



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: 145 Central Street c. 1889 William Veazie Rowhouses
Case: HPC 2013.072 Single Building Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Joshua Safdie, Owner
Applicant Address: 145 Central Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Date of Application: September 26, 2013
Legal Notice: *Replace glider window with double-hung window.*
Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: October 15, 2013

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This is 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 #145 has been painted. The rear entries have all been altered in various ways. #145 has an enclosed porch and small kitchen 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 19th 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 glider window with Andersen 400 Series Awning/Picture window which will have Low-E4 Smartsun glass with no pattern or grills. The exterior color is proposed to be either Terratone or Dark Bronze, whichever ends up being the closest match to the other existing aluminum windows in the house. The exterior trim color: Canvas [this is an approximation of the current trim color on the house; trim will be painted at the time of installation]

Size: The new window will fit exactly the rough opening for the existing glider window. The existing casings will be removed so that we can install a new-construction window, not a replacement window. There will not be the typical 'thickening' of the window casings and jambs associated with replacement windows. The new unit will fit right to the existing framing and the interior dimensions of the existing casings.

Casings, trim, and sill: The existing casings are in poor condition. The flat 4" trim will be taken down and replaced in-kind, and the existing window cornice will be taken down, restored, and re-installed in the same location.

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.

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|-----|----------------|-----------|---|
| 137 | Central Street | 3/11/2002 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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; 2. Repair and replace rotted wood steps and front porch floor; 3. Replace railing and balusters to match in-kind other buildings in the row of houses; 4. Repair and replace structural members of the porch in-kind as necessary; 5. Repair and replace porch skirt in-kind as necessary; 6. Replace door hardware to an older style, retaining letter slot and knocker; 7. Replace porch light fixture with one more in-keeping with the style of the house; 8. Replace front white plastic gutter with one made of copper; 9. Repair fence as necessary; 10. Repaint; and 11. Landscape front yard. |
| 137 | Central Street | 7/4/2003 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replace existing deck with new deck with <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Posts and balusters to match those on front porch (C/A); b. Brackets will match those in the eaves of the house (C/A); and c. Directional change of stairs (C/A); 2. Remodel basement and back of house <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Replace small front windows with similar Marvin wood Tilt Pac windows to match the other replacement windows (C/A); b. Install 3 Marvin wood Tilt Pac windows and a French patio door on rear below deck (C/NA); c. Install wood trim in-kind to match existing (C/NA). |

137	Central Street	10/1/2009, 11/24/09	1. Repair and replace rotted and damaged clapboards in-kind as needed; 2. Repair porch, replacing damaged floorboards in-kind as needed; and 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)
139	Central Street	4/25/2002	1. Install railings and balusters to match other existing properties in series of row houses; 2. Rebuild front steps, porch floor, and skirt; 3. Repair front door; and 4. Repaint as needed.
139	Central Street	5/14/2003	1. Install vents for second floor rear bathroom near downspout at rear.
141	Central Street	9/15/2005	1. Repair light on back porch; 2. Install a lattice entryway to crawl space under front porch.
141	Central Street		1. Replace vinyl gutters on porch with wood ones; 2. Add newels to stair railing to match neighboring newels; and 3. Replace plastic pane with glass in front door. 4. Repair and replace flashing and wood gutters in-kind; 5. Install gutter screens; 6. Repair and replace porch roof and posts in-kind; 7. Repair and replace sliding glass door in rear of house; 8. Repair and replace clapboards in-kind as necessary; and 9. Repaint and stain house.
141	Central Street	9/29/2009	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 2. Install 2 casement windows.
141	Central Street	8/24/2010	1. Remove/strip approx. 500 SF of rubber roofing; 2. Install new ½" polyiso to deck; and 3. Install new fully adhered rubber membrane to deck.
143	Central Street	8/6/2004	1. Replace existing wood sash windows with 2/2 replacement true divided light soft-coat or vacuum-deposit insulated wood sash windows.
143	Central Street	6/18/2004	1. Renovate the bathroom with the installation of new fixtures.

1. Precedence:

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

It should be noted that this and other houses in the row have replacement windows. There is a wide variety of window configurations on the rear of the row. 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 closest to 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 enclosed porch and a glider window on the first floor. There are three windows on the second floor. The existing window is a replacement that is old and leaks.

- *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 rear of the building is not described on the Form B.

- 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).*

The existing window is altered from the original configuration but has not achieved any special significance.

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

The replacement sash in this window opening is not reparable.

- 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 window will fit the existing opening which will be rebuilt.

- 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 casings will 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 window is visible from the public right of way.

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.*

The window opening will not be altered from its existing condition.

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 existing window is not original. There will be no changes to the casing style. The finish will closely match the existing windows. The Lo E coating is the least reflective of those available.

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 appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Veazie Row Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant 145 Central Street a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the replacement of the glider window on the rear of the building with an Andersen 400 Series awning window which will have Low-E4 Smartsun glass with no pattern or grills.

