



**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: 139 Central Street c. 1889 William Veazie Rowhouses  
Case: HPC 2015.068 Single Building Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Michelle Filtreau for Devin Griffin, Owner  
Applicant Address: 139 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Date of Application: September 30, 2015  
Legal Notice: *Alter rear window.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness  
Date of Public Hearing: October 15, 2013

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**I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:**

This is the second one end of a set of 5 wood Italianate rowhouses with bracketed eaves. They are all side-hall plan with a small pedimented porch. Simple window hoods cap the casing. The brick foundation of #139 has been painted. The rear entries have all been altered in various ways. #139 has an open deck and a greenhouse window overlooking the yard and Medford Street.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:**

Located at the corner of Central and Medford Streets, this late 19<sup>th</sup> century row housed a number of mid-level tradesmen and their families. The closeness of the new Somerville Junction station contributed to the popularity of this section of Winter Hill along with increased rail service and new industries in the southern section of Somerville. These wood-frame rowhouses on Central Street were in response to the changing needs and were predecessors of the larger apartment blocks developed in other parts of Somerville.



**II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

*1. Proposal of Alteration:*

Replace greenhouse window with Marvin Integrity Wood-Ultrex Glider which will have Low E2 glass with no pattern or grills. <http://www.marvin.com/integrity/windows/wood-ultrex-glider> The exterior color is proposed to be Evergreen to match the upstairs original windows (two on the right). The exterior trim is proposed to be flat casing in Stone White or Cashmere, whichever ends up being the closest match to the existing trim on the other windows (will paint if necessary).

The Applicants request a slight increase in the size of the window in order to tie in more closely with the windows on 141 Central Street and 143 Central Street, which the Applicants understand to be the only house in the row with the original first floor rear windows. While the Applicants are not trying to copy these windows exactly, we want to bring the upper edge of our window up a few inches to align with the height of the windows on #141 and #143. The Applicants also want to introduce the “look” of two windows by putting in a glider (#141 has two casement windows and #143 has two double-hung windows).

Size: Current window dimensions (frame size): 3’ 6.25” wide x 3’ .5” high

Requested window dimensions (frame size): 3’ 11.5” wide x 3’ 11.75” high. The Applicants propose to keep the left side of the window lined up with the left side of the window above, and would extend out slightly to the right.

Casings, trim, and sill: The Applicants would also add a detail piece to the upper edge of the window to be consistent with the other four houses in the row. The house is currently the only one without this detail.

See the final pages for details and photos.

## II. FINDINGS

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

No owners of 145 Central Street have appeared before the Commission for any alterations or requested Certificates of Non-Applicability for repairs to 145 Central Street since 2001 when Staff started a running digital case list.

Certificates have been issued for work to other owners of this rowhouse.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 137 Central Street    3/11/2002 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replace all windows with Marvin® Tilt Pac wood, double hung, “Simulated Divided Lite” windows with or without internal spacer bar, except for basement and kitchen windows;</li> <li>2. Repair and replace rotted wood steps and front porch floor;</li> <li>3. Replace railing and balusters to match in-kind other buildings in the row of houses;</li> <li>4. Repair and replace structural members of the porch in-kind as necessary;</li> <li>5. Repair and replace porch skirt in-kind as necessary;</li> <li>6. Replace door hardware to an older style, retaining letter slot and knocker;</li> <li>7. Replace porch light fixture with one more in-keeping with the style of the house;</li> <li>8. Replace front white plastic gutter with one made of copper;</li> <li>9. Repair fence as necessary;</li> <li>10. Repaint; and</li> <li>11. Landscape front yard.</li> </ol> |
|---------------------------------|---|

