

# An Architectural and Historical Walking Tour

*of the*

## Quadrangle-Mattoon

Historic District

*of*

## Springfield, Massachusetts



**SPRINGFIELD  
PRESERVATION  
TRUST**  
INCORPORATED 1972

**Created by the Springfield Preservation Trust**

**with funding from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts.**

## Architectural Styles in Springfield

Greek Revival:	1825-1860
Gothic Revival:	1840-1880
Italianate:	1845-1875
Renaissance Revival:	1860-1930
Second Empire:	1865-1875
Stick:	1865-1885
High Victorian Gothic:	1870-1900
Queen Anne:	1880-1900
Shingle:	1880-1910
Colonial Revival:	1880-present
Classical Revival:	1890-1920
Tudor Revival:	1895-present
English Cottage:	1910-1940
International Style:	1945-1965

## Terminology

**Preservation** involves keeping something from destruction and making sure it is not altered or changed in a way that can't be undone.

**Restoration** means bringing something back to a former position or condition. In restoring an art object, piece of furnishing, or architecture, the most important requirement is the final appearance.

**Renovation** simply means to make an object look like new. You can use new or old materials and it does not have to result in historic accuracy.

**Conservation** is when the absolute maximum amount of the original material, in as unaltered a condition as possible, is preserved. All repairs or additions must be reversible and removable without affecting the condition of the original material.

Have you ever thought about what makes a building look good or look bad? Have you ever seen a building that you really liked or that you really hated? Someone made deliberate choices in the building materials, design, construction, and possibly renovation of every building you see. On this tour, we're going to look at several buildings in Springfield's Lower Maple and Ridgewood Historic Districts. As we go along, you will begin to look at buildings differently.

Take a look at the two houses below. Pay careful attention to the windows, roof, and doors. Which one looks better to you?



Would you believe these photos are of the same house? They are. This is a house in Hartford, CT. The photo on the left shows what it used to look like. The windows are not even. Some of them are boarded up. And they aren't right for the building. The roof of the porch has been totally removed. And the doors are made of steel.

The photo on the right shows the house after being restored by someone who cares about historic preservation. The windows are appropriate materials and style and are spaced evenly. None of the windows is blocked up. The doors are historically appropriate. The porch was rebuilt and the roof gained decorative elements.

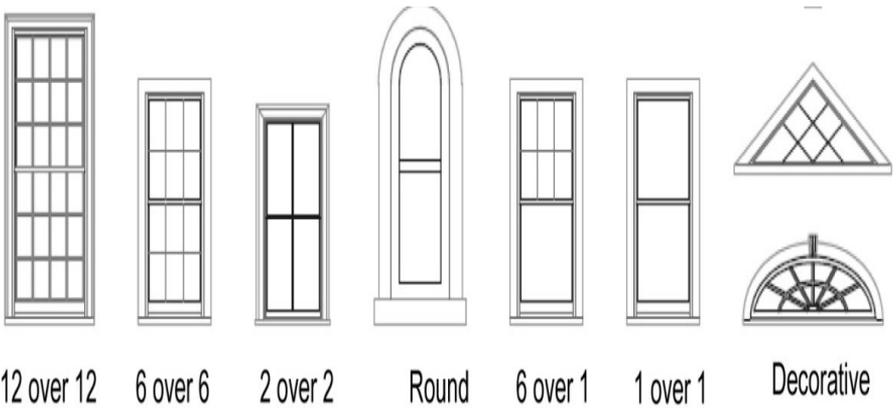
Which house would you rather live in? Which house would you rather live next to and see every day? Houses look good or bad because people make choices about the building materials and styles.

Before we start our tour, you'll need some definitions.

