



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

6 AUGUST 2024 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on Zoom.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS	ARRIVED
Eric Parkes	Chair	<i>Present</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>Absent</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Present</i>	

City staff present: Sarah White (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Madison Anthony (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning); Stephen Cary (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:51pm and adjourned at 7:58pm.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA):
HP24-000038 – 11 Chester Place

Member Price recused herself from this item.

The applicant team explained that this deals with a demolition delay placed in April. They have come to terms with Staff on the proposed MOA. Changes were made to the project based on Commission recommendations.

The Commission expressed initial concerns with the truncation with the first-floor porch, but then noticed the door entering the lower unit. The building presents as a triple decker, but the interior usage is unconventional. Another concern expressed dealt with the brackets at the top of the porch columns, as they harken a Queen Anne style which is not often seen on triple decker structures in Somerville. There seem to be many decks proposed and these might feel less imposing if pulled back a bit.

The applicant team explained that the size and projection of the proposed front porches is dictated by zoning requirements. The front porches are proposed to be approximately a minimum of 6' deep. Staff asked if there is a way to adjust the building design so that the front porches do not stick out past the bay. The applicant team suggested pulling the second and third floor decks back to the area of the bay.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Falvey, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the changes discussed:

- that the brackets on the porch be removed and replaced with proper cap molding, which should not protrude beyond the front plane of the porch trim

RESULT:

APPROVED

Member Price retook her seat.

PUBLIC HEARING:
Determinations of Historic Significance (Step 1 in the Demolition Review Process)
HP24-000059 – 80 Curtis Street

The applicant team stated that they do not know much about the historic significance of the building, aside from what was noted by Staff. It is believed the building was built in 1920.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Patricia Craig (32-34 Teele Ave) – expressed concern that this entire neighborhood contains original historic structures. All other properties that have been developed have left the exterior of the buildings the same. From a historic perspective, it would be jarring to see new development alongside the other 1920s buildings.

Mary D’Aurora – echoed the same concerns as previously expressed. West Somerville is defined by its historic homes. She is concerned with property values being ruined by new cookie cutter homes coming in. The building in question should not be torn down due to its historic value.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed the public testimony.

The Commission discussed that the structure is clearly historic and retains components that identify it easily as being a historic property. It exists in the same position on the lot as it did historically. The exterior envelope has been modified but the form and massing remain. This structure has amazing opportunity to be retained in its existing form. This structure is older than 1920, estimated around 1890, and older than other structures in this neighborhood. The low scale gambrel structure is unique.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to find the property Historically Significant.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the following findings:

- the design of the structure is unique with a distinct form within the City
- the building is similarly aged to those around it, but is one of a kind structurally

RESULT:	HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT
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OTHER BUSINESS: Somernova

It was noted that 30 August 2024 at noon is the deadline for written public comment on this item. The proposal is regarding the potential uses for areas that are now part of the American Tube Works property, to be expanded to include greater possibility for uses and a greater allowance for height. Staff explained that the Commission could consider voicing comments regarding the intended look of this area and how this could be maintained.

The Commission agreed to draft a letter to the Planning Board that these buildings have historic value for review at the next meeting. The Commission agreed to discuss potentially making this a Local Historic District at a future meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

The Board agreed to review the 16 July minutes at the next meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

It was noted that the CPC continues to collect applications. There is a proposal to double the CPC allotment to the maximum of 3%. This will be up for a vote at the November election.

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.