



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

TOM GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 382 McGrath Highway

Case: HP25-000075

Applicant: Nicholas Tan

Owner: 382 McGrath NT LLC

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

HPC Meeting Date: October 7, 2025

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

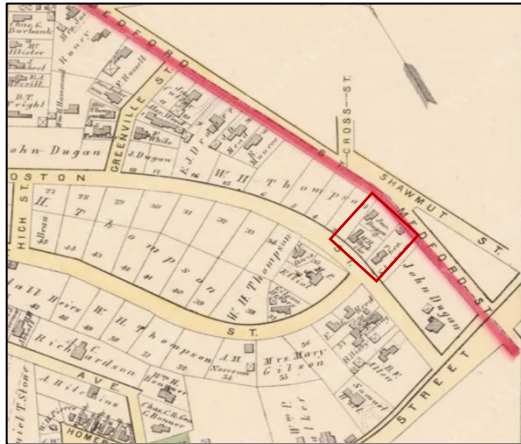
Bottom, right: Right elevation



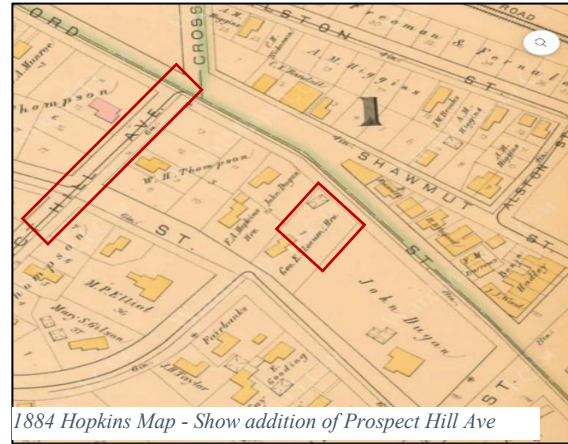
The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the 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: 382 McGrath Highway is a three-story mixed-use building located in the Prospect Hill neighborhood, southeast of Somerville. A commercial storefront is found on the street level with two stories of residential space above.

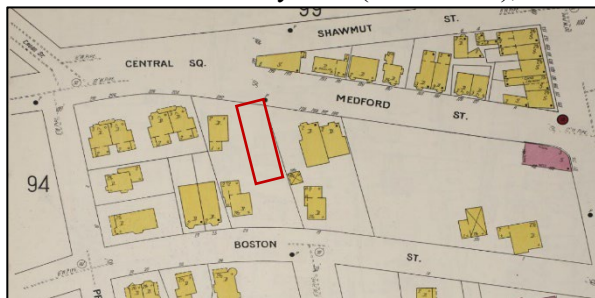


1874 Hopkins Map - Prospect Hill general area

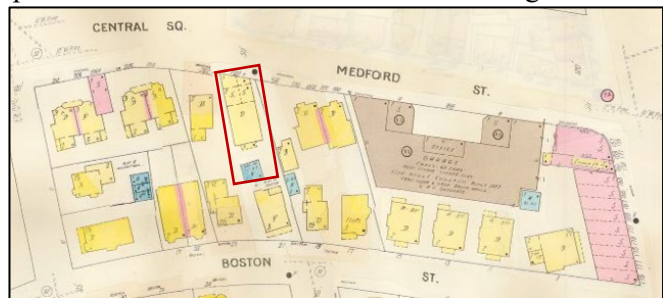


Formerly known as 200 Medford Street, 382 McGrath Highway first appeared on the 1925 Sanborn Map. Although Medford Street was established in the early 1800s, the construction and naming of what is now known as McGrath Highway began around 1928, with the addition of the bypass occurring around 1950.

