



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

**GEORGE J. PROAKIS**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

---

**STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**  
**STAFF REPORT**

---

**Site:** 51 Broadway

**Case:** HPC.DMO 2022.01

**Applicant:** Ben Rogan

**Owner:** CDA Realty, LLC

**Legal Ad:** *Demolish principal structure.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022

*Top: Front elevation*

*Bottom, left: Left elevation*

*Bottom, middle: Rear elevation*

*Bottom, Right: Right elevation*



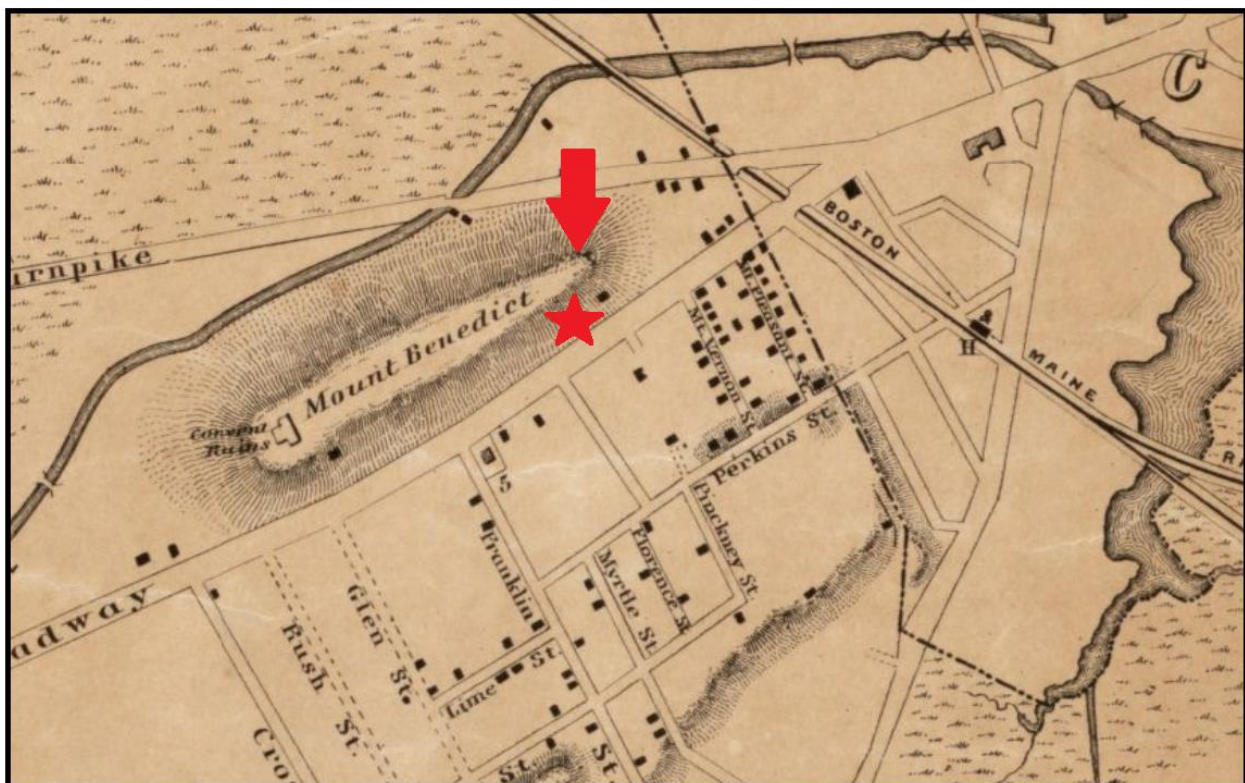
## **I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

**Historical Context:** 51 Broadway is a three-story structure. This portion of Broadway is dominated by one story commercial structures on the south side of Broadway and two-and-half and three-story residential buildings on the north.

