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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2011

Revised: 3/2025



John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS Landscape  
John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

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## Introduction

### The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI)

The Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) is a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the National Park System. Landscapes that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources and in which the National Park Service has, or plans to acquire, legal interest are included in the inventory. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, and condition. Cultural landscapes have approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into the Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS-CL) database. In addition, for landscapes not currently listed on the National Register and/or without adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, or the Keeper of the National Register.

### Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is compiled from primary and secondary sources and through on-site surveys of the landscape. The level of investigation is dependent upon scoping the need for information.

The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's integrity and an assessment of the landscape's condition. The CLI also includes historic maps, drawings, and images; photographs of existing conditions; and a site plan that indicates major features. The CLI documents the existing condition of park landscape resources and identifies impacts, threats, and measures to stabilize condition. This information can be used to develop strategies for improved stewardship. Unlike a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), the CLI does not provide management recommendations or treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape, but it may identify stabilization measures.

### The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, and cultural landscapes. Cultural Resources Inventory System (CRIS) replaces three legacy inventory systems: ASMIS (archeology), CLI (cultural landscapes), and LCS (historic structures); and it reinstates the former ERI (ethnographic resources). This Cultural Landscape Inventory document reflects the information in a corresponding CRIS Cultural Landscape record.

### Statutory and Regulatory Foundation

The legislative, regulatory, and policy directives for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are:

- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)) Sec. 110
- Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3 (a and c)
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs
- Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Std. 2
- Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22; issued pursuant to Director's Order #28 (DO-28)

The NHPA requires the identification, evaluation, and nomination of historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the maintenance and expansion of an inventory of cultural resources. DO-28 requires a cyclic assessment of the current condition of cultural landscapes based on an assessment interval, with a default of six years.

### Use

Beyond fulfilling legal and policy requirements, park staff can use the Cultural Landscape Inventory in the following ways:

- To learn about park cultural landscapes (all staff)
- To inform management decisions (park managers)
- To inform project planning and development (park managers, facility managers, project managers, compliance specialists)
- To monitor the condition of the cultural landscape and take measures to protect its significance and integrity (cultural resource managers, facility managers)
- To recognize the stabilization and treatment needs of landscape features and plan work within cultural landscapes to address the needs (facility managers, cultural resource managers)
- To understand the cultural value of natural systems in a cultural landscape (natural resource managers)
- To create programming and educational materials based on site history (interpretation and education specialists)
- To recognize impacts within cultural landscapes and enforce protection measures (visitor and resources protection staff)

## General Information

### Property Level and CLI Numbers

|                                   |                                       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Inventory Unit Name:</b>       | John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS Landscape |
| <b>Resource Classification:</b>   | Cultural Landscape                    |
| <b>CLI Identification Number:</b> | 650032                                |
| <b>Parent Landscape:</b>          | 650032                                |
| <b>Inventory Status:</b>          | Complete                              |

### Park Information

|                                |                                                |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Park Name:</b>              | John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site |
| <b>Alpha Code:</b>             | JOFI                                           |
| <b>Park Organization Code:</b> | 1805                                           |
| <b>Park District:</b>          | JOFI                                           |
| <b>Region:</b>                 | Northeast                                      |
| <b>Restricted:</b>             | Yes                                            |

### Landscape Description:

The John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site, located in the Coolidge Corner neighborhood of Brookline, Massachusetts, is a 0.09-acre property that preserves the birthplace and childhood home of the country's thirty-fifth President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy (b. 1917–d. 1963). The site is located on the south side of 83 Beals Street in a residential development surrounded by homes on its northeast, southeast, and southwest sides. The property consists of a two and one half-story Colonial Revival house built in 1909 and is surrounded by small front, side, and rear yards and fencing. A large plane-tree extends over the street and shades the front lawn. A collection of evergreen shrubs and a privet hedge frame the front yard, which contains a commemorative marker installed by the Town of Brookline in 1961, a flagpole installed in 1969 after the dedication ceremony, and park signs. The side yard is accessed by a concrete walk, which leads to the basement visitor entrance. The rear yard is predominantly turf and ringed by deciduous trees and shrubs and an evergreen tree. Flowering annuals add color by the commemorative marker and along the fence line.

The site is presently accessed by the public through a seasonal tour program, which includes tours of the home and of the neighborhood. The house was refurbished by the Kennedys between 1966 and 1969 to reflect the birthplace in 1917, as remembered by the President's mother, Rose Kennedy. The site is characterized by features from the Kennedy's period of residence in 1914 to 1920, as well as from the 1960s when the property was enhanced by the Town of Brookline to recognize its significance as the President's birthplace and when the property was repurchased by the Kennedy family as a memorial to John F. Kennedy. The site was formally dedicated on May 29, 1969 and is a designated National Historic Landmark.

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Prior to European settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, the Massachusetts confederation of Native Americans occupied the narrow coastal peninsula and Muddy River area that would respectively become Boston and Brookline. European colonists, drawn to the abundant fresh water, fertile soils, as well as fishing, hunting and trade opportunities, displaced most Native Americans by the end of the century. Early inland trails across the Muddy River flats and Charles River lowlands became colonial cart paths, accessible from Boston—first at the Muddy River ford in

1633 and later by the Mill River Dam Road across the Back Bay mudflats in 1821.

A village center grew near the Muddy River ford, and in 1686 the General Council approved a schoolhouse for the Hamlet of Muddy River, effectively separating the community from Boston. In 1705 the General Council approved a petition to incorporate the community as the Town of Brookline. By the end of the eighteenth century, the town included sparse settlements of farms and summer retreats built by wealthy Bostonians. Despite numerous efforts to annex the area to the growing city of Boston, the town remained independent.

During the nineteenth century, the town established its own municipal utilities, allowing it to remain a prestigious community of country estates that was set apart but almost geographically surrounded by the city of Boston. The Boston population swelled in mid century with an influx of immigrants, many from Ireland who left during the Great Famine. Included among these Irish immigrants were the maternal and paternal great grandparents of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Although Kennedy's great grandparents did not settle in Brookline, many Irish Roman Catholic immigrants found work in the growing commercial centers and on the large estates in the town. In 1852 the Archdiocese established a Catholic Church in Brookline in the town's first center by the Muddy River ford, later known as Brookline Village and located along present-day Brookline Avenue.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the heirs of some of Brookline's greatest landowners chose to divide and sell their properties, particularly in North Brookline. Brookline's population nearly tripled with the introduction of first the horse-drawn, and then the electric, streetcar. Streetcars along Beacon and Harvard streets prompted Coolidge Corner to become a commercial hub and led to the rapid development of subdivisions in the surrounding neighborhood. These new communities required new school buildings, town services, and houses of worship.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, when Joseph and Rose Kennedy were searching for their first home, North Brookline was developing rapidly. Members of diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups were moving out of Boston to new neighborhoods along the streetcar lines, resulting in new houses of worship, schools, services, and stores. The young couple chose a two and one half-story Colonial Revival home within a seventeen year-old subdivision, in close proximity to Coolidge Corner commercial area, the newly constructed Saint Aidan's Roman Catholic Church (which was the third Catholic church in Brookline) and the recently expanded Edward Devotion School. When the Kennedys moved into their home at 83 Beals Street in October 1914, the neighborhood was open and spacious compared to their respective neighborhoods in Boston, and many of the surrounding lots were undeveloped.

Four of the nine Kennedy children were born while the family lived at 83 Beals Street: Joseph, John, Rosemary, and Kathleen. Their first child, Joseph Patrick (Joe) Jr., was born at the family's summer house in Hull, Massachusetts on July 25, 1915. On May 29, 1917, six weeks after the United States entered the First World War, their second son, John Fitzgerald (Jack) Kennedy was born in the upstairs bedroom of their Beals Street home. Jack was baptized at the nearby Saint Aidan's Roman Catholic Church, where he later served as an altar boy. Jack spent his first three years playing in the small yard at 83 Beals and walking along the tree-lined streets of the neighborhood. During their residency, the trimmed grass yard remained unadorned, with the exception of the plane-tree along the street and three rose bushes along the rear foundation wall. A chicken-wire fence enclosed the rear yard with a small white picket gate across a concrete walk. The surrounding open lots were unmaintained.

In 1920, the Kennedy family moved three blocks north to 51 Abbottsford Road, a larger house with increased space for live-in help and larger lot with a detached garage for the family car. For the next seven years, Jack and his growing number of siblings lived in the Abbottsford Road home where a wrap-around porch, a lawn, and a paved driveway offered more space for play and fresh air. Along with his older brother, Jack attended the local public elementary Edward Devotion School in 1922 and 1923. The boys transferred to the nearby private Noble and Greenough lower school in 1924 and continued to attend the school in 1926 when it became the Dexter School. The family left Brookline in the fall of 1927 and moved to Riverdale, New York.

During the 1920s, home construction in the Beals Estate subdivision continued. The first home constructed on the eastern half of the development in 1921 was 63 Beals, which filled in a gap in the houses to the southwest of 83 Beals. Immediately to the northeast of 83 Beals, a building permit was submitted for a two-family home at 85/87 Beals in 1922. Between 1922 and 1924 five additional homes were built across the street. In 1927, as the Kennedys were moving to New York, building permits were submitted for the final two properties in the development. Within a year, all lots within the Beals Estate subdivision were built upon.

Two years after the Kennedys left Brookline, the country entered the Great Depression. Residential construction in Brookline diminished and after the Second World War, suburban development shifted further from the city, due in large part to new roads built under the 1950s federal transportation programs, federal mortgage guarantees, and veterans' incentives. Despite the continued exodus of residents from Boston and its urban neighborhoods, the Coolidge Corner area remained vibrant, though with little change. John F. Kennedy returned to Massachusetts in 1945 and began his political career as a representative from the eleventh Congressional district, an area which did not include Brookline.

In years between the sale of the 83 Beals Street property by the Kennedys in 1920 and its repurchase by Rose Kennedy's nephew in 1966, the property passed through three owners: the Moores who were friends of the Kennedys, the Myersons, and the Pollacks. During this time, a detached garage and driveway were added and then removed from the southwest side of the property. Foundation plantings, a perimeter hedge, and a spruce tree were added to the yard, enhancing its domestic character.

When John Fitzgerald Kennedy was elected President of the United States in 1960, the Beals Street neighborhood acquired widespread public significance as his birthplace and childhood home. The Town of Brookline installed a commemorative bronze plaque in the front yard at 83 Beals in 1961, which at the time was a private residence owned by Martha Pollack. When Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, Beals Street and the Kennedy birthplace became a gathering site for thousands of mourners who wished to express their sorrow at the untimely loss of the nation's thirty-fifth President.

Recognizing the significance of the property as a memorial to the late President, the Town of Brookline considered plans for acquiring the Beals Street property. Ultimately, the Kennedy family repurchased the property in 1966 and Rose Kennedy refurbished the home as she remembered it at the time of John's birth. Mrs. Kennedy donated the property to the National Park Service in 1967. The landscape however, was not restored to its 1917 appearance, but instead ornamented with shrubs, flowers, and a reproduction gas light. The site opened with a dedication ceremony on May 29, 1969, and according to a local newspaper, drew about 600 visitors.

Throughout these events and physical changes to the home, the plane-trees, planted prior to the arrival of the Kennedy family to the Brookline neighborhood in 1914, have remained and continued to envelop the streetscape. Other smaller landscape features have been added including shrubs, signs, walks, and lawn furniture. The present landscape collectively represents the two periods of Kennedy family involvement in the 1910s and 1960s as well as later features introduced by the National Park Service.

## SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

As stated in the 2010 National Register amendment, the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site is significant under Criterion A in the area of social history for its significance as a presidential commemorative site. The site is significant under Criterion B for its association with John Fitzgerald Kennedy and for its association with Rose Kennedy, the mother of the slain President, who is recognized as being of historical significance in her own right. The property meets Criteria Consideration C as the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Criteria Consideration G for significance achieved within the last fifty years.

The property has a discontinuous period of significance. The first period of significance begins in 1917, the year John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born at 83 Beals Street and extends to 1920, the year the Kennedy family moved out of the birthplace. The later period begins on November 22, 1963 with the death of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Rose Kennedy's significant association with the site begins in 1966, when the Kennedy family reacquired the property. This later period of significance extends to May 29, 1969, the date of the dedication ceremony for the national historic site.

## ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION

The historical integrity of the Kennedy National Historic Site is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the periods of significance (1917–1920, 1963–1969) with the existing conditions as assessed between 2008 and 2011. Many of the existing features contribute to the historic character of the site's landscape. The site's most dominant feature, the house, retains its Colonial Revival design and detailing, while the landscape reflects the commemorative treatment of a small suburban lot, as it appeared in the 1960s, but does not reflect the unadorned appearance of the 1910s. The home remains in its residential setting, though houses to the northeast and north of 83 Beals were built after the Kennedys moved in 1920. The landscape retains some of the key features dating to the

Kennedys' residency in the 1910s—most notably the plane-tree, sidewalk, and front walk—but other features were added in the 1960s including the walk on the southwest side of the house, the commemorative marker, as well as chain-link fence, shrubs, hedges, and flowers by the marker. In the 1910s, the street trees were young and barely casting shade, whereas by the 1960s, the trees created a cathedral-like allee down Beals Street.

The site overall has had some minor alterations since 1969. The National Park Service has altered circulation for ease of access for the site's visitors. The maintenance and periodic replacement of vegetation has occurred since the end of the period of significance. Vegetation has also been added over the years to serve as a screen along the rear property line. As for small-scale features, the flagpole was added to the site after the second period of significance and is not consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood. The park service also added flowers along the southwest chain-link fence in the 1980s.

