



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

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 52 Powder House Blvd

Case: HP26-000062

Applicant: Vanita Wagner

Owner: Vanita Wagner

Legal Ad: *The applicant is requesting the replacement of 6 original wood windows on a Local Historic District (LHD) property.*



Front Elevation of 52 Powder House Blvd.

HPC Meeting Date: September 1, 2026

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. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus is the c. 1916 Colonial Revival building known as the Morris Gotlob & Edward Gorman House. The property is in a residential area in the Powder House Square neighborhood, near Davis Square and the Tufts University area. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Proposal: The Applicant proposes to replace six (6) original windows on the building. The existing windows are wood, where the new windows are vinyl.

II. ANALYSIS

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. Applicable regulations are discussed below.

Due to the material of the windows changing on a Local Historic District (LHD) property, the HPC has purview over this work.

The applicable design guidelines can be found below:

C. Windows and Doors

- 1. Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.*
- 2. Wherever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence. If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.*

Materials: The windows proposed are Marvin Infinity replacement windows.

III. VOTE

HPC Determination:

The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complied with the Design Guidelines.

When bringing the matter to a vote the HPC must state their findings and reasons why they take their position.

IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Planning staff recommended the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project. The HPC may also add further conditions as-needed during their deliberations.

1. The applicant/Owner shall file the Certificate with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) by uploading it to the Citizenserve permitting portal with their application for a building permit.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire and the Applicant shall re-apply for the reissuance of this Certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff-level reissuance of the Certificate.
3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC.

PHOTOS OF PROJECT AREA:



Above: Front of 52 Powder House with original windows proposed to be replaced circled



Above: Rear of 52 Powder House with original windows proposed to be replaced circled



Above: Right side of 52 Powder House with original windows proposed to be replaced circled

DETAIL PHOTOS:







Example of window
frosted over in winter
given lack of proper
insulation

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.346
Historic Name:	
Common Name:	Gotlob, Morris G. - Gorman, Edward House
Address:	52 Powder House Blvd
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Tufts;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1916
Architectural Style(s):	Colonial Revival;
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture;
Area(s):	SMV.AM, SMV.BA
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Stucco; Wood; Wood Clapboard; Foundation: Stone, Cut;
Demolished	No



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 80 BOYLSTON STREET
 BOSTON, MA 02116

*Pl. TUFTS
 USGS BOSTON
 SECT A*

LMD-1013/89

AREA Tufts Area **FORM NO.** 346

Town SOMERVILLE

Address 52 Powderhouse Blvd.

Historic Name Morris Gotlob & Edward Gorman (first residents)

Use: Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

Date 1916-1917

Source directories

Style Colonial Revival / Dutch

Architect _____

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard / stucc

Outbuildings _____

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

Condition good

Moved _____ **Date** _____

Acreage 4572 sq. ft.

Setting South side of main thoroughfare opposite Tufts University Athletic fields, tree lined and residential setting on south side of Powderhouse.

Recorded by Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date April, 1988

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

Tufts Athletic Fields

POWDER HOUSE BLVD

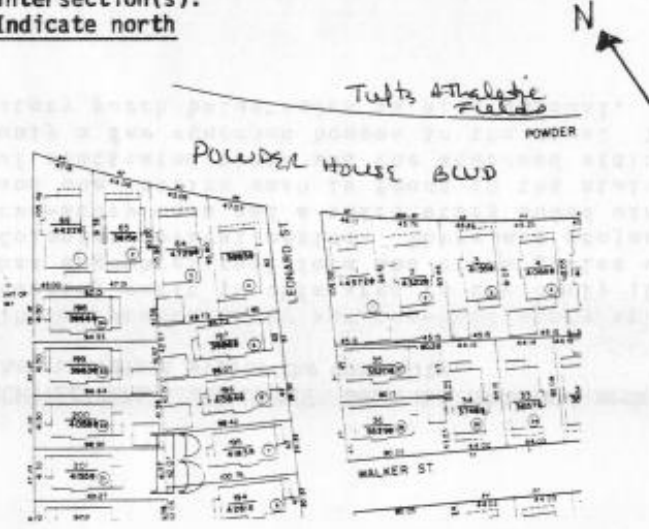
LEONARD ST

WALKER ST

UTM REFERENCE _____

USGS QUADRANGLE _____

SCALE _____

SMV.346

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The substantial two and one-half story stuccoed house is representative of housing built in this area in the early 1900s. Built as a two-family, it has a gambrel roof form and cross gables which were popular styles of the Colonial Revival period. There are projecting square and octagonal one and two-story bays and a third story bowed window. Sash vary from 8/1 to 15/1 and one lattice sash is found in the stair hall window. The foundation is of rusticated block and the stuccoed siding makes this dwelling one of only a few stuccoed houses in the area. The elaborate design of the two story porch balustrades is also unusual.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Powderhouse Boulevard was not constructed until the beginning of the 20th century. Although proposed in 1892 the 1895 and 1900 maps show it as an unconstructed road. The purpose of the 1892 proposed Powderhouse Boulevard was to link Somerville to the Metropolitan Park Commission's Mystic Valley Parkway. The hope was to establish a "good block, with suitably laid out intersecting streets" (Annual Reports, 1898). The development of one and two-family houses on the Boulevard appealed attracted Somerville and Boston businessmen who used the improved street railway system.

This house was built by 1917 as one of the substantial two-family dwellings on the Boulevard. The first residents included Morris G. Gotlob who was a travelling salesman and Edward Gorman who served as a postal clerk.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. City Directories: 1910-1920.
2. City of Somerville, Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, 1983.

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