



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT

Site: 25 Ivaloo Street
Case: HPC 2014.081
Applicant Name: Richard Williams & Jeanne Segal
Date of Application: September 23, 2014
Date of Significance: October 21, 2014

Recommendation: NOT Preferably Preserved
Hearing Date: November 18, 2014



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

I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, October 21, 2014, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 25 Ivaloo 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.*

In accordance with *Criteria (i)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings, that this structure is importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the retention of the Mansard roof cottage massing, several architectural details that continue to illustrate a Victorian style, as an example of late 20th century working class housing, and as part of a late nineteenth century collection of housing associated with the late residential infill development of Somerville.

In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings, that the house is historically and architecturally significant as a representative of late 20th century working class housing stock due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to original form, massing, fenestration

pattern, and material. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a collection of structures that represent the same cultural context, this dwelling is significant within the context of the group of buildings which, together, represent the late 20th century residential infill development of Somerville.

II. Additional Information

Existing Structural Conditions:

- A structural evaluation and summary memo were submitted from Phelan Engineering as well as a memo from the architect which specifies the challenges with regard rehabilitation. These documents identify that “the existing structure has experienced more than the usual differential settlement associated with single family dwellings.” The following is identified in the architect’s memo as specific challenges presented by the existing structure.
 1. The existing foundation of the original building has subsided 3" to 6" toward the interior supporting wall, unevenly around the perimeter.
 2. The existing foundation is insufficient to bear the weight of new work.
 3. The existing structure is under-framed.
 4. The rear additions have a cinder block foundation wall without evidence of footings and have in fact subsided 3" to 4" in 10 feet.
 5. The basement floods periodically from rises in ground and storm water runoff.
 6. The existing foundation and dirt floor cannot be made water tight even at great expense.
 7. The soil conditions are unstable.

Summary: The extent and complexity of the situation, attempting to adequately renovate the existing structure is cost prohibitive in that expanding the house with additional foundation walls beyond the basement footprint would most likely undermine and destabilize the existing structure.

Comparable Structures:

Cottages with Mansard roofs are common throughout the City and constructed in a variety of Mansard roof forms- straight, hipped, concave, and convex. This roof type is utilized to give a more grand presence to small cottages as well as provide additional habitable space in half-stories for larger residences. While the Mansard roof form is not a style, typically this roof type signifies a late Italianate or Victorian style. Early versions of this roof form are found in East Somerville, often on two-story buildings, which typically compose the Italianate style while later versions of this roof form are found across the city on Italianate and Victorian styles and with a variety of massing.

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 Mansard roof form is illustrated across the city; however, the Mansard form of this building is visually different than a typical Mansard as not all four facades illustrate this roof form. The development pattern in this neighborhood demonstrates that this parcel was a later infill development parcel that would have housed working-class housing; therefore, as this building was constructed for the working-class, the quality of design with regard to the style may explain why this roof form is only on the primary façade.

- 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 that integrity of this one-family dwelling is retained within the Mansard roof cottage massing, architectural details that continue to illustrate a Victorian style, as an example of late 20th century working class housing, and as part of a late nineteenth century collection of housing associated with the late residential infill development of Somerville. However, additional information from the structural report demonstrates there are key structural concerns that substantially reduce the feasibility of retaining this building.

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

This is significant at the local level as this was later infill housing for the working class of the city.

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

The building is highly visible and located at the corner of Ivaloo and Harrison streets. Demolition would be highly visible; however, the existing building demonstrates structural issues that could continue to deteriorate the existing conditions.

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

Cottages with Mansard roofs are common throughout the City and constructed in a variety of Mansard roof forms.

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 Mansard roof form is commonly illustrated across the city; however, the Mansard form of this building is visually different than a typical Mansard as not all four facades illustrate this roof form. The HPC found the building to retain historical and architectural integrity; however, additional information demonstrates clear concerns for the existing foundation and framing. The level of significance is local but the building is highly visible at this intersection.

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 structure not detrimental to the heritage of the City, and consequently not in the best interest of the public to preserve or rehabilitate. Therefore, due to the lack of information on Harold A. Palmer's legacy, frequency of this type of residential dwelling throughout the nation, and the building's lack of architectural distinction, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 25 Ivaloo 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).

