



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JACOB D. WILSON
MAYOR

THOMAS F GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 46 Mount Vernon Street

Applicant Name: William Kuang

Owner Name: Same as Applicant

Petition: *The applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter a previously approved rear addition and add a new backyard cottage to a Local Historic District Property.*

HPC Hearing Date: July 21, 2026



Photo from Google Imaging

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.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus is the c. 1885 Queen Anne building known as the George Poole House. The property is in a residential area in the East Somerville neighborhood. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Proposal: The Applicant proposes changes to a previously approved two-story addition to the building, as well as a new backyard cottage in the rear yard. The originally approved Certificate of Appropriateness has been attached to this staff report.

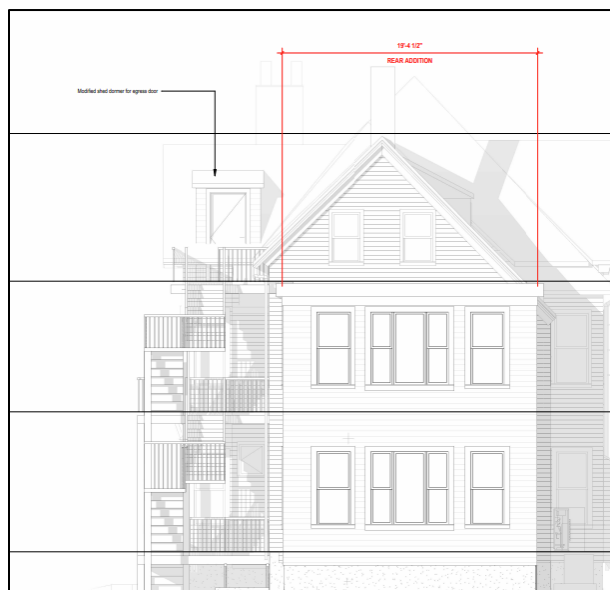
II. ANALYSIS

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.

Revision of the previously approved addition to the rear of the structure

Due to the addition being an alteration to a Local Historic District (LHD) property, the HPC has purview over this work.

The proposed change would shorten the height of the previously approved rear addition by 6 feet.



Original Approved Design



Proposed Revised Design

The applicable Somerville LHD Guidelines are found under:

E. New Additions

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

2. *It is not the intent of these guidelines to limit new additions to faithful copies of earlier buildings. New designs may also evoke, without copying, the architecture of the property to which they are being added, through careful attention to height, bulk, materials, window size, and type and location, and detail. A building should not, however, be altered to an appearance that predates its construction.*
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.*

Materials: The applicant has not provided the exact materials that will be used on the rear addition. During the previous approval meeting, the applicant discussed using in-kind materials that match the existing structure. Planning Staff maintain the recommendation that's the siding, windows and trim, match the materials and designed used throughout the main massing to carry the historic character through the addition.

This revision is in line with the deliberations from the Commission during original approval, making the addition smaller and less noticeable. Staff believe there is no change in the considerations from the prior approval. Staff included the prior conditions of approval to this staff report.

Backyard Cottage

The applicant proposes a new backyard cottage at the rear of the property.

Materials: The applicant will be using Hardi Cement Fiber Plank lap siding and trim. The overlapping will match the existing structure.

The applicable design guidelines can be found under:

E. New Additions

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.*
2. *It is not the intent of these guidelines to limit new additions to faithful copies of earlier buildings. New designs may also evoke, without copying, the architecture of the property to which they are being added, through careful attention to height, bulk, materials, window size, and type and location, and detail. A building should not, however, be altered to an appearance that predates its construction.*
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The applicant's current proposal aims to create continuity between the two structures by using the same overlapping on the backyard cottage. Planning Staff recommend that where possible, architectural details from the main structure should be used on the backyard cottage.

III. VOTE

HPC Determination

The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complies with the Design Guidelines.

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

IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Preservation Planning recommended the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project. The HPC may also add further conditions as-needed during their deliberations.

1. The applicant/Owner 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.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire and the Applicant shall re-apply for the reissuance of this Certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff-level reissuance of the Certificate.
3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC.
4. Square cut balusters shall be used.



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

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PROPERTY ADDRESS: 46 Mount Vernon Street
PERMIT NUMBER: HP25-000022
OWNER: William Kuang
OWNER ADDRESS: 46 Mount Vernon Street, Somerville, MA 02145
APPLICANT: William Kuang
APPLICANT ADDRESS: 46 Mount Vernon Street, Somerville, MA 02145
DECISION: **Conditional** Certificate of Appropriateness
DECISION ISSUED: January 13, 2026

2026 JAN 13 A 9:47
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
SOMERVILLE, MA

This decision summarizes the findings made by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) or their designee regarding the Local Historic District property at 46 Mount Vernon Street.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Construct a rear attached two-story addition with egress stairs.

DETERMINATION

Under the Somerville Historic Districts Ordinance (HDO) proposed alterations of Local Historic District (LHD) properties must conform to specific criteria set out in the *Design Guidelines*. In the instance of 46 Mount Vernon Street, the proposal meets the following criteria set out in *Design Guideline Section I, General Approach and item E: New Additions* which read(s) as follows:

1. *New additions should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible in size, scale, materials, and character of the property and its environment. Where possible, new additions should be confined to the rear of the house.*
2. *It is not the intent of these guidelines to limit new additions to faithful copies of earlier buildings. New designs may also evoke, without copying, the architecture of the property to which they are being added, through careful attention to height, bulk, materials, window size, and type and location, and detail. A building should not, however, be altered to an appearance that predates its construction.*
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 proposes to construct a two-story rear addition with egress stairs, with in-kind materials that match the original building. The stair structure is visible from the public way and the addition is stepped-back on both sides.

