



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

GEORGE J. PROAKIS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING DIVISION
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

STEP 1: DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE
STAFF REPORT

Site: 211 Holland Street

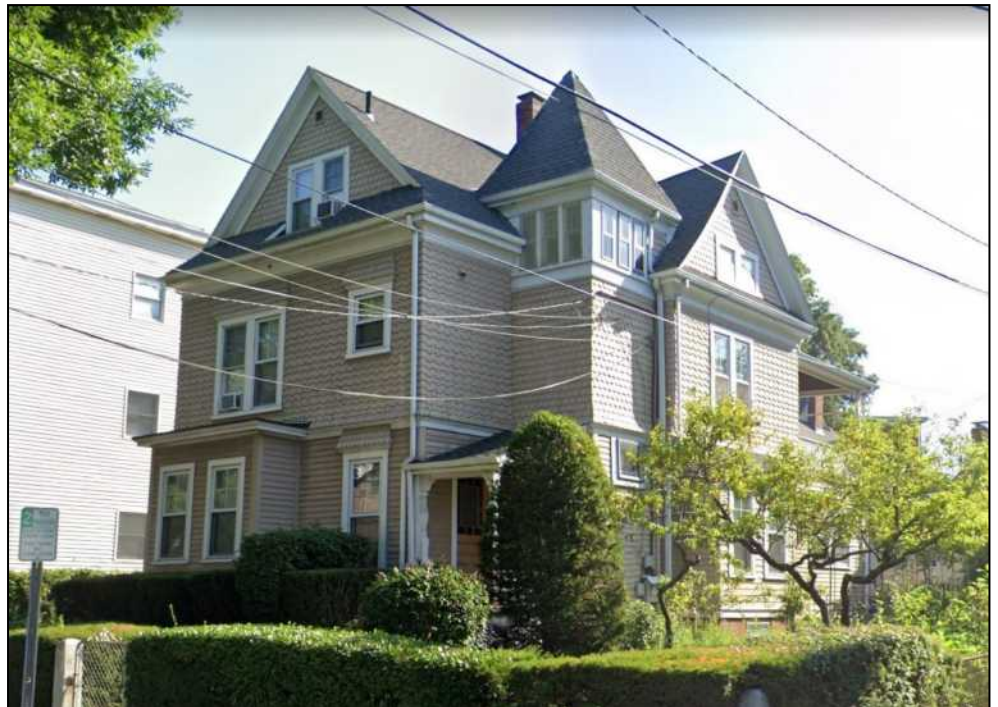
Case: HPC.DMO 2020-21

Applicant: Silva Realty
8, LLC

Owner: same as applicant

Proposal: *Demolish
principal structure.*

HPC Meeting Date:
October 20, 2020



Above: Right and front elevations of 211 Holland Street.

Following page, first image: Aerial view of 211 Holland Street in area context.



I. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Historical Context: 211 Holland Street is located in Teele Square. Teele Square, like the rest of West Somerville, was largely undeveloped until the end of the 19th century. Unlike most of the rest of Somerville, the area comprising West Somerville was relatively flat and for most of the 18th and 19th centuries it was used for farming and dairying.

Teele Square developed around the site of the early 19th century homestead of Jonathan Teele, for whom the square is named. In 1867 Holland Street was extended from Davis Square and the irregular intersection that it created when it met Broadway became the nucleus of a commercial center in West Somerville.