East Somerville, at the eastern end of Somerville abutting Charlestown, is one of the oldest settlement areas in the city. It comprised the "Neck" or isthmus that connected Somerville to Charlestown. Over time the area has been expanded by filling in the tidal and marshy basins of the Mystic and Miller's Rivers, creating a densely settled residential and commercial neighborhood.

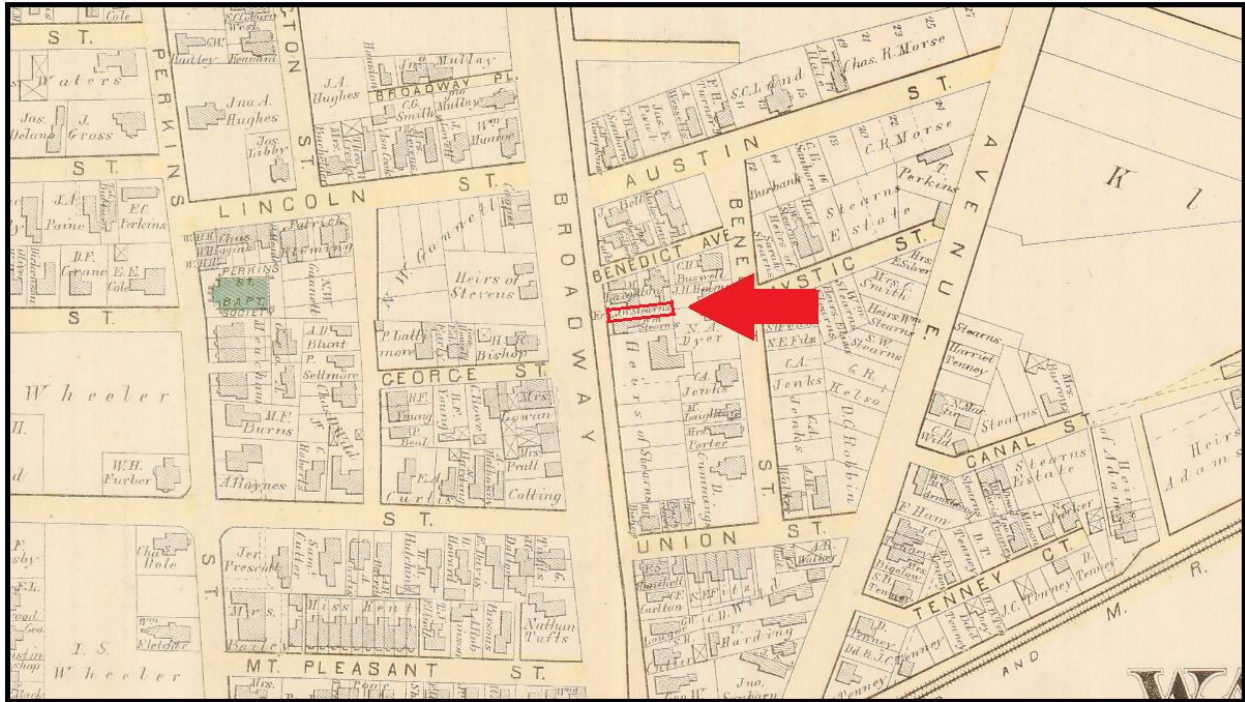
East Somerville is bounded by Washington Street and 1-93 on the north; the area is traversed east/west by the eastern portion of Broadway. Dense residential development in East Somerville dates from early in the 19th century and was constructed to provide housing for laborers who worked nearby in factories along the Miller's River or in the brickyards located in the Ten Hills section of Somerville.

In 1870 William A Garbett began platting the area on the southeastern edge of Mount Benedict. The houses along the north side of Broadway are a collection of working-class houses built before 1874.



