



**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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Address: 11 Linden Avenue  
Case Number: HPC 2014.065  
Applicant Name: Linden Tree Realty Trust  
Applicant Address: 21 Village Street, Somerville, MA 02143  
Date of Application: August 13, 2014  
Legal Notice: *Replace windows.*  
Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness  
Date of Public Hearing: November 18, 2014



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**I. Building Description**

Architectural Description: The following italicized text is predominantly from the survey Form B.

*The Isaac Story House is a 2½ story Italianate dwelling with a side hall entry and side yard. Architectural features include a wide fascia with over-scaled corner brackets and a polygonal bay with decorative brackets. The side hall entry is sheltered with a flat roof over an open porch. The porch has unadorned columns and beaded molding.*

*Components of the side yard landscape, including the cobblestone drive, were discernable until the 1980s. By 1984, only the spatial setting remains. The dwelling is sited above street level and bordered by a bluestone retaining wall with granite posts.*

Historical Context: The following italicized text is predominantly from the survey Form B.

*Located in the Spring Hill neighborhood, near Elm Street, the Isaac Story House is one of the earliest houses built within the immediate neighborhood, prior to major land subdivisions. While other transitional buildings that bridge the gap between the Greek Revival and Italianate styles are existent, the setting of the subject parcel (specifically the side yard) evokes a greater sense of space than many nearby properties. The side yard is located to the south of the existing house and, at an earlier period, would have offered views of Cambridge from the elevation of Spring Hill. Judge Isaac Story (b. 1818, Marblehead) lived here after moving to Somerville in 1853.*

*Judge Story practiced law in Boston and was a justice of the Somerville Police Court (1872) and of the Middlesex District Court. Indian artifacts have been found on site, near a large rock at the rear of the dwelling.*

## II. Project Description

The windows of the front building are in need of replacement. There is no information regarding dimensions for original windows located on this building. While not all windows are visible from a public way, the Applicant prefers to install one type of window throughout the building. The Applicant has been working with Staff since mid-August to find replica windows; however, the existing replacement windows were installed approximately 20 years ago and a replica has not been found. Therefore, the Applicant requests to use windows that will match the new building located at the rear of the property, which would have less glazing and a larger muntin profile (depth to remain at 1/4") than the existing replacement windows. The proposed windows would be wood with two-over-two simulated true divided light (two grills and a spacer between the panes). There will be no low-E glazing.

	Existing width	Proposed width
Muntin	5/8" – flat pointed profile	7/8" – rounded putty profile
Top Rail	1 3/4"	2 15/32"
Bottom Rail	2 1/2"	3 3/4"
Stile Width	1 1/8"	1 25/32"

The windows dimensions will be consistent with the existing as follows:

- 2 attic windows – 34" x 53"
- 1 second floor bath window – 33 1/2" x 60 3/4"
- 7 second floor bedrooms and bathroom windows- 33 1/2" x 61"
- 1 second floor rear bedroom window – 34" x 61"
- 1 second floor back bedroom window – 33 1/2" x 60 1/2"
- 1 second floor back bedroom window – 34" 60 1/2"
- 2 front bedroom windows – 39 1/2" x 77"
- 1 front bedroom window – 33 1/2" x 69"
- 2 front bedroom window – 29 1/2" x 69 1/2"
- 2 kitchen windows - 33 1/2" x 60 1/2"
- 1 kitchen window above sink – 33 1/2" x 53"
- 1 kitchen pantry window - 27 1/2" x 52 3/4"
- 2 kitchen windows – 27 3/4" x 69"

## III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

### *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

- A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (HPC 2011.115) was issued on 03/08/12 to:
  1. Add 1 additional window on rear ell that matches all properties of the existing adjacent window, including style, material, casing, muntin profile, and reflectivity of the glass;
  2. Rebuild porch without a roof on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor south side, based on the undated plans presented and marked approved on 2/21/12 and as located on the circa 1985 photograph on the Form B; and
  3. Construct a free standing 2-unit building on the lot near to the existing 1-family dwelling with:
    - i. the general location and footprint as shown on the site plan dated 2/10/12;
    - ii. a design that resembles a barn/stable, constructed as shown in the conceptual elevations dated 2/10/12 that include:
      - a. massing, scale, and height of the building;
      - b. placement, and scale of the roof forms, including the cupola;
      - c. placement, scale and arrangement of the windows;
      - d. placement and detailing of the trim, and both siding and door design
- A **Certificate of Hardship** (HPC 2012.075) was issued on 07/19/12 to:
  1. Enlarge driveway entry up to 18' for compliance with access required by Fire Department; and

