



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (LHD) PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 36 Atherton Street

Case: HPC.ALT 2021.37

Applicant: George Saropoulos

Owner: Same as applicant

Legal Ad: *Installation of a new driveway*

HPC Meeting Date: July 20th, 2021



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with a professional assessment of alteration proposals made for Local Historic District (LHD) properties. These assessments are based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and the associated Design Guidelines. A Staff Report is not a determination/decision and does not represent findings. A staff report does not constitute authorization in any form.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Subject Property: The locus is the c.1856 Italianate house known as the Enoch Robinson House, colloquially referred to locally as the “Round House”. This property is located at the corner of Atherton Street and Beech Street into the Spring Hill neighborhood. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Proposal: The Applicant proposes the following:

- Install driveway (add dimensions here – length and width)
- Driveway material: brick with granite curbing

II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. The portions of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations are discussed below.

H. Landscape Features and Paving

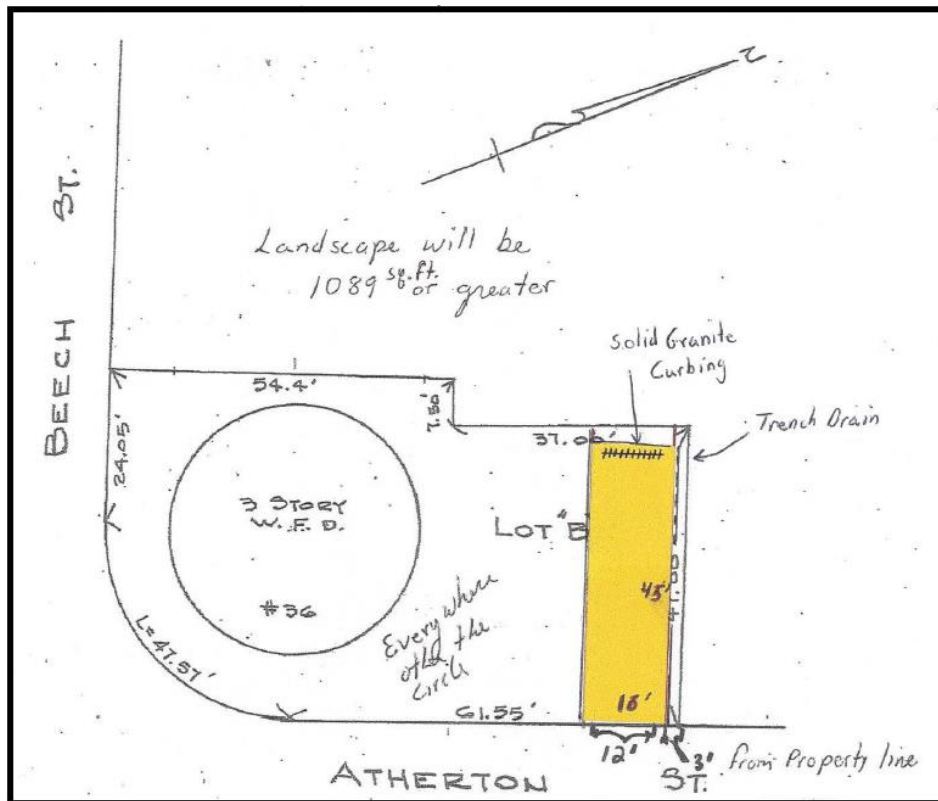
The most relevant portion of this Design Guideline is as follows:

