



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

**TOM GALLIGANI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

---

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

---

**Site:** 71 School Street

**Case:** HPC.DMO 2022.26

**Applicant:** Ji Shi

**Owner:** Same as Applicant

**Legal Ad:** *The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** July 19, 2022

*Top: Front elevation*

*Bottom, left: Left elevation*

*Bottom, middle: Rear elevation*

*Bottom, right: Right elevation*



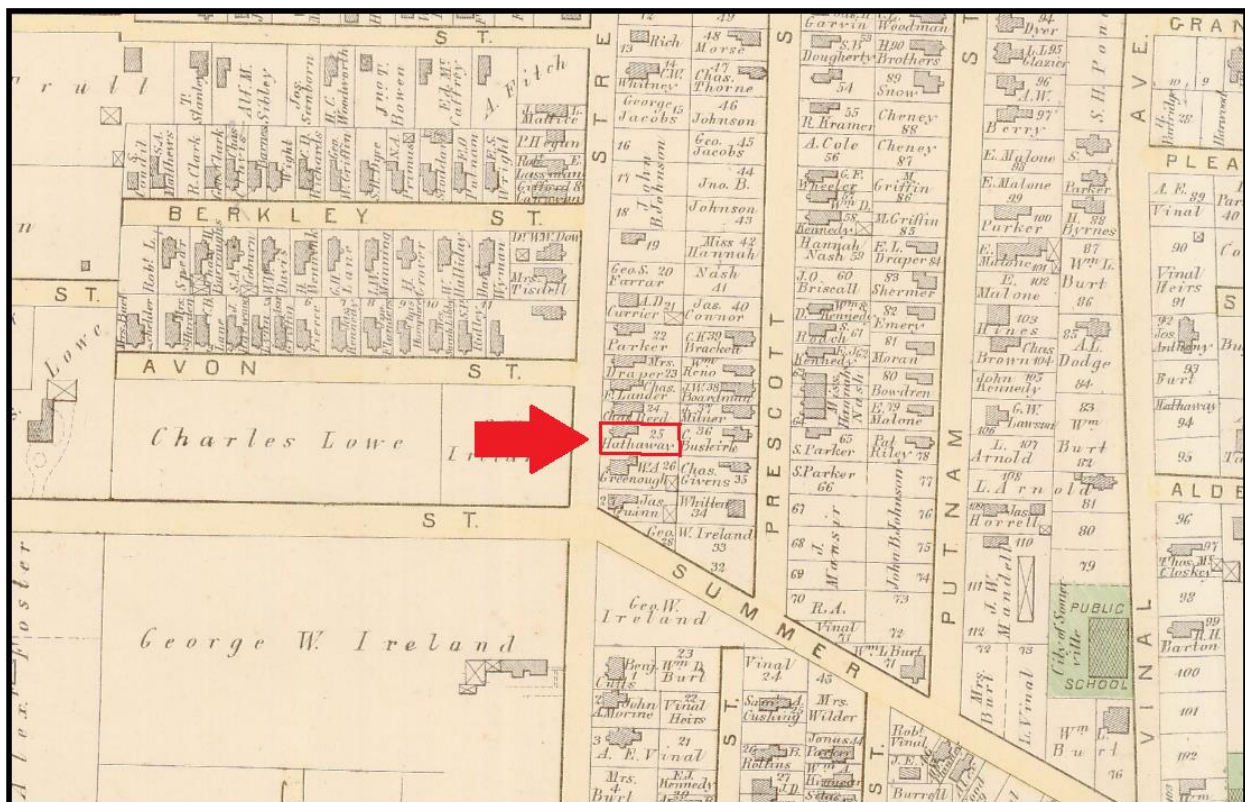
The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is not a determination/decision, nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

## I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

**Historical Context:** 71 School Street was a two and ¾ - story residential structure. School Street contains a mixture of two-and ¾ story residential buildings, a parking lot, and a commercial structure.

