



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

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

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**STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
**STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 33 Cedar Street

**Case:** HP24-000061

**Applicant:** Beantown LLC

**Owner:** Genevieve Hansen

**Legal Ad:** *The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure 100 years ago.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** August 20, 2024

*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.

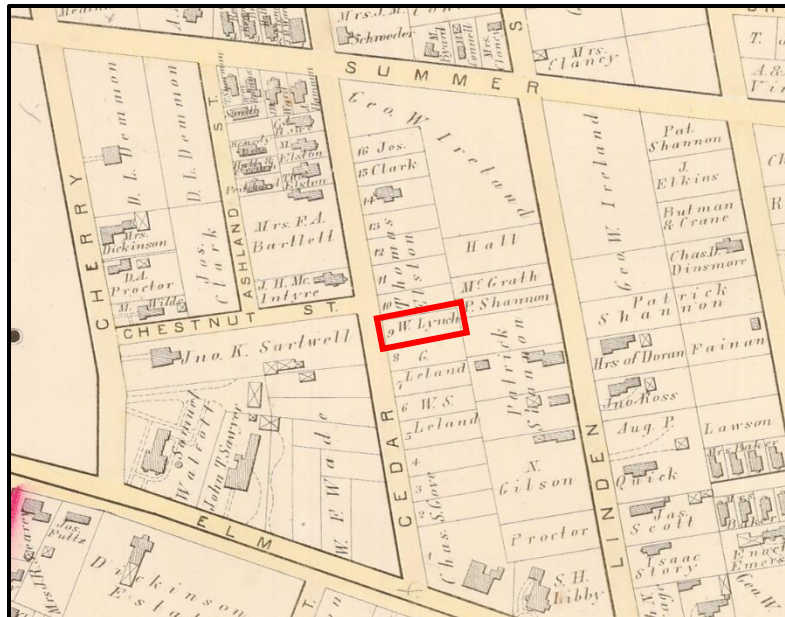
## I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Historical Context:** 33 Cedar Street is a two and a half-story Italianate home. The odd and even sides of Cedar Street are dominated by two and a half-story, gable-fronted structures.

The Spring Hill neighborhood was once part of the seventeenth century Stinted Common. As with all of present-day Somerville, this area was part of Charlestown until 1842. The area provided excellent grazing land and farm sties for Charlestown residents in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Large agricultural tracts were divided for Charlestown residents in the eighteenth century. Among early farms at the edge of Spring Hill was that of Timothy Tufts. Portions of the Tufts lands were later developed into extensive brickyards extending from Elm Street across Broadway between Cedar Street and Willow Avenue.

The development of industries along Milk Row (now Somerville Avenue), the construction of the Fitchburg Railroad to Fresh Pond in 1836, and the promotion of residential building in Somerville after its incorporation in 1842 all had a great impact on the agricultural landscape of Spring Hill. After the first wave of pre-Civil War development, several types of residential development occupied Spring Hill. After 1870, large single-family homes were built along Cherry, Craigie, Belmont, Spring and Lauren Streets. Small single-family workers' houses were constructed by builders along streets such as Cedar, Hall, Porter, and Granite.

*1874 Hopkins  
Map Plate J,  
specificizing  
location of 33  
Cedar Street.*

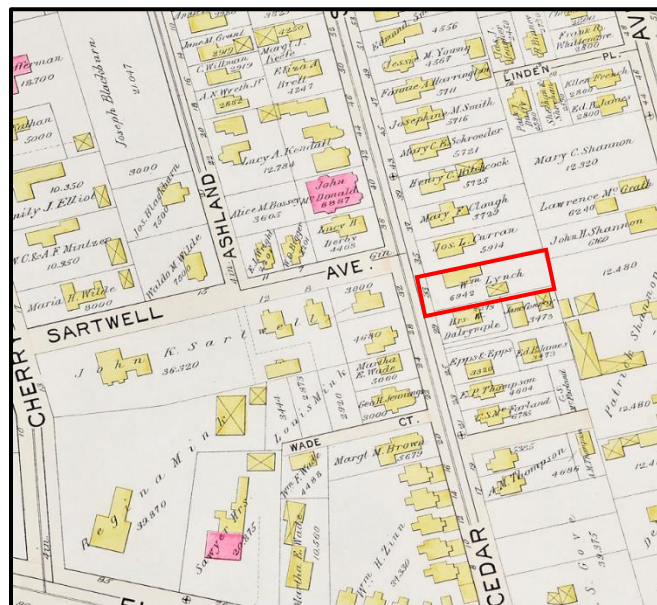


The 1874 Hopkins Map shows that this section of Cedar Street the subject property is located had been both laid out and platted. The surrounding area was fast developing with residential buildings already constructed on many lots on nearby streets such as Linden, Cherry, Chestnut, and Ashland. The 1874 map shows the parcel was owned by a W. Lynch. According to deed records, this parcel was Lot No. 9 on a “plan of Land in Somerville, belonging to the heirs of the late Caleb W. Leland, May 1873, W.A. Mason, Surveyor.”



