



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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Alan Bingham, Chair
Dick Bauer
Eric Parkes
Ryan Falvey
Adam Wylie, Secretary (Alt)

Mark Sternman, Vice Chair
Robin Kelly
Denis (DJ) Chagnon (Alt.)
Anthony Griseto (Alt.)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AGENDA

**THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY IN COMPLIANCE WITH GOVERNOR
BAKER'S EMERGENCY ORDERS REGARDING THE OPEN MEETING LAW (OML)
A LINK AND ACCESS INFO TO THE VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE POSTED ONCE IT HAS
BEEN MADE AVAILABLE.**

6:45 p.m. on Monday, April 26, 2021

The following order of cases to be heard is tentative. Cases may be moved up or pushed back at the discretion of the Commission.

Meeting called to order at 6:52 p.m. by Alan Bingham, Chair
Members present: Alan Bingham, Dick Bauer, Eric Parkes, DJ Chagnon, Adam Wylie

Staff present: Sarah White, Charlotte Leis, Wendy Sczechowicz

Note that some cases heard at this meeting were lengthy. Therefore, members of the public wishing to understand the full context of each case should request a copy of the audio file.



CITY HALL • 93 HIGHLAND AVENUE • SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS 02143
(617) 625-6600 EXT. 2500 • TTY: (617) 666-0001 • FAX: (617) 625-0722

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I. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

1. 24 Webster Avenue

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the MOA.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

II. Advisory Review

1. 277 Broadway (Elizabeth Peabody House)

Advisory conversation to discuss best practices for installing an elevator (location, etc.), considerations for creating plans/drawings, and discuss re-enforcement of the third floor.

- They would like to add an elevator
- Commission members provided advice about MAAB and potential other accessibility triggers
- Alan pointed out any work on exterior will need HPC review
- Want elevator to access third floor space

III. Alterations to Local Historic District (LHD) Properties

1. HPC.ALT 2021.22 – Westwood Road

Applicant: City of Somerville

Relocate historic granite gateposts to alternative location on Westwood Road

Asked for continuance to May meeting

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to continue.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

2. HPC.ALT 2021.17 – 64 Meacham Road

Applicant: Bridget Darling

Owner: Bridget Darling & Mary Margaret Darling

Exterior renovations

- Bridget Darling - Owner - works for Catamount Builders
- Remove vinyl siding and asbestos shingles
- Marvin elevate windows 2X2 - black
- Re-build front stairs
- Remove “chunks” of concrete curbs

- Windows - fiberglass Marvin elevate 2 over 2 styles
- Accept fiberglass with staff review for provide
- Window openings - commissioners gave advice on window sizes and openings aligning windows on side elevation:
 - Window on jog should relate to other
 - 4 windows should line up from the top
 - Right side centered between 2 windows
 - Window well below - Window wells OK
 - Two left back - keep head of windows aligning with others - the sills can be different
- Brackets – suggested a more simplified design - staff review
 - Pick something like others in neighborhood
- Same thing for porch posts - change to square
- Staff review on front door
- Brick paver - true brick color
- Field stone wall with granite cap - keep it low
- Veneer with cap along with field stone wall OK
- Staff review on final bracket
- Perhaps look at brackets and column wraps for porch
- Continue the porch and ask for certificate of approval for all other items

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to approve certificate of appropriateness for all items above EXCEPT the porch, including columns, bracket, and roof, which should be continued to May meeting

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

HPC Action: The Commission voted separately (5-0) to continue the porch, including columns, bracket, and roof to May meeting

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

3. 3. HPC.ALT 2021.21 – 33 Warren Avenue

Applicant: 33 Warren Ave., LLC

Owner: same as applicant

Install new walkway and create new driveway

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to NOT approve the work that already took place:

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the following conditional certificate of appropriateness:

- Whatever material in driveway should match front walkway
- Version A - driveway narrow enough to continue by the side bay
- Version B - wider driveway that would only go up to the bay and then become a walkway to the back
- Version C - Walkway with width approved by zoning with left wall removed

- Historic does not have purview of rear yard
- Back patio certificate of non-applicability because not viewable from public way

