



# THE Fenway News

HYPERLOCAL NEWS FOR THE FENWAY, AUDUBON CIRCLE, KENMORE SQUARE, UPPER BACK BAY, PRUDENTIAL, LONGWOOD, AND MISSION HILL SINCE 1974 • VOLUME 49 NUMBER 12 • DECEMBER 1-DECEMBER 29, 2023

## Storied St. Alphonsus Hall Falls to Fatal Wrecking Ball

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Once “that magnificent building said to be the most beautiful of its kind in Boston,” St. Alphonsus Hall in Mission Hill fell to the wrecking ball the first weekend in November. (The quote comes from a 1901 account in the *Boston Globe*.)

When the crane swung wildly against the stone walls of the hall, debris fell on the neighboring Smith Street Playground ballfield as cricket players played on. Neighbors and City Councilor Sharon Durkan had pressed for added safety measures because of the proximity of nearby public housing, Tobin Elementary School, and Mission Grammar School. As late as Friday evening before the scheduled demolition, however, details were

hard to confirm.

The former Sisters of Notre Dame convent—even older than St. Alphonsus Hall—was razed the following weekend. As the cranes from Atlantic Coast Dismantling smashed the bricks, some passersby stopped and snapped photos; others seemed oblivious.

More than 20 years ago, the Redemptorist Order sold the property with both buildings to real estate investors Mark J. and Paul J. Donahue, Jr. The former school at 90 Smith St., leased from the Donahues and renovated by Harvard Chan School of Public Health for use as office space, now stands alone between the flattened remains of its former neighbors.

The hall was known citywide for its large, elegant theater and as home base for the St. Alphonsus Association and its athletic



PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS

## SENIOR EVENTS

To attend, RSVP to Tracey or Sara at (617) 536-7154. For information, visit [operationpeaceboston.org](https://operationpeaceboston.org). Events take place at the Peterborough Senior Ctr. (PSC), or the Fenway Community Ctr. (FCC).

- Thu, Dec. 7, 12pm: HOLIDAY MUSIC at FCC
- Tue, Dec. 12 & 28, 12pm: FILM SCREENING

at PSC

- Wed, Dec. 13, 12pm: KNITTING AND CROCHETING at PSC
- Thu, Dec. 14, 12pm: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS at FCC
- Thu, Dec. 21, 12pm: HOLIDAY POTLUCK at FCC

## Ribbon-Cutting Opens River's New Era



PHOTOS: STEVE CHASE & CAROL LASKY

More than 100 people turned out on Nov. 29 for the official wrap-up of the Muddy River Restoration Project. Key players lined up to cut a ceremonial ribbon (large photo) after a 40-minute program—shortened, no doubt, by cold temperatures. Speakers included [from top right] Boston Mayor Michelle Wu; Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, the City's chief of environment, energy, and open space; and Boston Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods.

teams. Redemptorist priest Father Frawley is credited as the visionary behind the clubhouse for the men of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, now commonly known as Mission Church. According to historic accounts, thousands attended the dedication in February 1900.

Although included in the Mission Church Complex landmark designation, the hall had stood vacant since an amateur drama group associated with late State Rep. Kevin Fitzgerald last performed on the stage in the 1970s.

The Donahues entertained demolition intentions from the beginning; in 2005 they filed plans for a residential development called Basilica Court, although the project never went forward. Seventeen years later, once the BPDA accepted a new filing as a Notice of Project Change, demolition always seemed imminent.

Years of no maintenance weighed on 80 and 100 Smith St., and the Donahues pressed the Inspectional Services Department for permission to raze the buildings.

However, demolition permits needed sign-off from the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC), which held a public hearing in last August [see our Sept. issue, page 8].

In October, the BLC approved a salvage plan for removal of 56 stained-glass window panels and small terra-cotta features from the convent facade, to be stored at the Donahues' Shore Plaza East in East Boston. Also, 1,000 square feet of cut granite and 1,000 square feet of Roxbury puddingstone from the Hall's foundation and walls is supposed to be moved to a contractor's yard at 415 VFW Drive in

Rockland. The interiors had been stripped of valuable fixtures after the Donahues purchased the properties.

The Basilica Court proposal will now need approval from both the Boston Civic Design Commission and the BLC. A BPDA request in June for additional information and responses to previous public comments has not yet yielded a response. Whether the neighbors and preservation advocates will have a say remains to be seen; proposed heights for the market-rate apartments have been a concern for years.

A year ago, former City Councilor Kenzie Bok requested an in-person public meeting to be held nearby, possibly at the Mission Main Community Center, but no meeting has ever taken place.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## @ THE CENTER

The Fenway Community Center is open six days a week. Visit <https://fenwaycommunitycenter.org> for details.

- Sat, Dec. 2 & 16, 10am: CREATE art making
- Wed, Dec. 6, 4:30pm: PRE-TREE-LIGHTING FESTIVITIES
- Sat, Dec. 9, 2pm: HOLIDAY MARKET WITH WORK BY LOCAL ARTISTS
- Wed, Dec. 13, 5pm: WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP

## 2023 CITY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

The Fenway								
UNOFFICIAL TOTALS BY WARD/PRECINCT								
TURNOUT								
Ward/Precinct ↻	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9	5/2	5/10	21/1	21/2
	19.4%	16.8%	14.3%	7.8%	12.7%	13.3%	13.6%	8.4%
RESULTS FOR AT-LARGE COUNCILORS								
CLIFTON BRAITHWAITE	17	49	35	9	23	17	31	4
RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE ✓	170	146	128	10	10	93	166	29
JULIA MEJIA ✓	128	128	121	25	90	90	144	26
ERIN MURPHY ✓	170	116	91	12	197	70	139	25
BRIDGET NEE-WALSH	71	58	57	2	40	45	78	21
SHAWN NELSON	42	54	34	9	29	24	48	9
HENRY SANTANA ✓	165	105	105	22	105	78	127	21
CATHERINE VITALE	23	31	33	7	18	16	21	6

✓ FOUR CANDIDATES WITH THE HIGHEST CITYWIDE VOTE TOTALS BECOME THE NEW AT-LARGE CITY COUNCILORS. RESULTS PROVIDED BY CITY OF BOSTON ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT. THESE ARE UNOFFICIAL TOTALS.

