



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

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PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 60 Franklin Street

Case: HP24-000119

Applicant: Picker Construction Pablo Picker

Owner: Shelley J Milligan

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

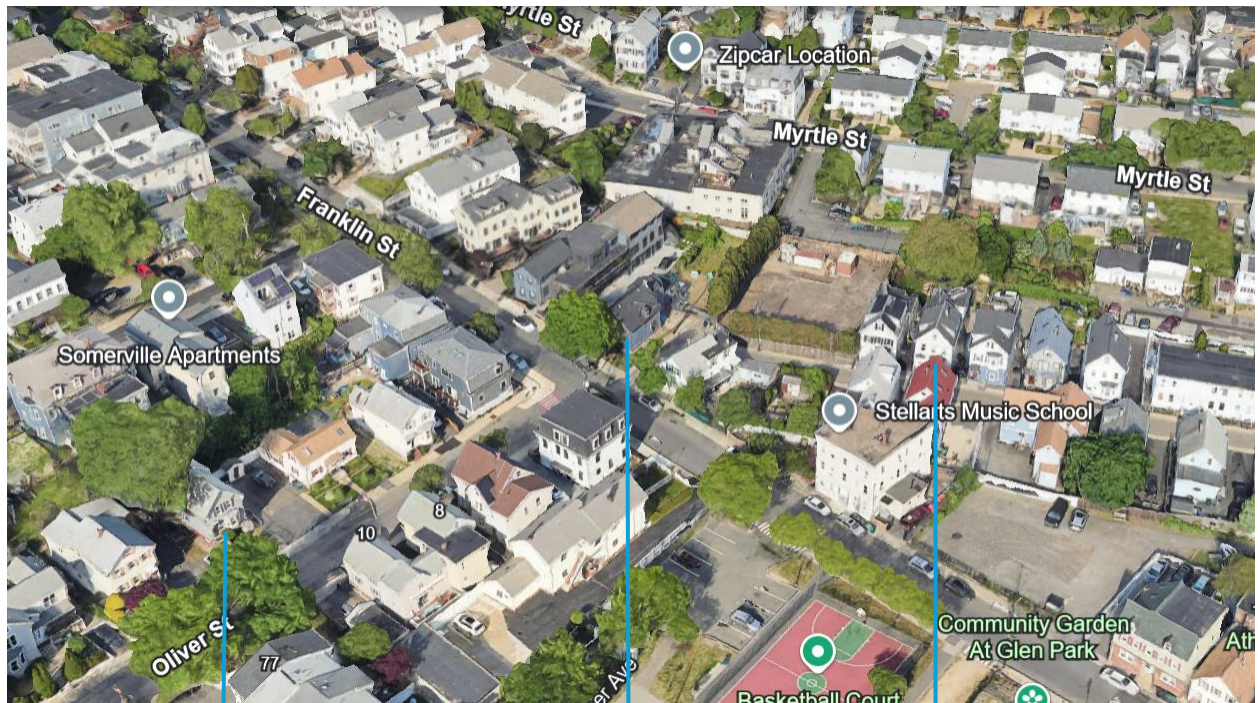
HPC Meeting Date: March 4th, 2025



Front Elevation of 60 Franklin St.

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. IMAGES OF PROPERTY / AREA



9 Oliver Street
Italianate

60 Franklin Street
Italianate
Subject Property

33 Franklin Ave
Italianate

Photos of the subject property

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation



The images below are of two neighboring properties and are provided for comparison. These structures were built during the same time period as the subject property and all had similar original massing. All three structures are of Italianate style (front-facing gabled roofs, moderate to widely overhanging eaves, bracketed eaves, bracketed or pedimented windows, single-story entry porches, tall narrow windows, bay

windows). These front-facing gabled, Italianate dwellings are common throughout the neighborhood. A majority of these structures were present by the time of the 1874 Hopkins map, shown later in this memo.



Left: 8 Oliver Street



Left: 33 Franklin Ave

II. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 60 Franklin Street is a residential structure built sometime before 1874. The subject property is located between what today is known as East Somerville and the Cobble Hill neighborhood, at the corner of Franklin Street and Franklin Avenue.

60 Franklin is one of several Italianate style homes, predominately built between 1840 to 1885, in the neighborhood. The front-gabled rectangular form was popularized by the Greek Revival style between 1825 and 1860. Front-gabled roof Italianate dwellings, about 10% of surviving examples of the Italianate style, became common on narrow lots in dense residential areas.

