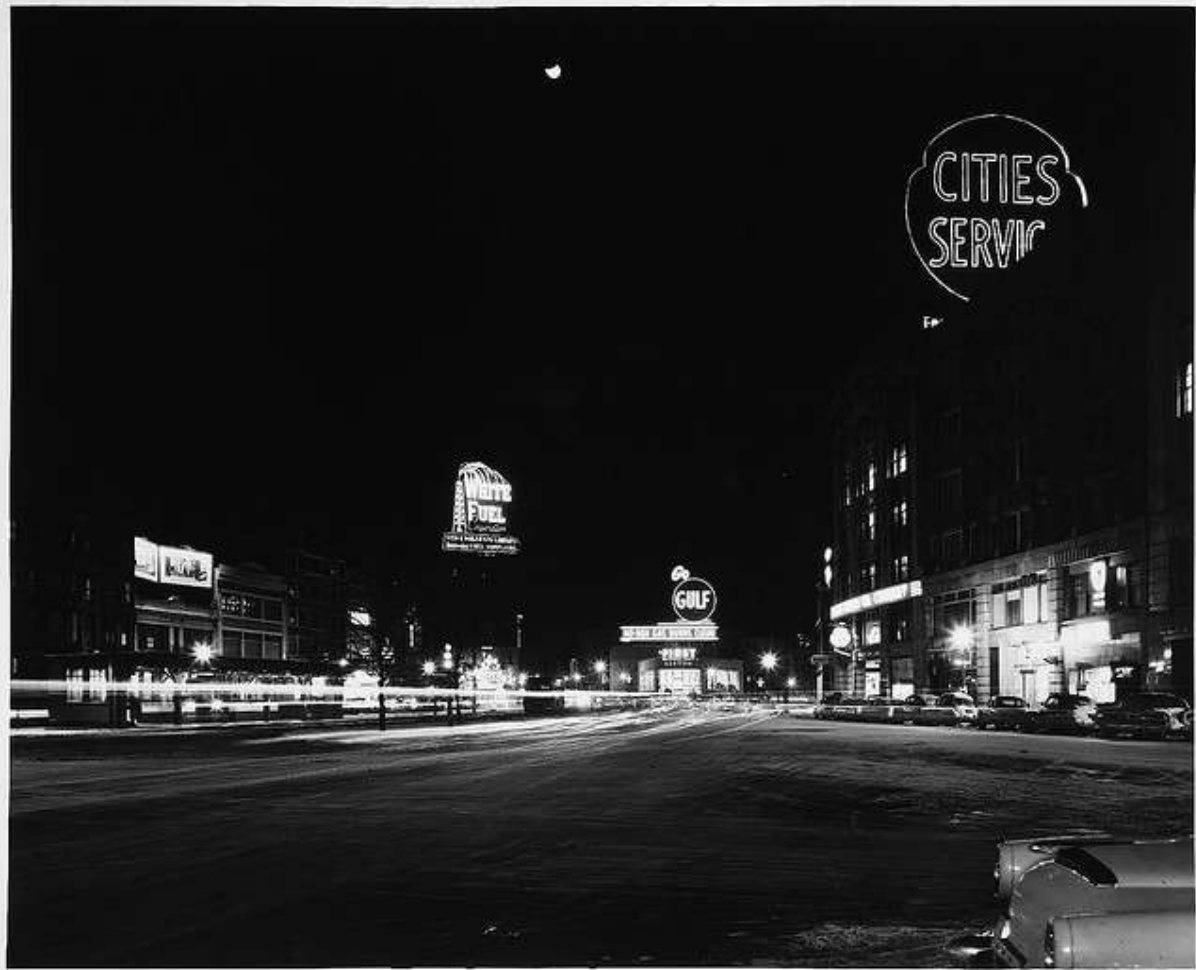


Kenmore Square



Gateway to Boston

Boston, Massachusetts

Bill Tarkulich

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Photo [Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society](#), 2013

Revision 1

Preface

The story of Kenmore Square is one of a hundred stories. This piece follows its progression from a backwater swamp to a classy destination, to a gateway, to a crime-ridden square to one which aspires to the same place a hundred years prior. Much of its history has been lost by time or convoluted by stories passed along one too many times. Many of these are made whole, hidden stories unearthed, some disturbing and others of humor. Enjoy!

Bill Tarkulich, June, 2013

PART I: Growth

From a Tidal Basin to a Gateway

In the early 19th century the area now known as Kenmore Square was called Sewell's Point, located at the edge of a tidal basin called the Back Bay. It was connected to the rest of Boston by a narrow road that ran atop a Mill Dam running along the Charles River.¹



Figure 1 Milldam Plan, 1814. The future Kenmore Square is circled²

The aim of the Mill Dam was to use the tides of the Charles River to power 100 mills for industrial purposes. Additionally, the Dam would serve as a toll road. In the end, Dearborn's plan was not realized (only three mills signed up) and a much simpler Mill Dam was built by 1821. Eventually, this project failed in part because of sewage and wastewater build-up in the tidal basins. This build-up caused unpleasant smells that drifted all over the city. As a result, in May 1855, the Back Bay began to be filled in and developed.³

The Back Bay was filled in by the late 19th century along with the Charles River dam. The former "Mill Dam Road" became Beacon Street, which connected to Brookline Avenue. Commonwealth Avenue came soon after, and eventually the 3 busy roads converged and "Three Roads Junction" was its original name. It was officially named Governor Square in 1910.^{4 5} It became known as a

¹ <http://www.bahistory.org/HistoryMillDam.html>

² [Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society](#), 2013

³ "Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society", 2013

⁴ *Tracing the Changing Face of Kenmore Square*, Patrick L. Kennedy, 01.24.2013, BU TODAY

⁵ Matt Hasson, 2013

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“gateway to the city”, where one transitioned from the suburbs to the city. Appendix III describes in more detail the progression of events in the development of Kenmore square.

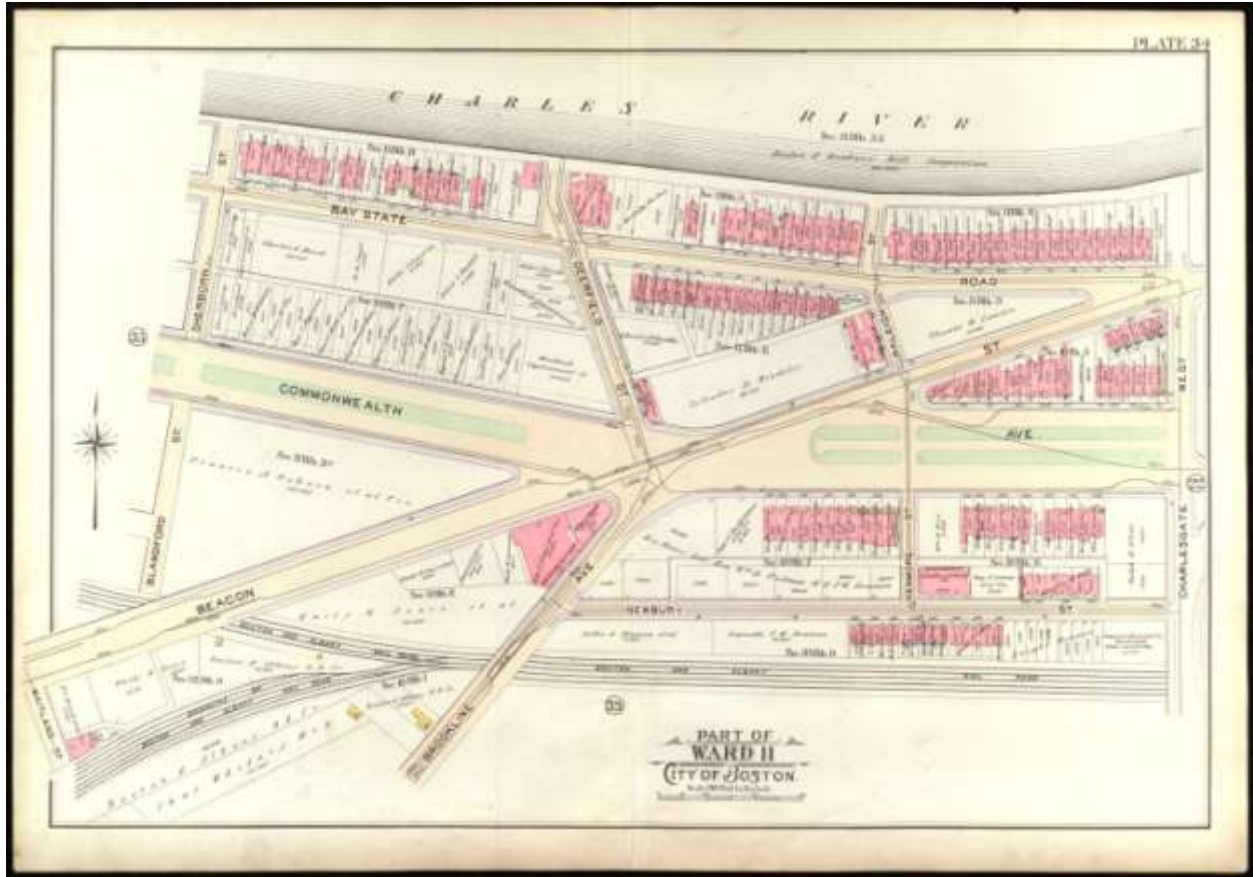


Figure 2 Governor Square, 1912 Ward Map

By 1870, three roads merged from the west, Western Ave (Brookline Ave), Beacon St. and Brighton Avenue (Commonwealth Ave.) at a point called “Three Roads”. The first buildings shown on an 1895 ward map include the Belvoir (corner of Beacon and Raleigh (Kenmore) streets), the row houses/offices (510-524 Commonwealth) and the Westgate, (corner of Beacon and Deerfield). Also 13-57 Bay State Road had been constructed. The Buckminster Hotel, on the corner of Beacon and Brookline streets was the first hotel to open in 1899.

For the most part, the square always has been a commercial center, with residences wrapping it to the north (Bay State Road) and east (Commonwealth, Beacon and Newbury.) Other hotels came rapidly after the Buckminster; Wadsworth (1902), Hotel Kenmore (1915), Sheraton (1917) and the Myles Standish (1926). Outside of the Square were the Somerset (1899) and Braemore (1917). The Braemore, Kenmore and Wadsworth Hotels were jointly managed.⁶

⁶ *Hotel and Travel Department Information Bureau, Sunday Herald Traveler, Jun 24, 1923*

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From the beginning, the square was filled with a “quiet elegance”; Stately brownstone residence-offices, upscale hotels, restaurants, clubs doctor’s practices and professional offices. It was host to major baseball teams, and central to major medical center visitors.



