



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

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 53 Broadway

Case: HPC.DMO 2022.02

Applicant: Ben Rogan

Owner: CDA Realty, LLC

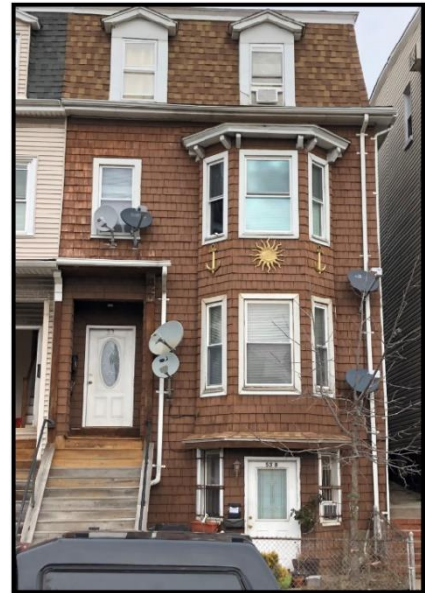
Legal Ad: *Demolish principal structure.*

HPC Meeting Date: February 15th, 2022

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Rear elevation

Bottom, Right: Right elevation



I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

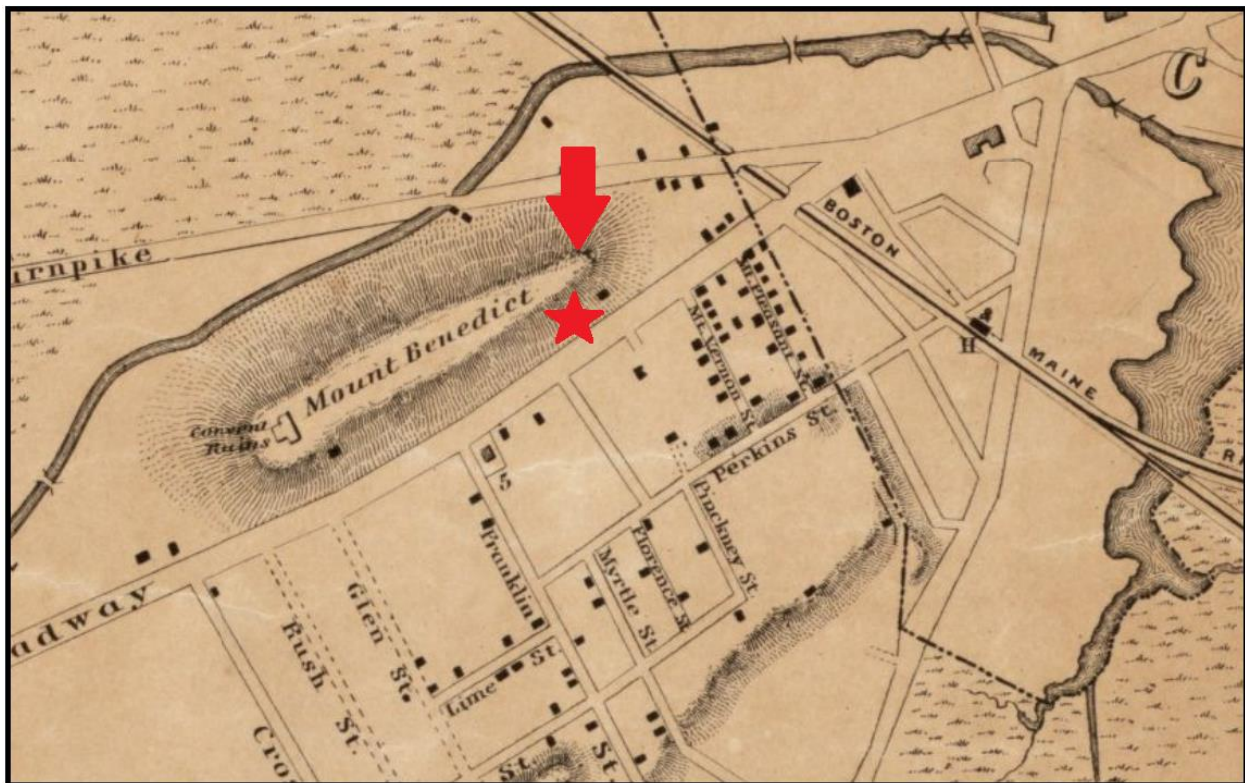
Historical Context: 53 Broadway is a three-story structure that shares a wall with 55 Broadway. The applicant proposes to demolish 53 Broadway and leave half of the structure (55 Broadway) standing.

