Newton's 19th Century Architecture:

Newton Centre • Oak Hill • Chestnut Hill • Commonwealth Avenue

Department of Planning and Development
Newton Historical Commission

NEWTON'S 19TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE:
NEWTON CENTRE
OAK HILL
CHESTNUT HILL
COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

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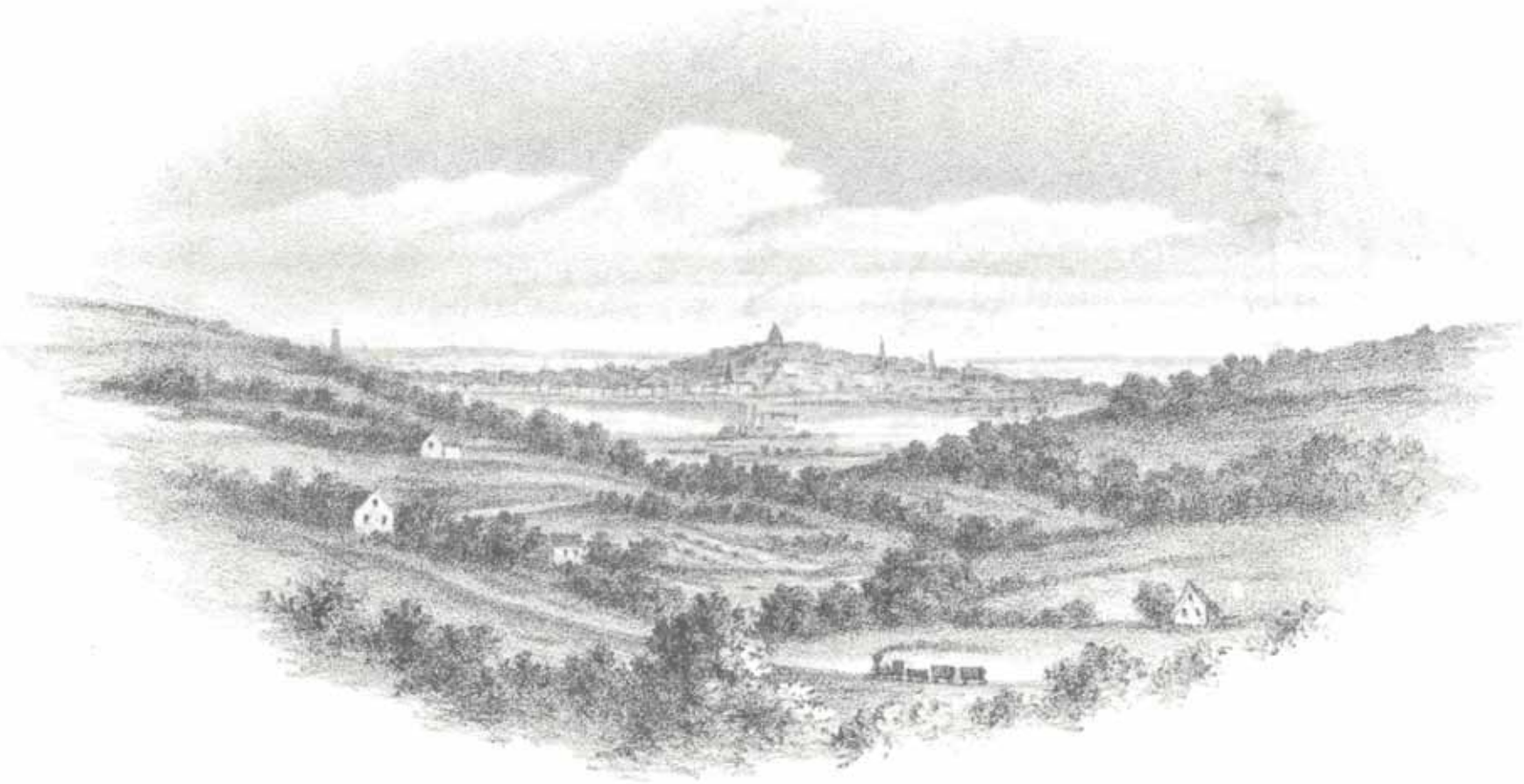

View of Back Bay and Beacon Hill from "Plan of Chestnut Hill" (1856)

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PREFACE

This booklet is part of an ongoing project to identify and study Newton's architectural heritage. Under the Newton Historical Properties Survey, all existing structures built prior to 1907, have been inventoried. Based in part on information from the Jackson Homestead's *Newton's Older Houses* series, the date of construction, architectural style and a brief historical background for each structure has been recorded. The inventory forms are on file at the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston, with copies at the Jackson Homestead, Newton's City Museum.

Based on the Historical Properties Survey, this booklet has been prepared as an introduction and guide to the nineteenth century architecture of Newton Centre, Oak Hill, Chestnut Hill and the Commonwealth Avenue Corridor. It is the seventh in a series entitled *Newton's 19th Century Architecture*. Those booklets still in print are available through the Planning Department at Newton City Hall.

Many people have generously shared time and information in the course of this project. Thanks are due to members of the Newton Historical Commission, particularly Larry Bauer and Barbara Thibault, as well as to David Webster, Steve Rosenthal, Duscha Scott, Priscilla Ritter, Joe Cancellieri, Edwina Seeler, Elizabeth Rubin, Gorgina Flannery, Sarah Gillman, Bruce Beck, William Shelton, Doris Carley and Christine Cunningham. Special thanks are due to friends and family who dilligently pursued the arduous task of proofreading, to my son Kurt for the discovery of resources which made Laser typesetting feasible, to Bruce Fernald for editorial assistance, and most of all to Thelma Fleishman for her dedication to historical accuracy. Finally, I am indebted to my husband for his enthusiastic support of this project.

Susan D. Abele, Consultant
Historic Newton, Inc.
1985

LEGEND:

1. West Newton Hill
2. Bullough's Pond
3. Waban Hill
4. Chestnut Hill
5. Hammond's Pond
6. Institution Hill
7. Crystal Lake
8. Bald Pate Hill
9. Oak Hill

Figure 1. Map showing the boundaries of the Historical Properties Survey, 1983

THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEWTON CENTRE, OAK HILL, CHESTNUT HILL AND COMMONWEALTH AVENUE

Newton owes its abundance of nineteenth century architecture to the city's proximity to Boston and its consequent development as a railroad suburb. Made accessible to middle income homeowners by the advent of the railroad, Newton changed from a predominantly farming community to a series of suburban villages in little more than half a century. Development began with the introduction of passenger service to north side villages in 1834. Ten years later regular commuter service triggered a period of growth, which, particularly after the Civil War, contributed to the substantial expansion of the villages of Newton Corner, Newtonville, West Newton and Auburndale. Growth on the south side of Newton was much slower. The Charles River Railroad began operation in 1852, but the line was used mainly by industries at Newton Upper Falls and for the transportation of fill for the Back Bay in Boston. Although service improved after the completion of the Back Bay project, suburban development at Chestnut Hill and Newton Centre remained slow until the line became part of the new Circuit Railroad in 1886.

North and west of Newton Centre, from Waban Hill at the Brighton line to West Newton Hill, lay open farm land. Development did not spill over into this area until the 1890s when the construction of Commonwealth Avenue and the proliferation of street railways stimulated building and boosted land values. South of Newton Centre, Oak Hill was not to witness significant development until after the Great South Meadow was drained and the automobile emerged as the dominant means of transportation in suburban America.

Early highways and roads, upon which the later suburban street system was based, were laid out in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as settlers passed through Newton to other communities, and as residents of Newton traveled to and from their meeting house on the Dedham Road (Centre and Dedham Streets). The Dedham Road, Newton's first major highway, was "trodden" as early as 1635 by Watertown families preparing to settle the Dedham grant. Somewhat later, the highway between Boston and Sherborn was laid out, crossing Newton from the Brookline line at Heath Street to Newton Lower Falls. This road, known as the Sherborn Road, was later replaced as an east-west highway by the Worcester Turnpike, which was completed in 1808. Originally a toll road, the turnpike brought little return to investors and became a public highway in 1833. Other early roads include Homer Street laid out from the meeting house on the Dedham Road in 1716 and Cotton, Ward, Hammond, and Fuller Streets. These names commemorate Newton's colonial settlers and provide a link with Newton's early history.

Fine farms, pleasant villages, lakes, ponds, and picturesque hilltops made Newton a particularly desirable location for development in the Victorian era. Since many houses and neighborhoods built during this period of nineteenth century suburban development still stand, an understanding of the forces that shaped these communities and the aesthetics which governed the choice of architecture can give a new appreciation of the built environment.

Colonial Settlement

The area which is now Newton was once part of Watertown. In the mid-1630s it was given to Cambridge and by the end of the decade settlement had begun on "the south side of Charles River" near the Brighton line. During the next twenty years the community increased to about fifteen families and settlement began to spread out along the "trodden ways." As the years went on, families became reluctant to make the long journey to Cambridge for religious services. In 1660, they built their own meeting house adjacent to the burying ground at the corner of Cotton and Centre Streets and the settlement came to be known as Cambridge Village. However, the gathering of the First Church marked the beginning of the struggle for full separation from Cambridge. Independence was finally granted in 1688, and in 1691, by order of the General Court, the new community officially became known as Newton.

By the end of the seventeenth century, settlement had spread throughout Newton and many farms were located in outlying areas of the town. Poor roads and indirect routes made travel to the meeting house difficult and there was general dissatisfaction with its location. To settle the dispute, a surveyor was appointed in 1714 to locate the geographical center of the town which was found to be near the present intersection of Homer and Centre Streets, and within a few years a new meeting house was built on that site, less than a mile from the old one. Two new roads, one to the west (Homer Street) and one to the northwest (possibly Morton Street) were laid out to make the new location more accessible, and the area soon became known as Newton Centre.

The village of Newton Centre grew up on a small plain near Crystal Lake. To the south of the Centre, beyond what later became known as Institution Hill, lay the Great South Meadow, and to the west, Alcock's swamp--parts of which are now included in the Cemetery and Cold Spring Playground. Hilly uplands to the north included the unusually rich farm land along Ward Street, and great outcroppings of rock, similar to those still seen along Beacon Street and in Hammond's Woods, separated Newton Centre from rich farmland to the east. Although there was an old way "over the rocks," it was discontinued in the mid-1700s, and, until Beacon Street was put through in 1850, the only access to the eastern farms was by the way to Brighton (Ward Street).

Although a training field had been located near the old burying ground, by the early 1700s it had been moved to Newton Centre. The method and precise date of acquisition of land for the training field are unclear, but according to tradition it was given by the Hyde and Wiswall families, early

landowners at Newton Centre. Jonathan Hyde's 300 acre farm lay north of the lake along Centre Street and west to Alcock's Swamp, while the Wiswall farm lay south and east of the lake, which became known as Wiswall's Pond. The training field or the Newton Centre Common or Green as it is now known, along with the old burying ground at Cotton Street are the only remnants of the Colonial period in the vicinity.

Until the mid-1700s townspeople remained content to worship at the new meeting house at Homer and Centre Streets, but as settlement increased, families in the west and south began to request winter preaching in their neighborhoods. Although both requests were denied, another meeting house was built with private funds. Further petitions for town-supported winter preaching were also denied and the issue remained unsettled until 1778 when Newton was split into East and West Parishes and the latter was released from its obligation to support the church at Newton Centre. In the meantime, the Baptists, who had gained in numbers, were also released from paying support to the First Church and in 1781 built their own meeting house on land near the pond, given by Noah Wiswall. Thereafter, the pond became generally known as Baptist Pond.

In 1826, the Newton Theological Institution was incorporated to prepare students for the Baptist ministry. Instruction was first given in a small house on Ward Street and later moved to a permanent location in the mansion house of the old Peck estate. Located on the hill south of the common (thereafter known as Institution Hill), it was the first institution of higher learning to be established in Newton. It is also the oldest Protestant graduate school of theology in the United States. Professors and scholars, who became part of the community, have added significantly to the intellectual climate at Newton Centre as well as strengthening the influence of the First Baptist Church, which became the mother church to new congregations in surrounding communities.

Although taxpayers in the West Parish no longer contributed to the support of the meeting house at Newton Centre, town meetings continued to be held there. However, by the 1830s, the East Parish was no longer willing to bear the entire burden alone. After considerable debate, a separate town house was built at Newton Centre and town meetings alternated for a time between Newton Centre and a similar hall included in the new Fuller Academy at West Newton. This arrangement came to an end when the Academy was taken over by the Normal School and the dispute was reopened, further exacerbated by petitions for division of the town. The issue was not settled until the town voted to buy the old West Parish meeting house for use as a town house by the entire community. In 1849, the last town meeting was held at Newton Centre and after that, the political center of the town shifted to West Newton.

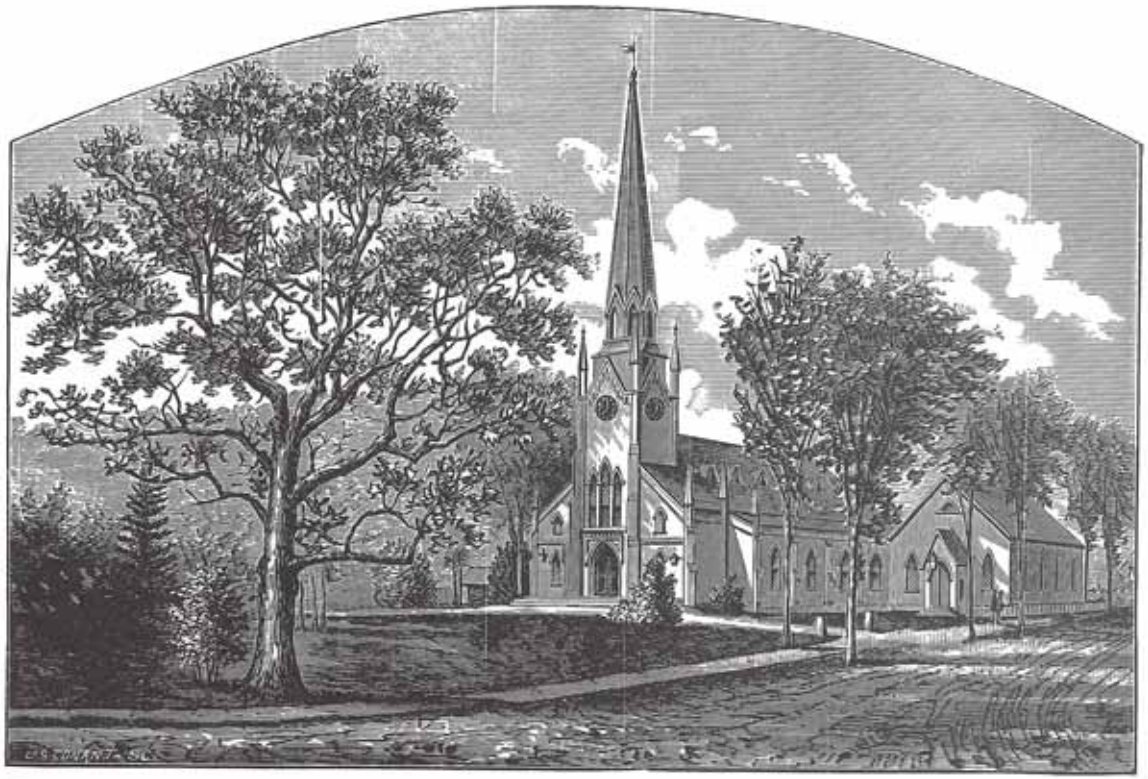


Figure 2. The First Church in Newton (1847)

Newton Centre in 1850

At mid-century, West Newton was showing signs of development due to the establishment of the railroad in 1834 and regular commuter service ten years later. Newton Centre, on the other hand, had no rail service and lay too far from the Worcester Turnpike to derive much benefit from it. Buildings clustered around the common numbered less than ten. Several dwellings, an engine house, store and post office were located on Centre Street along with the second Baptist meeting house, built in 1835-6. Adjacent to the common, the old town house had been converted to Lyceum Hall and to the north, on the site of the old meeting house at Homer and Centre Streets, stood a new church building with a gothic spire and diamond-paned windows, built in 1847 (Figure 2). Farms surrounded the village center and there was little sign of development.

