



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT**

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Site:	117 Washington Street	c. 1783 Samuel Ireland House
Case:	HPC 2017.100	Single Building Local Historic District
Applicant Name:	Claude Augustin, Owner	
Applicant Address:	PO Box 2, Somerville, Ma 02143	
Date of Application:	December 11, 2017	
Legal Notice:	<i>Install new fence</i>	
Staff Recommendation:	Certificate of Appropriateness	
Date of Public Hearing:	August 19, 2014	



I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION  
See attached Survey Form B.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### *1. Proposal of Alteration:*

1. Remove unapproved fence and automotive gate
2. Install a 4' wood picket fence along the sidewalk with gates at the pathway and the driveway entry.
3. On the side yard, the fence shall start at a height of 4 feet where it meets the sidewalk and shall gradually scale up to 6 feet

See the final pages for details and photos.

## II. FINDINGS

### *1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

C/NA	Hunter Wollman	2007.061	1. Interior Exploratory Demolition.
Denied without prejudice	Hunter Wollman	2008.070	1. Replace exiting asphalt 3-tab shingle roof with cedar shingles; 2. Replace 6 replacement windows on front façade of building with Pella insulated glass 6/6 wood windows; and 3. Replace the remaining replacement windows with insulated glass 6/6 vinyl windows.
C/A, C/NA	Claude Augustin	2011.075	1. Remove and replace all existing vinyl windows with new Jeld-wen® wood windows a. with 4/4 sash to match historic profiles on the original block; and b. with 2/2 sash to match historic profiles on the additions; 2. Remove and replace all existing exterior doors with a glass and new wood main door and a four-panel door on the addition; 3. One story rear addition in the location of the existing deck with siding to match existing shakes; 4. Add three second floor dormers for bathroom, bedrooms with siding and roofing to match existing; a. 2 dormers to match the front dormer with the central dormer as a shed dormer 5. Remove existing chimney; and 6. Reconstruct the chimney with thin brick and L-corners to be mortar set and located centrally on the building with Staff review and approval 7. Repair, and replace existing siding as needed to match existing shakes; and 8. Replace 3-tab asphalt shingles.
C/NA	Claude Augustin	2011.078	1. Interior renovations
C/A	Claude Augustin	2012.094	1. Remove circa 1940s wood shingle siding; and 2. Replace with clapboard with exposures to match original.
C/A	Claude Augustin	2015.045	1. Applicant shall obtain all appropriate building permits prior to commencing work. 2. The thin brick 'faux' chimney shall be constructed as per HPC Certificate 2011.075 and per plans by Khalsa Design Inc. dated 8/18/2011. 3. No permits shall be issued for additional work on the building until the above work has been completed and approved by HPC Staff for consistency with the approved Certificate. 4. The roofing material shall be Timberline® in any color except for the very light, or strong red or green shades. 5. Flashing shall be copper or terne metal. 6. No flashing or drip edges shall protrude more than ½" along the eaves.

7. Vent pipes protruding from the roof shall be dark in color.
8. A Cobra® ridge vent shall not be installed on the roof.
9. Missing wood trim shall be reinstalled to match the originals in size, shape and contours in their original locations.
10. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.

1. *Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

to approve the replacement of a picket fence with another picket fence in a style consistent with previously approved fences for the age and style of the building.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*  
The proposed fence would be visible along Washington Street and from the rear along
- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*

The existing fence along the east side is composed of chain link. Several of the tenants chain their bicycles to the fence. It is not known whether the fence belongs to 17-19R Aldersey Street or to the property next door at 9-11 Aldersey.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

HPC Specific Guidelines do not explicitly address fences. Municipal preservation guideline research regarding fence location advises that fences are appropriate when placed in a rear yard with minimal visibility, or are considerably set back from the streetscape to allow the property owner privacy, pet control or security. Additionally, the placement of a fence along lot lines confirms historic lot patterns of historic neighborhoods. Zoning requires that a fence be no more than 4' along the front yard setback.

## **GENERAL APPROACH**

The primary purpose of Somerville's Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Somerville's Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the City's architectural heritage. The following guidelines ensure that rehabilitation efforts, alterations, and new construction all respect the design fabric of the districts and do not adversely affect their present architectural integrity.

- A. *The design approach to each property should begin with the premise that the features of historic and architectural significance described in the Study Committee report must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.*
- B. *Changes and additions to the property and its environment that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and*

*this significance should be recognized and respected (LATER IMPORTANT FEATURES will be the term used hereafter to convey this concept).*

- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*
- D. *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*
- E. *Whenever possible, new materials should match the material being replaced with respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. **The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.***
- F. ***The Commission will give design review priority to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways or those portions which it can be reasonably inferred may be visible in the future.***

There will be no changes to the historic fabric as described on the Form B. The fence proposed is a common style made of traditional materials.

### **Landscape Features and Paving**

*The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*

- 1. It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the structure and its newer surroundings.*
- 2. The existing landforms of the site should not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the structure or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the structure.*
- 3. The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

There will be no alteration of the landscape. While the character of the neighborhood and surrounding area has been radically changed since 1783, the character of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century should be retained with the use of appropriate materials and styles. There will be no changes to the landform. There will be no changes to the pattern of circulation.

### **FENCES, GATES, RAILINGS, PERGOLAS & OTHER STRUCTURES**

*Fences and gates often define the boundary between a historic property and its surroundings, both streetscape and neighboring properties. Railings atop walls, handrails for site stairs, trellises, and similar structures are often also prominent features in the landscape. The following guidelines address these elements when they are located in the landscape.*

1. Preserve historic fences, and gates whenever possible, including ironwork such as hitching posts, boot scrapers. etc.
2. **New fences and gates should be compatible with the historic property in style, scale, placement, and materials.**
3. **Fences, gates and other landscaping elements (such as plantings) should not obscure the historic building.**
4. **Front yard fences should be open and decorative. Do not use front yard fences to screen front yards.**
5. **On public ways, the height of fences is restricted according to zoning code.**
6. **The finished side of any fence should face toward public view.**
7. **Use historically appropriate materials for fences and gates.**
8. Fencing and plantings may be used to screen parking areas and mechanical systems.

Staff has been working with the Applicant to match historic photos of 19<sup>th</sup> century working class houses similar to what might have been used. See photos below for the intended outcome and the most recent attempt to replicate the fence style.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

*The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features of buildings and structures in the area, in accordance with the required findings that are considered by the Somerville Historic District Ordinance for a Historic District Certificate. This report may be revised or updated with new a recommendation or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through more in depth research conducted during the public hearing process.*

### III. RECOMMENDATION

***Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD Guidelines, Staff does recommend APPROVAL of a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a historically appropriate fence to enclose the yard.***

1. All appropriate building permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any work.
2. If changes are necessary to the proposed design for which this Certificate of Appropriateness was issued, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
3. The unapproved fence and automotive gate shall be removed.
4. Install a 4' wood picket fence along the sidewalk with gates at the pathway and the driveway entry.
5. Fence posts shall be simple with a pyramidal cap.
6. On the side yard, the fence shall start at a height of 4 feet where it meets the sidewalk and shall gradually scale up to 6 feet at approximately 16' from where it attaches at the sidewalk.
7. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate.







13 Dane Street (razed) circa 1900



8 Nevada Avenue circa 1900





Proposed fence



Gate for 53 Moore Street, approved by the HPC in 2017.