



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

THOMAS F GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 36 Beacon Street

Applicant Name: 36 Beacon, LLC (Dave Cameron, Mgr.)

Owner Name: same as applicant

Petition: *Add rear egress stairs with porch extension*

HPC Hearing Date: October 21, 2025



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 1. Subject Property:** The subject property is the right-end unit of the original 5-unit apartment row. As can be seen on the map on the Form B as well as from satellite imagery, this is the only unit in the row that has had additions added (two at the rear). The first addition is a brick extension followed by a three-story wood clapboard addition that is mid-late 20th-century in period. These additions have been extant on this unit at least since the apartment row became an LHD in 1986. See the attached Form B for further historical and architectural details.
- 2. Proposal:** The Applicant proposes adding a two-story exterior egress stair to the clapboard addition at the rear of the property.

The HPC approved a Certificate of Appropriateness for work on this property in September 2020 (see attached), but the work was never executed. The proposal largely remains the same, with the exception of a change in the materials to be used. The applicant now proposes to use white vinyl for the rails and balusters rather than the previously-approved wood or black metal. Normally, Staff would be able to renew this now-expired approval. However, the proposed changes in materials require the HPC's approval.

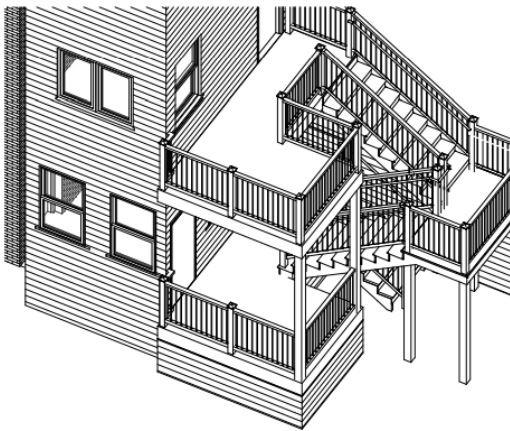
The project will be visible only from public ways within the City of Cambridge at the rear of the property: the City of Cambridge-owned portion of the parking lot to the rear of the building, and Line Street. However, because it is visible from a public way at all, regardless of municipality, the proposal must be reviewed by the HPC. Vegetation does not exempt properties from the public way visibility. See attached drawing and Google Earth Imaging.



36 Beacon Google Earth View



36 Beacon view from Line Street



Stair Rendering from Plan Set



36 Beacon Rear Photograph
(existing conditions)

II. FINDINGS

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. The portion of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations is discussed below.

1. CONSTRUCT REAR EGRESS STAIRS

Section E “New Additions” items 1 and 3

1. New additions should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible in size, scale, material, and character of the property and its environment. Where possible, new additions should be confined to the rear of the house.

3. New additions or alterations should be done in a way that, if they were to be removed in the future, the basic form and integrity of the historic property would remain intact.

Preservation Planning Assessment

The rear portion of the structure to which the proposed project will attach is a later 20th century addition to the rear of the unit. The proposed project will have no impact on the primary façade of the unit which carries the bulk of the architectural detail for the structure. Were components of this project to be removed in the future – principally the stairs and decking – the basic form and integrity of the property, both as an individual unit and collectively as regards its contribution to the apartment row, would remain intact.

HPC Determination:

- The HPC must determine if the proposed project satisfies the applicable regulations.
- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS


Should the HPC decide to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA), Preservation Planning suggests that the following conditions be added to any approvals:

1. All relevant permits shall be obtained from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) prior to the start of work.
2. The applicant shall file the Certificate with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) by uploading it to the Citizenserve permitting portal with their application for a building permit.
3. Any changes made to this project shall be submitted in the form of a new application with accompanying documentation through the City's online permitting portal for review and approval by the HPC.
4. Work shall commence within one year of the date of approval for this Certificate. If work does not commence within one year, these approvals shall expire. The applicant must then submit an application to the HPC requesting re-approval of the project.
5. If the clapboarding on this wood framed rear-addition is to be replaced, the clapboarding shall remain horizontal with the same reveal. Front and back primed cedar wood clapboarding shall be used or a cementitious siding material may be substituted provided that a smooth finish is used. If new siding is to be positioned vertically, the profile and composition of siding material must first be reviewed and approved by the HPC.
6. Trex shall be used for deck flooring.
7. Pressure treated wood shall be used for deck framing shall be painted.

8. Handrails shall be white vinyl.
9. Balusters shall be white vinyl.
10. Newel posts shall be white vinyl or painted pressure treated wood.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.139		
Historic Name:			
Common Name:	Wyatt, George Apartment Row		
Address:	28-36 Beacon St		
City/Town:	Somerville		
Village/Neighborhood:	Ward Two - Cobble Hill;		
Local No:	1027; 113; 3;		
Year Constructed:	C 1880		
Architectural Style(s):	Queen Anne; Row House;		
Architect(s):	Wyatt, L. E.;		
Use(s):	Apartment House;		
Significance:	Architecture;		
Area(s):	SMV.AY		
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/11/1985); Nat'l Register MRA (09/18/1989); Nat'l Register Individual Property (09/18/1989);		
Building Materials:	Wall: Brick; Granite; Stone, Cut; Wood;		
Demolished	No		

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

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NRMRA/IND

9/18/89

(1C)

MHC #1027

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LHD-3/11/85 (1C)

AREA

FORM NO.

