



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: 346-352 Highland Avenue
Case: HPC 2015.039

Applicant Name: Scott Zink
Date of Application: June 29, 2015

Recommendation: Not Significant
Hearing Date: July 21, 2015

I. Historical Association

Historical Context: Highland Avenue has been a major thoroughfare since the last quarter of the 19th century, while Willow Ave was one of the original range ways joining Elm Street with Broadway. The corner was originally part of the property located directly to the south until it was subdivided in the early 20th century.

Evolution of Site: Located at the intersection of Willow and Highland, little information was available about the businesses.



Based upon Sanborn Maps, the building was constructed between 1900 and 1925. No building permit was found. From the City Directories and the Building Permit Records

346 Highland Avenue

1924-1940	Adams Pharmacy, Allan H. Adams lived at 147 Willow. His wife was Gertrude H.	
1971	T. Murphy	Remodel storefront
1973	T. Murphy	Replace existing glass & brick works, front.
1998	T. Murphy	R & R roof

348 Highland Avenue

1924 Frank Aguda, Confectionary. He resided at 1 Oak Terrace
1929-1930 Louis Case, Confectionary. He resided in Watertown
1940 William H. Maher, Confectionary. He lived at 356 Highland Avenue and was married Theresa E.
1960 Bill's Spa Erect metal sign box
1968 T. Maher Install new front; Remodel

350 Highland Avenue

1924 Roderick MacKenzie, Baker
1929-1930 Roderick MacKenzie, Baker, Fancy Bakery & Delicatessen. He lived at 87 Electric Avenue and was married to Christine.
1940 Earl W. Burgess, Barber. He lived at 65 Pearson Avenue with his wife Margaret.

352 Highland Avenue

1924 Victor Berlin, Provisions. He lived at 234 Willow Street
1929-1930 John Carleton, Meats, also located at 304 Summer Street. He lived at 31 Linden Avenue. His wife was Nora.
1940 Horn's Food Mart, John Carleton, Proprietor. He lived at 31 Linden Avenue
1946 Friendly Food Store Erect 2 signs
1966 T. Maher Panel walls; hang ceiling
1988 C. Poutahidis Rebuild fascia & copper connecting roof

346-352 Highland Avenue

T.F. Murphy, The Florist started in August 1953 and closed April 2015. Tom Murphy was a Korean War veteran. It is not known when the properties were consolidated. Although there were a number of building permits issued for 346 Highland Avenue attributed to T. Murphy. (see above). It has been a landmark business for over 60 years.

Architectural Description: The building is a long one-story brick storefront 6 bays by 2 bays deep facing onto Highland Avenue. Three entries face onto Highland, although historically, there were 4 storefronts. There is a faux singled mansard overhang with the eave line at the same height as the top of the plate glass windows.

Summary: The building is a single story building of little particular distinction. The structure served a variety of businesses, most of them were food related.

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 **do not** find **246-252 Highland Avenue** 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 not found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the lack of distinction of any of the owners or relating to the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City

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 **246-252 Highland Avenue** begins with its construction in the first half of the 1920s and continues as a storefront business serving the local area through to last April.

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 nor has the neighborhood around it essentially changed since its construction.
- b. Design: The current design appears to be mid 1970-1980s in style with the low hanging and large mansard.
- c. Materials: The 1925 Sanborn indicates that the storefront was originally wood. Currently there is a simple red brick veneer and modern commercial plate glass window system.
- d. Alterations: The façade has been altered and does not resemble the original in material or style or number of bays.

Evaluation of Integrity:

The building lacks integrity as a mid-1920s storefront due to numerous alterations in material and configuration.

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

The building does relate to the storefront across Highland Avenue in massing but not in style. Both buildings are one-story commercial buildings on busy corner at the edge of a residential district.

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?

The florist business was much loved and a long-lasting business at this location. The building itself lacks importance.

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 do not find 346-352 Highland Avenue historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to the numerous alterations undertaken in the late 20th century that have totally removed or obscured the 1920s façade.

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 1925, is at least 50 years old.

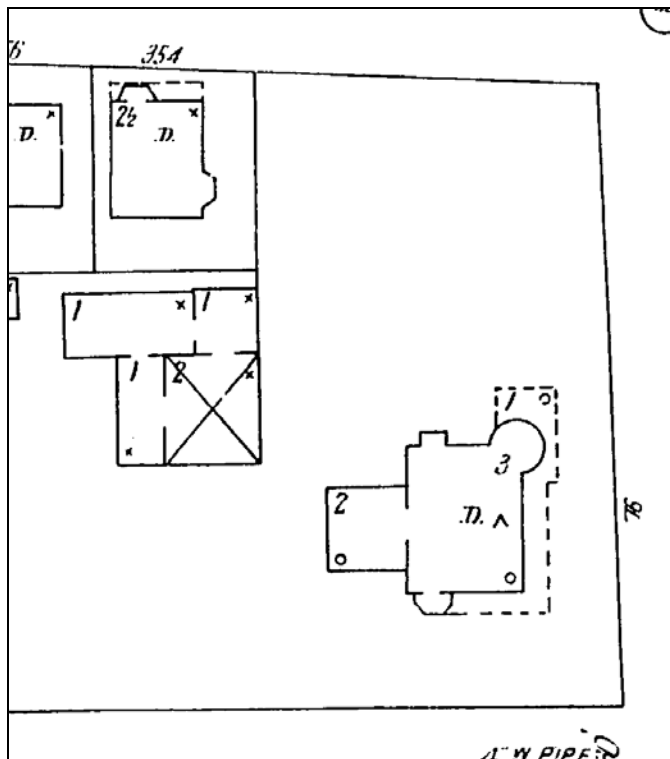
AND

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.

