



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

GEORGE J. PROAKIS, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	297 Medford Street
Case:	HPC 2019.058
Applicant Name:	Barros Properties, LLC
Date of Application:	August 12, 2019
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	September 17, 2019



I. Historical Association

Historical Context: See Attached Form B.

Evolution of Site: See Attached Form B.

Architectural Description: See Attached Form B.

Summary: Hill-Michie Company Auto Garage, 29597 Medford Street, Somerville The Hill-Michie Company Auto Garage is at the east corner of Walnut and Medford Streets on a sloping lot bordered by the MBTA Lowell Line on the northeast (rear) side. The garage is a one-story, brick commercial building constructed in 1906 and designed by Frank H. Dillaby of Boston. The garage is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level

under Criteria A and C for association with the development of automobile commercial services in the city and as a well-preserved example of early twentieth century brick garage construction.

A. Association with the development of automobile commercial services, and as the oldest car dealership in the city

C. As a well preserved example of 20th century brick garage construction.

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 find 295-297 Medford Street to be 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.

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City for the reasons noted above.

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 of structures (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

The period of significance for the Hill-Michie Garage begins with its construction as a garage circa 1906.

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 building has not been moved. It is located at the corner of one of the major rangeways (Walnut Street) and Medford Street close to the City Hall, the High School and the Library and near the rail lines.
- b. **Design:** The building was designed by Frank H. Dillaby of Boston. It has arched entries and windows, a decorative frieze band or belt course and inset panels over the doors
- c. **Materials:** The building is constructed with brick. Many of the openings have been infilled with brick, concrete block and signage.
- d. **Alterations:** Many of the openings have been infilled with brick, concrete block and signage. Poor quality pointing of the mortar and mismatched bricks on one side stand out from the original materials. Vehicular entries have been enlarged on the Medford Street and Walnut Street sides of the building.

Evaluation of Integrity: Despite the alterations to the building, it still retains integrity of form and massing with many of the original details intact. It is the only remaining relatively intact early brick 20th century garage in Somerville.

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 295-297 Medford Street** historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due as a well preserved example of 20th century brick garage construction by a known architect, Frank H. Dillaby.

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.

According to the Form B prepared in 1990, the building is recommended as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under to two categories: A & C.

- A. Association with the development of automobile commercial services, and as the oldest car dealership in the city
- D. As a well preserved example of 20th century brick garage construction.

OR

(B) The structure, **circa 1906**, is at least 50 years old.

AND

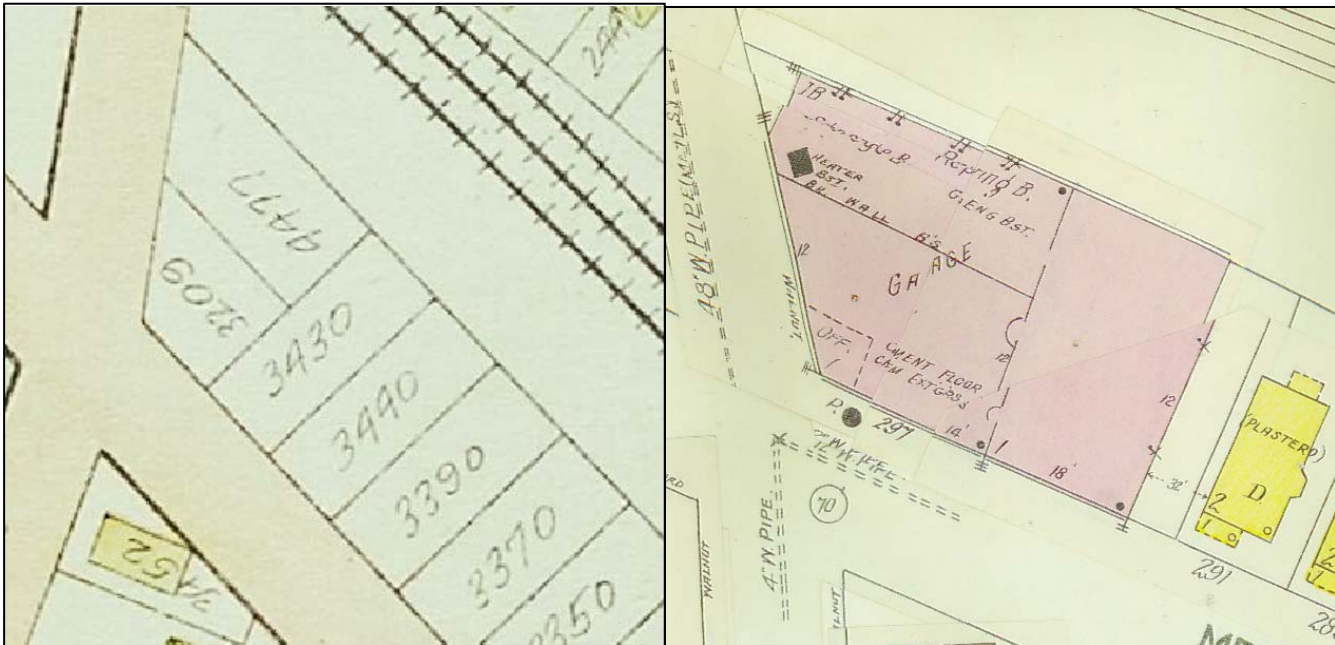
For a Determination of Significance under (B), the subject building must be found either (a) importantly associated with people, events or history or (b) historically or architecturally significant.

