

Union Square Revisited: From Sand Pit to Melting Pot

Led by

Edward W. Gordon, President of the Victorian Society in America/ New England Chapter

Union Square was initially called "Sand Pit Square" because its sandy, clay pit-dotted areas yielded a fine grade of silica used in glass and brick-making. Union Square became a major commercial center due to its location at an important crossroads in eastern Somerville during the early 19th Century. The Square's three major thoroughfares, Washington Street, Bow Street, and Somerville Avenue (formerly Charlestown Lane and Milk Row) originated as seventeenth and eighteenth century trade routes. Middlesex County farm products were hauled through the Square to be sold at markets in Charlestown and Boston. The introduction of the first railroad lines near the Square during the 1830s and 1840s spurred further residential and commercial growth in the area.



Union Square circa 1907

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the rise of industries near Union Square, such as the Union Glass Company and **American Tube Works**, as well as numerous small woodworking shops, ice businesses, and carriage-making concerns. The success of these enterprises insured that Union Square was an important contributor to the commercial success of Somerville well into the twentieth century. The Square became known as "Liberty Pole Square" after a flagpole was erected by Somerville firemen in 1853. Ten years later, it served as a major recruitment center during the Civil War when it was again renamed. Today, Union Square is a lively melting pot of the City, brimming with residents of Azorean, Brazilian, Irish, Vietnamese and African heritage.

Union Square: Host to Four Historic Crossroads

Union Square is host to four heavily trafficked crossroads. Each is lined with historic buildings that provide evidence of the Square's past glories as a commercial hub, as well as its current multi-cultural vibrancy and future promise with a station on the Green Line Extension.

The Somerville Avenue, Bow Street, and Webster Avenue crossroads within the heart of Union Square have historically been associated with important commercial blocks beginning with the ca.1850 Oasis general store (since demolished and originally located next to the ca.1845 **Mid Nite Convenience Store**), and later by the Masonic Block of 1869 (demolished, now the modern one-story building at Washington Street and Somerville Avenue with restaurants, barber shop, and cleaners), the **Hill Building** of 1874 (partially intact at the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue), and the **Eberle Building** of 1884 at 31-34 Union Square (remarkably intact right down to the surrounds of its storefront). The major landmark at this intersection is **St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church**, a Gothic Revival ecclesiastical edifice of the early 1870s.

Two other important intersections located at the western edge of Union Square speak to different aspects of Somerville's development. In the early 1600's, Milk Row (Somerville Avenue) had been set out to avoid marshland associated with the Miller's River. When in 1830, Milk Row was straightened; the distinctive U-shaped path of a segment was re-named Bow Street. The Bow Street/Summer Street intersection is unusually rich, with well-designed late 19th century buildings that form a memorable 360 degree panorama, best viewed from the small triangular park at the center of this intersection.

The crossroads formed by Somerville Avenue, Washington, and Prospect Streets are an important gateway to Somerville, both northward from Cambridge along Prospect Street and westward from the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston. Although the buildings have perhaps had more than their fair share of alterations, enough remains to tell the story of how Union Square has evolved over two centuries.

At the beginning of the American Revolution, Somerville Avenue and Washington Street were part of the route used by British Red Coats during their retreat from Concord on April 19th 1775. The Prospect Hill Tower, looming above the eastern section of Union Square, marks the site of General Israel Putnam's encampment of patriotic troops. It is also the place where the Grand Union Flag—the first flag representing the thirteen colonies of America—was first flown on January 1, 1776.

After the Revolution, the Warren Bridge opened, linking Charlestown and Boston. This caused a considerable increase in traffic along Washington Street and Charlestown Lane, also known as Milk Row due to farmers bringing their produce to market from Middlesex County communities further to the west. From modest beginnings in the 1830s and 1840s industry began to expand after the Civil War to the areas east, south and west of Union Square. The new jobs brought housing and stores to the Square, first serving families of Irish descent, and then later of Portuguese, Italian and Greek origins. In more recent times beginning in the 1990s, Union Square's urban "cachet" has been fueled by its location, architecturally rich building stock, and ethnic diversity, as well as other factors. This has attracted cutting edge cafes, restaurants and specialty shops, as well as new residents involved in academia, the arts, high tech and various professions.

