



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

**AGENDA for the public meeting of PREFERABLY PRESERVED STRUCTURES**

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission will hold a public meeting on **Thursday, December 3, 2015 at 6:15 p.m.** in City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. Please note that the start times listed below are estimates only and cases may be moved up or pushed back at the discretion of Staff.

The purpose of the meeting is to seek alternatives to demolition for structures determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to be Preferably Preserved and to make recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission at a future Commission meeting on the following Preferably Preserved structure(s):

**6:15 PM to 7:00 PM**

23 Cleveland St.                      HPC 2015.004  
Delay Period Ends:                4/21/2016  
Building Description:            c. 1869-1870 worker's cottage

**Significance:** Built in 1869-1870, during the first administration of President Ulysses S. Grant, 23 Cleveland Street provides physical evidence documenting the second wave of house construction occurring on the south slope of Spring Hill during 1865-1873. Completed on the eve of Somerville's incorporation as a City (1872), the modest scale of this house was typical of many houses built in Somerville around 1870.

This section of Cleveland Street was originally part of Elm Place. The street was renamed in 1908 when the new Cleveland Street was put through from Central Street. Elm Place is one of the original streets platted by Alexander Wadsworth.

This one-and-one-half story to two-story workers cottage is one of the earliest buildings on Cleveland Street/Elm Place. It is set on an ample lot. The 1874 Hopkins atlas indicates that the house is owned by John Nichols, wharfinger. A wharfinger is someone who owns or supervises the running of a wharf or group of wharves. Nichols's house is located on Central Street with a large stable or barn lying across the end of Elm Place thus ending the street running perpendicular to Harvard Street.

According to the 1876 and 1881 City Directories, the house was occupied by a painter, John R. Mills. By 1884, the house is attributed by the Hopkins Atlas and the City Directory to the ownership of a dyer at the Middlesex Bleachery, Richard Barlow. He is known to be at this address through 1895. He was also known to have been a member of the Bay State Fraternity where he was Vice President of the Somerville Lodge No.1 in 1884. The Bay State Fraternity was a mutual aid society.

1895 Bromley shows Josephine Williams as the owner of the house on Elm Place/Cleveland Street. At this time the streetscape almost fully developed although the street has yet to be cut through to Central Street

The 1903 Directory lists a salesman, John W. MacDonald as the head of household at this address. MacDonald is mentioned in the City Reports as a member of the Common Council for Ward 2 in 1887, 1888 and 1897.



In 1909, William St. G. Little, resident of the soon to be renamed Cleveland Street at number 23 commented to the Board of Aldermen regarding the installation of a utility pole in front of his house and in 1911 on the taking of some of his land for the construction of the street.

*Architectural Description:*

23 Cleveland Street is a 1 and ½ story on the east side rising to 2 stories on the west workers cottage with the gables toward the side lot lines. The front porch extends the across the central portion of the building with a central entry door located at the original west edge of the building. The siding and windows are all vinyl, probably replaced in the late 1990s when the porch was rebuilt.

The original house was probably a two room over two room 1 ½ story workers cottage with a slate foundation. A 2-story addition was constructed on the west side adding a 3<sup>rd</sup> bedroom to the building and a small bathroom. This is evidenced in the brick and slate rubble foundation. The rear shed portion of the house was also probably constructed at different times as the lower shed roof shows a flatter profile and stronger connection to the taller 2-story section of the main roof. The larger rear shed roof over what was probably the dining area sags. A smaller shed is attached to the west side.

A circa 1922 2-car cement block garage is located in the northeast corner of the lot.