



**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 2018.037

**Date:** ~~May 15, 2018~~ May 22, 2018

**Recommendation:** ~~Denial~~ Conditional Approval

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## **PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 14 Flint Street

**Applicant Name:** Keith Fallon

**Applicant Address:** 9 Winthrop Court, Medford, MA 02155

**Owner Name:** ~~Estate of Manuel Sequeira~~ 14 Flint LLC

**Owner Address:** 14 Flint Street, Somerville, MA 02145

**Petition:** Keith Fallon, 14 Flint LLC, Applicant, seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to add decks to the east side rear addition and replace two windows with two doors.

**HPC Hearing Date:** ~~May 15, 2018~~ May 22, 2018

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### **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Subject Property:** The subject residential building is located on a side street in the East Somerville neighborhood between Franklin Street and Glen Street. See Form B for details.

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to construct ~~18' x 8'~~ 16' x 8' porches on the first and second floors of the rear ell on the left side which would involve removing a window and replacing it with a door. The porch would be located on the inner corner between the main block of the building and the ell. He intends to use a generic handrail and baluster system with 6 x6 pressure treated hard-wood wrapped posts. The proposed first floor porch will be 12 feet above the ground level in the rear



*14 Flint Street – 2006 photo*



and the second floor porch will be another 10 feet above that. A shallow roof would further enclose and finish the porch. A small terrace would be constructed beneath porch at ground level. See attached plans and photos for details.

3. **Existing Conditions:** The building has been neglected for some time and needs considerable repairs. A Certificate of Non-Applicability will be issued for all the repairs. There are no porches on the rear of the building. The first floor has a small piazza on the right side of the building near Flint Street. See photos.

## II. FINDINGS FOR PORCHES

### D. Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements

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.

*The porch is an important stylistic element to the main 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.*

*A porch includes: roof and its components (see roof section); posts, columns, pilasters; railings and balusters; stairs; skirts; piers; built-in features (benches, planters); openings, such as windows and doors; and screening*

### Preservation Considerations for Porches

1. The scale and massing of a porch should not be altered. All decorative details such as balusters, balustrades, columns, and brackets should be retained.
2. Original masonry elements in porches should be retained and preserved. If mortar needs repair, the color and pointing should match the original mortar, if possible, and be compatible with that of the original masonry. Replacement masonry elements should be compatible with the style and materials of the historic building (for further details, see exterior siding and walls).
3. Even if an entrance is not used, it should remain in place if its porch is integral to the building design. Abandoned entries can be put back into use at a later date.
4. If elements of the porch must be replaced, they should exactly match the originals in design and materials, based on photographic or physical evidence, or else they should make reference to the porch design of other houses in the neighborhood of the same style and period. Synthetic materials are highly discouraged.
5. *Replacement posts and railings should match the proportions and stylistic elements of the existing porch, or else, at the discretion of the SHPC, they may be designed to minimize their visibility. If prominent, new posts and railings should not look either too beefy or too skinny in comparison to other porch elements such as corner posts and other details.*
6. *The spacing of replacement balusters should be in proportion to the style of the historic building.*
7. Cast or wrought-iron porch supports should not replace brick or wooden posts.
8. Steps should be made of materials compatible with the style of the historic building.

9. *Porch skirting may be made out of lattice or boards, either sawn or vertical. Synthetic materials, with or without fake wood grain, are not allowed. Lattice spacing should be tight enough to minimize the visibility of the interior space and structure under the porch.*
10. Additional porch elements should not be added if they did not exist historically. For instance, the addition of decorative "gingerbread" brackets to a Craftsman-style porch is inappropriate.
11. *Balustrades or railings should not be added unless there is historical evidence that a balustrade existed on the porch. Railings that must be added for modern code considerations should be compatible with the design, materials and scale of the original porch. If alteration to the height of the railing or balustrade is required by building code, new designs should retain the proportions of the original railing height.*
12. *The addition of a porch which would not have existed on a house historically, such as an elaborate, highly detailed porch on a secondary entrance, is strongly discouraged*
13. Open porches and porticos should not be permanently enclosed or filled with windows.
14. *Pressure-treated wood must be painted or wrapped and match the style and appearance of other historic wooden elements.*
15. *Any new porch work must not destroy, damage, or obscure historic details and must be reversible.*

**Staff Findings** Staff finds that the proposed porches ~~do not~~ for the most part meet the HPC Guidelines. The ~~size and~~ location of the porches ~~are not~~ is traditional. Side or rear porches and piazzas may ~~span the width of a building or~~ fit into the inner corner between the main portion of the building and an ell. A humble home, such as this from circa 1857-58 would not have had porches well above the ground level. The Applicant has also made the porches smaller and related their size to the locations of the windows and basement door.

