

The Sparhawk House

Study Report



Boston Landmarks Commission
Environment Department
City of Boston

Report on the Potential Designation of
Sparkhawk House
45 Murdock Street, Brighton, Massachusetts

as a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended

Approved by:

Ellen Lipsey, Executive Director

Date

Approved by:

Susan D. Pranger, Chairman

Date

Contents	Page
1. Location of Property	4
2. Description	7
3. Significance	11
4. Economic Status	20
5. Planning Context	21
6. Alternative Approaches	23
7. Recommendations	25
8. Bibliography	26

1.0 Location of Property

1.1 Address:

45 Murdock Street, Brighton (Boston), MA

Assessor's parcel numbers:

Ward 22, Parcel 2201990000

1.2 Area in which property is located:

Approximately 19,476 square feet of land comprise the Sparhawk House property. The house is situated in the center of the parcel on Murdock Street just northeast of where Whitney Street intersects on the west side of Murdock Street in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston.

1.3 Map Showing Location



Map from Boston Redevelopment Authority *Boston Atlas- Brighton Center/Oak Square*

1.4 Assessor's Map Illustrating Location (outlined)



2.0 Description

2.1 Type and Use

Historical documentation, such as maps and physical evidence, supports the 1899 account of Brighton historian J.P.C. Winship that the house was built in 1802 for Edward Sparhawk. It was originally located near the intersection of Elko and Sparhawk streets, closer to Cambridge Street. The house was moved to the present smaller lot by 1873 and converted into a two-family dwelling. It remained in use as a two-family house until the mid-20th century, at which time as many as five families may have lived here. In the latter 20th century it was converted to six one-bedroom apartments. Since 2006 the house has stood vacant.

2.2 Physical Description

The house is situated on a lot facing south and perpendicular to Murdock Street. It is a timber frame structure, two-and-one half stories high with a gable roof. Extending from the east gable end are two gable roof wings, one two stories high followed by a shorter wing one story high. The entire structure is covered with aluminum siding added in 1965. Additional siding has been added to the porticos and the south entrance in recent years.

All of the first floor windows are boarded over but recent photographs show that, like the upper floor windows, the main body of the house has two-over-two wood double hung sash that probably date to the late nineteenth century when the house was converted for two families. The first floor of the two east wings, and the single north dormer over the main block of the house, retain original six over six double hung sash.

A single brick chimney rises from the ridge of the roof over the east end of the main block of the house. This section of the house rests on a foundation of ashlar granite blocks. The principal façade faces south and is five bays wide with a central entrance. A one-story hipped roof portico, also encased in aluminum siding, is over the entrance. The portico rests on a brick platform with brick steps and a single iron railing that replaced a wood platform and steps in 1946. A single eight-panel door is flanked by sidelights and what is believed to be a fanlight encased behind siding.

On the north side of the houses is a second entrance with a round arched glazed and paneled door. This door stylistically dates from the 1870s and probably was added when the house was converted for two families. This entrance also has a portico encased in aluminum siding that rests on a 1946 brick platform with iron hand railing. The roof above this five-bay façade has a central hipped- roof dormer with paired windows and six over six double hung wood sash.

The west façade, which faces Murdock Street, is four bays wide with one of the original double hung sash on the first floor replaced with a single small fixed sash.

The two east wings are on rubble stone foundations. The larger wing, two-stories high, is two bays wide with a smaller third window added on the south side. On the north side of this wing the two second floor windows have been replaced with small fixed sash. A third fixed sash was added on that façade.

The smaller one-story wing is one bay wide with two doors on the gable end facing east flanking a shed roof appendage that may originally have been a privy. Extending at an angle from each corner of the one-story wing are long entrance vestibules to provide access to the basement. Each has a gable roof. On the northeast corner the entrance vestibule is wood frame and was added by 1949. On the southeast corner the smaller entrance vestibule is concrete block construction and probably dates from the late 20th century.

2.3 Photographs



View from southeast.



View from southwest.



View of house from northeast.



