
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT FOR

Longfellow National Historic Site

VOLUME 2: ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY



Olmsted Center for
Landscape Preservation



National Park Service

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Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation
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Cover Photo: Formal Garden, Longfellow NHS, circa 1935–40. Photo # 111969, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), copy at Longfellow National Historic Site.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	9
Purpose and Scope of Project	9
Methodology and Summary of Findings	11
Historical Overview	12
Early Preservation Efforts	14
1. HISTORIC CONTEXT: DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE NEW ENGLAND	17
Colonial Seat (1750 - 1790)	20
Federal Ideal (1790 - 1840)	23
Romantic Residence (1840 - 1890)	27
Colonial Redefined (1890 - 1930)	33
2. HISTORIC CONTEXT: LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS	39
Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson (1871 - 1959)	39
Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. (1854 - 1934)	46
Ellen Biddle Shipman (1869 - 1950)	47
3. ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY	51
Current National Register Status and Areas of Significance	51
Potential New Areas of Landscape Significance	52
<i>Criterion A: Association with Events, Activities or Trends</i>	
<i>Criterion B: Association with a Person</i>	
<i>Criterion C: Design: Landscape Architecture</i>	
Landscape Integrity	61
<i>Vassall Period (1759 - 1790)</i>	
<i>Craigie Period (1791 - 1841)</i>	
<i>Henry Longfellow Period (1841 - 1882)</i>	
<i>Alice Longfellow Period (1882 - 1928)</i>	
<i>Harry Dana/Longfellow Trust Period (1928 - 1950)</i>	
<i>Summary Evaluation of Integrity</i>	
Period of Landscape Significance	68
Contributing Resources	68
Boundary	69
Summary Statement of Landscape Significance	69

4. CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	71
Spatial Organization and Land Use	71
<i>Setting</i>	
<i>Site Boundaries</i>	
<i>Spatial Organization</i>	
<i>Topography</i>	
<i>Views</i>	
Circulation	78
<i>Carriage Drive</i>	
<i>Front Walk</i>	
<i>East Lawn and Garden Paths</i>	
Buildings	81
<i>House</i>	
<i>Carriage House</i>	
Structures and Small-scale Features	85
<i>Front Fence</i>	
<i>Balustrade</i>	
<i>Formal Garden</i>	
<i>Alice's Garden</i>	
Vegetation	87
<i>Specimen Trees</i>	
<i>Lilacs</i>	
<i>Perimeter Plantings</i>	
<i>Vines and Small-scale Plantings</i>	
5. CONCLUSIONS	93
Summary of Findings	93
Treatment Implications	97
Recommendations for Additional Work	98
END NOTES	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107
APPENDIX A Martha Brookes Hutcheson Project List	110
APPENDIX B Significance Summary Chart	112

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure</i>		<i>Page</i>
	INTRODUCTION	
overleaf	View of Longfellow property, 1916.	8
1	Early engraving of Longfellow property, circa 1842.	12
	1. HISTORIC CONTEXT: DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE NEW ENGLAND	
overleaf	View of Longfellow house from the southeast, January 1904.	16
2	Detail from “A Plan of Boston in New England with its environs” by Henry Pelham, London, 1777.	21
3	Current view of the Codman house in Lincoln, MA, showing similar terracing to that found at Longfellow NHS.	23
4	The Vale in Waltham, MA, was one of the earliest romantic landscapes in New England.	25
5	Perspective drawing of Craigie house by Charles Warner, from a mathematical thesis, 1815.	27
6	This prototypical image illustrates a romantic landscapewith scattered plants in an open lawn.	29
7	Detail of Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr.’s sketch of grounds, 1844.	31
8	Painting by N. Vautin, 1845. This is one of the few views of the rear of the property during Longfellow’s lifetime.	32
9	The Wendell garden in Portsmouth, NH, was typical of early attempts to recreate Colonial gardens.	34
10	Formal garden at Longfellow NHS after redesign by Martha Brookes Hutcheson in 1904.	36
	2. HISTORIC CONTEXT: LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS	
overleaf	View of arbor in formal garden designed by Martha Brookes Hutcheson, circa 1905.	38
11	Flower garden at the Moseley estate, one of Hutcheson’s most important projects.	42
12	Hutcheson used this view of the garden at Welwyn on Long Island to illustrate what she called “the importance of the green enclosure of a garden.”	42
13	This view of the Oldfields estate on Long Island illustrates Hutcheson’s skillful use of hedges and a focal sculpture to define an axis.	43
14	Hutcheson designed arbors in many styles, ranging the rustic arbor at Merchiston Farm (right), to the more formal arbor at Undercliff (far right).	44
15	View of Longfellow garden from east shortly after Hutcheson’s work was completed, circa 1905.	45
16	View of garden with arbor in background showing Hutcheson’s skillful use of Colonial Revival detailing, circa 1905.	45

<i>Figure</i>		<i>Page</i>
	3. ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY	
overleaf	Henry and Edith Longfellow on the steps of the Longfellow house, 1880.	50
17	Alice Longfellow, circa 1891.	56
18	Formal garden after redesign by Martha Brookes Hutcheson.	58
19	Estate of John Vassall, 1774.	62
20	Craigie Estate, 1841.	63
21	Estate of Henry W. Longfellow, 1882.	64
22	Longfellow property, 1928, including the Longfellow Trust and Alice Longfellow's property.	65
23	Historic American Buildings Survey, "General Plan Vicinity of House, Henry W. Longfellow Place," 1935.	66
	4. CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES	
overleaf	Existing Conditions Plan, Longfellow National Historic Site, 1998.	70
24	Brattle Street neighborhood, 1882 and 1992.	72
25	Site boundaries, 1820, 1843, 1992.	74
26	Landscape areas.	75
27	View out towards Charles River through the front door of the Longfellow house, 1900.	76
28	Historic post card view from Brattle Street, early twentieth century.	77
29	Circulation diagram, 1999.	78
30	Front path, 1880 and 1998.	80
31	View of house.	81
32	View of vine-covered carriage house, circa 1900.	82
33	Front fence, circa 1969.	83
34	Richard Dolben's Plan for Longfellow garden, 1847.	85
35	Diagram of formal garden as it existed after 1904. This layout reflects the earlier design of Martha Brookes Hutcheson for which no plans survive.	85
36	Formal garden today with side beds removed and denser perimeter plantings.	85
37	The architectural features designed by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow Jr. are the most distinctive aspects of Alice's Garden.	87
38	The profuse vegetation of the 1880s gave the property a very different appearance than it has today.	88
39	Vine-covered balustrade. Photo by Mrs. J. H. Thurston, circa 1882.	90
40	Character Defining Features Chart	91
	4. CONCLUSIONS	
overleaf	View from southeast.	92
41	Stairs at west portico. Photo by Mrs. J. H. Thurston, circa 1882.	94
42	East porch prior to 1882.	96
	NOTES	
overleaf	East piazza, circa 1904.	100
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	
overleaf	View of house from formal garden, after 1905.	106

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View of Longfellow property, 1916

Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA)

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF PROJECT

The Longfellow National Historic Site (Longfellow NHS) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was established by Congress in 1972 to commemorate two of the best loved figures in American history—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and George Washington. The site consists of a 1.98-acre residential lot on which are located a Colonial Georgian house (1759), a carriage house (1844) and landscaped grounds with open lawn areas, trees, shrubs and a formal garden as well as other landscape features. The site also contains many of the original furnishings associated with the Longfellow family and an extensive archival collection.

The National Park Service (NPS) assumed responsibility for the property in 1973 and in the following years undertook major preservation work on the structures to correct problems caused by deferred maintenance. For the past 20 years, the primary document guiding management and interpretation of the site has been the *Final Master Plan* prepared by the NPS in 1978. The *Master Plan* focused on the relationship between the poet and his home but also acknowledged modifications to the property made by Alice Longfellow, the poet's daughter. It recommends that features from Alice's period should be retained when features from Longfellow's period were either not extant or not clearly documented. The *Master Plan* offered little guidance regarding the grounds.

The appearance of the landscape has become increasingly problematic over time; it includes features from several historic periods with an overlay of modern alterations and does not presently represent any specific point in time. Modifications, including those undertaken by the NPS over the past 25 years, have removed some historic features and added non-historic features, leaving a confusing appearance, which does not support effective management and interpretation of the property. In the 1980s, several studies were undertaken to provide the historical documentation necessary to develop a plan for the landscape, but these were never finalized.

In the past decade, much work on the treatment and management of historic landscapes has been done by the National Park Service. As a result, cultural landscape reports prepared for NPS properties now must include a high level of documentation as well as a clear and defensible approach to treatment. The NPS, as steward of Longfellow National Historic Site, has recently undertaken a three part *Cultural Landscape Report* for the property.

Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, by Catherine Evans, was completed in 1993. That comprehensive report documents the evolution of the property from Colonial times to the present, providing a detailed landscape history and a description of the landscape as it exists today. The information contained in Volume 1 has already enhanced understanding of the landscape and provided valuable planning information. This report, Volume 2 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, is the second phase in re-evaluation of the Longfellow NHS landscape. It analyzes the historical significance and integrity of the landscape, evaluating the grounds in relation to other properties which are similar in style and character, and identifying character defining historic features. Volume 3 of the *Cultural Landscape Report* will include treatment recommendations and a detailed treatment plan.

The historic contexts in Chapters 1 and 2 of this volume provide information about historic trends in landscape design and about other similar properties as a basis for evaluating the significance of the Longfellow NHS landscape. Chapter 3 evaluates the significance and integrity of the landscape based on site history, applicable historic contexts and existing site conditions. Chapter 4 describes the physical characteristics of the property that contribute to significance and integrity, known as character defining features. Conclusions are contained in Chapter 5, followed by supporting materials in the Appendices. This volume answers specific questions that will provide important information for treatment decisions but does not prescribe treatment.

In addition to the *Cultural Landscape Report*, the National Park Service has also undertaken several related cultural resource investigations to gain a fuller understanding and appreciation of site resources. The “Historical Overview and Evaluation of Significance, A Historic Resource Study” completed in 1996 by Marie Carden and Tom Denenberg (hereafter referred to as “Historic Resource Study”) integrates the findings of several earlier reports into a detailed chronology of the property and addresses potential new areas of National Register significance. Most notably, it recommends that the property be considered significant as an icon of the Colonial Revival and early historic preservation

movements and that the period of significance be extended into the twentieth century. The "Historic Furnishings Report, The Longfellow House, Volume I, Historical Data," by Sarah Heald, documents the furnishing of the house at key periods, providing critical information on site furnishing and interpretation. An archeological investigation has also been undertaken, concentrating in the area of the carriage house. It has revealed greater presence of subsurface resources than was previously known.

A "Management Objectives Workshop" held in 1995 refined the mission statement of the park and updated park goals. In 1998 a group of NPS and outside scholars gathered to re-evaluate the period of treatment. The outcome was a recommendation that the property be furnished and interpreted through the Alice Longfellow period to encompass changes made by the poet's daughter. This decision has important implications for all aspects of site management, including the landscape.

METHODOLOGY AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report was based on methodology for the preparation of cultural landscape reports recently developed by the National Park Service. This approach to analyzing and evaluating the significance and integrity of historic properties builds upon criteria and procedures established by the National Register of Historic Places, applying National Register methodology specifically to cultural landscapes and their associated features.

The Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property, now the Longfellow National Historic Site, has long been recognized as nationally significant for its association with George Washington and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and as an outstanding example of Colonial Georgian architecture. Volume 2 of the *Cultural Landscape Report* is one of a series of recent studies commissioned by the National Park Service which has brought awareness to other aspects of the site's history and recognition of potential new areas of historical significance. Key findings of this report are that the landscape contributes to the significance of the property in each of the established areas of significance; it should be recognized as a significant example of the early Colonial Revival style of landscape architecture; and it is also noteworthy for its association with landscape architect Martha Brookes Hutcheson.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW¹

In the early eighteenth century, Cambridge was a small village, relatively isolated from Boston and the surrounding area. The road to Watertown, now known as Brattle Street, was lined with many small properties, most undeveloped or in agricultural use. In the 1750s John Vassall, Esquire, consolidated a number of these properties to create a 97-acre estate with an imposing Georgian mansion at the center. The prominence of the house reflected Vassall's social and economic prestige; it had elaborate architectural details and was elevated for views, ventilation and drainage. The estate, a working farm, also had several large outbuildings and a formal garden, about which relatively little is known.

When Vassall built his house in 1759, there were only a few houses along the road to Watertown. By 1770 there were seven estates with substantial houses built by wealthy landowners, most of whom were British loyalists, hence the name Tory Row was applied to the street. John Vassall's wealth, Anglican beliefs and political ties to England earned him social status in Colonial New England, but eventually mandated his departure to Boston, then, by way of Canada, to England in 1774. Many of his neighbors were forced to leave as well.

FIGURE 1

Engraving of Longfellow property, circa 1842.
(Courtesy: National Park Service, Longfellow National Historic Site, hereafter referred to as Longfellow NHS)



The size of the house and strategic river-front location of the property appealed to General George Washington and it served as his headquarters for a critical nine-month period in 1775-76. In the wake of the Revolution, the estate was confiscated and sold, subsequently passing through several hands.

In the 1790s, the property was acquired by Andrew Craigie, a shrewd real estate speculator, who transformed it into a picturesque 140-acre estate, enlarging the house and embellishing the grounds with gardens, structures and ponds. Craigie's expenditures were so lavish that the house later became known as "Castle Craigie." The expense of the property and his extensive land speculations contributed to the demise of Craigie's fortune and he died heavily in debt. Subdivision of the estate began soon after Craigie's death in 1819 and accelerated after his wife Elizabeth's death in 1841.

Henry W. Longfellow first resided in the house in 1837 as one of Elizabeth Craigie's boarders and lived there until his death in 1882. In 1843, Longfellow married Frances (Fanny) Appleton. The couple received the house and five acres of land as a wedding gift from her father, Nathan Appleton, who also purchased four acres of meadow on the south side of the street for the couple. The Longfellows, fascinated with the historical associations of the house and delighted with its setting near the Charles River, adopted a conservative attitude towards their property, making relatively few changes. The family referred to their home as "Craigie house" well into the twentieth century. The history and location of the property became an inspirational setting for Henry Longfellow's life and work.

Longfellow's residence coincided with an era of change in the character of Cambridge. Meadows, fields and views of the river and hills disappeared as many of the eighteenth century estates were sub-divided in the mid-nineteenth century. This transformation from a rural to a suburban neighborhood heightened Longfellow's appreciation of the historic significance of his home. His awareness of the relationship between the house and its surroundings fueled his efforts to conserve significant elements of this association. Although Longfellow installed a new flower garden, laid out new paths and planted many trees, his major interest focused on extant historic features, primarily the house, the forecourt of elm trees and the visual and historical link between the house and the Charles River. Implicit in these efforts is Longfellow's identification of those features as those that, in his words, "signified" the property or that were integral to its identity.

EARLY PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Conscious preservation of the property began with Henry and Fanny Longfellow's residency and continued after Longfellow's death through his children's stewardship of the property. The first commemorative effort undertaken by Longfellow's heirs was to encourage the establishment of the Longfellow Memorial Association, which developed the parcel of land opposite the house as Longfellow Park to commemorate the poet. The heirs' second effort centered around the preservation of the house and its immediate surroundings. In 1888, the estate was partitioned, providing each of the Longfellow children with a lot and delineating the 1.98-acre parcel that constitutes the Longfellow NHS today.

An Indenture of Trust created by the Longfellow children in 1913 set forth conditions for Alice Longfellow and subsequent heirs to occupy the house and created the Longfellow House Trust. Although the Trust was responsible for financial and legal issues pertaining to the property, Alice Longfellow assumed primary responsibility for care of the house and grounds during her lifetime. Like her parents, Alice made only conservative changes. Plumbing and electricity were installed in the interest of comfort, and the barn was altered to accommodate automobiles. Alice also made changes in the formal garden, bringing in three designers between 1904 and 1925 to shape the alterations: Martha Brookes Hutcheson, Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow and Ellen Shipman. After Alice's death in 1928, the Longfellow House Trust assumed full responsibility for the property.

