



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:	56 Line Street
Case:	HPC 2014.088
Applicant Name:	Cambport Group LLC
Date of Application:	October 17, 2014
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	November 18, 2014



I. Historical Association

Historical Context: In 1852, the town is still largely agricultural with some development around Sullivan and Union Squares. Beacon, Washington, and Line Streets are sparsely developed with 9 houses on the Somerville side of Line Street between Washington Street and Cambridge Street. At this time the street is known as Lynde Street. One of these houses is very likely to be 56 Line Street. The 1869 City Directory lists Thomas McDermott, laborer as living on Lynde Street, near Washington. Most of the residents along the street found in the 1869 Directory are categorized as laborers.

Thomas McDermott is noted as the owner on both the 1874 and 1884 Hopkins Atlases. By 1874 Smith Avenue and Cooney Street are created with more parcels developed, but still largely undeveloped on north side of Beacon St. McDermott was not found in the 1890 or 1895 City Directories.

By 1895 the property is shown to be owned by Josephine Williamson. She is not listed in the in the Directory, therefore it is likely that this was rental property for her.

The 1903 City Directory, the first that gives a street index, lists Manuel Ameral, laborer. He is not found in earlier directories.

The 1910 City Directory indicates that the house is now owned by Lawrence L Yore, laborer with Andrew and Patrick Yore in residence, also listed as laborers. By 1915 Lawrence has become a watchman and by 1924, he is listed as a smelter and married to Julia. The 1940 Directory lists John P. Yore, laborer, Anna C. Yore, bookkeeper, and Mary A. Yore as a bookbinder. The 1940 census lists John P. Yore, aged 28 as head of household, illegible, working in coal, his sister Mary A. aged 34 as a sewer in book binding and third member of the family not listed. During World War II John Yore was in the Army. He had jury duty in 1948 and was listed as a mechanic at that time. He later became a chauffeur and then a truck driver. John and his sister Mary are listed in

the directory through 1965. Deeds indicate that Mary died in 1993 and the house was sold as part of her estate in 1994.

Evolution of Site: A building most likely to be what is now 56 Line Street is illustrated in existing location along with houses on either side on the 1852 Draper Map. It is one of 9 buildings on the Somerville side of the street. By 1874 and 1884, the street was only slightly more densely populated Beacon Street is shown to have larger homes on larger grounds. By 1895, the Bromley Atlas shows Line Street almost fully developed. Today Line Street is dominated by 3-deckers with a few late simplified Queen Anne style homes and few workers cottage from the 1850s still extant. Maps show that originally there had been other workers cottages immediately to the west. These have been razed giving the cottage a larger side yard than it had in the 1850s.

Architectural Description: The 1 bay by 4 bay 1 ½-story workers cottage sits end gable to the street. The building was resided in vinyl in 1995 as found in the building permit records. The roof has asphalt shingles. The windows are all 1/1 double glazed vinyl. Decorative shutters have been applied to the south and west sides. There is a small window in the eaves on the west (entry) side. The north end of the building has a door located to the west with a small window centered on the ground floor and a double 1/1 window in the gable. The windows on the east and north side do not have decorative shutters. The doors are metal. The foundation is parged with cement. The side (main) entry is reached by a Trex, Azek and vinyl porch.

Summary: 56 Line Street is a workers cottage originally constructed in the mid-19th century. It has consistently been inhabited by blue collar workers and their families through at least 1993. There has been little alteration of form but has lost most of its original exterior fabric.

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 **do not** find 56 Line Street to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events.

Staff **do** find the subject building associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its association with laborers and the early development of that section of the City.

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 56 Line Street begins as a workers cottage in the mid-19th century.

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 identification

and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

- a. Location: The building has not been moved.
- b. Design: The form is unadorned with a gable end toward the street. Fenestration has been altered although it is likely that the openings have not been grossly altered.
- c. Materials: The building is a wood frame structure with an asphalt shingle roof. The foundation has a cement parging probably over brick. The windows and siding are modern vinyl.
- d. Alterations: The foundation has a cement parging probably over brick. The windows and siding are modern vinyl. Staff did not see indications of original materials beneath the existing vinyl clapboard.

Evaluation of Integrity: Despite the alterations to the building, the retention of form and location give some sense of what workers housing was like in the 1850s.

Does the subject parcel represent a distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction?

56 Line Street is a workers cottage. There still remains a few other workers cottages on Line Street also probably dating to the same period of the City development. The lack of a consistent type of building on Line Street indicates how the street developed over time. The types of buildings are however, consistent with housing for the working class.

Does the subject parcel represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or region due to its singular physical characteristics or landscape?

The building type is one that is recognizably a workers cottage in the simplicity of form and orientation to the street. It is not distinguished in its singularity.