*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.*

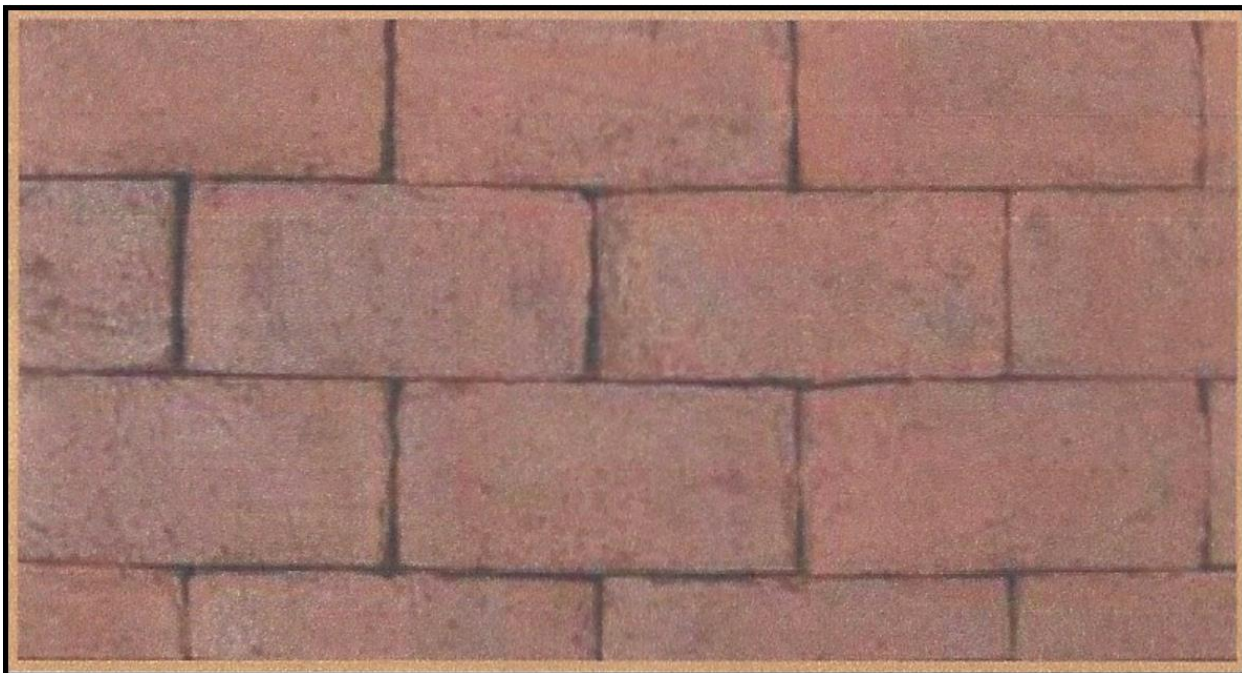
Applicant proposal: Currently, a gravel patch used for parking exists on-site. The applicant proposes to install a 45’ long x 16’ wide driveway. As this is a new installation, this comes under the Commission’s purview. The Applicant proposes brick installed in a running bond pattern across the driveway with raised granite curbing. The proposed driveway will be placed to the right of the residential structure, and three (3) feet from the neighboring property to the right on Atherton.

The Historic Preservation Commission originally reviewed the proposal to install a driveway at the site on July 15th, 2014 under HPC.ALT 2014.44. The original application at that time was for the location of the driveway but did not include materials. The conditional approval of the original application required the applicant to return to the HPC for review of materials.

Because the applicant had not begun work within twelve months of issuance of the Commission’s approval, the issued Certificate expired. The Applicant had also not returned to the Commission during that 12-month period to get approval for driveway materials. Therefore, the applicant is required to return to the HPC for review and approval of both the installation and materials.



Left: Proposed driveway location



Above: Detail of proposed brick



Left: Detail of proposed granite curbing

Preservation Planning Assessment:

By cause of the paving being proposed, the HPC has purview over these features and the materials used.

Due to the period of the house and the vast brickworks active in Somerville at the time, brick would be a likely choice of material were a property owner at the time able to afford to install a hardscaped driveway.

VI. FINDINGS & VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote the HPC must state their findings and reasons on why they take their position.

IV. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Preservation Planning recommends the following conditions be attached to any Certificate of Appropriateness that the HPC might grant for this project:

1. The Applicant/Owner shall file the Certificate with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) by uploading it to the CitizenServe permitting portal with their application for zoning compliance/building permit.
2. This Certificate is valid for one year. If work has not commenced within one year of the HPC's date of determination, this Certificate shall expire, and the Applicant shall re-apply for re-

issuance of this Certificate. Provided that no changes have been made to the proposal, this shall be a Staff-level re-issuance of the Certificate.