1884 Hopkins  
Map Plate 12,  
specifying  
location of 33  
Cedar Street.

The 1884 Hopkins map shows Cedar Street with established parcel numbers as they appear today. More development had happened in the immediate area in the 10 years between the publication of these maps, with many of the lots on Cedar Street having residential structures on them. As for 33 Cedar Street, along with the principle structure, a barn or stable had also been built on the property. Though Staff cannot determine exactly when the structure was built, it is presumed it was constructed when the principle structure was built or closely thereafter. Though a bit difficult to see on the image above, the black arrow points to where the barn or stable is located on the property.



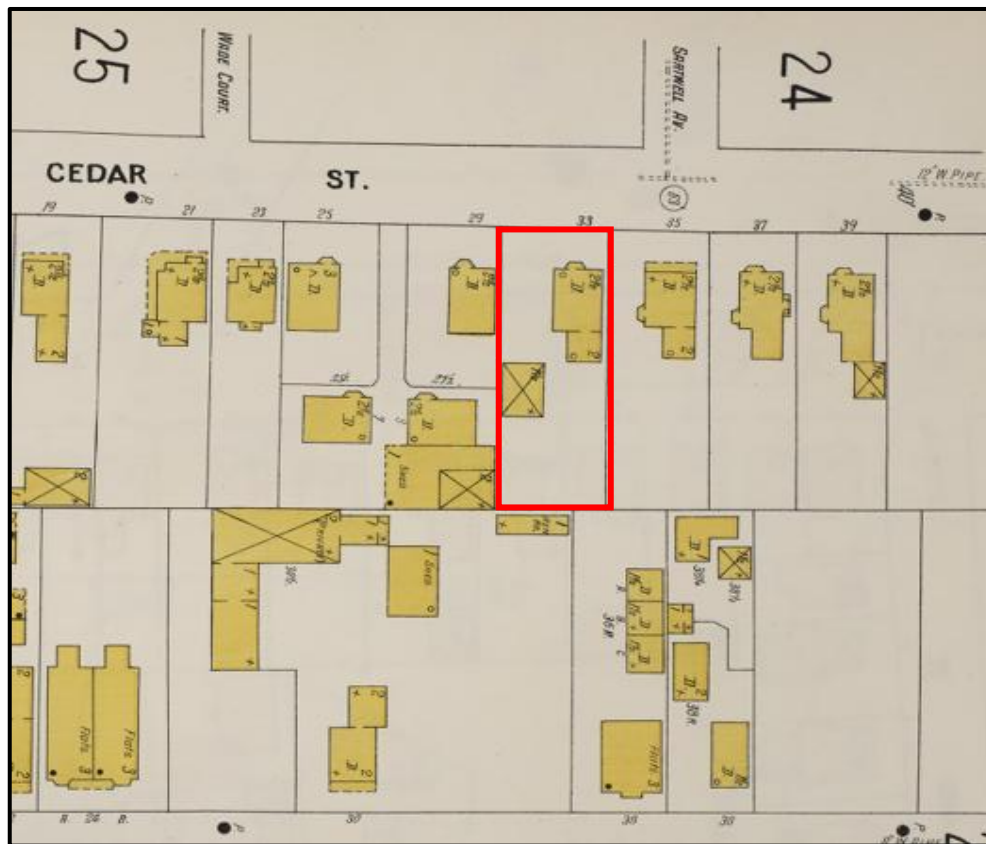
1895 Bromley  
Map Plate 17,  
specifying  
location of 33  
Cedar Street.

The 1895 Bromley map shows that by this point in time, more of this area is developing residential structures. Nothing significant has changed to 33 Cedar Street, as the map shows the structure remains the



