



ARTICLE 34

**Final Report to Town Meeting on the Proposed
Enlargement of the Pleasant Street Historic District to
Include Oak Knoll**

April 2006

**Submitted by the Arlington Historic District Commissions
Acting as Study Committee**

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Summary

On October 26, 2005 residents of Oak Knoll met with representatives of the Arlington Historic District Commissions (AHDC) and the Arlington Historical Commission (AHC) to discuss the possibility of including Oak Knoll in the Pleasant Street Historic District. Following the enthusiastic response of the residents at this initial meeting, the Historic District Commissions voted on October 27, 2005 to designate this street as a study area, designated the Commissions acting jointly as a study committee as prescribed under M.G.L. Ch. 40C Sec.3, and asked Alyssa Krimsky Clossey (an Oak Knoll resident) to coordinate the research and report-production efforts of the residents.

Research on the eight properties in the study area was carried out by local historian Richard A. Duffy and residents of Oak Knoll including Betsy and James Bailey, Alyssa and Will Clossey, Jan and Cliff Lo, Miriam and Will Stein, Julie and Jim Zigo, and Stephanie and Jeff Larason. Photography was done by Alyssa Krimsky Clossey.

Based on the efforts of all of these individuals, a Preliminary Report was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Arlington Redevelopment Board (acting as the Town's planning board) on November 14, 2005 for their review. Pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 40C Sec.3, on January 13, 2006, the Historic District Commissions acting jointly as a study committee held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed enlargement. Based on the enthusiastic feedback of all those in attendance and the positive recommendation of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Commissions voted to place the proposed enlargement on the 2006 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Subsequently, both the Arlington Board of Selectmen and the Arlington Redevelopment Board have also endorsed the proposed enlargement.

The study committee established by Historic District Commissions is comprised of the following Historic District Commissioners:

Stephen Makowka, Chairperson
Michael Logan, Vice-Chairperson
John L. Worden III, Secretary
Andrea Alberg
Madelon Hope Berkowitz
Beth Cohen
Alex Frisch
Yvonne Logan
Martha Penzenik
Margaret Potter
Danielle Santos (since resigned)
assisted by their Executive Secretary Carol Ryerson Greeley.

Introduction

Arlington is fortunate in having a wide array of historically and/or architecturally significant buildings and landscapes from the eighteenth to the first half of the twentieth centuries, including the properties clustered in the seven established Local Historic Districts. Although the properties in the various Local Historic Districts vary in age, style, and level of ornamentation, all reflect Arlington's rich history. For close to 30 years, Local Historic District status has proven to be one of the most effective tools in the informed preservation of Arlington's historical resources. The Arlington Historic District Commissions, which oversee the seven existing Local Historic Districts, work with property owners to ensure that the Town's historic buildings will continue to tell us of our past, while meeting our present needs.

Local Historic Districts serve three functions:

1. To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant to the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;
2. To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places;
3. To assure that new construction is compatible with existing buildings and their historic relationship to other buildings in the vicinity.

Governed by the Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40C and Town Bylaws, Title VII, the Arlington Historic District Commissions offer their protections by reviewing the architectural appropriateness of most proposed exterior design changes to properties within Local Historic Districts, except those changes specifically exempted from review including, in part, changes not subject to public view, paint color, repair using like materials, rebuilding of structures damaged by natural disaster, storm windows and doors, lighting fixtures, and window air conditioners. The membership of each Historic District Commission includes architects, real estate agents, representatives of The Arlington Historical Society, knowledgeable at-large Town residents, as well as residents or property owners of each of the Historic Districts.

Inclusion in the historic district of the grouping of historic structures that grace Oak Knoll is supported by interested property owners, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Arlington Redevelopment Board, the Arlington Board of Selectmen, and the Arlington Historical Commission, under whose jurisdiction most of Oak Knoll falls as part of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District. Such designation indicates historical importance but offers little real protection from incongruous changes and demolition of significant structures. The proposal to expand the Pleasant Street Historic District to include Oak Knoll brings to full circle the efforts that began over 30 years ago to promote the preservation of this exceptional group of architecturally significant properties and their historic streetscapes. This enlargement also closes the existing "hole" created within the Pleasant Street Historic District by the recent expansions of the District to include Pelham Terrace to the north and Academy Street to the west.

Methodology Statement

The current effort to enlarge the Pleasant Street Local Historic District to include Oak Knoll was motivated by the interest of neighborhood residents, some of whom were surprised to learn that the area was not already part of the District.

An informal meeting that included all resident property owners was held on Wednesday, October 26, 2005 at the home of Alyssa and William Clossey, 11 Oak Knoll. Stephen Makowka, chair of the Arlington Historic District Commissions, and Richard A. Duffy, co-chair of the Arlington Historical Commission, attended the meeting. Messrs. Makowka and Duffy led a discussion that focused on the rights and responsibilities of property owners as part of a Local Historic District (LHD), versus those currently in effect for properties listed on Arlington's *Inventory of Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Properties*. The differences between the neighborhood's status as part of a National Register Historic District and that of properties within the boundaries of a LHD were reviewed. Lastly, the rationale was outlined for including Oak Knoll as an enlargement of the Pleasant Street LHD. The processes for the relatively recent enlargements of the Pleasant Street LHD including Pelham Terrace (2002-2003) and Academy/Maple Streets (2004-2005) served as concrete examples of what would be required to undertake a similar effort for Oak Knoll.

Based upon favorable consensus of the informal neighborhood meeting, the Arlington Historic District Commissions (AHDC) were requested to establish a Local Historic District Study Committee (LHDSC), which was done by vote of the AHDC at its meeting on October 27, 2005. The Arlington Historical Commission endorsed the overall proposal at its meeting of November 1, 2005.

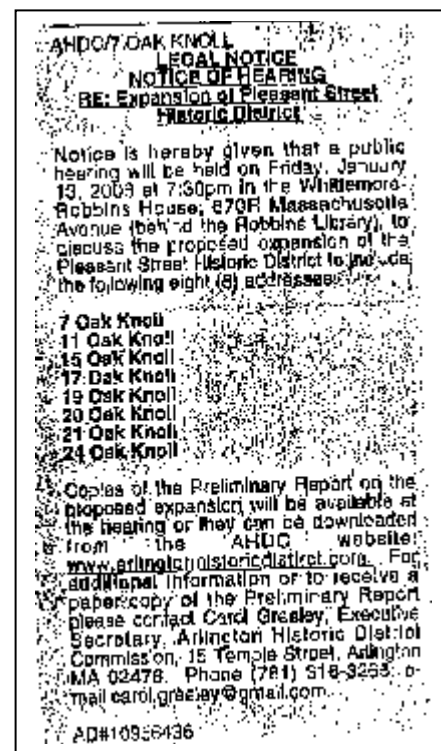
Management of the production of the Preliminary Study Report was undertaken by property owner Alyssa Krinsky Clossey (11 Oak Knoll). It was determined that, due to funding and timing restrictions, a grassroots effort of many neighbors would be needed to produce all of the required materials. Two major obstacles were present: (1) most properties were lacking inventory forms (MHC Form B), largely because almost all of the proposed LHD enlargement area had been included on Arlington's *Inventory of Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Properties* due to National Register Historic District status; and (2) there were many errors, omissions and other problems with the quality of the research in the Inventory forms, which had been completed 25 years earlier. Simple transcription of the Inventory forms would not be acceptable.

Several neighbors took up a variety of research tasks, with resident-owners submitting basic architectural descriptions of one or more properties, along with what was known or assumed about their histories. Neighbors contributing to this effort included Betsy and James Bailey of 7 Oak Knoll, Alyssa and Will Clossey of 11 Oak Knoll, Jan and Cliff Lo of 15 Oak Knoll, Miriam and Will Stein of 17 Oak Knoll, Julie and Jim Zigo of 19 Oak Knoll, and Stephanie and Jeff Larason of 20 Oak Knoll. Photography was done by Alyssa Krinsky Clossey of 11 Oak Knoll. These draft versions of architectural descriptions were reviewed, corrected and amplified by AHDC commissioner Beth Cohen and Danielle Santos, both registered architects. Mr. Duffy performed the same work on the historical descriptions; he also researched and wrote the history of Oak

Knoll for the Significance Statement, as well as the Methodology Statement and Justification of Boundaries.

