

Medford Neighborhood Overviews

MEDFORD SQUARE

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

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

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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

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

into what is now East Medford before the construction of I-93. This urban development occurred simultaneously across the river in South Medford, leaving most of Medford Square, or that part north of High and west of Forest partitioned in large farm or suburban lots. The current disorderly street system in this section came a hundred years later.

Medford Square Neighborhood in 1855

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



Fig.1: Map of Medford, 1855, detail with Medford Square neighborhood outlined in red line.

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



Fig.2: Andrew I. Hall House, 43 High St., ca.1750.



Fig.3: John B. Angier House, 129 High St., 1842; Alexander Jackson Davis, architect.



Fig.4: William Roach House (Grace Church Rectory), High St. east of Rural Ave., ca. 1850.



Fig.5: Grace Episcopal Church, 160 High St., 1867, Henry Hobson Richardson, architect.



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



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

The Old Ship Street National Register Historic District on Riverside Avenue in the adjacent East Medford neighborhood represents another pocket of Greek Revival period residences. They were associated with the shipyards that were located in that area. The principal “industry” in Medford Square was the Lawrence rum distillery, which occupied a large site in the triangle between Salem Street and Riverside Avenue and extended south to the river. This area was the Square’s work zone. Ponds were constructed to contain water for tidal mills. The Middlesex Canal, which was dug through South Medford in 1803, included a branch that connected to the Mystic River opposite the Lawrence distillery. In the same year the Medford Turnpike Company was formed, which built a toll road to Cambridge originating on Main Street just south of the river (now Mystic Avenue). When the Medford Branch Railroad was built in 1845, it terminated at Medford Square. None of these historic features survives to any extent having been replaced by new commercial development at various stages.



Fig.8: Alfred Litchfield Duplex House, 72-74 Forest St., ca. 1845.

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

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



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

Medford Square Neighborhood in 1880

A bird's-eye view of Medford published in 1880 shows the development of the Medford Square neighborhood (Fig.9). The three-dimensional view provides a sense of how densely the square area had built up; most if not all of the tall commercial buildings depicted had been constructed since 1855, although even this second stage of development has since been largely obliterated. One exception is the pair of three-story buildings east of the Bigelow Block at the intersection of Forest and Salem streets. As also indicated on the 1875 map of the town, new residential construction had quickly filled in the streets platted east and south of the center, notably on Ashland and Oakland

streets, which are within the current boundaries of the neighborhood. As in other places, a mixture of end and cross-wing houses in Greek and Gothic modes were the norm, with at least one hipped-roof Italianate house on Oakland Street. Most were single-family dwellings with the preponderance of duplexes found across I-93 in East Medford. Some larger houses were spreading north along Forest Street, such as the elegant Second Empire-style home of lumber dealer Joseph K. Manning (35 Forest St.), whose business was located on Riverside Avenue east of the distillery. New houses in more suburban styles were being built on lots created along an extended Highland Avenue, now Powder House Road, on merchant Henry Page's property north of the Unitarian Church. Grain dealer George B. Green built a stylish brick cross-gable house with jerkin-head gables at the top of the road in 1872 (Fig.10). Its elevated site provided vistas south across the river. Algernon S. Lincoln, a bank teller, built a more traditional two-story house on the street that now bears his name (Fig.11).



Fig.10: George B. Green House, 6 Powder House Ter., 1872.



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

Medford Square Neighborhood in 1898

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

New houses also appeared on the hillside north of High Street, such as physician Charles M. Green's distinctive Shingle-style residence off Hillside Avenue (now Powder House) on what is now Green



Fig.12: Masonic Block, 20 High St., ca. 1885.



Fig.13: Bigelow Block, Forest & Salem sts., 1886.



Fig.14: Oakland St., west side south of Chestnut St.



Fig.15: House at 76 Ashland St.

Road. (He was the son of George B. Green whose house is pictured in Fig.10.) The grand Greek Revival edifice of the Unitarian Church at the corner of Hillside and High was destroyed by fire in 1893, and was replaced with the current Shingle-style church erected the following year. Across the street, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, which occupied the old Second Congregational Church since 1876, had broken ground in 1896 for a new church building, which would not be completed until 1912.

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



Fig.16: Hillside Ave., north end at Grandview Ave.



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



Fig.18: Intervale Ave., west side north of Hall Ave.

