

Newton's 19th Century Architecture: Newton Highlands and Waban



Department of Planning and Development
Newton Historical Commission

NEWTON'S
19th CENTURY
ARCHITECTURE:
NEWTON
HIGHLANDS
AND WABAN

Historic Newton, Inc.

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PREFACE

This guide has been prepared as an introduction to the architecture of Newton Highlands and Waban, whose housing is primarily the product of the Victorian era. Included in this booklet are a history of both villages, a brief guide to understanding architectural design, and a review of the most common architectural styles with photographs of local examples.

This booklet is part of an ongoing project to identify and study Newton's architectural heritage. Under the Newton Historical Properties Survey, structural inventories have been completed in Auburndale, Newtonville, Newton Corner, Nonantum, and West Newton. Based in part on information from the Jackson Homestead's *Newton's Older Houses* series, this inventory records the date of construction, architectural style, and provides a brief historical background of each structure built prior to 1907. Copies of these forms are on file at the Newton Housing Rehabilitation Fund Office and at the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston. Booklets describing the history and nineteenth century architecture of these

villages have also been published along with walking tour brochures.

Many people have contributed time and assistance during the course of this project. They include several members of the Newton Historical Commission, Larry Bauer, Barbara Thibault, and especially Thelma Fleishman and Jean Husher whose efforts, guidance and editing skills were sincerely appreciated. Georgina Flannery, Mary Elizabeth Rubin, and Susan Cain of the Newton Free Library, and Duscha Scott of the Jackson Homestead, as well as the staffs of the Newton Housing Rehabilitation Office, the City Clerk's Office and the City Engineers Office provided helpful assistance. Bruce Fernald as Project Director, provided guidance during the structural inventory. Finally thanks are gratefully extended to Gregory Deyermenjian for his support during all phases of the survey.

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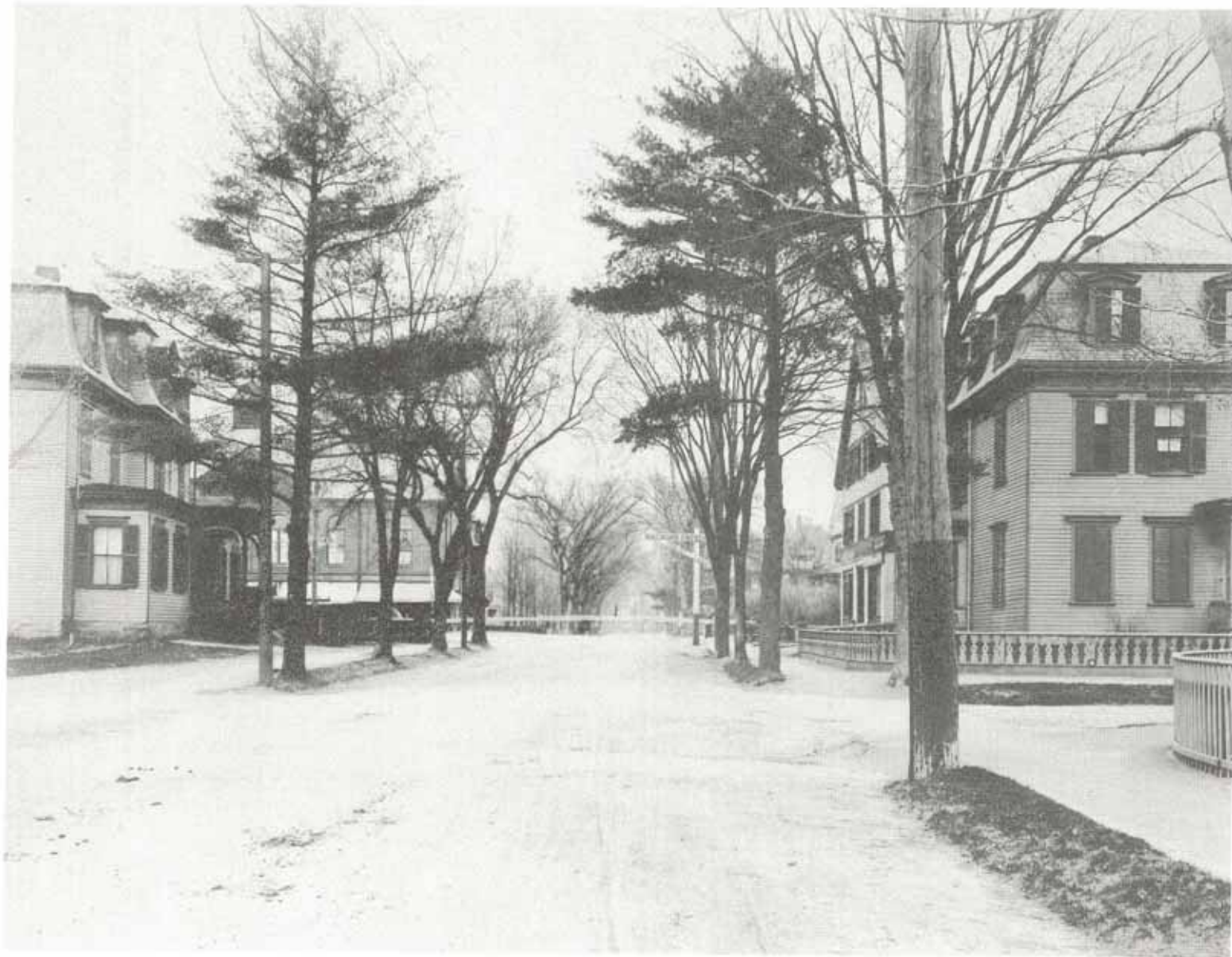
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Walnut Street at intersection with Floral Street, looking north, 1902



THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEWTON HIGHLANDS AND WABAN

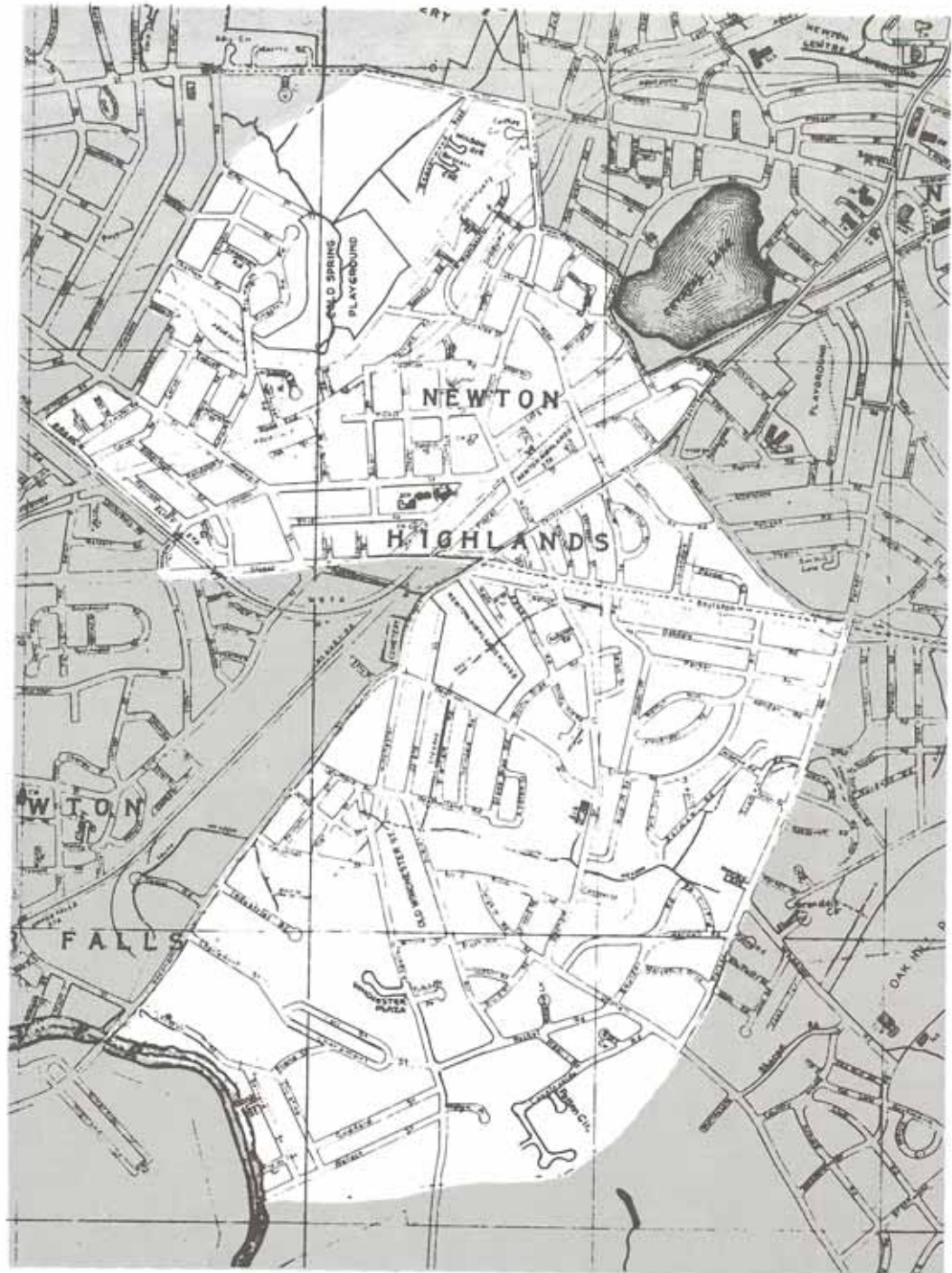
Developed largely during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Newton is an attractive area of predominantly single-family homes situated about eight miles west of Boston. Its thirteen villages, with local shopping areas, individual social amenities and varying physical features, give the City a diverse character. The villages are a reflection of a much earlier pattern of settlement which led to the growth of several small farming and manufacturing communities. Both Newton Highlands and Waban were among the former until the advent of the Highland Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad in the late nineteenth century.

Located to the south of Newton's geographic center, the boundaries of Newton Highlands have never been formally agreed upon; the present L-shape having been arbitrarily determined by lines drawn by the United States Post Office. However, physical features originally influenced the extent of the region's development. The Great Meadow lay to the East and to the West were the 150 acres of Alcock's Swamp (a few still remain in the Cold Spring Playground). Crystal

Lake, a Great Pond, still defines the northern border. Known originally as Wiswall's Pond after the first settler on its shore, by 1800 the lake was commonly called Baptist Pond because the Baptists had their Meeting House close by and used the pond for total immersion baptisms. The name Crystal Lake was apparently coined during the late nineteenth century by land developers hoping it would help to attract new residents to the neighborhood. And indeed, the lake has for years been an invaluable community resource; swimming, sailing, fishing and skating are popular activities enjoyed by many Newtonians.

Located in southwestern Newton, Waban remained sparsely settled until the construction of the Highland Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad (later known as the "Circuit road") in 1886. This direct link to Boston encouraged many city businessmen to acquire the spacious house lots then becoming available and build homes there. Waban's Victorian architecture, much of which was professionally designed, is a tasteful legacy of this significant period of growth.

NEWTON HIGHLANDS



Plan of Newton
Highlands, showing
boundaries of
Newton Historical
Properties Survey,
1978.

COLONIAL SETTLEMENT

During the first decade of settlement in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, special large grants of land were made to persons of influence and importance. Among these was one of 1,000 acres to John Haynes in 1634. This grant, the earliest and largest recorded in Newton's history, included much of the area which is present day Newton Highlands. Haynes came from England aboard the *Griffin* in 1633, was made an Assistant to the General Court in 1634 and chosen Governor of the Colony in 1635. In 1637 he followed the Reverend John Hooker to Hartford, Connecticut, where he died in 1654. His heirs lived in Connecticut, and the bulk of the land remained in their possession, undeveloped, for several generations. Thus settlement was slow to come to Newton Highlands. During the eighteenth century, however, farms spread out along the old colonial highways which crisscrossed the village. The road from Watertown to Dedham followed what are now Centre and Dedham Streets, while Winchester Street ran southeast from the road to Dedham to the "way past John Kenrick's farm on the Charles River," or Nahanton Street. The Sherborn Road was formally laid out by the County in 1685 and connected Boston to the outlying settlements to the west. The road can still be traced today along Jackson, Clark, Centre, Curtis, Ramsdell, Woodward and Beacon Streets. Its circuitous route was necessary to avoid both wetlands and hills.

During the late eighteenth century many roads were built throughout the Northeast to facilitate the transportation of manufactured goods and farmers' produce to the seaport

markets. The Worcester Turnpike was one of these. A private company, owned by a group of Boston businessmen, was chartered in 1806 and the straight east-west turnpike between Boston and Worcester was opened in 1808. A tollbooth was sited below Eliot Street opposite a wetland, making it difficult for travelers to "shunpike" or avoid paying tolls. The company, however, paid few dividends and the stockholders soon lost their investments (of the 600 shares in the original stock, few were owned by Newton residents). The Turnpike was made a public highway in 1833 and given to the towns through which it passed. Meanwhile, a small business community had developed at the tollbooth where the turnpike met the local highways: the Dedham and Sherborn Roads and Elliot Street. Moses Craft's blacksmith and wheelwright's shops and two taverns, Bacon's (later known as Cook's) and Marean-Mitchell's, were sited there. Nothing remains of these early enterprises except a slate milestone which can now be seen at the end of Hartford Street, having been moved there when Boylston Street was widened.

Two aqueducts pass through Newton Highlands. Though both were built to serve Boston, not Newton, they have had an impact on land plans in the villages through which they pass. The Cochituate Aqueduct, built between 1846 and 1848, enters Newton just above the Lower Falls, and passes through Waban to Newton Highlands where it skirts the southern and eastern edges of Cold Springs Playground as it heads toward Newton Centre and the Chestnut Hill Reservoir. It is now part of the Newton sewer system.

In the 1870's, Echo Bridge was built to carry the Sudbury Aqueduct across the Charles River at Upper Falls. From here it crosses Boylston and Woodward Streets and almost meets the Cochituate as they run parallel to each through the Highlands. As part of the City's linear open-space system, they are enjoyed by hikers and joggers, although many private owners do not allow access necessitating some detours.

As only a dozen or so families resided in mid-nineteenth century Newton Highlands, few houses have survived. Though extensively altered, the Fogg House at 79 Woodward Street (c. 1810) and the William Hyde farm at 22 Hyde Street (1848-1851) reflect the modest scale of housing constructed during this early period.



