



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

THOMAS GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 326 Lowell Street

Case: HP23-000064

Applicant: Alfa Excavation Inc

Owner: 326-328 Lowell Street, LLC

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

HPC Meeting Date: January 16, 2024

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation (partially demo'ed)

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation (partially demo'ed)



The purpose of this 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: 326 Lowell Street is a two-story, two-family residential structure built in 1851. This section of Lowell Street, south of present-day Magoun Square, has single-, two-, and three-family residential structures in an eclectic mix of styles.

In the early 19th century, the family of John C. Magoun, as assessor for the city and militia captain, owned a farm which stretched from Broadway down to Vernon Street. Lowell Street served as a rangeway for these agricultural activities before being laid out as a street.

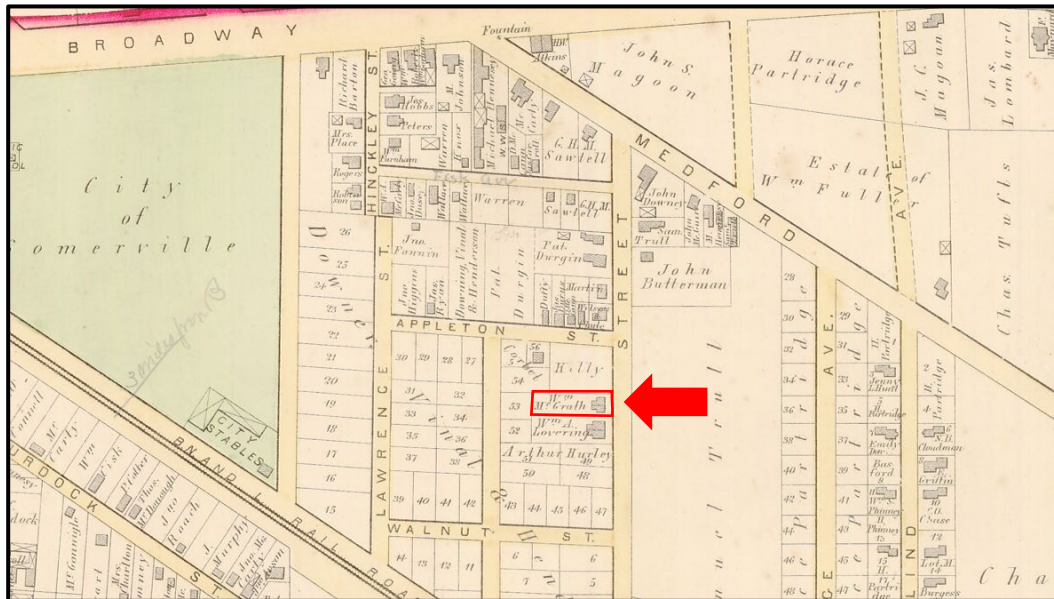


Above: 1852 Draper Map with the location of 326 Lowell Street indicated.

The 1852 Draper map above demonstrates that much of the residential development in the first half of the 19th century in this area of Somerville clustered at the top of Winter Hill. The land to the south and west remained largely put to agricultural use, although house lots had begun to be laid out along Lowell Street.

