



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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December 31, 2015

To: Members of the Historical Commission

From: Charles Sullivan

Re: Case D-1382: 33 Kinnaird St., by Ryan Wittig. Demolish Mansard house (1869).

Current Conditions

An application to demolish the house at 33 Kinnaird Street was received on December 16, 2015. The owner, Ryan Wittig, was notified of an initial determination of significance and a public hearing was scheduled for January 7, 2016.

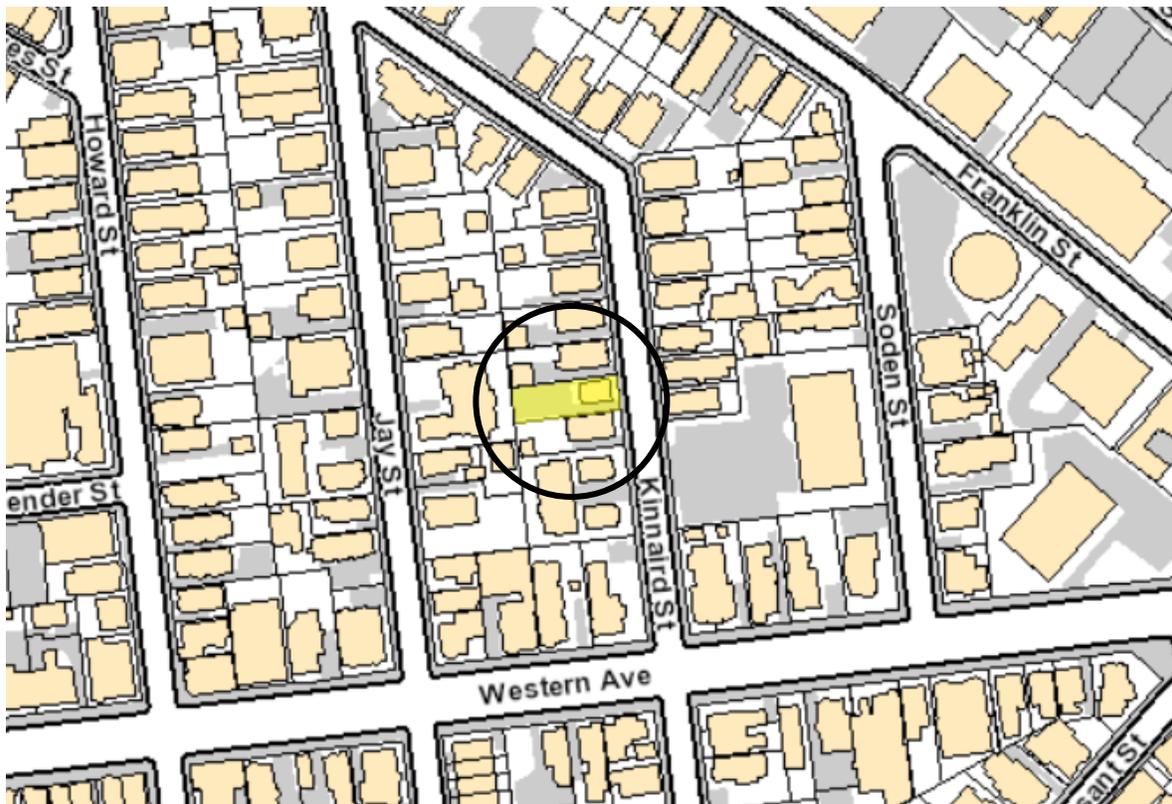


33 Kinnaird Street

Cambridge Assessors

The house at 33 Kinnaird Street occupies a 3,200 square-foot lot (123/6) on the west side of Kinnaird Street, north of Western Avenue. The house is a one-story frame building on a high basement with a Mansard roof. The zoning is Residence C-1, a multi-family housing district with maximum of 29 units per acre. The regular FAR and height limits in this district are .75 and 35 feet, though the zoning code has increased allowances for townhouse development. The assessed value

of the land and building, according to the Assessors database, is \$602,400 - \$99,200 for the house, and \$503,200 for the land.



Locus map

Cambridge GIS

The front of the house is set back from the sidewalk by approximately 10', ranging even with other houses on the west side of the street. The side setbacks are about 8' on the south and 3' on the north. There is a curb cut and driveway on the south side of the house.

