



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

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site: 151 Linwood Street
Case: HPC 2018.100

Applicant Name: AREC 8, LLC
Date of Application: September 6, 2018

Recommendation: NOT Significant
Hearing Date: October 16, 2018



I. Historical Association

Historical Context: “The trucking industry in the United States has affected the political and economic history of the United States in the 20th century. Before the invention of automobiles, most freight was moved by train or horse-drawn vehicle.

“During World War I, the military was the first to use trucks extensively. With the increased construction of paved roads, trucking began to achieve significant foothold in the 1930s, and soon became subject to various government regulations (such as the hours of service). During the late 1950s and 1960s, trucking was accelerated by the construction of the Interstate Highway System, an extensive network of freeways linking major cities across the continent.”¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_trucking_industry_in_the_United_States accessed 10/5/2018

Evolution of Site: taken from the NR Nomination Form for 1 Fitchburg Street

Development of the Brick Bottom Neighborhood

"(T)he streets of the adjacent Brick Bottom neighborhood were determined at a much earlier date. In June of 1857, the Boston & Lowell Railroad hired William Edson, "delineator" of the J.H. Bufford Lithography Company of Boston to create a plan depicting streets bordered by 31 lots in East Somerville. The plan was intended to both advertise the date of a public auction of these lots scheduled for June 30th, 1857 as well as depicting specific lots referenced in Middlesex County deeds. The plan notes that "A special train of cars will leave the depot of the Boston & Lowell Railroad at 3 1/2 o'clock P.M. on the day of the sale to accommodate gentlemen who wish to attend."

"The Edson plan depicts a street pattern that, for the most part, is not currently in evidence. Although Linwood and Fitchburg Streets are still extant, the east-west street called Lowell (later London Street) is no longer extant and a north-south street called Chestnut at the eastern side of this tract was added later as an extension of Joy Street to Fitchburg Street. The eastern edge of the tract is shown as bounded by the Boston & Lowell Railroad embankment (originally constructed by the Grand Junction Railroad during the early 1850s). ...

"Between 1857 and the early 1900s, nine dwellings and three stables were built on the future site of the A&P food distribution center. The Boston & Lowell Railroad Company's seven lots were located at the southern margins of the Brick Bottom neighborhood. Irish families named Cunningham, Kelley, McGaffrey and Crowley occupied the houses that were built on these lots. The Irish were but one group within the Brickbottom neighborhood. Indeed, any discussion of the evolution of development ...should be considered within the broader context of the Brickbottom neighborhood. Bounded by the railroad tracks of the Boston & Lowell and Fitchburg Railroad tracks, as well as Somerville Avenue and Washington Street, Brickbottom, during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, had been an area of clay pits associated with brick making operations. While the Irish constituted a sizable percentage of Brickbottom, the neighborhood was, in fact, a melting pot. Represented within this neighborhood's small area were families of Portuguese, Italian, Greek and Eastern European Jewish heritage. During the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these ethnic groups were drawn to Brickbottom's inexpensive rental housing as well as its proximity to jobs in nearby factories as we Union Square commercial concerns. Additionally, Brickbottom's proximity to the industries located near Union Square was another reason for settlement in the neighborhood.

"In 1925, the Brickbottom neighborhood was bisected by the Northern Artery, later the McGrath Highway. This division created by the new transportation corridor's presence hastened the Brickbottom area's transition from residential to light industrial and commercial. One result of this change of use was the shift in Brick Bottom's scale from one of modest, low-rise wooden residences constructed primarily of wood to larger masonry buildings. Gradually replacing the neighborhood's houses were the long rectangular forms of garages, warehouses and light industrial structures constructed of brick, concrete and metal. The two five- story warehouse and bakery components of the A&P complex are the tallest buildings ever built in Brick Bottom ..."

Early history of the property prior to its development as a garage was not investigated. The 1900 Sanborn map shows an empty lot at what is now 151 Linwood Street. The other lots that were taken over by automotive uses show a number of residences and barns. These were all eventually razed.

