

Proceedings
of the
Brookline
Historical Society
For 1979-1984



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Report of the President January 1983

The spring of our year at the Brookline Historical Society centered around two of our own who, while they no longer reside in Brookline, continue to be an important part of the Society. The portraits of the Rev. and Mrs. Ebenezer Devotion, painted by Winthrop Chandler in the eighteenth century, are owned by the Brookline Historical Society and housed by the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington, it having been decided that the security risks of their continued residence at the Devotion House were simply too great. In April, the portraits went north to the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire, to be part of a special exhibition called "Masterworks by Artists of New England." In May, the Society followed.

The 1982 spring meeting was held at the Currier Gallery on Sunday afternoon, May 16. A bus had been chartered and Society members were met by Robert M. Doty, director of the Currier Gallery, who gave us a sparkling and erudite tour of both the exhibit and the museum's new wing, a modern but sympathetic addition to the Classical-Revival building of the 1920s. The Devotions shone forth against the white walls of the new wing, and sherry and catalogues of the exhibition were given us by the museum staff.

The portraits were returned to Lexington, and in September the Society gave permission to Michael Schaffer of Cambridge to use slides of them in a slide presentation called "The Past in Your Future," to be shown at the Hall of Everyday Life in the Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Mr. Schaffer is the producer of the slide show which is used at the Lowell National Park.

Mr. Vose had noticed that the Chandler portraits were in need of some refurbishing after normal wear and tear and at our request had a conservator look at them. Necessary small repairs and restoration work were done this January, and the Devotions are once again in the Museum of Our National Heritage after an exhilarating six months and looking much the better for it.

It was decided this summer, as we sent out our annual dues notices, that the Society's permanent address, the Devotion House at 347 Harvard Street, will be used for all correspondence of the Brookline Historical Society. We reasoned that while individual officers of the Society change frequently, the Devotion House has stood for over 200 years and we hope it will continue to do so. It was absolutely necessary to have the cooperation of Helen and Jim McIntosh in this endeavor and they have given it unstintingly. The house itself was repainted this summer using funds from a Community Development Block Grant and under the supervision of the Brookline Historical

Commission. The Society plans to have repairs made to some of the furnishings.

The fall meeting of the Society was held on October 24, 1982, at Fisher Hill Estates in Brookline. It took place in one of the new buildings of the complex and Carla Benka of the Brookline Historical Commission gave a slide presentation on "The Architecture of the Fisher Hill Area." Peter Freeman of the Macomber Corporation, who was responsible for lending us the meeting site, gave a walking tour of Fisher Hill Estates immediately following Mrs. Benka's talk, and cider and doughnuts were served.

At the trustees meeting in December, it was agreed that the Society will undertake to "translate" its Baker glass slide collection, which is at the Brookline Main Library, into modern photographs and slides. Treasurer Christopher Smith has suggested that when the project is completed the Society will be able to have some of the most interesting slides reproduced on postcards, which can be sold; there is also the appealing possibility of using the slides as a basis for a future publication or audiovisual presentation. Having looked at the originals, I can also predict that we are going to need the help of knowledgeable Society members in identifying some of the scenes pictured; we welcome volunteers.

The annual meeting planned for January 16, was, as most of you know, snowed away, but the Shannons and our speaker William Selm have agreed to a rescheduled meeting on April 10. The Brookline Society joined the Massachusetts Association for Olmsted Parks, the National Park Service, the Boston Preservation Alliance and the Society of Architectural Historians in sponsoring a lecture by Brookline's Cynthia Zaitzevsky, author of *Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System*, and a reception for Dr. Zaitzevsky on February 4 of this year.

I would like to thank the trustees, officers and members of the Brookline Historical Society for their help during the past year. Of all the faithful Society members, two in particular have always seemed to me to be at the heart of the organization and my first year as president has confirmed that impression. Morton Vose has been responsible for helping arrange our spring meeting, for overseeing and caring for the Devotion and Seaver portraits, and for constant cheerful willingness to be of service to the Society. Helen McIntosh, despite her other concerns, has given time and thought to the Society beyond anything we could ask. She has attended to Society matters whenever we requested her to do so, and usually before. Her dedication, knowledge and graciousness are beyond praise.