View of house from northwest.

3.0 Significance

Built in 1802 by Edward Sparhawk, the house is associated with a family that was important in the early history of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the years leading up to the American Revolution. However, 45 Murdock Street is the second dwelling built by this branch of the Sparhawk family, and it is no longer sited on the original homestead location. The level of alterations, including its relocation and conversion for two families, and later for multiple units, represents a loss of integrity which significantly detracts from its level of significance in terms of Landmark eligibility. Although it is a rare surviving Federal period farmhouse, no outbuildings survive that convey the sense of a farmstead. As a rare surviving Federal period farmhouse, its primary significance relates to the history of Brighton, and to Edward Sparhawk as a descendant of one of Brighton's most important founding families.¹

3.1 Historic Significance

The primary source for the history of the house at 45 Murdock Street is the work of Brighton's nineteenth century historian, J.P.C. Winship. Winship, who undoubtedly knew Edward C. Sparhawk, provided the construction date of 1802 in his 1899 history of Brighton. The Town of Brighton lasted less than three-quarters of a century, 1807-1874. That time frame is remarkably coeval with the period of significance for the house itself, 1802 until 1873 when it was relocated on Murdock Street and used as a rental property. Thus, the house is of exceptional importance in the history of the Town of Brighton.

The Sparhawk family in Massachusetts originated with Nathaniel who came from Dedham, England and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1636.² In the 17th century the Town of Cambridge extended across the south side of the Charles River to include what was called "Little Cambridge" and later became the Town of Brighton. The south side of the Charles River was transferred from Watertown to Cambridge in 1634 as grazing land. Little Cambridge was linked to Boston via the Roxbury Highway in 1638. The road followed North Harvard and Harvard streets over the Neck into Boston. A bridge over the Charles replaced ferries in 1663. Nathaniel Sparhawk's holdings extended across both sides of the river and included five houses and over 1,000 acres. He died in 1647 and his sons Samuel and Nathaniel II inherited the land in Little Cambridge. Samuel built a house for himself on Western Avenue, while Nathaniel II built the house near Cambridge

¹ The Fowler-Clark Study Report identified only four Federal period farmhouses in Boston built between 1796-1806. However, this number may be artificially low due to the cut-off date of 1806, given the lack of certainty in dating many houses from this period.

² For the Sparhawk family and the history of Brighton, I have relied heavily on J.P.C. Winship's *History of Brighton*, vol. I. Boston: George A. Ware, 1899, and William P. Marchione's *The Bull in the Garden: A History of Allston-Brighton*. Boston: The Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston, 1986.

Street in 1649, where he died in 1685. The Nathaniel II Sparhawk house was the first house on the site near Elko Street which 45 Murdock Street replaced in 1802.

The Town of Cambridge established Market and Faneuil streets in 1656, while Washington Street was a joint effort of the Town of Boston (including Brookline, then known as Muddy River), Cambridge and Watertown. As the population of Little Cambridge grew in the eighteenth century, a parish church was built in 1744 at the northeast corner of Washington and Market streets, not far from the Nathaniel Sparhawk homestead. The burial ground behind the church dates to 1764 and on land obtained from Nathaniel Sparhawk IV. The cattle market that played such an important role in Brighton's history was established in 1775 on Washington Street, although not originally at the location on the northwest corner of Market and Washington streets. While the cattle market was important to the economy, this economic benefit was undercut by the construction of the West Boston Bridge over the Charles River in 1793. The new bridge provided a direct link between Boston and Cambridge that diminished the importance of Little Cambridge.

