



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

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 6 Wheatland Street

Case: HP25-000008

Applicant: Adam Dash

Owner: NPO Properties LLC

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

HPC Meeting Date: May 6, 2025



Front elevation



Left side



Rear view

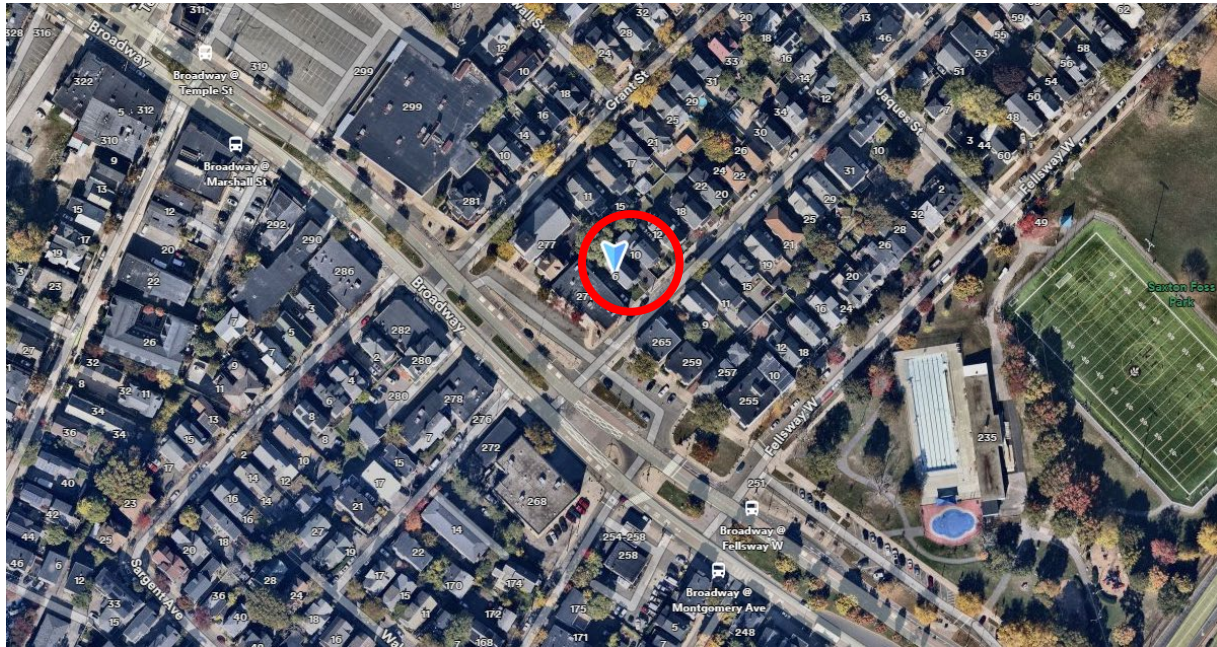


Right side

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: 6 Wheatland Street is a two and a half-story structure on a street dominated by two and a half-story residential buildings and a few triple-decker residential buildings. Wheatland Street is located in the Ten Hills neighborhood on the cusp of Winter Hill. The street is roughly bound by the key roadways of Temple Street, Broadway, Mystic Avenue, and the McGrath-O'Brien Highway, with the state-owned Foss Park in between.