See the ~~photos~~ plans below with approximate locations indicated of the proposed alterations and a photo of another building which has a two-story porch on a slope added to the rear ell visible from the street.

### III. FINDINGS FOR WINDOWS

#### C. Windows and Doors

1. *Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.*
2. *Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, sill, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.* If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.

*Windows serve a practical function by providing a house with light, ventilation, and visibility to the outdoors. They play an important aesthetic role as well. The ratio of window openings to solid wall creates a certain rhythm in the visual design of the facade. The proportions of each window, as well as its details-including its three-dimensional profile, the number, size, and arrangement of its window panes, and its materials, color, and trim-are integral to the building's overall design. The size, placement, and style of windows are characteristic of specific historic periods.*

#### Preservation Considerations for Windows

##### Preserving historic windows

1. *Retain and preserve the size and shape of original window openings. Retain the locations of original windows; avoid moving them from their historic location, or adding windows in new areas. Maintain the consistency of window design throughout the historic building.*
2. *Avoid changing the function of a window or other opening; e.g., converting a window to a door and vice versa.*
3. Retain and preserve existing historic windows, including their functional and decorative features, such as frames, glass, sashes, muntins, sills, heads, trim, moldings, surrounds and hardware. Whenever possible, repair rather than replace the functional and decorative features of windows.
4. Repair historic windows through recognized preservation methods for patching, consolidating, splicing, and reinforcing. Consider compatible substitute materials only if using the original material is not technically feasible.
5. Replace only the deteriorated components rather than replacing the entire window. When replacement of deteriorated components is necessary, use elements that match the original in style, shape, dimensions, and materials.

**Staff Findings:** Staff finds that the proposed alterations do not meet the above HPC Guidelines. The guidelines and considerations clearly state that windows should not be altered to become doors nor vice versa. While occasionally new opens are made in the envelope of a building, these relate to the rest of the windows and doors on a façade. In this case, windows to be altered are minimally to not visible from Flint Street or Franklin Street and visible from a distance from Oliver Street.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, ~~Staff recommends denying a Certificate of Appropriateness to add a porch at the far end of the building on two stories, and replacing two windows with two doors.~~ Staff recommends that the Commission consider granting A Certificate of Appropriateness for a covered two-story porch located on the interior corner of the building with shorter dimensions and replacing the windows on the first and second floor with an entry doors going into the ell closest to the main block of the building. A Certificate of Non-Applicability may be issued for repairs in-kind.*

