



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

**GEORGE J. PROAKIS**  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

**PLANNING DIVISION**  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

SARAH WHITE, *MDS-HP*  
*SENIOR ZONING & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

December 15, 2020  
Case: HPC.ALT 2020-50  
Site: 48-50 Highland Avenue

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**ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY**  
**STAFF REPORT**

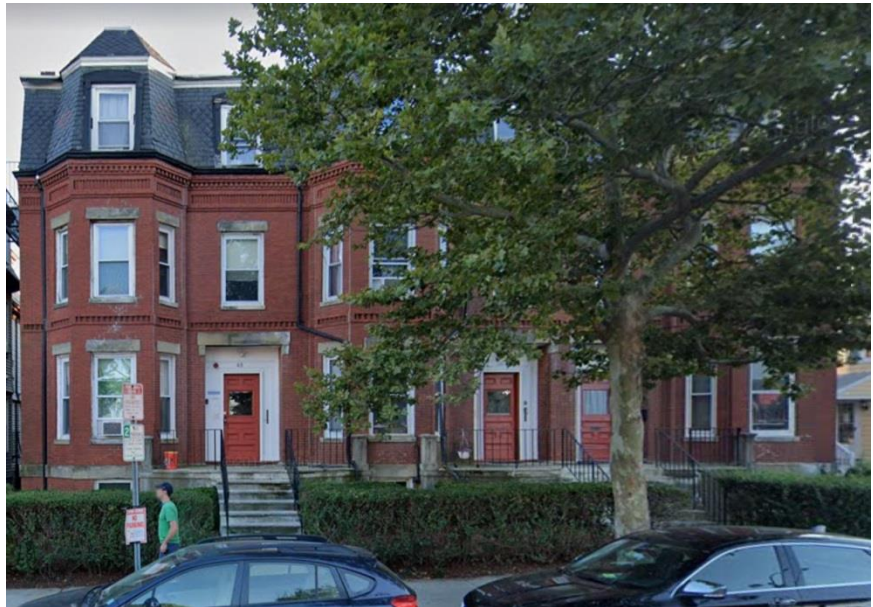
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**Site:** 48-50 Highland Avenue

**Applicant:** Craig Murphy

**Owner:** GNY Realty, Inc.

**Petition:** *Install awning over entry door.*



**HPC Hearing Date:** December 15, 2020

## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

- 1. Subject Property:** The full address of this LHD property is 48-52 Highland Avenue. (However, the application has been submitted only for units 48-50.) The attached Form B provides the documented historical and architectural information on the property.

**Proposal:** The Applicant proposes installing canvas awnings over two of the three front entries on the Highland Avenue façade of the building. One awning identifying “48 Highland” will be installed above the left-most front entry door of the building. A separate awning identifying “50 Highland” will be installed above the front entry door found in the middle of the building. The right-most front entry door will not have a canopy installed.

Images of the proposed awnings are attached to this report.

## **II. FINDINGS**

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated *Design Guidelines*. The portions of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations are discussed below.

The applicable section of the Somerville LHD Design Guidelines is *Section G “Signs, Marquees, & Awnings”, Items 2, 3, 4, and 5* which read as follows:

- 2. New signs, marquees and awnings should not detract from the essential form of the building nor obscure its architectural features.*

**Staff Assessment:**

The awning would cover key architectural features on these two entries, specifically, part of the door lintel and the decorative casing above the entry door on each.

- 3. New signs, marquees and awnings should be of a size, material, shape and color [consistent] with the building and its current use, and should also be consistent with other signs and buildings along the street.*

**Staff Assessment:**

There are no other awnings on this building. The curved form of the proposed awning is one of many typical awning styles that are seen throughout the City and is, in general, not uncommon above an entry to a residential building.

The dark green fabric would allow the awning to stand out from the building. Black would also allow for same. From a color perspective it does not strike Preservation Planning that the intent of this guideline is to have the awning blend with the building color-wise.

***4. Signs, marquees and awnings applied to the face of a building should be attached in such a way that they can be removed at a later date without damaging the material to which they are fastened.***

**Staff Assessment:**

While the awnings could be removed from the building at a later date, there is the possibility that the mechanisms used to fasten the awnings to the building will damage the lintels and decorative casings.

