

Date: 14 February 2026

To: Beacon Hill Architectural Commission

RE: 70 Charles Street / Application 26.0637 BH

From: Donald W. Mills, RA / On Behalf of Meeting House Suites LLC

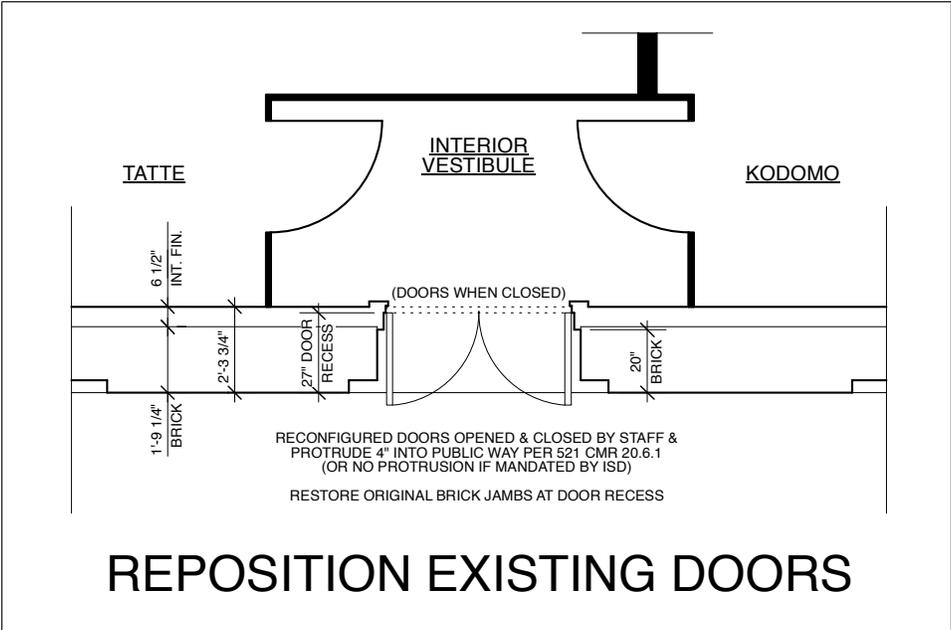
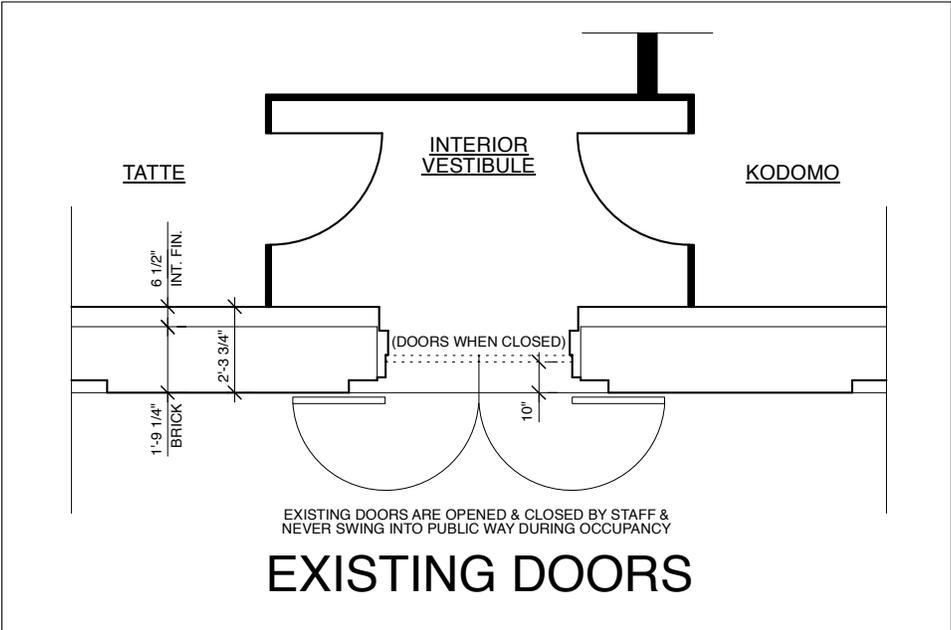
This is a second application to the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission for review of the central doors on the east façade between the street level retail vestibule and sidewalk at the former Charles Street Meeting House. This issue is related to proposing appropriate treatment of the existing outswing doors in response to a building code refusal letter issued by Inspectional Services Department after review of the permit application for interior expansion of the Tatte Bakery and Café.

