

**NEWTON PUBLIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHASE II – ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Building Analysis

Kennard Estate



Address: 246 Dudley Road
Year of Construction: 1907

Level of Significance: Moderate

Recommended Treatment Level: Rehabilitation

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance

Building History

The Kennard Estate is a Shingle-style residential structure set within Kennard Park. The house was constructed in 1907 for Frederic Hedge Kennard, a prominent ornithologist and landscape architect.

Frederic Hedge Kennard (1865-1937) was born in Brookline, MA. He graduated from Harvard in 1888 and did graduate work at Harvard in landscape architecture and science. He married Sarah Harrison Eisenbrey, a daughter of a well-known Philadelphia family, in 1896. The couple had five children. Kennard worked for the firm of Frederick Law Olmstead until 1901, when he joined the General Electric Company. From 1906-1915 he returned to landscape architecture and started his own firm in Boston until retiring due to illness. A noted ornithologist, he published many articles in national scientific magazines on bird species and behavior and was an author of popular manuals on bird identification and on how to attract birds to the home using plants and landscape elements. In addition to his landscape practice and ornithological work he was also a practicing chemist, and in 1915 he patented a method for reducing an industrial byproduct of the wood pulp industry into powdered form as well as the resulting chemical compound that became widely used in arts and manufacturing as an adhesive. This patent provided him with a steady source of income at the end of his life and helped fund his numerous trips to study and collect birds all over the United States and the Caribbean.

The Kennards lived in Brookline until 1906 when they purchased a large tract of land in Newton Centre. They hired the Boston architecture firm of Coolidge & Carlson to design their home, which they moved into in March of 1907. Kennard designed the landscape around the house himself. The grounds had extensive lawns, gardens and woodlands and contained a pond and small stream.

Joseph R. Coolidge Jr. began his architecture firm in 1898. Coolidge was originally a banker who gave up his position to study architecture in a special 2-year course at MIT. He continued his training in Germany and at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris prior to returning to Boston. Henry J. Carlson joined Coolidge's firm as a principal in 1903. The best-known works of the firm include several dormitories at Harvard University and other collegiate work and "Dreamworld", a large estate constructed in 1900 in Egypt, MA for Thomas W. Lawson, a notorious stock speculator. Coolidge was the president of the Boston Society of Architects from 1905-1906.

In 1978 the City of Newton acquired 32.2 acres from the Kennard family; this land is now known as the Kennard Conservation Area. In 1982 Frederic's son Dr. Harrison Kennard willed 16 additional acres and the house to the city, which became Kennard Park. Under the stipulations of the bequest, income from the use of the house and outbuildings goes to the maintenance and upkeep of the house, outbuildings, and grounds.

Level of Significance

The Kennard Estate is significant under National Register Criterion B for its association with Frederic Kennard. While work would be required to bring the grounds back to their original appearance the building is largely intact.

Bibliography

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- United States Patent Office. "Patent 1,138,118: Frederic H. Kennard of Newton Massachusetts, Process of Reducing Waste Sulfite Liquor to a Powder". May 4, 1915.
- Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishers, 1956. Reprint, Detroit: Omnigraphics, 1996.

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance: Historic Images



Figure 1: Front view of "House of F. H. Kennard, Newton Centre, MA" published in *American Architect and Architecture*, an architectural trade journal, on October 29, 1919.



Figure 2: Side view of Kennard Estate, also from *American Architect and Architecture*, 1919.

Part 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features

Exterior Visual Character

Setting

- Set within a 12-acre park that was once the grounds for the single-family house. The original site had landscaped gardens. Numerous original plantings remain on site, although the grounds have not been maintained.

Shape

- Two and a half story structure with a rectangular front facing the street and a lower rectangular back ell.

Roof and Related Features

- A large gambrel roof encloses the second and third stories of the main building. Windows are set into the roof at the west elevation including two large hipped dormers. The attic level has three flat-roofed dormer windows. The roof overhangs the first floor at the street side creating a continuous porch across the street elevation. The upper portion of the gambrel roof is clad with red asphalt shingles and the lower portion is clad with wood shingles, painted red.
- The rear (east) of the building is covered with a gambrel roof set perpendicularly to the main roof. A lower gambrel roof extends over the rear ell. Dormers are set into the north and south sides of the higher gable roof at the third floor level, and windows are set into the sides of the ell's gambrel roof at the second floor level.
- Two stucco-clad chimneys are located at either side of the main gambrel roof and one stucco-clad chimney is located at the rear ell gambrel roof. The chimneys have decorative copper caps.
- Gutters are installed along all roof edges. The gutters appear to be formed out of painted wood planks and have a metal lining. These gutters are likely replacements.

Openings

- Windows are typically individual openings with wood double-hung 8-over-1 sashes.
- A small round window is located adjacent to the ell entrance door at the east elevation.
- The building retains its original wood doors and the majority of its original door hardware.

Projections:

- A hipped-roof canopy is located at the entrance to the porch on the north elevation, supported by 4x4 lumber, a replacement for the original supports.
- Additional hipped-roof canopies are located above entrances at the east and north elevations.

Trim and Secondary Features:

- Wood trim is present at the gable ends, the building base and around windows and doors.
- The majority of the windows retain their original wood shutters although they are in poor condition.
- Basement-level windows are set within curved brick areaways.
- Stairs to the porch and other entrances are typically brick with bluestone treads.

