

Brookline Preservation Commission

The Pill Hill Local Historic District: The Story of a Neighborhood

Preface

Pill Hill is also called High Street Hill. The 50 year old High Street Hill Neighborhood Association is possibly the oldest continuously operating one in Brookline. It was instrumental in the creation of the Local Historic District, and at that time made its boundaries co-terminus with those of the District. Its impressive web site (highstreethill.org) contains a wealth of architectural and historical information about the neighborhood, including historic maps and photographs of every house, arranged so that you can “walk” each street, “turning” at appropriate places onto connecting streets.

This study attempts to blend the stories of the neighborhood’s development, its notable architectural heritage, and the families who have lived here and contributed to its special character up through the mid-twentieth century. A useful historian’s axiom says “history” begins 50 years ago. That informed the decision not to mention present Pill Hill residents. Generally multi-family buildings and houses from World War I on have only been mentioned if there was a specific reason.



While this study is based on earlier research and publications by the Preservation Commission and Brookline Historical Society, it is also a product of our age; Our increasing knowledge of Pill Hill’s residents would be impossible without Google! There is sufficient Town documentation to tell us much about who lived where and when. We not only know their occupations (not all doctors) but also their preoccupations — and how they were educated (overwhelmingly a century ago at Harvard — but very many with MIT connections of some sort). Like today’s Pill Hill, in addition to doctors, businessmen, and lawyers, there was a healthy leavening of artists, musicians, educators, and activists.

Dennis De Witt, Roger Reed, & Greer Hardwick — Summer 2009

In the beginning

The story of Pill Hill begins with **Walnut St.** It was laid out by 1658, as part of The Sherburne Rd. However, there is a reference as early as 1633 to the construction of a cart bridge over the Muddy River and the road probably followed an ancient Indian trail. The Sherburne Rd. crossed Mission Hill from the Boston Neck and then followed in turn what is now Huntington Ave., the lower portion of Washington St., (only later part of the Worcester Turnpike — now Route 9), Walnut St., and Heath St. (the eastern part of which was also subsumed into the Turnpike). As the first westward route from Boston, the Sherburne Rd. played an important role in the earliest history and development of Brookline and New England. It passed through Brookline's original Town Center where the first 1714 Meetinghouse stood, at approximately 353 Walnut, on part of a lot later long occupied the 1856 First Parish parsonage. (Its sale in 2007 severed a three-century link of that site with First Parish.) A stone marker and plaque there commemorates the location of the first meetinghouse.

Although the small triangle of land where Walnut meets Warren St. is called Town Green, it is not a "Town Green" nor a "Common" in the normal sense of land originally set aside as common open space. Because Brookline was part of Boston, its only true "common" was Boston Common. A 1905 marker on Town Green speaks of the departure of Brookline militia companies from "this spot" for the battle of Lexington. But in 1775 the land still belonged to the Hyslop family, even though apparently there had long been a wooden, one room schoolhouse on it. In 1793 the Hyslops donated to the town that same "triangular plot of land in the fork in the road" — where the Town soon built a new brick school house. Thus it had always been, at most, a schoolhouse site, not a town common.

Brookline's 1905 bi-centennial program, devotes several pages to the evolution of "Brooklin" to "Brooklyn" to "Brookline," but also simply calls that piece of land "the Walnut St. Triangle." In 1910 a D.A.R. patriotic historical magazine article, written by the Brookline chapter's "Regent" apparently first called it the "Village Green." Only in 1927 did "Town Green" finally appear in the Town Atlas.

An 1876 view of the 1825 first Town Hall before it was physically incorporated into the present First Parish Church complex. Note the horse sheds to its right, a once common feature of New England meeting houses and churches. During long church services the horses sheltered inside the sheds, with the buggies still attached.



The present First Parish Church site was sold by the Hyslops to the Town in 1805. In 1825 Brookline's first true Town Hall, now First Parish's Pierce Hall, was built there. Only in 1833 were Massachusetts towns and parishes finally separated.

Cypress St, the western edge of the Pill Hill neighborhood, was originally New Lane, built in 1720 to connect Walnut St. with Washington St. in Brookline Village across the Town Brook wetlands. Town Brook was and is (now in a big pipe) where the Green Line runs. Cypress St. provided access for the residents of northern Brookline to the new 1714 meetinghouse. South of Walnut, there was only a narrow lane, which wouldn't even show up on maps (as Sewall St.) until 1855. Although we now think of Cypress as crossing Walnut, the old sidewalk lot lines, still surviving on the northwest corner of the intersection, clearly show that Cypress originally curved westward into Walnut and did not cross it. The present, more squared off curb line at that side of the intersection, was only created in ca. 1980.

Confusingly Brookline as a whole was initially sometimes referred to as "Boston Commons" — the place where Boston kept its "swine and other cattle." A series of maps of old land ownerships shows an interesting pattern. In the seventeenth century there were many smaller holdings east of Harvard St. and again to the west of Pill Hill and Fisher Hill — although perhaps these holdings were not all settled. By the late eighteenth century there was some reconsolidation of those small holdings into country estates, a trend that would continue through the first half of the nineteenth century.

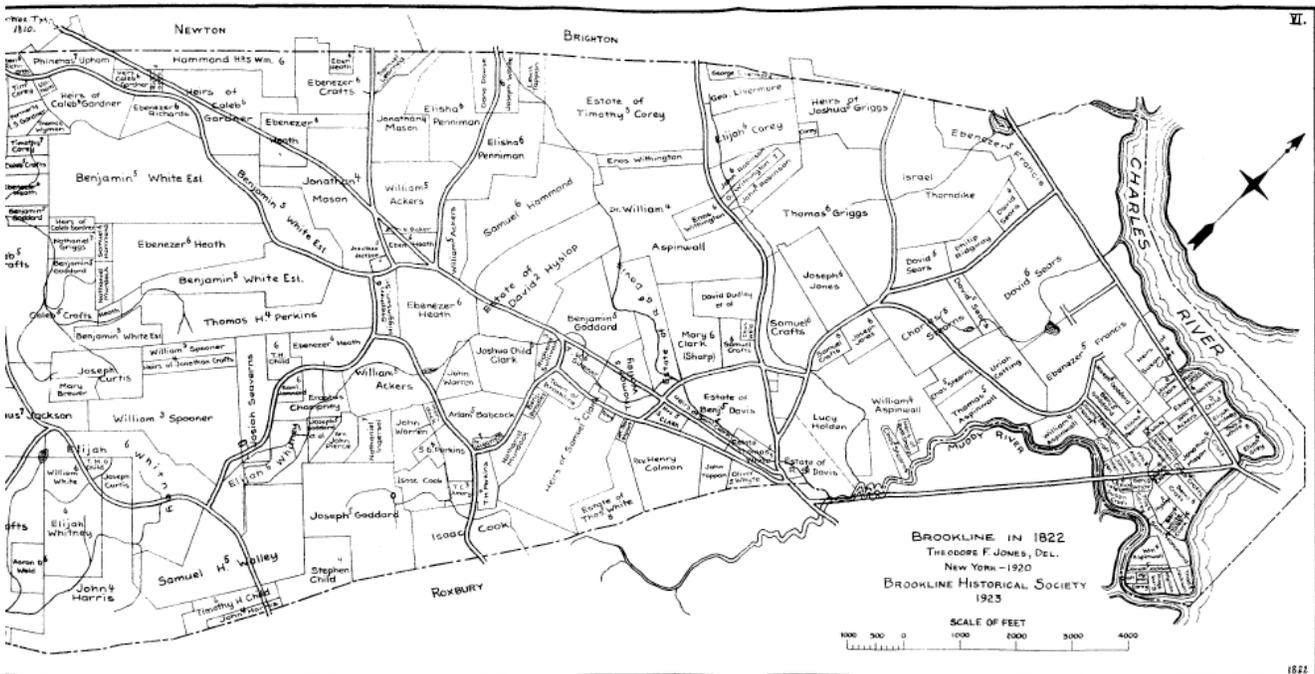
The **Eliphalet Spurr House** (ca. 1798) at 103 Walnut is the oldest house on Pill Hill and one of the oldest surviving houses in Brookline. It is a typical vernacular Federal style house with added early nineteenth century Greek Revival portico. In 1816, Spurr, the builder and original owner, established the first line of coaches to run between the Punch Bowl Tavern in Brookline Village and Boston. It lasted only a few years, in part because the fares were considered too high. In 1817 Thomas and Eliza Aspinwall, the son and daughter of Colonel Thomas Aspinwall, purchased it. Thomas was deaf mute, but was active in the town, making himself understood by signs. He and his sister died within a year of each other in the early 1840s. During the 1870s the house was an "infant asylum" — which may have meant something like a daycare.

The Eliphalet Spurr House as it looked ca. 1948. Note the huge elms (sadly lost to the Dutch Elm blight), which gave so much spatial character — like grand continuous outdoor rooms — to the early twentieth century American streetscape. In the distant background to the right is the towering Gothic 1870s Town Hall, (lost to 1960s urban renewal and the popular disdain of the time for Victorian architecture). It stood where there is now an empty space in front of the present town hall.



Country Estates

The particular character of Pill Hill derives from four significant factors. First, most of its development was carefully controlled by neighborhood residents. Second, its development and landscaping often reflected a respect for the local physical features. Third, many property owners hired well-established, respected architects and land-planners who created a visually harmonious neighborhood of distinguished houses. Fourth, and most important, occupying many of these homes during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were leaders in politics, education, science, the arts, and, of course, medicine. The name Pill Hill derives from the many doctors who lived here beginning in the late nineteenth century and from the neighborhood's Free Hospital for Women. As the alternate name, High Street Hill, could not have been used before 1860, it is not clear what the hill might have been called earlier. Old maps name most of Brookline's hills, but not this one.



This map shows all roads and properties in 1822, Brookline. At the bottom middle is the meandering, then tidal, Muddy River (now approximately the Town Line). The straight, pre-1844 Brookline-Roxbury town line follows what is now mostly the rear lot lines on the west side of High St. The two closely paralleling roads angling away above that are Walnut St. and the 1808 Worcester Turnpike (Rte. 9). The first street crossing the turnpike is Cypress. The next one meeting it, where Walnut ends, is Warren St., with First Parish and (soon) the first Town Hall nearby. Note also that at that time Brookline's boundaries went to the center of the Charles River and included what is now Kenmore Sq. The loss of those areas to Boston in the 1870s was a price Brookline paid for continued independence. (This map is one of a chronological set of six, the earliest of which is for 1667, created by the Brookline Historical Society in 1923. Most of those lot lines can still be traced in today's highly subdivided Brookline.)

In the late eighteenth century the Brookline portion of Pill Hill was still all in the Benjamin White estate to the south of Walnut St. and divided between the Edward White and Benjamin Davis estates to the north. The area east of what is now High St. was then part of Roxbury and remained essentially unsettled into the nineteenth century — by which time it was the Samuel Ward Farm.

By 1822 the White Estate south of Walnut had split onto the Oliver Whyte Estate to the east, the Rev. Henry Coleman estate to the west and, in the middle, the John Tappan (soon to be Samuel Philbrick) estate, which was approximately bounded by the present locations of Irving St. and the lower straight part of Walnut Place.

As late as 1874 the Philbrick and Wright (formerly Whyte) estates would still remain largely intact (although by then separated by Irving St.), while the Colman estate would become (from east to west): the properties along Walnut Place, developed starting in the 1840s and looking much today as it did then; the Cobb Estate, which later would become the Puddingstone Rows and Oakland Rd.; and what would become, in part, Wellington Terrace.

In size, these early nineteenth century estates were typical of the country properties of the first generation of wealthy retired merchants and carriage-commuters who settled in Brookline. Today we think of suburbs as developing on open farmland, but Brookline was different. In the mid-nineteenth century, when Brookline's suburbanization and urbanization began, most of northern and central Brookline was compact country estates of perhaps five or ten acres, each with a substantial house and a few out-buildings. (For a time in the late nineteenth century, Brookline was said to be the wealthiest town in the country.) A critical difference between Pill Hill and many areas of Brookline is that, to a large extent, the land owners were their own developers and they intended to stay in the neighborhood. (The same might be also said of a few other Brookline areas, such as Longwood, Cottage Farm, and Fisher Hill.)

Wellington Terrace is the remaining core of the estate associated with the **Joseph Sewall House** (1823) at 2 Wellington Terrace, the second oldest house in Pill Hill — an estate that originally extended as far as Walnut Place. This granite residence contains elements of the Federal and Greek Revival styles, as seen in its long first floor windows. The porch or “piazza” was probably added in the 1840s or 1850s. The Rockport granite would have come all the way to Brookline by boat. Originally there were three similar granite houses of this time in Brookline. Only the two in Pill Hill survive. Granite was a rare, expensive material for a private house, when almost all non-urban buildings were of wood. The few stone buildings in Brookline were more typically made of local Roxbury puddingstone. The original owner of this house, Joseph Sewall, was a partner in the shipping firm of Sewall & Tappan and a descendant of Salem Witch Trial Judge Samuel Sewall. Joseph Sewall lived here until 1834.

As the estate was successively subdivided by later owners, the house became: a lodging house, a home for the orphans of naval officers, and since the 1970s, condominiums. The Stick Style house at **6 Wellington Terrace** (1871) was originally built on what is now the rest of Wellington terrace, a lot that was separated from the Sewell house at that time. The house was later turned 90° when Wellington Terrace was laid out ca. 1890. The street was not named for the Iron Duke but for the Wellington family that sub-divided the property. Martha L. Wellington was also a member of the Swedenborgian church on High St. **3 Wellington Terrace** (1892) combines the Queen Anne/Colonial Revival styles. **5 Wellington Terrace** (c. 1892) is a simple Shingle Style house. **7 Wellington Terrace** (1891) is a

Queen Anne house designed by Edwin Tobey. Elizabeth Glendower Evans, an active social reformer lived here. Widowed at an early age, she contributed to the development of a more modern penal system in Massachusetts. She was active in the women's trade union movement, eventually becoming a committed socialist, and supported the successful campaign for a minimum wage law in Massachusetts. Along with Jane Addams, she was a US delegate to the International Congress of Women in The Hague. She founded and funded the committee to defend Sacco and Vanzetti. Vanzetti's letters refer to her as his second "Mother" and "Auntie Bee" — a name used by her friends — who included William James and Louis Brandeis. Other Pill Hill residents also actively supported Sacco and Vanzetti's cause.

The Philbricks and Abolition

The Rockport granite **Tappan-Philbrick House** (1824-25), at 182 Walnut, was built by Joseph Sewall's partner, John Tappan. It was said to be the hundredth house built in Brookline. Tappan's brother Lewis, who married into the Aspinwall family, built a similar stone house in Brookline at about this time. The estate as John Tappan bought it was 18 acres — half being a "grove of oaks and hickories" in which he built his "mansion . . . of split blue granite, unhammered." Apparently the open top of the hill seemed less desirable.