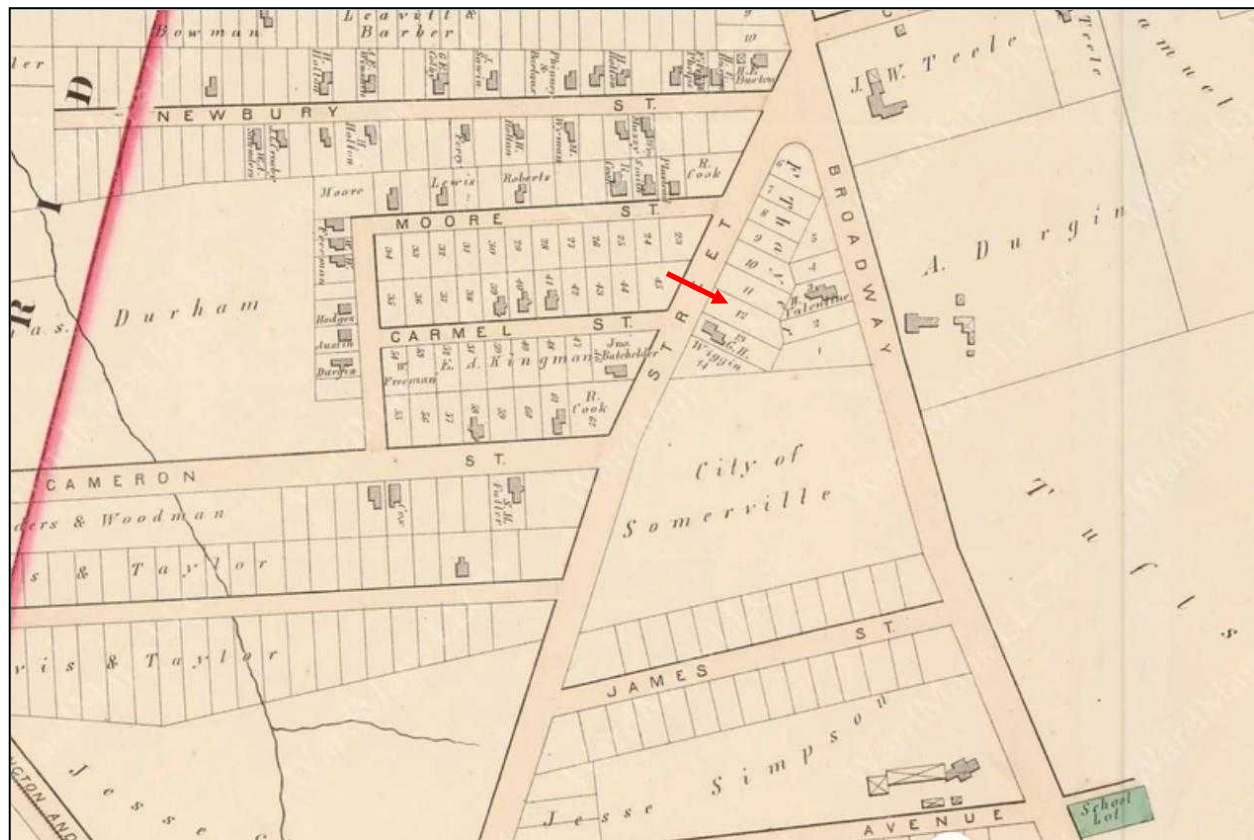
As buildable land in the other parts of Somerville became more scarce, and as streetcar and trolley service became more available, many of the large landowners and farmers in West Somerville sold their property for residential development. In 1885 the West End Street Railway car shop was constructed at the western extreme of Broadway at Alewife Brook Parkway and by 1900 maps show most of the area around Teele Square platted, but only a few houses built. (See Form A (Area) SMV.J, appended).

The earliest maps accessed to-date, the 1874 Hopkins, Plate L, shows provides visual support to the statements taken from the Form A above: this area of Somerville was sparsely populated. Most of the land in this area at that time was divided between large estate holdings and smaller areas platted into housing lots for the purpose of speculative real estate development.

Below: 1874 Hopkins Plate L, area.

