

Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

AGENDA

Tuesday, November 21, 2006

City Hall

3rd Floor Conference Room

6:30 p.m.

Staff Present: Kristi Chase, Brandon Wilson (in and out), Katherine Montgomery (Intern)

Members Present: Dick Bauer, Barbara Mangum, Michael Payne, Cheryl Vanderbilt, DJ Chagnon*, Abby Freedman**, Jeff Meese*, Brad Stearns*. DJ Chagnon* and Abby Freedman** arrived at 7:00 pm. Barbara Mangum arrived at 7:05 pm. Abby Freedman** as last alternate to arrive, was non-voting.

Members Absent: John Bunzick, Stephen Glines, Susan Fontano*, David Guss*, Susan Rabinowitz*, Derick Snare*.

Others Present: Eric Carlson, Eleanor Glidden, Florentien de Ruiter, James Mayeux, Joe Lynch. Also one student observer who did not sign in or give a name.

Approval of HPC Minutes: October 10, 2006 The minutes were approved 4-0-1 (Brad Stearns* abstaining as he had not attended the entire meeting in October). Barbara Mangum, DJ Chagnon*, Abby Freedman** did not vote as they had not been at that meeting.

6:40 p.m. Deliberation of HPC Cases

HPC 06.66 – 191 Highland Avenue (The Armory)

Applicant: Eric Carlson, SingleSpeed Design for Joseph & Nabil Sater, Owners

Review and discussion of proposed skylight and installation of louvers.

Eric presented the case for retaining the originally proposed skylight design, emphasizing the need to bring light into the center portion of the enlarged penthouse. The room had been lit by the side windows, but enlarging the room moved them too far from the center for comfort. It was also found that an electrically operable skylight system would be best due to the height of the ceiling. Replication of the original skylight found at the rear of the building would cost over \$7,000 more and was not operable. The replacement skylight in the center of the building that illuminates the stairway would be insulated and due to the changes in material have a similar but not exact replication of the muntin system of the original. Although skylights on the front of the building are not desirable, these would not dominate the view of the building, but would be seen only from two narrow view corridors due to the proximity of nearby houses. Because the purpose of the building has changes from military to arts uses, perceived modernity could be a positive aspect.

Louvers would replace the glass on two ground floor windows at either end of the Drill Hall. The louvers are needed to disguise the intake and exhaust ducts needed to vent the HVAC system located in the basement. The ducts and vents have been sized appropriately. The large upper window would be insulated glass.

Jeff Meese wanted to be sure that non-specular and unreflective materials were used. Eric said that they would not be using any materials that were.

Michael Payne, seconded by Jeff Meese made a motion that the proposed changes were acceptable to the Commission and that there were no further recommendations at this time. The vote was unanimous (7-0).

Demolition Reviews

HPC 06.16 D – 55-61 Clyde Street (MaxPac Site) - Update

Applicants: Leslie Donovan, Preservation Consultant; Matt O’Neill, Director of Development, KSS Realty Trust

Received	Determined Significant	Preferably Preserved	9 Months
03/14/06	03/21/06	04/18/06	01/18/07

The planned Review, discussion, and vote on the draft MOA between the SHPC and the development team drafted by the Staff & Anne Thomas of the Law Department was postponed at the request of the developers because some of the wording is not agreed upon. A meeting will be set up for the week of 11/27/06-12/1/06.

HPC #06.27 D– 46 Pearl Street – Update on proposed demolition of 1871 Ezra Conant House

Applicant: John Mahoney, Developer

Received	Determined Significant	Preferably Preserved	9 Months
04/20/06	09/16/03	05/16/06	02/16/07

Staff received a phone call on 11/30/06 from Mr. Mahoney to say he has another idea. Staff received another call on 11/21/06 and will meet with Mr. Mahoney on Monday, 11/27/06 at 9:30 am to review latest plans. He says he intends to save house and build addition using some of the Boyes Watson plans.

HPC 06.60 D – 56 Putnam Street – pre- 1895 Stable/Barn

Applicant: Eleanor Glidden, Owner

Received	Determined Significant
10/16/06	10/17/06

Review of the SHPC’s initial determination that under section 4.2 of the Demolition Review Ordinance #2003-05, the subject residential building is considered “significant”. Public testimony followed by discussion and a vote by the Commission will be taken on whether the building should be “preferably preserved” per section 4.3.

