



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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PLANNING, PRESERVATION, & ZONING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**STEP 2: DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
STAFF REPORT**

Site: 8 Bolton Street

Case: HP24-000125

Applicant: Julian Lewis

Owner: Stephen Ober

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

HPC Meeting Date: April 15, 2025



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. CONCESSION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The applicant for 8 Bolton Street has conceded that the subject property is historically significant. Pursuant to Section 7-28(c)(7) of the Demolition Review Ordinance allows for applicants to waive the determination of significance and reads "An applicant, when submitting the required documents for an initial determination per subsection (e)(2), may voluntarily select to waive initial determination. If the initial determination is waived, the building shall immediately be determined to be a significant building, without further action from the commission, and shall be scheduled for a final determination per subsection (f)(2) of this section." Due to this admission, 8 Bolton Street moves on to the second step in the demolition review process, which calls for the HPC to

determine whether or not the building should be “Preferably Preserved”. A determination of “preferably preserved” does not permanently halt demolition of a building.

II. BUILDING UNDER CONSIDERATION

8 Bolton Street is a 2-1/2 story two-family residential structure.

Right: Left elevation



Right: Rear elevation

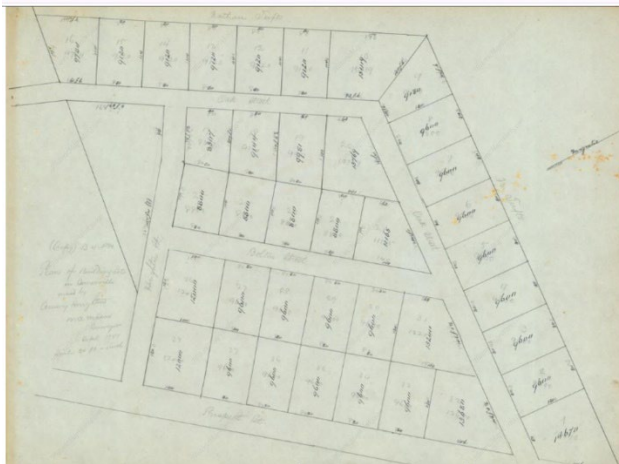


Right: Right elevation

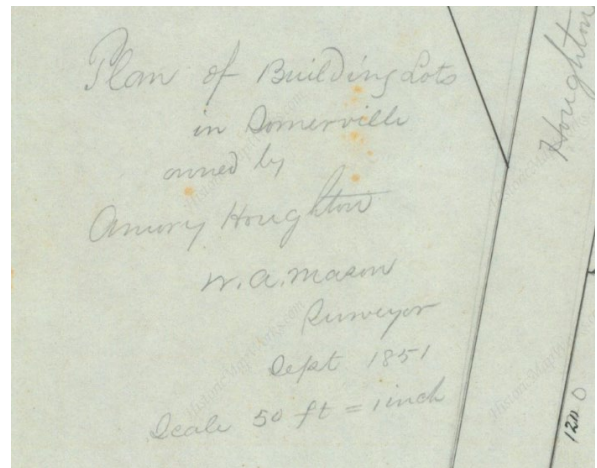


III. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: A large swath of land in and around Union Square including Bolton Street was owned in 1851 by Amory Houghton – the founder of Union Glass Company on Webster Street. The land was platted into housing lots in 1851 by Surveyor W. A. Mason as a speculative subdivision. This land was laid out encompassing Houghton, Oak, and Bolton Streets for worker housing to support the glass factory, and likely neighboring brickyards, but no company-owned housing was built. This location would have been attractive to homeowners due to the proximity to Union Square and the growing commercial hub. Also, the Fitchburg (steam) Railroad made commuting to Boston possible, beginning circa 1848, with further transportation options via the Cambridge (horse) Railroad in the mid to late 1850's.



