

## Medford Neighborhood Overviews

### WEST MEDFORD

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

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

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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

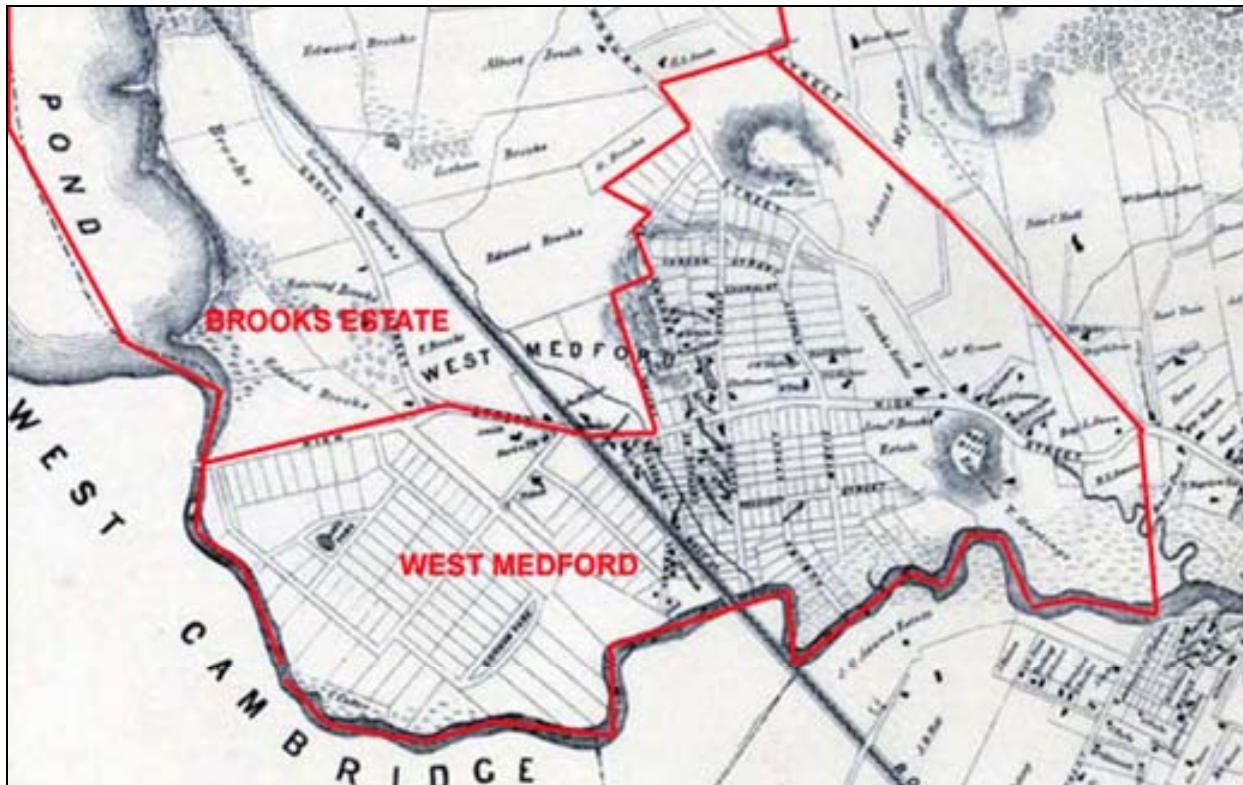


Fig.1: Detail of 1855 Medford map with boundaries of West Medford neighborhood

### West Medford Neighborhood in 1855

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

The footprint of a large house is pictured on the southeast corner of Boston and Bower; the Italian villa now on Bower Street may be that building moved back when the Harvard Street frontage commercialized (Fig.2). The only other section where buildings are located is close to the river along Lowell (now Canal) Street. The names of carpenter Daniel Gunn and Thomas P. Smith are associated with two of them. Smith also owned the parcel located between the railroad and Canal Street, which has since developed commercially. Clergyman James M. Usher is shown owning a large lot north of High Street and east of the railroad; he would play a major role in the development of West Medford’s commercial core.