At a special meeting on November 10, 2005, the AHDC formally accepted the draft of the Preliminary Study Report and voted that it be transmitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) and to the Arlington Redevelopment Board (acting as the Town's planning board).¹ The Preliminary Study Report was delivered to the MHC and the ARB on Monday November 14, 2005 for their review. On December 14, 2005, the MHC voted to provide the recommendation that the Town of Arlington "expand the Pleasant Street Historic District in order to protect this historically significant area." A copy of the Preliminary Report and a letter dated November 30, 2005 was delivered by hand to resident property owners, or sent via first-class mail to the non-resident owners of record at the addresses on file at the Town of Arlington Assessor's Office. This letter provided background about developments to date, explained the process of enlarging an Historic District, provided contact information for any questions, and noted that a public hearing would be held by the AHDC on January 13, 2006 to gather feedback from the public.

In conformance with the law, AHDC held a properly noticed public hearing on or after January 13, 2006, more than sixty (60) days from the date of transmittal. This meeting was attended by seven residents of the proposed enlargement area representing five of the eight included properties. Several of those in attendance spoke in favor of the proposed enlargement, with one resident noting that the efforts to include Oak Knoll in the Pleasant Street Historic District had brought the neighborhood together and strengthened them as a community. AHDC Chair Stephen Makowka asked for a straw poll from all visitors in attendance and all voted in support. There were no residents in opposition to the expansion. Based on this favorable feedback, the Arlington Historic District Commissions, acting jointly as the study committee, voted unanimously to approve placing the proposed enlargement of the Pleasant Street Historic District to include the Oak Knoll area described herein on the 2006 Annual Town Meeting Warrant with a recommendation for approval of said Warrant Article. The plan of the proposed District which appears on page 21 was prepared in the Office of the Arlington Town Engineer, and the Commissions are grateful for their assistance in this endeavor.



¹ The Arlington Redevelopment Board met on October 25, 2004 and voted unanimously to endorse the proposed enlargement of the Pleasant Street LHD to include Academy and Maple Streets. At this meeting, a review of the enlargement boundaries led the Board to observe that Oak Knoll had emerged as an enclave that was not included in the proposal area. The Board encouraged consideration of including Oak Knoll in any future initiative to enlarge the Pleasant Street LHD. Not surprisingly, at its meeting on April 3, 2006, the Board endorsed the addition of Oak Knoll to the Pleasant Street Historic District.

Letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

December 16, 2005

Mr. Stephen Makowka, Chairperson
Arlington Historic District Commission
17 Russell Street
Arlington, MA 02474

RE: Pleasant Street Historic District-Oak Knoll Expansion

Dear Mr. Makowka:

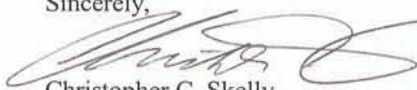
I am pleased to inform you that the Massachusetts Historical Commission voted on December 14, 2005 to acknowledge receipt of the Preliminary Study Report for the expansion of the Pleasant Street Historic District and provide the following advisory recommendations and comments:

- The Massachusetts Historical Commission encourages the town of Arlington to expand the Pleasant Street Historic District in order to protect this historically significant area.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission commends the town of Arlington for recognizing the need for a local historic district. Today, there are over 200 local historic districts in Massachusetts. Local Historic Districts are the most effective method of preservation available and are an essential component to local preservation efforts.

I wish you the best of luck in establishing the local historic district. If you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Christopher C. Skelly
Director of Local Government Programs

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

Significance Statement

ENLARGEMENT OF THE PLEASANT STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT TO INCLUDE OAK KNOLL

**Richard A. Duffy
Co-Chairman, Arlington Historical Commission
November 12, 2005**

Introduction

The recent addition of Academy and Maple Streets to the Pleasant Street Local Historic District (LHD) led local preservationists to recognize that Oak Knoll was an area that is architecturally and historically integral to the District, yet which had been omitted almost by sheer oversight. The roots of this omission are easy to see when certain facts are considered. Oak Knoll is a cul-de-sac off Pleasant Street, which is a busy main road. Moreover, it not only dead-ends at Academy Street—the abutting properties of each street stand upon substantially different topographical grades. Links to the Pleasant Street LHD are therefore camouflaged at first glance, but soon become evident.

Almost all of the Oak Knoll properties fall within the boundaries of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District. As such, they have been included on the Town of Arlington's Inventory of Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Properties, and have been under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission for decades.

Similar to Academy and Maple Streets, Oak Knoll was to have been included in Arlington's very first proposal to establish a Local Historic District. The 1972 effort to create the "Menotomy Historic District" was ahead of its time; therefore, it would be over 16 years before many of the properties identified in that proposal would receive the protection afforded by the establishment of the original boundaries of the Pleasant Street LHD.

Historical and Architectural Significance

The properties bearing Oak Knoll addresses roughly represent the "Pleasant Street front" of a mid-19th century estate whose land holdings eventually extended back to Academy Street. The original Burrage-Hoitt mansion-house of this grand estate is still standing, albeit moved almost a century ago to a new foundation at 21 Oak Knoll.

In 1849, Joseph Burrage, a successful wholesale merchant of boots and shoes whose business was located on Pearl Street in Boston, first appears on the tax rolls of the Town of West Cambridge (re-named Arlington in 1867). Georgiana Gray Homer's unpublished lecture notes from 1911 on the history of Pleasant Street are of interest, as she lived from childhood until her death only two estates away from Oak Knoll, and she was personally acquainted with Burrage. Madam Homer describes Burrage as having purchased the premises that encompasses his "Pleasant Street Parcel" of Oak Knoll from Francis L. Raymond, who had acquired the property and constructed a house there, circa 1846. Burrage purchased the property by 1849. Madam Homer states that

Burrage immediately removed the Raymond house following his purchase of it “in 1850” (*sic*) in order to build his mansion. Recent analysis of the property and personal tax records of the Town of West Cambridge suggests a different history. Adjusted for changes in the tax rate, the doubling of his valuation from 1853 to 1854 makes it most likely that Burrage occupied the Raymond house for about five years, before building his high-style Italianate home. The Burrage-Hoitt House that now stands at 21 Oak Knoll is thus logically assigned a construction date of circa 1854.

In 1862, Burrage purchased from Sarah Adams Potter (wife of Joseph S. Potter of “Potter’s Grove” fame, and his abutting neighbor to the south and west), a parcel to the rear of his property that extended to newly laid out Academy Street. This “Academy Street Parcel” of the Burrage estate is described by Amy J. Winn (ref. unpublished Arlington Historical Society lecture notes on Academy Street, 1930) as featuring a grove of oak trees, and that Burrage laid out extensive terraced gardens up to the Academy Street level. These oaks and topography clearly suggest the origins of the name of the present-day street called Oak Knoll.

The purchase of the rear section of the Burrage estate does not appear to have had a significant impact on his property tax valuation. It is possible that, due to the steep downward slope of the land from Academy Street, the property was considered to be unsuitable for building purposes and not an important addition for tax purposes.

In 1873, Joseph Burrage moved to Vermont and sold his estate to Alfred D. Hoitt of Charlestown. The selling price was \$2,500. Hoitt had become wealthy in the hay and grain business, prior to moving to Arlington and undertaking public-service roles as a second career. He was best remembered as Arlington’s postmaster for many years, responsible for managing the introduction of free home delivery of mail in 1897, and for refusing his postmaster’s salary in favor of improving the pay and conditions of Post Office employees.

Around 1880, Hoitt constructed the single-family house at today’s number 38 Academy Street. This took economic advantage of the fact that the rear lot fronted on an accepted town way, and followed the same practice of others of his Pleasant Street neighbors.

In May 1892, the *Arlington Advocate* newspaper noted Hoitt’s acquisition of the Daniel Prentiss Green estate, which abutted his property at today’s 119 Pleasant Street. Hoitt subsequently sold the Green estate to Waterman Taft by December of that same year.

Following Hoitt’s unexpected death in 1909, the sale of his property was announced. It was acquired in 1911 by John C. Hood of Winchester. The deed was transferred from Hoitt’s surviving son and two daughters for the sum of one dollar and “other valuable consideration,” the latter being a \$7,000 mortgage granted by the sellers.

