



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

Joseph A. Curtatone

Mayor

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

KRISTENNA CHASE, *PRESERVATION PLANNER*
SARAH WHITE, *PLANNER & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

Case #: HPC 2017 - 028

Date: June 20, 2017

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT

Site: 22 Pleasant Avenue

Applicant Name: Edward Tauro, Trustee

Applicant Address: 9 Glendale Road,
Burlington, MA 01803

Owner Name: Pleasant Ave Realty Trust

Owner Address: same as above

Petition: Edward Tauro, Trustee seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to replace yellow brick wall with red brick.

HPC Hearing Date: June 20, 2017



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property located in the Prospect Hill neighborhood, is part of the Pleasant Avenue Local Historic District (1985). See attached Form B for more information.

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant would like to replace the existing buff brick wall with a red brick wall with a cap. The wall would be approximately the same height as the existing.

III. FINDINGS FOR LANDSCAPING

The Somerville LHD guidelines state that landscaping may be treated as follows:

Landscape Features and Paving

1. *The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*
2. *It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the structure and its newer surroundings.*
3. *The existing landforms of the site should not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the structure or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the structure.*
4. *The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

Proposal: The Applicant would like to replace the existing 1920s yellow brick wall around the front yard with a red brick wall with a cap. The wall would be approximately the same height as the existing. The current wall has numerous cracks, twists and bowing. This alteration had previously been approved in 2009, however the Certificate has long since expired. The Applicant has suggested red concrete bricks not clay ones from Home Depot. Staff has recommended that he find and proposed another type of true brick with a sample of the topper for the wall.

Staff Findings: Staff finds that there is no alteration of the landforms or circulation pattern of the site visible from the public right of way. There will be no alteration to the relationship of the house to its surroundings. The wall is not original to the property. The height of the wall will not be altered.

Staff found in various brick collectors' websites and e-mailed Jim Graves, author of Brick Brands of the United States. He wrote back.

"Because these were mixed in the same wall they were probably used or salvaged brick at the time of construction. There is a huge range of dates but the dates clump in the 1950's. But this is date of manufacture. As used brick they could be 10-20 years later.

"Laclede- Christy Clay Products of PA (the one with the keystone) Osceola Mills, PA *circa* 1950-1954

Laclede- Christy Clay Products Co. St. Louis, MO *circa* 1907-1954

RAJAH was made in Frostburg, MD by:

National Refractories *circa* 1954

Mexico Refractories *circa* 1958-1959

Kaiser Refractories *circa* 1959-1968

WOODLAND was made by:

Woodland Fire Brick Co. Woodland, PA *circa* 1871-1896

Harbison Walker Refractories all PA plants *circa* 1902- 1970"

Staff found a building permit dated 1955 issued to M. Rawson for extensive porch repairs which could indicate the date of the wall as it is likely that the work was done concurrently.

Staff finds that the proposed alterations meet the above HPC Guidelines. The proposed bricks should be constructed of traditional material in keeping with the historic nature of the property, not modern concrete brick.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD Guidelines, Staff recommends CONDITIONAL APPROVAL of the demolition of the wall and its reconstruction with red brick with the following conditions:

- 1- All relevant building permits shall be obtained by the applicant.
- 2- The buff fire brick wall shall be removed.
- 3- A new wall shall be constructed of red clay brick in a variety of tones.
- 4- The wall shall be finished by a stone topper.
- 5- If the work differs from the plans, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
- 6- Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.







Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Inventory No: | SMV.284 |
| Historic Name: | Colson, Henry W. P. House |
| Common Name: | |
| Address: | 22 Pleasant Ave |
| City/Town: | Somerville |
| Village/Neighborhood: | Prospect Hill |
| Local No: | 72-D-03 |
| Year Constructed: | c 1890 |
| Architect(s): | |
| Architectural Style(s): | Queen Anne |
| Use(s): | Multiple Family Dwelling House |
| Significance: | Architecture |
| Area(s): | SMV.C: Central Hill SMV.AX: Pleasant Avenue Historic District |
| Designation(s): | Local Historic District (10/31/1989) |
| Building Materials(s): | Roof: Slate Wall: Asbestos Shingle; Wood Foundation: Stone, Uncut |



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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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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

LHD 10/31/89 (10)
P1. Prospect
USGS. BOSTON
SECT B

AREA

FORM NO.

