



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

---

**ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT**

---

Site: 22 Flint Street c.1857 Donohoe-Davis House  
Case: HPC 2016.098 Flint Street Local Historic District

Applicant Name: John A. Ciccolo, for Luna Properties LLC, Owner  
Applicant Address: 136 Fletcher Road, Belmont, MA 02478

Date of Application: November 29, 2016  
Legal Notice: *Rebuild porches using Trex® flooring*  
Staff Recommendation: Denial  
Date of Public Hearing: January 10, 2017

---

**I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

See attached Form B.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:**

See attached Form B

**II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

*1. Proposal of Alteration:*

1. Rebuild porches on front and side of the house using Trex® for the flooring;
2. Remove plywood and restore railings on second floor;
3. Restore railings, posts and spindles on wrap-around porch.



*22 Flint Street, 2004*

The Applicant recently bought the property which has been in Land Court for several years. The work done was at a remove from the owners, undertaken by a court appointed lawyer. See below for the content of the Certificates of Non-Applicability issued. Trex® was used on the landing of the rear side porch without permission. The new owner asked his tenant who is also a contractor to do the repairs when it became obvious that the porch was in poor condition. The tenant was unaware of the historic nature of the building and installed a Trex® porch floor to match the one at the rear entry. Rather than completely redoing the decking, the Applicant would like to retain it as they undertake the other needed repairs.

See the final pages for details and photos.

## II. FINDINGS

### 1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

2013.077	Paul O'Donnell for Ryan & Miller	C/NA	1. The rubber roofing shall be replaced with rubber roofing in-kind to match existing.
2014.073	Commissioner Paul O'Donnell for Richard Ryan & Gregory Miller	C/A	1. The rear east side porch railings shall be replaced in wood to match existing wood railings in shape and size. 2. The posts shall be 4" x 4" with pyramidal caps to match existing. 3. The railings shall be 2" x 4" with a slight bevel on the top side to shed water. 4. The 1.5" balusters shall be set at a diagonal to match the existing and set to meet code distance.

### 1. *Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

Rebuild porches on front and side of the house using Trex® for the flooring.

Synthetic materials have never been approved for use in Local Historic Districts where the material is visible from the public right of way.

### 2. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The porches are visible from Flint Street. Currently there are a hedge and trees obfuscating the porch along the street. The house is only a few feet from the street.

- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*

The porches have been partially rebuilt using Trex® and pressure treated wood. The wood posts will be wrapped to give greater visual weight to the posts. The spindle array and other historic portions of the porch are currently stored in the back yard behind the garage. See photos at the end of the document.

- *Is the proposal more appropriate than the existing conditions?*

Trex® is not considered an appropriate material. The remaining alterations/repairs are in-keeping with HPC Guidelines with the exception of the original height of the railing on the ground floor.

- *Is the proposal more in-keeping with the age, purpose, style and construction of the building?*

The removal of plywood panels on the second floor is more appropriate than retaining it.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

### **GENERAL APPROACH**

*The primary purpose of Somerville's Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Somerville's Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the City's architectural heritage. The following guidelines ensure that rehabilitation efforts, alterations, and new construction all respect the design fabric of the districts and do not adversely effect their present architectural integrity.*

- A. *The design approach to each property should begin with the premise that the features of historic and architectural significance described in the Study Committee report must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.*
- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*
- D. *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*

- E. *Whenever possible, new materials should match the material being replaced with respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.*
- F. *The Commission will give design review priority to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or those portions which it can be reasonably inferred may be visible in the future.*

The main wrap-around porch was discussed in the Form B. The deteriorated posts will be reconstructed to match the existing. The porch appears to be 30" or less from the ground level which means the railings could be returned to their historic height. See detail showing existing rail with original post next to the front door. The second floor porch is not original to the building. The proposed alteration to the porch would bring it back to an earlier condition as can be seen in the photos below.

### **Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements**

1. *Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old. Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.*

Other than the decking and the removal of plywood from the porches, there would be no other changes. The railings, posts, balusters, spindles, brackets and other details would be repaired and replaced in kind to match the original.

