



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:	10 Emerson Street
Case:	HPC 2016.004
Applicant Name:	10 Emerson LLC
Date of Application:	January 25, 2016
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	February 16, 2015

I. Historical Association

Historical Context: Located on the southern edge of Union Square, the Emerson-Newton triangle was set out in 1852-58 on land belonging to Robert Vinal. The streets first appear on the 1866 Map of Boston and its Environs published by Baker and Tilden under the direction of H.F. Walling. Union Square has become densely settled with buildings shown on Bow Street, Prospect Hill and Washington Street. Nearby businesses seen on the map include the Wyatt Brickyards and the American Tube Works. The Union Glass Company was located just to the south of the neighborhood. By 1874 the neighborhood was fully built out.



A number of immigrant families have lived here with as many as 10 people in the 1940 census. The earliest owner was Prussian while the 20th century owners/residents have all been of European extraction, predominantly Prussian, Scotch, or Irish. They have generally been working class without high levels of education.

Architectural Description: 10 Emerson Street is a L-shaped 1 ½ story workers cottage with an enclosed front porch and another prominent entry on the ell. The front porch was enclosed circa 1923 as found in the building permits. The aluminum siding was added by J O'Connell in 1963. See photos.

Summary: 10 Emerson Street is a workers cottage set in a neighbor of similar buildings. Some of these are more ornate with center cross gables in the Italianate style. Others are simple 1 ½ story simple cottages.

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 find 10 Emerson 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, economic and social history of the City due to its association with popular architectural trends within the working-classes and the early residential development of Union Square.

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 10 Emerson Street begins around 1870 as the home of a cabinet maker and continued through at least 1965 as home to members of the working class.

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 building has not been moved. It is located within a group of cottages from the same period at the southern edge of Union Square.
- b) **Design:** The building is an excellent example of workers' cottage that retains many of its original features including, but not limited to: window layout, gable ends with original trim molding, and 2-story rear ell. The door surround on Everett Street indicates that it was once used as the main door. The front porch has been enclosed.
- c) **Materials:** The dwelling is constructed of wood with aluminum siding over the clapboard siding and a brick foundation. One brick chimney stack remains centered on the main roof of the house. The roof has asphalt shingles.
- d) **Alterations:** Many of the windows have been replaced, the original clapboarding has been (either removed or) covered over with aluminum. Original roofing material has been changed to asphalt shingles as is typical of most houses of this vintage. The house retains its original massing and form.

Evaluation of Integrity: Despite the alterations to the building, the retention of form and location give a very good sense of this type of working-class housing in the 19th century.

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

This house is just one of a small collection of working class houses on Emerson, Everett and Newton Streets associated with the businesses in and around Union Square.

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?

Its location on the central corner of the neighborhood is the key to perception of the district. Any alteration of massing and form will distort the proportions of the remaining buildings on the street

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 10 Emerson Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its place within a group of similarly important buildings. The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant as an intact representative of 19th century working- class housing stock and represents some of the earliest residential development on this neighborhood.

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. The building is however on the list of properties currently being surveyed for consideration as part of a Union Square Local Historic District.

OR

(B) The structure, circa 1870, 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 find 10 Emerson 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 10 Emerson Street historically and architecturally significant.**

10 Emerson



1874 Hopkins Plate 27



1884 Hopkins Plate 7



1895 Bromley Plate 7





LOCATION	O/R	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	SOURCE	NOTES
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>	<i>Own</i>	Charles Diebner		<i>Cabinet Maker</i>		<i>1869 City Directory</i>	
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Charles T. Diebner (Head)	50	<i>Cabinet Maker</i>	<i>Prussia</i>	<i>1870 Census</i>	
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Caroline (Wife)	37	<i>Keeps House</i>	<i>Prussia</i>		
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Annie (Daughter)	19	<i>Sales Woman</i>	<i>New York</i>		
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Louisa (Daughter)	14	<i>School</i>	<i>New York</i>		
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Ida (Daughter)	3	<i>Home</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Louis (Son)	12	<i>School</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		
	<i>Own</i>	Dibner				<i>1874 Hopkins Atlas Plate 27</i>	
		Mrs. Charles T. Diebner		<i>Fancy Goods, Somerville Avenue</i>		<i>1875, 1876 City Directories</i>	
<i>Emerson Street</i>	<i>Own</i>	Charles T. Diebner (Head)	61	<i>Cabinet Maker</i>	<i>Prussia</i>	<i>1880 Census</i>	
<i>Emerson Street</i>		Caroline (Wife)	45	<i>Keeps House</i>	<i>France</i>		
<i>Emerson Street</i>		Louise (Daughter)	23	<i>School</i>	<i>New York</i>		
<i>Emerson Street</i>		Louis (Son)	22	<i>at Home</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>Emerson Street</i>		Ida L. (Daughter)	13	<i>at School</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		

