

# CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT JOSEPH A. CURTATONE MAYOR

GEORGE J. PROAKIS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION HISTORIC PRESERVATION

# STEP 2: DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED STAFF REPORT

Site: 59 Bow Street

**Case:** HPC.DMO 2021.13

Applicant: 59 Bow St., LLC c/o Elan Sassoon

Owner: 59 Bow St., LLC c/o Elan Sassoon

**Proposal:** Demolish principal structure.

HPC Meeting Date: May 18th, 2021



The purpose of a staff report is to provide the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with additional information and professional assessments regarding properties that are proposed for demolition. These assessments are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is <u>not</u> a determination/decision nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

#### I. CONCESSION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The applicant for 115 Thurston Street has conceded that the subject property is historically significant. Pursuant to Section 7-28(c)(7) of the Demolition Review Ordinance allows for applicants to waive the determination of significance and reads "An applicant, when submitting the required documents for an initial determination per subsection (e)(2), may voluntary select to waive initial determination. If the initial determination is waived, the building shall immediately be determined to be a significant building, without further action from the commission, and shall be scheduled for a final determination per subsection (f)(2) of this section." Due to this admission, 115 Thurston Street moves on to the second step in the demolition review process, which calls for the HPC to determine whether or not the building should be "Preferably Preserved". A determination of "preferably preserved" does not permanently halt demolition of a building.



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# II. BUILDING UNDER CONSIDERATION

59-61 Bow Street is approximately the first structure on the Northwest quadrant of Bow Street and Bow Street Place. It is a late Victorian style building with two and a half stories.

Right: 59 Bow Street



Right: Rear & Right Elevation of Building



Right: left Elevation



Site: 59 Bow Street

Below: 59 Bow Street context map



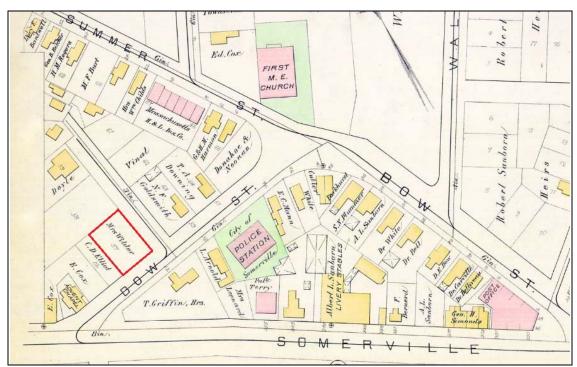
## III. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 59-61 Bow Street is located in Union Square. Union Square, like many of the commercial squares in Somerville, is invariably connected to the residential and commercial growth of the City. Somerville saw a large increase in population in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century due to improvement in transportation from the Boston area to Somerville. This, coupled with further economic growth following the end of the Civil War, resulted in the large-scale construction of businesses and multi-family residential structures. 59 Bow Street is part of a number of multi-family buildings in Union Square constructed in the late 1800s to the early 1900s to meet this demand for housing.

The Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) has the date of construction of the property as 1890. MACRIS does not provide a source for this date. What we can say, based on the Hopkins and Bromley maps is that the property was built between 1884 and 1895. The 1884 Hopkins map shows the site as being owned by Mrs. Wilder with no structure evident on site. At this time the map shows few developments on Bow Street Place, with the lots to the rear and side of 59 Bow Street as vacant.

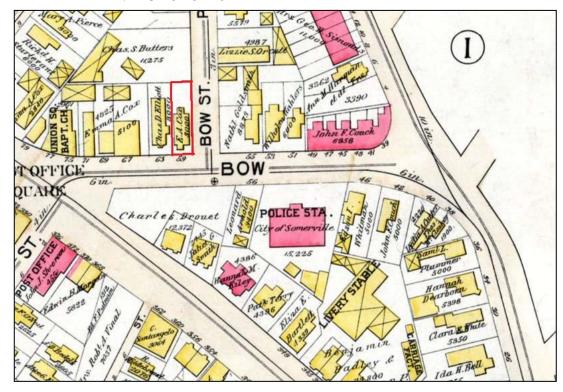
Site: 59 Bow Street



Above: 1884 Hopkins Map highlighting 59 Bow Street

By 1895 the Bromley Map shows development on the surrounding lots and is the first map to show the structure at 59 Bow Street, under the ownership of Edward A Cox, a real estate agent. Edward Cox had offices at 227 Washington Street and a property at Central Street, and likely built the structure at 59 Bow Street as a rental property. 59 Bow Street, along with the development in the surrounding blocks is part of the post-Civil War growth of Union Square.

