



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) 9 Westwood Road, c. 1896 Charles Lamb House, Westwood Road LHD
Case: HPC 13.005

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

Date of Application: 1/29/13
Legal Notice: *Change concrete walkway to City Hall pavers.*

Staff Recommendation: Recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: 2/19/13

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. 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.

9 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

1. *Proposal of Alteration:*

The Applicants would like to replace the existing concrete walkway with City Hall pavers in a running bond pattern.

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:

- *Considerations:*

There have been only 6 cases of walkway replacement with alternative materials in the last 12 years. Walkways have received Certificates of Appropriateness for replacement with Uni-Block (75-77 Columbus Avenue and 101 School Street); cobbles (1 Summer Street); City Hall pavers (156 Summer Street and 8 Mount Vernon Street) and grass (18 Benton Road).

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

The walkway running from the street to the front door is extremely visible.

- *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. The concrete pathway is undistinguished but appears to be a replacement of the one seen in the c.1898 photo of the house from Somerville Past and Present which seems to have a raised edging. Its material is not discernable in the photo.

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



3. GENERAL APPROACH

- C. *Whenever possible, deteriorated material or architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced or removed.*
- 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 replacement material does not match the highly visible existing walkway which is not original. It is difficult from the existing historic photo to determine the paving material.

II. SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

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

H. Landscape Features and Paving

- 1. *The general intent of this section is to preserve the existing or later essential landscape features that enhance the property.*
- 4. *The original layout and materials of the walks, steps and paved areas should be maintained if significant grade changes constitute an important feature of the structure or site. Consideration will be given to alterations if it can be shown that improved site circulation is necessary and that the alterations will accomplish this without altering the integrity of the structure.*

There will be no alterations to the layout of the walkway. The building will not be obscured. There will be no alterations to the landform.

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, in the Westwood Road Local Historic District. Therefore **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant** to Sylvia and Arthur Shurcliff, **a Certificate of Appropriateness** for the removal of the entrance walkway as the current materials are not original and replacement with City Hall pavers. Staff also recommends that the pavers are laid in a simple running bond pattern. According to the Landscape Architect on the Commission, the pavers are durable and have a classic aesthetic. 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

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.