



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
**MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**JOSEPH A. CURTATONE**  
**MAYOR**

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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***DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT***

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Site:	251 Highland Avenue
Case:	HPC 2017.073
Applicant Name:	Cheung Kwan Yu
Date of Application:	August 16, 2017
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	September 26, 2017

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***I. Historical Association***

*Historical Context:* Highland Avenue ran through to Central Street by 1852 and was added to incrementally. As of 1874, the road was penciled in from Cherry Street to Grove Street and finally put through the Tufts Brickyards to Davis Square by 1874. The 1874 Hopkins map shows the plat at 251 Highland Avenue attributed to the ownership of C. Smith. No house was located on this property until the early 1890s. The house and storefront are adjacent to a private right of way or snicket that runs from Hudson Street to Highland Avenue. The right of way was originally a portion of Porter Street that ran to Broadway was never constructed.

A wide range of owners and tenants have lived in this house. The most prominent of the owners was Charles E. Shaw, painter and paper hanger who was also a member of the Prescott-Robert A. Vinal Hook & Ladder Company No.1 in Union Square and later a Lieutenant at the Highland Avenue Hook & Ladder Company No.2. In 1911, a store was added to the front of the house for the grocery of William C. Jones who lived around the corner on Conwell Street. Small stores were located wherever there was a streetcar stop. Frank W. Weeks who lived 251 from 1919-the 1960s was listed a clerk and manager of a grocery store. See attached table for more information on owners and tenants.



**Architectural Description:** 251 Highland Avenue is a 2 ½-story 2-family wood-frame house with a square-bay by a single story brick façade storefront that was added on in 1911 by W. Jones. The current storefront dates to 1972. The house is sided with vinyl and has replacement windows.

**Summary:** This ca. 1895 house has been home to a number of working class and middle class owners. The addition of a storefront in 1911 changed the character of the house, bringing the building closer to the street and making it less domestic. This type of alteration was made to homes located near transportation lines where the clientele would be able to pick up needed goods on their way home. Other houses in this block also have similar alterations.

### ***Findings on Historical Association***

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) **importantly associated with people, events or history** or (b) historically or architecturally significant (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (b) are at the end of the next section.*

*(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from Findings on Historical Association, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, such as Somerville Past and Present, Staff **do NOT** find 251 Highland Avenue to be importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, but **do find** it to be associated with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.*

The subject building is NOT found importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events but is associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City. There is no association with any particular persons or events but is associated with the development of Highland Avenue as an important and commercial corridor.

This ca. 1893 house at 251 Highland Avenue has been home to a number of working class and middle class owners. The addition of a storefront in 1911 changed the character of the house, bringing the building closer to the street and making it less domestic. This type of alteration was made to homes located near transportation lines where the clientele would be able to pick up needed goods on their way home. Other houses in this block also have similar alterations. The number of small retail shops along this section of Highland Avenue indicates that this was a major node of local commerce for those commuting to and from Boston by streetcar.

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## ***II. Historical and 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 (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).*

The period of significance for 241 Highland Avenue begins with its construction circa 1890 and continues to the present day.

### ***Integrity***

*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.*

- a. *Location:* The house is located on a major local arterial in a group of similar buildings, many of which have *ca.* 1910-1920 storefronts added to them or have ground floor retail.
- b. *Design:* The building is a Queen Anne style home with a square two story bay that has been altered over the years. It has a gable end toward the street and symmetrically placed windows. The ground floor has been obscured by the addition of a storefront.
- c. *Materials:* The building is wood frame construction with an overlay of vinyl siding and an asphalt roof. The windows are all replacements except one Queen Anne style stair window.
- d. *Alterations:* A storefront was added to the building in 1911 and given a more modern façade in 1972.

*Evaluation of Integrity:* The building bears strong architectural relationships to other nearby buildings on the block constructed circa 1895 where every other house has an added storefront and where ground floor retail can be found on larger scale buildings of later construction.

### ***Findings for Historical and Architectural Significance***

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) **historically or architecturally significant** (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B). Findings for (a) can be found at the end of the previous section.*

*(b) In accordance with the Finding on Historical and Architectural Significance, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff find 251 Highland Avenue historically or architecturally significant.*

The subject building at 251 Highland Avenue is found historically and architecturally significant in the context of a group of buildings. The building bears strong architectural relationships to other nearby buildings on the block constructed circa 1895 where every other house has an added storefront and where ground floor retail can also be found on larger scale buildings of later construction.