Below: 1895 Bromley Map highlighting 59 Bow Street

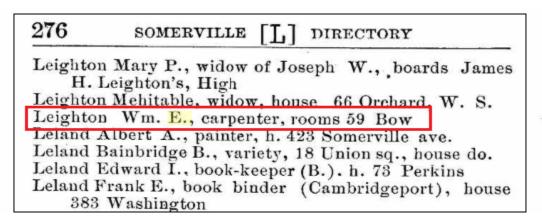


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Site: 59 Bow Street

During Edward Cox's ownership of the property, a number of individuals are listed as boarders at 59 Bow Street in the City Directories and Federal Census records.

The earliest resident listed on City Directories for 59 Bow Street is William E. Leighton, a carpenter. Leighton is listed as residing at the subject site from 1889 to 1891.



Above: 1889 Somerville City Directory listing for William E. Leighton

William E Leighton is followed by George W. Ballon and George E. Carr. George W. Ballon works as a clerk while living at 59 Bow Street in 1893. After moving out of the property he marries Mary Francis Snyder in 1902 before being drafted to fight in World War I on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 1918.

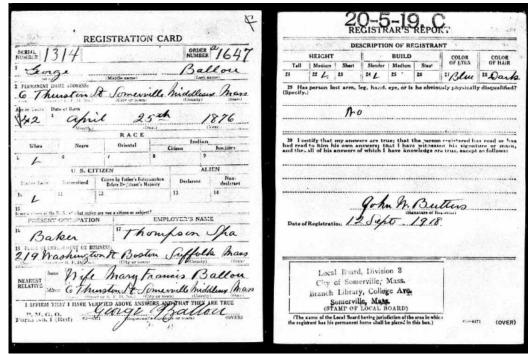
DIRECTORY 142 SOMERVILLE [C] Carr Eugene P. manager, Gorham, cor. Howard, h. 60 Orchard, W. S. Francis D. clerk (85 Leverett. B.), b. 83 Laurel Frank A. electro plater, h. 10 Vinal ave. Florence E. bookkeeper, bds. 41 Putnam Fred M. asst. foreman, M. W. Carr & Co's, Gorham, cor. Howard, bds. 74 Craigie George, clerk, bds. 59 Bow George E. bookkeeper, bds. 59 Bow George E. (Jenks & Co.), oysters, hams, sausages etc. 14 Bennett, bds. 15 Warren ave. Harriet, house 41 Putnam James, clerk, bds. 1 Cook Jane, widow of William J. Sr. h. 4 Joy John, freight handler, h. 119 Linwood John, teamster, house 10 Chestnut John A. carpet layer, house 34 Broadway Josiah, chemist, house 18 Alpine Lawrence M. confectioner, h. 416 Elm, W. S. Leslie W. teamster, bds. 9 Waverly Lucretia T. widow of Uriah W. h. 62 Chandler, W. S Martin W. (M. W. Carr & Co.), mnfg. jeweler, Gorham, cor. Howard, house 74 Craigie Mary, widow of John H. house 1 Cook Mary E. Mrs. dressmaker, 13 Moore, W. S. b. do. Michael F. laborer, house 9 Joy place M. Frank, letter carrier. P. O. h. at Cambridgeport M. W. & Co. (Martin W. Carr), jewelry and novelty mnfr. Gorham, cor. Howard, W. S. Patrick laborer, house 12 Taylor place Patrick, tailor, house 59 Bow Patricz, teamster, or Mediord Roy T. confectionery mnfr. 416 Elm, W. S. b. do.