The adjacent buildings include a Mansard cottage of 1870 at 31, a 1987 townhouse development, and five nearly identical two-story houses built in 1889. Across the street are a mixture of gable-front Italianates and three-deckers, as well as the parking lot of a Soden Street apartment building. Behind the property is a 2007 townhouse development at 30 Jay Street that incorporates a similar Mansard cottage that was moved on its lot to accommodate new construction.



33 Kinnaird Street (right)

Google Street View

The condition of 33 Kinnaird Street is fair. Some rot and peeling paint is evident on the door hoods and brackets, but the wood shingle siding dates from 1972 and is in good condition. The roof appears to be fairly new. The foundation consists of replacement concrete block on the east, north and west sides; on the south side the foundation is lower, and the framing of the lower level wall is noticeably deflected. No original details are apparent on the interior; all surfaces have been covered with paneling and the windows are vinyl replacements. The proponents wish to demolish the house and construct a two-family house on the lot.

Description

The house at 33 Kinnaird Street is a one-story Mansard cottage with a side hall plan built in 1869. The structure sits on a high basement that is especially apparent on the left (south) side. The front door is approached by a flight of nine steps and is sheltered by a hip-roof hood supported by Italianate brackets. The original clapboards and trim were covered by asphalt siding in 1947 and with wood shingles in 1972. The gutters are K-style aluminum. The Mansard roof is slightly concave and steeply pitched, consistent with the late date for this style.



33 Kinnaird Street front and south side detail



CHC staff photos

On the south side of the house the grade drops down from the sidewalk and the full height of the basement is framed and trimmed like the wall above. A door in the center of this wall has a hood and brackets similar but not identical to that above the front door and is flanked by two double-hung windows. The floor of the basement within is slightly lower than the driveway outside. The ledgerstone foundation is visible inside the basement on three sides, as is the concrete block that at some point replaced the brick cellar walls. Behind the house a flight of wooden steps reaches a deck at the first floor level. The back yard is paved for parking.

