

Garden in Boston Metro Article

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Somerset Street from Beacon to Cambridge streets

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BOSTON. When Beacon Hill comes to mind, many might think of the State House and points West — a medley of nooks, crannies and rows of brownstones.

On the other side of our government's seat, however, one finds a more institutional feel.

Here, rather than searching for antiques or that quintessential postcard photo, the visitor finds higher education and halls of justice. Relentless foot traffic is dominated by students, lawyers and every form of uniformed law enforcement. Tourists are a rarity.

At the apex of hilly Somerset Street sits the heart of Suffolk University. Across the street is the front of the John Adams Courthouse — which houses the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court —and the back of the adjacent Suffolk County Superior Court.

There, murder cases are tried on a weekly basis, making the street's one oasis a perfectly placed one. The Garden of Peace, burrowed below the 22-story Ashburton Street home of Attorney General Martha Coakley and the 22-story Saltonstall building, is a touching memorial to the victims of such killings.

Hundreds of stones with the names of homicide victims are placed there, and a ceremony honoring them takes place each year.

Unfortunately for visitors to the garden, the block's one true eyesore is within view as steps away sits the former home of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, boarded up windows dotting its massive brick face.

Suffolk is in discussions to renovate the structure for academic purposes, slated for completion in 2011. In keeping with the rest of the street, modern design plans look decidedly un-Beacon Hill.