Overall, the house and other landscape features are in good condition. The site shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The site's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Landscape Hierarchy Description:**

**Landscape Type:**

Historic Site

**Other Names:**

|                    |                                                   |                         |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Other Name:</b> | John Fitzgerald Kennedy<br>National Historic Site | <b>Other Name Type:</b> | Both Current And Historic |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|

**Site Plan**

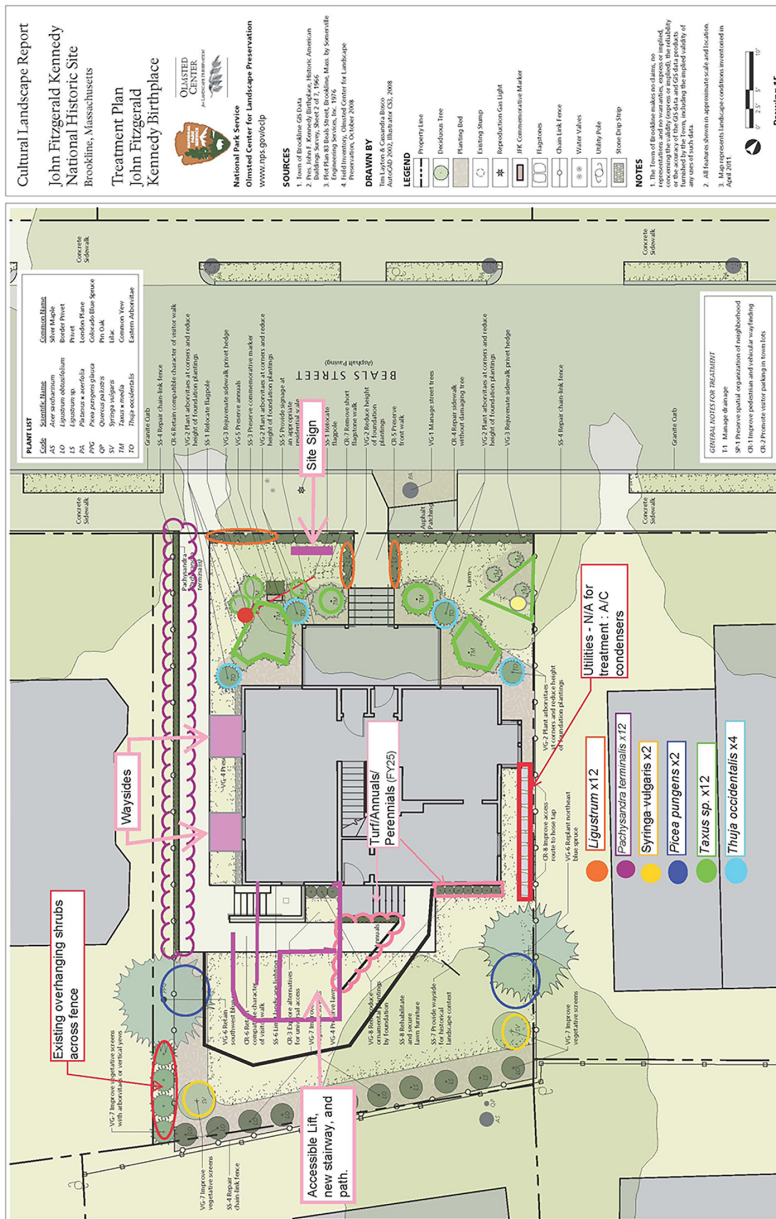
[illegible]

Cultural Landscapes Inventory

[illegible]

Cultural Landscapes Inventory

Plan of Existing Conditions, 2025 edits



## Concurrence Information

**Concurrence Status:**

|                                                 |            |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Park Superintendent Concurrence:</b>         | Yes        |
| <b>Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:</b> | 09/12/2011 |

**Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

Information for this Cultural Landscape Inventory has been extracted from the May 2011 draft of the “Cultural Landscape Report for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site.” The Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was written by Timothy Layton, Adrine Arakelian, and Margie Coffin Brown of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation in Boston. Site visits and research were conducted for the CLR beginning in 2008. The CLR used primary source research materials gathered by Carole Perrault, Historian, NPS Northeast Region Historic Architecture Program, as part of her research for the forthcoming Historic Structure Report for the property. Additionally, information has also been extracted from a 2010 draft amendment of the park’s National Register documentation.

**Concurrence Graphic Information:**

Attachment File Path

/THU 11:49 AM

FAX No. 617 232 3964

P. 00

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY  
CONCURRENCE FORM

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site Landscape  
John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site concurs with the findings of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site Landscape including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must Be Preserved and Maintained

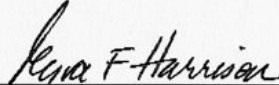
CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscape Inventory for the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site Landscape is hereby approved and accepted.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site      Date

9/12/2011

Park concurrence form, September 12, 2011.

**Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
CLI Update Certification Form  
2025**

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site  
John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS Landscape

John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site concurs with the update for the following CLI, including:

CONDITION ASSESSMENT:      Good – John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS Landscape

**Good:** indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

**Fair:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements, will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

**Poor:** indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The CLI Update for the John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS Landscape is hereby approved and accepted.

**JASON NEWMAN** Digitally signed by JASON NEWMAN  
Date: 2025.03.05 13:14:12 -05'00'

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Park concurrence form, March 5, 2025*

**Revision:**

| Revised By   | Type of Revision | Revision Date | Revision Narrative                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jeff Killion | CLI Update       | 03/05/2025    | Three levels of effort have been developed for CLI Updates: A, B, and C. Level C is limited to a condition reassessment of the landscape; Level B includes C and is a targeted update of select data fields; Level A includes C and is a comprehensive update of all data fields. This 2025 update to the John F. Kennedy NHS Landscape CLI has been conducted at a Level C effort. See Landscape Documents in CRIS-CL for correspondences with park. |

## Geographic Information

### State and County:

**State**

Massachusetts

**County**

Norfolk County

**Size (Acres):** 0.09

### Land Tract Number(s)

Lot 47, Beals Estate, Brookline

### Boundary Description:

The 0.09-acre lot is located on the south side of Beals Street, and bounded by three adjacent lots, 77/79 Beals to the southwest and 85/87 Beals to the northeast—both duplexes—and 82 Stedman to the southeast. Chain link fences demarcate the sides of the lot, but are not on the original or current property lines.

**Boundary Coordinates**

| Source               | Type of Point | Latitude          | Longitude        | Narrative |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|
| USGS Map<br>1:24,000 | Point         | -71.1260415206366 | 42.3461577981071 |           |

**Location Map:**



*Location Map Information. Map of Brookline, Boston, surrounding towns, and Boston neighborhoods (town outlines from MassGIS, <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/townssurvey.htm>).*



## **Regional Landscape Contexts:**

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

### **Description:**

The John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site is within the Beals Street development, which is part of North Brookline's Coolidge Corner neighborhood (see Regional Landscape Context graphic). Prior to its development, the Coolidge Corner neighborhood was characterized by a mixture of wetland and drumlin features. Speculative developers in c.1897 filled Babcock Pond and accompanying minor waterways in North Brookline, and leveled the once prominent Babcock's Hill. Due to the density of the neighborhood development, these key natural features are difficult to discern (CLR, draft May 2011: 164).

The topography of the Beals Street development is fairly level. To the southwest of the site, the remaining knoll that used to be Babcock's Hill gives insight into what the land looked like before the hill was used as fill for Babcock Pond and its associated wetlands. A low point is present on Stedman Street northeast of the Devotion School Playground and the topography rises to the northwest from Beals Street to Naples Road. Many properties on the north side of Beals Street have retaining walls to hold the change in grade (CLR, draft May 2011: 166-167). Furthermore, several homes near the intersection of Beals, Stedman, and Gibbs Street appear to have settled, suggesting that they were built on filled wetlands. The park property itself is predominantly flat, though it drains slightly to the east and southeast toward a former wetland area associated with Babcock Pond (CLR, draft May 2011: 167,170).

The soils in the development are primarily identified as urban complexes containing component soils that include Merrimac, Canton, and Newport. All three component soils are classified as prime farmland by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, provided that they are on land that slopes from three to eight percent (CLR, draft May 2011: 167).

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

The Coolidge Corner neighborhood, which is based on a loose grid-like network of streets, the majority of which are residential connector streets, has remained nearly unchanged for the past century. The neighborhood radiates approximately one half mile from the hub created by the intersection of Harvard and Beacon streets. The neighborhood buildings to the north of Beacon Street exhibit a range of development types and styles, which contribute to its vitality (CLR, draft May 2011: 163).

Anchored by commercial, institutional, and apartment buildings, Beacon and Harvard streets provide a popular social center for the surrounding area. Beacon Street is a broad corridor characterized by its mature street tree canopy and wide sidewalks with ample width for vehicles, streetcars, parking, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Harvard Street is also lined with assorted young street trees and functions similarly to Beacon Street, but on a smaller scale without streetcar lines. The residential areas contain an array of parks, squares, and playgrounds, which provide green space for the neighborhood (CLR, draft May 2011: 163).

The Beals Street development encompasses the residences along Beals and Stedman streets that are within the 1897 thirteen-acre Beals Estate subdivision. The busy commercial setting of Harvard Street, with its wide sidewalks and young trees of mixed species contrasts markedly with the quiet residential character of Beals Street, with its narrow sidewalks and mature plane-trees. Stedman Street, with the Edward Devotion School and athletic fields along its southeastern side and residences to the northwest, has a semi-private character. While the Beals Street development is entirely residential, nearby institutional buildings include the Edward Devotion School to the south and the Congregation Kehillath Israel Synagogue to the southwest, both of which face onto Harvard Street (CLR, draft May 2011: 166).

**Type of Context:** Political

**Description:**

The Coolidge Corner neighborhood is in North Brookline, which falls within the northeastern corner of Norfolk County and is just west of Boston. The 0.09-acre John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site is situated along a quiet residential street within this area.

## Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 09/12/2011

### Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site meets the criteria for the “Must be Preserved and Maintained” management category. The nationally significant property was designated a National Historic Landmark as the birthplace of the thirty-fifth President of the United States. The park’s enabling legislation (Public Law 90-20), dated May 26, 1967, states that the property will be established “to preserve in public ownership and for the purpose of establishing the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy as a national historic site.”

### Management Agreements:

### Legal Interests:

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

**Narrative:**

**Located in managed wilderness?:** Unknown

## Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?**    Yes

### Adjacent Lands Narrative:

Adjacent lands, defined as those beyond park boundaries, contribute to the significance of the property. The site is part of the Beals Street development, a thirteen-acre subdivision initiated in 1897 and built out by about 1928. There are approximately seventy lots in the Beals Estate development between Harvard Street and Manchester Road. Due to the similar age, material, and scale of the residential properties, Beals Street has a well-preserved consistency to its character that creates a unique, largely intact example of speculative development and residential expansion of an early twentieth century streetcar suburb. In addition, the plane-trees lining Beals Street further lend a unifying character to the neighborhood and a sense of its continuity and age. The plane-trees lining Beals Street remain the best preserved example of the initial monoculture street tree plantings for the various streets developed in the area around the early twentieth century.



## National Register Information

### National Register of Historic Places

**Documentation Status:** Entered Documented

**Documentation Narrative Description:**

The property at 83 Beals was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) under the name John F. Kennedy Birthplace on July 19, 1964, as the place where John F. Kennedy, the thirty-fifth President of the United States, was born and spent his infancy. The accompanying documentation for the NHL designation was brief, but according to the National Historic Landmarks Program, the property derives national significance under NHL Criterion 1 in the area of politics/government for the period 1917–1920, corresponding with the birth of President Kennedy in the house on May 29, 1917, and concluding in 1920 when the Kennedy family sold the house and moved out (email, July 19, 2011). The documentation described the house, completed in 1909, and the commemorative marker bearing a relief portrait, installed in 1961 by the Town of Brookline (outside the NHL period of significance).

The site was administratively listed without documentation in the National Register of Historic Places at the time of its designation as the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site, on May 26, 1967. National Register documentation for the site was accepted on November 14, 1976, under Criterion B for its association with John F. Kennedy and Criteria Consideration C (birthplaces and graves). The period of significance was listed as 1917–1920. The house and commemorative marker were described in the documentation, but no other landscape features were discussed.

In a letter dated November 21, 1994, as part of a review of List of Classified Structures resources, the Massachusetts Historical Commission (SHPO) concurred with the National Park Service that the house at 83 Beals Street was contributing resource. The SHPO also determined at this time that the commemorative marker was not a contributing resource because it was less than fifty years old.

In an email dated May 26, 2011, a draft of an amendment to the property's 1976 National Register documentation was approved by the Keeper of the National Register. The amendment added two new areas of significance—Criterion A under social history and Criterion B for Rose Kennedy—and a new period of significance, 1963–1969, for the commemorative efforts relating to the establishment of the site between 1963 and 1969 and the personal involvement of Rose Kennedy, the President's mother, between 1966 and 1969. In addition to a thorough description of the interior and exterior of the house, the amendment also describes the site's associated resources both within and immediately outside the park boundaries. Resources described within the park boundary include the setback of the house from the street, the site's flat topography, front lawn, concrete walk leading to the front of the house, commemorative marker, walk from the public sidewalk along the southwest elevation of the house to an entrance to the basement (visitor center), back yard with small shrubs growing along the rear (southeastern) property line, and the three-and-one-half-foot tall chain link fence along the northeast, southeast, and southwest property lines to enclose the side and rear yards. One noncontributing resource is also described: the steel flagpole (installed in 1969). Resources outside the boundaries include the granite curb along the street, concrete sidewalk that covers the whole of the median, cast-iron gas lamp, and the mature plane-tree in the median.

According to research conducted for this CLI and the categories of National Register documentation outlined in the "CLI Professional Procedures Guide," the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site is adequately documented based on the recently amended National Register documentation and previous correspondences with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Therefore, for purposes of the CLI, the property is considered "Entered-Documented."

**Eligibility:** Eligible -- Keeper

**Concurrence Eligibility Date:** 05/26/2011

**Concurrence Narrative:**

**Significance Level:** National

**Contributing:** Individual

**Classification:** Site

**Statement of Significance for National Register of Historic Places:**

As stated in the 2010 National Register amendment, the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site is significant under Criterion A in the area of social history for its significance as a presidential commemorative site during the period 1963–1969, which begins with Kennedy's assassination on November 22, 1963 and ends with the establishment of the national historic site administered by the National Park Service in 1969. The property is also significant under Criterion B for its association with John Fitzgerald Kennedy, thirty-fifth President of the United States, and for its association with Rose Kennedy, the mother of the slain President, who is recognized as being of historical significance in her own right. The property meets Criteria Consideration C as the birthplace of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Criteria Consideration G for significance achieved within the last fifty years (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 9).

The property has a discontinuous period of significance. The first period of significance begins in 1917, the year John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born and extends to 1920, the year the Kennedy family moved out of the birthplace. The later period begins in 1963 with the death of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. Rose Kennedy's significant association with the site begins in 1966, when she reacquired the property. This later period of significance extends to 1969 when Rose Kennedy donated the property to the National Park Service (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 9).

Extant landscape features on the property that contribute to the significance of the landscape for the early period of Kennedy ownership from 1917 to 1920 include the house, plane-tree (on town-owned land in front of the house) and yard areas, and the walk to the front door. Extant landscape features that contribute to the second period of Kennedy ownership in the 1960s and the associated commemorative and memorial landscape include the house, plane-tree, ornamental shrub plantings in the front yard, front walk, commemorative marker, gas light, and chain-link fence.

**CRITERION A**

The property is significant at the national level under Criterion A, in the area of social history, for its significance as a presidential commemorative site during the period 1963–1969. Unlike many other presidential commemorative sites that were conceived and developed as formal commemorative sites by the families of presidents, the National Park Service, or other groups, the development of 83 Beals Street as a commemorative property was preceded by an informal movement within the town of Brookline. The property at 83 Beals Street spontaneously became a place to celebrate the achievements of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, starting with his election as President of the United States in 1960. After his assassination in 1963, the site became a place to mourn his loss before becoming a formal, national commemorative site. In 1966, the Kennedy family acquired the property to restore it as a formal commemorative site, an initiative led by Rose Kennedy. It is one of a small number of sites commemorating presidents who died in office, and it is the only presidential commemorative site

developed by a president's mother (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 32).

#### CRITERION B

The property is significant under Criterion B for John Fitzgerald Kennedy, the thirty-fifth President of the United States. John was born on May 29, 1917, in Brookline, Massachusetts, the second of nine children raised by Joseph and Rose Kennedy. He graduated from Harvard in 1940 with a degree in international affairs and joined the Navy in 1941. Kennedy served on a Patrol Torpedo boat during World War II and was honorably discharged in early 1945 (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 9).

During his youth, John Kennedy never aspired to become a politician and the political aspirations of his parents were focused on his older brother, Joseph, Jr. However, after the death of Joseph, Jr., during World War II, his parents focused their political aspirations on John. As a result, shortly after returning to Boston from the war, John Kennedy embarked on his political career. In 1946, he ran for the U.S. House of Representatives to fill a spot vacated by James Michael Curley, who had relinquished his post to become the mayor of Boston. Kennedy won the election in November 1946 by a large margin and took office in January 1947. After serving three terms in the House of Representatives, Kennedy ran for the U.S. Senate in 1952 and beat the incumbent, Republican Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., in the general election. Kennedy moved from the House to the Senate on January 3, 1953, and served eight years in the U.S. Senate, being reelected in 1958. Eight months after becoming a senator, Kennedy married Jacqueline Bouvier on September 12, 1953. In 1956, Kennedy authored the Pulitzer Prize winning book "Profiles in Courage" and later that year narrowly missed becoming the Democratic candidate for vice-president (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 9-10).

