



**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

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**STEP 2: DETERMINATION OF PREFERABLY PRESERVED  
STAFF REPORT**

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**Site:** 125 Highland Avenue

**Case:** HPC.DMO 2021.09

**Applicant:** Barros Properties

**Owner:** Highland Masonic Temple  
Association, Co-Owner c/o Christopher  
Kenney

**Proposal:** *Demolish principal  
structure.*

**HPC Meeting Date:** April 26, 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 reports are based on the criteria allowed for consideration by the HPC in accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO). A Staff Report is not a determination/decision nor does it constitute authorization in any form.

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**I. AUTOMATIC DETERMINATION OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE**

In accordance with the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO), because 125 Highland Avenue is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is automatically determined to be “historically significant”, therefore allowing the building to proceed to Step 2 in the demolition review process for a determination of whether or not it should be “preferably preserved”. The referenced section of the DRO states that:



*If a building is listed on, or is within an area listed on, the National Register of Historic Places, or the subject of a pending application for listing on the National Register, it shall be automatically determined significant...*

125 Highland Avenue is listed both individually on the Register and as an important component of a National Register Multiple Resource Area (MRA).

## **II. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Preservation Planning endeavors to provide as comprehensive a research effort as possible in preparation for hearings on historic significance and preferable preservation. Multiple factors can apply to a building for it to be considered “historically significant” and “preferably preserved”. A significant amount of information is provided thereon in the form of the Form B and the National Register nomination papers (attached for reference).

In addition to the information provided, the racist beliefs of the building’s architect, Ralph Adams Cram, were brought to Preservation Planning’s attention by the Applicant. Preservation Planning research confirmed that Cram believed in white, Anglo-Saxon supremacy and also held beliefs in the superiority of some religions over others.

Though 125 Highland is a Romanesque Revival building, Cram was a devotee of Gothic Revival and was particularly known for the so-called “Collegiate Gothic” style, having designed buildings for countless colleges and universities. Religious buildings were also a core of his work. A list of some of Cram’s buildings is appended.

125 Highland Avenue is an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Romanesque Revival Church using a Gothic cruciform design with attached side bell tower. The use of brick and terracotta add visual variety and interest to an otherwise simple and unadorned exterior. Particularly, these elements used for the foundation, the outline of the Romanesque arches, the capping on the buttresses and the adornment of the string courses provide visual and textural contrast to the neutral stucco exterior.

## **III. FINDINGS**

There are many things that can make a building “historically significant” and qualify it to be “preferably preserved”. The HPC should consider the importance of a building to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.

The HPC must make one of the following determinations and state their findings:

### **a. Preferably Preserved**

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

- *That the demolition of the building at **125 Highland Avenue** would be detrimental to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social heritage of the City.*

If the HPC makes the above finding in the affirmative or the negative, the HPC must state their reasons why they take either position.

**b. Not Preferably Preserved**

For a determination of **NOT preferably preserved**, the HPC must state their reasons why they take their position.

**c. Not Preferably Preserved with Conditions**

For a determination of **NOT preferably preserved with Conditions**, in addition to their findings, the HPC may add any or all of the following conditions to their determination:

*- That the applicant is required to provide one or more of the following to the Planning Division (Preservation Planning) prior to demolition:*

- 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.*

**VI. VOTE**

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at **125 Highland Avenue** is or is not “preferably preserved” (adopt findings).

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	SMV.122
<b>Historic Name:</b>	First Universalist Church
<b>Common Name:</b>	Igreja Batista Missionaria Church
<b>Address:</b>	125 Highland Ave
<b>City/Town:</b>	Somerville
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	Central Hill
<b>Local No:</b>	1050, 143, 50-F-31
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	r 1920
<b>Architect(s):</b>	Cram and Ferguson; Cram, Ralph Adams
<b>Architectural Style(s):</b>	Romanesque Revival
<b>Use(s):</b>	Church
<b>Significance:</b>	Architecture; Community Planning; Ethnic Heritage; Religion
<b>Area(s):</b>	SMV.C: Central Hill SMV.AY: Somerville Multiple Resource Area
<b>Designation(s):</b>	Nat'l Register MRA (09/18/1989); Nat'l Register Individual Property (09/18/1989)
<b>Building Materials(s):</b>	Roof: Slate Wall: Brick; Glass; Stucco Foundation: Stone, Cut



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)

This file was accessed on: Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 2:04: PM

**FORM B - BUILDING**

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

50/ F/ 31

Boston-North

SMV.122

Town Somerville

Place (neighborhood or village) Central Hill

Address 125 Highland Avenue

Historic Name First Universalist Church

Use: Present Religious

Original Religious

Date of Construction 1916-1923

Source Tucci, Built in Boston, p.171

Style/Form Italian Romanesque/ L-shaped

Architect/Builder Ralph Adams Cram (Cram & Ferguson)

Exterior Material

Foundation Stone

Wall Stucco-parged brick, brick trim

Roof Slate Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures N/A

Major Alterations (with dates) Very intact

Condition Fair

Moved ☐ yes ☒ no

Acreage 18,045 Square feet

Recorded by Edward W. Gordon

Organization Som. Historic Preservation Comm.

Date(month/day/year) 3/7/05

Setting Situated on rise atop Central Hill. Together with the granite 1890s Richardsonian Romanesque Congregational church across the street, adds considerable interest to the Highland Avenue streetscape.

RECEIVED

OCT 10 2005

MASS. HIST. COMM.





**BUILDING FORM**

SMV.122

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION** ☒ *see continuation sheet*

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

Built in 1916-1923, the First Universalist Church is a major landmark atop Central Hill by virtue of its siting and distinctive, towered form. Together with the Hartwell and Richardson-designed First Unitarian Church (1894) located diagonally across Highland Avenue, the First Universalist Church constitutes a picturesque "gateway," setting a high bar for design excellence along the avenue that is matched, further to the east, by the City Hall and Library. The church represents the work of the noted architect Ralph Adams Cram, America's leading proponent of Gothicism during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Although the church has been dismissed by some architectural historians as a rather bland example of Cram's work, the fact remains that revivals of the first Romanesque after its initial "hey day" during the 1850s and early 1860s were uncommon. Further more, any community that has a Cram church within its borders is fortunate, indeed, to have a building by such a great master. Inspired by the 11th century churches of northern Italy, this church's design commands considerable interest as a rare, twentieth century foray into the first Romanesque or Lombard style. The first Romanesque is a historic architectural revival style initially used in the design of American churches and railroad stations during the mid nineteenth century. This early manifestation of the Romanesque Revival or "Round Style" is not to be confused with the Richardsonian Romanesque style of the 1870s and 1880s.

H. H. Richardson's interpretation of the Romanesque, on the other hand, was inspired by photographs of 11th century Romanesque churches in France and Spain. Although Richardson had studied and worked in Paris during the 1860s, he never actually visited the Pyrenees region of the aforementioned countries that was so rich in

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE** ☒ *see continuation sheet*

*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.*

The First Universalist Church at 125 Highland Avenue was built in 1916 -1923 from designs provided by the important architect Ralph Adams Cram of Cram and Ferguson architects of Boston. The First Universalist Society traces its roots to the early 1850s when the first Universalist services in Somerville were held in the town hall with the Rev. George H. Emerson, D. D. officiating as minister. The First Universalist Church in the City, however, was not officially organized until February 16, 1854. Edwin Munroe, a prominent real estate speculator on Prospect Hill, was the leader in the movement to establish a Universalist Church in Somerville.

In 1854, the twelve incorporators of the First Universalist Church were Ira Thorpe, Charles Williams, Erastus E. Cole, Reuben Horton, Edwin Munroe, David Russell, Francis Russell, James S. Runey, J. Q. Twombly (see the Dugin- Twombly House, 19 Greenville Avenue, SMV.454 ), Robert Burrows, David P. Horton and Edwin Munroe (Munroe had attended church in Charlestown, but an accident while en route to worship services convinced him that he needed to attend church closer to his home on Walnut Street). The first religious meetings were held in a schoolhouse in Central Square. Central Square ran from the intersection of Cross Street down Medford Street to Washington Street; a site now located under Route 28. The schoolhouse soon proved to be inadequate to accommodate the people and a chapel was erected on Cross Street in East Somerville with funds raised by subscription. The chapel's land was donated by Charles Tuft who funded the construction of the first buildings at

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES** ☐ *see continuation sheet*

- Bromley, George, **Atlases of the City of Somerville**, 1895; 1900.  
Harris, Cyril M. **American Architecture, An Illustrated Encyclopedia**, N. Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998.  
Hopkins, G. M., **Maps of the City of Somerville**, 1874; 1884.  
Samuels, Edward A. **Somerville Past & Present**. Boston: Samuels & Kimball Company, 1897.  
**Somerville City Directories**: 1869-70 to 1940; Somerville Public Library, **Local History Room Church Files**.  
*Somerville Journal* 6/2/ 1916, "Beautiful New Church Plans for Artistic Building on Highland Avenue";  
*SJ* 3/5/1920, "Universalist Church on Highland Completed in 1918."  
Tucci, Douglas Shand. **Built in Boston, City and Suburb**. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard U. Press, 1978.  
Zellie, Carole, **Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, MA**, 1982, 1990.

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

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Town:  
Somerville, MA

Area(s):  
Central Hill

Property Address:  
**125 Highland Avenue**

**Form No:**  
SMV.122

Indicate each item on inventory form, continued below.

**Architectural Description      Page 3**

Medieval Romanesque churches. That the First Universalist Church's design revisits the first revival of the Romanesque during the second decade of the twentieth century is very interesting and all the more so because Cram, the great Gothickist, may have been personally responsible for choosing this mode for the Highland Avenue Church.

The First Universalist Church is rectangular in form with an extensive, two-story ell that projects from the center of its rear wall. Served up on a rise above heavily trafficked Highland Avenue, a lawn at the front of the building slopes down to the sidewalk. At the rear of the building is an asphalt-paved parking area. At the Highland Avenue facade, two flights of concrete steps lead to main and secondary entrances. The main entrance is located on the tower wall, as well as a secondary entrance located at the western end of the main facade. In general, the church's figural painted stained glass is intact. Unfortunately, the church's stucco has not held up well over time and is in need of repair. The brick trim around windows needs to be re-pointed.

**Historical Narrative**

Tufts University campus during the early 1850s. The original chapel was moved to Tufts Street where it was used as a schoolhouse and it afterwards served as a barn. The chapel was replaced in 1859 by a wooden church which was destroyed by fire in January, 1868. The members of the Universalist religious society did not waste any time rebuilding their church. In 1869 the brick structure on Cross Street was completed and in 1894 the Social Hall building was added to the Tufts Street side of the property. These buildings were sold when the present edifice on Highland Avenue was erected in 1916-1923.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the church's land was owned by milkman Chetham Parks. Containing over 13,000 square feet, this lot was mostly undeveloped with only a small L-shaped stable located at its northeast corner. Parks died around 1905 and his widow, Lavinia W. Parks owned the property until 1916.

Until 1870, when it was extended from Central Street to Davis Square, Highland Avenue was called Church Street and extended only as far as Central Street. Prior to 1850, Church /Highland was called "Barberry Lane" or "Middle Way." By the early 1900s, Highland Avenue, east of Lowell Street, became what might be described as Somerville's premiere thoroughfare, bordered by handsome public buildings, churches, and substantial residences. By the time The First Universalist Church was built during the World War I era, Highland Avenue's reputation as a focus for architecturally distinguished buildings had already been established for several decades.

Ralph Adams Cram (1863-1942) was the leading proponent of the Eclectic Gothic Revival style in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century. Prior to the establishment of the Boston architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson in 1899, Cram was a partner in Cram and Wentworth. After 1914, his firm became known as Cram and Ferguson. The author of numerous books and articles, as well as a prolific lecturer, Cram was a scholar of Gothic architecture. Initially serving an apprenticeship with the Boston firm of Rotch and Tilden (1881-1885), Cram's career spanned a period of almost fifty years, with projects ranging from All Saints Episcopal Church in the Ashmont section of Dorchester (1894), to Boston University's Charles River Campus (early 1940s). Cram's most significant buildings, aside from churches, were located at West Point, beginning in 1903.

**INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET**Town  
SomervilleProperty Address  
**125 Highland Avenue**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125Area (s)  
Central HillForm No.  
SMV.1047**Historical Narrative      Page 4**

Returning to the history of the First Universalist Church on Highland Avenue, by the 1910s, it was clear that the Cross Street Church had become inadequate for the purposes of the Congregation. By April of 1915, \$12,000 had been raised towards the construction of a new church. By June of 1916, the building committee of the First Universalist Church was ready to move forward with the construction of a new, "artistic" building. One of the key members of the building committee was Gilbert H. Hood of the Hood Milk Company family. The new church was planned to house an "assembly room," Sunday school classes, and a parish house.

The church currently houses a religious society called Igreja Batista Missionaria. The Somerville Universalists merged With the Unitarians back in the 1960s and no longer have a meeting place in Somerville, today.





