



**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS**  
***MAYOR'S OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT***  
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*HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION*

**Preliminary Study Report: De-Designation of 1170 Broadway**

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<b>Study Committee:</b>	<b>Dick Bauer, Chair</b>	<b>Abby Freedman, Vice Chair</b>
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	<b>Eric Parkes</b>	<b>Derick Snare</b>
	<b>Mark Sternman</b>	<b>Todd Zinn</b>

**Public Hearing Date:** *mid-late July 2015 (expected)*  
**Board of Alderman Expected Vote:** *July/August 2015*  
**Total Properties:** **2**  
**Address:** **1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue, Somerville, MA**

**Conclusion:** The City of Somerville is composed of a number of historic resources that visually describe the history of the City. Adopting the 1985 Historic District Ordinance and several map enlargements since then, a number of historic resources were designated as local historic districts, which is an acknowledgement that these buildings are of special importance to the history of the City. The intent of this Ordinance is to "Protect, enhance and preserve cultural and historical resources ... Safeguard the City's historical and cultural heritage ... [and] Enhance the City's image to residents, visitors and tourists ...". As the Historic Preservation Commission administers this Ordinance, the Commission is responsible for establishing the standard of integrity and significance that is to be conveyed by properties given historic designation status. These standards serve to protect, enhance and preserve designated properties and the Commission is then responsible for upholding these standards throughout the City for all designated historic properties and to defend these standards as tools used by the Commission to accomplish the intent and purpose of the Ordinance. Regulating the integrity of local historic districts, as in the ability of these districts to convey significance, serves to enhance the City's image by preserving the heritage of the City. Similarly, if a building within a local historic district is no longer composed of integrity, and is no longer able to convey significance, such building should be de-designated as a local



historic district. The Survey Form B is complete and correct. There have been no changes to the buildings since they were designated. The buildings retain the integrity for which they were designated. Maintaining the designation for buildings that uphold the established standard confirms the importance and purpose behind historic designation and compromises the intent of the Historic District Ordinance; therefore, Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission do not support the request to de-designate 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue.

### **Location**

The structures known as the Saint James Episcopal Church and Rectory, 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Street are located at the corner of Broadway and Clarendon Street in West Somerville near the western edge of Teele Square. This is a single-building district composed two structures joined by the ca. 1902 Assembly Hall. The buildings are visible from both streets.



*1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue looking toward the north.*

### **Introduction**

The pastor of the Saint James Episcopal Church, Reverend Doctor Karen Coleman, is requesting the de-designation of this structure as a local historic district. She has stated that there is new information

demonstrating insufficient significance and/or integrity whereby designation is not appropriate; that a professional error was made in the designation of the property and that a prejudicial error was made in the designation of this property. This Preliminary Study Report includes an analysis of the current significance and integrity of the building; a review of the designation process and the steps taken; *and a review of the benefits of designation* which will assist the Historic Preservation Commission review of this case regarding their recommendation to the Board of Alderman. Based upon recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Board, the Board of Alderman will make the final decision regarding the de-designation of 1170 Broadway.



*Left: View of Rectory and Church with connecting hall (photo 2006)    Right: View of church from Broadway (photo 2006)*

## **Process**

This preliminary report has been prepared under the requirements set forth in the City's Historic Districts Ordinance and in accordance with state enabling legislation, Massachusetts General Law chapter 40C, which states that any expansion or reduction in a local historic district requires a study report by the Historic Preservation Commission. Once the Commission has completed its preliminary study it is simultaneously forwarded to the Somerville Planning Board and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for their review and recommendations. A Public Hearing will be held by the SHPC no sooner than sixty (60) days after the submittal of this study report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and the Somerville Planning Board. Due notice shall be given in writing 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 at least fourteen days prior to the date of the Public Hearing, which included a notice. The request to approve the de-designation of the local historic district will then be submitted to the Board of Aldermen for their review and approval by a two-thirds vote. The de-designation becomes fully effective upon filing with the City Clerk and recording by the Registry of Deeds.

## **Background**

In March 1985, the City of Somerville formally adopted a Historic District Ordinance to preserve and protect its most historically and architecturally significant properties. This ordinance was the culmination of many months of extensive research and considerable community effort. It also symbolized the immense pride that the people of Somerville, both citizens and public officials, have in their City's heritage and its rich and diverse architecture.



