



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 2018.108
Date: November 27, 2018

Recommendation: Conditional Approval

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT

Site: 53 Columbus Avenue

Applicant Name: Jackson Alves do Santos
Applicant Address: 53 Columbus Avenue
Owner Name: Gambale Suffolk Co. Realty Trust
Owner Address: 17 Appleton Road, Windham NH 03087

Petition: Jackson Alves do Santos, contractor for Gambale Suffolk Co. Realty Trust, Owner, seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to replace c. 1900 door to second floor porch with a fiberglass door.

HPC Hearing Date: November 27, 2018

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** The subject building is located at the corner of Prospect Hill Parkway and Columbus Avenue at the edge of Prospect Hill Park, therefore all sides of the building are visible from the right of way. The existing second floor porch doorway was installed circa 1945 per building permit for the construction of a second floor porch. The door may have been installed at the same time from salvaged materials. The door appears to be a *circa* 1900 interior door as can be seen by its construction and hardware. Second Empire buildings generally did not have second floor porches. A review of the surveyed Second Empire style buildings on MACRIS had only one other building with a second story porch. The



current owners bought the building in 2014 and state that they were unaware that the building was designated. See photos and Form B for details.

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant has replaced the second floor porch door with a fiberglass door. The tenants were complaining about the draft near the doors. Not knowing that the building was part of the historic district, they had the door traded out. See attached photos.

II. FINDINGS FOR DOORS

C. Windows and Doors

1. *Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.*
2. *Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, sill, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.* If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.

Doorways define the character and style of historic buildings. The main doorway is usually the most prominent and decorative architectural feature of the front of a building. Because of their importance, special care should be given in preserving doorways.

Staff Findings: Staff finds that the proposed alteration will minimally affect the perception of the existing building. The original door in this location was an interior door with no lights. Due to distance from the right of way it is impossible to determine the material of the door.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends A Certificate of Appropriateness 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 replacement door shall have an upper window panel and two lower panels such as the Jeld-Wen® F63042.
4. The exposed door casing shall be painted to match the existing walls.
5. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.



Original porch door: Exterior (left) Interior (right)



Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.244
Historic Name:	
Common Name:	
Address:	53 Columbus Ave
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Prospect Hill
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Second Empire
Use(s):	Multiple Family Dwelling House; Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	SMV.AW: Columbus Avenue - Warren Avenue Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Slate Wall: Asbestos Shingle; Wood Foundation: Brick



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:

Tuesday, July 29, 2014 at 6:52: PM

FORM B - BUILDING

LHD 10/3/89 (1C)
P1-PROSPECT
USGS BOSTON
SOMER

AREA

FORM NO.

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
30 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AW Prospect Hill

244



SOMERVILLE

53 Columbus Avenue

c Name

resent residential

original residential

TION

1874

directories / maps

Second Empire

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric asbestos shingles

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition fair

Moved Date

Acreage 4572 sq. ft.

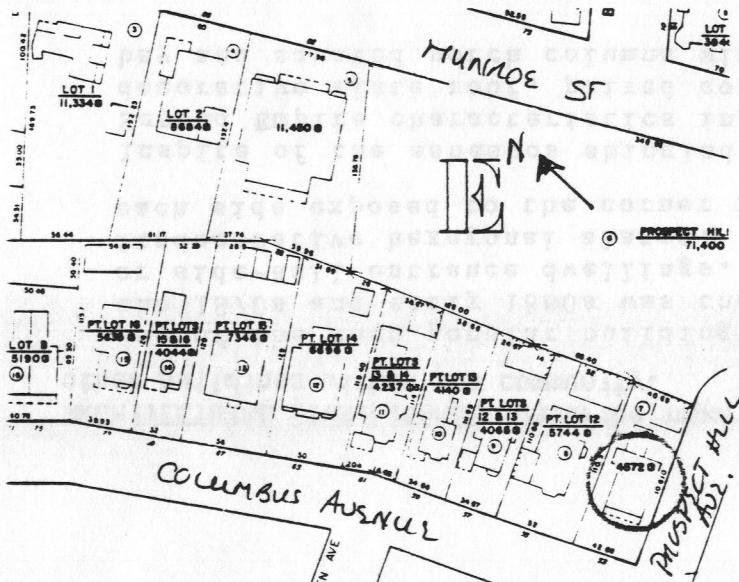
Setting Northwest corner of Columbus
and Prospect Hill Avenues, south
slope of Prospect Hill, near entrance
to park, late 19th c. residential

Recorded by Gretchen Schuler

Organization Somerville Historic
Preservation Commission

Date April, 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



JTM 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.

One of the most popular building styles in the Prospect Hill area during the 1870s and early 1880s was the Second Empire style for large center-hall or side-hall entrance dwellings. The concave mansard roof retains its decorative hexagonal slates. There are two segmental arched dormers on each side exposed to the corner intersection.

In spite of the asbestos shingled siding the house retains some of its Second Empire characteristics including its most distinctive feature of a decorative slate roof, paired cornice brackets, a two-story octagonal side bay and squared porch columns with capitals and brackets with drop finials.

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 substantial residential neighborhoods of Somerville, evolved throughout the late 19th century. Prior to that it was an agricultural community of farms. Columbus Avenue, once known as Warren Avenue, ran from Walnut to Bonner Street until the 1870s when it was continued through Bonner property to Washington Street. Its proximity to Union Square, a center for commercial and transportation activity made it a desirable place to live. Columbus Avenue was and is half way to the top of Prospect Hill and only a few blocks from Highland Avenue where the civic center of Somerville was by the mid to late 1800s.

From 1875 Henry M. Abbott lived in this house. According to City Directories he was a "house-builder" and in all likelihood built his own dwelling. The late 19th century owner/occupant was John W. Vinal who lived here from 1887. He was a real estate and insurance agent in Union Square.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("H.M. Abbott"), 1884 ("S.R. Hart"), 1895 ("John W. Vinal")
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s.
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book Page .