



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: 331-333 Broadway 1914 – The Princeton
Case: HPC 2013.075 Single Building Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Gerry Squires for Sprint Spectrum
Applicant Address: 101 Palisades Circle, Stoughton, MA

Date of Application: April 9, 2015
Legal Notice: *Install cell equipment & antennae*
Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness; Certificate of Non-Applicability
Date of Public Hearing: May 19, 2015

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: From the Form B.
Located at the northwest corner of Broadway & Langmaid Avenue, heavily travelled route with commercial and residential surrounds, the Princeton is one of Somerville's finest early 20th century apartment buildings. The four-story brick building has a recessed central entrance with a grey-stone elaborate surround and name plaque. This entrance is flanked by a single sash bay, a three-sash projecting bay and an end single-sash bay. The Princeton is distinguished by elaborate stone consoles, stone string courses, and a variety of stone lozenge and swag details at the windows.



331-333 Broadway 2015



HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

The Princeton is representative of the substantial growth in population in early 20th century Somerville, the increased need for housing and the accepted solution of apartment housing. Fine masonry apartment buildings such as the Princeton were constructed from the late 19th century well in to the 20th century, particularly on Winter Hill. The first masonry buildings in the area were rowhouses such as those at 392-400 Broadway, followed by apartment house construction as seen in the Langmaid Terrace Apartments at 359-365 Broadway.

Broadway had been a main transportation route throughout the

development of Somerville and in the late 19th century became a desirable residential area due to the easy access to transportation including the railroad and streetcar. Those living at the Princeton from 1916 seem to have middle management positions such as salesman, manager, assistant superintendent, clerk, broker, and police officer.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Proposal of Alteration:

1. Addition of 3 (1 not visible from public right of way) 2.5 Ghz Sprint antennas and RBH mounted on pipe mounts on the penthouses.
2. Addition of an equipment cabinet (not visible from public right of way).

See the final pages for details and photos.

II. FINDINGS

1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

333	Broadway	C/NA	Anthony Paone	2005.051	1. Renovate kitchens and bathrooms.
333	Broadway	C/NA	Anthony Paone	2006.071	1. Repair and replace rotted and damaged decorative balcony framing in aluminum as needed to match existing.
333	Broadway	C/NA	Sprint Spectrum LP	2012.071	1. Replace the three (3) existing panel antennas with three (3) new panel antennas mounted to the facade in approximately the same location as the existing antennas; 2. Paint new antennas to match the penthouse façade; 3. Mount remote radio heads to the base of the penthouse exterior; 4. Connect new antenna cabling to the equipment cabinets located in the courtyard below; 5. Install two cabinets and one utility cabinet on the existing platform within the courtyard; and 6. Replace the existing GPS antenna with a newer model in the same location as the existing GPS antenna.

1. Precedence:

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

1. Addition of 3 (1 not visible from public right of way) 2.5 Ghz Sprint antennas and RBH mounted on pipe mounts on the penthouses.
2. Addition of an equipment cabinet (not visible from public right of way).

3. Considerations:

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

1. Addition of 3 (1 not visible from public right of way) 2.5 Ghz Sprint antennas and RBH mounted on pipe mounts on the penthouses.
2. Addition of an equipment cabinet (not visible from public right of way).
The penthouses on the front side of the building are visible from Broadway on the uphill (west side) of the building and from School Street.

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

The penthouses currently have cell antennae. Additional equipment is located centrally on the roof of the building and not visible from the public right of way. See photos at the end of the document.

- *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 penthouses were not discussed in the Form B.

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

No repairs or alterations to the historic fabric of the building will be undertaken.

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

No architectural features will be replaced.

- 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.*

No new materials will be used.

- 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 penthouses on the front side of the building are visible from Broadway on the uphill (west side) of the building and from School Street.

B. Roofs

7. *Utility equipment, such as television antennae, air conditioners, solar collectors and other mechanical units should be restricted to the rear of the property or on portions of the roof that are not visible from a public way. If no other placement is possible, air conditioning and other cooling units on street facades should be of the slim-line type or set flush with the surface of the building and painted the same color as the window trim.*

Two proposed cell antennae will be located on the front of the penthouses on the south side and one on the rear which will not be visible. The other equipment will be located centrally on the flat roof and not visible from the public right of way.

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 derogatory to the Princeton Single Building Local Historic District at 331-333 Broadway; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Sprint Spectrum a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the installation of antennas on the penthouses of 331-333 Broadway and a **Certificate of Non-Applicability** for the remaining work that is not visible from the public right of way with the following contingencies.

- (1) All the antennae and mounts shall be installed as indicated in the plans provided for Sprint Vision T-1, C-1, Z-1, Z-2, Z-3, Z-4 dated 2/05/14, received on 4/9/2015 and painted to match the color of the penthouses.
- (2) All other equipment shall be placed where it cannot be seen from Broadway or Langmaid Avenue.





331-333 Broadway showing penthouse with visible antennae.



331-333 Broadway from School Street showing penthouses.