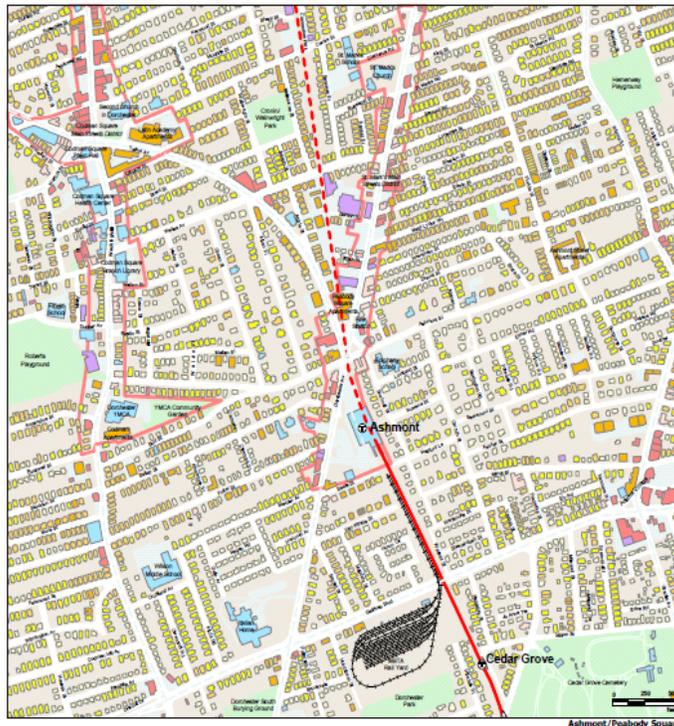


## St. Marks Area (Ashmont/Peabody Square), Dorchester



### Ashmont/Peabody Square Dorchester

- Legend
- 1 Family Residential
  - 2 Family Residential
  - 3 Family Residential
  - Apartments/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
  - Water Transit Routes
  - Bus Routes



### Introduction to District

St. Mark's Main Street District spans a mile-long section of Dorchester Avenue starting from Peabody Square and running north to St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church campus. The district includes the residential and commercial areas surrounding those two nodes.

The area, once rural farmland, began to develop after the Old Colony railroad established a station here in the 1870s. Subsequent trolley service and later electrified train lines, now the MBTA's red line, transformed the neighborhood district into first a "Railroad Suburb" and then a "Streetcar Suburb." Parts of the area are characterized as "Garden Districts" in recognition of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century English-inspired development of suburban districts, which included spacious single-family houses built on large lots and the commercial district at Peabody Square. Other areas reflect Boston's general urban growth in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with densely clustered multi-family housing, including Dorchester's famous three-deckers, found on the streets surrounding St. Mark's Church.

The district, particularly in Peabody Square, features many late 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings, including the landmark All Saints' Episcopal Church, the Peabody Apartments, a fire station, and a distinctive market building. These surround a small urban park with a monument street clock. The St. Mark's campus, established a few decades later, mostly in the 1910s and 1920s, is a

## **Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**

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collection of ecclesiastical buildings set upon a large, airy parcel. The commercial buildings between the two nodes are a mixture of late 19th-century, three-story mixed use buildings and one story multi-storefront buildings constructed in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Housing from a variety of eras can be found throughout the district.

### **District Layout and Boundaries**

The St. Mark's Area Main Street District runs along a linear stretch of Dorchester Avenue between the village-like Peabody Square to the south and the large St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church campus area to the north. Dorchester Avenue, a main thoroughfare that runs generally north/south, is the backbone of the district, with Melville Avenue (north) and Mercier Avenue (south) acting as the technical boundaries of the mile-long district. To the north, the district runs into the Fields Corner commercial district (and Main Street district). To the south, it runs into the Lower Mills neighborhood and the Milton line. The district is surrounded by unique residential neighborhoods on either side of Dorchester Avenue on Ashmont Hill and Carruth Hill.

The St. Mark's area is about five miles south of downtown Boston. It is generally accessed by Dorchester Avenue via automobile/bus and is in close proximity to the Southeast Expressway (Route 93). Ashmont is home to the terminus of the MBTA Red Line and serves as a major bus hub. The Mattapan Trolley extension begins at the Ashmont Station.

### **Historic Narrative of St. Mark's and Peabody Square**

#### **17<sup>th</sup> Century Farmland draws few settlers**

Ashmont\*<sup>1</sup> during the 17th century was part of the largely uninhabited Great Lots that occupied the vast section of Dorchester south of Meeting House Hill. Families such as the Pierces, Minots and Tolmans were among the few to settle in this area of pasture, forest and marsh land and their houses were located in the Neponset section, just south of Ashmont and Carruth Hills.

Although Dorchester Avenue was laid out as a toll road in 1804, the Ashmont area remained generally uninhabited until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite the drastically improved transportation route.



Photograph of the 1874 Ashmont train station

#### **Development comes slowly in the 1800s**

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\* For the purposes of the historical narrative, Peabody Square/St. Mark's area is referred to as "Ashmont."

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In 1844, the Old Colony Railroad was set out linking Boston with Plymouth. Its route through Dorchester was too far to the east of Ashmont to have a significant impact on its residential development. However, the railroad's president, Nathan Carruth moved to the area in 1847, building a Luther-Briggs designed mansion, which has since been demolished.

Ashmont Street, one of the more significant streets to cross Dorchester Avenue in this section, was laid out in 1849 per Nathan Carruth's influential lobbying. Historians have variously referred to this area as "Ashmont", "Beechmont" and "Beaumont."

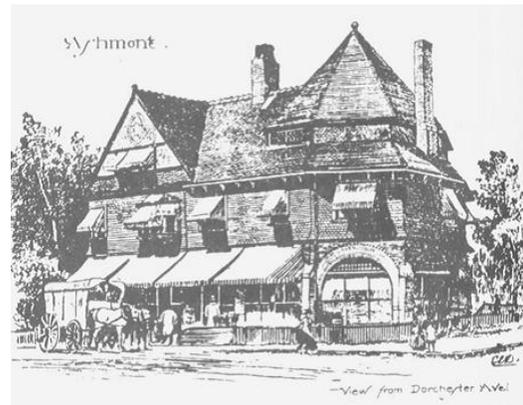
In 1854, Dorchester Avenue was made into a free street (meaning that it was no longer a toll road). Horse drawn streetcars were brought into service three years later. More than a decade after that, in 1870, a branch of the Old Colony Railroad was set out through the Peabody Square area, which had remained largely undeveloped up to that point. The economic development benefits were delayed by several years due to an economic depression in the early 1870s.

