

**AUBURNDALE  
LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**FINAL STUDY REPORT**

**Prepared by Auburndale Historic District Committee  
of  
Lasell Neighborhood Association  
for  
Newton Historical Commission  
the  
Study Committee for the Proposed Auburndale Local Historic District**

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## SUMMARY

The Auburndale Local Historic District Study Report is submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Newton Planning Board in accordance with M.G.L Chapter 40C – Section 3 and Newton City Ordinances Section 22-40 (c )(3) by the Newton Historical Commission acting as the Study Committee for the newly proposed local historic district on behalf of Newton’s three established local historic districts commissions, which are called the Chestnut Hill Historic District Commission, the Newtonville Historic District Commission and the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission.

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The **Public Hearing** will be held no sooner than sixty (60) days after the submittal of this study report to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and the Newton Planning Board. The request to approve the local historic district will be docketed before the Board of Aldermen. The issue will be reviewed by the Zoning and Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen, after the public hearing held by the Newton Historical Commission has taken place, and will be forwarded to the full Board of Aldermen at the discretion of the Zoning and Planning Committee, which meets monthly. The **Board of Aldermen meetings** also are held monthly and the agenda is determined by the Board, thus it is not possible to state an expected date. The Study Committee anticipates that the issue will be considered in early 2005.

**The total number of parcels** in the proposed historic district is 276 of which 14 are vacant lots. The number of resources on those parcels is 277 because there are several parcels on which there is more than one resource.

This is the second Preliminary Study Report submitted for an Auburndale Historic District and should be referred to as Preliminary Study Report 2005. Changes have been made to the 2002 report to update the information and amend the map that was included in the first report. The map in the Preliminary Study Report 2005 is consistent with the map that was amended just prior to the Board of Aldermen’s final consideration in 2003 and reflects changes that were discussed by and recommended by the Zoning and Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen.

## INTRODUCTION

A local historic district is established in accordance with M.G. L Chapter 40C and is a local option. The adoption of an historic district grants a local commission that is duly appointed according to the State Historic District Act, jurisdiction over the exterior architectural elements of properties included in the prescribed geographic area, known as the district. The premise upon which local historic district legislation is based is protection of the public interest in a community's historic resources, thus all jurisdiction is limited to elements within the public view. Local historic district designation in Massachusetts is not a zoning tool and does not provide jurisdiction over use of a property.

Newton first adopted an ordinance in conformance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C in 1976 when it established the Newton Upper Falls Historic District. In 1985 the boundaries of that first Newton local historic district were expanded to include a total of 192 properties. In 1991 the entire ordinance was rewritten and a second district was established, known as the Chestnut Hill Historic District including 252 properties. The most significant changes to the text of the ordinance at that time were the addition of some of the items that would be excluded from review and the membership of the commission. In 2002 the Newtonville Historic District Commission, comprising 113 properties, was adopted by the Board of Aldermen bringing Newton's historic districts to three with jurisdiction over 557 properties. In 2003 the Board of Aldermen considered an article to establish a local historic district in Auburndale. While the proposal received a majority vote, it did not gain the necessary 2/3 majority, missing by one vote.

Newton's Historic District Ordinance clearly states that the purpose of local historic district is to promote:

- preservation and protection of the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the City of Newton;
- maintenance and improvement of settings of such buildings and settings;
- encouragement of design compatible with the existing architecture.

Thus it is important to understand the evolution of a potential historic district and to know how the historic resources are distinctive and informative of the past historical development that prompts interest in preservation of the neighborhood. The discussion in the Significance Section of a Study Report establishes the context of the existing neighborhood that is worthy of protection.

Due to the considerable work of each district commission and the Newton Historical Commission, the Lasell Neighborhood Association agreed to assist in writing the Auburndale Historic District Study Report. The Preliminary Study Report for the district considered in 2003 was prepared by the Auburndale Historic District Committee of the Lasell Neighborhood Association. The same group has prepared the information for an edited study report to be used for this new initiative if the Study Committee so chooses.

The core of this proposed Local Historic District consists of two National Register Districts and four individual National Register properties. All were listed in 1986 as part of Newton's Multiple Resource Area Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The educational institution, today known as Lasell College, and the wood frame Auburndale Congregational Church built in 1856-57 have been at the center of the development patterns of the neighborhood since the mid-nineteenth century. Hence, they are the core of the district that fans out from these National Register properties to include other National Register listings – the district known as the Walker Home for Missionary Children, and three dwellings; the Rufus Estabrook House, more accurately named the Ebenezer Bradbury House, (ca. 1848, Greek Revival) at 33 Woodland Road, the Edward C. Hammond House (1909, Craftsman Style) at 35 Groveland Street, and the Rev. Francis E. Clark House (1895, Queen Anne) at 379 Central Street. This larger neighborhood that includes the National Register properties evolved in response to transportation patterns, real estate speculation, and the establishment of these very institutions: Lasell Female Seminary, now known as Lasell College and the Auburndale Congregational Church, now known as the United Parish of Auburndale.

The larger neighborhood retains a wealth of resources reflective of the development patterns and of the refined architectural tastes from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. Preservation of these properties as well as their context retains a collection of resources that tell the story of Auburndale's suburban development while protecting the public interest in that segment of local history.

## METHODOLOGY

This Preliminary Study Report 2005 is a revision of the first preliminary study report which was submitted in January 2002, and which recommended a larger district than is proposed in this study report. The reasons for establishing the district and the methodology for gathering information to justify the architectural and historical significance as well as the need and interest remain the same and are described below to substantiate this Report. Added to this Methodology statement are the results of the 2002 Study Report and the reasons for the submission of this new Study Report.

**Preservation Need.** As in many cases the motivation to move forward with a local historic district initiative has been generated in reaction to losses. Consideration of an Auburndale Local Historic District began in 2000, and following two years of work which is detailed below, the Board of Aldermen's vote to adopt the district was one vote less than required for a two-thirds majority. There is no doubt that the need for local historic district protection continues. In the mid-1990s two commodious and architecturally significant resources were lost on Ranlett Hill through demolition. Four new dwellings and a rehabilitation of the unique carriage house replaced the commanding ca. 1895 Queen Anne/Colonial Revival Captain Charles Ranlett House (MHC # 2132). Only a short time later the neighborhood again watched the demolition of another one of its treasures, the ca. 1874 Bard Plummer House (MHC # 2130) constructed in the Italianate Style with square corner tower. It was replaced by an enormous neo-colonial house. The companion carriage barn was remodeled beyond recognition. On Seminary Avenue one of the few remaining carriage barns was demolished for the construction of a new dormitory in 2003. Three requests for demolition were made in 2003 and were delayed by the Newton Historical Commission for one year, a time that soon will expire. One at 91 Central Street is part of the original larger district and just outside this proposal. The other two are 15 Williston Road and 20 Vista Avenue. Once the demolition delay periods have ended those properties will be subject to demolition which results in the loss of a non-renewal resource. A significant change to the area in the last two years is the construction by Lasell College of three new institutional buildings on the former Bragdon Hill, the elevation of which has been reduced substantially. One more building is scheduled to be constructed as part of the new "Bragdon Hill Academic Quadrangle." Other losses have occurred through the removal of the architectural elaboration of buildings that provides richness and texture in the district. Many important buildings have suffered the application of vinyl siding. The preservation of that richness of detail, texture, color and craftsmanship along with size and scale consistent with the immediate context are goals of local historic districting.

