



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 2022

Membership:

Jennifer Keenan, Chair (Term Ex. 12/1/2023)
Ryan D. Hayward, Vice Chair (Term Ex. 12/1/2025)
Doug Carr, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2025)
Peter Miller, Secretary (Term Ex. 12/1/2024)
Edward Wiest, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2025)
Jessica Farrell, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2023)
Kit Nichols, Commissioner (Term Ex. 12/1/2024)

Meetings:

Second Monday of every month, except to avoid conflict with Monday holidays. All meetings in 2022 were held via Zoom in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.

Meeting Dates: January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11, May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8, September 12, October 3, October 17, November 14, December 12.

Contact:

Email: HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov

Activities of the Commission:

- The Historical Commission budget remained at \$35,050. It is broken down into three parts: an \$18,000 match for a yearly grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission; \$15,500 for the creation of inventory forms as-needed and for demolition delay review and \$1,550 for memberships, legal fees, postage, and our website.
- The Commission worked extensively with the Building Department to facilitate permit reviews. The Commission's Permit Review Subcommittee has been tasked with keeping up with

incoming permits for approval. The former Building Commissioner provided high praise for keeping ahead of the tide of permits which have not slowed down since the beginning of the year. A summary of all Building Permits reviewed by the MHC is provided below.

- The Commission began implementing improvements on Thomas Brooks Park via a grant from the Community Preservation Committee. The archaeological work was awarded and completed with the help of volunteers. The restoration of Pomp's Wall and the fieldstone wall along Grove Street will be completed in 2023.
- The Commission's work benefitted from City Hall staff support throughout the entire year. The Commission would like to thank Denis MacDougall for his hard work facilitating the MHC Meetings and serving as the public face of the Commission at City Hall for this past year. We would also like to thank Theresa Dupont, the Head Clerk at the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability for her administration assistance with ongoing projects.
- The Commission, using its knowledge and expertise with significant historic buildings, provided input to new or renovated structures which resulted in better designs that fit within the context of their surrounding neighborhoods. A number of demolition delayed properties saw their delay lifted due to continued and good-faith efforts which mitigated the demolition.
- The Commission will continue to work with the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability to ensure it receives the ZBA and Community Development Board agenda and attachments during a period in which all city agencies have been conducting digital, rather than in-person, meetings. The Commission (three of whose members are architects and/or historic preservation consultants) provides valuable input to these discussions. The Commission has critical information about the existing landscape and expertise in incorporating historical elements into new project designs.
- Historical survey work under the aegis of the Commission has been ongoing. We completed the Winter Hill Neighborhood Survey, a \$32,000 project with half of the funding coming from a grant by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The completion of the project has been delayed due to restrictions from COVID-19. Consultants working with the Commission documented large numbers of buildings in area and building forms. This provides critical insight into neighborhood history and helps fulfill the Commission's mission of identifying historic properties.
- The Commission is currently administering a project in the Brickyards-Mystic Park Neighborhood. This is a \$35,000 project with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. This neighborhood is experiencing increased pressures of development from the Green Line Extension (GLX) and neighboring Somerville. Work is halfway complete and expected by April of 2023.
- The Commission has applied to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for a \$32,000 Survey and Planning Grant for the next fiscal year to document the Fulton Heights neighborhood. A match was awarded and work is ongoing to contract with the consultant. We expect this project to begin in April of 2023.

New Inventory Forms:

The Commission procured Massachusetts Historical Commission Form Bs on 18 properties, adding to its historical inventory, many of which were critical towards determining Historical Significance and whether or not the property should be Preferably Preserved:

- 17 Edward Street
- 64 Court Street
- 69 Jerome Street
- 52 Allston Street
- 146 Summer Street
- 232 Fulton Street
- 4068 Mystic Valley Parkway
- 20 Otis Street
- 136 Boston Avenue
- 76 Sharon Street
- 124 Boston Avenue
- 128 Boston Avenue
- 132 Boston Avenue
- 138 Boston Avenue
- 180 Lincoln Road
- 8 Hamlin Avenue
- 15 Marion Street
- 7 Hamlin Avenue
- Form A (Area Form) – covering St. Clement Church, School, Rectory (Campus)

Summary of forms added under the Winter Hill Neighborhood Survey Project:

- 8 Massachusetts Historical Commission area forms were prepared and recorded 115 buildings. An additional 33 buildings were recorded in building forms. There were a total of 148 resources documented as part of this project.

