



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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MAYOR

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF PRESENT
AMIE HAYES, PLANNER
KRISTI CHASE, PRESERVATION PLANNER

MEMBERS PRESENT
ALAN BINGHAM
GEORGE BORN
NATASHA BURGER
RYAN FALVEY

Public Meeting of Preferably Preserved Structures
Recommendations and Minutes

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission held a public meeting on **Thursday, January 3, 2012**, at **6:30 p.m.** in City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA. The meeting was relocated at 6:45 to the Committee Room on the 2nd floor due to scheduling conflicts.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek alternatives to demolition for structures determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to be Preferably Preserved and to make recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission at a future Commission meeting on the following Preferably Preserved structure(s):

336 Summer Street	Case # HPC 2012.056
Delay Period Ends:	3/19/2013
Building Description:	c. 1870 two-family, gable-end dwelling, 2½ stories with three bays, located on a corner lot
Significance:	i. <i>“Importantly associated with...the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City..., and</i> ii. <i>“Historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association... in the context of a group of buildings or structures...”</i>

This was the first time for this case to come to a Preferably Preserved public meeting. The Applicant explained that prior to purchasing the building, they were aware that the building supports were poorly located and unstable. Additionally, there are hydrological issues that will need to be addressed. The Applicant explained that because the structure is not sound, a number of alternative possibilities are not realistically feasible from a financial standpoint. The Applicant also stated that while the front façade is consistent with other houses in the neighborhood, other portions and spaces of the building have been modified in an awkward and unsympathetic manner. The corner location makes this property prominent and integral to the integrity of the overall streetscape. A rendering of the new by-right plan shows a townhouse building type in the Queen Anne style, which will preserve the streetscape by continuing the rhythm of rooflines.

Recommendation: The proposed design of the by-right project, due to Staff facilitation, continues the roofline rhythm of the streetscape and addresses the prominent corner location through a corner tower with turret. Since the Demolition Delay terminates in approximately two months, Staff recommends a Memorandum of Agreement, whereby, in exchange for photo documentation and a walk through, prior to demolition, to develop a plan that will ensure any materials of high architectural value will be salvaged, the Commission will lift the remaining delay.



315-321 Broadway

Case # HPC 2012.061

Delay Period Ends:

6/18/2013

Building Description:

c. 1925 two-story brick commercial block in the Classical Revival style, differentiation in height

Significance:

i. *“Importantly associated with...the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City..., and*

ii. *“Historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of building construction, or association... in the context of a group of buildings or structures...”*

This was the first time for this case to come to a Preferably Preserved public meeting. The attorney and architect for the Applicant explained there are a number of reasons to demolish this structure, as opposed to reuse or rehabilitation. Currently, there is no residential component in the existing building and the purpose of the Commercial Corridor District is to “encourage commercial and residential uses that contribute to a multi-modal-friendly street.” Additionally, recent changes to the MA state building code make the rehabilitation of a structure with a change in grade (8-10 feet), such as the subject structure, most challenging. Furthermore, the design of the replacement structure takes into account the architectural detail of the existing structure, material compatibility of the surrounding neighborhood, the grade change, and the purpose of the Commercial Corridor District.

Recommendation: The proposed current design of this project continues the role of this structure as a background building that compliments the historic nature of the surrounding neighborhood with a unified roofline. Heavy cornice lines, similar pattern and style of storefronts, higher level of detail for window sills and heads, and the simulated use of cast stone, brick, and patina metal ensure the compatibility of this structure to the existing neighborhood and corridor. Staff recommends a Memorandum of Agreement, whereby, in exchange for photo documentation, a walk through prior to demolition to develop a plan to ensure any materials of high architectural value will be salvaged, and so long as the intent of the design is consistent with what was presented on 1/3/2013, the Commission will lift the remaining delay. To ensure the consistency of design, Staff also recommends a Memorandum be sent to the Design Review Committee which shall detail the characteristics that ensure this consistency. These characteristics are the arched entries, the use of cast stone and red brick- especially the quoining and panel work, the rhythm of the original façade and the emphasis on the corner as a focal point of the building.