Figure 3 Hotel Buckminster, Governor Square, circa 1900, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection.

1900 to 1929 was a period of tremendous growth in Kenmore Square. The newspapers were filled with reports of hundreds of new residential and commercial buildings being constructed in the Back Bay, including Commonwealth Avenue, Beacon Street and Bay State Road.

The area soon grew with businesses and residences, and it's location with high traffic made it attractive to the hotel industry. After all, it was called a gateway into Boston for those coming from Brookline, Allston and the

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western suburbs. As early as 1926, “Kenmore Square” was the name informally being used to refer to the area.⁷

With growth came challenges. In 1926, five neighborhood associations joined forces to drive civic issues such as elimination of begging and peddling, loitering, police protection, highway and sidewalk repair, snow, ash and garbage removal.”⁸



Figure 4 Governor Square, 1915. Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

⁷ Boston Globe, 3/30/26

⁸ *Consider Forming New Organization*, Boston Daily Globe, Mar 30, 1926

The Boston Elevated Railway



In 1913-14, the Boston Elevated Railway, popularly known as the “El” constructed the “Boylston Street Subway” from the Public Garden (At today’s Arlington station) to Kenmore Street.⁹¹⁰

The line was originally proposed to be called the “Riverbank Subway” in 1907. There were three schemes presented for the subway to reach Kenmore Square. The first contemplated an incline emerging from the embankment (today’s Storrow Drive), crossing the Stone

Brook (Today’s Muddy River) and connecting to the existing Beacon Street track. The second proposal was to build the tunnel under the Muddy River, then for an incline to arise into the middle of the square on Beacon Street alongside where the Kenmore Club was later built. A third proposal was to build the incline between Massachusetts Avenue and Charlesgate East.¹¹

The agreed to solution was for the subway to emerge from the underground east of Kenmore street, in the Commonwealth Avenue mall, making its first above-ground stop Kenmore Street. The subway emerged on what was referred to as an “incline.” It was customary to name subway and trolley stations after intersecting roads. The stop became known as “Kenmore Station.” The rooftop vestiges of this incline remain in the mall, used today for tunnel ventilation. (Figure 6)

Almost as soon as the subway line was completed, complaints about traffic in the square began. In 1927, it was reported, “Automobiles, pouring in from Beacon Street and Commonwealth Avenue where the thoroughfares merge at Kenmore Station were held for 6 ½ minutes.”¹²

As an attempt to mitigate these issues, in 1916, a plan was presented to widen Commonwealth Avenue from Charlesgate East to Massachusetts Avenue (opposite the Hotel Somerset and the Harvard Club). A bridge between Charlesgate East and West, running from the Fens to Storrow Drive was also planned.

Traffic problems continued to increase during the 20’s. The square was considered by some to be the busiest in the city, with rush hour jams that had become intolerable to residents, commuters and police. Everyone except the “El” agreed that the conflicts between trolley and automobile were by far the largest contributor to congestion. Ideas such as one-side-of-street parking, widening Commonwealth Ave, routing light traffic onto Bay State Road and making Charlesgate west into a two way road were considered.¹³

To address the congestion, in 1925 the state legislature passed an act allowing for extension of the Boylston street subway, presumably by tunnel under Governor Square. In 1926 Mayor Malcolm Nichols continued to pressure the Elevated to take action. The Elevated refused, saying this was a problem of “motor congestion, not trolley congestion”.¹⁴

⁹ *Three Sections are Completed*, Boston Daily Globe, Mar 14, 1913

¹⁰ *Boylston-St Subway Complete*, Boston Daily Globe, Sep 27, 1914

¹¹ *The Riverbank Subway Entrance*, Boston Herald, Nov 12, 1907

¹² *Governor-Sq Traffic Delays Continue*, Boston Daily Globe, Oct 22, 1927

¹³ *Working to Solve Traffic Problems in Governor Sq.*, Boston Daily Globe, Jun 16, 1926

¹⁴ *Mayor Again Urges Subway Extension*, Boston Daily Globe, Oct. 20, 1926

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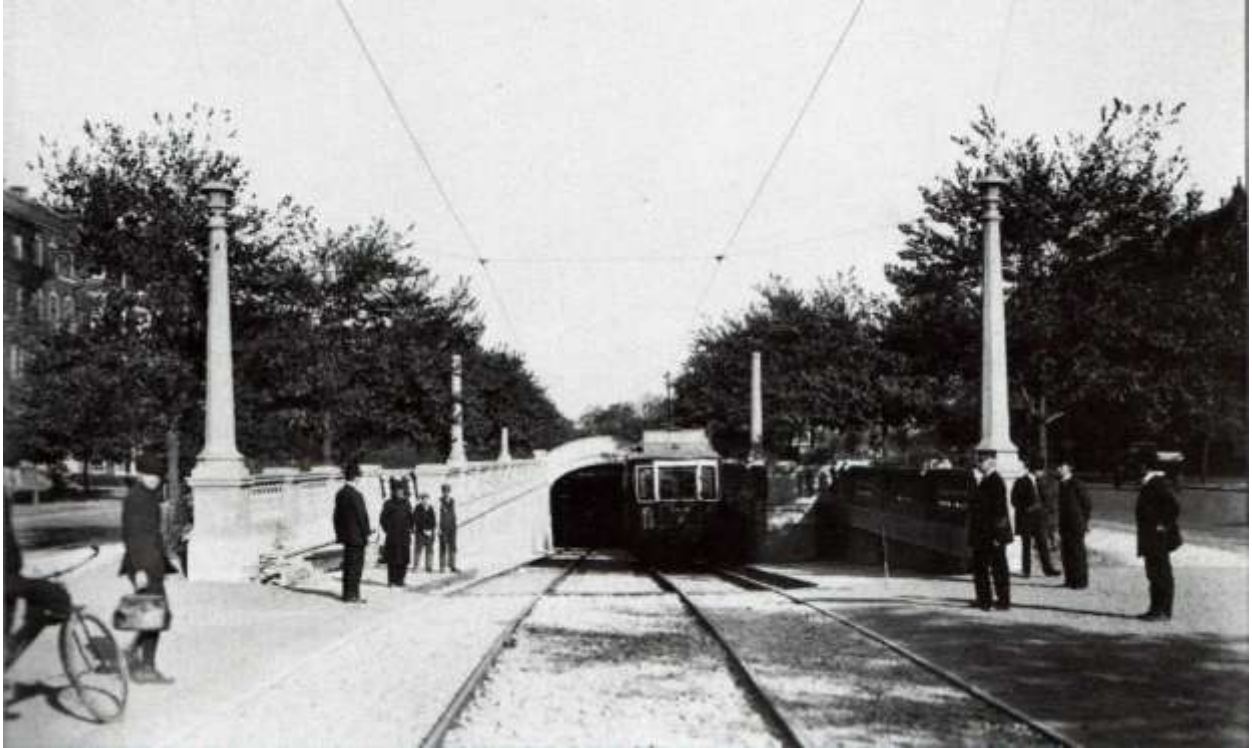


Figure 5 Original Kenmore Station Incline, Circa 1914

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Figure 6 1912 - The massive Somerset is in the far distance. Neither the Braemore or the Kenmore have been constructed. Notice the Subway Incline is under construction and the Commonwealth mall extended to the center of the square. . Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

By early 1928, city officials had had enough of an unresponsive Boston Elevated Railway. Management of the El suggested that the problem could be solved by “subwaying [sic] street vehicles.” While the city owned all underground routes, many wanted take control and put entire El into public ownership.¹⁵ In 1930, more than 40,000 automobiles were making their way through the square every day.¹⁶

It wasn’t until Mayor James Michael Curley was reelected that pressure was put on the Legislature to move on the issue. Based on a bill that Curley had originally submitted in 1925, the city agreed to pay any operating losses the El might suffer as result of the Governor Square extension.

In August of 1930, the first of the steel beams for the Kenmore underground station were delivered. By the end of 1932, the Kenmore subway station had opened. A business group brought forth a request that the city change the name of the square from Governor to Kenmore since it was already part of the local vernacular. On December 31, 1932 Mayor Curley signed a bill changing the name to “Kenmore Square.” Eventually the assets of the El were transferred to an entirely public entity, the Metropolitan Transit Authority in 1947.

¹⁵ *Foss For Public Ownership of the “L”*, Daily Boston Globe, Feb 10, 1928

¹⁶ *Governor Sq sees 40,000 Cars a Day*, Mar 6, 1930



Figure 7 Remnants from the original subway incline

The bridge over the Muddy River between Charlesgate East and West was opened in 1951. The bridge connected the Fens to the newly opened Storrow Drive. While traffic necessitated this interconnection, it severed the square's link to the elegant strip which progressed from the Public Garden. The bridge was not only a physical separation, but became a social separation as well. ¹⁷

The center of the square, which earlier had included a center mall, was replaced with a bus terminal. There have been three incarnations of the terminal, a wooden one in the 40's, one of concrete in 1968 and steel and glass shelter in the 2010's. The later was the first to have a direct connection to the subway below. Until that point the only means of subway entrance and egress was from opposite sides of the square.

¹⁷ *Embankment Road Opens Both Lanes to Traffic Today*, Boston Globe, Jun 15, 1951

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Figure 8 Kenmore Square, 1930, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

South Side of Commonwealth Avenue



Figure 9 500-548 Commonwealth Ave, South Side, 1970's

The block of buildings on the south side of Commonwealth Avenue, stretching from Kenmore Street halfway to Brookline Avenue (516 to 532) was constructed circa 1900, at roughly the same time as the Buckminster Hotel. The block was used as medical offices. With public transportation at its doorsteps, it became an attractive location for medical practices. Several of these building had residences in the upper floors.

In the early years, these buildings had small grass “lawns” in front. In 1936, a new concept fence, the “chain-link” was adopted by the owners to protect the lawns. The fence was marketed not only as safe, but “neighbor friendly” due to its visual transparency.

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Figure 10 South side of Commonwealth Avenue, 1936. The lawns with fencing can be seen on the right, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

The Brookline Avenue end of the block was filled commercial buildings. These businesses included a long-standing Auto School, Walton’s Lunch, automotive retail space, National Shawmut Bank (1925), a *Chocolatier* and the “Haberdasher and Hatter” store (1932). Kenmore Pharmacy, which opened in 1932 to service the medical community, was originally located in this section (538).