3. Any changes to this proposal made prior to the commencement of work or in-the-field changes shall be submitted to Preservation Planning for their review to determine if the changes come under the purview of the HPC.
4. The driveway shall be framed by raised granite curbing.
5. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at historic@somervillema.gov a minimum of 15 business days prior to final ISD walk-through so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm if the project was completed according to HPC approvals.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.93
Historic Name:	Robinson, Enoch House
Common Name:	Round House, The
Address:	36 Atherton St
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Spring Hill
Local No:	1089, 56
Year Constructed:	1856
Architect(s):	Robinson, Enoch
Architectural Style(s):	Italianate
Use(s):	Single 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):	Wall: Wood; Wood Clapboard



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: Sunday, July 11, 2021 at 4:23: PM

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116



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

See Attached Assessor's Map

UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE Boston North

SCALE 1:25,000

NRDIS/MRA - 9.18.89

(10)
LHD - 3/4/85
(10)

AREA

FORM NO.

Spring Hill

MHC 56

AQAY, O

1089

Somerville

(93)

Address 36 Atherton Street

Historic Name The Round House

Enoch Robinson House

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

1856

PI. SPRING
USGS. BOSTON
SECT. B

Owner Samuels, Somerville Past and Present

Style Italianate - Round Plan

Architect Enoch Robinson

Exterior Wall Fabric wood clapboards

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) in process
of being historically rehabed 1988

Condition fair, improving with
stabilization work

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting In Spring Hill district, urban
residential setting, among mid and
late 19th century dwellings and one
NR school.

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Mass. Historical Commission

Date September, 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Round House is one of the most unusual houses, architecturally, and retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The house fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places at the local level.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

One of Somerville's most unique 19th century buildings, the Round House is well known as an architectural oddity. Circular in plan, the third story is of smaller diameter than the two below. Robinson designed circular rooms and a glass dome for the interior.

The building is being studied and historically rehabilitated by the North Bennett Street School of Carpentry. The asbestos siding has been removed exposing the bowed clapboards, most of which are in tact. The building retains much of its ornamentation such as cornice brackets, segmental arched window hoods, Ionic columns supporting an Italianate-like doorhood, and the unusual parapet created to solve the problem of opening bowed windows.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Enoch Robinson (1801-1888) was a noted inventor and businessman. Born in Boston, he apprenticed to his gunsmith father in a variety of trades including flassecutting. Robinson moved to East Cambridge in 1825, and entered the New England Glass Company. He developed a patented method of pressing glass furniture knobs in 1826. In 1837 he built a furnace and factory in Boston to manufacture knobs and established a lock business in 1839. With his sons, Robinson operated the lock business for many years. He moved to Somerville in 1847 and built his unique house in 1856.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Samuels, Edward, Somerville: Past and Present, 1898.

