



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	13 Warwick Street
Case:	HPC 2015.023
Applicant Name:	Sal Querusio
Date of Application:	May 22, 2015
Recommendation:	Not Significant
Hearing Date:	July 21, 2015

I. Historical Association

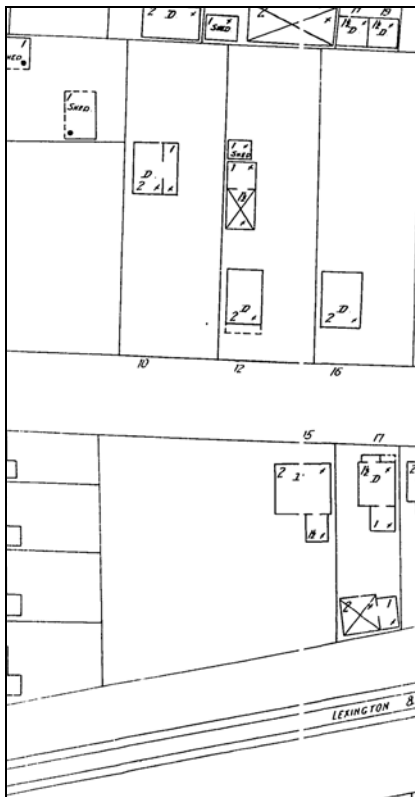
Historical Context: According to their website, Royal White Laundry was established in 1926. No building permits were found for the building on Warwick Street. However, the 1929-1930 City Directory places Royal White at 13 Warwick Street. The President Alexander O. Eno and his wife Florence lived at 184 Cedar Street. Barnet Liebowitz is listed as the Treasurer. He does not live in Somerville. Subsequent Directories show that Alexander Eno and his wife moved to 15 Warwick Street shortly thereafter and he continued as President of Royal White Laundry.

Businesses such as laundries rely upon unskilled labor and are magnets for those who did not speak English as their primary tongue.

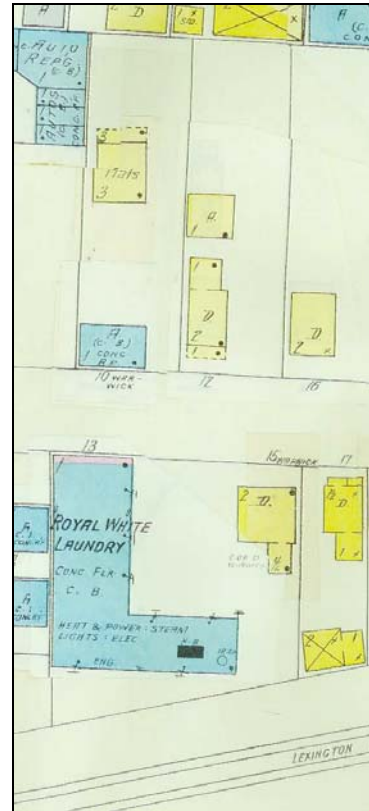
Evolution of Site: This area (Clyde, Murdock, and Warwick streets) developed as a small neighborhood of houses for brickyard employees and other working class families as the Boston Brick Company was located nearby on Cedar Street. Brick making in Somerville was in its prime from 1860-1880, and by 1900 only one company, the Sanborn Brick Company, remained.

Architectural Description: The Royal White Laundry building on Warwick Street is a 1-2 story concrete block and brick structure pierced by 3 truck-sized garage doors and 2 pedestrian doors. The upper story of the newest section has a band of corrugated metal across the front above 2 small casement windows. The side along the driveway is irregularly pierced by windows on the second floor while the ground floor has large barred windows.

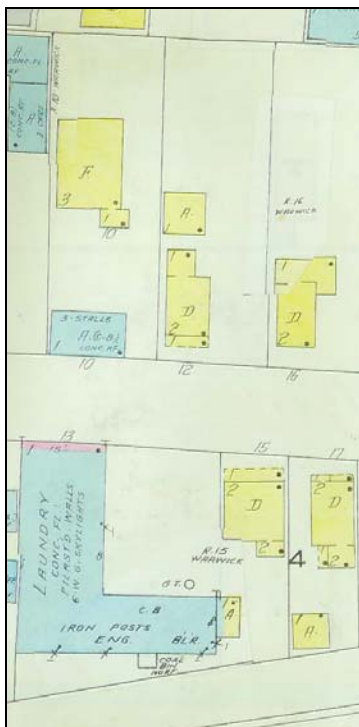




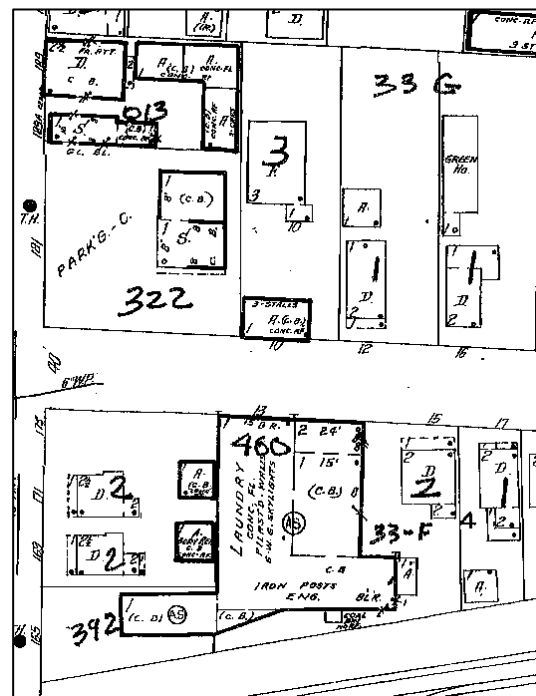
1900 Sanborn



1925 Sanborn



1955 Sanborn



1989 Sanborn

Summary: The building that houses Royal White Laundry has evolved over the years as can be seen in the historic maps. The structure is primarily constructed of concrete block with a brick and metal façade. It has been owned and run by the Liebowitz family since 1926. The business was primarily staffed by unskilled labor.

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/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 13 Warwick 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.

The subject building is not found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the lack of any known particular prominence of either the building, the family or the business despite being a source of income for many new arrivals to the United States and other unskilled labor.

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 13 Warwick Street begins in 1926 with the founding of the Royal White Laundry.

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. It is located at the edge of a workers neighborhood adjacent to rail lines.
- b. **Design:** The design is a simple design with additions that reflect the evolution of the site. The structure is clearly utilitarian and industrial in nature.
- c. **Materials:** The structure is primarily concrete block with a brick and metal façade. The oldest portion of the building has a brick façade on Warwick Street.
- d. **Alterations:** Building Permits were found for additions and the removal and the repair of fire damaged portions of the building from 1970-1983. The fenestration patterns have been altered.

Evaluation of Integrity:

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

The subject building is not part of a larger group of industrial buildings but is located next to the railroad at the edge of a residential workers neighborhood. Possibly some of the residents of the Clyde Murdock Street area may have found employment in the Laundry.

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 property is notable as an industrial building at the edge of a workers neighborhood. The area has been changing with workers housing demolished for larger multi-family buildings.

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 do not find 13 Warwick Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to numerous alterations, its lack of distinction in style or materials and lack of proximal relationship with other similar industrial buildings.

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 1926, 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 do not find 13 Warwick 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 not found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the lack of any known particular prominence of either the building, the family or the business despite being a source of income for many new arrivals to the United States and other unskilled labor.

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 13 Warwick Street historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is not found historically and architecturally significant due to numerous alterations, its lack of distinction in style or materials and lack of proximal relationship with other similar industrial buildings.