George E. Carr lives at 59 Bow Street from 1895 to 1898 as a bookkeeper. Somerville City Directories also have a Patrick H. Carr, a tailor, and a second George Carr, a clerk, living at 59 Bow Street in 1895. Their relationship to George E. Carr is unclear.

Left: 1895 Somerville City Directory listing for George Carr, George E Carr, and Patrick Carr

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**Right:** 1918 World War I Draft Card for George Ballon



The Somerville City Directory for 1900 has Charlotte Holmes living at 59 Bow Street. She is listed as a teacher working at the Knapp School. The Knapp School was built in 1889 on Concord Square, and named after Oren S. Knapp. Oren S. Knapp was the superintendent of School in Somerville from 1865 to 1866. By 1900 the Knapp School was a thirteen (13) room school<sup>1</sup>.

**Right:** 1900 Somerville City Directory listing for Charlotte Holmes

Holmes Alson L. (Holmes & Durgin) grocer, 260 Elm,
W. S. h. 48 Chester, do.
A. S. Miss, h. 2 Central
Betsey, widow of T. C. b. 342 Broadway
Charles A. h. 263 Beacon
Charles R. brakeman, h. 22 Fountain ave.
Charlotte, teacher, O. S. Knapp school, b. 59 Bow
Edmund G. real estate, h. 2105 Medford
Edward C.florist and seedsman, 84 Broadway, h.214 do.
Eliza, widow, h. 16 Ivaloo
Emma J. Mrs. h. 184 Pearl
Frank H. steam fitter, B. h. 294 Veazie
Hattie G. at registry of deeds office, B. rms. 58 Oliver
James W. lunch, 7 Marshall, h. 10 Florence terrace

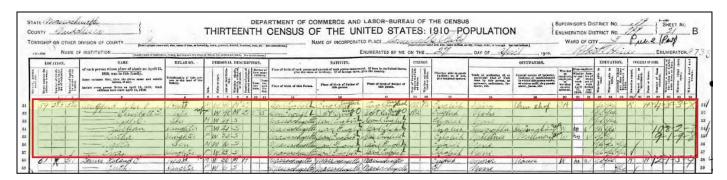
John H Mugford moves to 59 Bow St in 1905. In 1880, John immigrated from Canada and opens his own dairy shop. He lives at 59 Bow Street with his wife Elizabeth E Mugford, and five children; Royal, Lillian, Bertha, Walter, and Eva until 1915. Walter Mugford, John's son, will later be drafted to fight in World War I on June 05, 1917.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Story of Somerville, https://archive.org/stream/storyofsomervill00haley/storyofsomervill00haley djvu.txt

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Above: 1910 Federal Census - Mugford family.

5×00 00100	
Form 1 150 3 REGISTRATION CARD 49 No. 27	20-5-17. A
1 Name in full Walter Johnston Mingford 23	REGISTRAR'S REPORT
2 Home 59 Bow Somerville, Mass.	a short (specify which)? (Medicana Stender, medium, or stead (which)? Thender  Color of opes? Blue. Color of hair? Black now
3 Date of birth Dee (Month) 26 1893	Has preced last arm, leg, hand, took er both  3 eyes, ar is he atherwise disabled (specify)?
Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalised citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? Satisfactorial Born	
5 Wilson Value Vol. J. C. (State)	I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:
6 If not a cilizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject?	
7 What is your present trade, occupation, or office? autimatic attendant 4	01 12 0
8 By whom employed? (Mestern Merican Telegraph Where employed: 175 Congress It Boston	Walter Burton
Have you a father, mother, wife, childennier 12, or a sister or grether under 12, solely dependent on you for support (apacify which)?	City SOMERVILLE JUN 5 1917
10 Married or single (which)? Thingle Race (specify which)?	State MASSACHUSETTS (Date of registration)
11 What military service have you had? Rank Arphi branch branch pears Nation or State	
12 De you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?	
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.	
Walter Johnston Muglord	
49	

Above: 1917 World War I Draft Card for Walter Mugford

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Site: 59 Bow Street

59-61 Bow Street had numerous tenants between its construction and 1927. Further details of tenants are missing between 1927 and 1940. A complete table with all listed occupants for 59-61 Bow Street between 1892 to 1927 is provided to the right.