According the Hopkins Atlas, 56 Putnam Street was owned by Snow, no one by that name was found in the City Directories. By 1884, M. L. White owned the property, again M. L. White does not appear in the directories and nothing is known of the tenants of the house. At this time, no barns or out buildings are indicated on the insurance map.

The barn/carriage house does appear on the 1895 Bromley Atlas at which time the house belongs to Michael H. McCarthy. According to the City Directories, Michael H. McCarthy, partner in McCarthy Brothers, dealers in charcoal, both wholesale and retail, moved from 22 Putnam Street to 56 Putnam

Street in 1892-1920. Evidently, the firm did fairly well as they had a large ad in the Directories until the early 1920s. He had two brothers who lived on Gilman Street and Church Street.

The 1921, 1922 and 1923 Directories are missing.

From 1924-1951, The First Methodist Episcopal Church owned the building, which was used for a parsonage. Parsons noted were Robert M. Pierce, Joseph E. Belcher and John B. Olds.

Beginning in 1952, the house appears to have been divided into at least 3 apartments. From 1952-1960, the tenants ranged from laborers and factory workers and their wives to nurses and electricians. Most of the families appear to have only been there for one or two years, although the Nichols family stayed for four.

The other two properties on Putnam Street with existing carriage house/barns are located across the Street at numbers 61 and 63. Herbert K Woodman, (63 Putnam from 1881-1905) and his neighbors at were involved in the dairy business, being listed as milkman, dairy, butter and grocer over the years. (Cheryl has done the research on 61 Putnam Street).

It would appear that these accessory buildings are associated from 1895 – 1920 with suppliers and tradesmen who had need of a horse and wagon to make deliveries and not people commuting to work who might otherwise use the streetcars for transportation.

Eleanor Glidden told of her family's use of the building and its current condition. The garage area is not usable for several reasons. The slope of the land and poor drainage make the floor wet. Lack of doors on the garage from the time that they bought the house in 1967, makes it insecure. The sheet rock ceiling is disintegrating leaving a white residue on anything left below it. Other than a new roof, and vinyl siding, no maintenance has been done on the building, which has no foundation. A swayback roofline and buckling walls indicate structural problems that would not be cheap to remedy and she has no use for the building. Brad Stearns thought that the building was altered and that the structure was so compromised that a significant financial investment would be needed to bring the building back to its original form.

While there may be changes in the City Ordinances clarifying the uses of outbuildings for art studios, these are not in effect now and may not be helpful for Mrs. Glidden and her family. She did not think that even if it were feasible to save the building that they would attempt to do so. The Commission also did not see that attempting to save this building would be worthwhile.

Michael Payne made motion, seconded by Brad Stearns that the building was found to be not "preferably preserved" under section 4.3. The vote was 6-1.

HPC 06.62 D – 335 Summer Street – 1895 Carriage House

Applicant: Florentien de Ruiter, Tomas Bok

Received	Determined Significant
10/26/06	11/21/06

Initial review and determination under section 4.2 of the Demolition Review Ordinance #2003-05, as to whether the subject building is considered "significant".

Staff reported that City Building Permit Records note that a “garage for carriages” was built by Edmund I. Train in 1895. He is listed in the City Directory as a grocer with a business on Bridge Street (now Route 28) in 1896. Subsequent City Directories record him as dealing in hay, etc. He died in January of 1928, when his wife inherited the house. See comment above regarding associations.

Florentien de Ruiter and her architect, James Mayeux presented. She said that she learned more from the Staff research than she had known previously and understood the significance, however the building was in terrible shape with which both Brad Stearns and Staff concurred, having some prior knowledge of the building.

There was some discussion of utility buildings and their various types. The most distinctive features of this carriage garage are the differently sized doors, the large garden windows and the pitch of the shed roof. Jean Mayeux noted that the craftsmanship of the building showed that whoever built it was not in the building trade as the beams were all undersized and had an unusual spacing that needed shoring up shortly after the building was constructed.

Jeff Meese proposed a motion to determine the building to be significant, which Michael Payne amended that the reasons were that the building is:

- B. 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.

Dick Bauer seconded the motion. The vote was 4-3.

Barbara Mangum noted that she voted against the determination because although she thought the building was worthy of documentation for its level of interest, it was not of sufficient significance to move forward. Cheryl Vanderbilt concurred.

Michael Payne then discussed the process, in that while all agreed that the building would probably not be determined to be preferably preserved, the Commission was locked into the process by the Demolition Review Ordinance. Legal Notice needed to be given 2 weeks in advance, through both the paper of record and to the abutters about the hearing. It was rare that both portions of the determination could occur in the same meeting.