1. The triangular island at Washington Street and Somerville Avenue has long been occupied by a fire station, first with an "Engine House" in the 1850's and then the current **Fire Station, at 92 Union Square** built in 1903-1904. The City's Commissioner of Buildings, Walter T. Littlefield, provided its Georgian Revival design, with a tower originally capped by an octagonal roof and colonial weathervane. Although the station's clock tower has since been reduced in height, the structure remains an important focal point within the Square, and currently serves as the headquarters for Somerville Cable Access Television (SCAT).



Union Square Fire Station circa 1914



2. The current structure at **70 Union Square** was designed to replace the first **Police Headquarters** for the City located nearby on Bow Street. The building housed a police force that had grown from 46 members in 1900 to 93 in 1920, and to 150 officers and a constabulary when it was constructed in 1932. In the mid 1980s, the City rehabilitated a former MBTA car barn at the eastern edge of the Square to serve as a



joint Headquarters for the Police and Fire Departments. Concurrently the City sold this building to a private developer to adaptively reuse it for offices and an eatery on the lower level. The original Elephant Walk restaurant first opened here.

3. The **Union Square Post Office at 237 Washington Street** was built in 1935 to serve as the main postal office for the City. It replaced a wood-framed Prospect Hill School House that had occupied this key intersection of Washington and Prospect Streets since at least the early 1850s. This red brick post office was designed in the Colonial Revival style, and still houses in its main lobby a colorful mural depicting scenes from the early days of the American Revolution.

These murals were funded through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The program provided employment to many individuals who created public works of art, documented historic American buildings, and wrote guides to historic sites throughout the nation.



1937 Mural by Ross Moffett of the Retreat from Lexington April 18, 1775 with James Miller and sons

4. The **William P. Walker House at 215 Washington Street** is the most architecturally significant residence within the Union Square area by virtue of its prominent siting, architectural elements, and distinctive L-shaped, gambrel-roofed volume. Set back from busy Washington Street, at the southern eastern base of Prospect Hill, this house was built ca. 1860 for George P. Walker, who apparently was employed at the Warren Hotel once located in Union Square.



Hiram Walker House

This house provides evidence that the gambrel roof, usually associated with Colonial New England housing, --was occasionally revived in Italianate design in the mid 1800s. The gambrel roof configuration was popular in America between the early 1700s until around 1780 due in part to its practicality – snow slides more readily off a double pitched roof. The gambrel also accommodated a more commodious attic space than a more standard hip roof could offer.

5. The modern structure that currently houses a portion of Somerville’s Police and Fire Department forces incorporates part of the former **MBTA Car Barn** built in 1927. You can best see evidence of the original use via the bricked in openings on the Merriam Street and Somerville Avenue sides that allowed for ventilation of the car barn.

6. Across Merriam street from the former Car Barn is a solid, restrained example of a Late Victorian commercial/residential block that represents Somerville as it began a period of great expansion, both in terms of population and construction activities. Here, in this 1890s commercial/residential building at **210 Washington Street**, the Sillari Plumbing Co is currently housed on the first floor. This building survives from the early days of the electric trolley that brought shoppers from all over Somerville and adjoining municipalities. Between 1890 and 1910, the City’s population rose dramatically from 40,152 to 77,236. Among the residents of the “Sillari Block” during the early 1900s were John F. Wahlgren, a cabinetmaker, Henry P. Giles, a driver, Michael A. McCart, a plumber, and John McCormack, a laborer.

7. From the corner of Merriam Street look diagonally across the street to **#197 Washington Street**, built ca.1860. Like the Walker house at #215, this cupola-topped Italianate residence, now occupied by the Cota Funeral Parlor, is set on high, back at the base of Prospect Hill, with an unusually deep lawn. An

early owner, if not the original one, was **Samuel Holt**, variously described in business directories as a “teamster” and a “truckman.” He commuted to work at Fifield, Richardson & Company on Chauncy Street in Boston where he was on the board until he retired in 1895. Holt was a member of the Boston Volunteer Fire Department for 9 years and a charter member of the Boston Light Artillery. He served on the Common Council in 1884 and 1885, as well as on the Somerville Board of Aldermen from 1886 -1887. By the 1880s, Holt’s sons Charles L., a traveling salesman, and Arthur, a “treasurer” are listed as residents here, while Samuel’s widow, Mary E. Holt lived here into the early 1900s. The Holt House has been a funeral home since at least the early 1930s.