Respectfully submitted,
Jean Kramer

Report of the Committee on Rooms

Visitors to the Devotion House came from as far away as Texas and Arizona this year. Children from seven different schools visited the house. The curator from the Paul Revere house came in preparation for a workshop with the fourth graders of the Devotion School.

On April 19, Michael Merrill, selectman, greeted William Dawes. His father Gary Merrill assisted in the flag-raising ceremony.

During the month of March Judith Selwyn came to assess the repairs needed on the house. A grant was written for the funds to paint, scrape, and repair the outside of the house.

Martha and Ebenezer Devotion are greatly missed, but we have had a busy year with 280 visitors.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen McIntosh

Spring Meeting – April 17, 1983

The spring meeting of the Brookline Historical Society will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Shannon, 25 Lenox Street, on Sunday afternoon at three o'clock.

Mr. William Selm of the National Park Service will discuss the Lenox Street house, which was the subject of a paper he wrote as a student in the Boston University graduate program in Preservation Studies. This will be the meeting which was planned for last January and postponed by a snow-storm.

25 Lenox Street

by William L. Selm

I first became acquainted with the house at 25 Lenox Street in February 1981. At that time I was a graduate student in Boston University's Historic Preservation Studies Program. I was enrolled in a course concerned with the reuse of historic buildings.

The objectives of our 25 Lenox reuse proposal were two-fold. We sought to preserve a building which had been an integral component of the Cottage Farm neighborhood since the mid-nineteenth century, and at the same time reverse an attitude of casual neglect towards a building which had been underutilized for over two decades and uninhabited since 1979.

A reuse plan for 25 Lenox evolved after conferring with university officials, investigating the demand for housing in Brookline, and studying the zoning implications of condominium conversion. The proposed development plan called for the conversion of the house into three residential condominium units for university personnel.

Twenty-five Lenox was ideal for our study. Scratched into one of the "No Trespassing" signs put up by Boston University was a message:

Dear Trustees: Please fix this house before the leaky roof really spoils it. It's a lovely house and probably much better than the new stuff.

After examining the house my team concluded that the message was not merely vacant graffiti, but an accurate assessment.

Despite the neglect of twenty years, the building was in sound condition. The most immediate problem was water damage. The interior had water-damaged plaster and some water-stained floors. The roof had suffered from deferred maintenance and was the first conservation priority. Water had also caused some problems on the facade. The copper gutters and downspouts had been clogged and strangled by climbing vines. The result of this misdirected flow of water had been relatively minor. (The wooden cornice and soffit had suffered the most damage from the water.) Most of the mortar was in good shape, although bricks had been loosened in several places. The lack of paint on the window sashes and doors had resulted in their deterioration. Most of the original windows had their shutters in place, and they appeared to be in fair condition.

An examination of previous historical research on the house and the area as well as a study of city atlases revealed that 25 Lenox was built around 1855 for Amos A. Lawrence as part of his suburban development. During the eighteenth century, the area was made up of large farm estates belonging to wealthy Bostonians. As Boston expanded and the romantic ideal of the

country home became popular, affluent Boston businessmen were attracted to the open farmlands in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Lawrence and his physician brother, William, purchased the land in 1850 and named it Cottage Farm after Judge Sewall's late seventeenth-century farm cottage. The two brothers subdivided the land; their residential development was complete with streets, landscaping, and a church. They were assured success in 1885 when the Boston-Worcester railroad built a station in Cottage Farm.

The Lawrence brothers wanted to control the physical appearance and the social composition of Cottage Farm. They divided their land holdings among their children and sold smaller lots to business partners and friends — all people of good social standing. Twenty-five Lenox remained in the Lawrence family as a rental property until 1917 when it became the home of the Richardson family. Dr. Benjamin Banks purchased the house and its abutter as a speculative investment in 1957. The building was purchased by the university in 1977 and had been vacant from 1979 to 1981.

Because of the sensitive renovation and restoration, the house has essentially remained unaltered. Twenty-five Lenox is a three-story, brick building modestly designed in the style of the Second Empire. The main facade facing Lenox Street (south) is divided into three bays with the entrance in the center. All of the original windows have stone lintels and sills. The mansard roof is made of gray slate shingles and is pierced by one shed roof dormer on each elevation. The exception is the north side with three dormers. The wooden cornice, modillions, and soffit are below the roof. All of the gutters and downspouts are made of copper. The projecting brick foundation is accented by a molded brick course. At the corners are brick quoins which terminate at the second floor. A corbeled belt course separates the stories. Projecting from the central ground floor bay is a gabled porch, added between 1874 and 1884. A segmental brick arch with a pronounced keystone accents a double door with two glazed windows. Two windows, also articulated with segmental arches and keystones, are located on either side of the porch entryway.

