

What is a National Register Historic District?

The National Register is the nation's list of places worth preserving. A National Register Historic District nomination recognizes the significance of the neighborhood in the development of Boston.

The National Register is maintained by the Department of the Interior National Parks Service, and places are added to it through a nomination process which, in Boston, is coordinated by the Boston Landmarks Commission. The process includes an inventory and study of the buildings' history to determine whether they meet the National Register criteria.

Once listed on the National Register, the neighborhood would also be automatically listed on the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places.

What are the benefits of a National Register Historic District?

There are three major benefits to being listed on the National Register:

- 1. Recognition.** Listing on the National Register provides recognition for the historic significance of the neighborhood.
- 2. Protection.** Listing provides some protection against demolition or negative effects of projects funded by the federal or state governments.
- 3. Tax incentives for restoration.** Depending on its use, a building may qualify for a federal or state investment tax credits.

Would this restrict what I can do with my property?

Absolutely not. Listing on the National Register does not restrict you from making changes to your house. National Register districts do not have official design review. You would still be able to paint your house any color you choose.

What can I do to help?

There's a lot of work that has to be done to make this happen.

- 1. Learn more about your house.** Ask questions: Has your family been here for generations? Do you know who lived here before you? What style are your house's original exterior details? How has your house changed over the years?
- 2. Share your knowledge.** Host a meeting to talk about the neighborhood's history and share stories, photos, maps, postcards. Teach your kids about the neighborhood's history.
- 3. Volunteer!** All of our efforts are made possible by dedicated volunteers. You can help with community organizing, Spanish translation, library research, or developing educational programs and materials. If you'd like to volunteer, please contact us.

Thanks to the Boston Landmarks Commission staff for their suggestions to improve this brochure. Revised August 4, 2006.



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FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.HistoricHydeSquare.org

SUPPORT

the creation of the

Round Hill- Sunnyside

NATIONAL REGISTER
HISTORIC DISTRICT



Including the following streets:

Edge Hill,
Gay Head,
Round Hill,
Sunnyside, and
Westerly.

THIS BROCHURE ANSWERS THE QUESTIONS

*What is a National Register Historic District?
What are the benefits of a National Register listing?
Would this restrict what I can do with my property?*

What can I do to help?

What makes this neighborhood historic?

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What makes this neighborhood historic?

Affordable Housing circa 1890

The Round Hill-Sunnyside neighborhood was Robert Treat Paine's third and largest attempt to create a substantial neighborhood of affordable housing in Boston.

As an alternative to building attached row houses or the more common three-decker, Paine envisioned an attractive, affordable neighborhood of modest single family homes.

The Workingmen's Building Association built the houses and then sold them at cost. Most of the houses sold for about \$2,500—roughly \$100,000 in today's dollars. The Workingmen's Cooperative Bank offered amortizing mortgages to buyers—an innovation for its time that let working people buy these homes on an installment plan.

Paine adapted some of the ideals of his time—light, gardens, and rich

ornamentation—scaled them down, and put them into practice for the benefit of working people.

A Picturesque Vision

The Workingmen's Building Association purchased the land for the neighborhood from the Susan Weld estate in 1888. At that time, it was a farm with a pond and few buildings. By the turn of the century, the land was transformed into a subdivision of curving streets that followed the contours of the land.

Paine turned to Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of American landscape architecture and the designer of Boston's Emerald Necklace, for advice on the street layout and plantings for the wooded slope between Sunnyside and Edge Hill streets.

George W. Pope designed the houses with Victorian details of more expensive

homes—patterned shingles, decorative bracketing and cornices, bay windows, and dormers. Paine had recently commissioned Henry Hobson Richardson to renovate his own home in Waltham, and that experience clearly influenced the residential styles of the houses built here. Paine wanted to build housing that people could aspire to own, not to build houses that were solely utilitarian.

Urban Survivors

Look around today and you'll see an intact neighborhood of wood houses that has survived over a hundred years.

As historian Sam Bass Warner, Jr. points out, these houses survive today because they are some of the best hous-

ing options in the neighborhood.

During the 20th century, much of the surrounding neighborhood was bulldozed by government "urban renewal" programs.

Under the guise of slum clearance, dozens of nearby working-class three-deckers were demolished to build the Hennigan Elementary School; hundreds of nearby houses were torn down for the Southwest Expressway (now the Orange Line); the brick rowhouses and squares of Bromley Park were removed to build the Bromley Park public housing; and a neighborhood park was lost to build the Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Listing the neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places makes a statement that this place is worth preserving for future generations.

Nearby National Register Districts Jamaica Plain

- Monument Square Historic District
- Sumner Hill Historic District
- Woodbourne Historic District

Roxbury

- Roxbury Highlands Historic District
- Moreland Street Historic District.



Sources: Mass. Historical Commission, *Know How #3*; Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs*; Richard Heath, *Woodbourne*; Anthony Mitchell Sammarco, *Jamaica Plain*; Alan Lupo, *Rights of Way*; Boston Landmarks Commission, *Jamaica Plain brochure*; Robert Treat Paine Estate, Waltham; U.S. Library of Congress, Olmsted Associates Archives; Suffolk County Registry of Deeds. Photos and text by Rik Ahlberg unless otherwise credited. © 2006 Historic Hyde Square. For more information, visit www.HistoricHydeSquare.org

