

“From Mansions to Mudflats: A Walking Tour of East Somerville’s Cornucopia of Cultural Treasures”

*Led by Edward Gordon, President, New England Chapter of the Victorian Society in America
Sunday, May 6, 2012*



This East Somerville walking tour starts on the north side of Broadway, in the parking lot across from the Mount Vernon Restaurant.

The tour will focus on three primary architectural styles of prominence within the East Somerville neighborhood: Greek Revival, Italianate, and Mansard styles. Greek Revival style examples can be found south of Broadway, such as the tract housing typified by corner pilasters, side entries, and gables that form a pediment. The Italianate style is identified by eaves with brackets and arched attic windows. In contrast, the Mansard style is characterized by distinctive double-pitched roofs that essentially create an additional full third floor and allow for more spacious rooms. This style is often associated with America’s early trophy houses.

Early on, East Somerville played a major role in the evolution of communication technology. In 1877, the first telephone conversation took place between an East Somerville homeowner, who lived on Arlington Street, and a member of the owner’s work staff, who worked on Court Street in Boston. Since the focus of this tour is on technological developments, as expressed through architectural building styles, we will view this house while meandering through the residential neighborhood in East Somerville south of Broadway.

Broadway offers a variety of building types and styles, including Mansard style houses, a former fire station that once appeared similar to the Palazzo Vecchio tower in Florence, Italy, and a public library that exhibits bold use of the Classical Revival style.

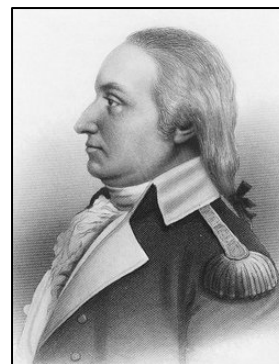


North of Broadway lays Austin Street which illustrates how East Somerville may have developed in the late nineteenth century if construction had not been delayed by the Panic of 1873. The northern portion of Austin Street provides a convenient platform to discuss two waterways – the long lost Middlesex Canal and the Mystic River. We will then explore the “State Avenues” neighborhood, dominated by large well-proportioned two-family houses, and discover the architectural curiosities on Cross Street East. The tour will conclude on Broadway where we will enjoy appetizers donated by Tapatio, one of the many wonderful ethnic eateries in the neighborhood.

East Somerville is a diverse and lively Somerville neighborhood that shares borders with the City of Cambridge to the south and the City of Boston, with Charlestown and Sullivan Square on its eastern edge. The neighborhood’s western boundary is a major transportation corridor that includes the McGrath - O’Brien Highway and rail tracks currently used by several commuter lines and the MBTA’s Orange Line, and formerly owned by the Boston and Lowell Railroad Company. In 1956 the Interstate Highway Act was passed and provided \$100 billion for building interstate highways throughout the United States. This led to the construction of Interstate 93 in the late 1970s that cut off a wide swath of land on the western edge of the City, bisecting the East Somerville neighborhood and separating it from easy access to the shores of the Mystic River. This northernmost edge of eastern Somerville became popularly known as Assembly Square, due the dominance of the Ford Motor Company’s auto assembly plant. The area will soon become a vibrant mixed use, transit-oriented neighborhood that ultimately will incorporate new office space, restaurants, cinemas, IKEA, a hotel, and over 2,000 housing units. The MBTA is in the process of adding a new Orange Line stop there and construction has begun for the new residential development.

To date, the citizens of East Somerville have witnessed watershed events and technological advances of major significance, not only to the New England region, but also to the entire nation. On April 18, 1775, Paul Revere made his famous Midnight Ride to warn colonists that the British Red Coats were headed to Lexington and Concord. This historic ride followed a road now known as Broadway through the neighborhoods of East Somerville and Winter Hill. This event triggered the American Revolution that resulted in the birth of a whole new country and inspired oppressed citizens in France and Latin America to overthrow their own authoritarian regimes.

Twenty years after the end of the American Revolution, East Somerville near Sullivan Square in Charlestown was the terminus for a major new transportation artery – the Middlesex Canal. Through the ingenuity of Loami Baldwin, the father of the civil engineering profession in America, this 27-mile long canal connected the Merrimack River Valley to the Boston Harbor. Constructed between 1792 and 1803, the Canal was designed to transport such goods as granite and lumber to many eastern Massachusetts communities, remaining relevant until the rise of the railroad during the 1830s. The Middlesex Canal folded in 1851 and, although sections are still visible in some communities, evidence of it in Somerville is limited to a marker at Foss Park.