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

Community  
SOMERVILLE, MA

Property Address  
125 HIGHLAND AVENUE

Area(s) Form No.  
Spring Hill

AY SMV.122

## National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- ☒ Individually eligible      ☐ Eligible **only** in a historic district  
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district      ☐ Potential historic district

Criteria: ☒ A    ☐ B    ☒ C    ☐ D

Criteria Considerations:    ☐ A    ☐ B    ☐ C    ☐ D    ☐ E    ☐ F    ☐ G

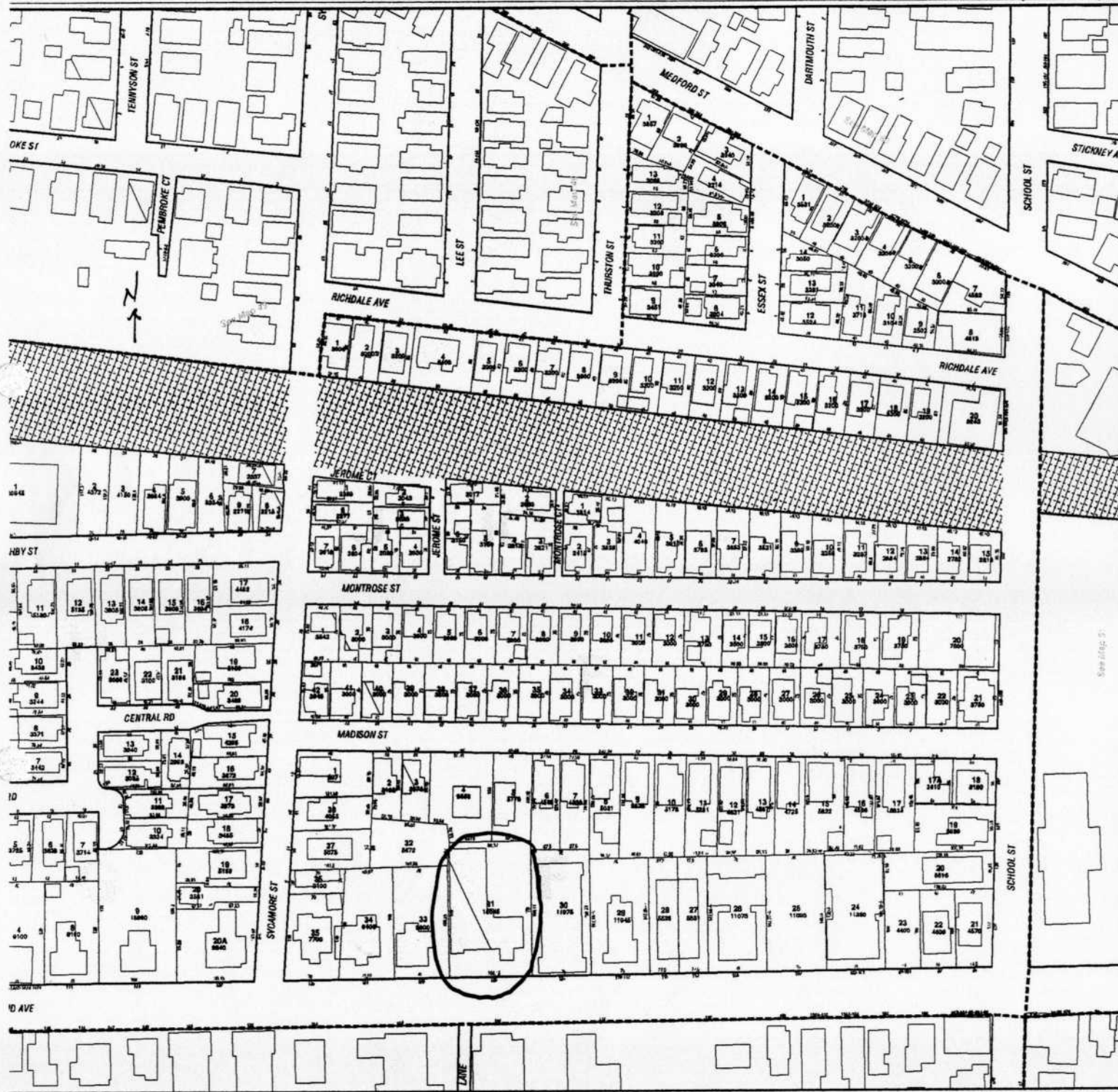
Statement of Significance by

Edward W. G. W. M.  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

**The First Universalist Church at 125 Highland Avenue is considered individually eligible for listing on the N. R. H. P..**

**The First Universalist Church at 125 Highland Avenue was built in 1916 -1923 from designs provided by the important architect Ralph Adams Cram of Cram and Ferguson architects of Boston. The First Universalist Society traces its roots to the early 1850s when the first Universalist services in Somerville were held in the town hall with the Rev. George H. Emerson, D. D. officiating as minister. The First Universalist Church in the City, however, was not officially organized until February 16, 1854. Edwin Munroe, a prominent real estate speculator on Prospect Hill was the leader in the movement to establish a Universalist Church in Somerville. 125 highland Avenue satisfies criteria A of the N. R. H. P.**

**Built in 1916-1923, the First Universalist Church is a major landmark atop Central Hill by virtue of its siting and distinctive, towered form. Together with the Hartwell and Richardson-designed First Unitarian Church (1894) located diagonally across Highland Avenue, the First Universalist Church constitutes a picturesque "gateway", setting a high bar for design excellence along the avenue that is bordered by other architecturally significant public buildings located further to the east, by the City Hall, High School and Library. This church satisfies criteria C of the N. R. H. P. as an unusual early twentieth century revival of the First Romanesque Revival style of the 1850s. It represents the work of the noted architect Ralph Adams Cram, America's leading proponent of the Gothic Revival style during the first four decades of the twentieth century.**

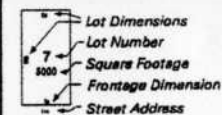


City of  
**Somerville**  
Massachusetts



### Assessors Map

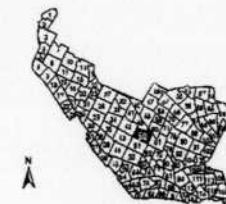
- Parcel Boundary
- Block Boundary
- - - Assessor Map Boundary
- Water Body
- Building
- ▨ Railroad ROW



1" = 80'  
February 07, 2002

Sources: Rights-of-way and building footprints developed from Boston Edison Company data, 1993. Parcel data transferred from assessor maps by Camp Dresser & McKee, 1999.

NOTE: The data represented on these maps indicate distances and decided locations of cadastral boundaries in the City of Somerville. They are NOT survey data and should not be treated as such.



**50**

SMV.122

(A11C)

## FORM B - BUILDING

OFFICE COPY  
DO NOT REMOVEMASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

143/22



Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).  
Indicate north

See Attached Assessor's Map

UTM REFERENCE 19 327/020 4694/740

USGS QUADRANGLE Boston, NorthSCALE 1:25,000

Somerville  
Address 125 Highland Avenue  
Historic Name First Universalist Church

Present religious  
Original religious

## DESCRIPTION

1916-1923  
Reference Tucci, Built in Boston, p.171  
Style Italian Romanesque  
Architect Ralph Adams Cram

Exterior Wall Fabric brick, stucco, terra cotta  
Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) noneCondition goodMoved no Date n/aAcreage less than one acre

Setting North side of Highland, heavily traveled route, with residential and commercial surrounds, office space late 19th c. housing and new construction

Recorded by Gretchen G. SchulerOrganization Mass. Historical CommissionDate September, 1988



**NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)**

The First Universalist Church retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and association with the early 20th century religious community of Somerville. It is the only local example of work by well known architect Ralph Adams Cram. The First Universalist Church fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.**

The First Universalist Church, built from 1916 to 1923, is an example of a Romanesque design with the Gothic cruciform plan and an attached side tower. Although it is described by Douglas Tucci (Built in Boston) as "uniformly bland" the use of brick, stucco and terra cotta adds variety to the unadorned architectural detail. The Romanesque windows, the stringcourses of the tower, and the buttresses all with brick and terra cotta trim are the only elements of decoration. There is one rondelle of stained glass on the west facade that adds variety and interest to the design.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.**

Built on Central Hill the First Universalist Church was the last major church built in this area. Highland Avenue, originally part of an old route known as "Barberry Land" or "Middle Way" extended only to Central Street until 1870 when it was continued to Davis Square. It was the site of civic buildings, several churches of large congregations, and of large single family homes.

The First Universalist Church was the last large church to be built in the area and is situated diagonally across Highland Avenue from the Hartwell and Richardson designed First Unitarian Church. Well known architect Ralph Adams Cram, who is known as one of the foremost designers of Gothic architecture in America, designed the First Universalist Church a deviation from his usual style for religious and institutional buildings.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES**

Tucci, Douglas, Built in Boston, p.171.

SOUTHERN DIVISION

**MONTROSE ST.**

MADISON ST.

HIGHLAND AVENUE



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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

Town

Somerville 125 Highland Ave

Property Address

Area(s)

Form No.

SMV 122

BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT—DISTRICT POLICE			
PLAN RECORD			
CASE	<b>A</b>	RACK	<b>2</b>
		APART.	<b>20</b>
		NO.	<b>8173</b> ✓
BUILDING	<b>First Universalist Church</b>		
		ROOMS	<b>1B</b>
CITY OR TOWN	<b>Somerville</b>		
	STREET	<b>Highland Ave.</b>	
TO BE USED FOR	<b>Religious Purposes</b>		CLASS <b>Church</b>
OWNER	<b>First Universalist Soc.</b>		Title
ARCHITECT	<b>Cran &amp; Ferguson</b>		
CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED—			
DATE	<b>July 5, 1917</b>		
INSPECTOR	<b>Lewis</b>		
FORM 41. 10,000. 2-2-16.			

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 04 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration FormNATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name SOMERVILLE MULTIPLE RESOURCE AREA  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number MULTIPLE N/A not for publication  
city, town SOMERVILLE N/A vicinity  
state MASSACHUSETTS code 027 county MIDDLESEX code 017 zip code 02143

## 3. Classification

## Ownership of Property

☒ private  
☒ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

## Category of Property

☒ building(s)  
☒ district  
☒ site  
☒ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>166</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<u>168</u>	<u>37</u>
	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/ANumber of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 3 \*see cont. sheet\*

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

Valerie A. Faernge  
Mass. Historical Commission Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.☐ removed from the National Register.☐ other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_for

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 3 Page 1

Somerville, MA  
(MRA)

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Contributing Resources previously Listed on the National Register:

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| 1) Martin Carr School                  | NR 1984 |
| 2) Bow Street Historic District        | NR 1976 |
| 3) Powder House Park Historic District | NR 1975 |

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: Processing

INDUSTRY: MANUFACTURE

COMMERCE/ TRADE: business, professional

DOMESTIC: Single &amp; Multiple Dwellings

RECREATION &amp; CULTURE: Theatre

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Business, professional

Domestic: Single &amp; Multiple Dwellings

Recreation &amp; Culture: Theatre

Funerary; cemetery

Education: School

(CONTINUED)

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

GREEK REVIVAL

GOTHIC REVIVAL

ITALIANATE

GEORGIAN

QUEEN ANNE

COLONIAL REVIVAL

SHINGLE STYLE

TUDOR REVIVAL

FEDERAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/CONCRETE

walls SHINGLE/SHAKE/SYNTHETIC

roof ASPHALT SLATE

other MULTIPLE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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Somerville, MASS. (MRA)

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## Historic Functions

Funerary: Cemetery

Education: School

Religious: Churches



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(MRA)Section number 7 Page 1Boundaries

Boundaries for the Somerville Multiple Resource National Register Nomination are the incorporated city limits of Somerville, Massachusetts, an area of approximately four square miles bordered by Boston (south), Medford (north), Everett (northeast), Arlington (northwest), and Cambridge (south). Located in eastern Middlesex County, Somerville is two miles from Boston, in one of the oldest settled areas of the state. Its present character is that of a densely settled residential community whose 18th, 19th, and early 20th century structures represent a wide range of building styles. While many have been substantially altered, a number have survived intact, forming the basis for this multiple resource nomination.

At first settlement, Somerville was part of the Charlestown Peninsula, marshy at its eastern, southern, and northern edges, and meadowland and grassland toward the western edge. The entire tract was largely unforested. Through much of the 17th century, it served as common grazing land, known as the area "beyond the Neck."

The natural landscape of Somerville has been changed radically since settlement. Hills have been cut down or completely razed, rivers and streams filled, and marshlands and claylands built over. In 1629 Thomas Graves recorded that this area was "very beautiful in open lands, mixed with goodly woods, and again open plains, in some places 500 acres, some places more, some less, not much troublesome for to clear for the plough to go in; no place barren but on the tops of the hills. The grass and weeds grow up to a man's face in the lowlands, and by the fresh rivers abundance of grass and large meadows, without any tree or shrub to hinder the scythe."

Topography

Topographically, Somerville's landscape is marked by numerous drumlins, or gravel-filled glacial deposits, which form the city's backbone between the lower Charles and Mystic River watersheds. The most prominent are Winter, Spring, Central, and Prospect Hills. Of these, Winter and Spring Hills are the highest (about 130 feet in elevation), lying on either side of a lowland through which now runs the Boston & Maine Railroad. Winthrop Hill, Cobble Hill, and Mount Benedict (or Ploughed Hill) were completely cut down in the late

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nineteenth century. Numerous slate deposits were quarried by early settlers at several locations, including sites on Winter, Prospect, and Spring Hills. The city today is vaguely rectangular in shape, wide and narrow, with its boundaries defined in part by the presence of the Mystic River north and west of the city.

Two rivers border Somerville: the Mystic River at the north, and Alewife Brook, a tributary to the Mystic, at the west. Until 1874, Miller's River (also known as Willis' Creek) cut a deep inlet draining marshland at the south; it was filled with soil cut down from Prospect Hill in an attempt to alleviate pollution. Numerous other creeks and small ponds have been filled in during the last century. Somerville's soils range from well-drained loam in the western section to dense deposits of glacial clay in the Mystic River watershed and near former swamplands to the south, originally part of the glacial flood plain that fills the lower valley of the Charles River from Watertown to the Back Bay.

Topography and natural resources have determined the location of industries and residential districts, as well as transportation corridors. The majority of manufacturing and processing establishments (now for the most part demolished) located in the lowlands near the Mystic River, and the residential sections adhered primarily to the slopes of the hills.

Somerville is a city composed of many neighborhoods. Area nomenclature is dominated by the names given to hills and natural features in the 18th and 19th centuries (see historic map). Ten Hills, above the shore of the Mystic River, once housed the summer residence of Governor John Winthrop. Winter Hill, site of farms and quarries in the colonial period, was built up as a fortification site during the Revolutionary war. Located in northern Somerville, it developed as a residential area beginning in the 1840s. Spring Hill, just north of the Cambridge line, likewise developed as a residential subdivision ca. 1840. Other Somerville neighborhoods include East Somerville (historically the site of Somerville's earliest industries), Union Square (the first town commercial center and junction of a number of early roadways), Asylum Hill (home of the first asylum for the insane in New England) and its neighboring area for workers housing, "Brick Bottom," Prospect Hill (another Revolutionary-war fortification site and later the location of some of the city's most prestigious late 19th century dwellings, as well as its civic center), and Ward II (one of the few political

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designations in active use and an industrial center in the 19th century).

