



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

MICHAEL F. GLAVIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT

Site:	501 Mystic Valley Parkway
Case:	HPC 2017.042
Applicant Name:	POAH LLC
Date of Application:	June 9, 2017
Recommendation:	Significant
Hearing Date:	July 18, 2017

I. Historical Association

Architectural Description:

501 Mystic Valley Parkway is a classic mid-century modern single-story H shaped brick ranch house with a large greenhouse addition located centrally on the roof. The roof is 3-tab asphalt shingle. There is a large chimney. Doors and windows are appropriate for the date of construction and have not been altered. There is also a modern concrete block shed and a garage with a second story modern apartment. See photos.

Historical Context:

Mystic Valley Parkway is on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston. According to

https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/massachusetts_conservation/metro_park_system_of_greater_boston.html "The Mystic Valley Parkway has adjacent elements that were added to the National Register of Historic Places through the Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Thematic Resource Area, including the Medford Pipe Bridge (1897-8), Mystic Dam (1864), Mystic Pumping Station (1862-4), and Mystic Gatehouse (1862-8)."

501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway was acquired by Anthony W. DiCecca in 1949 on land previously been owned by what is now the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and was attached to the Mystic Water Pumping Station next door. The house was constructed 1950 by Anthony W. DiCecca. A building permit was issued in 1979 to construct the addition on the garage. A greenhouse addition with hot tub on the roof of the house was constructed in 1983. The house has been in the DiCecca family since its construction.

Anthony W DiCecca was born in Somerville to Vincent and Annunziata DiCecca. He grew up across the street from the Squires and North Meat Packing Plants on Medford and Ward Streets.

According to his obituary, he graduated from Boston University Law School and was active in the Middlesex County Bar Association. He was the City Solicitor from 1947 to 1949. He died in 1974. See spreadsheet for more detail..

Summary: The house is not visible from any street, being located behind high hedges on a heavily wooded lot. The house is a brick H-shaped ranch house with a large addition on its roof. The house is strongly associated with the DiCecca family.

The remaining buildings are essentially less than 50 years old and are therefore exempt from Commission Review.

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/atlas, 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 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway 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 Anthony W. DiCecca, a prominent lawyer in the area.

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 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway begins with its construction in 149-1950.

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 buildings have not been moved. Due to the landscaping, they are not visible from the public right of way. They are located on an ample lot along the Mystic Valley Parkway next door to the Mystic Pumping Station and across the street from the park. Houses on Irvington Road was constructed after 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway was built and back onto the lot.

- b. Design: The house is a classic mid-century modern brick ranch house. Unlike many H-shaped ranch houses, the garage is a separate structure. The garage has been altered with a large second story addition and porch which makes it resemble an Acorn Deck House.
- c. Materials: The building is brick with a brick foundation. The windows are original metal with simple wood casings. The roof is 3-tab asphalt shingle.
- d. Alterations: A large greenhouse addition has been added to the center of the roof which opens to a deck on the rear of the building. The garage acquired a second story apartment in the late 1970s.

Evaluation of Integrity: Despite the alteration to the main house, the addition is clear and reversible, thus retaining the original intent of the building in form and function. The garage as noted above appears much more modern, being altered in 1979.

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 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its clear mid-century modern style not typical of Somerville architecture. The alterations are clearly reversible.

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 1950, 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.