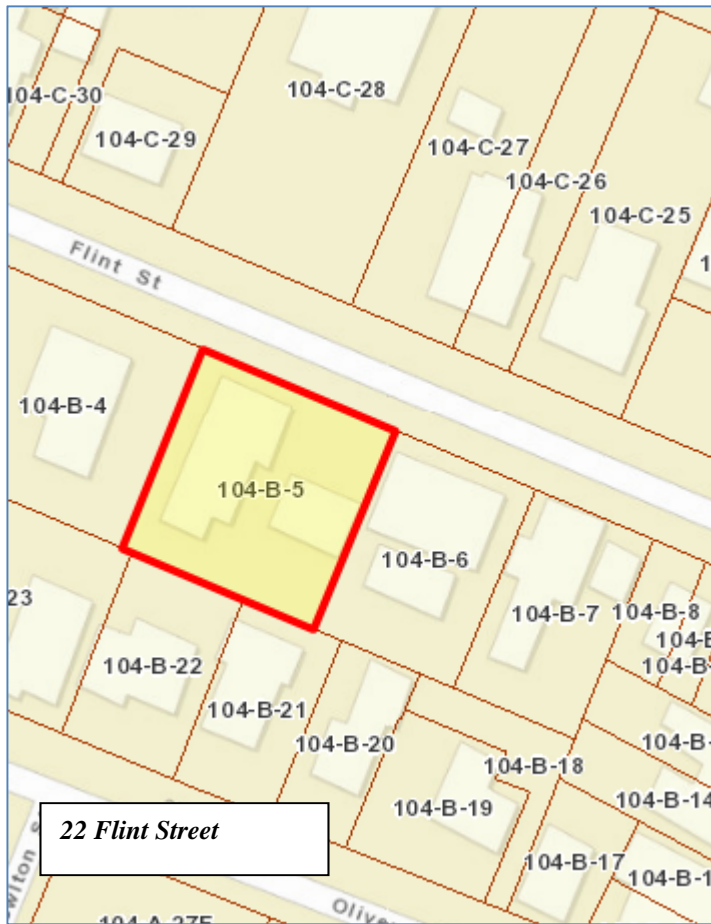
### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

*The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features of buildings and structures in the area, in accordance with the required findings that are considered by the Somerville Historic District Ordinance for a Historic District Certificate. This report may be revised or updated with new a recommendation or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through more in depth research conducted during the public hearing process.*

Staff determines that the alteration for which an application for a Historic Certificate has been filed is not totally appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Flint Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff does not recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the use of Trex® or other synthetic materials but does recommend granting a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) to remove the plywood from the porches and issue the Applicant a Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA) for the repair and maintenance of the porches in-kind to match the originals to John Ciccolo, Owner for work on 22 Flint Street.**

1. All appropriate building permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any work.
2. If changes are necessary to the proposed design for which this Certificate of Appropriateness was issued, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
3. The plywood panels on the second floor porch shall be removed. (C/A)
4. The rails and balusters of the second floor shall match those on the first floor in form and materials. (C/NA)
5. The porches shall be rebuilt using a hard wood for the decking. (C/NA)
6. The railings and spindles on wrap-around porch shall be restored. (C/NA)
7. The porch posts shall be wrapped in wood to meet the original 6" x 6" dimensions. (C/NA)
8. The trim details where the fascia meets the roof shall be reproduced in kind. (C/NA)
9. The railing height shall be returned to the original height. (C/A)
10. The porch skirt shall be made of wood lattice. (C/NA)

11. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that it was executed in accordance with this Certificate and approved plans.