Street names also commemorate early settlers (Adams, Winthrop, Russell), trees (Willow, Cedar, Elm), and the 19th century businessmen, town officials, and land speculators who often wore all three hats. Brastow, Simpson, Gilman, Dimick, and Vinal are named for these individuals. Lost natural features and old routes are still evident in street names: Granite Street was the name leading to the slate quarry of Osgood B. Dane (also commemorated in a street name), and Canal Road at Ten Hills abutted a portion of the Middlesex Canal.

Eighteenth and early-19th century dairy farms are documented on Prospect, Winter, and Spring Hills, and in West Somerville near Alewife Brook. The upland soil of West Somerville was well-suited for grazing, and later in the 19th century, for market gardening. In Ward II, Ten Hills, and the Powderhouse area, glacial clay deposits were extensively excavated for the manufacture of bricks and pottery. Beginning in the 17th century, outcroppings of bedrock were quarried for foundation stone, fenceposts, and headstones. Somerville stone was used for the next two centuries for walls and foundations, and in a few cases, for the construction of buildings. A stone-crushing industry developed in the late 19th century to supply gravel for road-building.

Large-scale filling and the subsequent construction of buildings have changed this early 19th century land use pattern. In the 1840s, farmers sold some of the pastureland to be stripped for brickyards. Later, with the decline of the brick industry, this land was filled and used for building lots. Similarly, marshes in the Ward II and Ten Hills areas were filled, often for the construction of tenements.

The paths of many of Somerville's earliest transportation routes survive to the present; during the period of first settlement, from ca. 1620 to ca. 1676, native trails were improved as local highways, including routes from the Cambridge border east along present-day Washington Street to Union Square; west from Union Square along Bow and Elm Streets and Somerville Avenue to Alewife Brook; and north from Charlestown along Broadway, around Winter Hill. A highway to the estate of Governor John Winthrop at Ten Hills established ca. 1631 led northeast from Broadway. With the division of the Stinted Pasture between Broadway and Somerville Avenue in 1681-1685, a grid continued

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of north/south rangeways that remains to this day was laid out. Radial routes from Union Square, the growing town's nucleus, were clearly established by the 18th century. Milk Row, now Somerville Avenue, was the major route to Charlestown, used throughout the 18th century by Somerville dairy farmers delivering their products for market.

After the revolution, the construction of Boston bridges to Cambridge and Charlestown furthered a radial turnpike network through Somerville. In 1803, the Middlesex Canal from Charlestown opened, linking Somerville still further with points north and south. Abandoned in the 1840s, the canal was supplanted by rail lines constructed across Somerville to a junction at Charlestown (the Boston & Lowell line from Medford, between Winter and Prospect Hills [1835]; the Fitchburg line from Cambridge around Spring Hill; and the Boston and Maine line across the Mystic River [1845]). The Fitchburg River followed the path of the Miller's River landfill. Street railways operated by the mid 19th century from Charlestown through Union Square north to Medford and west to Cambridge. Residential subdivision, spurred by convenient public transportation routes to Boston, added new streets to Somerville during the early industrial period. Somerville's road network and dense settlement pattern were clearly defined by the mid 19th century.

Somerville was for much of its history a town with a considerable amount of green space. As the dairy farms disappeared in the late-19th century, civic-minded Somerville citizens urged the town to set aside land as public parks. Three parks--Central Hill (1870), Broadway (1874), and Nathan Tufts (1890)--were established, the last by private donation. By 1900, however, only 52 of Somerville's 2,400 acres were used as parkland. Realtors and developers successfully protested the use of available land for parks, and the area continued to be built up well into the 20th century. Large estates and farms were subdivided, and by 1880, the city's brickyards were being built over. This pattern of continuous building, first of single-family and later of multifamily dwellings, on small lots made Somerville the most densely populated city in Massachusetts by the late 19th century, a dubious achievement that still holds true today. Also characteristic of present-day Somerville are a prevalence of synthetic siding sheathing a number of its early buildings, the extensive alterations of many of these structures, the use of asphalt and concrete covering public and private grounds alike, and a lack of trees and other greenery throughout the city. With very few exceptions, the once lovely open setting of this Boston suburb is no longer extant.

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Much of Somerville's housing stock was created in the late 19th century, with 50% of its units constructed between 1890 and 1910. Single-family houses predominated prior to 1870; after 1870, two-family houses were introduced, particularly on the "courts" or short streets intended for workers' houses. Row housing, adjacent to the mid-19th century factories of Ward II, and small cottages near the brickyards were constructed, but little if any company-owned housing was built. Rather, company owners often laid out speculative subdivisions and built houses for sale to area laborers.

While today, three deckers and a variety of multiple family houses built for Somerville's growing population at the turn of the century dominate the city's crowded streets, other buildings, primarily residential, from earlier periods remain scattered across the landscape. Gambrel-roofed Colonial-period houses, porticoed Greek Revival businessmen's cottages, slate-roofed Second Empire rowhouses, and Queen Anne mansions built for suburbanites are all components of Somerville's architectural resources. A fine collection of churches and public and commercial buildings also mark Somerville's 19th century development from farmland to brickmaking center to an industrial city and Boston suburb. The properties nominated as part of the Multiple Resource Area are well-preserved examples of these styles and forms, retaining the architectural integrity and historical associations that have survived as reflections of Somerville's unique development patterns.

Somerville's proximity to Boston's urban center is evident in its late-19th century housing stock, and it shares many of bordering Cambridge's late-19th century building traditions. Wooden frame construction, stock millwork and ornament provided a system of interchangeable parts. A great variety of details and themes, scaled to a cost of the building, could be added to the "typical" house of the period.

In the following paragraphs, key and representative buildings are discussed. Residential buildings, which comprise the majority in the Multiple Resource Area, are discussed first, followed by industrial, commercial, and ecclesiastical structures.

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(MRA)RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGSFirst Settlement (1630-1714)

Houses built during the first period of settlement (1640-1725) followed the heavy timber frame construction characteristic of the Charlestown settlement. Steeply pitched gable roofs and five-bay facades with central entries are seen on houses in old photographs. One survives: the Oliver Tufts House at 78 Sycamore (1714, #169) is notable as Somerville's oldest documented residence despite some unfortunate 20th century alterations. Its gable roof was modernized to a gambrel form sometime in the mid 18th century, at which time the building was also enlarged from its original much smaller form to its present five-bay plan.

Earliest buildings of Charlestown "outside the Neck" were situated along Broadway, Washington, Milk Row, and a few of the 17th century rangeways that marked earliest land division.

Later Colonial Period (1714-1775)  
Georgian Style

Some of Somerville's eighteenth century dwellings reflected the architectural influence of Boston. The ca. 1770 hip-roofed "Mansion House" of Sir Robert Temple at Ten Hills (razed), the hip-roofed Samuel Tufts House, formerly at 478 Somerville Avenue (1690, razed), and the 1750 Stearnes House on Broadway near George Street (razed) all exhibited some degree of Georgian stylishness, including pedimented doorways and hip roofs. The narrow gambrel roof appeared in Somerville by 1750, and two remaining houses retain relatively undisturbed rooflines: one, a double house at 35 Temple St. (ca. 1750-1780, #170); and another at 6 Kent Court (ca. 1750-1780, #149). Both houses were moved to their present locations from unknown sites at the turn of the 20th century. Housemoving is an early and enduring characteristic of Somerville's historic landscape.

Two one-and-a-half gable-roofed houses with a "saltbox" silhouette are extant. The Samuel Ireland House at 117 Washington St., a 1 1/2-story, gable-roofed cottage whose five-bay facade reflects the original arrangement of windows and doors, is documentable to ca. 1792 (#180). It is the earliest house remaining along Washington Street in the historic Cobble Hill area of eastern Somerville.

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Another small dwelling at 72R Dane Street appears to be a mid-eighteenth century survivor (#133). It is a three-bay, 1 1/2-story cottage whose low-pitched roof and simple millwork confirm its early origins.

Federal Period (1776-1830)  
Federal Style

Somerville has few surviving examples of Federal-style architecture. The Adams-Magoun House, 438 Broadway (ca. 1783, #119), at the top of Winter Hill, well demonstrates the influence of the Federal style as expressed through a traditional four-room, center-hall Georgian plan. This five-bay, gable-roofed house has a five-part leaded fanlight, reportedly one of the earliest in the Boston area. A style-conscious clientele existed in the Winter Hill, Cobble Hill, and east Somerville areas. The finest Federal house within present-day Somerville was the 1793 Joseph Barrell House, designed by Charles Bulfinch. This three-story brick mansion was built for a wealthy merchant of the period. Razed in 1896, its 32-foot flying staircase and mantels are now on display at the Somerville Historical Society (Westwood Road Historic District).

At least one other stylish Federal house was built, that of Edward Cutter on Broadway in east Somerville. This five-bay, three-story brick house, built ca. 1815, had the flat balustraded roof and carefully modulated fenestration associated with the work of Bulfinch in Boston. It too has been demolished.

One survivor, a fragment of the Cooper-Davenport Tavern (ca. 1806, #136), no longer retains integrity of setting, having been moved to 12 Eustis Street in southwest Somerville from its site on Massachusetts Avenue in adjacent Cambridge ca. 1888. The main block of the tavern, built in 1757, was razed at the same time. The remaining portion, hip-roofed with a four-bay facade, is late Georgian in plan. It retains its original Federal-period entry door enframingent, with slender pilasters, pedimented lintel, and fan (now boarded over).

Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)  
Greek Revival Style

In the years immediately before and after Somerville became a town (1842), a variety of Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and early  
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Italianate houses were built in both agricultural and suburban settings. Along the rangeways in the town's western portion, simple five-bay houses were built by Somerville farmers. In portions of Winter and Spring Hills, stylish Greek Revival houses were constructed by Boston businessmen who commuted from the "suburb" of Somerville. Several pedimented gable, two-story temple-front residences have not survived. One temple-front cottage with overhanging gable survives at 29 Mt. Vernon Street (ca. 1845, Mt. Vernon Historic District). The Mt. Vernon/Perkins Street area is representative of one of Somerville's earliest residential neighborhoods. Subdivided shortly after Somerville became a town in 1842, it has an important concentration of three-bay, Doric-columned side-hall-plan Greek Revival houses built for Boston and Charlestown businessmen. All are included within the Mt. Vernon Historic District. Other unaltered three bay Greek Revival houses are the Charles Adams-Woodbury Locke House, 178 Central Street (1845, #121) and the First Amos Keyes House, 12 Adams Street (1845, #100). Both are well-preserved examples of finely detailed side-hall-plan dwellings.

An entire early subdivision of double Greek Revival houses survives on Spring Hill off Harvard Street. In 1843, George Brastow (who became Somerville's first mayor in 1872-1873) commissioned surveyor Alexander Wadsworth to lay out a residential area on the southern slope of Spring Hill. The grid-plan subdivision was built up with at least seven double houses. All had full Doric-columned porches, and several had octagonal cupolas atop the ridgepole. This area (nominated as the Spring Hill Historic District) is also the site of the Round House, address, designed by local inventor Enoch Robinson (1856, Spring Hill Historic District).

The Union Square area in western Somerville once had many early Greek Revival dwellings and shops. Three survive along Somerville Avenue. They are the last remaining historic links to "Milk Row," part of the road to Cambridge and Medford that was an important route for the transportation of local products to the markets of Charlestown and Boston in the 18th and early 19th century. Milk Row was lined with eighteenth century houses, some of which survived into the 20th century. All have since been razed. Surviving Greek Revival-style examples of the mid-nineteenth century are at 439-441R Somerville Avenue, a double house with wide corner boards, pedimented gable, and an exceptional double entrance framed by pilasters, heavy entablature, and 3/4 sidelights (1840, #166), and  
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437 Somerville Avenue, a three-bay, gable-roofed single-family house with trabeated gable entrance (ca. 1830-1840, #165).

Gothic Revival Style

Few of the Gothic Revival-style houses set in rustic settings, as popularized by the books of landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, survive in an unaltered state. The Gothic Revival combination of cusped bargeboards and lancet windows are best represented by a modestly scaled brick dwelling at 197 Morrison Street (ca. 1860, #153), noted also for full-width Doric-columned porch and a floor-length facade window. Unfortunately the 1845 Gothic Revival work of housewright Joshua Fernald on White Street has had some alteration and the building is not eligible for the National Register. A small, stuccoed, side-hall-plan house at 8 Mt. Pleasant Street, the Daniel Worthen House in the Mt Vernon Street District, has a fancifully decorated cusped bargeboard and foliated porch trim (1860, #154). 15 Spring Street, part of the Brastow subdivision in the Spring Hill Historic District, also has a distinctive cusped bargeboard, and possibly other Gothic features are hidden under its asphalt siding (ca. 1845).

Vernacular Workers' Housing

Brickmaking was a major Somerville industry in the mid to late nineteenth century, and some of the small houses built near the brickyard for yard workers survive today. One notable collection is situated on Clyde and Murdock Streets, near the former Boston Brick Company lands in northeastern Somerville. A high brick foundation, three-bay facade, and simple Greek Revival details are characteristic of these structures. The best-preserved example stands at 25 Clyde Street (ca. 1850, #126). Similar buildings are found in the former brickmaking areas of Northwest Cambridge.

Italianate Style

Handsome Italianate homes were built in newly developing areas of Somerville by the businessmen of the 1850s and 1860s. Surviving early examples include the houses of hat dealer Charles Williams at 108 Cross Street, East Somerville (ca. 1855, #132), kitchen furniture dealer Frank Williams at 37 Albion Street (ca. 1860, #103), and baker Samuel Gaut (ca. 1848-1860, #145) at 137 Highland Avenue. Trefoil or Palladian windows in the three-bay-facades' center gables are features of these early examples. The Gaut House also retains an octagonal cupola at the ridge line and a side loggia. The home of Charles Schuebeler, jeweler, at 384 Washington Street (ca. 1855, #181), is notable for its central oculus with

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carved garland surround. Simpler houses with cross gables and glazed oculi are found throughout the city and are best represented by the well-conserved structure at 237 School Street (ca. 1860, #164). This building, the Elisha Hopkins House, also retains its full-width porch with turned posts and trim.

