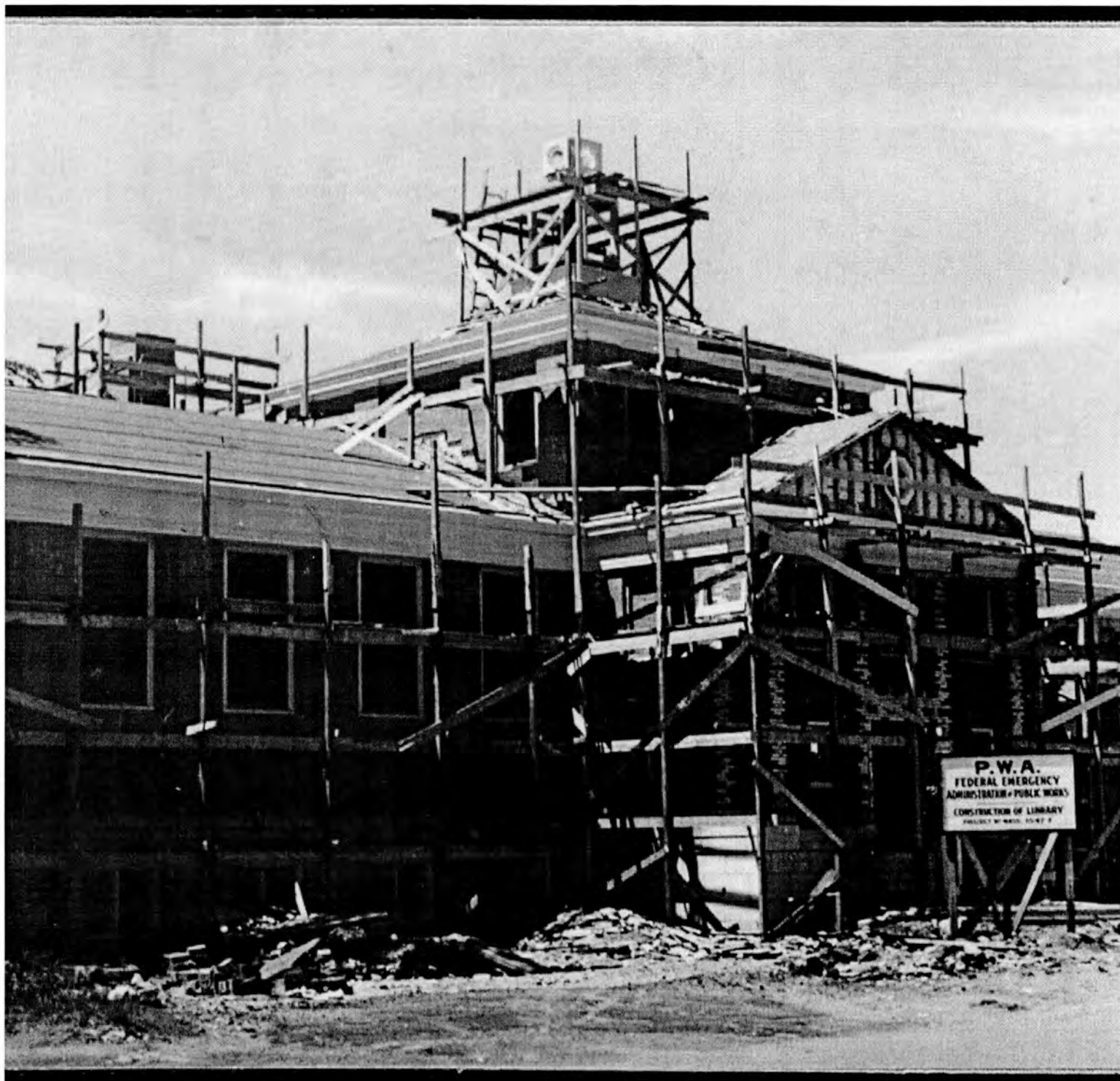


**NEWTONVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY
UNDER CONSTRUCTION, 1938 - 1939**



March 17, 2022

Peter Dimond, Chair
Newton Historical Commission
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

Dear Mr. Dimond:

As members of the City Council, we have nominated the building at 345 Walnut St. for landmark consideration. This building was originally the Newtonville Branch Library and is currently used as a Senior Center.

We appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Newton Historical Commission on March 24th to present our position to you. In advance of the March 24th meeting, we are transmitting to you a binder of materials that supports our contention that the current Senior Center building is sufficiently important architecturally and historically that it deserves landmark protection.

Sincerely,



Tarik Lucas
Councilor at Large
Ward 2



Julia Malakie
Ward Councilor
Ward 3

Cc: Members of the Newton Historical Commission
Valerie Birmingham

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INTRODUCTION -- RESPECTING HISTORY, RESPECTING PEOPLE

With post-World War I prosperity came more suburban amenities. Between 1925 and 1930, Newton added four branch libraries: West Newton, Auburndale, Newton Centre, and Waban. Newtonville, with its rapidly developing Walnut Street business district, relied on the Masonic Hall for library space. Notwithstanding its lack of a designated library branch, year after year, Newtonville residents recorded the highest library activity in the city. The village was rapidly outgrowing its makeshift library.

In 1935, despite the continued economic depression, the Newtonville Improvement Association decided to raise the funds necessary to establish a local library. To achieve this purpose, the Improvement Association established the Newtonville Library Association which was incorporated on July 3, 1935. Although Newtonville was less affluent than some other Newton villages, in June, 1936, the Newtonville Library Association launched a vigorous fundraising campaign, which raised more than 2,300 contributions ranging from \$.25 to \$1,500. John R. Prescott, a Newtonville resident and Library Association trustee, was the largest single benefactor, contributing the entire proceeds of the sale of his booklet: "Suburban Living at Its Best, Newton, Massachusetts". By the summer of 1938, sufficient funds had been raised to purchase the property at 345 Walnut St. which was turned over to the city.

The Library Association urged Mayor Ned Childs to support the erection of the library building by the city with the assistance of a federal grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA) which had been established by the New Deal to stimulate economic activity by funding civic buildings. Newton eventually received a WPA grant of \$49,500 which funded approximately 45% of the cost of construction. The balance of the project was paid for with city funds.

In 1939, the Newtonville Branch Library opened as the largest of Newton's local libraries. Its purposes were to serve Newtonville area residents and the 2,600 Newton High School students whose library was inadequate. Its Walnut Street location also served as an anchor balancing the Masonic Hall which anchored the other end of Walnut Street. The building was designed by Newton architect E. Donald Robb, principal in the nationally renowned firm of Robb and Little, with stained glass windows donated by acclaimed artist Charles Jay Connick, another Newtonville resident. The library was built in the popular red brick Georgian style of Depression-era municipal buildings, much like Newton City Hall. The stately library represented a reassuring and welcoming public place for people enduring the hardships of the Great Depression. Its dedication was a celebration of the joint effort of the city, the federal government and community leaders. On Dec. 1, 1939, more than 400 distinguished guests gathered for the official opening of the Newtonville Branch Library to hear Robert Frost, a friend of Charles Connick, say his poem "Mending Walls", lines of which were incorporated in

Connick's stained glass windows. The collaboration between an architect, a poet, and a stained glass artist is one of the more unusual features of this project.

For decades, the library offered Newton students a range of educational and recreational materials within walking and biking distance of their homes. Similarly, local adults benefitted from its collection and programs. The Newtonville branch Library was a place where people gathered, attended meetings, and found comfort and solace.

When the building was repurposed as the Newton Senior Center in 1993, architects added a fully accessible entrance from the parking lot, which would be a requirement in any renovation and new construction. While only two village branch libraries continue to function as libraries, the others have been preserved and serve their communities in different ways. The building has served Newtonville residents as well as the greater Newton community for eighty-three years. On warmer days, people on their way to or from errands, take advantage of the center's comfortable benches in the lovely Senior Center Park in front of the building on Walnut St. The space is a favorite of Newton North students who like to congregate there after school. It was and continues to be a Newtonville community space.



Program

Newtonville Library Dedication
December 1, 1939, 8 P.M.

Introduction of MAYOR EDWIN O. CHILDS
as presiding officer

MRS. VIRGINIA M. HUTCHINSON
President, Board of Trustees, Newton Free Library

The Newtonville Improvement Association and the
Library

MR. FRED C. ALEXANDER

Greetings from the Schools

MR. JULIUS E. WARREN

Robert Frost

Introduction of Special Guests

Reading of his poem, "Mending Wall"

MR. ROBERT FROST

Dedicatory Address

MR. FREDERIC G. MELCHER

Editor, *Publishers' Weekly*, New York

Presentation of the Keys

MR. DONALD E. ROBB, Architect

Songs by a delegation from the Highland Glee Club

Dedicatory Prayer

REVEREND RANDOLPH S. MERRILL

Central Church, Newtonville

Music before and after the exercises by a Trio from the All Newton
Music School.

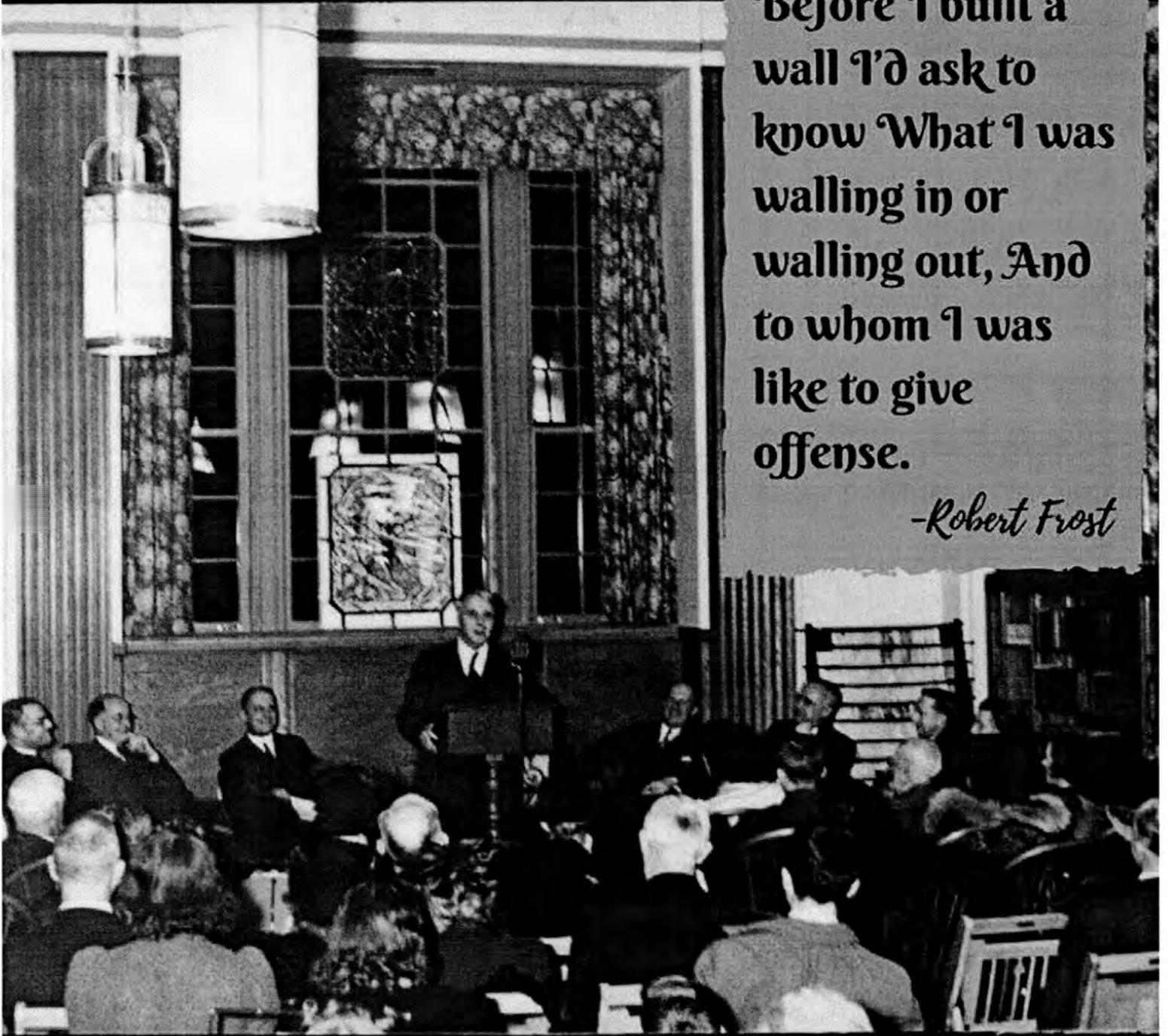
The Library is indebted to Mr. Harold W. Batchelder, of the Garden
City Radio Co., 333 Walnut Street, Newtonville, for supplying a Public
Address System, as well as to many other friends who have made this
program possible.

*Donna Lathrop
Rosa Rogers*

Edna Rogers

Before I built a
wall I'd ask to
know What I was
walling in or
walling out, And
to whom I was
like to give
offense.

-Robert Frost



Building Architecture.

The Newtonville Branch Library building, currently used as the Senior Center, at 345 Walnut Street, is a prominent Newton landmark. The largest of the five branch libraries built in Newton between 1926 and 1939, it was designed by nationally known Newtonville architect, E. Donald Robb, of Frohman, Robb, and Little, the Boston firm responsible for such significant buildings as the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

Dedicated in 1939, the red brick building, with granite base course, exemplifies the Georgian Revival architectural style prominent in Newton in that era. Its pedimented pavilion in the Doric Order with four fluted pilasters on limestone bases signals entry into the central bloc, which is topped by a cupola. Symmetrical wings extend north and south to create a gracefully massed ensemble set back in a green park. Two stained glass medallions, designed and executed by noted Newtonville glass artist Charles J. Connick, embellish the windows at the north and south gable ends.

While its scale and setting relate spatially to the village scale of structures between the commercial center and Newton North High School, this public building in a park-like setting also provides a spatial release as students and other residents move along the green Walnut Street pedestrian pathway from the village's commercial center toward the High School.

As noted, this existing senior center/library building is already a local landmark and should be officially designated as such by the Garden City and its Newton Historical Commission.

William E. Roesner, architect

Newtonville Branch Library

JULIUS-LUCHT

Librarian, Newton, Mass., Free Library

THE NEWTONVILLE BRANCH LIBRARY has been designed on a somewhat larger scale than the other branch libraries of the city of Newton, Massachusetts, because it is hoped that some time it may be the first unit of a central library for the city. The plans have been prepared so that, with very slight alterations such as changing a few windows into doors, an addition can be built to care for all the necessary departments of a main library. The new building is located at the edge of a business district, with an elementary school across the street, and the nearest building of the high school group only three minutes away. Robb & Little, of Boston, were the architects.



The Newtonville Branch Library Exterior Is Modified Colonial In Style

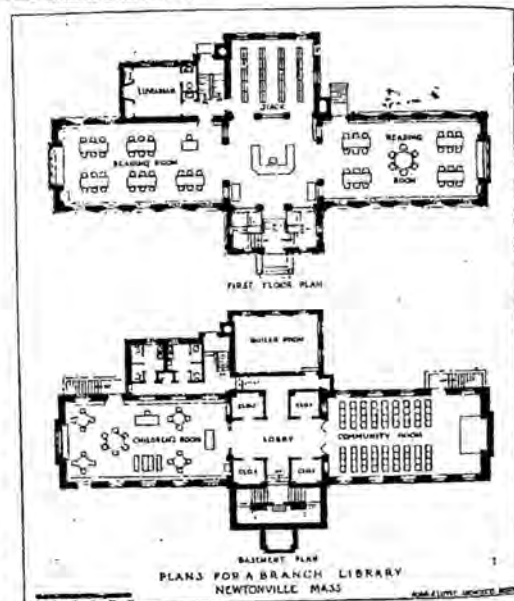
The lot is irregular in shape, approximately rectangular, with a frontage of 160 feet on Walnut Street, and a depth of 175 feet on Highland Avenue. The grounds on the front and side are completely landscaped. Immediately back of the building, on the Highland Avenue side, a garden has been developed by the Newtonville Garden Club. It is planted with shrubs, perennials, and bulbs, and enclosed with a chain-link fence. For the present, the remainder of the rear lot is a public parking space.

The exterior of the new building is modified Colonial, and the interior is conservative modern. The walls are red brick, with pine trim painted cream. The roof is slate, and the whole building is fireproof construction, insulated against heat and cold, and with acoustical corrections in the reading rooms. The floors of the main rooms are cork tile, those on the lower floor are asphalt tile. The building is heated by steam, using oil as a fuel. Delivery of books is made at the rear service entrance, on a level midway between the upper and lower

rooms. The present book capacity is approximately 20,000.

Entering the front door, one can go down to the rooms in the lower story, or up a few steps to the main floor. The large sectional charging desk is directly opposite the main entrance, in a tower-like space, lighted from the top by eight windows and a skylight. Reading rooms, each 22 by 45 feet, open to the right and left of the desk. A two-floor stack room opens directly from the rear of the desk. At present only the first floor of the stack room is provided with shelves, with a book capacity of about 6,000.

On the floor below there is a Boys' and Girls' Room on one side, and a Community Room on the other. The latter is equipped with a small platform, and is capable of seating 125. Back of the platform is a recess on which is painted a silver screen for lantern slides and motion pictures. This room is used for exhibitions of art and craftsmanship, in addition to meetings of an educational and civic nature. These basement rooms have separate outside entrances.



The white oak furniture has all been made to order, most of it to special design of the architects. The main charging desk is a sectional type, capable of extension. It is completely equipped and designed to harmonize with the interior architecture of the building. Glass display cases for exhibits of books and small objects flank

the main entrance doors. They are nine inches deep inside—somewhat deeper than is usual. They are separately lighted with fluorescent bulbs. There is a third display case in the Boys' and Girls' Room. The magazine racks, newspaper rack, stands for dictionaries, atlases, etc., are all standard as to form, but made especially to fit into spaces in the architecture.

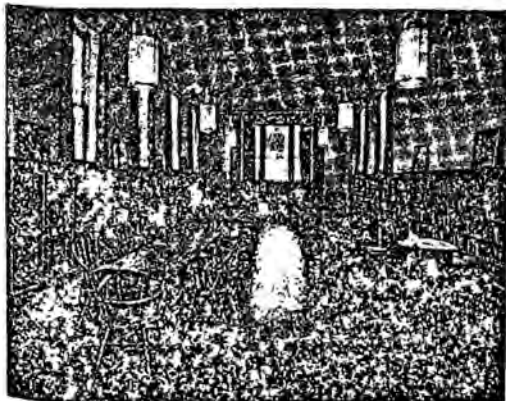
Draperies are of various fabrics, in patterns and colors to suit the different rooms. They are lined and hung on traverses. Those in the Community Room are lined with black sateen, to obscure the daylight whenever it is planned to have motion pictures or lantern slides during daylight hours.

The principal lighting fixtures were especially designed by the architects and made to order. Each one is fitted with a reflector and lens so arranged as to distribute the light evenly over the required area. In addition, there are lights which illuminate the ceilings and side walls for general illumination. The fixtures in the Boys' and Girls' Room and in the Community Room are indirect, giving a soft and evenly distributed light. These and all less important fixtures were selected from stock.

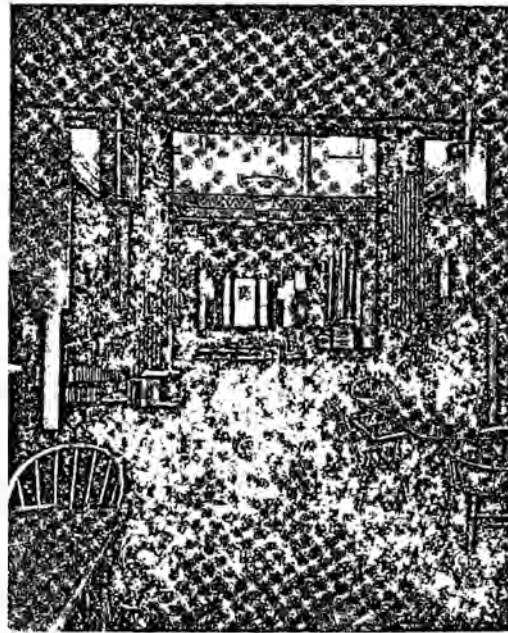
Two beautiful stained glass medallions, 25 by 31 inches, designed and made by Charles J. Connick, the well-known stained glass artist who is a resident of Newtonville, are the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Connick. These panels, dedicated to two New England poets, are placed in the large windows at each end of the Reading Room. The Emily Dickinson medallion centers about her lines:

There is no frigate like a book
To take us lands away.

