



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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

Tuesday, April 17, 2012 at 6:40 p.m.
Third Floor Conference Room

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

Members Present: Alan Bingham*, Dick Bauer, George Born*, Natasha Burger**, Tom DeYoung*, Abby Freedman, Eric Parkes, Brad Stearns*, and Todd Zinn*. Tom De Young* left at 6:55 PM; George Born*, Brad Stearns* and Abby Freedman arrived at 7:00 PM; Natasha Burger was the fifth alternate to arrive with 3 regular Commission members present at the meeting.

Members Absent: Kevin Allen, DJ Chagnon*, Ryan Falvey, Derick Snare*, and Kelly Speakman

*Alternates

** Non-voting Alternate

Others present: Nicole Catavolos, Frank Cresta, Rocco di Renzo, Don di Rocco, Edward Doherty, John Hallam, Paul Gross, Ryan Guthrie, Molly and David Harris, and son, Alderman Maryann Heuston, Barry King, Juliana Kuipers, Colin Lukins, Scott E M---, George Proakis, John and Arlene Quinn, Peter Quinn, Susan Rudolph, Julie Schneider, Teri Swartzel, and Laura Rushfeldt,

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to not approve the March 20, 2012 Minutes because they were not yet been completed.

DELIBERATION OF HPC CASES

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 12.016 – 25 Clyde Street – 1820-1858 H. Timney Brick-Workers Cottage (Continued) 2/27/12

Applicants: Mark Hammer, Architect for Stateside Realty Group, LLC



CITY HALL • 93 HIGHLAND AVENUE • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02143
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 2500 • TTY: (617) 666-0001 • FAX: (617) 625-0722

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1. Demolish existing garages at the rear of the property (C/A);
2. Remove east side enclosed entry(C/A);
3. Replace entry with a window (C/A);
4. Rebuild brick foundation (C/NA);
5. Infill lower level entry to the street (C/A);
6. Enlarge rear addition to accommodate second stairway (C/A);
7. Replace wood shingle siding with wood clapboard (C/A);
8. Remove inappropriate replacement and other windows (C/A);
9. Replace them with 2/2 double-hung wood replacement windows (C/A);
10. Repair or replace all rotted sills (C/NA);
11. Replace or replicate exterior trim to match existing as needed (C/NA);
12. Remove minimally visible chimney (C/A);
13. Replace roof (C/A);
14. Construct or rebuild the second floor entry stairs (C/NA);
15. Construct a new deck on west side rear (C/A);
16. Install fencing around rear and sides of lot (C/A);
17. Remove asphalt from the entire yard (C/A);
18. Install cobble and stone aggregate parking areas (C/A);
19. Landscape the remaining area (C/A); and
20. Construct a free standing 2-unit structure designed to resemble workers cottages on lot with an existing 1-family dwelling (C/A)

Richard DiGirolamo introduced the project with additional comments from ***Ryan Guthrie***. ***Don DiRocco presented the project itself***. They are proposing to add a new structure on the approximately 5000 SF lot. There have been several issues regarding needed variances especially in regards to parking and fire-lanes required by the Fire Department. This meant that the plans being shown were not final and would certainly need revisions to solve these issues.

Don said that he thought they had a good design for the new construction and for the addition in the rear to the building as a second means of egress. It would be a full gut rehab because floors were not level, some interior beams were sagging and twisted so that the doors were not rectangular.

They would need to raise the building up to reconstruct the foundations. The lower floor ceiling does not meet code for living space so they would lower the floor level below grade in order to keep the original proportions. The new concrete foundation would be faced with both salvaged bricks and new ones to match. The mortar would be suitably soft. They have undertaken this technique several times and found it to be successful.

They would restore the original clapboard siding and remove the 1940s wood shingles.

The clapboard siding on the main entry stairs was to hide the structure and to keep debris from blowing beneath them.

