

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

142

Town Somerville

Address 93 Highland Avenue

Historic Name Somerville High School /
Somerville Town Hall / City Hall

Use: Present institutional/city office

Original educational / institutional

DESCRIPTION

Date 1852 / enlarged & altered

1896, 1902, 1924.

Source Samuels, Somerville Past and Present.

Style Georgian Revival

Architect current facade by Ritchie, Parsons & Taylor

Exterior Wall Fabric brick

Outbuildings none

Major Alterations (with dates) additions and alterations - 1896, 1902, 1924.

Condition good

Moved no Date n/a

Acreage less than one acre

Setting stands on a lot adjacent to other public buildings of City at Central Hill, on main transportation route.

Recorded by Gretchen G. Schuler

Organization Mass. Historical Commission

Date September, 1988

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north

See Attached Assessor's Map

Z E N
19 327/250 4694/670

UTM REFERENCE

USGS QUADRANGLE Boston North

SCALE 1:25,000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Somerville City Hall retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with the development of the civic life of Somerville. It is significant for its importance in the history of Somerville and for its architectural integrity. The Somerville City Hall fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The present Somerville City Hall is a result of a series of alterations, and adaptive reuse additions made to a building originally constructed on Central Hill as the High School in 1852. That structure in the Greek Revival tradition was a two-story building of pressed brick. The first major enlargement occurred in 1896 when a rear wing was added (the portion projecting towards Highland Avenue). The second addition occurred in 1924 when the entire building, orientation, and size was changed. The new, large north wing restored the symmetrical facade. The gable end pediment of the original building was removed and a third story was added. The entrance was relocated to the original block (where it remains), and Georgian Revival details, including the two colossal Ionic columns set in antis, the broad wood spandrels between first and second story windows, and the clock tower, spire and weathervane, were part of the 1924 rehabilitation.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Somerville City Hall rests on historic Central Hill where it is an integral part of the Highland Avenue streetscape and the civic center of the City. Built first as a Greek Revival high school in 1852, the building eventually housed the town offices in 1867 when the Forster Schoolhouse on Sycamore Street, the location of the Town Hall offices, burned. In 1872 the new Latin High School (no longer extant) was built on Central Hill to accommodate the expanding school age population, the Town of Somerville was incorporated as a City and the 1852 High School building became the City Hall. In 1873 a Public Library was opened at the rear of the building in an area vacated by the police who moved to the newly constructed Police Station in Union Square.

The 1896 expansion of the City Hall was in response to the rapid growth of the city government. Plans were drawn by Boston architect, Thomas T.M.Sargent. By this time the entire building was needed for city government. The library had moved to its own building in 1885. The 1924 renovation and enlargement of the City Hall was done by Boston based architects, Ritchie, Parsons and Taylor.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Draper, Martin, Map of Somerville, 1852.
- Hopkins, G.M. Atlas of the City of Somerville, 1874.
- Samuels, Edward, Somerville: Past and Present, 1897.
- Somerville Journal.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Somerville	Form No: 142
Property Name: Somerville City Hall	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

