



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

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PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 90 School Street

Case: HPC.DMO 2022.24

Applicant: Ralph Malin

Owner: 90 School St Realty Trust

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

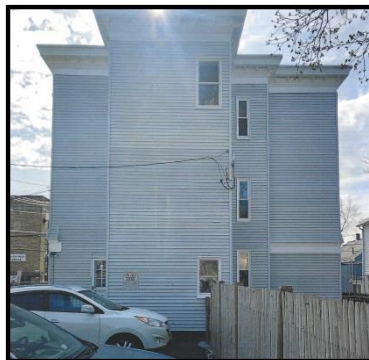
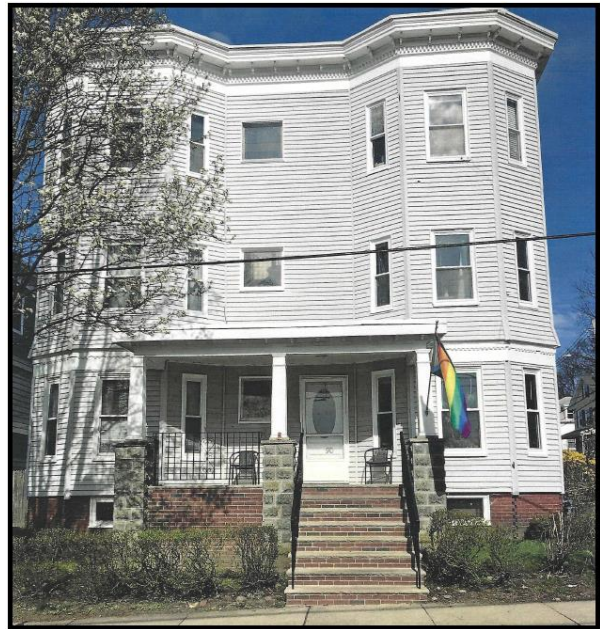
HPC Meeting Date: June 21, 2022

Top: Front elevation

Bottom, left: Left elevation

Bottom, middle: Rear elevation

Bottom, right: Right elevation



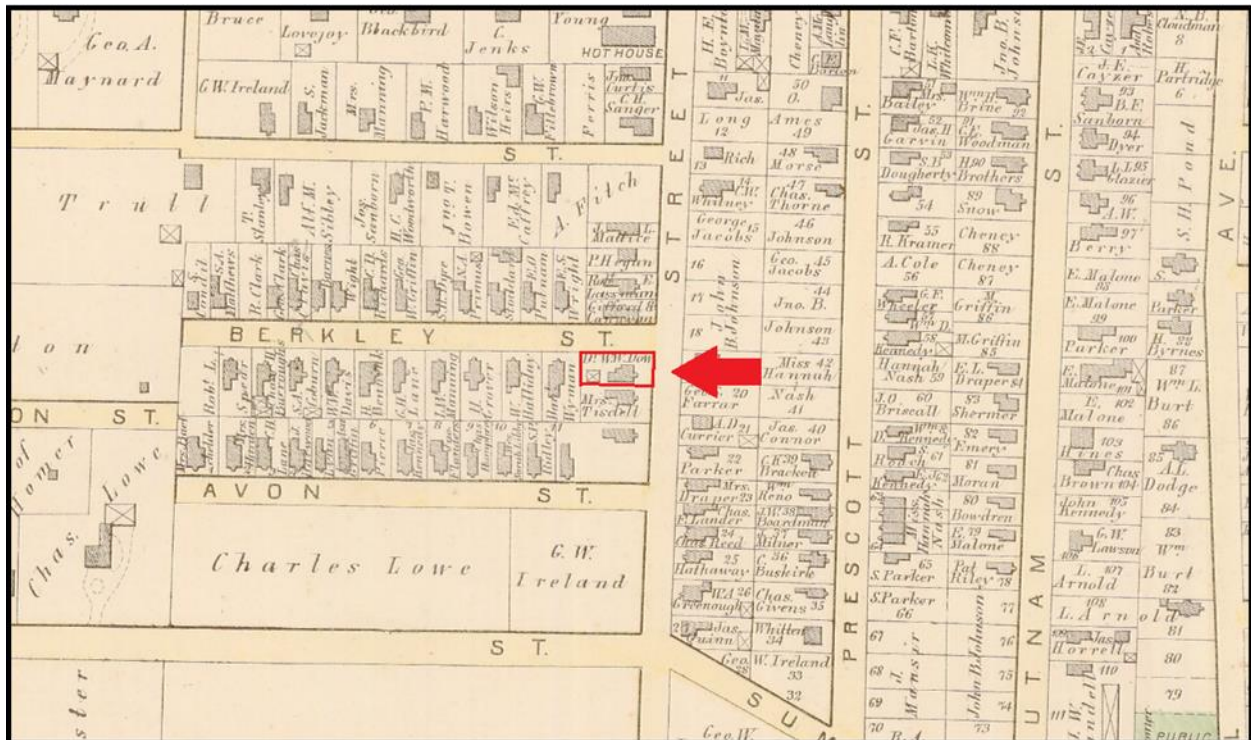
The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the 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: 90 School Street is a three-story residential structure. School Street is dominated by a mixture of two-and-half story residential buildings, a parking lot, and a school.