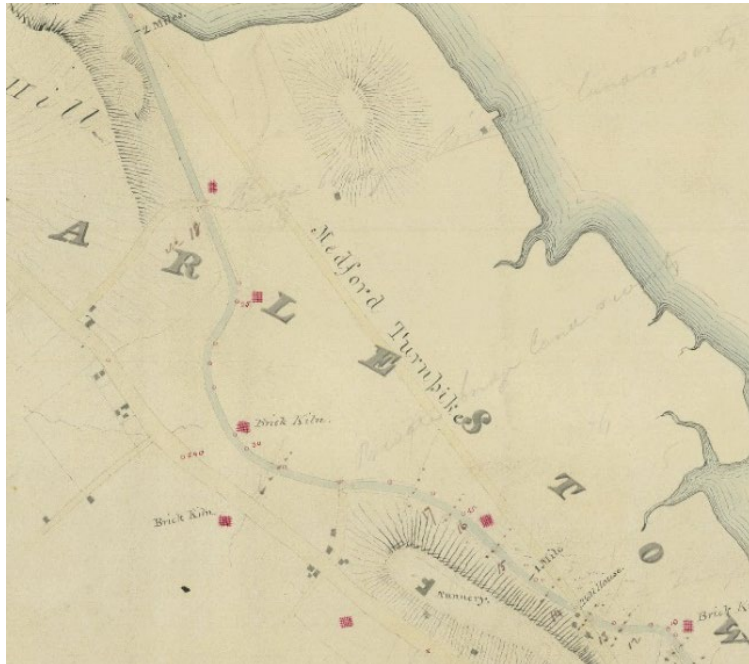
2025 aerial showing location of 6 Wheatland in relation to Broadway and Foss Park

Ten Hills is named for the ten hills of the original tracts of land deeded to Governor John Winthrop by the Massachusetts Bay Colony Council in 1630. The original Ten Hills site was bisected by the Mystic River, with 450 acres in present-day Medford. Winthrop chose the area for the site of his farm and used Ten Hills as a summer residence. Governor Winthrop was among the one of the few original European settlers in the Ten hills area.



1637 map of Ten Hills Farm (note: north is to the right)

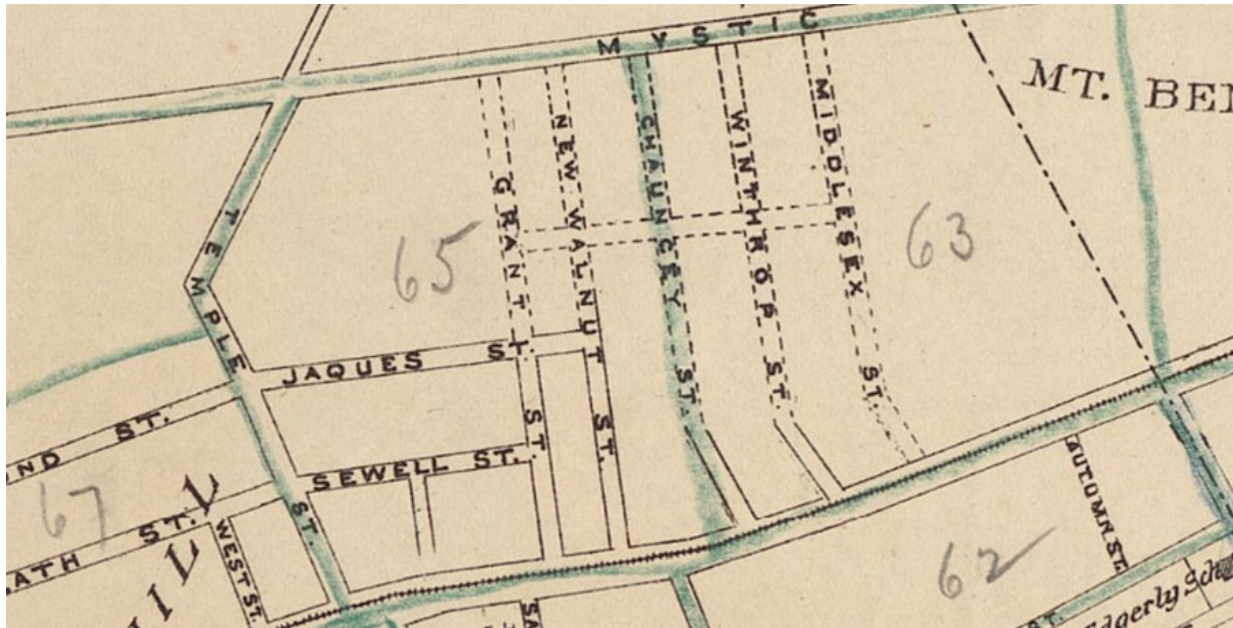
In the 18th-century, running through the same area, the "Proprietors of the Middlesex Canal" were incorporated to build a canal connecting the Merrimack River in Lowell with the Mystic River in Medford. In 1795, the canal was authorized as far as Boston. The canal was completed as far as Charlestown (now Somerville) on December 31, 1803. The canal was thirty feet wide, four feet deep, and was abandoned in the 1830s, after the expansion of the railroad network. Staff was unable to find any information about the canal ever being officially "filled in", it appear to be gradually built over as the land was needed for residential lots. Similarly, marshes in the Ten Hills areas were filled, often for the construction of worker housing.



