



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

May 18, 2021
Case: HPC.ALT 2021.26
Site: 56 Meacham Road

ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY
STAFF REPORT

Site: 56 Meacham Road

Applicant: Sun Sasongko & Jackie Nice

Owner: same as applicant

Petition: *Replace asphalt shingle roof with natural slate roof; replace aluminum gutter with copper gutter*

Note: the Applicant also proposes to change the shingled siding on the dormer cheeks to paneling.

HPC Hearing Date: May 18, 2021



I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- 1. Subject Property:** The subject property is historically known as the Simpson House built c. 1874. Historical and architectural information can be found on the Form B (appended).
- 2. Proposal:** The Applicant seeks the following approvals:
 - a. Replace asphalt shingle roof with natural slate roof
 - b. Replace aluminum gutters with copper gutters
 - c. Replace shingling on dormer cheeks with paneling

II. FINDINGS

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.

A. Replace asphalt shingle roof with natural slate roof

The applicable Somerville LHD Design Guideline is ***B. "Roofs"***.

Preservation Planning Staff has found evidence in old building permit files that a slate roof once existed on this property. Therefore, restoration of a slate roof is an appropriate application for this property.

Applicant Proposal: The Applicant/Owner seeks permission to replace the asphalt shingles with slate.

Preservation Planning Assessment: Research by Preservation Planning Staff revealed that the slate roof was removed by a prior property owner in 1947. The proof of this is found in the archived building permit info below:

PERARCIV-D3 INSPECTION SERVICES, PERMIT DISPLAY SCREEN
MULTIBASE INQUIRY AND REPORTING SYSTEM
PROVIDED BY CITY OF SOMERVILLE - MIS DEPT.
ARCHIVES YEARS 1895-1983 INQUIRY
Permit Code: BP Building Permit
YEAR Bk# Permit# SFX DUP#
1947 1 349 00
Real Acct# 10-06258010 TAXED W/S Acct# 322099001
Date of Approval APR 10, 1947
Location: 56 MEACHAM RD SNGL-FAM-RES
Map Coordinates: M/B/L 22 H 23 Ward: 0 Prct: 0 NO CENSUS W/P
Last Name, First Init'l : FRAYER, W
Inspection data
Fee Paid: 5.00 Insp-ID: WGH

Est Const Cost: 300.00 Group :
Description-1 : REROOF W ASPHALT REMOVE SLATE
Zone :
Comment-1 : # Units:
Comment-2 : Ward :
Last entry: JLS DATE: FEB 24,1993 TIME: 08:54:40
User Logon: KPC DATE: FEB 12,2014 TIME: 15:19:58
F1-Return to Find Mode F5-Select List
** Display Mode ** VIA STREET

Based on the information provided by the applicant's contractor with the application, a combination of rectangular and fish scale slate design is appropriate for this structure. Fully fish scale or fully rectangular (same or mixed colors) would also be appropriate for this property.

HPC Determination:

- The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complies with the Design Guidelines.
- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

B. Replace aluminum gutters with copper gutters

The applicable portion of the Somerville LHD Design Guidelines is **B. Roofs**, the relevant portion reading as follows:

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.

Applicant Proposal: The Applicant/Owner seeks to replace aluminum gutters with copper gutters.

Preservation Planning Assessment: A house of this period would have had wood gutters, if it had any gutters at all. These wood gutters would have been lined with lead or zinc or, if unlined, would have had to be treated regularly with linseed oil.

Installation of wood gutters where none have existed for some time, is impractical in this day and age.

Replacement aluminum gutters that are the color of the side of the house against which they (and the downspouts) rest, will be less evident and will more closely approximate a painted wood gutter than will copper.

HPC Determination:

- The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complies with the Design Guidelines.

- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

C. Replace shingling on dormer cheeks with paneling

The applicable portion of the Somerville LHD Design Guidelines is *D. Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements*.

The Design Guidelines also state that changes to specific characteristics of a property should be based on photographic evidence. There is no photographic evidence available that suggests that the dormer cheeks were ever paneled. The example provided is from a house with a comparatively more ornate dormer cap than that which has existed at 56 Meacham Road. Given the modesty of the house at 56 Meacham and the typical treatment of such modest houses during the Second Empire period, slate roofing material or clapboard/shingle siding is the most appropriate treatment for the dormer cheeks on this property. Unless other evidence is uncovered underneath the extant shingles, paneling on the dormer cheeks is stylistically too sophisticated for this property.

HPC Determination:

- The HPC must determine if, based on a review of the documentation presented, the proposed project complies with the Design Guidelines.
- The HPC must structure their motion to include their own specific findings on the proposed project.

III. RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

Should the HPC decide to grant a Certificate of Appropriateness (CA), Preservation Planning suggests the following conditions to add to any approvals:

1. All relevant permits shall be obtained from ISD and all other departments, boards, or commissions prior to the start of work.
2. The Applicant/Owner shall upload their Certificate of Appropriateness to ISD's permitting system.
3. Any changes made to this proposal as a result of reviews by other permit-granting entities shall be submitted in the form of a new application to Preservation Planning for review and approval by the HPC.
4. The asphalt shingle roof shall be replaced with a natural slate shingle. Patterning may include rectangle, fish scale, or a combination of the two.
5. The dormer cheeks shall be shingled, clapboarded, or slate-roofed, but not paneled.
6. The gable caps shall be restored in-kind with no change in design, dimension, or material.
7. Gutters and downspouts may be copper or aluminum. If aluminum, gutter and downspout color shall match the color of the portion of the house against which each rests.

8. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning at historic@somervillema.gov a minimum of **15 business days prior** to final ISD sign-off on this work so that Preservation Planning or their designee can confirm that the project was completed according to HPC approvals.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.197
Historic Name:	Simpson House
Common Name:	
Address:	56 Meacham Rd
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	Davis Square
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	c 1874
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	Second Empire
Use(s):	Single Family Dwelling House
Significance:	Architecture
Area(s):	SMV.N: Campbell Park - Meacham Road Historic District
Designation(s):	Local Historic District (10/31/1989)
Building Materials(s):	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Vinyl Siding; Wood



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

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

LHD- 10/31/89 (10)
PI-DAVIS SQ
USGS- BOSTON
CELTA

AREA

FORM NO.

☒ Davis Square

197



SOMERVILLE

Address 56 Meacham Road

Historic Name Simpson

Present residential

Original residential

DESCRIPTION

pre-1874

Research maps / visual analysis

Mansard cottage

Architect

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

Exterior Wall Fabric synthetic siding

Outbuildings

Major Alterations (with dates)

Condition fair

Moved Date

Acreage 2908 sq. ft.

Setting East side of well established residential street of late 19th century dwellings of varying architectural elaboration.

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

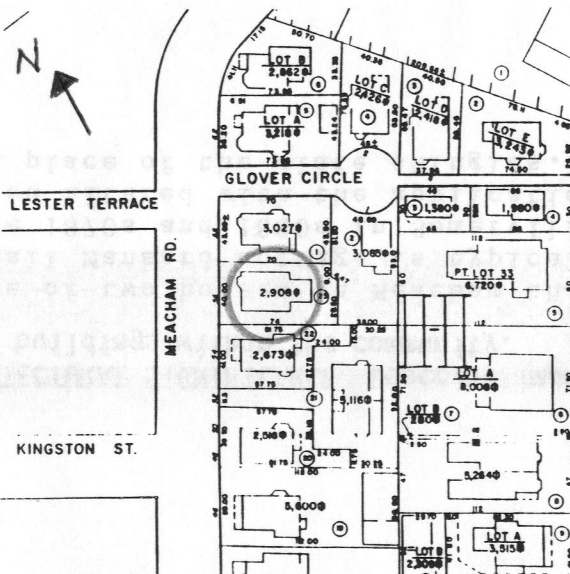
Organization Somerville Historic Preservation Commission

Date March, 1988

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.

One of two houses on Meacham that pre-date the 1890s development, this small Mansard cottage is typical of the modest housing that was built in the 1870s and 1880s in Somerville. The form is basic and this house has been altered with the application of synthetic siding and asphalt roofing in place of the slate shingles.

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

This is one of two houses that was built in the 1870s and pre-dates any development in the immediate area. Although the subdivision was laid out in 1847 by George Meacham there was no development until the 1890s, with the exception of the two mansard cottages, #56 and #64. Much of the land on Meacham Road was owned by Henry Glover and Charles H. Saunders of Cambridge in the 1870s and 1880s. Glover, a real estate investor from Cambridge built many of the houses, sold some, and retained others for rental income.

Much of the Davis Square area became home for railroad and streetcar commuters and is evidence of the suburban building boom of the late 19th century. Streetcar service along nearby Massachusetts Avenue to Porter Square and to Davis Square provided easy access to Boston and Cambridge for employment. This area was also home for many Somerville workers. By the 1870s Davis Square was evolving into a commercial center with several commercial blocks and good transportation with the Somerville Horse Railroad Company and the Boston and Maine Railroad.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1. Atlas of Middlesex County, Somerville: 1874 ("Simpson & Glover"), 1884 ("Simpson and Glover"), 1895 ("H.R. Glover").
2. City Directories, 1890s
3. Registry of Deeds, Middlesex County: Book 1262, Page 387.