



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 / District(s): 8 Mount Vernon Street
Case: HPC 2014.089

Applicant Name: Barbara Castro
Applicant Address: 8 Mt. Vernon Street

Date of Application: June 25, 2013
Legal Notice: *Modify windows and reshingle.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: November 18, 2014

I. Building Description

Architectural Description:

The subject structure is a 2½ story, two-family dwelling in the Greek Revival style with a side hall interior plan. Architectural details to note are the Doric portico that extends the width of the front façade, paneled corner pilasters that extend the full height of the building, and full-length first floor windows. While many dwellings along the Mt. Vernon streetscape are similar in style and detailing, this is an excellent and intact example.

Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel: The structure, c. 1840-1850, is illustrated on the

1852 Draper Map and is noted in the MHC survey form as the Ebenezer Davis house. Ebenezer was a maritime inspector in Boston and is an early member of the East Somerville community.

8 Mount Vernon Street, 2012



II. Project Description

Proposal of Alteration:

The Applicant was approved for the following changes in July 2013. The work was not able to begin within a year; therefore, the Applicant is required to come back before the HPC for a new approval.

The aluminum window currently located on the second floor of the rear facade would be replaced with a historically appropriate wood window or be replaced with an existing historic window currently located on the rear of the first floor, which is not visible from a public way.

Two small square windows on the first floor of the left side facade would be removed, infilled and reshingled to match the existing facade. One non-historic window on the right side facade would be removed and replaced with two hardwood windows and frames, which would match the existing historic windows below.

III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

June 2012, the HPC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (HPC 2012.060) for the Applicant to cover a concrete wall and chain-link fence at rear of property with fieldstone to the height of 8' 5".

July 2011, the HPC issued a Certificate of Non-Applicability (HPC 2011.068) to remove paint from exterior wood trim; repair damaged and rotten wood; replace in-kind to match existing trim as needed; and repaint.

March 2011, the HPC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (HPC 2011.036) to cover a concrete wall and chain-link fence at rear of property with fieldstone to the height of 6'; and construct a low stone wall around the garden area next to the driveway and the sidewalk.

November 2010, the HPC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (HPC 2010.083) to install a metal fence with gates along the driveway and sidewalk property line.

July 2013, the HPC issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (HPC 2013.035) for the changes proposed above.

There are a number of earlier Certificates issued for this property as well, since the current owners have been updating and enhancing this historic structure for close to ten years.

2. Precedence:

The HPC previously approved this request.

The relocation of windows is a common request; however, the replacement of non-historic windows with historically appropriate or replicated windows is less common.

3. Considerations:

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The proposal- relocating windows on the right side facade, removing windows from the left side facade, and replacing a non-historic window with a historic window- would be highly visible.

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

The building has been well maintained since the current owners have taken an interest in restoring and enhancing their home.

The primary purpose of the Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Local Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the architectural heritage of the City. 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 affect their present architectural integrity.

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

Features described in the Form B, such as the portico, will not be altered as a result of this proposal. While one historic window on the rear façade would be relocated on the rear façade, this feature is not being removed and the fenestration pattern is being improved.

- 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.*

The non-historic windows and doors proposed to be removed have not developed significance and are composed of materials that will not withstand the life of the building.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the appropriate Specific Guidelines as set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

Windows and Doors - Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce door and window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash or doors, or air conditioners.

Although window and door openings will be relocated, the Applicant proposes to install historically appropriate windows and doors to replace these non-historic features. In addition, the features whose locations are to be altered are not known to be part of the original fenestration pattern.

