



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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Todd Zinn (Alt.)

Abby Freedman, Vice Chair
Alan Bingham (Alt.)
Natasha Burger
Tom DeYoung (Alt.)
Eric Parkes
Brad Stearns (Alt.)

Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

Visiting Nurses Association, Chapel, 3rd Floor, 259 Lowell Street
6:40 p.m. on Wednesday, June 18, 2014

Staff Present: Kristi Chase, and Amie Hayes. Brandon Wilson arrived at 7:30 PM.

Members Present: Dick Bauer, Alan Bingham*, George Born*, Ryan Falvey, and Eric Parkes. Eric Parkes arrived at 6:50 PM.

Members Absent: Jillian Adams, Natasha Burger, DJ Chagnon*, Tom DeYoung*, Abby Freedman, Derick Snare*, Brad Stearns*, and Todd Zinn*.

*Alternates

Others Present: Ben Crystal, Lunara, Marcos and Victoria Devers, Heather Davies, Bill Gage, Irene Mizrahi, and Matt Timmins

Proposed Alterations to Local Historic District Properties

58 Columbus Avenue (HPC 2014.027)	
Applicant:	William Gage
Property Owner:	William Gage
Application Date:	May 7, 2014
Legal Notice:	<i>Alteration to fence which includes a gate; and handrails on stairs</i>



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Recommendation:	Certificate of Appropriateness
Current Status:	Heard on Wednesday June 18, 2014
Presentation:	Bill Gage presented. He plans to remove the chain link fence along the pathway to the front door and install a gate across the front edge of it. He also wants to install a metal hand rail on the stairs. The style would be based upon the iron fire escape on the front of the building.
Public Comment:	There was no public comment.
Staff Report:	Based upon precedence and the existence of several similarly styled railings in the Columbus Avenue/ Warren Avenue Local Historic District the Staff found that the proposal would not be derogatory and recommended that the Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following contingencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chain link fence on either side of the walkway shall be removed; 2. A new iron gate and short fence in the enclosed design sketch shall be installed at the beginning of the walkway to the house; and 3. A handrail to match shall be added to west side of entry stairs.
Documents:	Staff Report based upon the City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, HPC Design Guidelines, and Massachusetts Historical Commission Property Survey Form, and site visits.
Discussion:	George Born said there was enough chain link in the City and the request was appropriate.
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following contingencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chain link fence on either side of the walkway shall be removed; 2. A new iron gate and short fence in the enclosed design sketch shall be installed at the beginning of the walkway to the house; and 3. A handrail to match shall be added to west side of entry stairs.

24 Pleasant Avenue (HPC 2014.032)	
Applicant:	Susan Kamin
Property Owner:	Susan Kamin
Application Date:	April 30, 2014
Legal Notice:	<i>Alteration of the front porch rails and balusters.</i>
Recommendation:	Certificate of Appropriateness
Current Status:	Will be heard Wednesday June 18, 2014
Current Status:	Heard on Wednesday June 18, 2014
Presentation:	Ben Crystal presented for Susan Kamin who could not attend the meeting. The porch is rotted with specific damage at the bases of the spindles and the kick board. The post are also rotted. The work is beyond his skill level to repair or reproduce in kind. They had received a variety of estimates and looked around the neighborhood for comparable buildings. They would like to reproduce what their neighbors have for railings.
Public Comment:	There was no public comment.
Staff Report:	Based upon precedence and the existence of similarly styled railings on the two other Mansards in the Pleasant Avenue Local Historic District the Staff found that the proposal would not be derogatory and recommended that the Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following contingencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new railings and balusters shall <i>exactly match those on the front of 45 Vinal Avenue in construction, size, shape, proportion, detail and material.</i> 2. <i>The existing newels and posts shall be replicated as necessary.</i>
Documents:	Staff Report based upon the City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, HPC Design Guidelines, and Massachusetts Historical Commission Property Survey Form, and site visits.