Henry (Harry) Wadsworth Longfellow Dana lived at the house from 1917 to 1950. Harry not only cared for his grandfather's books and papers, he collected papers, books and artifacts associated with the complete history of the Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property. After Alice's death he was the family member most involved in the house, its possessions and its preservation as a memorial to his grandfather.

During the 1930s and 40s, the Longfellow family and the Longfellow House Trust faced financial constraints and the related dilemma of the disposition of the property. At the same time, appreciation and concern for the historic significance of the house was growing. Among those most concerned was William Summer Appleton, a Longfellow cousin and founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Early discussions were inconclusive and it was not until 1952, two years after Harry Dana's death, that the trustees renewed their search for an appropriate steward for the property. In 1962, the National Park Service determined that the property was of national historical significance and thus eligible for inclusion in the national park system, but legal obstacles still had to be overcome before the property could be transferred. Legislation establishing the Longfellow National Historic Site was passed in 1972.² In the intervening years, the landscape has continued to evolve through management actions and the natural processes of evolution.



View of Longfellow house from the southeast, January 1904

Longfellow NHS

1. HISTORIC CONTEXT:

DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE

NEW ENGLAND

The history of the landscape at the Longfellow NHS has been well documented in Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*. In order to evaluate the significance of the landscape, the property must be placed within a larger intellectual framework, known as a historic context. Two relevant contexts have been identified. The first, the designed residential landscapes of New England, is further divided into four sub-contexts that correspond with major periods of residential landscape design. The second context, contained in Chapter 2, evaluates the work of three designers who shaped the landscape in the early twentieth century: Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson, Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. and Ellen Biddle Shipman.

The design of residential landscape settings has long been an American pre-occupation. From the first efforts to establish gardens in the wilderness to the creation of elaborate estates in the twentieth century, residential grounds have been a reflection of the social and political mores of an era as well as the status and attitudes of an individual.

The geographic parameters of this context are limited to the New England area, particularly southern New England where the Longfellow NHS is located, although many of the characteristics described for this area appear elsewhere as well. While the property was initially developed as a rural estate, by the mid-nineteenth century it had become a suburban residence, and its later development is evaluated largely from this perspective. Since the primary purpose of this investigation is to provide a context for the Longfellow NHS, of which less than two acres remains, emphasis is on the area immediately surrounding the house. This area, often called the ornamental grounds, was where property owners typically made the most effort to make a personal statement of style and taste.

The beginning and ending dates for this historic context, 1750 and 1930 respectively, were selected because they correspond roughly with periods of major development at the property, and also because they mark important transitions in American landscape history. Prior to 1750, New England residential landscapes were primarily functional with relatively little attempt at embellishment or conscious design. By the mid-eighteenth century, wealthy individuals were beginning to amass large land holdings and create rural estates, a pattern clearly reflected in the development of the Brattle Street neighborhood where the Longfellow NHS is located. The 1930 date was selected because it corresponds with the death of Alice Longfellow in 1928 and because the stock market crash of 1929 heralded the end of the period often called the Golden Age of American Gardens.³ Between 1930 and 1950 the depression and war years created a climate where there were few innovations in residential design. After World War II emphasis shifted to contemporary landscape styles which have little relevance to the Longfellow NHS.

For each of the four periods described in this section, the general themes and influences are discussed first, followed by a description of the physical characteristics of the period and finally by a discussion of how the Longfellow NHS embodies the style of the period.

Colonial Seat 1750 - 1790

BACKGROUND

Landscape historian Ann Leighton has characterized the gardens of seventeenth century New England as being “for Meate or Medicine” while eighteenth century gardens were for “Use or for Delight”.⁴ The gardens of seventeenth century America were those of settlers in the wilderness, while those of eighteenth century Colonists had more worldly horizons. Leighton notes,

*The gardens of the eighteenth-century colonies and states expanded as the manner of life expanded, and began to acquire the interest and style, the variety and charm, that can come with a relaxed society, one that feels sure of holding its own and more, too.*⁵

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, small utilitarian farms still predominated in New England but wealthier farmers were beginning to amass large land holdings and to establish substantial estates with grand mansions, sophisticated agricultural production and elaborate formal gardens. This period could be considered the beginning of designed, as opposed to vernacular,

landscape in New England since style was a conscious component of the property, in contrast with the earlier landscapes which were primarily functional in character. The design vocabulary of the early estate owners borrowed heavily from traditional European ideals, particularly English landscape gardening, as adapted to the New England landscape. Large estates flourished during the middle part of the century, a relatively stable period politically. During the latter part of the century, few innovations in landscape design took place because of the turmoil associated with the Revolutionary War. Many of the estates were confiscated or abandoned during the war and fell into decline in the post-war period.

CHARACTERISTICS

Leighton describes the essence of an American eighteenth century estate as space, trees and water. She indicates that, "The standard American middle-of-the-road garden layout was fairly predictable, from New England to the Carolinas."⁶ Estate landscapes generally consisted of two sections: the large outlying agricultural holdings of tilled fields, pastures, meadows, woodlots and orchards, and the ornamental grounds near the house, a much smaller area which might include a front lawn, a formal garden and a small vegetable garden. The farm area would have been organized functionally, while the ornamental grounds would be laid out with more attention to aesthetic concerns.

The house would have been the most prominent building, with many outbuildings to support the numerous activities of the farm. Leighton could have been describing the Vassall property when she characterized the buildings associated with a typical Colonial estate:

A two- or three-story house with a central hall and two or four chimneys would stand clear on its foundation with no embellishments other than, often, some terracing, which lent dignity and increased a sense of privacy when the house stood high on a town street . . . a stable with carriage houses and a paddock or cow yard would be behind the house and to one side with its own access.⁷

Other "appurtenances" might include ells attached to the house, a summer kitchen, a cool room, a well, a woodshed and an "earth closet" for the family, with another for servants and workers. The latter, also known as necessities, were often screened with plant materials to ensure privacy for those in transit. Summer houses or gazebos, preferably with a view, were also popular.

The front of the property, most likely designed to be seen from the road, would have consisted of generous lawns broken by large ornamental trees, possibly set off from the street by a wall or fence. The entrance drive, possibly lined with mature trees, would be laid out to impress arriving visitors. Paths connected various features of the site, which might include arbors, trellises and places to sit in vine-encased privacy. Formal gardens, frequently located to the side or rear of the property, were typically symmetrical and rectilinear during this period and would have been enclosed by a fence or possibly a fruit wall to extend the growing season. South facing slopes were favored. Where the topography lent itself, a garden might be terraced to take maximum advantage of the sun. Walks might be graveled or made of beach stones. Boxwood might be used to edge the beds, which would consist primarily of flowers. The vegetable garden, another essential landscape component,

... was laid out in its own formal style with borders of currant and with grass or gravel walks down past the squared-off onion and asparagus beds to the inevitable quince in one of the far corners. There would be a garden seat there, too, as a well-cared-for vegetable garden was something for the owner to show to friends aspiring to rival or excel him in new varieties of peas or beans or salad stuff.⁸

Trees were for “shade or fruit or bloom or beauty.”⁹ In a landscape where wood was needed for fuel and lumber, mature trees were often sparse in a residential setting. American elms and lindens were particularly favored as ornamental trees because of their majestic shape. Orchards were also an essential feature of a Colonial estate as many gallons of cider were consumed annually. While apples were the primary orchard fruit grown in New England during this period, pears, peaches and other more exotic fruits were also grown on a limited basis.

LONGFELLOW NHS

Like many early New England towns, Newtowne, as Cambridge was initially called, was carefully sited. The first settlement was established in 1630 near the present Harvard Square. It was accessible by water but protected from attack by the sea. Fresh water was available from springs, and the wooded uplands provided good building sites with views of the surrounding area. The partially cleared land facilitated agriculture, while tidal lands provided much needed hay. Oysters were available on the tidal flats and fish were plentiful in the Charles River. Initially the settlement was a compact walled village with scattered farm

1. DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE: NEW ENGLAND

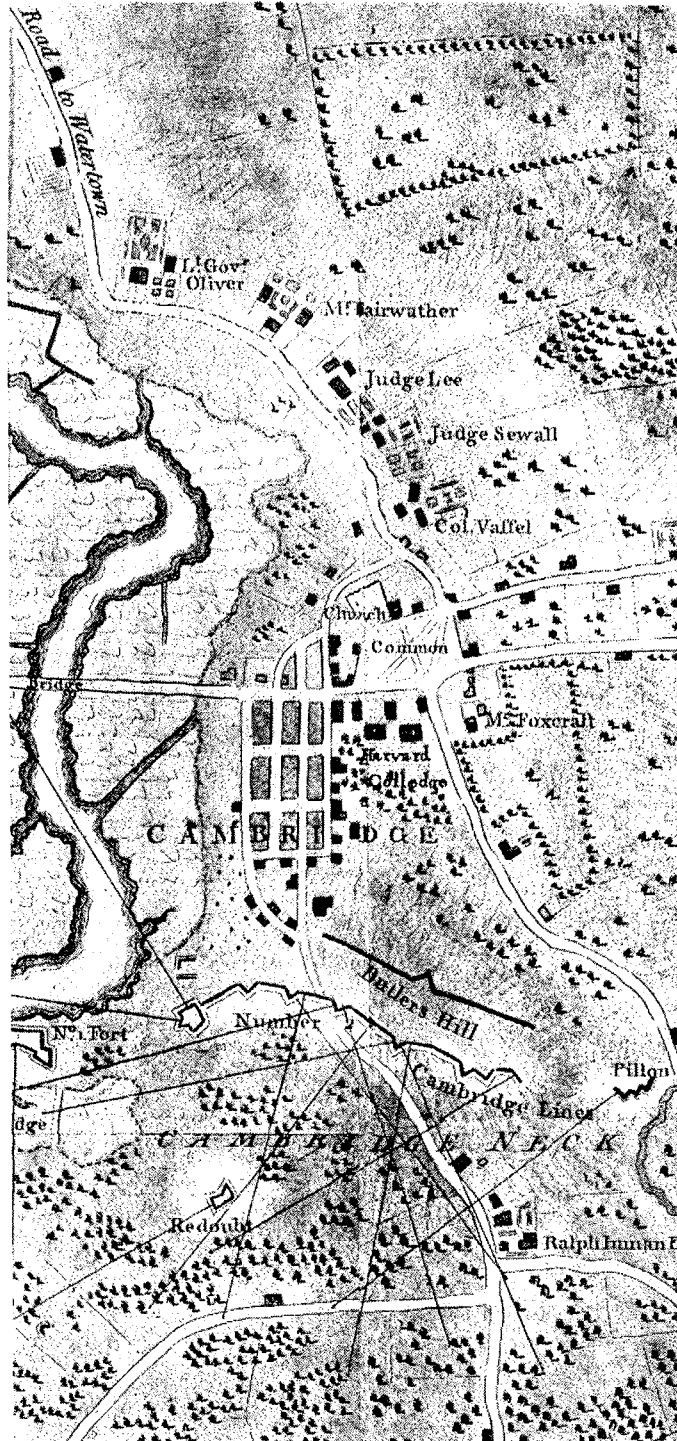


FIGURE 2

Detail from "A Plan of Boston in New England with its environs" by Henry Pelham, London, 1777. The Vassall property is just above the common which is located near the center of the map. (Pusey Library, Harvard University)

allotments outside. After 1650, settlement spread out along the highways, which were becoming more established, and the trend was toward consolidation of many small land holdings by fewer land owners.¹⁰

In the mid-1700s John Vassall's estate was one of seven large Brattle Street properties established along the road to Watertown (now Brattle Street) west of Harvard Square. Most were on the north side of the street, with houses sited on raised terraces to give added height and importance. The estate owners were Boston's elite, with strong ties to England, and their estates were designed to reinforce this notion. The area was known as Tory Row because of the political leanings of the residents.

John Vassall's estate was the third of seven Brattle Street properties established by 1770 and the largest in terms of land holdings. The property was managed as a multi-use estate with formal gardens located near the house and outlying agricultural areas consisting of fields, orchards, woodlots and meadows. Buildings included the prominently sited house set on terraces overlooking Brattle Street, as well as two large barns and several smaller outbuildings located behind the house. There were also several smaller residences to accommodate staff. Relatively little is known about landscape design during the Vassall years, although the Pelham map, a detail of which is shown on the previous page, indicates what appear to be extensive formal gardens behind the house. The masonry wall along Brattle Street and the original elm trees in front of the house are believed to date to this period.

Longfellow NHS clearly reflects its Colonial origins. The house, the terraces, and the relationship to the road and the river are all extant features from this period. The property is the best extant example in Cambridge of an affluent residential landscape of the Colonial period because the larger landscape relationships are better preserved here than in any of the other Brattle Street estates. It is also one of a handful of early estates in the Boston area that retains Colonial landscape features. The Bellingham Carey house in Chelsea and the Shirley Eustis house in Roxbury are two other urban examples, both with less landscape integrity than the Longfellow NHS. Suburban examples include the Codman estate in Lincoln, MA (circa 1740), which retains its larger landscape setting, and the Adams mansion in Quincy, MA (1732), which retains some Colonial features but is not stylistically similar. All extant Colonial residential landscapes in the Boston area also have an overlay of later design.

Federal Ideal 1790 - 1840

BACKGROUND

During the Revolutionary War, many of Boston's wealthy Tories were forced to return to England. Their properties were abandoned or confiscated and changed hands in the years following the war. By the 1790s there was a growing political and economic stability and new owners began to undertake their own improvements. It was a time of intense national pride when Americans were anxious to prove that their estates were equal to any in England. In early nineteenth century New England, land ownership and embellishment were a means of displaying wealth and importance, demonstrating a new American aristocracy. Rural estates reflected an owner's civic pride as well as his social status.



FIGURE 3

Current view of the Codman house in Lincoln, MA, showing similar terracing to that found at Longfellow NHS. (Photo by author)

The early nineteenth century was also a time of new ideas—social, philosophical, scientific and industrial—all evident in New England. A prominent theme of the day was interest in scientific agriculture. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture was founded in 1792 by wealthy estate owners to promote increased agricultural production and efficiency. Popular interest in ornamental horticulture also increased during this period. The founding of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1829 provided an additional forum for exchanging horticultural information, as well as a means of improving agricultural practices.

During the early part of the nineteenth century, gardening books were limited and came primarily from Europe. Most New England estates of the period retained traditional rectilinear garden layouts. However, in England, there was a growing trend towards a more romantic, naturalistic style popularized by Humphrey Repton, John Claudius Loudon, Capability Brown and other landscape gardeners. This style, which gained greater popularity later in the century, was found in only a few early nineteenth century New England estates. The Lyman estate (known as the Vale) in Waltham, laid out in the 1790s, is one notable early example.

CHARACTERISTICS

In the early nineteenth century, the basic features of a New England estate remained much as they had during the previous century. The house would have been prominently sited, set on a rise if possible to gain a “prospect” or view. There would have been no foundation planting to obstruct the view of the house from the road. Terracing might have been retained but was less likely to be constructed during this period. The spatial organization would have been much the same as during the eighteenth century although there might have been a more curvilinear driveway, reflecting the growing influence of the English romantic landscape style.

1. DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE: NEW ENGLAND

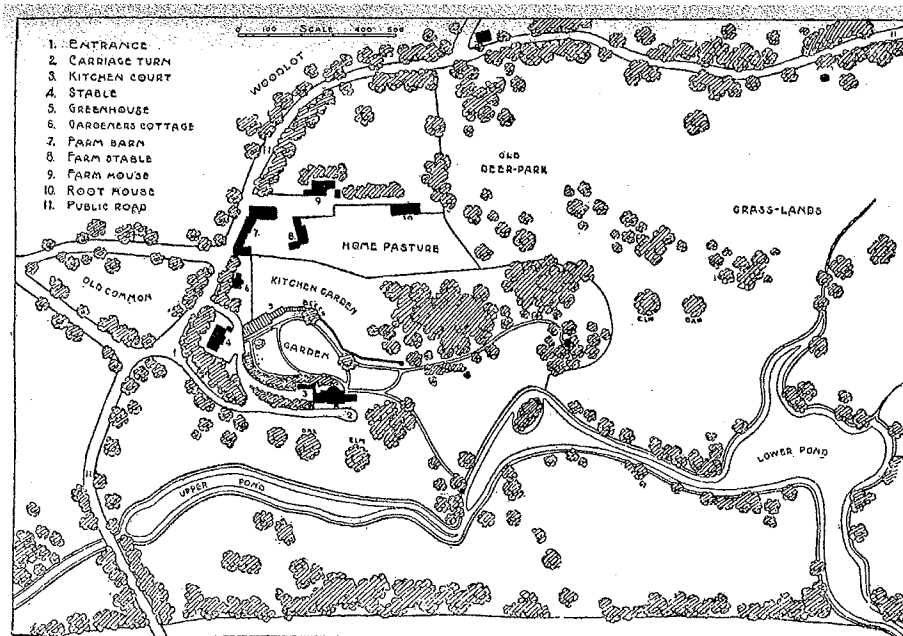


FIGURE 4

The Vale in Waltham, MA,
was one of the earliest
romantic landscapes in
New England.

