CITY OF MEDFORD COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY PLAN
Medford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts

Prepared for the Medford Historical Commission
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Project History & Objectives

The Medford Historical Commission obtained grant support from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to prepare a survey plan in advance of undertaking extensive and long-overdue inventory work. Although Medford’s commission has been active, its efforts have been focused on compliance, inquiries from the public and city agencies, demolition delay review (established 1992), and its two local historic districts (established in 1985). The Commission is operated by volunteers with no staff support from the city; its annual budget has been approximately $500 for the last five years. A survey plan will allow the commission to begin expanding its role in managing Medford’s historic resources. Medford is a city of over 55,000, with as many as 15,000 buildings, a significant portion of these are over fifty years of age. The City measures just over eight square miles, with a population density of over 10,000 people and over 2,500 housing units per square mile. Sheer numbers make this a challenging effort.

The Medford Historical Commission has begun laying the groundwork for the effort ahead. The commission members are well-versed in Medford history and fully engaged in the preservation issues that
arise. The commission has established a predictable routine of public meetings, maintains systematic records, and has established effective partnerships with critical agencies in the city. The Historical Society is active and ambitious, and its library and website contain useful material on the town’s history. City offices, including the library, community development, assessing, and engineering are poised to share their resources. Many of the critical sources for survey work have been assembled, including digital versions of most of the primary historic maps. The Commission already has a website with significant amounts of information about its efforts; adding the survey plan will help the community to better understand the historic landscape of Medford, as well as the survey and planning effort ahead.

In the spring of 2008, students in the Preservation Studies Program at Boston University undertook preliminary research on the historic landscapes of Medford and reconnaissance survey of the area south of the Mystic River. Students consulted a variety of primary sources, including a selection of the numerous historic maps and atlases that cover the city, censuses of population, and recorded plot plans, and researched selected themes in city and regional histories. This research provided an overview of the forces that shaped Medford’s historic landscape, as well as outlining the key periods of development for that landscape.

While standard survey methodology works well to cover the exceptional and well-preserved components of this landscape, the common buildings which were constructed in large numbers and that have experienced some remodeling present a greater challenge. It will be useful to review how these resources might best be served, represented, planned for, and protected. With the support of the Mayor and funding from the Office of Community Development, the Medford Historical Commission proposes to undertake that critical building block of preservation planning, a truly comprehensive inventory of its rich historical resources.

Project Objectives

The purpose of the project was to conduct communitywide reconnaissance survey and to prepare a survey plan to guide the comprehensive inventory of the cultural resources of the City of Medford. The project provided the expertise of a professional cultural resource survey specialist (Neil Larson, Larson Fisher Associates, www.larsonfisher.com) to the assist the Medford Historical Commission in developing a survey plan. Specific project goals include the following:

- To describe the historic landscapes of the City of Medford
- To identify and assess documentary materials concerning the history of the City of Medford
- To provide a preliminary identification and assessment of the nature and location of historic and cultural resources in the City of Medford, including previously undocumented or underdocumented resources
- To identify selection criteria and priorities for comprehensive survey of the City of Medford
- To develop an action plan for implementing survey goals for the creation of a comprehensive inventory of the cultural and historic resources of the City of Medford.

Medford Community-Wide Survey Plan
Historical Background & Identification of Neighborhoods

Medford’s historic population growth parallels that of many of the inner suburbs that form a dense ring around the city of Boston. Although sparsely settled in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Mystic River provided opportunities for employment beyond agriculture, shipbuilding and trade. In addition, the area was well-known for brick production as well as rum distilling and a variety of other service and manufacturing endeavors. Fueled by these growth opportunities, the town’s population reached 5,000 in the middle of the 19th century, and by the 1880s had doubled to 10,000. The greatest expansion, however, came after Medford adopted city government in 1892; over the next two decades the population doubled again, and over the next three decades it tripled, reaching an all-time high of over 67,000 persons in 1945. To accommodate this growth, thousands of residences were constructed in the formerly rural landscape surrounding Medford Square and West Medford, and a very large proportion of the current city consists of residential neighborhoods created during this extraordinary boom. The City now includes over 22,000 households within a nearly equal number of housing units.
Medford includes surviving examples of historic resources from each period of its development, save the early years of the 17th century. Exceptional as well as more common examples can be found of the building forms and styles that were popular in eastern Massachusetts towns and cities over the last three centuries. Most of the city’s earliest and agricultural landscapes have been built over, but several are preserved in the large open spaces of the Middlesex Fells; newer open spaces were created by parks and parkway lands. Early survey efforts have focused on the city’s exceptional architectural landmarks, and, more recently, some of its inter-municipal sanitary and transportation infrastructure has been highlighted in regional recording and evaluating efforts. More extensive and numerous resources remain to be recorded. Core areas in East Medford and West Medford were the first to urbanize and retain significant plan and architectural features. As Medford continued to grow, with regional prosperity and improved transportation networks, neighborhoods of the rising Victorian middle class grew up north and west of Medford Square and around West Medford. Housing for the working classes developed peripheral to these better neighborhoods, near the manufacturing zones, and along transportation corridors.

The building booms of the late 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries produced large numbers of housing units as well as a number of small commercial nodes scattered across the expanding neighborhoods of east, west, north, and south Medford. Block upon block of single-family and two-family housing, as well as some three-deckers and apartment houses, all constructed during this hectic period, can be found in these areas.

More detailed historical overviews are contained in the neighborhood reconnaissance surveys appended to the end of this report. Medford’s neighborhoods have been identified as follows (see map below).

1. Medford Square
Location: West of 93 and east of Winthrop.

Medford Square contains the central business district of the city, which dates back to the establishment of the commons in the early 18th century. The city’s public buildings and many churches are located here. In 1855 the area where Salem, Riverside, Forest, High and Main streets merged contained the densest development in the entire town. The area also includes distinctive single-family houses on the hillside north of the commercial center. Medford Square had extended south across the Mystic River, but is now divided from South Medford by highways.

2. East Medford
Location: East of 93 and south of Fellsway West

Development in East Medford originated around a depot where the Medford Branch Railroad intersected Spring Street. Myrtle and Lawrence streets are depicted on the 1855 map with rows of small cottages already on Myrtle. Single- and two-family development spread to fill the space west of the depot reaching back to Park Street where a second depot was located on the eastern edge of Medford Square. Salem Street angles through the northern section of this early neighborhood and is a major commercial thoroughfare. More intensive multi-family housing was introduced to the eastern and northern sections of the neighborhood in the early 20th century.
3. West Medford
Location: South of Winthrop and east of Plaisted.

West Medford contains an old 18th-century center at High and Winthrop streets, as well as a much-later suburban center centered at the depot of the old Boston & Lowell Railroad at High and Plaisted. There are numerous 18th- and early 19th-century houses along High Street, but the area between High and Winthrop streets are now characterized by late-19th and early 20th-century residential developments, many of which are distinguished by quality architecture. Sections south of High Street and close to the Mystic River have denser and more mixed development indicating its transition to more of a working class community. The area of West Medford between the railroad and the river (this is where the Middlesex Canal had been routed) has a history as an African American enclave.

4. Wellington
Location: east of Locust, and following the north-south line that marks the change from very dense small lots and the larger ones; across the Fellsway to town boundary.

The numbered streets at the eastern limits of the city and south of the Medford Branch Railroad appear on the 1855 map of the city, but without any lots or buildings indicated. This area, along with three short streets south of Riverside—Locust, Linden and Hall—flank wetlands that became the source of clay for the Bay State Brick Manufacturing Company. Residential development, however, did not begin until the end of the 19th century and today is characterized by multi-family housing from that period.

5. Fulton Heights
Location: Also east of 93 and north of Fellsway West, I assume this is a later area.

This hillside neighborhood were sparsely developed into the 20th century. The older Malden Highlands neighborhood spilled over the town boundary, but it was not until Fellsway West was introduced that hillside woodlots were cleared and subdivided for development.

6. Brooks Estate
Location: West of Plaisted and south of the railroad.

This residential neighborhood was developed in stages in the 20th century reflecting West Medford’s growth as a bedroom community for Boston commuters.

The last two areas were excluded from more detailed examination undertaken in this survey as an expedient measure. Nevertheless, they are two areas that need to be addressed in the community-wide survey plan.

7. Middlesex Fells
Location: Open space in the north section of the town.

Middlesex Fells is a recognized state conservation area and, as such, tangential to a survey plan for historic neighborhoods. However, it is historically significant parkland that contains historic and archaeological resources, which will be of concern to the Medford Historical Commission. The Fells should be kept on the list of the neighborhoods and be acknowledged in the survey priorities. The
historical commission will need to work with the state Department of Conservation & Recreation and the Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation to identify and record these resources.

8. South Medford  
Location: South of Mystic River

South Medford has been the subject of a field study project for students in Boston University’s New England Studies Program under the direction of Claire Dempsey. Since the results of this study were not available at the outset of this project, further planning assessments for this neighborhood have been deferred to a later time. At an appropriate time, an addendum will be attached to this report for this neighborhood.

Medford in 1875
Existing Inventory and National Register Documentation

There are 768 entries for Medford in the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s survey inventory that include 688 buildings, 28 areas (three representing historic districts), 45 structures, six objects, and one cemetery. A count of documents currently in the Medford file of the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) has a substantially lower count for buildings (472), apparently since numerous buildings are recorded on area forms and not listed individually. Of these 11 areas (containing a total of 219 buildings), 121 individual buildings (54 being amendments of existing forms) and the one burial ground were inventoried in an MHC-funded survey project in 1974. Typical of such early surveys, the inventory is probably comprehensive for 17th- and 18th-century properties, spotty for antebellum properties and very selective of late 19th and early 20th-century properties. Since then hundreds of building forms have been added to the inventory through a series of informal and systematic efforts, the most recent being park and parkway components of the MHC-sponsored survey and registration project covering the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston.

With the exception of the park system project, the principal focus of the inventory is on single-family residences, churches and other civic architectural landmarks. Late 19th- and 20th-century vernacular dwellings, single- and multi-family, and commercial buildings are largely excluded. By today’s standards, most survey forms contain only cursory building data making them more identifiers than documentary records. Their principal advantage is as an entry on the MACRIS list, which affords certain protections to the buildings they represent. It is possible to greatly expand the level of historical documentation for the properties in the inventory, but it is more of a priority to add whole classes of architecture and historical contexts to the inventory to bring balance to the record. Uneven geographical coverage is another factor to address.

The 1974 survey resulted in the listing of two historic districts, the Hillside Avenue and Old Ship Street historic districts, and 14 individual properties on the National Register the following year. A lesser number of properties have been listed in the intervening 36 years. Today, the city contains the same two historic districts and a total of 23 individual properties listed on the National Register. Two properties, the Isaac Royall House on George Street and the Peter Tufts House on Riverside Avenue, were designated National Historic Landmarks decades ago. A more particular list of National Register and local designations follows.

National Historic Landmarks
- Isaac Royall House, 15 George St., 1692, 1737, 1750 (NHL)
- Peter Tufts House, 350 Riverside Ave., c. 1680 (NHL)

Historic Districts
- Hillside Avenue Historic District (NR 1975)
- Old Ship Street Historic District (NR 1975)
- Unitarian Universalist Church & Parsonage, 2 buildings, 141 & 147 High St. (MDF.P, NR 1975, HABS 1935)

Multiple Property Listings
- Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston Thematic Resources (MDF.Q, NR 1990)
  - Middlesex Fells Reservoirs Historic District (MDF.R, NR 1990)
  - Mystic Lakes (MDF.S, NR 1990)
• The Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS, Medford Components (MFD.U, NR 2003-2007)
  o Middlesex Fells Parkway (MDF.X, NR 2003)
  o Fells Connector Parkways Historic District (MDF.Y, NR 2003)
  o Mystic Valley Parkway (MDF.AA, NR 2006)
  o Revere Beach Parkway (MDF.AB, NR 2007)
• Middlesex Canal Historic and Archeological District (MDF.V, NR 2009)

Individual listings
• Albree-Hall-Lawrence House, 35 Lawrence Rd., c. 1785 (NR 1976; HABS 1935)
• John B. Angier House, 129 High St., 1842 (NR 1975)
• Bigelow Block, cor. Forest & Salem sts, 1886 (NR 1975)
• Charles Brooks House, 309 High St., c. 1785 (NR 1975)
• Jonathan Brooks House, 2 Woburn St., c. 1781 (NR 1975)
• Shepherd Brooks, Estate, 275 Grove St., 1881 (NR 1975)
• Paul Curtis House / M. Delano House, 114 South St., 1839 (NR 1975)
• George P. Fernald House, 12 Rock Hill St., 1894 (NR 1976)
• Jonathan Fletcher House, 283 High St., c. 1835 (NR 1975)
• Grace Episcopal Church, 160 High St., 1868-1872 (NR 1972)
• Isaac Hall House, 43 High St., c. 1720 & c. 1790 (NR 1975)
• Lawrence Light Guard Armory, 90 High St., 1900-1902 (NR 1975)
• Joseph K. Manning House, 35-37 Forest St., 1875 (NR 1980)
• John H. McGill House, 56 Vernon St., 1902 (NR 1980)
• Medford Main Post Office, 20 Forest St., 1937 (NR 1986)
• Edward Oakes House, 5 Sylvia Rd., 1729, moved from 460 Riverside Ave in 1977 (NR 1980)
• Old Medford High School, 22-24 Forest St., 1895, 1929, 1939 (NR 1983)
• Park Street Railroad Station, 20 Magoun Ave., 1894 (NR 1975)
• Richard Pinkham House, 24 Brooks Park, 1850 (NR 2007)
• Salem Street Burying Ground, Salem St., 1660-1880 (NR 1981)
• John Wade House / Pierce Tavern, 253 High St., 1784-1794 (NR 1975)
• Jonathan Wade House, 13 Bradlee Rd., 1683-1689 (NR 1975)

Determined Eligible for the National Register
• Dyer Building, 36 Salem St., 1915 (DOE for ITC 1986; Inventory Form No. MDF.78)
• Granary Building, 28-32 Main St., c. 1865 (DOE for Honor 1990; Inventory Form No. MDF.52)

Sixteen of the 23 individual properties and both historic districts were listed between 1972 and 1976, which associates them with the initial survey era. Clearly there is more National Register (and local designation) nominations to be made just among the properties and areas already inventoried, not to mention the vernacular resources yet to be surveyed.

Local Designations
In 1985 the city’s historical commission designated Hillside Avenue Historic District and Marm Simonds Hill Historic District local historic districts. The former was listed on the National Register, the latter has yet to be listed. No additional designations have been made.
Current Threats to Historic Resources

Medford is experiencing many of the threats to its historic resources that are experienced throughout the region and the Commonwealth. There are threats of tear-downs, demolition by neglect, and many buildings are undergoing physical alterations as property owners wrestle with increasing energy and maintenance costs. The city is a hub where many major inter-municipal and regional transportation routes intersect, and it soon may be a destination for a Green Line T extension. Medford is intensely developed and intensively used.

While it is difficult to predict the direction of change in an uncertain economy, there is little doubt that the historic fabric of the city place will suffer if better preservation planning cannot be undertaken. The survey plan is a first step for the Medford Historical Commission as it seeks to expand its efforts beyond its responsibilities as a Local District Commission and toward preservation planning for the city at large.

House in Wellington neighborhood with exterior features replaced.

Changes at intersection of High St. and Harvard Ave. in West Medford neighborhood.
General Recommendations & Survey Priorities

As the Medford Historical Commission prepares for a more comprehensive neighborhood approach to historic preservation planning, crafting an effective survey methodology becomes a critical first step. The buildings and other historic features that characterize the different neighborhoods need to be recorded and classified in objective terms such that properties are not selected based on pre-established qualitative architectural hierarchy, physical condition or personal taste. Physical and design characteristics of properties throughout a neighborhood, and the entire city, should be recorded in a controlled descriptive system that will allow for comparative analysis within locales or city wide. Once compiled in a computer data base, lists of all churches or schools could be generated, for example, or buildings constructed before 1850, two-family houses on Otis Street or in East Medford, the stages of residential development in Brooks Estate, or the percentage of houses with original wood window sash in Medford Square. Using the city’s geographical information system (GIS), maps can be generated to illustrate the location, concentration and distribution of properties exhibiting selected characteristics.

The City of Cambridge has set a standard for the comprehensive survey of historic resources on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. Using paper forms in a pre-digital age, the Cambridge Historical Commission recorded information on every building in the city. The effort took many years to complete but now the commission has a base level of architectural data that allows them to particularize buildings within a broad range of vernacular building types and assess them in the context of a neighborhood’s development. Comprehensive surveys take time and expand in stages. The first step will be record the most essential and easiest obtained data (most of it visual) of the property. Once the base level information of a neighborhood is established, more intensive documentation and contextual overviews can be added to elaborate on particular property types, historical periods or thematic groups or document historic districts.

As it progresses, the survey will be the source of valuable information that will provide the basis for the historical commission’s oversight of the city’s cultural resources and its decision-making, in regard to design review and demolition delay. The survey also is a preservation action in and of itself that will generate public awareness of Medford’s history and expand appreciation for its buildings and neighborhoods. An on-going survey is an opportunity to keep historic resources in the public eye and develop a community conversation about their value. Each neighborhood, as well as Medford as a whole, will benefit from articulating their character-defining features and introducing architectural and preservation terms into the local vocabulary.

