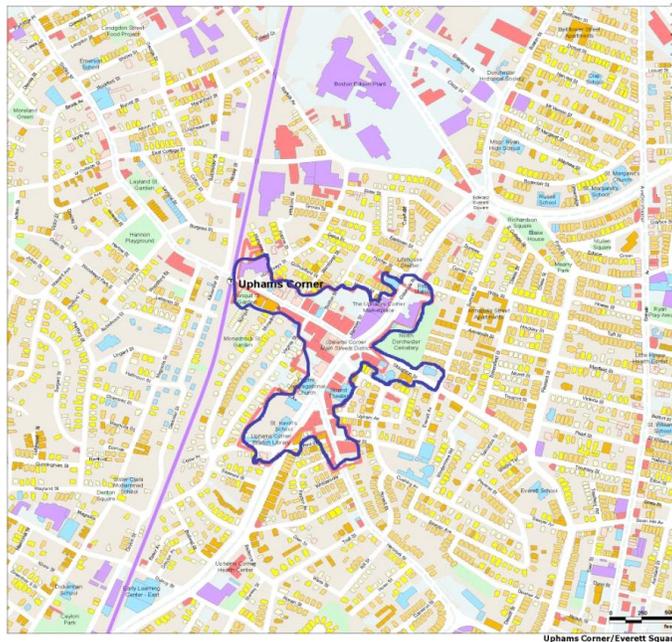


## Upham's Corner, Dorchester



### Uphams Corner/Everett Square Dorchester

- Legend**
- 1 Family Residential
  - 2 Family Residential
  - 3 Family Residential
  - Apartment/Condos
  - Mixed Use (Res.,Comm.)
  - Commercial
  - Institutional
  - Industrial
  - Open Space
  - Surface Parking
  - Main Streets District
  - MBTA Stations
  - MBTA Surface Subway Lines
  - MBTA Underground Subway Lines
  - Commuter Rail
  - Below Ground Commuter Rail
  - Water Transit Facilities
  - Bus Routes



### Introduction to District

Located in the northern section of the Dorchester neighborhood of the city of Boston, Upham's Corner is an architecturally and historically significant commercial district that forms an urban center for several surrounding residential neighborhoods. Although Upham's Corner has a long history of commerce and development, the majority of the buildings extant today are from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The district features churches, banks, apartment buildings, one-story and multi-level commercial buildings, warehouses, a municipal building, a former movie theatre, a burying ground, a fire station and vacant lots.

### District Layout and Boundaries

Upham's Corner lies at the crossing of two major thoroughfares. Columbia Road, a busy thoroughfare that links the Columbia Point and UMass Boston Campus to the Blue Hill Avenue and Franklin Park sections of Boston, is the central artery through the Upham's Corner commercial district. The secondary corridor is Dudley/Stoughton Street, which crosses Columbia Road near the center of the district. This street links the district with Roxbury to the north and the Savin Hill neighborhood of Dorchester to the south.

The commercial area includes the section of Columbia Road from Bird Street to Holden Street and it extends down Columbia Road to Edward Everett Square.

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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The commercial district's southern boundary is just below Columbia Road on Stoughton Street. The northern terminus is the Fairmount commuter railroad tracks and the Upham's Corner Commuter Rail station. The district also includes the section of Hancock Street from Columbia Road to Whittemore Terrace.

### **Historical Narrative of Upham's Corner**

#### **A Cemetery and Commercial Development**

The town of Dorchester was settled in the 1630s by a group from Dorset County in western England. This sub-neighborhood of Dorchester has been called by several names over the past four centuries starting with Cemetery Corner, so named for the Dorchester North Burying Ground. Established in 1634, it was the town's first cemetery and remained the only burying ground in Dorchester until 1819.

As the northern section of Dorchester became more populated, the area surrounding the Burying Ground became a residential and commercial center. In 1804, Amos Upham established a dry goods store on the corner of what is now Columbia Road and Dudley Street. The store was an integral part of the square, and the area took on the name of "Upham's Corner" sometime during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The store remained in business through three generations of the Upham family until the mid 1890s, when the federal style store building was replaced by the brick and granite Columbia Square Building.



**Figure 1 1899, The Widening and Expansion of Columbia Road at Edward Everett Square (Source: The Dorchester Athenaeum)**

#### **Expanded Roads link Castle Island to Franklin Park**

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the district took on the name "Columbia Square" and was labeled as such on some 19<sup>th</sup> century atlases. The new name likely referred to the important presence of Columbia Road after its expansion and widening in 1897. The project joined the Strandway, which ran from Castle Island to Columbus Park in South Boston, with the Dorchester Parkway, which ran from Marine Park to Edward Everett Square. The Dorchester Parkway was next linked to what was then called Boston Street, which ran from Edward Everett Square to Upham's Corner, where it then met Columbia Road. Together, the four roadways created the newly widened

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and expanded Columbia Road, which connected Castle Island to Franklin Park. During this transition, Columbia Road also took on a more park-like character as it became an extension of the Emerald Necklace system forming a southern crescent. Today, while there are still some references to the area being called "Columbia Square," the district is widely known as "Upham's Corner."

### Commercial Expansion Overtakes Residential Use

The expansion of Columbia Road solidified the area's position as a commercial district. Until that time, the Upham's Corner neighborhood featured a balanced mix of residential homes and ecclesiastical and commercial buildings. The area was also a hub for transportation as several trolley and rail lines serviced the district, bringing shoppers and workers from various neighborhoods. In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the large homes that lined Columbia Road in the district were replaced by commercial buildings with shops, theatres and meeting halls. Upham's Corner took on a mostly commercial feel, while the surrounding neighborhoods of Virginia/Monadnock Street and Jones Hill retained their suburban, Victorian feel.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century and in the first few decades of the twentieth century, Upham's Corner experienced growth and was a bustling commercial center. New buildings constructed around this time include:

The yellow-brick Wheelock Hall, 1890, 556-562 Columbia Road;

The Neo-classic brick and granite Columbia Square Building, mid 1890s, 584 Columbia Road;

The Pierce Building, 1904, 592 Columbia Road;

The curved four-story brick and granite Georgian Revival Municipal Building, 1902, 500 Columbia Road;

The New England Telegraph and Telephone Company offices, 1920s, 516 Columbia Road. This building was later became the Archdiocese's St. Kevin's Church and School;

The Romanesque Pilgrim Congregational Church, 1893, 540 Columbia Road.



Figure 2 Postcard. Caption on front: Upham's Corner. Postmarked Nov 11, 1911. Dorchester Station, Boston. With one cent stamp. On verso: Pub. by Putnam Art Co., Grove Hall, Boston (Source: Dorchester Athenaeum)

The Columbia Square and Pierce Buildings form a strong architectural presence as the gateway to the Upham's Corner commercial district. The Municipal building, which features an indoor swimming pool, has served in various public capacities for more than a century. It is currently used as a branch of the Boston Public Library, a health center and a community center

## Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner

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Rounding the corner up Dudley Street, many of the one to two-story commercial buildings appear to have been constructed during this period, as were the striking apartment buildings found near the northern boundary of the district. While much of this area appears to have been part of larger estates and farmland, Subdivision throughout much of the nineteenth century led to the more urban feel that we recognize today. The construction of the sophisticated Monadnock and the Denmark Apartment buildings, which were built in the 1890s, marked the height of apartment living. Likewise, there was a massive shift of use across the street from these apartment buildings in the first decades of the twentieth century when the Humphreys family, which who had lived on that land since 1637, subdivided and sold large amounts of farmland for both housing and for the construction of a five to seven-story hulking Dorchester Fireproof Storage Building. After coexisting for a few years, the Humphreys house was demolished in 1917.

### Modern Upham's Corner Emerges

With the area experiencing commercial success during the first decades of the twentieth century, banks and entertainment venues began to spring up along Columbia Road. In 1918, the Dorchester Trust Company was built at 555 Columbia Road in front of the Clap-Dwyer mansion beginning to form today's streetscape. On the other end of the same block, the terra-cotta, arched façade Strand



Figure 3 Clap-Dyer House, location of the Strand Theatre and Dorchester Trust Company today (Source: Dorchester Athenaeum)

Theatre was also built in 1918 at 543 Columbia Road. Designed by Funk & Wilcox, the Strand was one of the first purpose-built movie theatres in the city of Boston. In 1930, the district gained another large bank building; the Art Moderne styled Dorchester Savings Bank at 572 Columbia Road.