At the northwest corner of the building is the original service wing. It has a hip roof, a corbeled entablature, and one outside entrance. Care was made to incorporate the wing with the main building by the repetition of details.

A one-story bay was added to the east wall between 1900 and 1907. In 1925 the house was again enlarged. A two-story stuccoed frame addition was erected and the east bay window was remodeled. This flat roof addition added a room to each floor. When the new addition was built, the interior was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style. The greatest Colonial Revival transformation occurred in the central hall and the parlor in the southeast corner. The original stairs were located immediately inside the door in the hall. This single-run stairway was removed and a Colonial Revival triple-run stair-

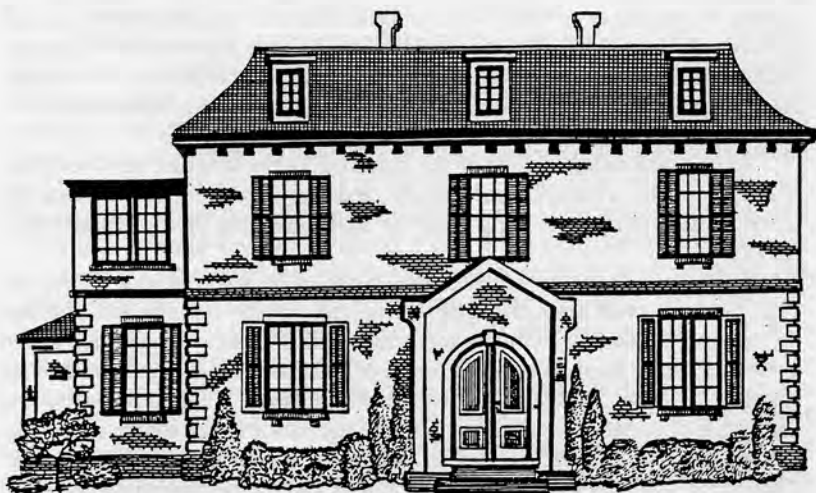
way was constructed on the back wall of the hall.

The southeast parlor has a four-foot high wainscot on all four walls. Integrated into the paneling are bookcases, a mantel, and a corner cupboard. Both the southeast and the southwest parlors have fireplaces. Glazed doors separate the paneled parlor from the hall. The room adjoining the paneled parlor (part of the 1925 addition) is separated by a glazed multi-light door with paperlike material sandwiched between the panes. This room has oak paneling, built-in bookcases, and a fireplace. The bedroom directly above also has a fireplace.

All the rooms in the first and second stories have oak floors. The pantry and kitchen have built-in shelves, counters, and cupboards. The building has four bathrooms, ample closet space and numerous built-in cupboards, and a large basement. All doors, hardware, and fixtures are intact. At the time of our study, the house had not been altered since the 1925 remodeling.

In the spring of 1981, Boston University made the decision to reuse 25 Lenox as a house for Professor William Shannon and his family. Professor Shannon had just completed a tour of duty as U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Ireland. Work progressed during the summer and the Shannons moved in during the autumn of 1981.

It is fortunate for the house and the historic area that Boston University did not implement our redevelopment scheme of three condominiums. The restoration and reuse of the house as a single-family residence is the appropriate use, and it closes another chapter in the history of the brothers Lawrence rental property at 25 Lenox Street. □



Fall Meeting – October 30, 1983

The Fall Meeting of the Brookline Historical Society will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kramer, 63 Griggs Road, at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon.

Lee Cooke Childs of Griggs Road will read the paper on the development of Griggs Park which she wrote for the Radcliffe Seminars Landscape Design program. Weather permitting, we can make a brief visit to the park.

Griggs Park

by Lee Cooke Childs

Our story begins as the nineteenth century is coming to a close. America is looking forward to the twentieth century, more progress, more expansion, more problems to overcome faster and more efficiently. New frontiers are opening in modes of transportation, communication, quality of life, and conquest of disease and suffering.