Name	Year(s) of Residency	Occupation
Ballon, George W	1902	
Bemis, Roland E	1907-1910	Piano Coverer
Black, Arthur	1900	Travelling Salesman
Black, Fannie T	1900	
Burgess, William H	1903	Bond Salesman
Carr, George	1892-1898	Bookkeeper
Carr, Patrick	1892-1897	Tailor
Holmes, Charlotte	1900	Teacher
Leighton, William E	1889-1891	Carpenter
McCauley, James	1901	Cooper
McCauley, Mary	1901	Bookkeeper
Moody, Mary R	1889	Dressmaker
Mueller, John	1912	Manufacturing Chemist
Mueller, Elsie	1912	
Mugford, John	1905-1918	Butler
Mugford, Elizabeth E	1915	
Mugford, Bertha	1915	Milliner
Mugford, Eva	1915	
Mugford, Geneva	1915	Student
Mugford, Lillian	1915	Stenographer
Mugford, Royal C.	1915	Clerk
Noyes, Elsie A	1905-1906	Bookkeeper
O'Brien, Margaret L	1925-1927	
O'Brien, William	1925-1927	Chauffeur
O'Hare, Mary A	1929	
O'Hare, Stephen	199	Tirg
Palmer, George L	1917	Sewing Machinist, Real Estate

# II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Please see the section immediately below which discusses location, design, materials and any alterations as the same information would be written here, just in longer form.

The National Park Service identifies historic integrity as the ability of a property to convey significance. A property should possess sufficient integrity to convey, represent or contain the values and qualities for which it is judged significant; therefore, the following is an identification and evaluation of these qualities and alterations as they affect the ability of the subject property to convey significance.

The architectural description is addresses separately for each of the three residential structures.

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#### 1. 59 Bow Street



The period of relevance for the house starts c.1890

- a. <u>Location</u>: It is likely that this structure is in its original location and was built on-site.
  - <u>Design:</u> The house is a narrow, gable-fronted two- and one-half story, three bay late-Victorian style building with an asymmetric front elevation

#### - Front Elevation

- Main double entrance on front façade with shed-roof hood
- Fenestration is single and paired double hung windows one over one, and a simple surround.
- Two story box-bay window with a flared hood for first floor bay window
- Concrete front steps.
- Mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century metal railings on front steps.
- 20<sup>th</sup>-century horizontal slider basement windows visible on foundation.
- Concrete parged foundation. Foundation likely brick behind the concrete.

#### - Right Elevation

- Fenestration is single double hung windows one-over-one, and a simple surround.
- Two-story bay window with shed roof overhang supported by brackets.
- Concrete parged foundation. Foundation likely brick behind the concrete.

#### <u>Left Elevation</u>

- Fenestration is single and double hung windows, one-over-one, and a simple surround
- Two-story bay window with shed roof overhang supported by brackets.
- 20<sup>th</sup>-century horizontal slider basement windows visible on foundation.
- Foundation likely brick behind concrete covered with clapboard

#### Rear Elevation

- Rear ell with two story shed roof enclosed porch extending from basement
- Exposed concrete parged foundation supporting rear ell

#### b. Materials:

- Foundation: brick.

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Site: 59 Bow Street

- Windows: vinyl or aluminum.
- Entry door: modern. Manmade materials, likely fiberglass.
- Siding: vinyl.
- Trim: vinyl covered
- Steps: brick with mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century metal rails with cement treads
- Roof: asphalt shingles.
- Metal gutters.
- c. <u>Alterations:</u> Modern metal railings. Replacement windows. Vinyl siding. Replacement one-over-one vinyl or aluminum windows throughout. Modern replacement door, likely fiberglass. The ell on the northwest elevation was likely added in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The two story shed roof enclosed porch on the ell are likely mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century additions.