Hood immediately subdivided his property by laying out a street called Oak Knoll along the southerly property line and establishing building lots on the northerly side of it. Oak Knoll was originally a private way 40 feet wide and 359 feet in length, legally approved

as such by the Board of Survey in 1919, and it was accepted by the Town as a public way in 1929.²

Hood was 57 years old at the time of his purchase and he devoted the next dozen years to the construction of new houses on Oak Knoll, which he built on speculation for prompt sale. He paid-off the mortgage to the heirs of Alfred D. Hoitt within three years.

In the case of the “Academy Street” parcel, Hood retained ownership of today’s number 17 and 21 Oak Knoll and used these as rental units until 1920. Around this time, title to the remaining Hood-owned properties began to be held in common with his wife, Lusema J. Hood, and eventually transferred to her name alone. By 1925 the Hoods had sold all of the properties in his subdivision with the exception of their own home at 111 Pleasant Street. John C. Hood’s occupation in 1919 is listed in town records as “retired,” and no occupation is ever given for him in published Arlington directory listings.

The most striking change made by Hood’s redevelopment of the former estate is the removal of the Burrage-Hoitt mansion from its original foundation at 111 Pleasant Street in 1912 to its present site at 21 Oak Knoll. Hood thus repeated the act of Joseph Burrage in 1854 by moving a house in order to build and occupy a home of a style and size that was better suited to the taste and conveniences of the era. On the foundation of the Burrage mansion, Hood constructed the half-timbered Tudor-style home that became his personal residence. This home is a “gateway” property to the proposed enlargement area and is already included in the Pleasant Street LHD. Hood converted the Burrage-Hoitt stable or barn to residential use as today’s 17 Oak Knoll.

Oak Knoll was subdivided with building restrictions imposed by Hood, which were necessary in the era before Arlington enacted zoning bylaws. On Burrage’s old “Pleasant Street Parcel” it was specified that no building may stand closer to Pleasant Street than 80 feet, and that the setbacks on the Oak Knoll frontage be a minimum of 25 feet. The emergence of the subdivision was part of a continuum of development in the immediate vicinity that arose from the breakup of the large estates that lined Pleasant Street in the 19th century. These subdivisions include Pelham Terrace (in the mid-1870s, on the site of the “Potter’s Grove” gardens), the George Harrison Gray estate (1880s and 1890s), the Addison Gage estate (1890s), and the Francis Peabody estate (1910s). Monadnock Road emerged after the development of Oak Knoll, by subdividing the John Schouler estate in the 1930s.

In addition to carving out single-family lots from the “Pleasant Street Parcel” of Oak Knoll, John Hood also subdivided the “Academy Street Parcel” by constructing a two-family home at 36 Academy Street in 1920. The last structure in the Hood subdivision

² Of note, the numbering of most of the houses with Oak Knoll addresses did not follow their present system until 1932. Oak Knoll, having originated as a single-sided street, did not adopt an odd-even numbering convention. Instead, sequential house numbers were assigned to the dwellings. The 1912 J.C. Hood Plan of Lots nearest to Pleasant Street includes lots 1 through 4, and the 1920 Plan designates subdivision of lots numbered 5 through 9. Arlington tax assessor’s records refer to lots under an A-B-C-D system. This makes especially confusing the process of cross-referencing data about the properties, and special care is needed to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions based on the fluctuating usage of addresses and locations in various reference works.

was the brick cottage-like home at 19 Oak Knoll, built in 1922 and nestled between Hood's Oak Knoll and Academy Street properties. This configuration reflects the zoning ease with which Hood could maximize building density through his sole ownership of large parcels. Of note, the Pleasant Street Parcel was a decidedly upper-middle class, single-family development, whereas the rear portion of Oak Knoll was intended for middle-class single- or multi-family housing.

The Hoods departed Arlington in 1932. Only two changes of note have been made since that time, both on the southern side of the Oak Knoll streetscape. First was the mid-1930s conversion of the Taft estate carriage house (built circa 1874, moved with major alterations circa 1893) into four small apartments at 24 Oak Knoll. It was ideally positioned to adopt an Oak Knoll address and public-way access when it went from being a garage to a dwelling. The other change came two decades later, when the brick ranch-style home at number 20 was erected.

Conclusion

The architectural and historical significance of the proposed Oak Knoll enlargement area is derived in large part from the preservation of three 19th-century structures from the heyday of Arlington's Pleasant Street estates. In addition, the houses from the first quarter of the 20th century contribute to the significance of the district because they are fine examples of their kind in good states of preservation. Their historical link to the developer who was also a resident of the Oak Knoll neighborhood is an important one. Lastly, even the lone infill property at 20 Oak Knoll is itself over 50 years old and possessed strong historical connection to 21 Oak Knoll from the outset, as having been built by a common owner of exceptionally long residence, the Tortorici family.

The proposed Oak Knoll enlargement area is truly a "missing link" in the cohesiveness of the Pleasant Street Historic District. In the more than three decades since Oak Knoll was first proposed as part of a Massachusetts Chapter 40C local historic district, awareness of its significance has greatly increased. With one minor exception, all of the properties are currently under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission, because they fall within the boundaries of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District. Now perhaps more than ever, this proposal to enlarge the Pleasant Street LHD offers the appropriate means to further protect and preserve one of Arlington's key historical resource areas.

Justification of Boundaries

The boundaries of the proposed enlargement area of the Pleasant Street Local Historic District, with the exception of 20 Oak Knoll, already fall within those of the Arlington Center National Register Historic District. The proposed boundary lines of the LHD encompass the entirety of properties with Oak Knoll frontage and/or street addresses.

In addition, the enlargement area includes a small portion of the rear yard of 119 Pleasant Street which appears to have been unintentionally bisected when the original boundary line for the 1988 Pleasant Street LHD was drawn. This portion of the lot has an Oak Knoll frontage and includes a planted area and a parking area for the structure at 119 Pleasant Street. The inclusion of this parcel has the effect of correcting a technical omission and fully incorporates all contiguous parcels surrounded by the original 1988 Pleasant Street LHD and the subsequent 2002 and 2005 enlargements.

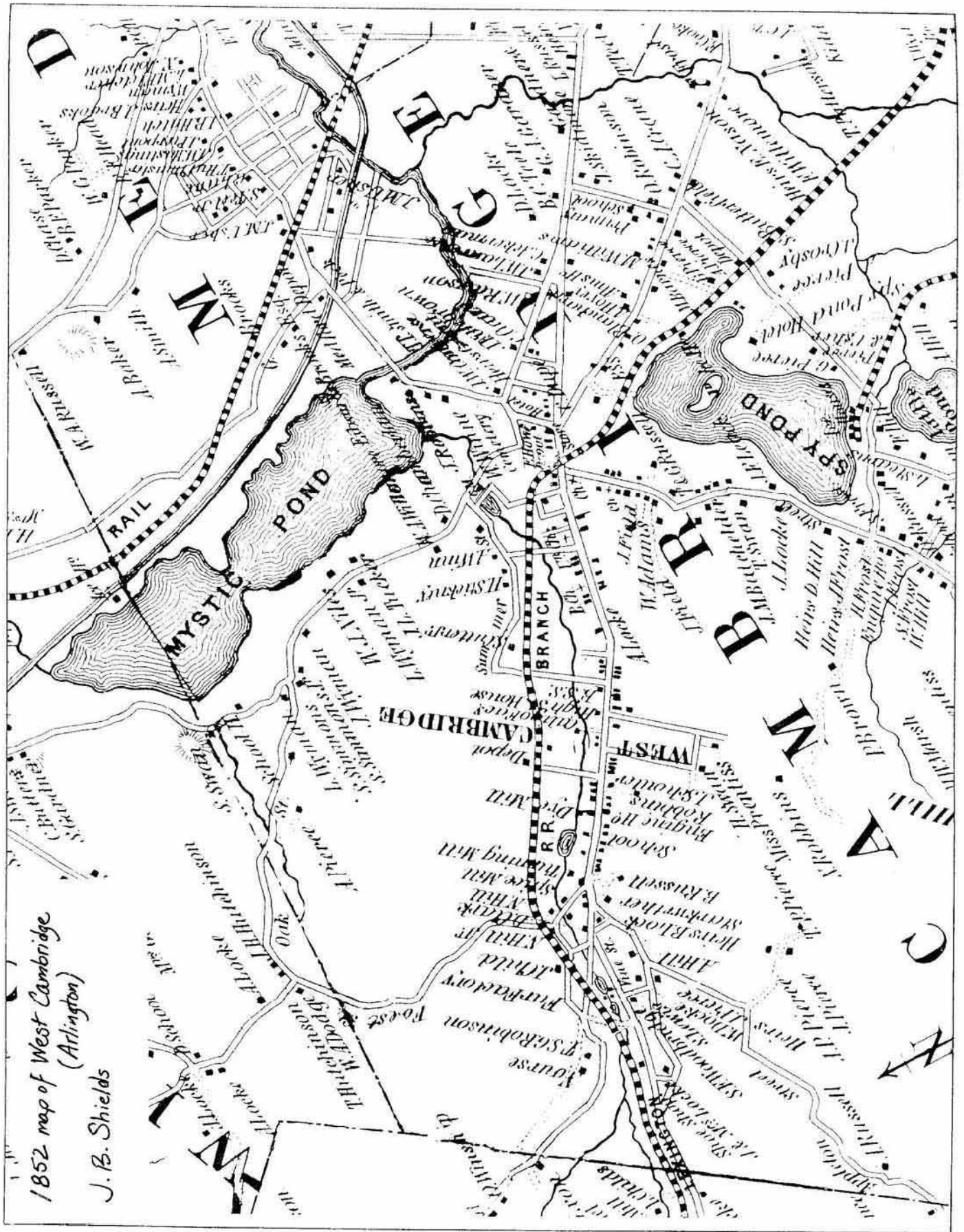
The Arlington Center National Register Historic District boundaries cover a large territory that includes other Local Historic Districts.