Since the initial designations in 1985 encompassing 105 LHDs and 135 properties, the City of Somerville, through its Historic Preservation Commission (SHPC), undertook one other major inventory and designation effort in 1988-89 in accordance with MHC guidelines. This effort resulted in the adoption of an additional 102 LHD's encompassing 167 properties throughout the City. In 2003, the SHPC also spearheaded an expansion of three smaller districts in the Prospect Hill area that led to an additional 9 properties being locally designated as historic. With the loss of only a few designated properties over time, often due to tragic fires, the number of Local Historic Districts in Somerville in 2007 totaled 203.

In 2004 The Historic Preservation Commission and the City began a new City-wide Surveying project for the purpose of expanding the Local Historic Districts under MGL chapter 40C. As part of the 2005-2006 surveying project most of the City's churches were surveyed and recommended for designation in an effort to protect these important buildings. Churches and other buildings important to our sense of community are endangered by dwindling congregations and development pressures. The Commission considers it is imperative to protect them through designation as Local Historic Districts. Grants and other help are available for some churches designated as Local Historic Districts or on the National Register of Historic Places.

As stated in the original 2007 Report: *"Houses of worship figured prominently in the 2005 inventory, acknowledging the key role that buildings of this type have played and continue to play within the lives of Somerville residents ... Over time, these religious properties (including two rectories, one convent, eleven churches and two synagogues) have transcended local significance to include congregants who have relocated to other communities. For both current and former congregants, these buildings have significance linked with personal milestones such as baptisms, confirmations, bar mitzvahs, weddings and funerals. In terms of the City's history, these houses of worship speak to an ever-changing ethnic demographic whether it might be the arrival of the first Irish Catholics during the second quarter of the nineteenth century or the influx of Central and Eastern European Jews to Somerville during the first quarter of the twentieth century."*

*"Somerville's churches generally represent the most architecturally sophisticated forays into formal, Academic design of any of the City's building types. Influenced by the Romanesque, Gothic Revival, Stick Style, Craftsman and Tudor Gothic styles, prominent architects such as Ralph Adams Cram, S. S. Eisenberg and C. C. Coveney provided Somerville with highly visible landmarks that memorably punctuate skylines or anchor the corners of major intersections."*

Arthur Krim, consultant stated that (t)he St. James Church is of note as a mid-19th century chapel, expanded in 1892 to form a simple stick style design of a local parish church in Teele Square.

He further noted that the house at 7 Clarendon Avenue is of note as a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century house, later acquired by the church as a rectory in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Once the surveys were concluded, a series of public hearing were held in the neighborhoods and by theme to elicit responses to proposed Local Historic Districts. Invitations were sent to the Saint James Episcopal Church and to the Rectory in early August for an informational hearing for religious properties held on Monday 8/21/2006. Packets were sent out to all institutions. An e-mail response was received from Gregory A. Sakal, Senior Warden on 9/3/2006 stating *"Needless to say, we are all very pleased indeed to have the possibility of being designated as an historic property. We have done our best to maintain the historical integrity of the structure. In the Fall of 2005, we had extensive repairs done to the sanctuary as part of restoring our historic Hook & Hastings pipe organ. Although we are a small parish, we are committed to preservation of the buildings, and to the growth of our little parish as a place of worship in the City of Somerville."*

*Since your survey was done, we have had a change of leadership at the parish. Fr. Paul LaCharite resigned his cure at the end of December 2005. Fr. Michael Dudley is our "priest-in-residence" which is a diocesan designation for a temporary priest pending the appointment of a new rector. Until we have a new rector in place, in my capacity as Senior Warden, I am the chief executive of the parish."*

A Preliminary Report for the Expansion of the Local Historic Districts was submitted to the Somerville Planning Board and to the Massachusetts Historic Commission in November 2006 for review and comment. Certified mail was sent out in mid-January, 2007 to notify all owners of the up-coming Public Hearing. On February 6, 2007 a public hearing was held at which Paul Baxter, another representative of the Saint James Episcopal Church attended. Notes in the files state that he spoke with J. Brandon Wilson mentioning that the governing body of the Church was "up to speed" with the designation process.

