

From: Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner, and  
Brandon Wilson Executive Director,  
RE: Recommendations for cases to be heard on 3/20/12

Application: **HPC 12.019 – 30 Day Street**  
Applicants: Rosemary Broome-Bingham and Alan Bingham

Historic and Architectural Significance  
See attached survey form.

Existing Conditions

The new owners are restoring and rehabilitating the building since 2010. They are currently working on the rear of the building and have received Certificates of Appropriateness and Non-Applicability to

1. Remove bulkhead and entry on south side (C/A);
2. Replace bulkhead with new stairs and guardrails (C/A);
3. Relocate adjacent entry to rear of house (C/NA);
4. Enlarge basement window on north side with double-hung 2/2 sash and a window well (C/NA).



Proposed Work and Recommendations

The Applicants seek a **Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A)** and a **Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA)** to:

1. Remove 2 windows on rear ell on the north and south side of the building (C/NA, C/A);
2. Replace with French doors (C/NA, C/A);
3. Install new porch on rear of building (C/A);
4. Relocate existing side entry to a location on the rear not visible from the public right of way (Approved HPC 10.073 on 9/24/10);
5. Remove a window not visible from the public right of way (C/NA); and
6. Replace with a door (C/NA).

The applicants would like to extend the porch right around the rear of the building. Some the proposed work has received approval and much of it is minimally visible from the public right of way. HPC Guidelines are as follows:

**I. 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 have been developed to *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.*

### 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 above application does not meet the above guidelines. While the Guidelines clearly state that window and other building openings should not be altered for the purpose of installing *stock materials*, they do not state that they might not be replaced for other reasons. Under section B of the General Guidelines and principles, it is noted that buildings can and do change to meet changing needs. Can this proposed change meet the idea of change and be properly respectful to the house as it originally was? Staff believes that the visibility of the change will be minimal and the porch posts and rails will disguise the additional length of the window/door since it is on the back ell of the building and well away from the street and the main façade. The door will bring more light into the ell and provide a clear means to reach the back yard. Staff **recommends** granting a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for this alteration.

### D. Porches, steps, trim and 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.* Avoid replacing wood posts and railings with metal ones, or wood porch decks with concrete.
- 2. Fire escapes are very conspicuous features and, as a rule, should only be placed on the rear of the building, or where they are least visible from a public way. If installation on the street or side façade cannot be avoided,

fire escapes should be designed and constructed with the same attention demanded by other major alterations and repairs, and are subject to the review and approval of the Commission.

#### **E. New additions**

1. *New additions should not disrupt the essential form and integrity of the property and should be compatible in size, scale, material and character of the property and its environment. Where possible, new additions should be confined to the rear of the house.*
2. *It is not the intent of these guidelines to limit new additions to faithful copies of earlier buildings. New designs may also evoke, without copying, the architecture of the property to which they are being added, through careful attention to height, bulk, materials, window size, and type and location, and detail. A building should not, however, be altered to an appearance that predates its construction.*
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 proposed back porch and openings are completely new construction. Visibility of the alterations is minimal and can be seen obliquely across the side yard, or at a distance in the winter across yards and fences. Other than one window replaced by a door, part of the porch and the railings, none of it is visible from Day Street.

The proposed rails and balusters are in-keeping with the secondary nature of the porch and do not match exactly the more prominent and important front entry posts. Because the proposed porch meets the HPC Guidelines above Staff **recommends** granting a **Certificate of Appropriateness** for the proposed porch.







View from Chester Street.