

# Bicycling New Historic Somerville 10th Annual Bike Tour Sunday, May 22, 2011



## New & Proposed Local Historic Districts

### START: Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Ave.

Highland Avenue was known as Church Street until 1870 when it was extended from Central Street to Davis Square.



Built in 1852, City Hall was originally constructed to be Somerville's first high school and was enlarged and altered in 1896, 1902, and 1924.

### A (STOP): Prospect Hill Tower, Monroe St.

Built in 1903, Prospect Hill Tower commemorates a key role played by Prospect Hill in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Prospect Hill is also the site of the first raising of the United Colonies flag on January 1, 1776.



### 27 Columbus Ave., Prospect Hill



Built in 1892, this Queen Anne style home represents the residential suburbanization of Prospect Hill during the late 19th century. A focal point when approaching from Union Square, various shapes create an asymmetrical façade and interior plan.

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor

### B (STOP): NEW Flint St. Local Historic District (LHD), East Somerville (11-13, 14, 15-17, 16-18\*, and 22 Flint St.; 47 Franklin St.)



This LHD, designated in December 2010, boasts a fine collection of Italianate houses, sited on ample lots on the crest of Ploughed Hill. Each house illustrates a high quality design and as a group,

provide a visually appealing cluster of architecturally significant buildings that represent the genteel lifestyle of the earliest homeowners in this neighborhood from the 1850s to the early 1880s.

### NEW Pearl St. LHD, East Somerville (32\*, 35\*, 70 and 94 Pearl St.)

During the period 1865-1890, stylish and substantial houses were built along Pearl Street. The street encompasses some of the



finest Mansard and Queen Anne designs in the City built for local manufacturers, attesting to the desirability of East Somerville as an upscale neighborhood at the end of the 19th century.



### C (STOP): Mt. Vernon St. LHD Expansion, East Somerville (8, 16, 17, 20, 29, 46, 47, 50\*, 51\*, 64, 68, and 74 Mt. Vernon St.)

This district is Somerville's most intact collection of modest, Greek Revival, side-hall entrance dwellings. Due to its proximity to Charlestown, Boston, and the Boston-Maine Railroad, its population increased significantly in the mid 19th century and these houses were constructed between 1830-1880.



*\*proposed only*

### D (STOP): First Telephone House, 1 Arlington St., East Somerville

An 1858 Italianate with an Eastlake style wing added in the 1880s, the original owner was Charles Williams Jr. As an early protégé of inventor Alexander Graham Bell, Charles enabled the house to be the end point of the world's first outdoor experimental telephone line from Boston in 1877.



### NEW Thurston-Walnut LHD, Winter Hill (50 Sargent Ave.; 193 and 237 School St.)



This District exemplifies the end gable form near the end of the 19th century, a time of transition between an agrarian and an industrial-based economy. Constructed by a house builder, 50 Sargent is a simple form featuring polygonal bays to help illuminate the interior.

**36 Marshall St., Winter Hill** This property is an end gable Italianate house c. 1860. At the rear of the property is a substantial c. 1890 gable roof stable. Both the house and stable were restored during a 1990s renovation.



### PROPOSED Adams-Thurston LHD, Winter Hill (55-63 Adams St.; 399 and 399A Medford St.; 52 and 58 Thurston St.)



This district includes St. Ann's church, rectory, convent, and school in a campus-like setting that evolved between 1897-1899 at the corner of Medford and Thurston streets. Constructed in the Romanesque Revival style during 1897-1899, St. Ann's Church is a high profile product of the City's late 19th century building boom, built to serve the spiritual needs of the many Irish, and later Italian families who settled on Winter Hill during the turn of the twentieth century.

### E (STOP): Russell House, 58 Sycamore St., Winter Hill

This modest home was built in the Greek Revival style on land originally owned by the Tufts family. Its creation likely coincided with the opening of the Boston-Lowell Railroad in 1835 and belonged to a Medford Street grocer, John Russell, in 1850.





### Oliver Tufts House, 78 Sycamore St., Winter Hill

Originally built in 1714 in the Colonial Saltbox style, the Tufts house now reflects Federal style alterations and a gambrel roof. Serving as headquarters for Major-General Charles E. Lee, left wing commander of the American Army during the siege of Boston 1775, the Tufts family purchased the house in 1778.



### F (STOP): PROPOSED Hinckley-Magoun LHD (4 Berwick St.; 23, 25, and 37 Fiske Ave.; 10, 13, 21, 22, and 23 Henderson St.; 8, 12, 16, 23, 80, and 84 Hinckley St.; 282 and 308 Lowell St.; 10 Lowell Ter.)

