

Final Study Report
for the proposed
Upper Central Street Local Historic District
in
Somerville, MA

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Summary Sheet

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Robin Kelly, *Vice-Chair*
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Ryan Falvey

Public Hearing: A public hearing was conducted by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on Monday, November 2, 2021 at 6:46pm

City Council Vote: Estimated December 9, 2021

Total Properties: 12

Eight (8) of the proposed properties are existing single-building districts that will be combined into this multi-building district. Four (4) additional buildings are proposed for designation.

Conclusion:

Among all of the municipalities in the Commonwealth that have adopted Chapter 40C, the City of Somerville has the largest number of single-building Local Historic Districts (LHDs), with over 180 properties individually designated. Eight such single-building LHDs, designated in the 1980s, are located on upper Central Street and Broadway in the Winter Hill section of Somerville.

The goal of the creation of the Upper Central Local Historic District (LHD) is to consolidate these eight (8) single-building LHDs into one district and simultaneously designate four (4) additional

structures on Central Street creating a single, thematically-linked district. In total, 12 structures would be brought under the same district umbrella. One of these four structures, 187 Central Street, is currently under a 12-month demolition delay.

This small area of Central and Broadway is uniquely rich with excellent examples of every major architectural period from Greek Revival to Exoticism¹ and build dates that range from 1840-1925. This is an opportunity to protect this clear architectural metamorphosis found within a very small setting. While visually these buildings speak to both changing architectural tastes and economic circumstances of Somerville residents, information unearthed about occupants, owners, and builders of the buildings reflects the social, cultural and economic changes occurring in the City over a roughly 185-year period.

The existing single-building² LHDs to be consolidated into the Upper Central Street LHD are:

- 158 Central
- 170 Central
- 178 Central
- 192-200 Central
- 392-394 Broadway
- 396-398 Broadway
- 400 Broadway
- 404 Broadway

The four additional properties³ that are newly proposed for designation are the following:

- 201 Central St (Temple B'nai B'rith)
- 187 Central Street (currently under a 12-month demolition delay)
- 183 Central Street
- 181 Central Street

The following is a list of each architectural style and the properties under consideration that represent them (in order from earliest architectural style to most recent):

Greek Revival

(178 Central)

Second Empire (Mansard)

(170, 192 Central; 392-394, 396-398, 400 Broadway)

¹ Though buildings of the Italianate style are also present on this portion of Central Street, none are proposed for inclusion in this particular district. There are designated Italianate buildings on lower Central Street between Medford Street and Highland Avenue.

² Form Bs exist for the above-listed properties.

³ A Form B exists for 201 Central Street. Form Bs are in-progress for 187, 183, and 181 Central Street.

Queen Anne (with Second Empire & Stick elements)
(158 Central Street)

Shingle Style
(404 Broadway)

Colonial Revival
(187, 183, 181 Central)

Exoticism (Byzantine Revival)
(201 Central)

The Upper Central Street LHD will fall under the City’s existing municipal ordinance (Code of Ordinances, Part II, Chapter 7 *Housing*, Article II *Historic Districts*) which allows for the creation of historic districts under the auspices of M.G.L. Chapter 40C. Somerville originally adopted its Historic District ordinance in 1985.

Introduction

Communities around the country began creating local historic districts in the 1930s, with the first being established in Charleston, South Carolina in 1931. The first local historic districts in Massachusetts were not created until 1955 with the establishment of the Beacon Hill and Nantucket districts. These local historic districts were created through Special Acts of the (state) Legislature, the only mechanism available at the time for creating this type of regulatory district.

In 1960 Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 40C *Historic Districts* came into effect, providing municipalities across the Commonwealth with the ability to create Local Historic Districts (LHDs) themselves without having to go through the State Legislature to do so. It is through the process outlined in this law that LHDs, including those in Somerville, are now established. Today there are over 300 LHDs across Massachusetts, with more being created each year.

M.G.L. Chapter 40C states that there are three main purposes⁴ for creating an LHD:

- to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;
- to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places;
- to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district.

The law goes on to state that through the preservation and protection of buildings and places significant to the state and its municipalities, LHDs promote the educational, cultural, economic,

⁴ M.G.L. Chapter 40C, §2 Purpose

and general welfare of the public.⁵ Research into the properties proposed for any LHD leads to the uncovering of often long-forgotten details of people and place that can help to tell a fuller and more inclusive story of the human experience, both broadly and locally. These stories are told through the written word, individual and collective memory, the visual language of architecture, and physical relics of people and place. LHDs help to anchor all of these diverse, complex, pleasant, painful, and divergent histories in place. The inventory forms (“Form B”) that are a component of the LHD creation process provide valuable information about the City in general and the lives of building owners and occupants in particular.

LHDs are not intended to prevent all change from occurring on designated properties. Historic designation encourages thoughtful, well-planned building design and site development, including new construction, within a set of regulations. Each proposed project is reviewed on its own merits relative to the historic district ordinance and design guidelines.

Chapter 40C allows for the creation of LHDs that contain a single parcel, building, or structure or multiple parcels, buildings or structures:

...the buildings, structures or sites to be included in the proposed historic district may consist of one or more parcels or lots of land, or one or more buildings or structures on one or more parcels or lots of land.”⁶

Numerous municipalities closely surrounding Somerville contain LHDs including, but not limited to, Brookline, Cambridge, Medford, Arlington, Boston (and its major neighborhoods), Newton, and Belmont, among numerous others. Somerville established its first LHDs in 1985. While the City has numerous multi-property LHDs, it also has the largest number of single-building LHDs in the state; there are over 180 single-building LHDs in Somerville. One of the objectives of this Upper Central Street LHD is to consolidate several single-building LHDs into one multi-building district.

The single-building designation approach has been, to date, a useful tool for protecting the architectural integrity of numerous individual Somerville buildings and the history that each communicates. Research into the Upper Central Street LHD has shown architectural and historical relationships between the proposed buildings that are better understood when these edifices are grouped into one district, rather than standing alone as individual designations.

The initial catalyst for the creation of this district was the proposed demolition of 187 Central Street. Currently, this property is in a 12-month demolition delay period. This portion of Central Street contains three strong and contiguous examples of Colonial Revival architecture (of which 187 Central is one). Loss of this building would significantly disrupt an otherwise intact Colonial Revival street wall and remove a physical reminder of the city’s social, economic, cultural and,

⁵ *Ibid*

⁶ See Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) Chapter 40C § 3.

particularly, immigrant narrative. This is further discussed in the Methodology section below and is further expressed in the most recent Form Bs.

Lastly, it is important to note the distinction between a Local Historic District (LHD) and a National Register District (NRD).

A Local Historic District (LHD) differs from a National Register District (NRD) in that an LHD protects the exterior of structures visible from a public way from incongruous exterior changes as well as demolition. Only exterior changes visible from a public way are reviewed by a district commission (in Somerville’s case, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)) relative to historic Design Guidelines.

