



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: 24 Summer Street c. 1870 Odiorne-Langley House
Case: (HPC 2015.034) Union Square Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Steven Azar, Owner
Applicant Address: 24 Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02143

Date of Application: June 24, 2015

Legal Notice: *Alter front entry including door and walkway; Alter driveway; Add wood fence and gate.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness

Date of Public Hearing: July 21, 2015

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: From the Form B. There is one Form B for the four adjacent properties on Summer Street

Overlooking a playing field and a community garden, the end gable Italianate houses at 22, 24, 26 and 28 Summer Street are key components within an interesting streetscape encompassing masonry mansard-roofed houses to the east and free standing mansard and gable-roofed wooden houses to the west. Although at first glance these houses appear to be identical, in fact, subtle differences in siting, form and design speak to the fact that there was a time lag of ten years or more between the construction of numbers 22 and 24 and that of numbers 26 and 28. 22 and 24 Summer Street were built during the early 1870s, while numbers 26 and 28 were built around 1885. Indeed, much of the architectural interest of this group lies in the fact that, despite a lag in development, not only did all four houses get built, but they have a more or less unified appearance in terms of form and massing. The lack of uniformity in the alignment of the house's end gables (due to number 24's slight setback) lends interest to this quartet.

*All of the houses are constructed of wood, possess L-shaped forms, rest on brick basements, stand two-and-one-half-stories tall, and exhibit three-bay end gable facades. All of the houses' main blocks measure three-bays by two-bays and appear to possess side hall interior plans. The most obvious difference in the designs of **numbers 22 and 24** vs. **26 and 28 Summer Street** are their main facade's first story bays. Standard polygonal bays of a type used during the period of 1850 -1875 are in evidence at numbers **22 and 24**, while the square and shed-roofed bays of **numbers 26 and 28** speak to a more Stick Style/ Queen Anne design sensibility of the 1870s and 1880s. **22 Summer***



24 Summer Street, 2010 photo

*Street retains a high percentage of its original elements. Sheathed with wood it exhibits the original bracketed door hood, as well as paired brackets at its eaves. Generally, windows contain original 2/2 double-hung wood sash. At number 22, a string course visually separates the first story from the second story. **24 Summer Street** is covered with asphalt shingles. Saw cut brackets are still intact at its main facade's polygonal bay as well as at the gable.*

HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

At first glance, the Italianate houses at 22, 24, 26 and 28 Summer Street look like they were all built at the same time, but City Atlases reveal that ten years or more separate the pair of c. early 1870s numbered 22 and 24 Summer Street from the c. early 1880s houses numbered 26 and 28 Summer Street. The earliest identifiable occupants living at these houses at the turn of the twentieth century included a harness maker, machinist, paper cutter, carpenter and baker.

***Numbers 22 and 24 Summer Street** appear on the 1874 Somerville Atlas with property owners listed as Dr. E Jackson and C. H. Smith, respectively. Apparently, **number 22** was an investment property built for Dr. Eben Jackson who lived and worked at 261 Washington Street in Somerville. **Number 24's** early owner, C. H. White, is not listed in the early 1870s Somerville City Directories.*

*By the mid-1880s, the owners of **numbers 22 and 24 Summer Street** were William Childs and M. F. Burt, respectively. William H. Childs was a harness maker who lived at 20 Cameron Avenue in West Somerville. No Burts are listed in the 1884 Somerville City Directory. In 1895, these houses were owned by: William Childs, harness maker (**number 22**); the William Odiorne heirs (**24 Summer Street**); Somerville City Directories indicate that by the early 1900s, each house contained two units and their occupants were drawn from the ranks of blue collar workers, local building trades and the clergy.*

*Occupants of these houses in 1903 included: Orrison Huff, machinist, and James Mulholland, paper cutter (**number 22**); Mrs. Margaret Odiorne, widow of William and George M. Langley, carpenter (**number 24**). By 1910, new additions to the roster of residents at **22 to 28 Summer Street** included Cyrus Gaudet, teamster and Benjamin Burkett, baker (**number 22**). By 1920, these houses were occupied by Eva and Carl Smith, auto repairer and Grace and Fitzroy L. Smith, steward at a Boston restaurant (**number 22**); Clara E. and George Odiorne, coat manufacturer, and long-time resident George M. Langley, carpenter and his wife Ida (**number 24**).*

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Proposal of Alteration:

1. Remove brick steps and replace with wood steps and landing;
2. Alter front entry including door;
3. Replace concrete pathway with brick;
4. Replace concrete driveway with brick pavers and granite apron; and
5. Add wood privacy fence and gate with trellis.