Our dignified hero, Alexis H. French, the first Brookline engineer, is advocating and promoting the innovative double (storm and sewer) drain system. In the *Brookline Annual Report* of 1895 he says:

The maintenance of the present or some other channel as sewer overflow is an absolute necessity in order to prevent flooding of cellars in the lower part of town during freshets. . . (when) there is no current, it soon becomes a stagnant pool, offensive to both sight and smell and doubtless a menace to public health. I think the channel should be filled and graded so that the surface water would flow into catch basins to be provided for it, and, for the purpose of the main sewer overflow, a new channel should be built.

I regard this matter as of most vital importance and think it should be taken up as early as possible in the coming season. . . If the present rapid growth of this part of town is to be encouraged, it will be necessary to take up a part of this work at an early day.¹

In 1896 the town meeting of Brookline voted monies for: 1) acquiring land for public playgrounds; 2) a new covered channel for Tannery Brook from Beacon to Park Streets;² and, 3) a new covered channel for Village Brook, and also for a new public bathhouse (Brookline had the first in the United States), and grading and finishing of Longwood playground.

Both Tannery (also called Farm) Brook and Village Brook ran into the Muddy River improvement system, or Riverdale, part of the Frederick Law and John C. Olmsted's Emerald Necklace of public open space following the wetlands and connecting parkways.

The Olmsteds, who had begun work on the Arnold Arboretum in 1878 with Charles Sprague Sargent, and the Boston park system in 1879, moved to Brookline in 1884 and formally began work on the Muddy River improvement in 1888³ with Alexis H. French as civil engineer for the project.⁴

Thomas B. Griggs, farmer, lived at 555 Washington Street (now the site of the Beacon Towers parking lot) on land farmed by his father and grandfathers before him.⁵ The old farmhouses were just down the street and across the brook. The exposed portion of Tannery (Farm) Brook ran almost in its entirety through his property. Washington Street was widened in 1894, and the new trolley ran up the middle of the street. Beacon Street had been widened in 1888 according to Olmsted's plan, with land donated by Henry Whitney's West End Land Company. Beacon Street and adjacent lots of other owners fronting on Beacon Street formed the northern boundary to the Griggs farm property.

Park Street formed the remaining boundary along which were arrayed a string of somewhat grander houses with stables, and Saint Mark's Church, then recently built in the Neo-Gothic style.⁶ The church has an accompanying triangular park to grace the intersection at which it stands.

Olmsted had laid out subdivisions for two adjacent holdings, Aspinwall Hill and Corey Hill. Aspinwall Hill preliminary designs were done in 1880. What was actually built was what Cynthia Zaitzevsky called an "illegitimate child" of the Olmsted plan by Ernest Bowditch. Olmsted laid out Corey Hill for Whitney in 1889. It was actually developed by Eben Jordan who bought the whole hill. It appears as constructed in the 1893 Atlas.⁷

To complete our cast of characters: the Brookline directory of 1897 lists Albert G. Eastman, supt. arch. — home: Washington Street and work: 87 Milk Street (Boston), a building which housed at least two architectural firms. Eastman was a young man from Cambridge, recently married to Carrie A. Fowle of Woburn, in 1895, when they were both twenty-eight.

The day of the streetcar suburbs had arrived. There was a building boom going on. Brookline was connected to fashionable Back Bay by Olmsted's Commonwealth Avenue extension (Beacon Street in Brookline) and the Boston and Albany railroad. Railway owner and Brookline activist Henry M. Whitney, also built the trolleys along Beacon and Washington Streets

and developed Beacon Street properties, including the fashionable Beaconsfield Hotel.⁸

The development of the Thomas Griggs farm was anticipated at least as early as 1893. In the Brookline atlas of that year there was a proposed Griggs subdivision cutting the old farm into hodge-podge snippets of the worst buildable sort, for detached houses. Something changed Thomas Griggs' mind. How that happened can only be surmised, but certainly the town and our hero were involved.

There was the emergence of a style. In 1896, A. H. French laid out Griggs Road in a long English or Olmsted style sweep to cover Tannery (Farm) Brook channel. By 1897 he had designed Griggs Park incorporating swampland, less desirable for building, on the properties of Thomas B. Griggs, the Griggs land trust, the West End Land Co., and cutting across the back sections of five other landowners^{9, 10} with houses and stables fronting on Park and Marion streets. Also on that plan is the faint outline of the proposed row houses designed by Eastman, occupying most of Thomas Griggs' parcel of the proposed park. French's line, redesigning around the incursion, may also be seen on the plan.