On January 2, 1960, the 42-year old Kennedy announced his plans to run for President of the United States. Despite the reluctance of many Protestants to elect a Roman Catholic President, his broad popularity gave Kennedy victory in the primaries, and he was nominated to the Democratic ticket on July 13, 1960. On November 8, 1960, Kennedy beat the Republican nominee, Richard M. Nixon, and was elected President of the United States. Taking office on January 20, 1961, Kennedy served as chief executive of the United States for slightly less than three years before being assassinated on November 22, 1963, while on a political visit to Dallas, Texas (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 10).

The property is also significant under Criterion B for its association with Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, and under Criterion A for its contributions to the social history of the U.S during the period 1966–1969, especially in regard to the role of women in public life. It is during this key period that Mrs. Kennedy acquired, restored, and donated the property. Relying largely on her memory, she restored it to its appearance when the President was born, but through her selection of objects and the interpretations she provided for them, she also imprinted her own life story and identity on the property. That identity revolved around the idea of motherhood, a role for which Rose Kennedy was publicly recognized from the 1950s onward and which she cultivated as matron of the nation's most prominent political family, particularly during the 1960s when three of her sons—John, Robert, and Edward M.—achieved high political positions and captured national attention (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 8: 32).

#### CRITERIA CONSIDERATION C: BIRTHPLACES OR GRAVES

The area of significance in the existing (1976) documentation gives the area of significance as "other – presidential birthplace." After the site was designated as a National Historic Landmark (1964), the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments resolved (October 1965) that "an election by the citizens of the Nation of a President is in itself an event of transcendent historical importance" and that "upon the election of any man as President of the United States, an appropriate site be identified and considered for classification as a National Landmark" (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 7: 1).

#### CRITERIA CONSIDERATION G: PROPERTIES THAT HAVE ACHIEVED SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

The site possesses exceptional importance for the period from 1963 to 1969 for its association with the establishment of property as a presidential site and also for reflecting the role of Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy

as a symbolic figure in American history in her own right. After his death, the house became a place where people came to experience a tangible link to the slain President during the period of social and political upheaval. In addition, the property is intimately associated with Rose Kennedy as the courageous mother of the slain President when she reacquired the house for the purpose of restoring it as a formal memorial to her son. It reflects, in its furnishings, collections, and oral histories intended for use as part of the audio tour, her own ideals relating to family and motherhood (National Register Amendment, draft 2010 , Sec. 7: 1-2).

The site interprets episodes from her own life and as a mother, a role for which she was widely recognized and to which the political success of her sons John Fitzgerald, Robert, and Edward M., provided the most direct testimony. Rose Kennedy spoke at length about the personal meaning of many of the objects in the house and how they reflected her beliefs. In addition, the property exhibits a high degree of historic integrity from this period and is therefore able to convey "exceptional importance." (National Register Amendment, draft 2010, Sec. 7: 2).

**National Register Significance Criteria:**

- A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history
- B - Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

**National Register Criteria Consideration:**

C -- A birthplace or grave

G -- A property less than 50 years of age

**National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes):**

**Time Period:** CE 1917 - CE 1920

| Historic Context Theme          | Subtheme                              | Facet                                 | Other Facet |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Shaping the Political Landscape | Other Shaping the Political Landscape | Other Shaping the Political Landscape |             |

**Time Period:** CE 1963 - CE 1969

| Historic Context Theme          | Subtheme                                  | Facet                                     | Other Facet |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Shaping the Political Landscape | Political and Military Affairs After 1945 | United States As Leader Of The Free World |             |

**Area of Significance:**

**Area of Significance Category:** Social History

**Area of Significance Subcategory:**

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**NRIS Information:**

**NRIS ID:** 67000001

**Primary Certification Date:** 05/26/1967

**Other Certifications and Date:** MM/dd/yyyy

**State Register Documentation:**

**Identification Number:** BKL.AJ

**Name:** John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site

**Listed Date:** 05/26/1967

**National Historic Landmarks:**

**National Historic Landmark?**      Yes

**Theme:**

**Contributing:**

**NHL ID:**

**NHL URL:**

**Date:**

**Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark:**

**World Heritage Site:**

**World Heritage Site?**      No

**Category:**

**WHS ID:**

**WHS URL:**

**Date:**

**Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape:**    No

## Chronology and Physical History

### Chronology:

| Year           | Event          | Major Event Narrative                                                                                                           |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CE 1897        | Platted        | Benjamin Newhall subdivides Beals Street development.                                                                           |
| CE 1900        | Planted        | Town of Brookline plants plane-trees along Beals Street.                                                                        |
| CE 1906 - 1907 | Purchased/Sold | Mary M. Poor purchases the 83 Beals lot and sells it in 1907 to Robert M. Goode.                                                |
| CE 1907        | Developed      | Goode subdivides 83 Beals lot, reduces frontage to 50 feet, giving 10 feet to 77/79 Beals.                                      |
| CE 1909        | Built          | Home built at 83 Beals.                                                                                                         |
| CE 1914        | Purchased/Sold | Joseph Kennedy purchases 83 Beals from Howard and Laura Kline.                                                                  |
| CE 1914        | Altered        | Joseph Kennedy adds bay window to northeast wall of dining room.                                                                |
| CE 1914        | Inhabited      | Rose and Joseph Kennedy move into 83 Beals on October 28, 1914.                                                                 |
| CE 1920        | Purchased/Sold | The Kennedys sell 83 Beals to family friends Edward and Mary Moore.                                                             |
| CE 1921 - 1924 | Built          | Homes are built on adjacent properties to the northeast and northwest within the Beals Street development.                      |
| CE 1927        | Built          | All properties within the Beals Street development are built.                                                                   |
| CE 1928        | Purchased/Sold | The Moores sell 83 Beals to the Myerson family.                                                                                 |
| CE 1928        | Built          | Garage is added to the south corner of the site.                                                                                |
| CE 1928        | Built          | Two concrete tracks, known as a ribbon driveway, are added for vehicular circulation to the garage.                             |
| CE 1930 - 1939 | Planted        | Privet hedge planted along southwestern property line.                                                                          |
| CE 1944        | Purchased/Sold | The Myersons sell 83 Beals to the Pollack family.                                                                               |
| CE 1950 - 1959 | Planted        | Spruce tree planted on the northeast side of rear yard, and foundation plantings around house.                                  |
| CE 1950 - 1959 | Planted        | The Pollacks add front yard vegetation, shrub arrangement under front windows and flanking wooden steps to the porch.           |
| CE 1961        | Planted        | Town of Brookline plants a privet hedge along the front sidewalk at 83 Beals after John F. Kennedy's presidential inauguration. |
| CE 1961        | Built          | Town of Brookline installs the commemorative marker at 83 Beals, John F. Kennedy's birthplace.                                  |
| CE 1961        | Planted        | Town of Brookline plants yews to frame the commemorative marker and sod in the front yard.                                      |
| CE 1964        | Established    | The property is designated a National Historic Landmark on July 19, 1964.                                                       |
| CE 1966        | Purchased/Sold | Joseph Gargan, Rose Kennedy's nephew purchases 83 Beals from the Pollacks.                                                      |

| Year           | Event       | Major Event Narrative                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CE 1966 - 1969 | Altered     | Rose Kennedy refurbishes interior of home to her memory of its 1917 appearance and alters exterior landscape.                                                                             |
| CE 1966 - 1969 | Established | Deed for 83 Beals transferred from Joseph Gargan to Secretary of the Interior on March 17, 1967.                                                                                          |
| CE 1966 - 1969 | Built       | A three-and-one-half-foot tall chain-link fence around perimeter of property is installed sometime between 1966 and 1969.                                                                 |
| CE 1966 - 1969 | Removed     | The garage in the south corner of the property as well as the ribbon driveway concrete tracks for vehicular circulation are removed sometime after September 1966, but prior to May 1969. |
| CE 1967        | Established | The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and authorized as a National Historic Site on May 26, 1967.                                                            |
| CE 1967        | Planted     | Landscape improvements to the front yard included planting lilacs, yews, arborvitae, sod, privets for the existing hedge, and geraniums.                                                  |
| CE 1967 - 1969 | Built       | The Town of Brookline installs a gas light in the tree lawn area in front of 83 Beals.                                                                                                    |
| CE 1967 - 1968 | Planted     | Landscape maintenance and improvements include potted geraniums by the commemorative marker, trimming shrubs, and sod installation.                                                       |
| CE 1969        | Established | Formal dedication ceremony on May 29, 1969 recognizing the property as a National Historic Site.                                                                                          |
| CE 1969        | Built       | Concrete walk installed on the southwest side of the property connecting to rear basement steps.                                                                                          |
| CE 1969        | Removed     | Concrete walk on the northeast side of the property removed.                                                                                                                              |
| CE 1969        | Built       | A flagpole is installed at the site in the early fall.                                                                                                                                    |
| CE 1969        | Planted     | Five arborvitae were transplanted from the front yard to the basement entrance and four yews were planted in the front yard.                                                              |
| CE 1975        | Damaged     | House is firebombed on the evening of September 8, 1975 causing damage to the rear vestibule, kitchen, and exterior wood shingles, as well as smoke damage throughout house.              |
| CE 1976        | Established | The site reopens for public access in December 1976 after restoring the damage the house.                                                                                                 |
| CE 1984        | Removed     | Spruce tree planted by the Pollacks in the rear yard is removed.                                                                                                                          |
| CE 2002        | Built       | A five-foot flag-stone walkway is installed to access the flagpole.                                                                                                                       |

#### Physical History:

The following section provides information on the physical development and evolution of the site, organized by time periods. Graphics associated with this section are located at the end of this report.

## SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF BROOKLINE, PRE-1600–1914

Prior to European settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, the Massachusetts confederation of Native Americans occupied the narrow coastal peninsula and Muddy River area that would respectively become Boston and Brookline. European colonists, drawn to the abundant fresh water, fertile soils, as well as fishing, hunting, and trade opportunities, displaced most Native Americans by the end of the century. Early inland trails across the Muddy River flats and Charles River lowlands became colonial cart paths, some of which led west through Brookline.

The establishment of the colonies resulted in increased trade and a growing population. Consequently, the settlement of the Boston area grew dense and left little open land for livestock. Additional pasture land was needed and the most convenient place to find it was to the west of the city, along the Roxbury Flats and Muddy River (Whitehill, 1968: 6-7). To facilitate use of this area, in 1633 the colonial authorities permitted the construction of a cart bridge over the Muddy River (Curtis, 1933: 32). Due to its close association with the river, the area that would become Brookline was first known simply as Muddy River. A north-south route was laid out in 1662, connecting to a bridge crossing the Charles River to Cambridge. Known as the “road to colleges,” it was renamed Harvard Street in 1841. Although the Muddy River land was primarily used for agricultural purposes by inhabitants of Boston, approximately thirty families were living in the Muddy River area by the 1680s (Herbster, 2007: 21). The population of the Muddy River area continued to grow prompting its incorporation as the Town of Brookline on November 13, 1705 (Curtis, 1933: 53-57).

In the decades leading up to the Revolutionary War, Brookline’s population grew at a modest pace as Boston residents maintained their city homes and looked to Brookline for agricultural production. By 1765, Brookline recorded a population of 388 people (Herbster, 2007: 23). Ten years later, during the siege of Boston, several hills and strategic points along the Muddy River were fortified with gun batteries, however, no battles were staged in Brookline.

In the years following the Revolutionary War, wealthy Bostonians established summer retreats in Brookline. At the start of the nineteenth century Brookline’s population had increased to 605 residents. The town continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century due to its bucolic setting, transportation improvements, and immigration (Curtis, 1933: 213). The town established its own municipal utilities, fended off annexation to Boston, and remained a prestigious community of country estates that was set apart but almost geographically surrounded by the city of Boston.

The city population swelled in the mid-nineteenth century with an influx of immigrants, many from Ireland who left during the Great Famine. Included among these Irish immigrants were the maternal and paternal great grandparents of John F. Kennedy. Although Kennedy’s great grandparents did not settle in Brookline, many Irish Roman Catholic immigrants found work in the growing commercial centers and on the large estates in the town. By 1852, Brookline had a sizeable Irish population, which supported the establishment of a Catholic church in Brookline Village (Goodwin, 1987: 10-11, 51-52).

At the end of the nineteenth century, a speculative real estate market led some Brookline landowners to divide and sell their properties, particularly in North Brookline. Brookline’s population nearly tripled with the introduction of first the horse-drawn, and then the electric streetcar. Streetcars along Beacon and Harvard streets transformed a general store at Coolidge Corner into a commercial hub and led to the rapid development of subdivisions in the surrounding neighborhood. These new communities required new school buildings, town services, and houses of worship (Curtis, 1933: 298).

At the close of the nineteenth century Brookline was closely tied to Boston, but remained independent with established public transportation, its own utilities, and a growing population. The town’s open rural character was still evident, but would soon give way to denser residential development. By 1900, the population more than doubled to 19,935. Due to the increase in population, the agricultural character of the area and its openness to the surrounding landscape and wooded hills was greatly altered. The town expanded public utilities and established a street tree program to accommodate the increased residential development. At the turn of the twentieth century,

the western portion of North Brookline remained predominantly undeveloped while land in the eastern section contained large single-family homes (Curtis, 1933: 247, 286).

#### Beginnings of Beals Street Development:

The topography of Brookline is relatively flat, though punctuated by several large drumlins, collectively known as the Brookline Hills. Babcock's Hill, north of the present-day John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site (from here on referred to as Kennedy National Historic Site), was named for George Babcock, who purchased the land in 1835, which would later become the Beals Estate subdivision (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 150: 44, HSR Research Files). Present-day Babcock Street follows the approximate southern boundary of Babcock's 76-acre property. The property extended north almost to the Boston line and was bounded to the west by Harvard Street and to the east by Manchester Road. Babcock and his family owned the land for over thirty years before selling it to James M. Beals in 1868. Beals then sold the property in 1897 to Benjamin Newhall, who subsequently subdivided the land along two roads, Beals and Stedman streets, which extend between Manchester Road and Harvard Street (Figure 1).

Advances in transportation in the early twentieth century provided greater access to housing in the Beals Street development area. With improved connections to outlying areas, the large country estates of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were transformed into dense residential subdivisions. The Beals Street development, 13 acres of the 76-acre Babcock property, was subdivided by Newhall into seventy one-tenth acre house lots, some of which were later built as apartment and duplex units (Brookline Historical Commission, n.d: 1).

To build residences on all seventy lots, a portion of Babcock's Hill was removed and used to fill a pond and wetland located within the subdivision boundaries. Although altered for the development's layout, evidence of Babcock's Hill can still be seen in Beals Street's northern lots. These lots abut steep slopes and many contain retaining walls to provide flat land at the rear of the property. Similarly, wetland filling is evident where houses have settled at the northeast end of Beals Street (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 800: 640, HSR Research Files).

Within the Beals Street development the houses were built to be two and one-half- stories, set back thirty feet from the road, and spaced about twenty feet apart. Due to the nature of land speculation and the rapid turnover in ownership, there is little evidence of extensive landscape improvements on private property in the early 1900s beyond concrete walkways to the entries and the addition of a few trees and shrubs for screening and ornamentation. In efforts to improve the quality of life in fast urbanizing Brookline and to incorporate the former pastoral character of the town, Brookline embarked on a street tree program. The plane-trees (*Platanus × acerifolia*) along Beals Street, planted circa 1900, were installed as part of their street tree program (Figure 2). By 1914 when the Kennedys moved into their home, the trees had grown to be about twenty-five feet tall (Brookline Historical Commission, n.d: 1).