Samuel Francis Smith, Marshall Rice and Luther Paul were prominent residents of Newton Centre in the mid-nineteenth century. Smith, whose home was located opposite the common, was pastor of the Baptist Church. Author of the hymn "America" and an important history of the town, he was considered the poet laureate of Newton. Rice, who was deeply involved with the community throughout his life, was an educator, surveyor, selectman, as well as town clerk for 27 years. He was an incorporator of "The Institution for Savings in the Town of Newton," (afterwards the Newton Savings Bank and later the Mutual Bank for Savings) and an original trustee of the Newton Cemetery. A devout Methodist, he was active in the church at Newton Upper Falls and later helped to establish the Methodist Church in Newton Centre. Luther Paul, a deacon of the First Church, kept the ice house (Figure 3) on the shores of Baptist Pond, and along with Marshall Rice, was long remembered for the stately elms which they planted along Centre Street.

Rice and Paul were not alone in their interest in tree planting. Recognizing the benefits of group effort, people had begun to form committees and clubs to oversee projects which the town as a whole might not otherwise undertake. In 1852, citizens of Newton Centre, "fond of cooling shades on sultry days," were invited by Marshall Rice, Luther Paul and James F. C. Hyde to form an association, which became the Newton Centre Tree Club. Members were particularly interested in improving the ancient Common and, with the help of an active ladies' committee, raised $400 to grade and ornament it. Although this group lasted only thirty months, its objectives, the planting of trees and beautification of the community remained an ongoing concern, laying the groundwork for the Newton Centre Improvement Association of the 1880s.

Tree planting was also undertaken by the Newton Horticultural Society, which held its first annual meeting at Lyceum Hall in 1854. The Society drew members from the entire community and was interested in all aspects of horticulture. Their activities included experimentation with new plant material, reports on agricultural and horticultural problems, and annual exhibits and festivals often held on the common at Newton Centre. Just as the Massachusetts Horticultural Society (which had many Newton members) had established Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge in 1831, so too members of the Newton Horticultural Society established the Newton Cemetery Corporation in 1855. The cemetery's picturesque location and emotional associations made it a source of pride and reverence for the entire community and it became widely regarded as one of the loveliest small garden cemeteries in the state. Members of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society visited the cemetery, declaring that "few things...indicate better than a cemetery, a town's general liberality and refinement."

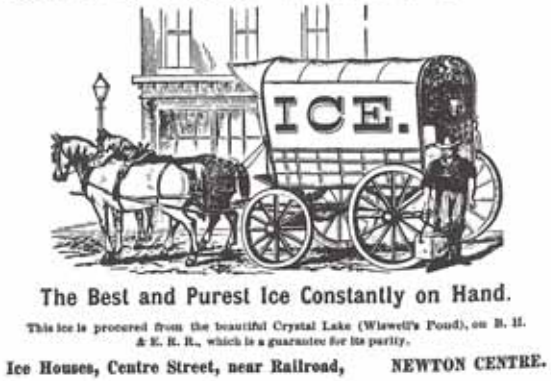


Figure 3. Advertisement from the Newton Directory (1875)

A Civil War monument was erected in 1866, funded by community subscription and, in 1885, a Gothic chapel and conservatory were dedicated to Dr. Henry F. Bigelow, former president of the trustees of the cemetery. The chapel, built of Cape Ann granite, was donated by John Farlow, designed by local architect George F. Meacham, and built by Newtonville contractor Henry F. Ross. Meacham was also responsible for the Gothic archway that once stood at the Walnut Street entrance to the cemetery. Both the chapel, located on the hillside below the Civil War monument, and the entrance arch were removed in this century.

Along with an expanded community outlook, the 1850s and 60s also experienced the beginnings of suburban development. The well-to-do, like Gardner Colby and J. Wiley Edmands, who lived on Centre Street between Newton Corner and Newton Centre, had long considered the area suitable for country homes, and improvements in transportation between Newton and Boston were soon to make permanent year-round residence a possibility even for middle income families. In 1850 Beacon Street connected Newton Centre with Boston. In 1852 the Charles River Railroad was put through from Brookline to Newton Centre and Newton Upper Falls. Although Dr. William Bushnell, pastor of the First Church in Newton Centre, had been an early advocate of the railroad, it was accomplished mainly through the efforts of Otis Pettee, who needed better transportation to and from his mills and factories at Upper Falls. The Charles River Railroad was used primarily for industrial purposes and for transporting fill to the Back Bay in Boston. Passenger service was infrequent and unreliable, clearly limiting early suburban development.

West of Centre Street, the area between Pelham Street and the pond was first developed by Roswell Turner, who began to acquire property there in the 1840s. In the 1860s, many of the Turner properties, including his home on Mount Pleasant (now 15 Bracebridge Road), were acquired by Charles S. Davis. *King's Handbook of Newton* comments that the Mount Pleasant estate was "notable for its luxuriant pine woods, and great ledges of conglomerate rock and picturesque flanking knolls." Davis, an associate of the Boston firm of Hallet and Davis, piano manufacturers was a member of the First Church and a regular participant in community affairs. Until his death in 1907, he played an active role in the development of Newton Centre.

East of Centre Street, at the foot of Institution Hill near the railroad station, land belonging to the Newton Theological Institution was surveyed by Marshall Rice and put up for auction in 1858. A few lots were offered on Ripley, Chase and Knowles Streets which had been laid out and named for professors at the Institution. Further

south, near the intersection of Langley Road and the Worcester Turnpike, a small working class community gathered, taking the name Thompsonville. A Sunday School, built there by the Baptists in 1867, became a focus for that community. Other small groups of working class families, many of whom came to Newton to work on the Cochituate aqueduct built in 1846-8, settled at Cold Springs City (Cork City) near the cemetery, and along Beacon Street at "four corners," which was known as Kerry Cross. Domestics working at the large estates along Centre Street between Newton Corner and Newton Centre lived at nearby Clinton Place.

Although street patterns were expanding, Newton Centre's growth even in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was slow and building was limited. *The Newton Journal* in September 1866 noted that there were no houses for rent in Newton Centre and very few for sale, although there was some inquiry for house lots in spite of the high price of materials. It was felt that there would be much more activity if railroad service were improved.

Education in Newton Centre

Several private schools, including Marshall Rice's Boarding School for Boys and the Female Academy at Newton Centre, enhanced educational opportunities for children in the early nineteenth century, since the ungraded, public grammar schools did not provide a high school curriculum. By the 1840s the state had begun to require towns with a population of over 4000 to provide advanced instruction, but it was not until 1852 that a committee was established to consider changes and improvements in Newton's educational system. Dr. Barnas Sears, Newton Centre resident and member of the Newton Theological Institution, who later succeeded Horace Mann as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, was chairman of the committee. The committee's recommendations included doing away with the old ungraded district schools (with the exception of Oak Hill), and the establishment of a graded system with provisions for high school instruction. New grammar schools were built at Newtonville and Newton Centre, and although the high school program was introduced with great success at Newton Centre, a separate high school was built in Newtonville in 1859.

Figure 4. Mason School (1870)

In 1869, fire destroyed a newly built grammar school that stood in the triangle between Centre and Beacon Streets and Langley Road. Redesigned by Boston architect George Ropes, the wooden building featured a new french mansard roof and was clearly a centerpiece for the community. After 1873 it was called the Mason School (Figure 4) in memory of David H. Mason, lawyer, legislator, U.S. District Attorney and member of the committee which had restructured Newton's educational system. At the turn of the century a new brick grammar school designed by Hartwell and Richardson (not to be confused with H. H. Richardson), was built on the site of the first Mason school. In 1886 a new Rice primary school, which was also located at Newton Centre, replaced an earlier building, and in 1959 the primary and grammar schools were combined, becoming the Mason-Rice school now located on Pleasant Street.

Newton Becomes a City

In 1873, amid the misgivings of some who thought city government would be too expensive, citizens voted to become a city, and in January of the following year inaugurated James F.C. Hyde, descendant of one of Newton's early settlers, the first mayor of Newton. This change reflected the widespread growth throughout the community that had also begun to manifest itself at Newton Centre. (Figure 5) The completion of the Back Bay fill project in the early '70s resulted in improved rail service, stimulating development West of Centre Street, Pleasant was put through to Homer; Lake, Crystal and Laurel intersected with Beacon, opening up the areas around the pond which about this time began to be called Crystal Lake. East of Centre Street, Gibbs and Everett opened up to Sumner Street, and Sumner Street and Grant Avenue were laid out to Ward Street. At the foot of Institution Hill, the block formed by Ripley, Knowles, and Chase Streets and Langley Road, was for the most part owned by builder Z. E. Coffin, who built at least six houses there. Further along Langley Road there was a subdivision of 48 lots, known briefly as "Johnsonville."Perhaps because it was too far out of the village, or more likely because of poor economic conditions, only a few lots were sold. The remaining lots were not developed until after 1900.

Unlike Newton Highlands, where subdivisions with grid layouts accounted for major areas of development, Newton Centre had no large scale subdivisions. Where development did occur, land was more often sold off lot by lot, and, with the exception of the "Johnsonville" tract, there were no grid layouts. Developers such as Charles S. Davis, Horace Cousens, and later Mellen Bray, and builders Z. E. Coffin and S. D. Garey, all lived in Newton Centre and there was little absentee ownership of land. Many of these men also participated in the revival of organized citizen involvement in community matters beginning in the 1870s and '80s.

In 1869 there had been a call for attendance to the citizens of the First School District of the Town of Newton. Committees were formed to investigate all aspects of community development including gas, water, sewers, police, railroad facilities, public buildings and grounds, and, of course, the Common. Using the record book of the early Tree Club, in 1880 they established the Newton Centre Improvement Association with John Lowell of Chestnut Hill as its first president. Under the aegis of the Improvement Association, the Common again received attention, and an embankment and walkway were built along Lake Avenue at Crystal Lake where skating, swimming and Fourth of July festivities

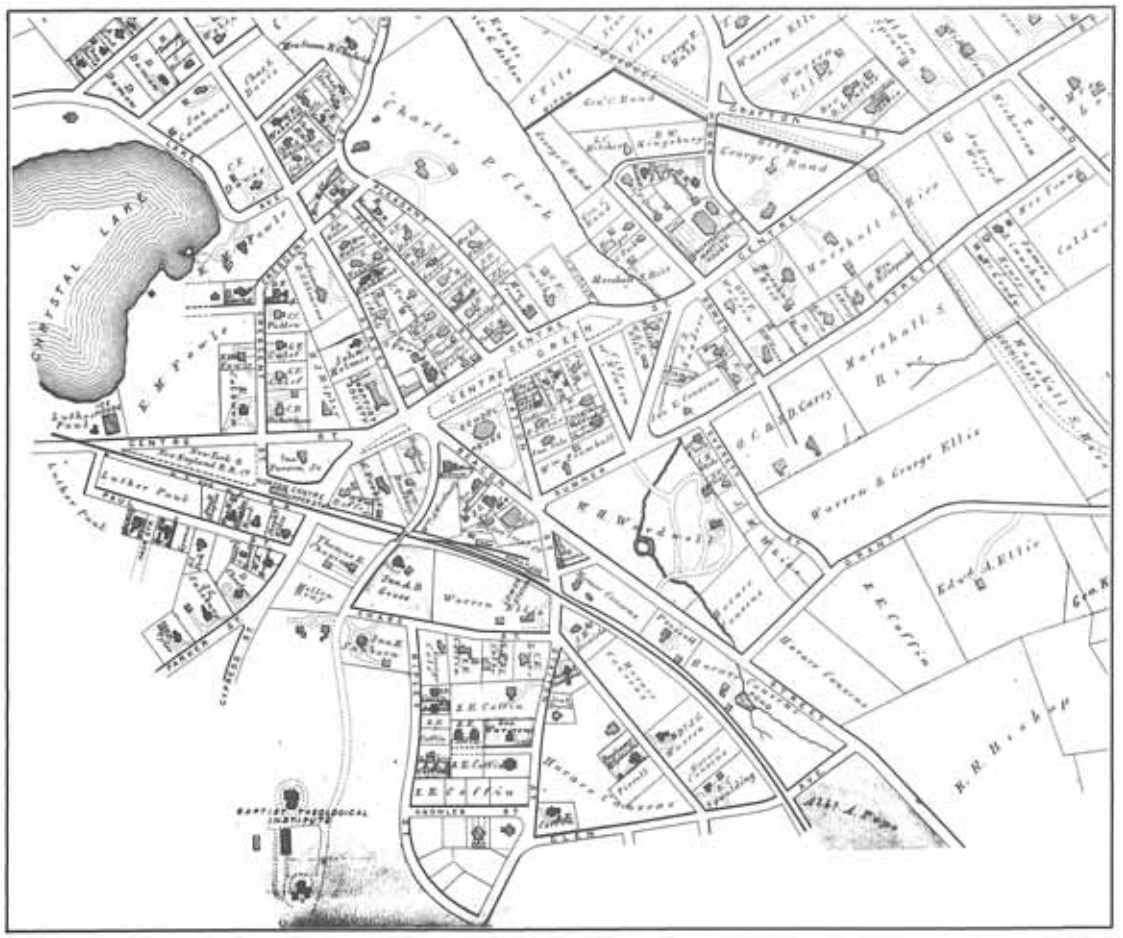


Figure 5. Newton Centre, City of Newton Atlas (G. M Hopkins & Co. 1874)

were greatly enjoyed. One of the Association's most far-reaching accomplishments was the acquisition and stewardship of the Newton Centre Playground in the 1890s. Land along Tyler Terrace was bought by the City with the help of the Association and the Newton Centre Women's Club, and laid out by the nation's foremost landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted (Figure 6). The playground was Newton Centre's response to the nineteenth century conservation movement which fostered the creation of New York's Central Park, the National Park System and local examples such as Boston's "emerald necklace," which, like Central Park, was developed by Olmsted.