The Final 2007 Local Historic Districts Report to the Board of Aldermen was submitted in June 2007. Due to its size, the Aldermen requested that the Report be resubmitted in smaller, more readable sections. The 200 plus property report was broken up into shorter reports with smaller groups of properties linked by age and style. These shorter Reports were resubmitted to the Board of Aldermen 2009-2011 after a new notification process wherein certified mailings for public hearing on the report that included the Saint James Episcopal Church and Rectory were sent out to each property owner on 4/6/2011, 4/22/2011 and a certified mail sent 5/24/2011 concerning a new Joint Public Hearing on 6/7/2011. No response was received. No representative from the Saint James Episcopal Church attended the public hearing.

Among those buildings constructed between 1874 and 1890 were the Saint James Episcopal Church and Rectory, and the Saint Anne Roman Catholic Church and Rectory. Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church was designated in 2010 as part of the Union Square Local Historic District. The property at 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue was designated as Local Historic District in December 2011 by the Board of Aldermen. Other church buildings have been designated in earlier rounds and will be in subsequent rounds of designation.

Study Report. Rev. Dr. Karen Coleman stated that "the designation was never agreed upon by the church. In the midst of temporary clergy this was acted upon without the parish knowledge or consent. There is nothing that makes this parish historical in the context of the neighborhood. This was done fraudulently."

See above for a discussion of the designation process. Owner consent is not required under MGL Chapter 40C.

Upon review of the Form Bs and the previous 2007 and 2011 study reports, Staff notes that the documentation addresses the historical and architectural significance of the buildings. The consultant, Arthur Krim, who surveyed Saint James Episcopal Church, stated that the building is eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Arthur Krim is a well-qualified architectural historian with degrees in Geography from the University of Chicago (MA 1967) and Clark University (Ph.D. 1980). He has been a teacher since 1975, and has taught at Clark University, Boston University, Salve Regina University and the Boston Architectural College. He is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians, the Association of American Geographers, and the Society for Commercial Archeology. He has written books on historic architecture, produced surveys and other historical research for Boston, Canton, Chinatown, Brookline, Lynn, Malden, Somerville, and Wilmington among others.

Arthur Krim stated that *"The St. James Episcopal Church at, 1170 Broadway corner of Clarendon Avenue, was originally built in 1876 as a chapel and enlarged in 1892 by an unknown architect for the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. The church follows a simple nave plan with a high gable roof and rear apse, all of wood construction set on a stone foundation. The original chapel of 1876 was located on Newbury Street and comprised the east two bays facing Clarendon Avenue. The chapel is shown in*

*Bradshaw (1962) designed in the Stick style and moved to its present site in 1885. Surviving features of the original chapel include the present portico entry with Stick Style bracing and a Gothic Style door, apparently intact from the original 1876 design. In 1892 the chapel was expanded to its present form of four bays with a rear (west) apse of octagonal form by an unknown architect. The 1892 remodeling included insertion of triangular dormer windows on the gable roof and the insertion of double arched windows in the nave with stained glass as well as triple lancet windows in the apse, producing a plain geometric effect. The interior remains intact from the 1892 remodeling with cross bracing in the gable roof, likely based from the original 1876 chapel design. The break between the original chapel and the expanded nave can be seen in the nave walls between the second and third bays. Some time after 1910, the apse arch was decorated in Gothic Revival style, with a 19th century organ installed in 1918 from the St. Marks School in Southborough, Mass. In 1902 an Assembly Hall was added on the south side to connect with the rectory at 7 Clarendon Avenue (SMV.1168) noted by a Gothic style door on Clarendon Avenue. A renovation of the original pews and interior paneling was made after 1962 with a remodeling of the Assembly Hall to its present form.”*

Staff research in the Somerville Journal Archives found no newspaper coverage of the moving of the Chapel but did find the schedule for morning and evening services at Newbury Street for one week and on Broadway the next week. Staff did find an article on the dedicatory service with a full description of the proceedings in the December 10, 1892 Somerville Journal on page 5.

Boundaries Rev. Dr. Karen Coleman stated that “There are brand new buildings being erected across the street on Clarendon and fairly new building on Broadway. In addition clearance has been given for additional stores on property on Teele Square.” According to the 2007 Report the boundaries of the St. James Episcopal Church Local Historic District “encompass two contiguous properties and follow property lines shown on the Somerville Assessor’s map.” “**St. James Episcopal Church at 1170 Broadway** is an important landmark on a major thoroughfare in West Somerville. Begun as early as 1876 as a small chapel that was moved to its present location in 1890, the chapel was then expanded by two thirds of its original sized. The original Stick Style of the old church was seamlessly replicated for the 1890 addition. In 1902, the church was attached to a ca. 1875 Italianate side hall plan residence at 7 Clarendon Avenue.”