Loami Baldwin

East Somerville also housed a portion of the first railroad line in the Boston area. The Boston and Lowell Railroad, chartered as early as June 1830, was hauling freight regularly between the two cities by 1835. By reaching a speed of 60 miles per hour, the train could make the 30-mile trip in 45 minutes. Due to demand from citizens in eastern Middlesex County, passenger service was begun in 1842. A railroad station was constructed at the southwest corner of Joy and Washington Streets, offering East Somerville residents the first opportunity within the newly established Town of Somerville to commute to white-collar jobs in Boston.

East Somerville is arguably one of the most ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the Boston metropolitan area. This is evident through the wide variety of ethnic restaurants found within the roughly one square mile neighborhood. Its status as a melting pot, however, is a relatively recent development. Starting in the 1840s and continuing through the 1890s, Protestant families set up households south of Broadway in commodious Greek Revival, Italianate, Mansard and Queen Anne residences. These were the homes of

Protestant captains of industry, house builders, retired sea captains, grocers, and others of largely British descent.

The electric trolley was introduced to Washington Street and Broadway about 1890, and it paved the way for East Somerville to host a much broader demographic. Irish, Italian, Greek, and Portuguese families found the area to be a convenient and pleasant place to live with its proximity to factories bordering Washington Street, commercial enterprises along Broadway, and easy access to Boston via public transit.

Short streets, such as Wheeler Street, were often designed to divide up large blocks whose original parameters were determined during the 1840s and 1850s. This is similar to the way large house lots were subdivided again for the development of new wood-frame, triple-deckers, and the occasional masonry apartment building. These innovative multi-family buildings were constructed in the side and back yards of existing dwellings and provided the type of rental housing necessary for office workers and other hourly wage earners.

The construction in 1911 of a Roman Catholic Church, St. Benedict's, at the corner of Hathorn Street and Lincoln Avenue, was a signal that a change to the East Somerville demographic was well underway. Irish families had become established, while Italian families, many of whom migrated west from the North End of Boston, became the newcomers. Today, the East Somerville neighborhood can be seen as a melting pot of Brazilian, Greek, Italian, Irish, Mexican and Portuguese families.



MOUNT VERNON STREET

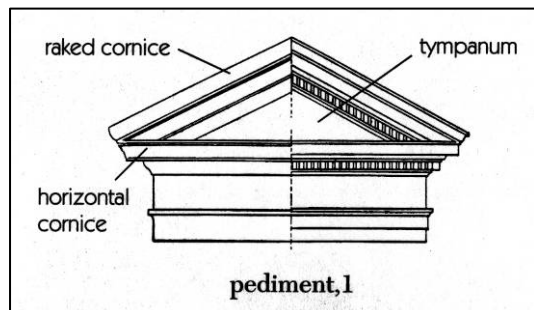
Welcome to the Somerville neighborhood where the Greek Revival style prevails. Mt. Vernon Street, between Broadway and Perkins Street, is a 1840s tract development of Greek Revival style houses. They symbolize the beginning of Somerville as a town, independent of Charlestown. Porch columns, ornamental pilasters, and gables that form a pediment all demonstrate the American fascination with Ancient Greece prior to the Civil War. The fascination with Greek design was fueled by recent archaeological discoveries in Greece, furniture design such as the *klismos* chair (depicted on ancient Grecian urns), early travel photography, the popularity of Greek mythology, and artistic references in mid-century paintings to the ancient world.



Mount Vernon Street National Register (NR) and Local Historic District (LHD)

8 Mt. Vernon Street (NR) (LHD)

The Ebenezer Davis House is an excellent example of a 2½ story Greek Revival style dwelling with a side-hall plan. Note the paneled pilasters and Doric columns on the porch. Ebenezer Davis was a Boston marine inspector whose name appears on the 1852 Draper map of Somerville, signifying Davis as one of the earliest members of the East Somerville community.



16 Mt. Vernon Street (NR) (LHD)

The Harrison Hutchins house was built circa 1850 and remained in the family until 1984. Harrison Hutchins is listed in City directories as a "whitener" which means an employee of a bleachery.

