



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

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*PLANNER & PRESERVATION PLANNER*

May 19, 2020  
Case: HPC.ALT 2020-07

Site: 58-68 Bow Street & 369-377 Somerville Avenue

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**ALTERATION OF A LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY**  
**STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 58-68 Bow Street & 369-377 Somerville Avenue

**Historic Name:** *Bow Street Hotel*

**Applicant Name:** CBI Consulting  
**Owner Name:** Gerrior Square Condominium Trust  
**Agent:** Harvest Properties, LLC

**Petition:** Replace existing siding, window trim/window elements/window pediments on Bow St & Somerville Ave facades; some alterations with non-traditional materials

**Recommendation:** Conditional CA

**HPC Hearing Date:** May 19, 2020



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## **I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

1. **Subject Property:** The locus presents a four-story mixed-use structure with commercial space on the street level and residential units on the floors above. The building spans two streets like a flat iron building and provides addresses on both Bow Street and Somerville Avenue. The Form B is attached with limited additional information about the building. The structure is part of a larger Local Historic District (LHD).

2. **Proposal:** The Applicant proposes to replace significant amounts of trim, siding, and key architectural elements on the building due to their deteriorated nature. The design, details, and dimensions of the replacement building elements will remain the same. Due to the extensive nature of the work, the Applicant proposes a combination of natural and man-made materials for this project. This combination of material types is made in an effort to balance the HPC's (and Design Guidelines) preference for natural materials with the Applicant's need to thoughtfully address serious issues with the building façade in a way that does not compromise the distinct architectural appearance of the building.

Because the proposed work is so extensive, the Applicant has provided a statement, at the request of Preservation Planning Staff, which breaks down the work being performed on the building and the reasons therefore. While the scope-of-work statement contains items that are outside the HPC's purview (such as caulking of windows and doors), it is provided to demonstrate the detailed assessment the Applicant team has undertaken to understand the building's needs while providing the HPC with a comprehensive project proposal.

The Applicant's proposal dossier contains building conditions assessment, project scope, materials proposal, and comparative examples. Please see the additional documents provided for this project which include:

- applicant statement
- photo documentation of building including existing conditions
- proposed non-traditional materials and specs
- plan set with color-coding identifying different components of the project
- examples of other historic properties in the greater Boston area on which the project team has used the proposed non-traditional materials; before and after photos provided

It is important to note the following items which are **not** under the Commission's purview with this application yet which are discussed in the Applicant statement; separate applications have already been submitted for the blow work and are currently under review by the Preservation Planner:

- **Windows.** While all of the building's residential windows will be replaced (all are currently replacement windows), they are being replaced in accordance with the agreement the condo association has with the City/HPC. Therefore, the window replacement is a Preservation staff-level approval and a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued.
- **Roofing.** Roof work will be performed. However, as a flat roof that is four stories above the public way and is shielded by an extensive parapet, the roof work is not visible from a public way and is therefore not in the HPC's purview. Staff-level Certificate of Non-Applicability will be issued.
- **Building work at the rear of the building.** The rear of the building faces a driveway/alleyway that is not a public way. All work at the rear of the building that is not visible from the public way is not in the HPC's purview. A staff-level Certificate of Non-Applicability will be issued.
- **Masonry.** Masonry will be re-pointed in-kind. A staff-level Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued.

## **I. FINDINGS FOR EXTERIOR WALLS**

The portion of the Somerville LHD Design Guidelines that is applicable to the proposal at 58-68 Bow Street/369-377 Somerville Avenue is found in Section A “*Exterior Walls*”. Items 1a and 1b apply and read as follows:

### **A. Exterior Walls**

*1. Wood Siding: clapboards, shingles, board and batten, etc.*

*a. Retain and repair original or later important material whenever possible.*

*b. Retain and repair, when necessary, replace deteriorated material which matches as closely as possible.*

**Staff Assessment:** The Applicant proposes a combined approach to the exterior clapboarding. Where indicated on the plan set, the Applicant plans to retain existing wood clapboarding that is in good condition. However, where retention of wood clapboarding is not possible, the Applicant proposes using fiber cement board that is sized to the dimensions of the existing wood clapboarding: the reveal would be the same.

Due to the extensive amount of clapboarding on the building and the amount that needs to be replaced, the Applicant has proposed this compromise solution of retaining existing clapboarding where possible and fiber cement in all other locations. Generally, it is difficult to visually discern particularly from the public way, if clapboarding is made of wood or fiber cement board (tactilely it is obvious).

