



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: 117 Washington Street c.1789-1792 Samuel Ireland House
Case: HPC 2015.045 Single Building Local Historic District

Applicant Name: Roberto DaSilva, Contractor
Applicant Address: 422 Mystic Avenue, Somerville, MA 02145

Date of Application: July 21, 2015
Legal Notice: Replace 3-tab asphalt with architectural shingle roof
Staff Recommendation: Conditional Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: August 18, 2015

I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION: From the Form B

The rare early farmhouse at 117 Washington Street was likely built 1789-1792 for Samuel Ireland of Charlestown by an unknown housewright as his own dwelling. The house follows a cottage plan of one and a half stories with a five bay center entrance facade and two rear chimney stacks, set on a stone foundation original to the site. A right rear "jog" is possibly an early addition with the roof slope adjusted to the main gable by a pent roof and the foundation matching in form to the main cellar. The rear chimney locations and the right jog mark a late 18th century plan consistent with the presumed dating of the house by 1792, although no interior examination has been made. The evident design follows a simple Federal Style with tight gable eaves and two façade dormers with plain pediments that define the architectural detail. The interior possibly has a central stair hall with two rear fireplaces likely, although only the left chimney stack remains intact. A later addition of a left side wing and rear room are likely mid-19th century, while the front entry portico appears early 20th century in Colonial Revival pedimented form with the shingle siding. The Ireland farm originally included a barn as cited in deeds and shown on the 1874 and 1884 Atlases to the rear of the house, demolished by 1895 when owned by Elizabeth McCleary (see Historical Narrative below).

The Samuel Ireland house is of rare architectural value as the only surviving 18th century farmhouse of Charlestown to survive along Washington Street, intact with simple Federal form and a later 20th century entrance.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT/EVOLUTION OF STRUCTURE OR PARCEL:

The rare early farmhouse at 117 Washington Street is likely dated 1789-1792 by deeds and genealogical research to Samuel Ireland (1748-1824) as original owner. Ireland was a yeoman farmer, son of Thomas Ireland, and grandson of Abraham Ireland, noted stone carver of the 8 Mile Marker in Harvard Square (Wyman 1879:541-43; Bahne 1997). The ascription to Ireland was made by Zellie (1980, 1982:14) based on a Boston University term paper by Kaynor (1979), from a Middlesex County Deed dated to "1792" (107-294). A search of Samuel Ireland in the Middlesex Deeds does reveal that he had assembled 5 acres of mowing land along the Cambridge Road (Washington Street) in Charlestown beginning in 1784 through 1789 with a mortgage to James Sherman in 1792 "with dwelling house and other buildings," (Middlesex Deeds 107-294). This deed sequence matches with deed descriptions for Samuel Ireland in Wyman (1879:543), thus confirming the likely dating of the Ireland house from 1789 to 1792, assuming the present house as 117 Washington Street. The dating also matches with the Federal Style features (see Architectural Description) for a house of the period. The Ireland property extended north along the Cambridge Road (Washington Street), east to the rangeway (Franklin Street), north to Ebenezer Shed and west to David Wood, later Nathan Tufts in 1815. The Ireland house is cited with the Joseph Barrell house of 1793 in a Charlestown survey of 1802 (Charlestown Land Records 1883:261; Zellie 1982:17) describing the two houses opposite one another on the Cambridge Road. In 1807 Samuel Ireland was declared "non-compos mentis" by his wife Rebecca, as "dangerously distracted" (Middlesex Probate 12284) with his estate sold at public auction in 1818. In 1824 Ireland prepared a will, with his property sold by his widow Rebecca in 1825. In 1826 the rear 2 acres were purchased by Joshua Littlefield who evidently built a house to the rear of the Ireland house cited in deeds of 1830 (Middlesex Deeds 299-250), and shown on the 1830 Hales Map. The Littlefield house was later purchased by Nathan Reed and shown on the 1895 Atlas as 2 Cottage Place (now demolished). After the death of Rebecca Ireland in 1831, the remainder of the property was apparently purchased by Nathan Blodgett from the "widow Rebecca Ireland estate" in 1839 (Middlesex Deeds 383-383), the only secure deed trace between the original Ireland farmstead and the present 117 Washington Street.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION*1. Proposal of Work:*