The children of Nathaniel II and Patience included Nathaniel III and Samuel, who were prominent in Cambridge as selectmen. Samuel Sparhawk (1665-1713) built a two-story gambrel roof house on Western Avenue (demolished in 1898).³ Daughter Sybil married Michael Wigglesworth, author of *The Day of Doom*, an important religious tract. Nathaniel Sparhawk II died in 1734, while his wife Abigail lived to 106 and remained in the homestead built by her father-in-law. Their eldest son, Nathaniel III, died in 1732 before the father, so the house first passed to a second son, Noah (d. 1749), then to her grandson Nathaniel IV. With Nathaniel IV the Sparhawk estate began a decline. Nathaniel IV married twice and fathered nine children. From his first wife Priscilla the children were John (d.1791), Nathaniel V (d.1794), George (d.1864), Noah (moved to Shrewsbury), Blake (d.1812 in Watertown) and Lydia (d.1846). His second wife, Hannah Murdock, gave him four children: Nathan, Edward, Catherine, and Thomas Gardner (d.1776). Nathaniel IV died in the Revolution in 1777, leaving his estate considerably in debt and to be divided between his wife and seven children.⁴

Nathaniel's wife Hannah was left one share of his real estate, 60 pounds and a chaise, along with the right to keep it in the "chaise house". Son John was to receive two shares and the homestead, provided he settled there and paid the debts. If he declined the homestead, it was to go to his son Nathaniel. In any case, Nathaniel was to receive one share, as did Noah, Blake, Lydia, Edward and Catherine. (The dispersion of the estate in probate is beyond the scope of this

³ As with brother Nathaniel, Samuel's name continued through several generations. There was Samuel II (1698-1774), Samuel III (1730-?) and Samuel IV (1766-1814). At his death the estate in the Western Avenue branch as sold at public auction. See *Independent Chronicle* May 15, 1815 for notice that the property would be rented, and *Boston Daily Advertiser* March 19, 1816 for auction notice.

⁴ Middlesex County Probate Records, Case #20894, Nathaniel Sparhawk will, 1777.

report.) On November 28, 1789 (twelve years after her husband's death) the estate was sold at public auction: "part of the homestead of said deceased, 2/3 of a good dwelling house and barn, and about 40 acres of excellent land consisting of mowing, orcharding and tilling." There was also 8 acres of wetland on the Charles River, 2/3 of a pew in the meetinghouse, and unimproved land in Sudbury, Canada, and in Maine on the Androscoggin River.⁵ Hannah eventually managed to obtain one third of the homestead, where she lived. According to Winship, "After her husband's death she was left with little means and was obliged to mortgage the family property. By working with her needle, however, she earned enough to pay off the mortgage and save the place for her children."⁶ This was probably an over-simplification of how the core of the estate was saved. In 1810 there was an agreement that Hannah would pay Edward Sparhawk \$500 for use of the easterly portion of the house "where she now lives", including the northeast corner of the cellar below and passage via the main entrance.⁷

The eldest brother John died in 1791, followed by his brother Nathaniel in 1794. It was Edward who ended up with the core of the estate, including the mansion house. Edward had been born in 1770 and went to sea as a young man (he was only seven when his father died). According to his obituary, his mother persuaded him to return home.⁸ His occupation in the early 1800s was housewright, and he eventually paid the mortgage on much of the estate in 1800.⁹ According to Winship, "In 1802 he had the old house on rollers in order to make some repairs; during the night a storm sprang up and blew it over."¹⁰ Edward then built the house that now stands at 45 Murdock Street, in which his mother continued to live until her death in 1826.

⁵ Ibid, Nathaniel Sparhawk probate records.