The emergence of the Cifrino Market marked one of the most important shifts in the development history of Upham's Corner. Built in 1920, the Upham's Corner Market Building at 610-618 Columbia Road was the first one-stop "supermarket" in Boston and one of the first in the country. The market, which featured a parking lot behind the building, became extremely popular and had a large diversity of products and of customers.

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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After World War II, the neighborhood began a period of slow decline, along with most other commercial districts within Boston and across the country as many city residents relocated to the suburbs. During the 1950s the park-like character of Columbia Road lost its park median strip and trolley lines in favor of more traffic lanes, allowing for heavier and faster moving traffic, resulting in a further degradation of the bustling pedestrian commercial district.

### **Neighborhood Context**

Upham's Corner is located in the northern section of Dorchester, which is Boston's largest and most populous neighborhood located to the south of the central business district. Upham's Corner is bounded by the neighborhoods of Roxbury and Mattapan to the north and west and the towns of Milton and Quincy to the west and south.

Upham's Corner is accessible by public transportation with the MBTA serving the area with several bus lines with terminuses at Dudley Square, Forest Hills, Andrew Square and Fields Corner. A commuter rail station served by the Fairmount line is located at the northern end of the district on Dudley Street. In the near future, this will become part of the Indigo Line, which will operate much like the other MBTA subway lines, and less like a commuter rail.

The Upham's Corner commercial district is surrounded by residential districts, including Jones Hill, Virginia/Monadnock, Trull-Glendale, and Humphreys/East Cottage Street areas. These neighborhoods, particularly Jones Hill and the Virginia/Monadnock area, feature high quality Victorian single family and multi-family homes. There are also many examples of the vernacular triple decker apartment building found throughout all four neighborhoods, some of which are finely ornamented.

### **District Demographics**

Demographic information, (which is derived from the 2000 census and based on the 2005 market analysis found on the Upham's Corner Main Street website), shows that the Dorchester North section of Boston, where Upham's Corner is located, is densely populated area with a wide range of income and race. More than 54,000 people live within one mile of the Upham's Corner commercial district, representing a mix of cultures including Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian populations. Of the population within a mile of Upham's Corner, about 43% is African America, 22% Caucasian, and 19% Hispanic. Census data shows that compared to the rest of Boston, a higher rate of residents within the Dorchester North area live below the poverty line (20.8% in Dorchester North versus 19.4% across all Boston neighborhoods) and are unemployed (9.6%, compared to Boston's overall average of 7.6 in 2000).

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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### **Neighborhood Challenges**

Starting in the middle of the twentieth century, Upham's Corner, like many other urban commercial centers in Boston and nationwide, began to experience a period of general decline.

While many residents left cities for the suburbs, many of those who stayed behind also adjusted the way that they use their urban commercial districts. As automobile culture took hold, more people began to shop further afield at shopping malls and supermarket centers. Neighborhood commercial districts began to see more and more vacancies, both at street level and in the upper stories of commercial buildings that traditionally had held residential apartments or office space.

**Vacant commercial space, particularly in the upper stories:** Vacant upper story space, particularly in large, significant buildings like the Columbia Square Building and the Fox Hall building, is a long-standing issue in the district. These buildings are historically significant and serve as the backbone of the district. With these spaces occupied, there would be more eyes on the street, greater density, and make the buildings more valuable, allowing the owners to maintain the structures. While the district does not suffer from many vacancies along busy Columbia Road, there are a few empty storefronts along Dudley Street. The large Dorchester Storage Building has been vacant for many years, making that end of the district feel desolate.

**Lack of a cohesive market:** While there are several strong residential neighborhoods surrounding the Upham's Corner commercial district, the district lacks services to meet the needs of those residents. The district also suffers from a reputation of being dangerous, and while by and large that is not the case, Dudley Street can feel unsafe at times, and there have been reports of crime along the Dudley Street corridor. The new Kroc Center, located just to the north of the district, should have a positive effect on this issue on Dudley Street.

**Public Transportation Inefficiencies:** While Upham's Corner is well served by buses and the commuter rail, the lack of a direct and quick subway line and obvious parking may be a hindrance to finding new consumers.

**Neighborhood Perception:** As stated above, there is an outside perception that the area is rundown and dangerous. In reality, while there is a general lack of economic opportunities in the district, positive developments have taken place and more change is on the horizon.

### **Neighborhood Success Stories**

Leadership from area non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups has also played a key role leading Upham's Corner to a new chapter of a revitalized district. Some of these projects are:

## Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner

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- **Upham's Corner Market building:** New Atlantic Development Corporation worked with the local community to craft a re-use plan for the long-abandoned 70,000 square foot building, including new retail and commercial space with 45 apartments for low income families and formerly homeless elders. Completed in 2001, this complex project required two separate special purpose limited partnerships, a complex condominium structure, and a total of thirteen separate sources of debt and equity financing.
- **Pierce Building:** The four story Classical Revival Pierce Building was rehabilitated in 1985 by the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation.
- **The Strand Theatre:** The Strand closed in the late 1960s in a bad state of disrepair. In the early 1970s, the City of Boston took the Strand by eminent domain and began the long journey of rehabilitating and bringing life back to the Strand Theatre. The Strand reopened in 1979 and entered into a 25 year agreement with the M. Harriet McCormick Center for the Arts. After that agreement expired, the City made key upgrades to the building, made it handicapped accessible, and replaced the seats. Phases of renovation have been completed, but there is a need for more restoration and an expectation that the governance structure will be reformed over the next few years. The Strand is owned by the Department of Neighborhood Development, managed by Department of Arts and Tourism and maintained by Facilities Department. More funds need to be raised, which is under the purview of the Festivals Board. Upham's Corner Main Street and other neighborhood stakeholders hope that a program manager will be hired to focus solely on the Theatre and its future.
- **Brothers Market:** A few years ago, Upham's Corner lost its only food market, America's Food Basket, which left a large hole both on Dudley Street and within the community. In 2009, a CVS planned to move into the old Food Basket space and agreed to the stipulation that it would support the opening of a food market in the adjacent space once occupied by a liquor store. Soon after, the locally owned Brothers Market mini-chain opened up in that space, and appears to be successful in its early years. This was a major project for Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation and for Upham's Corner Main Streets. The key to that project was the widening of Belden Street, to allow for safe and quick deliveries and car traffic.
- **Kroc Center:** While the construction of the Salvation Army Kroc community center has been long stalled and has experienced some starts and stops, it is now officially moving forward and is currently under construction. The Kroc Center, which is being built on a large parcel of land just north of the Upham's Corner commuter rail station, will provide early education, evening classes, daycare, a fitness center, and other activities to support the community.

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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**Recent investment in nearby residential communities:** Like many other areas of Dorchester, there has been a surge in investment in the residential communities over the past decade. However, the commercial districts have remained mostly under-utilized by some of these new residents. Certain neighborhood groups or area non-profit organizations, such as Upham's Corner Main Street, has made significant progress in engaging residents from nearby neighborhoods to be active and play a role in revitalizing the commercial district. More of this type of work needs to occur to bring forth a new attitude about using local commercial districts.

### **District Recommendations**

- **Create a National Register district**

Upham's Corner is a great example of a 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial center in the then quickly growing town of Dorchester. The district grew up around the 1630s Dorchester North Burying Ground and the early homes and shops of the original settlers in the area. As the area became more developed and densely settled, the area around the Burying Ground became a commercial center, based around the Upham family's general store at the corner of Columbia Road and Dudley Street. The district grew soon three to four story brick buildings were built to meet the needs of the growing population. Upham's Corner is likely to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Place. The benefits for this district nomination (and successive designation) would be to document the area's history, gain appreciation and exposure for the historic resources in the area, and to gain easy access to the use of historic tax credits, which could be used for rehabilitation projects for these contributing buildings.

- **Develop plans for vacant commercial space**

Work with owners to create plans for empty commercial space. The Dorchester Storage Building and the Columbia Road Comfort Station will likely require preservation rehabilitation projects, but should be part of a larger district plan. Occupying the vacant upper stories at the Columbia Square Building and Fox Hall are vital pieces of overall district success.