NRD designation is an *honorary* listing on the National Register and indicates formal, federal recognition of a property’s historic, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance. Buildings, structures, sites, and objects can be included on the National Register. The National register is a federal listing that is administered by the Secretary of the Interior.

However, National Register listing does not protect a property from demolition nor from undergoing unsympathetic exterior changes. The protections and regulatory oversight that an LHD affords are not provided by a National Register listing.⁷

Methodology

In early 2021, under the auspices of the City’s Demolition Review Ordinance (DRO), the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was presented with a demolition request for 187 Central Street by the property owner. In accordance with the DRO, the HPC determined the building to be “historically significant” and “preferably preserved” and imposed a 12-month demolition delay.⁸

Residents and property owners in this neighborhood were also galvanized by the possible loss of this building. Two public hearings held by the HPC regarding the determination of “historic significance” and the determination of “preferably preserved” drew large attendance from neighborhood property owners and residents who were opposed to the demolition of the building.

⁷ The exception is if a National Register or National Register-eligible property is potentially impacted by a (wholly- or partially-) federally funded, licensed, or permitted project. If such a project is being undertaken, an advisory review known as a Section 106 review is triggered. Section 106 reviews are required in certain circumstances by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). A general example of a project that could trigger a Section 106 review would be a telecom company’s installation of cell arrays on a building that is on or eligible for listing on the National Register. This would trigger a Section 106 review due to federal licensing or permitting requirements for these projects (in this case by the FCC). When a Section 106 review such as this is triggered, a consulting party, usually a local historic preservation commission, provides an *advisory* review to the entity undertaking the project. This advisory review provides local feedback on whether or not the project will have an adverse effect on surrounding historic assets. Section 106 reviews cannot prevent a project from happening, but they might be able to mitigate some negative impact on historic assets. The Section 106 process this is an iterative, advisory process with no guaranteed outcome. The entity undertaking the project can choose to work with the local consulting party or choose not to alter their project in any way.

⁸ The HPC determined 187 Central Street to be “historically significant” at their March 2021 meeting and “preferably preserved” at their April 2021 meeting. Public comment was taken at each. At the time of the final determination of “preferably preserved”, a 12-month demolition delay period was in place. In May 2021, the City Council affirmatively voted to increase the delay period to 18 months.

During the April 2021 HPC meeting and after the Commission’s final vote in favor of the building being “preferably preserved”, the Commission publicly directed Preservation Planning Staff to proceed with the process of creating a Local Historic District (LHD) in this area.

A Preliminary Study Report was submitted to the MHC and determined by them to be complete on September 2, 2021. On October 6, 2021, Ward 5 City Councilor Mark Niedergang and Ward 4 City Councilor Jesse Clingan sponsored an informational meeting for property owners in the proposed district. City Staff provided a presentation giving an overview of LHDs and related processes and, along with two members of the Somerville HPC, responded to questions from the public. On November 1, 2021, the HPC held a public hearing to take public comment on the creation of the Upper Central Street LHD.

The goal of the Upper Central Street LHD was initially to protect the contiguous Colonial Revival street wall created by 187, 183, and 181. However, the relationship between 187 Central and the existing 400 Broadway single-building LHD that was brought to light through Preservation Planning’s research for the demolition review process could not be ignored (see “Significance” section for brief history and associated Form B for more in-depth information). Knowing that there were several other single building LHDs in this immediate area, the City next looked for architectural and/or historical links between these properties that may have gone unnoticed because each building was designated individually. Ultimately, with the exception of 158 Central Street, the remaining single building LHDs were related to each other either in terms of builder and/or original landowner. As regards the last undesignated structure under consideration, 201 Central Street (B’nai Brith), in addition to exemplifying the Byzantine Revival style, this building also provided a link between the Jewish heritage of 187 Central’s Dr. Charles Dickerman and the hospital (400 Broadway) that he established (Sunnyside Hospital).

From a research perspective, the City studied census data, property deeds, development patterns, historic maps, city directories, historic newspaper articles, historic photographs, local history books, and numerous other resources to piece together the history of these buildings. Also utilized were the existing Form Bs for the eight (8) single-building LHDs to be absorbed into the Upper Central Street LHD. The Form B created for 201 Central Street (B’nai B’rith Synagogue) was also used. Though this property is not yet districted, it is proposed for inclusion in the Upper Central Street LHD.

On-the-whole, Somerville’s history and historic development patterns are well-documented both by city Preservation Planning Staff and through publications such as *Beyond the Neck: The Architecture and Development of Somerville, Massachusetts* and *Somerville Past and Present*. Preservation Planners in the Mayor’s Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development (OSPCD) have spent the past several years researching districted properties as well as those which are presented to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for demolition. The totality of this work has resulted in a deep and growing understanding of Somerville’s history. The opportunity to research properties for inclusion in a Local Historic District results in an intimate understanding of the lives of both the permanent and transient residents of a particular neighborhood.

As noted earlier in this report, the Upper Central Street LHD will fall under the City’s existing Historic Districts ordinance (Code of Ordinances, Part II, Chapter 7 *Housing*, Article II *Historic Districts*).

Significance

Brief History

The proposed Upper Central Street Local Historic District is found in Somerville’s Winter Hill neighborhood. Winter Hill refers to a large area of development north of Highland, east of Lowell, west of Marshall and bordered on the north by Broadway. The geographic drumlin⁹ in this area reaches its highest point near the top of Adams and Central Streets.

Separate from the place each of the proposed buildings has in the architectural narrative of this district, several of the buildings share unique relationships with each other from a social, economic and cultural history standpoint.

The earliest house remaining on the street, the c.1840 Adams-Locke House (178 Central Street) was originally a farmhouse. The land holdings for the property once reached from Medford Street in the South to Broadway in the North. The building was built and owned by Charles Adams, who was a state legislator as well as a farmer. Adams gave the City a portion of his land holdings at the north of his property for the first schoolhouse on Winter Hill. The school stood on the site of the present-day Vida Real Evangelical Center at 404 Broadway (historically known as the Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church).

Much of Broadway was developed after the Civil War. Adams and Central Streets were laid out and subdivided in 1847 but remained largely undeveloped until the 1880s and 1890s. During the 1870s and 1880s, much of the land on this portion of Central and onto Broadway was owned by Cutler Downer. Cutler Downer lived at 170 Central Street and worked as a real estate broker in Boston. Four of the buildings proposed for this district were built by Cutler Downer for speculative/investment purposes: 192-200 Central Street (known as the Cutler-Downer Rowhouses), 400 Broadway, 396-398 Broadway, and 392-394 Broadway. Much like present day, speculative real estate development was alive and well in the 19th century. A few of the properties in this district were built on speculation including the “double” Mansards of 396-398 Broadway and 392-394 Broadway. During the last quarter of the 19th century this portion of Broadway at the crest of a hill still offered excellent vistas looking out toward Charlestown and the Mystic River.