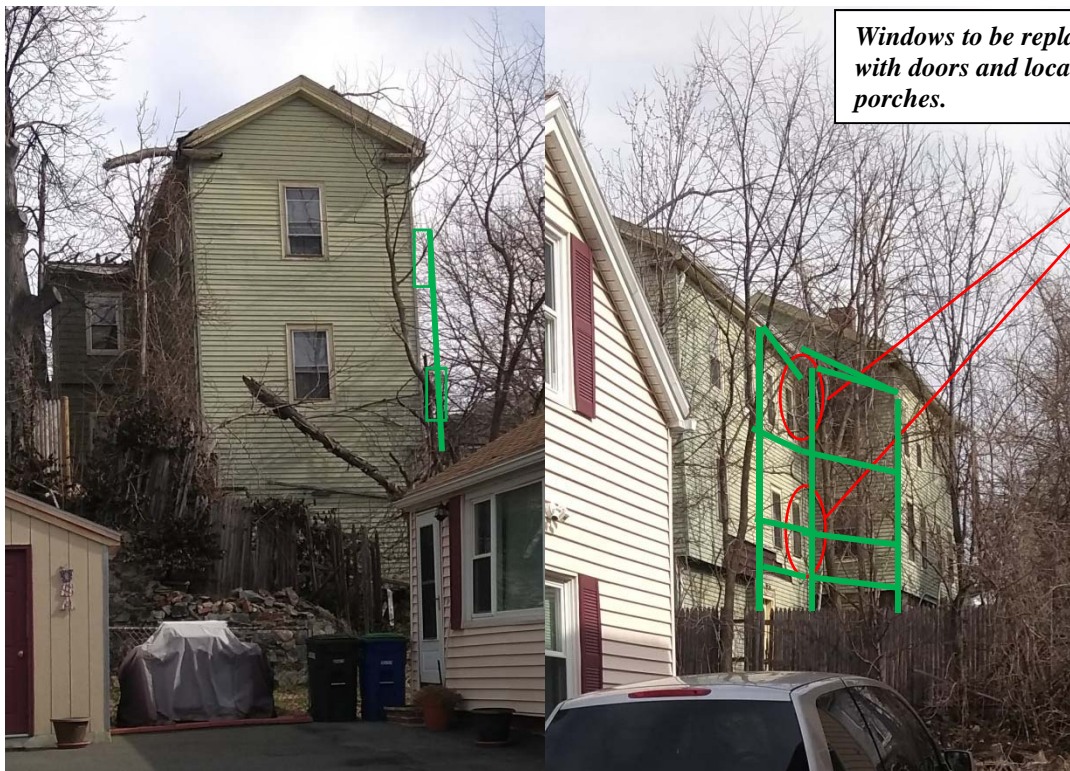
1. All appropriate building permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any work.
2. If changes are necessary to the proposed work for which these Certificates of Appropriateness (C/A) and Non-Applicability (C/NA) was issued, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
3. New porches shall be constructed on the inner corner of the building to the left rear of the main block.
4. The porches shall be covered with roof and detailed to relate to the rest of the building.
5. The porch posts shall be a minimum of 6 x 6 and shall not be pressure treated wood unless ~~hidden behind a porch skirt.~~ wrapped with a hard wood.
- ~~6. The porch skirt shall be constructed of wood and shall have either vertical slats or horizontal or diagonal lattice.~~
- ~~7.~~ 6. The porches shall be 8' x ~~12~~ 16' in size.
- ~~8.~~ 7. Top and foot rails should be generic.
- ~~9.~~ 8. The balusters may be plain or turned.
- ~~10.~~ 9. Two doors shall be added the rear block onto the porches.
- ~~11.~~ 10. The doors shall have 6 lights over panels in similar proportions to the approved windows.
- ~~12.~~ 11. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.





Windows to be replaced  
with doors minimally  
visible from Flint Street  
and location of porches.

