



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT**

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Site: 46 Atherton Street J. O. Frost - Swan Greek Revival Double House  
Case: HPC 2016.106 Single Building Local Historic District  
Spring Hill National Register Historic District  
Applicant Name: Jeff Martinez & Annabel Realf, Owners  
Applicant Address: 46 Atherton Street, MA  
Date of Application: December 22, 2016  
Legal Notice: *Repave walkways and driveway with pavers; alter rear porch*  
Staff Recommendation: *Conditional Certificate of Appropriateness*  
Date of Public Hearing: January 17, 2017

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Historic and Architectural Significance

See attached survey form.

Existing Conditions

46 Atherton is a Greek Revival two family attached to a 3-condominium entity that occupies the west side of the house. Both sides of the house are in fair to poor condition with the 46 Atherton side being in slightly worse shape due to lack of maintenance. No building permits were found for work after 1951.

Proposed Work and Recommendations

The owners recently purchased the home because of its potential. Their plan is to phase the needed work, depending on their financing and budget. At this time they plan to alter the pathway, revise the approved driveway material and location and revise the plans for the al.

The long term plan will be to repair/ replace rotten trim, remove and replace all vinyl windows, restore the cupola, repair and level the front porch which has a severe sag, and perform general maintenance and landscaping.

*1. Proposal of Alteration:* (see attached architectural drawings)

- 1) Remove walkway on the eastern edge of the porch.
- 2) Replace concrete walkway to central entry and replace with pavers to match those shown.
- 3) Install a second walkway along the east side of the house and alongside the driveway to the rear entries.
- 4) Revise proposed driveway material to use pavers.
- 5) Revise previously approved plans for rear/side decks.

The Engineering Division has requested further permeability of the ground surrounding the house. Due to the lot size, they have requested changes in materials and the configuration of the porches.



## II. FINDINGS

### 1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

The owners have recently received Certificates of Appropriateness and Non-Applicability for work on this property.

1. An egress and deck/ porch on the rear ell done in a classic style (see attached architectural drawings, and porch example).
  - a. The posts shall be no less than 6" square with simple toppers.
  - b. The balusters shall be simple 2" stock.
  - c. The railings shall be of a generic style,
2. Reconfigure front elevation to the original style:
  - a. Remove door and picture window on left side of elevation;
  - b. Install 6/6 wood double-hung Andersen® Architect® series windows or Pella® or similar with no Lo-E glass and dark spacers sized to match the other originally sized windows on the facade;
  - c. Remove 3 vinyl windows from the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor elevation and
  - d. Replace with the same as 1<sup>st</sup> floor; and
  - e. The window sash shall have a dark color.
3. A 9' driveway providing tandem parking for 2 cars may be installed to the east of the building.
4. The driveway material shall be constructed of concrete, 9 feet wide with 6' of green space between driveway and property line, and 3' of green space between the driveway and house.

### 1. *Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*
  1. Remove walkway on the eastern edge of the porch.
  2. Replace concrete walkway to central entry and replace with pavers to match those shown.
  3. Install a second walkway along the east side of the house and alongside the driveway to the rear entries.
  4. Pave driveway with the same pavers.
  5. Revise previously approved plans for rear/side decks.

Considerations: The eastern entry will be replaced by a window and a walkway is no longer needed at that location. The proposed pavers were favorably commented upon at last month's Commission Meeting. These would be used throughout.

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The paths and driveway will be fully visible from Atherton Street. The rear entry will not be visible from Atherton Street.

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

The building has been altered with picture windows, vinyl windows and an added door on the main façade. Current siding is asbestos shingle. See photos.

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

Yes. The Applicants intend to bring the building back to its original style and form on the exterior.

- *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 walkways and rear entry are not mentioned in the Form B. The proposed driveway, path and deck changes will not affect an original fabric.

### ***Landscape Features and Paving***

*The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*

Design Guidelines do not address driveway or walkway materials or location. The alterations would not alter any essential landscape features.

*It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the structure and its newer surroundings.*

The surrounding environment has been significantly developed over the last hundred years. New materials have been submitted for the driveway approved in November as the concrete driveway was denied the Engineering Department. Therefore the Commission needs to approve the new materials.

