



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

KRISTENNA CHASE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*  
SARAH WHITE, *PLANNER & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

**Case #:** HPC 2019.042  
**Date:** October 15, 2019

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 139 Central Street

**Applicant Name:** Michelle Griffin  
**Applicant Address:** 139 Central Street  
**Owner Name:** Devin Griffin  
**Owner Address:** same as above

**Petition:** Michelle & Devin Griffin, Owners, seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to alter the rear porch.

**HPC Hearing Date:** October 15, 2019

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Subject Property:** Located at the corner of Central and Medford Streets, this late 19<sup>th</sup> century row housed a number of mid-level tradesmen and their families. The closeness of the new Somerville Junction station contributed to the popularity of this section of Winter Hill along with increased rail service and new industries in the southern section of Somerville. These wood-frame rowhouses on Central Street were in response to the changing needs and were predecessors of the larger apartment blocks developed in other parts of Somerville. See Form B for details.

This is one of a set of 5 wood-framed Italianate rowhouses with bracketed eaves. They are all side-hall plan with a small pedimented porch. Simple window hoods cap the casing. The rear entries have all



*137-139 Central Street – 2018 Google photo*

been altered in various ways. #139 has a simple modern open deck overlooking the yard. The railings and balusters have been put together in a style more appropriate for a rustic cabin.

**Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to alter the rear porch using a mix of modern and traditional materials. The modern materials will be used for the deck flooring which are not visible from the right of way. The railings and posts will be simple wood, similar to that found on the neighboring decks. The newel posts will be a clear 4x4 with a 1x6 pedestal and (optional) pedestal/base cap. The balusters will be square 2x2's. The rails will be sapele handrails (Anderson McQuaid profile 6210 for top and bottom rail).

See photo of existing conditions below.

## II. FINDINGS FOR PORCHES, STEPS, TRIM AND OTHER EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

*The porch is an important stylistic element to the facade of a historic building because it frames the front entrance and sets the atmosphere for visitors. Porches also provide shade for adjacent rooms, help save energy costs, and often illustrate architectural style, which can help determine a construction date. In a densely built environment like Somerville, porches also act as a transitional area between private interior space and the surrounding neighborhood. Similar to porches, other transitional areas include balconies, decks, and covered entries.*

1. Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. **If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old.** Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.

**Staff Findings:** Staff finds that the existing porches on the rear of 139 Central Street and its neighbors are not original to building. The non-public sides of buildings, even those visible from the street are the areas of a building most likely to change. Over the years, the porches have grown and altered to accommodate the needs of the residents. Each porch has a slightly different character from its neighbor. Staff finds the one commonality is the use of wood. Staff finds that the proposed rails and posts will blend in with those of the adjacent houses.

Staff also finds the flooring of the decks will not be visible from the right of way and may be made of Trex® or similar materials for which a Certificate of Non-Applicability shall be issued.

## III. RECOMMENDATION

***Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends A Certificate of Appropriateness with the following conditions:***

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 newel posts shall be a clear 4x4 with a 1x6 pedestal and (optional) pedestal/base cap. The balusters shall be square 2x2's. The rails shall be sapele handrails (Anderson McQuaid profile 6210 for top and bottom rail).
4. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in Accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.

**A Certificate of Non-Applicability** shall be issued for the flooring of the deck.







Anderson McQuaid profile 6210 for hand and foot rails.

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.327
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Veazie, William Rowhouses
<b>Common Name:</b>	Veazie Row
<b>Address:</b>	137-145 Central St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Winter Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Italianate; Row House
<b>Use(s):</b>	Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.BA: Somerville Single Building Local Historic District
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (10/31/1989)



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Massachusetts Historical Commission  
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FORM B - BUILDING



LMD 10/31/89 (10)

P.L. WINTER  
USGS BOSTON  
SECT. B

AREA

FORM NO.

Winter Hill

327

Town SOMERVILLE

Address 137-145 Central Street

Historic Name William Veazie (develop

"Veazie Row"

Use: Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

Date 1889

Source maps/directories

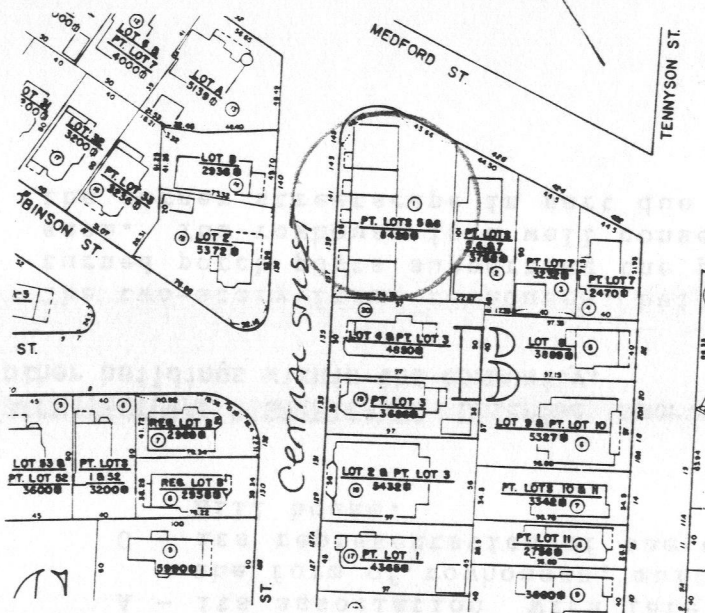
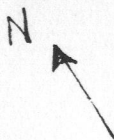
Style Italianate

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Intersection(s).  
Indicate north



Major Alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

Condition good

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage 8426 sq. ft.

Setting Southeast corner of Central &  
Medford, edge of late 19th century  
residential neighborhood.

Recorded by Carole Zellie - 1980  
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization Somerville Historic  
Preservation Commission

Date May, 1988

UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_

USGS QUADRANGLE \_\_\_\_\_

SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The property is significant for :

- A - its association with late 19th century residential development in the form of rowhouses, multi-family units of Winter Hill.
- C - its representation of one of the in tact frame rowhouses in Winter Hill house.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

The two-story frame rowhouses, built by 1889, retain their bracketed eaves, turned porch posts supporting the pedimented entrance porches and the 2/2 sash. The rowhouse is a well conserved building that is a focal point of the corner streetscape in part due to the fine care taken in maintenance.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.**

By the 1890s much of Winter Hill had been developed with large houses for local and commuting businessmen. With increased rail service as well as increased industry in the south section of Somerville, came a need for moderate housing. The frame rowhouses on Central Street were in response to the changing needs and were the forerunners of larger apartment blocks. The proximity to the new Central Street station contributed to their popularity.

The rowhouses are built on land that had belonged to Oliver Tufts and his heirs for many years. This area is east of the Tufts Brickyards. Known as Veazie Row, the five unit rowhouses were built by local real estate developer William Veazie who lived on Walnut Street. Veazie was also a printer. Poll Tax Listings show residents at these addresses from 1889. Several names are found consistently in directories at this address and include Robert McLaughlin, Lawrence Ogilvie (compositor), Charles Collins (post office agent), and several Hoffmans (all involved in merchant shipping).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1884 ("Oliver Tufts, Hrs" land only), 1895 ("Wm. Veazie").
2. City Directories, 1880s-1890s.
3. City of Somerville, Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, 1983.
4. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book                      Page                      .