



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

TOM F. GALLIGANI JR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 58-60 Beacon Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2023.17

Applicant: Niranjani Gawli

Owner: Samuel Perlman

Legal Ad: *The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.*

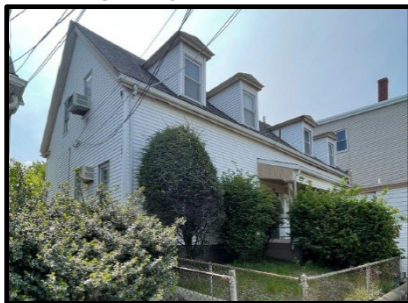
HPC Meeting Date: September 5, 2023

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation

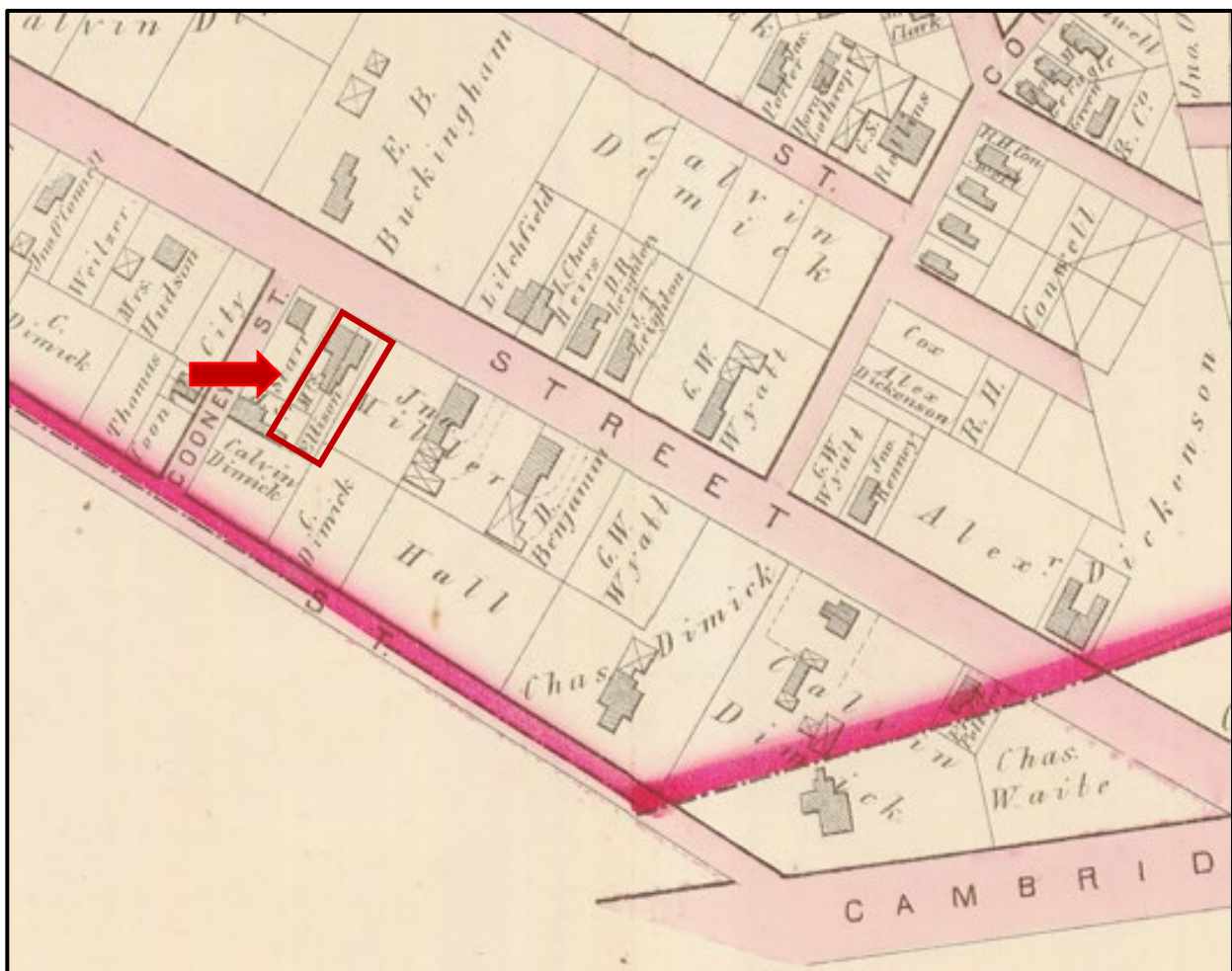


The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is not a determination/decision, nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