The original windows are long-gone. Picture windows had been installed in the 1990s without permission. They intend to use Windsor metal clad all wood window 2/2 or 6/6 sash, which they have successfully used in the past on historic buildings. It has a nice putty bar detail.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, site plans and conceptual elevations dated

Discussion: *The Commission was particularly concerned that the brick match and that the heights of the courses be retained. There was some discussion about whether to infill the original ground floor doorway completely, to indicate its existence in the brickwork or through a false door. It was also debated whether the replacement windows should have a 2/2 or 6/6 configuration. The building is shown to have had 6/6 windows on the Form B. The front stair needed more work to bring it back to a more traditional workers cottage appearance. Abby Freedman particularly did not like the modern horizontal fence, but most Commissioners did not have a strong opinion about it. The chimney was deemed to be a newer addition and not visible from the street. Although, she felt the lot to be over-built, Abby liked the fact that the buildings were the same height as the original building and designed to have the same forms and massing as the historic building in front.*

Decision: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to continue the following until next month pending more details and information:*

1. Remove inappropriate replacement and other windows (C/A);
2. Replace them with 2/2 or 6/6 double-hung Windsor wood replacement windows (C/A);
3. Construct or rebuild the second floor entry stairs (C/A); and
4. Landscape the remaining area (C/A);

The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a certificate for the following items

5. Demolish existing garages at the rear of the property (C/A);
6. Remove east side enclosed entry (C/A);
7. Replace entry with a window (C/A);
8. Rebuild brick foundation with mortar to be matched, bricks salvaged and reused, new bricks to be matched in color, texture and hardness (C/A);
9. Infill lower level entry to the street (C/A);
10. Enlarge rear addition to accommodate second stairway (C/A);
11. Replace wood shingle siding with wood clapboard (C/A);
12. Repair or replace all rotted sills (C/NA);
13. Replace or replicate exterior trim to match existing as needed (C/NA);
14. Replace roof in-kind with regular 3-tab shingles (C/A);
15. Construct a new deck on west side rear (C/A);
16. Install fencing around rear and sides of lot (C/A);
17. Remove asphalt from the entire yard (C/A);
18. Install cobble and stone aggregate parking areas (C/A);
19. Construct a free standing 2-unit structure designed to resemble workers cottages on lot with an existing 1-family dwelling (C/A); and
20. Remove minimally visible chimney (C/A).

The demolition of the garages was approved because they were not constructed during the period of significance for the workers cottage and were in very poor condition. The remaining items were found to be in keeping with the Commission's Guidelines.

HPC 12.026 – 67-69 Florence Street – 1857 Isaac Hardy House

3/28/12

Applicant: Rocco Di Renzo

1. Construct a brick wall with iron railings along the front of the property and the adjoining property (C/A).

Rocco di Renzo presented. *The wall would be located in front of all three properties that he owned on Florence Street with the historic house located in the middle between the new three-story building and the older one to the north. He would generally follow the Commission's desires on this. However, he preferred a flat top rail to pickets for safety reasons.*

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, photos of similar walls constructed by the Applicant, sketched site plan, and photos of historically appropriate fences and walls

Discussion: The Commission discussed the characteristics of older wall and fence styles to the modern ones found throughout Somerville and noted that there was a lot going on with simple materials. Italianate homes usually had wood picket fences although hairpin fences and iron pickets were not uncommon. Full height brick walls were more common in Europe. Iron fences did not have flat tops, but more commonly pickets or hairpin tops. The bricks were likely to be water-struck with a smooth surface, not rough. Brick walls should have prominent posts and may be higher than the height of the fence or wall. The posts should also be deeper than the wall which should recede somewhat. Whether the caps should be brick, cement, bluestone or granite was discussed. The height of the wall should be low and the fence should taller

Decision: Based upon HPC Guidelines for landscaping, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with Staff review and approval to

1. Construct a brick wall with iron railings along the front of the property and the adjoining property with the following conditions:
 - a. The posts should project above the top rail and be wider than the wall and fence;
 - b. The wall should be low with a taller fence on top;
 - c. The wall should be composed of older style bricks such as water-struck;
 - d. The caps may be brick or stone and if stone they should not be polished; and
 - e. The fence portion should have a decorative portion that rises above the rail.

HPC 12.030 - 14-16 Aldersey Street – c. 1871 Elizabeth and Stephen Fenno House

4/2/12

Applicants: Abby Freedman & Julie Schneider

1. Install a black metal chimney cap.

The case was heard first on the Agenda because Abby Freedman, Commissioner would not be in attendance for a case which involved her personally.

Julie Schneider presented. She proposed a box-type chimney cap that would be constructed of dark metal so that it would not be too reflective.

Staff Recommendations were read.

No Public Comment was received.

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, and manufacturers cut sheet showing the chimney style.

Discussion: The Commission agreed that the proposed cap met HPC Guidelines.

Decision: Based upon HPC Guidelines for roofs, the Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness to

1. Install a black metal chimney cap.

REVIEW AND COMMENT

None this month.