1829 Plan of the Middlesex Canal showing the location of brick kilns



1852 Map of the Middlesex Canal showing new residential development



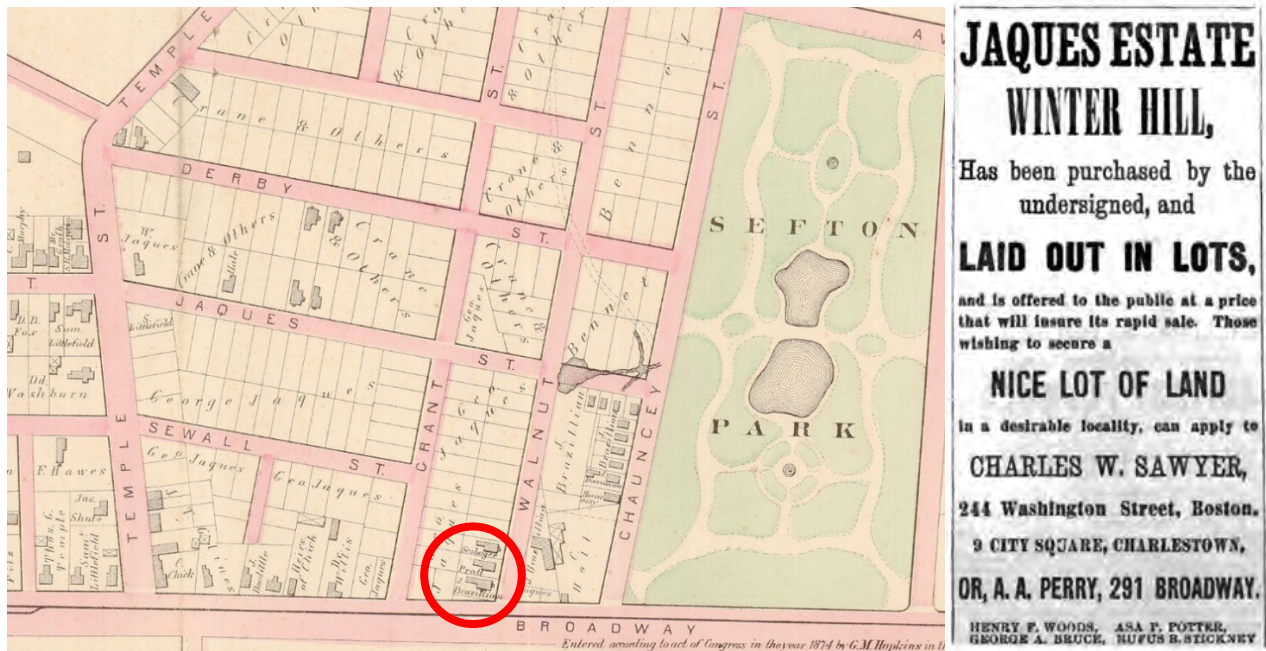
1874 map "Compiled and revised by Geo. A. Kimball for Greenough Jones & Co." shows New Walnut St (later renamed Wheatland Street) dashed, likely under construction. Middlesex and Winthrop Streets were eliminated to build Sefton (Broadway/Foss) Park

Between the Civil War and the turn of the 20th-century, brickmaking was the main industrial activity of the Ten Hills area due to the ample clay deposits. A small residential subdivision was platted near present-day Temple Street in 1845 to house brickyard workers. The subdivision included the present-day streets of Jaques, Heath, and Bond. The street names of the area reflect the names of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ten Hills residents. Many of the residents in this area are likely to have worked at the brickyard located at the end of Wheatland Street on Mystic Avenue.