Edmund Trowbridge Hastings originated the improvements on the east side of the railroad. He owned property on both sides of High Street west of Woburn Street and resided near the river just east of a promontory near the river, named Rock Hill on the 1855 map. (The house survived until fairly recently, replaced with a small residential subdivision on Alto Drive.) Hastings and his neighbor, Samuel Teel, Jr., whose property—also on both sides of High Street—contained an old 18<sup>th</sup>-century gambrel-roof house (411 High St.), took a combined 200 acres and laid out streets and building lots around 1845, planting trees to picturesque advantage. It was known as Hasting Heights. The western limit of the plan is said to have extended to the railroad, but innkeeper James M. Usher owned a fair amount of property near the crossing. Thus, the Hastings-Teel plat included Cottage, Allston, Auburn, Mystic and Prescott streets south of High Street and Irving (Warren), Allston, Mystic, Laurel and Vernon streets north of it. Adjacent to the east side of Hastings Heights was the estate of Jonathan Brooks, which remained intact for many years after.

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



Fig.2: House at 9 Bower St. (left)

Fig.3: Houses on Jonathan Brooks Estate, High St. (above)



### West Medford Neighborhood in 1875

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

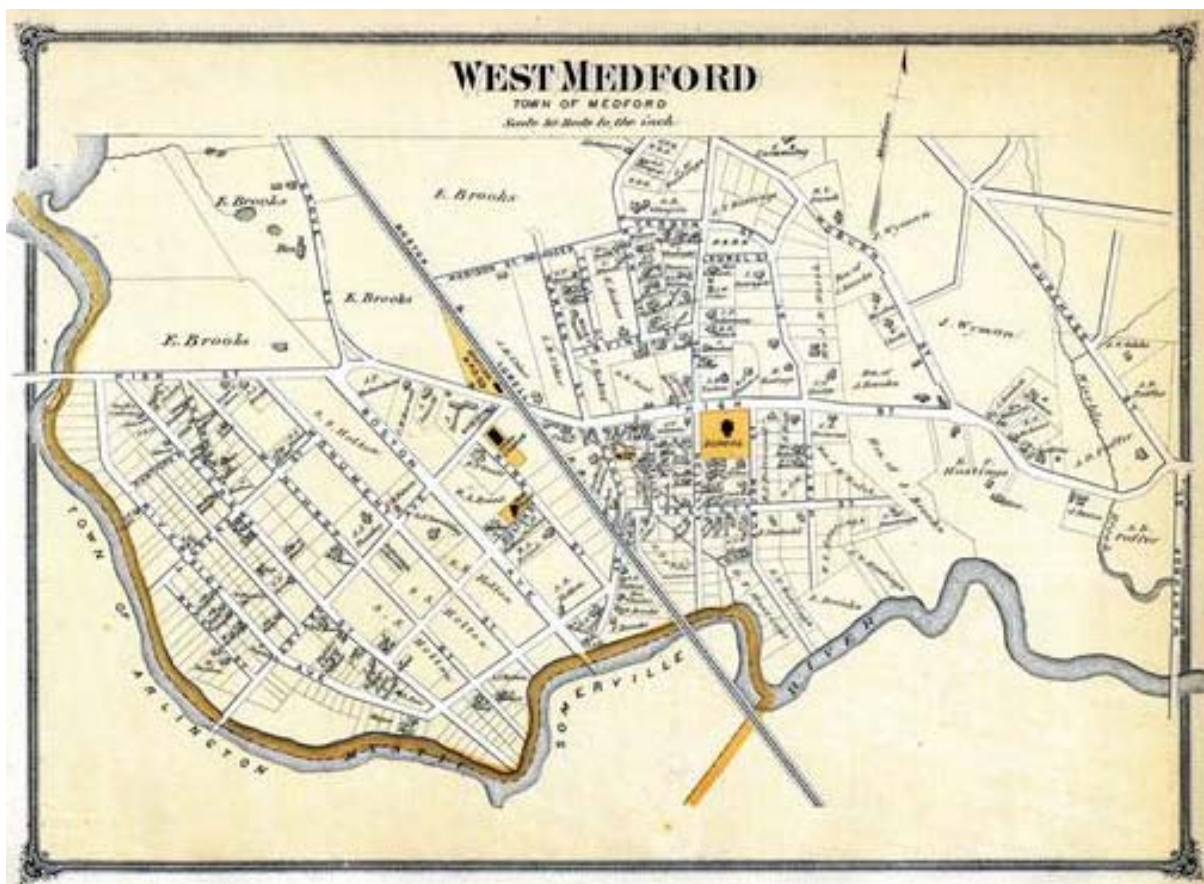


Fig.4: Map of West Medford, 1875.