- **Create Guidelines for property owners**

Establish district design guidelines that can guide property owners as they undertake building improvements. Take special notice of district design characteristics and the strength of the industrial building types in the area.

- **Educate Property Owners, Business Owners and Residents about Preservation tools**

When property owners of historic buildings begin to plan changes to their buildings, encourage them to meet with Egleston Square Main Street and with Historic Boston Incorporated. Certain resources are available to them, including design assistance, advice, and possibly financial support through grants, loans or tax credits.

- **Include Historic Preservation in Zoning and other City Planning Efforts**

In 2011, the Boston Redevelopment Authority will start a re-zoning process in Upham's Corner and the surrounding area. Look to other recently re-zoned neighborhoods, such as Roslindale and Hyde Park (in process) to see how the preservation of historic resources has increasingly become part of the planning language.

## Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner

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### Opportunities for Preservation:

There are several properties that could benefit from restoration and renovation. This would help bring additional positive attention to the district and spur further neighborhood development. Details of each building are below and further information can be found throughout this casebook chapter.

NAME	ADDRESS	APPOX. YEAR BUILT
Dorchester North Burying Ground	Columbia Road	1630
Wheelock Livery Building	525-531 Columbia Road	Pre 1874
Wheelock Hall/Fox Hall	558 Columbia Road	1890
Pilgrim Church	540 Columbia Road	1893
Columbia Square Building	767 Dudley Street	1895
Comfort Station (adjacent to Burying Ground)	611 Columbia Road	1912
Dorchester Storage Building (next to Commuter Rail Station)	55 Humphreys Street	1915

### Methodology:

The properties in this chapter of the Commercial Casebook were chosen to represent the opportunities for historic preservation in this commercial district. By including them in this Casebook, we have identified them as places that are historically, architecturally or culturally significant to this district. The selected buildings and resources deserve attention, interpretation, protection, and to become part of a district's overall economic success and revitalization.

### Sources:

- The Dorchester Athenaeum website ([www.dorchesteratheneum.org](http://www.dorchesteratheneum.org))
- A Record of the Streets, Alleys, Places, etc in the City of Boston by Boston (Mass.). Board of Street Commissioners, 1910
- Upham's Corner Area Form, Boston Landmarks Commission, prepared by Edward Gordon, 1994
- Boston Landmarks Commission Building Information Forms (October, 1977)
- Upham's Corner Main Street Website
- Boston Redevelopment Authority 2000 census reports
- Articles from the Boston Globe, Dorchester Reporter

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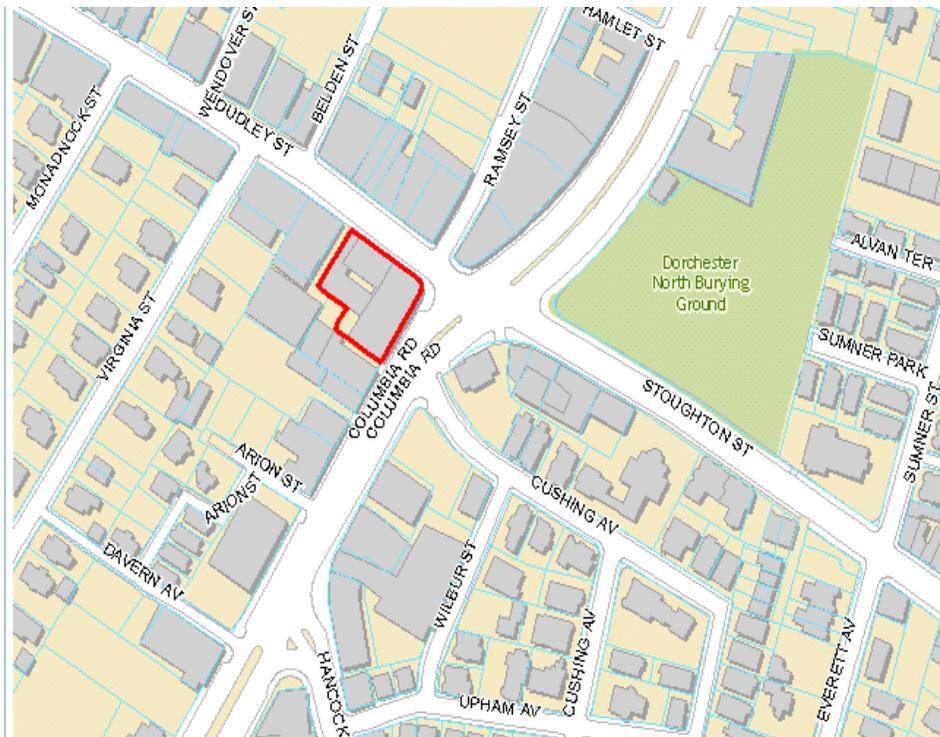
**Columbia Square Building**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 767 Dudley Street  
(also listed as 578-588 Columbia Road)  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner  
**Owner:** Valhalla Inc.  
**Property Type:** Commercial/Residential  
**Approximate Building Size:** 68,000 sq feet  
**Lot Size:** 17,700 square feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1301339000  
**Ward:** 13



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 405,200	
	Building	\$ 1,982,300	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,387,500</b>	<b>Tax: \$58,823.23</b>



## Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner

Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

### ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

**Date Built:** ca. 1895

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations (local, state, federal):** No designations, in MACRIS

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The four-story, red brick and granite Classical Revival style Columbia Square Building dominates Upham's Corner, both by its visible location on the corner of Columbia Road and Dudley Street and by its powerful curved façade. The Columbia Square Building is located on the site of the Upham family's Federal period dry goods store, a wood frame building that sat on this site from about 1800-the mid 1890s. The Upham family's store was a well-known landmark in the early commercial district; the family's name served as the basis for the area's current name. The store was replaced in 1884 by a one-story brick and granite structure that reportedly featured the first electric lights in Dorchester. A few years later, that building acquired three more stories, transforming the building into what is seen today.

The Columbia Square building was constructed during a time of change in the district: Columbia Road was being widened and expanded to create a north-south "boulevard," which offered better connections to downtown Boston and the Franklin Park section of Dorchester.

The Columbia Square building has a strong architectural presence, and along with the Pierce Building, they form the anchors to the commercial district. The first floor consists of storefronts while the top floor features arched windows. The middle two floors are more understated. The building also has a pronounced cornice with widely set dentil pattern along both facades.

According to building permits, the building's upper stories were occupied by six families (two on each floor) with retail stores on the first floor in 1916. A 1956 violation notice mentions the 4<sup>th</sup> floor space as being used for a Masonic hall and the presence of a Woolworths store on the first. In the 1970s the space may have been home to the Dudley Street Social club.

### CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The building is in fair condition but is underused and seems to chronically suffer from vacancies, mostly in its upper floors. At times, the upper floors have been used for rehearsal space for the Chamber Theatre group and offices on the second floor have been used for election offices/headquarters. In recent years, there was an effort to put Upham's Corner Charter School on the upper floors of this building, which did not work and now the school no longer exists.

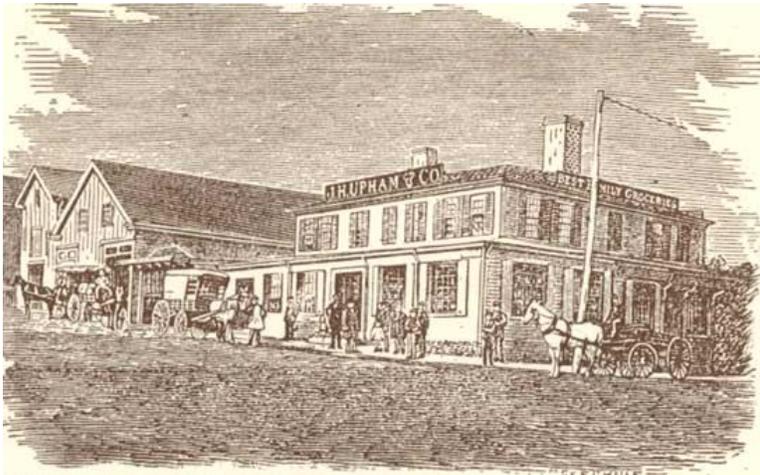
It is thought that one of the reasons why it has been difficult to find long term tenants for the upper stories is that the building lacks an operable elevator and that various systems need to be brought up to code. The building currently hosts many cell phone towers and other cellular apparatus, some of which is located within the elevator shaft.