The growing business class and a good location made speculative real estate development in the area a worthwhile enterprise for those willing to take the risk. While other nearby areas of the City such as those west of Lowell and Adams Streets were laid out to build workers’ housing, this area in Winter Hill began to be developed with large, highly detailed homes intended for businessmen.

⁹ Elongated, often oval-shaped land forms comprised of sediment (rock, sand, gravel) that were formed by and under moving glacial ice. Drumlins can be large, sometimes a ¼ mile or more in length. There are many drumlins in Somerville and the surrounding area.

392-392, 396-398, and 400 Broadway all show a considerable attention to exterior architectural detail and ornamentation geared toward the business class consumer.

The construction of the large, (originally) single-family homes at 187, 183, and 181 Central Street are also indicative of homes intended for the “business class”. The first owner of 187 Central Street, for example, was a successful businessman and banker, Sylvester R. Briggs. He owned the house outright (no mortgage), employed two live-in servants, and saw his daughter and sister, both of whom lived with him, off on a several months-long “grand tour” of the Middle East and Europe.

Later occupants of this particular property included Dr. Charles Dickerman, a Russian Jewish immigrant and medical doctor who founded the Sunnyside Hospital which was located within the current building at 400 Broadway. Though a man of means, when the Great Depression hit, a total of 14 people in 1930 and 16 people in 1940 resided with Dr. Dickerman at 187 Central St., including nurses at the hospital, paying lodgers, and family members.

Brief Architectural Descriptions

158 Central Street (existing LHD)

This 1 ½-story 1879 Second Empire house also presents distinct architectural elements from the Queen Anne and Stick style periods. The slant Mansard roof is slate with an intricate, decorative patterning. The roof has a raking cornice with unadorned brackets. The front façade presents an off-center entry under an open, covered porch supported by Queen Anne-style columns. Pierced, arched decorative elements appear between the tops of the columns. Windows are 2-over-2 except for the multi-paned windows in the later shed dormer on the top floor. Said dormer presents some decorative wood shingling. To the left of the porch, the front façade presents a one-story corner polygonal tower with a conical-form, slate-covered roof. The tower presents wood clapboarding and Stick work. The right elevation presents a two-story polygonal bay with wood clapboarding and Stick work. Large, decorative brackets appear at the base. The bay is capped by a conical-form roof. The left elevation presents a shed-roof one-story bay. A third story shed-roof dormer presents a pair of 2-over-2 windows, decorative shingling and decorative rafter tails. Stick detailing and wood clapboarding can be found throughout each façade.

170 Central Street (existing LHD)

This c.1868 2 ½ -story Second Empire house is historically known as the Cutler-Downer House. This substantial Mansard-roofed building is a three-bay configuration with right side-hall entrance. Heavy scrolled brackets can be found under the heavy cornice line. The front entry portico is supported by paired, squared columns. The entry door is flanked by single, squared, flat pilasters terminating in paneled plinths. The flat-roofed, open, entry portico is topped by a three-bay enclosed space. Window hoods are supported by small brackets. Mansard dormers are inset, capped with a gabled, open pediment and present small, detailed brackets. The roof is slate with a highly decorative patterning. Quoins are extant on the right front corner post but absent on the left front corner post. The right elevation presents a 2 ½-story Mansard-roofed squared bay

with decorated corner boards, hooded and bracketed windows. The left elevation presents an open, side porch with pierced wood arches facing the street and the rear of the property. Porch skirting is vertical boarding. The porch is supported by squared columns while flat, squared pilasters with period trim capping appear at the two corners of the porch where it attached to the left elevation of the house. The porch also presents a balustered railing system around its perimeter. The left elevation also presents a 2 ½-story polygonal bay. An ornate, arched dormer appears in an otherwise flat bay roof. Wood clapboarding on facades, heavy, exposed sill plate, brick foundation.

178 Central Street (existing LHD)

Known as the Adams-Locke House, this building was constructed c. 1840. The 2 ½-story wood-framed structure presents a three-bay front façade with a right-side hall entry. The front entry door is flanked by right and left full-length side lites. The gable-end fronts the street and presents a strong pediment on the ½ story. The cornice line is broad and strong and corner posts are capped in classic Greek revival style trim. Windows on the first floor fronting the front porch are significantly larger than standard, in keeping with the classic Greek Revival style. Second story front windows are 6-over-6. The two windows on the front half story under the gable peak are 3-over-3. The open, covered front porch is supported by fluted columns with capitals of the Doric order.

192-200 Central Street (existing LHD)

Historically known as the Downer Rowhouses, this multi-unit, 2 ½-story brick building was built c. 1880. This Second Empire building presents a straight-form Mansard roof with scalloped slate shingles. Dormer caps are gabled with broken pediments supported by small brackets. Heavy, pronounced and bracketed cornice line. Five polygonal front façade bays run the height of the building. Recessed entries present period-style paneled double doors with large, arched panes. Stone lintels above the entry doors. Windows present stone sills and lintels. Stone entry steps lead to the recessed entries.

392-394 Broadway (existing LHD)

This 2 ½-story “double” house is a Second Empire with a slant Mansard roof and built c. 1874. The building presents two side-by-side front entrances, each double-doored with period paneling and large rectangular panes. Heavy cornice line with bracketing and modillions. Substantial covered open entry portico supported by heavy, squared columns with paneled plinths. Paneling, brackets, and modillions appear under the eave line of the portico roof. Full-height tripartite bays on the front elevation with panel and bracket detailing on the first two stories of same. The ½ story portion of the bays present windows with gabled, broken pediment window hoods and supporting bracketing. The dormers throughout the front, right, and left Mansard roofline are also present broken pediment, gable form dormers with supporting brackets. The right and left elevations of the building present two single-story tripartite bays with heavy cornices and bracketing. Strong, wide, paneled corner boards. Horizontal wood clapboarding on the facades, additional paneling is noted under the front second-story windows. Scalloped slate shingles on roof. Brick foundation and exposed sill plate.

396-398 Broadway (existing LHD)

The architecture of this building is substantially the same as that of 392-394 Broadway with a few exceptions. The second story front windows lack paneling below. Paneled front entry doors present arched rather than rectangular panes. Right and left elevation tripartite dormers are two stories rather than one. The slate roofing has been replaced with asphalt shingles.