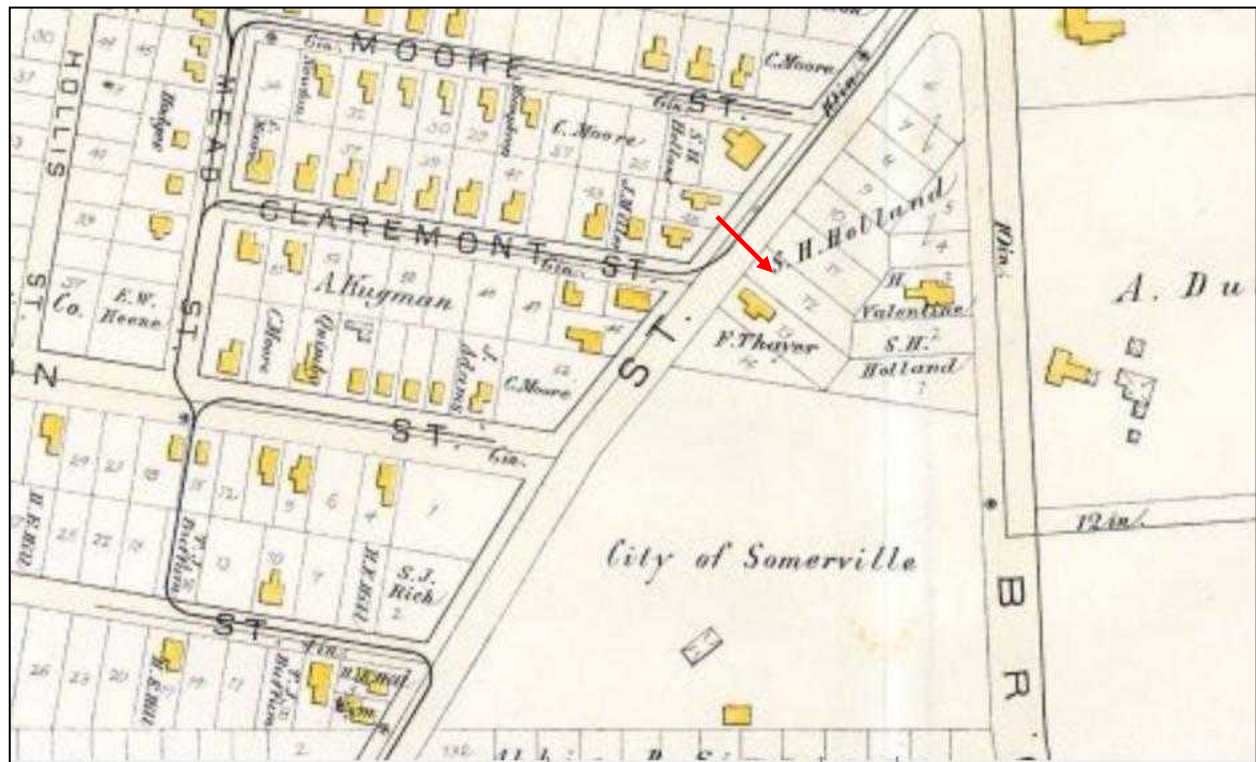


A close-up of Plate L (below) shows that the land currently occupied by 211 Holland Street was owned by an F. Thayer and is one of several contiguous building lots under Thayer's ownership. Speculative real estate development was in full swing in Somerville during this time and the Teele Square area was no exception.