<i>h. Everett c. Emerson</i>		Charles T. Diebner	<i>Cabinet Maker (F.Geldowsky, East Cambridge)</i>		<i>1881 City Directory</i>		
						<i>1895 Bromley Atlas Plate 7</i>	<i>Prominent Citizen, found in Somerville Past and Present, Frank W. Kaan was Somerville Solicitor from at least 1900- 1926 as found in newspaper articles on line. He lived at 12 Pleasant Avenue and 133 Sycamore Street.</i>
		Own	Frank H. (W.) Kaan				
		Own	F. W. Koan (Kaan)			<i>1900 Stadley Atlas Plate 13</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>	Rent	Everett Moore (Head)	24	<i>Bookkeeper</i>	<i>Canada, England (Halifax)</i>	<i>1900 Census</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Eva May (Wife)	24		<i>Canada, England (New Brunswick)</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Florence (Daughter)	3	<i>at School</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Hazel B. (D-in-Law)	11		<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		William Hollis (F-in-Law)	52	<i>Hardware Clerk</i>	<i>England</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Mary A. (M-in-Law)	45		<i>Canada, England (New Brunswick)</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>	Rent	Henry Kahl (Head)	43	<i>Pressman, Printing Office</i>	<i>New York</i>	<i>1910 Census</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Eleanor (Wife)	32		<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>	Rent	Christien Hoffmann (Head)	41	<i>Butcher, Slaughterhouse</i>	<i>Bavaria</i>	<i>1920 Census</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Minnie (Wife)	40		<i>England</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Winnifred (Daughter)	20	<i>Salesgirl, Department Store</i>	<i>England</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Anny (Daughter)	4		<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		L. Ward				<i>1923 Building Permit</i>	<i>Alter front piazza</i>
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Lawrence J. Ward		<i>Barber at 26 Union Square, rm. 3</i>		<i>1924 City Directory</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Bridget (wife)					
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Julian S. Carr*		<i>Chauffeur</i>		<i>1929-30 City Directory</i>	<i>Has phone</i>
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Alice E. (wife)					
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		<i>Not Found - House may be vacant</i>				<i>1930 Census</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		John J. O'Connell (Head)	49	<i>Laborer, Road Project</i>	<i>Irish Free State</i>	<i>1940 Census</i>	
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Mary F (Wife)	46		<i>Irish Free State</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Elizabeth (Daughter)	22	<i>Wrapper, Paper Factory</i>	<i>Massachusetts</i>		
<i>10 Emerson Street</i>		Mary (Daughter)	20		<i>Massachusetts</i>		

10 Emerson Street	Julia (Daughter)	19		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	Jeremiah (Son)	17		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	John (Son)	15		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	Theresa (Daughter)	11		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	William (Son)	8		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	Patricia (Daughter)	6		Massachusetts
10 Emerson Street	Michael Kelley	48	Laborer	1945 City Directory
10 Emerson Street	John J. O'Connell (Head)	53	Carpenter	
10 Emerson Street	Mary T. O'Connell	51	Housewife	
10 Emerson Street	Mary W. O'Connell	25	Clerk	
10 Emerson Street	Julia A. O'Connell	23	Clerk	
10 Emerson Street	Mary T. O'Connell	56	Housewife	1950 City Directory
10 Emerson Street	Margaret T. O'Connell	21	Office	
10 Emerson Street	William F. O'Connell	23	Unemployed	1955 City Directory
10 Emerson Street	Mary T. O'Connell	61	Housewife	
10 Emerson Street	Patricia L. O'Connell	20	Office	
10 Emerson Street	William F. O'Connell	28	Clerk	1960 City Directory
10 Emerson Street	Mary T. O'Connell	66	At Home	
10 Emerson Street	Patricia L. O'Connell	25	Office Worker	
10 Emerson Street	J. Oconnel			1963 Building Permit Aluminum siding on dwe, repair porch floor
	Catherine E. O'Connell	1926	Housewife	1965 Directory
	Jeremiah J. O'Connell	1922	Maintenance Man	
10 Emerson Street	T. Casey			1979 Building Permit Install dormer