


UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED NOV 5 1975
DATE ENTERED MAR 26 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

 HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District
AND/OR COMMON
Bow Street Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Bow Street (Multiple addresses)

CITY, TOWN Somerville VICINITY OF _____
STATE Massachusetts CODE 025 COUNTY Middlesex CODE 017
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 8

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE _____
VICINITY OF _____

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Middlesex County Registry of Deeds
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER 208 Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN Cambridge, STATE Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE 1975 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Boston STATE Massachusetts 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bow Street District is comprised of seventeen buildings in a densely settled, older section of the City of Somerville. The district is a mixture of religious, municipal, commercial, and residential buildings which exemplify the atmosphere and character of Somerville's most prosperous era of economic development, the late nineteenth century. The structures in the district include both brick buildings with granite trim and clapboard buildings with brackets and other details typical of the late nineteenth century.

One of the highlights of the district is the Prospect Hill Congregational Church, designed by Henry S. McKay in 1887. Responsible for having the church built were H. P. Hood, whose original dairy was situated in Somerville, and John North, owner of the North Packing Company in Cambridge (the largest meat packing operation east of Chicago). Completed the year after architect H. H. Richardson died, the church shows the characteristic features of the Richardsonian Romanesque style: rounded arches and semi-circular forms, the use of polychromy, and a square tower at one corner. The brick building is trimmed with rusticated granite which is used along the ground level and for the arches, lintels, sills, string course, and transoms. The arched entranceway contains short, stylized Doric columns on either side which support a slightly recessed arch within the larger arch. The windows are primarily leaded glass (with some stained glass) and are set with deep reveals. The square bell tower to the left of the entrance rises to a pyramidal roof. The tower has embedded in it a turret and granite pilasters which continue visually as undulations in the tower roof. On the interior, the main auditorium situated on the second floor has an open, mahogany trussed ceiling and a circular seating arrangement.

Typical of the residences in the district is the Lambert House (1879) which is one of six remaining from the nineteenth century "Doctor's Row." The asymmetrical plan, massing, and roofline are tied together with horizontal and vertical "stickwork" which frames the windows. The front entrance has a transom supported by posts and finely detailed knee-braces. There are front and back second-floor porches. The deep eaves are supported by brackets, and the three gables and six dormers are further articulated with scroll work and vertical board and batten. The two chimneys have corbelled and panelled brick detail. The interior of the house also has fine craftsmanship and materials in its mahogany panelling, tile fireplaces, and stained glass windows.

The First United Methodist Church (1856-74) defines the edge of the district in its location at the curve of Bow Street. The brick Gothic Revival church is accented with granite which appears on the buttresses, sills, and foundation. The first floor openings are segmental pointed arches, and the upper ones are lancet in form. The windows are leaded, diamond-shaped stained glass. A steeple, which once reached ninety feet, was removed after it was damaged in the hurricane of 1938.

The Somerville Police Station (now used as a Boys' Club and American Legion Post) was built in 1874 and was one of the first projects of the newly-chartered City of Somerville. The detailed brickwork, paired windows, segmental-arched lintels, and now disassembled mansard roof indicate some later Italianate and Second Empire influence.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bow Street Historic District is significant for its strong community of nineteenth century mixed-use buildings, its remaining early thoroughfare, its role in the American Revolution, and its ensuing importance as a center of Somerville's development.

Somerville's settlement began in 1630 when a branch highway (cart track) was built, extending from Union Square "along the southerly side of the town and curving around across the westerly portion til it joined the road to Menotomy." (This is now Bow Street, Somerville Avenue, and Elm Street.) A 1740 map shows that the few buildings in the area were clustered around Bow Street, thus indicating its early importance as the center of the community's development.

"Charlestown Lane" (Bow Street and Somerville Avenue) was well-traveled during Revolutionary times, and the district played a national role in 1775. On April 18, 1775, Paul Revere "started out across Charlestown neck . . . and up Cambridge Road (Washington Street) bent on skirting Somerville's hills to the south, heading up Milk Row (Somerville Avenue) and over Lexington Road."

Somerville was also the first town traversed by the British on their way to Lexington and Concord. They stopped at the house of Henry Adams on Bow Street for water (at the site of the present Methodist Church), then proceeded up Charlestown Lane on to Lexington. Union Square near Bow Street was the site of their retreat and of several small skirmishes with the colonists, now known as the "Skirmish of Milk Row."

Bow Street took its "bowed" form by skirting marshland to its south. Between 1830 and 1850, Milk Street continued straight through into Union Square, replacing Bow Street as the main thoroughfare. Thus a spatial integrity and visual rhythm have been allowed to persist, with few modern intrusions to disrupt the streetscape.

The first street railway in the Boston area began just before the Civil War, and ran between Harvard Square in Cambridge and Union Square in Somerville. Street railway transportation thrived and opened up Somerville as a prime location for people working in downtown Boston. Somerville became referred to proudly as the "city of homes." It was during this period that Bow Street became known as "Doctors' Row." Doctors White, White, and Couch, the founders of Somerville Hospital, made their homes and offices on Bow Street. More than a dozen doctors had thriving practices there, and a number of physicians are still located there.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Eliot, Charles Darwin. Somerville's History. Somerville, n.p., 1869.
 Hopkins, G. M. & Co., Publishers. Atlas of the City of Somerville, Mass., 1874; 1884.
 Jones, William Preble. Somerville Fifty Years Ago. Somerville. 1933.
 Samuels, Edward Augustus. Somerville Past and Present: An Illustrated Historical Souvenir. Somerville: Samuels and Kimball, 1897.
 Somerville Historical Society. Historic Leaves, Vols. I-IX, 1901-8.
 Somerville, Mass: The Beautiful City of Seven Hills. Somerville: A.Martine & Sons Co., 1912

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	3 2 7 2 6 0	4 6 9 4 0 4 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The district extends along the west side of Bow Street, running behind the back property lines of numbers 26-68 Bow Street. Along the east side of Bow Street, the district includes numbers 17-49 (including the First United Methodist Church at the corner of Wesley Park, Summer Street and Bow Street), and the boundaries run along the back property lines of these properties.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Judy D. Dobbs, National Register Editor, and Lisette Ellis, Aron Faegre, Margo Jones, research assistants for Mary Cahill

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

October 21, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

294 Washington Street

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts 02108

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Elizabeth Reed Amaden

TITLE Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE

Oct. 21, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Robert B. Ketting*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3/26/96

DATE

3-21-76

Acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 & 8 PAGE 1

#7 - Description:

Another building which serves to define the district is the Faulkner Apartment Block. This handsome Federal Revival structure was built before 1900 and its crescent shape reflects the curve of the original seventeenth century road. The brick building has granite sills and lintels and granite keystones in the brick arches over the three entrances. The recessed doorways have simple fanlights and are three steps above ground level. Beneath the paired windows on the third story the brick forms an interesting checkered pattern, projecting from the building surface by several inches. The white shutters have been added in recent years.

#8 - Significance

The Police Station on Bow Streets stands as one of the first building projects of the newly chartered city of Somerville. The police headquarters were moved to a newer building in 1932, and the original building is currently being used by the Boys' Club and the American Legion.

In terms of twentieth century development, with many buildings on Somerville Avenue having undergone major destruction or defacing, Bow Street has remained a relatively well-protected pocket of nineteenth century buildings. Along it one finds a comfortable mixture of fruit markets, dwellings, churches, apartments and shops.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

#8 Significance

The architecture of the Bow Street District represents a valuable record of the period of Somerville's greatest growth, the late nineteenth century. A variety of styles are represented -- Romanesque Revival, stick style, mansard, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne -- which provide an important document of construction in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The Doctor's Row grouping on the south side of Bow Street is a fine collection of stick style cottages, and other buildings such as the Faulkner Apartment Building are distinguished by their curvilinear design, reflecting the bend in Bow Street. While some of the buildings, such as Henry S. McKay's Prospect Hill Congregational Church, were designed by professional architects, others illustrate fine vernacular work of the period. As a whole the architectural integrity of the area remains intact, and the district represents one of the best late nineteenth century groupings in a city which has undergone many changes and alterations.

Property Bow Street Historic District
State Mass Working Number 11.5.75.1982

Middlesex

TECHNICAL

Photos 5
Maps 1 + sketch map

CONTROL

OK pl
11.7.75

Somerville and Union Sq ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR TRANSPORTATION + REVOLUTION. HISTORIAN
However, Bow St. does not reflect these areas of significance and is only or basically
significant for late 19TH C ARCHITECTURE (DOMESTIC, COMMERCIAL, RELIGIOUS). In terms of
architectural significance, there is not adequate discussion. ALSO should discuss hotel and apartment
structures. Doctor's Row is only one aspect of the district. BECAUSE OF DRASTIC, UGLY 20TH C ALTERATIONS
I DON'T THINK THE DISTRICT COULD BE EXTENDED TO Union Sq Without comprising integrity. BASICALLY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT WHILE Union Sq IS Commercial.

I agree with Ward's comments
LEB
12-9-75

The boundaries appear to be too restrictive - ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
from attached walking tour guide, I would have included Bow St. as far as
Union Square. Section B is poorly written, not really addressing the
architectural significance of the area. (The walking tour guide is a good first

local effort, tho # of NR properties is wrong & Rettig's name ARCHEOLOGIST
is spelt wrong.) of course surrounding environment will be protected under
sect. 106, but Bill L. indicates that boundaries cannot
be extended without impairing integrity of district. While there are
isolated bldgs. of arch. significance, there are too many intrusions as
one approaches Union Sq. Called Judy Dobbs - she will provide a

Hungund
12/9/75

OTHER continuation sheet on architectural significance HOLD; then ACCEPT
With the new continuation sheet received 12/22/75 - ACCEPT - Hungund 1/6/76

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Col
1/29/76

BRANCH CHIEF

accept
Hungund
J.J. 76

KEEPER

Accept
Rettig (for Murtagh)
3-21-76

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____
Federal Register Entry 5-4-76 Re-submit _____

Entered MAR 26 1976

INT:2106-74



ONE WAY
→

Methodist Episcopal Church
11th St. & 1st St.
W. 11th St. & 1st St.
W. 11th St. & 1st St.
W. 11th St. & 1st St.

BEANO
11th St. & 1st St.
W. 11th St. & 1st St.

