



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

Thomas Galligani
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 184 Broadway

Case: HP25-000102

Applicant: Adam Dash & Associates- Adam Dash

Owner: The Somerville Community Corporation, Inc.

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

HPC Meeting Date: January 20th, 2026



Front Elevation of 184 Broadway

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

Context Map:



Photos of the Subject Property:



Front Elevation of 184 Broadway



Left side Elevation of 184 Broadway

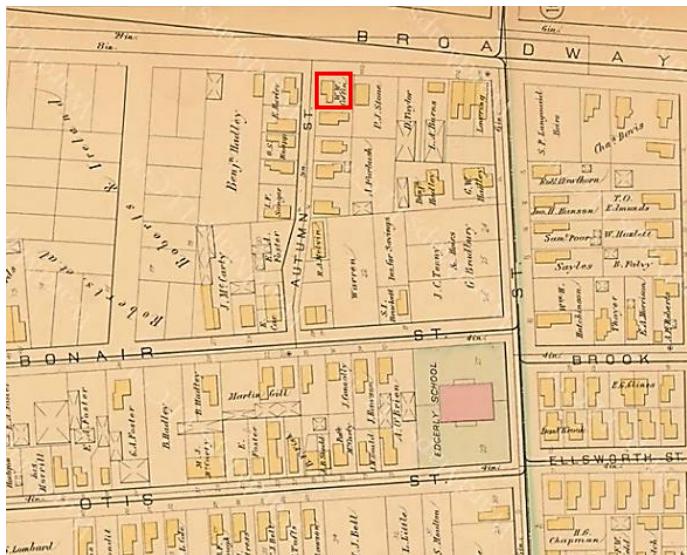


Rear Elevation of 184 Broadway



Right Side Elevation of 184 Broadway

II. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



1884 Bromley Map:

184 and 186 Broadway are one lot, the structure at 184 Broadway has not been built yet, and the owner is listed as W. W. Coffin.

Historical Context:

184 Broadway is a multi-family residential structure constructed between 1884 and 1895. The subject property is located in the East Somerville Neighborhood, south of Foss Park and MA-28.

Following Somerville being incorporated as a city in 1872, railroads expanded, prompting dense development throughout Somerville. Increased availability of transit to Boston led to neighborhoods like East Somerville rapidly urbanizing. Along roads like Broadway especially, multi-family rental housing began being densely developed and Broadway became a commercial

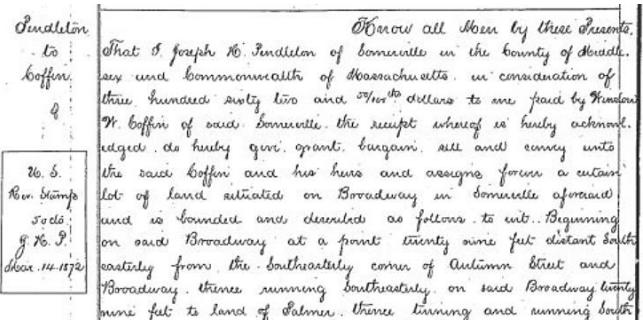
hub. This rapid growth led to the construction of multifamily structures like 184 Broadway. The building was constructed shortly before the popularization of the typical triple-deckers, found throughout Somerville, and contains features of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles.

Winslow W. Coffin was the owner of the property when the residential building at 184 Broadway was constructed. Winslow Coffin was born in Maine in 1849. He married Florence M. Pendleton in 1871 and a year later purchased 184 Broadway from his father-in-law, John H Pendleton. During this time the subject property is described as just a 'lot of land situated on Broadway.'



1895 Bromley Map

In the 1900 and 1910 Federal Census, Winslow Coffin's occupation is listed as the owner of a 'Real Estate Business.' Coffin and his family were living in a unit at 186 Broadway and had tenants living in the other units at 184-186 Broadway. Coffin owned 184 Broadway from 1872 until his death in 1926. He lived next door at 186 Broadway for over 50 years.

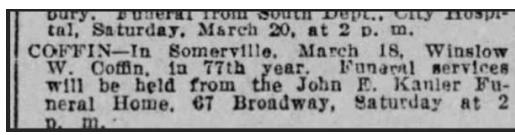


1872 Deed

In 1875, Winslow and Florence Coffin had their only child, a daughter, Fanny Ethel Coffin. By 1895, the residential structure at 184 Broadway had been fully constructed. On the 1895 Bromley map shown below, W. W. Coffin is listed as the owner for both 184 and 186 Broadway.

In the 1889 Somerville City Directory, Winslow Coffin is listed as living at 186 Broadway and his occupation is listed as a conductor for the West End Street Railway Company.

Name	Residency Year(s)	Occupation	Relationship	Type
Winslow W. Coffin	1872- 1926 (death)	Real Estate; Conductor for the West End Street Railway Company	Landlord	Owner
Florence M Coffin	1872- 1920 (death)	Home	Wife; Landlord	Wife of Owner
Fanny E. Taber/Plummer (Formerly Fanny E. Coffin)	1926- 1945	Music Teacher	Daughter; Head of Household	Owner
Emma Galassi	1945-1946	Secretary	Landlord	Owner
William F. Reidy	1946-1948	Trucker	Landlord	Owner
Margaret E. Reidy	1946-1948	Home	Landlord	Owner
Dominic Talluto	1948-1966	Unknown	Landlord	Owner
Mary Talluto	1948-1966	Unknown	Landlord	Owner
John M Pabian	1966-1977	Mail Handler	Landlord	Owner
Marion A Pabian	1966-1977	Home	Landlord	Owner



When Winslow Coffin died in 1926, Fanny E. Tabor received the property at 184 Broadway, according to Probate Court records. Fanny E. Tabor was Winslow's only child, and she was married to Charles R. Taber, whom she later divorced. In the 1900 Federal Census, Fanny's occupation is listed as 'Music teacher.' In 1901 she married William Frank Plummer.