Figure 11 In 1941 the bank touted a new "Drive Through" service, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

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After World War II, physicians, and other businesses followed their customers to the suburbs. These tenants were replaced by small technology companies, proprietary schools, liquor stores, cocktail lounges, Brigham's, (ice cream shop) White Tower, a salon and a credit counselor.

Newbury Street (West)

As originally planned, the main section of Newbury Street runs from Arlington St. crossing Massachusetts Avenue and terminating at Charlesgate East. It then resumes on the other side of the so-called Muddy river, at Charlesgate West and continues to Brookline Avenue. This second section had been referred to as West Newbury Street when planned.

West Newbury St. is a little-known abutter to the square. Newbury St. is connected to the square by Kenmore Street. Unlike its northerly counterpart, Bay State Road, Newbury today contains but a few residences. Before the adjacent Mass. Turnpike was constructed, a row of houses stretched from Mass. Ave to a little west Kenmore St. These homes were built in 1893.¹⁸ Further down the street, a large building contained an auto sales business in the 1920s, later a cigar manufacturer and an equipment distributor, Perkins Sales. Wadsworth Hotel and several other apartment buildings east of Kenmore Street are all that remain today.

The Kenmore Hotel was originally planned to be placed at the corner of Kenmore and (West) Newbury Streets, opposite the Hotel Wadsworth. For reasons unknown, that plan was scuttled and the Hotel was built on the diagonal corner of Commonwealth and Kenmore St. In 1924, attempts were made to construct a parking garage on that same site. This never happened probably due to abutter objections. (Figure 14)

In 1965, the extension of the Mass. Turnpike alongside the railroad right-of-way was under construction. The parallel row of houses on the south side of Newbury St. was taken by eminent domain and demolished to accommodate the new highway. (Figure 15)

¹⁸ *Real Estate Transactions, West Newbury Street Operations*, Boston Herald, Jul 21 1893

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Figure 12 Newbury Street, 1937 – Newbury Street looking east towards Massachusetts Avenue. Wadsworth Hotel is on the left, Boston & Maine railway right of way on the right. These homes were demolished to make way for the Mass. Turnpike in the 1965, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection



Figure 13 the Massachusetts Turnpike extension under construction. Kenmore Square is off-camera to the left. The Hotel Wadsworth is visible in the middle left. Newbury Street (left) hangs to the parallel edge of the canyon. The Prudential tower is under construction¹⁹ Photo taken from Brookline Ave. Circa 1965. , Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

Auto Row

From 1900 to 1940 a mile-long stretch of Commonwealth, from Kenmore Square westward was known as “Auto Row”²⁰. Over 100 “auto machine” dealers, stores and service businesses were in operation. Peerless Auto was the first to lease a new, large showroom and regional office in the square. The neon signs, Cities Services (Citgo), White Fuel and Gulf were erected in the 30’s. The post-war period signaled a move to the suburbs by new and growing families. The auto-related businesses on Commonwealth Avenue followed their customers. In time, the majority of the “auto row” came into ownership by Boston University as they drove to integrate their campus.

¹⁹ Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection.

²⁰ <http://www.bu.edu/today/2011/a-trip-down-automobile-row/>

Part II: Buildings and Signs

Hotels

From 1900 to 1940, the main business of Kenmore Square was hotels. At one time the Hotel Kenmore, Buckminster, Myles Standish, Braemore, Puritan, Charlesgate and Somerset Hotels were all within 3 blocks of each other. In addition the original Sheraton Hotel was nearby on Bay State Road. During that period, hotels had both short-term rooms and long-term apartments for rent. The terms “apartment” and “hotel” were often used interchangeably.

After WW II, the flight to suburbs, and new hotels downtown made the square’s hotels dated and uncompetitive. In the first salvo, Boston University purchased the Myles Standish Hotel for use as dormitories in 1949. In 1965 The Cambridge School (nee Gramm Junior College) purchase the Lumberman’s Mutual Fire Insurance building (645 Beacon), Hotel Kenmore (490 Commonwealth), Wadsworth Hotel (Kenmore St.) and the Hotel St. George (645 Beacon Street). Further afield the Sherry Biltmore Hotel had been acquired by Bryant and Stratton School. B. U. acquired Charlesgate West, the Fensgate Hotel went to Chandler, and the Hotel Bostonian on Boylston St. to the Berklee School of Music.

Hotel Buckminster (1897)



Figure 14 Hotel Buckminster, 1899, 645 Beacon Street, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

One of the first hotels was the Buckminster, located on the intersection of Beacon Street and Brookline Avenue. It was originally known as the Buckminster apartment hotel. Built in 1897 and opened in 1899 by Silvanus Stokes it had 200 rooms. The hotel was designed by the renowned architect Stanford White, who also worked on the design of the Boston Public Library and many of the elegant townhouses on Beacon Street. The Buckminster featured apartment suites of two to seven rooms in addition to regular hotel accommodations. For a while, it was the largest building in the square.

The Buckminster was the location of a plan to fix the 1919 World Series.²¹²² Joseph “Sport” Sullivan, a bookmaker and a gambler and Arnold “Chick” Gandil, first baseman for the White Sox hatched the plan in this hotel.

²¹ Chicago Tribune

²² *Eight Men Out*, Eliot Asinof



15 - Boston Herald Ad, 1900

The hotel had the unfortunate luck of having a fairly large betting operation running from its rooms. In 1934, three men were arrested for running a betting pool and horse race betting syndicates. Over 2,000 betting slips were recovered. ”²³

WNAC radio moved into new studios in the Buckminster in July, 1929. Later that year, using a 100-foot antenna strapped to the building’s roof with clothesline, the station arranged the first network broadcast in the history of radio with station WEAJ in New York City. This union formed a new company know as the *Yankee Network*. WNAC's owner John Shepard would later establish the first New England regional network of hometown stations. Anxious to expand the prestige of the Yankee Network, Shepard launched the Yankee News Service in March, 1934, the first independent news roundup on radio. ²⁴

In 1942 the Buckminster's role as a major Boston hotel suffered a setback when the building was turned over to a detachment of military police (First Service Command)²⁵ for use as barracks. It was also used for administration of the Army Emergency Relief Administration, and became a popular drop off site for gifts sent to servicemen. It was used as a temporary prison for a captured German submarine crew members and Italian prisoners. Cell blocks had been constructed in the basement for this purpose. ^{26, 27}. It was returned to the owner in November, 1945. The government compensated the owners \$164,000 for its use and related damages. Damages were limited to the bar room. It was used as a transient hotel until 1962.²⁸ For many years after the war a Howard Johnson’s was located in the front of the building.

From 1950 to 1953, the basement of the Buckminster was home to the **Storyville** nightclub, a popular jazz venue, with important entertainers including Sarah Vaughn, Dave Brubeck²⁹, Lois Armstrong, Billie Holiday and Red Garland. Leonard Bernstein also

²³ Arrest Trio in Raid On Betting Quarters, Daily Boston Globe, Jun 17 1934

²⁴ Matt Hasson, 2013

²⁵ Army Takes Buckminster, Boston Herald Aug 19, 1942

²⁶ Another Hotel Here Taken Over by Government, Boston Globe

²⁷ Buckminster Owners Awarded \$169,250

Boston Herald, Nov 15, 1945

²⁸ Buckminster to Reopen as a Transient Hotel, Boston Herald, Mar 1, 1946

²⁹ Advertisement, Boston Daily Records, Oct 10, 1952

performed here as a benefit to musicians who lost their belongings in a cottage fire in Gloucester in 1952.³⁰ By 1953, the club had been renamed to the Colonnade Room.³¹



Figure 17 Hotel Buckminster re-opens in 1946

Though the hotel's reputation continued to weaken, WNAC kept right on with the times, converting most of its studio space into some of Boston's first television studios which began broadcasting on Channel 7 in June, 1948. The TV and radio station operated on the site for twenty more years, enduring periodic changes of ownership and facility upgrades.

The Yankee Network eventually passed into history and the station became part of RKO-General, with the radio station changing its call letters to WRKO and the TV station retaining the WNAC call letters. The Buckminster also underwent changes in ownership and in 1962 its name was changed to the Hotel St. George.

In 1968 the building was sold to the Cambridge School and renamed Leavitt Hall. WNAC by this time had moved to brand new studios in Government Center.³² Gramm never made use of the complete radio and television production studios left behind in the basement of the Buckminster. They had already invested a great deal of money building broadcast facilities at 632 Beacon Street and couldn't afford to maintain both.