137	Central Street	7/4/2003	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replace existing deck with new deck with <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Posts and balusters to match those on front porch (C/A);</li> <li>b. Brackets will match those in the eaves of the house (C/A); and</li> <li>c. Directional change of stairs (C/A);</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Remodel basement and back of house <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Replace small front windows with similar Marvin wood Tilt Pac windows to match the other replacement windows (C/A);</li> <li>b. Install 3 Marvin wood Tilt Pac windows and a French patio door on rear below deck (C/NA);</li> <li>c. Install wood trim in-kind to match existing (C/NA).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
137	Central Street	10/1/2009, 11/24/09	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repair and replace rotted and damaged clapboards in-kind as needed;</li> <li>2. Repair porch, replacing damaged floorboards in-kind as needed; and</li> <li>3. Repair and replace missing and rotted trim in-kind as needed. (C/NA) and 1. Replace the casement window on rear of building with Marvin Ultimate Double Hung Tilt-Pac window with simulated divided lights with casings to match the other existing windows on the property. (C/A)</li> </ol>
139	Central Street	4/25/2002	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install railings and balusters to match other existing properties in series of row houses;</li> <li>2. Rebuild front steps, porch floor, and skirt;</li> <li>3. Repair front door; and</li> <li>4. Repaint as needed.</li> </ol>
139	Central Street	5/14/2003	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install vents for second floor rear bathroom near downspout at rear.</li> </ol>
141	Central Street	9/19/2002	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replace vinyl gutters on porch with wood ones;</li> <li>2. Add newels to stair railing to match neighboring newels; and</li> <li>3. Replace plastic pane with glass in front door.</li> <li>4. Repair and replace flashing and wood gutters in-kind;</li> <li>5. Install gutter screens;</li> <li>6. Repair and replace porch roof and posts in-kind;</li> <li>7. Repair and replace sliding glass door in rear of house;</li> <li>8. Repair and replace clapboards in-kind as necessary; and</li> <li>9. Repaint and stain house.</li> </ol>
141	Central Street	9/15/2005	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Repair light on back porch;</li> <li>2. Install a lattice entryway to crawl space under front porch.</li> </ol>
141	Central Street	9/29/2009	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise the sill of the windows approximately 15" while retaining the central casing and lintel to permit the installation of counters on the rear of building, visible from the public right of way; and</li> <li>2. Install 2 casement windows.</li> </ol>
141	Central Street	8/24/2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remove/strip approx. 500 SF of rubber roofing;</li> <li>2. Install new ½" polyiso to deck; and</li> <li>3. Install new fully adhered rubber membrane to deck.</li> </ol>
143	Central Street	8/6/2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Replace existing wood sash windows with 2/2 replacement true divided light soft-coat or vacuum-deposit insulated wood sash windows.</li> </ol>
143	Central Street	6/18/2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Renovate the bathroom with the installation of new fixtures.</li> </ol>
145	Central Street	10/17/2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The replacement awning window shall have no muntins and shall fit the existing window opening with rails, styles and color to match the existing.</li> <li>2. The glazing shall have a Lo-E coating shall be the least reflective available.</li> <li>3. The flat 4" trim existing window cornice will be repaired, restored, or replaced in-kind to match the existing and re-installed in the same location.</li> </ol>

### 1. Precedence:

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

It should be noted that the rear of this and the other houses in the row have a variety of replacement windows in five configurations. The Commission has approved window replacements if they meet the following Guidelines: The windows are on the rear of the building or viewable from an oblique angle and from a distance that sash sizes and muntin profiles are not discernible; that the least reflective Lo-E coatings available be used.

### 3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

This property is the second furthest of the row from Medford Street. The rear of the building is totally visible from the street.

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

The rear of the building is visible from Medford Street. This unit has an open deck and a greenhouse window on the first floor. There are three windows on the second floor. No Building Permit was found for the installation of the existing greenhouse window which likely dates from the 1970s.

- *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.*
- 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 (LATER IMPORTANT FEATURES will be the term used hereafter to convey this concept).*
- 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 window is visible from the public right of way. The rear of the building is not described on the Form B. The existing window is altered from the original configuration but has not achieved any special significance. The greenhouse window is not a historically appropriate architectural feature. The proposed new window is no more inappropriate to the period of significance of the rowhouses than the existing one. The proposed new window will not fit in the existing opening being both taller and wider than the current. The casings will replicate the existing outer casings and window hood of the only remaining original window opening.

### C. *Windows and Doors*

- 1. *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.*
- 2. *Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, sill, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence. If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.*