The units within 184 Broadway were rented to many tenants throughout Fanny's ownership. She owned the property from 1926 until 1945, when it was sold to Emma Galassi. Shortly after purchasing the property, Emma Galassi sold the property to William F. and Margaret E. Reidy.

In 1948, William F. and Margaret E. Reidy sold the property to Mary and Dominic Talluto, immigrants from Italy. In 1966, Mary and Dominic Talluto sold the property to Marion A. and John M. Pabian.

The Pabians sold 184 Broadway in 1977. After this sale, the property was sold every few years and passed through family trusts. It was foreclosed in 1992, then had several owners within a realty trust before it was sold to its current owner, Somerville Community Trust Inc. in 2022. It can be assumed during this time that the residential building at 184 Broadway lost most of its original architectural detailing and materials. Modern vinyl siding now covers the exterior of the structure and all windows have been replaced. Few features indicating the building's original architectural style remain.

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.

184 Broadway

The period of relevance for the subject property starts between 1884 and 1895. The building is a 4-story, multi-family proto-triple decker, Italianate, residential building with an asymmetrical facade.

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

Design: 184 Broadway is an Italianate style, 4-story structure on a narrow lot with nearly no setback, and strong vertical massing. Main massing presents stacked projecting bays, a raised masonry foundation, a flat roof, and a wide eave overhang.

Front Elevation

First Story:

- Raised foundation beneath first floor
- Concrete staircase flush with sidewalk
- Recessed covered entryway framed by large brackets
- 3, 1-over-1 modern sash windows on bay
- Projecting polygonal bay rising from basement

Second Story:

- Continued vertical stacked bay
- 3, 1-over-1 modern sash windows on bay
- Continued projecting upper floor above entryway with 1 modern 1-over-1 sash window

Third Story:

- Continued vertical stacked bay
- 3, 1-over-1 modern sash windows on bay
- Continued projecting upper floor above entryway with 1 modern 1-over-1 sash window

Fourth Story:

- Continued vertical stacked bay
- 3, 1-over-1 modern sash windows on bay
- Continued projecting upper floor above entryway with 1 modern 1-over-1 sash window
- Large bracket on the right side connected to eave
- Wide eave overhang topped with cornice bordering a small parapet

Right Elevation

First Story:

- Raised foundation beneath first floor
- 3 to 4 1-over-1 modern vinyl sash windows asymmetrically arranged
- Projecting rear floors rising from basement
- Sunken basement entryway with steps descending from ground level side yard

- Flat roofed hood over basement entryway supported by metal posts

Second Story:

- Continued projecting rear upper floors
- 3 to 4 1-over-1 modern vinyl sash windows asymmetrically arranged

Third Story:

- Continued projecting rear upper floors
- 3 to 4 1-over-1 modern vinyl sash windows asymmetrically arranged

Fourth Story:

- Continued projecting rear upper floors
- 3 to 4 1-over-1 modern vinyl sash windows asymmetrically arranged
- Large bracket on the left side projecting from front elevation
- Small parapet topped with cornice with a slight overhang

Left Elevation

First Story:

- Raised foundation beneath first floor
- Horizontal sash basement window
- Staircase railings and enclosure projecting from entryway
- Large bracket on the right-side projecting from front elevation slightly recessed from left elevation
- Projecting subtle polygonal bay rising from basement

Second Story:

- Continued subtle stacked bay
- 1 or 2 square picture windows asymmetrically arranged
- 2 1-over-1 modern sash windows on sides of bay

Third Story:

- Continued subtle stacked bay
- 1 or 2 square picture windows asymmetrically arranged
- 2 1-over-1 modern sash windows on sides of bay

Fourth Story:

- Continued subtle stacked bay
- 1 or 2 square picture windows asymmetrically arranged
- 2 1-over-1 modern sash windows on sides of bay

- Wide eave overhang topped with cornice bordering a small parapet

Rear Elevation (not fully visible)

First Story:

- Raised foundation beneath first floor
- Horizontal sash basement window

Second Story:

- Unknown fenestration
- Little to no architectural detailing

Third Story:

- Unknown fenestration
- Little to no architectural detailing

Fourth Story:

- Unknown fenestration
- Little to no architectural detailing

b. Materials:

Main massing: Vinyl siding; wood front door; vinyl or aluminum sash windows; concrete/brick foundation; flat roof with asphalt or rubber membrane; metal railing; concrete stairs

c. Alterations:

Exterior cladding was altered from likely wood siding to vinyl siding. Architectural detailing either removed or covered with vinyl or aluminum. All windows are replaced with either square picture or rectangular 1-over-1 vinyl or aluminum sash windows with size also likely altered.

Evaluation of Integrity of 184 Broadway:

Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retains the integrity of its forms and massing but lacks original architectural details and materials. While the massing remains intact, the building does not possess 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.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 184 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 184 Broadway 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.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 184 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the PRINCIPAL STRUCTURE at 184 Broadway 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 184 Broadway is or is not "historically significant".