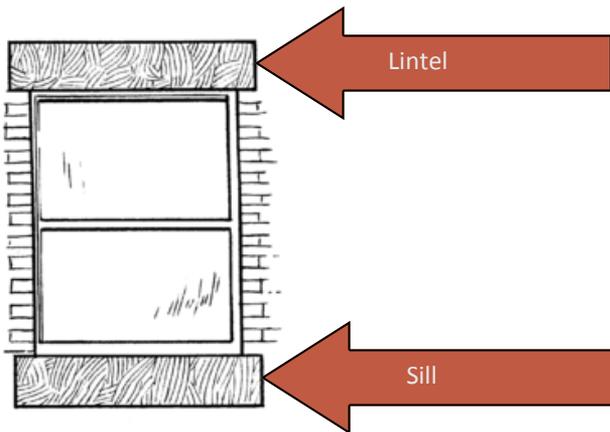
The parts of buildings that make the most impact on the way they look are their windows, doors, and roofs. So let's learn more about them.

**Windows:**

What do all windows have? Glass! Each pane of glass is called a “light” in architectural terminology. Usually, we refer to windows by the number of panes on the top portion of the window “over” the number in the bottom portion. Like this:



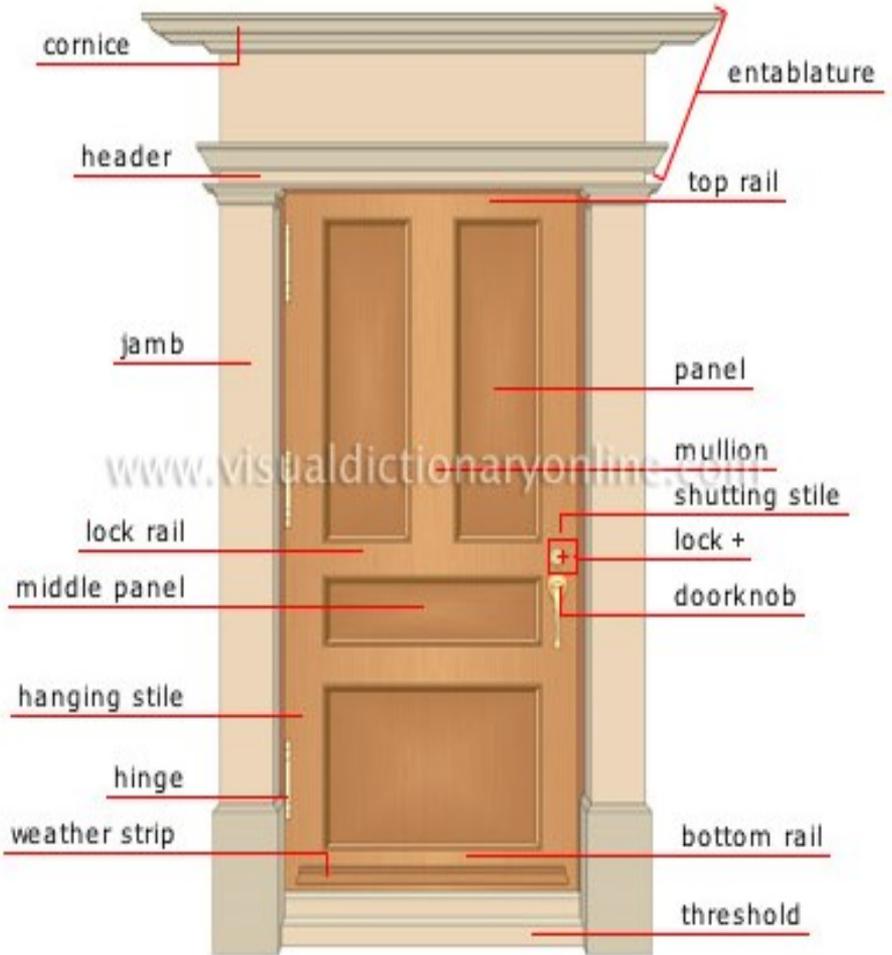
There are also several other components of a window that are important. The ones that make the most visual impact are the lintel and sill.



As you look at buildings on this tour, try to note the number of “lights” you see and note the materials of the lintels and sills.