Mr. Connick describes the medallion thus: "The poet's exuberant fancy is as evident in the upward flow of the lead lines as it is in the brilliant color scheme featuring white and gold sails, with an orange and red ship against a pure blue sky, and white and green water.



The Emily Dickinson Window Across One End Of The Reading Room



Across The Other End Of The Reading Room Is The Robert Frost Window

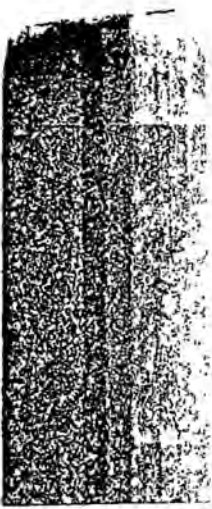
The little figure of Emily holding an open book is surrounded by an aura of brilliant gold and orange—symbol of achievement—taken up in pure gold flashes that surround the book."

The other window has for its subject these lines from Robert Frost, who is, by the way, a personal friend of Mr. Connick:

Something there is that does not love a wall—
That wants it down

To quote Mr. Connick again: "This medallion is designed to symbolize Robert Frost's poem, 'Mending Wall,' made significant in color and flowing lead lines that suggest the wisdom of the good red earth, and the pungent, lyrical good sense that so well represent Robert Frost. Features are made of the neighbor who walked in darkness (deep red-violet), and the contrast between the pine trees and the flowering apple trees, with flashes of gold and blue to enhance the green-clad figure of the young Robert Frost."

Newton, a city of about 70,000 people, is one of the larger suburban communities of Greater Boston. Twelve "villages" comprise "the Newtons," of which Newtonville is one of the three largest. With Newton Centre, it shares a central location in the city, and it is especially important as the seat of the senior high school for the whole city, with more than 2,500 pupils. At the Newtonville Branch, the Library maintains its chief Young People's Service collection. The Main Library, at Newton Corner, established in 1869, is one and a half miles to



the northeast, close to Watertown and the Brighton section of Boston.

Between the years 1925 and 1930, four sections of Newton—West Newton, Auburndale, Newton Centre, and Waban—raised a quarter-million dollars for branch library buildings and sites. Inspired by this example, citizens of Newtonville, though fully aware of the difficulties of raising money during depression years, organized in 1936 the Newtonville Library Association and immediately started a campaign for funds. Through the contributions of more than 2,300 individuals, in amounts ranging from 25¢ to \$1,500, \$29,159.20 was raised. After deducting campaign expenses, \$26,297.01 was left for the purchase of a site which, together with back taxes, cost \$34,981.20. The city appropriation for the

project of building and paying for the balance of the land was \$60,500, and the Works Progress Administration contributed \$49,500. The total cost for the building, equipment, architects' fees, etc., was \$101,375, and the total amount from all sources spent for land and building was \$136,297.01.

The building was dedicated December 1, 1939, with Frederic G. Melcher, a former Newton boy, as the principal speaker. Mr. Frost read his poem "Mending Wall," followed by several other poems, in response to enthusiastic applause. About 400 people filled the upper rooms and late-comers were able to follow the program from the Community and Children's Rooms downstairs thanks to an amplifying system provided by a friend of the Library.

HISTORY OF THE NEWTONVILLE LIBRARY

AND EDITORIAL

“These Are Our Libraries”

By ROBERT V. SPENCER



Reprint of articles recently published in
THE NEWTON GRAPHIC
Whose files contain an accurate history of the
City of Newton since 1872

FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION
Compliments of the Author

THESE ARE OUR LIBRARIES

The Newton Free Library System with its eleven branches and its seven library city-owned buildings stands next to our public school system as an educational force in this city of seventy thousand people, and second to none as a democratic institution. These twelve libraries of the city are the faucets from which the wine of the wisdom of the ages and the literary beauty and romance of the world may be imbibed by all. They are also, potentially, the people's college for the continuous self-education of all the people all the time through life. The library system is one of the most precious heritages of democracy and one which should at all times be securely safeguarded and supported. The system represents one of the most sacred freedoms of democracy, freedom of speech, and of education.

That the facilities offered by our libraries are appreciated and used is strikingly attested by the fact that last year the circulation of books drawn reached the grand total of 750,620, nearly equal to 11 books each for every man, woman, child and infant in the city. Wisely guided, this is a powerful force for the elevation of the intelligence level of the people of the city.

Although public libraries antedate Hammurabi and his Babylonian empire, it is only in recent times that their importance to all the people has come to be partially realized. Even in New England, which has led the rest of the country in the founding of community libraries, they are still the "Cinderella" of city departments. This is true to such an extent in our own city that the library management still feels called upon to solicit bequests and donations to supplement public funds. Even the name "Newton Free Library" is an anachronism harking back to the days when our libraries were established and operated by private individuals and private funds. Despite the name, which should now be laid away in lavender, our library system is as public and belongs to the people as much as our public school system.

The progressive and wealthy city of Newton is not so hard up that one of its most important city departments needs to beg money to supplement a meagre city budget. Furthermore, private funds tend to remove the control of our libraries from the people. Autocratic control of our libraries is as out of place in democracy as autocratic control of our public schools would be. The \$4,583.34 received from trust funds and gifts is too small a sum in proportion to the \$102,674.56 spent by our libraries last year to be of any great importance either as a directive of policy-making or an aid in budget support, but we must look ahead hundreds of years to estimate the end results. The libraries belong to all the people and their support should originate with and be controlled by them.

ROBERT V. SPENCER

The Newtonville Library . . . Past, Present and Future

By ROBERT V. SPENCER

Foreword

The following article consists of historical facts and opinions. The facts are either taken from my own personal knowledge or from material secured for me by Miss Frost of the main Newton library and by Miss Peters of the Newtonville Branch Library. The opinions are personal and in no way attempt to reflect those of others.

R. V. S.

Were it possible for mortals to know ultimate truth, and could we revert in our thinking to the days of ancient mythology, it might be discovered that the recently dedicated Newtonville public library building, graces Walnut st. as a result of the intervention of the gods. This brief story will show how the Fates may have despaired of proper housing ever being provided for library service to this community of 12,000 souls, and have thrown the problem into the lap of the gods who dealt kindly with the people.

Going back over the records for more than a hundred years, there is nothing to indicate that the people of Newtonville have not been as appreciative of good literature as have the residents of the other villages of Newton, but the community seems to have lacked the initiative, vision and leadership, until recent times, for the promotion of the cultural interests of the village in any persistent and effective organized way. As far back as 1826, Newton Centre had its Adelpian library, Newton its Book Club, started in 1848 and its Library Association organized in 1856, and there was a library in West Newton Parish as early as 1798. In contrast, we learn nothing about library work in Newtonville until 1886 when the newly incorporated Newton Free Library established a book distributing agency there.

"Tim" Shannon, who retired as library chauffeur in 1938, started delivering books with a livery outfit to village agencies and direct to homes in 1889. Tim says that in those days teachers were provided with covered baskets in

which they carried the books back and forth between their schools and the agencies. The Newtonville agency was held by Albert H. Sisson's drug store and coal office, located at the present site of the Christian Science Reading Room on Walnut st. Nearly all the adult circulation in those days was by request from the published catalogues. The local book distribution was handled by Sisson's agency, where the books were stored under the counter. In establishing new village libraries the Newton board of library trustees adhered to the policy of opening no new branches unless the local community manifested sufficient interest in the project to raise \$1000 for providing the necessary equipment and for meeting other initial expenses. In 1902, \$250 was raised among the people of Newtonville toward the amount necessary. There the matter rested for four years, when the Newtonville Improvement Association appointed a special committee to raise the balance required to complete the fund. This committee solicited subscriptions from the people of the community and the remaining \$750 was secured and the Newtonville Branch Library was opened in the second story of the Masonic Building October first, 1906.

The Library occupied those second story rooms until 1925, when it was moved to the first floor level of the same building on Walnut st. It occupied those unattractive but very accessible rooms until 1936, when it was crowded out by business and was moved to the second story Orr Hall. Here the floor space and lighting were excellent, but the long stair climb served as a constant reminder that library housing would never be right until a special building was provided.

In spite of all handicaps and delayed community support, with the exception of the three Orr Hall years, Newtonville has led all other branch libraries of the city in circulation since the start of the local agency in 1886. Within a brief period after this date the circulation had risen to over 11,000 a year, near which volume it stabilized until the local branch

was opened twenty years later. In 1906, the first year of branch operation, localized service was justified by an increase in circulation to 23,360. The last year of second-story location, the circulation had climbed to 54,891. The year of moving to the street level, it was 61,684, and reached an all-time high in 1934 of 104,586. Following this peak, when people began to find jobs again, it dropped somewhat and the moderate de-

the part the Newtonville librarians have played in this phenomenal development during the past thirty-three years. The women who have successively held this position of community importance and responsibility have not been mere clerks whose chief business has been to record laboriously minute statistical records accurately. They have been conscientious readers and students' assistants and teachers of good lit-



Looking north past service desk toward Robert Frost medalion window. *Courtesy Julius Lucht, City Librarian*

cline was continued when the library was moved to its second-story quarters. It is interesting to know that November, 1939, the first full month the library occupied its own building, circulation jumped 2,700 ahead of the previous November to a total of 10,449 and Newtonville again became the busiest branch in the city.

The above skeleton of library circulation, covering fifty-three years of Newtonville experience, seems to show two things conclusively; accessibility had been a dominant factor in determining library circulation and that Newtonville people are above the average consumers of good literature.

Space does not permit an adequate statement of appreciation of

literature. They have made the Newtonville Library a friendly place for all to go for books, regardless of whether it was located in a vacant store or in a second-story hall.

Miss Carrie L. Williams was appointed the first branch librarian in 1906. Mildred Chase followed her in 1910 and Maud Thompson took charge in 1917. Miss Alexina Burgess became librarian in 1920 and served until the present librarian, Miss Dorothy C. Peters, took charge in 1925. Miss Burges is now chief librarian at Suffield, Connecticut.

The Newtonville library was not wholly without organized community attention until 1936, as already indicated. When the rooms were moved to the first floor of the Masonic Building, the

Quite correctly, the Library Association simply played the part of sponsor and business agent and made the campaign a general community affair, independent of its own limited membership and that of the Improvement Association. It is safe to say that no army of canvassers ever took the field in Newtonville with better spirit than did those two hundred odd workers who went out that day in June, 1936, to raise that \$40,000. At the close of the day, however, when the reports were in, pledges for only \$16,000 had been secured.

A post mortem on that campaign at this date would be worse than useless, except to point out three facts which show that the partial failure of the campaign in no way reflects on the generosity of the people of the community.

The most important reason for the partial failure, undoubtedly, was the time of year, late June. Many families of means had already left for their summer homes. A lesser factor, but none the less important, was lack of understanding as to why the Library Association had chosen such an expensive lot. The excellent and attractive publicity material distributed failed to convince many who should have been substantial givers to the fund. The third fact which exonerates the community is that thirty thousand dollars was finally raised.

Following the partially successful drive to finance the purchase of the library lot, George Whitfield Taylor, president of the Newtonville Library Association, and Fred Alexander, campaign chairman, discontinued organized effort to complete the fund, but continued personally the attempt to raise the money. By the summer of 1938 they brought the sum available for the lot purchase to \$30,000 and the property was turned over to the city.

Had the seeming "intervention of the gods" not guided affairs at this stage, the library lot for many years to come might still have been used as a clandestine parking space. Up to this time the city had never assumed responsibility for the erection of branch library buildings. As soon as the Library Association had carried its money-raising efforts as far as it could, a special committee of the Association approached the Mayor and urged him to use his official influence to bring about the erection of the library building, by the city, assisted by a federal grant. They strongly predicated their plea on the ground that a well-

equipped library erected on this site would become a valuable adjunct to the high school for reference work. Be it to the everlasting credit of Mayor Ned Childs that he had the vision and appreciation of the importance of library work to break precedent and make the recommendation which carried with the Board of Aldermen, and with the Public Works Administration.

Another crisis immediately developed which should reflect high credit upon the goddess Hera. The acceptance of the project by the PWA depended upon plans being presented in time for work to be started in the fall under an appropriation then available. This left no time for the usual competition of architects plans, but by good fortune the problem worked out all right. As soon as city librarian Julius Lucht had become convinced that the Newtonville library building would be erected with the approval of the Board of Library Trustees, he had selected E. Donald Robb of Newtonville as an architect and had prepared preliminary plans. These plans were accepted by the city and by the PWA and contracts were let in record time. Officers of the Library Association and certain other citizens of Newtonville were allowed to see the plans. Suggestions for several minor changes were made and accepted by those in authority. The city appropriation amounted to \$111,200, 45 per cent of which has been refunded by a check from the federal treasury. With the exception of a balance of \$6,000 on the lot, the appropriation was all spent on the building, its furnishings, and the development of the grounds.

The cornerstone of the building was laid March 18, 1939, by John R. Prescott who had contributed the entire proceeds from the sale of his delightful booklet, "Suburban Living at Its Best," to the fund for the purchase of the lot. The fact that the \$1500 thus contributed was the largest amount given by any one individual to the fund was not only an eloquent epitome of the life of the fine citizen who has recently passed to his reward, but was also a revealing indication that Newtonville is not a community of great wealth.

At the dedication exercises held the evening of December first, 1939, four hundred people filled the main floor of the library. Frederick Melcher of New Haven, a former Newton boy now interested in the administration of the library system in his own city, gave the ad-

Newtonville Improvement Association made an appropriation to cover the cost of the lighting fixtures and the Newtonville Woman's Club donated the dictionary stand. An even more important indication of growing interest was an abortive attempt by the Improvement Association to start a campaign for a community building for Newtonville which, concluded that the time had arrived for action. It was decided to promote a new agency to carry out the project. The organization was formed and incorporated as the Newtonville Library Association with George Whitfield Taylor as president, Margaret McGill as vice-president, Mrs. Ernest P. Railsback as secretary and Adam Haug as treasurer. A campaign



Looking south toward Emily Dickinson médalion window. *Courtesy Julius Lucht, City Librarian*

in addition to housing the library, would have provided a large auditorium and other community rooms. This movement, started soon after World War I, was soon abandoned because of lack of promised financial support.

Going back again to the dawn of the century, the Newtonville library was the sixth branch established in the city, those at West Newton, Auburndale, Newton Centre, Upper Falls and Nonantum having preceded it in the order named. In 1936 when the movement was started which finally succeeded in bringing about the erection of the new building, citizens of the village had come to realize that a paradoxical situation existed. Four other good branch library buildings had already been erected in the city by private funds; West Newton Library, built in 1925; Newton Centre and Auburndale buildings, erected in 1927, and the Waban Library built in 1930. In the face of all its handicaps, Newtonville had been leading the branches of the city in the amount of service rendered to the respective communities.

At this time of improving business conditions the Newtonville Improvement Association con-

committee was then formed under the chairmanship of Albert M. Lyons, whose membership list read like a "Who's Who" of Newtonville.

The selection of the best building site available was the next step and an exceedingly important one. After a thorough canvass of all possibilities, the old Newton Club lot was decided upon and an option on the land was secured. The Library Association selected this location because of its convenience to the Newton High School and to the entire community; because many hoped that it would limit for all time the further encroachment of business into the residential district on Walnut st., and, finally, because an attractive library building at this spot would make a fine addition to the civic centre of the village.

The land was then owned by a man who had purchased it as a business speculation. After considerable negotiation, the owner agreed to sell for what he had paid, plus accumulated interest and taxes, which in all amounted to about \$36,000. The campaign was immediately launched to raise \$40,000 and the Newtonville Improvement Association pledged the first \$500.

dress. Robert Frost, the New England poet whose poem, "The Mending Wall," is symbolized in the Connick medallion ornamenting the north window, read generously from his poems. Mayor Edwin G. Childs presided and City Librarian Lucht turned the keys of the building over to Miss Peters, the librarian, to keep the library open from nine to nine during the fall, winter and spring months and according to established city schedule during the summer months.

For the benefit of record and for those who may not yet have had the opportunity to visit the new library, it may be said that, considering the rigid rules governing the erection of buildings under federal supervision and the present high cost of construction, the results from the standpoints of utility and of interior elegance are better than could reasonably have been expected. The structure is a modified colonial style. It is built of red brick relieved by touches of wood, stone and steel. The grounds have been tastefully laid out, and growing shrubbery already begins to soften the lines of the front elevation.

On entering the building and facing the service desk under the lofty light tower, supported by eight wood-faced Doric columns which frame the approaches to the reading rooms on either side, one receives the impression of well-proportioned space. The finish, window draperies, and chandeliers provide splashes of color and artistry and give the impression of dignified life. The children's room beneath the south wing is neat and well furnished and the community room under the north wing, which seats 100 people, has been used by thirty community organizations and committees during the first ten months which it has been open.

In its "A. L. A. Bulletin" of March, 1938, the American Library Association published the story of how the building was secured as an encouragement to other communities struggling with the problem of better library housing. A finely illustrated article by Julius Lucht, city librarian, published in the April 1940

number of the Library Journal gave an excellent description of the Newtonville Library and its furnishings. Newtonville is now on the map to the 15,000 librarians and library trustees of the country.

As soon as the building lot was turned over to the city and the execution of the building became assured, the Newtonville Library Association closed its books and as an organization took no part in the public exercises at the laying of the cornerstone nor at the dedicatory exercises. There is no indication that the Association will ever reorganize as a "friends of the library" society, as the American Library Association would like to see it do, as it refused even a hearing on such a proposal.

As stated above and in other ways, the new building has enabled the library to greatly broaden and increase its service to the community. Under the management of Miss Peters, the librarian, there has been a continuous series of painting exhibits by local artists and of hobby and educational exhibits by local collectors. The Newtonville Garden Club has developed an attractive display of annuals and perennials back of the building on Highland ave., which is already a delight to the eye.

Newtonville now has a library building and library work in progress of which the community and city may well be proud, but plenty of projects still remain for any and all organizations which may arise to interest themselves in the intellectual and cultural life of the community. Among other needs, a full catalogue of the working sections of the city library must be provided if the boys and girls of the high school are to receive efficient training in library usage. Objects of art, of high merit and appropriate, would enrich the atmosphere of the reading rooms. With the present splendid start, and with the potential intellectual strength of the community, Newtonville now has the opportunity to become outstanding for its progressive branch library and for its cultural community life.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Be it Known That whereas George W. Taylor, Adam Haug,
Irene Neal Railsback, John S. Whittemore, Charles R. Cabot,
Margaret McGill, Walter R. Amesbury, Paul E. Elicker,
William A. MacCormick, George L. Brooks and James C. Irwin

have associated themselves with the intention of forming a corporation under the name of
Newtonville Library Association, Inc.,

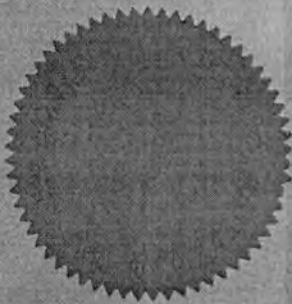
for the purpose of the following:— Establishing and/or maintaining a branch public library in that part of the city of Newton known as Newtonville, said library to include suitable reading rooms and a place for the holding of meetings for civic, educational, charitable and benevolent purposes; and for the accomplishment of the foregoing purpose to acquire by purchase or otherwise, and to hold any real or personal property which may be desirable or necessary in connection therewith; to borrow money and to secure the same by mortgage or pledge or otherwise of the whole or any part of the property of the corporation; to sell, assign, transfer and convey any part or all of the property of the corporation, including the right to dedicate and/or convey the same to any public, charitable or municipal corporation for public use; and to do anything desirable, incidental and/or necessary to carry out the aforesaid purposes, with all the powers, rights and privileges permitted or prescribed by law and usually enjoyed and exercised by such a corporation; and have complied with the provisions of the Statutes of this Commonwealth in such case made and provided, as appears from the Articles of Organization of said corporation, duly approved by the Commissioner of Corporations and Taxation and recorded in this office:

Now, therefore, I, FREDERIC W. COOK, Secretary of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Do Hereby Certify that said

George W. Taylor, Adam Haug, Irene Neal Railsback,
John S. Whittemore, Charles R. Cabot, Margaret McGill,
Walter R. Amesbury, Paul E. Elicker, William A. MacCormick,
George L. Brooks and James C. Irwin,

their associates and successors, are legally organized and established as, and are hereby made, an existing corporation as of July 3, 1935 *under the name of*
Newtonville Library Association, Inc.,
with the powers, rights and privileges, and subject to the limitations, duties and restrictions, which by law appertain thereto.

