

From: Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner, and
Brandon Wilson Executive Director
RE: Recommendation for 2/21/2012

HPC 11.115 – 11 Linden Avenue (continued)

Applicant: Lenore Hill, Owner

Historic and Architectural Significance

See attached survey form.

The form was done as part of the original 1985 surveys, which is why it has far less information about the building and its owner than would be expected today. Its architecture and setting on its original grounds, however, are noted as significant on both a local and a national level.



Existing Conditions

The house is in good condition although the last time major repairs were done in 1994. According to the available building permits, the fieldstone wall and granite steps were constructed in 1997. It has a large open yard, with the side area used for parking in recent years.

The house is on its original lot which never had a carriage house. In general, carriage houses were located at the rear corner of the lot, and did not have as big a footprint as the house as they were subsidiary to the main house. See attached pages for some of the City's carriage houses and their contexts.

Proposed Work and Recommendations

Owner seeks a **Certificate of Appropriateness** (C/A) in accordance with the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, as amended, and the City of Somerville Ordinance (Sections 7-16 – 7-27) for the following:

1. Add 1 additional window on rear ell;
2. Rebuild porch on 2nd floor south side without roof based upon historic photograph; and
3. Construct a free standing 2-unit structure designed to resemble a barn on lot with an existing 1-family dwelling;

1. Add 1 additional window on rear ell;

This will be minimally visible from in front of the neighbors' house and located behind the dining room bay on the far end of the building. . It will be trimmed out to match the existing neighboring window. The Staff recommends granting a Certificate of Appropriateness for this change because it would not adversely effect the historic context of the building and is in-keeping with the spirit of the guidelines.



2. Rebuild porch on 2nd floor south side without roof based upon historic photograph;

The Applicants propose that the 4" x 4" posts would be finished with 1" stock, while the base will have an additional 1" stock wrap. The bottom and top rails would be approximately 3" high (a little more hefty than typical), with 2" x 2" standard balusters, and an extra wide continuous top rail, approximately 6" wide - mimicking the railing on the lower porch, without the grandiose balusters. The height of the railing assembly would be 36" overall height to meet Code.

HPC Guidelines state:

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.

The proposed porch will reflect the style of the lower side porch in that it will have posts and rails that are related in scale and details to the posts on the porch below. The balusters would be simple 2" x 2" ones similar to those on the front entry. The submitted "historic photo" above does not reflect the building as it was originally constructed. No building permits were found for the porch construction. All evidence points to the proposed porch is an afterthought of unknown date. Guidelines state that new pieces *should match as closely as possible the style, shape, scale and materials of the old.*

Staff recommends a **Certificate of Appropriateness** because their height and design are compatible with both the Italianate design of the building, and the requirements of the current Building Code.



4. Construct a free standing 2-unit structure designed to resemble a barn on the lot with an existing 1-family dwelling;

SOMERVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT ORDINANCE:

(6/a) In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings or structures, the Commission shall *consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity*, and the Commission may in appropriate cases impose dimensional and set back requirements in addition to those required by applicable ordinance or by-law.

The Commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for *the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.*

HPC GUIDELINES FOR INFILL CONSTRUCTION

A. *Size, Shape and Proportion*

New building facades should be designed to look appropriate to, and compatible with, adjacent buildings. If there are no immediately adjacent structures, the applicant should look to nearby structures and blocks.

1. *Building height should be similar to nearby buildings, respecting the predominant heights of existing houses or commercial structures.*
2. *Facade proportions (ratio of width to height) should be similar to those of surrounding buildings to create or complement streetscapes and views with the area.*
3. *Roof forms should follow predominant styles of adjacent buildings.*
4. *Utility connections should be placed to minimize visibility from the street.*

B. *Materials.*

1. *Materials should be compatible with those used in adjacent structures or, when there are no immediately adjacent structures, buildings within the surrounding area. Exterior surfaces should be painted or otherwise finished in a similarly compatible manner.*
2. *Materials of foundation walls should be compatible with those of nearby buildings. If use of matching materials is impractical, substitutions that are not obtrusive should be used.*

C. *Details*

1. Door and window height-to width ratios should be similar to those in neighboring structures. The pattern established by the relationship of window or door openings and the surrounding wall area should respect the neighboring structures. The percentage of glass to wall should approximate that of neighboring structures.
2. Door and window height-to width ratios should be similar to those in neighboring structures. The pattern established by the relationship of window or door openings

and the surrounding wall area should respect the neighboring structures. The percentage of glass to wall should approximate that of neighboring structures.