**Doors:**

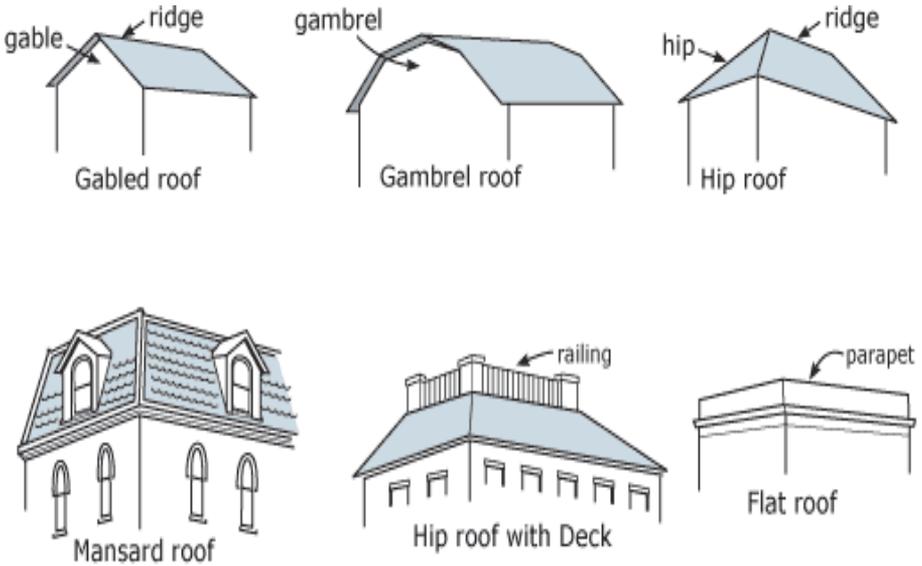
Doors allow you to enter and exit a house. They also are a key component to the look of a building. In older houses, all doors were made of wood. More modern doors may be made of steel or aluminum. Some doors have glass (lights) in them and some have glass on the side (side lights).



**Roofs:**

Also very important for the structural integrity of a building is its roof. If you’ve ever had a leaky roof, you know that’s a bad situation. Over the years, builders have experimented with different types of roofs in order to keep the rain and snow out while still making the roof enhance the overall look of a building.

Here are some of the styles of roofs you may see on our walk:



Wood Shingle/ Shake		Bungalow, Foursquare, other small Revival homes (e.g., Swiss Chalet, Cotswold Cottage)
Clay Tile		Spanish, Mediterranean-influenced styles, Chicago Bungalows, Romance Revivals
Concrete/ Composites		Spanish and Mediterranean-influenced styles, Chicago Bungalows, English/Cotswold/ Romance Revival styles
Slate		Tudor Revival, "English" Arts & Crafts, Craftsman Revival

Roofs can be made of different types of materials. Many older buildings in New England were designed with slate or cedar roofs. Some were designed with terra cotta tiles. Since the 1940s, many older roofs were replaced with asphalt shingles or metal roofs. This is because these more modern materials are less expensive.

As you leave the Quadrangle grounds, you will enter Merrick Park, a small green area located at the corner of State and Chestnut Streets.



The statue in the park next to the Central Library is called “The Puritan.” Do you see a name carved on the statue? The statue was designed to be a tribute to Deacon Samuel Chapin, one of the founding fathers of Springfield, who came to the city in the early 1600s. The statue was created by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, one of the most famous sculptors of the 19th century.

The sculpture was unveiled in 1889 and became so popular that smaller copies of it were made and can be found in museums around the United States. It was originally located in Stearns Square (the small park between Worthington and Bridge Streets), but the Chapin family wanted it moved to the more prominent location on State Street. It was moved in 1899 and has been there ever since.

Next to Merrick Park, and forming one side of the Quadrangle, is Springfield's Central Library. Now, **turn up State Street** and take a look at the building's façade.



