



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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Tuesday, April 19, 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: Alan Bingham*, Natasha Burger, Tom DeYoung*, Ryan Falvey, Abby Freedman, Eric Parkes, Brad Stearns**, and Todd Zinn*.

Members Absent: Kevin Allen, Dick Bauer, DJ Chagnon*, Sarah Degutis*, Derick Snare*, and Kelly Speakman.

*Alternates

**Non-voting Alternate

Others present: Holly Campbell, Stan and Pat Dick, Richard DiGirolamo, Darin DiNucci, Campbell Ellsworth, James and Maria Freitas Erb, Bernardino Freitas, Mariade Freitas, Monica Freitas, Nathan Hogan, Brian Keane, Andrew Kennedy, Kanayo Lala, Peter Lee, Peter Lesses, April, Donna and Reinaldo Luna, Paul McGovern, Filomena Monta, Antonio Moreira, Jon Rose, and Sheila Walsh.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

March 2011 Minutes

The Commission voted unanimously (4-0-3 (Alan Bingham, Abby Freedman, and Todd Zinn*)) to approve the Minutes as written.*

DELIBERATION OF HPC CASES



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The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission will hold public hearings on the following applications, all in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and the City of Somerville Ordinance (Sections 7-16 – 7-28):

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

10/01/10

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.

***Darin DiNucci presented**, he had completed the framing for the porch and replaced the roof before the winter. His goal is to finish by the fall. He had met with Eric Parkes to review the options and look more closely into design approaches. Because the 1st and 2nd floors were differing heights, adjustments need to be made for a more harmonious appearance. **Eric Parkes** explained his concept of a much wider fascia to make the disparity less obvious. There would be further detailing on the column post capitals and pedestals to give some character to the porch; a bead board ceiling to the 2nd floor porch roof but not the 1st floor.*

***Staff Recommendations** were read.*

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

***Discussion:** Because the plans were essentially conceptual and based upon the architectural recommendations of one commission member, the **Commission** was very specific about what they would permit. Due to the distance of the porch from the street, the detailing needed to be painted with a broad-brush. Fine detail would not be visible. Balusters should be as beefy as possible. Because a bead board ceiling would be installed on one floor but not the lower floor, **Brad Stearns** broached the possibility of a ceiling drainage system that could be used below the second floor porch. It was not thought to be feasible at this time due to financial constraints.*

***Documents:** City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, a sketch plans of the porch, and photographs of the building and vicinity.*

***Decisions:** The **Commission** voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for the following details on the already erected porch frame:*

1. Install a secondary fascia along the base of the second floor porch;
2. Wrap the posts with 6" x 6" lumber as tightly as possible;
3. Detail the porch posts with capitals and bases;
4. Install beadboard on second floor porch ceiling;
5. Install simple rails, either plain or fluted, and nominal 2" x2" balusters with a nailing strip; and
6. Install vertical lattice or slat skirt at the base of the porch;

HPC 11.24 – 101 School Street

3/17/11

Applicant: Holly Campbell for Hotel Waquoit Condominium Trust, Owners seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Remove existing mixed paver and asphalt walkway;
2. Replace it with Unilock Copthorne Camelot pavers laid in a diagonal pattern; and
3. Remove pipe handrail.

Holly Campbell presented. *The project is fairly straight forward. The walkway is in poor repair and needs to be replaced. They hope to retain the concrete paver with the address and of course the granite steps and borders.*

Staff Recommendations were read. *Staff noted that she had checked with the Landscape Architect on the Commission regarding the quality and appearance of the pavers. He said that they were long-lasting and an appropriate modern material.*

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *The granite edging and whether it would be reset was discussed. Tree roots have caused it to rise in various places.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, PowerPoint slides of the existing conditions and the proposed replacement materials.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the above proposal with no conditions.*

HPC 11.30 – 58 Columbus Avenue

3/31/11

Applicant: William T. Gage, Owner seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Install venting on east side of house for a new gas fireplace.

