



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: 333 Highland Avenue

Case: HP26-000047

Applicant: Fan Wang

Owner: Fan Wang and Marc Wagner

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

HPC Meeting Date: September 15, 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: 333 Highland Avenue is a two-and-a-half story, four-unit residence located at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Lesley Avenue in the Davis Square neighborhood of Somerville. This section of Highland Avenue, particularly the area between Hancock Street and Willow Avenue is characterized by a streetscape composed of two-family, two and a half (2 ½) stories cross gable structures.

The commercial and residential development of Davis Square started to increase due to the various railroad extensions that entered the area. The Boston & Lowell Railroad (1830), Fitchburg Railroad (1840) started opening the area for development, and later with the Lexington and Arlington branch (1870-1871) which reached Davis Square, it provided the most convenient transportation opportunities.

Much of present-day Davis Square is located in formerly owned land from Pearson Davis, a Boston grain merchant whose home stood at Elm, Grove and Walnut Street. In 1850 the area was officially named “Davis Square” in honor of Pearson.

The maps of 1874 and 1884 indicate a significant rise in the number of subdivisions and streets created during this ten-year period in the immediate area of this building. The 1895, 1900 and 1938 maps show the increase of dwellings built throughout these years and in the present-day section between Willow and Hancock Streets.



Figure 2-1874

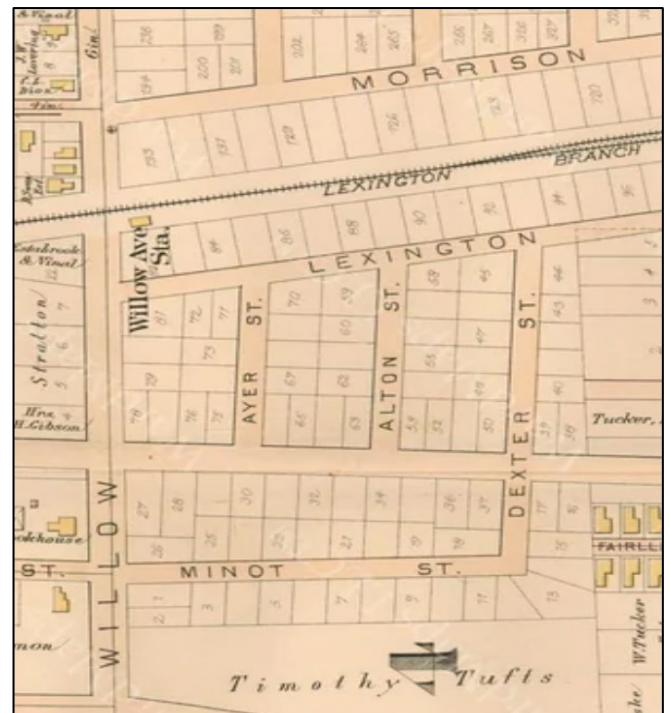


Figure 1 - 1884



Figure 4 – 1895



Figure 3 - 1900



Figure 5 - 1938

Originally numbered 331 Highland Avenue in the 1900 Sanborn map and later recorded as 333 Highland Avenue was constructed sometime between 1895 - 1900. The land where this building is located was owned by "Tufts Brick Manufacturer Company" and between 1874-1884 got subdivided creating present-day Lesley and Henry Avenue. Records of early directories show Dr. George Edward Osgood as a physician with this address, however it is unclear if this building was built by Dr. Osgood and if how long he lived there or only utilized this house as an office, as only the 1910 census records show Dr. Osgood and his wife Sarah E. Osgood living in this house.

The Somerville City Directories show that between 1901 to 1914 there were various people who resided or potentially rented office space at 333 Highland Ave. In the 1920 census records the Ayer and the Anderson families are listed as residents and in the 1915 directory it lists one of the family members of the Anderson family as a boarder.

Street	House No.	Dwellin Visited No.	Name	Relation	Home Ownr	Mortg	Sex	Race	Age	Marital Status		
HIGHLAND AVE.	333	81	130	Anderson, William E.	Head	1	R	M	W	52	M	
				Nellie M.	wife			F	W	45	M	
				Wilda C.	daughter			F	W	19	S	
				Stanley E.	son			M	W	25	M	
				Muriel H.	daughter-in-law			F	W	19	M	
			131	Ayer, Leon G.	Head	2	R	M	W	42	M	
				Clara E.	wife			F	W	36	M	
				Bird, Frances P.	step-son			M	W	18	S	
				Ayer, Mary E.	mother			F	W	61	W	
	335	82	132	Belmont, Mary E.	Head	1	O	M	F	W	76	W
				Herbert W.	son			M	W	52	S	
				Ella M.	daughter			F	W	42	S	
			133	Spinner, Charles S.	Head	2	R	M	W	62	M	
				Harriet M.	wife			F	W	62	M	
				Lowell J.	son			M	W	29	S	
	337	83	134	Todd, George W.	Head	1	R	M	W	54	M	
			Grace L.	wife			F	W	50	M		
			Boris L.	daughter			M	W	18	S		

Figure 7 - 333 Highland Avenue 1920 Census Record.

