



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

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 35 Cedar Street

Case: HP24-000076

Applicant: Mazel Tov LLC

Owner: John J. Malin

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

HPC Meeting Date: September 17, 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: 35 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 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.

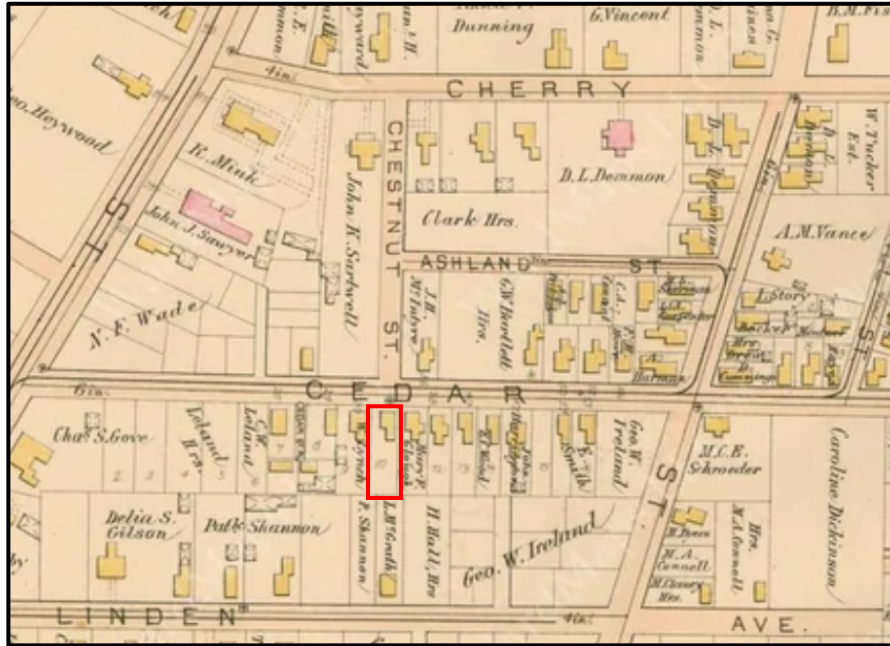
The development of industries along Milk Row (now Somerville Avenue), the construction of the Fitchburg Railroad to Fresh Pond in 1836, and the promotion of residential building in Somerville after its incorporation in 1842 all had a great impact on the agricultural landscape of Spring Hill. After the 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, specifying location of 35 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 Thomas Elston. Information from City Directories and Census records indicate that

Thomas Elston was a builder. It is possible he built the house at 35 Cedar Street and others on Cedar Street. Census records show that he was the son of Irish immigrants. Based on when he was born, his parents most likely immigrated to the United States during the Potato Famine in Ireland.



1884 Hopkins
Map Plate 12,
specifying
location of 35
Cedar Street.

The 1884 Hopkins map shows Cedar Street with established parcel numbers as they appear today. At this point a structure is built on the 35 Cedar Street lot. 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.