A later plan shows the park "as built" in 1948 with the elevated roadway and encirclement of willows, ash and maples. On that plan Griggs Road is being widened by five feet with the curb moving that far back into the park. French's formal walkways and entrance buildings were never built, except for the circular walk. The park underwent several rounds of improvements including filling and two layings of drain pipe, the last on piles, and the land is still sinking around it. The most recent improvement was done by Olmsted Associates, Artemis Richardson and Joseph Hudak, the last successors to the old Olmsted firm at 49 Warren Street. Screens of thirsty shrubs and trees that would divide the space vegetatively into passive and active areas and obscure the edges and the chain link fence were planted, with a ring of willows and shrubs circling the inside of the perimeter. The combined design of the two streets, Griggs Road and Griggs Terrace with no through traffic, and the park created a very special neighborhood. It was an eddy, just off the main stream of Washington Street, so it was convenient but also private, like the long circular drive and park of the manor house. An added convenience was access, but by footpath only, to Beacon Street. It was a democratization of the English manor style with access to the trolley. Even with the incursion of the automobile and the latter day tacked-on garages, the pervasive style of the neighborhood was not undermined.

To elaborate on the Griggs' contribution to our drama, Thomas' brother William lived on Harvard Street. Their father, Deacon Thomas, was both deacon of the Baptist Church for thirty-five years and selectman. Our Thomas was deacon of the Baptist Church, located on the corner of Harvard and Pierce streets, and William was to become selectman.

One progenitor, another Thomas Griggs, came to Roxbury before 1639.

A numerous and long-lived family, Miss Woods, a Curtis source, comments that in its various branches the Griggs family has been always of high standing in the town, having hardly been without one or more members holding some office of trust and honor either in the town or church. The town records are full of references to George and Thomas, those names being particularly favored by the family.¹¹

Turning to the architectural roots — in his book, *Built in Boston*, Douglass Shand Tucci documents the history of the Tontine in Boston: "Bulfinch's chief legacy to Boston was his introduction of neoclassical town planning. His Tontine Crescent of 1793-94 was remarkable for its time and not only in Boston. The shape of which (crescent) has survived in Franklin Street today. . . Alas, the whole brave parade lasted little more than fifty years so relentless was the later push of business in this quarter. . . . But the *idea* of the Tontine Crescent. . . proved more durable."¹²

"When Bulfinch was forced by his financial failure to abandon the second crescent he had planned to build facing the Tontine Crescent and built instead a series of free-standing double houses, it was the free-standing houses that became the most fashionable, according to Frank Chouteau Brown, even though the side yards were *very narrow*." The emphasis is Tucci's and, "points to how deep-seated in Boston was the preference for even the narrow yards of semi-detached houses as opposed to the block of connected houses, two walls in each of which had to be windowless." It is interesting to compare that to the Royal Crescent and Circus, 1725-80, neoclassical Georgian attached residences in Bath, England, which were the height of fashion in that most fashionable English spa city. They were designed by John Wood and his son.

Tucci goes on, "Both attached and detached houses were characteristic of the streetcar suburbs." He then cites Harris Wood Crescent, Fountain Square, Roxbury Highland, 1890, 1791-1821 Beacon Street, Brookline by Murdoch Boyle, "another connected residential block again facing a park."

"A particularly elegant area two blocks from Walnut Avenue (Boston), grew up around Fountain Square (Roxbury), where on the Harold Street side, J. William Beal, a well-known Boston architect of the period, designed a block of houses that must rank among the most lovely ensembles of picturesque connected town houses in Greater Boston. They still survive in fair condition. Built at a cost of about \$160,000, this block constitutes a kind of Queen Anne Tontine Crescent of fifteen attached brick and half-timbered town houses, the architectural unity of which is not equaled by any Queen Anne group anywhere in the city. Still another example of the way the Tontine Crescent persisted in Bostonians' imagination, this splendid block is not, strictly, a crescent; significantly, however, it was originally called Harris Wood Crescent."¹³

On the corner of Walnut and Humbolt Streets, both of which lead up

to Franklin Park, was another Queen Anne row called Lanesborough Gables (messrs. Charles F. Park and Ralph E. Sawyer, associated architects, Boston). Pictured in the *American Architect and Building News* of the day, the caption reads, ". . . the building nearly completed. It is a pleasant departure from the stereotyped form of apartment houses."¹⁴ Like Harris Wood Crescent, it was brick and timbered above.

