



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

PLANNING DIVISION  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

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**Site:** 42 Meacham Road

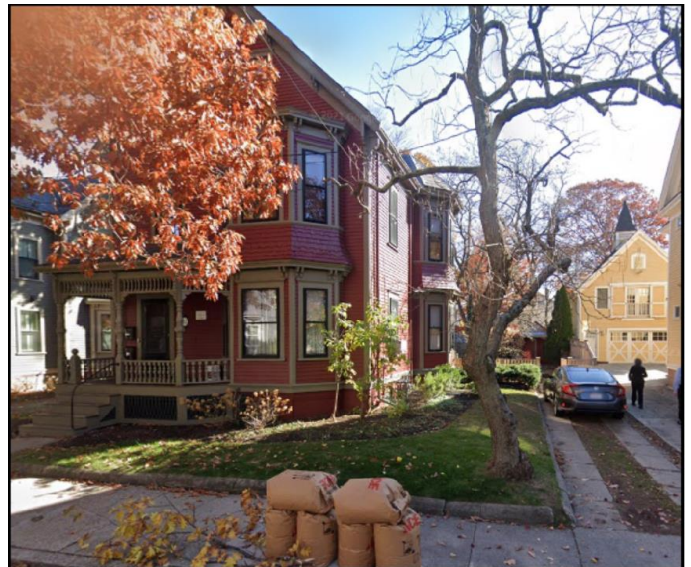
**Case:** HPC.ALT 2021.33

**Applicant:** Norma Elias

**Owner:** Saul Toby & Norma Elis

**Proposal:** *Exterior alterations\**

**\*Staff Note:** The Applicant was originally scheduled for the June 15<sup>th</sup> HPC meeting for this project. After the cancelled June HPC meeting, Staff met with the applicant to discuss their proposal. As a result of this meeting, the applicant submitted a second option for paving material. This is an updated Staff Analysis to reflect the submitted addendum.



**HPC Meeting Date:** July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

This item was originally scheduled to be heard at the June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 HPC meeting. Due to the failure of the State to take action allowing for municipalities to continue to hold public meetings via remote participation until September 1st, we were unable to hold a virtual meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on June 15<sup>th</sup>. As such all meetings were rescheduled to the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the HPC.

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.1891 Italianate house known as the Nellie F. Taylor House. This property is located adjacent to the Davis Square commercial area. A full description of the property is provided in the attached Form B survey held by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

**Proposal:**

A concrete and grass ribbon driveway currently exists. As a change in material and design is being proposed, this comes under the Commission's purview

The Applicant proposes the following:

- Expand width of driveway by two feet for the first twenty feet from the fence to the front property line.
- Replace concrete and grass ribbon driveway with pavers (two options provided)

## **II. ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL**

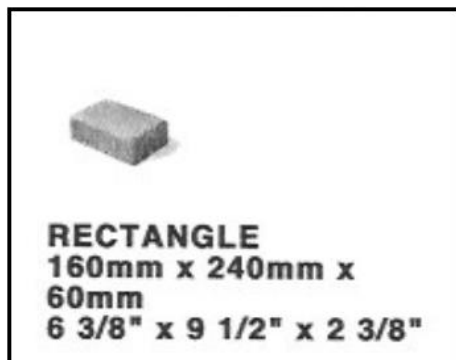
The HPC must make findings based on the Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in compliance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, and associated Design Guidelines. The portions of the regulations that are applicable to the proposed alterations are discussed below.

### **H. Landscape Features and Paving**

The Applicant proposes expanding the current width of the driveway by two feet for the first twenty feet from the fence to the front property line. and replacing the concrete and grass ribbon driveway with pavers.

**Applicant proposal:** The Applicant has submitted two proposal options for the Historic Preservation Commission's review. These options are discussed below.

**Option 1:** The Applicant proposes granite-colored pavers installed in a herringbone pattern for the top thirty-five (35) feet and paver stones in horizontal rows for the last ten (10) feet along the right of way. The ten (10) foot permeable apron is to satisfy a requirement from Somerville's Engineering Division. Further, the applicant proposes to widen the driveway by two (2) feet for the twenty (20) feet running from the fence towards the property line.



*Above: Proposed paver dimensions*



*Above: Detail of proposed granite paver*

### **Preservation Planning Assessment:**

The proposed granite paver color is more reminiscent of granite cobbles. Due to the period of the house and the vast brickworks active in Somerville at the time, brick would be a more likely choice of material rather than a granite cobble, were a property owner at the time able to afford to install a hardscaped walkway.

**Option 2:** The applicant has submitted a second option of brick pavers to be installed in a herringbone pattern for the top thirty-five (35) feet of the driveway and an apron of permeable pavers in a running bond or the first ten (10) feet of the driveway adjacent to the public sidewalk. The ten (10) foot permeable apron is to satisfy a requirement from Somerville's Engineering Division. The applicant proposes granite-colored pavers set in a soldier's-course along the borders of the driveway.



*Above: Proposed paver dimensions*



*Above: Detail of proposed brick paver*

**Preservation Planning Assessment:**

The brick pavers submitted as the second option for the driveway are a more accurate material for the style and age of the subject property. Brick would have been the likely material used if a property owner at the time were able to afford to install a hardscaped driveway.

**III. FINDINGS & VOTE**

When bringing the matter to a vote the HPC must state their findings and reasons on why they take their position. Staff presents the associated project components again below:

**H. Landscape Features and Paving**

- Expand width of driveway by two feet for the first twenty feet from the fence to the front property line.
- Replace concrete and grass ribbon driveway with paver stones

Should the HPC vote in favor of Option 1, Preservation Staff recommends the following conditions be included in addition to those listed in **Section IV ‘Recommended Conditions’** below.

1. The Applicant/Owner shall use granite-colored pavers set in a herringbone pattern with a 10-foot deep permeable paver apron set in a running bond installed where the driveway abuts the public sidewalk. The permeable pavers shall match the granite-colored pavers.

However, should the HPC vote in favor of design Option 2, Preservation Staff recommends the following conditions be included in addition to those listed in **Section IV ‘Recommended Conditions’** below.

1. The Applicant/Owner shall use brick-colored pavers set in a herringbone pattern with a 10-foot deep permeable paver apron set in a running bond installed where the driveway abuts the public sidewalk. The permeable pavers shall match the granite-colored pavers.
2. The Applicant/Owner shall use granite-colored pavers in a soldier course bordering the driveway.

**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. Failure to seek approval for changes may delay final signoffs.

4. Reserved for description of driveway design, material, and installation option approved by the HPC.
5. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at [historic@somervillema.gov](mailto: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.