

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARK REPORT

Strong Block (2-12 Windsor Rd)

**Prepared for:
Newton Historical
Commission**

August 24th, 2023

NAME: Strong Block ADDRESS: 2-12 Windsor Rd

1. *Name of Property*

- a. *Historic Name:* Strong Block
- b. *Common Name:* 2-12 Windsor Road, 1635-1651 Beacon Street

2. *Location*

- a. *Street Address:* 2-12 Windsor Rd (1635-1651 Beacon St)
- b. *Zip Code:* 02468
- c. *Assessor's #:* 53029 0002A

3. *Classification*

- a. *Ownership of Property:*
- b. *Type of Property:* Commercial Block with retail on the first floor.
- c. *National Register Status:* Listed Individually on the National Register of Historic Places.

4. *Function or Use*

- a. *Historic Functions:* retail space, post office, offices.
- b. *Current Functions:* commercial retail space including restaurants, hardware store, grocery store, salons and shops.

5. *Zoning*

The Zoning District is BU1.

6. *Description*

Neighborhood Description:

Waban Village was developed on what had previously been farmland as a commuter neighborhood in the late 19th century. Today, the village is the commercial center of the larger Waban neighborhood, with residential, institutional and commercial buildings surrounding the intersections of Beacon, Woodward and Wyman Streets. It is served by an MBTA Green Line station, which was instrumental in the development of the neighborhood.

Architectural Description:

Walls: The brickwork of the original Strong Block building at 1641-1649 Beacon Street, is a character defining feature of the building. The brickwork has a Flemish influence, and is mimicked in the older additions along Beacon Street. The additions also incorporate a cast stone element into their facades. The facades of later additions are less sensitively chosen in materials, with stucco walls and Stick/Tudor style ornamentation.

Roof: The roofs of the building are slate, as visible from the public way, with a few tar and gravel and/or rubber flat roofs on the rear portions of the additions. The Waban Market at 10 Windsor Rd has a shingled roof.

Windows: While a few wood windows remain on the building, they are generally in poor condition. Most of the windows on the original building have been replaced with vinyl.

Ornamentation: The stepped gables of the roofline of the original building, mimicked on the later additions. The corner building at 1625 Beacon Street is highly ornamented, with decorative copper roofs over the bay windows, a clockface over the doorway with bells on either side. The original building at 1649 Beacon St is decorated with three metal fleur-de-lis ornaments, which have periodically left stains on the brickwork. Other ornamentation is a product of the brickwork and cast stone in the walls.

Utilities/Other: There are three 3x3 stealth chimneys on the roof of the original Strong Block building, which were constructed to conceal cell phone antennae. The maintenance and replacement of these antennae have been an ongoing project at the Strong Block since 2000.

Site: The remaining area of the parcel has been paved into a rear parking lot. A one story garage structure still exists in the parking lot.

7. *History of Property*

a. Development History:

1. 1921 – Permit to build 1629-1639 Beacon Street. Architect E. B. Stratton.
2. 1924 – Permit to build 7 additional stores, extending the property to 6 Windsor Rd. Architect E.B. Stratton and builder P. J. Brophy.
3. 1925 – Permit to build garage structure in rear of building.
4. 1928 – Permit to build store 8 Windsor Rd (Presently 6 Windsor Rd)
5. 1929 – Permit to build one story store with flat roof. Architect Edward B Stratton, Builder M Slotnik.
6. 1930 – Permit for renovations to store and storefront at 1625 Beacon St. Architect E. B. Stratton and Builder Sawyer Co.
7. 1932 - Permit for new storefronts at 1643 and 1647 Beacon St. Architect E. B. Stratton.
8. 1937 – Permit to extend first floor wall of stores at 1637-1639 back.