### The Building Boom Arrives

In the 1880s and 1890s, Herbert Shaw Carruth, son of Nathan, deliberately developed Carruth's Hill into the suburban neighborhood as it appears today, hiring architect Luther Briggs, Jr. to survey the estate for streets and house lots. The final two decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the first wave of stylish and ample homes being built on both Ashmont and Carruth hills as well as the first substantial commercial buildings in Peabody Square. This building boom lasted well into the early 1910s.

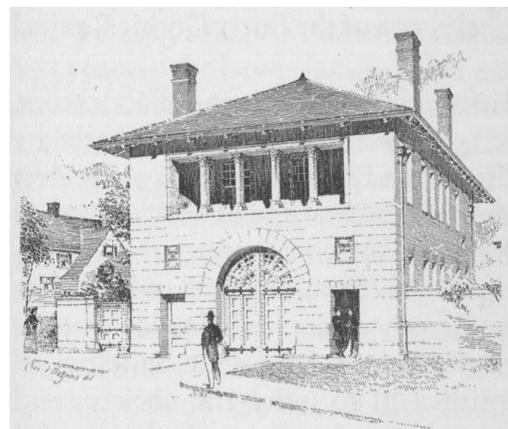
It was during this time that Peabody Square was developed as an emerging commercial district to support the growing residential population, with the establishment of a railroad station, a market, a hall, stables, a grand church and a fire station. Much of the development in the area at this time reflected the City Beautiful and the Garden City movements from England that were meant to provide residents with well-designed suburban towns that included parks, attractive but dense housing, and were accessible to pre-destined work zones via train.

The Ashmont Railroad station, constructed in 1870, was located on the northern edge of the square. In



Sketch of the market building in Peabody Square (above)

Sketch of the Peabody Square Fire House (below)



## **Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**

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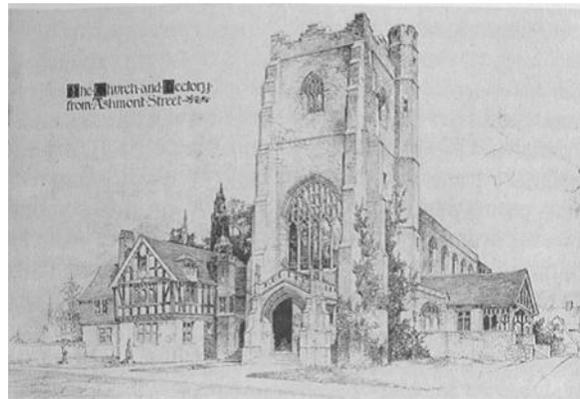
1884, the first real commercial entity was developed in the square- the market building on the corner of Dorchester Avenue and Ashmont Street. Now referred to as O'Brien's Market, the building was built by men named Jacques and Griffin, who operated the store and lived for a time in the suites above the shop. On the opposite corner of Ashmont Street and Dorchester Avenue/Talbot Avenue, the Hotel Argyle and the Ashmont Block were built in 1888-1892 by the design of W. Whitney Lewis. During the 1890s, the commercial first floor of the Hotel Argyle contained Greene's Pharmacy, Miss C.E. Weymouth Dry and Fancy Goods, the consulting rooms of C. Herman Miller, M.D. and the office of real estate and insurance agent Frederick Burleigh. The hotel had an adjoining red brick stable building that was remodeled into a car barn in 1910 by the Boston architects Gay and Proctor. The adjacent Ashmont Block, designed by local architect H.M Wallis, contained club rooms and a large second floor meeting hall.

On the northeast side of the square, the city of Boston constructed a new yellow brick, Roman style fire house for the growing community in 1895. The structure was designed by well-known architect Edmund Wheelwright. Wheelwright, who served as Boston City Architect at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is also responsible for the Longfellow Bridge, the Boston Opera House, the South End fire tower that is now Pine Street Inn, and many other civic buildings.

### **All Saints' Episcopal Church anchors Peabody Square**

On the south side of Peabody Square, All Saints' Episcopal Church was built between 1891-94. All Saints' had first been established in 1867 on Dorchester Avenue at Dorchester Lower Mills. In 1871, a larger wooden structure was built on Dorchester Avenue opposite Bailey Street, just south of Peabody Square. In 1879, a chance visit to this chapel by the wealthy Mary and Colonel Oliver Peabody marked the

beginning of their extraordinary patronage of All Saints'.



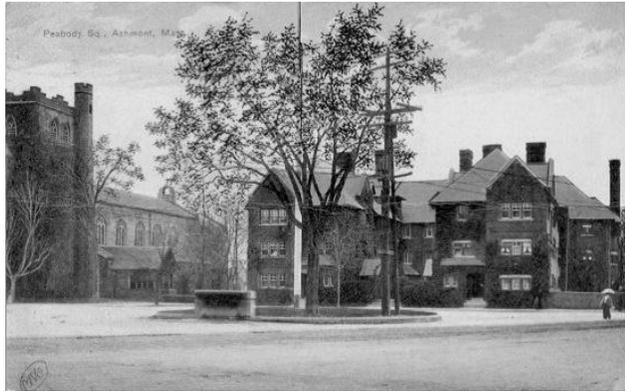
Sketch of All Saints Episcopal Church

The couple, devastated by the recent death of their only child, were comforted by Reverend Bennet of All Saints'. The Peabodys repaid his kindness with a large gift in 1893 and financed a significant amount of the construction of the new stone church in the Square. The ground-breaking structure was designed by architect Ralph Adams Cram, who heralded the Gothic Revival style with All Saints', ending the Arts and Crafts movement of that era. Cram went on to become the major church architect of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All Saints' became the ideal centerpiece not only for Peabody Square but also for the nearby English village-like residential quarters of Carruth's Hill and Ashmont Hill. All Saints has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1980.

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Next to All Saints', and rounding out the square on the south side is The Peabody apartment building. Built in 1896-97 from designs provided by Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., this apartment building consists of four connected brick three-deckers with servants' quarters under the roof.

