



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 2019.011
Date: April 16, 2019

Recommendation: *Conditional Approval*

PRESERVATION STAFF REPORT

Site: 9 Smith Avenue
Applicant Name: Grant Covell
Applicant Address: 12 Exeter Street, Belmont 02478
Owner Name: same as above
Owner Address: same as above

Petition: Grant Covell, Owner, seeks permission from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to install a paved driveway.

HPC Hearing Date: April 16, 2019

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. **Subject Property:** See Form B for details.
2. **Background:** The area between 9 and 5 Smith Avenue has been partially covered with asphalt.
3. **Proposal:** The Owners would like a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the landscape. They would like to replace the asphalt with Ideal® Aqua-Bric® 4" x 8" and 2 3/8" thick pavers in the grey, possibly quarry blend colors in a herring bone pattern. <https://www.idealconcreteblock.com/product-details/items/aqua-bric.html>. See attached photos and plans for details.



I. GENERAL APPROACH



The primary purpose of Somerville's Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Somerville's Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the City's architectural heritage. The following guidelines have been developed to ensure that rehabilitation efforts, alterations, and new construction all respect the design fabric of the districts and do not adversely effect their present architectural integrity.

The following portions of the Guidelines in bold italics are applicable in this case:

- A. ***The design approach to each property should begin with the premise that the features of historic and architectural significance*** described in the Study Committee report must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.
- B. Changes and additions to the property and its environment that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected (LATER IMPORTANT FEATURES will be the term used hereafter to convey this concept).
- C. ***Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.***
- D. ***When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.***
- E. Whenever possible, new materials should match the material being replaced with respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
- F. ***The Commission will give design review priority to those portions of the property which are visible from public ways*** or those portions which it can be reasonably inferred may be visible in the future.

II. FINDINGS FOR LANDSCAPING

GUIDELINES

The following sections of the "Landscape features & paving guidelines are also relevant to this case:

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.***
- 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.

Staff Findings:

Staff finds that walkways, ramps, and stairs are influenced by the historic patterns of use of the site. Driveways and parking areas, where original, speak to the transportation of the City and the property; where these features are later alterations to accommodate modern lifestyles; care should be taken to ensure that they do not distract from the site's historic nature. Staff finds that the change in materials will not substantially affect the perception of the historic architectural character of 5 and 9 Smith Avenue. No architectural features of either building will be altered and none of the buildings hidden.

III. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends Denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the existing conditions and recommends a Certificate of Appropriateness under 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 existing asphalt driveways may be replaced with Ideal® Aqua-Bric® 4" x 8" and 2 3/8" thick pavers in the grey, possibly quarry blend colors in a herring bone pattern.
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.







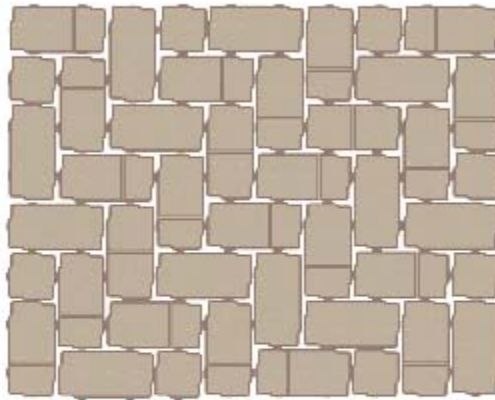
Aqua-Bric® IV

Pedestrian Friendly, Vehicular-Ready Permeable Concrete Pavers

Aqua-Bric IV permeable concrete pavers are a smart choice to mitigate stormwater runoff for plazas, parking lots, entrance drives, marshalling yards, industrial facilities, low-speed roadways and streets. Aqua-Bric IV offers the pedestrian-friendly features of our 6 cm thick **Aqua-Bric** in a 4 1/2" x 9" unit with a 8 cm thickness suited to heavy-duty traffic loads. **Aqua-Bric IV** is manufactured in a herringbone layout designed to take advantage of the economy of mechanical installation. Full-size stones with false joints seamlessly integrate with half stones creating an attractive and durable permeable pavement comprised of traditional shapes that suits a variety of applications. **Aqua-Bric IV** provides a firm, stable and slip-resistant walking surface with the structural capacity to meet the most demanding types of vehicular loads.