#### John Fitzgerald Kennedy Birthplace:

In 1906, Mary M. Poor purchased the undeveloped lot and mortgage for 83 Beals, the site of the future Kennedy National Historic Site. The 0.09-acre lot was located on the south side of Beals Street and bounded by three adjacent vacant lots: 77/79 Beals to the northeast, 85/87 Beals to the southwest, and 82 Stedman to the southeast. In November 1907, Ms. Poor sold the property as well as 77/79 Beals to Robert M. Goode and his wife (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 1068: 571-574, HSR Research Files).

About six months after purchasing the lots, Goode submitted a plan that subdivided the 83 Beals lot and gave a ten-foot wide swath to 77/79 Beals (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 989: 639; 1036: 181, HSR Research Files). The 83 Beals lot now had a frontage of 50-feet and the lot to the southwest had a frontage of 70-feet. The day after the plan was recorded with the registry of deeds, Goode submitted a building permit to the Town of Brookline for a two-family house at 77/79 Beals. Almost a year later, in April 1909, Goode submitted a building permit for a single family home at 83 Beals (Reed, n.d: 1). On the permit for 83 Beals, Goode was listed as the owner, builder, and architect. The Town of Brookline approved the permit and the two and one half-story, Colonial Revival home was completed that same year (Town of Brookline Permits).

Joseph Kennedy bought the property at 83 Beals on August 20, 1914, after two previous owners (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 1121: 266-267, HSR Research Files). Shortly after the purchase, Kennedy submitted a permit for alterations, which was approved on August 31, 1914. The permit allowed the addition of the bay window on the northeast side of the building, off of the dining room, since the properties northeast of 83 Beals were not yet developed. Joseph and Rose Kennedy moved into 83 Beals on October 28, 1914.

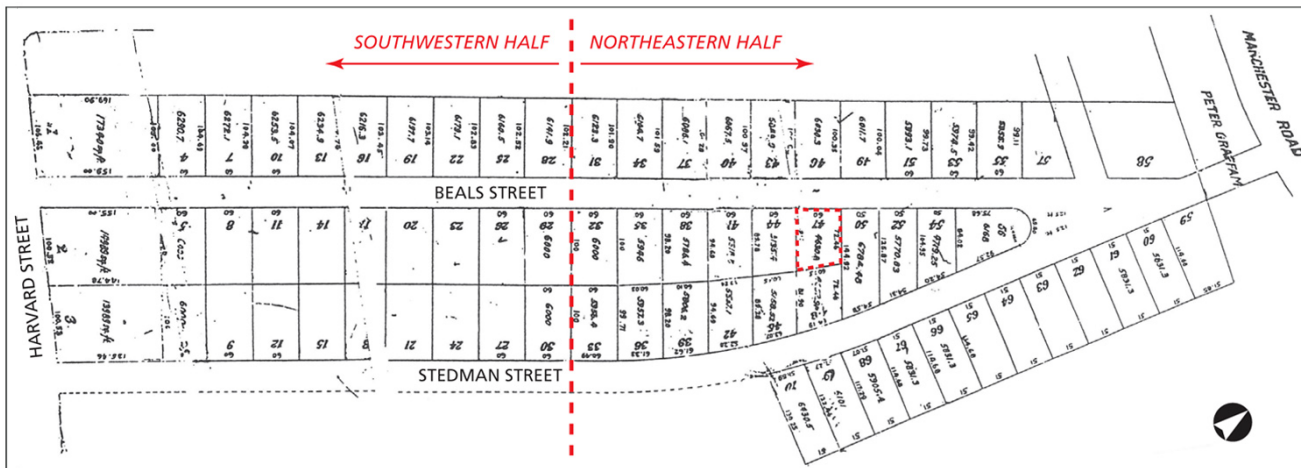


Figure 1. Digitally enhanced copy of the Beals Estate Subdivision Plan, 1897. The future Kennedy home at 83 Beals Street is outlined in red (Norfolk Registry of Deeds, vol. 800, pg. 640).



Figure 2. View from the intersection of Harvard and Beals Streets, looking northeast down Beals Street, circa 1910s. Plane-trees were selected by the town for Beals. At this time, Beals has no curbs or pavement (Stanley Album, Brookline Public Library).

## KENNEDY RESIDENCY 1914–1920

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Brookline's population was growing by approximately 1,000 people per year (Curtis, 1933: 321). Members of diverse ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups moved out of Boston to new neighborhoods along the streetcar lines, resulting in new houses of worship, schools, services, and stores (von Hoffman, 2004: 22). The streetcar lines along Beacon and Harvard streets continued to spur development, but the increasing use of automobiles also brought about changes to the landscape, with driveways, parking lots, and private garages becoming more prevalent. The Coolidge Corner commercial area continued to expand throughout the 1910s in response to increased residential development. The Coolidge Corner neighborhood, churches, and schools became a large part of the Kennedys early family life in Brookline.

In April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson declared that the United States would enter World War I. In Brookline, 1,841 men served in the armed forces, representing approximately five percent of the town's population (Curtis, 1933: 334). While many of Joseph Kennedy's friends enlisted, he was primarily focused on his banking career, and Rose was quickly absorbed by the prospect of motherhood. Before their first wedding anniversary, on July 25, 1915, Rose gave birth to their first child, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., while they were staying at the Fitzgerald's summer house in Hull, Massachusetts (Goodwin, 1987: 261-262). Rose gave birth again almost two years later to John Fitzgerald Kennedy on May 29, 1917, who was born in the upstairs bedroom of their home at 83 Beals.

The birth of the Kennedys' sons was followed by the birth of their first daughter, Rosemary, on September 13, 1918 and then Kathleen on February 20, 1920. Like John F. Kennedy, the two girls were born in the parents' upstairs bedroom (Goodwin, 1987: 291-295). Around the time of Kathleen's birth in 1920, John contracted scarlet fever and was admitted to Boston City Hospital for treatment (Kennedy, 1974: 73-74). As John was recovering, Rose purchased their second Brookline home at 51 Abbottsford Road in March 1920 (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 1448, 393, HSR Research Files). The six years of residence at 83 Beals came to end for the Kennedy family. Despite their seven years at Abbottsford Road, the Town of Brookline would continue to identify 83 Beals with the Kennedy family.

#### Beals Street:

During the Kennedy's tenure at 83 Beals, the number of homes on the northeastern half of the Beals Street development did not change. Many of the lots on the north side also remained undeveloped. The Kennedys benefitted from the openness offered by the undeveloped lots to the north and northeast of their property. For pedestrians, concrete sidewalks were located on both the north and south sides of Beals Street, while the street remained unpaved with no curbing. The Kennedy Family Collection photographs capture the character of the open area where Beals and Stedman Streets intersect. The lots appear overgrown with tall grass and young saplings, yet the open space is expansive compared to the dense development to the southwest of the house (Figure 3).

The photographs provide additional information on the street trees along Beals Street and associated tree lawn—the three-foot wide strip of grass set between the street and sidewalk. The plane-tree directly in front of 83 Beals is shown with chicken wire wrapped around its trunk as a protective measure (Figure 4). It was a common practice for the town to install either wood or wire guards to protect street trees from horses that might gnaw on their bark (Cummings, 1938: 14). The plane-trees lined both sides of the street and continued to mature and cast shade along the streets. Individual yards along Beals Street, however, remained unadorned perhaps due to the frequent changes in ownership and the high number of rental units.

#### Birthplace:

While the Kennedys lived at 83 Beals, alterations to the home and grounds were minimal. As mentioned previously, prior to moving into the home, Joseph Kennedy obtained a permit to construct a bay window on the northeast side of the dining room. No other significant additions or alterations are known to have been made to the home during the period of significance.

Although no photographs or plans exist from the 1910s that capture the front walk, it is likely that a paved walk provided access between the sidewalk and the front porch steps. Other than the sidewalk, front walkway, and walk in the northeast side yard and rear yard, there were no other

formal, paved pedestrian or vehicular surfaces installed at 83 Beals. For circulation from the front to rear yards, the northeast side concrete walkway extended perpendicular from the sidewalk and proceeded southeast past the house to the rear yard, back door, and basement. This walk was narrower than the sidewalk and followed the perimeter of the house on the northeast and southeast facades. The walk flared out to form a landing at the wooden stairs for the rear entry and continued southeast of the stairs to provide access to the bulkhead steps and basement (Figure 5, see also Figure 3).

The front yard vegetation included lawn and the plane-tree in the tree lawn along Beals Street, which was the only tree on-site. No foundation plantings were established in the front yard. In a similar fashion, the side yard consisted primarily of lawn with no plantings along the house foundation or property line. The rear yard contained lawn immediately past the concrete walk and foundation plantings in a narrow bed on the northeastern side of the rear facade. The three plants shown in the photograph of the rear yard, two healthy and one struggling, have the branching characteristics of roses (*Rosa* sp.) (see Figure 5).

Small-scale features visible in family photographs include chicken wire fencing on the northeast side yard located beyond the property line. At the east corner of the house, a wood picket gate has been tacked on to the house. Chicken wire fencing is attached to the northeast side of the gate and intersects with the fencing past the property line (see Figure 5). From the photographs, it is difficult to determine if this gate had hinges or was simply repositioned when access was needed. Horizontal boards at the base of the gate were likely added to contain crawling children. Additional chicken wire fencing was installed from the west corner of the house heading southwest toward the property line.

In the six years that the Kennedys lived at 83 Beals, they made few alterations to the property. Their flat yard had but a few roses, a lawn, and chicken wire fencing that restricted the children's play to the rear yard.



*Figure 3. John F. and Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., circa 1919. Looking northeast toward the intersection of Beals and Stedman Streets (Kennedy Family Collection, copyright John F. Kennedy Library Foundation).*



*Figure 4. John F. and Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., 1919, taken from the front of 83 Beals and looking north. The plane-tree has chicken wire around its trunk as a protective measure (Kennedy Family Collection, copyright John F. Kennedy Library Foundation).*



*Figure 5. Joseph P. Kennedy Sr. and Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., undated, likely 1917. By the east corner of the house at 83 Beals, a concrete walk provided access to the rear yard (Kennedy Family Collection, copyright John F. Kennedy Library Foundation).*

#### **ABBOTSFORD ROAD, 1920–1927**

Between 1890 and 1930, the Town of Brookline experienced a tremendous increase in population and new buildings, especially in the North Brookline area. Immigration, utility improvements, and streetcars all contributed to the town's expansion (Brookline Preservation Committee, 2001: 10). Prior to this period of growth, the area was characterized by larger estate homes, farmland, and a small commercial center located at Brookline Village. The Town of Brookline was also increasingly attracting ethnically diverse populations (Temple Ohabei Shalom, n.d.).

Although the Kennedys moved from Beals Street, Brookline continued to be their town of residence. Rose Kennedy purchased their new home at 51 Abbottsford Road in March 1920 (Norfolk Deed of Registry 1448: 393, HSR Research Files). A myriad of factors played into the Kennedy's decision to move from Beals Street to Abbottsford Road, a growing family and Joseph's financial success among them (Goodwin, 1987: 313; Kennedy, 1974: 73-74). During their residency at 51 Abbottsford, the Kennedy family grew to seven children. Eunice Mary arrived on July 10, 1921; Patricia on May 6, 1924; and Robert Francis on November 20, 1925.

#### Beals Street Fully Developed:

During the seven years the Kennedys resided at 51 Abbottsford, the Beals Street neighborhood experienced more development than the previous decade, due in part to the economic boom of the 1920s which allowed widespread acquisition of automobiles, prompting the addition of garages. Early construction along Beals Street focused on the higher ground in the southwestern half of the development with almost all of the parcels built upon by 1907. The first home constructed on the northeastern end of the development did not occur until around 1921 when a building permit was filed for a home at 63 Beals (Brookline Historical Commission, 1978-79). Between 1922 and 1924, numbers 84, 88, 92, 96, and 100 Beals were constructed on the north side of the street. Immediately to the northeast, a building permit was submitted for a two-family home at 85/87 Beals in 1922. By the mid-1920s, individual property owners developed all the available vacant land in the Beals Street development to the north and northeast of 83 Beals.

#### Sale of Birthplace:

Deed transactions indicate that the 83 Beals Street property was sold to Mary Moore on September 13, 1920 (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 1468: 73-74, HSR Research Files). Mary and her husband, Edward Moore had close ties with the Fitzgerald and Kennedy families. In addition to being a close friend and confidant, Edward Moore also worked for Joseph Sr. for several decades (Goodwin, 1978: 33-34; Kennedy, Times to Remember, 77; Herbster, 2007: 35).

By 1927, changes to the property's circulation may have occurred along the northeastern edge of the property since the adjacent property at 85/87 Beals was developed. The concrete walk near the property's northeastern boundary remained, but with the addition of a neighboring building approximately twelve feet away, the walk may have been less frequently used due to the more constricted space. The majority of the vegetation likely remained lawn with foundation plantings continuing to occupy the narrow bed near the east corner of the house. The new building to the northeast may also have impacted small-scale features at the site. The chicken wire fence that ran along the northeast side of the property may have been removed or its layout may have shifted to the southwest, closer to 83 Beals. Additionally, the fences and gate at the east and west corners of 83 Beals may have been removed.

Little documentation exists of the potential changes to 83 Beals while the Moores lived at the property. It seems that no significant additions or alterations were made to the building. Overall, the vegetation on-site did not change dramatically, though the branches of the thirty-year old plane-trees were now interlaced over the street and extended over the front yard to the roof of the house. While the site was minimally changed, its immediate context was greatly altered by the construction of new homes to the north and northeast.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT, 1927–1960**

In September 1927, the Kennedy family moved from 51 Abbottsford Road to Riverdale, New York. Two years after the Kennedys left Brookline, the country entered the Great Depression, and by the 1930s, the Town of Brookline's major period of growth had come to an end. North Brookline had acquired a population and residential building density, institutional facilities, and a commercially active center at Coolidge Corner that made the area comparable to one of Boston's urban neighborhoods. In addition, most of the developable properties in North Brookline were already built upon.

With the country's involvement in World War II, Joseph Jr. and John served in the Navy. Unfortunately for the Kennedy family, Joseph Jr. did not survive the war, as his plane inexplicably exploded on a mission to a German rocket site in France on August 12, 1944. Following the war and with the family still grieving, John assumed the role of eldest son and the weight of his father's aspirations to lead and serve at the highest levels for his country (Goodwin, 1987: 686-688; Kennedy, 1974, 256-257).

Urban development did not resume again until after World War II, with the construction of highways and suburban housing triggered by the Federal Highway Act of 1956. Boston was greatly affected by the post-war development with populations leaving the city to live in new suburban developments and the construction of highways to support the increased daily use of automobiles. Brookline's commercial sectors benefitted from the development of suburbs to the west, as Coolidge Corner offered a closer shopping location than downtown Boston. The Kennedys did not return to reside in the Boston area until after the war when John F. Kennedy, aspiring to enter politics, established residence in Boston in the fall of 1945. The following year, John ran for representative from Massachusetts' 11th Congressional district, winning the general election by a landslide. He would go on to be re-elected for the next two terms. Following 1950, John's focus shifted from the local congressional district to building a constituency for statewide office (Goodwin, 1987: 709-10, 744-48).

#### Beals Street:

By 1928, all the lots within the Beals Street development were developed. In the decades following the Kennedys move from Brookline until their return to Boston, no major construction occurred in the development, except for the addition of garages, and other such minor alterations. The plane-trees, first documented in a circa 1910 photograph (see Figure 2), achieved a relative level of maturity by the 1930s. Additional small-scale features present in the 1950s in the Beals Street development included electric utility poles on the north side of the street with overhead wires and street lights.