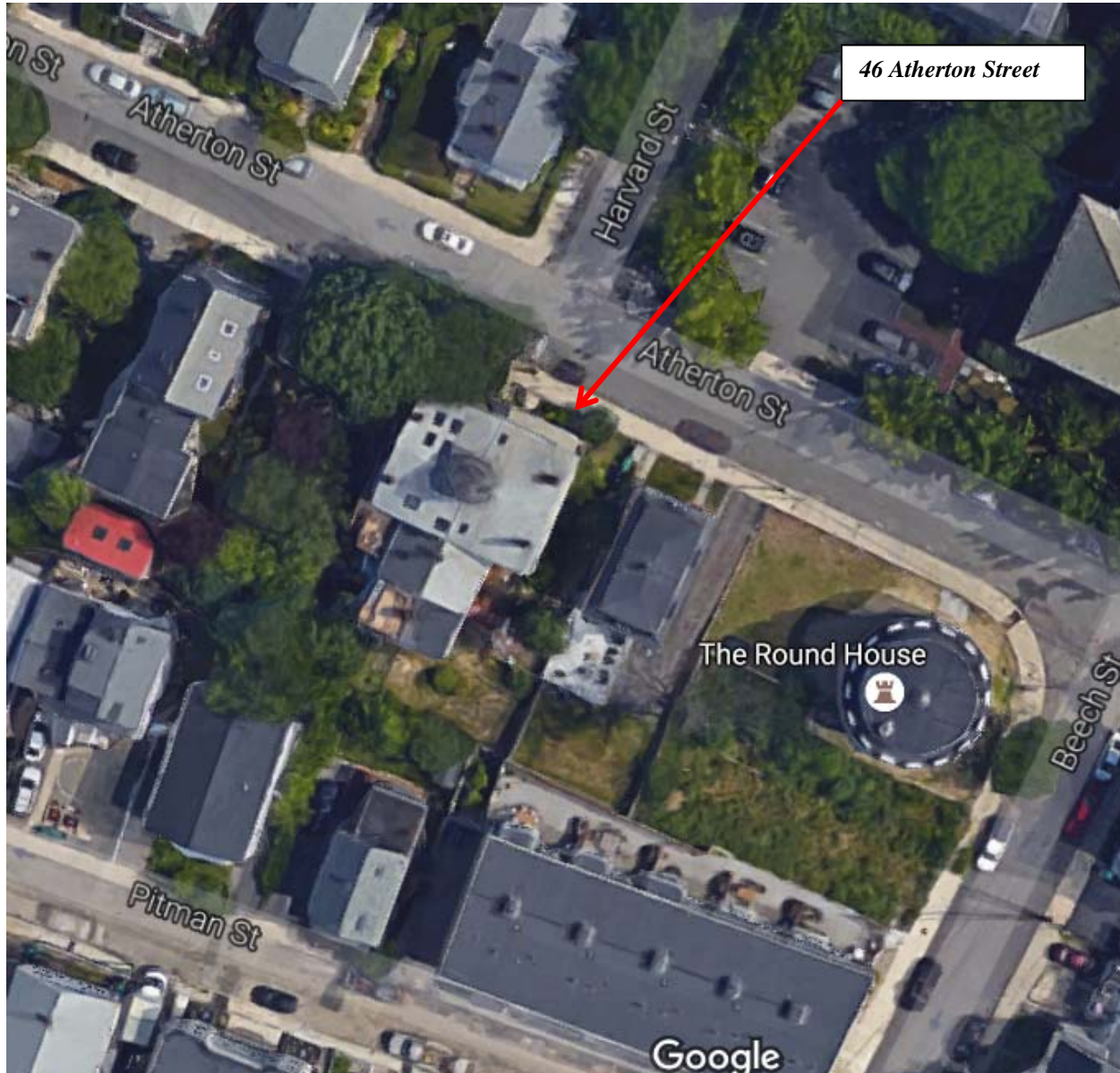
### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

