



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

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STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 26 Hawthorne Street
Case: HPC.DMO 2020-07

Applicant Name: Thomas W. Matthews
Owner Name: same as owner
Agent: Garth Goldstein, Architect

Recommendation: Significant
Hearing Date: April 21, 2020



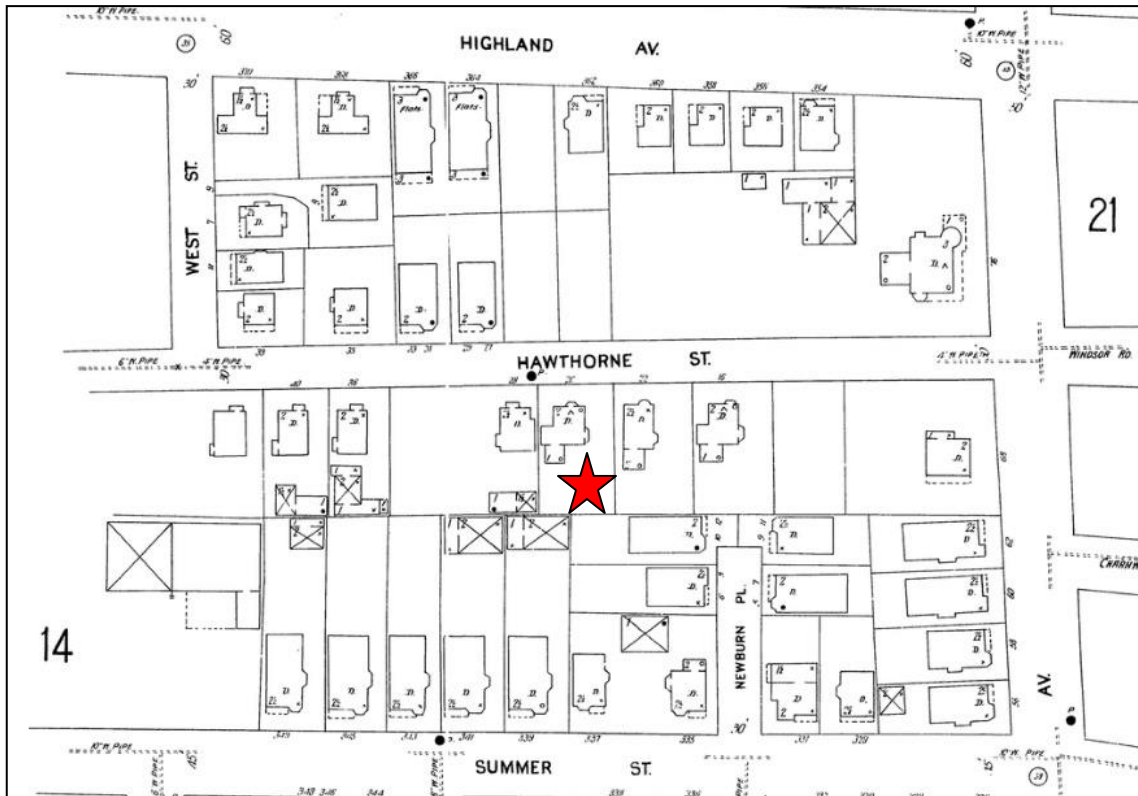
I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: The locus is sited just outside of Davis Square and between Highland Avenue and Summer Street. The Mansard would date to the roughly the 1870s and is surrounded by mostly 2 ½-story gable-fronted one- and two-family dwelling houses constructed in the late 19th century, with the occasional triple-decker or modern structure interspersed therein. There is one other Mansard on Hawthorne Street that is essentially a twin to the subject building; it is shown later in this report.

The time period of 26 Hawthorne Street corresponds with the advent of rail and street car service to this portion of the City (1870s), which spurred the development of Davis Square. Additional

research into the site and street development should unveil additional historic information about the property and its surroundings.

A 1900 Sanborn map below shows the subject property in its current configuration



Architectural Description: The dwelling house is a two-story, Mansard-roofed, single-family structure. The building is roofed with brown asphalt shingles and the siding and trim are covered by vinyl.