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

IV. Determinations of Preferably Preserved (STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)

4. 1. HPC.DMO 2021.06 – 1 Washington Street

Applicant: Niranjan Gawli

Owner: same as applicant

Demolish principal structure

- Applicant spoke - resident for past three years
- Looking to demolish the building - not sure what will go in its place
- Eric said he was having trouble seeing reason to preferably preserve
- DJ agreed - not really part of Washington or other streetscapes anymore
- Dick pointed out that perhaps it is part of the larger city-scape

Public Comment:

- No public comment

End of public comments

HPC Action: The Commission voted (4-1) to declare the building NOT preferably preserved.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: no; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

Findings:

- Lost most architectural detail overtime
- Not part of fundamental streetscape from Washington Street

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the above findings.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

2. HPC.DMO 2021.08 – 187 Central Street

Applicant: Nora, LLC

Owner: same as applicant

Demolish principal structure

- Ann Vigerito spoke on behalf of applicant
- Steven Sosa is architect
- Applicant and architect spoke as well
- Ann acknowledged overwhelming opposition to demo
- Architect stated it will be hard to incorporate existing building with new zoning code
- Applicant and architect want to strike a balance with neighborhood to be harmonious

- Trying to make building work for rental housing
 - The plan is to split lot and build 2, 3 unit buildings on the lot with one affordable unit for each lot
 - 2 fully detached buildings with benefit of affordable housing
 - Footprint is too large for a 3 family
 - Width and type for building typologies
- Eric - not a lot of thought into how it can be preserved
- Adam - not reason to demolish principle structure for 3 additional units
- DJ agreed and mentioned they should explore a potential second structure on the lot
- Alan - part of streetscape of all existing homes - to disrupt the harmony would be doing injustice to the city
 - Structure, form, and integrity all there
- Everyone agreed there was not compelling argument jut for the sake of adding 3 units

Public Comment:

- Representative Capuano:
 - Doesn't think the developer wants to work with the city
 - No-one in this neighborhood wants to go forward with this project
 - Seems that the developer is just concerned with the bottom line
- Counselor Clingan
 - Jessie Clingan - Ward 4 city counselor
 - Appreciated commission - agrees there are other ways to deal with property
 - Brought up idea of extending historic district in that area
- Counselor Niedergang:
 - Mark Niedergang - Ward 5 city counselor
 - Member of synagogue next store for 30 years
 - Encouraged full maximum demolition delay
- Joe Lynch - resident of Ward 5 - added voice in opposition - apply full demolition delay
- Jonathan Kilpatrick - neighbor at 21 Browning Road
 - Concerned with 2nd structure on the lot

End of public comments

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to declare the building preferably preserved.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

Findings:

- Building itself - important as piece of architecture - remarkably intact
- History of building - cultural significance
- Street scape
- Most architectural details are still present on the building

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the above findings.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

- Alan asked staff if we could look into making this a historic district

3. HPC.DMO 2021.09 – 125 Highland Avenue

Applicant: Highland Masonic Temple Association, Co-Owner c/o Christopher Kenney

Owner: Barros Properties, LLC

Demolish principal structure

- Tony Barros is the applicant
- Read letter - copied into notes

Public Comment:

- Counselor Ben Ewen-Campen - city counselor for ward 3
 - Believes that if the community saw it as a monument as racism it should be demolished - he doesn't think that conversation has happened with the community
- Eliza Margolin
 - How do you separate art from the artist?
 - Likes idea of turning into affordable housing
- Joanne Learvy - Maddison street - neighbor to this property - identify a couple of points - never identified it with the architect that designed it - only the congregation that has been in it
- Joe Lynch - Admires and respects what he is doing
 - Memory of architect should be wiped out
 - Pay attention to work of architect and not necessarily his views
- Mark Autoshaen - secretary of masonic temple - lived all over Somerville and served as EMS
 - Building owned by masons
 - You really can't separate that history from the building
- Matt Casino - 378 Medford Street - Civil Engineer
 - Can see spire from backyard
 - Fully in favor of demolishing this church
 - Architect is white supremacist who purposely used architecture to celebrate ideas
 - End of the day it is a building built by a famous racist
- Representative Miranda - represents Roxbury and Dorchester
 - Believes is resident lead leadership
 - Anglo-Saxon superiority is still alive today
 - Not about money but about principle
 - Recommend that we consider a delay in the decision to solicit community input
- Steven Nutter - Lives on Maple Ave - Urban Planner - lived here more than 10 years now - important that we need to let go of the structures of the past
 - Cram used white power and male privilege to express his privilege
 - Highland will become a new street
 - The world has enough Cram buildings and can afford to lose one
- Armand B. - Student at MIT - planning and architecture
 - Discussions around affordable housing
 - Various institutions built by slaves
 - They live with legacies
 - Let us not beat around the bush - to keep the building would be a shame

