



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: 3 Cameron Ave

Case: HP26-000042

Applicant: Niranjani Gawli

Owner: Cameron Rei LLC

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

HPC Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

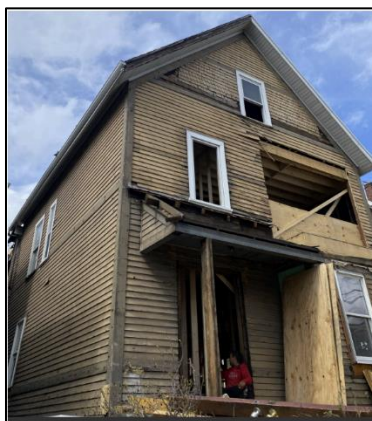
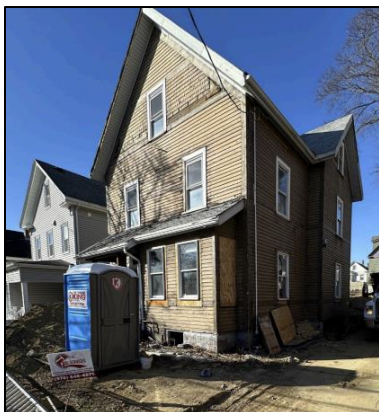


Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear Elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation

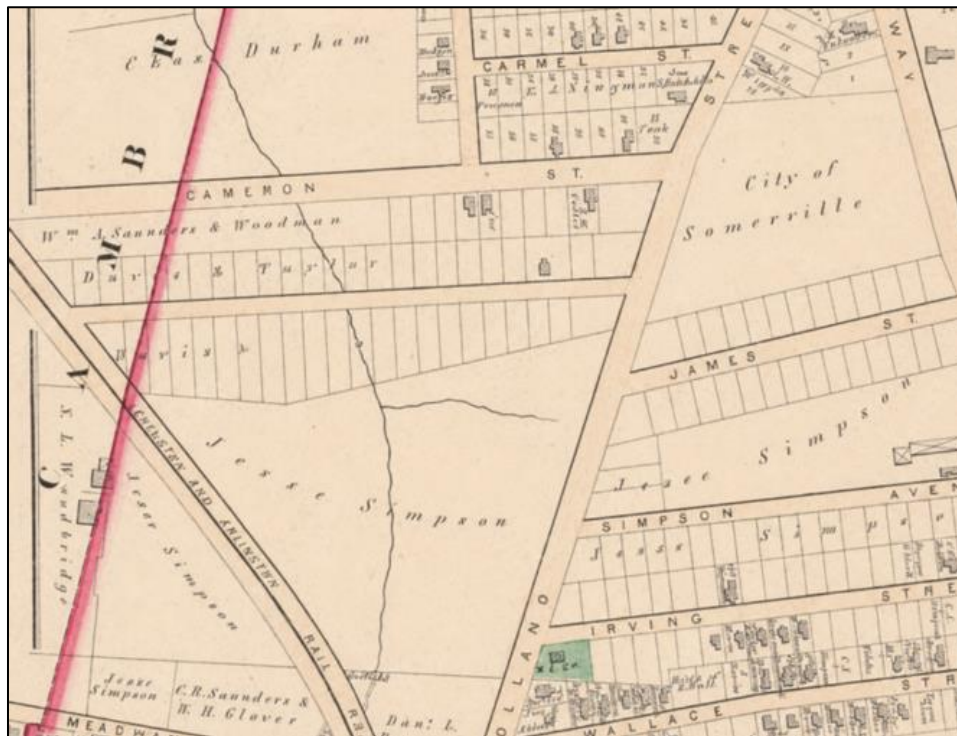


The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the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

Staff Note: This property has already begun demolition, as they have demolished more than fifty percent of the building while removing sheathing. A Stop Work Order has been placed on the property by the Inspection Services Department (ISD). A determination from the HPC is needed to see if the house is historically significant and the work can continue.

I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 3 Camerone is a two-and-a-half-story, two-family home located in the Teele Square neighborhood, northwest of Somerville. The Camerone Ave streetscape is characterized primarily gable-fronted homes of a similar size.