Originally owned by Colonel Oliver Peabody, The Peabody has the unique distinction of being the prototype for the Tudor apartment building with recessed court yard that was popular during the first two decades of the 20th-century. The Peabody apartment building has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2001.



Sketch of the Peabody Apartment Block

Peabody Park, the triangular green space in the center of Peabody Square, was a gift from Colonel Oliver Peabody to the City of Boston in 1893. In 1911 the City of Boston endowed Peabody Park with a clock designed by the architect William D. Austin and made by the E. Howard Clock Company.

### **The Development of St. Marks Parish**

Parallel with the suburban development of established Bostonians to the new garden-style district surrounding Peabody Square, Boston's Roman Catholic Church Archdiocese began to purchase land on Dorchester Avenue nearby to support the growing immigrant population there. St. Gregory's parish in the Lower Mills neighborhood, located to the south of Peabody Square, was beginning to feel the growing pains of an expanding congregation and the Archdiocese set out to create a new parish to respond to the new residents in the area. A small wooden chapel was built in 1899 in that location. The parish, called St. Mark's, built a large new red brick church building in 1914. The structure, reportedly inspired architecturally by the pioneering All Saints', soon became the center of an expanding campus. A rectory, a school and a convent were added in the next few years.

### **Modern Transportation Comes to Dorchester**

In 1928, the historic Old Colony Railroad line was electrified, becoming part of today's MBTA Red Line. At this time, the railroad stopped running through Peabody Square and a more modern station was erected on the site of the 1870 and 1894 stations. The 1894 Ashmont Railway Station is said to have been built from H.H. Richardson's designs. Although Richardson died in 1886, a number of his works were executed by his successor firm, Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Coolidge. By the time of the electrification of the tracks, much of the commercial district was built up along Dorchester Avenue, connecting the two nodes.

More recently, the Ashmont MBTA station has been rebuilt into a modern transportation facility

## **Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**

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with an accompanying plaza that can be used for events and a farmers' market. A large mixed use, transportation oriented development, The Carruth, was completed in 2008, providing new commercial space that has been filled by a bank, a coffee shop, a restaurant and office space. Other changes to Peabody Square, including a redesign of the park and the intersecting roadways, are now underway.



### **District Demographics**

The St Marks Area Main Street district features a wide mix of demographics of residents and business owners. Much of Ashmont Hill, Carruth Hill, and the Wellesley Park residential areas feature upper middle class and affluent residents that have moved into the fine Victorian single family houses there. The three deckers further up Dorchester Avenue and on streets perpendicular to the thoroughfare are often made up of apartments and condominiums and house middle to low income families and individuals.

### **Neighborhood Success Stories and District Challenges**

#### **Successes**

- Ashmont Station rebuilt and plaza at Peabody Square improved
- Streets at Peabody Square reconfigured and public green spaces expanded and enhanced
- Significant new construction, including The Carruth, MAHA Building, Banton Street Building.
- Several desirable new businesses opened, including Ashmont Grill, Tavolo, Flat Black Coffee, Wainwright Bank, Dot to Dot Café, At Home Real Estate, etc.
- High profile façade improvements completed, including Ashmont Grill, Tedeschi, Dot 2 Dot Café, Tara Pub Building.
- All Saints Ashmont is working with architects to create a historic structures report for the significant building, which will provide a blueprint for future restoration work there. The architects have also initiated the process of making All Saints a National Historic Landmark.
- Ashmont Hill and Carruth Hill/Peabody Square have been designated as a design overlay districts by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (Article 65-32 and 65-33), giving the Boston Landmarks Commission the opportunity to review building permit applications that originate from these important historic areas.

#### **Challenges**

- The linear nature of district creates a lack of cohesion and district identity
- The large number of residential buildings dilute commercial feel and flow of district

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- There is a perception that this is a high crime district
- It is difficult to fill vacancies and there is a distinct lack of anchor tenants
- There is a need to encourage residents to use local businesses
- A school closing on Saint Mark’s campus will create large vacancies.

**Recommendations**

- Nominate the district to be included on the National Register of Historic Places, or take the necessary steps to earn the state’s designation of eligibility. This will make buildings eligible for historic tax credits, providing equity to make rehabilitation projects more feasible.
- Identify the “high impact” buildings and establish goals/plans throughout the district.
- Investigate bringing city-run three-decker initiative into the district, as there are several opportunities to upgrade mixed use buildings here
- Continue the work that has already been taking place in enlivening spaces such as the new Ashmont MBTA station and surrounding plaza, the work in Peabody Square, and at All Saints , highlighting the “Garden District” properties that remain.
- Conduct a survey of rents, sales comps and space needs to better understand the district’s business dynamics and establish an up-to-date market analysis that would support better functioning business and higher occupancy rates in historic commercial buildings.

**Preservation Opportunities:** There are several properties that could benefit from rehabilitation. 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ODWIN Learning Center</li> </ul>	1943 Dorchester Avenue	Pre-1882, likely mid 19 <sup>th</sup> C.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O’Brien’s Market</li> </ul>	Corner of Dorchester Ave & Ashmont Street	1884
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dracut Buildings</li> </ul>	Corners of Dracut St & Dot Ave	Early 1890s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Mark’s Church Campus</li> </ul>	Dorchester Avenue, Centre St/Ave and Cheverus Streets	1914-1930s
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitten Street Garage</li> </ul>	1676 Dorchester Avenue	1917
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosemont Market</li> </ul>	1724-1740 Dorchester Avenue	1922
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dix St. Church Building (formerly Christ Church)</li> </ul>	1625 Dorchester Avenue (corner of Dix Street)	1894

## **Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**

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### **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**

BLC Carruth/Peabody Square Area Form, written by Edward Gordon

BLC St. Mark's/ Mather Street Area Form, written by Edward Gordon

*Ashmont, an Historical Guide to Peabody Square, Carruth's Hill, and Ashmont Hill and the architecture of Edwin J., Lewis and John A. Fox*, by Paul Douglass Shand-Tucci

Historic maps, atlases

Dorchester Atheneum website- source of historic images

City of Boston Assessing Records

City of Boston Building Permits

*Connecting Dot Ave: A New Vision for St. Mark's Area Main Streets* (final report written by Studio G Architects, from information pulled together at a design charette convened by SMAMS in 2004)