400 Broadway (existing LHD)

Historically known as the Sunnyside Hospital. This Second Empire single-Mansard was built around roughly the same time as its double-Mansard neighbors to the left. The exterior details of the building remain the same as with 392-394 Broadway with the following noted exceptions. The front entry door is a later, single-door entry with paneling and a large, rectangular pane. The door is flanked by $\frac{3}{4}$ -length side lites with paneled base. A tripartite transom rests above the entry door. The open entry portico is supported by round columns with capitals of the Doric order. Flat, square pilasters with paneled plinths and large brackets are found on either side of the side lites. Paneling is not present under the second-floor front façade window. While two single-story tripartite bays are present on the left elevation, no bays exist on the right elevation. Decorative metal fencing extends along the front and right perimeters of the parcel.

404 Broadway (existing LHD)

Historically known as the Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church and built 1890-1891 by Hartwell and Richardson. This building is one of the only Shingle Style institutional buildings in the City. The building presents classic shingle style architectural features. Characteristic Shingle Style elements include multiple slate roofs of varying forms. Extant roof styles on this building are gable, conical, pyramidal, and sloped with end flares. In addition to the multiple roof forms are the numerous architectural shapes that are presented on this building. Conical, two-story towers face Broadway and attach to either side of a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -story gable-fronted sanctuary. A squared bell tower flanks the left front corner of the building. The building façade is clad in wood shingles and granite. The square tower uses local slate known as “Somerville Stone” from the Fitzgerald’s Quarry in Somerville. Blue Rutland marble is used for the sills, copings and steps.

201 Central Street

The B’nai B’rith Synagogue was constructed between 1919-1920 in the Byzantine Revival style which was one of several types of architectural Exoticism popular at the time. This 4-story buff brick and limestone-faced building with cast stone trim is rectangular in form and measures three bays by five bays. The building is distinguished by several architectural forms and features including a tripartite main façade, center pavilion with a shallow, three-bay projection. The gently crenelated arch at the center of the front façade along with the tall, narrow side wings on the main massing round out some of the major architectural forms. Taken together, the architectural approach taken on this building given the structure a feeling of verticality and monumentality. Distinctive design features on the building are numerous. The tripartite main façade presents a trio of recessed arched entrances with heavily-paneled doors above which are found stained glass fan lights. These entry doors are reached via concrete steps that are flanked by high-shouldered masonry supports. Thick, cast stone lighting poles topped with iron and

globe-form lights flank the top of the entry steps. Arched windows with cast stone sills and arched caps feature prominently on the front façade as does the stained glass Star of David encircled by cast stone. Cast stone tablets of the Ten Commandments are prominently featured at the center top of the projecting pavilion.

187 Central Street

This c. 1895-1900 building is a center-entry, 2 ½-story Colonial Revival with a two-story rounded bay on either side of the front façade. Two-story polygonal bays are noted on the left and right facades. Hip roof with deep overhang. Three prominent single dormers on the front elevation. Left and right front dormers present gabled dormer caps while the middle dormer presents a stylized scrolled broken pediment dormer cap. Five additional gabled dormers are distributed among the right, left, and rear rooflines. An open, covered portico leads to a center front entry door. Wood rails and turned balusters present at the left and right boundaries of the wood portico decking. Right and left three-pillar clusters with Doric capitals support the portico roof. The area atop the portico roof is a later enclosure.

A center panel and glass entry door is flanked by paneled and glass side lites. An elongated fan light with trim molding is found above the entry door. Half-round pilasters with detailed capitals are positioned between the side lites and the entry door. Dentils are found below the roofline of portico. Molded trim can be found under same. Dentil molding is also extant under the eave of the of main body of the house. Non-functioning, fixed shutters flank the windows on the front façade of main body only. One brick chimney stack present as is a stone foundation.

183 Central Street

This c. 1895-1900 building is a center-entry, 2 ½-story Colonial Revival with a two-story rounded bay on either side of the front façade. Three prominent single dormers on the front elevation. Left and right front dormers present gabled dormer caps while the middle dormer is arched with a fanlight motif. Right and left elevation dormers are single, gabled. Rounded oriel present in the center of the second story of the front façade. Hip roof with deep overhand and dentils under the eave line. Building is three bays wide with a center entry flanked by wide side lites etched with a diamond motif. Right and left three-pillar clusters with Doric capitals support the open front portico roof. Front portico is enclosed at the sides up to roughly 3 feet up from the portico decking. A “roof deck” has been created atop the portico roof. One of the windows in the center rounded second floor bay appears to have been changed out to a door. Two brick chimney stacks are present on the main massing of the building. Stone foundation.

181 Central Street

This c.1895, 2 ½-story Colonial Revival building is three bays wide and presents a hip roof with slate shingling and a deep eave on the second story. The second floor façade overhangs the first floor façade in a revival design that borrows from a late medieval English/early First Period colonial American building style. There are thick, squared drops at either end of the overhang, a motif also borrowed from late-medieval English/ early First Period colonial American building style. Rounded bays with three windows each are found on both sides of the front entry portico. The windows present 6-over-one double-hung windows. Classical swag motifs are present above

the windows in each bay. This swag motif is carried across the cornice of the front portico. The second story presents a rounded, three window oriel at the center of the front façade. The upper portion of each of the three double-hung windows in this oriel present decorative caning. Right and left substantial three-pillar clusters with Doric capitals support the portico roof. The three-pillar columns rest on substantial plinths. Open metal railings with scrollwork are found on either side of the front portico deck and match the paired metal railings flanking the front entry steps. The center front entry presents a solid paneled door flanked by three-quarter, 10-light, bottom paneled side lights. Single, stylized corbels support the rear portion of the entry portico. A secondary entrance to the building is extant on the right elevation. Two wide, single dormers with exaggerated and flared gable roofs are present on the front elevation. The left and right elevations each present one single dormer with the same exaggerated and flared gable roof. All dormers have paired, double-hung, one-over-one windows. A single dormer with an exaggerated and flared gable roof is also present on the rear elevation. Two brick chimney stacks – one on the front right elevation and the other to the rear left. The foundation is stone.

An early 20th-century concrete block garage is extant along the right rear property line. The garage has two bays, double doors and a hipped roof with asphalt shingles.

Justification of Boundaries

The proposed district is bounded to the North by Broadway, the South by Medford Street, the East by Tennyson Street, Forster Street, and Browning Road and the West by Adams Street. As noted earlier in this report, eight (8) of the buildings in this proposed district are existing, individually designated Local Historic Districts. Four of the buildings are on Broadway and the remaining four are on Central. The additional four buildings to be newly designated are contiguous and are close to the intersection of Central and Broadway. The proposed Upper Central Street LHD provides the opportunity to consolidate existing single-building LHDs into a multi-building district while including four additional buildings. The proposed district presents excellent examples of nearly every major architectural style¹⁰ over a 185-year period contained within one small section of the City. Several of the buildings in the proposed district are historically connected through ownership, occupation, or development.