Tappan's journals suggest he was largely responsible for designing the house, which he intended as a summer residence. He felt his children's "physical and moral health" would be enhanced by "bringing them up in the country." Before his new house was finished he demolished and subdivided his Boston estate on Federal St. and moved to Brookline — noting that he intended riding by horse the five miles "into town every pleasant day at an early hour and returning to dinner at 2 o'clock." It was not to be.

His affairs were caught up in the depression of 1826. He had to sell the house and move to New York City, following his brother Lewis, a silk merchant, who eventually made him a partner. Later John reportedly built New York's first granite-fronted commercial building. Like his better-known brothers Arthur and Lewis, John was an early abolitionist. (Lewis was largely responsible for obtaining the freedom of the crew of the Amistad.) Another bother, Benjamin, became a US Senator from Ohio and Tappan Sq. in the center of Oberlin is named after him. John and Lewis were also early members of the American Peace Society, which arose in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars and survived until the Civil War.

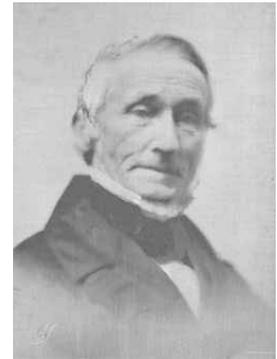
The Tappan-Philbrick house in the mid-nineteenth century with cows in the yard.



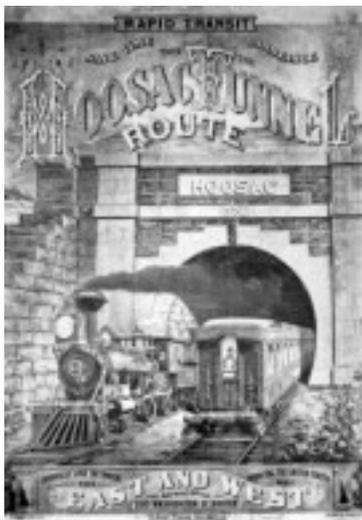
In 1828 John Tappan sold the estate for about \$14,000 to merchant William Ropes, who sold it to Samuel Philbrick in 1829. In later years wood framed clapboarded wings were added to the right and

rear. At its largest, the **Philbrick Estate** included everything on both sides of Walnut between Irving and Walnut Place, as well as half of the old Lincoln School site and all of what is now Maple St. and Upland Rd. above Irving.

Samuel Philbrick, a birthright Quaker, and his wife were among Brookline’s leading and earliest abolitionists and a financial backer of William Lloyd Garrison’s *The Liberator*. The Grimke sisters, the Quaker-convert daughters of a South Carolina slave holding family, who were part of the more radical women’s-rights branch of the abolition movement, stayed in the house during the winter of 1836-37. One of Brookline’s first anti-slavery meetings was held there at that time — when a public hall probably could not have been obtained for such a meeting. It was a ladies-only event, but reportedly the poet and ardent abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier listened from inside a closet. At about this time the Philbricks, at the suggestion of Wendell Philips, took a young black girl into their house as a domestic. They brought her with them to Sunday service at First Parish and had her sit in their pew, rather than in the balcony with the other black servants. As a result they were snubbed, they withdrew from the parish, and eventually helped establish Pill Hill’s Swedenborgian Church. The Tappan-Philbrick house is recognized as a part of the Underground Railroad, although its role in the abolitionist cause was far more longstanding and significant than its connection with the escape of two famous fugitive slaves (William and Ellen Crafts) would suggest.



Samuel Philbrick, one of Brookline’s leading and earliest abolitionists, and a financial backer of William Lloyd Garrison’s The Liberator.



Edward Southwick Philbrick, Samuel’s son, graduated Harvard in 1846 and became a civil engineer, working on such projects as the Hoosac Tunnel through the Berkshires (The Big Dig of its day, linking Boston and eastern Massachusetts with Albany and the West), and on the foundation designs of the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church. Later he became an expert in water supply (designing Brookline’s first system) and sanitary engineering, and a member of the MIT Corporation. His, in at least one instance, architecture-partner, William Ware, was MIT’s first professor of architecture. Philbrick was also briefly a Brookline Selectman and provided expert testimony at the inquiry into the Great Boston Fire of 1872.

A mid-nineteenth century advertisement extolling the “rapid transit” to “the West” made possible by the Hoosac Tunnel through the Berkshires, which Edward Philbrick worked on as a young engineer.

An active abolitionist like his father, Edward Philbrick lead a venture which purchased one third of Union occupied St. Helena Island S.C. in 1863 and set out to develop the “Free Labor Cotton Company” which hired freedmen to operate thirteen plantations. After the war, the land was divided and sold mostly to freedmen at below market rates. The “Philbrick Experiment,” as it is now called, showed that southern freedmen could be integrated into the free labor market and then it allowed them to buy farms totaling over 4,000 acres — something local white landowners would not have allowed at

any price. However, it should be noted that many of the 70 investors were cotton mill owner or cotton brokers. One of the ironies of New England's support of abolition is that the insatiable demand of its cotton mills sustained the institution of slavery in the decades before the Civil War. It should also be noted that Philbrick's "experiment" netted his backers a handsome \$80,000 — something like a 60% return on their investment — probably due in no small part to the low price originally paid for the land.

Samuel had died in 1859. (His grave is under a slab in the Old Burying Ground.) Edward inherited the estate and began to develop it. He and then his heirs, who later commissioned a subdivision plan from Fredrick Law Olmsted, Sr. in 1889, became one of Pill Hill's two primary developers, having laid out the upper portion of Upland Rd. and Maple St., building at least ten houses on those streets and Walnut St., and platting at least thirty building lots, in addition to the family's role in the design and construction of the Swedenborgian church. Edward Philbrick's widow died, aged 88, in 1922, leaving the house and grounds to Harvard, which promptly sold it for \$16,000. One subsequent owner was the Rt. Rev. Anson Phelps Stokes Jr., Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts. The estate is now protected against sub-division and further development by a preservation easement, generously granted by its present owner.

The puddingstone, mansard-roofed, **Edward Philbrick House**, just to the west at 24 Walnut Place (1857), was possibly built as a wedding present for him and remained part of the estate throughout the Philbrick's tenure. After World War I it doubled briefly as a convalescent home for service men. It was modified in 1939 by the removal of its gambrel roofed front wing, after there had been an initial application for demolition of the whole house. The timing suggests it may have been damaged in the great hurricane of 1938.

For over a century this house had a Walnut St. address — and for much of that time a long driveway paralleling Walnut Place, just a few feet away, all the way down to Walnut St. Finally in the 1980s the 160-year old estate boundary was breached and this house gained a more convenient Walnut Place entrance and address — and a lot for the new house at **10 Walnut Place** was made possible.

The Edward Philbrick House in 1919 with two servicemen convalescing in the fresh air on cots and another in the background near the house. At that time the house, then still part of the Philbrick Estate, was occupied by the Philbricks' Winsor in-laws, possibly shown here. The entire front wing of the house, to the right, with its distinctive cloche-like gambrel roof, and the central third-floor mansard tower, were eliminated in the 1939 renovation.



Philbrick’s developments began along the north side of Walnut and encompassed almost all the properties in view from the front windows of his own house. From east to west, the first was a double house at **167-169 Walnut**, designed by Cabot & Chandler. Helen Hopekirk a Scottish-born virtuoso pianist and composer, whose performances contemporaries compared to Clara Schumann’s, lived at 169 Walnut and taught at the New England Conservatory after she decided to settle permanently in the Boston area in 1897.



There are Philbrick double houses at **173-175 Walnut** and **187-189 Walnut** (1869) — with the latter being a very large double Mansard. Phillips Ward Page an aeronautical pioneer lived at 173 Walnut. He received his pilot’s license in 1911, became a flight instructor for the Burgess Aeroplane Co. in Marblehead, the aviation editor of the Boston Herald, and took the first moving pictures of Boston from the air. He died in 1917, aged 32, when his navy seaplane crashed in the English Channel.

Helen Hopekirk, Scottish-born virtuoso pianist and composer, lived at 169 Walnut St. Later she moved to 31 Allerton.

In the middle of these substantial twin houses, and then also part of the Philbrick estate, is the modest 1840s house at **181 Walnut**. A longstanding neighborhood myth, apparently unsupported by evidence, had this house linked to the Tappan-Philbrick house by a tunnel — a literal-minded embodiment of the Underground Railroad. Next to this house is **Walnut Path**, originally Cat Alley. Acquired by the Town from the Philbrick estate in 1890 and widened, it is probably the oldest of Brookline’s unusual set of pedestrian paths.

195 Walnut (ca. 1870) was the first Pill Hill home of Charles Ware, who during the Civil War contributed to the publication of *Slave Songs of the United States*. He later moved to 52 Allerton. This house was later occupied by Mr. & Mrs. Henry Curtis Snow. She was the sister of Mrs. Arthur D. Little, at 107 Upland. **205 Walnut**, (1860s) had a second story added in 1890 by Philbrick’s brother-in-law, Alfred Winsor, who was president of the Boston Towboat Company and other steamship lines. When women’s suffrage was being debated during and after World War I, it was occupied by Henry Preston White, a landscape architect, and his wife Sara C. White. She was deeply involved in many reform and welfare organizations, including organizing a “model moving picture show” under the auspices of the Brookline Friendly Society. But, like some other neighborhood women, she was also an active anti-suffragist.



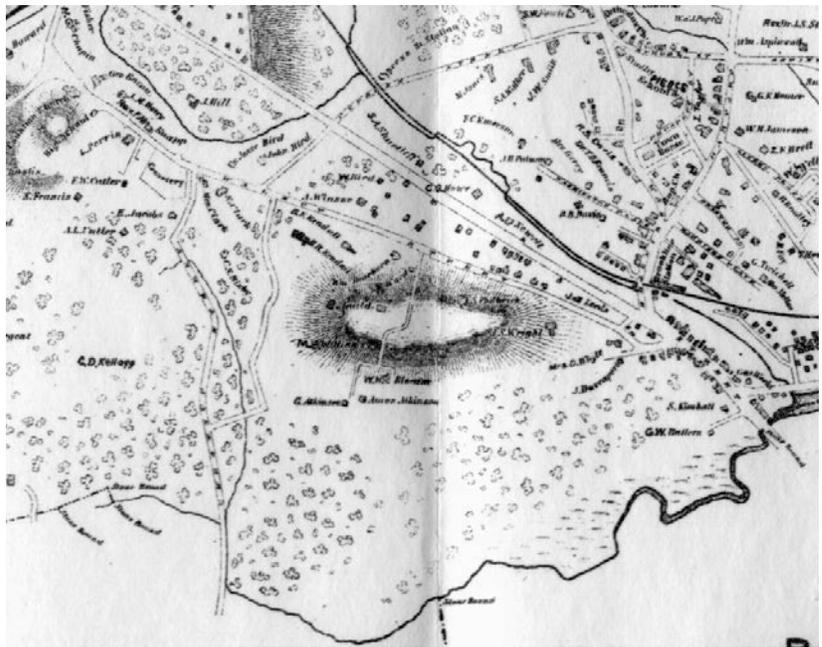
Phillips Ward Page at the controls of a Burgess Aeroplane. He lived at 173 Walnut St.

While much of Pill Hill was the creation of the Philbrick Estate and the Brookline Land Company, Walnut St. was there first and it is reasonable to consider the remainder of it before turning to those two developments.

Walnut Place

Walnut Place, immediately west of the Philbrick Estate, feels like a quiet county lane and uniquely gives a sense of what much of mid-nineteenth century Brookline was like. (The lower straight section on the Guild Estate was originally Guild St. while the curving upper portion on the Williams Estate was Green Bank Ave.) The much modified, brick **35 Walnut Place** (1889) was designed by William Ralph Emerson for Moses Williams' son Charles. The Italianate **56 Walnut Place** (1868) was the home of the three Stevenson sisters, one of whom was a Civil War nurse. They later moved to the abutting 94 Upland. The Greek Revival **67 Walnut Place** (1849) was Moses B. Williams' home and **61 Walnut Place** (c. 1860), now a home, was his barn. 67 Walnut Place recently acquired a porch with massive Greek Doric columns — archaeologically “correct” yet playfully disproportionate to the house. **76 Walnut Place** (ca. 1865) a slightly larger than life Mansard “cottage, was the home of Cyrus M Warren, part of a remarkable family that gained control of the “worthless” coal tar byproduct of the production of illuminating gas and proceeded to develop asphalt paving, tar paper, flat gravel roofs, and kerosene refining. His brother Samuel was minister of the Swedenborg church on High St. from 1864 to 1868 and operated a private chemical laboratory researching aniline dyes and other hydrocarbon derivatives.

An almost empty Pill Hill in 1855. The plateau-like feature in the center is Pill Hill with Walnut Place crossing it — not an accurate rendering. The hill extends much further southeast ending as the peninsular Edgehill Rd. Only the Tappan-Philbrick House and two now-lost Wright houses then occupied the area now bounded by Walnut St., Walnut Place, and High St. (What looks like the beginning of High is Village Lane.) The then-new railroad (now the Green Line) can be seen paralleling the Town Brook, just above the Worcester Pike (Route 9) — and Brookline Village is beginning to take shape along Harvard St. beyond it.



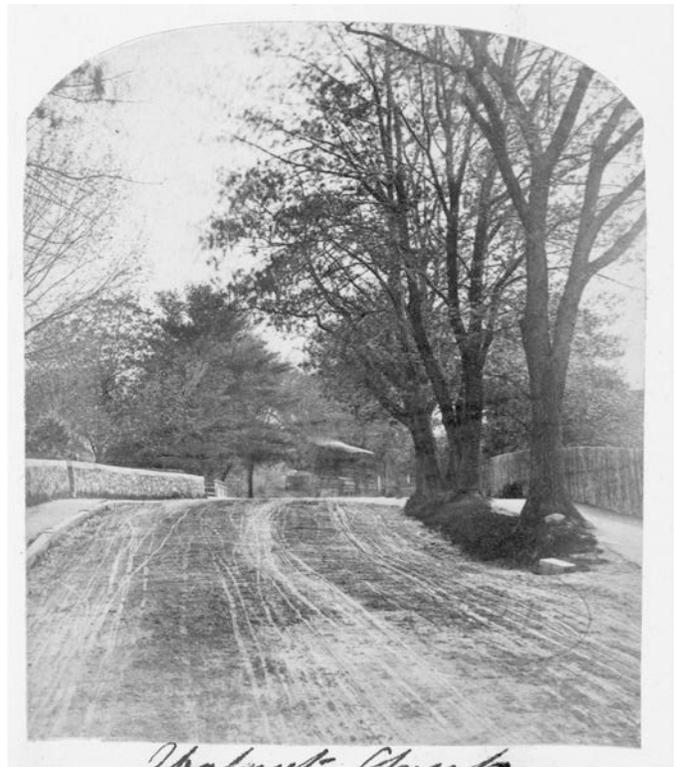
At the far end of Walnut Place are two simple houses built in succession for himself by Amos Atkinson, a Boston merchant who wanted to “rusticate” in this hidden corner of Brookline: **100 Walnut Place** (1842) and **94 Walnut Place** (1851). His son Edward was a boyhood and college friend of Edward Philbrick's. Upon marrying Edward moved just past the Brookline Reservoir to his wife's family's estate on Heath Hill but maintained close Pill Hill connections. Along with Philbrick's brother-in-law, Alfred Winsor, he was a director of the West End Street Railway Company, which developed Beacon St. He was a prolific writer, the inventor of the “Aladdin Oven”, and an ardent abolitionist who

helped finance John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry and sheltered John Brown's son when he arrived in Brookline, armed to the teeth, after it failed. He was also a member, along with several Pill Hill residents, of the Anti-Imperialist League. Edward Atkinson, in the role of *pater familias* is portrayed in *The Big House: A Century of Life in an American Summer Home*, the story of a larger than life summer house on Wing's Neck, Cape Cod, and of the Brookline family that belonged to it.

