



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 2014.050
Applicant: Marya & Kevin Outtersen
Address: 9 Westwood Road

Date of Application: June 26, 2014
Legal Notice: *Install vents and chimney cap.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: October 21, 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 the first floor and a stepped series of*



9 Westwood Road, c. 1898

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:

- The Applicant no longer proposes to install a chimney cap.
- The Applicant proposes to install two bathroom exhaust vents, which will be flush with the building and louvered, to be located on the right side façade within the projecting gable, see photo. Staff recommends a condition to paint the vents upon installation.



*Left: Location of flush louvered vent
Above: Proposed louvered vent to be painted*

- The Applicant proposes to install an attic fan (not visible) and vent on the front façade, directly beneath the gable. The professionals working with the Applicant recommend this vent so the air can exit the attic. For a fan of the appropriate size, two square feet of additional “net free venting” space is necessary. The Applicant proposes a small roof gable vent as shown below, with a total height of about 25 inches. The vent will be composed of wood and Staff recommends a condition to paint the vent upon installation.



Left: Location of attic vent
Bottom: Attic vent proposed



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.

- December 2012, a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace two third-story original wood windows was denied.
- February 2013, a Certificate of Appropriateness was issued to replace the front concrete walkway with pavers.
- May 2014, the current owners received a Certificate of Appropriateness to install an AC condenser and heat pump vent along the side façade of the building.

Precedence: The Commission has approved several vents and related equipment over the years. Often, these were granted by Staff due to the lack of visibility. While Staff could not specifically identify an attic vent installation, the proposal is compatible with the building and will not detrimentally affect architectural features. This is a common method to vent both attics and bathrooms to ensure these areas receive appropriate ventilation which ensure the long-term preservation of this building.

- *Visibility:* The attic vent will be highly visible while the two bathroom vents will be less visible as these are proposed on the right side façade. In addition, the proposed bathroom vents are flat against the façade and louvered, so they will be less visible than a projecting vent.
- *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 attic and bathroom vents are recommended to be painted to ensure minimal visibility from the street. The attic vent does remove a small portion of the shingled exterior; however, this vent will further the long-term preservation of this home and is not detrimental to the building. The bathroom vents are minimally visible from the street due to the flat quality of the vent. All vents should be painted to match the exterior.

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 Outtersen, a Certificate of Appropriateness to install an attic vent at the identified location on the front façade and two flat louvered vents at the identified location on the right side façade. Staff recommends a condition that all vents 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