



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

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STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 64 Medford St

Case: HP26-000038

Applicant: Paul O'Connell- Well Built
Construction Inc

Owner: P&P Carroll Realty Trust

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

HPC Meeting Date: July 21, 2026

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation



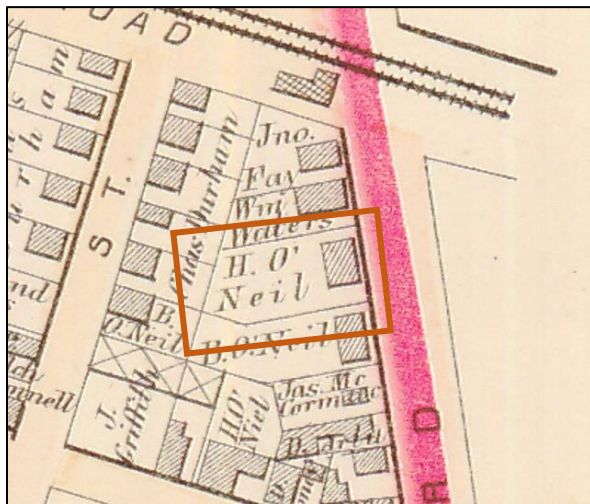
The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is not a determination/decision, nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

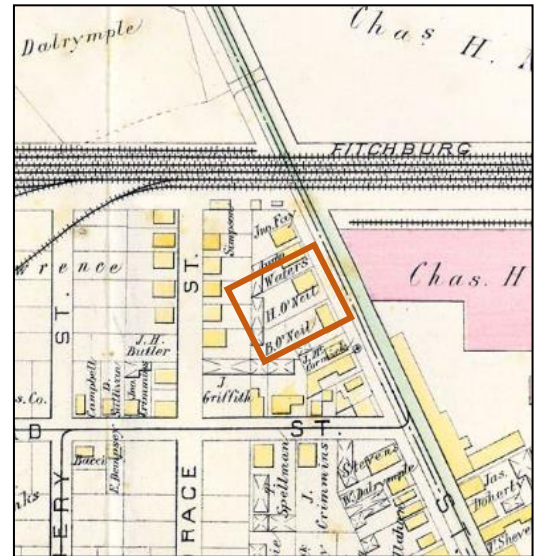
Historical Context: 64 Medford Street is a 2.5 story residential building with commercial occupants located along Medford Street on the border between the Cobble Hill and Inner Belt neighborhoods.

This area of Somerville between the Cobble Hill and Inner Belt neighborhoods has historically been an industrial zone of Somerville. During the late 1800s, a key industry in Somerville was meatpacking, with Somerville as the third largest slaughtering city in the United States by 1898. In “Beyond the Neck”, the housing built in this area in the late 1800s was described as the “poor class of houses” (Zellie, 1982). Development along the rail line in this area grew during the 1800s and many of the residents of these parcels worked in the industrial sector.

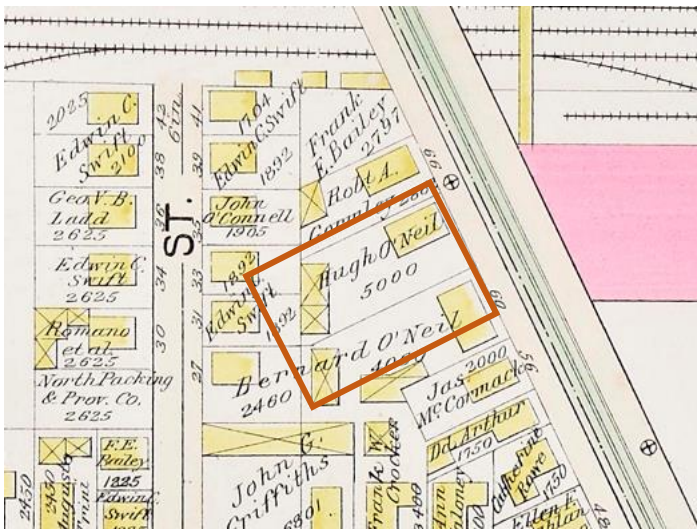
The parcel first appears on the 1874 Hopkins map, with a residential building owned by H O’Neil. The 1884 Hopkins map presents a residential building repositioned along the Medford frontage. The 1884 Hopkins map also includes the addition of a barn/stable buildings added onto the rear of the parcel. The 1895 Bromley map includes the full name of the owner as Hugh O’Neil and shows the same residential building with two barn/stable buildings on the rear of the parcel.



1874 Hopkins



1884 Hopkins



1895 Bromley

Hugh O'Neil was an Irish immigrant, born in Ireland in 1832. It is unclear his exact date of immigration to the United States. He settled in 64 Medford Street and died in 1898, shortly after the publication of the 1895 Bromley map. Hugh O'Neil's immigration reflects the broader pattern of Irish migration to the Boston area during the mid-19th century, largely driven by the Irish Potato Famine.