One exceptional example of the same early Italianate style and plan (ca. 1858) with later Eastlake additions (ca. 1888) is the Charles Williams Jr. House at 1 Arlington Street (#105). An elaborate gable screen shielding the oculus window, pedimented entrance porch with paired columns, and overscale window hoods with ornate iron cresting were all Eastlakian elements added in the late 19th century.

Somerville retains a single surviving well-preserved example of an Italianate villa--the Alexander Foster House at 45 Laurel Avenue (ca. 1860; #150). The three-bay house with front-facing gable and square, flat-roofed tower, is typical of the patternbook villas advocated by Andrew Jackson Downing. Notable features include paired brackets, panelled corner pilasters, a roundheaded window in the gable, and a full-width porch with quadrant struts.

Workers' houses in the 1860s and 1870s were also built with an Italianate architectural vocabulary. Typically, the house of the period is one-and-a-half or two-and-a-half stories, with a gable roof and side-hall plan, and projecting one- or two-story oriel. Paired or single brackets at eaves and bracketed door hoods are common. Although these buildings were produced cheaply and with stock ornament, some evidence interesting craftsmanship. The Benjamin Gage House, 81 Pearl Street (1865, #156), has a jigsawed porch frieze with punchwork pendant brackets. (A once-similar house at 79 Pearl Street has been severely altered, and no longer retains integrity.) Similarly, the house of brickyard owner George Wyatt at 33 Beacon Street is evidence of contemporary interest in elaborate and high-style ornamentation (1860, #114). Its decorations include paired scroll-sawn brackets, a prominent dentil course, and incised pilasters with circular headings. The cast-iron fence fronting the property is one of the few remaining in Somerville. A now isolated example at 14 Chestnut Street (#125), today set amidst an industrial park, is notable for its bracketed entry hood and flanking punched floral panels.

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)Second Empire Style

Second Empire, or in the vernacular, "Mansard," houses were continued



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translated into grand houses and apartment rows as well as workers' rows and cottages. Many substantial Second Empire homes were built throughout Somerville between ca. 1865 and 1880. Two neighboring houses, the James H. Brooks House at 61 Columbus Avenue (#130), and the S. E. Brackett House at 63 Columbus Avenue (#131), both built ca. 1880, are among the city's best and most pretentious examples of elaborate Second Empire houses with corner or central towers. Of particular note is the intact flushboarded facade, scalloped cornice, and applied ornament of #63 and the ornate cresting at #61.

Mansard-roofed apartment rows, brick with granite trim, were built on Prospect, Spring, and Winter Hills. The best examples have patterned slate roofs, carved stone lintels, and bracketed door hoods. 192-200 Central Street (ca. 1880, #122) is a well-maintained five-unit example, tall and narrow with full-height polygonal bays and a boldly projecting cornice. A similar unit was built at the same time at 55 Adams Street (#102), directly behind the Central Street row. Both were financed by Cutler Downer, a Winter Hill real estate broker.

The A. J. Lovejoy House, 30 Warren Avenue (1874, #179), is an example of a fine middle-class residence built in the Second Empire style. The two-bay house, 2 1/2 stories in height, boasts a handsome bracketed entry porch, two-story polygonal bays on both front and side elevations, and round-arched dormers in the scallop-shingled slate roof. The property also retains a rare Somerville survivor--a mansard-roofed stable with original detailing intact. Less pretentious were the one-and-a-half-story mansard-roofed cottages built across the city, often as inexpensive workers' homes. Some are well-crafted, with slate-covered roofs, elaborate dormers and window enframements, and applied wooden ornamentation, as represented by 34 Day Street (ca. 1868, #135) and 200 School Street (ca. 1870, #163).

Victorian Suburban Houses: Tudor Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Shingle Style

Between ca. 1885 and 1915, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Shingle Style houses contributed to Somerville's last major wave of residential building. Many Somerville builders began to advertise their services at this time, and some produced handsome houses of wood and brick construction. Many builders appear to have used the many builder's guides of the period, and many have derived some  
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inspiration from the work of local architects such as George Loring and Shepard Woodcock.

George Loring and Sanford Phipps produced some of Somerville's finest nineteenth century residences, working in the medieval English style popularized in England by Richard Norman Shaw, and Americanized by Henry Hobson Richardson. Two fine examples are Loring's own gambrel-roofed house atop Central Hill at 76 Highland Avenue (1893, #140), featuring mullioned oriel windows, broad massed chimneys, and steeply pitched roof, and the Edward Crane House at 152 Summer Avenue (1895, Spring Hill Historic District), notable for its conical corner turret containing an open first floor entrance porch, and a threaded, panelled brick chimney on the facade. Loring was also responsible for the Christopher Rymes House, 49 Spring Street (ca. 1883, Spring Hill Historic District), a substantial Queen Anne-style house with irregular massing whose gable dormers display the sunburst motifs so popular in the late 19th century. In the Prospect and Winter Hill areas, Loring and Phipps designed many houses in the Colonial Revival idiom, with a dormered steep-hipped roof, and projecting bays at either side of a central entrance. Several houses of this type survive, though severely altered, on Highland Avenue, once one of Somerville's most majestic residential thoroughfares.

A more conventional, less-literary form of the Queen Anne style was produced by the city's many locally known builders to good effect. On Prospect Hill, two houses were erected by Somerville builder Edwin Blaikie: the Louville Niles House at 45 Walnut Street (1890, #177) and a house to the rear (97 Monroe Street, ca. 1895, #174) financed by Boston provisioner Louville Niles for speculative purposes display the Queen Anne hallmarks of the period: turrets, oriels, and lavish use of patterned shingles and stained glass. The Clifton Bacon House, 27 Chester Street (ca. 1885, #124), has an equally fine corner tower topped with a turned finial.

Gambrel, or gable-roofed, houses often had oriels projecting from their end wall. Turned trusswork and stained and leaded glass decorate the exterior of some of these houses. The Charles H. Lockhardt House, 88 College Avenue (ca. 1890, #128), for example, home of an undertaker, has a projecting second-story bay with curved panes of stained glass. A three-story corner tower with conical roof was typical of Somerville's Queen Anne style.

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As in the earlier Italianate and Greek Revival styles, the two-and-a-half story, side-hall plan was a type widely used by builders of Queen Anne houses. Winter Hill, Spring Hill, and Prospect Hill were built up with hundreds of similar Queen Anne houses, housing a well-to-do class of businessmen and professionals. An exceptionally well-finished example at 10 Arlington Street shows the potential of Queen Anne decorative elements on the smaller house: patterned shingles, turned posts, and a prominent sunburst in the porch gable (ca. 1895, #106). The house is otherwise Italianate in style, with polygonal, flat-roofed bays, drip hood molds above the windows, shallow cornice returns on the front-facing gable, and paired brackets. Other modest but finely detailed examples of the Queen Anne style include 53 Hudson Street (ca. 1890, #148), the John F. Nichols House, 17 Summit Street (ca. 1890, #167) (especially notable for elaborate jigsaw work in the gable trusses and porch frieze board and balustrade), and two similar structures at 81 and 85 Benton Road (both ca. 1890; #125 and #116, respectively). The latter may both be the work of the same builder, Lemuel Snow. With their use of patterned shingling and applied pendants on cornice and frieze, the two buildings are similar but not identical. Number 81 also features a single-bay porch, crossbanded frieze, and heavy, bulbous turned posts, and oversized consoles, supporting the projections gable, while Number 85 displays a lighter use of decoration in its thin turned posts and delicate jigsawed struts adorning its semicircular porch.

Queen Anne and Colonial Revival ideas filtered into the design of the standard, speculatively built house of the day. Entire sections of the city filled with near identical two-family and three-decker houses. Although the two-family house was often of rather uninspired design, usually with a broad gable or gambrel roof and some classical detailing, some are of architectural interest. Somerville's great wave of multifamily house building occurred between 1890 and 1910. In the Highland/Cherry Street area, one builder of the 1890s, A. D. Rice, left his signature with an abundance of jigsawed and turned porch work. Approximately one dozen houses of standard plan and elevation are richly embellished with pendant brackets, and elaborately turned posts and spindles. One particularly fine example, though not identified as the work of Rice, is at 343 Highland Avenue (ca. 1885, #147). The first- and second story porches are embellished with elaborate jigsawed ornaments, but the building is otherwise a simple two-family  
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residence with paired brackets on its front-facing gable and modest dentilated lintels adorning its 1/1 windows.

Multifamily Housing

A few three-deckers are architecturally outstanding, comparing favorable to the best examples found in three-decker "centers" such as Dorchester and Fall River. A house at 16 Preston Street with Colonial Revival-style modillioned cornice, tiered entrance porches with carved balustrades and spherical newels supported by clustered colonnettes, exemplifies the best standard Somerville three-decker construction (ca. 1910, #159).

Apartment houses and rowhouses of brick construction built between ca. 1883 and 1900 are among the most interesting of late-19th century buildings. Many were built by speculative builders. The 1900 City Directory lists 45 apartment hotels, boasting names such as The Hotel Grandview and The Ideal. Somerville's apartment houses remain the best-crafted frame and masonry buildings in the city. Two late-19th century apartment hotel/commercial space combinations are represented by the Drouet Block (1898) and the Richmond (1898) in the Bow Street Historic District (NR 1976)--both are the work of architect Aaron Gould.

Langmaid Terrace, 359-365 Broadway (ca. 1887, #117), is the most significant, Somerville's finest example of a Queen Anne-style apartment row. The 2 1/2-story red brick structure is anchored by end towers, one pyramidal and one conical. A central pavilion has a stepped, Flemish-style gable, a motif repeated over the dormer windows. The exterior is embellished with brick and terra cotta coursing. Langmaid Terrace can be compared to the fashionable apartment complexes erected along Beacon Street in Brookline during the same period. Others include: 28-36 Beacon Street (ca. 1880, #113), in which each of the five units has an offset pyramidal tower and entry porch adorned with a pierced quatrefoil design; two adjoining structures at 56-58 Walnut Street (ca. 1890, #178) and 4-6 Pleasant Street (ca. 1890, #158), both prototypical examples of Queen Anne-style double three-deckers with ornate rooflines and classically detailed decorative features; The Highland, 66 Highland Avenue (1892, #139), atop Central Hill, representative of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and well-crafted in heavy masonry with conical-roofed turrets; and The Grandview, 82 Munroe Street (ca. 1896, #155), a commanding Colonial Revival-style frame structure prominently located on the slope of Prospect Hill.

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At the turn of the century, residential construction was dominated by the two-family house, but three small residential developments still catered to the few individuals desiring a large, single-family house. Hardware dealer Charles Bradshaw's Westwood Road, brickyard owner Nathan Tufts' Powderhouse Terrace, and spice manufacturer Rufus B. Stickney's School, Dartmouth, and Thurston Street subdivision were the site of some of the city's finest Shingle and Queen Anne-style buildings. Lot sizes were characteristically small, and houses were sited within several feet of the next, with little or no rear yard. The well-preserved group of 18 houses on Westwood Road, the most intact of those mentioned above, is being nominated to the National Register as the Westwood Road Historic District. Although the developments (on former brickyard land) of moderately priced two-family houses at Somerville Highlands (1905-1910) and Ten Hills (1917) created the most crowded neighborhoods, residents of the elegant enclaves such as Westwood Road eventually complained about building density in their areas as well. Neither such closely built subdivision practice nor the construction of three-deckers were restricted by building ordinances.

Residential construction after the turn of the century continued the multi-family Queen Anne and period Revival tradition. Entire sections were developed with the same house type, particularly in the Ten Hills and Mt. Benedict areas. Few single-family houses were built after 1910, with three decker courts and apartment buildings constituting the primary residential building types through the 1920s.

Nonresidential Buildings

With one exception, there are no documented pre-Civil War shops or stores still extant. Somerville's early trade centers, near "the Neck" and in Union Square, were composed of undistinguished small frame buildings. One small building in Union Square, now the Midnite Grocery, is indication of the simplicity of the mid-19th century commercial buildings and was probably built originally as a dwelling. It is 1 1/2 stories in height, wood frame, with Greek Revival-style cornice, returns, and corner boards visible above two storefront windows.

With the growth of Somerville's major commercial centers after the Civil War (Gilman, Davis, and Union Squares) and some lineal development along Broadway, Somerville Avenue, and Highland Avenue,  
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numerous frame and masonry commercial blocks were erected. Those that remain have been for the most part severely compromised. Union Square's frame business blocks of the period include the Bow Street Historic District (NR 1976); they constitute the best surviving examples. Large blocks in Davis and Gilman Squares have been razed or altered.

One of the best-preserved late-19th century commercial buildings in Somerville is the Somerville Journal Building, 9 Walnut Street (1894, #182). Built of brick with Queen Anne-style details, the structure is representative of modest business blocks erected to house small manufacturing companies at the turn of the century. The well-lit building was designed to accomodate new printing equipment and a modern linotype machine.

The Hobbs Building/Somerville Theatre (1914; MHC #359), prominently located at the central intersection of Davis Square, is typical in style and scale to the few remaining structures of its age in the square. In addition to a 1200 seat theatre, the building was designed for numerous commercial and recreational uses including: a bowling alley, billiard and pool room, a cafe, 23 businesses which included, 10 stores along the street level, 5 offices and a 750 seat meeting hall with a dance floor. Its plan is more complex than the other five theatres that existed in Somerville by 1914 when it opened. This sole survivor of the vaudeville era in Somerville is also the oldest theatre built for the purpose of showing silent movies and vauderville acts in the Boston area and was the possible prototype for the Strand Theatre (1918) in Dorchester, designed by the same architects.

When Somerville separated from Charlestown, five schoolhouses constituted its public buildings. By 1861, the town had twenty-two school buildings, including the Greek Revival-style High School (now City Hall) built on Highland Avenue (#142) in 1852. Originally a 2 1/2-story brick structure with engaged monumental pilasters and enclosed pediment, the building was vastly expanded in 1896 with the addition of a southern rear wing, also 2 1/2 stories in height and similar in its detailing. A major enlargement took place in 1923-1924, when a northern wing was added and a third story applied to the original portion. At the same time, a clock tower, spire, and weathervane were also added. In its present appearance, the building remains classic in style and detail, but more closely resembles the Georgian Revival than the Greek Revival style. The High School was converted to use as City Hall in 1871. Central Hill

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Park, a 38-acre green space, was created around the High School/City Hall and Revolutionary War fortification sites in 1870, the first of Somerville's parks.