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 *Finding 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 56 Line Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its association with laborers and the early development of that section of the City in a neighborhood of workers housing.

III. 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 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, circa 1852, is at least 50 years old.

AND

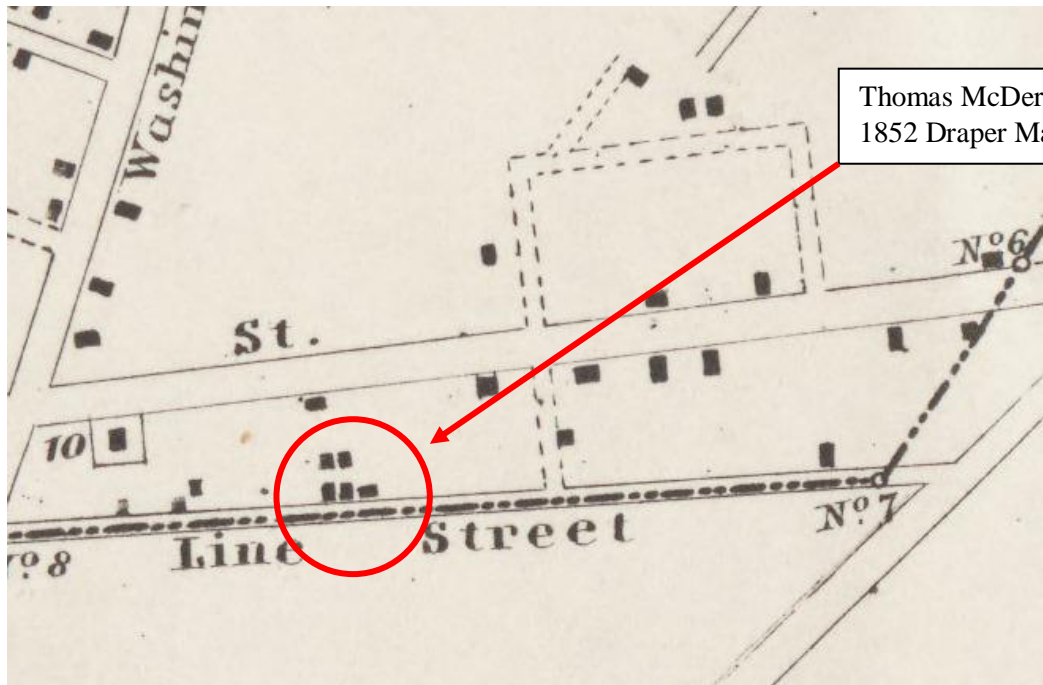
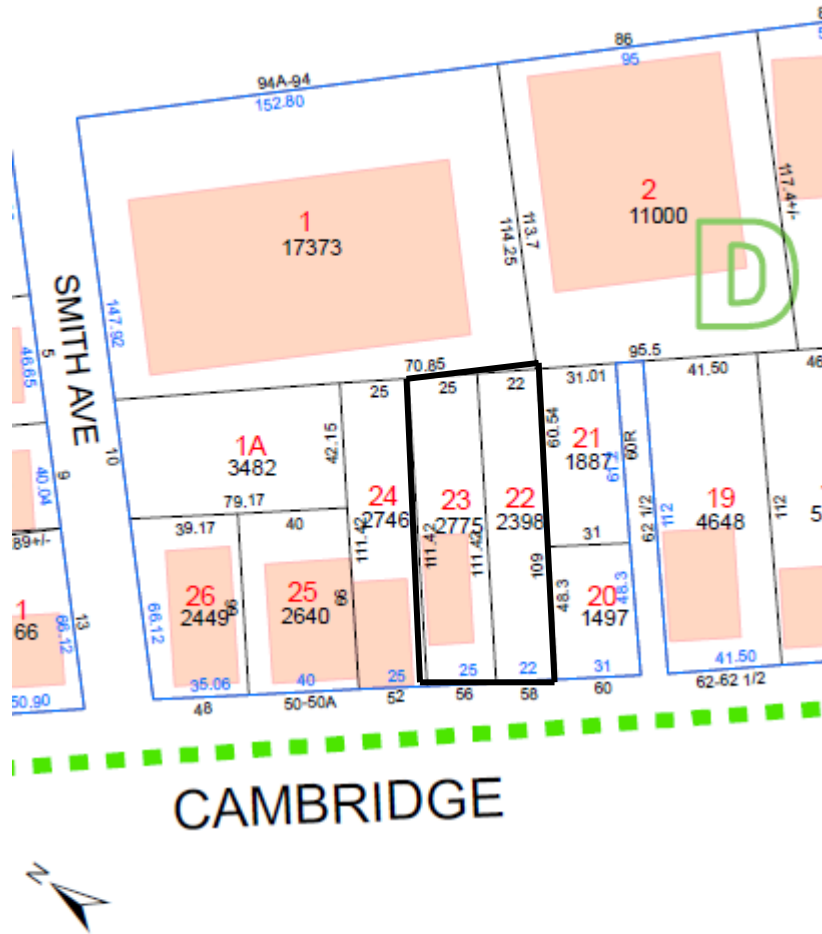
For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.

