



**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: 37 Albion Street C. 1860 F. G. Williams House  
Case: HPC 2014.034 Single Building Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Paul Carroll, Carroll & Sons Roofers for Genevieve Daly, Owner  
Applicant Address: 64 Medford Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Date of Application: May 29, 2014  
Legal Notice: *Replace approximately 7' of wood gutter with aluminum*  
Staff Recommendation: *Deny Certificate of Appropriateness; Recommend Certificate of Non-Applicability*  
Date of Public Hearing: July 15, 2014

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**I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:** from the Form B.

*"The F.G. Williams House is one of the best preserved examples of a center gable Italianate remaining in Somerville. Located on a corner lot giving the house high visibility, it exhibits a traditional three-bay center entrance plan with a substantial rear ell. The dwelling displays fine Italianate detail including the center gable with trefoil window in the peak, round headed windows in the gable-end peaks, high profile bracketed window lintels, and a raking cornice with elaborately carved brackets. The center entrance with half side lights and transom is accentuated by the projecting open porch with squared columns and pilasters and a bracketed cornice."*

37 Albion Street 2014



**HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:** from the Form B.

*"Located on Albion Street, once known as Forest Place, the Frank G. Williams House was one of the first houses built in the "Polly Swamp" area. By 1880 there were at least five dwellings in this subdivision laid out by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century land owners, the Stearns family. Subsequent development of the immediate area occurred at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when William Stearns subdivided remaining lands of the family farm. Much of the housing stock included modest mansard cottages and two-family vernacular housing."*

*“Frank Williams, the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century owner and resident of this dwelling worked in Boston and dealt in kitchen furnishings.”*

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### *1. Proposal of Alteration:*

1. Replace approximately 7' of wood gutter with K style aluminum gutter.

The Applicant intends to replace the asphalt shingle roof with 3-tab shingles; replace rotted wood fascia with finger jointed pine fascia; re-flash the chimneys; and replace all the gutters with aluminum.

## II. FINDINGS

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

No Certificates have been issued for work on this property.

### *1. Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

*Replace approximately 7' of wood gutter with K style aluminum gutter.*

The Commission has rarely approved Certificates of Hardship or Appropriateness for the replacement of wood gutters with aluminum. These were 19R Aldersey Street (2012) where there was difficult transition between the wood and existing aluminum gutters on the carriage house at the rear of the property causing leakage where the materials joined and a unified approach was needed; 61 Atherton Street (2009) where ogee curve of the K-style metal gutters could blend with similar details on the cornice and eaves on the back ells of the building; and 27 Warren Avenue (2009) whose owner had demonstrated financial hardship and the Certificate was conditioned that when the time comes for replacement, the aluminum gutters must be replaced with wood gutters to match the currently existing ones.

### *3. Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The gutter is visible from Centre Street.

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

The house is generally well-maintained, although it does need to be painted and the roof needs to be redone. The existing gutter system is with the exception of approximately seven feet on the north-west side of the main block of the house been replaced with aluminum. See photos at the end of the document.

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

While this is only a small portion of the gutter system, wood gutters are the most appropriate gutter system for a house of this period. The loss of any historic fabric not replaced

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

The gutter system was not discussed in the Form B.

- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*

The deteriorated wood gutter should be replaced in-kind and a regular maintenance schedule should be planned.

- D. *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*

The requested replacement with K-style aluminum gutter is not based on any evidence of 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.*

The original material is wood. The profile should match the existing.

- 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 gutter is visible from the public right of way.

### **B. Roofs**

1. *Preserve the integrity of the original or later important roof shape.*

There will be no change in the roof shape.

2. *Retain the original roof covering whenever possible. If the property has a slate roof, conserve the roof slates. Slate is a near-permanent roofing material, and deterioration is generally caused by rusted roofing nails.*

The roof covering is not original to the building.

3. *Whenever possible, replace deteriorated roof covering with material that matches the old in composition, color, size, shape, texture and installation detail.*

The roof covering will be replaced with 3-tab asphalt shingles in-kind.