Corner of Lincoln and Walnut Streets, looking south, 1902

RAILROAD SUBURB

Accessibility to Boston was a key factor in determining Newton Highlands' nineteenth century development. Portions of Walnut, Winchester (now Floral Street), Lincoln, and Hyde Streets were laid out just after the Charles River Railroad was constructed through the neighborhood in 1852. A train station was sited at the intersection of Walnut and Lincoln Streets in anticipation of pending suburban development. The stop was initially called Oak Hill, the early eighteenth century name for the entire, sparsely settled southern section of town. Mary E. Hyde, the daughter of James F. C. Hyde (Newton's first Mayor) in *Newton Highlands Forty Years Ago* written in 1916, describes it as a "red station of one room leading from which were a few living rooms for the station agent and his family."

However, the opening of the railroad did not immediately lead to any significant development. As the single track had been built to serve the industries at Upper Falls, commuter trains ran infrequently and were often delayed. This was especially so during the 1860's when Norman C. Munson was under contract to provide gravel for the filling in of Boston's Back Bay. For more than a decade, 40-car trains hauling gravel from Needham were dispatched at 45-minute intervals night and day, around the clock.

Newton Highlands' first significant period of growth occurred between 1871-1874, when the Back Bay land-fill project was virtually complete. The basic street system was extended into a full scale subdivision and several speculative developers were involved.

In 1871 Charles W. Farnham and Samson Whittemore purchased a 38-acre tract of land, originally a part of the Clark family's landholdings. The parcel was subdivided employing a standard grid thought in the nineteenth century to minimize street and utility costs. A series of streets, Bowdoin, Everett (now Chester), Columbus, Forest, and Hillside, were laid out in parallels, north of the village's main street, Lincoln Street. The land between was subdivided into a total of 70 rectangular lots, each 1/4 to 1/3 an acre in size.

1874 Atlas of Newton, G. M. Hopkins Map Co.



While higher income Boston families had long since established farms and summer homes in the countryside, the advent of the railroad made permanent, year round residence possible for the less privileged. Able to commute to and from work in the city, a broad cross section of working, middle, and upper-class families was attracted to Newton Highlands. With many acres of undeveloped open space, picturesque rock outcroppings, and Crystal Lake, the area was especially appealing as a healthful, rustic

environment in which to raise a family. By 1874, the nucleus of a community, bustling with 521 residents, was firmly established. Mary E. Hyde describes the period:

The ten years 1870-1880, were phenomenal in the growth of the village. At first, it was like a western town in its settlement, for into it came the riffraff of society, a moving population. But soon a better class came, who bought land and homes for themselves. Several of our Chautauquans came very early, and our village has improved steadily ever since, until now we have a beautiful village, with a fine class of people.

Approximately 66 houses were constructed during this initial boom period by several local contractors. Among them was Samuel A. Walker, a prolific builder who was responsible for constructing about 1/3. His houses were wood frame and of modest size and cost. There are many examples of his Mansard and Italinat style homes, including 93 Bowdoin Street (1874), 6 Columbus Street (1872), 3 and 19 Forest Street (both 1873), 138 Lincoln Street (1874), and 1090 Walnut Street (1871-1873).



138 Lincoln Street (1874)

MOSES CRANE

Another important figure in the early development of Newton Highlands was Moses Crane (1833-1898). He settled here during the late 1860's, on a dozen acres of land he had purchased just south of Crystal Lake. At the time there were less than 20 families residing within what are now the village limits. With Charles W. Farnham, Henry Billings as trustee, and the heirs of S. F. Plimpton, Crane purchased a large tract of land on speculation near the train station. In 1872, the group had Lake Avenue laid out, which in these early land transactions was called Essex Street. To facilitate the marketing of his land holdings, Crane constructed several streets at his own expense. These included Griffin Avenue (now Lakewood Road), Norman Road, Station Avenue, and portions of Berwick and Fisher Roads.

In addition to his activities as a speculative developer, Moses Crane was well known as an able inventor. He worked in close association with John M. Gamewell, for whom he developed several devices relating to fire and police telegraphic systems, among them a novel fire alarm striker. In 1873, Crane established a factory on Lake Avenue adjacent to the railroad tracks where about 60 workers were employed, among them several local school boys whom he trained in the highly skilled work needed to construct the alarm systems. The Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraphic Company, a New York corporation organized in 1876, purchased Crane's business and patents which by this time numbered more than 40. The company moved to new, more extensive quarters near the railroad station in Upper Falls in 1889. Crane

is credited with a large share of the success of the fire alarms which were marketed nationwide and in many foreign cities.

An active member in the political and social life of the community, Moses Crane was associated with other prominent citizens in the movement to secure a City Charter for Newton in 1873. He represented the community as a Councilman for 2 years, and later in 1892, was elected as Assistant Assessor. In 1872, he donated funds toward the construction of a schoolhouse which was built on Lincoln Street and he was a contributor to the Congregationalist Society which was also forming about that time. He was instrumental in organizing the Newton Highlands Improvement Association and served as its president for 13 years. It was this association which was responsible for planting more than 1,000 shade trees along the village streets and for erecting the lovely fountain which once stood in the center of a small park at the intersection of Forest and Walnut Streets. A major project of this organization was the campaign to eliminate the dangerous railroad grade crossing at the village center. Sadly, Moses Crane took his own life in 1898, following a prolonged period of serious ill health.


Advertisement, 1875 City Directory

MOSES G. CRANE,
Manufacturer of
TELEGRAPHIC AND MAGNETIC
Machinery & Instruments,
TOWER CLOCKS,

And all kinds of small Machinery made to order. Particular attention given to Designing and Perfecting Machinery for special purposes.
 Factory at Newton Highlands. Boston Address, 130 Washington St.

VILLAGE CENTER

Advertisement, 1875 City Directory

BAKERY.	413
A NEW	
B A K E R Y	
HAS BEEN OPENED AT	
NEWTON HIGHLANDS,	
LINCOLN, near WALNUT ST.,	
J. W. WENTWORTH, Jr., Proprietor.	
THE SUPPLIES WILL FRESHEN DAILY	
Fresh Bread, Cakes, Pies, &c.	
<i>Breads Baked and Baked Beans Every Sunday Morning.</i>	
	FANCY CAKE
FOR WEDDINGS, PARTIES,	
<i>Prepared promptly and arranged as desired.</i>	
<i>In connection with the store, we will send a wagon daily to Newton Centre and Newton Upper Falls, thus giving the inhabitants of those villages an opportunity to procure FRESH GOODS.</i>	
<i>Boston Prices Guaranteed.</i>	
WE SOLICIT A SHARE OF YOUR PATRONAGE.	
J. W. WENTWORTH, Jr.,	
NEWTON HIGHLANDS.	

By 1874, Newton Highlands had grown large enough to support a small collection of shops and service businesses. A group of modest wood frame commercial buildings was constructed along Lincoln Street later known as Lincoln Square. Charles W. Farnham, never one to pass up a good money-making opportunity, established a grocery business with a livery stable to its rear on the site of the present Stevens Block. Mary E. Hyde describes the corner grocery store as situated on "a knoll with a great elm tree in front of it . . . the post office was in this store, and a family lived over the store, while two flights up, was a hall, Farnham Hall. The hall was rather shabby." Samson Whittemore's Block, later known as Newhall's Block, with its mansard roof handsomely clad in polychrome patterned slate, was soon built opposite Farnham's Block. Mary E. Hyde recalls in her history that it was in the "corner room where Damarios Fruit Store now is, that we children were sent to our first school. The teacher's desk was opposite the door, so she could see the traffic outside easily, through those large fine windows, but alas! for us scholars. If we looked behind these out of those same windows, we had to stay five minutes after school . . . When the school-room was too cold, we were taken over to the parlor of our teacher, Miss Lourdon, on the corner of Lincoln and Columbus St." The blocks provided space for several small shops, including a dry and fancy goods shop, a bakery, as well as an apothecary (Drug Store) and a boot and shoe store.

According to local accounts, the residents of the new village were very dissatisfied with Oak Hill as the name for their community. It seemed especially inappropriate since the village was situated on a flat plain and Oak Hill itself was some distance to the Southeast. Newtondale was the first name chosen, but this, too, was unpopular although residents used it for a few years. The present name was finally chosen in 1873, at a meeting of villagers held specifically for that purpose.

Suburban development south of the Worcester Turnpike was less rapid. Although the Highland Land Associates owned 24 acres of land in the vicinity of Winchester Street and several streets and house lots were laid out by 1874, few residences were constructed. The land was sold off in large tracts with no further development until the automobile became a common form of transportation. The fertile lands close to the Charles River continued to be farmed until the close of the century.

JAMES F. C. HYDE

James F.C.Hyde (1825-1898), a descendant of one of Newton's founding families, was an important figure in the development of Newton Highlands as well as the City as a whole. Hyde served as town selectman for 16 years and presided over the annual Town Meetings until Newton became a city. Distinguishing himself in both political and social issues of his day, Hyde was the choice of all parties to serve as the first Mayor and was elected almost unanimously.

Agriculture was a special interest of James F. C. Hyde. A member of the State Board of Agriculture, he also served for several years as the first president of the Massachusetts Horticulture Society. He was instrumental in organizing the Newton Horticultural Society, and served a term as its president. His greatest contribution, though, was his determined effort to improve Newton's railroad service. The one-track Charles River Railroad, later known as the New York and New England Railroad, with its wooden rails, unsafe bed, and inadequate service, had been the source of bitter complaints by village residents who commuted to Boston for their daily employment. Partly attributed to this malfunctioning railroad, development in Newton Highlands was considerably slowed after 1874. Active in the real estate business, Hyde realized the necessity for better service. He attempted to persuade the Directors of the New York and New England Railroad to sell the portion of track between Brookline and Newton Highlands to the Boston and Albany Railroad Company (which already operated a branch line from Riverside through

Auburndale, Newtonville and Newton Corner to Boston). This early effort was a failure.

A group of prominent citizens, Hyde among them, formed the Newton Circuit Railroad Company and had a seven mile route surveyed from Brookline to Riverside via Newton Highlands. In an effort to protect its interests, the Boston and Albany Railroad secured an agreement to lease the track. The New York and New England Railroad Company later agreed to sell its branch to the Boston and Albany for \$415,000.00. Legal difficulties ensued for a time, but eventually the sale was closed. When the Boston and Albany Railroad Company agreed to carry out the project which was to extend track out from Brookline via Newton Highlands to a connection at Riverside with the northerly Boston and Albany line, the Newton Circuit Railroad Company dissolved.

Henry Hobson Richardson, America's most famous nineteenth century architect, was commissioned to design new train stations to be located at Chestnut Hill, Newton Centre, Newton Highlands, Eliot, Waban and Woodland. Only three stations remain today, and of these, only one, the small Woodland station, is a Richardson original. Construction of the station at Newton Highlands was begun by September 1886, but a scarcity of some masons delayed its completion until June of the next year. The opening coincided with the installation of four electric lights at Lincoln Square. As the Newton Highlands station was built after H. H. Richardson's death, it is believed to have been executed



James F. C. Hyde

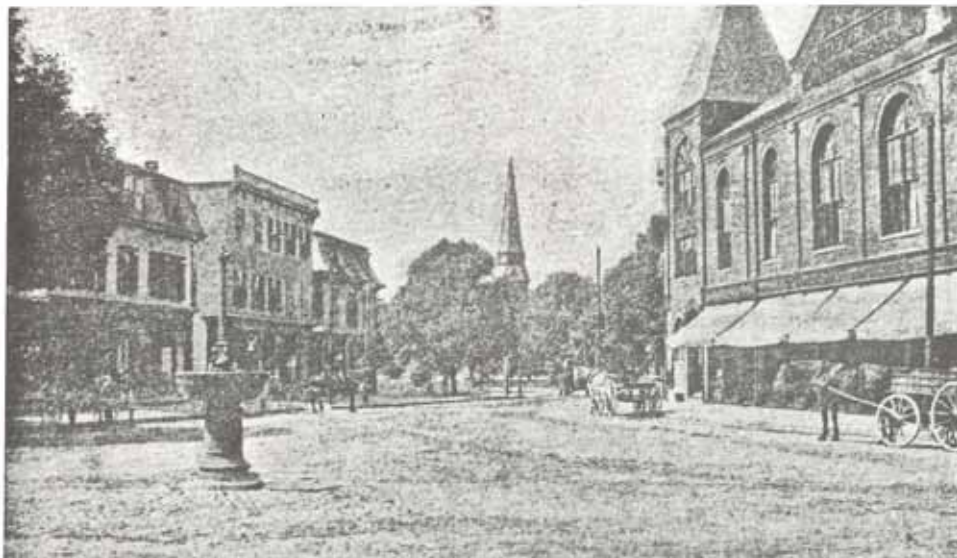
ELIOT STATION

by the succeeding firm, Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. As is typical of Richardson's work, the station is constructed of rough-cut pink granite with detail articulated in sandstone.

As well as precipitating development at Eliot and Waban, the completion of the Highland Branch in May 1886 renewed the demand for real estate at Newton Highlands. M. F. Sweetser describes the growth in his *King's Handbook of Newton* (1889). "On all sides are heard the sounds of carpentry, where new groups of houses are being prepared for the incoming families of the next year and the coming decades." In 1886 alone, 21 new houses were constructed in the village and by the mid 1890's, Farnham and Whittemore's original 38-acre subdivision had few undeveloped lots.

Benjamin Dickerman, a broker, played a key role in the development of the flat plain near Eliot Station, once thought to be the bed of an extensive lake. Lincoln Street was extended westward to provide access to Eliot Station and the adjacent 12 acres of land Dickerman acquired just prior to its completion in 1887. The parcel was subdivided into 48 house lots in the late 1880's, but it was not until the 1890's that the bulk of houses were built along Harrison and Dickerman Streets which had been laid out perpendicular to Lincoln Street.

The station was named for the Reverend John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians who converted Chief Waban and his Indian Tribe, Nonantum, to Christianity in 1646. According to local legend, Eliot often preached under the giant white oak tree which stands close to the junction of Collins and Annawan Roads in Waban.