(From *Charles Eliot, Landscape Architect*, 1902)

Many of the large New England estates retained their extensive agricultural holdings but self sufficiency would have been less important because better roads provided access to growing commercial and industrial centers. As the population of Boston and other urban centers increased, there were fewer estates located in towns and more in outlying areas. Increasingly estates were for summer use while wealthy families spent winters in town. Functional portions of the estate were more likely to be separated by this time, with a well-defined service entrance, farm complex and stables, as well as manager's residence, orchards, vegetable gardens, pastures and tillage fields.

Greenhouses and south-facing fruit walls were popular among the wealthy as the growing of exotic fruits and vegetables became the focus of keen competition. Ornamental horticulture also gained in popularity, with new species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous materials becoming available. Trees of many different varieties might be scattered in a park-like area known as a deer park. Bolder steps were taken to shape the landscape, through earth moving, creation of ponds and opening of vistas, rather than just adapting the existing land forms. Flower gardens were far more elaborate than they had been in the previous century, although they were still typically geometric in form, possibly surrounded by walls with a fountain or sculpture in the center.

Ornamental features within the landscape became more prevalent as wealthy land owners had more leisure time to spend in their gardens and were anxious to impress their visitors. Among the most common features were summer houses, often made of lattice and covered with vines, which afforded “an outdoor sitting place, near the house and garden and orchard (all equally inevitable), from which one could see all around, and be seen by none if the vines flourished.”¹¹

LONGFELLOW NHS

Cambridge remained relatively isolated until the opening of the West Boston bridge in 1793 and the Craigie bridge in 1809, which created a much closer link to Boston and resulted in rapid industrial and residential growth. The Brattle Street neighborhood, already fashionable, attracted new residents who vied to create showcase estates. Andrew Craigie acquired the former John Vassall property in 1791 and over the next year transformed it into one of the grandest of the Cambridge estates. He enlarged the house, adding piazzas, and built new outbuildings including a greenhouse and an elaborate summer house near the present Harvard Observatory which served as a destination for rides or strolls. He was also responsible for the Chinese Chippendale fence, created in a pattern which was popular in England at the time.¹²

Craigie was particularly interested in agriculture and horticulture. He was an early member of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture and in 1805 donated a portion of his estate to establish what became the Harvard Botanic Garden.¹³ His horticultural improvements to his own property are not well documented but his correspondence indicates that he ordered numerous fruit and ornamental trees, as well as shrubs and herbaceous plant materials, many from Prince’s Nursery on Long Island and some from England.¹⁴

The grandeur of the Craigie estate was short lived, however. After Andrew Craigie’s death in 1819, most of the estate was sold to pay off his debts, the buildings deteriorated and Elizabeth Craigie took in boarders—including Henry Longfellow—to make ends meet. While little evidence of the estate as a whole remains, the front lawn area retains key features associated with the Craigie era.

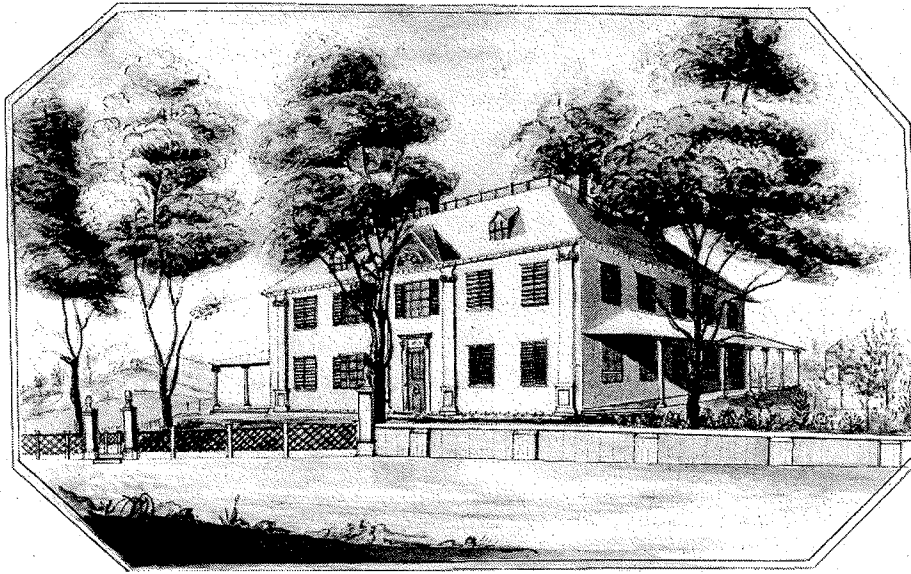


FIGURE 5

Perspective drawing of Craigie house by Charles Warner, from a mathematical thesis, 1815. (Pusey Library, Harvard University)

Other well-known Boston area estates from this period include the Lyman Estate in Waltham (1793) (Figure 4); Gore Place in Waltham (1815); and Belmont, John Perkins Cushing's estate in Watertown (1830s, no longer extant). The Lyman and Gore properties are better examples of this period because of their larger land area. However, the Craigie estate is recognized as one of the best Cambridge examples, along with many of the other Brattle Street estates.

Romantic Residence 1840–1890

BACKGROUND

Landscape historian Keith Morgan has characterized the nineteenth century as “a period of enormous change and vitality for horticulture and the landscape. Scientific, cultural, economic and political factors entered into the disposition of and opinions about the landscape as never before.”¹⁵ This is particularly reflected in landscapes of the latter part of the century. Through wide availability of books and periodicals, many by this time American rather than European, horticultural information was broadly disseminated and much discussed. Landscape design began to reach beyond the wealthy and become accessible to all. The leap from scientific agriculture to landscape design was easily made, due in large measure to the work of Andrew Jackson Downing. Initially a pomolo-

gist, Downing was best known as editor of *The Horticulturist* and author of books advocating landscape improvements as a reflection of moral rectitude and civic pride. André Parmentier, another prominent nineteenth century landscape spokesman, articulated the appeal of the romantic approach.

It has been reserved for the good taste of our age to make many advantageous changes in the embellishment of gardens, and to reinstate Nature in the possession of those rights from which she has too long been banished by an undue regard to symmetry. Our ancestors gave to every part of a garden all the exactness of geometric forms: they seem to have known of no other way to plant trees, except in straight lines; a system totally ruinous to the beauty of the prospect. We now see how ridiculous it was, except in the public gardens of the city, to apply the rules of architecture to the embellishment of gardens. The majestic trunk is now allowed the liberty of displaying its form, or of following in its vigorous shoot the plan of nature. Gardens are now treated like landscapes, the charms of which are not to be improved by any rules of art.¹⁶

The nineteenth century was also a period of rapid industrialization, with a resulting growth of cities and rise of suburban living. Many of the old estates, especially those close to urban centers, were subdivided for residential development, creating a new generation of urban and suburban residences. These ranged from spacious homes with many of the characteristics of a small estate to the tenements of the inner city. New estates were established further from town, often as seasonal residences. This was also a time when New England agriculture was in decline, as mid-west and western portions of the country were developed and became more accessible by improved railroad transportation.

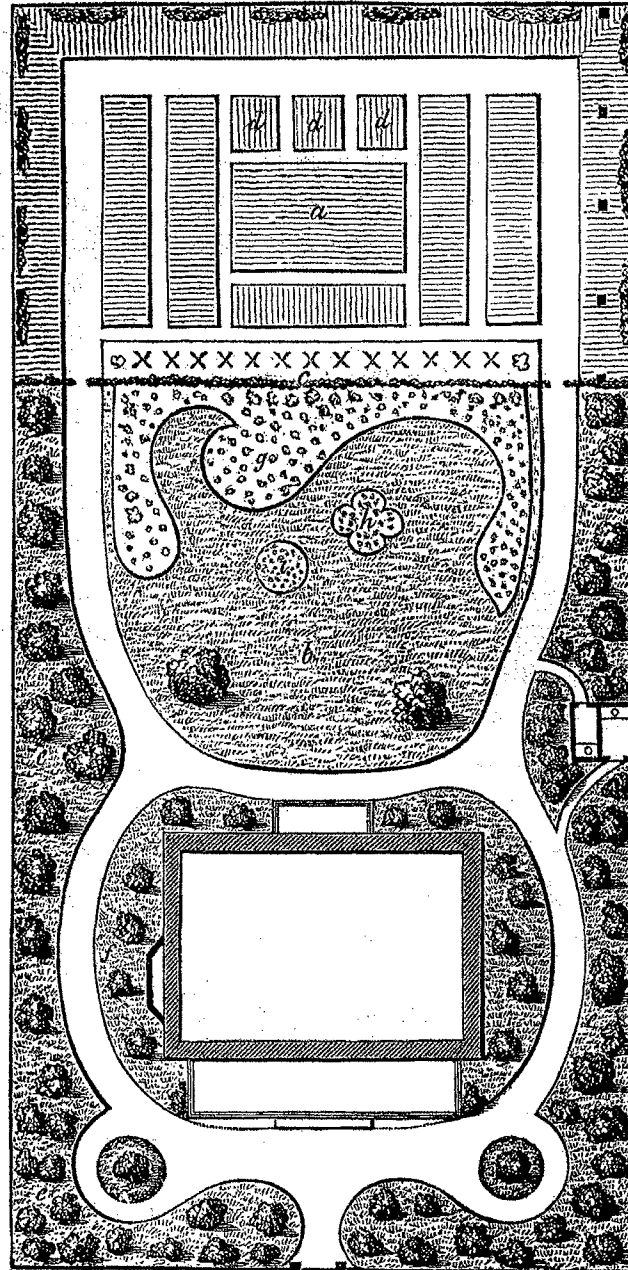


FIGURE 6

This prototypical image illustrates a romantic landscape with scattered plants in an open lawn. House is at bottom of photo, flower gardens in center and vegetable gardens at top. (From *Cottage Residences* by A.J. Downing, 1847)

CHARACTERISTICS

Small estates became more popular during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Typically these were from two to ten acres, with formal grounds at the front and small vegetable gardens and possibly remnant orchards at the rear. In addition to the house, there was likely to be a carriage house but other outbuildings were no longer necessary on a suburban-scale property. Changes were evident in every aspect of landscape design. Perhaps the most striking difference was the new approach to spatial organization which favored curvilinear beds over straight lines. The balance of art and nature was the focus of much discussion.

In *Victorian Gardens, Part I: Suburban Home Grounds*, written in 1870, Frank Scott advocated a style which he referred to as “decorative gardening” which featured curvilinear paths and beds as well as decorative planting, which might include many varieties of annuals as well as unusual specimen trees, often selected for dramatic characteristics such as unusual colored leaves or weeping foliage. Deciduous shrubs were used heavily, particularly lilacs. Plants were considered as specimens, often displayed individually or in geometric beds, but rarely massed. It was also a time of technological change with new materials, such as cast iron, available for landscape ornaments and new technology, which brought vastly improved greenhouses, facilitating the widespread use of annuals.

The focus on embellishment and public display was also characteristic of the Victorian age. Residential landscapes were more likely to be designed for pleasure rather than for agricultural production. The advent of the lawn mower in the 1850s brought new emphasis on turf and lawns, particularly at the front of a property which was intended to be admired from the street.¹⁷ With more leisure time, residents spent more time outside so spaces for outdoor living were needed; porches, piazzas and enclosed garden spaces became popular. As with the earlier summer houses, the idea was to be able to see out but not be seen from the street. This was also the period when foundation plantings began to be introduced, often in response to the raised first floors of the Victorian homes built during this era, but they would have been used as accents rather than a continuous mass of plantings.

LONGFELLOW NHS

By mid-nineteenth century, many of the old Brattle Street estates were being subdivided for residential use, a fact much lamented by many Cambridge residents, including Longfellow. The Craigie estate, reduced from over 100 acres in 1819 to five acres in 1843, was typical. One of the Longfellows' first actions was to tear down all the deteriorated outbuildings and construct a single carriage house appropriate to the needs of a suburban residence. Service areas were clearly located at the west, reflecting the separation of functional and recreational areas. Clear distinction was also made between the front of the house, which retained the general character of earlier eras, and the rear, which was redesigned in the style of the times. In the front lawn area, the basic Colonial features were retained, although the addition of lilacs and, in 1872, a balustrade on the top terrace gave the property a softer, more refined quality. The lilacs also provided screening, as did a row of acacias planted along the eastern boundary to block the view of the Oliver Hastings house next door, which was completed in 1844.

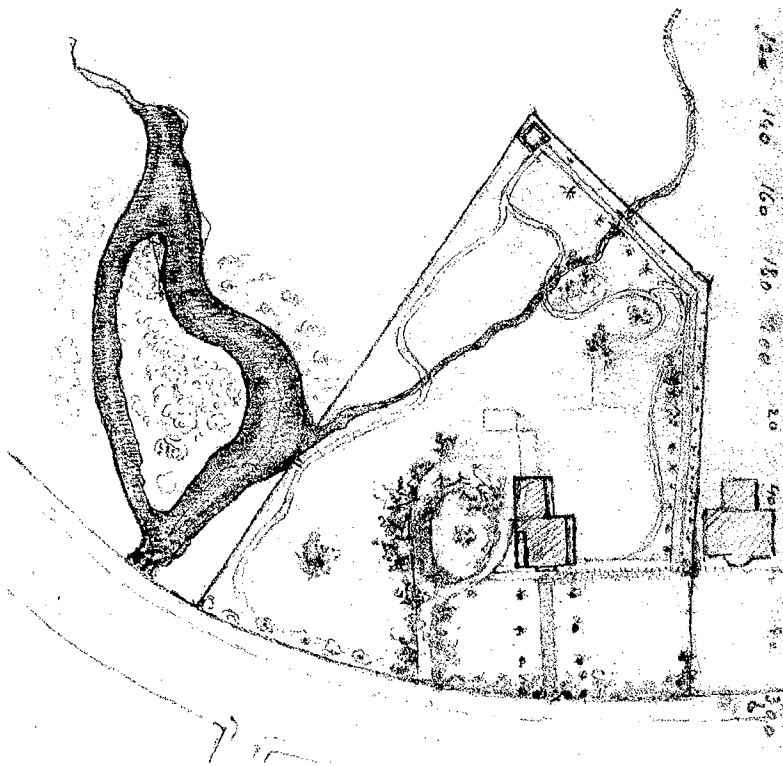


FIGURE 7

Detail of Alexander
Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr.'s
sketch of grounds, 1844.
(Houghton Library,
Harvard University)

The 1844 sketch of the grounds by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr., shown on the previous page, provides a tantalizing view of what the property might have been like during Longfellow's lifetime, fully embodying the spirit of the romantic landscape with its curvilinear paths, linden walk, stream and diverse plantings. Unfortunately few of these features remain, and there is little evidence of romantic design at the Longfellow NHS today. The lilacs, the balustrade and the origins of the formal garden are the primary landscape features which date to this era. Initially there was a lyre-shaped garden, which was typically romantic, but this was replaced in 1847 by a rectangular garden with more geometric beds, which might have been seen as more traditional, in keeping with the Colonial character of the house.

