



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Minutes

Tuesday, October 19, 2010
City Hall
3rd Floor Conference Room
6:40 p.m.

Staff Present: Kristi Chase and Brandon Wilson.

Members Present: Kevin Allen*, Dick Bauer, Sarah Degutis*, Ryan Falvey, and Eric Parkes.

Members Absent: DJ Chagnon*, Tom DeYoung, O. Susan Fontano*, Abby Freedman, Barbara Mangum, Michael Payne, Derick Snare*, and Brad Stearns.*

*Alternates

Others present: Rocco Antonelli, Matt Ballestrieri, Alan Bingham, Rosemary Broome-Bingham, Gorka Brabo, Natasha Burger, Darin DiNucci, Don Foote, Michele Gigli, Maryanne Manfra, Amie Schaeffer. Peter Sisk.

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the September 21, 2010 minutes were postponed due to a lack of a quorum attending that meeting.

DELIBERATION OF HPC CASES

HPC 10.76 – 23 Porter Street: Applicants: Rocco Antonelli, Architect and Lalo Development Corporation, LLC, Owner, seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:



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1. Restore, repair or replace damaged wood clapboard, soffits, fascia, and trim in-kind (C/NA); and
2. Replace modern door with 12-light wood door (C/A);
3. Replace one 2/2 double-hung window on center bay with a 12-light wood door and stairs (C/A);
4. Relocate basement window (C/A);
5. Replace picket fence porch railings with generic simple rails, posts and balusters (C/A); and
6. Construct a new addition as per plans and elevations dated 9/3/2010 (C/A).

Rocco Antonelli presented. *They propose to make very few changes to the original building. These include removing one window; replacing 2 doors with a multi-paned ones in the enclosed porch and the bay next to it; changing the picket fence railing on the enclosed porch with a generic post, baluster and rail system; raise the ground level in front of the existing building to make the main entries clear and to protect them from the parking area. A 'dry-laid' flat fieldstone retaining wall will abut the parking area and will be topped by a simple fence that will match the new rails and balusters on the house. This will hide the concrete covered foundation and a basement window. If possible they will repair the windows, otherwise they will return to the Commission to alter them.*

They intend to construct a new addition based on the existing architecture of the Gothic Revival farmhouse. They have held neighborhood meetings and have received the blessings of the neighbors to move forward. The building will still be a 4-unit building with 8 parking spaces. Height of the addition is kept low so as not to have an effect on the views of the uphill neighbors. The massing of the dormers and bays relate to those on the original building and echo the roof shapes. They wanted to make each unit different with only one perceived entry door. Other entries are at right angles to the street so as to not be visible. The parking area will have a cobble buffer between the sidewalk and the parking which will have a combination of crushed stone and stone dust to keep the surface from moving too much. Cobbles will also delineate the garden area.

Staff recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received. *Maryanne Manfra stated that her only concern was the retention of her view. Michele Gigli noted that she was looking forward to seeing the property fixed up.*

Discussion: *The Commission was concerned about the possible replacement of the existing late Victorian windows. However, they were generally impressed by the addition. Sarah Degutis noted that the addition fit well with the original building. Eric Parkes thought there was some individual character between the old and the new in the development. He also liked the deep eaves extending over the addition.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, plans dated 9/3/2010 with revisions to the door openings on sheet A.02 dated 9/17/10 by SFG Studios, cut sheets for Harvey Majesty Windows for the new construction, cut sheet for Simpson Door Company Bungalow door number 7224 and e-mails.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to*

1. Restore, repair or replace damaged wood clapboard, soffits, fascia, and trim in-kind (C/NA); and
2. Replace modern door with 12-light wood door (C/A);
3. Replace one 2/2 double-hung window on center bay with a 9-light wood door and stairs (C/A);
4. Remove a basement window (C/A);
5. Construct a 'dry-laid' flat fieldstone retaining wall (C/A);
6. Replace picket fence porch railings with generic simple rails, posts and balusters (C/A); and
7. Construct a new addition and landscape per plans and elevations dated 9/3/2010 (C/A).

Because the renovation and plans met HPC guidelines for additions and infill construction and the alterations would be an improvement over the existing conditions.

HPC 10.83 – 8 Mount Vernon Street: Applicants: Barbara and Fermin Castro, Owners, who seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Install a metal fence and gates along a portion of the driveway and along the sidewalk property line (C/A).

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the case until November 16, 2010 because the information was incomplete and the Applicants were not present.*

HPC: 10.85 – 53 Hudson Street: Applicants: Matthew Ballestrieri, Owner seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Replace one window on barn visible from the public right of way with an insulated glass aluminum clad wood window (C/A).