20 Mt. Vernon Street (NR) (LHD)

This dwelling is unique for Somerville as the entire façade is finished with vertical clapboards that lie flush to each other. This design is a direct reference to the stone construction of Greek temples which were both a model and an inspiration to this style in America.

26 Mt. Vernon Street

Although this building has been altered significantly over time, the present owners are currently in the process of restoring it back to its former glory. The most recent project has involved rehabilitating the original windows.

29 Mt. Vernon Street (LHD)

This is one of the few houses in Somerville and Cambridge that has full-length, triple-hung Greek Revival style windows. Note how much more ornate these Ionic columns are compared to the neighboring houses.

EAST SOMERVILLE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

This multi-building historic district encompasses stylish and substantial examples of houses that date from the second half of the nineteenth century.

84 Perkins Street (LHD)

Built circa 1870-1871, 84 Perkins Street introduces a domestic style of architecture that is well represented in East Somerville. This Mansard residence is substantial and well-proportioned. The original owner, Charles A. Dole, was a foreman for Stickley and Poor, and then Spice and Pickles of Charlestown. The Dole family were residents until the early 1900s.

46 Mt. Vernon Street (LHD)

Circa 1885, this structure ranks among the best detailed Queen Anne

residences in Somerville. For many years, this house was the residence of George S. Poole, Secretary of the Warren Institute of Savings.

**47 Mt. Vernon Street (LHD)**

As late as 1885, the Italianate style was also alive and well in the eastern portion of the City. The Fred Coburn House, whose original owner was a stationer, illustrates the Italianate style with its arched windows, wooden brackets, and a distinctive central portico.

50 Mt. Vernon Street (proposed LHD)

Circa 1895, this Queen Anne/Colonial Revival single-family house is noteworthy for its stained glass windows and front verandah, with paired Doric columns and bold scroll brackets beneath the deep overhang of the gable. Frederick Hosmer, a poultry dealer at Faneuil Hall Market, hired an unknown architect to design this dwelling in 1892.

51 Mt. Vernon Street (proposed LHD)

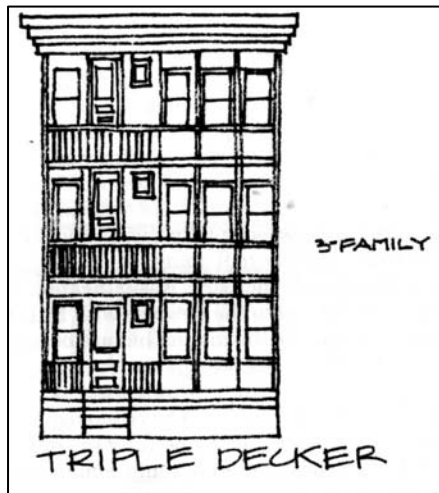
This center-hall house is an excellent example of a gable-end building also exhibiting a blend of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival style elements. It provides evidence that East Somerville was still a fashionable address at the close of the nineteenth century. This well-preserved residence could be called the "House That Burlap Built" as the first owner, Thomas L. Davis, was a burlap dealer in Boston.



From Mt. Vernon Street, turn right onto Wheeler Street. Proceed to the Pinckney Street intersection.

20 Wheeler Street (proposed LHD)

Constructed as six units for Mr. Littlefield in 1899, this dwelling is a fascinating and rare variation of the common triple-decker. Typically rectangular in form with three tiers of porches at both the front and back of the building, 20 Wheeler Street has a three-story porch nestled in the corner, which forms the north and west wings that are each three stories in height. The slender columns of the first and second story porches, window frames, broad string courses, and molded cornices all demonstrate the Colonial Revival style.



The triple-decker was introduced to both Boston and Worcester around 1880 and was instantly recognized by developers as a fast and efficient way to house the less affluent. This building type recommended interior features such as Colonial Revival style mantelpieces and built-in china cupboards. The popularity of the triple-decker rose exponentially after the introduction of the electric trolley, circa 1890, to Boston neighborhoods, and it proliferated in areas such as Dorchester and South Boston. The triple-decker persisted in popularity until 1915 and in some areas even later, including Jamaica Plain where this multi-family housing type was still being built as late as 1930. In Somerville, triple-deckers are primarily found in the eastern portion of the City while two-family dwellings remained more common in western Somerville. A noteworthy exception to this is the “States Avenues” section of East Somerville where two-families prevail.