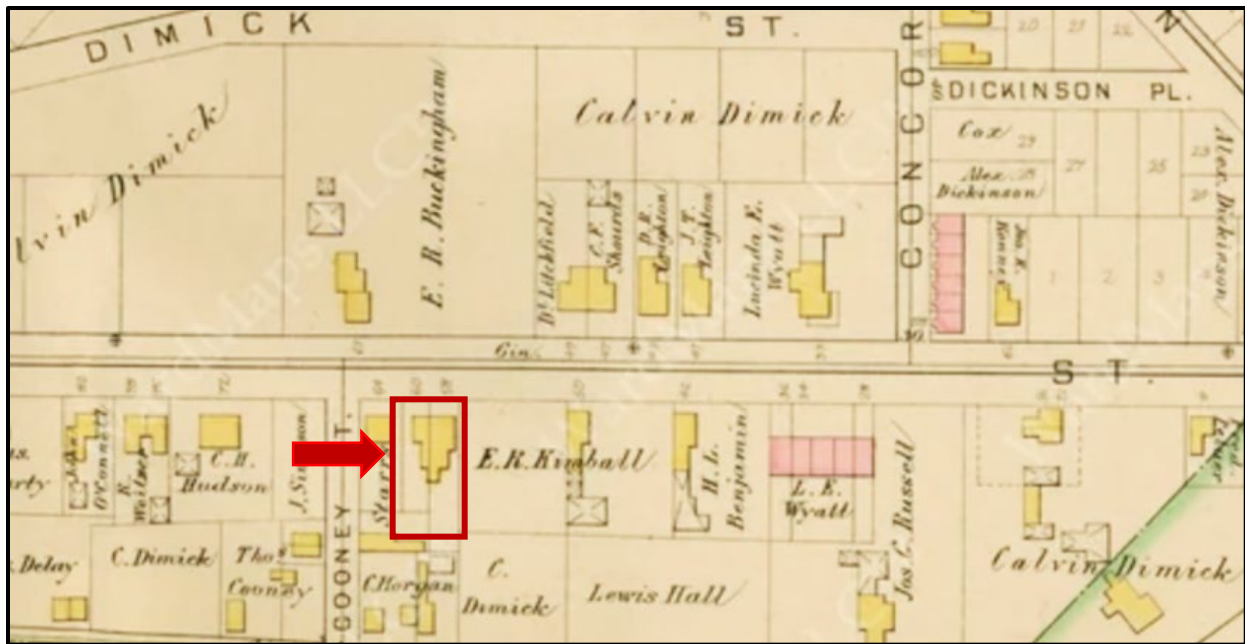
Historical Context: The structure located at 58-60 Beacon Street is a two (2) story wood framed gable-roofed house. This portion of Beacon Street contains a mixture of one to two and one-half (2 ½) to three (3) story residential houses. Characteristically, houses in this area are architecturally the most diverse within the city.

58-60 Beacon Street is located in close proximity to the Union Square neighborhood and at the edge of Somerville and Cambridge city lines. In 1852, this area was still largely agricultural with some development around Sullivan and Union Squares. Beacon, Washington, and Line Streets are sparsely developed with 9 houses on the Somerville side of Line Street between Washington Street and Cambridge Street. Housing in this area was constructed primarily for area workers, but with the expansion of horse and electric streetcar systems, portions of Beacon Street and surrounding open land were developed for a new market, the Boston commuter.



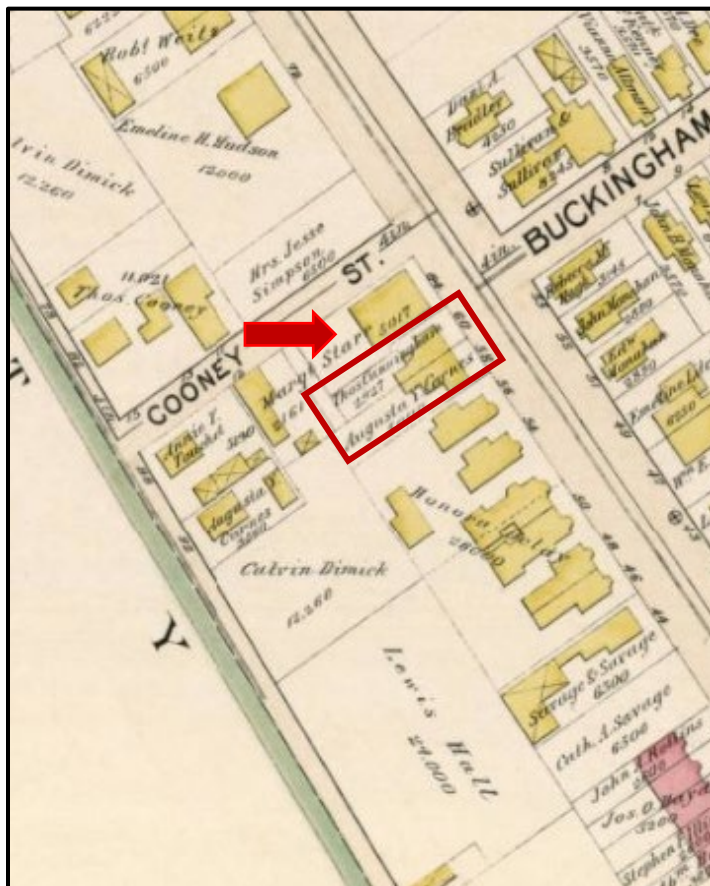
Above: 1874 Hopkins Map, Plate 24 & 25, approximately the site of 58-60 Beacon Street.