2. Redesign the landscaping and paving to minimize the visual impact of the wide driveway opening.
- A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (HPC 12.075R1) was issued on 5/1/2013 to:
    1. Reduce the parking dimensions to 8' wide by 16' long;
    2. Pavers for the pedestrian walkway shall be natural granite cobbles (grey in color) approximately 4"x6"x9"; and
    3. Pavers for the patios and entrance location shall be Stonehenge concrete unit 1'x1'x1' pavers by Unilock.
  - A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (HPC 12.075R2) was issued on 4/19/2013 to:
    1. Modifications to revise the building design and site plan shall be consistent with the plans presented on 4/16/2013: Planting Plan (Sheet L1, 1/1/2013), Building Elevations (Sheet A-300, 4/4/2013), & Perspectives (Sheet AV, 4/4/2013); and
    2. Further minor changes to the building design or site plan shall be subject to HPC Staff review and approval.
  - A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (HPC 12.075R3) was issued on 7/17/2013 to:
    1. Modifications to revise the driveway and site plan shall be consistent with the plan (Option A, dated 7/16/2013) presented on 7/16/2013;
    2. There shall be efforts made to soften the reconstructed wall to be less angular than the approved Option A which shall have Staff review and supervision through the reconstruction process;
    3. Approval of this modified driveway and site plan by the Zoning Board of Appeals; and
    4. Further minor changes to the driveway or site plan shall be subject to HPC Staff review and approval.
  - A **Certificate of Appropriateness** (HPC 12.075R4) was issued on 9/18/2013 to:
    1. Modifications to revise the building design shall be consistent with the plans entitled *11 Linden Avenue*, consisting of Sheets A-100, A-300, A-311 & AV, dated 4/4/2013, and presented on 9/17/2013;
    2. The band molding located on the primary façade between the first and half-story shall be removed from the plans;
    3. Approval of this modified building design by the Zoning Board of Appeals; and
    4. Further minor changes to the building design or site plan shall be subject to HPC Staff review and approval; however, Staff is encouraged to consult with the HPC.

*Precedence:*

Replacement windows are routinely reviewed by the HPC. Replacement of original windows is often more concerning to the HPC than the replacement of non-original windows. Since the sizes of the original glazing and muntin profiles were not determined, the Applicant requests to install windows that match in style and profile to the rear building.

In 2002, 58 Meacham Road (HPC 2002.045) replaced 12 existing windows with Brosco Boston style insulated wood sash.

In 2010, 140 Morrison Avenue (HPC 2010.021) replaced existing windows on the front façade with double-hung wood 2/2 sash and casings of an appropriate size and sash pattern.

In 2013, 46 Mt. Vernon Street (HPC 2013.068) installed JB sash replacement windows to match the existing in color, size, shape, and installation detail.

In 2014, 50 Bow Street (HPC 2014.001) installed 4 Marvin Ultimate double-hung, Magnum insulated wood window with manually modified muntin to match those previously installed as specified.

*Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?* Several windows on the front, right and left side façades will be visible from the public way.
- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?* The existing parcel is 12,480 square feet with a 2½ story single-family dwelling and a new two-family dwelling located behind the existing historic building.
- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

*General Approach - The primary purpose of the Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Local Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the architectural heritage of the City. 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 affect their present architectural integrity.*

The proposed replacement windows are consistent in size with the existing windows but would vary in muntin profile and glazing from the existing. Staff recommends the Applicant manually modify the profile of the muntin to create a flat and pointed profile to replicate the existing, which is most appropriate to a building of this c. 1853 date of construction.

- 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.*
- 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.*

The current windows are not original and are specifically referenced in the survey form. Replacement windows will be the same sizes as the existing, though the glazing would be reduced, and Staff recommends manually modifying the muntins to create the existing pointed profile

- *Does the proposal coincide with the appropriate Specific Guidelines as set forth in the Design Guidelines?*
- C. *Windows and Doors - 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.*

The current windows are not original; replacement windows should match as close as possible the existing muntin profile.

**IV. 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 11 Linden Avenue Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Linden Tree Realty Trust a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing windows that are visible from a public way for 11 Linden Avenue.** Staff also recommends the muntin profile be manually modified for windows visible from a public way.

*11 Linden Avenue, aerial view*