3
2
1

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Somerville

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Margo Jones

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Somerville Historical Commission
City Hall, Somerville

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Prospect Hill Congregational Church, 17 Bow Street
(#1 on map)

PHOTO NO 1 of 5

PROSPECT HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
17 BOW STREET



STICK STYLE COTTAGE, 26 BOW ST.

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Somerville _____ VICINITY OF COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Margo Jones

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Somerville Historical Commission
City Hall, Somerville

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 2 of 5

Lambert House, 26 Bow Street (#2 on map)

2 of 5

PROPERTY

NPS Number

Title

Loc.



39-49 BOW STREET

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-74)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

MAR 26 1976

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Somerville _____ VICINITY OF COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Margo Jones

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Somerville Historical Commission
City Hall, Somerville

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 3 of 5

Faulkner Apartment Block, 39-49 Bow Street (#11 on map)

PROPERTY OF

NPS Number

Title:

Loc. 7a

39

3 of 5



#8

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-75)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON
Same**2 LOCATION**

CITY, TOWN Somerville VICINITY OF COUNTY Middlesex STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT Margo Jones

DATE OF PHOTO 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT Somerville Historical Commission
City Hall, Somerville**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 4 of 5

Title
Loc. First United Methodist Church (#8 on map)

4 of 5



BOW STREET

LOOKING EAST FROM BESIDE POLICE STATION (50 BOW ST.)

Form No. 10-301a
(Rev. 10-7')

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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1 NAME

HISTORIC

Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Margo Jones

DATE OF PHOTO

1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Somerville Historical Commission
City Hall, Somerville

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO. 5 of 5

Looking east from beside Police Station (right foreground, #12 on map), 50 Bow Street

map), 50 Bow Street

5 of 5

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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1 NAME

HISTORIC Bow Street Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY/TOWN Somerville

___VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE Sanborn Map

SCALE 1" = 100'

DATE

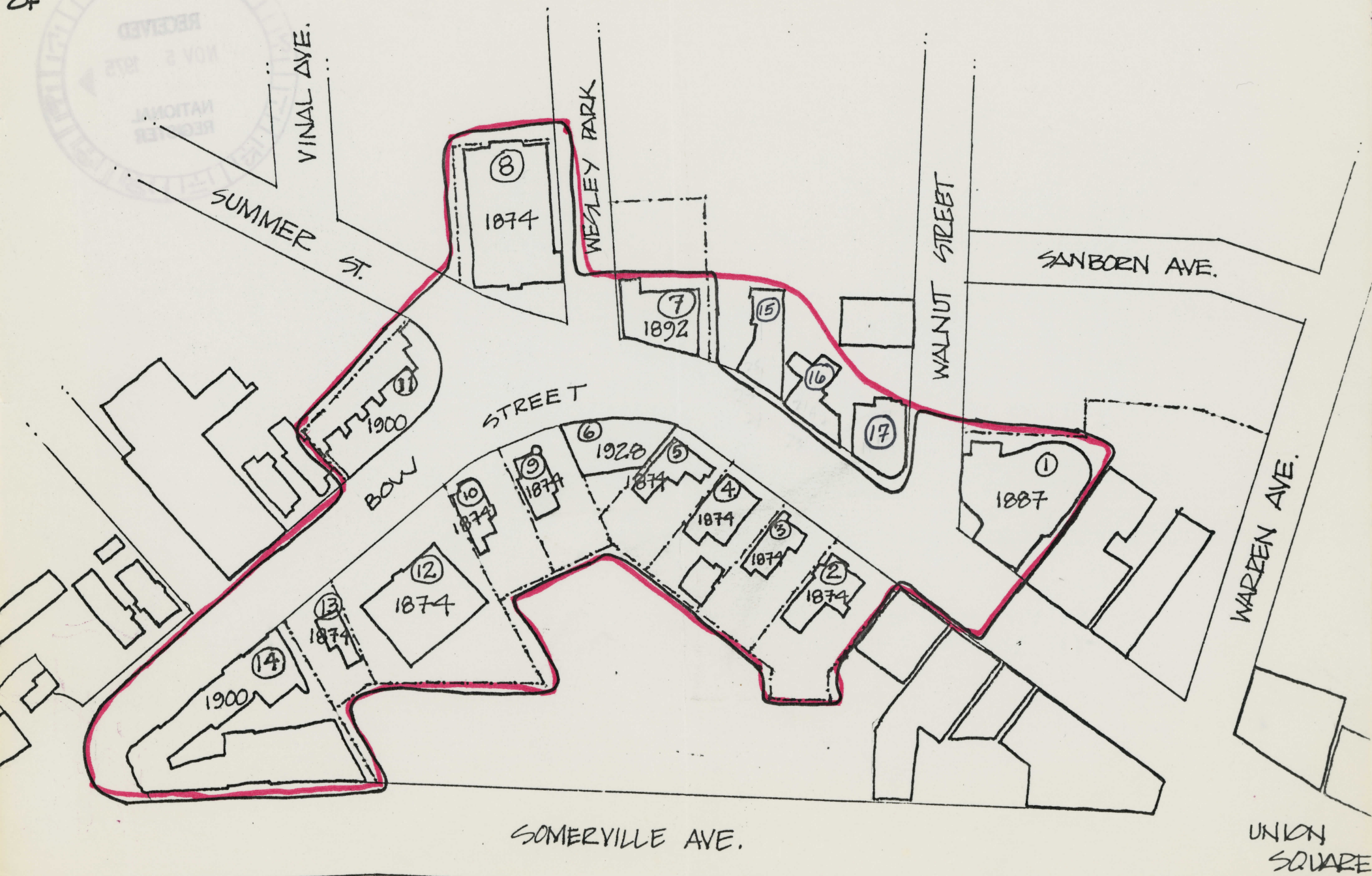
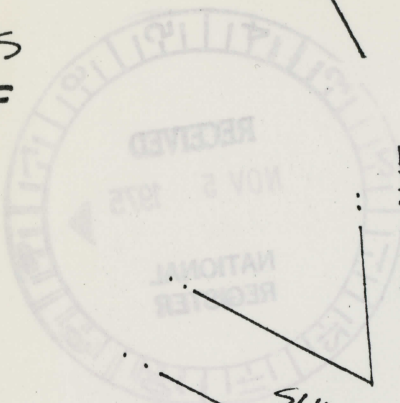
4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

SOMERVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

NES
OF



UNION
SQUARE



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN Somerville

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex

STATE MA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE USGS, Boston North Quadrangle