ISD stated two objections to the existing vestibule doors. First, the doors do not have panic exit hardware for egress purposes. Second, the doors swing into the public way. As evidenced by historic photographs, this masonry opening has always contained a pair of outswing doors. The current configuration serving retail stores has been in place since the adaptive reuse project in 1980. While the masonry opening does serve an egress function, the doors are always in the open position when the retail uses are occupied. The doors swinging into the public way is not a life safety issue because the doors are opened by staff in the morning and closed by staff in the evening, eliminating the likelihood that they will inadvertently encounter unsuspecting pedestrians on the sidewalk.

The first BHAC application was administratively approved on January 16, 2026. In that application the Owner proposed adding panic hardware while retaining the current door swing. That approach was deemed historically appropriate by BHAC and ISD is not opposed to the proposed solution. However, ISD was unwilling to issue a permit unless the applicant receives a variance from the MA Building Code Appeal Board (BCAB). Joseph Corning and Nicholas Armata met with ISD after that decision to request local jurisdiction to reconsider and allow this condition to be accepted. A possible favorable decision by ISD is still pending.

This second BHAC application proposes to recess the outswing doors into the vestibule to minimize or eliminate any encroachment into the public way. The existing doors would be re-used for this modification, the door frame relocated, and the brick jambs in the opening re-exposed since they are currently concealed by the existing door frame. As in the first application, panic exit hardware and hold-open door hooks will be provided as planned. The proposed layout submitted with the second application shows an encroachment of 4" into the public way beyond the façade since that amount of projection from a wall complies with accessibility regulations including the MA Architectural Access Board (521 CMR 20.6.1). The 4" projection is not required and could be reduced to 0" if preferred by ISD or BHAC.

Attachments: Vestibule Plan: Existing Doors / Reposition Existing Doors
Photographs: Historic Doors / Existing Doors
Architectural Drawings (3 Pages)
Captioned Photographs / Existing Images / B.01 – B.04
Historic Photographs / B.05 – B.06
Building Code Refusal / 11 Dec 2025 / ALT1731005 (1 page)



**CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE
70 CHARLES STREET / BOSTON MA**



HISTORIC DOORS

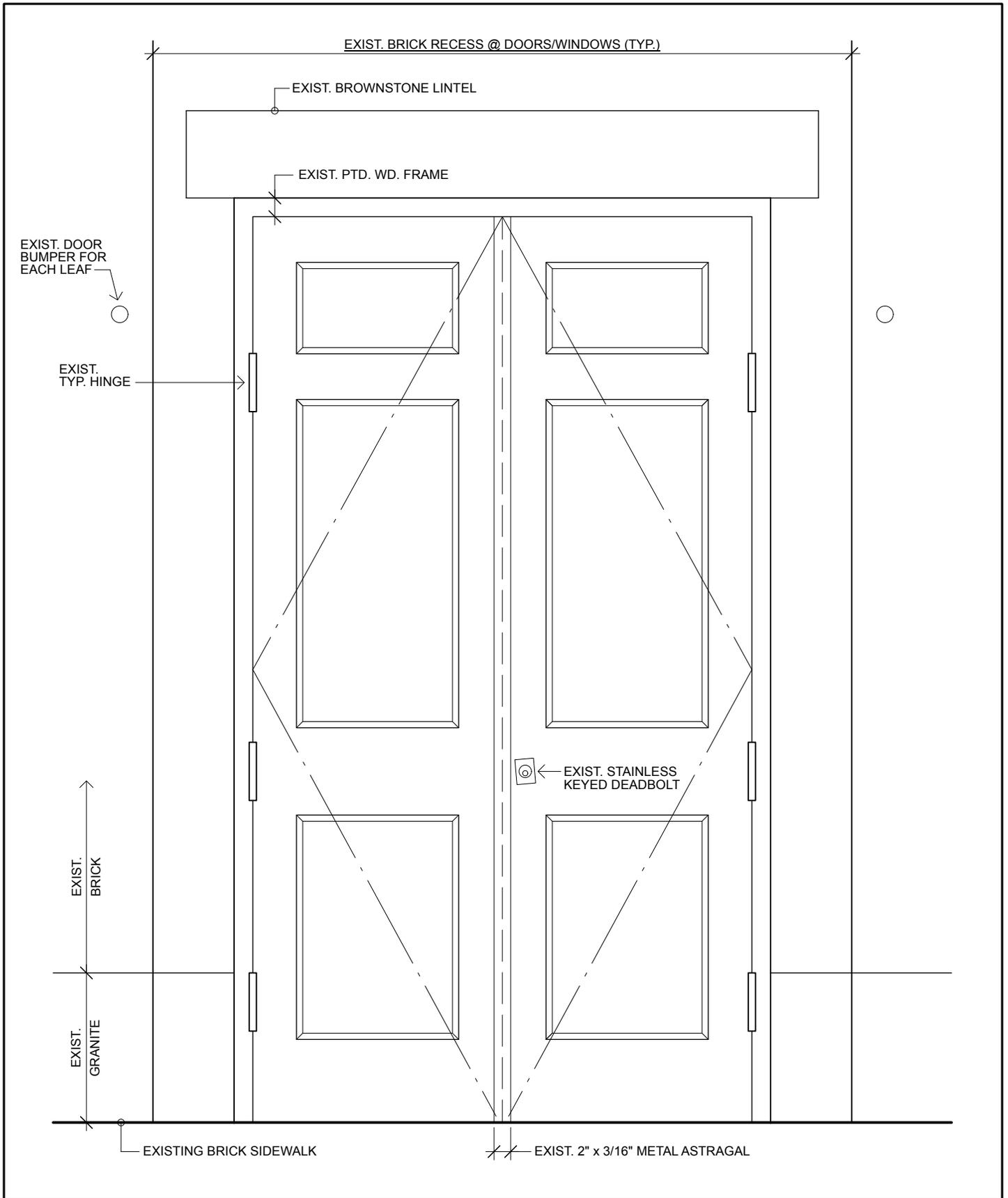
Photo Use Granted by Getty Images to JM Forbes / 1937 Image by Boston Globe