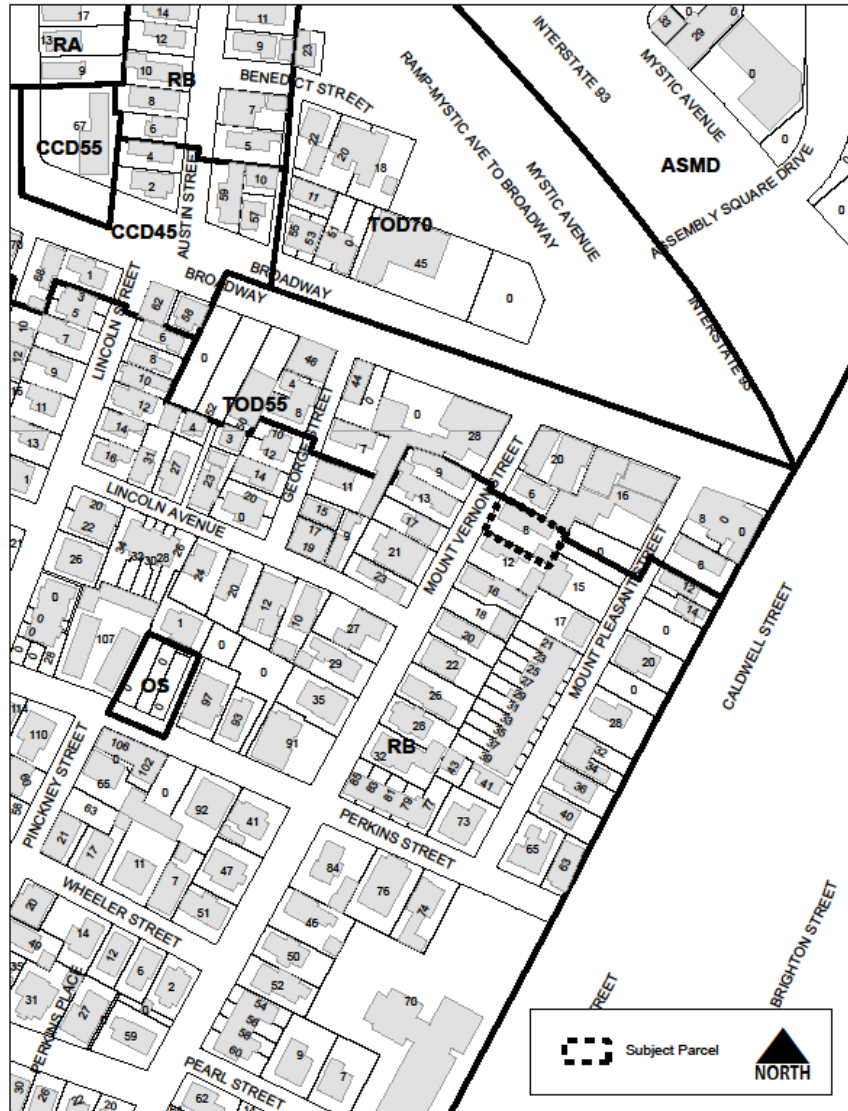
III. Recommendations

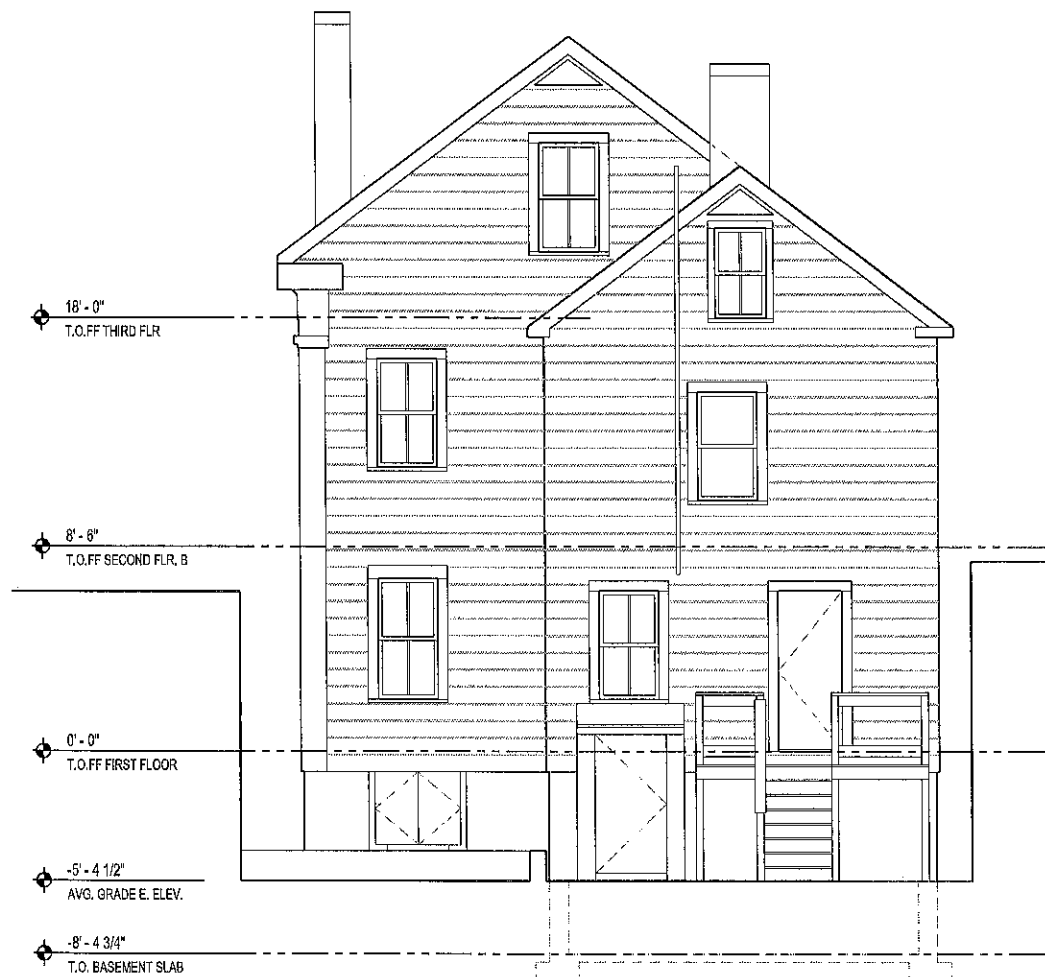
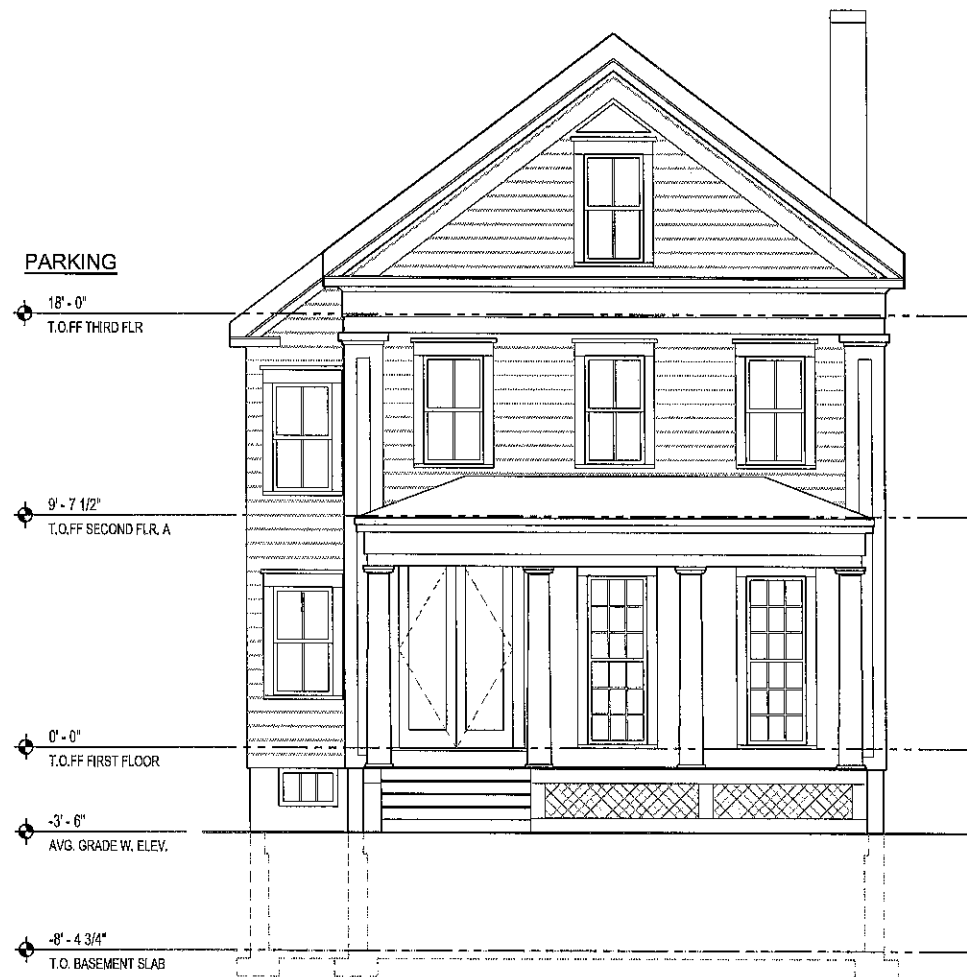
The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features 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 appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the 8 Mt. Vernon Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Barbara Castro a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove and/or relocate windows on the right, left**

and rear facades at 8 Mt. Vernon Street. Alterations shall be done in accordance with submitted plans: Sheets AX201, AX202, A202, AX203, & A203 (all dated 12/08/2011, except A203 is dated 7/02/2013)

