



**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 2017.077  
**Date:** September 26, 2017

**Recommendation:** Conditional Approval

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**PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 73 Columbus Avenue

Columbus Avenue/Warren Street Local Historic District

**Applicant Name:** Carlos Reverendo & Fernando Leon  
**Applicant Address:** 73 Columbus Avenue, Somerville 02143  
**Owner Name:** same as above  
**Owner Address:** same as above  
**Agent:** Joel Luis

**Petition:** Carlos Reverendo & Fernando Leon, Owner, seek permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to enlarge a dormer, blind the second floor windows and remove the chimney on the north east side.

**HPC Hearing Date:** September 26, 2017

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**I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Subject Property:**  
See attached Form B.
2. **Proposal:**  
The Applicant proposes to
  - a. Enlarge the dormer on the east side;
  - b. Remove the chimney; and
  - c. Remove two second floor windows.

**II. FINDINGS FOR ALTERATIONS TO ROOFS**

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

**B. 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.*

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.*

The commission also takes the following considerations into account regarding dormers.

## **DORMERS**

*Dormers are a common means of introducing light and increasing usable floor space to the top floor of a building. The introduction of dormers may dramatically change the building's appearance, and therefore may not be appropriate in all circumstances.*

1. *Retain and preserve all decorative elements on existing dormers such as brackets, returns, bargeboards, and trim.*
2. *Preserve original window shape in new or original dormers.*
3. *It is not appropriate to introduce new dormers if they will compromise the historic roof design, damage character-defining roof materials, or compromise the overall character of the historic building.*
4. *The mass and scale of a new dormer should be subordinate to the original roof form and the scale of the original structure.*

5. *Dormer design, proportions, and placement should be compatible in size, scale, proportion, shape, roof pitch, placement, and detail with the historic dormers found in buildings of similar style and as appropriate in the immediate neighborhood.*
6. *Skylights and dormers rarely can be combined successfully on a roof plane.*
7. *Dormers should be substantially narrower than the overall roof width. Generally, the total width of all dormers should not be greater than half the width of the existing roof.*
8. *Dormers should be set back 3' or more from the end wall of a gabled roof.*
9. *In no case should the dormer extend past the wall line below the roof on which it is placed. In many cases, it is more appropriate that the dormer be set back from the wall plane.*
10. *Use window shapes that are found on the historic building*

**Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to enlarge the existing shed dormer and remove the chimney, possibly to replace it with a faux chimney visible above the roof line at the original location. The dormer would be approximately 3 times the size of the existing dormer, extending from the present location toward the rear of the building and providing needed headroom. The existing chimney located behind the current dormer would need to be removed to provide the floor space desired in the newly enlarged 3<sup>rd</sup> floor room.

**Staff Findings:** The existing chimney is plain. The original chimney would have had some corbelling or other finishing details. Staff finds placement of a faux chimney in the middle of the enlarged dormer does not make visual sense, especially in relationship to the placement of windows. Staff finds that due to the house's relationship to the abutting house, the chimney is minimally visible due to its placement on the roof and the oblique angle from which it is viewed. Therefore Staff finds neither the enlargement of the dormer nor the removal of the chimney to be deleterious to the historic fabric of the Columbus Avenue/Warren Street Local Historic District. A second set of windows are proposed for the enlarged dormer. Staff finds that the dormer windows are irregularly spaced and sized. They do not have the traditional form factor or style. Staff finds that the windows should be consistent in size and style. Staff finds that the windows should be the same size as the window proposed for the gable end and exist on the side of the building. Staff finds that the windows should be evenly spaced along the dormer.

Staff finds that the proposal to enlarge the dormer retains the roof shape and relationship to the shed roofed dormer. Staff finds that the dormer windows are irregularly spaced and sized and do not relate to those found on the historic building.

## II. FINDINGS FOR REMOVAL OF WINDOWS

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

### 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.*

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

**Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to remove the existing windows on the east side and replace them with plain clapboards and to install 3 windows in the new dormer.

**Staff Findings:** Staff finds that the window removal is not for the purpose of installing stock windows. Staff finds that the traditional windows on the building are all double-hung sash. This existing style and type of window is referred to as “Boston Layout” which gives an indication of the frequency of the type and proportion of window in the Boston area.

The windows to be removed from the side of the building are visible at an oblique angle toward the rear on the east side. Staff finds that the windows do not match the existing original window openings in size and shape. A building permit was issued in 1950 to convert the building from a 2-family to a 3-family. The windows may have been installed at that time.

Staff finds that the removal of these two windows would not be deleterious to the historic fabric of the Columbus Avenue/Warren Street Local Historic District because they are minimally visible from the street and do not have the historic character of the existing original windows. Staff finds that continuous clapboard would balance the wall on either side of the four full-sized windows on that side of the building.

