



**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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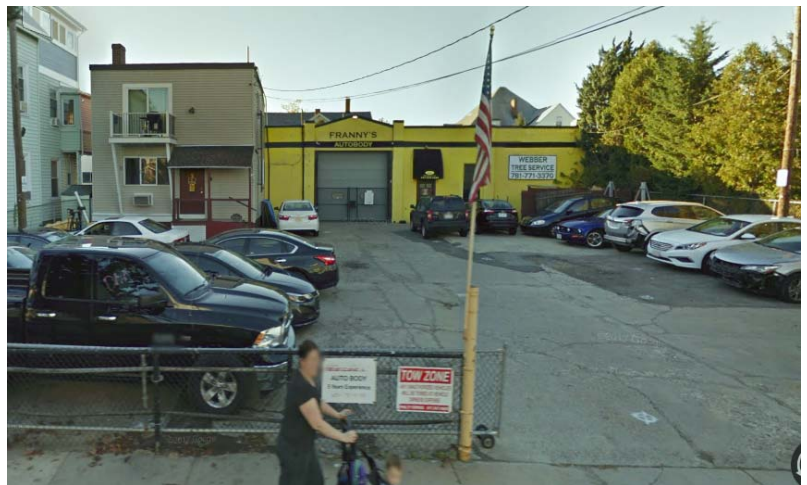
Site: 109-111 Prospect Street  
Case: HPC 2018.032  
Applicant Name: 109-111 Prospect Street, LLC  
Date of Application: April 9, 2018  
Recommendation: Significant  
Hearing Date: May 15, 2018

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**I. Historical Association**

*Historical Context:* Prospect Street runs from the base of Prospect Hill in Union Square, Somerville to Central Square, Cambridge. It has been a major local arterial beginning before 1852. During the 1910s through the 1930s, many mechanics took advantage of the passing traffic to start automotive businesses.

*Evolution of Site:* There were originally 2 houses on this property, now gone. In 1914 the house at 109 Prospect Street underwent a change from a single-family to a two-family. In 1916 the garages at the back of the property were constructed by Ezra Andelman on plans by S.S. Eisenberg. S.S. Eisenberg was a prolific architect with 100 properties noted in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS). In Somerville, the most noteworthy building by Eisenberg is the Temple B'nai Brith of which Ezra Andelman was an active member.



According to the Form B for the Temple “S. S. Eisenberg was a partner in the firm of Eisenberg and Feer between c.1926 and 1945. An early Eisenberg and Feer project was the Mattapan Hebrew Community Center on Morton Street between Norfolk Street and Blue Hill Avenue. One of Eisenberg's most successful projects from a siting and design perspective was the Reservoir Garden Apartments at 1982-1992 Commonwealth Avenue in Brighton. Built between 1920 and 1925 on still-developing western Commonwealth Avenue, Eisenberg ranged four identical apartment buildings around a courtyard that complements and extends the park bordering the Chestnut Hill Reservoir on the south side of the apartments.

In 1939 the house at 109 Prospect Street was demolished and in 1941, the house at 111 Prospect Street was also demolished leaving behind the original 1916 garage. A two-story office building for which there is no building permit was constructed at some point between the demolition of the house at 111 Prospect Street in 1941 and 1950 when it can be seen on that year's Sanborn Map probably by S. Schertzer. Samuel Schertzer dealt in used trucks according to the 1940 Census. He lived at 34 Prospect Street.

*Architectural Description:* The garage building is a 5 bay structure with a central pediment surmounting the garage door. A boxy two-story office building with a small balcony and porch is located and perhaps directly adjoins the garage on the left side of the property.

*Summary:* The front building at 109 Prospect Street has little known history or design. The rear building, a concrete block pedimented storage garage that spans the width of the lot was designed for Ezra Andelman by S.S. Eisenberg in 1916.

### **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 the rear building but NOT the front building at 109-111 Prospect 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 at 111 R Prospect Street is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to associations with growth of automotive use throughout the country and with the early career of a known architect, S.S. Eisenberg.