This site also hosts the granite marker for **James Miller**, who was killed during a skirmish with the British on their Retreat from Lexington on April 19th, 1775. He is reputed to have said to his sons that “I am too old to run but not to fight” as the British made their way around Prospect Hill toward Charlestown. Go inside the Post Office to see a poignant representation of the event on the wall.

Stroll along Merriam Street to Somerville Avenue and consider the turn of the century streetscape at 216 and 218-218B Somerville Avenue.

8. Although Somerville Avenue, east of Union Square, is largely characterized by altered mid 19th to early 20th century buildings, one can find here and there, intact, contiguous properties of considerable historic interest. Their surviving features attest to the area’s turn-of-the twentieth century prosperity. One historic streetscape that deserves to be preserved for future generations is represented by **216 and 218/218B-222 Somerville Avenue**. Here, the tall and narrow masonry commercial/residential block at **216 Somerville Avenue** exhibits a main façade dominated by a broad, full-length three-story oriel bay. Composed of galvanized iron, this massive projection features the initials EJL 1896 on one of its ornamental panels. The L may stand for Lewellyn as a M. Lewellyn owned the building in 1900. By 1897, John Sweeney’s Grocery Store was located on the ground floor, while a Mr. Sweeney, and William Hood, a watchman in East Cambridge, were renters living in the building’s two residential units.



9. Next door at **218-218B Somerville Avenue** is a handsome 1926 two-story commercial block designed in the Colonial Revival style, complete with boldly rendered ribbon and swag ornamentation.

The ground floor storefronts were occupied by Rafaele D. Vasta’s fish store and Salvatore Ciano’s grocery. Early occupants of this building include: Rafaele Campostoso, meat cutter, Salvatore Nardella, meat worker, and Anthony Douglas, waiter. This property is clearly tied to the early Italian community in Union Square, with two of the occupants working for the meat packing industry that is long associated with this part of Somerville.



From the corner of Somerville Avenue and Merriam Street, walk westward along Somerville Avenue to Prospect Street and turn left to consider the double Italianate and very plain Queen Anne single-family house at 26-28 and 30 Prospect Street.

10. **#26-28 and 30 Prospect Street** are remnants of the old **Clarke Bennett estate**. Bennett, a native of Vermont, became a prosperous brick manufacturer and insurance agent in Somerville during the mid-19th

century. Active in civic affairs, Bennett is among those credited with filling in the Miller's River, expanding the town's sewerage system, and constructing public parks, including Central Park atop Central Hill. Indeed, Bennett's land originally extended eastward to a creek associated with the Miller's River. It can be understood why a major landowner of the area might see landfill as a way to maximize his square footage. He was also the Chairman of the School Committee when Somerville was still a town, and his prominence led to the Bennett School being named in his honor in 1868. The main house on the Bennett tract was an F-shaped structure that stood to the south of 30 Prospect Street. The ca. 1860s double-Italianate house at #28-30 originally had a mate sited next door on the north. Built as rental income properties by the Bennett heirs, the houses at #26-28 were home by the early 1900s to laborers, clerks, railroad employees, teamsters, blacksmiths, carpenters and the like. Tenant turn-over was frequent and tended to be of Irish heritage.



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#30 Prospect Street was built a bit later, around 1890, as income-producing property for the Bennetts. This extremely plain house was rented to people with job descriptions similar to those of #28-30 during the early 1900s. Today it is memorably surrounded by old radiators and other salvaged vintage items.

From the Bennett buildings, walk up Prospect Street to Webster Avenue.

Look to the southeast, beyond the Prospect/Webster crossroads, to see the site of a once very important Somerville industry, **The Union Glass Company**. Organized in 1854, Union Glass specialized in the manufacture of flint glass products, including tableware, lamps, globes and shades. For its first two decades of operation it was the town's largest industrial employer. At the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 the company's exhibit featured a 150 pound punch bowl that was reportedly the largest piece of cut glass ever made. The Union Glass Company remained in business until as late as 1924.



