Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

WEST STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
Phone 781-942-6608
Fax (781) 942-9071
Website: readingma.gov

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
READING, MASS.
2014 OCT -6 A 8:01

Legal Notice

In accordance with Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 40 C, notice is hereby given that the West Street Historic District Commission, serving as the Historic District Study Committee, shall hold a public hearing to review the Preliminary Report for the proposed Summer Avenue Local Historic District. This notice also serves to inform the public that an Article establishing a Summer Avenue Local Historic District is on the Warrant for the Subsequent Town Meeting scheduled for November 10, 2014. The public hearing will be held on October 27, 2014 at 7:00 PM at the Pleasant Street Center, 49 Pleasant St. Reading, Massachusetts. A copy of the Preliminary Report and language related to the Warrant Article is available for review at the office of the Town Planner, Community Services Department, Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street Monday–Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM and Tuesdays from 7:30 AM to 7:00 PM. Written comments addressed to the Town Planner will be accepted prior to the hearing.

Everett Blodgett,
Chairman, West Street Historic District

ARTICLE 9 To see if the Town will vote to amend the General Bylaws by:

(a) Striking section 7.3.3 thereof in its entirety and inserting, in place thereof, the following:

7.3.3 District

The District shall consist of two areas as shown in Appendix A-1 and Appendix A-2.

(b) Amending section 7.3.4.2 thereof by striking the words "one or two property owners from the District area' and inserting, in place thereof, the words "one or two owners of property located within a District area."

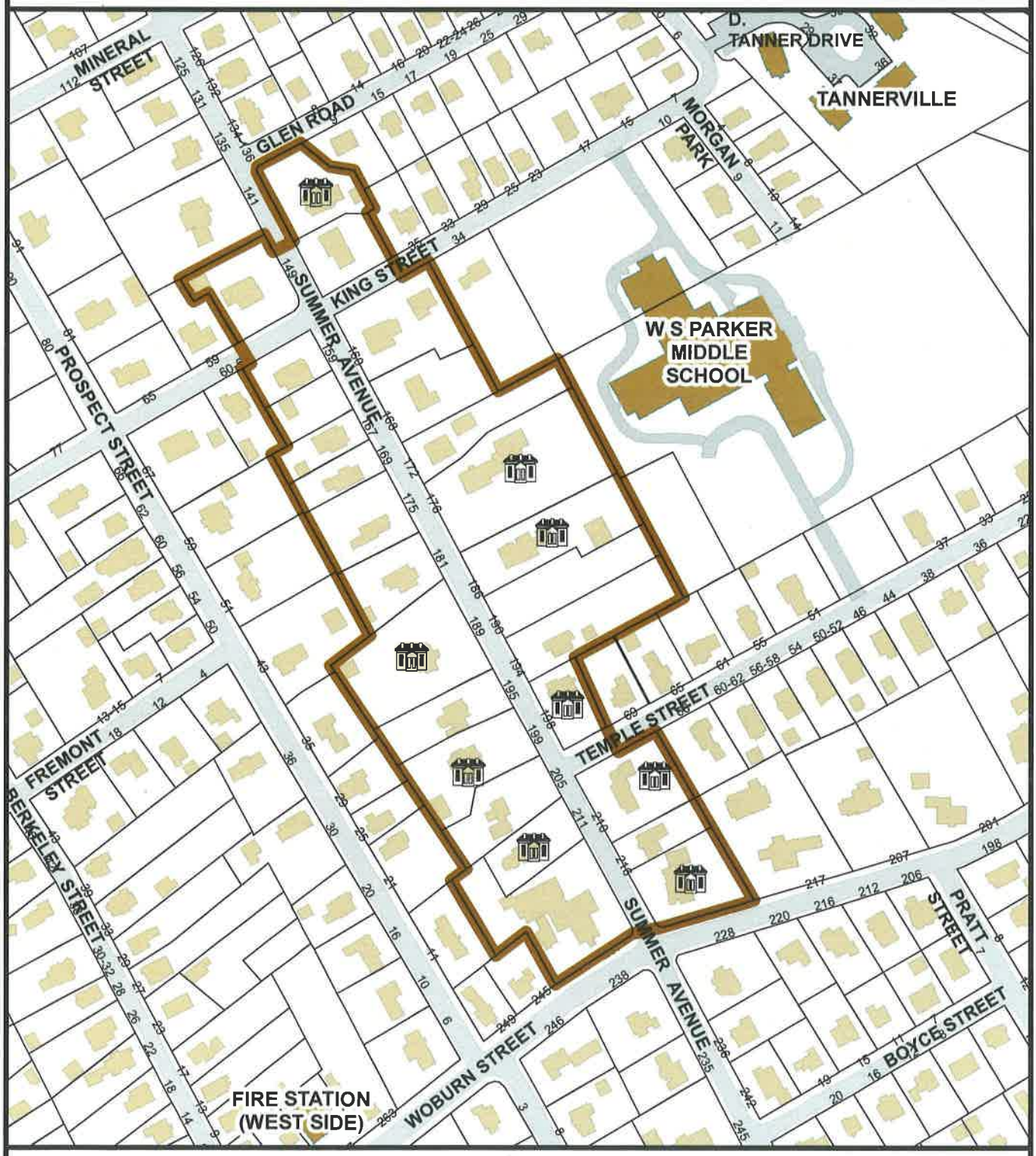
(c) Amending the Appendix A thereof by re-designating it as Appendix A-1 and inserting the word "Area" at the end of the title thereof.

