

To: SHPC
From: Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner and
Brandon Wilson, Executive Director
RE: Staff Recommendations 05/15/12

HPC 12.035 – 58 Columbus Avenue

Applicant: William T. Gage, Owner

Historic and Architectural Significance

See attached survey form.

Existing Conditions

Many who live on the Hill or in Union Square pass this house on a busy corner in a residential area of Prospect Hill on their way into Union Square. Columbus Avenue is narrow enough that cars need to turn into any open spaces or driveways in order to allow another car to pass. The house has no back yard but does have a sizable side yard. It is well maintained but in need of small repairs and new paint. A 5' fence and hedge enclose the yard.



Proposed Work

The Applicant would like to:

1. Remove concrete pad (C/A);
2. Replace with 11' x 13' red brick and 8' x 9' pea stone patios (C/A); and
3. Install a 6' x 10' fence to match existing on rear portion of side yard (C/A).

Recommendations

To quote from the introduction of the draft Guidelines underway: "While the building is clearly the dominant feature of most sites, a historic property is more than just the structure itself. Similarly, the property as a whole must be considered as part of its neighborhood and streetscape context. The landscape provides a setting for a historic building and should complement its historic character.

"Walkways, ramps, and stairs are influenced by the historic patterns of use of the site. Driveways and parking areas, where original, speak to the transportation of the City and the property; where these features are later alterations to accommodate modern lifestyles; care should be taken to ensure that they do not distract from the site's historic nature. Paved patio areas and other formal spaces form outdoor rooms and contribute to a site's overall character."

HPC Guidelines for landscaping are

H. Landscape Features and Paving

1. *The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*
2. *It is recognized that often the environment surrounding the property has a character, scale and street pattern quite different from that existing when the building was constructed. Thus, changes must frequently be made to accommodate the new condition, and the landscape treatment can be seen as a transition feature between the structure and its newer surroundings.*
3. *The existing landforms of the site should not be altered unless shown to be necessary for maintenance of the structure or site. Additional landforms will only be considered if they will not obscure the exterior of the structure.*
4. *The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

While cement is a material that has been used since antiquity, the existing concrete pad is not appropriate to the garden of a small Mansard cottage. New paving features and related elements should be constructed of historically appropriate materials. Traditionally, paths might have been laid out in stone dust, pea stone or flag stones. Patios or open areas when not grass would have been pea stone, brick or flagstone. The proposed work will not alter any of the landforms or obscure the historic building. The new patios will render the side-yard more usable.

Current Guidelines do not mention fences. However, fences and gates often define the boundary between a historic property and its surroundings, both streetscape and neighboring properties. New fences and gates should be compatible with the historic property in style, scale, placement, and materials. Fences, gates, and other landscaping elements (such as plantings) should not obscure the historic building.

The proposed new fence matches the one erected along the street edge of the yard and is lower down the slope of the hill. The fence will match the previously approved one and separate the rear/side yards for more privacy.

Because the proposed alterations meet the Guidelines noted above, Staff recommends **granting** a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for the proposed fence and patios.