



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:	56 Meacham Road	c.1874 Mansard Cottage
Case:	HPC 2014.002	Meacham Rd/Campbell Pk Local Historic District
Applicant Name:	Sun Sasongko, Owner	
Applicant Address:	56 Meacham Road, Somerville, MA 02144	
Date of Application:	January 9, 2014	
Legal Notice:	<i>Replace basement windows with insulated dark-pigmented synthetic windows.</i>	
Staff Recommendation:	Conditional Certificate of Appropriateness	
Date of Public Hearing:	November 17, 2013	

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Architectural Description: This side entry mansard cottage is located near the Davis Square end of the street, a few doors down from Seven Hills Park, near the corner of a private way (Glover Circle). It retains its original massing and is in fair condition, but lacks many of the architectural details found on similar cottages in Somerville. Vinyl siding has been applied over the original wood in 1976. The roof was originally replaced with 3-tab asphalt shingle in 1947. The windows have been replaced everywhere except the basement at an unknown date. There is only one dormer window in the front over the bay, while both sides of the house have two dormers each. The rear of the building has no dormers but does have a two-story ell toward the south side that takes up most of the side. The placement of the front door suggests a side-hall floor plan. The porch columns are square posts and are clearly replacements as are the stair rails and balusters.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

Much of the present-day Davis Square was a portion of the 10-acre estate of Person Davis for whom the Square was named in 1883. Today, it is one of the largest commercial areas of the City, and is currently the most vibrant. Horse railway up Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square began in 1856-1857 to Porter Square and beyond. As a result of the construction of Holland Street completed in 1868, Davis Square came into existence. After the Civil War, several real estate developers were poised to take advantage of the Davis Square area's potential as the major focus for the commercial and residential life of the community. In 1871, the Lexington and Arlington Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad reached Davis Square, further opening the area up for large scale development. The surrounding area of Davis Square became the homes of railroad and streetcar commuters and is

evidence of the suburban building boom of the late nineteenth century. Fifty-three trains a day and streetcar service from Davis Square provided easy access to employment in Cambridge and Boston.

This Mansard is one of 2 properties on Meacham Road that pre-dates the 1890s development undertaken by Henry R. Glover. The 1874 and all subsequent atlases show the ownership to H.R. Glover for this lot and most of the others on the street. The 1884 City Directory included only 9 families residing on Meacham Road. All of them were blue collar workers. It is unclear exactly which houses were occupied by which tenants, as street numbers were not in common use at that time.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Proposal of Alteration:

1. *Replace basement windows with insulated dark-pigmented synthetic windows.*

The Applicant would like to replace the rotted and damaged basement windows with insulated dark green pigmented synthetic windows with muntins and spacer bars to resemble the original windows. See the final pages for details and photos.

II. FINDINGS

1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

2001.030	56	Meacham Road	C/NA, C/A, Denial	1. Repair and replace rotted wood on existing windows in-kind 2. Install a new dormer on the rear of the house to match in style and construction the existing dormers. 3. Install a skylight on the side of a mansard roof:
2002.004	56	Meacham Road	C/A	Install skylight on upper roof
2006.054	56	Meacham Road	C/NA	1. Repoint foundation.
2007.052	56	Meacham Road	C/A	1. Install a wood picket fence on both sides of the house with a gate in each side per photo attached.
2009.056	56	Meacham Road	C/NA	1. Repair front porch floor boards and stair rails, posts and newel post finial; and 2. Repaint.
2012.013	56	Meacham Road	C/NA	1. Install a washer and dryer vent on south side towards the rear along the driveway; and 2. Install a water spigot and hose bib on the garden side of the building.
2012.090	56	Meacham Road	C/NA	1. Install a new furnace to be vented through the north side near the rear; 2. Paint the vent to match trim or body; and 3. Install a pad for HVAC equipment behind the house.

1. Precedence:

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*

Replace basement windows with insulated dark-pigmented synthetic windows. The Commission has occasionally reviewed and approved other insulated glass windows with the following qualifications:

- i. The windows are *not on the main façade and far enough from the street* to not be recognizable as insulated glass;
- ii. *No Low E coating is preferred* because it is reflective in an entirely different manner from older windows. ...

iii. *The sash and panes of glass should have the same measurements as the existing windows. If a mullion or muntin is used, it should have the same profile as the existing and have a spacer between the panes to draw the eye.”*

- There have been four cases of vinyl replacement windows for basements that have received Certificates of Non-Applicability or Appropriateness. In three of those cases, 3 Campbell Park (2002), 9 Westwood Road (2007) and 22 Pleasant Avenue (2009) the windows were either not visible from the public right of way or minimally visible. In the fourth case, 47 Columbus Avenue (2012) was granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace white vinyl windows with Vicon 24210 brown windows which matched the windows above. In addition, 137 Central Street (2003) received a Certificate of Appropriateness for Marvin Tilt-Pac® windows as part of a de-leading program. There were also 3 cases, 75-77 Columbus Avenue (2005 and 2007) and 30 Day Street (2010) where basement windows visible from an angle were enlarged for a second means of egress.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The windows are visible at an angle from Meacham Road both behind a fence and along the driveway. The window sash are deeply set behind brick mold.

