

# FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

E5/ 2/ 5/ / and  
E6/ 4/ 6/ /

Blue Hills

AVO.47

**Town/City:** Avon

**Place:** (*neighborhood or village*):

## Photograph



View looking northeast.

**Address:** 340 East Spring St.

**Historic Name:** Bows Moccasin Shop

**Uses:** Present: Motor Repair Shop

Original: Factory

**Date of Construction:** 1920

**Source:** Architectural Drawings; Newspaper

**Style/Form:** No Style

**Architect/Builder:** George H. Wood

## Exterior Material:

Foundation: Stone, Uncut

Wall/Trim: Vinyl Siding / Vinyl Trim

Roof: Asphalt Shingle

**Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:** None

**Major Alterations** (*with dates*): 2-story rear addition (ca. 1940); 1-story addition (post-1940); Garage bays added to east elevation; Vinyl siding and replacement metal sash windows; Windows removed (late 20<sup>th</sup> C or early 21<sup>st</sup> C)

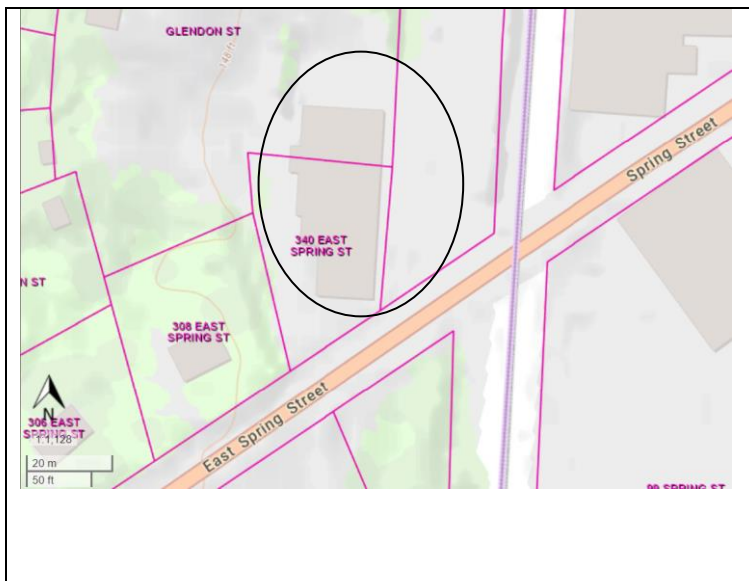
**Condition:** Fair

**Moved:** no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

**Acreage:** 0.25 acre

**Setting:** Located beside a rail line in an industrial area. Industrial buildings are also located northeast and southeast of the building. A residential area is located along East Spring Street west of the station.

## Locus Map



**Recorded by:** Stacy Spies

**Organization:** Avon Historical Commission

**Date** (*month / year*): December 2022

# INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

340 EAST SPRING ST.

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The building is located beside an active rail line on a sloping site covered with asphalt paving. The frame building is located very close to the street. The building consists of a 3-story main block and two 1-story rear ells. The building rests on an uncoursed stone foundation and rises to a shallow gable roof with overhanging eaves and a metal-clad fascia. A slender brick interior chimney is located in the northeast corner of the east roof slope. The south (streetside) elevation contains two metal pedestrian doors at the first story. The first and second stories each contain a tripartite fixed window. The third story contains four 1/1 sash windows. The current entrance is located in the south elevation of a 2-story projection attached to the main block's west elevation. The entrance contains a pair of full-light, metal frame doors located beneath a shed-roof porch. The east elevation is six bays wide. The east elevation's first floor contains four sash windows and a vehicle door with an overhead metal door.

The 1-story ell (ca. 1940) has a gable roof set perpendicular to the main block and contains two large vehicle doors with overhead metal doors in the east elevation. (This ell originally contained two stories; see 1940 photo below.) The 1-story ell at the north end of the building contains a large vehicle door with an overhead metal door. The ells rest on poured concrete foundations.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

*Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

In 1907, William A. Bows, Sr. (ca. 1869-1923) and his wife, Carrie Fowler Bows, purchased property at what was then 5 East Spring Street (now 152 East Spring Street) and soon had a house and a 1-story workshop constructed on the property. The couple had married in 1890 in Manchester, New Hampshire, where William A. Bows worked as a shoemaker. In 1900, the couple was living in Stoneham, Massachusetts where William Bows worked as a lasting machine operator.