Railroad construction began on the Boston and Lowell Railroads, despite opposition from brickyard owners that feared this would bring outside competition for the industry in Somerville. The Boston and Lowell railroads cut a path through the eastern section of the mainland. The Charlestown Branch, later the Fitchburg Railroad, was built between Boston and Fresh Pond in Cambridge in 1841. In 1843 the Fitchburg Railroad began passenger service which opened corridors along these railroads to residential development.

In the 1840s to early 1870s, East Somerville was settled by a middle- class that commuted to businesses in Boston. Their commute was made possible by the introduction of these passenger rail lines, and East Somerville soon became an attractive area for residential development. The area the subject property is located was already densely developed by the 1870s, due to its proximity to what is today known as the East Somerville train station.

Beyond Pearl Street to the south towards Cobble Hill, the land dropped off precipitously in the direction of Washington Street. This “drop off” served as a natural line of demarcation between the area of substantial residences north of Pearl Street and the more modest workers’ cottages located on the incline that sloped down to the industrial corridor bordering Washington Street, like the subject property. Industries located in vicinity of the subject property and Washington Street included (brickmaking, spike manufacturing, potteries, etc.). In the beginning (1840s to early 1870s) most homeowners were Boston businessmen.

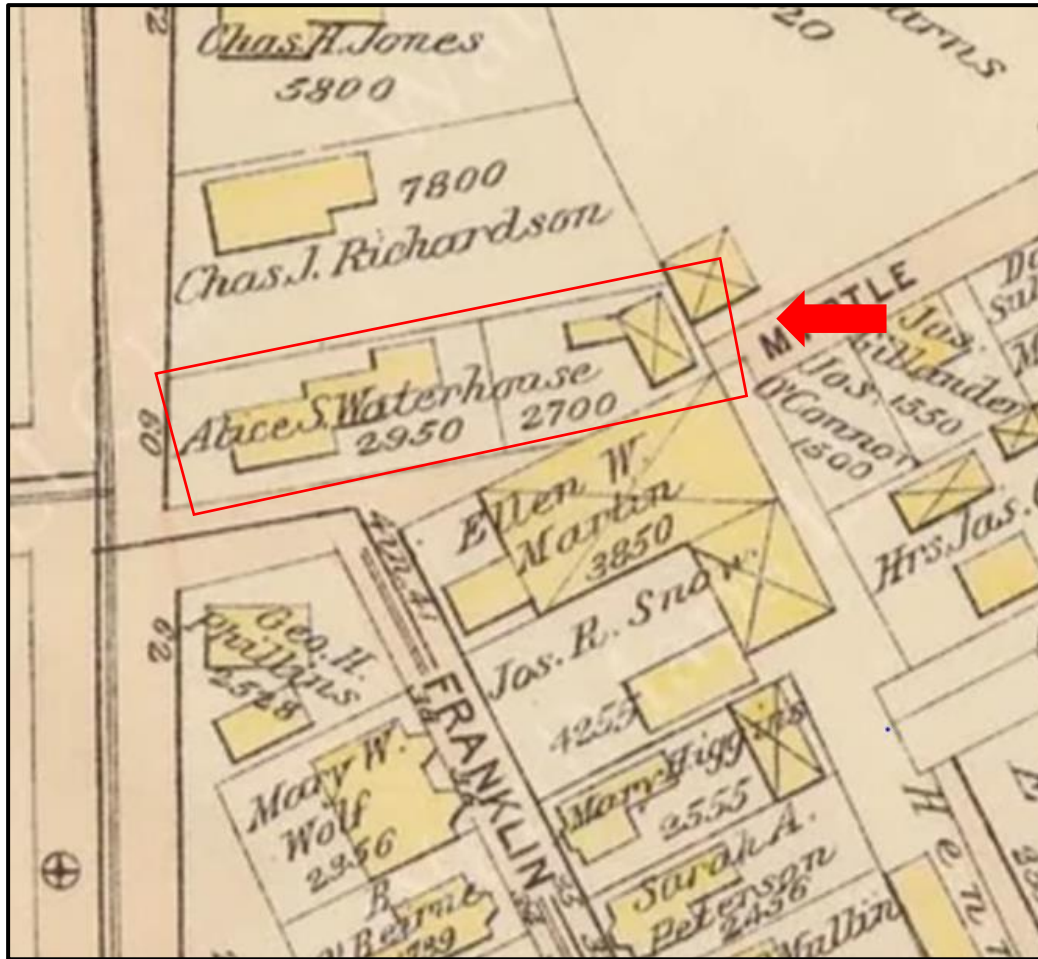
According to the 1874 Hopkins Map shown below, once Somerville was incorporated as a city in 1872, the area of the subject property was already densely populated.