Turn onto Pinckney Street and then right onto Perkins Street.

Some East Somerville streets have names that echo those on the southern slope of Beacon Hill in Boston, such as Mt. Vernon, Pinckney, and Myrtle Streets. Perkins and Otis were names of early nineteenth century Boston grandees who did extremely well in the shipping and real estate industries and also in politics. Perhaps the developers of East Somerville were suggesting that their streets would some day have the same cachet as Beacon Hill and the families of Thomas Handyside Perkins and Harrison Gray Otis.

At the intersection of Perkins and Lincoln Streets, turn left and walk a short distance to the corner of Lincoln and Arlington Streets.

1 Arlington Street (LHD)

This house located on the corner of Lincoln and Arlington Streets is primarily of the Italianate. Built for Nathan Tufts circa 1858, the dwelling boasts a substantial central gable with an oculus window, tab-accented window lintels sheltered by an ornate cornice, and a double window with a pediment above the main entrance. Shortly after Charles Williams Jr. bought the house in 1876, he added Eastlake style elements that include the ornate front porch and “punched and cut” gingerbread detail that overlays the central gable on the main façade, as well as cast iron railings above the first story windows.

The Eastlake style was named for Charles Locke Eastlake, an English writer, who developed a new aesthetic for both furniture and architecture. This new style was characterized by Renaissance Revival trim elements with incised linear designs. The Eastlake style is typically associated with furniture-like bookcases, sideboards and parlor furnishings, rather than such exterior details as the porch and window designs seen here at 1 Arlington Street.





This house at 1 Arlington Street also has a unique role in the evolution of telephone communication as it was the terminus for the first outdoor experimental telephone line. Charles Williams Jr. was an early innovator who rented space to Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone. Bell and his assistant, Thomas A. Watson developed the first telephone at Williams' electrical shop in Boston at 109 Court Street in 1875. The manufacturing of early telephones took place exclusively at the electrical shop until Williams' business was sold to the Western Electric Company in 1883. Williams purchased the wire, labor, and brackets to hold the wire to the structure, and the telephone line between his Court Street shop and the Arlington Street residence was completed on April 4, 1877.

From Arlington Street, turn left onto Lincoln Street.

Lincoln and Pearl Streets are among the best spots to see the Mansard style in East Somerville. The Mansard style was first introduced to America in 1847 at the Deacon Mansion (now demolished) in the South End of Boston. It evolved from a low pitch bell-cast profile to a sharp pitch with four straight sides. After 1870, the style continued to evolve into the hip-on-mansard roof giving the building a double pitch. This roof style enabled attic space to serve as a top floor, with commodious rooms and higher ceilings, before being superseded by the Queen Anne style in the 1880s. Lincoln Street was in existence by 1852, but not yet developed with houses. The bulk of the Mansard style dwellings on these streets were built between 1865 and 1885.

From Lincoln Street, walk north across Broadway.

Surveyor Thomas Greaves laid out Broadway as early as 1636. Broadway, the "Winter Hill Road," connected Charlestown with Medford. Originally bordered by farmsteads, Broadway became a commercial thoroughfare after horse-drawn trolleys were introduced to the area in 1858. As early as 1750, a sizable Georgian style farmhouse was located at the intersection of George Street and Broadway (47 Broadway). The Stearns homestead rose to two-stories and was capped with a hip roof. The clapboard house was highly symmetrical with a main façade that featured five-bays and a central entry. The Stearns family was initially engaged in farming, but in the 1830s they operated a distillery at Neck Village (Sullivan Square), and during the 1840s and 1850s the family was actively selling family land south of Broadway.

Turn left on Broadway and continue to the Mudflat Studios.

Hurst's Broadway Theatre, 79-83 Broadway

The original building was constructed by the Somerville Home Building Association in 1915 for the Star Theatres Incorporated. The Hurst Theatre had a capacity of 1,850 seats and continued to operate into the late 1940s.

By the late 1920s, Somerville had as many as six theatres! Only one, however, is still in operation today as a theatrical venue – the Somerville Theatre in Davis Square. In 1933, Arthur N. Viano, builder of the Teele Square Theatre, owned the Broadway theatre under the name "Viano's Broadway." It was located behind a façade of storefronts, a fairly typical arrangement for theatres at the time. The building has recently been totally renovated, both inside and outside, and is now the new home for Mudflat Studios. Organized in East Cambridge in 1971, Mudflat is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing the facilities and instruction necessary for adults and children to produce pottery. It is an important community resource that draws people to East Somerville from throughout the Greater Boston area.