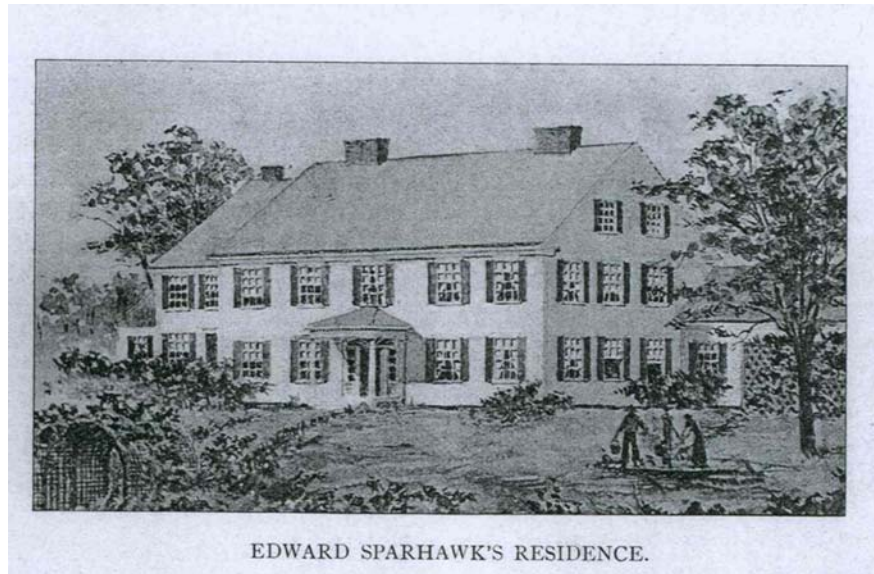
⁶ Winship, *History of Brighton*, vol. 1, p.169.

⁷ Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 210, p.474.

⁸ *Brighton Item*, June 14, 1890, p.8. This account mentions that Edward spoke often about his family history.

⁹ Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 136, p.140-41, 142, 143. It is these early deed references where Sparhawk is identified as a housewright.

¹⁰ Winship, *History of Brighton*, p.171.

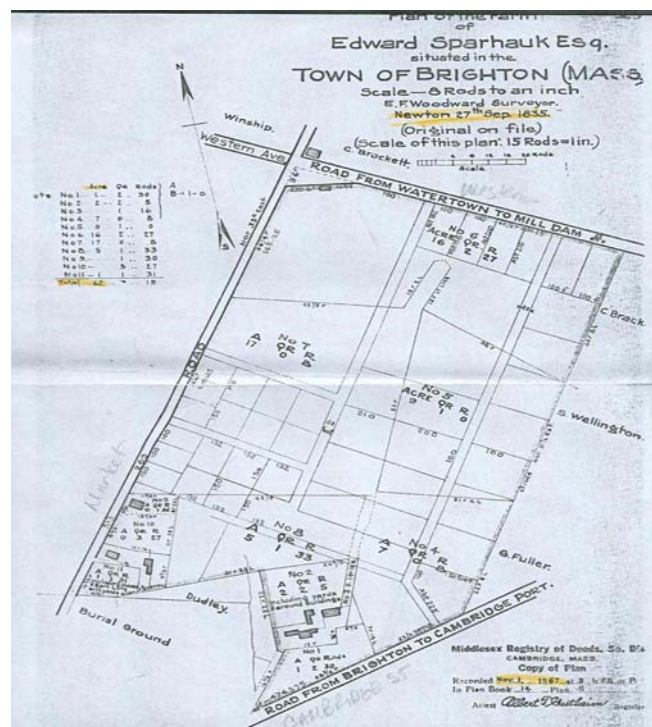


45-47 Murdock Street on its original site, as published in Winship's 1899 History of Brighton. No identification is given of the artist or source of the drawing.

In 1807 the Town of Brighton was established. Cambridge Street was built in 1808, followed by a bridge over the Charles River in 1810. Edward prospered as a businessman and, if the deed references are any indication, ceased practicing the trade of housewright. Samuel Sparhawk, with whom he jointly purchased property, died in 1814. His property, including the seventeenth-century house and a three-story mansion house with brick ends, was auctioned in February 1816. In the mid 1820s Brighton Avenue was built from the newly completed milldam, roughly along the lines of Commonwealth Avenue. Western Avenue also dates from that period, although some road must have existed earlier to access the Samuel Sparhawk House. The Boston & Worcester Railroad was constructed along the Charles River in 1832, which contributed to the prosperity of the cattle market. The Cattle Fair Hotel had been built at the northwest corner of Cambridge and Market streets in 1830, and substantially enlarged in 1852. The Newton Street (omnibus) Railway along Washington and Cambridge streets followed in 1858.

