



CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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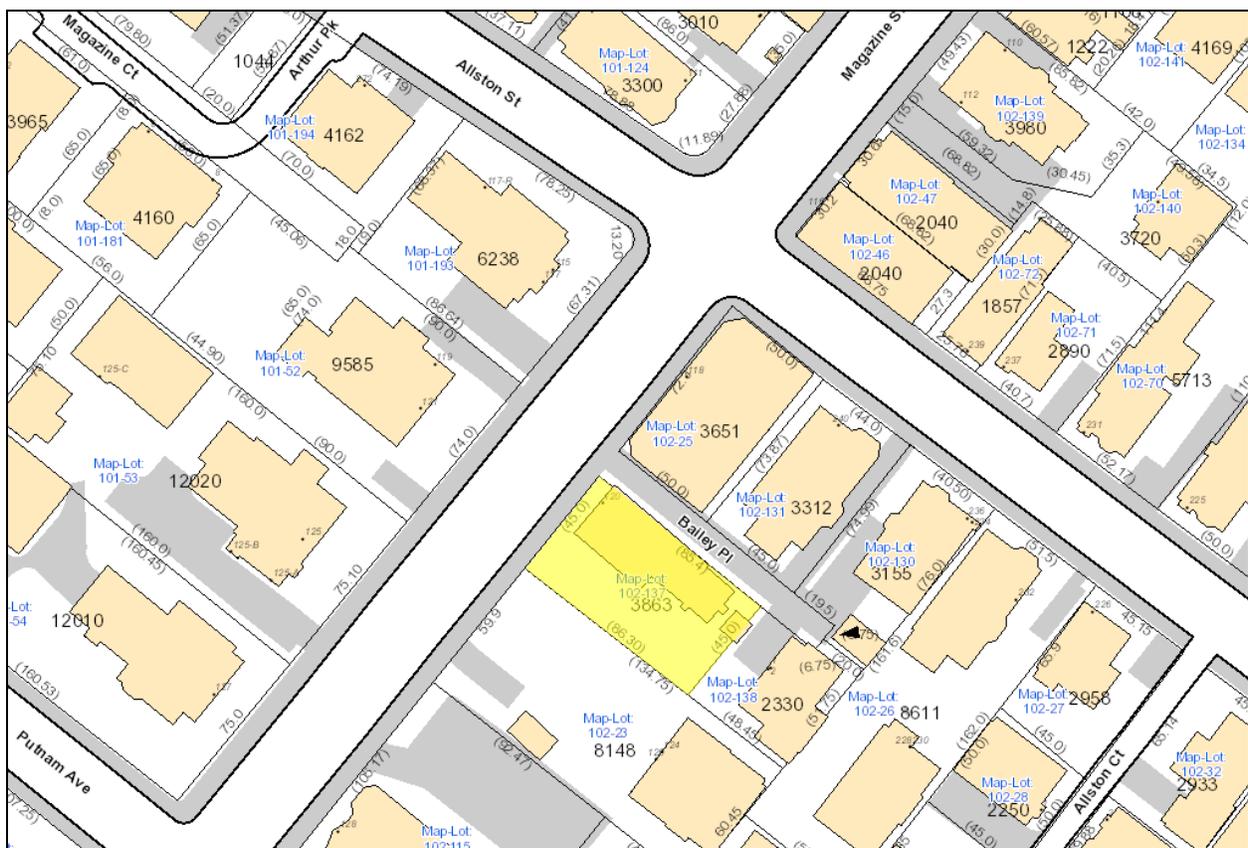
December 4, 2018

To: Members of the Historical Commission
From: Charles Sullivan, Executive Director
Sarah L. Burks, Preservation Planner
Re: Case D-1501: Isaiah Bailey house, 120 Magazine Street (1844)

On or about October 22, 2018, the Greek Revival house at 120 Magazine Street built by Isaiah Bailey in 1844 was substantially demolished in the course of a project intended to rehabilitate the structure.

CHC staff notified the Inspectional Services Department, which stopped work at the site. The owners, Lindsay MacIndoe and Wendy Holding, requested a hearing of the Historical Commission to consider relief from the two-year construction moratorium that is provided for in the enforcement clause of the demolition delay ordinance. A public hearing was advertised for December 6, 2018. The owners have also applied to the BZA for relief to reconstruct a non-conforming structure.