Thus, it is strongly recommended here that the Medford Historical Commission embark on a comprehensive survey project that will generate a digital data base in which the physical features of all the parcels in the city are eventually recorded. Age is of no importance as comprehensiveness is critical and at a certain point, recent buildings will become historic. More specific general recommendations continue below. Neighborhood-based recommendations are included in the neighborhood overviews elsewhere in this report.
1. Identify survey priorities and five-year plan, some suggested priorities follow:
   a. Create data base “Medford Historic Resource Inventory” as described in Item 2 below, including “Neighborhood” and “Demolition Delay” classification
      i. Select a neighborhood or part of a neighborhood as a prototype case to develop a data base model and work out bugs in the methodology for data collection, data entry and data function
         1. Plan project in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and apply for funding support
         2. Present project to Boston University’s New England Studies Program for consideration as a student class project
   ii. Develop prioritized plan for application of prototype in other neighborhoods
   b. Create a cultural resource base map using city’s Geographical Information System (GIS)
   c. List all pre-1900 resources for demolition delay protection
   d. List and map all known and potential archeological sites (do not publicize)
   e. Document all Government, Educational and Religious properties, city-wide, using MHC Building Forms; add information to data base; create map using GIS
   f. Survey all Commercial, Industrial and Transportation-related properties city-wide
      i. Survey East Medford commercial district using MHC Area Form
      ii. Survey Medford Square commercial district using MHC Area Form
      iii. Survey West Medford commercial district using MHC Area Form
      iv. Survey South Medford commercial district using MHC Area Form
      v. Survey other commercial, industrial and transportation-related nodes and individual properties using MHC Area or Building Forms
      vi. Add information to data base; create map using GIS
   g. Evaluate surveyed properties and areas in c. and d. above and identify local landmarks and historic commercial districts for designation
   h. Review neighborhood overviews from Medford Community-Wide Survey Plan, revise boundaries, if necessary, and identify and delineate smaller sub-areas based on more focused research into subdivision history.
      i. Expand contexts
         ii. Map integral sections and subdivisions
            1. 18th-century properties and areas
            2. Estates & 19th-century development tracts
            3. Railroad, industrial & commercial development
            4. Planned RR-related suburban development
            5. 20th-century subdivisions
      iii. Identify areas and individual properties for intensive survey, with special attention to properties depicted on 1855 and 1875 maps
   i. Identify areas where historic resources are at risk and prioritize survey and local action.
      i. Medford Square commercial district
      ii. Haines Square commercial district, East Medford
      iii. Mystic Avenue commercial district, South Medford
      iv. Boston Avenue, West Medford and South Medford
      v. Industrial buildings city-wide

Medford Community-Wide Survey Plan
vi. Early 19th-century urban areas flanking I-93 on east side of Medford Square and west side of East Medford
vii. Alterations and renovations in East Medford
viii. Alterations and renovation in South Medford
ix. Green Line route, South Medford

2. Create a data base to record and manage information about Medford’s historic resources for survey and planning
   a. Obtain a copy of an existing parcel-level data base from city assessor; save it as a “Medford Historic Resource Inventory” (data base format to be determined by Medford Historical Commission in consultation with MHC)
   b. Keep pertinent physical data concerning location (tax parcel number, street address, ward, etc.), land use/zoning, parcel size, and building characteristics (date built, stories, area, materials, etc.) and remove other time-sensitive data (owner, assessed value, etc.)
   c. Add a category for “Neighborhood” and attach one of the following eight names to each parcel
      i. Brooks Estate
      ii. East Medford
      iii. Fulton Heights
      iv. Medford Square
      v. Middlesex Fells
      vi. South Medford
      vii. Wellington
      viii. West Medford
   d. Add a category for “Demolition Delay” and using maps in the 1900 Atlas of Middlesex County, indicate all addresses with buildings
   e. Add category for “Historic Function” and using assessor’s land use classifications indicate all addresses with at least the following functions (buildings that have changed function, e.g. a decommissioned fire house currently in a restaurant use, will need visual assessment in more particular surveys)
      i. Government
      ii. Education-related
      iii. Religious
      iv. Transportation-related
      v. Commercial
      vi. Industrial
      vii. Residential (single-family, two-family, multiple family, apartment)
   f. Add category for “Historic Period” and establish periods based on historic maps; suggested periods are: (these periods can be filled in as survey progresses)
      i. 1855 and earlier
      ii. 1856 – 1875
      iii. 1876 – 1889
      iv. 1890 – 1900
      v. 1901 – 1910
      vi. 1911 - 1936
vii. 1937 – 1960

g. Add categories for other useful property and building data, such as
   i. Building type (open list)
   ii. Height, plan, façade fenestration, roof type
   iii. Construction method, exterior materials (original and current)
   iv. Distinctive features: porches, window & roof-edge decoration
   v. Alterations: siding, porches, windows, replacement sash
   vi. Design style

3. Expand historical commission and increase support base
   a. Increase membership; add members willing to take action on survey program
   b. Build a volunteer base of local historians through historical society
   c. Organize volunteer activities to further survey plan
   d. Public outreach
      i. Establish presence on-line
         1. Post neighborhood overviews and survey plan
         2. Provide links to historic maps (w/ library)
         3. Post general preservation guidelines with links to Secretary of Interior’s Standards and NPS technical literature
      ii. Promote public programs and workshops (w/ historical society)
      iii. Create “buzz” about historic buildings and neighborhoods, local architectural landmarks
   e. Build support for historic preservation planning in city hall

4. Locate funding for survey projects
   a. Obtain certification for Certified Local Government Program qualifying the City to apply for grant funding specific to this program
   b. Present a multi-year plan to MHC and apply for grant support
      i. Grants available from both state and CLG sources
      ii. Annual awards to municipalities in $15,000 to $30,000 range
      iii. Multi-year projects possible
   c. Present a multi-year plan to City and secure commitment of general funding, matching funds for grants, and in-kind municipal support for survey projects
   d. Work with historical society to raise funds and volunteer support for projects
The Brooks Estate neighborhood is located in the northwest corner of the city, having the Mystic Lakes and Arlington as its west boundary and Winchester on the north (a substantial section of the Brooks Estate was ceded to Winchester in 1850). On the east, it ends at the Middlesex Fells and its southern boundary follows an irregular line through West Medford, of which it is geographically a part. The topography is generally flat. A stream, known as Whitemore or Playstead Brook, originates in Brooks Pond in the center of the northern section of the neighborhood, on what remains of Brooks family residential estate, and flows south in the Playstead park where it joins an unnamed creek flowing southwest from the Fells and then is piped underground to the Mystic.

Grove Street, an old highway leading to Woburn, is a principal thoroughfare; it originates at High Street, which represents the neighborhood’s southern boundary with West Medford and enters Winchester at the north city line. Playstead Road was put into use at the turn of the 20th century. With its southern terminus at High Street, the road’s serpentine course bends around the east side of the Brooks family’s residential estate and the Oak Grove Cemetery to where it merges with Woburn Street, another old road, and farther on, Winthrop Street just before it enters Winchester. First the Middlesex Canal (1803) was routed through the west side of the Brooks Estate. No above-ground features remain from this waterway; Sycamore Avenue was built over the ditch in the early 1900s. The canal was made obsolete by the Boston & Lowell Railroad, which bisected the neighborhood in 1830. This line is still in use by the MTA commuter railroad and for which West Medford is an important local station. The Mystic Valley Parkway was a constructed along the east bank of the Mystic River as a part of a sanitation project the 1890s. At that time the Mystic Lakes were created as reservoirs and the shorelands placed in reserve.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area was the western part of the plantation granted Gov. Matthew Craddock in 1629. His house and barn were located in Medford Square near the town green (now the site of city hall). Later in the 17th century, the easternmost portion of this holding was conveyed to Caleb Brooks and Timothy Wheeler. The Brooks family went on to develop the tract as an extensive farm, and by the 19th century, they had attained sufficient wealth to distinguish the property with elegant homes and an expansive pleasure ground. The section south of High Street (West Medford neighborhood) was cut off and sold in 1850 by Gorham Brooks to Roxbury merchant Thomas P. Smith. The rest remained in family hands until the early 1900s when a number of residential subdivisions were created shrinking the Brooks personal holding to the northern half of the estate. This land, along with Shepherd Brooks stone mansion, is now held in a public trust, conserving a valuable historic resource and open space.
Brooks Estate Neighborhood in 1855

The Brooks Estate neighborhood was largely defined by farms in 1855, most of them associated with the Brooks family which had owned the tract since the 17th century (Fig.1). By this time, the greater holding, which included land across the Winchester town line, had been subdivided into a series of smaller parcels fronting on Grove, Woburn or Winthrop streets. The map assigns them to either Gorham Brooks, Edward Brooks or just Brooks. Edward and Gorham Brooks were heirs of Peter Chardon Brooks (1767-1849) who made the family fortune and developed the estate into an elegant country seat. Gorham Brooks’s house is depicted on the east side of Grove Street, close to the Boston & Lowell Railroad. This house is not extant and its property is now part of Thomas Brooks Park. Edward Brooks is identified with a house on the west side of Grove Street; there is a large house in that location in the midst of a later residential subdivision that may be this historic building.

![1855 map of Mendon, detail showing boundaries of Brooks Estate and West Medford neighborhoods.](image)

As currently defined, the Brooks estate neighborhood includes parcels east of the Brooks family holding along Woburn and Purchase (Winthrop) streets. Albert Smith owned a sizable farm on the
west side of Woburn Street, and his house still survives (Fig.2) Augustus Baker kept a hotel just north of the Smith place, and George F. Lane farmed across the street. The northeast corner of the neighborhood contained William J. Russell’s large farm—his house still stands on the west side of Winthrop (Fig.3)—and the newly-created Oak Grove Cemetery, for which the Brooks family donated the land. South of Russell’s farm on Winthrop is an enclave of dwellings associated with Benjamin F. Parker and Lorenzo Chase, both masons, and David Lathrop, a printer. Harvard University owned a small square parcel in the midst of this group for unknown purposes. The almshouse was located east of here (and in Medford Square neighborhood); it is now the site of the Medford high school; the surrounding land is now part of the Middlesex Fells.

Fig.2: Albert Smith farmhouse, 230 Woburn St.

Fig.3: William A. Russell farmhouse, 708 Winthrop St.
Brooks Estate Neighborhood in 1900

Maps register few changes in the Brooks Estate during the last half of the 19th century. Peter C. Brooks III built a stone mansion near the Mystic River in 1859. It was designed by Calvert Vaux, and it was this period of picturesque landscape development that has been captured in photographs. The house is gone and little of the landscape remains except for a section containing Peter’s son Shepherd Brooks's mansion, designed by Peabody & Stearns in 1880. The 1898 map of the estate depicts these features, as well as residential subdivisions beginning to be planned near High Street and the West Medford center (Figs.4&5). Notable are the appearance of the Brooks Playstead, a public park initially containing a race track, Playstead Road wrapping around the east side of the park, and a plat of five streets east of that and west of Warren Street subdivided into house lots. The lots are vacant and have the name of Charles I. Travelli superimposed over them (Fig.5). The 1900 census lists him as an iron and chemicals merchant living with his wife, Emma, in the Newton household of his mother-in-law, Rebecca Robinson. She was the widow of Charles J. Robinson, a lawyer. A native of Pennsylvania, Travelli was living in Pittsburgh with his grandparents in 1880.

Fig.4: Map of Brooks Estate, 1898. The only subdivision platted at this time was the Travelli plot indicated by the street plan east of the Brooks Playstead park pictured on the lower right of this map and in more detail in Fig.5 below.
Brooks Estate Neighborhood in 1930

The character of the Brooks Estate changed dramatically during the early decades of the 20th century. The Travelli plat likely was the first to fill in, and each street has a regular pattern of two-family houses intended to integrate with the pre-existing urban plan of the West Medford center (Figs.6-8). The two-family units introduced a more progressive affordable house type to the neighborhood. Two-family houses were also constructed on new lots created between the railroad and Grove Street along Tyler and Johnson avenues (Fig 6) and near the river on Pitcher and Kilgore avenues, Hill St. and the Mystic Valley Parkway (Fig.9). Both these areas extended the type of middling house development from the older West Medford “Brooklands” subdivision north across High Street.

A residential subdivision of better single-family homes was built in between the two-family developments, that is, along Sagamore Avenue and Grove Street and streets in between from High Street up to Jackson Road (Fig.9). All this was realized before Shepherd Brooks died in 1922, possibly at his initiation. The houses are large and were designed in a range of period styles: Colonial, Shingle and Craftsman (Figs.10). Siting and setbacks were carefully controlled to create neat, uniform streetscapes. Front yards and mature trees contribute to a park-like setting.
Fig. 6: Sanborn Insurance Maps for Medford, Plate 77, 1936. The Travelli plot is located to the right of the Brooks Playstead with footprints of two-family houses. Tyler and Johnson aves. are depicted on the left side of the railroad tracks.
Fig. 7: View looking east across the Brooks Playstead at houses fronting Playstead Rd.

Fig. 8: Madison St. west of Warren St.
A second planned development began north of Jackson Road, probably after Shepherd Brooks's death. Sandwiched between the railroad tracks and the Mystic River, the narrow parcel was platted with large lots along serpentine roads. Pine Ridge Road was laid out on the bluff above the Mystic Valley Parkway with lots overlooking the lakes where a string of large brick houses in Tudor Revival-style designs were built (Fig.11). The rest of the subdivision contained houses in an eclectic mix of Colonial, Dutch Colonial and Craftsman styles, including bungalows (Fig.12).
Fig. 10: Houses at 58 & 60 Sycamore Rd.

Fig. 11: House at 96 Pine Ridge Rd.

Fig. 12: Saltonstall Rd., south side west of Grace Rd.
During this period, new subdivisions were being made on three new streets (Century, Woods and Roberts roads) platted north of the Brooks Playstead as well as in the triangle between Playstead Road and Woburn Street on Century and Clewey roads. In the latter case, subdivision plans dated in 1922 and 1923 resulted in a uniform development of two types of shingle-sided two-family homes in the Craftsman style (Fig. 13). Houses of similar style but more varied in design filled out the northern end of Warren Street. Once Century Road crossed Playstead Road, the designs of houses changed to single-family types and to the Colonial style, suggesting that they were built in the following decade (Fig. 14). The east side of Playstead Road between Century and Woburn contains early Cape Cod and Dutch Colonial houses built in this period, and a brick, two-story Colonial Revival school on the corner of Playstead and Roberts roads is a landmark of the emergence of this early 20th-century neighborhood.
Brooks Estate Neighborhood after 1930

As one of the last areas in Medford to open up for development in the 20th century (The Hillside Neighborhood is another), the northern edge of the Brooks Estate contains some of its most important Depression- and Post-WWII-era housing. In 1938 the Russell Farm at the north end of Winthrop Street was the location of a residential subdivision that overlapped into the town of Winchester. On the east side of Winthrop, on Winford Way and Priscilla Lane, Cape Cod houses were constructed. At the intersection of the two streets is a boulder with a plaque stating “Colonial Village 1938.” Along Robinson Road on the west side of Winthrop—where the old Russell farmhouse is still standing—the predominant house form is a two-story, three-bay Garrison-style house. A separate subdivision was made at the south end of the farm, opposite the cemetery, along Franklin Avenue, Hedland Way and Ronaele Road, yet it was not developed in the same systematic way and contains numerous houses built at later dates. Other small subdivisions have been slipped in along old and new streets intersecting Winthrop south as far as (and including) Brooks Street.

A characteristic house from this period is part of a small subdivision with buildings of identical design created on Priscilla Lane, a cul-de-sac behind Playstead Road opposite Roberts Road and the school (Fig.15). Roberts Road had been platted at the southern end of the Oak Grove Cemetery sometime in the 1920s, but the north side of the street did not contain houses on the 1936 Sanborn map (Fig.6). Shortly after the map was published, a string of Cape Cod houses were built there (Fig.16). This development continued past the west end of Roberts Road and up the east side of Russell Road opposite the railroad tracks. From there this new development follows the west side of Grove Street, which is lined mostly with larger Garrison-style houses (Fig.17). After crossing the railroad, Grove Street enters the extreme northwest corner of Medford where Peter C. Brooks III’s 1859 mansion was located. (A stone cottage from that property survives on Apache Trail.) It was probably after the war that the existing subdivision was developed on Grove Street, Norwich Circle and Josephine, Terrier and Alandale roads with Cape Cods, Garrisons and—rare in the Medford context—Ranches (Fig.18).

![Fig.15: House at 12 Diane Rd.](image)
Fig. 16: Roberts Rd., north side east of Russell Rd.

Fig. 17: Grove St., west side north of Russell Rd.

Fig. 18: Norwich Cir., west side south of Terrier Rd.
There is little evidence of new construction occurring in the past 50 years. Ad hoc in-fill has occurred in various places, and is particularly noticeable in the eastern section along Winthrop Street, on streets between Winthrop and Playstead, and in the Russell Farm subdivision on the east side of Winthrop on Franklin Avenue and connecting streets. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement. Otherwise, the present has little impact on the historic Brooks Estate neighborhood.

Fig.19: Aerial view of Brooks Estate showing neighborhood boundaries and stages of development.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: Brooks Estate Neighborhood

• Survey Trevelli tract on an area form (approx. 100 properties)

_The Travelli tract is a distinct development of two-family houses between Warren Street and Playstead Road_

• Survey properties in early Brooks development area north of High Street, south of Jackson and west of railroad on one or more area forms (approx. 200 properties)

_This tract is mixed and may be broken down into two or three subgroups as context allows. Large single-family houses on Sagamore and Grove streets constitute a distinctive set if they can be effectively separated geographically from more modest single- and two-family dwellings on peripheral streets._

• Survey properties in section developed between the wars on two area forms
  o Area north of Jackson and west of railroad (approx. 160 properties)
  o Area on Century, Woods & Roberts north of Playstead Park (approx/ 74 properties)
  o Area east of Playstead Rd., i.e., Century, Clewley, Gleason, Warren & Wildwood (approx 150 properties)

_These areas each contain one or more planned subdivisions and a variety of distinctive affordable house designs._

• Survey Depression/Post-WWII-era subdivisions on south and west periphery of cemetery and Brooks Estate Land Trust on one or more area forms. Streets include Roberts, Russell, Grove, Josephine, Terrier, Alandale & Norwich (approx. 140 properties)

_This area contains one of the most important post-WWII subdivisions in the city._

• Survey “Colonial Village” on Russell Farm on an area form. Streets include Robinson, Winford & Priscilla; on both sides of Winthrop Ave. (approx. 50 properties)

_This is a distinctive 1938 subdivision of Cape Cod houses. Development overlaps into Winchester._

• Survey “Colonial Village” on Russell Farm on an area form. Streets include Robinson, Winford & Priscilla; on both sides of Winthrop Ave. (approx. 50 properties)

_This is a distinctive 1938 subdivision of Cape Cod Houses. Development overlaps into Winchester._
Medford Neighborhood Overviews

EAST MEDFORD

East Medford is a large and geographically and historically diverse neighborhood in the east central section of the city. Today, it is bounded on the west by I-93, which effectively divides East Medford and Medford Square; on the north by the escarpment on the north side of the Fellsway West; on the east by the Medford-Malden corporate line; and on the south by the Mystic River. The topography is generally flat; the neighborhood was developed on a plateau below the Highlands of the Middlesex Fells (now Fulton Heights) and above the tidal wetlands of the Mystic River (and Wellington).

The neighborhood is bisected diagonally southwest to northeast by Salem Street (Rt. 60), an old regional highway running from U.S. 20 in Waltham to the Salem Turnpike in Revere. A streetcar began service along Salem Street in the late 19th century. Another old thoroughfare, Riverside Avenue, runs along the north shore of the Mystic River and into the Wellington neighborhood in the southeast corner of the city. It was once known as Ship Street due to its association with Medford’s early shipyards strung along its path. A branch of the Boston & Lowell Railroad was brought into Medford Square from the east side of the city in 1835; the right-of-way is still a feature of East Medford’s street plan paralleling Washington Street in the southern section of the neighborhood. Other principal streets are Park Avenue, which runs north-south through the west side of the neighborhood; Central Avenue, which runs east-west between Salem and Washington streets from Park Street east to the city line; Fulton Street, which runs north from Salem Street into The Heights; Spring Street, a north-south artery between Salem and Riverside on the east side of neighborhood; and Fellsway West, which wraps around the east and north sides of the area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The entire area, along with the rest of the plateau on the north side of the Mystic River in the city, was part of a plantation granted around 1629 to London merchant Matthew Craddock, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company. A great house and barn were built near the town green (now the site of city hall), neither of which are extant. Later, land comprising what it now the east side of Medford Square and west side of East Medford was conveyed to Jonathan Wade. (His brick house survives on Bradlee Road in Medford Square.) A historic map depicts the house of Nathaniel Wade on Riverside Avenue in East Medford. Peter Tufts’s farm occupied the east side of the Medford plantation. His house still exists on Riverside Avenue east of Spring Street, which approximates the western boundary of the Tufts farm.