#### Birthplace Changes Ownership:

After leading the effort to find the Kennedys housing in New York, the Moores sold the 83 Beals property to Lucy Myerson on August 14, 1928 (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 1809: 25-26, HSR Research Files). Myerson, her husband Simon, and their three sons lived at 83 Beals until February 1944. At that time, Louis and Sarah Pollack purchased the 83 Beals property from the Myersons (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 2475: 364-368, HSR Research Files).

Shortly after their purchase of the property in 1928, the Myersons submitted a permit for a one-car garage, which they added in the south corner of the site. Under the designation for builder, the permit indicated the garage was manufactured by the Whittredge Portable Garage Company. Based north of Boston in Lynn, Massachusetts, Whittredge began manufacturing steel garages in 1919 (Reed and Hardwicke, 2002: 48). North of the garage, a circulation feature added for vehicular access consisted of two paved tracks providing access from Beals Street to the garage (Myerson, c.1930).

Vegetation in the back yard at the time of the Myerson's residence, included a hedge, most likely privet (*Ligustrum* sp.), planted between the 77/79 Beals and 83 Beals properties. The hedge was not clipped in a formal fashion and individual plants varied in height from three to five feet. The Myersons may have planted a spruce tree (*Picea* sp.) in the rear yard, however, judging from the size of the tree in a 1964 photograph, the spruce tree was likely planted by the next property owner, the Pollacks, in about 1950. Foundation plantings were also added to the front of 83 Beals, likely during the Pollacks ownership of the property. A symmetrical arrangement of shrubs was planted with one shrub under each of the front windows and a pair of shrubs flanking the wood steps to the porch.



## COMMEMORATION AND MEMORIALIZATION, 1960–1969

After a successful presidential campaign in 1960, John F. Kennedy, at the age of 43, became the nation's youngest elected President. National interest developed around his presidency largely due to his youth, Catholic faith, and the telegenic image he and his family conveyed. As national plans developed for the inauguration and arrival in Washington of the thirty-fifth President, local attention began to focus on an inconspicuous house on Beals Street. The Town of Brookline and local residents took pride in the home's association with President Kennedy and sought to commemorate his election at his birthplace.

Despite the growth of suburban Boston throughout the mid-twentieth century, Brookline maintained a thriving commercial district and a reputation as a desirable town in which to reside. With the arrival of competition from shopping districts in suburban areas and downtown Boston, opportunities existed for Brookline residents to purchase goods and services beyond Coolidge Corner. However, the competition did not affect its success as a commercial district. The residents of Brookline enjoyed shopping in the neighborhood and took pride in the association of their neighborhood with the newly elected President (Brookline Planning Board, 1963: 4, 13).

On November 22, 1963, preparing to meet with local politicians and business leaders in Dallas, Texas, President Kennedy was assassinated when his motorcade entered Daley Plaza. The shock of losing a youthful, American President thrust the country into mourning, while his family and political leaders sought tangible ways to grieve his loss. Immediately following the President's assassination, Beals Street served as the corridor for a procession to Kennedy's birthplace. The house at 83 Beals Street became a site to commemorate Kennedy's rise to the highest elected office in the country, mourn his untimely passing, and finally serve as a memorial to his early years in Brookline.

### Beals Street in Commemoration and Mourning:

By the 1960s, the Beals Street development was well established. All of the lots from the 1897 subdivision had been developed with single-family homes, multi-family homes, and apartment buildings by the late 1920s. During the 1960s, there were no major changes to the layout of Beals and Stedman Streets. The setbacks, the density of lots and buildings, and the scale of the buildings remained constant.

The association of the Beals Street development with the Kennedys gave it a place in American history. On the afternoon of November 25, 1963, three days after Kennedy's assassination, members of Temple Kehillath Israel left their synagogue on Harvard Street and proceeded down Beals Street to place a wreath beside the commemorative marker installed by the Town of Brookline. As the week continued, the street filled with mourners from end to end, marking the first time the street, intended for vehicular use, was used as a pedestrian corridor to the site (Figures 6 and 7).

### Commemoration of Birthplace:

Although successive families eclipsed the Kennedys' six-year ownership of the property, the North Brookline community still recognized the home as the Kennedy residence and birthplace of the President. Understandably proud, the town and area residents began commemorating 83 Beals in 1961 as the President's birthplace by performing exterior maintenance, planting new hedges and shrubs, and installing a granite commemorative marker and bronze plaque, all while the elderly Mrs. Pollack and her family resided there (see Figure 6). Although no information has been discovered to date about how the Pollacks used or modified the landscape during the early 1960s, the park's 1976 Historic Resources Management Plan (hereafter 1976 Management Plan) provides a chronology of modifications to the landscape and house based on interviews from early park staff. This document, in conjunction with period photographs, provides the foundation for determining the early commemorative activities.

The building and structures on-site were minimally altered during the Town of Brookline's commemorative additions to the birthplace. The first related entry in the 1976 Management Plan cites that a local painters union painted the exterior of the house in 1961. The main circulation elements were also largely intact. A 1964 front elevation photograph shows one of two paved tracks

of a ribbon driveway to the southwest of the house, most likely concrete, that led to the garage installed by the Myerson family in 1928 at the south corner of the property (Figure 8).

In 1961, the Town of Brookline installed a California privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*) hedge along the front sidewalk and three shrubs by the foundation. At the latest, the painting and hedge installation took place just prior to the installation of the commemorative marker. On September 21, 1961, the Town of Brookline installed the commemorative granite marker and bronze plaque. At the same time or shortly after, crews planted several yew shrubs (*Taxus* sp.) framing the sides and back of the marker and added sod to the front area (Kennedy National Historic Site Historic Resources Management Plan, 1976: 602). Two weeks after President Kennedy's assassination, a photograph of the front of the house confirms the installation of the privet hedge, commemorative marker, and yew planting. The image also reveals the continued placement or maintenance of wreaths beside the commemorative marker, shown draped in black bunting (see Figure 6). An October 1964 photograph shows the combination of the privet hedge planting, commemorative marker installation, yew planting, and sod installation (see Figure 8). Although the angle of the photograph does not show new sod or lawn, it does reveal the addition of a "please keep off grass" sign.

In addition to the image of the front of house, photographs taken in 1964 show the two side elevations and rear elevation, providing additional information about circulation, vegetation, and small-scale features. Visible in the rear elevation photograph is the spruce planted in about 1950 by the Pollack family, a square rotary clothesline, and low foundation plantings. The rear and northeast side elevations show a concrete walk near the dining room bay window that connects to the rear walkway and landing at the kitchen entry stairs (Figures 9 and 10).

Sometime after October 1964 and by 1967, Brookline installed the reproduction gas light in front of the property. The gas light was installed as an "eternal flame," in memory of John F. Kennedy. The local gas company connected service to the light and also provided a new service line to 83 Beals in 1967 (Catalano and Sabin, 1975: 1; Keyspan Maps and Records Department, telephone conversation with author, June 23, 2008). This light was the only one installed along the entire length of Beals Street, at this time.

#### Rose Kennedy and the Memorialization of the Birthplace:

As the early commemorative and memorial activities demonstrate, the Town and residents of Brookline manifested both their pride and grief at John F. Kennedy's birthplace. In response to both the Town's and the public's desire to create a memorial to her son, in 1966 Rose Kennedy began plans for the Kennedy family to purchase the site and restore it to its appearance in 1917, the year of John F. Kennedy's birth. Rose Kennedy later stated that as the birthplace of a President of the United States, the home had historic and educational value for the American people (Senate Subcommittee on Parks and Recreation, 1967: 5).

The celebration of John F. Kennedy's election and the mourning of his passing both resulted in physical changes at the site, first initiated by the Town of Brookline in celebration, as previously discussed, and then by the Town and the Kennedy family in mourning. On November 1, 1966, Joseph Gargan, Rose Kennedy's nephew, purchased the property from the Pollack family, the first step in Rose Kennedy's involvement with the memorialization of the site (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 4392, 485-488, HSR Research Files). Restoration to its 1917 appearance began shortly after the purchase, as indicated by receipts and correspondence archived in the Kennedy Library. The goal was to complete restoration work and have the house open to the public on May 29, 1967, which would have been President Kennedy's fiftieth birthday (Hodson, 2005: 14-15).

Joseph Gargan transferred the deed for the property to the Secretary of the Interior on March 17, 1967 (Norfolk Registry of Deeds 4461: 665-666, HSR Research Files). However, Mrs. Kennedy's continued restoration work and acquisition of objects for furnishing delayed plans to open the property to the public. Based on a CBS News interview of Rose Kennedy at the house on October 31, 1967, and accounts of National Park Service staff, the house appeared almost ready for opening in November 1967 (Hodson, 2005: 14-15).

In the process of restoring the site to its 1917 condition, the house remained unaltered aside from the

interior decorations and exterior paintwork, however changes were made to the exterior landscape. For the dedication ceremony, Rose Kennedy had the house painted grey with white trim and shutters as she remembered it. The Myerson garage in the south corner of the property and the two concrete paved tracks known as a ribbon driveway leading to it from the street, were removed between 1966 and 1969, prior to the site's dedication, as they were not part of the landscape when the Kennedys resided at 83 Beals (Herbster, 2007:41).

During the course of the restoration project, Rose Kennedy worked with Jordan Marsh interior decorator Robert Luddington on acquisition, selection, and placement of furnishings and fixtures in the home. There is no evidence of their correspondence regarding the appearance, alteration, or role of the landscape in presenting the 1917 home to the public. In fact, in preparation of the 1976 Management Plan, Unit Manager Maurice Kowal stated that, "In his 'restoration' of the grounds in late 1960s, Mr. Luddington continued the town's landscaping scheme, simply removing dead shrubs and hedge bushes and replacing them with specimens of the same variety" (Catalano and Sabin, 1975: 1). An invoice from November 28, 1967, lists a series of "grounds care" activities, presumably conducted throughout the entire year that include: "Planting six lilacs, five arborvitae, ten spreading yews, 18 red geraniums for Memorial Day, and 50 pachysandra; Sod and maintenance; Moving and extending yew hedge; Removing large shrubs; and replacing geraniums with bronze queen chrysanthemums on October 15" (Hodson, 2007: 16). (Since spreading yews were close to the foundation and there is no evidence of a "yew hedge" on site, the reference in the invoice to moving and extending the yew hedge may be to the privet hedge installed along the front sidewalk by the Town of Brookline or perhaps to the yews in the back yard, an area not well documented.)

Invoices and receipts for work on the house at 83 Beals continued through December 1967 for books and small items. An invoice documents electrical work, carpentry, and painting on January 22, 1968. As Rose and the Kennedy family weathered another tragic loss, the assassination in 1968 of her son Robert Kennedy, work on the property may have halted for many months, as the next invoice is not dated until December 13, 1968. This invoice focused on maintenance and included: "125 sq. yds. Merion blue sod; Potted geraniums for memorial marker; Trimming shrubbery; Cutting and raking lawn" (Hodson, 2007: 17).

The 1968 invoice highlights two important maintenance items that continue today at the park. The first concerns the addition or replacement of sod. This was the second consecutive invoice to note problems with the sod, and the third reference to the problem in the 1960–1969 period. The second item highlighted in this invoice is the geraniums intended for the "memorial marker." The 1968 invoice indicates the planting of annuals at the front of the marker with yew shrubs bordering the sides and back of the marker (Pepper, 2008).

A series of both color and black-and-white photographs taken on May 29, 1969 at the formal dedication of the site, show the small-scale features and vegetation added during the 1960s. These included the commemorative marker, the privet hedge along the front sidewalk, the yew and arborvitae plantings, the front lawn, and even the geraniums planted in front of the marker (Figure 11). A three-and-one-half-foot high chain link fence along the southwest edge of the property was also installed, two-and-one-half feet northeast of the official property line.

For the dedication event, a podium was set up on the entry walk. In photographs showing the podium and front facade of the house, a United States flag is visible on the left and a Department of the Interior flag is visible on the right. Additional photographs show these flags on pedestals and not installed into the landscape (Figure 12). Therefore, the installation of the flagpole near the commemorative marker took place after the dedication event.

While the interior and exterior of the home was restored to its early 1900s appearance as remembered by Rose Kennedy, the landscape received a different treatment. Enhancements made by the Town of Brookline in 1961 were updated prior to the 1969 dedication with the addition of new trees and shrubs including arborvitae, yews, pachysandra, red geraniums, and lilacs—which would have been in bloom for the dedication. About 600 visitors came to the site's dedication ceremony on May 29, 1969. The landscape set under the canopy of the enormous plane-tree differed greatly from the new lawn and chicken wire fence that provided a play area for the Kennedy children.





*Figure 6. View of northwest elevation, December 9, 1963, confirming the installation of the privet hedge, commemorative marker, and yew planting. At this time, wreaths were maintained beside the marker, draped in black bunting (JOFI Management Records).*



*Figure 7. View looking southwest on Beals Street, November 25, 1963. The plane-tree in the left foreground is the street tree in front of 83 Beals (Jean Kramer, Brookline, Massachusetts: A Pictorial History, Boston: Historical Publishing Company, 1989).*



*Figure 8. View of northwest elevation, October 1964, shows the privet hedge, commemorative marker, yew planting, and sod installation (Irene Shwachman, 1964, Private collection of Mr. Robert Berliner, copies reside in the JOFI Management Records).*



*Figure 9. View of northeast elevation, October 1964 (Irene Shwachman, 1964, Private collection of Mr. Robert Berliner, copies reside in the JOFI Management Records).*



Figure 10. View of southeast elevation, October 1964 (Irene Shwachman, 1964, Private collection of Mr. Robert Berliner, copies reside in the JOFI Management Records).



Figure 11. View of northwest elevation, Dedication Ceremony, May 29, 1969, showing small-scale features and vegetation added during the 1960s: gas light, marker, privet, yew and arborvitae , front lawn, and geraniums (JOFI Management Records).



*Figure 12. View of northwest elevation, Dedication Ceremony, May 29, 1969. Note the Department of the Interior flag to the right of the podium set on a pedestal and not installed into the landscape (JOFI Management Records).*

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE MANAGEMENT 1969–PRESENT**

From the time of the dedication ceremony for the Kennedy National Historic Site in 1969 to the early years of the twenty-first century, the Coolidge Corner area has remained an affluent urban neighborhood. Proximity to Boston, access to public transportation, and an excellent school system have helped the area maintain its high real estate value. The street layout and block configuration for the Coolidge Corner neighborhood has remained largely unchanged over the years. Changes have only occurred at the block and site level as businesses and residents moved to and from the area. For its entire length in Brookline, Beacon Street was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 (District Planning Council, 2007: 25).

### **Beals Street:**

Since the late 1960s changes to the Beals Street development have been minimal. The lot sizes, density of lot coverage, and building setbacks remained consistent with earlier periods. The only major change to the streetscape was the installation of vertical granite curbing on Beals Street, by the Town of Brookline, by the 1980s (JOFI Management Records, Box 8, Folder 2).

### **National Park Service Management of Birthplace:**

One of the major impacts to the house at the Kennedy National Historic Site in this period occurred on the evening of September 8, 1975; two suspects entered the rear yard of the property and firebombed the home. In addition to the fire, the suspects spray-painted “Bus Teddy” in black on the sidewalk in front of the home. This act was committed in protest to Senator Ted Kennedy’s support of the busing desegregation plan for Boston’s public schools (JOFI Management Records: Box 4, Folder 14). The fire was concentrated in the rear vestibule and kitchen, however, smoke damage was extensive throughout the house. George Stevens, a National Park Service Regional Architect, reported exterior damage to thirty square feet of the wood shingles but no damage to landscape features. The site did not reopen until December 1976 due to the extent of the interior damage (JOFI Management Records: Box 4, Folder 15).

