



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

THOMAS F. GALLIGANI, JR.
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Eric Parkes, Chair
Robin Kelly, Vice-Chair
Ryan Falvey

Dick Bauer
Denis (DJ) Chagnon (Alt.)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, 2022

Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will hold a public meeting and public hearings on **Tuesday, October 18, 2022** at 6:45pm on the following applications, in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and/or the City of Somerville Code of Ordinances, Pt. II, Chap. 7, Sections 7-16 – 7-28.

Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission will be conducted via remote participation. A recording of these proceedings can be accessed at any time using the registration link at the top of this agenda.

Meeting called to order at 6:47pm by Chair Parkes

Members present: Eric Parkes (Chair), Robin Kelly (Vice Chair), Ryan Falvey, Dick Bauer, DJ Chagnon

Staff present: Wendy Sczechowicz, Andrew Graminski

Others present: Joe Matrano, Nicole Black, Michael Pettit, Mai Luo, Evan Stellman, Adam Dash, Maryann Thompson, Ben Messinger, Brian Militana

I. Advisory Review (CPA-HP funding projects)

- 438 Broadway (Adams-Magoun House)
 - Applicant presented the phased plan to address renovations, including work to be



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done on the windows, doors, cornices, and gutters in phase 1; structural repairs in phase 2; and foundations, cladding, and trim in phase 3.

- Chair Parkes asked about the kind of gutters to be used.
- Vice Chair Kelly asked the Commission's thoughts on the use of copper downspouts; the Commission advised the applicant to look at using a different material for the down spout.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Bauer, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted (4-0-1), with Mr. Chagnon abstaining, to **approve** the proposed work, with the downspouts painted in a way that makes them inconspicuous.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: abstain

II. Determinations of Historic Significance (STEP 1 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

1. HPC.DMO 2022.32 – 17 Hudson Street

Applicant: Nicole Black & Michael Pettit

Owner: Same as Applicant

The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

- Single-family home with structural issues such as foundation damage, sagging floors, significant water damage, collapsing chimney, nob & tube electrical, aluminum siding, and the current building does not comply with the zoning codes.
- Public comment:
 - Denise Provost (abutter to the rear): Building has had no maintenance since 1989. Nothing really historically significant about the existing structure. Chimney is falling apart which could cause issues on the existing house. Only issue/worry with demo is potential impact on the Silver Maple's roots. Has reviewed the plans for the new building, and felt they are appropriate and sensitive to the neighborhood.
- Closed public comment.
- Mr. Bauer was happy to see that they want to demolish the building to build a new one to actually live there. Asked if they significantly explored looking at doing restoration work to restore the existing building, as many buildings in Somerville are of that age and have similar issues and many are restored and not demolished.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the current building retains its original form, massing, and architectural integrity with the front porch, gable, and double bay windows. It contributes to the streetscape and appears that it has historic significance.
- Mr. Chagnon noted that the house itself is a lot like many in the direct neighborhood; it retains a lot of the original massing. Other than its large lot and front porch addition, it isn't particularly different than other houses in the neighborhood. On the fence if it meets the definition of being historically significant.

- Mr. Falvey agreed with Mr. Bauer; interested in the idea of keeping existing structure.
- Chair Parkes stated that it is always possible to save a building, depending on how costly the project ends up being. This particular house has a front facing gable, which is similar to houses nearby, but this house does not have the same architectural features as the other houses along the streetscape. Not totally sold on significance and asked the owners to elaborate on their decision to demolish the building, rather than salvaged.
- The owners noted that it does maintain some of its original form and massing, however it is a very simple design. Most of the wood trim is rotted out; restoring it would be impossible, so it would have to be completely replaced. As they reviewed the process over the last five months with several contractors, they determined that after removing everything that would need to be taken out, it would essentially be unrecognizable from the front. It could be restored, but they could not maintain the original character of the building, in addition to being substantially more expensive to do so.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted (3-2), with Mr. Chagnon and Chair Parkes dissenting, to declare the structure **historically significant**.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon: no; Eric Parkes: no

