

-tion was formed to insure the ongoing restoration, preservation, and upkeep of the garden's natural resources and history. The City of Newton received funding for the garden's rehabilitation from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and the Newton Community Preservation Fund; through this funding, an extensive restoration and preservation plan named the Houghton Garden Rehabilitation Project was created.

The 1999 project included comprehensive research and analysis, including the documentation of the garden's existing conditions and its associated properties, and a treatment recommendations report. This report warranted the City of Newton and the associated groups to make the necessary changes and updates to the garden while preserving the garden's historical integrity. The dam, constructed in 1980 to replace the damaged original, was repaired in an effort to restore the water level of the pond to its original and historic level (D). A gate was designed and installed at the pond's outlet in order to insure proper water exodus. Erosion control efforts were undertaken along both Hammond Brook and Woodman Stream, and minor repointing of the stone bridges was completed. The stone steps leading to the outlook (C) were reset and a handrail was added to the (replacement) timber bridge crossing Woodman Stream (A). The Chestnut Hill Garden Club's concrete bench was reset and relocated further away from the water's edge. One of the most considerable alterations to the garden's original form, was the introduction of wheelchair accessibility to the garden by widening some of the paths to meet ADA regulations. The existing fence around the property was replaced with a black, vinyl chain-link fence and a steel picket fence along Suffolk Road with

two pedestrian entrance gates (West and East Entrances), each flanked by large granite posts displaying the "Houghton Garden" entrance sign.

Houghton Garden was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the spring of 1999. The listing served as an extension of the Old Chestnut Hill Historic District National Register listing, which is comprised of mostly early twentieth century estates and buildings. The garden is the only formally private garden in Newton that is now open to the public. The garden is operated and maintained today by the cooperation of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the City of Newton Conservation Commission, the Chestnut Hill Garden Club, and the Friends of Houghton Garden; who work together to insure the ongoing preservation of the garden, its history, and its valuable resources.

Houghton Garden is open to the general public from dawn to dusk. Dogs are permitted if on leash, however no horses or bicycles are allowed. A bike rack is located just inside the East Gate Entrance. Parking is available along Suffolk Road.



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The *Discover Historic Houghton Garden* Walking Tour has been created by the Newton Planning Department in conjunction with the Newton Historical Commission.

Setti D. Warren, Mayor



Discover Historic

HOUGHTON GARDEN

On the morning of October 1st, 1896, a crowd of fifteen hundred gathered at the First Congregational Church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts to witness the marriage of Clement Stevens Houghton and Martha Gilbert Colt. Martha, a Pittsfield native, was the youngest daughter of the Massachusetts Supreme Court Judge James D. Colt and his wife Elizabeth. Clement was the only surviving son of Sarah Jane and William S. Houghton, proprietor of the largest wholesale shoe company in New England. Clement's own fortune was fueled by his education at both the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University and by the same perseverance that led his father to such lucrat-

member of the Boston Chamber of Commerce, the Third Division of the Massachusetts Naval Militia and was actively involved in over twenty local and national societies and associations throughout his lifetime.

In 1904, Clement, Martha, and their four children, Elizabeth, William M., Samuel G., and John D. moved to the genteel neighborhood of Chestnut Hill, where they established their family estate. The prominent family fashioned an opulent lifestyle in their new home complete with upwards of eleven servants, including a governess, seamstress, laundress, parlor maid, chambermaid, cook, kitchen girl, chauffeur, gardener, and a house manager. The 26-acre estate



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TOWARD RESIDENCE ACROSS POND FROM ROCK GARDEN - 1932

-ive successes. His wealth was largely based on his executive positions within several manufacturing companies of products including wool, textiles, roofing materials, and shoes. Clement was a

featured a Spanish Colonial Revival dwelling designed by the architectural firm of Chapman and Frazer, a carriage house, and gardeners cottage settled in a lush landscape.

