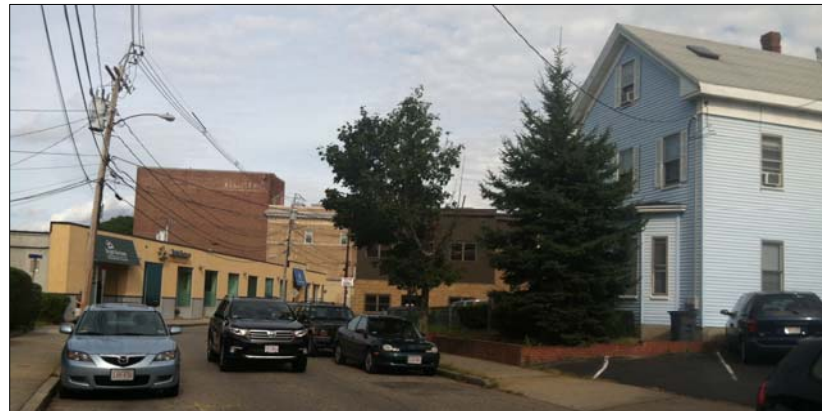
II. Additional Information

Additional Research:

- The development of Dover Street began in 1847 when the street was platted by George Meacham as part of a 43-lot subdivision along with Meacham Road and Orchard Street. Dover Street does not appear on the 1852 Draper Map but is potentially illustrated on the 1858 and 1860 Walling Map of Boston and Vicinity. By 1874, Dover Street still has some parcels that remain void of structures. By 1900, the southern portion of Dover Street appears similar to the way it appears today.
- Census data does not provide new information but does confirm that A.Cecil Edwards was 32 in 1910 and that he lived on Dover Street. This data also confirms that John W. Marshall owned property in the City during 1910 and lived at this location in 1920.
- Building permit files from Inspectional Services explain that in 1992, a permit was granted to cover the soffits, fascia, and gutters. Then in 1999, a permit to repair/replace all damaged wood on the front deck was granted.

Site Visit:

Site visits illustrate that the subject structure is located directly after the bend in the road (see photos). This dwelling is the only structure between the encroaching commercial development and the residential portion of the streetscape. While the rest of the streetscape is predominantly of historic building stock, there is new development that is beginning to alter the streetscape.



*Left: Dover Street, view south toward Cambridge
Right: Dover Street, view north toward Davis Square*

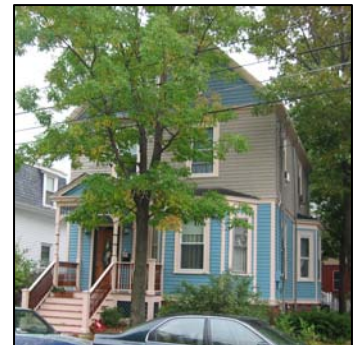
Comparable Structures:

Two story gable-end dwellings with three bays are common throughout the City and compose a majority of the residential housing stock within the City. This building type is generally constructed as a single or two-family dwelling. Comparable structures along Dover Street and in this general neighborhood include:

- 72 Dover Street
- 57 Meacham Road (LHD)
- 58 Meacham Road (LHD)
- 60 Meacham Road
- 8 Campbell Park
- 13 Campbell Park (LHD)
- 204 Morrison Avenue

88 Dover Street

Predominant differences between the comparable dwellings and the subject dwelling are the polygonal bay on the front façade, which is often two-stories instead of one, two versus three bays, and the size of the open front porch. However, one similarity is the side projecting bay, though many of the comparable dwellings illustrate this projection with a cross-gable instead of a flat roof.



*Top: 72 Dover Street; 57 Meacham Road (LHD); 58 Meacham Road (LHD); 60 Meacham Road
Bottom: 8 Campbell Park; 13 Campbell Park (LHD); 204 Morrison Avenue*

III. Preferably Preserved

If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d)

A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:

- a) *How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?*

The form and massing of this two-family dwelling represent a common residential building type within the City. The Dover streetscape and surrounding neighborhood are predominantly composed of structures similar to the form and massing of the subject parcel, and together, the buildings that form this streetscape illustrate the suburbanization of West Somerville at the end of the 19th century.

The fenestration pattern remains intact and the building has a side-hall interior plan while siting along the left side lot line is consistent with four other dwellings along this side of the street. As illustrated by the comparable structures, a projecting side bay is common, though often a cross gable is also present. Other than the depth of the eaves, door hood and the polygonal bays on the front and right side façades, architectural elements with regard to design are not visible.

- b) *What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.*

The Commission found that integrity of this two-family dwelling is retained within the location, form, and massing as well as integrity of design. The structure retains integrity of location through siting and orientation as well as through spatial relationships to other buildings along Dover Street. The main massing component, two-stories with a gable-end, remains evident and other architectural features, such as the polygonal bays and door hood, are also still present.

- c) *What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?*

The Commission determined that this structure is Significant within a context of structures, which, together, create a setting that reflects the character of the place in which the subject building played a historical role in the suburbanization of West Somerville.

Middle class housing constructed to suburbanize West Somerville predominantly represents an aspect of local history.

- d) *What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?*

The subject parcel is highly visible along Dover Street and is located just after a bend in the road, which transitions the Dover streetscape from predominantly commercial, at the north end, to residential, at the south end. Although the structure is a cohesive component to the streetscape, 82 Dover is located just after the road bends, so the subject parcel essentially bookends the residential portion of the streetscape, as opposed to being more centrally located.

- e) *What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?*

Two-story dwellings, both single and two-family, with a gable end roof are common throughout the City and dominate the Dover streetscape as well as many other streetscapes within the surrounding neighborhoods.

Upon a consideration of the above criteria (a-e), is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?

The Commission found the subject parcel Significant as a two-story gable end dwelling that is a comprehensive component of the residential portion of the Dover streetscape which, as a context of buildings, illustrates the suburbanization of West Somerville at the end of the 19th century. Significance is also due to the ability of the subject parcel to convey integrity regarding location, form, and massing as well as design. The additional information provided and consideration criteria (a-e) listed above convey that this type of dwelling is common in many neighborhoods throughout the City, as is the associated streetscape, and has moderate remaining architectural detail. Due to the location of the structure at the bend in Dover Street, the subject structure supports and bookends the residential end of the streetscape. Therefore, Staff finds the potential demolition of 88Dover Street detrimental to the heritage of the City.

IV. 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 hearing for a Determination of Preferably Preserved. 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.

In accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), Section 4.D, Staff find the potential demolition of the subject structure detrimental to the heritage of the City, and consequently in the best interest of the public to preserve or rehabilitate. Therefore, due to the location of this structure as a bookend to the residential component of the streetscape **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 88 Dover Street Preferably Preserved.**

If the Historic Preservation Commission determines the structure is Preferably Preserved, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit at anytime, upon receipt of written advice from the Commission that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore the subject building or structure (Ord. 2003-05, Section 4.5).

88 Dover Street, aerial view

