



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

THOMAS F GALLIGANI JR  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

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

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**Site:** 30 Vinal Ave

**Case:** HP26-000004

**Applicant:** 30 Vinal LLC

**Owner:** Michele Daly Taylor

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

**HPC Meeting Date:** April 7, 2026



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.

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**I. CONCESSION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFIGANCE**

The applicant for 30 Vinal Ave 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, 30 Vinal Ave 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. BUILDINGS UNDER CONSIDERATION

The building at 30 Vinal Ave is a 2 and <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> story structure and likely constructed approximately in 1900.

*Right: Left Elevation*



*Right: Rear Elevation*



*Right: Right Elevation*



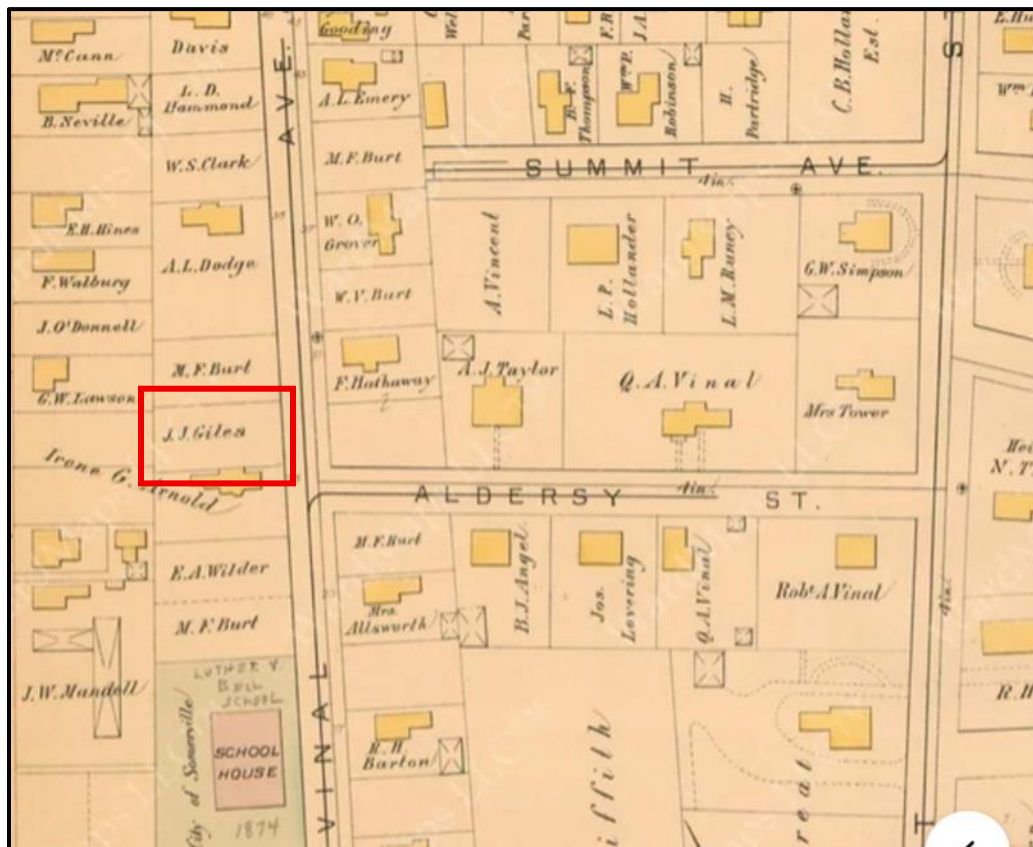
### III. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Historical Context:** 30 Vinal Avenue is a two-and-three-fourths story, two-family residence located near the intersection of Vinal Avenue and Aldersey Street in the Prospect Hill neighborhood of Somerville. The street lies between Highland Avenue and Summer Street and is characterized by a streetscape composed of single, double, and triple family residential structures that exhibit a range of architecture styles, predominantly Shingle Style, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival.

The portion of the Prospect Hill neighborhood where Vinal Avenue is located was formerly part of the estate of Robert Vinal, a Boston grain merchant whose home stood at the corner of Walnut and Aldersey Streets. Following the Civil War, real estate speculators purchased large parcels of former estates, which they subdivided and sold for residential development. The area near the top of Prospect Hill contained larger lots and became home to businessmen, while the western side of Walnut Street developed into smaller parcels with more varied housing types, where many laborers and blue-collar workers resided.