9. 1938 – Permit to extend basement to align with structure above at 1637-1639 Architect E. B. Stratton and builder Meltzmann.
10. 1939 – Permit for Addition of one-story store in rear of 4 Windsor rd. Architect E. B. Stratton.
11. 1941 – Permit to divide single store, making two stores at 8-10 Windsor
12. 1944 – Permit for two storefronts consolidated at 6 Windsor Rd. Architect Louis Comreau.
13. 1948 – Permit for rear addition at 6 Windsor Rd to align with adjoining store
14. 1952 – Permit for addition to Waban Market at 10 Windsor Rd. to enlarge
15. 1952 – Permit for remodeling storefront and replacing front door (12-16 Windsor Road but Marke footprint)
16. 1955 – Permit to construct additional store at 1651 Beacon St off of Rhodes Pharmacy. Architect Gustav Hayden. Builder Louis Racine
17. 1963 – Permit for 1633 Beacon St to replace wood pieces of storefronts with brick. Builder CD Train Jr.
18. 1964 – Permit for new storefront at 1631 Beacon St. Builder McCann Bros of Dedham.
19. 1964 – Permit for new storefront glass and aluminum at 1641 Beacon St. for Waban Hardware.
20. 1964 – Permit to remove present wood storefront and construct new front with brick and aluminum in same locations at 1629 Beacon St. Builder CD Train Jr.
21. 1975 – Permit for new storefront and hipped roof at 10 Windsor Rd. Waban Market New sign attached. Builder Richard White & Sons
22. 1975 – Permit to replace storefront of Waban Market.
23. 1986 – Permit to replace deli storefront with aluminum.
24. 1992 – Permit to rebuild existing chimney at 8 Windsor Rd.
25. 2000 – Permit to install wireless communication in false chimneys. Many permits for antennae work follow.
26. 2001 – Permit to replace glass at 1639 Beacon St.
27. 2002 – Permit to replace door at 1631-1633 Beacon St.
28. 2003 – Permit for repointing at 1641 Beacon St.
29. 2005 – Permit to replace entrance ramp at 6 Windsor Rd.
30. 2012 – Permit for 23 double hung windows replaced with vinyl at 1643-1647 Beacon St.
31. 2013 – Permit to install 3x3 stealth chimneys.
32. 2014 – Permit to replace roof at 10 Windsor rd.

8. *Significance of Property*

- a. *Period of Significance:*
- b. The period of significance of this building includes 1896, when the original building was constructed, through to the development of the last addition in 1934, excluding the Waban Market.
- c. *Historical Significance:*
The area that is now Waban Village served as farmland in to the second half of the nineteenth century. The 1886 expansion of the streetcars to Newton Highlands, Eliot and Waban stations, now the MBTA Green D Line, brought an influx of real estate investors and business owners into Waban, looking to create a neighborhood for

commuters to downtown Boston. William C. Strong, for whom the Strong Block is named, served as the first president of Waban Area Improvement Council, beginning in 1889, and developed the real estate that would one day become Waban Village.

d. *Architectural Significance:*

The original 1896 structure of the Strong Block, what is now 1641-1649 Beacon Street, was designed by Lewis Bacon. It is characterized by the stepped gables on the sides facades, and repeated in the center gable of the façade as well as in the front gables of later, one-story retail additions along Beacon Street. It is one of Newton’s few remaining examples of a nineteenth-century commercial building.

Lewis Bacon himself was a resident of Waban, who designed his own house on Chestnut Street. Bacon also served the City of Newton on the board of aldermen and the board of appeals. Another famous brick building of Bacon’s in Newton is the Engine 6 Firehouse.

9. *Designation*

a. *Landmark Designation Criteria:* The criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 22-93 of Newton’s Landmark Ordinance:

- the property significantly represents an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detailing, materials or craftsmanship
- the property is meaningfully associated with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural or archeological aspect of the development of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or the United States of America
- the property’s identification as a notable work of an architect, designer, engineer or builder whose work is significant in the history or development of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America
- historic events or activities occurred at the property that have made an outstanding contribution to, or which best represent some important aspect of, the history of the City of Newton, Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the United States of America.

In determining whether to designate a property as a landmark, the commission shall also consider the following conditions:

- that the distinguishing characteristics of significance are for the most part original and intact or capable of restoration.
- that the property, location and setting is compatible with future preservation and maintenance; and
- the property’s context in relation to the City’s policies and adopted plans and the property’s surrounding area.

10. Standards of Review

Standards for Design Review

a. General Standards:

The property should generally be reviewed by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Any replacements of siding or windows, alterations to the footprint of the building through demolition or addition, and masonry or foundation work should come before the commission for review. Additionally, the following standards should be considered outside of the Commission's purview, for the purpose of facilitating normal maintenance as well as the occupation of the building by retail tenants:

- Signage, changes to displays on windows, in-kind replacement of store front component and other non-material changes to the building as a result of the change of commercial tenant should not be reviewed by the commission.
- Commission should allow for the in-kind repairs and maintenance of roofing materials, including slate, tar and gravel, and EPDM/rubber roofs. Any changes from an existing material (other than the replacement of tar and gravel with EPDM/rubber roof) should be reviewed by the commission according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation.
- Utility work that is exterior to the building, and does not alter the exterior of the building that faces Beacon Street or Windsor Road shall not require review by the commission.
- Replacement of glass within an existing window frame shall not require review by the commission.
- Any buildout and/or alteration within a tenant's space is outside of the Commission's purview and shall not require review by the Commission.

b. Specific Standards:

Exterior Walls:

The brick facades of the original Strong Block Building and the brick additions, including the stepped rooflines and coursing of the brick work, should be preserved.