### III. RECOMMENDATION

*Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends **CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS** of the following.*

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 chimney shall be removed in order to enlarge the dormer.
4. The dormer shall be enlarged as shown on the plans A-5A in size, shape and placement but not fenestration.
5. The dormer windows shall be double-hung sash, shall be evenly spaced, and shall have traditional proportions.
6. The windows shall match the existing double-hung sash in terms of material, form, construction, number of lights, and muntin arrangement.
7. The window casings shall match the existing.
8. The second floor windows may be removed. Clapboard shall be installed in such a way that the patch does not show.
9. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.

Proposed alterations to the rear of the building are not visible from the public right of way and therefore will receive a **Certificate of Non-Applicability** for those changes.





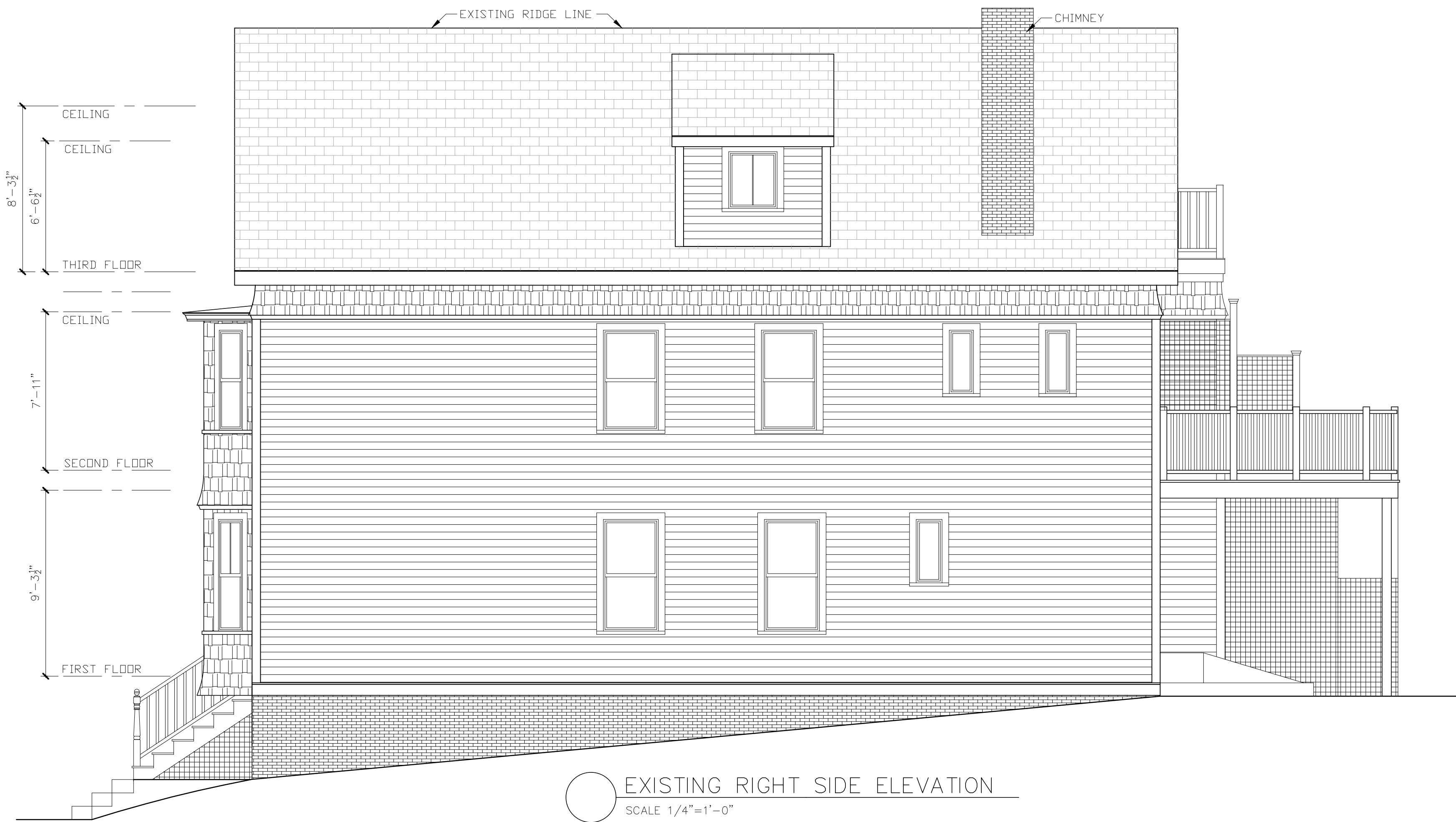




EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING REAR ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING LEFT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

MR. CARLOS REVERENDO  
&  
MR. FERNANDO LEON

EXISTING HOME  
INTERIOR RENOVATIONS  
NEW DORMER  
73 COLUMBUS AVENUE  
SOMERVILLE, MASS.