*Above: 1852 Draper Map with general location of 51 Broadway indicated.*



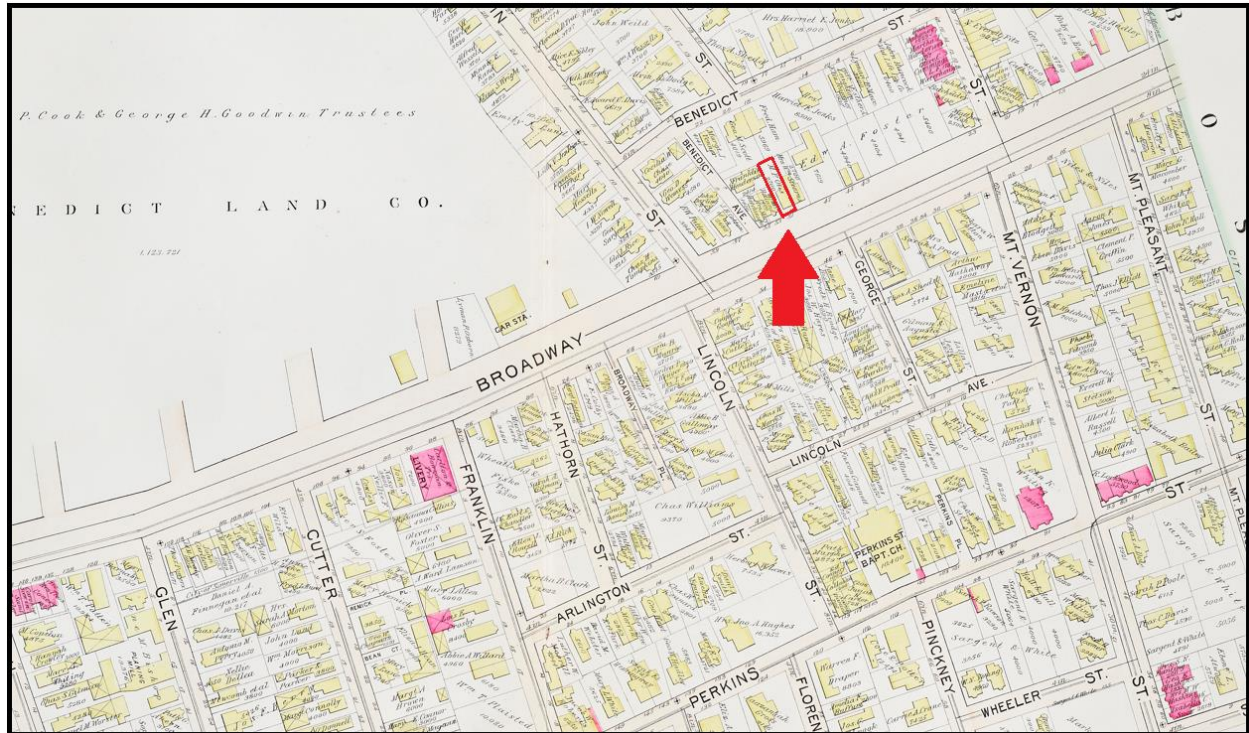


Above: 1874, Plate 14&15 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 51 Broadway

The neighborhood is a mix of Italianate and Mansard style homes constructed on Mount Benedict before 1874 between the north side of Broadway and the saltmarsh along the Mystic River. Much of Mount Benedict has been removed to make bricks and fill in the various saltmarshes to make land. Only one portion of Mt. Benedict's original elevation survives, at the eastern edge. Austin, Benedict, and Union Streets are a fragment of the residential corner now bisected by 1-93.

In 1874, the land for 52 Broadway had been platted but the residence had not yet been constructed. By 1895, the structure at 51 Broadway had been constructed as depicted in the 1895 Bromley Map. 51 Broadway mirrors the structure at 49 Broadway. Close ups of the historic maps show that the structures at 49 and 51 Broadway were not attached.

(Continued on next page.)



Above: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 10 specifying location of 51 Broadway



Above: 1900 Sanborn Map, Plate 98 specifying location of 51 Broadway

By 1874 most of the platted lots have been developed. Maps between 1884 and 1900 show little further development in the built neighborhood. The main changes are additions and alterations to existing structures.