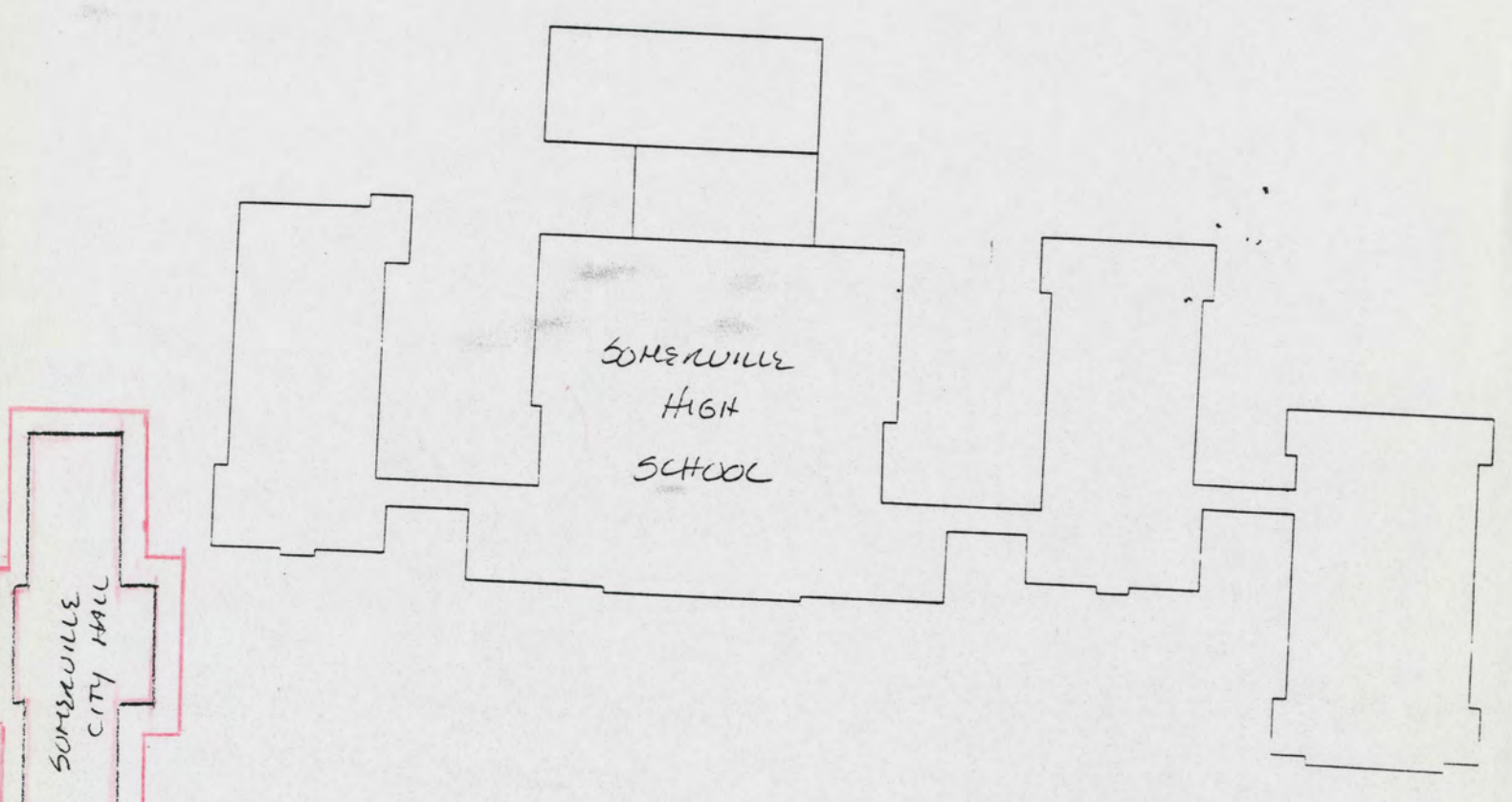
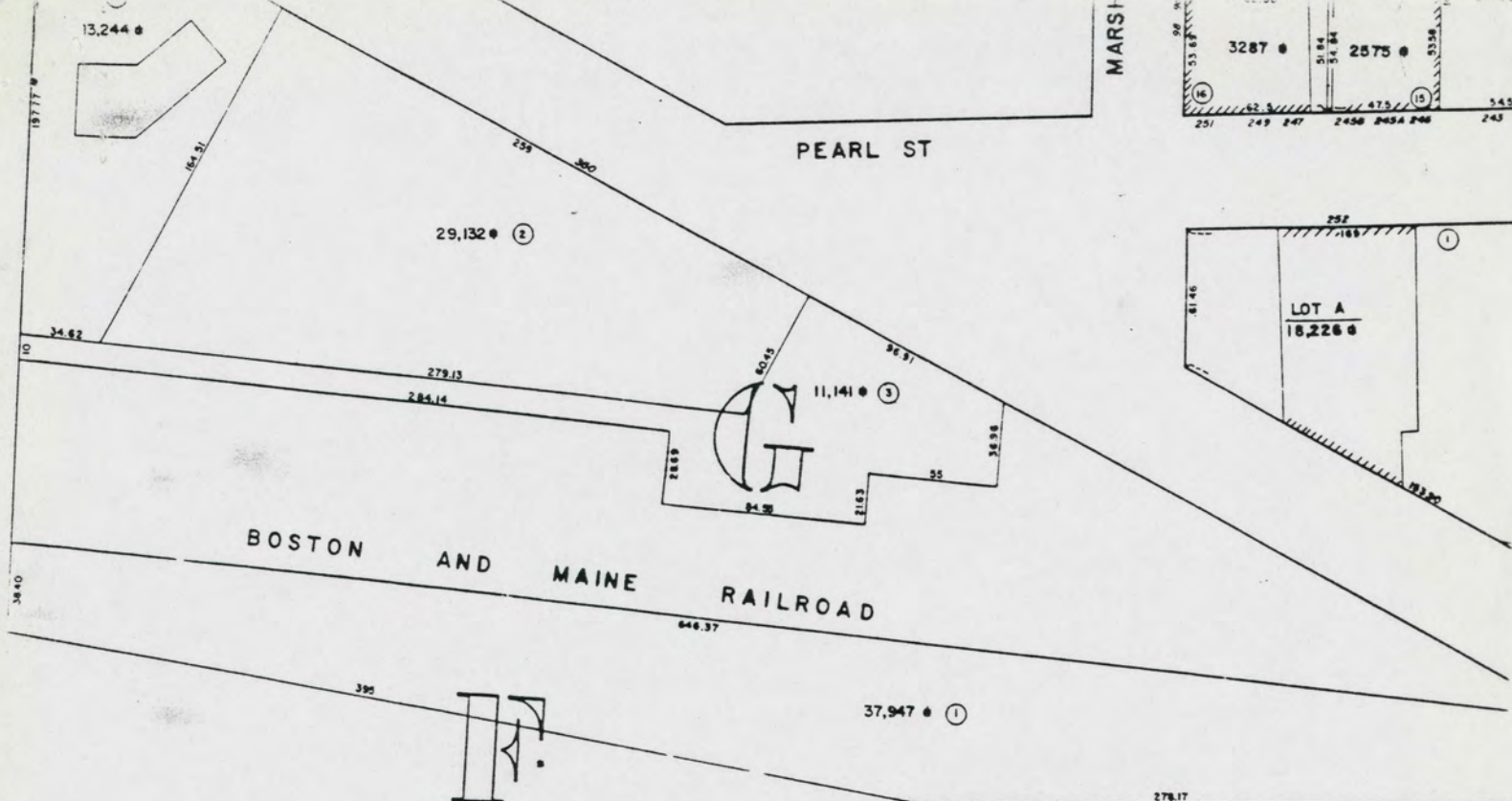
Historical Significance (Con't)