The proposed enlargement area is entirely bounded on the north, south, east and west by the Pleasant Street Local Historic District.

The boundaries were selected to promote the preservation of the complete streetscape of Oak Knoll. The proposed enlargement area is a fully contiguous one. Moreover, from a historical perspective, the boundaries correspond to the remaining portion of the 19th-century Burrage-Hoitt estate that is not already within the Pleasant Street Local Historic District.

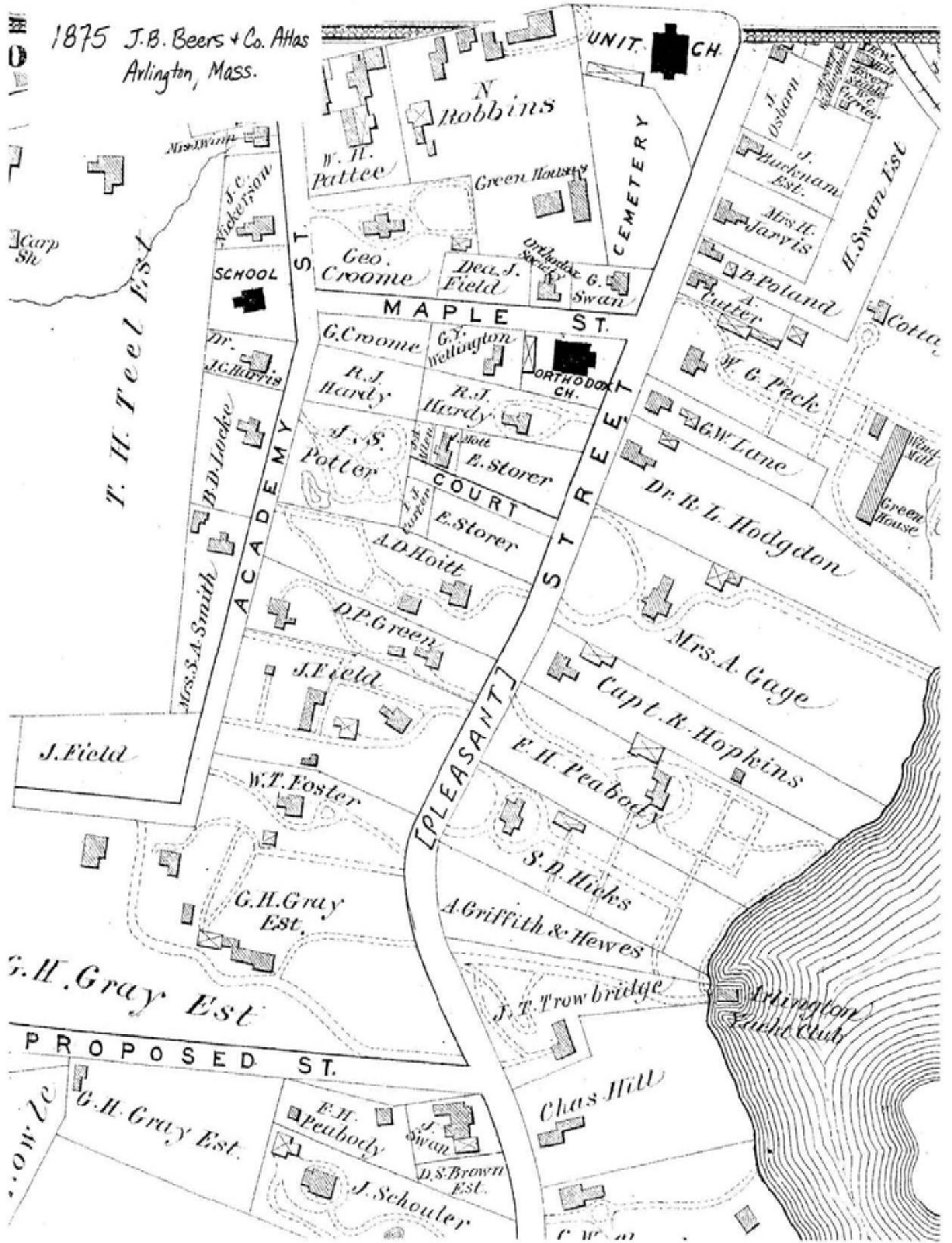
The boundaries were discussed at neighborhood meetings. They are inherently logical based on geographic, historical and contextual criteria.

Historical Maps



1852 map of West Cambridge
 (Arlington)
 J. B. Shields

1875 J.B. Beers + Co. Atlas
Arlington, Mass.

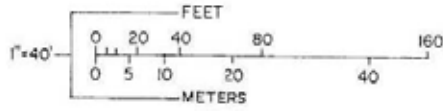


From: Atlas of Middlesex County
 Geo. W. Stady & Co. 1900
 ARLINGTON (detail) p. 19