The first listed owner in the records for 51 Broadway is the 'hrs of SW Stearnes'. This is likely the heirs of Sarah Stearnes. The Austin Street area was platted in the 1850s by the heirs of Sarah Stearnes, who lived in a pre-Revolutionary War house at the foot of Mt. Benedict (since replaced by Broadway Brake) and directly abutting 51 Broadway. -From City Directories and US Census records we do know that the heirs of Sarah Stearnes were likely absentee landlords or had a different last name from their ancestor as no Stearnes were discovered as living at 51 Broadway.

The next listed owner for 51 Broadway is 'M.P. Otis' as depicted on the 1895 Bromley Map. The City Directories do not have anyone by those initials with that last name. There was a George P Otis living on the property between 1889 and 1900 as well as a Cushing Otis who lived on the property from 1887 to 1898. George Otis, a plumber, is listed as a lodger with the Goodspeed family. One of the Goodspeed family members does have the same initials as the listed owner on the map, Mary P. Goodspeed. Mary P and her husband, Frank, lived at the property from 1896 to 1915, when Frank passed away. Mary continued to live at 51 Broadway until 1940. Both Frank Goodspeed and Cushing Otis are listed as working in real estate

The estate situated on the corner of Sever and Gardner sts, opposite Sullivan sq. Charlestown, owned by Cushing Otis, has been conveyed by deed to Mary P. Goodspeed. There is a large frame house and 2550 square feet of land, the whole taxed for \$5200, of which \$2800 is on the land.  
Another transfer in Charlestown estate numbered 69 Baldwin Main st. consisting of a brick

Above: Boston Globe excerpt, June 25, 1898

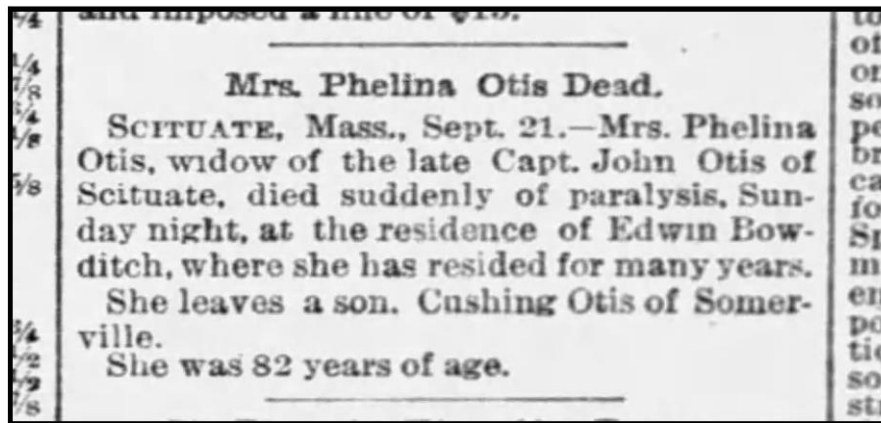
Frank L. Whitcomb, Jr. to F. Swan, Ridgmont st, 2 lots, \$1. Q.  
CHARLESTOWN.  
Charles B. Whitman to Mary Baldwin st, \$2200, W.  
Frank Coleman, intgee, Sumner Robinson, passageway to North Mead st, 2 lots, \$800, D.  
Sumner Robinson to Frank Coleman, passageway to North Mead st, 2 lots, \$1. Q.  
Cushing Otis to George P. Otis, Bunker Hill and Charles sts, \$1. W.  
Cushing Otis to Mary P. Goodspeed, Gardner and Sever sts, \$1. W.  
CHELSEA.