Mission Hill							
UNOFFICIAL TOTALS BY WARD/PRECINCT							
TURNOUT							
Ward/Precinct ↻	10/1	10/2	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/8
	20.3%	12.1%	11.3%	13.4%	17.1%	17.5%	18.5%
RESULTS FOR AT-LARGE COUNCILORS							
CLIFTON BRAITHWAITE	44	20	16	41	14	37	50
RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE ✓	81	81	60	154	130	140	243
JULIA MEJIA ✓	104	60	58	170	109	155	243
ERIN MURPHY ✓	67	67	36	71	74	89	167
BRIDGET NEE-WALSH	50	30	28	45	42	47	83
SHAWN NELSON	29	12	14	34	17	30	49
HENRY SANTANA ✓	93	70	58	171	110	133	204
CATHERINE VITALE	19	11	10	27	9	20	56

IN MEMORIAM

## Scott Francis Ashley and Samuel Adams

COMPILED BY  
RUTH KHOWAIS

Scott Francis Ashley of North Truro and the Fenway died after a long illness on May 28. He was 86. His partner of more than 60 years, Samuel (Sam) Adams, 88, died eight days later.



Sam Adams



Scott Ashley

“They could not be without one another,” Scott’s nephew Lawrence Ashley told *The Provincetown Independent*. “They shared a love not known by many.”

After graduating from Natick High School in 1955, Scott briefly attended Catholic seminary before going to work as a maître d’ at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. He served on the board of the Symphony Area Renaissance Trust. He was also a member of Symphony United Neighbors and the student and community liaison for Northeastern University.

Scott could often be seen in the Fenway walking his bulldogs Margot, Cricket, and Yoda, and his shar-pei, China.

Sam grew up in Tampa and earned a BA in music from Washington and Lee University; in 1967 he earned a master of music degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, then won a Fulbright Scholarship and moved to Berlin to study at the Hochschule für Musik Berlin, earning a piano arts diploma. In Germany he recorded music for RIAS, the radio station established by the U.S. government in the American Sector of occupied Berlin.

On his return to Boston in the early 1970s Sam began work on a doctoral degree at B.U. Within a few years he took his impressive classical repertoire on both piano and organ to the faculty of New England Conservatory’s Preparatory

School. He later served as director of NEC’s School of Continuing Education and director of the conservatory’s summer school. As he neared retirement he stepped away from administrative duties to chair the School of Continuing

Education’s Piano faculty. In 2008 he received the prestigious Jean Stackhouse Award for Excellence in Teaching from the preparatory school. He retired from NEC in 2019 after decades of service.

Sam also served as director of music and organist for First Church in Chestnut Hill from 1972 to 2017. In retirement but never far from the keys he loved, Sam filled in from time to time as organist and sang in the chorus at St. Mary of the Harbor in Provincetown.

During their retirements, Sam and Scott operated the Millstone vacation home in North Truro. Scott could often be found landscaping with stone, naturally aged wood, grasses, and other plantings. Among his works was a 9/11 memorial, numerous millstones turned into turtles, statues of Buddha, and garden walls made of glass balls. He never threw anything away.

Scott’s many nieces and nephews knew Scott and Sam as the “cool uncles.” They remain grateful for the times he would listen to them when they were troubled.

A joint celebration of Sam’s and Scott’s lives took place on Oct. 21, at St. Mary of the Harbor in Provincetown.

*Ruth Khowais lives in the West Fens.*

## Fenway News

Serving the Fenway, Kenmore Square, Audubon Circle, upper Back Bay, lower Roxbury, Prudential, Mission Hill, and Longwood since 1974

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## CALENDAR

### Sat, 12/2

The **MAYOR’S ENCHANTED TROLLEY TOUR** arrives in Brigham Circle at 3:45pm for a holiday tree-lighting.

### Sun, 12/3

Fenway Studios Gallery hosts the opening celebration for **ALEXANDER GASSEL’S EXHIBIT ‘SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS’**. Learn more about at [fenwayartstudios.org/artists/alexander-gassel/](http://fenwayartstudios.org/artists/alexander-gassel/). 12–4pm. 30 Ipswich St.

### Wed, 12/6

• The Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, Fenway Civic Association and Sam-

uels & Associates present the **ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY, LUMINARY WALK, AND COMMUNITY FREE SKATE**. Entertainment, free cider and cocoa, refreshments, and an illuminated art exhibit inspired by the story of Hanukkah. Kelleher Rose Garden (across from 77 Park Dr.). 6–9pm.

• **OUT HERE 7: MORE STORIES OF HOMELESSNESS AND TRANSITION FROM THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN BOSTON.** Since 2011, the Black Seed Writers Group has served as a weekly space for writers experiencing homelessness. Join the writers for an evening of readings from their

works. 6–7:30pm. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/3y5ygzkx>. Boston Public Library in Copley Square.

### Fri, 12/8 ☞ Sun, 12/10

Load up on art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts **ANNUAL ART SALE**. All proceeds support the school’s scholarship program. Fri–Sat, 10am–8pm; Sun, 10am–5pm. 230 The Fenway.

### Fri, 12/8 & 12/15

Mission Hill Artists Association presents **MISSION HILL HOLIDAY MARKET**, 1620 Tremont St. in front of Stop & Shop. 11am–5:30 pm.

### LEGAL NOTICE

## ZONING HEARING

The Zoning Commission of the City of Boston hereby gives notice, in accordance with Chapter 665 of the Acts of 1956, as amended, that a **virtual public hearing will be held on December 13, 2023, at 9:15 A.M.**, in connection with a petition for approval of the Map Amendment Application No. 765, filed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority d/b/a the Boston Planning & Development Agency.

The proposed amendment would remove a single parcel from a Multifamily Residential (MFR) Subdistrict and include it in the recently modified boundary of the Fenway Triangle Neighborhood Development Area (Fenway Triangle NDA) Subdistrict to include the parcel bounded by Park Drive, Peterborough Street, and Private Alley 931.