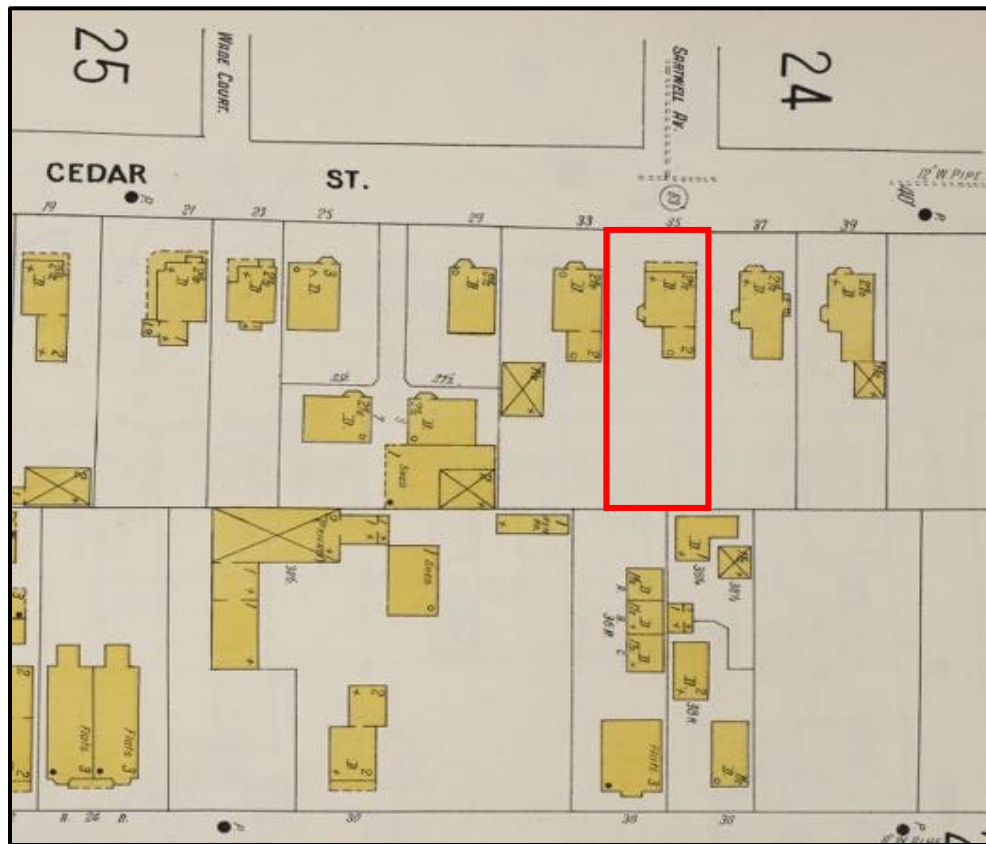


1885 Bromley
Map Plate 17,
specifying
location of 35
Cedar Street.

The 1895 Map shows that by this point in time, more of this area is developing residential structures. Nothing significant has changed to 35 Cedar Street, as the map shows the structure remains the same from

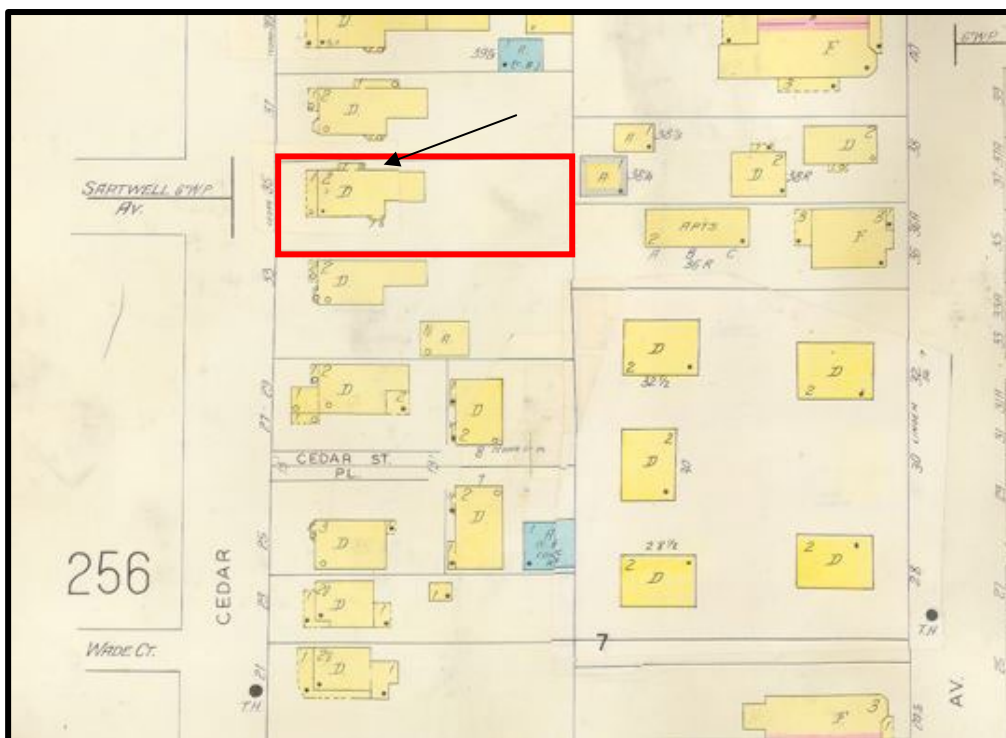
the 1884 Hopkins Map. One notable change in the neighborhood is that Chestnut Street was renamed to Sartwell Avenue.

1900 Sanborn Map Plate 27, specifying location of 35 Cedar Street.



By 1900, a front porch is added to the front of the principle structure. That front porch was removed at some point in time as it no longer exists on the property. A bay window is also added to the left side of the principle structure. No other noticeable additions were made to the house.

1938 Sanborn Map Plate 257, specifying location of 35 Cedar Street.



The 1938-1950 Sanborn Map shows that addition of a squared bay window on the right side of the principle structure (indicated by arrow).

35 Cedar Street Occupants:

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
William H. Parr	1881	Machinist	n/a	Renter
Charles Winters Jr.	1883	Artist	n/a	Renter
John H. Fellows	1884-1887	Brush Manufacturer	n/a	Renter
Joseph L. Curran	1889-1892	Gas Fitter	n/a	Homeowner
Crawford A. Hatch	1899	Piano Action Maker	n/a	Renter
Stephen O'Brien	1900	Meat Cutter	n/a	Renter
John T. Taylor	1901	Carpenter	n/a	Renter
Roger Blanchard Sr.	1903-1940	Musician	Head	Homeowner
Helen Blanchard	1903-1937	Unknown	Wife of Roger Blanchard Sr.	Homeowner
Roger Blanchard Jr.	1903-1961	Unknown	Son of Roger and Helen Blanchard	Homeowner
Arthur Blanchard	1903-1927	Clerk	Son of Roger and Helen Blanchard	Homeowner
James Blanchard	1917-1918	Unknown	Unknown	Renter
Lillie J. Blanchard	1907-1909	Unknown	Unknown	Renter
George B. Olive	1910-1920	Clerk	Head	Renter
Catherine W. Olive	1910-1920	Unknown	Wife of George Olive	Renter
Henry A. Horton	1910	Mill Man	n/a	Renter
John J. Malin	1962-2024	Unknown	Head	Homeowner
Grace M. Malin	1962-2024	Unknown	Wife of John J. Malin	Homeowner

Information found regarding the history of the structures occupants was done in the the time available to Staff. The information provided may not be 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.