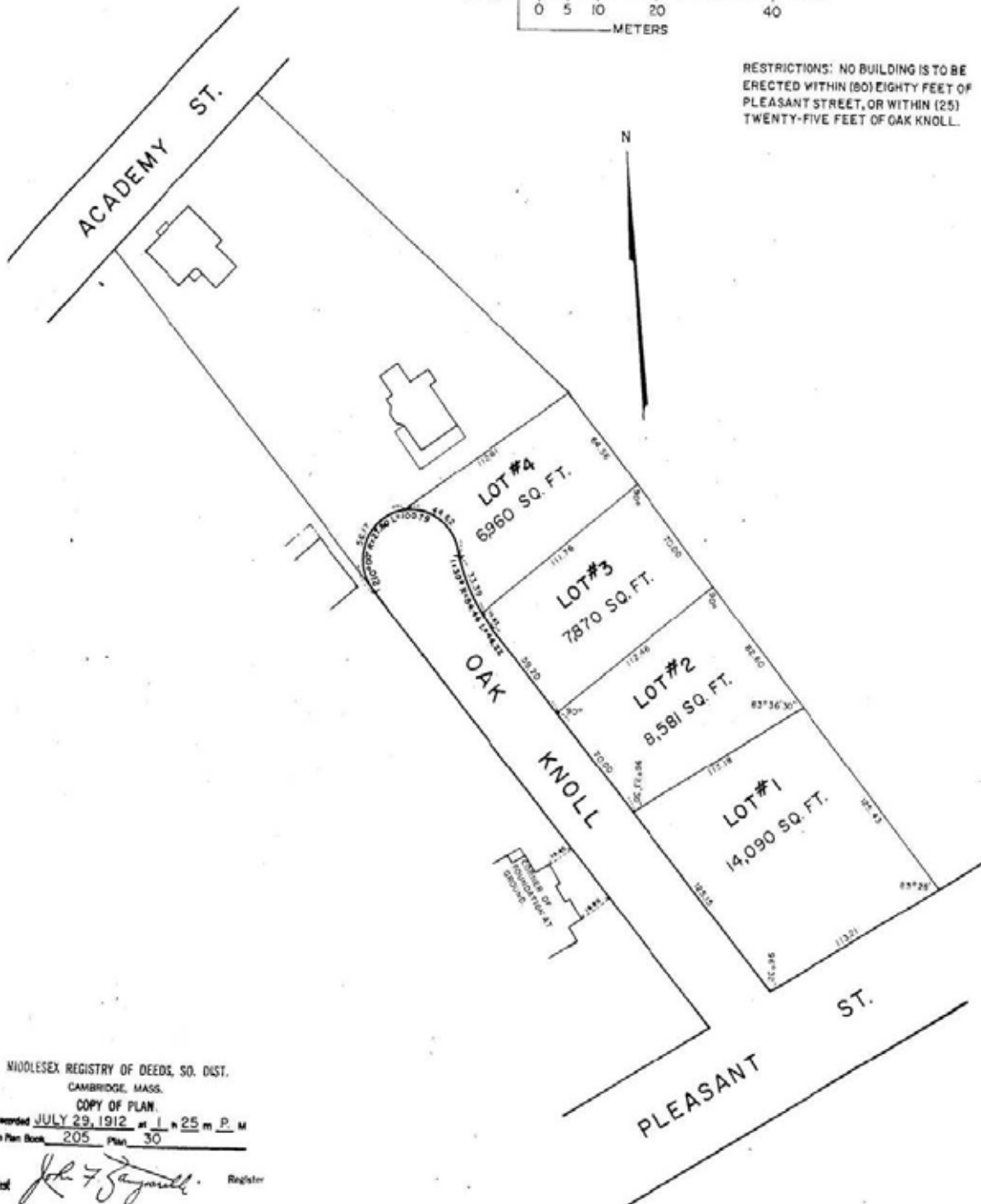


PLAN OF LOTS
 IN
ARLINGTON, MASS.
 OWNED BY
J. C. HOOD
 SCALE 1 INCH = 40 FEET. JULY 15, 1912

(ORIGINAL ON FILE)



RESTRICTIONS: NO BUILDING IS TO BE
 ERECTED WITHIN (80) EIGHTY FEET OF
 PLEASANT STREET, OR WITHIN (25)
 TWENTY-FIVE FEET OF OAK KNOLL.



MIDDLESEX REGISTRY OF DEEDS, SO. DIST.
 CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
 COPY OF PLAN
 recorded JULY 23, 1912, at 1 25 m P. M.
 Plan Book 205 Plan 30

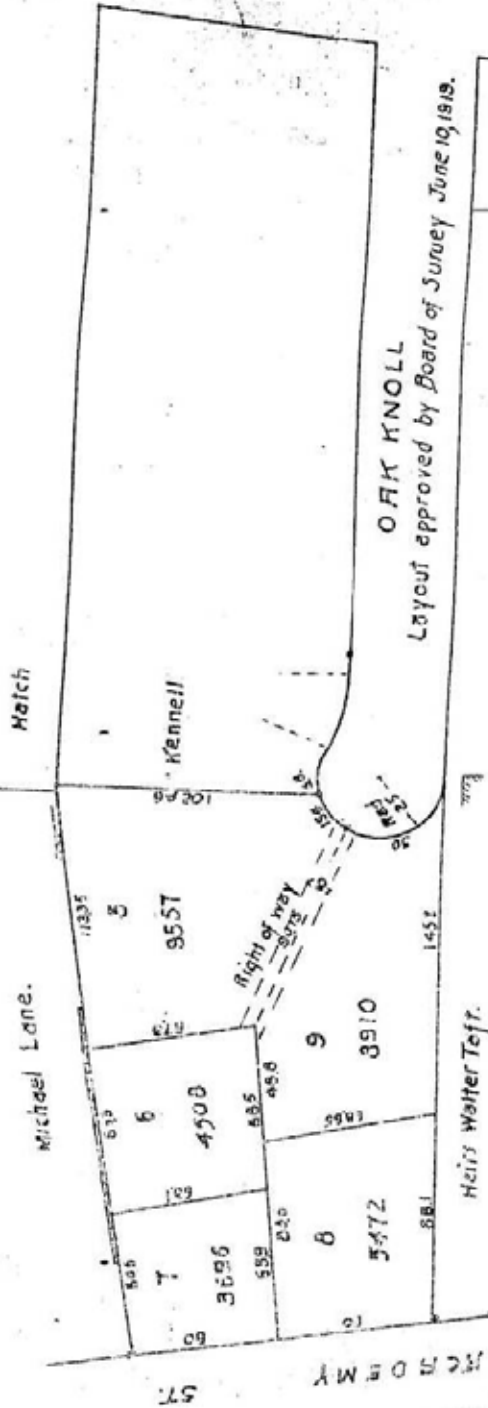
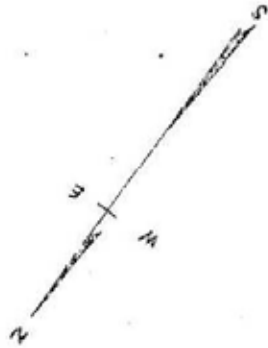
John F. Fitzgerald Register

PLAN BOOK 205 PLAN 30

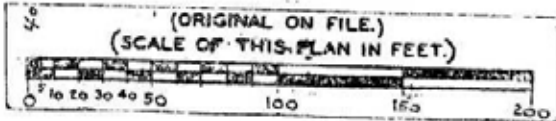
36

Land of
JOHN C. HOOD.
at
ARLINGTON.

Scale = 40. May 1, 1920.
F.R. CUTLER, C.E.
Lexington.

