



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

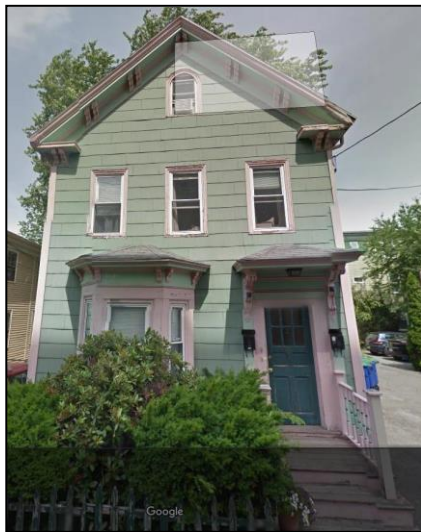
MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT

Sites:	5 Smith Avenue & 102 Beacon Street
Cases:	HPC 2015.082 & HPC 2015.083
Applicant Name:	Fred Starikov
Owner Name:	Richard Mauser
Agent Name:	Sean O'Donovan, Esq.
Date of Application:	November 29, 2015
Date of Significance:	Tuesday, December 15, 2015
Recommendation:	Preferably Preserved*
Hearing Date:	Tuesday, January 26, 2016

**A determination of Preferably Preserved begins a nine month Demolition Delay, a period during which the Applicant is required to work with Preservation Staff and the HPC on alternative plans.*



5 Smith Avenue, 2014 Google earth image



102 Beacon Street, Somerville Assessor's image. Note: the landscaping and color of the structure have changed since this photo was taken.

I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, December 15, 2015, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that the c. 1871 Italianate dwelling at 5 Smith Avenue is historically **Significant**. Per Section 2.17.B, this decision is founded on the following criteria:

Section 2.17.B - The structure is at least 50 years old

and:

(ii) The structure is historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures.

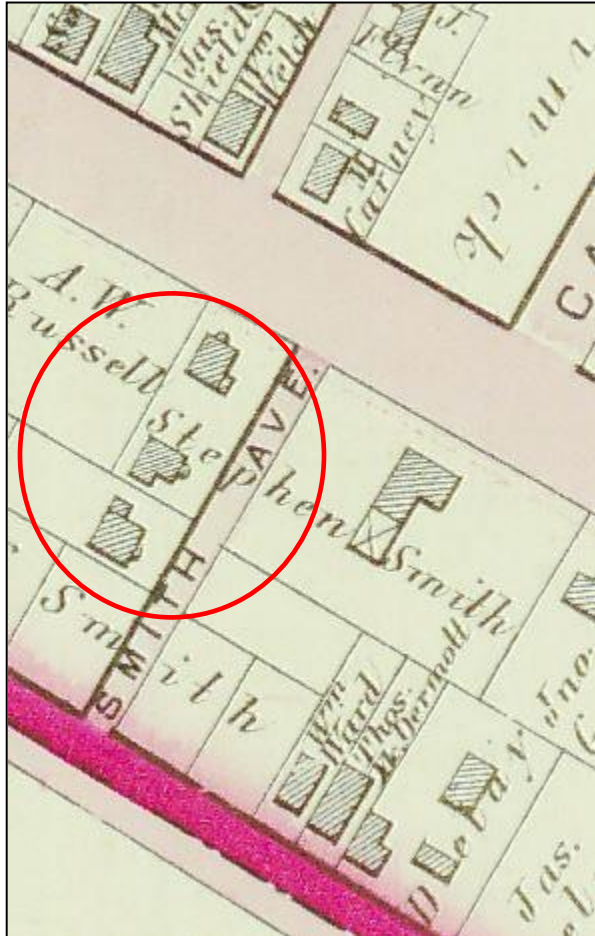
According to *Criteria 2.17.B*, listed above, historic map and directory research identifies the structures as a c. 1871 Italianate dwelling houses that are remarkably intact representatives of the 19th century working-to-middle-class housing stock and represent some of the earliest residential development on Smith Avenue and the corner of Beacon Street.

