



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

*Joseph A. Curtatone*

*Mayor*

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

KRISTENNA CHASE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*  
SARAH WHITE, *PLANNER & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

**Case #:** HPC 2017.076  
**Date:** October 24, 2017

**Recommendation:** Preferably Preserved

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**PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT**  
*for*  
**Determination of Preferably Preserved**

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**Site:** 105-107 Washington Street

**Applicant Name:** 105-107 Washington 5, LLC

**Applicant Address:** 385 Mystic Street, Arlington, MA 0

**Owner Name:** David Weinstock

**Owner Address:** 385 Mystic Street, Arlington, MA

**Petition:** Applicant seeks to demolish the existing structure.

**HPC Hearing Date:** October 24, 2017



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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is a c.1852 Greek Revival residential structure that is currently used as a multi-unit building.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant seeks to demolish the existing structure. A mixed use building would replace it.

**I. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance**

On September 26, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 105-107 Washington 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**

*(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.*

## **II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The building is located two doors from Buddy's Diner and three doors from the 1783 Ireland House. The house is shown on the Draper Map which is based upon an 1846 Survey.

No further information was found regarding the Robinson Family and their business on Blackstone Street in Boston.

### *Comparable Structures:*

Two story gable-end dwellings with three bays are common throughout the City and compose a majority of the residential housing stock within the City. This building type is generally constructed as a single or two-family dwelling and can reflect several different period styles. Comparable structures in the neighborhood of East Somerville of similar date and elsewhere.

- 8 Mount Vernon Street, c. 1852 (LHD)
- 16 Mount Vernon Street, c. 1852 (LHD)
- 22 Summer Street, c. 1870 (LHD)
- 54 Atherton Street, c. 1880 (NR)
- 174 Hudson Street, c. 1887

Predominant differences between the comparable dwellings and the subject dwelling are those of style and fashion. The Greek Revival buildings are characterized by the full pediments, tall ground floor windows and wide trim boards. The Italianate buildings have wider eaves, broken pediments, shorter windows and narrower trim boards. The roof pitch is a little steeper. Queen Anne style buildings have further elaboration of volumes and the tympanum.



*105-107 Washington Street, c. 1852*



*Top: 8 Mount Vernon Street (LHD); 16 Mount Vernon Street (LHD); 22 Summer Street (LHD)  
Bottom: 54 Atherton Street (NR); 174 Hudson Street*

### 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?*

- 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 exterior of the structure (the only portion of the building within the purview of the HPC), retains a high degree of architectural integrity and reflects the evolution of this



property through key eras of architectural change (vinyl cladding aside, which is easily removed). See the Staff Report on the Determination of Significance for more information

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

- The Commission found **105-107 Washington Street** to be importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City as a Greek Revival style home; a home to the Robinson family whose teaming business was emblematic of how goods were moved during the pre-automotive era; and as a home to immigrants in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The Commission also found **105-107 Washington Street** historically and architecturally significant as a pre-1852 Greek Revival style house with late 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations. The siding and fenestration alterations are likely to be reversible. The building retains the integrity of form and massing of Greek Revival style building. It is in its original location on a major local artery. Despite the alterations the building is clearly of its time and place

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

- The structure is a prominent structure along Washington Street and sited among a small group of historically and architecturally interesting buildings.

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

- Pre-1852 buildings are rare in the City. The 1850 census shows the population to be approximately 3500 or less than a thousand homes. Many have been demolished.
- The City of Somerville has several Greek Revival buildings retaining varying degrees of architectural integrity. 105-107 Washington Street is one of only two known Greek Revival structures along the Washington Street corridor.

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

105-107 Washington Street is a rare example of a Greek Revival building on a major local artery. Its architecture relates directly to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and despite some alterations it exhibits a high degree of integrity. The building is associated with the Robinson family of teamsters for over fifty years.

The Applicant's proposal for a new mixed use building of as yet unknown design is likely to dwarf the remaining architecturally and historically important buildings to the west, and will have no architectural relationship to them.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the building, Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission finds the property at 105-107 Washington Street to be **PREFERABLY PRESERVED**.*

