



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	47 Hunting Street
Case:	HPC 2013.070
Applicant Name:	James McSweeney
Date of Application:	09/26/2013
Date of Significance:	October 15, 2013
Recommendation:	NOT Preferably Preserved
Hearing Date:	November 19, 2013



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

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**I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance**

On Tuesday, October 15, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 47 Hunting 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 is both**

- (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**
- (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 identifies the structure as c.1874. The Hunting Street is not illustrated on the 1860 Walling Map of Boston and Vicinity.

In accordance with *Criteria (i)*, listed above, the Commission disagreed with Staff findings and found the structure importantly associated with the broad cultural and social history of the City as a gable end dwelling that consistently housed the working class.



In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission also disagreed with Staff findings, due to the location of the building within a context of working class structures which, together, demonstrate a pattern of settlement in which the subject building played a historical role.

## II. Additional Information

### *Additional Research:*

- Hunting Street is not listed in the 1869 directory, but is illustrated on the 1874 Hopkins Map (Plate F). A majority of the surrounding parcels do not appear to be developed until later, according to map research. However, the structure at the south corner of Hunting and South streets as well as the green structure across Hunting Street appears on the 1874 Hopkins Map. The 1895 Stadly map illustrates that the neighborhood has begun to be built up but not until the 1900 Sanborn map do a majority of the existing buildings appear; however, there are several buildings that have been demolished such as at the north corner of Hunting and South streets and a mixed use building to the left of the subject building, and this area illustrates a variety of infill structures with varying uses.
- Census data does not provide new information but does confirm that Owen Martin was 55 in 1880 and that he lived on Hunting Street.
- ISD currently does not have a building file for the subject address.

### *Site Visit:*

Site visits illustrate that the subject structure is located within an industrial area toward the north end of the street. The majority of the buildings along this street have been heavily altered, though their form and massing are still evident, which identify the historic nature of the building stock. While the southern end of the street is in Cambridge and becomes predominantly commercial, this residential structure is awkwardly located amid industrial buildings and parking lots though some historic buildings from a later time period are located across Hunting Street.



47 Hunting Street

*Comparable Structures:*

Two-story, gable-end dwellings with three bays are common throughout the City and compose a majority of the residential housing stock within the City. This building type is generally constructed as a single or two-family dwelling. Comparable structures along Hunting Street and in this general neighborhood include:

- 39 Hunting Street
- 48 Hunting Street
- 36 Hunting Street, Cambridge
- 38 Hunting Street, Cambridge
- 26 South Street
- 32 Ward Street

*47 Hunting Street*

Predominant differences between the comparable dwellings and the subject dwelling are the pitch of the roof, existence of an original door hood, and number of bays, which are often two bays instead of three. Similarities include the side hall entry and depth of two rooms (as illustrated by the consistency of two bays). As this type of structure was built to house the working class, these often have minimal architectural details, and what details remains is existent in the depth of the eaves, door hood, and fenestration pattern.

*Top: 39 Hunting Street; 48 Hunting Street; 36 Hunting Street (Cambridge)**Bottom: 38 Hunting Street (Cambridge); 26 South Street; 32 Ward Street***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 dwelling represents a typical working class dwelling within the City. Alterations, such as replacement windows and doors, siding, and asphalt shingles, have modified the exterior appearance of this dwelling over the years. While a number of additions have also masked the original structure, the original gable-end form and massing can still be identified.

Features that continue to contribute to the heritage of the City are minimal, but include the location of the building on the parcel, the original gable-end form, and right side-hall interior plan. Spatial relationships to other buildings along Hunting Street are compatible with this structure and are predominantly from a later historical context, but still represent the working class.

- 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 Commission found integrity of this two-family dwelling is retained within the location, form, and massing. The structure retains integrity of location through siting and orientation. However, while spatial relationships to other buildings along Hunting Street are compatible with this structure, these buildings are predominantly from a later historical context, but still represent the working class. The main massing component, two-stories with a gable-end, remains evident and other architectural features could still be existent beneath the siding.

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

The Commission determined that this structure is Significant within a context of working class structures, which, together, demonstrate a pattern of settlement in which the subject building played a historical role.

Working class housing constructed during the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century predominantly represents an aspect of local history.

- 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 highly visible along Hunting Street, but is not located within a very cohesive streetscape due to the surrounding industrial structures and parking lots that are associated with the industrial uses on the other side of the block. The opposite side of the block has a rhythm that is more understood, due to the similar massing of these buildings, but as the residential development of this area was inconsistent, the streetscape has also taken on this inconsistency.

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

This type of modest working class structure can be found throughout the City, but are often concentrated in areas near brickyards or industrial areas, such as Ward II. While there are neighborhoods within the City predominantly composed of modest working class dwellings, such as Hinckley-Magoun and Clyde-Murdock-Warwick, this type of housing stock also remains somewhat sporadic in areas that developed more industrial uses.

***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?***

This type of modest working class structure can be found throughout the City. A number of additions have been added to the original structure; however, the gable-end form and massing can still be readily identified. The buildings along Hunting Street, aside from the interspersed parking lots, are located within a close proximity to each other. While these structures are predominantly from a later historical context, they still represent the working class. The subject parcel is highly visible along Hunting Street, but is not located within a very cohesive streetscape due to the surrounding industrial structures and parking lots that are associated with the industrial uses on the other side of the block. The opposite side of the block has a rhythm that is more understood, due to the similar massing of these buildings, but as the residential development of this area was inconsistent, the streetscape has also taken on this inconsistency.

#### **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 do not find demolition of the subject structure detrimental to the heritage of the City, and consequently not in the best interest of the public to preserve or rehabilitate. Therefore, **Staff recommend the Historic Preservation Commission do NOT find 47 Hunting 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).*



*47 Hunting Street, aerial view*