**Interest.** Initial interest in forming a local historic district began in October, 2000, when a group of Auburndale neighbors contacted the City Preservation Planner, Lara Kritzer, to gather information about preservation options. They met with preservation consultant, Gretchen Schuler, to learn about neighborhood preservation strategies including local historic districting. Expansion of the existing National Register district was discussed; however, it was understood that there would be no jurisdiction over projects undertaken by private homeowners, and that the review and comment authority over projects triggering the review provided in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was advisory at best. Some neighbors asked about the

Neighborhood Conservation District that has been a tool used in Cambridge. The jurisdiction over demolition, new construction and additions exceeding a certain percentage of the original structure would address part of the concerns. However, the conclusion was that the local historic district is the appropriate tool to preserve the architectural elaboration of so many properties in the neighborhood.

At about the same time the Lasell Neighborhood Association (LNA) was formed and several sub-committees were established including the Auburndale Historic District Committee (AHDC). Within a short period of time the LNA/AHDC canvassed owners of over 280 properties in the Lasell neighborhood to determine interest in becoming part of a local historic district and willingness to participate in the historic and architectural research that would be an important part of the process of establishing such a district. Person-to-person contact was made with 70% of those owners who had received an informational flyer. The response was overwhelming support from over 88% of those contacted.

**Research.** Following meetings with Jackson Homestead curator, Susan Abele, eleven members of the LNA/AHDC gathered architectural and historical information for each property in the study area. This documentation was recorded on Massachusetts Historical Commission's survey forms. The survey forms were submitted to the MHC with the first study report in 2002.

**Education and Information.** There were many informational meetings held in 2001 and 2002, discussing preservation options as well as the history of the Auburndale neighborhood. These meetings were as follows:

- A meeting between the LNA Council and the Aldermen from the Auburndale neighborhood, to discuss the local historic district process in March 2001.
- A panel discussion about local historic districts followed by a lengthy Question & Answer period in April 2001 (approximately 80 attendees). Presenters were Gretchen Schuler, preservation consultant, and Paul O'Shaughnessy, Chairman of the Upper Falls Historic District
- A slide lecture on the development of Auburndale through its architecture by Barbara Thibault, former resident of Auburndale and former member and Chair of the Newton Historical Commission and the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission, in May 2001 (approximately 180 attendees).
- A panel discussion about the preservation option of establishing a local historic district in September 2001. The panel included the chairmen of two Newton local historic districts, the City Preservation Planner, and a representative of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council local historic district appeals panel.

- A meeting of the Auburndale Community Association at which the LNA presented information about the local historic district process and progress. Gretchen Schuler, preservation consultant, on behalf of the LNA was the presenter.

During the spring and summer of 2001 there were discussions between the LNA and Lasell College regarding the merits and the drawbacks of establishing a district. At public meetings on the topic of local historic districting during the first quarter of 2001, Lasell College representatives stated that the College remained neutral to the idea of a district. However, in April and May there were a number of meetings, in response to the College's request that the LNA abandon all attempts to establish an historic district, in which the College and the LNA attempted to reach an agreement that would exclude certain College properties from the jurisdiction of a local historic district commission. Negotiations ended without such an agreement.

**Results of research.** The LNA/AHDC reviewed all former inventory forms including 138 properties documented on MHC B-forms, 15 properties for which there was some documentation on a Newton Survey form (not converted to a B-form), and the National Register nomination including the Multiple Resource Area Context Statement and the individual expanded Area Forms and B-Forms for two areas which are districts and the three individual National Register properties that are in the study area. The Committee then prepared survey forms or continuation sheets including new photographs for each property in the proposed district. All documentation was submitted to the MHC and to the Jackson Homestead, the repository for Newton's Historic Resource Survey.

**Previous Auburndale Historic District Initiative.** Research was submitted to the Study Committee, the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission, in report format so that the District Commission was able to edit or rewrite following its review. The Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission voted to adopt the Study Report in 2001 and forwarded it to the MHC and the Newton Planning Board. At least sixty days later the NUFHDC forwarded the report requesting the Board of Aldermen to consider adoption of the Auburndale Historic District.

Following a hearing and a number of meetings on the topic of the Auburndale Historic District, the Zoning and Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen recommended adoption of the Historic District. Once the full Board considered the district, three options of changing the boundaries along the edges of the proposed district were discussed. The Study Committee, the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission, issued a vote in February 2003 stating that:

“[t]he Study Committee strongly supports the inclusion of all of the properties within the originally proposed Auburndale District. Of the 3 options, “Option C” contains the properties of the greatest historic value. On the narrow question regarding the elimination of Options A, B, and/or C, we believe the remaining portion of the original district would still contain sufficient architectural and historic resources to remain worthy of preservation.”



Based on this guidance and other input, the Board of Aldermen voted on a district comprising the original district minus the Option A properties on Aspen Avenue, the southern end of Hawthorne Avenue, and the Option B properties in an area in the northwest part of the district including Central Close, Central Terrace, a section of Central Street parallel to and north of Groveland Street, and five properties on Grove Street that abut the others, forming a discrete element of contiguous properties. The vote was 15 to 9. Although a majority voted in favor of the district, a two-thirds majority is required, thus, the motion to establish the Auburndale Historic District did not carry.

**Design Review Guidelines.** During the time leading up to the Aldermanic vote there was an attempt to develop Design Guidelines that the Study Committee could offer to a district commission once appointed. Representatives of Lasell College, the LNA, and the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission created a document that was never finalized, nor endorsed by all, but which may continue to serve as a starting point for a newly formed district commission in the event that an Auburndale Historic District is adopted in 2005.

**The 2005 Auburndale Historic District Proposal.** Interest has remained high, with frequent questions among supporters about when to re-initiate the efforts. Changes have continued in the area, some seemingly appropriate, others not. The need for local historic district designation has not been reduced at all. The LNA continues to foster interest in the preservation of the neighborhood. A walking tour of the neighborhood, sponsored by the Newton Historical Society, was held on June 12, 2004.

