



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	92-96 Prospect Street / 205 Tremont Street
Case:	HPC 2013.016
Applicant Name:	Two Squares, LLC
Date of Application:	April 23, 2013
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	May 21, 2013

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**I. Historical Association**

*Architectural Description:*

This c.1917 garage is a National Register eligible masonry structure in the Art Deco style. Rectangular in form, this building fronts both Prospect and Tremont streets. The structure is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, for association with the development of automobile commercial services, and under Criteria C, as a large, well executed, and preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century private garage, which were common throughout the City.

The primary façade on Prospect Street notes an arched entry with granite curb stones and flanking beveled granite piers. The parapet above the entry has a rounded arch with a granite capped roofline, or coping, and a center cornerstone noting the 1917 construction date. Each corner of this façade has a wide brick pier with a stepped parapet that is detailed by granite and decorated brick trim. Large window

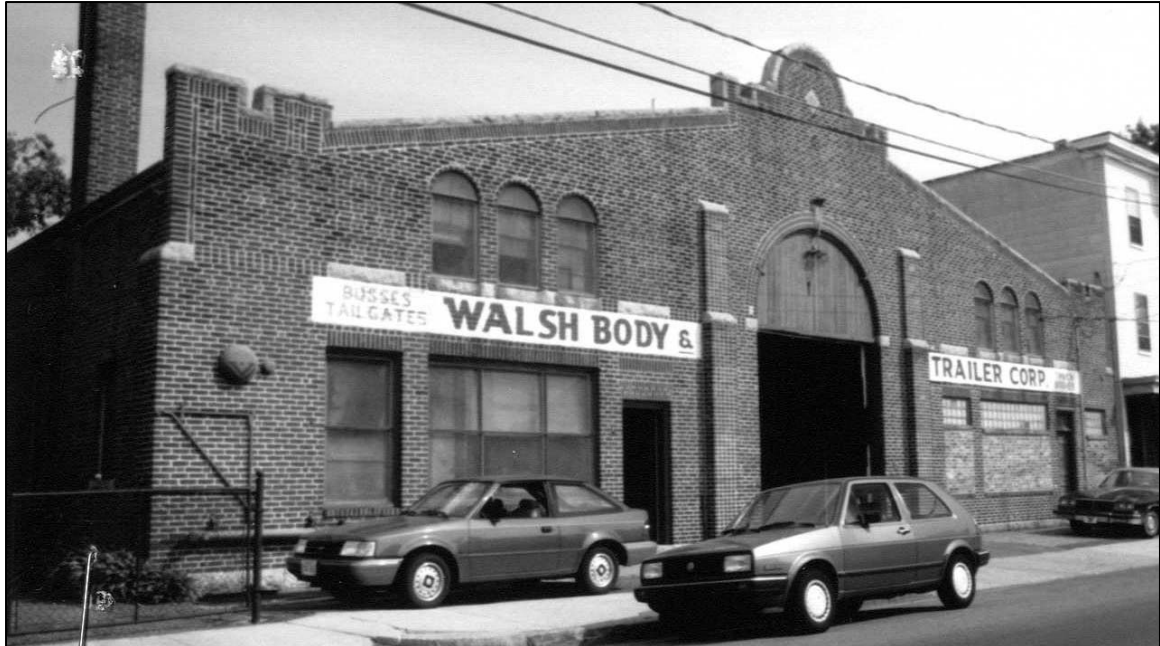


*Top: Prospect Street façade  
Bottom: Tremont Street façade*



openings, infilled with glass block, are located on either side of the main entry; these openings are each flanked by smaller windows and a door. Two groups of three arched windows are located in the half-story above with granite sills.

The secondary façade along Tremont Street features a center pediment, but is otherwise similar to the primary façade in that it also is symmetrical with consistent detailing that includes an arched entry with granite curb stones and granite piers, arched windows with granite sills, and glass block infilled windows. The main difference between the two façades is the shape of the center parapet/pediment.