67 Broadway

Currently the Boston Spine Clinic, this building was once a neighborhood funeral parlor, the Kelleher Funeral Home, going back to the late 1940s. It was painted in somber colors reflecting the nature of the business, white with black shutters, and clearly in contrast to the present brilliant blue color. Note that the Kelleher 'K' is still visible above the garage structure.

From Broadway, turn left onto Austin Street.

Laid out between 1860 and 1870, Austin Street, together with Mystic and Benedict Streets to the east, became an anomaly on the north side of Broadway as they were built-up with Italianate and Mansard style houses between the end of the Civil War and the financial Panic of 1873. This type of housing contrasted significantly with the two-family houses that developed decades later in the "States Avenues" area.

At the end of Austin Street, use this elevated perch to look toward the northern portion of East Somerville cut down in the late 1970s to accommodate construction of Interstate 93. The Middlesex Canal was once part of this northern edge of East Somerville.



Beginning in the early 1800s and through the 1850s, the Middlesex Canal extended through the northern portion of the East Somerville neighborhood. It began in Chelmsford, part of the Merrimack River Valley, and was designed to haul building materials and agricultural products south to the Boston markets. Its 27 miles terminus was at Sullivan Square, near the neck of land, or isthmus, which connected Charlestown to what later became Somerville. Canal boats were moored on the south side of the Charlestown Neck in the Charles River Bay, fed by the Charles River. Both the Charles River Bay and the nearby Miller's River disappeared beneath landfill during the late nineteenth century. The construction of the Middlesex Canal, a man-made waterway, and turnpikes with tolls were a feature of the Federal Period in America, as authorities for this new country were eager to accelerate the flow of commercial goods. Over time, the Canal was difficult to maintain in the New England climate, and it eventually became obsolete in the 1830s and 1840s when railroads could move people and products more efficiently.

In addition to the Canal, brickyards were also a common sight within the northern landscape of East Somerville. This type of production goes back to at least the 1850s when Colonel Jacques of Ten Hills operated numerous brick yards in the area. Much later, from 1926 to 1958, a Ford Motor Plant was located in the area, which underscored the importance of Somerville as a significant hub of early automobile commerce, most notably a car assembly plant, and multiple gas stations, garages, auto body shops and tire sale centers, all of which began in the first decades of the twentieth century.

From the north end of Austin Street, turn left at Maine Terrace. Continue southwest toward Maine Avenue, and then walk toward Pennsylvania Avenue. At the intersection of Maine and Pennsylvania Avenues, look left.

Here is a curving streetscape that provides an eye-catching introduction to an area of substantial two-family residences with both gambrel and gable roof lines. Nestled between Austin Street and Cross Street East, and between Broadway and Mystic Avenue, this is the "States Avenues" neighborhood that was not developed until the 1910s, even though the street pattern was plotted on paper in 1875. Development of the area was delayed for decades due to the intervening ruins of the Ursuline Convent and the hill upon which it was perched, known both as Ploughed Hill and Mt. Benedict. Removal of the soil and clay surface began around 1877 and continued for several decades. By the early 1900s, the Mount was almost level enough to develop, and rubble from the Convent and earthen materials from the Hill were both used to fill in wetlands associated with the Mystic River.

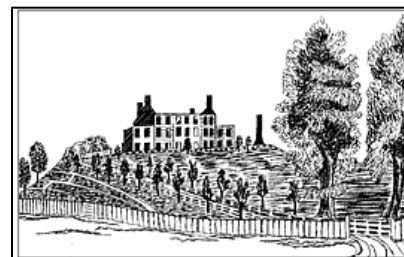
The Ursuline Convent will be discussed further at the next stop.

As reflected on the 1874 Hopkins Atlas of Somerville, Seman Klous, a brick maker and land developer, was convinced that the ruins and the Mount could be demolished in less than 40 years. The Atlas shows a grid of fourteen blocks within the present “State Avenues” neighborhood, which is not too different from the street pattern that was finally laid out in the 1910s. One noteworthy exception is a proposed long and narrow landscaped oval park at the center of the neighborhood. The park extends east to west and was to be located on the site of Mt. Benedict that was slated for demolition. Klous’ park may have been intended to mirror the oval parks in Boston, of which the most famous is at Louisburg Square, although there are others located throughout the South End. Interestingly, the circa 1870s row houses visible along Cross Street East may represent what was expected to be the predominant house type for Klous’ development.