Lincoln Square (1893)

PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

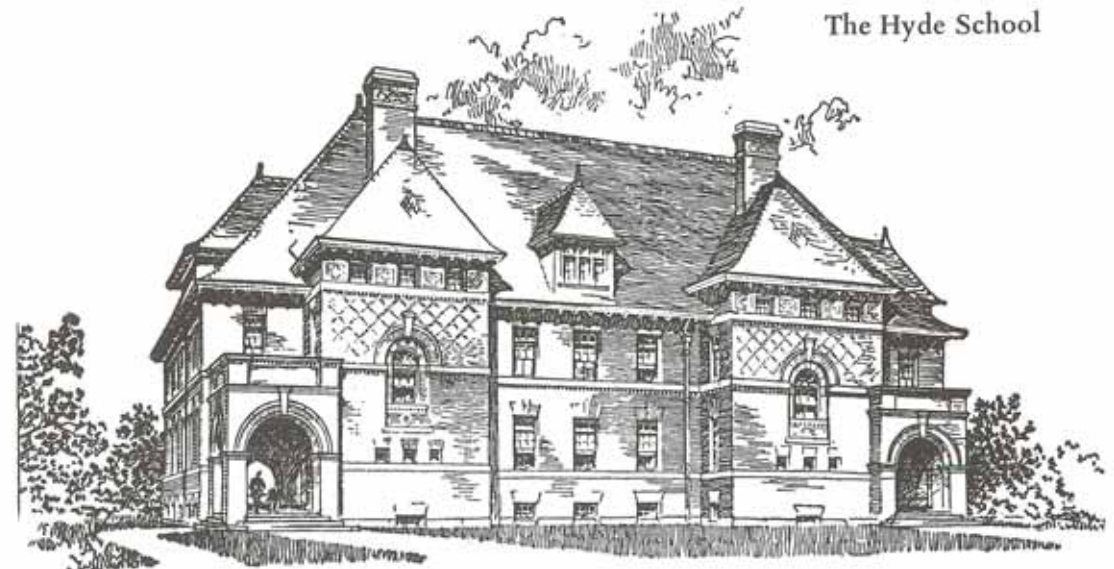
The Newton Highlands business district developed at the intersection of Lincoln and Walnut Streets and close to the stylish new railroad station. Constructed in 1888, the distinctive Stevens Block, prominently situated at the intersection, is evidence of the period's prosperity. Architect Herbert C. Mosely supervised the construction of the Romanesque style block. The building has been greatly altered, first by rebuilding after a serious fire a few years after it was built, and more recently by an attempt to modernize it.

The Hyde School (1895), designed by Hartwell and Richardson, an architectural firm well known for its handsome school designs, was named in honor of James F. C. Hyde, thus acknowledging his great service to the City at large and Newton Highlands in particular. The Neoclassical style addition to the school was designed by architects Coolidge and Carlson of Boston. Built in 1907, it also provided space for a branch library.

In his *King's Handbook of Newton* (1889), M. F. Sweetser describes the site of the Newton Highlands Congregational Church as "pleasant and commanding . . . at the intersection of two of the principal streets," looking "benignantly over the drowsy hamlet." Erected in 1876, it was important to the community as a place where "the people enjoy their harvest festivals and corn sociables, and other pleasant reunions, besides the usual religious observances of the old

Puritan faith." Rebuilt in 1907 to accommodate a growing congregation, the present structure was designed by architect George F. Newton.

Two other congregations were formed in Newton Highlands in the later years of the nineteenth century and built noteworthy structures. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was constructed in 1883 and moved to its present site on Walnut Street from across the street when it was enlarged in 1905, and the Cline Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, later the Odd Fellows Hall, erected in 1893. The latter building was designed by architects Clark and Crosby of Boston. The building was more recently used by the Elks as a meeting hall. In 1978 it was converted into five condominiums.



The Hyde School

TROLLEY CAR ERA

During the 1890's, hundreds of trolley lines were built in cities and towns in metropolitan Boston, providing transport for people of all income levels. Several small independent companies, often with the same owners and officers and usually backed by real estate promoters, were granted charters to construct trolley tracks along the major roads which linked Newton's villages. In 1892, the Newton and Boston Street Railway Company extended its line from Newtonville Square to Newton Highlands and later in 1898 to

Newton Upper Falls via Lincoln, Woodward and Elliot Streets. The Commonwealth Avenue Street Railway Company was granted a charter to expand its service. This company opened a branch line down Centre Street from Newton Centre to the Highlands in 1899. The fare was standardized to five cents or a "jitney" as the nickel was commonly called in 1903.

The Boston and Worcester Company was granted permission in 1898 to construct a line along the Worcester Turnpike provided it widen the highway to 90 feet, contribute to the cost of constructing a new lower dam at Upper Falls, and maintain street lights along the way. Running by 1903, this high-speed, heavy-duty street railway was called the Trolley Air Line. For a time it competed successfully with the railroad, providing convenient commuter service to Boston and to communities to the west of Newton as far as Worcester. In addition, it was equipped with freight cars to carry a variety of manufactured goods between Boston and Worcester and the towns along the way. As the line passed through Newton Highlands, the dangerous street level intersection with the railroad tracks as they crossed Boylston Street east of Hartford Street was avoided by the construction of a high wooden trestle. This was removed in 1906, when the railroad tracks were depressed at Lincoln Square and thence passed underneath Boylston Street.

By the turn of the century, an investment of a nickel afforded residents of Newton Highlands readily available transportation



THE MODERN ERA

across Newton north and south, east and west, to Needham, to Waltham, to Wellesley, Watertown, Brookline and Brighton, and to Norumbega Park on the Newton-Weston line.

Eventually the many small, independent street railway companies operating in Newton and other towns west of Boston were merged into one new corporation, the Middlesex and Boston Street Railway Company. Organized in 1907, the activities of the Middlesex and Boston reached their peak in 1913 when it operated 264 cars in twenty cities and towns. Its decline, largely due to the growing popularity of the automobile, began after World War I. In 1924, the company adopted a policy of bus substitution, and by 1930, its last rail line—Lake Street to Norumbega along Commonwealth Avenue—ceased operation, ending an era in Newton.

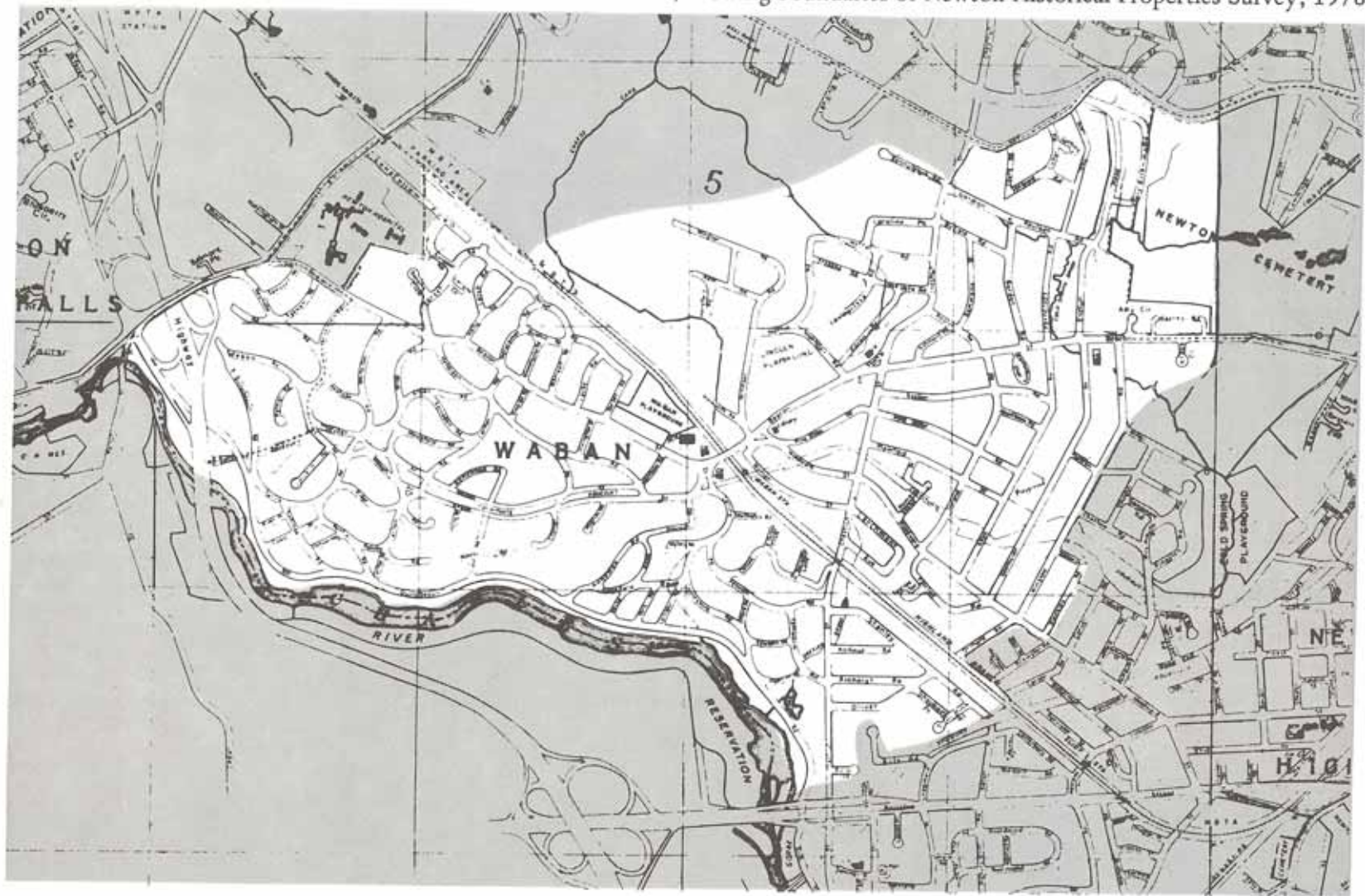


The Newton Highlands commercial center spread slowly along Lincoln and Walnut Streets between 1910 and 1930. A few Victorian mansions were destroyed as the center expanded to its present size. Using Community Development funds, this area has been greatly upgraded in recent years.

The automobile had a decided effect upon the village. During the 1920's, the majority of residents in Farnham and Whittemore's 38-acre subdivision added "auto houses" to their backyards. The land south of Centre Street, that is Boylston Road, Aberdeen Street, and Rockledge Road, though sparsely settled at the turn of the century, saw full development by the 1920's. The land south and close to the Worcester Turnpike (Boylston Street) was dotted with residences by this time. To facilitate the heavier traffic flow to and from Boston, this road was widened into Route 9 during the 1930's. The multi-lane expressway was elevated to the south of the village center and entrance and exit ramps were constructed. Several gas stations and drive-in shopping centers now line that section of Boylston Street, reflecting post World War II growth. The village's atmosphere, however, is still derived from its fine collection of well-preserved Victorian architecture. Situated along gracious, tree-lined streets, these buildings tell a story of a changing culture, technology, and taste which is essential to the identity of twentieth century Newton Highlands.

WABAN

Plan of Waban, showing boundaries of Newton Historical Properties Survey, 1978



DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Waban's widely varying terrain was a factor which influenced patterns of development. The village center is situated on a broad, low plain. To the east, the old Alcock's Swamp separates the region from Newton Highlands. Much of this once remote wetland has been drained and filled, and was developed in the early twentieth century making the boundary between the two villages indistinct. In contrast, west Waban is described thusly by M. F. Sweetser in the *King's Handbook of Newton* (1889), "Rising from the groves of pine and maple along the river, and the intervening meadows, is a chain of bluffs, broken in the most picturesque and often weird way by natural glades and amphitheatres." The late nineteenth century subdivision of this area south of Beacon Street was laid out with respect to its undulating topography.

According to a local account, Waban station was originally to have been called "Hillside" and the Eliot Station "Waban." Though train schedules and tickets had evidently been printed, William C. Strong, an early Waban resident, and others were said to have exerted pressure to change the names to those at present. He had previously resided at Nonantum Hill on the Newton-Brighton line where Waban once had his wigwam and where Reverend Eliot often preached.



Strong's Block, 1641-49 Beacon Street

THE FARMING COMMUNITY

Waban was not settled until after 1680. There could be several explanations for this delay. One might be that the region was inconveniently far from the first meetinghouse, which, in the seventeenth century was located at the corner of Centre and Cotton Streets particularly as Alcock's Swamp lay in between. For whatever reason, three of Waban's first families were second generation colonists: John Mason (1686), Henry Segar (1689) and Eleazer Hyde (1700), while John Woodward, Waban's first documented settler, was of the third generation.

In 1681, John Woodward (1649-1732) and his young wife, Rebecca Robbins of Cambridge, received 30 acres in Waban as a wedding gift. Their old colonial house, located at 50 Fairlee Road, is one of few known seventeenth century residences remaining in the city. Though substantially altered, the house

illustrates several early construction techniques. It is a 2½ story wood frame structure, built facing south. The steeply pitched seventeenth century roof was dismantled and re-framed in the eighteenth century by inserting the early framing members into new rafters. Such reuse was common. The structure was laid out with two rooms to a floor, separated by a massive central chimney block. Though windows of the farmhouse are newer sliding sash instead of casements, and the door has been sidelighted (nineteenth century), their off-center placement appears original. Lean-to and wing additions, added as space was required, give the house an asymmetrical profile.

The house was occupied for close to 275 years by eight generations of the Woodward family. John Woodward was actively involved in the politics of Newton as were his descendants. He served in a variety of positions such as fence viewer, tithingman, constable, and selectman. In 1776 Deacon John Woodward (1724-1801) was the moderator of the town meeting which passed by unanimous vote the resolution that the Continental Congress declare the colonies independent. He subsequently fought in the Battle of Concord though he was more than 50 years old. Deacon Elijah F. Woodward (1786-1845) was Representative to the General Court and Town Clerk from 1826 until his death. With W. E. Ward, he surveyed the area for the 1831 map of Newton which is today an invaluable historical resource. By 1874, that section of the Sherborn Road between the Worcester Turnpike and Beacon Street was known as Woodward Street.



Woodward House,
50 Fairlee Road
(photo courtesy of
Peter and Donna
Gumpert)

During Waban's long agricultural period, four large farms developed at the intersection of the Sherborn Road and a Town way. Laid out in 1702 from the Staples farm, the new road provided a more direct route to the Meetinghouse in Newton Centre. As it was necessary to avoid Alcock's Swamp to the East, the road ran along the present Beacon Street to Short Street, then north on Chestnut Street to Fuller and Homer Streets to Newton Centre.