After the mid-1800s, Spring Hill evolved into a prime residential neighborhood of Somerville. In 1853, Samuel C. Chamberlain platted a large residential tract including Thurston, Fruit (Dartmouth) and School Streets. Many of the first houses built in the Spring Hill subdivisions were substantial single-family homes on large lots. By the 1870s with the expansion of the industries on Milk Row (now Somerville Avenue) and the horsecar and later the streetcar on Summer Street from Union to Davis Square came the expanded development of the area with smaller single- and two-family workers' housing. School Street, a main local north south route from the late 1700s was developed with residences in the mid to late 1800s.

By the 1890s there was substantial development of apartment houses to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Somerville.



Above: 1874 Hopkins Map, Plate 20 & 21- indicating approximate location 71 School Street

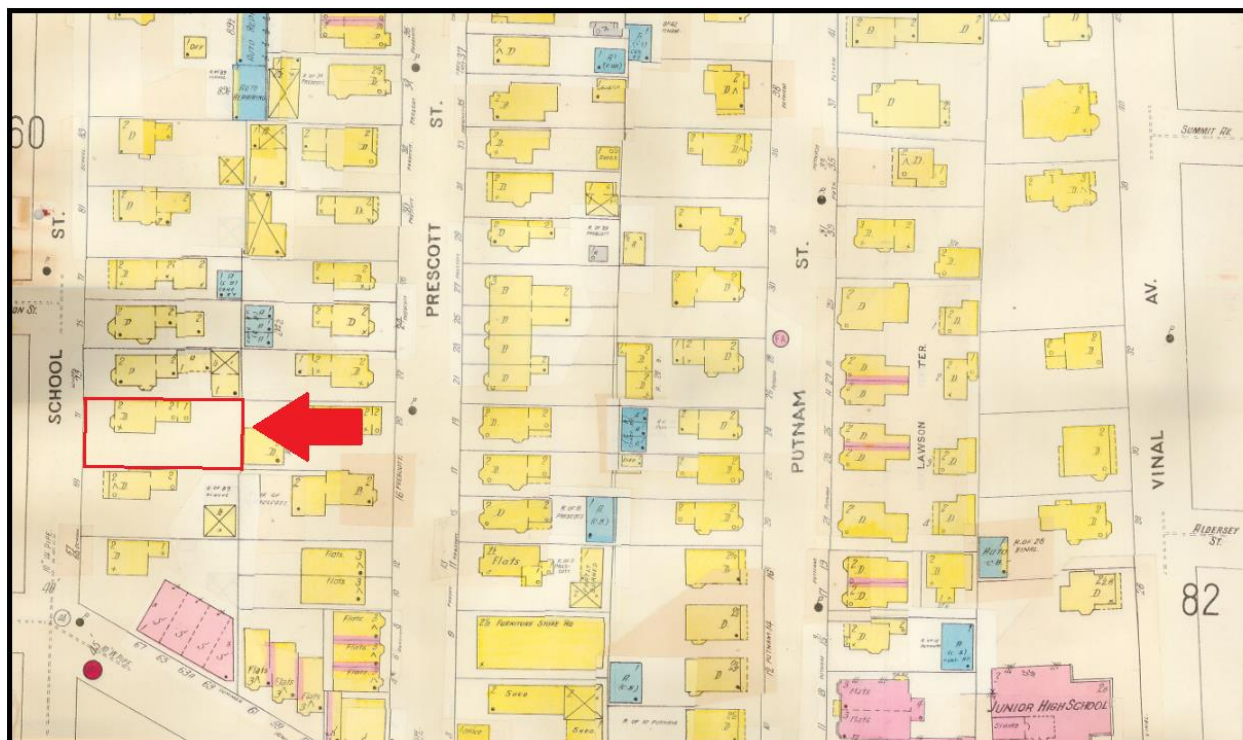
The 1874 Hopkins Map shows that the block containing 71 School Street and the blocks to the east of School Street have largely been developed. Like the surrounding area, 71 School St was platted and a residential structure had been constructed.

By 1895, the lots to the south of 71 School Street were fully developed. This was symptomatic of the substantial development of apartment houses constructed in the 1890s to accommodate the booming population of Somerville.