At their April 2021 meeting, the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) directed Preservation Planning Staff to begin researching a Local Historic District in this area and begin preparing the Preliminary Study Report. At their June 28, 2021 (public) business meeting, the HPC discussed the inclusion of the addresses recommended by Staff, the logic in subsuming existing single-building LHDs into a larger district, the inclusion of four additional addresses for designation, and the architectural and historical merits of the proposed buildings. The HPC voted to allow for Preservation Planning Staff to submit a Preliminary Study Report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission containing the properties indicated in this report.

¹⁰ See footnote 1

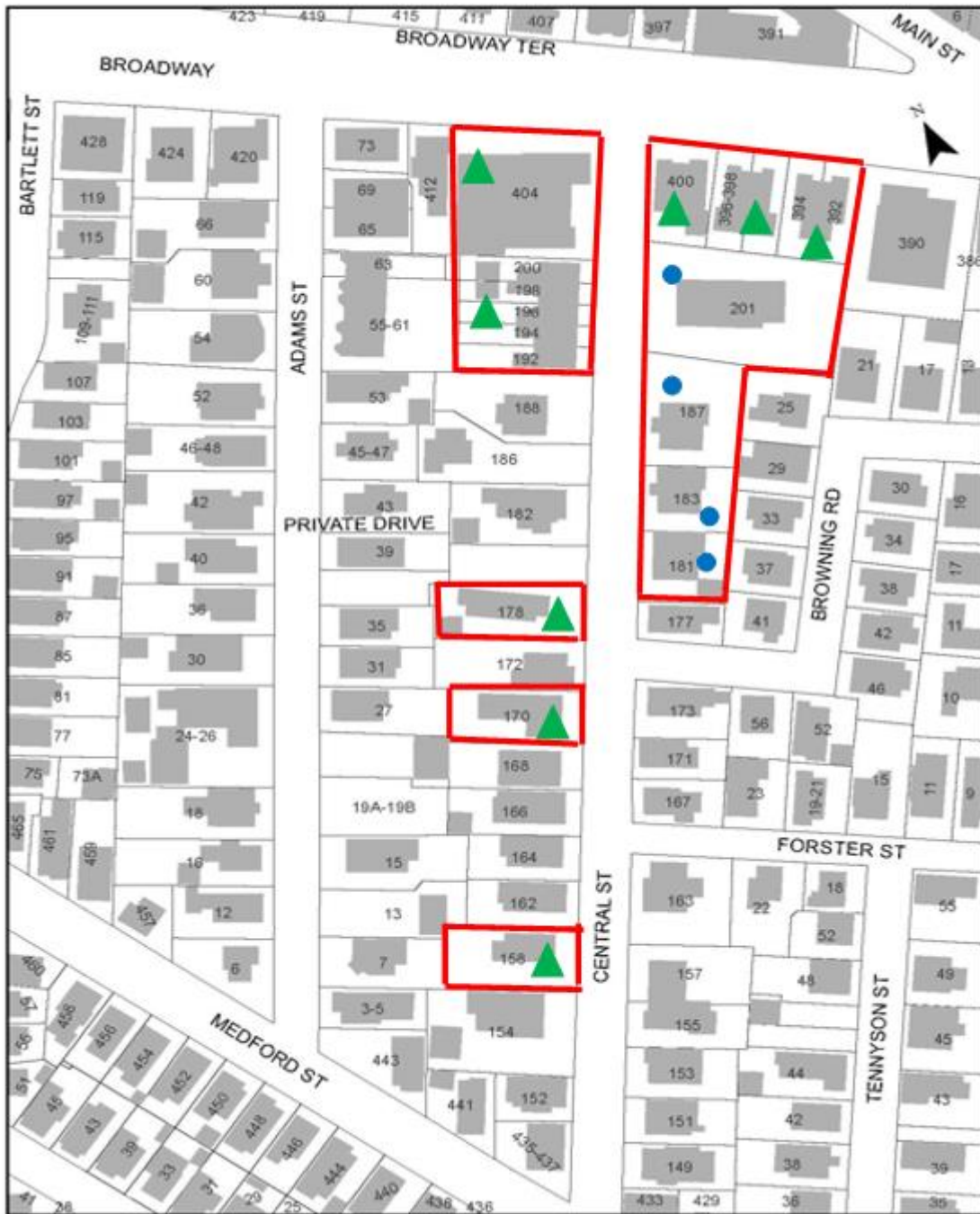
Map of Proposed District

The proposed district map that follows was produced through the City’s GIS system. Street numbers for each building are indicated on the map. In addition to noting the district boundaries, each property has been coded to indicate if it is an existing single-building LHD or if it is being newly proposed for first-time designation. These indicators appear below:

Boundary lines 

Existing LHD 

Proposed for designation 



Property Street Address Index

Street #	Street	Const. Date	Historic Name	Inventory Form	Architectural Style
158	Central St.	c.1879	Samuel Darling House	Existing	Second Empire (with Queen Anne & Stick elements)
170	Central St.	c.1868	Cutler Downer House	Existing	Second Empire (Mansard)
178	Central St.	c.1840	Charles Adams-Woodbury Locke House	Existing	Greek Revival
192-200	Central St.	c. 1880	Downer Rowhouses	Existing	Second Empire (Mansard)
201	Central St.	1919-1925	B’nai Brith Synagogue	Existing	Byzantine Revival
187	Central St.	c.1895-1900	Briggs-Dickerman House	New	Colonial Revival
183	Central St.	c.1895-1900	John Walter Sanborn House	New	Colonial Revival
181	Central St.	c.1895	William & Alice Woodberry House	New	Colonial Revival
392-394	Broadway	c.1874	Cutler Downer (developer)	Existing	Second Empire (Mansard)
396-398	Broadway	c.1874	Cutler Downer (developer)	Existing	Second Empire (Mansard)
400	Broadway	c.1874	Sunnyside Hospital	Existing	Second Empire (Mansard)
404	Broadway	1890-1891	Broadway Winter Hill Congregational Church	Existing	Shingle

Ordinance

The City of Somerville’s Historic District Ordinance (Ordinance No. 1985-2) was adopted in 1985. The ordinance is appended to this Final Study Report.

