



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
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HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

STAFF PRESENT
AMIE HAYES, PLANNER
KRISTI CHASE, PRESERVATION PLANNER
MELISSA WOODS, PLANNER

MEMBERS PRESENT
JILLIAN ADAMS
ABBY FREEDMAN

Public Meeting for Preferably Preserved Structures
Recommendations and Minutes

The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission held a public meeting on **Thursday, May 2, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.** in City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

The purpose of the meeting was to seek alternatives to demolition for structures determined by the Historic Preservation Commission to be Preferably Preserved and to make recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission at a future Commission meeting on the following Preferably Preserved structure(s):

6:30 PM to 7:30 PM

20 Warwick Street *Case # HPC 2012.109*
Delay Period Ends: 9/18/2013
Building Description: c. 1874 multi-family dwelling
Significance: The structure is "Significant" due to an association of the property with the Boston Brick Company, whose location and employment prompted the development of this small neighborhood of working class housing, and due to the ability of the subject parcel to convey significance regarding location, design and materials within the context of a group of buildings.

26 Warwick Street *Case # HPC 2012.108*
Delay Period Ends: 9/18/2013
Building Description: c. 1874 two-family dwelling
Significance: The structure is "Significant" due to an association of the property with the Boston Brick Company, whose location and employment prompted the development of this small neighborhood of working class housing, and due to the ability of the subject parcel to convey significance regarding location, design and materials within the context of a group of buildings.

This was the first time for these two cases to come to a Public Meeting for Preferably Preserved Structures. These cases were discussed simultaneously as these two structures are adjacent and the proposed project will develop both parcels. A site plan was presented which illustrated three townhouses facing into the center of the lot. The side façade of two townhouses is illustrated along the Warwick streetfront and is similar to the existing dwellings. Commissioners first inquired about the similarity between the proposed and the existing buildings. The Architect for the Agent explained that the locations of the existing buildings near and along the lot line make rehabilitation less desirable. The Commissioners then encouraged retaining one of the two buildings, likely 20 Warwick Street as this structure is not located on the property



line. There was further discussion regarding this suggestion in that the building could be extended toward the rear of the lot with an ell, or wing attached, which would extend toward the right side of the property. The Agent for the Applicant explained that there would likely not be enough square feet provided by this type of site plan. The Agent also explained that reducing the number of units would make this project no longer feasible. Staff explained that the current site plan locates three units in the backyard and, in moving forward, this plan would likely not be supported. Reducing the unit size was also discussed; however, the Agent did not think this would be a feasible option either.

The discussion concluded with an understanding that the Agent would discuss the suggested alternatives with the Applicant and inquire if the Applicant is willing to continue this discussion at the following meeting, June 6, 2013.

7:30 PM to 8:15 PM

197 Washington Street Case # HPC 2012.134

Delay Period Ends: 11/19/2013

Building Description: c. 1860 Italianate style funeral parlor

Significance: The structure is "Significant" due to an association with Samuel Holt, a member of the Common Council from 1884-1885 and an Alderman from 1886-1887. Additionally, the building is architecturally and historically significant for its retention of form, Italianate details (deep eaves with double brackets, square cupola and center pediment with fanlight) and original site plan as well as the use of the building, since 1933, as a funeral parlor.

Kristi Chase, Preservation Planner, recused herself from this portion of the meeting and left the room. Melissa Woods, Planner, joined this portion of the meeting to discuss the proposed project.

This was the second time for this case to come to a Public Meeting for Preferably Preserved Structures. The discussion continued from the previous meeting in an effort to determine if retaining the existing structure would be feasible. The discussion also addressed the significance of the building once it is either removed from the site or no longer visible to the public way along Washington Street. Commissioners continued to express their preference to retain the building and were concerned that options for preservation had not been fully explored. The Agent for the Applicant explained they did explore preservation options and in the neighborhood meetings regarding their project, they did not hear public opinion that preferred preserving the building. It was later determined that due to the lengthy timeline, number of entities involved, and substantial change in both use and massing between the existing and proposed structures, demolition will be the likely result.

The discussion briefly addressed the historic marker, which is currently located near the sidewalk along Washington Street. This marker will be relocated to a more appropriate location and could incorporate a narrative to explain the development of Union Square, from a pastoral beginning to a modern urban scene.

Proposed plans were discussed and Commissioners had difficulty determining how the proposed structure relates to the commercial structures that compose Union Square. Since the buildings appear monolithic, Commissioners noted the buildings would be more appropriate for a suburban office park. The Commissioners encouraged use of materials that are compatible with other historic structures nearby. They were also concerned by the large amount of land devoted to parking as there is little open or green space noted on the plans.

The discussion concluded with an understanding that Staff would set up a special Public Meeting for Preferably Preserved Structures to discuss solutions regarding how to incorporate historical materials, such as granite, into the project at a later date. Should the Agent and/or Applicant choose not to participate in this meeting, and should an MOA not result from these discussions, Commissioners inquired and understand that the HPC may submit formal recommendations to the Design Review Committee regarding use of materials that are compatible with the historic nature of Union Square.