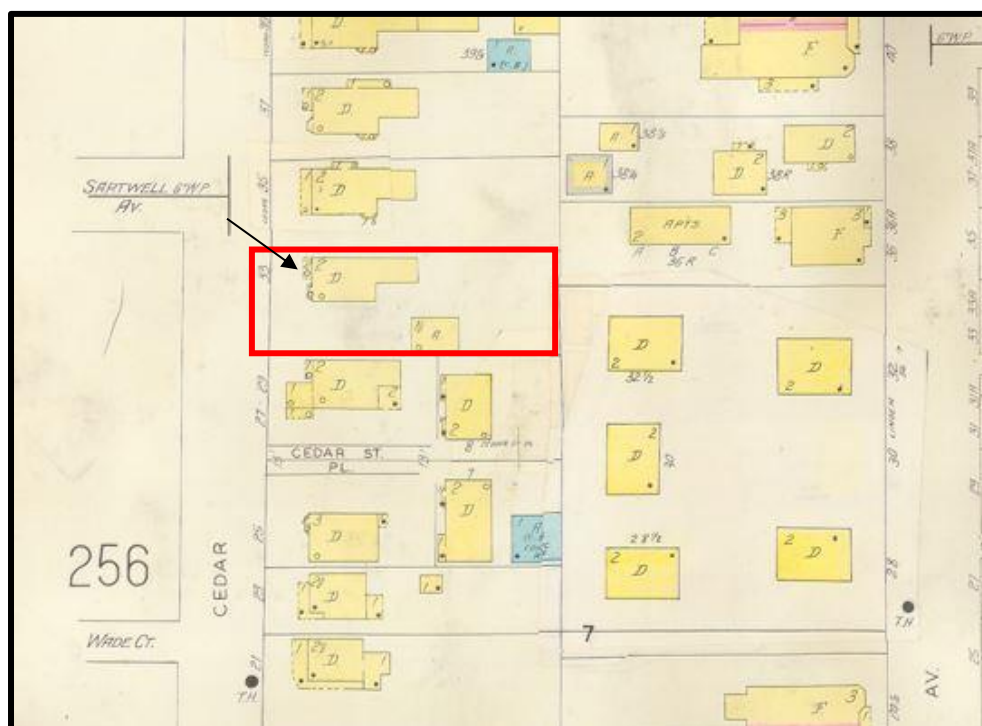
same from the 1884 Hopkins Map. One notable change in the neighborhood is that Chestnut Street was renamed to Sartwell Avenue.

1900 Sanborn Map Plate 27, specifying location of 33 Cedar Street.



By 1900, a bay window had been added to the front of the principle structure. No other noticeable additions were made to the house. At this point, much of the neighborhood was developed.

1938 Sanborn Map Plate 257, specifying location of 33 Cedar Street.

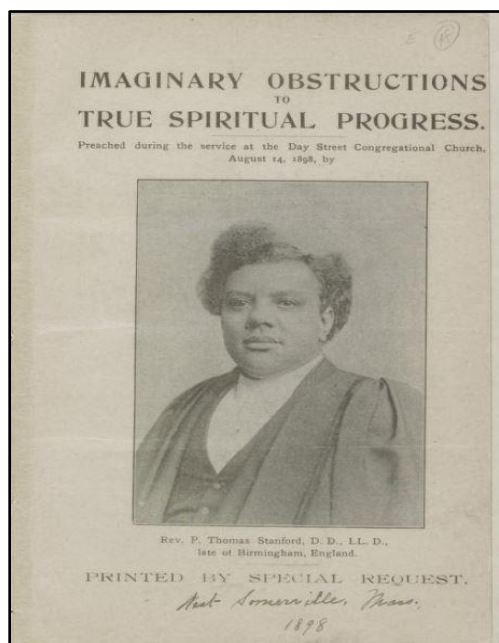


The 1938-1950 Sanborn map appears to show the addition of the second floor square oriel, indicated by the black arrow.

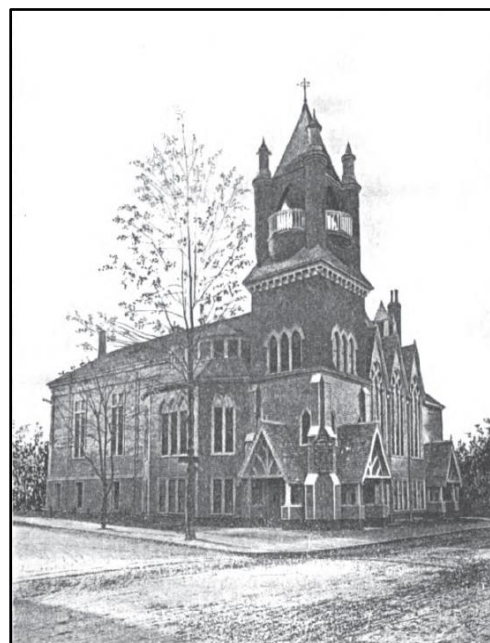
### 33 Cedar Street Occupants:

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
Henry C. Hitchcock	~1881-1887	Pastor	Unknown	B
H William	~1899-1909	Unknown	. Unknown	B
L William	~1910-1918	Salesman	Head of Household	H
Lucy William	~1910-1918	Unknown	Wife of L William	H
Margaret C. Shuckford	~1964-1981	Unknown	Unknown	H
Helen C. Gagon	~1964-1981	Unknown	Unknown	H
Margaret J. McLaren	~1981-1995	Unknown	Unknown	H
Herbet McLaren	~1981-1995	Unknown	Unknown	H
Marc F. Halevi	~1995-2024	Unknown	Unknown	H

One interesting connection with one of the buildings inhabitants, Henry C. Hitchcock, is with the former Day Street Congregational Church. Henry C. Hitchcock was a pastor at the Church from November, 1882 to January, 1893. After Hitchcock's time as Pastor, the Day Street Congregational Church hosted the Rev. P Thomas Stanford, a black congressional minister on August 14, 1898. At the service, Stanford gave a sermon and an account of his life from his enslavement in Hampton, Virginia, to his education in Connecticut. With the help of Harriet Beecher Stow he was able to advance education and his pursue his ministry in England.



