CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

JAKE WILSON
MAYOR

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PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 52 Powder House Blvd

Case: HP26-000050

Applicant: Vanita Wagner

Owner: Vanita Wagner

Legal Ad: *The applicant is requesting the replacement of original wood gutter system with fiberglass gutters on a Local Historic District (LHD) property.*

HPC Meeting Date: November 17, 2026



Front Elevation of 52 Powder House Blvd

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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 is requesting the replacement of an original wood gutter system with a fiberglass gutter system.

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 gutter system changing on a Local Historic District (LHD) property, the HPC has purview over this work.

The applicable design guidelines can be found below:

B. Roofs

4. *Preserve the architectural features that give the roof its distinctive character, such as cornices, gutters, iron filigree, cupolas, dormers and brackets. Downspouts should be inconspicuously located and should be painted to match the color of the siding.*

Materials: The proposed gutter system is fiber glass.

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.

Date: November 17, 2026
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PHOTOS OF PROJECT AREA:









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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)

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

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FORM B - BUILDING

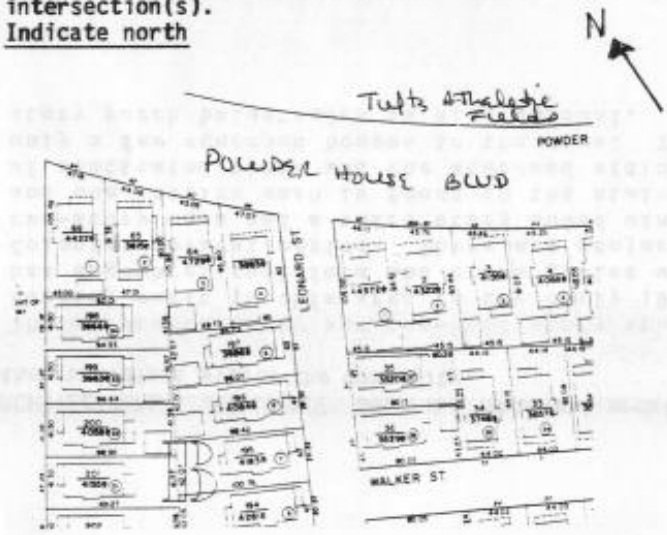
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

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 thoroughf opposite Tufts University Atheltic fields, tree lined and residential setting on south side of Powderhous
Recorded by: Carole Zellie - 1980 Gretchen Schuler - 1988
Organization: Somerville Historic Preservation Commissio
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



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, wtih 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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