



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: 63 Hudson Street, barn
Case: HPC 2014.097
Applicant Name: Rebecca Fordon & Eric Chon

Date of Application: November 20, 2014
Date of Significance: December 16, 2014
Recommendation: Preferably Preserved
Hearing Date: January 20, 2015



**A determination of Preferably Preserved begins a nine month Demolition Delay.*

I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, December 16, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that the barn at 63 Hudson Street is Significant. Per Section 2.17.B, this decision is found on the following criteria:

Section 2.17.B - The structure is at least 50 years old;

and

(i) *The structure is 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;*

and / or

(ii) *The structure is historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.*

According to *Criteria 2.17.B*, listed above, historic map and directory research identify the structure as c. 1895. The barn at 63 Hudson Street is not illustrated on maps prior to the 1895 Bromley Atlas.

In accordance with *Criteria (i)*, listed above, the Commission determined the barn to be broadly associated with the cultural, economic, and social history of the City, which is known historically to have been the location for several dairy businesses; therefore, the property owner in 1895, who is a dairy

farmer and deliverer of milk contributes to this historic narrative. In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, the Commission determined the barn was historically and architecturally significant due to the form, massing, inference of previous fenestration and retention of original materials. In addition, this structure shares a historic context, as a group of buildings, with the dwelling at 63 Hudson Street.

II. Supplemental Information

Census Data:

The 1890 census does not list a Frederick Burrows. The 1900 census lists a Frederick Burrows, age 33, as living in Somerville at this time. Mr. Burrows has a wife, Sadie, and mother, Jane, living in the same household.

Comparable Buildings:

There are a number of similar barn/shed type structures throughout the City. Many are less altered, retain their structural integrity, and some are local historic districts. Comparable structures within the City and this general neighborhood include:

- 53 Hudson Street
- 59 Albion Street
- 7 Gibbons Street
- 26 Oxford Street



*Top: 53 Hudson St, 59 Albion St
Bottom - 7 Gibbons St, 26 Oxford St*

III. Preferably Preserved

If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d)

A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:

- a) How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?*

The form and massing of this structure is still understood and historic material is retained.

- b) What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.*

The structural integrity appears to be compromised but the historical integrity continues to be visible due to the remaining materials and form.

- c) What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?*

This building is of local significance. The city is known historically to have been the location for several dairy businesses; therefore, the property owner in 1895, who is a dairy farmer and deliverer of milk contributes to this narrative.

- d) What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?*

The subject parcel is moderately visible from Hudson Street. However, this building is located at the rear and side property line which provides visibility from the surrounding properties as well as Albion Street, behind Hudson Street.

- e) What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?*

This type of accessory structure is frequently found throughout the City. While better examples of this building type survive and some are part of a historic district, the main concern is the large massing that is not prevalent among accessory structures within the City.

Upon a consideration of the above criteria (a-e), is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?

The building appears to have some structural failure but still retains a large degree of historical integrity due to materials and form. The building is of local significance and a variety of other examples exist within the city; however, the large massing of this barn is not less and less prevalent.

IV. 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

hearing for a Determination of Preferably Preserved. 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.

In accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), Section 4.D, Staff find the potential demolition of the subject barn detrimental to the heritage of the City, and consequently in the best interest of the public to preserve or rehabilitate. Therefore, due to the historical integrity retained within the materials and form, the uncommon large massing for this accessory building type, and association with the dairy business of Somerville, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find the barn at 63 Hudson Street Preferably Preserved.**

If the Historic Preservation Commission determines the structure is Preferably Preserved, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit at anytime, upon receipt of written advice from the Commission that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore the subject building or structure (Ord. 2003-05, Section 4.5).

63 Hudson Street

