



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
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MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	88 Dover Street
Case:	HPC 2013.050
Applicant Name:	Mui Sin Chow & Nam Cheung
Date of Application:	07/30/2013
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	August 20, 2013

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**I. Historical Association**

*Architectural Description:*

The subject property, c.1874, is a 2½ story two-family dwelling that is three bays wide with an entry door hood and polygonal bay on the primary façade, a two-story polygonal bay on the right side facade, vinyl siding, and replacement windows. The structure has a two-story rear ell and one chimney at the rear of the main massing; the foundation has been parged but appears brick in small areas. A small workshop (c.1934) is located at the rear of the lot on the right side. This dwelling represents the Italianate style, which is illustrated by the polygonal bays on the primary and right side façades, deep eaves, and the door hood.



*Front and right side façades of 88 Dover Street, photos 2013*



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*Historical Description:*

Dover Street is listed in the 1869 directory; however, the owner of 88 Dover Street is unknown. The 1874 Hopkins Map (Plate K) illustrates the building with rear ell and lists the owner as Ozias Clark, a carpenter, who is not listed prior to the directory of 1875. This directory also identifies Hiram Chapin, a Boston merchant, as an owner. These owners are listed consistently in directories through 1900, as #44, at which point Ozias Clark is no longer listed. The 1915 directory lists A.Cecil Edwards, a proprietor of Bostonian Laundry at 427 Highland (see advertisement below) and John Marshall, a salesman, along with Chapin. The 1919 directory continues to list Chapin and Marshall without Edwards.



*1915 directory advertisement for A.Cecil Edward's Bostonian Laundry Company*

The directory of 1925 lists David Gaddis (wife Sarah), a harness maker at 42 Dover, as the owner of 44 Dover. The 1925-30 directory states that the house is owned by Sara and that David is deceased; Herbert and Marion Geddis also reside at this location. Herbert is an auto trimmer at 84 Dover Street. The 1933 Sanborn map illustrates a harness shop to the right of the dwelling at the rear of the lot; the dwelling and the shop are listed with the current addresses. The Gaddis family continues to reside at this location through 1955; Herbert is listed with occupations such as defense and superintendent and was a director of the Davis Square Social Club. Marion Gaddis was a casualty in the 1942 Cocoanut Grove Fire in Boston. The Leavitt family, Harry and Sarah, reside here in 1945 (in addition to the Gaddis family), and in 1950 the Kuhn family, Stanley and Joanne, become residents.

*Context/Evolution:*

The building first appears on the 1874 Hopkins Map (Plate K) with a rear ell, or addition, which projects from the left side, similar to the current form. This map illustrates that this is the second of five houses that exist on this portion of the block, though there are also several buildings on the opposite side of the street. A shop is also illustrated in the right corner at the back of the parcel. The 1895 Stadley Map shows the two-story polygonal bay on the front and right side façades.

Dover Street was platted in 1847 by George Meacham as part of a 43-lot subdivision. The Dover streetscape, predominantly composed of two story gable end dwellings, illustrates the suburbanization that occurred in West Somerville at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This basic form is the same for many houses in this area and the architectural elaboration (brackets, decorative shingles, polygonal bays, and porches) add variety and interest to the streetscape.

The subject building bookends the historic structures at the north end of this streetscape. While the adjacent dwelling at 82 Dover has recently been demolished and is currently being redeveloped, this subject dwelling is still located within a context of buildings and structures which reflect the development of this neighborhood as a commuter suburb. However, the subject parcel, located approximately 500 feet from Davis Square, is directly adjacent to the commercial and industrial development that encroaches into this clearly defined residential neighborhood. Additionally, a modern apartment building is located across the Street.



*Dover Streetscape looking south*

*Summary:*

The building is of the Italianate style, which is understood through the polygonal bays, eaves, and front entry door hood. While the exterior is clad in vinyl siding with replacement windows, the form, massing, and fenestration pattern are still clear. While the harness shop (c.1934) is clearly associated with the Gaddis family, additional information about this family remains largely unknown.

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### **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) can be found 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 find 88 Dover 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.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, and social history of the City 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 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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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 88 Dover Street begins at the time of construction, c. 1873, as West Somerville was largely developed for commuter housing. This period of significance extends into

the twentieth century as this building, in the context of the Dover streetscape, continues to illustrate the suburban development of this neighborhood.

This building illustrates characteristics of the Italianate style with a wood frame and is not found to be associated with a reputed architect or builder. The building is located within a context of buildings or structures which, together, create a setting that reflects the character of the place in which the subject building played a historical role, i.e. the suburbanization of West Somerville.

### ***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 location of the subject two-family dwelling is along the left side lot line of a rectangular-shaped lot with approximately 80 feet of street frontage. This location has not been altered and five additional lots, located south of the subject parcel, are also positioned along their left side lot line.
- b. **Design:** The current design of the building illustrates three bays in width with a side hall entry interior plan. The front façade retains a polygonal bay on the first story and an original entry door hood. The right side façade implies the main building is two rooms deep while the left side façade implies the rear ell is also two rooms deep. While the dwelling is clad in vinyl with replacement windows, the entry door and hood, eaves, and polygonal bays continue to illustrate Italianate style.
- c. **Materials:** The materials that compose this dwelling represent preferences of those who created the dwelling as well as later owners and occupants. While a majority of the material is wood, later materials added include vinyl siding, replacement windows, and asphalt shingles. However, more original materials and features could remain beneath the current siding.
- d. **Alterations:** The two-story rear ell addition on the left side of this structure appears as early as 1874. Other alterations include replacement materials, such as windows, siding and asphalt shingles.

### ***Evaluation of Integrity:***

Alterations, such as replacement windows, siding, and asphalt shingles, have modified the exterior appearance of this two-family dwelling over the years; however, the form and massing and some architectural detail remains in tact and visible.

Qualities that continue to convey significance include the location of the building on the parcel and the spatial relationship to other buildings along Dover Street. The building retains integrity of design through the fenestration pattern and side hall interior plan.

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## **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 88 Dover Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically significant 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, i.e. the suburbanization of West Somerville. The subject building is found architecturally significant due to the ability of the subject parcel to convey significance regarding location, form, and massing as well as integrity of design.

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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.*

*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 1874, 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 find 88 Dover 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 find 88 Dover Street historically and architecturally significant.**

*88 Dover Street, aerial view*