Witness my official signature hereunto subscribed, and the Great Seal of The Commonwealth of Massachusetts hereunto affixed, this thirty-first day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty-five.



F. W. Cook

Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Newtonville's

greatest civic need is a
Branch Library Building

2600

High School students will
use it

8000

voters and their families
will use it

\$40,000

is to be raised by the
voluntary contributions
of Newton citizens

A one day campaign on
June 30 is planned

Be ready to give
generously

ALBERT M. LYON

Chairman, Campaign Committee

*"The greatest need of the Newton
Free Library is an adequate branch
library building for Newtonville."*

JULIUS LUCHT,

Librarian

E. DONALD ROBB, NOTED ARCHITECT

While Practicing Here, Caused
Stir by His Figures at St.
Thomas Church Entrances

LOVELESS WEDDING SHOWN

Represented by Carving on the
Bride's Door—Other Figures
of Fifth Avenue Types Seen

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BOSTON, July 9.—E. Donald Robb of Newtonville, nationally known architect, died yesterday at the age of 62, after a brief illness.

Born in Baltimore, Mr. Robb was graduated from Drexel Institute in Philadelphia and later studied in Europe. From 1903 to 1911 he worked in the office of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson in New York, and from 1914 to 1918 in the firm's Boston office.

Since 1918 he had been a member of the firm of Frohman, Robb & Little of Boston, architects for the National Episcopal Cathedral in Washington and many other noted churches. He was an authority on iconography and the arts of the church.

Mr. Robb admitted responsibility for a dollar sign carved over the Bride's Door of St. Thomas Episcopal Church, Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street, New York, after its discovery had caused a furor in the congregation more than twenty years ago. The dollar sign had gone unnoticed for ten years before a reporter discovered it.

Excitement Over a Symbol

The architect said that the dollar sign symbolized loveless marriage for money. "On the South, the sunny, happy side of the door," he added, "is the true lovers' knot, symbol of real love and the right kind of marriage. In this niche stands St. Joseph, patron saint of true marriage."

Over the main entrance to the million-dollar structure, beneath the arch, Mr. Robb worked in a frieze or tiny figures, each representing a Fifth Avenue type—the chappie with the vapid countenance, the haughty dowager, the rich young matron, the affected monocle-wearer.

Mr. Robb had been a fellow of the American Institute of Architects since 1939.

He leaves a widow, Mrs. Bertha Moor Robb; a son, Malcolm; two daughters, Miriam Robb and Mrs. Douglas R. Neilson of Waltham, and a sister, Mrs. A. A. Cochrane of Chester, Pa.

Architect for Baltimore Edifice

Mr. Robb's firm, Frohman, Robb & Little, has been architects for the Episcopal Cathedral in Baltimore, as well as that in Washington. He was head draftsman for Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson when he designed the dollar sign over the Bride's Door of St. Thomas Church here and the series of tiny figures representing "Fifth Avenue" types in the arch of the main entrance. He explained later that these symbols were in accordance with traditional ecclesiastical architecture in which virtues were contrasted with vices.

Born on Jan. 10, 1880, he was the son of Ellakim Tupper Robb and the former Mary Campbell.

After receiving his professional training he was associated with Theophilus P. Chandler and Cope & Stewardson in Philadelphia from 1899 to 1903, and then went to the Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson firm here.

C. J. CONNICK DIES; GLASS CRAFTSMAN

Considered World's Greatest
Artisan on Stained Windows
—Works in Many Churches

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BOSTON, Dec. 28.—Charles Jay Connick, considered the world's greatest contemporary craftsman in stained glass, died today at the age of 70. His works are included in churches and chapels all over the United States. Among his New York masterpieces are the rose window in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and the chancel and east transept windows in St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Born in Springboro, Pa., Mr. Connick's artistic ability gained him a job as apprentice illustrator with The Pittsburgh Press at the age of 18. A year later, he visited the stained glass shop of Rudy Brothers in Pittsburgh, and once he saw the piles of glass on a work bench leap into life with a glow of color, his career was determined.

From then on he studied glass both in this country and in Europe, until he established his own studio and workshop at 9 Harcourt Street here, whence he arose to world fame.

In 1915 he received the gold medal for stained glass work at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. Although he gained many other honors for his work, Mr. Connick continually maintained that his windows should have been signed by many names, for the men and women who worked with him "were like an extension of his spirit as well as of his hands and brain."

Won Many Honors

His many honors included the Logan Medal in applied arts of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1917 and 1921; the Medal of the Boston Society and Arts and Crafts, 1920, and the Craftsmanship Medal of the American Institute of Architects in 1925.

Mr. Connick wrote many essays on stained glass windows, and his book "Adventure in Light and Color," is considered by many as one of the most notable contributions ever made to literature on the subject.

His works are installed in many famous places, including the chapel at the University of Pittsburgh, St. Paul's Cathedral and the Chapel of the Little Flower in Detroit, and Father Flannagan's home in Boystown, Neb.

An honorary member of the American Institute of Architects since 1932, Mr. Connick also held honorary degrees of Master of Fine Arts from Princeton and Doctor of Fine Arts from Boston University. He was a member of many craft societies.

He leaves a widow, Mrs. Mabel Coombs Connick; his mother, Mrs. George H. Connick; a brother, C. Ernest Connick, and a sister, Miss Louise Connick of Quincy, Mass.

Epic Windows at Princeton

Mr. Connick also did the east window, to "Christian Brotherhood," and four great choir windows symbolizing the Christian epics—Dante's "Divine Comedy," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Milton's "Paradise Lost," and Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," in the chapel of Princeton University.

Among other New York church windows he executed were those of the Roman Catholic Church of St. Vincent Ferrer.

Introduction – Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Windows

Charles J. Connick was a world renowned stained glass artist who lived from 1875 to 1945. He produced many stained glass windows including rose windows for St. Patrick's cathedral and St. John the Divine in New York City and windows in the Princeton University chapel and the Heinz Memorial Chapel at the University of Pittsburgh.

The art historian, Peter Cormack, described Connick in the following way:

"More fully than any of his contemporaries in the USA, he comprehended the essential qualities of historic stained glass and their potential for reinterpretation to modern aesthetic sensibilities...Connick kept 'open study' at Harcourt Street, encouraging musicians, writers, and anyone interested to view his works in progress. The poet Robert Frost was among those drawn to this vibrant center of creativity, and was the recipient of some of Connick's most innovative experiments, made from bits of pressed glass excavated from the disused nineteenth-century glassworks at Sandwich, Massachusetts."

The New York Times obituary in 1945 stated that "Charles Jay Connick (was) considered the world's greatest contemporary craftsman in stained glass."

In 1938, Newton selected the architect E. Donald Robb to design the Newtonville branch library. Robb contacted his friend and Newtonville neighbor, Charles Connick, and suggested that he design some stained glass windows as part of the library project. Correspondence between Robb and Connick indicates that Connick was delighted to do so and that these windows would be a gift to the city.

In keeping with the library environment, the subjects that Connick chose to depict were literary. He designed two windows based on lines from two New England poets: Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall" and Emily Dickinson's poem "There is no Frigate Like a Book". In his letter to Mayor Fuller and the Newton Historic Commission, a member of the Board of the Connick Foundation, Lance Kasperian, described these windows in the following way:

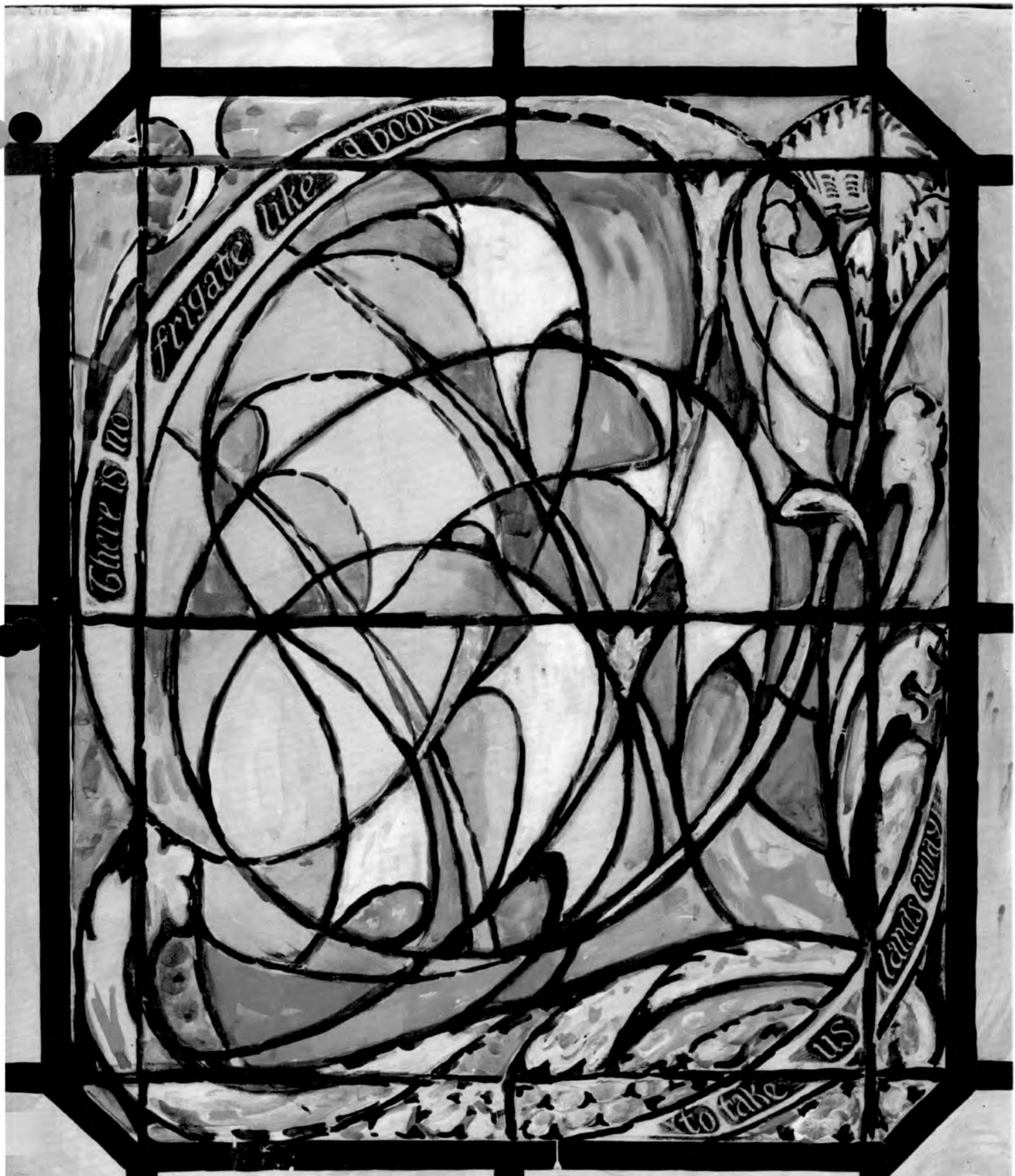
"These works are among the most significant of Connick's later career, illustrating a style which is distinct from his better known body of ecclesiastical work. They reflect his personal commitments to the Newtonville community and his friendships with the architect of the library, E. Donald Robb (1880-1942) - who was also a long-time Newtonville resident - and the American poet Robert Frost."

Respecting Charles Connick's Wishes

It is clear from the correspondence between E. Donald Robb and Charles Connick that they were partners in the development of the Newtonville library. Robb wanted to put Connick's work on full display and Connick wanted his work to blend with Robb's architecture.

Because we have not found the legal document from Connick giving his stained glass to the city of Newton -- it may have been orally -- we cannot be certain what conditions Connick attached to his gift. However, based on the correspondence that we do have, it is clear that Connick intended his stained glass to be permanently integrated into Robb's architectural design. Removing Connick's stained glass and inserting them into a new building would eliminate the architectural context created for Connick's stained glass and clearly be a violation of Connick's wishes. We contend that Newton has a moral and legal obligation to comply with Connick's wishes if at all possible.





There is no

Frigate like

a book

to take

lands run

No Frigate like a book -- Describes a voyage
to reach the corners unimagined and the heart
of the world -- Dickinson

to take the world by the hand
and lead it -- Dickinson

FROHMAN, ROBB & LITTLE
ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS
259 STUART STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
WASHINGTON CATHEDRAL OFFICE, MOUNT ST. ALBAN
WASHINGTON D. C.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

April 11, 1939.

Mr. Charles J. Connick,
9 Harcourt Street,
Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Connick:

Enclosed is a sketch which will give you as accurately as we are able to at this time the sizes for the two panels in the Library, for which you have kindly offered to contribute the stained glass.

The accurate dimensions should of course be taken when the actual sash arrives on the job; and when this happens I shall let you know.

Very sincerely yours,

E. Donald Robb
by *A. P. MacLean - Secy*

EDRM.

Dictated but not read

Paul checking on sketch

April 16, 1939.

Mr. E. Donald Robb,
Frohman, Robb and Little, Architects,
259 Stuart Street,
Boston, Massachusetts.

Dear Mr. Robb:

I am glad to have the sketch which your secretary sent me on April eleventh, and I am enjoying a play of imagination over the medallions that I want to make for the Newtonville Library.

Mrs. Connick and I are both happy to watch the building as it grows, and she enjoys, with me, the thought that we are to have a place in it with at least two characteristic medallions.

They are to serve as our gifts in celebration of our enthusiastic good will for the whole enterprise.

With cordial greetings,

Sincerely yours,

CJC/rmh.

INTRODUCTION – Converting the Newtonville Branch Library to the Senior Center

After many years of planning, Newton opened a newly built central library on Sept. 15, 1991. Once opened, Newton made a decision to close or convert the branch libraries that had been established in many of Newton's villages.

The Real Property Reuse Committee of the Board of Aldermen recommended that the Newtonville branch library be converted to a Senior Center.

On March 2, 1992, the Board of Aldermen adopted an ordinance that transferred the land and building known as the Newtonville branch library "to the Human Services Department for use as a senior center."

The Board Order included the following stipulation:

"That all feasible means be taken to preserve and/or replace the architectural elements, both interior and exterior, which give the building its historic character, including, but not limited to, doors, windows, casework and vaulted ceilings. Any necessary exterior alterations of the building or the site shall be reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission."



CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

March 2, 1992

That, pursuant to Section 2-7 of the Revised Ordinances of 1989, as amended by Ordinance T-31, adopted June 5, 1989, and as further amended by Ordinance T-212, adopted January 21, 1992, and upon the recommendation of the Real Property Reuse Committee, through its Chairman, Ald. D. Pauline Bryson, be and it is hereby

ORDERED:

That the land and building commonly known as the Newtonville Branch Library property located at 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville, in Ward 2, be transferred to the Human Services Department for use as a Senior Center. The property contains a three-story brick building of approximately 8,742 square feet on a lot containing approximately 25,909 square feet of land.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That Community Development Block Grant Funding shall be continued at not less than the current level for Senior Centers in Nonantum and Newton Corner until:
 - a) six (6) months after the opening of the new Senior Center or
 - b) the end of FY94, whichever is later.

Additional funding at a level of no less than \$36,000 per fiscal year shall be available to support the new Senior Center until evaluations are completed. Provided that Community Development Block Grant Human Service funds remain available to Newton, subsequent funding for all Senior Centers shall be based upon performance criteria developed and agreed upon by each Senior Center's Neighborhood Advisory Group, operators, and/or administrators, and the City's Planning and Human Services Departments, and applied to all Centers after the opening of the new Senior Center.

2. That all feasible means be taken to preserve and/or replace the architectural elements, both interior and exterior, which give the building its historic character, including, but not limited to, doors, windows, casework and vaulted ceilings. Any necessary exterior alterations of the building or the site shall be reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission.

A True Copy
Attest
Richard M. English
City Clerk of Newton, Mass.

3. That the metered parking spaces in the southeast sector of the Austin Street municipal lot, closest to the 345 Walnut Street site, be made available for senior citizen sticker parking by exchanging the 12-hour meters as needed.
4. That vehicular access to the site be configured to maximize ease of access and pedestrian safety for seniors.

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Adopted
23 yeas 0 nays 1 absent
(Ald. Shick)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

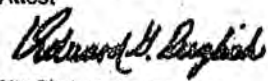
Approved: March 5, 1992



(SGD) EDWARD G. ENGLISH, City Clerk



(SGD) THEODORE D. MANN, Mayor

A True Copy
Attest

City Clerk of Newton, Mass.

Introduction -- The Park at the Newton Senior Center

Creating the Park, 2004-2005

The east view of the Newtonville Branch library from the outset had an attractive landscape facing Walnut St. There are photos of the main entrance from 1939 on the Dedication Program and from 1987 on page 3 of the Newton Public Buildings Survey.

In 2004, seven years after the building began functioning as a Senior Center, the city and the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, proposed to “develop the Center’s frontscape on Walnut St.” by creating a park. The Application for Community Preservation Funding described the goal of the proposed park on page 3:

The primary goal of The Park at The Newton Senior Center project is to: provide a fully accessible, passive recreation public park for people of all ages and abilities. To begin realizing this goal, the Department of Human Services has worked with local supporters to develop the enclosed conceptual design intended to upgrade the Center's frontscape along Walnut St. with plantings, pathways, lighting and seating that will invite people of all ages to gather, rest, read, play board games, talk, eat, and generally enjoy the conveniently accessible public space.

This goal addresses the goals articulated in the City of Newton's Recreation and Open space plan:

- *To address the increasing resident interest in less structured, more passive recreation opportunities,*
- *To provide additional small scale, passive recreational facilities for uses such as sitting areas, walking paths ... that are responsive to the specific needs of elderly and people with disabilities.*

The Application for Community Preservation Funding explained the community need for the proposed park on pages 3-4:

Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan intends to meet the National Recreation Association's minimum ratio of public open space/1000 residents. According to this standard Newtonville (ward 2- precinct 1) falls below this standard. It is generally recognized that the north side of the city is further from that ratio than the south side of the city. The City's plan states that: "where neighborhoods fall short of the standard efforts will be made to fill the gaps by creating "small pocket parks". The City is currently reevaluating its public land to identify potential neighborhood parks, including roadside land, that could be designated or developed as small pocket parks. The proposed Park at the Newton Senior Center will help the City fulfill the need for additional, small pocket parks. It will be both a neighborhood gem and a city treasure.

A budget of \$271,210 from CPA funds was requested.

On Feb. 8, 2005, the Community Preservation Committee recommended that the request for \$271,210 be approved by the Board of Aldermen.

On April 4, 2005, the Board of Aldermen by a vote of 23-0, approved a Board Order appropriating “a grant for \$271,210 to create a new park at the Newton Senior Center,

345 Walnut Street, as described by the Community Preservation Committee Recommendation (dated 8 February 2005) and the application (submitted on 15 October 2004).”

Paragraph 2 of the Board Order states the following:

That all feasible means be taken to preserve and/or replace the architectural elements, both interior and exterior, which give the building its historic character, including, but not limited to, doors, windows, casework and vaulted ceilings. Any necessary exterior alterations of the building or the site shall be reviewed and approved by the Historical Commission.

Protecting the Park

Massachusetts has very strong laws protecting parks. It is not impossible to build on a park but there are many hurdles to do so.

The Board Order from 2005 authorized the expenditure of \$271,210 to “create a new park at the Newton Senior Center”. The Board Order included a restriction that the Historical Commission shall review and approve “any necessary exterior alterations of the building or the site...” This authority indicates how important preserving the building was to the board of aldermen.