Matthew Ballestrieri presented. *The existing window is in rough shape and not original to the building. He would like to replace it with a Harvey vinyl window. He was interested in finding a long-term use for the building that would be more than storage.*

Staff recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *The Commission was interested in the future plans for the building as the repairs and maintenance of the doors and windows would be reflected in the current plans. The Commission recommended that the Applicant speak with the HPC Staff about the changes in the Zoning Codes that are under consideration by the BOA.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, and cut sheets of the proposed Harvey Vicon window.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to*

1. Replace one window on barn visible from the public right of way with an insulated vinyl window (C/A),

because it would be no more derogatory to the District than the existing window.

HPC 10.86 – 27 Columbus Avenue: Applicants: Peter Sisk and Victoria Goodhart, Owners, seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Replace casement window on 2nd floor front with Marvin double-hung 6/6 window (C/A);
2. Replace 1970s glass slider window with a glass multi-pane door found in the basement (C/A); and
3. Install mahogany railing to meet code (C/A).

Peter Sisk presented. *The existing windows on the second and third floor front are inappropriate and in poor shape. He would like to replace them with a more appropriate window on the second floor and different window on the third that would give them egress on to the roof behind the parapet. While he had asked for a Marvin window, he found the cost to be breath-taking and was looking for alternatives possibly salvage. A railing on the parapet was essential since the parapet rail was only 24” above the roof and felt very unsafe. He and his wife would like to use wood. It may be painted to match the house.*

Staff recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *The Commission discussed the types of windows appropriate to a Queen Anne style building and the relative positions of the windows to the stringcourse and fascia, railing heights and visibility. Eric Parkes noted that salvage was a good way to go. The Commission generally agreed that the window on the second floor probably rose to the string course and that installing a window that matched the others on that level would be appropriate. The third floor window could be a number of different styles and would need further research. Staff could review the window for appropriateness. A railing system internal to the rail of the parapet was recommended but the style and method of attachment needed to be determined. Eric Parkes agreed to meet with the Applicant to help refine the railing ideas proposed and determine its visibility.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, photos of existing conditions, photos and cut sheets of proposed materials.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to*

1. Replace casement window on 2nd floor front with a single-pane 2/1 double-hung window to match the other second floor windows; and
2. Replace 1970s glass slider window on the 3rd floor with a glass multi-pane window with Staff review and approval.

Because the alterations would be an improvement over the existing conditions and closer to the original design of the building.

3. *The Commission also voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the case until November 16, 2010 so that the Applicant could research, design and present further information regarding the proposed code-height mahogany railing.*

HPC 10.87 – 15 Munroe Street: Applicants: Michelle Nicolassen and Jim O’Toole, Owners who seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Install 2 skylights on the main roof of the house (C/A); and
2. Construct an addition on rear of the house (C/A).

Donald Foote, contractor for the Owners presented. The building’s conversion at an unknown date to a 2-family ruined the interior flow of the rooms. It is currently used a single-family home. The family now consists on the parents and 5 children. They plan to enlarge the small kitchen, create an eat-in area, more bedrooms, mudroom and bathrooms. For the most part, the addition will not be visible. They would like to install 2 skylights on the original building. Only one of them will be visible from the public right of way. Dormers would not work in this location. They had tried very hard to find alternatives to the skylight.

Staff recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: The Commission discussed other possible layouts and how to minimize the view of the skylight which would be visible behind the wing of the building. Sarah Degutis said that a narrower skylight placed low over the toilet would minimize the impact of the skylight. It would still be about 5’ from the floor.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, photos of property, the plans by Marta Kruszelnicka not dated.

Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to

1. Install 1 skylight 24” x 30” on the roof of the house as far toward the back of the original building and as low as possible with Staff Review (C/A);
2. Construct an addition on rear of the house (C/A); and

issue a Certificate of Non- Applicability

3. Install 1 skylight not visible from the public right of way (C/NA)

because they will have a minimal impact on the historic district as seen from Munroe Street and meet HPC Guidelines.

HPC 10.90 – 27 Warren Avenue: Applicant: Darin DiNucci, Owner, seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Remove enclosed 2-story porch (C/A); and
2. Replace with open 2-story porch (C/A).

Darrin DiNucci presented. Porches had been closed off from the living space due to extensive water damage. The porch is located behind the bay on the south side of the building. It has suffered a great deal of water damage and was falling away from the building. It needs to be rebuilt. He would prefer to construct it as a 2-story open porch. This is needed to reconnect the fire escape from the Mansard level unit as well as the second floor unit. He would like to use 1” balusters and a 2” railing but would be willing to look at alternatives.

Staff recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received.