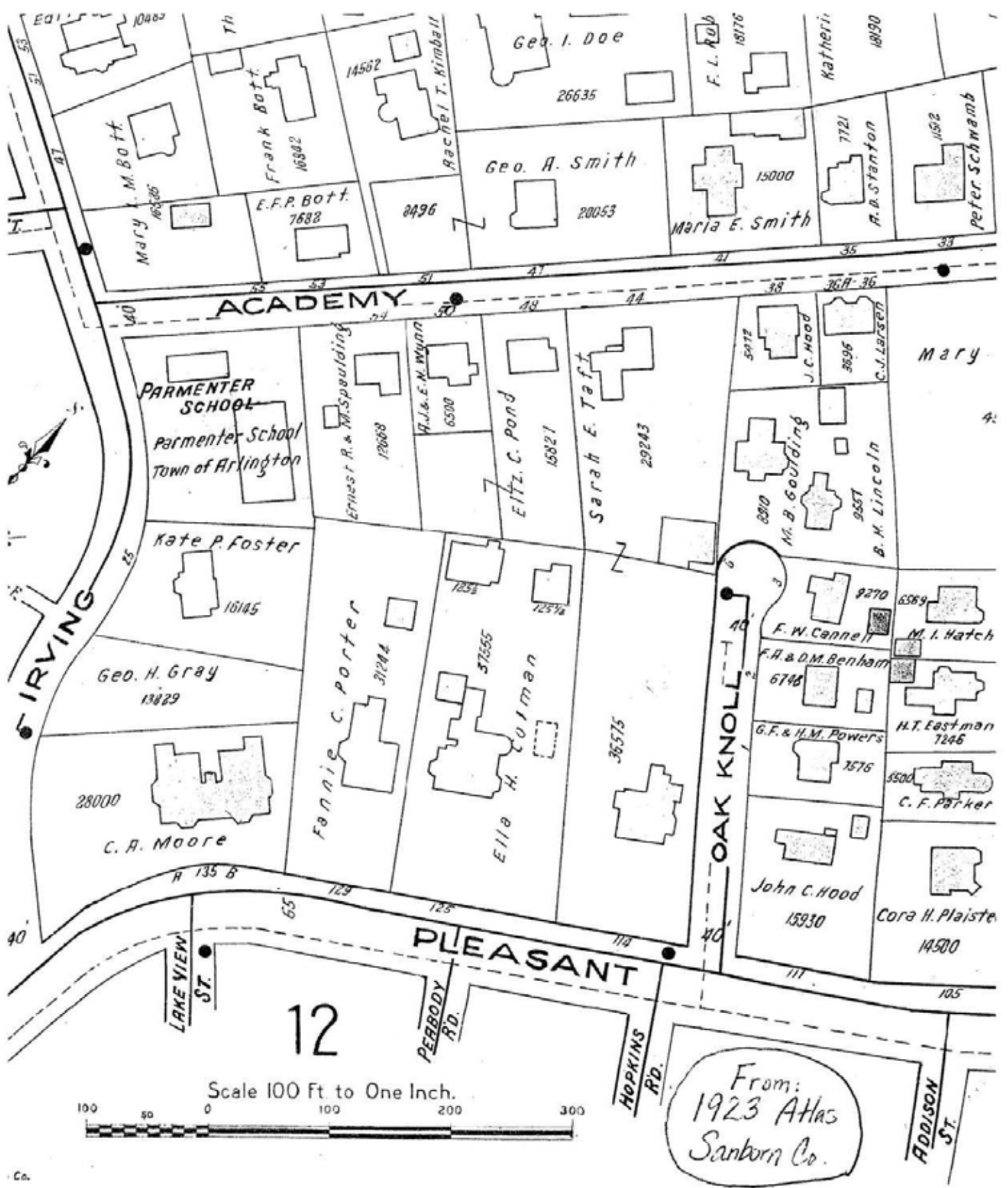


ORFK KNOLL
Layout approved by Board of Survey June 19, 1919.



MIDDLESEX REGISTRY OF DEEDS, SO. DIST.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
COPY OF PLAN
Recorded JUL. 23, 1921 at 10 h 27 m A.M.
In File Book 227 File 36

Attest *Edmond R. Bailey* Register

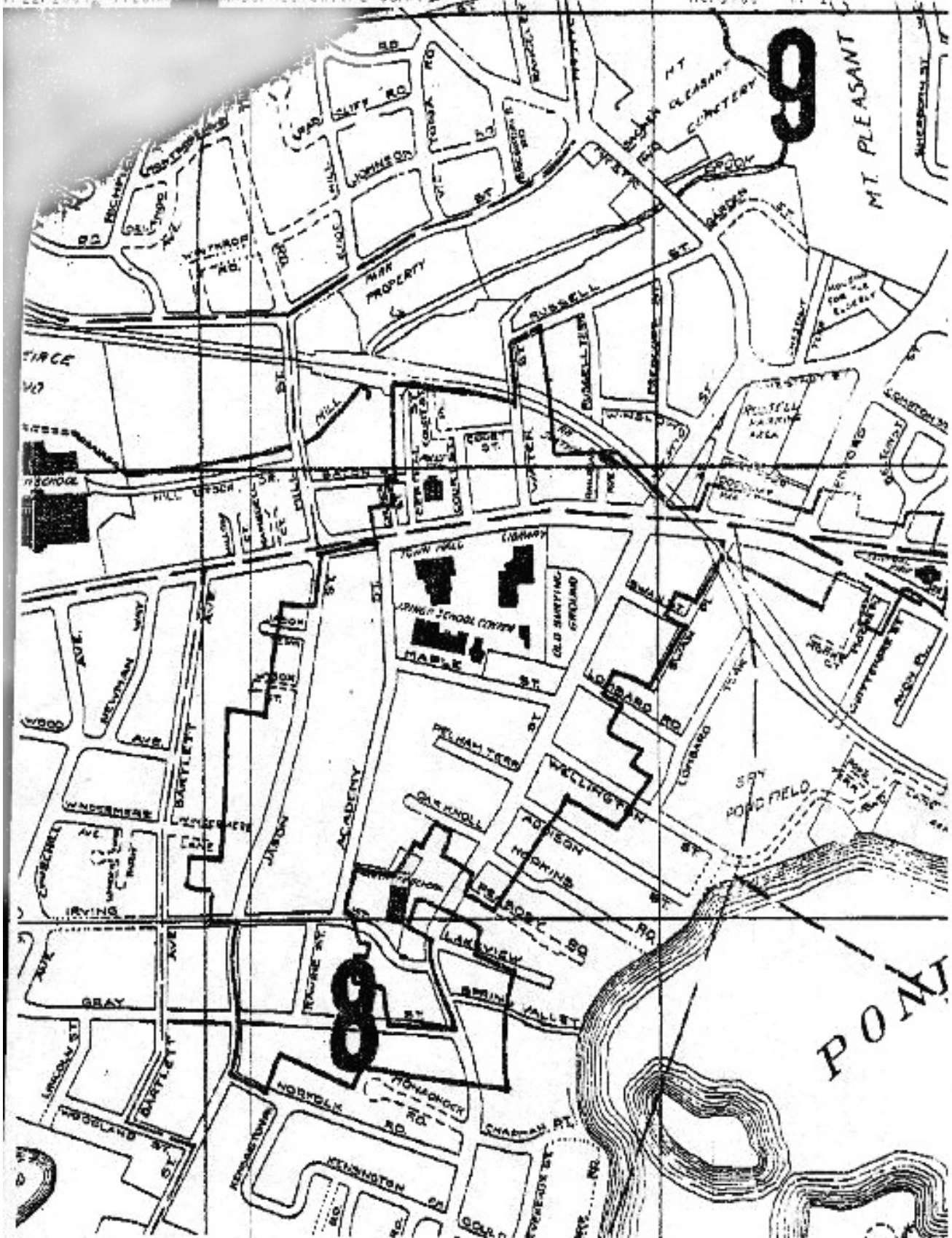


National Register District Map

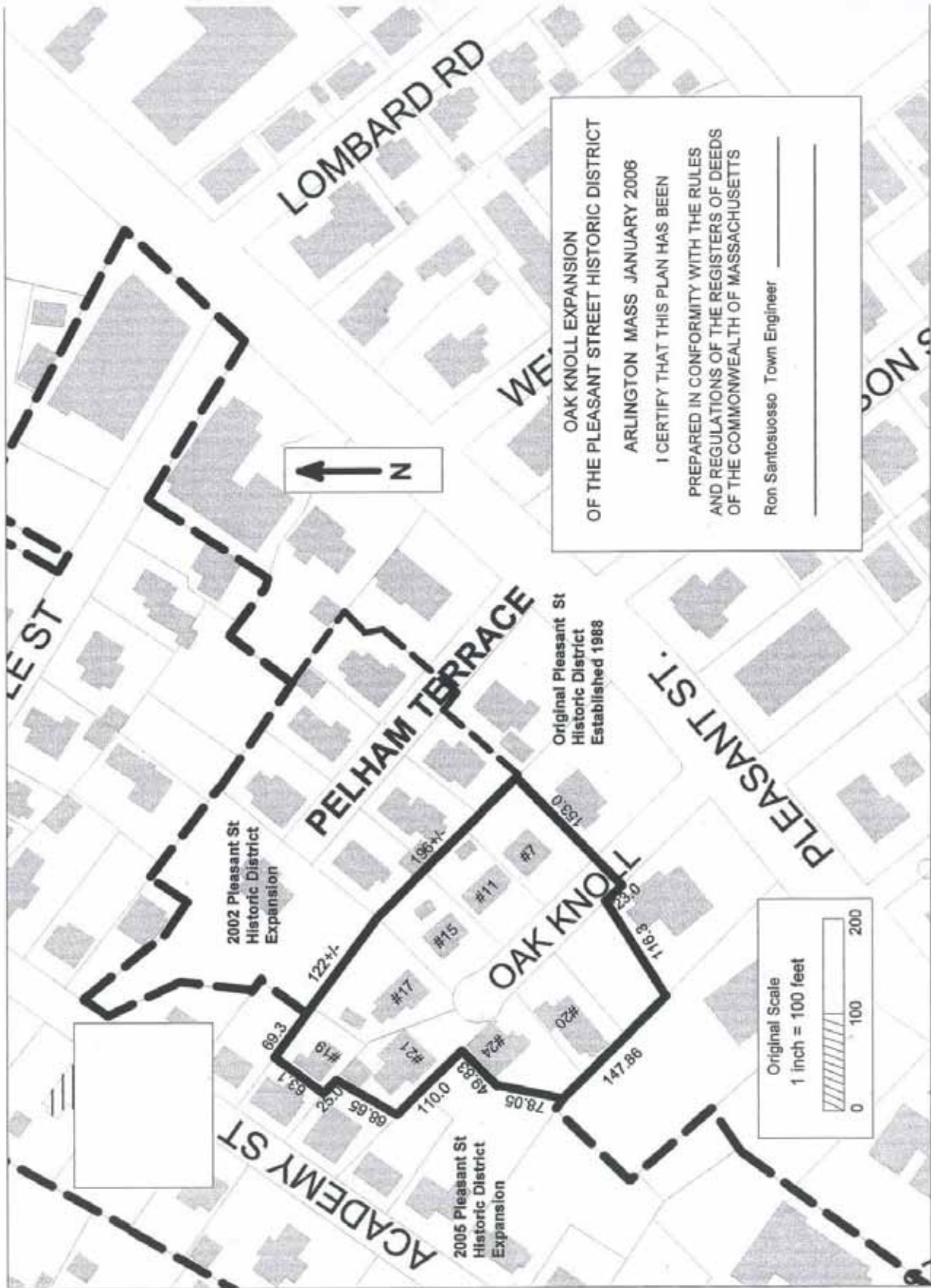
T. 22, 2004, 9:26AM

MASS. HISTORICAL COMM.

