



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

Joseph A. Curtatone

Mayor

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

KRISTENNA CHASE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PLANNER & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

Case #: HPC 2019.023

Date: June 18, 2019

Recommendation: Preferably Preserved

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT
for
Determination of Preferably Preserved

Site: 28 Clyde Street

Applicant Name: Richard Monagle, RJM Development, LLC

Applicant Address: 83 West Street, Medford, MA

Owner Name: Ann C. Dicey

Owner Address: Not Supplied.

Petition: Applicant seeks to demolish the c. 1869 workers cottage.

HPC Hearing Date: June 18, 2019



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is a c.1869 workers cottage in the “Patch” neighborhood.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant seeks to demolish the existing structure.

I. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance

On Tuesday, May 21, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to determine the c. 1869 wood-frame dwelling at 28 Clyde Street ‘Significant’ because the building, per Section 2.17.B of the Demolition Review Ordinance 2003-05, is “at least 50 years old, and is or has been determined by

the Commission to be a significant building or structure after a finding that the building or structure is either:

- i. “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, or
- ii. “Historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) 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.”

The building illustrates the simplicity of workers housing. It is clad in wood shingle siding with replacement doors and windows. There is a new larger front porch. The owners/occupants were laborers and blue collar workers. The subject building is located within a context of buildings and structures which, together, create a setting that reflects the character of the place in which the subject building played a historical role, i.e. working class housing for laborers of the Boston Brick Company.

The Commission found **28Clyde Street** importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to the association of the property with workers and the Boston Brick Company, whose location and employment opportunity prompted the development of this small neighborhood of working class housing.

The Commission found **28Clyde Street** historically and architecturally significant due to the ability of the subject parcel to convey significance regarding location in a group of similar buildings and design. Neighborhoods of workers housing are becoming endangered.

II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are 2 metal garages on the property for which there has been no request for a determination of significance. They have no building permits.

Comparable Structures:

There are few structures that are appropriate to compare with the subject dwelling due to the combination of the potential age of the structure, the modest 1½ story massing, and siting with regard to the side-gable. There are multiple buildings still existent from the mid-nineteenth century, though their massing is often larger. There are also a number of single-family dwellings with a modest 1½ story massing located throughout the City.

Comparable structures within the City include: 80 Properzi Way (c.1850), 25 Clyde Street (1860) (LHD), 37 Fiske Avenue (c. 1866), 342 Lowell Street (1861) (LHD), 23 Fiske Avenue (c. 1870), 93 Properzi Way (c. 1870). All of them have some alteration but still retain their original form.



80 Properzi Way (c.1850), 25 Clyde Street LHD (1860), 37 Fiske Avenue (c. 1866),



342 Lowell Street (1861), 23 Fiske Avenue (c. 1870), 93 Properzi Way (c. 1870)

II. PREFERABLY PRESERVED

If the Commission determines that the demolition of the significant building or structure would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City, such building or structure shall be considered a preferably preserved building or structure. (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 4.2.d)

A determination regarding if the demolition of the subject building is detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City should consider the following:

How does this building or structure compose or reflect features which contribute to the heritage of the City?

a) What is the remaining integrity of the structure? The National Park Service defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance.

- The exterior of the structure (the only portion of the building within the purview of the HPC), retains a high degree of architectural integrity as a workers cottage and reflects the evolution of this property through key eras of architectural change. See determination of significance for a summary of the historic architectural features of this structure.

What is the level (local, state, national) of significance?

- This structure is significantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its simple style and association with the working class families of the Patch who emigrated primarily from Ireland. It is significant as part of a group of buildings that tell this story.

b) What is the visibility of the structure with regard to public interest (Section 2.17.B.ii) if demolition were to occur?

- The structure is set close to the street on a small well-traveled neighborhood street. The building is one of several small houses left in the neighborhood.

c) What is the scarcity or frequency of this type of resource in the City?

- The City of Somerville has few structures from the 1850s without massive alterations. It retains the size, proportions and massing typical and characteristic cottages constructed for the working class. The building does not appear on the 1852 Draper Map but is found on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas.

Upon a consideration of the above criteria is the demolition of the subject building detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City?

Staff finds that this type of workers cottage is an important component of workers housing found in parts of Somerville near freight lines and former rivers and canals.

III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the building, Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission finds the property at 28 Clyde Street to be **PREFERABLY PRESERVED**.*