In April 2004, the LNA met with the Newton Historical Commission to begin the process of appointing a Study Committee for the local historic district designation process. After meeting with each of the existing local historic districts who agreed to support the proposed Auburndale Historic District but declined to act as the study committee, the LNA again met with the NHC in June 2004, at which time the Commission unanimously voted to act as the Study Committee. In their role as the Study Committee, the NHC held a public meeting on July 20, 2004 where they reviewed the preliminary draft of the study report and the new boundaries of the proposed district. The NHC unanimously approved the preliminary report and boundaries at that time and requested that the report be forwarded to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the City's Planning and Development Board at that time (comments from each organization are attached). Following the required 60 day review period, the NHC held a public hearing for all residents of the proposed district on Tuesday, November 30, 2004. Following this public hearing, the Commission unanimously voted to finalize the preliminary report and to forward it the Board of Aldermen for their consideration at their next meeting on December 20, 2004.

This Study Report recommends that the Auburndale Historic District map resemble the map considered by the Aldermen in 2003. This accounts for boundaries that are reduced from those that were studied and recommended in the first study report. While the larger district is cohesive and worthy of preservation, so is a slightly modified district, the integrity of which remains high. The Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission clearly stated this conclusion in their motion and vote of February 14, 2003 (see attached).

## SIGNIFICANCE

Today, examples of each decade of development from the late 1840s through the early twentieth century are evident in this large neighborhood. Although the neighborhood evolved over a century representing changing tastes in styles and plans of domestic architecture, there is a strong cohesiveness to this wide-spread suburban neighborhood in size, scale and overall massing as well as richness of craftsmanship. Most properties were built in appreciation for the bucolic and spacious settings on large suburban lots away from the mechanics of urban living. All properties inform us of the evolving life-style of a community rich with the legacy of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, clergy, and artists and those who have supported the educational and institutional entities that shaped the community.

### Historical Development.

The transition from a *rural agricultural community* to a *streetcar suburb* is a development theme common to most of Newton's twelve villages. Differentiation comes from the pivotal events that trigger the evolution of an area and those dates and events often are related to the overall topography of the locale. In Auburndale the intervening pivotal event was the opening of the Boston & Worcester Railroad through Newton in 1834 with a flag stop at the bottom of Auburndale's Grove Street in 1847. Land speculators responded to this new transportation opportunity with the purchase of land and subsequent subdivision of those parcels. The first land transactions and subdivisions south of the railroad fronted on the two main colonial routes of Auburn Street and Woodland Road and along Grove Street, then called Linden Road. Land north of the railroad was laid out in 1847 by the North Auburn Dale Land Company and land south of the railroad was purchased by individuals including the Reverend Charles Pigeon and Abijah S. Johnson. Pigeon, who had several substantial lots south of the railroad also purchased land overlooking the Charles River north of the railroad. He is credited with naming the area Auburn Dale, reminiscent of his favorite place for pastoral quietude, Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

Abijah Johnson laid out Grove Street (known as Linden Road in the mid-nineteenth century), Maple Street and Hancock Street (first known as Forest Street) as well as Hawthorne Avenue, Lake Avenue and Myrtle Avenue just south of Woodland Road. Johnson remained an important figure in this mid-nineteenth century development of Auburndale not only as a real estate speculator, developer and builder of some of the first housing, but also as an active member of the community, instrumental in the formation of the Auburndale Educational Society in 1849, the precursor of Lasell Female Seminary, and of the Auburndale Congregational Society in 1850. As displayed on the 1849 Plan of Auburndale, Johnson owned significant tracts of land on which he built his speculative real estate.

By 1855 there were seventy-five families in Auburndale with thirty dwellings in South Auburndale – the subject area of this report. Many of these mid-nineteenth century properties remain, reminiscent of the early history of Auburndale. A couple of Greek Revival dwellings remain from this period including the outstanding National Register property known as the **Rufus Estabrook House** (more accurately to be called the **Ebenezer Bradbury House**) at 33 Woodland Road (MHC #2118) and its neighbor, **the Reverend Isaac R. Worcester House** at 59

Woodland Road (MHC #6285). Ebenezer Bradbury, lawyer, Justice of the Peace, and School Committee member, was one of the early Auburndale residents. The National Register listing attributes this property to its later owner Rufus Estabrook. Abijah Johnson is reported to have built over twenty dwellings in the immediate neighborhood, some of which remain today including the **Abijah Johnson House** at 51 Hawthorne Avenue (MHC #2172) and a nearby residence, the **Henry L. Stone House** at 63 Hawthorne Avenue (MHC #2173). . Johnson's interest in the Italianate Style is seen in these two dwellings as well as the **Samuel Barrett House** at 120 Woodland Road (MHC #2166) and the first **Frederick Johnson House** at 188 Woodland Road (MHC #2212). Both houses display the commodious plan of the period.

Three important neighborhood institutions find their roots in the first two decades of Auburndale's development. The Auburndale Congregational Society, founded in 1850, built the outstanding **Auburndale Congregational Church** at 64 Hancock Street (MHC #2137) in 1856-57. Designed by architect, Charles Edward Parker (1826-1890), the building is one of the only remaining mid-nineteenth century wood churches in Newton that displays the Romanesque Revival Style of architectural elaboration applied to a Federal meetinghouse plan. Parker, who lived in Auburndale, had designed buildings for Amherst College and was known as the "Boston Architect" in his day. He also designed the Boston Society of Architect's building on Broad Street. At the time that the church was being constructed Abijah Johnson built the dwelling at 89 Grove Street (MHC #2148) that became the **Parsonage for the Auburndale Congregational Church**. Johnson at that time owned the entire block along the west side of Grove Street from Central Street to Woodland Road.

Several of the real estate investors including Abijah Johnson banded together to start a seminary as a new educational opportunity for women. They hired Edward Lasell who taught at Williams and at Mt. Holyoke to come to set up the Auburndale Female Seminary in 1851. A landmark building, later to be named Bragdon Hall (demolished in 1973), crowning what was formerly known as Bragdon Hill, was constructed in 1851 marking the permanence and stature of this new institution. Lasell met with an untimely death in 1852 at which time the Seminary was renamed Lasell Female Seminary. By 1855 the Seminary had 100 women enrolled. The scope of the education at Lasell changed in 1873 when the Seminary was purchased by ten Methodist businessmen and put one of the investors, Charles Bragdon, at the head to educate women to become "first-rate, all-around women." The College built its second building in 1882 and in 1892 purchased its first residence from private ownership. After 1900 many other houses of important architectural characteristics were purchased by the College for housing as well as classrooms.

The Walker Missionary Home was established soon after 1868 when the Rev. Sewall Harding built his widowed daughter and her four children the Italianate **Eliza Harding Walker House** at 103-107 Hancock Street (MHC #2099). She began the Home for Missionaries' Children, later known as the Walker Missionary Home, in her own home and by 1879 had begun to purchase neighboring houses, first a house at the Hancock and Grove Street triangle, and in 1893 the **Haskell House** at 138 Hancock Street (MHC #5605)(ca.1870s/1914/1927) to expand the institution, which eventually became a home for retired missionaries. This early house was

totally rebuilt in 1914 and now is known as the Barton House. Today it is part of the complex known as the Walker Center for Ecumenical Exchange.