Even more than other towns, Medford was slow to populate. In 1700, there were no more than 230 souls in the town; by the end of the century there were 147 families residing in 104 dwellings. A center began to develop along High Street east of Medford Square in the 18th century with commercial development focused at the intersection of High, Riverside and Main. Shipbuilding enterprises were situated on the Mystic River east of the Main Street (Craddock’s) bridge, mostly on
the north side along Riverside. A map drafted in 1794 by Peter Tufts, Jr. shows only two roads in
East Medford: Malden Road (Riverside Ave.) and Stoneham Road (best approximated by Fulton St.).
The Mystic River is depicted, but only two buildings are indicated, both in Medford Square, a
“Meeting House” north of the river and Blanchard Tavern” south of the river. The characterization of East Medford is not much different on the 1830 map of the town. By then population had doubled, and it is likely that residential development had begun to occur along streets leading east and south from Medford Square.

East Medford Neighborhood in 1855

By 1855 this growth was precisely delineated on a published map. A street plan extended east to Almont Street north of Salem Street and Park Avenue south of Salem. Thacher Magoun’s shipyard is indicated on the south side of Ship (Riverside) Street; he also owned a large unpartitioned lot bisected by the Medford Branch Railway. The rest of Ship Street was largely built out with new streets and lots laid out at the eastern end of the neighborhood. The map documents the obvious direction of early 19th-century growth, that is, rippling out concentrically from the town center with extensions along the three principal axes: Salem Street, Ship Street/Riverside Avenue, and the railroad corridor, particularly at the nodes of depot locations at Park and Spring streets. A pattern of very small lots are concentrated in the northwest corner of the neighborhood, apparently intended to attract working class buyers. The rest of the area remained partitioned into large lots but undeveloped, notably at the southern edge of the hills to the north, the marshes along the river on the south, and at the western outskirts of the town. The largest holding by far belonged to retired merchant Dudley Hall, who may have operated a farm there. Its proximity to butcher George W. Wild’s lot farther east suggests that at least some of the land was functioning as stockyards consistent with Medford’s history as a drover stop and transshipment point.

Numerous antebellum buildings, both single- and multi-family dwellings, are located along streets in this oldest section of the neighborhood. The Old Ship Street Historic District (NR-listed 1975) contains a collection of distinctive Greek Revival-style houses associated with the development of the Mystic River shipyards, but the entire area west of Park Street is characterized by buildings from this period. At the smallest and simplest end of the scale are small single-family dwellings with gabled front facades, corner pilasters, Greek entablatures and trabeated entrances (Fig.2). These houses could be further elaborated with a Greek porch or portico. Introduced in this period, this modest house type was duplicated and refashioned in New England towns in great numbers through to the end of the 19th century. Many like the example pictured have had their design features obscured by later applications of sidings.

There also are single-family dwellings oriented with their gables parallel to the street, requiring wider lots and presenting a larger front façade (Fig.3). Some have their gable ends facing the street with their entrances on a side wall. Some are two-stories in height, but in this middling neighborhood, the larger buildings typically contained two dwellings (Fig.4). The largest house form of this period pairs two-story dwellings back-to-back with a gable end on the street and entrances on both sides and appear to have contained up to four living units (Fig.5). In the context of the current city, all these antebellum dwellings can be considered rare surviving landmarks of Medford’s early urban history. It does not appear that any property types other than dwellings survive from this period in East Medford.
East Medford Neighborhood in 1875

Twenty years later, when the next map was published, the primary area showing progress in development was along the railroad branch line. Myrtle Street, which paralleled the tracks, was packed with small end houses. Some of this development had already appeared on the 1855 map, but it had doubled in size on the subsequent one (Fig.6). It appears to have been the first systematic development of prototype houses to occur in East Medford, and was likely one of the first in the entire city (Fig.7). Apparently, their relationship to the railroad, shipyards and brickyards determined the type of small-house development (Fig.8). The East Medford train depot was located at the intersection of Spring and Myrtle streets, and, by contrast, new streets and building sites were laid out west of Spring and north of Washington for the construction of larger and more costly single-family houses attractive to commuters. Grant, Sheridan and Lawrence streets were platted west of Spring Street and north of Washington Street, which paralleled the rail line, on tracts formerly identified with the Magouns and Lawrences (Fig.6). In addition, two new streets, Dudley and Otis were opened east of Park Street in the Dudley Hall tract, with lots accommodating radial growth at the fringe of the existing city plan as well as railroad-oriented development.
By 1875 domestic architecture in east Medford had adopted the picturesque features of the Romantic or Early Industrial Era. While many of the traditional house forms persisted, they were embellished with overlays in Gothic, Italianate and Mansard styles creating more ornate and diversified elements in the streetscapes. New cross-wing forms were introduced representing a distinguishable change in the plan and appearance of middling architecture. Still, at the lower end of the economic scale, particularly in single-family worker cottages, the old front-gable form with modified Greek Revival or Classical decoration endured but notably reduced in magnitude and expression. New buildings were added on existing lots west of Park Street filling out the plan, with their contrasting forms and decoration indicating their modernity. Houses built in this period on new streets are likewise interspersed in later one-, two- and three-family dwellings.
The shift from Greek Revival to Gothic decoration is obvious on some dwellings, particularly on front-gable cottages where the pointed façade was well-suited to the Gothic treatment (Fig.9). In the pictured example, corner pilasters and side-wall friezes are prominent, but the scalloped vergeboard on the front is the principal design attraction, and the trabeated entrance is relieved by the addition of a peaked lintel. A similar cottage on Myrtle Street, one of the more ornate on the street, features a bay window and bracketed hood over the entrance that, along with brackets applied along the roof edges of both the house and the bay window, give it a more Italianate appearance, although such elements are not rare on buildings evincing Gothic or Mansard design (Figs.8&12).

The real innovation at this time was the cross-wing house, which depending on its size, could be suitable for working- and middle-class families alike. The cross-wing plan, with its asymmetrical exterior and unconventional arrangement of domestic spaces represents a revolutionary moment in house design (Fig.11). Consistent with the taste of the period, gabled fronts were embellished with bay windows and eave decoration, and ornate piazzas filled the L-shaped void between the wings to distinguish the entrance. Larger cross-wing houses designed in the scale and manner of the type of suburban homes promoted in builders’ pattern books of the period appeared on the new streets in East Medford suggesting that the fashion was gaining popularity with middle-class families either working in Medford or commuting (Figs.10&13). Larger in size—typically two-stories in height, with cross wings, rear service ells, front entrances tucked under deep front piazzas that wrapped around one side and terminated at a cross wing. Rooftines of both house and piazza could be heavily ornamented with brackets and other scroll-sawn detail, with the posts and balustrades of the piazza carrying further embellishment. Houses frequently contained a mix of Gothic and Italianate detail, with the latter winning out when there are brackets. The mansard roof was a design option making a passing reference to French taste while expanding upper-story space (Fig.12).
On Washington Street near the site of East Medford depot is a multi-family dwelling that shares some of the same decorative features described above (Fig.14). The suburban-type houses required larger lots and, although few survive, most would have had small barns to stable a horse and keep a carriage (Fig.13). This was another indication of greater wealth when compared to the smaller lots and houses in the older section west of Park Street (or on Myrtle Street), where residents would not have had the luxury of their own personal transportation. There are other non-domestic buildings to identify from this period, and it will be important to inventory them. One is a large building on the east side of Spring Street north of the railroad ROW, which is identified as a post office in 1875 and likely served other functions associated with the adjacent East Medford depot (not extant).

**East Medford Neighborhood in 1900**

The 1880 bird’s-eye view of Medford does not extend east of Otis Street indicating that there was still not much to show in that part of the city. Maps of the city published in 1889 shows little difference in residential or commercial development from the 1875 snapshot. The west side (up to Spring Street) of Dudley Hall’s large tract had developed somewhat by the time the 1900 map of the city was
published (Fig.15). All of Washington, Dudley, Otis, Spring, and the east side of Grant streets were thickly developed, with scattered houses, single and in small groups, in the center of the tract. Blocks of empty lots in this section were owned either by civil engineer James O. Goodwin or manufacturer Josiah R. Teel. The tract on the south side of the railway owned by the Magouns, was also fully platted but with houses on only about half of the lots. Streets in the Lapham tract, intersecting with the north side of Riverview Avenue (Sprague, Lapham, Pembroke, Abbott), were full of houses. Streets at the north end of the neighborhood were also slow to fill in. The far eastern part of East Medford had yet to see any construction. The northern part of the easternmost leg of the Dudley tract remained undeveloped, having come into the ownership of William Dwyer. Two other tracts north of
there, one owned by Angelina Carney and the other by Arthur D. McClellon were platted but empty. The identities of these three Irish-Americans cannot be determined in Medford census records, suggesting that they were speculators from elsewhere. A fourth area north of Salem Street and east of Cherry Street was only partially mapped and divided among three different individuals. The streetcar, introduced on Salem Street around this time, terminated at barns at the city line (Medford was incorporated as a city in 1892), so these areas represented what were still the eastern outskirts of town.

It was in the last part of the 19th century that two-family dwellings became the primary component of development plans. Medford’s population was increasing rapidly, and the eastern part of the city, with its available and affordable building lots, became a target area for expansion. The streetcar line along Salem Street became the axis of the neighborhood, with new streets intersecting with its south side loading up with the current answer to the demand for urban housing: the two-family flat. By 1900 rows of two-story end houses with two front doors and identical fenestration on both levels were appearing on the Salem Street ends of streets in the Dudley Hall tract, shifting concentration from the railway corridor and riverside to the trolley line (Figs. 16 & 17). Single-family dwellings of similar urban appearance were built as well for those who could afford it. These were mixed in with two-family houses on the new streets, as well as inserted in undeveloped areas in older sections of the city, such as on Cudworth Street in the midst of the Old Ship Street Historic District (Fig. 18).
The affordability principle of these mass-produced houses resulted in the economical use of decoration. New houses had a generally plain appearance with few embellishments, which has been exaggerated in recent years with the addition of even plainer sidings—asbestos-cement shingles or metal/vinyl siding—and the denuding and/or enclosure of porches. As in previous eras, porches were the main ornament on the urban house, big or small (Figs.20 & 21). Cornice detail had reduced in importance by this time, but projecting bays on front and side walls were employed to enliven front facades and break up the broad expanses of long side walls (Fig.22). Multiple types and textures of sidings also were used; often wood clapboards covered the first story and wood shingles the second separated by wide board belts or a flared apron. Turrets were popular features as evidenced on many new houses, particularly on Otis Street (Fig.20).

In addition to the two-story flats, some larger and better multiple dwellings continued to be designed as double-house or semi-detached types (Fig.22). Remarkably, the traditional two-story duplex house form with entrances off porches on the sides can be seen as persisting in the pictured example. The
influence of the Queen Anne and Shingle styles is quite evident, most of it coming from builders’
guides and published plans. More intensive research should reveal the involvement of local architects
in the more elaborate instances, as it has done in other places. The proliferation construction begs the
question of who were the individuals doing the work and what were the economy and network
involved.

It appears that by 1900 Salem Street was still residential in character and the current commercial zone
is the result of a gradual 20th-century transformation. Many buildings on the street originated as
houses constructed in all of the neighborhood’s historic eras and were later adapted to commercial use
by the addition of a store on the front or renovation of the first floor. Others were demolished for the
construction of new commercial or mixed use buildings. One of the first of these to be completed is a
large three-story brick block—the Potter Building—located on the southeast corner of Salem and
Park streets (Fig.19). It was designed with three stores at street level, one with a corner entrance
tucked under a distinctive round wood frame turret with tall conical roof. The space between the
second and third stories of the turret are embellished with applied swags as are three two-story oriels,
two on the long Salem Street façade and one on the shorter wall facing Park Street. Recently
rehabilitated, the Potter Building is a landmark commercial building in East Medford.

East Medford Neighborhood in 1930

The remaining undeveloped areas of the East Medford neighborhood built out quickly during the first
two decades of the 20th century, which corresponds with the period of the city’s largest and fastest
population increase. It was at this time that neighborhood services were formalized, with new
schools, a firehouse, hospital, church and a commercial center at Haines Square. It also is likely that
improvements to public water and sewer service finally made the final expansion to the city limits
possible.

The last remaining undivided space in the neighborhood, the eastern section of Dudley Hall’s tract,
then owned by William Dwyer, was platted in the 1920s creating building lots on Burnside, Chipman,
Poole, Evans, Pinkett, Kenmere and Amaranth streets between Central Avenue and Lawrence streets
and a triangular subdivision above Central with a greensward (Morrison Playground) at the wider
west end and Hurlcroft Avenue slanting southwesterly along the historic angled boundary of the
Dudley Hall tract. A subdivision plan for lots within this section on Hurlcroft, Yeoman and Central
avenues and Linwood Court was filed with the land court in 1922 resulting in the construction of neat
rows of identical two-family houses fronted by two-story porches surmounted by a gambrel pediment
overlaying the front-gable end (Figs.23-25). This systematic, speculative development with its
distinctive, repetitive two-family house design is unique in the neighborhood for its size and
uniformity. The streets below Central developed seemingly without a unifying plan and with a mix of
single- and two-family houses (some with gambrel pediments) that were constructed gradually over
many decades.
House construction began in Angelina Carney’s subdivision around this same time. The variety of designs of two-family flats suggests that lot buyers were responsible for building their houses (Fig.27). A subdivision was filed with the land court in 1924 for a portion of Carney’s plot on Linwood, Carney and Emerald streets.

Other smaller speculative row developments are visible in other parts of the neighborhood. At the northern edge of the neighborhood along Fellsway West, about a dozen single-family dwellings were built on both sides of Brogan Street, which borders the south side of the Park Street playground.
A row of six houses of similar design appeared just east of the playground on Park Street (Fig.27). A row of six houses of similar design appeared just east of the playground on Park Street (Fig.28). The central portion of streets running between Salem and Washington streets were slow to develop. One of these, Sheridan Street, was developed with facing rows of similar two-families (Fig.29). These were built in the midst of what were largely single-family dwellings that had crept up Sheridan from the railway line during earlier phases. Farther north, near Hooker Street, a row of two-story four-square-type houses were built (Fig.30). These were a popular builder’s house in the early 20th century, and examples of them can be found throughout East Medford. The recently-completed Fellsway became one of the few areas of the city where three-deckers were built.

Wood shingles were an important modernizing material in the early 1900s and many houses in the neighborhood were built with them covering the exterior, although a high percentage of them have been resided. Most of new Craftsman bungalows built in East Medford in this period originated with wood shingle exteriors to emphasize their non-industrial aesthetic (Fig.31). Their low-slung roofs and prominent dormers, asymmetrical fenestration, deep porches, and restrained ornament are characteristic features, which were immediately incorporated into other house more conventional forms (Figs.32&33). The design of multiple-family dwellings also had a Craftsman variant, with wood shingle exteriors and Bungalow-inspired interior woodwork distinguishing the flats (Fig.35).
In some cases older homes were modernized with an application of wood shingles (Fig.35). The Colonial Revival taste is evident in other houses of the period, such as the gambrel-roof cottage illustrated above, which also shows aspects of the Craftsman Bungalow as well (Fig.36). The more individualistic designs of some of the Craftsman and Colonial Revival houses mentioned were likely developed by professional architects, whose identities are not yet known.

By 1930 Haines Square had developed as a commercial center near the old trolley terminal, which had evolved into a garage and maintenance facility for the city’s bus system, which had replaced the railcars. Fellsway West had been constructed in the 1890s, which made the east end of Salem Street an important portal to the city. This transportation nexus was the ideal location for a shopping center, particularly with Spring Street linking the square with another neighborhood thoroughfare linked to the railroad depot. Furthermore, the great swell in East Medford’s population made a satellite shopping center practical, and it was in walking distance of its latest and most densely developed
eastern section. Undeveloped land on the north and south side of Salem Street at the Spring Street intersection made the change in use easier. All the commercial buildings constructed at Haines Square were built as such, with some at the western edge adapted from dwellings (Fig.37). These include a series of one-story shop rows on the north side of Salem Street extending from Fellsway West west to Grant Street, with rounded corners at the widened intersection with Spring Street. The commercial streetscape begins just west of the bus station on the south side of Salem Street where a movie house and social hall were built to face west on the square. Opposite that is another building with multiple storefronts wrapping around a rounded façade on the southwest corner of Salem and Spring; rows of one- and two-story stores with brick facades extended west from Spring Street to Grant.