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

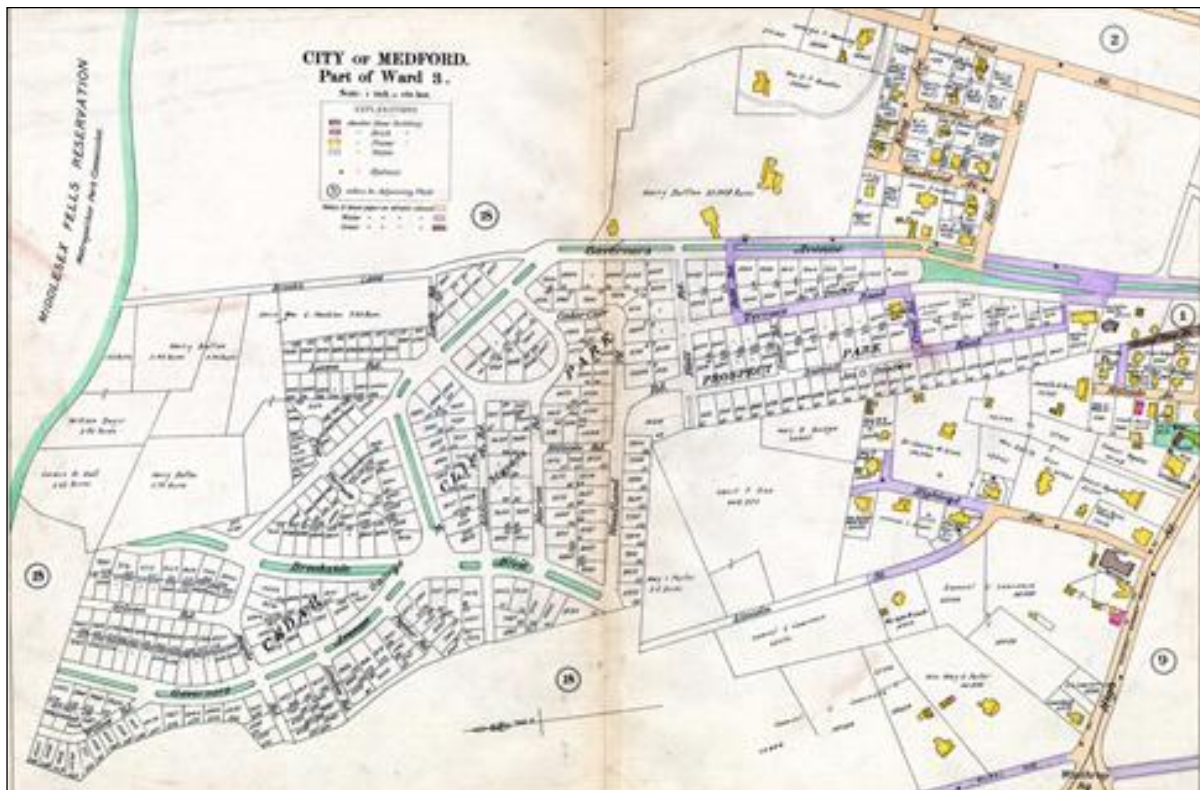


Fig.19: Map of subdivision plans along Governors Avenue, 1898. Note map is oriented with north to the left. Governors Ave. is the boulevard depicted in the center of the map (the dogleg heading towards the lower left corner was never built and the lot plan was revised). High Street is at lower right with existing residential development on the hillside along Highland Ave. (now Powder House Rd.) and Hillside and Lincoln avenues.

Governors Avenue was a major addition to the neighborhood in the 1890s. The boulevard replaced an old lane traversing the Hall lands on "Pasture Hill" north of High Street (Fig.19). The Prospect Park development was laid out on the west side of Governors Avenue by James O. Goodwin, a civil engineer who had acquired this rocky promontory from the Hall estate. (Goodwin lived in the Dudley Hall house and was probably responsible for the Woodland Avenue subdivision, too.) Lots were platted along two hill-top streets, Terrace and Summit roads, with the Shingle-style Medford Club building erected where the streets converged at the southern end. The other subdivision, which was never realized, was named Cedar Cliff Park. It filled the rest of the Dudley parcel and was planned by George M. Stevens, who was probably the produce salesman and former carpenter with that name.

living in Somerville. The map shows Governors Avenue bending northwest at Hall Road (the approximate location of what is now Lawrence Road) and thence bending through a complex tangle of streets. It was clearly inspired by picturesque suburban landscape designs of the period. The rest of the upland section of the neighborhood remained undeveloped.