Albert Eastman, as a young architect in Boston, must have known about these row houses, as well as much else that was being built by this extremely active profession of the 1890s. It was typical for a builder of the period, according to Sam Bass Warner in *Streetcar Suburbs*, to build no more than one dwelling in any one year and less than twenty in the whole period, and also to live within two blocks of most of the buildings.¹⁵ That spirit was not true for the architects. The eclecticism of the period is obvious within the practice of the major Boston firms. *The Architectural Record* in an 1896 article entitled "Great American Architects, Series 3, Boston Architects," shows the breadth and variety of styles employed by Boston architects Peabody and Stearns (both Brookline residents) and Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, heirs to the firm of H. H. Richardson (a Brookline resident and a neighbor and collaborator of Olmsted's).

A brief perusal of the April-June 1896 *Architectural Record* shows the eclecticism. There is Queen Anne Shingle Style and masonry, Neoclassical, Neofederalist, Neo-Gothic, French Chateau, Italianate, and high-rise office and commercial buildings flush with the sidewalk, precursors of the International Style — the melting pot, riding the cusp to an elusive "American Style," as difficult to pin down and find in a single work as the great American novel. It was a time like today, a time of rapid transitions, open to a variety of expressions, and seeking its own.

In the same volume of the *Architectural Record* is an illustrated article by Bannister Fletcher entitled "The Smaller Houses of the English Suburbs and Provinces."¹⁶ Here we see houses that are attached by a shared lower facade, also a house by R. Norman Shaw startlingly reminiscent of the Griggs Road houses by Albert Eastman.

In 1897 Albert Eastman took out a building permit for nine houses on Griggs Road. On January 3, 1899 he took out seven identical individual permits for wooden, block, single family, three-story houses with stone foundations built on solid (not filled) earth with pitched roofs, furnaces with four-inch lined flues and brick party walls between the units. He signed each permit: Albert G. Eastman, Griggs Road. The cost of each unit was \$3,500, about one-third the cost of the elegant Harris Wood Crescent, but well into the range for middle-class housing¹⁷ and well built. The line for the name of the builder is empty on these forms but not on a 1901 permit for another Griggs Road house, probably number 40, which lists T. B. Griggs as owner, Albert G. Eastman as architect and Albert G. Eastman builder. In 1903 W. H. Toombs & Company took out a building permit listing T.

B. Griggs owner, A. G. Eastman architect and Toombs as builder. This was for a smaller house on Griggs Road with a smaller setback. The house at number 40 is a typical graceful Queen Anne shingle residence facing the park (with a later documented addition of a sun porch and asphalt shingles in 1920). At that time Thomas Griggs still owned and was renting out these properties and had moved to number 30 himself.

Nowhere in the literature can I find another shingle row. There is a shorter row, contemporaneous with this at 1-4 Summit Avenue, just across Beacon Street. It looks as though there may have been designed, if not built, two additional units curving onto Beacon Street to complete the symmetry of the building.

When Eastman's shingle row was finished, it was numbered 1-7 Griggs Road (now 59-71) and named Hambleton (Hamilton) Hall. The neighborhood was immediately fashionable. In 1901 there were seven families listed in the Brookline Blue Book (five in the row) in residence on Griggs Road. In 1902 there were thirteen listings on Griggs Road, including all seven of the row, plus Mr. and Mrs. Albert G. Eastman and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Otis — summer residence in Cohasset. The Eastman and Otis house numbers were not listed. Alexis H. French was listed at 35 Cypress Street and as a vice-president of the Harvard Church brotherhood, both places a few blocks from Griggs Road. Also listed were Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Olmsted, F. L. Olmsted, Jr., and Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Olmsted, all on Warren Street. None of the Griggs family, nor any of the residents of Griggs' properties on Washington Street was listed in the Blue Books. They were respectable but not fashionable, and certainly wealthy by this time, although they may have simply refused to pay for the listing.

