



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

TOM GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 282-284 McGrath Highway

Case: HP26-000014

Applicant: Law Office of Michael LaRosa LLC - Michael LaRosa

Owner: Walter Tauro, Trustee of Brant Realty Trust

Legal Ad: *The Applicant seeks to demolish a building that was constructed over 75 years ago.*

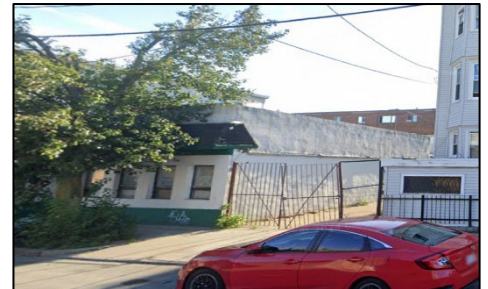
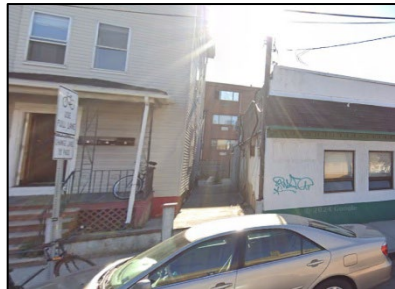
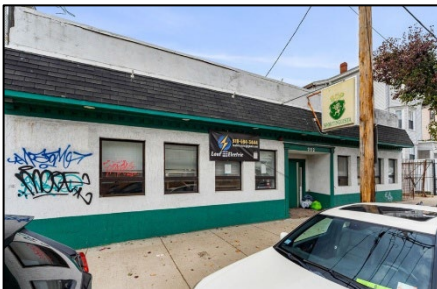
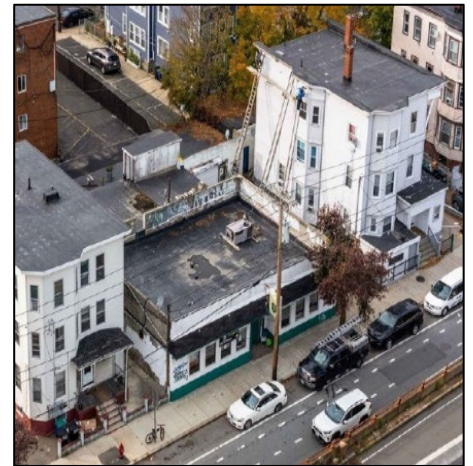
HPC Meeting Date: June 2, 2026

Top: Aerial site view

Bottom, left: Front elevation

Bottom, middle: Left 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:

282-284 McGrath Highway is a one-story commercial-use building located in the Union Square neighborhood of southeastern Somerville.

Union Square is recognized as the oldest and largest commercial district in Somerville. Since the early 19th century have served as a major trade center, as Washington Street, Bow Street, and Somerville Avenue (formerly Milk Row) have acted as key trade routes. Since the mid-1800s with the addition of passenger carriages and clusters of a variety of light and heavier industries, the square landscape started to shift more to a commercial hub. The increase in accessible transportation in Union Square led to more mixed use and residential development in the surrounding streets from early 1900s onwards.

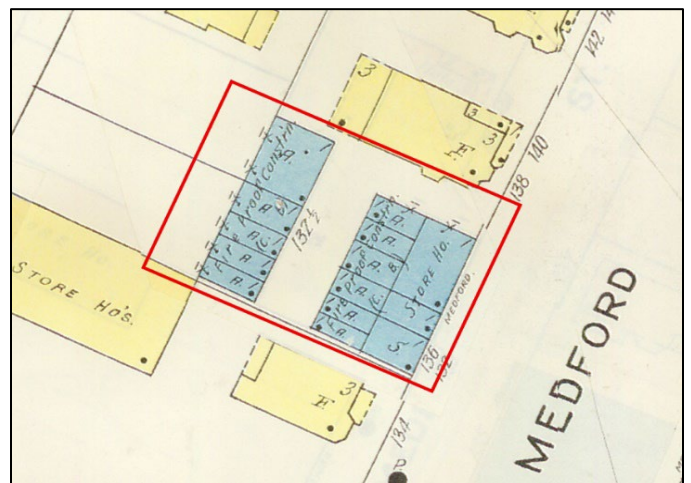
The commercial building occupies a parcel that was historically the address 136 Medford Street. Although Medford Street was established in the early 1800s, the construction and naming of what is now known as McGrath Highway began around 1928, the addition of the bypass infrastructure occurring around 1950.