1851 subdivision survey plan by W.A. Mason



Enlargement showing ownership and date

Bolton Street does not appear on the 1852 Draper Map which is based upon an 1846 survey. However, it appears on both the 1858 and 1860 Walling Map of Boston and the Country Adjacent with several houses indicated along Oak and Prospect Streets, but no 6-8 Bolton Street is shown.



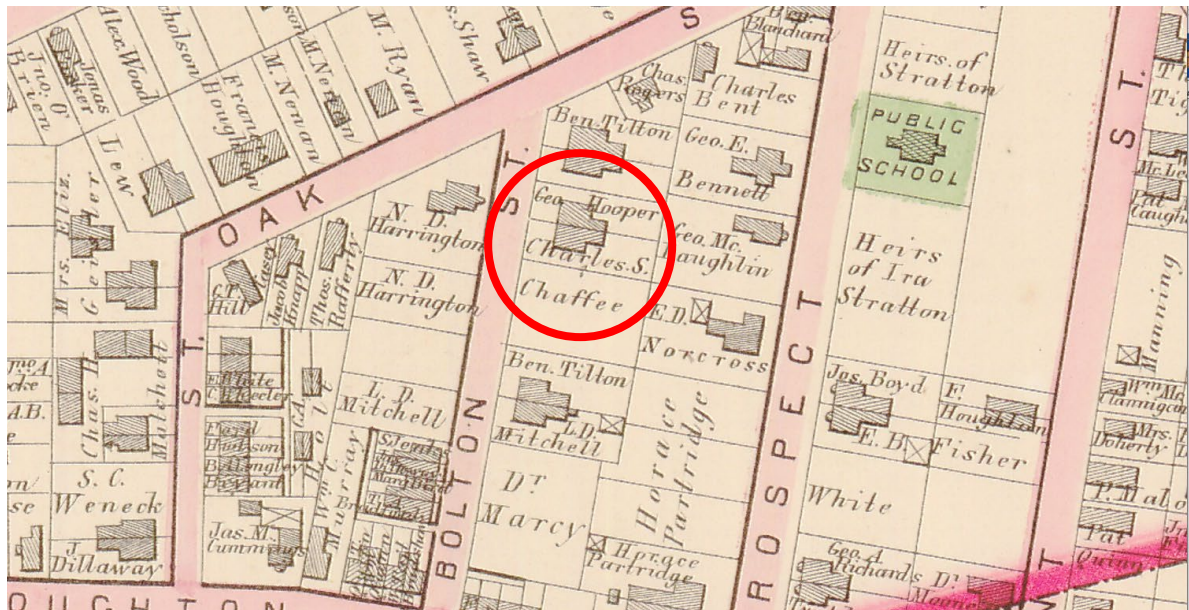
1858 Walling Map of Boston and the Country Adjacent



1860 Walling Map of Boston and the Country Adjacent

The first known sale of the property was from Thomas Dana – who acquired the Union Glass Company and this land from Amory Houghton in 1860 – to Richard B. Hines in 1865¹ and he owned it for 3 years. While the exact date of construction has not been determined, 6-8 Bolton Street was likely built sometime between 1860 and 1865. The Italianate structure, very similar if not identical to the adjacent structure at #2-4 (documented on the Form B SMV.378 on MACRIS), was built as a “double house” – a side-by-side two-family dwelling. Hines sold the property to Hosea Ballou Dennison on July 30, 1868². From Maine, Dennison was an architect and only lived in this location with his wife Justina and their adopted daughter Abby until November 3, 1868. The property was then sold to George R. Hooper³.

Ownership of 6-8 Bolton Street is first documented on the historic maps as shown on the 1874 Hopkins Map Plate E, with owners noted as George Hooper (#6) and Charles S. Chaffee (#8). At that time, it appears that Charles Chaffee also owned the large parcel to the south.



1874 Hopkins Atlas of the City of Somerville

Charles Shaylor Chaffee, a salesman, worked at Baldwin, Robbins & Co. Wholesale Hardware, 115 Milk St, Boston. He purchased #8 from Robert Douglass on April 23, 1864⁴ but this document is not digitally available.