DEMOLITION REVIEWS**CURRENT CASES WITHIN 9-MONTH REVIEW PERIOD****HPC 08.72 – 92 Properzi Way, circa 1850, James W. Maloy House**

10/20/11

Applicant: Moshe Safdie Associates, Owner

Plans will be presented for a Memorandum of Agreement:

1. Restore the main portion of the historic house to a semblance of the original 1850s workers cottage;
2. Demolish 1-story rear addition; and
3. Construct a new rear addition that reflects 1930s factory building.

Paul Gross with Laura Rushfeldt presented. After many months of conversations with the neighbors and meeting with Planning, Historic Preservation Staff and a member of the Design Review Committee, they have changed use from business to residential, reduced the footprint and volume, moved the roof deck and reduced its size, changed the materials and fenestration, and added a privacy planter. They have also added more evergreen landscaping to give more privacy to the neighbors. The historic building has more separation from the proposed new building. Large windows will have translucent glass on the side toward the neighbors along with evergreen plantings. The building will only be 29' high as opposed to the permitted 40'. There will be no penthouse projection. Connections between the buildings will all be below ground.

Underground parking was not feasible, due to the amount of fill that would need to be removed from the site which is essentially polluted. The current plan has minimal excavation needed.

While it had been proposed, a more residential look for the project did not meet with internal vetting and a building closer to the design of the industrial building was preferred. The building was made to look as small as possible and many compromises were made in order to do so.

Staff Recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received. **Molly Harris**, who was concerned with property values and sunlight, said that she believes that the proposed building was not an appropriate attachment to a residential farmhouse. The massing reflects badly on the feeling of the street. **Her son** also spoke, noting that they were extending a commercial use into the neighborhood since the basement is clearly storage space for the office use. The roof deck is was for commercial use and the massing was also clearly industrial. It gives the building the look of a tractor trailer and detracts from the modestly scaled wood frame house. Moshe Safdie is a well-respected internationally known firm and should be able to find alternatives that would address the architectural integrity of older neighborhoods.

Alderman Heuston likened the proposal to putting the wrong head on the torso of a sculpture by clumping a large building on the back of a very simple house. The underground connections are pretty permanent and she doesn't see that they could easily be undone. The rooftop connections also seem permanent. While the proposal has gone from office to residential with an opportunity to house visiting architects and clients, this use could be placed elsewhere.

Nicole Catavolos noted that a lot of the changes to the proposal over time have been positive, however, she is still concerned that it would still be easy to change the use from residential to office. She does not like the scale which is still that of an industrial warehouse rather than residential and believes that its construction would irrevocably alter the scale of the neighborhood. The architects should make sure that the mature trees are kept. Their loss would make the property feel more industrial.

Colin Lukins from Skehan Street was particularly concerned with the mature trees and the scale of the project.

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, photos, site plans and conceptual elevations by Moshe Safdie Associates dated 4/17/12.*

Discussion: *The Commission noted that the new addition should be taking its design cues from the existing 1850s residential buildings and not from the 1930 industrial building next door. General HPC guidelines are for new additions or structures to not dominate or to call attention to itself at the expense of the existing building or streetscape. The historic workers cottage was still overwhelmed by the proposed addition and the streetscape was interrupted by the juxtaposition of the two structures. There was a lack of compatibility of the materials between the clapboard and the brick, as well as the form and massing. They were using very different architectural vocabularies. Could there be another way to look at the site since it was residential and not industrial? **George Proakis**, Director of Planning noted that buildings that abut different zones are particularly complicated. And of course, with the timing, it is critical to come to a resolution soon. **Abby Freedman** wondered whether underground parking could be used. **Alan Bingham** said he loved the presentation but had hoped the proposal would be more consistent with the historic buildings. The 1930s look of the proposed structure was antithetical to the 1850s character of the neighborhood.*

Decision: *The Commission requested that the Applicants go back to the committee to see if the addition could be smaller and further from the workers cottage and address some of the other issues brought up by the neighbors. The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to continue the case at the May HPC Meeting. The Committee would include Alan Bingham, George Born, Abby Freedman, and Eric Parkes.*

HPC 11.109 – 29 Day Street, circa 1870, Rich Collins House 11/15/11
Applicant: Kaj Vandkjaer, architect for Borderline Improvements LLC, Owner

HPC 11.113 – 1 Village Terrace – pre-1874 Workers Cottage 1/17/12
Applicant: Doug S. Beaudet, Owner

DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED

HPC 11.126 – 18 Cottage Avenue – circa 1850, N. Willson Boarding House (continued) 12/20/11
Applicant: 18 Cottage LLC

***Richard DiGirolamo** requested a continuation to the May 15, 2012 meeting on behalf of the applicants.*

***No Staff Findings** were read.*

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

Documents: *City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.28, Draft Property Form B, and photos of the building.*

There was no Discussion.