The parcel first appears on the 1895 Bromley map as an undeveloped 3,400 square-foot lot owned by Francis Tufts and located next to the address 138 Medford Street. This land was originally owned by Nathan Tufts and was passed down to heirs, including Francis Tufts.

The first time a building appears on the parcel is in the 1925 Sanborn Maps. The building is depicted as two concrete commercial structures at 132-136 Medford Street and is labeled “store ho[use]”, indicating that the buildings were used for the storage of goods. The structures were constructed sometime between 1895 and 1925, likely around 1910 based on property records.



1895 Bromley Map



1925 Sanborn Map, construction details

The table below indicates the owners and uses of the parcel of land.

Owner	Years	Use of Parcel
Nathan Tufts	1874	Undeveloped land
Francis Tufts	1895	Undeveloped land
Unknown	1925	Commercial Building- Storage House
Pasquale Reale, Assunta Reale, Cosmo Reale	Unknown-1969	Commercial Building/ 1941- 1969 Florentine Gardens Inc.
Lucy and Arthur Otolo	1969 – 1990	Lucia’s Restaurant
Sold at public auction	1991	Steves 282 Restaurant
Silvino Moreira, Zulmira Moreira	1991-1997	Commercial Building
Lucy and Arthur Otolo	1997-1998	Commercial Building
Trust Brant Realty (current owner)	1998 – 2026	Nucleo Sportinguista da Area de Boston (closed in 2019)

Through information found in the “The Backside of America” a local exploration blog, the building had a sign indicating that this location was The Florentine Gardens Bldg “Somerville’s First Pizzeria” established in 1934 and founded by Raymondo and Rosa Cangiano, Italian Immigrants that settled in Somerville. This sign has been removed and is not currently on the building.

Florentine Gardens, Inc., 284 McGrath highway, Somerville, restaurant business; 100 shares of common stock with no par value; incorporators, Raimondo Cangiano, Gilda Catalano and Rosa Cangiano, all of 296 McGrath highway, and Sylvia Pellegrini of 28 Marshall st., all of Somerville.

The Boston Globe- January 12, 1964

SOMERVILLE—7-day liquor license, and food, barroom, good, going business. Inquire 284 McGrath hwy., or call 623-9379.

The Boston Globe- December 15, 1941



Sign indicating building commercial origins, no longer on site.

At some point prior to 1969, the property was acquired by Pasquale Reale, Assunta Reale, and Cosmo Reale, members of an Italian immigrant family. The restaurant Florentine Gardens Inc, and the Reale family ownership of the building reflects the broader pattern of Italian immigration and settlement in Somerville and Massachusetts during the early and mid-20th century.

28 Boston Evening Globe Wednesday, August 9, 1978

Who owed what on state's meals tax list

The following is a list, compiled by the State Department of Revenue and released to Rep. Francis W. Hatch Jr. (R-Beverly Farms) on the orders of a Superior Court judge, of businesses which the state said were delinquent in meals tax payments as of May 31, 1978. The list includes companies which have gone bankrupt, or out of business, ones which are disputing the state interpretation of the meals tax law, and ones which say they have paid taxes due in full or in part.