Walnut Street

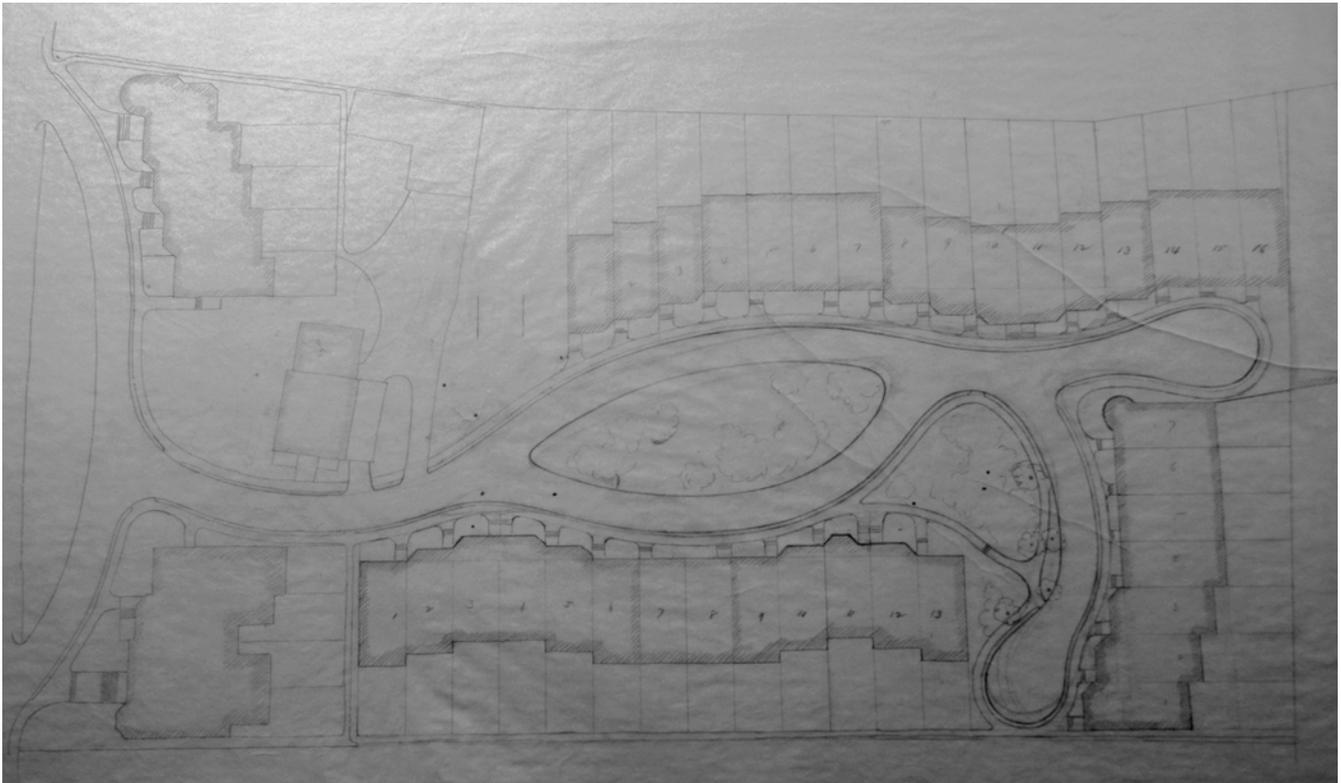
The cluster of innovative early 1950s modern houses at the bottom of Walnut place, **210, 220, 224, & 230 Walnut**, occupy the sites of the two houses on the Searle Estate demolished after the Great Depression. Granite gateposts on Walnut Place once lead to the smaller Searle house, while the other was reached by the present common drive serving most of the houses. 220 Walnut, a "duplex," and 230 Walnut were built by Richard H. French and Roberta Kohlberg French, who probably was the designer. Both were MIT graduates. He was a hydrologist. She had written a 120-page Bachelor of Science thesis on flat roofed buildings in New England. 230 Walnut has two newer "tower" additions. 210 is by David Abrahams and 224 by the Core House Corporation whose architect, Edward A Cuetara, was an associate of the Architect's Collaborative. 230 and 210 were owned by two brothers, both doctors. These innovative houses are a positive reminder of how egalitarian and idealistic America was after having experienced the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the social leveling of WWII and the GI Bill. 222 Walnut is an **Acorn house** from the 1980s.

Walnut St. looking west in 1876. On the left is the stone retaining wall of the Philbrick Estate without the present wood fence on it, which was added by the Burrages in the 1930s. At the end of the wall is Walnut Place with the now subdivided Searle Estate beyond it. On the right are a group of oaks, the last of which survived into the 1980s when it succumbed to old age and root damage caused by street paving. At that time the town had wanted to cut the tree and straighten the street. The neighborhood disagreed. The sidewalk is still wider there.



Opposite them is an earlier sort of modernism. The highly romantic, Arts and Crafts house at **217 Walnut** (1908), with its glacial-boulder masonry and lych gate at the sidewalk, was designed by Henry F. Keyes for B. Frank Carroll, a builder. Its red tile roof suggests an affinity with the California Mission Style. While advertising its owner's craft it was also featured in an advertisement for Thomas Edison's new portland cement stucco — which was applied over walls made of structural hollow clay

tiles, one of many innovations of that inventive period in construction technology. Immediately to its west are two of the neighborhood's older houses, **233 Walnut** (ca. 1843) and **239 Walnut** (1836, with later additions). Opposite the latter and occupying the former **Cobb Estate** are Oakland Rd. and the **Puddingstone Rows** (1886), at 234-258 Walnut, two magnificent sets of Romanesque stone townhouses built for Albert A. Cobb, a prominent Boston East Indies merchant, by his son Henry Ives Cobb, an important Chicago architect, whose best known works there include the English Collegiate-Gothic core of the University of Chicago. (Recently, after 125 years, a set of the original working drawings for the east row was found in one of its attics.) Before Oakland Rd. was cut through, the Puddingstone Rows were fronted by a sweeping drive, called Walnut Terrace, within a unified Frederick Law Olmsted landscape.



The Olmsted archives contain this beautiful unrealized plan for developing the rest of the Cobb estate, which was behind the Puddingstone Rows (what is now Oakland Rd.), with an additional 36 row houses, presumably also by Albert Cobb's son, Henry Ives Cobb. Walnut St. is at the left edge with the two Puddingstone Rows facing Walnut Terrace, their original curved private drive. ("Terrace" is a British term for a unified set of row houses.) Sited between them is the 1829 Cobb house, now moved back and turned at 22 Oakland Rd., but then still on its original site. The three proposed new row house terraces are arrayed around a "green," — a more refined version the one Olmsted created, in a rather ad hoc manner, at about that same time, on the Philbrick Estate (now Philbrick Green on Upland Rd.) The south end of the Cobb Estate was bounded (behind the shortest of the three proposed rows) by the north side of what was then called Sewall Pl. (Now Rice St.). The area proposed for the 36 new row houses now contains approximately ten two- and three-deckers and ten single-family houses.

Through the early years of the twentieth century, **256 Walnut** was the Chilean consulate and home of the Chilean Consul, Horace N Fisher. He had been a staff Lt. Colonel in the Civil War at the Battle of Shiloh and at Chickamauga, where he was wounded. Later, he found himself in the middle of the War of the Pacific between Chile, Bolivia, and Peru. He wrote extensively on matters of military history and, contra others on the Hill, strongly advocated annexing Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico after the Spanish American War — to the point of even writing a book on colonial administration.

The Cobb family lived in an 1829 farmhouse, which stood facing Walnut St. between, and back from, the Puddingstone Rows. The Cobb house and its carriage house, now a residence, were moved in 1903 to what became **22 Oakland Rd.** Recently it was restored with the removal of artificial siding. Opposite 22 Oakland is **Vogel Terrace**, four once-identical houses around a cul-de-sac. Built in 1910 for rental purposes, they were designed for Emily Vogel by Funk & Wilcox, the architects of the fire station at the bottom of High St. **19 Oakland** (1909), by Everett & Mead, at first seems an early nineteenth century Greek Revival house. Only the cozy little porch, with its built-in benches, typical of the early twentieth century Arts & Crafts era, betrays its true date. The more typical Arts and Crafts House at **15 Oakland** has a similar porch. The houses at **28 & 32 Oakland** were built in 1907-08 and show the influence of the Shingle Style in their gambrel roofs and shed dormers, with Colonial detailing at the front porch.

The five substantial triple-deckers (ca. 1910-14) opposite the Puddingstone Rows were built on the relatively modest estate of the Winsor family, whose daughter had married Edward Philbrick 50 years earlier. **255 Walnut** is particularly handsome with considerable fine Colonial Revival detail. It was designed in 1910 by James J. Rantin, an Irish-immigrant architect, who was particularly prolific in this type of housing. Tucked unexpectedly behind **247 Walnut** is the Winsor's 1840s Greek Revival house with its Doric columned porch.

Just beyond them are three solid, Rationalist, almost machine-like, examples of the Stick Style. **267 Walnut** (ca. 1878) was built for Anna Jones, a member of the Swedenborgian Church on High St. Sadly neglected and asphalt-sided when the Historic District was created, it has since been restored. Noah S. Jenney, treasurer of Jenney Oil, built **273 Walnut** (1879). At the time Jenney's son, Alexander, lived at home and attended the Architectural Program at MIT. After graduation he worked for H.H. Richardson, whose office was in Brookline. Alexander may have designed his father's house. As it happens, the pioneering Chicago skyscraper architect William LeBaron Jenney, a relative, was then also building houses there in a very similar style — no connection is known. Its matching carriage house-like garage/studio dates from 1997. **287 Walnut** (ca. 1880), at the corner of Cypress, is another good example of this type. It was designed by Abel C. Martin, a talented young architect who died in an accident the year after it was built. Before World War I it was the home of landscape architect and city planner George Gibbs who worked for the Olmsted practice, both here and in California. The last house in the district is **156-158 Cypress** (1886) an unusual for Brookline, double brick house with porch. Its decorative brickwork is reminiscent of the Panel Brick style commercial blocks and apartment houses in Brookline Village.

On the south side of Walnut St., which had begun to develop a decade earlier than the north side, is a late Italianate house (1879) at **268 Walnut** and Mansard houses at **276-278 Walnut** (1876), **262 Walnut** (ca. 1863), and **284 Walnut** (1863), the last of which a few years ago had its long lost, late nineteenth century, porch restored and some jarring, steel framed, 1950s picture windows removed.

Returning to the east of the Philbrick Estate on Walnut there are: a simple house built in 1844 for Charles Foster, a boot and shoe dealer, at **163 Walnut**; an unusual house at **141 Walnut** (ca. 1845-55) with an L-shaped two story colonnade (the second floor veranda came later); an Italianate houses at **157 Walnut** (1851-52), built by Abraham Lambert, a blacksmith; and **149 Walnut** (1858). The central unit of the three Gothic-gabled brick rowhouses at **129-137 Walnut** (1877-78) is officially a church. Its neon sign was stolen years ago and the Preservation Commission supported its replacement as part of the neighborhood's character.

At the edge of Brookline Village

A postcard view of the fire station at the foot of High St. in 1912, with a trolley shelter in the middle of the street. The large building to the left of the fire station was the Brookline Friendly Society's Union Building, a settlement house, on the site now occupied by the high-rise. Single-story "taxpayer" shops are also visible to the left of the fire station, where there is now a parking lot. Beyond the fire station, down Route 9 where the Dunkin Donuts is now, was Mr. Quinlan's carriage works. Yet, even then, the Wright Estate which abutted the two apartment hotels at the corner of High and Walnut, still remained undeveloped. At that time Pill Hill was even more abruptly contiguous with the urbanity of Brookline Village than it is today.



In the mid-nineteenth century, three major events led to growth in Pill Hill. The Town's civic center shifted from the area around First Parish to Brookline Village. The Brookline Branch of the Boston & Worcester Railroad (now the Green Line) came to the Village, providing a more direct, reliable commute to Boston. And in 1844 the boundary between Brookline and Roxbury was moved from near High St. to the Muddy River. This annexation resulted from a petition of 107 residents of the "Farm" area near Washington St., where the Brook House is now — an area then part of Roxbury. In the late twentieth century a few older Pill Hill residents recalled an earlier time when students living in the annexed area reportedly still had preferential enrollment access to Roxbury Latin, despite their Brookline addresses.

At 72 Walnut St. (1875) is the Victorian Gothic former **Hotel Kempford**, an early apartment hotel with duplex units. The parlor and dining room of each apartment are on its lower floor, with the bedrooms above connected by a private staircase. Next door, at 64 Walnut/13-21 High, was the **Hotel Adelaide**. These two buildings, both now condominiums, were designed by Obed F. Smith. Together with the fire station, they are almost all that survives south of Route 9 of Brookline Village's original urban fabric, which once stretched seamlessly from here to Harvard Sq. beyond the railroad tracks. All of Brookline Village that flanked both sides Route 9 from High St. to the Boston line was swept away

by the 1960s urban renewal of the “Farm” and “Marsh” areas, which were replaced by the Brook House and Brookline Place projects respectively.



