



# City of Medford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

City Hall – Room 308  
85 George P. Hassett Drive  
Medford, Massachusetts 02155

## Medford Historical Commission Annual Report 2020

### Membership:

Jennifer Keenan, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2021)  
Ryan D. Hayward, Vice Chair (Term Ex. 12/1/2022)  
Doug Carr, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2022)  
Abigail Salerno, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2020)  
Benjamin Johnson, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2021)  
Peter Miller, Interim Secretary (Term Ex. 12/1/2020)  
Edward Wiest, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2022)

### Meetings:

Second Monday of every month, except noted holidays, 7PM, Room 201, Medford City Hall.

Meeting Dates: January 13, February 10, March 9, With no business to attend to, the April 13 meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The following meetings were moved online to Zoom and follow the same schedule as above:

May 11, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, October 19 (moved for holiday), November 9, December 14.

### Contact:

Email: [HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov](mailto:HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov)

### Activities of the Commission:

- The Historical Commission received a \$5,000 increase in our budget for fiscal year 2020. This funding has allowed us to continue actively surveying historic resources.
- The Commission received funding to complete a plan for Thomas Brooks Park in West Medford.

The board was able to hold a public meeting during which critical feedback from City residents was heard. The project was completed and a CPC application was made for Phase I work. The CPC board approved this allocation and it is awaiting approval from City Council.

- The Commission worked with the Historic District Commission to establish a local district at 16 Foster Court. Although this movement was not successful (City Council voted the proposal down), it taught us several valuable lessons and provided the framework on which to proceed with several other districts.
- The Commission received staff support for the first time this year. We would like to thank the Mayor and Alicia Hunt from Community Development for allocating a staff person to assist with administrative tasks. The Commission would like to thank Denis MacDougal for all his efforts in working with the Historical Commission during this year.
- The board, using its knowledge and expertise with significant historic buildings provided input to new or renovated buildings which resulted in better designs that fit within the context of their surrounding neighborhoods. Perhaps the most successful example was 30-36 Salem Street in Medford Square, which will result in restoring elements of the former movie theater exterior while also converting the commercial space into residential units.
- The Commission participated in various 40B application discussions. These applications bypass all local processes and the Commission was concerned about the scope of demolition for both projects. Similar to all other City Departments, the Historical Commission submitted comments to Community Development about the project.
- This year we were able to survey several areas of Medford. We were not able to secure a Survey and Planning Grant so we allocated our match to complete survey work in neighborhoods which are high priority for documentation and preservation through historic districts. These include properties along Forest Street and within the Hall-Bradlee Estates behind Medford Square.
- The Commission did apply to the Massachusetts Historical Commission to secure a Survey and Planning Grant for next fiscal year. The \$32,000 project will cover historic resources in the Winter Hill neighborhood, which is experiencing increased pressures of development from the Green Line Extension and Somerville.

### **New Inventory Forms:**

The Commission added the following properties to the historical inventory as part of individual projects, including the demolition delay:

- 23 Pleasant Street
- 31 Pleasant Street
- 43 Pleasant Street
- 2 Capen Street
- 22 West Street
- 77 Court Street
- 61 Sagamore Avenue

- 120 Jerome Street
- 75-77 South Street (Revised Form)
- 116 Dover
- 15 Hadley Place
- 202 Middlesex

Summary of forms added under the Wellington Neighborhood Survey Project:

- 11 Massachusetts Historical Commission area forms and 47 building forms covering 221 properties altogether were completed during this project.

Summary of forms added under the additional work in Medford Square South:

- 1 Massachusetts Historical Commission area form and 14 building forms covering 55 properties altogether were completed during this year.

The Commission allocated a large portion of its budget to complete additional survey work on Forest Street as part of a request from the Historic District Commission to create a local historic district there. In addition funding was applied to survey the Hall-Bradlee Estates abutting Forest Street and Medford Square. The remaining portion of our budget was allocated to complete forms in the Wellington Neighborhood.