AY

Ward

113 139

PI-WARD II
USGS-BOSTON
SECT BTown Somerville MRAAddress 28 - 36 Beacon StreetHistoric Name unknown GeorgeWyatt / landowner - L.E. Wyatt / builderUse: Present apartment rowOriginal apartment row

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1880Source map researchStyle Queen AnneArchitect unknownExterior Wall Fabric brickOutbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

Rebuilding of three-tier rear
porches, 1982Condition goodMoved no Date n/aAcreage less than one acreSetting South side of Beacon, near
Cambridge-Somerville line, commercial
and residential surrounds, heavily
travelled urban route.Recorded by Betsy Friedberg, Preservation
PlannerOrganization Mass. Historical CommissionDate June 1986

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

30
305

ation

gs

See Attached Assessor's Map

UTM REFERENCE 19 - 326/820 - 4693/360USGS QUADRANGLE Boston NorthSCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

28-36 Beacon Street is a well-preserved apartment row distinguished by its Queen Anne-style details. Its construction was a direct consequence of Somerville's rapid development as a bedroom community in the late 19th century. The building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association, and fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

This five-unit Queen Anne apartment row is one of the city's most exceptional brick residences. The building consists of five identical units. Each unit has a pyramidal tower offset to the left, a full-length polygonal bay offset to the right, and double entrance doors with upper panels of glass set within flat-roofed entrance porches with a pierced quatrefoil design on the porch frieze. Other notable features include the corbelled or brick cornice and granite belt courses.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Apartment buildings designed for middle-class commuters were important elements of Somerville's turn-of-the-century development, a period of intense residential development. The apartment row at 28-36 Beacon Street was located along a major city roadway. It was built on land formerly owned by brickyard owner George Wyatt, who may have been some relation to the builder of this structure, L. E. Wyatt. George Wyatt's own house stands at 33 Beacon Street (#14).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Hopkins, G. M., Atlas of the City of Somerville, 1874, 1884.

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SMV.139



MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street Boston MA 02108

Roll 31:3

SMV-139

Somerville

28 - 36 Beacon

Original Name

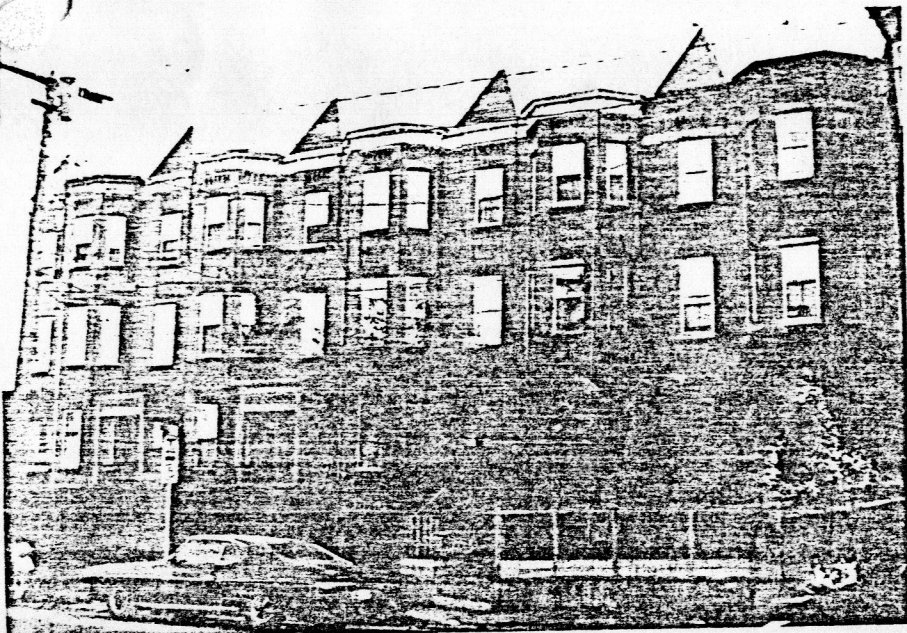
Original apartment building or rowhouse

Present same

Ship: ☒ Private individual
Private organization

Public

Original owner L.E. Wyatt (1884)



DESCRIPTION:

Date ca. 1880

Source map research

Style Queen Anne

Architect

Exterior wall fabric brick

Outbuildings

Major alterations (with dates)