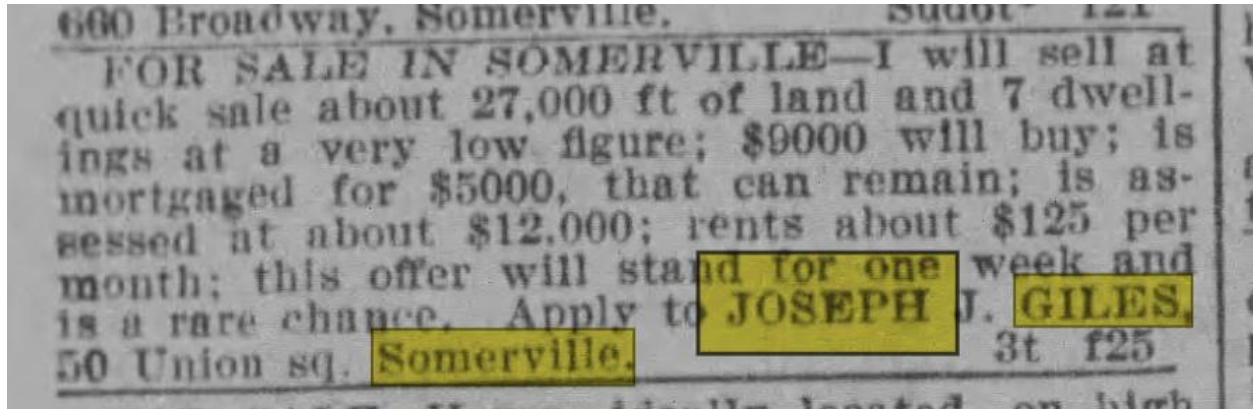
The maps of 1884 and 1895 indicate a significant rise in the number of dwellings constructed during this ten-year period. The earliest residents of the area were primarily carpenters or wood craftsmen.

On the 1884 map below we can see that no house sits on the 20 Vinal Ave lot yet during this time period. However, we do see that the lot was owned by an individual named J. J. Giles during this time period. Based off of historic records, J. J. Giles is most likely Joseph James Giles. Giles had the distinction of being the first baby born in Somerville after it was incorporated as a town. He served in the Civil War and eventually went on to serve as a representative in the State Legislature from 1891-1892.



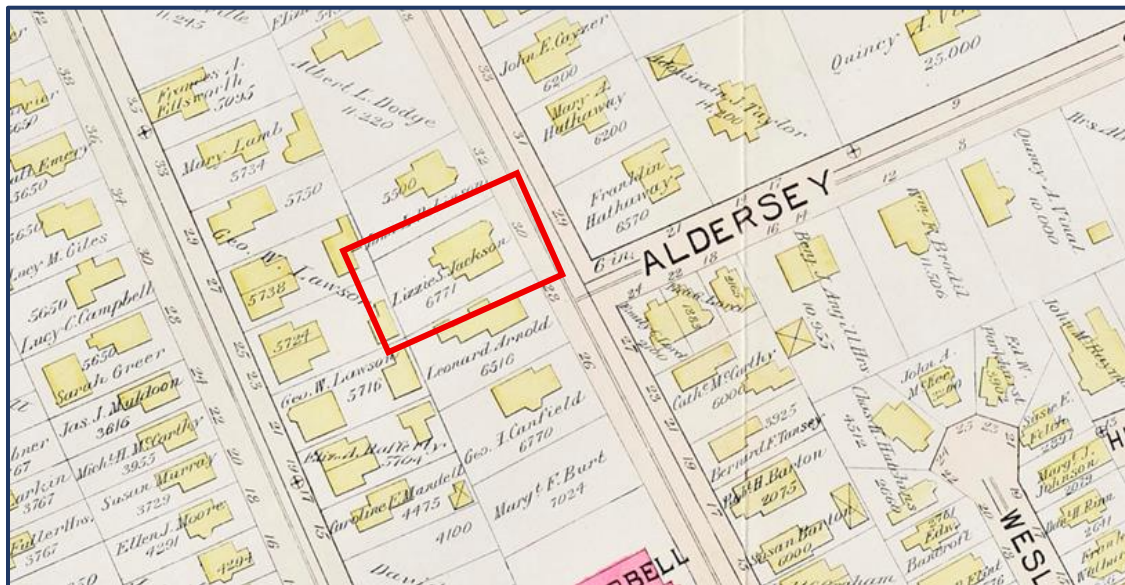
Above: 1884 Hopkins, Plate 4, with 30 Vinal Ave highlighted

Giles likely owned and developed the land without residing there himself. An article in the Boston Globe published in Boston Globe in 1912 lists an ad by Giles selling land and dwelling units for rent.