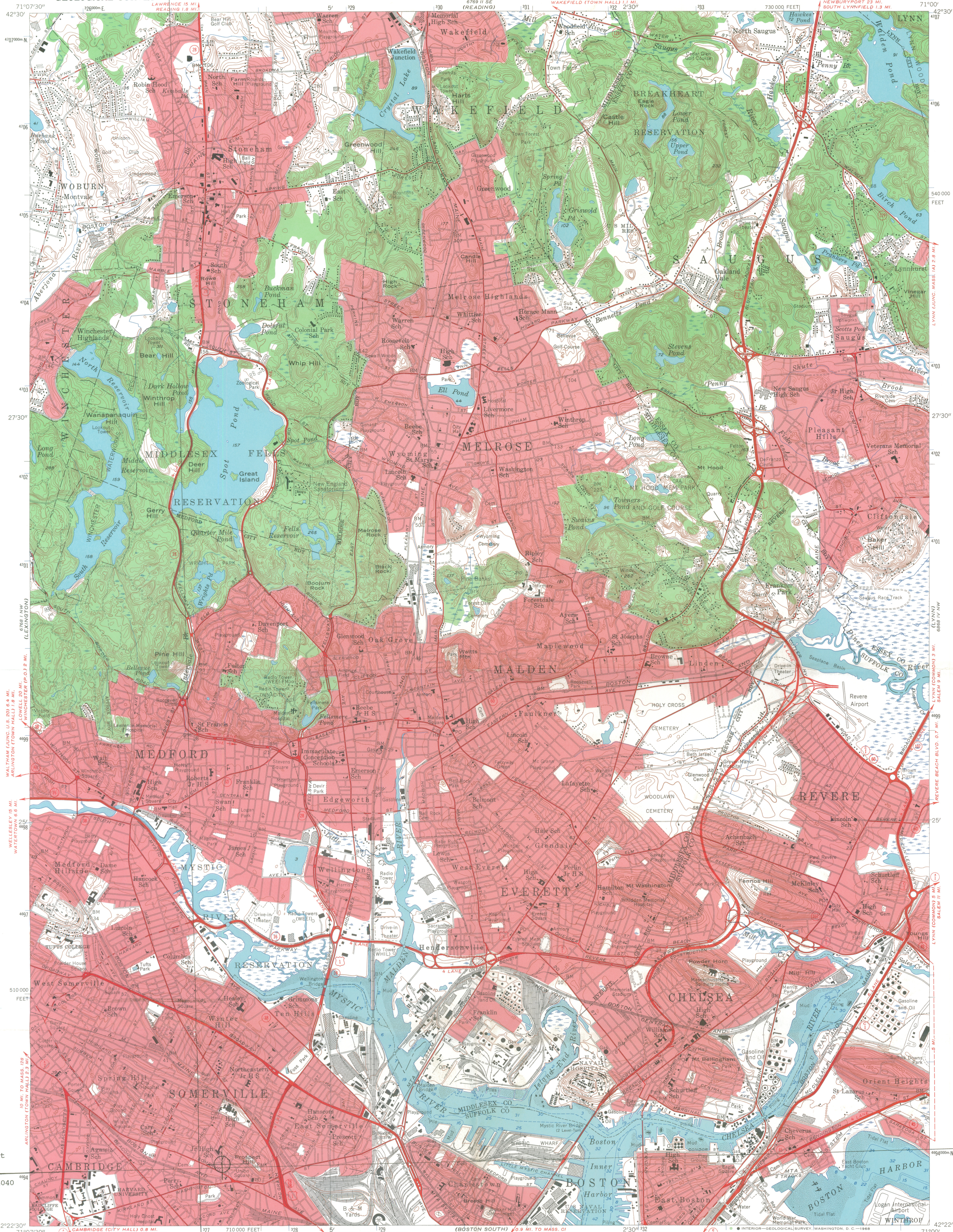
SCALE 1:24000

DATE 1956

4 REQUIREMENTS

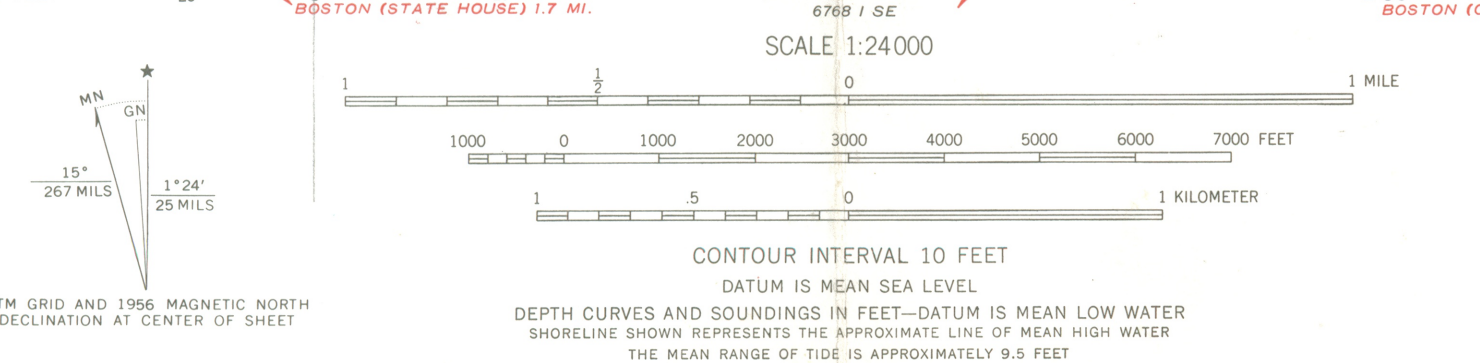
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



Somerville: Bow Street
Historic District
UTM: 19/327260/4694040

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USC&GS, USCE, Mass. Harbor & Land Commission, and
Mass. Geodetic Survey.
Topography by plane-table surveys 1943. Culture revised by
photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955
Field check 1956
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS charts 248 (1955) and 245 (1956)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts (Mainland)
coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Boundaries in tidewater areas from information
supplied by Mass. Dept. of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———

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NATIONAL REGISTER

QUADRANGLE LOCATION
BOSTON NORTH, MASS.
N4222.5-W7100/7.5
1956
AMS 6768 1 NE—SERIES V814

20



EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

MRS. MAUREEN S. HILLIARD
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

S. LESTER RALPH
MAYOR

October 15, 1975

Dear Somerville Resident/Community Leader:

Mayor S. Lester Ralph and the Somerville Historical Commission are pleased to send you this copy of Union Square Revisited. This booklet, a brief history and suggested walking tour, is a by-product of research done this summer in nominating buildings in that area for the National Register of Historical Places.

We hope you are inspired to tour Union Square as well as other sections of Somerville, more aware of architectural clues to Somerville's history.

Sincerely,

Mary G. Cahill

Mary G. Cahill
Historical Projects Coordinator





Union Square Revisited

INTRODUCTION

The amount of information which the Federal government requires when applying for an Historic District designation is extensive. Rather than filing away the interesting maps, photographs, interviews, and architectural history, we have made them available to you in this pamphlet. The pamphlet contains basic historical information about the Union Square area, a catalogue of the major styles of architecture, a walking tour of forty buildings in the Square area (including those nominated for the Historic District), and a few notes for residents and owners regarding maintenance and renovation of older buildings.

Since 1975-76 is the year of the bicentennial celebration, it seems appropriate for Somerville to commemorate the year with a publication which celebrates a significant element of local history. Also, the completion of the new traffic pattern and pedestrian improvements in Union Square this fall demonstrates a renewed interest in the area which can be amplified with an historic perspective.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the Honorable S. Lester Ralph, Mayor of Somerville, for his continuing support, without which this pamphlet would not have been possible.

We also wish to thank the Somerville Historical Commission: Mary Cahill, Executive Secretary; Isobel Cheney; Isabel Abbott; Hazel Hughes; Viola Herbert; and George Almond. The reference materials of the Somerville Historical Society were extremely useful.

Thanks to Charles Sullivan of the Cambridge Historical Commission for all his suggestions and editorial assistance, and to Judy Dobbs of the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

We are grateful to Mr. Philip Beyer, a long-time resident of Union Square, and to Dr. and Mrs. MacSweeney, for their cooperation.

This project was also made possible by the Architectural Assistance Program of the M. I. T. Department of Architecture, and the Federal Work-Study Program.

Special thanks to Julian Smith for his drawings.

UNION SQUARE REVISITED:
A Walking Tour, with a Brief History and
Guide to the Architectural Styles

Written and Illustrated by Lisette Ellis
Aron Faegre
Margo Jones
Drawings by Julian Smith

Under the auspices of the Somerville
Historical Commission and the Office
of Mayor S. Lester Ralph. 1975.



FORTIFICATIONS AROUND BOSTON IN 1775

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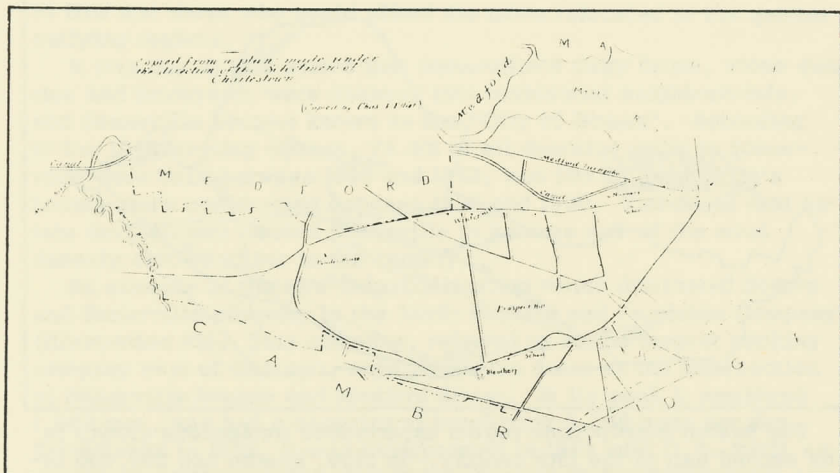
HISTORY

Somerville, until 1842, was part of Charlestown, and was called "Charlestown Without the Neck", or "Charlestown Beyond the Neck". At the time of the first settlement, the tide ebbed and flowed in the local rivers all the way from the bay to what is now Washington Street, one of the oldest thoroughfares in the area. "Skirting marshes and river", it followed an old Indian trail from Charlestown to Watertown. The first local settler, an Indian trader named John Woolrich, came to the area in the early 1600's; by 1630 the early Indian path had become a thoroughfare, the "Highway to Newtowne", leading from Charlestown Neck to Cambridge or "Newtowne". By the mid-1600's, a throughway to Arlington called "Charlestown Lane" was defined. This old road is known today as Somerville Avenue, Bow Street, Elm Street and College Avenue.

For the first 100 years of its settlement, the early citizens of this area were gradually developing enough commerce to sustain them. Major activities by the mid-18th century included cattle-raising, farming, brick-making, quarrying, and oystering. The "Highway to Newtowne" and "Charlestown Lane" continued to support most traffic in the region and subsequently provided the routes which allowed the area, later named Union Square, to play a role of national significance in the early stages of the American Revolution.

In 1775, "Charlestown Beyond the Neck" was the land first traversed by the British on their way to Lexington and Concord (Illustration #1). The 800 British troops arrived near Prospect Street from their boat across the Charles. From there they proceeded along the "Highway to Newtowne", and onward to Lexington. The British later retreated through Union Square, and several small skirmishes with the colonists occurred in the area, known today as the "Skirmish of Milk Row".

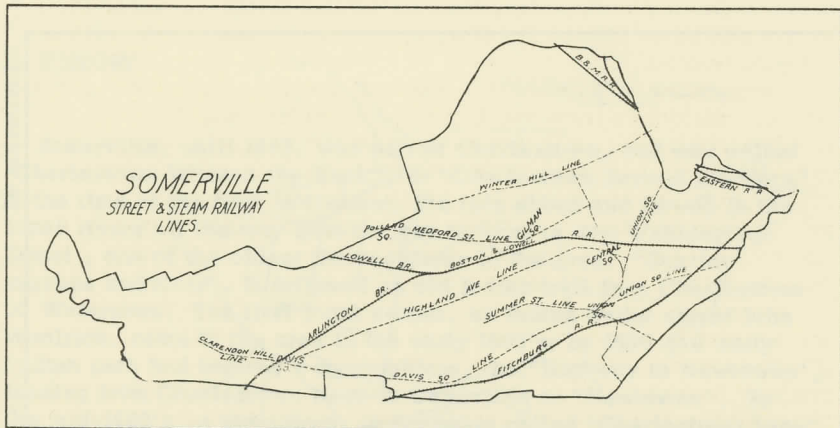
The local post-Revolutionary commerce became increasingly sophisticated, and served as an impetus for an independence movement which resulted in Somerville's being named and incorporated as a town in 1842. In addition to brick-making and quarrying, several



other industries were developed in the early 19th century, including dairying, bleacheries, dye and rope works, potteries, grist mills, distilleries, glass factories, saw mills, and eventually, slaughtering.

Originally, Bow Street took its bowed form by skirting marshland to its south. Later, between 1821 and 1830, Milk Row (now Somerville Avenue) was continued straight to Union Square, replacing Bow Street as the main thoroughfare (Illustration #2). The name comes from that time, when Bow Street was first bypassed and left as a protected pocket for the buildings which came in the 19th century. Subsequently, the form of the curving street has allowed its succession of buildings to develop a spatial integrity and visual rhythm with few modern intrusions.

The largest burst of population and housing growth in Union Square and Somerville occurred after 1850 when many immigrants came to Boston, and the expansion of the horse-drawn streetcar transformed Somerville from a farming community to a working suburb.



The Boston metropolitan region experienced tremendous growth in the second half of the 19th century. In 1850, Boston had 200,000 inhabitants living within a three mile radius; by 1900 there were over 1,000,000 people and the city encompassed a region with a ten mile radius. Most of this metropolitan growth occurred in the cities and towns which bordered on Boston proper. Two years before it was incorporated in 1872, Somerville was a town of 14,700. By 1900, it had expanded by almost 500% to a population of 69,000.