Above: The Boston Globe excerpt, 25 June 1898

A. T. Stearns Junior company to J. Winn, Washington st, \$1. W.  
CHARLESTOWN.  
Mary P. Goodspeed to George P. Otis, Irving pl and near, \$1. W.  
George P. Otis to Mary P. Goodspeed, Cross st, \$1. W.  
CHELSEA.  
Hattie M. Haskins to Marion T. Gray

Above: The Boston Globe excerpt, August 10, 1901

Interestingly, we also know from Boston Globe archives that Cushing Otis, George Otis, and Mary P. Goodspeed were involved with several land deals between the three of them though none of the news clippings reference 51 Broadway. Despite sharing a last name no obvious familial connection was discovered between George and Cushing; this would take considerable genealogical research. We know that Cushing was the only son of Captain John Otis and Phelina Otis.



*Left: The Boston Globe excerpt, Sept 21, 1891*

Other residents of 51 Broadway included John S Lovering, a teamster; Samuel B Hobart; and the Stodder family containing Lucy, George and William.

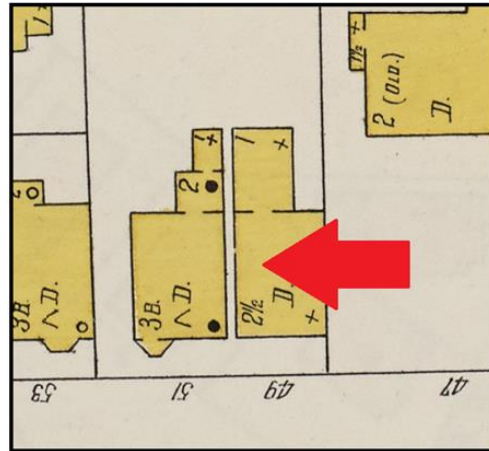
This property was owned and rented by a variety of working-class families throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A list of all residents is provided below.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation
Andrews, Thomas	1889	Carpenter
Copeland, Arthur C		Truckman
Goodspeed, Arthur W	1917 - 1940	Salesman, Bookkeeper
Goodspeed, Ernest S	1899	Clerk
Goodspeed, Ethel M	1917 - 1940	
Goodspeed, Frank E	1895 - 1915	Clerk, Foreman, Carpenter, Jobber, Caretaker
Goodspeed, Mary	1895 - 1940	
Henderson, Milton E	1918 - 1919	Chauffeur, Operator
Hobart, Samuel B	1883	Car-builder at Middlesex Repair Shop
Lovering, John S	1892 - 1894	Teamster
Manser, George	1901	
Munday, Thomas P	1904 - 1905	Driver at Am Ex Co
Otis, Cushing	1887 - 1898	Real estate
Otis, George P	1889 - 1901	Plumber, Jobber
Potter, Alex R	1885	Shipper
Stodder, George F	1883	Fish market at 153 Perkins
Stodder, Lucy	1883	
Stodder, William H	1883	Milkman
Wilson, Harry	1905	Brass finisher

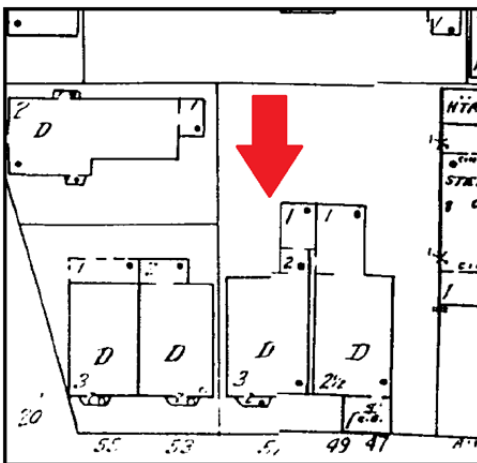
Comparing the historic maps with the current property we can track the architectural changes over time and the degree to which the structure has been altered.



