



**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 2018.075  
**Date:** June 2, 2018

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 34 Spring Street, #4

**Applicant Name:** Hatice Baser, Trustee  
**Applicant Address:** 34 Spring Street, #4  
**Owner Name:** 34 Spring Street Condominium Trust  
**Owner Address:** same as above

**Petition:** Hatice Baser, Trustee, seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to reconstruct the deck on the rear ell of the building.

**HPC Hearing Date:** August 21, 2018

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Subject Property:** See Form B for details.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to reconstruct the deck that had been on the rear ell of the building. See attached plans for details.

“In 2014 when the roof over Unit 3 had to be replaced, the existing deck, deeded for exclusive use of Unit 4 (located at third floor level above ground), was demolished. Owner of unit 4 was living in Brazil and she sold the property within 1 year; the unit 4 was left unattended without establishing a safe egress to fire escape. Unit 4 went on sale in November 2015; current owner, Hatice Baser, now needs to restore this deeded roof deck since there is no safe, viable access to



*34 Spring Street*

fire escape for the Unit 4 resident. There is a 14" drop from the unit 4 egress door to the roof level, creating tripping hazard (please refer to *Figure 1* below). In addition, fire escape stairwell is -10' ft. away from unit 4 egress door and there is no protective railing to the fire escape stairwell (*Figure 2*). Proposed length of roof deck is extending 10 ft. from Unit 4."

The original deck had a lattice enclosure, This will not be replaced. The railings and balusters will be the simple generic type that the Commission has approved in the past.

## II FINDINGS FOR ROOFS

1. Preserve the integrity of the original or later important roof shape.
2. Retain the original roof covering whenever possible. If the property has a slate roof, conserve the roof slates. Slate is a near-permanent roofing material, and deterioration is generally caused by rusted roofing nails.
3. Whenever possible, replace deteriorated roof covering with material that matches the old in composition, color, size, shape, texture and installation detail.
4. Preserve the architectural features that give the roof its distinctive character, such as cornices, gutters, iron filigree, cupolas, dormers and brackets. Downspouts should be inconspicuously located and should be painted to match the color of the siding.
5. New dormers will be permitted if they are related to the forms, proportions, size and arrangement of existing windows, and constructed in matching materials and colors. If possible, new dormers should be confined to the rear of the house.
6. Skylights with flat profiles may be installed on the rear of the property.
7. Utility equipment, such as television antennae, air conditioners, solar collectors and other mechanical units should be restricted to the rear of the property or on portions of the roof that are not visible from a public way. If no other placement is possible, air conditioning and other cooling units on street facades should be of the slim-line type or set flush with the surface of the building and painted the same color as the window trim.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS BY THE COMMISSION CONCERNING ROOF DECKS

1. New roof decks and enclosures should not be visible from a public right-of-way and should be unobtrusive. Roof decks should be located toward the rear of the building.
2. When visible and if historically appropriate, railings should be ornamental iron.
3. Permanent opaque elevations, such as lattice or planters should be lower than the railing height.

**Staff Findings:** Staff finds that the proposed roof deck and egress will be located on the flat-roofed rear ell. It will be visible along the driveway from the right side of the house and have no effect on the roof structures. Staff finds that it does not significantly detract from the historic character of the house and to some extent is necessary for the safety of the occupants.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends **A Certificate of Appropriateness** for the new ADA ramps and entry with the following conditions:*

1. All appropriate building permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any work.
2. If changes are necessary to the proposed design for which this Certificate of Appropriateness was issued, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
3. The deck shall have simple rails, balusters and posts with a shallow decorative top to meet code height and painted to match the building trim.
4. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.

A **Certificate of Non-Applicability** shall be issued for the extensive repairs and maintenance in kind.





Figure 1. 34 Spring St. Unit 4, egress door, 14" drop to roof level



Original roof deck.

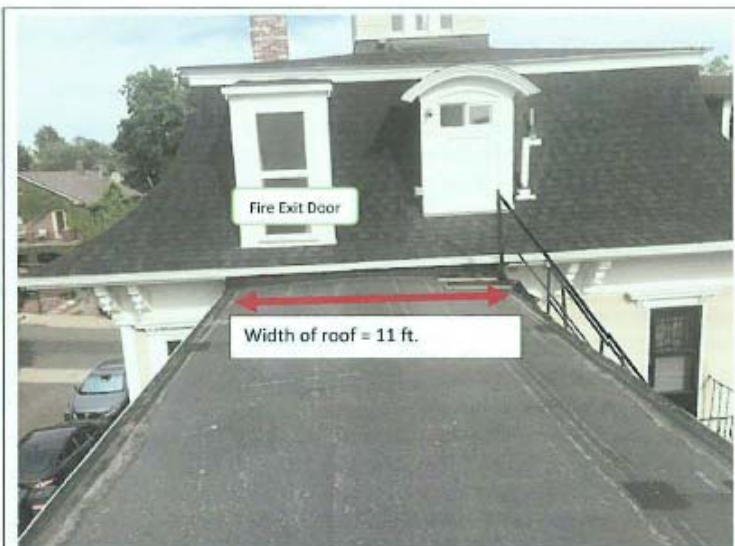


Figure 2. 34 Spring St. Unit 4 Egress door and distance to fire escape stairwell!



Proposed roof deck railings



Figure 3. Length of roof space over Unit 3 is more than 50 ft