



Alison Hardy and her team began the restoration and repair work in October 2017. In July 2018, they helped reinstall the windows (inset).

ALUM PROFILE

## These Old Windows

Questrom alum restores windows at BU's Dahod Family Alumni Center

By Cynthia K. Buccini

Alison Hardy comes from a family of doers. Her father designed jet engines for General Electric. Her mother ran a dairy farm for years and taught her daughter to sew at a young age.

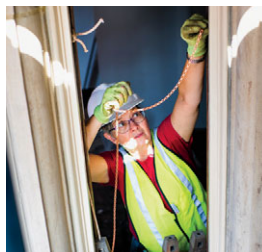
It's unsurprising, then, that Hardy (Questrom'83), who studied theatrical costuming at Denison University and who earned an MBA at BU, spent her first career in textiles, designing fabrics for companies like Izod Lacoste and Mast Industries. Or that her second career is repairing and restoring windows on projects from cottages to, well, a Castle.

For the past year, Hardy, owner of the Amesbury, Mass.-based Window Woman of New England, and her team have been restoring the 300 or so windows of BU's 103-year-old Castle, now the Dahod Family Alumni Center.

Hardy is entirely self-taught. In 1998, she and her husband bought a 200-plus-year-old house in Chelmsford, Mass., whose windows were hard to open, drafty, and covered in paint. She learned how to restore them by reading books, watching videos, and calling up tradesmen out of the blue. A friend was so impressed with her work, he asked if Hardy would do the same for his windows. Word spread. "The great thing about old houses is

old-house people talk to old-house people," Hardy says. She opened her first workshop in 2003, after she and her husband moved into an 1850s farmhouse in Topsfield. One of her first jobs was the historic Hawthorne Hotel in nearby Salem. The work has been steady ever since.

Now, she and her staff of 11 juggle 10 to 20 projects a month, both simple—such as repairs of broken glass or sash cords—and complex, like the restoration of 151 windows at Beverly City Hall. The Dahod Family Alumni Center is her biggest job to date. "It's kind of fun getting a project from my alma mater," she says.



The work began in October 2017. After workers removed the windows from the Tudor revival building, Hardy and her team loaded them into vans and brought them to her shop. The problems varied from window to window: loose glass, chipped paint, crumbled lead, and frames splintered or damaged by rot. Then there was the grime. "Honestly, the degree of dirt on these. They are just filthy," Hardy says. "It's to be expected—it's city dirt."

Her crew went to work, restoring the glass, the frames, and the hardware. Then, this past summer, they packed up the vans and headed back to campus to help reinstall the windows. Overall, she says, "The windows on this property were beautifully built and generally held up well over the last century."