It is not entirely clear why the streets in this area were named after American states in the 1910s. Thematic street names, however, were common in the 1840s when the first suburban enclaves like Sumner Hill in Jamaica Plain were named after places in Virginia and the Carolinas. It is possible that this area’s street theme can be attributed to the transition of several western territories into states during the 1890s and early 1900s.

Continue along Pennsylvania Avenue. Stop at Michigan Avenue to learn about Mt. Benedict and the Ursuline Convent.

Known as Ploughed Hill during the Revolutionary War and later as Mt. Benedict, this hill was sited with artillery to defend the Mystic River from the British. Then circa 1830 it became the site of the Ursuline Convent, a school primarily attended by Unitarian girls from prosperous families. These young women were taught by Roman Catholic nuns in such subjects as French, geography and needlepoint in an effort to groom them for suitable marriages. The convent was located at the western end of Mt. Benedict, as in a line drawn south to the intersection of Glen Street and Broadway.



The 1830s marked the start of tension between Protestants and Catholics within the Boston area. Established Protestant families became anxious about the Pope’s undue influence on United States policy as well as the growing presence of unskilled Irish immigrants seeking local jobs. In 1834, an angry mob of predominantly uneducated Protestant farmers were provoked by rumors of inappropriate behavior and immoral teachings by the Catholic nuns, and they burned down the Ursuline Convent. Luckily both the Catholic nuns and their students were warned ahead of time to flee the premises and no one was harmed.

The ruins remained as a notable landmark until the Hill was taken down for infill during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Many still refer to this section of the City as the “Nunnery Grounds.” Interestingly, some of the brick building materials from the Convent are visible in a wall at the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Cross (constructed 1866-1876) in the South End of Boston.



18-24 Cross Street East

Although greatly altered, enough of a partial frame of this Gothic Revival church remains to pique curiosity about its original appearance. Built for the Randall Memorial Free Baptist Church in 1898, this religious society traces its roots back to 1874 when it was organized in Charlestown, MA.

A vintage drawing of the church illustrates its original condition before its towers were truncated. The window openings remain, but no longer hold any leaded or decorative glass.

Although the church’s architect has yet to be identified, it is known that Edwin P. Moulton was the pastor at the time of its construction. In 1921, the church was adapted for reuse as the Circle Dance Hall, and it

continued to serve as a venue for dancing until at least the 1960s, according to Bob Doherty, a retired member of the City's Fire Department. Others report that ballet classes were given in the building as well graduation and wedding parties.

Above all, the building's 20th century historical interest lies in its association with "Symphony Sid," a band leader who apparently performed here on a regular basis. Born in New York's Lower East Side, Symphony Sid grew up in Brooklyn. His name Symphony Sid came from working at the Symphony record store where he introduced R&B records. The predominantly black customers told their friends that they bought the records from Symphony Sid. Over time he worked as a disc jockey at New York City radio stations and later in Boston. He was famous for his hipster lingo and encyclopedic knowledge of jazz. In addition to jazz, he played R&B records, Gospel and even Country music. One of the highlights of his career was a song that Lester Young wrote about him with lyrics by King Pleasure entitled *Jumpin' With Symphony Sid*. In 1971, Leslie Gourse of the New York Times described him as "probably the greatest middleman jazz has ever known."

In 1984, the former church was rewired after a fire and subsequently became a storage facility. The building has been vacant for a number of years.



Row Houses at 8-16 Cross Street East (LHD)

This building was constructed at the request of Seman Klous, a brick maker and land developer. Klous owned the first building to catch fire in the Great Fire of Boston in 1872, as well as all the land between the rear lot lines of Austin Street and Foss Park, originally known as Broadway Park from 1865 to 1880. (See the plot plan at the beginning of this brochure). Although these row houses have suffered over time with multiple ownerships and prolonged disinvestment, one can still see the fine bones and Mansard style essence of this circa 1880 building.