This meeting will only be held virtually and not in person. **You can participate in this meeting by going to [https://bit.ly/BZC\\_Dec2023](https://bit.ly/BZC_Dec2023). Copies of the petitions and a map of the area involved may be obtained from the Zoning Commission electronically, and you may also submit written comments or questions to [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov).**

Interpreting services are available to communicate information at this hearing. If you require interpreting services, please contact the following: [zoningcommission@boston.gov](mailto:zoningcommission@boston.gov) or 617-918-4308. The meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2023. Please request interpreting services no later than December 8, 2023.

FOR THE COMMISSION  
JEFFREY M. HAMPTON  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

## FENWAY TREES GET A BOOST



PHOTO COURTESY OF FCA

Volunteers mulched trees at a Fenway Garden Society event in September.

BY LESLIE POND

On a rainy Saturday morning in late October, a group of Northeastern University students worked with members of the Fenway Civic Association to clean tree pits and mulch trees along streets in the East and West Fens.

FCA organized the event with Northeastern’s City and Community Engagement Team and the Alliance of Civically Engaged Students for the university’s Global Service Week. The partnership between FCA and Northeastern goes back 50 years, starting with their flower share, which continues annually.

Marie Fukuda, co-chair of FCA’s Parks and Open Space Committee, said the group regularly organizes such events. While the City has an Urban Forest Plan, the events complement its urban forestry efforts, which remain underfunded, with a small staff of arborists caring for all trees in Boston’s parks and streets.

“Having citizens and volunteers support tree maintenance provides direct work that helps the city and its trees, while helping connect residents with the urban canopy and the role they can play in helping grow it,” said Fukuda.

*Leslie Pond lives in the West Fens.*

## “Comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.”

The founders of The Fenway News adopted this motto to express their mission of exposing and opposing the dangers the neighborhood faced in the early 1970s—rampant arson, predatory landlords, and a destructive urban renewal plan. If the original motto no longer fits today’s Fenway, we remain committed to its spirit of identifying problems and making our neighborhood a better and safer place to live.

### > NEXT ISSUE <

Our next issue will appear on **Friday, December 29.**

> **DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS <**  
The deadline for letters, news items, and ads for our next issue is **Friday, December 22.**

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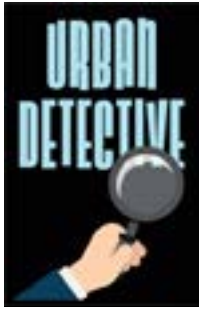
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# The Case of the Wandering Poet: The Robert Burns Statue

BY ED BALLO

Traditional wisdom would dictate that statues generally stay where they are placed. So, how did the statue of Robert Burns disappear from its Fenway perch, resurface in the Financial District, stay there for over 40 years, and then return to its original location in 2019?

Did “Rabbie” Burns and his faithful collie Luath go for a bit of a walkabout?



Burns (1759-1796) will always be remembered for the poem and the song “Auld Lang Syne” and in verse is considered a pioneer of the Romantic Movement. Considered Scotland’s greatest poet, his star has only continued to shine in the 200-plus years since his death. In fact, a 2009 poll by a Scottish television station named Burns the greatest Scot ever to have lived.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Robert Burns associations popped up in many English-speaking countries, and in 1910 the Burns Memorial Association in Boston held a competition to produce a statue of the poet. The winner was Anglo-American sculptor Henry Hudson Kitson, whose other local sculptures include the Minuteman on Lexington Green, the Pilgrim maiden in Plymouth,

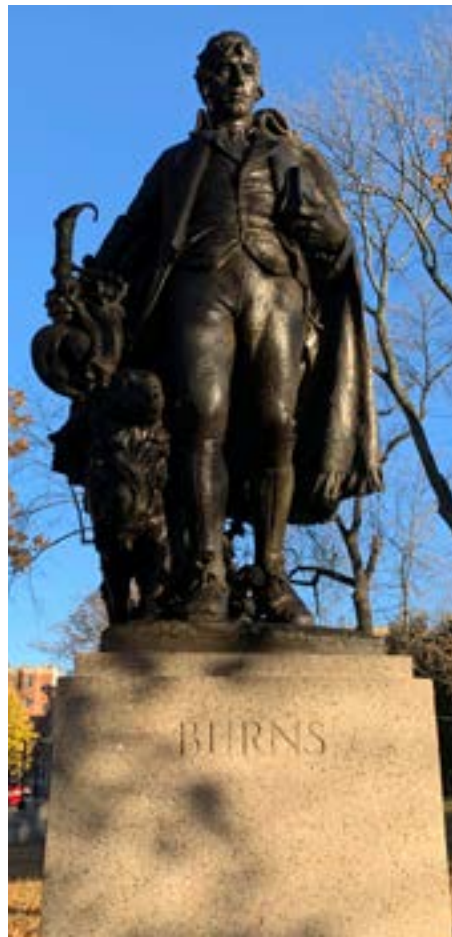
and the Roger Conant statue in Salem.

Born in West Yorkshire, England, Kitson (1863-1947) came from an artistic family. He immigrated to the U.S. as a teenager to apprentice with his oldest brother John William, an accomplished woodworker and creator of interior design. William did so well that he was able to fund Henry’s studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1882.

Upon his return to the United States, Henry settled in Boston to teach sculpture, living with his sculptor brother Sam, who maintained studios here and in New York. In 1893, he married his former student, Brookline-born Alice Ruggles, who would go on to enjoy a noteworthy artistic career of her own. Known as Theo Alice Ruggles Kitson, she won an honorable mention at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1888, becoming the youngest woman and the first American woman to receive the honor. In 1895 she became the first woman admitted to the National Sculpture Society.

The statue in the Fenway was dedicated by then-Governor Calvin Coolidge in 1920. In 1975, after 55 years, the Burns sculpture was moved to Winthrop Square in front of a handsome, recently renovated 19th-century building on the edge of the Financial District.

Given a recent spate of vandalism, City officials initially assumed the statue had been stolen, and even the parks commissioner was



unaware of the circumstances surrounding the move. (The City of Boston website still says that the statue was “spirited away.”) It transpired that the developer of the renovated building, Ted Raymond, was at the source. “We originally asked for the statue of John Winthrop,” Raymond told the *Boston Globe* at the time. Raymond’s request for the statue of Winthrop, a Puritan leader and first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, was denied; the City’s arts commission offered up the Burns statue instead, despite opposition from Fenway residents. It should be noted that the statue of Winthrop had itself been moved from Scollay Square to the First Church at Berkeley and Marlborough streets in the Back Bay at the beginning of the 20th century.