During the 20th century the residential neighborhood of Brickbottom, the area reverted to automotive based industries. Among those located at 151 Linwood Street were William F. Noble Milk Co. which merged with H. P. Hood Company and E.F. Scannell, a trucking company which merged with another trucking company in the 1970s.

The Building Permit record for 149 Linwood Street was reviewed for information. Permits were issued to T. Reardon in 1924 for a 125 car garage with a hip roof; and to Noble Milk Co. in 1933 to add a steel paint shop for trucks and a corrugated metal structure. The Noble Dairy had other offices and truck garages in use during the 1930s on Myrtle Street.

E.F. Scannell had depots in Baltimore, Maryland and Boulder, Colorado while Somerville was their headquarters. News articles were found regarding E.F. Scannell mention the high-jacking of 1100 cases of liquor in 1946; a woman, Mrs. Harold J. Silver ran the company in 1966.

E. F. Scannell Inc consolidated several adjacent properties from the mid-1940s through 1957. By 1945, the lot is known as 151 Linwood, When E. Scannell, a trucking company enlarged the entry doors. Meanwhile, E. J. Scannell Inc, demolished the building(s) at 21 Joy Street and built a single story addition on the rear of the 151 Linwood. They also added a metal roof in 1957.

The next building permits all come under the ownership of U-Haul beginning in 1977-1979 when they made alterations to building.

Architectural Description:

The building is a series of predominantly single story interlocking structures constructed of brick and concrete block. The original 151 Linwood Street building is brick of unknown color. A U-Haul sign band several feet high extending the full width of the building obscures the top edge. The building itself has been painted with the current brand identifying colors and design intended to be seen from a distance. The branding of the building also minimizes any existing details of the original building, however, one can see a cornice frieze over the main central entry area, a concrete blocked truck entryway, and a glass blocked truck entryway and window. The additions to the rear are concrete block. The Joy Street side of the building is a one-story brick structure constructed in 1957. See photos.

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 **do not** find 151 Linwood 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. While associated with the trucking and dairy industries in Somerville, these business uses were not particularly prominent in the history of Somerville and were not one consistent use over time.

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 151 Linwood Street begins in 1924 as an automotive storage building. It was converted to truck use for the dairy industry in the 1930s and then altered slightly

to accommodate long-distance trucking in the 1940s through the mid-1970s. It's most recent use is as a self-storage facility.

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. The neighborhood altered in the late 1950s from residential to industrial due to the proposed construction of the Innerbelt Highway through the neighborhood.
- b. **Design:** The building is composed of several utilitarian components with little elaboration constructed over time. The form and shape is simple.
- c. **Materials:** Some portions of the building are constructed with brick, others with concrete block. The building has several types of windows from plate glass, glass block, casement and double hung metal windows. The roof is covered by a rubber membrane.
- a. **Alterations:** This structure has undergone a number of small modifications over the years, specifically with regard to exterior surface, and to the removed or replaced windows and doors. The garage door openings have been altered for large vehicles and then closed in. Although the alteration of these components reduces the remaining integrity of this structure, many of the openings have been preserved and the design intent of each façade remains clear. The most major alteration is the covering of the original brick with paint, a surface treatment that cannot be reversed without possible damage to the skin of the brick.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building and additions are not immediately identifiable as constructed for a particular purpose. Almost any industrial purpose could be inserted into the structure. The distinctive large entries have been

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 151 Linwood Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is NOT found historically and architecturally significant because there are neither associations with important people nor with an architecturally important building either by itself or in the context of a group of similar buildings. Changing uses have altered the utilitarian building(s) to the extent that it lacks architectural integrity.

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 1924, 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.

This structure is associated with the development of automotive commercial services. It is a large storage building originally intended for automobiles but enlarged for truck storage uses. Currently self-storage and moving trucks can be found within the building.