SOMERVILLE [C] DIRECTORY. 47

Cavanagh Christopher, gardener, house Myrtle, near Milk
Chaffee Charles S. salesman, (115 Milk, B.), house Bolton, near Oak [Plummer's Wash. near Webster ave.
Chaffee Thomas, bookkeeper, Union Glass Co. boards Jas.
Chamberlin Carmi D. blacksmith, house Flint, near Glen

1870 Somerville City Directory

¹ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 947/107

² Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 1046/251

³ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 1056/118

⁴ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 927/507

Chaffee died at 39 (January 16, 1878) of “Organic Disease of Brain”. He was the son of Knowlton S. Chaffee, a treasurer for the Union Glass Company, who, along with Chaffee’s widow Martha, sold the property at public auction on July 9, 1879⁵. The property was purchased by George Robert Hooper of #6 Bolton Street.

George R. Hooper and his family are found in the 1870 and 1880 US Census. He is listed in the Somerville City Directory from 1870. Hooper worked at the Custom House in Boston as an Assistant Weigher and Night Inspector. The Bolton Street house was occupied by Hooper, his wife Mary, his son George William, and included his mother-in-law (Rebecca Barker) and sister-in-law (Fannie D. Barker). He died May 4, 1889, of pneumonia at age 51, leaving the house to his wife.

Holt Lucy, widow John, h. Union, n. Medford turnpike
Holt Samuel W. truckman, house Washington, n. Boston
Homer Jacob, clerk, (Court House, B.), house Summer,
opposite Laurel
Hooper George R. night inspector, (Custom House, B.),
house Bolton, near Oak

WOODWARD & BROWN, Piano-forte Manufacturers, 387
Washington Street, Boston.

1870 Somerville City Directory

The 1895 Bromley Atlas of the City of Somerville shows that by this point in time, the heirs of George Hooper own both #6 and #8 Bolton Street and a new 2-family structure has been constructed on the adjacent property (#14-16 previously owned by Chaffee). Most of the surrounding lots had also been developed at this time.



1895 Bromley Atlas of the City of Somerville - Plate 6

⁵ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 1516/413 & 412

Mary W. Hooper moved into #8, from #6, as evidenced by the Somerville City Directories, however the date of this move has not been determined. In 1906, on February 27th, Mary Hooper sold the property to her son George William Hooper for \$1⁶. George William never lived in 6-8 Bolton Street as an adult, instead renting out both units. He owned and lived at 89 Prospect Street.



Sanborn 1900 – 1925 additions Vol. 0-076



Sanborn 1938 – 1959 Vol. 1-19

George W. Hooper sold the 6-8 Bolton Street properties, along with his own home at 89 Prospect, to Zola Piers on July 7, 1949⁷. She was from New Brunswick, Canada, and a single saleswoman who only held the properties for 2 months before selling 6-8 Bolton to Frederick Zantrofski on September 7, 1949⁸. It appears that Frederick C. Zantrofski never lived on Bolton Street either as the 1948 and 1953 Boston City Directories show him living at 175 Chambers Street in Boston.

The following table provides a list of the known owners of the property since 1851.

Name	Ownership	Occupation	Relationship	House
Amory Houghton	1851	Union Glass Co.		Land
Thomas Dana	1860	Thomas Dana & Co.		Land
Robert Douglass	1864			
Charles S. Chaffee	1864-1879	Salesman		#8
George R. Hooper	1879-1906	Asst. Weigher, Custom House		#8
Richard B. Hines	1865-1868	Furniture dealer		
Hosea B. Dennison	July-Nov. 1868	Architect		#6
George R. Hooper	1868-1906	Asst. Weigher, Custom House	Wife Mary W. Barker	#6
George W. Hooper	1906-1949	Paperhanger	Son to George R. & Mary W. Hooper	#6 & #8
Zola Piers	July–Sept. 1949	Saleswoman		#6 & #8
Frederick Zantrofski	1949-1951	Porter (Grants)		#6 & #8