From 1975 until the fall of 2019, passers-by and office workers having lunch in the pleasant leafy Winthrop Square were puzzled, to say the least, to find Scotland’s national poet at the heart of a plaza named for such a prominent Bostonian. After prolonged community efforts, the statue was returned to the Fenway and rededicated in October 2019. It stands behind the Fire Alarm Building on the Fenway at Westland Avenue.

Ed Ballo lives in the West Fens.

His periodic “Urban Detective” column presents small bites of local history to help decipher the city around you and enhance your appreciation of it.

## Utility Companies Duke It Out On Brookline Avenue

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Utility companies are battling for space beneath Brookline Avenue, which at 60 feet lacks the width needed to accommodate National Grid, Boston Water and Sewer Commission infrastructure, various telecom lines, and Vicinity Energy’s new pipes for life-science-lab developer IQHQ.

Representatives of Vicinity Energy have appeared at seven hearings before the Boston Public Improvement Commission (PIC) since September but so far have failed to get their plan for installation of steam pipes down the middle of Brookline Avenue approved. This would be the second phase of a project to bring steam generated in Kendall Square to 109 Brookline Ave., a lab building under construction next to the Marriott Residence Inn. As explained at the Sept. 7 hearing, excavation will have to take place in the middle of the street because of hollow sidewalks on the avenue and the location of existing infrastructure, including the Muddy River stormwater culvert.

When City officials reviewed plans for 109 Brookline Ave. in 2021,

they asked IQHQ to consider renewable energy sources for the building.

Two years later, Vicinity announced that “eSteam”, its new carbon-free, renewable thermal energy” would decarbonize IQHQ developments in the Fenway. Vicinity’s Kendall Square plant will begin using a just-delivered electric boiler in 2024, although heat pumps will not be operational until 2027.

Phase 1 of the piping project won approval in March 2023; trench work for that continues on Boylston, Ipswich, and Lansdowne streets. Although not all delays and disruptions of the schedule for the #55 bus can be attributed to this project, Ipswich especially has become an obstacle course for #55 bus drivers.

The official City winter moratorium on roadway excavation began on Nov. 15; the annual pause only allows issuance of new permits for emergencies. Boston Public Works guidelines state that allowing permit holders “to work during the Winter Moratorium is a privilege and should not be abused.”

Negotiations over phase 2 of the steampipe project—from the corner of Lansdowne to 109 Brookline Ave.—



The #55 bus threads its way around an excavation trench on Ipswich Street.

apparently broke down because of disagreements between Vicinity and National Grid over the distance between their respective pipes. At the Oct. 19 PIC hearing Tim Matook, speaking for National Grid, said Vicinity’s steam pipes would sit too close to National Grid’s pipes, violating safety standards. In addition, he claimed that Vicinity won

City approval of its project without meeting conditions set by National Grid.

Chaired by Streets Cabinet chief Jascha Franklin-Hodge, the PIC meets every two weeks. Vicinity will be on the agenda yet again at the commission’s Dec. 7 hearing.

Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.

## As Pathways Plan Comes Into Focus, Not All Details Are Clear

BY STEVE WOLF

Plans have started coming into focus for the Back Bay Fens Pathways study, although many decisions remain. Underway for more than a year, the study appears to have slowed to allow consultation with a multitude of agencies that control how much and where the Parks Department can make changes in the Fens.

At a virtual meeting on Nov. 15, landscape architect Kyle Zick—lead consultant for the study—walked about 25 people through the complex layers of ownership and approval. Three agencies control different parts of the park. The state’s Department of Conservation and Recreation controls Park Drive, the Fenway, Agassiz Road, and—most significantly—the sidewalk on the outside of the park. The low-profile Boston Trust Office owns the War Memorial and some adjacent land. The Parks Department controls everything else.

That’s not all. Much of the park falls under wetlands-protection laws and regulations, requiring permits for work done near the Muddy River and in some other areas. And the plan will recommend new limited-mobility access to the raised platform at the War Memorial, a seemingly simple assignment that led Zick’s firm to design 12 possible solutions for review with City commissions on conservation, landmarks, disability, and veterans.

The meeting did provide some new details on key elements of the eventual upgrade.

- **Paths:** The plan will match pathway widths to traffic levels, aiming to relieve bottlenecks like the central Victory Gardens entrance at Boylston Street. It also calls for repaving a substantial proportion of all paths and conversion of some “desire lines”—user-created paths—into paved pathways.
- **Landscaping:** Working to supplement a tree inventory produced by the Emerald

Necklace Conservancy, the plan will identify all trees that need replacing. It proposes making permanent two meadows across from the Simmons campus that emerged during the second phase of the Muddy River dredging project, a boost to the park’s biodiversity.

- **Lighting:** The plan calls for installation of acorn light fixtures along the path from Jersey Street to the Forsyth Way bridge, along the basketball courts, and on the west side of Clemente Field. Acorns would also replace highway-scale streetlights—installed as a “temporary” anti-crime measure more than 30 years ago—along the Victory Gardens’ A path, which runs parallel to Boylston.
- **Victory Gardens:** Rebuilding the Boylston entrance would involve relocating the flagpole, memorial boulder, and bulletin board; new paving; a new inlaid strip with “welcome” carved in multiple languages; and adding benches and a water fountain. With the river’s

phragmites gone, the back path gains prominence along with some benches and landscaping sited to capitalize on the newly opened views across the river.

- **John Boyle O’Reilly Memorial:** The monument to a popular 19th-century journalist and orator will see significant changes. To improve accessibility, the plan proposes replacing existing granite pavers and raising the sidewalk at the monument. Zick’s firm also recommends widening the sidewalk where heavy foot traffic has left the ground compacted and barren. The semicircle of granite benches facing the statue would undergo repair and cleaning.

Zick and Project Manager Lauren Bryant said that comments from the meeting would be incorporated into the plan but gave no indication of the timing of plan completion or implementation. Bryant has not responded to questions about timing, submitted subsequently.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens.

