



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

**MINUTES**

Tuesday, February 15, 2011 at 6:40 p.m.  
Third Floor Conference Room  
Somerville City Hall

**Staff Present:** Kristi Chase, and Brandon Wilson (in and out).

**Members Present:** Kevin Allen\*, Dick Bauer, DJ Chagnon\*\*, Sarah Degutis\*, Tom DeYoung, Ryan Falvey, Abby Freedman, and Eric Parkes. Kevin Allen arrived at 6:50 PM. DJ Chagnon arrived at 7:30 PM.

**Members Absent:** O. Susan Fontano\*, Barbara Mangum, Michael Payne, Derick Snare\*, and Brad Stearns\*.

\*\*Non-voting Members

\*Alternates

**Others present:** Charles Aggouras, Alan Bingham, Natasha Burger, Richard DiGirolamo, Daniel DiPierro, Janis Mamayek, Jeff Meese, Kelly Speakman, James Zegowitz and Todd Zinn

*The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

December 2010 and January 2011

*The Commission voted unanimously (6-0-1 (Dick Bauer)) to approve the Minutes as written.*



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**DELIBERATION OF HPC CASES**

**HPC 10.90 – 27 Warren Avenue** (continued from 10/19/10)

Applicant: Darin DiNucci, Owner, seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Remove enclosed 2-story porch ; and
2. Replace with open 2-story porch.

*A conditional **Certificate of Appropriateness** was issued on 10/26/10 for the framing. The details are still to be determined.*

*The Applicant has **requested a continuance until April 19, 2011.***

*No Public Comment was received.*

*There was no Discussion:*

*Documents: None received this month.*

*Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to grant a continuance.*

**HPC 09.67 Demolition – 378-382 Somerville Avenue, formerly Londontowne Antiques**

Applicant: W. James Herbert, Trustee.

*Because the property became part of the Union Square Local Historic District on December 16, 2010 as part of the City-wide Local Historic District Expansion begun in 2006, the proposed work was reviewed as:*

**HPC 11.01 – 378-382 Somerville Avenue, formerly Londontowne Antiques**

Applicant: W. James Herbert, Trustee seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** to:

1. Open up closed retail window openings on Carlton Street; and
2. Install historically appropriate "magnum" windows to match original retail windows as needed;
3. Replace doors with more appropriately styled doors;
4. Replace replacement windows with 2/2 insulated wood sash on second floor and above;
5. Replace missing decorative wood shingles where simpler shingle designs have been used;
6. Replace missing conical roof on corner;
7. Remove concrete block structure and porches on the rear of the building;
8. Add a driveway and gate system on Carlton Street;
9. Construct an addition on the rear and over part of the building as far away from the Somerville Avenue façade as practical; and
10. Construct a new building next door which will connect to the existing building. The west facade will no longer be visible.

**Janis Mamayek**, architect presented with additional comments from **Jeff Meese**, architect; **Jim Herbert**, owner; and **Richard DiGirolamo**, attorney. Because this project has been underway for over a year and none of the information presented was new to the Commission, they reviewed the alterations and repairs to the facades to be retained. The remainder of the building will be demolished for the construction of underground parking for the new building which will be built within the shell of the Carlton Street and Somerville Avenue facades and extended down Somerville Avenue to Church Street. The process will not be reversible. The Carlton Street and Somerville Avenue facades will be retained. It will be repaired in-kind with alterations that will bring it back to its original state. The proposed magnum windows will probably be Marvin® although other manufacturers will be considered. The existing oak doors were installed by Jim Herbert. More appropriate ones will be found to replace them.

**No Public Comment** was received.

**Discussion:** Most of the requests for alteration were to return the building to its intended form and style on the facades being retained. Staff review was requested to ensure that last minute decisions in keeping with the Guidelines could be resolved without returning to the Commission for small decisions. The Commission was particularly concerned with how the mosaic entry steps would be treated. The entries do not meet ADA requirements and will need to be lowered. They will need full documentation. The needed alteration was not 'Appropriate' but met the definition of 'Hardship.'