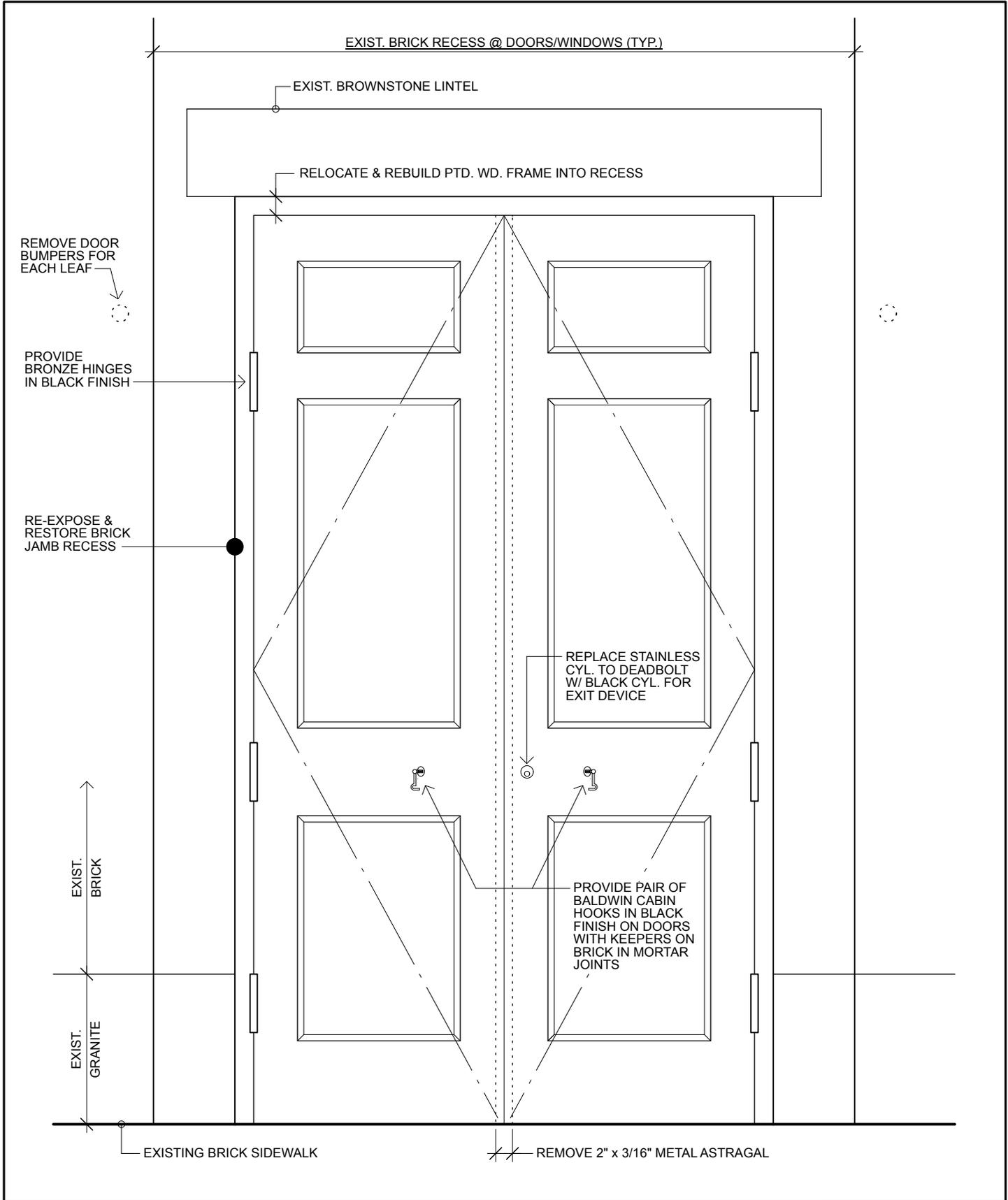
EXISTING DOORS

Photo Taken by Paul Elias (JM Forbes) on January 28, 2026

CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE
70 CHARLES STREET / BOSTON MA



PROJECT: CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE 70 CHARLES STREET BOSTON MA 02114	MILLS WHITAKER ARCHITECTS, LLC P.O. Box 750089 Arlington MA 02475	<h1>A-50 v2</h1>
SOURCE: FIELD DIMENSIONS	SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"	
DRAWING: EXISTING EXTERIOR OF DOORS	DATE: 13 FEB 2026	



PROJECT:	CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE 70 CHARLES STREET BOSTON MA 02114	MILLS WHITAKER ARCHITECTS, LLC P.O. Box 750089 Arlington MA 02475	A-51 v2
SOURCE:	FIELD DIMENSIONS	SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"	
DRAWING:	PROPOSED EXTERIOR OF DOORS	DATE: 13 FEB 2026	

PAIR OF EXTERIOR DOORS SERVING RETAIL LOBBY

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

- E1:** Each leaf of the pair of outswing doors is 29.25" wide x 109" tall x 1.875" thick.
- E2:** The doors were indicated in the 1980 Adaptive Reuse project for the building to serve retail lobby from Charles Street in the stamped permit set for ISD.
- E3:** The doors are used for security purposes when the building is unoccupied, being opened by staff at 6 AM and closed by staff at 11 PM.
- E4:** The doors never serve an egress function when swinging out into the public way since they are held in the open position against the exterior façade during all times of occupancy.
- E5:** ISD issued a "Building Code Refusal" letter due to the absence of appropriate exit hardware and due to the outswing protruding into the public way.