In 1869 Edward D. Winslow owned the land east of Hawthorn Avenue to Washington Street, between Aspen and Woodland Road. This large tract was laid out in a plan drawn in June 1868 and filed in the Registry of Deeds in October 1869. It showed a seemingly picturesque asymmetrical plan of the land with buildings on Vista Hill between Hawthorn and Vista Avenues. In addition there were over fifty lots symmetrically laid out on Oakland Avenue (now Studio), Forest Avenue and Aspen Avenue. Bellevue Avenue, which appears to never have been built, formed a circle in the middle of the subdivision. Lots ranged from 17,000 to 30,000 square feet. Soon after laying out his land Winslow sold the main house near the crest of Vista Hill to Edmund B. Haskell, who added much of the High Victorian Gothic elaboration and maintained the gardens and outbuildings that had been shown on the 1868 plan. Haskell was a co-owner of the Boston Herald at the time that he lived here. By 1886 houses lined the east side of Vista Avenue and the west side of Studio Road (then Oakland Avenue). Also by this time several lots (outside the proposed district) had been consolidated to build the Woodland Park Hotel in 1882. Although this building was an important part of the pastoral trend of Auburndale, the area of its location is substantially altered from this era since its 1950 demolition for the residential street lay-out and construction of modest post World War II dwellings on Seton Hill and Mary Mount Roads.

Other religious institutions were established in South Auburndale such as the **Centenary Methodist Church** at 234 Central Street (MHC #2080) in 1867. The organist and choir master, Eben Tourjee lived only a few doors away at 246-248 Central Street (MHC #6291). Later he founded the New England Conservatory of Music. In 1880 the first Church of the Messiah was constructed by architect Charles E. Parker. The building (not in the proposed district) burned in the 1940s and was rebuilt.

Suburban development continued with improved train service arriving at the 1881 Henry Hobson Richardson train station (demolished for the Mass Pike construction in 1962), the growth of Lasell, and the 1895 extension of Commonwealth Avenue to the Charles River. The area also served as a recreational destination from the 1870s with the organization of the Boston Canoe Club and the Newton Boat Club along the banks of the Charles River and with the construction of the 1882 Woodland Park Hotel mentioned above. Seventy-five dwellings were built between 1875 and 1885.

Large estates were established, some of which have given way to the bull dozer. Others are reminiscent of the upper middle class residents of Auburndale such as the **Winslow-Haskell House** (ca. 1868, 53 Vista Avenue, MHC #158) also known as **The Castle** and the **Frederick Johnson House** (ca. 1883, 204 Woodland Road, MHC #2211). The latter was built by Johnson, son of mid-nineteenth century neighborhood pillar, Abijah S. Johnson. His father had built him a more modest house next door where he lived until constructing this large Queen Anne house. Like his father, Frederick Johnson also became a pillar of the community and was involved in local politics and real estate speculation into the early twentieth century.

One large 70-acre estate high on Central Street belonged to James J. Walworth. Although the large Gothic Revival mansion is no longer extant, one of the key outbuildings at the bottom of the hill was converted to a residence by important local architect, Charles E. Parker, who had designed the Romanesque Revival Congregational Church in 1856-57. Parker remodeled the house at 7 Williston Road (MHC #2109) possibly twice. Historic maps show at least three footprints as the house evolved. An additional important association with this property is that Parker's son, Horatio Parker became Dean of the School of Music at Yale. By the 1870s besides adding a distinctive square tower, Parker had subdivided his land forming four lots on Fern Street

Much of the development near the turn of the century was the subdivision of large estates, particularly with the 1895 laying out of the "boulevard", Commonwealth Avenue through some of the estates. At the same time the streetcar was introduced and ran along Commonwealth Avenue to Auburn Street and extended to the Charles River in 1897 when Norembega Park was opened at the site of today's Marriot Hotel.

The Pemberton estate was divided when Commonwealth Avenue was extended west from Washington Street and some of the land was taken for the new boulevard. At about the same time Cheswick Road was laid out on Pemberton land as well as eight house lots on which there was construction of substantial dwellings such as the **W. Kirke Corey House** (1897, 1830 Commonwealth Avenue MHC #2210). Soon after Cheswick Road was laid out, tracts of land belonging to Edward Pickard and Andrew Potter, between the new boulevard, Commonwealth Avenue, and one of the old colonial routes, Woodland Road, were subdivided in 1897 to form Windermere Road and twelve lots. Only three houses in the middle of the block were constructed prior to 1915 including the **Albert Hunt House** (ca. 1899, 115 Windermere Road MHC #2205), the **Albert Hunt House** (ca. 1901, 118 Windermere Road MHC #2206) and the **William Heckman House** (ca. 1899, 119 Windermere Road MHC #2207).

An additional 250 houses appeared in Auburndale in the decade spanning the turn of the century from 1895 to 1905. While much of this development was north of the railroad where commercial spaces also were located, the area south of the railroad (and the Turnpike of 1962) also experienced continued increase in population. These twentieth century development pressures were a result of the extension of Commonwealth Avenue and the streetcar expansion, followed by the automobile. The Middlesex and Boston Street Railway Company's Commonwealth Line that ran along the green strip of Commonwealth Avenue between the roadway and carriage way all the way to Norumbega Park located at the site of the present Newton Marriott Hotel peaked in 1913. Infill occurred on streets that had been laid out and subdivided but not built so that those late nineteenth century subdivisions finally were developed. One of the most interesting examples of infill is the **Edward Hammond House** at 35 Groveland Street (MHC #2593). Using a Gustave Stickley design Hammond had this fine example of the Arts and Crafts style built in 1909.

One such streetcar expansion occurred atop Ranlett Hill, named for Charles Ranlett who had extended Central Street westerly on part of the James J. Walworth Estate that he had purchased in 1873. The large elaborately designed residences at the top of Central Street, most built in the

late 1880s and 1890s, were part of Ranlett's Westview subdivision. Ranlett's first house, no longer extant, had been built as part of James Walworth's estate, and the bulk of his land was sold to Elizabeth B. Hardy by 1885 when Ranlett built his large Queen Anne / Colonial Revival house at the top of the hill (also no longer extant). In the 1910s the Walworth-Ranlett Mansion, owned by Elizabeth Hardy from ca. 1885 to ca. 1915, was demolished and the multi-acre estate was subdivided along Maple Road (now known as Leighton Road), Oakwood and Virginia Roads. However, only Leighton Road and a few lots on Oakwood were developed by the early 1930s. The name of Maple Road was changed to Leighton Road for the second owner of 1 Leighton Road, William and Clara Leighton. That house had been first owned by Emma Robinson an art teacher at the Williams School but in 1917 Leighton, principal of the Charles Burr School that had been located at 46 Ash Street, and his wife moved to this neighborhood and remained for over thirty years.

