



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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT

Site: 22 Flint Street c.1857 Donohoe-Davis House
Case: HPC 2016.098 R1 Flint Street Local Historic District

Applicant Name: John A. Ciccolo, for Luna Properties LLC, Owner
Applicant Address: 136 Fletcher Road, Belmont, MA 02478

Date of Application: ~~November 29, 2016~~ May 21, 2018
Legal Notice: *Rebuild porches using Trex® flooring*
Staff Recommendation: ~~Denial~~ Re-issue of Certificates of Appropriateness and Non-Applicability
Date of Public Hearing: ~~January 10, 2017~~ June 19, 2018

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

See attached Form B.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

See attached Form B

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Proposal of Alteration:

1. Rebuild porches on front and side of the house using Trex® for the flooring;
2. Remove plywood and restore railings on second floor;
3. Restore railings, posts and spindles on wrap-around porch.



The Applicant recently bought the property which has been in Land Court for several years. The work done was at a remove from the owners, undertaken by a court appointed lawyer. See below for the content of the Certificates of Non-Applicability issued. Trex® was used on the landing of the rear side porch without permission. The new owner asked his tenant who is also a contractor to do the repairs when it became obvious that the porch was in poor condition. The tenant was unaware of the historic nature of the building and installed a Trex® porch floor to match the one at the rear entry. Rather than completely redoing the decking, the Applicant would like to retain it as they undertake there are other needed repairs.

The Applicant did not act upon the original Certificate and is now ready to begin the work. However, the Certificate has now lapsed. He would prefer not to paint the Trex® porch flooring as originally approved.

See the final pages for details and photos.

II. FINDINGS

1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

2013.077 Paul O'Donnell for Ryan & Miller C/NA

2014.073 Commissioner Paul O'Donnell for Richard Ryan & Gregory Miller C/A

1. The rubber roofing shall be replaced with rubber roofing in-kind to match existing.

1. The rear east side porch railings shall be replaced in wood to match existing wood railings in shape and size.

2. The posts shall be 4" x 4" with pyramidal caps to match existing.

3. The railings shall be 2" x 4" with a slight bevel on the top side to shed water.

4. The 1.5" balusters shall be set at a diagonal to match the existing and set to meet code distance.

2016.098 John A. Ciccolo

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 plywood panels on the second floor porch shall be removed. (C/A)

4. The second floor porch posts shall match the existing. (C/NA)

5. The rails and balusters of the second floor shall match those on the first floor in form and materials. (C/NA)

6. The porch decking shall be rebuilt using Trex® with a 4"-6" smooth wood or AZEK® wide edging around the entire perimeter. (C/A)

7. The decking shall be painted. (C/A)

8. An additional post shall be installed along the eastern side of the first floor porch. (C/A)

9. The brackets, railings, spindles and other details on the wrap-around porch shall be restored or replicated where necessary. (C/NA)

10. All porch posts shall be wrapped in wood to meet the original 6" x 6" dimensions and design. (C/NA)

11. The trim details where the fascia meets the roof shall be reproduced in kind. (C/NA)

12. The railing height shall be returned to the original height as seen where the porch meets the edge of the house. (C/A)

13. The porch skirt shall be made of vertical wood lattice. (C/NA)

14. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that it was executed in accordance with this Certificate and approved plans.

1. Precedence:

- Are there similar properties / proposals?

Rebuild porches on front and side of the house using Trex® for the flooring.

Synthetic materials have never been approved for use in Local Historic Districts where the material is visible from the public right of way. These were approved after the original hearing with the conditions noted in the table above

2. Considerations:

- What is the visibility of the proposal?

The porches are visible from Flint Street. Currently there are a hedge and trees ~~obfuscating-obscuring~~ the porch along the street. The house is only a few feet from the street.

- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*

The porches have been partially rebuilt using Trex® and pressure treated wood. The wood posts will be wrapped to give greater visual weight to the posts. The spindle array and other historic portions of the porch are currently stored in the back yard behind the garage. See photos at the end of the document.

- *Is the proposal more appropriate than the existing conditions?*

Trex® is not considered an appropriate material. The remaining alterations/repairs are in-keeping with HPC Guidelines with the exception of the original height of the railing on the ground floor. The Commission agreed in 2016 that edging of the porch with an appropriate material and painting the entire plane would make the alteration less obvious to passers-by and would be considered acceptable.

- *Is the proposal more in-keeping with the age, purpose, style and construction of the building?*

The removal of plywood panels on the second floor is more appropriate than retaining it.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

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 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.