Massachusetts has a provision in its Constitution (see Article 97), that requires that any change in use of a park be approved by a 2/3rd vote of both houses of the legislature. According to the Supreme Judicial Court’s ruling in Smith v City of Westfield, this requirement applies when “*land is dedicated to the public as a public park when the landowner’s intent to do so is clear and unequivocal, and when the public accepts such use by actually using the land as a public park.*”

The Board Order from April 5, 2005 clearly establishes the city’s intent to create a park in front of the Senior Center and the park has been used by the public since the improvements were authorized.

The City of Newton has not made any effort to gain the needed approvals in order to allow a community center building to be built on the parkland in question.

**APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY
PRESERVATION FUNDING**

THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER



PROPERTY OF:
DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
CITY HALL
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02169

*** DO NOT TAKE ***
*** FOR REVIEW ONLY ***

OCTOBER 15, 2004

2004 OCT 14 PM 3:40

City of Newton



David B. Cohen
Mayor

APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING

Submit to Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner
Newton Planning and Development Department
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459
jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us
617-796-1120 ext. 1131

Name of Applicant¹ The Senior Citizens Fund of Newton Inc.

Name of Co-Applicant : The Department of Human Services-Newton Senior Center

Contact Name Jayne Colino, Director Newton Council on Aging and Senior Center

Mailing Address 345 Walnut St City Newton ville State MA Zip 02460

Daytime Phone 617-796-1660 **Email** jcolino@ci.newton.ma.us

Name of Proposal The Park at the Newton Senior Center

Address of Proposal (or assessor's parcel id) 345 Walnut St Newtonville, MA

CPA Category (all that apply) Open space Historic preservation Recreation Community housing

CPA Funding Requested \$271,210 **Total Cost of Proposed Project:** \$329,210

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A BEAUTIFULLY, RENEWED PARK FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

The Newton Senior Center, in collaboration with the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton Inc. (SCFN a private non-profit 501c3 organization) proposes to develop the Center's frontscape on Walnut St. to restore its historic elegance and promote passive recreational activities among people of all ages. With funding from SCFN, preliminary plans and cost estimates have already been developed, and support for the realization of the project is growing among Newtonville neighbors and citywide Center participants and their families. The "Oasis Garden", located in the courtyard adjacent to the Center's main entrance in the rear of the building is already an award-winning and beloved space for quiet reflection and activity. Developed and maintained with privately raised funds, this garden reflects the Senior Center's design intent: to provide a dignified environment that reflects the contributions of Newton's seniors and the value that the City of Newton places on their continued participation in civic life. The Newton Senior Center is a study in success. It has been functioning at capacity since it opened in October, 1993. The Oasis Garden has offered staff and volunteers the opportunity for expanded programming in nice weather, and has traditionally served as the site for such functions as garden parties, concerts, barbeques, and exercise classes. The Oasis Garden, courtyard, and fountain is surrounded by lattice fencing, opening to the Center's new rear entrance. It is truly an oasis where one can often find people just sitting,

¹ If the proposal is on City-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the City Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.

enjoying the garden, reading, eating, or chatting. Its enclosure makes it the quiet, contemplative space it was meant to be; yet it also shields its availability to the community at large.

The Walnut Street frontscape of the Newton Senior Center is the subject of this proposal. It seeks to expand the passive recreation opportunities now available in the Oasis Garden to the wider community, while upgrading the design and restoring the landscape's historic pathways and shape. It has been designed specifically to encourage use by people of all ages, seniors, high schoolers (Newton North is just up the street), families, and others who would seek a quiet interlude, a game of chess, or a place to meet. The Center's Director has prioritized *outreach* for the last three years to encourage expanded services without expanded space. The development of the Park at the Newton Senior Center will support these efforts both by making the Center itself more visible and inviting, and by providing additional space for expanded programming several months a year.

The proposed design has been developed by WingNut Gardens and Pressley Landscape Architects, Inc. It restores the original and historic path to the building's front entrance, which is being re-opened for public use. (It had been closed for security reasons, but internal design and management modifications are successfully addressing these.) The area south of the front entrance will include tables, seating, and benches on a hard surface that can be navigated by families with strollers, people walking independently or with canes or walkers, and people using wheelchairs. In addition, an existing chess table will be relocated with new seating so that the "Chess Nuts" and others can enjoy a game outside, in a location more suitable to the pursuit. The area to the north of the entrance will provide some benches for seating and a grassy area for picnics, croquet, or just the pleasure of the scent of grass and the feel of grass between your toes.

A private donor has approached the Senior Citizen Fund of Newton with an offer to fund a sculpture to be installed in the redesigned The Park At the Newton Senior Center. Although these negotiations are not complete at this time, the very real potential exists for the grassy area to include a public sculpture of extraordinary merit.

Such essentials as quality furnishings and materials, and lighting, and irrigation are included in the Park's design. These are selected to ensure the Park's safe and equitable use by people of all ages and abilities, morning, noon, and night. The proposed design specifies the highest quality materials, consistent with the design of the Senior Center's interior and its Oasis Garden. The lighting will make any nighttime use visible, while also highlighting the Center's beautiful landscape and architectural elements. An existing irrigation system will ensure plant life through the dry season, and limit the cost of daily maintenance.

No new municipal park can be developed without a plan for its ongoing maintenance. For ten years the SCFN and the Senior Center staff has funded and managed the Center's garden and grounds maintenance. The expanded garden will be designed to require no additional maintenance than is currently required; and maintenance and funding will continue with the same, proven approach that is already in place.

With funds from Newton's CPA, enhanced with private funds already committed by the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, the Park at the Newton Senior Center can become a reality by the Spring of 2006.

1. *Goals:* What are the goals of the proposed project?

THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER MEETS MANY CPA GOALS

The primary goal of The Park at The Newton Senior Center project is to: provide a fully accessible, passive recreation public park for people of all ages and abilities. To begin realizing this goal, the Department of Human Services has worked with local supporters to develop the enclosed conceptual design intended to upgrade the Center's frontscape along Walnut St. with plantings, pathways, lighting and seating that will invite people of all ages to gather, rest, read, play board games, talk, eat, and generally enjoy the conveniently accessible public space.

This goal addresses the goals articulated in the City of Newton's Recreation and Open space plan:

- To address the increasing resident interest in less structured, more passive recreation opportunities,
- To provide additional small scale, passive recreational facilities for uses such as sitting areas, walking paths... that are responsive to the specific needs of elderly and people with disabilities.

We expect that local merchants, their customers, neighbors, students, families, and Senior Center participants will utilize The Park at the Newton Senior Center.

The Park at the Newton Senior Center project meets the Community Preservation Plan's general goals as well as those for three specific eligibility categories, Recreation, Open Space, and Historical Preservation.

- Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character,
- Boost the vitality of the community, and
- Enhance the quality of life for its residents. Create small pocket parks,
- Enable the development of passive recreation opportunities.
- Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally-owned resources that are on the National or State Register, or that have been landmarked or found to be "preferably preserved" by the Newton Historical Commission, and
- Enable access to this resource by the public.

The Newton Senior Center building is considered an "historically significant" building.

2. *Community Need:* Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?

THE NEWTON COMMUNITY NEEDS THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER

Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan intends to meet the National Recreation Association's minimum ratio of public open space/ 1000 residents. According to this standard Newtonville (ward 2- precinct 1) falls below this standard. It is generally recognized that the north side of the city is further from that ratio than the south side of the city. The City's plan states that: "where neighborhoods fall short of the standard efforts will be made to fill the gaps by creating "small pocket parks". The City is currently reevaluating its public land to identify potential neighborhood parks, including roadside land, that could be designated or developed as small

pocket parks. The proposed Park at the Newton Senior Center will help the City fulfill the need for additional, small pocket parks. It will be both a neighborhood gem and a city treasure.

Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan also defines the need to increase recreational open space that serve the general population as well as special groups, such as youth, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The Park at the Newton Senior Center is specifically designed to welcome people of all ages and abilities, and encourage interaction among these groups.

In addition, Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan defines the need to locate facilities in places that are easily accessible to people both from the local neighborhood as well as people city wide. Unmet needs exist in the provision of the informal recreational opportunities for the elderly such as walks and sitting places. The City strives to meet its objective to provide small-scale passive recreation uses in convenient locations that are sensitive to the needs of the special groups listed above. The Park at the Newton Senior Center helps to address this objective by providing a small scale conveniently located passive recreation opportunity accessible to special groups as well as the whole city. It is clearly available to participants at the Senior Center. In addition, it is intended to welcome Newtonville residents and shoppers, high school and junior high school students who through through Newtonville day and night.

Not expressed in any existing City plan but set forth by the Center is the need to improve the frontscape of the Center to the level of respect that is seen and felt in the "Oasis Garden". We have the experience of developing and maintaining garden, landscape, and passive recreation space for use by the whole community. On any given day or time one will observe the "Oasis Garden" being utilized by neighbors, the local workforce, students, and Senior Center participants (sometimes and happily all at the same time). The nature and care that is evident in this area is reflected in the respectful way it is utilized. The same is not evident in the frontscape of the Center. The former Newtonville Branch Library once had an inviting entrance, with benches, sun, shade, and a lighted kiosk. Seventy-five years later, those same trees cast so much shade that the seating is often dank and uninviting. The plantings obscure the building's lovely, historic front entrance. The front entrance has been closed, and there is no direct pathway to it. When one approaches the Center today, it is usually with an eye to figuring out what building this is, and how to get into it. It is not currently a place that invites you into the garden or the Center. The kiosk is dilapidated, its windows have no news, and its glass is scratched and peeling. The benches are damp and in poor repair, often uninviting. A chess table (an earlier gift to the Senior Center) was installed in a location that is not conducive to the game, and without appropriate seating. There is no clear or inviting signage that identifies the building and its welcoming message. The Park at the Newton Senior Center is designed to improve community pride and presence at this city-owned building, and to reflect and increase the community's access to it.

3. **Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.

The level of community support for this project should be evident in the support letters and petitions submitted with this application. The eleven SCFN members have worked diligently to assess the need and develop the preliminary designs included in this proposal. In addition, you will find letters from community members who support us on an ongoing, daily basis, but who have taken this opportunity to express their support specifically for this project. They include neighbors, local business, students, senior center participants, community leaders, and other community organizations. Attached please find letters received by October 13th from:

- Kate Becker, Executive Director, New Art Center
- James Cellucci, Owner, Great Harvest Bread Company
- Anne Serafin, Neighbor
- Carol Ann Shea and Marguerite Major, Owners Century 21 Garden City Homes
- Robert Mortarelli, Manager, The Village Bank
- Kathleen Malloy, Ariadne Restaurant and Bar
- Jack Kimball, Owner, Taste in Newtonville
- Rose Madsen, Neighbor
- Nathan Cobb, Neighbor and Treasurer of Park Friends Inc.
- Edward Bloom, CFO International Data Group (owner of abutting property)
- Robert Dereubis, Deputy Commissioner Parks and Recreation
- Adele Hoffman, Chairperson, Newton Council on Aging
- Petitions signed by students and senior center participants

4. *Timeline:* What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?

- funding allocated- April 2005
- Design development, construction documents, approvals, and bid package - April 2005 thru October 2005
- Bid process completed- December 2005
- Construction -March thru April 2006
- Plantings- April 2006
- Grand Opening- late Spring 2006

5. *Credentials:* How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?

The City's Department of Human Services has managed senior centers for close to forty years. In the beginning, until 1993, senior centers were found in storefront locations, schoolrooms, and extra space in function halls, church basements, and libraries. In October 1993, the Newton Senior Center opened its doors in the newly renovated, historically significant, bright and lovely, Newtonville Branch Library building. Since its opening the Senior Center has become a community focal point not only through the services and programs that the Council on Aging and Senior Center provides to thousands of Newton's seniors, but also through the presence it has in the village of Newtonville. The Senior Center has become a space that is a resource to the whole community.

The original renovations were made possible with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds amounting to approximately \$750,000. Another \$300,000 was privately raised and managed by the Senior Center Board of Directors, through its relationship with The Senior

Citizens Fund of Newton Inc. to furnish and equip the center. A large anonymous donation partnered with a small landscape and grounds line item from CDBG monies, allowed the creation of the award winning courtyard landscape that is now referred to as "The Oasis Garden." SCFN's mission is to "support Senior Centers in Newton" and it has done so for close to 30 years. Currently Co-Chaired by two past Presidents of the Senior Center Board of Directors (Audrey cooper and Carol Ann Shea), SCFN members also represent Council on Aging members, the business community, community activists, and one member who lends a particular expertise to The Park at the Newton Senior Center project. Katherine McGuinness is the founding Principal of Kessler McGuinness and Associates and former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Newton Senior Center. She is a nationally known consultant in accessibility and universal design, and was closely involved in the development of the Newton Senior Center's interiors and furnishings. (See attached list of SCFN Board)

The SCFN has retained two design firms to help develop the preliminary garden designs presented in this proposal. Wingnut Gardens' Principal Diane Syverson has maintained and developed the Oasis Garden and the current frontscape for three years, and was asked by the SCFN to develop a plan to upgrade the front area. When CPA funds became a potential funding source, Ms. Syverson and the SCFN turned to the nationally known firm of Pressley Associates to develop the plans enclosed in this proposal. We are fortunate to have the skill and art of such world-class landscape architects designing the Park at the Newton Senior Center, as they are both Newton residents. Their vast experience with public parks, including the East Boston Piers Park assures us that this park will combine the necessarily intimate, backyard scale with appropriate materials, methods, and construction documents for a public, unsupervised park. Pressley Associates has also developed the cost estimate for this project based on certain materials assumptions and their experience with public bidding and project management. Please reference background information enclosed.

6. *Success Factors:* How will the success of this project will be measured? Be as specific as possible.

We will measure the success of this project in two ways. First, since the primary goal of The Park at The Newton Senior Center project is to provide a fully accessible, passive recreation public park for people of all ages and abilities, its success will be visible to all. Visible to all passing by when, the park's success will be evidenced by the park's use by a broad spectrum of people, young and old, singles and groups, interacting or reflecting. When we see participants of all the age groups utilizing and respecting the Park at the Newton Senior Center for passive recreation and intergenerational activity, we will have succeeded in providing a lifelong benefit to the Newton Community. Second, since it is a garden and all gardens require maintenance, the project's success will be defined by the City and the SCFN's ability to build and maintain it with the same successful, public-private partnership that has already developed the NSC and its Oasis Garden. The City is **not** being asked to fund its maintenance beyond the current maintenance already provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. The SCFN will continue its maintenance with private funds.

"If you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life" (Frank Lloyd Wright)

7. *Budget:* What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.)

The total project budget is \$329,210, of which this proposal requests \$271,210 from the City's CPA funds. The SCFN has already expended \$7,000 on preliminary design fees to prepare the conceptual design, presentation materials, and detailed cost estimates included herein. See attached Cost Estimate dated 10/05/04 and Design Fee proposal dated 10/06/04

8. **Other Funding:** *What* additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.

Prior to this application process SCFN committed funds to professionally create a conceptual design and cost estimate for The Park at the Newton Senior Center. In addition, members of the SCFN and staff of the Newton Senior Center have spent well over 100 hours, valued at thousands of dollars, to manage the development of this preliminary design, cost estimate, and proposal. This shows that City staff and Newton citizens have already made a commitment to provide a fully accessible, passive recreation park environment for the entire community to use and enjoy.

For the past 30 years the SCFN has sent an annual letter to the community to raise money that supplements the City, State, Federal, and private funds that allow the Center to remain a community focal point and to meet the needs of Newton's seniors. The SCFN will send a letter in the early spring of 2005 (assuming that the CPA funds are awarded to this project) "planting the seed" for the newly established "Park at the Newton Senior Center Endowment Fund". SCFN will provide the ongoing maintenance of \$6,000/year through its proven and ongoing community fundraising.

9. **Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

Since the creation of The Oasis Garden and the landscape design that encompasses the center's building, the maintenance needs have been met through the creation of partnerships and the development of community support. The following is a list of the partnerships that have allowed us to establish and maintain the garden/landscape and grounds upkeep to this point;

- CDBG funding
- Anonymous \$20,000 earmarked donation raised by SCFN for creation of the Oasis Garden.
- \$10,000 donation from SCFN to install an underground irrigation system.
- \$3000 donation from SCFN for purchase and installation of on outdoor shed for grounds maintenance.
- In-kind maintenance by Newton Parks and Recreation Department includes:
 - Snow removal
 - Trash removal (daily)
 - Lawn care
 - Leaf removal
 - Maintenance of irrigation system
 - Provision of bark and leaf mulch and wood chips under the "adopt a space" program
- Community Service projects:

- Annual Newton Serves program under the Office of Volunteer Services, spring clean up
 - Cops and Kids program: clean up, painting, raking, etc
- Daily site upkeep by Senior Center Custodial staff
- Informal site upkeep by Senior Center staff, volunteers, and participants
- Ongoing funding, averaging \$6,000/year over the last ten years, from the SCFN for professional landscape maintenance by outside vendors.

The design anticipates no additional maintenance costs, as the SCFN already supports maintenance of the current front landscape of the Senior Center, and has directed the designers to ensure a final design anticipating a similar level of maintenance. No changes to the collaborative maintenance mechanism described above are anticipated. The SCFN intends to continue its support for the maintenance of the garden, landscape, and The Park at the Newton Senior Center.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed. **See Attached**
11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal. **See attached**
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.
N/A
13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission). **Although Parks and Recreation does not have an approval role in this project, because of our ongoing relationship as recipients of their department's in-kind services this project was brought to their attention and described in terms of future maintenance needs. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, Fran Towle was in complete support of the proposal.**
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place. **The Senior Center passed approval of this within its original approvals for occupancy required during renovation.**
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed. **See enclosed credentials of Pressley Associates.**
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal. Contact Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner, at 617-796-1131 or jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us to arrange for an independent appraisal.

City of Newton



City of Newton, Massachusetts
Community Preservation Committee



MEMORANDUM

David B. Cohen
Mayor

TO: Honorable Board of Aldermen
FROM: Community Preservation Committee
DATE: 8 February 2005
RE: **CPC Recommendation For CPA Funding**

PROJECT TITLE: The Park at the Newton Senior Center
CPA PROJECT ID: CPA-FY05-21
CPA CATEGORY: Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicants, The Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, Inc., and The Department of Human Services-Newton Senior Center, are proposing to redevelop the Senior Center's front yard into a new pocket park. The Senior Center, established in 1993, is located at 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville in a building that was constructed as a library in the early 20th century. The applicant requests \$271,210 of CPA funds to restore the original path to the front entrance of the building (which will re-open for public use); install tables, seating, and benches; relocate the existing chess table; and install landscaping, lighting, and irrigation.

The CPC requested a clarification regarding bidding and construction management aspects of this project through its review process. In response, the City has designated the Parks and Recreation Department to head a project management team that also includes the Engineering Division and the Department of Public Works. In addition, the CPC requested a revised budget that decreases the contingency from 20% to the more typical 10% (see revised budget, dated 2/9/05, attached).

FINDINGS

Community Preservation Act (MGL c.44B)

Recreation

The Park at the Newton Senior Center complies with the definition of **recreational use** under §2 which includes, but is not limited to ". . . the use of land as a park . . .". The project also complies with §5(b)(2) which allows the CPA to fund the **creation** of land for recreational use. This project would transform the existing front yard of the Senior Center into a new neighborhood pocket park for the public to enjoy passive recreation.

Newton Community Preservation Plan

Overarching Goals

1. Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character, boost the vitality of the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents.	Yes
2. Serve more than one CPA category.	No
3. Demonstrate the highest cost/benefit value relative to other proposals.	See below
4. Leverage other public and/or private funds.	Yes, see below

6. Create incentives for other private projects to occur.	No
7. Show that a project is the most reasonable available option to achieve the objective.	Yes
8. Demonstrate strong community support.	Yes
9. Serve to equitably distribute CPA funds throughout the City.	See below

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 3: Projects received during the October funding round included a high CPA cost of \$1,000,000 and a low CPA cost of \$19,250. The CPA cost for this project is \$271,210. The relative benefit for this project is creating a new public park which will serve the Senior Center, as well as the Newtonville commercial center, nearby neighborhoods, and students at Newton North High School and nearby Cabot Elementary School.