From *Beyond the Neck* by Carol Zellie:

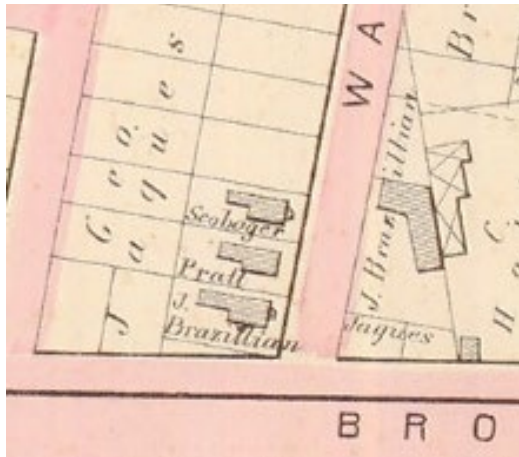
"Brick workers houses are also found at Ten Hills near Temple Street, near the yards which lined the Medford Turnpike (Mystic Avenue), and in Ward II. Despite the large-scale production of brick in Somerville, brick was never a popular building material for residential construction in the town. The New England wood building tradition flourished in Somerville, with brick generally reserved for the construction of chimneys and foundations, and for large apartment houses and commercial and public buildings."

With the decline of the brick industry in the 1880s and 1890s, more of this land, that was brickyards, was filled and used for building lots.



1874 Hopkins Atlas of the City of Somerville showing 6 Wheatland Street and the platted landholdings of George Jacques

The land on which 6 Wheatland was built was originally owned by A. E. Jacques and surveyed for subdivision by S. L. Minot in 1869. However, the first owner listed in the records showing a house on the lot that became 6 Wheatland Street (it was originally named Walnut Street) is 'Pratt' as shown in the 1874 Hopkins Map (below). The 1874 and 1875 City Directories confirm that Zenas Pratt was a grocer and lived on Walnut (now Wheatland) near Broadway. He also appears in the 1875 City Directory but not in 1887.

