



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

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	88 Dover Street – Accessory Building
Case:	HPC 2016.028
Applicant Name:	Sing Cheung
Date of Application:	April 25, 2016
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	May 17, 2016

I. Historical Association

Architectural Description:

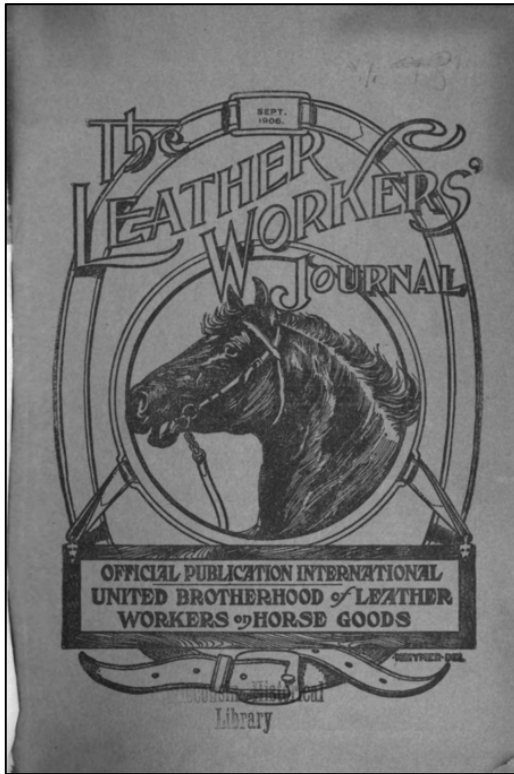
The subject property, c.1924 as found in the building permit records, is a 1 story gable-end vinyl clad accessory building that is one bay wide with an entry door and vinyl replacement window located off center on the primary façade. From the north side, the wall is punctuated by vinyl windows. A differentiation of the roof indicates that the building may have been constructed at different times although no evidence was found in the building permit records or historic maps to indicate if and when this might have occurred. There is no record of when the house and accessory building were clad with vinyl.



Front and north sides of 88 Dover Street accessory building, photos 2013



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1906 Newsletter by and for members of the United Brotherhood of Leather Workers of Horse Goods.

Historical Description:

The accessory building was constructed by David Gaddis as a harness shop in 1924. David Gaddis was an active member and officer in 1906 and 1907 of the Boston Chapter of the United Brotherhood of Leather Workers of Horse Goods. "In 1910, the International United Brotherhood of Leather Workers on Horse Goods, following an unsuccessful conference with the National Saddlery Manufacturers' Association, called a national strike in the saddlery industry for the 8-hour day. The strike proved a failure, and a large number of employers required verbal or written promises to abandon and remain out of the organization as a condition of re-employment." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-dog_contract accessed 5/3/2016. By 1920, according to the U.S. Census, he owned his own harness business and lived on Endicott Street. In 1924, he constructed the workshop at 42 Dover Street. The 1925 city directory lists David Gaddis (wife Sarah), a harness maker at 42 Dover, and the owner of 44 Dover. He died in 1927 at the age of 57. Sarah, his wife is noted as the head of household in the 1930 Census. Herbert, son and Marion Gaddis, daughter also reside at this location. His son Herbert is noted as 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 now listed with the current address system. The Gaddis family continued to reside at this location through 1955; Herbert Gaddis is listed with occupations such as defense and superintendent along with auto trimmer (detailer), and he was a director of the Davis Square Social Club which was originally the Union Square Social and Athletic Association. Marion Gaddis was injured 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:

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 19th 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 house 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. The 1895 Stadley Map shows the two-story polygonal bay on the front and right side façades.

The subject building, **88 Dover Street accessory building** is located within a context of buildings and structures which reflect the development of this neighborhood. A number of businesses and services grew up around the Davis Square Station such as the West End Street

Railroad and livery stables diagonally across Dover Street. The proximity of these businesses and the then important horse drawn transportation must have encouraged David Gaddis to locate his shop nearby despite the increasing use of automotive power. It is of note that his son, Herbert made the transition from horse related leather productions to the care and feeding of the automotive leather and chrome detailing. The maps also show the growth of garages and repair shops nearby. Some of these buildings and uses still exist today. 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.