In terms of CPA cost related to all other recreation projects, both past and proposed, this project is the most costly out of 10 total. The following table illustrates the comparative costs of recreation projects.

TABLE 2: CPA Project Costs (Recreation)

Project Name	Fiscal Year	Total CPA Funds
Senior Center Park	05	\$271,210
Forte Park*	03	\$250,000
Albemarle Community Classroom	03	\$99,931
Cabot Outdoor Classroom	04	\$68,270
West Newton Common Irrigation	04	\$65,968
Wellington Park Improvements	05	\$64,000
Thompsonville/Bowen Ballfield	03	\$56,805
Houghton Garden *	04	\$50,000
Stearns/Pellegrini Park Renovation**	04	\$30,000
Kayla's Garden	03	\$23,718

* The Forte Park project was awarded a total of \$500K under the condition that \$250K be returned to the CP Fund after reimbursement through a state/federal grant. Therefore, this table represents that \$250K of CP funds was awarded to this project.

Likewise, the Houghton Garden project was awarded a total of \$90K under the condition that \$40K be returned to the CP Fund after reimbursement through a state grant. Therefore, this table represents that \$50K of CP funds was awarded to this project. However, the CPC is recommending to the Board that this loan be converted to a grant due to denial of other state funding.

**Denotes projects requesting CPA funds to conduct a study in preparation for a larger recreation project.

Goal 4: The table below shows how this project compares to the other FY05 CPA requests in terms of leveraging funds.

TABLE 1: Leveraging

Total project cost	CPA funds requested	Leveraging (CPA as % of total project cost)	Ranking (as compared to other FY05 projects)	Average for all FY05 projects
\$329,210	\$271,210	82.4%	5	85.7%

The project has leveraged private funds from the Senior Center Fund of Newton (SCFN) in addition to over 100 hours of volunteer time. SCFN has also pledged to provide \$6K per year for ongoing maintenance of the new park facility.

Goal 9: The FY05 applications include funding requests for projects in Nonantum, Newton Corner, West Newton, Newtonville, Newton Upper Falls, Newton Center, Newton Highlands, Waban as well as city-wide projects. The Senior Center is located in Newtonville.

Recreation Goals

1. Address the needs targeted in the <i>Recreation and Open Space Plan</i> and take advantage of other opportunities to meet the recreation needs of the residents of the City.	No
2. Meet the recreation needs of the greatest number of residents possible.	Yes, see below
3. Meet the greatest variety of recreation needs possible.	Yes, see below
4. Serve passive as well as active uses. Finding ways to balance the range of recreational opportunities and serve the diverse recreation needs of the community is a priority of the CPC.	No, see below
5. Preserve sight lines consistent with open space. . . . Decisions about scale and placement should be made with the objective of enhancing or enabling open views.	NA
6. Access for disabled residents should be included in plans wherever possible.	Yes

Additional comments on selected goals:

Goal 2: This proposed new park would meet the recreation needs of a high number of residents due to its location in the commercial center of Newtonville and its close proximity to Newton North High School and Cabot Elementary School.

Goal 3: The new park would meet a variety of recreation needs by providing different types of facilities (benches, tables, chess tables, gardens, and lawn).

Goal 4: Due to the small size of the area, only passive recreation uses are practical to include in this project.

Past Performance Rating

Applicants who are prior recipients of CPA funds are rated on past performance. Ratings are based on adherence to project timelines, meeting deadlines for quarterly reports, and remaining within budget constraints. An overall ratio is assigned to each applicant, with 1.0 being the highest. A rating of 1.0 indicates an applicant has met all requirements in a timely fashion; a rating of 0.8 indicates a compliance rate of 80%, etc. The table below represents a summary of the ranking for the project applicants:

TABLE 4: Past Performance Rating

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>Prior Projects</i>	<i>Rating</i>	<i>Missed Criteria</i>
The Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, Inc.	0	n/a	n/a
The Dept. of Human Services	0	n/a	n/a

CPC Recommendation

The proposal is consistent with the CPA criteria and many of the Plan's goals, as described above. Therefore, the Community Preservation Committee voted unanimously to recommend funding this application to create new park at the Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, Newtonville, by appropriating and transferring the requested \$271,210 to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Human Services for purposes of this project as detailed in the application (dated 15 October 2004), subject to the following conditions:

1. Work shall commence no later than 31 December 2006 and shall be completed no later than 31 December 2007 or such other date(s) as may be approved in writing by the Director of Planning and Development. In the event of failure to meet the project start or completion dates as stated herein or as approved by the Director of Planning and Development, any remaining funds in the project account shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.
2. Promptly after substantial completion of the project, the applicant shall submit to the Community Preservation Committee a final project development cost statement. If such final development costs are less than the development budget on which the CPC based its funding recommendation, then the CPC reserves the right to require the applicant to remit to the Newton Community Preservation Fund a share of such surplus.
3. Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes stated herein shall be returned to the Newton Community Preservation Fund.

-DRAFT BOARD ORDER-

CITY OF NEWTON

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

February 25, 2005

ORDERED:

That in accordance with the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee, through its Chairman, Doug Dickson; the Board of Aldermen Committee on Community Preservation, through its Chairman, Alderman Stephen Linsky; and the Finance Committee through its Chairman, Alderman Paul Coletti: the sum of Two Hundred Seventy-One Thousand, Two Hundred Ten Dollars (\$271,210) is hereby appropriated and transferred from the Community Preservation Current Year Reserve, to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Human Services for purposes of funding a grant for \$271,210 to create a new park at the Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, as described in the Community Preservation Committee Recommendation (dated 8 February 2005) and the application (submitted on 15 October 2004).

FROM: Community Preservation Current Year Reserve 21-5790	\$271,210
TO: Recreation Projects The Park at Newton Senior Center 21D502A-581502	\$271,210

Newton Senior Center				
Cost Estimate 2/9/05				
Preliminary				
Item	Qty.	Unit	Unit Price	Total
SITE PREPARATION				
Prune trees to remain(three)	1	LS	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Remove & dispose of existing Bradford Pear	2	lf	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Remove & dispose of existing Privet Hedge	82	lf	\$ 3.00	\$ 246.00
Remove & dispose of Yew hedge Section.	1	ls	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
Remove & dispose of Euonymus	3	ea	\$ 50.00	\$ 150.00
Remove & dispose of Hemlock and Stumps	1	ea	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
Remove & dispose of Shrubs	625	sf	\$ 5.00	\$ 3,125.00
Remove & dispose of Existing Concrete Pavers	935	sf	\$ 2.00	\$ 1,870.00
Remove & dispose of Existing Curb	103	lf	\$ 4.00	\$ 412.00
Remove & dispose of Existing Concrete	283	sf	\$ 2.50	\$ 707.50
Remove & dispose of Kiosk	1	ls	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Remove & relocate Bike Rack	1	ls	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Remove & stockpile Ex. Bench	3	ea	\$ 150.00	\$ 450.00
Remove & relocate Ex. Bench	1	ea	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Remove and relocate existing public telephone	1	ea	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00
Remove and relocate games table	1	ea	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00
SITE PREPARATION SUBTOTAL				\$ 21,710.50
PAVING AND SURFACING				
Concrete Sidewalk	3,269	sf	\$ 5.50	\$ 17,979.50
Granite curb under fence	293	lf	\$ 50.00	\$ 14,650.00
Granite curb	218	lf	\$ 35.00	\$ 7,630.00
Brick Pavers on Concrete subbase	1,906	sf	\$ 27.00	\$ 51,462.00
PAVING AND SURFACES SUBTOTAL				\$ 91,721.50
SITE IMPROVEMENTS				
Fencing and Signage				
Steel fence 4' high	293	lf	\$ 100.00	\$ 29,300.00
Stone Entry Columns 5' high x 18'	11	ea	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 38,500.00
43" Round Teak Game Tables	3	ea	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 3,600.00
Teak Chair	12	ea	\$ 500.00	\$ 6,000.00
Teak Bench	6	ea	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 12,000.00
Chairs for game table	2	ea	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,200.00
Metal sign on radius	2	ea	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
Lighting				
Black Metal Overhead Light Fixtures w/ Wiring	2	ea	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 9,000.00
Down Lights	4	ea	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 4,800.00
SITE IMPROVEMENTS TOTAL				\$ 110,400.00
PLANTING AND IRRIGATION				
Irrigation	4600	ea	\$ 1.25	\$ 5,750.00
Shrubs				
Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Fracilis Compacta'/ Hinoki Falsecypress (5'-6' B&B)	2	ea	\$ 650.00	\$ 1,300.00
Deutzia gracilis 'Nikko'/ Compact White Deutzia (3 gal)	24	ea	\$ 45.00	\$ 1,080.00
Hydrangea macrophylla 'Endless Summer' (3 gal)	5	ea	\$ 45.00	\$ 225.00
Ilex pedunculosa - female/ Longstalk Holly (3'-4' B&B)	2	ea	\$ 170.00	\$ 340.00
Ilex pedunculosa - male/ Longstalk Holly (7 gal)	1	ea	\$ 119.00	\$ 119.00
Pieris x Brouwer's Beauty/ Brower's Beauty Andromeda (20"-30" B&B)	8	ea	\$ 155.00	\$ 1,240.00
Spiraea japonica 'Gold Mound' (3 gal)	38	ea	\$ 50.00	\$ 1,900.00
Taxus cuspidata 'Nana Pyramidalis'/ Upright Nana Yew (4'-5' B&B)	2	ea	\$ 250.00	\$ 500.00
Taxus media 'Viridis'/ Upright Yew (3' B&B)	5	ea	\$ 112.00	\$ 560.00
Vaccinium corymbosum Blueray/ Blueray Highbush Blueberry (3' gal)	2	ea	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00
Vaccinium corymbosum Nordland/ Northland Highbush Blueberry (3 gal)	2	ea	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00
Trees				
Canopy Tree 3 1/2"-4" caliper	1	ea	\$ 1,400.00	\$ 1,400.00
Hamamelis x intermedia 'Arnold Promise' / Witch Hazel (5'-6' B&B)	1	ea	\$ 300.00	\$ 300.00
Magnolia acuminata 'Elizabeth'/ Magnolia Elizabet (2"-2.5" cal.)	2	ea	\$ 500.00	\$ 1,000.00
Perennials				
Iris siberica 'Yankee Doodle Boy'/ Siberian iris (triple fan or greater) (1 gal)	14	ea	\$ 20.00	\$ 280.00
Hosta 'Sun and Substance' (1 gal)	33	ea	\$ 20.00	\$ 660.00
Groundcover				
Pachysandra 'Green Sheen'	1,549	ea	\$ 1.10	\$ 1,703.90
Spring Bulbs				
Scilla/ Scilla siberica Spring Beauty	1,000	ea	\$ 0.29	\$ 290.00
Giant Snowdrops/ Galanthus elwesii	1,000	ea	\$ 0.30	\$ 300.00
Fine Grade & Sod	2,043	sf	\$ 1.75	\$ 3,575.25
PLANTING TOTAL				\$ 22,723.15
Subtotal				\$ 246,555.15
Contingency @ 10%				\$ 24,655.52
Total with Contingency				\$ 271,210.67

CITY OF NEWTON
IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN

April 4, 2005

ORDERED:

That in accordance with the recommendations of the Community Preservation Committee, through its Chairman, Doug Dickson; the Board of Aldermen Committee on Community Preservation, through its Chairman, Alderman Stephen Linsky; and the Finance Committee through its Chairman, Alderman Paul Coletti: the sum of Two Hundred Seventy-One Thousand, Two Hundred Ten Dollars (\$271,210) is hereby appropriated and transferred from the Community Preservation Current Year Reserve, to be expended under the direction and control of the Director of Human Services for purposes of funding a grant for \$271,210 to create a new park at the Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut Street, as described in the Community Preservation Committee Recommendation (dated 8 February 2005) and the application (submitted on 15 October 2004).

FROM:	Community Preservation Current Year Reserve (21-5790).....\$271,210
TO:	Recreation Projects The Park at Newton Senior Center (21D502A-581502).....\$271,210

Under Suspension of Rules
Readings Waived and Approved
23 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Ald. Vance)

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
Approved: April 6, 2005

(SGD) EDWARD G. ENGLISH
City Clerk

(SGD) DAVID B. COHEN
Mayor

(SGD) PAUL E. COLETTI
Chairman, Finance Committee

Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution for Albemarle Park

What is Article 97?

Article 97 is an Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution, passed in 1972, declaring, *as a public purpose*, protection of the people's right to conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.¹ Article 97 gives the state legislature power to protect these rights, including the authority to acquire land (or interests in land, such as easements) to accomplish this public purpose. Of greatest relevance to the proposed siting of a senior center on Newton parkland, Article 97 provides that "[l]ands and easements taken or acquired for such purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of" except by a two-thirds vote of each branch of the state legislature. This requirement applies not only to "Article 97 land" held by the Commonwealth; it also applies to Article 97 land held by cities and towns. For this reason, any time a municipality seeks to dispose of Article 97 land, or convert it to another purpose, two thirds of the state senate, and two thirds of the state representatives, must approve the proposal by special legislation. Additional requirements (discussed below) are imposed by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the disposal or change in use of land protected under Article 97.

What land is protected under Article 97?

Article 97 land is land "taken or acquired" by the state or a municipality for the public purpose stated in the Article: to protect the people's rights to "the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources." This is often shortened to "conservation land" or "conservation purposes," but this does not mean that Article 97 applies only to land in a natural or unspoiled state, or only to greenspace. Article 97 protections apply to public "parks" and "parkland" used for a variety of purposes serving public health, broadly interpreted. In Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. 49 (2017), the Supreme Judicial Court found a city-owned parcel containing a playground and baseball fields subject to the protections of Article 97. Discussing a variety of ways by which land might come to be used

¹ "The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; and the protection of the people in their right to the conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources is hereby declared to be a public purpose. The general court shall have the power to enact legislation necessary or expedient to protect such rights. In the furtherance of the foregoing powers, the general court shall have the power to provide for the taking, upon payment of just compensation therefor, or for the acquisition by purchase or otherwise, of lands and easements or such other interests therein as may be deemed necessary to accomplish these purposes. Lands and easements taken or acquired for such purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by laws enacted by a two thirds vote, taken by yeas and nays, of each branch of the general court."

by the public as parks or open space, the Court noted that “a city or town that owns land in its proprietary capacity and uses the land for a park may. . . dedicate the parkland to the use of the public.” The Court then made a point of explaining the breadth of beneficial public use of such park land:

“The healthful and civilizing influence of parks in and near congested areas of population is of more than local interest and becomes a concern of the State under modern conditions. It relates not only to public health in its narrow sense, but to broader considerations of exercise, refreshment, and enjoyment.”

Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 60, citing Higginson v. Treasurer and Sch. House Comm’rs of Boston, 212 Mass. 583, 589 (1912). The Court concluded that “[b]ecause the general public has an interest in parkland owned by a city or town, ultimate authority over a public park rests with the Legislature, not with the municipality.”² There are no reported cases in which a court has narrowed the meaning of “park” or “park land” under Article 97 to exclude paved surfaces or recreational facilities. It may be presumed that the public health benefits “exercise, refreshment, and enjoyment” continue to define the public purpose protected under Article 97.

Significantly, Smith v City of Westfield establishes that land need not have been in use as “park land” at the time it was acquired by the state, city or town; nor need it have been acquired for the express purpose of park use. The property in Smith v. City of Westfield had been acquired through action to foreclose on a tax lien for nonpayment of taxes; seven years later, the city planning board recommended its use for “a new playground.” Id. at 51.

How is Article 97 protection demonstrated?

Another important holding of Smith v. City of Westfield is that park land need not be subject to an explicit deed restriction in order to be protected under Article 97. Weaving the common law doctrine of “prior public use” into its discussion, the Court stated that “land is dedicated to the public as a public park when the landowner’s intent to do so is clear and unequivocal, and when the public accepts such use by actually using the land as a public park.” Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 63. Referencing the Boston Common and Public Garden, the Court noted that “a deed or conservation restriction is only one way of manifesting such intent but it is not the only way”; it was “plain” that these spaces “had been dedicated as a public park without there being any deed or conservation restriction declaring the land to be a public park.” Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 63, citing Lowell v. Boston, 322 Mass. 709, 729-30 (1948). An intent of permanence must be found:

² In this discussion, the Court also referenced the doctrine of “prior public use”

“[T]he intent must be to use the land permanently as a public park, because the consequence of a dedication is that the general public for whose benefit a use in the land was established . . . obtains an interest in the land in the nature of an easement, and upon completion of dedication it becomes irrevocable.”

Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 63 (internal citations omitted). The Court found in this case that the Cross Street Playground “was dedicated as a public park by the city under this standard, and therefore is protected under the prior public use doctrine and art. 97.” Id. at 64. The Court noted a number of factors supporting that conclusion (the land had been used as a public park for more than sixty years; control of the land had been turned over to the playground commission; an ordinance was passed naming the parcels),³ but stated that “the determinative factor” was the city’s acceptance of Federal conservation funds to rehabilitate the playground, which carried with it a requirement that the playground could not be converted to use other than for public outdoor recreation absent the approval of the (state) Secretary of Environmental Affairs. Id. “Regardless of whether the parcel had been dedicated earlier as a public park, it became so dedicated once the city accepted Federal funds pursuant to this condition.” Id.⁴

Clearly, the acceptance of federal conservation funds is the gold standard for establishing a “clear and unequivocal intent” to dedicate land permanently to park use. But presumably it is not the only way to establish such intent, as the Court states it “consider[ed] the totality of the circumstances,” as well as the other factors noted above, in reaching its conclusion. Id.

How would Article 97 apply to the proposed siting of a senior center on existing park land?

The City proposes to site a senior center on a portion of Albemarle Park, implicating Article 97. It is not yet clear whether the City believes that 1) the park land in question is not protected by Article 97; or 2) the park land *is* protected, but the proposed senior center is not a conversion in use; or 3) Article 97 applies, and the City is complying/will comply with its requirements. These are addressed in turn.

Is the site of the senior center protected by Article 97 ?

³ The Court noted in describing the history of park use that the Cross Street Playground had been identified in the City’s open space plan as “public land with a ‘full’ degree of protection and ‘active’ recreation potential.” 478 Mass. at 53.

⁴ The Court added that “[i]t is significant that this understanding was shared by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, whose 2006 [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan][“SCORP”] stated that land developed with [federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act][“LWCF”] funds became protected under art. 97.” Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 64. The federal program is implemented through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

It is represented that the proposed senior center will occupy only the “hardscape” areas of the Albemarle Park, leaving the fields untouched. The areas upon which the facility is proposed to be located includes the field house, basketball courts (also used for street hockey), tennis courts, and Gath Pool. Although the City’s legal reasoning has not yet been publicly presented, one argument will likely be that because these areas are not green space, they do not qualify as “park land” eligible for protection under Article 97. This is unpersuasive, where the Court’s articulation of “park” and “park land” has never excluded hardscape recreational facilities, nor otherwise made such a distinction. Reported cases impose no criteria of “greenness” or natural state on park land. Instead, the Court’s discussion in Smith v. City of Westfield references the “broader considerations of exercise, refreshment, and enjoyment” as among public health benefits of parks. Where the areas of Albemarle Park proposed as the site of the senior center are used by the public for swimming, tennis, basketball, street hockey - as well as other recreational activities as part of Day Middle School physical education – it would seem a difficult case for the City to make that these areas are not “park land” as the Supreme Judicial Court has described it.⁵ It is reasonably safe to presume that the proposed site for the senior center is “park land” under its current state and use.

Based on the Court’s analysis in City of Westfield, whether the park land proposed as the site of the senior center *is protected by Article 97* depends upon whether there was “a clear and unequivocal intent to dedicate [the land] as a public park,” such intent being “to use the land permanently as a public park,” and whether the public has accepted such use “by actually using the land as a public park.” Id. at 63.⁶

To make such determination, a court would apply the “totality of the circumstances” analysis noted in City of Westfield, reviewing facts surrounding the City’s acquisition of the park land; the department(s) given custody of the land; the purposes for which the park land has been

⁵ The park land held to be protected under Article 97 in City of Westfield was a playground; although the facts do not indicate the type of surface entailed, it is the activity, not the surface that would appear relevant.

