



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT

Address: 9 Westwood Road
Case: HPC 2014.024
Applicant: Marya & Kevin Outtersson
Address: 9 Westwood Road

Date of Application: April 30, 2014
Legal Notice: *Location of HVAC*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: May 20, 2014



I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Architectural Description: The following italicized text is predominantly from the survey Form B. *Nine Westwood Road is one of the best examples of the Shingle style on the street. Rising from a prominent stone foundation, clad in wood shingles, this two and one-half story front gabled house is rectangular in plan. The facade is two bays wide with a one-story bay window on the first floor. The off center entrance has been obscured by an enclosed porch that encompasses a portion of the bay. While the facades have minimal architectural detailing, typical of the Shingle Style, the second floor exhibits unique variations in the wall plane. The building wall, which projects slightly over the first floor, is constructed at a slightly recessed angle, while the three second floor windows continue the vertical plane of the upper third story. In the gable, a recessed semi-hexagonal bow window is framed by curved walls, a characteristic element of the Shingle Style. The west elevation is defined by a two-story round turret with conical roof. The turret consists of a four-part window with stained glass transoms on*



9 Westwood Road, c. 1898

the first floor and a stepped series of narrow elongated rectangular windows recessed into the wall surface on the second floor. The second story windows on this elevation are recessed into the angled wall, in contrast to the projecting windows on the facade. An exterior chimney, which is fieldstone on the first floor and brick above, completes the west elevation.

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

Westwood Road was originally platted on the Shute estate and Benton farm in 1874, but was not developed until 1894, when hardware dealer Charles Bradshaw replatted the entire subdivision. To landscape the street, Bradshaw moved mature elms and maples from elsewhere on the estate to the street line and retained the estate's granite posts as the entrance to the road. Eight Shingle style houses designed by Somerville architect J. St. Clair Harrold, were initially built by Bradshaw, and by 1905, a total of 17 houses had been constructed. The first owners on Westwood Road held a cross-section of Somerville business and professional interests at the turn of the century. Divided between Boston and local concerns, the owners included lawyers, pharmacists, shoe, jewelry and desk manufacturers, and dairy and produce dealers. Westwood Road is Somerville's closest representation of a picturesquely-planned nineteenth century subdivision and remains one of the City's finest collections of Shingle and Colonial Revival style residences.

Nine Westwood Road was one of the original houses built on Westwood Road by Charles Bradshaw and designed by architect James St. Clair Harrold, who died in 1901 at the age of 39. This house was built in 1896 for Charles Lamb who was listed in the dry goods business in the street directories. Prior to 1896, he lived at 29 Ames Street. An article in the Somerville Journal on Somerville homes owned by influential citizens highlighted this house along with 3 Westwood Road. By 1905, this house had been sold to Herman A. and Herbert W. Fosdick, who were listed as salesmen. Their previous residence was at 446 Broadway.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal of Alteration:

Remove A/C window units to be replaced with an A/C condenser and install heat pump with a small vent through to the exterior of the building. The Applicant proposes to install both the unit and the vent along the west side façade, location A, which is minimally visible from Westwood Road. This location is behind the two-story turret and low to the ground. The AC unit will still be visible from the sidewalk and the vent may or may not be visible dependent upon the exact location of installation.

Location A

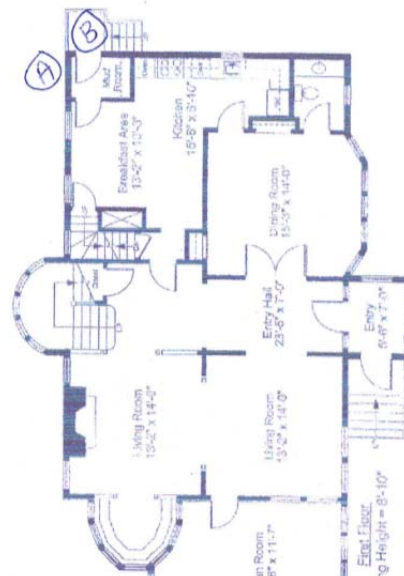


Photo and plan illustrate proposed location A

III. FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed: Certificates of Appropriateness and Non-Applicability have been issued for numerous repairs and alterations over the years by prior homeowners.

- September 2009, Certificates of Non-Applicability and Appropriateness were issued to repair fascia, gutters/downspouts, and porch as well as repoint the chimney, replace flashing with copper, and asphalt shingles with wood shingles.
- May 2011, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued to remove the chain link fence and replace with a board/lattice fence.
- December 2012, a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace two third-story original wood windows was denied.
- February 2013, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issue to replace the front concrete walkway with pavers.

Precedence: The Commission has approved several AC condensers over the years as well as vents, but often these approvals were granted by Staff due to the lack of visibility. Locations the Commission has approved were often located alongside the driveway or toward the rear of the building, which is consistent with the current proposal.

- *Visibility:* The condenser and heat pump vent will be minimally visible behind the turret and close to the ground along the west side of the building façade.
- *Existing Conditions:* The house is located on Westwood Road, a district with multiple Shingle style houses developed in the 1890s. The house has been preserved well over the years as several prior certificates illustrate.
- *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 guidelines 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.

- 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 architectural features will not be altered. The AC condenser will not be affixed to the exterior of the dwelling, but installed on the ground. While the vent will come through to the exterior of the building, this will be minimally visible, if at all, and Staff recommends the Applicant paint the vent to match the exterior siding of the house to further obscure this vent.

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 the Historic Preservation Commission grant Kevin Outterson, a Certificate of Appropriateness to install an AC condenser at location A and to install a heat pump vent to be located behind the turret and close to the ground. Staff recommends a condition that the vent be painted to match the exterior façade of the dwelling.** This alteration would not be “incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.”



9 Westwood Road