



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site: 46 Murdock Street
Case: HPC 2014.059
Applicant Name: Scott Zink
Date of Application: August 6, 2014
Recommendation: Not Significant
Hearing Date: November 20, 2012



I. Historical Association

Context:

Clyde, Murdock, and Warwick streets developed as a small neighborhood of houses for brickyard employees as the Boston Brick Company was located nearby on Cedar Street. Brick making in Somerville was in its prime from 1860-1880, and by 1900 only one company, the Sanborn Brick Company, remained.

Historical Description:

Murdock Street is referenced in the directory of 1869 and Jeremiah Murphy, a laborer, is listed as owner of a house "6th from the left on Murdock near LRR." This building first appears on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas as a simple rectangular building under ownership of J. Murphy. Listed as a Middlesex Bleachery worker later in the century, Murphy is noted to have moved to Kent Court by 1884.

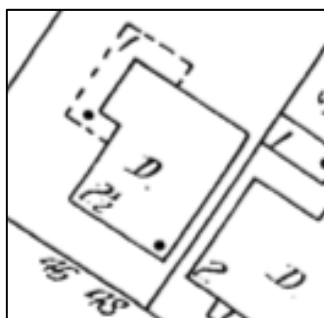
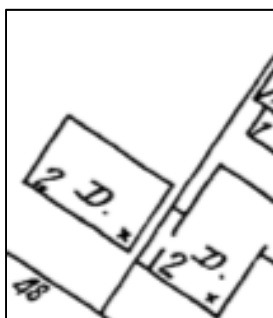
The Hopkins Map of 1884 (Plate 12) illustrates this building and adjacent land with a barn is under the ownership of Bank. Cross-directory research is not available to provide names of the occupants who lived at this location while under ownership of Bank; though it also seems plausible that the owner name could identify that a bank currently owns the land and buildings. In 1895, the Stadly map illustrates the property is under ownership of Joshua T. Nowell.

Directory research from 1903 identifies an Earnest E. Steadman, teamster, with a house at 46 Murdock Street. The 1900 Sanborn Map (sheet 35) continues to note a two-story rectangular dwelling. John Ciccolo, hairdresser on Broadway, is listed at this location by 1910 as well as Jamie, Tony, and Rigo Ciccolo who share the same occupation. A permit was granted to J.Ciccolo in 1905 for “one wood one family dwelling with a pitched roof.” This identifies that the existing building went through a large change and was likely converted into a two-family as the Ciccolo and Cancelliere families are both listed here in 1925. The 1933 Sanborn (Vol.2, sheet 241) identifies the building as 2 1/2 stories with a rear and side addition as well as a rear porch addition. This map and existing conditions suggest the roofline was altered and that the main massing approximately doubled in size. The Ciccolo family is listed at this location until the 1950s when two new working-class families take up residency, the Greene and Lytle families.

Left: 1900 Sanborn map

Right: 1934 Sanborn map

Below: 46 Murdock Street, assessor photo



Architectural Description:

The subject property, c.1869, is a 2½ story two-family structure that is three bays wide with an unknown style. The structure has an unusual roof line, multiple additions and various material alterations. The Sanborn maps illustrate the building underwent a form and massing change by 1933. The original massing is not able to be determined through an examination of the existing building. However, the existing building has an unusual roofline due to previous alterations to create a half-story as well as porch and exterior stair additions. The exterior is clad in vinyl siding as well as windows and doors. There may still be some original material beneath existing material.

Summary:

The building was constructed c.1869 as single-family working class housing. The building appears to have been significantly altered in form and massing prior to 1933, likely when this became a two-family dwelling in 1905. Style is unknown and various additions and material alterations since 1933 continue to hide further details.

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) can be found at the end of the next section.*

(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, such as *Somerville Past and Present*, Staff **do not** find 46 Murdock Street 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.

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 46 Murdock Street begins at the time of construction, c. 1869 and extends into the twentieth century as this dwelling has evolved and continues to house the working class.

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 location of the subject dwelling is along the right side boundary of a long and narrow lot on Murdock Street. This location has not been altered. The subject building is not located within a context of buildings and structures which, together, create a setting that reflects the character of the place in which the subject building played a historical role, i.e. working class housing for laborers of the Boston Brick Company. The surrounding buildings are a mix of new apartment buildings and altered workers cottages.

b. Design: The design of the original dwelling is difficult to understand due to the form and massing changes. While even later additions such as enclosed porches and stairwells mask the modified massing, the 1905 modified building appears to have been a 2 1/2 story side-gable dwelling. The main entrance has been relocated to an enclosed porch, so it is difficult to determine if the two-bay fenestration pattern is original to the modified dwelling.

The spatial relationship of this dwelling to other buildings and the streetscape is similar as the dwelling is located on the side parcel boundary along the Murdock streetscape, which is a precedent within this working class neighborhood to locate dwellings along a side lot line.

c. Materials: The materials that compose this dwelling represent preferences of those who created the dwelling as well as later owners and occupants. While a majority of the material has been replaced, such as windows and doors, original materials may still exist beneath siding.

d. Alterations: The 1905 alteration to likely add a dwelling unit altered this building in form and massing according to Sanborn maps. This building has also seen multiple additions since this 1905.

Evaluation of Integrity:

This building has undergone a form and massing change since the original date of construction, c. 1869, making an analysis of the original building not possible at this time. However, an analysis of the existing building, a 1905 two-family side-gable dwelling, illustrates several additions and material alterations. While this building has evolved to house more working class families simultaneously, and later alterations sometimes become significant in their own right, this building has been modified in form and massing more than once. Neither the original nor the existing interior plan and fenestration pattern are clear. The surrounding streetscape is minimally intact due to large infill development and alterations to existing buildings.

Findings on 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 assesses the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff find 46 Murdock Street historically and architecturally significant.

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 on further information provided to Staff or through additional 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 1869, 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/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 recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 46 Murdock 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 do not find 46 Murdock Street historically and architecturally significant.**