⁶ In citing the common law “prior public use” doctrine, the Court states that “land is dedicated to the public as a public park when the landowner’s intent to do so is clear and unequivocal, *and when the public accepts such use by actually using the land as a public park.*” Smith v. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 63 (emphasis supplied). Based on the Court’s subsequent discussion, it appears that the focus of Article 97 analysis is the intent of the owner, more so than the public’s acceptance by use of the land, but both would seem relevant under the Court’s “totality of the circumstances” analysis. See id. at 63-64 (discussing City’s actions in accepting public funding and naming the park, but also mentioning “the land had been used as a public park for more than sixty years.”). Perhaps the two elements (intent of the city; use by the public) cannot truly be separated.

used since acquisition; any actions the City has taken in designating and developing uses of the land; the funding sources used in any improvements, including any restrictions imposed; how the park land has been named; how it appears on municipal and regional open space plans; and any other facts supporting or detracting from the idea of a dedication of the land, permanently, to use as a public park.

At this point, the facts would appear to support the site's protection under Article 97, but these facts must be developed through research and detailed documentation.

Is the proposed senior center “use [of park land] for other purposes”?

Article 97 protections apply where park land is proposed to be disposed of or “used for other purposes.” Again, while the City's legal reasoning has not been discussed publicly, an argument might be made that where the new facility will contain recreational facilities, including a gym and possibly a pool, the park land – which currently supports recreational uses – will not in fact be “used for other purposes” and thus not subject to the protections and requirements of Article 97.

This would not appear to be a strong argument. No reported cases suggest that indoor recreational facilities are fungible with “park land,” or that a building may be constructed on park land if a portion of the uses within are “recreational.” Moreover, the primary use of the proposed senior center is *as a senior center*. The provision of services to seniors (including recreation), within a newly-constructed building, is a “use for other purposes” of currently-used park land. This argument may be developed further at a later deed as needed.

Does the City intend to comply with Article 97?

It is possible that the City intends to claim compliance with Article 97, and that it will in fact seek to obtain the two-thirds vote in the state senate and house of representatives. If the City elects to take this path, it must also satisfy the requirements of the Article 97 Land Disposition Policy of the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. While a separate memorandum might be prepared on this subject alone, it may be noted at this point that the Policy requires municipalities seeking to dispose of Article 97 land⁷ to:

- “1. obtain a unanimous vote of the municipal Conservation Commission that the Article 97 land is surplus to municipal, conservation and open space needs;
2. obtain a unanimous vote of the municipal Park Commission if the land proposed for disposition is parkland;

⁷ The Policy defines “disposition” as including “any change in use, in and to Article 97 land or interests in Article 97 land.”

3. obtain a two-thirds Town Meeting or City Council vote in support of the disposition;
4. obtain two-thirds vote of the legislature in support of the disposition, as required under the state constitution;
5. comply with all requirements of the Self-Help, Urban Self-Help, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and any other applicable funding sources; and
6. comply with EOEPA Article 97 Land Disposition Policy [note: the municipality must also file an Environmental Notification Form with EOEPA's MEPA office].”

Only under “exceptional circumstances” will the Secretary support a disposition of Article 97 land, and only upon satisfaction of certain conditions contained in the policy. The application of the Article 97 Land Disposition Policy to this proposed project may be addressed at another time. At this point, the requirement of unanimous votes of the Conservation Commission and Parks Commission should be noted.

How would a challenge to the City's proposal be made?

In Smith v. City of Westfield, the plaintiffs brought claims under several statutes seeking to halt construction of a school on a City playground. The project entailed removal of trees and a portion of the playground. One count was a “ten taxpayer” action under G.L. c. 40, s. 53, in which residents of a municipality may sue to enjoin expenditures believed to be unlawful; another count was a “ten resident” action under G.L. c. 214, s. 7A, alleging damage to the environment; and a third was an action in the nature of mandamus under G.L. c. 249, s. 5, requesting that the Court order the defendant City to comply with Article 97 prior to construction or operation of the school on any part of the playground. City of Westfield, 478 Mass. at 53.

It is not clear under which statute(s) or cause(s) of action the Court granted relief – an order directing entry of a permanent injunction. Any challenge to the City of Newton's location of the senior center on park land should include all of the above counts. Additional counts for declaratory and/or injunctive relief, and/or requesting that the court adjudicate the rights of the parties in land, might also be brought.

There appears to be no requirement that the individual residents in a “ten resident” action demonstrate personal aggrievement arising from the proposed project – that is, that they personally have standing because they will be specifically affected by the project. There is no such requirement in a “ten taxpayer” action.

In City of Westfield, the plaintiffs filed their approximately eight months after the city council voted to transfer the playground parcel from the city's parks and recreation department to its school department for the purpose of construction a new school on the land. This filing came shortly (within several months) after the City commenced removing trees and portions of the playground. The plaintiffs obtained a temporary restraining order, then a preliminary injunction halting construction during the pendency of the case. Should the City of Newton continue to

pursue construction of the senior center on Albemarle Park, and should residents seek to challenge this action, an appropriate milestone – such as a vote by the City Council to designate the land for that purpose, or to convey the land – would be the predicate for filing suit. Filing earlier than a City Council vote (or other significant milestone – a matter meriting discussion with people knowledgeable about the process) would likely result in a court finding that the matter was not yet “ripe” for hearing.

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

Building Analysis

Senior Center



Address: 345 Walnut Street
Year of Construction: 1938

Level of Significance: High
Contributing building in the Newtonville National Register Historic District.
Eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Recommended Treatment Level: Preservation/Rehabilitation

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance

Building History

The Newton Senior Center was built in 1938 as the Newtonville Branch Library, or the John R. Prescott Library, named after its largest contributor. The Classical Revival building was designed by the Boston architecture firm of Robb & Little. It was designed to be larger than the other branch libraries constructed during the same time period due to its close proximity to the Newton High School. The site, previously of the site of the Newton Club, was purchased by citizen subscription. The Public Works Assistance, or PWA, funded 45% of the project, the remaining funds raised over three years. The library accommodated many uses, including painting, hobby and educational exhibits.

At its dedication in December of 1939, Robert Frost read his poem "Mending Wall"; lines from his poem were memorialized in the stained glass window medallion designed by noted stained glass artist and Newtonville resident Charles J. Connick.

Harry Britton Little (1882-1944) and Newton resident E. Donald Robb (1880-1942), architects of the Senior Center, were both employees of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson early in their careers. Robb left briefly in 1911 to form Brazer & Robb with Clarence W. Brazer; the Alfred O. Deschong Museum in Chester, PA is one of their designs. In 1914 Robb returned to Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson. Sometime after 1918 he and Little left to create the firm of Robb & Little. They were later joined by Philip Hubert Frohman. The firm of Frohman, Robb & Little is best known for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York.

In 1981 the Senior Drop-In Center moved into the library. In 1983 an arson fire caused over \$100,000 in damage. In the early 1990s the Newtonville Branch Library was one of several branches closed due to funding constraints. The building was renovated in 1993 by the Boston firm of Schwartz/Silver Architects and it re-opened as the new Senior Center. The renovations made some alterations to the building to accommodate the new programmatic needs. The two large reading rooms on the main floor became an activities room and a dining wing. On the lower level, the community room was subdivided to create an art studio and a games room; the children's room was subdivided to create a health maintenance suite and library. Traces of the original configuration of these spaces are visible in the plaster detailing of the ceilings.

Level of Significance

The Newton Senior Center is a contributing structure within the Newtonville Historic District, a National Register Historic District. It is eligible for Individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and is significant under National Register Criteria A and C. It was the largest of the five branch libraries built in Newton between 1926 and 1939 and is representative of this period in Newton's civic history. The building is well designed and represents the work of architect E. Donald Robb and stained glass artist Charles J. Connick, both of whom are masters in their respective fields.

References

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- The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation. "History of the Connick Studio" (April 2011),
<<http://www.cjconnick.org/history.php>> (visited 31, October, 2011).
- Herrmann, Jon and Lucy Xu. "Senior Center History: Historically Speaking" (2007)
<<http://www.newtonseniors.org/about/history.htm>> (visited 31, October, 2011).
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Form B NWT.3639—347 Walnut St" (1997).
- Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. "Howard Gilman Wilbert (1891-1966), Pittsburgh" (2009) <<http://www.phlf.org/2008/03/21/howard-gilman-wilbert-1891-1966-pittsburgh/>> (visited 31, October, 2011).

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance: Historic Images



Figure 1: East elevation of Newtonville Branch Library, 1987. The landscaping of the site has changed considerably since then. The light fixtures on the limestone standards have also been changed. (Credit: Historic Newton)

Part 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features

Exterior Visual Character

Setting

- Corner lot in downtown Newtonville. Landscaping: outdoor seating areas, benches, site fences.

Shape

- Typically two stories with a third story pavilion at the very center of the building. Roughly rectangular with a projecting center bay. Additions are low and located at the rear elevation, hidden from view.

Roof and Related Features

- Gable roofs at the north and south wings and projecting entrance.
- Hipped roof and cupola at the center pavilion.

Openings

- The windows are typically single openings with 12-over-12 double-hung wood sashes. At the sides of the north and south wings, the windows are tall, with 16/12 double-hung wood sashes.
- Basement level windows are typically pairs of 6-pane casements.
- The gable ends of the side wings have tripartite windows with leaded glass in elaborate wood surrounds.
- The main entrance door is recessed within a relatively elaborate wood surround.
- Octagonal window within the east pediment.

Projections:

- The projecting entrance bay has a pediment supported by engaged wood Doric pilasters on limestone bases.
- Shallow wood bay of windows at the north and south ends.
- Two exterior basement stairs on the west elevation are detailed to not extend above the granite base course at the building perimeter.

Trim and Secondary Features:

- Brick pilasters at the walls of the side wings, with sloping or stepped brick at the bottom of the recesses between.
- Copper exterior wall sconce on west elevation may be original.

Materials

- The walls are typically red brick with wood and metal trim, a granite base course, brick watertable and a tall, painted wood cornice.
- At the projecting entrance bay, the watertable and cheekwalls are limestone; the front steps are granite.
- Slate roof with copper flashing at the main portions of the building. There are low-slope roofs of unknown material at the additions.
- The cupola is painted wood with copper roofing at its shallow hip roofs and window hoods.

Craft Details

- The stained glass medallions within the large, multi-pane window at the north and south window bays were designed by Charles J. Connick. One contains lines from Robert Frost's poetry.
- Metalwork ornament located above the main (east) door.
- Two globe light fixtures on limestone standards flanking the main (east) entry.
- Ornamental medallion is centered within the south and north pediments.
- The exterior window sills at the first and second floors typically have a large bullnose profile.

Interior Visual Character

Individually Important Spaces

Main Lobby

- Triple-height space, with a mezzanine and 6/6 double-hung windows at upper level
- Square, 28-pane laylight, recessed in ceiling
- Shallow steps in plaster wall and ceiling surfaces
- Stenciling on the walls
- Wood-clad square, fluted columns
- Ornamental metal railings at mezzanine and doors from entry vestibule
- Ornamental metal pattern at lower panels of doors to entry vestibule
- Ceiling-mounted light fixture mounted at center of laylight

Reading Rooms (now repurposed)

- Double-height spaces with shallow barrel vault
- Stained glass medallion at far end
- Wood-clad square, fluted pilasters
- Ceiling-mounted light fixtures
- Built-in wood bookshelves along long (east, west) sides

Related Spaces

Original (east) Entry Vestibule

- Shallow steps in plaster wall and ceiling surfaces
- Ceiling-mounted light fixture
- Wood architrave at exterior door
- Wood paneling at lower level
- Ornamental metal panels at balustrades

Children's Room and Community Room (now subdivided and repurposed)

- Plaster ceiling detail: border of shallow steps in surface
- Wood bookshelves; some relocated
- Windows: steeply sloped interior sills, extensions to the window hardware so they are readily operable

Part 2 – Images

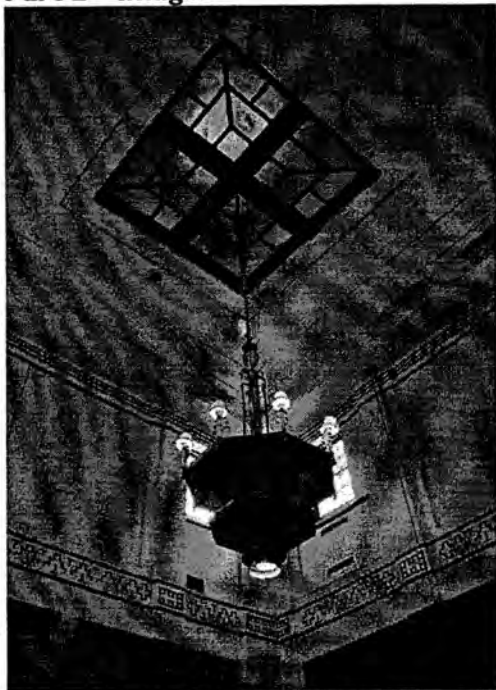


Figure 2: Laylight and chandelier in Main Lobby. Note stepped plaster detail at walls and ceiling.

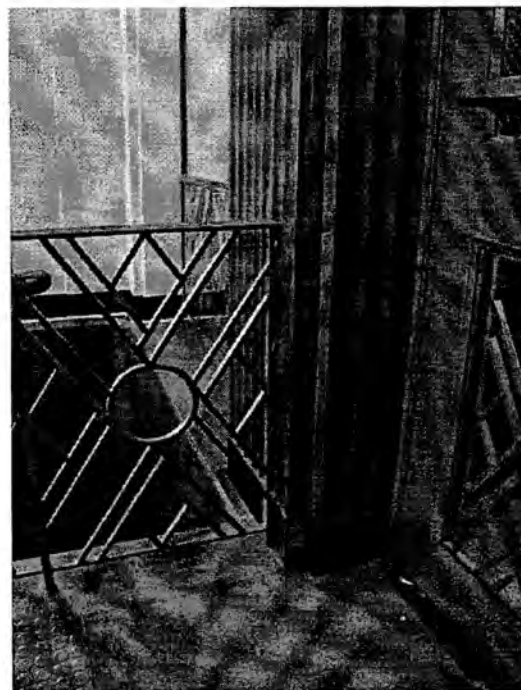


Figure 3: fluted wood column and ornamental metal panels at Entry Vestibule balustrade and door.



Figure 4: South gable end. Note carved pediment ornament and stained glass panel behind storm windows.

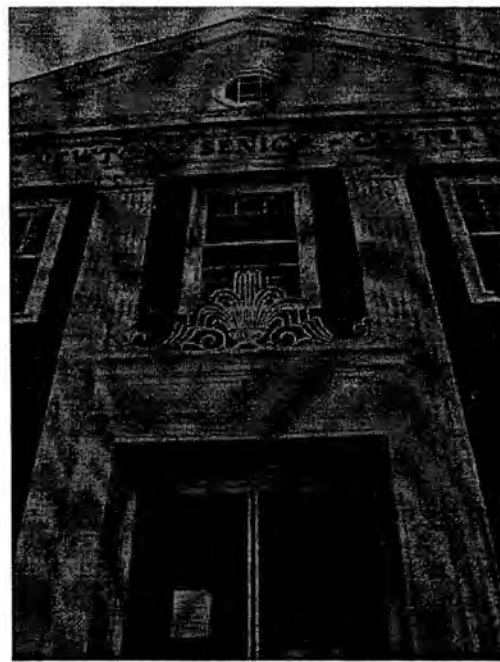


Figure 5: East (historic main) entrance.

Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations

Preservation Treatment Level

The Newton Senior Center, with its origin as the most prominent of the branch libraries built in the 1920s-30s, is significant to the civic history of Newton. While the building's use has changed and many spaces have been altered, many of the most significant features remain intact and in good condition. It is recommended that the most important spaces and the historically significant features (listed in Part 2 of this report) be treated at the "Preservation" Level outlined in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The Preservation treatment level places a premium on the retention of historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair.

In related spaces and ancillary spaces not directly contributing to the historic character, the "Rehabilitation" level of treatment from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* may be more appropriate. At this level, the emphasis is placed on protecting and maintaining historic building material and significant features while providing an efficient contemporary use of the building.

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

Exterior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Clogged area drain at northwest basement stairs. Unclog.
- Evidence of water infiltration and water damage at various locations. Locations of leaks to be determined and repaired. Building elements already damaged identified below to be addressed as part of more comprehensive work.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Roof was not accessible for survey. Survey roof condition and repair as necessary. Coordinate with identifying and repairing leaks.
- Window condition to be thoroughly surveyed, including sash, frame, lintel and hardware. Repair as required. Repaint. Replace missing hardware.
- Steel lintels at basement level windows are rusted, many need to be replaced, all need to be repainted. Reset and repoint displaced bricks where rust jacking has occurred (preserve existing windows) and where removed to replace lintels.
- Peeling paint at steel lintel of current (west) main entrance; repaint to prevent structural damage.
- Basement stairs at northwest and southwest: rusting steel nosings; water stains and biological growth at concrete retaining walls. South: joints below granite coping need to be repointed. North: retaining wall in poor condition- large areas of spalling, cracking, efflorescence, biological growth. Repair and/or rebuild retaining wall. Provide adequate drainage on exterior side.
- Replace rotted wood elements in kind. Paint all wood elements. Includes cornice and base at current (west) main entrance.
- HVAC equipment visible on southwest roof, with insensitive wall penetrations. Coordinate with cupola repair and restoration and overall HVAC strategy (HVAC not part of the scope of this report).
- Cupola: Historic appearance and functionality have been compromised by the insensitive addition of acrylic panels sealing the louvered vents, pipe vents and possibly being sealed off from the daylight below. Investigate original venting, daylighting, and subsequent alterations. Coordinate with HVAC design.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- At the projecting entrance bay: repair the spalling limestone bases, including dutchman repairs as required. Remove ferrous elements, clean and repoint. Repaint all wood surfaces.
- Clean brick walls and watertable, and granite base course. Repoint where necessary for repairs or for better mortar match. Visible locations include:
 - mismatched repointing at the west façade of the southwest projection
 - repointing, some brick replacement needed at west façade, investigate for possible source of water damage here
 - efflorescence at chimney; at southwest corner of south wing; investigate source
 - stained brick, missing mortar at corner of southwest projection; identify moisture source that is causing the efflorescence; repair, clean, repoint.
 - staining of brick and mortar at current main entrance; indicates water, damage at cornice or roof above. Repair leak.
- non-original (non-contributing) corrugated plastic shed roof over north basement stair in poor condition: should be removed and/or replaced with more appropriate roof
- copper exterior wall sconce likely original; to be repaired, restored. Includes removing inappropriate repairs, cleaning corrosion, replacing missing glazing panels, fitting with exterior-appropriate energy-efficient bulb.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Protect and continue to maintain stained glass medallions in north and south window bays.
- The other character-defining features are in generally good condition. Continue regular maintenance.

Interior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Locate and repair source of water damage at entry vestibule wall and ceiling.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Clean laylight. Investigate original functionality and possibility of opening up to cupola. Coordinate with work at cupola and HVAC system.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Repair and repaint entry vestibule wall and ceiling where water-damaged.
- Acoustic tiles affixed to ceilings of significant spaces (reading rooms, entry vestibule, children's room, community room). Determine original surfaces, find more appropriate means of acoustic dampening if necessary.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- The other character-defining features are in generally good condition. Continue regular maintenance.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No: NWT.3639
Historic Name: Newtonville Branch Library
Common Name: Newton Senior Center
Address: 345 Walnut St

City/Town: Newton
Village/Neighborhood: Newtonville
Local No: 24-010-001, NV-081
Year Constructed: 1938
Architect(s): Connick Studios; Robb, E. Donald; Swartz/Silver Architects
Architectural Style(s): Classical Revival
Use(s): Community Center; Library
Significance: Architecture; Community Planning; Education
Area(s): NWT.Z: Newton Multiple Resource Area - 1908-1940
NWT.AI: Newtonville Historic District
Designation(s): Nat'l Register District (02/16/1990); Nat'l Register MRA (02/16/1990)
Building Materials(s): Roof: Slate
Wall: Brick; Glass; Wood
Foundation: Granite; Stone, Cut



The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has converted this paper record to digital format as part of ongoing projects to scan records of the Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth and National Register of Historic Places nominations for Massachusetts. Efforts are ongoing and not all inventory or National Register records related to this resource may be available in digital format at this time.