In the 1980s, the National Park Service performed a paint analysis to determine the exterior paint color of the house at the time of the Kennedy’s residence. The results of the analysis showed that the house was painted green with yellow trim and shutters. As a result, the house was then repainted

to reflect the colors determined by the analysis, although these colors differ from those chosen by Rose Kennedy, according to her memory, for the 1969 dedication of the site (gray shingles with cream trim and black shutters).

After the Kennedy National Historic Site was opened to public visitation on May 29, 1969, further changes were made to the circulation features. Less than a month after the dedication, a purchase order was submitted to remove an existing walk and add a new walk. The concrete walk was installed on the southwest side of the house to provide visitor circulation from the back steps at the basement to the Beals Street sidewalk. To complete the connection to the existing sidewalk, four privet hedge plants were removed. The walkway removed was most likely on the northeast side of the house (see Figure 9). Although documentation does not exist, a decision was made to route visitor circulation on the southwest side, where there was space from earlier vehicular circulation to the garage, instead of on the northeast side where passage is constricted by the dining room bay window and the neighboring house (JOFI Management Records: Box 8, Folders 1 and 2).

A further circulation feature was installed in the mid-1980s. The park improved visitor access by a reconfiguration and expansion of the basement steps and landing. The reconfiguration of the stairs to run alongside the house allowed for a more gradual descent to the basement level, installation of an L-shaped retaining wall, and a wider landing at the basement level. This was an improvement over the previous steps, which ran parallel to the rear façade and descended quickly from the backyard to the basement level. The reconfiguration was made in preparation for use of the basement level for programming, which began in 1990.

Similar to other residential properties, many changes following the dedication ceremony concerned vegetation. In the 1976 Management Plan, alterations to vegetation listed for 1969 include the transplanting of five arborvitae from the front of the house to the basement entrance, the removal of lilac shrubs from the northeast side of the house, and the addition of four yews to the front of the house. Photographs from the 1969 dedication event show three of the five arborvitae were present at the front of the house. Photographs from early 1975 show the removal of the arborvitae and the addition of four yews to the front of the house (Figure 13, see also Figures 11 and 12) (Kennedy National Historic Site Historic Resources Management Plan, 1976: 602).

In addition to changes in evergreen material at the front of the house, documents reveal changes were made to the front hedge. In 1971, a purchase order requested eight privets for planting in the front hedge (JOFI Management Records: Box 8, Folder 2). A plan or further documentation has not been located to indicate if the privet purchase was replacement of existing material or an expansion or reconfiguration of the existing hedge.

Maintaining a lawn at the front of the property was a continual challenge. Twice before the dedication ceremony, in 1967 and 1968, new sod was installed in the front yard. The sod was again replaced in 1969 following the dedication and may have been a direct result of damage caused by the number of people present at the ceremony. The practice of installing new sod continued in May 1971 and June 1972 indicating the difficulty encountered in establishing a healthy lawn (JOFI Management Records: Box 8, Folder 2).

In the backyard, a spruce tree (*Picea* sp.) planted by the Pollack family in about 1950 was removed in 1984. Approximately 30 to 40 years old at that time, the tree had grown taller than the house and neighboring home at 85 Beals Street. Both the National Park Service and neighbor were concerned about potential damage and continuing maintenance to their roofs and gutters. Estimates were received from local arborists and sometime after March, the tree was taken down (JOFI Management Records: Box 3, Folder 4).

In addition to circulation and vegetation changes, the flag and flagpole were added to the front of the house after the dedication. Two purchase orders in the site's management records verify the flagpole's installation. The park ordered the flag and flagpole in late August 1969. This was quickly followed by an early September order to install the flagpole. At the earliest, the flagpole was added to the site four months after the dedication (see Figure 13) (JOFI Management Records: Box 8, Folder 2).

Utility alterations also began shortly after the dedication. In late June 1969, the cold water main was re-piped (JOFI Management Records: Box 8, Folder 1). A large-capacity dry well was installed in the rear yard in 1987 to collect runoff from the rear half of the roof. In addition to the roof leaders, a drain inlet at the bottom of the basement access stairs was connected to the dry well (Pepper, 2008).

During the last decades of the twentieth century and the outset of the twenty-first century, changes to the historic site itself since its dedication in 1969 have been minimal. Some vegetation has been replaced as have the site's signs. Throughout these events and physical changes to the home, the plane-trees have remained and continued to envelop the streetscape. Other smaller landscape features—the shrubs, walkways, and site furnishings—have come and gone. The present landscape collectively represents the two periods of Kennedy family involvement as well as later features introduced by the National Park Service.



*Figure 13. View of northwest elevation in January 1975. Most arborvitae have been transplanted to the side yard and additional yews have been planted. Note the gas light and flagpole (JOFI Management Records).*

## Uses

### Functions and Uses:

| Major Category         | Category                  | Use/Function                       | Historic | Current | Primary |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| Domestic (Residential) | Single Family Dwelling    | Single Family House                | Yes      | No      | Yes     |
| Recreation/Culture     | Monument (Marker, Plaque) | Monument (Marker, Plaque)          | Yes      | Yes     | No      |
| Recreation/Culture     | Museum (Exhibition Hall)  | Museum (Exhibition Hall)-<br>Other | No       | Yes     | Yes     |

### Public Access:

**Public Access:** Other Restrictions

#### Public Access Narrative:

The park is open to the public from spring until fall. In recent years, approximately 14,000-16,000 visitors have come to the site during a six-month programming season and by special appointment. A house tour program is run during the summer and fall seasons. Educational programming and events organized with the nearby schools also bring members of the public to the site.

### Associated Ethnographic Group

#### Ethnographic Study Status:

#### Ethnographic Narrative:

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Significant landscape characteristics identified for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site include spatial organization, topography, views, circulation, buildings and structures, vegetation, and small-scale features. These characteristics have associated features that contribute to the site's overall historic significance, as well as features that do not contribute or are undetermined.

The historical integrity of the Kennedy National Historic Site is evaluated by comparing landscape characteristics and features present during the periods of significance (1917–1920, 1963–1969) with the existing conditions as assessed in 2008 and 2011. Many of the existing features contribute to the historic character of the site's landscape. The site's most dominant feature, the house, retains its Colonial Revival design and detailing, while the landscape reflects the commemorative treatment of a small suburban lot, as it appeared in the 1960s, but does not reflect the unadorned appearance of the 1917 to 1920 period. The home remains in its residential setting, though houses to the northeast and north of 83 Beals were built after the Kennedys moved in 1920. The landscape retains some of the key features dating to the Kennedys' residency in the 1910s—most notably the plane-tree, sidewalk, and front walk—but others were added in the 1960s including the walk on the southwest side of the house, the commemorative marker, as well as chain-link fence, shrubs, hedges, and flowers. In the 1910s, the street trees were young and barely casting shade, whereas by the 1960s, the trees created a cathedral-like allee down Beals Street.

The site overall has had some minor alterations since 1969. The National Park Service has altered circulation for ease of access for the site's visitors. The maintenance and periodic replacement of vegetation has occurred since the end of the period of significance. Vegetation has also been added over the years to serve as a screen along the rear property line. As for small-scale features, the flagpole was added to the site after the second period of significance and is not consistent with the residential character of the neighborhood.

### INTEGRITY

Overall the landscape of the site retains historical integrity including its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to the 1960s period of significance but only its location and association for the 1910s period of significance. While the house retains its Colonial Revival design, materials, and workmanship from the earlier 1910s period as well, the landscape solely reflects design, materials, and workmanship of the 1960s period.

#### Location:

Location is defined as the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The Kennedy home at 83 Beals remains in its historic location and the associated landscape is extant.

#### Design:

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The layout of the Kennedy home, its front walkway, sidewalk, and the plane-tree reflects both the 1960s and 1910s period. The southwest side walkway, fences, vegetation, and small-scale features reflect the 1960s period. The plane-tree is part of the design of a larger streetscape allee that dates to c. 1900, which is beyond the property boundaries.

#### Setting:

Setting is the physical environment of a property and the general character of the place. During the 1910s period, the residential development was incomplete, with vacant lots to the northeast and north on Beals Street. During the 1960s, the residential development was complete and the setting appeared as it does today.

#### Materials:

Materials are the physical features that were combined or deposited during the period of significance in a particular pattern or configuration to give form to the property. In terms of built materials, the 83 Beals property retains the house, front walkway, sidewalk, and plane-tree, which are central to the property's significance.

However, other landscape materials date to the 1960s rather than 1910s period, including the shrubs, hedges, commemorative marker, gas light, and boundary fence.

**Workmanship:**

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts and methods of construction used during the specified historic period of significance. From the 1910s period, the 83 Beals property retains the workmanship evident in the house and front walk, but the other landscape features present during this period, albeit minimal, are gone, such as the chicken-wire fence and northeast side walkway. Workmanship carried out during the 1960s is still evident, such as the shrub plantings, hedges, commemorative marker, gas light, and boundary fence.

**Feeling:**

Feeling is the expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular time resulting from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey a property's historic character. The Kennedy birthplace evokes the sense of place created by Rose Kennedy in the 1960s, but not the stark open feeling of the new neighborhood in the midst of development in the 1910s.

**Association:**

Association is the direct link between an important event or person and the property. Although the Kennedy home is no longer a private residence, its unassuming presence, knit into the fabric of a residential neighborhood, is evident and reflective of both the 1910s and 1960s periods.

The following section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic periods (1917–1920, 1963–1969), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource. Information for this section is extracted from the May 2011 draft of the "Cultural Landscape Report for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site."

**Landscape Characteristic:   Spatial Organization**

Historic Conditions:  
The former Kennedy home at 83 Beals was one of seventy lots within a subdivision built between 1897 and 1928. When the house at 83 Beals was constructed in 1909, it was sited in the center of the property. A central walkway led to the front porch while a walk on the northeast side of the house led to the back kitchen and basement doors. The lots on the northeast and northwest side were undeveloped while the Kennedys resided there. Homes were not built on the neighboring properties until 1922, after the Kennedys had moved to Abbottsford Road. The plane-trees that run along Beals Street were planted circa 1900 and were not yet mature when the Kennedys lived at the property.

Post-historic and Existing Conditions:  
The lot coverage, setback, and physical relationship of the house to the yard and to Beals Street are largely unchanged since the Kennedys resided there. The feeling of openness that surrounded the house changed in 1922 when homes were built on the adjacent northeastern and northern properties. The approach to the site is in a similar state, as street alignment and the neighborhood have largely remained unaltered except for the development of the neighboring homes. The plane-trees have provided a consistent vertical and overhead plane that has grown more prominent throughout the years (CLR, draft May 2011: 216-217).

The existing conditions of the site's spatial organization are minimally changed since 1969, but more altered since 1920. The spatial organization of the site reflects its condition in the 1960s, with the lot coverage, setback, and physical relationship of the house to the yard and to Beals Street largely unchanged, and therefore contributes to the character of the historic landscape despite its alteration since 1920 (Figures 14 and 15) (CLR, draft May 2011: 216-217).

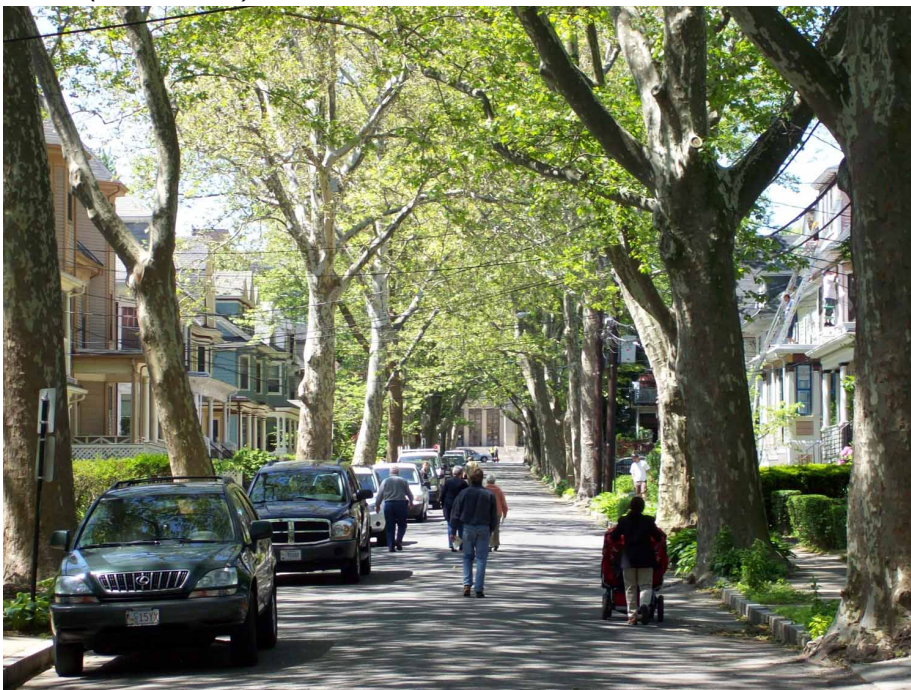
**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name                     | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Residential Spatial Organization | 152831         | Contributing         |                     |                       |                  |                    | No               |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 14. View of 83 Beals Street showing physical relationship to neighboring properties and Beals Street, building setback, and front yard walkway and entrance. Note the plane-tree in tree-lawn area in front of the house (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 15. View looking southwest up Beals Street toward Harvard Street showing the similar setback of homes along the street. Note the prominent vertical and overhead spatial definition by the plane-trees (OCLP, 2008).*

### Landscape Characteristic: Topography

#### Historic Condition:

The topography of the site was originally characterized by the nearby drumlin, Babcock's Hill, and wetland area known as Babcock Pond. These natural features were regraded in about 1897 as part of the Beals Estate development. The site of the 83 Beals home however, appears to have been relatively flat with the wetland area just to the east and southeast (CLR, draft May 2011: 216).

#### Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

The site is relatively flat with a slight drop in grade to the east and southeast. Since construction of the former Kennedy home in 1909, the site's topography has remained largely unchanged. The natural and manipulated topography—now relatively flat—contribute to the character of the historic landscape (see Figures 14 and 15) (CLR, draft May 2011: 216).

### Landscape Features:

| Feature Name    | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Flat Topography | 152835         | Contributing         |                     |                       |                  |                    | No               |

### Landscape Characteristic: Vegetation

#### Historic Condition:

**Privet Hedge along Sidewalk.** The Town of Brookline planted the privet hedge along the front sidewalk in 1961 before the installation of the commemorative marker. Due to its installation just after the presidential election of John F. Kennedy, it has become part of the commemorative landscape and frames the house and commemorative marker. The National Park Service has performed periodic maintenance of the privet hedge by removal, replanting, and pruning since the site's dedication (CLR, draft May 2011: 217).

**Yews in Front Yard.** Shortly after the installation of the commemorative marker in 1961, the Town of Brookline planted several yews in the front yard, to the sides and rear of the marker (CLR, draft May 2011: 218).

**Annuals by Commemorative Marker.** In 1968, as indicated on a work invoice, Rose Kennedy requested geraniums be planted by the commemorative marker (CLR, draft May 2011: 218).

**Front Lawn.** When the Kennedys resided at the property, the front yard was mostly lawn. Sod was reinstalled in 1961, at the time of the Town of Brookline's planting of the front yard vegetation. The Town reinstalled sod again in 1967 and 1968 (CLR, draft May 2011: 219).