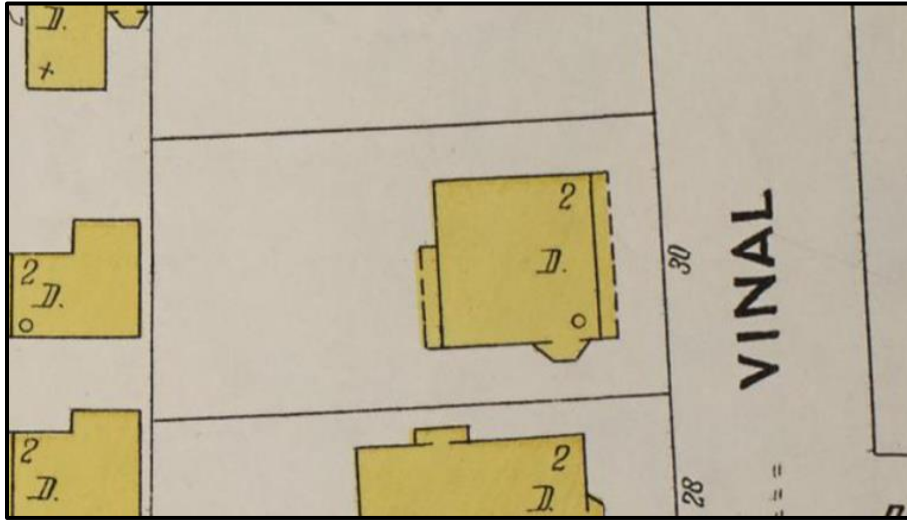
Above: The Boston Globe, Thu, Feb 25, 1915, Page 15

On the 1896 map below, we can see that a structure now sits on the lot and that a new owner, Lizzie S. Jackson, is listed. Unfortunately, no further information could be found on Lizzie S. Jackson.



Above: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 1, with 30 Vinal Ave highlighted

In 1900, the footprint of the building appears slightly different, suggesting the building might have undergone a change. In addition, the city accessor's website lists the construction year as 1900, so there is evidence that this may now a new structure.



At some point ownership was transferred to Timothy F. Crimmings. Crimmings was born and raised in Somerville and was involved in the construction of Prospect Hill Park and many of the city's earliest sewers. He also graded Central Hill. A Boston Globe article reporting on his death that was published on February 21, 1928 highlights his history on Somerville.

## T. F. CRIMMINGS DIES IN SOMERVILLE

### Helped to Lay Foundation of St Joseph's Church

Timothy F. Crimmings, a retired general contractor of Somerville, died this morning at his home, 30 Vinal av, Somerville, following a lingering sickness. He had been in poor health for three years.

He was born in Somerville, June 20,



TIMOTHY F. CRIMMINGS

1856, son of Dennis and Mary Crimmings, and always made his home in that city.

His late father was a general contractor, and he was employed with him in laying the foundation of St Joseph's Catholic Church, Union sq, the first Catholic Church erected in the city, in 1874.

Mr Crimmings graded Central Hill, where the High School and City Hall are situated, in 1884. He constructed Prospect Hill Park in 1903 and built many of Somerville's largest sewers.

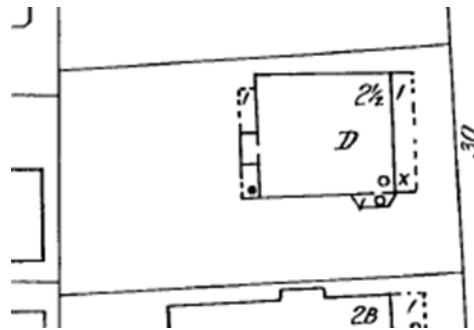
He leaves his wife, Mrs Katherine V. Crimmings; five sons, Dennis I., at present in the general contracting business in Somerville; Edward J., John F. and William H. of Somerville, and Vincent T. of New York; a daughter, Miss Marjorie G. Crimmings, and three sisters, Mrs Mary G. Connor, Mrs James F. McCarthy and Mrs Annie E. Bennett, all of Somerville.

Funeral will be held in his home, 30 Vinal av, Somerville, next Thursday morning. A solemn high mass of requier will be sung at 9 o'clock in St Joseph's Church. Interment will be at St Paul's Cemetery, Arlington.