Union Glass Company, circa 1890

Also to the southeast were located meat packing plants for which Somerville and

neighboring East

Cambridge were justly famous. The Boynton Meat Packing Company and the New England Dressed Meat and Wool Company were leading industries of their type between the Civil War and World War I eras.

11. Look down the embankment on the west side of Webster Avenue to discern the ruins of stairs

that once descended to the old Union Square Station on the Fitchburg line. The first station was built during the 1840s. The commuter train system was dismantled during the 1920s and 1930s due to the growth of private car ownership. The development of new or better transportation greatly contributed to the success of Union Square as a major commercial center in Somerville.



Union Square Station, date unknown; demolished mid 20th century.

As early as 1835 the Boston and Lowell Rail Road commenced passenger service on Washington Street, just to the east of Union Square. By the early 1840s, the Fitchburg Rail Road Line offered passenger service to residents of Union Square and surrounding areas.

Fred Stark Pearson used the Tuft's gristmill which was located at the corner of Webster Avenue and Prospect Street to generate electricity. The **Somerville Electric Light Company** was a moderately-sized business that had a brief, but very productive and successful life for seventeen years, from 1886 to 1903. The investor-owned company was founded to illuminate the streets of Somerville and introduce electricity into people's homes.



The first electricity contract in Somerville was awarded in June 1887 to furnish 50 arc lights for one year at \$.37 per night, until 1:00 AM. The idea of keeping the streetlamps on all night did not come until many years later.

Follow Newton Street down a gradual incline to Emerson Street and walk a short block to Webster Avenue, crossing over to the west side of this busy street.

12. The area bounded by Webster Avenue on the West, the rear lot lines of buildings fronting onto Somerville Avenue on the north, and Prospect Avenue on the east, is a small, compact and unexpected oasis of mid-19th century residences. They are nestled within an area of Union Square characterized by heavily trafficked thoroughfares, open parking lots and low-storied commercial buildings bordering Somerville Avenue. Here, however, one finds at least four houses dating back to the 1850s, with the

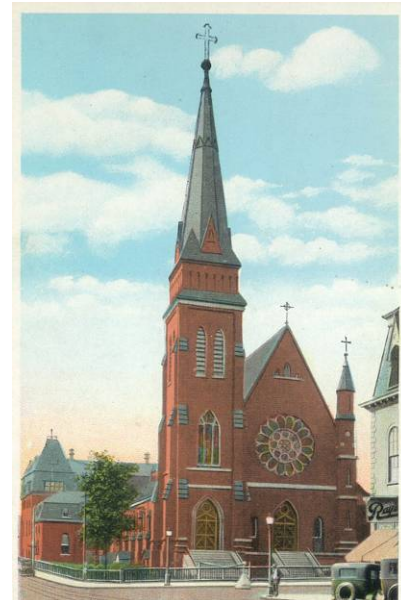


remaining half dozen or so residences harking back to the period of 1860 - 1890. By the early 1870s residents included an iron worker, painter, cabinet maker, engineer, barber, gas fitter, and three carpenters, including **Samuel Tuttle** who was the original owner of **14 Everett Street**. In September of 1856, Tuttle paid Prospect Hill real estate developer Robert Vinal just over \$1000 for the lot and "the building there on." Tuttle may have

been the carpenter responsible for building this charming Italianate, center-gable house. The current owners are particularly proud of an aunt, who was a bootlegger during Prohibition years.

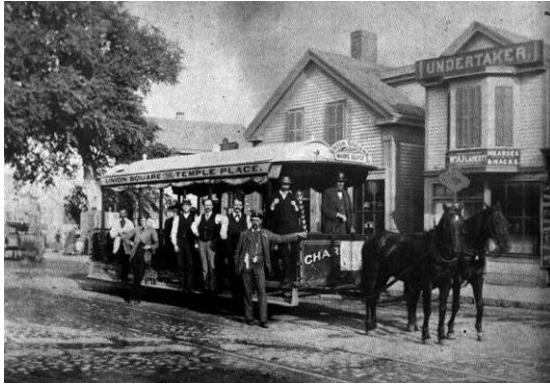
Continue along Webster Avenue, and cross Washington Street to consider the church at 272 Washington Street.

13. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, at Washington and Webster Streets. Until St. Joseph's Church opened in 1870-1874, Somerville's notable population of 2,000 Catholics were forced to walk considerable distances to worship in churches in Charlestown and Cambridge. On January 20, 1870, the Mayo estate was purchased, and architect James Murphy designed a new Victorian Gothic church for local Catholics. In 1871 the pastor Monsignor Christopher C. McGrath held the first services in the lower church, and then he presided over the congregation for the next sixty-three years! Sadly the steeple of the church was taken down in 1978 for fear that structural instability would cause it to collapse, and Union Square lost a significant land very striking landmark.



St. Joseph's Church circa 1917

14. Looking eastward into the Square it is evident that few buildings have escaped major alterations.



Interestingly, the oldest building in the center, the Mid-Nite Convenience Store at **14-15 Union Square** is remarkably intact. Built ca. 1845 this wooden Greek Revival building once had a side porch and an attic window with shutters. In October 1860, Queen Victoria's son, later to become King Edward VII, rode through the Square, passing this building on his way back to Boston from a gala reception at Harvard College.

In 1852, the first horse drawn streetcar in the Boston area began to run between Union and Harvard Squares. By the turn of the 20th century, the Union Square area was a central point for streetcar and rail transport, enabling many Somerville residents to easily work in Boston.

In 1852, the first horse drawn streetcar in the Boston area began to run between

15. Stone Building (or Barristers Hall), 57-61 Union Square; 1891. Treasurer of the Somerville Savings Bank, Jonathon Stone had this building constructed as the main office for the bank. It has a brick exterior with granite lintels and foundation, and a steel interior structure. By the late 19th century, commercial blocks were built with detailed surface decoration on the first floor, leaving the upper stories relatively plain. Renovations circa 1975 have obscured its true age and original façade. A well-known local artist, Be Sargent Allen was commissioned in the early 1990s to paint the mural on the side to commemorate a prominent historical event, the Raising of the Grand Union Flag on Prospect Hill in 1775.



From the triangular island at the intersection of Washington Street and Somerville Avenue, cross over to the corner formed by Somerville Avenue and Bow Street and look across the Avenue to the Eberle Building and house.



Union Square, 1917

16. The Eberle Building at 31-33 Somerville Avenue was built in the Queen Anne style and still maintains its exemplary Victorian window surrounds. It was named after Phillip Eberle, a shoe



dealer, who also

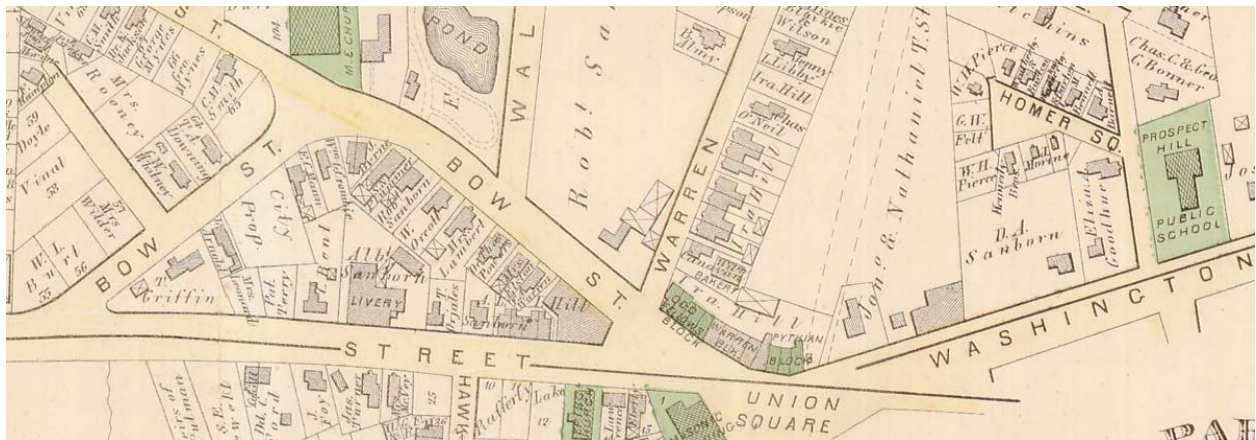
helped develop the Masonic Block, located to the east of the Eberle Building. In 1869 the Masonic Block (now razed) was the first major commercial block in the Square. Eberle lived nearby at **34 Somerville Avenue** in a house he built for himself in the 1870s. The very narrow house is still standing, with a steeply pitched, delightfully quirky mansard roof.