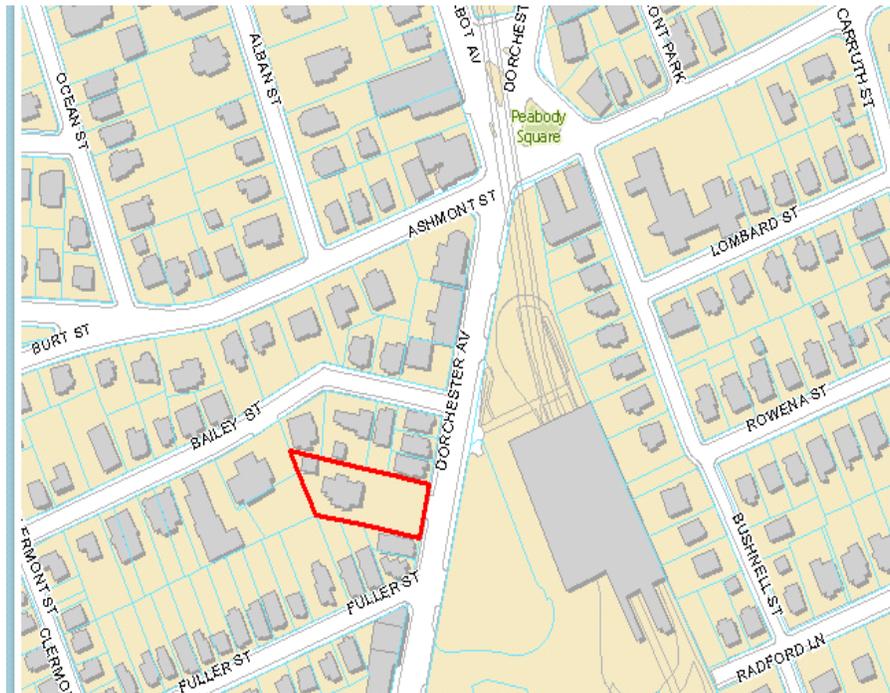
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**ODWIN Learning Center**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 1943 Dorchester Avenue  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** ODWIN –Health Careers Inc.  
**Property Type:** non-profit/exempt  
**Lot Size:** 18,504 square feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1704530000  
**Ward:** 17

<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 211,600
	Building	\$ 367,600
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 579,200</b>



**Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**  
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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** pre-1874 (according to BLC survey form it might be as early as 1830s)

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The building that now houses the ODWIN Learning Center is likely the oldest remaining extant building in the St. Marks Area Main Street district. It appears on the 1874 map, along with its outbuilding to the rear left of the building. According the updated BLC survey, a similar building appears on this property as early as 1831. The survey form also refers to this building as the “Bailey House.”



The building has been altered drastically over the years. It was likely originally a single family farm house set in the countryside of south Dorchester in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was a two-family residence and then a funeral home starting in the 1940s. It was given over to its current use as an adult education center in the 1980s. The building, which was likely altered to its current appearance to fit with the funeral home use, was built in the shape of a cross, with two projecting bays on each side elevation. Today, there is a bulky addition that transforms the front façade, giving the building an uneven look. A tall porch has also been added, although it is not known if the original featured one.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

The building is currently covered with vinyl siding and features an incongruous addition on the front. The structure has a large setback, which is now the facility’s parking lot and was used for the Main Street district’s Farmers’ Markets for some time. There is also a carriage barn located behind the main building.



**In 2010**, ODWIN faced financial troubles and sold the building to Codman Square Health Center. The building is not protected by any designations and could be vulnerable if purchased by another entity or individual.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

SMAMS and HBI should make themselves available to current and future owners if assistance is needed to think about how this historic building can work for tenants. More research should be done both on the building and the barn.

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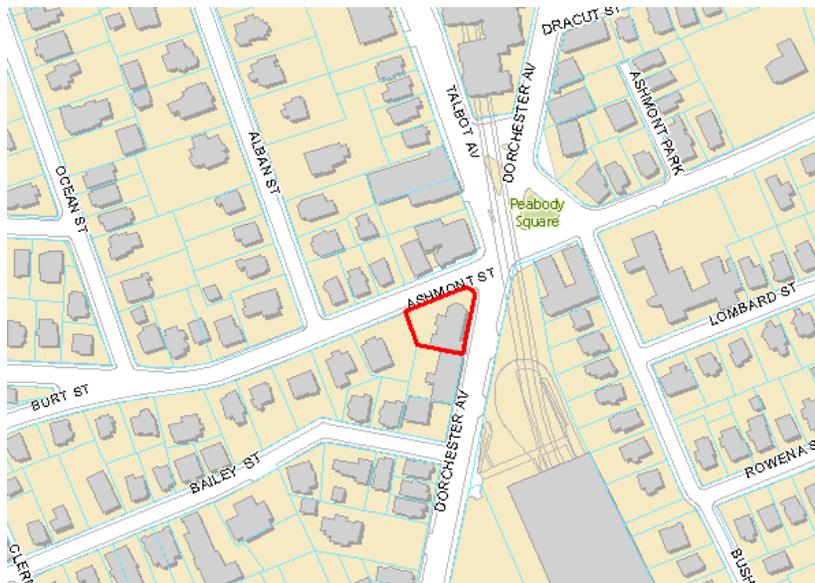
**O'Brien's Market Building**

175 Ashmont Street

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 175 Ashmont Street  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** Asma Zafar  
**Property Type:** Commercial/Residential  
**Ward:** 17  
**Parcel Number:** 1704599000  
**Lot Size:** 9900 square feet  
**Assessment (2010):**

Land	\$ 170,100.00
Building	\$ 926,900.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,097,000.00</b>



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** 1884

**Architect:** Whitney Lewis

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** O'Briens Market is arguably one of the most significant buildings in Peabody Square and along this southern section of Dorchester Avenue. It is certainly one of the most distinctive. With a red brick first floor storefront for its commercial entities and the upper, residential floors clad in wood shingles, the Victorian market building is the centerpiece for the square.

Large glass-filled arches, checkerboard brickwork patterning, red brownstone trim, and decorative shingling all play off one another to create an interesting, complicated and highly designed building. Steeply pitched roofs, heavy dormers, and the roughly designed rock scrollwork of "1884" all add another layer of interest to the building. Douglas Shand-Tucci, architectural historian, compares this building with the better known S.S. Pierce building in Brookline's Coolidge Corner.