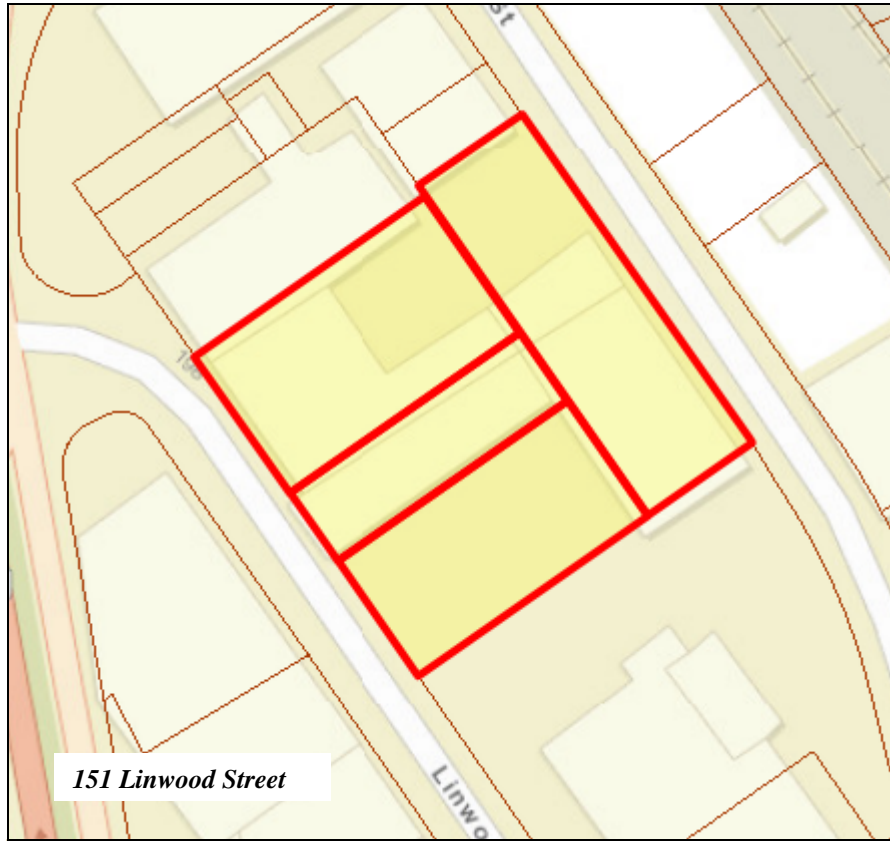
- (a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do NOT find 151 Linwood 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.**

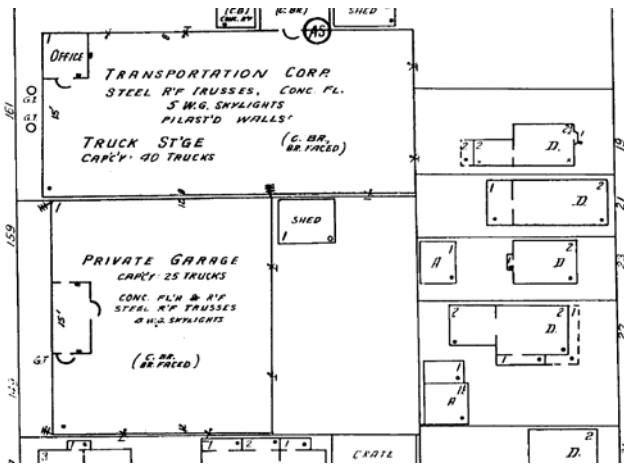
The subject building is **not** found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City. While associated with the trucking and dairy industries in Somerville, 151 Linwood Streets role in these business uses were not particularly prominent in the history of Somerville and were not one consistent use over time.