1. Entire roof of main house.
 - a. Remove existing asphalt roof and replace with Timberline®.
 - b. Completely de-nail roof and re-nail roofing boards as needed.
 - c. Install new plywood all of the house also install w 2+6 to make over hanger on 2 gable of the house and little area back the house also fix top of entry from door with plywood
 - d. Install of ice and water shield all of the house
 - e. Install 8" aluminum drip edge (White) to all rakes and eaves.
 - f. Install pipe flanges as needed.
 - g. All shingles will be fastened using 1" nails. Each shingle fastened with 6 nails.
 - h. Install chimney flashing:
 - i. Install GAF Cobra Ridge Vent all on the house to allow for proper ventilation:

See the final pages for details and photos.

II. FINDINGS*1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

C/NA	Hunter Wollman	2007.061	1. Interior Exploratory Demolition.
Denied without prejudice	Hunter Wollman	2008.070	1. Replace exiting asphalt 3-tab shingle roof with cedar shingles; 2. Replace 6 replacement windows on front façade of building with Pella insulated glass 6/6 wood windows; and 3. Replace the remaining replacement windows with insulated glass 6/6 vinyl windows.

C/A, C/NA	Claude Augustin	2011.075	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove and replace all existing vinyl windows with new Jeld-wen® wood windows <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. with 4/4 sash to match historic profiles on the original block; and b. with 2/2 sash to match historic profiles on the additions; 2. Remove and replace all existing exterior doors with a glass and new wood main door and a four-panel door on the addition; 3. One story rear addition in the location of the existing deck with siding to match existing shakes; 4. Add three second floor dormers for bathroom, bedrooms with siding and roofing to match existing; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 dormers to match the front dormer with the central dormer as a shed dormer 5. Remove existing chimney; and 6. Reconstruct the chimney with thin brick and L-corners to be mortar set and located centrally on the building with Staff review and approval 7. Repair, and replace existing siding as needed to match existing shakes; and 8. Replace 3-tab asphalt shingles.
C/NA	Claude Augustin	2011.078	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interior renovations
C/A	Claude Augustin	2012.094	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove circa 1940s wood shingle siding; and 2. Replace with clapboard with exposures to match original.

2. *Precedence:*

- *Are there similar properties / proposals?*
 - There are numerous cases of 3-tab asphalt being up-graded to an architectural shingle. Each case was evaluated for a match to bring the building closer to its original appearance based on physical or photographic evidence. In a few cases, where the visibility or the availability of an appropriate product limited an appropriate choice to one that was less than optimal but gave a sense of the original roofing, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued with the understanding that at a future date better and more appropriate products might become available.
 - There are very few properties from the 18th century still in existence in Somerville. Only one, the Powder House has a wood roof. 117 Washington Street had, until recently such a roof located beneath a more recent, higher roof providing physical evidence of the size, shape and size of the original wood shingles. The other 18th Century buildings are 78 Sycamore Street (3-tab asphalt); 6 Kent Court (3-tab asphalt); and 438 Broadway (Timberline® Ultra®). This last was approved due to the location of the house at the top of Winter Hill where the visibility of the shingles is from an acute angle where only the reveal can be seen. See roofing chart at end of document.
 - Cobra roof vents have been granted Certificates of Appropriateness primarily on Westwood Road (2002, 2004, 2008, 2009, and 2010). A Certificate for a ridge vent was also issued for 26 Bow Street (2004).
 - Drip edges and flashing are commonly installed. Typically these are either in terne metal or copper if they are visible and painted to match for small overhangs.
 - Install pipe flanges as needed. This is unclear as to what these are to be used for and where they would be installed. Precedence could not be determined for this item.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The roof of the building is highly visible from both Washington Street and Knowlton Street.

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

The Owner bought this house in a foreclosure in 2011. This property, located on a major local arterial, has been under a very delayed construction schedule. The roof has been replaced sometime between August 2013 and August 2014 with 3-tab shingles on a Certificate issued in 2011. Not all the items granted a Certificate of Appropriateness by the Commission have been undertaken such as the faux chimney which was to replace the one taken down in order to construct dormers on the rear of the building.