The Haines Square stores terminated on the east at the trolley barns/bus garages on the south side of Salem Street and a small apartment house group on the north side, both of which cornered on Fellsway West. The boulevard was the location for apartment house development, which was a novel alternative to multi-family flat and tenement dwellings. Much as today, apartments were small and affordable for newlyweds, older couples or single people; flats were still the preferred housing options for families. A much larger complex was built on the east side of the boulevard in Malden. Another is located at Fulton Avenue (Fig.38). In spite of their location on Fellsway West, there appears to have been no accommodation for car parking, which suggests they were not particularly intended for commuters. There were commercial garages by this time, such as one with a 45-car capacity on the corner of Salem and Dudley streets. By one account, the median in Fellsway West was intended for a railway, but there is no evidence that this ever occurred. These buildings were clearly built from architects’ original designs.
Other non-residential buildings include a Methodist Episcopal Church on the corner of Otis Street and Central Avenue (Fig.40), which appears to have been the only religious property in East Medford. (St. Francis of Assisi Roman Catholic Church is located north of the Fellsway West at Fulton Street.) There are three schools, all of which were constructed before between 1900 and 1930: the Swan Elementary School on Park and Washington streets, the Franklin Elementary School on Central Avenue between Garfield and Farragut avenues (Fig.41), and the Milton Fuller Roberts Junior High School on Park Street north of Salem Street. Dearborn Hospital also operated briefly in a large house on the corner of Park Street and Central Avenue. An elegant brick fire station with a tall hose-drying tower was constructed on Salem Street near Park Street (Fig.42), and when the trolley system was replaced with busses, a building containing a waiting room and business office was sited at the east end of Salem Street near the trolley barns, which had been adapted for bus servicing (Fig.39).
Fig. 43: Map of East Medford neighborhood (outlined in yellow) showing stages of growth. The extent of development occurring by 1855 is indicated in red; expansion by 1875 in orange, and that reached by 1900 in green. The remaining area between the green and yellow lines was built out by 1930.
East Medford Neighborhood after 1930

The East Medford neighborhood has remained largely intact since the final push of development in the 1920s. Changes that have occurred after 1930 include the closure of the railroad and the privatization of the right-of-way, the increased commercialization of Salem Street with a large supermarket replacing the trolley barns at the eastern end (a bus terminal still exists but is slated to be closed), and the rezoning of land along the Mystic River from industrial to high-density apartment developments. The construction of I-93 along the western side of the neighborhood obliterated historic buildings in its path and has created a barrier between East Medford and Medford Square that was not previously there. However, with that exception, existing residential areas have not physically changed over the years. Zoning has preserved two-family houses south of Salem Street but has allowed the number of units to increase in historic one- and two-family houses in areas north of Salem Street and east of Spring Street. Some new construction has taken place on lots left vacant or where original houses have been destroyed by fire or demolished for other reasons. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings, and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: East Medford Neighborhood

- Survey streets indicated on 1855 map and document and map all antebellum properties on B Forms (est. 100 properties)

*Buildings constructed before the Civil War represent a rare and diminishing group of historic resources in Medford and should be documented without exception.*

- Survey area in Dudley Hall tract pictured on 1875 map, that is Park, Dudley and Otis streets between Salem Street on the north and the Washington Street on south and document houses surviving from that period on B Forms (est. 50 buildings)

*The area experienced noteworthy “suburban” growth in the 20 years between maps and this should be investigated to document the architectural evolution and the infrastructure and non-residential development that accompanied it. Buildings surviving from this period are also significant for their age, rarity and potential to provide information about the city’s history.*

- Document industrial archeology of north side of Mystic River

*The shipbuilding enterprises and later industrial development along the river has been addressed in local histories, but the geographical and physical characteristics could be better documented and depicted. (Some of this may have been addressed in studies conducted in the planning of I-93 and other river-related environmental projects.)*

- Document commercial area centered on Haines Square on an area form (approx. 30 properties)

*This is one of the more important historic shopping centers in the city.*
The Fulton Heights neighborhood is located in the northeast corner of the city of Medford. It is bounded on the south and west by The Fellsway West (Rt. 28), on the east by the Malden town line, and on the north by the Middlesex Fells reservation. The southern half of the neighborhood is located on the side of a steep hillside that has its base at the Fellsway West; the northern half occupies an upland plateau. All of this section was originally part of the Charleston Woodlots north of Gov. Matthew Craddock’s 17th-century plantation, which was the origin of European settlement in Medford. Fulton Heights remained essentially undeveloped (and wooded) into the 20th century.

Fig.1: Map of Mendon, 1794. Fulton Heights is outlined in upper right with Fulton Street depicted within.
Fulton Heights is named for its topography and its main artery, Fulton Street, which originates on Salem Street and terminates at Highland Avenue and continues as Woodland Avenue into Stoneham. This road is one of the oldest in Medford (Fig.1). In the automobile age, its importance as a thoroughfare was first eclipsed by the Fellsway West, later by Rt. 28 and, ultimately, by I-93. Highland Avenue, which linked Fulton Street to Malden, and Elm Street, linking Fulton and Forest streets, were in place by 1875, providing passage around the north end of what were still woodlots at the end of the 19th century.

Fig.2: Detail of 1875 map of Medford showing Fulton Heights neighborhood. The parcel named “Town Propy” near bottom became Osgood Park (see Fig.3) And the one named “G. Richardson in center was platted as Highland Park

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By 1855 land traditionally used to provide firewood for Medford households began to be transferred to real estate speculators. A number of large parcels in the northwest corner of the Heights were owned by either Charles Copeland or his son, Charles S. Copeland, confectioners living in Stoneham. Other landowners were C. Cutter, A. Tufts, whose identities are unknown and may have lived in other towns, Elbridge Holmes, a Medford dealer in provisions, and Eleazer Davis, for whom no occupation
is listed. Merchant Samuel Lapham controlled a fair amount of land in the Heights, as did ship joiner George Richardson, lumber dealer Francis E. Foster, fancy goods merchant William B. Whitcomb, and the estate of Unitarian minister, David Osgood. The first homesteads were spread along Fulton Street, with a concentration developing at the base of the hill in East Medford. Nathan Childs name is associated with a lot at the south end of the street; he was recorded as a farmer in the 1850 census. Amos Newton had a farm at the top of the hill that he probably worked with George H. Newton, a relative. Only a few other settlers are depicted on the 1855 map.

Little change occurred in the 20 years between the 1855 and 1875 maps (Fig.2). Highland Avenue and Elm Street had been platted and a few more homesteads had appeared along Fulton Street. The street plan for the Malden Highlands development spilled over the east town boundary (this development was never realized and most of the land it covers was later ceded to Malden). The only other notable change was that the David Osgood’s daughters had conveyed his wood lot to the town for the benefit of the public library.

Fulton Heights Neighborhood in 1898

Two residential subdivisions were platted in the 1890s. The larger and more noteworthy of the two was named Osgood Park, as the 50-or-so-acre plot had been long owned by the Osgood family, which later deeded it to the town. By 1898 the parcel was indicated as owned by the heirs of S.K. Abbott and had been laid out with serpentine hillside roads and numerous, large lots (Fig.3) The map has footprints for three houses that represent the early architectural phase of the development. One of them appears to survive: a small Queen Anne-style cottage with corner tower oriented to the view (Fig.4). The Craftsman bungalow is the predominant house type in the development indicating that construction did not begin in earnest until after the turn of the 20th century (Figs.4&5).
The second subdivision detailed on the 1898 is named Highland Park (Fig.6). The map registers the owner as Anthony B. Palmer, a carriage maker born in England and living on Clifton Street in Medford Square. The lot had belonged to ship joiner George Richardson in 1875. James Howe, another England-born carriage maker who lived in East Medford, owned a lot between Highland Park and Fulton Street. The parcel contains a rocky hillock that failed to be developed and today constitutes a park. (The relationship between the two carriage makers is unknown. The map shows other turn-of-the-century real estate speculators picking up lots in the area, such as Samuel C. Lawrence, who had assembled numerous farm lots on the hillside above Medford Square and created new residential subdivisions. Frank E. Chandler was acting similarly in West Medford, and is particularly known for the subdivision of the Wyman Farm at Winthrop Square. The merchant Samuel Lapham was another figure associated with large tracts of land in the city.
Highland Park was even slower than Osgood Park to develop. There are no turn-of-the-century houses and only a few Craftsman cottages (Fig.7). The development is now characterized by Post WWII Cape Cods and Garrisons. A third subdivision was laid out along two streets (Arlington and Rand streets) perpendicular and south of Winslow Avenue. The groups of small lots on these streets were distributed among a number of owners, such as Irish stone amson Thomas Boland, Irish contractor Patrick H. Byron, gardener Charles F. Cunningham, Sarah Brackett, perhaps the wife of Stoneham shoe manufacturer William BrACKETT, and the City of Medford. The streets remain paper streets with the actual site composed of an escarpment.

The lone dwelling depicted on Fulton Street at the top of the map was occupied by Medford letter carrier Joseph E. St. Dennis and his family. Other Fulton Street households enumerated in the 1900 census were supported by a dressmaker, store sales clerk, janitor (public library), milkman, rubber boot maker (the Boston Rubber Shoe Company is shown just outside the city in Malden Heights), scenic painter, laborer working on city’s gypsy moth project, nurse, and store cashier. At least 12 households were counted. Eight families were living on Highland Avenue with household members working as a poultry dealer, motorman, city laborer, print works labrers, worker at Boston Steel and Iron Works, cigar maker, and expressman.

Charles O. Blomerth owned a large parcel on the north side of Highland Avenue that overlapped into Malden. He came from Sweden in 1857 and was naturalized in 1864; his first appearance in the census was in 1880 when he was living in Everett and working as a paper carrier. He married Anna M. Fernald in 1873. They were living in Medford with their eight children in 1900; Charles O. Blomerth, then 64 years of age, was recorded as having no occupation. The 1898 map depicts two
brick buildings on the Blomerths’ property representing the two very eccentric two-story houses still extant (Fig.8).

![Blomerth House, Maurice St., ca. 1890.](image)

**Fig.8: Blomerth House, Maurice St., ca. 1890.**

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**Fulton Heights Neighborhood in 1930**

Fulton Heights built up rapidly during the early decades of the 20th century, in response to the tremendous growth in population experienced in the city. By 1930 more than half of the neighborhood’s nearly 2000 lots contained houses. The topography and isolation of Fulton Heights did not lend itself to large-scale development of multi-family dwellings as was happening in East Medford and Wellington, and the diminished value of the real estate gave people of lesser means the opportunity to own—even build—their own homes. Local histories contain accounts of hardscrabble urban personalities carving out their homesteads in the rugged terrain. They also have popularized the story of George A. McCormack, who is credited with making it possible for working-class families to own a home in the suburbs. McCormack apparently took over the Highland Park subdivision. The existence of McCormack Avenue south of Winslow Avenue suggests he had something to do with another 220 lot subdivision plan there, which was filed with the Land Court in 1917. Nearly every large tract delineated on the 1900 Medford map was platted by 1930. In 1915 Samuel C. Lawrence’s 55.75-acre parcel between Fulton and Elm streets was laid out with streets named for past Massachusetts governors, such as Russell, Ames, Gaston and Foss. It was originally known as Lawrence Park. The completion of the Fellsway surely had a role in its development. George McCormack is said to have been involved in this development as well (Fig.9). A subdivision plan creating 89 lots on Bailey, Scott & Taft streets was filed in 1911 by transit worker Jim Bartlett, who built houses for himself and his family as well as a nuber for speculation.
As in other parts of the city, the rapid growth necessitated an expansion in services. Sarah Bradley Fulton, a local Revolutionary War figure, was the name for a new school on the street that also bears her name (Fig.10). A second school, built later, was named for the botanist George Edward Davenport, who was one of the people behind the conservation of the neighboring Middlesex Fells. Another of Medford’s distinctive brick firehouses was erected at the intersection of Fulton Street and Winslow Avenue where a small center had developed with a couple of stores (Fig.11). It was in the same area that the Fulton Heights Community Baptist congregation built a new church in 1927 (Fig.12).

Fulton Heights Neighborhood after 1930

Because of the number of available building lots there in 1945, the Fulton Heights neighborhood contains the largest amount of post-World War II development in Medford. And because nearly all of
the neighborhood had been previously subdivided and platted, no planned residential community emerged in that period. However, most pre-existing subdivisions now contain the characteristic Cape Cods and Garrisons of that architectural era, many of them grouped in rows where vacant lots could be assembled in sequence (Figs.13&14). The Garrison house type, with its definitive overhanging second story and three-bay front façade has been found to be have been popular in other city neighborhoods, particularly in the Brooks Estate. The Cape Cods pictured below are distinctive in that they were designed with two-story rear facades to provide more second-story space than the conventional one-story type with dormers. The brick-veneered front façade shown in the Palmer Avenue view reflects the common use of brick exteriors on houses in Samuel C. Lawrence’s earlier development in Lawrence Park in Medford Square. Still, brick—a more expensive material—is not as prominent a feature in Fulton Heights.

The Cape Cods pictured below are distinctive in neighborhoods, particularly in the Brooks Estate. The Cape Cods pictured below are distinctive in that they were designed with two-story rear facades to provide more second-story space than the conventional one-story type with dormers. The brick-veneered front façade shown in the Palmer Avenue view reflects the common use of brick exteriors on houses in Samuel C. Lawrence’s earlier development in Lawrence Park in Medford Square. Still, brick—a more expensive material—is not as prominent a feature in Fulton Heights.

The Fulton Heights neighborhood came closer to building out by 1965 when the current city zoning map was first printed. At that time the entire neighborhood was in a single-family residential zone. When the map was last revised in 1993 a large area in the center of the neighborhood between McCormack Avenue and the Malden town line was still undeveloped. Why this remained open for so long is unknown, but within the last decade, the entire tract has been platted and filled with houses along Tamar Road and other intersectors. A smaller parcel on the hillside below Fulton Spring Road (very near the site of the spring) is also shown to have been developed since 1993. The only other open space depicted on the map represents James P. Carr Park located east of Fulton Street and north of Winslow Avenue.

The construction of I-93 along the western side of the neighborhood did not obliterate historic buildings as happened in neighborhoods farther south. The highway intensified the barrier between Fulton Heights and Medford Square that the Fellsway already had created. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings, and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement.
Fig. 12: Haines St., north side west of Gaston St.

Fig. 13: Palmer Ave., west side north of Belle Ave.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: Fulton Heights Neighborhood

- Survey all surviving buildings depicted on 1900 map on B Forms (approx. 20 properties)

This date represents the end of the “settlement” period of the neighborhood, which was the last in the city to develop.

- Survey Osgood Park subdivision on an area form (approx. 250 properties)

This is a distinctive planned subdivision.

Fig. 14: Aerial view of Fulton Heights, neighborhood outlined in yellow, major development plots outlined in red.
Medford Neighborhood Overviews

MEDFORD SQUARE

Medford Square is located in the center of the city having the Mystic River and South Medford as its south boundary, Interstate 93 as its east boundary, Winthrop Street on the west and the Middlesex Fells Reservation on the north. The topography slopes gradually from highlands in the north to the river on the south. A rocky promontory is centered in the neighborhood north of High Street and west of Governors Avenue. There is a second hill farther north, now within the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

The neighborhood is centered on the five-leg intersection where High, Forest, Salem and Main streets and Riverside Avenue come together. High Street led west to the old town center, where the road to Woburn forked off, and then through West Medford and across the river to Arlington. Forest Street went north through the woodlots and into Stoneham. Salem Street headed northeast through East Medford and eventually to Salem, and Riverside Avenue accessed the shipyards and wharfs along the Mystic before crossing the marshes in Wellington and entering Malden. Main Street crossed one of the first bridges spanning the river and carried travelers to Cambridge and Boston. High and Salem Streets later became State Route 60; Route 38 follows High Street a short distance between Main and Winthrop Streets. Governors Avenue traverses the neighborhood from High Street on the south (just west of the square) to the Fells. Lawrence Avenue is a major east-west artery on the north or upland part of the neighborhood, running between Forest and Winthrop streets. It approximates the route of an earlier mostly paper street named Valley Street.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This part of the city represents what was the core of the plantation granted to Gov. Matthew Craddock in 1629. The site of his house and barn is near the present city hall, which is situated on what once was the town green. Craddock’s holding encompassed all of the land within the city from the Mystic River north to the Middlesex Fells, known in the 18th century as the Charleston Woodlots. After Craddock’s death, the plantation was divided into a number of lots and sold, with a large central lot conveyed to Jonathan Wade. The original plantation house is long gone, but Wade’s brick dwelling stands in its original location on Brooks Lane behind the commercial buildings on High Street.

Medford historians believe it was because of Wade’s control of the intersection of roads within his farm that the town center initially developed in John Hall’s neighboring farm tract west of Winthrop Square (Marm Simond’s Hill Historic District). Yet as commercial activity increased around the river and the Main Street river crossing in the mid-18th century, the town center inevitably shifted there, with the land in between remaining agricultural. Once the town hall, bank, hotel, churches, and stores were concentrated there, Medford Square was distinguished as the town center. A small grid of streets north of High and east of Forest Street, including Ashland, Oakland, Water, Garden and Chestnut, were platted early in the 19th century. They were part of a larger urban plan that extended...
Medford Square Neighborhood in 1855

By 1855 High Street was thickly settled (Fig.1). Merchants and ship builders had constructed mansions along the river and on the opposing hill side to take advantage of the picturesque setting. Only a few of these houses have survived the expansion of the commercial center west along High Street. The Jonathan Wade house (13 Bradlee Rd.) has already been mentioned as an early Medford relic, and it is one of a small number of rare early brick buildings in the entire Commonwealth. Andrew I. Hall’s mid-19th-century house at 43 High Street is the only survivor of a row of three Hall brothers’ houses on the north side of High Street (Fig.2). David Osgood House (ca. 1784) on the corner of High Street and Powder House Road is another survivor of the 18th-century scene, largely because it has been used as the parsonage of the Unitarian Church since before 1875. John B. Angier’s elegant Gothic cottage at 129 High Street was the epitome of fashionable domestic design when it was built in 1842 following plans drawn by New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis (Fig.3). Other genteel houses built by Angier’s neighbors, such as Henry Bradlee and lumber dealer Dudley C. Hall, also were designed in the Gothic style. A more modest High Street example of the Gothic style is carpenter William Roach’s house near Rural Avenue; it served as the rectory for Grace Episcopal Church for many years (Fig.4). Grace Church, one of Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson’s first commissions in 1866, continues to dignify the south side of High Street (Fig.5).

Fig.1: Map of Medford, 1855, detail with Medford Square neighborhood outlined in red line.
Older Greek Revival-style mansions, like the home of shipbuilder Thatcher Magoun that had been on the High Street site (and original home) of the Medford Public Library, no longer survive, but it was in this early 19th-century period that Medford Square was established. (Old photographs show the town hall was designed as a Greek temple.) Although altered, baker Timothy Cotting’s House on Forest Street is a large house reflecting the taste of this period (Fig.6). By 1855 the east side of Forest Street was lined with the stylish houses of Medford’s prospering middle class and elites. Commercial properties spread east from the square along Salem Street, and Ashland and Oakland streets were platted with smaller house lots. One of the first houses built there was owned in 1860 by carpenter John White, an Irish immigrant who came to Medford via California, and his brother, Nicholas, a stone mason (Fig.7). The back-to-back duplex house owned and probably built by carpenter Alfred Litchfield on Forest Street is a distinctive example of the Greek Revival style (Fig.8).

Fig.2: Andrew I. Hall House, 43 High St., ca.1750.  
Fig.3: John B. Angier House, 129 High St., 1842; Alexander Jackson Davis, architect.

Fig.4: William Roach House (Grace Church Rectory), High St. east of Rural Ave., ca. 1850.  
Fig.5: Grace Episcopal Church, 160 High St., 1867, Henry Hobson Richardson, architect.
The Old Ship Street Historic District on Riverside Avenue in the adjacent East Medford neighborhood represents another pocket of Greek Revival period residences. They were associated with the shipyards that were located in that area. The principal “industry” in Medford Square was the Lawrence rum distillery, which occupied a large site in the triangle between Salem Street and Riverside Avenue and extended from there south to the river. This area was the Square’s work zone. Ponds were constructed to contain water for tidal mills. The Middlesex Canal, which was dug through South Medford in 1803, included a branch that connected to the Mystic River opposite the Lawrence distillery. In the same year the Medford Turnpike Company was formed, which built a toll road to Cambridge originating on Main Street just south of the river (now Mystic Avenue). When the Medford Branch Railroad was built in 1845, it terminated at Medford Square. None of these historic features survive to any extent having been replaced by new commercial development at various stages.