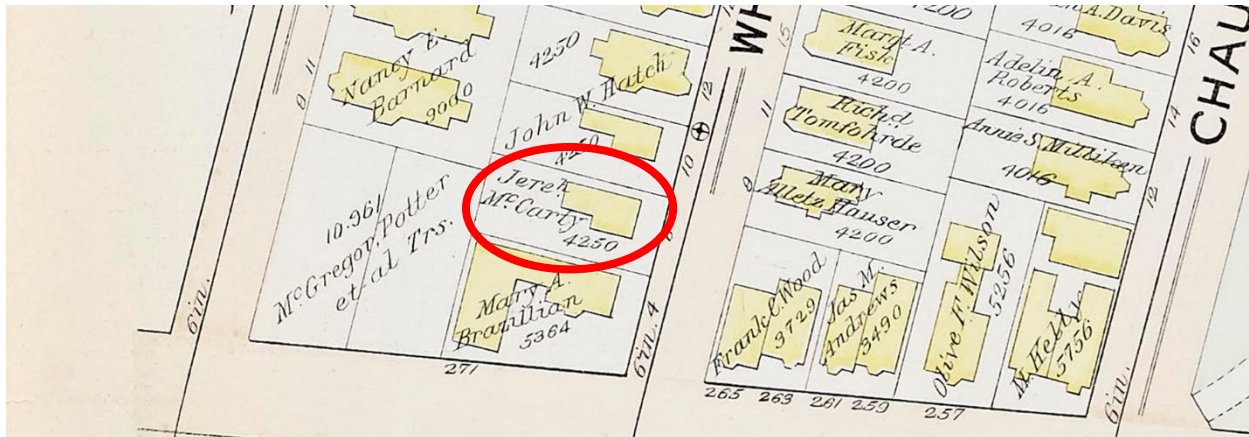


1874 Hopkins Atlas of the City of Somerville

Powers Patrick, mason, h. Cherry, n. Summer
Powers Thomas, laborer, h. Clyde, n. Cedar [h. do.
Powers Thomas F., dispensary doctor, Bow, opp. Walnut,
Pratt Charles, carpenter, h. School, opp. Avon
Pratt Charles O., fish dealer (E. Camb.), h. Milk, c. Linden
Pratt George A., clerk, h. Summer, n. Central
Pratt Hannah J., clairvoyant physician, h. 10 Mt. Pleasant
Pratt John T., h. Washington, n. Prospect
Pratt Sylvanus G., painter, bds. Mrs. Lydia Lewis'
Pratt Zenas, grocer, Broadway, cor. Walnut, h. Wheat-
land, n. Broadway [tral, n. Summer
Pray Orrin B., real estate (555 Main, Cambridge), h. Cen-
Preble Origen O., machinist, h. Milk, n. Linden
Preble Thomas M., clergyman, h. Bow st. pl.
Prescott Annie L., teacher Edgerly school, b. 8 Webster
Prescott George H., clerk (F. R. R., B.), h. Everett av.,
n. Cross
Prescott Jeremiah, supt. Eastern R. R. (Causeway, B.),

1874 City of Somerville City Directory

By 1895, 6 Wheatland Street is owned by 'Jeremiah McCarty'.



1895 Bromley Atlas of the City of Somerville, Plate 11

It is difficult to trace Jeremiah McCarty as there are 3 listed in the 1899 Somerville City Directory, but none of them living on Wheatland Street. There are also 4 Jeremiah “McCarthy” listed in that same directory.

McCarty Dennis laborer, h. 114 Tremont
McCarty James F., glass blower, bds. 2 Tremont place
McCarty Jeremiah, contractor, h. 27 Bonair
McCarty Jeremiah, laborer, J. P. Squire & Co., house 6 Bedford
McCarty Jeremiah, laborer, h. 20 Bonair
McCarty Johanna, widow, of John, h. 8 Skahan
McCarty John, gardener, h. Vine, corner Tyler
McCarty John, charcoal peddler, Maple, n. Poplar, h. do.
McCarty John, laborer, 36 h. Myrtle

McCarthy James, laborer, h. Clyde, opp. Murdock
McCarthy James, laborer, bds. 36 Myrtle
McCarthy James F., charcoal, 29 Church, h. do.
McCarthy Jeremiah, h. 23 Everett av.
McCarthy Jeremiah, laborer, h. foot of South
McCarthy Jeremiah, finisher, D. & K. Desk Co., house at Charlestown
McCarthy Jeremiah, switchman, bds. 34 Springfield
McCarthy Johanna, widow of Dennis, h. 23 Bonair
McCarthy John, laborer, h. Murdock, n. Clyde

1899 City of Somerville City Directory

As the 1899 City Directory shows two people living at 6 Wheatland - George A. Stacy a salesman working in Boston and Roscoe Stimpson, a driver – it is likely that Jeremiah McCarty owned the property but never occupied it and rented it out.

SOMERVILLE [S] DIRECTORY	573	SOMERVILLE [S] DIRECTORY	579
Stackpole Nellie (N. Stackpole & Co.) h. 242 Broadway		Stillings Rufus, printer, h. 23 Arthur	
“ N. & Co. (Nellie Stackpole) millinery, 247 Pearl		Stillson Daniel C. h. 55 Tennyson	
“ William L. carpenter, h. 20 Ames		“ Fanny K. b. 36 Wigglesworth [h. do.	
Stacus Anton, laborer, b. 5, r. 101 Medford		Stilphen Eugene (Stilphen & Co.) express, 31 Lincoln ave.	
Stacy Albert C. mgr. 50 Arch, B. h. 26 Billingham, W. S.		“ Sarah E. widow of John E. h. 8 Miner	
“ George A. salesman, B. h. 6 Wheatland		STILPHEN & CO. (Eugene Stilphen and D.	
“ George W. clerk, h. 14 Albion		Warren Coombs) piano and furniture moving, 31	
“ John F. salesman, 159 Pearl, h. 18 Edmands		Lincoln ave. and 8: Court sq. and 77 Kingston, B.	
Stafanowicz Stanislaw, junk, h. 9 Chestnut		See p. 826	
		Stimpson Charles M. driver, Adams Ex. Co. B. b. 33 Jaques.	
		“ Elizabeth A. widow of Charles M. h. 33 Jaques	
		“ Frank W. compositor, Transcript, B. b. 33 Jaques	
		“ Roscoe, driver, h. 6 Wheatland	
		Stimson Frank W. shipper, B. h. 17 Jaques	