**Lawn in Southwest Side Yard.** When the Kennedys resided at the property, the vegetation consisted primarily of lawn. A photograph from about 1919 shows the lawn on the southwest side of the house, with an unidentified object at the west corner of the house. Sometime in 1928 when the Myerson's constructed a garage in the south corner of the property, they also installed two concrete tracks leading to the garage for vehicular circulation, known as a ribbon driveway. Between 1966 and 1969, prior to the dedication ceremony, the garage and tracks were removed from the site (CLR, draft May 2011: 219).

**Rear Lawn.** When the Kennedys resided at the property, the vegetation consisted primarily of turf.

The rear yard also contained turf at the time of the site's dedication. The National Park Service has periodically reinstalled turf and it continues to perform such maintenance activities today (CLR, draft May 2011: 221).

Yew in Southern Corner. A yew was planted near the south corner of the property sometime after the removal of the garage, which occurred between 1966 and 1969. It is unclear from the documentation if the yew was planted prior to the site's dedication (CLR, draft May 2011: 221).

Plane-tree in Tree Lawn along Beals Street. The plane-tree on Beals Street is part of the plane-tree rows lining both sides of Beals Street since about 1900. The evenly spaced trees define the character of the streetscape. The tree was young when the Kennedys lived there but has matured since prior to the site's dedication (CLR, draft May 2011: 222). Note: the tree grows in the town-owned tree lawn between the street and sidewalk.

Annuals along Southwest Side Yard, Roses along Southwest Side Yard, Privet and Mulched Planting Bed, Arborvitae in Rear Yard, and Colorado Blue Spruce in Rear Yard. Not present during the historic period.

#### Post-historic and Existing Conditions:

Privet Hedge along Sidewalk. The privet hedge is healthy and well tended at approximately eighteen inches in height and twelve inches in width. Its short height allows views to the marker from many vantage points. Due to the excessive shading in the front yard by the overhanging plane-tree, the hedge appears thin. The separate hedges on both sides of the front yard are not uniform in width and as maintenance has been performed throughout the years, single plants have been removed due to damage or death, leaving holes in the otherwise continuous hedge. The privet hedge was installed by the Town of Brookline as one of the first elements of the commemorative landscape in the 1960s period of significance. This feature therefore contributes to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 16) (CLR, draft May 2011: 217).

Yews in Front Yard. The National Park Service has performed periodic maintenance of the yews by removal, replanting, and pruning since the site's dedication. Yews tolerate the low light conditions in the front yard and are in good health. However the shrubs are overgrown and partially obscure the porch, the park sign, and the commemorative marker. In 2008, maintenance crews began a selective pruning program to care for the shrubs. The four yews on the northeast side of the front porch are four and a half to five feet tall. Additionally, at the north corner of the front yard, three yews were recently replaced in kind and are small, but in good condition. The five yews on the northwest side of the front porch are four and a half to six feet tall, plus a low spreading yew on the northwest side of the commemorative marker that is about two and a half feet tall and five feet wide. The yews installed in the front yard form a significant part of the commemorative aspect of the site from the 1960s period of significance. As such, they contribute to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 17) (CLR, draft 2100: 218).

Annuals by Commemorative Marker. The practice of planting annuals at the front of the marker has continued to the present day. Currently, the seasonal annuals grow in a two by three foot bed in front of the marker and are in fair condition. They are less affected by the shade than other front yard understory vegetation. The annuals at the commemorative marker were present during the site's dedication ceremony. They directly reflect the association of Rose Kennedy with the memorial aspect of the site and contribute to the character of the historic landscape (see Figure 17) (CLR, draft May 2011: 218).

Front Lawn. Following the site's dedication the National Park Service reinstalled lawn in 1969 and has continued to perform periodic replacement and maintenance. Currently, the front lawn is in fair condition though somewhat affected by the shade of the overhanging plane-tree. The front yard lawn is one of the few landscape features present in both periods of significance and contributes to the character of the historic landscape (see Figure 17) (CLR, draft May 2011: 219).

Lawn in Southwest Side Yard. At an undetermined point after the dedication ceremony, the National Park Service reinstalled sod in the southwest side yard and a concrete walkway. The

southwest side yard is now comprised of a one-foot drain strip, three-foot sod strip, four-foot walk, and an eight-inch planting bed along the fence. An additional planting bed of about three feet lies on the other side of the fence. The side yard is used to access the rear yard and visitor entrance to the basement. While the southwestern side yard experiences some shade, the effects are not nearly as severe as in the rear yard. On the side yard, the lawn is in fair condition. As the presence of lawn in the southwest side yard at the dedication ceremony is undetermined, it is not a contributing feature to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 219).

**Annuals along Southwest Side Yard.** The annuals are planted in an eight-inch wide bed along the concrete walkway, which provides visitor access to the basement entrance. The National Park Service began planting annuals along the fence in the late 1980s and has continued to the present. Annual plantings line the park side of the fence, while rose, raspberry, and perennial plantings are planted on the neighbor's side. The lawn is in fair condition as are the impatiens—the annuals typically planted along the fence. The annuals planted in the southwest side yard were not present at the site in either of the periods of significance and are not a contributing feature (see Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 219-220).

**Roses along Southwest Side Yard.** Four climbing roses, planted by the neighbor at an unknown date, grow along their side of chain link fence on the southwest side of lot. The fence that separates the two properties is actually about two-and-one-half feet northeast of the designated property line, so the roses are planted on property that is part of 83 Beals. The roses were planted at an unknown date after the periods of significance and are not a contributing feature (see Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 220).

**Privet and Mulched Planting Bed.** The park installed a staggered row of privets, three feet apart and consisting of fifteen plants in total, in a six foot wide bed at an undetermined date after the dedication ceremony. At present in the rear yard, a large silver maple and a leggy pin oak overhang the property line from the rear adjacent parcel. The trees capture much of the light and soil moisture in the rear yard. Understory plantings, including the row of privet are stressed due to lack of light and moisture. Intended for screening, the privet is thin and ineffective. The privet, known for their hardiness and vigor, appear ragged due to the difficult growing conditions. A large silver maple was recently removed from the neighboring lot at the south corner of the 83 Beals property. Thus, the condition of the privets may improve. The mulched planting bed and privets were planted at an unknown date after the periods of significance and are not contributing features (Figure 19) (CLR, draft May 2011: 220).

**Rear Lawn.** The park currently uses the small but level lawn as a place for outdoor congregation. As it is the largest open area at the site, it serves as a multi-purpose space for most of the year. Similar to the southwestern side yard, the rear yard maintains a sense of separation and privacy from the nearby neighboring homes with vegetative screens and fencing. A set of teak table and chairs is located at the southern corner of the lawn, primarily for use by staff. Due to the shade provided by the overhanging trees from the adjacent property, the rear lawn lacks vigor and appears bare. The rear yard lawn is one of the few landscape features present in both periods of significance and contributes to the character of the historic landscape (see Figure 19) (CLR, draft May 2011: 221).

**Arborvitae in Rear Yard.** An arborvitae grew at the south corner of the house near the basement door. Three additional arborvitae were installed along the southwest property line at an undetermined date after the dedication ceremony. Due to the overhanging trees capturing most of the light and soil moisture in the rear yard, the eastern arborvitae were stressed and all removed by 2010. The eastern arborvitae were planted after the periods of significance and are not a contributing feature (CLR, draft May 2011: 221).

**Yew in Southern Corner.** The National Park Service removed the yew just prior to 2008 and planted a replacement yew after the site's existing conditions were initially documented (CLR, draft May 2011: 221).

Colorado Blue Spruce in Rear Yard. A spruce grew along the northeast property line between 83 and 85 Beals and was present in the 1960s, but is now gone. At an unknown date, most likely in the 1980s, the neighbor at 77/79 Beals installed a Colorado blue spruce along the southwest property line on their side of the fence but within the National Park Service parcel. The tree is the only plant seemingly unaffected by the rear yard shade, at twenty-five to thirty feet tall. It was planted after the periods of significance and is not a contributing feature (CLR, draft May 2011: 222).

Plane-tree in Tree Lawn along Beals Street. With an over three foot diameter trunk, the plane-tree is now mature and casts significant shade onto the front yard. Like most of the other plane-trees along Beals Street, the curb blocks have been removed and the roots spill into the edge of the street. The roots have lifted the concrete sidewalk and the leaves often clog the gutters, causing other maintenance issues for the site. At the base of the tree, an asphalt patch has replaced a section of the concrete sidewalk. The granite curb that runs along the street is absent for the length of the tree's planting area and is due to the tree's extreme girth and bulging of the root system. While these trees offer a great amount of shade in the summer months and further dramatize the character of the property as well as the street and neighborhood as a whole, attempting to grow any substantial understory vegetation becomes a trying task. The plane-tree has been present in front of 83 Beals since 1900 and therefore contributes to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 20) (CLR, draft May 2011: 222). Note: The plane-tree is outside of the park's boundaries, and therefore is not officially evaluated for purposes of the CLI.

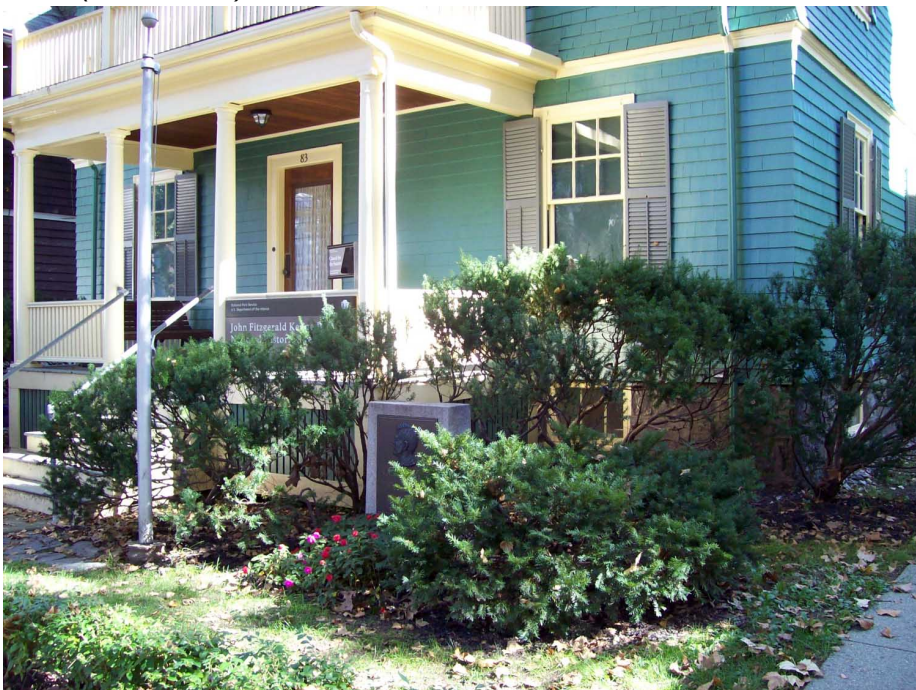
#### Landscape Features:

| Feature Name                      | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution         | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Privet Hedge Along Sidewalk       | 152837         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123101            | No               |
| Yews in Front Yard                | 152853         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123102            | No               |
| Annuals by Commemorative Marker   | 152855         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123103            | No               |
| Front Lawn                        | 152857         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123104            | No               |
| Lawn in Southwest Side Yard       | 152847         | Undetermined                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123104            | No               |
| Annuals along Southwest Side Yard | 152849         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123103            | No               |
| Roses along Southwest Side Yard   | 153159         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123102            | No               |
| Privet and Mulched Planting Bed   | 153161         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123101            | No               |
| Rear Lawn                         | 153163         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123104            | No               |
| Arborvitae in Rear Yard           | 153175         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123102            | No               |
| Yew in Southern Corner            | 153167         | Undetermined                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123102            | No               |
| Colorado Blue Spruce in Rear Yard | 153177         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123099            | No               |

#### Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



*Figure 16. North corner of the front yard showing the porch, partially obscured by a row of yews. An incomplete low privet hedge lines the sidewalk. The property is separated from the neighboring property by a chain link fence (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 17. Southwest side of the front yard at the Kennedy National Historic Site. Note the overgrown yews obscuring the porch, the annuals by the commemorative marker, the front lawn, the NPS sign, and the flagpole (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 18. View from the rear yard of the park toward Beals Street showing the chain-link fence, side yard, and walk used to access the visitor center in the basement (right). The park maintains impatiens along the fence and the neighbor maintains roses,*



*Figure 19. View of the east corner of the rear yard and lawn area. A chain link fence and wood board fence separate the park from the neighboring properties. A row of privets is thin and barely visible in front of the board fence (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 20. Plane-tree in the tree-lawn in front of 83 Beals. The tree was planted circa 1900 and continues to thrive (OCLP, 2008).*

**Landscape Characteristic: Circulation**

**Historic Condition:**

**Front Concrete Walkway.** The front concrete walk used to access the house from the sidewalk was installed about 1909 and has remained in the same location since the Kennedys residence at the site (CLR, draft May 2011: 222-223).

**Southwest Side and Rear Yard Concrete Walkway.** The southwest side and rear yard concrete walkway was installed by the National Park Service in 1969, after the dedication ceremony, for ease of access by staff and visitors to the site. The rear yard had traditionally been accessed by a walkway on the northeast side of the house, installed prior to the Kennedys residence at the home when homes were not yet developed on the adjacent parcels to the northeast. This walkway was removed in 1969 in favor of installing a wider walkway on the southwest side (CLR, draft May 2011: 223).

**Steps Leading to Back Door.** The wooden steps leading to the back door of the house were originally built in 1909 when the house was constructed. The steps were likely rebuilt prior to the site's dedication (Figure 21) (CLR, draft May 2011: 224).

**Blue Flagstone Walk and Concrete Steps Leading to Basement.** Not present during the historic period.

**Post-historic and Existing Conditions:**

**Front Concrete Walkway.** Currently the front walk extends from the public sidewalk, where it is four and a half feet wide, and bisects the front yard. At the foot of the steps that lead up to the porch and front door, the concrete walkway widens to five and a half feet, where it meets the six-foot-wide porch steps. As of 2006, all tours begin on the front porch of the birthplace. Visible in the 1969 dedication photographs, the front walk is at least forty years old and is in good condition. There are no major cracks or hazards apparent. The front yard walkway has been present throughout both periods of significance and therefore contributes to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 22) (CLR, draft May 2011: 222-223).

**Southwest Side and Rear Yard Concrete Walkway.** The side walkway is presently in good condition with only a few minor cracks. As the most often used walkway at the site, the four-foot-wide connective path from the sidewalk to the rear yard leads to the site's basement entrance and rear landscape area. It serves as the only exterior walkway connecting the three main landscape areas of the site. The southwest side and rear yard concrete walkway was installed after the 1969 dedication ceremony and therefore is not a contributing feature (see Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 223).

**Blue Flagstone Walk.** The National Park Service installed a short walk consisting of blue flagstones off the front walkway in 2002 to ease staff access to the flagpole erected in the front yard and to allow visitors to access the memorial plaque. The walkway, only twenty inches wide and five feet long, is in good condition. It is not a connective path but is presently used by staff as a place to raise and lower the flag, as well as by visitors to access the memorial plaque on the lawn. However, as visitors follow the path and then continue across the lawn to the commemorative marker, the lawn becomes compacted, which then becomes a maintenance concern. The blue slate flagstones were installed after the periods of significance and therefore are not a contributing feature (Figure 23) (CLR, draft May 2011: 224).

