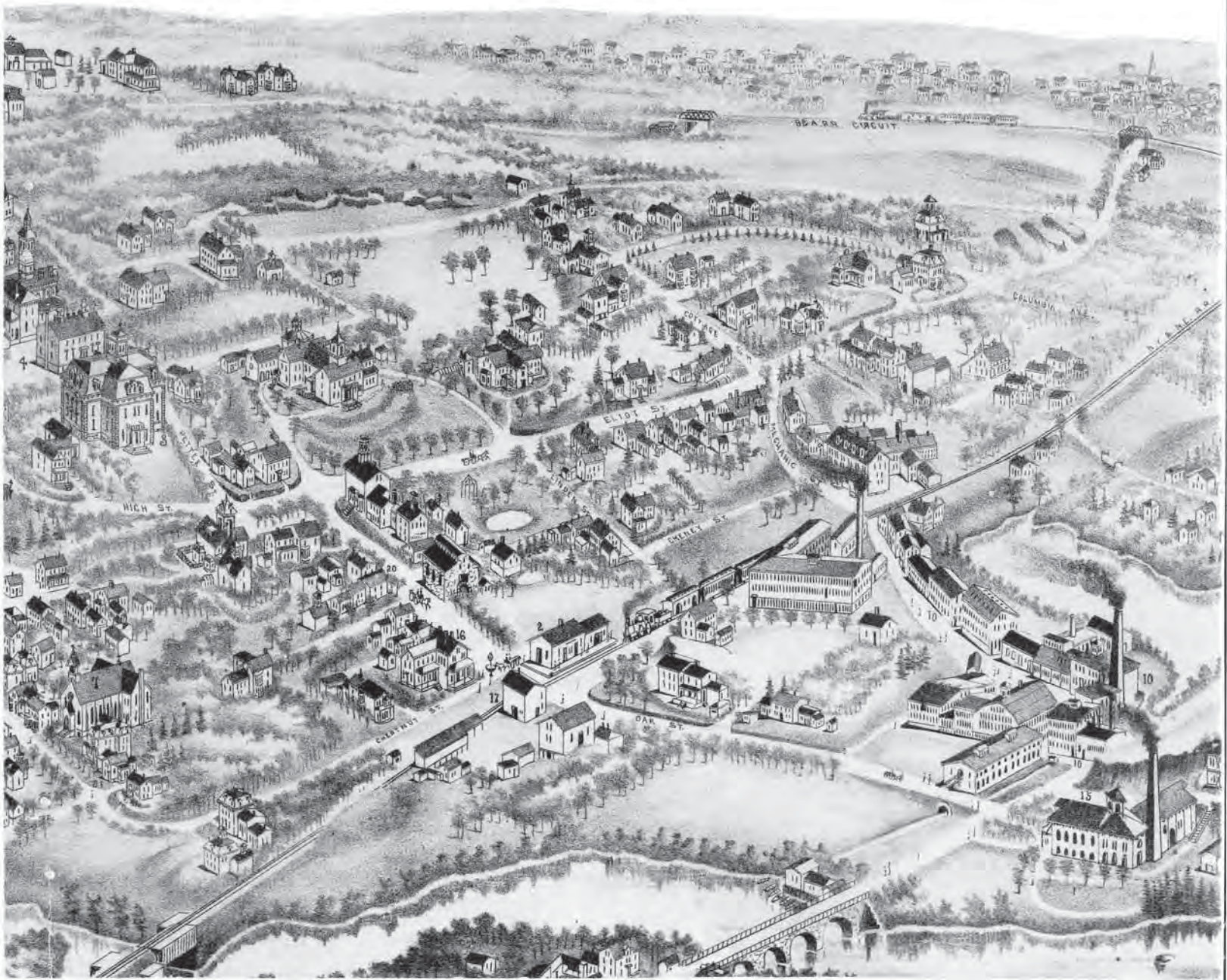
UPPER FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT FUNDING PROGRAM

CITY OF NEWTON

THE NEWTON UPPER FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT



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The Cahill Estate at Boylston and Chestnut Streets

A GUIDE TO THE LANDSCAPE

People who founded settlements several centuries ago chose their town sites for special reasons. Some sites drew colonizers to good harbors where waterborne trade could flourish. Others offered swift streams or waterfalls to power mills for local industry. As each town grew, it took on an individual appearance determined by its natural features, its street patterns and its buildings. As recently as 70 years ago, most towns and cities still had their special and unique appearances. Local terrain determined how buildings were set into the landscape; local fashion and a carpenter's skill gave those buildings characteristics unshared by those just a few miles away.

Today, for a variety of reasons, places everywhere are losing their special qualities; they all seem to look alike. At the same time, people are instinctively wanting to be in touch with the process of history, and are seeking it in places like Williamsburg, Old Sturbridge Village, and more recently in historic districts like those in Salem, Newburyport, and Boston.

Twentieth century standardization fortunately has not stolen the special sense of place found in Newton Upper Falls. Though some landmarks have been lost, and nearby highways have altered village orientation, it is easy to see how and why the place came to be as it is. This brief local history, then, is less a chronicle of events than a guide to the landscape: how houses and mills and churches came to be in this hilly, river-bound terrain.

In Newton Upper Falls, the survival of houses and stores, churches, mills, mansions and workers' cottages from its 18th century and 19th century growth periods has left the village with a strong sense of place. Knowing where the three great mills were located explains the curve of the oldest streets with their cottages and early stores. It is in keeping with New England tradition that comfortable village houses line the streets part way up the slope of the hill, with those of the mill workers nearest the factories, while it is nearly a cliche of New England mill towns that the great houses of the most successful industrialists crown the hill far above the mills and the bustle of village life. It is important for Newton Upper Falls to protect its historic landscape and buildings, so that its special character will always be as evident as it is today.

Tucked into the curve of the winding Charles, on one of its major waterfalls, Upper Falls was one of five Newton hamlets existing late in the 18th century. The spot was an obvious choice for early settlement, for waterfalls meant power. Even before 1700, the first dam at Upper Falls was built to control the stream to power John Clark's sawmill. So important was the sawn lumber produced by this early mill for fast-growing Cambridge that a connecting highway was quickly opened, following the course of today's Elliot Street through the village. The new mill was soon joined by a grist and fulling mill and these buildings occupied the site for almost a century, standing on the location later developed by the Elliot Manufacturing Company, many of whose buildings are still standing and in use as a part of the Echo Bridge Office Park.

It was not until after the Revolution that intensive development at the falls began. Simon Elliot of Boston began to buy land at Upper Falls in 1778, and when the Revolutionary War was over, he replaced the old mills with a new complex of snuff mills, an annealing mill, screw factory, a wire mill and blacksmith shop. The mills were purchased by Thomas Handasyd Perkins (who had married Simon Elliot's daughter) and his brother James in 1814. The Perkins brothers replaced the old mills with the new Elliot Manufacturing Company, establishing a cotton factory there by 1823.

A second industrial site at the lower dam in Upper Falls downstream from the Elliot mill site began development after the Revolution. There Jonothan Bixby built a rolling mill to manufacture scythes, selling the industry in 1799 to the Ellis brothers, Rufus and David, who established the Newton Ironworks Company. In 1809 they constructed a nail factory, and in 1813 a cotton spinning mill. Ten years later this factory complex was renamed "Newton Factories."

The 1830s brought the introduction of the third important industrial site in Newton Upper Falls. Otis Pettee, who had been superintendent at the Elliot mills, established his own factory in 1831, for the manufacture of cotton machinery. Pettee's factory, well to the southeast of the older mills, was located near the present WHDH radio tower on South Meadow Brook which was dammed to provide the needed power. It was the third industry which pulled the shape of the village into a crescent, determining the outline of Upper Falls 19th century development. The resulting curve is followed by the Newton Upper Falls Historic District.

As the three industrial sites grew, people were drawn, first from the surrounding countryside, then from Europe as cotton manufacture increased the demand for skilled workers. Small but comfortable cottages, one story tall with broad attics under pitched roofs, and larger boarding houses were built by the mill owners for their employees. Many of these houses stand today, still recognizable and still in use as residences, on Richardson Road, and on Chestnut, Ellis and Elliot Streets.

According to local tradition, some rivalry existed between the people who dwelt near the Newton Factories at the lower dam (around Boylston Street) and those near the Elliot Manufacturing company. Consequently, the first church, now the United Methodist Church, established in 1828, at Chestnut and Summer Streets and shared by all, was midway between the two neighborhoods.

Newton's growth was steady throughout the 19th century, and the Upper Falls was a relatively self-sufficient industrial community with most of its residents, including children, at work in the mills. The possibilities for employment at this period began to draw immigrants to the village in significant numbers. The railroad from Boston had been extended to West Newton by 1834, and around 1850 Otis Pettee encouraged a line to be built through the village from a connection with the Boston & Worcester Railroad at Brookline. This helped to transform the Upper Falls into a thriving industrial village with community life centering at the crossroads where Ellis, Winter and Chestnut Streets meet. Here the school, the Post Office building, stores and churches were clustered within easy reach of the people in the lower and upper dam neighborhoods and along High Street.

In 1876, the seven-arched Echo Bridge was built to carry the Sudbury Aqueduct (channeling water for Boston from Framingham to the Chestnut Hill Reservoir) across the Charles. During the last quarter of the 19th century, recreational use of the river at Newton Upper Falls began, capitalizing on the outstanding beauty of the landscape with the village hill rising steeply beside the river. The later 19th century saw the cotton industry shift to major industrial cities like Lowell, Fall River and New Bedford, where immense factories and sophisticated corporations discouraged their small competitors, including those in the Upper Falls. Several new industries appeared here to fill the vacancies created by the loss of the cotton industry in the 1880s, bringing an era of continued prosperity supported by the manufacture of silk, along with paper and nails, brooms, fireworks, and fire alarms.