Aqua-Bric IV® Features

- Meets pedestrian slip resistance standards from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Architectural Guidelines
- Provides smooth surfaces with minimal openings to make walking more comfortable
- Openings and joints allow for rapid removal of stormwater
- Eliminates standing water without sloping
- Available in a variety of colors and blends, including colors to meet LEED® Solar Reflectance Index values



Sold in the layer configuration shown above.

Aqua-Bric® IV

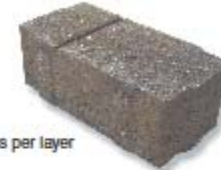
Nom. 4 1/2" x 9" x 3 1/2"



9 units per layer



3 units per layer



16 units per layer



8 units per layer
• 4 full stones w/halves
• 4 false joint stones w/halves

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FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Locus Map

On continuation sheet

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

66/E/10

Town/City: Somerville

Place: (*neighborhood or village*):
Ward Two – Cobble Hill

Address: 9 Smith Avenue

Historic Name: Patrick Leonard House

Uses: Present: residential

Original: residential

Date of Construction: 1869-1874

Source: census data, historic maps, deed research

Style/Form: Italianate

Architect/Builder: Stephen Smith. Later owner, Patrick Leonard

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: clapboard

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Dates are unknown but major alterations are:

- Skylight, left elevation
- Rear elevation addition

Condition: excellent

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 3920 square feet

Setting: urban; small residential street near
Cambridge/Somerville line and major thoroughfare (Beacon
Street)

Recorded by: Sarah White, Preservation Planner, City of Somerville

Organization: Office of Strategic Planning & Community Dev.

Date (*month / year*): June, 2016

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWN

ADDRESS

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The dwelling is a gable-ended Italianate home built c.1871 on a brick foundation. The house is currently asbestos sided and retains its paired cornice brackets, a decorated door hood over the front entrance, and the one-story bay on the first floor front elevation. Also extant is the original placement of the windows, particularly on the front elevation. Of further note is the arch-topped window located under the front gable peak. A two-story ell on the left of the structure remains and mirrors the original ell of its neighbor, 9 Smith Avenue. The building is an excellent example of an Italianate workers' cottage. The original core of 9 Smith Avenue is the mirror image of 5 Smith Avenue.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

This 2 ½-story Italianate structure was built c.1871, at the time during which Smith Avenue was laid out and developed for residential use (the Somerville assessor's database has the construction date of this property incorrectly listed as 1900). Much about 9 Smith Avenue can be learned from the abutting property at 5 Smith Avenue which is also its mirror image. This structure was one of the first to be built on this Ward 2 street.

This ward was sparsely developed until the mid to late 1800s when it became an important transportation and manufacturing center. The early industries of the Middlesex Dye and Bleachery Company (1801) and the American Tube Works (1852) established the development cycle in the area. By the 1870s, all of the brick yards and farmland had been converted to manufacturing and food processing establishments. This uptick in industrialization and the nature of the industries established created significant health and pollution concerns in the surrounding area. Accompanying the industrial growth was the need for workers' housing.

Smith Avenue, a short street near the Cambridge line, and running between Beacon and Line Streets, was laid out between 1869 and 1874. The surrounding land was owned and subsequently developed by Stephen Smith who, from the 1860s, lived on Beacon Street opposite Calvin Street. Probate records show that friends and relatives petitioned to have Smith declared insane in the years before his death in 1874.

9 Smith Avenue, along with 5 Smith Avenue and 102 Beacon Street (at the corner of Smith and Beacon), all reflect the popular Italianate style of dwelling popular during the last half of the 19th century. These types of buildings, along with similar wooden structures in the immediate area, reflect the styles and designs of houses popular with working and middle-class homeowners. This building represents one of the first constructed on Smith Avenue when it was first laid out.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

(South) Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Cambridge, MA

Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts

Map of Somerville, 1883

City of Somerville Tax Records

Somerville City Directories (1881, 1896, 1903, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1918, 1920, 1945, 1955, 1960, 1965)

U.S. Census (1880, 1900, 1930)

1874 Hopkins Atlas

1884 Hopkins Atlas

1895 Bromley

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWN

ADDRESS

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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