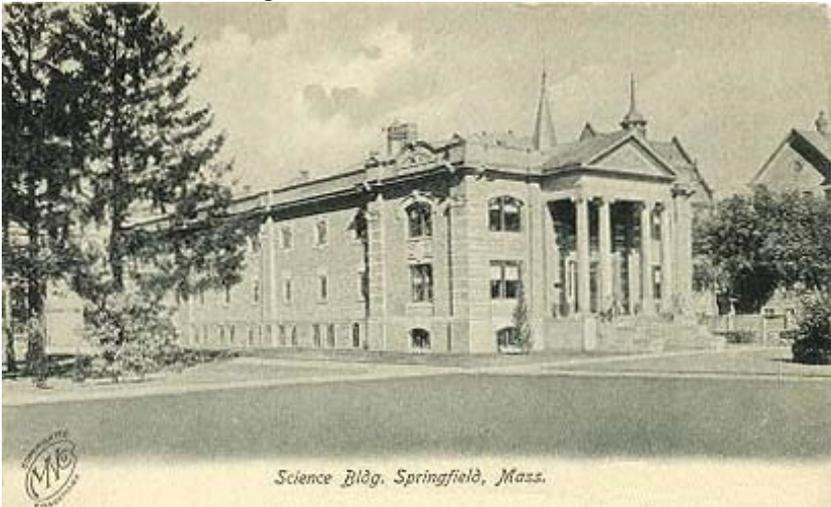
This large, white building was designed to house the Springfield Library and it currently serves as the heart of the city's library system. The building was built between 1910 and 1912 and was built to replace another library building that was about 40 years old. The building is in the Renaissance Revival style, which are often more horizontal than vertical and have details used on grand buildings of Italy in the 15th and 16th centuries. There are often fruit and animal elements, like the garlands of fruit and the lion heads on the facade, and these buildings are usually large, public buildings designed to impress the general public as they look at and enter the buildings.

Donations from Springfield citizens and very large donations from Andrew Carnegie (a wealthy industrialist who decided towards the end of his life to give lots of money to the public for buildings like libraries and concert halls) allowed this large and impressive project to be completed. It was built of reinforced concrete with a pink granite base, surrounded by white Vermont marble, with a frieze of white terra cotta, and topped with a dark green tile roof.

Here is the first Springfield Library building which stood at the same location as the current library. It was built in 1871 and by 1892 it was too small to serve the reading public. You can see the George Walter Vincent Smith museum to the right of the library.



The Springfield Central Library is not the only building along this stretch of State Street to have changed over the years. The Springfield Science Museum used to face State Street, and visitors entered it by way of a long driveway. Now the entrance to the museum is through the Welcome Center on Edwards Street and the building faces the interior of the Quadrangle.



It was built in 1899 in a Colonial Revival style. Note the columns and pediment as well as the symmetrical façade. The building was redesigned as an Art Deco/Moderne style building in the 1930s when the Quadrangle plan became more formalized. The façade of the Science Museum was designed to be complementary to the Art Museum across the green.



If you look up between the Library and St. Michael’s Cathedral, you can still see the original entrance to the Science Museum.

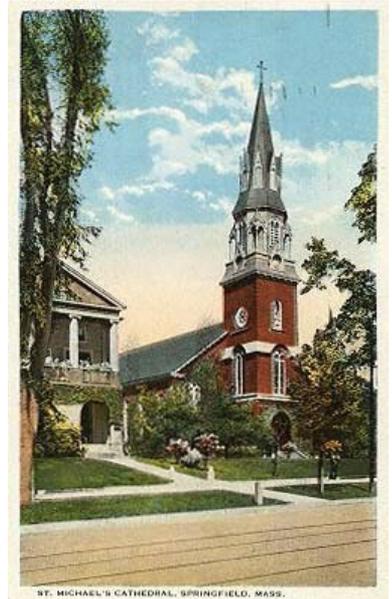


ST. MICHAEL'S CATHEDRAL AND SAINT LUKE'S SANITARIUM  
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

The photo above is from 1908 and it shows St. Michael's Cathedral and Saint Luke's Sanitarium to the left of the cathedral. The old entryway to the Science Museum would have been to the left of the sanitarium. Sanitariums were what we would today call rest homes or long-term care facilities. They were a place for people to recover from an illness that didn't require hospitalization. Saint Luke's Rest Home is now located on nearby Spring Street. This building was demolished some time between 1908 and 1940.

The Cathedral has also changed over the years. There is a lot of ivy growing on the front of the church in the 1908 photo, but the larger change is the steeple. There were peaked Gothic arches on the steeple in 1908 that are no longer there.