PASTOR SANTOS, Southbridge 15,812.69	CASE IN EIGHT, INC., Marlboro 10015.60	CHEFS HAT RES., Weymouth 6907.08	BLACK STALL 6907.08
ATRUM, Brookline 15,812.55	MAUNA KAI REST., Marlboro 9996.02	CAPE PLAYHOUSE RES., Dennis 6886.83	SAND TRAP 6886.83
FEENEY'S INC., Weylesley 15,800.01	COLLIANS, Raynham 9996.30	GILBERT & DAVIS CATERER, 1580 VFW Pkwy., Roxbury 6880.75	MATTAPOOSE 6876.99
HOUSE OF JIMMY MEEHANS, Newburyport 15,787.62	ONE O'ONE, Ware 9920.01	COFFEE TIME, 5A Central Sq., Cambridge 6876.99	F B CLARK C 6876.99
262 RESTAURANT, Sold at Boston, Wakefield 15,774.42	VI CAESARS, Wrentham 9916.68	MIKES PLACE, Littleton 6847.08	OLD FERRY 6847.08
GLENDALE HOUSE REALTY T. 32 Rowley St., Agawam 15,686.16	SANTORO'S SUB SANDWICH, Woburn 9907.41	GOLDEN EAGLE STEAKHOUSE, Haverhill 6836.84	DINNYS RES 6812.21
CALS & VALS ROAST BEEF, New Bedford 15,642.05	SUDBURY HOUSE, INC., Sudbury 9886.30	BATTLE GREEN INN, Lexington 6812.21	GALLERYS C 6808.07
CARLTON HOUSE, Quincy 15,640.12	GABLES FOOD SHOP, INC., S. Deerfield 9886.30	TEXAS STEAKHOUSE INC., 22 Everett Av., Everett 6808.07	INSQUARE T 6808.48
EDGARTOWN COFFEE SHOP, Edgartown 15,628.14		BLACK ROSE INC., 160 State St., Boston 6808.48	BARBA MITTS 6796.00
EDDIES TAVERN INC., 225 Bowdoin St., Dorchester 15,593.74		MUR MACS INC., 827 Park St., Stoughton 6796.00	TURTLE CAF 6748.19
THE BRAVING IRON, 75 Blossom Ct., Boston 15,562.06		VICTORS INC., 335 Biv Blvd., Revere 6748.19	BLUE DOLPH 6730.37
ERNIES CAPE ANN DINER, Gloucester 15,512.69		MEL & MURRAYS LUNCH INC., Burlington 6730.37	HARRYS AM 6724.65
HEARTHSTONE REST., Seekonk 15,390.81	COUNTRY KITCHEN REST., Ipswich 9867.92	SIZZLER STEAK HOUSE, Natick 6724.65	ALEXANDER 6715.87
RIVERVIEW LOUNGE, INC., Methuen 15,390.81	EXECUTIVE TOWN HOUSE CO., 84 Beacon St., Boston 9851.86		SLB WORLD 6715.87
OXBOW FIREPLACE, Mills 15,373.02	POLYNESIAN ISLAND INC., Reading 9843.55		
WARM ENTERPRISES, INC., Lynn 15,323.25	JOJOS SUB SHOP, Newburyport 9836.96		
THREE COINS IN THE FOUNTAIN, Saarn 15,268.10	SHEAS GROVE, Chicopee 9770.82		
CART 282-284 MCGRATH HWY - 8 - 282-284		ED BURKE'S TAVERN INC., 612 Huntington Av., Boston 9828.24	

ED SMITH SELLS AGAIN
SALE AT PUBLIC AUCTION RE: STEVE'S 282 RESTAURANT

**RESTAURANT - PIZZA
DINING ROOM & VEHICLES
EQUIPMENT - FIXTURES - DECOR
TO BE SOLD ON THE PREMISES
282 McGRATH HIGHWAY, SOMERVILLE, MASS.
THURSDAY MAY 30, 1991 AT 11 A.M.**