General Notes :

Symbol



681 MAIN STREET  
WALTHAM, MA 02451  
TEL./FAX: 781-647-5831

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Date: 06-21-2017

Revisions: 08-22-2017

EXISTING ELEVATIONS

Drawing

A-2





EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING/PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



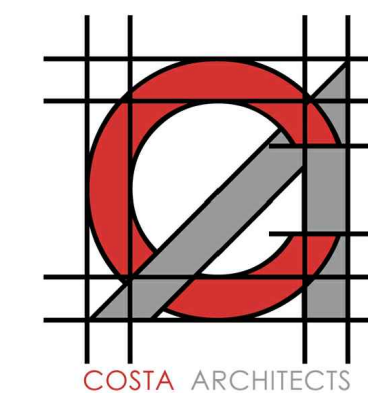
EXISTING LEFT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

MR. CARLOS REVERENDO  
&  
MR. FERNANDO LEON

EXISTING HOME  
INTERIOR RENOVATIONS  
NEW DORMER  
73 COLUMBUS AVENUE  
SOMERVILLE, MASS.

General Notes :

Symbol



681 MAIN STREET  
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Date: 06-21-2017

Revisions: 08-22-2017

EXISTING/PROPOSED  
ELEVATIONS

Drawing

A-5

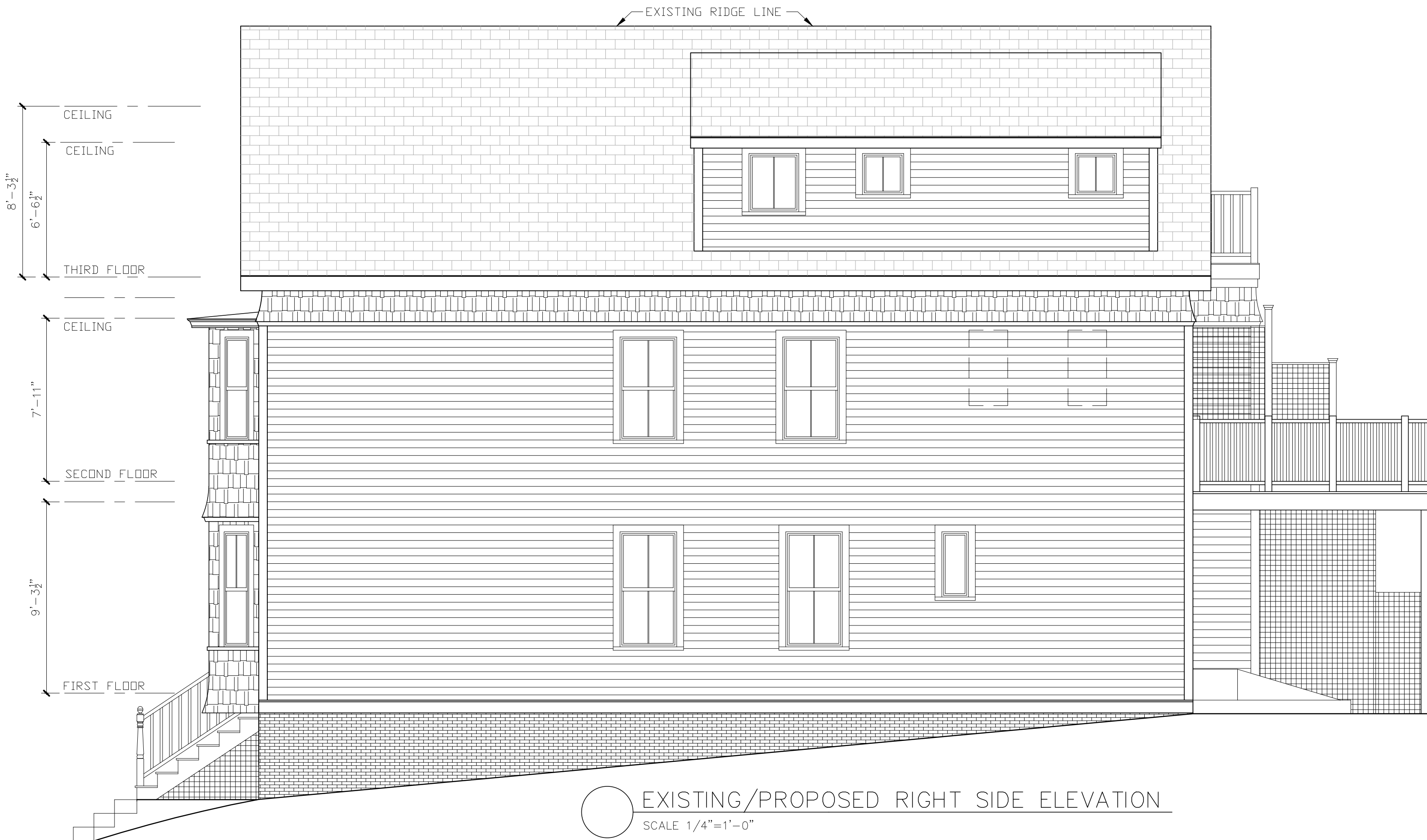




EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING/PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING/PROPOSED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"