Many of the trees in the 1908 photo have grown and matured since the time the photo was taken. Some of the bollards marking the front and side entryways to the sanitarium have been removed.



ST. MICHAEL'S CATHEDRAL, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

As we continue to head up the hill on State Street, we will come to Saint Michael's Cathedral and Saint Michael's Rectory.



Saint Michael's Cathedral was built in 1862. It was designed by Patrick Keeley of New York, a prominent architect of churches. It has elements of the Italianate (brackets under eaves) and Romanesque Revival (heavily carved arch around the front door). Combining architectural elements was a common technique in the Victorian era.

The Rectory, however, is a very pure example of Second French Empire architecture. This style features something called a "mansard roof" — a flat roof with a sloping gambrel in the front and back that allows for extra living space in the top of the building.

Besides the mansard roof, French Second Empire homes are often made of brick or stone and usually have Italianate features, but may have a combination of several differ-

ent styles. The interiors of these homes usually feature high ceilings and many rich details like marble fireplaces and fine woods for the doors.

The Saint Michael's Cathedral Rectory was built as a home for priests who served the Cathedral and it is still used for that purpose today. It also contains office and meeting space for the members of the Cathedral.



**Turn left to Elliot Street** after the Rectory. There is a brick Second French Empire building that caught fire in 2008 and has been abandoned ever since. There has been a long-running dispute between the owner of the building and the city about what the best way forward is.



Some of the things proposed for the building have been:

- Tear it down and make a parking lot
- Restore it and turn it back into a duplex with side-by-side homes
- Renovate it and make it office space

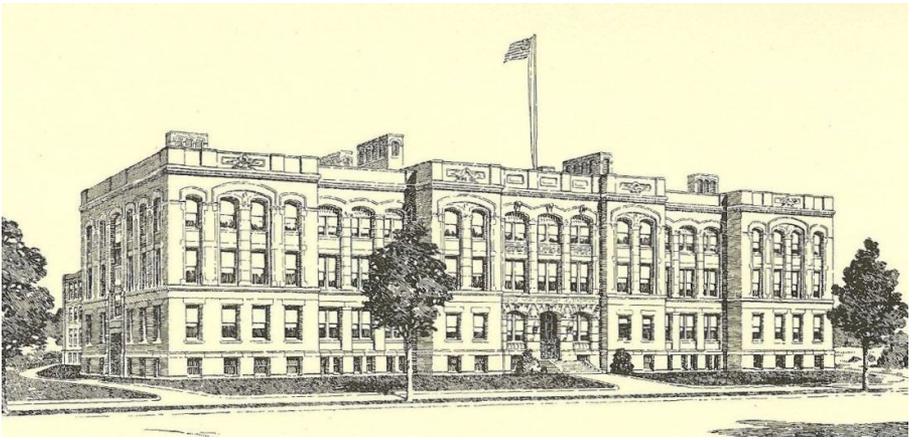
Next to the fire-damaged Second French Empire building is one of the oldest residential buildings in Springfield.



The Alexander House in Springfield was originally built at the corner of Elliott and State Streets in 1811 for James Byers, superintendent of the Springfield Armory. The design of the house has been attributed to Asher Benjamin and it was built by Simon Sanborn, Springfield's master builder of the first half of the nineteenth century, who designed many of the city's old mansions, which have all been demolished. In 1862, the house was sold to Henry Alexander, Jr. In that year, Alexander became mayor of Springfield and he resided in the house until his death in 1878. While Alexander lived in the home, he moved the house to a new location nearby on State Street (in 1874). The house was acquired by Historic New England, a group dedicated to preserving old buildings in New England and moved again in 2004 to Elliott Street to make way for the construction of a new federal courthouse.

The house features fluted columns, decorative moldings along the roof line, a circular window, symmetrical porches, and side entries. These are elements of the Greek Revival style. Note that the building appears to have corner stones, but this is actually painted wood. This was an early faux effect to make the building look like it used fancier, more expensive building materials.

The last building we'll look at on this end of Elliot Street is the former Technical High School. Built in 1915 as a high school for future engineers and mathematicians, it closed in 1986 and sat vacant for many years.