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Sunday, November 28, 2021 at 5:23: AM

NWT. 3639

FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

24-010-001

Boston South

AI, 2

3639

Newtonville 2/14/90

Town Newton

Place (neighborhood or village)

Newtonville

Photograph

Address 345 Walnut Street - was listed at
259 Walnut Street



Name Newtonville Library

sent Senior Center

iginal Library

onstruction 1938

ilding permit

n Classical Revival

Builder E. Donald Robb

aterial:

Foundation Granite

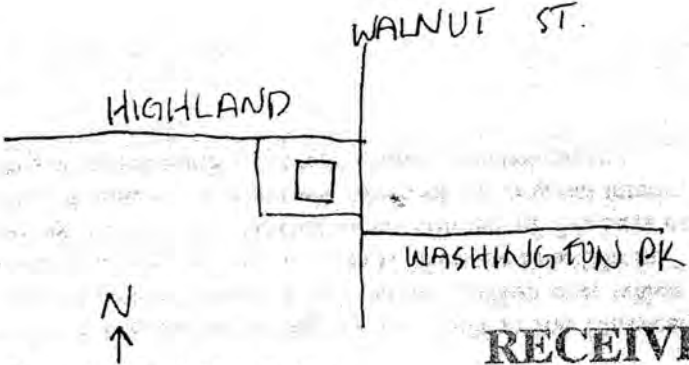
Wall/Trim Brick

Roof Slate

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures None

Major Alterations (with dates) None

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Condition Good

Moved no yes Date

Acreage 25,909 Sq Ft

Setting Just south of village center

RECEIVED

MAR 16 1998

MASS HIST. COM

Recorded by Hillary Sullivan

Organization BU Preservation Studies

Date 10/30/97

BUILDING FORM

NWT. 3639

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [] *see continuation sheet*

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Newton's biggest branch library was built in the Classical Revival Style. The building has a symmetrical facade organized around a pedimented pavilion over which a third story cupola rises. The pavilion has four pilasters carrying a frieze that reads "Newton Free Library." the double leaf entry is headed by an entablature carrying an urn. The flanking wings consists of five bays each and set off by panels containing sixteen over twelve double hung windows. Much of the original interior has also been retained, including a high ceiling with a stenciled border, old light fixtures and balconies.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [] *see continuation sheet*

Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The Newtonville branch was the fifth library to be built between 1926 and 1939. The other five libraries were built by subscription, while Newtonville's land, formerly the site of the Newton Club, was only purchased this way. The PWA, Public Works Assistance funded 45% of the project. This was the largest of the branches due to its proximity to Newton High School. The building was designed by E. Donald Robb of Robb and Little. Mr. Robb was a Newton resident, as was the founder of Connick Studios who supplied the stained glass for the project. The building is currently being used as a Senior Center. Swartz/Silver Architects converted the building in 1993.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [] *see continuation sheet*

Newton Graphic 12/39

[X] **Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.** *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*

NWT. 3639

WRDS
NEWB

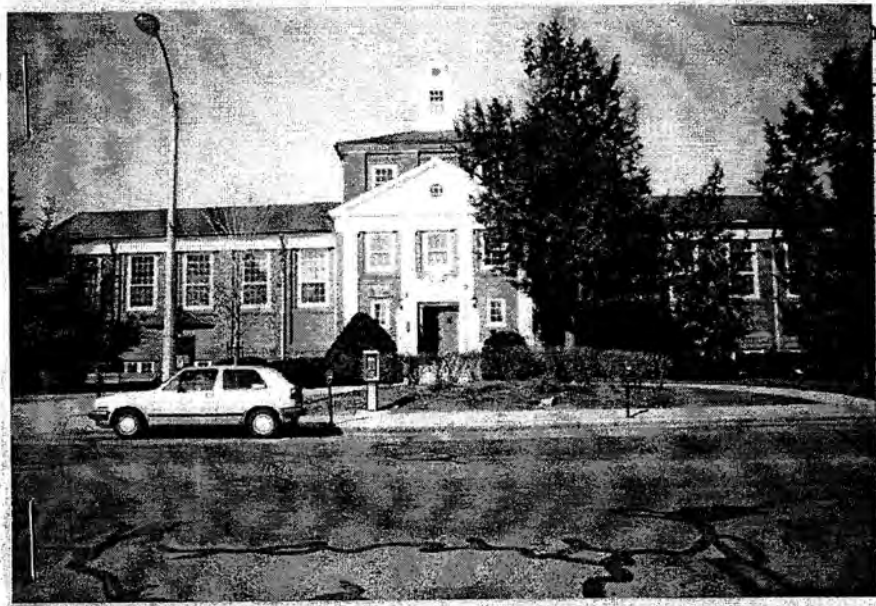
AI, Z
AREA

3639
FORM NO.

NW-6 NU-081

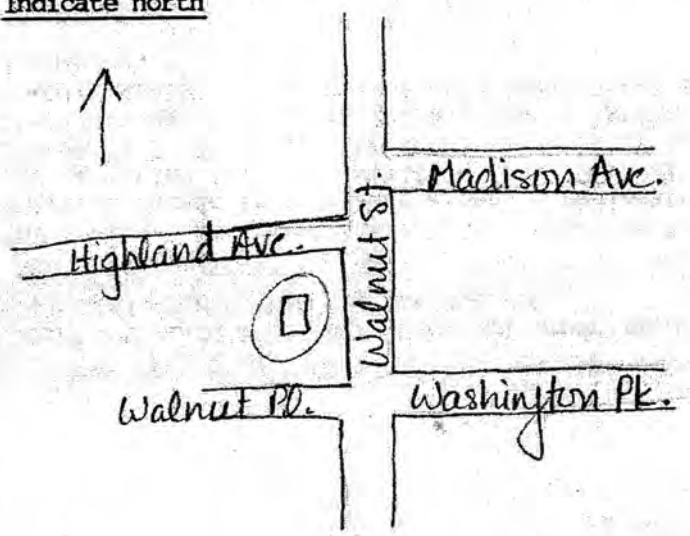
FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116



City Newton (Newtonville)
Address 259 Walnut Street
Historic Name Newtonville Branch Library
Present Branch Library
Original same
Description 1938
Type Building Permit
Style Classical Revival
Architect E. Donald Robb

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s). Indicate north



Exterior Wall Fabric brick
Outbuildings none
Major Alterations (with dates) none
Condition good
Moved no Date n/a
Acreage 26,512 sq. ft.
Setting at southern edge of village commercial center

UTM REFERENCE _____
USGS QUADRANGLE _____
SCALE _____

Recorded by Candace Jenkins/Susan Abele
Organization Newton Historical Comm.
Date March 1987

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

The Newtonville Branch Library is a handsome brick Classical Revival structure whose symmetrical facade is organized around a pedimented pavillion with a third story and cupola rising behind it. The pavillion is trimmed with pilasters carrying a frieze which reads: NEWTON FREE LIBRARY. The double-leaf entry is headed by an entablature carrying an urn. The flanking wings have five bays each, defined by recessed panels containing 16/12 double hung windows. This is the largest and most elaborate of Newton's several branch libraries.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Newtonville Library was the fifth branch library built during the 20s and 30s at the instigation of local residents. Although the branches in West Newton, Auburndale, Waban and Newton Centre were paid for entirely by subscription, the Newtonville branch was funded in part by a PWA (Public Works Assistance) grant which covered 45% of the cost. The site, formerly that of the Newton Club, was purchased by community subscription and the remainder of the cost was made up by the city. The library was seen as an important resource for Newton High School students and was therefore larger than might otherwise have been needed for branch service.

The building, which was seen as a buffer between the expanding commercial center and the residential neighborhood, was designed by Newtonville resident E. Donald Robb, a member of the firm of Robb and Little. Stained glass windows were designed by the Connick Studio, whose founder Charles Connick was also a resident of Newtonville. Ground breaking took place in November 1938 and the building was dedicated on December 1, 1939. Poet Robert Frost was a participant in the ceremony.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Building Records 259 Walnut Street
Newton Graphic 9/23/38, 11/18/38

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

NWT. 3639

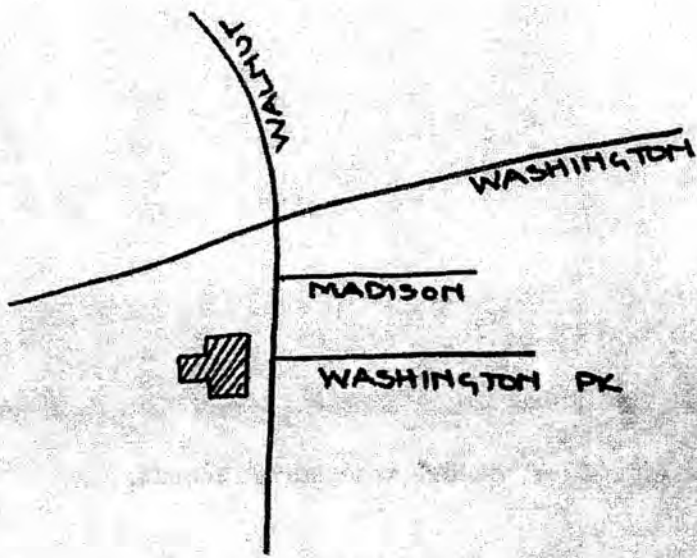
In Area no.	Duplicate Form no. 3639 2544 1145
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1. Town Newton/ newtonville ^{DE}
 Address 345 Walnut
 Name Newtonville Branch Library
 Present use library
 Present owner Newton

3. Description:
 Date 1939
 Source librarian
 Style colonial revival
 Architect _____

4. Map. Draw sketch of building location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings. Indicate north.



Other features 1.5 stories; t-shaped plan; raised basement; center pavillion with hip roof and cupula; 2 side wings with gable roof; gable entrance pavillion with 4 Doric columns; corniced entrance door with
 Altered _____ Date _____
 Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:
 One acre or less _____ Over one acre x
 Approximate frontage .75
 Approximate distance of building from street 20'

6. Recorded by Marianne McLoughlin
 Organization MAPC
 Date 9/14/78

↑
(over)

7. Original owner (if known) _____

Original use _____

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates _____

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Aboriginal | _____ | Conservation | _____ | Recreation | _____ |
| Agricultural | _____ | Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Religion | _____ |
| Architectural | _____ | Exploration/
settlement | _____ | Science/
invention | _____ |
| The Arts | _____ | Industry | _____ | Social/
humanitarian | _____ |
| Commerce | _____ | Military | _____ | Transportation | _____ |
| Communication | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Political | _____ | | |
| Community development | _____ | | | | |

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)



10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

NWT. 3639

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newton/Newtonville	Form No:
Property Name: Newtonville Branch library	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Other Features:

metal decoration above door; brick pilasters around center pavillion and wings;
small windows on either side of entrance portal; double hung sash windows, 12/12;
large tripart windows in gable end of side wings;

Staple to Inventory form at bottom



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath
Director

DEMOLITION REVIEW STATUS

DATE: 9/11/20

PROJECT# 20090019

Dear Homeowner/ Contact Person:

RE: PROPERTY ADDRESS: 345 Walnut Street

We have conducted our initial site visit of the structure for which you have requested either full or partial demolition and have determined that the building or structure is **Historically Significant** for the reason(s) indicated below. Your application is now scheduled for further review by the Newton Historical Commission.

The building or structure is historically significant because it is:

- in a National Register or local historic district not visible from a public way.
- on the National Register of Historic Places or eligible for listing;
- importantly associated with historic persons, events, or architectural or social history.
- historically or architecturally important for its period, style, architect, builder, or context.
- located within 150 feet of a National Register or local historic district and contextually similar.

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting date is September 24th. An agenda will be mailed to you one week prior to the meeting. At this meeting the Newton Historical Commission will determine whether the structure(s) or partial structure(s) is "Preferably Preserved." If the building(s) is found to be "Preferably Preserved," no Building Permit for demolition shall be issued by the Inspectional Services Department unless the demolition delay is waived by the Commission or the delay expires.

Please note that direct abutters to this property will be notified of the Commission hearing by mail at least one week prior to the meeting on the date shown above.

Additional information on Demolition Review can be found on our website at www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/Historic/historical.htm. If you should have any questions prior to the meeting please call our office at 617-796-1120.

Regards,

The Historic Preservation Staff

Newton Historical Commission
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, Massachusetts 02459
Email: kholmes@newtonma.gov
www.newtonma.gov

Project#: _____

Date Received: _____

City of Newton, Massachusetts Department of Planning and Development <i>Demolition Review Ordinance - Application for Property Review</i>

Property Owner City of Newton	Address of Property to be reviewed: 345 Walnut Street Newtonville, MA 02460	Phone: 617-
Primary Contact: Joshua R. Morse, Commissioner of Public Buildings	Address: 52 Elliot Street Newton, MA 02461	Phone: 617-796-1600
Email Address jmorse@newtonma.gov		

I. Type of Structure to be Demolished: (check)

House Garage Shed Non-Residential Building Other

If Other, please describe: Public Building – Newton Senior Center

II. Year Property Built 1938 - **Section:** 24 **Block:** 010 **Lot:** 0001
 (Can be found in Assessors Database on City's website – www.ci.newton.ma.us)

III. Description of Demolition Requested: please see attached project description and request for demolition option.

IV. Required Documentation to be Included With Application: (check items included)

Photographs of Front, Back and Sides of affected Structure and one of front of addressed building on property for location purposes.

Assessor's Map Showing Property Location

Incomplete applications may result in a delay in review time.

V. Suggested Additional Documentation: (check items included)

Building Plans **11 X 17 or smaller (Elevations only), recommended**

Historical Information Site Plan Product/Material Information

Photos of neighborhood (recommended for full demos) Sketches

Homeowner Signature: _____
 Joshua R. Morse, Public Buildings Commissioner

PLEASE NOTE: Once the completed application is received, the Preservation Planner has 15 days to determine whether the structure is considered to be historically significant. If you should have questions, please contact the Planning & Development Department at (617) 796-1120.

*This application is **only** for Demolition Review from the Newton Historical Commission. Applicants should also consult the Planning Department to consider other relevant planning and zoning ordinances. Following this review, an application for Plan Examination and/or Building Permit must be completed and submitted to Inspectional Services.*

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
Demolition Review Ordinance - Application for Property Review

The Newton Center for Active Living (NewCAL) Feasibility Study

To meet the increasing space demands and physical challenges at the current Senior Center, the City of Newton will undertake a feasibility study. The feasibility study will consider keeping some or all of the current building. As a result, the Public Buildings Department is requesting the option to demolish the building in part or in its entirety based on the outcome of the feasibility study which will determine the most appropriate solution to meet the future programmatic and service demands of the growing senior population.

NewCAL Project Description

The City of Newton is designated as an Age-Friendly Community by the World Health Organization / AARP. In accordance with the community engagement process required under this designation, the community identified the need for a new senior center facility as one of the top four priorities to be addressed. The City of Newton has placed a high priority on serving the growing and changing needs of its senior population and has undertaken the development of the NewCAL project. In order to address these significant needs major renovation and expansion or replacement of the existing Senior Center will be required.

Approximately 19,000 residents, nearly 22% of the City's population are age 60 or above. Each year the Newton Council on Aging through the Newton Senior Center serves approximately 5,000 individuals in this age category and Senior Services consist of 30,000 units of services annually which include social / recreation programs, support groups, health education, physical activities, cultural programs, Medicare counseling, help with benefit applications and related social services, and elder law assistance. Newton's over-60 population is projected to reach 30% of the general population by the year 2030 and currently 40% of Newton households include at least one person over the age of 60. Based on the City's research over the past 2 ½ years, to address the growing and changing needs of the senior community, the renovated and expanded or replacement Senior Center will be approximately 30,000 S.F. to 35,000 S.F.

The Senior Center located at 345 Walnut Street was built in 1938 as the Newtonville Branch Library, or the John R. Prescott Library, named after its largest contributor. The Classical Revival building was designed by the Boston architecture firm of Robb & Little. The Newton Senior Center is a contributing structure within the Newtonville Historic District, a National Register Historic District. It is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and is significant under National Register Criteria A and C.

In 1981 the Senior Drop-In Center moved into the library. In 1983 an arson fire caused over \$100,000 in damage. The building was renovated in 1993 by the Boston firm of Schwartz/Silver Architects and it re-opened as the new Senior Center. The renovations made some alterations to the building to accommodate the programmatic needs. The two large reading rooms on the main floor became an activities room and a dining wing. On the lower level, the community room was subdivided to create an art studio and a games room; the children's room was subdivided to create a health maintenance suite and library. Traces of the original configuration of these spaces are visible in the plaster detailing of the ceilings.

The Senior Center facility is over 82 years old with original building systems in poor condition. It is a 2 ½ story, 2 floor building with a mezzanine level. The building gross square footage is 11,298 S.F. and is situated on a 25,909 square foot lot. The main heating system was recently converted to natural gas, but the heating distribution system is original from 1938, with a few modifications made in 1993 when the former library building was converted to the current Senior Center. The Boiler is from 1980 and the roof top unit (RTU) is from 2016. All HVAC distribution systems and equipment have reached their useful life, except for the 2016 RTU. Electrical and plumbing systems are from 1938 with modifications made in 1993 and have reached their useful life. The Montgomery elevator is from 1993 and does not meet current elevator code for size and parts are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain and should be updated. Exterior painted surfaces were last painted over 8 years ago and currently need repair and re-painting. Exterior Windows are original to 1938 and have reached their useful life and should be replaced. The roof is made of both slate and EPDM and along with the copper and bronze/aluminum gutters and downspouts need repair/replacement.

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
Demolition Review Ordinance - Application for Property Review

Senior Center Photos



EAST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
Demolition Review Ordinance - Application for Property Review

Assessor's Map

City of Newton, MA

July 22, 2020

Senior Center 345 Walnut Street



Property Information

Property ID 24010 0001
Location 345 WALNUT ST
Owner CITY OF NEWTON



**MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT**

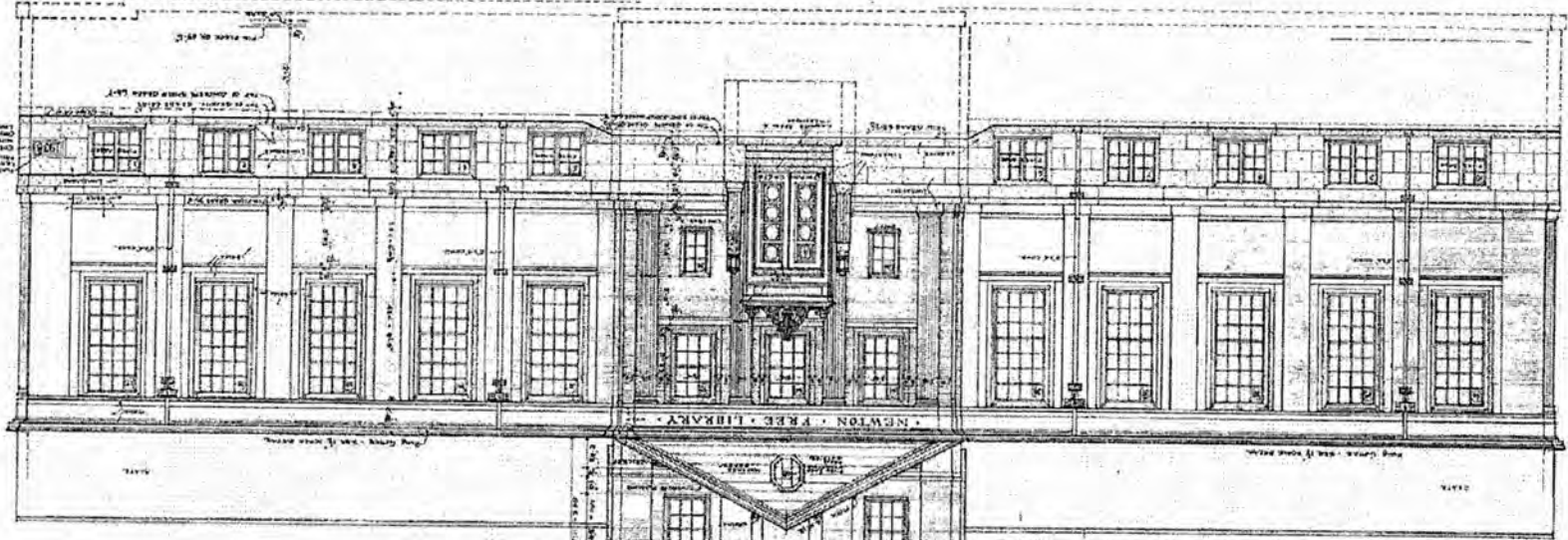
City of Newton, MA makes no claims and no warranties, expressed or implied, concerning the validity or accuracy of the GIS data presented on this map.