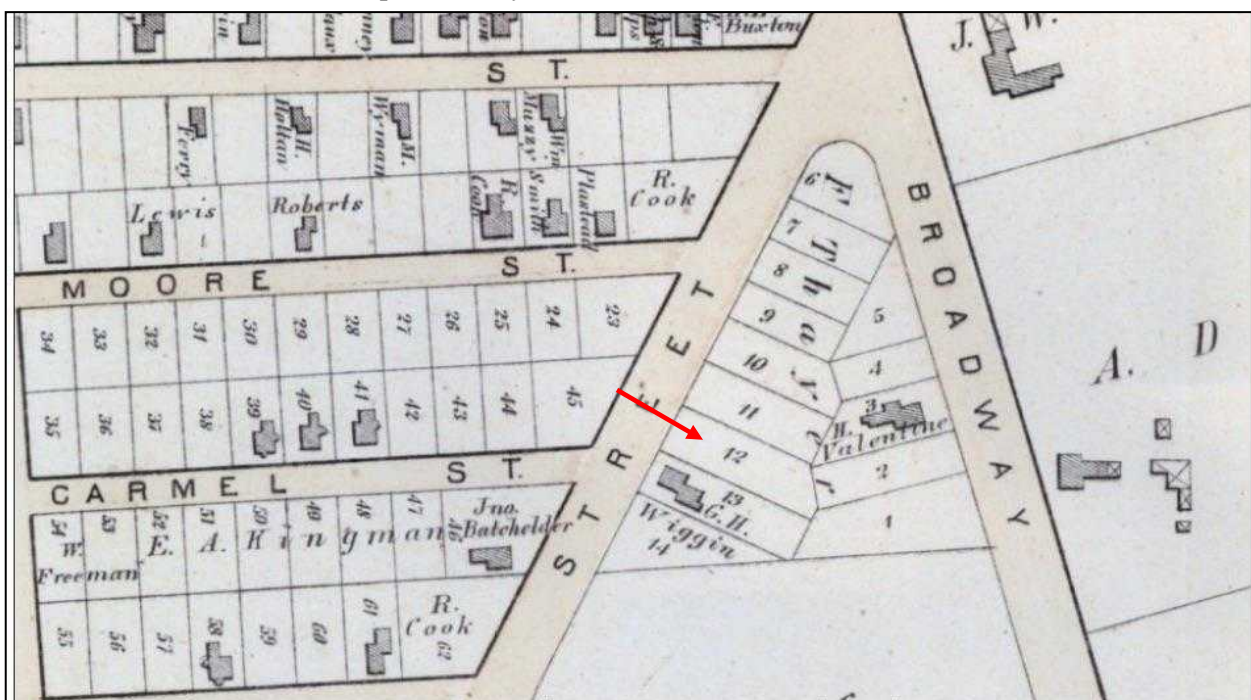


The 1884 Hopkins map (below) shows that these parcels previously owned by Thayer a decade earlier are now owned in common by Silas H. Holland, after whom Holland Street was named. Originally trained as a carriage maker in Northboro, MA, Holland came to Somerville in 1856 and purchased the Thomas Teele farm on Broadway. In addition to his general civic engagement, Holland spent 35 years as a farmer, real estate investor, politician and, ultimately, the Vice President of Somerville Savings Bank.

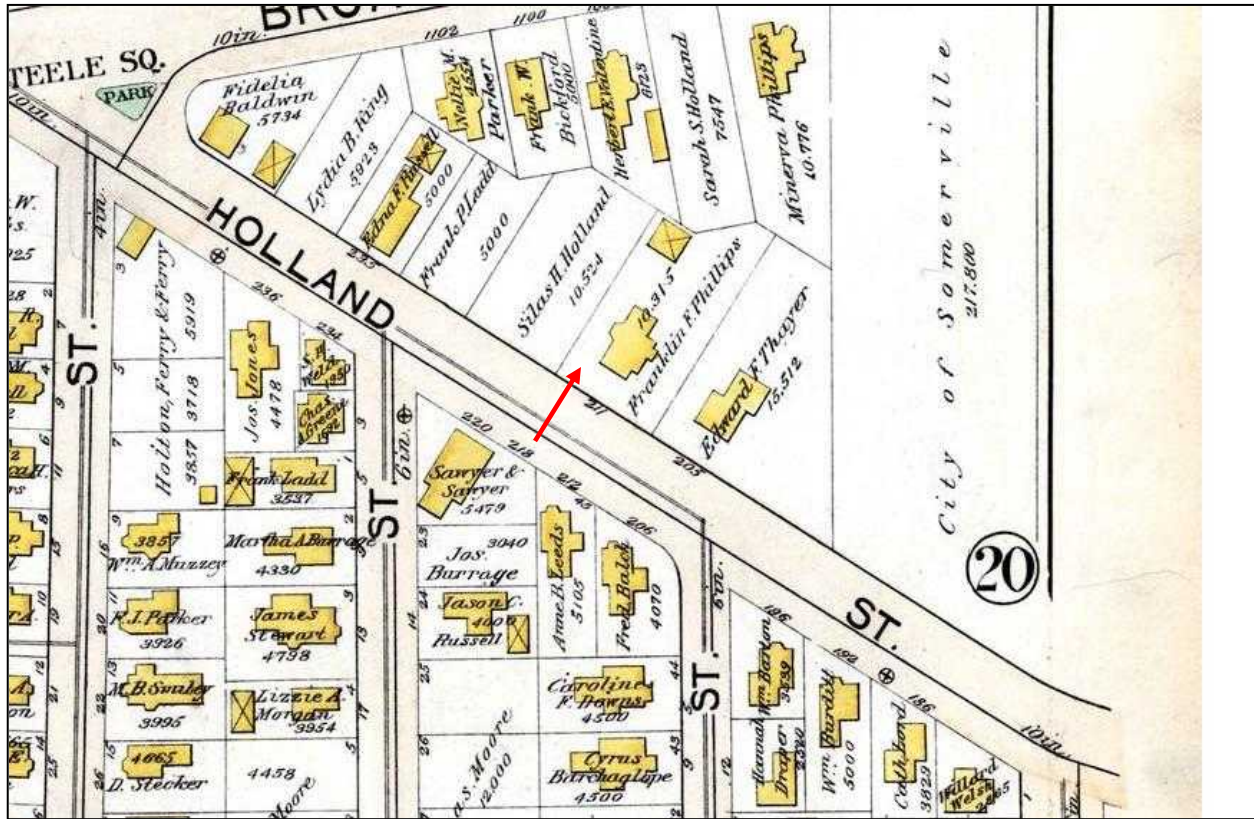
Below: the 1884 Hopkins map with the 211 Holland parcel indicated.