The W.A. Bows & Son company was established in 1911 in the workshop behind the house at 152 East Spring Street. William A. Bows, Sr. worked as the superintendent of this factory in partnership with his sons, William A. Bows, Jr. (1892-1977)<sup>1</sup> and Clinton F. Bows (1898-1964).<sup>2</sup> Clinton F. Bows left the firm at a later date. The company manufactured "High Grade Moccasins – Men's, Ladies' and Children's Slippers – Snowshoes and Hunting Boots"<sup>3</sup> In 1920, the company had a new factory constructed at 340 East Spring Street.<sup>4</sup> The company name appears to have changed to Bows Moccasin Shoe Company around that time, as well. William A. Bows III (1924-2008),<sup>5</sup> son of William A. and Gladys Bows, joined his father in the business.

By 1940, Bows Moccasin Shoe Company employed 55 people and manufactured 300 pairs of moccasins per day.<sup>6</sup> At that time, William A. Bows stated that the growing business could hire as many as 45 more employees, but the existing building was too small. After considering a move to another town that could accommodate their need for a larger building, an addition was attached to the rear of the existing East Spring Street building circa 1940. Bows moccasins were included in the Hall of Fashions

<sup>1</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #54097449. Accessed Sept. 13, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #178791346. Accessed Sept. 13, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> 1914 City Directory.

<sup>4</sup> Plans for "Moccasin Shop." Division of Public Safety Records. Massachusetts State Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #62867886. Accessed Sept. 13, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> "Avon Would Keep Moccasin Firm in Present Location." 1930s newspaper clipping.

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at the World's Fair in 1939.<sup>7</sup> Bows Moccasin Shoe Company remained in business into the 1960s, long after most of the shoe manufacturers in Avon had relocated operations or gone out of business. The Bows Moccasin Shoe Company building is one of the last buildings in Avon associated with the boot and shoe manufacturing trade that dominated the local economy in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century through World War II.

Avon carpenter and contractor George H. Wood (1888-1965)<sup>8</sup> appears to be the "G. H. Wood" who drew the plans for the 1920 Bows factory that are located at the Massachusetts State Archives. The plans, however, are not as-built; the original building is substantially larger than those filed with the state. (More research is recommended.) George H. Wood also served as chief of the Avon Fire Department. Wood served with the department for 33 years before retiring in 1947.<sup>9</sup>

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- "Avon Would Keep Moccasin Firm in Present Location." Ca. 1940 newspaper clipping. Frank Noyes Scrapbook. Collection of Robbins House Museum, Avon, Massachusetts.
- City Directories.
- Findagrave.com.
- "George H. Wood, Former Fire Chief." *Patriot Ledger*. 12 April 1965.
- Hanna, William F. *The Story of Avon*. Avon: Avon Centennial Committee. 1988.
- Massachusetts Vital Records.
- Massachusetts Division of Public Safety, Building Inspection Records. Massachusetts State Archives, Boston.
- "New Factory Addition is Dedicated at Open House." *Brockton Daily Enterprise*. Dec. [1940]. Newspaper clipping. Frank Noyes Scrapbook. Collection of Blanchard House Museum, Avon, Massachusetts.
- Norfolk County Registry of Deeds.
- Photographs in collection of Robbins House Museum. Avon, Massachusetts.
- Town of Avon. Tax Assessor records.
- United States Census. Ancestry.com.

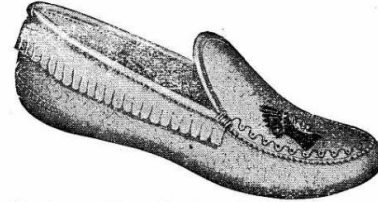
### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



View looking west.

Telephone Connection

## BOWS MOCCASIN CO.



Manufacturers of  
HIGH GRADE

Men's, Ladies' and  
Children's  
Moccasin Slippers

Factory, East Spring Street, opp. depot

Avon, Mass.

Advertisement in 1921 city directory.

<sup>7</sup> "Avon Would Keep Moccasin Firm in Present Location."

<sup>8</sup> Findagrave.com Memorial #70185277. Accessed Oct. 27, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> "George H. Wood, Former Fire Chief," *Patriot Ledger*, 12 April 1965.

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1921 view looking west. Source: Avon Historical Commission.



Ca. 1940 view looking northwest showing new addition at right. Source: Avon Historical Commission.