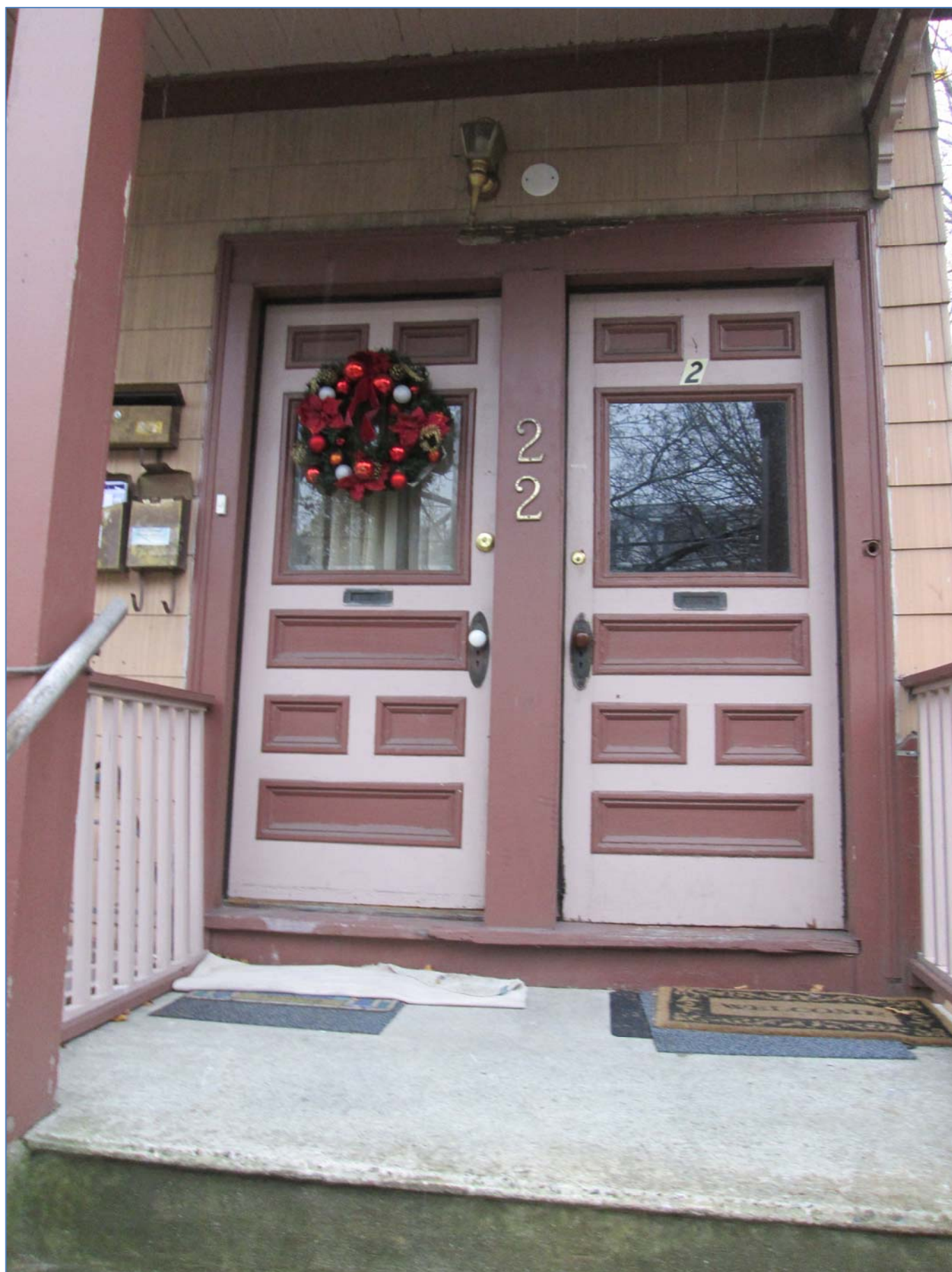
*22 Flint Street. 2013*



*22 Flint Street. 2016*











# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.1190
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Donahoe, Patrick - Davis, Charles M. House
<b>Common Name:</b>	Wentworth, Ransom D. House
<b>Address:</b>	22 Flint St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	East Somerville
<b>Local No:</b>	104-C-25
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1857
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Italianate
<b>Use(s):</b>	Multiple Family Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.BW: Flint Street Local Historic District
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (03/29/2011)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Vinyl Siding; Wood Foundation: Brick



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Thursday, January 5, 2017 at 2:55: PM



# FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

MA  
220  
Bo

Pho  
(3"  
back  
neg  
form  
shee



Ske  
Dra  
nea  
bui

tion or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.

see attached map

RECEIVED

SEP 30 2005

MASS. HIST. COMM

Recorded by Arthur Krim

Organization Somerville Hist. Presv. Comm.