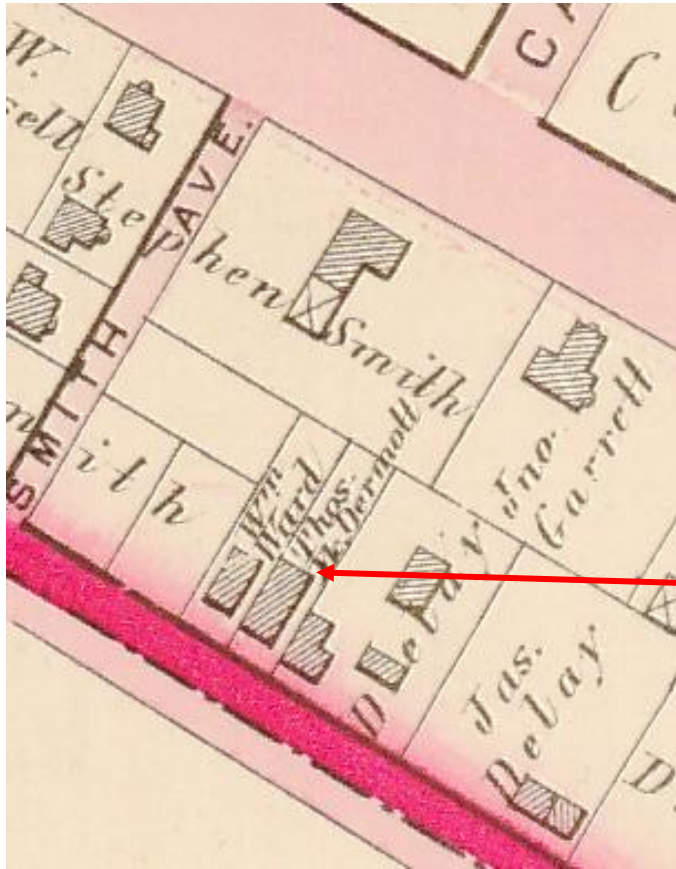
(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 56 Line Street 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.**

OR

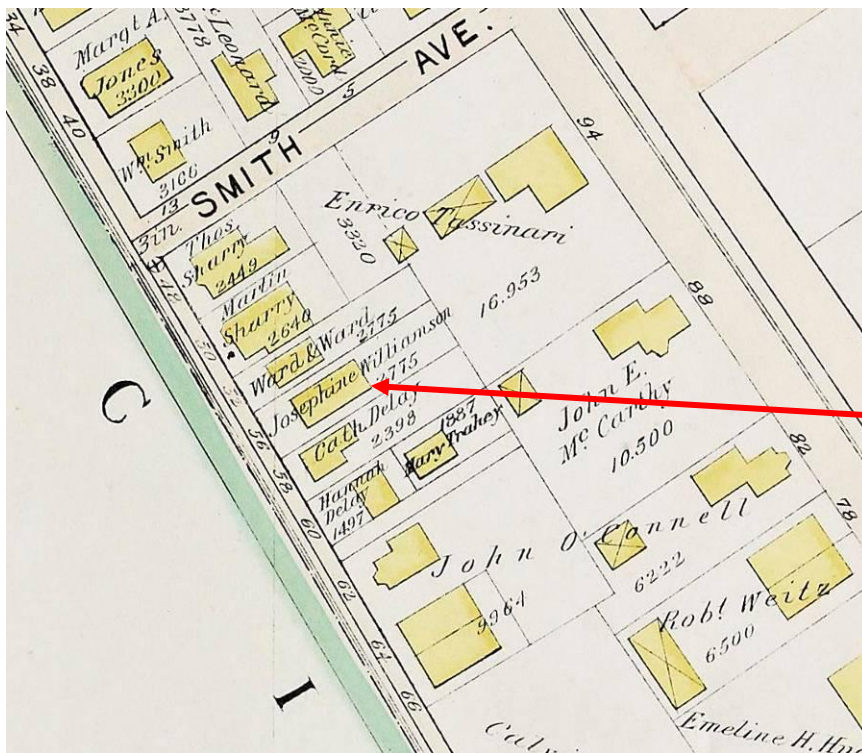
(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 56 Line Street historically and architecturally significant.**

56 Line Street





Thomas McDermott House
1874 Hopkins Atlas



Thomas McDermott House
1895 Bromley Atlas