In a time of rapid transition many families sought the English rural/suburban ideal; house and park with curving drive following the topography of the land. This was juxtaposed, in the abutting area, with the Parisian residential ideal of flats developing along boulevarded Beacon Street. Olmsted intended one artery of Beacon Street for commerce and the other for pleasure driving. The only remaining vestige of that division of use is for the annual Boston marathon when one side is closed for the race.

Also nearby on Beacon Street at Coolidge Corner, Whitney Hall (the former S. S. Pierce Building) was built in half-timbered Queen Anne style the same year as Hambleton Hall was built. Douglass Shand Tucci in *Built in Boston* refers to Whitney Hall as "commercial architecture of some distinction"¹⁸ and advocates its restoration.

According to Vincent Scully, historian of the built environment and author of *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style*, the porches of the Shingle Style are continuous extensions of interior space which provide a spatial interweaving and thus reinforce unity of design and continuity of indoor and outdoor space.¹⁹ The porches of 59-71 Griggs Road are smaller than those referred to by Scully appropriately, as each unit is smaller than country

houses to which he refers, but they still function in the same way. The horizontality of the row and its seemingly organic relationship to the earth is strengthened by the dark brown color, the irregularity of the outline, and by a continuous sweep of lawn and street trees. More recently the infill on the west and plantings along the individual property lines have hidden the gracefulness intended. Arleyn Levee, landscape architectural historian, describes the appropriate landscape for such a building: "The American translation of the Queen Anne landscape was a gentle amalgam of both the formal and natural approaches, with emphasis on the latter, reflecting, as the century closed, the increasingly sophisticated appreciation of the architectural style. Designed to the ground with their stone foundations or with decorative lattice work, more common in the suburban vernacular examples, the Queen Anne houses were most successfully anchored to their sites by an ample spread of carefully treated land and/or by terracing."²⁰

The irregularity of outline also allows light penetration on two and a half or three sides of each unit. The romantic castellations, Queen Anne sunflower decorations, and irregularly placed doorways make it a rather fairy-tale place because viewers cannot tell where one unit ends and the other begins. The building was intentionally sited so that the whole front cannot be viewed at once, but only from one end or the other. It must be experienced by moving past it.

The Classical Revival evolved out of the Shingle Style. Albert Eastman built at least one more house on Griggs Road in 1903, either number 46 or 56 or both, before he disappeared from public records. Both houses are in the Classical Revival style. The Eastmans owned the property under number 56 in 1901 and probably built the house in that year. The Eastmans are listed at number 40 in the Blue Book, then at number 46 in 1903, neither are listed in 1905. Perhaps they were off building somewhere else. Carrie is back at number 46 in 1906. A Carrie Eastman died on February 10, 1916, in Tewksbury state hospital, listed as divorced.

Thomas Griggs lived to be ninety-five and never moved out of his neighborhood, known until his death as the Griggs Farm. He was content to hold the properties after developing them, to wait for the imminent rise in value and farm his new crop of tenants. The farm included single-families, doubles, the shingle row, and a later Queen Anne stucco row facing the park, and stretched up Washington Street to include numbers 549, 609-611, 655-657, and 659-661 next to Fire Station No. 7 with its Dutch gable.²¹ Thomas died at number 655. All these buildings are still in use.

The sense of the area known as Griggs Farm has shrunk with the infill of commercial buildings, especially from the Washington Square side, but the sense of neighborhood along Griggs Road and around Griggs Park, particularly, has been preserved despite new high-rise buildings going up on its borders. There are not many real neighborhoods in Brookline and the hand or mind of Olmsted touched or influenced most of them. For the Griggs

neighborhood, the single enlightened owner for so many years certainly helped, as did later zoning and neighborhood activism, to prevent more massive incursions.

And the design really mattered. There are few neighborhoods in the densely populated Boston area that are as civilized in the English suburban tradition and within financial reach of the middle-class.