FIGURE 8

Painting by N. Vautin, 1845.
This is one of the few views of
the rear of the property during
Longfellow's lifetime.
(Longfellow NHS)



There are few extant examples of the type of romantic design advocated by Downing, Parmentier and Scott. It was a labor intensive style which was soon rejected in favor of simpler, more architectural gardens with massed plantings rather than individual specimen plants. One notable example from early in this period is the Bowen House in Woodstock, CT (1846), with its Gothic Revival house and extensive gardens, now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Colonial Redefined 1890 - 1930

BACKGROUND

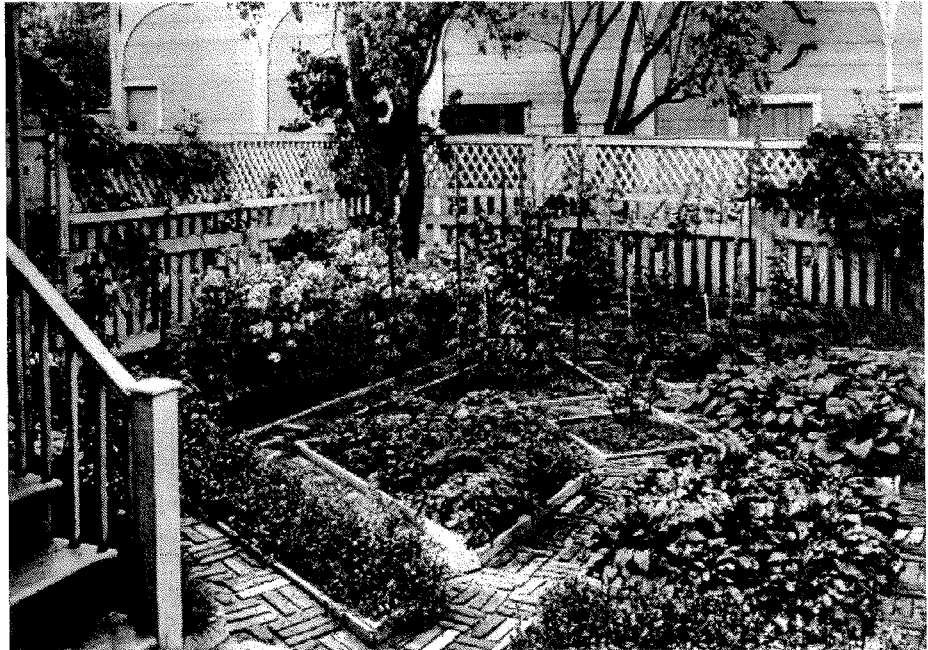
In the late nineteenth century there was a strong reaction against the dramatic changes in the character of the American landscape brought about by the rapid expansion of cities. This, in combination with the renewed patriotism inspired by the 1876 Centennial, led to an interest in perpetuating the national heritage and enthusiasm for the Colonial Revival, a style described by historian William Howard Adams as “the invention and reinterpretation of the nation’s colonial legacy.”¹⁸

In landscape architecture, this sentiment was expressed during the late nineteenth century by an interest in old fashioned gardens, sometimes known as grandmothers gardens, which were featured extensively in garden literature. Often these were very personal gardens, designed and maintained by their owners, in sharp contrast to the grand estates inspired by European design styles that were also popular during this period. A parallel garden movement occurred in Europe, particularly England, during the early twentieth century where landscape gardeners and writers such as William Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll espoused interest in cottage gardens and wild gardens in reaction to the artificiality of Victorian plantings. Old fashioned gardens have been largely discounted during most of the twentieth century but have recently been recognized by art historian May Brawley Hill as an important indigenous American garden style that was particularly associated with the lives of women and was a direct precursor of the Colonial Revival style of landscape design.

During the first part of the twentieth century, many garden designs, including early “restoration” efforts, sought to integrate the approach to planting design associated with grandmothers gardens and the Colonially-inspired architectural detailing developed by an emerging group of preservation architects. Some of these projects were also strongly influenced by the architectural spaces associated with the estate designs of the country place era in the work of practitioners such as Charles Platt.

FIGURE 9

The Wendell garden in Portsmouth, NH, was typical of early attempts to recreate Colonial gardens.
(From: *The Mentor, Historic Gardens of New England*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 1916)



CHARACTERISTICS

Suburban residences from the turn of the century included many of the same landscape features as earlier periods, but often on a reduced scale. The front lawn was generally open to the street, although a fence or wall might be used to define the boundary. Typically there would have been screening at the edges of the property, often created by shrubbery. Evergreens were increasingly popular to provide year-round visual interest. Plants were more likely to be massed by this period, rather than set apart as individual specimens. Some foundation plantings might be found, but usually as accents rather than as continuous masses. Service areas were at the side and screened from view. Spaces were provided for recreational activities, typically at the side or rear so residents were not visible from the street. Screened porches were popular, often covered with vines.

Most properties also had an enclosed garden, either an old fashioned garden or a formal garden, possibly designed by one of the growing number of landscape architects who specialized in residential projects. The garden as a whole was likely to be rectilinear with graveled paths, rectangular beds and perhaps a central feature such as a fountain or sculpture. While distant vistas or axial relationships were favored where possible, hedges or fences were used to create a sense of enclosure. Architectural features such as arbors and pergolas were common. Planting beds were often edged with box. The exuberant planting style of the old fashioned garden provided an effective counterpoint to the controlled spatial organization.

The old fashioned gardens popular in the late nineteenth century reflected a reaction against the excesses of the Victorian period and a desire to return to simple gardens evocative of the Colonial period. May Brawley Hill has characterized them as “box-bordered beds of old-fashioned flowers in luxuriant bloom often enclosed by a fence or a hedge.”¹⁹ Hill indicates that they might be pre-1800 gardens “both real and imagined” and links them with the Colonial Revival interest in architecture and decorative arts. Hill asserts, “It became an indication of breeding and background as well as good taste to value old houses, antique American furniture, and old-fashioned gardens,” as a way of affirming a gardener’s social and cultural affiliations.²⁰

Grandmothers gardens were not based on literal documentation and research. Hill writes “What mattered was that the old-fashioned garden was filled with plants native to America or introduced early in the country’s history . . . abundance, profusion and informality should characterize such a garden.”²¹

FIGURE 10

Formal garden at Longfellow NHS after redesign by Martha Brookes Hutcheson in 1904. (Morris County Parks Commission)



LONGFELLOW NHS

The importance of the Longfellow property was widely recognized in the early twentieth century, both for its association with the poet and as an prominent example of architecture and landscape design. In June 1904, *Country Life In America* featured an article on the Longfellow residence in a series entitled “Homes of Famous Americans.” In this article, the house is described as “one of the purest examples of Colonial architecture that we have” and the Longfellow formal garden, recently redesigned by Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson, as “a simple, little garden.”²² Several influential books focused specifically on the Longfellow garden, including Alice Morse Earle’s *Gardens of Colony and State* and Louise Shelton’s *Beautiful Gardens of America*. Although Shelton documented primarily new gardens, she also made a case for old-fashioned New England gardens, commenting:

*With the foremost gardens of the day claiming our attention we must not lose sight of the simple little old New England gardens so completely in contrast to the more ornamental creations . . . typical of that old-time planting where Cherry and Pear trees cast their slight shade over Box-edged walks and where Lemon Lilies, Peonies, Flag, Roses and shrubs predominated. To many of us there is nothing sweeter than these shaded perfumed enclosures and it is certain that those now existing will be perpetuated, and doubtless their loveliness will be imitated for time to come, wherever perfect simplicity is required.*²³

Landscape historian Ann Leighton also cited the Longfellow formal garden as an example of an old fashioned garden, noting that it is one of the few gardens in the country originating before 1850 for which we have both plans and contemporary descriptions.²⁴

That the Longfellow property, particularly the formal garden, was featured in several well-known early twentieth century garden publications demonstrates the influential role that it played during this period. Its prominence was derived partly from the association with one of America's best loved figures, partly for its link with the Colonial past and partly as a work of (new) landscape design. The front portion of the site, where Alice Longfellow made few alterations, still reflected the Colonial and Federal years, embellished during Henry Longfellow's time with balustrade and lilacs. The biggest changes were in the formal garden area which she redesigned with the help of Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson, Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. and Ellen Shipman.

Alice's motives were two-fold: to create a memorial to her father and to make the property more impressive. Her comments on the balustrade offer a clue to her thinking: "We have transformed the Craigie House into a baronial hall by putting a balustrade on the top of the second bank. It will look very pretty when we get some vines growing over it."²⁵ This layering of new "up to date" features on an older garden was seen as embellishing the past—what we might call today rehabilitation.



*View of arbor in formal garden designed by
Martha Brookes Hutcheson, circa 1905*

Morris County Parks Commission

2. HISTORIC CONTEXT: LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS

The second context in which the Longfellow NHS landscape is evaluated is the work of three designers who worked with Alice Longfellow to shape the landscape in the early twentieth century. These designers, Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson, Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. and Ellen Biddle Shipman, are discussed both in terms of their overall body of work and the relationship of this particular project to their other projects. In evaluating the significance of a work of design, two key questions must be asked: is the designer considered a “master” or does the specific project being evaluated “possess high artistic values”? Furthermore, the property must be evaluated to determine its importance relative to the overall body of work of a designer or whether the project reflects a particular aspect of his or her career.

Two other designers who worked at the property in the mid-nineteenth century are not evaluated here. Little is known about their roles and their work no longer retains integrity. Richard Dolben, who laid out the formal garden in 1847, may have been a landscape gardener as well as a designer. While the large central bed of his garden plan remains, it was substantially reworked by Hutcheson in the early twentieth century and the side beds were removed in the late 1960s. Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr.’s role is similarly elusive other than an 1844 sketch plan of the grounds which may never have been implemented (see Figure 7).

MARTHA BROOKES (BROWN) HUTCHESON 1871–1959

Biography

Martha Brookes (Brown) Hutcheson was one of the first American women to achieve professional success in the field of landscape architecture.²⁶ She attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1900 to 1903 and the Bussey Institute at Harvard where she completed a self-study program in botany and horticulture. She later traveled in Europe and, like many landscape architects of her generation, was particularly influenced by the design of Italian villas.

Early in her professional career, Hutcheson established her reputation as a designer of gardens and country estates, working on commissions for clients primarily in New England, New York and New Jersey. In 1912 she closed her practice in Massachusetts and moved to Manhattan. Her own country place, Merchiston Farm in Gladstone, New Jersey, was an ongoing project where she tried out many of her design ideas. Hutcheson, along with two other pioneering women landscape architects, Beatrix Farrand and Marion Coffin, broke away from the image of the woman gardener to enter the profession of landscape architecture, which had previously been dominated by men. Hutcheson's achievements as a landscape architect were recognized when she became the third woman admitted to the American Society of Landscape Architects and was named a fellow of that organization in 1935.

After 1912, Hutcheson was best known as a garden writer, lecturer on design and civic improvement, consultant and active member of the Garden Club of America. Her status as a professional landscape architect undoubtedly contributed to her skill and credibility as a writer. She wrote many articles but was best known for her widely-read book, *The Spirit of the Garden*, published in 1923. While her built commissions were primarily for wealthy clients, her writings were directed to a much broader audience. Hutcheson was also involved in other progressive social movements of the period, stressing the value of gardening to improve people's lives and working for preservation of native plants and natural scenery.

Landscape historian Rebecca Warren Davidson has characterized Hutcheson's writings as "among the most important expressions of American cultural life during this period," presenting "an accessible theory of design for the American middle class garden in the first half of the twentieth century."²⁷ Ernest Peixotto, in the introduction to *The Spirit of the Garden*, articulates the difference between Hutcheson and many of the other garden writers of the time.

I should especially like to say a word in praise of the restrained tone and the sober spirit of her text, so free from the exuberances of many garden-books whose preoccupations seem to be, above all else, for color combinations, the massing of flowering shrubs, and the "picturesque features" and other excesses adored by horticultural gardeners.²⁸

Hutcheson, like many early twentieth century landscape architects, has been largely forgotten until recently. The only property currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its association with her and her work is Merchiston Farm. The National Register nomination says in part:

*Merchiston Farm is significant as the home of Martha Brookes Hutcheson, landscape architect, and for the extant landscaping Mrs. Hutcheson designed and executed on the property as an example of the Country Place Era of landscape design practiced during the first three decades of the 20th century in America. Mrs. Hutcheson lived at Merchiston Farm from 1912-1959 and designed two site plans for the farm in 1912 and again in 1927, which embody the precepts and components of landscape architecture as practiced on the large country homes of wealthy Americans between the turn of the century and 1933, the year of income tax reforms. . . . Mrs. Hutcheson designed and supervised the implementation of over a dozen large commissions for estates in Massachusetts and Long Island as well as numerous smaller gardens around New York City and northern New Jersey. A major portion of Mrs. Hutcheson's design and its components remains at Merchiston Farm today, renamed Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center . . .*²⁹

Another important Hutcheson-designed property is the Frederick Moseley estate in Newburyport, MA, now Maudslay State Park. Although not yet listed on the National Register, this property has been determined eligible by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in the category of landscape architecture. It has also been the subject of extensive landscape research and retains many extant landscape features designed by Hutcheson, some of which are in the process of being restored.³⁰

CHARACTERISTICS

The theme of unity of house, garden and landscape, the notion of gardens as outdoor rooms and the juxtaposition of formal and informal spaces were hallmarks of Hutcheson's designs. While she designed large estates, Hutcheson is best known for her smaller gardens which demonstrated skillful use of axis, grading, vistas and hedges. Her book, *The Spirit of the Garden*, illustrates the elements that she felt were critical to a design.



FIGURE 11

Flower garden at the Moseley estate, one of Hutcheson's most important projects.
(From *The Spirit of the Garden*, by Martha Brookes Hutcheson, 1923)

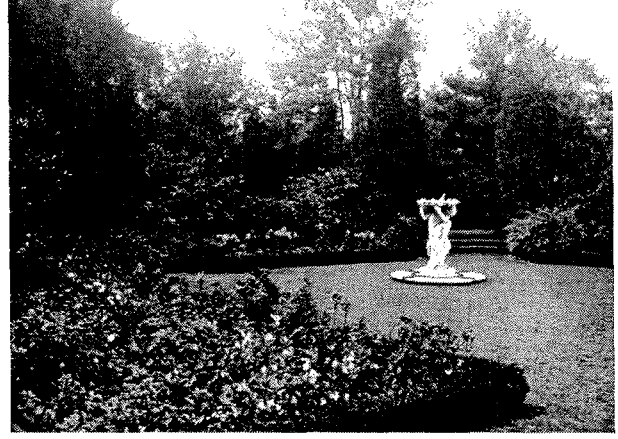


FIGURE 12

Hutcheson used this view of the garden at Welwyn on Long Island to illustrate what she called "the importance of the green enclosure of a garden."
(From *The Spirit of the Garden*, 1923)

Hutcheson lists the flower garden as the first element of a successful landscape design, the focal point to a property, carefully laid out in relation to the house and its surroundings. Her gardens, such as the two illustrated above, integrated skillful handling of spatial organization, topography and plant materials, reflecting influences from several different design traditions, most notably the formality of the country place era and the lush plantings of the old fashioned garden.

Hutcheson's second major design principle, was the importance of axis, which she saw as the backbone of a design, the central organizing principle establishing the relationship between the garden and the house and shaping spaces and vistas. In this aspect of her work, Hutcheson was particularly influenced by Italian gardens, but her use of axes was typically more subtle and intimate in scale.

Hutcheson also stressed the use of hedges which she felt were "the meeting point of architecture and the green world."³¹ These varied from the low boxwood hedges used to line a flower border to far larger hedges which created a sense of spatial definition and enclosure. Hedges could also be used as "the backgrounds for the statues; the enclosures for the amphitheatres; the protecting walls behind which romance and intrigue have been born and cardinals have walked."³² Hutcheson acknowledged that hedges were "essentially artificial and that if they were left untouched for a short period they would go "back with amazing alacrity to the freer growth which the Lord intended."³³



FIGURE 13

This view of the Oldfields estate on Long Island illustrates Hutcheson's skillful use of hedges and a focal sculpture to define an axis. (From *The Spirit of the Garden*, 1923)

Hutcheson devoted an entire chapter of her book to arbors and gateways. She saw arbors as a link between the architecture of the house and the character of the landscape, designing them in a range of styles from rustic post-rail to Italian-inspired stone structures. They might define the end of a garden, provide a shady place to walk or offer a secluded place to sit, which Hutcheson thought might be “the most intimate and enchanting spot about a home.”³⁴ Hutcheson saw gates as symbolic entrances to the outdoor rooms, opportunities to frame a view, make an architectural statement or provide a sense of mystery. Where possible, Hutcheson also used greenhouses and water features, which she felt enriched the character of the garden.