4. *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.*

The proposed gutter will not be the same as the existing and does not preserve the character of a wood gutter.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

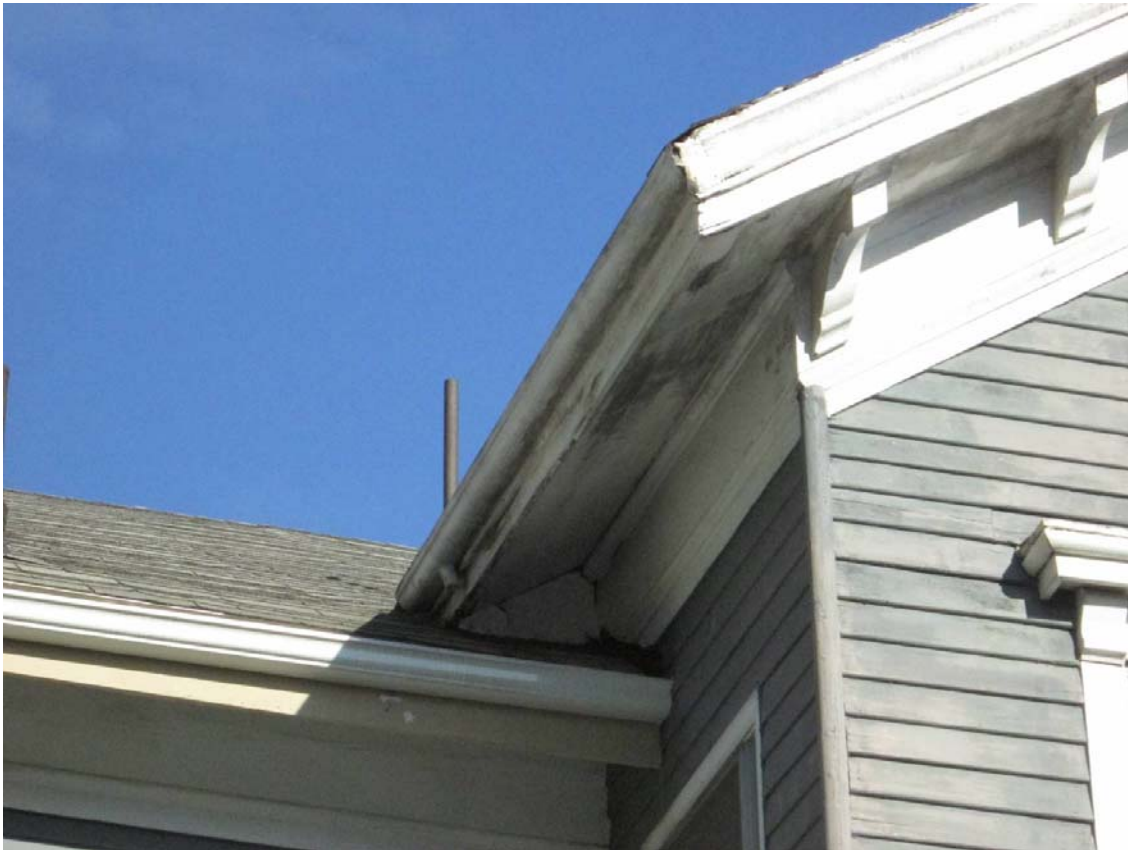
*The Staff recommendation is based on a complete application and supporting materials, as submitted by the Applicant, and an analysis of the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features 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 appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the 37 Albion Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission deny Carroll and Sons Roofing, contractor and Genevieve Daly, owner a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the replacement of wood gutter with aluminum. Further **Staff recommends that a Certificate of Non-Applicability** be issued with the following contingencies:

1. The roof will be stripped and re-shingled with 3-tab asphalt shingles with no ridge vent.
2. The chimneys shall be re-flashed with in-kind materials as needed.
3. The rotted and damaged fascia shall be replaced with wood fascia.
4. The aluminum gutters may be replaced with aluminum gutters.
5. The remaining wood gutter shall be replaced with a new wood gutter with the same size and profile as the existing wood gutter.
6. The down spouts shall have the same size and shape as the existing.







*37 Albion Street. 2014 - Details*