In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings that, due to an association of the property with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City *and* due to its association with workers, laborers, and the residential and commercial development of this area of the City *and* due to the unusual occurrence that 5 Smith and 102 Beacon are still extant and in excellent condition along with their triplet, 9 Smith Avenue, the Commission found the building to be historically Significant

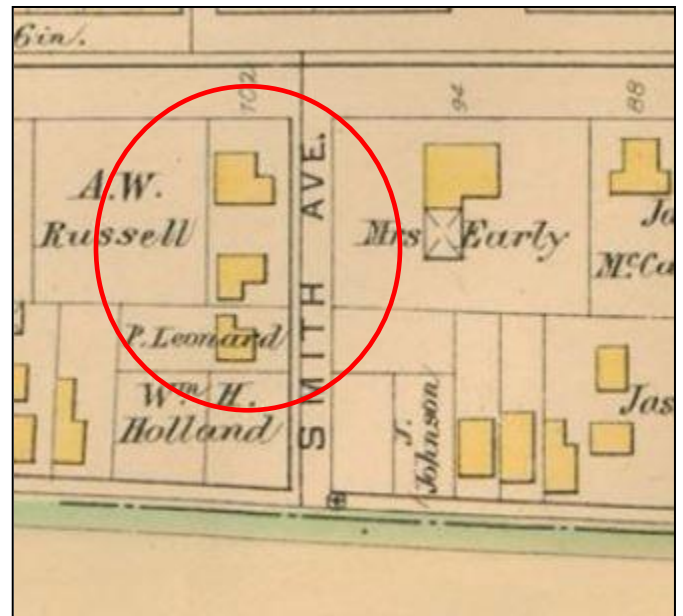
Further, in accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission agreed with Staff findings that it is extremely rare in Somerville to have a cluster of similar buildings such as these still standing and in excellent repair, retaining the majority of their original character-defining features, form, style, and massing.

The period of significance for 5 Smith Ave (and 102 Beacon along with their triplet, the single-structure LHD of 9 Smith Avenue) begins c. 1871 during the time that Smith Avenue and this portion of Beacon Street were first being laid out (1869-1874). The use of these structures was as two-family buildings. As each of the buildings retains rental units of 2+ each, the use as multi-“family” residential has remained quite consistent over the last 145 years.

1874 Hopkins Plate 24-25 showing 9 Smith, 5 Smith and 102 Beacon already extant. Note that 5 Smith and 102 Beacon are both owned by Stephen Smith.



1884 Hopkins Plate 8 showing 9 Smith, 5 Smith and 102 Beacon already extant. Note that 5 Smith and 102 Beacon remain under common ownership at this time as well.



II. Additional Information

Additional Research:

Additional research has found that this immediate area, specifically the small area of Smith Avenue and Beacon Street, was heavily populated with Irish immigrants and first-generation Irish-Americans during the latter quarter of the 19th century. Men in these households worked in the trades while the majority of the women kept house. The 1895 Bromley plate (immediately below) shows interesting changes in that the Beacon and Smith lots were now split and women were the property owners: Annie McCord owned Smith and Bridget Cavanagh owned Beacon.



The table below outlines the names, ages and occupations of several of the occupants of both 102 Beacon and 5 Smith at several points during the last 145 years. Sources include census records and Somerville directories. While initially the residents were consistently Irish / Irish-American during much of the last quarter of the 19th century, we start to see changes in countries of origin once we get well into the 20th century; pattern changes which appear to be consistent with immigration patterns following the First World War.

LOCATION	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	SOURCE
Beacon	Mrs. Stephen Smith		Keeping House		1876 Directory
Beacon / Smith	Daniel Haley*	50	Laborer	Ireland	1880 Census/ 1884 Directory
Beacon / Smith	Jane Haley (wife of Daniel)	55	Keeping House	Ireland	1880 Census
Beacon / Smith	Josephine Haley (daughter of Daniel)	18	Dress Maker	Massachusetts	1880 Census
Beacon / Smith	Ellen Jane (surname)	12	At School	Massachusetts	1880 Census

	<i>illegible</i>)(niece of Daniel)				
Beacon / Smith	John Rowe**	26	Stone Cutter	Massachusetts (parents born Ireland)	1880 Census
Beacon / Smith	Mary (wife of John)	25	Keeping House	Massachusetts (parents born Ireland)	1880 Census
Beacon / Smith	Patrick Leonard**	55	House Carpenter	Ireland	1880 Census / 1884 Directory
Beacon / Smith	Mary Ann (wife of Patrick)	46	Keeping House	Massachusetts (parents born Ireland)	1880 Census
Beacon	William Simpson		Laborer		1881 Directory
Beacon	William Dwyer		Cabinet Maker		1884 Directory
Beacon	William Smith		Cabinet Maker		1884 Directory
Beacon	Peter Hartman	73	None	Germany	1930 Census
Beacon	Carl (son of Peter)	32	Cabinet Maker	Massachusetts	1930 Census
Beacon	Clara (daughter of Peter)	29	None	Massachusetts	1930 Census
Smith	(Illegible) Alberghini	57	Milk Delivery	Italy	1930 Census
Smith	Clara (wife)	47	None	Italy	1930 Census
Smith	Armando (son)	26	Truck Driver	Italy	1930 Census
Smith	(Illegible) (son)	18	None	Massachusetts	1930 Census
Smith	Elana (daughter)	15	None	Massachusetts	1930 Census
Smith	William Hughman	40	Shipping Clerk	Massachusetts (parents born Germany)	1930 Census
Smith	Charlotte (wife)	28	None	Massachusetts (parents born Germany)	1930 Census
Smith	Phyllis (daughter of William)	14	None	Massachusetts	1930 Census

