



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

HISTORIC DISTRICT ALTERATION STAFF REPORT

Site / District(s) 60 Bow Street, Unit H (Drouet Block, Condos at Gerrior Sq)/Bow St LHD/NR
Case: HPC 2012.123

Applicant Name(s): Hancock Gaston, LLC (Daniel Silva)
Applicant Address: 32 Walden Terrace, Saugus, MA 01906

Date of Application: 10/31/2012
Legal Notice: Remove seven JB Sash windows from the Bow Street and interior courtyard
 façades and install Marvin Aluminum Clad ultimate double hung wood windows
 with simulated divided lights.

Staff Recommendation: Certificate of Appropriateness
Date of Public Hearing: Tuesday, November 20, 2012

I. Building Description

Architecture:

The Drouet Block, located at the western intersection of Somerville Avenue and Bow Street, is a four-story Renaissance Revival structure constructed c. 1898. Sheathed in clapboards with a small cornice between the first and second stories, another larger cornice extends from the flat roof. Two pediments are located above the three story polygonal bays along both Somerville Avenue and Bow Street and most windows have either a pediment or hood with an entablature.



Historical Context/Evolution:

As stated on the National Register survey form, Somerville's apartment houses remain the best crafted frame and masonry buildings in the City and are among the most interesting of the late nineteenth century. While many grand hotels of the era were built by speculators, the Drouet Block and the Richmond are both designed by architect Aaron Gould. The Drouet Block was converted into condominiums in 1997 and has approximately 35 residential and commercial units.

II. Project Description*Proposal of Alteration:*

The Applicant, Daniel Silva of Hancock Gaston, LLC, proposes to remove seven existing JB Sash windows from the fourth story and install Marvin Aluminum Clad ultimate double hung insulated wood windows with screen (fully integrated unit). Four windows are located along the Bow Street façade and three windows are located on the interior courtyard façade, which are not visible from a public right-of-way. Three windows compose one of the fourth story polygonal bays and the fourth is also a double hung window. All windows are proposed to be aluminum clad in the Wineberry color, including the screens, with a divided light, either with or without the spacer bar, and have Low-E glazing. The Applicant also states that the color is nearly an identical match to the existing sash color and Staff agrees that the color is a very close match. The proportion and of the 5/8" muntin would remain the same as would the general shape of the muntin. The visible portion of the glass is currently 35" in width by 33" in height and the proposed dimension of the glass would be 33.5" in width by 32.5" in height.

The Applicant wishes to change the window brand as he is not satisfied with the performance or quality of the existing JB Sash windows. All the windows proposed to be replaced have warped and allow air to freely flow in and out. The bottom sash is rotting and falling apart for several of the windows and since the muntins snap-on, many of these have also fallen out over the years. The screens are also an issue as they do not stay on the window.

Additionally, the Applicant was part of the renovation process back in the 1990s, has sold and rented several units over the years, and maintained the building for many years. As the Applicant is knowledgeable about the building and familiar with the current window brand, the Applicant requests to set a new precedent, with regard to the proposed windows, which he believes are of better quality and performance.



Left: Drouet Block, Bow Street façade

Right: 60 Bow Street, Unit H, proposed windows

III. Findings for a Certificate of Appropriateness

1. *Prior Certificates Issued/Proposed:*

Prior certificates have not been issued for this specific condo, 60 Bow Street, Unit H; however, several certificates have been issued for repairs, maintenance, and windows in the past. Three JB Sash windows were issued a Certificate of Non-Applicability (C/NA) earlier this year (HPC 12.009). In 2007, two more JB Sash replacement wood windows were issued a C/NA (HPC 07.78). The Commission will often allow windows with Low-E; although, these windows are generally not prominently located unless the window is already a replacement.

2. *Precedence:*

JB Sash and Marvin brand replacement windows are both commonly requested by applicants and approved by the Commission; however, the existing brand is not often a concern. Although the previous window replacements for the Drouet Block were in-kind, part of the Applicant's proposal is to change the brand as he is dissatisfied with the performance or quality of the window.

Staff would like to note that while there have been few requests for window replacements for this building over the years, during the site visit, Staff notes that several windows in fact have been replaced over the years. Additionally, many windows no longer have an exterior muntin or a muntin at all.

3. *Considerations:*

- *What is the visibility of the proposal?*

Four windows on the Bow Street façade are visible from a public right-of-way while three windows that face the interior courtyard are not visible and therefore not subject to review by the Commission. The Applicant does wish to replace all seven windows with the same brand and style.

- *What are the Existing Conditions?*

The windows are deteriorated. Several windows have a lower sash that has rotten and warped, allowing air to flow freely. Some screens and muntins remain but many screens do not work properly.

- *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 must be preserved. In general, this tends to minimize the exterior alterations that will be allowed.*

The features of significance will be preserved; this proposal does not affect the exterior window hood or casing. The windows proposed to be replaced are not original, but the replacement windows are consistent with regard to the muntin profile, glazing, and size.

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

As part of this proposal, the Applicant would like to use a different brand of window, which he believes to be of better quality and performance. The proposed brand will be more energy efficient due to the integrated screen and will have a better quality simulated divided light.

- 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 proposed windows are wood and match the existing in all qualities. The differences are the exterior aluminum cladding and the proposed Low-E glazing.

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

C. Windows and Doors

1. *Retain original and later window openings where they exist. Do not enlarge or reduce window openings for the purpose of fitting stock window sash.*

The original window openings are not proposed to be altered.

2. *Whenever possible, repair and retain original or later important window elements such as sash, lintels, sill, architraves, glass, shutters and other decorative elements and hardware.*

Original window elements, such as the exterior window hood and casing will be retained. Other elements, such as hardware, are part of the new window unit.

IV. Recommendations

Recommendations are 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 further research.

Staff finds the alteration for which an application for a Historic Certificate has been filed is reasonably appropriate for and compatible with the preservation and protection of the Bow Street Local Historic District. However, while Staff is supportive of the aluminum veneer in the proposed Wineberry color, Staff does not support the Low-E glazing. Therefore, **Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission grant 60 Bow Street, Unit H, a Certificate of Appropriateness for the four proposed windows on the Bow Street façade without Low-E glazing and with a simulated divided lite.**

58-68 Bow Street, Drouet Block