On each side of World War I many of the already subdivided lots were improved with commodious builders' houses in the Revival styles popular in the early twentieth century. In the 1910s most of the remaining houses built on Cheswick and Windermere Roads were in Shingle and Colonial Revival styles with Craftsman influence. Houses also were built on Aspen Avenue in 1913-1915 and in the 1920s again displaying Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture. Although Groveland Street had been laid out in 1895 across the estate of Harry W. Mason, most of it was not developed until 1912 to 1917 when Colonial Revival and Dutch Colonial Revival dwellings were constructed. After World War I a number of new dwellings cropped up in this neighborhood, nearly all on already subdivided lots. Some examples are 19 and 21 Fern Street, each constructed in ca. 1920, and a Dutch Colonial at 70 Maple Street. Lasell Seminary became Lasell Junior College in 1932. From the 1920s the institution owned a number of properties along Woodland Road including several large parcels. Very little building occurred in the neighborhood from the mid 1930s to the 1950s. The **Williams School**, a neighborhood elementary school at 141 Grove Street (MHC #2594), was constructed in 1950 to replace the late nineteenth century school that fronted on Hancock Street behind the present day school. From the 1950s Lasell has built a number of buildings, most in brick, for classrooms and dormitories.

### **Auburndale Today**

As noted above, today's suburban Auburndale, the fabric of this intricate development pattern, creates a sense of the evolving neighborhood with extant properties from each period of development within the overall cultural landscape of its past. Overall, the district retains its context with example after example of fine craftsmanship within the spacious setting that is distinctive in this suburban neighborhood. Descriptions of individual properties and collections within a streetscape show the significance of the historic and architectural fabric. The following examples form the picture of the mid- to late-nineteenth century neighborhood that grew substantially as it moved into the early twentieth century and articulate the significance of the historic district with many examples of architectural elaboration that clearly is worthy of preservation.

### 1840s – 1870s, dominated by Greek Revival and Italianate Architecture

The first wave of development from the late 1840s into the 1870s was completed in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles with many mansard roofs added to the Italianate building referring to the Second Empire architecture that became prevalent for many civic structures. The end gable and the side gable house had additions forming L-plans. The later appeal of the mansard roof form allowed for additional space in a squarer plan, but retained Italianate detail.

As noted above, there were thirty dwellings shown on the 1849 Plan of Auburndale. Many remain displaying distinctive Greek Revival and Italianate elaboration and others were built in the 1850s and 1860s. One of the most prominent examples is the **Ebenezer Bradbury House** (listed as the Rufus Estabrook House for a later owner) at 33 Woodland Road (MHC #2188). The end gable house with sidehall entrance displays full sidelights and transom surrounding the door on the main façade, bold corner posts with a raking cornice and returns and a full width Ionic open porch with later fretwork frieze. Only half a block away is the **Rev. Isaac R. Worcester House** at 59 Woodland Road (MHC #6285). This plain side gable house with wide corner pilasters, frieze and eave returns as well as peaked lintels over window sash was built in ca. 1848 and modified with ca. late 1870s or early 1880s updating of the single story projecting bays in each gable end, and the large projecting oriel window constructed on top of the open porch carried by four fluted square pillars.

Two L-plan houses built by Abijah Johnson with similar plans are the 1856 **Parsonage** of the Congregational Church at 89 Grove Street (MHC #2148) and the first **Frederick Johnson House** at 188 Woodland Road (MHC #2212). Both have raking eaves (once bracketed), full width porches (now enclosed) and the distinctive projecting gable end with long side wing. The Frederick Johnson House has been sided and trim has been removed. On the other hand the **Samuel Barrett House** at 120 Woodland Road (MHC #2166) has been rehabilitated with the removal of siding and the restoration of Italianate detail including cornice brackets and window consoles.

The Greek Revival dwelling (ca. 1850) at 19 Berkeley Place (MHC #2216) likely was moved here ca. 1880s and is characterized by its pediment gable, corner pilasters that now are covered with siding, six-over-six sash and a slate roof. Berkeley Place was private property, part of the Pickard Estate. The Stick Style barn now being reused as a College building, although somewhat altered retains a raking cornice on its gable roof, decorative King post and defined corner boards.

The **Henry L. Stone House** at 63 Hawthorne Avenue (ca. 1849, MHC #2173) is perched on a hill. The commodious square house with raking bracketed eaves is similar in detail to the neighboring house at 51 Hawthorne Avenue suggesting that the Henry Stone House was also built by Abijah S. Johnson, who resided in the latter house.

The **Edward Strong House** (ca. 1860) at 33 Hancock Street (MHC #2083), although covered with synthetic siding also displays the Italianate Style with its deep bracketed eaves, six-over-six sash with projecting consoles, and an oculus window in the central gable.

One of the more distinctive Second Empire houses is the **Richard Robinson House** (also known as the Bunker House) at 176 Grove Street (MHC #2144). Built in ca. 1862 the dwelling displays a bellcast mansard roof, paired brackets, and a centered entrance porch shielding the double leaf door. The companion carriage house is notable for its board and batten siding.

The eastern end of Central Street between Commonwealth Avenue and Auburn Street has three “Gothic” cottages built on speculation at #46, #52, and #58 (MHC #s2221, 2220, 2219) retaining some features such as the clipped gables, the half round trim and decorative fascia as well as slate roofs. Each built ca. 1870 they are evidence of many businessmen being bitten by the speculative real estate bug and subdividing nearby parcels for this type of substantial middle class housing.

Other examples of this early real estate speculation are the three cottages built by Samuel Pickering at 191, 197, and 205 Grove Street (MHC #s2105, 6249, 2106) in the early 1870s and 1880s. Each sits above the road on spacious lots and displays a side hall entrance plan with projecting two-story bays on the front and side elevations, and various forms of dormer windows. A mansard roof caps the house at 191 Grove Street while the other two have shallow hipped roofs. The cottage at 191 Grove Street also has projecting consoles over windows and applied panel designs under the sash in the bay windows.

Only the south side of Central Street remains between Auburn Street and Woodland Road. The remaining houses become progressively larger and more elaborate as one moves west. The **Centenary Methodist Church** at 234 Central Street (MHC #2080, 230 Central Street on old survey form) was constructed in 1867, the second religious institution in Auburndale. The quaint wood frame church with square corner tower with pyramidal cap has been reused for community housing. Now sided, the building once displayed Stick Style elements with pointed arched windows as well. The **Eben Tourjee House** at #246-248 Central Street (ca. 1870, MHC #6291) is a large Second Empire dwelling built for and owned by the Director of the New England Conservatory of Music for over thirty years. The large Second Empire house has a central projecting bay with Colonial Revival porch, and a single-story projecting bay on the north end.

### **1880s – 1905, the Picturesque Architecture, Queen Anne, Stick, Shingle Styles to the Revivals**

Architecture from this period in Auburndale featured the asymmetrical plans with projecting elements, textured surfaces, complex roof systems, and fanciful detail. Towards the turn of the last century many houses were built displaying the transition between Queen Anne and Colonial Revival in detail so that a number of dwellings retain asymmetrical plans elaborated with classical elements from the Revival period. A wide range of architectural treatments for this period of development remain as examples in this neighborhood of Auburndale.