The plans approved with the building permit and photographs taken throughout the job timeline were distributed to the Commission in the December meeting packets.



GIS map of 120 Magazine St (highlighted in yellow) and environs

Description

The Isaiah Bailey house was a 2½-story two-family structure oriented with its gable end facing Magazine Street. The three-bay side-hall plan was executed in the Greek Revival style with a broad gable, an undercut porch with four Doric columns, symmetrically placed 6-over-6 double-hung windows, clapboard siding, pilasters, sidelights flanking the front door, and a round arched window in the gable end. The arched window and the form of the pediment may indicate that the house was remodeled in the Italianate period, ca. 1865-75, and that it might have originated as a 1½-story house with a projecting porch. Several contemporaneous houses on Cottage Street demonstrate both versions.



120 Magazine Street, ca. 2016

Assessing Dept. photo

The main block of the house measured 22' wide by 29' deep. The two-story ells extended another 30' to the rear and measured approximately 16' wide. According to the Assessors, the house contained approximately 2,737 square feet of living space, not counting any finished space in the basement.

Though the house retained its massing and form prior to the intended renovation, there had been several alterations made over the years. Vinyl siding was applied in 1987, and the front door and sidelights were replaced in 1994. A 25' long shed dormer was constructed in 2001 on the south side of the main block of the house. At some point the original fluted Doric columns were replaced with thinner columns without fluting.



120 Magazine Street, 1965

CHC photo

History

The settlement of Cambridgeport was made possible by the construction of the West Boston Bridge in 1793. Prior to that time, there were only three houses east of Quincy Street, and the area south of present Massachusetts Avenue was completely unpopulated. Most of Cambridgeport was controlled by two landowners, William Jarvis and Francis Dana, while all of East Cambridge fell to Andrew Craigie. Dana, a descendant of an old Cambridge family, controlled not only land along Dana Hill but also most of Cambridgeport south of Massachusetts Avenue. Jarvis and Dana worked with the Proprietors of the West Boston Bridge to lay out Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street but did not otherwise develop a master plan for the area.

For the most part the Dana lands were developed systematically, with the blocks closest to Massachusetts Avenue developed first. In typical fashion, tracts were sold and then divided into successively smaller parcels for speculative residential development. The 1840s saw similar houses going up in two widely separated parts of the Dana lands, along Cottage Street near Central Square and on the relatively high ground on lower Magazine Street. The house at 120 Magazine

Street and a neighbor at 118 Magazine Street (which was replaced by stores in 1922) were the oldest houses on the block and prefigured the development of the Pine Grove subdivision.