³⁰ Boston Daily Record, Aug 13, 1952

³¹ Advertisement, Boston Daily Record, May 16, 1953

³² *RKO radio, TV stations settled in new home*, Boston Globe, Dec. 1 1968

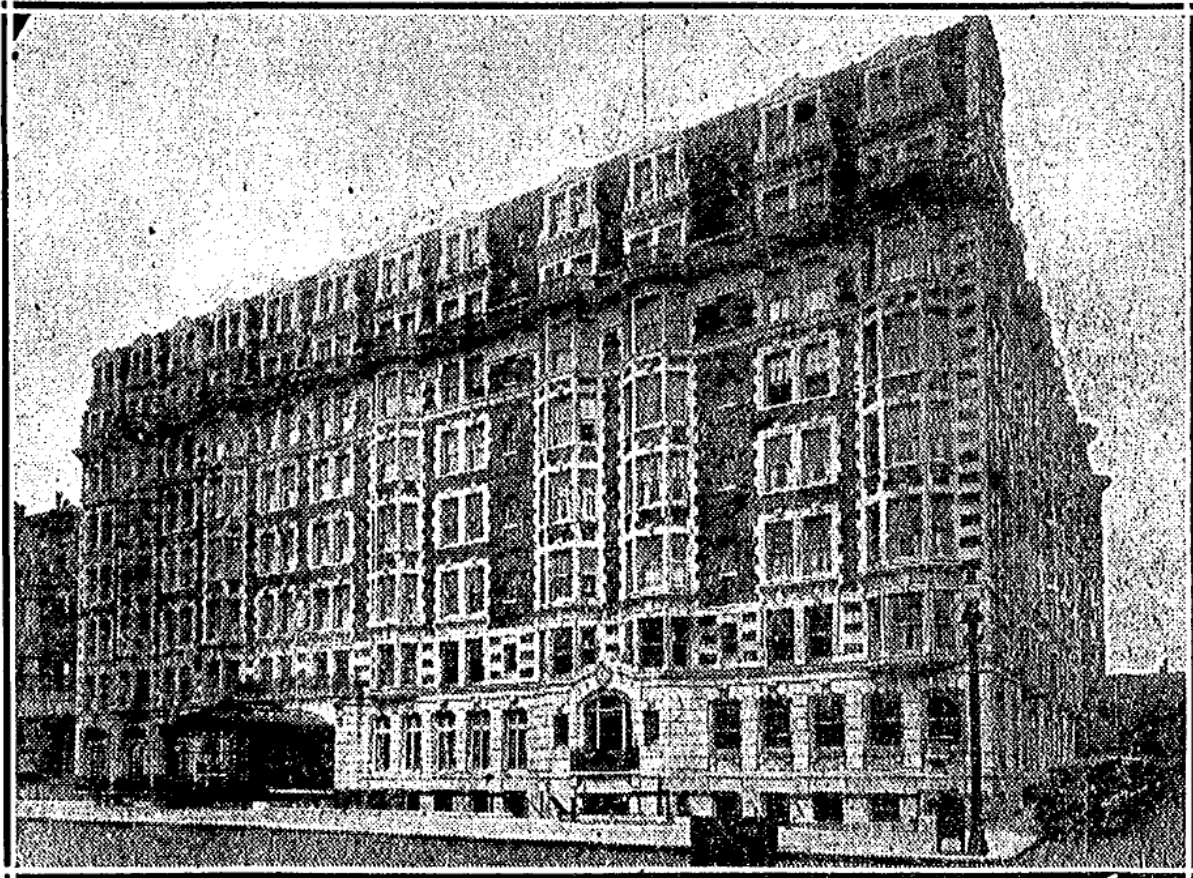
Hotel Kenmore (1916)



Figure 18 Kenmore Hotel Apartments 1915

In 1916 the “apartment hotel” known as Kenmore Hotel opened and was pitched as an “apartment hotel”, for long term tenants. It was located³³ at the corner of Kenmore Street and Commonwealth Ave. The building was originally planned to be placed at the corner of Kenmore and Newbury Streets, opposite the Hotel Wadsworth. While one postcard (above) originally called it the “Kenmore Apartments”, it was continually advertised as the “Hotel Kenmore”. The terms “hotel” and “apartment” were often used interchangeably.

³³ Advertisement, Hotel Kenmore, Boston Herald, Aug 13, 1916



HOTEL KENMORE, COMMONWEALTH AV.

Figure 19 Hotel Kenmore 1926

In 1925 the hotel acquired adjacent land, tore down the buildings and constructed an addition, doubling the size of the building. The addition provided 150 new rooms, a new dining room for 175, a new downstairs café for 275 and a new banquet hall for 400. Each room had ice-water taps and showers in each room. ³⁴ A controversy erupted when the Braemore-Kenmore Trust submitted plans for an 88 foot high building, 18 feet higher than provided by law for buildings on Commonwealth Avenue. The trust argued that the building was of a mansard style, common across the United States and was technically a roof. The trust eventually prevailed. In 1926, the hotel reopened, larger and grander than ever. At the same time, the hotel had acquired the Hotel Wadsworth, directly behind, adding a 3rd-floor walkway bridge to it. Wadsworth was used for long-term apartments.

³⁴ *Addition to Hotel Kenmore*, Boston Herald, Aug 9, 1925

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Figure 20 Beef 'n' Bird Restaurant, Hotel Kenmore

With 400 rooms, the Kenmore was one of the Boston's finest hotels boasting elegant accommodations and many guest services. In no time it soon became an important part of the local social scene. Some of the special guest room features included shampoo shower spray and circulating ice water, but what set it apart from the other hotels in the area was its special relationship with the Boston Red Sox. In the years prior to World War II, the owners went out of their way to cater to the business of professional baseball. Fenway Park was just three blocks away. They had the perfect location.

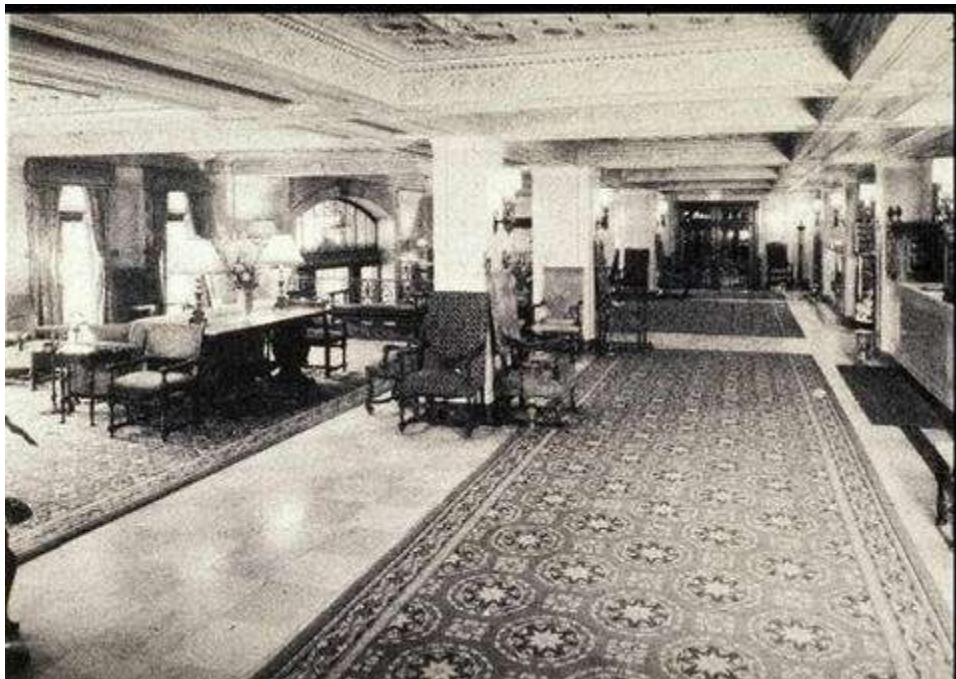


Figure 21 Hotel Kenmore Lobby, , Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

The Kenmore soon became Boston's baseball headquarters. At one time, just after the war and while the Braves still belonged to Boston, all 14 visiting ball clubs stayed at the

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Kenmore. Even the Red Sox made it their headquarters here when they returned from spring training, until the players could find private residences around the city. This made the Kenmore the only hotel in major league history that housed every visiting team. Its banquet and meeting facilities were also frequently used by team owners and management for business meetings.



Figure 22 A star pitcher for the Browns in his room at Hotel Kenmore, Circa 1951, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

Over the years, the Kenmore was the place where trades were made, managers hired and fired, friendships begun and feuds settled. It was also the scene of many post-game parties featuring countless sports celebrities of the day. Casey Stengel while manager for the Braves and later the Yankees would hold court for sportswriters and guests into the late hours. The hotel was actually an all-sports gathering place. The Gridiron Club held its dinners there; American Football League teams in town to play the Patriots stayed there; the college football writers held their weekly luncheons in its function rooms.



Figure 23 Hotel Kenmore, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

The Kenmore sports scene thrived throughout the fifties and early sixties, but by 1965, the building had started to show its age and the construction of large hotels like the Sheraton towers started to take away business from the Kenmore. In 1966, its last owners, the Sonesta Hotel chain decided to sell the property to the Cambridge School of Business, which had already been leasing space in the building for student housing. Renamed Kenmore Hall, the building became the main dormitory for Cambridge School and its successor, Grahm Junior College. When Grahm closed its doors in 1979, both properties were purchased by Boston University which converted both buildings into apartments for senior citizen and special needs housing in 1984. The former Hotel Kenmore is now called Kenmore Abbey, and Wadsworth returned to its original namesake.³⁵

³⁵ Matt Hasson, 2013

Peerless Motor Car Building, 660 Beacon Street (1910)



Figure 24 Peerless Motor Car Building, 1910

The Peerless Motor Car Company of New England signed a 20-year lease for this building in 1910. This was a six-story building, with 70,000 square feet of floor space, construction of red brick and limestone. A massive bronze and metal marquee was over the front entrance to the salesroom. Furniture was of mahogany and the building contained mahogany wainscoting. The salesroom contained chandeliers, and the furniture was covered with green upholstery. The cars entered and exited through a side street. General offices and stockroom were on the second floor. The third and fourth floor was used for automobile repair and overhauling. The fifth

floor was for making and repairing tops and contained a tinsmith and blacksmith departments. The sixth floor was exclusively for pining and finishing automobiles. The building contained four elevator systems.³⁶

³⁶ *Peerless Moves into New Home*, Boston Herald, Aug 14, 1910

Cities Service Oil Company Building, 660 Beacon Street (1940)



Figure 25 1940 Advertisement

Cities Service Oil Company opened their new headquarters at 660 Beacon Street on August 9, 1940, replacing Peerless Motor Car as tenant and renaming it the “Cities Service Building”. The first floor provided a “Super service station” and a salesroom for accessories. The second, third and fourth floor contained parking for 150 cars. The fifth and sixth floors were the headquarters offices.

The huge neon sign was constructed 110 feet above the roof and was lit for the first time on August 9, 1940. The original sign measured 90 by 75 feet. The sign was replaced with the present-day CITGO sign³⁷ in 1965. It used the extant steel frame. John C. Brink, owner of the sign-making firm claimed the sign was [at the time] the largest in New England. ³⁸ The sign was slated for demolition in 1979, but a grass roots preservationist movement saved it.

