



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) 50 Bow Street (Unit 12) / LHD & NR
Case: HPC 2013.079

Applicant Name: Daniel Leahey
Applicant Address: 50 Bow Street, Unit 12

Date of Application: 10/17/2013
Legal Notice: *Replace Windows.*

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



I. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Architectural Description:

The Bow Street Police Station was constructed in 1874 and was one of the first municipal building projects for the City of Somerville, chartered in 1871. The Police Station was designed by George A. Clough, a very influential Boston architect during the late 19th century. Clough designed approximately 25 public schools in Boston as well as numerous other service and institutional structures.

The Police Station is in the Bow Street Historic District which was the first district in the City to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, and it was later designated by the City as part of a local historic district in 1985. It exhibits a number of elaborate masonry details typical of institutional structures of its era. These details include an entrance arch with contrasting colors of red brick and light granite, paired windows with stilted segmental arched lintels, string course granite sills on the second floor, and corbelled brickwork below the eaves. Archival photographs of Union Square illustrate similar designs for many of the surrounding three and four story retail establishments. This Second Empire style building originally had a Mansard roof that enclosed a full third story, but the City removed it during the 1940s due to a fire and structural issues caused by deterioration. The Mansard roof was then reproduced by developers as part of an extensive restoration project in the early part of this century.

Historical Context/Evolution of Structure or Parcel:

From 2001-2002 the City of Somerville undertook extensive stabilization and restoration work on the Bow Street Police Station in order to prepare it for future sale or leasing. The work was funded by \$292,000 of

federal monies and a \$90,000 MPPF grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). The MHC grant led to a preservation restriction on the building which required the City and all subsequent owners to gain consent from the MHC for any alterations to the structure that were identified to be of architectural significance. This consent was in addition to the review and approval required from the Somerville Historic Preservation as a locally designated building.

In 2003, Urbanica, Inc. purchased the Police Station building from the City and began a major rehabilitation and restoration project. The project converted the space into 16 residential condominiums and was completed in 2005. The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission awarded the developers a Preservation Award in 2006 for excellent work replicating the original Mansard roof, chimneys, cresting, brackets, and windows. The historic replication was based upon extensive documentary and physical evidence, and was in keeping with the DOI Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposal of Alteration:

The Applicant proposes to replace four windows in Unit 12, located in the right rear corner on the third floor. Two windows are located on the rear façade and only one is visible from a public way (Somerville Avenue) and two windows are located on the right side façade and are visible from Bow Street. All four windows would be replaced within the existing opening with Marvin Ultimate Magnum double-hung, insulated, wood windows with two-over-two lights and two panes of glass with a spacer between the panes. This specific brand and type of insulated window has been previously approved for this building as the JB Sash replacement windows have not proven sufficient for this building. The original window casing will be reinstalled and any materials displaced as a result of removing the casing would be replaced in-kind.



South facing windows, photos September 2013.

III. FINDINGS FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

Unit 4 came before the SHPC in October 2011 to replace five windows on the first floor, of which, four are visible from a public way. Marvin Ultimate Magnum 2/2 double-hung, double pane windows that contain a spacer between the panes and low-emittance glass (LoE³-366) were proposed. Their contractor modified the muntin profile on the new windows to make it consistent with the existing windows. Unit 4 received a Certificate of Appropriateness and a Certificate of Non-Applicability in December 2011 to install the windows, subject to submission of condominium documents showing authority to make the changes requested. The HPC decision noted that "... **this decision is considered a precedent setting decision for this Bow Street building.**" The Commission expects that other condo owners who request to replace their windows would be required to install windows with the same specifications, so long as they are available, in order to maintain consistency within the building. Currently each owner would still require review by the HPC before installation.

Unit 6 came before the HPC in June 2012 to replace two windows on the 1st floor south rear corner with the previously approved Marvin Ultimate Magnum double-hung, insulated windows, as specified which includes a modified muntin. This proposal was unanimously approved.

2. *Precedence:*

- The Board of Trustees for Urbanica 50 Condominium Trust has submitted a letter regarding their approval for the proposed window replacements, subject to the issuance of an HPC Certificate. Their letter states:
 - 1) *Windows and doors are property of the unit owner and shall be replaced at their expense;*
 - 2) *Multiple owners at this property have experienced problems with windows that were not installed correctly and therefore, have become structurally deficient. The Trustees expect additional requests for replacement windows in the future but believe mandatory replacement of all unit windows would create a substantial hardship for owners and is beyond the Trustees scope of authority;*
 - 3) *Upon review of SHPC minutes for November 2011, the Trustees appreciate the Commission's effort to find a viable solution and recognize that the previous decision sets the precedent for future replacement windows; and*
 - 4) *Urbanica 50 Condominium Trust must submit written approval of the replacement window request to the unit owners.*
- For this specific building and for prior cases, the HPC has approved multi-pane windows with the following qualifications:
 1. The location of the new window(s) was not on the main façade and the new window(s) was far enough from the street that the multi-pane glass was not recognizable as such;
 2. The new sash and panes of glass have the same measurements as the existing windows, including the profile of the mullion and/or muntin, and a spacer was used between the glass panes to fully divide the light; and
 3. While windows without a low-emittance coating are always preferred, due to a difference in the way light is reflected off this kind of coated surface, the HPC has approved windows with this type of coating for this specific building at two separate requests.
- For efficiency and consistency with previous decisions and methods of handling HPC cases, Staff recommends **the HPC vote to authorize Staff to issue Certificates of Appropriateness for future applications regarding window replacement which are consistent with this request** for the previously approved window specifications for this specific building.