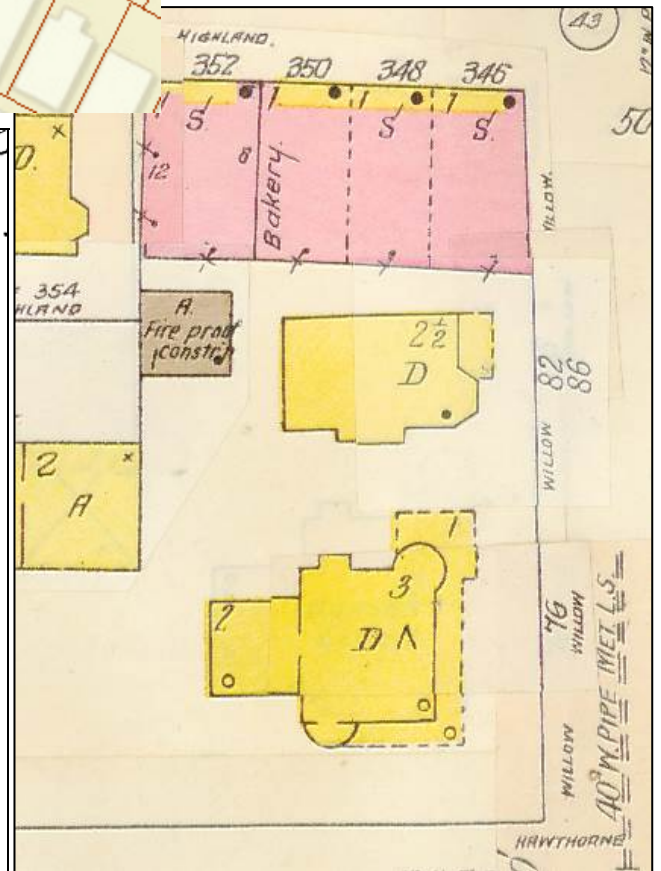
(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 346-352 Highland Avenue 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

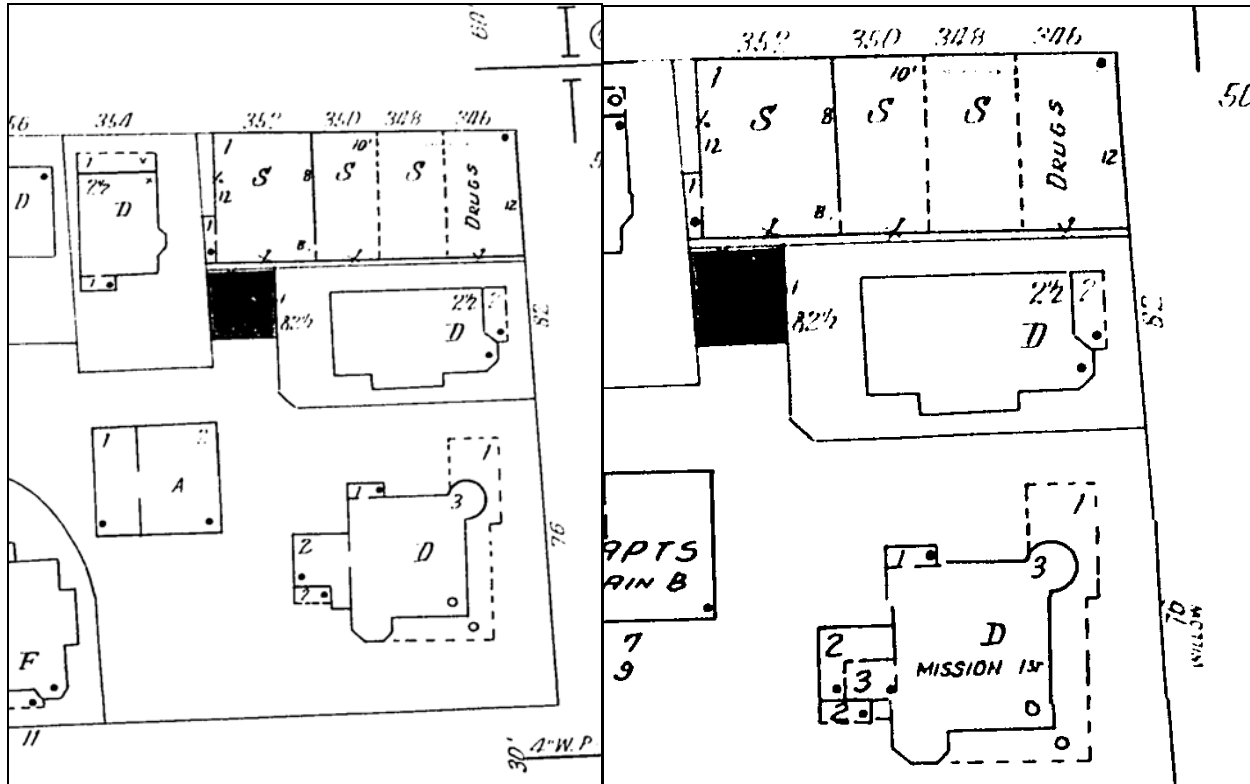
(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 346-352 Highland Avenue historically and architecturally significant.**



1900 Sanborn Plate 17



1925 Sanborn Map Plate 17



1933-34 Sanborn Plate 232

1934-1950 Sanborn Plate 232