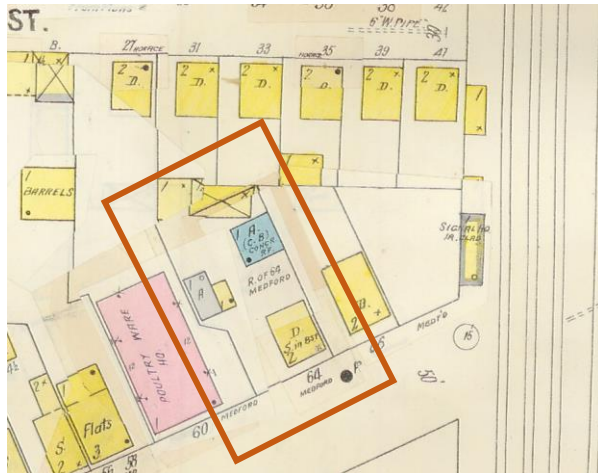
Following Hugh O'Neil's ownership, it is unclear who the owner of 64 Medford became. However, this location is cited as the address for several people in the Somerville 1900 Directory including: Antonio Dillazo, Francesco Fiorillo, Angelo Lombardi and Michael Lyons, implying that the use of the property may have been as a boarding house. Starting in the 1860s, there was a large influx of Italian immigrants that settled in the Boston area. As a result, tenement housing was a common use of residential buildings during the early 1900s to support the thousands of working-class Italian immigrants that moved to Massachusetts.

From 1910-1919, 64 Medford is cited as the residence of Gus and Cathrina Cavicchi in the Somerville Directories. Their occupations were listed as carpenter and laborer in the Somerville Directories, which implies the beginning of the transition to commercial use of the property.

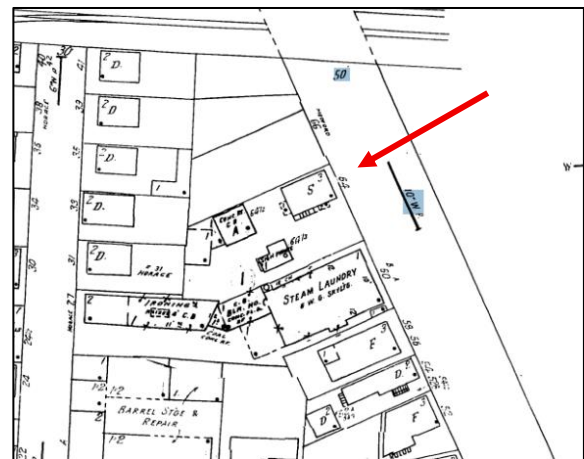


Hine, L. W., photographer. (1912) *View of 64? Medford Street, Somerville, Mass.*

64 Medford Street is cited as the location of a photograph published in 1912 by Lewis Hines in the National Child Labor Committee Collection at the Library of Congress. Lewis Hines was an investigative journalist who documented the working and living condition of children in the United States between 1908 and 1924. The image depicts a child in front of the 64 Medford residential house surrounded by infrastructure development.



1925 Sanborn



1933 Sanborn

The 1925 Sanborn map shows an additional rear concrete building, along with a garage denoted as “A” for “Automobile” at the rear of the parcel. The primary building is labeled “S in BST”, indicating a store use in the basement level. By the 1933-1950 Sanborn maps, the building is marked simply as “S”, suggesting the use had transitioned fully from residential to commercial. The concrete block addition remains, along with multiple sheds and what is likely a garage or carport.

Following the 1933-1950 Sanborn map, there is little information on the use and occupancy of 64 Medford Street. At some point following the 1933 Sanborn map publication, the rear concrete building and accessory buildings were removed, though the original building remains on the parcel. During this period, this area of the Cobble Hill neighborhood continued to industrialize, consistent with the broader transformation of this area. Cobble Hill was leveled by the late 19th century to accommodate the expanding industrial hub of Somerville, with much of the land being used for railyard, slaughterhouses, and other large scale industrial uses. It is likely that the building has since been used only for commercial purposes rather than its original residential use. This parcel would likely have been heavily impacted as part of the proposed 1948 Inner Belt Expressway that ultimately was never built but contributed to the naming of the “Inner Belt” neighborhood in Somerville.

The current owners purchased the parcel in 1994. On the rear elevation of the existing building there is a sign indicating the “Carroll Brothers Roofers” which suggests the building was likely used as commercial space in addition to the adjacent lot of 60 Medford which was the primary location of the roofing business.

On April 26, 2021, 64 Medford Street was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission for historical significance and at the time was found to be not historically significant. According to the Somerville Demolition Review Ordinance, if the applicant does not demolish the structure within three years, then the applicant must present to the HPC again to redetermine historical significance. Since 2021, the addition of occupants from 1900-1919 and the 1925/1933 Sanborn maps and associated description of uses has been added to its historical context.

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: rear elevation of the building
Bottom left: left elevation of the building
Bottom right: right elevation of the building

1. **64 Medford Street**

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1884-1895

- a. Location: It is believed that the structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime between 1884-1895
- b. Design: The building is a 2.5 story vernacular gable-front workers cottage with a covered porch on the rear elevation
 - Front Elevation
 - Symmetrical front elevation
 - 2.5 story vernacular gable-front frame
 - Right Elevation
 - Asbestos siding with 4 windows
 - Left Elevation
 - First floor side entrance
 - Steps to second floor porch
 - Rear Elevation
 - Covered first floor porch with rear steps
 - Second floor porch
 - Entrance likely to basement level
- c. Materials:
 - Foundation: Likely concrete or brick
 - Windows: Likely aluminum
 - Entry door: Modern with storm door
 - Siding: Vinyl shingle
 - Trim: Wood & likely aluminum
 - Steps: Wood
 - Roof: Gable and asphalt shingles
- d. Alterations: Modern replacement of doors and windows on the front elevation. Replacement of siding to vinyl shingle.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 64 Medford 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 obscure some original details; however, the original massing and key architectural details such as the gable roof feature remain intact.

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 STRUCTURE at 64 Medford Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 64 Medford Street 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 STRUCTURE at 64 Medford Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 64 Medford Street 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 STRUCTURE at 64 Medford is or is not “historically significant”.