³⁷ <http://www.citgo.com/AboutCITGO/BostonSign.jsp>

³⁸ *New CITGO Emblem Lights Up Kenmore Square*, Boston Herald, Dec 16, 1965

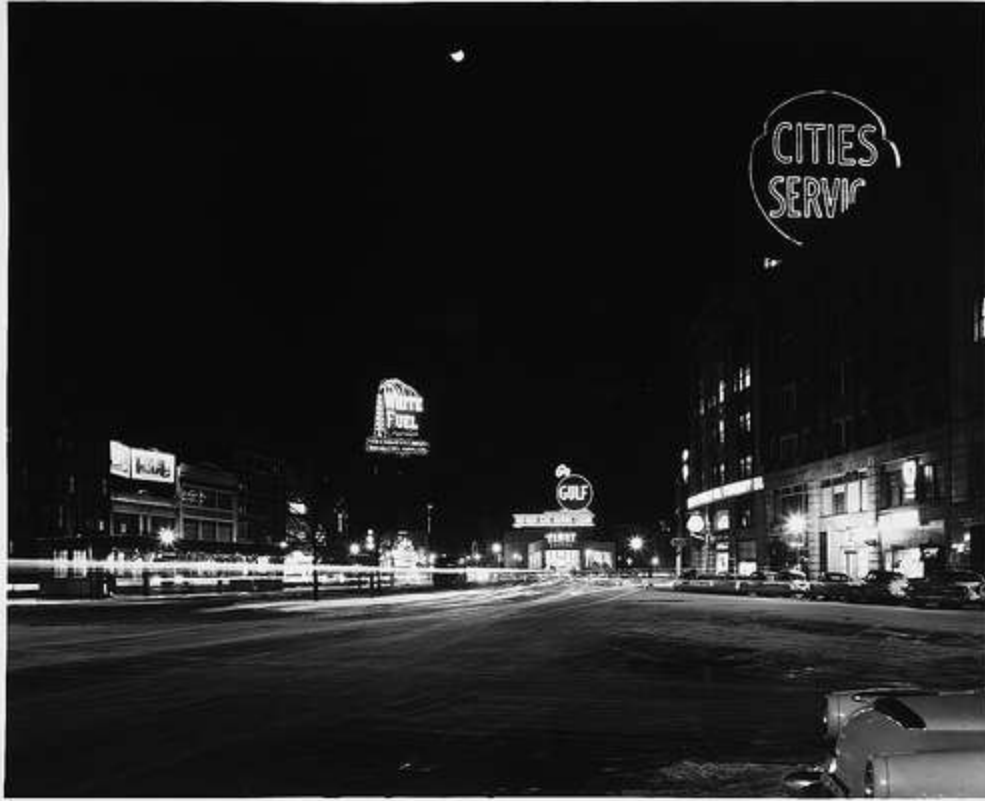


Figure 26 Kenmore Square circa 1956, (c) Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Attempts to sublet space in the building from 1960 to 1966 gained no takers. In 1966, Cities Service moved to a new headquarters alongside Route 128 in Braintree. The Ward School, a chain of business schools focusing on data processing leased one floor in 1966.³⁹ Ward remained in this building for only a couple of years, after which the Andover Business Institute (ABI) occupied some of the space.⁴⁰ Today the building houses a multi-floor Barnes and Noble bookstore and is owned by Boston University.

³⁹ *Ward School Here Expanding*, Boston Sunday Herald, May 22, 1966

⁴⁰ ABI was shut down in the early 1970's due to deceptive advertising practices.

White Fuel Sign (1939)



The Buckminster Hotel hosted the White Fuel Sign, constructed in 1939⁴¹ and demolished in 1982.⁴² During World War II the White Fuel Corporation agreed to change the animation of its sign atop 645 Beacon Street to support the purchase of U. S. Defense Bonds and Stamps. “The neon tubes were arranged to depict a dramatically soaring plane which dips in its flight to the top of the huge ‘V’ for Victory. The plane then appears to be skywriting its way through this symbol with brilliant illumination following its flight to the end of the letter. Having completed the “V” the plane then flies off into space as the words ‘Keep ‘em Flying’ appear in red neon. Then comes [sic] the climax of the presentation, ‘Buy U. S. Defense Bonds and Stamps’ which flashes on in gold neon across the entire base of the sign.”⁴³ The White Fuel Company opened a retail store across the square selling household appliances.

⁴¹ *Governor Lights Sign*, Aug 4, 1939, Boston Herald

⁴² Boston Globe, Mar 4, 1982

⁴³ *White Fuel’s Sign at Kenmore Sq. is Winged Plea for Defense Bonds*, Daily Boston Globe, Feb 26, 1942

Hotel Wadsworth (1901)



Figure 27 Hotel Wadsworth, 2013

The Hotel Wadsworth, 10 Kenmore Street at the corner of West Newbury was opened in 1901 as a residential apartment building. It was filled with long-term apartments, advertising 52 suites of 2-3 Bedrooms each with a bath, and long distance telephone. The dining room seated 100.⁴⁴

In connection with the Hotel Kenmore expansion of 1925, Wadsworth was acquired and used for long-term hotel apartments.

⁴⁴ Advertisement, Boston Herald, Apr 5, 1901

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In 1965, the Cambridge School purchased both the Hotel Kenmore Building and the Wadsworth buildings for use as dormitories.

The school used the Wadsworth for only a few years. It was shuttered by 1970. As a result of the school bankruptcy and subsequent foreclosure, the Wadsworth along with the Hotel Kenmore was sold to Boston University, which converted them to elderly and special-needs housing. The exterior of the building remains unchanged from its original construction.

Sheraton (Shelton) Apartment Hotel (1923)



Figure 28 The Sheraton, Advertisement, 1923

In 1923, a group of investors erected this eight story building at 91 Bay State Road, overlooking the Charles River. It contained 132 apartments (250 rooms in total), each arranged in suites of one and two rooms with a bath. This was one of the original holdings of the Sheraton Corporation after its post-war incorporation. In 1950 the building was sold to A.M. Sonnabend and renamed the *Shelton*. Sonnabend selected this name so as to make as few changes as possible. They even reused the monogrammed "S" towels. The only thing they could not change was the "Sheraton" etched in limestone over the entrance.

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Sonnabend owned eight hotels, including the Somerset and Puritan in Boston.⁴⁵ Ted Williams and Playwright Eugene O’Neill resided here as did Jeanette MacDonald, star of nearly 30 MGM films in the 1930’s.

Local radio station WBMS broadcast from a studio inside the hotel. Hosts include one of Boston’s first Afro-American radio personalities, Sabby Lewis. Mayor James Michael Curley ran a show offering commentary and reciting his own poetry.⁴⁶

As was the case with other hotels nearby, Boston University purchased the building in 1954 to be used as a women’s dormitory⁴⁷.

Boston University has written a comprehensive history of this building.
<http://www.bu.edu/bostonia/web/one-address-many-stories/>

⁴⁵ Sheraton Hotel Sold to AM Sonnabend renamed Shelton, Daily Boston Globe, Aug 18 1950

⁴⁶ One Address, Many Stories, Patrick L. Kennedy, BU Today

⁴⁷ BU buys Shelton Hotel for Coed Dorm, Boston Herald, Jun 23, 1954

Hotel Braemore (1917)



Figure 29 The Braemore, Early Advertisement

The Braemore, located at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Charlesgate West, was constructed during World War I, as a luxury apartment hotel. The Braemore had its series of misfortunes, including a suicide, two falls to death, a fire and the president of Converse Rubber who vanished while hunting in the Maine woods. On the positive side, a young doorman was gifted \$300,000 by a wealthy New York woman as reward and encouragement for his hard work and honesty.

Hotel Somerset (1899)

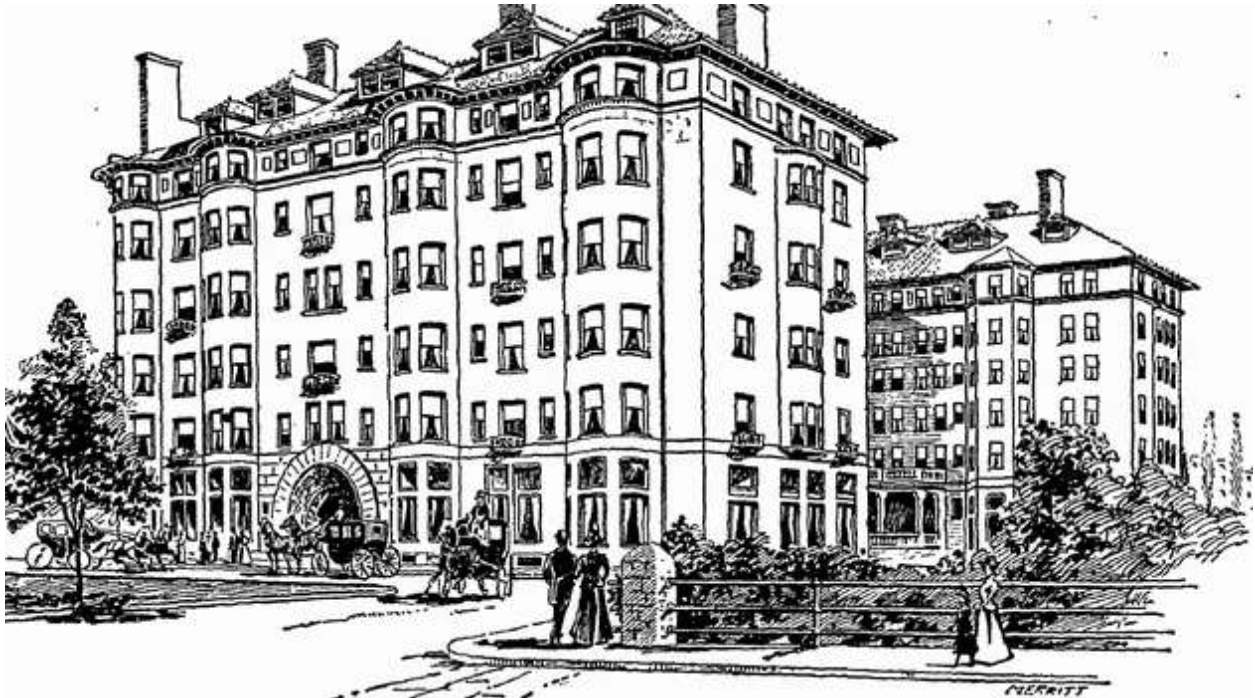


Figure 30 Hotel Somerset, original publicity

Located across from the Braemore, on the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Charlesgate East, this was arguably the largest and most elegant city hotel of its time. 6 stories high and at its opening contained 30,000 square feet in of space, a large courtyard and 250 rooms. It was designed for both permanent and transient guests. Electricity was run throughout the building, superior to and safer than gas. The maids lived on the top floor. The wood above the first floor is sycamore. Its corridor was reproduced from the Palace of Versailles, the grand staircase was of marble and gold and the popular Palm Room for breakfast and Dutch rooms with Flemish wainscoting. The main dining room was furnished in the Jacobean period and contained massive mahogany beams, 30 inches deep. It contained a library decorated in the Elizabethan period, finished in mahogany. It also contained a ballroom and ladies parlor.⁴⁸

It attracted important visitors, including Kaiser Prince Henry of Prussia in 1902.⁴⁹

The Somerset annexed the adjacent Hotel Puritan on Commonwealth Avenue in 1952, which greatly increased its capacity.