Discussion: Noting that the enclosure and second floor of the porch were not original, the Commission wanted to understand the egress issues and how they impacted the design for the porch. They noted that the proposed porch design was not well-thought out or appropriate to the building. The Applicant should investigate other side porches on Mansard buildings of the era for design ideas of character-defining details that might be appropriate.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, photos of existing conditions, and the sketch plan of the porch.

Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the enclosed 2-story porch and frame the base structure on the same footprint, match the original fascia and roof to allow for the second means of egress only because the safety issues needed to be dealt with immediately and the appropriateness of the design could be determined at another meeting. With the approval of the Applicant, the Commission also voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the case until the November 16, 2010 HPC Meeting so that the Applicant can design and submit plans for the new open porch.

HPC 10.91 – 30 Day Street: Applicants: Rosemary Broome Bingham and Alan Bingham Owners, seek a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) and a Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA) to:

1. Remove rear kitchen chimney (C/A); and
2. Repair roof in kind (C/NA).

Alan Bingham presented. They have leaks in the bedroom. The chimney is no longer in use. The chimney is leaning and has mortar loss. The damage to the chimney is due to moisture build-up. He spoke with 2 or 3 contractors who said that he needs to get rid of the chimney since it will never be used. Rebuilding it would result in the same problem. Since the interior framing would not be removed, there would be an opportunity to replace the chimney at a later date if desired.

Staff recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *The Commission debated whether the chimney was a character-defining and important feature of the building's style. The chimney is simple, not elaborated, minimally visible from the street and not as important as the other chimney. Its loss would not be noticed.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Guidelines, Staff recommendations, and photos of the existing conditions.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to*

1. Remove rear kitchen chimney (C/A); and
2. Repair roof in kind (C/NA).

because the chimney was not character-defining and its removal would not be deleterious to the character of the Historic District.

HPC 09.67 Demolition – 378-382 Somerville Avenue, formerly Londontowne Antiques:
(continued at request of the Applicant: W. James Herbert, Trustee)

Several subcommittee meetings have been held over the summer with the HPC Staff, other OSPCD Staff, the Owner, his architects, and a representative from the DRC. The Applicant's team has prepared plans to develop the entire site and retain the historic façade of the building. A draft Memoranda of Agreement between the Owner and the SHPC will be reviewed and subject to approval by the SHPC.

Presentation: *The Applicant has requested a continuation until November 16, 2010.*

No Staff recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

There was no Discussion:

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, HPC Guidelines.*

Decisions: *The Commission also voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the case until the November 16, 2010 HPC Meeting at the request of the Applicant*

SECTION 106 REVIEWS CONDUCTED BY THE STAFF

HPC 10.79 – Green Line Extension (GLX)

09/08/10

Two meetings scheduled in October with MassDOT, consulting parties from Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the historical commissions of Medford, Somerville, Cambridge and Boston.

CERTIFICATES OF NON-APPLICABILITY ISSUED BY THE STAFF

HPC: 10.85 – 53 Hudson Street: 09/20/10
 Applicant: Matthew Ballestrieri, Owner

1. Repair and replace wood clapboard on barn;
2. Repair and replace trim in-kind as needed; and
3. Replace 3-tab asphalt shingle roof on barn.

HPC 10.92 – 20 Mount Vernon Street
 Applicant: Jorge Diaz, Contractor for Carlos M. Pleitez, Owner 10/05/10

1. Repair and replace wood gutters and downspouts on front porch; and
2. Replace roof on rear ell with asphalt shingles in-kind.

DEMOLITIONS REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY THE STAFF

HPC 10.93 – 270 Cedar Street, *circa* 1925-1947 1-story brick building and *circa* 1900-1925 gable end 1-story wood building 10/14/10
 Applicant: Sal Querucio, Contractor for 270 Realty Trust

No building permits were found for either structure. Preliminary map research did not reveal further information construction dates and original uses. Staff did not find either building to be architecturally distinctive, and therefore determined that the buildings were not significant.

STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENTS AS PER REQUEST OF THE PLANNING DIVISION

HPC 10.84 – 343-349 and 351 Summer Street 09/16/10

Two infill buildings incorporating 1920s Colonial Revival references are proposed to house condominiums and a relocated VFW hall at a site next to the Art Deco Bank building at the corner of Summer St. and Cutter Ave.

HPC 10.88 – 39 Jay Street 09/29/10

Front porches to be replaced on all floors of a triple-decker.

HPC 10.95 – 29 Ward Street 10/14/10

Enlargement of a circa 1927 garage to include a second story and to hide the ‘granite’ concrete blocks.

