



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

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

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**Site:** 722 Broadway

**Case:** HPC.DMO 2021.29

**Applicant:** Di Camillo Associates, LLC

**Owner:** Same as applicant

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

**HPC Meeting Date:** January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

*Top: Front elevation*

*Bottom, left: Left elevation*

*Bottom, middle: Rear elevation*

*Bottom, Right: Right elevation*



## I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

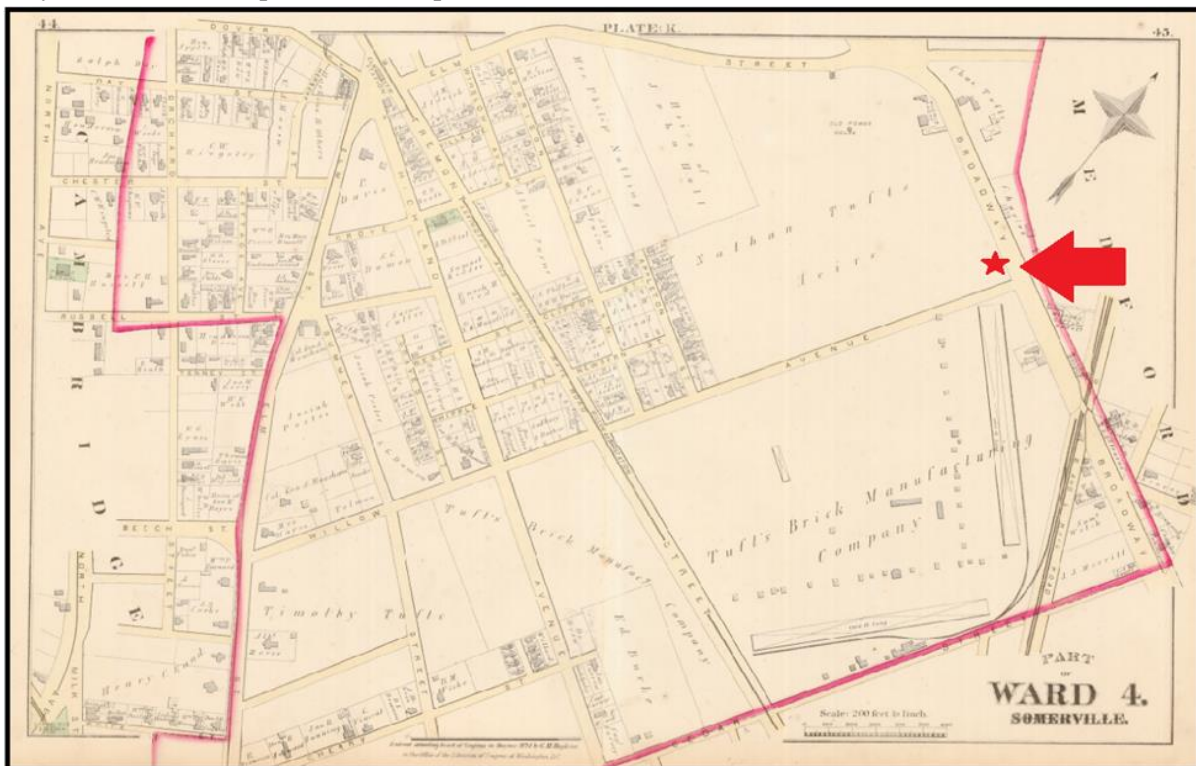
**Historical Context:** 722 Broadway is a two and a half-story structure. This portion of Broadway is dominated by one- and two-story commercial structures and two-and-half story residential detached houses.

722 Broadway is located in Ball Square within the Powderhouse area. The Powderhouse area consists largely of late 19th century residential areas, a small 20th century commercial area, Ball Square, and three small industrial areas located along the B&M (Arlington & Lexington line) railroad tracks, which were laid out in 1870 to Davis Square.

Ball Square is located along Broadway at the junction of Boston Avenue in the Powderhouse section of Somerville. Despite its name, Ball Square is a linear commercial zone whose architectural appearance was developed in the early 20th century. A number of the commercial buildings located on the south side of Broadway are one-story structures attached to substantial 2 1/2-to-3-story houses which front on the side streets such as Willow and Josephine Streets.

In the 1600s, the Powder House area was part of the “Stinted Common”, an area set aside by Charlestown (Somerville was part of Charlestown at the time) for cattle grazing. Though part of the Common, the Powder House area was generally not well-suited to grazing due to swampy, poorly drained terrain. Farmers were the earliest residents of the Powder House area.

