



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 - 035

Date: June 20, 2017

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT

Site: 46 Atherton Street

Applicant Name: Jeff Martinez

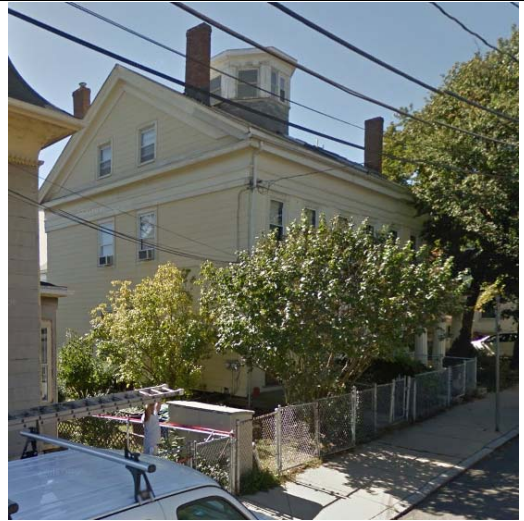
Applicant Address: 46 Atherton Street, Somerville MA 02143

Owner Name: Jeffrey Martinez & Annabel Realf

Owner Address: Same as above

Petition: Jeff Martinez seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to remove and replace two chimneys.

HPC Hearing Date: June 20, 2017



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject property located in the Spring Hill neighborhood is a Single Building Local Historic District (1985). See attached Form B for more information.
2. **Proposal:** The Applicant would like to remove and replace two chimneys.

III. FINDINGS FOR ROOFS

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

Roofs

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.*

The commission also takes the following considerations into account regarding chimneys:

Existing chimneys are an important architectural detail that in most cases, contribute to the architectural integrity of the structure and overall roof form. The chimneys on a historic building form the backbone of its structure; they indicate the building's interior layout and the uses of the rooms inside. Certain chimney styles are associated with particular styles of 18th and 19th century buildings. The style and shape of a chimney, as well as the form of its bricks, may reflect the aspirations of the building's original owners.

1. *Existing chimneys, along with original details such as chimney pots and other terra cotta work, should be retained and restored.*
2. *Most non-functioning chimneys should be preserved as an original historic detail of the building.*
3. *New chimneys should be placed on less visible roof exposures and should reflect the width and height of historic chimneys.*
4. *Chimney caps should be in a dark bronze or copper finish.*

Proposal: The Applicant would like to remove the existing chimneys due to their interior condition. The Applicants agreed that the front-most chimney adds to the aesthetics of the house, however, rebuilding it is not in their budget at this time due to the ongoing work on the rest of the house. They would like to either add a faux chimney box, or rebuild it at a later date. The Applicant believes that neither chimney is original, and neither have any significant historical value. Both chimneys are in very poor condition, and in danger of falling through the floor. See attached photos.

Staff Findings: There are two chimneys located on the east end of the building visible from the street. These are the chimneys proposed for demolition. Staff finds that the front chimney is of historic proportions, and that both chimneys may have been rebuilt more than once given the age of the building. Chimneys are often re-built as the mortar is softer than the brick and needs to be replaced periodically. The rear chimney was not rebuilt to the historic size and shape. Staff finds that chimneys are character-defining features. The other double Greek Revivals on Spring Hill also had chimneys constructed in the same locations and of similar dimensions. Staff found that chimneys had been removed from three of the buildings prior to designation in 1985. (See photos below from 1985).

Staff finds that if the chimneys at 46 Atherton Street are demonstrably un-sound, they should be reconstructed. Rebuilding chimneys from attic beams up or constructing boxes with veneer brick often the leads to leaks and further damage due to differential expansion and contraction of the various components. The traditional method of building chimneys from the ground up and surrounding them with a timber frame gives the greatest stability to the entire system. Flashing should be of sufficient size to form a seal between the materials and the elements.

Staff finds that the proposed alterations do not meet the above HPC Guidelines.

III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD Guidelines, Staff recommends **Denial** of the request to remove the chimneys.*

A Certificate of Non-Applicability shall be issued for the reconstruction of the chimneys in-kind.