Fig.6: Timothy Cotting House, 23 Forest St., ca. 1830.

Fig.7: John & Nicholas White House, 63 Ashland St., ca. 1840.

Fig.8: Alfred Litchfield Duplex House, 72-74 Forest St., c. 1845.
“First Church” was built on High Street in 1770. It is not the site of the current Unitarian church, which originated in a building on Forest Street in 1832, now gone. The Baptist congregation erected their first church on Salem Street around 1841; this was later replaced by one built on Oakland Street (the site of the current church) in 1872. A Methodist church was built on the corner of Salem and Oakwood streets in 1845; it replaced an earlier building functioning on Riverside Avenue in 1822. The Mystic Congregational Church at 70 Salem Street appears on the 1855 map, although the present church building was probably built later.

The urban development of the town center pushed east and south leaving the existing west side of the neighborhood relatively intact and its northern section still characterized by large farm tracts. The Albree-Hall-Lawrence House on 353 Lawrence Road is perhaps the only landmark from this period.

Fig.9: Bird’s-eye view of Medford, 1880; detail of Medford Square neighborhood.

**Medford Square Neighborhood in 1880**

A bird’s-eye view of Medford published in 1880 shows the development of the Medford Square neighborhood (Fig.9). The three-dimensional view provides a sense of how densely the square area had built up; most if not all of the tall commercial buildings depicted had been constructed since 1855, although even this second stage of development has since been largely obliterated. One exception is the pair of three-story buildings east of the Bigelow Block at the intersection of Forest and Salem streets. As also indicated on the 1875 map of the town, new residential construction had quickly filled in the streets platted east and south of the center, notably, on Ashland and Oakland
streets, which are within the current boundaries of the neighborhood. As in other places, a mixture of end and cross-wing houses in Greek and Gothic modes were the norm, with at least one hipped-roof Italianate house on Oakland Street. Most were single family dwellings with the preponderance of duplexes found across I-93 in East Medford. Some larger houses were spreading north along Forest Street, such as the elegant Second Empire-style home of lumber dealer Joseph K. Manning (35 Forest St.), whose business was located on Riverside Avenue east of the distillery. New houses in more suburban styles were being built on lots created along an extended Highland Avenue, now Powder House Road, on merchant Henry Page’s property north of the Unitarian Church. Grain dealer George B. Green built a stylish brick cross-gable house with jerkin-head gables at the top of the road in 1872 (Fig.10). Its elevated site provided vistas south across the river. Algernon S. Lincoln, a bank teller, built a more traditional two-story house on the street that now bears his name (Fig.11).

![Fig.10: George B. Green House, 6 Powder Hill Ter., 1872.]

![Fig.11: Algernon S. Lincoln House, 32 Lincoln Rd., ca. 1860.]

**Medford Square Neighborhood in 1898**

By the time the next map of Medford Square was published in 1898, significant changes had occurred. New brick buildings appeared in the commercial district. One was the Medford Savings Bank, built on the corner of High Street and Brooks Lane. (It has since been replaced by a more recent bank building.) A four-story commercial block containing a Masonic Hall, built across the street, still survives (Fig.12). The Green Block on Main Street and the ornate Bigelow Block, built on the corner of Forest and Salem streets in 1886, are also extant (Fig.13). The Lawrence family still controlled most of the real estate in the center. The distillery continued in business into the early 20th century. They also maintained residences on High Street and owned increasing amounts of open land farther north, which they acquired as farming declined. Existing streets east of Forest filled in with new single- and multiple-family dwellings. On Oakland Street, fancy Queen Anne-style houses and plain end houses intermingled with earlier Italianate dwellings (Fig.14). Duplex houses were built on the west side of Ashland Street on lots subdivided at the rears of large Forest Avenue parcels (Fig.15).

New houses also appeared on the hillside north of High Street, such as physician Charles M. Green’s distinctive Shingle-style residence off Hillside Avenue (now Powder Mill) on what is now Green
Road. (He was the son of George B. Green whose house is pictured in Fig.10.) The grand Greek Revival edifice of the Unitarian Church at the corner of Hillside and High was destroyed by fire in 1893, and was replaced with the current Shingle-style church erected the following year. Across the street, St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church, which occupied the old Second Congregational Church since 1876, had broken ground in 1896 for a new church building, which would not be completed until 1912.

The heirs of shipbuilder Thatcher Magoun donated his Greek Revival-style High Street residence to the city for a library in 1875. The rest of the land was subdivided into lots along Hillside and Grandview avenues. The first house to be built there was a Shingle style residence at the top of Hillside constructed in 1882 for lawyer Baxter E. Perry and his wife, Charlotte (Fig.16). Over the next decade the plat built out with equally distinctive houses (Fig.17). In 1900 residents included banker Charles B. Buss, news dealer Frank H. Peak, and merchant Frank Hervey on Hillside, and insurance agent Frank H. Hamilton, merchant John McPhearson, builder Nicholas White, civil engineer Gilbert Hodges on Grandview. Today the two streets comprise a historic district.
Fig. 16: Hillside Ave., north end at Grandview Ave.

Fig. 17: Hillside Ave., west side north of High St.

Fig. 18: Intervale Ave., west side north of Hall Ave.
The west side of Forest Avenue underwent a transformation in the 1890s. The Bradlee property became the site of a new high school built in 1895. The remainder of the parcel was divided into house lots along new roads: Bradlee, Porter and Turrell (formerly Royal), although by 1900 the pre-existing Bradlee and Bigelow houses were the only ones mapped. (The Bradlee house survives on Bradlee Road.) In addition, an adjoining portion of Dudley C. Hall’s property was subdivided into about 20 lots, including a large one on the west side containing the old Hall residence, which is still extant at 16 Woodland Avenue. Unlike the Bradlee subdivision, this plat built out quickly with large Queen Anne and Shingle style houses (Fig.18).

Governors Avenue was a major addition to the neighborhood in the 1890s. The boulevard replaced an old lane traversing the Hall lands on “Pasture Hill” north of High Street (Fig.19). The Prospect Park development was laid out on the west side of Governors Avenue by James O. Goodwin, a civil engineer who had acquired this rocky promontory from the Hall estate. (Goodwin lived in the Dudley Hall house and was probably responsible for the Woodland Avenue subdivision, too.) Lots were platted along two hill-top streets, Terrace and Summit roads, with the Shingle-style Medford Club building erected where the streets converged at the southern end. The other subdivision, which was

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Fig.19: Map of subdivision plans along Governors Avenue, 1898. Note map is oriented with north to the left. Governors Ave. is the boulevard depicted in the center of the map (the dogleg heading towards the lower left corner was never built and the lot plan was revised). High Street is at lower right with existing residential development on the hillside along Highland Ave. (now Powder House Rd.) and Hillside and Lincoln aves.
never realized, was named Cedar Cliff Park. It filled the rest of the Dudley parcel and was planned by George M. Stevens, who was probably the produce salesman and former carpenter with that name living in Somerville. The map shows Governors Avenue bending northwest at Hall Road (the approximate location of what is now Lawrence Road) and thence bending through a complex tangle of streets. It was clearly inspired by picturesque suburban landscape designs of the period. The rest of the upland section of the neighborhood remained undeveloped.

**Medford Square Neighborhood in 1930**

As the city’s population more than doubled between 1900 and 1920, Medford Square became even more of a central place. Civic, banking, religious, educational, commercial and entertainment functions coalesced around the five-corners and the streetscape further evolved so that most of the historic buildings that exist today are from this period. Notable among these are the following.

**North side of High Street**
New England Telephone Building on the corner of High Street and Governors Avenue
Three Lawrence houses east of Governor’s Avenue (only one left, Fig.23)
New Classical Revival-style bank on the site of Medford Savings Bank on west corner of Brooks Lane (Fig.23)
Two-story Moderne-style store block with stone cornice on corner of Forest Street (fig.25)

**South side of High Street**
Three story Mediterranean-style apartment houses, 148 High Street (now “Crown Plaza Apartments,” Fig.45)
St. Joseph’s Church (1912), parochial school (1929), 120 High Street (Fig.20)
Lawrence Armory (1902), 90 High Street (Fig.21)
One-story Colonial Revival-style bank building, 50 High (Fig.22)
Two-story Classical Revival-style post office building, 38 High (Fig.24)
Opera house, 20 High Street (demolished)
Two-story Moderne-style store block (city offices on second floor) on corner High and Main streets, occupies site of old town hall (Fig.26)

**West side of Forest Street**
One-story store block containing arcade, ice cream store & print shop in rear, 8-16 Forest Street (façade altered)
Medford High School, gymnasium & auditorium added to rear and three story classroom wing added on north end; detached two-story vocational school building located south of it

**North side of Salem Street**
Two-story Colonial Revival-style movie theater & lodge hall, 30-36 Salem Street; rear auditorium demolished (Fig.27)
Two-story commercial, west corner of Ashland Street, 38-40 Salem Street (exterior altered)
Two-story brick transformer station (Malden Electric Co.), 56 Salem Street

**South side of Salem Street**
Two-story parking garage & bowling alley east of cemetery (demolished and site redeveloped with three-story office block)
One-story brick-fronted store block between River Street & Riverside Avenue
North side of Riverside Avenue
Movie theater built on portion of Lawrence distillery site, 22-48 Riverside Avenue (demolished and site redeveloped with one-story store block)
Gasoline filling station & railroad station on south side of cemetery (demolished and redeveloped as park)
Geo. W. Blanchard & Co. lumber, building materials & coal yards (cleared and redeveloped with three-story parking garage)

South side of Riverside Avenue
Old Lawrence distillery site redeveloped as Baltzer boat yard; Blanchard lumber yard; railroad yard (cleared and redeveloped with store and office blocks)

East side of Main Street
Railroad station converted to store block, 18-22 Main Street
Bowling alley added to rear of Green Block, 28-32 Main Street

West side of Main Street
Two-story city office block
Fig. 21: High St., south side east of Hillside Ave., Lawrence Armory (1902).

Fig. 22: High St., south side east of Governors Ave.

Fig. 23: High St. north side east of Governors Ave.
Fig. 24: High St. south side east of Governors Ave.

Fig. 25: High St. north side east of Brooks Ln.

Fig. 26: High St., south side west of Main St.
Governors Avenue Subdivisions

Residential development spread out across the hillside crisscrossing it with a maze of new streets routed around the uneven topography. The existing Bradlee Road, Woodland Avenue, and Prospect Park subdivisions filled out early in the 20th century and, along with Forest Street and Governors Avenue, were packed with large, fashionable new houses well before 1930. Distinctive among them are boxy two-story hipped roof houses in Colonial Revival and Craftsman modes. The Colonials have wood sidings and ornate cornices and porches; the Craftsmans are intentionally plainer and more organic with stuccoed exteriors (Figs.28&29). Shingle-style houses in Prospect Park reflect an older 1890s taste, even though they did not appear on the 1900 map (Fig.30). In addition there were gable Colonials and more conventional end houses, the latter especially on Forest, which was a neighborhood thoroughfare (Fig.28). Lots developed in the second and third decades of the 20th century often are characterized by smaller Craftsman types, including bungalows and cottages indicating a shift in the real estate values and/or builders’ models (many may have been catalog houses) in the subdivisions (Fig.31). By the 1920s, Dutch Colonials and Tudors begin to appear as they do in other parts of the city illustrating changing trends in middle-class domestic architecture. The brick and frame Tudors built on Dutton Circle, a cul-de-sac off Governors Avenue inserted into the Woodland Avenue subdivision represent this evolution (Fig.32).
Fig. 29: Governors Ave., east side north of Porter Rd.

Fig. 30: Summit Rd. east side south of Crest Rd.

Fig. 31: Cedar Rd., north side west of Governors Ave.
The 1920 census provides a profile of the occupations of the residents of these subdivisions. Most can be categorized as management-level jobs in business and manufacturing. Various Bradlee Road households were headed by a wholesale dry goods merchant, bank treasurer, woolen mill manager, druggist and coal merchant. A commission merchant, insurance agent, wholesale clothing merchant and oil salesman lived on Intervale Avenue. On Woodland Avenue, there was an automobile manufacturer (Philip J. Teele) and architect (Michael A. Dyer), as well as a buyer for a dry goods store and two store managers. Tea merchant Dudley Hall lived, not coincidentally, on Hall Street. Forest Street residents included two real estate brokers (named Bradlee and Bigelow), an engineer, stock broker (Linzee Hall), law judge, department store treasurer, store fixtures manufacturer, hardware dealer, and pawn shop owner. An undertaker, cork manufacturer, private school principal (female), banker, and railroad supplies agent had homes on Governors Avenue.

The occupational status of residents in the Prospect Park subdivision seems to be somewhat more mixed in 1920. A plumber, electrical contractor, interior decorator, manual training teacher, factory foreman and a librarian at the public library headed households on Summit Road, along with a lawyer, accountant, and bank bookkeeper. A bank vice-president, real estate broker, hardware merchant and mining broker lived on Terrace Road. Perhaps this reflects the greater value properties with views surely had over those without.

Trincroft and Lawrence Park Subdivisions
By 1900 Samuel C. Lawrence had gained control of most of the vacant land on the hillside north of High Street and west of Powder House Road (Fig.33). Based on the design of houses built there, it can be concluded that he undertook the development of the area in two or more stages in the period between the World Wars. One was planned on the old Samuel Train estate located between Rural Avenue and Lincoln Road and organized around a serpentine road winding up the hill appropriately named Trincroft Street; Crocker, Badger, Burbank and Damon roads may have been platted at the same time. The development contains single-family dwellings of a uniform period and scale expressing current popular domestic styles, notably Dutch Colonial, which emerged as the
Fig. 33: Map of hillside section of Medford Square showing large parcels existing in 1898; most were owned by Samuel G. Lawrence.

Fig. 34: Traincroft St. NW, south side west of Traincroft St.

Fig. 35: House at 73 Damon Rd.

Fig. 36: Traincroft St., east side north of Crocker Rd.

Fig. 37: Traincroft St., west side south of Crocker Rd.
predominant design choice of builders at this time (Figs.34&35). In addition, the Traincroft subdivision contains significant examples of Colonial and Tudor house design (Figs.35-37). As the illustrations indicate, numerous houses have brick exteriors, which is a defining feature of the architecture in the whole Lawrence tract.

The 1920 census contains only a few entries for Traincroft Street and its intersectors indicating that the development was just getting underway. By 1930 the census schedules enumerate scores of residents on Traincroft, Crocker, Badger, Burbank and Damon. Addresses on the existing streets framing the subdivision—Rural and Lincoln—also increased in number. A quick review of occupations for heads of households on Traincroft and the other streets reveals that the initial residents were employed in white-collar jobs such as store and factory managers, product salesmen, real estate brokers, insurance agents, and small business owners. The list also contained a small representation of professionals like physicians, lawyers, engineers and public school teachers. In addition, there were many persons living in the new subdivision involved in the building trades, including architects. Any number of these heads of household could have been commuting to businesses and offices outside of Medford.

The residential subdivision that today generally is known as Lawrence Park is visibly different in scale and design than the Traincroft Street development and is therefore assumed to have been conceived independently. Lawrence Road serves as a dividing line between the two sections, although they appear to have progressed simultaneously. The streets platted on the north side of Lawrence Road are straight and parallel compared to those on the south side indicating, at least, that the former were laid out on a plateau, either natural or man-made, whereas the latter had to contend with a hillside site. One existing street (Lincoln) and another originating in the Traincroft development (Damon) were extended north across Lawrence Road, terminating at the next slope on the southern edge of the Middlesex Fells. Others were added parallel and perpendicular to this alignment extending the street plan west to Winthrop Street where the roads bent southwesterly to intersect its diagonal course (Fig.38).

There are essentially three house types in the Lawrence Park subdivision: Colonial, Tudor and Dutch Colonial (Figs.39&40). All are two-stories in height, although the Tudors and Dutch Colonials have pent roofs or wings to simulate one-story ends. The front facades are three bays wide, and sun rooms are appended to the ends in the standard suburban plan of the period. The rhythm of alternating styles in the streetscape suggests that much of this development was planned and built before houses were sold. Brick veneer was a common option for all types and the material distinguishes this section of the neighborhood (Figs.40&41). These street names do not appear in the 1920 census, and by 1930 many addresses are listed bracketing the construction dates in this decade. Based on the occupations reported in 1930, the development attracted mostly white-collar workers in store, business and factory management and product sales, with some employed in the construction trades. A certain number likely would have commuted to jobs outside Medford, probably by automobile.
Fig. 38: Plan of Lawrence Park residential subdivision north of Lawrence Rd., from Sanborn map, 1936

Fig. 39: Lincoln Rd. west side north of Lawrence Rd.
Brookside Parkway Subdivision
Sometime after the turn of the 20th century, a large vacant parcel east of Forest Street and north of Webster Street, which had belonged to Joseph K. Manning for years, was subdivided into lots along Brookside Parkway, Englehutt Road, Woodrow and Early avenues and Walter Street. The brook giving the parkway its name became the route for I-93, which has separated the area from comparable streets in East Medford. The streets primarily contain gable roofed two-families grouped in rows (Fig.42). The east side of Brookside Parkway and the south side of Woodrow Avenue contain single dwellings, the former mixed in types and the latter having a row of identical bungalows (Fig.43). This planned concentration of this house form is unusual in the city.
The 1930 census records residents’ occupations in categories of store and factory employees, building and automotive trades, and other skilled jobs, such as school teacher, orchestra musician, police officer, hotel chef, optician and gold leaf manufacturer. At least three persons were employed by the elevated railway, indicating that they traveled outside the city to work. Likewise hotel jobs would have been elsewhere. However, many of the occupations described could have been in businesses, trades and service jobs based in Medford Square.

![Fig.42: Brookside Pkwy., north of Woodrow Ave.](image)

![Fig.43: Woodrow Ave., south side west of Brookside Pkwy.](image)

**Development in Highlands**
The last area to address in Medford Square is located in the northeast corner of the neighborhood in a hilly section adjacent to the Middlesex Fells. Both Forest Street and Governors Avenue travel through this section to their terminations at South Border Road. The impetus for development here is unknown, but it was probably related to the completion of Fellsway West in 1898 on the east side of the area and the clamor for homes in Medford during this period. The Highlands section of the city,
of which this part of Medford Square can be considered a part, was the last to develop, and it did so in a less organized and systematic, that is, more individualized manner. That characteristic is evident here, especially in comparison with subdivisions in the rest of the neighborhood. The irregular topography and lower real estate value were clear factors.

