



**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 SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site: 18 Kent Court  
Case: HPC 2015.001  
Applicant Name: Keith Glover & Attila Javor  
  
Date of Application: January 5, 2015  
Recommendation: Significant  
Hearing Date: February 17, 2015

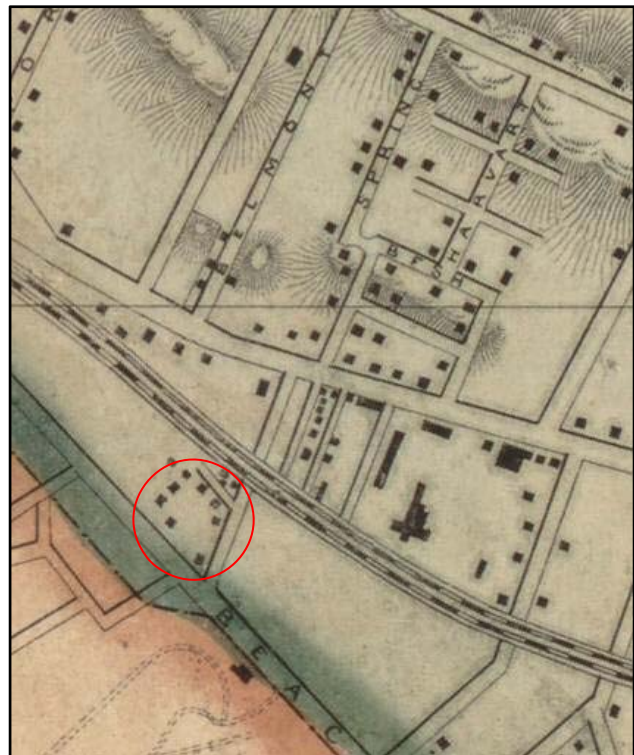
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**I. Historical Association**

Context: Kent Street connected Beacon Street with Somerville Avenue, then Milk Row, as early as 1813, according to *Beyond the Neck*. In 1835, the first passenger railroad station in Somerville opened and in 1842, the Kent Street Station opened near the Harvard Branch railway spur, which encouraged development of the southern slope of Spring Hill. Nearby, Kent Court developed near the Fitchburg Railroad tracks after the Civil War.

According to the 1858 Walling map, a small collection of mid nineteenth century structures along this portion of Kent Street and Kent Court appears to remain existent. Being located near the Bleachery, these dwellings likely housed employees of the Bleachery as well industries that developed later along the railroad or within the immediate area.

Several dwellings with raised basements along Kent Court appear similar to the workers cottages located near the brickyards, such as Clyde Street. Raised basements were often useful for cooking or for use as a shop. Another similarity is having three



*1858 Walling map with Kent Street and Kent Court  
circled in red*

bays on the primary facade and the one room of depth for the main massing. This type of structure was small, inexpensive, easy to construct and often used in marshy areas where excavating a cellar was not practical.

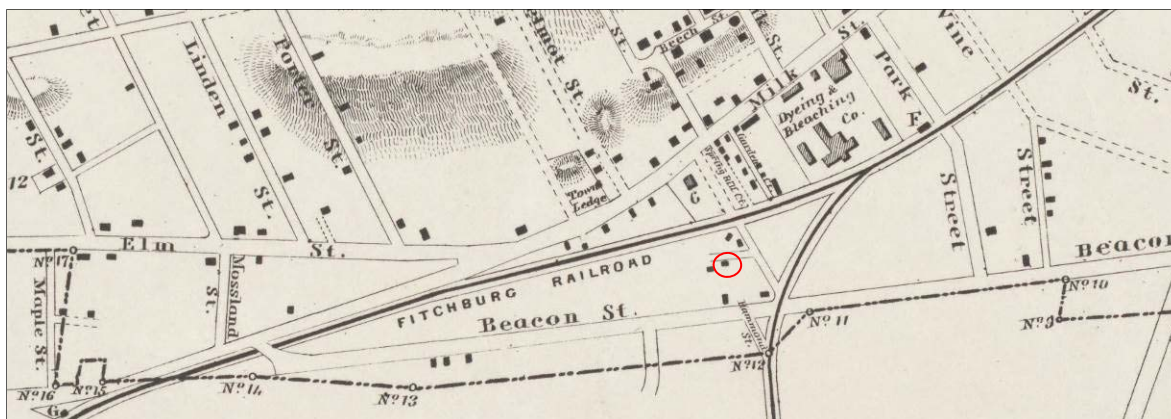
*Architectural Description:* The building is a 1½ story, single-family dwelling with a side-gable roof and an unidentifiable style. This building likely has a mid-nineteenth century construction date, see the 1852 Draper Map. The front façade illustrates three bays in width with shallow eaves and a replacement canopy over the entry door. The main massing appears to be one room deep, which is understood through the single-bay side profile with a short eave return. There is also a rear ell and beyond this addition is an enclosed rear porch. Alterations include replacement windows and doors, an enclosed rear porch, enclosed bulkhead and modifications to the front entrance including the canopy and stairs. The roof is asphalt shingles and the foundation has been painted, but appears to be composed of brick.