A number of the houses depicted on the map were owned by Moses W. Mann, a young architect and builder born in Vermont, who resided on the southwest corner of Winthrop (now Sharon) Street and Harvard Avenue in a house no longer extant. Mann was Samuel S. Holton's son-in-law. Real estate agent Eugene R. Guptill also owned a house and vacant lots in the area. Likewise did J.H. Wight and H. Buxton, although their identities are unknown. Few, if any, of the houses shown on the map appear to have survived. The two churches highlighted in yellow on the map also are gone. A fire

station occupies the site of the Congregational church on the northeast corner of Harvard and Bower; in 1875 an engine house was located on Canal Street near High Street. A Methodist chapel depicted at the intersection of Bower and Holton streets was later replaced with a larger church on the same property.

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

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



Fig.5: Warren Street, east side north of Irving Street (41, 445 & 51 Warren St., r to l).





Fig.6: House at 47 Allston Street.



Fig.7: Prescott Street, south side west of Auburn Street.

### West Medford Neighborhood in 1889

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

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

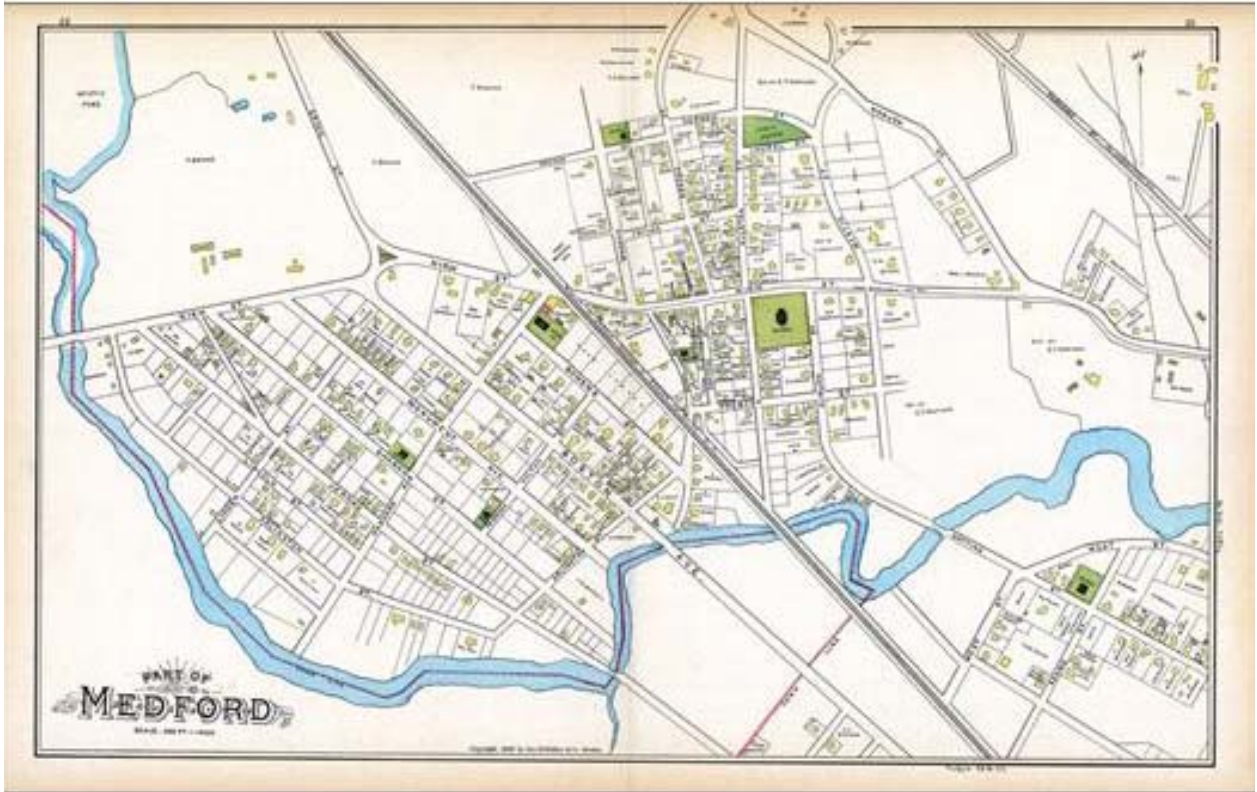


Fig.8: Map of West Medford from 1889 county atlas.



Fig.9: Boston Ave., west side south of High St.