**Concrete Steps Leading to Basement.** The National Park Service built the new set of concrete basement entry steps in the mid-1980s to ease access to the site, and reconfigured and expanded the steps and landing. Five steps—four feet in length and ten inches in width, with six and a half inch risers plus one step with a five and one half inch riser—lead visitors to the site's main entry. The park rebuilt the steps to facilitate visitor access to the basement in the 1990s. Currently, the concrete steps are the main access point into the visitor center by the public and are in good condition. The concrete steps leading to the basement were installed after the periods of significance and therefore are not a contributing feature (see Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 224).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name                                  | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution         | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Front Concrete Walkway                        | 152893         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123094            | No               |
| Southwest Side and Rear Yard Concrete Walkway | 152897         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123094            | No               |
| Blue Flagstone Walk                           | 152899         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123094            | No               |
| Concrete Steps Leading to Basement            | 152901         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123094            | No               |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 21. Wooden steps leading to rear entrance of the house (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 22. The southwest side of the front yard includes small-scale features that distinguish the house from others on the street: the park sign mounted to the front porch, the commemorative marker, the flagpole, and the gas light (OCLP, 2008).*



*Figure 23. Close-up of the flagstone pavers on the southwest side of the front yard that lead to the base of the flagpole (OCLP, 2008).*

**Landscape Characteristic: Buildings and Structures**

**Historic Condition:**

The house was built in 1909. When the Kennedys purchased the home in 1914, they submitted a permit to add a bay window to the northeast wall of the dining room. The house is the only remaining structure at the site, after the removal of a one-car garage between 1966 and 1969. When the Kennedys repurchased the property in 1967, they refurbished the interiors to reflect Rose Kennedy's remembrance of the home in 1917, which was the year John F. Kennedy was born (CLR, draft May 2011: 224-225).

**Post-historic and Existing Conditions:**

The only significant damage to the home occurred when the rear of the house was attacked with a fire bomb on September 8, 1975 in protest to Edward 'Ted' Kennedy's support of school bussing. The damaged rear vestibule, kitchen, and exterior wood shingles were restored. Though minor remodeling has occurred over the years, the house now appears to be in a similar state as during the period when the Kennedys resided there. The house has been minimally altered since the Kennedy's residence and is a contributing feature to the character of the historic landscape (see Figure 14) (CLR, draft May 2011: 224-225).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| House        | 152903         | Contributing         | 740                 |                       | Location         | 63776              | Yes              |

**Landscape Characteristic: Views and Vistas**

**Historic Condition:**

The view of tree-lined Beals Street from the front yard has been a consistent aspect of the site's experience from the Kennedy's residence in 1914 to 1920 to the present (CLR, draft May 2011: 225).

**Post-historic and Existing Conditions:**

The mature tree-lined sides of Beals Street now create a unique view from the property when one looks either northeast or southwest on the street. The relatively short setback of the house from the street and proximity of neighboring homes limits a notable view of the Kennedy National Historic Site. The view of plane-tree-lined Beals Street has been a constant feature of the landscape. Although, the plane-trees have matured throughout the years, the view is a contributing feature to the character of the historic landscape (see Figure 15) (CLR, draft May 2011: 225).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name                                         | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Northeast/Southwest Vista of Tree-Lined Beals Street | 152905         | Contributing         |                     |                       |                  |                    | No               |

### **Landscape Characteristic: Small Scale Features**

#### **Historic Condition:**

**Commemorative Marker.** The Town of Brookline installed the granite commemorative marker with bronze plaque in 1961 after John F. Kennedy's presidential election to mark his birthplace in Brookline. It is one of the most important features at the site, in clear view from the public right of way. In 1963, after President Kennedy's assassination, mourners left wreaths at the marker, which was covered in black bunting. (CLR, draft May 2011: 225-226).

**Gas Light.** The Town of Brookline installed the gas light sometime between 1964 and 1967 in remembrance of the site as the birthplace of the former President. It forms part of the memorial aspect of the landscape even though it is not located within the site boundary (CLR, draft May 2011: 226).

**Chain Link Fence.** Installed before the 1969 dedication ceremony, the fence ran along the sides and rear of the site, but not the true property lines. During the Kennedys residence, chicken-wire was used to fence in the yard (CLR, draft May 2011: 227).

**National Park Service Sign, Flagpole, Stone Drip Strip, and Teak Table and Four Chairs in Rear Yard.** Not present during the historic period.

#### **Post-historic and Existing Conditions:**

##### **National Park Service Sign.**

Following the dedication of the site, the National Park Service installed a sign to clearly identify the site to visitors. At least as early as the mid 1980s, park staff hung a small green sign on the porch railing each day and brought the sign in each night. In about 2009 the park obtained a new, larger sign with a design and lettering that conformed to the National Park Service messaging standards. The new sign is permanently affixed to the porch railing and spans the width of one side of the porch. The sign was installed after the 1969 dedication ceremony and therefore is not a contributing feature (see Figure 22) (CLR, draft May 2011: 225).

**Commemorative Marker.** Comprised of a vertically set granite block, fronted with a bronze plaque, the marker measures twenty-four and one-quarter inches wide, by thirty-six inches tall, by nine inches deep. The plaque contains a bas-relief profile of John F. Kennedy, and a brief description recognizing the site as his birthplace. It is located in the front yard, nestled into a mass of common yews. The commemorative marker was installed by the Town of Brookline as one of the first elements of the commemorative landscape in the 1960s period of significance. This feature therefore contributes to the character of the historic landscape (Figure 24) (CLR, draft May 2011: 225-226).

**Flagpole.** The flagpole was installed by the National Park Service in 1969, after the dedication ceremony. At the ceremony a flag and flagpole were present but not installed on the property. The flagpole is eleven and one half-feet tall, set in concrete surrounded by an exposed, corrugated metal sleeve. It is located at the end of the blue flagstones that leads off the main entry walk. The flagpole was installed after the 1969 dedication ceremony and therefore is not a contributing feature (see Figure 22) (CLR, draft May 2011: 226).

**Gas Light.** Though historically no gas lamps existed on the southeastern portion of Beals Street, the intent is to call attention to the time of the Kennedys' residence. In front of the house in the public right of way, a reproduction gas light stands on concrete pavement, where a swath of lawn for the street trees used to be located. The light post is fluted, tapers from top to bottom, and has a black finish. The luminaire is cylindrical and the mantles are lit throughout the day. This feature forms part of the memorial aspect of the site and is a contributing feature (see Figure 22) (CLR, draft May 2011: 226). Note: The gas lamp is outside of the park's boundaries, and therefore is not officially evaluated for purposes of the CLI.

**Chain Link Fence.** Chain link fencing still runs along the southwestern, northeastern, and southeastern accepted property lines. At the west corner of the property, the fence is two-and-one-half feet northeast of a National Park Service survey monument. This indicates that many of the neighbor's plantings along the fence line actually lie on park property. On the narrower northeastern side of the property, the chain link fence is four feet away from the house. The chain link fence is beginning to rust. The fence was installed prior to the 1969 dedication ceremony and therefore is a contributing feature (see Figures 16 and 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 227).

**Stone Drip Strip.** The stone drip strip was installed immediately surrounding the house by the National Park Service as a maintenance feature to avoid overflow water from the gutters splashing at the foundation of the house. The surrounding trees drop seasonal leaf litter, sometimes clogging the gutter system. As the gutters fill with run-off during rainstorms, they overflow and spill water to the ground, two and a half stories below. In an effort to avoid splashing at the foundation of the house, a stone drip strip was installed that provides a uniform finish immediately surrounding the structure. The stone drip strip was installed as a site maintenance feature after the periods of significance and therefore is not a contributing feature (see Figure 18) (CLR, draft May 2011: 227).

**Teak Table and Four Chairs in Rear Yard.** Installed by the National Park Service in the 1990s, these teak table and chairs replaced a rustic picnic table that was on the site in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The table and chairs provide outdoor seating for the property's staff and appear to be in good condition. The site furnishings were installed for staff use after the site's dedication and are not a contributing feature (see Figure 19) (CLR, draft May 2011: 227).

**Landscape Features:**

| Feature Name                            | CLI Feature ID | Feature Contribution         | CRIS-HS Resource ID | Associated CRIS-AR ID | FMSS Record Type | FMSS Record Number | FMSS Exact Match |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| National Park Service Sign              | 152907         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       |                  |                    | No               |
| Commemorative Marker                    | 152909         | Contributing                 | 40155               |                       | Asset            | 34392              | Yes              |
| Flagpole                                | 152911         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123097            | Yes              |
| Chain Link Fence                        | 152913         | Contributing                 |                     |                       | Asset            | 1457104            | Yes              |
| Stone Drip Strip                        | 152915         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       | Asset            | 1123095            | Yes              |
| Teak Table and Four Chairs in Rear Yard | 152917         | Noncontributing – Compatible |                     |                       |                  |                    | No               |

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Figure 24. Commemorative marker in the front yard installed by the Town of Brookline in 1961 with annuals (OCLP, 2008).*

## Condition

**Assessment Interval (Years):** 6

**Next Assessment Due Date:** 03/05/2031

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 03/05/2025

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

The overall landscape is well-maintained and in good condition. Changes to the landscape with two AC condenser units installed on North side of house. Also new concrete stairs and wheel chair lift for access to VC.

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 09/21/2021

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Provisional. The condition reassessment for this CLI has been delayed due to Covid-19 travel restrictions and staffing shortages. In the meantime, the most recent condition assessment will remain in place until it is reassessed as part of a comprehensive update of the entire CLI. Planning and scheduling this update will occur in FY 2022.

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 09/12/2011

#### Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

In the course of research undertaken for the writing of the Cultural Landscape Report, several site visits were conducted in 2008 through 2011 to examine various features of the landscape. Overall, the house and other landscape features are in good condition. The site shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The site's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

## Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Adjacent Lands

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Narrative:** The broader neighborhood context greatly contributes to the visitor experience and interpretation of the site. It is central to the site's significance, setting, and character. Other than the Town of Brookline's Interim Planning Overlay District, no preservation restrictions are currently in place to ensure the continuity of the residential area's specific qualities.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

**Type of Impact:** Improper Drainage

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** In the past, improper site drainage has led to on-site flooding. In general, homes to the east are built on a former wetland, thus the water table in the area is high.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

**Type of Impact:** Other

**Other Impact:** Boundary

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** The chain-link fence on the southwest side property boundary is installed 2.5 feet northeast of the site's actual property line, which is marked by a survey marker. This indicates that many of the neighbor's plantings along the fence actually lie on park property. Further discussion is contained in the treatment tasks for vegetation and small-scale features.

2025: Park will not be relocating the fence but will continue to maintain neighbor plant materials that are on park property.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

**Type of Impact:** Other

**Other Impact:** Access

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** Physical access to the property is a key issue that includes parking, restrooms, and building access. Parking that complies with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) is not defined. The site is within a residential area without any designated parking. The site itself is flat, but no curb cuts or ramps exist to facilitate access from the street to the site and from the site into the house. Both front and rear visitor entrances to the house are accessed by steps. The house interior, including the public restroom in the basement, is also not universally accessible. Making the house universally accessible would significantly alter the historic building and its setting.

2025: As part of Visitor Center renovations (2020 - 2023), a wheelchair lift was installed in the back yard and an accessible bathroom was added to the visitor center.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

**Type of Impact:** Vandalism/Theft/Arson

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Narrative:** The park has to secure any outdoor furniture and signage because theft of these objects has occurred in the past.

2025: In recent years, wooden mailbox was also stolen off of front porch. Park fabricated a new box and staff checks to ensure it hasn't again been removed.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

**Type of Impact:** Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**Other Impact:**

**External or Internal:** Both Internal and External

**Impact Narrative:** The plane-tree at 83 Beals and other mature trees surrounding the house make the health of the understory vegetation and lawn difficult to maintain. Now that the plane-trees are over one hundred years old, large limbs may drop during intense storms, potentially causing damage to property. The roots have lifted the sidewalk, creating an uneven walking surface. Despite these issues, the trees are admired by residents and visitors as they contribute to the distinctive character of the neighborhood. Maintenance of the street trees falls under the jurisdiction of the Town of Brookline. However, as a historic feature of the neighborhood, the park should work in conjunction with the Town to preserve the health of the tree.

2025: In 2024, vegetation in front of the house was entirely replaced according to existing CLR (lawn, shrubs, garden beds). At this time the flag pole and identity sign were also moved as suggested in CLR. Damaged blue spruce in back yard was removed and replaced with a dwarf variety that does not block visitor access on path. Park worked with Town of Brookline to correct Beal St sidewalk on town property as much as was possible.

**Date Identified:** 09/21/2011

## Treatment

### **Stabilization Measures**

## Treatment Documents

**Treatment Type:** Preservation

**Treatment Completed:** No

**Document Type:** General Management Plan

**Title:**

**IRMA Link:**

### Narrative:

The May 2011 draft of the “Cultural Landscape Report for John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site” addresses treatment of the property. Based on the treatment direction provided by the park’s General Management Plan (to be developed), the findings of the revised National Register documentation, and the current condition of the property, the recommended treatment for the landscape is preservation. This approach recognizes the high level of historical integrity to the late 1960s (CLR, draft May 2011: 245).

The recommended treatment date is May 29, 1969, the end of the period of significance and the time of the dedication of the site by Mrs. Kennedy. The rationale for this date is as follows (CLR, draft May 2011: 246-247):

- 1) By 1969 Mrs. Kennedy and the Town of Brookline had completed several physical changes to the property that are still evident today. These physical changes created a memorial site, while not overshadowing the birthplace and childhood home of John F. Kennedy.
- 2) The photographic landscape documentation for the late 1960s is very good, allowing the property managers to understand the appearance of the property at this time.
- 3) The site retains a high level of integrity to the 1969 appearance as well as its landscape setting. The plantings in the front yard were recently installed at this time, and not yet mature. Thus, the most appropriate appearance for the vegetation in front of the house would be the mid-1970s. The house was in good condition at this time and still retained its historical integrity to the earlier period of significance in the 1910s.

## Approved Treatment Costs

### Cost Narrative:

**Treatment Type:** Bulk Import TBD

**Treatment Completed:** No

**Document Type:** Cultural Landscape Report

**Document Date:** 2012-01-01

**Title:** Cultural Landscape Report for John Fitzgerald  
Kennedy National Historic Site

**IRMA Link:** <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2193162>

**Narrative:**

#### Approved Treatment Costs

#### Cost Narrative:

## Bibliography and Supplemental Information

### Bibliography:

| Citation Author                         | Citation Title                                                                                                                  | Year of Publication | Citation Publisher                                                               | Citation Type | Citation Location | Citation Number |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
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**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** District Planning Council, Coolidge Corner District Plan, 25;  
"Beacon Street Transportation Improvements"

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

<http://www.townofbrooklinemass.com/Dpw/BeaconStreet.html>

**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** HSR Research Files, John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site Historic Structure Report (Draft), U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Northeast Region, Historic Architecture Program, Lowell, MA.

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

Accessed March 2008.

**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** Pepper, Charles, Interview with Timothy Layton, May 21, 2008 and interview with Margie Coffin Brown, May 18, 2011.

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

**Supplemental Information:**

**Supplemental Information Title:** Temple Ohabei Shalom, "Ohabei Shalom - Our Building

**Supplemental Information Narrative:**

<http://ohabei.org/ohabei/building.php>

**Landscape Documents:**

| File Name                                             | Date | Attachment Type |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------|
| CL-FMSS_crosswalk-JOFI.xlsx                           |      | Other Report    |
| JOFI_John F Kennedy NHS Landscape_CLI Update 2025.pdf |      |                 |

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