Edward was elected Town of Brighton selectman in 1808-09 and 1817-27. He was town treasurer in 1830-36, first Collector, Justice of the Peace and deacon at the First Parish Church. Although deed references referred to Sparhawk as a housewright as late as 1817, he appears to have been more successful as a businessman. Edward Sparhawk served as Treasurer of the Cattle Fair Hotel Corporation until he was age 90, was president of the Citizen's Mutual Insurance Company, and president of the Bank of Brighton. The estate he reassembled is reflected in an 1835 survey of the property prepared by E.F. Woodward, but not registered in the Middlesex County Registry until 1867. Edward's wife Elizabeth

died in 1858, and he lived on in the house he built until 1867.¹¹ Edward's son, Edward Corey Sparhawk, was born in the same house in 1805 and inherited the homestead portion of the property. The north half of the estate went to his brother George (1810-1879). These two sons were the only children who survived him. George was a Harvard educated attorney who lived in Boston and other locations before he died in Brooklyn, New York. Edward C. Sparhawk did not attend college. According to the United States Federal Census in 1850, his occupation was "farmer", while his father was listed as "bank president" (a position Edward Corey took on only after his father's death). Edward married Elizabeth Greenwood in 1833 but the couple had no children of their own. He served as town selectman, assessor, was a director of the Market National Bank and president and director of the Citizen Mutual Insurance Company.



Plot Plan of Edward Sparhawk's Land, 1835 as recorded in 1867. Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 14, Plan 11.

After Edward Sparhawk died in 1867, Edward C. and George made plans to subdivide the land for housing, which is reflected in the 1868 survey of the property showing lots and streets different from what was finally agreed upon.¹² That this plan was not acceptable is reflected in the town report for 1869 in which a petition to accept a new street from Cambridge Street to Market Street in this area was not acted upon as it was considered "premature". Brighton was entering its last six years as an independent town and there were many changes underway.

¹¹ *Boston Evening Transcript*, February 12, 1858; September 5, 1867. Edward lived to age 96.

¹² "Plan of Land belonging to the estate of Edward Sparhawk". Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 15, Plans 42 A and B, January 27, 1868.

The last years of town reports demonstrate a good deal of effort to rebuild and improve major roads. In the same period the town built two grammar schools, a library and a fire station. Of particular importance was the construction of an abattoir in 1872, which consolidated all the noxious animal slaughtering activities in one building.

The initial efforts by Edward and George to market their father's estate were revised in 1873. In that year a plan with thirty-six house lots on Sparhawk and Whitney streets between Murdock and Market streets was registered and auctioned.¹³ Perhaps due to the economic downturn, this also proved to be premature as only four lots were sold. The significance of this plan is that it shows 45-47 Murdock Street (named after his mother) on its lot as it is today. E.C. Sparhawk sold a portion of his land to Granville Fuller on a "contemplated street" in 1868, and this apparently included the now demolished house Fuller built on Murdock Street two lots to the south of 45-47. Based upon the available information, it appears that the Edward Sparhawk House was moved to its present site between 1868-1873. It also appears that E.C. Sparhawk built his new house at 16 Elko Street (initially not named, then briefly called Sparhawk Avenue) in the same time period.



Edward C. Sparhawk House, 16 Elko Street.

¹³ *Brighton Messenger*, September 6, 1873; "Plan of House Lots in Brighton belonging to E.C. Sparhawk", Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 23, Plan 9, September 25, 1873.



Edward C. Sparhawk on porch of 16 Elko Street.

Based upon an examination of atlases for 1885 and 1890, sales of land in the former Sparhawk estate proceeded slowly in the years leading up to E.C. Sparhawk's death in 1890. His property passed to his two nieces, Rhoda and Susan, whom he had adopted, and who built two large homes of their own in the neighborhood. A plan to further subdivide the land around the Elko Street house was registered on May 9, 1891. Sometime between 1875-1885, E.C. Sparhawk had converted his father's house on Murdock Street to a two-family dwelling. It passed to Rhoda Sparhawk Hatch and her husband Edward who lived at 8 Sparhawk Street. As reflected in the Boston building permits, the decline of 45 Murdock accelerated in the early twentieth century. There was an application for repairs in 1924 and one to repair fire damage in 1927. Although a 1946 permit records replacing the wood porch steps with brick, it is followed by a violation citation in 1949 for having constructed the wood frame basement entrance appendage without a permit, and for using that space as a living room. This is the first indication that the house was used for more than two families.