Deacon John Staples (1658?-1740) came to Newton about 1688. Early records indicate he was living in Waban by the turn of the century where he amassed a large 93-acre farm northeast of the crossroads. The residence at 1615 Beacon Street is situated on the site of his early farmstead. Though significantly altered, it incorporates the foundation, structural members and hardware of this earlier residence.

Politically active, Deacon Staples held a variety of public positions and was Town Clerk and Treasurer for many years. He was appointed Newton's first schoolmaster in 1700, for which he was paid 5 shillings per session.

As Staples and his wife were childless, the couple raised several boys from other families. One was Moses Craft who inherited the farm. It is believed that Craft rebuilt the Staples house, replacing it with one of the then current style. He added an ell in 1769 which he sold to his son Joseph, a young man with a growing family. Apparently Joseph Craft had agreed to stay on the farm, taking over its maintenance, and this was his

father's way of providing for three generations to live peacefully in one house.

Joseph Craft fathered 15 children, most of whom lived to adulthood. Some left Newton to settle in Maine, and others took up trades other than farming. He and his wife continued to live on the farm long after they were able to maintain it and various lots were sold off from time to time to meet expenses and taxes. Joseph Craft died in 1821 at the age of 85, leaving no will and an estate seriously in debt. At the auction ordered by the Judge of Probate, Joseph's son, Moses Craft II, a blacksmith who lived nearby on the Worcester Turnpike, was allowed to make the winning bid of \$5.50 for the house, barn, and a large tract of land. In 1824 Moses Craft II sold the property to his cousin William Wiswall II. It is believed that Wiswall was responsible for the restyling of the house, giving it its Federal ornament.

Much of the farmland was exceedingly rich bottomland and, with good farming practices, could be guaranteed to produce large crops. Indeed, that part of the land, now the Lincoln Playground, continued to be cultivated as a truck farm until after World War II. Wiswall was highly regarded for his prosperous farm until, in 1858 unable to maintain it any longer, he sold the property to David Kinmonth, a wealthy Boston merchant.

Desiring a stylish summer estate, Kinmonth had the house extensively remodeled, resulting in its present appearance. He clipped the gable ends and the dormers, added several bay windows, extended the porches and



squared off the L-shaped house by adding a new oval diningroom to the north east corner with an arched-ceilinged master bedroom above. He lived to enjoy his summer estate only a few years before he died in 1865. The property was then sold to another Boston merchant, Edward Wyman.

This country farmhouse, one of the oldest in the village and prominently located in its center, serves as an important visual link to Waban's agricultural past.

1615 Beacon Street,
Staples-Craft-Wisall House

 HYDE FARM

Southeast of the crossroads was the second of the four important farms, that of Eleazer Hyde. Hyde was the tenth son of one of Newton's earliest and most prolific settlers, Jonathan Hyde. Jonathan Hyde provided well for his children, leaving each son a good sized parcel by both will and deed to insure that his wishes were carried out. In 1700, he assigned 30 acres on the Sherborn Road to his son Eleazer who added to his holdings by buying 38 more. He, in turn, willed the entire estate to his only son, Eleazer, Jr. The property passed out of the Hyde family when Eleazer died in 1770, his wife and two children having predeceased him.

Edward Wyman, who had previously acquired the Staples Farm, purchased the old Hyde farmhouse which today stands at 401 Woodward Street in 1866. Three years later he sold both farms to his brother Morrill Wyman, a Harvard professor, who supervised them from Cambridge. Among other farming experiments he had black and white mulberry trees planted, hoping to raise silkworms to supply the local silk industry with cocoons. Unfortunately, only the mulberry trees could survive the harsh New England winter.

The Eleazer Hyde farm was sold to real estate developers Charles J. Page and Frederick H. Henshaw in 1886. They in turn sold the old

farmhouse a few years later to H. Langford Warren, the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Harvard. Originally one room deep with double back chimneys warming the north, cold wall, the house has been substantially enlarged. Warren remodeled the house, adding a large ell which replaced a small shed-roof extension. Another large addition at the rear and a side porch were added in the 1930's. All additions have been well-planned, echoing the house's original Georgian style.



Eleazer Hyde farmhouse, 401 Woodward Street

 THE COLLINS FARM

The Collins Farm was situated to the southwest of the crossroads. In 1775 Matthias Collins II, a blacksmith from Watertown, purchased 100 acres adjoining the Woodward Farm on Sherborn Road from Joseph Craft. Matthias III, his only son, inherited the estate and in turn willed portions of it to his three sons, Frederic A., Edward J. and Amasa, when he died in 1855. The Collins estate by this time embraced 200 acres in Waban. This section of Beacon Street came to be known as the "Collins Neighborhood" because of the row of family houses. Only the house of Frederic Collins at 1734 Beacon Street remains, a distinctive, Greek Revival

style residence which was built about the time of his marriage to Amelia Revere in 1847.

The Collins brothers were active in local affairs as their father had been. Edward, a respected businessman, served as the Treasurer of the town for 21 years, as a County Commissioner, and as a member of the State Legislature. In addition, he was the Treasurer of the Newton Savings Bank and a Director of the Newton National Bank. His house, which once stood at 1686 Beacon Street, was occupied by the Pillsbury Preparatory School for Boys and somewhat later by the Besse Sanitorium before it was demolished in 1935 and the land subdivided.

Frederic Collins and his brother began a glue factory on 5 acres of land (at the end of Gould Road) adjacent to the Charles River. At the time there were few glue makers in this country, and fish and bone glues



"Elmwood," Edward Collins estate,
1686 Beacon Street (demolished 1935)

POOR FARM/BARTLETT FARM

were as yet unknown. The enterprise was evidently profitable since by 1855 it had expanded to include three factories. Soon after the death of Edward Collins, in 1879, the business was discontinued.

The glue business was not the first industrial enterprise in Waban. There was a small but significant weaving industry throughout the eighteenth century. John Staples, Moses Craft, Eleazer Hyde, and John Woodward, among others, were all professional weavers. Fulling mills were located nearby at both Upper and Lower Falls to finish the hand-woven cloth. Hand weaving was displaced here, as in England, early in the nineteenth century with the introduction of power looms.

Advertisement, 1868 City Directory

FREDERIC A. COLLINS,
GLUE MANUFACTURER,
BEACON ST., NEAR WOODWARD,
 NEWTON UPPER FALLS.
Highest Cash Prices paid for Hide Scraps.

In 1837, the Poor Farm was moved from Auburndale to 40 acres of land north of the crossroads. Prior to its establishment, Newton's poor were supported by the town and boarded out to the lowest bidder. Provisions for them are recorded as far back as 1711 when donations were collected at the annual Thanksgiving Church Service. The money was distributed by the Selectmen, acting as Overseers of the Poor. By 1731, a workhouse was established in Auburndale. Increasing land values in the mid nineteenth century coupled with the problem of unruly wards necessitated its removal to the "backwaters," as Waban was regarded at the time. In 1900, and for similar reasons, the City was persuaded to relocate the Poor Farm. It was moved to a still more remote area on lower Winchester Street, a 35-acre lot which extended to the Charles River. The Waban building was destroyed in 1902, and much of its farmland now makes up the Angier School playground.

As few residences have survived Waban's long agricultural era, it is important to include the Bartlett Farm. The house was built as a one-room half house (visible as the southerly third of the structure) about 1736, the year of Ebenezer Bartlett's marriage to Anne Clark. Later it was doubled in size to accommodate the Bartlett's growing family, eventually totalling seventeen children. The house is unusually wide because a one-room ell was added to its northerly end. The house was moved to 15 Winnetaska Road from a site

PINE SCHOOL FARM

about 200 yards away in 1915, and carefully renovated.

Ebenezer Bartlett served the town in a variety of lesser positions such as hayward, highway surveyor, and constable. He was certified as an Antipedobaptist at a time when sects outside the established church were frowned upon. The family landholdings were vast and came to include close to 200 acres by 1800.

The Pine School Farm was established in 1864, by the Children's Aid Society of Boston. Situated at the intersection of Chestnut and Fuller Streets, the farm provided a home for wayward boys under criminal prosecution in Boston, as well as temporary housing for vagrants and destitute children. M. F. Sweetser sums up the circumstances of the school in his *King's Handbook of Newton* (1889).

More than 500 boys, between the ages of 8 and 13, have been rescued from the slums of the metropolis, and brought out here, where the pure air and good associations of this upland home are quick to sweeten the hard, surly, pallid expression of the city poor. Besides receiving many of the lacking elements of a common school education, the lads are trained in singing and in carpentry, and more than all else, in the partical work of farming, so that after a year and a half of discipline and instruction, they are sent out to work on farms in New England and the West.



The Pine School Farm

 RAILROAD SUBURBS

While land sales were booming elsewhere in Newton at the beginning of the 1880's, Waban, with less than 20 houses, remained sparsely settled. Although Chestnut Street had been extended to the Upper Falls and Beacon Street (between Newton Centre and Chestnut Street) had been laid out by mid century, accessibility was still poor. In the 1870's there had been some speculation in land, prompted by talk of extending the railroad west of Newton Highlands. However, two proposals came to nothing before the Boston and Albany agreed to construct the Highland Branch. One, the Hoosac Tunnel or North Western Railroad, was surveyed from Brookline to Riverside via Oak Hill, South Newton Highlands, Upper Falls, and Waban. The other, by the Brighton and Newton Railroad, was to connect Newton Lower Falls via Waban, Cold Springs City and Newton Centre to Boston. In anticipation of the latter, the Nonantum Land Associates purchased and subdivided the 76 acre Varick Estate at the corner of Washington and Beacon Streets into 195 small building lots. The subdivision and the proposed railroad are shown on the 1874 City Atlas, but were never carried out because of the nation-wide economic depression which had a serious impact locally.

As with Newton Highlands, Waban's real suburban growth began with the completion, in 1886, of the Highland Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad which connected the villages in the south part of Newton to the main line at Riverside. Waban Station was built near the old crossroads (Beacon and Woodward Streets) to one of the last

designs of H. H. Richardson. Several individuals helped to bring about this important development, among them James F. C. Hyde, Samuel Hano, Edward L. Collins, William Dresser and William C. Strong. Boston-based land developers Charles J. Page and Frederick H. Henshaw bought the old Eleazer Hyde Farm from Morrill Wyman in 1886 and subdivided the property into 87 house lots fronting on Beacon, Chestnut and Woodward Streets, and on Wyman, Plainfield Streets and Pine Ridge Road which they had laid out. The plan of the subdivision filed with the City of Newton includes a diagram of the route of the new Circuit Railroad, for Page and Henshaw used copies of this to impress potential customers with the convenience of the frequent trains both to Boston and to other Newton villages.

Edwin P. Seaver, Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools, joined Waban's land



787 Chestnut Street, 1888

speculation boom and acquired 25 acres contiguous to that owned by Page and Henshaw. He had the land subdivided into 60 ¼ acre house lots and several new streets laid out.

In 1889, the undulating terrain of the Varick Estate, together with the adjoining 26-acre Carlton Estate and the 200 acres belonging to the Collins family, was laid out by Ernest Bowditch (the well-known Civil Engineer) into a complex of winding roads and broad frontage lots, one half to several acres in size. The Cochituate Aqueduct is an important component of this creative design. Waban Avenue was laid out on both sides of it, while cross streets sectionalize it into

pleasing, round and oval, treed islands. Bowditch was often hired as a surveyor by Frederick Law Olmsted and was influenced by his concept that one should never be able to look straight down a road for any distance, the road should bend so that the vista would change as one moved along.

William C. Strong's new farm was 93 acres, extending from his house on Beacon Street easterly to Chestnut Street, and included Moffat Hill, a drumlin characterized by its elliptical shape and rounded peak. Formed during the glacial period, its hard-packed slopes are the gradual accumulation of clayey till gathered into a sticky mass beneath the moving ice sheet, a common phenomenon in the Boston area. According to local tradition, the name of the hill is derived from a squatter named Moffat who once made his home there. Strong, a well-known nurseryman, planted fruit trees on the southern slope and devoted the other, more level ground, to hardy trees, shrubs, roses and vines. He was a knowledgeable authority on raising fruit trees and wrote several publications on the subject, among them, *Fruit Culture*. He advertised his nursery business in the local City Directory and offered free catalogs of his varied stock to potential customers. Active in securing the right of way needed through Waban to expedite the construction of the Highland Branch, William Strong, too, intended to profit from its construction. He had Windsor Road laid out as a pleasant country lane, bordered by flowers and winding to the summit of Moffat Hill where he offered handsome house lots for sale. *King's Handbook of Newton* (1889),



1895 Atlas of Newton

extols the view from Moffat Hill: "From the crest of the gracefully rounded hill, situated among the pastures and groves, one gains a charming view over many tall spired villages, the picturesque hills of Waltham and Wellesley, bits of the distant mounts Wachussets and Monadnock, with parts of Boston and the turquoise painted Blue Hills of Milton."

A number of glowing advertisements by various Waban land developers appeared in the 1889 and 1891 editions of the Newton City Directory. These touted the commodious size of building lots, idyllic settings and the convenience of transportation to Boston only 10 miles away, with 30 daily trains. "Homes for the merchant, banker and clerk" were offered at prices ranging from \$10,000, quickly sold and built upon.

James F. C. Hyde entered the Waban real estate market during the late 1880's by announcing the sale of 130 house lots in a large advertisement taking up half the front page of *The Newton Graphic*. According to a local history, 53 lots were sold off almost immediately.

By 1888, Waban's population had grown from less than a dozen families to twenty-six. Ten new and stylish residences had been

built by 1889 and half of these were designed by H. Langford Warren, a local architect well-known in Boston. Again, according to M. F. Sweetser's *King's Handbook of Newton*, the design of these residences "has made a deep impress on the village of Waban, in the very dawn of its existence." This is evidently true for several line-cut drawings and photographs of these residences, 787 Chestnut Street (1888), 102 Windsor Road and 141 Woodward Street (also 1888) illustrate the text of his book.

WABAN, THE BEAUTIFUL NEW VILLAGE IN NEWTON,

BOSTON & ALBANY R. R.,

Now rapidly becoming one of the charming villages of the Garden City, with its new station, its block of stores just erected, its post-office, its school-houses, now being erected, the future of this Newton is fully established, and we offer on the high table-land, overlooking the beautiful Charles River some 200 to 300 choice house lots, varying in contents from ½ acre to 2 acres. Liberal discount to those who will build. For Plans, etc., call on or address,

JAMES F. C. HYDE,
31 Milk Street, Boston,
or SAMUEL HANO,
Allston.

