



City of Somerville
Planning, Preservation, & Zoning
City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

TO: City Council
FROM: Planning, Preservation & Zoning Staff
DATE: November 8, 2021
RE: Upper Central Street Local Historic District (LHD)

This memo is intended to provide a brief summary of the request for the City Council to approve the creation of the Upper Central Street Local Historic District (LHD). Detailed information regarding this proposal can be found in the Final Study Report (“the Report”) and its related documents that were submitted to the Council for its consideration.

Under the auspices of the enabling statute, MGL Chapter 40C, Somerville adopted its Historic District Ordinance (HDO) in 1985. Since that time, the City has been amending the district map by adding additional properties under this protective regulation. The last time properties were designated into a Local Historic District was in 2017 with the creation of the Harvard Hill LHD, which contained 8 properties.

The proposal before the Council seeks to create a twelve (12) -property LHD. This would be achieved by consolidating eight (8) existing single-property LHDs with four (4) currently undesignated properties into one larger LHD. One of these four structures, 187 Central Street, is currently under a 12-month demolition delay.

Prior to the submission of this proposal to the Council, the following occurred:

- Preparation of a Preliminary Study Report and submission for Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and Planning Board for review
- Informational meeting for affected property owners
- Public Hearing conducted by the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
- Preparation of a Final Study Report

This small area of Central and Broadway is uniquely rich with excellent architectural representation from Greek Revival to Exoticism and build dates that range from c.1840-1925. The proposed district would protect a 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.

A 2/3 vote of the Council is required for passage.