NO. 5760 P. 2



Map of Proposed District



Property Index

Street Address	Inventory Form Number	Construction and Moved Dates	Historic Name	Architectural Style
7 Oak Knoll (formerly #1; lot 2)*	n/a	1916		Foursquare/ Colonial Revival
11 Oak Knoll (former #2; lot 3)*	n/a	1915		Colonial Revival
15 Oak Knoll (former #3; lot 4)*	n/a	1913		Craftsman Colonial Revival
17 Oak Knoll (former #4; lot 5)**	n/a	Circa 1855 Moved & converted to residence (w/ additions) 1911 - 1912	Burrage-Hoitt Barn	Italianate, with Colonial Revival alterations
19 Oak Knoll (former 4A or 17A; lot 6)**	n/a	1922		Colonial Revival
20 Oak Knoll	n/a	1952	Rose Tortorici House	Ranch
21 Oak Knoll (former #5 & 6; lot 9)**	MHC 333	Circa 1854 Moved 1912	Burrage-Hoitt House	Italianate
24 Oak Knoll	n/a	Built 1874 Moved 1893	Green-Taft Carriage House	Second Empire

Notes:

Oak Knoll street-numbering mostly changed to present system in 1932.

* Lot designation in 1912 plot plan (Book 205, Page 30)

** Lot designation in 1920 plot plan (Book 297, Page 36)

Lot 7 is 36 Academy St. Lot 8 is 38 Academy St.

Town tax assessor's records sometimes reference lots by alphabet letter.

**Architectural and Historical Descriptions and
Photographs of the Properties**



7 Oak Knoll

Situated on the north side of the street, this dignified clapboard house follows the American Foursquare layout, with its shallow-pitched hip roof and dormers. The gently flared wide eave overhang, supported by exposed decorative rafter-tails, shows the influence of the Prairie and Bungalow styles, uncommon in Arlington.

The original oak center-entrance door, with nine unequal sized beveled glass lights, is flanked by a partial-width porch to the right side and a square window bay on the left. The majority of the fenestration is 6/1 double hung windows, but there is a set of three smaller grouped windows centered over the simple porch pediment. The house features original window shutters. A detached garage to the right of the home was probably added in the 1950's.

Originally bearing the address number 1 Oak Knoll, construction of the house began in 1916 by John C. Hood on lot #2 of his 1912 subdivision plan. Hood's name is handwritten on the underside of the fireplace mantel board. The house was purchased in 1917 by George and Helen Powers, who were granted a mortgage from Hood. George Powers was listed in the 1920's as an office manager, and became a bank examiner by 1934. The house remained in the Powers family until 1974 when it was purchased by its present owners. A large body of routine financial records of the Powers family still exists.



11 Oak Knoll

This is an unusual variation of early 20th century Colonial Revival design built in 1915. The overall massing is that of a gambrel roofed structure, which is punctuated by a shed roof covering the second story continuation of the central portion of the front façade. Prominent features include a small open pedimented front entry porch with a sunburst design in the pediment. The original two-panel front door features eight lights flanked by two twelve-paned sidelights. The majority of the windows are 6/1 double hung wood construction. The house has clapboard walls and a fieldstone foundation. It has a screened wood porch with free classical columns. The house is situated high above a stone retaining wall adjacent to that of 15 Oak Knoll. A detached 1915 clapboard garage with a gabled asphalt shingle roof is located to the rear of the property.

In October 1, 1915, John C. Hood and Lusema J. Hood sold 11 Oak Knoll (then number 2 Oak Knoll; lot #3 in the 1912 plot plan) to Daisy M. Benham and her husband Frank A. Benham who owned the home for 44 years. Mr. Benham was a civil engineer. Other owners of the home included George E. Vanderpool and Helen J. Vanderpool, Inez C. Long and Earle C. Parks, Neil J. and Mary E. Sullivan and pediatrician Thomas B. Brazelton, III and Marybeth Brazelton. Dr. Brazelton is the son of T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., one of the most famous pediatricians in the United States.



15 Oak Knoll

This L shaped, gable roofed stucco covered house is of Colonial Revival design in a somewhat subdued "Craftsman Colonial" style that was the latest fashion for homes in Arlington when it was built. It is situated above the street on a sloping property. This two and half story, single-family house features a simple wrap around porch with Tuscan influenced columns and a single story kitchen addition situated on the rear. All windows are original to the house except for 3 in the kitchen addition. The living room and dining room windows are of a decorative style, showing 1/2, 2 full, and 1/2 vertical hexagon shapes above a single light. A street facing rectangular picture window is to the left of the west door. The remaining fenestration is 6/6 double hung wood windows. The house has a fieldstone foundation. It is not known if the kitchen addition is an enclosed porch, or a converted pantry, however, it appears to have had an integral part of the original interior floor plan. Behind the house sits a square, one car garage built into the grade of the property. The garage is made of concrete blocks, has a hip roof, two 6/1 windows and a large single paneled wooden door.

The house was built on lot #4 of the 1912 J.C. Hood subdivision plan in 1913. It originally had the street address of 3 Oak Knoll. Its first owners were Florence W. and Winburn S. Cannell, a teacher.



17 Oak Knoll

Not much remains of the barn and its presumed Italianate features. A narrower two-story extension was added when the house was moved and underwent Colonial Revival alterations. There is a bay window on the first floor, left side, and a wrap-around open porch with a simple wood railing. Windows are generally 6/1 double hung replacements of relatively recent date. There is a small one-story enclosed porch, with 4/1 window and door on the north side facing the back yard. The materials include a fieldstone foundation, wood shingle (or cedar “shakes”) siding, and an asphalt shingle roof. The wood molding that follows the gable roof line, front and back, includes scroll-sawn pairs of brackets, echoing the brackets on the neighboring Burrage-Hoitt House, which has similar shaped brackets that are more ornate and numerous. The house is situated on the cul-de-sac of Oak Knoll and is situated gable end to street. The detached wood, narrow clapboard one-car garage of No. 17 built between 1923 and 1926 is situated perpendicular to the house.

Number 17 Oak Knoll was originally the barn and carriage house of the Burrage estate. After its conversion to residential use around 1912, it was originally number 4 Oak Knoll and located on lot #5 of the 1920 Hood subdivision plan. It was owned for a decade by Oak Knoll developer John C. Hood and was used as a rental property. The first resident during this rental period appears to be Kervin R. Dunton in 1912, a furniture manufacturer who had his shop on Arch Street in Boston. The house was sold in 1920 to Mary I. Swift, who sold it in 1921 or 1922 to Bertha H. Lincoln. Mary Swift's husband was Bradford E. Swift, the principal of the junior high school in Arlington; Bertha Lincoln's husband was Edward A. Lincoln, a professor at Harvard University.

Other owners of note include Norman Belden, partner in the Belden & Snow men's clothing stores in Arlington Center and Davis Square; Elaine and Frank Hassler, she a teacher of Home Economics at Arlington High School and he employed first by Mitre Corporation in Bedford, MA, and later in the U.S. Dept. of Transportation's Volpe Transportation Systems Center at Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA. After living in the house, the Hasslers rented it for a number of years to a group who made it the Boston Zendo, following the Zen master Philip Kapleau of Rochester, NY.