The 1900 map identifies two principal owners of the remaining open land in this section. One was Harry Dutton, a department store merchant, who controlled most of the tracts on the west side of the section covering both sides of Governor’s Avenue. These originally had been owned by Dudley Hall. Dutton lived in a large stylish house on Governors Avenue with his family and servants, and his subdivision extended from his back yard north to the Fells (Fig. 44). Land court records document subdivisions on Samson, Stickney, Hutchins, Holmes and Joyce roads in 1928 and 1929. In the 1930 census, numerous residents were enumerated on these streets, most employed in office, factory, and trade jobs. Notable among them is an Italian architectural sculptor named Emilius Ciampa, who lived at 5 Hutchins Road. Houses from this period are generally in Craftsman bungalow and cottage forms; other types—e.g. Capes and Garrisons—were constructed after the Second World War.

The east side of the section, which covered both sides of Forest Street, was mostly owned by members of the Wright-Fay family, who had farmed there for many years. In the 1920s Samuel B. and Ida Wright Fay’s 24-acre parcel became the site of subdivisions along Westwood, Sherwood and Circuit roads, as well as the diagonal Massachusetts Avenue. Walter C. Wright’s eight-acre property south of there was transected by Westdale Road with the arcing Ripley Road having house lots where his residence once was sited. Both plans and their architecture reflect a variety and randomness that define the area. The Fay and Wright tracts bordered a seven-and-a-half-acre parcel owned by Susan M. Kidder where she lived with her husband, David O. Kidder, a merchant. This property was also subdivided in the 1920s creating Roosevelt and Paul roads.

Fig. 44: Harry Dutton House, 110 Forest St.
Medford Square Neighborhood after 1930

By 1930 residential subdivisions thoroughly covered the Medford Square neighborhood outside of the commercial and industrial sections along the Mystic River. No new developments appear, and new construction was limited to vacant lots on pre-existing streets. No distinctive examples or collections of new houses have been located outside of a few cul-de-sacs, such as Clifton Street and Powder House Road Extension. A new type of residential architecture emerged in the period between the World Wars: the apartment house. One of the earliest to appear in the city is located on High Street at the west end of the center (Fig.45). Designed in a Mediterranean style with tapestry brickwork, tile roof and bracketed eaves, arched windows and classical porch, the small three-story building is compatible with the large parochial school built about the same time (1929) next door. Within the next decade a group of four-story apartment blocks were built in the core of the center on a large lot behind (north of) High Street between Governors Avenue and Forest Street that formerly was associated with the home of Samuel C. Lawrence. The low heights, interior-block location and restrained Classical or Colonial Revival design of these buildings diminished their impact on the existing built environment (Fig.46). As the 20th century progressed and land use intensified, more apartment blocks were constructed in the center, and existing commercial buildings, as well as the Lawrence Armory, were renovated into multiple dwellings.

The rapid growth and urbanization of Medford in the early 20th century resulted in the expansion of civic services and improvement of civic architecture. A new, larger city hall was built on the old town green at the east end of the commercial district. Its three-stories housed the growing number of departments managing a city of Medford’s size required. Its “national” Colonial Revival style associates it with other civic buildings built during the Depression with funding and designs coming from the National Works Administration in Washington D.C.. Medford’s post office on Forest Street was built in this period under the same program (Fig.47). The post office was built on the site of Samuel G. Lawrence’s house, which had been demolished as part of the commercial redevelopment of the property. A new theater was built at the same time (Fig.48). The west side of Forest Street was further changed with the enlargement of the Medford High School and the installation of an architectural war monument in front of it (Fig.49). Another landmark of the period and the civic Colonial Revival style is the brick Baptist Church on Oakwood Street that was built in 1936 after fire...
destroyed its predecessor (Fig.50). St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church continued to expand on High Street with the addition of a convent in 1949 and a huge social center built in 1963 between and connecting the church and parochial school (Fig.20). Victims of the redevelopment of the Lawrence property were two of the three 18th-century Hall-family houses on High Street. They were replaced with a one-story store block (Fig.51). The remaining old High Street house and the brick Jonathan Wade house behind have been preserved (Figs.23 & 46).

Another major redevelopment project occurred along Riverside Avenue in the commercial district when the defunct railroad and its associated buildings and yards were removed and the riverfront industrial sites leveled. The construction of I-93 east of City Hall created a new gateway to the city at the eastern end of the center. New one-story store blocks were constructed on both sides of Riverview, along with two- and three-story office buildings, one containing a parking garage (Fig.52). The rounded Sloane Building at the intersection is either a renovation or a replacement of an earlier
stone-faced three-story building. Large surface parking lots were created along rivers edge and around City Hall, all done in the effort to better accommodate automobiles within the old commercial district. Existing buildings in the center show the effects of exterior and storefront alterations made in recent years. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses in the neighborhood have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement. Otherwise, the present has little impact on the historic residential sections of the Medford Square neighborhood.

Fig.51: High St., north side east of Governors Ave.

Fig.52: Riverview Ave., east of Main St.
Fig. 53: Map of Medford Square (outlined in yellow) showing zones (red) of major periods of development.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: Medford Square Neighborhood

- Document extant early houses in detail on MHC B Forms using 1855 and 1875 maps as identification tools, (approximately 25 properties)
  - 18th- & early 19th-century houses on High Street
  - Early 19th-century houses on Oakwood, Ashland & intervening streets
  - Early suburban seats off Forest, Highland & Winthrop

*Medford Square contains some of the oldest and most significant historic buildings in the city.* Yet, in many cases, they are now camouflaged within much later residential subdivisions. These relics should be carefully documented along with a sense of their original settings.

- Survey commercial center on an area form (approx. 40 properties)

*The Medford Square commercial center is a significant historic feature of the neighborhood and city.*

- Survey the 19th-century residential section containing Oakland, Ashland, Garden, Chestnut, Water and Webster streets on an area form (approx. 100 properties)

*This is the only 19th-century subdivision in the neighborhood and contains very valuable resources.*

- Survey residential subdivisions on area forms (numbers approximate)
  - Hillside-Grandview Avenue Historic District, update NR (16 properties)
  - Bradlee Subdivision, Bradlee, Turrell & Porter rds. (20 properties)
  - Hall Subdivision, Hall, Woodland, Intervale & King aves. (25 properties)
  - Dutton-Hall Subdivision, Woodland, Ashcroft, Cedar & Lawrence rds. (60 properties)
  - Prospect Park Subdivision, Summit & Terrace rds. (50 properties)
  - Brookside Parkway Subdivision, Brookside Pkwy., Woodrow & Early aves., Walter & Valley sts. & Englehutt Rd. (80 properties)
  - Traincroft Subdivision, Traincroft St, Rural, Crocker, Badger, Burbank & Damon rds. (120 properties)
  - Lawrence Park Subdivision, Lawrence, Lincoln, Damon, Ramshead, Keith, Judkins, Blakely, Whittier, Whitney, Woodside & Blaisdell rds. (300 properties)
  - Dutton Highlands Subdivision, Charlemont, Brewster, Samson, Stickney, Hutchins, Joyce, Holmes & Ashcroft rds. & Governors Ave. (200 properties)
  - Wright & Fay Subdivision, Westwood, Sherwood, Circuit, Westvale, Ripley & Roosevelt rds & Forest St. (200 properties)

*These subdivisions represent distinct entities within the neighborhood with their own development histories and architectural characteristics.*

- Survey Forest Street and Governors Avenue on area forms (approx. 100 properties each)

*These major arteries are significant areas to themselves. Some properties will also be part of adjacent subdivisions.*
Medford Neighborhood Overviews

WELLINGTTON

Wellington is Medford’s smallest neighborhood and its most remote, being located at the terminus of Riverside Avenue in the southeast corner of the town. It is bounded on three sides by waterways: south by the Mystic River, east by the Malden River and north by a stream identified on one map as Showell’s Creek, with more than half of its area originating as flood plain. (Much of this was obliterated with fill in the mid-20th century.) Marshland separated Wellington from East Medford, an area occupied by a large brickworks in the late 19th-century and since been redeveloped into industrial, commercial and high-density apartment zones. The topography is generally flat with higher ground in the east where a grid of streets was laid out in the mid-1800s by the Wellington family in anticipation of residential development that was slow in coming.

Wellington has become a transportation nexus. An MTA line running along its east side has a station (Wellington Circle) in the southern part of the neighborhood. The now-defunct Medford Branch Railway, once heading west from the Boston & Maine Railroad to Medford Square, ran across the north side of the neighborhood. It serviced the brick yard, and a short spur still links to this site, which now contains a Budweiser distribution center. The Mystic Valley Parkway (Rt.16) traverses the southern edge of Wellington before turning into the Revere Beach Parkway at the junction of Rt. 28 (The Fellsway), which bisects the neighborhood north-to-south. The riverfront between the Mystic Valley Parkway and the Mystic River is preserved as parkland. A new mixed-use development is located in the southeast quadrant of the intersection adjacent to a huge park-and-ride T stop. Commercial development characterizes the northwest quadrant (Fellsway Plaza). The aptly-named Meadow Glen Mall is farther west along Mystic Valley Parkway. An office park has been built on reclaimed land on the east side of Wellington between the railroad and the Malden River.

Riverside Avenue is the principal local artery linking Wellington to Medford Square. This route, formerly known as Ship Street or the Malden Road, is an old one. Middlesex Avenue is another main thoroughfare cutting north through Wellington from Somerville to Malden. Bypassed by the Fellsway, it is still a busy link between commercial areas in the adjoining towns. Otherwise, residential streets predominate, most of them in the grid emanating from Middlesex Avenue.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area that became known as Wellington comprises the eastern portion of Peter Tuft’s Farm together with an adjacent plantation granted to Rev. John Wilson of Boston in 1634. In the 1700s Wilson’s title was conveyed to the Bradbury family of Newburyport. By 1780 it was owned by Captain Wymond Bradbury, who is remembered for his highly cultivated farm. The property lay outside of the Medford limits, which terminated at the eastern end of the Tufts farm, formerly the easternmost part of Governor Matthew Craddock’s plantation. The western half of the Bradbury farm was ceded from Malden in 1815 and the eastern half was annexed from Everett in 1875. The former
action occurred around the time brothers James and Isaac Wellington purchased the farm; the latter after they had platted the high ground around the Bradbury homestead for urban development once the Boston & Maine Railroad (and the Medford Branch) was routed through the farm in 1845.
Wellington Neighborhood in 1855

The 1855 map of Mendon shows Wellington to be largely unpopulated (Fig.1). Wetlands on the south side of the area were subdivided into more than a score of smaller lots, evidently as sources of hay for townspeople. Farmer Charles Hall is identified with a large lot, divided by Riverside Avenue, in the northwest part of the neighborhood. The western part had been obtained from the Tufts farm, the old brick house located a short distance away in East Medford. It was probably Hall who surveyed a series of house lots on three streets—Locust, Linden and Hall—on a small plateau on south of Riverside Avenue in this section of his farm. The Bay State Brick Manufacturing Company was destined to transform the farm into a facility producing millions of bricks a year, and perhaps this small tract along with others appearing at the farm’s periphery in East Medford anticipated this occurrence. While plats were pictured only one was depicted with a dwelling, which may be the cross-wing house still occupying the northwest corner of Riverside Avenue and Hall Street. The 1855 map pictures a lone dwelling on the north side of Riverside to indicate Charles Hall’s farmhouse, which is no longer extant. The northeastern section of the neighborhood, backing up to the corridors of the Boston & Main Railroad and the Medford Branch Railway, had already been hatched with parallel streets numbered First through Ninth and transected by Middlesex and Bradbury avenues. These streets were platted over the elevated portion of the Wellington Farm, giving the development as well as the general area its name. The 1855 map indicates two Wellington houses and a train depot as the only buildings. One of them was the old Bradbury house, which survived until 1968 on the southwest corner of Middlesex and Riverside avenues. The other is the Italianate house at 12 Bradbury Avenue built by Isaac Wellington (Fig.2).

![Isaac & Mary Wellington House, 12 Bradbury Ave., ca. 1850.](image-url)
Wellington Neighborhood in 1875

Significant development is registered in the map of Medford published twenty years later, however little of it was residential. The most notable change was the acquisition of Charles Hall’s farm by the Bay State Brick Manufacturing Company and the rapid expansion of the facility, which included ever-widening clay pits north and south of Riverside Avenue and a series of kilns on the west side of the property serviced by a spur connecting to the Medford Branch Railway. This works would become the largest and longest-operating of Medford’s many brick producers. According to the Seaburgs, “Many of the labor force employed in this yard were migrant workers from French Canada. They lived in crowded boarding houses or in houses ‘packed in closely on both sides’ on Linden Street, Locust Street, and Hall Avenue off Riverside Avenue. Many brought their families. The locals referred to them as living in the brickyards… The houses were quite small, often only one room on the ground floor.”

The 1875 map shows a number of dwellings on the three short streets south of Riverside Avenue, including boarding houses (Fig.3). It also depicts a factory between Locust and Linden streets annotated with Medford Carpet Company and Mystic Print Works, apparently owned by J. Cochrane, Jr., who does not appear as a resident of the city during that time. None of this remains. Existing dwellings and tenements on Riverview and Linden seem to date later than the map, except the previously-mentioned one on the southwest corner of Riverside and Hall that is depicted in 1855. Brick company features are depicted: long kiln buildings, shop, office and other unidentified buildings. An unmarked building on the north side of Riverview east of the railroad crossing may be the remnant of Charles Hall’s farmhouse.

![Fig.3: Detail of 1875 map of East Medford showing NE corner of Wellington neighborhood with Bay State Brick Manufacturing Company and associated streets in lower right corner.](image-url)
The street plan mapped on the high ground at the east side of Wellington overlapped into Revere even though that section was annexed to Medford in 1875. (The map must have been prepared just before the town boundary was shifted.) The 1875 Revere map shows the numbered streets terminating at Craddock Street with the railroad along its eastern side; the “Wellington Pass. Sta.” is sited in the center of Craddock Street at the Fifth Street intersection. Only a few buildings are identified amid the Medford side of the plan (Fig.4). One is Isaac Wellington’s house, already pictured (Fig.2). The other is the house James Wellington built sometime after 1855 and in which his widow Lucy was living in 1875 (Fig.5). The large two-story cross-wing house, once embellished with Italianate decoration, is located on the west side of Middlesex Avenue opposite the Sixth Street. The map indicates that it was probably milkman George H. Ball living in the old Bradbury-Wellington farmhouse on the corner of Riverside and Middlesex avenues. Insurance man John A. Rolfe was living in a house on Fifth Street (now Riverside) according to the map. It is assumed that the two-story mansard house near that location was Rolfe’s and that a similar house on the northeast corner of 

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Middlesex and Fifth was built for provisioner Bailey Mills (Fig.6). Lesser houses appeared at the periphery of the neighborhood center that was organizing around the Wellington homes. A back-to-back duplex dwelling on Third Street and a laborer’s house on Fourth Street were the first to be recorded (Figs.7&8).

![Fig.5: James & Lucy Wellington House, 174 Middlesex Ave., ca. 1865.](image1)

![Fig.6: Bailey Mills House, Middlesex Ave. NW cor. Fifth St., ca. 1870.](image2)

![Fig.7: Bliss Duplex House, 95-97 Third St., ca. 1860.](image3)

![Fig.8: J. Riley House, 156 Fourth St., ca. 1860.](image4)

**Wellington Neighborhood in 1889**

The 1880 census groups 25 households under the heading of Wellington Farms, conveying a name to the developing neighborhood. Included in the list are James and Isaac Wellington, the sons and namesakes of the farm’s original owners. Both were recorded as real estate brokers. Evidently, they resided in their fathers’ homes. The old Bradbury-Wellington farmhouse was occupied by Darius Crosby, an engine builder, who probably married one of the Wellington daughters. (He and his household were residing with Lucy Wellington in 1870.) About 40 buildings are depicted on the map of Wellington Farms contained in the 1889 atlas of Middlesex County. They are still concentrated around the Wellington homes on Third through Sixth streets. These distinctive Victorian Gothic-style buildings are easy to identify amid the sea of later two-family flats that now
characterize the streetscapes. A small school and chapel of unknown denomination had been built on the northeast corner of Middlesex Avenue and Fourth Street.

As typified by the intact single dwellings at 562 Riverside Avenue and 163 Middlesex Avenue, there are some stylish “modern” designs that reflect the work of an architect and/or accomplished builder (Figs.9&10). In the first case, the exterior of the two-story, wood frame house is enlivened with overlapping stories, varied sidings and applied timberwork. The deep eaves of the gable roof and its wide front gable dormer are braced with tall scrolled brackets. A first-story bay window and a recessed corner porch containing the entrance (now glazed) are prominent features. Its red paint finish reinforces the design similarities with William Morris’s Red House in Bexleyheath, London. The Middlesex Avenue house is nearly identical, although with different timberwork patterns and without a front bay window. Its porch has not been enclosed and retains a frieze decorated with sawn work and turnings. Both houses have many features associated with the Queen Anne style, which was in the beginning stages of its popularity.
Other similar houses are extant on the numbered streets, most close to Middlesex Street associating them with the early core development (Fig.11) and providing landmarks of the early cultural geography of the community. More than one were built as duplexes (Fig.12). By contrast, houses appearing before 1889 east of Middlesex Avenue on Third Street are smaller and plainer indicating that lots on northern fringe of the settlement were attracting less affluent residents. Two single-family end houses on the north side of Third Street near Middlesex Avenue employed established forms and decoration (Fig.13). However, some of the innovations found on the “modern” houses were employed, such as the overlapping exterior walling visible on the house at 33 Third Street in spite of the overlay of vinyl siding. Farther east on Third Street and quite near the railroad are four duplex houses illustrating the diminishing status of real estate in this remote and noisy location (Fig.14).

Wellington Neighborhood in 1900

In the 14 years between maps, houses in Wellington Farms had nearly doubled in number, while the western brick yard section and southern marshland had remained essentially unchanged (Fig.15). Lots on Second through Fifth streets had filled in with new houses intensifying development in areas that were already settled. Fourth and Fifth streets show the greatest growth, extending a block on either side of Middlesex Avenue. Little new construction occurred on the avenue itself, however. The architecture was more eclectic, with single-family dwellings predominating. Queen Anne- and Shingle-style features, such as complex facades and roofs, towers and dormers, characterize the buildings (Figs.16&17). Vacant lots are more precisely delineated and identified on the map. Blocks are lettered and lots numbered. They were owned primarily by the heirs James A. Wellington, but whole blocks at the north end of the plan were owned variously by Woodruff & Wellington and Woodruff & Wetherald. Alice E. Hewins, apparently of Foxborough, had acquired all the lots on First and Second streets and Craddock Avenue between Middlesex and Bradbury avenues.
A major change that had occurred in the previous decade was the construction of the Fellsway, which came north across the Mystic River from Somerville and across the marshes straight along the axis of Middlesex Avenue to bend sharply west at Ninth Street and bend around Wellington Farms. It cut across the oblique intersection of Riverside Avenue, Fourth Street, and Winthrop Avenue and proceeded north between the Wellington grid and a large clay pit. Riverside Avenue was rerouted, angling southeasterly across marshland to cross the Fellsway and join Fifth Street. A triangular plot was trapped between the new and old roads, which was platted with new lots; more parcels were laid
out on the south side of the new road. Both were evidently reclaimed from the marsh with the road construction. Shown on the 1900 map (but not in 1898) was the proposed route for the Revere Beach Parkway east of the Fellsway.