*Above: 1895 Bromley Map, Plate 1, indicating location of 71 School St parcel*

(Continued on next page.)

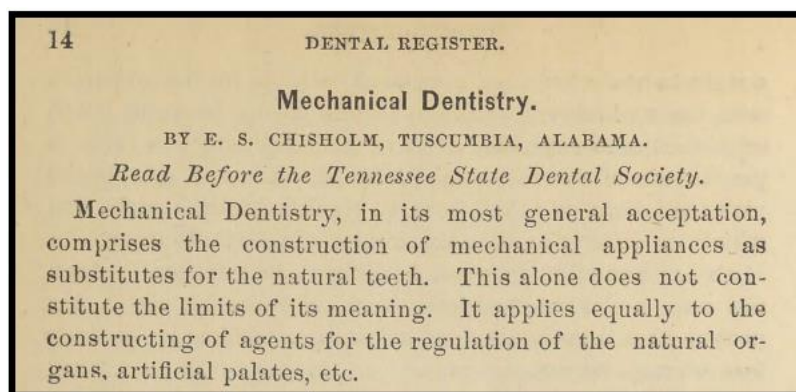


Above: 1900 Sanborn Map - 1925 Addition, Plate 81- indicating location 71 School St parcel

The earliest listed owner of 71 School St, as stated on the 1874 Hopkins Map, is 'Hathaway'. Comparing this name to the list of residents for 71 School Street, 'Franklin' would be Franklin Hathaway, a travelling salesman. Franklin Hathaway owned the property from, at least, 1874 to 1881.


The property is next owned by 'Snell & Bennett'. City Directories and U.S. Census records list a Bennett family and a Mason A. Snell listed as living at the property by 1890. Mason A. Snell was the father-in-law to Leon S. Bennett. Leon S. Bennett lived at 71 School with his wife Edith S Bennett (née Edith S. Snell). Mason A. Snell's listed profession in the City Directories is 'fish', likely suggesting he worked as a fisherman. Leon Bennett worked as a dentist, and later as a mechanical dentist. Staff was able to find a contemporary description of mechanical dentistry as listed by E.S. Chisholm written in 1873<sup>1</sup>.

Edith and Leon Bennett are listed as living at the property through the 1930 Census. At this time, they are the only remaining members of the household; their children having moved out and Robert Snell having passed away over a decade earlier. Leon S. Bennett then passes away in 1935. Historic records do not indicate whether Edith sold the property immediately after her husband passed away or whether she remained on the property for a few more years.



<sup>1</sup> Chisholm, E.S. (1873). *Mechanical Dentistry*. National Library of Medicine.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6908184/pdf/dentreg133132-0012.pdf>

By 1940, Census records for Somerville indicate that the property is owned by an absentee landlord. The 1940 Census has two households listed for 71 School Street but lists both as renters: the Hanarhan Family and the Menino Family. The Hanarhan household consisted of Allan and his wife Margaret, and their in-laws, Phyllis and Robert Moran. The Menino Family consisted of Joseph and his wife, Josephine, and their two daughters: Janet and Janice.



Line	Age	Sex	Mar	Birth	Place	Occup	Relationship	Res	Yr	Mo	Day	Year	House	Room	Value	Other	Notes
2																	
3																	
4	69	M	W	0	1900		Head										
5							Wife										
6							Son										
7	71	M	W	25	1900		Head										
8							Wife										
9							Son										
10							Brother-in-law										
11							Sister-in-law										
12	71	M	W	27	1900		Head										
13							Wife										
14							Daughter										
15							Daughter										
16	73	M	W	55	1900		Head										
17							Wife										
18							Son										
19							Son										
20							Son										
21							Father-in-law										
22							Sister-in-law										
23	75	M	W	32	1900		Head										
24							Wife										

Above: 1940 Census Record for Somerville, indicating the Hanarhan and Menino Households