**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Conduct research on the office market in the district to better understand the persistent vacancy issues in this building. Determine if there is a need for more office space or better office space.
- Conduct more research to understand past residential use and configuration of this building as well as historical significance. This includes answering questions about whether it was used for an Odd Fellows Hall or a Masonic Hall, whether the Upham family ran a store from here and what other uses has it had.
- Explore viable business arrangements between the owners and Historic Boston Inc. that could lead to the rehabilitation of this building, starting with feasibility study.
- Determine whether the building is a candidate listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



**Figure 1 Photograph of Drawing printed on p. 42 of *Dorchester Old and New 1630-1930*, Courtesy of Dorchester Athenaeum)**

**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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**Figure 2 One story brick and granite commercial that replaced the Upham Family's General Store.**  
Anthony Mitchell Sammarco, Images of America series.  
(Courtesy of the Dorchester Athenaeum)



Figure 3 Photograph published in Official Program, Dorchester Day, Saturday, June 7th, 1913.  
(Courtesy of the Dorchester Athenaeum)



Figure 4 Upham's Corner Postcard,  
(Courtesy of the Dorchester Athenaeum)

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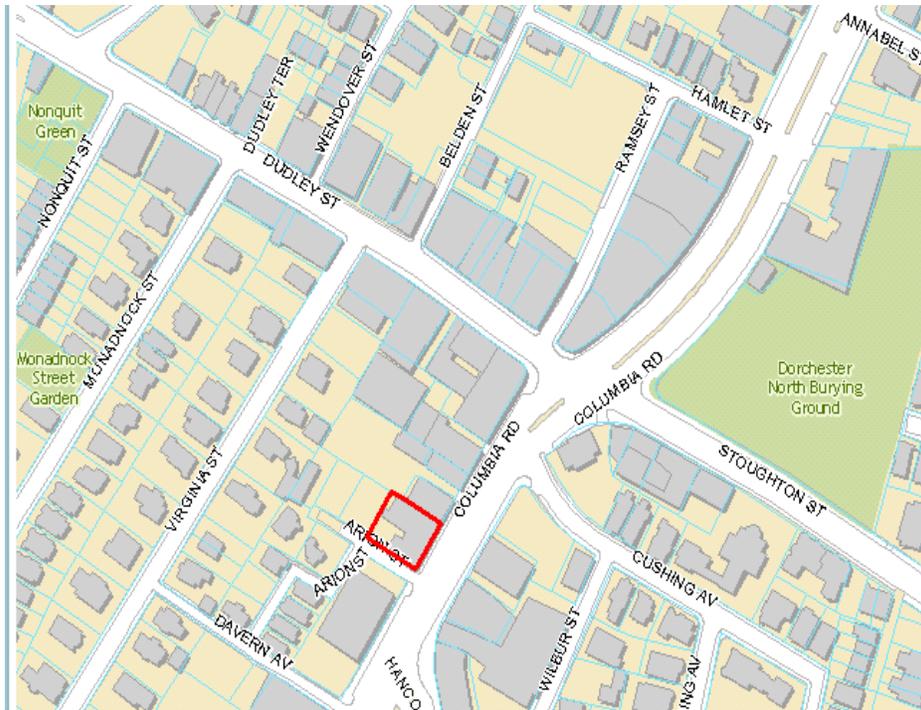
**Wheelock/Fox Hall**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 554-562 Columbia Road  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner  
**Owner:** Mariana Realty Corp  
**Property Type:** Residential/Commercial  
**Approximate Building Size:** 28,000 square feet  
**Lot Size:** 7588 square feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1301345000  
**Ward:** 13



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 388,800	
	Building	\$ 918,700	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,307,500</b>	<b>Tax: \$15,999.36</b>



**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** ca. 1890

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations (local, state, Federal):** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:**

The four-story yellow brick, vaguely Classical Revival commercial block at 554-562 Columbia Road was built as early as 1890, replacing two smaller wood framed buildings on two separate parcels. Over time, the building has provided meeting space for groups in a space called variably Wheelock Hall, the Odd Fellows Hall and Fox Hall. Wheelock Hall was named in honor of A.P. Wheelock who operated a large livery stable across the street at the corner of Hancock and Columbia Road (531 Columbia Road). Over the years, the building has been home to several different businesses on the first floor, including Edison Electric and a Brigham's restaurant.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

Today, the four story building features storefronts including a Metro PCS retail store, a chiropractic office, and an H & R Block, on the first floor, a billiards facility on the second floor, a bowling alley on the third floor and meeting hall space on the fourth floor.

The primary income to the building comes from the retail stores. However, there is a small but committed group of billiards and pool players who frequent the billiard hall. The pool hall is rarely used; until recently, a group of youth used it on the weekends, but this is no longer happening. The fourth floor is also seldom used. The owner of the building, Nick Verenis, recently considered converting it to artist studios. However, despite marketing the space through the Dorchester Open studios and with support from UCMS, he was not able to garner enough artist interest and has since left the floor vacant. The building has been in the Verenis family for over 50 years. The building is in fair condition and has an active owner.



**Figure 3 Photo of the Bowling Alley on the third floor**



**Figure 4 Meeting Hall on the fourth floor**

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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### **PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Discuss the uses and tactics to increase rental opportunities for the upper stories of the building.
- Explore the possibility of Historic Boston working with the owner on a feasibility study of how the upper floors could be used.
- Determine if a rehabilitation project would be exceed the owner's basis, making it eligible for federal tax credits.

**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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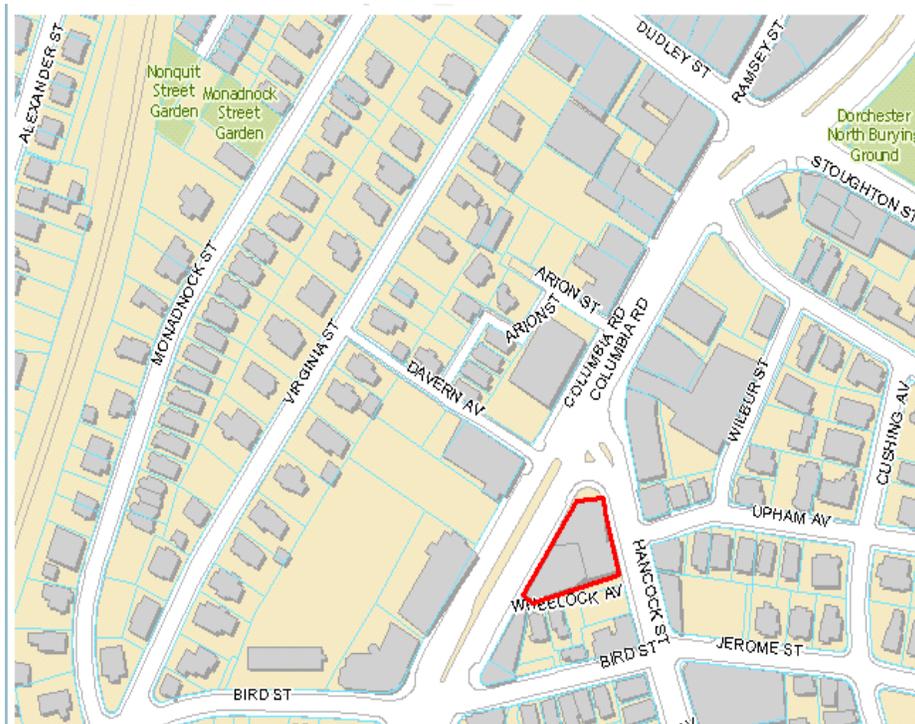
**Wheelock Livery Building & Associated buildings**

**Site Information**

**Address:** 525-531 Columbia Road  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner Main Street  
**Owner:** OPHIR SHALOM B  
**Property Type:** Commercial  
**Approximate Building Size:** 39,000 square feet  
**Lot Size:** 13358 sq ft  
**Parcel Number:** 1301746000  
**Ward:** 13



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 567,265.00	
	Building	\$ 745,826.00	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,313,091.00</b>	<b>Tax: 35,597.90</b>



**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** unknown- wood frame livery building constructed between 1831-1874- present on 1874 maps (see below)

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations (local, state, Federal):** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Little is known about the Wheelock Livery Stables building, which is one of the oldest remaining buildings in the area. On the 1831 Edmund Baker map, a small dot, indicating a homestead or another type of building, is located approximately in this location. There is no name associated with this building, but nearby, Payson, Davenport, Clapp and Upham are listed. Due to the large gap in maps available, we know that buildings listed as “livery” are located in this location as early as 1874, and potentially were built at an earlier date. Both on maps and in historic images, it appears that wood framed buildings stood in front of the brick livery building and on a pointed parcel of land that thrust into the busy Hancock Street/Columbia Road intersection. The widening of Columbia Road at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and other expansions has since swallowed up that land.