This portion of Broadway is dominated by one story commercial buildings on the south side of Broadway and two-and-half and three-story residential buildings on the north. It is important to note that the Applicant proposes to demolish only 53 Broadway and not the other half of the structure located on 55 Broadway.

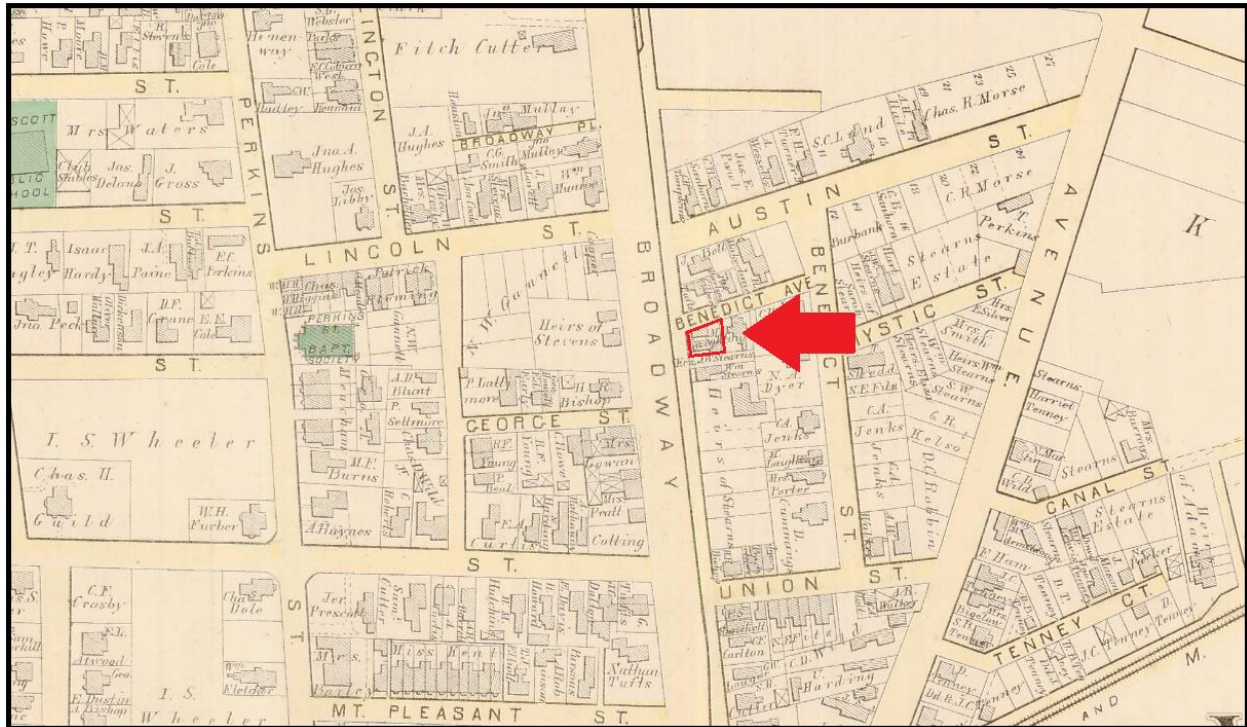
East Somerville, at the eastern end of Somerville abutting Charlestown, is one of the oldest settlement areas in the city. It comprised the "Neck" or isthmus that connected Somerville to Charlestown. Over time the area has been expanded by filling in the tidal and marshy basins of the Mystic and Miller's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

East Somerville is bounded by Washington Street and I-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.