Medford Square Neighborhood in 1930

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

North side of High Street

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

South side of High Street

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

West side of Forest Street

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

North side of Salem Street

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

South side of Salem Street

Two-story parking garage & bowling alley east of cemetery (demolished and site redeveloped with three-story office block)
One-story brick-fronted store block between River Street & Riverside Avenue

North side of Riverside Avenue

Movie theater built on portion of Lawrence distillery site, 22-48 Riverside Avenue (demolished and

site redeveloped with one-story store block)
Gasoline filling station & railroad station on south side of cemetery (demolished and redeveloped as park)
Geo. W. Blanchard & Co. lumber, building materials & coal yards (cleared and redeveloped with three-story parking garage)

South side of Riverside Avenue

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

East side of Main Street

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

West side of Main Street

Two-story city office block



Fig.20: High St., south side west of Hillside Ave., St. Joseph's Church complex (1912-1963).



Fig.21: High St., south side east of Hillside Ave., Lawrence Armory (1902).



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



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



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

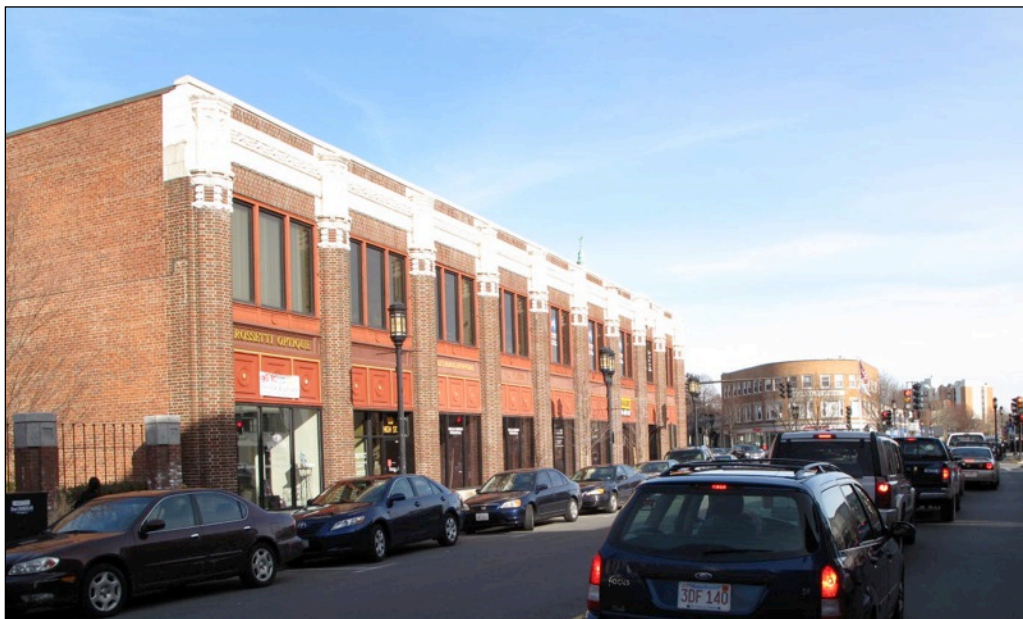


Fig.25: High St. north side east of Brooks Ln.



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



Fig.27: Salem St., west of Forest Ave.

Governors Avenue Subdivisions

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



Fig.28: Forest St. west side north of Hall Ave.



Fig.29: Governors Ave., east side north of Porter Rd.



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



Fig.31: Cedar Rd., north side west of Governors Ave.



Fig.32: Dutton Cir., east of Governors Ave.

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

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

Traincroft and Lawrence Estates Subdivisions

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



Fig.33: Map of hillside section of Medford Square showing large parcels existing in 1898; most were owned by Samuel G. Lawrence.



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



Fig.35: House at 73 Damon Rd.



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



Fig.37: Traincroft St., west side south of Crocker Rd.