AX, C

284

Prospect Hill



SOMERVILLE

Address 22 Pleasant Avenue

Historic Name H.W.P. Colson

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

Date ca. 1890

Source maps / deeds / directories

Style Queen Anne / vernacular

Architect

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

Exterior Wall Fabric asbestos shingle

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition fair

Moved Date

Acres 4178 sq. ft.

Setting South side of Pleasant Ave

late 19th century residential

neighborhood

Recorded by Gretchen Schuler

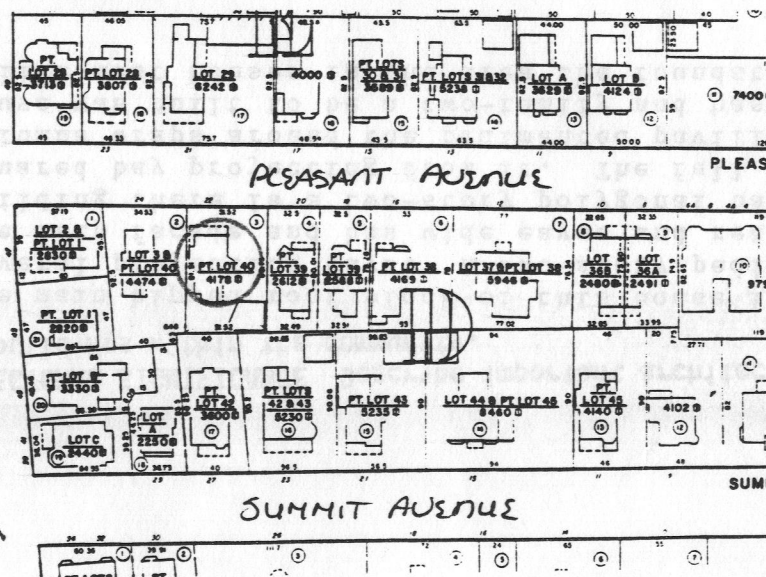
Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date April, 1988

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 main hipped roof block of this house is somewhat obscured by the several projecting bays. A two-story pedimented pavillion projects from the main facade and has wide eaves and returns. On the east side of the building there is a two-story polygonal bay with a one-story, hipped roof, squared bay projecting from it. The full length porch supported by fluted columns wraps around the pedimented pavillion and the west side ell. The house was built to be a two-family and has two side hall entrance doors. Unlike most houses in the area the foundation is of field stone.

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

Prospect Hill, one of the most prosperous residential neighborhoods, evolved throughout the late 19th century. Prior to that it was an agricultural community of farms. Large tracts of land were purchased by real estate investors and well-to-do merchants in the mid 1800s. Pleasant Avenue was part of the 1870 subdivision plan for Ira Hill and others (Plan Book 17, Plan 88). Several subdivision plans such as this were done for other parts of Prospect Hill. Ira Hill, who lived at #91 Boston Street, was a principal in most. Other Pleasant Avenue investors were Elijah Walker who also moved to Pleasant Avenue, and Horace Partridge. Each side of Pleasant Avenue was subdivided into seven lots which were then sold for development. Residents were prosperous Boston or Union Square businessmen.

This is one of the parcels that was not developed until the 1890s. From the first subdivision, the land was owned by Horace Partridge. In the 1880s, C.G. Wellington owned the land and by 1895 Henry W.P. Colson, who owned and developed other Pleasant Avenue properties, also owned this lot with a house.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1884, ("C.G. Wellington", land only), 1895 ("H.W.P. Colson").
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book , Page .