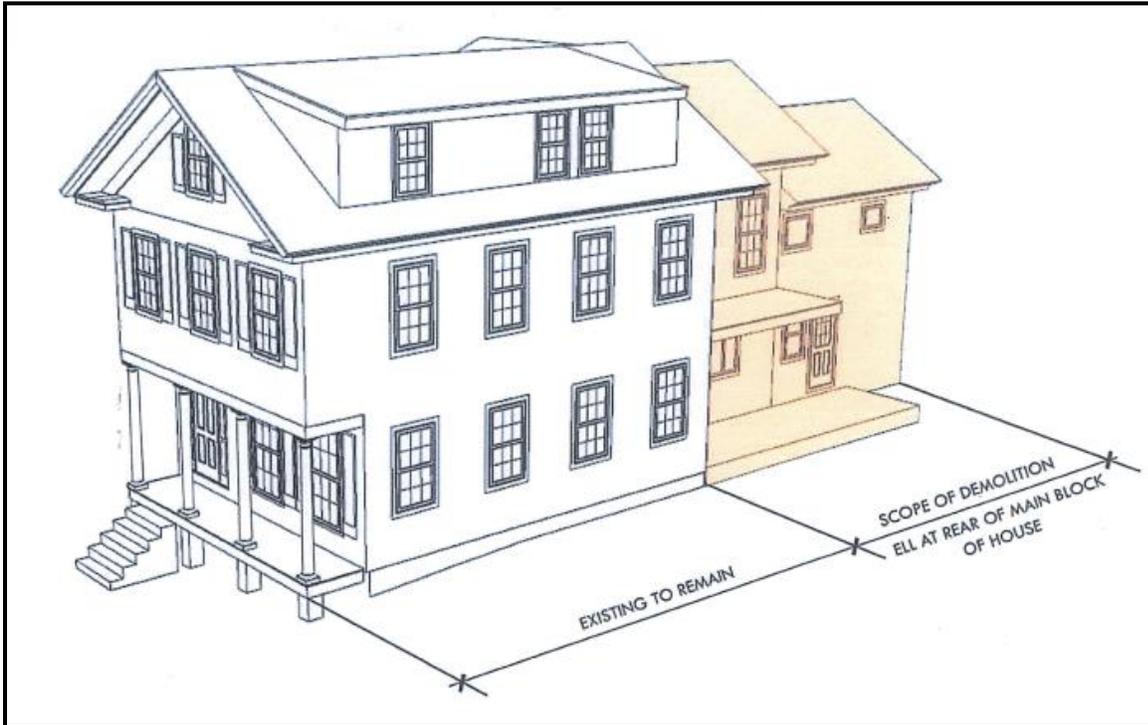
Lower Magazine Street, 1854

H.F. Walling, Map of Cambridge

The house was constructed by Isaiah Bailey, a mason, in 1844. His family lived there for several decades. His son, Isaiah Baily, Jr., was also a mason. The property changed hands several times in the 1860s, though the Baileys appear to have still been residents there. In 1870, it was purchased by James A. Caldwell, a butter dealer. He constructed the house at the rear of the property (120½ Magazine, now called 2 Bailey Place) in 1876. Each building housed two families by at least 1906.

Recent Events

Wendy Holding and Lindsay MacIndoe purchased 120 Magazine Street in September 2016 and retained Foley Fiore Architects to design a renovation. The Board of Zoning Appeal granted a variance to allow construction of a new dormer and an addition to the non-conforming house on May 11, 2017 (#BZA-012376-2017). CHC staff agreed that the two-story ells were not significant, and ISD issued a demolition permit for them on February 14, 2018 (#DEMO-015259-2017). ISD issued building permit on June 22, 2018 to renovate the existing house and to construct a new 2-story rear addition as approved by the Board of Zoning Appeal.



Demolition plan, 120 Magazine Street

Foley Fiore Architecture



After construction began the Commissioner of Inspectional Services approved a revised design that eliminated the columns and enclosed the original undercut porch. CHC staff objected to this request but had no further authority in the matter. The owners were not required to return to the Board of Zoning Appeal to amend their variance.

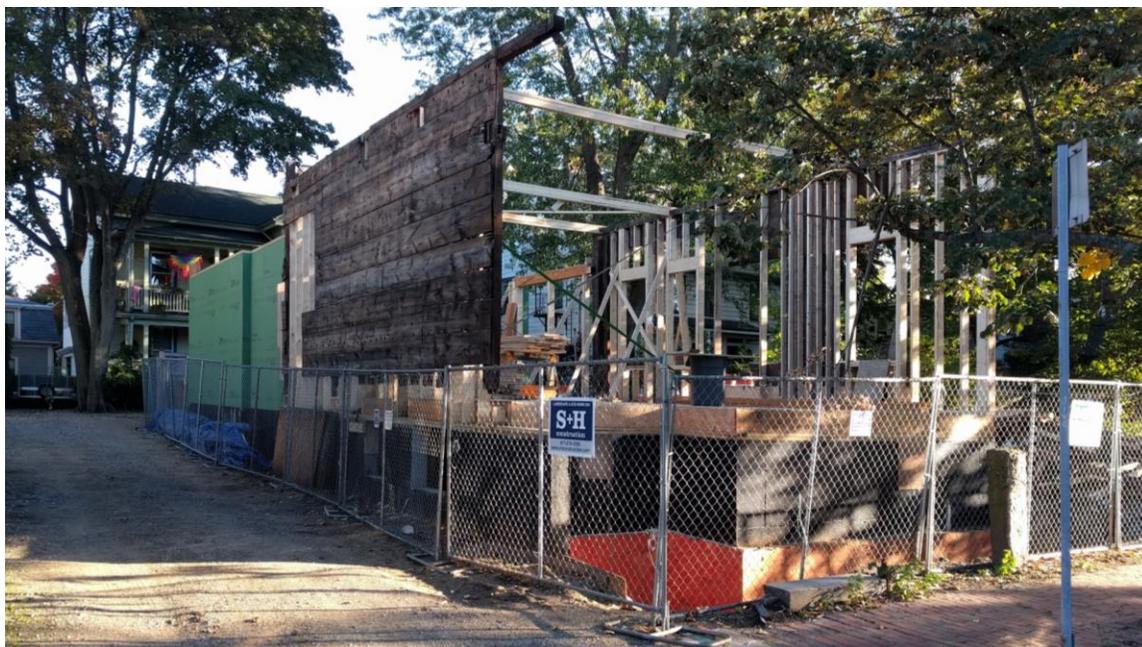
Revised front elevation with filled-in porch.
Foley Fiore Architecture