6 BURNER SO. BEND STOVE W/IRON W/ CAN 36" RANGE W/2 BURNERS 24" GRILL AND OVEN AND SALAMANDER BROILER, 4 S/S STAND, C/TOP WARMER, (2) 14" GAS FRYOLATORS, 14" UP TO COOGE ALL S/S EXHAUST HOOD W/RETURN AIR AND 2 FANS, 14" S/S BACK WALL PANELS, BAKERS RIDE MOD. 1500 GAS FRIED PIZZA OVEN, HOBART MOD. H-600 DOUGH MIXER 1 PH. GLOBE MOD. 500 MEAT SLICER, LITTON MICROWAVE OVEN, BEV-AIR S/S SANDWICH UNIT, TRAU-SEN 2 DOOR S/S R/I COOLER, TRAU-SEN 2 DOOR S/S S/C REACH-IN FREEZER, (2) 3' 6" S/S TABLES, 6 SLOWING GLASS DOOR COOLER, TIME CLOCK, 8' S/S DISH STAND, INSINGER 20" COMMANDER UPRIGHT DISHWASHER W/TRAP AND SPRAY, HOBART 1/2 SIZE CONVECTION OVEN, PASS-THRU DESSERT COOLER, COFFIN-FREEZER, 4' S/S SHELVES, 10' x 8' x 7' WALK-IN COOLER.

LARGE LOT WHITE MATCHING CHINA SKILLETS, POTS, PANS, UTENSILS, INSERTS GLASSWARE, 3 STEEL DOORS, WALL MIRRORS, CEILING FANS, 2 SMOKETERS, (15) 65" x 35" 1/2" THICK SAFETY GLASS DECORATIVE PANELS, (2) 8' SETTEES, DART BOARD, 3 HIGH TOP TABLES, 50 STACK CHAIRS, (4) 6 BULB BRASS CHANDELIERS, 4 WALL LIGHTS, 8 UPHOLSTERED FOREST GREEN SETTEES, (4) 6' SECTIONS OAK ROOM DIVIDERS, (6) 30" x 48" FORMICA TOP TABLES, 1400 SQ. FT. GREEN CARPETING, MANY MORE ITEMS.

ROWE A.M.I. 200 PLAY 100 RECORD JUKE BOX, ROWE CIGARETTE MACHINE, 1963 DODGE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION, 1985 DODGE RAM MINI VAN W/LOW MILEAGE, VEHICLES TO BE SOLD AT 11:30 A.M. SHARP.

TERMS: CASH OR CERTIFIED FUNDS ONLY OR BANK LETTER DATED FOR DAY OF SALE GUARANTEEING PAYMENT OF CHECK, (NO EXCEPTIONS OR PERSONAL CHECKS); 25% DEPOSIT REQUIRED THROUGHOUT THE SALE. INSPECTION MORNING OF SALE. SALE PER ORDER OWNER.

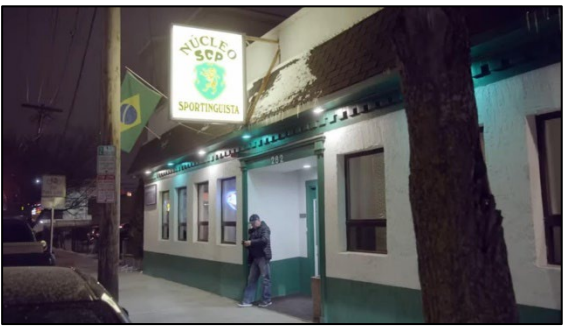
EDWARD F. SMITH, AUCTIONEER, MASS. LIC. #126
AVENUE AUCTION SALES
932 DORCHESTER AVENUE, BOSTON, MASS. 02125
AUCTIONEER - (617) 436-9829 FAX (617) 287-0525 - APPRAISER

In 1969 the building was sold to Lucy and Arthur Otololo and became the home of Lucia's Restaurant. This restaurant operated at 282 McGrath until approximately 1990. During this period, the property was cited multiple times for unpaid taxes, with records of tax liens appearing in Registry of Deeds documents as early as 1978. By 1991, the restaurant had transitioned to Steve's 282 Restaurant before the property was sold at public auction.

In 1991, the building was purchased by Silvino and Zulmira Moreira, immigrants from Portugal. Their ownership reflects the broader influx of Portuguese immigration and settlement in Somerville and the Greater Boston region during the late 20th century.