3. Facade elements which can help give a new structure a historically appearance include:

Window hoods and lintels;

Entrances with porches and balustrades;

Cornice lines with architectural detailing;

Brick work with quoins, corbels, and other details;

Friezes;

Gables;

Columns and pilasters; and

Chimneys

The fact that this house remains preserved in its original context is one of the primary reasons that this property is both listed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a Local Historic District. This is a true rarity in Somerville where lots have been typically subdivided and often intensely developed over time. As seen in the accompanying maps, some of the buildings in the neighborhood that were constructed during the same era included carriage houses and barns on the same lot. Typically these accessory structures were smaller than the main house and were located on the edge of the property and usually on the rear lot line. See attached photos of carriage houses throughout the City for size and context of these buildings. None of the buildings are more than 2 ½ stories and most are at 1 ½ stories including the hayloft. A few have been converted to residential or other uses. If properly scaled and located, the proposal to build additional housing in the style of a carriage house could be an appropriate addition to the property.

The applicants have extensively redesigned the proposed carriage house/barn in response to the Commission's request to make the building more subsidiary to the historic building. The building is now 12'6" narrower than originally proposed. At 2 ½ stories, it is taller and has more mass than traditional carriage houses have. However, the building is no longer centered on the rear half of the lot but rather located nearly halfway behind the original building, making it less prominent and giving it a more traditional relationship to the original house. The building has been moved over another 1'6", meeting the minimum 8' side yard required by Zoning. On the other side, a 22' side yard leaves more open space in the lot.

The lowered central pavilion is narrower than originally envisioned. While the over all height remains the same, it should be noted that the lot slopes down from the house. The pitch of the roof echoes the existing historic house. Details would include 1" x 8" corner boards, flared siding/trim between the first and second floors, a mix of clapboards, shingles and decorative shingles to break up the massing, and the top casing trim on the windows would slightly overlap the side trim. These details, especially the playful use of shingles do not give a false sense of historicity to the building, being completely modern in their inventive use. The Staff finds that the proposed 2-family building meets the guidelines for massing, building height, and location, references the idea of a barn/carriage house in the architecture through the use of the cupola, barn doors, and materials but does not replicate any particular structure or style.

Staff d **recommends granting a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the proposed structure for the reasons noted above.

Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



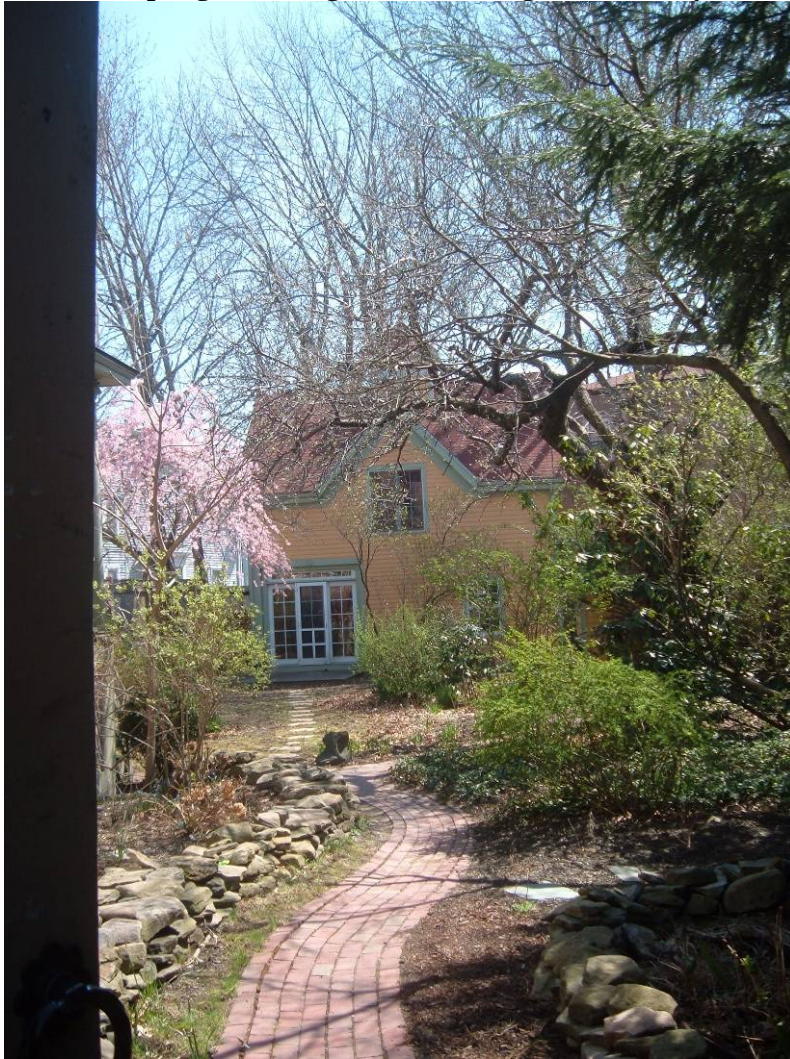
Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City



Sampling of carriage houses through out the City