One of the earliest houses built in this time period in Auburndale was that resembling an Italian villa at 62 Vista Avenue (MHC #2228). It was constructed by **Edwin B. Haskell** who had expanded and elaborated the Winslow House at 53 Vista Avenue (MHC #158) in the 1870s. While the latter is only marginally visible from the public way the former displays a three-story squared tower within the L-plan of the two perpendicular wings. Paired brackets ornament the eaves of the house, tower and projecting bay on the main facade. The bracketed porch is carried by chamfered posts on paneled pedestals. The polychromatic slate roof provides additional interest and variety to this unique property.

In the late 1860s Central Street was extended west of Woodland Road to the top of Ranlett Hill when Charles E. Ranlett who owned the land laid out his “Westview” subdivision. Most of the elaborate and spacious dwellings, many with commanding views of the Charles River, were constructed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Some lots nearer the bottom of the hill were developed in the Stick Style such as the **Henry Snow House** at 20 Fern Street. Applied detail on the verge board is a fleur de lis pattern which appears on a couple of other nearby buildings. Other dwellings displaying Stick Style characteristics are the **Edward Morgan House** at 399 Central Street (1887, MHC #2134)) and the **Henry C. Edwards House** at 316 Central Street (ca. 1882, MHC #2124). The former has a gabled central pavilion and stick work linking windows at their lintels and sills. The latter has porches with pierced valences, boxed posts and diagonal bracing and a gable peak with picket facing, a kingpost truss and the fleur de lis pattern noted above on a trim board defining the base of the gable peak.

A fine example of the picturesque Queen Anne style is the **Susan Jennings House** at 119 Hancock Street (MHC #2101), built in ca. 1883. Textured decorative shingled wall surfaces, ornate porches with turned and pierced wood structure, brackets and projecting window consoles and sills are characteristic of this well-preserved late nineteenth century house.

Another excellent example of a broad expression of the Queen Anne Style is the **J. Walker Davis House** at 32 Woodland Road (MHC #2081, was 254 Central Street). Built in ca. 1885, for a musician, the elaboration of balconies, the tower, oriel windows, patterned shingles, and the wrapping verandah all have been carefully restored within the last decade, making this a center piece for one of the entrances to this district.

One of the most remarkable houses in the district is **the Rev. Francis E. Clark House** at 379 Central Street (1895, MHC #2131) The three-story circular corner tower of this Queen Anne structure is a key feature among many others such as the paneled ribbed chimneys, half timbering, the use of brick and shingles, stained glass windows, and three part dormer window.

The Colonial Revival Style became popular in the 1880s as is witnessed by the **William H. Cooley House** at 387-389 Central Street (ca. 1887, 2133) which retains its symmetrical façade, its hipped roof with a gabled central pavilion, the Palladian style window in the gable peak as well as the broken scroll pediment over the paired second story windows, and the angled porte-cochere at the southeast corner.

While many houses on Maple Street were built in the first two decades of development of Auburndale in the Italianate style, a fine example of the Colonial Revival period is the **William F. Crane House** at 59 Maple Street (MHC #2188), built in 1896. The broad hipped roof unifies the large shingled house with symmetrical façade and spacious centered entrance porch leading to the paneled door with side lights, twelve over one sash, projecting single-story bays and a string of three roof dormers on the front roof slope. A fully developed Colonial Revival form is presented in the **Charles A. Sweet House**, 74 Grove Street (MHC #2150), named for a ca. 1860s owner. This house was completely remodeled and updated at the turn of the century and demonstrates the symmetry so common to the Colonial Revival period. Details such as the modillion blocks, deep open entrance porch carried by clusters of Tuscan columns, the piazza with balustrade on the north side and the semi-circular south bay also with balustrade trim this spacious house.

Cheswick Road, linking the newly built Commonwealth Avenue to Woodland Road was part of the Pemberton Estate prior to its 1895 subdivision with eight lots along Cheswick Road. The first dwelling was the **Harry F. Gibbs House** at 44 Cheswick (ca. 1897, MHC #2208) in the Shingle Style. The house has been covered with aluminum siding losing its shingled sheathing, but retains its wall dormers and stained glass oriel as well as the second-story overhang with Craftsman style brackets. Another Shingle Style house is 27 Cheswick Road (ca. 1899, MHC #2209), the **Arthur B. Sederquist House** with its broad gambrel roof with cropped eaves, shed roof dormers and inset windows with curved reveals just under the eave.

An important example of the Shingle Style is the **George D. Rand House** built in 1902 at 40 Groveland Street (MHC #2155) and designed by the owner who was a principal of Rand and Taylor, well known suburban architects of Boston. The wide and sweeping gambrel roof with cropped eaves and a molded cornice and frieze also has a long shed dormer and an eyebrow dormer. An important feature of this house is the two-story window panel with stair hall window and second story rounded arch window above.

### **1905 – 1930s, The Revival Period.**

As plans of houses moved back to more symmetrical orientations so did the elaboration draw from symmetrical and classical design. The early twentieth century Revival and Arts and Crafts inspired architecture continued to be expressed in solid and commodious design. In many instances roofs became dominate features and the gambrel roof was popular for the Colonial Revival, Shingle Style and Craftsman house. Sheathing materials continued to be wood clapboards and shingles with several houses covered with stucco by the 1920s.

There are several modest Tudor Revival dwellings constructed in the district in the first and second quarters of the twentieth century. At 94 Grove Street (ca. 1931, MHC #6238), on the corner of Grove and Woodland is a two and one-half story gabled roof dwelling with half timbering in the peaks, strings of windows, and a Tudoresque entrance. Farther east at 244 Woodland is the Wienberg House, a Tudor Revival house of brick construction built in ca. 1927.

The main building for the **Walker Home** at 144 Hancock Street (MHC #5609) was designed by Coolidge and Carlson and built in 1912. It is one of the only brick buildings in the district and is reduced from its institutional size by its expansive gambrel roof which minimizes the overall size and scale. The double leaf entrance with flanking sidelights is shielded by the centered entrance porch on Tuscan style columns.

Houses on Leighton Road, once known as Maple Road, just below Ranlett Hill, are slightly more modest than many of the new houses constructed up to the early 1900s. Two dwellings that display the Craftsman Style are two and one-half stories with a side gable roof and off-center entry. At 10 Leighton Road (MHC #4808, ca. 1913), the porch carried by three pairs of square columns is incorporated into the sweeping roof line. The house at 1 Leighton Road (ca. 1912, MHC #6265), named **the William A. and Clara L. Leighton House** for its second occupants who lived there for over thirty years and for whom the street was named also has an incorporated porch with extended rafter ends that are trimmed with an end board. Both houses are shingled and have six-over-one sash. Built in ca. 1916 is the Arts and Crafts house at 125 Windermere Road (MHC #6169). The stucco house has a sloping roof, six-over-six sash, and a copper bracketed door hood and square bay roof.