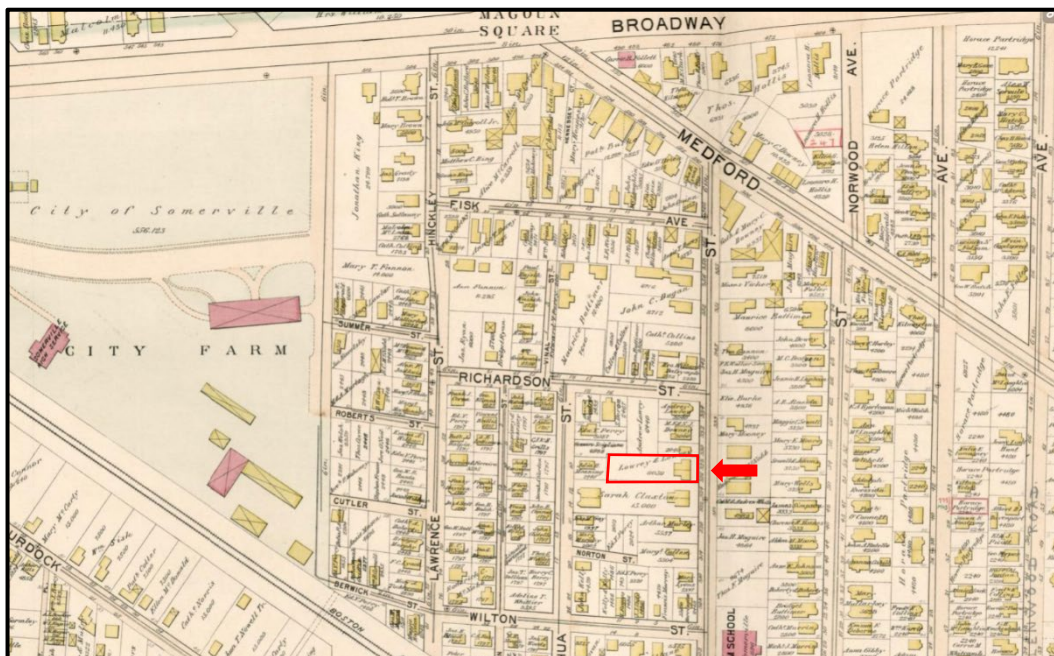
Magoun Square, originally called “The Corner”, was a convenient stopping point at the corner of Medford Street and Broadway for teamsters hauling stone and brick through Somerville to Charlestown and Boston. The area around Magoun Square to the south and east was developed for residential use (as demonstrated by the 1874 Hopkins map below) at about the same time as the development of the square. Lowell Street

was an appropriate location for worker's housing, being close to the railroad tracks and the quarry (later the Derby Desk Company).



Above: 1874 Hopkins Map Plate G-30 & 31 with location of 326 Lowell Street indicated.

By 1895 all the northern half of Lowell Street, from Medford Street to the railroad tracks, had been developed, as the Bromley map below demonstrates.



Above: 1895 Bromley Map Plate 15 with location of 326 Lowell Street indicated.

The houses built in this area of Somerville before the Civil War (including 326-328 Lowell Street) reflect a more suburban style, before industrial growth necessitated the construction of denser workers' housing.

The design of the double house structure at 326-328 Lowell Street is a plain Italianate Style, as seen in the short return gable cornices (according to the Form B from the Massachusetts Historical Commission).

An unknown housewright built the house at 326-328 Lowell Street in 1851 on land previously owned by speculators Charles Wood, Isaac Melvin, and Samuel Smith. The original owners were Moses Binney, a leather dresser, and his wife Elizabeth Binney (nee Perham). The couple lived in the house with their son Charles from its construction until 1865 (at which point the couple is listed as living in Cambridge).

Houses continued to appear along Lowell Street, and they became homes to Irish immigrant families, who arrived in America in a wave of migration spurred by the Irish Potato Famine. According to the 1880 Federal Census, Irish families populated the street almost exclusively, with surnames such as Norton, Dooris, Splain, and Donavan. After arriving in America in 1850, William and Bridget McGrath came to own the property at 326-328 Lowell Street (then addressed as 258 Lowell Street) in approximately 1870. They lived with Bridget's daughter Nelley Harrington and her husband Jeremiah Harrington (the son of Irish immigrants), and their two children Mary and Frank. William and Bridget died in 1886, and Nelley and her family (including several more children) moved to another house on Lowell Street.

After the McGraths, the property (now known as 326-328 Lowell Street) came into the ownership of another family of immigrants, the Lowreys. Andrew N. Lowrey, a stevedore and immigrant from Denmark, and his wife Elizabeth Lowrey, a housekeeper and an immigrant from Ireland, were absentee owners – they primarily lived down the street and remodeled the house as a tenement. They passed the house down to their daughter Elizabeth A. Lowrey in 1913.

Belgian Girl Weds War Vet at Somerville

An international romance culminated in marriage yesterday afternoon when Mlle. Marguerite Haulotte of Charleroi, Belgium, became the bride of Domenick Cerullo, 326 Lowell st., Somerville, at St. Anthony's Church, Somerville, in a ceremony performed by the pastor, Very Rev. Nazarene Cerullo.

The couple met in Belgium in an air-raid shelter during the Normandy invasion—Cerullo was serving as a sergeant in the 9th Air Force. His bride's family, except her father, was killed during the war.

