

# jamaica plain

founded/ annexed	population	gross area	population density	housing units	median income
1630/1874	38,074	3.07 sq.mi.	12,402 ppsm	16,536	\$41,524

Information from 2000 U.S. Census data

## history

No one is sure how Jamaica Plain acquired its name. Some attribute it to an Indian chief named Kutchemakin, while others claim the locals had a fondness for Jamaica rum and asked for it 'neat,' or plain. Before 1630, the land around Jamaica Pond was a summer home to the Wampanoag tribe. In 1630, Puritan settlers built the first road in the area – Quinecticut Lane, today's Perkins Street. The land along the Stony Brook Valley was attractive to farmers, and Jamaica Plain became a wealthy rural village. Beginning in the 1840's, factories and breweries were built along Stony Brook and Mission Hill. The first wave of gentrification of Jamaica Plain began in about 1740, when the Brahmins built their country summer homes on sprawling rural estates in the Pondsides area of Jamaica Plain.

Jamaica Plain is home to the **Eliot School** (founded 1676), the fourth-oldest school in the country, and the **Footlights Club** (founded 1877), the oldest community theater in the United States, and the **Tuesday Club** (founded 1897), one of the oldest women's literary societies. Entrepreneur James Drummond Dole (1877-1958) was born in Jamaica Plain and went on to Hawaii where he made a fortune with the pineapple business that still bears his name.

## today

Jamaica Plain combines aspects of city living, an exclusive suburb, and an artist community. Neighborhood amenities include **Centre Street's** art galleries and cafes to sailing and trout fishing on the Pond. Jamaica Plain contains or is adjacent to more than 1,250 acres of open space, including **Allendale Woods**, the **Arnold Arboretum**, the **Forest Hills Cemetery**, **Franklin Park**, **Jamaica Pond**, and the **Southwest Corridor Park**. Jamaica Plain is broken down into smaller localities with distinct identities:

**Brookside** stretches from Boylston Street to Green Street and from Washington Street to the Southwest Corridor Park. This area was once dominated by breweries.

**Central Jamaica Plain** stretches from Centre St. to the Southwest Corridor Park.

**Egleston Square** revolves around the intersection of Columbus Avenue and Washington Street and is the boundary between Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. There are some Victorian houses here on Ather-ton, School, and Copley. This was where the brewery managers lived. Round Hill and Edge Hill were developments for brewery workers.

**Forest Hills** is east of Hyde Park Avenue. Housing stock includes triple-deckers and Victorians.

**Jamaica Hills** is west and northwest of the Arnold Arboretum and is defined by traditional high-end housing, including **Moss Hill**, which has the strongest reputation, and **Green Hill**, behind Faulkner Hospital. This area is zoned for single-family homes and there are virtually no rental units.

**Parkside** was once seen as the whole neighborhood east of the Stony Brook valley, but now refers to the area east of Washington or the Southwest Corridor Park.

**Pondsides** is known for single-family area with homes that are almost equal in price to Jamaica Hills. Proximity to the Pond and Centre Street are the biggest draws of this neighborhood.

**Stony Brook** lies northeast of the Forest Hills MBTA Station and it is dominated by triple-deckers. It is mixed in with industrial uses to the west, and south at the Arborway Yard.

**South Street** is the neighborhood south of the Soldiers' Monument. This area varies considerably from street to street; housing stock by the Arboretum is higher end and there are smaller houses closer to South Street. There are mostly triple-deckers from South Street to the Southwest Corridor Park. This area is equivalent to the Forest Hills area.

**Sumner Hill** is an historical neighborhood behind the fire station between Centre Street and the Southwest Corridor Park. The area

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was settled with large country estates beginning in the mid 1700s with the Loring-Greenough house. After the Civil War, the estates were sub-divided.

**Woodbourne** is southwest of the Forest Hills Cemetery. The Olmstead Brothers designed Woodbourne, one of Boston's first planned communities, which was built in 1913. This is the blue collar equivalent of Moss Hill. It is smaller and less expensive than Moss Hill but still has World War II-era housing.

**Longwood Medical Center** is home to some of the world's leading health care institutions, including the Beth Israel and the Brigham & Women's Hospitals.

## location

The boundaries of Jamaica Plain have never been clearly defined. Over the course of its history, Jamaica Plain has been part of Roxbury, then of West Roxbury, and it was annexed to Boston in 1874. The neighborhood is bordered to the south by West Roxbury and Roslindale, to the east by Roxbury, to the west by the town of Brookline, and to the north by The Fenway and South End. The main commercial streets are Centre, South, and Washington. Many parts of Jamaica Plain are also convenient to the **Longwood Medical Area**, home to some of the world's leading health care institutions, including the Beth Israel and the Brigham & Women's Hospitals.

## housing stock

Jamaica Plain has a mix of Victorian, Colonial Revival, Second Empire, wooden three-deckers, and brick apartment buildings. Locals refer to neighborhoods as 'pondside' or 'parkside,' depending on their proximity to Jamaica Plain's outdoor amenities. Prestige addresses include Jamaica Hills (Moss Hill, Green Hill, Sumner Hill) as well as the Jamaicaaway, particularly along the stretch facing Jamaica Pond. More contemporary developments of note include the **Adams Arboretum Condominiums** and the **Allandale Condominiums**.

## culture & recreation

Arnold Arboretum • Forest Hills Cemetery • Loring-Greenough House (1760) • Jamaica Pond • Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists • Walter Street Burying Ground (1711)

## famous residents

Samuel Adams • Emily Greene Balch • Ednah Dow Cheney • James Micheal Curley • James Drummond Dole • Susan Walker Fitzgerald • Margaret Fuller • John Hancock • Maud Cuney Hare • Julia Oliver O'Neil Elizabeth Peabody • Sylvia Plath • Judith Winsor Smith • Lucy Stone • Ellen Swallow Richards • Marie Zakrewska

## major employers

Beth Israel Hospital • Brigham & Women's Hospital • Faulker Hospital • Samuel Adams Brewery

## transportation

Jamaica Plain is conveniently located for both residents and commuters. Jamaica Plain is served by a rapid transit line that runs through the center of the neighborhood along the Southwest Corridor. The Orange Line that originates at the Forest Hills MBTA Station in southern Jamaica Plain includes three more stops in the neighborhood, and extends to downtown Boston and beyond. The Forest Hills Station is also a regional transportation hub for the bus system and for a commuter rail that also runs through Roslindale Village.

## local news sources

*Jamaica Plain Gazette* ([jamaicaplainingazette.com](http://jamaicaplainingazette.com))

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