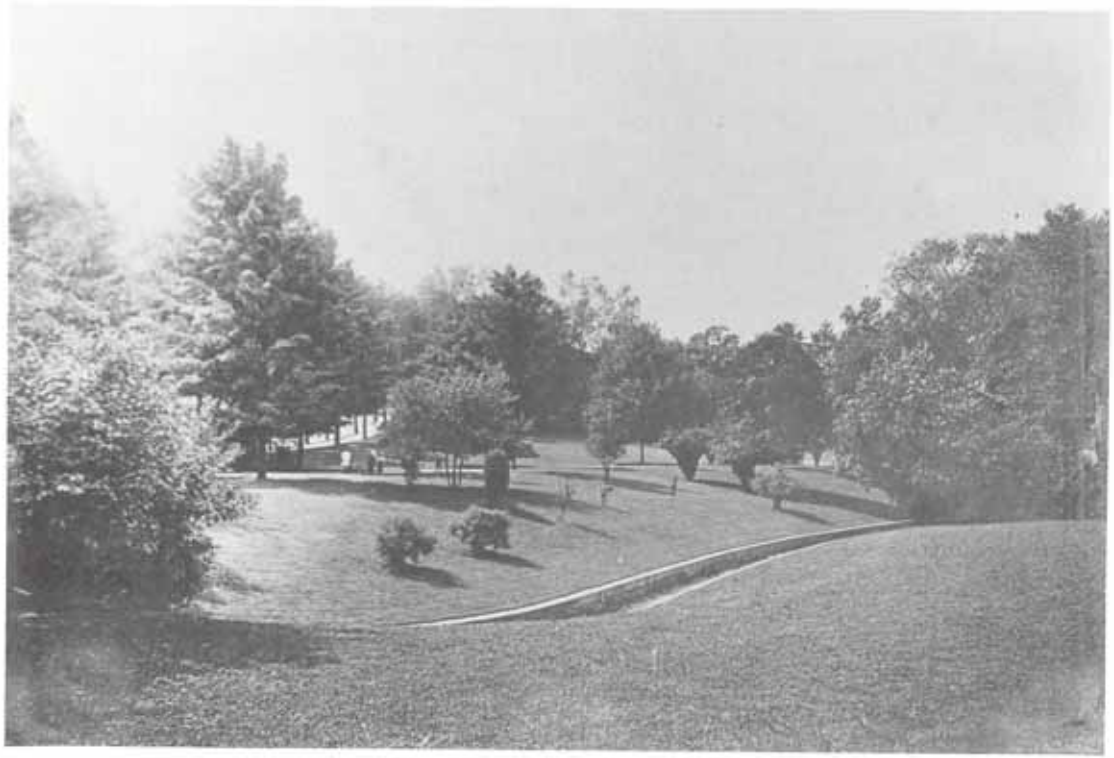


Figure 6. Newton Centre Playground, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted

The following excerpt from an 1888 Boston guidebook presents one view of Newton in this period of suburban development.

> *Newton, the most favored and delightful among the many attractive suburbs of Boston, is distinctly a city of beautiful homes...[it is] noted for its magnificent country seats and luxurious dwellings, its superb drives, exquisite scenery and elegant surroundings, its beautiful lawns, gardens and conservatories...This is, in short, an ideal American community, and represents the highest development of New England Civilization...*

This suburban paradise was the creation of enterprising residents who actively supported the establishment of rail service in Newton. In 1882, after many years of effort to improve south side rail service, a group of investors, including James F. C. Hyde, formed the Newton Circuit

Railroad Company. Although the project was eventually taken over by the Boston and Albany, and the original company dissolved, the line was completed as envisioned by the original investors. The tracks were renewed between Brookline and Newton Highlands and extended, with new stops at Eliot, Waban and Woodland, to Riverside, where they linked up with the main Boston and Albany line. On Saturday, May 22, 1886 a special train inaugurated the Circuit Railroad. Citizens celebrated the years of effort by Hyde. In speeches tribute was also paid to the thrifty suburban population, the beautiful scenery and the desirable building sites along the route of the railroad. A new station (Figure 7), built in 1890 by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, reflected the importance of the railroad to the village.

The 1880s and '90s also brought new ecclesiastical and commercial structures to Newton Centre, built to meet the needs of the expanding community. Foremost was the Baptist Church, designed by architect John Lyman Faxon (Figure 8). The old Baptist meeting house was purchased by local businessmen and moved to the corner of Pelham and Centre Streets. Known as Associates Hall, it was fitted out as a library, reading room and debating hall, and stood on its new site until after the turn of the century. A new Methodist Church was built by Cram, Wentworth, and Goodhue, next to the Green on the site of the old church and a Unitarian Church (now Lutheran) was built at the corner of Cypress and Centre Streets. A small Episcopal church, located on Pelham Street was later moved to the corner of Homer and Centre Street, opposite the First Church. Moved again, when a larger church was built in 1913, it is now the Hut at the Newton Centre Playground. On Centre Street, south of Beacon, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, designed by the firm of Rand and Taylor, was dedicated in 1899 and a new First Congregational Church by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge was built on the site of the old meeting house, at the corner of Homer and Centre Streets in 1904.

Figure 7. The Newton Centre Station, *Newton Journal*, October 17, 1890.

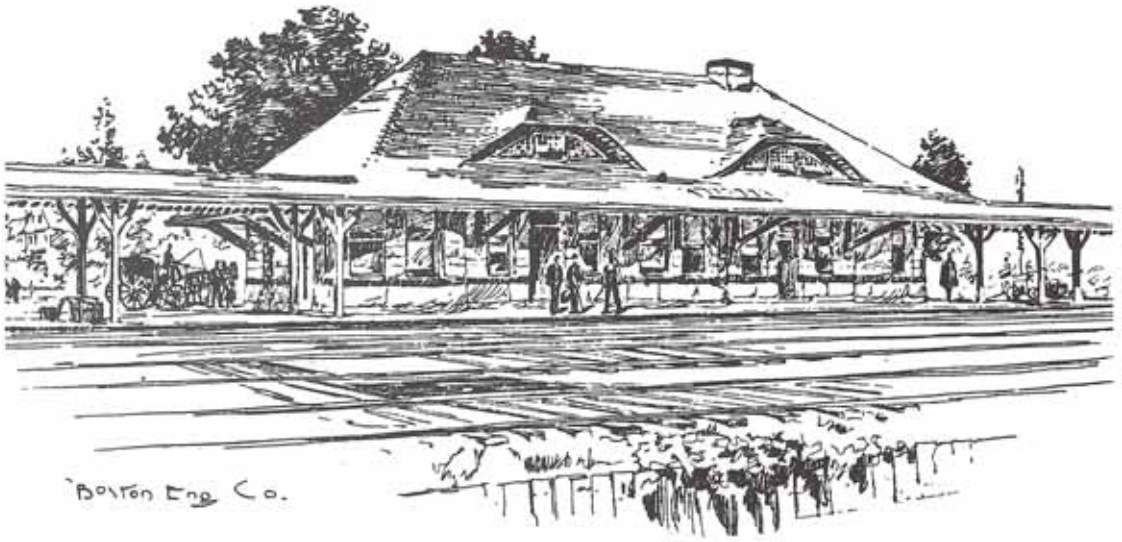


Figure 8. First Baptist Church of Newton (1888)

Several two- and three-story, wooden, commercial blocks were located near the Newton Centre depot and across from the Common. In 1893, Mellen Bray, inventor, investor and philanthropist, built a brick commercial block on Union Street, which was considered a great asset to the community and its future development. Bray also built a number of rental properties on Braeland Street, and in 1913 built Newton Centre's first apartment building, Bradford Court on Herrick Road.

Improvements to the Common continued as well, including the erection, in 1907, of a large stone drinking trough at the corner of Beacon and Centre Street. The trough was funded jointly by the Newton Centre Improvement Association and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It provided a small reservoir of water for dogs along with the large trough for horses.

Trolley Car Era

The Street Railway began in Newton in 1866 with a horse-drawn run between West Newton and the Waltham Watch factory, but major expansion of the street railways did not come until after 1886 with the electrification of the lines. Numerous small street railway companies, often with the same officers and associated real estate interests, were active in Newton. In 1891, the Newton and Boston Street Railway Company was granted a run between Newtonville and Newton Centre. The line was extended from Walnut Street up Homer Street to Centre Street, making another link between Newton Centre and the north side suburbs. Although there was considerable controversy over the necessity of widening Centre Street and possible destruction of prized trees which lined the road, in 1899 the Commonwealth Avenue Street Railway was allowed to build a connecting line through Newton Centre to Newton Highlands.

Newton Centre resident Adams Claflin, son of ex-governor William Claflin, was a major figure in the development of the street railway in Newton and a director of a number of the individual companies which had franchises in the city. In 1907, Claflin became president of the new Middlesex and Boston Street Railway Company, which merged many of the lines in Newton and the surrounding communities. Under Claflin, street car usage reached a peak in 1913, when the Middlesex and Boston operated two hundred and sixty-four cars in twenty cities and towns in the metropolitan Boston area. However, after World War I, ridership on the street railways fell off as the automobile became popular. Buses eventually replaced the railway lines and, in 1930, the run from Lake Street to Norumbega along Commonwealth Avenue was shut down bringing the era of the street railway to a close in Newton.

Agricultural Period

Although the name Oak Hill applies to a more restricted area today, it originally referred to all the lands south of the Worcester Turnpike bordered by Brookline, Roxbury and the Charles River. Newton Upper Falls formed the western extremity and, until the 1870s, the railroad stop at Newton Highlands was called Oak Hill. Although traversed by the Dedham Road as early as 1635, settlement at Oak Hill did not begin until the 1690s. Brookline Street was laid out in 1693 and by 1711 Cypress, Dudley, Greenwood, Nahanton and Vine were all in use. The street pattern and location of farms showed little change until this century, due in great measure to the character of the land. Oak Hill and Bald Pate Hill overlooked vast expanses of meadows and swampland. Stretches of rough, stony soil, muck and peat bogs meant that large farms had to be maintained if families were to sustain themselves Thus, there was little subdivision of the land and the population at Oak Hill remained stable.

In 1701 the town voted to build two school houses, one at the meeting house near the Cotton Street burying ground in Newton Centre and the other at Oak Hill. In 1702, Jonathan Hyde gave a half acre of land on the north side of Dedham Street near Oak Hill and a one-room school house was erected the following year. Yet, despite the early location of a school at Oak Hill, no village centre developed. In 1855 a school was still located on the north side of Dedham Street. That land, however, was later sold and a new school house located across the street just beyond Nahanton Street. A sunday school/chapel was built nearby on Nahanton Street, and the First Baptist Church at Newton Centre maintained preaching at Oak Hill every Sabbath by students connected with the Newton Theological Institution.

Figure 9. 328 Brookline Street, circa 1710

Oak Hill is fortunate to have retained a number of seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings, most on their original sites. Two fine examples are located at 215 and 328 Brookline Street (Figure 9). Another well preserved house, although incorporating a series of later additions, is at 391 Dedham Street. The original house, built circa 1772, is one of three on Dedham Street owned by the Stone family who farmed at Oak Hill for one hundred and fifty years. Although moved from its original site and sympathetically restored, the Carlson house (777 Dedham Street) is an interesting example of the evolution of a farm house. Beginning as a center chimney salt box, circa 1719, the house was enlarged to two-and-a-half stories in the mid-nineteenth century. Figure 10 shows the house on its original site at the corner of Brookline and Dedham Streets, with porches which were later removed. In the 1920s it was a tea room, before being moved across the street to the campus of Mt. Ida Junior College.

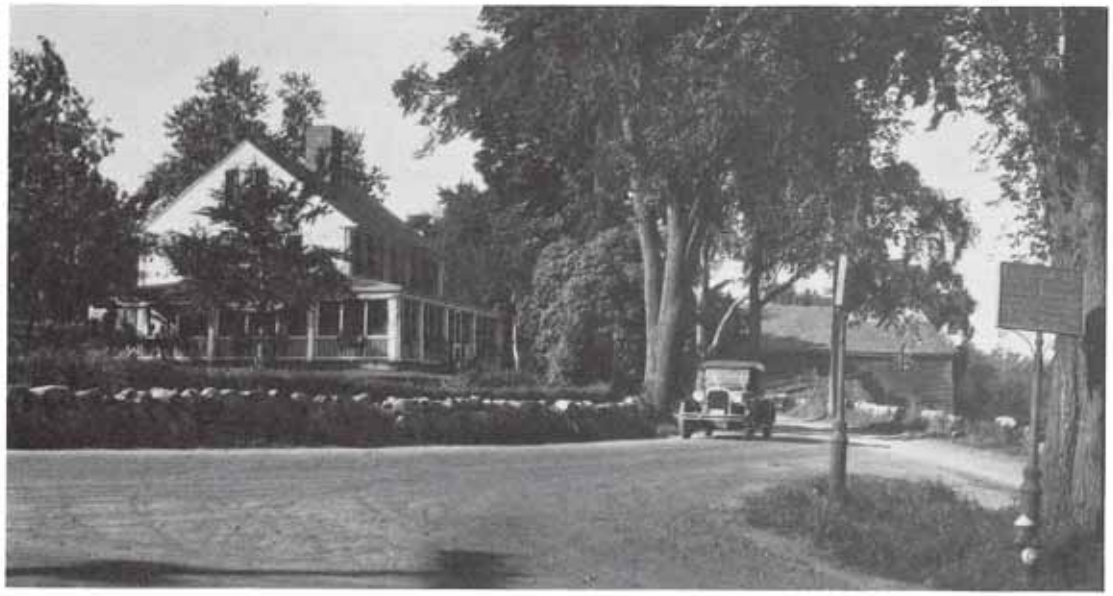


Figure 10. Peabody Home Tea Room in 1927

Offshoots of the agricultural and farming activities at Oak Hill in the 1850s included a blacksmith shop on the Stone farm at 360 Dedham Street and a glue factory which was located near the Hyde farm at 29 Greenwood Street. Edward Wales bought the Hyde farm in 1860, and in 1867 George and William Wales started a small fruit preserving business. As their business grew, George bought out his brother and by 1884 was so successful that he had to build a new factory near the corner of Cedar Street and Mill Street at Newton Centre. Although largely sold to local markets, his "home-made" preserves found their way to major cities throughout the country and to European markets as well.

Oak Hill's Large Estates

Because of the lack of development in Oak Hill, there is a total absence of several mid-century building styles. Early Federal and Greek Revival houses predominate, while Mansard and Italianate buildings are not present except in the school house and Sunday School/chapel respectively. However, as opposed to the lack of vernacular examples of certain styles, Oak Hill possessed three very large estates, each with high-style, nineteenth century houses. Earliest, and largest, was William Sumner Appleton's three hundred acre estate, later owned by Robert Gould Shaw II. Appleton was the son of Nathan Appleton, one of the founders of the Boston Manufacturing Company at Waltham. Holbrook Hall, with its deep porches, irregular massing, and fanciful Stick style and Queen Ann detail, was designed by Peabody and Stearns in 1875 (Figure 12). Set near a beautiful little pond named for Appleton's brother-in-law, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and surrounded by green lawns, meadow and woodlands, its quintessential Victorian ambiance must have provided a perfect setting for the antiquarian Appleton. Part of the estate, including the house built by Shaw after the Appleton house was razed, is now the campus of Mt. Ida Junior College. Another three acres belongs to the City of Newton, and a large portion along the Charles River belongs to the Massachusetts District Commission.