***5. All signs added to the building should be part of a single signage system, or reflect a design concept appropriate to the specific features of the original architecture.***

**Staff Assessment:**

While not part of a single system, the two proposed awnings match in terms of style, design, color and graphics.

**HPC Determination:**

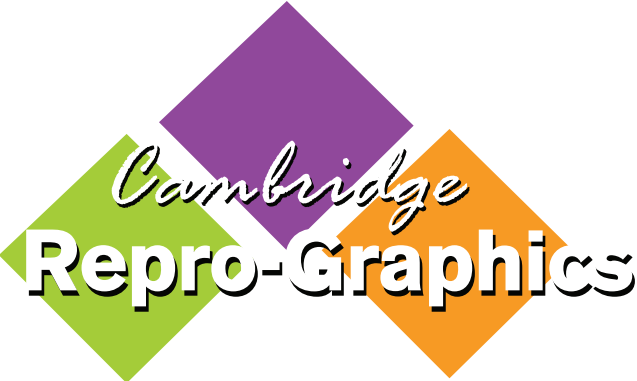
- The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project satisfies the applicable guideline for ***Section G “Signs, Marquees, & Awnings”, Items 2, 3, 4, and 5***
- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

### **III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

Should the HPC decide to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA), Preservation Planning suggests the following conditions to add to any approvals:

1. All relevant permits shall be obtained from ISD prior to the start of work.
2. The applicant shall upload their Certificate of Appropriateness to ISD’s permitting system.
3. Any changes made to this proposal as a result of reviews by other permit-granting entities shall be submitted in the form of a new application to Preservation Planning for review and approval by the HPC.
4. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) a minimum of 15 business days prior to final ISD sign-off so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm that the project was completed according to HPC approvals.



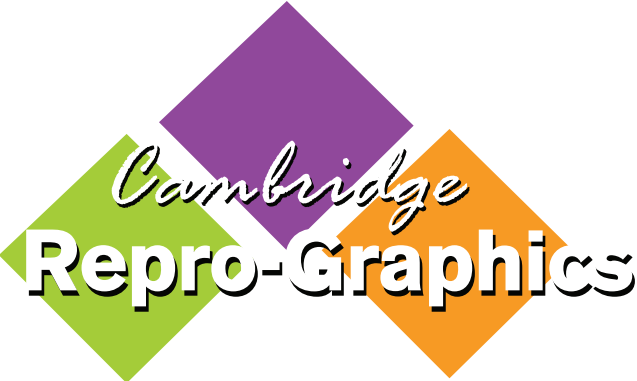


DRAWING TITLE: BK MANAGEMENT	CUSTOMER:	CONTACT PHONE :
PROJECT ADDRESS:		DATE :
JOB NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
JOB DESCRIPTION:		

Proposed View of Property







DRAWING TITLE: BK MANAGEMENT	CUSTOMER:	CONTACT PHONE :
PROJECT ADDRESS:		DATE :
JOB NUMBER:	E-MAIL:	
JOB DESCRIPTION:		



**AWNING SPECS**

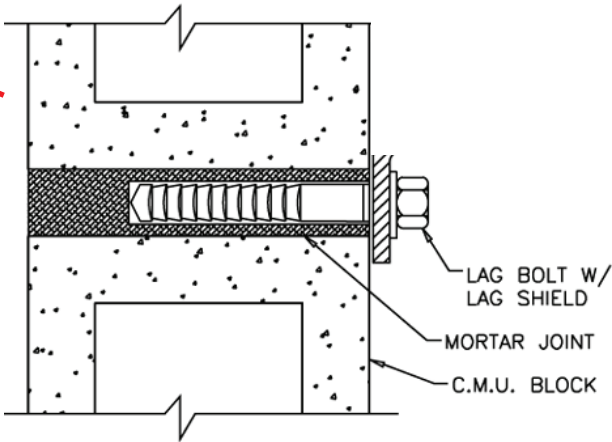
2 DOME AWNINGS FOR 48 AND 50 HIGHLAND AVE  
WITH RESPECTIVE WHITE LETTERS ON VALANCE.