Discussion:	Eric Parkes noted that the key to the alteration would be in the proportions. The neighbors' railings had retained the heavy appearance appropriate for the building.
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (4-0-1 (Eric Parkes abstained because he is a neighbor)) to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness with the following contingencies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new railings and balusters shall <i>exactly match those on the front of 45 Vinal Avenue in construction, size, shape, proportion, detail and material.</i> 2. <i>The existing newels and posts shall be replicated as necessary.</i>

Demolition Reviews

Determination of Significance

350 Medford Street (HPC 2014.031)	
Applicant:	City of Somerville
Property Owner:	City of Somerville
Application Date:	May 27, 2014
Legal Notice:	<i>Determination of Significance</i>
Recommendation:	Significant
Current Status:	Heard on Wednesday June 18, 2014
Presentation:	Staff presented on behalf of the City. The City attended several meetings with the MHC and the MBTA. It was recognized that the building is 'significant.' As the plans for the Green Line Extension have become more complete, it has been recognized that the building will have to be completely demolished rather than just losing its loading docks. The structure of the building is steel with brick infill. The masonry is much deteriorated. The cast stone is cracked. The lion's head and entry are relatively intact and would be preserved either as part of the Station area design or in Gilman's Square. The Commission had voted to concur with the Memorandum of Agreement between the MHC, the MBTA and MassDOT in 2011. Staff agreed that they would not recommend that the building be determined to be 'preferably preserved' due to the condition of the building, and because most of the usual mitigations were already covered by the MOA.
Public Comment:	There was no public comment.
Staff Report:	<p>Staff reviewed the building's significance. Staff found that "<i>Gilman Square developed between the 1880s and 1920s as a small concentration of late 19th century commercial, fraternal, and industrial buildings. Three commercial blocks and two industrial complexes remain, including the Reid & Murdoch Building. Constructed in 1929, the company was attracted to the land for its proximity to the railroad. The structure is significant at the local level, in the areas of industry and architecture, and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places</i>". The period of significance for 350 Medford Street begins with the c. 1929 date of construction as an Art Deco industrial warehouse and ended with the change in use of the warehouse from industrial to office.</p> <p>(a) In accordance with the historic information obtained from <i>Findings on Historical Association</i>, which utilizes historic maps/atlasses, City reports and directories, and building permit research, and through an examination of resources that document the history of the City, Staff found 350 Medford Street to be <u>importantly associated</u> 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.</p> <p>Staff found the subject building importantly associated with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to an association with the industry and growth of Gilman Square in the late 1920s, the Reid & Murdoch Company, and the retention of Art Deco details on a large scale industrial warehouse.</p>



	<p>Staff found the structure retained a high level of historical and architectural integrity due to an association with the industry and growth of Gilman Square in the late 1920s, the Reid & Murdoch Company, and the retention of Art Deco details on a large scale industrial warehouse. However, the existing conditions point toward a failing integrity of the exterior facade, which speaks to the architectural integrity of the structure. While the building retains its historical significance, the quality of the remaining features as a whole is minimal. The lion head, archway, and circular windows are the only remaining architectural features that remain predominantly intact.</p> <p>(b) In accordance with the <i>Finding on Historical and Architectural Significance</i>, which addresses period, style, method of building construction, and association with a reputed architect or builder, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, as well as integrity, which assess the ability of the property to convey significance, Staff found 350 Medford Street historically or architecturally significant.</p> <p>The subject dwelling was found historically and architecturally as a representative of 1920s industrial growth of Gilman Square and due to the remaining Art Deco architectural detail of the structure with regard to original form, massing, fenestration pattern, and inlaid stone detail. In addition, due to the location of the structure within a collection of structures that represent the same cultural context, this structure is significant within the context of the group of buildings which, together, retain the historic development of Gilman Square, a small concentration of late 19th century commercial, fraternal, and industrial buildings.</p>
Documents:	Staff Report based upon the City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, HPC Design Guidelines, and Massachusetts Historical Commission Property Survey Form, and site visits.
Discussion:	George Born recommended that the building be found ‘significant’. The Commission discussed what would happen to the rest of the property since the entire site would not be covered by the station. They noted that it would be a pity to just tear the building down just for a staging area. The Commission was concerned that the property stay within the City’s ownership.
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to concur with the Staff findings that the building was “significant.”