<u>Evaluation of Integrity of 59 Bow Street</u>: Based on the observations of the building and a study of the historic maps, it is Staff's position that the building retains integrity of its original form and massing. This clearly still reads as late 19<sup>th</sup> century workers' housing.

## IV. DETERMINATION

The HPC must determine one of the following for the building at 59 Bow Street:

- a. That the building is Preferably Preserved.
- b. That the building is not Preferably Preserved.
- c. That the building is not Preferably Preserved with Conditions.

See the following section V "Findings" for guidance.

# V. FINDINGS

#### a. Preferably Preserved

For a determination of *preferably preserved*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- That the demolition of the building at **59 Bow Street** will be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.

If the HPC makes the above finding, the Commission must state their reasons why they take this position.

#### b. Not Preferably Preserved

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Site: 59 Bow Street

If the HPC makes the above finding, the Commission must state their reasons why they take this position.

#### c. Not Preferably Preserved with Conditions

For a determination of *NOT preferably preserved with Conditions*, the HPC must make the following finding:

- That the building at **59 Bow Street** does not meet any of the criteria to be "preferably preserved.". The HPC may add any or all of the following as conditions to this determination:
  - 1. photographic documentation of the building to be demolished;
  - 2. architectural renderings of the building to be demolished;
  - *3. identification of materials for salvage of material; and/or,*
  - 4. a plan for installation of historic or interpretive signage at or near the site.

If the HPC makes the above finding, the HPC must state their reasons why they take this position.

### VI. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the building at 59 **Bow Street** is or is not "preferably preserved".

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

# **Scanned Record Cover Page**

Inventory No: SMV.1378

Historic Name: Cox, Edward A. House

**Common Name:** 

Address: 59-61 Bow St

City/Town: Somerville

Village/Neighborhood: Prospect Hill; Union Square

**Local No:** 

Year Constructed: r 1890

Architect(s): Cox, Edward A.

Architectural Style(s): Altered beyond recognition; Queen Anne

Use(s): Multiple Family Dwelling House; Abandoned or Vacant

Significance: Architecture

Area(s):

Designation(s):

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

Building Materials(s): Wall: Vinyl Siding; Wood

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.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 3:52: PM

#### FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING 220 Morrissey Boulevard BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

**Photograph** 



#### **Locus Map**



Recorded by: V. Adams, G. Pineo, C. Barry, M. Andrade;

Organization: City of Somerville, OSPCD, Planning

Division

**Date:** May 2016

Assessor's Number USGS Ouad Form Number Area(s) Boston SMV.1378 63-C-29 North

Town/City: Somerville

Place: (neighborhood or village): Union Square

Address: 59-61 Bow Street

Historic Name: Edward A. Cox House

Uses: Present: Multiple Family Dwelling

Original: Multiple Family Dwelling

**Date of Construction: 1884–1895** 

Source: Hopkins 1884, Bromley 1895

Style/Form: Queen Anne

Architect/Builder: E.A. Cox

**Exterior Material:** Foundation: Brick

Wall/Trim: Vinyl

Roof: Asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: Garage, post-1950

Major Alterations (with dates): Rear ell added early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: rear porches added mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century; vinyl siding added and windows replaced, late 20th

Condition: fair

Moved: no ⊠ Date: yes  $\square$ 

Acreage: 0.07

**Setting:** The building faces southeast towards a sidewalk at the intersection of Bow Street and Bow Street Place. It is within a densely developed urban neighborhood surrounded

by residential and commercial buildings.

JUL 29 2016 MASS, HIST, COMM.

#### INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

SOMERVILLE

59-61 Bow Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)	Form No.	
	SMV.1378	

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.	

#### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

59–61 Bow Street occupies a rectangular lot at the west corner of Bow Street and Bow Street Place. The property consists of a ca. 1895 multiple family dwelling and a one-bay garage. The two buildings fill the majority of the lot, which is surrounded by multiple family residences and commercial buildings.