Above: 1874 Hopkins map with location of 3 Camerone Ave Highlighted



Above: Close up of 3 Camerone Ave lot, listing J. Adams as the owner

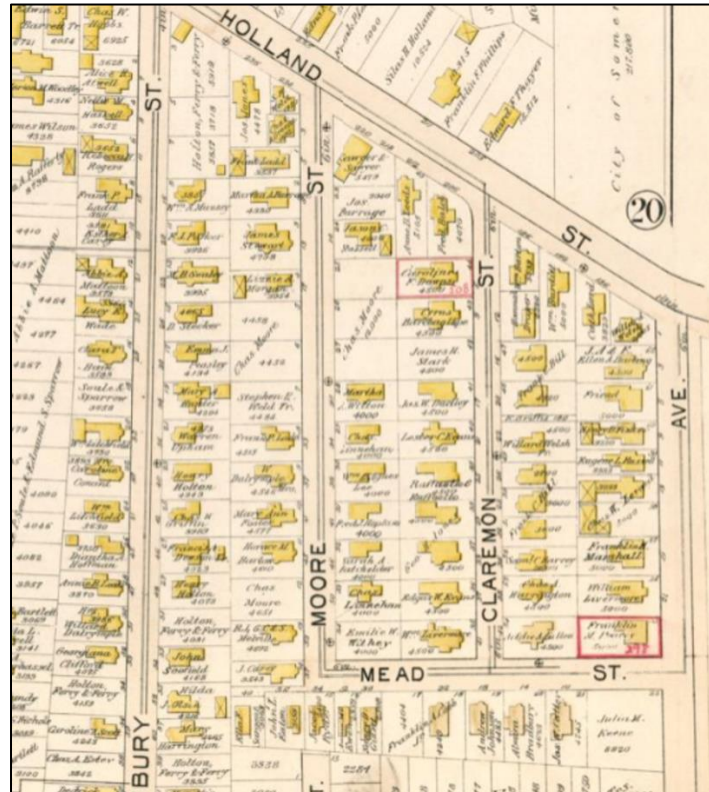
3 Camerone Ave first appears on the 1874 Hopkins Map, with an individual named J. Adams listed as the owner. At that time, we can see early subdividing around the area, but West Somerville was largely undeveloped and used for agricultural purposes. In the century prior, colonial settlers such as members of the Tufts and Russell families owned farms and estates in this area. This makes 3 Camerone Ave one of the first few houses in the area.

Between 1870 and 1890, West Somerville experienced rapid development through the construction and improvement of both new and existing streets. In addition, the extension of the railway connection near Lowell Street, linking the Lexington–Arlington Branch with the Boston–Lowell line, crossed through Davis Square. Further, the increased accessibility provided by the advent of streetcars and trolleys encouraged large landowners and farmers to subdivide their properties, resulting in a transition from open, farm-centric land to residential development.

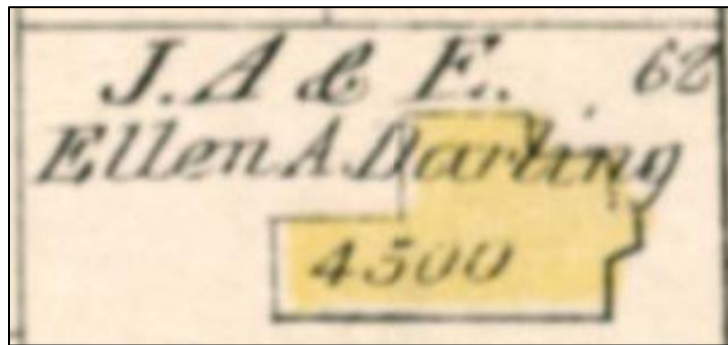
The maps of 1884 and 1895 below effectively illustrate the steady transformation of the area between Holland Avenue and the Lexington–Arlington rail line from agricultural to developed.