At the bottom of Grove Street on the east side were nearly twenty acres of the Keyes and Rice properties that were divided into lots as early as 1895. However most of the housing did not appear until the late 1920s when at least four dwellings were constructed all in the Revival styles. Although somewhat altered by synthetic siding and converted to two family dwellings, each is a modest variation of a stock builders' plan. 228 Grove Street (ca. 1924, MHC #6254) is capped with a gambrel roof. 236-238 Grove Street (MHC #6256) is a Four Square house and a Craftsman house is at 242-244 Grove Street (MHC #6258), both constructed in ca. 1929.

The most common material for the structures of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was wood and there is a variety of wood clapboards and shingles found throughout the district. A scattering of brick and stucco houses are found, most built in the 1910s to 1930s. Brick houses are found on Woodland and Cheswick, near the brick College buildings. A scattering of stucco buildings are on Windermere Road. Towards the end of this period of development Lasell College built its first institutional building other than Bragdon Hall (no longer extant). On the southeast corner of Woodland Road and Maple Street is the brick Colonial Revival **Winslow Hall** (ca. 1937, MHC #6193) with its cast quoins and rounded arched tall windows. Although an institutional building it retains a semblance of domestic scale with its two stories and rhythm of windows and belt course.

### **1940s to Present – Modern Period**

In the mid to late 1940s following World War II, building in the proposed district was limited to three or four modest dwellings in the Cape Cod Style. The size and scale of these houses was substantially smaller than the majority of dwellings of the area. A few additional houses were added to the district in the 1950s such as ranch and eclectic cape style dwellings at 71 Vista Avenue (ca. 1951, MHC #6159), and 49 Central Street (ca. 1953, MHC #6202). A

contemporary house was built at 15 Williston Road in ca. 1952, which has been temporarily protected from demolition through a one-year delay imposed when demolition was requested in early 2003.

Institutional growth following World War II articulated the growing school population with the 1950s construction of the buff-colored brick, two story **Williams School** at 141 Grove Street (ca. 1950, MHC #2594). The new school building wrapped around the bend in Grove Street with a cast concrete entrance pavilion reminiscent of the Art Deco period. Strings of windows echo the horizontal form of the building on the Grove Street side. Lasell College also experienced substantial growth in the 1950s when campus buildings pushed beyond the walls of residential type structures and three brick institutional buildings were constructed on the large lots between Woodland Road and Commonwealth Avenue. Woodland Hall (ca. 1950, MHC #6184), Wolf Hall (ca. 1950s, MHC # 6187), and Wass Science Hall (ca. 1954, MHC #6186) are three and four story brick contemporary buildings with strings of windows punched into the masonry walls and cast water tables and other band courses to accentuate the horizontal lines of the buildings. These buildings represent the growth and development of Lasell College and its consolidation of activities into these centralized structures at the core of a residential neighborhood. The College also continued to own and maintain many surrounding nineteenth and early twentieth century residences as well. Lasell also added residential-scaled structures such as **Ordway House** (MHC #6190), built in 1959 at 9 Maple Terrace. A typical five-bay, two-story hipped roof structure similar in size and scale to many surrounding dwellings, the house is constructed of brick and has a substantial rear addition.

In 1970 the **Community Center** (MHC # 6293) was constructed at the Centenary Methodist Church on Central Street. A modest institutional building in a residential neighborhood, the brick and plate glass window, one and one-half story building was set at a slight angle to the street which helped to visually minimize its scale. Also a brick student center was constructed at Lasell in the 1970s. During the 1990s some infill housing occurred on Studio Road and Seminary Avenue. Also Lasell constructed a new Athletic Center (MHC #6188) next to its other brick buildings, again using a horizontal scale consistent with the residential neighborhood, in part due to the large sloping lot that helps to reduce the scale. In the last year the College has constructed two new buildings on what was Bragdon Hill and is in the process of constructing a third. A future, fourth building will complete the Bragdon Academic Quadrangle.

### **Significance of Extant Properties**

The settings and massing on spacious lots, the variety of architectural design and materials to express those designs as well as the craftsmanship displayed, and the association with the patterns of development impart an overall understanding and feeling of the neighborhood that has inspired many to settle here and preserve the heritage inherent in the buildings that make up the cohesive neighborhood. The architectural elaboration and the size and scale are important components of each structure that affect the integrity of the whole neighborhood. Preservation of the ambience of this neighborhood requires protection of the detail as well as the overall context and is an important goal to achieve for coming generations to interpret, understand and enjoy Auburndale's historical development.

## JUSTIFICATION OF THE BOUNDARIES

The proposed district represents a continuum of historical and architectural development reflective of the evolution of Auburndale into a suburban village near Boston. Affluent educated businessmen settled here for its pastoral quality as well as accessibility due to the introduction of the railroad followed by the street car. This part of Auburndale is distinctive from the northern part of Auburndale for its commodious single-family residences built on lots that tend to be larger than those in surrounding neighborhoods. Furthermore from its mid-nineteenth century growth period it has been visually and physically separated from the village commercial center and areas of Auburndale north of Commonwealth Avenue by the railroad.

The larger area that was reviewed for possible inclusion in the Auburndale Local Historic District is bound by major routes or land uses and is as follows:

- Massachusetts Turnpike to the north, Commonwealth Avenue to the northeast, Washington Street to the southeast, Woodland Country Club to the south, the MBTA Riverside line to the south and west.

These rough boundaries constitute the broader neighborhood surrounding the Lasell Neighborhood National Register District. It includes the larger set of properties that were developed in response to the construction of a railroad stop in 1847, the establishment of the Auburndale Congregational Church and the Lasell Female Seminary, followed by the extension of Commonwealth Avenue in 1895, followed by the street car from 1897 into the 1910s. The Massachusetts Turnpike, built along the railroad line in 1962, resulted in the demolition or relocation of about 30 houses and the cutting of a wide swath through the village of Auburndale further separating this well evolved residential neighborhood south of the railroad and Turnpike from the more commercial and denser area north of the Pike.

The recommended boundaries of the Auburndale Historic District provide a smaller district than the study area noted above. On the edges of the larger study area, there are properties that either represent a much later development pattern, i.e. post-World War II, or that show significant derogation of the architectural and/or historical integrity of the discrete area, or appear to turn their backs on the district in terms of orientation. It could be argued that a 1950s subdivision follows a similar pattern as subdivision development of the early twentieth century. However, the scale, the architectural elaboration, and the integration into the rest of the community are significantly different and have been the basis upon which these boundary decisions are premised. In a couple of instances there are properties that tend to be oriented away from the district. For instance modern subdivisions on the boundary edge face away from the district or inwardly to one another. Some properties along Commonwealth Avenue tend to turn their backs on the district and are oriented to the broad avenue rather than inwardly to the district. The opposite of this is true in a couple of instances where a companion carriage house or the main dwelling of a former complex may front on a section of a street not included in the district; however, that property, if contiguous with properties that are within the proposed boundaries, is included to keep related resources together.

