



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
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*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	13 Warwick Street
Case:	HPC 2015.023
Applicant Name:	Sal Querusio
Date of Application:	May 22, 2015
Date of Significance:	July 21, 2015
Recommendation:	Preferably Preserved
Hearing Date:	August 18, 2015



*\*A determination of Preferably Preserved begins a nine month Demolition Delay.*

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**I. Meeting Summary: Determination of Significance**

On Tuesday, May 22, 2015, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 12 Warwick Street is Significant. Per Section 2.17.B, this decision is found on the following criteria:

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

**and**

(i) *The structure is 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;*

**and / or**

(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 structure as c. 1929 Industrial building.

In accordance with *Criteria (i)*, listed above, the Commission determined the building 'Significant' due to an association of the property with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its association with immigration and an important catalyst for the acclimatization and

incorporation of unskilled workers into the community, spurring the development of workers housing and other businesses.

In accordance with *Criteria (ii)*, listed above, the Commission also found the subject building historically and architecturally significant due to the continuity of an important local business under the aegis of a single family. The original building is clearly typical of modest industrial architecture of the 1920s.

The period of significance for 13 Warwick begins with its construction circa 1924 and continues through to the closure of the business at that site. Royal White Laundry is a business established by immigrants that has provided a livelihood for generations of unskilled laborers and continues to do so.

## II. Additional Information

### *Additional Research:*

- Clyde, Murdock and Warwick streets, known as the Patch neighborhood, developed as a small neighborhood of working class housing beginning in the mid nineteenth century. Asa Murdock, a Cambridge brickyard owner and real estate speculator, owned tracts of land in this neighborhood. Architecturally, several of the simple houses in this neighborhood are distinctive due to their high brick foundations and uniform three-bay façades, such as 13 and 25 Clyde Street. These are similar to the 1820-1850 brick workers houses of Northwest Cambridge.

The 1852 Draper map shows one house located along Clyde Street and the 1859 Walling map of Boston and Vicinity illustrates eight houses along the south side of Clyde Street. Clyde Street developed as early as 1852, while Murdock and Warwick were not developed for approximately another twenty years (1871-72).

- No additional information was found on the early history of Royal White Laundry. A form B from 1990 states *The Royal White Laundry complex has four buildings three of which are ca. 1960 concrete block. The one story building fronting on Warwick Street which dates from ca. 1929 is constructed of concrete block with a brick facade, flat roof, and no parapet. The facade has sign "Royal White Laundry" painted on the brick, a garage bay and several doors and windows that have been altered.*

*The Royal White Laundry was established around 1928. The current facility consists of three main buildings, one of which appears to date from 1928. When the Royal White Laundry was built it was one of 12 steam laundries in the City. A competitor, the White Cross Laundry, was located nearby at 154 Cedar Street.*

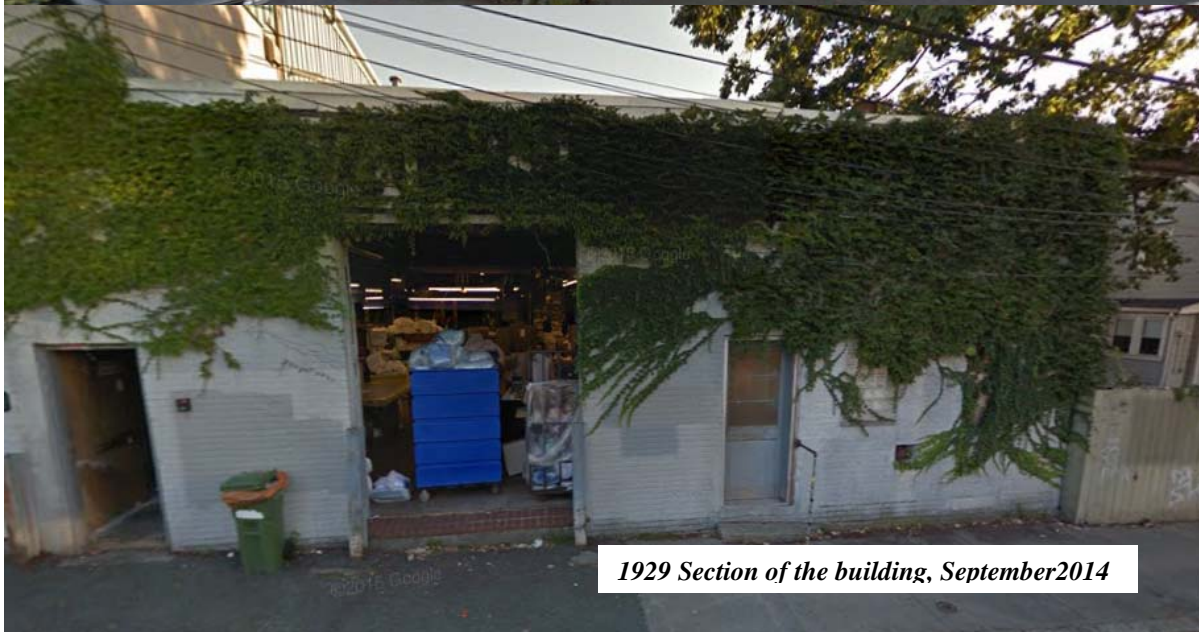
- Articles were found for more recent separation of Royal Institutional and Royal White Laundries.