**HPC 06.64 D – 541 Windsor Street – Pre-1874 North Meat Packing Company
Soap Rendering Building**

Applicant: Joe Nissenbaum

Received: 10/30/06

Unsafe Conditions MGL Chapter 143, section 9 (See photos).

Section 106 and FCC NEPA Reviews

HPC 06.65 – 51 McGrath Highway

11/2/06

Applicant: Brian Lever, Cultural Resources Specialist, EBI Consulting

Review and Comments to be forwarded to MHC re: NEPA/Section 106 Review of proposed installation of:

- One antenna array (sector 1) will be façade-mounted at the approximate height of 53 feet above ground level to an existing freight elevator penthouse, located on the northern portion of the roof;
- Two antenna arrays (sectors 2 and 3) will be mounted to the building’s existing façade, at a height of approximately 44 feet above ground level on the southeastern and southwestern portion of the roof; and
- Alternatives also submitted.

No one from Cingular Wireless was able to come to the meeting although the Staff had telephone conversations with Richard Detch from Cingular. He submitted some alternatives to the originally proposed installation. After some discussion about all the locations of the equipment and antennas, the Commission decided that both proposals would have an “adverse effect” on the National Register Eligible building, liking neither of the camouflage or stealth approaches nor the scale of the proposed antennas that altered the silhouette of the building, located close to the elevated portion of Route 28. There are other buildings in the area that would not be adversely impacted and could also host the cell equipment.

Certificates of Non-Applicability Issued by the Staff

HPC#06.61 – 29 Powderhouse Terrace

10/23/06

Applicant: Carolyn & John W. Taylor, Owners

1. Repair and replace 3-tab asphalt roof shingles in-kind.

HPC 06.63 – 140-148 Morrison Avenue

10/30/06

Applicants: Mark Chase, Elizabeth Loveland, Brian Green, Norman Campbell

1. Repair and replace 3-tab asphalt roof shingles in-kind.

HPC 06.68 – 57 Meacham Road

11/06/06

Applicants: Carrie Normand & David Zraket, Owners

1. Replace vinyl windows with 1/1 and 2/1 vinyl windows.

HPC 06.69 – 143-145 Sycamore Street

11/09/06

Applicant: Jim McCallum, Owner

1. Repair front porch; and
2. Repair and replace rotted wood elements in-kind as needed.

HPC 06.70 – 53 Columbus Avenue

11/10/06

Applicant: Bun Chhouy, Contractor

1. Replace vinyl windows in kind.

HPC 06.71 – 333 Broadway

11/15/06

Applicant: Tony Paone, Owner

1. Repair ornamental balcony to match existing.

Other Business - Project Updates

- **Middlesex Canal National Register Listing Update – Dick Bauer**
- **Preservation and Director’s Awards:** Nominations still needed by Monday December 4, 2006.
- **Ghosts of Somerville Event Report – Barbara Mangum**
- **LHD Expansion Project –**
 - Review minutes from the special meeting held on Tuesday, 11/14/06 to reconsider LHD proposed properties where owner consent not given or not clear;
 - Update on Preliminary Report Status;
 - Expected LHD Project Timetable;
 - New properties surveyed for proposed designation: 31 Kidder Avenue, 58 Central Street, 28 Benton Road

*After an extensive review of the 11/14/06 meeting minutes and the resulting list of properties to go forward in the process of designation, Michael Payne made a motion that the record of the vote on 11/14/06 and subsequent discussion be accepted. Dick Bauer seconded the motion and added the record should also include Michael’s notes and recommendations to the Commission as an appendix. Michael Payne also made a motion, seconded Jeff Meese to accept the recommendations of the consultant for the expansion except those noted in 11/14/06 meeting minutes that would not go forward. The Commission voted unanimously (7-0) with Abby Freedman** voting in place of DJ Chagnon who had been called away.*

- **Holiday Party Planning**
 - Date to be determined
 - Location to be determined
- **Historic Plaque Program**
 - Preserving Somerville merchandise – New order of red, black and natural canvas totes @ \$10.00 expected in time for gift giving.

Schedule of remaining regular SHPC meetings for 2006: Held on the third Tuesday of every month: December 19.

Regular SHPC meetings for 2007 are scheduled as follows: January 16, February 20, March 20, April 17, May 15, June 19, July 17, August 21, September 18, October 16, November 20, and December 18.