The security gate at the rear of the building closing off the retail parking area was of particular concern because there were no details yet as to form and design or how it would be installed. It was resolved that the concept of a gate be approved but not the specifics which will be reviewed and approved at another meeting.

Abby Freedman and Dick Bauer continue to believe that the portion of the new building over the rear is too high and should be one floor less. The architects thought that the lower roof line would be too busy and would not set off the restored conical roof. The fifth floor unit over the area is small and could not reasonably be made smaller. The pergola/conservatory will soften the transition toward the front and serve as a community space for the building tenants.

**Documents:** City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, conceptual plans dated November 16, 2010 and photographs of the building and vicinity.

**Decisions:** The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Open up closed retail window openings on Carlton Street; and
2. Replicate size and location, matching casings to existing when found with Staff review;
3. Install historically appropriate "magnum" windows to match original retail windows as needed with Staff review;
4. Replace doors with more appropriately styled doors with Staff review;
5. Replace replacement windows with 2/2 insulated clear glass wood or clad sash on second floor and above with Staff review;

6. Replace missing decorative wood shingles where simpler shingle designs have been used *to follow the existing pattern established on the belt course above the storefronts on Somerville;*
7. Replace missing conical roof on the corner of Carlton Street and Somerville Avenue *using scalloped shingles in a color that will match the roof of the pediments subject to availability;*

*because they meet HPC Design Guidelines for restoration.*

8. Add a driveway and *the concept of a gate system which will be determined and approved at a later date* on Carlton Street; and
9. Construct a new addition next door which will connect to the existing building as shown in the conceptual plans *dated November 16, 2010*. The west facade and interior of the building will no longer exist;

*because they meet HPC Design Guidelines for additions and infill development. Most of the west façade will be interior to the building once the addition is constructed. The interior of a building is not visible from the public right of way and therefore is exempt from review by the Commission.*

*The Commission voted (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to:*

10. Remove concrete block structure and

*They also voted (6-1 (Dick Bauer)) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to:*

11. Remove the porches on the rear of the building,

*because they were later additions to the property and their removal would not be not “incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.”*

*The Commission voted (5-2 (Dick Bauer and Abby Freedman) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to:*

12. Construct an addition on the rear and over part of the building as far away from the Somerville Avenue façade as practical as shown in the conceptual plans *dated November 16, 2010;*

*because they meet HPC Design Guidelines for additions and infill development.*

*The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Hardship to:*

13. Lower the entries to grad in order to meet ADA Requirements;
14. Retain or replicate the existing mosaic tile entries if possible; and
15. If not, the mosaics should be fully documented as to color and scale;

*Because the condition of the raised entry steps is particular to this building and not necessarily to all the other buildings in the District and the alteration is necessary to meet the ADA requirements.*

*The plans approved are still conceptual and schematic in nature and are not construction drawings. Final details have not been determined. Note that Staff review is a condition for several of the proposed alterations to ensure that those changes meet HPC Design Guidelines.*

**DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED****HPC 11.02 Demolition – 43 Elmwood Street, circa 1898 wood-frame house and 1916-1919 concrete block buildings**

Applicant: Charles Aggouras

**HPC 11.02 Demolition – 43 Elmwood Street, circa 1898 wood frame house and 1916-1919 concrete block buildings**

Applicants: Charles Aggouras and Daniel DiPierro, GFC Development Inc.