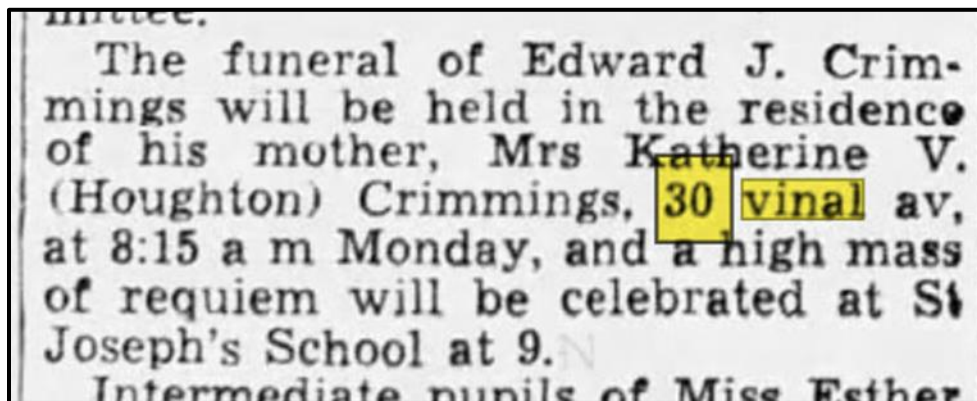
Below is a table of all confirmed owners and residents of 30 Vinal Ave.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Relationship	Occupation
J. J. Giles	1884 (land owner)		Painter, veteran, state representative
Lizzie S. Jackson	1895		
Timothy F. Crimmings	1917 - 1935		Contractor
Katherine V. (Houghton) Crimmings	1928 - 1935	wife	
John Francis Crimmings	1917	son	
Vincint Timothy Crimmings	1917	son	
Dennis L. Crimmings	1917	son	
Edward J. Crimmings	1917	son	
William H. Crimmings		son	
Marjorie G. Crimmings		daughter	

In 1933, we can see that the house's footprint remains the same.



Based off of a Boston Globe article published, ownership of the house was transferred to Timothy Crimmings's wife Katherine after his death. She was still residing there in 1935,



Above: The Boston Globe, Sat, Jun 29, 1935, Page 4

#### 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.*

## 1. 30 Vinal Ave



The period of relevance for the house starts c.1900-1951

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- Design: The house is a narrow, two- and  $\frac{3}{4}$  story, two-family building.
  - Front Elevation
    - Largely symmetrical front elevation with a dominant central mass and hipped roof.
    - Central shed dormer above a projecting two-story bay element.
    - First-story appears enclosed as part of a later porch/sunroom addition.
    - Primary entry is centered within the enclosed porch rather than clearly expressed on the original façade.
    - Fenestration consists of one-over-one double-hung sash windows on the first and second floors, with additional multi-pane windows enclosing the porch.
  - Right Elevation
    - Prominent front-facing gable with a secondary cross gable toward the center.
    - Shed-roofed dormer located between the gable elements.
    - Covered wooden porch with the main entrance visible from this elevation.
    - Porch extends into a fully enclosed porch/sunroom wrapping toward the front.
    - Rear portion of the building steps down slightly in height with a reduced

- footprint while maintaining similar roof forms.
  - Fenestration on the first floor includes:
    - one one-over-one double-hung sash window beneath the front gable,
    - a continuous band of single-pane windows enclosing the porch,
    - additional grouped windows toward the rear addition.
  - Second-floor fenestration consists of one-over-one double-hung sash windows aligned beneath the gables.
  - Left Elevation
    - Large cross gable toward the front with a smaller cross gable toward the rear.
    - Later shed-like addition attached near the center of the elevation.
    - Exterior metal fire escape stair runs from ground level to the roof.
    - Portions of the porch roof and trim show visible deterioration.
  - Rear Elevation
    - Gable-ended rear elevation with minimal ornamentation.
    - Secondary entrance and service-related elements located at this elevation.
    - Elevated foundation with visible lattice/skirt and utility areas below.
- b. Materials:
- Foundation: brick.
  - Windows: wood.
  - Entry door: likely wood.
  - Siding: aluminum
  - Trim: likely aluminum or vinyl
  - Roof: slate.
- c. Alterations: Possible vertical aluminum siding, possible replacement one-over-one windows throughout, likely door replacement, shed installation

**Evaluation of Integrity of 30 Vinal Ave:** Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retains integrity of its original form and massing.

## **V. DETERMINATION**

The HPC must determine one of the following for the structure at 30 Vinal Ave:

- 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**

The HPC need to make determinations of whether the structure is to be preferably preserved and adopt findings.

**a. Preferably Preserved**

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

- *That the demolition of the structure at 30 Vinal Ave would 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 either position.

**b. Not Preferably Preserved**

If the HPC makes the above finding, the Commission must state their reasons why they take either 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 structure at 30 Vinal Ave do 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.

**VI. VOTE**

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at *30 Vinal Ave* is or is not “preferably preserved”.