Originally operated by businessmen Jacques and Griffin, the building became known as "O'Brien's Market", when George O' Brien, who started as a clerk at the market in 1895, took over ownership. Although the building's ownership has changed several times since then, the name has remained.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

The building was restored in recent years and is closer to the original today than it was in the decades prior. While the general "look" of the market building reflects its historic self, a few unsympathetic alterations remain, such as vinyl replacement windows and the absence of the character defining transoms that had small square lights. The large arched windows are mostly covered by interior walls and shelving to accommodate the



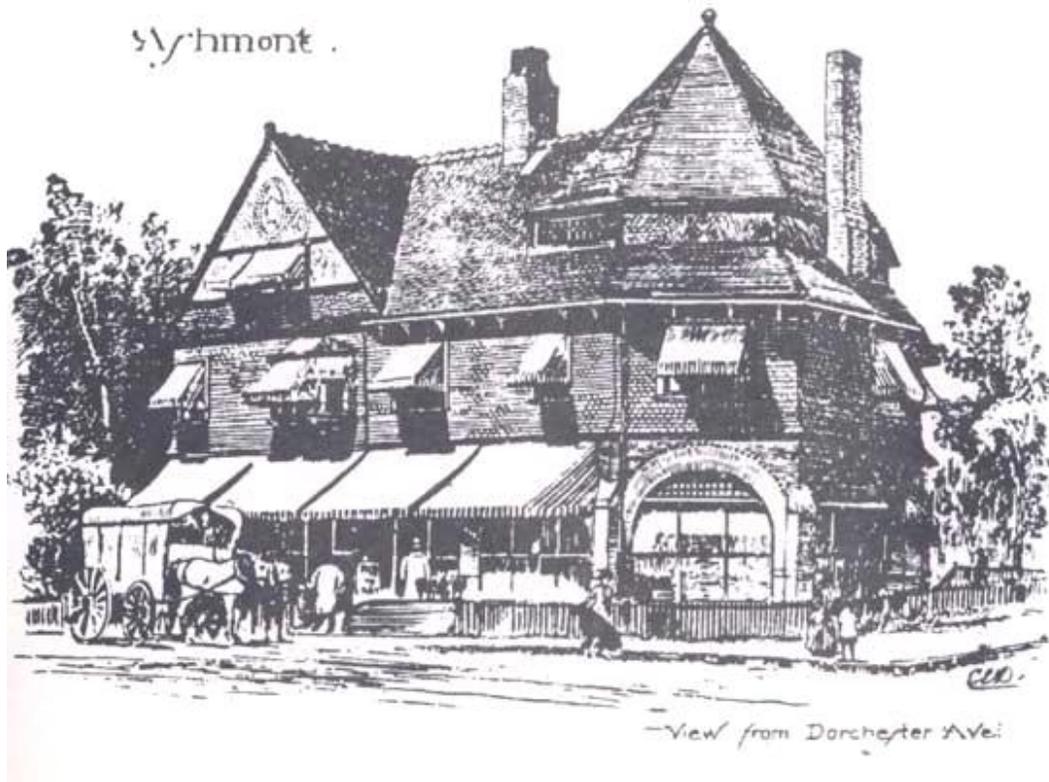
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store within.

Useable basement space is not currently occupied. The neighborhood, including SMAMS, takes issue with the underutilized secondary commercial space. The Market building is a significant commercial space in Peabody Square, and should serve as an anchor commercial building for the district.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Recommend a building plan for future alterations that highlights which character defining features should remain and/or be restored.
- Assist the building owner in solving the basement accessibility issue and finding a new tenant for underutilized spaces.
- Develop a better plan for the interior to allow the store owner to take down shelving and false walls in the arched windows so they can be reopened.
- Help owner understand the rental market in order to support more lucrative businesses that better serve the economic diversity of this neighborhood.



*Sketch by Eldon Deane, from American Architect and Building News, July 24, 1886. Published in Ashmont / Paul Douglass Shand-Tucci. Dorchester : The Dorchester Historical Society, 1991.*

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**Dracut Street Commercial/Residential Buildings**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 1876 Dorchester Avenue  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** Claudio Poles  
**Property Type:** Commercial/Residential  
**Lot Size:** 9813 square feet  
**Approximate Building Size:** 29,000 sq feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1603001000  
**Ward:** 16



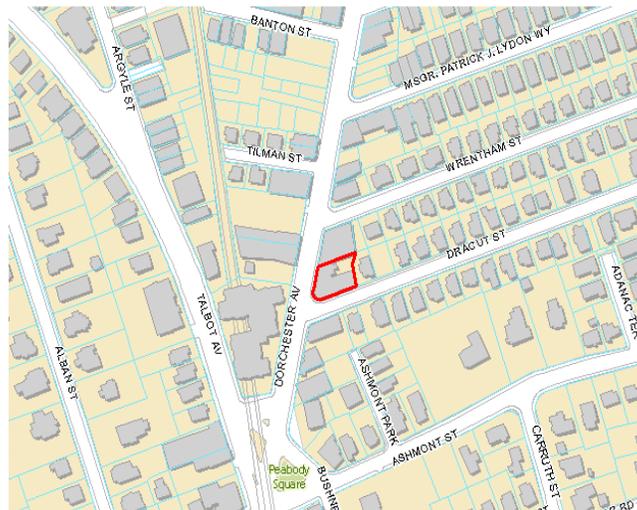
<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 168,100.00
	<u>Building</u>	<u>\$ 641,900.00</u>
	Total	\$ 810,000.00

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 6 Dracut Street  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** Claudio Poles  
**Property Type:** Commercial/Residential  
**Lot Size:** 6750 square feet  
**Approximate Building Size:** 20,000 sq feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1603001000  
**Ward:** 16



<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 154,600
	<u>Building</u>	<u>\$ 462,400</u>
	Total	\$ 617,000



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** pre 1894

**Architect:** unknown

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Attractive, historic “gateway” buildings at the northern end of Peabody Square.

**1876-1882 Dorchester Avenue** is a traditional three-decker form constructed in the Queen Anne style with a distinctive turret on its prominent Dorchester Avenue/Dracut Street corner and projecting squared off bays on both the Dorchester Avenue and Dracut Street elevations. Built in a period when Dorchester Avenue was responding to the city’s physical and demographic expansions, the wood building was built in different stages, with the corner building (exact date unknown- after 1882, before 1894) and the commercial section at the far right on Dorchester Avenue coming first, and the connecting one story commercial section being built in 1894. The building has been home to commercial entities including a general store, tavern, hair salon, sub shop, and pharmacy. The upper floors feature nine residential apartments which were some of the first multi-family units in the south Dorchester area.