Wellington Neighborhood in 1930

Like East Medford, residential construction in Wellington Farms mushroomed in the early decades of the 20th century so that by 1936 the neighborhood was nearly fully built out. Many of the varied designs for single and two-family houses found in East Medford are repeated in Wellington suggesting that the same builders were at work in both neighborhoods. However, single-family dwellings predominate in Wellington Farms. If any early-20th-century design type distinguishes the neighborhood, it is the four-square Craftsman house, which is characterized by rock-faced concrete block basements, wood shingle siding, multi-paned windows, and a hipped roof with deep eaves, closed soffits and a central dormer (Fig.18). The front facades generally contain entrances at one corner balanced by bay windows at the other under wide porches. Windows are generous in size and number, as well as grouped in paired and tripartite units. Side walls, especially where elongated in two-family houses, are interrupted by horizontal bands and/or flaring second stories and tall pavilions capped by pedimented dormers (Fig.19). Colonial Revival-style details embellish porches, doorways and windows.

Fig.18: Second St., south side west of Bradbury Ave. Identical single-family houses built ca. 1912.
A subdivision plan filed with the Middlesex County Land Court in 1912 contained lots on the south side of Second Street and the north sides of Third and Fourth streets between Bradbury Avenue and The Fellsway. A small number of dwellings already existed there, and they were simply incorporated into the new plan. A long row of identical two-story single-family houses with hipped roofs and Craftsman-style features were constructed on Second Street, with a set of larger but similarly-designed two-family houses on Third Street (Fig.18). Still larger and more elaborate two-families fronted on Fourth Street, which angled close to Third in this section leaving insufficient space for back-to-back lots (Fig.20). These houses perhaps were made more substantial because they faced St. James Roman Catholic Church, which was built on the south side of Fourth Street around the same time. Its appearance indicates the increasing size of the neighborhood and its Irish cultural make-up. The small one-story church fronted The Fellsway with a four-story bell tower and there was a rectory south of it and a parochial school east of it. There was a notch in the southeast corner of the subdivision where the two-story Osgood Elementary School had been built to serve Wellington’s families. The 1936 map shows that it contained a large auditorium and a public library branch, both of which would have been used by the community-at-large. Due to changing demographics and economies, the church and school recently were abandoned and demolished, replaced by a new townhouse development.
The four-square Craftsman type was a model for single- and two-family houses throughout the neighborhood, but not to the extent found in the preceding example (Figs.21&22). Some streetescapes contain a mix of four-square and more typical end house types with their prominent front gables. Instances where four-square and end house types are interspersed, such as on Seventh Street, indicate that both types were built simultaneously, often to add variety to a planned development (Fig.11).

Another distinctive two-family house type to appear later in the neighborhood has a front gable façade with a gambrel pediment superimposed over the front gable (Fig.23). A subdivision plan filed with the land court in 1931 covering both sides of Seventh Street between Middlesex and Craddock avenues was filled with these houses. A development of identical houses was built in East Medford on a subdivision filed in 1922, associating this unusual two-family house type with the later stages of the city’s expansion during the period between the wars. The two-family with gambrel overlay also is seen on Middlesex Avenue in the vicinity of Seventh Street, as well as newer streets, such as Wellington Street, which was added when the Wellington family finally gave up their personal property. Of all the streets in the area, Wellington is perhaps the most mixed, having end house, four-square and gambrel pediment types together (Fig.24).
When Wellington Farms reached full development, there was little to distinguish houses on one numbered street from the other or discerning any particular economic or social hierarchies. A cursory review of households in the 1900 census revealed a wide range of white-collar (bookkeepers, clerks, salesmen, bank manager, stock broker, printers, hotel manager, small manufacturers) and blue-collar (machinists, plumbers, stone cutters, factory workers, carpenters, general laborers) occupations. It appeared that the lower numbered streets (First through Third) was where those with blue collar jobs tended to live, with white color types residing in the upper numbers. It is difficult to discern from the occupations listed, if these people (white or blue collar) were employed in Medford or in neighboring cities and towns. Wellington bordered on three other municipalities and had a station on the Boston line, which would have made it an attractive housing area for commuters. It would have been just as easy to get to work in Somerville or Malden as to go to Medford Square, as there was no trolley connection along Riverside Avenue. When the parkways were opened, inter-municipal transportation became even more of a factor of life in the neighborhood.

It does not appear that the neighborhood was commercially self-sufficient, and residents would have had to travel to Medford Square, Salem Street in East Medford, or into Malden on Middlesex Avenue to shop. By the 1920s a small one-story brick commercial block with seven small storefronts had been built on Middlesex Avenue between Third and Fourth streets (Fig.25). Across the street, on the southwest corner of Middlesex Avenue and Third Street, a restaurant was ensconced in the street.
level of an older three-story tenement, an unusual building type for the neighborhood (Fig. 26). With the block-square playground north of it, this approximated Wellington’s public square. Another small commercial block was built on Riverside Avenue near Middlesex, indicating the importance of this major connector street. Otherwise, the only commercial development occurred where The Fellsway intersected Riverside Avenue—a gas station, automobile repair shop and roofing company warehouse—and Revere Beach Parkway—a gas station and 58-car parking garage. None of these appear to survive, although the properties are in similar commercial use. Additionally, large-scale commercial enterprises occupied large lots east of Craddock Avenue and the railroad tracks. The 1936 map depicts the facilities of a chemical company, a scrap metal and scrap rubber yard, and a box factory. These have since been replaced by large-scale office and apartment buildings separated, with the railroad, from the neighborhood by a tall sound barrier.

The Bay State Brick Company was a successful business for many years; its bricks were known to be of good quality and were in great demand during this period of urban growth in the Boston region. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Wellington facility produced between 15 million and 20 million bricks annually. Scores of dwellings and boarding houses on its periphery housed its employees. The business was purchased by the New England Brick Company in 1900, which operated for another three decades years until forced into bankruptcy. By 1930 the company had moved the equipment to its Cambridge plant and the wood frame firing sheds were torn down. When the Friend Lumber Company took over the property the huge clay pits remained open, filling with rain water and debris; at least one was used by the city as a dump. It would not be until after World War II that these pits were filled with material recovered from dredging the Malden River.

![Fig.25: Commercial block, ca. 1920, Middlesex Ave., east side north of Fourth St.](image1)

![Fig.26: Commercial block, ca. 1890, Middlesex Ave., west side south of Third St.](image2)

**Wellington After 1930**

Wellington’s fire station on Riverview Avenue is depicted on the 1930 Sanborn, but it is associated with Depression-era development that is of a different sort and design than the preceded period (Fig. 27). Constructed of brick, it has a gambrel roof and arched openings that, while consistent with the Neo-Federal style of government-financed architecture of the period, was modeled on the nearby Tufts House; the design even duplicating the house’s distinctive port-hole windows.
Another group of “modern” single-family homes appears on the 1930 map on new lots within the triangle formed at the intersection of The Fellsway with the new and old (Fourth Street) legs of Riverside Avenue. These compact two-story dwellings were given the appearance of smaller one-story cottages with the application of gambrel and gable overlays on their ends – Dutch Colonials and Tudors, respectively (Fig.28). They also incorporated brick veneers on part or all of their first stories, all of which contributed to a more suburban appearance for the streetscape. Coming a decade or more later were a development of Post World War II Cape Cod style houses on Sidney Street north of Second Street (Fig.29). The site had been the location of a planing mill in 1930. And these proto-type plan, mass-produced houses represent a rare example of a planned post-war housing project in Medford.
The Wellington neighborhood was undergone extensive change in the last 50 years. The numbered streets comprising the Wellington Farms section was essentially built out by 1930 and has remained largely intact. As in other places where the predominant exterior material is wood, many houses have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings, and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and low-maintenance home improvements. More recent construction is evident on previously undeveloped lots at the periphery or where older buildings have been lost, such as the railroad station, St. James Catholic Church, and Osgood Elementary School. The Fellsway has routed traffic around this residential enclave, but Middlesex Avenue is still a busy thoroughfare. The clay pits and most of the extensive marshland have been filled and redeveloped consistent with large-scale industrial, commercial, office and residential zoning imposed there. Only a small portion of the Mystic River shorelands south of the Mystic Valley Parkway has been preserved as recreational open space. The residential streets south of Riverside Avenue adjacent to the brick yards has evolved into an area of small commercial and industrial properties; yet some of the historic housing survives. All of this has left Wellington Farms as a historic residential island on the city zoning map.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: Wellington Neighborhood

Survey “Wellington Farms” as an area

The approximately 350 properties in this residential enclave east of The Fellsway constitute a cohesive historical and architectural unit that would be efficiently and effectively handled on an A Form. There are recognizable components from each stage of its development and the geography of its growth is documented on maps.

Survey 20th-century residential developments west of The Fellsway as areas

The small planned housing developments on St. James Road (5 properties) and Sidney Street (18 properties) should be surveyed independently and separately on A Forms as distinctive examples of their period and housing types.

Survey scattered individual properties

These include surviving historic residential properties in brickyard section (Locust, Linden & Hall streets) and other buildings appearing to have individual significance (e.g., Wellington houses, distinctive Queen Anne-style houses on numbered streets, Wellington Fire Station). Estimated 20-25 B Forms.
Medford Neighborhood Overviews

WEST MEDFORD

West Medford is located in the southwest corner of the city, having the Mystic River as its west and south boundary and Winthrop Street as its western limit. Its irregular northern boundary is defined by its separation from the Brooks Estate that, although geographically part of West Medford, developed much later as a residential neighborhood. The MTA commuter railroad bisects the area. The topography is flat in the section of the neighborhood on the west side of the railroad where wetlands along the Mystic River evidently were filled and leveled. The section east of the railroad is elevated on the north and low-lying on the south, where it meets the river, except for Rock Hill, a small hillock south of High Street.

The area was the western part of the plantation granted Gov. Matthew Craddock in 1629. His great house and barn were located near the town green (now the site of city hall). His holdings on the west side of Medford were later conveyed in two tracts, one on the east to John Hall and others and another on the west to Caleb Brooks and Timothy Wheeler. Numerous members of the Hall family built homes along Woburn Street; other homesteaders settled along High Street. As it is currently delineated, the West Medford neighborhood contains the earliest central place in the city, constituting the Marm Simond’s Hill Historic District on High Street between Woburn and Winthrop streets along what were old roads connecting to Arlington, Malden and Boston (Hill Ave.) and Woburn (Woburn St.). Medford’s first church was built here in the 17th century and a number of distinctive 18th-century houses survive on High Street. High Street continues to be a main inter-municipal thoroughfare (Rt. 60), while Woburn Street has been bypassed by Winthrop Street (Rt. 38; named Purchase Street in 1855), shifting the major intersection to Winthrop Square. A few farmhouses predating the railroad-era subdivisions can still be seen along Woburn Street. A fourth leg now leads south from the rotary there bridging the river and to the Mystic Valley Parkway.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The neighborhood is now defined by an urban plan that was laid out shortly after the Boston & Lowell Railroad opened in 1835. A depot was established where the tracks crossed Hill Avenue leading to separate developments on either side of the tracks, with lots on the east side being smaller and denser than those on the west. A small commercial district began to develop immediately on High Street near the crossing, gradually expanding with the population. The Middlesex Canal had been routed through the western section, but made obsolete by the railroad, it was filled in and replaced with Boston Avenue. The plan depicted in 1855 survives essentially intact on the east side of the railroad, but the plan on the west side was revised by the time a new map was published in 1875; this revision was realized and largely exists today. Land east of Woburn Street remained in large residential tracts until the 20th century when they were developed in the period of the city’s most rapid expansion.
West Medford Neighborhood in 1855

Roxbury merchant Thomas P. Smith purchased the land west of the railroad and east of the river from Gorham Brooks in 1850. He built a large house and “Mystic Hall” on High Street, the latter serving as the lyceum for Eliza Smith’s girls’ seminary. Smith’s plan for the development, named “Brooklands” is shown on the 1855 map. The resulting street plan does not fully mirror the current plan having fewer streets and lots concentrated in the middle of the tract and deep parcels along the river that continued to contain marshland. Notable are the two small parks created at the northern and southern ends of the plan. Boston Avenue is mapped as the widest street and it flares out where it meets the river as if the dimensions still relate to the canal and a basin; a river crossing had yet to be built. Monument and Bower streets parallel Boston Avenue on the south and north, respectively, with Harvard Street the principal cross axis (Fig.1).

The footprint of a large house is pictured on the southeast corner of Boston and Bower; the Italian villa now on Bower Street may be that building moved back when the Harvard Street frontage commercialized (Fig.2). The only other section where buildings are located is close to the river along Lowell (now Canal) Street. The names of carpenter Daniel Gunn and Thomas P. Smith are associated with two of them. Smith also owned the parcel located between the railroad and Canal Street, which has since developed commercially. Clergyman James M. Usher is shown owning a large lot north of High Street and east of the railroad; he would play a major role in the development of West Medford’s commercial core.
Edmund Trowbridge Hastings originated the improvements on the east side of the railroad. He owned property on both sides of High Street west of Woburn Street and resided near the river just east of a promontory near the river, named Rock Hill on the 1855 map. (The house survived until fairly recently, replaced with a small residential subdivision on Alto Drive.) Hastings and his neighbor, Samuel Teel, Jr., whose property—also on both sides of High Street—contained an old 18th-century gambrel-roof house (411 High St.), took a combined 200 acres and laid out streets and building lots around 1845, planting trees to picturesque advantage. It was known as Hastings Heights. The western limit of the plan is said to have extended to the railroad, but innkeeper James M. Usher owned a fair amount of property near the crossing. Thus, the Hastings-Teel plat included Cottage, Allston, Auburn, Mystic and Prescott streets south of High Street and Irving (Warren), Allston, Mystic, Laurel and Vernon streets north of it. Adjacent to the east side of Hastings Heights was the estate of Jonathan Brooks, which remained intact for many years after.

Lots on the south side of High Street were smaller and less expensive. The sole dwelling appearing on the 1855 map was the home of blacksmith James B. Turner on Prescott Street. By 1855 only two dwellings existed at the northern end of Allston Street near Hastings Park, a rocky promontory between Laurel, Vernon, Allston and Mystic streets where a stone water tower constructed in this period remains. The only other buildings pictured are along the north side of High Street, most of which pre-existed the development. They include the residences of Irving Huffmaster, whose occupation was recorded as farmer, broker Nathaniel Tracy, merchant William Haskins, Unitarian clergyman John Pierpont, and J.W. Hastings, the developer’s son. Charles Brooks, son of Jonathan Brooks, was living on his father’s High Street estate based on his proximity to these other residents in the 1860 census schedule (Fig.3).
West Medford Neighborhood in 1875

Samuel S. Holton, a boot and shoe dealer living in Winchester, is shown owning most of the vacant land and a number of houses in the subdivision west of the railroad. He headed a group of investors who acquired the tract from Thomas P. Smith’s estate. The street plan was revised consistent with current conditions (Fig.4). Samuel S. Holton’s son and namesake resided in a house on Boston Avenue near Holton Street; he was listed as a resident of Medford in the 1880 census with the occupation of “real estate.” The only other house on Boston Avenue at the time belonged to George F. Spaulding, publisher of the Boston Traveler, forerunner of the Boston Herald. Nearly all of the development occurring at this time was concentrated on the lesser lots close to the river, particularly Jerome Street and Riverside Avenue (now Arlington Street).

![Fig.4: Map of West Medford, 1875.](image)

A number of the houses depicted on the map were owned by Moses W. Mann, a young architect and builder born in Vermont, who resided on the southwest corner of Winthrop (now Sharon) Street and Harvard Avenue in a house no longer extant. Mann was Samuel S. Holton’s son-in-law. Real estate agent Eugene R. Guptill also owned a house and vacant lots in the area. Likewise did J.H. Wight and H. Buxton, although their identities are unknown. Few, if any, of the houses shown on the map appear to have survived. The two churches highlighted in yellow on the map also are gone. A fire
station occupies the site of the Congregational church on the northeast corner of Harvard and Bower; in 1875 an engine house was located on Canal Street near High Street. A Methodist chapel depicted at the intersection of Bower and Holton streets was later replaced with a larger church on the same property.

Hastings Heights was filling in more rapidly. By 1875 most of Allston, Brook and Warren streets on the north side of Hill Avenue had built out with substantial new homes, many in the mansard style (Fig.5). Large sections along Mystic Street were still undeveloped, some of the lots on the east side of the street associated with merchant John B. Hatch’s residence just off High Street. Hatch owned lots on the east side of Mystic south of High Street as well. Brothers Richard P. and Edward N. Hallowell, both Quakers active in the Anti-Slavery Movement, owned the block of lots on the west side of Mystic and east side of Auburn; they lived in neighboring houses in the middle of the block. A school had been built on the south side of Hill Avenue between Auburn and Allston streets, in the midst of a dense concentration of smaller dwellings characteristic of the development between Hill Street and the river. A mansard house built in 1872 on the east side of Allston Street illustrates the diminished scale of dwellings in this area (Fig.6). A row of story-and-a-half end houses on the other side of the street were, in 1875, harbingers of the proliferation of this prototype affordable house. The streetscape along the south side of Prescott Street contains a variety of period house types (Fig.7).

Commercial development had apparently begun on High Street at the railroad crossing, particularly on the land James M. Usher owned. Appropriate buildings are pictured on the 1875 map, but business functions cannot be discerned. Mystic Hall was functioning as a store under Samuel S. Holton’s ownership. The Smith residence was occupied by “J. Doane,” possibly carpenter Joel Doane.

![Fig.5: Warren Street, east side north of Irving Street (41, 445 & 51 Warren St., r to l).](image-url)
West Medford Neighborhood in 1889

In the 14 years between published maps, the Brooklands development, if it was still considered such, had built out substantially (Fig.8). Boston Avenue, the main thoroughfare, was lined with large new houses, some designed in the old Gothic and Mansard fashions of mid-century dating them closer to 1875 and others in the Queen Anne and Shingle styles current in 1889 (Figs.9&10). When a bridge crossing the Mystic River was completed sometime before the 1889 map, the area became less remote from the rest of the city. A bridge at Hill Street linked with Arlington; perhaps Arlington Street received its name because it was intended to be a secondary route to the crossing. Harvard Avenue did not bridge the river at this time. The nearest streets flanking Boston Avenue were Bower and Monument streets, and they were also nearly fully developed by 1889 (Fig.11). Two schools had been opened on Sharon Street in the next tier of streets indicating the number of families settled in the area. The streets most remote from Beacon Avenue and closest to the river—Sharon, Jerome, Lincoln and Arlington—were slower to build up overall, with most of the development occurring between Harvard Avenue and Linden (now Fairfield) Street. Vacant lots predominated north and south of these blocks.