Brookline’s town seal, adopted in 1848, shows a train crossing (on a trestle) the seemingly-open waters of the then still unfilled Back Bay, towards an agrarian Brookline wreathed in blooming roses — with the Hub of the Universe rising from the waters in the distance. Both the inclusion of the unusual historical “explanation” around the top and the central vignette (probably inspired by an 1839 engraving with a similar composition of a train approaching Boston), closely identify Brookline with Boston. But all the symbolism asserts that Brookline was not just suburban but prosperously agrarian — a suitable home, perhaps, for the country gentleman. A report explaining the design noted Brookline was formerly called “Boston Plantation” and “Boston Cornfield.” The seal was designed and engraved on a stamping die by Francis N. Mitchell for Fifty-six dollars.

When trolleys ran down Boylston, Harvard, and Washington Streets, their intersection here was a major junction and transfer point with shelters, like those in Coolidge Corner, in the middle of the Washington St. opposite the fire station. One other survivor of the Farm area is the “The Guild,” a 1903 apartment building at **36 High** built with a communal dining room for occupancy by single men. It is the last building within the Historic District on the east side of High, and is set at a slight angle to High — facing instead the remaining short stub of **Village Lane**, which is almost all that remains of the old pre-urban renewal street pattern of the Farm. Significantly, Village Lane also demarked a portion of the **pre-1844 Brookline-Roxbury town line**. The house at **44 High** (1882) was built for George Ropes a coal dealer.

The Swedenborgians

Another active force in the emerging intellectual and social character of Pill Hill was the **Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem**. The Swedenborgian denomination, founded in 1787 in London, was based on the religious philosophy of Emmanuel Swedenborg, an eighteenth century Swedish scientist and inventor whose writings influenced the likes of William Blake, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Baudelaire, Balzac, and Strindberg, among others. He promoted a rational approach to love, wisdom, and order, and a belief that salvation was not possible through faith alone but must also be based on good works. Swedenborg also believed that Africans were particularly attuned to the Deity — thus part of the appeal of Swedenborgianism for Abolitionists. The Swedenborgian milieu also tended to be spiritualist and utopian, in keeping with much progressive thought of the time.

The Swedenborgian movement came to the United States in 1818 and peaked along with the great revival movement in the decades before the Civil War. In 1857, a group of Swedenborgian

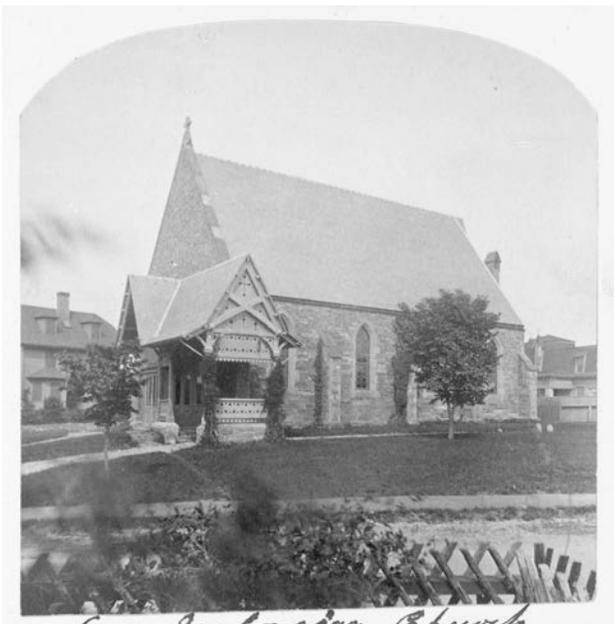
followers residing in Boston and Brookline formed a Brookline congregation, initially holding services in Town Hall and in private homes. (Eventually there would be eight Swedenborgian churches in Massachusetts. Today only a few thousand Swedenborgians remain in the US.)

Swedenborgians were deeply involved in the abolition movement. Carl Wadstrom, shown here, advocated an African colony to demonstrate that the freeing of black labor was not just morally right but also more productive than slavery — perhaps helping inspire the “Philbrick Experiment.”



The Gothic Revival, puddingstone, Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem (1862; Since 1966 the Latvian-Lutheran Church) clearly reflects the influence of the British Gothic Revival propagandist and architect A.N.W. Pugin — as seen in the structural honesty of the “relieving arch,” designed to carry wall loads around the west window, just visible in the wall fabric above the windows (an example of subtle structural “honesty” rather than the typical mid-Victorian enhanced expression of structure). The church was designed by the brief partnership of Edward Philbrick with William Ware, who was clearly its designer and soon entered partnership with Henry Van Brunt. (Unfortunately, the interior, which reflected the same simple honesty of materials, is radically altered.) For a time Ware & Van Brunt was second only to H.H.

Richardson as one of Boston’s most important architectural firms. Their well known works include Memorial Hall at Harvard.



The Swedenborgian church in 1876, without its later unfortunate accretions, as viewed from the fenced yard of 39 Irving. Just visible on its right is 68 High. On its left is 10 Allerton (then 10 Irving), built by Dr. Shurtleff, probably soon after the church was built. 10 Allerton later shared its lot with 14 Allerton. “Mrs. Dr. Denny,” as the formality of the day had it, was born in 10 Allerton. The daughter of Charles Storrow, she lived in four Pill Hill houses. 10 Allerton survived until after WWII, when Pill Hill houses were so cheap that a new owner of 14 Allerton demolished it to gain additional yard space.

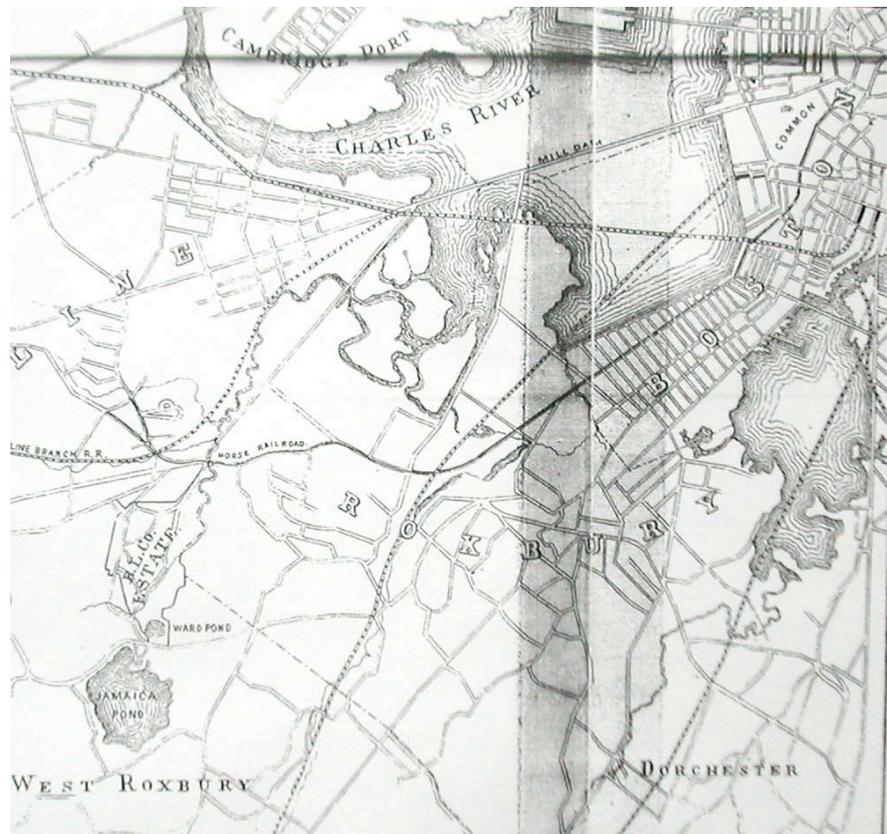
Edward Philbrick’s mother and his brother William made generous donation towards the construction of the church. Other original proprietors were also Pill Hill residents. Dr. Augustine Shurtleff, who owned **14 Allerton St.**, facing the apse end, was a founding member and generous supporter. Tellingly perhaps, the church was dedicated on Washington’s Birthday, 1862. The present abutting “apartment building” on the site (**58 Irving St.**) is an unfortunate, 1970s pre-Historic District reconstruction of the original rectory, after a fire. (Farley Wheelwright, who living there as a boy in the

1920s, recalls that only the principal rooms were electrified while the remainder were still illuminated by gas. He also recalls being operated on, lying on the kitchen table. His adenoids were removed, after the doctor had wafted a can of ether under his nose.) The High St. meeting hall façade between 58 Irving and the church also pre-dates the Historic District.

The Brookline Land Company

The **Brookline Land Company** was the neighborhood’s largest landowner in the second half of the nineteenth century, controlling 80 acres. This included almost all the land annexed from Roxbury in 1844, between High St. and the Muddy River, and extending from the edge of the “Farm” section of Brookline Village (site of the Brook House and Co-op housing) almost to Jamaica Pond. The Company’s tract had been the Samuel Ward Farm — an orchard famous for its Roxbury Russet apples. The Brookline Land Company was established in 1860 to develop the area while maintaining the neighborhood’s character. It wished to preserve the quality of the neighborhood through deed restrictions (the only long term planning means available before zoning), which prevented “occupation or erection of any building which could work injury or annoyance to residents.” There was a significant overlap among the Company’s proprietors, neighborhood residents, and Swedenborgians.

An inset location map from the Brookline Land Company’s 1860 sales map showing the “B. L. Co. Estate” (just above Jamaica Pond towards the lower left. It also shows the “Brookline Branch RR” (now the Green Line) running from Brookline village to a waters-edge junction at the future Kenmore Sq. (then still part of Brookline) and then across the waters of the unfilled and still tidal Back Bay on a trestle. It also shows the “horse railroad” following what is now Huntington Ave., then crossing Mission Hill, and traversing the then new South End to the Common at Park and Tremont.



High St. became a public way in the early 1860s. By 1870, 30 acres had been sold (including significant proportions to several directors), and two miles of streets built. Sales accelerated in the 1880s and 1890s, although it was not built out until the 1920s.

The original 1860 development plan, drawn up by the civil engineering firm of Shedd & Edson, is interesting for both what survives of it and what doesn't. Had it been executed completely, it would have been an important early example of suburban development based on the picturesque garden cemetery tradition, introduced by Mt. Auburn in Cambridge — which a few years later Shedd & Edson substantially enlarged in the same manner. (In 1853 they had designed Brookline's picturesquely planned, Holyhood Cemetery off Heath St., where JFK's parents are buried.) Conspicuously, their plan had a five acre park occupying much of the space now bounded by High, Allerton, Glen, and Cumberland, with its principal entrance from what Olmsted later called the Allerton Overlook on Pond Ave. The carriageway around the park's north side (called Irving St. on the plan) lead up to the Swedenborgian church, whose lot was contiguous with the park. The carriageway on the south side (called Glen St.) led, via High St., to Summit Ave. (now Edgehill) and the most dramatically sited lots.

The Brookline Land Company's picturesque, 1860 first plan centered on an unrealized five-acre park east of High St. Its survey was based on a grid whose "zero point" was the old State House in Boston and the plan is "oriented" the old fashioned way, with east up.

What it calls "High St." includes Irving and that portion of High south of the church — connecting with a pre-existing road beyond the Land Company tract where two houses are shown. (One still stands at 175 High).

What it calls "Irving" is now Allerton and was only built as shown here, adjacent to the church lot and for the width of two house lots towards Pond Ave. The short section next to the church runs due east, paralleling the church as shown here. That would have made the church also oriented due east-west — the liturgical ideal. (As built, its orientation splits the difference between Allerton & Irving.)

The angled lot line between the church lot and park suggests that, even then, an extension of High towards Brookline Village was contemplated. "Glen St." would have met High where Cumberland does — dictated by the dip in High to provide the easiest gradient. "Summit" (now Edgehill) and Pond show their present form — including the Allerton Overlook bow, which would have signaled the entrance to the park. (Neither High nor Pond appears in an 1858 county map, suggesting neither pre-existed.)

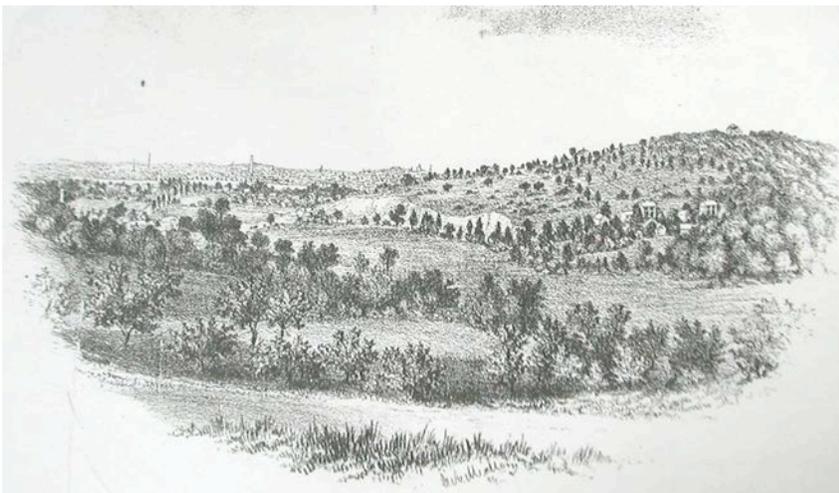


Presumably as a practical matter, development began with the more prosaic part of the design. An access road, then named as a part of High St. (now Irving), lead east from Walnut along the common boundary of the Philbrick and Wright estates and then, turning to become the southern part of today's High St., paralleled the Land Company's boundary, with lots on both sides, and giving access to Edgehill. That is how things stood — albeit on paper only, as far as “Glen Street” and “Irving” were concerned — until no later than 1870.

Edgehill Road & the southern part of High Streets

The very first new houses in the development include the Italianate **138 High** (ca. 1861), built for Sarah Searle, a Swedenborgian. It was the home of Dr. Walter Channing, first dean of the Harvard Medical School and a founder of the Boston Lying-In Hospital, at the time that died there in 1876. The neighborhood's collective memory long identified 138 High as a station on the underground railroad, although its apparent construction date, suggests otherwise. An occupant of this house in the 1920s was Henry Whitney Lamb an industrialist and president of the Brookline Savings Bank who, like several of his neighbors was a member of the Anti-Imperialist League. **1 Edgehill** (ca. 1866-67) was originally an Italianate house. It acquired its present Arts & Crafts appearance in the early twentieth century.

99 High St. (1865), originally a Mansard, was built for Congressman John W. Candler, a director of the Land Company. There was a great annexation struggle between Brookline and Boston in the 1870s, when Brookline became the first suburb of a major U.S. city to successfully resist annexation by its adjacent core city. Brookline started a national trend, which by the end of the century effectively ended the growth of many U.S. core cities through annexation. Candler was a leader of the losing, pro-annexation side and, as a result, lost his “safe” Republican seat in Congress. This house was given its present castle-like appearance by the architect F. Manton Wakefield, its then owner, in 1907. Wakefield had also lived on Wellington Terrace. **Candler's Jam** (1881), the four, closely spaced, Queen Anne cottages at 17, 19, 25, & 29 Edgehill, was built by Candler as an endowment for an unmarried daughter. Although similar, each has individual features. Another house totally modernized (in a medieval manner, in 1905) by F. Manton Wakefield is **132 High** (ca. 1870).