Geometry updated 11/09/2018
Data updated 11/04/2018

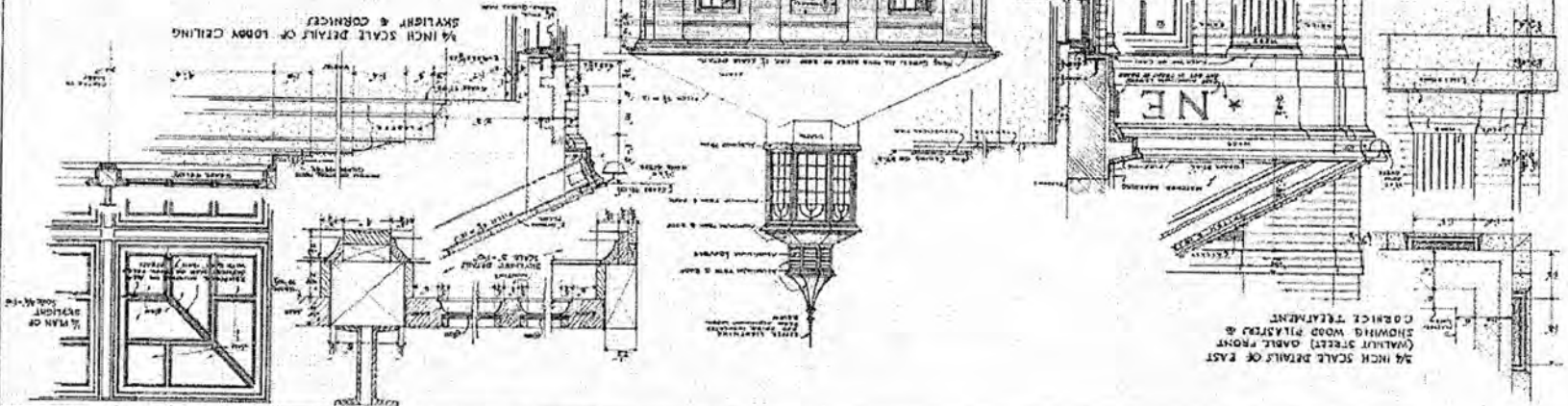
6

PROPOSED LIBRARY
WALNUT ST & HIGHLAND AVE.
NEWTONVILLE, MASS.
NEWTON FREE LIBRARY
PROJECT MASS 1547-A
ROBB & LITTLE ARCHITECTS
250 AVENUE OF DONOR MASS
DRAWN BY C.G. DECEMBER 1938

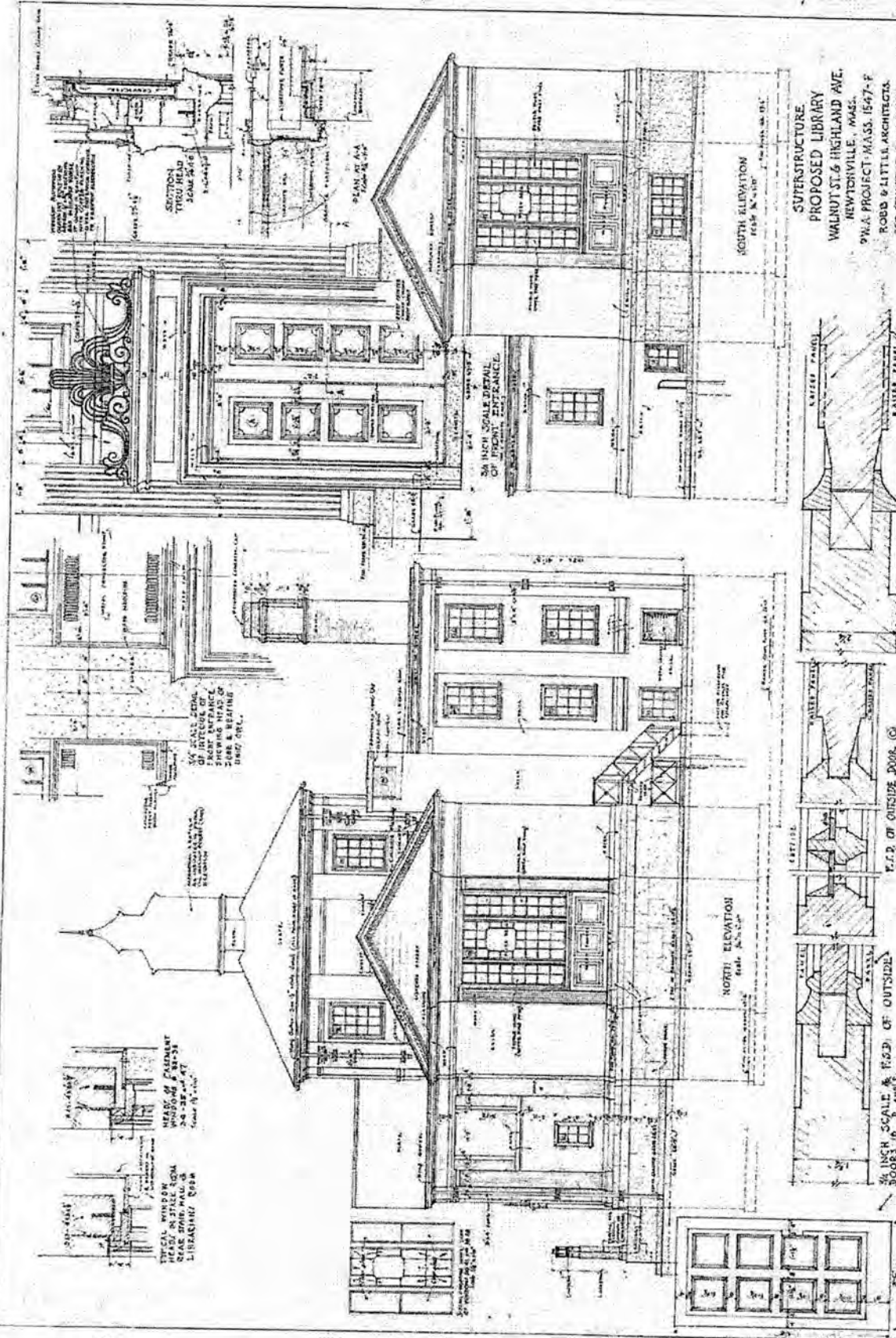
FRONT ELEVATION (EAST)



3/4 INCH SCALE DETAILS OF LOBBY CEILING
SKYLIGHT & CORNICE



3/4 INCH SCALE DETAILS OF EAST
CORNICHE TREATMENT
(QUALITY STEEL) GABLE FRONT
SHOWING WOOD PILLASTERS &
CORNICHE TREATMENT



SUPERSTRUCTURE
 PROPOSED LIBRARY
 WALNUT ST. & HIGHLAND AVE.
 NEWTONVILLE, MASS.
 P.N.A. PROJECT MASS. 1547-F
 ROSS & LITTLE ARCHITECTS
 250 STUART ST., BOSTON, MASS.
 DRAWN BY G.S.A. DEC. 27, 1938

1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF OUTSIDE DOORS
 1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS
 1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS
 1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS

1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS
 1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS
 1/4" INCH SCALE & F.S.D. OF WINDOW HEADS

NORTH ELEVATION

SOUTH ELEVATION

3/4" INCH SCALE DETAIL OF FRONT ENTRANCE

SECTION THROUGH HEAD OF MAIN ENTRANCE

F.T.D. OF MAIN ENTRANCE DOORS (A)

F.T.D. OF OUTSIDE DOOR (C)

F.T.D. OF OUTSIDE DOOR (B)



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

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(617) 796-1120
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(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath
Director

Newton Historical Commission Demolition Review Decision

Date: 10/2/2020 Zoning & Dev. Review Project# 20090019

Address of structure: 345 Walnut Street

Type of building : Senior Center

If partial demolition, feature to be demolished is _____

The building or structure:

- is _____ is not in a National Register or local historic district not visible from a public way.
- is is not _____ on the National Register or eligible for listing.
- is is not _____ importantly associated with historic person(s), events, or architectural or social history
- is is not _____ historically or architecturally important for period, style, architect, builder, or context.
- is _____ is not located within 150 feet of a historic district and contextually similar.

is _____ **NOT HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT** as defined by the Newton Demolition Delay Ordinance.
Demolition is not delayed and no further review is required.

is **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT** as defined by the Newton Demolition Delay Ordinance (See below).

The Newton Historical Commission staff:

_____ **APPROVES** the proposed project based upon materials submitted see below for conditions (if any).
Demolition is not delayed, further staff review may be required.

DOES NOT APPROVE and the project requires
Newton Historical Commission review (See below).

The Newton Historical Commission finds the building or structure:

is _____ **NOT PREFERABLY PRESERVED**
Demolition is not delayed and no further review is required.

is **PREFERABLY PRESERVED – (SEE BELOW).**

Owner of Record:

Delay of Demolition:

is in effect until 3/24/2022

_____ has been waived - see attached for conditions

Please Note: if demolition does not occur within two years of the date of expiration of the demolition delay, the demolition will require a resubmittal to the Historical Commission for review and may result in another demolition delay.

Determination made by:

Katy Hax Holmes, NHC



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
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TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath
Director

RECORD OF ACTION

DATE: October 2, 2020

SUBJECT: 345 Walnut Street

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on September 24, 2020, the Newton Historical Commission, by a vote of 6-0-1, with one abstention:

RESOLVED to preferably preserve the historic former library building at 345 Walnut Street for architectural integrity and historic context. A demolition delay of 18 months is imposed.

Voting in the Affirmative: _____ Voting in the Negative: _____ Voting to Abstain: _____

Doug Cornelius, Chairman
Katie Kubie, Member
Peter Dimond, Member
Mark Armstrong, Member
Amanda Stauffer Park, Member
Deborah Budd, Alternate

Jennifer Bentley-Houston, Alt

Title Reference: _____ Owner of Property: _____ City of Newton _____
Deed recorded at: _____ Middlesex (South) Registry of Deeds
Book _____, Page _____
Date _____

Katy Hax Holmes, NHC

Katy Hax Holmes, Staff



HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

Defining the past. Shaping the future.

1424 Canton Avenue
Milton, MA 02186-2418
tel 617-227-3956
HistoricNewEngland.org

Newton Historical Commission
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Ave.
Newton, MA 02459

January 30, 2022

To whom it may concern,

After reading the article in today's Boston Globe about the plans for the new senior center in Newtonville, I feel compelled to add another voice for the preservation of at least the main block of the current building. As a Newtonville resident, I have seen a lot of change in the past few years in the village center and I find that the new construction has changed the character for the worse. The generic-looking apartment buildings we now have on Washington Street and Austin Street feel out of scale and I fear the current plan for the new senior center will do the same for the southern end of Newtonville. Like the Masonic Building up the street, the current senior center building has anchored the entrance to the village center for more than eighty years and its materials and scale relate to the other historic structures around it. I understand that it will be more complicated and expensive to preserve the Walnut Street facade of the original 1938 library building, but shouldn't Newton be a leader for preserving buildings that contribute to our quality of life? The small park in front of the existing building and its setback from the street are important features, both of which will be lost with the current plan for the new senior center. Walk along the sidewalks in front of the new buildings on Washington and Austin Streets and one doesn't even look up to notice that they are in a New England village. You could be anywhere. Newtonville's village center has lost so much already; I urge you not to allow the city to give up one more structure just because it doesn't perfectly suit the new use. With creativity and commitment, we can have it both ways.

Thank you for your consideration,

Peter Gittleman

7 Mt Vernon Terrace, Newton
Visitor Experience Team Leader at Historic New England

The Living New Deal

Still Working for America

Department of Geography
University of California
505 McCone Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720-4741
livingnewdeal.org
info@livingnewdeal.org



February 8, 2022

Dear Mayor Fuller and Newton City Council members,

The physical legacy of the New Deal and the spirit of government it represents are vanishing before our eyes. These extraordinary public works and artworks, which belong to all Americans, represent the work of millions of Americans struggling amidst the Great Depression and government's investment in our nation's future.

People and organizations frequently contact us for help when New Deal-era buildings or artworks are threatened with destruction. We have become aware that a building of New Deal provenance in your care is endangered. The building at 345 Walnut Street, now serving as the Newton Senior Center, was constructed in 1938 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to serve as the Newtonville Public Library. It is our understanding that more than 500 local individuals have signed a petition opposing the building's demolition and that a landmark application has been made to the Newton Historic Commission. We support these preservation efforts and encourage the Newton City Council do the same.

The Living New Deal, a nonprofit organization, works with educators, authors, libraries, and preservation groups, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, to document schools, libraries, museums, parks, hospitals, roads, airports, post offices, and other civic buildings, infrastructure and art commissioned by the federal government during the New Deal (1933-1942). Many of these structures are adorned with works by artists and craftspeople hired under New Deal programs and are protected by the U.S. General Services Administration.

You can find our national map of New Deal sites at Livingnewdeal.org, along with resources on New Deal history, New Deal art, site preservation and much more.

Sincerely,

Richard Walker, Director

Richard Walker
Director

Gray Brechin
Project Scholar

Advisory Board

Dean Baker
John Roosevelt Boettiger
Sara Boettiger
Robert Chlebowski
Lizabath Cohen
James Galbraith
Nina Roosevelt Gibson
Ira Katznelson
William Leuchtenburg
Nelson Lichtenstein
Touré Reed
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Peter Cormack, M.B.E., F.S.A., Hon.F.M.G.P.
23 Roe End, London NW9 9BL, U.K.
Telephone: (+44) 208 204 4758
E-mail: p.cormack@virginmedia.com

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre
MA 02459
U. S. A.

10th January 2022

Dear Mayor Fuller

NEWTON SENIOR CENTRE 'NewCal' (the former Newtonville Library)

I am writing to you to express my deep concern at the current proposal to demolish the former Newtonville Library – now Newton Senior Centre – in order to create a new building with enhanced facilities and access. The aims of the NewCal project are of course wholly laudable, but I sincerely hope that these can be achieved without incurring the loss of such a significant architectural and heritage asset, which is clearly much valued by the local community.

Although I live in London, England, over the years I have been a frequent visitor to Newton and its various communities, and I am currently researching and writing a comprehensive account of the life and work of one of Newton's most distinguished citizens, the artist and writer Charles Jay Connick (1875-1945), who designed two fine examples of his stained glass for the former Newtonville Library. Connick was the most accomplished American stained glass artist of the twentieth century, gaining an international reputation for his work in cathedrals, churches, colleges and other buildings throughout the USA, notably St John the Divine and St Patrick's Cathedrals in New York City, Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, the Graduate College and Chapel at Princeton University and the Heinz Memorial Chapel in Pittsburgh, as well as many locations in the city of Boston and the state of Massachusetts. Connick's two windows in the Senior Centre illustrate poems by two of the greatest American literary figures, Emily Dickinson (*There is no Frigate like a Book*) and Robert Frost (*Mending Wall*).

The Senior Centre's original architect, E. Donald Robb (1880-1942), of the Boston partnership of Robb & Little, was a long-time friend of Charles Connick and, like him, a resident of Newton. Robb belongs to a school of twentieth-century American architects whose work is becoming increasingly appreciated and the former Library is an elegant and dignified example of his 'Modern-Colonial' idiom. The fact that it was a significant project partly built with New Deal funding gives it a particular social and historical interest, quite apart from its very high aesthetic quality. The latter is surely acknowledged in the fact that the building is seen as 'a visual anchor to the southern end of the historic district', and is indeed one of the most handsome buildings on Walnut Street.

It is difficult to believe that an inventive architectural scheme could not be devised that would retain at least the 'shell' of the Robb & Little building, incorporating its three principal elevations (with Charles Connick's two windows) as part of a new and fully-accessible building with enhanced facilities for its users. The old orthodoxy of unnecessarily destroying historic buildings, instead of creatively adapting them for new uses, has been widely rejected by contemporary architects who value both heritage and environmental conservation – I believe that the NewCal project could be an inspirational example of this latter approach, combining the best of the old with all the advantages of the new.

I do hope that the City of Newton will decide against any proposal to demolish the 1938-39 building and that you and your fellow civic representatives will preserve this architectural gem and facilitate its re-use as part of an imaginative development of NewCal for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Cormack

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February 10, 2022

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459
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RE: Newton Senior Center/ former Newtonville Branch Library

Dear Mayor Fuller:

I understand that the City of Newton is developing plans for a new Senior Center on the site of its current facility – the former Newtonville Branch Library (1938-39). As a director of the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation, I'm interested in the disposition of two stained glass works in this building, as well as their original architectural setting and historical context. As you may know, these works were a gift to the City of Newton in 1939 by the American stained glass artist and writer Charles Jay Connick (1875-1945), a long-time Newtonville resident.

In one of these works, located on the south façade of the building overlooking Walnut Place, Connick depicted the 1914 poem, "Mending Wall," by his long-time friend, the American poet Robert Frost. Interestingly, during the 1950s several recordings were made of Frost "saying" this poem. Long before that however, he "said" this poem at the dedication of the library in December of 1939, while standing in the south reading room before Connick's glass work and an audience of 400. Today, Frost's poem and Connick's work are still vital, resonating with contemporary debates about international borders and immigration policy, perhaps as much as with ongoing deliberations about the Senior Center and the historic Newtonville Branch Library building.

In the north façade overlooking Highland Avenue, Connick depicted the 1873 poem, "There is no Frigate like a Book" by Emily Dickinson, who is today considered a proto-modernist poet and perhaps "the greatest woman poet in the English language." In the cool light of the former north reading room, this panel displays the opening lines of Dickinson's poem in an abstract linear pattern of whirling banners and sails, which fittingly herald the power of the book and human imagination throughout the vaulted interior of the "streamlined" Colonial reading room.

These works are among the most significant of Connick's later career, illustrating a style which is distinct from his better known body of ecclesiastical work. They reflect his personal commitments to the Newtonville community and his friendships with the architect of the library, E. Donald Robb (1880-1942) - who was also a long-time Newtonville resident - and the American poet Robert Frost. Aside from this, they reveal Connick's grasp of contemporary design trends in the U.S. and abroad. In 1925, Connick visited the *International Exposition of Modern Decorative & Industrial Art* in Paris as a delegate to a special commission of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. In the

following year his observations on the architectural glass manufacturing section of the exhibition were included in a report to the Secretary, along with a special appendix in which he discussed in detail the contemporary stained glass seen throughout the exhibition. Connick's contributions to this report provide important insight into the evolution of his work during the 1930s, but the report as a whole also sheds light on the forward thinking spirit of the period and the details of Robb's architectural design for the library.

Especially notable is the fact that the library building was funded by local subscription with major financial support from the New Deal era Public Works Administration. Although research about Connick's Newtonville Library commission is only in its early stages, it appears that Robb's architectural design, with its integral stained glass work by Charles Connick, is a vivid expression of the New Deal era, when the work promulgated by the supervising Architect of the U.S. Department of Treasury was said to be "freer, bolder, with a sort of wisely conservative experimental quality," while continuing to respect regional tradition. (Lee, *Architects to the Nation*, 2000: 260.)

Certainly the Newtonville Branch Library building has a distinguished pedigree rooted in enduring local civic commitment, the notable careers of its local architect and stained glass artist, and the history of economic and social progress and architectural design during the New Deal era. As the City of Newton deliberates on the fate of this historic building, I hope that this legacy will be recognized and preserved. It would be a shame if major capital investments and cultural expressions such as this were to be readily dismissed as obsolete and disposed of every eighty years.

Respectfully,

Lance Kasparian

cc:

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