



E. Broadway, 81 Broadway (1915-1982)

The Broadway opened in 1915 as part of an elaborate stock scheme. The theater went bankrupt in months, but was later purchased by the Viano family who operated it for over 50 years. Recently sold to the Mudflat Pottery Studio, it is slated to undergo extensive renovation.

F. Sack - Assembly Square, 26 Mddlesex Ave. (1981-2007)

The multiplex that drove Somerville's second to last single screen theater out of business, closed its doors in 2007. When the 8 screen complex added 4 screens in 1983, it was the largest multi-screen complex in New England. The building, with its empty marquee, is currently unoccupied.



G. Capitol, 303 Broadway (1927-1963)



The last of the early theaters built in Somerville, the Capitol was the city's largest and most luxuriuous. The Capitol was an enormous theater seating 1,732 people. With its own orchestra and art deco murals lining the entrance, the theater was predicted "to be the center of attraction at all times." The theater was demolished sometime after 1965, and the site is now the closed Star Market and parking lot.



H. Winter Hill, 318 Broadway (1909-1917)
The building now contains a U.S. Post Office and the Winter Hill Bakery.

I. Pearson's Perfect Pictures, 306 Broadway (1904-1927)

In 1904, just 8 years after Edison introduced the Vitascope, a confectioner named Arthur G. Pearson showed the first movie in Somerville in the Oddfellows Hall above his store. What started as an experiment continued until 1927. The building burned in 1974 and the Broadway Health Center was built on the site in 2001.



J. Ball Square, 707 Broadway (1923-1956)



Advertised as the region's most "pretentious and capacious" new theater, the Ball Square opened with great fanfare in April 1923. The Locatellis owned it until a fire gutted the theater 16 years later. Reopened as part of the M&P chain, it was an early victim to television, closing in 1956. A small part of the

original pedimented facade remains, as well as the entry lobby which is now occupied by Cambridge Lock.

K. Teele Square, 1156 Broadway (1922-1967)

The Teele Square was the Viano family's first theater. Designed by Walter Littlefield, architect of the Union Square fire station, the theater opened in 1922 showing "Love and Doughnuts" among other features. The Teele Square closed its doors in 1967 and was demolished 30 years later. The former entry lobby remains, and is occupied by La Femme Chic salon.



L. Somerville Theater, 55 Davis Sqare (1914-present)



This Davis Square landmark shared the Hobbs Building with a dance hall and a bowling alley. The Viano family purchased the theater in 1926, and redesigned the interior in its current Aztec

Deco style. The Somerville continues to entertain today, with films and live musical performances. When the Assembly Square theater closed in 2007, the Somerville Theater became the city's last standing, surviving 14 competitors and 96 years.

M. Day Street Olympia, Day and Herbert St. (1913-1942)

Like many early theaters, the Day Street Olympia was housed in a converted church, in this case the former West Somerville Congregational. Sold for \$3,000 to the National Amusement Company in 1909, the theater did not open until 1913 due to public opposition. It was eventually purchased by E.M. Loew, who changed its name to Loew's Davis Square. The building was extremely vulnerable to fire and burned down in May 1942. The site is now a parking lot.



N. Highland, 156 Highland Ave. (1916-1921)



The Highland was located in the elegant 1914 Knights of Columbus building at the intersection of Highland and Central. When the Central opened across the street in 1921, the Highland closed and the space eventually became