Like other abandoned and historically important and architecturally appealing buildings, there were many suggestions about what to do with the empty building. Someone always proposes demolition and someone always proposes total restoration. In this case, something else happened. The building was partially demolished, but the façade was kept intact and a new building was built behind the façade.



The construction project used state-of-the-art modern materials and techniques and attached the new building to the old façade. This photo shows the building from the parking lot of the Alexander House.



And here you see the front of the old building. You might not even know there was a whole new building behind this one.



The site is now used as a data center for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, housing digital copies of important documents like tax returns and driver's licenses.

**Turn around and head back to State Street.** Take a look at the other 21st century building in the area, the Federal Court House at the corner of Elliot and State Streets.



The large, spiraling Federal Court House was built in 2008. It was designed by Moshe Safdie, an internationally-famous architect. It was designed around three large trees that were probably 300 years old. Unfortunately, one of the trees died, but the other two are an important part of the site design. In addition to all the glass on the building's facade and swooping roof, the building also features concrete and limestone. There is an interior staircase visible from the street. The walls behind the staircase feature a black and white mural designed by Sol LeWitt, a famous American artist who died shortly after this mural was installed

**Continue up State Street to turn left onto Byers Street.** As you do so, please notice the stately grounds of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site on your right. This was the first storage place for government weapons in the new United States. It was founded by George Washington in 1777 and is well worth a visit. It is the only National Park in Western Massachusetts.



As you round the corner to Byers Street, you pass a large building on the left. This is in the Georgian Revival style. The building has a hipped roof, symmetrical façade, pedimented gable, and stone lintels. It was built in 1924 as the Federal Land

Bank, the place that farmers in New England, New Jersey, and New York would go to apply for a loan to finance their farms.

After that long, long building, you will see another large brick building on Byers Street. This was once a hotel, called the “Hotel Rainville,” and it was built in 1916.

The building was designed in the Classical Revival style with a symmetrical façade.

After having been a hotel, it was turned into studio apartments for people who had been homeless.



As you continue along Byers Street, you will pass a fine example of a duplex (two family, side by side) home built in the Queen Anne style. The Queen Anne style is what most people have in mind when they think of Victorian architecture in the United States.

These are houses built between 1880 and 1910 and are usually made of wood. They were inspired by English design and the defining feature of the American Queen Anne style is the use of different surfaces and forms like bays, towers, overhangs, wall projections, and multiple wall materials and textures to avoid any flat or plain surfaces.



As you pass Frost Street, look at how far back this yellow Queen Anne House extends. You may also notice the delicate carved terra cotta panel on the exterior chimney and the way the house was built to accommodate its location on a hill.



The brick house on the other corner of Byers and Frost Streets was once owned by Homer Merriam, of Merriam-Webster fame. The Merriam-Webster dictionary is still headquartered in Springfield. It's very close by, on Federal Street.

Note the square stone at the edge of the curb. This is called an "upping stone" and was used to help people get up into carriages or onto horses. There are two upping stones on Byers Street. The other one has a ring attached to hold the reins of a horse.

Upping stones are rarely seen anymore and two on one street is quite unusual.

One of the most unusual buildings in Springfield is located at 60 Byers Street. Originally, this was a two-family Victorian home. In 1953, a local artist-architect, Thurston Munson, rebuilt it from the inside out as a modern style home, with curved walls,



Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired iron work, and an entire wall of glass on the rear (overlooking Spring Street). The home was a local talking point (people loved it or hated it, but almost no one ignored it) and was featured in architectural magazines when it was

completed. Unfortunately, the house suffered a major fire a few weeks after the magazine story appeared and it was rebuilt with cheaper materials. The house has been broken up into four apartments.

Continuing down the street, we pass several apartment buildings, including the Spanish Colonial Revival building below. The Spanish Colonial Revival style features stucco facades and ceramic tile roofs, neither of which is hardy in New England winters, so this type of building is rarely seen in the Northeast.

Many of the apartment buildings on Byers Street were constructed in the early 1900s to provide housing to the thousands of people who worked at the Springfield Armory, right across the street, and the many office and retail employees who worked in what used to be a bustling downtown.