Hutcheson's work combined many influences. Most of her projects are associated with the country place approach to landscape design which might incorporate a variety of styles within a single project. Within this influential movement, she represented a skilled practitioner most often responsible for smaller and less

FIGURE 14

Hutcheson designed arbors in many styles, ranging from the rustic arbor at Merchiston Farm (right) to the more formal arbor in the rose garden at Maudesleigh (far right). (From *The Spirit of the Garden*, 1923)



showy estates which were recognized for careful spatial organization and skilled use of built features and plant materials. One of the strengths of her approach was that her principles could be applied to small gardens, such as that she created for Alice Longfellow, as well as larger properties.

LONGFELLOW NHS

Martha Brookes Hutcheson was the first of three designers hired by Alice Longfellow between 1904 and 1925 to modify the grounds of the Longfellow property. The project was an unusual one for her in that she tended to produce new designs rather than retaining or incorporating extant gardens, although often she had to work “around” existing features or pre-determined relationships. Hutcheson’s work at Longfellow NHS was one of her most subtle and skillfully executed projects, carefully integrating valued features of the landscape while updating the formal garden area.

She respected the basic layout of the existing formal garden, adding a low vine-covered fence to separate the formal garden from the east lawn and relocating an earlier lattice fence and pediment to the west end of the garden to screen off the carriage drive. At the east end was an elaborate arbor which provided a sitting area with a view of the garden and screened the Hastings house to the east. Thus



the formal garden became an enclosed outdoor room, defined on three sides by structures and on the north by plantings. The beds were edged with boxwood and filled with colorful plants in the tradition of the grandmothers garden.

Hutcheson, one of the first women landscape architects admitted to the American Society of Landscape Architects and one of the first to become a fellow of that organization, clearly meets the criterion of being a “master” of her profession. The Longfellow project, although small in scale, was a very visible commission done for a prestigious client. It was frequently illustrated in the garden literature of the period and was used by Hutcheson to illustrate her own design principles, particularly her approach to architectural detailing. Some of Hutcheson’s garden features, most notably the arbor and the end beds, have been lost; however, this is true for many landscapes of the period, which are by their very nature ephemeral. The Longfellow garden retains its essential form and remains an important example of Hutcheson’s design work.

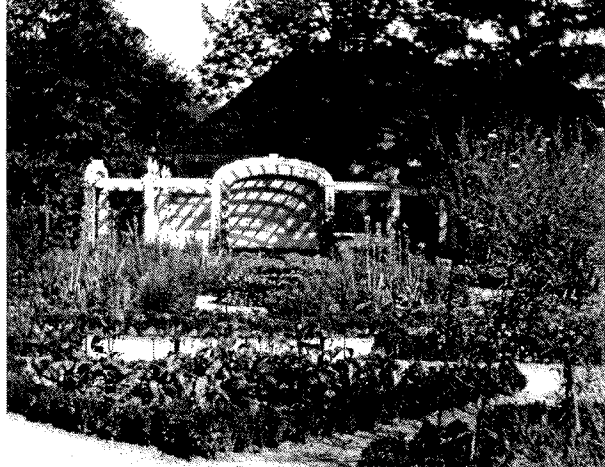


FIGURE 15

View of Longfellow garden from east lawn shortly after Hutcheson’s work was completed, circa 1905. (Longfellow NHS)

FIGURE 16

View of garden with arbor in background showing Hutcheson’s skillful use of Colonial Revival detailing, circa 1905. (Longfellow NHS)

Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. 1854 - 1934

BIOGRAPHY

Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. was Henry Longfellow's nephew and Alice Longfellow's first cousin. Waddy, as he was known to family and friends, studied architecture at Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. He practiced in H.H. Richardson's firm until 1886 when he established a partnership with Frank Alden and Alfred Harlow, with offices in Boston and Pittsburgh. After 1896, Longfellow established his own practice in Boston. He produced over 70 designs while practicing on his own, many of these in the northeast, and he was involved in twice that number while in partnership with Alden and Harlow. Many of his commissions were in the Brattle Street neighborhood, where he designed over 30 buildings. He was also a founding member of the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts in 1897. From 1886 to 1917 he completed extensive work at the Longfellow house including sensitive modernization of the interior of the main house and carriage house, and original design of Colonial Revival features within the house.

Longfellow's commissions included numerous city and country residences, many located in the Brattle Street neighborhood of Cambridge, including 115 Brattle Street for the poet's daughter Annie and her husband, Gilbert Thorp; two houses in Longfellow Park; and Winthrop Hall, immediately northeast of the Longfellow NHS on the grounds of the Episcopal Divinity School. Some of his more important projects are Cambridge City Hall (1888) and Island Station, Boston Elevated Railroad (1898). Longfellow projects in Cambridge listed on the National Register include: The Larches (moving and alterations), Edwin Abbott House, the J.A. Noyes House and Bertram Hall at Radcliffe College. Two Longfellow projects in Pittsburgh are also listed on the National Register: McKeesport National Bank and Firstside Historic District.

CHARACTERISTICS

Waddy Longfellow was a colorful figure who spent much time at the Longfellow house. Just as his uncle's poetry created many of the most powerful nineteenth century literary images of the American past (the clock on the stairs, the lighted steeple of the Old North Church), the young architect was inspired by the architectural evidence of the Colonial past and was among the first to employ Colonial motifs in his designs. The Longfellow house provided direct inspiration for many of his projects detailed with Colonial elements.

Margaret Henderson Floyd, author of *Architecture After Richardson: Regionalism Before Modernism—Longfellow, Harlow and Alden in Boston and Pittsburgh*, documents Longfellow's achievement in turn-of-the-century design as filling the gap between Richardson and modern architecture by developing a familiar style known today as Colonial Revival. Floyd wrote "While Longfellow's knowledge of American colonial design was encyclopedic, his importance was as a designer rather than as a restorer."³⁵ Floyd says of Longfellow,

*Among the first architects to develop a duocolonial design rationale: a syntax that allowed for disciplined combination of explicit seventeenth and eighteenth century historic quotations in the design of a single building . . . such duocolonial buildings became the most widespread expression of antimodernism in American culture.*³⁶

LONGFELLOW NHS

Longfellow's projects at the Longfellow NHS were primarily alterations rather than new designs and represent some of his smallest commissions. As a young man, Waddy helped Charlie Longfellow, the poet's son, display momentos from his Japanese trips. Executed projects include a china closet between the dining room and front parlor, the balustrade at the second floor rear and Alice's garden, which consisted of a shelter, bench and lattice work, and was built as a screen against the east wall of the billiard room. Floyd notes that the lattice associated with Alice's garden work reflected over fifty years of Longfellow's exploration of Oriental design (see Figure 37).

Ellen Biddle Shipman 1869 - 1950

BIOGRAPHY

Ellen Biddle was born to a wealthy Philadelphia family and educated at Radcliffe, although she left early to marry poet, editor and playwright Louis Shipman. The Shipmans spent their summers in Plainfield, NH where they were members of the Cornish art colony. Ellen Shipman began doing planting plans for architect and painter Charles Platt in 1914. This association provided her with the mentor she needed to gain her first important commissions. She soon opened her own office in Cornish and later in New York City. Shipman rapidly gained acceptance in the field, later assuming sole responsibility for

large projects. Shipman designed over 600 gardens between 1914 and 1946, geographically spanning from Washington state to Maine and from Long Island to Louisiana. She has been called the “dean of American women landscape architects” by landscape historian Judith Tankard.³⁷

Shipman’s significance derives from her design abilities as well as the leadership role she assumed for women landscape architects; she taught for many years at the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture, Gardening and Horticulture for Women in Cambridge and ran an all-women landscape office for over thirty years. Her most significant projects include: Lake Shore Boulevard, Grosse Point, MI; the Sarah Duke Memorial Garden at Duke University, Durham, NC; the Alger estate, Grosse Point; Rynwood, the Samuel Salvage estate, Glenhead, NY; Longue View Gardens, the Edgar Stern estate, New Orleans, LA; Cottleigh, the Franklin B. Lord estate, Syosset, NY; and the Carl Tucker estate, Mount Kisco, NY.³⁸

Shipman has not specifically been listed as a significant designer associated with any properties on the National Register to date, although she is known to have worked at several properties which are listed on the Register, including at least five National Park Service properties: Longfellow NHS, Saint-Gaudens NHS, Marsh-Billings NHP, the Chatham estate at Fredericksburg NMP and Glenmont at Edison NHS.

CHARACTERISTICS

Judith Tankard, author of a recent monograph on Shipman, has characterized her as first and foremost a gardener.

Domesticity, intimacy, and romantic, sensual seclusion characterized the best of Ellen Shipman’s landscape designs, distinguishing them from the grander, self-consciously European schemes that were commonplace during the period. Shipman’s own experiments with large-scale European-influenced estate design generally do not figure among her most memorable work. Her more original aesthetic derived from the quiet simplicity of traditional Colonial-revival spatial layout, the convention of the outdoor room, an artist’s approach to planting and a sense of the garden as lush, green, and - above all - private world. Her debt to the British designer Gertrude Jekyll is unmistakable, but Shipman’s gardens were American in spirit and impact.³⁹

Shipman's projects ranged from large estates, where she had full responsibility for all aspects of landscape design, to smaller commissions with a more limited scope. Most were for private clients although she had a few public commissions as well. Tankard continues,

But modest jobs were more common, circumscribed by budget, site size, or pre-existing designs by other landscape architects. Shipman's availability to work up an elaborate planting scheme for a few hundred dollars proved irresistible to dozens of clients whose resources were limited or who already owned grand gardens that simply needed to have their plantings rejuvenated. These smaller jobs usually involved new plans and designs for pools, terraces, flights of steps, and other architectural features; most did not include site design or extensive grading.⁴⁰

In *Pioneers of Landscape Architecture*, axial relationships and skilled planting design are identified as the primary characteristics of Shipman's work.

A basic design structure in her work, influenced by Platt, was the axial relationship of the garden, between the house and the landscape beyond. Like Platt, she did not try to invent styles, but worked to refine the style she developed. According to her friend and colleague, Anne Bruce Haldeman, "Although Mrs. Shipman's basic designs were outstanding and practical, her use of plant material to interpret the designs was in a class by itself."⁴¹

LONGFELLOW NHS

Ellen Shipman prepared planting plans for Alice Longfellow in 1925. The project involved a very small area—only the formal garden—and was limited to the replacement of plantings within the established beds and some planting around the perimeter of the garden. The planting plans were elaborate for such a small space but were not otherwise remarkable. The work was typical of Shipman's smaller projects in its horticultural focus and the sophistication of the plantings. However, like much of her work it was also ephemeral; few if any of the plantings remain, although the work is well documented and could be restored.



Henry and Edith Longfellow on the steps of the Longfellow house, 1880

LONGFELLOW NHS

3. ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the historical significance and integrity of the Longfellow NHS landscape under the topic "Landscape Architecture" within the theme "Expressing Cultural Values" in the National Park Service's *Revised Thematic Framework*. This evaluation is based on three factors: detailed knowledge of site history as documented in Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, as well as other research and planning documents; understanding of the applicable historic contexts described in the preceding chapter; and familiarity with existing site conditions, which is particularly critical for determining the integrity of the landscape. This analysis does not address the significance of resources other than the landscape, as these are well documented in other studies and are outside the scope of this report.

CURRENT NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS AND AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property has been well established and undisputed for many years. It is a well known icon of American history and architecture. The property was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962 and a National Historic Site in 1972. The property is also a contributing resource of the Old Cambridge Historic District which encompasses much of the Brattle Street neighborhood in which it is located.⁴²

The National Register nomination for the Longfellow NHS was completed in 1979 and does not meet current standards for documentation and evaluation of historic resources. It consists of a two page statement of significance and a brief description of the house and carriage house, the only two resources cited in the nomination. The landscape is mentioned only in passing, indicating "the grounds, particularly the formal garden, designed by Longfellow himself, are significant as an essential part of the historic environment which is directly associated with the poet."⁴³

A 1994 letter from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to the National Park Service concurs with an NPS determination that the balustrade, Brattle Street fence and front steps are contributing resources.⁴⁴ The letter also states that the formal garden would be classified as a contributing resource if the nomination were amended to extend the period of significance to 1928, the year of Alice Longfellow's death. The letter further indicates that the carriage drive/loop is considered a contributing resource despite the recently introduced granite block curbing, as it continues to reflect the original intent of the property's vehicular circulation system.

The Longfellow NHS has long been considered significant in the areas of architecture, literature and military history. Although not formally stated on the 1979 National Register form, the property has been recognized as meeting three of the four criteria for listing on the National Register: Criterion A for its association with the American Revolution; Criterion B for its association with Washington and Longfellow; and Criterion C as an outstanding example of Colonial Georgian architecture. The period of significance established in the National Register nomination extends from the construction of the house in 1759 to Henry Longfellow's death in 1882, covering all of these associations.

Considerable research on the property itself and emerging areas of scholarship have substantially enhanced understanding of the history and significance of the Longfellow NHS since 1979. Of particular note is the 1996 "Historic Resource Study", based primarily on the architecture and curatorial resources, which recommended that the property be considered significant for its association with the Colonial Revival and historic preservation movements, and that the period of significance be extended to 1947, the year of William Sumner Appleton's death.⁴⁵ Appleton was a Longfellow cousin who advised Harry Dana on management and disposition of the property and also founder of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

POTENTIAL NEW AREAS OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The following analysis evaluates the role of the landscape in meeting National Register criteria. For each of the possible areas of significance explored, there are three potential outcomes: finding of landscape significance independent of other resources; finding that the landscape contributed to significance but does

not have significance in its own right; and finding of no landscape significance. As landscape history is an emerging area of scholarship for which historic contexts are still being developed, some areas may warrant further study.

Criterion A: Association with Event, Activities or Trends

In order to be determined eligible under Criterion A, a property must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history as defined in the relevant historic contexts. The Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property has already been recognized as nationally significant for its role as George Washington's headquarters during the siege of Boston, a critical nine-month period of the American Revolution. The landscape contributes to the significance of the property as a whole for this association but does not independently meet Criterion A.

Since the "Historic Resource Study" recommended that the Longfellow NHS be considered significant under Criterion A based on the relationship of the site to the Colonial Revival and early historic preservation movements, these two topics were also explored relative to the landscape.⁴⁶

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MOVEMENT

Preservation of the Longfellow property began with Henry and Fanny Longfellow's interest in its history, continued with the Longfellow children, and later the Longfellow Memorial Association, the Longfellow House Trust and the National Park Service. This pattern of private preservation initiatives, followed by institutional and eventually governmental management, was common for historic properties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Longfellow property was one of a number of homes of prominent individuals consciously preserved in the late nineteenth century. One of the earliest and best known examples is George Washington's home, Mount Vernon, preserved by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, of which Alice Longfellow was vice-regent for the Massachusetts Chapter from 1880 to 1928. Although presidents' homes were the most common type of property to be commemorated in the nineteenth century, the homes of literary figures were also frequently preserved, usually by family members or private memorial societies. Other well known examples include Orchard House, the home of the Alcott family in Concord, MA, and the Old Manse, home of several prominent literary figures including Nathaniel Hawthorne, also in Concord.

The Longfellow NHS has been recommended as eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the early historic preservation movement, a determination with which the state Historic Preservation Officer has concurred. The landscape is a contributing resource for this association but the landscape on its own cannot independently be considered a pioneering or distinctive example of historic preservation. Landscape improvements undertaken by Alice Longfellow between 1904 and 1925 should be evaluated as a work of landscape architecture in the emerging Colonial Revival style rather than as an example of historic preservation. Changes to the landscape made during the late 1960s and early 1970s were driven primarily by maintenance considerations, and in any case are less than fifty years old, making them ineligible for National Register listing except under exceptional circumstances.