Above: 1874 Hopkins Map with 60 Franklin Street indicated



Above: 1884 Hopkins Map with 60 Franklin Street indicated



Above: 1895 Bromley Map Plate with location of 60 Franklin Street indicated.

The 1895 Bromley Map indicates that the subject property was subdivided into two lots, an accessory structure was added to the rear of the property, and the first-floor rear addition had been added to the residence. During this time the owner was listed on this map as Alice Waterhouse, but deed records also show the property being split in half when Andrew M. Treacy conveyed half of the property to his brother, John Tracey, in 1890.

This 1895 map also shows a concentration of women owning property along Franklin Ave. Along with Alice Waterhouse, other owners included Mary W. Wolf, Mary Higgins, Sarah Peterson, and Ellen W. Martin. It was uncommon for women to own property during this period, let alone 5 women-owned properties concentrated around the subject property.

According to Census records, it does not appear neither of these men resided in the home but could have been owners for a short time prior to Mrs. Waterhouse. It appears Marlborough Savings Bank had ownership of the property at some point due to unpaid taxes and switched ownership several times before being acquired by Mrs. Waterhouse.

Alice S. Waterhouse moved to 60 Franklin Street in 1884. She was born in Maine in 1832. She was the widow of David Waterhouse, a leather worker who died prior to her moving into 60 Franklin. She was the mother of 3 children.

Her occupation was listed as ‘physician’ in several Somerville city directories but referenced as a leader & medium in a Spiritualism group. Regardless of her exact occupation, Mrs. Waterhouse worked out of her home and spoke on behalf of the National Spiritualism Alliance in Boston and the surrounding areas. She was a significant figure in the spiritualist movement in the area.

Name	Residency Year(s)	Occupation	Relationship	Type
Stephen L. Hayward	1874 – 1885	Carpenter		Absentee Owner
Alice S. Waterhouse *add 1884 census/directory	1884-1919	Physician/ Spiritual Medium	Head of Household	Boarder?
Amelia Howe	1885 - 1886			Absentee Owner
Andrew M. Tracey	1886 - 1890			Absentee Owner
Andrew M. Treacy & John Treacy	1890 - 1898			Absentee Owner
Marlborough savings Bank	1898 -	Bank	Mortgage lender	Absentee Owner
John T. Freeto	1899-1919	Lawler & Freeto Grocer		Boarder
Alice S. Waterhouse	1900 - until death in 1932	Physician	Head of household	Owner

Below: Alice Waterhouse in the 1900 Census; shown as the head of household and owner of 60 Franklin St.

[illegible]

Below: 1896 Somerville City Directory

W. S.	ave.
Physicians.	
(*Members of the Massachusetts Medical Society).	
Aldrich Albert C. 262 School	*Ransom N. Morton, 94 Summer
Bailey Wm. H. 63 Bow	Roscoe T. 178 Central
*Bell Wm. A. 26 Bow	*Sanborn E. A. 24 Franklin
Bradbury Charles H. 57 Elm	Sawyer Emily H. Mrs. (homo.),
*Bryant Giles W. 296 Elm, W. S.	284 Elm, W. S.
*Bump Lewis N. 138 Central	*Smith Frederick G. 49 Cross
Buttman George F. 214 Quincy	Stevens O. H. 178 Pearl
Carvill A. H. (homo.), 28 Highland	Taylor Ann B. 47 Pearl
ave.	Thompson H. J. 19 Burnside ave.
Clark Wm. C. 105 Porter	Thurlow Edgar F. 58 Preston
*Couch John F. 42 Bow	*Trueman Harmon S. 145 Summer
*Couch Wm. A. 42 Bow	Waterhouse Alice S. Mrs. 60 Frank-
Currier Mary B. Miss, 191 Broad-	lin
way	*White Emory L. 39 Bow
	*White Horace C. 149 Perkins
	*Whiting G. W. W. 280 Broadway
	Whitman Edson P. 46 Bow
	*Willis Reubin, 285 Broadway

Alice Waterhouse is listed as a member of the Massachusetts Medical Society in the 1896 Somerville City Directory

Below: Close-up of 1898 Somerville City Directory indicating Alice Waterhouse as a Physician operating out of 60 Franklin Street.