Many of the houses, stores and industrial buildings from Newton's long history have survived, and are in use today. Together they form an attractive neighborhood which well deserves historic district designation.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

In the following sections, reference is sometimes made to specific styles of architecture, briefly defined here below. The purpose of these definitions is not to fully explain each style, as several books exist on this subject, but rather to put styles within historical context, and to point out how they are represented in the Newton Upper Falls Historic District. Styles are listed chronologically.

Georgian (1720-1790)

The Georgian Style (named for England's first three Georges) represents the coming of the Renaissance to America. Its classical aspirations are chiefly manifested in symmetry, meaning that all sides of the house (but particularly the front) have evenly arranged windows of equal size, with centrally-located doors at front and rear. The front door is usually surrounded by an ornamental frame which uses classical Roman decorative forms.

The house at 1034 Chestnut Street is a late example of the Georgian Style, but is a half-house only, intended for later symmetry by the addition of two more bays on the other side of the entry. Note the triangular classical pediment over the front door and the small-paired 9/6 sash.

Federal (1785-1820)

The Federal or Adam Style prevailed after the Revolution, when news reached America of the work of London's Robert Adam. While still a development of Georgian in its symmetry and use of Roman classical decor, the Federal Style is distinguished by its greater elegance and simplicity: lower roof pitches, slender columns, doors with fanlights and sidelights and larger, more elongated windows.

This style corresponds to the first significant settlement of the Upper Falls, and many fine examples of simple Federal houses can be

identified. The five-bay house at 954 Chestnut Street is typical, as are 959 and 965-967 on the same street. Note particularly the six-over-six sash with their muntins between panes, and the sidelights flanking the door of 954 Chestnut Street.

Greek Revival (1820-1860)

The Greek Revival Style represents a romantic and idealized attempt to recreate the republican architecture of ancient Greece here in America. It reflects the new mood of confidence in our freedom which followed our success in the War of 1812-15 with England. Typical of the style are temple-like buildings, with columned porticoes and gable ends facing the street, but simpler structures can only be identified by details, such as the corner-block door and window trim typical of the 1830s and 40s.

In Newton Upper Falls, there are many fine examples of Greek Revival architecture, beginning with the very elaborate houses at 1235 Boylston and 260 Elliot Streets. Note that Greek Revival buildings have sidelighted doors and even glass over the door, but no fanlights. Sash was still six-over-six until about mid-century, when two-over-two was introduced.

At 1267-69 Boylston Street, we see a house whose portico is only one story high, a simpler but common form of Greek Revival. The duplex at 207-209 Elliot Street represents the simplest form of the style, indistinguishable from an earlier Federal cottage except for its corner-block trim and higher ceilings.

Gothic Revival (1830-1870)

The Gothic Revival Style was first introduced in the 1830s, and reached limited popularity by mid-century. Its most obvious distinguishing feature is the pointed Gothic window, but true Gothic cottages had steep gables decorated with elaborate woodwork.

In Newton Upper Falls, we can identify some houses which, while predominantly Greek Revival, have pointed Gothic windows: such a combination is typical of c.1840, and can be found at 6 and 14 Summer Street.

Italianate (1840-1880)

The Italianate Style was the direct import of Italian Renaissance influence without the English modifications imposed by the earlier Georgian Style. The most distinctive feature of Italianate buildings is a wide, overhanging cornice, usually supported on brackets or "modillions".

Newton Upper Falls has few examples of true Italianate, but the lovely house at 68 High Street is an exception, and has all the best features of this ornate style. Note also the paired windows at 15 Oak Street, another frequent Italianate distinction.

Second Empire (1860-1880)

The Second Empire Style is simply the Italianate modified with the Mansard roof favored by the French. Paris was then the best known source of architectural schooling, and it was there that many Americans studied this profession.

In Newton Upper Falls, 937 Chestnut Street displays a good example of a Mansard roof, as well as the two-over-two sash typical of the period.

Stick Style (1860-1880)

The Stick Style was essentially an American Carpenter's Gothic, adapting Gothic forms to wood frame construction. The most notable feature of this highly intellectualized style is its "stickwork": flat exterior boards intended to express the structure of the building.

Newton Upper Falls has but one example of Stick Style, the house at 300 Elliot Street, but it is such a fine example that it should not be missed by any visitor to the District. Note its flanking pyramidically-roofed tower, and the painted stickwork which divides its exterior walls into highly textured sections.

Queen Anne Revival (1875-1895)

This rather outrageous and ebullient style stemmed from a desire to cast off the shackles of classical form, and explore the possibilities of unbridled license in the combination of form and decoration. It was termed the Queen Anne Revival to evoke a time in English history when the Renaissance was just displacing medieval construction, and local carpenters used classic and Gothic forms together in blissful ignorance.

There are few examples of Queen Anne Revival architecture in Newton Upper Falls, and those few have been largely stripped of their complex ornament. At 37 High Street, however, we can still see the steep roofscape and top heavy, romantic silhouette typical of the style, as well as a fine oriel window (a bay window that does not come down to the ground) and the carved sunbursts evocative of that optimistic era.

Shingle Style (1895-1910)

Gradually, the ornate Queen Anne Revival gave way to a simplified architecture, distinguished by simplified forms and simplified wall textures of uniform shingles.

At 1268 Boylston Street, note the simple window trim, the six-over-one sash which is a feature of the Shingle Style, and the plain shingle walls. At 254-256 Elliot Street, note the flared walls above the first floor. At 65 Ellis Street, the simple shingling is relieved by one very handsome diamond pattern in the gable.

Georgian Revival (1900-1940)

By the beginning of the present century, the lush decor of such styles as the Queen Anne, Stick Style, and Italianate had produced a certain nostalgia for the simplicity of the earlier Georgian and Federal Styles. Both of these were revived under the name Georgian Revival: albeit in a form more English than American in its degree of elaboration.

The rectory of St. Mary Immaculate of Lourdes, at 270 Elliot Street, is a very good example of the style. Brick, popular in England and Virginia but uncommon in 18th-century New England, became the favored material, and there is much ornament in the form of urns and clusters of columns.

A Note on Cladding

The overall cladding of a house, be it clapboards, shingles, board and batten siding or other is particularly important to its overall visual effect.As particular types of cladding are appropriate to particular Architectural eras and styles, special notice of cladding is taken in this text. Please note that the Historic District Funding Program will encourage the maintenance or restoration of historically appropriate cladding. Restoration of historic cladding does involve a certain element of risk, as removal of later materials such as vinyl and aluminum may reveal considerable rot and other damage to the shingles or clapboards beneath, and necessary repairs should be included in your estimate of the project cost. Read the Siding Materials section in *Home Improvement and Repair Standards* for further guidance.

The Cahill Estate Circa 1902

THE PROPERTIES

INTRODUCTION

The following paragraphs describe individual properties within the Newton Upper Falls Historic District, including its recent expansion. A capsule description of each building or structure summarizes its historic, architectural features, present appearance, and other points of interest.

The section is organized in alphabetical order, by street name, and individual properties are listed in numerical order by street number. A glossary is included at the end to explain architectural and stylistic terminology.

BOYLSTON STREET

1235 Boylston Street
William Ellis House
c. 1790, rebuilt 1828

This elegant house is one of the outstanding structures of the Newton Upper Falls Historic District. Its tetrastyle (four columned) portico with full pediment is its dominant stylistic element, and gives the house a temple-like appearance characteristic of the Greek Revival Style. Also noteworthy are the original three-part door surround, and the windows with their distinctive corner-block trim. Please note that the words "surround" and "trim" both refer to the woodwork around door and window openings, and that Greek Revival trim most frequently has square blocks at its upper corners, usually ornamented with a bulls-eye design known as a patera.

The main block of the house, with its Greek Revival features, is actually an 1828 addition to an older structure of 1790, and the narrow clapboards which now cover all exterior walls are appropriate to both periods.

1268 Boylston Street
c.1890

Research indicates that this large, shingled house was once a barn for 1272 Boylston Street, and was converted into a dwelling at the end of the 19th century. Its shingled walls, its heavy and plain window trim and six-over-one sash, and its gable roofed entry porch, are all features of the Shingle Style. Of particular note is the fine stained glass window to the right of the front door, also a feature often found in turn-of-the-century houses.

1267 — 1269 Boylston Street
Manufacturers' Hotel
1829

Built by Rufus Ellis in 1829 to serve business visitors to the Newton area factories, this building is a stately example of the Greek Revival style. The fully enclosed pediment at attic level is a classical feature of the style, reinforced by the columned porch across the ground floor front. The three-part entrance door is a fine original detail, as are the six-over-six paned window sash. The exterior cladding consists of original clapboards, entirely appropriate to the house.

1272 Boylston Street
c.1809

With its symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors, center entrance with fanlight over the door, and narrow clapboard sheathing with cornerboards, this house is a good example of the Federal Style. Its central chimney is somewhat unusual for the District, as the more common arrangement is two chimneys, equidistant from the ends of the roof. The house was built around the time that the Worcester Turnpike (Boylston Street) was opened as a toll road (1809), and according to local tradition it served as an inn for stage drivers. The hipped roof entrance porch, a distinctive feature of the house, is a late-19th century addition.

1276 — 1278 Boylston Street
before 1874

This house, with its attic story treated as a broad pediment, was built as a store before 1874. Original clapboards are visible in places beneath the gray synthetic siding, and their uncovering would enhance the building's appearance. The hipped roof entry porch, serving both doors, is a handsome feature.

1282 — 1284 Boylston Street
before 1820

Facing the Worcester Turnpike, this clapboard house is distinguished for its overall shape and simple detail. In a house of this kind, its existing surface texture of narrow clapboards, its roof form (medium pitch with molded cornices), and its window and door trim are all important. Because these plain but significant details have been respected, this house has dignity and style.