Union Square remained the main commercial and municipal center of Somerville. A primary reason for the importance of the Square was the growth of the street railway. The first horse-drawn street-car in the Boston area was established in 1852 between Union Square and Harvard Square. Providing a quick and inexpensive means of commuting to work, streetcars proliferated throughout the Boston area after the Civil War. In 1889 the first electric trolley was installed on Beacon Street in Boston. A transportation map of 1892 (Illustration #3) shows railway lines operating on Somerville Avenue, Washington Street and Summer Street. Illustration #4 shows a typical car. According to one source, West End trolley cars stopped in Union Square 88 times a day in 1900.

Street railway transportation opened up a much wider territory for housing. Now working people could live up to six miles away and still commute to work within an hour. During this time Boston

changed from a compact seaport to an industrialized commercial center. Consequently, the downtown became a less desirable place to live and those who could afford the move relocated to the quieter outlying regions.

It was during this period that Somerville's dairy farms, stone quarries and brickyards were changed into residential neighborhoods, and Somerville became known as the "City of Homes". According to the 1940 housing census, 76.4% of all dwelling units in Somerville were built between 1880 and 1920, and 50% of Somerville's houses were constructed between 1890 and 1900. This rapid real estate development caused Somerville to become one of the most densely settled cities in the country.

An example of the new industrialization which dominated Boston and Somerville economy is the North Packing and Provision Company (Illustration #5). This company, referred to as the largest packing company east of Chicago, covered twelve acres at the intersection of Somerville Avenue and Medford Street. At its peak it employed 1,000 men, and had a capacity of butchering 5,000 hogs per day. Established in 1855, it was incorporated in 1890 with G.F. Swift as president. Other smaller industries close to Union Square were a barrel maker, S. Armstrong & Co., employing 80 men, and I.H.



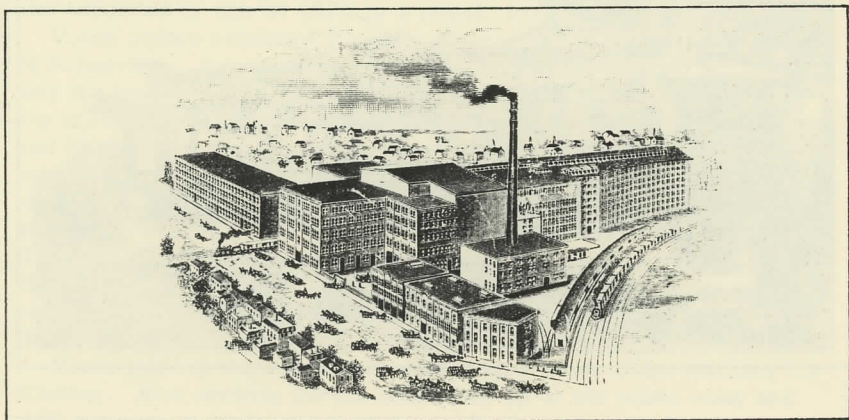
Illustration #4

Brown & Co. at 289 Washington Street, a millworking operation which had mechanized drying equipment.

With the advent of corporate economic development came a new class of white collar workers. Union Square was a prime location for business and professional offices. Bow Street became known as "Doctors' Row" as several doctors and dentists established residences with offices there. The major banks and local newspaper located nearby, and the upper floors of the Union Square block buildings were occupied by real estate, insurance, and other office workers.

Later, during the Depression of the thirties, business lagged and many buildings were significantly altered to adapt to the slackening pace. For the past thirty-five years, the automobile has had an increasingly adverse effect on the Square's economy; shopping centers with drive-in parking have encroached on the commercial livelihood of the Square. Although some offices remain, the number of professional practices has decreased. Elderly housing has been constructed near the Square, and many community organizations are finding uses for the buildings which have outgrown their original purposes. The State Department of Transportation is constructing a new traffic pattern in 1975 in an attempt to adapt a 19th century urban environment to its 20th century needs. This and other actions need to be taken to revitalize an historically and architecturally significant resource.

Illustration #5



THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

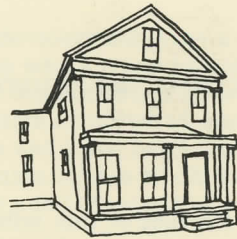
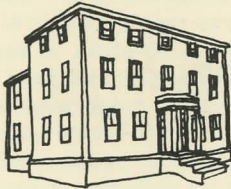
At the time of this printing, seventeen buildings on Bow Street have been nominated by the Massachusetts State and the City of Somerville Historical Commissions to be designated by the National Register of Historic Places as an Historic District. This group of buildings was selected because its valuable architecture represents the period of Somerville's largest growth, the late 19th century.

The National Register of Historic Places records those properties worthy of preservation for their historic value, as legislated by Congress in the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It is published biennially with pertinent information about each entry, with a growing list of over 1,000 entries.

In addition to this recognition, the Register protects the area from Federally funded or licensed projects which might have an adverse effect on the property, or might jeopardize the significance of and character of the area. Indirectly, these National Register properties are also afforded similar protection from state funded projects. (When no Federal funds or licenses are involved, there is no control over an owner's use or treatment of any National Register property.)

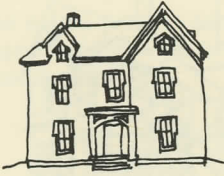
A National Register listing makes a property owner eligible to apply for grants-in-aid assistance from the National Park Service for preservation and renovation of his or her property. These funds are allocated and administered on the local level by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

It is hoped that the present physical character of the Bow Street area will continue to be maintained and enhanced. We have included a special section and bibliography at the end of this pamphlet which offer some pointers to owners and residents who wish to improve their properties. Any questions regarding the Historic designation can be addressed to the Somerville Historical Commission at City Hall.

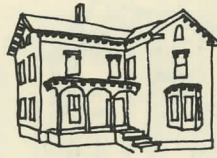


The late phase of Georgian architecture is known as the **FEDERAL** or Adam, style, which emerged in part from the work of Charles Bulfinch in Boston, from 1790 to 1820. Proportion and clarity in both the massing and the facade have priority over extensive ornamentation. The simple geometric forms and uncluttered wall surfaces are important elements. The cornice is crisp, and seldom returns across the facade on the gable end symmetrical, with longer windows on the ground level, and an entry with side lights and fanlights. Elements of the Federal style came into vernacular use in the early 19th century, and such buildings were generally characterized by delicate trim and flat facade.

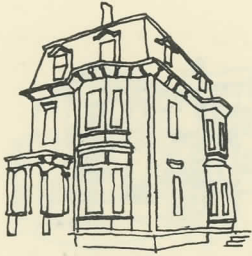
In the second quarter of the 19th century, the **GREEK REVIVAL** style became almost a national style of architecture. It began as an adaptation of the Greek temple form to a functional 19th century dwelling. Houses were usually sided with clapboards, with gable roofs open to the front or side, and either center, or (more commonly) side-hall entries. The style is most easily identified by protruding molding on the gable and cornice lines which forms a large triangular pediment. Heavy window frames and corner pilasters are usually present on the facade, and there is often an entrance porch carried by Doric columns. Such buildings were invariably painted white. In vernacular building, any and all of these details were used in an endless variety of single and double houses.



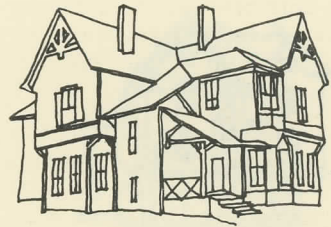
The **GOTHIC REVIVAL** came to Massachusetts in the 1830's, copied from English and Continental prototypes. The early Gothic Revival is characterized by a steep, pointed gable roof and pointed or lancet window arches. Any surface ornamentation (window tracery, moldings, etc.) appears thin and fragile. The commercial and institutional Gothic Revival buildings of the 1870's are often larger than early examples of the style, and often combine multi-colored stone trims with patterned brick walls in a variety of color and texture. The steep gable and pointed arches remain, although these elements in later buildings tend to be exaggerated in a building of great perpendicular thrust.



The **ITALIANATE** or **BRACKETED** style began in imitation of Italian country villas. The silhouette of this building style is heavy and irregular. Windows, especially at the attic level, can be half-rounded. Bay windows, balustraded balconies and verandas are all common Italianate features. The wooden bracket was one of the popular successes of the Italianate style, a detail made possible on a large scale by the invention of special saws and lathes in the mid-19th century. The bracket's many varieties, low cost, high visibility and adaptability resulted in its wide use between 1850 and 1900, and it can be spotted today on countless vernacular buildings of all types.



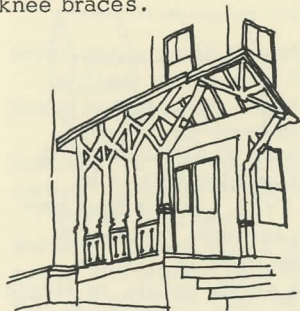
The MANSARD, or Second Empire, style had its roots in an academic movement in France which advocated monumental scale and heavy ornamentation, including a high, slate-covered, double-pitched roof. A mid-19th century designer, Henry Greenough, introduced a version of this style to Cambridge which emphasized a tall, richly modeled facade. The original French style became Americanized with the use of porches, verandas, and asymmetrical facades. It was popular in this country in the 1850's due to its European fashionability and the practical effect that the top story space became usable without raising the cornice line. Eventually, the "French roof" became an ornamental feature of house construction like brackets, bay windows and porches.



QUEEN ANNE refers to a general style of building which became popular after 1870. The style is marked by bold experimentation in floor plan and exterior features, which contrasts with the formal academicism of revival styles. Irregular plan and massing characterize a style which grows from an additive building process, the result of an understanding of and respect for the inherent nature of materials. Roofs are high and multiple; bay windows are often used, and frequently there are many gables and chimneys. If there is any classical trim, it tends to be small in scale.

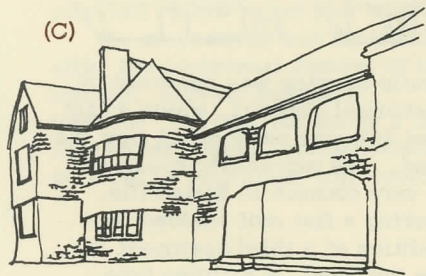
The STICK STYLE (B) is one of the few uniquely American architectural styles of the 19th century. The variety of massing, texture and color which began with the Queen Anne style is accented with extensive exterior "stickwork" which symbolizes, but does not incorporate, an unseen structural frame.

The eaves project and are often supported by large brackets and knee braces.