(d) Inserting a new Appendix A-2, to be titled "Summer Avenue Historic District Area," and containing a map, titled "Summer Avenue Historic District Area," a copy of which is available for inspection in the Office of the Town Clerk.

or take any other action with respect thereto.

West Street Historic District Commission

PROPOSED SUMMER AVENUE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



Legend

Proposed Local Historic District

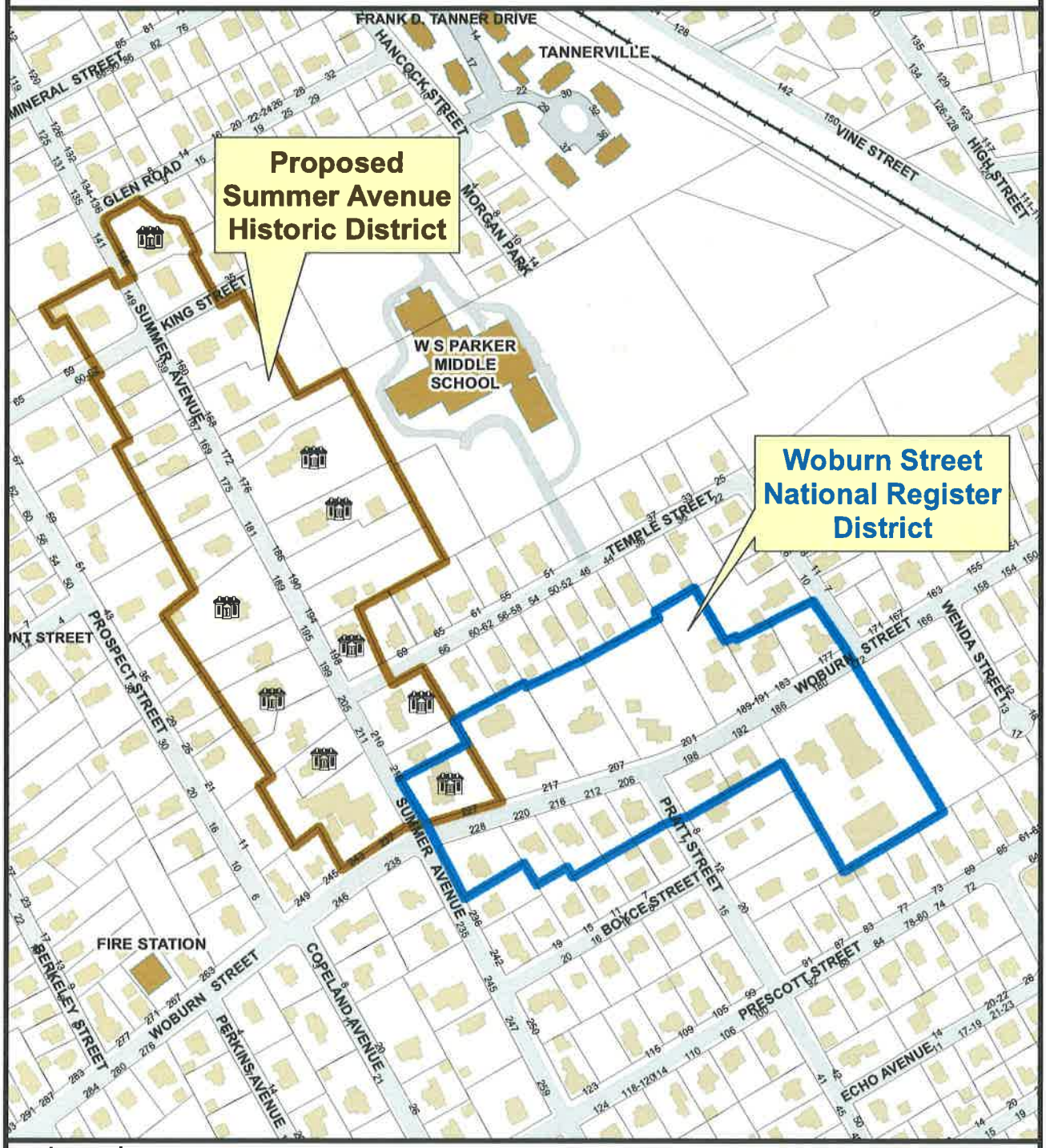
Historic Inventory Property

Map by Town of Reading, 8/12/14
Parcel data current as of 1/1/14.
Building footprints from 2008 aerial photos. Historic inventory properties from Reading Historical Commission.