HEIGHT: 40"  
WIDTH: 84"  
PROJECTION: 36"  
FABRIC: FOREST GREEN SUNBRELLA  
FRAME: GALVINIZED STEEL



LOCATIONS OF LAG BOLTS  
INTO BRICK ONLY (NOT CEMENT)

**INSTALLATION METHOD**  
Z CLIPS LAG BOLTED INTO BRICK



# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.300
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Langmaid Building
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	48-52 Highland Ave
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Prospect Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	138
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1889
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Panel Brick; Row House
<b>Use(s):</b>	Apartment House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.C: Central Hill SMV.AY: Somerville Multiple Resource Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Nat'l Register MRA (09/18/1989); Nat'l Register Individual Property (09/18/1989); Local Historic District (10/31/1989)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Slate Wall: Brick; Stone, Cut



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 10:49 PM

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
3 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AP-Prospect  
USGS-BOSTON

Highland Ave. 300

SP4 B AY, C



SOMERVILLE

48-52 Highland Avenue

Name Samuel & Mary Langmaid

Present residential

Original residential

ION

1889

directories

Mansard / Queen Anne detail

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric brick / stone trim

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition fair / good

Moved                      Date                     

Acreage 6530 sq. ft.

Setting South side of Highland, oppos

Somerville Public Library and School

adjacent properties, residential,

dwelling and apartment houses

Carole Zellie - 1980

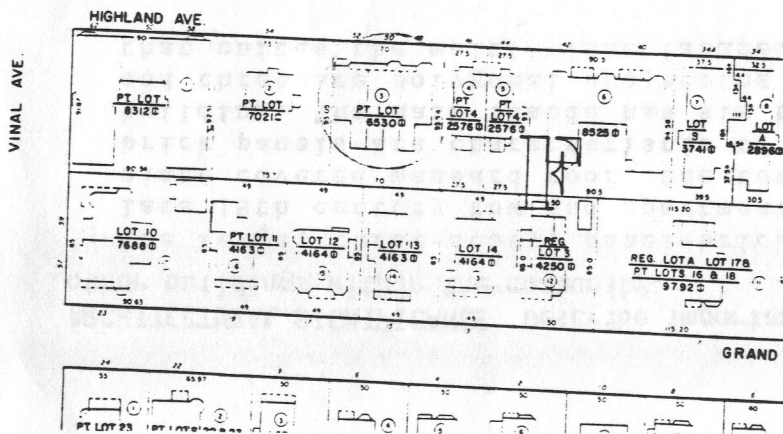
Recorded by Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Somerville Historic

Organization Preservation Commission

Date April, 1988

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location  
relation to nearest cross streets and/or  
topographical features. Indicate all buildings  
between inventoried property and nearest  
intersection(s).  
Indicate north



TM REFERENCE

GS QUADRANGLE

SCALE



**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)****ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE** Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The large, three-story, panel-brick apartment house is representative of late 19th century row and apartment house construction. The polychromed, slate covered mansard roof, the tower dormers, and the decorative inset brick panels are characteristic of these buildings and are retained on this building. The main facade has six bays of which three are entrance bays and three are polygonal projecting bays. There is a brick corbelled frieze that unites the multi-plane facade.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Highland Avenue, once known as "Church Street" and formerly "Barberry Lane" was built in increments. The first section was completed in the 1840s from east to west and extended only to Central Street. By 1852, according to the Martin Draper Map of Somerville, there were several houses and the Somerville High School (now the City Hall). Towards the end of the 19th century when Highland had been continued through to Davis Square, the eastern end of it became the civic center of Somerville and surrounding residential development was convenient to transportation, to the commercial area at Union Square and to the civic center and park at Central Hill.

The brick construction was indicative of a new building era in Somerville. Prior to this most residential construction had been single and two-family dwelling of frame construction. With the significant increases in population from the 1880s there was a need for increased and moderate housing. Many late 19th and early 20th century apartment houses were made of brick. This building was developed by Samuel Langmaid and family who built several handsome brick apartment houses in Somerville including the National Register property Langmaid Terrace at 385 Broadway. #48-52 was the first at Central Hill on Highland Avenue.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1884 ("W.S. Stearnes"), 1895 ("Mary Langmaid"). land only
2. City Directories, 1880s-1890s.
3. City of Somerville, Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, 1983.
4. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book , Page .