17. The Hill Building (1874) at 38 Union Square is a prominent building that wraps around the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue. This once striking commercial block with High

Victorian Gothic architecture of red brick, trimmed with granite and brownstone, has great potential for an innovative development team to do restoration work, including adding back its original upper stories.

Continue west along Somerville Avenue and turn right onto the driveway between 345 and 347 Somerville Avenue.

18. The **Albert Sanborn Stables** were originally situated at the back of the driveway that led from Somerville Avenue to the interior of the block encircled by Somerville Avenue and Bow Street. The stables were replaced during the first quarter of the 20th century by garage/storage facilities for a Model T Ford dealership. Still in evidence is the large forecourt that accommodated the comings and goings of the old horse drawn rental carriages. The space now serves as a warehouse for Riverside Kawasaki Motorcycles which has its retail store in the heart of the Square. The Sanborns were among the oldest families in the Union Square area with roots reaching back to well before the Civil War. As late as the mid-1870s, a large Sanborn-owned farm was located at the northwest corner of Bow and Walnut Streets.



While exiting the stables site, notice the handsome, center entrance/center gable Italianate house at **347 Somerville Avenue** built ca. 1850s. The 1874 map shows a large lot belonging to C. Bent. By 1895, the property is owned by Albert Sanborn who installed additional stables around the perimeter of the lots.

Continue west along Somerville Avenue, and stop briefly to view the building at #374.

19. The building at **374 Somerville Avenue** has been extensively altered since its heyday as the **Star Theatre**, and the only second purpose built movie theatre in the nation. Constructed in 1908, the Star was one of fourteen theatres located in Somerville during the first half of the twentieth century when Americans were first introduced to this new medium of entertainment. The Somerville Theatre in Davis Square is the only one of the 14 still in operation as a movie theatre. Unlike numerous pre-1930 theatres that were originally designed to showcase vaudeville acts, the Star, from the start, was built to show silent movies. By 1908, eastern Somerville had a growing Italian and Greek immigrant population who resided in Ward II and at the base of Spring Hill and were apparently among the patrons attracted to the Star's "silents." Reportedly no evidence remains of the old theatre's lobby or auditorium. The structure is now occupied by the **Grand**, a retail business and 2 architects' offices.



Continue walking along Somerville Avenue until it intersects with the western end of Bow Street. Standing on the small traffic island notice the following historic buildings:

20. Anchoring the corner of Somerville Avenue and Carlton Street, is the **Bennett Block at 380 Somerville Avenue**. This remarkably intact Queen Anne is one of three large wooden commercial/residential blocks in the Union Square area. Built in 1892-1893, this wood-framed building was almost certainly designed by the well-known architect Aaron Gould who designed the similar, although much more massive buildings known as the Drouet and Richmond Blocks. This well-detailed building was constructed for William F. Bennett whose commercial business was housed in the part of the building numbered 7 Carlton Street. The building's lot was carved from the old Hawkins estate. By 1920, the upper floors of the building were home to Irish and Italian families employed as shoe workers, tube workers, carpenters and lab workers.

21. Built in 1898 the **Drouet Block at 58-68 Bow Street**, is the largest of three wooden commercial blocks designed by architect Aaron Gould during the 1890s. Gould was born in Nova Scotia in 1865, where he learned the carpenter's trade. Later in his career his work took him to Maine and the southern states where he built hotels. Gould's buildings are characterized by undulating surfaces, as seen in the oriel windows of the Bennett and Richmond Blocks, as well as in ornate window surrounds as found at the Drouet Block. Most communities would be privileged to retain one of these large, highly ornamented wood-framed buildings, so the fact that a small area like Union Square still boasts three buildings of this type and design caliber is quite extraordinary.

