

Discover Historic CHESTNUT HILL

English Gothicist Henry Vaughan, architect of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., was hired by the parish to design a new church in the then popular English Perpendicular mode. The rectangular nave, which features large windows with stone tracery and contrasting rough and finished stone work, was completed in 1915. The large belfry, highlighted by arched louvered windows, a Gothic arched entry portal, and a crenellated parapet with soaring pinnacles, was completed in 1920. This is an excellent example of the style and stand out as one of Vaughan's finest commissions.

24 Built in 1895 to serve as the rectory for the Church of the Redeemer, the Tudor Revival house at **381 Hammond Street** adds a bit of variety to the Colonial Revival landscape of this section of Chestnut Hill. It is notable for its graceful half timbering and for the arched porch on the north side.

25 **394 Hammond Street** is a relatively restrained example of the Colonial Revival motif. It relies on its simple symmetry and a sense of proportion, rather than upon superabundant decorative detail, for its character. Its multi-pane fenestration, double window dormers, and restrained double columned entry portico all add to the simple charm of this house.

26 Originally an Italianate house built in 1865, the brick residence located at **408 Hammond Street** was substantially rebuilt in 1895 in

the Colonial Revival mode. The result is a rather eclectic house that presents some aspects of Italianate architecture and some elements of Colonial Revivalism. This house was at one time owned by Francis W. Lee, a descendant of the original heirs to Joseph Lee.

27 **413 Hammond Street** was built on speculation in 1900 by Andrew G. Weeks, a Boston businessman, and is a late transitional example of Shingle and Colonial Revival architecture. While this structure is almost completely Colonial in its organization, including a symmetrical facade, a classical entry portico, and a slate gambrel roof, it retains several Shingle elements, specifically the dark shingle cladding and the polygonal center dormer.

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David B. Cohen, Mayor

Located in the easternmost section of Newton, the village of Chestnut Hill was originally settled by the Hammond family in 1665. The initial Hammond property encompassed all of what is now the Newton portion of Chestnut Hill. The family remained in the area for generations, giving its name to Hammond Street, Hammond Woods and Hammond Pond.

Originally isolated and relatively inaccessible, the area remained sparsely settled well into the 1800s and long after development had begun in the rest of Newton.

With the advent of railway access to Brookline and Boston

via the Beacon Street extension in 1850 and the Charles River Railroad in 1852, the character of the area began to change. When Capt. Joseph Lee of Beverly purchased his farm from the Hammond family in 1822, he was one of only a handful of residents in the area. Upon his death in 1845, though, the property passed to his six nieces and nephews, several of whom moved to the old farm, built houses and laid out an ambitious development plan for a community of country estates called Chestnut Hill. As rail service improved, more of the Lee family,

along with their associates from Essex County, moved to Chestnut Hill. These included members of such prominent North Shore families as the Lowells, the Cabots, the Lawrences, and the Saltonstalls. Thus the "Essex Colony" was established.

Despite this early influx, the majority of Chestnut Hill was not developed until after 1880 when transportation to the area had improved. Between 1880 and 1910, the remaining land was carved into a combination of large building lots, private estates, and even a "working" farm. The prominent architectural styles of the period – Georgian, Colonial Revival, and Shingle – are all well represented and the area is distinguished by a number of significant architect designed homes. While the neighborhood continued to develop well into the 20th century, it still retains the rural neighborhood character established in the mid and late 19th century. In 1991, the Chestnut Hill Local Historic District was established to preserve and extend the architectural elements and character defining aspects of this neighborhood that are highlighted on this tour. None of the sites on the tour are open to the public.



1860s drawing of the view



Chestnut Hill Chapel ca. 1882

1 The construction of the **Chestnut Hill Chapel**, now part of the Chestnut Hill School, was funded by Thomas Lee of Brookline, brother of Joseph Lee and uncle to many members of the "Essex Colony." Concerned that his relatives often missed church services in Brookline, he commissioned Charles Follen of Boston to build a small chapel at Chestnut Hill. This building was completed in 1868 and was based upon the design of the "Old Ship" Unitarian Church in Hingham. It was substantially remodeled in 1889 and later incorporated into the Chestnut Hill School complex. From Hammond Street, it is visible in the far left corner under a steeply sloping, pyramidal roof and is crowned by a small cupola.