Decision: *The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) to grant the requested continuance.*

HPC 12.017 – 146 Hudson Street – circa 1924 Edward J Heath House
Applicant: Richard DiGirolamo, Attorney for Edward Doherty, Owner 2/29/12

Richard Di Girolamo presented. *After reviewing the structural engineer’s report, he believes that the structure needs too much work to be economically feasible to rehabilitate an eyesore. It has no character and should not be preferably preserved. The building still has to go to DRC and Planning. The lot is too narrow for a second structure. They plan to demolish the building for 3 flats.*

Staff Recommendations were read.

Public Comment was received from the Quinns of 150 Hudson Street. John Quinn would like to see the eyesore gone. The building has been abandoned for some time and has a surprising amount of deterioration. They have known the family there since the 1940s but in recent years it has really started to go downhill. Arlene Quinn thought that the building was originally a barn moved there by Admiral Pride’s father on the marriage of his daughter (Admiral Pride’s sister).

Documents: City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, Property Form B, HPC Design Guidelines, and structural engineer’s report by Roome and Guarracino, LLC dated April 10, 2012 and architects plans A-0 through A-5 by Peter Quinn Associates, dated 20 March, 2012

Discussion: The structural report was reviewed. There were no cost estimates to fix the building or of a cost benefit analysis. While some water damage was evident, it still appeared structurally sound. Abby Freedman noted that the building proposed for the lot would dwarf 150 Hudson next door.

Decision: The Commission voted (4-3 (Dick Bauer, George Born, Abby Freedman, Eric Parkes – Alan Bingham, Brad Stearns and Todd Zinn)) to continue the discussion and reconsider the structural and other information received.

DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Commission may make a preliminary determination under the City of Somerville Ordinance as set forth in Section 7-28 b (2) on whether any buildings are “significant”. Prior notice is not required by the Ordinance. New cases for a Determination of Significance may be added to the Agenda until Thursday, February 16, 2012. Public testimony followed by discussion and a vote by the Commission.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

HPC Guidelines Revisions

- Discussion about adopting and substituting completed portions of revised HPC Design Guidelines drafted by Subcommittee as an interim step to the final Guidelines.

STAFF REVIEW & APPROVAL OF DEMOLITIONS & CERTIFICATES OF NON-APPLICABILITY

HPC 12.025 – 56-58 Walnut Street – 1890 Hollander Block Certificate of Non-Applicability 3/26/12
Applicant: Hugh Gelch, owner of Walnut Pleasant LLC.

1. Replace asphalt roof shingles in-kind on the mansard portion of the roof.

HPC 12.029 Demolition – 15 Park Place – 1925 Concrete Block Garages (6) 4/2/12
Applicant: Vladimir Pezel

HPC 12.032 – 93 Highland Avenue – 1852-1924 City Hall Certificate of Non-Applicability 4/4/12
Applicant: Sarah Spicer, Senior Planner for OSPCD, City of Somerville.

1. Install a Hubway station near the driveway entrance to City concourse, against the retaining wall facing the Dilboy sculpture. Station is temporary, to be in place from March through November.

This will be a seasonal and reversible installation necessary for the docking of the shared bikes with no lasting effect upon the historic fabric of the site.

STAFF REVIEW AND COMMENTS AS PER REQUEST OF PLANNING & OTHER DIVISIONS

PLANNING DIVISION REVIEWS

12.023 – 57 Pitman Street 3/28/12

Applicant: Pitman Property Group LLC

12.024 – 11 Church Street 3/29/12

Applicant: CMS Church Nominee Trust

The proposed change to the rear of the building will not affect the rhythm of the existing streetscape.

12.028 – 280 Broadway 3/29/12

Applicant: Amos G. Winter and Fred Camerato, Owners

Due to alterations much of the original historic value has been lost. The proposed changes will not affect the historic integrity of the building or the existing streetscape.

12.031 – 106 Orchard Street 4/3/12

Applicant: Sapna Mehtani

The proposed alteration to the house will not disrupt the existing streetscape. The proposed addition will be minimally visible from the street since it will be located on the rear of the building.

SECTION 106 REVIEWS

None this month.