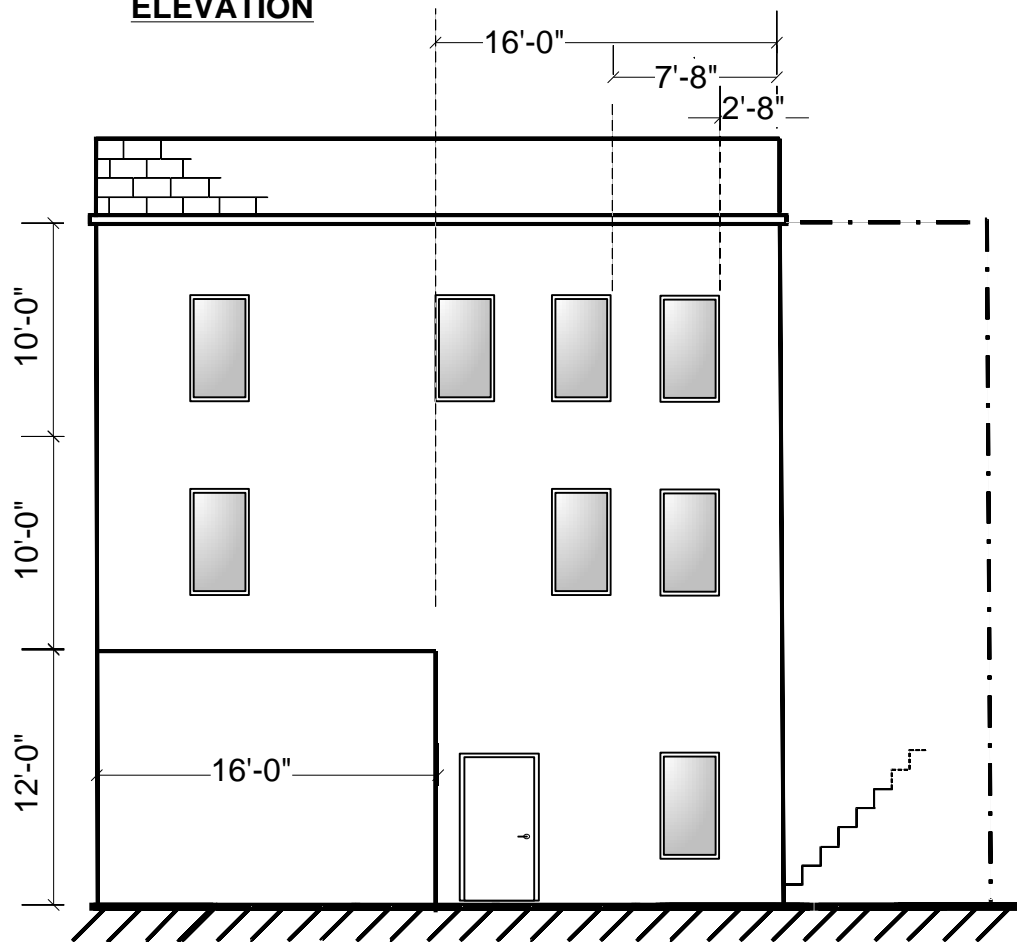




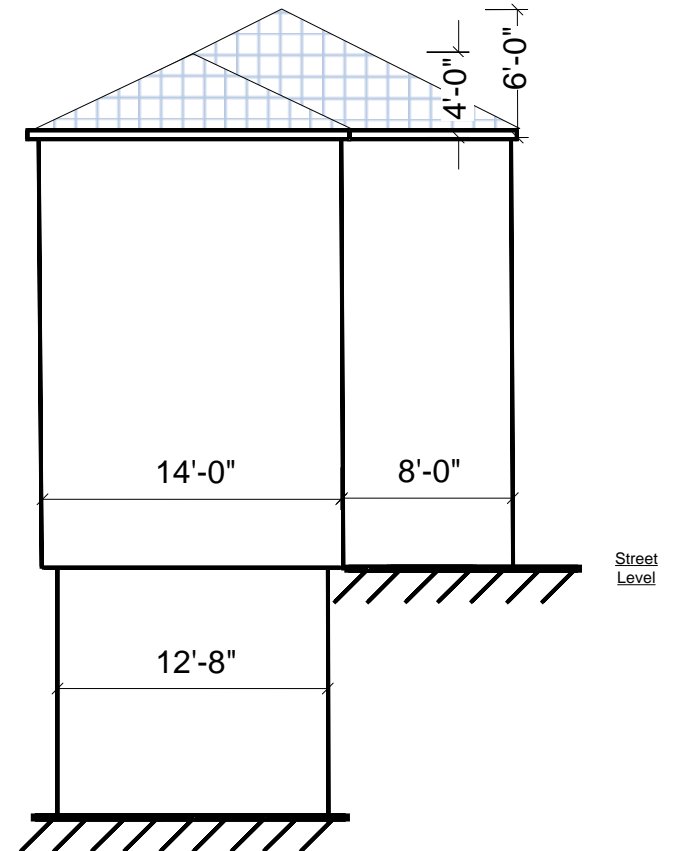
*32-34 Summit Avenue (c. 1870) – new 2 story porch along Vinal Avenue with 6x6 posts and generic rails.*

*22 Summer Street (c. 1870) – traditional porch with modern height railings and skirt.*