On May 13, 1915, Alexis H. French passed away. His assistant, Mr. Varney, wrote in the *Town Report* for that year, "Although he had been ill for over a year, he kept in touch with the department to the last. He was appointed town engineer in 1894 when the department was established. Previous to the establishment of the department he did most of the engineering and surveying for the town, so that since 1875 practically all engineering work was under his direction. He took an active interest in all public matters. . . his former assistants feel his death keenly and will always remember his unfailing courtesies and consideration under all circumstances."²²

French's own accounts in the 1895 *Town Report* convey, even in his own quiet way, the excitement and high hopes of the times. "The regular work of the department consisting of construction and special matters had been so large as to require the whole office constantly, so that less has been accomplished than was expected by the writer in the way of compiling and indexing street plans, notes, etc. and deciding on the best methods of organization in some of its minor details. The work is well started, however, and should be continued as the more urgent matters allow!"²³

Dedicated, thorough and civilized, it is most directly Alexis H. French, consulting engineer to Frederick Law Olmsted that we can credit with the design development of the Griggs Park neighborhood and its continuing success aesthetically and socially.²⁴ □

Notes

1. Alexis H. French, Town Engineer's Report, *Town of Brookline Annual Report*, 1895, 161-162.

2. Bicentennial Map, Town of Brookline, 1632-1976, drawn by John F. Furlong, shows seventeenth-century waterways, old carriage route, hills and modern streets all superimposed.

3. A memo from the Olmsted office with the file number 927 (Brookline Parks) from the Office of the Park Commissioners, Brookline, Massachusetts, and dated November 3,

1888, reads: "The Board of Park Commissioners Voted: That Messrs. F. L. + J. C. Olmsted, be authorized and requested to prepare detailed plans of the Brookline park of the Muddy River Improvement. Attest George F. Joyce, Clerk"

4. Map included with the Brookline Annual Report 1889 entitled "The Parkway," credits F. L. & J. C. Olmsted, Landscape Architects, and Alexis H. French, Surveyor.

5. On the back of the Bicentennial

Map (see no. 2) is a reproduction by the Brookline Historical Society in 1923 of an 1822 map of Brookline which shows a tract of land, labeled Thomas Griggs, extending from Washington Street to Harvard Street, including a segment of Tannery Brook.

6. *Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society for 1975-1978*, 29.

7. Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society for 1975-1978*, "Frederick Law Olmsted in Brookline: A Preliminary Study of His Public Projects," 48-52, 55-56.

8. *A History of the Town of Brookline, Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Town*, Brookline Press, Brookline, 1906.

9. In the 1903 *Town of Brookline Annual Report*, the town was still unable to purchase 2,473 sq. ft. for Washington Playground (Griggs) and approval was made to take it by eminent domain for \$370.95.

10. In 1894 the Brookline Park Commission consisted of Charles Sprague Sargent, who served for many years, William H. Lincoln and Henry M. Whitney, who served more than one four-year term, and George F. Joyce, Clerk.

11. John Gould Curtis, *A History of the Town of Brookline*, Cambridge, Houghton Mifflin, 1933.

12. Douglass Shand Tucci, *Built in Boston*, Boston, Little Brown, 1978, 6.

13. *Ibid.*, 86-88.

14. *American Architect and Building News*, 2, January 25, 1896.

15. Sam Bass Warner, *Streetcar Suburbs*, Cambridge, Harvard, 1978, appendix B., 184 and 185.

16. Bannister Fletcher, "Smaller Houses of the English Suburbs and Provinces," *Architectural Record*,

April-June 1896, 323-335.

17. Warner, 103.

18. Tucci, 75.

19. Vincent Scully, *The Shingle Style and the Stick Style*, New Haven: Yale, 1971.

20. Arleyn Levee, "Queen Anne Architecture and Its Landscape," unpublished, Radcliffe Seminars, 1980, 15.

21. *Washington Street in Brookline*, Brookline Historical Commission, 22.

22. Mr. Varney, Engineer's report, *Town of Brookline Annual Report*, 1915, 200.

23. Alexis H. French, Engineer's Report, *Town of Brookline Annual Report*, 1895, 157.

24. Phone memo from the Olmsted office files dated 15 January 1892, numbered 927, Brookline Parks, telephone from A. H. French to J.C.O. documents the relationship between French and Olmsted two years before French became Town Engineer. "Said our design for drive above Willow Pond width was reduced to 32 feet — that Commission had all informally expressed their intention of recommending the town to widen Pond Ave. as per our recent study and asked whether he could not widen drive to 35 feet accordingly using our line on side next brook. Replied he would like to look into the matter but that he could proceed meanwhile. He said our recent design for alterations between Leverett & Willow Ponds called for destruction of 30 or 40 feet of the big brick drain already built. I said we would look into the matter upon receipt of the facts from him on a little (?) tracing. Told him Belvedere (sic) Bridge & Tremont Culvert were both approved yesterday by Boston Commission.