After the Revolutionary War (1775–1783), the Prospect Hill area continued to function as an agricultural



1900 Sanborn Map



1925 Sanborn Map

district, with a small trade center located at the intersection of Washington Street and Somerville Avenue. Further development of the area accompanied the construction of the Boston–Lowell Railroad passenger stations in the first half of the 19th century, first on Somerville Ave and later Medford St. In the 1840s, the first wave of residential development began in the area. Developers such as Robert A. Vinal and Robert Munroe, both grain merchants, built small Greek Revival houses south of Walnut Street as demand for housing for businessmen increased. By the early 1850s, various farmlands were subdivided as more merchants and developers purchased nearby land. However, few dwellings or new roads were constructed until after the Civil War (1861-1865). Maps from 1874 and 1884 show that the major change in the area during this period was the creation of Prospect Hill Avenue. The estate of George D. Haven, then the owner of the land where 382 McGrath Highway now stands, experienced its greatest development between 1900

and 1925. This included the construction of commercial buildings along Washington Street, residences along Boston Street, and the addition of concrete block garages on various properties.

The table below records the residents and owners of 382 McGrath Highway between 1940 and the present. Because the building was not constructed until sometime between 1900 and 1925, the address does not appear in Somerville's early directories. Census records from 1880, however, indicate that John Dugan, owned the land bounded by Washington St, Medford St (McGrath Hwy) and Boston St., between approximately 1874 and 1894. He was a local agricultural producer and the father-in-law of real estate clerk George D. Haven. Based on Haven's profession and role in real estate, it is possible that Haven was responsible for the development of dwellings in this area in the early 1900s.

The earliest identified residents of 382 McGrath Highway were Salvatore Ventura, a local mechanic, his wife Veronica, and their daughters Fay and Nancy. In the 1950 census, no listing appears for 382, but rather for 381 McGrath Highway. This record identifies Jenny Defazio, an Italian immigrant, and her three sons, Angelo and Christopher Defazio, and Anthony Vandoli as residents. An obituary published in the local newspapers further reveals that John J. Cullen, a U.S. Army corporal during World War II and the Korean War, lived at 382 McGrath Highway with his family sometime between 1940 and 1950. His funeral was held at the residence in 1951.



John J. Cullen Obituary Notice - Boston Globe 1951

There is no additional information available regarding later tenants, although ownership records of the building exist from 1980 to the present.

Name	Date and Place of Birth	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
John Dugan	About 1798 - Massachusetts	-	Farmer	-	Owner of parcel sometime between (1874 - 1894)
Geo D. Haven	About 1840 - Massachusetts	-	Real Estate	-	Owner of parcel (1895 -) Residence at 181 Washington
Salvatore Ventura	About 1911 - Massachusetts	Sometime Between 1940-1950	Mechanic	Head	Rented
Veronices Ventura	About 1916 - Massachusetts	-	-	Wife	-
Fay Venture	About 1934 - Massachusetts	-	-	Daughter	-
Nancy Ventura	About 1939 - Massachusetts	-	-	Daughter	-
John J. Cullen	About 1922 - Massachusetts	Sometime Between 1940-1950	Labore/Corp. U.S. Army	-	-
Lillin G. Cullen	About 1892 - Massachusetts	-	-	Mother	-