18 Kent Court



*Historical Description:* The subject property is likely illustrated on the 1852 Draper map (see below), due to the location of the subject building, which is closer to the street than buildings on either side. The red circle on the Draper Map below is believed to be 18 Kent Court.



1852 Draper map with 18 Kent Court circled in red

The 1874 Hopkins Atlas (Plate J) lists M. Grady as the property owner. The 1876 directory lists Michael O. Grady, a cooper, with John Grady as a boarder. The 1884 (Plate 9) Hopkins Atlas continues to list M. Grady as the property owner, illustrating the building located along the left side property line; the rear ell is also noted. The 1884 directory notes M. O. Grady has relocated to Everett Street near Newton. The Bromley Atlas from 1895 (Plate 4) illustrates this parcel (3300 square feet) as owned by Manuel M. Enos, a laborer. M. Enos is noted as a Boston fireman in the 1903 directory. The house is sparsely occupied until 1933, when the Sorrenti family takes up occupancy. There are various families that reside here through 1950, such as Coradi, Goventi, and Brown. By 1955, the Rubinsky family lives; Edward is a general worker while Felicia is a housewife.

The 1900 Sanborn map (Sheet 38) illustrates the structure more clearly as a “1½B” story building (B notes the raised basement of the structure) with a two-story rear addition and a single-story garage at the rear of the parcel. The two-story rear addition is likely accounting for a basement level due to the high foundation. By 1934, the Sanborn map (Vol. II, Sheet 264) notes that the entire building is one story and a basement. The updated Sanborn map (1934-1950) does not illustrate any changes other than the garage has been removed. Building permits were not found for this property.

*Summary:* The subject building is likely c.1852, which is understood through relationships to the surrounding buildings along Kent Court. The 1 1/2 single-family dwelling has a side-gable roof and an unidentifiable style but notes a familiar three-bay primary facade, short return eaves on the gable end with a single-bay profile, and shallow eaves along the primary facade. Retaining the simple form and massing, including the rear ell, also demonstrates this was working class housing. Most other features appear to have been either removed or are covered over in modern materials, such as the window casing. A small collection of mid nineteenth century structures is located along the south side of Kent Court; these buildings appear to relate to each other due to their location, similar features, and date of construction.

## 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/atlasses, 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 find 18 Kent Court 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.

**Findings:** The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to a likely c.1852 construction date; simple form and massing including the rear ell; three-bay primary and single-bay side fenestration patterns; and remaining architectural detail such as the return eaves on the gable ends. This building is an early to mid-nineteenth century example of working class housing and is part of a collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.



## 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 18 Kent Court begins with the likely c.1852 date of construction as a modest single-family dwelling in an unknown style and continues into the present day as the use of this structure remains consistent.

***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 evaluation of 1) Location, 2) Design, 3) Material, and 4) Alteration, as these qualities relate to the ability to convey significance.*

***Location:*** The subject structure is located near the end of Kent Court, next to Star Market and near Cambridge. The location has not been altered and the dwelling is sited to the far left side of the lot. The location of this dwelling, as well as others along Kent Court, illustrate an early to mid nineteenth century collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.



*Kent Court streetscape, photo 2014*

***Design:*** The original form, massing (including rear ell), and fenestration patterns (front and left side) are clearly evident. Remaining architectural features include the shallow eaves on the primary facade, short return eaves on the side facade, and possibly window trim beneath the exterior casing. However, working

class cottages often did not include much detail. While doors and windows have been replaced, the building retains integrity of design.

**Materials:** The materials that compose this structure are predominantly wood with a masonry foundation while asphalt shingles were added to the roof at a later period.

**Alterations:** Various modern materials have been added to the building over the years such as windows, doors, and roofing material. The enclosed rear porch and covered bulkhead are later additions, though the dates of these additions has not been determined by historic map research.

**Evaluation of Integrity:** The subject structure retains a high level of historical and architectural integrity due to the likely c. 1852 date of construction; retention of simple form, massing, and fenestration patterns, which clearly illustrates three-bays on the primary facade and a single-bay profile; and as part of a small collection of mid nineteenth century working class housing that represents the early development and industry of Somerville.

## 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 ***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, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff find 18 Kent Court historically or architecturally significant.

**Findings:** The subject dwelling is found historically and architecturally significant as a representative of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century working class housing stock due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to original form, massing, and visible fenestration patterns. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a small 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 early development and industry of Somerville.

### III. Recommendation

*Recommendations are based on an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance to be 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, c. 1852, 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/atlas, 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 find 18 Kent Court 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.**

**Findings:** The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to a likely c.1852 construction date; simple form and massing including the rear ell; three-bay primary and single-bay side fenestration patterns; and remaining architectural detail such as the return eaves on the gable ends. This building is an early to mid-nineteenth century example of working class housing and is part of a collection of housing associated with the early development and industry of Somerville.

**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 find 18 Kent Court historically or architecturally significant.**

**Findings:** The subject dwelling is found historically and architecturally significant as a representative of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century working class housing stock due to the remaining integrity of the structure with regard to original form, massing, and visible fenestration patterns. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a small 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 early development and industry of Somerville.

*18 Kent Court*



