



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

19 AUGUST 2025 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>Absent</i>	
Dick Bauer	Member	<i>Absent</i>	
Denis (DJ) Chagnon	Alt. Member	<i>Present</i>	
Denise Price	Member	<i>Present</i>	
Dan Coughlin	Member	<i>Absent</i>	

City staff present: Madison Anthony (Planning, Preservation, & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:53pm and adjourned at 7:21pm.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – DETERMINATIONS OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED
(STEP 2 IN THE DEMOLITION REVIEW PROCESS)
HP25-000051 – 80 Irving Street**

The applicant team explained that they seek to demolish the existing two-family structure in order to build a new residential structure with more units. On 15 July 2025, the Commission voted to find the existing structure Historically Significant. The evolution of the building's footprint over time has greatly changed to the present day. The applicant team stated that in reviewing the Assessor's maps, one can see how the footprints of the buildings along Irving Street have greatly changed. Alterations have included adding an uncovered porch, a shed which was later removed, enclosing the porch, adding a front portico, a single-story rear addition with a porch on top which obscures the original massing, skylights on the roof, and possibly a sunburst above the front door. They also noted that all the windows have been replaced with vinyl and aluminum windows, and aluminum siding has been added. While some of the original building exists, the rear addition and front portico have changed the form and massing of the structure quite a bit. Nothing historically important happened on this property and nobody historically significant lived there. The applicant team stated that this is not a significant building style, and it is not associated with a reputed architect or builder. It is not in the public interest to keep the structure. When determining whether an 18-month demolition delay should be imposed by finding the structure Preferably Preserved, the question is whether demolishing the structure would be detrimental to the City. The applicant team argued that demolishing a run-of-the-mill, two-family structure in favor of a new structure with more units benefits the City without harming it. The Staff Memo recommends conditions for finding the structure Preferably Preserved, which the applicant team would accept. These conditions include photographs, renderings, salvaging items, and having a marker for the original structure.

Chair Parkes opened public testimony.

Helen Corrigan (76 Irving Street) – asked when demolition would begin and the hours of work occurring on the site.

Seeing no additional comments, Chair Parkes closed public testimony.

The Commission noted that it does not have purview over most of the items asked by the member of the public, but that these items could likely be answered by Staff or the Building Department.

The Commission stated that it found the building Historically Significant as it was one in a sequence of four nearby houses and much of the original structure is relatively intact. Though, the style of house itself is not unique in the City and there is nothing historically noteworthy about it.

The Commission expressed concern with interrupting the rhythm of the streetscape by demolishing this structure. The house was built somewhere between 1874 and 1884. The streetscape is currently charming, and it would be a shame to remove one of the buildings in the sequence. There was a suggestion that the structure could be creatively restored to allow for additional units while respecting the streetscape.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Price, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to find the property Preferably Preserved.

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Member Chagnon, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the following findings:

- The property retains much of its general form, massing, and details.
- The property supports the rhythm of the architecture along the street.
- The property is one of many similar buildings along the street and its removal would be disruptive to the strength of that collection.
- The property, and those nearby it, speak to the era in which they were built, creating housing for the working class particularly with access to the trolley in Davis Square, and the development in that period.

RESULT:	PREFERABLY PRESERVED
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OTHER BUSINESS: Meeting Minutes

Following a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by Chair Parkes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0) to approve the 5 August 2025 meeting minutes.

OTHER BUSINESS: CPC Update

There was no update at this time.

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.