Waterhouse Alice S. Mrs. physician, 60 Franklin, h. do.

Below: 1904 Boston Globe article mentioning Alice Waterhouse

What is Said Regarding Spiritualism.

Sessions of the First Spiritualist Ladies' Aid Society.

The First Spiritualist ladies' aid society held three sessions yesterday in Appleton hall, 9 Appleton st, to commemorate the 56th anniversary of modern spiritualism. There was a large attendance during the day and evening.

The morning session opened with brief remarks by the president, Mrs. M. E. A. Albee, followed by addresses from Mrs. Alice S. Waterhouse, Albert Blinn and Edgar Emerson.

Below: 1906 Boston Evening article mention Alice Waterhouse

MEDIUMS GIVE TESTIMONY

Evening Session of Spiritualists Addressed by Many Ladies

Considerable personal testimony was given by those interested in the movement at last night's session incident to the fifty-eighth anniversary of modern spiritualism held in Red Men's Hall. Mrs. W. S. Butler presided, and addresses were made by a number of persons, including Mrs. N. J. Willis of Boston, Mrs. Alice Waterhouse of Somerville, Mrs. Pettingill, wife of Judge Pettingill of Malden, Mrs. Anna Chapman of Brighton and Mrs. Minnie A. Soule of Boston, who contended that it was the unde-

Below: 1908 Somerville City Directory; no longer listed as 'Physician'; listed as widow of David Waterhouse

WATERHOUSE Alice S wid David
h 60 Franklin


Below: 1924 article about Alice Waterhouse

CIRION and Albert Dunn, its Secretary.

Belief Has Outgrown Table Tipping And Ouija Board Phase

Community Noted for Longevity of Inhabitants —Camp Pioneers Beyond the Honorable Four Score and 10 Mark—Mrs **Alice S. Waterhouse**, Nimble-Minded at 92, Has Been Spiritualist for 70 Years — Lecture and "Messages" Followed by Trumpet Demonstration of "Spirit Voices"

THE VIBRATIONS set in motion by a three-line item from The Republican's Lake Pleasant correspondent jostled a restless Ford



Mrs **Alice Waterhouse** is keen-minded at 92.

Below: 1915 Boston Globe

STATE OBSERVANCE OF ADVENT OF SPIRITUALISM

The 6th anniversary of the advent of Spiritualism is being observed today at Franklin Union, under the auspices of the Massachusetts State Association, by a large number of prominent Spiritualists.

The morning session was opened by Rev Frederick A. Wiggin, president. Mrs Martha A. Whitehead offered the invocation.

Pres Wiggin introduced as the first speaker Mrs **Alice Waterhouse**, who has been in the service of spiritualism 60 years. She gave an interesting account of the growth of the work.

A series of seances followed, during which messages were given by Mrs Millicent Wilson, Mr LeRoy Clough, Mrs Nellie Abbott, Mrs Amelia Adams and Mrs Mae Crowell. Mrs Susie Mosier gave an address. Rev M. E. G. Howe pronounced the benediction.

This evening Dr George B. Warner, president of the National Spiritualistic Association, will give the principal address.

Below: 1916 Boston Post Spiritualist meeting



Throughout her time living at 60 Franklin Street, Alice Waterhouse was heavily active in the spiritualist community. She was an official of the National Spiritual Alliance. She was also a resident and VP of the Lake Pleasant (Massachusetts) community association. Lake Pleasant is the location of the headquarters for the National Spiritualism Alliance. Mrs. Waterhouse went to stay at Lake Pleasant every summer for 70 years acting as a community official, VP, medium, and resident. The National Spiritual Alliance is still active today <https://spiritualallianceusa.org/> with their headquarters remaining in Lake Pleasant, MA. The history of the Spiritualist Movement that took hold in the US starting in the 19th century can be found here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritualism_\(movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritualism_(movement)).

In some articles, the Lake Pleasant spiritualist colony is described as an encampment that had contention with fellow neighborhood groups. Alice Waterhouse was a member of the Lake Pleasant community and a resident of 60 Franklin Street up until her death in 1934.