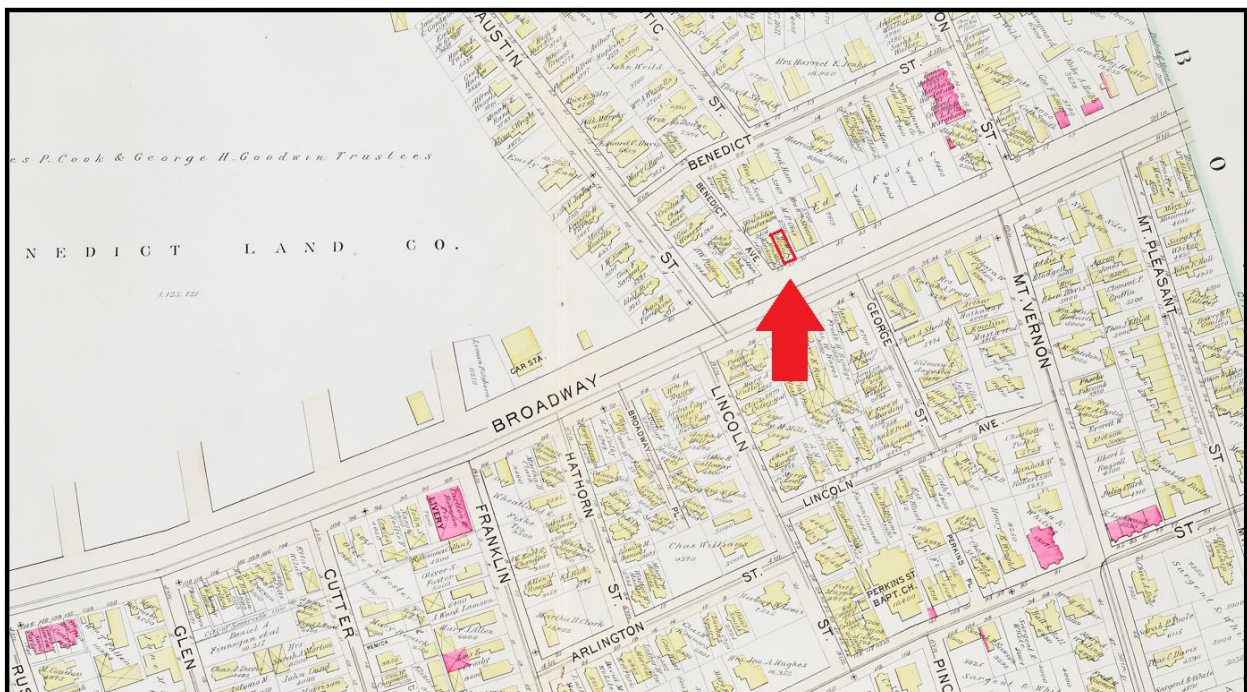


Above: 1852 Draper Map with general location of 53 Broadway indicated.



Above: 1874, Plate 14&15 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 53 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.



Above: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 10 specifying location of 53 Broadway



Above: 1900 Sanborn Map, Plate 98 specifying location of 53 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.

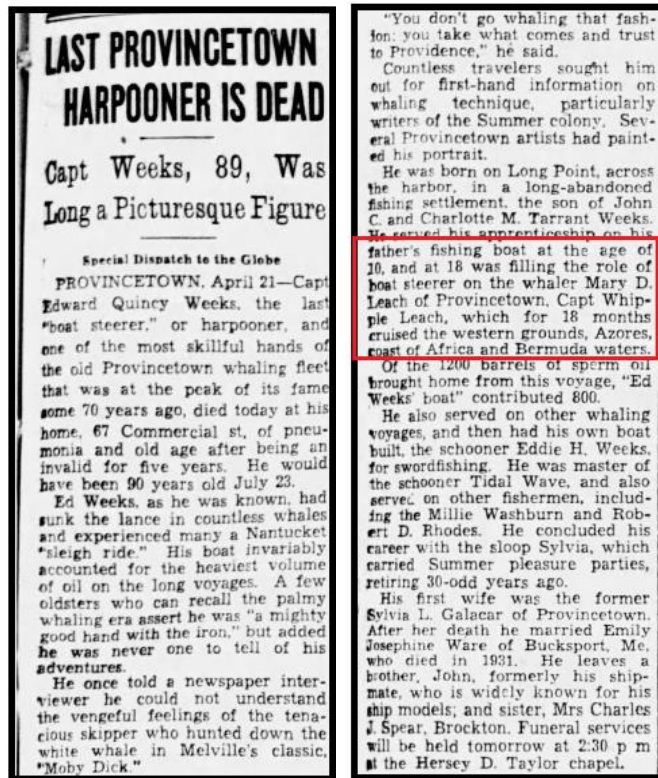
The first discovered owner of 53 Broadway was 'M Loughton' in 1874. Research did not uncover information on this individual. We can determine from City Directories and US Census records that M. Loughton was an absentee landlord as they are not listed as residing at the property or in Somerville.