Staff finds that the proposal to incorporate man-made materials (fiber cement board) provides the Applicant with the ability to re-side a large, prominent building in Union Square in a way that is designed to blend with the remaining nature material while providing greater longevity and durability to the siding.

## **II. FINDINGS FOR WINDOW SILLS, TRIM, PEDIMENTS & OTHER EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

The Applicant proposes replacing existing most sills, trim, and pediments. The applicable portions of the Design Guidelines are Section I. General Approach items C, D, and E along with Section C. Windows and Doors item 2. These portions of the Guidelines read as follows:

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

*D. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence of the original or later important features.*

*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.*

*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. When replacement of materials or elements is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence. If aluminum windows must be installed, select a baked finish that matches as closely as possible the color of the existing trim. Investigate weather-stripping and storm windows with a baked enamel finish as an alternative to the replacement of historic sash.*

**Staff Assessment:** The amount of deteriorated trim and architectural elements around the building is significant. Trim that is found to be in good condition, such as that at the fourth floor roof level, will be retained, repaired as-necessary, scraped, and painted.

Deteriorated trim will be replaced and the replacement pieces will be created based on documentary evidence extant on the building. Custom knives will be made replicating the profile of the existing trim, such as that around the windows. In turn, these knives will be used to create PVC-based trim pieces that match the profile of the existing wood trim.

Window pediments (photos on pages 20, 21, and 22 of the PDF plan set) will be retained and repaired if in good condition. Otherwise, the pediments will be replaced with exact replicas created from GFRP (Glass Fiber Reinforced Polymer). Replicas will match the profile and details of the existing pediments. Examples of this technology being used on area projects can be found at the end of the Applicant's plan set.

At least two rowlocks and types of pediments will be salvaged and provided to the City for research and educational purposes.

All trim, including PVC trim, will be painted.

Staff finds that the proposal incorporates man-made materials in such a way that it will be difficult to tell from the public way which materials are synthetic due to the distance of the material from the public realm and/or due to the synthetic material being painted.

### **III. RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the information provided and an assessment of the proposal against the Somerville LHD guidelines, Staff recommends that the HPC approve a **CONDITIONAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS** for 58-68 Bow Street/369-377 Somerville Avenue as follows:

1. All appropriate building permits shall be obtained prior to the start of any work.
2. Any changes to the project from that which is allowed in the Certificate of Appropriateness shall require the Applicant to appear before the HPC for their review and deliberation. The Certificate of Appropriateness shall incorporate salient portions of the Applicant's project statement for reference.
3. The Applicant team shall contact the Preservation Planner at least 10 business days in advance of their delivery of salvaged rowlocks and pediments to the City in order to arrange logistics at the Preservation Planner's convenience.
4. The Applicant shall contact Preservation Planning a minimum of 10 business days prior to arranging for a final inspection/sign-off from ISD. Preservation Planners or their designee shall

issue a sign-off upon completion of the project that it was executed in accordance with the Certificate of Appropriateness. Contact shall be made at both of the following email addresses **ONLY**:

[historic@somervillema.gov](mailto:historic@somervillema.gov)

[swhite@somervillema.gov](mailto:swhite@somervillema.gov)

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.30
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Bow Street Hotel
<b>Common Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	58-68 Bow St 365-369 Somerville Ave
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Prospect Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	c 1900
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Druit
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Classical Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Apartment House
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.A: Bow Street Historic District
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Nat'l Register District (03/26/1976); Local Historic District (03/11/1985)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood Shingle; Stone, Cut Foundation: Brick



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

The MACRIS database and scanned files are highly dynamic; new information is added daily and both database records and related scanned files may be updated as new information is incorporated into MHC files. Users should note that there may be a considerable lag time between the receipt of new or updated records by MHC and the appearance of related information in MACRIS. Users should also note that not all source materials for the MACRIS database are made available as scanned images. Users may consult the records, files and maps available in MHC's public research area at its offices at the State Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, open M-F, 9-5.

Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

Data available via the MACRIS web interface, and associated scanned files are for information purposes only. THE ACT OF CHECKING THIS DATABASE AND ASSOCIATED SCANNED FILES DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL, STATE OR FEDERAL LAWS AND REGULATIONS. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTING A DEVELOPER AND/OR A PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WILL REQUIRE A PERMIT, LICENSE OR FUNDING FROM ANY STATE OR FEDERAL AGENCY YOU MUST SUBMIT A PROJECT NOTIFICATION FORM TO MHC FOR MHC'S REVIEW AND COMMENT. You can obtain a copy of a PNF through the MHC web site ([www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)) under the subject heading "MHC Forms."

Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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## FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

3/26/76 NR Bow St. H.D. \*

In Area no.

Form no.

(A)

30

1. Town SomervilleAddress 68 -58 Bow St.; 365-369 Somerville AveName Bow Street HotelPresent use Apartment buildingPresent owner Ellen Gilmastin

3. Description:

Date before 1900Source 1900 Sanborn Insurance mapStyle Clapboard, bay windows, Gr. Revi val trimArchitect Builder: Mr. DruitExterior wall fabric Clapboard (wood)Outbuildings (describe) noneOther features 4 stories, brick foundation, flat roof, brown, & green w trim, small scaleGreek columns, pediments 2 entrances w two Corinthian columns and pilasters.

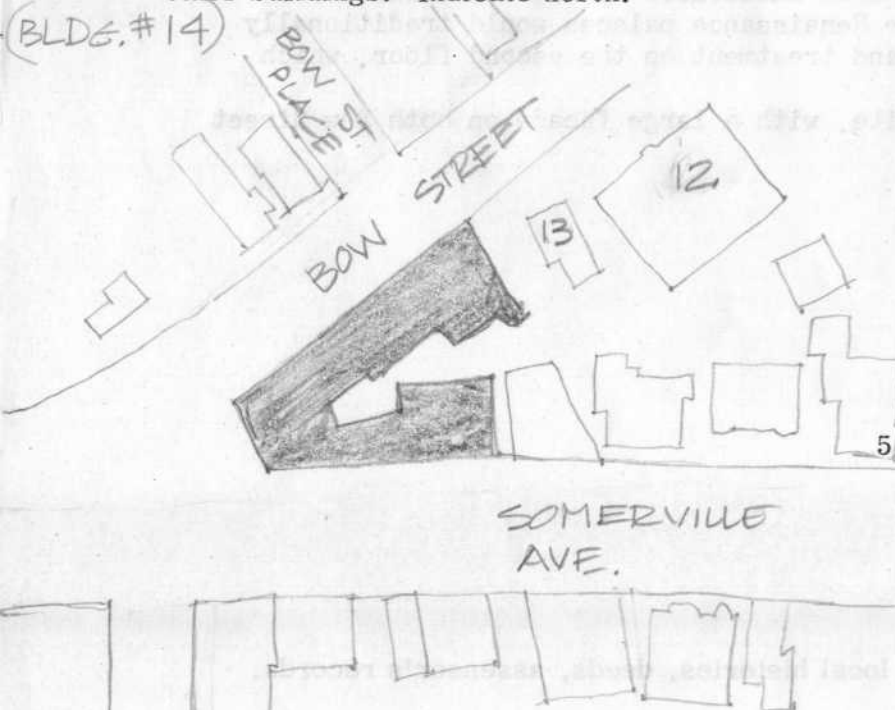
Altered \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Moved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

5. Lot size:

One acre or less x Over one acre \_\_\_\_\_Approximate frontage Bow St.: 150'Approximate distance of building from street Somerville Ave.: 120'  
on sidewalk on both streets6. Recorded by Margo Jones, Aron FaegreOrganization Somerville Historic CommissionDate 24 June, 1975

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_

MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

RECEIVED

JUL

1975

MASS. HIST. COMM.  
(over)



## 7. Original owner (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Original use Workers HotelSubsequent uses (if any) and dates Apartments

## 8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal	_____	Conservation	_____	Recreation	_____
Agricultural	_____	Education	_____	Religion	_____
Architectural	<u>X</u>	Exploration/ settlement	_____	Science/ invention	_____
The Arts	_____	Industry	_____	Social/ humanitarian	_____
Commerce	_____	Military	_____	Transportation	_____
Communication	_____	Political	_____		
Community development	<u>X</u>				

## 9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

This four story tenement house occupies the site at which Bow Street branches from Somerville Ave. The first floor exterior is 'rusticated' with shingles, and the upper floors finished in clapboards. A small cornice is set between the shingles and clapboards; a large cornice extends from a flat roof. All windows are trabeated with complete entablatures. The third floor windows each have a pediment, suggesting that they have been influenced by High Renaissance styles of Italian city palaces. (These Renaissance palaces would traditionally elaborate and enlarge the window size and treatment on the second floor, which housed the 'most important' rooms.)

The building fills a triangular site, with a large facade on both Bow Street and Somerville Ave.

## 10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

1900 Sanborn Insurance Map