In 1963 there was an application to the Boston Inspectional Services Department (ISD) to allow for parking twenty cars on the property for the Medical Arts Building behind the house on Cambridge Street. This was granted, conditional that two barns/garages be removed. The application mentions four families living in the house. Aluminum siding and gutters were added in 1965. In 1973 the property was cited by ISD for housing five families. A 2004 application to demolish the house and construct a six unit dwelling was denied without prejudice.



Sparhawk House at 45 Murdock Street, taken about 1979 with porch and entrance intact.

3.2 Architectural Significance

As one of only four known extant Federal period farmhouses built between 1786-1806 in the City of Boston, the Sparhawk House is an architecturally rare building type. The house retains the original configuration of its 1802 construction date, although it appears that the wings have been either replaced or reconfigured. The drawing of the house that was published in Winship's *History of Brighton* in 1899 is probably accurate, except for the proportions. The unidentified artist employed a perspective view that make the house look grander than was justified. Assuming this drawing is essentially accurate, the wings have been altered. Without an in-depth investigation of the structure of the house, we are left to speculate that the west wing shown in the drawing was detached when the house was moved to Murdock Street and reattached to the east side of the house. The smaller east wing may be the east wing that shows in the drawing, or it may be a new construction from circa 1873. In any case, it is likely that when the house was moved the wings were detached, which would have made it easy to reattach them in different locations to retain a south exposure for the main entrance without having the appendages face the street.

While the basic configuration and fenestration pattern of a two-and-one-half story Federal period house survives, very little of the original exterior fabric is exposed. The north dormer, with its six over six double hung sash, is a notable exception. Clapboard siding, and even the porches and south entrance fanlight, have been covered with aluminum siding. Without knowing the condition of the woodwork

beneath the siding, it is difficult to determine architectural integrity of the house, beyond its theoretical potential for restoration.

Viewed through one of the sidelights, the original staircase, wainscot and woodwork of the original entrance hall appear to be intact. The use of the house as rental property in the twentieth century, and the fact that little money was invested in more than cosmetic improvements, suggests that there may be original fabric covered by later alterations. If this is true, the house could be accurately restored as part of a renovation to the property.

3.3 Relationship to Criteria for Landmark Designation

The house at 45 Murdock Street is a physical link to a family that at one time was significant to the development of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and is an early example of Federal period farmhouses. However, due to the lack of direct association with the regionally significant pre-Revolutionary generations of the Sparhawk family, and the relocation of the house from the site of the original Sparhawk homestead which it replaced, it does not appear to fully meet the following criteria for Landmark designation, found in Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, with significance above the local level, as required in Section 2 of Chapter 772:

A. A property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Sparhawk House is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. A property with prominent associations with the cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the city, Commonwealth, region, or nation. The construction and relocation of 45 Murdock Street, and division of surrounding estate lands into parcels for sale are illustrative of the history and development of Brighton, but do not appear to rise above a level of local importance.

C. A property associated significantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages. 45 Murdock Street can be linked to the regionally-prominent Sparhawk family, but its construction several generations after this prominence had faded, and the evidence of its relocation from the original location, diminishes the strength of these associations.

D. A property representative of architectural design, craftsmanship, or distinctive characteristics of a type inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction or development, or a notable work of a designer or builder. 45 Murdock Street, built in 1802, is an early example of a Federal period farmhouse, and was once considered a grand structure. However, the apparent alteration of the building's layout as a result of its late-19th century relocation, and later alterations to the exterior such as replacement of windows and application of siding, diminish the building's architectural integrity.