2 **17 Suffolk Road** is a Shingle style house built by the Lee family in 1893 to provide rental income. The building is a mix of the common elements seen in the Shingle style, such as its high, steeply pitched gambrel roof, and more eclectic elements such as the addition of a projecting center tower with a pyramidal roof. Its diamond pane windows are also a distinctly First Period element in contrast to Georgian Period elements that represent the predominant colonial mode found in Chestnut Hill. For over fifty years, it was also the home of Hazel Hotchkins Wightman, an early leader in the sport of women's tennis for whom the Wightman Cup is named.

3 The First Church in Chestnut Hill is located at **26 Suffolk Road**. By

the end of the first decade of this century, the Unitarian congregation started by the "Essex Colony" in 1861 had outgrown the Chestnut Hill Chapel. In 1909, the congregation retained J. Lovett Little, a local architect, to construct a new church. Little chose the English Gothic style, which was then being popularized by architects

Henry Vaughan and Ralph Adams Cram, as the appropriate style for the new church. However, unlike Vaughan's elaborate Church of the Redeemer on Hammond Street, Little chose the simple Gothicism of an English rural parish church. It is T shaped in design, consisting of a rectangular gabled nave and a smaller adjacent wing with a plain rectangular tower at the junction of the two wings. It is built of uncoursed rubblestone and is very simply adorned.

4 **27 Suffolk Road** is typical of the Georgian Revival homes which sprang up throughout Chestnut Hill at the turn of the century. It was built by James Cott, a wealthy Boston lawyer, in 1895, as a year-round suburban home. Its symmetrical facade, hipped roof with pedimented dormers, columned entry porch, and Palladian window are all familiar elements of Georgian Revival architecture.

5 **38 Suffolk Road** is a Georgian Revival home typical of the smaller scale brick infill houses which were built in Chestnut Hill following the First World War. Less grandiose in scale than the earlier Georgian homes in the area, this house, built in 1920, is nevertheless an eclectic

reinterpretation of the traditional five bay brick Colonial house. Most notable is the shallow curved bay that dominates the second story of the structure and the somewhat delicate columned entry portico.

6 **70 Suffolk Road** is a monumental exercise in the Georgian Revival style. This handsome brick house was designed by the Boston architectural firm of Coolidge, Shepley, Bulfinch, and Abbott in 1928. It is a marvelously detailed structure with an elongated hip slate roof, large chimneys, and an elegant entry with a large fan light, elaborate limestone pilasters, and entablature. This house is screened from Suffolk Road by a border of mature trees. Located across the road from this house, in the island at the center of the intersection, is a small stone monument and a large tree, both of which memorialize Edward Saltonstall, a prominent Chestnut Hill resident during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

7 The **Houghton House and Carriage House** are located at **152 and 100 Suffolk Road** respectively. To find Mission Revival architecture of this scale and quality in Newton, Massachusetts is really quite astounding. The Spanish Colonial Revival began in California in the 1880s and enjoyed a brief period of popularity during the first decade of this century. Both the main house and carriage house display many fine elements of this style, including low spreading hipped roofs, stucco walls featuring low arched arcades and the distinctive gable, and fine quatrefoil windows. The entrance to both the main house and the carriage house courtyard have a large decorative pergola arch which is almost Japanese in character. This property was designed by the renowned

Boston firm of Chapman and Frazer in 1904 for Clement S. Houghton, a successful Boston businessman.

8 **137 Suffolk Road** is believed to have been built around 1701 and is reputedly one of the oldest buildings in Newton. It was originally located on Hammond Street and was the home of Ebenezer Stone, a prominent Newton settler and member of the General Court in 1729. It was later sold to the Kingsbury family who occupied the house until 1904, at which time it was moved to its present site. The building appears to have retained its early architectural integrity and the front façade exhibits many traditional First Period design elements - 2 1/2 stories, a pitched roof, massive center chimney, and a symmetrical five bay facade. The entry portico, shingle siding, and additions to the rear were probably added sometime after the move.

9 Built in 1906, **207 Suffolk Road** is an excellent example of a Tudor Revival building with Craftsman influences. The full stucco exterior, heavy half timber decoration, and steeply pitched slate roof are all typical elements of the Tudor Revival style which are not often seen in Chestnut Hill. The bracketed eaves and wide, heavily timbered entrance porch are Craftsman style touches which work well with the Tudor style.

10 Just across the street, **Houghton Garden** is the only formerly private garden in Newton that is now open to the public and represents a style of landscape design which was common to many early 20th century estates in Chestnut Hill. Originally part of the Houghton Estate, the nine acre rock garden was designed in the