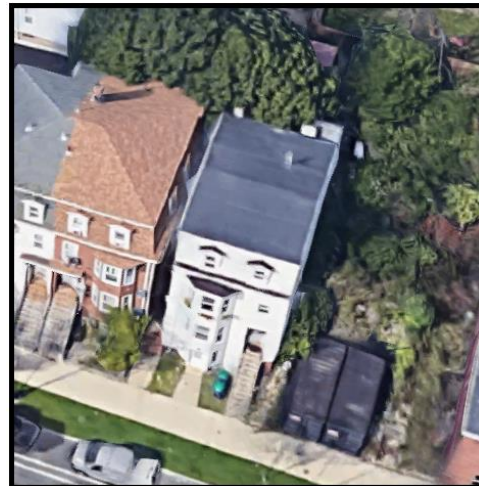
Above: Fig 1



Above: Fig 2



Above: Fig 3



Above: Fig 4

Figure 1: 1895 Bromley Map, close-up of 51 Broadway

Figure 2: 1900 Sanborn Map, close-up of 51 Broadway

Figure 3: 1933-1950 Sanborn Map, close-up of 51 Broadway

Figure 4: Satellite image of 51 Broadway

The structure in 1895 contained a front bay and a small projection on the rear. Looking at the above four images of the building from 1895 to 2022, minimal alterations have occurred.

## II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

*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.*

### 1. 51 Broadway

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1883-1940

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The house is a low slope roof, wood-framed residential building with a front bay with entrance from the ground floor and an additional covered entryway on the first floor. State that this house used to be a double-house and likely mirrored that of the double Mansard to its left. However, due to the right portion of the original structure having been removed, the Mansard form of the original roofline has been modified.
  - Front Elevation
    - Recessed elevated entryway with aluminum or vinyl glass door
    - Entryway at base of bay with aluminum or vinyl glass door
    - Two single gabled dormers on top floor
    - Deep eave between top mansard style roof and floors below
    - Fenestration consists of two double-hung one-over-one windows flanking the doorway on bay at the basement level. On the first floor there are three double-hung windows on the bay. The second floor consists of three double-hung windows on the bay and a smaller double-hung window to the right. Top floor has two double-hung windows with one-over-one configuration, with one window each for the two dormers.
    - Wood steps from grade to door
    - Late 20<sup>th</sup> century iron railings on front steps.
  - Right Elevation
    - Fenestration consists of one double hung one-over-one window on the top floor.
  - Left Elevation
    - Fenestration consists of one double hung one-over-one window on the top floor.
    - Each floor has a wall mounted air conditioning unit
  - Rear Elevation
    - The rear extends farther on right side of the building



- Fenestration consists of one single-hung one-over-one window one the first, second, and top floor.
- Concrete block or granite exterior chimney

c. Materials:

- Foundation: brick covered by aluminum siding in some places,
- Windows: aluminum or vinyl
- Entry doors: modern. aluminum or fiberglass with decorative center panes
- Siding: vinyl
- Trim: facade and windows” vinyl covered wood
- Steps: wood

d. Roof: low slope with mansard style on front elevation

e. Alterations: Replacement windows, modern replacement doors, vinyl siding, vinyl siding along portions of the foundation. Comparing this structure with neighboring structures built in the same style and period, it is likely that brackets along the rooflines were removed, and the mansard roof was removed along the side and rear facades. And the other half of the house itself.

f. Evaluation of Integrity of 51 Broadway Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff’s position that the building does retain integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure though some original details and architectural design has been removed; however, the original massing remains intact.

### III. FINDINGS

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) importantly associated with people, events or history and/or (ii) historically or architecturally significant. The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:*

#### A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

*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.*

##### **Residential Structure**

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the STRUCTURE at 51 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 51 Broadway does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “a”.

#### B. HISTORICAL & 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, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.*

**Residential Structure**

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the STRUCTURE at 51 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 51 Broadway or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “b”.

If the HPC makes the above finding, the HPC must state their reasons why they take this position.

**IV. VOTE**

1. When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the STRUCTURE at 51 Broadway is or is not “historically significant”.