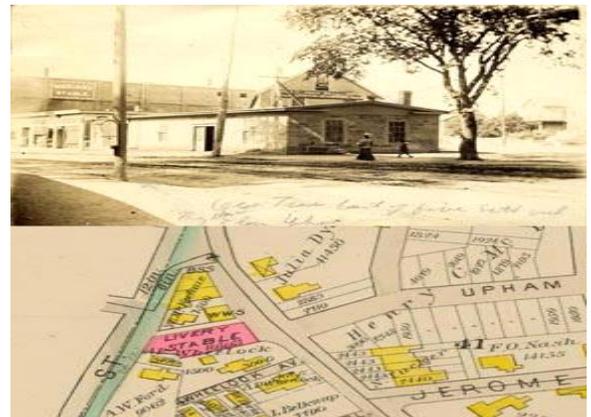
While it is known that a building with the use of a “livery” was located on this parcel of land as early as 1874, it is not clear if the wood buildings were replaced by the three-story, brick livery building or if the older building was incorporated into the larger brick building. More investigation is needed.

The current three-story brick building, which was first used to stable horses, was later used as a garage for automobiles. With a few different phases of construction, the building has been expanded in interesting ways, particularly in the years between 1880 and 1910.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Wheelock Livery Building and its attached one story brick commercial building are currently home to several different businesses. In the livery building, a large portion of the first and second floors is being used by Furniture Mart, a discount furniture store. Other businesses include New York Fried Chicken and Pizza and Rent-A-Center. The third floor is being used by for



**Figure 3** Early map of the area shows evidence of a early buildings on this site



**Figure 4** Early wood-frame buildings on the site, 1874 map shows a livery stable on the back of the site (red/pink building on the map)



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karate and boxing clubs. The one-story brick addition, constructed in unusually fine, classically-detailed cast stone, is used by a convenience store.

The building is in fair condition. According to Historic Boston's 2006 notes, there are some surviving interior tile walls and wooden wainscoting. The second floor, which is accessed by a wide staircase, has a boxed-in truss system. The intact brick façade is in need of repointing and there are several filled in windows. There is also a vacant lot located at 15 Wheelock, which belongs to the building owner. Currently, the land is being used as parking by Rent-A-Center.

As of 2010, Upham's Corner Main Street's Design Committee is working with the owner, known as Bachi, on different signage and building improvement scenarios. While hesitant on investing a large sum of money without insurance of a strong return, Bachi has been very open to discussing options. DND Architect Frank Vilbrund and associated architectural consultant Ed Forte have both put together renderings of the rehabilitated building, and Forte is currently working on a signage program for the building. Bachi has agreed to work with business owners to encourage them to apply to the city for Main Street signage funding. He is also changing the lease structures of each store space to include restrictions on signage.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:** This building is underused and sits on a prominent corner location. The interior is open with ample opportunity for re-development. The commercial use of this building could remain intact with work done to the exterior to repoint the brick. The filled windows could be reopened and the interior could be reorganized to include office space.

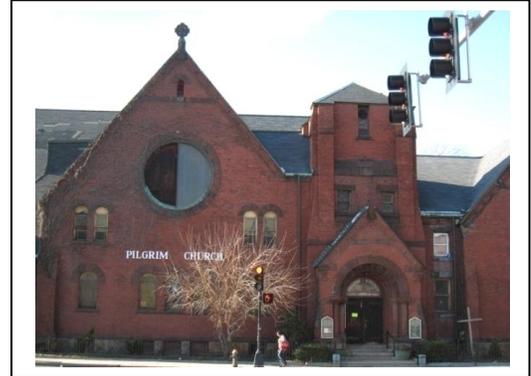
- Historic Boston could support Upham's Corner Main Street's work with owner to produce renderings and a better signage program. Historic Boston can assist in the owner in better understanding the asset and its potential if rehabilitated by producing a feasibility study.
- Conduct research into the building's history and how it has changed over time. This would include learning more about the earlier stables structure and the building's construction.
- Investigate possibility of eligibility on National Register of Historic Places.
- Explore possibility of using 10% Federal "Non-historic" tax credit for future rehabilitation projects, if it is deemed to be ineligible for listing on the National Register,

**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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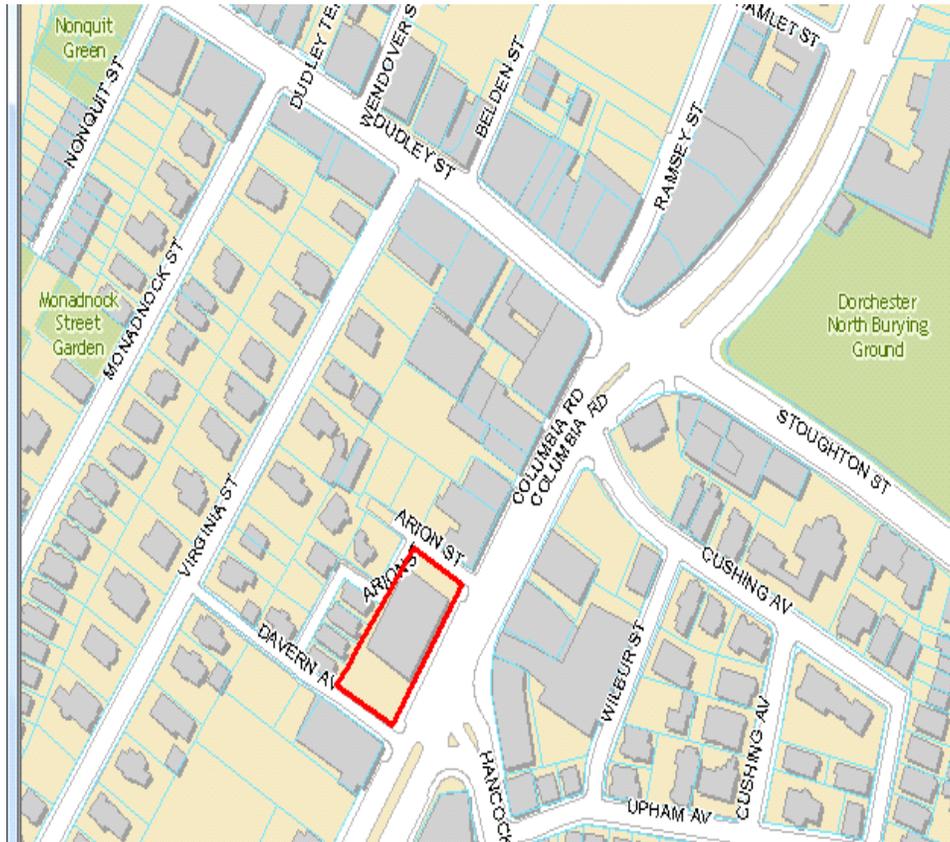
**Pilgrim Church**

**Site Information**

**Address:** 540 Columbia Road  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner Main Street  
**Owner:** The Pilgrim Church  
**Property Type:** Church  
**Lot Size:** 19,397 sq ft  
**Parcel Number:** 1301323000  
**Ward:** 13



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 293,300	
	<u>Building</u>	<u>\$ 840,100</u>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,133,400</b>	<b>Tax: \$0</b>



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** 1888-1892

**Architect:** Stephen Earle, Worcester

**Designations:** None

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Founded in 1862, the church was recognized by representatives of Congregational Churches of Boston as an Orthodox Congregational Church in 1867. The congregation first worshipped in rented space at