In 1884, a fine Public Library designed by Somerville architect George F. Loring was constructed on Central Hill. The brick and terra cotta Romanesque Revival-style building compared favorably to the late nineteenth century libraries designed by Henry Hobson Richardson. This building was replaced by the present Central Library at 79 Highland Avenue in 1913 (#141). It was designed by Edward L. Tilton. The Renaissance Revival-style building, its design completed with well-executed classical trim, shows the influence of McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library of 1888-1892, and remains Somerville's finest public building. The 1909 West Branch Library, 40 College Avenue (#127), is of Classical Revival style. Designed by McLean and Wright, it is the city's best remaining building of the style. Its fine entrance portico is composed of a triangular pediment with urns and acroteria carried by Ionic columns and broad pilasters. Similar porticoes on banks of the period have been altered.

A fine Victorian Gothic-style Police Station was built in 1875 of brick and granite, after designs by G. A. Clough; it stands within the Bow Street Historic District. The building lost its mansard roof in the 1940s; it otherwise retains most of its Gothicized features and polychrome brick treatment. Designers of subsequent police and fire stations have followed early twentieth century Classical Revival fashion. The Mystic Water Works, on Alewife Brook Parkway, originally owned by the town of Charlestown and now owned by the Metropolitan District Commission, is a handsome mansard-roofed pumping station of significance to the development of the City water system as well as a good example of a mid-century Second Empire style building (1864, #104).

Somerville's past church-building activity shows a strong tradition of architectural excellence. Fires claimed many nineteenth-century examples, but a number of fine churches survive in near-original condition. Several are of particular note. The Hartwell and Richardson Congregational Church at 130 Highland Avenue, now home of the First Unitarian Church (1894, MHC #144), is an imposing structure of asymmetrical plan with a recessed entrance set within a Romanesque arch at the base of a pyramidal corner tower.



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Fenestration is primarily the narrow slits typical of the Romanesque Revival style. The Winter Hill Congregational Church, 404 Broadway (1897, MHC #118), is also the work of Hartwell and Richardson. The building uses a slate fieldstone finish and green slate tiles to achieve a Shingle Style appearance, an unusual and costly approach to this popular late 19th century style. The building features multiple roof lines (pyramidal, conical, and gable), small deep windows, and a corner bell tower. The First Universalist Church, 125 Highland Avenue (1916-1923, MHC #143), was the only local example of the work of noted ecclesiastical architect Ralph Adams Cram. Built of stucco, terra cotta, and brick, Cram's church is Italian Romanesque in inspiration. The Romanesque Revival-style Prospect Hill Congregational Church (1887), the work of H. S. McKay, is part of the Bow Street Historic District.

ARCHAEOLOGY

No prehistoric archaeological sites are currently recorded in Somerville. Given the city's location between the Mystic River and Alewife Brook, and the volume as well as diversity of natural resources available from the tidal marshes along both the Mystic and Millers Rivers, native occupation in Somerville must have been extensive. Unfortunately, the massive amount of land alteration and intensity of later historical development appears to have destroyed many of the potentially sensitive areas. Despite these losses, significant prehistoric sites may yet survive, especially along Alewife Brook and wetland margins now buried under later fill. Any sites that do survive would be significant in helping to document the patterns of prehistoric activity in Somerville.

There is a potential for significant historical archaeological deposits around many of the individual properties and within the Mt. Vernon and Spring Hill districts. Occupation-related features (privies, wells, trash pits) may help to document the changing social, cultural, and economic patterns that characterized the community during the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. Archaeological investigations may also help to document some of Somerville's early industrial activities, such as the Runey Pottery (Cross Street) and the Union Glass Company. A portion of the Middlesex Canal (1803) appears to survive beneath Foss Park.

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(MRA)METHODOLOGY

The survey on which this nomination is based was carried out between January 1980 and January 1981. It is broadly architectural and historical in focus, but deferred non-architecturally significant structures to "local" survey use. It does not include actual archaeological sites, although, as indicated above, Massachusetts Historical Commission staff believes that some potential sites may indeed exist and that some archaeological remains are possible.

The survey and study was conducted by Carole Zellie, an architectural historian employed by the city. Industrial sites were surveyed by Peter Stott, an industrial archaeologist, and HAER inventory forms filed where appropriate. Every street in Somerville was viewed for structures of architectural significance. Approximately 1200 structures were noted in the survey, and forms completed for approximately 900. Additionally, area forms were completed for historically or geographically significant areas (e.g. speculated subdivisions) and some were used to designate districts. Town histories, historical photographs, manuscripts, biographical records, business directories, and plat maps provided this information and are noted in the bibliography.

Somerville has already had several resources listed in the National Register. Powder House Park, donated to the city in the late 19th century and containing within it an intact early 18th century powderhouse, was listed in 1975. The Martin Carr School, located in Spring Hill, was listed in 1984 and was converted to residential use according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. And the Bow Street Historic District, Somerville's most intact commercial district, was listed in the National Register in 1976. Three other historic districts and 79 individual buildings are included within the present nomination. The districts include Spring Hill Historic District, Somerville's largest and most intact early 19th century residential district, and the Mt. Vernon Historic District, a small collection of modest, well-preserved Greek Revival-style houses, and Westwood Road Historic District, a neighborhood of 21 shingle and period revival style houses developed at the turn of the century. Only buildings which serve as outstanding examples of particular architectural styles or as characteristic building types associated with important local persons or the development of particular areas have been nominated individually.

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All properties included in the nomination were identified in the survey.

Through the course of its 350 year history, Somerville has contained excellent high-styled examples of architectural styles popular in Cambridge and Boston. Unfortunately, few still survive. Somerville's late-19th century two-family houses and triple deckers have left a stamp of uniformity which did not exist prior to 1880. This nomination mentions surviving buildings in the context of what was built, as well as what remains. In the 19th century Somerville had a substantial class of wealthy residents who were interested in architectural fashion and hired architects and a group of builders and craftsmen who enthusiastically used the pattern books and stock millwork available to them. House builders after 1850 were often speculators; both real estate men and carpenter-contractors.

Several architects resided in Somerville when it became a town in 1842. However, architects are not documented in the design of individual buildings until after 1870, with the notable exception of Charles Bulfinch's design for the 1792 Joseph Barrell house at Asylum Hill, a fine Federal house no longer extant. Shepard Woodcock, one of the earliest architects, had an extensive regional practice in both architecture and landscape design. George Loring, of Loring and Phipps, is credited with numerous Somerville houses of the late 1880s and 1890s as well as churches and schools. Hartwell and Richardson are credited with the design of the First Unitarian Church on Highland Avenue and the Winter Hill Congregational Church on Broadway, both imposing late-19th century buildings.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☒ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

COMMERCE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1630-1714

1714-1775

1830-1870

1870-1915

1915-1940

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Dates

1855

1770

1835

1873

1920

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

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(MRA)**8. Significance**

The Somerville Multiple Resource area contains 3 districts and 79 individual properties, for a total of 200 properties. One of these districts, the Bow Street Historic District, was listed on the National Register in 1978. The major themes and periods of significance identified for Somerville trace its evolution from agricultural settlement to dense Boston suburb over the course of 2 1/2 centuries. Somerville's cultural resources, as identified within the Multiple Resource Area, range from Georgian farmhouses to mid-19th century housing for Boston businessmen to brickworkers' dwellings and elegant apartment blocks. Many buildings in this nomination have been moved, however, they have maintained their integrity and contributing characteristics. The majority of properties proposed for nomination are residential buildings erected after the Civil War, during Somerville's decades of greatest growth. Scattered across the city, the nominated properties stand in a community that appears superficially to be a densely settled city developed rapidly and haphazardly at the turn of the century. Within the context of this intensive late development, and extensive alterations to many early buildings, the properties nominated to the National Register as part of the Multiple Resource Area are rare survivals. Retaining integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the Somerville Multiple Resource Area fulfills Criteria A, C and exception B of the National Register of Historic Places.

**First Settlement, 1630-1658**

Somerville was originally a portion of Charlestown, settled in 1629-1630. It was known as the area "outside the Neck" or "beyond the Neck," for it lay beyond the Charlestown peninsula. Until grants of land were made to individuals in 1658, the mainland area beyond the narrow neck of Charlestown, including this cow commons, was largely uninhabited. John Wolrich, an Indian trader who lived near present-day Washington and Dane Streets in Somerville, and Governor John Winthrop, who was granted the 600-acre Ten Hills farm in 1631, were among the few original settlers. Two roads, Washington Street (the Road to Newton, 1630) and Broadway or Winter Hill Road (the Road to Medford, 1637), radiated from the peninsular Charlestown settlement near City Square, through Somerville, skirting the area's marshland. Much of the present-day Somerville area was used as a common grazing land, known as the "Cow Commons." In 1637, the land between the Winter Hill Road and Charlestown Lane  
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(Somerville Avenue) was divided into rights of pasturage, the land being reserved as common land for "milk cows, working cattle, goats, and calves."

Colonial Period, 1659-1775

The Cow Commons became the "Stinted Pasture" in 1656, when it was apportioned among Charlestown residents, and individual family farmsteads, rather than collectively held fields, began to be prevalent. In 1681 and again in 1685, when the lands between Washington Street, Somerville Avenue, Broadway, and Elm Street were divided into 1 1/4-mile-wide lots, with numbered rangeways corresponding to the cross streets today known as Franklin, Cross, Walnut, School, Central, Lowell, Cedar, Willow, Curtis, and North. Many of these rangeways were only rutted paths and were not improved as public roads or streets until the 1850s or 1860s. Some, in western parts of Somerville, were unimproved as late as 1890. Today, these streets remain as highly visible indications of the early agricultural land division pattern. Winthrop's farm at Ten Hills was the most extensive tract held by an individual. Somerville dairy farms in the colonial period supplied milk and cheese to Charlestown and northern parts of Boston. The road to Charlestown, known as Milk Row, ran past several large farms and was the main route through Somerville for transport of farm products from the west of Boston. Milk Row is now Somerville Avenue.

Although Charlestown's settlers established mills, lime kilns, and fish weirs, the exact location of these early industries outside the Neck is not well documented. Still standing, however, is a stone-walled gristmill, later known as "the Powderhouse," built at a quarry site ca. 1703 near the western section along the Road to Medford, now Broadway (NR 1975).

Somerville's river location and prominent hills gave it strategic importance in the area's defense against the British, beginning in 1774 with the storage of powder in the gristmill on Quarry Hill. British soldiers skirmished in Somerville in April of 1775; and several were killed in the retreat from Concord along Elm Street and Somerville Avenue in the "skirmish of Milk Row." Ploughed Hill (Mt. Benedict), Prospect Hill, Cobble Hill, and Winter Hill were fortified during the revolution, and remnants of the breastworks existed until the mid-twentieth century.

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Residences, primarily in the form of scattered farmhouses near the rangeways and along Somerville Avenue (Milk Row), were simple structures. Only about a dozen houses were constructed during the first seventy years of settlement, most scattered along Charlestown Neck on Broadway, Washington Street, and Somerville Avenue, with more farmsteads added during the early and mid 18th century. Any concentration of structures was likely situated in the present-day Union Square area at the intersection of Bow and Washington Streets. One documentable pre-Revolutionary dwelling survives at 78 Sycamore Street (#169) on Winter Hill, built ca. 1714-1719 by farmer Nathaniel Matson on a large agricultural tract on Winter Hill. By 1770, the area "beyond the Neck" was also chosen as the site for the houses of several prominent individuals from Boston and a small number of Charlestown merchants. These men made the journey to Boston or Charlestown by private coach or by walking the poor roads of the day. The handsomest of these houses was said to be the mansion of Sir Robert Temple, built on a section of Governor Winthrop's farm near present-day Temple Street. The hip-roofed building with pedimented Georgian entry reflected the architectural influence of nearby Boston (the building was destroyed in 1877).

Early National Period, 1775-1842

The Adams-Magoun House, a five-bay federal-style residence built ca. 1783, is the last surviving 18th century house on Broadway. The Adams family's 71-acre farm was one of a number of farmsteads established in this section of Somerville in the late 18th century. A far more modest late 18th century residence to survive along an early roadway is the Ireland House at 117 Washington Street (#180), formerly a busy route between Charlestown and Cambridge. The five-bay, 1 1/2-story building was constructed ca. 1792. Its location in the Cobble Hill area placed it also along the route to Joseph Barrell's estate. In 1792, on Cobble Hill, merchant Joseph Barrell built a brick mansion on landscaped grounds designed by Charles Bulfinch. (In 1816, the Barrell House was purchased by Massachusetts General Hospital for use as McLean's Asylum. The site was eroded by the construction of extensive rail yards in the 1860s and eventually razed.)

After the Revolution, the area of Charlestown "beyond the Neck" experienced growth of its industries and agriculture. Four bridges, built in 1786, 1793, 1787, and 1809, united Cambridge, Charlestown, continued



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and Boston. New bridges and roads facilitated the movement of materials and finished products, as Charlestown and surrounding towns were drawn closer to Boston. Private entrepreneurs from centers such as Boston, Lowell, and Charlestown planned and financed a series of tollroads, bridges, and, in 1793, a canal--the Middlesex Canal--linking Boston and Charlestown with northern Middlesex County. Increased agricultural and commercial traffic were channeled through the mainland of Charlestown Neck and present-day Union Square. But the tollroads were usually poorly built and often ended in disaster for their investors. The canal--27 1/2 miles long, 30 feet across, and 4 feet deep--was designed to connect the Merrimack River in Lowell with the Mystic River to the southeast, in Medford, and then to continue on to Boston. In December 1803, the canal opened as far as the northern sections of Charlestown, now Somerville. It bisected the claylands of the Ten Hills area. The canal could be navigated eight months each year and carried both freight and passengers. In 1803, the Medford Turnpike (now Beacon Street) completed the radiating system of routes that served to link northern Middlesex County with Charlestown and thence Boston.