Findings:

- Characteristic of home of its era
- Structure, form and massing, is intact
- Fenestration appears to be original
- Pattern contributes to the streetscape

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted (3-2), with Mr. Chagnon and Chair Parkes dissenting, to adopt the above findings.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon: no; Eric Parkes: no

2. HPC.DMO 2022.34 – 627 Somerville Avenue

Applicant: Mai Luo

Owner: 635 Somerville Avenue, LLC

The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

- Architect gave a brief overview of the proposal and site context.
- Public comment:



- No public comments
- Closed public comment.
- Vice Chair Kelly stated that the building facing Somerville Ave is a hodgepodge and is more intrigued with the brick section that faces Belmont Street, although that section does not meet the 75-year-old threshold. The brick work of the Somerville Ave building does not look great any longer, appears to have had several modifications, the windows and doors are unusual; doesn't look like the original fenestration. Not much of historic significance to building.
- Mr. Bauer stated that the building is not in great condition, but the basic structure is still there.
- Staff confirmed that the first floor did house multiple storefronts originally.
- Chair Parkes indicated that he was on the fence about this; the building is not in great shape and the façade has clearly been changed numerous times, but it is a brick factory building which has been rapidly disappearing in the city.
- Mr. Falvey also had mixed feelings on this one, as he wasn't clear on what industries or businesses operated out of the building.
- Mr. Chagnon didn't think there was enough to determine it historically significant.
- Chair Parkes could visualize what the structure looked originally with the individual storefronts and the residential entryway in the center of the building, which is all gone now. What is left is a square shape with some interesting, but mostly basic brick work. It's unclear if there is enough good remaining to call it significant.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Chagnon, the Commission voted (1-4), with Mr. Falvey, Vice Chair Kelly, Mr. Chagnon, and Chair Parkes dissenting, to declare the structure **historically significant**.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: no; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: no; DJ Chagnon: no; Eric Parkes: no

Findings:

- Lacks original integrity
- Does not contribute to the streetscape

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Chagnon, the Commission voted (4-0-1), with Mr. Bauer abstaining, to adopt the above findings.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: abstain; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

3. **HPC.DMO 2022.37 – 63 Putnam Street**

Applicant: FL Development, LLC

Owner: James F Saraiva & Philip G Saraiva Sr., representatives of the Estate of Joseph Saraiva

The Applicant seeks to demolish an accessory structure constructed a minimum of 75 years



ago.

- Chair Parkes rescued himself from this case.
- Attorney Adam Dash explained that the applicant would like to demolish existing garage, which has been added onto several times over the years. He reviewed a report from a structural engineer stating that the garage is unsafe.
- Public comment:
 - Laurinda Bedingfield (61 Putnam Rd): just wanted to offer information on the nearby properties (59, 61, & 63 Putnam Road); each house was built by two brothers, had a barn, and the brothers ran a dairy delivery service.
- Closed public comment.
- Mr. Bauer noted that it is an interesting outbuilding that is architecturally intriguing.
- Mr. Falvey stated that the house and barn look similar, with significance to the history of the building (i.e., the dairy farming). It is architecturally significant, even though it has been added onto.
- Mr. Chagnon agreed. He also noted that the first addition to the structure was done with such purpose as to match the house, which is very interesting.
- Vice Chair Kelly said that the structure has historically significant aspects, especially the West portion of the building.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to declare the structure **historically significant**.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Robin Kelly: yes

Findings:

- Associated with the broad social and economic history of the city and the dairy product production in those times with two other nearby homes
- Architecturally significant due to its connection to the main house, which is unusual of a carriage house

HPC Action: Following a motion by Member Bauer, seconded by Mr. Chagnon, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to adopt the above findings.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Robin Kelly: yes

4. **HPC.DMO 2022.40 – 11 Chester Place**

Applicant: Jim Chen

Owner: Hong Ying Li

The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

- Chair Parkes rejoined the meeting.