*92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont Street - Prospect Street façade, c.1980*

*Historical Description:*

The structure is first listed in the 1925 reverse directory as 94 Prospect Street and is identified as O'Neill's Garage. A building permit issued to O'Neil in 1921 notes the construction of a brick garage. This establishment is under ownership of James Powers and Arthur Bradley. While Powers is not listed in the directory, Bradley is listed as a Cambridge resident.

The 1929-30 directory lists this structure as the Carciero Angelo Garage; Angelo Carciero lives in a house at 52 Sydney Street. This subject structure is not illustrated on a map until the 1933 Sanborn Map (Vol.1, Sheet 19). This map identifies the building is a garage with a capacity for 80 cars and a delineated space behind the Prospect Street façade that was likely office space. This map also notes the existence of skylights, reinforced concrete floors, and "pilastered walls."

The directory of 1940 notes the establishment of Fred's Motor Transportation at this location. Proprietor, Fred Stoddard, is a Lexington resident. The updated Sanborn Map, 1933-1950, illustrates an auto body shop at this location, the Walsh Body and Trailer Corporation. This is also the historic name noted in the MHC survey (SMV.673, 1980). A building permit issued to Walsh Body Trailer Corp. in 1948 notes the repair of fire damage to the roof. In 1958, a complaint was brought against the Walsh Body and Trailer Corporation to the Board of Alderman

with “regard to the objectionable conduct of their operations, which is causing annoyance and inconvenience to the property owners of the neighborhood.”

Several building permits were issued in more recent years (1980s and 1990s) for a variety of the alterations existent today, such as the overhead doors, new openings, roof repairs, and masonry repairs.

*Context/Evolution:*

The subject structure is twentieth century infill development in a predominantly residential neighborhood that consists of a mix of single, two- and three-family dwellings.

*Summary:*

This structure is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, for association with the development of automobile commercial services, and under Criteria C, as a large, well executed, and preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century private garage, which were common throughout the City. Both façades are similarly detailed and the building represents twentieth century infill development within this residential neighborhood.

### **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 92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont 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.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to an association with the development of automobile commercial services and as a large, well executed, and preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century private garage, which were common throughout the City.

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## **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 92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont Street begins with the date of construction, c.1917, and continues into the present day, as the use for this structure has remained consistent throughout the twentieth 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 subject structure is located along three of four lot lines and the Prospect Street façade has an approximate 10 foot setback from the sidewalk. The location of the structure is original and has not been altered. The adjacent parking lot, according to map research, seems to have always been associated with the use of this property.
- b. Design: The original design of this structure remains clearly evident. While several windows and doors have been replaced or removed, their original location is still understood. According to the National Register eligibility statement, this structure has well executed and preserved Art Deco style façades.
- c. Materials: Masonry materials predominantly compose the exterior of this structure while the interior is composed of steel trusses and a concrete floor. Later materials added include the glass block infill windows, steel doors, and aluminum roll-up garage doors.
- d. Alterations: This structure has undergone a number of small modifications over the years, specifically with regard to the removed or replaced windows and doors. Although the replacement/removal of these components reduces the remaining integrity of this Art Deco structure, the openings have been preserved and the design intent of each façade remains clear.

***Evaluation of Integrity:***

This National Register eligible structure continues to represent a well executed example of a c.1917 Art Deco private garage. Although several windows and doors have been removed and/or replaced, the original intent of design, for both façades, is still evident. In addition, the use for this property has remained consistent since the time of construction.

**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 92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to an association with the development of automobile commercial services and as a large, well executed, and preserved example of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century private garage, which were common throughout the City.

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### 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. However, the structure is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is significant under Criteria A and C.

**OR**

(B) The structure, circa 1917, 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, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont 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 92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont Street historically and architecturally significant.**

92-96 Prospect Street/205 Tremont Street