Advertisements,
1891 City Directory



VILLAGE CENTER

Waban's village center developed close to the railroad station at the old crossroads. Through the efforts of the Waban Improvement Society and Edward L. Collins, a real estate developer, Waban's first commercial block, Waban Hall, was constructed in 1890. The block has also been known as Collins Hall or Fyfe Block, after a grocery store which was located there for many years. The Shingle style building was designed to accommodate several shops at the street level and a community hall on the upper floor. It was here that the Waban Improvement Society met for some years, local children first attended public school, and where the Union Church held its first services until it, too, could erect its own building. A Chinese laundry and a branch of Moulton's General Store in Newton Highlands were first to rent shops. Although significantly altered, the structure is still standing and remains an important part of Waban's small commercial center.

The Waban Improvement Society, organized in 1888, undertook to guide the development of the village and to represent the desires and concerns of the community to the city government. It continues to play this role very effectively even now, and has made a significant contribution in maintaining Waban's attractiveness. Among other early activities, it was responsible for planting trees along the streets, for constructing side walks and having them plowed in the winter-time, for obtaining the large playground at Angier School along with its tennis courts, and for insisting that the telephone wires be placed underground in the village commercial center.

By 1891 the number of daily trains had increased to 38, stimulating further development at Waban. The nucleus of a community, its streets lined with Shingle style, Medieval and Colonial Revival residences so much in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century, was emerging near the railroad station. Waban's first school, the Roger Walcott School, was a small, two-story, Shingle style building erected in 1891, near the present Angier School, to accommodate the growing number of children in the village.

William C. Strong commissioned the firm of Bacon & Hill, architects (Lewis H. Bacon and Clinton Hill were both Waban residents) to design a building to accommodate several village stores with good-sized apartments above. The distinctive Dutch style block was completed in 1897, prominently sited in the square at 1641-1649 Beacon Street. A rendering of its design appeared in the October 31, 1896 edition of *American Architect and Building News*.

The Church of the Good Shepherd has an interesting history. The structure was originally owned by the Waban Church Corporation, a private group composed of members of the Waban Christian Union and the Waban Improvement Association who realized the village's need for some sort of organized religion. The corporation was formed with the understanding that services could change from time to time as the members might desire. The land was given jointly by William C. Strong and the City of Newton and the Medieval Revival style church was designed by William F. Goodwin, who, as a charter

member of the group, donated his skills. The church's furnishings, among them a Memorial Window by Tiffany and a fifteenth century cathedral's lamp, as well as a farmer's stone-wall for the foundation were also donations. Reverend William Hall Williams was engaged as the rector and the first services were held on Christmas Day, 1896. Williams leased the church for a yearly fee of \$200.00, and organized the present Episcopal Parish. In 1907 the Church Corporation transferred the property to the parish.

Waban had two private schools. The Charles E. Fish School for Boys opened in 1895, in what had been the Edward Collins house at 1686 Beacon Street. The barn was used as a gymnasium and by the local Women's Club, while the house of Frederic A. Collins (1734 Beacon Street) was converted into a dormitory, Eliot Hall, and that of real estate developer Samuel Hano at 152 Waban Avenue became Nonantum Hall. The house at 34 Collins Road was a fraternity house for students at the school. From 1897, the Windsor Hall School for Girls was held in a reconditioned barn which had belonged to William C. Strong.

Waban's growth progressed steadily. The larger developments in west Waban and south of Beacon Street, though sprinkled with residences in 1907, were thickly settled during the next decade. Large tracts of farmland north of Beacon Street (in west Waban) were purchased, subdivided into house lots, and built upon. The old Bartlett farm was developed at this time and the farmhouse (originally south facing) was turned 90° and

moved to its present site at 15 Winnetaska Road. It was not until shortly after World War II that a portion of Alcock's Swamp north of Beacon Street was drained, filled, subdivided, and built upon. A new school was built on the south side of Beacon Street on filled in swamp land. Little open space is now left in Waban as a result of its steady development, only an isolated lot here and there. Like Newton Highlands, the dominant characteristic of this village is its attractive architecture.

Accident in front of 1717 Beacon Street
(photograph dated April 16, 1933)



LOOKING AT ARCHITECTURE

BICKNELL'S VICTORIAN BUILDINGS

Floor Plans and Elevations for 45
Houses and Other Structures

A. J. BICKNELL & CO.

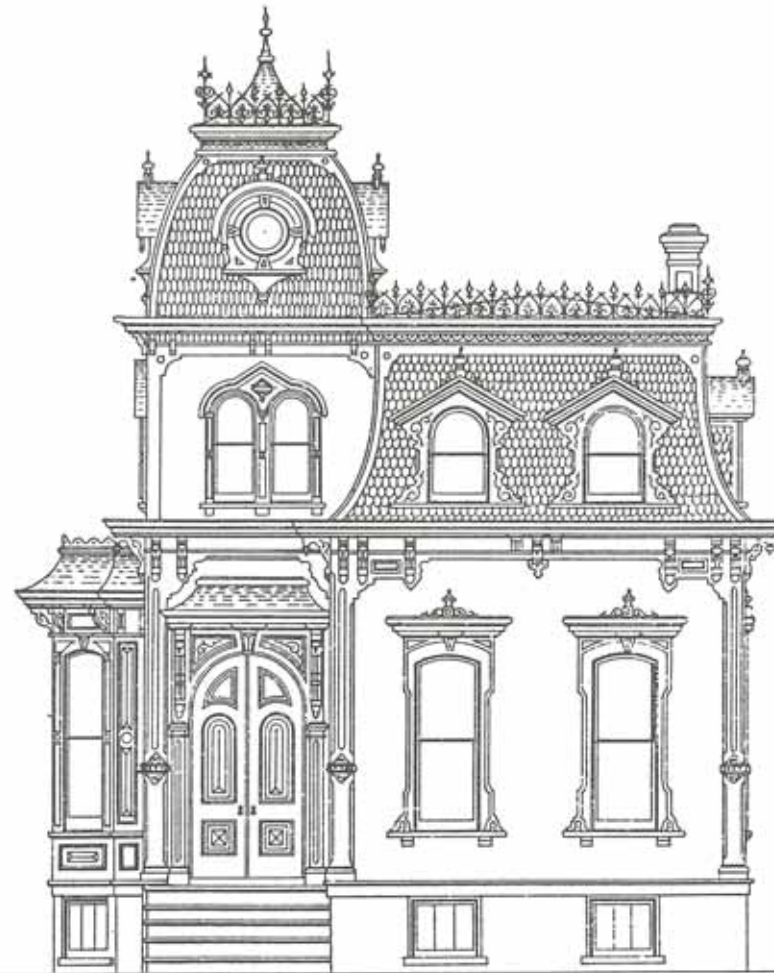


Figure 1. Cover of one of the popular architectural pattern books of the period (1878)

Waban possesses a significant proportion of residences designed by architects. In contrast, architects were responsible for only the largest and most complex of Newton Highlands buildings, primarily its churches and most elaborate houses. Designs for the majority of Newton Highlands residences were the product of local builders and contractors. This is not to imply that the local carpenter-builder was incapable of performing work of a relatively high level of sophistication. Essentially a craftsman, he was highly competent in practical matters like framing systems, which during the nineteenth century included not only the building's basic internal structure, but also the complex roofline shapes and curving projections of the Victorian era.

The builder participated fully in the design process. In addition to new developments in framing technology, he was required to absorb a rapid succession of architectural styles, adjusting them to both the taste and pocketbooks of his clients. To accomplish this, he borrowed from designs that had been successful for other builders, or consulted an architectural pattern book (Figure 1). These handbooks of sample floor plans (Figure 2), house designs and ornamental trim were widely published by architects and builders throughout the nineteenth century. Often a builder and potential homeowner reviewed these books together, selecting elements from several illustrations to be incorporated into a new design.

Wood was the most abundant and inexpensive building material of the nineteenth

century and was used for most of Newton Highlands' and Waban's residences. It was used in the internal structure, as weather proof skin for the exterior, and as ornament throughout the building. In the early 1800's, wood was fashioned by relatively primitive saws into linear shapes. With the introduction of more complex woodworking machines in the mid-nineteenth century, thousands of board feet of intricate wood trim were easily produced in a variety of fanciful scalloped, scrolled, curved and twisted shapes (Figure 3).

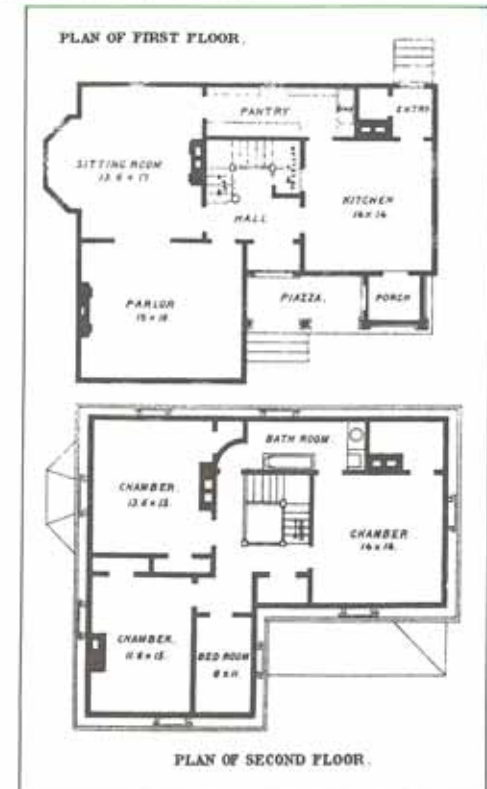


Figure 2. House Plan, *Bicknell's Victorian Buildings* (1878)

Creating a house design involved a number of limiting factors. Economic constraints imposed by the income of the client, for example, reduced the design options of the builder or homeowner. Speculative builders who constructed housing for an unknown buyer were even more restricted in their choices. Limiting their capital risk, this class of builder frequently selected conservative designs in a few popular styles that had already found acceptance among potential homeowners.

Cultural factors played a determining role in the exterior appearance of a house as well. In every age and culture there have been shared perceptions of how a home should look and function. Although taste in architecture is tied to personal experience, education and social status, cultural factors strongly influence the collective set of images of what is felt to be a beautiful or appropriate house in a particular era. During the nineteenth century, preferences in architectural design were expressed by ornately

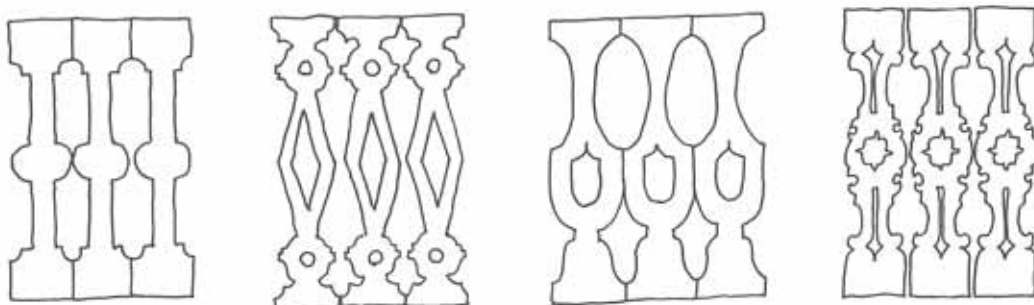
decorated houses that reflected a series of rapidly changing fashions or styles.

The kinds of rooms a house should have were similarly culturally determined. Victorian homeowners, for example, had a more formal attitude toward outsiders than modern families. In the nineteenth century, entertaining space was often divided into a formal parlor reserved for visitors and a separate sitting room for family intimates. These two functions were combined during the twentieth century to form the modern living room.

Many Newton Highlands houses were custom built in this manner, with the owner playing some role as entrepreneur. Samuel A. Walker was one such builder who was active in the early phase of the village's suburban development. He at first built his houses one after the other, occupying one while in the process of building the next. When the new residence was complete, Walker moved his family there and sold off his former house, presumably at a small profit. This seemingly unusual practice was actually common.

Walker's residences are 2½ story clapboard structures with both Italianate and Mansard detail. He applied ornament very sparingly, using simple brackets at the eaves, cornices over the windows visible from the street, and sidelights at the front doors. The plans for these homes were derived from architectural pattern books featuring moderately

Figure 3. Machine-sawn architectural ornament



priced designs. The residence at 6 Columbus Street is a Walker house, constructed in 1872 and sold for \$3,000.00.

While Walker and other builders such as Charles Pottle, J. C. Newcomb, and W. B. McMullin were responsible for many of the houses constructed in Victorian Newton Highlands, specific attributions are extremely difficult. Building permits, the most reliable source of information on a house's builder, cost, and date of construction, are not available until 1912. Records such as blueprints or contracts were rarely kept in a house as it changed owners over the years.

William C. Richardson (not to be confused with Henry Hobson Richardson) was one of very few Boston architects known to have worked in Newton Highlands. He was a partner in the firm of Hartwell and Richardson which was responsible for the designs of several prominent buildings in the City. The Hyde Grammar School (1895) was designed by the firm and constructed at a cost of \$50,000.00. The old High School, the Bigelow School, Mason and Horace Mann Schools, (the latter of which is a close variation of the Hyde School plan) were also designed by the firm. All of the schools have been destroyed except the Hyde School which has been severely damaged by fire (April 1981).

Herbert C. Moseley, supervising architect of the Stevens Block (1888) also designed the house at 263 Lake Avenue (1884). Gurdon R. Fisher designed several residences in the neighborhood, among them 28 and 32 Lakewood Road (1892, 1893 respectively).

H. Langford Warren, William F. Goodwin, Lewis H. Bacon, and Clinton Hill were architects known to have designed both public buildings and private residences in Waban. H. Langford Warren, a well-known architect and Dean of Faculty of Harvard's Architecture Department, was commissioned by real estate developers William C. Strong, Charles J. Page, and Frederick H. Henshaw, to design several of Waban's first houses. 787 Chestnut Street, 102 and 196 Windsor Road, and 389 and 414 Woodward Street, all built in 1888, are representative of his stylish, innovative designs.