Alterations. There have been no alterations to the property since designation.

Condition: The buildings are in good condition.

Certificates: No Certificates have been granted for work on the building.

- **Summary**

*The Staff could not find errors in the Study Report concerning the historic or architectural research as written in the survey Form B. The boundaries of the district contain no anomalous structures. There have been no changes within the District since its creation.*

**Existing Conditions**

No changes have been made to the buildings since they were designated. The church is located near the western edge of Teele Square. This edge is becoming more built up along the south side of Broadway but is still a commercial and residential area. In 2007, construction was completed on the mixed-use building at 1180 Broadway. A fire destroyed the single-story building on the other corner of Broadway and Clarendon Avenue had a fire and a new 4-story mixed use will be constructed to replace it.

- **Summary**

*There have been no changes to the structures or their locations since they were designated as a Local Historic District. Two buildings nearby on Broadway have been or will be constructed on a larger scale than their precursors but do not affect the district.*

### **Documentation**

This building was designated in 2011, along with Saint Anne Roman Catholic Church and Rectory. During the survey period, several sources were used to establish the history of the buildings. These were the 1884 Hopkins Atlas of Somerville; the 1895 Bromley Atlas of Somerville; Bradshaw, Charles 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Saint James Church, 1962; The Church Militant, "St. James," December 1937, p.9; Duffy, Mark ,J., ed. The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. Boston: Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, 1984; LaCharite, Fr. Paul. Interview by A. Krim, 22 June 2005; Somerville. Somerville: Board of Trade, 1912. Somerville. And New York: Mercantile publishing Co, 1892. Staff found the same information concerning the origins of the Saint James Episcopal Church in Somerville Past and Present, 1898 p. 317 .

- **Summary**

*Sufficient evidence to support the construction dates and evolution of the building and the site, which speaks to historical significance and integrity as valid reasons to designate 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue as a local historic district, is provided in the documentation that was used to designate this structure.*

### **Integrity and Significance**

In accordance with the National Park Service, ***integrity is the ability of a resource to convey its significance.*** The National Park Service determines integrity by evaluating seven key components that can exemplify integrity, whereby, various combinations of these components are able to convey the resulting significance. Local historic districts (LHDs) are determined by their level of integrity, meaning their ability to convey the significance of the district. LHDs are composed of contributing and noncontributing buildings with varying degrees of integrity which, together, visually express the historic significance of the City. Therefore, buildings within LHDs are held to a specific standard to ensure that changes within the District do not negatively affect the integrity and significance of the District as a whole.

The seven components of integrity are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Below is an evaluation of each component as it relates to the subject structure.

**Location:** Teele Square has been a busy intersection since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original chapel had been moved in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century from Newbury Street on one side of Teele Square to a location a few blocks away on the other side of the Square and later expanded to form the current church building. The Rectory has not been moved.

**Design:** While the original chapel has been altered. The alteration was done with close attention to the original structure and in a style compatible with the core structure in the Stick Style. From the 2007 Report "*The Stick Style (1850 – 1880) evolved from the Carpenter Gothic during the period of 1850 to 1880, enjoying widespread popularity during the 1870s. The term Stick Style is relatively recent, having been coined by Professor Vincent Scully of Yale University during the early 1950s. The basic premise of the Stick Style is that the exterior of the building should express something of the interior timber construction—this was accomplished via the application of horizontal, vertical and diagonal boards superimposed over standard clapboard sheathing. In Somerville, one of the finest expressions of the Stick Style is found at West Somerville's **St. James Episcopal Church**. Situated at **1170 Broadway** (1892), this church is a charming example of a Stick Style ecclesiastical building. Originally a tiny, chapel-scale*

*building, built in 1876, the sanctuary was enlarged by two-thirds in 1892. The addition respected the rustic “stick” qualities of the nucleus by repeating the overlay of horizontal and vertical boards.*

**Setting:** The current setting, located along Broadway, has been a busy commercial area since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Church was constructed and the house built. While there have been numerous changes to the buildings over the last one hundred plus years, they have been essentially true to the nature of intersection and its place as the commercial heart of the neighborhood. Churches are frequently located along busy rights of way.