By 1800, the Tufts family of Tufts University renown, owned much of the land in the Powder House area. Among other investments in the area, the Tufts created a large brickyard. Many members of the Tufts family continued to own significant amounts of acreage in the Powder House area throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as seen on multiple historic maps.



Above: 1874, Plate 44&45 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 722 Broadway

By the mid-1800s, a railway connecting the Boston and Lowell lines was built in the Powderhouse area. The post-Civil War era saw the western portion of Powderhouse very gradually experience residential growth as an effect of the development occurring in nearby Davis Square.



*Above: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 19 specifying location of 722 Broadway*

Generally, the residential growth in this portion of West Somerville was slow to occur. In the early 1870s, for example, 50 acres of former brickyard land around the current Willow Avenue area was platted into 482 residential building lots. Streets were proposed and named and the developer, Samuel Wolcott, initially planned for small, closely-built residences to be constructed. Over the next 25 years, the street plats, names, and building plans would change numerous times; however, no building would occur during this 25-year interval.

In 1883, the Ball Square area, with its close proximity to rail transportation, became the site of a footwear inner sole factory established by John Ball. Ball owned the property on Broadway between Josephine and Rogers Streets, and lived next to his factory, which operated from 1883 through 1902. In 1911, the Ball Square block was built on the sight of the factory, giving the square its name.

In 1891, the Tufts family platted out a large subdivision on land owned by the family since 1836. One-and-two family homes began to be constructed in the area around 1901. Most of the buildings in Ball Square date from around 1910 through 1930 and were constructed to serve the growing residential area nearby. The square provided entertainment among its amenities.

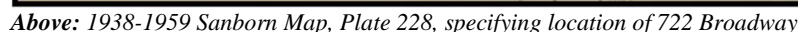




*Above: 1925 Sanborn Map, Plate 117 specifying location of 722 Broadway*

The 1925 Sanborn Map shows the development of the lots in Ball Square. This map also shows that these lots were developed together as they have near exact layouts; a main residential structure with a front bay and porch, a side bay, and a rear porch. Many also have a rear structure, likely a carriage house or garage.

722 Broadway was built in 1907 based on the first listed inhabitants in the City Directories. The structure matched the layout of the neighboring developments. The 1925 Sanborn Map also shows the development of commercial storefronts along the South and North sides of Broadway.



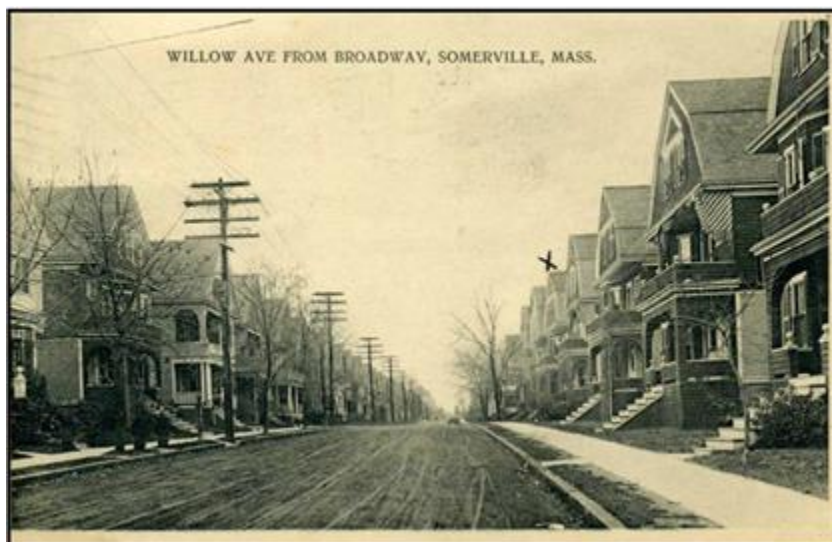
The increasing need for commercial services resulted in the residential structures in Ball square operating commercial enterprises. The City Directories list both residents and businesses at 722 Broadway. These businesses include listings for dressmakers, a physician, and a dentist.



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.

722 Broadway - Commercial		
Name	Year(s) of Occupancy	Business Type
Dempsey, J E	1916	Physician
Moran, Philip F	1919-1940	Dentist
Phillips, Ruby E	1907-1915	Dressmaker
Phillips, Susan	1907-1915	Dressmaker

722 Broadway - Residence		
Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation
Alson, Carolyn B	1915	Nurse
Phillips, Ruby E	1907-1915	Dressmaker
Terry, Edward	1917 -1919	Engineer



The structure at 722 Broadway has retained much of its original form and details. From historic photos of other structures built in the same style as part of the same development, we can see the original style and details of the buildings and compare that to the existing condition at 722 Broadway.