The Somerville City Hall, a building of firsts, the first Somerville High School, the first Somerville City Hall, and the first Somerville Public Library, is an important building in the development of Somerville. The building is the functional and symbolic focus of local government activity for the community.

Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary surrounding the Somerville High School(Present City Hall) include only the immediate surrounds using a 12.5 feet line of convenience. (see Assessor's map which is attached)

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



City Hall
93 Highland
Somerville (MRA), Mass.

HIGHLAND AVE.

#142

1" = 100'

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

AUG 4 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Somerville MPS
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review	Date/Signature
61. Old Cemetery Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
62. Otis--Wyman House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
63. Parker--Burnett House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
64. Prescott, Gustavus G., House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
65. Russell, Philemon, House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
66. Russell, Susan, House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
67. Schuebeler, Charles, House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
68. Snow, Lemuel, Jr., House Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
69. Somerville High School Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____
70. Somerville Journal Building Entered in the National Register	for Keeper <u>Albion Byrum</u> 9/18/89 Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Somerville High School
NAME:

MULTIPLE Somerville MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/04/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/15/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/31/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/18/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001261

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9/8/89 DATE Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



93 Highland

1. 93 Highland Avenue
2. Somerville. MA
3. C. Zelle
4. 1981
5. Somerville City Hall
6. looking west
Somerville High School
7. # 142
Somerville UAA, Ma

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500253