Bordering the west side of Lowell Street, and near a future Green Line station, much of this District was originally owned



by the Magoun family, until Samuel Hinckley bought the land in

1866 as a speculator. The modest houses of this compact well-defined district represent the affordable housing

of their day for Somerville's working class laborers, including teamsters and nearby factory workers. The current density harks back to the 1890's when the Winter Hill Land Company built many cottage-scale dwellings, creating a quirky streetscape and the architectural identity of an urban village.



### G (STOP): Morrison Ave. LHD Expansion (140-148, 197, 221, and 222 Morrison Ave.)

In 1869 Nathaniel Morrison purchased 244 acres from Henry C. Rand. Morrison was a real estate speculator poised to take advantage of the railroad and subsequent development in Davis Square. The house at #221 was converted in 1996 to a B&B and recently added rooms as part of a restoration in 2011. See [www.morrisonhousebnb.com](http://www.morrisonhousebnb.com).

**Somerville Theatre, 49-55 Davis Square** Designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style c. 1914, it was built to show silent movies as well as vaudeville shows. Today the Somerville Theatre is a centerpiece of Davis Square.



### PROPOSED Orchard St. LHD, Davis Square (23-25, 30, and 34 Day St.)

Davis Square became a center of trade for West Somerville by the mid 1870s when public transportation and rail lines were extended

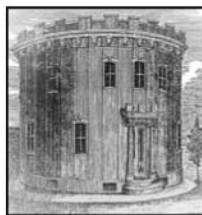
to the area. This mansard cottage is linked to the prominent rise of Orchard Street as an residential counterpart to the commercial development of Davis Square.

### PROPOSED Expansion of Central-Atherton-Spring-Summer (CASS) LHD, Spring Hill (54 and 55-57 Atherton St.; 7, 15\*, 34, and 36 Central St.; 14 Harvard Pl.; 38 Harvard St.; 3 and 10 Monmouth St.; 31-33, 44, and 46-46R Spring St.; 154, 174, and 176 Summer St.)



This section of Central Street, near #7 and #15, was originally part of the Stone family compound known as the "Stone Plantation." The roots of the Stone family run deep in Somerville, dating back to the American Revolution and earlier.

### H (STOP): Round House, 36 Atherton St., Spring Hill



An iconic and unique 19th century building within Somerville, the Round House was constructed in 1856 by inventor and businessman Enoch Robinson. Circular in plan, the third story has a slightly smaller diameter than the first two floors.

### Carr School, 35 Atherton St., Spring Hill

Built in 1898 as a 14-room elementary school, this is the first H-plan school in Somerville. Designed by well-known local architect Aaron H. Gould, this school may be his only surviving work.



*\*already designated*

### NEW CASS LHD, Spring Hill (18-20, 34, 38, 42, 50, and 54 Spring St.; 10 Harvard Pl.; 12 Harvard St.; 15 Central St.; 53 Atherton St.; 170 Summer St.; 21-23 Elm Pl.)

The development of Spring Hill began in 1843 with George A. Brastow, an influential businessman who later became Somerville's first mayor. He subdivided the area to attract substantial



homes on country estates for privileged suburbanites who held proprietary and managerial jobs. Full



development of this subdivision came much later in the century as owners were not eager to sell their side yards for new construction and then the Panic of 1873 brought an abrupt halt to housing construction.

### Westwood-Benton Rd. LHD, Spring Hill

Originally platted in 1874, Westwood Rd. is a turn of the 20th century subdivision illustrating architect designed Shingle, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival style houses.



Benton Road, carved from the Reuben Benton farm, is characterized by the substantial houses built during the turn of the 20th century north of Summer Street and the Benton farm.



### END: Somerville Museum, 1 Westwood Rd.

Anchoring one end of the Westwood Road District, the c. 1929 Museum houses a 32-foot "flying" Bulfinch staircase originally found within the grand Barrell Mansion in Cobble Hill. For more information about their many offerings, go to [www.SomervilleMuseum.org](http://www.SomervilleMuseum.org).



Sponsored by The Somerville Bicycle Committee and the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission. For more information, visit: [www.SomervilleBikes.org](http://www.SomervilleBikes.org); [www.Somervillema.gov/historicpreservation](http://www.Somervillema.gov/historicpreservation). Thank you to the property owners who kindly welcomed us in for a visit. Credits: Brochure - Amie K. Schaeffer, SHPC staff; Map & Cue sheet-- Ron Newman, SBC member. A full map and turn-by-turn cue sheet are printed on a separate sheet and are available online at: [www.SomervilleBikes.org/events](http://www.SomervilleBikes.org/events).