



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

GEORGE J. PROAKIS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE STAFF REPORT**

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Site: 7 Washington Street  
Case: HPC 2019.016

Applicant Name: WashDev2, LLC  
Date of Application: February 6, 2019  
Recommendation: Significant  
Hearing Date: March 26, 2019

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**I. Historical Association**

*Historical Context:* Washington Street is one of the oldest streets in the city and connected Charlestown with Cambridge and Arlington. 7 Washington Street is a second Empire style house located just outside Sullivan Square. It was constructed prior to 1874 and owned by Aristide Lauriat. According to City Directories, he was a gold beater and a member to the Lauriat family, renowned for their gold leaf.

The Lauriat family were based in Medford and employed up to 40 people. Their factory building in Medford is up for demolition this month as well. Please follow these links to some interesting articles regarding the Lauriat family and the production of gold leaf.



<https://www.wickedlocal.com/x90330190/Dee-Morris-All-that-glitters-Medford-s-shining-moment>

<https://medfordhistoricalcommission.org/2019/03/05/demo-application-7-lauriat-place/>

*Architectural Description:* 7 Washington Street is a mansard cottage located just steps from the Somerville Charlestown border. The window hoods are gently peaked in shape. There is an oriel to the right of the front door which from its location indicates a side-hall entry plan for the interior. The house has vinyl siding and replacement windows. The door hood is a modern replacement. The entry door has been replaced with a late 20<sup>th</sup> century or early 21<sup>st</sup> century system.



*Summary:* The Mansard cottage, home of Aristide Lauriat at 7 Washington Street is importantly associated with the Lauriat family of gold leaf manufacturers. The house itself retains the form and massing of a Mansard cottage circa 1874. It is not known whether any architectural details remain under the siding which has no reveal around the windows.

### **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 7 Washington 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 due to associations with Aristide Lauriat and with the Lauriat family of gold leaf manufacturers. The house itself retains the form and massing of a Mansard cottage circa 1874.

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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 7 Washington Street begins its construction prior to 1874 as the home of Aristide Lauriat.

### ***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:** Washington Street is one of the oldest and major roads linking Charlestown to the mainland and the farms of Arlington, Cambridge and what is now Somerville. The house is located close to the neck between Charlestown and Somerville and near Broadway which leads to Main Street heading into Medford where the family factory was located. Today Washington Street is still a major local arterial.
- b. **Design:** The house is a basic cube in form with detailing characteristic of the Mansard style – roof shape, oriel or bay windows, hooded door and small dormers.

- c. Materials: The building is a wood-frame structure with modern synthetic siding and windows.
- d. Alterations: The landform has been dug to expose some of the foundation which has been parged. The wood siding has been covered. The windows have been replaced. Modern brick steps and entry door welcome visitors.

*Evaluation of Integrity*: The building retains its massing and form.

### **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 7 Washington Street historically or architecturally significant.

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its integrity of form and massing, typical of a Mansard style house of circa 1874.

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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 1874, 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.*

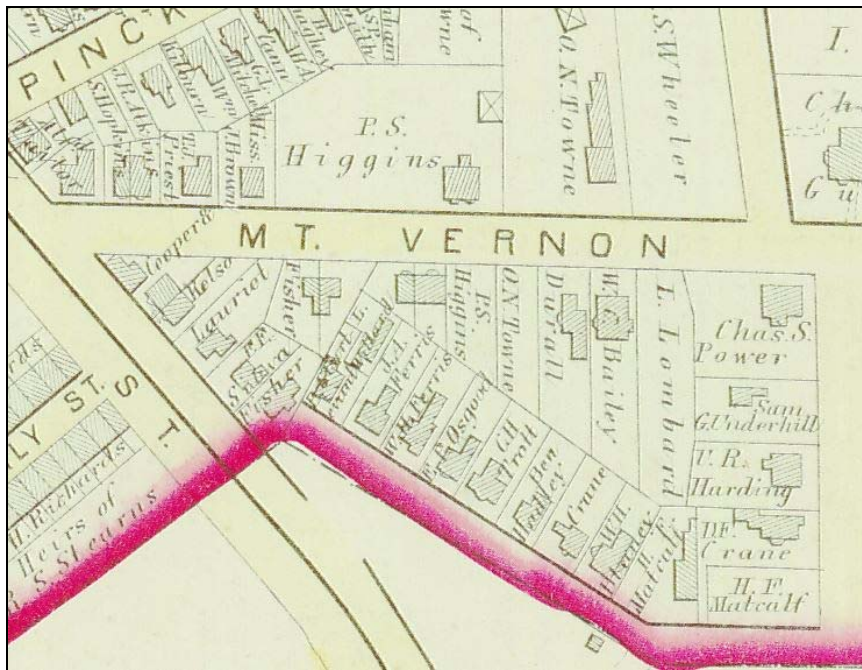
a) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical Association*, which utilizes historic maps/atlas, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 7 Washington 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.**

The subject building is found importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to associations with Aristide Lauriat and with the Lauriat family of gold leaf manufacturers.

**OR**

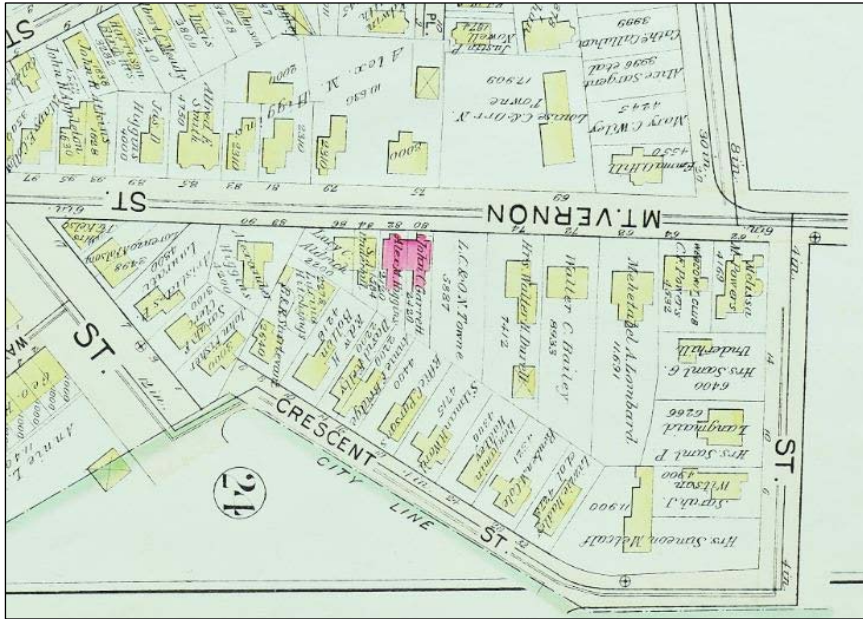
(b) In accordance with the *Findings on Historical and Architectural Significance*, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, the ability to convey significance, **Staff recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission find 7 Washington Street historically and architecturally significant.**

The subject building is found historically and architecturally significant due to its integrity of form and massing, typical of a Mansard style house of circa 1874.



1874 Hopkins Plate 14-15





1895 Bromley Plate 10