### *Site Visit:*

- The Royal White building is located just one lot in from Cedar Street. Houses on both sides of Warwick Street with similar scale but slightly different massings form a counterpoint to the large modern portion of the laundry building. A comparison between the 2014 and the 2013 Google street views show how the alteration of the neighborhood is changing. As recently as 2013, the Warwick streetscape is the only streetscape in the Patch neighborhood that remains almost fully intact. Maxwell's Green creates a street wall at the east end of the street and industrial buildings encroach on the corner of Cedar Street; however, Warwick Street still retains the original development pattern and variety of building types. Clyde Street has seen some infill and several building alterations, but remains moderately intact while Murdock Street is predominantly composed of infill buildings.



*Modern section of the building*



*1929 Section of the building, September 2014*





*Royal Institutional Laundry*



#### *Comparable Structures:*

There are numerous concrete block and brick industrial buildings scattered throughout the City but predominantly along the railway lines and major arterials.

### **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:*

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

Small concrete block and brick buildings are scattered throughout the City. The building is of an industrial nature with simple unornamented form. Large garage doors are used for loading laundry and vehicular access. The larger more modern building shares similar attributes. While the heritage of immigrant and unskilled labor can be seen during the day to day observation of activities around the property, it is not clear that the building's exterior itself tells this story.

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

The Commission found that integrity of this industrial building is retained within the location and form, as well as, integrity of design. The structure retains integrity of location through siting and orientation as well as through spatial relationships to other buildings along Warwick Street.

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

The Commission determined that this structure is Significant an association of the property with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its with immigration and an important catalyst for the acclimatization and incorporation of unskilled workers into the community, spurring the development of workers housing and other businesses.

The Commission also found the subject building *historically* and architecturally significant due to the continuity of an important local business under the aegis of a single family. The original building is clearly typical of modest industrial architecture of the 1920s.

The period of significance for 13 Warwick begins with its construction circa 1924 and continues through to the closure of the business at that site. Royal White Laundry is a business established by immigrants that has provided a livelihood for generations of unskilled laborers and continues to do so.

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

The subject parcel holds a large section of Warwick Street close to Cedar Street. The railroad that had once run alongside the street has been replaced with an extension of the Community Path. This right of way extends from the Cambridge line near Arlington to Lowell Street and will eventually run all the way to Boston. Neighborhoods and streets such as Warwick

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

There are numerous small buildings that served as bakeries, grocery stores, barbershops and laundries. They are often mistaken for garages due to their small size but their locations close to the sidewalk indicates a walk-up retail use.

***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 structure was determined ‘Significant’ due to an association of the property with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its with immigration and an important catalyst for the acclimatization and incorporation of unskilled workers into the community, spurring the development of workers housing and other businesses.

The Commission also found the subject building historically and architecturally significant due to the continuity of an important local business under the aegis of a single family. The original building is clearly typical of modest industrial architecture of the 1920s.

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Although the immediate historical context is changing, this building no longer fits within the residential context of the neighborhood. Workers are traveling further for work which is no longer located in the center but out from the urban core. There are still numerous examples of small brick and concrete block structures in use. Therefore, Staff does not find the potential demolition of 12 Warwick 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 do not 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 increasing rarity of this type of residential dwelling and associated streetscape within the City, and the location of the structure within the Warwick Streetscape, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do not find 13 Warwick Street 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).*