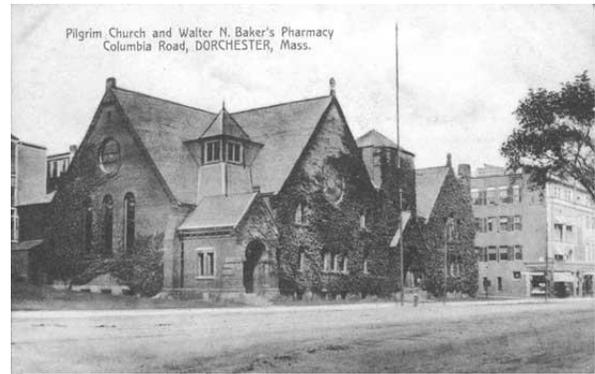
the Dorchester Athenaeum near Everett Square and then transitioned into a building on Stoughton Street. The foundations of a new church were laid in November, 1888, at 540 Columbia Road, but due to transitions in leadership, there was a delay in the construction. Finished in 1892 to a design by Stephen Earle of Worcester, the Pilgrim Church is in the Romanesque Revival style.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Pilgrim Church building is in poor condition. The congregation, which is composed of about 20 consistent worshippers, meets in a small chapel space adjacent to the sanctuary. Next to this room is the original chapel space, which was the first portion of the building to be built, and where the first services were held on this site. This early chapel space, which is currently used for storage

and support space, features what might be the original paint finish, as well as elaborate stained glass windows.

The church suffered a large fire in 1970, which began in the attic and ravaged the sanctuary. Some of the damage can still be seen today. In particular, the large round window on the street façade remains boarded up, which is the main focal point of the building from Columbia Road. The sanctuary space is now being used as an overnight homeless shelter, administered by Children's Services of Roxbury. That organization describes the program as an Adult Shelter that serves as an emergency overnight shelter and accommodates 124 men who struggle with substance abuse.

The building also is home to a daycare center/pre-school facility located in the basement and a thrift shop in the balcony area of the church, called the Thrift Shop of Project Care and Concern. The congregation administers a food pantry and a weekly community lunch and



**Figure 5 historic image of Pilgrim Church**



**Figure 6 deteriorating historic materials, and example of original paint colors**



**Figure 7 Original chapel space, now used as storage**

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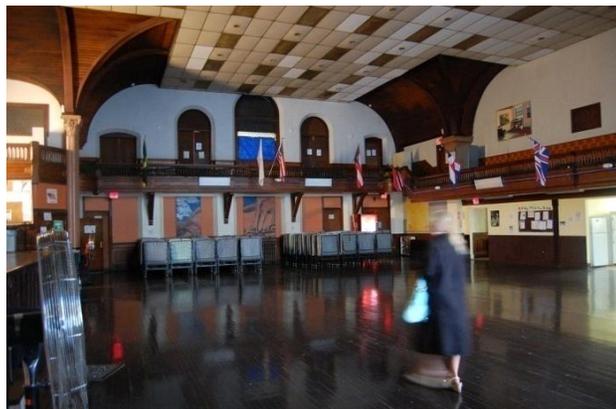
provides food on Boston Common each Saturday for the homeless and hungry.

Church members have approached Historic Boston, reporting water infiltration, structural damage, and the need for significant roof repair or replacement. The exterior needs to be repointed, and water infiltration through the foundation needs to be addressed.

November 2010 UPDATE: The roof has been replaced

### PRESERVATION STRATEGY:

- Thoroughly inspect and assess the building to understand its physical condition, as well as its character defining features. With this information, leadership will be able to plan for funding, future programming and the sequencing for rehabilitation projects.
- Ensure that all members of the congregation and the leadership of the church are in agreement about the physical and programmatic priorities at Pilgrim Church.
- Determine whether the space being maximized at its greatest value. Are there other compatible uses that could bring in more money and thereby allow a more sustainable rehabilitation effort?
- Determine if there is there a way to build up an endowment for future maintenance of the building. Is there a way to better balance the needs of the building with the charitable priorities of the congregation?
- The Pilgrim Church congregation could explore the idea of selling the property while maintaining worship space within the building or in a nearby place within the district. Perhaps this building could be better used if it were actually a social service center.
- Meet with other area stakeholders to better understand needs in the community. It seems that there is a need for the homeless shelter in this location, as it is always filled to capacity, but are there other needs for services that could take place here?
- Encourage a discussion about the social services needs of the district that would include the Pilgrim Church, Upham's Corner Health Center and the future Kroc Center.



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**Old Dorchester North Burying Ground**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** Columbia Road and Stoughton Street

**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester

**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner

**Owner:** The City of Boston

**Property Type:** Burying Ground

**Lot Size:** 136685 sq ft

**Parcel Number:** 0703999000

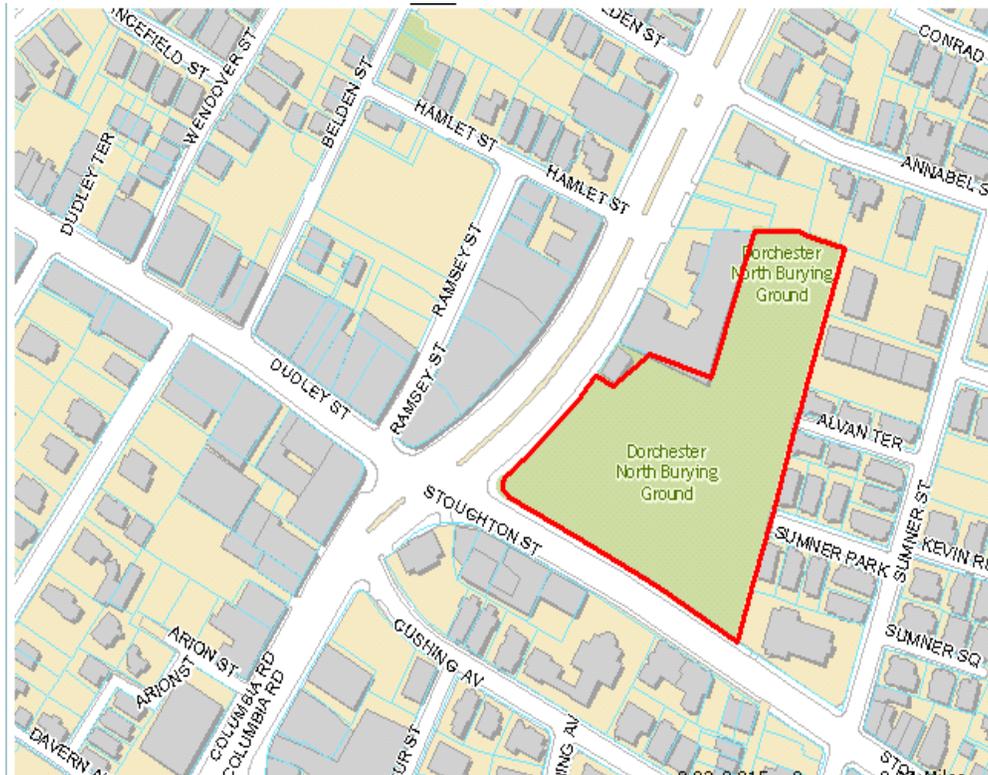
**Ward:** 07

**Assessment (2009):** Land \$ 983,400

Building \$ 0

**Total \$983,400**

**Tax: \$0**



## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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### **ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** burials began in 1638

**Architect:** early Dorchester residents

**Designations:** Boston Landmark; listed on the National Register of Historic Places

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Dorchester North Burying Ground, located at the corner of what is now Columbia Road and Stoughton Street, was first established in November of 1634. The original boundaries were quite small at about 80 feet on each side. Later parcel additions in 1694, 1718, 1727, 1741, 1745 and 1820 produced the roughly parallelogram shaped burying ground. Today it contains about 139,002 square feet. The Dorchester North Burying Ground is the earliest remaining man-made feature in this area of Dorchester. The first of the existing markers were Bernard and Joan Capen in 1638, which are now displayed in the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

The two most prominent figures buried in Dorchester North are William Stoughton, Lieutenant Governor of the Province from 1694 to 1699 and a later Chief Justice and benefactor of the original Stoughton Hall at Harvard College; and the Reverend Richard Mather, a progenitor of the celebrated Mather family, including Increase, Cotton, and John. Other early Dorchester forefathers with grave markers here include John Danforth, Isaac Royall, John Foster, the first printer in Boston, and members of distinguished local families such as the Clapps, Blakes, and Pierces. During the Revolutionary War period, forty unknown soldiers, who died due to the Siege, were buried in a single lot.