EXISTING DOOR HARDWARE:

- H1:** Each door leaf has 3 large long throw hinges that allow the door to swing out and be positioned parallel to the exterior brick façade during times of occupancy.
- H2:** The north leaf has a keyed deadbolt with exterior cylinder and interior thumb turn. The south leaf has a surface-mounted foot bolt into the granite threshold.
- H3:** There is a surface-mounted metal astragal on the north leaf, and rubber bumper door stops mounted high on the exterior brick wall for each leaf.

RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS:

- R1:** Provide egress hardware per request of ISD as approved by BHAC on 1/16/2026.
- R2:** Remove existing keyed deadbolt and surface-mounted slide bolt. Provide pair of interior surface-mounted exit devices with vertical upper rods for latching & egress.
- R3:** Provide pair of swivel type cabin hooks for securing doors in the open position.
- R4:** Relocate doors & frame into restored brick jamb recess with hardware as follows:
 - a. Interior Pair of Von Duprin Exit Devices LD-99-27-LBR-OUT-315-WD-P-299; Active Leaf NL-CYL-Schlage 622-20-022; Inactive Leaf EO (exit only).
 - b. Exterior Pair of Baldwin 2.5" Cabin Door Hook 0950 in 190 Satin Black; Hooks on Doors and Keepers on Brick Jambs (fastened in mortar joints).
 - c. Three heavy-duty full mortise hinges with ball finials in black finish for each door leaf with concealed ball bearings and sized to suit door height and weight.

PROJECT:	CHARLES STREET MEETING HOUSE 70 CHARLES STREET BOSTON MA 02114	MILLS WHITAKER ARCHITECTS, LLC P.O. Box 750089 Arlington MA 02475	A-52 v2
SOURCE:	SPECIFICATIONS	SCALE: N/A	
DRAWING:	NARRATIVE OF DOOR WORK	DATE: 13 FEB 2026	

251217-IMG_0139.JPG



Pair of Doors in Open Position During Occupancy Showing Conditions Since 1980 Adaptive Reuse

251217-IMG_0147.JPG



Pair of Doors in Open Position During Occupancy Lay Parallel to Charles Street Facade

251217-IMG_0152.JPG



Exterior View of Passive Leaf at Left; Wood Frame Conceals All But 1" of Brick Jamb

251217-IMG_0151.JPG



Exterior View of Active Leaf at Right Showing Wide Hinges Allowing Door to Open 180-Degrees

251217-IMG_0141.JPG



Stainless Lock and Plate to be Replaced with Black Lock Cylinder; Metal Astragal on Active Door Leaf to be Removed and Holes Patched/Painted

251217-IMG_0140.JPG



Deadbolt & Pull at Interior Side of Active Leaf to be Replaced with Flat Black Exit Device & Vertical Rods

251217-IMG_0144.JPG



Vertical Slide Bolt & Pull on Interior of Passive Leaf to be Replaced with Flat Black Exit Device & Vertical Rod

251217-IMG_0148.JPG



Abandoned Vertical Rod Hardware on Interior of Passive Leaf to be Removed; Flat Black Exit Device & Vertical Rod to be Provided as Panic Hardware

251217-IMG_0158.JPG



Exterior Rubber Door Bumper at Passive Leaf to be Removed and Brickwork Patched

251217-IMG_0156.JPG



Exterior Rubber Door Bumper at Active Leaf to be Removed and Brickwork Patched

251217-IMG_0153.JPG



Typical View from Retail Vestibule Interior with Existing Doors in Hold-Open Position Showing Overall Thickness of 27.75" @ Exterior Wall

251217-IMG_0072.JPG

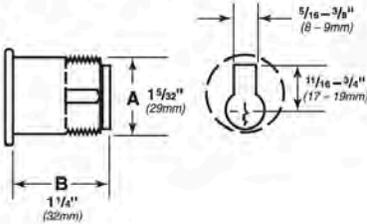


Partial Example of Proposed Interior Hardware for Proposed Pair of Exit Devices with Vertical Rods (Ignore Closers, Paper Exit Sign, & Security Contacts)

Cylinders are not furnished with device or trim and must be specified when ordering.
Refer to trim pages for cylinder type.