**Site Plan Review:**

The Office of Community Development solicited, and the Commission provided, comments on the following requests for site plan review:

- 590 Boston Avenue
- 595 Broadway
- 30-36 Salem Street
- 109 Forest Street

**Community and Section 106 Project Reviews:**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission and other local organizations solicited, and the Commission provided, comments of the following projects:

- 4000 Mystic Valley Parkway – 40B Project
- 970 Fellsway – 40 B Project
- David Osgood House – Exterior Repairs and Restoration
- Monument Restoration – Support for CPC project

**Demolition Delay:**

New this year, the Commission has started working with the Building Department to review all incoming permits for applicability for review under the demolition delay ordinance. The Commission

sends weekly updates calling out specific permits of interest and otherwise signing off on non-applicable items en masse. The process has gone smoothly thus far and allowed us to catch projects that may have otherwise circumvented the demolition delay review. In addition, it allows us to maintain a regular dialogue with the enforcement authority.

The following properties reviewed and actions:

- 43 Pleasant Street – The Commission reviewed an application for demolition of the pre 1855 dwelling house. The building was **found historically significant and preferably preserved**. The Commission resolved to work with the homeowners to find a solution that would balance demolition and the owners request for a new residence. The building is currently under an 18 month demolition delay.
- 39-41 Seventh Street – The demo delay subcommittee reviewed an application for demolition for a garage that was unsafe. Demolition was approved once paperwork was submitted.
- 118 Dover Street – The Commission reviewed an application for the demolition of a fire ravaged building. The application was received and the building was found to be **not significant** and demolition was okayed. The building has been demolished.
- 202 Middlesex Avenue – Potential buyers applied for a partial demolition permit. After determining the building to be **significant**, the applicants withdrew their application. The building is back on the market. This structure is a major example of Queen Anne architecture complete with a matching carriage house in the rear.
- 127 Sharon Street – The demo delay subcommittee reviewed an application for the demolition of a garage to the rear of this property which is slated for gut-renovation. Demolition was approved once paperwork was submitted.
- 120 Jerome Street – The applicant submitted paperwork for partial demolition of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow with significance to the neighborhood. The Commission reviewed information on the MHC form B and determined the property to be **historically significant and preferably preserved**. The Commission has formed a 3 member subcommittee to review architectural changes and work with the homeowner and present recommendations to the Commission upon reaching a consensus. The building currently is under an 18 month demolition delay which is expected to be lifted if ongoing efforts are made by the owner.
- 75 South Street – The Commission is presently reviewing an application for demolition for the pre-1875 property which has ties to local shipbuilding and is a major contributor to the streetscape. The building has been found **significant** and is awaiting a public hearing on preferably preserved status.
- 15 Hadley Place – The Commission determined this late nineteenth century Queen Anne style dwelling to be **significant**. The building is awaiting a public hearing on preferably preserved status.
- 403 Riverside Avenue – Paperwork has been received for the re-review of a demolition application submitted and withdrawn four years ago. The building has an MHC Form B and will

be reviewed for significance at our January meeting.

- 23 and 31 South Street – The Commission heard initial information about a proposed project on the site of two early nineteenth century buildings. An application will be coming from the new owners of the buildings. No determination has been made yet and the buildings are standing and occupied.

### **Goals for 2021**

- Continue to educate owners, developers, real estate brokers, and City Departments about the Demolition Delay ordinance in order to preserve the historic resources. The Commission will uphold the spirit of the bylaw and attempt to catch projects that may otherwise circumvent the project.
- Administer the most ambitious CPC project yet at Thomas Brooks Park. This project has the full support of Community Development and Purchasing Departments. We will work with both to ensure tasks are tackled in a timely manner.
- Work with the Historic District Commission to secure funding for a city-wide local historic district plan using survey work which has been completed thus far. This request came out of the City Council meetings regarding 16 Foster Court and we will ask that Council and the Mayor uphold the request.
- Begin to review the City for re-survey work and plan for a new city-wide survey plan that takes into account priorities of other departments. This should include a review of plans for Mystic Avenue, Medford Square, any major commercial corridor, and City resources (such as buildings, parks, etc.).
- Survey the City residents on their understanding of the Demolition Delay, its applicability, success and ways to improve the process.
- Regularly publish updates on our website and social media accounts to keep the public informed about any ongoing action by the Historical Commission, District Commission or combination of the same.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer M. Keenan  
Commission Chairman

June 14, 2021