Mrs. Cerullo had great difficulty in securing passage to the United States, and through the intercession of Senator David I. Walsh, who was told of the case by Joseph Filadono, supervisor at the Back Bay Postoffice, she finally secured passage on a plane to Sweden. From there she sailed to this country, arriving in New York Aug. 23.

The bride, who was a modiste in Belgium, created her own wedding gown of white crepe. Mary Cerullo, sister of the bridegroom, was maid of honor, and his brother, Henry, was best man. Alessandro Cerullo, the bridegroom's father, escorted the former Miss Haulotte to the altar.

A lifelong resident of Somerville, the bridegroom is employed at a Somerville glass company. After a wedding trip to New York, the couple will make their home at 328 Lowell st., Somerville.

Above: Boston Globe Excerpt September 16, 1946

FIREBUG IN SOMERVILLE.

Vacant House Ignited for Third Time in a Month—Three Other Fires of Incendiary Origin.

For the third time within a month an incendiary fired a vacant two-family house at 326 Lowell st., Somerville, shortly before 2 o'clock this morning. The fire was discovered by a passing milkman, and he sounded an alarm from b x 33. The fire was extinguished with a loss of \$300.

The other fires, also incendiary, have been extinguished in the same locality within the last few weeks, and the people in the neighborhood are considerably disturbed over the operations of the firebug.

Above: Boston Globe Excerpt August 15, 1908

During the Lowreys' ownership, a variety of boarders lived on either side of the two-family tenement. These included immigrants from Portugal, Canada, Germany, England, and Italy, with occupations such as laborers, hairdressers, painters, firemen, shoe workers, and clerks (a complete list of known boarders can be found in the table below). There was an episode during the Lowrey's ownership where an arsonist attempted to burn down the structure – see the newspaper clipping from 1908. Fortunately, the structure was vacant at the time – it may have been during the time that it was being converted to a tenement.

Alessandro Cerullo purchased the property from Elizabeth A. Lowrey in 1922, per deed records. Alessandro, a track man for the street railways, and his wife Eleanora, a housekeeper, arrived in America from Italy in 1912. The Cerullos were part of a wave of Italian immigration at the turn of the century which peaked between 1900 and 1910. The ethnic composition of Lowell Street changed to reflect this and by 1920, surnames such as Savini, D'Agostino, and Orlando were typical.

The Cerullos lived at 326 Lowell Street with several children through the 1950s, while the Del Mastro family were boarders on the other side of the house (328 Lowell Street) during this period. One of the Cerullo sons, Domenick, served in World War II and married a Belgian woman,

Marguerite Haulotte, whom he met during the war in Europe (see newspaper clipping from 1946). They and their family lived in the house until it was sold in 1964 to the Plaitano family.