Boylston Street at 744 Quinobequin Road
c.1750

This handsome farmhouse, set well above the road, has fine early Federal door trim, with an arched fanlight above the door. Its clapboard walls, early window sash, delicate door surround and fine setting make this house one of the District's finest. While Federal mill housing abounds in the Upper Falls, this is the only example of so early a large farmhouse in the District.

1302—1304 Boylston Street
c.1820-1830

This Federal-type house has the characteristic form of a large house of its period (circa 1820-1830). An entry, which faces eastward, is centered with two windows on either side, the roof is pitched with ridge parallel to the main facade, and the two chimneys are equidistant from the ends of the roof ridge. The house was probably clapboard-covered when built, and painted white or some pale color. The green overlapping asbestos shingles which now cover the house are out of scale with its stylistic features, and much could be achieved by their removal. The window trim and Victorian-period two-over-two paned sash survive, adding to the house's visual quality. There are some fine old trees in the side yard, and a very attractive rubble stone retaining wall, laid up "dry" (without mortar). These landscape features help give the house a good setting.

CHESTNUT STREET

925 Chestnut Street (north of Boylston)
20th century

This cottage, with its large attic dormer and enclosed vestibule, is massed tightly to give it a picturesque overall effect of the kind much appreciated in the early decades of our century. The present shingles are appropriate for the walls of this house, but the newer porch of glass jalousies is somewhat at odds with the overall character of the house.

937 Chestnut Street
c.1875

This mansard-roof house is one of only two Second Empire Style houses in the District, and thus it enriches the District's architectural character. It has dormer windows typical of mansard-roofed houses, a fine entry porch, two-over-two paned windows with molded cornice lintels, and its original double doors have survived. These details make the house a good example of its style and period. The clapboard cladding of this house is appropriate and may well be original.

943 Chestnut Street
c.1900

A turn-of-the-century cottage, distinguished by its gambrel roof flared at the north eave to form a handsome roofline. The window sash is Queen Anne type and original to the house. Original wood shingle or clapboard siding unfortunately has been covered by later gray asbestos siding. A very fine small barn, with shingled sides, built at the same time as the house, stands at the rear of the lot.

947-949 Chestnut Street
late 19th century

Its tall pitched roof, narrow stove chimney and pitched roof entry porch with turned posts identify this house as a design of the late 1880s or 1890s. It is a slightly enlarged, slightly exaggerated copy of a Federal-period house, and when built, its clapboard walls would probably have been white, enriched by heavy wood shutters with movable louvers. The house is now clad in aluminum, with aluminum shutters and storm door, which are inconsistent with its original appearance.

954 Chestnut Street
c.1830—c.1860-70

An especially pleasing Federal-style house, this building features a typical three-part doorway with sidelights. This doorway is further enriched by a hood carried on elaborate sawn brackets with drops, an Italianate addition of the 1870s. The windows have appropriate Federal six-over-six paned sash, while the louvered shutters are later additions. The two chimneys rise from the rear roof slope equidistant from the ends of the house, the clapboard walls are finished with cornerboards and flat water table (see glossary).

959 Chestnut Street
c.1825—35

A center-entry Federal style house, with fine proportions, an inviting porch, a Victorian three-sided bay window and a graceful lunette (see glossary) and Italianate Style bracketed hood over a south side door. Aluminum siding and lightweight imitation shutters have significantly altered the original appearance of the house and their removal would enhance its authenticity. A characteristic "back chimney" remains above the ridge, but another has probably been removed.

960 Chestnut Street
c.1825—c.1900

Like most of Chestnut Street's houses, this one is Federal in style, and its door trim is an outstanding original feature. Many details reflect a turn-of-the-century renovation, including the fine glazed-panel entrance doors and the wood shingle siding, which doubtless replaced earlier clapboards. There is a fine rubble stone retaining wall in front of the house.

965—967 Chestnut Street
c.1825—35

Similar in style to its Federal neighbor at 959 Chestnut Street, this house has evolved somewhat differently over the century and a half of its life. A large ground-floor bay, added as a storefront around the turn of the century, replaces the verandah or front porch, while the three-part door with patterned sidelights is still visible. Aluminum siding and imitation shutters have changed the surface texture of the house, and their removal would be a notable improvement. Its back chimneys, rising from the rear slope of the roof equidistant from the gable ends, survive.

966 Chestnut Street
c.1825

Another late Federal or early Greek Revival house of circa 1825, this one retains much of its original detail despite its relocation on its lot in 1876, to allow for the construction of the Sudbury Aqueduct. Its clapboard walls appear original, as do the six-over-six window sash.

969 Chestnut Street
c.1843

This mid-19th century house was moved back from Chestnut Street in 1876 to accomodate the construction of the Sudbury Aqueduct. The late Victorian verandah with turned posts is a fine feature of this house which has also been sided with aluminum, a cladding inconsistent with the original style and design of the house. Since the house is set back, its front yard is especially important to its overall appearance, and has some remarkably lovely large trees.

970 Chestnut Street
1830s

Built at the height of the Greek Revival style, during the 1830's this house has a number of characteristic features. Most outstanding is the door surround, which is trimmed at the corners with an adaptation of a geometric pattern known in its day as the "Greek Key." Its windows are set in molded frames, and the original paneled door can be seen behind a modern storm door. The center chimney is not commonly found in houses of the Greek Revival period. Although green asphalt shingles now cover the house, it is almost certain that its original siding was clapboard, and a restoration of its former siding would greatly enhance the appearance of the building as well as its historic flavor.

973—975 Chestnut Street
19th century—20th century

Once a simple, gable-ended house of the 19th century, this residence has a later, two-story extension on the front, above which are visible the top of the original gable, its handsome wood cornice and a window. Its shingled front addition clashes with the original clapboards, and the fenestration (window pattern) on both front and sides has been disrupted.

977—979 Chestnut Street
c.1900

This Georgian Revival brick commercial building initiates a short, small-scale shop district. It was built around 1900, its brick walls and contrasting white stone lintels imitating late 18th century English and American building styles. It has a very good pressed metal cornice—another characteristic of its style and period.

981 Chestnut Street
Captain Harding's Tavern
c.1825

Its gable end with attractive three-sided bay turned to the street, this center entry Federal-type house has its major facade on the south side. The pale yellow shingles are attractive, and may cover original clapboards. The Victorian period two-over-two paned windows are an asset to the house, as is its molded wood cornice.

984 Chestnut Street
c.1850—altered c.1880

This house, which is believed to have been built around 1850, was given more elaborate stylistic features about 30 years later. Its multi-colored, patterned slate roof is outstanding, and there is great Victorian richness in the pair of bay windows flanking a central two-story porch. Second floor windows have Gothic Revival lintels, and there is a delicate dentil course below the cornice. While aluminum siding has replaced the original clapboards, giving the trim a displaced look, the aluminum is at least narrow, and thus in scale with the other features of the house. Even in such cases, uncovering the original cladding would add to the authenticity and historic appeal of the building.

983—987—989 Chestnut Street
c.1825 and later

This cluster of Federal homes and little turn-of-the century stores is characteristic of this attractive section of Chestnut Street. A picturesque effect was created as the space between older houses was filled by shops during a late 19th century commercial expansion. The bracketed storefront at 987 Chestnut Street and the small south wing are particularly important to the character of the group. Although original clapboards are still in place on the front of this grouping, shingles have been more recently used at the second floor level, producing a rather strange two-tone effect which is inappropriate to the simplicity of the Federal Style.

992 Chestnut Street
c.1825

This one-story-and-attic cottage of classic early 19th century center-entry form with saltbox profile has Victorian window sash. The removal of synthetic siding in favor of clapboards, which were probably the original form of cladding, has enhanced the appearance of this small but graceful house. The dormers, an old addition, represent a phase in the development of the house.

993—997 Chestnut Street
Early 19th century—additions

This long, dormered house appears to have begun life early in the 19th century as a center-entry building of five bays of windows, but was extended later at the cost of its former classical symmetry. The center-entry section of the building is at its south end, and the clapboard walls and small windows are basic to its character, and its dormers are well-scaled.

996—1000 Chestnut Street
1920s

This 1920s brick building, apparently originally used as a store, has its original second floor detail surmounted by a handsome parapet with decorative brick coursing. At ground floor level the original entry, cast stone piers and full lintel, survive, but the openings between the piers have been bricked in to make residential spaces where stores had been.

999 Chestnut Street
c.1825—35

Another classic cottage of the early 19th century, this house has its narrow gable end facing the street, and its door and long facade turned in upon its own side yard. The short wood shingles are probably not its original wall covering, but painted gray, with white window surrounds and cornerboards, they give it an attractive appearance.

While a fine early Greek Revival door surround with a shallow pedimented lintel is the house's most important detail, this feature is partially hidden behind a metal awning. The small red barn in the rear adds to the visual appearance of the house, and is a dominant feature when seen from the rear on Ellis Street.

1003—1009 Chestnut Street
1846—altered early 20th century

This large frame building dominates the intersection where Chestnut meets Winter and Ellis Streets, and therefore enjoys great visual prominence. Its visible features are early 20th century Shingle Style, and its storefronts, especially on Chestnut Street, are handsome. An old photograph showing typical Greek Revival features indicates that the building actually predates the alteration that gave it its present appearance. The materials and storefronts currently on the building are the legacy of many decades of change, and include inappropriate asphalt shingles, brickwork and even lally columns.

1012—1019 Chestnut Street
Mid-19th century — later additions

This building, located at a major intersection, is also visually of great importance to the small commercial district on Chestnut Street. Its clustered appearance, with three dissimilar gables facing the street, is the dominant visual characteristic, followed by its narrow clapboard siding, two-over-two-paned window, eaves and cornices, and early store entry at the center section. The tan paint color is appropriate to the building's mid-Victorian appearance, and the recent addition of the large clockface sign enhances it as well.

1020 Chestnut Street
19th century — several later alterations

The simple appearance of this house belies its history of change. It was probably built as a one-story building and later raised to its present two stories, and was a store late in the 19th century and into the 20th. Its store openings have been replaced with small windows and its wood cladding covered by inappropriate wide aluminum siding, altering its proper scale and texture. Careful study should precede any attempt at restoration.