**Materials:** The materials have not been altered since the church was surveyed. While the original wood siding may be obscured by more modern vinyl, the essential character of the building has not been changed. The house still retains its clapboard siding.

**Workmanship:** The Church retains a high level of workmanship. The Rectory has a simple Italianate design and mid-level construction.

**Feeling:** The feeling of this property conveys the increasing urbanization of the City and the need for a house of worship for a growing group of Episcopalians in the Teele Square neighborhood of West Somerville.

**Association:** Historic research and documentation do not recognize an association between this structure and an important historic event or persons. Further research into the history of the parcel or structure could provide additional information.

For a local historic district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the resources that compose the character of the district must possess integrity, even if they are individually undistinguished. In addition, relationships among the district resources must be substantially unchanged since the period of significance. When evaluating the impact of an intrusion on the integrity of a district, the resources that do not contribute to the significance must be considered. A historic resource cannot contribute significance if there are substantial alterations made to the resource beyond the period of significance and if the resource does not share the historic associations of the district. Using the National Park Service criteria to evaluate integrity, Staff determines that the structure known as 72R Dane Street does not retain integrity and, therefore, is not able to convey significance. Consequently, 72R Dane Street does not contribute to the significance of the local historic district and is considered a non-contributing building. As this structure is a single-building local historic district, this district is recommended for de-designation.

### **Justification of the Boundaries**

The structure known as Saint James Episcopal Church is not recommended for de-designation. This structure is a single-building local historic district; therefore, the de-designation of this structure would terminate the district.

The bulleted list below summarizes the reasons for not recommending de-designation that are discussed within this Preliminary Study Report.

- The architectural and historic significance is clearly stated in the Form B and in the Reports. No new information was found.
- No changes to the District were made since designation, to alter significantly the form, massing, and fenestration pattern.
- The District clearly demonstrates its character as a religious institution originally constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



- Historic research was complete. Staff confirmed the information given.
- The buildings retain their integrity due to location, style, form and massing. The buildings clearly retain their relationship to the street and the neighborhood.
- No errors were made in the process as set out in the Ordinance.

Due to this list of items, the following map should retain the boundaries around 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue and should not be removed from the map of Local Historic Districts.



*GIS map illustrating location of 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue*

### **Public Process**

This Preliminary Study Report will be presented to the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) with a Staff recommendation. The HPC will vote to support or not support the request and forward a recommendation to the Planning Board. This Report will also be submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) for review and comment. The Planning Board will hold a meeting and vote to support or not support the HPC recommendation, and then forward their recommendation to the Board of Alderman. The request will then be heard at a joint public hearing between the HPC and the Land Use Committee of the Board of Alderman. Abutters within 300 feet will be notified of the public

hearing by mailed legal notice and the request will be advertised in a newspaper within general circulation. The full Board of Alderman will then vote at a later date to uphold or deny the de-designation request.

### **Conclusion**

The City of Somerville is composed of a number of historic resources that visually describe the history of the City. Adopting the 1985 Historic District Ordinance, a number of historic resources were designated as local historic districts, which is an acknowledgement that these buildings are of special importance to the history of the City. The intent of this Ordinance is to “Protect, enhance and preserve cultural and historical resources...Safeguard the City’s historical and cultural heritage ... [and] Enhance the City’s image to residents, visitors and tourists...” As the Historic Preservation Commission administers this Ordinance, the Commission is responsible for establishing the standard of integrity and significance that is to be conveyed by properties given historic designation status. These standards serve to protect, enhance and preserve designated properties and the Commission is then responsible for upholding these standards throughout the City for all designated historic properties and to defend these standards as tools used by the Commission to accomplish the intent and purpose of the Ordinance. Regulating the integrity of local historic districts, as in the ability of these districts to convey significance, serves to enhance the City’s image by preserving the heritage of the City. Similarly, if a building within a local historic district is no longer composed of integrity, and is no longer able to convey significance, such building should be de-designated as a local historic district. However, 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue retain their integrity and convey their significance. Maintaining designation for buildings that uphold the established standard values the importance and purpose behind historic designation and does not compromise the intent of the Historic District Ordinance; therefore, Staff recommends the Historic Preservation Commission not to support the de-designation of 1170 Broadway and 7 Clarendon Avenue.