Materials

- Walls that are not part of the roof are clad with stucco.
- Rustic stone piers are located at the edge of the main porch supporting the edge of the roof at the west elevation.
- The floor of the main porch is brick.

Craft Details

- Large wood beams span from the building wall to the rustic stone piers at the porch. Arched wood beams span between piers at the outer edge of the porch. Carved brackets are present at each end of the porch.
- Arched sidewalls are present at each side of the second floor dormers on the main (west) elevation.

Interior Visual Character

Individually Important Spaces

Dining Room

- Walls have high wood wainscoting, wood door surrounds and wood crown molding.
- The room has a large fireplace at the north wall with a decorative tile hearth and surround and wood mantelpiece.

Library

- Walls have high wood wainscoting and built-in wood bookshelves, wood door surrounds and wood crown molding.
- The room has a large fireplace at the north wall with a decorative tile hearth and surround and wood mantelpiece.

Related Spaces

Main Hall and Stair

- The walls of the main hall have painted paneled wood wainscot.
- The hallway has a coffered ceiling with wood beams. Wood beams and columns support the sides of the stair opening.
- The stairway to the second floor has elaborately turned banisters in three different carved patterns. The banisters wrap around the stair landing at the second floor and continue up the stairwell to the third floor. Tall banisters are set along the open side of the intermediate stair landing between the first and second floor.
- Large double wood pocket doors lead from the hall into the dining room and library.

Other Significant Interior Features

- Original wood floors throughout except in the remodeled kitchen area and bathrooms. Carpeting has been installed over some of the bedroom floors.
- Original wood doors, windows, door and window casing throughout. The majority of the doors and windows retain their original hardware.
- There is a pantry area at the first floor that has built in display cabinets and drawers at all walls.
- The bedroom at the second floor of the rear ell has a fireplace with a tile surround and wood mantelpiece.
- The northeast bedroom at the second floor has a corner fireplace with a brick surround and wood mantelpiece.

Part 2 – Images



Figure 3: Main exterior porch at west elevation. Note stone columns and wood beams.



Figure 4: Exterior wood door with original hardware.



Figure 5: Decorative tile work at library fireplace.



Figure 6: Main staircase and entrance hall.

Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations

Preservation Treatment Level

The Kennard Estate is essentially unaltered from its original construction and retains most of the features of a grand home from the early 1900s. The exterior of the building is at a critical point – lack of maintenance has caused deterioration which if not addressed will result in widespread loss of historic material. The interior is comparatively well preserved and undamaged. Because of the amount of intact historic material present on the site the building would be a good candidate for the “Preservation” level of treatment outlined in the U. S. Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. However, the building’s use has changed from residential to institutional since being acquired by the City of Newton and this change in use has resulted in new programmatic needs. For this reason it is recommended that future work at the building be performed according to the “Rehabilitation” Level of treatment. Rehabilitation assumes that more repair and replacement of historic material will be required than a more preservation-based approach and emphasizes protecting and maintaining historic building material and significant features while providing an efficient contemporary use of the building. Alterations should strive to maintain the overall arrangement of the rooms and the existing distinction between primary and secondary spaces. Significant features listed in Part 2 should be protected as much as possible.

The following bulleted list contains an analysis of existing conditions and recommended treatments for the significant features catalogued in Part 2 of this report.

Exterior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Inspect condition of roof and flashing, particularly the rear entrance porch roof where there is evidence of water staining. Repair as necessary. Replace missing shingles and flashing and damaged gutters and leaders.
- The original wood main porch entrance supports have been removed but are still present on site. These supports should be repaired and reinstalled before they are further damaged or lost.
- Repair areas of damaged, cracked or missing stucco to prevent water from entering the wall system.
- Replace the rotted window sill adjacent to the main porch entrance at the north elevation.
- Existing original shutters are typically deteriorated or missing. Remove severely damaged shutters to protect them from further loss until they can be repaired.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Both the wood shingle and asphalt shingle roof components are nearing the end of their serviceable life. The roof should be replaced with a new wood shingle roof.
- Non-original gutters should be replaced with gutters of a more historically appropriate design.
- Repair/replace all exterior shutters.
- Conduct thorough survey of window conditions, including sash, frame, casing and hardware. The existing windows should be retained to the largest extent possible, repaired and made weathertight. Deteriorated elements such as the sills should be replaced in kind and areas of minor deterioration should be repaired with dutchmen or through consolidation. Glazing putty will need to be replaced. The wood should be stripped and repainted in a color matching the original color.
- In addition to the windows address rotted and damaged wood trim elements. Repairs include:
 - Complete removal of existing paint from wood surfaces. It is recommended that paint analysis be performed prior to stripping to identify historic paint colors.

- Installation of new wood dutchmen with profiles matching the existing wood elements at areas of severe deterioration. Replacement of wood elements in-kind at areas of deterioration that are not repairable.
- Consolidation at areas of less severely deteriorated wood.
- Repainting wood surfaces.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Repair masonry areaways at basement windows.
- Repoint stone foundation.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Develop a regular maintenance plan with the intent to preserve character-defining features.
- Maintain all gutters, leaders and drains to keep clog-free.

Interior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Repair water damaged areas of plaster at second floor bedroom ceiling.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features. Elements that become deteriorated should be repaired or replaced in kind.
- Alterations should be sensitive to the original design and should strive to retain as much of the original material still present as possible. Spatial relationships between the major interior spaces should be preserved.