3. Considerations:

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*
One of the two rear façade windows of Unit 12 is visible from Somerville Avenue, while the two windows located on the right side façade are visible from Bow Street. The proposed replacement windows meet the qualifications listed above as they are not located on the main façade, the sash and glass panes match the existing window measurements, although the muntin profiles would be necessary to alter manually, and the proposed replacement windows have already been approved by the HPC for Unit 4 and Unit 6. .
- *What are the Existing Conditions of the building / parcel?*
The HPC should recognize the deteriorating nature of the original replacement windows for this entire building. While this building was rehabilitated more recently, residents unknowingly inherited flaws regarding poor installation of the replicated windows that were either created at the time of the rehab or were already present and not fixed at that time. Weather stripping and/or caulking around windows within a historic building is often necessary and always recommended, and, although this could help, the windows are greatly warped.

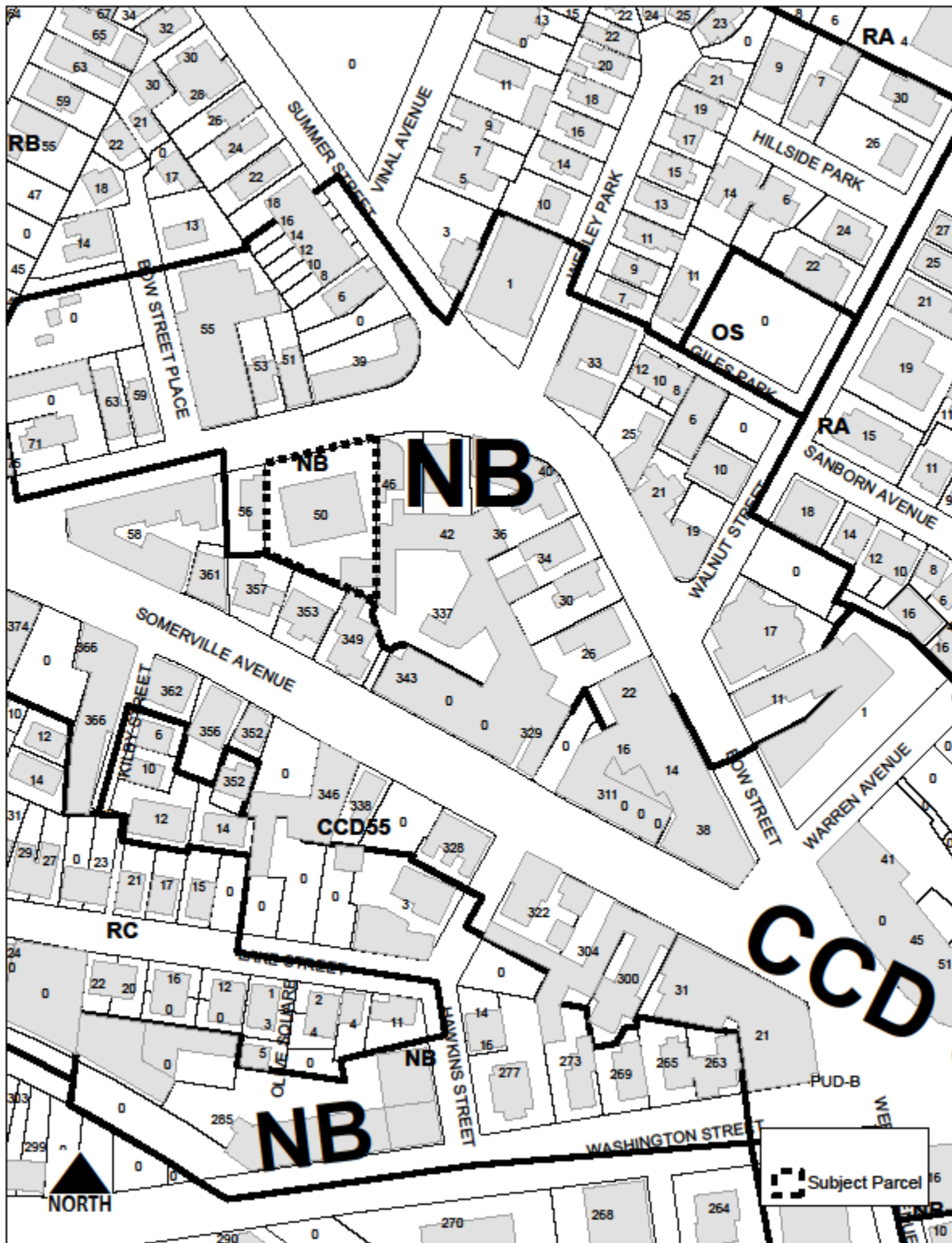
Although the replacement windows proposed contain a low-emittance coating, which is not preferred for a historically designated building and do not meet the general *HPC Guidelines*, the precedent has been set for Applicants to request these window specifications for replacement as this will allow the building to become consistent over time as replacement windows become necessary for other units.

