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

October 21, 2026

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

Re: Determination of Significance – 141 Grant Avenue

Dear Madam Clerk,

The Medford Historical Commission (the "Commission") has received an application concerning the proposed partial demolition of the dwelling house located at 141 Grant Avenue, Medford, MA. The application was filed at the Commission's regular meeting on Monday, October 5, 2026. Pursuant to Section 48-78(d) of the Revised Ordinances of the City of Medford, a public meeting was held on Monday, October 19, 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 October 19, 2026 meeting, the Commission made the determination that 141 Grant Avenue is a *significant building* under Section 48-78 of the Demolition Delay Ordinance. The Commission's determination (passed by a 5-0 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 Glenwood Neighborhood in which the premises is located. The facts supporting the finding are as follows:

1. 141 Grant Avenue is a distinctive example of Queen Anne architecture. The Matthew J. Conway House, constructed circa 1889-1898, is a two-and-a-half story Queen Anne style residence distinguished by its full height, three-story, polygonal corner turret and steeply pitched conical roof. Other character-defining features include its wrap around porch, turned porch posts, decorative scroll brackets, and eave returns. These features represent the height of late nineteenth century architecture and contribute to the overall historic character.

2. 141 Grant Avenue represents the development of East Medford during the late nineteenth century. The house was constructed during a period of dramatic transformation of the farm previously associated with the Hall family into a residential development. The subdivision, laid out by Ephraim Adams, follows the 1891 collapse of

the Hall family business. The house is tangible evidence of the first wave of buildings constructed as this section of Medford transformed from agricultural use to residential house lots.

3. 141 Grant Avenue contributes to the overall character of East Medford. Located near the Salem Street corridor and Haines Square, the building is an important transition between the commercial frontage and residential buildings beyond. The area is a densely packed enclave that contains many single family and duplex buildings on smaller lots. This is typical of buildings of similar age, style, and form. Preserving the house will help retain historic scale, the architectural variety, and the relationship between the residential and commercial districts.

4. 141 Grant Avenue contributes to our understanding of the social history of Glenwood. The house is associated with Matthew J. Conway, who purchased the property in 1918 and lived there with his wife, Ellen, and six children. Conway worked for the Boston Elevated Railway for 52 years, serving as an electrician and later as a foreman. The railway operated streetcar routes through Medford, including Salem Street and the Fellsway. The house reflects the working class and middle class residents whose employment contributed to the growth of greater Medford and the Boston communities.

5. 141 Grant Avenue retains a high degree of integrity. Despite alterations, including replacement windows and conversion from one to two families, the house retains several important features, particularly its prominent turret, conical roof, front porch, siding, window and door placement, and rear bay. The overall Queen Anne form, its residential setting, and documented history make it a good surviving record of the nineteenth century. These characteristics support consideration of the buildings preservation value.

Based on the information available to it, the Commission has found 141 Grant 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 East Medford 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, November 9, 2026 at 7pm via Zoom** to determine if the demolition of 141 Grant 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 November 9, 2026, the Commission will issue a formal written determination as to whether 141 Grant 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 141 Grant 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