***James Zegowitz** presented with additional comments from **Charles Aggouras** and **Daniel DiPierro**. They are in the early stages of developing the parcel. They have done numerous projects in Somerville and Cambridge. They intend to construct 9 units of housing in 3 buildings. Everything would be LEED certified.*

*After the previous meeting, they thought further about the house and its role in the streetscape. The interior has had several alterations and does not make sense. They found that at the center chimney is unsupported from below except by a couple of steel beams running through the basement. They believe that the building is structurally compromised and to correct the problems would cost more than constructing a new building.*

*They followed the massing of the original in terms of footprint and roof pitch but lowered the first floor to grade. The siding will be fiber-board*

*They plan to leave some of the existing walls of the 43 Elmwood Street garage to create interesting spaces. For example, the exterior corner walls of the garage would form private areas for the house that will be in the center of the building. They like the buildings at Tannery Brook and hope to develop a similar project.*

***Staff Recommendations** were read.*

***No Public Comment** was received.*

***Discussion:** **Kevin Allen** liked the way they would be keeping the exterior walls of 40 Cameron Avenue and 43 Elmwood Street because they refer to how the automobile infiltrated all parts of the City. **Abby Freedman** asked why they were going for all new construction rather than preserving the existing. The **Commission** discussed what was important in a streetscape and how this particular house fit. The lowered height of the building, the lack of a stoop, the height of the porch roof and its angle, the size, shape and location of the window add together. Each change has a cumulative effect which is not positive. It is common for a street to have buildings of mixed ages and styles. There was nothing inherently wrong with a Postmodern look. **Dick Bauer** was troubled by the proposed teardown and replacement when the building appeared to be reasonably sound. The proposed conceptual design captured the roof line but otherwise was quite different. **Abby Freedman** noted the shape of the porch roof, brackets and posts all added to the character. **Sarah Degutis** said she was not wedded to any design but felt it was necessary to get the massing right. **Kevin Allen** and **DJ Chagnon** liked the original building. **DJ Chagnon** also noted that if the original building were to come down the new interpretation should be distinctive.*

While the **Commission** thought that the house was the more important building, some **commissioners** stated that they liked the idea of retaining the façade of the concrete garage on Elmwood Street as presented in the Applicant's sketches. By not giving the garage a 'preferably preserved' status, the applicants may retain as much or as little of the building as is feasible for the project, especially since the **Commission** will be reviewing the site as a whole. Only one building needs to be 'preferably preserved.'

**Documents:** City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, Property Form B, Staff Memo re: architecture and history of the properties, Staff Recommendations, preliminary site and building plans, and photos of the buildings on Elmwood Street and Cameron Avenue by the Staff and the developers.

**Decisions:** The **Commission** voted (7-0) to determine the concrete block structure at 43 Elmwood Street, 'significant' but not 'preferably preserved' because, although the building was (Section 2.17) "at least 50 years old, and is or has been determined by the Commission to be a significant building or structure after a finding that the building or structure is either:

- i. "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 of Massachusetts, or
- ii. "Historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished."

Specifically, the significance of the building is associated with early twentieth century architecture, development patterns, immigration, and work. However, the structure is not as architecturally distinctive, nor is it in as original condition as many others in the City. It is located in the center of a residential neighborhood rather than on the edge as such buildings traditionally were. While some believed that the neighborhood would be better served with another building that meets with HPC Infill Development Guidelines where the form, massing, and set backs related to the other buildings on the street, others rather liked keeping some of the exterior walls of 40 Cameron Avenue and 43 Elmwood Street because they refer to how the automobile infiltrated all parts of the City.

The **Commission** voted (5-2) to determine 39 Elmwood Street, circa 1898 wood frame house 'significant' and 'preferably preserved' because the building was (Section 2.17) "at least 50 years old, and is or has been determined by the Commission to be a significant building or structure after a finding that the building or structure is either:

- i. "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 of Massachusetts, or
- ii. "Historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association with a reputed architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished."