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

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

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

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

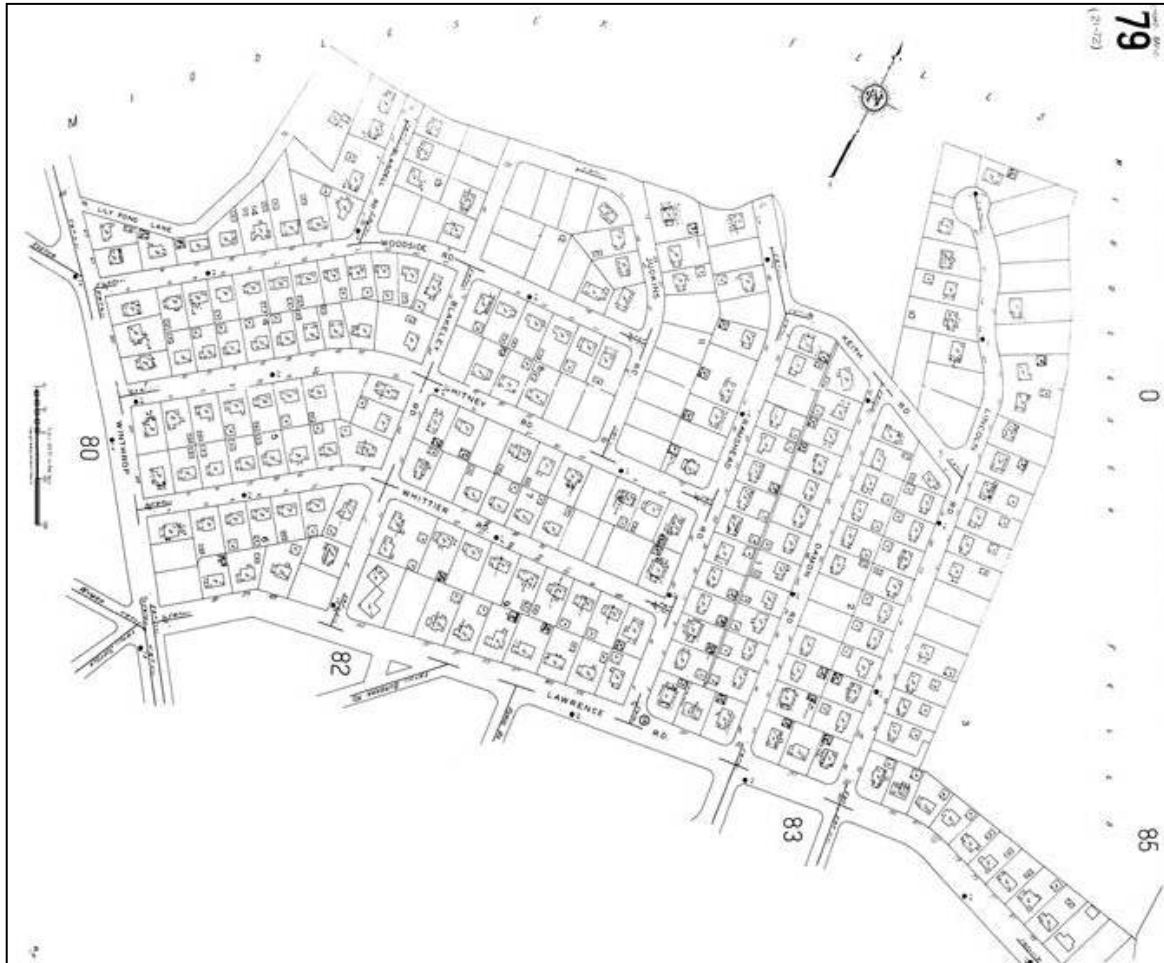


Fig.38: Plan of Lawrence Estates residential subdivision north of Lawrence Rd., from Sanborn map, 1936



Fig.39: Lincoln Rd. west side north of Lawrence Rd.



Fig.40: Ramshead Rd., west side south of Keith Rd.



Fig.41: High St., north side east of Rural Ave.

Brookside Parkway Subdivision

Sometime after the turn of the 20th century, a large vacant parcel east of Forest Street and north of Webster Street, which had belonged to Joseph K. Manning for years, was subdivided into lots along Brookside Parkway, Englehutt Road, Woodrow and Early avenues, and Walter Street. The brook giving the parkway its name became the route for I-93, which has separated the area from comparable streets in East Medford. The streets primarily contain gable roofed two-families grouped in rows (Fig.42). The east side of Brookside Parkway and the south side of Woodrow Avenue contain single dwellings, the former mixed in types and the latter having a row of identical bungalows (Fig.43). This planned concentration of this house form is unusual in the city.

