



**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**  
**Department of City Planning**

133 William Street • Room 303 • New Bedford, MA 02740  
508-979-1488 • www.newbedford-ma.gov

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**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** New Bedford City Council  
**FROM:** New Bedford Historical Commission  
**DATE:** November 14, 2022  
**RE:** **BUILDING DEMOLITION REVIEW: PARTIAL DEMOLITION - PORCH**  
**135 Cottage Street (Map 45 Lot 263)**

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In accordance with the requirements of the New Bedford City Code, Article XI, Section 2-157 Demolition of Buildings, the New Bedford Historical Commission [NBHC] has examined the structure located at the above-captioned site in order to determine its historical significance and whether it is in the public interest to preserve such structure.

The NBHC reviewed the application for *partial* demolition at its November 7, 2022, meeting, and hereby forwards its findings and recommendation in this matter to the New Bedford City Council:

- The property owner is proposing the demolition of the building's wrap-around porch in its entirety and rebuilding a section of the porch.
- The Robert B. & Lucinda Hudson Gifford House (NBE.2358) was constructed in 1897 and is a contributing historic resource to the County Street National Register District.
- The property is historically or architecturally significant in terms of period style, method of building construction or association with a significant architect or builder either by itself or as a part of a group of buildings.
- The Commission has collaborated with the property owner to modify the initially proposed porch materials to mutually agreed upon high-quality materials to mitigate the adverse effect the porch demolition will have on the property and the District.

**In light of these findings, the New Bedford Historical Commission has determined that the structure at 135 Cottage Street is Historically Significant but is not a Preferably Preserved structure.**

**Cc:** Dan Pickup, Care Free Homes, Inc., Applicant  
Danny Romanowicz, Commissioner, DIS

**Attachments:** NBHC Staff Report

**IN CITY COUNCIL, November 22, 2022**

Referred to the Committee on Appointments and Briefings.

Dennis W. Farias, City Clerk

a true copy attests:

City Clerk



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**STAFF REPORT - AMENDED**

**NEW BEDFORD HISTORICAL COMMISSION MEETING**

November 7, 2022

**DEMOLITION REVIEW CASE # 2022.36**  
135 Cottage St (Map 45 Lot 263)

**OWNER:** Elizabeth and Peter Blanchard  
9 Anthony Street  
New Bedford, MA 02740

**OVERVIEW:**

The property is located at the southwest corner of Cottage and Arnold Streets. Constructed as a single-family residence in 1897 in the Shingle Style it was adapted into a multi-family home in 1960. The property owner is seeking to demolish the wrap around porch in its entirety and rebuild a section of the porch with non-traditional materials.



**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:** By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many of the city's growing number of prosperous retail merchants and businessmen began to build their residences west of County Street, along newly expanded lots on Orchard, Cottage, Hawthorn and Union Streets. Designs ranged from varied expressions of the persistent Greek Revival style to those in the newer Gothic Revival and Italianate tastes, and by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the emergence of the Victorian and Shingle styles.

The land on which 135 Cottage Street was built was the former site of the city's first greenhouse owned by William F. Howard who was William Rotch Jr.'s gardener. By 1896 the lot was divided, and the Cottage Street frontage purchased by Robert B. and Lucinda Gifford. Gifford was an accountant who had an office on Union Street in the downtown.

The circa 1897, Robert B. & Lucinda Hudson Gifford House (NBE.2358) is a contributing historic resource to the County Street National Register District.

**STATEMENT OF APPLICABLE GUIDELINES:** The provisions of the Demolition Delay Ordinance shall apply only to any building or structure that, in whole or in part, was built seventy-five (75) or more years prior to the date of the application for the demolition permit, and is:

- A building or structure listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or within an area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or on the State Register of Historic Places;
- A building or structure importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the city, or;
- A building or structure which is historically or architecturally significant in terms of period style, method of building construction or association with a significant architect or builder either by itself or as a part of a group of buildings, or;
- A building or structure located within one hundred fifty (150) feet of a federal, state or local historic district boundary.

**Demolition:** The intentional act of substantially pulling down, destroying, defacing, removing or razing a building or structure or commencing the work of total, substantial or partial destruction with the intent of completing same. In addition to complete demolition of a building, the following actions shall require a demolition permit:

- *Altering a building's key-character defining features, making it non-eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.*

**STAFF NOTES:** The property was purchased in 2014 as a non-owner occupied five-unit investment property. The 2014 MLS Real Estate listing images show that the east gutter of the porch was intact and there were multiple downspouts in place to route the water. Images also show that the porch roof and porch decking were in good condition.

A December 4, 2014, City of New Bedford Assessor image of the property shows that the porch's east gutter had fallen or been removed. The 2014 MLS and Assessor's images, 2019 Google Map street view images, and current images demonstrate that the missing gutter was never replaced. In the eight years of ownership there is no record of building permits for the property. Water damage due to the neglected gutter led to the existing porch deterioration. *Please refer to timeline images.*

The proposal is to demolish the porch in its entirety, removing the "wrap-around" which is an iconic feature of the house style. The structure has been previously altered with the application of vinyl siding and vinyl windows; however, the massing, scale and presence of the original porch remains character defining. The section of the porch to be reconstructed would be utilizing composite rails and pressure treated square posts wrapped in PVC. The portions of the facades where the porch roof and decking are attached would require substantial patching of vinyl siding. Soffit, skirting, gutters and other trim materials are specified as aluminum and PVC.

The purpose of the Demolition Delay Ordinance is twofold:

1. To preserve and protect significant buildings and structures within New Bedford, which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, economic, political or social history of the city and limiting the detrimental effect of demolition on the character of the city.
2. To encourage owners of historic buildings to seek out alternative options that will preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings.

The proposed plans for the portion of the porch reconstruction lacks detail and there is opportunity for the Commission, the property owner and their contractor to determine an agreed upon approach in design and construction materials to mitigate the loss of the wrap-around porch.

**AMENDED: 11.07.22 MEETING:** The contractor and property owner have verified the use of more appropriate materials for the new construction. Please see slide (p 11) with new porch material listings and a recent example of the materials recently executed in the field by the contractor.