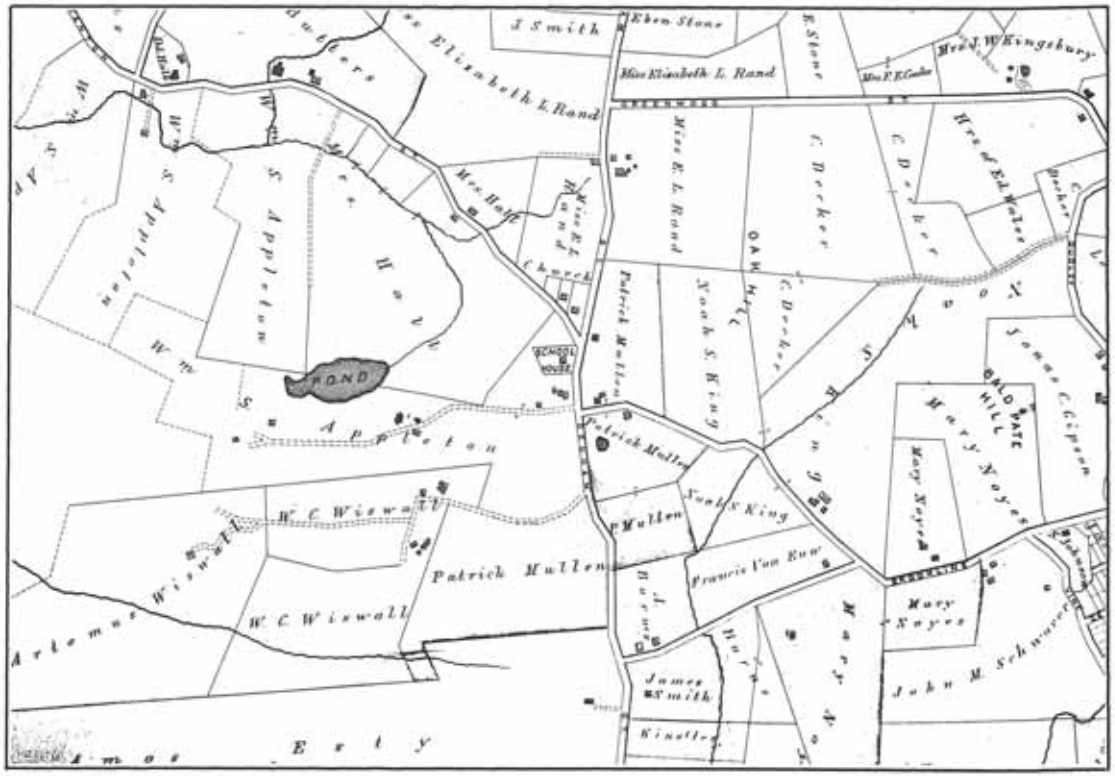


Figure 11. Oak Hill, City of Newton Atlas (G. M. Hopkins & Co. 1874)

During the 1880s Levi C. Wade and Dr. Henry J. Bigelow also acquired property in Oak Hill. Wade, a lawyer, was a Representative to the General Court and President of the Mexican Central Railroad. Bigelow, a well-known doctor and professor of medicine, was associated with Dr. William Morton and the discovery of anesthesia. Wade acquired large portions of the old Stone farm on Dedham Street and in 1881-2 built a large Shingle style house, which he called "Homewood." Outbuildings and a gate house were later designed by Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, but the architect of the house is unknown. Long after Wade's death, the house became the clubhouse for the Charles River Country Club and, although the house was later damaged by fire and torn down, much of the estate is preserved for golf and other recreational activities.

Figure 12. Holbrook Hall, home of William Sumner Appleton

Although Bigelow's estate was not as large as the other two, it occupied one of the most desirable sites in all of Newton, the top of Oak Hill. Bigelow's Shingle Style house, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson, one of the most famous architects of the period, was built in 1886-7 and was one of Richardson's last commissions. Original drawings show that proper siting of the house, to take advantage of the spectacular view, was a primary concern for Bigelow and Richardson, and the success of those efforts can be appreciated today. The house with attached outbuildings (Figure 13), recently rescued from years of neglect, has been converted to condominiums, and a path near the top of the hill is open to the public.

Oak Hill at the Turn of the Century

Until the turn of the century, land in Oak Hill not used for farming or grazing was for the most part wet-land, unfit for development. In the late 1890s there was some new building, including a few Colonial Revival country houses patterned after the fine suburban homes of Chestnut Hill and Newton Centre, but there was no large scale suburban development. By this time landowners at Oak Hill had begun to petition for wetland drainage. The City made plans for channeling South Meadow Brook and its tributaries and, by 1908, the ground water level had been lowered and large areas of the Great South Meadow drained.

In 1896 and in 1898, the Newton and Roxbury Street Railway petitioned for a route from Newton Centre over Parker and Dedham Streets to West Roxbury. The run was granted, and surveys and plans for widening Dedham Street were drawn in conjunction with the drainage project. The street railway project however, never materialized, and it remained for the automobile and a later bus route to West Roxbury to bring transportation and to facilitate the development of Oak Hill. The suburban development of Oak Hill is exclusively that of the twentieth century.

Figure 13. The Bigelow House

Agricultural Era

On the east side of Newton, the area now known as Chestnut Hill stretches from the slopes of Waban Hill south to Chestnut Hill. Originally it was separated from Newton Centre by a natural barrier of ledges and rocks, and access to the rest of the town was provided by Hammond Street, which ran from the Sherborn Road (Heath Street) to Ward Street in the north. Thomas Hammond, whose family dominated the area for many generations, was among the first settlers. His original farm, bought in 1656, extended from Heath to Ward Streets, and from the Brookline line to Langley Road at Newton Centre, including what is still known as Hammond's Woods and Hammond's Pond. Two Hammond houses are still standing, one at 521 Hammond Street and the other at 9 Old Orchard Road. Although much altered, the latter, which was built circa 1662, is considered to be the oldest house in Newton. A third house from this period, probably built by John Parker, was moved from Hammond Street in the late nineteenth century to its present location at 137 Suffolk Road.

Nineteenth Century Changes

Until 1821, when the Mill Dam over the Back Bay was completed, the only land access to Boston was through Roxbury and over the narrow Boston neck. The Mill Dam Road, which ran from Beacon Street near the Boston Common to Sewall's point in Brookline, created a second highway into Boston, shortening the distance between Boston and Brookline by several miles. Roads to Brookline Village and to Brighton were laid out from the terminus of the dam near Kenmore Square, and Beacon Street was eventually extended through Brookline, reaching Chestnut Hill and Newton Centre by 1850.

Transportation between Boston and Newton was significantly improved by the opening of the Charles River Railroad. Although not favored by well-to-do neighbors in Brookline (many of whom had carriages of their own and feared that their gardens would be ruined) the railroad was completed in 1852. However, passenger service was limited, and though the railroad brought only tentative suburban development, by 1856 "Chestnut Hill" had been put on the map.

Other changes came with the building of the Cochituate aqueduct between 1846 and '48 and the Chestnut Hill reservoirs in the late 1860s. The Cochituate aqueduct enters Newton above Lower Falls, passing through Waban, Newton Highlands, Newton Centre and Chestnut Hill on its way to Boston. Running north of Waban Hill, it connected with the Lawrence and Bradlee basins of the Chestnut Hill reservoirs, which were filled in 1868 and 1870 respectively, when

the water level at Lake Cochituate in Framingham was raised to increase the water supply for the city of Boston.

The area of Lawrence basin, so named because it covered portions of Amos Lawrence's farm, was ceded to Boston at the time the basins were built, but the land around the basin, with its winding drive and park-like landscaping, remained a source of pleasure to Newton lovers of the picturesque. Only the tiny, yet monumental, Romanesque Revival gate house, connecting the later Sudbury conduit (1873-75) and the Cochituate aqueduct, remains within the Newton city limits. The gate house (at 126 Beacon Street), together with the pumping station farther along Beacon Street, are a good measure of the importance of the system. In 1947-48 the Lawrence basin was drained and the land sold to Boston College for campus expansion and is now the site of the school's football stadium.

In the 1870s Newton, too, faced the need for providing a municipal water supply. Although first considering local ponds as potential sources, the city finally decided to take water from the Charles River. A pumping station was built near the river at Newton Upper Falls and a reservoir, which is still in use, was constructed inside Waban Hill. An open reservoir, built a few years later, added to the picturesque quality of the landscape on the hill and was considered an asset when residential development of Waban Hill began in the 1890s.

Suburban Chestnut Hill

In 1822, Joseph Lee came from Beverly and bought one hundred and sixty acres of the old Hammond farm. He never married, and at his death in 1845, the farm passed to his six nieces and nephews. Initially, the heirs had little interest in the "Uncle Joe Farm," but in the 1850s, when Beacon Street and the railroad improved communication between Boston and Newton, several family members decided to settle there. Although suburban neighborhoods were being laid out in other parts of Newton and also in Brookline, this was to be one of the most ambitious subdivisions in the area. The Lee family laid out new roads and built houses and, in 1856, issued a beautifully illustrated plan to promote the sale of land at "Chestnut Hill." Thus, the eastern portion of Newton received a name and the groundwork was laid for the suburban community which eventually followed.

Mary Lee, granddaughter of Joseph Lee's nephew Francis, describes the first work at Chestnut Hill in her book, *A History of the Chestnut Hill Chapel.*

The real planning out of Chestnut Hill was done on a pleasant April day when Mr. John

C. Lee and Francis Lee went out and made a day of it on the farm. "I have just got in from 'Chestnut Hill' with J.C.L. and a very pleasant day we have had of it," he writes on April 3. "We went out in the 12 A.M. train and spent until 5 on the place...We had a splendid time, and I flatter myself I convinced John of my ability to manage the laying out. We discussed roads and ditches and everything and have a sort of general plan chalked out and shall get to work pretty soon..."

Francis Lee selected a site east of Hammond Street at the foot of Chestnut Hill and built what he called a "thorough English homestead." John Lee's daughter Rose and her husband Leverett Saltonstall chose a site on the hill (231-245 Chestnut Hill Road) and cousin John Lowell bought the old Nathaniel Hammond farm (521 Hammond Street) across the tracks near Hammond's Pond. Other families joined the Lees, Lowells and Saltonstalls and within ten years the new community, often called the "Essex Colony," because many of the people came from the north shore, numbered twelve families.

The great chestnut trees which covered the hill in the nineteenth century and gave the community its name were entirely destroyed by a blight after 1900. However, they have been replaced by magnificent beeches and other specimen trees, nurtured first by Leverett Saltonstall, who, with the many caretakers in this century, can be credited with the beauty of Chestnut Hill today.

Thomas Lee of Brookline, brother of Joseph Lee and uncle to more than half the families there, took a keen interest in the activities at Chestnut Hill. Concerned with the spiritual life of his young relatives, who often missed church at Brookline, he donated a small chapel and school house, which soon became a focal point for the close knit community. The chapel, modeled after the First Unitarian Church in Hingham, was designed by Charles Follen, an associate of Francis Lee. Minus its original steeple, the little building is still standing as a part of the present Chestnut Hill School. Although a grammar school was located at Newton Centre, children of the Chestnut Hill community were taught first in the home of Francis Lee and then in the chapel schoolhouse.

The original Lee properties shown on the 1856 plan of "Chestnut Hill" lay roughly between Beacon Street, Reservoir Avenue, Hammond Street and the railroad tracks. Some of the acreage lapped over into Brookline, accounting for that area of Brookline also called Chestnut Hill. As succeeding generations married, they were provided with house lots in Chestnut Hill and many of these houses remain, still lived in by descendants of the original families.

In contrast to the spacious lots developed on the Lee property, Chestnut Hill Land Associates offered two subdivisions with grid layouts, which appear on an 1874 map. Land for these subdivisions was sold by Issac Kingsbury in 1872 to Albert de Forest Brown of Providence and subsequently to a series of investors including Dana Sargent of Nashua, New Hampshire, Edward P. Brown and George A. P. Darling, both of Boston, trustees for the Chestnut Hill Land Associates. Kingsbury's deed to Brown restricted building for ten years and allowed Kingsbury to continue to farm the land and harvest his crops. Sixty-three lots were proposed east of Hammond Street between Lawrence and Reservoir Avenues. West of Hammond Street twenty-four lots were proposed along Kingsbury Street and along an extension of Reservoir Avenue, which was never built. By 1886, only two suburban houses had been built west of Hammond Street, one of which was owned by Herman Burr, eighth mayor of Newton. By the 1890s, development west of Hammond Street had begun to increase, but in the subdivision east of Hammond there was no activity. Held by a series of investors, this section remained almost completely undeveloped until after the turn of the century.

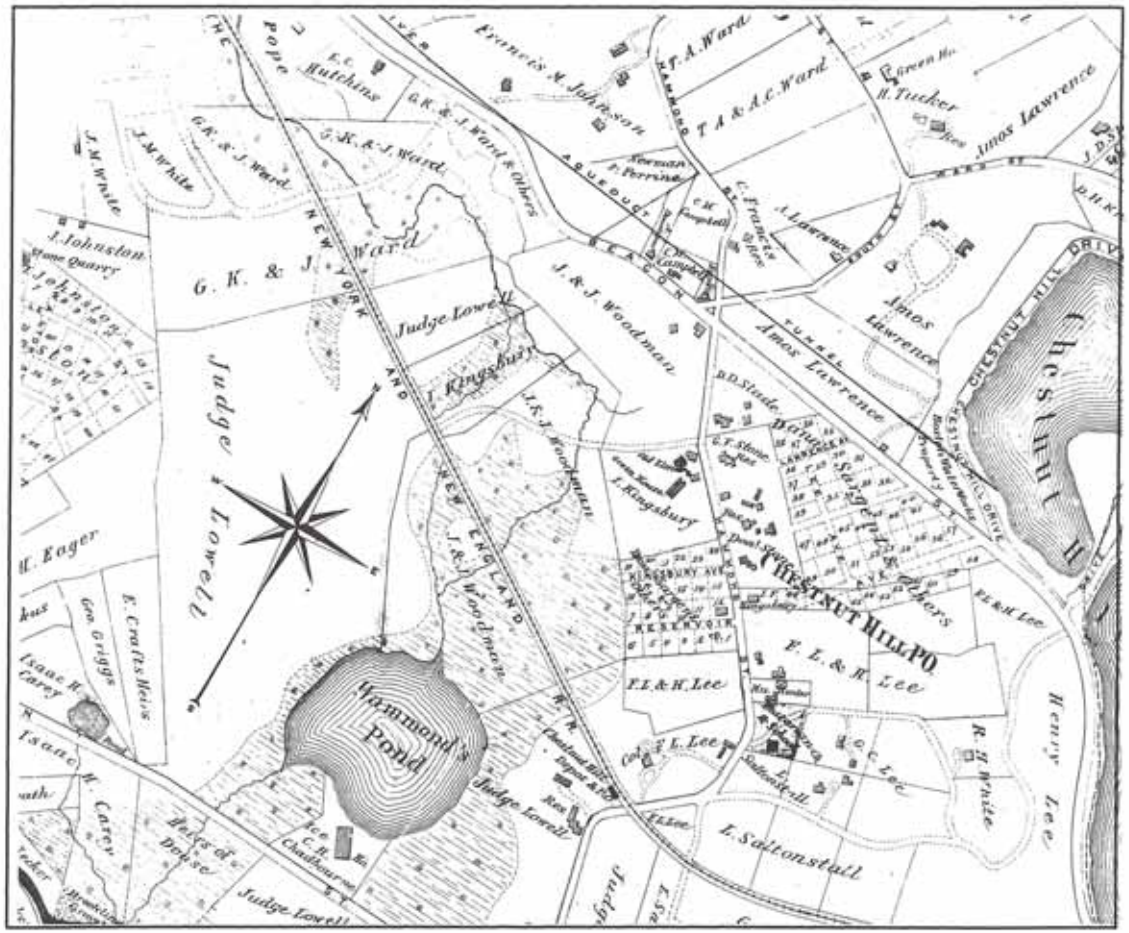


Figure 14. Chestnut Hill, City of Newton Atlas (F. W. Beers & Co. 1874)

Figure 15. Home of J. H. Sawyer, *King's Handbook* (1889)

North of the Lee property and the subdivisions, the Stone, Kingsbury, Woodman and Ward families continued to farm, selling off little of their lands until the development of Commonwealth Avenue in the 1890s. Lack of development until late in the century limits the number of houses in representative mid-century styles. There are no Greek Revival houses in Chestnut Hill and only a few of the Italianate style; and in contrast to Newton Centre, which had many Mansard houses built between 1860 and 1885, there is only one at Chestnut Hill. On the other hand, late century houses are numerous, with the Colonial Revival style being particularly heavily represented.