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### ***III. Recommendation***

*Recommendations are based upon an analysis by Historic Preservation Staff of the permit application and the required findings for the Demolition Review Ordinance, which requires archival and historical research, and an assessment of historical and architectural significance, conducted prior to the public meeting for a Determination of Significance. This report may be revised or updated with a new recommendation and/or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through further research.*

*For a Determination of Significance, the structure must be either (A) listed on the National Register or (B) at least 50 years old.*

(A) *The structure is NOT listed on or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor is the structure the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register.*

**OR**

(B) *The structure, circa 1895, is at least 50 years old.*

**AND**

*For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.*

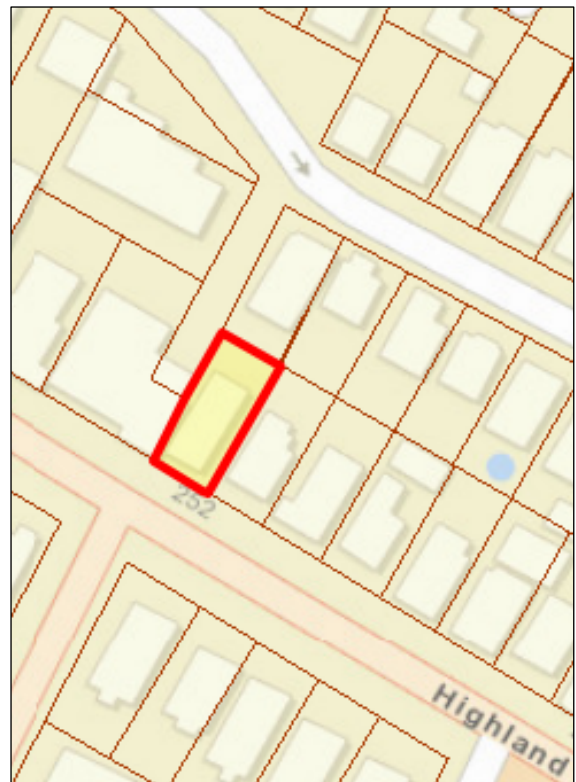
(a) *In accordance with the Findings on Historical Association, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission do NOT find 251 Highland Avenue importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events but do find it to be associated with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth.***

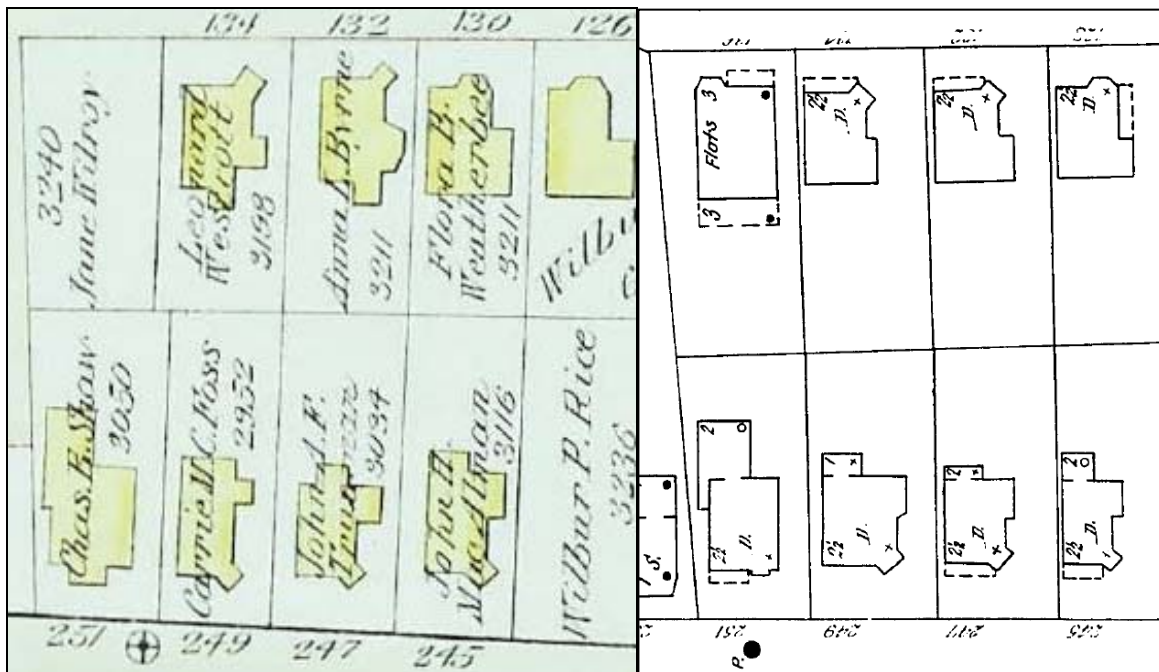
This ca. 1893 house at 251 Highland Avenue has been home to a number of working class and middle class owners. The addition of a storefront in 1911 changed the character of the house, bringing the building closer to the street and making it less domestic. This type of alteration was made to homes located near transportation lines where the clientele would be able to pick up needed goods on their way home. Other houses in this block also have similar alterations. The number of small retail shops along this section of Highland Avenue indicates that this was a major node of local commerce for those commuting to and from Boston by streetcar.

