



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 / District(s):	10 Westwood Road	c. 1897 Edward Jackman House
Case:	HPC 2013.032	Westwood Road Local Historic and National Register Districts
Applicant Name:	Michael Avery, Owner	
Applicant Address:	10 Westwood Road, Somerville	
Date of Application:	June 12, 2013	
Legal Notice:	<i>Replace iron handrails with wood rails, balusters and newel posts</i>	
Staff Recommendation:	Certificate of Appropriateness	
Date of Public Hearing:	July 16, 2013	

I. Building Description

Architectural Description: This two and one-half story Colonial Revival/ Shingle style house is 3 bays wide with a rectangular sidehall plan and rear 'ell. The ground floor of the facade includes a polygonal bay window contained under the slightly projecting second story and a classical entrance with sidelights. The front porch has Doric columns and denticulated cornice is connected to a wrap-around balustraded deck with shingled posts and square balusters. The front steps have simple iron handrails. The upper floors of the facade are simply designed with three windows on the second floor and a Palladian window in the gable, which has been altered with the addition of a door and fire escape into the central portion.

Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel: Westwood Road was originally platted on the Shute estate and Benton farm in 1874, but was not



10 Westwood Road

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 James St. Clair Harrold, who died in 1901 at the age of 39, 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.

Edward Jackman, first owner of the house was in the produce business according to the City Directory and had previously lived at 41 Laurel Street. By 1902, the house had been sold to Thomas M. Lewis, a druggist.

II. Project Description

Proposal of Alteration: Replace iron handrails with wood rails, balusters and newel posts.

III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:* Before the current porch repairs to the deck, columns and steps, of which this alteration is part, no Certificates for repairs and maintenance or alterations were found for this well-maintained house, however building permits were issued in 1986 to rebuild the porch steps and in 1989 to add a layer of roof shingles over existing.
2. *Precedence:* 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, 257 Broadway, 141 Central Street, 56 Meacham Road, 58 Meacham Road, 49 Vinal Avenue and most recently 47 Mount Vernon Street.

As can be seen in the historic photo, the house did not originally have handrails, and the newel posts were heavier and shorter than is commonly seen on the street. This does not meet current building code.

3. Considerations:

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?* The front steps are visible from the public right of way.
- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?* The owner has received a Certificate of Non-Applicability to undertake other porch repairs. The proposed design will be compatible with

The primary purpose of the Preservation Ordinance is to encourage preservation and high design standards in Local Historic Districts, in order to safeguard the architectural heritage of the City. Guidelines have been developed to 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.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*
- *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features. The historic photo from Somerville Past and Present does not show railings and newels but rather a wide shoulder and stubby posts with ball finials.*
- *Does the proposal coincide with the appropriate Specific Guidelines as set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

D. Porches, steps, trim and other exterior architectural elements

1. *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.



The proposed alteration would add handrails that are of a design consistent with the porch railings and balusters the existing porch rails and balusters. The new newel would similar to those on the upper level porch, the porch posts next door at 12 Westwood Road and those on 11 Westwood Road across the street.



Colonial Revival posts from 12 Westwood Road, 11 Westwood Road, 10 Arlington Street, 20 Chapel Street

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 Bow Street Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Michael Avery a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the existing metal hand rails and with wood handrails, balusters and newel posts consistent with the existing porch balusters and rails on 10 Westwood Road as seen on the historic photo.**