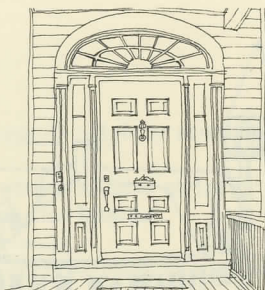


(B)

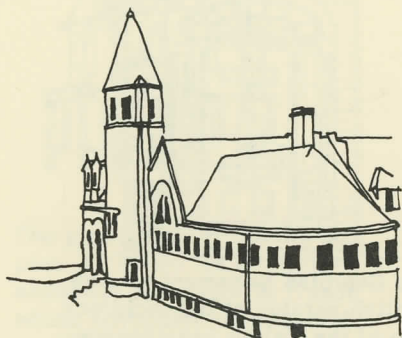
The SHINGLE STYLE (C) is another of the asymmetrical Queen Anne group. Shingles are used instead of the usual clapboards to emphasize round and continuous form. Often decorative shingles are used on an upper floor.



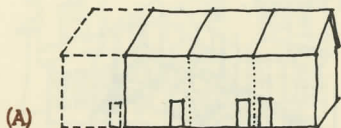
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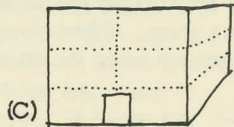
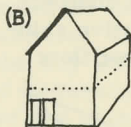
The Georgian movement was an English version of the architecture of the Italian Renaissance. It was the predominant style in America from the 1730's to the 1820's, and since its revival in the 1880's it has been in many respects the dominant architectural style in America. Georgian structures built after the mid-19th century are said to be in the COLONIAL REVIVAL style, the influence of which can be seen in many Somerville houses. The roof is low in pitch, and the facade symmetrical with large, double-hung windows and a restrained cornice, which often has a row of small, closely-spaced blocks called dentils. Later versions of the Georgian Revival use its details in isolation on buildings designed by carpenters and small builders, rather than imitating the pure rectangular European design.



The **ROMANESQUE REVIVAL** began in the 1840's and was later popularized by H.H. Richardson, the architect of Trinity Church in Boston. The characteristic features of the Romanesque are round arches, semi-circular forms, and often, different colors of masonry. Richardsonian Romanesque is distinguished by its rough-cut stone masonry which forms the ground level, arches, lintels, and transoms. The upper exterior walls are made of a different masonry material than the structural features, reinforcing the sense of weight and massiveness. Square towers are topped with pyramidal roofs; windows are arched or straight-topped and divided into rectangular sections by stone mullions and transoms.



Another means of distinguishing residential architecture is by **BUILDING TYPE**. In the first part of the 19th century, residential development usually took the form of the single house, or single houses put together into double- or row-houses (A). Unit division was vertical, enabling residents to own the land upon which the house was situated. By the end of the 19th century, most multi-

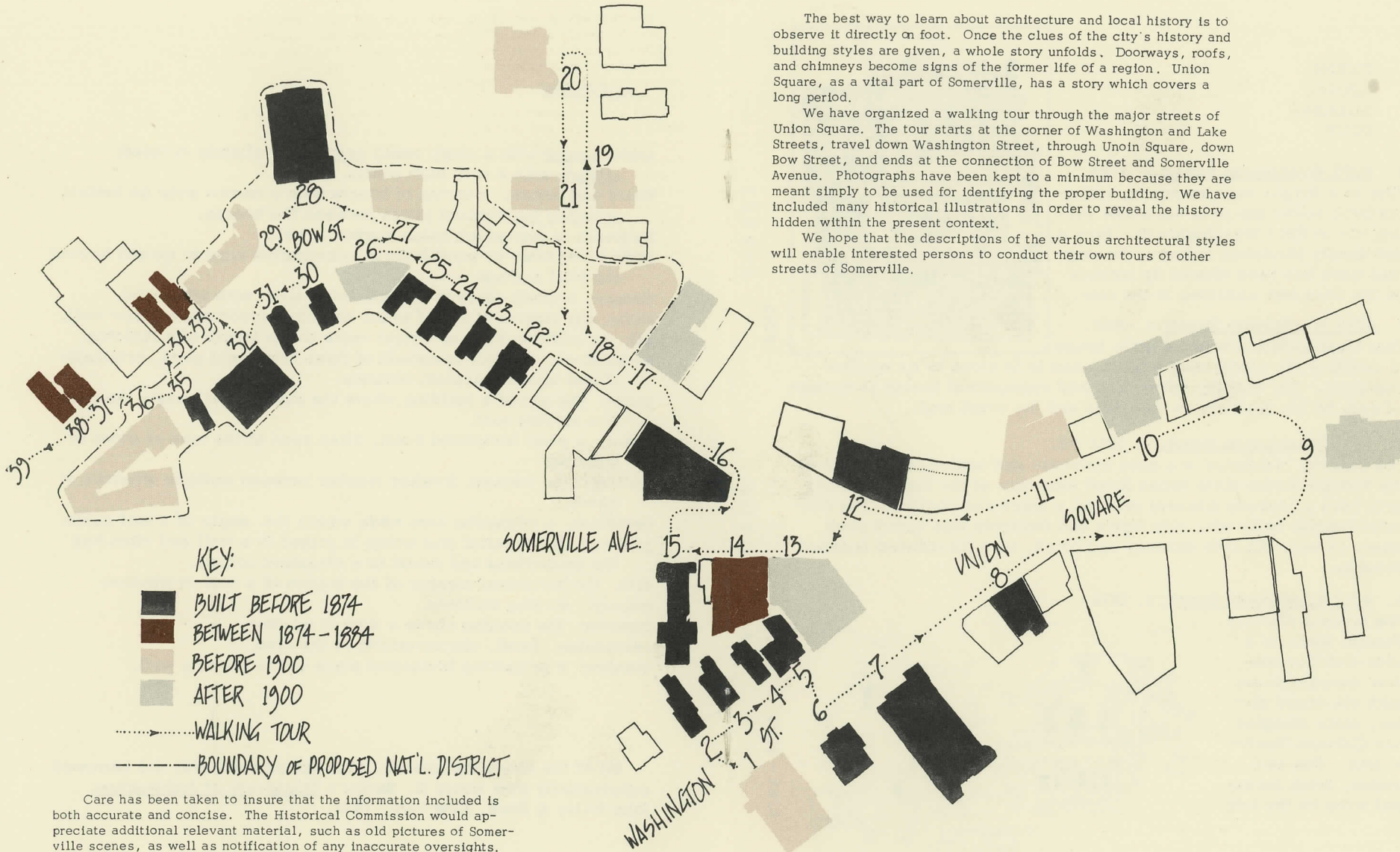


family housing was achieved by horizontal division, which meant that only one party could own the land. The **two-family house** (B) is very common in Somerville. Making a flat roof enabled the addition of a third apartment to the top level, a building type known as the **triple-decker** (C). Much larger versions of this style developed into tenement or apartment blocks.

GLOSSARY

- arch:** lancet-with a sharp point; segmental- slightly rounded; stilted- with a very high center.
- board and batten:** a facing of boards with a narrow strip (or batten) covering the vertical joints between the boards.
- buttress:** a pier which helps support a wall.
- corbel:** masonry or wood built in consecutive rows to extend beyond the wall surface.
- dormer:** a small gable in a larger roof, often with window(s).
- eave:** the portion of a roof which extends beyond the exterior wall.
- ell:** an addition built at a right angle to the length of a building.
- entablature:** a detail composed of three horizontal parts, originally placed above classical columns.
- gable:** the end of a building where the outside wall meets the ridge of a sloping roof.
- lintel:** a short horizontal beam, often seen at the tops of doors or windows.
- mullion:** the vertical dividing member between multiple windows or doors.
- pediment:** a triangular form made within the angle of a roof gable.
- pilaster:** a low relief pier which is joined to a wall and often has the proportions and detail of a classical column.
- sill:** the horizontal member at the bottom of a door or window.
- tracery:** curving mullions.
- transom:** the opening above a door or window.
- vernacular:** local, characteristic of the area.
- cornice:** a projecting horizontal piece at the top of a wall.

All of the above definitions, although paraphrased, are borrowed substantially from Henry H. Saylor's Dictionary of Architecture, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1952.



Care has been taken to insure that the information included is both accurate and concise. The Historical Commission would appreciate additional relevant material, such as old pictures of Somerville scenes, as well as notification of any inaccurate oversights.

The best way to learn about architecture and local history is to observe it directly on foot. Once the clues of the city's history and building styles are given, a whole story unfolds. Doorways, roofs, and chimneys become signs of the former life of a region. Union Square, as a vital part of Somerville, has a story which covers a long period.

We have organized a walking tour through the major streets of Union Square. The tour starts at the corner of Washington and Lake Streets, travel down Washington Street, through Union Square, down Bow Street, and ends at the connection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue. Photographs have been kept to a minimum because they are meant simply to be used for identifying the proper building. We have included many historical illustrations in order to reveal the history hidden within the present context.

We hope that the descriptions of the various architectural styles will enable interested persons to conduct their own tours of other streets of Somerville.

UNION
SQUARE
WALKING
TOUR

2. #273 Washington Street; c. 1865.

This is a simple mansard house, probably built before the more elaborate yellow one at #265 Washington St. Now a two-family clapboard cottage, the original mass has been altered by porches on the front and additions at the rear.

3. #269 Washington Street; c. 1860.

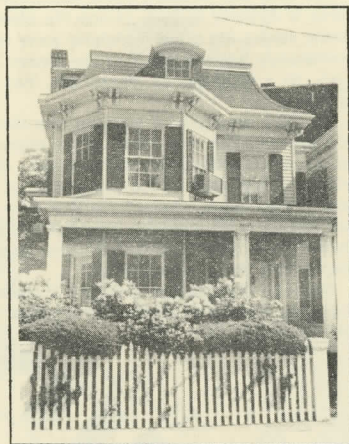
This early simple bracketed style house is probably the oldest on the block, and is in close to its original condition. The simple, spare, flat and symmetrical facade is accented only by the brackets on the gable and the porch roof.

4. #265 Washington Street; c. 1865-70.

The Flaherty residence is a more elaborate and sculptural example of the Second Empire style house found next door at the Funeral Home; both have a concave mansard roof and a bracketed cornice. The Colonial Revival entry with side lights and fanlights was added much later, as were the side chimney and porch, with its rounded encased columns.

5. #261 Washington Street; c. 1870.