## **Turn left onto Pearl Street, then left again onto Spring Street.**

As you turn left onto Spring Street, you'll see a small grocery store, a public park, and several more early 20th century apartment buildings.

## **Just after the park, turn right onto Salem Street.**



The most important building on this street — and one of the most important buildings in the city of Springfield — is the large stone church that is located where Salem, Elliot, and Mattoon Streets meet. It was built in 1873 and designed by the famous 19th century architect Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson built important public, civic, and religious buildings all around the country, including several in Springfield. This church is in the “Richardsonian Romanesque” style, which was a response to the highly ornamented styles like Gothic and Renaissance Revival. His style was inspired by medieval buildings and features unusual rooflines, semi-circular arches supported on clusters of squat columns, and round arches over windows on massive walls. This church was built from Longmeadow brownstone.

**Continue over the brick pathway to Mattoon Street, heading towards Chestnut Street.**

Mattoon Street is the only street in Springfield that features Victorian row houses on both sides of the street. It was developed from one plot of land in the 1870's, and was designed to provide fashionable housing in the town for the professional people of



Springfield who might also have had homes in the country outside of the city. In the 1970's, about a hundred years after it was developed, Mattoon Street was threatened with having many of its houses demolished and replaced with parking lots. A group of concerned citizens got together to block the demolition and established the city's first historic district. A historic district provides guidelines for the buildings to maintain their historic character and architectural details.

Many of the buildings on Mattoon Street are in the French Second Empire style. After an economic crash in 1873, homes were built more modestly and without many of the expensive and luxurious details of the French Second Empire style.

As you make your way down the street, you will notice that the homes built before 1873 are much more elegant and elaborate than those built later. The later homes are shorter, have smaller windows, and lack many of the decorative details of the earlier-built buildings.



**At the end of Mattoon Street, turn left onto Chestnut Street.**

At the corner of Chestnut and Mattoon Street, you will see some shops with a white brick facade. There have been shops here for a long time, as you can tell from this photograph of the building that stood in this location in 1940.



This building had been a single family home (a mansion), that was turned into a rooming house in the 1930s (during the Great Depression) and had a shop (the “Bay Path Spa”) added to the front of it. The little alley way you see in the right of the photo is the same alleyway between Mattoon Street that is there today. Now it has a gate.



**Next, turn left on to Edwards Street and head back toward the Quad-  
rangle.**

As you look down Edwards Street, you will notice very few houses and many parking lots. Until the 1960s, Edwards Street looked more like Elliot and Salem Streets, with a mix of large, single family Queen Anne houses and early 20th century apartment buildings. As the 20th century progressed, many people felt that these houses and apartment buildings were old-fashioned. Taking good care of a large, hundred year old house could be very expensive, and families became smaller and didn't need such large houses anymore. More and more people owned automobiles. All of these factors contributed to decisions to demolish many historic homes during this time period.

Here are some comparison photos to show the changes that have happened on Edwards Street in the 75 years between 1939 and 2014:



During the 1960's—1990's, many historic buildings were demolished. Many people now regret the loss of those pieces of history. In order for historic buildings to be preserved, citizens must understand why it's important to keep old buildings and use them in traditional or new ways and must advocate for the preservation of the old buildings which are a tangible piece of our community's history.

## The Springfield Preservation Trust

### Mission

The mission of the Springfield Preservation Trust is to preserve and protect properties in Springfield, Massachusetts which have architectural, historic, educational, or general cultural significance for public edification and enjoyment.

### History

In 1972 a group of concerned Springfield residents created the Springfield Preservation Trust as a reaction to the destruction of historic buildings. The Springfield Preservation Trust purchased key properties to preserve, and encouraged others to do the same. In time the situation stabilized and the Springfield Preservation Trust was able to shift its focus to helping residents learn about preserving and maintaining their historic properties. In more recent years the Springfield Preservation Trust has been known for its annual tour of homes and gardens. As the only non-profit/non-government advocate group for historic preservation in Springfield, the Springfield Preservation Trust will continue to be the voice of preservation into the future.

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