4.0 ECONOMIC STATUS

4.1 Current Assessed Value

According to the City of Boston Assessor's records, parcel 2201990000 has a total assessed value of \$630,500.00 with the land valued at \$314,900.00 and the building(s) valued at \$315,600.00.

4.2 Current Ownership

According to the City of Boston Assessor's records, the property located at 45 Murdock Street is owned by Arni N. Mohan, Trustee.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.1 Background

45 Murdock Street was built in 1802 by locally-prominent descendants of the earlier regionally-prominent Sparhawk family and used as a single-family home until approximately the end of the 19th century. The house was moved between 1868 and 1873, though it stayed on the family's estate. In 1873, the estate was divided, with additional plans for subdivisions registered in 1891, and was slowly sold off and developed. In this same time period, the house was converted to a two-family dwelling. Occupancy increased to six units in the latter part of the 20th century. The house is currently vacant. A pending petition to designate a Sparhawk Street Architectural Conservation District, submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission in 1980, would include 45 Murdock Street.

5.2 Current Planning Issues

Since 2005, the owner of 45 Murdock Street has appeared before the Zoning Board of Appeals three times, each time with a request to build six units of housing on the site. Each application has been denied without prejudice. It is the understanding of the BLC that community concerns with early plans included opposition to rental units, versus condominium units. The most recent application was denied because of concurrent consideration for Landmark designation.

On June 24, 2007, a member of the Boston Landmarks Commission and others submitted a petition for the designation of 45 Murdock Street as an individual Landmark. On July 24, 2007, the Commission voted to accept the petition for further study. On December 3, 2007, the owner of the property filed an Application for Article 85, Demolition Delay review, with the BLC.

At the BLC Demolition Delay hearing on January 8, 2008 a structural report was submitted, prepared by Structures North (John Wathne PE) for Historic Boston Incorporated, for which the Executive Summary stated in part:

“The existing house at 45 Murdock Street was found to suffer from a limited number and variety of structural deficiencies, some the [stet.] them more critical than others, however, none of these would threaten the overall economic, preservation-viability of this completely salvageable and otherwise mostly sound structure.”

No alternatives to demolition were presented by the applicant. Based on the Structures North report the owner of the property agreed to re-examine re-use of the house and asked if the BLC could offer assistance, which the commission requested staff to do. The BLC voted that, in the public interest, the house was preferably preserved or rehabilitated rather than demolished and voted to invoke the 90-day demolition delay period.

Historic Boston Incorporated (HBI) also agreed to offer assistance at the referral of the BLC. HBI met with the owner to help him and his team address feasible preservation-oriented redevelopment of 45 Murdock Street as an alternative to its demolition and all-new construction on the property. HBI contracted with Tremont Preservation Services (Leslie Dovovan) to assess the building's interior and exterior fabric for significance. HBI also hired Building Initiatives to prepare a development pro forma that would consider preservation of the house and the potential for additional new construction at the rear of the property.

Building Initiatives determined that rehabilitation of the existing historic building for three (3) units and an additional three (3) units of new construction appears to be economically feasible, relying on state and federal rehabilitation tax credits. The use of historic state and federal rehabilitation tax credits requires that housing and commercial spaces remain income-generating (i.e. rental/leased) for a period of five (5) years. Conversion to condominiums can take place after the initial five-year rental period. New construction is not subject to the rental requirement.

Prior to the expiration of the demolition delay period, the Commission voted to file a 90-day emergency Landmark designation, pursuant to its authority under Section 4 of Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended, and instructed staff to proceed with preparation of a study report for the potential designation of the property. During the ninety (90) day temporary designation, the property shall be treated as and entitled to all of the protection of a Boston Landmark. The ninety (90) day temporary designation will expire on July 6, 2008.

5.3 Current Zoning

Parcel 12201990000, Ward 22, located at 45 Murdock Street, Brighton is zoned in a two-family residential subdistrict (2F-5000).