*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 J. O. Frost - Swan Greek Revival Double House Local Historic District; and would not cause substantial detriment or derogation to the District therefore Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** and issue a **Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA)** to Jeff Martinez & Annabel Realf, Owners to make the following alterations and repairs to the historic fabric under the following conditions:

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 walkway to the eastern edge of the porch shall be removed. (C/A)
4. The concrete walkway to central entry shall be replaced with pavers to match those shown. (C/A)
5. A second walkway along the east side of the house and alongside the driveway to the rear entries shall be constructed with the approved pavers. (C/A)
6. The driveway shall be constructed with the same pavers. (C/A)
7. The previously approved plans for rear/side decks shall be revised. (C/NA)
8. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that it was executed in accordance with this Certificate and approved plans.





# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.91
<b>Historic Name:</b>	
<b>Common Name:</b>	Frost, J. O. - Swan House
<b>Address:</b>	44-48 Atherton St
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Spring Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	1091, 58
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	c 1850
<b>Architect(s):</b>	
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Greek Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Multiple Family Dwelling House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.O: Brastow and Harvard Street Subdivision SMV.AQ: Spring Hill Historic District SMV.AY: Somerville Multiple Resource Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Local Historic District (03/11/1985); Nat'l Register MRA (09/18/1989); Nat'l Register District (09/18/1989)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Asphalt Shingle Wall: Asbestos Shingle; 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.

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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](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

This file was accessed on: Tuesday, November 1, 2016 at 11:32 AM

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

NRD15/MRA - 9.18.89

(IC)

UND. 3/11/85

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Area <u>Spring</u>	Form no. <u>58</u>
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(91)



Somerville

P1-SPRING

s 46-48 Atherton St.

USGS BOSTON  
SECT B

ic Name Frost / Swan

iginal residence

resent

hip: ☒ Private individual

Private organization n/a

Public n/a

iginal owner J.O. Frost

Mrs. Swan

PTION:

Date ca. 1850

Source map research

Style Greek Revival

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric asphalt(?)

Outbuildings none

Major alterations (with dates) none

Moved no Date n/a

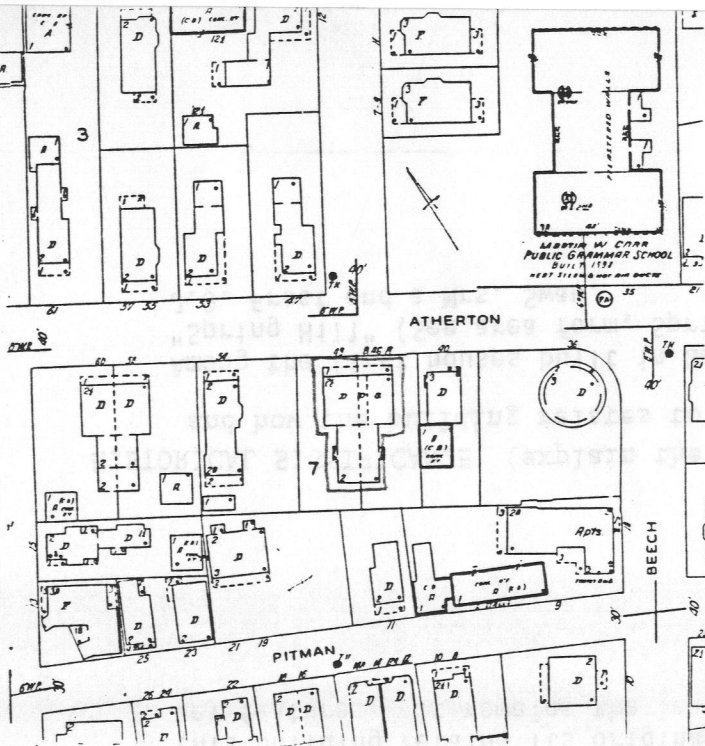
Approx. acreage less than one acre

Setting urban residential - in Spring

Hill district, mid to late 19th century

residential neighborhood, densely

populated



Recorded by Carole Zellie

Organization Somerville Historic Comm.