The photo to the right was taken of Willow Ave from where it intersects with Broadway (roughly next to 720 Broadway, the neighbor to 722 Broadway).

Comparing the current structure at 722 Broadway with the Sanborn Map from 1925 and the historic photo of neighboring properties, we can tell that an entryway with a small porch was added on the right elevation, and the porch on the first floor was enclosed.

(Continued on next page.)

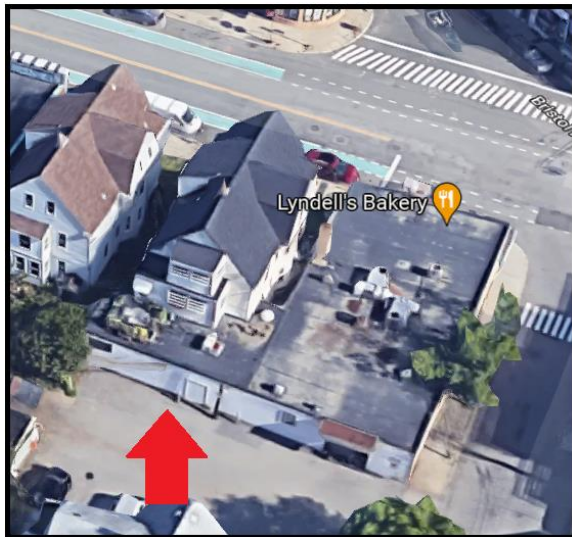




*Above: Detail of 1925 Sanborn Map, Plate 117*



*Above: Photo of 722 Broadway*



*Above: Satellite photo of 722 Broadway*

At some point after 1950 the rear of the commercial structure at 720 Broadway extends in to 722 Broadway and connects to the rear of the structure at 720 Broadway.

## 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. 722 Broadway

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1907-1940

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The house is a gambrel roof, wood-framed residential building with two bays on the front elevation with an enclosed porch on the first floor and balcony on the second floor.
  - Front Elevation
    - Elevated entryway with aluminum or vinyl glass door leading into enclosed porch
    - Balcony on second floor with entrance through an aluminum glass door
    - Enclosed porch is set to the right of the elevation
    - Jalousie windows on either side of entryway on enclosed porch and on the first floor of the left bay
    - Fenestration consists of jalousie windows and single or double hung one-over-one windows on the first floor. On the second floor there are single or double-hung windows with six-over-one configuration behind storm windows. Top floor has two single or double hung windows with one-over-one configuration.
    - Wood steps from landing to door
    - Wood or aluminum railings on front steps.
    - Two bays on either side with the left bay protruding closer to the street
    - Deep roof eave that disrupts the traditional gambrel roofline between the second floor and the beginning of the third floor
  - Right Elevation
    - Fenestration consists of jalousie windows on the enclosed porch on the first floor. On the second floor there are single or double-hung windows with six-over-one configuration behind storm windows. There are two windows on the dormer; one is a single or double one-over-one sash window and the other a six-over-one sash window.
    - Box dormer
    - Hooded porch on first floor with steps leading down. The door is wood with glass insert.



- Left Elevation
  - Two story bay
  - Box dormer with two windows
  - Fenestration consists of one-over-one, double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surround on first floor. On the second floor, single or double hung windows with four-over-one configuration behind a storm window.
  - Engaged wood storage shed with door
- Rear Elevation
  - Gable ended roof
  - Rear of commercial building from 720 Broadway extends on to the lot for 722 Broadway and connects to the rear of this structure
  - Rear two story ell with a later addition continuing the ell through the top floor
  - Doorway with aluminum hood leads from second floor of ell to the roof of the commercial structure that extends on to 722 Broadway
  - Fenestration jalousie windows on the second and third floors and glass block window on the first floor of the commercial structure

c. Materials:

- Foundation: brick with aluminum siding in some places,
- Windows: aluminum or vinyl, some wood
- Entry door: modern. aluminum (maybe fiberglass) with window
- Siding: vinyl clapboard
- Trim: wood
- Steps: wood

d. Roof: gambrel in the front transitioning to a gable roof in the rear with a box dormer on either side of the roof,

e. Alterations: Replacement windows, installation of storm windows. Based on similar structures in the area, and the style of architecture, the original arches of the porch have been enclosed. Bay added to the right elevation. The enclosure of the rear porch and conversion into an ell, the connection to the commercial structure at 720 Broadway in the rear, and the addition of the hooded porch on the right elevation. Modern replacement doors, vinyl siding, vinyl siding along portions of the foundation.

f. Evaluation of Integrity of 722 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 most integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure which obscures original details and architectural design; however, 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 722 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 722 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 722 Broadway meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 722 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 722 Broadway is or is not “historically significant”.