Fig.10: Boston Ave., west side north of Arlington St.



Fig.11: Monument St., north of Harvard Ave.

By 1889 Hasting Heights lots were pretty much filled to capacity. Mansard houses are prevalent during this time, along with large end houses showing Gothic and Queen Anne tastes (Fig.12). Houses on the hillside north of High Street were becoming more modern and distinctive in their design, which began to set this area apart from the Brooklands section west of the tracks. While Boston Avenue developed with large houses in a fully-developed Queen Anne style complete with verandas, towers, and complex roof and siding patterns, such elaboration was limited to that street and its intersections (Fig.11). Houses on streets west of Boston Avenue are plainer in design. In



Hastings Heights there was no such hierarchy, at least north of Hill Street. (The section on the south side of the main artery, which had developed first, was simpler and more conservative in design.) In this way, the hillside development was more uniform in the status of its housing and owners. This was clearly a white-collar neighborhood with heads of households having occupations at the ownership or management level in local businesses, as professionals (physicians, dentists, engineers, newspapermen), and in real estate rather than construction. Many of the households contained servants.



Fig.12: Allston Street, south of Laurel Street.

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

Commercial activity was increasing around the railroad depot. A new brick station had been built in 1880 and J.M. Usher, S.S. Holton and others had built new and larger edifices. Holton introduced the

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



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



Fig.14: High St., north side east of Warren St.



### West Medford Neighborhood in 1900

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



Fig.15: West Medford Baptist Church, southwest corner Boston & Harvard aves.



Fig.16: West Medford Methodist Church, southwest corner Bower & Holton sts.



Fig.17: House at 12 Temple St.



Fig.18: Holton St., south side east of Sharon St.

New stylish architecture appeared consistent with the suburban mode sweeping through Medford and surrounding towns. Two shingle-clad churches were built west of the railroad are similar enough to

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



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



Fig 20: Boston Ave., north side east of High St.





Fig.21: Vernon St., north side west of Allston St.

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



Fig.22: Usher Block, High St. & Playstead Rd., 1893.

### West Medford Neighborhood in 1930

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



Fig.23: Circuit St., west side south of Harvard St.

Significant changes had occurred along the commercial section of High Street in the 30 years between maps. Nearly all of the buildings east of the railroad crossing were constructed in this period. A three-story wood frame mixed-use building was erected east of the Usher Block containing two stores at street level and distinguished by pediments superimposed on the upper stories of the front facade. Next door is a distinctive one-story brick six-store block that wraps around the corner on Warren Street. The restaurant installed in the corner space is still intact and functioning (Fig.24). Three one-story store blocks were located across the street, all of which remain. Two on the eastern end are masonry faced with brick and stone; the westernmost one is wood frame. A steam laundry and



parking garage occupied the rear of the lot along the tracks, but they have been removed. A large masonry parking garage constructed in this period to accommodate 70 cars survives around the corner on Canal Street. East of Canal Street, there was a distribution center for Hood dairy products; it has been replaced with a four-story apartment block. The Medford Post Office, apparently a WPA project, is located on the north side of the street (Fig.14). Around the corner on Playstead Road on the lot behind the Usher Block is a tiny building now functioning as a laundromat. The 1936 map depicts it as a bank.

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

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



Fig.24: High St., north side west of Warren St.



Fig.25: High St., south side west of Canal St.



Fig.26: Brentwood Court Apartments, 520 High St.

The last area of the West Medford to develop was in its eastern section where four large estates were finally subdivided. In addition, there were a number of larger suburban properties at the northwestern end of Woburn Street that were subdivided into smaller house lots as Medford continued to urbanize in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. These were some of the last sections of the city to develop (Fig.27). What was left of Edmund T. Hastings personal estate after Hastings Heights was created amounted to his Federal Period home on Hastings Lane and land to the east located between High Street and the river. By 1900 lots had been platted around the house on Hastings Lane with the remaining land coming into the possession of George S. Hatch, including unsold lots in Hastings Heights. He built a new house on the east side of Hastings Lane, and the open space was preserved until after the Second World War, when the present subdivision was made.