The front façade is two bays wide on each story. The first story of the front elevation presents a right side hall entry door flanked by fluted pilasters and capped by dentil molding. It is unclear if these features surrounding the front door are of vinyl, composite, or wood or to what era they date. A later, shallow open portico was added over the front door and front stoop decking. A long run of wood stairs with railings leads to the covered stoop. Vertical wood picket-style skirting surrounds the stoop. To the left of the front door is polygonal, single-story bay window. All windows are one-over-one.

The second story of the front elevation presents the lower slope of the flared Mansard roof. Two decoratively-capped single dormers are present which are vertically aligned with the door and bay below. A wide cornice and associated eave defines the lower portion of the Mansard roof. The upper slope of the Mansard roof is not visible from the front elevation, street level, but the cornice separating the lower and upper slopes of the roof is evident.

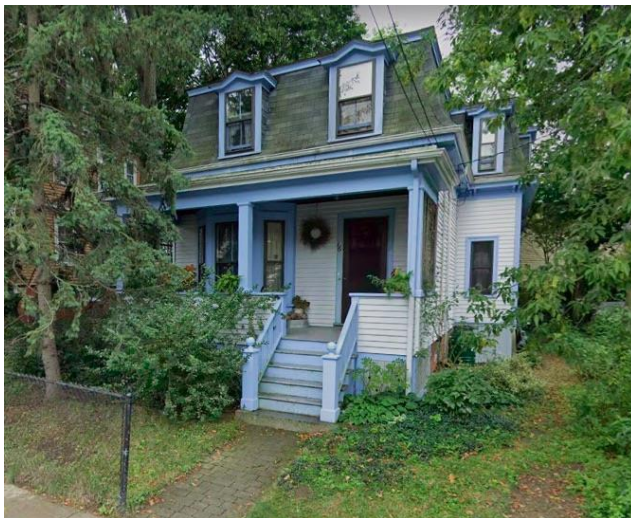
The left elevation of the building is two bays deep. The first story presents a one-over-one window closest to the street. The second bay on this elevation presents a polygonal, three-window

bay that mimics the one on the front façade. The second story of the left elevation presents the same decoratively-capped dormers as the front façade. Upper cornices and lower cornices with associated eave are visible.

The right elevation presents a Mansard-roofed, one-bay-deep jog that begins at about ½ way down the body of the main structure and ends roughly at the end of the main body of the building. At least one decoratively-capped dormer is visible from the street on this elevation. Upper cornices and lower cornices with associated eave are visible.

The rear elevation presents a bump-out that expands into the rear yard but steps in from the right elevation jog.

There is one other property on Hawthorne Street, 16 Hawthorne Street, which appears to be identical to 26 Hawthorne. These matching Mansards are separated by one property between them. The main difference between the two Mansards in terms of major architectural features is that 16 Hawthorne Street has a covered open entry porch that runs the length of the front façade. Images of 16 Hawthorne Street appear below:



II. 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) The property was built at a time that coincides with the introduction of rail and street car service to this part of the City, making this area ripe for both speculative and purposeful real estate development. This property was developed at the time that Davis Square was being built up. Additional research needs to be conducted in order to obtain further information regarding employment, ownership, and immigration trends associated with this property.

III. 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 (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B).

Relevant period

The period of relevance for the property begins in the 1870s.

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: It appears that the current siting of the swelling house is its original location.
- b. Design: See the in-depth description of this structure in the “Architectural Description” section earlier in this report.
- c. Materials: The building is wood-frame construction and presents a brick foundation. Roofing is comprised of asphalt shingles. The face and trim of the house have been covered with vinyl but it is typical that clapboarding or other shingling remain underneath.
- d. Alterations: Windows and door are modern, open entry portico is a later addition. Vinyl siding and asphalt roofing are typical 20th-century alterations.

Evaluation of Integrity: Dwelling house retains integrity of style, form, massing, architectural components such as bay windows, Mansard roof, and decoratively-capped dormers.

IV. FINDINGS ON HISTORICAL & 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 the dwelling house **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT**.

This finding is based on the architectural integrity of the structure, the building’s place in the development of the immediate Davis Square area, and that it is one of a set of essentially identical Mansards on Hawthorne Street.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the assessment to-date provided of criteria A and B of the ordinance, Staff recommend that the **DWELLING HOUSE** at 26 Hawthorne Street be determined to be **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT**.