



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

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PLANNING DIVISION  
*HISTORIC PRESERVATION*

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**ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTY  
STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 158 Central Street

**Case:** HP26-000024

**Applicant:** Michael Petit

**Owner:** Michael Pettit and Nicole Black

**Legal Ad:** *The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter an LHD property by adding a shed to the backyard of the property visible from the public street.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** June 2, 2026



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with a professional assessment of alteration proposals made for Local Historic District (LHD) properties. These assessments are based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and the associated Design Guidelines. A Staff Report is not a determination/decision and does not represent findings. A staff report does not constitute authorization in any form.

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## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

**Subject Property:** The locus is the c.1879 Victorian Eclectic house known as the Darling, Samuel House. This property is located in the Winter Hill neighborhood.

A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey, conducted by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

**Proposal:** The applicant proposes the following:

- To add a 10' x 12' shed to the backyard of the property, visible from the street. The proposed materials are:
  - Exterior of the shed will be cedar tongue and groove siding.
  - Roofing material will be Moire Black CertainTeed Landmark shingles
- The use of the shed is for the general storage of outdoor yard equipment, bikes, and gardening supplies



*Figure 1 - View of proposed location for new shed. (Applicant received an in-kind replacement permit earlier this year to replace the fence in this image with a cedar Manchester fence)*



Figure 2 – Digital rendering perspective with approved fence and proposed shed.

## **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. Applicable regulations are discussed below.

### **A. Addition of a new shed in the backyard**

The applicable Somerville LHD Design Guideline is *E. New Additions*

#### **Preservation Planning Assessment:**

The proposed shed will be a new addition to the property which will be visible from the public way (figure 1); the applicant recently received a Certificate of Appropriateness for in kind replacement wooden fence, though this will only partially cover the view of the proposed shed. The relevant portions of the Design Guidelines address the treatment of gutters and downspouts is Section II, E. New Additions, item 1 and 3 read as follows:

- 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.*

The applicant is proposing to add a 10' x 12' shed to the backyard of the property. The proposed shed is gambrel, as mentioned before the exterior of the shed will be cedar tongue and groove siding and the roofing material will be Moire Black CertainTeed Landmark shingles. Currently there are no existing accessory structures on the property, and there is visibility of the proposed addition.

If the HPC votes to approve the replacement, recommended conditions appear below

**HPC Determination:**

- The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complies with the Design Guidelines.
- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

**III. FINDINGS & VOTE**

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must state their findings and reasons for why they take their position.

**IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS**

**IF** the HPC approves the new shed for this property, Preservation Planning recommends the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project:

1. The Applicant shall obtain all necessary permits for this project through the Inspectional Services Department (ISD). The Applicant must upload a copy of this Certificate to their BUILDING PERMIT application and obtain any necessary division/department signoffs.
2. This Certificate is for the above-described work only. Any changes to this proposal shall first be submitted to Preservation Planning at [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) for review and approval PRIOR to implementation. Failure to do so will nullify this Certificate and delay final sign-offs/CO.
3. Work for which this Certificate is granted must commence within one year of issuance. If work does not commence within one year or pauses for a significant period of time such that the expiration date of the Certificate passes, the Applicant shall be required to apply for this Certificate to be re-issued. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov) for instructions.

## Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.329
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Darling, Samuel House
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	158 Central St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Winter Hill;
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	1879
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Victorian Eclectic;
<b>Use(s):</b>	Single Family Dwelling House;
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture;
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.BA, SMV.CG
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (10/31/1989); Local Historic District (04/28/2022);
<b>Building Materials:</b>	Roof: Slate; Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Foundation: Random Laid Rubble; Stone, Cut;
<b>Demolished</b>	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.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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**FORM B - BUILDING**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

LHD - 10/31/89 (10)  
PI - WINTER  
USGS, BOSTON  
Set B

AREA Winter Hill FORM NO. 329



SOMERVILLE  
s 158 Central Street  
ic Name Samuel Darling  
Present residential  
Original residential  
PTION  
1879  
maps / directories  
Second Empire w/ Queen Anne & Stick Style detail

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north



UTM REFERENCE \_\_\_\_\_  
USGS QUADRANGLE \_\_\_\_\_  
SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

Major Alterations (with dates) \_\_\_\_\_

Condition good

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage 7227 sq. ft.

Setting West side of Central near Med-

ford St., well established residential

neighborhood of large late 19th centu

houses.

Recorded by Carole Zellie - 1980  
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date May, 1988

SMV. 329

**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)****ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

Built by 1879 the two and one-half story Second Empire house retains architectural detail from Stick and Queen Anne styles. The slant mansard roof with patterned shingles has a raking cornice with unadorned brackets. There are shed roof dormers of two sash each. Other details include the one-story corner polygonal tower with clapboard siding and Stick work and a side shed roof bay which retains similar Stick work. The shed-roof porch is supported by turned posts and a simple balustrade. The house is well conserved example of the substantial houses built in this area in the late 1800s.

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

Winter Hill refers to a large area of development north of Highland, east of Lowell, west of Marshall and bordered on the north by Broadway. The actual geographic drumlin reaches its summit near the top of Adams and Central Streets, which were laid out and subdivided in 1847 but not developed for the most part until the 1880s and 1890s. Workers' housing was located in the Ten Hills area and on tracts of land west of Lowell and Adams Streets. In contrast, this area was developed with large, detailed, businessmen's homes.

During the 1870s this land was owned by Cutler Downer who lived at #170 Central Street and worked as a real estate broker in Boston. His tract of land was large extending from Medford Street and running north on Central and Adams Streets. The 1884 owner, Samuel Darling lived here by 1879. He was the Somerville city solicitor and also maintained a law office in Boston at the Old State House.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("Cutler Downer" land only), 1884 ("Samuel Darling") 1895 .
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s.
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book Page .

MHC INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET  
*MHC Inventory scanning project, 2008-2009*

MACRIS No. SMV.329