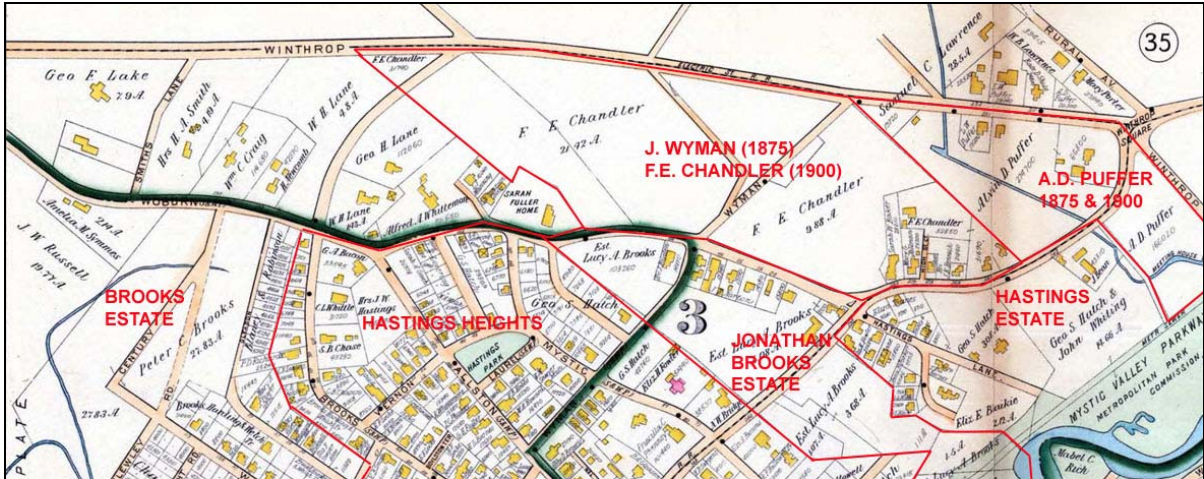


Fig.27: 1900 Map of Medford, detail of eastern end of West Medford showing development tracts.

The remaining property of the old Jonathan Brooks estate bridging High Street west of Woburn Street was subdivided and fully developed between 1900 and 1930. (Who was responsible for this project is currently unknown.) Wolcott Street and Austin Road were created in this plat, along with an extension of Wyman Street. The planned development interspersed four square house types in Craftsman and Shingle styles with Dutch Colonial Revival style houses with their characteristic false gambrel roofs (Fig.28). The latter house design would come to dominate residential subdivisions built in Medford Square and Brooks Estate neighborhoods during this period and later.



Fig.28: Wolcott St., west side north of Austin Rd.

The Puffer property located on the west side of the intersection of High and Winthrop streets (Winthrop Square) also was subdivided in this period after years of being open and associated with a single family. House lots had been created earlier along Winthrop Street, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Essex Street was routed through the triangular parcel on the north side of High Street and a uniform group of brick houses built on both sides (Fig.29). Essex Street connected on the north with a road system laid out in the adjacent Chandler tract, but the uniqueness of the brick house group identifies the development of the Puffer plot with a different builder. Brick was also used in the construction of similar houses in nearby Lawrence Park in the Medford Square neighborhood. Distinctive in the design of the Essex Street houses is the superimposition of a gable pent on the facades of many of the houses in a Tudor Revival style. The Puffer tract crossed over High Street and extended to the river. This parcel had been subdivided by 1936, but house construction did not occur until later in the century.



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



Fig.30: Suffolk St., east of Woburn St.



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



Fig.31: Fernald House, 1894, 12 Rock Hill Rd.

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

The construction of the Mystic Valley Parkway along the north shore of the river eradicated earlier street sections and lots, absorbing most of the land into parkland. New lots were created on the north side of the parkway at the south end of the Hastings Heights development (Auburn and Mystic streets), and houses, many of them two-family types, were quickly built there as if the parkway and opposing reservation were assets. Later, similar development occurred west of Winthrop when the Hastings-Hatch property was finally subdivided. Ever-increasing traffic on the Parkway has created a

different environment, with some of these properties turning commercial. One noteworthy automobile-related historic feature is a gas station on Winthrop Street built before 1936 (Fig.32).



Fig.32: Gas station, ca. 1925, 530 Winthrop St.

### West Medford Neighborhood after 1930

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

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





Fig.33: Mystic St., west side south of High St.



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



Fig.35: High St., south side east of Bower St.

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



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



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: West Medford Neighborhood

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Each of these four developments contain examples of late-19<sup>th</sup>- and early-20<sup>th</sup>-century domestic design worthy of inventorying and classifying begin to understand the defining features of Medford's architectural history.*