#	Name	Residency Year(s)	Occupation	Relationship	Type
	Moses Binney	1851 – ca. 1865	Leather dresser	Husband	Owner
	Elizabeth Binney	1851 – ca. 1865		Wife	
	Charles Binney	1851 – ca. 1865	Child	Son	
258	William McGrath	ca. 1870 - 1886	Laborer	Husband	Owner
258	Bridget McGrath	ca. 1870 - 1886	Housekeeper	Wife	
258	Nelley Harrington	1877 - 1886		Daughter	
258	Jeremiah Harrington	1877 - 1886	Produce Salesman	Son-in-law	
258	Mary Harrington	1877 - 1886	Child	Granddaughter	
258	Frank Harrington	1879 - 1886	Child	Grandson	
326	Andrew N Lowrey	1909 - 1912	Stevedore	Husband	Absentee Owner
326	Elizabeth Lowrey	1909 - 1912		Wife	Absentee Owner
326	Daniel J Lowrey	1909 - 1912	Letter Carrier	Son	
326	Elizabeth A Lowrey	1913 - 1915	Nurse	Daughter	Absentee Owner
326	Anthony Francis	1900 - 1901	Hairdresser		Boarder
328	James McIntire	1901 - 1904	Laborer	Brother	Boarder
328	Janet McIntire	1901 - 1904	Widow	Sister	Boarder
326	Charles Roarther	1903	Painter		Boarder
326	Frederick Rohwedder	1904	Painter		Boarder
328	David A Ewing	1905	City Lab		Boarder
326	Joseph Ryan	1906	City Lab		Boarder
328	William E MacGeehan	1906	Cook		Boarder
328	Gaetano Jodice	1908	Tailor		Boarder
328	Mary E Miller	1909-1910	Lump Maker		Boarder
328	Fanny Levenger	1909-1910	Widow		Boarder
328	John Costello	1912	Laborer		Boarder
326	Edward D Croto	1913-1914	Teamster	Brother	Boarder
328	Angelo Zarno	1913-1914	Laborer	Brother	Boarder
326	Nicola Gandusco	1915	Fireman		Boarder
328	Thomas Nadoni	1915	Shoeworker		Boarder
328	Stephen Langone	1915	Clerk		Boarder
326	Antonio Dimas	1918	Laborer		Boarder
328	Artuto Bovielli	1918			Boarder
328	Antonio Del Mastro	1920 - 1933	Track Man	Husband	Boarder
328	Angelina Del Mastro	1920 – ca. 1946		Wife	Boarder
328	James Del Mastro	1920 – ca. 1946	Carpenter	Son	Boarder
328	John Del Mastro	1920 – ca. 1946	Laborer	Son	Boarder
326	Alessandro Cerullo	1924 - 1964	Track Man	Husband	Owner
326	Eleanora Cerullo	1924 - 1950	Housekeeper	Wife	
326	Carmine Cerullo	1924 - 1933	Soda Clerk	Son	
326	Marie Cerullo	1924 – ca. 1940	Packer	Daughter	
326	Domenick Cerullo	1924 - 1964	Truck Driver	Son	
326	Albert Cerullo	1924 – ca. 1940	Auto Mechanic	Son	
326	Henry Cerullo	1924 – ca. 1940	Truck Driver	Son	
326	Rosolina Cerullo	1925 – ca. 1950	Toll Operator	Daughter	
326	Rosalie Minicucci	1940 – (death)		Mother-in-law	
328	Marguerite Cerullo	1946 – 1964		Daughter-in-law	
328	Arthur Cerullo	1947 – 1964		Grandson	
326	Pasquale Plaitano	1964 -		Husband	Owner
326	Guisepina Plaitano	1964 -		Wife	Owner

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.