The house at 658 Chestnut Street, Waban (1888) and the Medieval Revival Church of the Good Shepherd on Beacon Street (1896) are attributed to William F. Goodwin. Lewis H. Bacon of the firm, Bacon and Hill is credited with the design of two residences on Chestnut Street, No. 627 (1892) and No. 703 (1889), as well as the distinctive Dutch style Strong Block (1896). Prominently situated in the village center, the well-preserved block sustains a country ambience, very much a part of Waban's Victorian past. Clinton Hill, also a partner in Bacon and Hill, designed a residence for himself at 63 Windsor Road (1903). The firm is also credited with the design of the Medieval Revival style house at 99 Pine Ridge Road (1897). It is interesting to note that because Waban was not developed until after 1886, the bulk of its architecture reflects later suburban styles that of the Shingle, Medieval and Colonial Revival styles. There are no Mansard, Italianate, Gothic, nor Stick style residences in Waban.

The completion of the Circuit Railroad in 1886, not only contributed to the growth of the small community at Newton Highlands, but also encouraged development of the hinterlands to the west, specifically Eliot and Waban. These railroad suburbs were essentially small towns, tied through its residents to the aspirations, values, and lifestyles of a sophisticated urban center, yet in ambience and appearance were similar to a country village.

An essential feature of the picturesque suburb of the mid and late nineteenth century was a generous house lot planted with ornamental gardens and specimen trees. A curving drive, its entrance marked by posts, led to the main door of the house and lots were

fenced with low stone walls. Large lawns and yards at several Newton Highlands and Waban estates succumbed to pressure for development and were subdivided into smaller house lots in the late nineteenth century. The subdivision of the 200 acre Collins estate together with the contiguous Carlton and Varick estates at Waban is a notable example.

The term "style" in architecture refers to the characteristic features of buildings erected in a certain period. Understanding stylistic trends can provide insight into the relation of the homebuilder to his time and into his expression of "contemporary" taste. Architectural style also may indicate the approximate date of a building's construction and the development pattern of a specific neighborhood.

The typical suburban house was wood frame in construction, like America's earlier farmhouses and village dwellings, but designed with an imposing street facade and front entrance. A trend toward picturesque architecture, first appearing in the 1840's, coincided with the development of the suburban house form. Featuring a dramatic set of images that included jagged silhouettes, prominent rooflines and a profusion of ornate wooden decoration, "picturesque" buildings were felt to be particularly appropriate for scenic rural settings.

Each style has its own system of ornament, and a distinct set of features that includes not only decorative detail, but also the proportion of a building's parts as they relate



Figure 4.
Newton Highlands:
68 Hyde Street, 1883

to the design of the whole. In different styles, for example, the roof could be low and insignificant or it might dominate the entire composition.

New styles often borrowed several elements from their predecessors. A transition period of five to ten years that included features of both was common as designers and their clients grew accustomed to the latest style. Often the decorative detail of a new fashion was first tried on the inside of a house, with the exterior design completely in keeping with the older, more familiar forms. In some cases a much earlier building was remodeled in a new style, or a porch and different ornamental trim added to bring it up to date. The Italianate style house at 163 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands (Figure 5), for example, was built in 1872. The imposing round corner tower and spacious semi-circular verandah are Queen Anne elements added during the 1880's when the fashion for picturesque architecture was at its height.

Underlying the sequential development of nineteenth century styles were several basic trends. Historicism, or an interest in the

architecture of an earlier period, was a predominant characteristic of nineteenth century architecture. This was particularly true of the Victorian era, roughly corresponding to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), when a succession of styles evoked a highly interpretive, often romantic view of the past. Historicism, which began in America with an interest in the classical temples of ancient Greece, waned briefly in the 1880's with the more imaginative, less historical designs of the Queen Anne and Shingle style, and re-emerged at the end of the century with an



Figure 5. Newton Highlands:
163 Lincoln Street, 1872.

idealized version of American colonial architecture.

Another trend, which came full circle as it developed over the century, was a gradual change in the massing, or assemblage of forms in residential architecture. The compact, crisply-defined outline of the early 1800's gave way in the period between 1840 and 1890 to more picturesque designs with

broken silhouettes and a complex array of competing shapes. In the late nineteenth century, house forms reverted back to the earlier, self-contained rectilinear building types.

Most styles were imported from England, reaching this country through the enthusiasm of the European traveler, the architect who studied abroad, or architectural magazines and books. New fashions were first experimented with in large, sophisticated urban centers like Boston, and then gradually proceeded in a pattern of geographical dispersion to smaller cities and towns, and finally, to rural farming areas. As the population of Newton Highlands and Waban became increasingly Boston oriented, the usual five to fifteen year time period between a styles introduction and acceptance here diminished.

In a similarly orderly progression, architectural styles followed a sequence tied to socioeconomic status. Generally, new architectural fashions grew less complicated as housing became more modest, until at the workingman's level, they were evoked by a single ornamental feature such as the wooden bracket.

Descriptions of the eight Victorian architectural styles most prevalent in Newton Highlands and Waban, and illustrations of representative examples of both the more complex and simpler local interpretations follow.

Figure 6. Waban: "Hillcrest," 215 Windsor Road, 1891 (destroyed)



The Greek Revival style first appeared in England where new discoveries of ancient temples had heightened the interest of both architects and scholars in Greek civilization. In this country the Greek Revival style achieved the status of a national architecture, becoming predominant for commercial blocks, civic and religious buildings, residences, and even utilitarian structures like carriage barns.

The widespread appeal of the Greek Revival style lay in the often expressed sentiment that Americans were the spiritual successors of ancient Greece. This feeling was apparent not only in the country's building stock of the pre-Civil War era, but also in the names of its newly formed towns: Sparta, Ithaca, Athens and Attica.

The Grecian temple (Figure 7) provided the model for the Greek Revival style, the first in a series of nineteenth century styles based on historical precedents. Its triangular front pediment and columned portico were frequently copied for residential designs, although the temple's low roof was often modified to reflect the relatively steep slopes that were then common in American houses.

The temple form necessitated a rearrangement of the traditional orientation of the house so that its narrow side faced the street. The main entrance was often, but not always, shifted to the edge of the facade and opened into a hall that ran along the side of the building. These two changes produced the front gabled sidehall house plan that remained in vogue for the rest of the century.

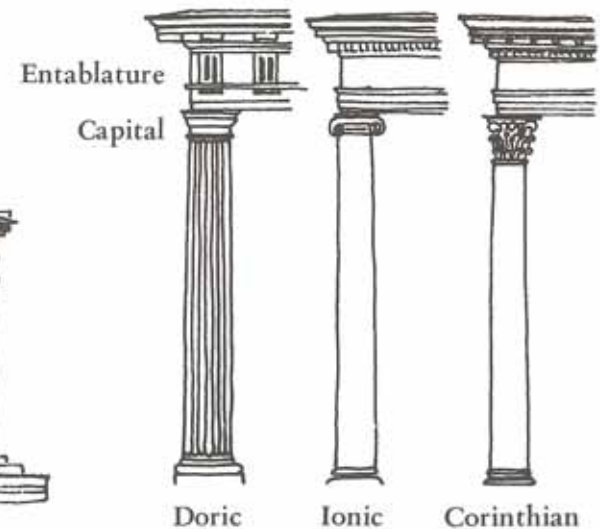
The column, with its three styles of capitals and surmounting entablature (Figure 8) was a favored form of ornament in the Greek Revival period. Both column and capital were often supplied by large lumber companies rather than handmade by the local carpenter. A less expensive version of the column, the pilaster, could be easily constructed by nailing wide vertical boards to corners and door frames and tacking on a few mouldings to suggest a capital. Similarly, a series of flat boards could be used to reproduce the classical entablature at the doorway and roofline.

The fashion for Greek Revival house designs peaked in Newton during the mid 1840's. As both Newton Highlands and Waban were as yet undeveloped, few residences were built in the style.

Figure 7. The Parthenon (438 B.C.)



Figure 8. The Classical Orders



The Grecian Temple form with its row of porch columns was used for more elaborate Greek Revival style residences. An ambitious, well-preserved temple form house is the Fred-eric A. Collins house at 1734 Beacon Street, Waban (1847, Figure 9). The structure owes its inspiration to the Allen C. Curtis house, now the Pillar House Restaurant, built in 1845 by local housewright William Lyon. The Collins house was constructed in the Ionic Order, readily identifiable by its columns with graceful, curved volutes. The two-story, Ionic colonnade supports a tall entablature. Compared with the shallow slopes of the Greek models, the roof of this

residence takes on a much steeper profile. The facade of the residence is faced with flush cladding in an attempt to emulate the masonry construction of the Greek originals. Its side entrance allowed for a traditional center hall room arrangement.

The William Hyde House at 22 Hyde Street, Newton Highlands (1848-1851, Figure 10) is a more modest local interpretation. Doric pilasters, a typical motif of the Greek Revival period, frame the corners of the building. A three-part entablature, an important feature, forms a continuous band on the main part of the house.

Figure 9. Waban: 1734 Beacon Street, 1847



Figure 10. Newton Highlands: 22 Hyde Street, 1848-1851



The Middle Ages provided another source for nineteenth century house styles. Small, vaguely Gothic garden structures began to appear on English country estates in the late 1700's, and by the early nineteenth century, medieval designs had been introduced for elaborate residences. The pointed arches, stained glass, and soaring towers of medieval cathedrals were suitable for churches, but the Gothic influence was more tenuous in domestic architecture. Confined to a few specifically medieval details, Gothic Revival house design, especially in this country, was more closely connected with the fanciful garden cottages of the late eighteenth century than the monuments of the medieval period.

The American public had acquired an interest in the Middle Ages through popular historical novels with medieval settings such as Sir Walter Scott's Waverley series. It was not, however, until a landscape designer named Alexander Jackson Downing promoted the Gothic Revival style that this interest was focused on "medieval" architecture. In his popular book *The Architecture of Country Houses*, Downing described the picturesque Gothic style: "It must not look all new and sunny, but show secluded shadowy corners. There must be nooks about it, where one would love to linger; windows where one can enjoy the quiet landscape leisurely; cozy rooms where all domestic fireside joys are invited to dwell." Downing's widely read articles and books were accompanied by sample house designs and plans for picturesque suburban cottages and country estates.

The Gothic Revival style, characterized by wings that projected in several directions, complex roofs, and ornate wooden detail, marked a departure from the compact house forms, restrained decoration, and rules of symmetry imposed in classical styles such as the Greek Revival. It initiated the picturesque fashion which was to encompass several distinct Victorian architectural styles.

Newton Highlands' and Waban's commuter population may have admired the picturesque styles, but usually preferred less dramatic, though still ostentatious versions for their own residences. The well preserved residence at 68 Hartford Street, Newton Highlands, is one of very few local examples.



Figure 11.
Newton Highlands:
68 Hartford Street,
1876

The design of this residence is adapted from pattern books that depict stone Gothic cottages. Since stone carving was rather expensive, the structure's wall surface is clad to look like stone. Board and batten siding in the gable fields, typical of carpenter Gothic versions, adds textural contrast to the wall surface. A tall corner tower, projected above the roofline, enhances the structure's verticality. Its steeply pitched dormers are romanticized with triangular peaked windows and pinnacles at the roof. The house displays a modest amount of "inch-board finery" condemned by contemporary critics of picturesque architecture. The newly invented scroll saw, a machine similar to the modern jig saw, allowed local saw mills and carpentry shops to produce thousands of board feet of gingerbread trim. (Figure 11).

The residence was built in 1876 by Charles C. Pottle, a local builder who was active in the area during the 1870's and 1880's. He also built the residences at 82 Hyde Street and 284 Lake Avenue, which are similarly styled.

A modest variation of the style, the Gothic cottage, is typified by the residence at 66 Forest Street (1871-1874, Figure 12). The cross-gabled roof establishes a strong vertical emphasis in the design of this house. The tall, narrow paired windows capped with segmental mouldings that are decorated with sawn ornament reinforce this vertical theme. The clapboarded walls and lack of "inch-board finery" demonstrate the lasting influence of the austere Greek Revival style among village buildings and home buyers.



Figure 12. Newton Highlands:
66 Forest Street, 1871-1874

The historical origins of the Italianate style can be traced to the rural architecture of northern Italy. The style was first introduced in England, again under the impetus for picturesque house designs. Its popularity was probably related to a contemporary interest in seventeenth century landscape paintings, many of which illustrated romantic Italian country villas.

The Italianate style arrived in this country during the early 1840's. Under various names including the Tuscan, Lombard, Bracketed, and Italian Villa styles, it was promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing and his contemporaries as an appropriate style for a scenic rural landscape.

Newton Highlands' first suburban villagers favored the Italianate style, and it enjoyed a long period of popularity that lasted until the mid 1880's, so that the village has many examples. The style was suitable for elaborate houses as well as for inexpensive cottages. Unlike the more complex Gothic Revival, the Italianate could be readily adapted by local carpenters by adding rows of brackets to the already familiar front and end gabled house forms. The narrow rounded arched windows were also a common feature of the Italianate style. They often appeared in pairs, outlined by prominent mouldings that trace the curving upper profile of the arch. Inexpensive architectural elements such

as brackets, and turned balusters appeared in a variety of profiles.

The residence at 111 Clark Street (1879, Figure 13) contains many features commonly found on the village's Italianate style residences. The design breaks from the traditional flank gable house form with the addition of an ornamental central gable. A pair of interior end chimneys is located at the roof's ridge line. The gable roof features a projecting cornice with short gable returns, both supported by paired brackets. The circular window, though distinctly Medieval,



Figure 13. Newton Highlands: 111 Clark Street, 1879

and the paired bays on the gable ends, were popular local Italianate motifs.

An unusual variation of the Italianate style is the Italian Villa. Newton Highlands' textbook example is the Italian Villa at 230 Winchester Street (1873, Figure 14). Charming-ly picturesque in effect, the house has two wings punctuated by a central tower which has a distinctive, slate bell-cast roof. The tower is embellished in the standard Italianate fashion. It has narrow round arched windows and scroll sawn brackets at the eaves. The irregular massing and silhouette of this design is similar to that of the Gothic Revival style.

Though the names Italian Villa and Tuscan Villa were often used interchangeably, the Tuscan Villa was a symmetrical cube with academic or classically derived detail. The Tuscan Villa at 122 Lincoln Street (1871-1873, Figure 15) illustrates this distinction. Its formal balance, established by the central placement of the entrance portico flanked by polygonal bays and crowned by a cupola, is typically Tuscan. In all other features: round-headed windows, bays, the cupola itself, the low-hipped roof, extended eaves, and the ornamental brackets, the Italianate influence is strongly felt.