By 1895, the property is now owned by 'HM Holland'. From City Directories and US Census records we know that Henry L Holland and his wife Hellen M. Holland resided at this address from 1879 to 1900. The census records show that Hellen was the owner of the property (note that this is unusual for the time period to have a woman as the owner and not her husband). Their sons, Nathaniel K. and Charles F., lived with them. Nathaniel lived at the property until 1911. During this time, he worked as a machinist at B & M.R.R. shop. The listed address for this business is 53 Broadway. Multiple residents of 53 Broadway also use this address as their place of business including Charles Holland, a clerk; C.R. Banks, who ran a picture framing establishment; and Dwight C. Walker, who also worked at B&M.R.R.



Above: Boston Globe Excerpt, June 23, 1899

One resident who lived at 53 Broadway was Mary D Leach. Somerville City Directories have her living at the residence from 1898 to 1902. Mary was the widow of Whipple Leach, a Captain of a harpooner boat in Provincetown. Whipple Leach named his ship the Mary D Leach, after his wife.



Right: Boston Globe Excerpt, April 22, 1936

Other notable residents of 53 Broadway include a portion of the Bannon family. Daniel L Bannon, his wife Margaret, and Daniel's brothers; John and James resided at 53 Broadway for various durations of time between 1915 and 1919. The Bannon brothers were seven brothers known locally for playing baseball with some members playing in national leagues in the late 19th century.



Above: Boston Globe Excerpt, October 13, 1895

James Bannon played for Boston as a lead batter and another brother, Thomas, played for the New York Giants. The Giants later moved to California and became the San Francisco Giants.

One of the brothers, John Bannon, rather than becoming a baseball player, became a 'driver' in Somerville. Prior to coming to Somerville, John was driver for the Fire Department in Saugus, MA. While the records do not state who exactly he was a driver for, it may be that he also drove for the Fire Department in Somerville.

A BASEBALL FAMILY.

Six Bannon Brothers From Saugus Have Made the Game Famous in Essex County.

TWO OF FAMILY IN NATIONAL LEAGUE.

One a Member of Boston Team, Another With New York—The Others Are Still Active in the Game Elsewhere.

In the town of Saugus there lives a family by the name of Bannon. What is particularly interesting is the fact that from the happy union of Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Bannon seven boys came into the world whose existence from youngsters makes a unique narrative.

All of the Bannons are ball players, the most noted being James and Thomas, the former being a member of the Boston team and its leading batter this season, and the latter a member of the New York team. The personnel of the brothers is John, Daniel, Timothy, Thomas, James, William and George. John, Daniel, Thomas and Timothy are married. All but one of the boys, George, were born in

Right: Above: Boston Globe Excerpt, October 13, 1895



Left: Boston Globe Excerpt, October 25, 1911

Below: Boston Globe Excerpt, October 25, 1911

North this fall.

JOHN P. BANNON NAMED.

Member of Noted Baseball Family Made Driver of the New Auto Fire Truck at Saugus.