RECORD OF A MARRIAGE.

Groom... *Geo. Edward Osgood*
 Bride... *Sarah Eliza Whitehouse*
 Residence of Groom... *Somerville Mass*
 " Bride... *So. Berwick Me.*
 Age of Groom... *31*
 " Bride... *35*
 Color of Groom... *W*
 " Bride... *W*
 Occupation of Groom... *Physician*
 " Bride... *Housekeeper*
 Birthplace of Groom... *Charlottesville Mass*
 " Bride... *So. Berwick*
 No. of Marriage of Groom... *First*
 " Bride... *First*
 Groom Widowed or Divorced...
 Bride " " "
 Intention Filed... *November 20th 1895*
 By whom Married... *E. Almon Hoyt*
 Residence... *Down St. Me.*
 Official Station*... *Clergyman*
 Date of Marriage... *December 3rd 1895*
 Place... *South Berwick Me.*
 *Clergyman, Justice of the Peace, etc.
 [Record continued over.]

Figure 6 - Record of marriage George and Sarah Osgood 1895.

The table below presents, in chronological order, the residents and owners of 333 Highland Avenue as documented the Somerville directories, and census records.

Table of residents/owners of 333 Highland Avenue

Name	Date and Place of Birth	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
George E. Osgood	About 1864, Massachusetts	Sometime between 1900-1917	Physician	Head	Inferred Owner
Sarah E Osgood	About 1860, Maine	Sometime between 1900-1917	Housekeeper	Wife	
Frederick C. Nicholas	Unknown	Sometime between 1900-1903	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Charles W. Woodman	About 1869, New Hampshire	Sometime between 1904-1906	Sales	Unknown	Unknown
Willis O. Mahoney	About 1870, Maine	Sometime between 1906-1908	Produce Dealer	Unknown	Unknown
Frederick L. Patten	About 1857, Massachusetts	Sometime 1909-1911	Jeweler	Unknown	Unknown
Leon G. Ayer	About 1878, Maine	Sometime between 1915-unknown	Civil Engineer	Head	Unknown
Clara E. Ayer	About 1884, Maine	Sometime between 1915-unknown	None	Wife	Unknown
James P. Bird	About 1900, Massachusetts	Sometime between 1915-unknown	None	Stepson	Unknown
Mary E. Ayer	About 1858, Maine	Sometime between 1915-unknownw	Nurse	Mother	Unknown
William E. Anderson	About 1868, Canada	Sometime between 1919-unknown	Carpenter	Head	Boards
Nellie M. Anderson	About 1875, New Hampshire	Sometime between 1919-unknown	None	Wife	-
Nilda C. Anderson	About 1900, Massachusetts	Sometime between 1919-unknown	Stenographer	Daughter	-
Stanley E. Anderson	About 1895, Massachusetts	Sometime between 1919-unknown	Painter	Son	-
Muriel H. Anderson	About 1900, Massachusetts	Sometime between 1919-unknown	None	Daughter in law	-

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: Current front facade of locus facing Highland Avenue

Top Right: Current side view of the building at the Lesley Ave. intersection.

Middle Left: Current view of left side of locus from the side yard of the property.

Middle Right: Satellite image from August 2026 showing aerial perspective of the front locus.

Bottom right: Satellite image from August 2026 showing aerial perspective of the back locus.

333 Highland Avenue

The period of relevance for the house starts in ca 1900.

- a. Location: This structure is in its original location. The building was constructed on-site in 1900.
- b. Design: The building is a two-and-a-half story house with gable/hip roof and stacked porch design, covered ground-floor entry porch with three windows and a matching second-floor recessed porch on the left side (facing Highland Ave.), and the other with a multi-story bay window tower with three symmetrical windows in each floor.
 - Front Elevation
 - Hip roof
 - Entry located in the front facing Highland Ave., with small porch, and three windows.
 - Three symmetrically distributed windows on the bay window tower.
 - Two gable front dormers.
 - Right elevation
 - Bay window tower with three windows symmetrically distributed.
 - Two windows on each side of the bay tower facing Lesley Ave.
 - Two-window dormer.
 - Small chimney
 - Left elevation

- Three windows on the first and second floor, symmetrically distributed.
- Foundation visible with basement windows.
- One gable dormer.

Materials:

- Foundation: Main massing: likely concrete-parged brick or stone.
- Windows: Likely vinyl windows replacement
- Entry door: Wood, fiberglass, or metal with glass on upper half
- Siding: Aluminum
- Trim: Vinyl/Aluminum
- Steps: Concrete steps
- Roof: Asphalt shingles
- Chimney: Brick single stack chimney

- c. Alterations: Alterations include replacement of siding, windows (type), and front entry doors.
- d. Evaluation of Integrity of 333 Highland Avenue: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is staff's position that the original massing, scale remain, however exterior components of the building have clearly been altered over time through the removal and replacement of original materials.

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 building at 333 Highland Avenue meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the building at 333 Highland Avenue 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 building at 333 Highland Avenue meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the building at 333 Highland Avenue 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 333 Highland Avenue is or is not “historically significant”.