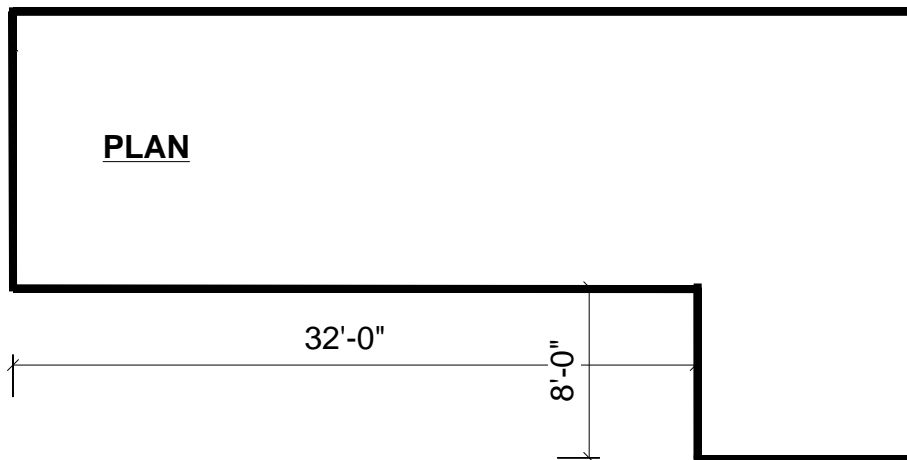
**ELEVATION**



**END VIEW**



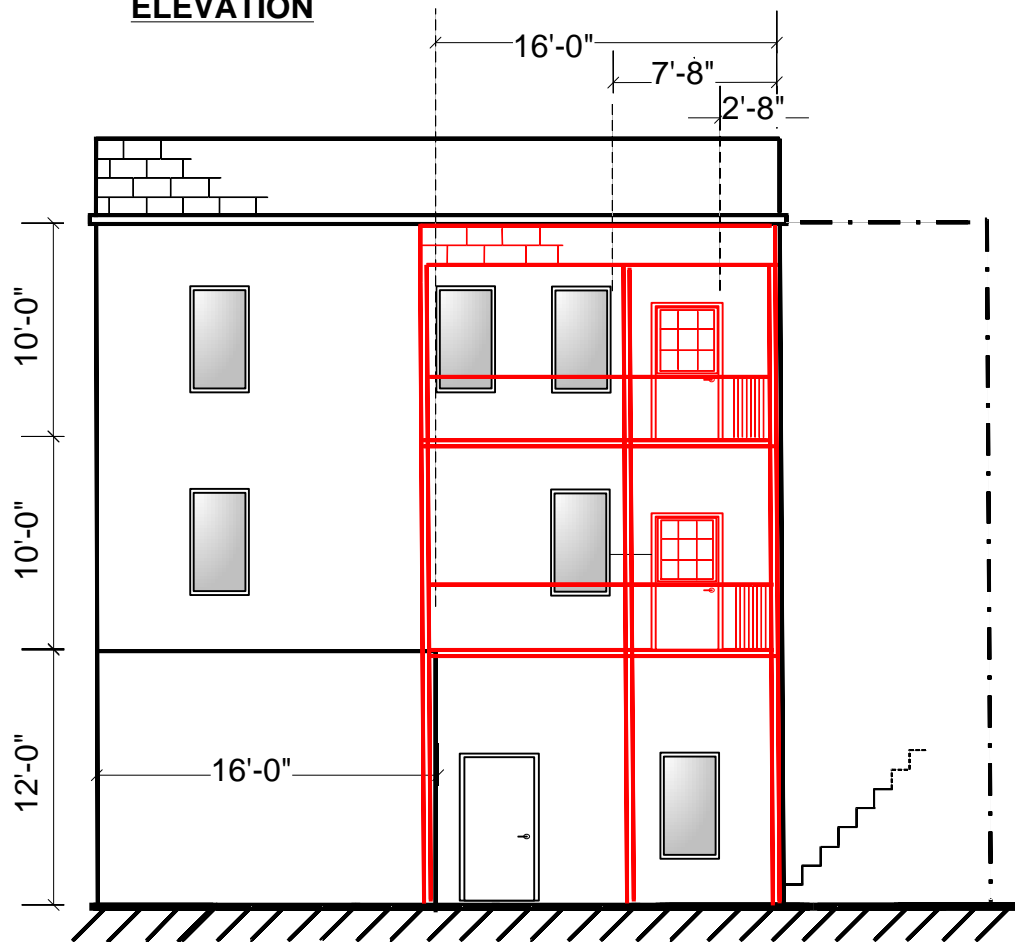
**PLAN**



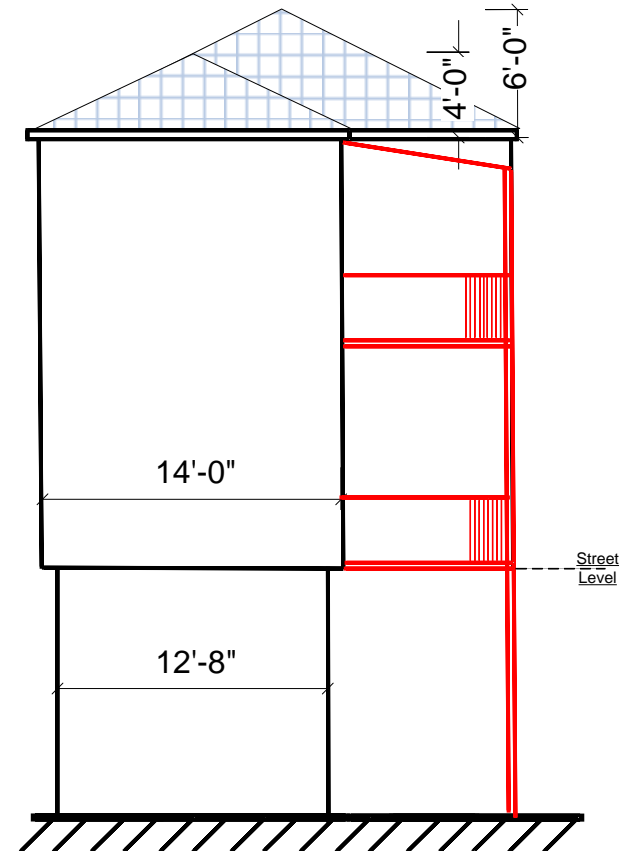
**EXISTING**

Scale 1" : 9 Ft  
Date 05/017/18

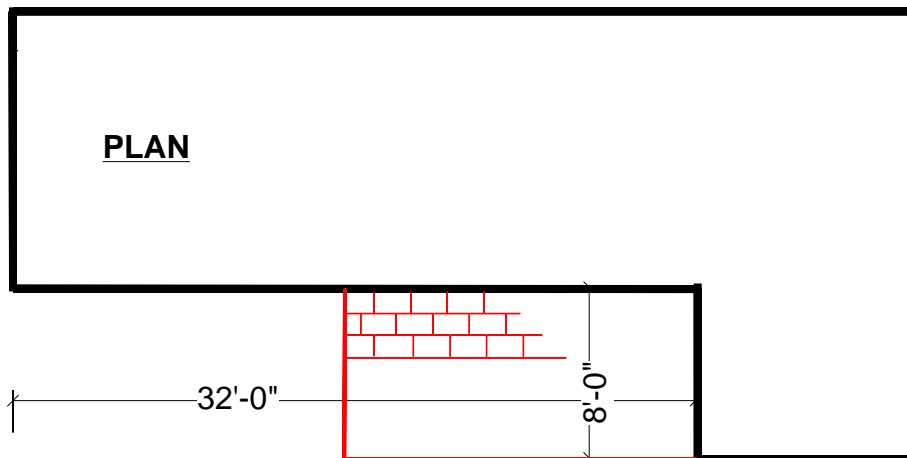
**ELEVATION**



**END VIEW**



**PLAN**



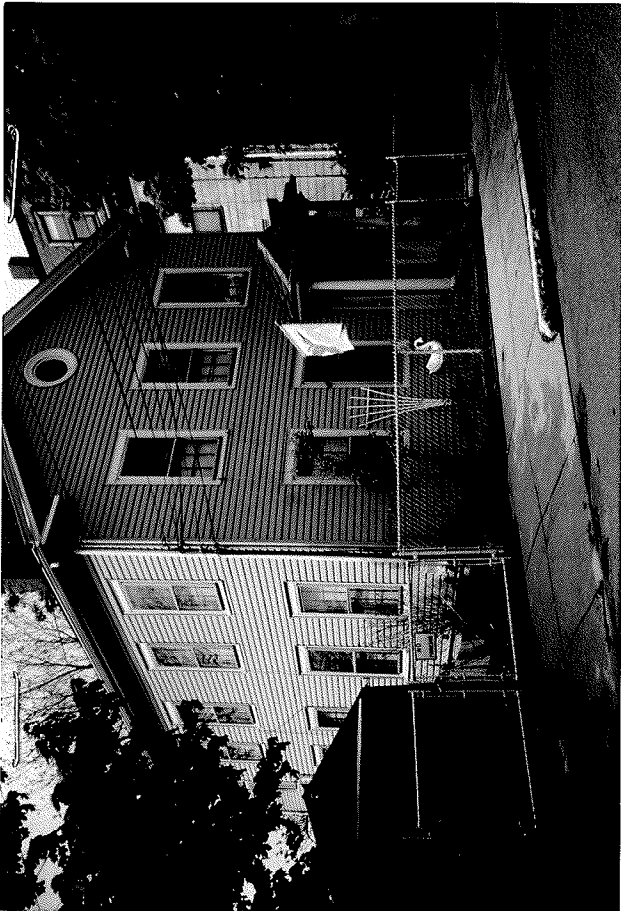
**PROPOSED**

Scale 1" : 9 Ft  
Date 05/017/18



# FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



see attached map

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
104-B-7	Boston North		1187

Town Somerville

Place (neighborhood or village) East Somerville

Address 14 Flint St.

Historic Name Davis-Nickerson House

Uses: Present residential

Original residential

Date of Construction 1857-1858

Source deeds and maps

Style/Form Italianate/suburban sidehall

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation brick

Wall/Trim vinyl/wood

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures auto garage  
ca.1920

Major Alterations (with dates) resided late 20C

Condition good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage 5104 sq.ft.

Setting suburban lot on hill slope

in dense residential district

Recorded by Arthur Krim

Organization Somerville Hist.Presv.Comm.

Date (month/year) August 2005