*Specifically, because its history is that of the neighborhood from its earliest day as the home of the local baker and Italian grocer to the home of French-Canadian immigrants whose names are inscribed on the Roll of Honor, and who lost their lives fighting in World War II. Architecturally, the house fits with the residential streetscape to the north and south of it.*

*A working group was formed to meet with the developers, the Planning Division and a member of the Design Review Committee to work out a Memorandum of Agreement that the Commission could accept within the 9-month review period. The Commission members volunteering to participate and report back to the Commission are Tom DeYoung, Eric Parkes, and DJ Chagnon. Kelly Speakman, whose name has been submitted to the BOA for membership to the HPC, and will probably be sworn in by the next Commission meeting, will also join the group once her role has been formalized. The Commission suggested that, for the Subcommittee meeting, the Applicant should prepare several sketches presenting a variety of concepts for retaining the existing historic house and/or the garage, or for demolishing either or both of them and constructing new buildings.*

**STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENTS AS PER REQUEST OF OTHER DIVISIONS****HPC 11.10 – 140 Central Street, circa 1898**

1/24/11

Planning Division

*Proposed enlargement of a basement window on the side of the building for egress would not negatively impact streetscape and abutting historic district across the street.*

**HPC 11.11 – 52 Franklin Street, before 1874**

1/31/11

Planning Division

*The structure may be of post and beam construction, and if so, it is a very important asset and resource for the City. Staff strongly recommends that a thorough survey be undertaken to verify its date of construction and history of ownership. Staff site visit on 2/10/11 revealed post and beam construction, severely compromised by modernizing. Corners had been cut into the posts and through the pegging to make the walls flush. New sills were being installed on the north side of the building. The walls were being propped up from the outside during the process. The developer intends to add two more units to the site. It is not known whether this is a late use of this construction technique or whether the building was moved to its current location. Deed and additional map research may help resolve the history of the building.*

**HPC 11.12 – 7 Central Street, Jonathan Stone House, circa 1870**

2/4/11

Planning Division

*The proposed relocation of the parking area will not further negatively impact the house or its historic context. The side yard of the abutting 15 Central Street has already been turned into a parking lot and is unlikely to be returned to its original garden use. The proposed use of the parking lot next door at #15 for #7 will at least keep most of the original 7 Central Street lot as garden.*

**HPC 11.13 – 23 Porter Street, circa 1850**

2/4/11

Planning Division

*Proposed alterations to the Local Historic District property are consistent with the Certificate of Appropriateness issued by the HPC on 10/19/10. Staff will meet with the Planning Division Staff and the developers to ensure any further changes are in keeping with the HPC's earlier deliberations and if not, the developers will return to the Commission for approval.*

**HPC 11.14 – 11 Williams Court, circa 1855-1860**

2/7/11

Planning Division

*Proposed plans to add two dormers will not negatively impact the streetscape.*

**DEMOLITIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF NON-APPLICABILITY REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY STAFF**

*None so far this month.*

**PROJECT UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS**

**Project Updates**

- **LHD Expansion Project** (Brandon Wilson & Amie Schaeffer)
  - Group D properties: Joint Public Hearing with BOA Legislative Matters Committee scheduled for Tues., February 22 at 7:00 PM
  - Notice of hearing sent to owners by HPC via certified mail with return receipt requested, as well as by City Clerk with Board of Aldermen's informational letter.
  - All LHD properties, proposed and existing, are being identified on a City-wide map, and grouped by geographical areas for presentation to the Aldermen.
- **SHPC Subcommittee for Guidelines Revision** (Kristi Chase & Abby Freedman)
  - Draft content of the introduction and outline of topics complete
  - Next meeting to be held in meeting room on garden level of City Hall on Thurs., Feb 24, 2011 at 7:00 PM.
- **2011 Preservation Awards Program** (Brandon Wilson with Derick Snare) Awards Subcommittee conducted final site visits on Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup>.
  - New award being granted this year to reflect adoption of many new local historic districts (LHDs) whose owners have been excellent stewards of their properties before they were designated and have notably enhanced the City's streetscape.
  - This year's winners include "Preservation Awards" for five LHD designated properties, "Director's Awards" for three non-designated but older and qualifying properties, and an "Inspiring Streetscape Award" for three owners of recently designated LHD properties.