Dover Streetscape looking south

Summary:

The building is vernacular or of no definable style, being utilitarian in nature and form. While the exterior is clad in vinyl siding with replacement windows, the form, massing, and fenestration pattern are still clear. The harness shop (c.1924) is clearly associated with the Gaddis family. David Gaddis, patriarch and harness maker had been involved as an officer of the Boston Chapter of the International United Brotherhood of Leather Workers on Horse Goods with union movements in the early part of the 20th century, although no further information was found regarding his continued involvement. He located his business near the Boston Elevated Railway stables which was eventually replaced. Herbert, his son continued to be involved with transportation and was more forward looking. His business of auto trimming, detailing and repairs fit well with the neighboring auto storage facilities.

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 an accessory structure typical of workshops that were once common in backyards throughout the city to support small business owners and for David Gaddis participation in the early 20th century labor movement. The building is a remnant of the pre-automotive age constructed for a dying use within city limits

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 workshop begins at the time of construction, c. 1924, 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 a utilitarian wood frame workshop 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 building is to the left and rear of a two-family dwelling. 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 is a simple rectangle with little overhang of the eaves. The gable end is toward the street and probably had wider entries for horse, car, and wagon access. Utilitarian workshops were commonly of the most simple form and design. The stylistic flourishes of current design were generally eschewed in favor of functionality and cost.
- c. **Materials:** The building is wood framed and probably had wood siding per the Sanborn maps. Later materials added include vinyl siding, and replacement windows. However, more original materials and features could remain beneath the current siding.
- d. **Alterations:** Alterations include replacement materials, such as doors, windows, and siding.

Evaluation of Integrity:

Alterations, such as replacement windows, siding, and asphalt shingles, have modified the exterior appearance of this utilitarian building over the years; however, the location, form and massing remains intact 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 its form and massing. Utilitarian workshops were commonly of the most simple form and design. The stylistic flourishes of current design were generally eschewed in favor of functionality and cost.

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.

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 1924, 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**.*

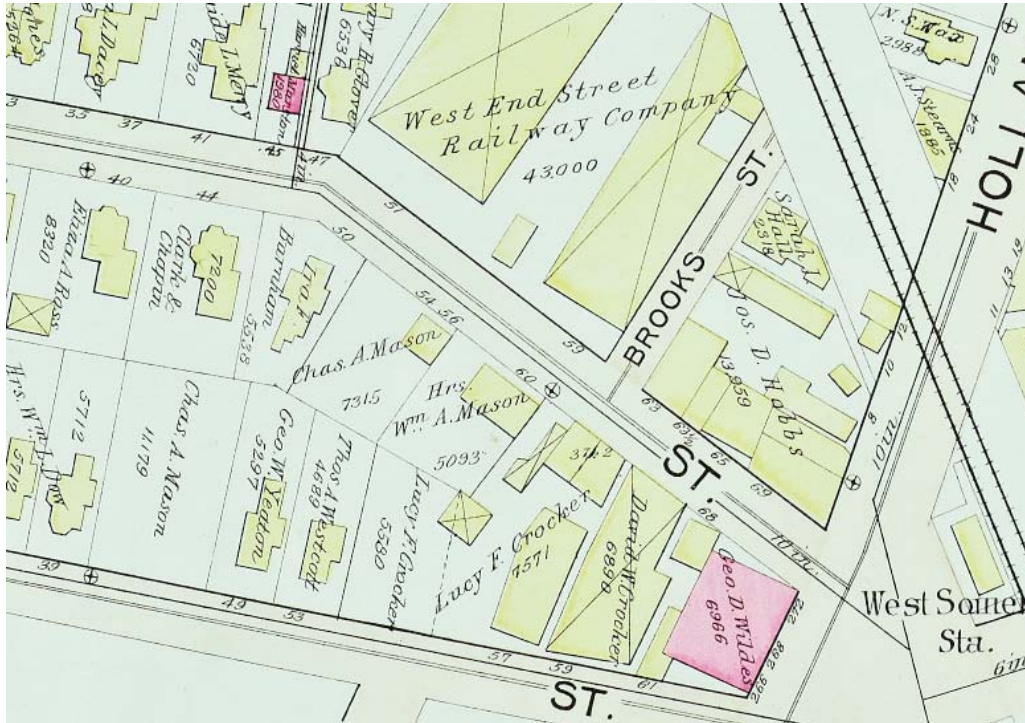
(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 88 Dover Street accessory building 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 accessory building historically and architecturally significant.**

88 Dover Street, aerial view





1895 Bromley



1900 Stadley



1925 Sanborn



1925 Sanborn