



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

16 APRIL 2024 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

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

City staff present: Stephen Cary (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:47pm and adjourned at 7:43pm.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Determinations of Preferably Preserved
(Step 2 in the Demolition Review Process)
HP23-000071 – 9 Olive Avenue**

The applicant team stated that the intention is to add a small addition off the back of the house, and to redo the windows, while matching the neighborhood's modest character.

Vice Chair Kelly opened public testimony. She noted that a written comment was received from Ron Cavallo (70 Victoria Street) and reviewed by the Commission.

Seeing no additional comments, Vice Chair Kelly closed public testimony.

The applicant team explained that the intention is to demolish the building. The proposal is to give the building a more modern look with Hardie board siding. The front porch is intended to be kept the same. From the street, the home should look similar to the existing structure.

The Commission discussed the proposed changes to the front window and door locations. The rear elevation is fairly visible from the street to the south of the property. Maintaining the form and massing of the front of the building will be important. There was discussion regarding option 1 being a preferred option.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Coughlin, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), to find the property at 9 Olive Avenue Not Preferably Preserved with the conditions that the renovated structure retain the form and massing of the front half of the existing building, including the porch, and the general character of the existing building, that it be relatively similar in appearance to scheme 1 of the submitted drawings, and that hi-resolution photographic record of the existing structure be provided.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Coughlin, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), to adopt the following findings:

- partial demolition of the exterior of the building would not be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the city

- the proposed renovations substantially maintain the street character, and its relation and scale to the neighboring buildings

RESULT:

NOT PREFERABLY PRESERVED

**PUBLIC HEARING: Determinations of Preferably Preserved
(Step 2 in the Demolition Review Process)
HP24-000011 – 11 Chester Place**

The applicant team explained that the property contains a two-family structure. The proposed demolition is to build a larger structure with a new internal layout, remaining as a two-family structure. The property is currently vacant and imposing an 18-month delay would leave the structure to remain vacant. This structure was before the Commission in 2022 and was found to be Historically Significant at that time. However, due to the passage of time, the applicant is now waiving the determination of Historically Significant to move to this process of determining if it should be Preferably Preserved. The structure has been altered over time, with a bay added to the front, an addition on the left side and rear, a porch on the left front corner which was later enclosed, replacement doors and windows, a wooden ramp on the front, and a rear lean-to. The original massing is not the same. Demolition would allow the owners to continue to live on the property, while not changing the number of units. It is in the city's best interest to allow owners to live in their properties and have a unit to lease for additional income. The owner is okay with the conditions proposed in the Staff Report. It was noted that interior demo work on this property occurred in 2022. The applicant team does not believe that demolition would be detrimental to the city.

Vice Chair Kelly opened public testimony. She noted that a written comment was received from Ron Cavallo (70 Victoria Street) and reviewed by the Commission.

Chris & Kristine O'Brien (30 Day Street) – asked if architectural plans have been presented to show if the new structure will fit with the character of the neighborhood.

The applicant team stated that there are not yet architectural drawings for the property, as the process is still being worked through.

Seeing no additional comments, Vice Chair Kelly closed public testimony.

The Commission discussed other existing newer, modern projects in this neighborhood. There was discussion regarding a finding of Preferably Preserved with a possible Memorandum of Agreement, in order to reduce the delay, while considering what would be built on the property. It would be detrimental to lose the coherent massing feel in this historic neighborhood.

The applicant team stated that not having plans for the new building on this property is irrelevant as to whether the current building is Preferably Preserved or not. There are a number of different allowed building types in the NR zoning district.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Coughlin, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), to find the building Preferably Preserved.

Following a motion by Member Chagnon, seconded by Member Coughlin, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), to adopt the following findings:

- the form, massing, and rhythm of the streetscape are important
- the property has an impact on this small side street

RESULT:	PREFERABLY PRESERVED
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"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 historic@somervillema.gov."