The <u>Edward A. Cox House (SMV.1378)</u> at 59–61 Bow Street is a two-and-one-half-story, three-bay, wood-frame Queen Annestyle building with an asymmetric southeast (facade) elevation. It has a rectangular footprint with a two-story rear ell, is seated on a brick foundation, and has a front-gable roof with overhanging eaves. The main double entrance is in the east bay of the facade and consists of a pair of partially-glazed, wood-paneled entrance doors protected by a shed-roof hood. A two-story box-bay window projects from the west bay of the main elevation. A two-story bay window with a shed-roof overhang supported by solid brackets is centered on the northeast elevation. The walls are clad with vinyl siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Fenestration consists of single and paired one-over-one, double-hung, vinyl replacement sash windows with simple surround. The rear ell projects off the northwest elevation, and has a two-story shed roof enclosed porch. The ell was likely constructed in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the porches added in the mid- to late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A post-1950 garage is northwest of the building and faces east onto Bow Street Place. The garage has a flat roof, concrete block walls, and one roll-up bay door.

Like many residential buildings in Union Square in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building was altered by the addition of vinyl siding and replacement windows. The building is one of a large group of single and multiple family dwellings on the outskirts of Union Square that were constructed during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in response to the expansion of Union Square and the routing of streetcars through the area.

#### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Union Square is the oldest and largest commercial area in Somerville, and its growth is tied to the residential and commercial growth of the City. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the area has been the site of commercial establishments serving travelers and tradespeople. Transportation improvements in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century enabled further development in the area to support the rapidly growing population. Following the Civil War, local entrepreneurs established lucrative businesses in the Square and constructed numerous ambitious buildings. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Union Square was a critical hub for automobile traffic, and it continued to develop commercially, adding auto-related enterprises to the mix. Today Union Square is one of two major commercial centers in Somerville, along with Davis Square, consisting primarily of locally owned restaurants, shops, and professional offices.

The dwelling at 59–61 Bow Street first appears on the 1895 Bromley Map under the ownership of Edward Cox, a real estate agent. Cox, who had an office at 227 Washington Street and a residence on Central Street, likely constructed the building as a rental property. This property was rented by a variety of working-class families throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including John Mugford (b. 1862), a Canadian immigrant and dairyman who lived at 59 Bow Street from about 1905 until at least 1915 with his wife Elizabeth (b. 1862), son Royal (b. 1886), and daughters Lillian (b. 1889) and Bertha (b. 1890). Two households resided at 61 Bow Street in 1910, Roland Bemis (b. 1872), a piano coverer, with his two daughters Ruth (b. 1904) and Marion (b. 1907), and Harry Leonard (b. 1876), a railroad brakeman, with his wife Maggie (b. 1883), and their two sons Adelbert (b. 1900) and Franklin (b. 1902). Both families moved to other addresses by 1915. Later tenants included chauffeurs, factory workers, and laundry workers. After 1950, a one car garage was constructed at the rear of the property. By 1980, 59 Bow Street was vacant, and 61 Bow Street was occupied by Jose Ferreira (b. 1927), a machine operator, and his wife Maria (b. 1927), a folder, likely employed at a local laundry, possibly the Manhattan Laundry, 55 Bow Street (SMV.1377). In 1987, the Ferreiras were joint owners of the property with Eleuterio and Maria C. Oliveira. It is likely that the building was resided with vinyl and the windows

#### INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

SOMERVILLE

59-61 Bow Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Area(s)	Form No.
	SMV.1378

replaced with vinyl units during the this period. In 1990, 59 Bow Street remained vacant, and the Ferreiras had both retired. In 1996, the Ferreiras deeded their portion of the house to the Oliveiras and Maria Simoes, who continue to own the property (Bromley 1895; Greenough 1890, 1896, 1905, 1910, 1915, 1920, 1924, 1925, 1929, 1933, 1940; Somerville Assessor 2015; Somerville City Street Directory 1940–1990).

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