On the northern edge, Auburn Street is omitted from the district due to the inconsistencies of period of construction and remaining architectural integrity of properties lining that part of Auburn Street west of Commonwealth Avenue and east of the Turnpike. While there are a few good examples of Italianate architecture with heavy bracketed cornices and projecting bays, there are many modern or substantially altered properties as well. Auburn Street was a main route from the colonial period, thus has undergone significant changes due to its proximity to the railroad in the nineteenth century and the Turnpike from the third quarter of the twentieth century. In this same area, the small cluster of ca. 1920s dwellings on Central Terrace and Central Close as well as those on Central Street between Grove and Maple streets also are eliminated from this district to conform with the modified district boundaries considered by the Aldermen in 2003. Thus the district line extends from the Turnpike along the rear property line of properties that front on those two small streets, Central Terrace and Central Close and along the rear lot lines of properties that front on the north side of Groveland Street. 26 Maple Street also is included as it is contiguous to 61 Central Street and was the former stable of that property.

On the eastern edge the boundary extending from Central Street to Windermere Road for the most part eliminates properties that front on Commonwealth Avenue. Exceptions are properties that were oriented to a side street that was developed as part of an early subdivision of estates at the time that Commonwealth Avenue was extended from Washington Street in a northwesterly direction to the Charles River. For instance 1844 Commonwealth Avenue, formerly 5 Cheswick Road, is oriented to Cheswick Road and 1830 Commonwealth Avenue, while fronting on the 'boulevard' was the main house for a property that extended along Cheswick Road with its former carriage house at 26 Cheswick Road.

Although Commonwealth Avenue intersects with Washington Street, there is a significant change in development for the area east of Windermere Road to Washington Street and south of Commonwealth Avenue to Aspen Avenue. Residential buildings either are oriented to the "boulevard" away from the proposed Auburndale Historic District neighborhood, and/or represent a later period of development, in some cases replacing earlier development. For instance, the block of land bordered by Woodland, Forest, Aspen and Washington Street was the site of the Woodland Park Hotel from 1888 until its demolition in 1951 after which over twenty new dwellings were constructed on the subdivided land. For similar reasons of period of construction the large lot (43-038-0001) that fronts on Woodland Road between Studio Road and Forest Avenue on which 1960s Lasell dormitories are situated is not included in the boundaries of the district. In addition, properties on Aspen and the southern end of Hawthorne also are eliminated from the district to conform with the district that the Aldermen considered in 2003. On the western side, vacant and improved lots between Grove Street and Seminary Avenue that constitute the newly constructed Lasell Village are eliminated from the district. Also at the western edge (west of Grove Street) is a sub-neighborhood that, for the most part, represents a later development and loss of historic fabric. The result is the elimination from the district, properties that are along the long section of Williston Road, all of Oakwood and Virginia and the top of Central Street where the five new dwellings are contiguous with modern properties on Oakwood Road.

While there may be a scattering of properties within the district that were built in the post-World War II period or may have lost some of the architectural detail, the boundaries for the most part surround a cohesive neighborhood of residences and institutional buildings that are rich with historical and architectural integrity.

## ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Newton previously adopted a local historic district ordinance known as Section 22-40 of Article III of the City Ordinances. Its intent is to govern all local historic districts, in Newton including the establishment of new districts and the enlargement or reduction of existing districts. Each district is defined by a map also adopted as part of the Ordinances. Section 22-41 establishes the boundaries for the Newton Upper Falls Historic District and Section 22-42 establishes the boundaries for the Chestnut Hill Historic District, Section 22-43 establishes the boundaries for the Newtonville Historic District. Thus the Newton Historical Commission will propose that the Board of Aldermen adopt a map defining the proposed Auburndale Historic District which will have to be given a number in Section 22 of Article III.

The proposed section will be as follows:

**Auburndale Historic District; established, boundaries.**

There is hereby established an historic district to be known as the Auburndale Historic District, bounded and described as shown on the map entitled, "Auburndale Historic District, January 2005."

Although there has been considerable discussion about suggestions to amend the existing ordinance to accommodate institutional structures and uses within this proposed local historic district it is recognized that the existing ordinance is consistent with State Enabling Legislation, Chapter 40C and tracks language that is relevant to all types of resources and districts. Thus, there are no recommendations to change the existing ordinance that governs the establishment, enlargement or reduction of a district and district commission, the procedures for review of applications, the criteria for determinations, and the exclusions from review. However, it is strongly recommended that Rules and Regulations and Design Review Guidelines be established by a duly appointed historic district commission following adoption of the proposed district.

Rules and Regulations presently exist for the three established Local Historic Districts. They contain issues relative to the administration of the LHDC and may be written to reflect the interests of property owners and commissioners of a newly established LHD. Current Rules and Regulations address issues of the obligations of a Commission to maintain and file with the City Clerk meeting minutes and decisions. The Rules and Regulations also could address meeting attendance, voting, and training recommendations.

It is recommended that Rules and Regulations and Design Review Guidelines be established immediately upon the appointment of a LHDC and that they be available for review prior to a public hearing at which they may be adopted.

The existing ordinance is included in the Appendices.



## MAP

Two maps are included in this Study Report.

**Fig 1.** One is titled “Proposed Auburndale Local Historic District” dated November 2004, showing the proposed district on a Geographic Information Systems map based on Newton Assessor’s Map information. The boundary of the proposed Local Historic District is shown by a heavy black line.

**Fig. 2.** The other map shows the National Register properties within the proposed local historic district boundary, including two districts and four single properties on the map described above. National Register districts and individual properties are demonstrated by a dash and dot line.

## PROPERTY INDEX

The index has been prepared in Excel and is available on disk or electronically. It is a list of the parcels and resources within the proposed Auburndale Local Historic District. Information included on the property index is as follows:

INV = the MHC inventory or MACRIS number for the resource. (Vacant parcels have no inventory number.

SBL = the Section, Block and Lot number found on Newton's Assessor's Maps.

STREET NO. = the street address number.

ST. NO. = the second part of a number for a property, e.g. 246-248 Central.

STREET NAME = the name of the street on which a resource is located.

HISTORIC NAME = the first known owner or name that is historically associate with a property.

COMMON NAME = the everyday name by which a property is recognized in modern times. All vacant parcels are so noted in this column with "vacant lot."

STYLE = the architectural style that is most prevalent in the design of a resource.

YEAR = the approximate date or year in which a resource was constructed.

NR STATUS = the NR designation if applicable with DIST meaning listed as part of a district and IND meaning an individual property listing.

RESOURCE TYPE = B stands for Building, St stands for Structure, etc.