At the intersection of several turnpikes and roads, Bow Street and Union Square were built up with stores, taverns, and houses and functioned as the town center, although the eastern section of Broadway just over the Neck had a considerable collection of nonresidential buildings as well. Bow Street, the site of taverns and wheelwrights' shops in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, has no extant structures that date to earlier than ca. 1858.

Early industrial development in the area included the establishment of the Charlestown (later Middlesex) Bleachery on Milk Row (ca. 1820), which dyed the cotton and woolen yarns brought to them and bleached and pressed the finished goods. It was one of the first firms in the area to use steam power in its processing plants. The largest nonagricultural employer in Somerville for seventy years after the Revolution were the area's brickmakers. A number of brickyards commenced operation near the clay-filled shores of the Mystic River and the lowlands of Strawberry Hill, now known as Ward II beginning ca. 1840. Loammi Baldwin's 1829 "Plan of the Middlesex Canal" noted the existence of eight brick kilns adjacent to the Medford Turnpike (now Mystic Avenue), the canal, and Broadway. In the mid 1830s, Col. Samuel Jacques purchased the Robert Temple property and operated first a large-scale stock farm and then a brickyard there. Bricks were molded by hand throughout Somerville until the introduction of steam-powered presses in the 1850s.

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Most of Somerville's early 19th century residences were simple structures. Between 1800 and 1842, the town's population of brickmakers, farmers, and shopkeepers were housed in dwellings constructed by the previous generations of farmers and laborers and in a few new houses. Gable roofs with short eave returns were characteristic. Exterior decorative trim was modest, usually confined to a simple pedimented entry derived from the Federal style. Few dwellings from this period remain intact. Among the early survivors are a three-bay, 1 1/2-story house built ca. 1830-1840 (#165), which now stands at 437 Somerville Avenue, it was moved from an unknown site early in the 20th century, and the three-bay, two-story Russell House at 58 Sycamore Street (ca. 1835, #168), located on property originally belonging to the Tufts family, whose house stands nearby. Sycamore Street developed primarily as the road to the Tufts House.

In 1835, railroad construction by the Boston and Lowell Railroad commenced "beyond the neck," despite opposition by brickyard owners and brick carriers who feared that the railroad would destroy their trade by opening up competitive new territory. The railroad cut a diagonal path through the eastern section of the mainland, skirting the northern slope of Prospect Hill and the southern slope of Winter Hill. The Charlestown Branch, later the Fitchburg Railroad, was built between Boston and Fresh Pond in Cambridge in 1841. Its route followed Milk Row and created a corridor which subsequently attracted a variety of industries. In 1843, the Fitchburg Railroad began passenger service and consequently opened the southern slopes of Prospect and Spring Hill to residential development (many of these structures, built between 1842 and 1870, are being nominated to the National Register as part of the Spring Hill Historic District; see below). The Boston and Lowell and the Fitchburg were the only railroads in the area prior to the incorporation of Somerville as a town in 1842.

Collections of small houses for brickyard and factory workers were built near the clay yards and factory sites (near Washington Street, Somerville Avenue, and off Lowell Street near Broadway) joined the farmhouses along and near the rangeways by the middle of the 19th century. A late example of a brickyard workers' cottage (ca. 1850, #126), near the site of the former yards of the Boston Brick Company, remains at 25 Clyde Street. The three-bay facade and high brick basement of this residence bear a strong resemblance to the  
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brickyard workers' housing of nearby Cambridge. Despite the large-scale production of brick in Somerville, brick was never a popular building material for residential construction in the town.

Early Industrial Period, 1842-1872

Local farmers had in 1824 unsuccessfully sought separation for the area "beyond the Neck," protesting the taxation of their rural settlement for the improvement of peninsular Charlestown. In 1842, a coalition of farmers and businessmen--"suburbanites"--succeeded where the farmers alone had failed. This second group of farmers included men who were actively engaged in providing the expanding urban area with farm products, rather than in maintaining isolation from the growing center of activity. The businessmen in the group--often merchants--were encouraged by the economic opportunities of the railroad and other transportation improvements. The new town was first to be called "Warren," in memory of Dr. Joseph Warren, a hero of the Battle of Bunker Hill, but the name "Somerville" was later decided upon, for an unknown reason.

At the time of separation, there were 1,013 residents, many employed in Charlestown or Boston. In 1842, Somerville still consisted primarily of farms, brickyards, and marshes, with a few bleacheries and foundries near Somerville Avenue (Milk Row) and Washington Street. Although most males were engaged in farming or brickmaking, other professions (including artisans, produce dealers, teamsters, merchants, blacksmiths, and builders) were also represented. Efforts were made to attract more industries and workers into the area by advertising the opportunities of the new town in the local newspaper. 226 pupils attended Somerville's four one-story schoolhouses. In 1842, Somerville also had a pound, an engine house with one engine, and a cemetery (#800, founded 1804).

The recently incorporated town attracted new residents, including businessmen and gentlemen farmers. A number of them operated small orchards on their property: a few apple trees on Spring Street in the Spring Hill Historic District are one remnant of this small-scale agricultural activity. By 1850, Somerville's population had grown to 3,524; by 1860, to 8,025.

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Although Boston was close by, rail and horsecar service were not available to most who worked in Boston because of their high cost. Despite the construction of numerous toll roads and bridges, and the introduction of public transport to Boston (in 1841, as mentioned above), walking remained the primary mode of travel between Somerville and Boston until the Civil War. Only the wealthiest members of the community used available public transportation on a regular basis, and true "commuting" did not begin for several decades. In general, merchants who moved to Somerville were motivated by factors other than convenience. A suburban location and cheaper land, often purchased directly from farmers, provided a successful entrepreneur with the opportunity to construct a substantial residence in a picturesque setting, one that might not have been affordable in Boston.

Residential subdivision activity began in the early 1840s. Cambridge and Charlestown land speculators subdivided sections of Winter Hill, Spring Hill, and East Somerville by 1847, and clusters of Greek Revival businessmen's houses soon appeared. The Mt. Vernon and Spring Hill areas were two such subdivisions. Mt. Vernon Street in East Somerville (nominated to the National Register as the Mt. Vernon Street Historic District) was platted in 1845 adjacent to the Charlestown line and the passenger station of the Boston and Lowell Railroad. With its houses sited on rather small, narrow lots (80 x 100 feet), this neighborhood began the town's pattern of dense residential development. Its 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 story houses were simple, side-hall-plan single family dwellings, with excellent Greek Revival-style detailing and Doric-columned porches. Most were probably the work of the same builder (name unknown). Among the earliest residents were Ebenezer Davis, a Boston marine inspector (8 Mt. Vernon Street, ca. 1840-1850) and Harrison Hutchins, a bleachery manager (16 Mt. Vernon Street, ca. 1850).

Spring Hill (nominated as the Spring Hill Historic District), a much larger area whose present appearance is the result of several phases of suburban development, was laid out by surveyor Alexander Wadsworth in 1843, on land belonging to real estate developer (later Somerville's first mayor) George Brastow. Wadsworth was well known throughout the Boston area for the picturesque suburban developments and informal garden cemeteries (including Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, 1831), that he designed. The land for the Spring Hill development had been part of a large farmstead and used as grazing land. The site was a large area located on a sloping hill above  
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Somerville Avenue and the buildings of the Middlesex Bleachery and Dye Works. At the foot of the hill, trains provided service to Boston. The core of Brastow's speculative development was eight Greek Revival-style double houses of near-identical appearance built ca. 1848. Several retain their original cupolas. The building's owners appear to have been produce dealers, provision suppliers, and local manufacturers. Single-family dwellings were added over the next several decades, representing succeeding popular styles of architecture, including the Italianate and the Gothic Revival. With increasing subdivision, land values rose throughout much of Somerville. Land that had sold for \$50-\$100 per acre in 1842 increased to \$2000 to \$3000 per acre by 1855.

Somerville's hills were well-suited for the construction of "Gothic" cottages as well as "Italian" villas. Andrew Jackson Downing's publications, such as Cottage Residences (1842), and a number of plan books provided architects and builders with plans and elevations for asymmetrical, square-towered houses modelled on the country residences of rural Italy. Round-arched windows and bracketed eaves and windows hoods were characteristic trim details. In 1860, Alexander Foster, a lumber dealer, was among the first to build a pretentious Italian villa on the southern slope of Spring Hill (45 Laurel Avenue, #150).

Versions of the Italianate style were popular between ca. 1855 and 1875. Milliners, bakers, jewelers, and furniture dealers were among those who bought Italianate houses in Somerville in the decade before the Civil War (MHC #s 132, 145, 181, and 145, respectively). Simpler Italianate houses with cross-gable roofs and round windows (or oculi) are still found in various locations throughout the city, particularly along early routes or former rangeways. The Elisha Hopkins House, 237 School Street (ca. 1860, #164), and Charles Schuebeler House, 384 Washington Street (ca. 1855, #181), are two such buildings.

Somerville was incorporated as a town in 1851. Almost immediately, the new municipal government platted new roads and streets, and struggled with the cost of constructing sewers, drains, and bridges. The 1859 Town Reports called attention to land speculators' practice of opening streets and courts "with exclusive reference to (their) sale, with no regard whatever to the general improvement of the town." The town officers urged speculators to lay out streets that were well-graded and acceptable to the town surveyor.

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While the town made urban improvements in the eastern section, farmers, particularly market gardeners and fruit growers, carried on profitable businesses in the western section. In 1865 there were twenty-two farms in operation, most of them small-scale. In general, however, industrial development continued while agricultural pursuits waned. Farming declined sharply in the decades after the Civil War, and West Somerville farmers often turned to land speculation.

The first large-scale public buildings erected by the newly incorporated town was a high school, constructed in 1852 at a prominent site atop Central Hill. Debate regarding the need for a public high school had begun two years previously as the School Committee reported that Somerville would soon fail to meet the educational needs of its growing population. By 1867, the town offices were located in the same building.

Residential development in the 1850s and 1860s was further stimulated by the introduction of regularly scheduled transportation. Steam rail service provided by the Boston and Maine and Fitchburg Railroads was improved, and in 1858 two horsecar lines were established, linking Winter Hill and West Somerville to Charlestown and Boston. In 1864, a horse-powered street railway was installed from Union Square to Boston and in 1871 it was extended further to West Somerville. Residential areas around Union Square and sections of East Somerville, Asylum Hill, Spring Hill, and Winter Hill consequently continued to expand. West Somerville was "colonized" primarily as a site for workingmen's homes only after the tracks of the horsecar lines (1871) and Arlington Branch Railroad (1870-1871) reached the area around Davis Square.

Industry diversified greatly between 1850 and 1870. Food packing houses, processing shops, ice businesses, glassworks, and foundries were built, concentrated primarily in the low, marshy areas south of Milk Row in Ward II. Somerville's land use pattern was determined early as industry claimed and filled swampland adjacent to railroad corridors at the southern, western, and northern edges; the higher, well-drained elevations were reserved for housing. Brickyard production declined after the Civil War, and several yards were abandoned and platted for extensive tracts of streets and house lots. Rising land prices and the development of more efficient but expensive machines that forced small yards out of business were two factors contributing to the industry's decline. There are no  
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intact remnants of Somerville's early industrial buildings. Only one intact brickyard owner's house is known to have survived: the home of George Wyatt, at 33 Beacon Street. Wyatt's brickyards occupied a large portion of Ward II for at least 35 years (ca. 1850-1885). The area, known as Wyatt's Pit, was adjacent to the Fitchburg Railroad. Wyatt enjoyed prosperity, as his small but lavishly decorated Italianate-style residence indicates (ca. 1860, #114).

Late Industrial Period, 1872-1915

Working-class housing appeared primarily after the Civil War, corresponding to a boom in industry and real estate development prior to the Panic of 1873. The post-Civil War demand for workers' housing was met by the construction of both rowhouses and single family dwellings most built speculatively for rent to laborers. Local newspapers urged potential investors to build inexpensive houses for rent or sale. The worker's house of the period was often built in a uniform row or on a "court." Like their more costly counterparts, workers' housing evidenced an Italianate architectural vocabulary, often using stock ornament. On Pearl Street in East Somerville, for example, Number 81, the home of Benjamin Gage (1865, #156), retains a jigsawed porch frieze and punchwork pendant brackets. Other similar houses in the row on Pearl Street have lost much of their original ornamentation.

Houses for local businessmen and merchants were also built after the Civil War. The Second Empire style became popular for both pretentious single-family houses and for multi-family dwellings. Many substantial Second Empire houses of frame construction were built throughout the town between 1865 and 1880. Broadway, on Winter Hill, was the site of at least twelve elaborate mansard-roofed houses built for such as Charlestown spice manufacture John R. Poor (the house is no longer extant). A 1 1/2-story mansard-roofed house on School Street, home of cabinetmaker J. K. Moore (ca. 1870, #163), is one of the best-crafted examples remaining in Winter Hill. A fine mansarded house at 61 Columbus Avenue in Prospect Hill (ca. 1880, #130) housed James H. Brooks, a dry goods dealer with offices in the Masonic Block in Union Square, while next door, at Number 63 (ca. 1880, #131), an equally well-detailed Second Empire-style house, was home to S. E. Brackett, a local merchant. In the 1870s, mansard-roofed brick apartment rows were built for commuters on Prospect, Spring, and Winter Hills, and particularly in East Somerville.

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By 1870, when Somerville's population reached 14,685, the villagelike character of formerly isolated sections of the town had begun to dissolve. New streets now linked all parts of town, particularly those sections near West Somerville. Gas was introduced into the town in 1867. A public water supply first tapped Mystic Lake in 1868, with the construction of the Mystic Pumping Station (#104), which was serving Charlestown, Somerville, and Everett by the 1870s.

Somerville became a city in 1871 and embarked on a second large-scale public building program. Of the sixteen schools built shortly after Somerville became a city in 1872, none of architectural significance survive. Somerville's first major fire station, the Central, on the present Central Library site, was built in 1872 and demolished ca. 1910. This spectacular structure had a steep mansard roof with pinnacled dormers and a tall hose tower topped with tiered cresting and a weathervane. Central Hill, created the city's first public park in 1870 with the purchase of a 38-acre tract between Walnut and School Streets, was chosen as the site for Somerville's civic center. The city's commercial center was firmly established at Union Square, and in the 1870s and 1880s, high-style masonry business blocks, hotels, churches, and a police station were constructed there (still well-preserved, this group comprises the Bow Street Historic District). The Victorian Gothic, a style of pointed arches, irregular rooflines, and polychromy, was frequently chosen by the builders of commercial structures in Union Square, as well as by the architects of public buildings.