A vignette from the Brookline Land Company's 1860 sales map showing “A view Northeasterly from Summit Ave.” (now Edgehill Rd.).

Robert S. Peabody, of Peabody & Stearns, designer of the Customs-house Tower — for years Boston's only “skyscraper” — built 50 and 76 Edgehill, the 1876 Queen Anne brick houses, and the shingled stable (1891) at the end of Edgehill. **50 Edgehill** was Peabody's own house.

Peabody's college roommate and friend, Moorfield Storey, lived at **44 Edgehill**. In about 1904, he and Peabody both moved to new Peabody-designed houses on the Fenway. Storey was a president of the American Bar Association and the president for most of its existence of the Anti-Imperialist League, an organization founded to oppose the annexation of the Philippines as a colony and to support free trade and the gold standard. Its members included Jane Addams, Andrew Carnegie, Grover Cleveland, Mark Twain, Samuel Gompers, and John Dewey, among many notables. Later Storey became the first president of the NAACP. Storey sold his house to Walter Edward Andrews. He was the business partner of Charles Storow (who lived at 112 High), son-in-law of James Wheeler Edgerly (who lived at 39 Irving), and father of the author Louise Andrews Kent. She lived in a total of five Pill Hill Houses — but in this one only for a couple of years. During the first great “red scare” of the 1920s, the house was owned by Horace Andrew Davis, a banker, legal scholar, and grandson of Massachusetts governor and senator “Honest John Davis.” However, he seems to have mostly resided in New York, while his wife, Anna Norwood (Hallowell) Davis, who was Secretary-Treasurer of the New England Civil Liberties Committee (an affiliate of the ACLU) occupied 44 Edgehill — which was the mailing address for its Sacco and Vanzetti defense committee.

Cabot & Chandler designed the Shingle Style **26 Edgehill** (1881), for Samuel Cabot, Jr. **41 Edgehill** (1870-71), the original Mansard home of Samuel Cabot, was “Colonial Revivalized” in 1934, with pedimented dormers and doorway, a fanlight, and a round arched window, by Royal Barry Wills, one of the great popularizers of the Colonial Revival. **33 Edgehill** (1913) replaced the home of Walter H. Kilham, prominent Boston Colonial Revival architect and author of *Boston After Bullfinch*. **36 Edgehill** belonged to Charles Torrey, an artist who painted ships and nautical scenes.



Moorfield Storey, who lived at 44 Edgehill, president of the ABA, first president of the NAACP, and president of the Anti-Imperialist League.

The 1869 Mansard at **123 High** was the home of Col. Charles Russell Codman, another Anti-Imperialist League member. He had returned from Europe to raise a Civil War regiment. His son, John Sturgis Codman was an anti-vivisectionist and promoter of Henry George's populist single-tax plan — the basis for the game Monopoly.

The Classical columned **135 High** is an 1870 Mansard updated in 1926 by Edwin J. Lewis Jr., who added the monumental columns, long windows and new entrance. The wrought iron fence once enclosed the entire Hall property. Its ca. 1870 barn, at **131 High**, became a house about 1940. The four **Hall Road** houses were built in 1941. Next door is the Arts & Crafts style **127 High** (1909), also designed by Edwin J. Lewis, Jr. for Prescott F. Hall, grandson of Walter Farnsworth, who built 135 High for his daughter. Prescott Hall was a lawyer and prolific writer on such topics as law, economics, and eugenics. Best known for founding the League for Restriction of Immigration, in 1906 he wrote *Immigration and its Effect upon the United States*. But he also was involved in progressive housing reform and helped draft Brookline's first zoning bylaw.

The simple house at **146 High** (ca. 1875) was called “Willow Cottage.” William G. Rantoul designed **111 High** (1905) for Dr. & Mrs. Francis Denny. He was Brookline's Public Health Officer, when the town ran its own hospital. She was born and lived in four Pill Hill houses and was a founder

of the Brookline Friendly Society's Visiting Nurse Service. The Friendly Society (now Brookline Community Foundation) had a Peabody & Stearns designed settlement house where the high-rise housing is now at 22 High. **107 High**, tucked behind 111, was built in 1940 for Mr. & Mrs. Morton Vose of the Vose Art Gallery.

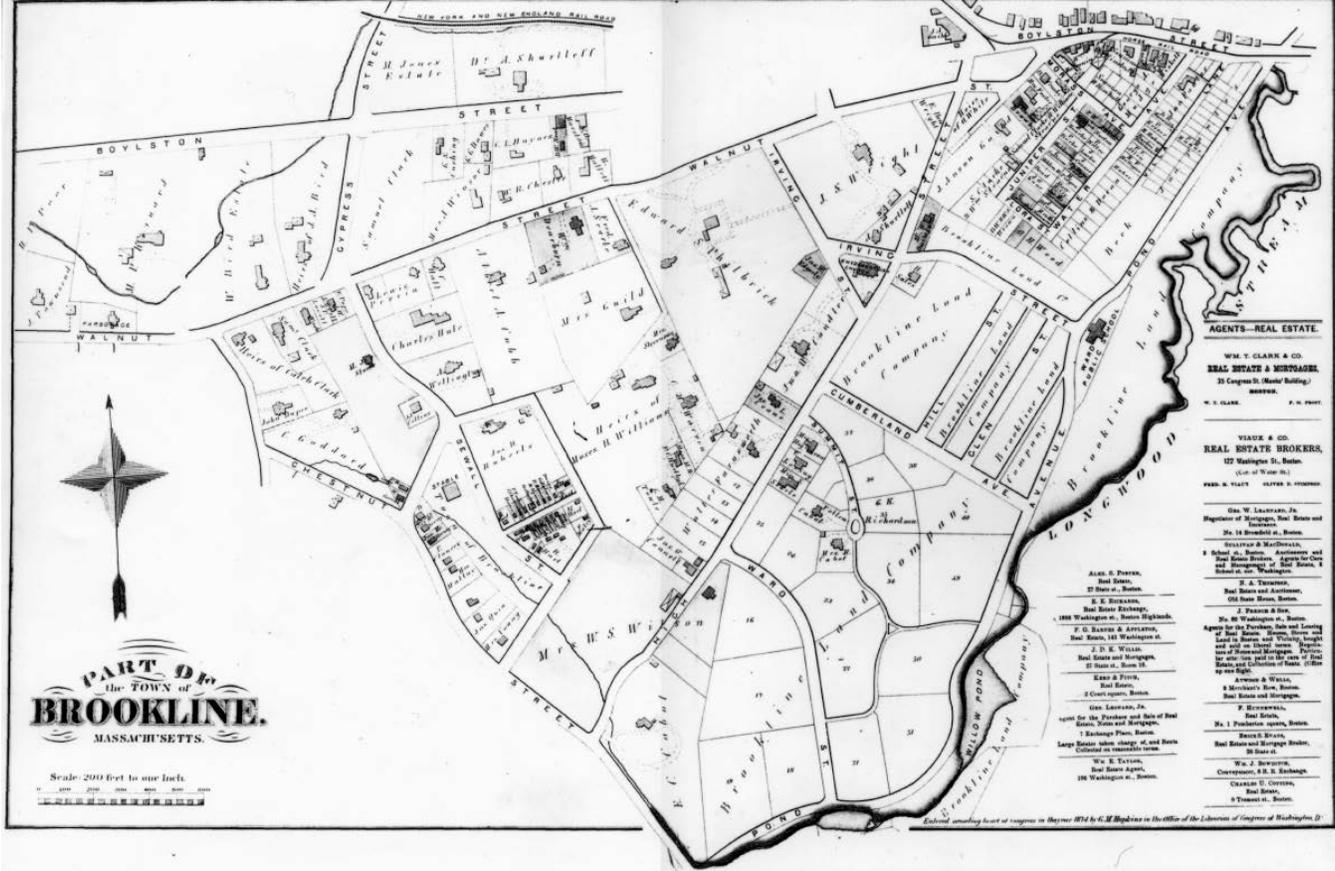
High Street (where the park would have been)

By about 1870 the Brookline Land Company's original development plans had been modified because the first house appeared on the east side of High where the park had been proposed. Even before that, the extension of High from the church down to the village must have been in place. In 1864 the mansard-roofed **52 High** was built and soon occupied by Michael Quinlan, whose carriage works was down in the village (where the Dunkin Donuts is now). By 1874 the present orthogonal street plan, eliminating the park, had been laid out by the civil engineer and landscape designer Ernest Bowditch. That same year he proposed a design for a Boston parks system — a year before Olmsted became involved with Boston's nascent parks. Bowditch had a long career designing Olmsted-like landscapes for some of the most gilded names of the Gilded Age, as well as having designed Brookline's wonderfully tranquil and wooded Walnut Hills Cemetery. It would be tempting to assume that the Land Company's changed plans reflected a recognition that there would be a salubrious park at the foot of the hill. However, the more modest lot sizes there suggest otherwise. Today's park was then a hopeful idea at best. Arguably, Cumberland's extraordinary width may reflect an attempt to save something of the curving "Glen Street's" role in the original design, as a gracious way of driving up the hill from Pond to High to Edgehill.

A vignette from the Brookline Land Company's 1860 sales map showing "Brookline from near Irving St." — presumably from where the church is now, at Allerton and High.



68 High St. (1871) is an unusual hybrid Stick Style and Mansard house built for Henry Sayles, a director of the Brookline Land Company by the fashionable Boston firm of Snell & Gregerson. The tough-minded but picturesquely-massed, almost Gothic-feeling, brick house at **84 High** (1875), was designed by Weston & Rand for John D. Runkle, second president of M.I.T. and an influential Brookline School Committee member, after whom the Runkle School is named. Cadwallader Curry, a Savings Bank Commissioner, built the Stick Style house at **100 High St.** (1880). Arthur Nikisch, who conducted the BSO in the 1889 season, reportedly stayed here, as did Max Fiedler, who conducted from 1912 to 1918. Subsequently, 100 High was the home of D. Blakeley Hoar, for whom Brookline's Hoar Wildlife Sanctuary is named, and of Homer Albers, a dean of the Boston University School of law.



Brookline's first 1874 atlas shows the Land Company's second, more conventional plan, which eliminated the park. One house appears where the park would have been. Some of the roads, paths, and alleys shown existed only on paper — "Ward St." later evolved, with a different shape, into Highland Rd.; never-built alleys parallel Glen; and an unrealized branched path or alley drops down the steep hillside at the end of Summit (now Edgehill). Not yet in place are Upland Rd., Maple St., Wellington Terrace, and Acron Rd. Village Lane, part of the former Brookline-Roxbury town line, just approaches High Street (at the word "Street"). The former town-line continues as the west lot line of 14 Allerton to the Irving/Allerton intersection and then follows the rear lines on the west side of High St. (Subsequent lot line adjustments make it less evident on later maps.) Note the Muddy River hopefully rebranded as "Longwood Stream."

The elegant Shingle Style house at **92 High** (1882-84) was built for Thatcher Loring. It is an important example of the work of William Ralph Emerson, Ralph Waldo's second cousin. Its playful façade innovations — the non-traditional columns supporting perforated screen-like façade extensions and a projecting diminutive balcony in the rear — almost seem to pre-figure, in shingles and brick, the spatial/structural inventiveness of the 1920s and 1930s modernists. For many years neighborhood barn dances were held in its large carriage barn, which as late as World War II still sheltered a milk cow — and now houses a private museum of magic lanterns.

Gen. John Henry Sherburne, who lived at 92 High St. He commanded the U.S. Army's first "negro" artillery battalion, the 167th Field Artillery, in France during World War I.



For over 60 years, beginning in the 1890s, 92 High was occupied by the families of Gen. John Henry Sherburne and his daughter. He was an attorney, sometime state representative, and would-be candidate for Lieutenant Governor. Having risen through the Massachusetts Militia (later National Guard) to the rank of Colonel, he saw action along the Mexican border during the early years of World War I and then commanded the U.S. Army's first negro artillery battalion in France. After the war he testified before Congress about orders that pointlessly sent hundreds of U.S. soldiers from other units "over the top" to their deaths on the morning of November 11, 1918, when the armistice hour was already known.

The grand shingled Queen Anne house at **112 High St.**, as well as the only-comparatively-smaller, shingled house at **20 Edgehill**, were both built in 1884 for Charles Storrow and Martha Cabot Storrow by Edward C. Cabot, Martha's father. 112 High was designed so that a small discrete stage could be created at one end of the parlor. It was used by a neighborhood Shakespeare Club. The family of storyteller Jay O'Callahan bought the house in 1942. His recordings include a collection of ***Pill Hill Stories***, describing his childhood in this house and the neighborhood. Says O'Callahan:

"The Pill Hill stories came out of the neighborhood. Pill Hill was filled with interesting people, a lot of eccentrics and wonderful rhythms . . . and the dramas and the tragedies. And you were aware of them all because it was a real neighborhood. Everybody knew everybody. There were a lot of currents going on — political and social — that I could feel but wasn't aware of. Mother and father were very dramatic. And the Hill was very dramatic; people loved to gather and sing. There were huge parties and there was singing and then there'd be plays. Gilbert & Sullivan was very important to all of those adults. And they had all gone through the War [WWII], so there was a lot of emotion in their singing."

Unfortunately, the original John La Farge stained glass windows in the house were sold in the 1970s. It also suffered a kitchen and roof fire at about that time, changing the roof profile on the Cumberland side. Between 112 High and 20 Edgehill is an intensely developed F.L. Olmsted, Sr. landscape that includes a ravine spanned by a stone bridge and hills banked up against a street-edge retaining wall of rough puddingstone boulders, forming a sort of "ha ha" (a one sided wall not visible from inside the property). It almost seems the very picturesque 20 Edgehill, with its exceedingly odd assortment of window shapes and sizes, and equally eccentric muntin bar patterns, was meant to terminate the garden, in the English landscape tradition of the garden "Folly." **50 Cumberland**, formerly its carriage house, later served as a school for "retarded" children before becoming a residence.