- 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.*
- 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.*

The main wrap-around porch was discussed in the Form B. The deteriorated posts will be reconstructed to match the existing. The porch appears to be 30" or less from the ground level which means the railings could be returned to their historic height. See detail showing existing rail with original post next to the front door. The second floor porch is not original to the building. The proposed alteration to the porch would bring it back to an earlier condition as can be seen in the photos below.

Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements

1. *Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old. Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.*

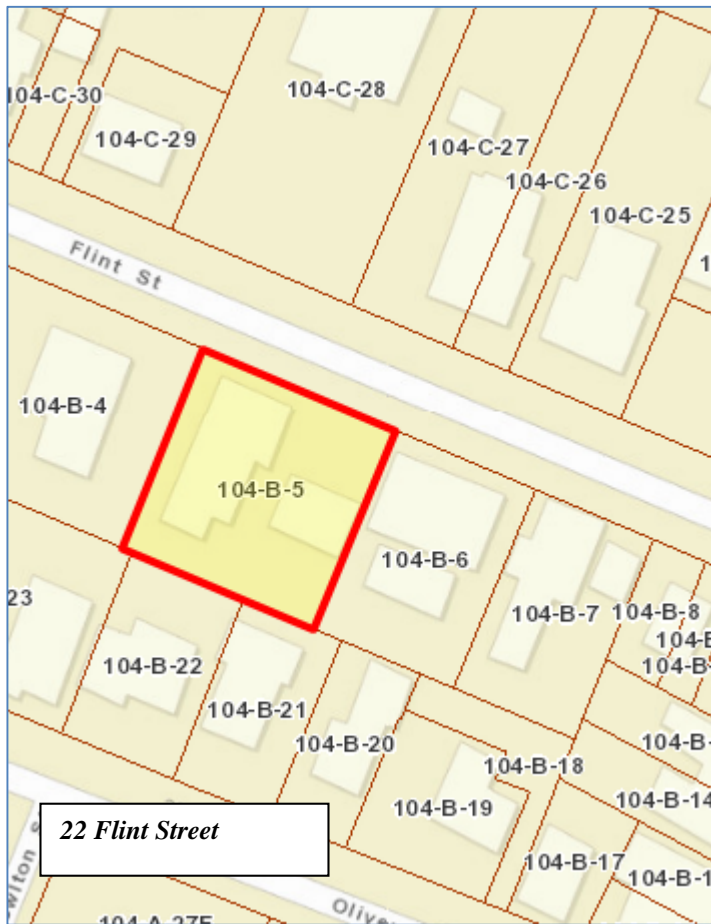
Other than the decking and the removal of plywood from the porches, there would be no other changes. The railings, posts, balusters, spindles, brackets and other details would be repaired and replaced in kind to match the original.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features of buildings and structures in the area, in accordance with the required findings that are considered by the Somerville Historic District Ordinance for a Historic District Certificate. This report may be revised or updated with new a recommendation or findings based upon additional information provided to Staff or through more in depth research conducted during the public hearing process.

Staff determines that the alteration for which an application for a Historic Certificate has been filed is not totally appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Flint Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff does not recommend that the Historic Preservation Commission grant a Certificate of Appropriateness for the use of Trex® or other synthetic materials but does recommend granting a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) to remove the plywood from the porches and issue the Applicant a Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA) for the repair and maintenance of the porches in-kind to match the originals to John Ciccolo, Owner for work on 22 Flint Street.**

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 plywood panels on the second floor porch shall be removed. (C/A)~~
- ~~3-4.~~ The second floor posts shall match the existing. (C/NA)
- ~~4-5.~~ The rails and balusters of the second floor shall match those on the first floor in form and materials. (C/NA)
- ~~6.~~ The porches shall be rebuilt using Trex® with a 4"-6" smooth wood or AZEK® wide edging around the entire perimeter. (C/A) a hard wood for the decking. (C/NA)
- ~~5-7.~~ The decking shall be painted. (C/A)
- ~~6-8.~~ The brackets, railings and spindles and other details on wrap-around porch shall be restored or replicated where necessary. (C/NA)
- ~~7-9.~~ All The porch posts shall be wrapped in wood to meet the original 6" x 6" dimensions and design. (C/NA)
- ~~8-10.~~ The trim details where the fascia meets the roof shall be reproduced in kind. (C/NA)
- ~~9-11.~~ The railing height shall be returned to the original height as seen where the porch meets the edge of the house. (C/A)
- ~~10-12.~~ The porch skirt shall be made of vertical wood lattice. (C/NA)
- ~~11-13.~~ Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that it was executed in accordance with this Certificate and approved plans.



22 Flint Street. 2013



22 Flint Street. 2016