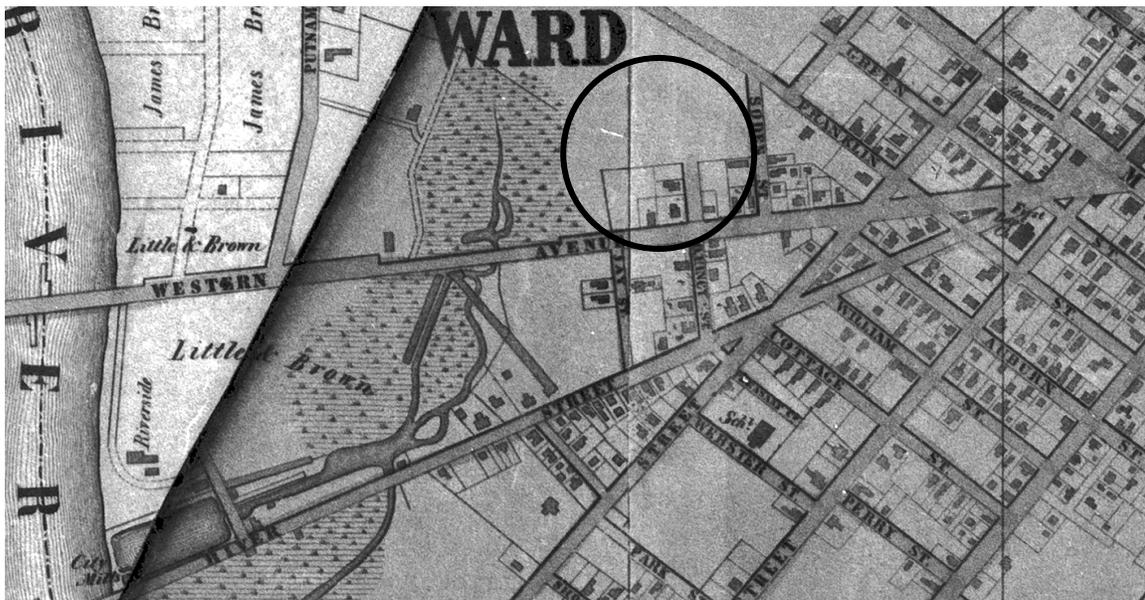


33 Kinnaid Street

Pictometry photo

History

The Riverside neighborhood north of Western Avenue was developed in the 1860s on lands originally held by the Dana family. The Western Avenue Bridge was opened in 1824, but the area developed slowly. The ground was marshy and poorly drained. Development initially occurred along Green Street to the north and Pleasant Street to the east. The residential development of the area intensified after the Civil War, spurred by the continued growth of the Riverside Press and the filling of the wetlands that fed a millpond that is now occupied by Hoyt Field.



Riverside in 1854

H.F. Walling Map of Cambridge (detail)

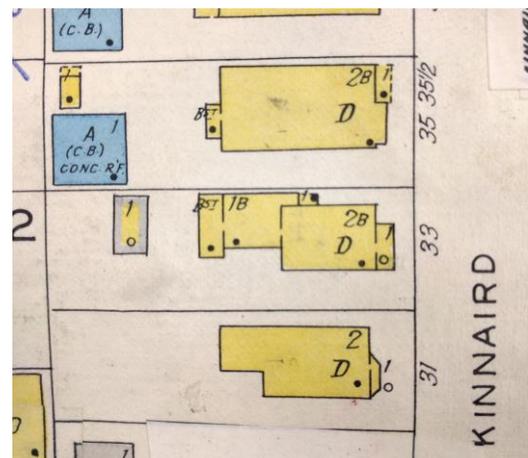
The lot now occupied by 33 Kinnaird Street was initially part of a much larger parcel traversed by Kinnaird, Jay and Howard Streets that was subdivided into 30 building lots between 1854 and 1873. Joseph A. Holmes (1812-1893), a prosperous grocer in Central Square, built over thirty houses in Cambridgeport between 1840 and 1887 to sell or to rent (including 30 Jay Street, also 1869, which abuts this property). He purchased the land from Sarah Ann Dana in 1868 and before the end of the year was taxed for an unfinished house. At some point during his ownership, probably between 1886 and 1894, Holmes constructed a one-story ell with a flat roof and an entrance on the right side that accommodated a second dwelling unit, designated 33½ Kinnaird.



33 Kinnaird Street in 1873 and 1894, showing the addition that made it a two-family

After Holmes died his heirs sold off of his rental properties. Rebecca Moorhead, a widow of Irish descent who had immigrated from New Brunswick, acquired 33 Kinnaird in about 1897 and took out a permit for a one-story addition on the front of the house so she could open a grocery store in the cellar. She operated the store and lived upstairs with her four children until about 1910.

33 Kinnaird Street in 1934, showing the ca. 1890 ell, the 1897 store addition in front, and the 1926 garage. Sanborn Map Co., *Atlas of Cambridge*





33 Kinnaird Street, 1965

CHC staff photo

In 1913 Patrick Dailey, a metalworker, acquired the property and rented the basement grocery store to a series of tenants who included Harry Shaparzian, who lived nearby on Western Avenue. During the Depression Dailey himself operated a variety store – one of 114 in the city in 1931. This venture failed, and in 1941 he was recorded as an employee of the Works Progress Administration. During WWII Dailey found work as a porter at the Badger Company in Kendall Square. Rose Dailey, his widow, left the property to their son Walter, a custodian at the Cambridge Hospital. He held the property in a life estate, from which the current owner purchased it in 2015.

The Daileys applied brick-pattern asphalt siding to the exterior in 1947, converted the building to a single-family about 1950, and razed the 1897 store addition in 1971. When the one-story ell was removed, probably in the 1970s, the house was returned to its original footprint.

Recommendation

The Holmes-Dailey house at 33 Kinnaird Street is significant as a characteristic example of moderate-income housing of the post-Civil War period in the Riverside neighborhood. The Mansard cottage is consistent with the context of the Kinnaird Street neighborhood and appears to be in recoverable condition. Demolition and replacement with a new building could interrupt the continuity of the streetscape.

The staff recommends that the Commission hear testimony from the neighbors and carefully review the plans for replacement construction before making a further determination.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, Inspectional Services
Ryan Wittig