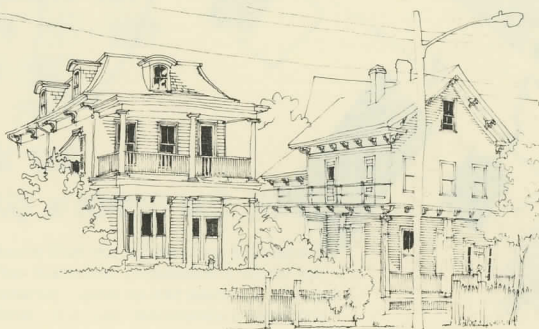
The present Flaherty Funeral Home is a side-hall bay window mansard house with clapboard siding, slate shingles and Colonial Revival trim. The entrance, brick facing and wing on the left



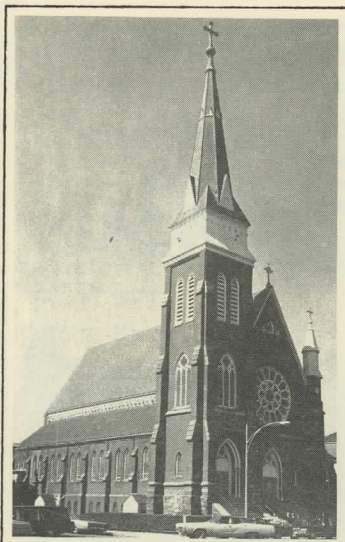
#265

STREET

WASHINGTON



#269 - #273



are more recent additions which alter the original massing of the house.

5. Parochial School; c.1890.

This three-story brick institutional building has a simple rectangular form which is slightly embellished by roof pediments above the cornice line and brick pilasters which help support the tall structure. Generous windows with brownstone lintels are placed symmetrically.

6. #2 Washington Street, Rectory; c.1870.

This High Victorian mansard-roofed house was built about the same time as St. Joseph's Church. A large house for its time, it is a good example of

the later developments of the mansard style (after 1870): the silhouette of the house has changed to include bays, towers and turrets which break through the continuous cornice line and front plane of the facade.

7. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Washington Street and Union Square; 1871-74.

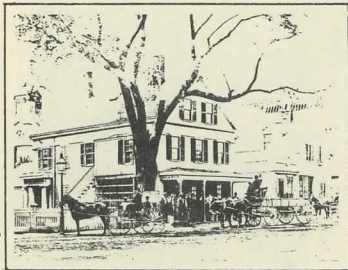
Murphy, architect.

St. Joseph's, the first Catholic church in Somerville, is an excellent example of the High Gothic style. The building follows the traditional cathedral form with a high central nave, smaller, illuminated side aisles, and a tall, narrow steeple. The building is composed of granite, brick and wood painted white. The fine foundation and slate roof are well-preserved evidence of the productivity of local quarries. Multiple lancet stained-glass windows and a large rose wheel window are typical of the style.



8. #15 Union Square; c.1845.

This is apparently the first residence in Union Square, and the birthplace of the founder of the Flaherty Funeral Home, Francis E. Flaherty, Sr. A very early end gable Greek Revival house, #15 Union Sq. still has its original brick foundation and rectangular shape, although the facade has been altered significantly over the years. The clap-board siding, corner pilasters and broken cornice line are all original details.



9. Union Square Fire Station; 1903-04.

Walter T. Littlefield, architect.

The form of this fire station, with its square bell tower, is derived from Italian Renaissance villas. Some details, such as the granite keystones, are reminiscent of Roman monuments. Many fire stations of this period are in the same style. Although not unique architecturally, this building serves as a visual focal point in the eastern end of the Square. Of note is the special brick wall pattern, a "Flemish" bond with both light and dark colored bricks.

10. Police Station, #66-70 Union Square; 1932.

Greek columns, alternating concrete blocks at the corners, and the symmetry of the facade all indicate the Neo-Classical Revival style, which many designers of municipal and bank buildings favored in the Thirties.

11. Stone Building (or Barristers Hall), #57-61 Union Square; 1891.

Built as the main office of the Somerville Savings Bank by its treasurer, Jonathan Stone, this building is brick with granite lintels and foundation, and a steel interior structure. By the late 19th century, commercial blocks



Fire Station

were built with detailed surface decoration on the first floor, leaving the upper stories relatively plain. Recent renovations have obscured its true age and original facade.

12. Union Square Hotel, #45-50 Union Square; c.1855-60.

This brick, bearing wall building is similar to much of the early 19th century commercial architecture in Boston. Though it is one of the oldest buildings in Union Square, it survives with changes only at the ground level. Granite lintels, a gently sloping slate roof, and star shaped tie bolts detail the simple and handsome facade.

#45-50



13. #21-29 Union Square; c. 1935

A three-story wooden commercial block building with a delightful mixture of Italianate, Mansard and Gothic styles (see old photograph on next page) once occupied this important position in the Square, until it burned down in the thirties. At that time the existing one-story concrete commercial building with Egyptian Revival surface treatment was erected, reflecting the more limited resources

of the Depression era.

14. Eberle Building, #31-34 Union Square; c.1884.

Constructed soon after the Hill Building across the street, this brick building was financed by Phil Eberle, a shoe merchant. The building is a modest Queen Anne style commercial block whose large regular openings present an unusually light facade. An interesting brick pattern is found at the



#31-34

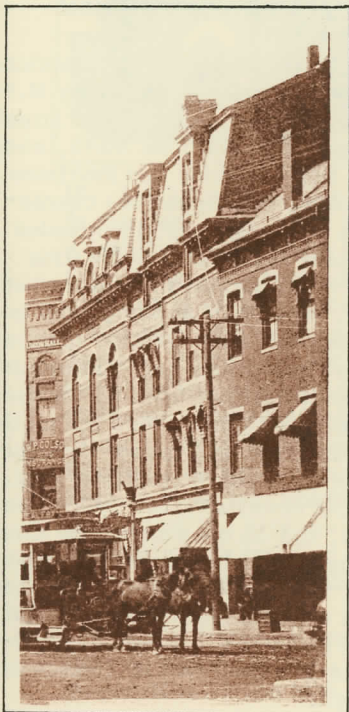
UNION SQ.



cornice line, and the wooden window trim is carved in the same pattern as the brownstone lintels on the Hill Building. The third floor has a large hall which was originally used for community social gatherings, holding up to 800 people. The mansard style wooden house on the right was Eberle's original residence.

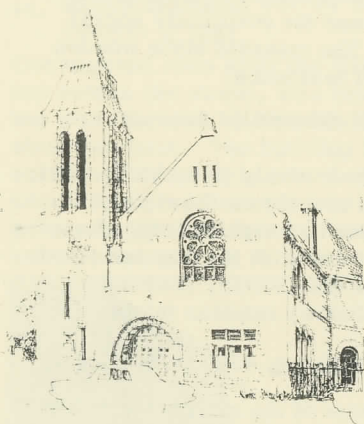
15. St. Thomas Episcopal Church, #300 Somerville Avenue; 1870, addition 1907-13.

A fine example of modest wooden Gothic Revival, this church originally had board and batten siding and a steeple on the right side. The entrance to a private day-care center has significantly altered its street appearance, but the interior nave with its exposed wooden trusses and Gothic, diamond-pattern windows remains intact.



16. Hill Building, #38 Union Square; 1874.

In the center of the old photograph to the left is a brick Queen Anne commercial block built by Ira Hill, a local builder and real estate developer. Originally boasting paneled brick chimneys and cornice details, and a mansard roof, the top two floors were removed in 1935 either to reduce heating bills and real estate taxes, or to avoid the threat of fire. Alternating brownstone and limestone blocks over the windows, and carved floral patterns on the lintels, give some idea of the detailing the building once had, indicating a builder who had a great deal of pride in his work.



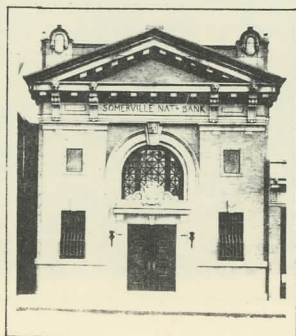
17. Somerville National Bank, #15 Bow Street; c.1915

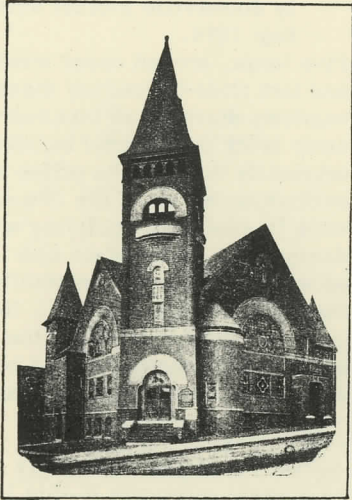
Another Neo-Classical Revival building of the early 20th century, this was built as a symbol of financial security by the Somerville National Bank. The original roof pediment on the front is still visible, although the lower portion of the facade has been "modernized" to include more windows.

18. Prospect Hill Congregational Church; 1887.

Henry Squarebrigs McKay, archit. This large church was founded by H. P. Hood, whose original dairy was situated in Somerville, and John North, owner of the North Packing and Provision

Company, which later became Swifts. The church has the characteristic features of H.H. Richardson's Romanesque style: rounded arches and semi-circular forms, a square tower, and contrasting kinds of masonry. The larger masses of the building are described by rough-cut (or "rusticated") granite, especially at the ground level. The stone arches, lintels, sills and transoms are also rusticated. The stained glass leaded windows are deeply set. Interesting formal relationships are developed with materials, such as the rusticated granite turrets which run up the square bell tower and appear as undulations in the tower's pyramidal roof. The central nave, situated on the second floor, has an open mahogany trussed ceiling and a circular arrangement of bays. The architect McKay designed a number of other buildings in Boston and outlying towns, including the Romanesque Immanuel Baptist Church in Cambridge.





Union Square Baptist Church

S T R E E T

19. #18 Sanborn Avenue; c.1890. In the 1880's the "flat" became a fashionable suburban housing form, often with the apartments arranged in three horizontal layers in what is known as a three-decker. This particular double three-decker was built in an elaborate Renaissance style because of its proximity to the Square. The expansive round bays and fine box windows on the Walnut St. side are embellishments on a building type which was used extensively throughout Somerville. The triple-decker became a standard housing form which was largely responsible for the high residen-

W A L N U T

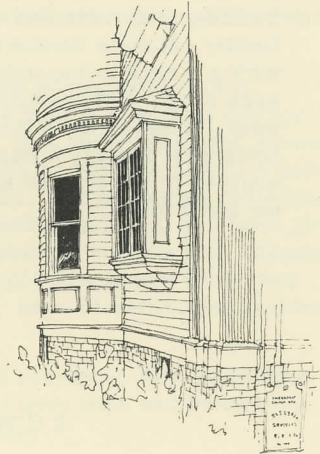
tial density of the city.