One decade later, in 1894, the Hopkins map (below) shows that ownership of the still-vacant parcel has reverted back to the ownership of F. Thayer.



One year later again, as shown in the 1895 Bromley plate below, we see that 211 Holland Street has been built. The plate shows a wood-framed house (yellow) with a wood-framed barn at the left rear of the lot (yellow square with “X”).



According to *Somerville Beyond the Neck*, Phillips was a chemical salesman by profession. Census data from 1900 lists his occupation as that of “chemist”. Phillips is listed in City records as a member of the City’s Common Council in 1891 and 1892 and listed as an Alderman in 1893 and 1894. In all cases he represented Ward 4 (note that his terms on the Common Council and BOA were prior to his move to 211 Holland Street).

A note of explanation regarding the Common Council and Somerville’s form of government at this point in history:

After 30 years of operating as a town, in 1872 Somerville became a city through a Special Act of the State Legislature and had a bicameral form of government (two chambers making up the Legislative branch). The two chambers of the City’s legislative branch were the Board of Aldermen (BOA) and the Common Council. The original City charter established four political wards. Each ward had two Aldermen and four Councilors (Common Councilors). All were elected annually. In 1899, the City abolished the bicameral system and the Common Council with it. At the same time, the City moved to a seven ward system with three Aldermen per ward. Annual elections continued until 1919.

A photo of 211 Holland Street from the 3rd quarter of the 20th-century appears on the following page. The photo can be referenced on page 142 of *Somerville Beyond the Neck*.



1900 Census data shows that Phillips, then aged 46, lived at 211 with his wife and three children ages 14, 17, and 21. All of the children were born in Maine, the state from which Phillips himself hailed. From this we see that neither Phillips nor his wife or children were lifelong Somerville residents. Phillips remains the owner of the property at this time.

Below: Entry on Franklin Phillips from Somerville, Past & Present, 1897.

Phillips, Franklin Folsom, son of James and Mary (Prescott) Phillips, was born in Searsmont, Me., December 21, 1852. He was educated at the town schools of Searsmont and Montville, at the Nichols Latin School, and at Bates College, Lewiston, Me., receiving the degree of A. M. on the completion of his studies. After graduating he taught in Bolton, Mass., and in Lisbon and Rockland, Me., being principal of the High School at the latter place five years. He was commissioned State Assayer of Maine in 1880 for a term of four years. Since 1883 he has been connected with the old and extensive chemical manufacturing house of Harrison Bros. & Co., of Philadelphia and New York, his work being both technical and commercial. He has served in the city government four years, 1890-1894, two years in the Common Council and two in the Board of Aldermen, and was a member of the committees on ordinances, sewers, fire department, public property and finance, serving on the latter committee the entire four years. Mr. Phillips is much engrossed with his business, but takes a deep interest in public matters. In politics he is a Republican, and as such was elected a member of the General Court in 1896. He resides at 211 Holland street.

