



**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 / District(s)      34 Day Street / Single Building LHD/NR  
Case:                      HPC 2012.095

Applicant Name:        Serena Crosina  
Applicant Address:     34 Day Street

Date of Application:    8/27/2012  
Legal Notice:           Enclose rear left side section of front porch with door.

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness  
Date of Public Hearing: Wednesday, September 19, 2012

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**I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

*1. Architectural Description:*

This building is a single family Mansard cottage constructed c. 1874 with a high level of architectural detail. The dwelling has two bays on the primary façade as well as a partially open porch and polygonal bay window. This modest, yet pretentious residence features recessed segmental-arched dormer windows, spring eaves, and polygonal bays on both the front and right side facades.



*Left: 34 Day Street, primary  
and right side facade*

2. *Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel:*

The structure first appears on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas, under the ownership of H. Brown and the footprint appears as it does today. Directory research from 1876 states that Henry D. Brown, a subscriber of books located at 20 Cornhill in Boston, has a house on Day Street, near Orchard Street. The 1884 Hopkins Atlas illustrates the same footprint, but no owner is listed. The 1895 Bromley Atlas lists Caroline S. Lacount as the owner of the dwelling and the parcel is 10,280 square feet.

## II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

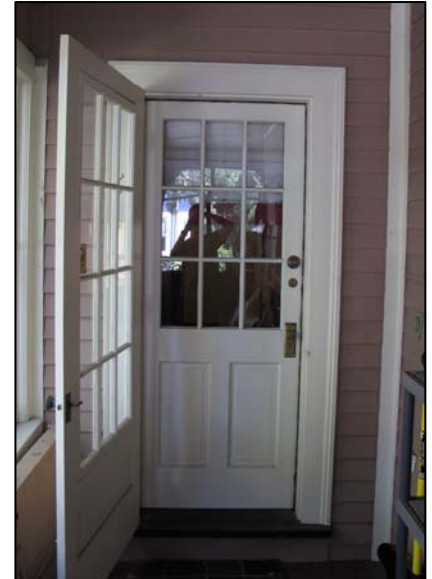
1. *Proposal of Alteration:*

The Applicant, Serena Crosina, proposes to 1) remove the screens and screen door on the front and left side of the front porch; 2) to install a wood door with glass panels and clapboard wall to fully enclose the left side portion of the porch (the front section of the porch will remain completely open); and 3) repair and replace with Mahogany the porch stair treads and floorboards.



Left: Screens proposed to be removed and location of second door to enclose section of porch with windows

Right: Proposed door and clapboard wall to be installed between front and rear sections of porch.



## III. FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

In 2010, a Certificate of Appropriateness was granted to install a new double-hung window in the Mansard roof on the left (north) side, remove the rear right side porch and door, replace said door with a matching double-hung window, and construct a period appropriate glass and metal conservatory on the rear façade.

In 2011, a Certificate of Non-Applicability was issued to restore windows, install insulation in the exterior walls and basement, and repair in-kind any damage caused by the insulation installation. Another Certificate of Non-Applicability was issued earlier this year, 2012, to repair and rebuild the rear porch and stairs in-kind.

2. *Precedence:*

The HPC encourages restoration of the City's building stock, as the purpose and intent of the Historic Ordinance is to "[p]rotect, enhance, and preserve cultural and historical resources..." as well as "[e]ncourage private efforts of Somerville citizens in support of such purposes."

There is evidence that a door/wall previously divided the rear porch from the front portion of the porch; therefore, this alteration could be viewed as a restoration, along with the removal of the screens and

replacement of the stair treads and floorboards, which were replaced approximately 5 years ago with pine and in need of replacement again.

Additionally, the HPC has granted Certificates in the past for the addition of new features or openings, depending upon the design of the feature and how it may or may not affect the historic integrity of the structure, such as the Certificate granted for this property in 2010 to replace a door with a window.

### 3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The removal of the screens and screen door from the front portion of the porch will be highly visible; however, the screens and door are not original and their removal will enhance the visible details of the entire porch.

The installation of a new wood and glass panel door and clapboard wall, consistent with the door and wall located at the rear of the porch (see photo above), will also be highly visible. However, this type of door is already a component of the porch and is compatible with the Second Empire style of the dwelling. Evidence illustrates that the rear porch was at some point separated from the front porch at the same location as the proposed new door and wall. The addition of a door to divide the front and back portions of the porch will not negatively affect the historic integrity of the house. This door/wall will be constructed in such a manner that if the current or future owners wish to convert the porch back to the present appearance, the historic fabric of the porch will not be negatively affected.

The repair and replacement of the porch stair treads and floorboards with Mahogany wood will also be visible. However, since the new material will be painted to match the existing, the change in material will not be visible. These elements were replaced with Pine within the last five years and since replacement is already necessary again, Mahogany is the proposed wood.

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

The Applicant currently uses the front and rear areas of the porch for different purposes; therefore, the Applicant proposes to remove the screens and screen door from the porch and install a wood and glass panel door so the front porch will be more attractive and the back porch can be more functional as a mud room. The existing porch is in need of repair due to rotting porch stair treads and several floorboards.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

A. *The design approach to each property should begin with the premise that the features of historic and architectural significance must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.*

The architectural features described in the MHC Form B- eaves, dormers, polygonal bays, and window lintels- are not proposed to be altered as part of this proposal. Other architectural porch details will not be negatively affected by the removal of screens, the addition of a door to enter into the left side rear of the porch, or the repair and replacement of the porch stair treads and floorboards. The wood and glass panel door will be installed in a manner that will allow it to be removed in the future with no affect to the historic fabric.

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

The porch stair treads and floorboards, to be replaced with Mahogany, are proposed to be constructed of a different material as the Applicant understands Mahogany will not rot as quickly as the Pine that was previously installed. Once installed, the wood will be painted to match the existing; therefore, no real change in material will be visible.

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

The installation of a door and wall between the front and rear porch areas is based on evidence that these areas were previously divided at this exact location. Furthermore, the addition of a door in this location will formally divide how the space is already being used by the residents.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the appropriate Specific Guidelines as set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

C. Windows and Doors

1. *Retain original and later important door and window openings where they exist.*

The proposed location of the new porch door was at one point an important opening as it existed previously to allow the front and rear porch areas to have separate functions. The proposal to re-divide this space will recreate these separate functions between the front and rear sections of the porch.

D. Porches, Steps, Trim & Other Exterior Architectural Elements

1. *Retain and repair porches and steps that are original or later important features, including such items as railings, balusters, columns, posts, brackets, roofs, ornamental ironwork and other important decorative items. If new pieces are needed, they should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old.*

The Applicant is going to repair the porch stair treads and floorboards to match the existing in style, shape, and scale. Although the material will be a different type of wood, Mahogany will be more resistant to rot and will be painted to match the existing.

E. New Additions

3. *New additions or alterations should be done in a way that, if they were to be removed, in the future, the basic form and integrity of the historic property would remain intact.*

The new porch door and wall between the front and rear areas would be installed in such a manner to allow its removal at a future date without a negative impact to the historic fabric or historic integrity of the structure.

### 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 34 Day Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission to grant 34 Day Street a Certificate of Appropriateness.**

34 Day Street