19 Oak Knoll

This is a two-story single-family gambrel brick house, with gable end to street and a right side entrance door. There is a small shed roofed dormer on each side. The house sits on a stone and concrete foundation. A flat-roof porch extends across the front. The front entry wooden door is two-paneled with four-over-four glass lights. The fenestration is 6/6 double hung. The house presents a charming, cottage-like appearance from Oak Knoll. A single story clapboard addition and small, uncovered deck on the north side of the house were added in 1985.

Number 19 Oak Knoll was the last house to be built in the J.C. Hood subdivision. It is nestled on a 4,508 square-foot lot without street frontage. Access is by right of way via shared driveway. It is the most visible evidence of Hood's design to develop the "Academy Street Parcel" of the former Burrage-Hoitt estate with greater density than he envisioned for the "Pleasant Street Parcel." The house was built in 1922 and was originally numbered 4a Oak Knoll when 17 Oak Knoll was number 4. It was purchased by the owner of number 17 (formerly number 4) and used for many years as a rental property and under the same ownership at number 4. Its early tenants included in 1925 T. Fuse, a Japanese importer. In 1928, Mrs. L. C. Pray, whose occupation is listed in directories as "saleslady" in Boston, and Mrs. Pray's daughter.



20 Oak Knoll

This is a brick-faced, single-story ranch style gable roof house which features an attached single car garage. The typical ranch style fenestration includes a large picture window with flanking side windows with diamond-patterned leaded glass panels.

20 Oak Knoll was built in 1952 by Rose and Frank Tortorici who had lived and reared their family one house away in the second-floor apartment in the house they had owned at 21 Oak Knoll for three decades. The house occupies a lot on the north side of Oak Knoll that was subdivided from 119 Pleasant Street and was part of the Green-Taft estate adjacent to the Burrage-Hoitt estate. After the Tortorici children were grown, the one-floor ranch at number 20 was intended to be their home in retirement. Sadly, Frank Tortorici died before the house was finished. Mrs. Tortorici moved in as planned and lived there for over 40 years. In the late 1990's she moved to Florida. Mrs. Tortorici retained ownership, and her granddaughter lived in the house for several years. Jeff and Stephanie Lagoy Larason, who became just the second owners of the home, purchased it in November 2003.



21 Oak Knoll

This distinguished Italianate villa is among the finer examples of its style in Arlington. It enjoys a prominent location at the head of Oak Knoll, where it was moved in 1911. In its new location, it has a modest setback from the street and occupies most of its lot. It features a gabled central pavilion, with elliptical-headed fenestration at the gable peak; a square replacement window and fill occupy the original shape of the opening. A pair of round-headed, full length windows is located above the ornately hooded double-door main entrance. The pavilion provides architectural focus and a vertical emphasis to the entire composition. The ornamentation, a classical vocabulary of bracketed window sills and window cornices, scroll-sawn paired brackets supporting generously overhanging eaves, and frieze with dentil moulding, is remarkable for its craftsmanship and design strength. The house is clad in narrow-banded aluminum siding, and most of the windows are double-hung two-over-two design. An enclosed porch on the north side of the house is of relatively recent construction, as are the bluestone-capped brick front steps with wrought-iron rail system. Despite aspects of its modernization, the house retains most of its essential original design and is an excellent candidate for authentic restoration.

The house was built circa 1854 by Joseph Burrage, a successful wholesale merchant of boots and shoes in Boston. The house was originally located on the foundation of 111 Pleasant Street. Burrage purchased the property in 1849 of Francis Raymond and had a circa 1846 home moved to accommodate construction of this mansion-house. He extended his land holdings to Academy Street by purchasing a large parcel to the rear of his property. Wealthy hay and grain merchant Alfred D. Hoitt acquired the estate in 1873. He served as Arlington's postmaster for many years, and in other public-service roles. The Hoitt estate was purchased in 1911 by John C. Hood, who created Oak Knoll Street and developed the subdivided lots. Hood moved the Burrage-Hoitt house from 111 Pleasant Street to its present location in order to build his own home. By the 1920s the Burrage-Hoitt house had been divided into two apartments and was owned by Frank Tortorici, a shoe repairer, and his wife, Rose. For three decades the Tortoricis occupied the upper unit, and the first-floor apartment was rented to various tenants, one of whom operated a private nursing home there for several years. Both units have been used as rental properties for many years. The house recently sold and is currently undergoing extensive interior renovation.

MHC Form B no. 333. This description substantially corrects and amplifies that 1980 document.



24 Oak Knoll

This mansard-roofed cottage-style apartment building was originally the barn and carriage house of 119 Pleasant Street of Daniel Prentiss Green, who built it in 1874. It was embellished with a gable-front dormer at the south corner of the main façade, which echoes design changes made to the mansion-house at 119 Pleasant Street after it was acquired by Waterman Taft in 1893. Also at around this time, the barn and carriage house was moved from the north side of the Taft lot to its present location. The one-story extension from the main mansard-roofed block of the building is part of the 19th-century massing of the entire structure. The building is covered by synthetic siding and has been unsympathetically modernized with modern wrought-iron porch posts and railings, among other changes. Nonetheless, the overall historic quality of the structure is evident, and its connection to 119 Pleasant Street (a property already in the Pleasant Street Local Historic District) is compelling. This property is an excellent candidate for sensitive historic rehabilitation in the future, while continuing its adaptive re-use as a residence.

In the 1920s this outbuilding of 119 Pleasant Street was being used as a private automobile garage for the main house, and possibly accommodated a chauffeur or other domestic worker in an upstairs apartment. In the 1930s the building was divided into four apartments and, similar to the contemporaneous subdivision of 119 Pleasant Street, its tenants primarily included domestic servants and lower-wage workers. At this time a driveway was opened to the Oak Knoll frontage, and took on its current Oak Knoll Street address. [Note: The 1922 Sanborn fire insurance map suggests that this house was number 6 Oak Knoll, but this was never the case.] It remains a rental apartment building today.

Recommended Vote of the Historic District Commissions acting as a study committee

ARTICLE 34

Voted: To enlarge the Pleasant Street Historic District, established under Chapter 40C of the General Laws by the vote under Article 32 of the 1988 Annual Town Meeting (By-Laws, Title VII, Article 1, Section 4) by adding thereto properties of Oak Knoll, and to accomplish the same to amend Title VII of the By Laws as follows:

Article 1, Section 4, add before close of parenthesis “and _____, 2006)”

Article 2, Section 4, add to the end:

“E. Fourth Enlargement (voted ___/___/06). Added thereto the land and buildings now known as and numbered 7, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, and 24 Oak Knoll, and a portion of the rear yard of 119 Pleasant Street, said properties being bounded and described as follows:

Starting at a beginning point on the southwesterly sideline of Oak Knoll, about 148 feet northwesterly of the northwesterly sideline of Pleasant Street, and running southwesterly 116.3 feet through the property now known as and numbered 119 Pleasant Street, then turning and running northwesterly 147.86 feet along the side yard of said 119 Pleasant Street and the rear yards of 20 and 24 Oak Knoll, then turning and running northerly along the property line of said 24 Oak Knoll 78.05 feet, then turning and running northeasterly by the same, 49.83 feet, then turning and running northwesterly along the property line of 21 Oak Knoll, 110 feet, then turning and running northeasterly by the same 68.65 feet, then turning and running northerly by the property line of 19 Oak Knoll 25 feet, then turning and running northeasterly by the same, 63.1 feet, then turning and running southeasterly by the property lines of 19, 17, 15, 11, and 7 Oak Knoll, in three courses, 69.3 feet, 122 ± feet, and 196 ± feet, then turning and running southwesterly along the property lines of 7 Oak Knoll and 111 Pleasant Street, and across Oak Knoll, 153 feet, the turning and running northwesterly along the aforesaid southwesterly sideline of Oak Knoll 23 feet to the point of beginning. All of said dimensions being more or less, or however said area may be otherwise bounded and described. Meaning and intending to include all of the land and buildings lying between Pleasant Street and Academy Street and not heretofore made part of the Pleasant Street Historic District. Shown on a plan entitled “Oak Knoll Expansion of the Pleasant Street Historic District, Arlington Mass January 2006” by Ronald Santosuosso, Town Engineer, dated 1/31/06.”