The clearest source for the most recent chain of ownership is an affidavit of Peter. M. Christopher¹ showing that the family has owned the property continuously since 1960. The Registry of Deeds further shows that Peter’s Great Grandfather owned the property prior to that time². Charles (also Carmelo or Carmelum) Anthony (Di)Christoforo as a shoemaker that

¹ Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 83607/76

² Middlesex Registry of Deeds Book/Page 07786/401

emigrated from Naples Italy. Genealogy and census records show the surname Christopher also appears as “Christofor” or “Christoforo” and sometimes as “DiChristofor”. The 1910 Federal Census shows Charles and his wife Lottie living at 6 Wheatland Street with their children Augustine, Albert, Alice, Margaret, Louise, & a brother Emery.

The property remained in the Christopher family until 2024.

The following table provides a list of the known owners of the property since 1874.

Name	Ownership	Occupation	Relationship
Zenas Pratt	1874	Grocer	
Jeremiah McCarty	1895		
Charles Christofor & Lottie (Galante)	Prior to 1910-1937		
Charles A. Christopher & Helen (Miaocco)	1937-1960		son
John Christopher & Nancy (McCoy)	1960-2002		grandson
John A. & Peter M. Christopher	2002-2024		great grandsons
NPO Properties LLC	2024-present		

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.

Architecturally, 6 Wheatland is a simplified Italianate style.



Photograph March 18, 2025, showing three bay design of front elevation but with a side entrance



Photograph March 18, 2025, showing original eave rake trim under aluminum siding



Photograph March 18, 2025, showing original high brick foundation

The period of significance for 6 Wheatland Street begins prior to 1874.

Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime between 1852-1874. Given the style of the building, a date closer to 1874 is most likely.

Design: The house is a wood-framed, two-and-a half-story gable-fronted with a two-story gabled rear addition that is subservient to the main massing. The house was built as a single-family dwelling.

Front Elevation

- Asymmetrical front elevation that is three bays wide
- Covered stoop with columns supports
- Right entry hall with entry door set into large door surround
- Deep eaves (broad fascia and soffit) and bed molding detail
- Polygonal bay window on first story, left
- Single double-hung window

Right Elevation

- Two double-hung windows toward rear of main massing, one on each story
- Two double-hung windows on rear addition, one on each story

Left Elevation

- Symmetrical window pattern possibly original
- Polygonal bay on first floor rear

Rear Elevation

- Addition has no windows on back
- Window pattern has been altered

Materials:

Foundation: Brick

Windows: Vinyl or aluminum

Entry doors: front: wood with metal storm door, rear: appears same

Siding: Alumin or vinyl
Trim: Wood under aluminum or vinyl
Steps: front: brick, rear: wood
Roof: Asphalt shingles
Chimney: Brick
Front columns and rails: metal

Alterations: **Main massing:** Aluminum siding and storm doors/windows have been added on the entire structure; brick foundation has been painted. Mid-20th century decorated metal columns and railings on front stoop; 20th century front stoop canopy; some original window openings covered on right elevation; front steps 20th century. **Rear addition:** Aluminum siding throughout; replacement vinyl or aluminum windows throughout; some original window openings covered over; later 20th century mental entry door canopy; late 20th century deck and entry steps; chimney stack in main massing removed.

Evaluation of Integrity of 6 Wheatland 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 have changed materials and may obscure some windows. While the basic building form remains, many of the original exterior details have been lost or obscured by aluminum siding.

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.

The HPC must specifically state *why* the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 6 Wheatland Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under criterion "a" above and vote to adopt these reasons as findings.

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.

The HPC must specifically state *why* the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 6 Wheatland Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under criterion “*b*” above and vote to adopt these reasons as findings.

IV. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 6 Wheatland Street is or is not “historically significant”.