Architectural trends visible today are a direct reflection of the village's development and social history. Many of the fine late century houses in Chestnut Hill were designed by architects, although today attributions are hard to trace as old plans were often destroyed when houses changed hands. However, Mary Lee mentions that Horace S. Frazer and Herbert Jaques, both members of the Chestnut Hill Chapel, were active in the community, designing a number of houses and making alterations to others. Jaques was responsible for the now demolished J. H. Sawyer house seen in a drawing from *King's Handbook of Newton* (Figure 15).

The prominent architect William Ralph Emerson is known to have designed at least two houses in Chestnut Hill. Reusing an old barn, Emerson developed a striking Shingle style house for John Lowell which still stands at 517 Hammond Street. For dry goods merchant Ralph H. White, he designed an impressive house, which stood at the top of Chestnut Hill Road. Destroyed in the 1920s, this house, according to *King's Handbook of Newton* had "an encircling veranda of great length, a massive porte-cochère and many picturesque gables." The siting of the house and the great porch took advantage of the magnificent view which included the reservoirs with their park-like surroundings, and the distant city of Boston. Alike in its command of an unusual view was the Dupee mansion at 400 Beacon Street, which overlooked rolling farmland west of Hammond Street toward the Blue Hills in Milton. Built in 1880-1 by Peabody and Stearns, the house, was later owned by Mary Baker Eddy and is still in the possession of the Christian Science Church.

Throughout the late nineteenth century, members of the farming community co-existed with the Chestnut Hill community. According to Mary Lee, members of the older farm community were Congregationalists or Baptists and went to church at Newton Centre, while Chestnut Hill

residents were Unitarians. They worshipped in their own chapel and tended to be oriented more to Brookline and Boston. However, members of the "Essex Colony" were also involved in Newton Centre activities. John Lowell was the first president of the Newton Centre Improvement Association in 1880 and Dr. Daniel Slade, whose house at 258 Hammond Street now belongs to Boston College, was a president of the Newton Horticultural Society. Dr. Slade is known to have written several papers on the care of small estates, the layout of country roads and a prize-winning essay on "How to Improve and Beautify Newton."

Near the turn of the century, two substantial churches added community gathering places for Chestnut Hill residents. In the 1880s, a small Episcopal congregation had formed at Chestnut Hill, ministered to by the Reverend George Shinn of Grace Church, Newton. They worshipped in the non-denominational Chestnut Hill Chapel until 1891, when architect Henry Vaughn designed the Church of the Redeemer on Hammond Street. The Unitarians, who had lapsed for a while, regrouped and in 1911 dedicated The First Unitarian Church on Suffolk Road, designed by J. Lovett Little, Jr. Chestnut Hill's English character was reinforced by the neo-Gothic style of these two churches as well as by the collegiate buildings of Boston College, begun in 1906, when the college moved from Boston to its present location.

Figure 16. View of Hammond Street

Figure 17. Chestnut Hill Station

In 1889, *King's Handbook of Newton* referred to "the charming semi-English suburb of Chestnut Hill, with its plain and unpretending country-houses, each in its broad environment of park-like grounds." Hammond Street was then a quiet residential street lined with graceful elms (Figure 16), and Chestnut Hill was marked by one of Henry Hobson Richardson's finest railroad stations. (Figure 17) Set off by the landscaping of Frederick Law Olmsted, the station was, according to *King's Handbook* "a fitting portal for one of the most charming suburbs of Boston." That station, built in 1884 was demolished by the MBTA in the 1960s. Although the opening of the Circuit Railroad improved commuter service, Chestnut Hill remained quiet until well into the 1890s when a surge of development was initiated by the opening of Commonwealth Avenue.

After the turn of the century, residential development continued to intensify, but unlike other Newton villages Chestnut Hill never developed a commercial center. Hammond's Woods and the Webster Conservation Area preserve areas of open land in the midst of the residential area, providing a buffer to commercial development on Route 9, and to this day "old" Chestnut Hill maintains its unique English character.

Suburban Expansion

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century substantial development had taken place both in villages along the river and along the two railroad lines. However, between the latter, the city remained largely woodland and sparcely settled farmland. Although traversed by Centre, Walnut, and Chestnut Streets, and other old roads such as Ward, Homer and Fuller, further development there was hindered by the lack of a direct east-west route. In 1891 the street railroad extended a line along Walnut Street and up Homer Street to Newton Centre, improving north-south connections, but more important steps were soon to be taken. Ambitious landowners and developers had begun to explore the possibility of constructing a major east-west boulevard through this area, and within four years the City had planned and executed the construction of the Newton Boulevard, later known as Commonwealth Avenue.

Newton and the Park Movement

In 1892, a special committee was appointed by the mayor to examine and make recommendations regarding the development of boulevards and parks throughout the city. Besides addressing actual transportation needs, Newton was responding to and reflecting an awareness of the development of the Boston park system. The Public Garden, Boston's answer to Central Park, had been laid out in 1859-60, but further action was delayed by the Civil War. It was not until 1869 that renewed interest in park development sparked serious discussion and the passage of enabling legislation in the form of the municipal Park Act of 1875. Frederick Law Olmsted was consulted informally regarding the various proposals, but refrained from direct involvement until 1878, when he was officially retained by the City to prepare plans for the new park system. The use of parkways or boulevards to connect sites such as the Muddy River, Jamaica Pond, the Arnold Aboretum and Franklin Park were major components of Olmsted's plan, creating what came to be known as Boston's "emerald necklace."

Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street, although not part of the actual park plan, received careful attention, and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, in *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, makes the following points in regard to their construction:

> *Neither street was a parkway in Olmsted's sense, since commercial traffic was permitted along with pleasure vehicles. Both were carefully thought out in relation to the park system and touched it at one or more points.*

Figure 18. Street Railway waiting room at the corner of Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue

Olmsted was commissioned by the Boston Street Department to design two sections of Commonwealth Avenue: one through the Back Bay Fens to Kenmore Square, and one from Brighton Avenue to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, known as the Chestnut Hill Circuit. Studies for the latter, including improvements to Beacon Street, were begun in 1884. Beacon Street, from Kenmore Square to the reservoir, was transformed into a formal boulevard in the French manner, while the Brighton section of Commonwealth Avenue, first known as Massachusetts Avenue, was laid out in a winding, informal path over very hilly terrain. Accommodations for the street railroad were not included in Olmsted's original plan and his informal, picturesque approach to the reservoir was later modified to provide unified street railroad connections between Kenmore Square and the Newton line. This section of Commonwealth Avenue remained incomplete until after the turn of the century. However, in addition to making connections with the Boston park system, both Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street connected the municipal parks with the larger metropolitan park system, which was being developed simultaneously under the guidance of Olmsted's associate, Charles Eliot.

The Newton Boulevard

After four months of deliberation, the boulevard committee submitted an interim report in May of 1893. Although a number of routes were being considered, a group of landowners, known as the Newton Boulevard Syndicate, were willing to give cash contributions and land in lieu of betterments in order to secure their preferred route between Chestnut Hill and Centre Street. They pressed the commission for immediate action. Although careful not to make any recommendation on the specific conditions of the syndicate, the committee's interim report approved the concept of the boulevard over the suggested route and submitted the project to the City for detailed surveys and estimates for construction. A complete report, filed later, covered suggestions for the remainder of the boulevard as far as the river and the widening of certain intersecting streets, which had been part of the original mandate. A number of small parks were also projected along the route, but these ambitious designs did not materialize.

Olmsted is commonly believed to have laid out the Newton sections of Commonwealth Avenue, but cataloguing of his projects and correspondence is incomplete and the degree of involvement is difficult to judge. A plan for the section from the end of Beacon and Commonwealth at the reservoir to Centre street was done for the

Rapid Transit Commission by Rice and Evans, Civil Engineers, in consultation with F. L. Olmsted and Co. Other plans may have been done for the Newton Boulevard Syndicate. Olmsted also wrote a letter of recommendation, read at a public hearing, regarding the original proposal to include Fuller Street as a part of the boulevard. This proposal was eventually rejected in favor of the so-called northen route between Valentine and Temple Streets. In summary comments at one of the public hearings, Judge Robert Bishop suggested that the entire project had matured under the able guidance of City Engineer Albert Noyes, Rice and Evans, Civil Engineers, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Many forces seem to have affected the actual layout, but Olmsted, by his work throughout the city of Boston, set the example, if not the actual plan, that was followed.

The Newton Boulevard Syndicate was another major force in the proposal, planning and execution of the boulevard plan. Members included a variety of people, such as ex-Governor Oliver Ames and Alphonse Fteley, Chief Engineer of the Aqueduct Commission of New York City. Others were long-time Newton residents: members of the Ward family, the Honorable Robert Bishop and Albert D. S. Bell. Bell, and Brookline resident Dana Estes, were the most active in the negotiations promoting the boulevard in Newton.

Before construction began at Chestnut Hill in 1894, the City had received assurances from the City of Boston that Commonwealth Avenue in Boston would be extended from the reservoir to link up with the proposed boulevard in Newton. The final layout of the boulevard was drawn by City Engineer Albert F. Noyes, and construction was supervised by Superintendent of Streets, Charles W. Ross. Cash contributions, betterments (monies paid by those whose property benefited from construction of the boulevard), and the fact that ninety percent of the land was given to the City made the net cost of the boulevard just under $500,000. Despite prolonged damage suits, the figures were well within the original estimates for construction.

The boulevard began at the Brighton line between the picturesque Chestnut Hill reservoir and the grassy slopes of Waban Hill. Traversing the fertile farmland south of Ward Street, it crossed Centre Street paralleling Homer Street, and continued past Bullough's Pond and Cold Spring City. Extending over the Dix and Frost farms along the lower slopes of West Newton Hill, it intersected Washington Street near the Woodland Park Hotel, and terminated at the Charles River in Auburndale.

On October 11, 1895, the boulevard was opened as far as Auburn Street in Auburndale. The remainder, which was laid out by H. D. Woods after the death of Engineer Noyes, was finished the following spring. *The Newton Journal* reported that real estate between Chestnut Hill and Centre Street alone showed an increased valuation of $2,000,000. *The Journal* also remarked that...

> *One feature in which the Newton boulevard is unique among those constructed in the vicinity of Boston is the absence of tedious perspective. The straight line is nowhere followed. The boulevard is marked by a series of broad curves, which give endless variety of scene, and make the steep grades over which it is carried seem gentle slopes.*

An important part of the development of the boulevard was the inclusion of a thirty foot center strip between the two carriage ways for the location of a double track electric railroad. The Commonwealth Avenue Street Railroad opened a line from Lake Street to Centre Street on June 11, 1895. The line was later extended to Auburndale and Norumbega Park, which was built by investors to stimulate use of the line. Excursion rides to places like Norumbega Park or to historic sites were popular in the late 1890s and during the early years of the twentieth century, providing inexpensive family outings. At the turn of the century, Newton residents could ride "the electric" throughout Newton and the surrounding communities for the price of a nickel with a free transfer to intersecting lines.

The boulevard was also popular for cyclists, and the hills became a favorite place for "coasting." The very finest bicycles, including "the celebrated Eclipse, Crawford, Orient, Union and others," were for sale or for rent by the hour, day or week, at the sporting goods store run by Louis Vachon in Associates Block, Newton Centre (Figure 19). Mr. Vachon gave lessons, indoors and out, and was particularly interested in getting the ladies to try this new mode of transportation.

Development along the Boulevard

Development followed construction of the boulevard, moving in general from east to west. At Chestnut Hill, a few lots on Waban Hill had been sold even before the boulevard was built. The grassy slopes of the hill, previously part of the Lawrence farm, offered a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape and the first houses were large, elegant buildings with generous lots. However, later development of land on Waban Hill, became quite dense. Land there was owned either by the syndicate or by Estes, who was also responsible for the introduction of apartment houses on the boulevard. These included the Queen Anne building at 41 Commonwealth Ave-

nue, and 219 Commonwealth Avenue in the popular Tudor Revival style, both near Waban Hill.

Between Newton Centre and the boulevard, new houses were built on lots remaining along the older streets such as Sumner and Grant. Along Sumner and Irving Streets, lands formerly belonging to Marshall Rice were sold off by Rice's daughter, who had married Alvah Hovey, President of the Newton Theological Institution. Many other long time residents of Newton Centre also subdivided their properties and new houses were built along Morton and Cedar Streets, and the newer Kenwood, Orient and Ashton Avenues.

Subdivisions along Hobart Road, and Eastbourne and Westbourne Roads, provide an interesting contrast in terms of scale and concept. Featuring a hilly terrain, the land along Hobart Road (which included Montvale Road and Terrace, Monadnock, Wachusett and Intervale Roads) was owned by the Newton Boulevard Syndicate and developed by them from a layout done in 1894 by Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, in conjunction with Rice and Evans. Curving roads followed the contour of the land. Lots, which were generally between 15,000 and 20,000 square feet, took advantage of the picturesque possibilities of the site. Although few houses were built before the turn of the century, the earliest were substantial homes in the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. Many were designed by architects.

The subdivision of Eastbourne and Westbourne Roads, which lies just beyond Grant Avenue on an eight-acre site, between Ward Street and the boulevard, was designed by Landscape Architect Franklin Brett. Paired streets in a flared horseshoe pattern take into account the rising ground toward Ward Street, but the site is otherwise unremarkable. Thirty-four lots, between 7500 and 10,000 square feet, are laid out in a regular pattern, with no possibilities for picturesque design. This site was owned by a series of speculative investors including Rose B. Rice, wife of George Rice, (whose firm, Rice and Evans, collaborated with Olmsted on the preliminary layout for the boulevard). Most of the dwellings on Eastbourne

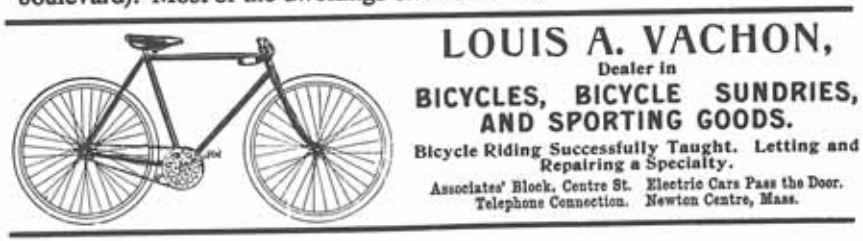


Figure 19. Advertisement from the Anthony Business Directory (1898-1899)

and Westbourne are modest single and two-family houses, built by contractors from stock plans. However, particular attention to detail is evident in the Colonial Revival house at 28 Westbourne Road–one of the first built and the only one to have a carriage house.