120 Magazine Street, July 17, 2018

Assessing Dept. photo

After the eels were removed the main block of the house was stripped down to the frame and sheathing and lifted off its foundation. The structure was set back on a new foundation and the contractors began to reframe the structure in accordance with the architects' drawings. In the course of this work the contractor removed not only the entire roof but also the framing of the second floor. The first and second-floor joists were removed, and the first-floor walls were re-framed with new studs. Only a few sheathing boards remained by the time work was stopped on or about October 23, 2018.



120 Magazine Street, October 16, 2018

CHC staff photo



120 Magazine Street, October 16, 2018

CHC staff photo



120 Magazine Street, April 23, 2017

Cambridge GIS/ConnectExplorer™

Provisions of the Ordinance

The demolition delay ordinance, Cambridge Municipal Code, Ch. 2.78, Article II, requires CHC review of applications to demolish buildings fifty or more years old (2.78.090.A). Demolition is defined in the ordinance, Section 2.78.080.G, as

"the act of pulling down, destroying, removing or razing a building or commencing the work of total or substantial destruction with the intent of completing the same."

The Inspectional Services Department further defines demolition as the removal of 25% or more of a structure.

The enforcement clause of the demolition delay ordinance requires that "no building permit shall be issued with respect to any premises upon which a building fifty years or more old has been voluntarily demolished otherwise than pursuant to a demolition permit granted after compliance with the provisions of this article for a period of two years after the date of the completion of such demolition" (2.78.120.B).

Recommendations

In the present case voluntary demolition of a building more than fifty years old occurred with a building permit intended to remodel the front block of the house and construct an addition, and the penalty described in the ordinance is in effect.

The Commission has no authority to modify the provisions of the ordinance, but on some past occasions of unauthorized demolition it has voted that a significant structure is no longer preferably preserved with respect to the proposed project. Such an action does not obviate the facts of the case, but allows projects to proceed after other city permits are granted.

In one recent case, 13-15 Kinnaird Street (2015), the owner agreed to abandon the proposed project in favor of a restoration of the main block of the house, which was built in 1855. The Commission concluded that, in the context of the revised plan, a) that it was not in the public interest to continue the moratorium; b) that the building was significant but not preferably preserved; and c) delegated approval of construction details to the staff. The project was then allowed to proceed after a three-month delay.

The Commission should first consider whether the former structure at 120 Magazine Street should be considered "significant" under the provisions of the ordinance.¹ The Commission should then consider whether to allow the project to proceed as permitted, or whether mitigation such as reconstruction of the earlier design (as seen in the 1965 photo) would be in the public interest. In making its determination the Commission should be aware that the owners will have to return to the Board of Zoning for a new variance, and that amended design with the filled-in porch was not permitted by the variance that the project received in 2017.

cc: Ranjit Singanayagam, ISD
James J. Rafferty, Esq.
Michael Wiggins, Esq.

¹ L. "Significant building" means any building within the City which is in whole or in part fifty years or more old and:

1. Which is within any historic district; or
2. Which is listed on, or is within an area listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, or which is the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register; or
3. Which is or has been designated by the Commission to be a significant building after a finding by the Commission that a building either:
 - a. Is 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, or
 - b. Is historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings. (2.78.080)