⁴⁸ *One of the Worlds Magnificent Hotels*, Boston Daily Globe, Mar 1, 1899

⁴⁹ *Apartments fit for the Kaiser*, Boston Daily Globe, Mar 2, 1902

Myles Standish Hotel (1925)



Figure 31 Myles Standish Hotel, Courtesy of the Boston Public Library, Leslie Jones Collection

This nine-story apartment hotel was built in 1925. It is located at the junction of Bay State Road and Beacon Street. It originally contained 225 suites, on 20,808 feet of land. The exterior bottom two stories were made of limestone and the upper floors of brick. As was the case throughout the city, it was constructed to be fireproof.

In 1949, the Myles Standish was the first in a series of hotels to be sold to college concerns. Boston University purchased the building and converted it into a men's dormitory.

Hotel Charlesview (1912)

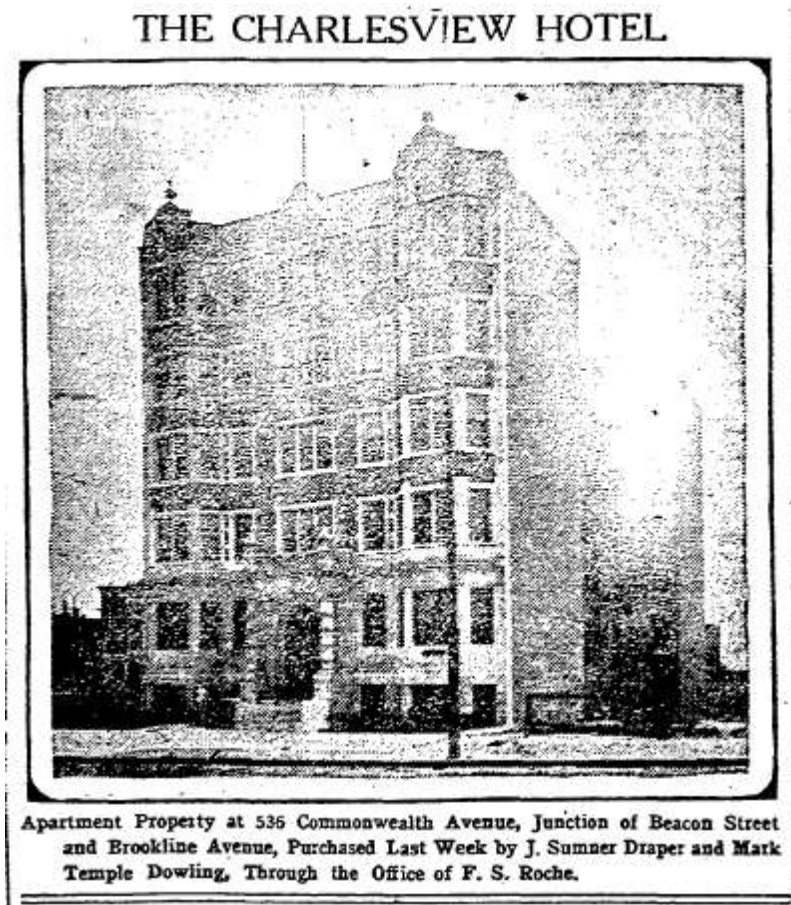


Figure 32 Charlesview Hotel, 1912

The Hotel Charlesview (536 Commonwealth Avenue) was another building on the south side of the square. Beginning in 1900, it was marketed to doctors, dentists, hospital executives and surgeons as long-term residence. Tenants often lived there for decades, some into the 1970's. The Charlesview building remains today.



Figure 33 Hotel Charlesview, 2013. When first constructed, it was designated street number 536. Say “hello” to Walter, the Graham Junior College Mascot!

Waterman’s (circa 1900)

No history of the square would be complete without mention of Waterman’s Funeral Chapel. Located in a distinctive triangular shape, at the easterly intersection of Beacon St. and Commonwealth Avenue, the building appears in seemingly every photograph of the square. In 1921, new buildings were acquired at 493, 495 and 497 (1925) Commonwealth Avenue, Kenmore Square, Boston. The firm had previously been located on Washington Street in Roxbury. It was

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founded in 1832. JS Waterman assumed ownership in 1857.⁵⁰ The location was previously the private residence of an affluent stockbroker.

In September 1990, the Son-Waring-Langone Funeral Home and Waterman's merged. In 1996, the giant funeral home operator Service Corporation International of Houston purchased the 17 funeral homes of Waterman's and Waring-Langone. Waterman's was relocated to Boston's North End.

Adjacent to the Waterman's corner lot, several residences along Commonwealth Avenue were constructed from 1892 to 1899. In the row was a medical office building. The row was bookended at the corner of Charlesgate West by a mansion owned by an extremely wealthy businessman. His estate was valued at several million dollars at his death in 1900, an enormous amount of money for the time.

Part III Decline

The post-war 1940's and 1950's took their toll on the square as residents moved to the suburbs. Hotels began to lose customers and Myles Standish hotel quickly unloaded it to Boston University in 1949.⁵¹

The 1960's were particularly cruel to the square, with professionals and businesses following their customers to the suburbs. Commercial vacancies rose and crime soon followed. The neighboring students wanted to hear loud music and eat fast food. The merchants of the square responded.

A good example of this decay is to examine number 520 Commonwealth Ave, on the south side of the square, which stood where the Commonwealth Hotel is today. Originally opened as a professional medical building in 1928, the building was filled with physicians, surgeons and dentists. After the war, the number of doctors practicing in this building dribbled off to a hardy few. Beginning in 1965 the building was burglarized; it experienced an armed robbery, assault and battery crimes. A policeman had been shot on Kenmore Street and another officer was shot inside the Shawmut bank and the adjacent jewelry store had been robbed.

Another example was the upscale "Hotel Charlesview" at 536 Commonwealth. Opened in 1912, this 20-apartment building had catered to professionals. By 1950, the building had some of the lowest rents in the area, attracting drifters, fortune tellers, a cleaners and a bridal gown salon. By the late 1960's, its occupants were being arrested on drug charges. A few holdout tenants from better times were all that remained.

Graham Junior College (successor to the Cambridge School)

In 1966, the Cambridge School became the dominant property owner in the square, purchasing four of the largest buildings in the square, including three of the four hotels. It purchased the Lumberman's Mutual Fire Insurance building (645 Beacon), Hotel Kenmore (490 Commonwealth), Wadsworth Hotel (10 Kenmore St.) and the Hotel St. George (645 Beacon Street). Kenmore Street

⁵⁰ *Open Office in Back Bay*, Boston Herald, Nov 22, 1925

⁵¹ *B. U. to Take Over Myles Standish Hotel for Dorm*, Daily Boston Globe, Feb 5, 1949

had even been renamed to “Grahm Street.” The civic associations were alarmed, feeling blindsided by the rapidity in which Grahm grabbed up buildings.

Nearby, the Sherry Biltmore Hotel (146 Mass. Ave) had been acquired by Bryant and Stratton School. B. U. acquired Charlesgate West, the Fensgate Hotel (73 Hemmingway) went to Chandler, and the Hotel Bostonian (1138 Boylston St.) to the Berklee School of Music.⁵² It wasn’t long before neighbors and civic organizations began to complain about the pervasive student presence. “Kenmore [Square] or should it be now called “Dormitory [Square]” so the newspaper article read. The neighbors argued that the students and transient residents left the area without a soul.

When the school began to struggle in 1977, the Red Sox and Boston University revealed a \$20 to \$50 million plan to rehabilitate the square. It would provide more parking for the Red Sox, more housing, hotel and office space and a general upgrade to the area. It would include a large apartment building over the Mass Turnpike, a seven story commercial building on Commonwealth Avenue near the Howard Johnson’s Motor Inn, and conversion of the Grahm buildings into street-level retail and housing.

With the Vietnam War, social unrest and high inflation many businesses and individuals voted with their feet. Urban renewal in Scollay square attracted many businesses to the new “Government Center”, leaving vacancies throughout the area. Community college competition struck hard at two year schools. Within 10 years, 30 of the 40 two-year schools were no longer operating. Many of these schools were in the Back Bay near Kenmore Square. The good news for the civic groups was that students began to vacate the area. The bad news was that this put a lot of real estate on the market.

Boston University

Immediately following World War 2, seeking to integrate its campus, Boston University acquired dozens of automotive retail buildings, hotels, Braves Field, 35 acres of land and an investment of \$60 million [in 1963 dollars] all along Commonwealth Avenue, west of the square. Daniel Weisberg, an assistant Professor of Real Estate, systematically acquired real estate beginning in 1949. It was Weisberg who suggested the purchase of the Myles Standish for use a men’s dormitory as he drove past it with then-BU president Daniel Marsh while returning from the airport one night. Within two weeks the hotel had been purchased. Other buildings BU purchased included the Sheraton (Shelton) Hotel on Bay State Road, General Tire (950 Commonwealth), Howard Johnson’s (793), General Electric (700), Jones McDuffee (853) and Noyes Buick(835).⁵³

Rathskeller (528 Commonwealth)

While the Kenmore Club complex of three night clubs (of ever-changing names) dominated the scene in the 70’s and 80s, the most infamous of all bars in the square was the Rathskeller. The “Rat” opened in 1974. Over time it transformed itself into a gritty, dingy, dark punk rock bar, where fights could often be seen rolling out into the streets. Names included Kenmore Club, Narcissus, Lucifer, Kkk katys, Lipstick and Celebration and others.

⁵² *Kenmore Square Area Slowly becoming a Dormitory Square*, Boston Globe, Dec 4, 1966

⁵³ *How One Man Pieced Together B. U. Acreage*, Boston Globe, Jul 21 1963



Figure 34 The facade of the Rathskeller belies what's inside



Figure 35 Rathskeller Bathroom Art



Figure 36 Rathskeller Interior

Drugs, Crime and Scientology

As early as the late 60's crime began to grow. Colleges which once had prided themselves with an open environment were forced to step up security. Boston University suffered dozens of burglaries. In 1972 a Graham Jr. College student was shot in the shoulder while looking out his apartment building one night. Simmons, an all-female college instituted security escorts for students to get back and forth to class. It wasn't limited to the Fenway. Problems arose all over the area, including Tufts, Harvard, Radcliffe and Emerson.

