



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): 30 Bow Street / LHD & NR
Case: HPC 2013.081

Applicant Name: Kelly Speakman
Applicant Address: 30 Bow Street

Date of Application: October 21, 2013
Legal Notice: *Remove and replace chimney.*

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: November 19, 2013



30 Bow Street, 2012

I. Building Description

Architectural Description:

The subject structure is a 2½ story dwelling in an unknown (possibly vernacular) style with a side hall interior plan. Architectural details to note are the first floor bay window, Colonial Revival enclosed entry, and later additions which create a complex façade that demonstrate how the structure has evolved over time.

Historical Context:

The structure, c. pre-1874, is illustrated on the 1874 Hopkins Map and is noted in the MHC survey form as the W. Orcutt residence. Bow Street illustrates a wood frame business block from the mid to late nineteenth century. At the intersection of several turnpikes and roads, Bow Street and Union Square were built up with stores, taverns, and houses and functioned as the town center, although the eastern section of Broadway just over the Neck had a considerable collection of nonresidential buildings as well. Bow Street, the site of taverns and wheelwrights' shops in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, has no extant structures that date earlier than c.1858.

II. Project Description

Proposal of Alteration:

The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing chimney and to replace this feature- in size, shape, and color- with a brick chimney veneer. As the Applicant thought this type of change would be considered replacement in-kind, due to the similar appearance and use of exterior materials, the proposal has already

been completed. However, photos of the original chimney and recent site visits demonstrate that the visible differences are extremely minimal due to the location of the chimney which results in minimal visibility.



Left: 30 Bow St, photo 2013
Bottom: Original chimney, photo May 2012



III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

May 2012, HPC Staff issued a Certificate of Non-Applicability to rebuild the chimney in-kind and to repair the roof flashing and shingles (HPC 2012.027). The other items attached to this Certificate were never acted upon, but were considered not applicable and a hardship.

July 2010, HPC Staff issued a Certificate of Non-Applicability to repair the chimney.

There are earlier Certificates issued for this property as well, since the current owner has been updating and enhancing this historic structure for several years.

2. *Precedence:*

In 2004, 178 Central Street reconstructed a chimney from attic level using new Boston Colonial or Boston Paver bricks.

In 2011, a chimney was reconstructed to be centrally located on the building with Staff review and approval.

- While many Certificates have been issued to repair and maintain chimneys, several have also been issued to alter chimneys with regard to location and reconstruction. These Certificates often ensure the mortar characteristics will be maintained. While there are no Certificates that identify brick veneers as part of their alteration, the overall concern is to maintain the chimney in-kind. The Applicant has maintained the size, shape, and brick color, which are the primary characteristics the HPC takes into account.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*
 The chimney is visible from Bow Street, but at a height where details are difficult to understand. The chimney continues to retain the same form, massing, and color of brick as the original.

- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*
The building has been well maintained since the current owner has taken an interest in restoring and maintaining this historic structure.

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?*

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.*

Features described in the Form B will not be altered as a result of this proposal.

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

The Applicant has repaired the chimney and flashing, which is what led to the chimney reconstruction.

- 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 new material is respectful of the original size, massing, and color of brick, but is a brick veneer.

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

Masonry

- a. *Wherever possible, original masonry and mortar should be retained.*

The original chimney has already been removed. The Applicant has replicated the chimney in size, shape and color of brick.

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 the Historic Preservation Commission to grant Kelly Speakman a Certificate of Appropriateness to reconstruct the chimney at 30 Bow Street with a brick veneer that is consistent in size, shape, and brick color.**

30 Bow Street

