

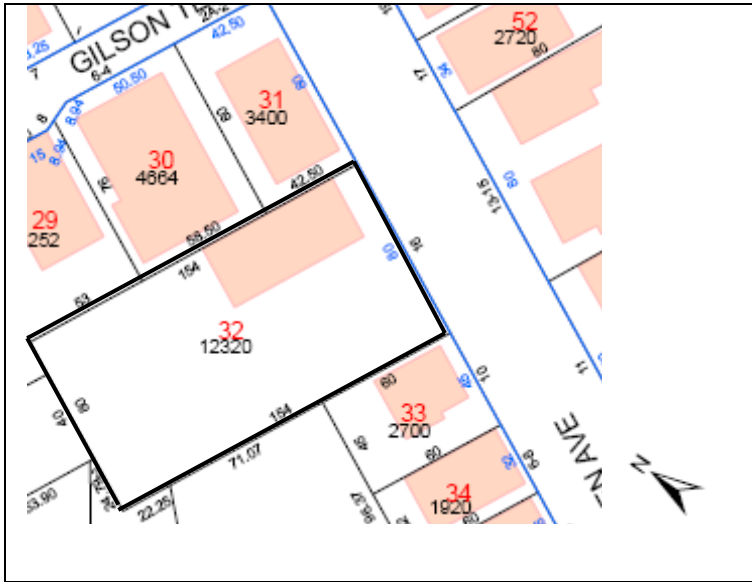
FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Kristi Chase

Organization: Historic Preservation Commission

Date (month / year): 3/12

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

36-A-32

Boston
North

Town: Somerville

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)
Spring Hill

Address: 16 Linden Avenue

Historic Name: McGuire-Donovan House

Uses: Present: 3-Family

Original: 3-Family

Date of Construction: circa 1900

Source: City Directories

Style/Form: Triple Decker

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Aluminum

Roof: T&G/Rubber

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*): Asbestos Siding 1947;
Aluminum Siding, 1972

Condition: Good

Moved: no | X | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 12,320 SF

Setting: Urban residential near the commercial part of Elm Street on a large city lot with side and back yard, asphalt parking area on street edge..

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

[SOMERVILLE]

[16 LINDEN AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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___ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Built in 1900 and clad with aluminum siding, 16 Linden Avenue is a typical example of a three-decker residence in Somerville. This building type was a practical solution to the house issues of the day, providing efficient, reasonably priced housing to families whose "bread winners" commuted to jobs in Boston and surrounding communities.

Rectangular in form, the building rises three stories from a brick foundation to a flat roof. The main facade is characterized by a flat entrance bay and a three-story polygonal bay, while the side walls extend the equivalent of five bays with a polygonal. The entablature and bracketed wooden cornice are the only indications of the original buildings style along with the front door and paired side windows. In general, the standard size windows are fully enframed and contain 1/1 double-hung wood sash.



HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

In many Boston area neighborhoods, the three-decker is the rule rather than the exception for housing built during the period of 1890 to 1930. Indeed, in neighborhoods such as South Boston, Dorchester and parts of Roxbury, the three-decker was the multi-family building type of choice to house the electric trolley commuters. During this period, however, in Somerville, the two-family residence was built in much greater numbers, particularly in the western section of the City. The reasons for the limited representation of three-deckers in Somerville are expressed in a *Somerville Journal* article of November 19, 1915. The author of the article entitled "About Three-Deckers" reported that representatives from local organizations met with Somerville Aldermen to discuss the need to enact a law that would restrict three-decker construction because of their typically "cheap" construction, lack of aesthetic appeal and tendency to house "less than quality people."

The three-decker as a building type, came to the fore around 1880. Both Boston and Worcester claim the three-decker as a building type that originated in their neighborhoods. The term "three-decker" is said to have originated in maritime terminology in reference to a multi-masted ship with three decks. Typically, three deckers have porches projecting from the main and rear facades of these boxy, rectangular, three-story buildings. The construction of three deckers accelerated after 1890 as electric trolleys reached far into the neighborhoods and near suburbs of Boston. The Queen Anne and Colonial Revival architectural

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styles were by far the most widely represented within the designs of three-family buildings. The three-decker persisted in many areas well into the early Automobile Age of the 1920s.

This building does not appear on the 1900 Stadley Map. City Directories however, list Samuel R McGuire, a Boston Salesman who actually had a telephone in 1900 as the earliest known resident. The 1903 Directory also includes Manuel D Neves, Jeweler and James D McDonald, telegrapher as the other tenants. In 1908, Samuel McGuire shares the building with 2 other salesmen, Robert Anderson and Marcus Holmes.

By 1913, along with McGuire, John G Poppelwell, machine printer is in residence. And in 1918, only Jeremiah Donovan, trainman on the B&M Railroad is listed with his wife, Catherine.

The 1924 Directory indicates that the building is now fully occupied by Emily Harris, Inspector; Odin P Hokanson, toolmaker and his wife Ruth L; Francis X Hurley, clerk and his wife Isabel M (they are noted for having a telephone); and Mrs Delia J Murphy of no listed occupation. 1929 the only listed resident is William H Roche, Jr, who works as a packer.

In 1933, another salesman, Fred Harkness is the only person listed. He has a telephone. By 1939, the building is once again fully occupied by Albert J Boyle (38), unemployed; Arthur McNally (35), chauffeur and his wife Mary (28); Francis L Noonan (21), WPA; his parents John J (60), teamster and Delia (50); James H Shannon (38) oilman and his wife Rose (38); Julia Borean (60), at home; and Irene Pike, housewife.

During the 1940s, the McNally family, the Noonan family and the Shannon family continue to live there.

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