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.

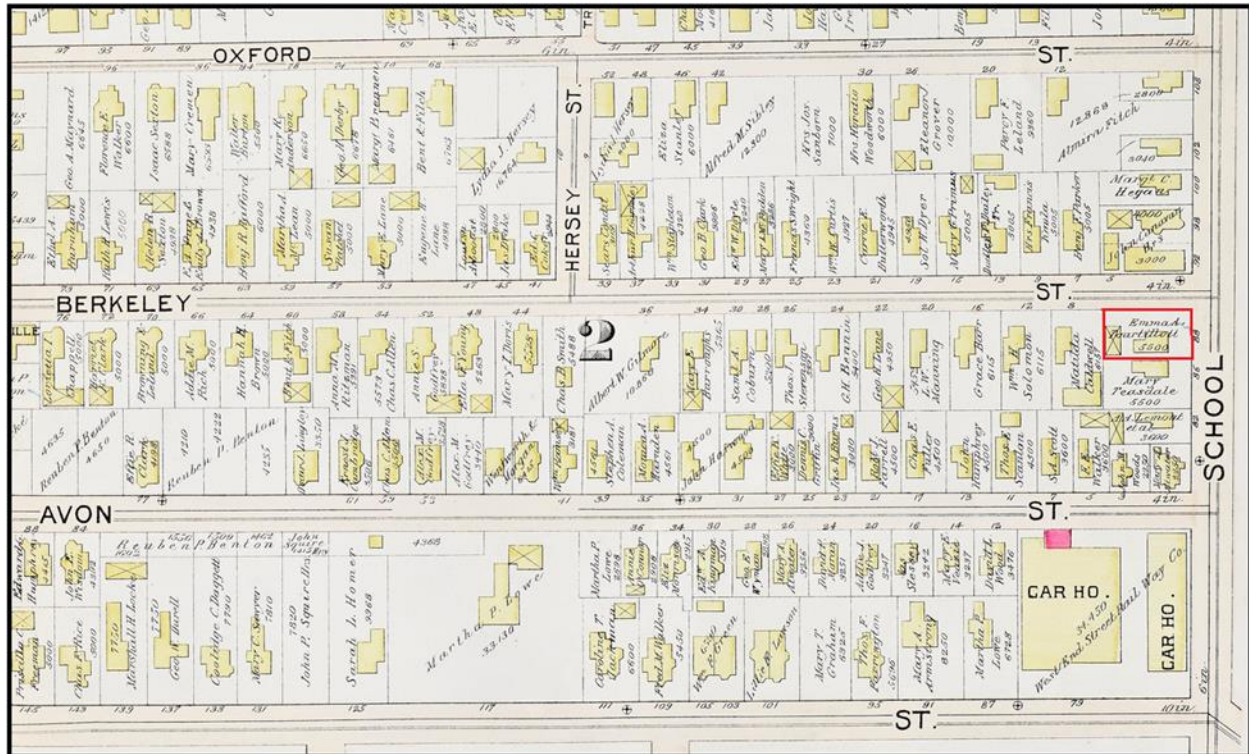
By the 1890s there was substantial development of apartment houses to accommodate the rapidly growing population of Somerville.



Above: 1874, Plate 20&21 Hopkins Map, specifying location of 90 School Street.

The 1874 Hopkins Map shows that the block containing 90 School Street and the blocks to the east of School Street have largely been developed. Like the surrounding area, 90 School St. was platted and a residential structure with a detached carriage house in the rear had been constructed.

By 1895, the lots to the south of 90 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 3 specifying location of 90 School Street.

The 1900 Sanborn Map shows that rear additions to the residential structure connect with additions on the front of the carriage house in the rear.

(Continued on next page.)



Above: 1900 Sanborn Map, Sheet 49 specifying location of 90 School Street.



Above: 1933-1934 Sanborn Map, Vol 1 Sheet 26 specifying location of 90 School Street.

Prior to 1900, 90 School Street is listed as 88 School Street. What is now 90 School Street is first listed as owned by 'Dr William Dow', the City Physician. The 1871 City Directory listed him as living at the property. By 1880 he is listed as living on 33 Bow Street. Dr William Dow sold the property to 'H.E.

Burroughs', the listed owner of the site in the 1884 Hopkins Map. No additional information was located on this individual. The third owner of 90 School Street is '*Emma A Tourtillott*', who is listed as living at 88 School Street in 1895 with her husband, George, and their three children.