Common knowledge is that this subdivision adjacent to the railway was intended to attract new residents who would commute to jobs outside of Medford’s borders. A review of job descriptions in the 1880 and 1900 censuses (the 1890 census no longer exists) do not immediately lead to this conclusion, but it is possible that many of the store and office clerks, bookkeepers, factory workers, skilled tradesmen and professionals worked elsewhere and used the train to get to their jobs. In addition, there were carpenters, plumbers, electricians, masons, stone cutters who were just as likely employed locally building new houses and repairing old ones. West Medford’s African American community began its settlement on the streets at river’s edge, and the home of at least one of its noted persons, caterer James R. Young, is depicted on Jerome Street in 1889. This represents the beginning of a wave of black families, coming mostly from Virginia and North Carolina (Young was born in Alabama), into Medford who integrated Sharon, Jerome, Lincoln and Arlington streets and created a historic community.
Fig.8: Map of West Medford from 1889 county atlas.

Fig.9: Boston Ave., west side south of High St.
By 1889 Hasting Heights lots were pretty much filled to capacity. Mansard houses are prevalent during this time, along with large end houses showing Gothic and Queen Anne tastes (Fig.12). Houses on the hillside north of High Street were becoming more modern and distinctive in their design, which began to set this area apart from the Brooklands section west of the tracks. While Boston Avenue developed with large houses in a fully-developed Queen Anne style complete with verandas, towers, and complex roof and siding patterns, such elaboration was limited to that street and its intersections (Fig.11). Houses on streets west of Boston Avenue are plainer in design. In
Hastings Heights there was no such hierarchy, at least north of Hill Street. (The section on the south side of the main artery, which had developed first, was simpler and more conservative in design.) In this way, the hillside development was more uniform in the status of its housing and owners. This was clearly a white-collar neighborhood with heads of households having occupations at the ownership or management level in local businesses, as professionals (physicians, dentists, engineers, newspapermen), and in real estate rather than construction. Many of the households contained servants.

![Fig.12: Allston Street, south of Laurel Street.](image)

The occupations of residents south of High Street were more mixed, with two dentists, a printer and a carriage maker living on Prescott Street in 1900 and a machinist, gardener, dressmaker, pedlar and laborer heading households on Auburn Street. Few if any of these houses accommodated servants. The public school (Brooks School) still occupied a large lot between Allston and Auburn on the south side of High Street. Another one, dubbed the Gleason School (not extant), had opened on the hillside on the northeast corner of Warren and Madison streets. (The Gleason School now is located in a 1920’s era building on Playstead Road in the Brooks Estate neighborhood.) Large portions of the Hastings estate south of High Street remained undeveloped in 1889 as did the Jonathan Brooks estate. The carpenter John H. Norton had built five houses on Woburn Street lots he evidently had purchased from the Brooks estate. Of these, at least two survive, one a mansard house and the other an end house.

Commercial activity was increasing around the railroad depot. A new brick station had been built in 1880 and J.M. Usher, S.S. Holton and others had built new and larger edifices. Holton introduced the
first brick building at the corner of High Street and Harvard Avenue (Fig.13). It is three stories tall
with a mansard roof and had street-level store fronts (now infilled). Another survivor from this
period is a two-story wood frame building with a mansard roof and corner turret at the intersection of
High and Warren (Fig.14). It was owned by C.E. Brown, possibly Carrie E. Brown, wife of
photographer Alden F. Brown, who both lived on Jerome Street in 1900. Otherwise nothing else that
survives appears to relate to foot prints on the 1889 map. One result of the growth of West Medford’s
population, local economy and neighborhood identity was the emergence of a group of local citizens
intent on the neighborhood seceding from the City of Medford and establishing its own municipality
with the name of Brooks. Obviously, this insurrection was not successful, but more than other
Medford neighborhoods, West Medford developed as a distinct entity.

Fig.13: Harvard St., east side south of High St.

Fig.14: High St., north side east of Warren St.
West Medford Neighborhood in 1900

Residential development advanced through to the end of the 19th century and was spread out evenly across the various sections of the neighborhood leaving fewer vacant lots interspersed among the houses. (Some of these would have been associated with neighboring properties as side yards.) The landscape matured. On the hillside portion of Hastings Heights, new short terraces and courts were introduced intensifying and urbanizing the plot plan. The Brooks heirs still controlled the family property on High Street, and it remained essentially open. So did the old Wyman Farm that filled the space between the Brooks’s place and Winthrop Avenue. Edmund T. Hasting’s house and grounds had been conveyed to George S. Hatch, a state tax commissioner. He was the son of John B. Hatch and had grown up in the neighborhood. Hastings Lane was created from the driveway with new houses constructed along the west side and on Rock Hill. Hatch held some of this land in partnership with Frank E. Chandler, a grain merchant and son of Joseph Chandler of South Street. (Chandler would later acquire and subdivide the Wyman Farm.)

![Fig.15: West Medford Baptist Church, southwest corner Boston & Harvard aves.](image)

![Fig.16: West Medford Methodist Church, southwest corner Bower & Holton sts.](image)

![Fig.17: House at 12 Temple St.](image)

![Fig.18: Holton St., south side east of Sharon St.](image)

New stylish architecture appeared consistent with the suburban mode sweeping through Medford and surrounding towns. Two shingle-clad churches were built west of the railroad are similar enough to
have been the work of the same architect/builder. The Baptist church on Boston Avenue is larger and accompanied by an annex and a detached manse (Fig.15). The Methodist church on Bower Street is smaller and appears to contain an Akron plan popular with Methodists in the period (Fig.16). Both buildings have tall square towers with entrances in their bases. The Shiloh Baptist Church, an African American congregation, recently has moved to the Methodist church from the church it built on Lincoln Street in the early 1900s. The asymmetrical house on Temple Street east of Boston Avenue is a further example of the architecture popular in West Medford in 1900. Its elaborate design attains a high standard (Fig.17). Lesser houses continued the local tradition for end houses and more modest decoration (Figs.18&19). This conservatism is also evident in row of new end houses built on Boston Street with their boxy forms and front gable orientations updated only with wood shingle siding and turrets (Fig.20). In Hastings Heights, shingle-sided four-square type single dwellings were common additions in this period (Fig.21).

Fig.19: Arlington St., east side south of Harvard St.

Fig 20: Boston Ave., north side east of High St.
The most notable building to appear in West Medford was the three-story brick commercial block built by the Usher family on High Street at the railroad crossing (Fig. 22). It is the largest and most distinctive architectural object outside of Medford Square, and it would stimulate more commercial development, much of by the Ushers, in the new century. Bent around a corner, a tall gabled pavilion faces the intersection flanked by identical facades facing High Street and Playstead Road. Street-level storefronts are surmounted by windows framed in stone in the upper stories. Dormers in the tall chateau roof contain arched windows, the largest being in the gable of corner façade. West Medford clearly upgraded its image with this building, particularly to train riders.
West Medford Neighborhood in 1930

Unlike East Medford and South Medford, West Medford was sufficiently built out with single-family dwellings by 1900 that there was little space for large developments of two-family houses. This is a somewhat arbitrary distinction, since areas where such development occurred, notably on cross streets between Playstead Road and Warren Street and streets north of High Street west of the railroad, have been delineated within the Brooks Estate neighborhood. One such development exists within the bounds of West Medford neighborhood on Circuit and Bower streets. The parcel abutting the west side of the railroad tracks south of Harvard Avenue remained vacant until after 1900 when it was owned by Anne Buffen (Charles Larned was the owner in 1889). The two-story hipped-roof buildings echo single dwelling forms popular in the neighborhood (Fig.23). Other two-family houses were added ad hoc on vacant lots throughout the Brooklands section west of the tracks, particularly on the riverside streets where more lots were available and economics made multiple dwellings more practical.

Significant changes had occurred along the commercial section of High Street in the 30 years between maps. Nearly all of the buildings east of the railroad crossing were constructed in this period. A three-story wood frame mixed-use building was erected east of the Usher Block containing two stores at street level and distinguished by pediments superimposed on the upper stories of the front facade. Next door is a distinctive one-story brick six-store block that wraps around the corner on Warren Street. The restaurant installed in the corner space is still intact and functioning (Fig.24). Three one-story store blocks were located across the street, all of which remain. Two on the eastern end are masonry faced with brick and stone; the westernmost one is wood frame. A steam laundry and
parking garage occupied the rear of the lot along the tracks, but they have been removed. A large masonry parking garage constructed in this period to accommodate 70 cars survives around the corner on Canal Street. East of Canal Street, there was a distribution center for Hood dairy products; it has been replaced with a four-story apartment block. The Medford Post Office, apparently a WPA project, is located on the north side of the street (Fig.14). Around the corner on Playstead Road on the lot behind the Usher Block is a tiny building now functioning as a laundromat. The 1936 map depicts it as a bank.

High Street west of the railroad has been redeveloped at the expense of older commercial properties pictured on the 1936 map, including the West Medford station built in the 1880s. St. Raphael’s Roman Catholic Church was built on the site of the Mystic Hall Seminary. (This church has only recently been demolished following the construction of a new church on the site.) Farther west, Brentwood Court Apartments were built in the 1920s; it is one of the more distinctive of the few such buildings in the city (Fig.26). From this point, High Street returns to residential uses, with the exception of a one-story store block on the corner of Boston Avenue. (There is another distinctive neighborhood store block on the southwest corner of Boston Avenue and Arlington Street.)

Notable among commercial survivors is the three-story building containing a fraternal lodge added to Harvard Avenue (Fig.13). It appears that the old Congregational church next door was adapted for a fire house after the West Medford Congregationalists built a new church next to the Brooks School on the corner of High and Allston streets. (The fire company occupies a new building since built on the site.) A large service and parking garage was built across the street; it has been replaced by an apartment block. A second garage, built with a 40 car capacity survives on the south side of Harvard west of Bower Street. The one-story drug store shown adjacent to it on the 1930 map is extant as well.

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Fig.24: High St., north side west of Warren St.
The last area of the West Medford to develop was in its eastern section where four large estates were finally subdivided. In addition, there were a number of larger suburban properties at the northwestern end of Woburn Street that were subdivided into smaller house lots as Medford continued to urbanize in the mid-20th century. These were some of the last sections of the city to develop (Fig.27). What was left of Edmund T. Hastings personal estate after Hastings Heights was created amounted to his Federal Period home on Hastings Lane and land to the east located between High Street and the river. By 1900 lots had been platted around the house on Hastings Lane with the remaining land coming into the possession of George S. Hatch, including unsold lots in Hastings Heights. He built a new house on the east side of Hastings Lane, and the open space was preserved until after the Second World War, when the present subdivision was made.
The remaining property of the old Jonathan Brooks estate bridging High Street west of Woburn Street was subdivided and fully developed between 1900 and 1930. (Who was responsible for this project is currently unknown.) Wolcott Street and Austin Road were created in this plat, along with an extension of Wyman Street. The planned development interspersed Four Square house types in Craftsman and Shingle styles with Dutch Colonial Revival Style houses with their characteristic false gambrel roofs (Fig.28). The latter house design would come to dominate residential subdivisions built in Medford Square neighborhoods during this period and later.
The Puffer property located on the west side of the intersection of High and Winthrop streets (Winthrop Square) also was subdivided in this period after years of being open and associated with a single family. House lots had been created earlier along Winthrop Street, but in the early 20th century Essex Street was routed through the triangular parcel on the north side of High Street and a uniform group of brick houses built on both sides (Fig.29). Essex Street connected on the north with a road system laid out in the adjacent Chandler tract, but the uniqueness of the brick house group identifies the development of the Puffer plot with a different builder. Brick was a primary material in the construction of similar houses in nearby Lawrence Park in the Medford Square neighborhood. Distinctive in the design of the Essex Street houses is the superimposition of a gable pent on the facades of many of the houses in a Tudor Revival style. The Puffer tract crossed over High Street and extended to the river. This parcel had been subdivided by 1936, but house construction did not occur until later in the century.

Fig.29: Essex St., east side south of Whitman Rd.

Fig.30: Suffolk St., east of Woburn St.
The other large property to be developed in this period was the old Wyman farm that encompassed the area between Woburn and Winthrop streets from High to Brooks. The 1900 map indicates it was then owned by Frank E. Chandler, who likely acquired the farm to create the residential development that was nearly fully built out over the next three decades. New streets named Suffolk, Dover, Monmouth, Exeter and Chandler were laid out in an irregular suburban pattern, especially Chandler, which winds around a rocky promontory at the north end of the tract. House design includes the forms and styles characteristic of suburban architecture in the period between the wars: Colonial, Dutch Colonial and Craftsman (Fig.30).

One grand house was built on Rock Hill at the turn of the 20th century. From a distance, its Federal Revival design is authentic enough to be deceptive (Fig.31). According to the Seaburgs’ Medford on the Mystic, the mansion was designed by either George P. Fernald, who lived there, or his brother, Albert, who were Boston architects. The two-story house with portico and matching wings was reputedly modeled after a period house in Providence, Rhode Island. The property was listed on the National Register in 1976.

The construction of the Mystic Valley Parkway along the north shore of the river eradicated earlier street sections and lots, absorbing most of the land into parkland. New lots were created on the north side of the parkway at the south end of the Hastings Heights development (Auburn and Mystic streets), and houses, many of them two-family types, were quickly built there as if the parkway and opposing reservation were assets. Later, similar development occurred west of Winthrop when the Hastings-Hatch property was finally subdivided. Ever-increasing traffic on the Parkway has created a...
different environment, with some of these properties turning commercial. One noteworthy automobile-related historic feature is a gas station on Winthrop Street built before 1936 (Fig.32).

![Gas station, ca. 1925, 530 Winthrop St.](image)

**West Medford Neighborhood after 1930**

While there are numerous mid-20th-century buildings scattered about the neighborhood, the result of ad hoc house construction or commercial redevelopment, few of them are more than simple evidence of the additive process of urban history. As one moves closer to the outskirts of the city on Woburn Street subdivisions planned during the Depression and Post-WWII eras become common distinguishing this section of the city of one of its most important mid-20th-century expansion areas. Most of this section is contained in the Brooks Estate neighborhood. In West Medford, subdivisions made during this period are limited to late-developing areas between High Street and the Mystic Parkway, as described above, such as on Schoolhouse and Daly roads and the southern end of Hastings Lane. One distinctive group of houses was built just before the war on land the Hallowell family owned on Auburn and Mystic streets (Fig.33).

Another area illustrative of post-1930 change represents much more recent redevelopment activity. The north side of High Street west of the railroad crossing was long distinguished by a stylish station built in the 1880s. It is pictured on the 1936 map, but more recently, it has been lost (reason unknown) and replaced by two one-story store blocks, one containing the post office (Fig.34). However, the height, form and functions of the new buildings reflect that of the historic one-story
Fig. 33: Mystic St., west side south of High St.

Fig. 34: High St., north side west of railroad crossing

Fig. 35: High St., south side east of Bower St.
store blocks on the east side of the tracks thereby maintaining the scale of the commercial area. The south side of High Street has also been redeveloped at the expense of buildings extant in 1930. The original St. Raphael’s Roman Catholic Church built by 1930 has been demolished after a new church building was recently erected, and construction is underway on a new building on the site of the old church. A two-story school building has been added west of the church, where a rectory once stood (Fig.35). Two multi-story commercial buildings once on the short section of High Street between Harvard Avenue and railroad tracks have been replaced with a comparatively miniscule Dunkin Donuts store, leaving a void in the streetscape. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement. Otherwise, the present has little impact on the historic West Medford neighborhood.

Fig.36: Map of West Medford (outlined in yellow) showing principal areas of development. Subdivisions in Brooklands and Hasting Heights occurred in ca. 1850. The four areas on the east side of the neighborhood (Brooks, Hastings, Chandler and Puffer) were subdivided and developed after 1900.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: West Medford Neighborhood

- Document extant early houses in detail using 1855 and 1875 maps as identification tools (approx. 25 properties).
  - 18th-century houses on High Street (Marm Simonds Hill Historic District)
  - Houses on Woburn Road

West Medford contains some of the oldest and most significant historic buildings in the city. Yet, in many cases, they are now camouflaged within much later residential subdivisions. These relics should be carefully identified and their historically documented along with a sense of their original settings.

- Survey High Street commercial district on an area form (approx. 25 properties)

The West Medford commercial center is a significant historic feature of the neighborhood and city. Anchored by the imposing Usher Block, its continued preservation in important.

- Survey Brooklands subdivision on one or more area forms (300-400 properties)
  - Boston Avenue & cross streets
  - African American community
  - Identify individually significant properties

Brooklands (west side of tracks) is one of Medford’s earliest and important residential subdivisions. It has a long history and better documentation would be valuable on a number of levels. There is a wide range of domestic architectural types and periods worthy of recording and analysis, although due to the high number of components, a more categorical approach to data lists may be warranted.

- Survey Hastings Heights subdivision on an area form (approx. 250 properties)

Hastings Heights is an important mid-19th-century residential subdivision. It has numerous examples of mid-century houses, particularly on the west side of the development near the commercial center, as well as houses reflecting post-Civil War suburban design. This latter category would benefit from a more detailed classification of design features.

- Survey four eastern development tracts separately on area forms
  - Hastings Estate (approx. 26 pre-WWII houses + equal amount post WWII ones)
  - Brooks Estate (approx. 60 houses)
  - Puffer Estate (approx 45 houses on High St. and north of High St.; including 20 brick houses on Essex St., approx 16 houses on Schoolhouse Rd & Winthrop St. south of High)
  - Wyman Farm/Chandler Subdivision (approx. 150 properties)

Each of these four developments contain examples of late-19th- and early-20th-century domestic design worthy of inventorying and classifying beginto understand the defining features of Medford’s architectural history.
Annotated Bibliography

Maps
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This article provides background of an important development area in the city.
A theoretical rethinking of suburban history models.
This article provides background of an important development area in the city.


Context for early suburban development


Context and methodology for Medford study.


This is a collection of newspaper articles on local history with occasional relevance to the development history of the city.


This article provides background of an important period in Medford’s development history.


This book provides background of an important area in the city.


A review of selected city directories will be helpful in getting a sense of the occupations of residents and their locations.


This is a new publication summarizing the history of the city in 146 pages with numerous illustrations. Chapters are organized chronologically and contain sections concerning people and events. There does not appear to be many new topics covered here.


This book provides background of an important area in the city.


A valuable illustrated history of Medford.


This book provides background of an important historical feature in the city.


This book provides background of an important area in the city.


Context for vernacular village development.

Public Records


Subdivision Plans will provide valuable information of the partitioning of the city during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston MA. Historic Resource Survey data and National Register Nomination Forms for selected Medford properties.

Medford, City of. Engineering Department.

Source of maps and subdivision plans

Medford, City of. Assessors Office.

Source of property data and parcel maps.