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

THOMAS F GALLIGANI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY STAFF REPORT

Site: 15 Adams Street

Case: HP26-000063

Applicant Name: Justin Santolucito – Just Woodcraft Inc.

Owner Name: Catherine and Eric Haines

Legal Ad: The Applicant seeks a Certificate of Appropriateness to alter a LHD property by demolishing and reducing the size of deck.

HPC Hearing Date: October 20, 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.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus property is a c. 1894 Queen Anne house known as the Emma Bently House. The property is in a residential area 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:

- Removing the entire uncovered portion of the deck, including the staircase leading from the deck to the rear yard.
- Reduce the deck to only the covered portion of the deck and install a temporary handrail and set of stairs.



Figure 1: 15 Adams, uncovered deck



Figure 2: 15 Adams, covered and uncovered decks

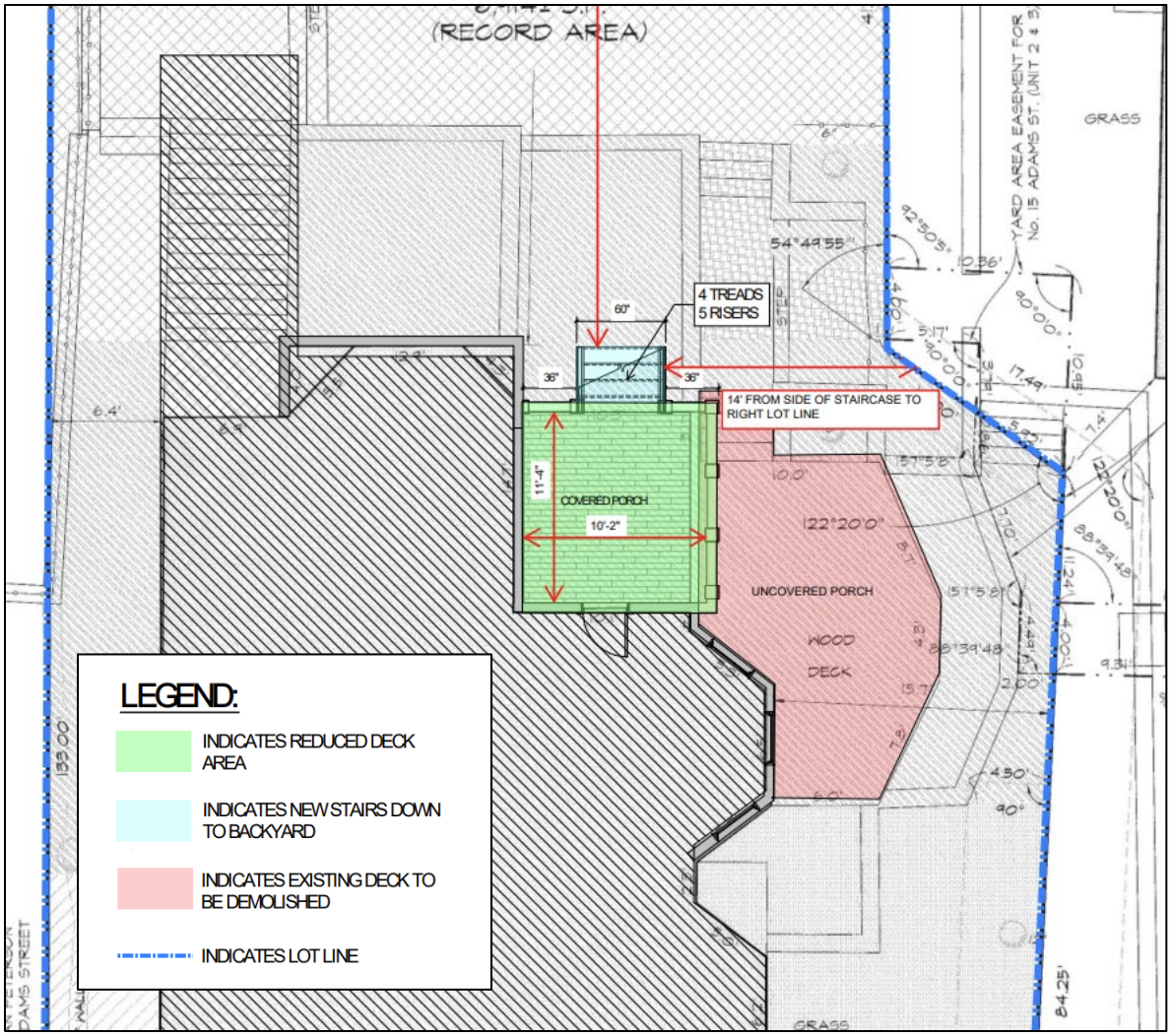


Figure 3: Proposed plans for demolition and reduction of deck

II. FINDINGS

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. Applicable regulations are discussed below.

Due to the demolition and reduction of size of the porch being visible from the public way, the HPC has purview over this work.

A: Demolition and Replacement of existing deck

The applicable Somerville LHD Design Guideline is ***D. Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements.***

Preservation Planning Assessment:

The relevant portions of the Design Guidelines address porches in Section II, D. Porches, Steps, trim, and other exterior architectural elements, item 1, which reads as follows:

1. *Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old. Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.*

The existing side and rear wood deck appear to be in good condition as shown by pictures and the street view. The Applicant's narrative describes that this demolition is part of a larger project to understand the full extent of other needed work for structural upgrades and will be assessed by a Structural Engineer to make repairs and restoration to the deck. The Applicant also includes in the narrative that removing the uncovered portion of the deck does not have an impact on historic preservation as the deck was not a part of the original building footprint and its removal and the subsequent regrading will more closely align with the original finished grade of the building. The Applicant also states the removal has no effect on the use or function of common areas and can only be seen marginally from the public way.

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 demolition and reduction of the deck 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. The Certificate is for the above- described work only. Any changes to this proposal shall first be submitted to Preservation Planning at historic@somervillema.gov for review and approval PRIOR to implementation. Failure to do so will nullify this Certificate and delay final sign-offs/ and issuance of Certificate of Occupancy.