COLONIAL REVIVAL MOVEMENT

The Colonial Revival movement was a period of national nostalgia which emerged after the 1876 Centennial and influenced design styles and popular taste well into the twentieth century. The potential significance of the Longfellow NHS as a Colonial Revival icon or symbol has been well documented in the “Historic Resource Study.” The recommendation of significance was based predominantly on the site’s architectural resources but the landscape was also recognized as playing a contributing role.

Images of the property from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, initially stereo views and later postcards, typically showed a frontal view of the house, framed by mature elms. They might feature either the front fence, if taken from the street, or the balustrade, if a closer view was used. In these popular images, emphasis was on the simple enduring features of the landscape, many of which dated to the Colonial or Federal periods—the house, terraces, elms, fence, front walk and views, and on two features added during Longfellow’s lifetime, balustrade and lilacs. Vines also appeared prominently in many of these images. Prior to 1904 there were few views of the remainder of the grounds. Thus it was the front lawn area that was most widely depicted and most influential during the early years of the Colonial Revival and can be said to have had the greatest influence on this movement.

Projects undertaken by Alice Longfellow between 1904 and 1925, notably the creation of Alice’s garden and the redesign of the formal garden, were not original Colonial era features but deliberate efforts to mimic a perceived notion of the Colonial period. Thus they should be considered primarily as examples of the emerging Colonial Revival *style* rather than contributing to the Colonial Revival *movement*.

While the property as a whole has been recommended in the “Historic Resource Study” as meeting Criterion A as an icon of the Colonial Revival movement, in this context the landscape served primarily as a setting for the house. Thus, the landscape contributes to the property’s association with the Colonial Revival movement as an historically significant event, but the landscape by itself does not independently meet Criterion A for this association.

Criterion B: Association with a Person

In order to be determined eligible under Criterion B a property must be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past as identified in the relevant historic contexts. The Longfellow property has already been determined nationally significant for its association with George Washington and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. The Cambridge Historical Commission has also recognized the property as locally significant for its association with John Vassall and Andrew Craigie.⁴⁷ Recent research, particularly Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, has reinforced our understanding of the relationship of each of these individuals to the landscape. However, this new research does not alter existing findings regarding significance, it merely enriches our understanding of the areas of significance that have already been established, in particular the way in which the landscape has contributed to the overall use and appreciation of the property over time. For its association with each of these four men, the landscape played a supporting, but not an independent, role in contributing to significance.

ALICE LONGFELLOW

Alice Longfellow, the poet’s eldest daughter, worked with her father to guide changes to the house and grounds after her mother’s death in 1861. Alice later played a key role in the transition of the property from private residence to public memorial, remaining in the family home throughout her life as steward of the family legacy. Her approach was to preserve what she inherited in the public spaces of the property, both inside and outside, and to update the private spaces to suit her own lifestyle. Alice’s contributions to the landscape are one of her most visible legacies at the Longfellow NHS, described in the “Historic Resource Study” as “significant evolutionary features of the Longfellow estate landscape . . . designed with a regard to her father’s vision.” While she herself was not the designer, Alice hired a series of designers to implement her ideas.⁴⁸ The role that she filled, that of client as patron and orchestrator of design, a role often filled by women, is increasingly recognized as influential but is difficult to evaluate without a larger historic context.



FIGURE 17

Alice Longfellow, circa 1891.
(Longfellow NHS)

Despite her long and active role in shaping the property after her father's death, there is relatively little published information about the details of Alice's life. However, evidence established to date does not justify placing Alice Longfellow in the category of "persons significant in our past." Thus the Longfellow NHS landscape does not meet Criterion B for its association with Alice Longfellow.

Criterion C

Design: Landscape Architecture

In order to be determined eligible under Criterion C a property must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Only one of these requirements must be met.

The Colonial Revival style of landscape architecture has recently received growing recognition through several conferences and books on the Colonial Revival which have acknowledged the influence of this style on American landscape architecture.⁵² An important aspect of this new scholarship is recognition of an earlier period, referred to by historian May Brawley Hill as “grandmothers garden,” which she describes as an old fashioned style characterized by lush plantings of hardy perennials, self-sown annuals and native American plants, typically planted close to the house in rectangular beds and enclosed with a hedge or fence.⁵³ Hill identifies this type of garden, most common between 1865 and 1915, as a direct precursor of the Colonial Revival style.

The early Colonial Revival style, now gaining recognition, flourished in the first third of the twentieth century. During this period, characteristics of the grandmothers garden were integrated with the careful detailing associated with Colonial Revival architecture, creating gardens which were more formal and axial than grandmothers gardens and were often characterized by extensive architectural detailing with a Colonial motif. One reason that this early Colonial Revival period of garden design has not received wider recognition is that much of the work was done by women, often through garden clubs, while Colonial Revival architecture typically employed the expertise of professional architects, giving it more credibility.

The Longfellow NHS landscape, particularly the formal garden area, incorporates features from both the grandmothers garden era and from the early Colonial Revival style of garden design. The garden was widely publicized during Alice Longfellow’s lifetime by authors such as Alice Morse Earle and Louise Shelton, as well as in secondary publications such as *The Mentor*, from which the image, shown on the previous page, was taken. The skillful handling of spatial organization, architectural features and vegetation, and the continuity of approach make this a significant example of early Colonial Revival landscape design. Such gardens by their very nature are ephemeral and the Longfellow garden, like most others of this type and period which have not been restored, does suffer from the loss of some features, notably the arbor and side beds. However, despite these losses it remains an important and well documented example of its type.

WORK OF SPECIFIC DESIGNERS

In addition to members of the immediate family, five designers shaped the Longfellow NHS landscape between 1844 and 1925. Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr., the poet's brother, prepared an 1844 sketch of the grounds which shows an idealized romantic plan for the 5-acre property that existed at that time (Figure 7). It is unknown to what extent the plan was implemented and many of the features shown are no longer extant because they were on land no longer associated with the property. Richard Dolben, who laid out the formal garden in 1847, was an English landscape gardener about whom relatively little is known (Figure 34). Direct evidence of his work has been lost, although the form he created is still evident in the plan of the formal garden. The landscape cannot be considered significant as an example of the work of either of these two designers due to insufficient information about their body of work to establish them as eligible for Criterion C. In addition, their work at the Longfellow NHS is poorly documented and the work of both designers has little remaining integrity.

MARTHA BROOKES BROWN HUTCHESON was responsible for the redesign of the formal garden in 1904-5. She has been described as:

*... one of the country's pioneer women landscape architects
... [who] created gardens noted for their meticulously
planned spatial organization and knowledgeable integration
of hardscape and plant material. In addition, her writing
offers useful insight into the design ideas of a well-known
early-twentieth century practitioner.*⁵⁴

As one of the first women to achieve success as a professional landscape architect in the United States, Hutcheson designed over fifty early twentieth century gardens (see Appendix A). She was one of the earliest women elected to the American Society of Landscape Architects and one of the first to become a fellow of that organization. She is also known for her writing on garden design, most notably her 1923 book, *The Spirit of the Garden*.

Hutcheson's work at the Longfellow NHS was one of her most carefully detailed projects. Although small in scale, it was a project in which she took great pride which clearly exemplifies the design principles described in her writing—the importance of axis, well defined spaces, extensive use of architectural features and careful selection of plant materials. Despite loss of some garden features, Hutcheson's work at the Longfellow NHS clearly meets Criterion C as a work of a master and as a design which represents high artistic ideals, despite its diminished integrity.

The National Register nomination already recognizes the Longfellow house as “one of the foremost examples of New England High Georgian architecture,” a determination reinforced by the findings of the “Historic Resource Study.”⁴⁹ The Longfellow NHS landscape has long been recognized as contributing to the significance of the property as a work of design but specific areas of significance associated with landscape architecture have not yet been established. That is the purpose of the following analysis which explores three sub-themes: designed residential landscapes as a property type, the Colonial Revival as a landscape architectural style, and the work of three designers who shaped the landscape.

PROPERTY TYPE: DESIGNED RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE

During its first century, roughly 1750 to 1840, the Vassall/Craigie property with its grand mansion, extensive land holdings and ornamental grounds near the house was typical of the early estates built by wealthy New England landowners. Although the estate as a whole has lost much of its integrity for this period, many of the Colonial and Federal era landscape features are still evident in the remaining core of the property, particularly in the front lawn area. These include house, terraces, elms, front fence and the relationship to Brattle Street and the river. The Longfellow NHS landscape is the best extant example of the early Brattle Street estate landscapes, due largely to the well preserved relationship to the Charles River. The property also retains more integrity from this era than any other Boston area Colonial landscape in an urban setting. There are some rural properties from this period in the greater Boston area that retain more of their landscape setting and have greater significance as Colonial era landscapes. Thus, for the period 1750 - 1840 the landscape contributes to the overall significance of the property but is not independently significant as a work of landscape architecture because of its diminished integrity.

The period of Longfellow’s occupancy, 1837 - 1882, coincides roughly with the romantic period in residential landscape design. The 1844 plan by Alexander Longfellow, Sr. (see Figure 7) offers a tantalizing illustration of many of the ideas of romantic era landscape design, largely in areas no longer associated with the property, but virtually none of these features remain and indeed it is unclear to what extent this plan was implemented. Thus the landscape cannot be considered significant as a romantic era design, although the property was nationally significant for its association with Longfellow during this period. For later periods the property is best evaluated in terms of particular styles and designers rather than as a property type.

STYLE: COLONIAL REVIVAL

The Longfellow NHS property achieved its greatest prominence as a work of landscape architecture under the stewardship of Alice Longfellow during the early years of the twentieth century. During this period, the property as a whole became an important icon or symbol of the Colonial Revival *movement* while the landscape also became an example of the emerging Colonial Revival *style*, a conscious effort to recreate colonial motifs in the garden forms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Features most closely associated with this style at the Longfellow NHS include the balustrade, Alice's garden and particularly the formal garden, all in association with earlier Colonial and Federal era features such as the terraces, the forecourt of elms and the front fence.

The Colonial Revival has not been widely acknowledged as a distinct style of landscape architecture until recently. In Normal Newton's classic 1971 history, *Design on the Land, The Development of Landscape Architecture*, Colonial Revival is treated peripherally in a chapter entitled "Variations in Professional Practice" which emphasizes work at Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930s.⁵⁰ Charles Hosmer, in *The Colonial Revival in America*, also focuses primarily on Colonial Williamsburg and other examples from the 1930s, making no mention of earlier garden restorations.⁵¹

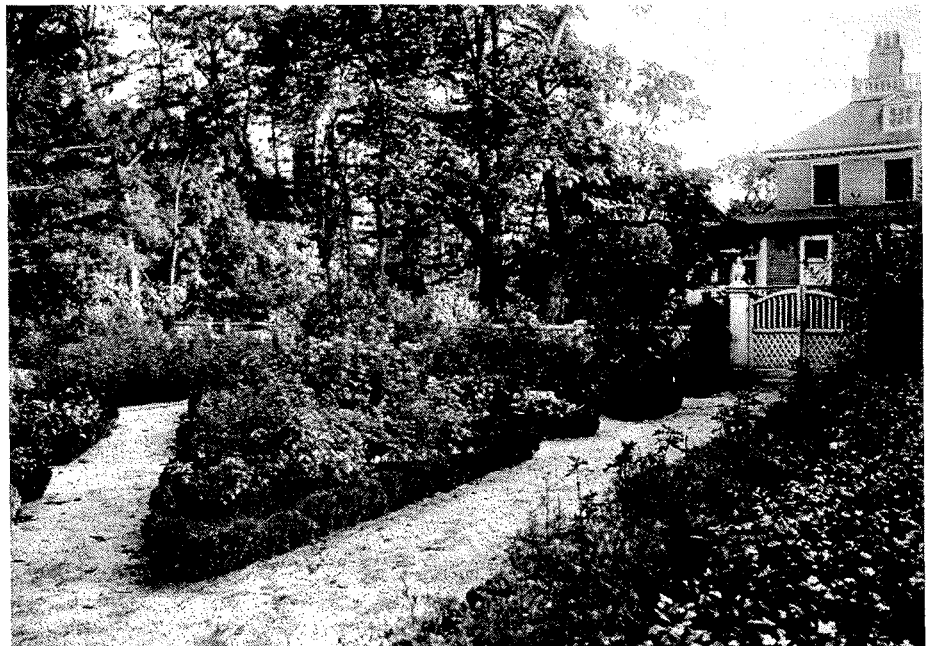


FIGURE 18

Formal garden after redesign by Martha Brookes Hutcheson.
(From *The Mentor, Historic Gardens of New England*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 1916)

ALEXANDER WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, JR. known as Waddy, was responsible for interior modifications and for the creation of Alice's garden. He is considered an important architect of the Colonial Revival by his biographer Margaret Henderson Floyd, with particular skill in reinterpreting older homes, including the Craigie house (as the Longfellow house was known at that time). However, Tom Denenberg, co-author of the "Historic Resource Study" indicates, "it does not appear that the property meets Criterion C because of his work at this site."⁵⁵ Although Waddy Longfellow is recognized as a master, his work at the Longfellow NHS represented a skillful but relatively minor project which does not compare with some of his more important commissions.

ELLEN BIDDLE SHIPMAN the third designer hired by Alice Longfellow, was responsible for redesign of the planting beds established by Hutcheson. Shipman, like Hutcheson, has become widely recognized as a prominent early practitioner. Often described as the dean of American women landscape architects, she was particularly known for her planting design. She undertook more than 600 projects during her professional career, many of them, like her work at the Longfellow property, were small planting projects. Thus Shipman, like Longfellow Jr., qualifies as a master but her work at this property does not meet Criterion C because it was a small project and little evidence of the work remains.

LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity or the extent to which a property evokes its appearance during a particular historic period. While evaluation of integrity is often a subjective judgment, particularly for a landscape, it must be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. The National Register identifies seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Retention of these qualities is essential for a property to convey its significance.

In the following section, landscape integrity is evaluated for five periods beginning in 1759 and extending through 1950. These are the major periods associated with the occupancy of the property and also correspond roughly with major periods in the evolution of New England residential landscape design. While the integrity is least for the earlier periods and greatest for the most recent, one of the remarkable aspects of this property is the layering of historical features and the strong association with and appreciation for earlier periods. Each period builds upon earlier ones, retaining key features but adding an overlay of new elements as well.

Vassall Period (1759 - 1790)

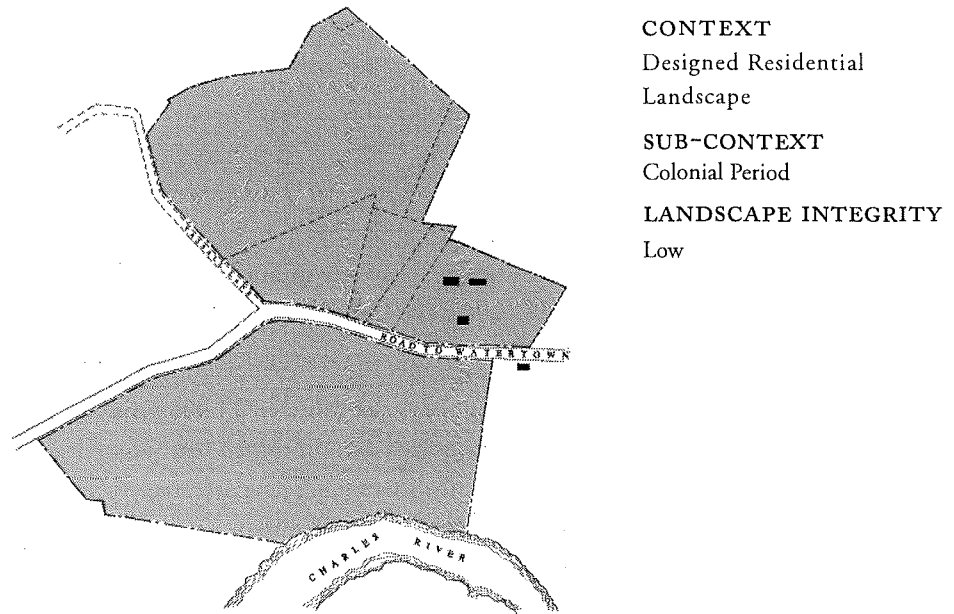


FIGURE 19

Estate of John Vassall, 1774.
(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

The landscape has little integrity for the Vassall period due to the dramatic reduction in the size of the estate and the substantial physical changes which have occurred over the past 200 years. The property does retain integrity of location and association for this period, most notably the direct link with George Washington who occupied the property for nearly a year during a key period in the American Revolution. For the property as a whole, there is little integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and feeling. However, the front lawn area does retain some integrity of feeling and design for this period due to key relationships established during the Vassall period. These include: the siting of the house on two terraces overlooking the river; the relationship of the property to Brattle Street; and the forecourt of elms in the front yard, which probably dates to this period although individual trees have been replaced. Extant features from the Vassall period include: most of the house, masonry portions of the front fence and the linden tree northeast of the house. In summary, the landscape retains only two of the seven aspects of integrity and thus the property as a whole has low integrity for the Vassall period, although the front lawn area retains several key Vassall design features. With such limited integrity the landscape cannot be considered independently significant for this period but it does contribute to the overall significance of the property as one of the few surviving remnant Colonial estates in the Boston area.