*The Rev. P Thomas Stanford, as pictured in the front cover of the original sermon booklet. Image via the library of Congress*



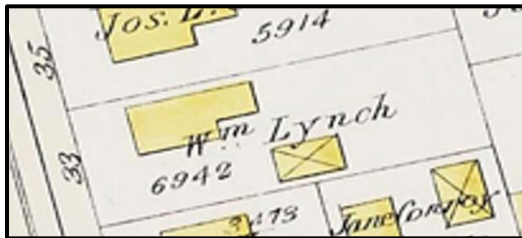
*Day Street Congregational Church, late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the church has since been demolished. Image via Somerville Past and Present.*

In the time available to Staff, we were unable to get an exact history of the building occupants throughout the structure's existence. Information obtained was from a mix of sources including city directories and census records.

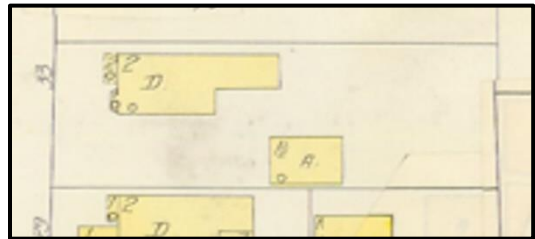
## II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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.*



Above: Fig 1



Above: Fig 2



Above: Fig 3



Above: Fig 4

Figure 1: 1885 Bromley Map

- Shows the original footprint of the structure.
- Shows an accessory barn or stable.

Figure 2:

- Shows the addition of a front stoop and upper story oriel.
- Shows the addition of the first-floor bay window.

Figure 3:

- Shows the later addition of what could possibly be painted aluminum trim around the first-floor bay window and windows on second floor oriel.

Figure 4:

- Shows the addition of a rear deck and stairs.

## 1. 33 Cedar Street

The period of relevance for the house starts c. 1874-1884

- a. Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime between 1874-1884.
- b. Design: The house is a two and a half-story front gable, three-bay wide, wood-framed Italianate with a two-story subservient rear addition contemporary to the construction date of the main massing.
  - Front Elevation
    - Gable roof with deep eave
    - First floor: On the left of the front façade: covered stoop with main entry door flanked on its left by side lites. On the right of the front façade: one-story polygonal bay window on the.
    - Second floor: Two evenly spaced window openings, and flat roofed square oriel.
    - Half-story: Arched window opening centered under gable peak.
  - Rear Elevation
    - Rear addition stepped down, contemporary and subservient to main massing.
    - Main massing first floor: Sliding glass doors, rear deck and stairs.
    - Second floor main massing: Window opening in original location.
    - Half-story main massing: Window opening in original location.
  - Left Elevation
    - First floor: One window opening in original location.
    - Basement: Three standard basement/foundation windows.
    - Second floor: Two window openings in original location. Other original window openings have been covered up with siding.
  - Right Elevation
    - Window openings in original location, evenly spaced and symmetrically spaced across two-floors.
    - Rear addition: Window openings original.
    - First floor: late 20<sup>th</sup> century bay window with later alteration of entry door and overhang.
    - Basement: At least one standard basement/foundation window.
- c. Materials:
  - Foundation: Brick
  - Windows: Wood trim openings
  - Entry door: Wood or composite
  - Siding: Vinyl
  - Trim: Vinyl trim
  - Steps: Wood
  - Roof: Asphalt shingles
  - Chimneys (2): Brick
- d. Alterations: Modern replacement of doors and windows on the front elevation. Modern replacement of windows on rear elevation, right elevation, and left elevation., covered

stoop, side lite, second story oriel, and removal of original eave brackets on the roof. Addition of deck on the rear elevation, along with sliding glass door, bay window, and entry door with covered overhang on the rear addition. It is also possible that the rear addition has been notched out to accommodate the entry door. Some original window openings have been covered up by siding material on the left and rear elevations.

- e. *Evaluation of Integrity of 33 Cedar Street:* Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retains most of the integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure which obscure some original details; however, the original massing and key architectural details such as the two and a half-story wood-framed Italianate main massing, bay window, arched window frame under the gable peak, chimneys and several window openings remain intact.

### **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 33 Cedar Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 33 Cedar 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 33 Cedar Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 33 Cedar 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 33 Cedar Street is or is not “historically significant”.