Although the northern side of Beacon Street was still largely undeveloped at this time, the 1874 Hopkins Map shows the southern side of Beacon Street being developed. The structure at 58-60 Beacon Street was likely constructed around this time. The 1874 Hopkins Map also shows that the structure located at 58-60 Beacon Street originally sat on two separate lots. Mrs. Ellison is listed as the owner of both lots in 1874, although the City Directories do not list her as living in the house at that time. No records of Mrs. Ellison can be found.



Above: 1884 Bromley Map, Plate 8, approximately the site of 58-60 Beacon Street.

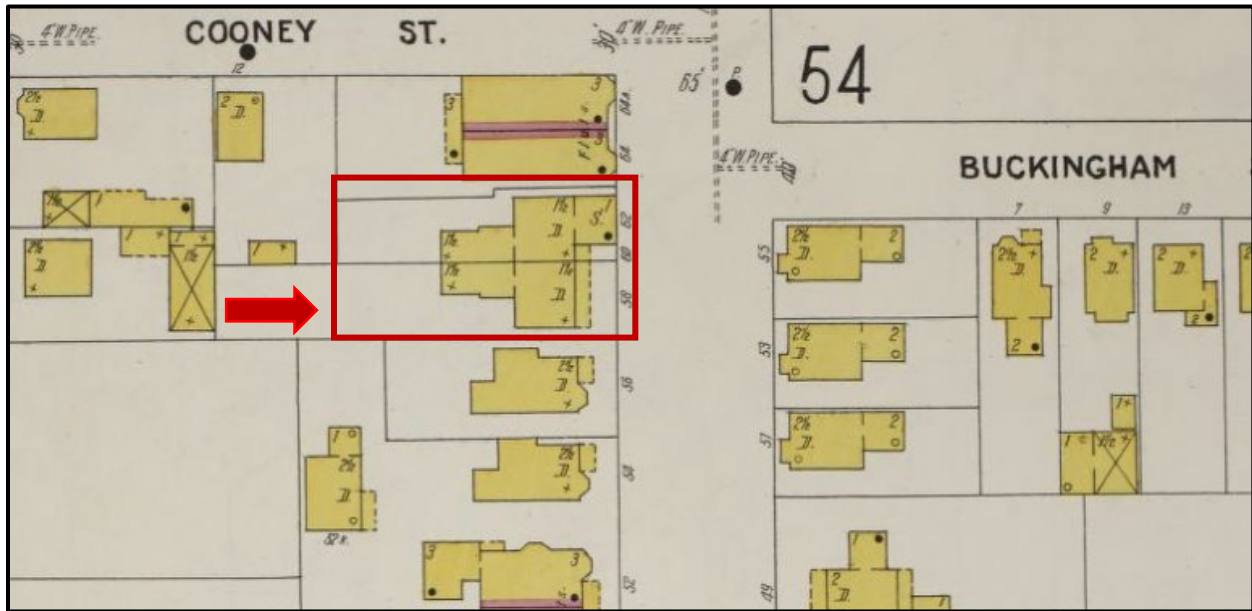
Below: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 6, approximately the site of 58-60 Beacon Street.



Between 1884 to 1894, an owner or resident of the property cannot be found. The 1884 Bromley Map does not list a property owner. It is likely that the structure was vacant during this period. The 1895 Bromley Map shows Thomas Cunningham as the listed owner of 60 Beacon Street and Augusta Edward Carnes of 58 Beacon Street.

Augusta Edward Carnes was an engineer during this time. The 1895 City Directories lists Trimmer Henry as the resident, who was likely Carnes's tenant.