SAUGUS, Oct 25—John P. Bannon, son of the late John Bannon, the father of the famous Bannon baseball family, residing at 1 Willow ct, has been appointed by the Selectmen driver of the new auto chemical truck of the Fire Department. Arthur B. Mansfield, Frank A.

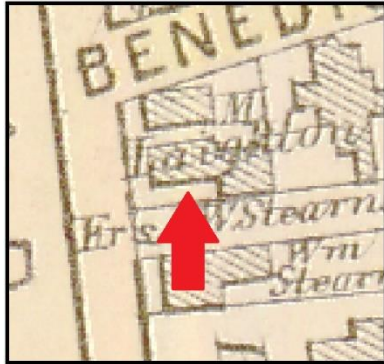
This property was owned and rented by a variety of working-class families throughout the 20th century. A list of all residents and businesses is provided below.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation
Bannon, Daniel	1915-1919	Clerk
Bannon, James	1919	Operator
Bannon, John	1916-1917	Driver
Bannon, Margaret	1919	
Bean, Grover C	1907	Brakeman
Ciam, John W L	1889	Clerk
Cobb, Silas	1903	Engineer
Finn, Alice M	1940	
Finn, Edward B	1940	Painter
Finn, Elizabeth	1940	
Green, Oliver H	1883	Real estate agent
Hammond, Alonzo L	1894	Shipper
Hayes, Edwin M	1889	Glass Cutter
Holland, Charles F	1879 - 1889	Clerk
Holland, Hellen M	1879-1900	
Holland, Henry L	1879 - 1900	Clerk
Holland, Nathaniel K	1892 - 1911	Machinist at B. & M.R.R. Shop
Hynes, Harry T	1908	Teamster
Kezer, George D	1877 - 1879	
Kezer, Samuel	1877 - 1881	Turner
Kezer, William	1879	Clerk at 157 Perkins
Leach, Abbie D	1898 - 1902	Bookkeeper
Leach, Mary D	1898 - 1902	
Minniss, John	1895	Motorman at W.E. St. Railway
Snow, Arah E	188 - 1887	Clerk
Totman, Levi D	1911	Sales
Walker, Dwight C	1892	Train baggage master at B. & M.R.R.
Walridge, Paul D	1885	Clerk USN, Pay Department
Yunker, William E	1910 - 1914	Driver

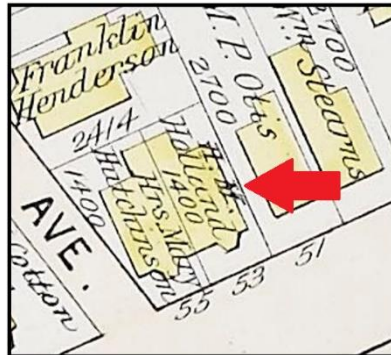
Name	Year(s) of Residency	Business Type
Banks, C.R.	1898 - 1903	Pictures, Picture Frames and Mouldings
Holland, Charles F	1879 - 1889	Clerk
Walker, Dwight C	1892	B. & M.R.R.

(Continued on next page.)

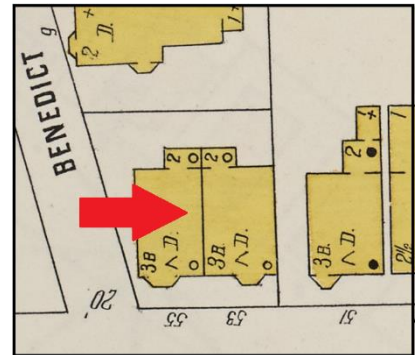
Comparing the historic maps with the current property we can track the architectural changes over time and the degree to which the structure has been altered.