OFFICE COPY  
DO NOT REMOVE

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
10 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

MHC #  
300

AREA Highland Ave. Area 138 300  
FORM NO. 300



Somerville MRA  
48-52 Highland Avenue  
Historic Name Langmaid Building  
Present apartment house  
Original apartment house  
Description  
ca. 1875-1883  
map research  
Second Empire  
Architect unknown

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

Exterior Wall Fabric brick/stone trim  
Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) none

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting The property faces onto a major thoroughfare in a densely built urban area. The property faces the institutional district of Somerville, Central Hill where the Library, High School and City Hall are located.

UTM REFERENCE Z 19 - E 327/460 - N 4694/470

USGS QUADRANGLE Boston North

SCALE 1:25,000

Recorded by Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner

Organization Mass. Historical Commission

Date May 1986



**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The Langmaid Building, 48-52 Highland Avenue, is a well-built example of apartment rowhouses, built in the late 19th century, at the height of Somerville's period of greatest growth and development. The property retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

The Langmaid Building, 48-52 Highland Avenue is typical of the Second Empire influenced apartment row houses built in Somerville in the 1870s and 1880s. The use of panel brick with decorative insets is characteristic, as is the slate covered mansard roof. The three towers with polygonal roofs are of varying height. Stone lintels and sills, and segmental-arched window openings on the end facade, further ornament the building.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.**

Samuel Langmaid and members of the Langmaid family developed several handsome brick rows in Somerville, of which 48-52 Highland Avenue is a fine example (as is Langmaid Terrace 359-365 Broadway, # 117). This building constructed ca. 1875-1883, was the first on this block on Highland Avenue. Subsequent apartment construction on Highland Avenue included the equally stylish Romanesque Revival Highland Building # 140. As Highland Avenue was a well-travelled route to Boston, residents of the Langmaid Building could easily commute into the city.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

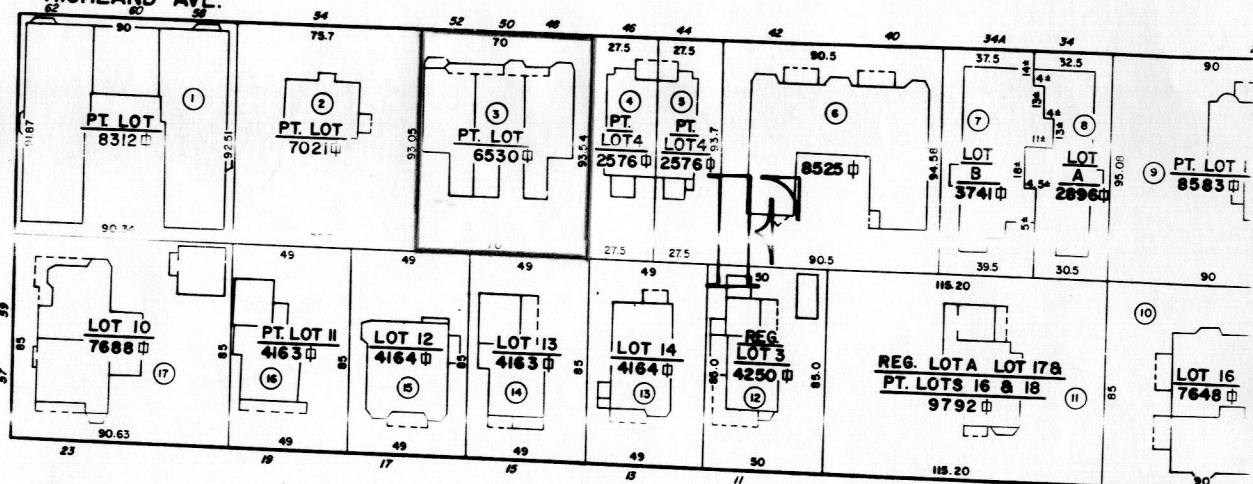
Hopkins, G. M. Atlas of the City of Somerville, 1884



