



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 2018.014

Date: May 22, 2018

Recommendation: Preferably Preserved

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT
for
Determination of Preferably Preserved

ite: 14 Flint Street

Applicant Name: Adragna Dedic, LLC

Applicant Address: 100 Dartmouth Street, Medford, MA 02155

Owner Name: Same

Owner Address: Same

Petition: Applicant seeks to demolish the single-family house

HPC Hearing Date: May 22, 2018



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is a c.1862 single family house.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant seeks to partially demolish the existing structure.

I. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, April 17, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to determine the c. 1860 wood-framed house 14 Pearl Street 'Significant' because the building, per Section 2.17.B of the Demolition Review Ordinance 2003-05, is "at least 50 years old, and is or has been determined by the Commission to be a significant building or structure after a finding that the building or structure is either:

- i. “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 of Massachusetts, or
- ii. “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, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.”

The house is a simple workers cottage that retains its original form and massing. Dating to around 1862, it is one of the earlier buildings on this section of Pearl Street. Unlike many of the workers cottages researched, none of the residents listed on the US Census have been foreign born.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its size, form, style, and massing as a good example of workers housing and associations with the working class, particularly workers on the steam railway.

The period of significance for 14 Pearl Street begins prior to 1874 as workers housing. The building retains the essential form, shape and size of a workers cottage and can therefore be understood as such despite some alteration of the external fabric. The building is the smallest and probably the oldest on the street which exhibits a range of altered Second Empire and Mansard roofed houses.

14 Pearl Street is found historically and architecturally significant to the ability of the subject parcel to convey significance regarding location and design in terms of scale, height, form and massing. This building retains a number of qualities that continue to convey both historic and architectural significance, such as the location of the structure on the lot and the spatial relationships between the subject dwelling and other dwellings along Pearl Street.

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No additional information has been received.

Comparable Structures:

There are a number of single-family dwellings with a modest 1½ story massing located throughout the City. Comparable groupings of workers housing are generally of a later date. While there are no comparable dwellings located along Pearl Street, which are of later dates and of a grander styles. Comparable structures within the City include:

- 25 Clyde Street (LHD)
- 31 Richardson Street
- 92 Properzi Way
- 8 Mount Pleasant Street (NR)



25 Clyde Street, LHD (c. 1850); 92 Properzi Way (c. 1850)



II. 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 (brick and shingle cladding aside, which is easily removed). See determination of significance for a summary of the historic architectural features of this structure.

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

- This structure is significantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its simple style, and associations with the working class.

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 set back from the street with a large front yard.

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

- The City of Somerville has few structures from the 1850s without massive alterations. This type of house is not the most common style of mid-19th century building in the City although it is a recognizable characteristic structure. The building does not appear on the 1852 Draper Map but is found on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas. The simplicity of the design

indicates that the building is more likely to be constructed at the earlier end of the time period.

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?

Staff finds that this type of house is an important style of workers housing found in eastern Somerville. The size and location of this building indicates that it is the oldest one on the Street.

III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the building, Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission finds the property at 14 Pearl Street to be **PREFERABLY PRESERVED**.*