Development of the Philbrick Estate

It is not surprising that subdivision of the Philbrick Estate, beginning in 1876, started from the church with which the Philbricks were so identified. At first, Walley Ave., as Philbrick called the portion of Upland Rd. above Irving, only went around the east side and top of what later became the Green. Walley Avenue's namesake is not clear. Possibly it relates in some manner to Sally Walley Phillips, mother of Wendell Phillips, the great abolitionist orator with whom Philbrick was associated. Its name was later changed by the town to Upland Rd. because it was said, "Walley" was too easily confused with "Walnut." (As in this case, Brookline's newer streets were typically called Road while the older ones typically were Street or Place or Avenue; the town's first officially named streets in the 1840s included not a single "Road." The later preference for "Road" may reflect that word's more rural connotation vs. the urban "Street.") The lower section of Upland (then called Harvey Ave.) was in place on the Wright Estate by 1877. The Stick Style house at **36 Upland** was built in 1877-78 for N.C. Towle, a homeopathic doctor. Later it was occupied by Dr. Joseph Pratt, who subsequently moved up the hill to 94 Upland — following a practice still common in the neighborhood. **30 Upland** was constructed the next year for the local postmaster. Later it was occupied by Robert Lincoln O'Brian, former personal secretary to Grover Cleveland, and president and editor of the Boston Herald.

As an "advertisement" for the quality and character of his development, Philbrick had Ware & Van Brunt design **43 Upland** (ca. 1876), with its elaborate Stick Style porch, facing the church and flanking the entrance to Upland Rd. This house, together with 84 Upland, also by Ware & Van Brunt, as well as 70 Upland and 167-169 Walnut, both designed by Cabot & Chandler, are the only Philbrick buildings with known designers. Their details are strikingly similar to those of other Philbrick buildings for which no designer has been identified.



39 Irving before it was "updated" in 1917 by the removal of its entrance portico and open terrace, its roof cresting, and the pointed lower terminations of its wooden upper cladding. Note that the then still open landscape of the Philbrick Estate is visible to the right of the house. The young tree at the tear in the photo is probably the towering ash still in that location. The rustic lattice fence on the retaining wall to the left was a type then common in the neighborhood. When the house was built the lot was smaller than now — ending where the retaining wall begins (the former Brookline-Roxbury town line). The side yard extension to the left came from the Brookline Land Company tract.

76 High (1880), is one of the most unusual buildings in Brookline. Built for Edward Stanwood and designed by Clarence Luce, it is a true example of the English Victorian Queen Anne style, which inspired the American version of Queen Anne. The tile roof and tile siding are typical of the English

Queen Anne but the roof tiles were unusual here and such typical English “tile hung” siding was almost completely unknown in the U.S. Also characteristic of the English Queen Anne are the decorative terra cotta and carved wood panels, and the typical Queen Anne sunflower design. The gargoyles embarrassed Stanwood, publisher of the extremely influential *The Youth’s Companion*, who became known as the man with “the house of sunflowers and devils.” It also has interior murals and a stained glass window by Thomas Wilmer Dewing dating from the time of its construction. The present owners have carefully restored the exterior polychrome decorations, which had all been painted over and have uncovered the Dewing murals and stencil-work decorations that had been covered with wallpaper.

Facing the church on the other side of the entrance to Upland is the imposing **39 Irving** (1876), built for James W. Edgerly, a cotton broker, Selectman, and proprietor of the Church. His summer home on Ironbound Island, Maine was later immortalized in watercolor sketches by John Singer Sargent. His daughter Mary Sophronia (Edgerly) Andrews is said to have won the first women’s golf match ever played in the U.S. (at The Country Club). Her daughter Louise lived here for a time after her mother died. Later, as Louise Andrews Kent, she wrote *The Brookline Trunk*, a children’s book about Brookline’s history, with the turret of this, her grandfather’s house, being the setting for one chapter.

70 Upland (1875), another Philbrick-built house, was designed by Cabot & Chandler. Edward C. Cabot was the father-in-law of Charles Storow who rented it from 1878 to 1885 before moving to 112 High St. The architect Carl Fehmer, of Fehmer & Page then lived there until 1890. The two-story wintergarden bay was added in 1920 for Eugene Tryon Redmond and his wife Helen Eames Redmond, a pineapple heiress from Hawaii. She became a somewhat infamous neighborhood character. In her later years she was given to jogging (before that term was invented) through the neighborhood in tennis shoes while wearing red cloak. She was remembered, long after her departure, for having actively enforced Massachusetts’ then strict blue laws. (Woe unto him whom she saw mowing his grass on a Sunday! An apologetic policeman would soon be at the miscreant’s door.) And, contra the inclinations of many in the neighborhood, she was also a member of the fanatically anti-communist John Birch Society.

Sometime before 1885, Philbrick built **84 Upland**, which he sold to Horace D. Chapin, treasurer of the Eastern Railroad. The present owner has information that 84 Upland was designed by Ware & Van Brunt. **78 Upland** was also built by Philbrick and rented to Chapin before he bought 84 Upland. In 1886 Charles and Mabel Foster bought and enlarged it using the architect and neighbor Carl Fehmer. Then, in 1893 they hired Peabody & Stearns to design the large, freestanding music pavilion to the right of the house, which was connected to it by an iron-framed glazed corridor whose roof was made of massive glass slabs. Among other involvements, Charles Henry Wheelwright Foster was at various times president of the Boston Sugar Refinery Company, the Brookline National Bank, and the Chickering Piano Co.

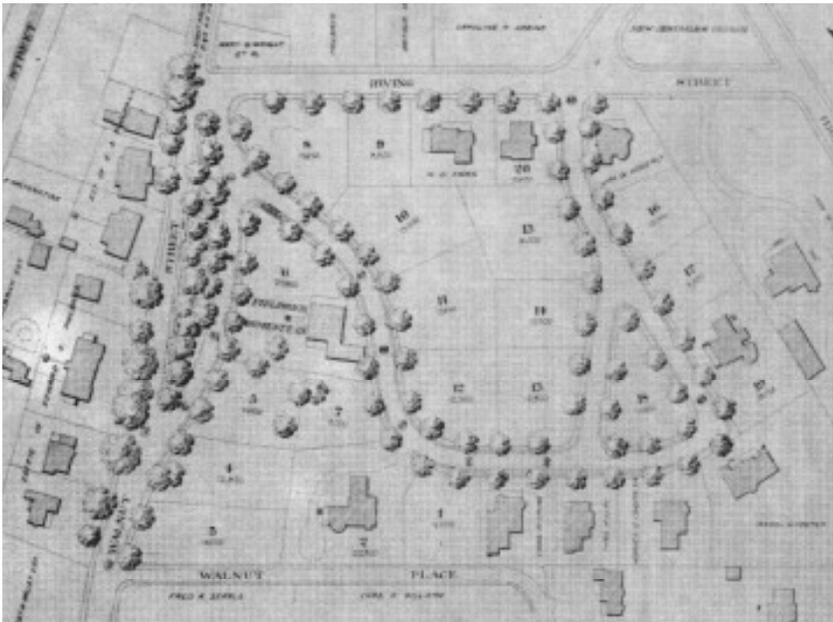
The second next owners were Isadore Braggiotti and his wife Lily (formerly Baroness de Relbnitz — formerly daughter of Mr. Sebastian Schlesinger of Boston). They were both singers who maintained a singular Hindu-vegetarian bohemian household with eight uninhibited musical children who delighted the likes of Amy Lowell and Mrs. Jack Gardner at Saturday musicales in the music pavilion — and various of whom later ran a dance studio *a la* Loie Fuller over a firehouse, performed in Vaudeville, started a national craze for piano four-hands — and in the case of actress daughter Francesca, married John Lodge, grandson of the first Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and brother of the second. John Lodge was by turns, an actor, Governor of Connecticut, and ambassador to Fascist Spain.



Francesca Braggiotti Lodge, Broadway actress whose ability to serenade urban Italian immigrant voters in their own language helped her Brahmin husband, John Lodge, become Governor of Connecticut.

Edward Philbrick built the Queen Anne **94 Upland** (ca. 1886), shortly before he died. Two years later, Thomas Hart Clay, editor of the popular children's magazine *The Youth's Companion*, bought it. He was followed by the Stevenson sisters, who were related to William Sumner Appleton, the founder of the Society for the Protection of New England Antiquities. As a result, SPNEA has a collection of photographs of Pill Hill taken from inside and around this house in the 1890s. They show, for instance, that it and its neighbors had been built in the Philbrick's orchard of large fruit trees. The next owner was Dr. Joseph Pratt, founder of the Pratt diagnostic clinic at the New England Medical Center. Since the 1920s, a semi-secret, pyramid-shaped closet within the porch roof of this house has been known to a succession of resident children and their neighborhood friends as "King Tut's Tomb."

After Edward Philbrick's death in 1889 his family hired F.L. Olmsted, Sr. to complete the estate's development plan. The **Olmsted plan** split Upland Rd. around **the Green**, which it shows as house-lot #18. The redesigned Upland Rd. was completed the same year. Old town engineering plans suggest the designation of "Maple St." once began at the Green, rather than at the curve, as it does now



Olmsted's 1889 plan, which split Upland Rd. around the Green (lot #18), shows the houses already built at that time. As envisioned in the plan, Maple St. would have curved around the east end of the Tappan-Philbrick House and come out on Walnut St. (rather than on Irving, as it now does), where there was to be a heavily landscaped "island" in the middle of the street, screening the Philbricks' view of their rental properties. It also proposed six larger house lots on the land between Upland and Maple, rather than the eventual eight.

Across the green, **51 Upland** (1891) is a more typical Shingle Style, but still characteristically restrained, house by William Ralph Emerson. After the turn of the century and into the 'twenties it was occupied Miss B. Gertrude Hall a practitioner of the then-new (and New Age-ish) "New Thought" movement, a spiritual healing movement distantly related to Christian Science. She lectured in Boston at Metaphysical Hall and gave spiritual guidance to devotees who boarded in the house.

Charles H.W. Foster, hired Arthur H. Bowditch to design the Colonial Revival **57 Upland** (1893), where for a time BSO conductor Wilhelm Gericke lived. The present **71 Upland**, (ca. 1950), replaced a large house with a wraparound porch that was occupied during the Depression by an old lady and numerous cats. When she died, the house seemed so permeated by “cat” and had so little market value in relation to the taxes that in 1940 her heirs let the Fire Department burn it down for practice.

The flames scorched **65 Upland** (1891) next door, which had been bought the year before (for \$4,000) by the Drs. George and Olive Smith, young pioneering researchers in fertility at the Free Hospital for Women. This very restrained house with refined detailing, including very thin, bead-edged clapboards, without corner boards, and simple gable over-hang, had been designed by William Ralph Emerson for Miss. Emily G. Denny the sister of Dr. Francis Denny.



The houses on the west side of the Green in 1935, (approximately where the Philbrick’s large barn once stood), from right to left: 57 Upland with Wisteria climbing a now recently reproduced chinoiserie balustrade over the portico; the soon to be scorched 65 Upland; the sadly lost 71 Upland; and 94 Upland, where Dr. Pratt’s daughters recalled growing up in a quiet formal Depression-era household that got along with “only” one or two servants on the third floor (with their tub and toilet in the cellar) — plus a Japanese gardener.

To have an ordinary sized house lot encircled by a street is very unusual and suggests Olmsted may have been hoping “lot 18” would remain open space, even though he did not designate it as such. It was a tended lawn in the 1890s and clearly enhanced the value of the surrounding lots. It was bought by Mabel Foster of 78 Upland, sometime after 1893. She resold to the Town in 1901 when the Fosters left Pill Hill, with the town paying \$2,500 and other neighbors paying a comparable amount. Officially on town maps it became Philbrick Square but until quite recently there was no sign identifying it as such; to the neighborhood it was always simply “The Green.” It was never elaborated as a “park” but has always been only a simple open greensward with trees around its edge. The last two huge 120-year old oaks planted by Philbrick were felled just a few years ago. (The benches only date from the 1980s.) It became the symbolic heart of the Pill Hill community. Every Christmas Eve neighbors of all faiths gather there for the annual “Caroling of the Green” and every Father’s Day for over fifty years the neighborhood has had its “Picnic on the Green” with games and pony rides — a tradition started in the 1950s by the Smith children of 65 Upland, as a Bastille Day celebration. Recently, after some spirited conversation, a neighborhood consensus determined that it should officially become **Philbrick Green**.

Around the Green many of Boston's foremost late nineteenth century architects are represented, with no ordinary Victorian "plan book" houses. On the east side, **56 Upland** (1890), designed by Andrews, Jaques & Rantoul, combines the Shingle Style with a British Arts and Crafts vocabulary just then being introduced in England by the architect C.F.A. Voysey, reflecting the close ties between Boston and the British Arts and Crafts movements. That same year, Andrews, Jaques & Rantoul designed the Shingle Style **52 Upland**, based on purely American models. The restrained slate-sided **62 Upland** (1890) by Hartwell & Richardson, reflects an unusual influence, Northern French vernacular. In the 1980s its cellar housed the neighborhood's food co-op.

100 Upland (1889) was designed by Peabody & Stearns for MIT professor Charles Cross, originally with a porte-cochere to the right of the entrance and a widow's walk roof balustrade. He was succeeded by another MIT Professor, William T. Sedgwick, who became Curator of the Lowell Institute, a nineteenth century workingmen's betterment endowment, which in the 1940s gave rise to WGBH as a major force in "educational broadcasting." Winslow & Walker designed the Shingle Style **108 Upland** (1892), for Joseph Walker, Speaker of the Massachusetts House and later a U.S. Congressman. Its small octagonal 1905 conservatory is the sole survivor of several which once graced nearby homes.

107 Upland (1892) was designed by Hartwell & Richardson for F. W. Hobbs, treasurer of Arlington Mills. Until about 1919 it was the home of Mr. & Mrs. Arthur D. Little — he having founded in 1886 the world's first consulting firm, which still bears his name. For a time the family was joined by his nephew Royal Little, a Harvard student. He later founded Textron, the first corporate conglomerate. The Littles then moved to **5 Maple** (1893), a house designed by Peabody & Stearns, blending Shingle Style with Colonial Revival. They were joined there by Mrs. Clara Reed Anthony, Mrs. Little's mother. She had been a life-long friend of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, the then recently deceased mother of William Randolph Hearst. They had corresponded, visited each other, and were engaged in projects together. When young "Willie" Hearst was in Harvard, Mrs. Anthony tried to keep an eye on him — not too successfully, as he was notoriously "wild." In 1897 the two women worked on a conference and project for a women's university in Washington DC. They were also identified, together with others, as incorporators of Kindergarten Magazine. Clearly, these ventures were funded by Mrs. Hearst's vast wealth — and, it is said, she proved her friend and confidant with a monthly stipend, as she did for others as well.

The two Shingle Style houses at **12 & 18 Maple** (1893) were designed by Arthur Bowditch, with 12 Maple being his home. The house at the corner of Maple and Irving, **27 Irving** (ca. 1888) blends the Shingle Style and Colonial Revival. Arthur Little, of Little & Brown, designed it for lawyer William Swan. Among its unusual features is a curvaceous shingled side-porch, whose roof and walls blend together, and a false dormer on the rear pierced by a chimney. The house pre-dates Maple Street, as can be seen in the Olmsted plan.