The mid-to-late nineteenth teens show four different men living at the property, none of whom is listed as the owner; it is therefore presumed they are renters or boarders. It is unclear if someone in the Phillips family still owned the property and was renting it out, if the family had taken in boarders, or if the property had changed hands to another owner who was an absentee landlord. Another possibility is that these men may have lived in the barn/stable at the rear of the property (where 213 Holland Street is now located). Such arrangements were common throughout the centuries, including the early portion of the 20th century.

The 1930 census shows definitively that ownership had passed out of the Phillips family and on to the Nicoli family, immigrants from Italy. The Nicolis lived at, and likely retained ownership of, the structure through 1940 when we also see the Stenmans (husband and wife) living at the property. It appears that the property had, by 1940, if not earlier, become an owner-occupied rental property.

Research data is appended to this staff report.

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

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

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

The period of relevance for the house starts 1894-1895.

- a. Location: The structure is in its original location.
- b. Design: Largely Queen Anne. Two full floors and $\frac{3}{4}$ top floor. Prominent cross gable on right elevation. Pyramid-topped 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ -story right elevation tower. Inset front entry is covered with the front entry door located on the left wall. Wood front steps and flooring. Turned front entry supports. Main front façade is three bays wide at the first and second levels.

Sloped window hoods (all with staggered butt wood shingling) on the three front window bays that sit flush with the building façade.

First level front elevation protruding, squared bay. Enlivened siding transitions from horizontal clapboard on first level to a multiplicity of shingling styles on the façade: staggered butt, fish scale and hexagonal on the second level, and fish scale on the third level.

Small shed dormer on left elevation. A portion rear end of the left gable roofline slopes downward to the left property line to the first level, forming a two-story bay. Heavy, protruding cornice below main roof. Double window under front façade gable is deep set

into the protruding cornice itself. Sloped overhang present between first and second floors. Multiple window sizes forms as expected on a Queen Anne. Triple windows on tower are original.

At the rear of the building, the roof form changes again to a steeply sloped hip roof. The right elevation of this portion of the house presents a covered, open, second-level porch resting over an enclosed first level. The left elevation of this rear portion of the house steps in significantly from the primary left façade. Overall, despite the right elevation of this portion of the house being visible from the public way, this rear, hip-roofed portion of the structure overall is subservient to the main body visually and physically in terms of its massing.

Two brick chimney stacks are extant.

- c. Materials: Wood frame; horizontal wood clapboarding on first level, ; staggered butt wood shingling, fish scale wood shingling, and hexagonal wood shingling on second level; fish scale shingles on top level. Wood trim. Brick foundation. Wood turned porch supports. Wood porch and front steps. Asphalt shingles. At least some wood windows. Brick chimney stacks.
- d. Alterations: Possible replacement in some locations. Possible addition of open covered porch at rear of structure.

Evaluation of Integrity: The building is extremely intact in terms of original form, massing, clear Queen Anne design and numerous architectural details. Also presents integrity of original location and most materials.

III. FINDINGS

*For a Determination of Significance, the subject building must be found either (i) **importantly associated with people, events or history** and/or (ii) **historically or architecturally significant** (Ordinance 2003-05, Section 2.17.B, i-ii). The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) must make these findings. The portions of the Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO) related to these findings are included below:*

A. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

2003-05, Section 2.17.B, i

Importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 211 Holland Street meets any of the criteria stated above.

2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 211 Holland Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “i”.

B. HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

2003-05, Section 2.17.B, ii

The findings for historical and/or architectural significance of a historic property address the period, style, method of building construction and association with a reputed architect or builder of the subject property, either by itself or in the context of a group of buildings or structures, and therefore it is in the public interest to be preserved or rehabilitated rather than to be demolished.