1028 Chestnut Street
c.1845 — altered c.1890

Built as a school house before the middle of the 19th century, this large and handsome building has Greek Revival details with an extended storefront added after the turn of the century. Its full pediment, enclosed by flat and raking cornices, is characteristically Greek Revival, as are the moldings used in the window surrounds. The storefront, though a major early alteration to the house, is a good feature and has much of its original detail. The dark brown shingling is stylistically in harmony with the late Victorian period of the storefront, and is the appropriate wall covering for the building.

1030 Chestnut Street
c.1920

This classic 1920s house is of later vintage than most buildings in the District. Characteristic of its period are its hipped roof with centered chimney, its stuccoed walls, and its prominent, undecorated front porch. The stucco, in this case, is both original and appropriate, and contributes to the attractive simplicity of the whole structure.

1034 Chestnut Street
c.1770—90

This half-house (see glossary), one of the earliest buildings in the District, exhibits both Late Georgian and Federal architectural characteristics typical of the last quarter of the 18th century. Its tall windows with nine-over-six sash and molded lintels are often seen on Late Georgian and early Federal houses. The manner in which the second story lintels break forward from a crown molding just below the eaves is also an early feature. The pedimented door surround, if original to the house, is a Georgian detail. The narrow clapboard walls, defined with cornerboards and a flat watertable, are also typical of Georgian architecture, and contribute to the house's stylistic integrity. The roof, hipped only at one end, is unusual and suggests an intention to add two further bays. This house is certainly one of the most architecturally significant buildings in Newton Upper Falls, due both to its age and authentic details.

1036—1039 Chestnut Street
c.1830

As with its neighbor at 1044—1046 Chestnut Street, this is a charming two-family worker's cottage, with two graceful and tall chimneys. All original cladding and trim has been superceded by aluminum siding, windows, storm doors, gutters, and shutters. While narrowness of the siding and the appropriate white-and-black color scheme are reasonably close to the original, when replacement is considered, a return to wood cladding and details would certainly restore to the house the charm of its considerable age.

1044—1046 Chestnut Street
c.1830 — altered 1960s

Synthetic siding above a base of modern veneer stonework nearly conceal the original charm of this worker's cottage built around 1830. Although the front slope of the roof has recently been raised to give more height on the second floor, the basic double-chimney, center-entry plan identifies this house as a typical early 19th century cottage. A return to narrow clapboards would reflect more closely the original character of this house.

CHILTON PLACE

9—11 Chilton Place
c.1885—90

This house is much older than its Queen Anne Style indicates. Interior features include old thin doors, early mantels, steep stairway, and hand-hewn beams in the basement. The house is pegged together with treenails, and was located on High Street, just in front of where it is presently. After a fire burned the rear ell, the house was moved across the street, and a new and smaller ell was added which has higher ceilings than the original house. The original structure was built as a single-family house, with two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs and two back chimneys.

15—17 Chilton Place
c.1910—1920

This early 20th century two-family house has considerable inherent dignity and balance. Its two-story bay window is balanced by the entry porch with balcony above, both sheltered tightly under a steep pitched roof with gable crowning the facade. The hipped roof dormer windows are a good period detail, as is the porch rail with its square balusters and crossed panels. The clapboard wall surface with shingled gable field and dormers gives the house a delicate contrast of textures.

CLIFF ROAD

22 Cliff Road
c.1840

Its rough stonework resembling the neighboring stone silk mill barn, this masonry cottage was probably built at the same time. As with the barn, the cottage is an unusual example of fieldstone architecture in Newton Upper Falls, where 19th century houses are nearly all of wood frame construction.

ELLIOT STREET

207—209 Elliot Street
1830s

Set diagonally on its corner lot to command the intersection of three streets, this long, low building is a duplex, built in the 1830s. The main block has two entrances, and a kitchen wing, one story tall with a stove chimney at the center, extends from each side of the house. The house has Greek Revival detail, particularly evident in the two doorways with molded surrounds and corner blocks, while the hipped roof front porch and the long dormer window are later alterations, and conceal the basic style, as do the present wood shingles, undoubtedly replacements for earlier wood clapboards. The turn-of-the-century cobblestone wall at the sidewalk, and the two large front yard trees enhance the appearance of the building.

216 Elliot Street
1830s

Built in the 1830s to house four millworker families, this broad-roofed house is one of the most interesting structures in the Upper Falls Historic District. Two of the original four kitchen wings (formerly one extended from each corner of the house) have survived and, instead of the usual pair of chimneys, this house has four. The most important feature of this house is its shape. Since its wall surfaces are broad and its windows disproportionately small, the sheathing texture of the house is an important visual element. It is very likely that this consisted originally of narrow clapboards, painted white, and which may still survive under the current modern shingles. At present a change to a more appropriate color would alone constitute a substantial improvement, if there are no immediate plans for residing the house with clapboards.

221—23 Elliot Street
1830s

Set well above the street level over a rubble stone retaining wall, this full two-story double house was built, like its neighbors, for families who worked in the Pettee factory. Although remaining historic detail is limited to its molded window surrounds and two-over-two paned sash, the house has a strong 19th century shape, and the two kitchen wings, one at either end of the main block, are strong visual reminders of its original use. While original clapboards are concealed beneath the present shingles, these are regularly coursed, and do not significantly alter the house from its former appearance. The chimney, with its stepped brick courses at the cap, is a good 19th century form.

224—226 Elliot Street
1830s

At the border of the Upper Falls Historic District, on Elliot Street, is a lovely row of classic Greek Revival 1830s millworkers' cottages. Simple and appealing in size, scale, and siting, these form a cohesive group of clear historical and architectural importance.

The double house at 224—26 Elliot has two central doors and four windows on its long front, as well as a simple pitched roof with two chimneys. Once typical of its kind, this house has been substantially altered by a 20th century enclosed porch and shingled walls. Its original appearance may be still viewed at 238—240 Elliot Street.

232—234 Elliot Street
1830s

This house, the center one in a group of three originally identical double cottages, retains its original form and sequence of openings, but aluminum siding, metal shutters, and a metal entry awning have given it an overall appearance very different from its historic character.

238—240 Elliot Street
1830s

Unlike the two preceeding cottages, this two-family house most nearly regains its original appearance. A millworkers' residence of the 1830s, it shows how small and simple details give a building character. Shape and form are of primary importance, and these are determined by the simple plan, the roof shape, the location and size of openings in the wall surface, and the chimney placement. The next most important feature is the texture of the wall surface: narrow clapboards with narrow cornerboards and flat watertable, giving an appearance quite different from shingle or ultra smooth aluminum. As for details, houses of such simplicity had few, but the open shutters do affect the appearance of the windows, and wood gutters lend elegance to roof edges. Also important are the effects of decorative accessories such as the trellis over the paired doors, of landscaping (placement and type of plant material, walls, fences, walks), and of outbuildings similar to the 19th century barn with wood siding and small cupola behind this house.

248 Elliot Street
c.1840

This temple-front Greek Revival house is one of the finest structures in the Upper Falls Historic District. As in No. 83 High Street, its fluted Doric columns rise one story to carry the tall triangular pediment made by the gable end of the second floor. The shape of the ground floor, which allows the columned portico to wrap partially around the west side of the house, is unusual. The main entry has corner-block trim, fine sidelights and an original four-panel door. The shingles on the wall are probably a late 19th century or early 20th century change from original clapboards or flushboards, but are so smooth and well coursed as to appear appropriate when painted.

254—256 Elliot Street
c.1900

This large, tightly massed house with its heavy, hulking silhouette, is a Shingle Style structure built around 1900. Its tall hipped roof has a pair of gabled dormers on its front slope, the caps of two bay windows, and the roof of a two-story porch. The shingled walls are an appropriate, indeed essential, feature of the Shingle Style as is the characteristic exterior flare between floor levels visible on the bays and porch of this house.

260 Elliot Street
St. Elizabeth's Center
1838

Another of the District's outstanding buildings is this magnificent Greek Revival house. Its fluted two-story Doric columns carry a full pediment, giving the house a truly temple-like appearance. All original cladding has survived. The building's front wall, sheltered by the portico, is flushboarded to suggest the smoothness of stone, while side walls are covered by clapboards. Windows have molded cornice lintels at the ground floor enriching the surface of the building, while the sash still holds much of its brittle, shimmering old glass.

270 Elliot Street
Rectory of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Church
c.1938

This brick building with crisp-looking white cast stone trim is basically Georgian Revival in style. It has a fine slate-covered gambrel roof, with its gable end facing the street. The contrast of the brick-and-stone combination at window lintels and corners gives liveliness to the building, and the wood porch on the street side, with its triple corner columns echoed by triple urns on the balcony above, is a handsome detail.

277 Elliot Street
Otis Pettee House (Sunnyside) — Stone Institute
1828 — additions c.1900

Otis Pettee's "antique yellow mansion crowned by a little spire" is still standing today within the much larger brick building that now houses the Stone Institute. The oldest portion of the house is an extensive 19th century two-story, center-entry, double-chimneyed house similar to, but much larger than, the smaller dwellings typical of the Historic District. It once had a cupola of some magnificance as well as an attractive porch. The original cladding of the old house was wood clapboard which has been covered with stucco at some later period. The removal of the stucco would be costly, and might be unrealistic, but would be a prerequisite to restoring an historic, clapboarded appearance. The brick walls of the newer portion of the building are Georgian Revival, and enjoy a good measure of the dignified simplicity of early examples of this style. The brick walls are appropriate to this building style.

280 Elliot Street
St. Mary Immaculate of Lourdes Church
1909

With its tall bell tower rising high above its main roof, this brick and stone Catholic Church, built in 1909, is a fine example of the late Italian Renaissance Revival. Its impressive porticoed shape is typical of the style as is its rich color scheme of deep red and tan. Further richness comes from its trim. The columns are Corinthian, the most elaborate of the three basic classical orders, and its pediment is filled with sculpted images of the Virgin and other figures.

