



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
Case: HPC 2014.005

Applicant Name: Mark Boyes-Watson
Applicant Address: 30 Bow Street

Date of Application: January 27, 2014
Legal Notice: *Construct brick veneer replica chimney.*
Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Public Hearing: February 18, 2014



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 veneer which would have a chimney cap. 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, and primarily due to the chimney cap.



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



III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

November 2013, the Applicant applied for a change in chimney material to the HPC. The Applicant was not available for the November hearing but wanted Staff to move the case forward. As the Applicant was not present to answer questions regarding this chimney, the application was denied without prejudice due to the need for clarity regarding a rear chimney that had been previously removed.

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.

April 2001, HPC granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to:

Replacement of the existing deteriorated windows with divided light NORCO windows, predominately six-over-six, except where manufacturer's recommendations indicate in order to maintain similar proportions throughout, subject to the *condition* that regular insulated glass to be used and not low-E, muntins are to be wood, window sills to be a true at 1 7/8" with a 5/4" casing and band molding, and the siding to preserve the reveals.

Reconfigured head of the left front window (Dentist's Office) to be extended downward just enough to build a complete 5/4" casing and a slight reveal, and maintain the over-sized appearance of the existing window.

Window at the front of the house along the driveway is to be reconfigured to match adjacent window along the driveway.

Construction of a gravel parking area with a 10-15' apron of either cobble stone or pavers between sidewalk and commencement of gravel driveway, color to be compatible in appearance with the gravel, granite border shall edge the driveway.

March 2001, a Certificate of Hardship was issued to demolish the partially fallen rear chimney and a Certificate of Non-Applicability for the removal and replacement of the window on the second floor rear of the building.

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 as well as to allow chimney caps. These Certificates often ensure the mortar characteristics will be maintained and that the cap does not obstruct the chimney. 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, and added a chimney cap that does not obstruct the chimney itself.

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, but a chimney cap has been added.
- *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 and adds a chimney cap.

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

Masonry: 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, and added a chimney cap that does not obstruct the chimney.

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 Mark Boyes-Watson a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a brick veneer chimney and add a chimney cap at 30 Bow Street that is consistent in size, shape, and brick color to the original.**

30 Bow Street