## Guild House Welcomes Tenants, Plans Updates

BY ALISON PULTINAS

Last month Peabody Properties opened a gender-restricted lottery for single-room-occupancy (SRO) units at Our Lady's Guild House at 20 Charlesgate West. The female-only restriction reflects the historic mission of the property, originally planned by Cardinal Richard Cushing as safe housing for single working women.

Monthly rent will be \$1,200. The application deadline has passed, but Peabody will accept applications for the waiting list at [liveolgh.com](http://liveolgh.com).

The Fenway Community Development Corp. and the Archdiocese Planning Office for Urban Affairs created Twenty Charlesgate LLC to take control of the property after years of negotiation and organizing by

CDC staff. Funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing and the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation helped with the \$14 million acquisition cost. The new owners filed a permanent affordability restriction agreement at the Suffolk Registry of Deeds.

Leases for new tenants only cover an "interim occupancy period" before

planned rehabilitation, expected to begin in 2025. All residents will have to move during the renovation, which will convert 140 current rooms on six floors to 78 apartments, mostly studios with a few one-bedrooms and SROs. A relocation specialist, Housing to Home, has already been brought on for the project. According to Nick Pittman of the Fenway CDC, once renovation is complete, all units will be open to all gender identities.

*Alison Pultinas lives in Mission Hill.*

## A CLIMATE ACTION CHECKLIST TO HELP HEAL THE PLANET

BY LESLIE POND

Concerned about global warming, and not sure what you can do about it? The City of Boston and local organizations offer options to help reduce the amount of carbon pollution you generate.



### REDUCE

Consider how you can use less gas and oil and fewer products—especially those made from fossil fuels, such as plastics. Plastics are difficult to recycle and often end up being in-

nerated or dumped in oceans. Options for reducing plastic manufacturing and waste include avoiding single-use plastics by using refillable water bottles and soap and shampoo bars instead of bottled products.

### OPT-IN/OPT-UP TO BOSTON'S COMMUNITY CHOICE ELECTRICITY PROGRAM

The City buys electricity at a competitive rate and passes it on to residents who sign up through this program. By opting-in or opting-up, we increase the City's collective buying power to provide affordable and renewable electricity to customers. Current rate options, locked in through December 2025 and including different levels of renewable energy, are:

- **Optional Basic:** 24 percent renewable energy, \$0.14205 per kWh
- **Standard (default):** 39 percent renewable energy, \$0.14805 per kWh
- **Optional Green 100:** 100 percent renewable energy, \$0.17195 per kWh

Learn more at [boston.gov/departments/environment/community-choice-electricity](http://boston.gov/departments/environment/community-choice-electricity).

### REUSE

Consider buying or trading goods instead of buying them new. Conversely, do you have new or gently used items sitting in the back of your closet? Your neighbors might just need them! Two options to donate items:

- **Fenway CDC's Free Market.** Hosted monthly at the Fenway Community Center, the Free Market invites you to bring gently used items for others to enjoy—and pick up something for yourself! The Free Market typically takes place on a Tuesday afternoon. Check [fenwaycommunitycenter.org/calendar](http://fenwaycommunitycenter.org/calendar)
- **Winter Clothing Drive.** During December, the Fenway Community Center, in partnership with the Fenway Civic Association, will host a winter

clothing drive for the Boston Public Health Commission. Bring new or clean, gently worn clothing and shoes. New warm winter clothing is especially needed, and new undergarments and socks will also be accepted. The drop-off box is at 1282 Boylston Street (enter on Jersey Street) and accessible:

- > Mon. and Tue. through Dec. 19, 12–4pm
- > Thu. through Dec. 21, 12–7pm
- > Sat. through Dec. 16, 10am–12pm

### RECYCLE

For items that are beyond "gently used" or simply no longer needed, the City of Boston offers these recycling and safe disposal options.

Some glass, metal, paper, and plastic items can be placed in the familiar blue bins for pick-up on your street's trash day. For effective recycling, only place accepted items in the bin. Contamination with non-accepted items reduces the overall amount that can be recycled.

Plastic bags don't belong in the blue bins, as they can clog up sorting machinery. Some stores, including Whole Foods, Target, Star, and Stop & Shop take back plastic bags and wraps (such as the ones for toilet paper and paper towels).

To find out what can be accepted, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/recycling-boston](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/recycling-boston) or download the Trash Day app from the website.

### RECYCLE CLOTHING AND TEXTILE

The City of Boston no longer accepts clothing and textiles in curbside trash, in accordance with a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection policy that has been in place since November 2022. An estimated 85 percent of the textiles that were being delivered to trash facilities could have been donated, reused, or recycled instead.

Boston residents have two options for donating clothing and textiles:

- Drop-off boxes, including at the Mel King Middle School (formerly McKinley Middle School), 50 St. Mary's St. in Audubon Circle
- Weekend curbside textile collection

The program accepts footwear, clothing, accessories, linens, luggage, and stuffed animals that are clean, dry, and odorless.

To see what specific items are accepted, find additional drop-off boxes, and schedule curbside pickup, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/recycling-clothing-and-textiles](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/recycling-clothing-and-textiles).

The City recycles almost all donated items: 45 percent is usable clothing that is sold as secondhand apparel, 30 percent is turned into industrial wiping cloths, and 20 percent is sent to fiber converters where textiles are broken down into their basic fiber components to be remanufactured into insulation for cars and homes, carpet padding, or soundproofing materials.

### RECYCLE MATTRESSES

Massachusetts requires that mattresses be recycled. According to the City's website, more than 75 percent of the mattress and box spring components can be reused to manufacture a variety of products.

Donate mattresses in good condition to an organization on the MassDEP's Beyond the Bin Recycling Directory.

For mattress recycling:

- If you live in a building with six or fewer units, dial 311 or 617-635-4500 to schedule a curbside pickup.
- If you live in a larger building, contact a local mattress hauler. It may be helpful to coordinate with the building owner.
- Futons are not included in the mattress recycling program.

For more information, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/mattress-recycling](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/mattress-recycling).

### HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

The City schedules drop-off days throughout the year for items such as electronics, some types of paint, some batteries, and more. You must provide a photo ID, utility bill, or lease as proof of residency.

To dispose of expired prescription medications, some Boston Police facilities, including Area B-2 headquarters in Nubian Square, and drugstores have disposal kiosks.

To learn more, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/get-rid-household-hazardous-waste](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/get-rid-household-hazardous-waste).

For Environmental Protection Agency guidelines on disposal of medications, visit [epa.gov/hwgenerators/collecting-and-disposing-unwanted-medicines](http://epa.gov/hwgenerators/collecting-and-disposing-unwanted-medicines).

### COMPOST

Up to 10 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. is linked to food waste, and the USDA estimates that nearly 40 percent of food is thrown away. With food insecurity increasing, consider donating unopened items that you won't use before the best-by-date to a community fridge or food pantry. To compost food scraps:

- If you live in a building with six or fewer units, sign up for free curbside food waste collection. Your food scraps will be turned into nutrient-rich soil and renewable energy. For more info, including lists of accepted and not accepted items and a how-to guide, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/curbside-food-waste-collection](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/curbside-food-waste-collection).
- If you live a building with seven or more units, take food waste to a Project Oscar community bin to be turned into nutrient-rich compost that is sold to farmers and gardeners. Bins are always accessible; some have locks and a QR code for access instructions. The closest ones:
  - > Tobin Community Ctr., 1481 Tremont St.
  - > South End Library, 685 Tremont St.
  - > City Hall Plaza

Note that Project Oscar bins accept fewer types of items than the curbside collection program. For more info, visit [boston.gov/departments/public-works/project-oscar](http://boston.gov/departments/public-works/project-oscar).

### COMPOSTING PRO TIPS

- Store food scraps in a closed container(s) in your fridge or freezer until collection or drop-off day.

## Banging The Drums For Art

PHOTO: ALISON PULTINAS



For one week only at MassArt's Brant Gallery in South Hall, artist-in-residence Steve Hubback, a sculptor and musician, exhibited his percussion creations.

## Kaji Aso Studio Celebrates 50 Years



Kaji Aso Studio in the East Fens marked its 50th anniversary on Nov. 4 with an art show, poetry reading, and musical medley. Thirty-seven artists, poets, and musicians contributed to the event. State Rep. Jay Livingstone presented a certificate honoring the studio at the event. Pictured at the celebration, left to right, are Consul General of Japan Kotaro Suzuki; Kate Finnegan, executive director of Kaji Aso Studio; and Livingstone.

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A LOT HAPPENED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE THE LAST ISSUE, INCLUDING...

# ICYMI

B.U. swatted away charges of fiscal mismanagement at the Center for Antiracist Research. A university audit “found no issues with how finances were handled.” **Contrarian Boston reports that HYM will soon file detailed plans for the P3 site on Tremont Street across from police headquarters. ICYMI will be curious to see if plans have changed for the five-building complex with housing, labs (of course!), stores, and a museum.** **Henry Santana held his victory celebration at Mission Hill’s Yellow Door Taqueria after last month’s elections. He won a seat as an at-large councilor on his first try.** **Strategic local union actions: Workers walked out of the REI store at 401 Park on Nov. 4, and out of a Starbucks across Comm. Ave. from Agannis Arena on Nov. 16.** **ICYMI took last issue off, so it failed to note Lee Berk’s death on Oct. 25. Berk served 25 years as president of the school of music, which his father founded and named for him.** **A lengthy Globe’s “Spotlight” report used One Dalton Street as a textbook example of Boston’s out-of-balance housing market, where luxury construction has crowded out almost everything else. The average tax assessment for each of the building’s 171 condos sits at \$6 million. More depressingly, only 16% of unit owners have requested a residential tax exemption, which strongly suggests that most units represent investments—with owners’ identities masked by trusts and LLCs—and not actual homes.** **New England Conservatory faculty and alums scooped up 12 Grammy nominations, most in classical or jazz categories (except for a nod in the category of Best New Age, Ambient or Chant Album.)**

### Proposed Cancer Hospital Will Need State Review

The state Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is reviewing the new cancer hospital proposed by BIDMC and Dana Farber Cancer Institute. The 445,000-SF building would replace the existing Joslin Diabetes Center on Brookline Avenue. The proposal requires environmental review due to 250 spaces of below-grade parking and the additional traffic it would generate. Visit MEPA’s Environmental Monitor web page to review the project’s Environmental Notification Form (<https://tinyurl.com/4xk8fy5u>). Submit public comments by Dec. 12 there or to [Purvi.Patel@mass.gov](mailto:Purvi.Patel@mass.gov).

## COMMUNITY meetings

**MON, DEC 11** The BPDA hosts a virtual public meeting for **142-146 ST. MARY’S STREET** in Audubon Circle. The meeting will include a presentation followed by Q&A. The proposed 91,000-square-foot project would include six stories, 90 residential

units, and parking for 128 cars. Register at [bit.ly/45TUIem](https://bit.ly/45TUIem), or call in at (833) 568-8864 (meeting ID is 161 031 5006). Contact Ebony DaRosa at [ebony.darosa@boston.gov](mailto:ebony.darosa@boston.gov) or (617) 918-4419 for more information. 6pm.

## Mission Hill Development

### Permits Expired, But Barriers Still Block Huntington Ave.

Permits have expired for 804–812 Huntington Ave., originally given to the Bullfinch Company’s contractor Derenzo in 2022 for work associated with a proposed life-science lab building. That project stalled, leaving a half-demolished concrete shell on the site. Even though the demolition permit expired a year ago, Jersey barriers blocking the sidewalk and taking up parking spaces remain, including those rounding the corner on Frawley Street. A street-occupancy permit from Public Works expired on Nov. 24.

### Parcel 25 Reboot Trades Offices For Housing

In an October BPDA filing, Mission Hill Neighborhood Housing Services proposed changing the planned third phase of its Parcel 25 development on the former MBTA property in Roxbury Crossing. The new proposal calls for 94 income-restricted rental units instead of the previously approved office building. The change is expected to be approved at the Dec. 16 BPDA board meeting. The plans are on a fast track to meet tight year-end deadlines to apply for competitive public funding from the city and state.