Mortise — 3215
(Schlage 20-001, L583-477 cam)



Dogged (Inverted) cam

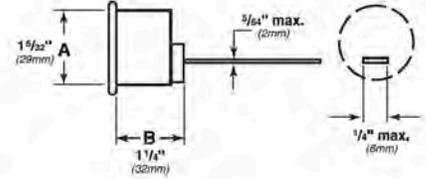
For CD, CDSI, CI and SD



Rim — 3216
(Schlage 20-022)

**Undogged cam
(standard operations)**

For ALK, CX, DE5300, RCM, SS and all 98/99 Series mortise cylinder trims and controls



64 · Von Duprin · 98/99 Series

*Proposed Replacement Lock Cylinder in Matte Black
for Keying of Active Door to Interior Exit Device*

HOME — ACCESSORIES — HOOKS — BALDWIN 0950 2.5" CABIN DOOR HOOK



BALDWIN HARDWARE

★★★★★ (0)

Baldwin 0950 2.5" Cabin Door Hook

\$76.80 List Price: \$96.00

FREE SHIPPING OVER \$99 ● IN STOCK

SKU: 0950-190

FINISH: 190 SATIN BLACK



- 1 +

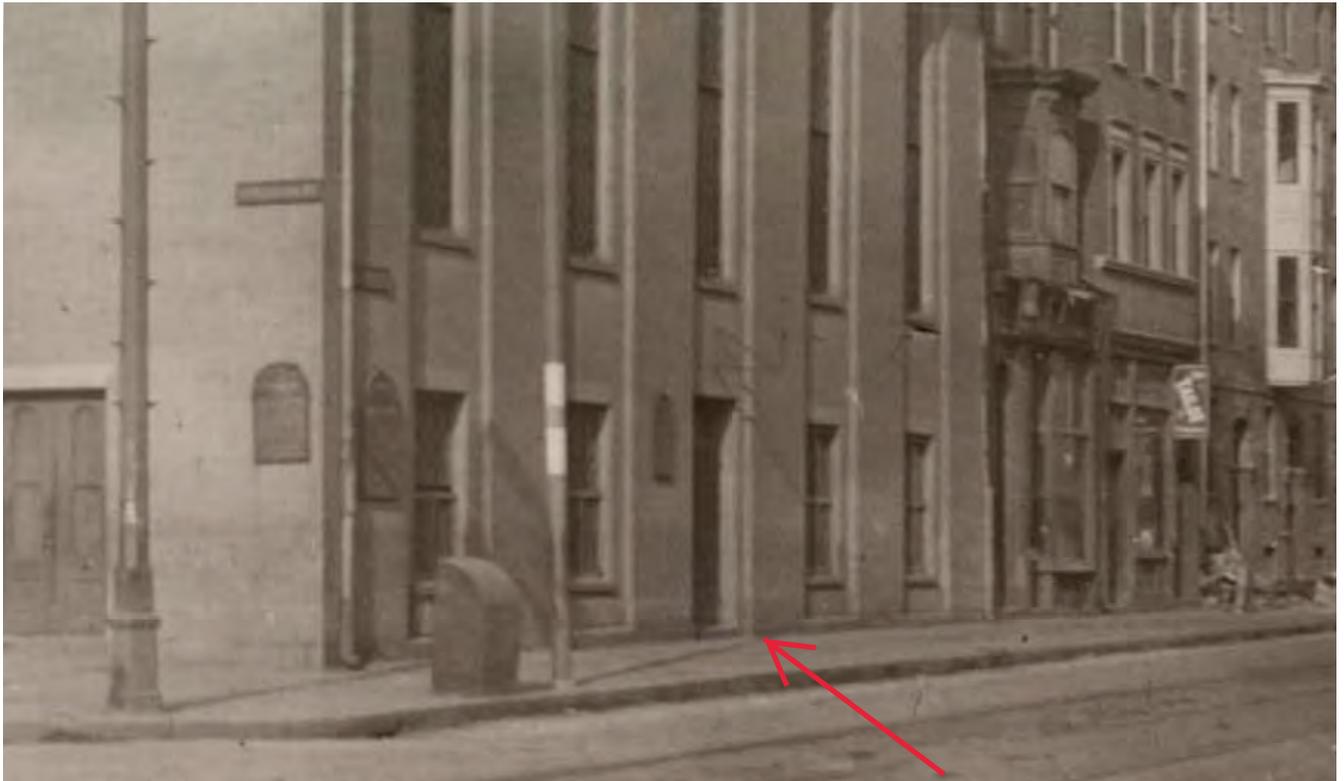
ADD TO CART

HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THIS PRODUCT?

Proposed Pair of Baldwin 2.5" Swivel Hooks in Satin Black to Hold Doors Open During Times of Occupancy



*ca. 1889 Photograph from Boston Pictorial Archive / Boston Public Library
of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*



*ca. 1889 Photograph (Zoomed-In) from Boston Pictorial Archive / Boston Public Library
Showing Exposed Brick Jamb to Recessed Central Door on Charles Street Facade*



*1971 Photograph from Boston Landmarks Commission Collection 5210.004
(Digital Commonwealth Massachusetts Collection Online)*



*Zoomed-In 1971 Photograph Showing Door with Flush Transom Bar Above
Doors in the Same Plane ... Which is Indicative of Outswing Configuration*



Michelle Wu
Mayor

Boston Inspectional Services Department

Building and Structures Division

1010 Massachusetts Avenue Boston, MA 02118 Telephone: (617) 635-5300

Marc A. Joseph
Inspector of Buildings

BUILDING CODE REFUSAL

December 11, 2025

DANIEL BRENNAN
8 STONEGATE LANE
SALEM, NH 03079

Re: Application # : **ALT1731005**