Front chimney and basement photo





Rear chimney and basement photos



46- 48 Atherton Street



9-11 Harvard Place (razed)



58-60 Atherton Street



23-25 Monmouth Street

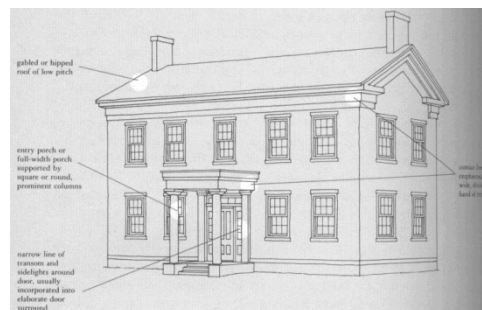


1-3 Harvard Place



31-33 Monmouth Street

All photos taken prior to designation in 1985



Style book examples of Greek Revival houses with side gables showing chimney placement and shapes.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.91
Historic Name:	
Common Name:	Frost, J. O. - Swan House
Address:	44-48 Atherton St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Spring Hill
Local No:	1091, 58
Year Constructed:	c 1850
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Greek Revival
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	SMV.O: Brastow and Harvard Street Subdivision SMV.AQ: Spring Hill Historic District SMV.AY: Somerville Multiple Resource Area
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (03/11/1985); Nat'l Register MRA (09/18/1989); Nat'l Register District (09/18/1989)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Asbestos Shingle; Wood



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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
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

NRD15/MRA - 9.18.89

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Area <u>Spring</u>	Form no. <u>58</u>
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(91)



Somerville

P1-SPRING

s 46-48 Atherton St.

USGS BOSTON
SECT B

ic Name Frost / Swan

iginal residence

resent "

hip: ☒ Private individual
Private organization n/a

Public n/a

iginal owner J.O. Frost
Mrs. Swan

PTION:

Date ca. 1850

Source map research

Style Greek Revival

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric asphalt(?)

Outbuildings none

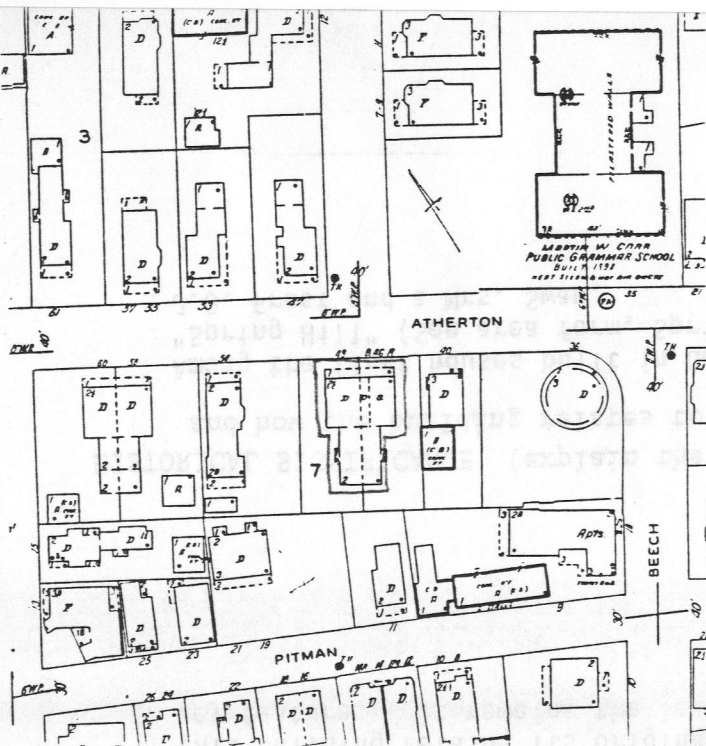
Major alterations (with dates) none

Moved no Date n/a

Approx. acreage less than one acre

Setting urban residential - in Spring

Hill district, mid to late 19th century
residential neighborhood, densely
populated



Recorded by Carole Zellie

Organization Somerville Historic Comm.

Date 1981

Staple additional sheets here

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

One of seven Greek Revival houses built on the Southern Slope of Spring Hill, this building retains its original windows, Doric columned porch, and other key features. It remains the least altered of the original group.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Among the first houses built in George Brastow's 1843 subdivision of "Spring Hill" (See area form, Spring Hill). Original owners included J.O. Frost and a Mrs. Swan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Draper, 1852 Map of Somerville
1874 Directory