0 50 100 200 Feet

N

PROPOSED SUMMER AVENUE LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT & WOBURN STREET NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT



Legend

- Proposed Local Historic District
- Woburn Street National Register District
- Historic Inventory Property

Map by Town of Reading, 8/12/14
Parcel data current as of 1/1/14.
Building footprints from 2008 aerial photos.
Historic inventory properties from Reading Historical Commission.

N

0 100 200 Feet

West Street Historic District Commission
Preliminary Report for the creation of the
Summer Avenue Local Historic District

Town of Reading, MA
August 14, 2014

Introduction

In Massachusetts, a Local Historic District ("LHD") is a way for a city or town to protect its distinct historic neighborhoods from needless destruction or insensitive alteration. A Local Historic District offers the strongest form of protection to our most prized historic resources, but, is also somewhat limited in its scope. Only alterations of exterior architectural features that are visible from a public way are subject to review by a Local Historic District Commission, and, additionally, there are features which are exempt from review.

Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40C, provides the framework for establishing LHDs in the Commonwealth's cities and towns, and over 120 municipalities in Massachusetts have established one or more Local Historic Districts in their communities. A Local Historic District is different from a National Register District. Listing on the National Register provides formal recognition of a property's significance, but does not place conditions on alterations made by a property owner. A Local Historic District, however, does provide a regulatory review process for changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way.

Nearly 10 years ago, the Town of Reading adopted a Local Historic District bylaw and established its first LHD, the West Street Local Historic District. With the bylaw framework in place, it was expected that, in time, other LHDs would be established to benefit and protect the unique character of additional neighborhoods. While there are a number of areas and neighborhoods to be studied and considered as potential Local Historic Districts in Reading, the subject of this report is the proposed creation of a Summer Avenue Local Historic District.

Methodology

In accordance with the State Law (MGL Ch. 40C, S. 3), an existing Local Historic District Commission shall act as the study committee to create a new LHD. The West Street Historic District Commission is, therefore, responsible for the investigation, report and hearing for the proposed new Summer Avenue Local Historic District. The Town's 2005 Master Plan calls on the Historical Commission to, "protect buildings of historical significance and establish Local Historic Districts where appropriate, as part of the value the Town puts into its architectural heritage and character." Portions of Summer Avenue and Woburn Street, each having a National Register District or Multiple Resource Area, have long been candidates to become Local Historic Districts. Endangered residential properties on Summer Avenue are the specific impetus which propelled the study and review at this time for the proposed area. Like many communities in the Boston region, Reading is susceptible to teardowns, due to its convenient proximity to Routes 93 and 128, as well as the lack of open land available for development; like many communities, it is also vulnerable to state and federal regulations which often override local zoning. The potential for loss or destruction under these conditions is persistent and growing, and it is important for the community to take control of the protection of its own resources from external forces.

While Reading prides itself on its heritage and substantial stock of historic structures and places, a finding of the 2005 Master Plan states, "The character and identity of the community, preserved up to today, is potentially threatened by changes occurring within the existing fabric; changes driven by forces outside the realm of the Town's influence and sustained by the regional housing crisis. The human-friendly balance among building size, lot size and natural elements that exists throughout the Town is put to test by factors external to Reading, thus threatening the sense of distinctiveness maintained throughout the years." In order, then, to protect some of our most storied and valuable homes, it would seem that selective regulation is warranted to ensure the greater protection of the neighborhood, as a whole, and especially from the threat of commercial development in a residential neighborhood.

Of the 25 buildings proposed to be included in the Summer Avenue LHD, 10 of them are on the Town's Historical and Architectural Inventory, and 5 are recognized as National Register properties.

According to a preliminary survey, the vast majority of the property owners in the proposed Summer Avenue LHD are in favor of the district and, in fact, in many ways the catalyst for its creation.

It is expected that the Public Hearing which is required prior to the creation of the District, will be held on or about October 15, 2014. The Town Meeting vote required to create the District is expected to take place on or about November 10, 2014.

Significance

In its earliest years, from settlement in 1639, Reading was an agrarian village. Later, as farming waned, home industry grew, and eventually Reading moved into a number of flourishing industries, including the manufacture of shoes, clocks, organ pipes, furniture, cabinets, and neckties. In 1806, the Andover-Medford Turnpike bisected downtown Reading, and by the middle of the 19th century, the train from Boston came through Reading, as well. These two changes contributed to creating the bedroom community that Reading is today, 12 miles north of Boston. Among the first streets and neighborhoods chosen by the affluent merchants and businessmen, who commuted from Boston to Reading, to build their homes was Summer Avenue.