Date Filed: June 05, 2025
Location: 70 CHARLES ST BOSTON, MA 02114
Ward: 05
Purpose: Change occupancy to remove 2 retail spaces and renovation to the existing 1,320 SF Tatte Bakery and Cafe (#37 & #36A) to take additional 2,095 SF SF of the two adjacent retail spaces. (total 3,415 SF).
Requesting a nominal fee for zoning review/refusal for expansion of a conditional use.
eplan - BOA decision valid until 11/2027 --> BBRs

Your application requires Building Code Relief, as same would be in violation of Massachusetts State Building Code 780 CMR - 10th Edition, Chapter 802, acts of 1972, as amended to wit:

Violation:	Violation Description:	Violation Comments:
780 CMR: Chapter 10	Means of Egress	1010.2.9- Panic and exit hardware: Swinging doors serving rooms or spaces with an occupant load of 50 or more in a Group A occupancy shall not be provided with a latch or lock other than panic hardware or fire exit hardware.
780CMR: Chapter 32	Encroachments into the Public-Right-of-V	Doors swinging on public way

THIS DECISION MAY BE APPEALED WITHIN FORTY-FIVE (45) DAYS. ANY PARTY MAY FILE AN APPEAL OF THE DETERMINATION OF A LOCAL BUILDING INSPECTOR WITHIN 45 CALENDAR DAYS OF ISSUANCE OF A DENIAL LETTER BY A LOCAL BUILDING INSPECTOR. APPLICATIONS NOT APPEALED WITHIN THAT TIME PERIOD Will BE DEEMED ABANDONED. LEARN HOW TO FILE AN APPEAL AT:

Building Code: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/building-code-appeals-board-bcab>
Accessibility: <https://www.mass.gov/architectural-access-board-variance>
Plumbing: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/submit-a-variance-request-to-the-board-of-state-examiners-of-plumbers-and-gas-fitters>

Jordi Segales-Perez
for the Commissioner
(617)961-3280

Refusal of a permit may be appealed to the appropriate board within 45 days. 780 CMR 105.3.1