Figure 14. Newton Highlands: 230 Winchester Street, 1873



Figure 15. Newton Highlands: 122 Lincoln Street, 1871-1873



Regardless of the derivation of a building's decorative ornament, it is Mansard in style if it has a mansard roof. Essentially a hybrid form, the style borrowed round arched windows, bracketing, boxed porch posts and its interior floor plans from the Italianate style.

The mansard roof was imported from France where it had a major revival in the mid-nineteenth century. Named for Francois Mansart, a seventeenth century architect, "la mansarde" derived from a provincial French roof form. (The word itself has come to mean attic in France.) The mansard reappeared during the Second Empire under Napoleon III (1852-1870) when it was used in the enlargement of the Louvre palace during the 1850's. In this country the Mansard style was often referred to as "Second Empire," a designation that applied primarily to monumental structures of the 1860's and 1870's, such as Boston's old City Hall. Many mansard roofed public buildings were erected during the post Civil War administration of Ulysses S. Grant, giving rise to another name for the style, the "General Grant."

In residential architecture, the Mansard style enjoyed wide popularity in suburban communities such as Newton Highlands. Local builders adopted the new roof in the early 1860's and continued to build Mansard style residences until the mid 1880's. The mansard roof was appreciated by the Victorian public as a new, distinctive form but its chief

appeal lay in its practicality. The roof's height allowed more headroom in the attic, adding an extra usable floor to many buildings. In some instances, a new mansard roof was added to an older house for this specific purpose.

The Mansard style was used in a variety of house types in Newton Highlands from towered residences like that at 335 Lake Avenue (1873) to simpler cottages found on Columbus and Forest Streets. A pronounced curve to the lower roof slope and segmental shaped dormers was a popular combination for Mansard houses built around the time of the Civil War. The large residence at 43 Floral Street (1873, Figure 16) was owned by Winfield S. Richards,



Figure 16. Newton Highlands: 43 Floral Street, 1873

a railroad expressman. The columned verandah appears to date from a later alteration. A carriage barn, constructed to the rear of this residence, has been extensively altered. Although livery stables were operated in each village, carriage barns remained in vogue in Newton throughout the Victorian era.

A unique variation of the style is the large, square residence at 450 Winchester Street, Newton Highlands (c. 1865, Figure 17). The

mansard roof's lower slope contains gabled dormers with round arched windows. Above the dormers, a curb cornice emphasizes the intersection of the mansard's two slopes. The symmetrical design of the residence is emphasized by floor-to-ceiling, round arched windows flanking the central entrance. The scroll saw is very much in evidence in this house, providing the ornate trim for its eaves and verandah, including the exquisite cable moulded posts, a Romanesque moulding imitative of a twisted cord.



Figure 17. Newton Highlands:
450 Winchester Street, c. 1865

The Stick style is a more picturesque contemporary of the Mansard and Italianate styles. In keeping with the conservative taste of Newton Highlands' Victorian population, it enjoyed less popularity in the village than the latter styles. The Stick style's steep gabled roofs, decorated wall surfaces, bargeboards and multi-wing plans were an extension of the Gothic Revival, another style that found little favor in Newton Highlands.

The central feature of the Stick style is a network of thin, flat boards applied over a clapboard wall. Stickwork, as this decorative system is called, is laid in a pattern of horizontals, verticals and diagonals that suggests the building's interior framing, although it serves no structural function. Thus, wall areas are given a new visual importance; they are recognized as a design element with the potential for energetic articulation. This theme was taken to its inventive extreme during the ensuing Queen Anne period.

The sophisticated Stick style residence at 173 Lincoln Street (1876, Figure 18) ranks among Newton Highlands' finest Victorian era residences. Its vertically proportioned, angular design is emphasized by a steep gable roof, projecting eaves, and bargeboards. Utilized as ornament, the rafter ends at the eaves are left exposed. The interesting stickwork in the gable is accented by both diagonal flush board and picket style paneling,

characteristic Stick style features. In most Newton Highlands' residences, this stickwork was confined to simple horizontal bands that crossed at each floor level and at the tops and sills of window frames. The polygonal bays are distinctively detailed with exposed rafters, picket valances, and crosswork paneling.



Figure 18. Newton Highlands: 173 Lincoln Street, 1876

The energy and inventiveness of the Queen Anne style gave full expression to the picturesque forms that had been an undercurrent in American architecture beginning in the 1840's. Most often, Queen Anne designs were eclectic, drawing from several sources for inspiration. For models, architects relied on contemporary British decorative arts, medieval cottages and town houses, and, toward the end of the style's popularity, American colonial architecture.

The style's name was coined in England to describe a series of quasi-medieval manor houses built in the mid-1800's, and was taken with no discernible logic from the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714). It received widespread publicity in this country at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia through the popular British pavilions, whose Queen Anne design caught the imagination of the American public. Architectural pattern books featuring the Queen Anne style were rushed into print, and within four years after the Centennial many new suburban homes appeared with all the trappings of the latest fashion.

Queen Anne style houses are not compact. Rooms spill outward from a central core in no set pattern, exterior walls project at several intervals, and the roofline is correspondingly complex. Attached are all manner of

porches, balconies and bay windows. Designers in this period played on the contrast of materials as well as forms. It is not unusual to find brick, stone, clapboards, plain or patterned wood shingles, stucco, and intricate moulded plaster or clay panels within a single house.

The Queen Anne style made its first appearance in Newton Highlands in the late 1870's and reached the height of its popularity a decade later. Local versions of the style range from the inexpensive sidehall plan houses such as 1 and 3 Bowdoin Street (both 1885) to comfortable builder designed residences that appear on Lincoln, Hartford, Chester and Walnut Streets. In its simplest expression, the style's ornate trim is reduced to a front porch with curving posts and a wall surface divided between clapboards and patterned shingles.

There is remarkable variety in the designs for Newton Highlands' Queen Anne houses for the 1880's and 1890's, especially in their ornamental details. These include long front porches with turned supports and ornate railings, textured walls of clapboards and shingles, complex rooflines with several dormers and gable-roofed projections, and towers which provide the focal point for what sometimes seems a confusing array of shapes and forms.

Built in 1886, the residence at 93 Hillside Road, Newton Highlands (Figure 19) displays a rich variety of surface trim that is a characteristic of Queen Anne design. Particularly notable are its ornate frontispiece, entrance porch with spindle-turned posts (since replaced with ones of Colonial Revival design), corner tower with bellcast roof and finial, and Queen Anne style sash windows (small panes encircling a large central pane) visible on the first story. Several variations of this design can be found on Lincoln Street.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Queen Anne style's exuberance was toned down as designers worked more closely from Medieval models, particularly the townhouses in the English Tudor period of the sixteenth century. In this late period, projections were pulled in and walls stripped of balconies and towers, resulting in a quiet facade relieved by a series of balanced, secondary roofs, and a simplified porch.



Figure 19. Newton Highlands:
93 Hillside Road, 1886

H. Langford Warren was well-known for his Medieval Revival style architecture which he introduced to Waban with designs such as that of 102 Windsor Road (1888, Figure 20). The architect worked in close association with Henry Hobson Richardson, and was strongly influenced by his work. Several architectural features of this picturesque villa, the steep gables, overhanging projections, small paned sash windows and oriels are recognizably Medieval. The plainer, shingled wall surface of the Medieval Revival was more often the rule in Waban and there are many fine examples: 1545 Beacon Street (1896), 58 Plainfield Street (1897), and 203 Windsor Road (1897).

Half-timbering, which has intersecting wall boards over a plaster or wooden surface, was introduced during this later phase. The residence at 25 Pine Ridge Road, Waban (Figure 21) is an exceptional example. Built in 1906, the heavier scale of half-timbering is typical of later, more architecturally correct Medieval Revival adaptations. The clay tile roof with coping at the ridge, casement windows with diamond sash panes, and the Tudor arched entrance and side porches are important features. Double and triple windows, common in the late century, increase the amount of light to interior rooms.

Figure 20. Waban: 102 Windsor Road, 1888



Figure 21. Waban: 25 Pine Ridge Road, 1906



The Shingle style evolved from the Queen Anne style and shares with it an informal appearance and freedom in the arrangement of its interior spaces. The first truly American style, it developed from the early, rambling farmhouses of the New England region. The barn-like gambrel roof that characterized many of these buildings became a popular feature of the Shingle style, which also adopted more formal aspects of eighteenth century colonial architecture, such as the columned porch.

The hallmark of the Shingle style is the use of natural or brown stained wooden shingles as a wall covering. The style was popular in New England seacoast resorts, where shingled walls, often used with rough surfaced stone, were particularly suited to the seaside air and rocky maritime scenery. Shingling not only covered the walls of these houses, but often the roof, porch posts, bracketing and curving sides of the window openings as well. Although the style often incorporated the circular towers and long front porches of the Queen Anne period, its uniform shingled wall texture gave these houses a quieter, more restful appearance. Decorative detail was generally confined to porch columns, bay windows, large dormers and groupings of recessed windows.

The Shingle style gained wide popularity in suburban settings. It was introduced in Newton Highlands and Waban during the late 1880's, and was used primarily for ambitious middle and upper class housing. It was rarely used in modest dwellings erected to stock plans by local builders.

Wood shingled houses appear on Lake Avenue, Walnut Street, Lakewood Road and Norman Road in Newton Highlands during the 1890's. Many, however, were complex, irregular designs more closely tied to the Queen Anne style. More typical of the quiet effect conveyed by the Shingle style is this house at 48 Windsor Road (1887, Figure 22). The residence is contained under a pair of broad gambrel roofs which encompass two floors of living space. The continuous expanse of wall surface is broken only by shallow projections and small-paned windows that appear in pairs, and tripled.

Figure 22. Waban: 48 Windsor Road, 1887



After the Centennial year, American architects began to examine their own heritage. The first result of this interest became apparent in designs for Shingle style buildings. As the decade of the eighties drew to a close, the preoccupation with early American architecture coalesced into a full-fledged style, the Colonial Revival. The style represented a return to historical precedents for architectural design, with the important difference that the original models were copied more faithfully than had been the case with the evocative, picturesque styles of the mid-nineteenth century.

The Colonial Revival, however, borrowed freely from several phases of eighteenth century architecture and from the post colonial

Federal style as well. Long schooled to admire the picturesque, American homeowners were unwilling to accept a copy of the pristine, austere houses of the early 1700's and demanded versions of later, more elaborate eighteenth century house designs. With mill-work machines close at hand, Colonial Revival builders could easily trim the new style with the same profusion of detail that had characterized earlier Victorian styles. The scale of the buildings was also altered to reflect the accepted notion of the appropriate size for a comfortable house, which by modern standards seems unusually large. Thus the narrow fanlight doorway of the Federal period was greatly expanded to accommodate the grand entrance of the Colonial Revival house.

Colonial Revival ornament began appearing in Queen Anne designs in the 1880's and resulted in many hybrid forms such as the eclectic residence at 111 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands (1886-1888, Figure 23). Colonial Revival ornament was also used for the porch and window areas of Shingle style residences. Basically classical in derivation, the ornament included large pilasters, columns, oval windows from the Federal period, elaborate eaves, mouldings, railings, urns, and Palladian windows, an eighteenth century motif using an arched central window flanked by two narrower openings.



Figure 23. Newton Highlands: 111 Lincoln Street, 1886-1888

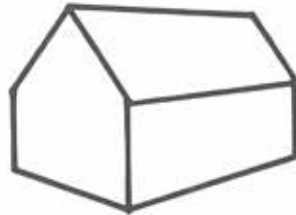
The Colonial Revival style was popular in many of Newton's villages, including both Waban and Newton Highlands where there are many good examples of the style. The typical Colonial Revival house has a boxy self-contained shape usually capped by a hip roof, although the gable and gambrel forms were also used. The rules of symmetry were usually observed on the street facade which was often ornamented with a columned porch. The residence at 170 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands (1896, Figure 24) is an impressive Colonial Revival mansion and is virtually a catalog of classical ornament. The

columned front porch, popular on less expensive versions of the style, is replaced by a semi-circular portico with fluted, Corinthian columns. The central entrance with its elliptical fan and leaded sidelights is derived from the Federal period. Fluted pilasters with Roman Ionic capitals frame the corners of the residence and are surmounted by an entablature enriched with a denticular cornice, bead moulding, and comma brackets. The house is contained under a truncated hip roof which features a series of pedimented dormers.



Figure 24. Newton Highlands: 170 Lincoln Street, 1896

GUIDE TO HOUSE FORMS,
REMODELING, REPAIRING



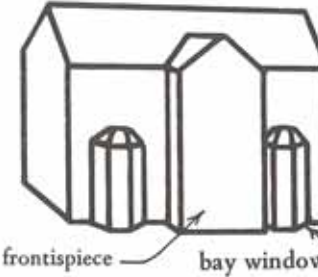
The overall form of a house is most often expressed in the simple geometry of a rectangular or square block.



This basic shape can be made more complex by adding a secondary form, or wing, to the sides or back of the house.



When there is more than a single wing, the arrangement of forms can be symmetrical, with balancing wings on either side of the main block.

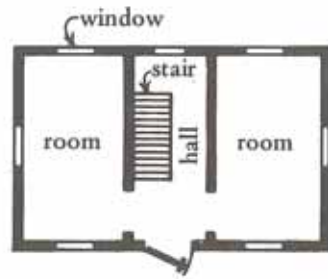


Another method of arriving at a more involved house form is to add shallow projections such as a center frontispiece or bay windows to the main block. These are placed symmetrically in the example.

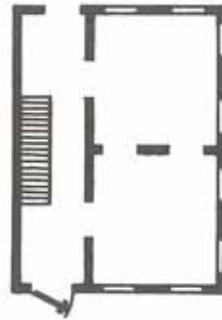


By the mid-1800's houses were designed with asymmetrical forms of varying sizes and shapes. Favored in the Victorian period, these complex designs were called "picturesque" because of their irregular, dramatic silhouettes.

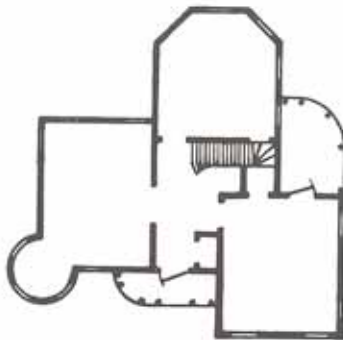
A plan is essentially a map of a building, drawn looking from above as if the walls had been sliced through. It shows the arrangement of the rooms, the location of the stairway and hall, and the placement of the doors and windows.