Being in the square, Graham Junior College took the unusual yet necessary step of putting round-the-clock security for all four of the school's buildings. Paul Clausmeyer, manager of facilities noted, "Last year our force was about 30% lower. But this area is becoming a second combat zone. If we didn't tighten up our security, the incidence of crime would have increased over last year's. We know we can never eliminate it, but we feel we can control it."⁵⁴ In the fall of that year, a Graham student witnessed the shooting of a policeman outside his dormitory. The policeman was pursuing an individual who had just robbed a Brigham's ice cream shop, just around the corner.

The Hotel Buckminster, having been previously used as a Graham dormitory (Leavitt Hall), was purchased by a private concern in 1977 as Graham worked to shed assets. It operated until 2002 as a rooming house. The Hotel attracted low-income residents and transients. In 1985 the hotel was only 2/3 occupied. This was a further blow to the stability of the square.

⁵⁴ *Growing Problem for Boston's Colleges*, Herald Traveler and Boston Record American, Nov 15, 1972.

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When Gram Junior College went bankrupt in 1979, Boston University was quick to purchase the buildings, 632 Beacon Street, and its dormitories Kenmore and Wadsworth Halls. The buildings remained vacant for some time after their purchase. BU rehabbed these buildings into subsidized housing for the elderly and disabled in 1984. This was the university's first step towards cleaning up the square.

Drugs and crime became rampant in the square. In the early 80's there were arrests for handgun possession, shootings, armed robberies and homicides including one inside a night club. A for-profit methadone clinic⁵⁵ on Beacon Street opened in 1986. It reportedly had 700 patients. Even Steven Tyler of Aerosmith was treated there.⁵⁶ The Salvation Army ran a detox home for alcoholics and homeless⁵⁷ on Brookline Avenue. It was asserted that the clinic and home attracted even more criminal elements to the area.

Dormitories near and in the square became a target for frequent burglaries, shoplifting, purse-snatching, and handgun possession. A masseuse and a fortune teller had also taken up shop in the square. Hare Krishna, Scientology, alcoholics and panhandlers plied the street, pushing themselves onto passersby. Homeless individuals lived in cardboard boxes under the Charlesgate bridges.

To make matters worse, organized crime was on the doorstep. James "Whitey" Bulger reported in 1979 that Stephen "The Rifleman" Flemmi was so incensed about a beating his daughter suffered at a nightclub in Kenmore Square he "may whack out" the owner and burn down the club. The club was not named."⁵⁸

Boston University had long regarded Kenmore Square as an extension of its campus. It was no secret that BU held nightclub owner Henry Vara in disdain. BU President John Silber said later that he bought buildings in the square so he could "Clean up the bars and get the horrendous influence of Henry Vara out of Kenmore Square."⁵⁹ Vara owned Narcissus, Lipstick and Celebration, all at 533 Commonwealth Avenue, on the north side of the square. The Boston Police had tied Vara to other illicit activities in other areas in the city.

By the mid 80s, rapes and assaults were at an all-time high. In 1986 alone there was a homicide, six rapes, 78 robberies and 50 aggravated assault arrests.⁶⁰ The square was the scene of a liquor store shootout, the shooting of a police officer and a student.

BU felt that the bars posed the largest safety issue, attracting even more criminals. The BU 10-year real estate plan included closing the nightclubs. BU purchased the Vara nightclubs in 1987. BU

⁵⁵ Operates as the Habit Management Institute, 648 Beacon St., 6th floor. Ref: Narcotic Treatment Programs Directory, US FDA, DHHS

⁵⁶ *Does the Noise In My Head Bother You? A Rock 'n' Roll Memoir* by Steven Tyler, Harper Collins, 2011

⁵⁷ 61 Brookline Avenue – re: Soldiers of Salvation, Christina Robb, Boston Globe, Dec 9 1984

⁵⁸ Boston Globe, Jul 19, 1998

⁵⁹ *BU, bar owner Kenmore Partners*, Boston Herald, Aug 25, 1989

⁶⁰ Boston Police crime statistics, issued 1987.

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wanted the clubs so badly that it greatly outbid the London-based Hard Rock Café.⁶¹ At the same time, BU acquired the 535-541 Commonwealth Avenue buildings adjacent to the clubs.⁶²

The university continued its acquisition of Kenmore Square real estate with the purchase the vast majority of buildings on the south side of Commonwealth Avenue (508-510), including six retail and residential buildings in 1987.

While BU gobbled up property in the square, what it would do with them was not a foregone conclusion. The Boston Redevelopment Authority and neighborhood groups insisted they participate in those decisions. The group's number one priority was to see more residential housing in the area and shutting down the clubs. They argued this would be the best way to fight crime in the square.

1990's – The tidal basin slowly turns

Things reached the lowest point in 1996 when pushers were selling heroin in Kenmore Square and prostitution had made inroads. It was also a turning point. The methadone clinic was ushered out. In 1997 BU purchased the Rathskeller night club and shut it down.

BU had originally planned to replace the three bars with a single, more upscale nightclub, but it was met with such opposition that BU dropped the idea quickly. Ultimately the bars were replaced with a Bertucci's pizza restaurant.

Boston Police also started to get a handle on the problem. By 1999 Boston police indicated that crime in the square had been steadily dropping. Police, residents and those who worked in the square were all in agreement that removing the nightclubs made the difference.⁶³

The Hotel Buckminster was entirely renovated into an upscale operation in 2002.⁶⁴ This too began to change the makeup of the visitors to the square.

The improvements in the square lingered for a few years of the 1990's. The clubs had been shut down, the trouble makers and addicts no longer had reason to visit, and there was an expectation that the largest development project in 100 years would entirely transform the square. But that would have to wait until 2004.

⁶¹ *Creeping Kenmore*, Jul 2, 1987, Boston Globe

⁶² *BU Wins Approval to Buy Kenmore Sq. Buildings*, Aug 14, 1987.

⁶³ Boston Globe, Mar 8, 1999

⁶⁴ *Back to the Future Place where Ruth lived moving towards past prestige.*, Boston Globe, Feb 3, 2002

Part IV: New Development & the Future

Hotel Commonwealth (2003)

Over two decades, BU's opportunistically purchased buildings in the square. With the 516 to 532 Commonwealth Avenue block of buildings, BU jointly partnered with a Great Bay Holdings to construct the 150-room Hotel Commonwealth.

The original plan was for a sensitive restoration of the existing five-story buildings, retain the facades, and "bookend" the old fronts with new construction. But the city didn't like that plan. The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) noted that the formerly residential/office row houses had been altered beyond recognition by their contemporary retail and office uses.⁶⁵ Most of the block was eventually demolished in 2001."⁶⁶

The city relocated the MBTA entrance into the façade of the hotel. As part of the joint revitalization with the city, the bus terminal was redesigned⁶⁷. The bus terminal took an astronomical five years to replace.

The hotel, along with its high-end restaurants and street level shopping opened in 2004. Both the neighborhood association and the Boston Redevelopment Authority objected to the exterior design. They argued that the building did not architecturally fit. It cited exterior panels that looked like plastic, cutouts that pose as dormers, and colors appear to "glow." In the end, the developers spent \$1.9M for changes, which included precast concrete on the lower floor to look like limestone, the pointed window frames became dormer connected to the mansard roof. BU agreed to fund relocation of the MBTA entrances.⁶⁸

BU's intention was never to own any property long term. The plan was to improve the area, then move on. In December of 2012, Denver-based Sage Hospitality purchased the hotel from BU for \$79M.⁶⁹ BU did however, retain land ownership. They felt this would be the best way to control future events in the square.

⁶⁵ *Missed Opportunity*, *Traditional Building* magazine, February, 2007

⁶⁶ *RENEWING KENMORE HOTEL'S BLEND OF TECH, TRADITION SEEN HELPING TO REVITALIZE SQUARE*. Boston Globe, Jan 3, 2003

⁶⁷ *European-Style hotel planned for Kenmore Square*, B. U. Bridge, Feb 5, 1999

⁶⁸ *Hotel Commonwealth Developers acknowledge substituting cheaper materials: City requires \$1.9M Makeover of Exterior*. Boston Globe, 2003

⁶⁹ *BU Scores with hotel sale*, Boston Herald, Dec 19, 2012

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Figure 37 Hotel Commonwealth, Original Design



Figure 38 Hotel Commonwealth, as constructed

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Figure 39 Commonwealth Ave, South Side, 2011



Figure 40 Commonwealth Ave, South Side, 1971

Today, real estate demand around Kenmore Square has accelerated to the point that dozens of new building projects can be found from Boylston St., to the Longwood Medical area to Boston

University. Hundreds of new housing units have been constructed in the last five years on Boylston Street, south of Fenway Park.

Fenway Center (proposed)



Figure 41 "Fenway Center" 2013, showing Beacon Street in the foreground, Courtesy Fenway Center

In 2012 the \$500M, 1.3M square foot "Fenway Center"⁷⁰ proposal to build over the Massachusetts turnpike was dusted off. It passed its final hurdle at this writing, June 20, 2013. This proposal includes construction immediately behind the Hotel Buckminster, a transportation/commuter rail center, mixed use commercial and residential components.

⁷⁰ <http://fenwaycenter.com/>

Still a Gateway?

The period from 1890 to 1930 was one of unprecedented growth for the square. What started as vacant land quickly rose to a high level of sophistication and charm.

Post-war social change took the “American Dream” to the suburbs leaving Kenmore Square devoid of families, doctors, professionals and businesses. These voids were filled by short-term residents; students, the homeless, and transients. The old hotels couldn’t match the service and accoutrements of the modern hotels downtown. Crime became uncontrollable; that reputation is hard to shake.

With a new hotel in the 2000’s, additional residential space, departure of the clubs and large development looming nearby, the square is positioned for a the first large scale improvement in 100 years.

So who’s “gateway” is Kenmore Square anyways? A gateway to the city, or a gateway to BU? Perhaps it’s both.