During the next thirty years, Central Hill Park (already the site of the 1852 Greek Revival High School, later City Hall, #142) became the site of all major public buildings. The 1871 Engine House by Shepard S. Woodcock and 1871 Latin High School designed in Victorian Gothic Style by Boston architect Samuel J. F. Thayer (both buildings are no longer standing) were followed by the 1884 Romanesque-style Public Library designed by Somerville architect George F. Loring and replaced in 1913 by the present library. The 1895 English High School, by Hartwell, Richardson and Driver, survives on Central Hill with alterations. A major addition of the 1930s now stands on the site of the Latin High School.

In the decade after the Civil War, as Somerville's population increased, the services of town government specialized, eventually resulting in a municipal organization. In the years before  
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Somerville became a city, there had been a growing public awareness of the inherent quality of Somerville's natural setting and the often weak character of some of its housing stock. In the late 1860s, a conservation spirit had surfaced among residents, particularly businessmen, directed at improving the city's lowlands, creating open space, and improving housing. The conservation of historic sites, particularly Prospect Hill, was also urged in local newspaper editorials. Between 1872 and 1900, Somerville created two major parks (Broadway [Foss] and Nathan Tufts, which includes the original powderhouse; both remain today) and several small parks and playgrounds, and debated the construction of parkways and boulevards linking the city to the regional park system of the Metropolitan Park Commission. Citizens' groups appear to have had a major role in these developments.

The 1880s and 1890s were decades of continued civic improvement and investment: in addition to the parks and new civic buildings already mentioned, streets, sewers, and street lighting systems extended throughout the city. The Somerville Electric Company was established in 1887, with a plant on Willow Street.

Between 1880 and 1890, Somerville's population almost doubled, growing from 24,933 to 40,152. By 1888, a severe housing shortage had occurred. The pressure for intense development was great, and over the next several decades, most of the parkland that had been set aside during the civic-minded years after obliteration would be obliterated. Somerville's building industry grew with the demand for lumber and building components. A strong woodworking industry developed, with carpenters, builders, lumberyards, furniture makers, picture-frame makers, and museum case and coffin manufacturers located throughout the city. Many of these firms began operation in Boston, and moved to Somerville at the end of the century. A variety of other industries expanded, particularly the manufacture of glass, iron, and boilers and the processing of food (distilleries, vinegar works, bakeries, and meat). Unlike the previous generation of industries, company owners were often nonresidents of Somerville. Julian de Cordova of Lincoln, president of Union Glass, exemplified the wealthy nonresident industrialist of the period. Brickyards, the largest local industry at mid-century rapidly declined in the 1880s and 1890s until only one yard, the Sanborn Brick Company, located on the Mystic River flats of Ten Hills farm, remained by 1900. Electric streetcar service was introduced in 1889, bringing inexpensive transportation to the western sections of the city, and stimulating the growth of Davis, Teele, Union, and Gilman Squares.

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In response to the housing shortage and the influx of both industry and population, fifty percent of the housing units in Somerville were built between 1890 and 1910, over 2,000 buildings. Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Shingle Style houses contributed to Somerville's major wave of residential building. Somerville builders constructed many new units in response to the housing shortage. Local builders appear to have used the available builders' guides of the period and to derive inspiration from the work of Somerville architects.

As in the earlier Italianate and Greek Revival styles, the 2 1/2 story, sidehall plan was a type widely used by builders of Queen Anne houses. Examples can be found across the city which show the potential of Queen Anne decorative elements on the smaller house; patterned shingles, turned posts, and a prominent sunburst in the porch gable are characteristic features. Queen Anne and Colonial Revival ideas filtered into the standard, speculatively built houses of the day. Apartment houses and rowhouses also continued to be built through the turn of the century by nonresident speculative builders.

Among architects popular with Somerville's leading citizens were George Loring and Sanford Phipps, who produced some of Somerville's finest late-19th century residences. Loring and Phipps worked in the medieval English Revival Style popularized by Richard Norman Shaw, and translated by Boston's Henry Hobson Richardson. Though the best examples of their domestic work have been razed, two fine remaining examples are Loring's own gambrel-roofed house atop Central Hill (1895, #141) and a Shingle Style house at 152 Summer (1895, #137). Loring and Phipps also designed many houses in the Prospect and Winter Hill areas in Georgian or Federal Revival styles. Typical characteristics include a steep, dormered hip roof, and round projecting bays at either side of a central entrance. Several houses of this type still survive on Highland Avenue.

Apartment buildings were also important components of Somerville's turn-of-the-century development. Elegant apartment blocks of brick and frame, examples of late Victorian styles, were built throughout the city. A few more masonry apartment buildings were constructed for the growing numbers of commuters along main arteries before the first World War. Advertisements for the apartment houses of the period usually emphasized the buildings' good transportation connections to Boston. "Carlines in Front of Building," boasted a 1928 advertisement for the Highland Avenue Hillcrest Apartments.

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Enclaves for well-to-do businessmen were planned and built on the eve of the 20th century, the best-preserved being the Westwood Road area. The eighteen Period Revival and Shingle Style houses that make up the neighborhood (Westwood Road Historic District) were built on the former farm and estate of the Shute family. This development and other well-designed groups of residences prompted the Somerville Journal to note in 1890 that "the style of buildings which are now erected are a great improvement over those of 15 to 20 years ago, when there was a big boom in building and not much attention was given to architecture."

Yet despite these developments, a migration out of Somerville's Yankee and long-established Irish populations began in the late-19th century. Many prominent and affluent residents departed for less-crowded Boston suburbs, particularly Newton Highlands. They were followed by the arrival of a new working class population of Eastern Europeans, Greeks, and Italians. In 1895, the population was 52,200. Many of the first Italian and Portuguese immigrants, like the later Greek arrivals, settled in East Somerville, Ward II, and the "Brick Bottom" or Asylum Hill area, places where inexpensive rental housing could be found.

This gradual outmitigation of wealthy residents continued into the 20th century. In many cases, the ground of former estates were built over and the mansion houses converted to multiple family use. It is important to note that large single-family homes were still being built in the 1890s but by 1906 the Somerville Journal could criticize:

"... Somerville has some fine old houses, but for the most part their broad domains of former days have been encroached on until, in many places, they look cramped without the elbow room and breathing space which aristocratic respectability requires...."

By 1907, the western section of the city was largely platted or built, and realtors began to cast their attention to the last remaining land in the city: the brickyard-scarred land of Ten Hills along the Mystic River, and the partially excavated grounds of Mount Benedict. Architecturally, residential construction after the turn of the century continued the conservative Queen Anne and Classical

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Revival tradition. Entire sections were often developed with the same two-family house type, particularly in the Ten Hills and Mount Benedict areas. Few single family houses were built after 1910, with two- and three-family houses constituting the primary residential building type. Number 16 Preston Road (ca. 1910, #159) is Somerville's best example of a three-decker. It was one of a number of multifamily houses built on Preston Road by George Ireland, on land carved out of the apple orchards of his family's former estate.

Early Modern Period, 1915-1940

The character of Somerville's small commercial districts, or squares, was stabilized during the period 1900-1925 as masonry business blocks were constructed in Davis and Gilman Squares and a variety of one- and two-story commercial blocks with large windows developed in Teele, Ball, and Magoun Squares. Many were built in Classical or Renaissance Revival styles, with stuccoed surfaces, garlanded friezes, and decorative urns and balustrades (most have been substantially altered). Businesses in the squares catered to trolley-car and later, automobile shoppers. Businessmen's Associations organized by merchants promoted shopping opportunities and electricity helped in the advertising effort.

In addition to this new construction, numerous 19th century storefronts were "modernized" in the 1920s and 1930s with Art Deco and Streamlined Moderne treatments (although few survive without subsequent alteration). Gasoline stations in the Classical and Colonial Revival styles were built along major arteries between ca. 1910 and 1920 (all altered or razed).

Adding to the urban amenities of 20th century Somerville, vaudeville and motion picture theaters were built in several squares and along Highland and Broadway Avenues after the turn of the century. The 1914 Somerville Theatre in Davis Square, designed by F. Wilcox, is of historical interest. It was one of at least six theaters built in the city after 1900, and the only one still standing.

As the city grew, centralized squares developed within neighborhoods. The development of Davis Square is typical of Somerville's growth which paralleled the development of the railroad. The city began losing its rural character in 1843 when the first tracks of the Fitchburg Railroad were laid. Gradually continued



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pasture land, market gardens and country estates gave way to residential subdivisions with their own commercial centers.

Somerville's industrial growth continued after the turn of the century. Of 145 manufacturing establishments in 1930, 75 percent had located in the city since 1900. Among Middlesex County manufacturers, Somerville ranked third (behind Cambridge and Lowell) in the manufacture of carriages, food products, furniture, and metal and metallic products. Slaughtering and meat packing were the leading industries from ca. 1875 into the 1930s. In 1898, with five packing houses, the "Chicago of New England" was the third largest slaughtering city in the United States. The Charles North slaughterhouse, built in 1879 on the East Cambridge border, burned in 1981. The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant (1926) and the First National Stores (1922) and A and P Food Warehouses (1920-1923), built on the filled flats of the Mystic River, were the last large-scale industrial installations to be constructed in the city and employed many of the city's new immigrants. The A & P facilities were noted as one of the country's first modern food distribution centers. The Ford Motor Company facility has been rehabilitated as the Assembly Square shopping mall.

Somerville's population reached 103,908 in 1930. With a population density of 25,365 persons per square mile, Somerville had become the most densely settled community in Massachusetts and one of the most densely settled in the country. Past Somerville builders' adherence to the subdivision practice of small lots, closely sited streets, terraces, and courts, and the popular two and three family houses, coupled with the city's cautious open space acquisitions had made such density inevitable. Somerville's historic lack of public open space is the result of political decisions and land use choices made in the mid-nineteenth century. One late 19th century issue was the reluctance of land speculators to donate lands for public use. The chosen site for Broadway park was a swamp near brickyard land, bordering the Middlesex canal. Even this site was hotly debated by those who wished to see it divided into house lots.

Future survey should investigate the integrity of additional 20th century residences, both isolated examples and entire subdivisions, as well as many of the city's remaining commercial and industrial buildings. The survival of such intact properties, whose

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construction is a direct reflection of Somerville's 20th century development, requires further investigation. Intact examples could well constitute addition to the present Multiple Resource Area in future.

Preservation Activities

In 1985, Somerville adopted the Massachusetts state enabling legislation for local historic district protection, Massachusetts General Laws chapter 40C. One hundred fifty buildings were included in the protective ordinance. The Somerville Historic Preservation Commission was formed in order to administer the local historic districts. Most of the properties included in this Multiple Resource Area Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places are protected by the local historic district ordinance. By means of a matching Survey and Planning Grant from the National Park Service, part of the Department of the Interior, and through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, in 1988 Somerville reexamined nearly 500 properties that had been minimally considered in the 1980 survey. Approximately 100 of these properties were chosen for local historic district ordinance protection. An additional 70 properties were documented, which helped to create cohesive districts. Of the 175 properties that have been recommended for local historic district protection, a list of 33 individual properties and five districts have been recommended for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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# SOMERVILLE MRA - DATA SHEETS

## INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES

MHC #	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	TYPE	STATUS
100	First Amos Keyes Ho	12 Adams St.	1845-1860	Greek Revival	B	C
102	-	55 Adams St.	ca.1880	Second Empire	B	C
103	F.G.Williams House	37 Albion St.	ca.1860	Italianate	B	C
104	Mystic Shops warehouse/office	Alewife Brook Pky. "	1863 ca.1930s	Romanesque Revival modern/functional	B B	C NC
105	Charles Williams Jr.	1 Arlington St.	ca.1858	Italianate	B	C
106	-	10 Arlington St.	ca.1889	Queen Anne	B	C
113	-	28-36 Beacon St.	ca.1858	Queen Anne	B	C
114	George Wyatt Ho.	33 Beacon St.	ca.1860	Italianate	B	C
115	Lemuel Snow Jr. Ho	81 Benton Rd.	ca.1890	Queen Anne	B	C
116	C.C. Crowell House	85 Benton Rd.	ca.1890	Queen Anne	B	C
117	Langmaid Terrace	359-365 Broadway	ca.1889	Queen Anne	B	C
118	Winter Hill Congregational Church	404 Broadway	1895	Shingle Style	B	C
119	Adams-Magoun Ho.	438 Broadway	1783	Federal	B	C
800	Cemetery	School & Somerville	1805-		Si	C

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## INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES

MHC #	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	TYPE	STATUS
121	Charles Adams / Woodbury Locke Ho. garage	178 Central "	ca.1840 ca.1923	Greek Revival vernacular/Revival	B B	C NC
122	-	192-200 Central	ca.1800	Second Empire	B	C
123	W.C. Mentzner Ho. garage	36 Cherry St. "	1890 ca.1950	Queen Anne/Shingle Colonial Revival	B B	C NC
124	Bacon House garage	27 Chester St. "	ca.1885 ca.1940	Queen Anne modern	B B	C NC
125	-	14 Chestnut St.	1855-1860	Italianate	B	C
126	- garage	25 Clyde St. "	ca.1850 ca.1950	Greek Revival modern	B B	C NC
127	West Somerville Branch Library	40 College Ave.	1909	Neo-Classical	B	C
128	Charles H. Lockhardt carriage house/garage	88 College Ave. "	ca.1890 ca.1890	Queen Anne Colonial Revival	B B	C C
129	Thomas Cook Ho.	21 College Hill Rd.	ca.	Greek Revival	B	C
130	James H. Brooks Ho. garage	61 Columbus "	ca.1880 ca.1930	Second Empire vernacular/Revival	B B	C NC
131	S.E. Brackett Ho. garage	63 Columbus Ave. "	ca.1880 ca.1930	Second Empire vernacular/Revival	B B	C NC
132	Charles Williams Ho.	108 Cross St.	ca.1855	Italianate	B	C
133	-	72R Dane	ca.1730-1800	Georgian	B	C



