



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 2019.062
Date: October 15, 2019

Recommendation: NOT Preferably Preserved

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT
for
Determination of Preferably Preserved

Site: 59 Linden Avenue Barn

Applicant Name: Fan Wang & Marc Wagner

Applicant Address: 70 Lincoln Avenue, Apt. L215, Boston, MA

Owner Name: Same

Owner Address: Same

Petition: Applicant seeks to demolish the 1 ½-story wood-framed barn

HPC Hearing Date: October 15, 2019

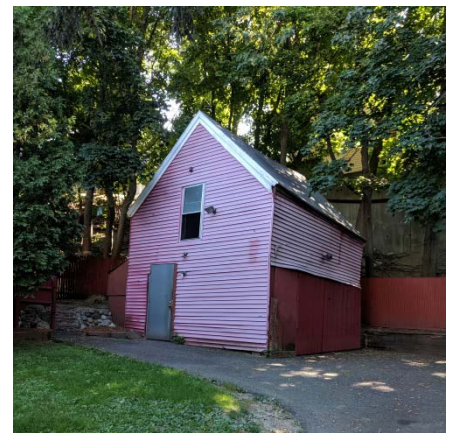
I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property is a c.1890 1 ½-story wood-framed barn.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant seeks to demolish the existing structure.

II. MEETING SUMMARY: Determination of Significance

On September 17, 2019, the Historic Preservation Commission, in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (2003-05), made a determination that 59 Linden Avenue is Significant. Per Section 2.17.B, this decision is found on the following criteria:

Section 2.17.B - The structure is at least 50 years old;
and



- (i) *The structure is 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;*
and
- (ii) *The structure is 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.*

The Commission found the barn importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its use as a barn or carriage house and the pre- automotive era.

The subject barn at 59 Linden Avenue is found historically and architecturally significant due to its method of building construction and its association with pre-automotive Somerville.

The period of significance for the 59 Linden Avenue house and barn begins with its construction circa 1895.

III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

See attached structural report from TLH Consulting, Inc. Structural Engineering. See photos submitted by the owner.

Comparable Structures: Barn/stable structures can be found throughout the City. While several barn/stable structures within the City remain in moderate to good condition, many more remain in moderate to poor condition, due to the lack of repurposing this type of structure. Here are a few comparable structures scattered around the city:

The predominant difference between the comparable barns illustrated below is one of maintenance and use. Some have been converted to residences, others to studios and home offices while some are still in use as shelters for automobiles.



Top: 22 Porter Street (LHD); 15 Linden Avenue; Preston Road



Center: Preston Road; ?; Sycamore Street at Broadway;



Bottom: 38 Marshall Street; 29 Meacham Road (LHD)

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

The form and massing of barn/stable structures represent a common historic accessory structure that served a variety of purposes in the pre-automotive age. This barn has more value to the city's heritage as a documented structure. It has no visibility on the street.

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

While the building does convey significance as a barn, the existing conditions are poor, and material alterations have modified the exterior appearance of this structure. The style is utilitarian with a variety of modern materials replacing the historic fabric. The building still retains a low level of integrity. It retains form and massing.

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

The Commission found the barn importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its use as a barn or carriage house and the pre-automotive era.

The subject barn at 59 Linden Avenue is found historically and architecturally significant due to its method of building construction and its association with pre-automotive Somerville.

The period of significance for the 59 Linden Avenue house and barn begins with its construction circa 1895.

Barn/stable structures were constructed in New England for a variety of general purposes such as to house animals, store food and other general items, and later to shelter carriages. Therefore, the subject structure represents an aspect of local and state (regional) history.

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

The subject structure is behind the main house on a side street and is not visible from any of the abutting streets.

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

Barn/stable structures are found throughout the City; however, not many remain in existence within the immediate area. Also, few barn/stable structures within the City remain in moderate to good condition.

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

The Commission found the barn importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its use as a barn or carriage house and the pre-automotive era.

The subject barn at 59 Linden Avenue is found historically and architecturally significant due to its method of building construction and its association with pre-automotive Somerville.

Staff, however finds that the condition of the building and its location outweighs its value of its historic and architectural significance to the City. The barn is currently in poor condition. Only the immediate neighbors are aware of its presence. The loss of the barn would not be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.

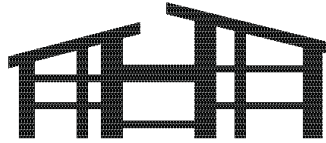
IV. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information provided and an assessment of the building, Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission finds the barn at 59 Linden Avenue NOT to be PREFERABLY PRESERVED.









TLH CONSULTING, INC.

Structural Engineering

505 Middlesex Turnpike Unit 14

Billerica, MA 01821

(978) 362-1804

September 30, 2019

Anne Wang
70 Lincoln St., Apt. L215
Boston, MA 02111

Regarding: Existing Barn Structural Assessment
59 Linden Ave., Somerville, MA
TLHC Project# 1909281

Dear Anne:

On September 28, 2019, TLH Consulting, Inc. (TLHC) visited the Somerville address referenced above. The purpose of the visit was to observe and evaluate an existing barn. The barn is located toward the rear of the property.

The barn is a 1 ½ story, wood framed structure with concrete masonry unit (CMU) foundation walls and a gable style roof. One of the gable walls faces the main house while the other gable wall faces the rear yard. The gable wall closest to the house has a single man door; the rear gable wall has a single door at the attic level. The wall closest to the driveway running parallel with the ridge appears to have two large doors that swing out toward the driveway. There are two walls on the opposite side of the ridge running parallel with the ridge. One wall supports the main roof of the barn and a small shed roof; the other lower roof supports the lower end of the shed roof.

The barn framing is in very poor condition. The roof sheathing is deteriorating and rotted in several places. The roof rafters are undersized when compared to current residential framing standards. The wood framed walls supporting the rafters are bowing outward which is an indication the rafters are not properly tied together.

The attic floor framing of the barn is out of level and the floor joists seem slightly undersized. The attic floor joists are supported by triple 2x10 beams at each end of the joists. The triple 2x10 beams are undersized. The beams bear on built up concrete masonry unit (CMU) piers. One of the piers has a significant lean to it.

The front and rear gable walls are approximately 5 to 10 degrees out of plumb. The rear gable wall is poorly framed; the portion of the front gable wall above the attic space is framed in an acceptable manner, however, the lower portion of the wall is unacceptable. The wall studs face the wrong direction and the bottom wall plate appeared to be “floating”, i.e. there was no sill plate.

The walls running parallel with the ridge are in very poor condition. The door headers at the wall closest to the driveway are notched at each end, and the wall framing along this wall is poorly constructed. The two walls on the opposite side of the ridge are not in much better condition than the driveway side wall.

In summary, it is our opinion the barn should be demolished. The condition of the barn is poor at best; the CMU foundation seems to be the only structurally sound element associated with the barn. If you have any questions or require additional information feel free to contact TLH Consulting at (978) 362-1804.

Sincerely,

Todd L. Hedly

Todd Hedly, P.E.
c.c.: file