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

The house already has pale blue vinyl siding and white vinyl windows except those in the basement. The windows are in poor to fair condition. Some of the basement windows have 3 lights and others have a single light. See photos at the end of the document.

- *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 basement windows were not discussed in the Form B.

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

Most of the existing basement windows are wood. Due to their location, the owner of the building would like to replace them with more durable rot resistant material which will be pigmented to be similar to the original dark green of the existing basement windows.

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

The replacement windows will not match the existing windows exactly but will be set behind the brick mold.

- 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 proposed windows and muntins will have a flatter profile, typical of replacement windows and slightly different dimensions.

- 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 windows are visible along the driveway and behind a fence on the opposite side. There are no basement windows on the street elevation.

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.*

Window openings will not be altered.

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 sill will be replaced with wood. The brick mold will be reproduced or retained. The proposed windows and muntins will have a flatter profile, typical of replacement windows and slightly different dimensions but match the existing in color.

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 Meacham Road/ Campbell Park Local Historic District; because the windows are not on the main façade, are visible obliquely behind a fence or down the

56 Meacham Road

23

2908

21

5116

6

8008

7

280

5

3028

6

2862

5

3218

4

2426

3

2418

2

3243

1

3027

2

3085

3

1380

4

1980

5

6720

11

2310

12

2160

13

565

14

625

20

2516

22

2673

17.15

50.70

41.11

33.35

73.85

40.35

209.66+/-

40.50

78.11

4.85

95-97

26.92

37.96

74.50

69.47

63.80

45+/-

2

43.24

76.89

62

38.20

48.63

51.26

48

3

70

23

70

75

30.8

33

75

54

41.00

81.75

24.00

13.00

30.25

27.75

57.75

57.78

26.10

39.50

48-50

11.4

24.00

11.75

30.25

71.50

92.00

71.50

79

2.50

112

280

2.50

77

85-89

60

112

30

93R

30

46

66

30

93

84-88

70

81

78-82

81

90-92

36.5

94

39.2

200

48-116

ER



56 Meacham Road, 2014



56 Meacham Road, 2014



56 Meacham Road, 2014



56 Meacham Road, 2014



56 Meacham Road, 2014



56 Meacham Road. 2014

WINDOW CUSTOMIZATION

Distinctive Window Design

Further that design with a custom or standard grille pattern, either with Grilles Between Glass (GBG) or Simulated Divided Lites (SDL). By placing a variety of design patterns within the glass, GBGs offer an attractive and low maintenance artistic option. Traditional window grilles can be replicated by means of SDL dividers which are permanently attached to both the interior and exterior glass.

Continue the traditional look with horizontal Pediment Heads (also known as Crossheads) added to the outer casings of windows.

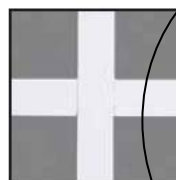
Pediments are often used in tandem with other architectural trim items like Pilasters, and provide outstanding visual improvement without breaking the bank.

With the many optional exterior paint colors available you can truly make a unique statement to your home or office.

Grille Options



5/8" Contoured GBG
(Grilles Between Glass)



5/8" Flat GBG
(Grilles Between Glass)



7/8" Contoured SDL
(Simulated Divided Lite)

Exterior Trim Options



Banded 4" Casing



Brickmould (908) Casing



Flat 3 1/2" Casing

Northern casing not shown

Pediment Head Options



Shown with Standard
Frame (no exterior casing)



Flat Casing shown



Banded Casing shown

Brickmould with pediment head not shown

Common Grille Configurations



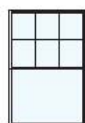
Colonial



Prairie



Queen Anne



6/1

Exterior Paint Options

Our in-house palette consists of 17 prefinished exterior colors, with many other colors available.



Pearl White



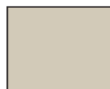
Cream White



Desert Sand



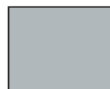
Adobe



Fog



Gray



Slate Blue



Edgewood Blue



Spruce Green



Dark Forest



Black



Bronze



Dark Brown



Earth Brown



Barn Red



Boysenberry



Burgundy

Please note that the material colors are not necessarily precise representations due to variance in the printing process.