**AND/OR**

(b) *In accordance with the Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 251 Highland Avenue historically and architecturally significant.***

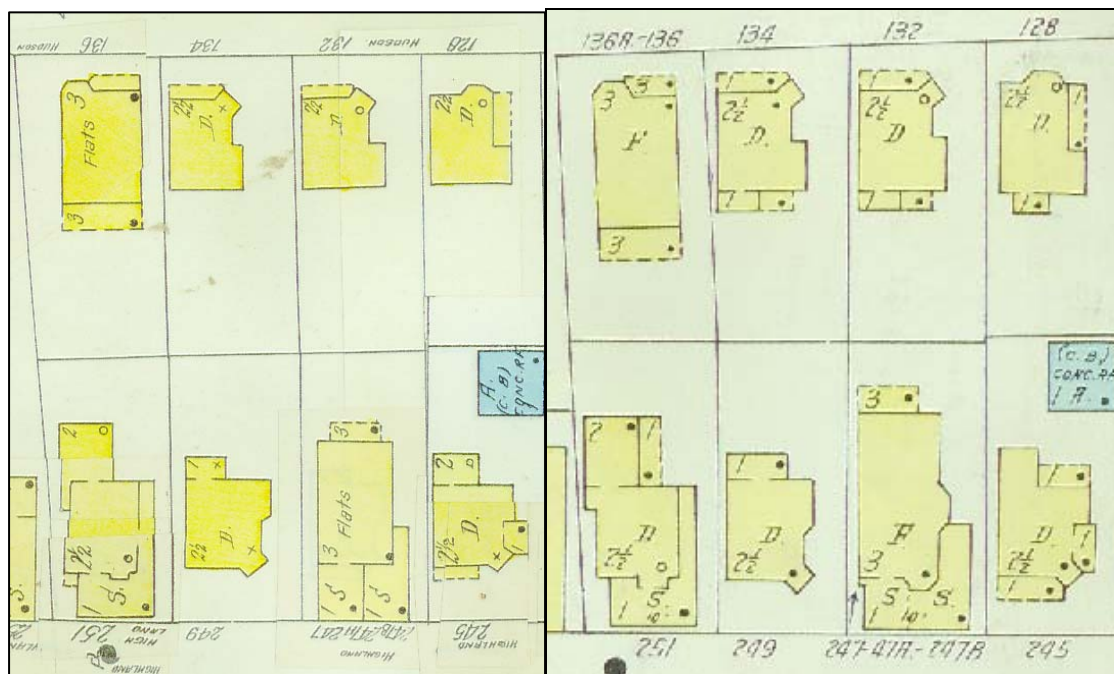
The subject building at 251 Highland Avenue is found historically and architecturally significant in the context of a group of buildings. The building bears strong architectural relationships to other nearby buildings on the block constructed circa 1895 where every other house has an added storefront and where ground floor retail can also be found on larger scale buildings of later construction.