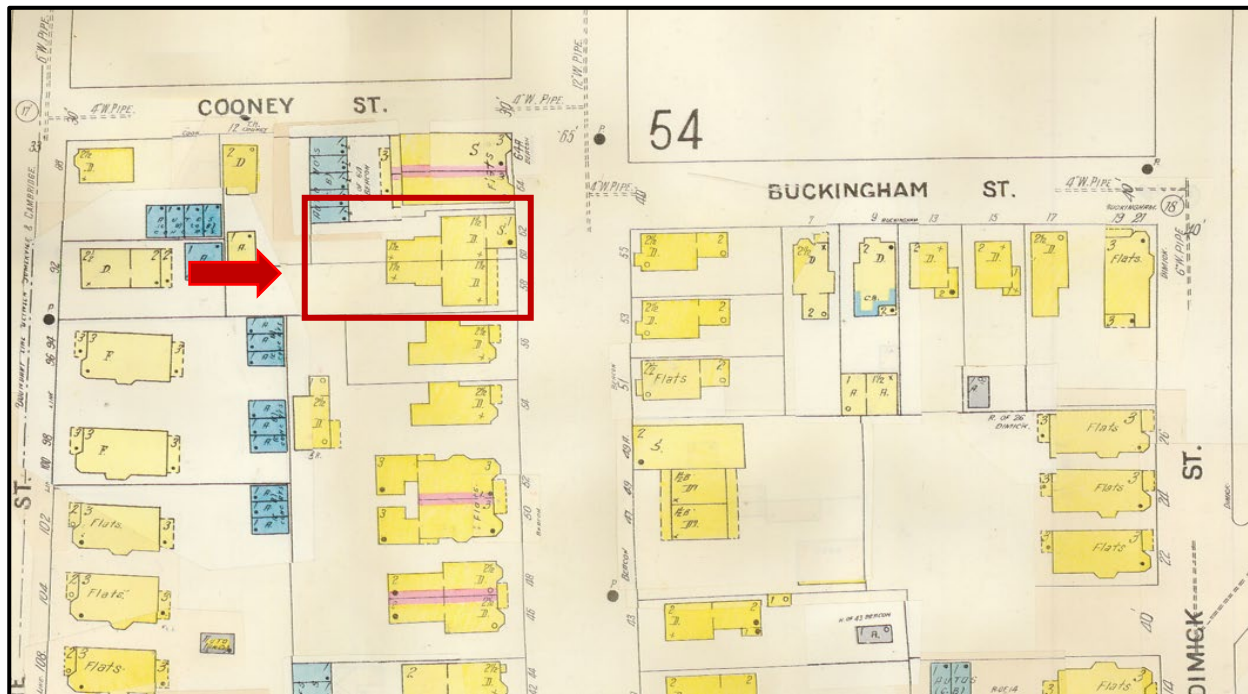
Thomas Cunningham was a brushmaker, who moved from Ireland to Somerville between 1870 to 1880. He purchased 60 Beacon Street in 1895 to live in with his wife, Ellen Driscoll. They raised nine (9) children while residing at 60 Beacon Street. According to the City Directories, the Cunningham family lived there from 1895 to 1940s. The property was likely passed down from family member to family member.



Above: 1900 Sanborn Map, Plate 71, approximately the site of 58-62 Beacon Street.

The 1900 Sanborn Map shows an addition was made to the front of the structure. The Cunningham family probably expanded the structure to allow space for their growing family as 62 Beacon Street remains with the Cunningham family throughout their residence at 60 Beacon Street. The 1900 Sanborn and 1925 Sanborn Maps show that the structure was altered to include an addition to the front of the structure on 60-62 Beacon Street, while a porch was added to the 58 Beacon front side of the structure. It also shows a reduction of the rear massing on the sides of the structure.

Below: 1925 Sanborn Map, Plate 71, approximately the site of 58-62 Beacon Street.



The 1903 and 1904 City Directories list Mrs. Marg Greenfield as the resident of 58 Beacon Street. The 1905 City Directories next lists Robert A. Burns as the resident of 58 Beacon Street. He lived at 58 Beacon Street from 1905 to 1927. Unfortunately, no further information can be found on Robert Burns.



Above: 1938-1959 Sanborn Map, Plate 71, approximately the site of 58-62 Beacon Street.

The 1924 and 1927 City Directories list Joseph Cunningham as the resident of 60-62 Beacon Street. Thomas Cunningham died in 1910, leaving his son, Joseph Cunningham, the ownership of the property. The 1940 City Directories list 58 Beacon Street as vacant and for 60-62 Beacon Street, Anna Cunningham as the resident. It is unclear the exact relationship between Anna Cunningham and Thomas Cunningham, however, it is likely they were related. Anna resided at 60-62 Beacon Street with her husband, Philip John Riley.