Unlike most historic Boston cemeteries, burials at Dorchester north extended well into the 19th century. A second burying ground was not added until 1819. This shows the importance of this northern section of town throughout the first two centuries of its existence.

Dorchester North contains approximately 1200 markers of various shapes, colors and materials including slate, marble, sandstone, granite and bronze. The sheer size and the lengthy period of active burials makes Dorchester North one of the more colorful and varied burying grounds throughout Boston.

In 1834, upon the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the burying ground, Dorchester residents began to take a renewed interest in Dorchester North. The group laid out the paths along the rows of graves and planted trees, flowers and shrubs. This was a move toward the more formal garden cemeteries that would be produced in the following years, such as Forest Hills and Mt. Auburn. The group also repaired much of the stone wall that was constructed towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In 1912, a new granite gateway was added. The curved Egyptian Revival style gate was built to frame the corner of Columbia Road and Stoughton Street. The last significant change in the enclosure of the burying grounds occurred a few years later, in the 1920s, when the stone walls were replaced by those constructed of concrete. Today, several of the panels on Columbia Road have been replaced with iron gates to allow visual access to the burial ground.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The Dorchester North Burying Ground is not currently threatened by development or demolition. As a Boston Landmark and as one of Boston's historic burying grounds, Dorchester North is protected from these forces. However,

## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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this site has been selected for this casebook to call attention to this historic resource within the busy Upham's Corner commercial district.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:** Open space in this area of Dorchester is rare, as are resources of this significance and age. While the burying ground is maintained by the City of Boston's Parks and Recreation Department, the burying ground is in need of attention and investment. Programming efforts, opening the Burying Ground on a regular basis, hosting clean-up days and activities are ways to gain more attention for the space and to educate residents and visitors about early Dorchester History.

- Upham's Corner Main Streets Volunteers could participate in regular clean-up days at the Burying Ground.
- An individual or an organization could be assigned as the local "Holder of the key," to provide better access to the Burying Ground.
- Advocate that the City of Boston and the Parks Department maintain structures within the Burying Ground, and that they remove the ivy growing on the main entrance way. The plant growth could be damaging the structure. Contact the Browne Fund, which has supported efforts at the Burying Ground in the past. The Browne Fund endows each project that they support to sustain their investments in the future.
- Advocate with the Browne Fund for programmatic interpretation, which could be installed on the solid walls on the Stoughton Street side of the Burying Ground.
- Rehabilitate a Comfort Station adjacent to the Burying Ground, which could become a center for Dorchester History and interpretation. Alternatively, if the Comfort Station were used for a for-profit purpose, such as a café or convenience store, another type of partnership could be created.

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*Historic Photograph Source: Dorchester Athenaeum.*

- *View of cemetery from 1888- notice historic fence.*
- *Photograph of a drawing of the Old Dorchester North Burying Ground at Upham's Corner in the possession of the Dorchester Historical Society in large album titled Old Dorchester Houses.*
- *Real-photo post card of Clapp Avenue in the Dorchester Old North Burial Ground leading from Stoughton Street at the back to the Wood Mausoleum at the front of the photo.*

**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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**Comfort Station at the Old North Burying Ground**

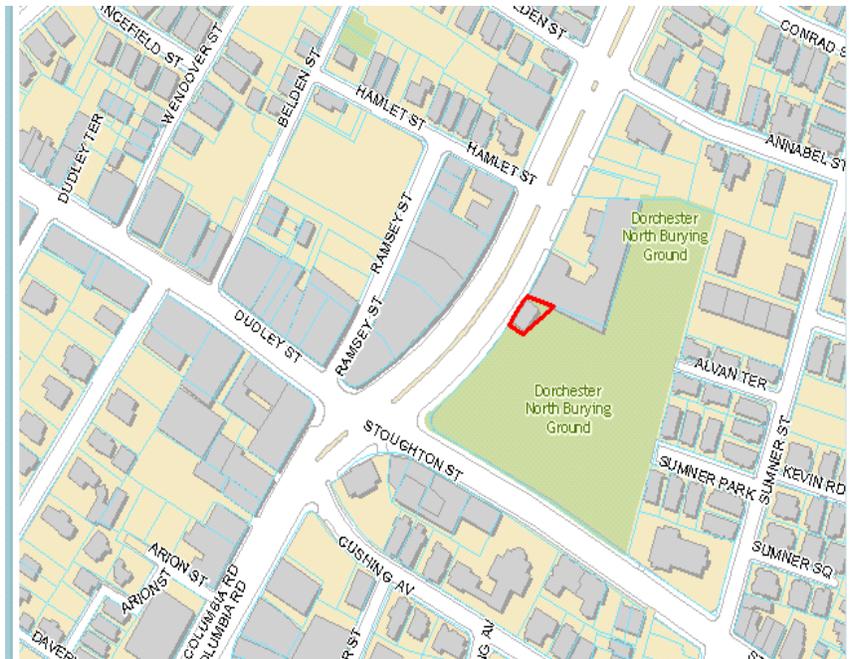
Updated: January 14, 2010

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 611 Columbia Road  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner  
**Owner:** The City of Boston-DND  
**Property Type:** "Exempt"  
**Building Size:** 1200 sq feet ±  
**Lot Size:** 2317 sq ft  
**Parcel Number:** 0703999010  
**Ward:** 07



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 50,000	
	Building	\$ 32,100	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 82,100</b>	<b>Tax: \$0</b>



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### **ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** 1912

**Architect:** William Besarick, who also designed the Roger Clap School on Harvest Street and the Municipal Building at the other end of Upham's Corner at the corner of Columbia Road and Bird Street. He is also known to have designed many of the triple deckers in the Boston Street/Jones Hill/ and Virginia and Monadnock Street areas, including the George Milliken House, at 44 Virginia Street, which is a Boston Landmark.

**Designations (local, state, Federal):** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The one-story "mission style" building was built as a "convenience station" in 1912. Designed by local architect William H. Besarick, the one-story building appears to have been built upon Dorchester North Burying Ground land. The building, which features a stucco exterior and a tiled roof, resembles something one would find in the American Southwest.

According to City of Boston building permits, the building's plumbing and electrical systems were modernized in 1945 and the doors were restored to the "original conditions." These efforts were part of a larger project throughout the Dorchester North Burying Ground area, in which the cemetery walls were repaired. By 1959, the building was considered an "office" space and consisted of 4 rooms on the first floor and a single room at the basement level. The 1200-square-foot building was reported to accommodate 10 people.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Today, the building is in overall poor condition. It has sat un-used for an unknown amount of time, possibly since 1977. At that time, there was a notice from the fire dept to the building department noting that its vacant status put it in danger of trespassers/vandals. There are holes in roof as well as loose and missing tiles. The foundation is cracked, and the stucco walls are a target for graffiti. The building has suffered from small fires and other acts of vandalism over the years.

The city began the process of putting this building out for bid in December of 2009. The challenge is that it is small and likely built on burial sites, meaning that archeology will be necessary. Additionally, there is little opportunity for expansion.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:** The comfort station has similar issues to the Agassiz Road Shelter (aka the Duck House) in the Back Bay Fens, except that this space sees a significant amount of foot traffic on Columbia Road, is adjacent to a busy bus stop and is located near or on an important burying ground.

- Work with DND to enter site; discuss incentives and criteria for HBI taking on the rehabilitation and reuse of the comfort station.
- Seek out economic feasibility; investigate market needs in the greater commercial district. It could house a non-profit program such as Upham's Corner Main Street. Other uses could include interpretive components for the Burying Ground and public restrooms.
- Support other groups' efforts at rehabilitating the Comfort Station, such as Michael Sand of RARE properties.