The following newspaper article was found regarding Roger Blanchard Sr. and his band, the Woburn Band.

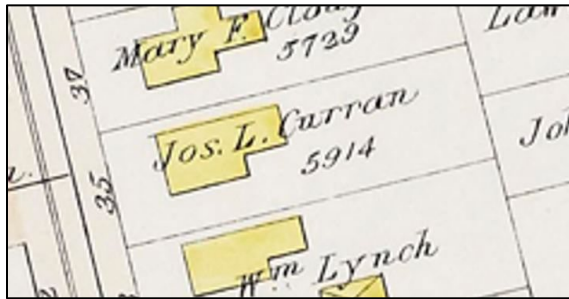
The band played several selections, including the De Molay march. Roger Blanchard is the leader. He was for 16 years leader of the well-known Woburn band. The drum major is Carl Wheeler of Lexington, six feet, five inches in height, a giant of a man, well proportioned.

The organization of the band was achieved through the efforts of Commander George I. Lawley, assisted by a committee, comprising Roger Blanchard, A. G. Howland, Arthur R. Kimball, Walter Dole and Tabor Sawyer.

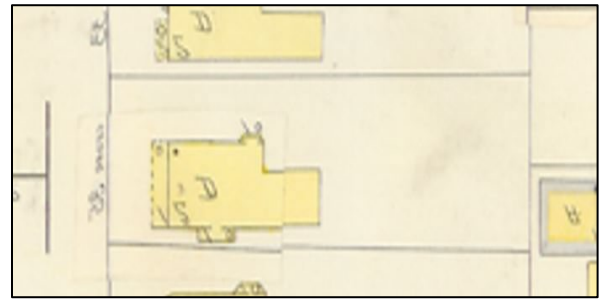
II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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: Figure 1



Above: Figure 2



Above: Figure 3



Above: Figure 4



Above: Figure 5

Figure 1: 1885 Bromley Map

- Shows the original footprint of the structure.

Figure 2: 1938-1950 Sanborn Map

- Shows the addition of right side bay window and left side squared bay window.
- Shows addition of a front porch, which was removed at some point in time.

Figure 3: Front Elevation

- Shows original window openings on the second floor and original window opening on half-story.
- Shows the addition of modern window and front door.

Figure 4: Right Elevation

- Shows the addition of the bay window on the first floor.
- Shows the addition of a side deck on the rear addition and covering over side entrance.

Figure 5: Left Elevation

- Shows the addition of the squared bay window.

1. 33 Cedar Street

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1884-1938

- 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 right side of the front façade: Stoop with main entry door flanked on its left and right by side lites and top crescent window. On the left of the front façade: Modern window.
 - Second floor: Three evenly spaced window openings.
 - Half-Story: One window opening centered under gable peak.
 - Rear Elevation
 - Rear addition stepped down, contemporary and subservient to main massing.
 - Main massing first floor: No window openings. Window openings likely covered up by siding.
 - Second floor main massing: One small window opening on left side.
 - Right Elevation
 - Window openings in original location, evenly spaced and symmetrically space across two-floors.
 - First floor: Early 20th century bay window.
 - Basement: Two standard basement/foundation windows.
 - Rear addition: Window openings likely covered up with siding and addition of smaller modern windows.
 - Left Elevation
 - Some original window openings on second floor. Other original window openings likely covered up by siding.
 - First floor: Early 20th century squared bay window.
 - Basement: Four standard basement/foundation windows.
- c. Materials:
 - Foundation: Brick
 - Windows: Modern vinyl trim windows
 - Entry door: Later addition modern door with side lites and crescent window
 - Siding: Vinyl siding

- Trim: Vinyl trim
 - Steps: Concrete
 - Roof: Asphalt shingles
 - Chimneys: Brick
- d. Alterations: Modern replacement of doors and windows on all elevations. Addition of rear deck to the right elevation, rear addition, along with modern side entry door and stairs added. Covering over the rear addition entry door. Some original window openings have been covered up by siding material on the left and rear elevations, and right elevation of the rear addition. The original eave brackets on the roof have been removed.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 35 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 integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure which obscure original details; however, the original massing remains 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 35 Cedar Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 35 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 35 Cedar Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 35 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 35 Cedar Street is or is not “historically significant”.