Beyond Walnut Street, a number of subdivisions were proposed, but there was virtually no building along the boulevard itself until after the turn of the century. Land in the vicinity of Bullough's Pond was owned by the Newton Land Improvement Company and Newton Park Land Company, while farther out tracts were owned by individual investors, such as Frederick Cutter and George Blaney, residents of West Newton Hill.

Figure 20. Wauwinet Farm on Commonwealth Avenue

Early development on West Newton hill began with the establishment of north side commuter rail service in 1844 and the initial influx of well-to-do commuters who settled in West Newton. On the northeast side of the hill, an area known as Sylvan Heights was laid out by Alexander Wadsworth in 1849. Lots between Highland and Otis, Forest and Chestnut, were offered at auction in 1851, but development of the area was not immediate. By the fourth quarter of the century however, development accelerated, and businessmen like Frederick R. Cutter and George A. Blaney were eager to locate on West Newton Hill. Cutter, whose business was trunks, lived at 287 Chestnut Street. His well preserved Shingle style residence is indicative of his aspirations and of the exuberance of the era. Blaney, a lawyer, lived at 12 Valentine Street, a Greek Revival house which he updated with Colonial Revival style details. Besides their regular business interests, both Blaney and Cutter were on the Board of the Commonwealth Avenue Street Railway. In addition, they owned large tracts of land along the boulevard between Chestnut and Temple Streets and Blaney was particularly active in promoting the "northern" route of the boulevard, which affected these holdings.

One of the largest estates on the south slope of West Newton Hill was that of George Ellis, who was not only the founder of a large Boston printing house, but also an alderman, representative to the General Court, State Senator, and dairy farmer. Located on the corner of Valentine and Commonwealth Avenue, the 24 acre Wauwinet Farm maintained a herd of 500 Jersey cows (Figure 20) and offered daily delivery of pure Jersey milk and cream. The farm ceased functioning about 1920 and the land was sold for development. Only the Ellis house, built in 1894, remains at 1245 Commonwealth Avenue.

Bullough's Pond and the New City Hall

Development of the site that was eventually chosen for the new city hall and war memorial hinged on changes to Bullough's pond (Figure 21). The millpond had, for several centuries, flooded a large area between Mill and Homer Streets and powered the nearby grist mill. Initially a barrier to highway construction, it was bisected by Walnut Street in 1855. When Walnut was widened and regraded in 1880, a culvert was built under the road to connect what then became two ponds. An 1883 proposal to create a 174 acre park around the pond was defeated because the cost of the land ($87,000.) was considered too high. Most of the proposed parkland was then purchased by the Newton Land Improvement Company which laid out several subdivisions including Grove Hill Park.

When the old mill burned in 1886, the pond changed radically. The mill dam was breached, the pond was drained and the swampy land became a nuisance to area residents. Construction of the boulevard affected the site as well, and the City, after negotiations with the Newton Land Improvement Company, finally took a portion of the land to restore the pond. A new dam was constructed and Dexter Road and Bullough's Park

Figure 21. Intersection of Walnut Street and Commonwealth Avenue

were laid out along the northern and eastern sides of the pond. Land southwest of the intersection was also taken and the City channeled the stream feeding the pond and built a small parkway beside it. By the end of 1897, the pond was again filled with water, but because of pollution from the street railway power plant on Walnut Street, it did not freeze during the winter until after the plant closed in 1910.

In 1873, when Newton became a city, it chose to renovate the town hall in West Newton rather than construct a costly new building. Renovations by Newton architect George F. Meacham updated the building in the current fashion and it served as a city hall for almost sixty years. Although the need for a new building was clearly apparent, even in the 1920s the city was concerned that the expense would be too great. However, with memories of the great World War still fresh in their minds, citizens also felt the need to create a war memorial. It was decided to combine the two projects and the city was pleased to discover that they could build a "first class" building at what was considered a reasonable price. The city took the land in the triangle west of Walnut Street (at one time almost entirely under water) and began to plan a new city hall and war memorial. The firm of Allen and Collens, whose principal architect Charles Collens was a Newton resident, resolved the complicated problem of the building's dual functions and the triangular site. The cornerstone of the combined War Memorial and City Hall was laid on Veterans' Day, November 11, 1931. Dedication of the completed building (Figure 22) was held on Veterans' Day one year later. Its style, then described as Colonial and Early Republic, reflected the enduring quality of the Colonial Revival style which became popular after the national Centennial in 1876 and retained its vigor well into the twentieth century. The landscaping by Olmsted Associates, successors to the old Olmsted firm, softened the building's formal aspect by creating a small park with ponds and stone bridges along Walnut Street. At the dedication of the building, Mayor Sinclair Weeks laid to rest the problem which had plagued Newton's forefathers. The Mayor stressed the new city hall's central location, its accessibility and the fact that it belonged not to one village or another, but to the entire city.

The Twentieth Century

In the years since the end of the nineteenth century and the dedication of the War Memorial and City Hall, Newton has witnessed many changes. Horses, carriages and stables, as well as streetcars have all disappeared, to be replaced by automobiles, garages and gas stations. Today, small stores and specialty shops in the village centers compete with supermarkets and shopping malls reached primarily by car. At Newton Centre, the commercial district has expanded considerably, at times encroaching on residential streets. Fine old

trees have succumbed to disease and street widening. Wooden commercial blocks have been replaced by modern stores, but the old, brick Bray Block on Union Street houses a new array of fashionable shops. With the exception of the loss of the Mason School, once a centerpiece for the community, reuse of old buildings such as the Methodist Church on Centre Street, has minimized recent changes to the streetscape. Chestnut Hill and Oak Hill have remained predominantly residential areas, although, for many, Chestnut Hill is synonymous with the shopping malls on Route 9 near Hammond's Pond. Joggers frequent the path of the old street railway tracks and the broad lanes of Commonwealth Avenue fulfill the vision of its developers, providing a vital, yet picturesque, artery through Newton. Within the various neighborhoods twentieth century houses coexist with those of the nineteenth, recording changes in culture, taste and technology. Parks, laid out by far-sighted Victorians, and twentieth century conservation areas,which preserve ancient properties like Hammond's Woods, further enrich the suburban environment and make Newton unique among Boston suburbs.

Figure 22. Newton City Hall and War Memorial

Nineteenth century railroad suburbs, which developed as rail service linked once rural communities with urban centers, maintained the ambiance and appearance of a country village, yet through their residents shared the aspirations, values, and lifestyles of a sophisticated urban society. As suburban communities expanded, builders and architects erected housing for burgeoning populations, creating distinctive new neighborhoods in a wide range of architectural styles. Familiarity with nineteenth century styles can provide insight into the growth of a community, suggesting the approximate date of a building's construction and the pattern of development of a specific neighborhood.

Most nineteenth century styles were imported from Europe, reaching this country through the enthusiasm of the traveler, the architect who studied abroad, or architectural magazines and books. New fashions were first tried in large, sophisticated urban centers such as Boston, and then gradually disseminated to smaller cities and towns, and finally, to rural farming areas. As Newton's population became increasingly Boston oriented, the time period between a style's introduction and acceptance diminished.

Each style had its own system of ornament and a distinct set of features that included not only decorative detail, but also the proportion of a building's parts as they related to the design of the whole. In different styles, for example, the roof could be low and insignificant, or it might dominate the entire composition. Generally, designs became less complicated as houses became more modest, until, at the working man's level, a style was represented by a single ornamental feature such as the wooden bracket or a few rows of patterned shingles.

New styles often borrowed several elements from their predecessors and a transition period of five to ten years that included features of both, was common as designers and their clients grew accustomed to the latest style. Often the decorative detail of a new fashion was first tried on the inside of a house, with the exterior design completely in keeping with the older, more familiar forms. In some cases a much earlier building was remodeled in a new style, or a porch and different ornamental trim added to bring it up to date. For example, at 12 Valentine Street, the Greek Revival house (circa 1840) was updated with Colonial Revival detail that included an entrance portico, wood tracery sidelights, and a series of elaborate balustrades along the roofline.

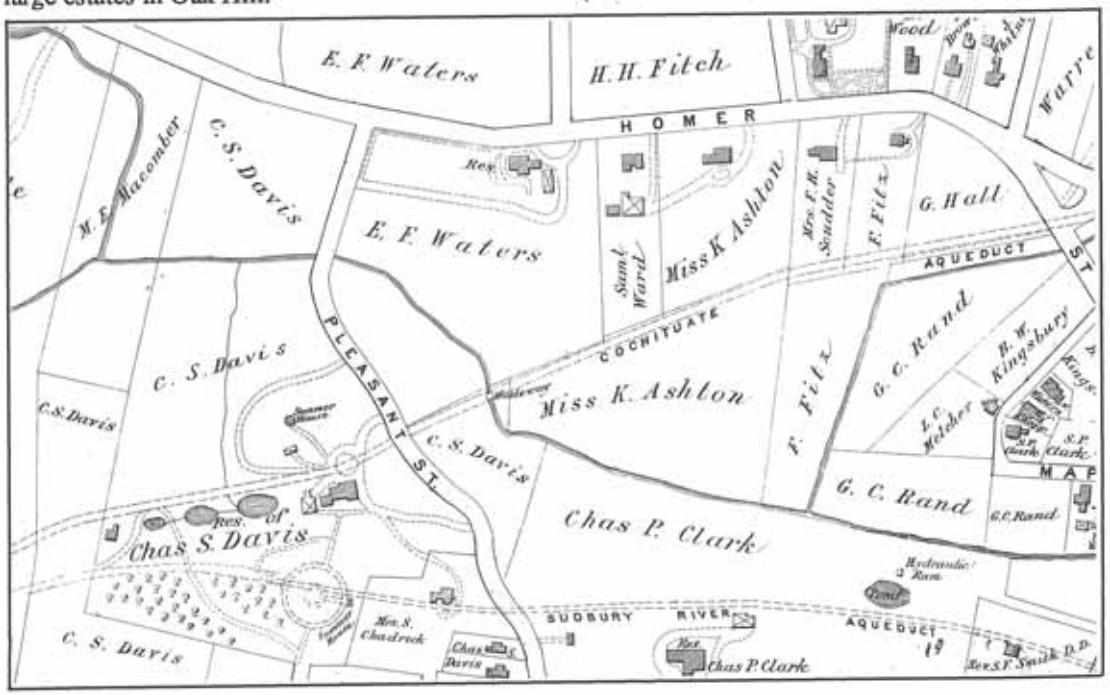
Historicism, or an interest in the architecture of an earlier period, was a predominant trend in the nineteenth century. This was particularly true of the Victorian era, roughly corresponding to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), when a succession of styles evoked a highly interpretive,

often romantic view of the past. Historicism began in America in the early nineteenth century with an interest in the classical temples of ancient Greece. It waned briefly in the 1880s with the more imaginative, less historical designs of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles, and re-emerged at the end of the century with an idealized version of American colonial architecture, the Colonial Revival.

Historicism was often manifested in the expression of the "picturesque," which provided an alternative to symmetrical compositions of the Colonial era and classical designs of the Greek Revival. Gothic, Italianate and other romantically inspired house forms were imported from England and soon found their way into American pattern books. Alexander Jackson Downing, through his books *Cottage Residences* (1842) and *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), was responsible for the popularization of picturesque house forms which he felt were appropriate for rural settings and the American lifestyle. Although Downing preferred simplicity and restraint in ornament, picturesque buildings often became quite elaborate, featuring broken silhouettes, a complex array of irregular shapes and a profusion of ornate wooden decoration. Newton's commuter population may have admired the picturesque styles, but they generally preferred less dramatic versions for their own residences.

An essential feature of the picturesque suburb of the mid and late nineteenth century was a generous house lot featuring ornamental gardens and specimen trees, and a curving drive marked by entrance posts leading to the main door of the house (Figure 1). Lots were fenced with low stone walls. Many fine examples of picturesque landscape were to be seen in Newton Centre along Beacon and Centre Streets, on West Newton Hill, in Chestnut Hill, and on the few large estates in Oak Hill.

Figure 1. City of Newton Atlas (F. W. Beers & Co. 1874)



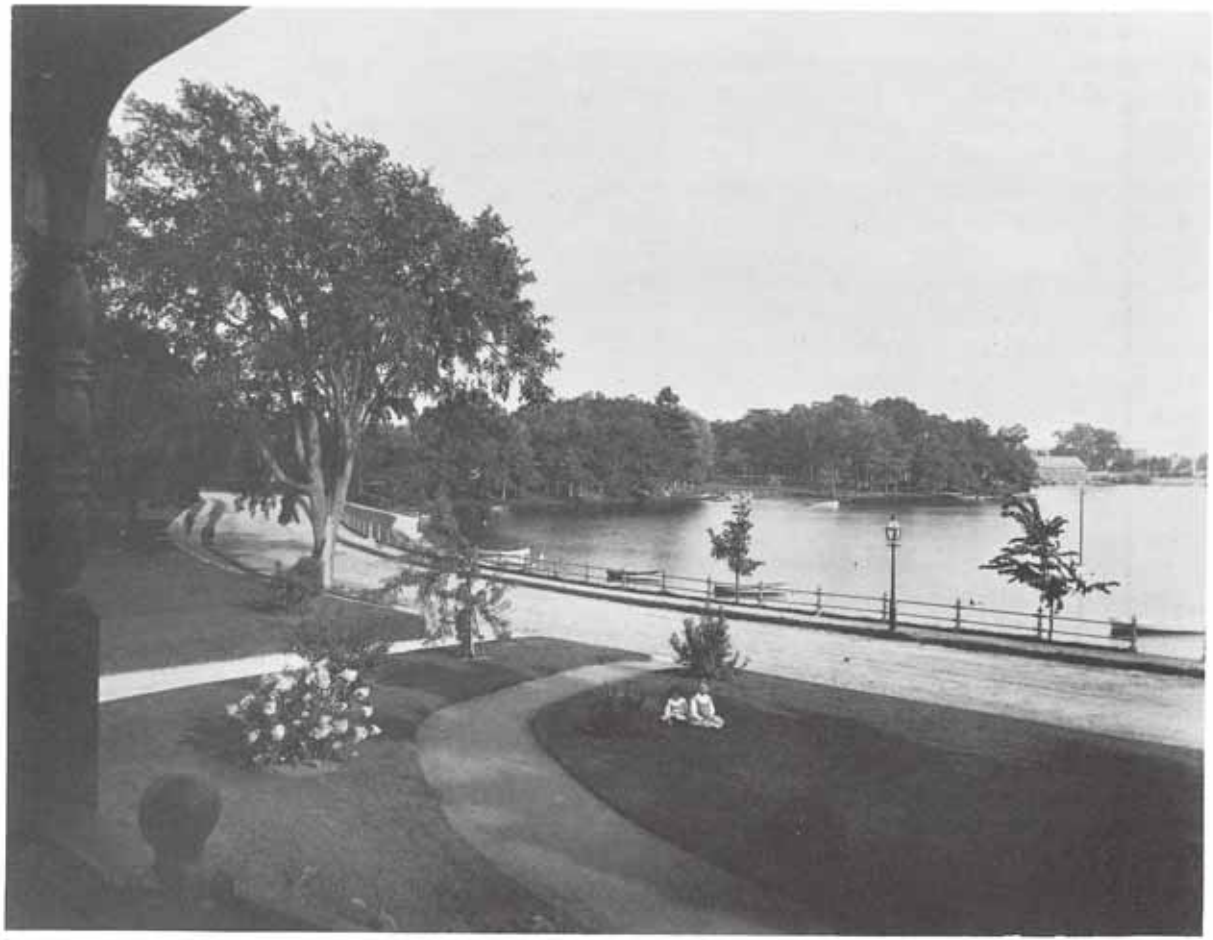


Figure 2. Lake Avenue at Crystal Lake

Late in the century, under the influence of the park movement in Boston, members of the Newton Centre Improvement Association advocated the removal of all fences and careful attention to the care of lawns and sidewalks in order to improve the park-like aspect of their properties and the community (Figure 2). Success in acquiring land for the playground at Newton Centre also lead to more elaborate schemes to link Hammond's Pond and Crystal Lake with connecting tracts of parkland in an imitation of Olmsted's "emerald necklace." Although this plan never materialized, it is clear that citizens were proud of Newton's reputation as the "Garden City" and consciously promoted the preservation and enhancement of the landscape privately and through participation in local improvement associations.