The owner would like to remove the current crumbling front steps and porch and replace them with more appropriate wood ones, remove the existing modern front door and replace it with a door reflecting the period of the house. He would like to resurface the driveway with brick pavers and a granite apron, and the walkway with brick pavers instead of the concrete. Finally he would like to enclose the yard with a "Charles" fence with a "Concord" topper and "Concord" fence close to the street and separating the neighbor's yard with a trellis and gate to match at the end of the driveway.

See the final pages for details and photos.

II. FINDINGS

1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:

No prior Certificates have been proposed or issued for this property which was designated in 2010.

2. Precedence:

- Are there similar properties / proposals?
- Alter front entry including door. Alterations to doors were granted Certificates of Appropriateness at 384 Washington Street (2002) and at 85 Benton Road (2014).

- *Remove brick steps and replace with wood steps and landing.* No cases of the replacement of brick with wood were found, although two cases were found for the replacement of concrete steps with granite: 74 Mount Vernon Street (2010), 27 Warren Avenue (2013), 18 Westwood Road (2013).

Several cases of alterations to porches have received Certificates of Appropriateness. There have been several instances where buildings have been returned to a previous condition based upon physical or photographic evidence, or of a design compatible with the porch when there have been no railings: 14-16 Aldersey Street (2010), 257 Broadway (2005), 141 Central Street (2002), 58 Meacham Road (2002), 49 Vinal Avenue (2005) and most recently 47 Mount Vernon Street (2013).

There are also several instances where a generic railing has been used to indicate that the original railings were unknown. These include 143-145 Perkins Street (2003), 24 Pleasant Avenue (2014), 23 Porter Street (2010), 25 Russell Street (2003), 101 School Street (2007), 27 Warren Avenue (2010), 10 Westwood Road, 50 Vinal Avenue (2005), 45 Vinal Avenue (2007) and 222 Morrison Avenue. The proposed railings and balusters would be based on the ones approved in 2007 for 45 Vinal Avenue.

See photos below.

- *Replace concrete pathway with brick; and replace concrete driveway with brick pavers and granite apron.* The Commission has granted Certificates of Appropriateness to replace existing paving materials with various types of pavers at 53 Atherton Street (2013), 27 Columbus Avenue (2002), 11 Linden Avenue (2013), 25 Russell Street (2003), 45 Vinal Avenue (2007) and 53 Moore Street (2014). 30 Bow Street (2001) was granted Certificate for an apron of granite pavers with a gravel driveway. 1 Summer Street (2005) received a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the cement walkway with granite pavers and 53 Moore Street (2014) replaced their pathway with brick pavers.
- *Add wood privacy fence and gate with trellis.* Privacy fences have been regularly granted Certificates of Appropriateness when they have been located beyond the main body of the building at 53 Atherton Street (2013), 438 Broadway (2005), 23 Chester Street (2004), 58, 61, and 63 Columbus Avenue (2014, 2007, and 2003), 30 Day Street (2013), 45 Vinal Avenue (2007) and 16-18 Westwood Road (2004).

3. Considerations:

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*
The fence, driveway, walkway, stairs, porch and door are all visible from the public right of way.
- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*
There is no fence. The driveway is asphalt; the walkway, cement; stairs and porch landing are brick. The door is a 1960s replacement. The brick steps and landing are in poor condition. See photos at the end of the document.
- *Is the proposal more appropriate than the existing conditions?*
There is no evidence of the exact style and configuration of the porch and stairs for this property. The neighboring sister house at 22 Summer Street has a circa 1950 concrete landing and stairs with simple iron railings.
- *Is the proposal more in-keeping with the age, purpose, style and construction of the building?*
The proposed alterations are all more in-keeping with the age, purpose, style and construction of the building than the existing conditions.