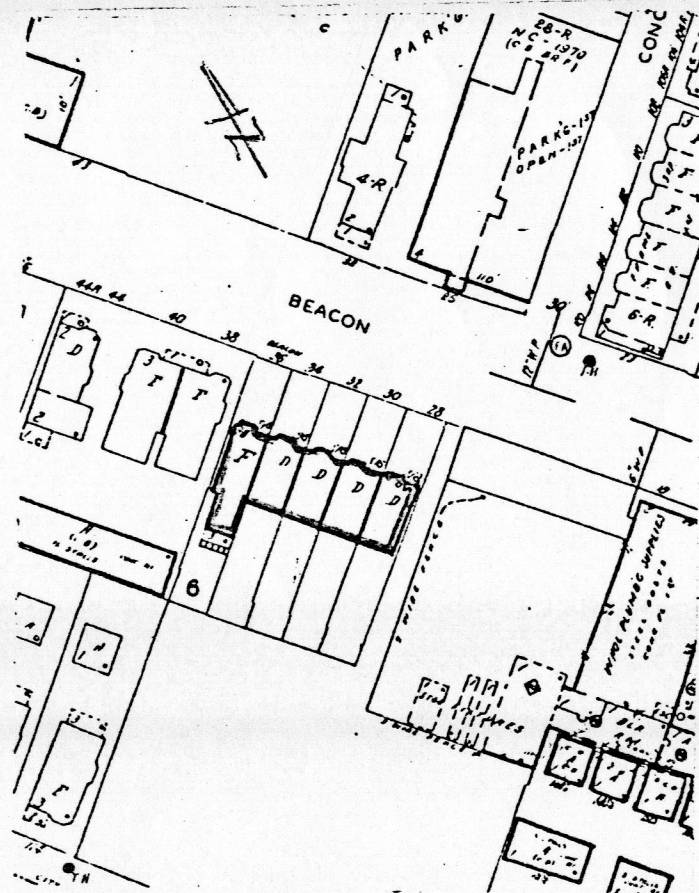
Rebuilding of three-tier rear porches

1982

Moved Date

Approx. acreage

Setting



Recorded by C.Zellie/H.White

Organization Landscape Research

Date 12/80 - 10/84

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

This five-unit Queen Anne apartment row is one of the City's most exceptional brick residences. The building consists of five identical units. Each unit has a pyramidal tower offset to the left, a full-height polygonal bay offset to the right, and double entrance doors with upper panels of glass set within flat-roofed entrance porches with a pierced quatrefoil design on the porch frieze. Other notable features include the corbelled brick cornice and granite belt courses.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Built on land formerly owned by brickyard owner George Wyatt, who may have been some relation to the builder of this structure, L.E. Wyatt. George Wyatt's own house stands at 33 Beacon Street.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of the City of Somerville, 1874, 1884.



City of Somerville

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

Alan Bingham
Chair
Mark Sternman
Vice-Chair
Adam Wylie, *Alt.*
Secretary

Dick Bauer
Ryan Falvey
Robin Kelly
Eric Parkes
DJ Chagnon, *Alt.*

ADDRESS: 36 Beacon St

CASE: HPC.ALT 2020.36

APPLICANT: 36 Beacon, LLC (Dave Cameron)

OWNER: same as applicant

DETERMINATION: *Conditional* **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**
(CA) (rear stairs)

DECISION DATE: September 15, 2020

This decision summarizes the findings made by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) or their designee regarding the proposal to construct rear egress stairs as-submitted for the local Historic District (LHD) property at 36 Beacon Street.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes adding a two-story exterior egress stair to the clapboard addition at the rear of the property.

The project will be visible only from public ways within the City of Cambridge; the City of Cambridge-owned portion from the parking lot to the rear of the building, and Line Street. However, because this portion of the building is visible from a public way at all, regardless of municipality, the proposal must be reviewed by the HPC.

DETERMINATION

The Somerville Historic Districts Ordinance only regulated features that are visible from a public way. The rear stairs will be visible from the public way in Cambridge.

The HPC determined that the proposal will have no impact on the primary façade of the unit which carries the bulk of the architectural detail for the structure.

CONDITIONS

1. All relevant permits shall be obtained from the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) prior to the start of work.
2. The applicant shall upload their Certificate of Appropriateness (CA) to ISD's permitting system.

3. Any changes made to this project shall be submitted in the form of a new application with accompanying documentation to Preservation Planning for review and approval by the HPC.
4. Pressure-treated wood used for deck framing shall be painted.
5. Handrails shall be stained hardwood or painted pressure-treated wood.
6. Newel posts shall be painted, pressure-treated wood.
7. Balusters shall be painted pressure-treated wood or round black metal.
8. Trex shall be used for deck flooring.
9. If the clapboarding on this wood-framed rear addition is to be replaced, the clapboarding shall remain horizontal with the same reveal. Cedar wood clapboarding shall be used or a cementitious siding material may be substituted providing that a smooth finish is used. If new siding is to be positioned vertically, the profile and composition of siding material must first be reviewed and approved by the HPC.
10. New egress doors shall be replaced in-kind.
11. If porch skirting is used, it shall be framed vertical slats constructed of pressure-treated wood and painted. If porch skirting is not used, any exposed sonotubes shall be painted to minimize their visibility.
12. Work shall commence within one year of the date of approval for this Certificate. If work does not commence within one year, this Certificate shall expire. The applicant must then submit an application to the HPC requesting the re-issuance of the Certificate.
13. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at historic@somervillema.gov a minimum of 15 business days prior to final ISD sign-off so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm that the project was completed according to HPC approvals.