- You can't hide behind the facade of the building
 - The built environment does project what you believe in
- Dalia Kay - 24-year resident of Somerville
 - Disgusted with who the architect is
 - This church is national landmark
 - Important that we economize that his design is different than his views
 - More appropriate approach is to leave structure and put something in to acknowledge how wrong this person (architect) is
- Joel Bennet - Impressed with process and everyone has done a good job at listening and being thoughtful:
 - Appreciate topics that have come up
 - He's sure that even this day and age there is anything that the city could do from developing property just because they were racist
 - There is not a law that could prevent you from developing a property if you are racist
 - He thinks that is a big problem
 - Are we looking at who developers are as people?
 - He would support a process to look at any property driven by community, but not developer
 - The people who live in Somerville and people of color who live in Somerville need to make decision whether this represents somehow that should be torn down
 - If Cram was alive today the city couldn't keep him from being an architect or developer
- Malcom Mitchel from across the street
 - Pastor of Mission Church across the street
 - "Faith is the substance of the veins we hope for and it is evidence of the veins we cannot see"
 - Somerville has made tremendous process in racial harmony
 - You can't apply equity to privilege
 - Asking majority population to acknowledge that Black Lives

End of public comments

HPC Action: The Commission voted (4-1) to declare the building preferably preserved.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: no

Findings:

- Romanesque Revival church - association with Ralph Adams Cram
- On National Register
- Architectural integrity
- Cram both as a noted and important architect and also he brings "baggage" which is important to remember

HPC Action: The Commission voted (4-1) to accept the above findings.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: no

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

1. HPC.DMO 2021.10 – 25 Appleton Street

Applicant: Kwesi Acquah

Owner: 25 Appleton, LLC

Demolish all structures

- Applicant spoke - 2 story single story building - just under 1500 SF
- Goal is to double the occupancy and add more living space
- Intent is not to tear it down but instead add to the right side
- The amount of work qualifies as demolition
- Remove right side
- More than 50% demolished
- Adam reminded that the plan for future building is less important to determine significance
- Adam thought it is significant due to form and massing
- Alan pointed out integrity and most of structural details in place
- Dick echoed comments
- DJ agreed it is an important part of the streetscape

Public Comment:

- No public comment

End of Public Comment

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to declare the building significant.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

Findings:

- Original integrity and form - streetscape
- Original architectural details
- Category B - architectural significance rather than cultural

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the above findings.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

2. HPC.DMO 2021.11 – 64 Medford Street

Applicant: P & P Realty Trust

Owner: same as applicant

Demolish principal structure

- No applicant or owner present

Public Comment:

- No public comment

End of Public Comment

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to declare the building NOT significant.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

Findings:

- Lacking original architectural details
- Not part of a significant streetscape
- Significantly modified over time and lack of integrity

HPC Action: The Commission voted (5-0) to accept the above findings.

Roll call vote: Alan Bingham: yes; Dick Bauer: yes; Eric Parkes: yes; DJ Chagnon: yes; Adam Wylie: yes

VI. Other Business

- Minutes 11/4, 2/16, 3/16
- CPC update

IV. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn approved at 1:20am

Reports and plans are available on the City of Somerville website at archive.somervillema.gov/departments/historic-preservation-commission/hpc-cases-and-decisions and on the third floor of City Hall at 93 Highland Avenue. Cases may be continued to a later date(s); therefore, check the agenda on the website 48 hours in advance of the meeting or call (617) 625-6600 x2500 to inquire if specific cases will be heard. Continued cases will not be re-advertized, but will be listed on the agenda. Interested persons may provide comments to the Historic Preservation Commission at the public hearing, by email to historic@somervillema.gov, by fax to (617) 625-0722, or by mail addressed to the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).