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**Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**  
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**Dorchester Fireproof Storage Company**

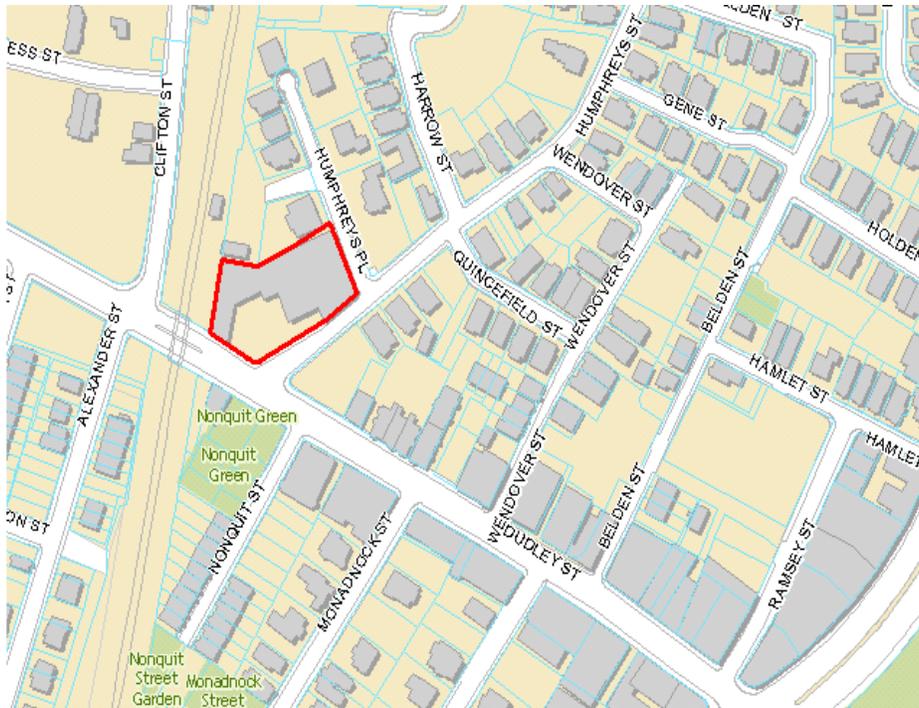
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**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 55 Humphreys Street  
(aka 692 Dudley Street)  
**Neighborhood:** Upham's Corner, Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** Upham's Corner  
**Owner:** Leon Family LLC  
**Property Type:** Industrial  
**Approximate Building Size:** 150,000 sq feet  
**Lot Size:** 29735 sq ft  
**Parcel Number:** 0703676000  
**Ward:** 07



<b>Assessment (2009):</b>	Land	\$ 499,700	
	Building	\$ 272,200	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 771,900</b>	<b>Tax: \$20,926</b>



## **Commercial Casebook: Upham's Corner**

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### **ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

Date Built: 1915

Architect: unknown

Designations (local, state, Federal): none, not surveyed, not in MACRIS

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Dorchester Fireproof Storage Building exemplifies a particular period in the development history of the greater Upham's Corner/Humphreys-East Cottage area. Its construction in 1915 shows the shift in this area away from residential use.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Located at the northern terminus of the district and adjacent to the Upham's Corner Commuter Rail Station and railroad tracks, the Dorchester Fireproof Storage Company is a large, irregularly shaped industrial building. The building varies between 5 and 7-stories tall with concrete and brick infill. The first floor has wide bays, possibly for cold storage. Ghost of writing on one wall states "Dorchester Fireproof Storage Warehouse."

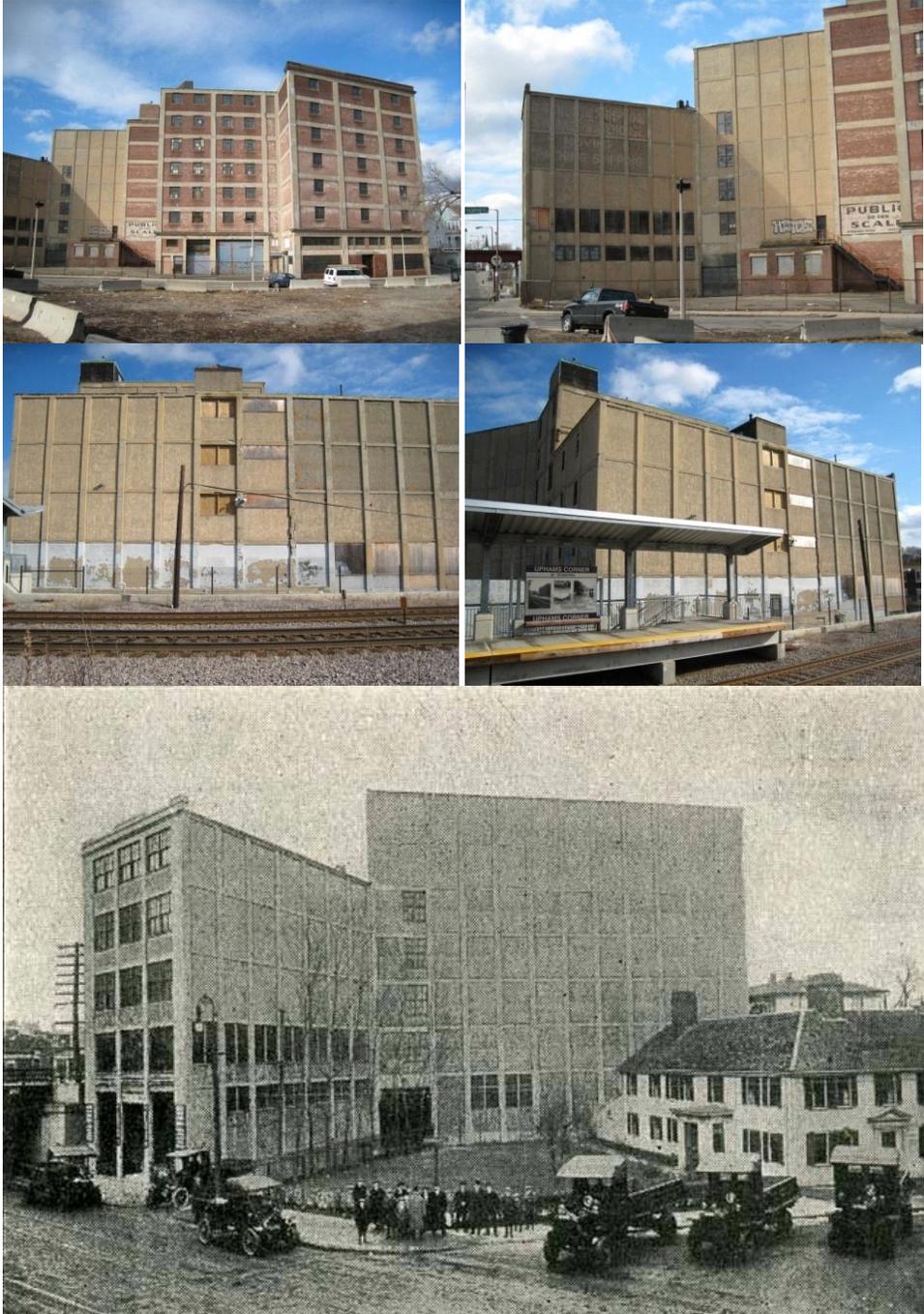
According to Historic Boston's notes from 2007, City and Upham's Corner officials tried to convince the owner to sell, but he was unwilling. Also, notes indicate that short ceiling heights, awkward configuration and solid concrete walls might pose significant challenges for future reuse.

With the combination of its proximity to the future Kroc Center, the commuter rail station (which will soon become the Indigo Line), and its status as the largest, unused property in the district, this site's redevelopment would be a very positive change for the community.

### **PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Investigate the significance of the building in terms of storage technologies, architectural details and its role in the history of the area to determine if it would be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Determine whether the building could be a topic for a design and use charrette held by Upham's Corner Main Street in conjunction with area universities and/or planning or architectural firms.
- Brainstorm to determine whether the facility could be converted for use for as residential rental units, green industry such as a solar farm, information storage or ancillary space for the Kroc Center.

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**Source:** Dorchester Athenaeum. *Scan of illustration from Official Program Dorchester Day, Saturday, June 5, 1915, showing Humphrey House and the new Dorchester Fireproof Storage Warehouse at the corner of Dudley Street and Humphrey Street.*

**In 1917 the family sold the property and moved from the old house, allowing its demolition. They had already sold the back part of the property for the construction of the Dorchester Fireproof Storage Warehouse. The family relocated to other nearby houses that were once part of the larger Humphries estate.**