6.0 ALTERNATIVES APPROACHES

6.1 Alternatives available to the Boston Landmarks Commission:

A. Individual Landmark Designation

The Commission retains the option of designating the Sparhawk House as a Boston Landmark. Designation shall correspond to Assessor's parcel 2201990000 and shall address the following exterior elements, hereinafter referred to as the "Specified Exterior Features."

- The exterior envelope of the building and entire parcel.

B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation

The Commission retains the option of not designating any or all of the Specified Exterior Features as a Landmark.

C. Preservation Restriction

The Commission could recommend the owner consider a preservation restriction for any or all of the Specified Exterior Features.

D. Preservation Plan

The Commission could recommend development and implementation of a preservation plan for the property.

E. National Register of Historic Places

The Commission could recommend listing on the National Register of Historic Places due to significance at the local level.

6.2 Impact of Alternatives:

A. Individual Landmark Designation

Landmark designation represents the city's highest honor and is therefore restricted to cultural resources of outstanding architectural and/or historical significance. Landmark designation under Chapter 772 would require review of physical changes to the Specified Exterior Features of the property, in accordance with the standards and criteria adopted as part of the designation.

B. Denial of Individual Landmark Designation

Without Landmark designation, the City would be unable to offer protection to the Specified Exterior Features, or extend guidance to the owner under chapter 772.

C. Preservation Restriction

Chapter 666 of the M.G.L. Acts of 1969 allows individuals to protect the architectural integrity of their property via a preservation restriction. A restriction may be donated to or purchased by any governmental body or nonprofit organization capable of acquiring interests in land and strongly associated with historic preservation. These agreements are recorded

instruments that run with the land for a specific term or in perpetuity, thereby binding not only the owner who conveyed the restriction, but also subsequent owners. Restrictions typically govern alterations to exterior features and maintenance of the appearance and condition of the property.

A preservation restriction would also afford the owner of the property with a one-time income tax deduction, based on the appraised amount of the loss of property value due to the restriction placed on the exterior of the building. Thus, the preservation restriction would offer an incentive to preserve all the historic fabric of the exterior of the property and to ensure that any alterations or additions would be compatible with the historic fabric. Listing in the National Register of Historic Places would qualify the house at 45 Murdock Street for a preservation restriction that may be tax deductible.

D. Preservation Plan

A preservation plan allows an owner to work with interested parties to investigate various adaptive use scenarios, analyze investment costs and rates of return, and provide recommendations for subsequent development. It does not carry regulatory oversight. The pro forma developed by HBI, as referenced above in Section 5.2, could constitute the basis of a preservation plan. Use of federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits includes review and approval of the proposed plans by the state and federal preservation agencies. A preservation plan could include a preservation restriction to provide ongoing regulatory oversight.

E. National Register

National Register listing provides an honorary designation and limited protection from federal, federally- licensed or federally-assisted activities. It creates incentives for preservation, notably the federal investment tax credits and grants through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. National Register listing provides listing on the State Register affording parallel protection for projects with state involvement and also the availability of state tax credits. Tax credits are not available to owners who demolish contributing portions of historic properties.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Sparhawk House at 45 Murdock Street, Brighton, does not appear meet the criteria for Landmark designation as found in Section 4 of Chapter 772, Acts of 1975, as amended, for reasons cited in Section 3.2 and 3.3 of this report. There is no direct association between this house and the earlier (pre-Revolutionary) regionally significant generations of the Sparhawk family. The house at 45 Murdock Street has been relocated from the site of the original Sparhawk family homestead. The layout of the house appears to be altered as the result of its relocation, and subsequent alterations to the exterior diminish the building's architectural integrity. Therefore, the staff of the Boston Landmarks Commission recommends that the Sparhawk House not be designated a Landmark under Chapter 772 of the Acts of 1975, as amended. Staff does, however, recommend that the property owner work with interested parties to pursue an alternative project and preservation plan for the Sparhawk House that considers using state and federal tax credits to help finance sensitive rehabilitation of the building, and also considers the option of donating a preservation restriction which would ensure the preservation of the building and afford the property owner a tax deduction.

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