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 for instructions.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System
Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.332
Historic Name:	Bentley, Emma House
Common Name:	
Address:	15 Adams St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Winter Hill;
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	1894
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; Slate; Wall: Copper; 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)

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

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LHD- 10/31/89 (C)
PI - WINTER HILL Vols. BOSTON Cont A

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA: Winter Hill
FORM NO.: 332



wn SOMERVILLE

ress 15 Adams Street

toric Name Emma Bentley (owner)
Edward Selg (occupant)

: Present residential
Original residential

CRIPTION

e 1894

rce directories / maps

e Queen Anne

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboard

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition very good

Moved Date

Acreage 6914 sq. ft.

Setting East side of Adams, four lots north of Medford St., well established residential neighborhood of large late 19th century houses, one nursing home

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



M REFERENCE

GS QUADRANGLE

ALE

Recorded by Carole Zellie - 1980
Gretchen Schuler - 1988

Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date May, 1988

SMV.332

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 is situated on the east side of Adams, four lots from the Medford Street intersection. The well conserved Queen Anne house is clad in clapboards and decorative shingles on a brick foundation. There are Stick Style and Colonial Revival motifs providing a sampler effect. Architectural details include the polygonal projecting corner tower with slate roof and copper spire, large gable/dormers, varying fenestration including oreil window, round headed windows and sash of 2/1 and 1/1, cornice brackets, and stick-work/lattice design in the entrance porch gable peak and the base of the corner tower.

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 Adams Street, 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 and 1880s this land was owned by Cutler Downer who lived on Central Street and worked as a "broker" in Boston. His son, Frank was a banker. Their tract of land was large extending from Medford Street and running north on Central and Adams Streets. The 1895 map shows a one-quarter acre parcel with two houses and one lot owned by Emma Bently. Directories indicate that the first resident of this house was Eugene Selg who was a manager at the Budweiser Brewery Co. in Boston.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("Cutler Downer", land only), 1884 (same), 1895 (" Emma Bently").
2. City Directories, 1890s.
3. City of Somerville, Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts, 1983.
4. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book Page .

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