22 Beacon Place (HPC 2014.033)	
Applicant:	Irene Mizrahi
Property Owner:	Ding Properties
Application Date:	May 27, 2014
Legal Notice:	<i>Determination of Significance</i>
Recommendation:	Not Significant
Current Status:	Heard on Wednesday June 18, 2014
Presentation:	Victoria Devers presented. Their original intent had been to remodel and repair the building after the fire. However, they found that there was no way to comply with all the building and safety codes. After several discussions with Melissa Woods, Planning Division Staff, they decided that it would be best to start fresh. They plan to rebuild a similar building that will meet all the code requirements.
Public Comment:	There was no public comment.
Staff Report:	<p>The period of significance for 22 Beacon Place begins around 1870 and continues to the present day as a home for workers. The dates of construction and alterations are unclear due to a lack of building permits. The building has been home to generations of predominantly Irish workers. The much-altered house is in very poor condition due to the fire last summer.</p> <p>While the Staff found associations with the broad architectural, cultural, economic and social history of the City due to its association with Irish workers in the last half of the 19th and early 20th century, no important associations were found to a particular wave of immigration.</p>



	The Staff also did not find the house historically and architecturally significant due to its lack of association with any important historic figure or event and its lack of cohesive architecture. The building is unable to convey a coherent story of immigrant history due to its condition and numerous alterations.
Documents:	Staff Report based upon the City of Somerville Ordinance sections 7.16 – 7.27, HPC Design Guidelines, and Massachusetts Historical Commission Property Survey Form, and site visits.
Discussion:	Commissioners noted that the building was severely damaged and that the structure was potentially in a dangerous condition. George Born noted the building had undergone many alterations and did not have any identifiable integrity. Eric Parkes said that the street did not have a cohesive rhythm or pattern with varied house types.
Decision:	The Commission voted unanimously (4-0-1 (Eric Parkes abstaining due to his late arrival) to concur with the Staff findings that the building was not “significant.”

Action Items

- Materials Authorization

Minutes:	May 20, 2014 – HPC
Minutes:	June 5, 2014 – Preferably Preserved
	The May minutes as amended were unanimously accepted by those attending the meeting. The June minutes were not complete and were therefore not accepted.

Non-Action Items

- Director’s Report

Brandon Wilson reviewed the Preservation Month’s activities, noting that once again the events were well-attended and well-received.

Structures within Demolition Review Period

314-316 Somerville Avenue (HPC 2014.009)	
Applicant:	Belmont Hill Corporation
Property Owner:	Belmont Hill Corporation
Significance:	April 15, 2014
Pref. Preserved	May 20, 2014
Recommendation:	Preferably Preserved
Current Status:	Schedule 2 nd meeting of ‘Preferably Preserved’ on July 3, 2014

Staff Review – Listed for informational purposes

46 Mount Vernon Street (HPC2014.028)	
Applicant:	Ting Fang
Description:	<i>Repair front porch in-kind</i>
Current Status:	Staff issued Certificate of Non-Applicability on May 20, 2014

81 Benton Road (HPC 2014.029)	
Applicant:	Gordon Swartz
Description:	<i>Repair second floor rear deck</i>
Current Status:	Staff issued Certificate of Non-Applicability on May 23, 2014

67 Walnut Street (HPC 2014.035)	
Applicant:	Ralph Veters
Description:	<i>Repair porch balusters in kind.</i>
Current Status:	Staff issued Certificate of Non-Applicability issued on April 24, 2014



45 Walnut Street (HPC 2014.036)	
Applicant:	Lindsey Sudbury
Description:	<i>Repair or replace wood gutters in-kind</i>
Current Status:	Staff issued Certificate of Non-Applicability issued on June 4, 2014

Reports and plans are available on the City of Somerville website at www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation-commission/hpc-cases-and-decisions and on the third floor of City Hall at 93 Highland Avenue. Cases may be continued to a later date(s); therefore, check the agenda on the website 48 hours in advance of the meeting or call (617) 625-6600 x2500 to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertized, but will be listed on the agenda. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the public hearing, by email to historic@somervillema.gov, by fax to (617) 625-0722, or by mail addressed to the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission.



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