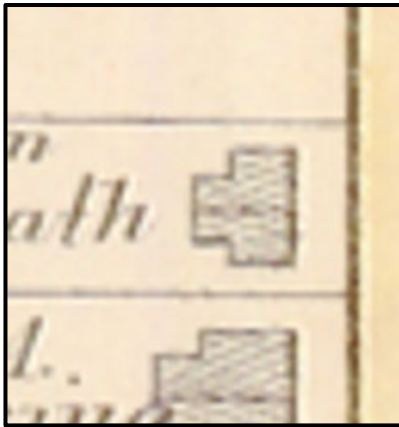


Fig 1

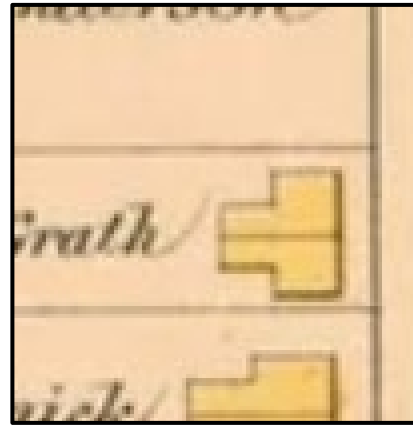


Fig 2

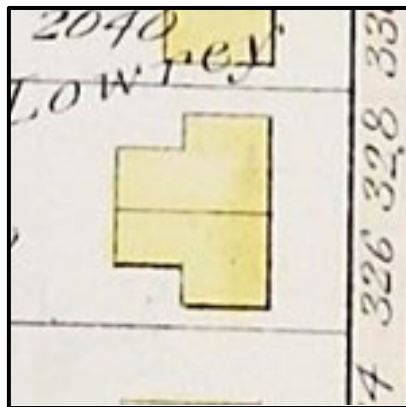


Fig 3

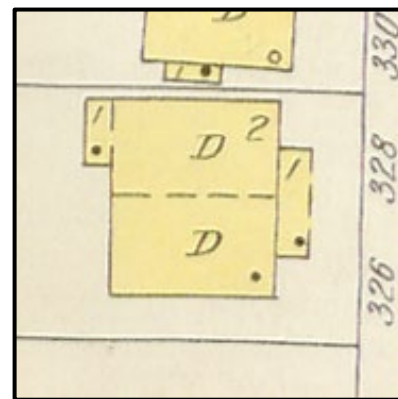


Fig 4



Fig 5

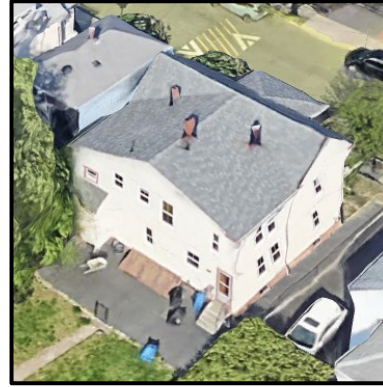


Fig 6

Figure 1: 1874 Hopkins Map

- Shows the original footprint of the structure.
- Side-gabled double-house with a two-story rear addition.

Figure 2: 1884 Hopkins Map,

- Shows the same footprint.

Figure 3: 1895 Bromley Map,

- Shows the same footprint.

Figure 4: 1938 – 1959 Sanborn Map

- Addition: porch at the front of the building
- Addition: rear addition has been built out to match the width of the front of the building.
- Addition: a small addition at the rear right for an enclosed entry-way porch.

Figures 5 & 6: Satellite image of the property

- Lean-to on rear to the right side of property with entry into the property, it may have been a covered porch that has been enclosed.

326-328 Lowell Street

The period of relevance for the property starts in 1851.

a. Location: The house is in its original location and was built on-site.

b. Design: The primary structure is a two-story, wood framed, side-gabled double house with a two-story rear addition with a shallow pitched roof. The main massing is five (5) bays wide. It was built in a modest Italianate style, as indicated by the short, yet deep, cornices on the gable returns.

- Front Elevation

- The front elevation presents an asphalt shingle roof and paired center entrances on the first story.
- In the center of the front façade is a two-story covered porch. Centered on the second story is a door leading to the porch. The porches were added to both stories in the mid-20th century and partially obscures the original façade.
- A set of concrete-with-brick-parging steps and a mid-to-late 20th century iron railing leads to the porch on the first story.

- Front fenestration includes a set of four (4) two-over-two double hung windows on both floors, symmetrically located on either side, for a total of eight (8) windows.
- Fenestration also includes two (2) basement level windows, covered with wire mesh.

- Right Elevation

- Moderately pitched gable with deep, short return cornices on the main massing. shallowed-pitched roof of on the rear addition.
- Main massing is one (1) bay deep with one (1) two-over two double-hung windows centered on each story.
- There are two (2) two-over-two double-hung windows on each story of the rear addition, for a total of six (6) windows.
- There are two (2) basement windows covered in wire mesh.

- Left Elevation

- Moderately pitched gable with deep, short return cornices on the main massing. shallowed-pitched roof of on the rear addition.
- Main massing is one (1) bay deep with one (1) two-over two double-hung windows centered on each story.
- There are two (2) two-over-two double-hung windows on each story of the rear addition, for a total of six (6) windows.
- There are two (2) basement windows covered in wire mesh.

- Rear Elevation

- Shallow pitched gable with short return cornices.
- Lean-to on rear to the right side of property with entry into the building.
- Fenestration includes two (2) two-over-two double-hung sash windows of differing widths asymmetrically placed on the first floor, and four (4) double-hung two-over-two sash windows of differing widths and one (1) double-hung one-over-one window asymmetrically placed on the second floor.
- There is a wooden bulkhead entrance to the basement on the first floor.

c. Materials:

1. *Main Structure:* Vinyl clapboard siding over wood frame; vinyl over wooden eaves; wood porch with vinyl siding; brick masonry front stairs with iron railing; wood replacement front doors; brick chimney stacks; vinyl/aluminum windows; asphalt shingles on roof; brick and cement foundation. Remnants of wood shakes and asphalt or asbestos siding on the right elevation of main massing.

- d. Alterations: Covered front porches and brick front stairs added; rear addition width increased to match width of the front; lean-to on rear which may have been a covered entryway that has been enclosed; replacement of original siding with asbestos or asphalt shingles, which was later replaced or supplemented by vinyl siding; replacement of front doors; replacement of windows.