In 1891-92, George Moffette, Jr. designed the Queen Anne house at **9 Irving** with its staggered butt shingles, "stick" detailing in the dormer, and round tower. Interestingly, Moffette, along with many other Boston design professionals, had once signed a manifesto saying that they would adopt the metric system on July 4th, 1876! This house was built for, and for many years owned by, Dr. E.F. Vickery a prominent surgeon and author of medical texts. He never lived there. It was first occupied by Elias Bliss, a flour merchant, and then by Dr. David Townsend, a leading TB specialist, who eventually owned it.

The north side of Irving was part of the Wright Estate. Arthur Mills, an executive of the Boston & Albany Railroad, hired Peabody & Stearns to design **22 Irving St.** (1883), a wonderful Shingle Style house that looks as if it had been miraculously transported from a summer isle in Maine. A former owner, Louise Castle, was Brookline's first Selectwoman. Her husband, Dr. William Castle helped discover the cause of and cure for pernicious anemia.

The Colonial Revival **14 Irving St.** was designed by Julius Schweinfurth. Herbert B. and Sara R Ehrmann lived here. It is typical of the progressive and diverse character of Pill Hill that he was one of Sacco and Vanzetti's attorneys. She, already a feminist and suffragist of long standing became, at 33, a leader of the Massachusetts Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty which, after a decades-long struggle, succeeded in ending the death penalty in Massachusetts. She also was a founder of the League of Women Voters in Brookline.

Elizabeth Glendower Evans, who lived on Wellington Terrace, helped organize and fund Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti's defense. Anne Norwood (Hallowell) Davis, the Secretary-Treasurer of the New England Civil Liberties Committee, lived at 44 Edgehill, which was also the mailing address for its Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee. Herbert B. Ehrmann, who lived at 14 Irving St., was one of Sacco and Vanzetti's several attorneys. The case inspired his wife, Sara R Ehrmann, to devote her life to ending the death penalty in Massachusetts.



Ben Shahn's poster of Sacco and Vanzetti with Bartolomeo Vanzetti's last testament.

Brookline Land Company's development below High St.

Allerton St. was the first part to be built out of the Brookline Land Company's second plan for the area east of High. (For a time Allerton was then still called Irving, together with we now call Irving). Set in the Pond Ave. curve at the bottom of Allerton, where the original lower entry to the Land Company's unrealized five-acre park was to have been, was the old Ward School. Originally built on Pearl Place in Brookline Village in 1853, it was enlarged and moved in 1863 to this Land Company site. (Buildings were moved routinely in frugal nineteenth century New England; there is an entire street of

moved cottages in the Point neighborhood.) In 1888 the school was razed, being deemed incompatible with Olmsted’s design for the Emerald Necklace. The present **Allerton Overlook**, as Olmsted’s design referred to this site, was recently restored in memory of Louise Castle, Pill Hill resident and Brookline’s first Selectwoman.

Eventually, the Land Company coordinated its plans with those Olmsted drew up for the Muddy River Improvement, now part of the Emerald Necklace — although Olmsted’s first Brookline park plans date only from 1880, well after the Land Company’s second subdivision plan for this area had been laid out by Ernest Bowditch. Eventually, in the 1890s, the Company sold to the town much of what became **Olmsted Park, Leverett Pond**, and Riverdale Parkway (a former pleasure drive where the bicycle and pedestrian paths are now). One reason this part of the neighborhood was slow to develop is that, before Olmsted’s improvements, the brackish tidewaters of the fetid Back Bay reached as far as the present Leverett Pond.

An 1876 view of the banks of the, then still tidal, mosquito ridden Muddy River. The photographer’s romantic composition suggests a tangled Fredrick Church wilderness — with a small lone figure in the center pondering raw nature — rather than the bucolic landscape Fredrick Law Olmsted and his firm would design in the 1880s and execute in the 1890s, leading to the final development of the of the lower slopes of the Land Company’s tract.



Judith Eleanor Motley Low lived at **28 Allerton** (1884), the house with the little pepper-pot turret. As a 60-year old widow she founded the Lowthorpe school of Landscape Architecture in Groton Mass. in 1901, the first such school intended to prepare women as

professionals. In 1945 it merged into the Rhode Island School of Design and became the basis of RISD’s Landscape Architecture Department. After Ms. Low, 28 Allerton was the home of, Dr. John Rock. He developed the oral contraceptive Pill at the Free Hospital for Women — thus, perhaps, single-handedly justifying the name “Pill Hill.”

31 Allerton (1891), designed by Chapman & Frazer, was the final home of the pianist Helen Hopekirk, who moved here from Walnut. St. **35 Allerton** (1892) was designed by the firm of Walker & Kimball. **41 Allerton** (1896), by the firm of Chapman & Frazer, was the home of Gorham Dana, an expert of fire prevention who was part of the campaign against triple-deckers. Later he moved to 44 Edgehill. **43 Allerton** (1893) was designed by Longfellow, Alden & Harlow, a firm which operated in both Boston and Pittsburg, where it catered to Andrew Carnegie, his foundation, and many of that city's leading industrialists and institutions.

Charles Knowles Bolton, historian, novelist, and a founder of the Brookline Historical Society, lived in the "cottage" type house at **48 Allerton** (1893), designed by William F. Goodwin. Bolton was the librarian of the Brookline Public library and then of the Athenaeum. His publications include *Brookline: the History of a Favored Town*. **52 Allerton** (1894), designed by H. Forbes Bigelow, was the home of Charles Packard Ware, who previously had lived somewhat more modestly in one of the Philbrick houses on Walnut.



58 Allerton St. (1899) was the home of the great African American concert tenor, Roland Hayes, who lived there until his death in the 1970s. It was designed by Joseph E. Chandler, the restoration architect of the Paul Revere House. The lot below Roland Hayes' house (now part of the Brook house) was occupied by the Trumbell Hospital, also called the Allerton Hospital, a small private hospital — built in the 1920's and removed by the 1960s urban renewal.

Concert tenor Roland Hayes lived at 58 Allerton St. from 1925 to 1977

Originally called Hill St., Hawthorn Rd. was developed from the Allerton end. The unusual two-color brick, Georgian Revival, **4 Hawthorn Rd.** was built for Mrs. Charles Appleton in 1894, based on the designs of Henry F. Bigelow and William Rutan. Later, it was owned by Charles S. Sergeant, an executive of the Boston Elevated Railway Company. His daughter Katharine was a life-long editor of the *New Yorker*, mother of writer Roger Angell, and wife of E.B. White. The most unusual house on the street is **14 Hawthorn** (1896) by Ball & Dabney, inspired at a reduced scale, by the 1803 Federal style Aspinwall house on Aspinwall Hill built by the great grandfather of the first owner of this house.

Across the street is a pair of three-story, 1893, Federal Revival houses turned sideways to face each other at **17 & 21 Hawthorn**, designed by Peabody & Stearns for George Hyde Page and his sister Mary Hutcheson Page. George Hyde Page was with the Metropolitan Steamship Company on India Wharf. Mary Hutcheson Page, who had attended MIT, founded the Brookline Equal Suffrage Association, and then was involved in founding the Boston Equal Suffrage Association for Good Government — becoming Chair of its Executive Board and later president. She entertained Emmeline Pankhurst during her 1909 visit to Massachusetts.

The grand, now lost, 1803 Federal style Aspinwall house, on Aspinwall Hill, built by the great grandfather of the builder of 14 Hawthorn Rd. — which echoes, at a reduced scale, the original, including its central pavilion with Palladian windows, the unusual crescent shaped fanlight, and balustraded entrance porch. This original Aspinwall house belonged to the father-in-law of John Tappan’s brother Lewis. John Tappan stayed there while the Tappan-Philbrick house on Walnut St. was being built in the 1820s.



17 Hawthorne was bought by Rich Kent and Louise Andrews Kent in 1923. Rich Kent was an editor of, and sometimes wrote for, *The Youth’s Companion* and later was an editor at Houghton Mifflin. Louise Andrews Kent, author of *The Brookline Trunk* and other books tells of her life in Brookline and on Pill Hill in her memoir *Mrs. Appleyard & I*. As she recalls it, George Page and his wife, who were her aunt’s friends, “always rented one house and lived in the other.” She writes that they “spent a good deal of time abroad and used to move into whichever house was empty when they came back.” She also says the houses had big sliding doors between the living and dining rooms to accommodate large meetings. Eventually the Kents owned both houses. Rich Kent, through a common ancestor named Remember Kent, was a cousin of Atwater Kent, who made a fortune in automobile ignitions and, more famously, in radios. He financed The Kent Tavern Museum that Louise Andrews Kent established in Vermont. After Rich Kent died in 1943 Louise Andrews Kent opened her house to a succession of young couples as tenants “with kitchen privileges” (which became the title of another of her vaguely autobiographical Mrs. Appleyard books). This was one of five Pill Hill houses in which she lived. In addition to her grandparent’s house at 39 Irving, she was born in a house on Walnut St., lived for a time with her parents in Miss Wood’s boarding house on Walnut St., and eventually spent her last winters in the house of her friend Charlotte Sage on Walnut St.

The house at **20 Hawthorne** (1899), designed by Edward Little Rogers, was the retirement home of the Rev. Oliver Pomeroy Emerson, born to early New England missionaries to Hawaii in the 1840s. He was sent “home” to be educated. He then returned to Hawaii where he compiled the first English-Hawaiian dictionary. **28 Hawthorne** (1911) is by Gay & Proctor. **34 Hawthorne** (1915), built for Miss Louisa M. Hooper, the town’s librarian, is by Kilham & Hopkins, who also designed the reform housing on Highland Circle. **40 Hawthorne** (1917) is by Dykeman & Murray.

The **Free Hospital for Women**, now “The Park” condominiums, also developed a Brookline Land Company site, chosen in part for its proximity to Olmsted Park. It was a Harvard teaching hospital which stressed gynecology as a recognized field of medicine, and pioneered radiation treatment of cancer, in vitro fertilization, and oral contraception. The Renaissance-inspired main yellow brick building (1895) is by Shaw & Hunnewell. Major additions were made in 1911, 1921, and 1922 by Coolidge & Carlson. Even finer is the nurses quarters facing its main entrance, across what was then still Glen Rd. The landscaping was planned by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot in 1893. Beginning in 1895, Charles S. Sargent, who was Director of the Arnold Arboretum for 54 years, became responsible for

overseeing its landscaped grounds. The Free Hospital for Women merged with the Boston Lying In Hospital (now part of Brigham & Women's), which closed its Brookline Campus in the 1960s.

A final Olmsted collaboration with the Land Company occurred in 1894, when it asked the Olmsted firm to draw up subdivision plans for the triangle of land between Jamaica Road and Highland Avenue. Although two studies were completed, nothing came of them, and the property, including the site of the triple-deckers along Jamaica Rd., passed to M.I.T for an athletic field — now belonging to the town and called **Harry Downes Field** but still also known locally as “Tech Field.

The inter-war period

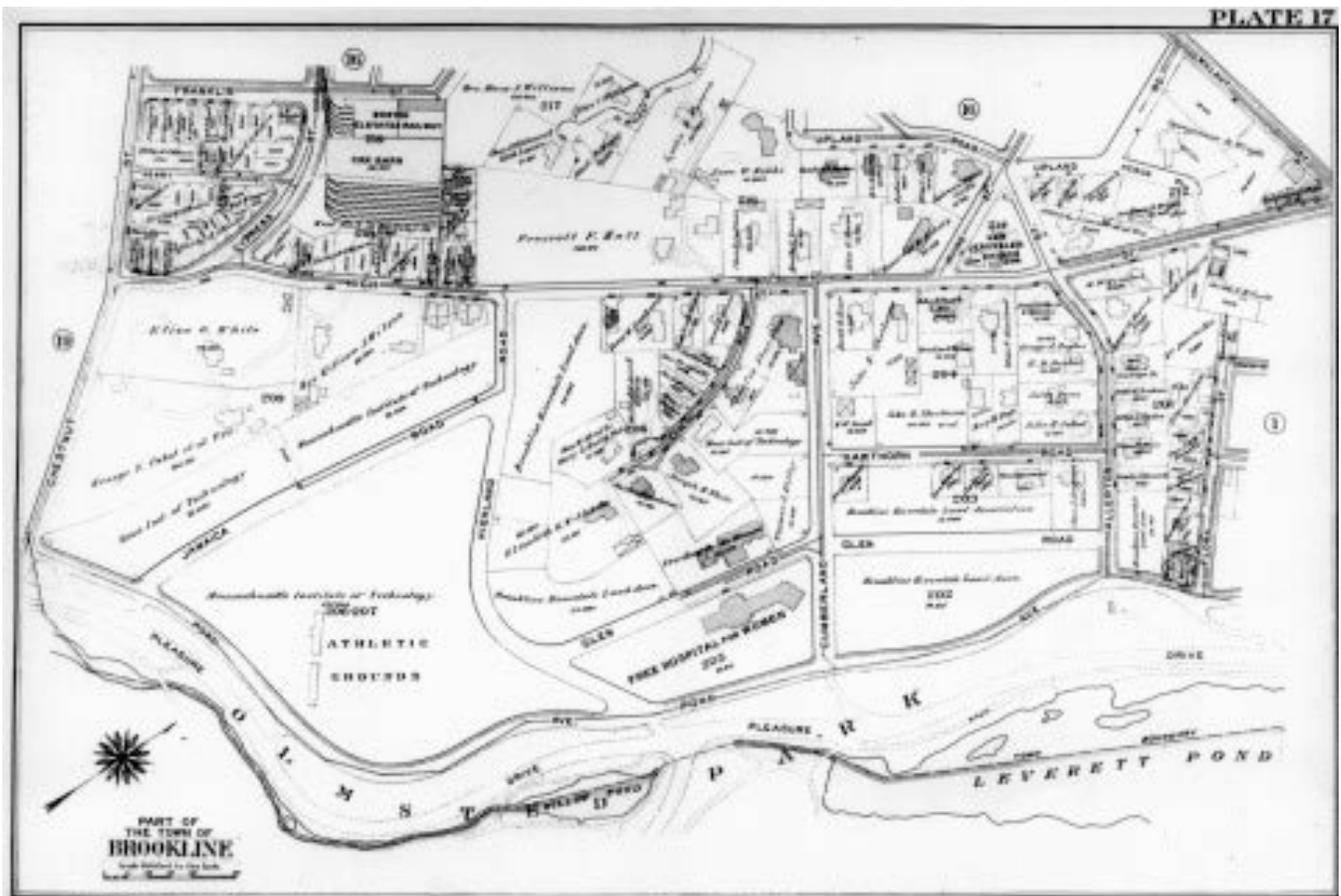
By the beginning of World War I all that remained undeveloped of the Brookline Land Company holdings — by then owned by the Brookline Riverdale Land Association — was the southern ends of Glen Rd, Pond Ave., and Hawthorn Rd. When a developer took out permits for a series of triple-deckers at the bottom of Cumberland, neighbors formed the Glen Trust and bought the land to assure that the character of the Hill would be maintained. Many homes on these streets were developed by individual residents who bought lots. The majority are of the Colonial and Dutch Colonial styles, and many have the sunporches and sleeping porches typical of this period. At 203-219 Pond Ave. are the four **Playing Card Houses** (1925-26) — although designed by three different architects, each house has shutter cut-outs of one of the four suits in a deck of cards.