300 Elliot Street
c.1840 — remodeled c.1880

This fine Stick Style mansion, recently repainted with a contrasting color scheme appropriate to its style and period, is one of the grandest houses in the Upper Falls. A major renovation around 1880 updated an earlier house as befitted the status of a wealthy industrialist, and its present exuberant appearance is the result of that renovation. The cladding, a fanciful mixture of shingles and clapboards, is also wholly original. The house's architectural style is carried most distinctly by the vertical and pointed forms of its tower, and echoed by the finial above the gable of the main block of the house. The porch, with its shingled band at cornice level and its paired posts, is another strong element of the Stick Style. The large yard makes a fine setting, and the cupola-crowned barn glimpsed in back of the house completes this most pleasing sight.

301 Elliot Street
c.1903

This Georgian Revival brick commercial building has handsome cast iron ground floor shop fronts, many of which have original windows and doors, a fine pressed metal cornice, and cast-stone lintels with keystones. It is an asset to the District.

314 Elliot Street
1830s

Two storys tall, with pitched roof parallel to is main facade, this house has a center chimney instead of the more typical two side chimneys so often seen in Newton Upper Falls. Except for its basic size, shape and scale, this house reveals little of its original architectural character, but it is clearly a house of the first half of the 19th century. Its walls would have been clapboarded when built, but are now covered with a cladding inappropriate to this style of house. The new enclosed porch destroys the elegance of its original five-bay facade. When the red asphalt shingle roof, currently in deteriorating condition, is replaced, a slate gray color would be more appropriate.

319—321 Elliot Street
c.1890

This simple double house was built late in the 19th century. Its steep roof, shallow depth, tall windows, shed-roofed porch and slender chimneys all attest to a construction date around 1890. It has a picturesque hillside site, with an attractive rubble retaining wall at the rear. Although now covered with asbestos shingles, its original siding material was clapboard, as can be seen on the front wall within the enclosed porch. Uncovering of the clapboards would be beneficial to the appearance of the house.

324 Elliot Street
1830s

This large, broad house, probably built in the 1830s, is thought to have originally been a residence for mill operatives. Its plain, pitched roof form, and relatively small window openings suggest its eary date, although the two-over-two-paned sash are later (c.1850), and aluminum siding conceals further architectural detail. Removal of the later cladding in favor of narrow clapboards would be appropriate to the Greek Revival era of this building, and should be carefully considered.

331 Elliot Street
1830s

This small cottage was built as a millworker's house for the Elliot Manufacturing Company around 1830. Its overall shape is its most important feature. Surface texture is important, too, and this house has original (or early) wood shingles on its west side. The front, which may once have been clapboarded, has later shingles, but these are still quite appropriate for so modest a building, and do not detract from its appearance. Modern flashings and an aluminum storm door of inappropriate design offer room for improvement.

335—337 Elliot Street
1830s

With its double entry, clapboard front and shingled sides, this cottage retains much of its original appearance. The metal shutters replace larger wooden ones that would have covered the windows when closed. Built around 1830 when the Greek Revival style was dominant, this house probably was originally painted white or a soft color. At present aluminum storm doors conceal some lovely panelled entrance doors.

339 Elliot Street
c.1790

This millworker's cottage differs slightly from its neighbors in that it has two windows on each side of the door, and a single chimney at the center. Three different kinds of siding: aluminum, wood shingle, and brick veneer, substitute for the original clapboard. A return to more appropriate wall surfaces would substantially enhance this building. A central dormer, added later, breaks the simple but elegant roof line of the house.

347—349 Elliot Street
c.1825—35

An attractive, long house with two entries, this building, like its neighbors, was a millworker's house. Its features include a continuous pitched roof, with ridge parallel to the main facade, large chimneys, six-over-six-paned sash, and two lean-tos at the back of the building. Narrow aluminum siding imitates the original clapboard, and aluminum shutters have replaced wooden ones. Two small entry porches, with latticed sidewalls, are an enriching detail.

351—353 Elliot Street
1830s

This is another variant of the 1830s millworkers' double house found often within the Historic District. This building has its entries at each end of the building's front, with interior chimneys located equidistant from the ends of the roof. The windows are set in their original molded surrounds, and their nine-over-six-paned sash are an unusual, early feature. As with its neighbors, this house would have had clapboard siding when originally built, but now is clad with an inappropriate mixture of wide asbestos shingles and pseudo-brick. The removal of both in favor of clapboard would be an assset.

ELLIS STREET

6—8 Ellis Street
c.1825—30

Built in the early Greek Revival style around 1825—30, this house faces Boylston Street, its narrow gable end visible above a granite retaining wall on Ellis Street. It has a fine trabeated door surround. Although inappropriate asbestos siding covers its clapboards, and should be replaced by clapboards, the house still has its early window trim and six-over-six sash, and the impressive original building mass is completed by a pair of heavy chimneys rising above the ridge.

Ellis Street
c.1865—70

This classic story-and-attic cottage has the typical center-entry form for its main block, and its doorway is sheltered by a bracketed Victorian Italianate (see glossary). Windows have appropriate two-over-two sash, and are set in molded trim. The front garden drops steeply to a low stone dry wall near the street. The present asbestos cladding is both too wide and too flat to imitate the clapboards which once were on this small house, and should be replaced by clapboards, which may still be in acceptable condition underneath it.

38 Ellis Street
c.1865-70

This Italianate cottage has the attributes of the kind of dwelling considered "romantic" in the 19th century. Set over a brick story into the steep side of the hill, its front door is reached by a run of steps to a terrace. The roof has overhanging eaves with small paired brackets, and the windows have two-over-two sash. Removal of the various existing asbestos siding concealing walls that would in the past have been clapboarded and may have been painted a stone or earth-like color, would enhance this building.

65 Ellis Street
c.1900

A fine example of the Shingle Style, this house was built around 1900. Only minor changes have been made to its exterior (the porch rail), and the decorative shingle pattern in its gable field above clapboard lower walls are Shingle Style features. The cobblestone foundation is witness to the interest, at the turn-of-the-century, in smooth rounded stones as a building material.

Second Baptist Church
73 Ellis Street
c.1833

The simple Gothic Revival massing of this square-towered church is its most powerful feature. Aluminum siding has obliterated any trim the exterior may have had, and has left the building rather barren. Research is suggested prior to considering restoration of this structure.

HIGH STREET

Ralph Waldo Emerson School (Newton Free Library)
5 High Street
c.1905

Built as a school, this handsome brick building is distinguished for its patterned brickwork forming decorative panels, pilasters, and window surrounds. Its hipped slate roof breaks upward at intervals to accomodate dormer windows that light the attic story. The ground on the High Street side of the building presents a parklike landscaping effect. The school has a most unattractive recent addition on Pettee Street, which destroys its symmetry and hopefully, would not be retained in any future renovation. All its doors are now plywood, and its lower windows have been covered with heavy steel mesh.

23 High Street
c.1850; later changes

Set back on its hillside site well screened by trees, this 19th century house seems comfortably removed from the streetscape before it. Its most characteristic feature is the deep verandah wrapped around front and side, with original balustered handrail and posts behind modern screening. The house's two-over-two-paned window sash are an important detail, as is its three-sided bay with leaded glass window. Removal, at a future date, of the aluminum siding, which may conceal earlier wood cladding, should benefit the appearance of the house.

34 High Street
c.1900

Typically turn-of-the-century, with tall hipped roof crowining a symmetrical facade, this house is basically Georgian Revival in form. Its symmetry is as strict as that of 18th century buildings, with hipped roof dormers centered in each roof slope and entrance between two windows at the ground floor. The small garage echoes the shape and style of the house, and is set slightly to the south where the ground slopes steeply away to the rear. Aluminum siding, aluminum shutters, and a storm door present a somewhat artificial effect inconsistent with the predominant style of the house, and should be considered for removal.

36—38 High Street
c.1895

This handsome Shingle Style house which retains its original shingle walls, is rich with period details. The steep facade gable extends, bracketed, slightly beyond the plane of the facade, and holds a paired window with a deep lintel. The L-shape plan, steep, extended gables, and pedimented dormer window recall the revival of interest in America's medieval buildings in the closing years of the last century. The steep drop in grade at the rear of the house gives it a fine picturesque landscape.

37 High Street
c.1885

This fine house, built around 1885, displays the then popular Queen Anne Revival Style. While the double-bracketed overhangs at the gable and the three-sided oriel with its many-paned sash give dominance to the top of the house, the verandah with its entry-bay pediment framing the characteristic Queen Anne sunburst is one of the building's more important features. The house's surface texture is original, established by the wood shingle siding, and the elaborately patterned lattice beneath the porch floor is another enriching feature. The low granite retaining wall, defined by granite posts, is a good landscape detail. The house, very visible at a bend on High Street, is one of the finest in the neighborhood.

43—45 High Street
c.1850

The design of this substantial Greek Revival house is focused on its broad, pediment-capped entrance. Framing the house and echoing some of the elements at the entry, wide corner pilasters seem to carry the architrave (the flat board crossing the facade between the eaves and the tops of the second floor windows), while narrow clapboards contrast with the smoothness of both the architrave and the pilasters, creating a surface texture important to the appearance of the house. The ell, which has similar clapboard walls and pilasters, has a fine Italianate entry porch with delicate piers and scroll-sawn decoration beneath its cornice. This house is set on a terraced lawn that raised it well above the sidewalk level.

44—46 High Street
19th century

Thought to have been built as a carpentry shop for an early owner of the Greek Revival house across High Street (No. 43—45), this aluminum-clad building once sided with narrow clapboards, now reflects little of its 19th century origins. Remaining assets include its six-over-one paned window sash, the dramatic falling land slope at the rear, and a large tree just south of its forward corner. Careful research should precede any exterior work.