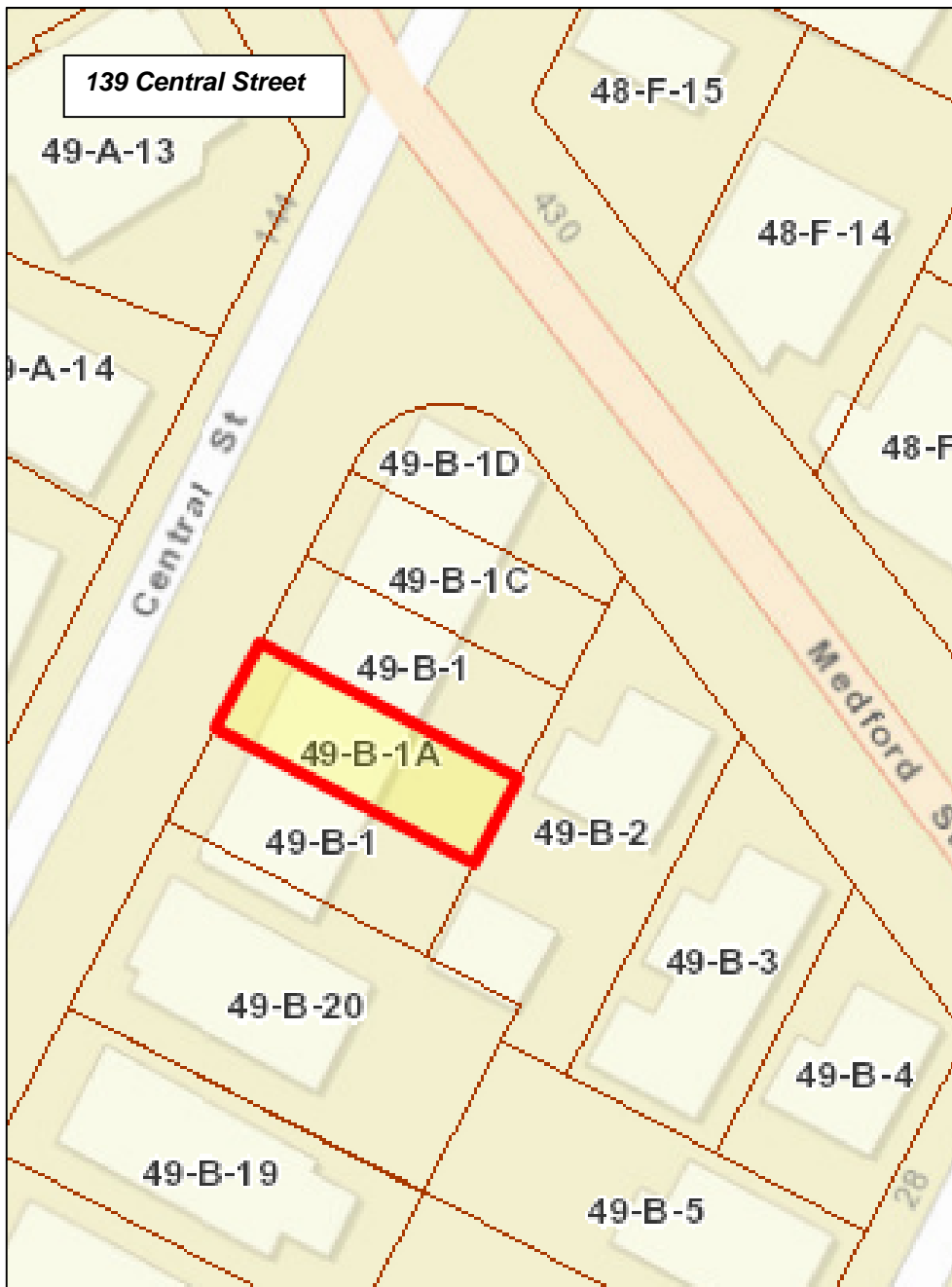
The window opening will be altered from its existing condition. The existing window is not original. There will be changes to the casing style. The finish will closely match the existing windows.

## 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 will not present further incongruities to the historic district and is therefore compatible with the preservation and protection of the Veazie Row Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant 139 Central Street a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the replacement of the greenhouse window on the rear of the building with the following conditions:

1. Applicant shall obtain all appropriate building permits prior to commencing work.
2. The greenhouse window on the rear elevation of 139 Central Street may be removed.
3. The window opening may be altered to be 3' 11.5" wide x 3' 11.75" high.
4. The window shall be Marvin Integrity Wood-Ultrex Glider.
5. The window shall have the least reflective Low E2 glass with no pattern or grills.
6. If the approval differs from the plans, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work;
7. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.



## Supplement to Application for Certificate of Appropriateness

Devin J. Griffin (owner)  
Michelle L. Filteau (applicant)  
139 Central Street  
Somerville, MA 02145

Date of Application: September 30, 2015

Proposal of Alteration:

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







<http://www.marvin.com/integrity/windows/wood-ultrex-glider>



### GLIDER

1 Wide XO and 2 Wide XO-OX Opera

M.O. (mm)	3-0 (914)	4-0 (1219)
R.O. (mm)	3-0 1/2 (927)	4-0 1/2 (1232)
Frame Size (mm)	2-11 1/2 (902)	3-11 1/2 (1207)
Glass Size (mm)	14 3/4" (375)	20 3/4" (527)

2-0 (610) 2-0 1/4 (616) 1-11 3/4 (603) 18 3/4" (476)	 ITGL3624	 ITGL4824
3-0 (914) 3-0 1/4 (921) 2-11 3/4 (908) 30 3/4" (781)	 ITGL3636	 ITGL4836
3-6 (1067) 3-6 1/4 (1073) 3-5 3/4 (1060) 36 3/4" (933)	 ITGL3642	 ITGL4842
4-0 (1219) 4-0 1/4 (1226) 3-11 3/4 (1213) 42 3/4" (1086)	 ITGL3648	 ITGL4848 E

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Current Window





Example of trim on upper edge of window (#143) – we'd like to add this



View from Medford Street



Zoomed in view from Medford – see height of window at #141 (blue house)



View of all five windows on the back of the row (no two windows are the same)



View of windows on #143 and #145 (these are significantly larger than our current window at #139)