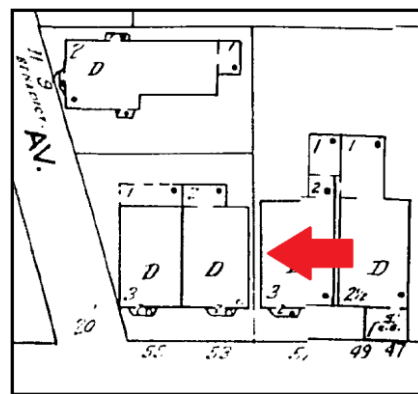
Above: Fig 1



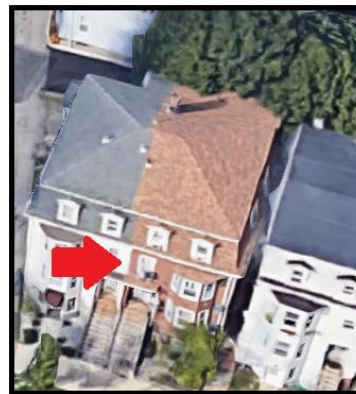
Above: Fig 2



Above: Fig 3



Above: Fig 4



Above: Fig 5

Figure 1: 1874 Hopkins Map, close-up of 53 Broadway

- In 1874 53 and 55 Broadway are one lot with two separate structures. Based on the location and shape of these two structures it is likely that these buildings were demolished to make way for the current structure. By 1887 we have an increase in tenants at the property a reflection of the property transitioning from a single-family property to the current a multi-family structure. It is likely that the current structure was built in 1887.

Figure 2: 1895 Bromley Map, close-up of 53 Broadway

- By 1895, 53 and 55 Broadway have been subdivided, and the current structure spanning both lots constructed. The lots mirror each other with a bay on the front entrance and an extension on the rear.

Figure 3: 1900 Sanborn Map, close-up of 53 Broadway

- No alterations are apparent.

Figure 4: 1933-1950 Sanborn Map, close-up of 53 Broadway

- No alterations are apparent.

Figure 5: Satellite image of 53 Broadway

- By 2022, rear porches on the first and second floors have been constructed with an addition on the third floor acting as the roof of the second-floor porch. This is not visible from satellite images because of the tree in the rear; however, photos of the rear depict this addition.

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. 53 Broadway

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1887-1940

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The house is a mansard style roof, wood-framed residential building with a front bay with entrance from the ground floor and an additional inset entryway on the first floor.
 - Front Elevation
 - Hooded, recessed, elevated entryway with aluminum or vinyl glass door
 - Substantial scrolled brackets support the door hood.
 - Entryway at base of polygonal bay with aluminum or vinyl glass door
 - A hood runs along the bay above the ground floor
 - Top of bay has four sets of paired brackets under the bay roof
 - Two gabled dormers on top floor
 - Deep eave separates the Mansard roof from second floor
 - Fenestration consists of two double-hung one-over-one windows flanking the doorway on the ground floor. 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 on smaller double-hung window to the right. Top floor has two double hung windows with one-over-one configuration, with one double-hung window each for the two dormers.
 - Wood steps from grade to door
 - Late 20th century iron railings on front steps.
 - Right Elevation
 - Fenestration consists of two double-hung one-over-one windows on each floor. Top floor has two double-hung windows with one-over-one configuration, with one double-hung window each for the two dormers.
 - Left Elevation
 - This structure is connected on the left side to 55 Broadway

- Rear Elevation

- Porches have been added on first and second floor
- On the third floor an addition above the porches has been constructed.
- Wood stairs access the porches and rear third floor addition
- Fenestration consists of one single or double hung one-over-one window one the first, second, and top floor.
- An aluminum or plexiglass door with glass insert is on each floor to access rear.

c. Materials:

- Foundation: concrete or brick with concrete parging
- Windows: aluminum or vinyl
- Entry doors: modern. aluminum (maybe fiberglass) with window
- Siding: wood shingle
- Trim: wood or vinyl
- Steps: wood

d. Roof: Mansard with asphalt shingle

e. Alterations: Replacement windows and modern replacement doors. Addition of rear porches and rear third floor addition.

f. Evaluation of Integrity of 53 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, including that it was originally constructed to be a double-house, and likely at the same time as the (formerly) double Mansard to the right (49 Broadway) Minimal alterations have occurred to this structure, original details such as bracketing, eave lines and door hood, along with overall architectural design are still evident. The original massing remains largely 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 53 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.

2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 53 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 53 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 53 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 53 Broadway is or is not “historically significant”.