- The applicant was not present, and no continuance form was provided.
- Item was moved down on the agenda to allow time for the applicant to join the meeting.

II. Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

1. HPC.ALT 2022.53 – 24 Warren Avenue

Applicant: Emma Rose

Owner: Maryann Thompson

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness for after-the-fact approval of hardscape alterations.

- Vice Chair Kelly recused herself.
- The owner explained that her daughter/applicant, that also lives at the property, and she reconfigured the brick hardscape without realizing that it was under the purview of the HPC. Once they realized, they submitted plans and materials for approval. The owner noted that they are open to the recommendations outlined in the Staff Memo.
- Public comment:
 - No public comments
- Closed public comment.
- Chair Parkes summarized the proposal and confirmed that the current driveway will remain.
- Staff clarified that their recommendation was to remove the flagstone and replace it with a more appropriate brick.
- Mr. Chagnon agreed that brick would be more appropriate considering the era this building was built; he recommended getting salvaged material for the retaining curb along the driveway, such as granite.
- Mr. Falvey agreed.
- The Commission discussed allowing Staff to review the proposed materials for final approval.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Chagnon, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to **approve** a Certificate of Appropriateness, with permission to rebuild the brick patio with a condition that the curbing be restored to the original alignment, the concrete curbing be replaced with salvaged granite or similar material, the flagstone walk be replaced with salvaged or new brick, and that all materials are to be reviewed by Staff.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

2. HPC.ALT 2022.56 – 101 School Street



Applicant: Brian Militana

Owner: Jane Messinger & Ben Messinger

The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by removing existing window openings to install a doorway.

- Vice Chair Kelly rejoined the meeting.
- The owner explained the intentions of the proposed renovation.
- The applicant shared plans and asked the HPC about using three-panel-doors instead of two-panel doors, which would go against Staff's recommendations. They would maintain the existing trim around the windows but introduce two patio doors and a fixed.
- Public comment:
 - No public comments.
- Closed public comment.
- Mr. Falvey confirmed that the porches are only visible through other people's yards.
- Chair Parkes agreed that the porch is minimally visible.
- Vice Chair Kelly also stated that the porches on the rear of the building are very deep, which makes it hard to see the fenestration and details.
- Chair Parkes confirmed that as long as they keep the current overall design, he does not care if they use two or three panel doors.
- Vice Chair Kelly noted that if the alignment of the windows remain in line with other the balconies, she would not have an issue with the placement of the proposed door.
- Mr. Falvey and Mr. Bauer agreed.
- The HPC and applicant discussed the make and material of the proposed doors.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to **approve** the amended design with additional details to be reviewed and approved by Staff.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon; Eric Parkes: yes

5. **HPC.DMO 2022.40 – 11 Chester Place**

Applicant: Jim Chen

Owner: Hong Ying Li

The Applicant seeks to demolish a principal structure constructed a minimum of 75 years ago.

- Item was moved to the end of the agenda to allow the applicant to join the meeting; the applicant did not join the meeting but requested a continuance to the 15 November 2022 HPC meeting.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Mr. Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to **continue** the case to 15 November 2022.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

III. Other Business

- 09/01-10/14 Staff Approvals
 - Staff provided updates on staff level approvals.

IV. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 8:53pm.

HPC Action: Following a motion by Mr. Bingham, seconded by Mr. Bauer, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to **adjourn** the meeting.

Roll call vote: Ryan Falvey: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Robin Kelly: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Eric Parkes: yes

Please see cases at <https://www.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation/hpc-cases> . As cases may be continued to a later date, please check the agenda (posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting) on the City website or email historic@somervillema.gov to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertised. Interested persons may provide spoken remarks to the Historic Preservation Commission at the virtual public hearing or via e-mail to historic@somervillema.gov . All written comments must be received by NOON, one week prior to the date of the HPC meeting.