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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 109-111 Prospect Street begins in 1916 with the construction of the storage garage behind the houses at 109 and 111 Prospect Street.

***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 buildings are located on a major urban thoroughfare and have not been moved.
- b. Design: 111 Prospect Street, the front building is a simple cube. 111R, the storage garage is a single story 5-bay structure with a central single-bay pediment over the garage door.
- c. Materials: The front office building appears to be wood frame with modern siding and windows. The storage garage has stucco over masonry with a modern garage door.
- d. Alterations: The office building has modern windows and doors, a new balcony and many other alterations. The rear storage garage appears to have few alterations beyond the modern garage door.

*Evaluation of Integrity:* The front building has integrity of form but does not seem to have a readily interpretable purpose.

The storage garage retains all its integrity. Its use and history are easily read as an automotive use from the teens and twenties of the last century.

**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 the storage garage at 111 R Prospect Street but do not find the small office building at 111 Prospect Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building at 111 R Prospect Street is found historically and architecturally significant due to associations with a reputed architect, S. S. Eisenberg.

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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.

**OR**

(B) The structures, circa 1916 and circa 1945, are 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.*

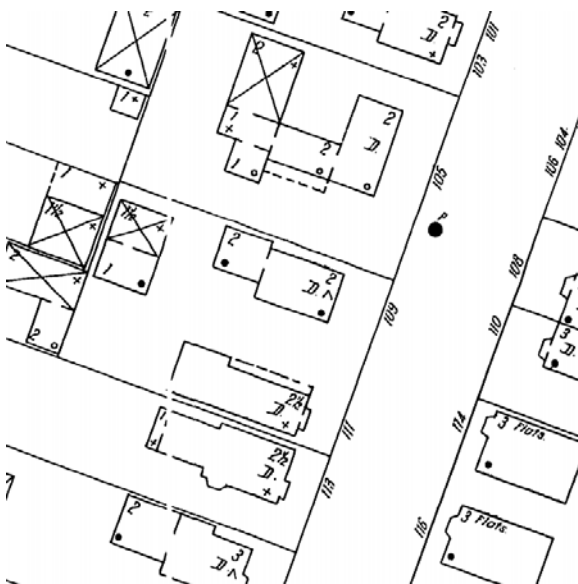
(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find the storage garage at 111 Prospect 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 at 111 R Prospect Street is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to associations with growth of automotive use throughout the country and with the early career of a known architect, S.S. Eisenberg.

**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 the storage garage at 111 Prospect Street historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building at 111 R Prospect Street is found historically and architecturally significant due to associations with a reputed architect, S. S. Eisenberg.



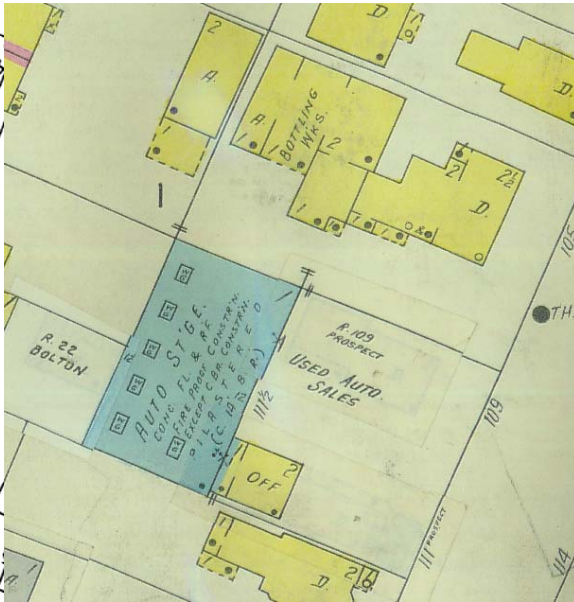
1900 Sanborn Plate 76



1925 Sanborn Plate 76



1950 Sanborn Plate 19



1958 Sanborn Plate 19