48—50 High Street
19th century

Totally clad in aluminum like its southern neighbor, this house, too, had an unusual original use. A tinsmith shop operated from its ground floor, while the Oddfellows maintained a meeting hall on the top story. Buildings such as this one and its neighbor — tinsmith shops, blacksmith shops, small markets or stores — existed on residential streets in most 19th century communities. Too often they vanished when their uses became obsolete, and people today tend to forget the way small businesses and industries were salted into village streetscapes a hundred years ago. Fortuntately these buildings have survived, their original shapes still clear behind aluminum siding. While they have the potential of contributing to the historic character of the District, restoration should be undertaken only after research.

51—53 High Street
Elliot Hall
1842 — altered 1879

Built in 1842 as a house of worship and living quarters for the Universalist Society, this building was extensively redesigned for use as a two-family house in 1879, with the addition of two-story bay windows and a new porch. The simple gable-roofed form and the symmetry of the house are a good background for the Victorian detail of the square balusters of the handrail, and the row of small, scrolled modillions under the cornice enrich the house's entry porch. Cladding is aluminum which, both in scale and color, is more visually successful than most, but it would still be preferable to see the original clapboards re-exposed.

54 High Street
1842 — altered 1867 — altered 20th century

Another building with an unusual original use, this one was built in 1842 as a fire engine house, with a meeting hall on its upper floor. Around 1867 it became a school, then a tailor shop, and was finally converted to a dwelling. the fine cornice and slightly overhanging eaves may be original to the building, while the three-sided oriel window at the center of the second floor replaces a tall three-part Italianate window shown in an early photograph. The original ground floor included a large door to accomodate a fire engine. The building's street front as well as its sides were clapboarded. The current cladding consists of patterned shingles which, with the oriel, give the house a Queen Anne Revival look which is consistent with its later conversion to a dwelling.

58—60 High Street
c.1845

This is a handsome mid-19th century double house with a strong, plain shape, clapboarded front and shingled sides, and six-over-six paned sash. The characteristic pair of chimneys rise above the ridge of the roof, and the entry porch — a late Victorian feature — focuses the facade of the house. The use of shingles on all but the front of the house is often an early example of New England thrift, as clapboards were desirable but more expensive.

59 High Street
c.1840

An excellent example of mature Greek Revival, this house is oriented with its gable end towards the street, and reached by an elegant flight of granite steps. Virtually all of its original details and trim are intact, including a fine front door, six-over-six sash with cornerblock trim, a lovely Doric porch, clapboards, and appropriately green exterior shutters. The house is in need of some repairs and maintenance, but is one of the best-preserved in the District.

65 High Street
c.1835

The three-part door with turned corner blocks and sidelights, fluted Doric columns at the verandah, and heavy flat frieze just under the eaves are the characteristics that establish this house as an example of the Greek Revival style. This special type of house is seen elsewhere in Newton Upper Falls, and is distinguished by its ridge running parallel to the street, its two chimneys set in the rear roof slope equidistant from the roof ends, its five-windows-wide, center entry plan, clapboard walls and one-story, full-width verandah. That the verandah is original is strongly suggested by the flushboarding on the walls behind it. The solid rail is a later change, leaving only half of the fine columns visible. As with other houses on the east side of High Street this one has a fine granite drywall that supports its front lawn above the sidewalk.

68 High Street
c.1875—80

This asymmetrical High Victorian Italianate house appears to have nearly all of its original detail intact and is one of the finest buildings in the Upper Falls. Small paired brackets support the slightly overhanging eaves, and the two-over-two sash have lovely trim with heavy lintels, carried on small modillion brackets. The entrance porch, with square piers chamfered (see glossary) at the corners, brackets, and balustraded second story balcony, is outstanding. Behind the porch, the original double doors have heavy molded panels, and traces of original etched glass panes. The clapboard wall surface is the original material. Conservation work should be considered to preserve all external details of this fine house, as it is urgently needed.

70 High Street
c.1885—95

Classically shaped, with its pitched-roof ridge parallel to the facade, this late 19th century house is a handsome element of the Historic District. It is clapboard-sided with a simple wood cornice, two-over-two window sash, and a full-width, elegant verandah with turned posts, corner brackets, and ornate balustrade.

71 High Street
c.1835 — remodeled c.1900

Originally the twin of No. 65 High Street, this Greek Revival house was altered c.1900, with the addition of a Georgian Revival porch and central dormer window. An enclosed vestibule enlarged the entry at the same time, but the fine original doorway with molded trim and corner blocks, sidelights and panels, was moved forward and re-used for the vestibule. The capped granite retaining wall with stone gateposts is important to the setting of this house. While the Georgian Revival additions are now of historic interest, and merit protection, the wide asbestos siding replacing narrow clapboards does not benefit the style of this well-proportioned house.

75 High Street
c.1825

Standing at the head of Winter Street, terraced slightly above sidewalk level by a stone retaining wall, this one-story-and-attic house is a characteristic example of the transitional period between the Federal and Greek Revival styles. Its three-part doorway with narrow sidelights is centered with a pair of windows on either side, and the two broad chimneys are typically located equidistant from the ends of the roof. The shed-roofed dormer that lights the story under the roof is a modern insertion. The aluminum siding which tries to simulate the narrow clapboards that would have been original to the house hides the window trim and has accumulated many dents.

80—82 High Street
c.1895—1900

An unusual architectural form for the Newton Upper Falls Historic District, this flat-roofed building has brick sidewalls and a clapboard front enframed by cornerboards. The side windows are segmental-headed, and the brick walls are studded with simple iron tie-rod plates that fasten the interior wood structure securely to the outside walls. The facade detail is extremely simple, with old glass shimmering in two-over-two-paned window sash, and the entrance with its original glass-and-panelled double doors is set back from the facade plane beneath a high glass transom.

83 High Street
c.1835

This outstanding Greek Revival house turns its gable to the street, supporting its pediment on fluted Doric columns that screen a front porch. The three-part doorway, with its sidelights carried nearly to the floor, represents the fully mature phase of the style, as do the windows onto the porch, whose enframements begin several inches from the floor. A long ell of various parts extends well into the rear of the lot. Recent removal of asphalt shingles at this house revealed its original flushboards at the temple front (smooth, to suggest classical stone), with narrow clapboards on the sides. These were retained and restored, and the house is now worthy of being used as an example of the benefit of careful restoration to the District as a whole.

85 High Street
c.1825—30; c.1890

A turn-of-the-century owner remodeled this small Federal house to create a Queen Anne Revival cottage of picturesque appeal. While the original form of the house (gable-roofed, ridge parallel to the street with center entry flanked by paired windows) can still be seen, the Queen Anne details now give the house its special quality. The extended center bay, crowned with a shingled gable, breaks up the roofline, its effect enhanced by the gabled dormers on either side. The diamond-shaped windows on the bay's side walls are characteristic features, and the deep front porch was very common in all late 19th century styles. The present wide, green asbestos siding is a discordant note, and the patterned wood shingles in the dormer gables more truly represent the kind of cladding which would be appropriate to the Queen Anne Revival renovation.

86 High Street
19th century

This house was probably raised to its present two-story height to enlarge a smaller building used variously as a street-car waiting room and a store. The upper story gives clues to its architectural history with its cladding of shingles above the clapboards of the lower story. The High Street windows have much old glass in their eight-over-eight sash (a hard-to-duplicate feature of an older house) which often adds subtle charm and atmosphere.

88 High Street
c.1895

The flared exterior wall between the first floor and the second indicates the Shingle Style origins of this aluminum-sided house. The fully enclosed triangle of the gable is another stylistic clue, as are the two-over-two sash, and the pedimented entry porch. For a more authentic appearance, the aluminum siding should give way to wood shingles, or to the wood shingles and clapboard arrangement still extant on its neighbor, 90 High Street.

90 High Street
c.1890

Its regular, rectangular plan, tall hipped roof, and five-window center entry arrangement give this building (once used as a print shop) of circa 1890 a simplified Georgian Revival appearance. Its wall surface — clapboard on the ground floor with shingle above — is appropriate to the period of the house, and its heavy, paneled door with a glass pane in the upper portion is original. The two-over-two paned window sash are important original features.

91 High Street
c.1835; c.1880

The main block of this house shows it to have the classic five-bay, center entry form, with paired "back chimneys." A late Victorian period alteration created a bracketed, rectilinear oriel above the entrance door, placing this oriel and entrance in a stepped-forward center bay with a gable of its own.

99 High Street
c.1900

Simply trimmed, hipped-roof houses such as this one represent the last phase of the Queen Anne Revival style. They stand trimly on village streets in many American towns, lending solid dignity to their surroundings. The effect of compressed solidity important to this house is created by the capping of each bay and dormer with a hipped roof that follows the lines of the main roof, and the girding of the house with a two-sided hipped-roof verandah. This house, now covered with aluminum, originally may have had clapboard walls or shingles or a combination of both. A return to the original surface, at some future date, would improve its appearance. Its porch, now glass-windowed, would have had a solid rail and may have been designed to take removable screen windows. The stone wall and smoothly graded front lawn are important to its setting.

103 High Street
c.1900

This house, next to No. 99 High Street and built around the same time, also represents a late phase of the Queen Anne style. Here, however, a steeply pitched gable roof and L-shaped plan create a late Victorian picturesque quality that contrasts with the trim, contained massing of its neighbor. The deep verandah has slim piers with solid corner brackets, and its eaves rest on small brackets of their own. The narrow aluminum siding probably conceals patterned shingles, and is inappropriate to the style, as are the aluminum windows and storm door.

109 High Street
c.1840—45

Characteristic of the Greek Revival style in the District, this two-story house is five bays wide with a center entry. Though only one survives, it doubtless had two chimneys, characteristically placed. Its wide clapboard walls are emphasized by the flat cornerboards and the architrave below the eaves at the front. The six-over-six window sash are valuable original details. The hipped roof front porch, now screened, has original fluted Doric columns. A little garden building greatly enhances the grounds of this house, and interestingly shaped granite gateposts distinguish the low walls separating the front yard from the sidewalk.