Unique among Pill Hill's houses is **231 Pond** (1928), designed by Byron Merrill, whose highly picturesque materials — the random red and black clay roof tiles and the overfired, distorted clunker-brick — are typical of a very theatrical (or movie-set like) architecture which flourished in the interwar period. Some think of this as a “storybook” house with a somewhat Scandinavian character — albeit perhaps more Brother Grimm than Hans Christian Andersen. Its distorted bricks, a type which originally must have been discovered among over-fired kiln rejects, were rather popular in and peculiar to Boston in this period — and clearly came to be deliberately produced. After World War II the Scandinavian-modernist architects Alvar Aalto and Eero Saarinen, teaching and working at MIT, discovered and used them, leading to a brief fad for them outside New England in the 1960s.

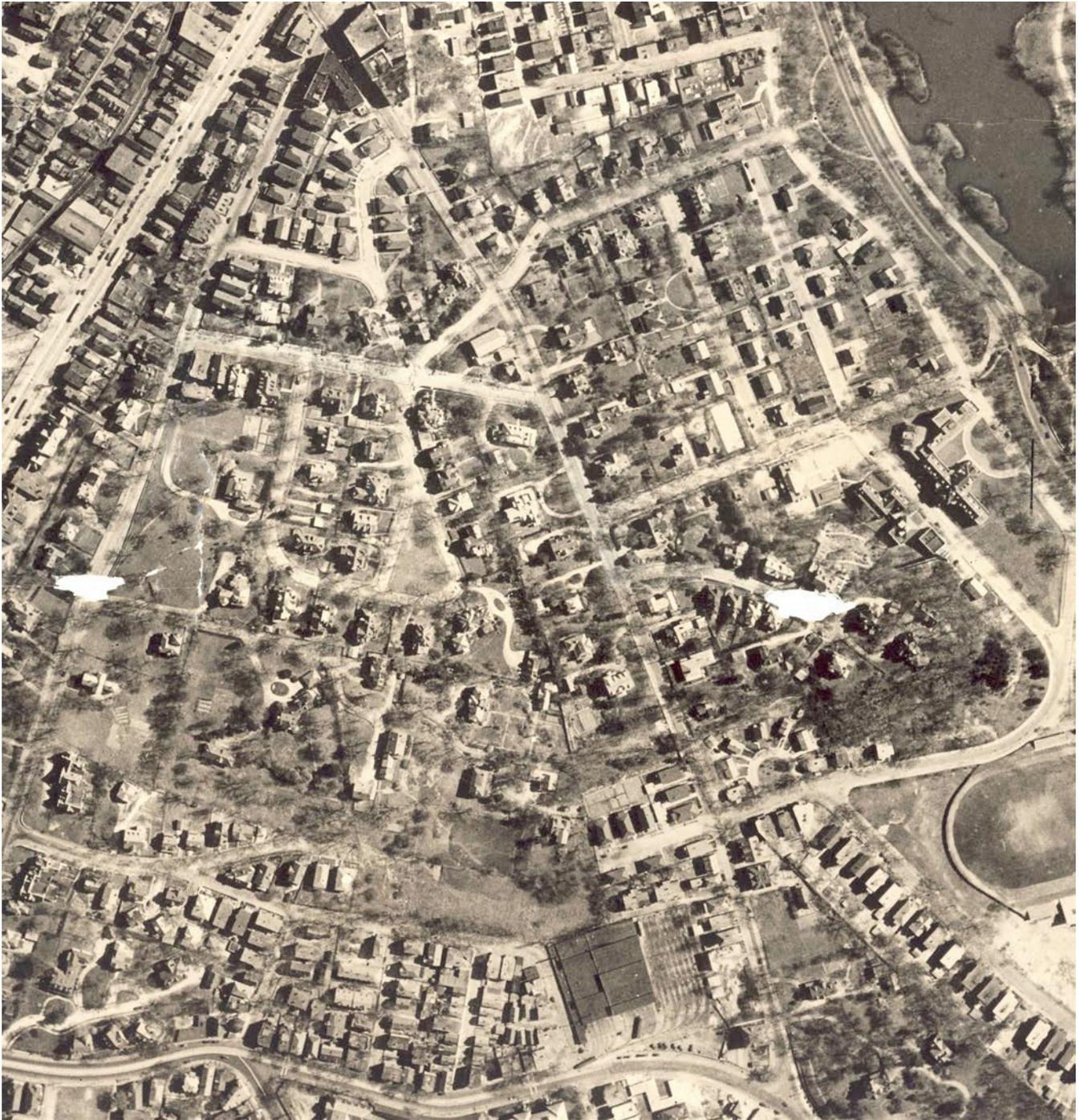
Howe, Manning & Almay designed the Colonial Revival house at **60 High** (1928), for William C. Codman. Lois Lilley Howe and Eleanor Manning O'Connor were among the first women graduates of the M.I.T. School of Architecture. Their firm was the first all-woman architecture practice in Boston and the second in the U.S. They built over thirty houses in Cambridge and public housing in Boston. Howe was the first woman elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

A Pill Hill institution is the clay **tennis court** at the corner of Hawthorne and Cumberland. By 1893, far earlier than for much of that area, there was already a house on that lot, owned by E.W. Lamb. By 1907 the house had been replaced by a carriage house or “barn”, designed by Peabody & Stearns, and still owned by Lamb. Curiously, the barn (as shown on town atlases) appeared to have the same footprint as the house, but was located further up the Cumberland side of the lot. In the 1920s it belonged to Mrs. Redmond, who lived at 70 Upland. Mrs. Redmond, whose daughter was an accomplished equestrian, kept a horse in her Cumberland Rd., barn. It was also rumored, perhaps apocryphally, to have been a Prohibition era depository of bootlegged hooch. In 1930 she sold the lot

for \$10,500 to The Hawthorne Associates Trust. By then the tennis court was already in place. The Trust's shareholders were a broad group of neighbors who may have been more concerned about inappropriate development than about tennis. At that time and for some years thereafter the barn was used to store stage scenery for the Leland Powers School of the Spoken Word and to garage automobiles. The tennis court was leased to an informal neighborhood club. Sometime in the 1940s the trust considered subdividing the lot and selling the part with the barn, which has been recalled as being built of brick and stone, for conversion into a house. However a zoning change precluded that. In the mid-50s the barn was demolished. At some point the Trust took over the role of the tennis club. It also gradually gained control of a majority of the shares, although some are still handed down from owner to owner when houses are sold. Anyone living in the neighborhood can be a playing member of the club.



The Brookline Land Company area in 1913, showing its final street pattern. No houses had then been built on Glen or Pond Roads. The Highland Circle housing was a year from being started. A carriage barn occupied the now wooded half of the tennis court's lot on Cumberland Ave at Hawthorne Rd. The new Acron Rd on the Wright estate (then still a dead end called Acron Place) had nothing built on it, nor even at that late date, did the entire Walnut St. frontage of the Wright Estate. Near the upper left corner of the map are the trolley car storage tracks and "car-barns" off Cypress St. at the end of the trolley line, where the Robinson Playground is now.



Pill Hill in 1930. The white road on the upper left is Boylston. Almost paralleling it, Walnut, meets High at the "V" shaped building. Top right is Leverett Pond. Just below that is the Free Hospital for Women and below that Tech Field. Along the bottom edge is Cypress with the huge black-roofed trolley car barn where the playing field is now. The now lost carriage house is visibly next to the (very white) tennis court on Cumberland. The Allerton Hospital stands opposite the north end of Glen, whose southern end goes through to Highland. Hall Road is still a garden. One estate occupies all the land between the Puddingstone Rows and Walnut Place. The Veterans Housing and 99 High are not built.

The only post-World War II house in this part of Pill Hill is a 1960s split-level at **38 Cumberland**, once the home of Seiji Ozawa, long time conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. It has a Japanese garden designed by Julie Messervy.

At the bottom of High St. around **Highland Circle**, are four identical brick double houses with gambrel roofs designed in 1914 by Kilham & Hopkins for the Highland Road Trust. (The shingled, single-family houses between them were inserted in the 1920s.) Prescott Hall of 127 High St and Henry Lamb of 138 High were two of the trustees. There was a strong anti-triple decker sentiment at the time and these houses reflect the housing reform ideas of the Massachusetts Homestead Commission. The purpose of the Commission was to “assist mechanics, laborers, and other to acquire homesteads or smaller houses and plots of ground in the suburbs of cities and towns.” They were inspired by the examples of the English “Garden Cities” around London. Kilham & Hopkins were chosen because of their experience in designing similar housing in Lowell and Salem. Among the early residents were teachers, a chauffeur, a bookkeeper, a carpenter, and a civil engineer. Nearby, in the Point neighborhood, other reform housing was built at about that time by the Lawrence Trust. Some of it survived intact and in good condition until recently when, unfortunately, it was vinyl-sided. The strength of the anti-triple decker sentiment that developed throughout New England in that era was such that, when zoning was introduced after World War I, almost everywhere triple-deckers were not allowed. (In part this arose from concerns about urban conflagrations, such as the great Salem fire of 1914, although there may have been other biases at work as well.) Even though they are now considered a desirable type of housing, it was only in 2007 that Brookline, for the first time, created an appropriate three-unit zoning classification.

Elsewhere on the Hill changing times changed the neighborhood. After World War I the Wright Estate house was demolished and the land subdivided into lots for two family houses and triple-deckers along its Walnut St. and new Acron Rd. frontages. With the Great Depression came the downsizing or demolition of two other houses at the foot of Walnut Place and at the corner of Irving and Upland — in the latter case creating two cottages, which for the past sixty years have often served as dower or retirement homes for neighbors no longer needing large houses.

Placemarkers

Sometimes we pass historic clues and place markers daily without a second thought. Pill Hill has a surprising number of substantial granite Obelisk-like stone posts marking the entrances to former estate drives and developments with estate ambitions — including Wellington Terrace, Walnut Place, both ends of lower Upland Rd. (Harvey Ave., as it then was), the Tappan-Philbrick house, a massive pair for the Moses Williams house (67 Walnut Place), and the houses at 217, 233, and 239 Walnut and at 55 Irving (originally a drive to 99 High), and two pairs marking the site of the Searle Estate near the bottom of Walnut Place.



As the ‘thirties came to a close Pill Hill, like the rest of Brookline, saw its old hand painted wood street name signs replaced by unique cast aluminum ones made in the Town’s own foundry in the Town

Barn on Cypress St. (Many still survive in the Town's Historic Districts whereas they have almost completely disappeared from south Brookline. There is no other set of surviving cast aluminum street name signs like these in the country. (Brookline still has several hundred in place and they have been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Historic Register.)

Post-World War II

After the Depression, World War II and the introduction of cheap GI mortgages for suburban tract houses, areas like Pill Hill were thought obsolete and its large houses were called “white elephants” or “Victorian horrors” (think Charles Addams). In the 1960s **urban renewal** came to Brookline with a vengeance. The Brookline Redevelopment Authority efficiently cleared the Marsh and the Farm and, following Federal “mandates,” declared Brookline Village and Pill Hill “blighted.” Into the late 1970s Pill Hill residents could be eligible for low interest Federal improvement loans. Houses on the Hill were attractive to some with large families because they were cheap — but brokers told their clients to avoid the Lincoln School. (Transfers to other schools allowed, no questions asked!) Break-ins and vandalism were not uncommon. One Upland Rd. house was a Hippie Commune. Another Upland owner reluctantly demolished a polygonal Victorian greenhouse because its glass was constantly being broken.

In 1958 a group of Pill Hill neighbors formed the High Street Hill Neighborhood Association with Jay O’Callahan’s father, Edward O’Callahan, as its first president and with bylaws cribbed by judge Mo Richardson from the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Association. It now claims the distinction of being Brookline’s oldest continuously operating neighborhood association.

This large Queen Anne house at the corner of Upland and Irving was built by Dr. George Sabine in about 1880. It was demolished at the end of the Depression and replaced by the two cottages at 30 Irving and 27 Upland. While the house is gone, the granite obelisk-like post (visible lower left) at the corner of the street remains — one of two pairs still marking the ends of what was once Harvey St. on the Wright Estate (now lower Upland Rd.).



True to the neighborhood’s heritage, many long time residents remained, and Pill Hill attracted new residents who understood how special it was and wanted to retain its unique character. Although the Town’s first Local Historic District was created in Cottage Farm, following a weekend demolition

by B.U., Pill Hill provided about a third of the combined members of the then Historic and Local District Commissions, just as it has always provided more than its share of the present Preservation Commission's members. Most of Pill Hill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. The Local Historic District was established in 1983 following various threats, including a proposal to demolish and sub-divide the Tappan-Philbrick estate on Walnut St. and the insensitive aluminum siding of some properties.

Based on the experience of similar Brookline neighborhoods, if there had been no historic district, in recent years Pill Hill probably would have again experienced the demolition of larger houses — but now for McMansions — and of smaller homes for two-families or higher density development, where the zoning allows.

The brick and shingle new **Park Condominiums** (1984) at the southern end of the former Free Hospital site, designed by CBT/Childs, Bertram, Tseckares & Casendino, was the first new building in the Pill Hill subject to Historic District design review. Since then there have been three new houses, a few out buildings and many additions throughout the neighborhood.

The new buildings or major additions that the Preservation Commission has reviewed in the Pill Hill District include:

The **Latvian Church entrance lobby addition** (1985), which replaced the original front of the meeting hall (previously identical to the façade still exposed on High St.) The design, while not impressive, was much improved over the then existing façade and the original proposal — and it was required not to be in physical contact with the historic church structure.

An **Acorn (prefabricated) house** at 222 Walnut St. (1985). Because this industrially produced house fit appropriately among its 1950s modern neighbors, it was approved as presented.

A **new house** at 10 Walnut Place (1997), whose design responded to neighborhood concerns about sight lines and not upstaging the Tappan-Philbrick house.

A **new house** at 36 Allerton, (2005), whose siting on the lot evolved in response to neighbors' concerns about preserving a specimen beech tree on the property.

A **two story garage with studio above** at 273 Walnut (1997), a **garage/woodworking studio** at 27 Walnut Place (1999), and the **Parking forecourt** for one of the Puddingstone Rows at 254-58 Walnut St. (1994).