Inventory Forms / Photographs

Existing inventory forms for the following buildings are appended to the report:

- 158 Central
- 170 Central
- 178 Central
- 192-200 Central
- 392-394 Broadway
- 396-398 Broadway
- 400 Broadway
- 404 Broadway
- 201 Central St (Temple B’nai B’rith)

New inventory forms for the following buildings are appended to the report:

- 187 Central Street (currently under a 12-month demolition delay)
- 183 Central Street
- 181 Central Street

HISTORIC DISTRICT ORDINANCE

FOR THE

CITY OF SOMERVILLE

In accordance with the Historic Districts Act,
Chapter 40C of the General Laws of Massachusetts

Adopted by Board of Aldermen (Ordinance #1985-2)
March 7, 1985
Approved by Mayor Brune
March 11, 1985

Amended by Board of Aldermen (Ordinance #1989-6)
October 26, 1989
Approved by Mayor Brune
October 31, 1989

Amended by Board of Aldermen (Ordinance #1990-7)
May 10, 1990
Approved by Mayor Capuano
May 16, 1990

Amended by Board of Aldermen (Ordinance #1993-2)
February 25, 1993
Approved by Mayor Capuano
March 2, 1993

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**AN ORDINANCE CREATING AND PROTECTING HISTORIC DISTRICTS
IN THE CITY OF SOMERVILLE**

BE IT ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND THE MAYOR, in accordance with the authority granted under the Historic Districts Act, Chapter 40C of the General Laws of Massachusetts

Section 1. Purpose and Intent

It is hereby declared a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, preservation and use of historical resources or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of education, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this ordinance is to:

- a. Protect, enhance and preserve cultural and historical resources, including those districts which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history.
- b. Safeguard the City's historical and cultural heritage by improving historical and cultural resources by creating historic districts.
- c. Foster wider public awareness of and pride in accomplishments of the past.
- d. Encourage private efforts of Somerville citizens in support of such purposes.
- e. Promote the use of historic districts as a stimulus to local business and industry.
- f. Enhance the City's image to residents, visitors and tourists and make the City a more attractive and desirable place in which to live and work.

Section 2. Definitions

In the ordinance, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

- a. Commission means the Historic Preservation Commission created under this ordinance.
- b. Historic District is an area designated in accordance with Section 3 that contains one or more parcels or lots of land, or one or more buildings or structures on one or more parcels or lots of land.
- c. Altered includes the words "rebuilt", "reconstructed", "restored", "removed" and "demolished" and the phrases "changed in exterior color" and "any alteration to exterior physical appearance or exterior architectural feature visible from a public way".
- d. Building means a combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals or property.
- e. Constructed includes the words "built", "erected", "installed", "enlarged" and "moved".

- f. Exterior architectural feature means such portion of the exterior of a building or structure as is open to view from a public street, public way, public park or public body of water, including but not limited to the architectural style and general arrangement and setting thereof, the kind, color and texture of exterior building materials, the color of paint or other materials applied to exterior surfaces and the type and style of windows, doors, lights, signs and other appurtenant exterior fixtures.
- g. Person Aggrieved means the applicant, an owner of adjoining property, an owner of property within the same historic district as property within one hundred feet of said property lines and any charitable corporation in which one of its purposes is the preservation of historic structures or districts.
- h. Structure means a combination of materials other than a building, including a sign, fence, wall, hitching post, terrace, walk or driveway.

Section 3. Establishment of Historic Districts

The City of Somerville may, by ordinance adopted by two-thirds vote of the Board of Aldermen, establish historic districts subject to the following provisions:

- a. Process. Prior to the establishment of any historic district in Somerville, an investigation and report on the historical and architectural significance of the buildings, structures or sites to be included in the proposed historic district or districts shall be made by an historic district study committee or by an historic district commission, as provided in this section. The buildings, structures or sites to be included in the proposed historic district may consist of one or more parcels or lots of land, or one or more buildings or structures on one or more parcels or lots of land.

The study committee or the commission shall transmit copies of the report to the Planning Board, and to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for their respective consideration and recommendations.

Not less than sixty days after such a transmittal the study committee or commission shall hold a public hearing on the report after due notice given at least fourteen days prior to the date thereof, which shall include a written notice, given by certified mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested, to the owners as they appear on the most recent real estate tax list of the Board of Assessors of all properties to be included in such district or districts. The committee shall submit a final report with its recommendations, a map of the proposed district or districts and a draft of a proposed ordinance to the Board of Aldermen.

- b. Formation of Historic District Study Committee. An historic district study committee may be established in Somerville by vote of the Board of Aldermen for the purpose of making an investigation of the desirability of establishing an historic district or districts therein. The study committee shall consist of not less than three nor more than seven members appointed by the Mayor, subject to confirmation by the Board of Aldermen including: a) one member from two nominees submitted by the Somerville Historical Society or, in the absence thereof by the Society for the Preservation of New England

Antiquities; b) one member from two nominees submitted by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects; and c) one member from two nominees of the board of realtors, if any, covering the area. If, within thirty days after submission of a written request for nominees to any of the organizations herein named, no such nominations have been made, the appointing body may proceed to appoint the study committee without nominations by such organization.

Section 4. Historic Preservation Commission: Membership Terms and Administrative Matters

- a. Terms. The ordinance shall be administered by an Historic Preservation Committee with the following terms, composition and administrative matters. The Historic Preservation Commission shall consist of seven (7) members, and seven (7) alternates, appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the Board of Aldermen. All of the members and at least five (5) of the alternates shall be residents of the City. Each member and alternate shall serve for a term of three years; except that the initial appointments shall be for two members and two alternates to serve a term of one year, two members and two alternates to serve a term of two years, and three members and three alternates to serve a term of three years. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the unexpired term. In case of the absence, inability to act or unwillingness to act because of self-interest on the part of a member of the Commission, his or her place shall be taken by an alternate member designated by the chairman. Each member and alternate shall continue in office after expiration of his or her term until a successor is duly appointed and qualified.
- b. Composition. The Commission membership shall be composed of the following: one member, preferably a professional architectural historian, chosen from three nominees submitted by the Somerville Historical Society or the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities; an architect, preferably a person registered in the Commonwealth, chosen from three nominees submitted by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects; a licensed real estate broker chosen from three nominees submitted by the regional chapter of the Board of Realtors; a city planner, preferably with knowledge about allied local activities and boards; a lawyer with knowledge of real estate and historic preservation law; and two citizen members who, through education or experience, have demonstrated a commitment to historic preservation. Two or more of the members so appointed shall be residents of a designated historic district. The alternate members shall include: at least one resident of a designated historic district, one landscape architect, one licensed general contractor or building tradesperson and four with a background in any of the other categories represented by the regular members of the Commission. If, within thirty (30) days after the submission of a written request for nominees to any of the above-named organizations, no such nominations have been submitted, the Mayor may make such an appointment without nomination by said organization. To the extent a person meets more than one of the foregoing specific membership requirements, then each such specific membership requirement so met shall be satisfied by such person's membership on the commission.
- c. Compensation. No member or alternate shall receive compensation for his or her service on the Commission, but shall be reimbursed, subject to availability of

appropriated funds, for his or her actual expenses reasonably and necessarily incurred in performance of his or her official duties.