Craigie Period (1791 - 1841)

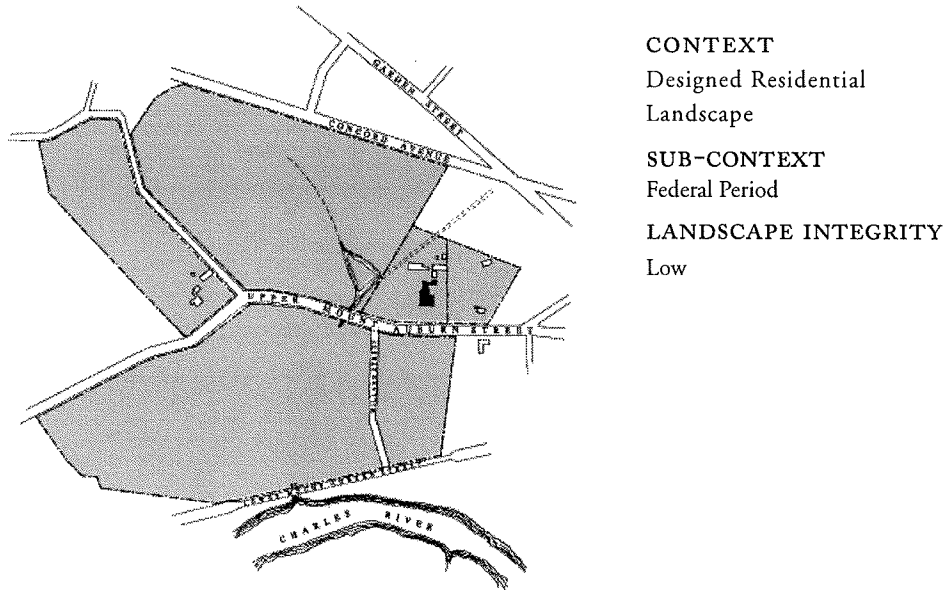
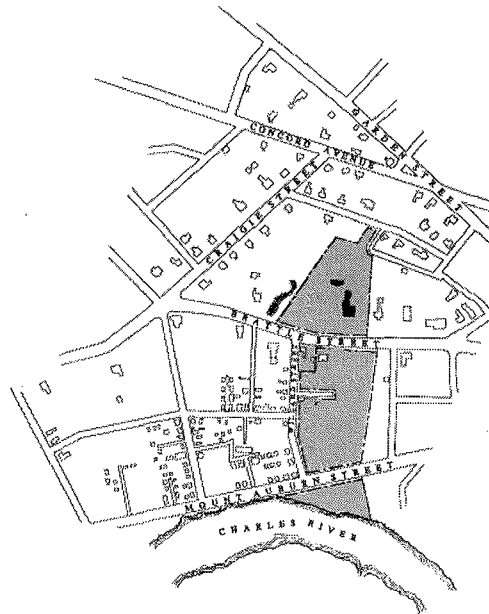


FIGURE 20

Craigie Estate, 1841.
(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

The landscape has little integrity for the Craigie period because of the substantial changes made since 1841 as the property was transformed from a large country estate to a small suburban residence. However, the front lawn area retains essential features from the Craigie period: the siting of the house; the terraces; the front path; the river view; the relationship to Brattle Street; the forecourt of elms and the front fence; the linden tree in the rear yard, which dates to the Vassall period; and addition of the Craigie piazzas, which altered the relationship of the house to the landscape. These key features also contribute to a strong associative link with the past that was highly valued by the Longfellows and remains a strong aspect of integrity today. The front of the property also retains integrity of feeling because of these distinctive features. There is little integrity of landscape design, materials or workmanship other than the design of the Chippendale front fence, which was constructed during this period. In summary, while the landscape integrity for this period is greater than for the previous period, the property as a whole has significantly diminished integrity for the Craigie period. The front lawn can be distinguished from the remainder of the property in that it does retain integrity of design and feeling, characteristics that later became important to the recognition of the property as a Colonial landscape. Thus as with the Vassall period, the landscape cannot be considered independently significant for the Craigie period but it does contribute to the overall significance of the property as one of the few surviving remnant early estates in the Boston area.

Henry Longfellow Period (1841 - 1882)



CONTEXT

Designed Residential
Landscape

SUB-CONTEXT

Romantic Period

LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Moderate

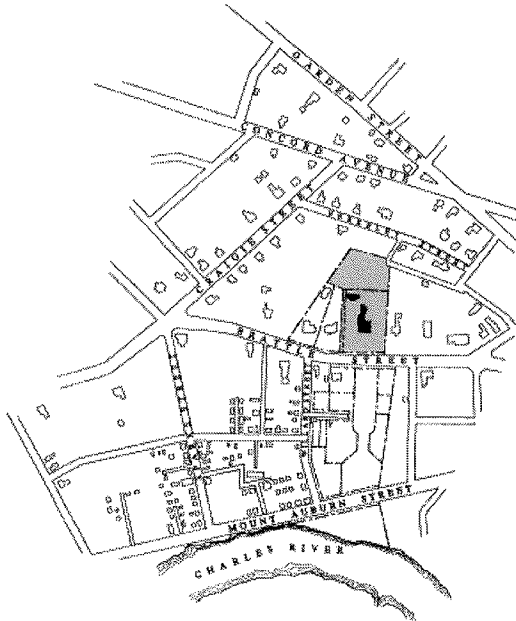
FIGURE 21

Estate of Henry W. Longfellow,
1882.

(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

While the landscape integrity for the Henry Longfellow period is greater than that for the two earlier periods, it has only moderate integrity, as many of the features then associated with the property are no longer extant (orchard, summer house, apple tree with seat, linden walk). Association is the strongest aspect of its integrity, as Longfellow lived most of his adult life here and his feelings for the property are widely known through his poetry and correspondence. Feeling also remains a strong contributing factor, due largely to the features from earlier periods that Longfellow retained. The setting of the Brattle Street neighborhood retains a moderately high level of integrity, as many of the houses date to this period, although landscape details have changed. Due to the reduction in the size of the property and changes since Longfellow's death, much of the overall integrity of design, workmanship and materials has been lost. As with the two earlier periods, the front lawn retains the greatest integrity though its key features: terraces, elms, fence, path and river view, supplemented during the poet's lifetime with lilacs and the balustrade. The carriage drive, established during this period, and the east lawn also retain integrity of design in their spatial organization and key features. The formal garden, substantially modified by Alice Longfellow in the early twentieth century, lacks integrity of materials and workmanship for this period, although some large plant materials date to this time. In summary, while many character defining features date to 1882 and earlier, the cumulative changes have compromised the integrity of the landscape for this period, except for the front lawn and carriage drive areas.

Alice Longfellow Period (1882 - 1928)



CONTEXT

Designed Residential
Landscape

SUB-CONTEXT

Colonial Revival Style

CONTEXT

Landscape Designers

SUB-CONTEXT

Martha Brookes (Brown)
Hutcheson

LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Moderate

FIGURE 22

Longfellow property, 1928,
including the Longfellow Trust
and Alice Longfellow's property.
(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

The landscape as a whole has moderate integrity for the Alice Longfellow period. This is the earliest period for which there is integrity of setting. The present property boundaries were largely established early in this period, except on the north side, and the surrounding neighborhood was mostly developed by the late 1880s. The integrity of the area was recognized in the creation of the Old Cambridge Historic District, which encompasses the Longfellow NHS and much of the surrounding neighborhood. As with the earlier periods, association is a strong aspect of integrity, carefully nurtured by Alice Longfellow through her efforts to establish the property as a memorial to her father and George Washington. The spatial organization and major landscape features have remained largely intact since this period. The property as a whole, but especially the front lawn, carriage drive area and east lawn reflect integrity of design. Ironically the formal garden and Alice's garden, designed during this period, have the least integrity. Both gardens are extant, but have had major modifications and retain little historic plant material, most notably the formal garden, where the arbor and end beds were removed in 1932 and 1970 respectively. Although the outline of the design remains, this area shows the least integrity of materials and workmanship. While integrity of design, materials and workmanship is considerably stronger for this period than for the earlier periods, details of the landscape were changed, such as paving materials, herbaceous plantings etc., which have had a subtle but substantial effect on the property. The transition from a highly maintained private garden to a more institutional landscape has also adversely affected materials and workmanship.

Harry Dana/Longfellow Trust Period (1928 - 1950)

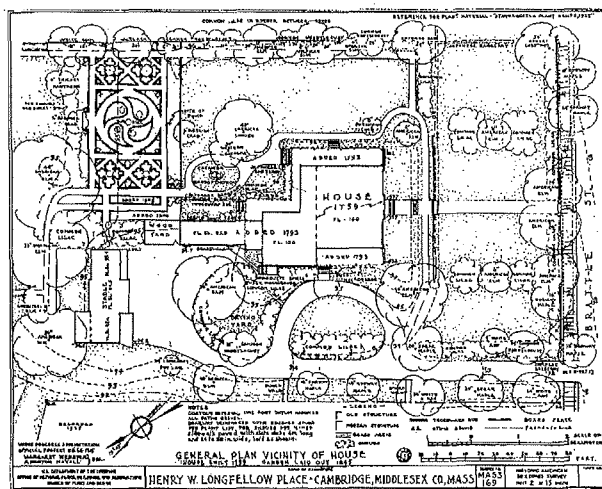


FIGURE 23
Historic American Buildings
Survey, "General Plan Vicinity
of House, Henry W. Longfellow
Place," 1935.
(Longfellow NHS)

CONTEXT
Designed Residential
Landscape

SUB-CONTEXT
Not Applicable

LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY
High

The final period evaluated in the analysis of integrity postdates the period of landscape significance recommended in the following section, but it is included here because it corresponds with the occupancy of Harry Dana, the last family member to occupy the Longfellow NHS property. The end date of 1950 was the year of Harry Dana's death, and it also corresponds closely with the 1947 end to the period of significance for the property recommended in the "Historic Resource Study." Few changes occurred in the landscape during this period and those which did were primarily of a pragmatic nature to accommodate public use of the property and the reduced funding available for maintenance. Association remains a strong aspect of integrity for this period due to the continued presence of Harry Dana and his efforts to preserve the property as a memorial to the poet, a continuation of the work begun by Alice Longfellow. The site as a whole has a high level of integrity to this period. Setting, feeling and design remain largely intact. The removal of the two ends beds from the formal garden in 1970 is the most significant design change since this period. There have also been minor changes in materials and workmanship, most notably in paving and herbaceous plant materials, as well as loss of several major trees and development of the adjacent lot to the north.

Summary Evaluation of Integrity

The following analysis summarizes findings regarding each of the seven aspects of integrity for each of the five periods described in the preceding section.

LOCATION is where the historic property was constructed or the historic event occurred. It remains constant for the Longfellow property and is present for each of the five periods analyzed.

DESIGN is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a property. It remains fairly constant for the 1.98-acre core site after the mid-nineteenth century and thus is strongest for the three later periods (Henry Longfellow, Alice Longfellow and Harry Dana/Longfellow Trust). For the first two periods (Vassall and Craigie) there is some integrity of design, which is most evident in the front portion of the property.

SETTING is the property's physical environment, which has changed substantially for the Longfellow NHS since 1759. While some aspects of setting remain from the earliest period, notably the relationship to Brattle Street and the Charles River, the reduction of the property's size and the development of the surrounding area leave little integrity of setting except for the two most recent periods.

MATERIALS are the physical elements, which include plant materials, paving and other landscape features. These are not well documented for the earlier periods; however, for the later periods there is far greater integrity of materials. Built features (such as fences and paths) and woody plant materials (trees and shrubs) have greater integrity of materials than herbaceous plant materials, which have little integrity even to the later periods.

WORKMANSHIP includes the physical evidence of craft. It is poorly documented for the earlier periods and better understood for the later. Landscape workmanship peaked during the Alice Longfellow period and has declined since her death.

FEELING is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period and remains a strong contributing aspect of the property. The front lawn area in particular, which has become a symbol of the property, retains strong integrity of feeling to the three later periods (Henry Longfellow, Alice Longfellow and Harry Dana/Longfellow Trust) despite the loss of plant materials.

ASSOCIATION is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. It remains especially strong, reflecting a chain of association, that extends more than 200 years. This distinguishes the Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property from many others that contain similar features but lack the strong associative link with the past.

PERIOD OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The National Register nomination establishes the period of significance as 1759 (construction of the house) to 1882 (Henry Longfellow's death). However, the property is currently interpreted to 1928, the year of Alice Longfellow's death, to incorporate the many changes made by Alice after 1882, largely as a memorial to her father. Recent research has identified additional areas of potential significance which extend into the twentieth century. The "Historic Resource Study" recommends that the period of significance be extended to 1947.⁵⁶ This date was chosen because it corresponds with the death of William Sumner Appleton. It is also close to the 1950 death of Harry Dana, the last Longfellow descendant to occupy the property.

Alice Longfellow was the last family member to make major changes to the landscape. During her lifetime the grounds reached their fullest expression as a designed landscape, declining after her death in 1928. Harry Dana's stewardship of the property from 1928 to 1950 and that of Annie Longfellow Thorp, which extended until 1955, was an era when the landscape changed very little. During the period from 1929 through 1950, the Depression and World War II, as well as the Longfellow Trust finances, necessitated that only routine maintenance work be accomplished as funds and manpower were severely limited.

Thus while the "Historic Resource Study" recommends that the property as a whole be considered significant to 1947, the landscape, considered independently of other site resources, is only significant through 1928.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Contributing resources are buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts that contribute to the historical significance of a property. For National Park Service properties, contributing resources are often listed in the "List of Classified Structures" or the "Cultural Landscape Inventory."

