

Narrative: 64 Dane St, Somerville, MA 02143 (Littlefield-James House)**Replacement/ Demolition of Front Porch (updated)**

September 3, 2025

The front “ell” porch on the two and half story gabled house built in 1851 is in need of partial demolition, repair and replacement. The house is on the local historic registry.

The **roof** appears to be in adequate shape but is in need of new asphalt shingles and may need additional framing reinforcement and new beams at the column line. The plan is to brace and maintain the roof during construction. The ceiling will need to be completely replaced since the remaining original boards show signs of rot and water damage and the ceiling areas covered by temporary plywood patches are not aesthetically pleasing or original to the structure. The ceiling will be replaced with tongue and groove wood to match existing orientation.

The pierced **columns** are in various stages of decline. Refer to included letter from structural engineer. They have rot at the base and the corner column had the webbing removed completely to accommodate downspout. ~~A structural engineer has reviewed the existing columns and stated that while the columns could be replaced with replicas they would have to be with larger members that would alter the scale and width of the new replica columns. The homeowner would like to replace the pierced columns with simple square ones of similar proportion to the front facing width of the existing columns, 10". The capital would replicate the cove crown and the flat base at the bottom proportionally. The column will be cast fiberglass w/ wood crown and fly ash (TruExterior) base, painted.~~

A structural engineer has reviewed the existing columns and stated that the columns could be replaced with replicas. The replacement columns will be made of wood, replacing what was original with duplicates to be painted.

The **guardrail** may be able to be reused depending on approval from ISD for allowing a non-code compliant guardrail re-installation. The current railing is 31" tall and code requires it to be at 36". The railing panels need to be removed during construction and some of the 1-1/2"x1-1/2" square balusters need to be replaced due to rot or breakage. There is nothing aesthetically significant about these railings since they are comprised of readily available dimensional material.

The 1x4 **wood deck** flooring will be replaced completely with 1x4 wood deck in the same layout. The deck will be treated with a clear impregnating sealant.

Deck structure is unsound. The three concealed 8x8 brick piers and two 4" steel pipe set into concrete are degraded and need to be replaced and repositioned to better support the loads. The framing needs to be replaced due to rot and degradation.

The existing **screening** under the porch is a combination of mismatched panels comprised of different sized vertical stock and spacing between them. It isn't obvious what is original to the house. The homeowner would like to replace the screening with 1x3 wood flat stock with a smaller equal spacing that allows for airflow but minimizes rodent infestation and visual barrier. This will be painted.

The **front steps** are not original, being replaced perhaps 10 years ago. The newel posts are simple 4x4 wood post w/o cap. The railing on one side has 2x4 top and bottom rail that meets modern code height and 1-1/2"x1-1/2" square balusters. There is no railing on right side of stair. The stairs will be completely replaced. The wood treads will be treated with a clear sealant. The rest of the structure will be painted.

END