Inventory forms are available on the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) available online through the Massachusetts Historical Commission website.

The Commission is awaiting additional survey products for the Hall Estate subdivision in Medford Square, and additional area forms for the Wellington neighborhood. These are expected in April of 2023.

Site Plan/Section 106 Reviews:

- Cell Phone Towers at the Middlesex Fells
- 4060 Mystic Valley Parkway
- 595 Broadway
- 162 Mystic Avenue
- 2-4 Capen Street
- 50 Winthrop Street
- 121 Riverside Avenue

City of Medford and Community Project Reviews/Support:

- City Hall Windows – CPC Support
- Sarah Bradlee Fulton Historic Marker Relocation

Demolition Delay:

In 2022, the Commission continued using the CitizenServe software and coordinated with the Building Department to review permit applications, request additional information, flag projects that require full review under the demolition delay, and to upload our findings for the permit record.

A Note about Findings and Delays: When a property is determined not Significant or Preferably Preserved, the permit hold is released upon filing of the letter with the Clerk shortly after the meeting. If a building is Significant and Preferably Preserved, an 18-month demolition delay is placed on the property. The amount of time elapsed can be up to eighteen months, but usually is much less. It is always the decision of the owner to make a bonafide effort to mitigate the impacts of demolition and/or wait out the demolition.

The Commission took action on demolition delay applications on the following properties:

- **160 Forest Street:** This project was stopped by the Building Commissioner in late 2021 for exceeding the scope of work allowed by the permit as granted. The Building Commissioner then directed the property owner to come before the Historical Commission due to the excessive demolition that had taken place. The Commission found 160 Forest Street to be **Significant**, but not **Preferably Preserved**, by a 5-0 vote.
- **33 Third Street:** Form B and merits of the house were discussed, including the house's age and importance to the historical Wellington neighborhood. The building was found to be historically **Significant**, 4-1 and **Preferably Preserved**, 3-2. This property remains under demolition delay as the owner has chosen not to engage with the Commission. The delay will expire in August of 2023.
- **28 Chester Ave:** After review of the Form B and merits of the house, the building was found to be **Not Significant** by 4-1.
- **93 Watson Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the house, the building was found to be **Not Significant** by 5-0.
- **17 Edward Street:** Commission members found elements of the Form B and Form A to be compelling, as the house is part of a strong neighborhood development context and found the property to be **Significant** 5-0, and **Preferably Preserved**, 4-0. The designers matched the existing details on the property, and the delay was lifted after 2 months.
- **78 Cotting Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the house – an early Cape style house and association with the Adams family - the building was found to be **Significant** by 5-0 and **Preferably Preserved** 4-0. The property owner had their architect alter the design to be more respectful of the original architecture and mitigate the demolition. The delay was lifted after 3 months.
- **64 Court Street:** After review of the Form B, and because the building had been altered over time, the building was found to be **Not Significant** by 5-0.
- **567 Boston Ave** (St. Clements Parochial School, 595 Boston Ave (St. Clement RC Elementary School), 0 Warner Street (St. Clement Church & Parish School) and 71 Warner Street (St. Clement Rectory). After review, all five buildings were believed to have a strong place in the history and development of Medford and were found to be **Significant**. This was for CPC eligibility only.
- **69 Jerome Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, including unique

exterior trim and association with historically important local architect/builder Moses Mann, the building was found to be **Significant**, 4-0 and **Preferably Preserved**, 4-0. The developer mitigated the demolition by matching the details of the existing building and preserving the front façade. The delay was lifted after 2 months.