From 1997 to 1998, the building was briefly owned by the Otololos again but eventually was sold to Trust Brant Realty in 1998 who is the current owner.

From 1998 to 2019, the building became the home to the Núcleo Sportinguista da Área de Boston, operated by Paulo Bizarria. The club served as an important cultural and social gathering space for Portuguese and Brazilian communities in Somerville and the surrounding areas. This organization would screen Brazilian and Portuguese sporting events as well as host musical performances, cultural programming, and served Portuguese food. Núcleo Sportinguista da Área contributed to the preservation and expression of Portuguese speaking cultural and immigrant identities in Somerville.

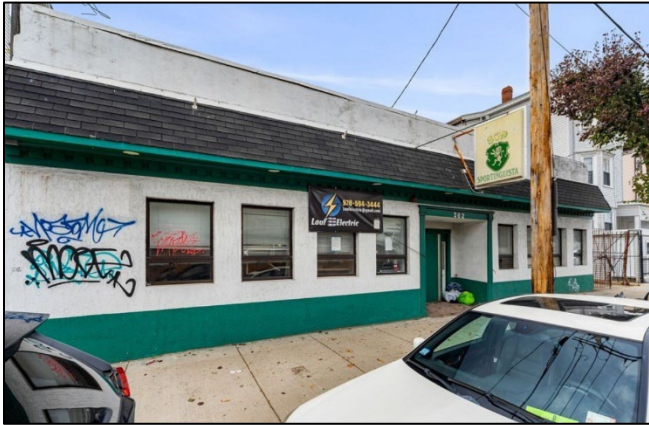


The club closed in approximately 2019 and has been mostly vacant since then. In 2024, a business presented to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a special permit to propose a restaurant in the building, but ultimately the project was abandoned.

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: Front elevation of the building
-
- Top Right: Right elevation of building
-
- Bottom Left: Left elevation of the building
-
- Bottom right: Aerial image of the overall building.

1. 282-284 McGrath Hwy

The period of relevance for the house starts c. 1910

- a. Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site between 1895 and 1925, likely circa 1910 on what was historically addressed as 132-136 Medford Street.
- b. Design: The building is a one story commercial building constructed primarily of concrete with no discernable high-style architectural design, commonly associated with small scale commercial and storage buildings of the early 20th century.
 - Front Elevation
 - Flat roof with elevated bordering walls
 - Shingled awning
 - Street level commercial storefront
 - 1 over 1 sash windows; main entrance alcove with storefront steel door.
 - Concrete façade materials
 - Right elevation
 - Plain side white painting
 - Concrete façade materials
 - No windows
 - Left elevation
 - Plain side white painting
 - Concrete façade materials
 - No windows, an opening that may be an entrance/exit
 - Rear elevation
 - Enclosure of the separate commercial spaces between 1910 and 1941.
- c. Materials:
 - Foundation: Likely concrete or brick foundation
 - Structural System: Concrete commercial construction as identified on the 1925 Sanborn Map
 - Exterior Walls: Concrete and paint
 - Exterior Awning: Shingled
 - Entry Doors: Modern commercial replacement doors, likely aluminum
 - Windows: Modern replaced windows with glass storefront elements
 - Trim: Painted concrete or brick
 - Roof: Rubber roof with bordering walls
- d. Alterations: The building appears to have undergone multiple alterations associated with changing commercial tenants. Alterations likely include replacement storefront systems, replacement windows and doors, updated roofing materials, enclosure between the two separated original commercial concrete buildings, and other modifications for restaurant

and club uses. Despite these changes, the building retains its original one-story massing and general commercial form.

- e. *Evaluation of Integrity of 282-284 McGrath:* Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff’s position that the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its commercial character. The building has been altered, but retains its original location, massing, scale, and commercial form.

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.

Commercial Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the Building at 282 McGrath Highway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the Building at 282 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.

Commercial Structure

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the Building at 282 McGrath Highway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the Building at 282 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 282-284 McGrath Highway is or is not “historically significant”.