- Owners have been notified and invited to the Awards Ceremony on Thurs., May 26<sup>th</sup> at the Somerville Museum.
- The SHS Art and CAD teachers are in the process of receiving their final award packets so that their students can begin the artwork for each property owner's award.
- **Prospect Hill Tower and Site** (Brandon Wilson)
  - 235<sup>th</sup> annual Flag Raising event on January 1<sup>st</sup> was very well attended, and weather was unusually balmy for a January 1<sup>st</sup> date. The Mayor opened the Tower for public observation on this once a year special day. Requests for programs from those not able to attend are still coming in. Photos of the event can be seen in Photo Gallery of the City's website.
  - The City with its consultant TBA Architects, Inc. will be making a presentation to Massachusetts Historical Commission re: the significance of the whole park as a key Revolutionary battlefield and the rationale for its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Meeting has been rescheduled to March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Union Square Surveying and Designation Project** (Brandon Wilson)
  - Review and editing of surveys by PAL Inc. continues, with expectation that additional surveying will be needed to determine certain properties' eligibility for the National Register. NR listing allows for potential historic tax credits for projects involving major rehabilitation and restoration work.
- **East Somerville and Broadway Streetscape Surveying Project** (Brandon Wilson)
  - SHPC Staff with Carrie Dancy, Director of East Somerville Main Streets, recently did a windshield survey of properties along Broadway from East Somerville through West Somerville, to identify properties worthy of surveying for potential LHD and NR designations. Focus will be on CDBG-eligible properties due to HUD funding.
- **SHPC Operational Affairs** (Brandon Wilson)
  - Recommendations for four new appointments (Alan Bingham, Natasha Burger, Kelly Speakman, and Todd Zinn) and three reappointments have been submitted to the Mayor. He submitted the recommendations package to the Board of Aldermen at their recent February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting for their review and approval.
  - It is hoped that the new members will be able to vote officially at the Commission's next regular meeting in March.
  - The annual Holiday Party of the Commission was held at the historic home of Abby Freedman and Dick Lourie, and was very well attended by both current and former members of the SHPC.
  - The SHPC Staff is working with realtor Sara Rosenfeld of Coldwell Banker to sponsor a real estate class on historic preservation at Somerville City Hall from 8:45 am to noon on Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Realtors from throughout the Boston metropolitan area will be invited to learn more about local historic districts, their value, and inner workings. Continuing education credits will be offered for attendees at the training session.

- **Somerville Museum Capital Building Fund** (Brandon Wilson)
  - The Somerville Museum with the help of SHPC Commissioner Barbara Mangum has received a \$104,500 matching grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Massachusetts Development Corporation.
  - Matching funds in the same amount need to be raised by Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> if the full amount of the grant is to be awarded. Widespread support from the community at large, including both residents and local businesses, is being solicited for this unique repository of local history, arts and culture.
  - The scope of work includes replacement of the original slate roof on this 1925 building and repairs to the wood gutters, exterior windows and trim. Work is expected to be done by two local firms.

### **Other Business**

- **1 Benton Road**
  - It has been determined that mediation will not occur between the developer and the neighbors who are adamantly against the proposed subdivision of the property.

**Upcoming Meeting Schedule for 2011:** March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21, July 19, August 16, September 20, October 18, November 15, and December 20.

All of the applications summarized above are available for public inspection at the Commission's Office on the third floor of City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, on Mon. -Wed. 9:00 am - 4:30 pm; Thurs. 9:00 am-7:30 pm; and Fri. 9:00 am-12:30 pm. Since cases may be continued to a later date(s), please check the agenda on the City's website, or call before attending (tel.: (617) 625-6600 x. 2525). Continued cases will not be re-advertised. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the hearing, by fax to 617-625-0722, by e-mail to [kchase@somervillema.gov](mailto:kchase@somervillema.gov), or by mail to the Historic Preservation Commission, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143.