Representative of twentieth century estates, the designed landscape reflected both the garden theories and trends of the period. For many years, Americans relished the opportunity to emulate the glories of the Old World; however, as American culture developed further, a desire to compete with European traditions arose. Similar to most of the estates in the area, a lavish, formal garden was planted close to the house in elegant geometric patterns designed to be complimentary of the residence's architecture. The comprehensive landscaping plan also included the creation of a large wild garden away from the house, which landscape architect Warren Manning was commissioned to design.

The concept of the wild garden essentially grew out of a yearning to further differentiate the New World from European culture. Inspired by the wild beauty of North America, the father of American landscape design, Andrew Jackson Downing advocated for a freer, more naturalistic approach to landscape architecture. Americans had what European designers had been endlessly trying to re-create... natural beauty. The pure and undomesticated landscapes of the new country inspired an entirely new approach to landscape and garden design in America. These landscapes consisted of resource-based designs in which nature was, in effect, the artist's blank canvas. One of the principle designers who encouraged this "wild" approach was Warren Manning, who believed that the wild garden was embedded in nature and would emerge through careful and deliberate pruning. His personal definition embodied the idea that the wild garden is a "form of floriculture which is concerned with the planting in a nature-like manner colonies of hardy plants that require a minimum of care."

Warren Manning's interest in horticulture and landscape design was

sparked by his father's nursery and his mother's activities as an artist. Manning joined the family business, designing landscapes for the nursery's customers at a young age, while attending classes at Harvard's Arnold Arboretum. Three years after marrying Nellie Hamblin Pratt, Manning left his father's nursery to work for one of the most influential landscape architects of the time, Frederick Law Olmsted. As planting supervisor for the Olmsted office, Manning worked on over 125 projects including the grandiose Biltmore Estate of George Vanderbilt in Asheville, North Carolina. In 1896, Manning left the Olmsted office in favor of establishing his own firm on Tremont Street in Boston, where he had the freedom to design in his own style. Throughout his career, Warren Manning worked on over 1,700 projects including private estates, subdivisions, parks, college campuses, golf courses, and city planning projects in almost every state. Furthermore, he is celebrated for his contributions to the professional world of landscape architecture through his



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MRS. HOUGHTON'S ROCK GARDEN WITH GLIMPSE OF POND BEYOND

role in the founding of the American Civic Association and the American Society of Landscape Architects, in which he served as president in 1914. In response to westward expansion, Manning developed an environmental planning model entitled the "National Plan," which provided a land classification system designed to control the exploitation of the country's natural resources including forests, animals, minerals and waterways, and a foundation to evaluate indigenous scenic beauty.

The Houghton's wild garden was designed in conjunction with the pre-existing natural landscape of the property. Warren Manning designed the new garden around the natural rock outcroppings and a natural resource found behind the house: a small brook fed by Hammond Pond. The brook was dammed in the northwest corner of the property in order to create the large u-shaped water feature known today as Houghton Pond.

Clement and Martha Houghton



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were avid horticulturists, and were very involved in the overall design and planting of the garden. The Houghton's corresponded with the Director of Harvard University's Arnold Arboretum, Charles Sprague Sargent, about the garden, and experimented with foreign plant species and seed cross-germination. In addition, Sargent assisted the Houghton's in their plan for the garden to contain at least one of every tree species that would grow and thrive in the New England climate. Martha Houghton made several trips to England, France and Japan to research gardens and to collect plant material, which she brought back to the United States after having received special permission from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Houghton's great appreciation for horticulture extended further in their membership and involvement in the National Conservation Association and the National Association of Audubon Societies. One of the most unique and interesting aspects of this style of garden is the altogether natural appearance of the landscape, and how the man-made features are almost indistinguishable against the wild and natural landscape.

The following tour stops can be found on the enclosed map.

[A] Since the "wild garden" is designed to blend into the natural landscape, the materials used to construct the man-made features are often of a natural, woody, or earthy origin. These materials are chosen because they are derived from nature and can render a more naturalistic image and experience of the man-made features in that particular setting. These features are generally constructed in a simple, rustic style in an effort to further camouflage them into the natural landscape. The timber bridge (replacement of original) crossing Woodman Stream, is a beautiful