* By 1884, Daniel Haley had moved into 5 Smith Avenue.

** By 1884, John Rowe had moved into 5 Smith Avenue (recall that both addresses were used as 2-family structures).

***By 1884, Patrick Leonard had moved from Beacon street and now owned the house that is now 9 Smith Avenue, the single structure LHD (source: 1884 Directory).

III. Preferably Preserved

If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d)

A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:

- a) *How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?*

The form, massing, style, design and detail found in both 5 Smith Avenue and 102 Beacon Street remain very much intact from the time of their construction. The door hoods, window arrangements, roof pitch, eaves, and Italianate brackets remain extant. Further, as noted elsewhere, it is extremely rare to find a cluster of nearly identical structures (5 Smith and 102 Beacon along with their “triplet”, 9 Smith) all extant and in a remarkable state of preservation with regard to exterior architectural features.

Individually and taken together, these buildings reflect stylistic trends now available to working class and lower-middle class residents of the City. These stylistic trends are consistent with other structures throughout the city. It is not possible to over-emphasize how rare it is to see all of these structures still standing and still speaking in testimony to the early development of this portion of the City and to the impact their early inhabitants had on the economic, social and cultural development of the City.

- b) *What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.*

As noted in other sections of this report, Staff finds that the structures retain a high level of integrity including form, massing, style, design, detail and materials, along with location.

- c) *What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?*

The Commission determined that these structures are significant due to their integrity as workers cottages, which is clearly visible in its scale, massing, form. They are further historically significant due to their association with the early development of the Smith/Beacon areas of the City and are among the first residential structures built here at the time that Smith Avenue was first laid out between 1869 – 1874.

- d) *What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?*

The subject parcels are visible from Smith Avenue and Beacon Street and, to some degree from Line Street where it intersects with Smith.

- e) *What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?*

Workers cottages are becoming more rare throughout the City. A cluster of nearly-identical workers’ cottages is nearly unheard of in the City.

Upon a consideration of the above criteria (a-e), is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?

The Commission determined that the structures are significant due to their history as workers’ cottages, which is visible in their scale, massing, form, and simplicity of design and detail. They are historically significant as a cluster as well and offer a view into the earliest development

stages of this part of the City as it began to see job creation and the construction of associated workers' housing in the latter half of the 19th century.

Significance is also due to the ability of the subject parcels to convey integrity regarding location and form and design, specifically with regard to the Italianate style that became popular during this portion of the 19th century.

The Commission found that integrity of these historically 2-family dwellings is retained within the location, form, design, style, detailing, and also the clustering of the structures. The structures retain integrity of location through siting and orientation as well as through spatial relationships to other buildings along this section of Smith Avenue and Beacon Street. The subject structures retain a significant level of historical and architectural integrity.

With the entirety of the considerations taken into account, Staff finds the potential demolition of 5 Smith Avenue and 102 Beacon Street detrimental to the heritage of the City.

IV. 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 hearing for a Determination of Preferably Preserved. 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.

In accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), Section 4.D, Staff find the potential demolition of the subject structure detrimental to the heritage of the City, and consequently in the best interest of the public to preserve or rehabilitate. Therefore, due to the rarity of this type of residential dwelling within the City, its consistent form and massing, **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission finds:**

5 Smith Avenue PREFERABLY PRESERVED

AND

102 Beacon Avenue PREFERABLY PRESERVED

If the Historic Preservation Commission determines the structure is Preferably Preserved, the Building Inspector may issue a demolition permit at anytime, upon receipt of written advice from the Commission that there is no reasonable likelihood that either the owner or some other person or group is willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore the subject building or structure (Ord. 2003-05, Section 4.5).