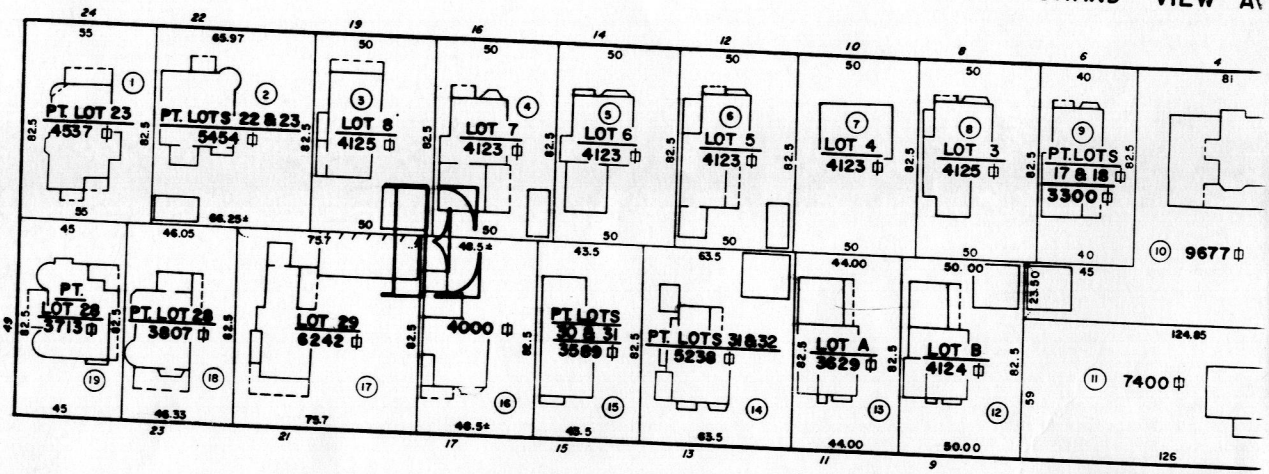
SMV. 300

VINAL AVE.

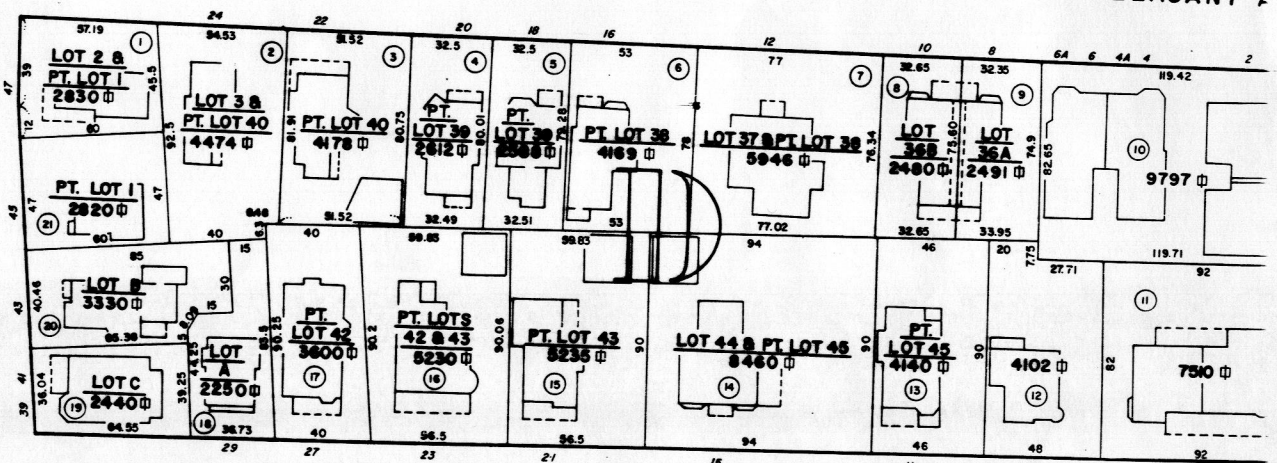
HIGHLAND AVE.



GRAND VIEW AV



PLEASANT A



SUMMIT AVE