PROJECT UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS

Project Updates

- **LHD Expansion Project** (Brandon Wilson with Kristi Chase & Amie Schaeffer)
 - **Joint public hearing by SHPC and BOA’s Legislative Matters Committee to present Group C properties (1865-1873) is now scheduled for Tues., Nov. 16th** which is same night as regular SHPC monthly meeting. Hearing will start at 7 pm in the BOA Chambers and will include a presentation of the properties proposed for designation and an opportunity for public testimony.

- The regular business before the Commission will be heard starting at 6 pm (subject to a quorum) and be continued directly following the public hearing.
- **Please advise the Staff of your availability ASAP for both an early meeting starting at 6 pm and the public hearing at 7 pm.**
- Group D properties (1865-1873) will be submitted to the BOA at their Tues. Nov. 9th regular meeting for review and scheduling of another public hearing thereafter.
- **Union Square Historic Surveying Project** (Brandon Wilson with Kristi Chase)
 - PAL recently completed its submissions of Form B surveys and Form A reports
 - Review of all materials by the Staff is underway
- **Milk Row Cemetery Restoration Project - Phase II** (Brandon Wilson)
 - Recently restored fencing on perimeter is showing signs of deterioration due to bicycle chains and weather so additional follow-up required for installation of bike racks by both the City and DeMoulas, and field inspection by contractor, Cassidy Bros. Inc.
 - Installation of benches, trash receptacles and water source within the Cemetery is being sought through DPW and Ward Alderman Heuston.
 - Recent adoption by Somerville Garden Club has led to additional beautification of burial grounds with new plantings; provision of direct water source within the site being finalized by DPW.
 - Opening of Cemetery to the public planned for this weekend; see details under Events below.
- **Prospect Hill Tower Assessment Study** (Brandon Wilson)
 - Consulting firm, TBA Architects, Inc. will be presenting their preliminary concepts to Staff for historic re-interpretation of the Tower and surrounding parkland this Thurs., Oct. 21st. Goal is to seek significant funds for repair and restoration of the site and listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Preservation Newsletter Project** (Amie Schaeffer with Brandon Wilson & Kristi Chase)
 - Review and comments received from Monica and being incorporated into final copy.
 - Intended distribution to all designated property owners will occur once mailing lists finalized and postage source identified.
- **SHPC Subcommittee for Guidelines Revision** (Kristi Chase)
 - Subcommittee of SHPC met on Tues., October 12 and discussed the need for revised and updated guidelines to meet current needs of the Commission and Homeowners.
 - Next meeting to review and compare other cities guidelines on scheduled for Thurs., Nov. 4th from 7 – 8:30 pm
- **Certified Local Government Annual Reports** (Kristi Chase with Brandon Wilson)
 - Year 2009 Report submitted to the MHC at end of September.
 - Pre-application to the MHC for a Survey and Planning Grant for a feasibility study to provide handicapped accessibility to the West Branch Library is being considered.
- **Preservation Awards Program** (Brandon Wilson with Derick Snare)

- 2011 nominations for both designated historic properties (Preservation Awards) and for non-designated older properties (Director Awards) are needed from everyone! Please spread the word as well. Deadline for submissions: Mon. Nov. 8th.
 - SHPC Architect Derick Snare will be meeting with the SHS CAD students beginning this fall, to begin their orientation to the requisite house drawings.
 - Five ceramic tiles created by the SHS students for one of 2010 Preservation Award houses (27 Columbus Avenue) were so well received by the owner that they are being integrated into their kitchen, in exchange for a donation to the SHS Art Dept. Club.
- **SHPC Appointments/Re-Appointments**
 - Search still in process for additional contractor and/or historic district resident eligible and interested in serving. Suggestions welcome.

Upcoming Events

- **The Ghosts of Somerville: Up Close and Intimate"** at the Milk Row Cemetery, from 2-4 pm as part of Mayor's Somerstreets program, this coming Sun. Oct. 24th. Sponsored by Historic Somerville, Inc in cooperation with the SHPC and Somerville Museum. Visitors in small groups will be treated to short guided tours of selected gravesites where the resident Ghost will engage in conversation about their daily lives in centuries past. An entertaining way to learn something new about Somerville history from those who lived it! Entry by donation, and homemade refreshments for sale.
- **Walking Tour - Union Square: Historic Crossroads of Commerce**, Sun. Nov. 7th, 2 - 4:30 pm. Architectural historian Ed Gordon will delve into the history of Somerville's oldest and largest commercial district to understand the ingredients for its economic rebirth. Tour will highlight the Square's most significant commercial buildings and why, and explore its diverse architectural styles. Sponsored by ArtsUnion in cooperation with the SHPC. Free.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule for 2010: November 16, and December 21.