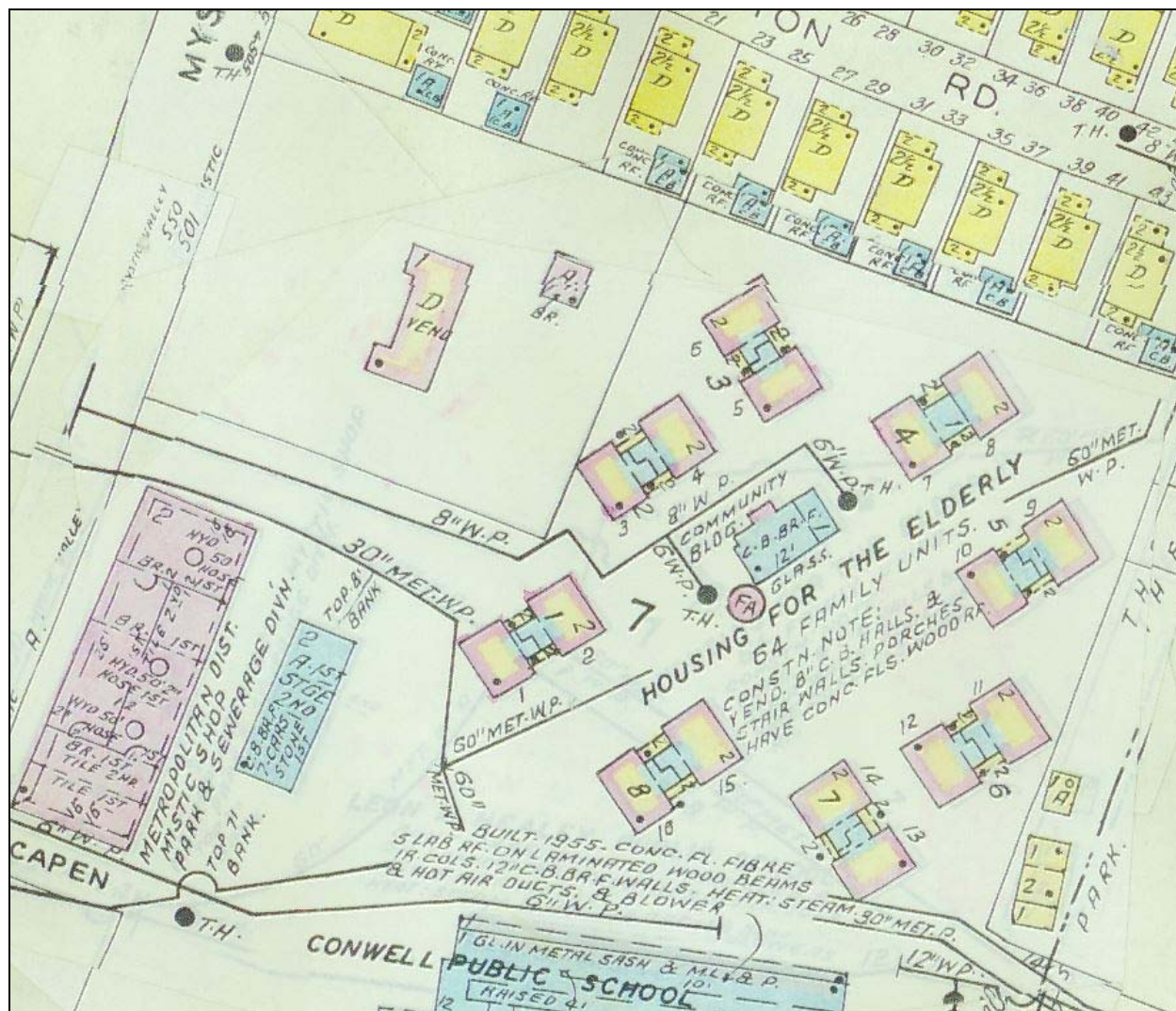
The subject buildings are found importantly associated with Anthony W. DiCecca, a prominent lawyer in the area.

(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 find the house at 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway 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 the house at 501-503 Mystic Valley Parkway historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its clear mid-century modern style not typical of Somerville architecture. The alterations are clearly reversible.



1958 Sanborn Plate 213



501 Mystic Valley Parkway with 1983 addition



1950 Garage with 1979 Apartment



Undated shed – less than 50 years old

Dwelling/ Family No.	LOCATION	O/R	NAME	AGE	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF BIRTH	IMMIGRATION YEAR	SOURCE	NOTES
316/ 694	46 Medford Street	O	Vincenz Di Cecca (head)	39	Grocer, Own store	Italy	1901	1910 Census	
			Annunziata Di Cecca (wife)	37		Italy	1902	1910 Census	
			John Di Cecca (son)	6		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Antonio Di Cecca (son)	3		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
			Cosmo Di Cecca (son)	1		Massachusetts		1910 Census	
381	1 Ward Street	O	Vincent Di Cecca (head)	49	Storekeeper, Grocery Store	Italy	1894	1920 US Census	
			Annunziata Di Cecca (wife)	45		Italy	1901	1920 US Census	
			John Di Cecca (son)	16		Massachusetts		1920 US Census	
			Antonio Di Cecca (son)	13		Massachusetts		1920 US Census	
			Cosmo Di Cecca (son)	11		Massachusetts		1920 US Census	
			Francis Di Cecca (son)	10		Massachusetts		1920 US Census	
			Eleanor Di Cecca (daughter)	5		Massachusetts		1920 US Census	
24	8 Fenwick Street	R	Anthony W. Di Cecca (head)	24	Lawyer			1940 US Census	
			Yola E Di Cecca (wife)	26				1940 US Census	
			Yola N Di Cecca (daughter)	2				1940 US Census	
	501 Mystic Valley Parkway		Anthony W. Di Cecca (owner)					1950-1-310 Plumbing Permit	
			Anthony W DiCecca		Lawyer			1974 Obituary	
			Yola Di Cecca (wife)					1974 Obituary	
			Yola Ganak (daughter)					1974 Obituary	
			Charles DiCecca (son)					1974 Obituary	
			Francis DiCecca (brother)					1974 Obituary	
			Elena Stankunas (sister)					1974 Obituary	
			Vincent Di Cecca (father)					Saint Michael's Cemetery Listing	
			Annunziata Di Cecca (mother)					Saint Michael's Cemetery Listing	

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503 Mystic Valley Parkway C. DiCecca

503 Mystic Valley Parkway

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1979-2-631 New shingle dwelling
Building Permit
1980-1-44
Plumbing Permit
1983-1-193
Plumbing Permit