Up until the 1933-1934 Sanborn Map, none of the depictions of 90 school Street in the Hopkins and Bromley Maps show a residential structure matching the location and outline as the structure existing in 2022. Comparing the location and design of the current residential structure (also shown in the 1933-1934 Sanborn Map) to that of the residential structure depicted in the 1874, 1895 and 1900 historic maps it can be deduced that the current building was constructed between 1900 and 1938. Based on the residents found in the U.S Census records and the Somerville City Directories for 90 School Street the current structure was built in 1915. It isn't until the current structure is built in 1915 that the property receives the current address of 90 School St rather than '88 School Street'. Additionally, multiple large families are listed as residing at the property starting in 1915. This is indicative of a multi-family property such as the current structure.

Further research resulted in the following information on the tenants or owners over the decades at 90 School Street. The names that have been found show the property was inhabited by working-class individuals. A list of all residents is provided below.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation	Relationship	Residency Type
Bardon, Frank	1925	Carpenter		R
Bardon, Idella	1925	Carpenter	Wife to Walter	
Bardon, Walter	1925		Husband to Idella	
Barrett, Edna	1920		Wife to James	H
Barrett, James	1920	Manager	Husband to Edna	H
Billings, Charles W	1915 - 1916	Machinist		H
Brussard, Anne M	1940		Wife to Arthur	H
Brussard, Arthur M	1940	Carpenter	Husband to Anne	H
Carroll, Mary A	1917 - 1925		Widow of William	H
Carroll, Walter F	1917 - 1924	Stock Clerk		R
Chadwick, Ethel W	1915 - 1917	Bookkeeper	Daughter of Sarah	B
Chadwick, Leroy A	1915 - 1917	Cashier @ Essex Hotel B	Son of Sarah	H
Chadwick, Sarah A	1915 - 1917		Head of Household	B
Curtis, Freeman D	1924	Sales		R
Dermady, Joseph	1927 - 1929	Carpenter	Husband to Mary	H
Dermady, Mary	1927 - 1929		Wife to Joseph	H
DesRoches, Harold V	1933	Clerk		R
Douglass, Charles E M	1920	Sales N E D M & W Co	Husband to Susan	H
Douglass, Susan A	1920-1925		Wife to Charles	H
Duggan, John J	1940	Employee - Standard Oil Co	Husband to Margaret	H
Duggan, Margaret	1940		Wife to John	H
Gleason, Catherine M	1918 - 1919		Wife to Eroschoe	H
Gleason, Eroschoe C	1918 - 1933	Furniture Packer	Husband to Catherine	H
MacKenzie, Alexia	1918 - 1933	Housekeeper	Sister-in-law to Eroschoe Gleason	B
Mader, Gordon W	1927 - 1930	Signal Maintainer for Steam Railroad	Husband to Minnie	H
Mader, Minnie M	1927 - 1930		Wife to Gordon	H
Marshall, Gladys	1925		Wife to Richard	H

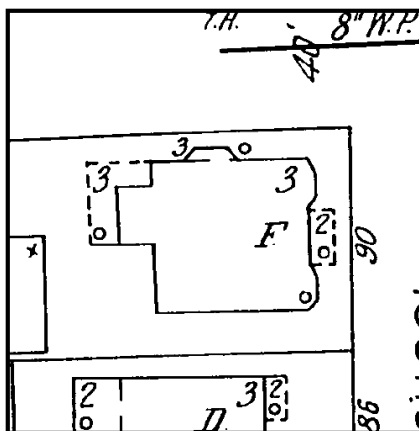
Marshall, Richard	1925	Mechanic	Husband to Gladys	H
McCrossan, William J	1929	Mus	Boarder of Gordon W Mader	R
Milne, Francis B	1925	Sales		R
Nichols, Jennie	1933		Wife to Ralph	H
Nichols, Ralph H	1933	Auto Mechanic	Husband to Jennie	H
Norton, Mary E	1940			R
Orcutt, Caroline A	1915 - 1916		Head of House	H
Orcutt, Ethel M	1915 - 1916		Daughter of Caroline	B
Orcutt, Irene R	1915 - 1916	Clerk	Daughter of Caroline	B
Powers, Hazel	1933		Wife to Thomas	H
Powers, Thomas H	1933	Insurance Agent	Husband to Hazel	H
Ray, Chester	1940	Chauffeur - Post Office Motor Vehicle Service	Husband to Edith	H
Ray, Edith C	1940		Wife to Chester	H
Smardon, James	1918 - 1919	Collector @ 33 Union Sq	Husband to Marie	H
Smardon, Marie B	1919		Wife to James	H
Stanton, William J	1940	Employee B & M		R
Winslow, Herbert	1915	Clerk @ 347 Medford		H

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

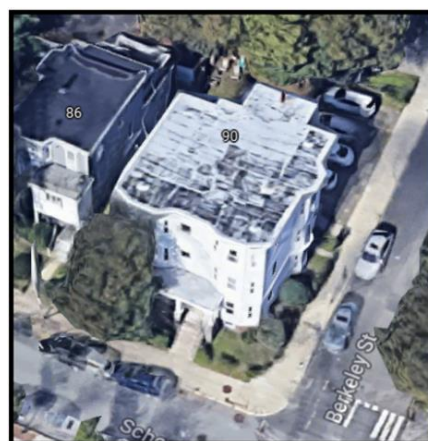
Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

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.