1895 Bromley Plate 16

1900 Sanborn Plate 31



1925 Sanborn Plate 31

1958 Sanborn Plate 248





<i>Dwelling/Family</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
	Lot 18, Book of Plans 45, Plan 44	O	Joseph F. Wilson					1889 Deed 1939/568 from Caroline L. Smith	
	Lot 18, Book of Plans 45, Plan 44	O	Charles E. Shaw					1890 Deed 2004/94 from Joseph F. Wilson	
	251 Highland Avenue		Charles E. Shaw		Paper hanger			1893 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. James Shannon					1893 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Charles E. Shaw		Paper hanger			1894 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		William C. Clarke		Physician			1894 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		William C. Clarke					1895 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Charles E. Shaw		Paper hanger			1896 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Edgehill B. Timpany		Carpenter			1896 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Charles E. Shaw		Paper hanger, Lieut. H&L no. 2			1897 City Directory	
		O	Harriet E. Kneeland					1897 Deed 2541/254 from Charles E. Shaw	
	251 Highland Avenue		Lucy S. Clark					1898 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Hattie E. Kneeland					1898 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Hattie E. Kneeland					1899 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Mary J. Worthley					1899 City Directory	

<i>Dwelling/Family</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
	251 Highland Avenue		Edward H. Smith		Wood carver			1900 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Lucy S. Clark					1900 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Hattie E. Kneeland					1900 City Directory	
<b>51/78</b>	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Harriet Kneeland (head)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>Landlady</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>		<b>1900 US Census</b>	
<b>51/78</b>	251 Highland Avenue		Lucy S. Clark (sister)	60	Landlady	Massachusetts		1900 US Census	
<b>51/78</b>	251 Highland Avenue		Mary Matthews (boarder)	5	At school	Massachusetts		1900 US Census	
<b>51/79</b>	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>William C. Clarke (head)</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Physician &amp; Surgeon</b>	<b>Bexley, Africa</b>		<b>1900 US Census</b>	
<b>51/79</b>	251 Highland Avenue		Clara S. Clarke (wife)	53		New Hampshire		1900 US Census	
	251 Highland Avenue		Lucy S. Clark					1901 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Hattie E. Kneeland					1901 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Mary Matthews					1901 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Fred Wheaton		Shipper, 29 West St, W.S.			1902 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Hattie E. Kneeland					1902 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Mrs. Mary Matthews					1902 City Directory	
	251 Highland		Mary Matthews					1903 City Directory	



<i>NOTES</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>Dwelling/Family</i>
								Avenue	
	1905 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	1906 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	1906 City Directory					Henrietta Clark		251 Highland Avenue	
	1907 City Directory			Carpenter		Abner Jenkins		251 Highland Avenue	
	1907 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	1908 City Directory			Carpenter		Abner Jenkins		251 Highland Avenue	
	1908 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	1909 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	1910 City Directory			Carpenter		Abner Jenkins		251 Highland Avenue	
	1910 City Directory			Pattern maker		Edward L. Taft		251 Highland Avenue	
	<b>1910 US Census</b>	<b>188 9</b>	<b>Canada, Eng</b>	<b>Carpenter, house</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>Abner Jenkins (head)</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>72/109</b>
	1910 US Census	188 9	Canada, Eng		44	Eliza Jenkins (wife)		251 Highland Avenue	72/109
	1910 US Census	188 9	Canada, Eng	Bookkeeper, laundry office	25	Bertha Jenkins (daughter)		251 Highland Avenue	72/109

<i>Dwelling/Family</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
72/109	251 Highland Avenue		Hazel D. Jenkins	9		Massachusetts		1910 US Census	
72/110	251 Highland Avenue		Henrietta Clark (sister in law)	65	Own income	Massachusetts		1910 US Census	
<b>72/110</b>	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Edward L. Taft</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>Pattern maker, shop</b>	<b>New Hampshire</b>		<b>1910 US Census</b>	
72/110	251 Highland Avenue		Georgiana Clark (wife)	59		Massachusetts		1910 US Census	
	251 Highland Avenue		Abner Jenkins		Carpenter			1911 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Benjanin F. Bailey		Commercial Traveler			1911 City Directory	
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>William C. Jones &amp; Mary A. Jones</b>					<b>1911 Deed 3608/184 from Estate of Harriet E. Kneeland</b>	
	251 Highland Avenue		W. Jones					1911-1-179 Building Permit	Store, flat roof, T&G cover, stone found.
	251 Highland Avenue		Leonard T. Bruce		Stableman			1912 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Maud F. Marston					1913 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Ethyl E. Perkins		Clerk			1914 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		H. W. Hight					1914 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Maud F. Marston		Widow of Willis H. Marston			1914 City Directory	
	251 Highland		W. C. Jones & Co.		Grocery			1914 City Directory	