- **52 Allston Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **130 Boston Ave:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Significant** 4-0 and **Preferably Preserved** 4-0 with one recusal for each vote. The building was documented and the owner changed their designs to mitigate the demolition by preserving historical details. The delay was lifted after 3 months.
- **146 Summer Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 4-1.
- **232 Fulton Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **20 Otis Street (Carriage House):** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Significant**, 5-0 and **Preferably Preserved**, 5-0. The owners changed their design to replicate the existing building, and the delay was lifted after 3 months.
- **76 Sharon Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, including being a rare example of stick style in Medford, the building was found to be **Significant**, 5-0 and **Preferably Preserved**, 3-2. The owners changed their design to mitigate the demolition and the delay was lifted after 2 months.
- **136 Boston Ave:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, including that not enough of the original house remained, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 4-0 with one recusal.
- **4054 Mystic Valley Parkway:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, and despite an interesting history in the development of the MVP area, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 4-0 with one recusal.
- **10 Newcomb Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **85 Fern Road:** After review of the Form B and merits of the house, the Commission found the property to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **2-4 Capen Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 4-0, with one abstention.
- **50 Winthrop Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the building was found to be **Not Significant**, 4-0, with one abstention.

- **80 Canal Street:** The building was automatically found to be significant because it was listed on the National Historic Register, Middlesex Canal Historic and Archaeological District, although it had lost integrity due to fire damage and other alterations. The building was found to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **11 Orchard Street:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the Commission found the property to be **Not Significant**, 5-0.
- **8 Hamlin Ave:** After review of the Form B and merits of the building, the Commission found the property to be **Not Significant**, 4-0.
- **31 South Street:** After review of the Form B and the merits of the building, including its association with Medford's shipbuilding industry, the Commission found the building to be **Significant**, 4-3 and **Preferably Preserved**, 5-1. The owner is currently working with the Commission to mitigate the demolition and lift the delay in advance of the full 18 months.
- **180 Lincoln Road:** After review of the Form B and the merits of the building, including its role in the Lawrence Estate neighborhood, the Commission found the property to be **Not Significant**, 6-0.

2023 Demolition Delay Summary:

25 Total Properties Reviewed for Significance

- 1 property found to be Significant – pending further review in 2023 (4%)
- 7 properties found to be Significant & Preferably Preserved (28%)
- 1 property found Significant but not Preferably Preserved (4%)
- 16 Not Significant / Not Preferably Preserved (64%)

City of Medford:

- Over 2,000 Building Permits issued in 2022
- Approx. 200 Building Permits (10%) were reviewed.
- 25 Permits were reviewed for Significance by MHC in 2022 (approx. 1%) and 2/3 of these were found to be **Not Significant**
- Only 9 Permits resulted in Demo Delay – less than ½ of 1% of all permits in Medford

Goals for 2023

- Continue to educate residents, owners, developers, real estate brokers, and City departments about the Demolition Delay ordinance to preserve Medford's historic resources. The Commission will continue to uphold the spirit of the bylaw and work with the Building Department and new Commissioner to identify projects that warrant review.
- Complete the first phase of the Thomas Brooks Park CPC-funded project.
- Work with the Historic District Commission to secure funding for a city-wide local historic district plan, using the extensive survey work which has been completed over the last 10+ years.

This work will address concerns raised by the City Council while the proposed 16 Foster Court historic district, and we will advocate with City Council and the Mayor to approve additional historic districts when proposed by the HDC.

- Work with the Department of Planning, Development and Sustainability to review existing city-wide plans and identify conflicts with our historic preservation objectives. The Commission will prioritize areas and apply funding toward the recommendation of additional survey work in these locations. We will share our findings with the Mayor and other City Departments to continue the ongoing collaboration.
- Survey the City residents on their understanding of the Demolition Delay, its applicability, success, and ways to improve the process.
- Strengthen the language in the Demolition Delay Ordinance so that it is clear, concise and legally enforceable. We will work with the Mayor, Building Commissioner, the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability, and the City Council to make this happen.
- 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
Chair, Medford Historical Commission
March 31, 2023