



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

*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

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**ALTERATION TO A HISTORIC PROPERTY STAFF REPORT**

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Site / District(s)      9 Westwood Road, Charles Lamb House, Westwood Road LHD  
Case:                      HPC 12.129

Applicant Name:        Sylvia and Arthur Shurcliff  
Applicant Address:     9 Westwood Road

Date of Application:    11/14/12  
Legal Notice:            11/30/12

Staff Recommendation: Recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with conditions  
Date of Public Hearing: 12/18/12

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**I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION**

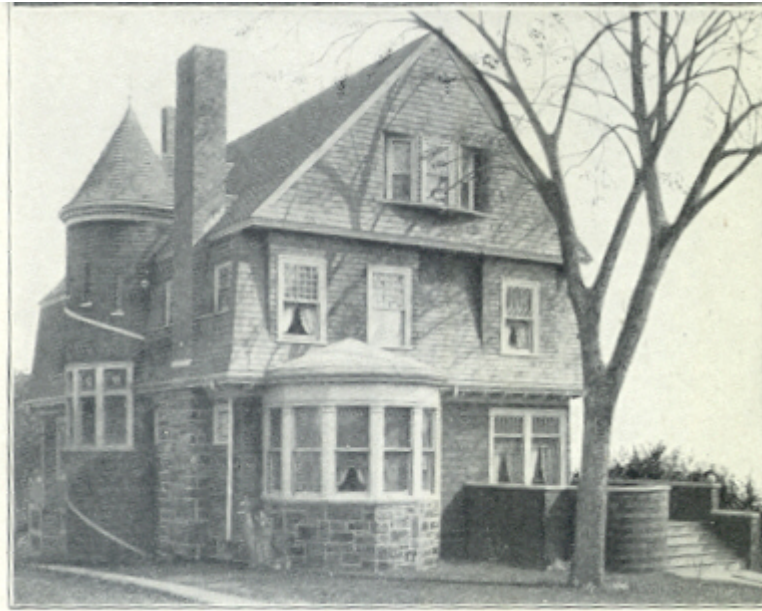
*1. Architectural Description:*

9 Westwood Road is one of the best preserved examples of the Shingle Style on Westwood Road. Rising from a prominent stone foundation and 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 also encompasses a portion of the bay. While the facade of this house has 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. This results in the appearance of shallow dormers under the projecting third floor. 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 demined 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 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.

## *2. Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel:*



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. Claire Harrold were initially built by Bradshaw, and by 1905, a total of 17 houses had been constructed. The first owners on Westwood Road were 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.

9 Westwood Road was one of the original houses built on Westwood Road by Charles Bradshaw and designed by architect J. St. Claire Harrold. 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

### *1. Proposal of Alteration:*

The Applicants would like to remove two (2) windows on the third floor of the rear elevation; and install Renewal® by Anderson® double -hung windows to match existing the windows on the rear elevation. These windows were located in the box room which is unoccupied. The storm windows broke during Hurricane Sandy.

## III. FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

### *1. Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

Certificates of Appropriateness and Non-Applicability have been issued for numerous repairs and alterations.

2007.75	C/NA	12/12/07	1. Replace basement windows with Renewal by Andersen (not visible from ROW)
2008.38	C/NA	07/21/08	1. Replace third floor wood windows in-kind to match existing window panes in form and material; 2. Install Harvey Tru-channel® storm windows; and 3. Replace windows and door on rear elevation of the building.
2009.57	C/NA, C/A	9/23/2009, 9/29/09	1. Repair or replace fascia in-kind; 2. Repair or replace aluminum gutters in-kind; 3. Install downspouts; 4. Repoint chimney and foundation with matching mortar; and 5. Replace porch roof with EPDM or similar material. (C/NA) and  1. Replace metal flashing on chimney and windows with copper flashing; and 2. Replace 3-tab asphalt shingles with wood shingles on lower gambrel roof to the edges of windows similar to window openings at 12 Benton Road, with Staff Review. (C/A)
2011.037	C/A	05/23/11	1. Remove chain link fence; 2. Install 6' board and lattice fence at rear of property; and 3. Install 42" lattice fence at sides of property.

## 2. *Precedence:*

The Commission generally does not allow replacement windows on the main façade of a building but may, on a side or rear elevation, if the alteration is not too visible. A review of recently permitted windows show that several manufacturers have windows that been acceptable for the side and rear elevations when seen obliquely or at a distance providing that no low emissive or soft coat, vacuum coat or spatter coat or other low reflective coating is used such as at 50 Bow Street and 396 Broadway. Renewal® by Andersen® windows were approved for 61 Columbus Avenue to replace white vinyl replacement windows. Certificates of Hardship were issued for 45 Columbus Avenue when the Applicant could not have been aware of the LHD designation due to a filing error at the Registry of Deeds and already had the windows in hand and 77 Columbus Avenue after the contractor, who had not pulled a building permit, had already junked the historic windows when the replacement was discovered.

- *Considerations:*
- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The rear of the building is visible from Cambria Street.

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

This house is located on Westwood Road, a district with multiple shingle style houses developed in the late 1890s. Decorative window treatments are found throughout the district. At some point, the decorative multi-pane second floor windows on the rear portion of the building were modernized with 1/1 sash. The existing windows on the third floor may be original to the building as they are located in the less formal section of the building.



- *Does the proposal coincide with the General Approach set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

- 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 windows are not described in Form B, however, the historic photo shows the original building as it looked in 1898. The proposed window is not visible in the photo and is located in the servants' portion of the building where simpler, less elaborate windows would have been the norm.

- B. *Changes and additions to the property and its environment that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected (LATER IMPORTANT FEATURES will be the term used hereafter to convey this concept).*

While platted, Cambria Street was developed later Westwood Road. The siting of the buildings suggest that the builders wanted some privacy for the residents of the older and newer structures.

- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*

The windows are loose and the storms are missing.

- D. *When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*

The Applicant would like to replace the windows with modern tight windows with no muntins or spacers. This is not based upon the physical evidence.

- 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.*

The proposed window replacement does not match the existing in design and is double glazed which, even with no Lo-E coating, there is a certain amount of distortion due to the double-glazing and changes in atmospheric pressure.. The viewing distance is such that other physical qualities would not be discernable.

- 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 rear of the house is visible from Cambria Street. See photo.

- *Does the proposal coincide with the appropriate Specific Guidelines as set forth in the Design Guidelines?*

**C. 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.*

Window openings visible from the street will stay the same. No openings would be altered for the purpose of fitting stock window sash, 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.*

The window will be white to match the existing trim.

### 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 9 Westwood Road, Charles Lamb House, Westwood Road Local Historic District; therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant Sylvia and Arthur Shurcliff a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the condition that the windows have no Lo-E coating, a muntin and a spacer to match the existing historic window** because due to the distance from the street, it would not be “incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district;” **and the windows be retained in storage for reinstallation at a later date, should a subsequent owner wish to do the needed repairs.**



9 Westwood Road

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Samuels, Edward A. Somerville, Past and Present. Boston, 1897, p. 480.  
Somerville Street Directories: 1895-1905.  
Somerville Journal. June 6, 1896, p. 1.  
Somerville Journal. January, 26, 1900, p. 12.