# BUILDING FORM

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

14 Flint St.

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The early suburban house at 14 Flint Street was built in 1857-1858 by an unknown housewright for John Davis, later owned by John Nickerson. The house follows a standard suburban side hall plan of two stories with gable to the street, set on a brick foundation built back on a steep slope. The design is Italianate Style as seen in the short return gable cornice and most obviously in the round oculus gable window. The entry retains an older Greek Revival side light door frame and the windows are possibly original 6/6 sash. The entry portico is of later date ca.1920 in Colonial Revival Style, with the house recently resided.

Although modified, the Davis-Nickerson house is of note as an early house on Flint Street, that defines the suburban character of the area before the Civil War.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☐ see continuation sheet

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

The early suburban house at 14 Flint Street is dated 1857-1858 by deeds and map research to John Davis, later owned by John Nickerson. The property was purchased by Davis in 1855 with a tax assessment to Davis of \$16.58 in 1857. Although the house is not shown on the 1857 Walling Map, the construction is likely of 1857-1858. In 1864 the house was sold to David Eliot and resold to John F. Nickerson in 1866 as shown on the 1874 Atlas. Nickerson is listed as a Boston grocer in the 1881 Directory and the house remained in the Nickerson family through 1895. In 1905 the house is listed to Thomas Jones, an insurance agent with Mrs. Elizabeth Lawrie. In 1925 the address is shown to Robert Malatesta, a railroad switchman and his wife Sarah, while in 1940 the house is listed to Frank Milton and Mrs. Agnes Stewart.

The Davis-Nickerson house is of note as an early suburban house on Flint Street before the Civil War, and later residence for local workers in East Somerville.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

☐ see continuation sheet

Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: J.M. Hopkins, 1874, 1884.  
Atlas of Somerville. Philadelphia: G.W. Bromley, 1895.  
Map of Middlesex County. Boston: H.F. Walling, 1857.  
Middlesex County Deeds 733-48 (1855), 935-292 (1864),  
961-328 (1865), 962-546 (1866)  
Somerville Directory. Boston: W.A. Greenough, 1875-1940.  
Somerville Tax Lists. Somerville: by the town, 1856-1864.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