Due to the description of the work, the images of the property and plans submitted by the Applicant, and the provisions set forth in the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) and related Design Guidelines, the Applicant is granted a **Conditional Certificate of Appropriateness**.

The Conditions attached to this Certificate are as follows and must be followed by the Applicant/Owner:

CONDITIONS

1. The applicant/owner 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.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire and the Applicant shall re-apply for the re-

issuance of this certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff level re-issuance of the Certificate.

3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC.
4. Square-cut balusters shall be used.

Issued on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC):

Eric Parkes, *Chair*
Dick Bauer
DJ Chagnon, *Alt.*

Robin Kelly, *Vice-Chair*
Denise Price

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.308
Historic Name:	Poole, George House
Common Name:	
Address:	46 Mount Vernon St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	East Somerville;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1885
Architectural Style(s):	Queen Anne;
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House;
Significance:	Architecture;
Area(s):	SMV.BA
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989);
Building Materials:	Roof: Asphalt Shingle; Wall: Unglazed Terra Cotta; Wood; Wood Clapboard; Wood Shingle; Foundation: Brick;
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.

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>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

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

This file was accessed on: Friday, July 17, 2026 at 9:17 AM

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

Lot - 013189 (10)
P.L. E. 50m
USGS. BOYLSTON
SECT A

AREA

FORM NO.

East
Somerville

308



SOMERVILLE

Address 46 Mt. Vernon Street

Historic Name George S. Poole

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

1885

Source maps / directories

Style Queen Anne / Stick details

Architect _____

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboards/shingle

Outbuildings _____

Major Alterations (with dates) _____

Condition very good

Moved _____ **Date** _____

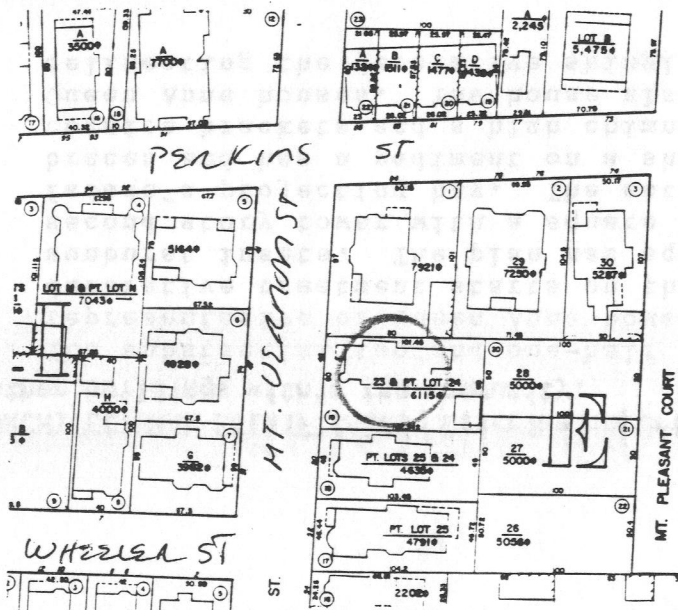
Acreage 6115 sq. ft.

Setting East side of Mt. Vernon, well established mid to late 19th century residential neighborhood, near Charlestown line.

Recorded by Carole Zellie - 1980
Gretchen Schuler - 1988
Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date May, 1988

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 _____

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

The substantial two and one-half story house with an assymetrical plan is representative of Queen Anne houses popular in the late 1800s. The decorative treatment starts on the brick foundation which has terracotta sunburst insets. The plan has square projecting bays and a round corner second story tower with a square base set on the diagonal to the main facade's projecting bay. The entrance porch is elaborated with scalloped braces and has a pediment on a shed roof with spindle screening. There are cornice brackets and a high chimney other details found on many decorative Queen Anne houses. The house also has some Stick Style characteristics delineating the decorative shingle from clapboard sheathing.

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

East Somerville was one of the most densely settled parts of Somerville by the mid to late 1800s in part due to its topography and fine soil for drainage and clay for brick and pottery making. Broadway and Washington Street were main thoroughfares from the 18th century connecting Charlestown with Medford and Cambridge. Several farms cropped up in the East Somerville area and by the mid 1800s there were shops, taverns and industries with brick yards and pottery enterprises. In the mid 1800s most residents were Boston businessmen and from the 1870s many multi-family buildings were built to accomodate the increasing number of workers in the area due to the expanding brickyards, spike factories, and potteries.

Mt. Vernon Street, which only ran from Broadway to Perkins Street by the mid 1800s, was well developed with many extant Greek Revival dwellings. By the 1870s Mt. Vernon was continued through to Washington Street and the area saw the greatest period of development when many substantial houses were built on Mt. Vernon and Mt. Pleasant, Pearl and Perkins Streets. At the same time brick apartment houses and small workers' houses were constructed on nearby streets. George S. Poole lived at #46 from 1885 and was the secretary of the Warren Institute for Savings in Charlestown. Prior to this Poole had served as first librarian of the Charlestown Public Library and in 1863 as assistant librarian fo the Library of Congress.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("I.S. Wheeler" land only), 1884 (land only), 1895 ("Sarah P. Poole").
2. City of Somerville, Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, 1983.
3. City Directories: 1880s-1890s.
4. *Samuels, Edward, Somerville: Past and Present, 1897.