Evaluation of Integrity of 326-328 Lowell Street: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building, with the exception of the front overhung porches and expanded rear addition, largely retains the integrity of its

original and later forms and massing. While some alterations have occurred to this structure it retains a high degree of integrity of original and later architectural elements.

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 328-328 Lowell Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 328-328 Lowell 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 328-328 Lowell Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 328-328 Lowell 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 328-328 Lowell Street is or is not "historically significant".

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.1275
Historic Name:	Binney, Moses Double House
Common Name:	McGrath, William - Ewing, David House
Address:	326-328 Lowell St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Magoun - Albion;
Local No:	32-E-7;
Year Constructed:	1851
Architectural Style(s):	No style;
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture;
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Asbestos Shingle; Wood; Foundation: Brick;
Demolished	No



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 11:51 AM

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
32-E-7	Boston North		1275

Town Somerville

Place (neighborhood or village) Magoun Square

Address 326-328 Lowell St.

Historic Name Binney House

Uses: Present residential

Original residential

Date of Construction 1851

Source deeds and directory research

Style/Form Italianate/double house

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation brick

Wall/Trim vinyl/wood

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates) porch add ca. 1920

see attached **RECEIVED**

FEB 14 2006

MASS. HIST. COMM

Recorded by Arthur Krim

Organization Somerville Hist. Presv. Comm.

Date (month/year) January 2006

Condition fair

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 4460 sq.ft.

Setting suburban lot in dense

residential district

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet 326-328 Lowell St.

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The early double house at 326-328 Lowell Street was built in 1851 by an unknown housewright for Moses Binney, the original owner. The house follows a traditional two story, five bay plan, with a paired center entrance, indicating the double house plan, and a two story rear ell. The design is plain Italianate Style as seen in the short return gable cornices, with other period details removed in later remodelings. About 1910 the house was remodeled as a tenement with a two story front porch added to the facade, and the original siding replaced by asphalt shingles.

Although modified, the Binney house is one of the oldest remaining houses in the Lowell Street area from the mid-19th century, and preserves the original suburban style of the area before the Civil War.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☐ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The early double house at 326-328 Lowell Street is dated to 1851 by deeds and original plans to Moses Binney as the original owner. The house lot was laid out as part of a suburban subdivision in October 1851, with a footprint of the house shown to "Binney" on the 1851 plat map. A deed of 1852 to Binney and a listing for Moses Binney, a cushion manufacturer, in the 1851 Directory "near Medford [St.]," confirms construction in 1851. The house is shown on the 1852 Map and listed to "M. Binney" on the 1857 Map. The 1874 Atlas shows the house to William McGrath, who listed as a laborer in the 1875 Directory, and again listed to McGrath on the 1884 Atlas. The 1905 Directory lists David Ewing, a city laborer. In 1915 Nicola Gandusco and Thomas Nadoni, a shoemaker, are listed. A similar listing is given in 1925 with Antonio DeMastro and Alex Cerullo.

The Binney House is one of the original houses on Lowell Street from the first 1851 subdivision, later divided as a tenement for local workers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: J.M. Hopkins, 1874, 1884.

Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1895.

Map of Middlesex Co., Boston: H.F. Walling, 1857.

Map of Somerville. Somerville: Martin Draper, 1852.

Middlesex County Deeds. Plan Book 4B-84 (1851), 660-274 (1851), 903-373 (1863), 1006-505 (1867).

Somerville Directory. Somerville: Edmund Tufts, 1851.

Somerville Directory. Boston: W.A. Greenough, 1875-1940.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

SMV.1275

City of
Somerville
Massachusetts



Assessors Map

- Parcel Boundary
- Block Boundary
- - - Assessor Map Boundary

- Water Body
- Building
- Railroad ROW

- Lot Dimensions
- Lot Number
- Square Footage
- Frontage Dimension
- Street Address

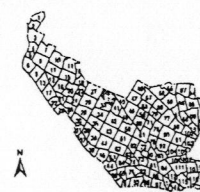


1" = 80'

February 07, 2002

Sources: Rights-of-way and building footprints developed from Boston Edison Company data, 1995. Parcel data developed from assessor maps by Camp Dresser & McKee, 1999.

NOTE: The data represented on these maps indicate distances and deeded locations of cadastral boundaries in the City of Somerville. They are NOT survey data and should not be treated as such.



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CDM
AN PLACE

326-328 Lowell St. SMV.1275