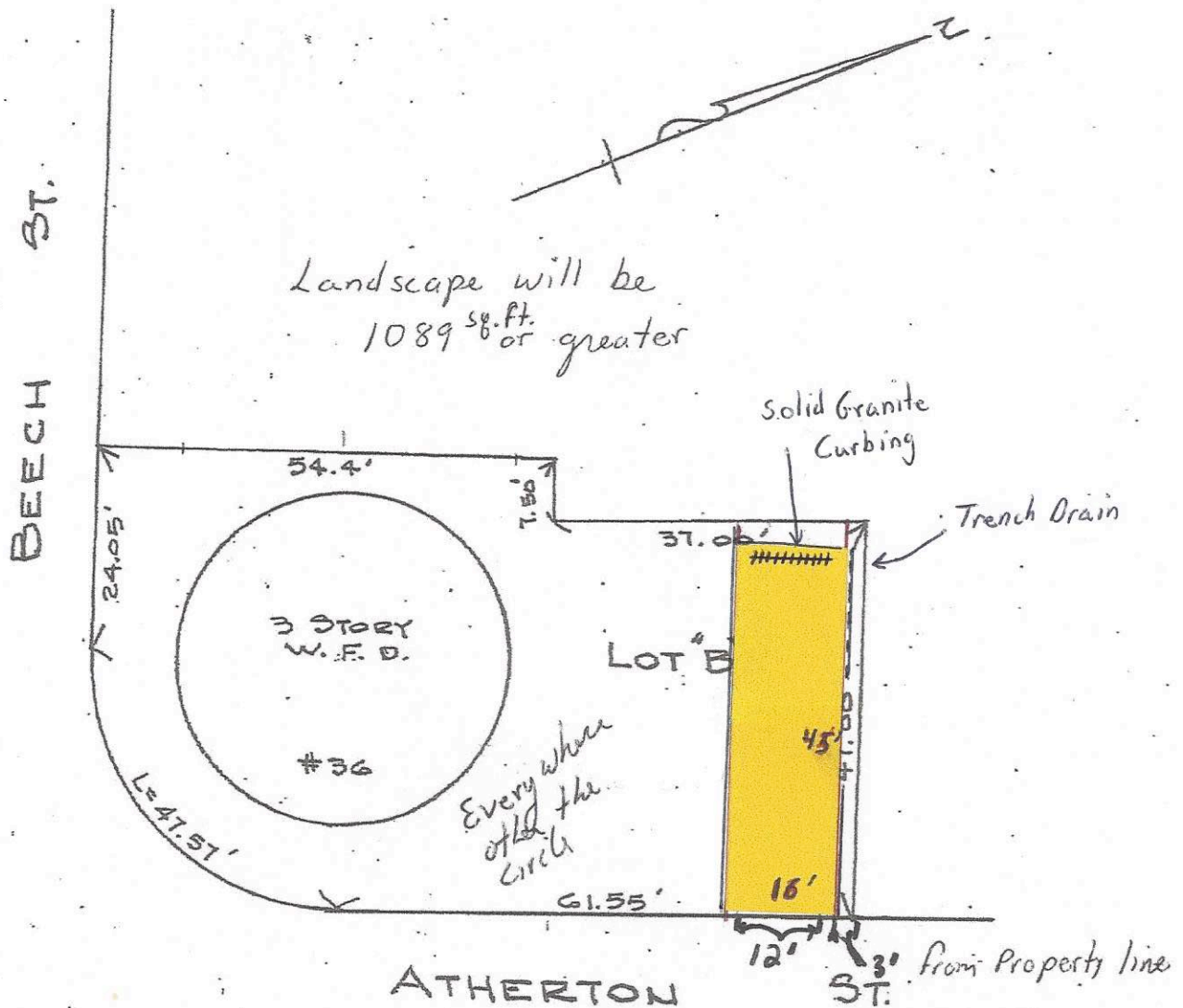
Van Slyck, J.D., New England Manufacturers and Manufactories, 1879, Vol. II, p. 767.



Looking southwest

MORTGAGE INSPECTION PLAN

for mortgage purposes only



NO DETERMINATION IS MADE AS TO THE LOCATION OF ANY RETAINING WALLS OR FENCES IN RELATION TO THE PROPERTY LINES.

LOCUS NOT ACCESSIBLE AT THE TIME OF INSPECTION.



*Certification is hereby made to

THE LAW OFFICE OF GEORGE C. MALONIS

that the existing structures shown on this plan are situated on the lot designated in compliance with the

CITY OR TOWN SOMERVILLE, MA

DATE OF INSPECTION: 11/16/06

SCALE: 1 inch = 20 feet

36 Atherton Street

S & H City Hall Pavers

3 PERMEABLE CONCRETE UNIT PAVERS
SCALE: NTS

Granite Curbs

Trench Drain
Running Bond
Border Detail

Granite
Curb

13325

