



City of Medford

HISTORICAL COMMISSION &
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

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

Via Electronic Mail and Fax

September 16, 2026

Laurel Siegel, City Clerk
Medford City Hall
85 George P. Hassett Drive
Medford, MA 02155
(781) 605-4735

Re: Determination of Significance – 71 Mystic Avenue

Dear Madam Clerk,

The Medford Historical Commission (the “Commission”) has received an application concerning the proposed demolition of the dwelling house located at 71 Mystic Avenue, Medford, MA. The application was filed at the Commission’s regular meeting on Monday, August 10, 2026. Pursuant to Section 48-78(d) of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford, a public meeting was held on Monday, September 14, 2026, at 7 PM via Zoom to determine if the aforementioned property was to be found to be *significant* under Medford’s Demolition Delay Ordinance.

As set forth in Section 48-78, a significant building is any structure, or a portion thereof, which is not within a local historic district subject to regulation under the provisions of MGLA c. 40C, but which:

1. Has been listed in or is the subject of a pending application for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; or
2. Has been listed in the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places; or
3. Was built within 75 years or older and which is determined by the commission to be a significant building as provided by subsection 48-78(d) either because:
 - a. It 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. It is historically or architecturally important in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with an important architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings.

At the September 14, 2026 meeting, the Commission made the determination that 71 Mystic Avenue is a *significant building* under Section 48-78 of the Demolition Delay Ordinance. The Commission’s determination (passed by a 5-1 vote), was based on the documentation and research contained in the attached Massachusetts Historical Commission (‘MHC’) form B prepared by John Clemson, the Commission’s consultant in architectural history. The Commission also reviewed the expanded narrative for the Wellington Neighborhood in which the premises is located. The facts supporting the finding are as follows:

1. 71 Mystic Avenue is the last surviving wood-frame dwelling from the original residential development of this section of Mystic Avenue. Constructed between 1867 and 1875, the Connors House dates to a period when the west side of Mystic Avenue was developed with modest wood-frame residences. By 1898, nine similar houses occupied the block between Columbia Road and Hancock Court. These residences were subsequently lost as the area was redeveloped for commercial use during the twentieth century. 71 Mystic Avenue is now the last surviving resource from this original development, making it an exceptionally important physical record of the neighborhood’s nineteenth-century residential character
2. 71 Mystic Avenue is a rare and diminishing resource. The City of Medford Survey Plan notes that buildings constructed before 1900 are becoming increasingly rare in our dense suburban landscape. In a city of our size,

approximately 3000 pre-1900 resources remain. The Commission views the retention of these buildings as a top priority.

3. 71 Mystic Avenue has historical association with the working-class and Irish immigrant history of Medford. The house was acquired in 1867 by James Connors, an Irish immigrant who worked as a laborer and the property remained associated with his family until 1887. From then until 1957, the property was owned and occupied by three generations of the Barry family, also of Irish heritage. The house, therefore, provides a tangible connection to the residential history, social history, and ethnic heritage of the working-class families who occupied this portion of Medford during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
4. 71 Mystic Avenue is an integral surviving component of a historically layered landscape shaped by residential and then commercial and industrial development. The property occupies land within an 1853 subdivision whose western boundary generally followed the former Middlesex Canal, while Mystic Avenue follows the route of the Medford Turnpike. The house represents the transitional change from open space to residential development. The area again transitioned from residential to commercial in the early twentieth century. The surrounding parcels became home to various businesses and industrial uses. This building, as the last wood-frame residence, provides a strong reminder of the former land use.

Based on the information available to it, the Commission has found 71 Mystic Avenue to be historically significant under Section 48-78(d) under criteria a and b set forth in the determination of “significant building” in Section 48-77 of the Demolition Delay Ordinance, as it has important associations with the broad architectural and social history of the City of Medford. It is architecturally important in terms of period and style, both by itself and in the context of buildings in the Medford Square South Neighborhood in which it was erected. These factors, viewed in combination, provide ample support for a finding of significance.

In accordance with section 48-78 (e) of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford, **the Medford Historical Commission will hold a public hearing on Monday, October 5, 2026 at 7pm via Zoom** to determine if the demolition of 71 Mystic Avenue would be detrimental to the historical, cultural, or architectural heritage or resources of the City of Medford. Within 21 days from the close of the meeting on October 5, 2026, the Commission will issue a formal written determination as to whether 71 Mystic Avenue should be “preferably preserved” and thus the demolition delay provided for in Section 48-78(h) of the Revised Ordinances.

Additional information regarding the meeting, including online link, will be filed with the legal notice and upcoming agenda which will be submitted as required by open meeting rules and regulations.

Any questions regarding this determination and the hearing to be conducted on 71 Mystic Avenue may be directed to the Chair of the Historical Commission at HistoricalCommission@Medford-MA.gov.

Sincerely,



Jennifer M. Keenan
Chair, Medford Historical Commission

CC: Applicants of Record
Building Department/Building Commissioner