Date 1981

Staple additional sheets here

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

One of seven Greek Revival houses built on the Southern Slope of Spring Hill, this building retains its original windows, Doric columned porch, and other key features. It remains the least altered of the original group.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Among the first houses built in George Brastow's 1843 subdivision of "Spring Hill" (See area form, Spring Hill). Original owners included J.O. Frost and a Mrs. Swan.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Draper, 1852 Map of Somerville  
1874 Directory







# 46 Atherton Street

## Front Walkway and Rear Porch Proposal

Front Walkways: As discussed in the December 20th meeting, Replace front Walkways with permeable pavers, the same style as the proposed driveway (see attached image and plot plan)

Rear Porch: To comply with our maximum 35% impervious area, the porch needs to be rebuilt and resized to 4' wide. It is currently offset from the door by 22" and in poor condition. This will be done in the same style as the previously approved deck. Note the highlighted areas on the plot plan, and that this is not visible from the public way

This porch is not original to the house. It was most likely added in the late 90's

This would be a traditional style porch with white posts, white trim, and lightly stained stair treads.

The porch will be finished with Ash, Cedar, Redwood, or similar decay-resistant finish grade lumber. Posts will be a minimum 4x4 square, wrapped in finish grade lumber and topped with a simple pyramidal cap.

Railing will be traditional style with 2x2 pickets, painted white.

(see example picture and updated elevation)

CURRENT ZONE: RB

	REQUIRED	EXISTING	PROPOSED
SIDE YARD	8'	17.7'	14.1'
IMPERVIOUS AREA	35%	31.9%	35.0%

CURRENT OWNER: MARY STACK JUDGE  
TITLE REFERENCE: BOOK 12508 PAGE 194  
PLAN REFERENCE: ---

THIS PLAN WAS PREPARED WITHOUT A FULL TITLE EXAMINATION AND IS NOT A CERTIFICATION TO THE TITLE OF THE LANDS SHOWN. THE OWNERSHIP OF ABUTTING PROPERTIES IS ACCORDING TO ASSESSORS RECORDS. THIS PLAN MAY OR MAY NOT SHOW ALL ENCUMBRANCES WHETHER EXPRESSED, IMPLIED OR PRESCRIPTIVE.

**SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION:**

TO: JEFF MARTINEZ

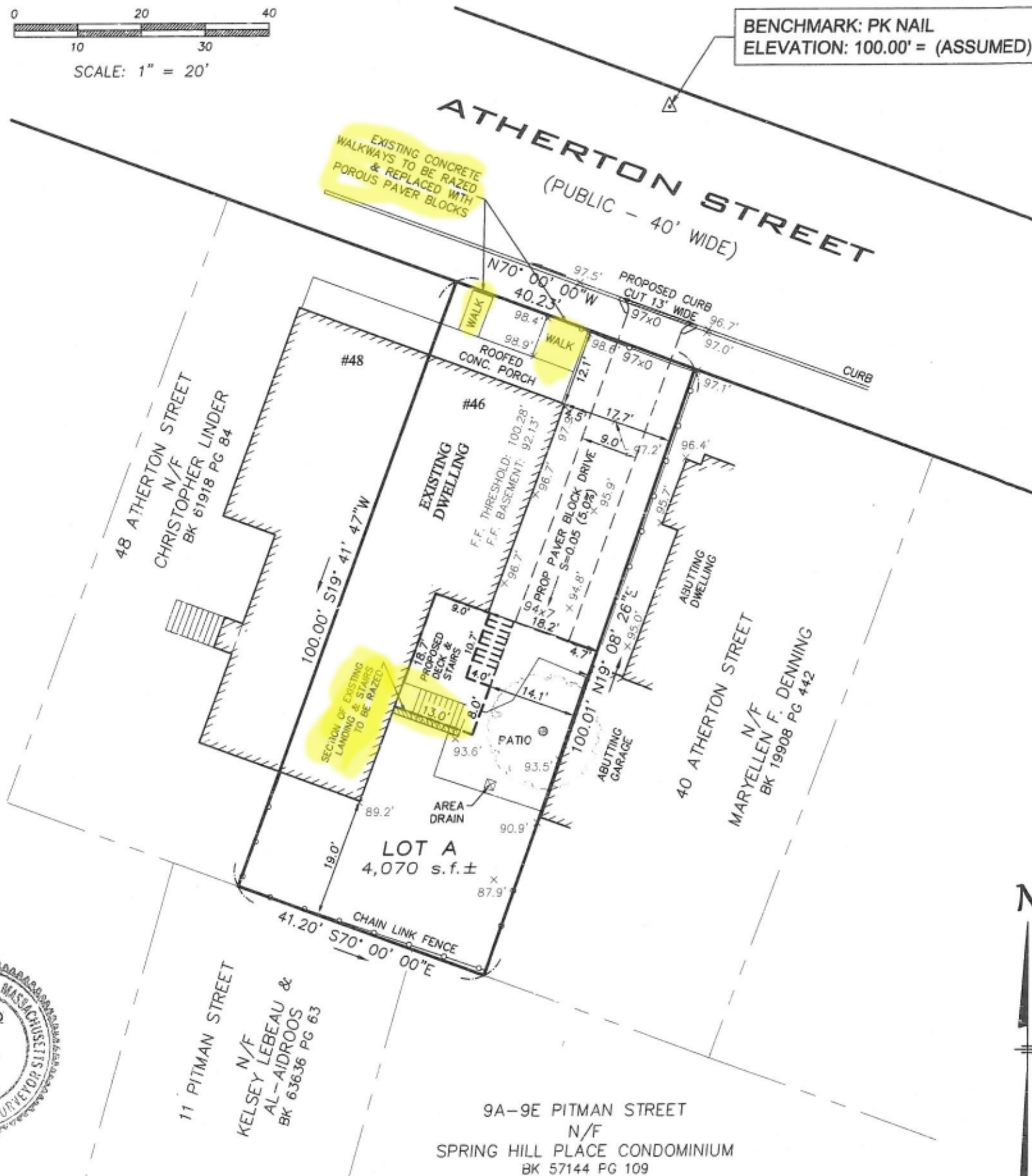
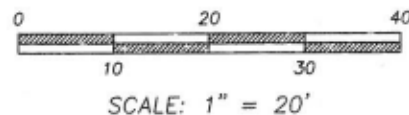
I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN AND THE SURVEY ON WHICH IT IS BASED WERE MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE PRACTICES OF LAND SURVEYORS IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS FOR A PLAN AND SURVEY OF THIS TYPE. THIS CERTIFICATION IS MADE ONLY TO THE ABOVE NAMED INDIVIDUAL(S) AND IS NULL AND VOID UPON ANY FURTHER CONVEYANCE OF THIS PLAN.

THE FIELD WORK WAS COMPLETED ON: NOVEMBER 22, 2016  
DATE OF PLAN: DECEMBER 5, 2016  
REVISED PLAN: DECEMBER 16, 2016 (DRIVEWAY PAVERS)  
REVISED PLAN: DECEMBER 19, 2016 (ADJUST PROPOSED DECK)

RICHARD J. MEDE, JR. P.L.S.

DATE:

12/19/2016



**CERTIFIED PLOT PLAN**  
46 ATHERTON STREET  
SOMERVILLE, MA.  
(MIDDLESEX COUNTY)

PREPARED BY:

**MEDFORD  
ENGINEERING  
& SURVEY**  
ANGELO B. VENEZIANO ASSOCIATES  
15 HALL STREET, MEDFORD, MA 02155  
781-396-4466 fax: 781-396-8052

PREPARED FOR:

JEFF MARTINEZ

DRAWN	CHECKED	FILE No.
KKG	RJM	19613



Existing walkways to be razed and replaced with permeable pavers





Permeable pavers, same style as previously approved for the driveway





Existing Rear Porch, Note 22" offset from door.  
Porch would be rebuilt 4' wide, to comply with maximum impervious area restriction



## Porch Railing Example





The Martinez Residence  
46 Atherton Street  
Somerville, MA

PROPOSED  
DECK ELEVATION  
3/16" = 1'-0"



A5.1