Bill Gage presented: *He would like to install a gas fireplace in his living room. A small vent would need to be located outside near the other utilities.*

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *There was none.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, manufacturer’s specifications and photographs of the building.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the above proposal with no conditions.*

HPC 11.31 – 58-68 Bow Street, 365-377 Somerville Avenue, the Drouet Block a.k.a. the Condos at Gerrior Square

4/1/11

Applicants: Noblin Associates, LLC, architects for the Gerrior Square Condominium Trust seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Add narrow corner boards to outer corners of the building;
2. Alter spacing of clapboard siding and method of attachment; and
3. Replace rotted and damaged window casing as needed to as close a match as possible.

Nathan Hogan from Noblin Associates presented with additional comments from Sheila Walsh of the Gerrior Square Condominium Association. The Condominium Association had had repairs made to the building a few years ago but they proved to be insufficient to make the building watertight. The surface preparation and paint started peeling fairly soon after the work was done. Since the previous work had been specified by architects and it had not solved the problems, the Association hired engineers to work on the problem. They recommended replacing the old siding and installing a rain shield system to ensure that the walls had a chance to breathe and dry out. This system added about 3/16” to the depth of the walls which were also insulated at this time. They also chose to add narrow corner strips to accommodate the natural expansion and contraction of the clapboard as a way to minimize water infiltration. These were not original to the building but similar to strips that were used on interior corners of the bays.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: Commission concerns were with the installation of corner boards visible to the public right-of-way without Commission approval, recently altered window casings resulting in ones that did not match either the historic casings nor the more recently replaced stock casings, and the varied exposures of clapboard that did not match as it turned the corner from the driveway to the Bow Street façade. Much of the hearing was taken up with the technical aspects of dealing with the mismatch of clapboard exposures and dealing with the corner treatments. The applicants agreed to change the window casing and one of the added corner boards on the side along Somerville Avenue.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, Noblin & Associates, LLC contract documents and specifications dated 12/8/2010 for the Building Envelope Repairs of the Gerrior Square Condominium, letter from Noblin Associates, LLC dated, 3/25/11 and photographs of the building.

Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to continue the case on site Monday 4/25/11 at 3:00 PM to make a fully informed decision on how to make the building water-tight and how to make minimal alterations to the building to meet the owners’ needs along with HPC Guidelines. **Brad Stearns, Eric Parkes, Alan Bingham and Ryan Falvey** said that they would be available to constitute a quorum. Staff would put legal notice on Clerk’s Board and City web-site.

HPC 11.32 – 8 Westwood Road

4/1/11

Applicants: Neal Minahan and Robert Vigneau, Owners seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to:

1. Remove added wrap-around side porch;
2. Repair turret and front porch to match historic photo; and
3. Replace porch side door with a window to match existing windows.

Jon Rose, contractor for the owners presented. The owners have phased their proposed scope of work on the property which needs a lot of work. The owners intend to do repairs and replacements in-kind for most of the work. First, they need to remove the porches to do the structural repairs to the foundation and the second floor overhang, and to install new footings. The front porch would be designed in such a way that it can be extended to reproduce the open porch shown on the historic photos. Rather than leave the porch unfinished, they propose to replicate the other side of the porch so that it matched until they could afford to rebuild the wrap-around porch pictured in Somerville Past and Present.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: Since the owners will be conducting their repairs and maintenance in a phased project over a number of years, there was some discussion about what would happen if the wrap around porch was not rebuilt. On the whole, the **Commission** was pleased with this phase of the project.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, descriptions of proposed work and historic photograph of the building and photographs of existing conditions.

Decisions: The **Commission** voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for the above work.