Alice Waterhouse is quoted or mentioned on articles regarding spiritualism more than 100 times in newspapers such as the Boston Globe, The Boston Transcript, and others around Massachusetts. She was a prominent medium, educator, speaker, and representative during the spiritualist movement around the Boston area.

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section 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

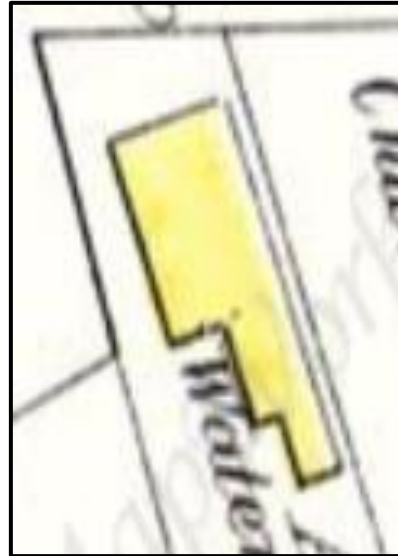


Fig 2

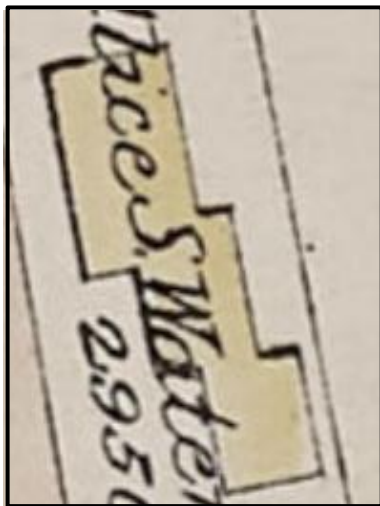


Fig 3



Fig 4

Figure 1: 1874 Hopkins Map

- Shows the original footprint of the structure.

Figure 2: 1884 Hopkins Map,

- Shows a one-story addition to the rear.

Figure 3: 1895 Bromley Map, rear addition is expanded.

Figures 5 & 6: Satellite image of the property

- Deck added to the rear of the home.

60 Franklin Street

The period of relevance for the subject property starts c. 1874 or earlier. The house is an Italianate, two and three-quarters-story, front-gabled roof cottage with shingled siding and an asymmetrical facade.

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

- Design: 60 Franklin Street is an Italianate style, 2 ½-story gable-fronted structure with two subservient rear additions. Main massing presents a heavy eave and a simple with minor irregularities and projections.

Front Elevation

First Story:

- protruding, enclosed entry hall on left with hipped roof
- polygonal oriel window with four fixed or casement-style windows

Second Story:

- two fixed double-paned windows
- front gabled roof with a steep pitch on front portion of home (pitch varies)
- wide eave overhang, boxed without brackets

Right Elevation

First Story:

- asymmetrical facade
- four-pane fixed, picture window
- two-panel picture windows
- two (2) basement windows

Second Story:

- 2 dormers; a gabled roof dormer with a double-hung window and a shed dormer with a two-panel sliding window
- 2 panel picture windows
- wide eave overhang, boxed without brackets

Left Elevation

First Story:

- first rear addition protrudes out with a shed-style pitched roof
- single-floor second addition with two double-hung windows
- two (2) basement windows

Second Story:

- first addition has a 3-panel fixed picture window
- wide eave overhang, boxed without brackets

Rear Elevation

First Story:

- Lean-to on rear to the right side of property with entry into the building.
- triple picture window
- They're differing front facing pitched roofs.
- rear deck and patio, built level with the deck.

Second Story:

- narrow eave overhang, without brackets

b. Materials:

- . *Main massing:* Wood shingle siding over wood frame; wooden shingles on eaves and enclosed front entry; wood front door; brick chimney stacks; vinyl/aluminum windows; asphalt shingles on roof; brick and cement foundation

- c. *Alterations:* There have been 2 two-story additions and 1 one-story additions to 60 Franklin, all constructed prior to 1895. A rear deck and brick patio were also added. Doors and windows appear to have been replaced at different points in time. The shingles appear to have been replaced or repaired.

Evaluation of Integrity of 60 Franklin Street: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building 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.

IV. 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

- . The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 60 Franklin Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
- . The HPC must specifically state why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 60 Franklin 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 PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 60 Franklin Street meets any of the criteria stated above.

2. The HPC must specifically state why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 60 Franklin 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.

V. VOTE

1. When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 60 Franklin Street is or is not "historically significant".