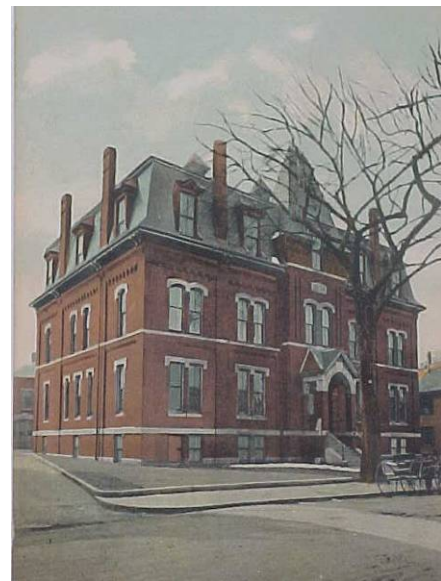


22. The former **Metropolitan Gas Station at 69 Bow Street** is nestled at the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue. As a Colonial Revival built ca.1915, the diminutive structure is a rare survivor in the Boston metropolitan area from the early Automobile Age. It stands as symbolic testimony to the rise of automotive vehicles that began to patronize the commercial businesses of Union Square during the World War I era.

From the traffic island continue east along Bow Street. Literally

possessing a bowed, curving path, this street was part of the original route of Somerville Avenue (a.k.a. Milk Row). Well before the American Revolution, the path of **Bow Street** was diverted northward in a broad arc to avoid a marshy area related to Willis Creek, later known as Miller's River. In 1830 the segment of Somerville Avenue between Bow and Washington Streets was set out as a straight shot over the filled-in wetlands, resulting in the intersection of Bow Street and Somerville Avenue as they exist today.

Heading northeastward along the even numbered side of Bow Street, continue as far as the former Union Square Police Station at 50 Bow Street.



23. The **Union Square Police Station** was built in 1874 from designs provided by George A. Clough, a well-known architect who was the City of Boston's first in-house architect. In that capacity, Clough designed numerous fire stations, police stations, and other municipal buildings in Boston neighborhoods during the 1870s. Clough evidently found time aside from his Boston projects to design this stately Mansard style Police Station. This building represents a very recent historic preservation success story

for the City of Somerville. The old station's original, mansard roof, reputed to be destroyed by fire in the 1940's, was recreated as part of a private-public partnership for an adaptive re-use project. The extensive rehabilitation and restoration work resulted in the creation of a fourteen-unit residential condominium development, completed in 2005.



24. Next door to the former police station is The **E.C. Mann House** at **46 Bow Street**. This late 19th century house is a key component in the remarkable node of mostly Victorian buildings bordering the Bow Street/Summer Street intersection. The Mann House is the westernmost member of a group of Bow Street residences known collectively as “**Doctors’ Row.**” The facades of the Mann House are unusually ornate, complete with all manner of turned elements, windows of various shapes and sizes, as well as a picturesque, complicated roof line that is enlivened by copper finials. Particularly noteworthy are the extremely narrow columns at the front porch and high quality stained glass windows. This highly eclectic and colorfully painted house would be very much at home in the “painted lady” neighborhoods of San Francisco.

Now cross Bow Street and stand on the small triangular traffic island at the intersection of Bow and Summer Streets to see an impressive 360 degree panorama of buildings in addition to the Mann House, each possessing significant historic designs:

25. Crescent Row at **39-49 Bow Street** (1900) represents a rare example of Federal Revival row housing. Instead of imitating the fancy row houses of Charles Bulfinch (1769-1844), these houses celebrate the simple charm of plain, attached dwellings built for working class families during the early 1800s. This set of unique row houses serves as a strong visual anchor for this outstanding intersection.