A **Certificate of Non-Applicability** will also be issued to:

1. Repair turret and original structure/architecture;
2. Repair eaves to match rest of house;
3. Waterproof all penetrations;
4. Brace second and third floors above front porch during construction;
5. Remove old footings and explore;
6. Remove old framing and inspect sills/ledger;
7. Excavate front porch and pour new footings;
8. Frame with pressure-treated wood;
9. Replace existing fir porch floor in-kind;
10. Replace porch walls with red cedar shingle to match existing including drainage openings;
11. Replace existing fir ceiling paneling in-kind or with the closest equivalent with Staff review and approval;
12. Replace existing wooden beam trim with back primed clear cedar trim;
13. The existing wall cap will be replaced with Douglas fir (8/4 stock, primed);
14. Install a Spanish cedar bed molding around entire porch;
15. Strip and refurbish existing front porch columns which will be preserved.

DEMOLITION REVIEWS

9-MONTH REVIEW PERIOD

HPC 11.02 Demolition – 39-43 Elmwood Street, circa 1898 wood-frame house

2/15/11

Applicants: Charles Aggouras and Daniel DiPierro, GFC Development Inc

The house at 39 Elmwood was ‘preferably preserved 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.

Working group with members of the Commission, Staff for the HPC and Planning Division and the developers have held three meetings so far on 3/4/11, 3/11/1, 4/1/11 to develop site plans and save the house at 39 Elmwood Street. Developers now state that they plan to retain the house and develop around it. Conceptual plans will be submitted for review and comment before they go to the Design Review Committee on April 28, 2011.

Staff presented in the absence of the development team. Following the February meeting with the HPC, the design working group decided to keep the original house at 39 Elmwood and concentrate their attention on the rest of the site. The house at 39 Elmwood will have a modern addition on the rear. Other new construction will be contained within the walls of the concrete block structure at 43 Elmwood and 40 Cameron Avenue. They plan to use modern and green materials that will provide a contrast to the concrete and wood structures in the neighborhood.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: Plans were a little unclear with differing details in different drawings. On the whole the **Commission** was pleased with the amount of detail retained and looks forward to a completed plan.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, Property Form B, Staff Memo re: architecture and history of the properties, Staff Recommendations, photos of the buildings by the Staff and the owners, plans dated 4/01/11 by the MZO Group.

No Decisions were made.

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED

HPC 11.21 – 52 Franklin Street, between 1857 and 1874

3/4/11

Applicant: Richard DiGirolamo, Attorney for Maria Freitas, Owner

Workers house, located on the lower end of Franklin Street, was determined to be significant because its history is that of the workers neighborhood from before the Civil War. Architecturally, the house fits with the residential streetscape to the south of it.

Richard DiGirolamo, attorney; Campbell Ellsworth, architect; and James Erb presented: The applicants had bought the property a year and a half ago with the intention of living there. They have spent over \$100, 000 in the attempt to renovate the house. It was found to be so structurally deficient by Kanayo Lala, P.E. that he recommended that every post, beam or truss should need to be sistered, which he thought was economically infeasible.

Staff Recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received from Alderman Roche' who believes that the building should not be preferably preserved; from Pat Dick, who was very pleased to see reinvestment by local families into the neighborhood; and Monica Freitas, who reminded the Commission that the Applicants would be living there and would not be absentee landlords.

Discussion: The **Commission** discussed the number of intact pre-Civil War workers' cottage still in existence. Properzi Way (Vine Street) was pointed out as an equivalent cohesive and well-maintained group of workers housing. It was noted that while, yes, the building could be preserved, there is a limit on what an owner in Somerville could reasonably be expected to do to preserve a derelict building. After reviewing what the Commission might want to require in the event of a 'preferably preserved' determination beyond photo-documentation, it was decided that a letter would be sent to the Planning Division noting its concerns and requesting that at least one Commission member be included in design review for new construction at the site.