1. The HPC must make a finding as to whether or not the structure at 211 Holland Street meets any of the criteria stated above.
2. The HPC must specifically state why the structure at 211 Holland Street does or does not meet the threshold for historic significance under finding “ii”.

IV. VOTE

When bringing the matter to a vote, the HPC must include the reasons why the structure at 211 Holland Street is or is not “historically significant”.

Census Location (#)	Plotted Land	O/R	Name	Age/Birth Date	Occupation	Place of Birth	Immigration Year	Source	Notes
48	211 Holland St	O	Franklin F Phillips (head)	46	Chemist	Maine, USA		1900 US Census	
49	211 Holland St		Julia A Philips (wife)	46		New Hampshire USA		1900 US Census	
50	211 Holland St		Franklin F Phillips Jr (son)	19	Student	Maine, USA		1900 US Census	
51	211 Holland St		William L Phillips (son)	14	Student	Maine, USA		1900 US Census	
52	211 Holland St		Florence M Phillips (daughter)	21	Student	Maine, USA		1900 US Census	
8	211 Holland St		Stanley Stenman (head)	32	Die Maker	Massachusetts		1940 US Federal Census	Highest Grade Completed High School, 4th year Hours Worked Week Prior to Census 40 Class of Worker Wage or salary worker in private work Weeks Worked in 1939 52 Income 2400 Income Other Sources No
9	211 Holland St		Majorie Stenman	36		Canada		1940 US Federal Census	
	211 Holland St		Lewis Edgar Felch	20 Aug 1878	Conductor			US WWI Registration Card 1917-18	
	211 Holland St		Lorenzo Arthur Harold Hogle	April 15 1891	Salesman	Canada		US WWI Registration Card 1917-18	
	211 Holland St		Forrest MacLean		Engineer	City Directory 1914		City Directory 1914	
	211 Holland St		Clinton Gray		Bookkeeper	City Directory 1914			
95	211 Holland St	O	Peter Nicoli (head)	1887	Building Construction	Italy	1911	1930 US Census	
96	211 Holland St		Ester M Nicoli (wife)	1888		Italy	1916	1930 US Census	
13			Peter Nicoli (head)	1889	Carpenter	Italy		1940 US Census	Value of Home or Monthly Rental if Rented:2000 Attended School or College:No Highest Grade Completed:0 Hours Worked Week Prior to Census:48 Class of Worker:Working on own account Weeks Worked in 1939:0 Income:0 Income Other Sources:Yes

14			Ester M Nicoli (wife)	1890		Italy		1940 US Census	Usual Occupation:Housewife Usual Industry:Home Usual Class of Worker:Unpaid family worker
15			Mary Nicoli (daughter)	1928	Student	Massachusetts		1940 US Census	Highest Grade Completed:Elementary school, 7th grade

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SMV.J
Historic Name:	Teele Square
Common Name:	
Address:	
City/Town:	Somerville
Village/Neighborhood:	West Somerville; Tufts; Davis Square
Local No:	
Year Constructed:	
Architect(s):	
Architectural Style(s):	
Use(s):	Commercial District
Significance:	Architecture; Commerce; Community Planning
Area(s):	
Designation(s):	
Building Materials(s):	



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Users of this digital material acknowledge that they have read and understood the MACRIS Information and Disclaimer (<http://mhc-macris.net/macrisdisclaimer.htm>)

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

This file was accessed on: Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 7:31: PM

FORM A - AREA

AREA
TEELE SQUARE

FORM NO.
681,682,683,685,686,
687,688



View looking east on Broadway at
Curtis and Holland St.