- d. Conflict of Interest. If any Commission member or alternate is employed or to be employed by the City or to have directly, or indirectly a financial interest in any contract with the City, the classification of "special municipal employee" should be obtained from the Board of Aldermen and all other requirements as set forth under Chapter 268A, Massachusetts General Laws, shall be met.
- e. Officers. The Commission shall elect before the end of its fourth regular meeting during the first year and every May thereafter, a chairman, vice-chairman, and a secretary. All officers, except the secretary shall be elected from its own members. Whenever the secretary shall not attend a meeting of the Commission, the Commission shall elect a secretary pro-tempore who shall take the minutes of the meeting. The records of the Commission shall set forth every determination made by the Commission, the vote of every member participating in such determination and the absence or failure to vote of every other member.
- f. Expenses. The Commission may enter into contracts and may, if necessary, subject to appropriation, employ clerical and technical assistance of consultants and incur other expenses appropriate to the carrying on of its work.
- g. Gifts. The Commission may accept money gifts and expend the same for the carrying on of its work. The Commission may also administer on behalf of the City any properties or easements, restrictions or other interests in real property which the City may have or may accept as gifts or otherwise and which the City may designate the Commission as the administrator thereof.
- h. Record Keeping and Rules. The Commission shall keep a permanent record of its resolutions, transactions and determinations and of the vote of each member participating therein, and may adopt and amend such rules and regulations not inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance and prescribe such forms as it shall deem desirable and necessary for the regulations of its affairs and the conduct of its business. The Commission shall file a copy of any such rules and regulations with the City Clerk. An annual report of the Commission's activities shall be filed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission under provisions of Chapter 40C, Section 15, and shall be submitted to the City Clerk for filing.
- i. Other Powers. The Commission shall have, in addition to the powers, authority and duties granted to it by this Ordinance, such other powers, authority and duties as may be delegated or assigned to it from time to time by vote of the Board of Aldermen.

Section 5. Amendments to Historic District Designations

- a. Enlargements or Reductions. An historic district may be enlarged or reduced or an additional historic district in the City created in the manner established under Section 3, for creation of the initial district, except that in the case of the enlargement or reduction of an existing historic district the investigation, report and hearing shall be by the

Historic Preservation Commission having jurisdiction over such historic district instead of by a study committee.

- b. Additional Districts. In the case of creation of an additional historical district the investigation, report and hearing shall be by the City Historic Preservation Commission instead of by a study committee unless the Commission recommends otherwise.
- c. Notice. If the district is to be reduced, written notice, as provided in section 3 for the creation of the initial district, shall be given to said owners of each property in the district.
- d. Filing Requirements. No changes to the boundaries of an historic district shall become effective until a map(s) setting forth the changes to the boundaries of the historic district has been filed with the City Clerk and has been recorded in the South Middlesex Registry of Deeds and the provisions of Section 13A of Chapter 36, of Massachusetts General Laws, shall not apply.

Section 6. Application for Certificates from the Commission

- a. Considerations of Commission. In passing upon matters before it the Commission shall consider, among other things, the historic and architectural value and significance of the site, building or structure, the general design, arrangement, texture, material and color of the features involved, and the relation of such features to similar features of buildings and structures in the surrounding area. In the case of new construction or additions to existing buildings or structures, the Commission shall consider the appropriateness of the size and shape of the building or structure both in relation to the land area upon which the building or structure is situated and to buildings and structures in the vicinity, and the Commission may in appropriate cases impose dimensional and set back requirements in addition to those required by applicable ordinance or by-law. The Commission shall not consider interior arrangements or the categories of exclusions specified in paragraph c of this Section.

The Commission may after public hearing set forth in such manner as it may determine the various designs of certain appurtenances, such as light fixtures, which will meet the requirements of an historic district and a roster of certain colors of paint and roofing materials which will meet the requirements of an historic district, but no such determination shall limit the right of an applicant to present other designs or colors to the Commission for its approval.

The Commission shall not make any recommendation or requirement except for the purpose of preventing developments incongruous to the historic aspects or the architectural characteristics of the surroundings and of the historic district.

- b. Submission Requirements. Except for the exclusions noted in paragraph (c), no building or structure within an historic district shall be constructed or altered in any way that affects exterior architectural features unless the Commission shall first have issued a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of nonapplicability or a certificate of hardship with respect to such construction or alteration.

Any person who desires to obtain a certificate shall file with the Commission an application for a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of nonapplicability or a certificate of hardship, as the case may be, in such form as the Commission may reasonably determine, together with such plans, elevations, specifications, material and other information, including in the case of demolition or removal a statement of the proposed condition and appearance of the property thereafter, as may be reasonably deemed necessary by the Commission to enable it to make a determination on the application.

No building permit for construction of a building or structure or for alteration of an exterior architectural feature within an historic district and no demolition permit for demolition (full or partial) or removal of a building or structure within an historic district shall be issued by Inspectional Services thereof until the certificate required by this section has been issued by the Commission.

- c. Exclusions. The authority of the Commission shall not extend to the review of the following categories of buildings, structures or exterior architectural features of the historic district and, in this event, the buildings, structures or exterior architectural features so excluded may be constructed or altered within the historic district without review by the Commission:
1. temporary structures or signs, subject, however, to such conditions as to duration of use, location, lighting, removal and similar matters as the Commission may reasonably specify;
 2. storm doors and windows, screens, window air conditioners, lighting fixtures, antennae, lawn statuary and similar appurtenances, or any one or more of them;
 3. the color of paint;
 4. signs of one foot square or less in area in connection with use of a residence for a customary home occupation or for professional purposes, provided only one such sign is displayed in connection with each residence and if illuminated is illuminated only indirectly; and one sign in connection with the non-residential use of each building or structure which is not more than twelve square feet in area, is appropriately located and consists of letters and/or symbol or trademark compatible with the character of the area and if illuminated only indirectly; or either of them;
 5. the reconstruction, substantially similar in exterior design, type of use and size of a building, structure or exterior architectural feature damaged or destroyed by storm or other disaster, provided such reconstruction is begun within one year thereafter and carried forward with due diligence; and upon request by an applicant, the Commission shall issue a certificate of non-applicability with respect to construction or alteration in any category then not subject to review by the Commission in accordance with the above provisions.