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, Property Form B, Staff memo re: architecture and history of the properties, Staff recommendations, photos of the buildings by the Staff and the owners, and structural report by Kanayo Lala, P.E..*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (0-7) to consider the site “preferably preserved”. In other words, no one was in favor of that determination due to the condition of the building, the cost of repairing it, and the applicants’ expressed desire to build within the context of the neighborhood. They also voted unanimously (7-0) to write a letter requesting that the Planning Division include a member of the Commission in design review meetings to ensure that the new construction stays within the neighborhood context.*

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

HPC 11.27 – 26 Weston Avenue – Builders Specialty and Hardware Corporation – concrete block industrial building 3/22/11

Applicant: 26 Weston Avenue DevCo LLC, Owners

Industrial building that began as multiple garages in the 1920s with many alterations and additions over time. Permits have been granted by the Planning Board and the ZBA for a new low-rise residential building on this location. The neighborhood is otherwise residential.

Peter Lee presented: *He bought the building and intends to construct a condominium complex that matches the one across the street. It is fully permitted with exception of the Demolition Permit.*

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Discussion: *The Commission agreed fully with the Staff recommendations.*

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, Staff Memo re: architecture and history of the property, Staff Recommendations, and photos of the building.*

Decisions: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to determine the building not ‘significant’ because the building is much altered from its originally intended use, has been periodically altered over the years, and is no longer in-keeping with the neighborhood which has also been much changed since the 1920s when the building was originally constructed. They did not believe that the retention of the existing building would be of long-term benefit to the community.*

HPC 11.29 – 25 Farragut Avenue – wood-frame house circa 1884 3/23/11

Applicants: Reinaldo & Donna Luna

1¾-story single-family cottage. Farragut Street was platted in 1884 and three new houses appeared there before the year’s end. This is one of ten constructed by 1895. The applicants have gutted the interior of the building. See note below.

Jon Lannan, architect presented for the applicants. *The project began in May of 2010 when the Luna family decided to make the house, where they have lived since 1982, more energy efficient. They received a mix of misinformation and began the project without all the correct permits in place. They moved out of their house on 12/24/2010 in order to start the demolition and reconstruction of the house in a*

different, larger and more efficient way than it currently exists. The plans have been submitted to the Zoning Board of Appeals since then. The ZBA is holding judgment until the Commission has had a chance to make a determination of significance and comment upon the designs. He also noted various statistics regarding building types, sizes and materials found on the street.

Staff Recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received in the form of petitions and letters of support to the ZBA regarding the proposed new construction not specific to the proposed determination of significance from 16 neighbors.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance section 7.28, Property Form B, Staff Memo re: architecture and history of the properties, Staff Recommendations, photos of the building and the above-mentioned written comment from the public.

Discussion: The Commission noted that although the house is probably one of the oldest in the neighborhood, it did not set the tone of the street but was rather an anomaly, smaller and humbler than all the others. Its physical loss would not be evident in the streetscape. The known owners were neither unique nor characteristic of the neighborhood. There was some debate as to whether age alone was sufficient to consider the house significant. Since the house is from the last quarter of the 19th century when the much of Somerville’s housing stock was constructed, its age was not considered an important feature.

Decisions: The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to determine the building not ‘significant’ because the house was not importantly associated with any person, group, movement, or architectural style in particular even though it was more than 50 years old.

STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENTS AS PER REQUEST OF OTHER DIVISIONS

HPC 11.23 – 25 Farragut Avenue – wood-frame house circa 1884

3/11/11

Applicant: Planning Division

Proposed building is symmetrical and has a much larger volume than the existing building in a style similar to the post-1900 house next to it to the north but not similar to the house immediately to its south.

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

HPC 11.26 Demolition – 205 Broadway, concrete block service station, numerous alterations since original 1940 construction

3/24/11

Applicant: Maurice Haddad, Owner.

PROJECT UPDATES AND OTHER BUSINESS

Project Updates

- **LHD Expansion Project** (Brandon Wilson and Amie Schaeffer)
 - Group D: As of 3-24-11, BOA approved 11 properties with 17 owners in 7 LHDs, and removed 1 property (75 Florence St.) from group at this time.