At the end of the century, particularly after the construction of Commonwealth Avenue, increased land values resulted in pressure to subdivide many large estates. Although some estates along Commonwealth Avenue were heavily developed, single family homes on comfortable, if not spacious, lots remained the norm. Developers in areas such as Hobart and adjacent roads, and Bishopsgate, Gray Cliff and The Ledges took advantage of the unusual topography, extending the picturesque tradition as they laid out new roads and house lots.

Builders and Architects

The typical nineteenth century suburban house was of wood frame construction with an imposing street façade and front entrance. A majority of the houses were produced by local builders, contractors and carpenters and the style and quality of the average house in this period are indicative of the skill and sophistication of these individuals. Essentially craftsmen, they were highly competent in practical matters like framing systems, which during the nineteenth century included not only the building's basic internal structure, but also the complex roofline shapes and curving projections of the Victorian era. In addition to new developments in framing technology, builders were required to absorb a rapid succession of architectural styles, adjusting them to both the taste and pocketbooks of their clients. To accomplish this, they borrowed from designs that had been successful for other builders, or consulted an architectural pattern book. These handbooks of sample floor plans, house designs and ornamental trim were widely published by architects and builders throughout the nineteenth century and many homes were essentially custom built, as a builder and potential homeowner reviewed these books together, selecting elements to be incorporated into a new design.

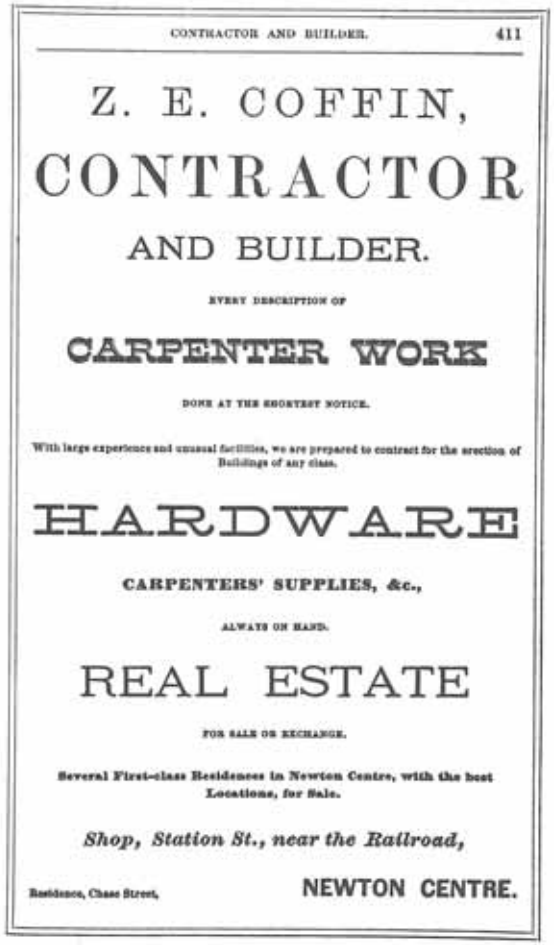


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Figure 3. Advertisement from the Newton Directory (1875)

More common, however, was the builder in the role of entrepreneur. Z. E. Coffin, who was active in Newton for more than twenty years, was one of several builders in Newton Centre who built houses on speculation. He lived first at 85 Homer Street and later at 30 Chase Street. In 1871 he began to acquire land at the foot of Institution Hill and eventually owned most of the lots between Chase and Ripley Streets and Langley Road. Coffin is known to have built at least six other houses besides his own at 30 Chase Street, including several two-family houses which he retained for rental purposes. According to an advertisement in the Newton Directory (Figure 3), his shop was located at the railroad depot and he was active in all aspects of the building trade.

While Z. E. Coffin, Samuel D. Garey, S. P. Clark and other builders were responsible for many of the houses constructed in Newton, specific attributions are difficult. Records, such as blueprints and contracts, were generally not preserved as houses changed owners, and building permits, the most reliable source of information on a house's date of construction, cost and builder, are not available in Newton before 1912.

Architects designed only the largest and most complex buildings, primarily churches in Newton Centre and Chestnut Hill, and the more elaborate houses in the survey area. Bertrand Taylor, whose residence at 238 Grant Avenue was illustrated in *King's Handbook of Newton*, is known to have done several houses in Newton. Besides his own, which was a combination of Queen Anne and Shingle style motifs, he designed the stylish Queen Anne house at 304 Otis Street for E. B. Wilson (Mayor of Newton in 1899-1900). In 1891, the firm of Rand and Taylor, designed the twin-towered late Romanesque Revival Sacred Heart Church at Newton Centre, and after Taylor's death the firm, then known as Kendall, Taylor and Company, produced the design for Bradford Court, an apartment house on Herrick Road.

In addition to Taylor, architects Henry P. Richmond, Henry Kendall and Henry J. Carlson were active in Newton Centre, while Herbert Jaques, Horace S. Frazer and J. Lovett Little, Jr., had many commissions in Chestnut Hill. Charles Collens, of the firm of Allen and Collens, which was responsible for the design of the new City Hall, lived on Dudley Road, near Oak Hill. Frederick Kennard, landscape architect, whose house and land (the Kennard Park and Conservation Area), are owned by the City, lived there as well.

Within the survey area, only Newton Centre developed the full range of nineteenth century architectural styles and a definable village center. The absence of village centers in Oak Hill and Chestnut Hill, and the absence or limited number of several mid-century styles there and in the Commonwealth Avenue corridor, indicate the lack of development in the areas surrounding Newton Centre in those years. Yet many interesting examples of nineteenth century architecture are to be seen there, and, in general, the success and pride of Newton's nineteenth century citizens can be measured by the attractive homes throughout the area.

Descriptions of eight Victorian architectural styles most prevalent in Newton Centre, Oak Hill, Chestnut Hill and the Commonwealth Avenue corridor, with illustrations of representative examples of both the more complex and simpler local interpretations, follow.

Figure 4. The Parthenon (438 B.C.)

The Greek Revival was the first in a series of nineteenth century styles based on historical precedents. It developed in England in the eighteenth century, after discoveries of ancient temples in Greece heightened the interest of both architects and scholars in Greek civilization. In this country, the widespread appeal of the Greek Revival lay in the often expressed sentiment that Americans were the spiritual successors of ancient Greece, and it achieved the status of a national architecture, becoming predominant for commercial blocks, civic and religious buildings, residences, and even utilitarian structures like carriage barns. This appeal was apparent not only in the country's building stock of the pre-Civil War era, but also in the names of newly formed towns--Sparta, Ithaca, Athens and Attica.

The Grecian temple (Figure 4) provided the model for the Greek Revival buildings. Its triangular front pediment and columned portico

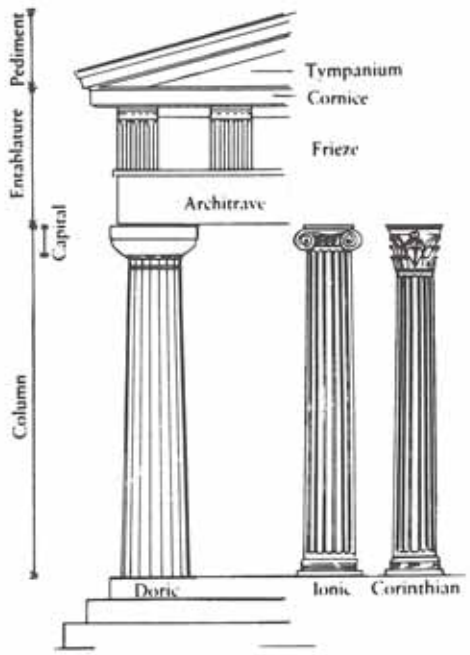

Figure 5. The Classical Orders

were frequently copied for residential designs, although the temple's low roof was often modified to reflect the relatively steep slopes that were then common in American houses. The temple form necessitated a rearrangement of the traditional orientation of the house. The narrow side now faced the street; and the main entrance was shifted to the edge of the facade. These two changes produced the front-gabled, sidehall house plan that remained popular throughout the century and was interpreted in a variety of architectural styles.

Figure 6. 729 Dedham Street

The column, with its three styles of capitals, and surmounting entablature (Figure 5) was a favored form of ornament in the Greek Revival period. Both column and capital were generally supplied by large lumber companies rather than handmade by the local carpenter. A less expensive version of the column, the pilaster, could be easily constructed by nailing wide vertical boards to corners and door frames and tacking on a few moldings to suggest a capital. Similarly, a series of flat boards could be used to reproduce the classical entablature at the doorway and roofline.

Although the fashion for Greek Revival houses peaked in Newton in the mid-1840s a number of later examples at Newton Centre and Oak Hill show the lingering popularity of the style and the conservative nature of local interpretations. Several Greek Revival houses on Morton Street (Figure 22, page 62) show the common front-gabled, sidehall plan, but a more common variation in the survey area tended to be the conservative flank gable plan, reflecting earlier colonial house styles. Unlike the older villages of Newton Corner and West Newton, Newton Centre has no monumental temple front houses. The well-preserved, flank gable, Greek Revival house at 9 Crescent Avenue features a two-story

porch, but lacks the imposing character of the Allen House in West Newton. Many houses, like 151 Parker Street, combine Greek Revival elements with the later Italianate style, introduced in the 1840s. Examples of this kind of stylistic cross-pollination were common throughout the nineteenth century when architects, builders and homeowners felt free to combine any design elements which pleased them.

The small, one-and-a-half story farm house at 729 Dedham Street, built circa 1855 (Figure 6) combines the stylistic elements of the Greek Revival and evokes something of the monumental quality of a larger building. Paneled corner pilasters with capitals support a deep entablature, and wide door surrounds with side lights and full entablature contribute to the understated, monumental effect. A large two story ell was added before1886; and the roofline may have been changed at that time, since the characteristic pediment is missing at the gable ends.

The two-and-a-half story, flank gable house at 85 Langley Road, built in 1847 by local housewright Henry Fuller, is a good example of the Greek Revival in Newton Centre (Figure 7). Paneled corner pilasters carrying a broad entablature and a one story porch with Doric columns and entablature determine the character of the house. Flush board paneling, which emulates masonry construction, six over six windows set in full length frames and sidelights flanking the front door are characteristic Greek Revival details. The gable ends have full pediments, decorated with graceful, carved wreaths.

Figure 7. 85 Langley Road

The Middle Ages provided another source for nineteenth century house styles. Small, vaguely Gothic garden structures began to appear on English country estates in the late 1700s, and by the early nineteenth century, medieval designs had been introduced for elaborate residences. The pointed arches, stained glass, and soaring towers of medieval cathedrals were suitable for churches, but the Gothic influence was more tenuous in domestic architecture. Confined to a few specifically medieval details, Gothic Revival house design, especially in this country, was more closely connected with the fanciful English cottages of the late eighteenth century than with the monuments of the medieval period.

Figure 8. 106 Pleasant Street

The American public had acquired an interest in the Middle Ages through popular historical novels with medieval settings such as Sir Walter Scott's Waverley series. It was not, however, until the landscape designer, Alexander Jackson Downing, promoted the Gothic Revival Style that this interest was focused on "medieval" architecture. In his popular book *The Architecture of Country Houses*, Downing described the picturesque Gothic style: "It must not look all new and sunny, but show secluded shadowy corners. There must be nooks about it, where one would love to linger; windows where one can enjoy the quiet landscape leisurely; cozy rooms where all domestic fireside joys are invited to dwell." Downing's widely read articles and books were accompanied by sample house designs and plans for picturesque suburban cottages and country estates.

The Gothic Revival style, characterized by wings that projected in several directions, complex roofs and ornate wooden detail, marked a departure from the compact house forms, restrained decoration and rules of symmetry imposed in classical styles such as the Greek Revival. It initiated the picturesque fashion which was to encompass several distinct Victorian architectural styles.

Within the survey area, Gothic Revival houses are found only at Newton Centre where a cluster of fine examples is located west of Centre Street near Crystal Lake. The house at 106 Pleasant Street (Figure 8) is similar in plan and design to several nearby houses. It is two-and-a-half stories in height and capped by a cross-gabled roof with a variety of scroll-sawn wood trim along the roofline, gables and porch. Gables and wall dormers were further decorated by finials and pendent moldings (now removed), which accentuated the pitch of the roof. A carved floral panel highlights the second story double window and a delicate incised floral motif enlivens the gabled entrance portico. This house, and the adjacent Gothic and Mansard cottages, were built for rental purposes by Charles S. Davis in the 1860s and '70s and remain today as a particularly pleasing group of nineteenth century houses.

A smaller and simpler version of the Pleasant Street house, at 15 Moreland Avenue (Figure 9) was built in 1876. Although it lacks elaborate wood trim, its steeply pitched gable and broadly overhanging eaves are unmistakably Gothic. Similarities in plan and decorative detail between these houses and several others in the area suggest that they may have been constructed by the same builder and that the Gothic Revival was well suited to the picturesque setting in the vicinity of Crystal Lake.

Figure 9. 15 Moreland Street

The historical origins of the Italianate style can be traced to the rural architecture of northern Italy. Like the Gothic Revival, this style was first introduced in England as part of a general trend toward the "picturesque." Contemporary interest in seventeenth century landscape paintings, many of which illustrated romantic Italian country villas, provided models easily adapted to the prevailing fashion for picturesque architecture. The Italianate style arrived in this country from England during the early 1840s and, under various names including Tuscan, Lombard, Bracketed, and Italian Villa styles, was promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing and his contemporaries as an appropriate style for a scenic rural landscape.