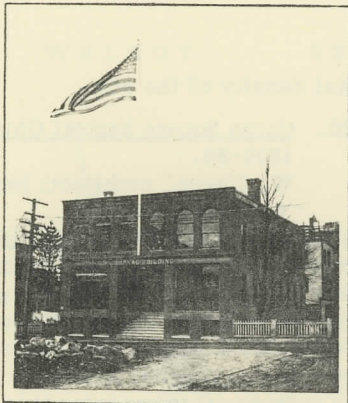
20. Union Square Baptist Church:
1895-96.

W. Hayes, architect; John A. Dodge, builder.

A Minneapolis architect designed this extraordinary church which has elements of both the Shingle and Romanesque styles. A square corner tower dominates the composition of circular forms. A lower cylindrical tower joins this square tower to the main hall, with its large, semi-circular stained glass windows. The use of brick for the lower story, clapboards for the first floor, and shingles for the top level is characteristic of the Queen Anne style. (These details are obscured by new siding.)

#18 Sanborn Ave.





#8-10

WALNUT

STREET

21. #8-10 Walnut Street, formerly Somerville Journal Building; 1894.

Five large, arched upper windows and two floor-to-ceiling display windows distinguish this two-story brick commercial building, originally built as the office and publishing house of the Somerville Journal. The building was designed to accommodate new printing equipment, especially the new linotype machine. Now used for artists' studios, the building has been occupied by a

number of different commercial and civic operations over the years.

27. #33-37 Bow Street, "The Richmond"; 1892.

The use of pilasters, entablatures, arched openings, pediments and bold cornices suggests a Renaissance Revival influence in this four story store and tenement block, known as the Druit Block (after its builder, who also constructed the hotel at #58-68 Bow St.) A tower with a concave hexagonal roof is placed at the corner, and each facade has several bay windows. Previous mixed-use row house buildings were divided into distinctly separate vertical units, with a single living unit above each shop. This particular tenement, however, with the flats in horizontal layers, a design which evolved to the type of apartment we know today.

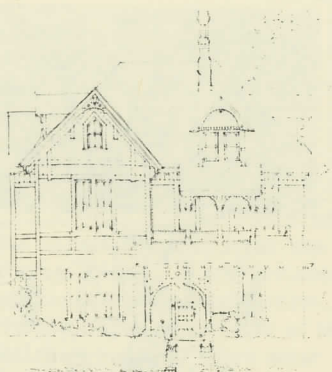


#33-37

BOW

STREET

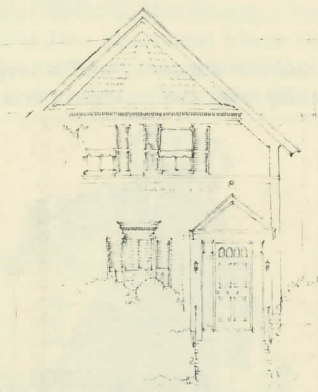
#26



22. #26 Bow Street; c.1974-84.

This combined residence and doctor's office, one of six remaining from the 19th century "Doctors' Row", is an excellent example of Stick Style architecture. Infill between the sticks is primarily beaded clapboards, with board and batten under the eaves. The front entrance has a transom supported by posts and finely detailed knee braces. Wide eaves are supported by brackets. The roof includes three gables and six dormers with scroll work and vertical

board and batten, and two corbelled and panelled chimneys. Interior mahogany paneling, tile fireplaces and stained glass windows are all in original condition. The craftsmanship throughout is excellent.



23. #30 Bow Street; before 1874.

A Colonial Revival entry and a left wing have been added to this vernacular end-gable house; these additions reinforce the balance and proportion of the original structure.

24. #34 Bow Street; before 1874.

Originally a simple side-hall cottage of the 1850's, this house has been altered several times by the addition of a cross gable, an ell, and an angled projecting wing. The entire building has been given a fine shingle surface and Colonial

Revival detail, and is an excellent example of a house which has been remodeled with great sensitivity by several vernacular builders.

25. #36 Bow Street; before 1874.

Another of the "Doctors' Row" end gable cottages, this building's asymmetries seem the result of additions over time and cannot be attributed to a specific architectural style.

#34

26. #38-40 Bow Street

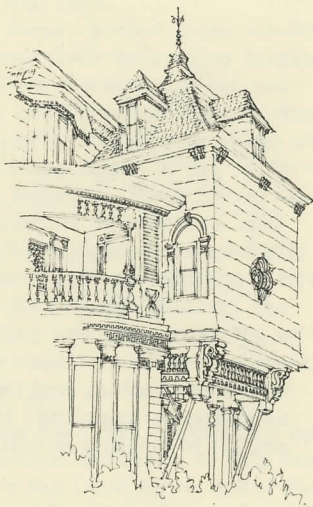
Market Building; before 1928.
This single story, six bay brick commercial building was formerly a fish market.

30. #42 Bow Street; before 1874.

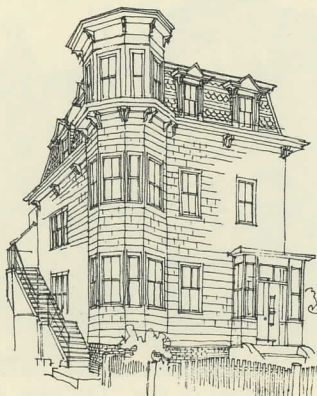
This simple three-story bracketed mansard house is distinguished by a full-height tower on the left which until recently had a pointed conical roof. This is a side-hall mansard, formerly sided with shingles.

31. #46 Bow Street; before 1874.

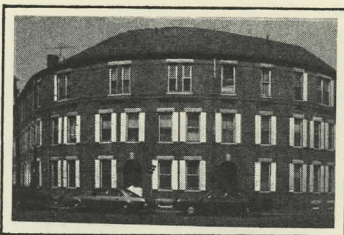
This building has an amusing, eclectic assemblage of late 19th century architectural details. The basic plan is of an end gable bracketed cottage, now obscured by the addition of a rounded bay window on the first floor left side, gabled dormers, and a large square bay on the right which leans heavily over the entrance and is supported by posts and braces. A circular rose-shaped stained glass window peers from the bay. The roof of this bay resembles a pyramid, and is built in three distinct sections. The left, rounded bay is built of Federal pilasters, narrow windows, and an entablature. Above it sits a porch with a domed roof, surrounded and supported by finely turned woodwork. There are several stained glass windows behind this porch and in the entrance hall.



#46



#42



28. First United Methodist Church
1858-74.

This large brick church defines the edge of Carr Square at the curve of Bow Street. The pointed arches and monochrome appearance indicate early Gothic Revival style. The lower window

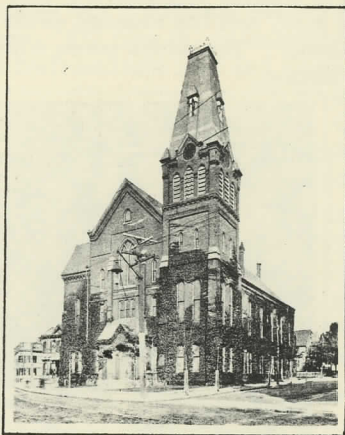
arches are segmental and pointed, and the upper lancet in form; the windows are of leaded diamond-shaped stained glass. A low horizontal base, window sills, and small roof buttresses are all in granite, and there is some brick

Though begun at the end of the Early Gothic Revival period, it was finished in 1874, when most such building had ceased elsewhere in the country. The steeple which once reached 90' was removed after the hurricane of 1938. Although the church membership is declining, as is typical of most urban churches, the building continues to be actively used by community organization.

29. #39-49 Bow Street, Apartment Block; before 1900.

This fine apartment block is built in a crescent shape to conform to the curve of the street, in a variant of the Queen Anne style known as panelled brick. The building has granite sills and lintels, and granite keystones in the entrance arches.

The brick become decorative between the second and third stories, where it forms an interesting checkered pattern, projecting from the building surface by several inches. The shutters are 20th century additions, and never would have appeared on a building of this type. The form of the building is similar in style, density and urban character to many commercial blocks built during the same period.



#58-68 Bow Street

32. #50 Bow Street, Somerville Police Station; 1874.

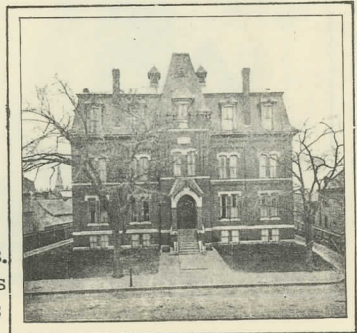
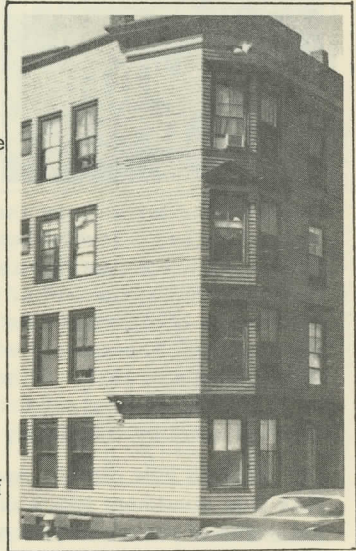
One of the first projects of the newly chartered city of Somerville was to erect this police station. The entrance arch and the use of contrasting colors (red brick and light granite) indicate a High Victorian Gothic style. Paired windows with segmental arched lintels having some carved detail, string-coursed granite sills on the second floor, and the now removed mansard roof are features of a style which began in this area with Harvard's Memorial Hall.

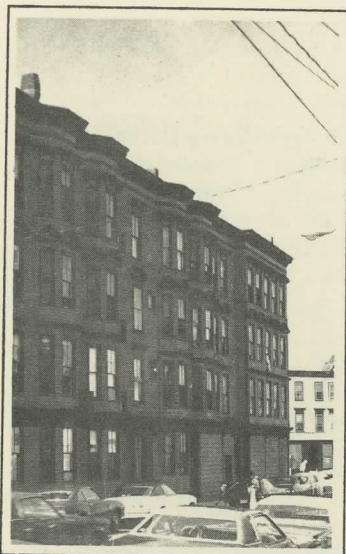
35. #56 Bow Street; c.1860.