Above: 1884 Hopkins map with location of 3 Camerone Ave Highlighted



Above: 1895 Bromley map with location of 3 Camerone Ave Highlighted



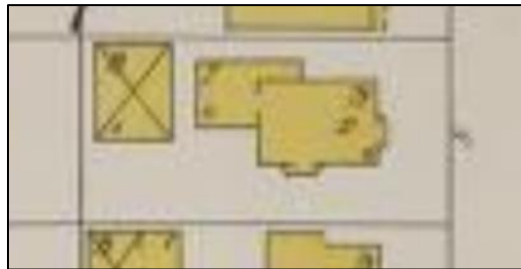
Above: Close up of 3 Camerone Ave lot, listing J. A. & E Ellen A. Darling as the owner(s)

On the 1895 Map above, we see “J. A. & E. Ellen A. Darling” listed as the owner or owners. It is unknown if this is multiple owners, different owners for parts of the two-family home, or perhaps they were relatives.

On the 1900 Map below, we can see the surrounding area in a similar state as 1895 and the building footprint of 3 Cameron Ave remaining the same. We can also see that a garage pops up on the property by this time. This garage remained on the site until it was approved for demolition in 2025.



Above: 1900 Sanborn map with location of 3 Camerone Ave Highlighted



Above: Close up of 3 Camerone Ave lot with the garage visible

Unfortunately, not much information could be found on the residents of 3 Camerone Ave could be found. Below is a table of confirmed residents that were found through historic maps and newspaper articles.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residence Type
J. Adams	1874 - 1884			Owner
Ellen A. Darling	1895			Owner
Bart J. Piraino	1945	Sargent	Brother of Mary	
Mary Freitas	1945		Sister of Bart	

Besides the individuals identified in the previously displayed historic maps, two other residents could be identified. Bart J. Piraino, a who served as a Sargent in World War II, resided in the house after his time serving.

Below is an article detailing his time serving:



Above: Boston Evening Globe, Aug 04, 1945, Page 5

He resided in the house with his sister, Mary Freitas. Due to the fact that she had a different last name than her brother, it can be inferred that she either resided there with her husband or that she had previously been married.

As mentioned earlier in the memo, this house is here for review because more than 50% of the building has been demolished during the already ongoing construction process. Below are images of the current state of the building, compared to images of the building prior to construction, taken from google maps, dated 2022.



Above: front façade in 2022, prior to construction



Above: current front facade



Above: Right façade in 2022, prior to construction



Above: current front facade



Above: current rear facade

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.

1. 3 Cameron Ave

The period of relevance for the house starts prior to 1874.

- a. Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site sometime prior to 1874.
- b. Design: The house is a 2.5-story worker's cottage with a gable roof. Prior to the current construction, the exterior likely consisted of vinyl siding and concrete material over a wood frame. Entry is through the front that was likely vinyl door.

- Front Elevation

- The front elevation presents a gable
- There was a front porch, likely made of concrete and wood, with a railing that was possibly made of vinyl
- The front door was possibly vinyl
- Six one-over-one windows are visible that were likely not original

- - Right Elevation

- The right elevation presented formerly vinyl siding over a wood and concrete base
- There are five one-over-one windows that were likely vinyl and likely not original

- Left Elevation

- The right elevation presented formerly vinyl siding over a wood and concrete base
- There are at least three one-over-one windows that were likely vinyl and likely not original

- Rear Elevation

- The applicant did not present images of the rear prior to construction, but it can be inferred that it likely contained vinyl siding and one-over-one vinyl windows like the rest of the house
- The roof appears hipped from the rear

c. Materials:

- Foundation: Concrete perimeter
- Windows: Likely vinyl
- Siding: Likely Vinyl
- Trim: Likely vinyl
- Roof: gable/hipped, asphalt shingles

d. Alterations: likely window replacements,

- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 3 Camerone Ave: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retained most of the integrity of its original form prior to the applicant's demolition.

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 3 Camerone Ave meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 3 Camerone Ave 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 3 Cameron Ave meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 3 Cameron Ave 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 3 Cameron Ave is or is not “historically significant”.