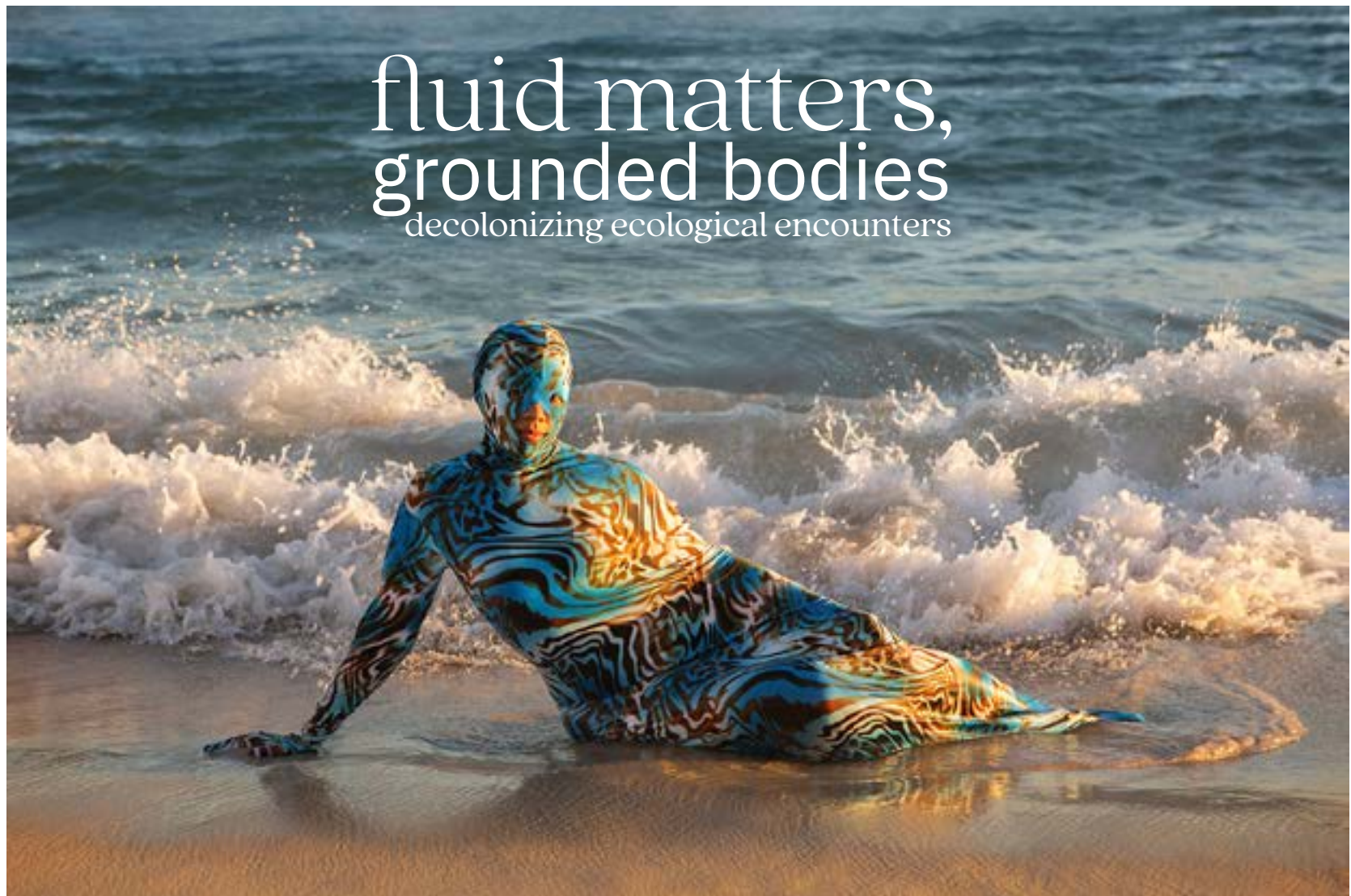
At the Nov. 14 Boston Civic Design Commission (BCDC) review, commissioners saw project renderings for the first time and had questions about the site conditions and the long façade facing Columbus Avenue. Typically, a large, complicated development would undergo review at two or three subcommittee meetings before going to the full board for a vote. However, BPDA Chief of Urban Design Diana Fernandez spoke forcefully of the need to push faster on affordable housing. Commissioners then voted to approve Phase 3, but also asked to send the project to a subcommittee for further refinement.

### Opponents Can’t Gain Traction on 1558 Tremont Proposal

After receiving the obligatory two-day notice for the BPDA board agenda, Mission Hill neighbors and Impact Advisory Group members sent a flurry of messages in October to City Councilor Sharon Durkan asking for her support to delay the vote and oppose approval of the 95-unit development at 1558 Tremont St. Nevertheless, the board approved the project unanimously, and the councilor did not testify. An Oct. 12 memo from BPDA staff to the board said, “...the proposed density is justified. The creation of 95 total units with 17% on-site IDP contribution, streetscape and public realm improvements, and the site’s proximity to rapid transit, retail, and the Longwood Medical Area is an exemplary scenario for greater residential density.”

An 18-month-long community process had failed in many ways. For example, IAG members were left off meeting notification lists, and the IAG held no discussion about negotiated community benefits. Public comments were posted online in an illegible, abbreviated spreadsheet, and months later were still missing. Opposition primarily focused on the size of the proposal on the site of former funeral home and surface parking lot used by Mission Church parishioners and school staff. “Literally hundreds of letters of opposition sent, meetings attended, thoughtful and intelligent suggestions and discussions, research and pleas for re-design—and it gets approved,” wrote Luanne Witkowski. “The planned building...obscures views of our neighborhood’s namesake historic basilica and provides exclusively small rental units but no home ownership opportunities,” wrote Martin Beinborn.

1558 Tremont St. is an old building—historically, quarry owner Timothy McCarthy’s homestead. However, its original features lie hidden behind a 1960s renovation that converted it into a funeral home. The land uphill behind the house was a puddingstone quarry, and stone outcroppings remain visible at the edge of the parking lot. Demolition will require an application to the Boston Landmarks Commission, and the developer will need variances from the Zoning Board of Appeal. An application has not been submitted yet.