OR

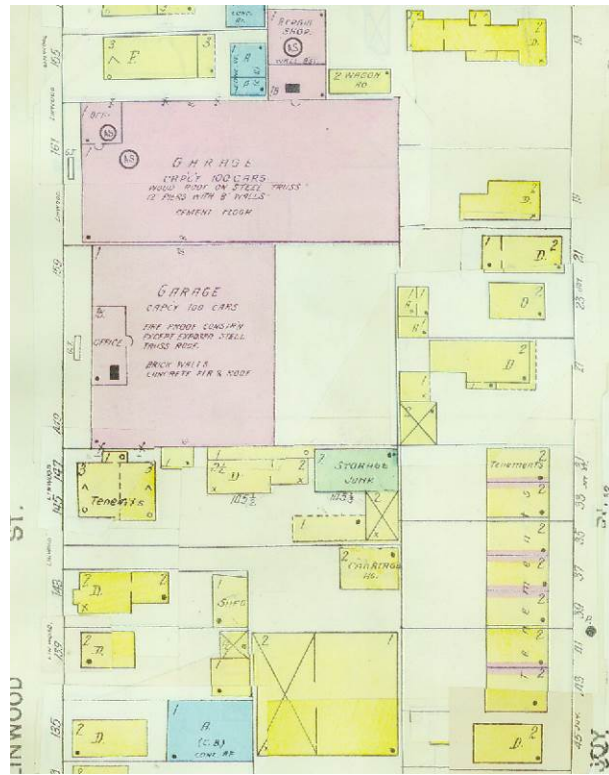
- (b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do NOT find 151 Linwood Street historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is **not** found historically and architecturally significant because there are neither associations with important people nor with an important architect nor is the building important either by itself or in the context of a group of similar buildings. Changing uses have altered the utilitarian building(s) to the extent that it lacks architectural integrity. The neighborhood is in flux with a limited number of buildings exhibiting architectural integrity.