Comparing the historic map with satellite images of the current property we can determine the degree to which the structure has been altered.



Above: Fig 1



Above: Fig 2



Above: Fig 3

Fig 1: 1933-1934 Sanborn Ma[, close up of 90 School Street

- The 1933-1934 Map shows that the original structure had a covered front entrance, a bay on the right elevation, and a three-story porch on the left elevation wrapping to behind the rear ell.

Fig 2: Satellite image of 90 School Street

- By 2022, no alterations are visible from the satellite view of the property.

Fig 3: Street view of the right elevation and rear of 90 School Street

- The street view of the left elevation and rear show that the three-story porch was removed. Only a small porch in the corner between the ell and the rest of the building on the first floor remains.

1. 90 School Street

The period of relevance for the house starts c.1915 - 1940

a. Location: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.

- Design: The house is a flat roof, wood-framed apartment building with two symmetrical bays on the front elevation, and a covered porch on the front entrance. The roof has a deep eave decorated with brackets and dentils.
- Front Elevation
 - Covered porch with vinyl or aluminum entry door behind a storm door.
 - Porch roof is made of wood with fluted square wood columns on stone bases.
 - Fenestration consists of one one-over-one, double-hung, replacement sash windows with simple surrounds on each of the three sides of the bays on all three floors. Additionally, there is one fixed square window on each floor between the two bays, asymmetrically placed to the left.
 - Concrete capped brick steps lead to a concrete capped brick landing to the main front entrance.
 - Strong (wood) belt course with scalloped edges visually separates the first and second stories.
 - The exterior walls flare out slightly above the belt course.
- Right Elevation
 - Three-story bay
 - Strong (wood) belt course with scalloped edges visually separates the first and second stories.
 - The exterior walls flare out slightly above the belt course Fenestration consists of one one-over-one, double-hung, replacement sash windows on each of the three sides of the bays on all three floors. Towards the front of the right elevation is one one-over-one double-hung sash window on each floor. Towards the rear on each floor is a square window consisting of one large square pane of glass surrounded by small decorative glass panes. Fenestration on the right elevation of the ell consists of one one-over-one double-hung replacement sash window on each floor.
 - Small porch in the corner between the ell and the main mass of the building

- Concrete capped brick steps lead to a concrete capped brick landing of the porch with mid to late 20th century decorative iron railings.

- Left Elevation

- Strong (wood) belt course with scalloped edges visually separates the first and second stories.
- The exterior walls flare out slightly above the belt course
- Fenestration consists of one one-over-one, double-hung, sash window toward the front on all three floors. In the middle of the facade is one smaller, one-over-one double-hung sash window on each floor. Towards the rear on each floor fenestration consists of two one-over-one double-hung replacement sash windows on each floor.

- Rear Elevation

- Decorative banding does not extend to the rear nor does the wall flare.
- A modern replacement door behind a storm door leads to the porch.
- Fenestration on the first floor consists of one one-over-one double hung window on the ell, and a thinner one-over-one double-hung sash window on the portion of the building to the right of the ell. The second-floor fenestration consists of a thin one-over-one double-hung sash window on the portion of the building to the right of the ell. Fenestration on the third floor consists of one one-over-one double hung window on the ell, and a thinner one-over-one double-hung sash window on the portion of the building to the right of the ell.

b. Materials:

- Foundation: brick
- Windows: aluminum and wood
- Entry door: modern, aluminum or vinyl with storm door
- Siding: vinyl clapboard
- Trim: wood & aluminum
- Steps: concrete and brick

c. Roof: Flat

- d. Alterations: Replacement windows and doors. Removal of the porches in the rear and addition of a smaller porch. Concrete and brick steps, mid to late 20th century iron railings. Vinyl siding.
- e. Evaluation of Integrity of 90 School Street 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 of the integrity of its original form. Alterations have occurred to this structure which obscure some original details; however, the original massing remains largely intact as do architectural details such as the deep eave, bracketing, dentils, and strong, scallop-edged belt course between the first and second stories. Key architectural components such as the three-story bay also remain 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 RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 90 School Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 90 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 RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 90 School Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 90 School Street 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 RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE at 90 School Street is or is not “historically significant”.