“Nobody goes there anymore. It’s too crowded” – Yogi Berra

APPENDIX I – A Concise Timeline

- 1891 Underground electrification of the Square begins
- 1891 Residential construction begins in the surrounding neighborhood, as soon as the lands are filled in.
- 1895 Kenmore Street was adopted by the city as an official “highway”
- 1899 Hotel Buckminster opens
- 1899 Hotel Somerset
- 1901 Wadsworth Hotel (10 Kenmore Street)
- 1910 Officially named “Governor Square”
- 1910 Peerless Motor Car Building
- 1912 Hotel Charlesview
- 1912 Fenway Park
- 1914 Boylston Street Subway (Boston Garden to Governor Square) opened
- 1915 Braves Field
- 1916 Kenmore Apartments
- 1917 Hotel Braemore
- 1923 Sheraton (Shelton) Apartments
- 1925 Myles Standish Hotel
- 1930 Mass transit subway submerged under Kenmore Square
- 1930 Renamed “Kenmore Square”
- 1930 Cities Service occupies the Peerless Motor Car building and renames it.
- 1939 White Fuel sign erected
- 1940 Peerless building renamed to Cities Services building, sign placed on roof

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- 1949 BU purchases Myles Standish
- 1950 First section of Storrow Drive is opened.
- 1952 Bridge over the Muddy River connecting the Fens with Storrow Drive is opened
- 1965 Cities Services sign replaced with new CITGO graphic
- 1966 Gram Junior College purchases the former hotels Kenmore, Buckminster & Wadsworth and 632 Beacon.
- 1979 BU purchases the former hotels Kenmore and Wadsworth, transforms it into housing
- 1979 BU purchases 632 Beacon St.
- 1984 Kenmore Abbey housing opened
- 1982 BU begins to purchase properties on the south side of the square, Comm Ave.
- 1983 BU purchases 660 Beacon St.(Peerless) and converts it into a 6-story bookstore in 1985
- 1986 Methadone clinic begins operation
- 1987 BU Purchases 533-541 Commonwealth Ave.⁷¹
- 1987 BU Purchases 508-510 Commonwealth Ave.
- 1989 BU begins eviction proceedings on Narcissus, Celebration and Lipstick night clubs (533-541)
- 1992 BU purchases 575 Commonwealth, site of Howard Johnson's. At this point, BU owned 24 separate parcels in and around the square.
- 1996 Methadone clinic ceases operation
- 1997 BU purchases Comm ave building housing the Rathskellar and shuts it down in Nov.
- 2003 Hotel Commonwealth opens (500-528 Commonwealth)⁷²
- 2012 BU sells Hotel Commonwealth, but retains land ownership of 500-528 Commonwealth

⁷¹ Suffolk County Land Records, Boston, Mass.

⁷² Construction Lease Mortgage – University Inn, LLC, June 14 2001

APPENDIX II – Locator Map

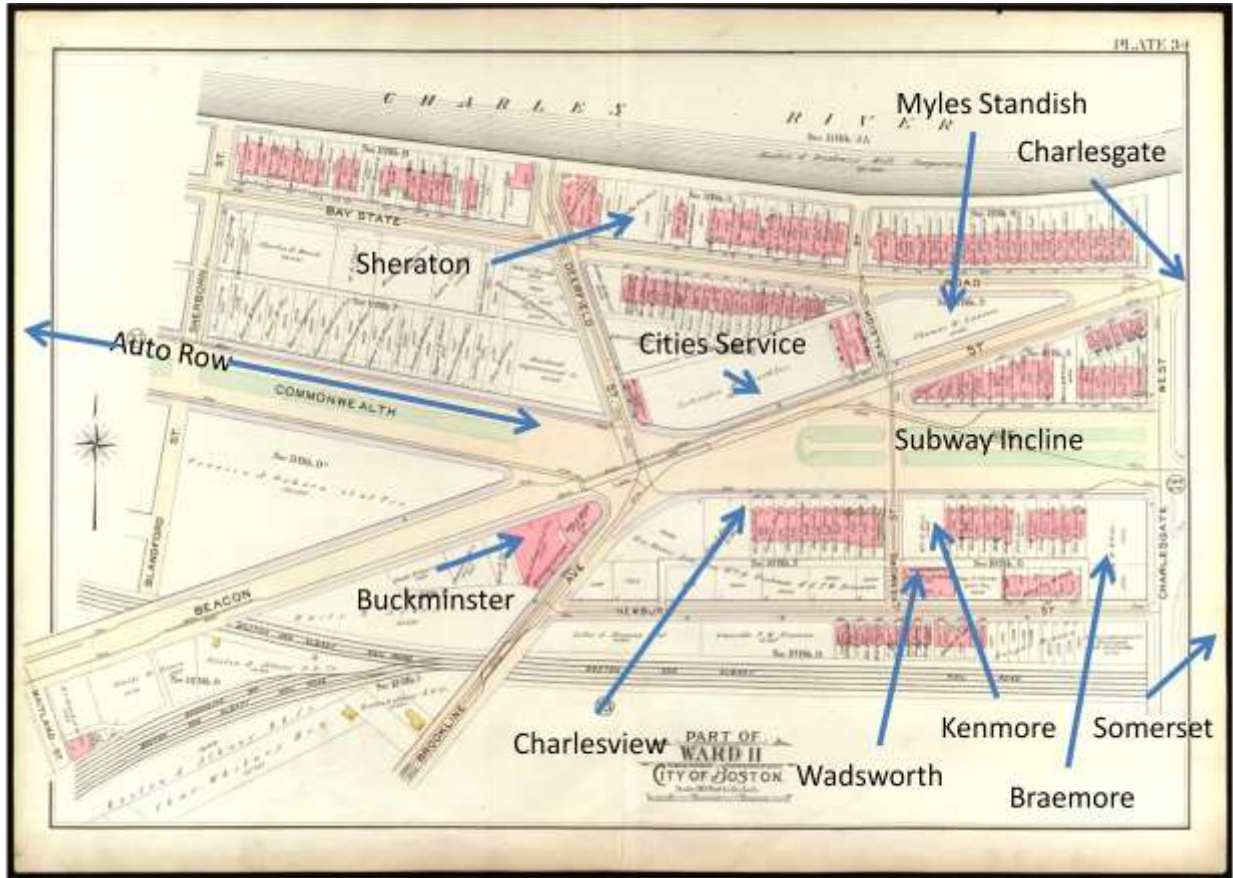


Figure 42 Locator Map, Based on Boston Ward Map, 1912

APPENDIX III – Development of the Back Bay

From the Massachusetts Historical Society

“This map by Benjamin Dearborn (1754-1838) is a proposal to construct what he called "Perpetual Tide Mills" across the Back Bay and South Bay in Boston. The plan details water and marshland as well as streets and roads of Boston, Roxbury, Brookline, Charlestown, Cambridge, Brighton, and Dorchester. Dearborn's map, which introduces an extensive series of canals, dams, and toll roads, is a variation on a previously proposed Mill Dam project. Creating a Mill Dam and road across the Back Bay came on the heels of the successful Mill Pond project near Boston's North End.



Figure 43 A Plan of those Parts of Boston and the Towns in its Vicinity: with the Waters and Flats Adjacent 1814 , Benjamin Dearborn⁷³

The aim of the Mill Dam was to use the tides of the Charles River to power mills for industrial purposes. Additionally, the Dam would serve as a toll road. In the end, Dearborn's plan was not realized and a much simpler Mill Dam was built by 1821. Eventually, this project failed in part because of sewage and wastewater build-up in the tidal basins. This build-up caused unpleasant smells that drifted all over the city. As a result, in May 1855, the Back Bay began to be filled in and developed. ⁷⁴

⁷³ Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society”, 2013

⁷⁴ “Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society”, 2013

Kenmore Square – Gateway to the City



Figure 44 Boston, 1838, the Mill Dam, now Called Western Avenue⁷⁵



Figure 45 Boston, 1852 Back Bay, Then called "Rail Road Basin", with traversing railroad lines⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society", 2013

⁷⁶ Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society", 2013

Kenmore Square – Gateway to the City



Figure 46 City plan to fill in Bay - Dotted lines are proposed. 1874⁷⁷

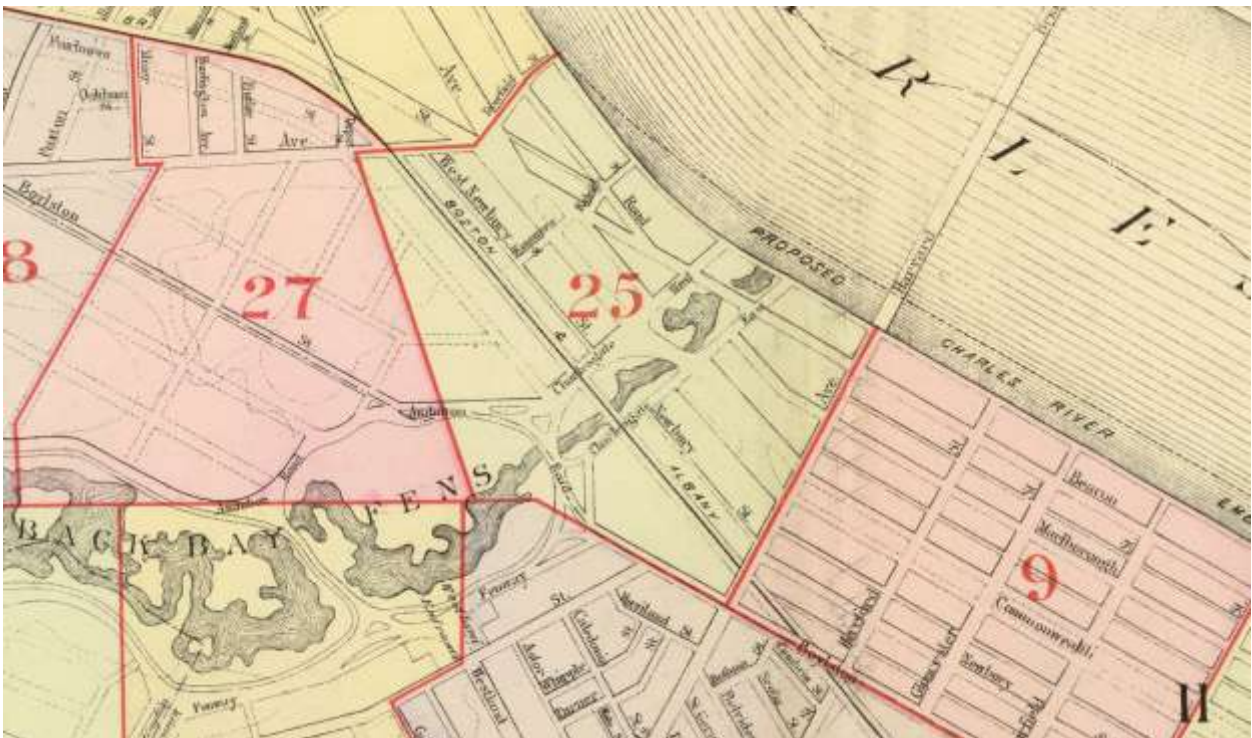


Figure 47 1895, David Ramsey Collection – Boston, Established streets and roads ⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society”, 2013

⁷⁸ Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society”, 2013

