



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: 140 Highland Avenue c. 1890 – Barnes-Luce House
Case: HPC 2013.095 Single Building LHD, NRIND, NRMRA

Applicant Name: Michael Guigli, Owner
Applicant Address: 140 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA 02143

Date of Application: December 27, 2013
Legal Notice: *Remove chimney on west side*

Staff Recommendation: *Deny* Certificate of Appropriateness; *conditional* Certificate of Appropriateness.
Date of Public Hearing: January 21, 2014

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

140 Highland Avenue is an intact Stick Style/Queen Anne Style residence, one of the few such unaltered examples on Highland Avenue and in the City. A variety of dormers, bays, porches, and chimneys contribute to the building's asymmetrical appearance. Gables are set into a steep hipped roof punctuated by a half round window in a central gable. The entry is sheltered by a brace-supported shed-roofed porch.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

The property's first owner was Walter S. Barnes whose company manufactured paper boxes in Boston though at least 1916.



The property is primarily associated with politician Robert Luce. It was his residence during the peak of his career as a state representative and congressman. He lived in the house between 1903 and his death in 1945. He was born in Maine on December 2, 1862, and moved with his family to Somerville in 1874. He graduated from Harvard in 1882. In 1888, he started the Press Clipping Bureau. In 1908, he passed the bar examination and practiced of law for which he gained a reputation as an eloquent and learned speaker. He entered politics in the 1890s. After nine terms as state representative from Somerville, Luce was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1911. He was also in the U. S. House of Representatives, where he served from 1919 to 1934 and 1936 to 1940, and became the ranking member of the committees on banking, world war veterans and library. He was a regent of the Smithsonian Institute from 1929 to 1931. He died at the age of 83 and is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

II. Project Description

Proposal of Alteration: Brief Description of Work: The Owner would like to remove a disused chimney and replace it with slate shingles to match the existing roof.

See the final pages for details and photos.

III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness*1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

2004.020	C/NA, Denied		1. Replace wood gutters with copper on main roof.
2005.025	C/NA		1. Repair and replace damaged and missing copper downspouts with in-kind materials and style.
2008.031	continued - C/A, C/NA	12/24/08	1. Remove a secondary chimney to below the roofline (C/A); 2. Remove remaining portion of the chimney from the interior (C/NA); and 3. Install new slate and copper ridge where needed to match original (C/A).
2008.080	C/A, C/NA	12/24/08	1. Remove 4 white vinyl clad windows on 1st floor (C/A); 2. Install 4 wood replacement windows to match original sash configuration (C/A); 3. Install storm windows over the 4 replacement windows and match to existing storm windows (C/NA) and 4. Repair in-kind front porch ceiling and floor to match existing (C/NA).
2013.019	C/A, C/NA		A. Front Door: a. Replace existing 'plastic' glazing with 'glass' glazing (C/A). B. Porch Roof and Round Room Roof Covering: a. Remove existing 'non-original' asphalt (and metal underneath) (C/A); b. replace the 3-tab asphalt shingles with synthetic slate shingles on the condition that they match the existing roof in color, depth, texture, and scale and are reviewed by Staff to see that they meet these conditions although the Commission requests that true slate be used if possible (C/A); and c. Install copper or lead flashing at the windows to eliminate occasional water leaks (C/A). C. Gutters: a. Remove existing flashed 'crown' at the round room (C/A); b. Replace with a continuous run of drip edge and either wood gutter along the porch and round room (C/A); and c. Replace the existing porch and turret room gutters with new wood to match the existing historic wood gutters found on the upper level or similar so that the rafter ends and corresponding upper details as can be seen in the historic photo with Staff review in consultation with HPC Architect, Eric Parkes (C/A). 1. Repair and replace in-kind to match existing clapboard above front porch and on and above round room (C/NA); 2. Repair and replace in-kind to match existing trim and corner boards above front porch and on and above round room (facilitate installation of flashing) (C/NA); 3. Repair and replace in-kind to match existing porch ceiling boards (C/NA); 4. Replace fascia and rafter end details on the round room and porch to match existing (C/NA); 5. Install missing copper or galvanized steel gutters and downspouts to match existing where needed (C/NA); 6. Repair and replace footings under front porch or first floor living room (C/NA); 7. Repair and replace to match existing roof sheathing (C/NA); 8. Install blown-in cellulose insulation in walls, and ceilings of round room and living room (C/NA); 9. Install ice and water shield and if required continuous copper drip edge (approx. 55 ft) (C/NA); 10. Repair and replace to match existing three storm windows on second floor (two on front and one on west side) (C/NA); 11. Paint wood trim and stain clapboard to match existing colors (C/NA).