Windows:

Window replacements should match the existing or another historically appropriate grill formation using simulated divided lines. Aluminum windows will be considered a suitable historic material.

Ornamentation/Roof:

The ornamental copper roof at the corner of the block should be preserved. The clockface and bells on 1625 Beacon St. should be preserved.

Future Development:

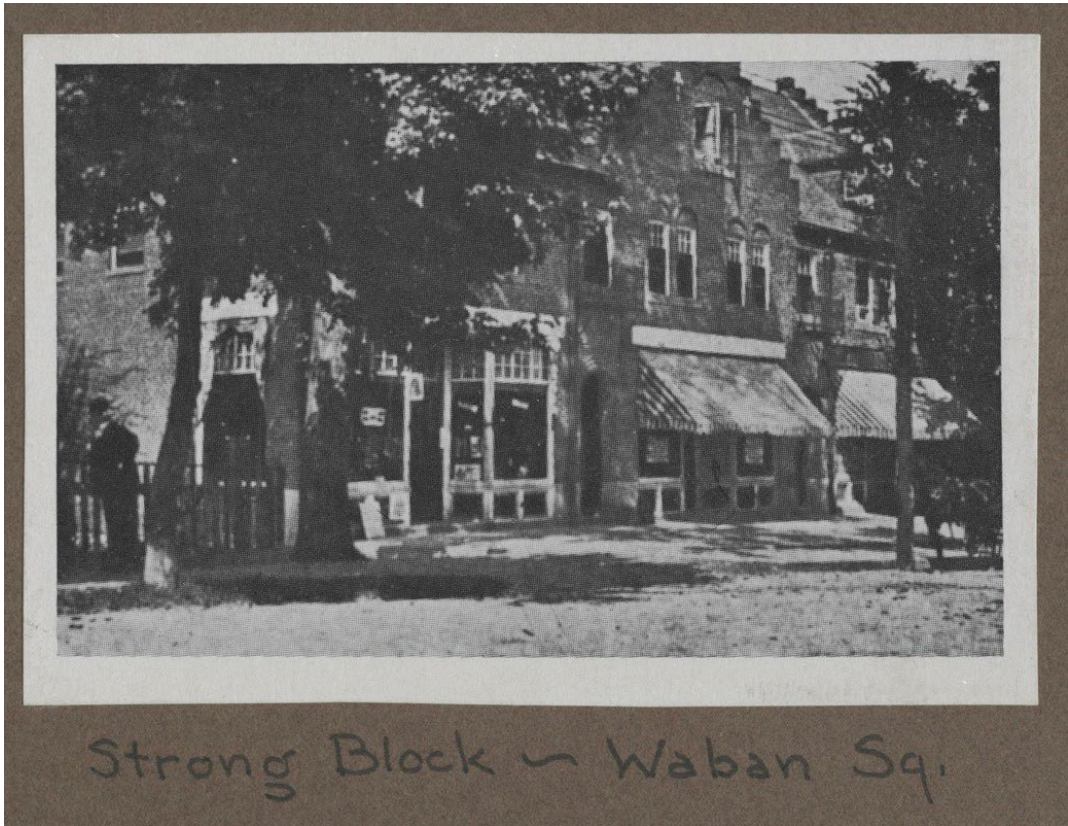
The commission will review the development of any detached structure on the parcel, only as to its impact on the historic structure, with greatest weight paid to the original Strong Block building. The standards of review should also allow for the potential redevelopment within the footprint of 10 Windsor Road (Waban Market). Any attached structure built in replacement of 10 Windsor Road should be treated as an addition to the landmark structure and built according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

11. *Notification*

The following properties are considered abutters for the purposes of notification. Owners of these properties should receive notice when this property is considered for landmark designation and for any future under the Landmark Ordinance.

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>S/B/L</u>
116 HUNTINGTON AVE STE 600	21344/296
P O BOX 77	18745/485
101 N TRYON ST	6709/561
458 WOODWARD ST	36546/586
452 WOODWARD ST	66251/114
10 PARK PLAZA STE 5610	000000/0000
1000 COMM AVE	000000/0000
1000 COMM AVE	000000/0000
326 FULLER ST	4409/448
200 RESERVOIR ST	81607/325
251 HARVARD ST STE 12	12758/260
21 KINMONTH RD	55062/32
24 WINDSOR RD	15555/438
24 WINDSOR RD	15555/438
40 WINDSOR RD	80322/243
1601 BEACON ST	6764/365
1615 BEACON ST	70257/306
326 FULLER ST	3599/417
1000 COMM AVE	000000/0000
1692 BEACON ST	000000/0000
28 COLLINS RD	72246/249
14 COLLINS RD	9171/143
14 COLLINS RD	000000/0000

Historic Photographs and Maps





1917 Bromley Atlas