- *Is the proposal more appropriate than the existing conditions?*

The erose appearance of the Timberline® shingles does not mimic the traditional wood shingle. Timberline® shingles were developed for and are therefore for a low ranch style building which this is not. The original shingles were regular in size, shape and exposure with very slight variation.

Currently, no flashing or drip edges are visible. An 8" exposure is not appropriate for an 18th century house.

Cobra ridge vents run most of the length of the ridge line and have a shadow line. Due to the fact that the second floor/attic area is completely finished, the installation of a ridge vent will not function as designed.

- *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 roofing material was not discussed in the Form B. No deteriorated historic material or features will be repaired or replaced. The proposed Timberline® shingles do not replicate historic wood shingles. The flashing and drip edges will be in aluminum and will be visible. The proposed materials do not match the historic materials in respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The proposal is visible from the public right of way.

B. Roofs

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

HPC 2011.075 was issued on the understanding that a replacement chimney would be installed to replace the one removed from the building to allow for the construction of a dormer. There are no further proposed changes to 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 original roof had wood shingles as can be seen in the photo below.

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

The proposed Timberline® shingles do not replicate historic wood shingles. The exposure and size of the existing 3-tab asphalt shingles is closer to the original wood shingle and closer to the Slateline® architectural shingle than the proposed Timberline® shingles.

Visible flashing should be restricted to chimneys. It should not be visible on the roof of in an 18th century house.

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.

Work approved on HPC Certificate 2011.075 and not completed was a condition for subsequent approvals. This must be rectified before permits for additional work are undertaken.

The proposed Timberline® shingles do not replicate historic wood shingles. The flashing and drip edges will be in aluminum and will be visible. The proposed materials do not match the historic materials in respect to their physical properties, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. The proposal is visible from the public right of way.

Staff determines that the alteration for which an application for a Historic Certificate has been filed is not appropriate for and not compatible with the preservation and protection of the Samuel Ireland House Single Building Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Roberto DaSilva, Contractor for Claude Augustin, Owner a Certificate of Appropriateness** to for a new roof with the following contingencies.

1. The thin brick 'faux' chimney shall be constructed as per HPC Certificate 2011.075 and per plans by Khalsa Design Inc. dated 8/18/2011.
2. No permits shall be issued for additional work on the building until the above work has been completed and approved by HPC Staff for consistency with the approved Certificate.
3. The roofing material shall be Slateline® in English Gray, Antique or Weathered Slate color.
4. Flashing shall be copper or terne metal.
5. No flashing or drip edges shall protrude more than ½" along the eaves.
6. Vent pipes protruding from the roof shall be dark in color.
7. A Cobra® ridge vent shall not be installed on the roof.
8. Missing wood trim shall be reinstalled to match the originals in size, shape and contours in their original locations.
9. Historic Staff shall issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that this was done in accordance with the Certificate and approved plans.





Building Style	Original Roofing	Existing Roofing	Approved Architectural Shingles	Basis
Colonial Revival	Wood	3-tab Asphalt	Slateline®	Similar size and exposure to original wood shakes (existing)
Federal	Wood	3-tab Asphalt	Timberline® Ultra®	Shallow pitch of roof, angle of view critical

Federal	Wood	3-tab Asphalt	Hatteras®/ Slateline®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>
Queen Anne/Stick	Unknown	3-tab Asphalt	Slateline®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>
Second Empire Style	Slate	3-tab Asphalt	Slateline®	Similar size and exposure to original
Second Empire Style	Slate	3-tab Asphalt	Owens Corning® Berkshire®	Similar size and exposure to original
Shingle style	Unknown	3-tab Asphalt	Timberline® Prestique Grande®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>
Shingle style	Unknown	3-tab Asphalt	Tamko® Heritage®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>
Shingle style	Unknown	3-tab Asphalt	Slateline®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>
Shingle style	Unknown	3-tab Asphalt	CertainTeed® Landmark®	<i>closer to the original roofing material than the existing.</i>