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grounded bodies  
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# The Arts

## You Might Call The MFA's Sargent Exhibit A Fashion Show

BY STEVE WOLF

I didn't have high hopes for "Fashioned by Sargent" at the MFA. It sounded like a superficial crowd pleaser built around a local favorite plus a sprinkling of period clothes from Olde Boston closets. In other words, the art-world equivalent of a Twinkie.

Boy, was I wrong. The show makes a bulletproof argument for Sargent's astonishing skill as a painter; his ability to adapt avant-garde techniques in ways that conventional audiences could love; and his gift for flattering wealthy patrons while telegraphing their distinct personalities on canvas.

Even as Sargent absorbed 19th-century currents reshaping European art—the Pre-Raphaelites, the Impressionists, even post-Impressionists—he also drew from old masters like Frans Hals and Anthony Van Dyke. He embraced Hals's practice of painting subjects in dark clothing against dark backgrounds; these shadowy realms made the warm, bright tones of faces and hands leap off the canvas.

Above all, Sargent paid close attention to and frequently *invented* clothes, reveling in fabrics themselves—whose varied textures just happened to showcase his mastery—and in the ways they transmuted into fashion. He often told his subjects precisely what to wear for a portrait and frequently redesigned their clothes as he painted, removing some details and inventing others in the pursuit of more

dramatic and energetic compositions.

Gallery 2 focuses on the complex rules that bound upper-class women's dress. Here's where those Brahmin hand-me-downs first appear—with a bang. Three freestanding cases hold magnificent dresses that appear in nearby portraits. The actual outfits help illuminate some of the liberties Sargent took with his subjects' clothes. But they also draw attention to themselves and the magnificent craft that went into such complex, precisely tailored creations. Something I'd dismissed as a frill ends up adding an intriguing extra dimension to the portraits.

"Mrs. Hugh Hammersley (Mary Frances Grant)" stands out here. This 1892 portrait shows Sargent's high-society friend leaning forward from a couch, ready to jump up, take you by the arm, and engage you in earnest conversation. She wears an elegant velvet gown, its color somewhere between red and pink, with a nipped waste and a shimmering cloud of gold lace at her neck, suggested with the loosest possible brushwork. Sargent thought highly of the picture: he borrowed it back multiple times to hang in exhibitions.

The next gallery, "Sporting With Gender," shows us that we didn't invent gender fluidity. It features portraits of women who presented as men and of men who lavished enough attention on their clothes, accessories, and public images to earn the disapproving label "dandy." Having just left a gallery fo-

cused on restrictive ideas of propriety for women's clothing, you can see why people would have rebelled. A rough 1881 study of "Vernon Lee" shows the lively writer Violet Paget, dressed as a man and lived under her male pen name.

In "Doctor Pozzi at Home," also 1881, the Parisian gynecologist Samuel-Jean Pozzi strikes a theatrical—even dandified—pose. Bearded and elegantly handsome, he rests one hand on the lapel of a brilliant crimson dressing gown while the other pulls suggestively at the gown's belt. One of the most arresting portraits in a show full of them, its subject looks more like a matinee idol than a respected clinician.

Sargent painted several Jewish members of the English upper crust. Despite their wealth and titles, they ran up against a deep vein of anti-Semitism among the British aristocracy. The curators suggest that Sargent—an American reared in Europe and quite possibly gay—likely understood their feelings of being outsiders among the entitled rich. Outsider status might also have contributed to his interest in "sporting" with gender.

Toward the show's end we see Sargent's fame kick into high gear with portraits of royalty, both hereditary (an English marquess



"Dr. Pozzi at Home," 1881

in gaudy ceremonial dress) and financial (an English banker's family, John D. Rockefeller). Around 1907 Sargent largely abandoned portraits (he'd still paint the occasional friend) and increasingly worked on outdoor subjects, stepping outside of fashion to find visual excitement in Middle Eastern clothing, out-of-fashion Western styles, and white summer clothes worn on alpine hikes. In these late paintings, less finished and filled with remarkable energy, you sense the artist giving in to the raw pleasure of rendering fabric and its shifting balance of shadows, colors, and textures.

Borrowing from museums far and wide, the show offers some of Sargent's greatest hits, like "Doctor Pozzi" and "Madame X," the portrait that so scandalized Paris that Sargent had to repaint

a fallen dress strap to put a stop to the gossip. You might feel disappointment in not finding others, like Isabella Stewart Gardner with a rope of pearls cinching her waist, or the much-loved "Daughters of Edward Darley Boit." Don't worry—they remain, respectively, at her "palace" and upstairs in the Art of the Americas wing. But neither showcases the remarkable skill, thought, and sheer joy that Sargent lavished on fashion over his long career.

Steve Wolf lives in the West Fens. "Designed by Sargent" remains on view through Jan. 15, after which it travels to London's Tate Gallery.



PHOTO: JACK TAN, COURTESY OF CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

### PROGRAM WELCOMES ANYONE TO DANCE

Over the weekend of Nov. 18–19, 115 students danced in three shows for the annual fall Colleges of the Fenway (COF) event in MassArt's Tower Auditorium. If you missed it, you can find a video of the performance, "Roots in Rhythm," on YouTube. The Colleges of the Fenway comprises MassArt, Simmons University, Emmanuel College, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, and Wentworth Institute of Technology. The intercollegiate program, directed by Kristen Duffy Young and founded in 2006, included a wide spectrum of dance styles—tap, hip hop, ballet, Latin, West African, and modern. Both students and instructors are choreographers. What is unique about the COF Dance Project is that it requires no auditions; anyone can participate, whether they have years of dance classes or none. The photo shows the piece "Howling," choreographed by jazz and tap instructor Kelly McAuley with lighting by Erik Fox.

—ALISON PULTINAS



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# Fenway Tree Lighting

**Wednesday, December 6 | 6PM**

Outside Kelleher Rose Garden  
(across from 77 Park Drive)



**6PM**

**TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

**6:45PM**

**LUMINARY WALK**

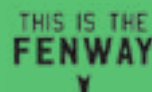
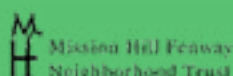
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