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

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

September 28, 2012

Peter Kaplan
RCG Aldersey LLC
17 Ivaloo Street, Suite 100
Somerville, MA 02143

Re: HPC 12.098 – 17-19 and 19R Aldersey Street, Somerville, MA

Dear Mr. Kaplan,

The Historic Preservation Commission (Commission) received your application for an alteration to a Historic District Property on August 29, 2012. After a review of the application and a site visit, Staff made a determination that (1) the proposal to remove and salvage existing carriage house roof slates, some of which are visible from the public right of way for repairs on main building; and replace the visible slate and asphalt shingles of the mansard on the carriage house with architectural or decorative asphalt shingles; replace existing wood gutters of house and carriage house with aluminum gutters; and remove existing picket fence are within the jurisdiction of the Commission and are subject to their review. Therefore, the proposed changes specified above have been reviewed by the Commission at their hearing on Wednesday, September 19, 2012.

In accordance with the Somerville Historic District Ordinance section 6.d.1, *Commission Powers and Duties*, which states, “[i]f the Commission determines that the construction or alteration for which an application for a certificate of appropriateness has been filed will be appropriate for or compatible with the preservation or protection of the historic district, the Commission shall cause a certificate of appropriateness to be issued to the applicant”, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to grant a **Certificate of Appropriateness** to the Applicant, Peter Kaplan, project manager for RGC Aldersey LLC contingent upon the following conditions:

1. Remove and salvage existing carriage house (19R Aldersey Street) roof slates for repairs on main building;
 - a. Any slates left over from repairs on the main house at 17-19 Aldersey Street should be used first on the front of the carriage house and then on the west side facing Vinal Avenue;



2. Replace slate and asphalt shingles on the remainder of the carriage house mansard with Slateline® architectural shingles; and
3. Remove existing picket fence.

The Commission based its decision on your application and presentation at the hearing, Staff recommendations, photographs of the house, plans by Peter Quinn Architects A-1 – A-5 dated August 29, 2012 and SKA-1a dated September 4, 2012, discussions and recommendations of the Commission members, and the Commission's adopted Design Guidelines for Historic Districts. The Commission gave priority to repairs of the main house, then the carriage house.

A determination of hardship is based on several factors. The granting of a certificate of hardship is based on "conditions especially affecting the building or structure involved, but not affecting the historic district generally." In other words, the hardship must be unique to the applicant's property and affect it in a particular manner. Under Massachusetts General Law chapter 40C, the approval of a certificate of hardship should not have "substantial detriment to the public welfare" or "substantial derogation from the intent and purposes" of MGL Chapter 40C. According to the purpose section of MGL 40C, local historic districts are "to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the commonwealth and its cities and towns or their architecture, and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings and places and the encouragement of design compatible therewith."

Since the aluminum gutters on the main facades of the buildings may be re-placed in-kind (section 7-24) of the Somerville Code of Ordinances which states that "Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance, repair or replacement of any exterior feature within the historic district that does not involve a change in design, material, color or the outward appearance thereof..." The transitions between the wood and aluminum are difficult, causing leakage where the materials join. The existing method of directing water away from the building did not protect the envelope adequately and needed a unified approach. Since the few remaining feet of wood gutters were not on the main façade and would have limited effect on the Aldersey-Summit District, the Commission voted unanimously (6-0) to grant a **Certificate of Hardship** on the following contingent upon the following conditions:

4. Replace existing wood gutters of house and carriage house with aluminum gutters but not on the carriage house porch.

Further the Code states that only an "alteration to the physical appearance or architectural feature visible from a public way" is subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission (section 7-17). Contingent upon this condition, a **Certificate of Non-Applicability** is issued for the work noted below:

5. Replace slate shingles with asphalt shingles on upper roof of carriage house (not visible);

17-19R Aldersey Street is applicable for a Certificate of Appropriateness under Sections 6.d.1 of the Somerville Historic District Ordinance. Therefore, your proposal was reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission on September 19, 2012 and they determined that the Certificates noted above will be appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the historic district. **This letter shall serve as Certificates of Appropriateness, Hardship and Non-Applicability for the work described above.** This Certificate is granted upon the condition that the work authorized herein is commenced within one year after the date of issue. If the work authorized by this Certificate is not commenced within one year after the date

of issue, or if work is suspended in significant part for a period of one year after it has begun, this Certificate shall expire.

Please take this letter to the Inspectional Services Department when applying for a building permit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristi Chase".

Kristi Chase
Preservation Planner

Cc: John Long, City Clerk
Paul Nonni, Sr. Building Inspector, Inspectional Services Division.
George Proakis, Director, Planning Division
Dick Bauer, Chairman, Historic Preservation Commission
J. Brandon Wilson, Executive Director, Historic Preservation Commission