Town Somerville

Name of Area Teele Square

Present Use Commercial

General Date or Period _____

ca. 1900 - ca. 1940

General Condition Good to

Fair

Acreage 6

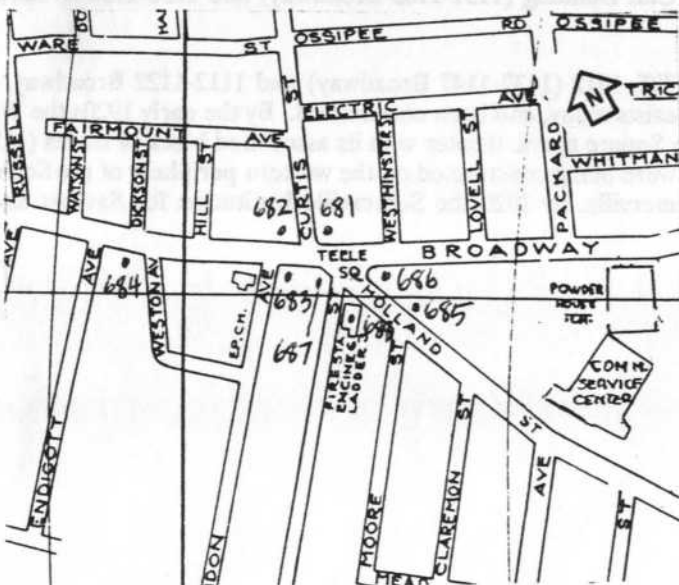
Recorded By Fitch & Hollister
The Public Archaeology
Laboratory, Inc.

Organization Somerville

Historic Preservation Comm.

Date May, 1990

MAP



UTM REFERENCE _____

USGS QUADRANGLE _____

SCALE _____

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT

SMV.J

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Teele Square is a distinct commercial area located in the western section of Somerville at the intersection of Broadway, Holland Street, and Curtis Street. Broadway is a major east/west thoroughfare in Somerville, the only street which traverses the entire breadth of the City. Holland Street runs from nearby Davis Square, another significant commercial area, to Teele Square.

Teele Square is characterized by one-, two-, and three-story brick, commercial buildings dating from the early 20th century. Except for the Cliff Building, 1905 (1151-1165 Broadway) all of the multi-story buildings had apartments on the upper floors reflecting the almost exclusively residential character of West Somerville.

Although some post-1960 construction has occurred, most of it is located west of Teele Square along Broadway and is compatible in scale with the surrounding residential neighborhood.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Teele Square, like the rest of West Somerville, was largely undeveloped until the end of the 19th century. Unlike most of the rest of Somerville, the area comprising West Somerville was relatively flat and for most of the 18th and 19th centuries it was used for farming and dairying.

Teele Square developed around the site of the early 19th century homestead of Jonathan Teele, for whom the square is named. In 1867 Holland Street was extended from Davis Square and the irregular intersection that it created when it met Broadway became the nucleus of a commercial center in West Somerville.

As buildable land in the other parts of Somerville became more scarce, and as streetcar and trolley service became more available, many of the large landowners and farmers in West Somerville sold their property for residential development. In 1885 the West End Street Railway carshop was constructed at the western extreme of Broadway at Alewife Brook Parkway and by 1900 maps show most of the area around Teele Square platted, but only a few houses built. By 1905, however, developers and builders like Zebedee E. Cliff had erected substantial business blocks like the Cliff Building (1151-1165 Broadway) and 1150-1152 Broadway in the Square.

As the century progressed Teele Square grew and by 1915 The Cliff, 1912 (1137-1147 Broadway) and 1112-1122 Broadway, ca. 1910 were built and the architectural character of the Square, as it exists today, had been constructed. By the early 1920s the West Somerville fire station had been built as well as the elaborate Teele Square movie theater with its associated block of stores (1154-1164 Broadway), and commercial blocks like 1198-1212 Broadway were being constructed on the western periphery of the Square. A further indication of the growth and development of West Somerville, by 1920 the Somerville Institution for Savings had a branch located in Teele Square at 1154-1164 Broadway.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Somerville City Directories
Hopkins Map, 1874, 1884
Sanborn Maps, 1900 - 1950
Beyond the Neck, 1983



View looking west on Broadway at
Holland Street.



View looking north on Holland St.
at Broadway.



View looking east on Broadway at Clarendon.