114 High Street
c.1885

This is a fine Shingle Style house, built around 1885, with most of its distinctive architectural detail left intact. The walls are clapboard, with decorative patterned shingle in the gable field. A hipped roof verandah with a rail, possibly Chinese-inspired, unites the two wings of the L-shaped plan and shelters the original glass-topped, paneled double doors. Characteristic of the style of this house is the paired, one-over-one bay window crowned by is own gable on the south side.

117 High Street
c.1850

This Italianate house whose original clapboards are now hidden under wide aluminum is graced by a two-story bay window that gives it an asymmetrical facade, and two-over-two window sash. A handrailed front porch exhibits smooth, turned columns which may be a later addition. The molded eaves, returned several inches along the gables at the sides of the house, are a characteristic mid-Victorian detail. A fine 19th century barn with slate-roofed cupola adds much to the Victorian character of the property.

120 High Street
20th century

This fairly modern house was successfully designed to harmonize with the Federal and Greek revival buildings characteristic of Newton Upper Falls. The slim pilasters of the door surround rise to the eaves, a detail often found in early Federal houses. The shingle walls seen here, however, are more common on Georgian Revival houses of the 20th century, than on their real Georgian or Federal prototypes, and underline the true origins of this attractive house.

124 High Street
1920s

This is a fine Elizabethan cottage of the 1920s. Though small, its forms are arranged to achieve a picturesque asymmetry based on medieval English cottages. The location of the chimney, its walls exposed near the front of the house, is a characteristic touch but all original trim and wall surfaces are now hidden by aluminum siding, with awning and storm door, all inappropriate to the style of the house. The evergreen plantings clustered at the entry to the house are in excellent harmony with its style and form.

125 High Street
c.1855

This Greek Revival house, originally the one-story-and-attic type, stands raised well above street level on a terraced lawn. Its ground floor has the typical arrangement of center entry between paired windows, while the windows on the second floor are organized differently. The three-part door and small, columned entry porch are fine details, and the clapboard walls are the building's appropriate surface, reflecting the favored cladding of the Greek Revival period. A granite retaining wall at the sidewalk and old trees in the yard enhance the house's appearance.

132 High Street
late 19th century

This simple house, two stories tall with its gable end facing the street, has the classic Queen Anne Revival form. Its original surface texture was probably clapboard, with perhaps some shingles in the gable field, and its windows would have been shuttered. Removal of the current vinyl cladding, following research as to the original wall surface, should benefit the appearance of this house.

OAK STREET

15 Oak Street
c.1885

Late Victorian Italianate in style, this clapboarded house has rectangular bay windows everywhere, giving it a picturesque appearance. Wide, paired windows maximize the views from these bays, one of which shelters the entry porch from above. The front yard with a stone retaining wall, features a fine old red beech tree.

23 Oak Street
c.1825—30

This farmhouse is similar in style to Greek Revival houses elsewhere in the District. As with others, this one is sited for emphasis on a terraced mound. It has small windows and a center chimney, but its added dormers, vestibule and shingle cladding have changed its appearance. Significant as one of the few farmhouses within the Historic District, this house appears pleasant in terms of overall visual effect, and would benefit substantially by restoration work.

38—44 Oak Street
c.1840

Unusual in having at grade entries at each of its four levels, this stone barn features beautiful masonry walls, and a roof shape designed to admit light into the center of the building. Most surfaces are fieldstone, laid up random fashion with the great door and window surrounds worked in cut stone and brick. The barn's upper level, beneath the broad roof, is vertical wood siding. Probably built around 1840 for Otis Pettee, the building is believed to have been intended for a silk mill, but it has had a variety of actual uses ranging from woodworking to warehousing. While of great historical significance for the District, this building is also to be prized for its handsome appearance.

PETTEE STREET

44 Pettee Street
1838 — altered c.1900

This house, so significantly altered as to present a virtually unrecognizable style, has a broad-pitched roof, shingled walls, and a flare between first and second stories. While some of these characteristics suggest a turn-of-the-century modification, the delicate three-part door is early Greek Revival. Comprehensive exterior work, preceeded by careful research, would be required to achieve a good return to its original style.

48 Pettee Street
c.1890—1900

Very similar to its neighbor at No. 50 Pettee Street, this Queen Anne village house, with clapboard walls and a hipped-roof verandah, has its gable end facing the street. The lattice beneath the porch floor is a fine detail, as is the graceful three-sided bay window on the house's south side. The attractive front door, set with an oval pane of glass, is now hidden by an aluminum storm door.

50 Pettee Street
c.1890—1900

Similar to its neighbor at No. 48, this Queen Anne village house has clapboard walls enhanced by some delicate patterned shingling at the gable field. The cornerboards and molded window surrounds are good details, and the hipped-roof verandah is indispensable to the building's style.

54 Pettee Street
19th century; modified

Two stories tall, its ridge parallel to the street, this 19th century house has been modified by the addition of a massive stuccoed front porch. The extended center bay at second story level has a roof that sweeps down and outward from the main roof, and enhances the modified appearance of the house. The cobblestone retaining wall is a landscape feature very characteristic of the early 20th century. While the porch represents an interesting later feature, the aluminum cladding does diminish the authenticity and appeal of this house.

RICHARDSON ROAD

12 Richardson Road
c.1810; altered c.1870

Built early in the 19th century for the family of a millworker, this house is one of only two remaining components of an original group of cottages. The clapboard siding with cornerboards is important to the house's appearance, and the High Victorian Italianate bracketed hood over the door adds richness to the simple facade. The dormer windows, though probably added much later, are well designed, and appropriately sided with clapboards.

16 Richardson Road
c.1810; altered c.1870

This house, with its close neighbor at 12 Richardson Road was built as housing for workers at the nearby Newton Factories. In common with its neighbor, the cottage has clapboard walls and dormer windows, but its simple door surround is not hooded. Both No. 16 and No. 12 Richardson Road are important historically, and they make a satisfying architectural group.

28 Richardson Road
c.1848; altered c.1875

This large house is one of the District's rare examples of the Second Empire style, distinguished by its dormer-windowed mansard roof. The roof, probably a century old, retains its original patterned slate covering, a feature of great distinction. Also important are the brackets paired at the eaves, the heavy, molded lintels over ground floor windows, the square-piered porch nestled into a corner, and the clapboard walls. A handsome early barn is located near the house.

SULLIVAN AVENUE

16 Sullivan Avenue
c.1915

This small, late Shingle Style house, apparently built around 1915, has a pitched roof, with its gable facing the lane, a simple hipped-roof front porch, and a narrow stove-sized chimney rising from the center of its roof ridge. Wide aluminum siding has altered the original surface texture of the house which is likely to have been originally shingled. Removal of the siding would improve the appearance and texture of the exterior walls.

17 Sullivan Avenue
19th century barn; remodeled for a house

Believed to have been built as a barn and converted later to a house, this small stucco-walled structure is built into the hillside with entrances at both the ground and the second floors. It is a house of good proportions, clean, neat, and painted white.

24—26 Sullivan Avenue
c.1885

The late Victorian Italianate bracketed entrance hood above the paired doorways is the most important architectural detail of this hipped roof double house. Its two-over-two window sash are original details. The simple, rectangular form, low-pitched hipped roof and elaborate entry hood give this house the features of the Italian Villa style, whose popularity presisted throughout the second half of the 19th century. The existing wide aluminum cladding should be considered for removal in favor of clapboards appropriate to the style of this period.

33—35 Sullivan Avenue
c.1850; later modifications

The original east block of this house is a traditional Newton Upper Falls one-and-a-half story, center door, two chimney house of the mid-19th century. A fine porch with hipped roof and turned posts, was added in the 1920s, enriching the appearance of the house. A large, two-story west wing, a late 19th century addition, nearly doubles the building's size. The wing's second floor entry, reached by a tall railed stair, and sheltered by a bracketed hood, gives visual liveliness to the simple shape of the el. The entire structure is sheathed with narrow clapboards, a detail of substantial significance for houses of this type whose beauty is in the smallest elements of texture and trim.

36 — 38 Sullivan Avenue
19th century stable — remodeled early 20th century

This handsome "double decker" house was originally built as a livery stable for the owner of the house at No. 33-35 Sullivan Avenue. Its conversion to residences seems to have taken place early in this century. Little except its broad, low-pitched roof remains of its old appearance. Beyond its spacious overall form, the chief detail of this house is its two-story gallery (porches), with turned posts and balustraded handrails. The cladding consists of asbestos shingles inconsistent with the period in which this building was reconstructed as a dwelling.

SPRING STREET

12 Spring Street
c.1835—45

This Greek Revival cottage is very typical of Newton Upper Falls houses of its period. Its trabeated (post-and-lintel) door surround is its strongest stylistic detail, and the two-over-two window sash, while perhaps not original, are an old modification and appropriate. The peaked dormers, with fronts flush with the facade plane are much later additions, which alter the basic appearance of the house and the asbestos shingles may conceal original clapboards and their removal should be considered. The breaks in the cornice line necessitated by the new dormers have further necessitated installation of downspouts disruptive to the appearance of the front of the house.

SUMMER STREET

5 Summer Street
mid-20th century

This fairly recent Georgian Revival house has a good pedimented door surround and appropriate wood shingled walls. The evergreen foundation planting is consistent with and characteristic of houses of the 1930s to 1950s.

United Methodist Church
15 Summer Street
1827

An outstanding early Greek Revival church, this structure is one of the architectural treasures of the Historic District. Formerly, it was more appropriately sheathed with four-inch clapboards, but the overall form of the building with square tower rising behind the gabled narthex, and capped by an octagonal lantern with finial and weathervane retains a powerful effect. Decorative detail, particularly the entrance with fluted Doric columns supporting a strong lintel, surmounted by a broad, three-part Palladian window is architecturally fine. The present aluminum siding is not in harmony with the age and style of this structure.