#56 Bow St. is an excellent example of a modest side-hall end gable cottage with some Italianate detail. This vernacular building made two concessions to current architectural fashion; the side overhang and the pitch of roof, and the rounded gable window, both of which are Italianate manner. The entire porch with its second story projection is a later addition.

36. #58-68 Bow Street; before 1900.

This fine four story apartment house, built as a hotel by Mr. Druit, fills the triangular site at which Bow St. branches from Somerville Ave. Large facades on these two streets are characterized by small cornices set between shingles and clapboards, and by large cornices extending from the flat roof. The surfaces of the facades are broken at various intervals by full-height bays. All windows have complete entablatures above them, and the third floor windows





each have a pediment, suggesting that they have been influenced by High Renaissance styles of Italian city palaces. Painted in colors which are highly appropriate to the style, this structure provides a striking portal to the Bow St. District.

33, 34, 37, 38 #59-61;63;73-75;77 Bow Street; all by 1884.

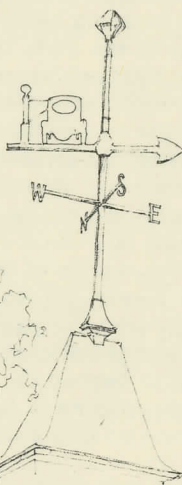
It is interesting to look at these four houses as variations on the same theme: the basic two-family house is an end ga-

ble, side-hall cottage with brick foundation, a form found throughout Somerville. The overall dimension and slope of each roof varies, and each house has a different variety of window bay. #77 Bow St. is embellished with a half-mansard roof and rounded turret;

#63 has Queen Anne windows and a finely detailed eave board.

39. #69 Bow Street; c.1920

Those who are familiar with the weather-vane shown here have sharp eyes. It is placed atop a small gas station which may have been one of the first to be built in Somerville.



#69 Bow Street



#63:61-59

RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping an older building in good shape not only provides the owner and his or her immediate neighbors with a source of pleasure, but also strongly reinforces the fragile network of the townscape. All of the buildings along a single street are bound up with one another, and every building has a responsibility not to upset the texture and integrity of the neighborhood. Any work done on a building should be done with an awareness of the visual effect it will have on the entire streetscape.

A building being preserved or renovated should retain the elements of the style in which it was built. It is impossible to recreate many building features that have been destroyed because the skill of early craftsmen and the richness of their work cannot be replaced. The best way to preserve the character while repairing an older building is to replace older materials with new materials of the same kind. Surprisingly, this is seldom as costly as one would think: the price of painting a house over a 25 year period is roughly the same as installing non-wood siding for the same amount of time.

The results of these investments last far beyond the present time. They provide a resource for the future which, by establishing a continuity with the past and its people, offers a richness that is invaluable and irreplaceable.

It is beyond the scope of this pamphlet to make more detailed suggestions as to how to maintain older buildings, but the following sources on this subject are strongly recommended:

- Beacon Hill Civic Association, Beacon Hill Architectural Handbook - Guides for Preservation and Modification, Boston, 1975 (227-1922)
- Brookline Planning Department, Vision, Inc., Fixing Up Older Houses
Handbook of Exterior Renovations, Brookline, March, 1975
(333 Washington St., Brookline, Mass. 02146) (232-9000)
- Greater Portland Landmarks, Inc. Advisory Service, Some Notes on Living with Old Houses, Revised, Portland, 1974.
- * Stephens, George, Remodeling Old Houses Without Destroying their Character; illustrations by the author, New York, 1972. (\$3.95) (available in many Boston area bookstores)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following books were used as source material for the written portion of this pamphlet:

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2. Cambridge Historical Commission, Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge: Mid-Cambridge (Downing, MacDougall, Pearson, 1967); Cambridgeport (1971); Old Cambridge (Bunting; Nylander, 1973). All M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass.
3. Saylor, Henry H., Dictionary of Architecture; John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1952
4. Somerville Citizen, Semi-Centennial Programme of Semi-Centennial Celebration of Somerville; March 3, 1892
5. Somerville Historical Commission, Somerville: An Historical Perspective; 1974
6. The Somerville Journal Co., Somerville Journal Souvenir 1842-1892; March 3, 1892
7. Retting, Robert Bell, Guide to Cambridge Architecture, Ten Walking Tours; M.I.T Press, Cambridge, 1969
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Cover illustration: G. M. Hopkins & Co., ATLAS OF THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE. Philadelphia, 1884.



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

294 Washington St, Boston, Massachusetts 02108 (617) 727-8470

11 December 1975

Mr. Ward Jandl
Review Unit
National Register Office
National Park Service
US Department of the Interior
18th and C Streets, NW
Washington, DC 20240



Dear Mr. Jandl:

In answer to your telephone request today for further information on the architectural significance of the Bow Street District in Somerville, Massachusetts, I am enclosing a Continuation Sheet with an elaboration of this point.

If you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Judy D. Dobbs

Judy D. Dobbs
National Register Editor
Massachusetts Historical Commission

/jd

enclosure

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered MAR 26 1976

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Dwight-Wenderson House	Great Barrington Berkshire County
Bow Street Historic District	Somerville Middlesex County
Lea Lower Main Street Historic District	Lee Berkshire County
Haydenville Historic District	Haydenville, Town of Williamsburg Hampshire County
Brockton City Hall	Brockton Plymouth County
Bryant-Cushing House	Norwell Plymouth County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Silvio O. Conte
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Hon. James A. Burke

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Regional Director, North Atlantic
Region

PR MOTT:djb 4/5/76

APR 27 1976

MASS. HIST. COMM.

HERALD-AMERICAN
BOSTON, MASS.
D. 424,654

(M) 9
McG

APR 22 1976

New
England
Newspaper

Bow st. area is given U.S. landmark status

In an announcement at City Hall yesterday, Mayor S. Lester Ralph revealed that the Bow Street Historic District has been accepted by the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Notification by letter from Paul Guzzi, Secretary of the Commonwealth, and Elizabeth Reed Amadon, State Historic Preservation Officer was received by the Mayor's Office that acceptance became official on April 16.

The Bow Street District is comprised of seventeen buildings in a densely settled, older section of the City of Somerville, near Union Square.

The district is a mixture of religious, municipal, commercial and residential buildings which exemplify the atmosphere and character of Somerville during the late nineteenth century.

Structures in the district include both brick buildings with granite trim and clapboard buildings with brackets and other details typical of the era.

Among the highlights of the district are: The

Prospect Hill Congregational Church designed by Henry S. McKay in 1887, the Lambert House (1879) which is one of six remaining from the nineteenth century "Doctor's Row", the First United Methodist Church (1856-74), the old Somerville Police Station (1874) which is now used as the Boys' Club.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register makes property eligible to be considered for Federal grants-in-aid for historic preservation through state programs.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 gave extensive responsibilities to the Secretary of the Interior to effect, through the National Park Service, a national policy of historic preservation.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 expanded this mandate and called for a broadened program for the preservation of all cultural property throughout the country.

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

1 NAME as it appears on federal register: Bow Street Historic District
 2 OTHER NAMES:
 3 date of entry: 3-26-76
 4 county code: 017

5 LOCATION street & number: Bow St.
 city / town: Somerville
 vicinity of:
 state: MA
 county: Middlesex
 6 NPS REGION: North Atlantic

7 OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name): public/private
 8 ADMINISTRATOR:
 9 EXISTING SURVEYS HABS HAER NHL
 10 FUNDED? YES NO
 11 CONGRESS. DISTRICT: 8
 12 SOURCE of NOMINATION: STATE FEDERAL
 if state who prepared form?

13 WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES, NAME: NO
 14 WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES, NAME: NO
 15 ACREAGE: 3
 LOCAL PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

16 CONDITION deteriorated altered original site
 excellent ruins unaltered moved
 good unexposed reconstructed unknown
 fair unexcavated excavated
 17 features: INTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3
 NOT INTACT-0 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-4 UNKNOWN-5
 NOT APPLICABLE-7 NOT APPLICABLE-8
 ENVIRON SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3
 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-6
 NOT APPLICABLE-9

18 ACCESS YES-Restricted YES-Unrestricted No Access Unknown
 19 ADAPTIVE USE YES NO
 20 SAVED? YES
 IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? yes

21 AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:
 ARCHEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 COMMERCE-6
 ARCHEOLOGY-historic-1 COMMUNICATIONS-7 EXPLORATION-12 LITERATURE-17
 AGRICULTURE-3 CONSERVATION-8 HEALTH-27 MILITARY-18
 ARCHITECTURE-4 ECONOMICS-9 INDUSTRY-13 MUSIC-19
 ART-5 EDUCATION-10 INVENTION-14 PHILOSOPHY-20
 ENGINEERING-11 LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 POLITICS/GOVT.-21 RECREATION-28
 ENTERTAINMENT-26 LAW-16 RELIGION-22 SETTLEMENT-29
 SCIENCE-23 URBAN PLANNING-31
 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 OTHER (SPECIFY)
 SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30
 TRANSPORTATION-25
 22 CLAIMS: explain
 'first'
 'oldest'
 'only'

23 functions
 WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: commercial/residential
 CURRENTLY: ditto
 24 dates of initial construction: last half 19th C.
 major alterations: mid--late 19th C.
 historic events:
 25 ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

26 architectural style(s): Romanesque Revival/Queen Anne
 27 architect:
 28 master builder:
 29 engineer:
 30 landscape architect/garden designer:
 31 interior decorator:
 32 artist:
 33 artisan:
 34 builder/contractor:

35 NAMES give role & date
 PERSONAL:
 EVENTS:
 INSTITUTIONAL:

36 NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP: Primarily residential district of 17 frame or masonry 2 1/2--3 1/2-story structures; notable are the Bow fronted Faulkner apartment block (1900), the Romanesque revival Prospect Hill Congregational Church (1887), and the Queen Anne Stick Style Lambert House (1874). Developed post-Civil War with advent of streetcar, allowing ^{workers} commutes from Boston for work; Bow St. replaced as main thoroughfare circa 1850; retains 19th c. integrity.