- *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.*
- 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.*

The door, porch, stairs, handrails, fencing, pathway and driveway were not discussed in the Form B. No historic materials will be replaced or altered. No physical or documentary evidence exists of the original building entry. The original materials of the entry are un-known although it is very likely that they were composed of wood elements. The paving material is not original to the property. The proposed changes are all visible from the public right of way.

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.*

There will be no alterations to the door openings. The replacement of the 1960s door with one more period appropriate will be the only change.

Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements

- 3. 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.

There are no original features to retain. The Applicant intends to use the simple generic posts, rails and balusters which would match those at 47 Vinal Avenue. The porch and stairs would also be constructed of wood in a traditional manner replacing the modern and crumbling brick steps.

Landscape Features and Paving

1. *The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*
4. *The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

There are no alterations to the essential landscape features. There are no changes to the layout of the pathway and driveway. The new granite and brick driveway and pathway will not alter the essential integrity of the house or the district. The Applicant would like to lay a decorative brick design but has not yet determined the pattern. The fence would be a combination of 'Charles' and 'Concord' styles by McDonough Fence Co. and would rise from 4' at the sidewalk edge to 6' at the end of the driveway and around the property line.

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 Westwood Road Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Steven Azar, Owner a Certificate of Appropriateness for 24 Summer Street** with the following contingencies.

1. The front door will be replaced by Vintage Door style G121.
2. The brick front porch and stairs with iron handrails shall be replaced by a new wood porch with new posts, railings, and balusters shall *exactly match those on the front of 45 Vinal Avenue in construction, size, shape, proportion, detail and material as per attached photo.*
3. The dimensions of the front porch shall match the existing of approximately 4' x 8'.
4. The skirt of the porch shall be wood.
5. The driveway shall have an apron of granite with real brick pavers in a pattern to be determined.
6. The walkway shall have real brick pavers to be determined.
7. The fence and gate shall be Charles and Concord as located in the site sketch provided by McDonough Fence dates 4/30/2015 and as shown on <http://www.mcdonoughfence.com/wood.html>
8. The pergola/trellis shall be the Concord as shown <http://www.mcdonoughfence.com/images/arbors/large/2.jpg>
9. If the approval differs from the plans, new plans shall be submitted to Historic Staff prior to commencing the work.
10. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.





24 Summer Street front steps and walkway




45 Vinal Avenue post, railings and balusters.



Charles fence, gate and trellis

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G121

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- Screen & Storm Transoms
- Screen & Storm Sidelights
- Screen & Storm Options
- Design Your Own Door
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- Storm Windows
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- Louver Doors
- Dutch Doors
- Dutch Louver Doors
- Craftsman Doors
- Arch & Round Top Doors
- Stained Glass Doors
- Double Door Entrance Units
- Entrance Units
- Dutch Entrance Units
- Double Dutch Doors
- Applied Molding Doors
- Side Lights
- Transoms
- Mirror Doors
- Wall Panels

Door Options & Details


- Wood Species
- Glass Types
- V- Grooved Templates
- Stained Glass Templates
- Stained Glass Colors
- Stained Glass Caming
- Stile & Rail Profiles
- Panel Profiles
- Applied Moldings
- Shelves
- Pre-Hanging


Pet Doors & Gates

- Pet Gates
- Pet Doors
- Garden Gates


In Stock Solid Wood Doors

- In Stock Screen Doors
- In Stock Dutch Doors





Salvage door serving as example



Select Your Options and we will Quote Your Project!

Interior/Exterior

Wood Species

Double Door

☐ Check Box to add Sidelights or Transom. [Click Here for Sidelight and Transom Designs](#)

Measurement Type

Width

Height

Thickness

Pre Hung

Pre-Hung Jamb Width

Pre-Hung Hinge Finish

Lockset Preps

Swing Direction

Glass Type

Stained Glass

Optional Shelf

Panel Profile

Quantity

Please Select ▼

Select Interior/Exterior ▼

None - This is a Single Door ▼

Exact Size: ▼

36 ▼

▼

80 ▼

▼

Select Interior/Exterior ▼

Pre-Hung on Matching Jamb ▼

4 ▼

9/16 ▼

Brass Hinges ▼

None ▼

In Left ▼

Clear Standard ▼


N/A ▼






No Shelf ▼

Raised Panel ▼

1

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