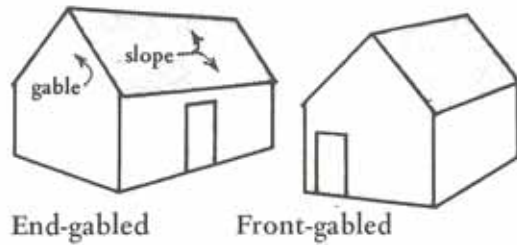
In general, boxy buildings with geometrical shapes will have simple plans. Shown above is a typical first-floor room arrangement for houses of this type. This plan is symmetrical, with a central hall and rooms on each side.



The side-hall plan was adopted for the long, narrow houses of the mid-1800's. Because of the short front walls in these buildings, the stairhall was moved from a center position to the side, with the two main first-floor rooms placed back-to-back.



In picturesque designs, and in large complex buildings, room shape and size varies and the interior spaces follow a complicated, asymmetrical pattern. The internal room divisions can rarely be guessed from looking at the exterior and it is easier to become lost once inside.



Five roof types were standard in the nineteenth century: gable, jerkin, gambrel, hip and mansard. Wood shingles had been the most common roof covering early in the 1800's, but by mid-century slate came into general use.

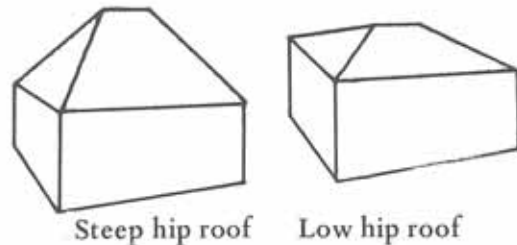
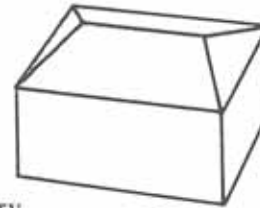
GABLE ROOFS

Popular throughout the nineteenth century and very common, the gable roof has two slopes that meet at a peak and a gable at each end. The position of the gables is of major importance to a building's design. If the gable appears at the sides of a house, it is said to be end-gabled.

Front-gabled houses had a quite different appearance. They were used frequently with the side-hall plan.

HIP ROOFS

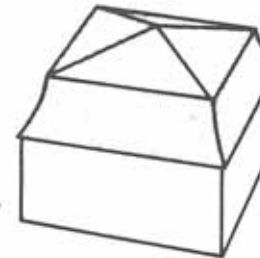
The hip roof has four slopes and no gables. It was used in the early 1800's and reappeared at the end of the century.



The proportions as well as the form of a roof can change the character of a house. A prominent, steep roof will dominate a design, just as a low roof can assume much less importance in relation to the rest of the building.

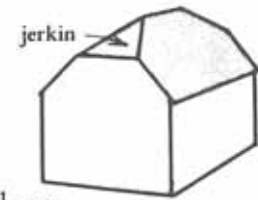
MANSARD ROOF

A two-part hip roof, the mansard often has curving slopes. Its hey-day was between 1860 and 1880, during the so-called Mansard style.



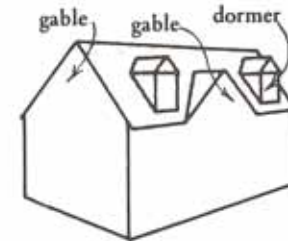
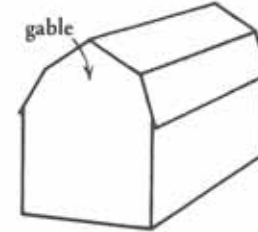
JERKIN ROOF

The jerkin roof is closely related to the gable form, but has a triangular, backward slanting front and rear slope.



GAMBREL ROOF

Barnlike in shape, the gambrel roof has two slopes, broken into double sections, and gables. It was popular during the late 1800's.



The complexity of a roof corresponds to the grouping of forms in the body of the house. A picturesque house with a complex plan will also have a complex roofline. Decorative gables, or large triangular areas similar to the ends of a two-sloped roof, and dormers can add to the complexity of the roof shape.

The ratio of solids to voids, or the extent of the blank, neutral wall area between the punched-in window openings, makes a difference in the appearance of a house.

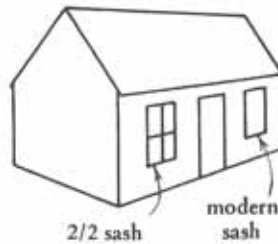
In the example (right), there are four windows grouped symmetrically on either side of the door. The number of windows allows for only a small section of wall space between each opening.



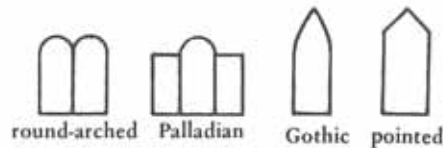
An asymmetrical arrangement of two windows on one side, with a single window flanking the door, illustrates a variation in window/wall ratio that produces a quite different effect.



Size can also govern the appearance of a building's facade. In this illustration, the window at the right assumes much more importance in this design because its opening is larger.



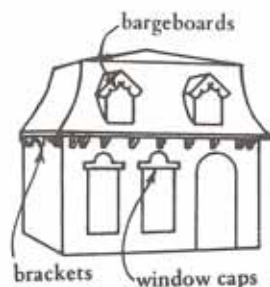
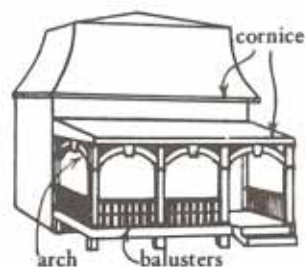
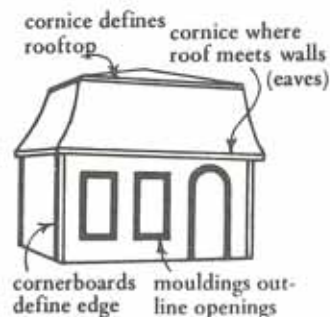
Windows in the nineteenth century held standard sizes of glass, kept in place by narrow strips of wood, or sash bars. Until the 1840's six panes in each section of the window were used (6/6 sash), with 2/2 division until the end of the nineteenth century, when modern 1/1 sash was introduced. The number of sash bars and window panes makes an impact on the overall effect of the design, as can be seen in the contrast between the 2/2 sash of the mid-1800's and the modern undivided window with plate glass.



In the nineteenth century windows assumed several shapes in addition to the standard rectangular form. Often displayed in a prominent position, such as above the main entrance, these windows were an important decorative feature. They were used sparingly because of the time and expense involved in special framing for the opening and in cutting the glass.

ORNAMENTS

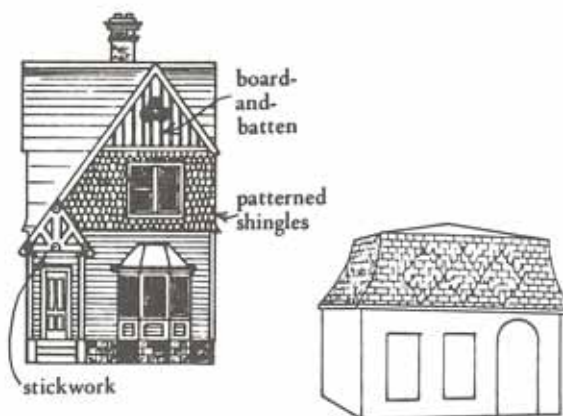
Ornament is an essential part of a building's design, not just an afterthought. The type and amount of trim was dictated by a building's architectural style, as well as by its cost, size and pretensions.



Ornament can be used in several ways. For example, it defines the meeting points between the walls, roof area and openings. Decorative trim at these key locations includes the cornice at the eaves, cornerboards and mouldings at the doors and windows.

Decoration is also concentrated at a building's most important design features. As an extension of the facade, the porch played an essential role in nineteenth century houses, as well as in the lifestyle of their occupants. In modest houses the porch often received the only display of fancy wooden detail. Porches were usually ornamented with curving posts, wooden arches, and railings with rows of balusters.

Ornate trim was often applied as the final, individualistic signature to a design. This ornament is what sets nineteenth century architecture apart from the modern tract house. Common forms are bargeboards, or narrow decorative borders along the roof eaves, brackets, and window caps.



Decorative wall coverings were sometimes applied to the exterior of a building to enliven this essentially neutral area. The repetitive rows of clapboards perform this function to some extent, but elaborate decoration such as patterned wood shingles, long flat boards laid in various designs (stickwork) and vertical board-and-batten siding play a more crucial role in the design.

In slate-covered roofs the individual slates were cut into decorative shapes and laid in intricate patterns, in much the same manner as wood shingles. Patterned slate became a common feature of the mansard roof and sometimes appeared in several colors.

SUMMARY

The selective, deliberate process of combining materials, forms, proportions and decoration produced an architectural statement that reflected a building's times, its occupants and its designer. Easily perceived at the time the house was built, this composite message is often not as clear to its modern readers.

Remodeling or repairing an older house requires a great deal of care and should respect the basic principles that went into its design. *Home Improvement and Repair Standards*, a guide published by the Newton Planning and Development Department and the Newton Upper Falls Historic District Commission, offers extensive advice for remodeling older homes.

In general, original materials should be conserved wherever possible. Often selective patchwork will serve perfectly well, especially in the case of decorative trim, deteriorated shingles or broken slates.

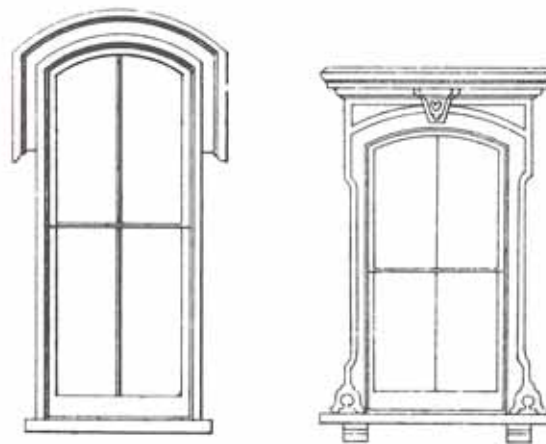
Let the original building material be the guide in selecting replacement parts. Wood was used in the vast majority of older houses. It has special properties entirely different from brick, composition stone, shiny metals and synthetics.

Windows

The number of windows, as well as their dimensions, sets up a deliberate, balanced juxtaposition of openings and solid wall areas, which should be retained, at least on the front part of the house. The size of the panes and sash bar divisions of nineteenth century windows also makes an impact on the overall effect of the design.

Walls

The type of wall covering is important to a building's appearance. Clapboards, the most popular choice of the nineteenth century, had a thin, three- to five-inch exposure. When laid in a repetitive horizontal pattern, the clapboards established a specific texture to the wall surface. Eight-inch sizes of aluminum and vinyl synthetic siding destroy this rhythm, alter the wall texture and significantly change the character of the house. Wood shingles give a building an informal appearance, especially when they are stained rather than painted. Patterned shingles and decorative stickwork were applied as part of a complex design scheme and should be kept if at all possible.



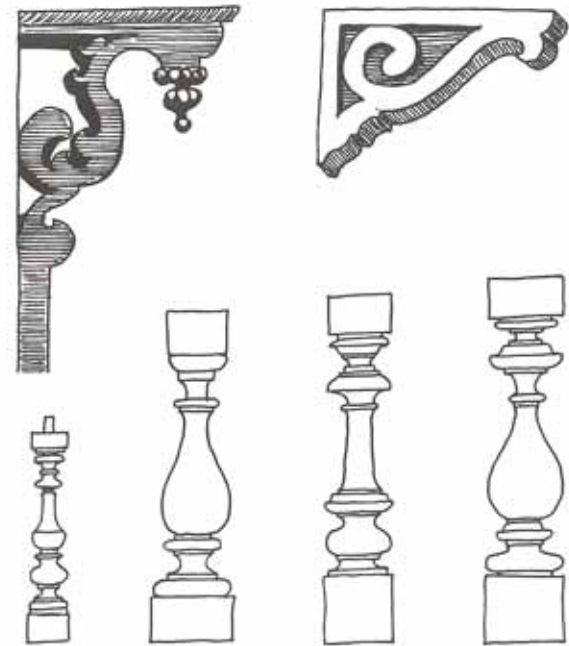
Decorative Trim

Mouldings and other trim that outline the openings, corners, and roof areas of the house are absolutely essential to a building's character. Small-scale trim like brackets and "gingerbread" sets a particular house apart from its neighbors and as such, is rarely an expendable part of the design. This ornamental detail was particularly important in the Victorian period.

Color

Color and style were closely tied in nineteenth century architecture. Historically, early nineteenth century houses were painted white with dark shutters; later houses (1840-1890) had strong but dusky colors (dark red and green-/grey/olive/tan and ochre) and contrasting trim in lighter or darker tones. Large ornate buildings of the 1880's were painted with up to eight different colors. During the last decade of the nineteenth century, pastel shades (beige/light yellow/light green/light blue) with dark shutter colors and white trim came into vogue.

Repainting a nineteenth century house in an appropriate color scheme may pay large dividends by immediately recapturing its original character. To assist interested homeowners in choosing paint, a guide titled *Paint Colors for Newton's Victorian Homes* is available for reference at the Jackson Homestead, Newton's historical house museum. The guide, based on a pamphlet prepared by



the Cambridge Historical Commission, identifies the various nineteenth century architectural styles and lists color combinations appropriate for each. Pattern books and manufacturer's publications of the period form the basis for the recommended combinations. The guide is illustrated with paint chips and representative houses of each style.

One general rule with regard to color is that dark-shaded materials emphasize the roof area of the house, while light or variegated asphalt shingles tend to make the roof disappear. In all architectural styles after 1840, the roof was meant to play a prominent role and therefore should be dark in color.

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CREDITS

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Text	Deborah Shea
Guide to House Forms, Remodeling and Repairing	Kathlyn Hatch
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Layout	Nancy L. Weston

NEWTON HIGHLANDS WALKING TOUR

Text	Deborah Shea
Photographs	Courtesy of the Jackson Homestead, Newton Free Library
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WABAN WALKING TOUR

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