**4-6 Dracut Street**, also a built in the three decker form and designed in the Queen Anne style, was likely constructed around the same time as its commercial/residential cousin across Dracut Street. The land, once part of a large lot owned by Cheever Newhall, was likely subdivided in the 1880s. Dracut Street was also laid during this time. The building features commercial storefronts on the first floor and residential apartments on the upper stories. It was also one of the first multi-family apartment houses in Dorchester.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

**1876-1882 Dorchester Avenue** is currently covered with different colored vertical vinyl siding on its upper floors and imitation brick appliqué on the street level commercial spaces. The windows have been replaced with white vinyl windows. The tavern space on the corner has been vacant for about two years.

**6 Dracut Street**, until recently, was covered in aluminum siding. Within the past year or so, the building has been treated with a thick layer of beige stucco, hiding any of its remaining architectural details. The windows have been replaced with white vinyl windows.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Discuss a package of technical assistance and loans with the owner.
- Provide renderings of rehabilitated/rethought buildings to give owner an idea of what could be done to improve the building.
- Engage owner in conversation about the stucco treatment and try to prevent the application of stucco on the green building. Present alternatives to this treatment in taking care of the building or dealing with water infiltration/degradation of materials.

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- Engage owner and city to use 1876-1882 Dorchester Avenue as a demonstration project for commercial/residential three-decker program.

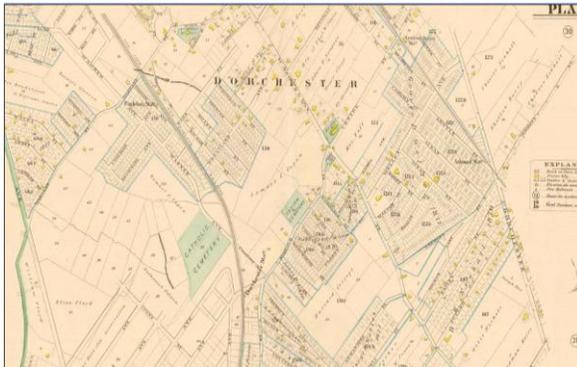
**PHOTOGRAPHS:**



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1920 photograph, showing the residential section to the far right of the 1876-1882 Dorchester Avenue building.



1882 Map, showing land (no buildings yet)



1894 map

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**St. Marks Campus Buildings**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** Dorchester Avenue, Cheverus and Centre Streets

**Neighborhood:** Dorchester

**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area

**Owner:** Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

**Lot Size:** 59154 sq ft

**Parcel Number:** 1601296000

**Ward:** 16

<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 852,100.00
	<u>Building</u>	<u>\$ 8,225,000.00</u>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,077,100.00</b>

**Tax:** \$ exempt



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** Church was built 1915, rectory 1920, school 1923, Convent 1926

**Architect:** Charles Brigham of Brigham, Coveney and Bisbee

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** St. Mark's is the focal point of the area north of Peabody Square. The large campus, which contains the large gothic St. Mark's Roman Catholic Church (1915), a Revival rectory (1920) as well as a Georgian Revival convent (1926) and Gothic Revival St. Mark's Roman Catholic School (1923). These buildings are surrounded by play areas and parking lots as well as landscaped grounds along Dorchester Avenue, Roseland Street and Centre Avenue/Street.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, St. Gregory's parish, which is located nearby Lower Mills, was growing quickly. The archdiocese, looking to expand, purchased the lot on Dorchester Avenue and Rosemont Street and built a small, wooden chapel. In 1905, St. Mark's parish was officially named and set off from St. Gregory's. In 1914, the parish commissioned Charles Brigham to design the red brick church in the "perpendicular gothic style," which is said to be derivative of All Saints Episcopal Church in nearby Peabody Square. Charles Brigham, of Brigham, Coveney and Bisbee, was a well known architect at the time, and his firm was also responsible for the enormous domed Christian Science Church in Boston's Back Bay.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:**

The buildings are all in fair condition and all but the school are presently being used. However, the school was shut down at the end of June, 2010, and no plans have been made public for its future use.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Obtain current information about status of the buildings from archdiocese and/or Office of Urban Affairs.
- Support re-use from "institutional uses" that serve the neighborhood, such as other types of schools or elderly affordable housing.
- Investigate whether the campus is eligible for a National Register District as an example of an intact, early 20<sup>th</sup> century Roman Catholic church campus and surrounding multi-family housing that grew up around the church.

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Historic Boston Incorporated, 2009-2011

**PHOTOGRAPHS:**



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**Whitten Street Garage**

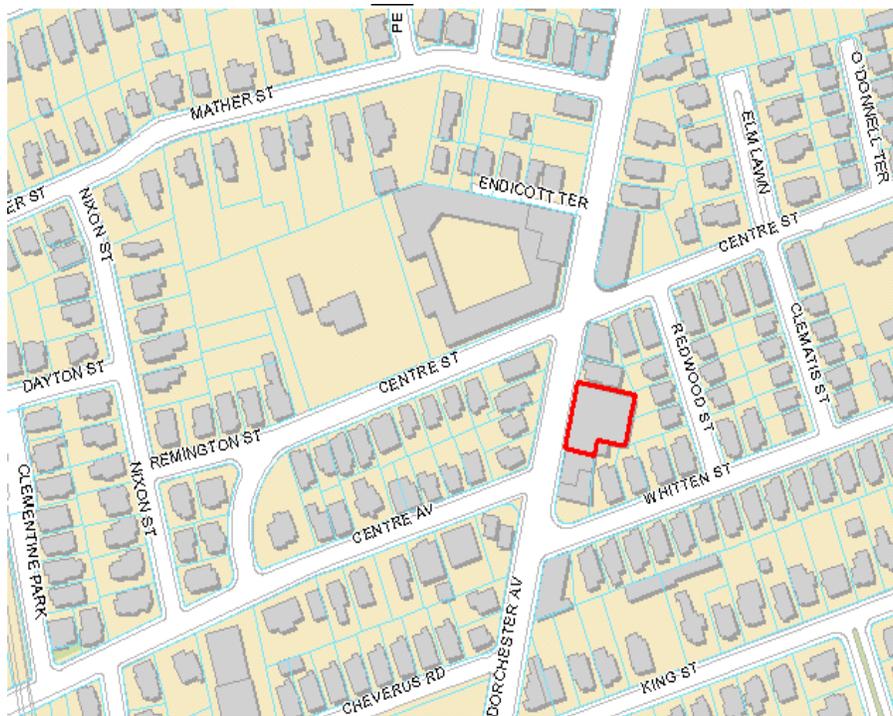
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**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 1676 Dorchester Avenue  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** Eileen Neret  
**Property Type:** commercial  
**Lot Size:** 9208 sq ft  
**Approximate Building Size:** 9000 square feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1601055000  
**Ward:** 16