EXISTING LEFT SIDE ELEVATION  
SCALE 1/4"=1'-0"

MR. CARLOS REVERENDO  
&  
MR. FERNANDO LEON

EXISTING HOME  
INTERIOR RENOVATIONS  
NEW DORMER  
73 COLUMBUS AVENUE  
SOMERVILLE, MASS.

General Notes :

Symbol



681 MAIN STREET  
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Date: 06-21-2017

Revisions: 08-22-2017

EXISTING/PROPOSED  
ELEVATIONS

Drawing

A-5A

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.250
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Drouet, Charles House
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	73 Columbus Ave
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Prospect Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	c 1885
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Queen Anne
<b>Use(s):</b>	Single Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.AW: Columbus Avenue - Warren Avenue Historic District
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (10/31/1989)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Slate Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard; Wood Shingle



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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Monday, September 25, 2017 at 4:12: PM

## FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

LHD - 10/31/89 (10)  
P. PROSPECT  
USGS - BOST, N  
SECT B

AREA

FORM NO.

AW

250

Prospect Hill

SOMERVILLE

73 Columbus Avenue

Name Charles Drouet

Present residential

Original residential

TION

1885-1887

deeds / directories

Italianate / Queen Anne

Architect

Exterior Wall Fabric clapboards

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition good

Moved Date

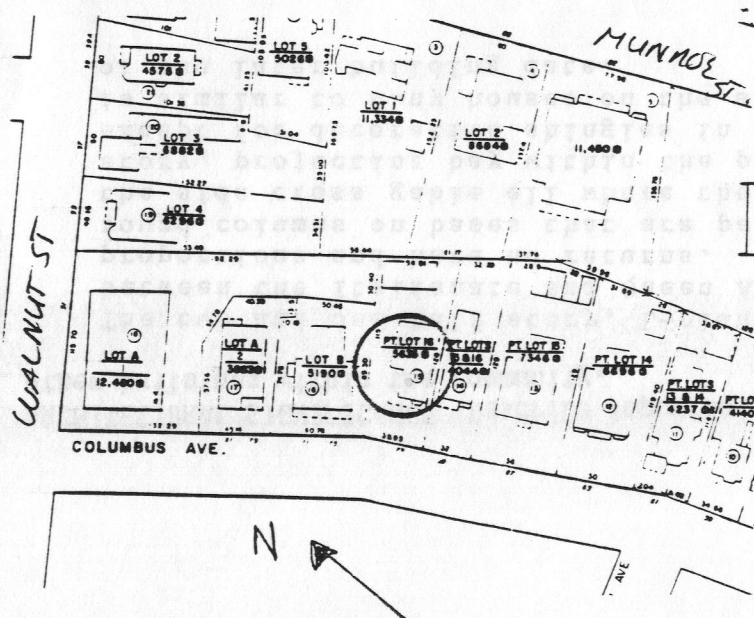
Acreage 5635 sq. ft.

Setting North side of Columbus, south  
slope of Prospect Hill, late 19th  
century residential neighborhood.

Recorded by Gretchen Schuler  
Somerville Historic  
Organization 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



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 two and one-half story, L-planned, dwelling appears to be a transition between the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. The gable ends are of narrow proportions and have no returns. There is a large wrap porch with short round columns on bases that are part of the balustrade. The porch wraps to the side cross gable ell where the dwelling's entrance is. There is a two story, projecting bay within the porch as well. The siding is clapboard except for decorative shingles in the gable peak. Although the basic form is similar to many houses on the streetscape, the proportions are evidence of the later building date.

**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.

Many of the properties near Warren Avenue were part of Ira Hill's 1870 Plan of Building Lots (Plan Book 17, Plan 90). Part of Lot #16 was sold to Charles Drouet in 1885 by Benjamin Thompson. The house was built by 1887 when Drouet is listed in City Directories. Drouet was a superintendent at Metropolitan Insurance Company. He was a local real estate investor as well who built the 1892 Richmond and the 1898 Drouet Block, both designed by local architect Aaron Gould also of Prospect Hill.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("H.H. Fuller", land only), 1884 ("Thompson", land only), 1895 ("Charles Drouet").
2. City Directories, 1870s-1890s.
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book 1721 Page 336.