UPDATES ON PROJECTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

POTENTIAL UPCOMING CASES

360 Mystic Avenue – c. 1887 C.W. Lyman & Company

- Structural engineers report received stating that it is not feasible to rehabilitate the building.

47 Columbus Avenue – 1882 Philip Eberle House

- New owners proposing to enlarge basement windows and basement door; re-grading; and installing brick patios and stone retaining walls at front of property.

143-145 Perkins Street – 1850 Robert Brothers House

- Up for sale. Several potential buyers have been asking questions about the possibilities.

OTHER BUSINESS

SHPC Operational Affairs (Brandon Wilson)

- HPC Elections will take place at the May 15, 2012 Meeting

- Re-appointments to be submitted for Bingham, Chagnon, Freedman, Speakman & possibly Stearns

Mystic Waterworks Housing Project (Kristi Chase)

- Letter of Support (round 3) for Somerville Housing Authority chosen 40B team submitted to the MHC

PROJECT UPDATES

HPC Guidelines Revisions (Abby Freedman with Amie Schaeffer)

- Committee met on Monday, 4/2/12 from 7-9pm
- Update on progress
- Next meeting on Monday, 5/7/12 from 7-9pm

Milk Row Cemetery Preservation Master Plan Implementation (Brandon Wilson)

- Grant application submitted March 30th to MHC for Round 18 of MPPF Program.
- Application for \$34,000 matching grant for two high priority recommendations: 1) rehabilitation of tombs housing the earliest residents of the cemetery, including members of the Tufts family; and 2) design and installation of site and interpretive signage to increase public awareness of Cemetery's historic significance.
- Scope of work limited by availability of CDBG funds for 50% match plus grant administration.
- Other Master Plan implementation work continues in collaboration with other organizations: 1) Somerville Garden Club (City daffodil bulbs planted in fall and muscari last spring are in full bloom now!); and 2) Department of Public Works has installed bike post directly outside cemetery, and 2 benches soon near monument); and 3) Meetings begun with Historic Somerville to develop a Docent Program to increase public openings and appreciation of local history treasures.

West Branch Library Improvements (Brandon Wilson)

- Accessibility Study well underway with 3 proposals reviewed with WBL Director on March 9th;
- TBA Architects made presentation to Library & OSPCD Staff on April 3rd; awaiting feedback before proceeds
- Enhancements to Children's Room and resources in continues to progress with Library Staff, community members, and architectural students.

Preservation Awards Program (Brandon Wilson, Derick Snare, and Amie Schaeffer)

- Derick continues to advise and guide SHS CAD students with their architectural drawings, ensuring building accuracy and highlighting significant elements.
- Brandon met with SHS Art teachers on April 13th and all moving ahead, with some challenges.
- 2011 Awards Exhibit is up at the last venue, Century Bank on Fellsway West.
- Photos to be taken shortly of 2012 winning property owners for Awards Ceremony at the Somerville Museum on Thurs., May 31st. Remember to mark your own calendars!

Assembly Row Historic Enhancement Project (Brandon Wilson & Kristi Chase)

Planning for Upcoming Events (Brandon Wilson & Kristi Chase) (All welcome & encouraged to attend!)

- **Patriot's Day Celebration at Foss Park.** (Monday, April 16th, 10am-noon)
- **May Preservation Month Events** (Tentative list)
 - "The Menace of the Three Decker" talk (Thurs. May 3rd, Somerville Museum) by Stuart Brorson, sponsored by Historic Somerville, in collaboration with the SHPC;

- Jane's Walk (Sat. May 5th) to take place in Hinckley-Magoun Area, in part to highlight the proposed local historic district there;
- "Researching Your House and Family" talk (Wed. May 30th, 7-9 pm at Central Library) by Kristi Chase, in collaboration with the Som. Central Library Staff;
- Milk Row Cemetery Opening & Tour (Thurs. May 17th at 6pm) by Barbara Mangum, Historic Somerville President, in collaboration with the SHPC;
- Walking Tour "From Mansions to Mudflats: East Somerville's Cornucopia of Cultural Treasures" (Sun. May 6th, 2-4:30 pm) by Edward Gordon, in collaboration with East Somerville Main Streets
- Historic Bike Tour highlighting "Somerville Parks, Then and Now" (Sun. May 20th, 2-4:30pm) in collaboration with Somerville Bike Committee.
- Memorial Day Parade (Sun. May 28th) with Historic Somerville contingent.
- Preservation Awards Ceremony (see info. above)

NEW BUSINESS

Upcoming Meeting Schedule for 2012: May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18, October 16, November 20, December 18.

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.