<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 196,100.00
	Building	\$ 209,700.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 405,800.00</b>



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**

**Date Built:** 1917

**Architect:** J.M Parks

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** As the automobile gained popularity in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, garages were introduced to urban areas. Many garages were actually once stables buildings that housed carriages and horses, but transitioned to automobiles as they became more commonplace. While it is not clear if the Whitten Street garage building was meant to store automobiles or to provide repair services, it was likely one of the first of its kind in Dorchester.

The building served as a garage from the time it was built in 1917 until the late 1930s when it became a supermarket. The supermarket, the A&P ( Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company), only lasted a few years into the 1940s. The building was converted for use by a paper storage and cardboard cutting business and transitioned back into a garage/repair shop by the 1960s.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Today, the Whitten Street garage, an attractive, brick building on Dorchester Avenue, is vacant. According to St Marks Area Main Streets, the garage was going to be sold to a new owner who planned to introduce a food-based business to the building, but the plans fell through. The current owner is looking to use the building to sell cars but has encountered community opposition due to concern about where the vehicles would be parked. There was also talk about the building taking on a Family Dollar use, but the neighborhood balked at this use, which frustrated the owner.

It is difficult to tell the condition of the building, but it appears that many of its original features remain, including articulated archways, a distinctive parapet and decorative brick and sandstone trim around the doors and windows. More decorative features likely exist below the roll down grate covers.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Engage in a fresh conversation with owner to understand current plans and needs and potential incentives for re-use.
- Find out if the building can be partitioned into two or more spaces, which may make it an easier fit for new businesses.
- Determine if there are there any environmental problems that need mitigation and the overall physical status of the building.
- Actively market the building as a place for new business/growth/opportunity

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**PHOTOGRAPHS:**



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**Rosemont Market**

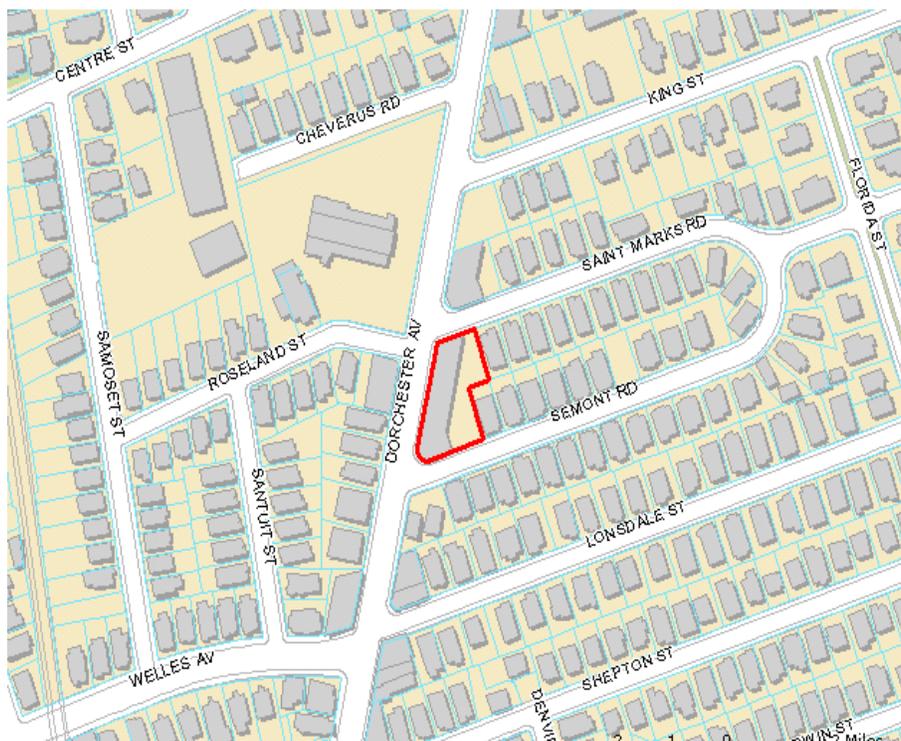
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**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 1724-1740 Dorchester Avenue  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** multiple (condo association)  
& Nikolas Loulakis  
**Property Type:** commercial condominiums  
**Lot Size:** 14869 sq ft  
**Parcel Number:** 1601598000 (condo section),  
and 1601598008 (Loulakis condo)  
**Ward:** 16



<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 0
	Building	\$ 1,241,500.00 (Loulakis condo)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,241,500.00</b>



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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** 1922

**Architect:** S.S Eisenberg

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** This one-story, commercial block, which originally featured 11 different storefronts, was designed by Samuel S. Eisenberg, of Eisenberg and Feer, a Boston-based firm that was prolific in the Dorchester building trades during the first quarter of the 20th century. The building retains some neo-classical details such as bold dentil work at the cornice line and decorative scrollwork cartouches at the parapet level. Although the building has been heavily altered at the street level, there are some hints as to what the original storefronts looked like, particularly at the current “Mass Market” store space, with its thick, boxy columns articulating the shop windows. The rehabilitation of this building, an unusual surviving example of transit oriented tax-payer block, would be make an enormous visual difference along Dorchester Avenue.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** The building has a complicated ownership system. Much of the building is still owned by the Loulakis family, but some sections are owned as commercial condominiums, such as Charlie’s Pizza shop on the corner. The building has suffered from many unsympathetic alterations over the years, such as dropped sign bands, covered windows, and a disorganized treatment of signage and “stuff” on the exterior. However, one storefront has preserved its original divided light transom window.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY:**