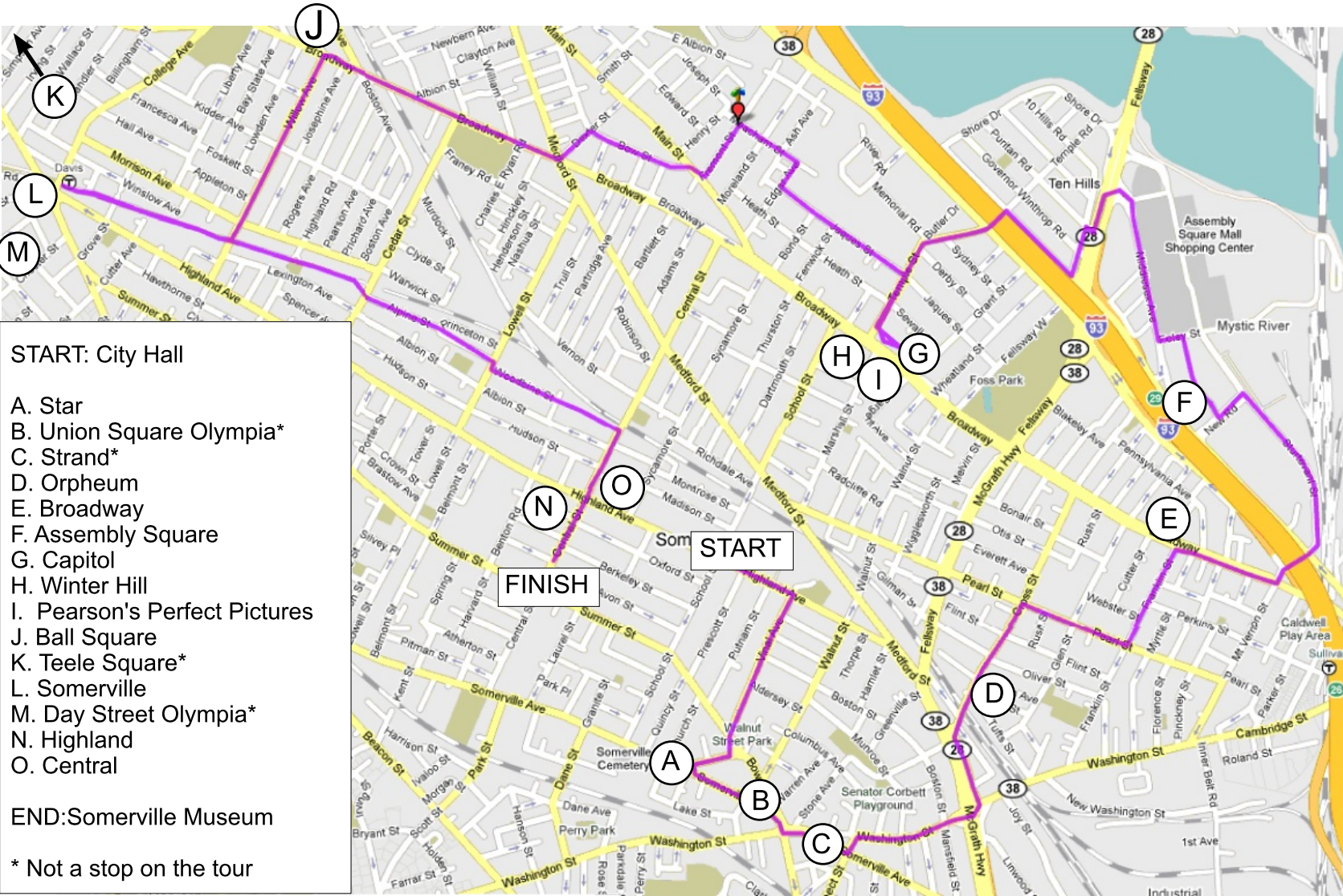
Anthony's Function Hall. While dramatically altered, the building still features the 2 lion medallions that once supported the theater's awning chains.

O. Central, 151 Highland Ave. (1921-early 1960s)

Architect Frank Bignotti enclosed the first of the Locatellis' three theaters inside an apartment building that also included offices and stores. The interior was as elegant as the facade, featuring murals on each side of the stage. The theater opened in 1921 and operated for nearly 40 years. Since its closing, the theater has served as offices, a tango school, a and even a rock climbing gym.



The full map and turn-by-turn cue sheet are available online at:
<http://www.bikely.com/maps/bike-path/409495>
<http://www.bikely.com/cuesheet/route/409495>



Most of the information in this flyer came from Tufts Professor David Guss's website LostTheatres.org (as well as CinemaTreasures.org). Visit Professor Guss's site for a great collection of photographs, oral histories and information on Somerville's lost theaters.


Also, visit these sites to learn more about the tour sponsors:

Somerville Bicycle Committee - SomervilleBikes.org
Somerville Historic Preservation Commission - tinyurl.com/33ou3nq
Somerville Museum - somervillmuseum.org/




Somerville History Bicycle Tour
Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor
Lost Theaters of Somerville
Sunday, May 23, 2010


A. Star Theater, 374 Somerville Ave. (1908-1914)
Located in a two-story 1890 brick building, the Star may have been the first theater to show films in Union Square. The theater seemed to attract a young and rowdy audience - the city tried to close the theater on several occasions. An architecture office and Grand retail store are now located in the building.



B. Union Square Olympia, 8 Warren St. (1914-late 1920s; demolished 1933)
The Olympia held 1200 patrons. Goodyear Tire is located on the site.



C. The Strand, 4 Union Square (1925-early 1950s)
The Strand was the last of Union Square's 3 theaters. Opened in 1925, it became part of the Paramount affiliated M&P chain, building its reputation by showing high quality first run films. Later used for an indoor mini golf course, the Strand was demolished 1953, the site is currently a parking lot next to Riverside Motorcycle.



D. Orpheum, 138 Cross St. (1916-late 1940s/early 1950s)
The Orpheum is a classic story of an adaptive reuse: a 19th century church converted to a 20th century theater and now a 21st century luxury condominium. The First Universalist Church became the Opheum in 1916. Known as the "Bughouse," it showed second run features, attracting children from Brickbottom and other poor neighborhoods.