⁶ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 03922/370

⁷ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 07451/492

⁸ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 07476/322

Joseph & Maria Estrella	1951-1974	Wholesale Shipper		#6 & #8
Frank E. & Georgina Ober	1974-present			#6 & #8

IV. 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.



Photograph c. 1980 showing 2-4 and 6-8 and Bolton Street (from MACRIS SMV.378 which is the form B for 2-4 Bolton Street, the building on the left-most portion of this photo. 6-8 Bolton Street is on the right.)



Photograph January 27, 2025, showing original trim at eaves and gable



Photograph January 27, 2025, showing original door surrounds and ornate porch columns



Photograph January 27, 2025, showing original 2-over-2 windows with exterior storm

1. 8 Bolton Street

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1860-1865

- a. Location:* This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime between 1860-1865.
- b. Design:* The house is a wood-framed, two-and-a half-story side gable with a two-story gabled rear addition perpendicular to the main massing. The house was built as a side-by-side two-family (previously referred to as a “double house”).

- Front Elevation
 - Symmetrical front elevation with two bays on each house presenting a four-bay wide elevation
 - Two-and-a-half-story gable roof on main volume with two-story rear addition
 - Covered porch with two entry doors
 - Of architectural interest on these modest houses are the ornate brackets of the porch and deep eaves (including fascia and soffit), and frieze boards
 - Right Elevation
 - Symmetrical window pattern remains as original
 - Original gable trim, eave trim, and frieze boards remain
 - Left Elevation
 - Symmetrical window pattern remains as original
 - Original gable trim, eave trim, and frieze boards remain
 - Rear Elevation
 - Window pattern has been altered
 - Original gable trim, eave trim, and frieze boards remain
- c. Materials:
- Foundation: Stone and brick
 - Windows: Original wood with exterior metal storms, some vinyl replacement
 - Entry doors: Wood with fan light and storm door
 - Siding: Asbestos shingles
 - Trim: Wood and possibly aluminum
 - Steps: Wood
 - Roof: Asphalt shingles
 - Chimney: Brick
- d. Alterations: Asbestos shingle siding and storm doors/windows added on the entire structure. A chimney stack on the right dwelling unit (#8) has been removed. Some window openings on rear elevation have been closed and are covered with siding and some windows replaced with vinyl units on #6 on the left elevation and at the rear. The foundation brick and stone have been painted.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 8 Bolton 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 windows and many of the remaining windows are the original wood two-over-two divided lite double-hung. The porch and decorative column capitals, the front door surrounds, the deep eaves (including the fascia and soffit), the frieze boards on all elevations, and the trim at the gable ends are original and remain mostly intact.

V. DETERMINATION

The HPC must determine one of the following for the building at 8 Bolton Street:

- a. That the building is Preferably Preserved.
- b. That the building is not Preferably Preserved.
- c. That the building is not Preferably Preserved *with Conditions*.

See the following section “VI. Findings” for guidance.

VI. FINDINGS

a. Preferably Preserved

For a determination of *preferably preserved*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- *That the demolition of the building at 8 Bolton Street will be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.*

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

b. Not Preferably Preserved

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

c. Not Preferably Preserved with Conditions

For a determination of *NOT preferably preserved with Conditions*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- *That the building at 8 Bolton Street does not meet any of the criteria to be “preferably preserved.”. The HPC may add any or all of the following as conditions to this determination:*

- 1. photographic documentation of the building to be demolished;*
- 2. architectural renderings of the building to be demolished;*
- 3. identification of materials for salvage of material; and/or,*
- 4. a plan for installation of historic or interpretive signage at or near the site.*

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

VII. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the building at **8 Bolton Street** is or is not “preferably preserved”.