- d. Commission Powers and Duties. The Commission shall have the following powers, functions and duties related to issuance of certificates:
1. If the Commission determines that the construction or alteration for which an application for a certificate of appropriateness has been filed will be appropriate for or compatible with the preservation or protection of the historic district, the Commission shall cause a certificate of appropriateness to be issued to the applicant. In the case of a disapproval of an application for a certificate of appropriateness the Commission shall place upon its records the reasons for such determination and shall forthwith cause a notice of its determination, accompanied by a copy of the reasons therefore as set forth in the records of the Commission, to be issued to the applicant. The Commission may make recommendations to the applicant with respect to appropriateness of design, arrangement, texture, material, and similar features. Prior to the issuance if any disapproval the Commission may notify the applicant of its proposed action accompanied by recommendations of changes in the applicant's proposal which, if made, would make the application acceptable to the Commission. The Commission shall, as feasible, identify sources of additional information, technical assistance and financial incentives, which may eliminate the area of concern. If, within fourteen days of the receipt of such notice, the applicant files a written modification of his application in conformity with the recommended changes of the Commission, the Commission shall cause certificate of appropriateness to be issued to the applicant.
 2. In the case of determination by the Commission that an application for a certificate of appropriateness or for a certificate of non-applicability does not involve any exterior architectural feature, or involves an exterior architectural feature which is not then subject to review by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of Section Six, the Commission shall cause a certificate of non-applicability to be issued to the applicant.
 3. The commission shall determine if the construction or alteration for which an application for a certificate of appropriateness has been filed is inappropriate, or in the event of an application for a certificate of hardship, the Commission shall determine if, owing to conditions especially affecting the building or structure involved, (e.g. handicapped access), but not affecting the historic district generally, failure to approve an application will involve a substantial hardship, financial or otherwise, to the applicant. The commission shall also determine whether such application may be approved without substantial detriment to the public welfare and without substantial derogation from the intent and purposes of this Ordinance. If the commission determines that owing to such conditions failure to approve an application will involve substantial hardship to the applicant and approval thereof may be made without such substantial detriment or derogation, or, in the event of failure to make a determination on an application within the time specified in Section Seven, the Commission shall cause a certificate of hardship to be issued to the applicant.

4. Each certificate issued by the Commission shall be dated and signed by its Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary or such other person designated by the Commission to sign such certificates on its behalf. Each certificate issued by the Commission shall also be accompanied by a document substantiating in sufficient detail, the basis of the determination. Certificates are valid for one full year from the date of issuance and must be revalidated by the Commission if substantial work has not been completed by the end of this period.
5. The commission shall file with the City Clerk and with the City Building Department a copy or notice of all certificates, determinations of disapproval and substantiating documents issued by it.

Section 7. Meetings of the Commission

- a. Voting: The Commission shall hold meetings at the call of the Chairman and at the request of two members of the Commission, and in such other manner as the Commission shall determine in its rules. A majority of the members of a Commission shall constitute a quorum. The concurring vote of a majority of the members of the Commission shall be necessary to issue a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of non-applicability or a certificate of hardship.
- b. Review of Application: The Commission shall determine promptly, and in all events within fourteen (14) days after the filing of an application for a certificate of appropriateness, a certificate of non-applicability or a certificate of hardship, as the case may be, whether the application involves any exterior architectural features which are subject to approval by the Commission. If the Commission determines that such application involves any such features which are subject to approval by the Commission, the Commission shall hold a public hearing on such application unless such hearing is dispensed with as hereinafter provided.
- c. Hearing an Application: The Commission shall fix a reasonable time for the hearing on any application and shall give public notice of the time, place and purposes thereof at least fourteen (14) days before said hearing in such manner as it may determine, and by mailing, postage prepaid, a copy of said notice to the applicant, to the owners of all adjoining property and other property deemed by the Commission to be materially affected thereby as they appear on the most recent real estate tax list of the Board of Assessors, to the City Planning Board, to any person filing written request for notice of hearing, such request to be renewed yearly in December, and to such other persons as the Commission shall deem entitled to notice.
- d. Period of Determination: As soon as convenient after such public hearing, but in any event within forty-five (45) days after the filing of the application, or within such further time as the applicant may allow in writing, the Commission shall make a determination on the application. If the Commission shall fail to make a determination within such period of time, the Commission shall thereupon issue a certificate of hardship.

- e. Waiver of Public Hearing: A public hearing on an application need not be held if such hearing is waived in writing by all persons entitled to notice thereof. In addition, a public hearing on an application may be waived by the Commission if the Commission determines that the exterior architectural feature involved or its category or color, as the case may be, is so insubstantial in its effect on the historic district that it may be reviewed by the Commission without public hearing on an application, provided, however, that if the Commission dispenses with a public hearing on an application, notice of the application shall be given to the owners of all adjoining property and other property deemed by the Commission to be materially affected thereby as above provided and ten (10) days shall elapse after the mailing of such notice before the Commission may act upon such application.

Section 8. Process of Appealing Determinations of the Commission

- a. Court Appeal. A person aggrieved by a determination of the Commission may, within twenty (20) days after the filing of the notice of such determination with the City Clerk, appeal to the South Middlesex Superior Court.
- b. Court Option. The court shall hear all pertinent evidence and shall annul the determination of the Commission if it finds the decision of the Commission to be unsupported by the evidence or to exceed the authority of the Commission, or may remand the case for further action by the Commission or make such other decree as justice and equity may require.
- c. Other Options. The remedy provided by this section shall be exclusive but the parties shall have all rights of appeal and exception as in other equity cases.
- d. Costs. Costs shall not be allowed against the Commission unless it shall appear to the court that the Commission acted with gross negligence, in bad faith or with malice in the matter from which appeal was taken. Costs shall not be allowed against the party appealing from such determination of the Commission unless it shall appear to the court that such party acted in bad faith or with malice in making the appeal to the court.

Section 9. Enforcement

The South Middlesex Superior Court shall have jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of Chapter 40C, General Laws and this ordinance enacted thereunder and the determinations, rulings and regulations issued pursuant thereto and may, upon the petition of the Mayor or the Board of Aldermen or of the Commission, restrain by injunction violations thereof; and, without limitation, such court may order the removal of any building, structure or exterior architectural feature constructed in violation thereof, or the substantial restoration of any building, structure or exterior architectural feature altered or demolished in violation thereof, and may issue such other orders for relief as may be equitable.

Whoever violates any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be punished by a fine of not less than ten dollars (\$10.00) nor more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00). Each day during any portion of which a violation continues to exist shall constitute a separate offense.

Section 10. Limited Coverage

Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance, repair, or replacement of any exterior architectural feature within an historic district which does not involve a change in design, material, color or the outward appearance thereof, nor to prevent landscaping with plants, trees or shrubs, nor construed to prevent the meeting of requirements certified by a duly authorized public officer to be necessary for public safety because of an unsafe or dangerous condition nor construed to prevent any construction or alteration under a permit duly issued prior to the effective date of this historic district ordinance.

Section 11. Amendments to Ordinance

This ordinance enabling the creation of historic districts may from time to time be amended in a manner not inconsistent with the provisions of Chapter 40C, General Laws, by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Aldermen, provided that the substance of such amendment has first been submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, for their recommendation and their recommendations have been received or sixty (60) days have elapsed without such recommendations.

Section 12. Severability

The provisions of this ordinance are severable, and if any of its provisions shall be held invalid or unconstitutional by any decision of any court or competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not impair or otherwise effect any other provisions of this act.

Section 13. Designation of Historic Districts

There are hereby established under the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40C, as amended, the following Historic Districts bounded as shown on the map accompanying the inventory forms, which is attached and made a part of this ordinance.