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.

The proposed windows for Unit 12 do not meet *Design Guidelines*. However, two applications for the proposed windows have already been approved by the HPC and installed, and the location of the proposed replacement windows would have a minimum adverse effect on the historic character of Bow Street. Staff recommends granting a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace both windows on the right side façade and one on the rear at 50 Bow Street, Unit 12, while a Certificate of Non-Applicability will be issued to replace the window on the rear façade that is not visible from a public way. This Certificate is conditional upon the replacement windows matching those that have already been replaced on the building in that they have the same low-emittance coating, muntin profile, and light division. Staff also recommends the HPC to authorize Staff review regarding future requests for these window specifications for this building (see authorization statement).

50 Bow Street



Unit 12

KEY	
AH	AIR HANDLER
HW	HOT WATER HEATER
WD	WASHER / DRYER
R	REFRIGERATOR
DW	DISH WASHER

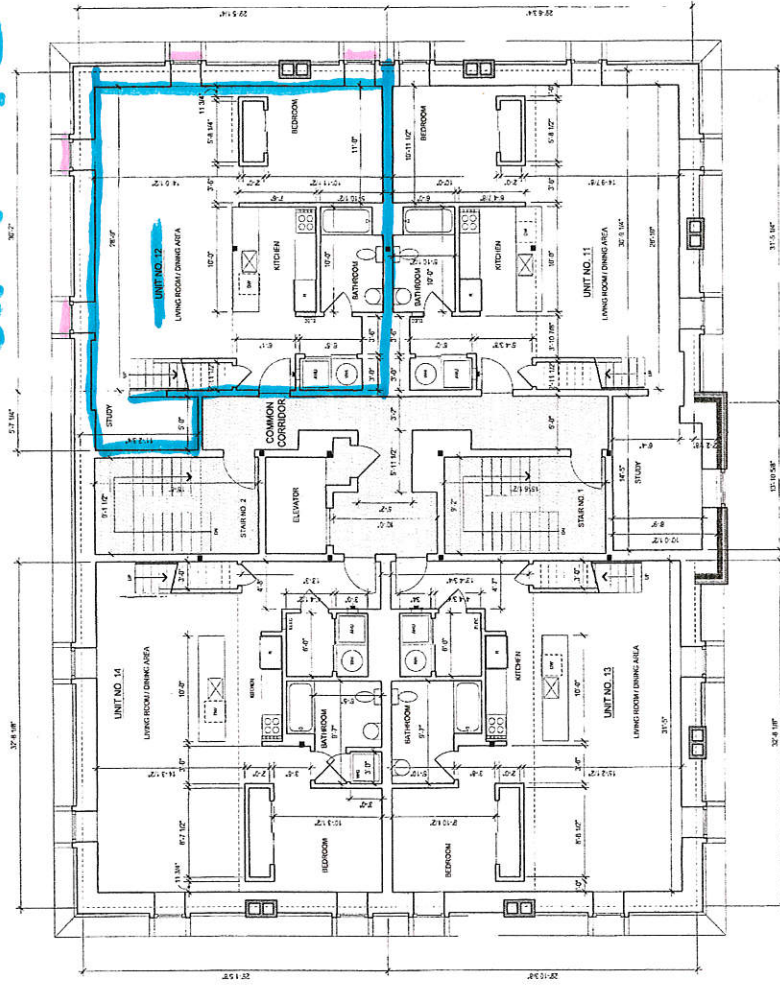
 DENOTES COMMON AREA
 DENOTES UNIT BOUNDARY

I certify that this plan has been prepared in conformity with the rules and regulations of the Registrar of Deeds of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Stephen Chung 25 AUG 05

Stephen Chung, Architect, Mass Registration No. 30144 Date

THIRD FLOOR PLAN



- THIRD FLOOR PLAN (Unit 14: 1,426 sf)
- THIRD FLOOR PLAN (Unit 13: 1,448 sf)
- THIRD FLOOR PLAN (Unit 12: 1,753 sf)
- THIRD FLOOR PLAN (Unit 11: 1,810 sf)

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THIRD FLOOR PLAN

I certify that these plans consisting of six sheets fully and accurately depict the layout, location, unit numbers, and dimensions of the Units of the Urbanica 50 Condominium, as built. The building has no name.



Stephen Chung 25 AUG 05

Stephen Chung, Architect, Mass Registration No. 30144 Date

moda Architects LLC 142 Berkeley Street, Suite No. 402 Boston, Massachusetts 02116 Tel. (617) 654-8900 Fax. (617) 654-8901	<h1 style="text-align: center;">URBANICA 50 CONDOMINIUM</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">50 BOW STREET, SOMERVILLE, MASS 02143</h2>	Sheet <h1 style="text-align: center;">4 of 6</h1>	Registry of Deeds use only Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"
		Date	