6 Summer Street
c.1835—40

This clapboarded Greek Revival house, with typical pitched roof, chimney pair and post-and-lintel door with sidelights, is quite unusual because of its graceful Gothic-arched windows on the front and sides. Louvered shutters, fixed at the upper arches and opened below, make a strong pattern across the front of the house, and the sash includes much old glass. The ell at the back of the house has a fine High Victorian Italianate bracketed hood sheltering a side door.

14 Summer Street
c.1835—40

This small house, whose pointed-arched sash on the sidewalls suggests the hand of the same architect who built No. 6 Summer Street, retains its early form. This form is most unusual, having full front and rear porches sheltered beneath the slopes of its pitched roof. A recent alteration has veneered the building's facade with brick, and the fine front door has been hidden behind an inappropriately designed aluminum storm door.

20 Summer Street
late 19th century

This simple house suggests a very late 19th century date on the basis of its roof form and L-shaped plan. Very little stylistic detail remains due to the aluminum cladding, inappropriate to this style of house. The modern, vertically-sided side porches are particularly out of keeping with the rest of the house.

24 Summer Street
19 century barn; remodeled 20th century

This modest house was built during the 19th century as a barn, and converted for use as a house in the 1930s. Its strong, simple lines are pleasing. The wood shingles are an appropriate cladding.

WINTER STREET

1 Winter Street
c.1860—75

This small Italianate cottage with a picturesque three-sided bay window on High Street, is being enlarged to double its original size. There is a fine little bracketed hood sheltering the entrance, and the Winter Street windows in the original section are paired within a single frame. Windows in the addition are not similar to the more charming ones on the original portion of the house. As the addition has no cladding yet, it is recommended that clapboards be used.

7 Winter Street
c.1835 appearance — house may be older

A tall Greek Revival house of the mid-19th century, this building has a fine three-part door surround. The small two-over-two windows are very appropriate to its design, but a two-story, shed-roofed extension is not in harmony with the style of the house. Narrow clapboard wall surface gives the house an appropriate texture, and granite retaining walls add a good landscape feature to the site.

13—15 Winter Street
c.1835

Set high on a rise, this Greek Revival house has a fine trabeated door surround and early window sash. The unpainted blackened shingles are modern and probably conceal or replace the original narrow-width clapboards, which would have been painted white. A return to the historical cladding would dramatically improve the appearance of the house.

16—20 Winter Street
c.1825—35; altered

The shape and organization of this small house establish it as a typical 19th century two-chimney, centry entry house whose appearance has been modified. While its form is strong and appealing, no historical detail is to be seen from the street. The double dormer in the center of the roof, while adding light to the second floor, is inappropriate to the original design. The house would be greatly improved by replacing the wide, dented aluminum with narrow wood clapboards.

23—25 Winter Street
19th century — altered

Stucco completely conceals this clapboarded Greek Revival house and its porch, but its general shape, chimneys and columned porch reveal both its period and style. Removal of the stucco would be costly, and might be unrealistic, but would be a prerequisite to restoring an historic, clapboarded appearance.

GLOSSARY

Architrave:	a heavy horizontal beam or depiction thereof
Balusters:	small pillars or *columns*, a series of which support a railing or a bannister
Brackets:	wooden or metal supports, often ornamental, at eaves, windowsills, lintels
Bay:	within a structure, a regularly repeated spatial element defined by beams or ribs and their supports; as in a *bay* of windows. (See also *bay windows* under windows)
Capital:	the top of a classical *column*, making the transition between its round shaft and the weight that it supports
Chamfer:	a bevelled edge on a rectangular section, such as a wood beam
Column:	a supporting pillar, sometimes plain and circular in section, sometimes treated as one of the classic orders *fluted Doric column*: column whose shaft is channeled vertically, with a simple, circular capital
Corner blocks:	squares at the upper corners of window and door frames, sometimes ornamented with concentric circles, rosettes or other devices
Corner boards:	flat boards casing a wood building's corners for weather protection, often ornamentally treated as *pilasters*
Corner brackets:	ornamental wood brackets that span the corner between a vertical element (often a porch post) and the horizontal element it carries
Cornice:	a projection at the top of a wall forming the roof edge
Dentil:	a small square block beneath an *eave* or *cornice*
Doorway:	an opening for passage through a wall door *surround* — the casing into which a door fits when closed
Double House:	a two-family house, with two front doors on its principal front
Eaves:	roof edges that project over outside walls
Ell:	an extension to a building at right angles to its length *lateral ell*: an extension at the side of a building

Facade:	the front of a building
Fan Light:	a semi-circular or elliptical glazed opening over a doorway
Finial:	a pointed ornament at the peak of a *gable* or tower cap
Flush-boards:	wood boarding applied either vertically or horizontally to create a smooth surface
Gable:	the end wall beneath a pitched roof
Gothic arch:	a fairly narrow arch with pointed top
Half House:	a small house consisting of two *bays* of windows on one side of an entrance, as opposed to the two *bays* of windows found on either side of the entrance of a "full" house
Hood:	overhead shelter, as at a doorway
Lean-to:	a rear addition making the house into a Salt-box
Lunette:	a *window* in the shape of a half-moon
Modillions:	small brackets used in a series, usually to ornament a *cornice*
Moulding:	a three-dimensional ornamental feature
Narthex:	the entrance vestibule of a church
Order:	a classical style of *column* (e.g. the Doric Order, the Corinthian Order)
Oriel:	a projecting *window*, canti-levered out from a building's upper floors
Parapet:	low wall along the edge of a roof, usually concealing the slope of the roof
Pediment:	the enclosure of a *gable* field by raking *cornices* (along the roof slopes) and flat *cornice* (connecting the raking *cornices* at eaves level) to frame a triangle
Pier:	solid, square support
Pilaster:	a *pier* of shallow depth, projecting slightly from the wall surface behind it

Portico: overhanging front, supported on *columns*

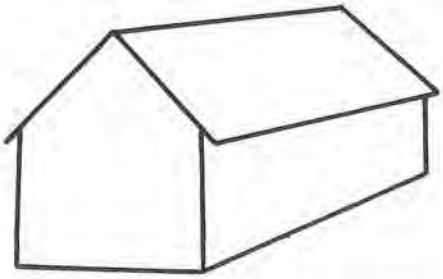
Roof: the top protective shell of a building

pitched roof (*gable* roof): one in which two slopes meet at their upper edges at a ridge

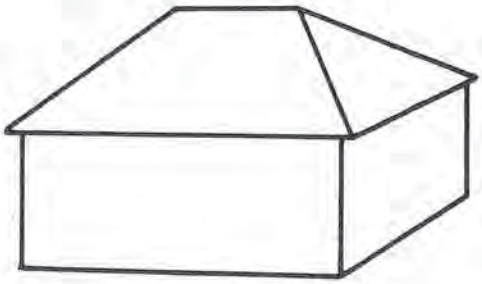
hipped roof: one in which four slopes, one above each exterior wall, meet to form a ridge parallel to the longer walls of the building

gambrel roof: one in which the front and back roofs break to form upper and lower slopes below the ridge

mansard roof: one in which the steep lower slope of a double pitched roof forms a full-height attic story above the building's *cornice*



GABLE



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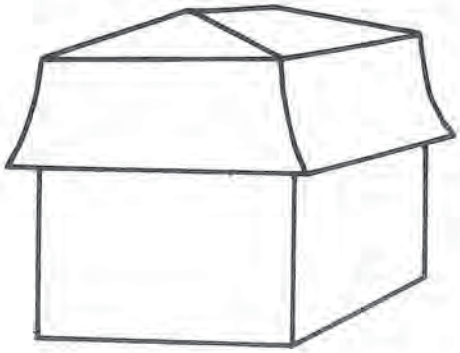
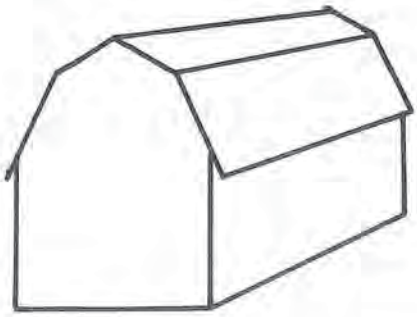


MANSARD



GAMBREL

Saltbox: a house whose rear wall is lower than its front wall. This is usually the result of a shed addition across the back of the building

Scroll sawn: openwork cut with a scroll saw or jigsaw

Segmental arch: a curve which is less than a full half-circle

Sidelights: strips of glass panes on either side of a door

Sunburst: a carved depiction of a rising sun popular in Queen Anne Revival architecture

Surround: the decorative woodwork around a door or window opening

Temple-front: description for the type of Greek Revival style house where a row of columns support a pediment that shelters the building's front porch

Trabeated: of post-and-lintel construction: where vertical supports carry a horizontal beam

Transom: an opening over a door or window, for light or ventilation, often glazed in panes

Trim: the woodwork around a door or window opening

Verandah: long porch crossing front and/or side facade including roof, supports, rail and floor

Victorian: not a particular style, but any style used during Queen Victoria's reign (1844-1900)

Watertable: the exterior wall element directly above the foundation, which may be a board on a wood building, or a course of stone or brick on a masonry building

Window: an opening in a wall for light and ventilation, with all its appurtenances

bay window: multi-sided or rounded windowed projection from the foundation level

double-hung window: having two sash, one sliding vertically over the other; described by the number of panes in each sash (six-over-six)

lintel: horizontal element spanning top of a door or window

sill: horizontal element at base of window

sash: frame which holds glass in a window

lunette: a window in the shape of a half-moon

muntin: in the sash, the slender bar holding the window panes

oriel window: a bay window which is on an upper story only

window surround: the frame around a window, enclosing the sash

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