26. Construction of the First United Methodist Church (1858-1874) at **1 Summer Street**



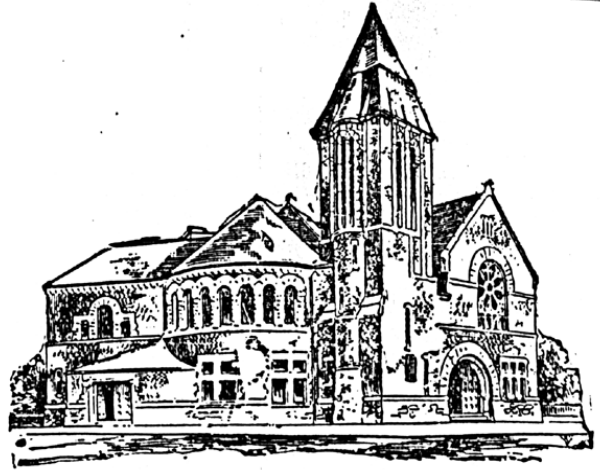
began on the eve of the Civil War and then, inexplicably, took sixteen years to complete! The outcome, however, is a handsome Victorian Gothic house of worship that is faced with red brick and rock, and trimmed with granite. The 90-foot polychrome slate steeple that originally completed the east tower of the façade was removed after the extraordinarily destructive hurricane of 1938. The building was recently converted (2003-2007) into 7 residential condominiums with expansive ceiling heights up to 65 feet!

27. The Richmond at 33-37 Bow Street is a mixed use, commercial/residential building built in 1892. It is one of three substantial wood-framed buildings in the western section of Union Square designed by Aaron Gould. The Queen Anne style is noteworthy for its towered massing, polygonal oriels, and porches that are in evidence along the Wesley Park side of the building. The building was recently rehabilitated for residential use and received preservation awards from the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1997.

26 Bow Street – Lambert/ Bell Residence – ca. 1869. This combined Stick Style residence and doctor’s office is one of six remaining from the nineteenth century “Doctor’s Row”.

Continue southeastward along Bow Street to Walnut Street, pausing to admire the adaptively re-used former church.

28. Founded by Somerville dairyman H.P. Hood and other local businessmen in 1887, the **Prospect Hill Congregational Church** at **17 Bow Street** epitomizes the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The church’s architect was Henry Squarebridge McKay who ranked among the most talented imitators of the work of H. H. Richardson. Like Richardson’s Trinity Church at Copley Square, the 1880s Somerville church relies on the use of polychromatic, light-hued granite and brownstone trim for maximum visual effect. Converted to 17 residential condominiums in the late 1980s, several owners enjoy spaces illuminated by spectacular stained glass windows from the former use.



A short distance around the corner at **8-10 Walnut Street** is the **Somerville Journal Building**. Built in 1894, this brick building was designed to accommodate new printing equipment, including the linotype machine.

29. The tour concludes at the second **Somerville National Bank** at **11-15 Bow Street**. The architectural firm of Gay and Proctor designed this early 20th century bank building in the Neo-Classical Revival Style, that helped convey an image of conservatism, authority, and time-tested financial wisdom for which banks to this day still like to project. This former financial institution was founded in 1908 by the locally prominent Stone family active in local politics and business associations. The handsome building was recently rehabilitated both inside and outside in order to enjoy its reincarnation as a popular local café known as the Bloc 11.

This brochure was produced by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC), in concert with Edward Gordon, historian and tour leader, as part of the 2008 ArtsUnion Grant Project.

Established in 1985, the Historic Preservation Commission administers historic districts, advises homeowners, provides historic and technical information, and is an arm of City government. The Commission also sponsors events and develops programs and written materials as part of its public outreach and educational mission. Its Staff can be reached via 617.625.6600 ext. 2525 or www.ci.somerville.ma.us/historicpreservation

ArtsUnion is a project designed to boost the cultural economic development of Union Square, Somerville. The project is shepherded by the Somerville Arts Council, working in collaboration with numerous local organizations, artists, businesses and community members. The Project is expected to spark community-wide excitement about the Square, as well as create new economic opportunities for local artists. During 2007-2008 ArtsUnion is presenting a series of cultural events/performances; running a craft market; creating cultural tours; commissioning local artisans to design new streetscape furniture; and supporting a zoning/regulation review to further enhance the arts and distinct character of the Square. Over time the project is expected to strengthen the regional identity and long-term appeal of Union Square. ArtsUnion is funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council and its John and Abigail Adams Arts Program.