1. *Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*
- *Remove chimney.*

Certificates of Appropriateness have been granted for the removal of minimally visible or non-visible chimneys at 25 Clyde Street (2012) and 30 Day Street (2010). Although Staff found that the removal of the chimney did not meet HPC Guidelines, a Certificate of Appropriateness was also granted for this project in 2008 with the condition that matching slates could be found to repair the roof because Queen Anne structures were typically asymmetrical, and greater prominence would be given to the remaining chimney. The Commission did not believe that its removal would be detrimental to the Historic District. A more recent application was denied for a similar request to remove a visible chimney at 24 Pleasant Avenue (2013).

A Certificate of Appropriateness was issued for the replication of a chimney with a veneer to match the existing chimney at 117 Washington Street (2011).

Several Certificates of Non-Applicability have been issued to remove and rebuild existing chimneys, and the replication of missing upper courses of chimneys based on physical or photographic evidence.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The chimney is visible from Highland Avenue.

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

This building is located on a major thoroughfare and is highly visible. The owner has maintained this property for several years. He recently replaced the 3-tab asphalt shingle roof of the porch and tower room with salvaged slate of an appropriate color to match that of the existing slate roof over the main body of the house.

- *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 chimney is clearly visible on the photo accompanying the Form B which was written in 1985 and included less architectural and historical information than today's requirements.

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

The chimney will not be replicated or rebuilt.

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

There will be no replacement of the chimney. The owner has found red slate to match the existing decorative slate band and will match the existing roof.

- 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.*

No new material will be used for the chimney however the replacement slate is the same as the existing in all its physical properties.

- 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 chimney and roof are visible from the public right of way.

Roofs:

1. *Preserve the integrity of the original or later important roof shape.*

There will be no alteration of the roof shape.

2. *Retain the original roof covering whenever possible. If the property has a slate roof, conserve the roof slates. Slate is a near-permanent roofing material, and deterioration is generally caused by rusted roofing nails.*

The whole left from the chimney removal will be replaced with matching slate.

3. *Whenever possible, replace deteriorated roof covering with material that matches the old in composition, color, size, shape, texture and installation detail.*

There will be no alteration in the roof covering.

4. *Preserve the architectural features that give the roof its distinctive character, such as cornices, gutters, iron filigree, cupolas, dormers and brackets. Downspouts should be inconspicuously located and should be painted to match the color of the siding.*

Chimneys are a major element in the visual cues of the history and use of a building. The elaboration or simplicity of a chimney, where it is located tells a lot about the building and its inhabitants. The original

chimneys were both ornate, indicating that they were intended to be admired and were not merely utilitarian.

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 not appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the **140 Highland Avenue Local Historic District**; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission do not grant Michael Guigli a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the removal of a prominent chimney because it does not meet the above Guidelines. However, based on precedent, a replicated chimney in lighter weight materials that match the existing in size, color and texture with appropriate structural support could receive a Certificate of Appropriateness as there would be no visible change to the Historic District. **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Michael Guigli a Certificate of Appropriateness** to *replicate the original intact chimney either with interior supports or in a lighter weight veneer to match in size, shape and texture.*





LIEUT.-GOVERNOR'S HOME, HIGHLAND AVENUE

140 Highland Avenue, 1898



140 Highland Avenue, 1988



140 Highland Avenue, roof and chimney detail 2014