A list of all residents for 71 School Street and their professions is provided below.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
Bailey, George	1887	Driver, C.R. Co		Bds
Bennett, Caroline H.	1897 - 1917	Clerk @ 93 Broadway	Daughter of Leon & Edith	Bds
Bennett, Edith S.	1895 - 1935		Wife of Leon S.	H
Bennett, Ellen H.	1895 - 1918	Clerk	Daughter of Leon & Edith	bds
Bennett, Emily E.	1899 - 1920	Student	Daughter of Leon & Edith	bds
Bennett, Leon S.	1895 - 1935	Dentist, Mechanical dentist	Head of Household	H
Bennett, Mason E.	1895 - 1913	Clerk	Son of Leon & Edith	Bds
Bennett, Ruth L.	1895 - 1929		Daughter of Leon & Edith	Bds
Davis, Marietta V.	1889	Seamstress		B
Hanarhan, Allan J.	1940	Welder	Husband to Margaret	H
Hanarhan, Margaret	1940		Wife to Allan J.	H
Hathaway, Franklin	1874 - 1881	Travelling Salesman		H
Hutchins, Warren W.	1893	Clerk		Bds
Menino, Joseph F.	1940	Coat Cutter	Husband to Josephine	R
Menino, Josephine	1940		Wife to Joseph F.	R
Menino, Janice	1940		Daughter of Joseph & Josephine	B
Menino, Janet	1940		Daughter of Joseph & Josephine	B
Moran, Phyllis V.	1940		Wife to Robert A., Sister-in-law to Allan Hanarhan	R
Moran, Robert A.	1940	Attorney	Husband to Phyllis V., Brother-in-law to Allan Hanarhan	R
Pierce, Edward	1884	Slater		B
Pierce, Ned	1885	Slater		B
Snell, Mason A.	1890 - 1902	Fish	Father-in-law of Leon S. Bennett	B, H
Stearns, Ruth A.	1894	Boarding House		H
Thurston, Stephen L.	1893 - 1894	Car Conductor		B

## **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.*

Prior to applying to the HPC for demolition review, the Applicant originally received permission to remove the roof, attic, rear wall, and right-side wall to allow for an addition. At the time the scope of work did not meet the 50% demolition of the building envelope required for review by the HPC. During the course of construction, the Applicant proceeded in demolishing most of the remaining walls without permission. This unauthorized activity can be seen in the photos below. After the Applicant was notified by ISD that demolition review by the HPC was required, the Applicant began to submit their application documents. A stop work order was placed on the property by ISD.

### **71 School St after commencement of demolition:**



*Above: Photo after commencement of demolition*



*Above: Photo after commencement of demolition*

## 1. 71 School Street

The period of relevance for the house starts late 1874.

- a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
- b. Design: The dwelling house was a 2 and 3/4 - story, front -gabled structure with a portico over the entryway. Asymmetrical entry to the left; decorative mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century iron posts supporting portico; decorative mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century iron railings along portico; brick and concrete steps from grade to porch on front elevation; fenestration consisted of one-over-one double-hung sash windows; shed dormer on right elevation towards the front; two-story, three sided bay on right elevation; towards the rear of the right elevation the building projects out to the right; lean-to added to the rear of this projection; above lean-to a covered porch was added (looks like a later addition); concrete steps lead from grade to entryway to the lean-to on the right elevation; late 20<sup>th</sup> century to early 21<sup>st</sup> century aluminum railings along porch and stairs on right elevation. One story, flat roofed addition at rear; brick chimney; shed dormer on left elevation.
- c. Materials: Foundation is concrete parged brick; windows are replacement aluminum or vinyl windows; aluminum replacement doors; siding is vinyl clapboard; asphalt shingles prior to demolition; brick chimney
- d. Alterations: Replacement windows and door; left and right shed dormers; roof deck in rear atop lean-to; removal of front bay; addition of right-side bay; addition of entry portico on

front elevation; addition of stairs to access lean-to on right-side; enclosure and/or removal of second floor windows on the front elevation.

- e. *Evaluation of Integrity of 71 School Street:* Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retained the basic integrity of its original form prior to demolition. Alterations and additions had occurred to this structure that obscured original details and architectural design.

### **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 71 School Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 71 School Street 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 71 School Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the STRUCTURE at 71 School Street does 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 71 School Street is or is not “historically significant”.