

MEMO

Date: October 30, 2024
To: Jennifer Keenan, Ryan Hayward
From: Peter Hedlund
Project: Thomas Brooks Park
Subject: Archaeological Protection Concept Design

This memo summarizes the concept design work completed in 2024 in order to protect, preserve and interpret the former estate house site at Thomas Brooks Park. This project began in late 2023 and concluded in October 2024. Public presentations were given at Historical Commission meetings on January 8 and March 11, 2024 and the Historical Commission has these materials. A public meeting to review the concept design was held on October 22, 2024. The concept design is shown on the attached plan.

The plan is to create a History Walk that will create a pedestrian loop in the center of the park with a series of markers to help interpret the various layers of history in the park.

The walk will be an accessible pathway and will connect to new crosswalks across Grove Street at Ravine Road and Jackson Road. Potential new accessible parking spaces would be on these streets. At these entrances there will be new signs to identify Thomas Brooks Park and welcome visitors.

Along the History Walk there will be five interpretive signs, as described below:

1. Native American Historic Marker
 - Located along History Walk overlooking woodland
 - Highlight Native American history of the site, with habitation from the Middle to Late Woodlands periods (2,000 – 450 years ago)
 - Outline recent 2023 archaeological dig that recovered 64 pre-contact cultural artifacts
2. African American Historic Marker
 - Located along History Walk behind Pomp's Wall
 - Discuss history of this historic wall and the importance of its preservation for the park
 - Outline 2023 wall restoration work
3. Medford Water Systems Historic Marker
 - Located along History Walk overlooking field
 - Discuss important historic water systems in Medford, including the Middlesex Canal and Medford's role in the development of the Boston water and sewer system
4. Boston & Lowell Railroad Historic Marker
 - Located at back of park near fence line overlooking railroad
 - Overview of the importance of the Boston & Lowell Railroad – the first major railroad in the state and still in operation

5. Brooks Estate House Historic Marker

- Located near the site of the former Thomas Brooks Estate
- Review the history of the house (depicted below in Figure 1) built in 1727 and demolished in 1860
- Overview the 2023 archaeological dig that recovered 1,635 post-contact artifacts

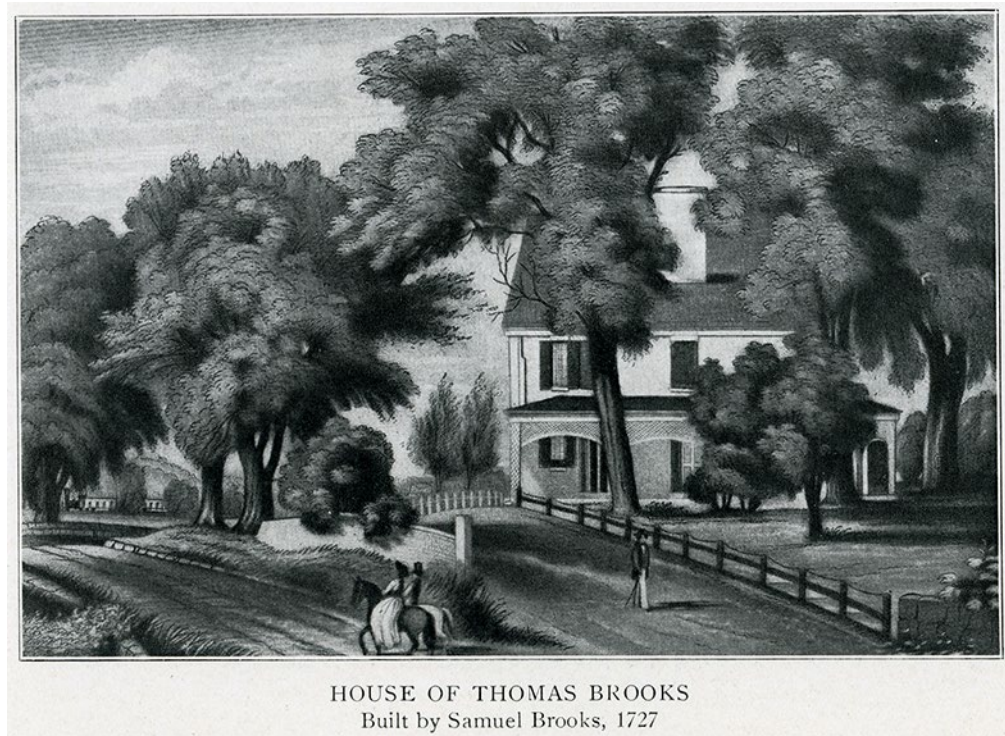


Figure 1. Illustration of Thomas Brooks House – undated (Massachusetts Historical Commission)

Stone blocks will mark the corners of the former house, as shown on the plan. These blocks would provide a subtle reminder of the house that was once there. The ground plane would be largely undisturbed, except for the addition of *Chrysogonum virginianum* (Gold Star) planting. This low groundcover has small yellow flowers from late spring to fall to add seasonal interest.

Historic documents reveal that *Syringa vulgaris* (Lilac) were formerly planted next to Pomp's Wall. This concept design has a new row of lilacs that would be planted in a row behind the wall, adding a burst of spring flowers that would be visible from both Grove Street and the History Walk.

More details and locations for concept design elements are shown on the attached plan.