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<b>MHC #</b>	<b>HISTORIC NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>STYLE</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
134	- garage	21 Dartmouth St. "	ca.1890 ca.1930	Queen Anne Colonial Revival	B B	C NC
135	Knight/Lacount Ho. gazebo	34 Day St. "	ca.1870 ca.1920	Second Empire Colonial Revival	B St	C C
136	Cooper-Davenport	81 Eustis St.	1808	Federal	B	C
137	L.W.Dow Farmhouse	13 Fairmont Ave.	1848	Italianate	B	C
138	Langmaid Building	48-52 Highland Ave.	1892	Second Empire	B	C
139	The Highland	66 Highland Ave.	1892	Richardsonian Romanesque	B	C
140	George Loring Ho.	76 Highland Ave.	ca.1895	Shingle Style	B	C
141	Central Library	79 Highland Ave.	1913	Renaissance Rev.	B	C
142	City Hall	93 Highland	1852	Colonial Revival	B	C
143	First Universalist	125 Highland Ave.	1916-1923	Italian Romanesque	B	C
144	First Unitarian Church	130 Highland Ave.	1894	Richardsonian Roman	B	C
145	Gaut House	137 Highland Ave.	1848-1860	Italianate	B	C
146	-	140 Highland	ca.1885	Shingle Style	B	C
147	- garage	343 Highland Ave. "	ca.1880 ca.1930	Queen Anne vernacular/Revival	B B	C NC
148	" stable/garage	53 Hudson St. same	ca.1890 ca.1890	Queen Anne Queen Anne	B B	C C

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**INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES**

<b>MHC #</b>	<b>HISTORIC NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>STYLE</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
149	-	6 Kent Court	ca.1750	Georgian	B	C
150	Alexander Foster	45 Laurel St.	ca.1860	Italianate	B	C
151	Isaac Story Ho.	11 Linden St.	ca.1860	Italianate	B	C
152	Edmund Sparrow Ho. stable/house	27 Meacham Road "	ca.1890 ca.1890	Queen Anne Queen Anne	B B	C C
153	- garage	197 Morrison Ave. "	ca.1860 ca.1930	Greek Revival vernacular/Revival	B B	C NC
154	Daniel Worthen House	8 Mt. Pleasant St.	1850-1860	Greek Revival	B	C
183	-	29 Mt. Vernon St.	ca.1850	Greek Revival	B	C
155	The Grandview	82 Munroe	ca.1896	Colonial Revival	B	C
156	-	97 Munroe	ca.1894	Queen Anne	B	C
157	-	81 Pearl St.	1860-1870	Italianate	B	C
158	Gustavus Prescott	65-67 Perkins	1840-1850	Italianate	B	C
159	- stable / garage	16-18 Preston Rd. "	ca.1910 ca.1885	Colonial Revival Italianate	B B	C C
160	Z.E. Cliff House	29 Powderhouse Ter.	ca.1900	Shingle Style/C.R.	B	C
161	-	5 Prospect Hill	ca.1880	Queen Anne	B	C
162	Russell House	25 Russell St.	ca.1850	Greek Revival	B	C
163	-	205 School St.	ca.1870	Second Empire	B	C

**SOMERVILLE MRA - DATA SHEETS**

**INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES**

<b>MHC #</b>	<b>HISTORIC NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>STYLE</b>	<b>TYPE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
164	Elisha Hopkins Ho.	237 School St.	ca.1860	Italianate	B	C
165	-	437 Somerville Ave.	1830-1840	Greek Revival	B	C
166	-	439R Somerville Ave.	1840-1850	Greek Revival	B	C
	double house	439-441 " "	ca.1870	Italianate	B	C
167	John F. Nichols Ho.	17 Summit St.	ca.1890	Queen Anne	B	C
168	Susan Russell House	58 Sycamore St.	ca.1830	Greek Revival	B	C
169	Oliver Tufts House	78 Sycamore St.	1714/	Federal	B	C
170	-	35 Temple St.	ca.1750		B	C
171	Otis/Wyman House	67 Thurston St.	ca.1883	Queen Anne/Eastlake	B	C
172		42 Vinal Ave.	ca.1895	Shingle Style	B	C
	garage	"	ca.1910	Colonial Revival	B	C
	garage	"	ca.1930	vernacular/Revival	B	NC
173	-	48 Vinal Ave.	ca.1870	Italianate	B	C
174	Hailey House	49 Vinal Ave.	ca.1894	Shingle/Col. Rev/	B	C
175	Wright House	54 Vinal Ave.	ca.1895	Shingle/Queen Anne	B	C
176	Robert Munroe House	37 Walnut St.	ca.1849	Greek Revival	B	C
	garage	"	ca.1950	modern	B	NC
177	Louville Niles	45 Walnut St.	1890	Queen Anne	B	C
178	The Hollander Block	56-58 Walnut	ca.1890	Queen Anne/Col. Rev.	B	C
	-	4-6 Pleasant Ave.	ca.1890	Queen Anne/Col. Rev.	B	C

# SOMERVILLE MRA - DATA SHEETS

## INDIVIDUALLY NOMINATED PROPERTIES

MHC #	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	TYPE	STATUS
179	A.J.Lovejoy House	30 Warren St.	1874	Second Empire	B	C
	stable	"	ca.1874	Mansard	B	NC
180	Ireland House	117 Washington	ca.1792	Late Georgian	B	C
181	-	384 Washington St.	ca.1855	Italianate	B	C
182	Somerville Journal	8-10 Walnut St.	1894	Romanesque	B	C

79C / 13NC  
1C / 0  
1C / 0

B = Building  
St = Structure  
Si = Site

## Residences[\[edit\]](#)



House of the Rising Sun, Fall River, Massachusetts, c.1890

- [The Birches](#), [Garrison, New York](#), 1882
- House of the Rising Sun, 657 Highland Avenue, Fall River, Massachusetts, c.1890. Designed for Unitarian missionary Reverend Arthur May Knapp (1841–1921), it was inspired by a Japanese Pagoda.
- [Rehoboth](#), [Chappaqua, New York](#), 1891–92
- [Richmond Court](#), [Brookline, Massachusetts](#), 1896
- [Watkins Manor House](#), [Winona, Minnesota](#), 1924–27

## Churches and religious buildings[\[edit\]](#)



[Cathedral Church of St. Paul](#), [Detroit](#), 1908



[Church of the Covenant](#) in the [University Circle](#) neighborhood of [Cleveland](#), 1911



Cathedral of St. John the Divine, NYC; design taken over by Cram in 1911



Princeton University Chapel, 1928

- All Saints' Church, Ashmont, Massachusetts, 1892
- Christ Church, Hyde Park, Massachusetts 1892
- Church of St. John the Evangelist, Boston, Massachusetts, 1892
- Lady Chapel, Church of the Advent, Boston, Massachusetts, 1894
- Phillips Church, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1897
- All Saints Parish,<sup>[15]</sup> Brookline, Massachusetts, 1898
- Emmanuel Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 1900
- Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1904
- Holy Cross Monastery, West Park, New York, with Henry Vaughan, 1904
- All Saints' Chapel, Sewanee: The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, begun 1904, completed 1959
- La Santísima Trinidad pro-cathedral, Havana, Cuba, 1905
- Saint Thomas Church, New York City, 1905–13
- First Unitarian Society, Newton, Massachusetts, 1905–06
- St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Denver, CO, 1907
- Cathedral Church of Saint Paul, Detroit, Michigan, 1908
- St. Philip's Church, Durham, North Carolina, 1908
- Russell Sage Memorial Church, Far Rockaway, New York, 1908-10<sup>[16]</sup>
- House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1909–14
- St. Florian Church, Hamtramck, Michigan, 1910, expanded by Cram 1928
- All Saints Cathedral, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1910

- [Park Avenue Christian Church, New York City](#), 1911
- [Church of the Covenant in the University Circle](#) neighborhood of [Cleveland, Ohio](#), 1911
- [Cathedral of St. John the Divine](#), New York City, design taken over by Cram in 1911, unfinished
- [All Souls Congregational Church, Bangor, Maine](#), 1912
- remodeling of [Richard Upjohn's Grace Church, Providence, Rhode Island](#), 1912
- [Saint Paul's Episcopal Parish, Malden, Massachusetts](#), begun 1913, unfinished
- [Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois](#), 1914
- Nave extension and Lady Chapel of [Trinity Church, Princeton](#), Princeton, New Jersey, 1914.
- [Chapel of St. Anne, Arlington, Massachusetts](#), 1915
- [Sacred Heart Cathedral, Dodge City, Kansas](#) (1916)
- [All Saints Church, Peterborough, New Hampshire](#), ca 1916-20
- [First Universalist Church, Somerville, Massachusetts](#), 1916-23<sup>[17]</sup>
- Chapel of [Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Pennsylvania](#), 1916-28
- [Cole Memorial Chapel, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts](#), 1917
- [Trinity Episcopal Church, Houston, Texas](#), 1919
- [Calvary Episcopal Church, Americus, Georgia](#) 1919-21
- [St. Mark's Episcopal Pro-Cathedral, Hastings, Nebraska](#), 1921-29
- [Saint James Church, Lake Delaware, New York](#), 1922.<sup>[18]</sup>
- [First Presbyterian Church, Lexington, Kentucky](#) 1922
- [The First Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, Washington](#), 1923
- [Sacred Heart Church, Jersey City, New Jersey](#), 1923<sup>[19]</sup>
- [St. James' Episcopal Church, New York City](#), rebuilt, 1924
- [First Presbyterian Church, Utica, New York](#), 1924
- [Pine Street Presbyterian Church, Harrisburg, PA](#), 1926
- [First Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, Nebraska](#), 1925-27
- Chapel at [St. George's School, Newport, Rhode Island](#), 1928
- [Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#), 1928
- [First Presbyterian Church, Glens Falls, New York](#), 1928
- [St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem, North Carolina](#), 1928
- [Concordia Lutheran Church, Louisville, Kentucky](#), 1930
- [Knowles Memorial Chapel](#), on the campus of [Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida](#), 1931-32
- [Christ Church United Methodist, New York City](#), 1931-33
- Chancel, [Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland](#), 1931
- [Cathedral of Hope](#), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1932-35
- Christ Episcopal Church tower addition, [Blacksburg Historic District, Blacksburg, Virginia](#), 1934
- [Conventual Church of St. Mary and St. John, Cambridge, Massachusetts](#), 1936
- Monastery and chapel at the [Society of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, Massachusetts](#), 1936
- [All Saints Episcopal Church, Winter Park, Florida](#), 1941

## **Libraries & academic buildings**<sup>[edit]</sup>





Sayles Memorial Library in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, 1902



Hunt Memorial Library, Nashua, New Hampshire, c. 1906



Princeton University Graduate College, 1911-13



Lucius Beebe Memorial Library, Wakefield, Massachusetts, 1922



Julia Ideson Building, Houston Public Library, Houston, Texas, 1926



Archbold Infirmary, The Choate School, Wallingford, Connecticut, 1928



Rothschild Memorial Archway, Princeton University, c. 1929-1930

- Public Library, [Fall River, Massachusetts](#) 1899
- Boston Public Library, [Parker Hill Branch, Roxbury, Massachusetts](#) 1931<sup>[20]</sup>
- [Deborah Cook Sayles Public Library, Pawtucket, Rhode Island](#), 1899
- [The Mather School, Dorchester, Massachusetts](#), 1905
- Hunt Memorial Library, [Nashua, New Hampshire](#), c.1906
- [Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Virginia](#), 1906–28
  - Mary K. Benedict Hall
  - Fletcher Hall
  - Mary Harley Student Health and Counseling Center
  - Mary Helen Cochran Library
- Masters Hall, [The Masters School, Dobbs Ferry, New York](#), 1921
- [Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey](#), 1911–28
  - [Princeton University Graduate College](#), 1911–13
  - [Cleveland Tower](#), 1917

- [Princeton University Chapel](#), 1928
  - [Rothschild Memorial Archway](#), 1929-1930
  - [Campbell Hall](#)
  - [McCormick Hall](#)
- [University of Richmond](#), [Richmond, Virginia](#), 1911–14
  - [Ryland Hall](#),
  - [Jeter Hall](#)
  - [North Court](#)
- [Phillips Exeter Academy](#), [Exeter, New Hampshire](#)
  - [Academy Building](#), 1914
  - [other buildings](#)
- [Rice University](#), [Houston, Texas](#), 1910–16
  - [Lovett Hall \(Administration Building\)](#)
  - [Mechanical Laboratory](#)
  - [Campus master plan](#)
- [Lucius Beebe Memorial Library](#), [Wakefield, Massachusetts](#), 1922
- [The Choate School](#), [Wallingford, Connecticut](#), 1924–28
  - [St. Andrews Chapel \(now Seymour St. John Chapel\)](#)
  - [Archbold Infirmary](#), 1928 (now [Archbold House](#))
- [Julia Ideson Building](#) of the [Houston Public Library](#), [Houston, Texas](#), 1926
- [Doheny Library](#), [Campus of the University of Southern California](#), [Los Angeles](#), 1931
- [Bell Tower](#), [Dwight Morrow High School](#), [Englewood, New Jersey](#), 1932
- [Saint Mary's Academy](#), [Glens Falls, New York](#), 1932
- [Wheaton College \(Massachusetts\)](#), [Upper Campus](#)
- [Sweet Briar College](#), [Sweet Briar, Virginia](#), [Campus](#)
- [South Dining Hall](#), [University of Notre Dame](#), [South Bend, Indiana](#), 1927

## Other buildings[\[edit\]](#)

- [Virginia War Memorial Carillon](#), [Byrd Park](#), [Richmond, Virginia](#), 1932
- [U.S. Post Office and Courthouse](#) aka [J.W. McCormack Post Office and Courthouse](#), [Boston, Massachusetts](#), 1933
- [buildings at the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery and Memorial](#), [Belleau](#), [France](#), 1937
- [buildings at the Oise-Aisne American Cemetery and Memorial](#), [Fère-en-Tardenois](#), [Aisne](#) department, [France](#), c. 1937
- [New England Mutual Life Insurance Building](#), [Boston, Massachusetts](#), 1941