The 1930 census records residents' occupations in categories of store and factory employees, building and automotive trades, and other skilled jobs, such as school teacher, orchestra musician, police officer, hotel chef, optician and gold leaf manufacturer. At least three persons were employed by the elevated railway, indicating that they traveled outside the city to work. Likewise hotel jobs would have been elsewhere. However, many of the occupations described could have been in businesses, trades and service jobs based in Medford Square.



Fig.42: Brookside Pkwy., north of Woodrow Ave.



Fig.43: Woodrow Ave., south side west of Brookside Pkwy.

Development in Highlands

The last area to address in Medford Square is located in the northeast corner of the neighborhood in a hilly section adjacent to the Middlesex Fells. Both Forest Street and Governors Avenue travel through this section to their terminations at South Border Road. The impetus for development here is unknown, but it was probably related to the completion of Fellsway West in 1898 on the east side of the area and the clamor for homes in Medford during this period. The Highlands section of the city,

of which this part of Medford Square can be considered a part, was the last to develop, and it did so in a less organized and systematic, that is, more individualized manner. That characteristic is evident here, especially in comparison with subdivisions in the rest of the neighborhood. The irregular topography and lower real estate value were clear factors.

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

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



Fig.44: Harry Dutton House, 110 Governors Ave.

Medford Square Neighborhood after 1930

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



Fig.45: Apartment house, 148 High St., ca. 1925.



Fig.46: Apartment house, Governors Ave., ca. 1930.

The rapid growth and urbanization of Medford in the early 20th century resulted in the expansion of civic services and improvement of civic architecture. A new, larger city hall was built on the old town green at the east end of the commercial district. Its three stories housed the growing number of departments managing a city of Medford's size required. Its "national" Colonial Revival style associates it with other civic buildings built during the Depression with funding and designs coming from the National Works Progress Administration in Washington D.C. Medford's post office on Forest Street was built in this period under the same program (Fig.47). The post office was built on the site of Samuel G. Lawrence's house, which had been demolished as part of the commercial redevelopment of the property. A new theater was built at the same time (Fig.48). The west side of Forest Street was further changed with the enlargement of the Medford High School and the installation of an architectural war monument in front of it (Fig.49). Another landmark of the period and the civic Colonial Revival style is the brick Baptist Church on Oakland Street that was built in

1936 after fire destroyed its predecessor (Fig.50). St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church continued to expand on High Street with the addition of a convent in 1949 and a huge social center built in 1963 between and connecting the church and parochial school (Fig.20). Victims of the redevelopment of the Lawrence property were two of the three 18th-century Hall-family houses on High Street. They were replaced with a one-story store block (Fig.51). The remaining old High Street house and the brick Jonathan Wade house behind have been preserved (Figs.23 &46).



Fig.47 (top left): U.S. Post Office, Forest St., ca. 1936.

Fig.48 (top rt): Chevalier Theater, Forest St., ca.1936.

Fig.49: (above): War Memorial, Forest St., ca. 1936.

Fig.50: (right): First Baptist Church, Oakland St., 1936.

Another major redevelopment project occurred along Riverside Avenue in the commercial district when the defunct railroad and its associated buildings and yards were removed and the riverfront industrial sites leveled. The construction of I-93 east of City Hall created a new gateway to the city at the eastern end of the center. New one-story store blocks were constructed on both sides of Riverview, along with two- and three-story office buildings, one containing a parking garage (Fig.52). The rounded Sloane Building at the intersection is either a renovation or a replacement of an earlier stone-faced three-story building. Large surface parking lots were created along the river's edge and

around City Hall, all done in the effort to better accommodate automobiles within the old commercial district.

Existing buildings in the center show the effects of exterior and storefront alterations made in recent years. As in other places where the dominant exterior material is wood, many houses in the neighborhood have been altered with the application of new synthetic sidings and original wood windows are being systematically replaced with new insulated units following the popular trends of energy conservation and home improvement. Otherwise, the present has little impact on the historic residential sections of the Medford Square neighborhood.



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



Fig.52: Riverview Ave., east of Main St.



Fig.53: Map of Medford Square (outlined in yellow) showing zones (red) of major periods of development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SURVEY: Medford Square Neighborhood

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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