



City of Somerville
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

1 AUGUST 2023 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Eric Parkes	Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Robin Kelly	Vice Chair	<i>Present</i>	
Ryan Falvey	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Dick Bauer	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	
Colin Curzi	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Wendy Sczechowicz (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Sarah White (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:49pm and adjourned at 8:14pm.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: Alterations to Local Historic District Properties (LHD)
HPC.ALT 2023.20 – 192 Central Street
(continued from 20 June 2023)

As there was not an applicant available at first, the Commission tabled discussion on this item to later in the meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING: Alterations to Local Historic District Property (LHD)
HPC.ALT 2023.41 – 11 Thorpe Street

The applicant team explained that the proposal is to install a mini split for air conditioning and heating for the property. This will involve running two lines up the side of the house, similar to the existing electric line. This property is located on a one-way street and is visible, though not significantly, from the street.

Chair Parkes asked for public testimony. As there was no request for public comment, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission discussed that the applicant's intention to place the condenser under the stairs seems reasonable and that this will be the least visible location. There was discussion that the Commission should approve energy efficiency improvements, where possible.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Bauer, the Commission voted (7-0), to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for this project, with the condition that the lines be painted the color of the exterior against which they are placed.

RESULT:

APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS

PUBLIC HEARING: Determination of Historic Significance (Step 1)
HPC.DMO 2023.10 – 45 Alpine Street

The applicant team explained that this property contains an existing 960 s.f. cottage. The intention is to expand the structure to allow for the owners to continue to live there long-term. The proposal is not for a full demolition of the structure, but enough of one to necessitate this process.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Ron Cavallo (70 Victoria Street) – noted that he believes this Commission demonstrates antidevelopment agendas within the City. This building has limited architectural value to the City. This building has been changed a number of times. He would like the homeowner to have latitude to make additional changes.

Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

There was discussion that, through this proposal, the house seems to retain its original form and massing. The exterior materials and fenestration have changed over time. This is within a group of five houses that mostly all retain their form and massing. This building does contribute to the streetscape and there is merit to preserving the original form and massing.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Bauer, the Commission voted (7-0), to find the structure at 45 Alpine Street Historically Significant.

Findings:

- Relationship to the streetscape
- Retains much of its original form and massing, as do most of the other buildings in the grouping

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Chagnon, the Commission voted (7-0), to adopt the findings, as discussed.

The applicant team noted that it would have liked the opportunity to speak before the Commission voted. The Commission offered the applicant team the chance to speak. The applicant team explained that this structure is odd within the grouping of five other structures and has a different style. The siding has asbestos, and the roof has changed over the years. The Commission acknowledged the applicant team's frustration and noted that the proposed plans will be reviewed at the next stage of the process. The Commission agreed to remain with the vote as previously taken.

RESULT:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT

PUBLIC HEARINGS: Alterations to Local Historic District Properties (LHD)
HPC.ALT 2023.20 – 192 Central Street
(continued from 20 June 2023)

The applicant team explained that the proposal was to replace wood gutters with aluminum gutters. It was noted that the front of the house contains wood gutters, and the back of the house contains aluminum gutters. The current proposal is to change the front of the property to aluminum gutters keeping with the existing gutter profile. The applicant would also consider leaving the front as wood gutters. The proposal is also to replace the back of the property with aluminum, case-style gutters. These would have the same profile as the existing gutters.

Staff explained that the rear of the building is not visible from any right of way and this request can be handled administratively. The Commission should only consider the side and front elevations of the building.

Chair Parkes asked for public testimony. As there was no request for public comment, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission discussed concern with switching the front gutter type and a preference to keep with wood gutters. The Commission asked the applicant team what the transition between materials would look like. The applicant stated that the transition would essentially be seamless. The gutter proposed is produced by someone in Sudbury specifically for this type of situation. The Commission discussed allowing Staff to review the proposed aluminum gutters for appropriateness of transition points.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted (6-0-1), with Member Bauer abstaining, to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of the front wood gutters with the Duragutter aluminum gutters, subject to Staff approval of how well the transition matches and, if necessary, extension of wood gutters across a portion of the façade to a clean transition point.

RESULT:	APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS
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OTHER BUSINESS: Rules of Policy & Procedure

Staff explained that some changes were made to the document based on Commission comments and other input. The Commission can change these rules at any point in the future. The Commission discussed the language as to alternates voting during a meeting.

Following a motion by Member Bauer, seconded by Vice Chair Kelly, the Commission voted (7-0) to approve the Rules of Policy & Procedure document, contingent upon the changes delivered in Version 2 dated 27 July 2023, inclusive of the change in language relative to the voting of alternate members in place of regular members as discussed at the 1 August 2023 meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

The Commission discussed that the City has just finished soliciting CPC applications for the next funding year. A couple of projects were submitted mid-cycle and approved which will lead to less funding for the next round of applications.

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.