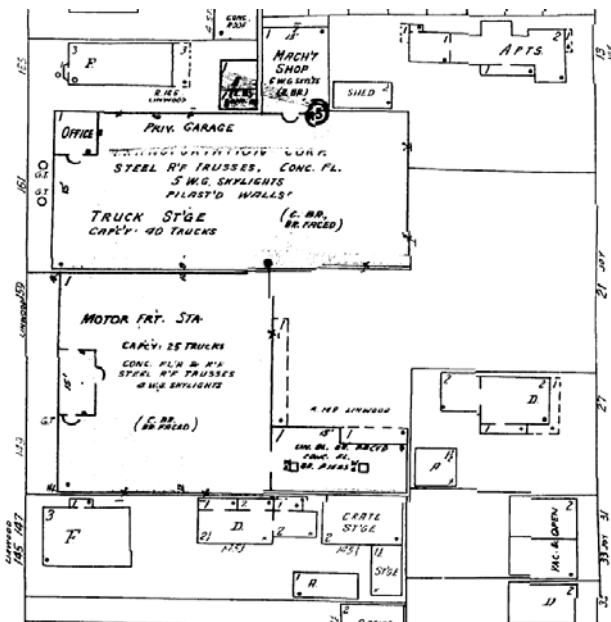




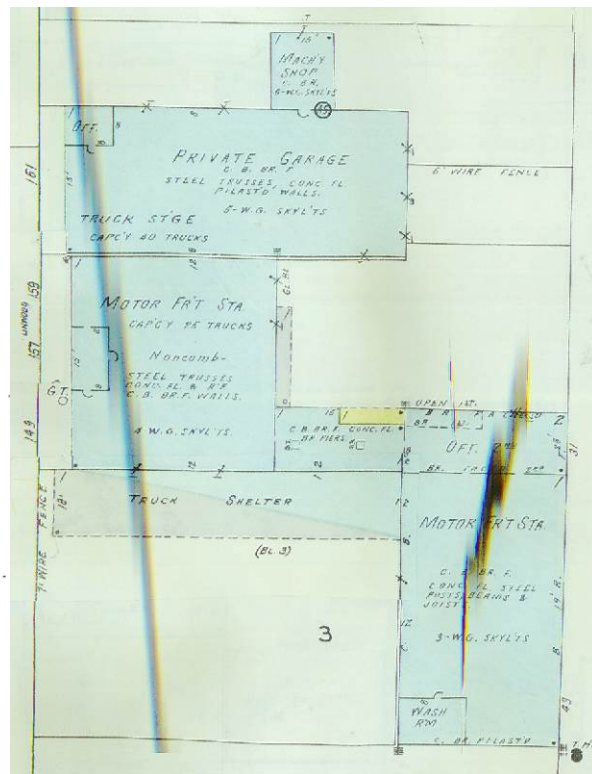
1925 Sanborn Plate 110



1933 Sanborn Plate 7



1950 Sanborn Plate 7



1959 Sanborn Plate 7



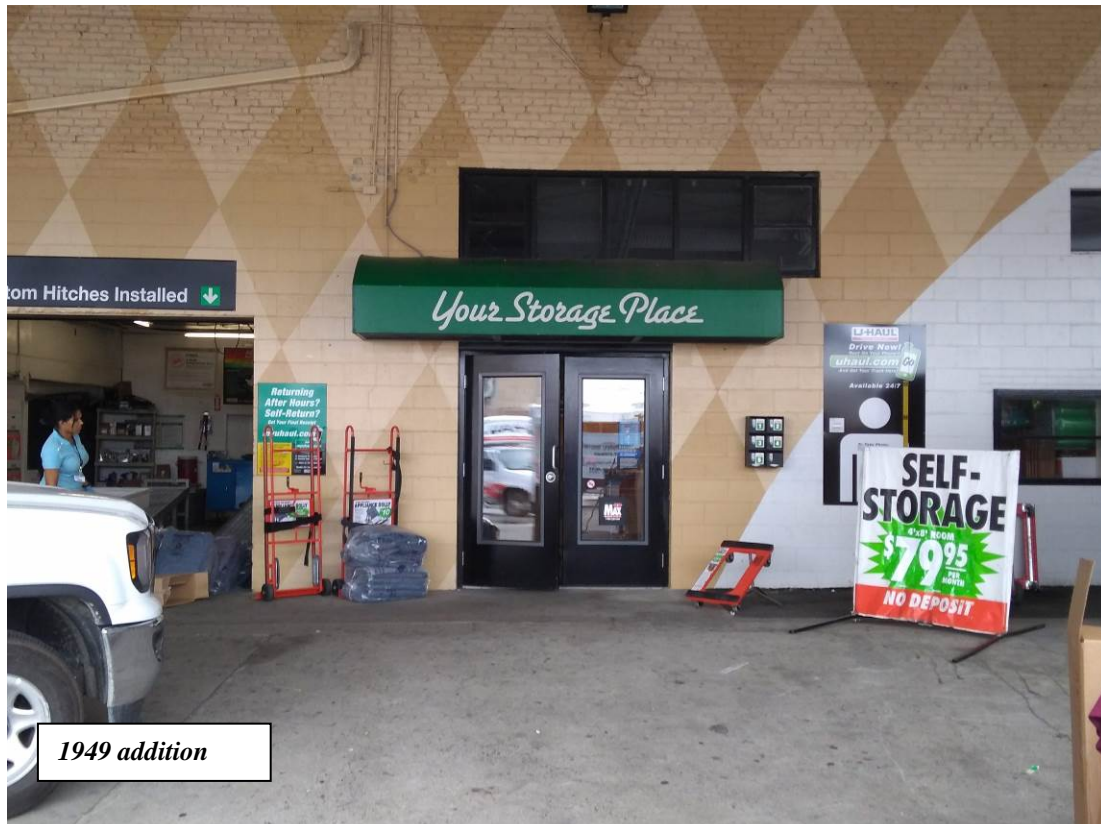
151 Linwood Street showing brick construction, infilled truck entry and cornice treatment of the original building.



Storage entries in original building.



1949 addition



1949 addition



1957 Joy Street addition from Linwood Street







1957 Joy Street addition



Side of 1957 Joy Street addition





Side of 1957 Joy Street addition, 1949 addition and original



151 Linwood Street rear