165 Broadway, current Senior Center and former Fire Station

This masonry structure was built circa 1895 as Fire House No. 2, which may be difficult to envision due to removal of its crenellated tower and battlements, making it resemble more of an Italian palazzo. The construction of a fire station in this area presents strong evidence of the high density level in East Somerville after 1890, which corresponded with the introduction of the electric trolley. Toward the end of the twentieth century, the building became a recreational facility to serve both seniors and the youth in the community.

161 Broadway, Park Garage Company

This circa 1914 building is a typical early twentieth century garage primarily used to store cars. Features include pick-up and delivery services, a gas pump, and waiting rooms. The original owners were Arthur N. Park and Fred R. Curtis. The structure has space for 40 cars, a machine shop located in the basement for repairs, two 500-gallon gas tanks, a car rental business, and also a showroom for Ford, Marmon, and Marathon cars. The garage even had a 1914 Packard limousine for rental!



The East Somerville Branch Library, 115 Broadway

Located at the corner of Broadway and Illinois Avenue, the circa 1918 East Somerville Branch Library is a satellite of the Central Library atop Central Hill. Somerville's public library system began in 1871, the same year that the community was incorporated as a city. The East Somerville branch was organized in 1912 in a commercial space located at 153 Perkins Street. Formal establishment of the East Somerville Branch Library was associated with the explosive



East Somerville Branch was opened in 1912 in a rented store at 153 Perkins St.

residential growth that occurred during the World War I era when two-family dwellings were built in mass numbers along the streets that were named after American states. The establishment of this Library may also have been a by-product of the early Automobile Age when people began to rely on cars to perform errands such as returning library books. Architecturally, this Library is noteworthy for the simple rectangular masonry form and Classical Revival style ornamentation that includes Ionic and Doric pilasters, and a heavy entablature below the cornice of the roof. The building was funded solely by Andrew Carnegie, the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania steel magnate. A Scotland native, Carnegie funded hundreds of fine libraries throughout Great Britain and the United States between 1895 and 1930. Carnegie attributed his business success to his early access to the private library of a wealthy family in his hometown.

Franklin Building, 88-90 Broadway

Built in 1919 from designs provided by an unknown architect, the Franklin Building is a brick and concrete commercial building with stylistic references to the Classical Revival, as well as to elements that anticipate the Art Deco Style. Originally this building was associated with banking – more specifically with the Winter Hill Cooperative Bank and the Somerville Institute for Savings.

Columbia Building, 84-86 Broadway

This yellow brick structure was constructed in 1902 by the Columbia Associates, a fraternal organization composed of fifty members whose president was J. S. Newcomb, a Somerville realtor. Designed in the Colonial Revival Style by E.L. Clark, it was built to house five stores on the ground floor, and a club room, club offices, and other club-related rooms on the second floor. The construction in yellow brick is interesting because it shows that the vogue for lighter-hued bricks had reached Somerville by the early 1900s. The monochromatic, gleaming white Boston Public Library by McKim Mead and White of 1888-1896 is a prime example of this sea change in American design. Building materials other than dark red brick or brownstone began to figure significantly in the construction of American public buildings after the Chicago World's Fair or Columbian Exposition of 1893. Dubbed "the White City" because all of its pavilions were constructed of white building materials, the appearance of the Fair had a profound effect on architects and other tastemakers of the day. The commercial concerns of the Columbia Building during the early 20th century included a real estate company, drug store, beauty shop, dentist, and the like. Other fraternal organizations that used this building included the Paul Revere Lodge, Home Circle and the Knights of Honor.

This East Somerville Walking Tour is jointly sponsored by East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS) and the City's Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC) as part of May Preservation Month in Somerville. Some of the research is based upon survey work by two architectural consultants, Edward Gordon and Arthur Krim, hired in 2004-2006 to identify significant properties in East Somerville eligible for designation as Local Historic Districts" or "LHDs."

The ESMS was initiated in 2006 by Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone to help build East Somerville as a thriving, safe, friendly neighborhood and commercial district that welcomes cultural diversity and offers a variety of businesses, to both serve and employ residents. East Somerville Main Streets can be reached via (617) 623-3869 or carrie@eastsovervillemainstreets.org.

The SHPC was established in 1985 by City Ordinance to administer historic districts, advise homeowners, and provide historic and technical information. The Commission also sponsors events and develops programs and written materials as part of its public outreach and educational mission. The Staff can be reached via 617-625-6600, ext. 2500 or www.somervillema.gov/historicpreservation.