Date (month/year) August 2005

Assessor's Number <b>104-C-25</b>	USGS Quad <b>Boston North</b>	Area(s)	Form Number <b>1190</b>
--------------------------------------	----------------------------------	---------	----------------------------

Town Somerville

Place (neighborhood or village) East Somerville

Address 22 Flint St.

Historic Name Donahoe-Davis House

Uses: Present residential

Original residential

Date of Construction 1857-1858

Source deeds and maps

Style/Form Italianate/suburban sidehall

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation brick

Wall/Trim vinyl/wood

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures auto garage  
ca. 1925

Major Alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

Condition fair/good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage 7564 sq. ft.

Setting large suburban lot in

dense residential district

## BUILDING FORM

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

22 Flint St.

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The early suburban house at 22 Flint Street was built in 1857-1858 by an unknown housewright for Patrick Donahoe as the original owner, later owned by Charles Davis. The house follows a standard suburban side hall plan of two stories with gable to the street set on a brick foundation built back on a steep rear slope. The design is elaborate Italianate Style as seen in the short return gable cornice with paired jig saw brackets and in the round arched gable window. Most notable is the original facade porch turning around the left side with bracketed posts and a spindle overrail. The double doors are likely a later remodeling as a two-family house, ca.1910.

Although resided, the Donahoe-Davis house is of great architectural value, retaining its original Italianate features, defining the suburban character of Flint Street on the crest of Cobble Hill in before the Civil War.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☐ see continuation sheet*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The early suburban house at 22 Flint Street is dated 1857-1858 by deed and map research to Patrick Donahoe of Boston as the original owner, later owned by Charles M. Davis. The suburban lot was purchased by Donahoe in December 1856 and mortgaged in 1858 "with buildings." Although not shown on the 1857 Walling Map, the deeds suggests a construction date 1857-1858. The property was purchased by Charles M. Davis, a Boston goods merchant in 1864 and owned by Davis on the 1874 and 1884 Atlases. In 1895 the house is owned by R.D. Wentworth and to Ransom D. Wentworth, a Boston provisions dealer in the 1895 Directory. In 1925 the houses was evidently divided as a two-family with a listing for Charles Fritts, a railroad engineer with his wife Carol, and Fred Lucas, a bookkeeper and his wife Edna. In 1940 the address was shown to Carmello Pallore, a laborer and his wife Julia.

The Donahoe-Davis house is notable as an early suburban house on Flint Street built before the Civil War, later divided as a two-family for workers in East Somerville.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ see continuation sheet

Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: J.M. Hopkins, 1874, 1884.

Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1895.

Map of Middlesex Co. Boston: H.F. Walling, 1857.

Middlesex County Deeds 757-89 (1856), 803-368 (1858), 929-5 (1864).

Somerville Directory. Boston: W.A. Greenough, 1895-1940.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

City of  
**Somerville**  
Massachusetts



**Assessors Map**

- Parcel Boundary
- Block Boundary
- - - Assessor Map Boundary
- Water Body
- Building
- ▨ Railroad ROW

- Lot Dimensions
- Lot Number
- Square Footage
- Frontage Dimension
- Street Address



1" = 80'  
January 3, 2001

Sources: Rights-of-way and building footprints developed from Boston Edison Company data, 1995. Parcel data developed from assessor maps by Camp Dresser & McKee, 1999.

NOTE: The data represented on these maps indicate distances and deeded locations of cadastral boundaries in the City of Somerville. They are NOT survey data and should not be treated as such.



**104**



**CDM**

22 Flint St. SMV.1190





Entry detail