- Use surviving details (such as the storefront transom) to inspire a vision for the rest of the building with technical and financial package.
- Remove much of the unsympathetic alterations that have been layered on over the years.
- Remove false dropped sign bands, overpowering corner signage, and promote a unified signage program for the building.
- Remove bulky grates and either replace with interior chain safety screens or another alternative that doesn’t crowd the building’s façade.
- Open up the windows that have been covered.
- Restore cast stone detail
- Put together a conceptual rehab drawing to inspire owner/condo owners to work together to improve building.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS:**



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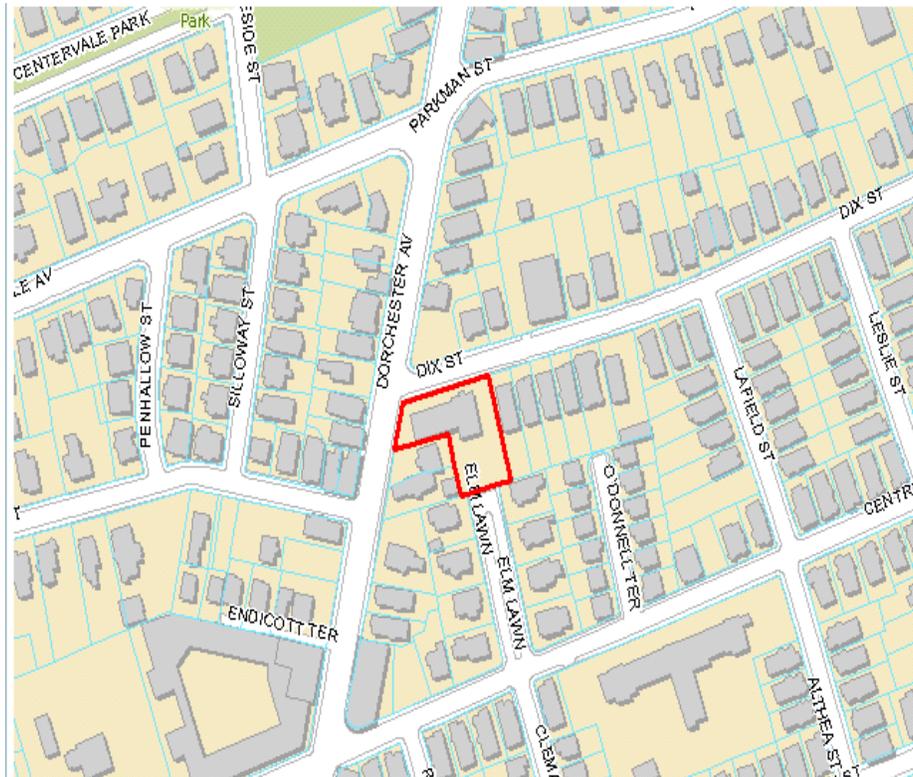
**Christ Church/Bethel Hispanic Seventh Day Adventist Church**

**SITE INFORMATION**

**Address:** 1625 Dorchester Avenue  
**Neighborhood:** Dorchester  
**Main Street District:** St. Marks Area  
**Owner:** Northeastern Conference Corporation  
(regional Adventist group)  
**Property Type:** church/exempt  
**Lot Size:** 18,328 square feet  
**Parcel Number:** 1600935000  
**Ward:** 16



<b>Assessment (2010):</b>	Land	\$ 217,900.00
	Building	\$ 839,900.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,057,800.00</b>



**Commercial Casebook: St Marks Area**  
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**ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:**

**Date Built:** ca. 1894

**Architect:** Edwin J. Lewis

**Designations:** none

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Christ Church of Dorchester was organized May 13, 1852 as the Third Unitarian Society, and was known from 1875 to 1894 as the Harrison Square Unitarian Church. Its building was located at the corner of Neponset Avenue and Mill Street. In the 1890s, the congregation re-located to the corner of Dorchester Avenue and Dix Streets.

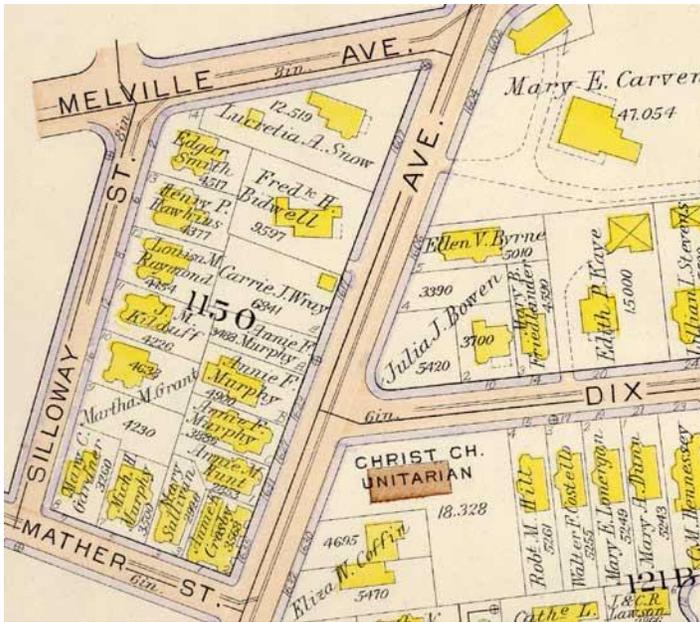
The building was designed by renowned Dorchester architect Edwin J. Lewis, Jr., who lived nearby at 597 Adams Street. The original design included a tower that was never built. Lewis is most famous for his residential architecture and some of his designs are located in Dorchester at 15 & 22 Carruth Street, 12 Alban Street, 12, 60, and 75 Ocean Street. He also gained national recognition for his church designs.

**CURRENT STATUS/EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Christ Church is now owned by a Seventh Day Adventist congregation. In recent years, the congregation has made unsympathetic alterations to the exterior of the church, including the application of stucco over the distinctive Roxbury Puddingstone buttresses and the addition of residential-grade wooden stairs at the entry points. The loss of the character defining features of the Lewis designed building affects the adjacent neighborhood.

**PRESERVATION STRATEGY**

- Engage in a conversation with the current owners and discuss the challenges that they are facing with the building.
- Invite the congregation's leaders to take part in the ongoing religious properties discussion led by the Boston Preservation Alliance.
- Investigate whether the church is eligible for National Register listing.

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