<i>NOTES</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>Dwelling/Family</i>
								Avenue	
	1916 City Directory			Machinist		George A. Hill		251 Highland Avenue	
	1917 City Directory			Machinist		George A. Hill		251 Highland Avenue	
	1917 City Directory					Nina P. Hill		251 Highland Avenue	
	1918 City Directory			Machinist		George A. Hill		251 Highland Avenue	
	1918 City Directory					Nina P. Hill		251 Highland Avenue	
	1919 City Directory					Frank W. Weeks		251 Highland Avenue	
	<b>1920 US Census</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>Manager, Grocery</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Frank W. Weeks (head)</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>251A Highland Avenue</b>	<b>51/91</b>
	1920 US Census		Massachusetts		26	Glades E. Weeks (wife)		251A Highland Avenue	51/91
	1920 US Census		Massachusetts		6	Glades M. Weeks (daughter)		251A Highland Avenue	51/91
	1920 US Census		Massachusetts			Doris C. Weeks (daughter)		251A Highland Avenue	51/91
	1929 City Directory					Susie M. Partridge		251 Highland Avenue	
	1929 City Directory			Meat cutter		Wilbur H Partridge		251 Highland Avenue	
	<b>1930 US Census</b>		<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>Clerk, Grocery Store</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Frank W. Weeks (head)</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>251A Highland Avenue</b>	<b>223/477</b>
	1930 US Census		Massachusetts		36	Gladys E. Weeks (wife)		251A Highland Avenue	223/477

<i>Dwelling/Family</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>O/R</i>	<i>NAME</i>	<i>AGE</i>	<i>OCCUPATION</i>	<i>PLACE OF BIRTH</i>	<i>IMMIGRATION YEAR</i>	<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>NOTES</i>
223/477	251A Highland Avenue		Gladys M. Weeks (daughter)	17		Massachusetts		1930 US Census	
223/477	251A Highland Avenue		Doris C. Weeks (daughter)	12		Massachusetts		1930 US Census	
223/477	251A Highland Avenue		Gertrude A. Weeks (daughter)	6		Massachusetts		1930 US Census	
	251 Highland Avenue		Doris C. Blondon					1940 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Frank W. Weeks					1940 City Directory	
	251 Highland Avenue		Raymond J. Blondon		employed in Boston			1940 City Directory	
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Frank W. Weeks &amp; Gladys E. Weeks</b>					<b>1940 Deed 6396/248 from Estate of Mary A. Jones</b>	
<b>43</b>	<b>251A Highland Avenue</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Frank W. Weeks (head)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Manager, Grocery</b>	<b>Massachusetts</b>		<b>1940 US Census</b>	
43	251A Highland Avenue		Gladys E. Weeks (wife)	46		Massachusetts		1940 US Census	
43	251A Highland Avenue		Raymond J. Blandin (son in Law)	23	Attendant, parking lot	Vermont		1940 US Census	
43	251A Highland Avenue		Doris Blandin (daughter)	22	Clerk, Mail delivery	Massachusetts		1940 US Census	
43	251A Highland Avenue		Gertrude A. Weeks (daughter)	16		Massachusetts		1940 US Census	
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Pasquale N. Durazzano &amp; Lucy F. Durazzano</b>					<b>1964 Deed 10581/405 from Gladys E. Weeks</b>	

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	251 Highland Avenue		P. Durazzano					1971-1-242 Building Permit	Vinyl siding
	251 Highland Avenue		P. Durazzano					1972-1-121 Building Permit	Remodel storefront
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Louis Durazzano &amp; Anne Marie Soroko</b>					<b>1992 Deed 22768/089 from Lucy F. Durazzano</b>	
	251 Highland Avenue		P. Durazzano					1993-1-101 Building Permit	Sign
	251 Highland Avenue		L. Durazzano					1993-1-102 Building Permit	Back wall
	251 Highland Avenue		P. Durazzano					1993-1-82 Building Permit	Install paneling
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Sukhdev S. Sandhu &amp; Harinder K. Sadhu</b>					<b>1998 Deed 28241/592 from Louis Durazzano &amp; Anne Marie Soroko</b>	
	251 Highland Avenue		S. Sankhu					1998-1-220 Cert of Occupancy	2-family & 1 retail
	251 Highland Avenue		Sukhder Sandhu					1998-2-695 Building Permit	Repair 2 Apartments
	<b>251 Highland Avenue</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>Tin Kin Yu &amp; Ying Suen Yu</b>					<b>2002 Deed 35306/285 from Sukhdev S. Sandhu &amp; Harinder K. Sadhu</b>	