8 Mount Vernon Street





MT. VERNON STREET
RENOVATIONS
MOUNT VERNON STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145

DATE: 12/08/11
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

EXISTING
ELEVATIONS

AX201

EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

2

EXISTING EAST ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

1



MT. VERNON STREET
RENOVATIONS

MOUNT VERNON STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145

DATE: 12/08/11
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

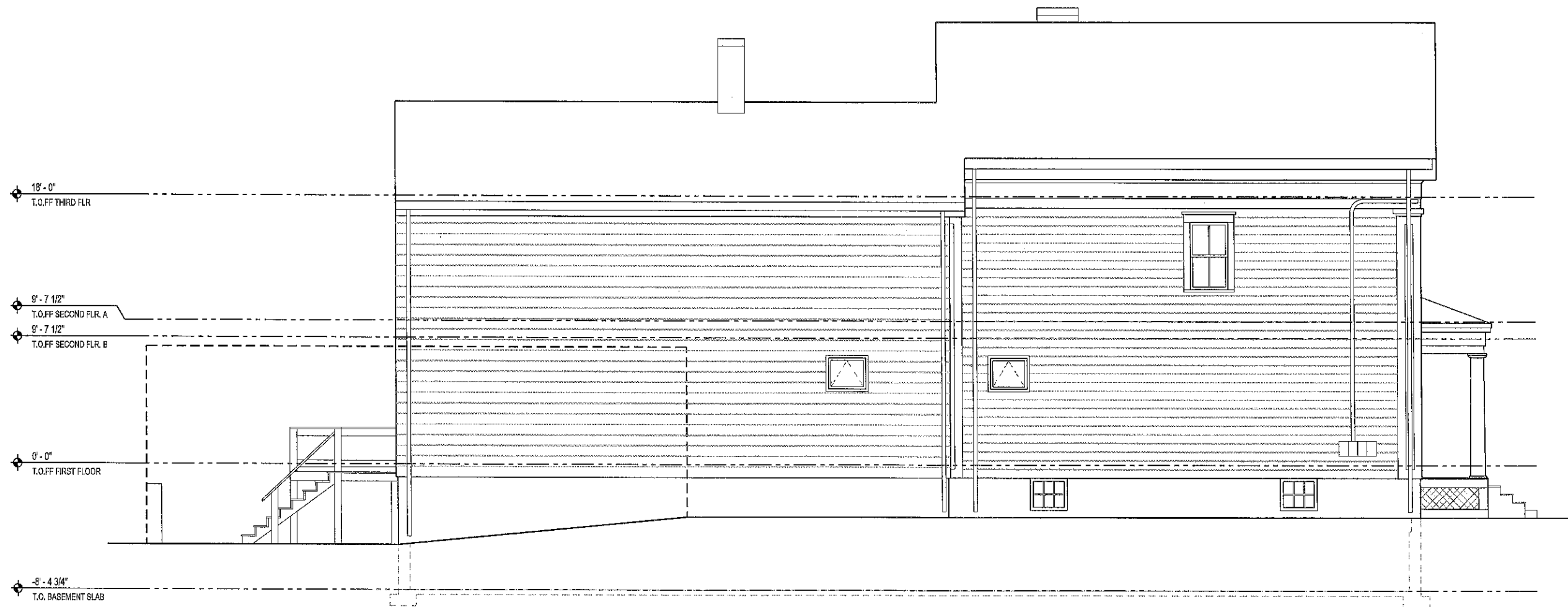
EXISTING
ELEVATIONS

AX202

EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

1



MT. VERNON STREET
RENOVATIONS

MOUNT VERNON STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145

DATE: 12/08/11
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

EXISTING
ELEVATIONS

AX203

EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

1



MT. VERNON STREET
RENOVATIONS

MOUNT VERNON STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145

DATE: 12/08/11
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

PROPOSED
ELEVATIONS

A202

PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

1



MT. VERNON STREET
RENOVATIONS

MOUNT VERNON STREET
SOMERVILLE, MA 02145

DATE: 12/08/11
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

PROPOSED
ELEVATIONS

A203

PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION

1/8" = 1'-0"

1