This particular stretch of Summer Avenue, boasts a dozen or more of Reading's finest historic homes, dating from 1807 to 1900, and slightly beyond. While the contiguous tree-lined streetscape with significant set-backs lends a visual sense of the past, it also continues to offer a peaceful residential setting in the present, which, with proper attention to preservation, will also carry on into the future.

Significance (continued)
Individual properties, which contribute to the history of the proposed district, include:

Kemp Place (1853), Reading's finest example of Italianate architecture, 186 Summer Ave.

Dewey Place (1853), a Greek Revival with Italianate features, 176 Summer Ave.

Wisteria Lodge (1873), a classic Second Empire w/ fish-scale slate mansard roof, 146 Summer Ave.

Father Kemp's Place (1878), a remodeled Second Empire, now an English Revival, 199 Summer Ave.

Edgar Hunt House (1887), an elegant Shingle-style Queen Anne, 189 Summer Ave.

Justification of the Boundaries

The Commission's investigation and discussion of the potential District boundaries determined that its southern gateway would be the border of the Woburn Street National Register District, and to the north, would capture the 1873 Wisteria Lodge, while incorporating the concentration of National Register properties and the fine and varied examples of 19th century architecture found among the once popular homes of Reading's affluent merchants and commuters. A current threat to the neighborhood has given urgency to the move to protect all of these resources.

Options and Recommendations for the Bylaw

The Town of Reading adopted a Local Historic District Bylaw (Gen. Bylaw, Article 7.3) in 2005, and currently administers the West Street Local Historic District. The proposed Summer Avenue Local Historic District would be similarly administered under the bylaw, without amendment.

Attachments:

- Map of the Proposed Summer Avenue Local Historic District
- Property Index of the 25 properties in the proposed District
- Digital Images of the proposed District

August 14, 2014

Summer Ave Local Historic District **Summary Sheet**

West Street Historic District Commission (Study Committee)
WSH@ci.reading.ma.us 781-942-6612 (Reading Community Services)

Chairman:
Everett Blodgett eblodg-wshd-350@comcast.net 781-944-2957

Members:
Virginia Adams
Ilene Bornstein
Priscilla Poehler
Alyssa Scaparotti

Expected Date of Public Hearing / Summer Ave Local Historic District:
October 15, 2014

Expected Date of Town Meeting:
November 10, 2014

Total Number of Properties Included in Proposed Local Historic District:
25

25 Properties within
Boundary of Proposed
Summer Avenue Local Historic District
Reading, Massachusetts

Property Address	Inventory #	Date Built	Historic Name	Architectural Style
146 Summer Avenue	REA.160	1873	Wisteria Lodge	Second Empire
149 Summer Avenue		1920		Queen Anne
152 Summer Avenue		2006		Contemporary Colonial
159 Summer Avenue	~	1889	~	Queen Anne
160 Summer Avenue	~	1807	~	Altered Federal
167 Summer Avenue	~	1916	~	American Four-Square
168 Summer Avenue	~	1966	~	Modified Ranch/Split
169 Summer Avenue	~	1880	~	Greek Revival
172 Summer Avenue	~	1994	~	Contemporary Colonial
175 Summer Avenue	~	1831	~	Mansard/Second Empire
176 Summer Avenue	REA.159	1853	Dewey Place – Francis D. Dewey House	Greek Revival
181 Summer Avenue	~	1900	~	Dutch Colonial
186 Summer Avenue	REA.158, 157	1853	Kemp Place & Kemp Place Barn	Italianate
189 Summer Avenue	REA.156	1887	Edgar N. Hunt House	Queen Anne Shingle
190 Summer Avenue	~	N/A	~	Vacant unbuildable lot
194 Summer Avenue	~	1891	~	Queen Anne
195 Summer Avenue	~	1956	~	Contemporary Colonial
198 Summer Avenue	REA.155	1847	Roswell N. Temple House	Federal; Greek Revival
199 Summer Avenue	REA.154	1878	Father Kemp's Place – Robert Kemp House	English Revival; Second Empire
205 Summer Avenue	~	1956	~	Contemporary Colonial
210 Summer Avenue	REA.250	1927	Arthur W. Coolidge House	Colonial Revival
211 Summer Avenue	REA.153	1892	Charles A. Loring House	Queen Anne Stick
216 Summer Avenue	~	1928	~	Colonial Revival
227 Woburn Street	REA.130	1888	Ada E. Lewis House	Queen Anne
239 Woburn Street	~	1920	(Unitarian Universalist Church)	English Country-Style