Figure 10. 550 Beacon Street

Newton's suburban villagers favored Italianate designs, which enjoyed a long period of popularity, lasting until the late 1870s. The style was well suited for elaborate single-family houses, inexpensive cottages, two- and three-family houses, and commercial buildings. Unlike the more complex Gothic Revival, the Italianate could be readily adapted by local carpenters, who added rows of brackets to the already familiar front- and end-gabled house forms. The newly invented scroll saw, a machine similar to the modern jigsaw, allowed sawmills and carpentry shops to produce thousands of board feet of ornate wood trim. Inexpensive architectural elements such as turned balusters appeared in a variety of profiles, further enriching decorative possibilities. Bay windows also became popular, facilitating additional light and ventilation and expanding the rigid form of earlier house plans.

Italianate houses in the vicinity of Newton Centre were built in front- and end-gable forms. The house at 63 Bowen Road, circa 1874 (Figure 23, page 62), is an example of the front-gable plan, while 550 Beacon Street, built 1853-4 (Figure 10), shows the conservative flank-gable form. Tall proportions and shallow roof pitch create a feeling of lightness in the house, which features an ornamental central gable, brackets and a round-arched center window. The entry porch is a later Colonial Revival alteration. An ell to the rear of the house displays Colonial architectural features which indicate an earlier date for that section of the house or reuse of old materials.

The L-shaped house at 73 Herrick Road (Figure 11) is a variation on the common front-gable, sidehall plan, as the usual gable entrance is placed at the intersection of the two wings. The bay windows, deeply projecting, bracketed cornices and a round-arched gable window are all characteristic Italianate details. Pairs of chamfered posts support the porch roof and posts and decorative brackets support the paneled entry gable. The house was built, circa 1871, for local businessman Mellen Bray, who invented a type of tubular rivet used in the shoe industry, and who was also involved in real estate in Newton Centre.

Figure 11. 73 Herrick Road

Figure 12. 70 Chase Street

Regardless of the derivation of a building's decorative ornament, it is Mansard in style if it has a mansard roof. Essentially a hybrid form, the style borrowed round-arched windows, bracketing, boxed porch posts and its interior floor plans from the Italianate style.

The mansard roof was imported from France where it had a major revival in the mid-nineteenth century. Named for François Mansart, a seventeenth century architect, "la mansarde" derived from a provincial French roof form. The mansard reappeared during the Second Empire when it was used in the enlargement of the Louvre palace during the 1850s. In this country the Mansard style was often referred to as "Second Empire," a designation that applied primarily to monumental structures of the 1860s and 1870s, such as Boston's old City Hall. Many mansard-roofed public buildings were erected during the post-Civil War administration of Ulysses S. Grant, giving rise to another name for the style, the "General Grant."

In residential architecture, the Mansard style enjoyed wide popularity in Newton Centre, but found little favor in the more rural area of the survey. Local builders adopted the new roof very early and continued to build Mansard residences until the early 1880s. The mansard roof was appreciated by the Victorian public as a new, distinctive form, but its chief appeal lay in its

practicality. The roof's height allowed more headroom in the attic, adding an extra usable floor to many buildings. In some instances, a new mansard roof was added to an older house for this specific purpose.

The Mansard style was applied to a variety of house types from the towered residence at 70 Chase Street to simple houses such as 15 Sumner Street. The house at 70 Chase (Figure 12), built circa 1870 for Boston broker and commission merchant John H. Sandborn, owes much to the Italianate style as well. The central and side towers, as well as the brackets, dentils at the eaves, and two-story paired bay windows are all Italianate motifs. The bellcast mansard roof is enlivened with fishscale patterned slate, and a curb cornice and iron cresting enrich the roof detail. The elaborate veranda that extended to form a porte-cochère has today been reduced to a single bay at the center entrance, effectively shifting the façade's emphasis from horizontal to vertical.

In providing full ceiling height to the upper story, the mansard roof was particularly effective in small houses such as 15 Sumner Street (Figure 13), which was built circa 1860-65. A center pavilion, brackets at the eaves, double doors and round-headed windows in the center wall dormer are stylistic elements from the Italianate, yet the straight-sided mansard roof with hexagonal patterned slates determines the style of this house. Paneled corner pilasters, a paneled frieze and incised floral motifs over the windows and door enrich the design of this house, which was moved in 1877 from its original location at 450 Ward Street.

Figure 13. 15 Sumner Street

STICK STYLE 1865-1890

The Stick style is a more picturesque contemporary of the Mansard and Italianate styles. In keeping with the conservative taste of Newton's Victorian population, it enjoyed less popularity than later styles. The Stick style's steep gabled roofs, decorated wall surfaces, verge-boards and multi-wing plans were an extension of the Gothic Revival, another style that found little favor in the survey area.

Figure 14. 56 Cedar Street

The central feature of the Stick style is a network of thin, flat boards applied over a clapboard wall. Stickwork, as this decorative system is called, is laid in a pattern of horizontals, verticals and diagonals that suggests the building's interior framing, although it serves no structural function. Wall areas are given a new visual importance in that they are recognized as a design element. This theme was taken to its inventive extreme during the ensuing Queen Anne period.

Although Stick style houses are not found in great number in the vicinity of Newton Centre, there are several unusual examples. Edward F. Parsons, "gentleman," was the original owner of the cross-gabled, Stick style house built in 1877 at 56 Cedar Street (Figure 14). A jerkin head front gable and patterned stickwork are characteristic of this style. The cross gable as well as the gable facing the street feature elaborate carved bargeboards decorated with rosettes. Chamfered posts, also decorated with brackets and rosettes, support the porch roof, which, like the main roof, was originally covered with patterned slates.

The now demolished Appleton house in Oak Hill (Figure 12, page 22), which was built in 1875 by Peabody and Stearns, combined elements of the Stick style and Queen Anne in a high style, wood-frame house. The Dupee house at 400 Beacon Street, built of stone in 1880-1, was a more sophisticated, eclectic composition, yet its porch was related to earlier Stick style designs. Although the columns and roof of the porch have long since disappeared, photographs recall the rustic charm of the original construction (Figure 15). Tree trunks, sticks and wood panels shaped with a characteristic Stick style pattern evoked qualities of the picturesque so much in favor in the Victorian period.

Figure 15. 400 Beacon Street

The energy and inventiveness of the Queen Anne style gave full expression to the picturesque forms that had been an undercurrent in American architecture since the 1840s. Most often, Queen Anne designs were eclectic, drawing from several sources for inspiration. For models architects relied on contemporary British decorative arts, medieval cottages and town houses, and, toward the end of the style's popularity, American colonial architecture.

The style's name was coined in England. It received widespread publicity in this country at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia through the popular British pavilions, whose "Queen Anne" design caught the imagination of the American public. Architectural pattern books featuring the Queen Anne style were rushed into print, and within four years after the Centennial many new suburban homes appeared with all the trappings of the latest fashion.

Figure 16. 91 Herrick Road

Toward the end of the nineteenth century the Queen Anne style's eclecticism became subdued as designers worked more closely from medieval models. Half-timbering, which featured intersecting wall boards over a plaster or wooden surface, was introduced during the later phase of the Queen Anne, although plain wall surfaces were generally more popular. The medieval influence of the late Queen Anne style was a forerunner of the Tudor Revival which became popular after the turn of the century.

Queen Anne style houses are not compact. Rooms spill outward from a central core in no set pattern, exterior walls often project at several

intervals, and the roofline is correspondingly complex. Attached are all manner of porches, balconies and bay windows. Designers in this period played on a contrast of materials as well as forms. It is not unusual to find brick, stone, clapboards, plain or patterned wood shingles, stucco, and intricate molded plaster or clay panels within a single house.

The style made its first appearance in the survey area in the late 1870s just as suburban development was beginning to increase significantly. Local variations of the style range from simple builder-designed houses to more complex designs like 91 Herrick Road and 77 Temple Street.

The house at 91 Herrick Road (Figure 16) was built in 1884 for William C. Bray, son of Mellen Bray, whose own house was at 73 Herrick Road. Although more contained than some Queen Anne designs, the house features a complex roof line with a front gable opposed by a turreted corner tower. A balcony supported on large consoles is incorporated into the second story, and two sides of the house are wrapped by a veranda which ends in a gabled entrance portico. Patterned shingles, clapboards, non-classical moldings, incised floral designs, turned posts and balusters create a variety of textures and patterns in this exuberant and stylish house.

portico. Patterned shingles, clapboards, non-classical moldings, incised floral designs, turned posts and balusters create a variety of textures and patterns in this exuberant and stylish house.

A more elaborate house at 77 Temple Street (Figure 17), built circa 1882, features a variety of building materials. Patterned brick defines the first story, while the upper stories are carried out in clapboard and patterned shingles with a variety of scroll-sawn wood work, brackets and wooden Stick style panels. A recessed second story balcony is flanked by asymmetrical wall projections and topped by a jerkin head oriel. Decorative chimneys and a porte-cochère contribute to the elegance of this house, which was built for Joseph L. Stone and sold about 1892 to Stephen Reynolds, President of the Mexican Central Railroad.

Figure 17. 77 Temple Street

SHINGLE STYLE 1885-1910

The Shingle style evolved from the Queen Anne and shares with it an informal appearance and freedom in arrangement of its interior spaces. The first truly American style, it developed from the early, rambling farmhouses of the New England region. The barn-like gambrel roof that characterized many of these buildings became a popular feature of the Shingle style, which in most suburban houses also adopted more formal aspects of eighteenth century colonial architecture, such as the columned porch.

Figure 18. 53 Gray Cliff Road

The hallmark of the Shingle style is the use of natural or brown-stained wooden shingles as a wall covering. The style was popular in New England seacoast resorts, where shingled walls, often used with rough-surfaced stone, were particularly suited to the seaside air and rocky maritime scenery. Shingling not only covered the walls of these houses, but often the roof, porch posts, bracketing and curving sides of the window openings as well. Although the style often incorporated the circular towers and long front porches of the Queen Anne period, uniformly shingled walls gave these houses a quieter, more restful appearance. Decorative detail was generally confined to porch columns and a variety of window forms.

The Shingle style, which gained wide popularity in suburban settings, was introduced in the survey area in the late 1880s. Although it was used primarily for expensive middle-class housing and only rarely for modest dwellings erected to stock plans, some vernacular Shingle style houses, such as Figure 26, page 63 can be found in Newton Centre.

Within the survey area there are several important Shingle style houses, including the Bigelow

house on Oak Hill (Figure 13, page 23) and 300 Highland Street on West Newton Hill. Another interesting example is 53 Gray Cliff Road (Figure 18), which was built in 1888 for Robert Casson, well-known interior designer. In this house, the complex volumes of the Queen Anne style are now controlled by broad areas of roof. Although clapboards appear at the first story, shingles cover most surfaces, and detail is limited to turned columns and porch balusters. Dark-stained shingles, a fieldstone foundation and rock terraces complement the siting of the building and harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

A smaller, yet spirited Shingle house, now lacking much of the stylish details evident in Figure 19, still stands at 181 Gibbs Street. Built circa 1890, the broad roofline, exaggerated dormer hood, and half-recessed porch, are characteristic elements which relate this house to more important Shingle style seaside and resort designs. The arched bays of the porch, turned posts and balustrades, modillions at the eaves and the variety of window treatments are elements of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles, which were often present in Shingle style residences.

Figure 19. 181 Gibbs Street

COLONIAL REVIVAL 1890-1910

After the Centennial year, American architects began to examine their own heritage. The first evidence of this interest was the Shingle style, but, as the decade of the eighties drew to a close, a preoccupation with early American architecture coalesced into a full-fledged style, the Colonial Revival. The style represented a return to historical precedents for architectural design and in this case, American, not European precedents were valued and emulated. Original models were copied more faithfully than had been the case with the eclectic styles of the mid-nineteenth century.

Figure 20. 106 Sumner Street

The Colonial Revival, however, borrowed freely from several phases of eighteenth century architecture and from the post-colonial Federal style as well. Long schooled to admire the picturesque, American homeowners were unwilling to accept copies of the pristine, austere houses of the early 1700s and demanded versions of later, more elaborate eighteenth century house designs. With mill-work machines close at hand, Colonial Revival builders could easily embellish the new designs with the same profusion of detail that had characterized earlier Victorian styles. The scale of the buildings was also altered to reflect the accepted notion of the appropriate size for a comfortable house, which by modern standards seems unusually large. Thus the narrow fanlight doorway of the Federal period was greatly expanded to accommodate the grand entrance of the Colonial Revival house.

The Colonial Revival style was a reaction to a perceived "lack of discipline" in architectural form that reached its climax during the Queen Anne period. Although many examples of Queen Anne style houses were excessive in detail and often unsatisfactory in design, this reaction brought an end to an element of freedom and creativity that characterized American architecture during the decades that followed the Civil War.

The popularization of the Colonial Revival style coincided with the streetcar era and with the

construction of Commonwealth Avenue. As a result of the intense pace of development which characterized these years, fine examples of the Colonial Revival are found throughout the survey area. Although basically a suburban phenomenon, a number of interesting examples also appear in more rural settings at Oak Hill.

The typical Colonial Revival style house in the survey area features a boxy, self-contained shape and is usually capped by a hip roof, although the gable and gambrel forms are also used. The rules of balance and/or symmetry are observed on its street façade which is usually ornamented with a columned porch. The house at 106 Sumner Street, which was built in 1899 (Figure 20), features the characteristic hip roof and a full width front porch. Broad cornices on the house and porch, and pilasters, columns and paired colonettes define the form of the house and porch, while the swell-front bay emphasizes the front entrance. Leaded windows and sidelights, balustrades and columns are among the readily produced details used to create a Colonial Revival design. The swan's neck pediments on the twin dormers are less common details that distinguish the facade.

The elegant gambrel roof Colonial Revival house at 307 Hammond Street (Figure 21) was built in 1905 for Edwin S. Webster on the site of the old Kingsbury farm, much of which is now preserved as the Webster Conservation Area. The three-and-a-half story mansion with its crowning balustrade is typical of the substantial homes built, particularly at Chestnut Hill, at the turn of the century. A columned portico and a porte-cochère, each capped by a balustrade, add dignity to the composition, and quoins and modillions enrich the design, as do the moldings over the first floor windows and the oriel window on the gable end. Adjacent to the house, a large carriage barn was designed with similar attention to detail.

Figure 21. 307 Hammond Street

The gable-front, sidehall house, introduced with the Greek Revival temple-front houses, has become one of the most enduring forms of American vernacular architecture. In the nineteenth century simple sidehall plan was easily adapted to narrow lots, particularly in the rapidly growing cities and towns in the northeast. The form was readily modified by the addition of decorative details to meet changing architectural fashion. Thus a simple Greek Revival house becomes Italianate with the addition of brackets at the eaves, Mansard with the change of roof style, or Queen Anne with the addition of patterned shingles and a porch with turned supports. The following series shows the basic nineteenth century house in six popular styles.

Figure 22. Greek Revival, 105 Morton Street, circa 1855

Figure 23. Italianate, 63 Bowen Street, circa 1874

Figure 24. Mansard, 191-193 Gibbs Street, circa 1860

Figure 25. Queen Anne, 264 Parker Street, built 1886

Figure 26. Shingle, 36 Oxford Road, built 1894

Figure 27. Colonial Revival, 181 Parker Street, circa 1907

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