Unit	Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
58	Mrs. Ellison	1874	n/a	n/a	Owned
58	Augusta Edward Carnes	1895	Engineer	n/a	Owned
58	Trimmer Henry	1895-1900	n/a	n/a	Rent
58	Mrs. Marg Greenfield	1903-1904	n/a	n/a	n/a
58	Robert A. Burns	1905-1927	n/a	n/a	Owned
60	Thomas Cunningham	1895-1910	Brushmaker	Household Head	Owned
60	Ellen Driscoll	1895 -n/a	n/a	Wife of Thomas Cunningham	Owned
60	Joseph Cunningham	1924-1927	n/a	Son of Thomas Cunningham	Owned
60	Anna Cunningham	1940s	n/a	Relative to Thomas Cunningham	Owned
60	Philip John Riley	1940s	n/a	Husband to Anna Cunningham	n/a

Above: Resident Table from 1874-1940s at 58-60 Beacon Street.

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials, and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

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.

Comparing the historic map with satellite images of the current property we can determine the degree to which the structure has been altered.



Figure 2

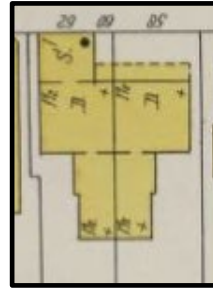


Figure 1

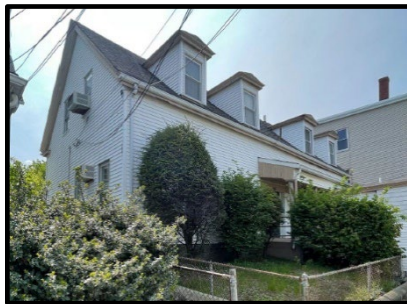


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 3

Fig 1-2: 1895 Bromley Map and 1900 Sanborn Map, close-up of 58-60 Beacon Street

- Figure 1 and Figure 2 show between 1895 to 1900, the structure was altered to include an addition to the front of the structure on 60-62 Beacon Street, while a porch was added to the 58 Beacon front side of the structure. It also shows a reduction of the rear massing on the sides of the structure.

Fig 3 -5: Current photos of 58-60 Beacon Street

- The photos of the extant structure show that the overall shape of the structure has had modern alterations to the front addition.

1. 56-60 Beacon Street -

The period of relevance for the house starts from 1895 to 1900.

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The garage is a gable-roofed, wood-framed residential structure with a symmetrical, covered entryway and a brick chimney. The front elevation has two entry doors with storm doors that lead to a wood porch and steps; entry to the left has side lights on either side of the door; four gable dormers on the front roofline; an earlier addition protrudes from the right side of the front elevation with a separate entryway on its front elevations; fenestration on the front elevation consists of double-hung two-over-two sash windows and one rectangular horizontal rolling window on the later addition. The left right elevation consists of an entry door on the front addition and double-hung two-over-two sash windows. Left elevation fenestration includes double-hung two-over-two sash windows. On the rear elevation there is a porch on the second floor to the right side with metal stairs; a projected gable ended addition project from the center of the rear of the building with what appears to be a later lean-to; a second concrete (maybe concrete parged brick) in the rear; three gable dormers, one dormer on the right most side appears to have been removed for the addition of the porch; fenestration on the rear includes double-hung two-over-two sash windows
- c. Materials:
 Foundation: Concrete parging over brick
 Windows: Wood
 Entry: Wood or aluminum
 Siding: Vinyl and wood
 Roof: Asphalt Shingles with brick and concrete chimneys
- d. Alterations: The structure has an early front addition on 60 Beacon Street with later alterations, later porch addition in rear added of 60 Beacon St; lean-to addition in rear; replacement doors and windows; replacement siding. The rear massing was reduced on the sides of the structure from its original form. The front addition was enlarged from the original alteration.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 58-60 Beacon Street: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building mostly retains the integrity of its original form.

III. FINDINGS

For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) importantly associated with people, events, or history and/or (ii) historically or architecturally significant. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:

A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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.

Residential Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the STRUCTURE at 58-60 Beacon Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 58-60 Beacon Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “a”.

B. HISTORICAL & 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, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.

Residential Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the STRUCTURE at 58-60 Beacon Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 58-60 Beacon Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “b”.

If the HPC makes the above finding, the HPC must state their reasons why they take this position.

IV. VOTE

1. When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the STRUCTURE at 58-60 Beacon Street is or is not “historically significant”.