(a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, 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 find 295-297 Medford Street 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.

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 295-297 Medford Street historically and architecturally significant.**



1900 Stadly Plate 13

1925 Sanborn Plate 84



City Hall Annex photo circa 1907





Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.669
Historic Name:	Hill - Michie Company Automobile Garage
Common Name:	Mike's Auto Service
Address:	295-297 Medford St Medford and Walnut Sts
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Central Hill
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1906
Architect(s):	Dillaby, Frank H.
Architectural Style(s):	No style
Use(s):	Gas Station or Service Station; Machine Shop; Other Commercial
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Transportation
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	Wall: Brick; Granite; Stone, Cut



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.

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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
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

PI. CENTRAL
USGS. BOSTON
SEA B

In Area no.
Winter Hill

Form no.

669

1/35-36

Somerville

295-297 Medford St. at Walnut

Hill-Michie Co. auto garage

se

owner P. & M. Realty Trust

on:

1906

City of Somerville Water Division

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.

Photo-
1990

Architect Frank H. Dillaby, Boston

Exterior wall fabric

Outbuildings (describe)

Other features single-story brick garage

with round-arch openings,

brick belt course and cornice.

Altered Date

Moved Date

5. Lot size:

One acre or less Over one acre

Approximate frontage

Approximate distance of building from street

6. Recorded by Peter Stott

Organization Landscape Research

Date 5/80

(over)

7. Original owner (if known) Hill-Michie Co, Inc.

Original use automobile garage

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	_____	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	_____				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

The Hill-Michie Co. was established in 1899, making it, according to the City's Board of Trade, the oldest garage in Somerville. The present building, built in 1906 with an addition in 1912 could accomodate 75 cars.* "They have a large and perfectly equipped machine shop, and employ an efficient force of skilled mechanics. Their location is in the centre where Somerville automobile owners reside, and no city in New England can boast of as many automobiles passing through a street....This popular concern has had the exclusive agency of the Cadillac car for ten years, the Locomobile being added to their line five years ago, and last fall the Ford was taken on to meet the demand for a high grade low priced car...The company sells automobile supplies of all kinds, besides renting, repairing and storage of automobiles." (Board of Trade)

*A rendering of the new garage signed by the architect Frank H. Dillaby of Boston was included in the souvenir program of the 4th of July Association in 1906.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Somerville Board of Trade, Somerville, Mass. -- The Beautiful City of Seven Hills (Somerville, 1912), p. 108.

Somerville Fourth of July Association, Somerville, July 4, 1906 (Souvenir program of advertisements) (Advertisement with architectural drawing, signed). Copy at Somerville Library, history room.

Somerville
295-297 Medford Street
Hill-Michie Company Garage

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

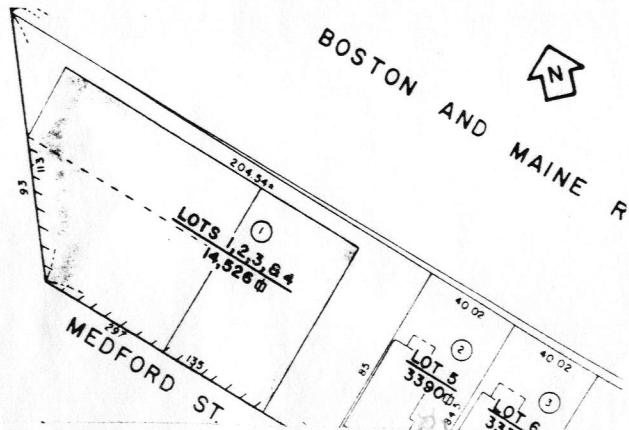
This property is significant:

- A - for its association with the development of automobile commercial services, and as the oldest auto garage and car dealership in the City.
- C - as a well-preserved example of early 20th century brick garage construction.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

No. 295-297 is a one- and two-story, brick, flat-roofed garage. The building has a flat parapet, corbelled cornice, and segmentally arched window openings with granite sills. The simple brick pilasters end at the cornice except on the steep Walnut Street facade where they extend beyond the roof line. Most of the window openings have been blocked in and modern roll type garage doors added.

The Winter Hill section of Somerville is located in the north central section of the city and takes its name from one of the seven glacial drumlins that give Somerville its rugged topography. The main thoroughfares through Winter Hill are Broadway, a 17th century road which connected Charlestown to points west, and Medford Street, an early 19th century north/south road located along the 1835 Boston & Lowell (now Boston & Maine) railroad right of way. Winter Hill has three important commercial areas: the mid-19th century Gilman Square at the intersection of Medford, Pearl, and Marshall Streets; the late 19th century/early 20th century Winter Hill section at the intersection of Broadway and Marshall Street; and early 20th century Magoun Square at the intersection of Medford Street and Broadway. Winter Hill also has two principal industrial areas located along the B&M railroad right-of-way in the valley between Central Hill and Winter Hill. Winter Hill's development paralleled much of the rest of Somerville's growth: 17th and early 18th century farmsteads giving way to dense residential development in the mid-to late 19th century. With the advent of the railroad in the 1840s and 1850s, factories and commercial areas developed first along the railroad and later along streetcar lines located on main thoroughfares such as Broadway.



Recorded By Fitch & Hollister,
The Public Archaeology
Laboratory, Inc.
Organization Somerville
Historic Preservation Commission
Date May, 1990