- Group E: 18 properties with 20 owners proposed in 5 LHDs; 1st package mailed to owners 4-7-11 w. return deadline of 4-22-11 before 2nd mailing sent to non-responding owners; copy of all material sent to owners being distributed on CD to all SHPC members attending tonight's meeting
- Properties On Hold: 15 properties with 16 different owners in Groups B, C, and D on hold as per BOA action
- Preservation Newsletter – Spring Edition being prepared by Amie

- **2011 Surveying Projects** (Brandon Wilson and Kristi Chase)
 - Union Square Commercial LHD – RFQ being prepared for U.S. Post Office only
 - Prospect Hill Tower – RFQ in progress
 - Commercial and Industrial Properties in CDBG-eligible areas – RFQ in progress
 - Other Residents' Requests (e.g. 137 Summer St., 9 Claremon St.)
- **SHPC Subcommittee for Guidelines Revision** (Kristi Chase and Abby Freedman)
- **Patriot's Day Celebration -Colonial Fair Event** (Brandon Wilson and Amie Schaeffer)
 - Mon. April 18th, 10-11:30 am. at Foss Park; volunteers still needed!
 - Update: Colonial Fair big success! Over 100 passports picked up by local children with their families; Paul Revere arrived on horseback and spoke, along w. Lancers Assoc. representative; and great attendance by elected officials: Mayor, State Representatives Sciortino and Twomey, 8 of 11 Aldermen, and School Committee Vice Chairman Adam Sweeting, in addition to SHPC member Eric Parkes.
 - Many thanks to former SHPC member Susan Fontana for her generous donation of 2 dozen huge balloons, and to SHPC member Kelly Speakman who dressed up in Colonial attire and was an outstanding SHPC representative and volunteer at the Passport distribution table!
- **Preservation Awards Program** (Brandon Wilson and Derick Snare)
 - Interviews proceeding with a selection of 2011 award winning owners by Marian Berkowitz; expected that interviews and photos will be published during Preservation Month by local media
 - Last year's 2010 Awards Exhibit currently on display at Somerville Armory; will be transferred to City Hall for Preservation Month
- **2011 Preservation Month Calendar of Events (Draft)** (Brandon Wilson)
 - East Somerville Walking Tour with East Somerville Main Streets – Sun. May 1st, 2-4:30pm. Meet at Mt. Vernon Restaurant, and conclude with refreshments at Vinny's Restaurant.
 - Milk Row Cemetery Tour with Barbara Mangum – Tues. May 5th 6-7:30 pm
 - Jane's Walk in Union Square with Union Square Main Streets – Sat. or Sun. May 7-8th TBA.
 - Researching Your Somerville House, with Somerville Library – Tues. May 10th, 7-8:30 pm. Central Library
 - *Citizen Somerville* book signing and possible panel discussion – Sat. May 21, 2 – 4pm. Somerville Museum
 - Historic Bike Tour of LHDs in Somerville, with Somerville Bike Committee, Sun. May 22nd, 1:30 – 4:30 pm. Meet at Somerville City Hall, with refreshments at end, at location TBA.
 - 2011 Preservation Awards Ceremony – Thurs. May 26th, 6:30-9pm. Somerville Museum. Refreshment donations from local businesses via SHPC members welcome!

Other Business

- **SHPC Operational Affairs** (Brandon Wilson)
 - Membership Updates -- Orientation and Re-Appointments; distribution of new rosters
 - Alert! Upcoming Elections in May for Officers
 - Launching of new City Website, with additional enhancements for SHPC in progress
 - Drafting of Historic Preservation-Economic Development Goals as part of Budgetary Process

- **Somerville Museum Capital Building Fund Update** (Brandon Wilson)
 - With full match of MCC grant completed this spring, work on window repairs and roof replacement to be done this summer.

Upcoming Meeting Schedule for 2011: 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, or by mail to the Historic Preservation Commission, City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143.