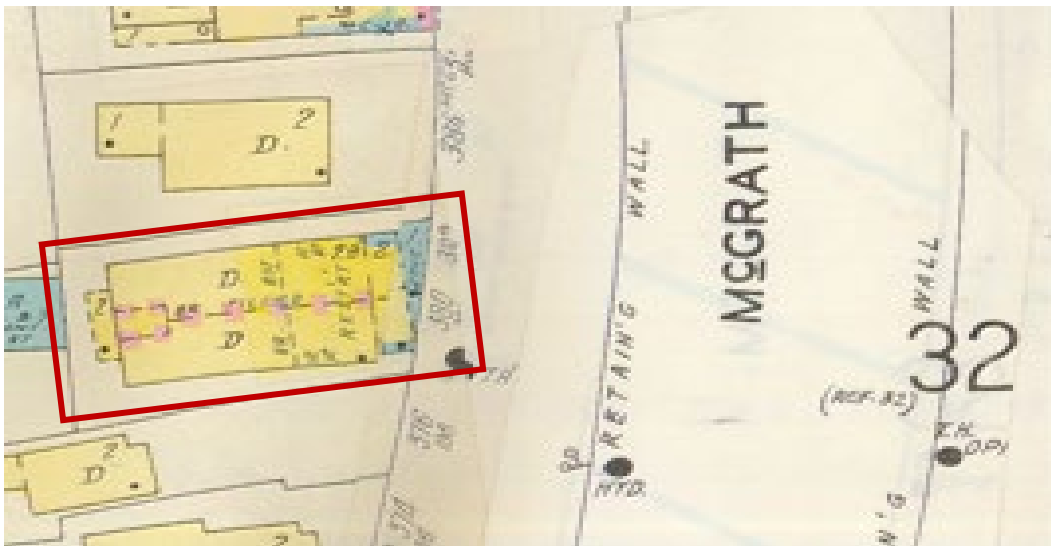
Under 381 McGrath* Anthony Vandoli DOB 1926 Trucker	About 1926 – Massachusetts	Per 1950 Census – Sometime between 1950 - unknown	Trucker	Head	-
Jenny Defazio	About 1902 - Italy	-	Armed Forces	Mother	-
Christopher Defazio	About 1931 - Massachusetts	-	Bailing Press	Stepbrother	-
Angelo Defazio	About 1932 - Massachusetts	-	-	Stepbrother	-
Emil G	-	-	-	-	Unknown -1980 Per Deed
John N. Cerundolo	-	-	-	-	1980-1983 per Deed
Joseph, Andrew and Christine Bellizia	-	-	-	-	1983-1988 per Deed
Bell Realty Trust (Joseph and Andrew Bellizia)	-	-	-	-	1988-2022 per Deed
382 McGrath NT LLC	-	-	-	-	2022-current per deed

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.





- Top Left: Current front elevation of locus
- Top Right: Current back entrance of the building.

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Middle Left: Current view of right side of locus.

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Middle Right: Left and front eye level view of structure.

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Bottom: 1934 Sanborn Map showing construction details.

1. 382 McGrath Hwy

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1920-1925

- a. Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime between 1900-1925.

b. Design: The building is a three-story mixed-use wood-framed structure of no discernable overall architectural design. The first story (street level) presents two (2) storefronts.

- Front Elevation
 - Flat roof
 - Concrete front commercial entrances
 - Side concrete stairs
- Right elevation
 - Concrete stairs and path connecting rear entrance and the side main entrance, with wood weathered stairs leading to the access door.
 - Vinyl siding with multiple vertical oriented windows casement windows.
- Left elevation
 - Concrete stairs and path connecting rear entrance, however no side entrance like on the opposite side, rather access to a bulkhead door.
 - Like opposite side layout, the side structure has multiple vertical oriented casement windows, distributed symmetrically.
- Rear elevation
 - Rear egress for first residential floor, with wooden railings and flooring.
 - Second residential floor has a wooden balcony with railings.
 - Symmetrical casement windows throughout the back area.

c. Materials:

- Foundation: Brick lined
- Windows: Likely Aluminum or vinyl
- Entry door: Likely wood with glass door
- Siding: Vinyl
- Trim: Vinyl (aluminum trim is not used with vinyl siding; when these types of siding are used, the trim materials will be the same as the siding 99% of the time)
- Steps: Concrete
- Roof: Rubber roof
- Storefront?

d. Alterations: Likely the vinyl siding, and the encasement of the front projection in the street level of the façade, along with the double-hung windows across the building show some alteration to the original building.

e. Evaluation of Integrity of 382 McGrath: 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. The original massing, scale remain.

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 Building at 382 McGrath Highway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the Building at 382 McGrath Highway 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 Building at 382 McGrath Highway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the Building at 382 McGrath Highway 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 Building at 382 McGrath Highway is or is not “historically significant”.