BUILDINGS House (1759), Carriage House (1844)

STRUCTURES Carriage Drive/Loop (circa 1844), Front Fence (prior to 1815), Balustrade (1872), Front Steps and Walk (early nineteenth century); Formal Garden (1847)

SITE Longfellow NHS Property (1759)

OBJECTS None

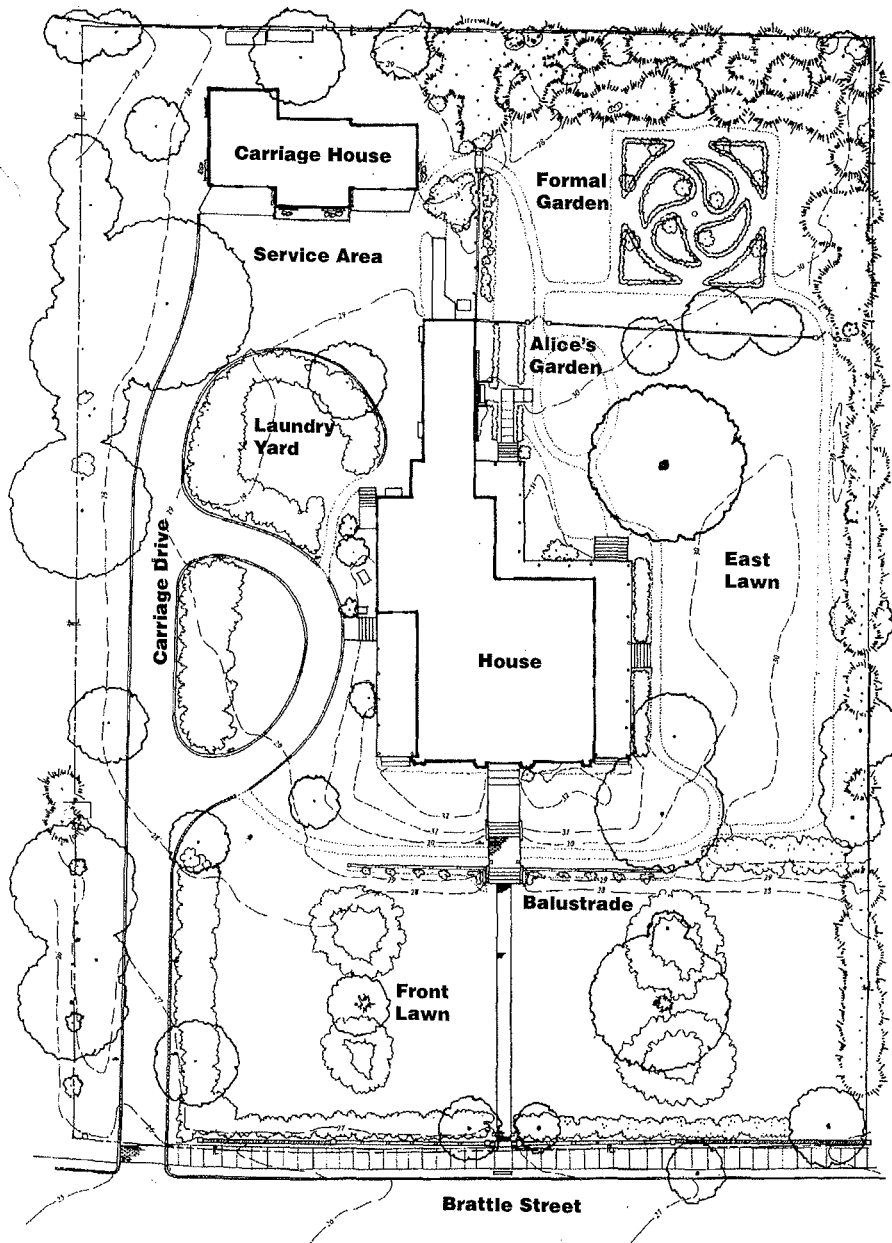
BOUNDARY

The boundary of the National Register nomination corresponds with the 1.98-acre site owned by the National Park Service. No boundary alterations are proposed for either the site or the nomination. Much of the surrounding neighborhood, which was formerly associated with the Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property, is included in the Old Cambridge Historic District, which is both a National Register district and a local historic district.

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF LANDSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The Longfellow NHS has a long and distinguished history as a designed residential landscape with important features extant from each of the major periods of occupation. It represents several major styles of landscape design from 1759 through 1928, most notably Colonial and Colonial Revival, and reflects the work of several prominent designers between 1844 and 1925, particularly Martha Brookes Hutcheson. The landscape contributes to the significance of the property from 1759 to 1928 under Criteria A and B and is independently significant under Criterion C as an example of an early Colonial Revival landscape and for its association with landscape architect Martha Brookes Hutcheson.

While the preceding analysis breaks the landscape into a series of somewhat artificial component parts, what is most remarkable is the cumulative layers of design and association over a period of nearly two centuries. Thus the combination of Colonial features, association with George Washington and Henry Longfellow, the formal garden redesigned in the early twentieth century in a Colonial motif, and the involvement of several notable designers have brought growing recognition to the Longfellow NHS landscape. The landscape is not independently significant for the Vassall and Craigie periods because of diminished integrity. There has also been some loss of integrity for the later periods, particularly in the formal garden area where the side garden beds and arbor have been lost and there have been changes in the plant material. However, the essential structure of the landscape, even in this area, is still clear and distinguishable, and there is clear documentation for the missing features to make an accurate restoration possible.



Existing Conditions Plan, Longfellow National Historic Site, 1998

DRAWN BY NORMA WILLIAMS FOR OLMSTED CENTER

4. CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

A character defining feature is a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its historic character. By definition, character defining features are significant and historic, although they may also be replacements of missing historic features. Character defining features must be extant, although some missing historic features are discussed here because information about them may be needed in the future for treatment decisions.

This chapter identifies the character defining features of the Longfellow NHS landscape, documents changes to these features over time and, where applicable, describes the current condition of the feature. Emphasis has been placed on the 1.98-acre site which constitutes the Longfellow NHS today, although the setting and the larger estate are also addressed to some extent in the discussion of spatial organization and land use. The twentieth century appearance of the property has been emphasized because this is most critical for evaluating the significance and integrity of the landscape and for developing treatment recommendations. For a more detailed discussion of site history, see Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND USE

Setting

During the Vassall and Craigie periods, the area along Brattle Street west of Harvard Square was occupied by a few large estates with houses prominently sited overlooking the river. The estate landscape consisted largely of tilled fields, pastures and orchards, with salt meadows along the river edges, and formal gardens adjacent to the mansions. In the mid-nineteenth century, many of the estates were sub-divided and the area became increasingly built up, creating a denser, more suburban neighborhood.



FIGURE 24

Brattle Street neighborhood,
1882 and 1992.
(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

The Brattle Street neighborhood still largely reflects the mid to late nineteenth century residential character that is the core of the Old Cambridge Historic District. The Oliver Hastings house immediately to the east of the Longfellow NHS and the Dana house immediately to the west both date to this period, as do many houses along both sides of Brattle Street. Other buildings, such as the residences on the cul de sac behind the Longfellow NHS and some of the institutional buildings associated with the Episcopal Divinity School, date to the both the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

The Longfellows recognized the link between the house and the Charles River as an important feature of their property and went to great lengths to preserve this relationship. Largely due to their efforts, the Longfellow NHS retains the historic connection with the river more than any of the other early Brattle Street estates. When Longfellow Park was established in the 1880s, the meadow south of Brattle Street was transformed into parkland but the relationship between the house and the river was carefully maintained.

In the twentieth century, many of the larger residences along Brattle Street have been converted to institutional use, including those on either side of the Longfellow NHS. The former Oliver Hastings house at 101 Brattle Street is

now part of the Episcopal Divinity School and the former Dana house at 113 Brattle Street is now the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Both properties are well preserved and respect the nineteenth century character of the neighborhood, although their back yards are now used for parking. The parcel immediately north of Longfellow NHS, originally subdivided for Alice Longfellow, was developed for residential and institutional use as part of the Episcopal Divinity School in the 1950s, although three of the houses on this new cul de sac date from 1820 to 1845. The area around Longfellow Park has also become more densely developed over the past century, but the park itself has been preserved as open space, perpetuating the relationship between the Longfellow NHS and the Charles River.

In summary, while the immediate surroundings of the Longfellow NHS have evolved, many of the alterations were made in the nineteenth century, either by the Longfellow family or the Longfellow Memorial Association in memory of the poet. The major change which postdates Alice Longfellow's death in 1928 is the development of the parcel immediately north of the property in the 1950s. This area is well screened from Brattle Street and major visitor use areas so its primary impact is on the formal garden.

Site Boundaries

The most dramatic change in the Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property has been in the reduction of its boundaries, which occurred in several stages primarily between 1819 and 1888. During the Vassall and early Craigie years, the mansion stood at the center of a substantial estate, which at its peak reached a total of 140 acres.⁵⁷ The estate was sub-divided between 1819 and 1843, leaving only the five-acre lot immediately surrounding the house, which Henry and Fanny Longfellow received as a wedding present. The Longfellows subsequently acquired about seven acres on the south side of Brattle Street to preserve the view to the river.⁵⁸ In 1888, a few years after Henry Longfellow's death, the property was sub-divided again. The Longfellow children each received a small residential lot and collectively retained the 1.98-acre lot on which the family home was located.⁵⁹ At the same time, the field on the south side of Brattle Street was donated to the Longfellow Memorial Association to create a park in honor of the poet. Until the 1950s, the parcel north of the house remained an open area which was perceived as part of the Longfellow property.⁶⁰

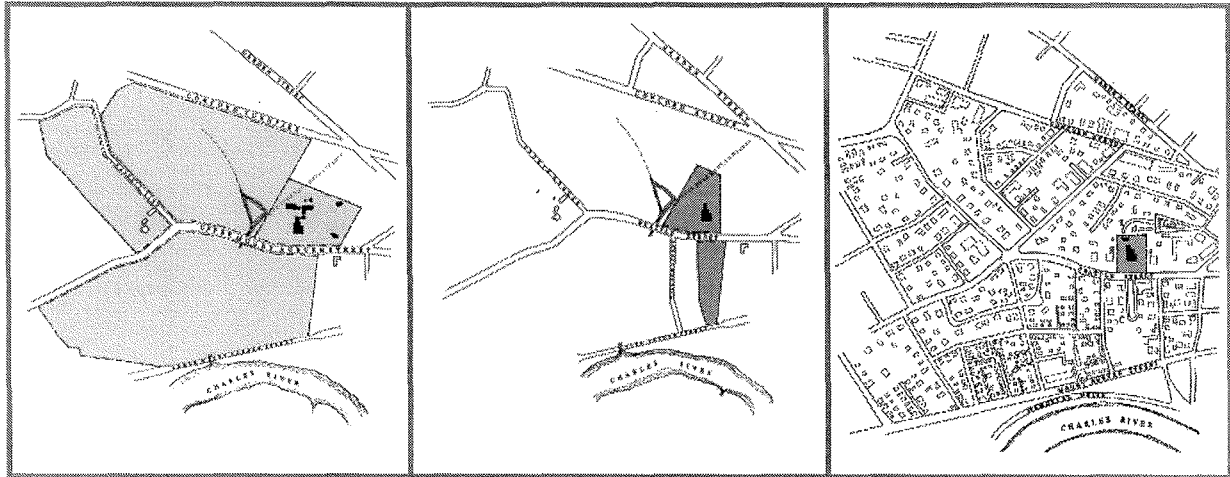


FIGURE 25

Site boundaries,
1820, 1843, 1992.
(adapted from Longfellow
CLR, Vol. 1)

While the reduction in size from 135 acres in 1819 to less than 2 acres today has altered the character of the property dramatically, the portion which remains is the core of the original estate. The relationship with Brattle Street to the south has remained constant for over two centuries. The east boundary was established in the early 1840s when the estate was sub-divided after Elizabeth Craigie's death. The west boundary was established in the 1880s when the land was partitioned after Longfellow's death. The north boundary was established in 1955 with the sale of the lot formerly owned by Alice Longfellow.

Spatial Organization

The spatial organization of the 1.98-acre site which comprises the Longfellow NHS was established soon after the Longfellows acquired the property in the early 1840s and has remained largely unchanged since that time. The property consists of four distinct areas: the front lawn, the east lawn, the formal garden and the carriage drive/service area. These areas are separated and defined by fences and by vegetation, creating a series of outdoor rooms. At the center is the prominently sited house, which continues to dominate its surroundings today as it has for 240 years.

The front lawn serves as a foreground for the house, creating a formal, nearly symmetrical appearance. This area, visible from the street, is the public face of the property. The east lawn area, which includes the east piazza and Alice's garden as well as the lawn itself, is more private and informal, intended for family use. The formal garden northeast of the house was established in its

4. CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

present location around 1847. During Longfellow's lifetime, this garden was directly linked with the lawn area to the north. Under Alice Longfellow's stewardship, the formal garden became more enclosed. The fourth area is the carriage drive/service area which runs along the western edge of the property and provides the only vehicular access to the site. This area was laid out around 1844 when the present carriage house was built. Since its use is primarily functional, this area is screened from the rest of the property by lilacs and has a less ornamental character.

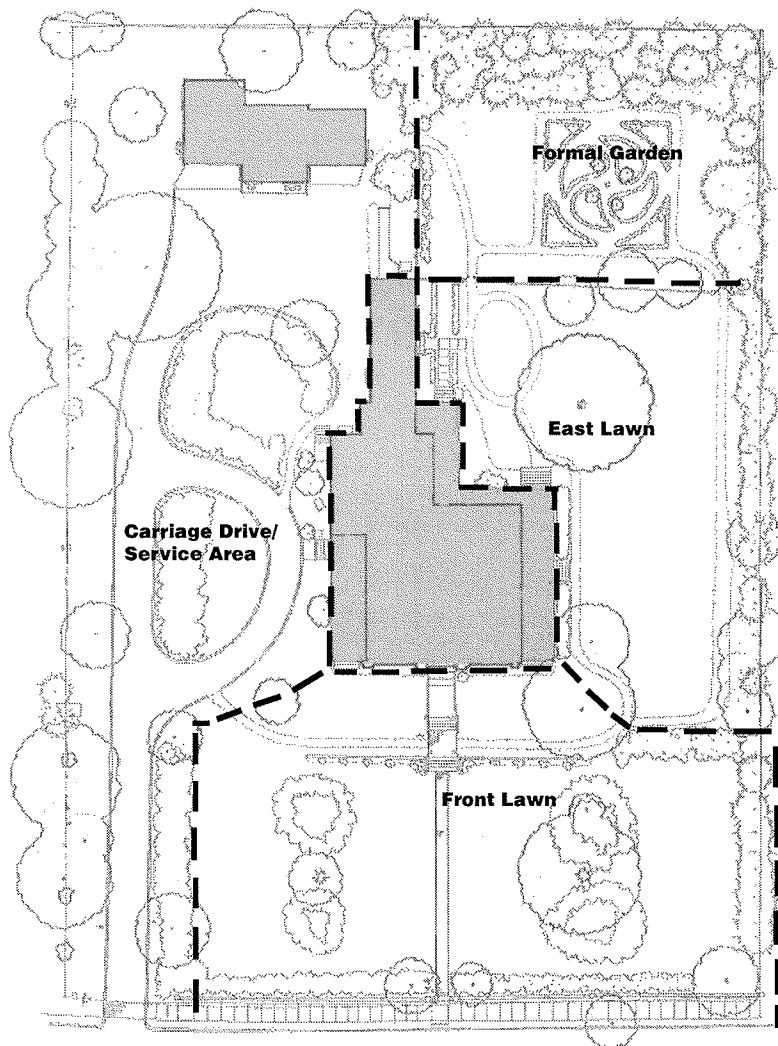


FIGURE 26
Landscape areas.

Topography

The Vassall house, like many other Colonial residences, was deliberately sited at the crown of a hill to increase its visibility and sense of prominence. This also improved views out from the house and made it look more impressive from the street. The effect was heightened by two terraces running east/west in front of the house, a common landscape technique of the eighteenth century. Since the 1840s, there have been no significant topographic changes in the 1.98-acre parcel which comprises the Longfellow NHS. There have been major topographic alterations to other portions of the former Vassall and Craigie estate, most notably the filling in of the former salt marshes along the river in the late nineteenth century to create parkland.

Views



FIGURE 27

View out towards Charles River
through the front door of the
Longfellow house, 1900.
(SPNEA)

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Cambridge landscape was far more open than it is today, with few mature trees and far fewer houses. The primary view from the property has always been south from the house towards the river. Longfellow highly valued this view and his efforts to protect it are an important aspect of the site's history. During the Longfellow family's tenure in the house, the openness of the land to the west (where 113 Brattle Street is presently located) was prized by the family as well. From the 1840s on, the view to the east, towards the Oliver Hastings house, was screened by a hedge. The view to the north was not a primary view from the property, although prior to the 1950s this area was still managed as part of the estate.



FIGURE 28
Historic post card view
from Brattle Street, early
twentieth century.
(Longfellow NHS)

In addition to views from the property, there were also important views *to* the property from Brattle Street, where the house was a prominent landmark because of its distinctive architecture, prominent siting and distinguished residents. The essential features of this view have remained constant, but the character of the view has changed somewhat as the vegetation has evolved. Views of the house from the street or just inside the front fence were frequently published and shaped perceptions of the property for many who never saw it in person.

CIRCULATION

There is little documentation of the onsite circulation prior to an 1844 sketch of the grounds by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Sr. (Figure 7). Although this plan may have been conjectural, it provides the first detailed layout of the grounds, which corresponds surprisingly with the site circulation today. There are currently three major components of the circulation system: the carriage drive; the front path; and the paths leading around the east lawn and through the garden. All three were extant during Longfellow's lifetime and remain largely intact although they have been modified somewhat in the last forty years, particularly in the formal garden area.

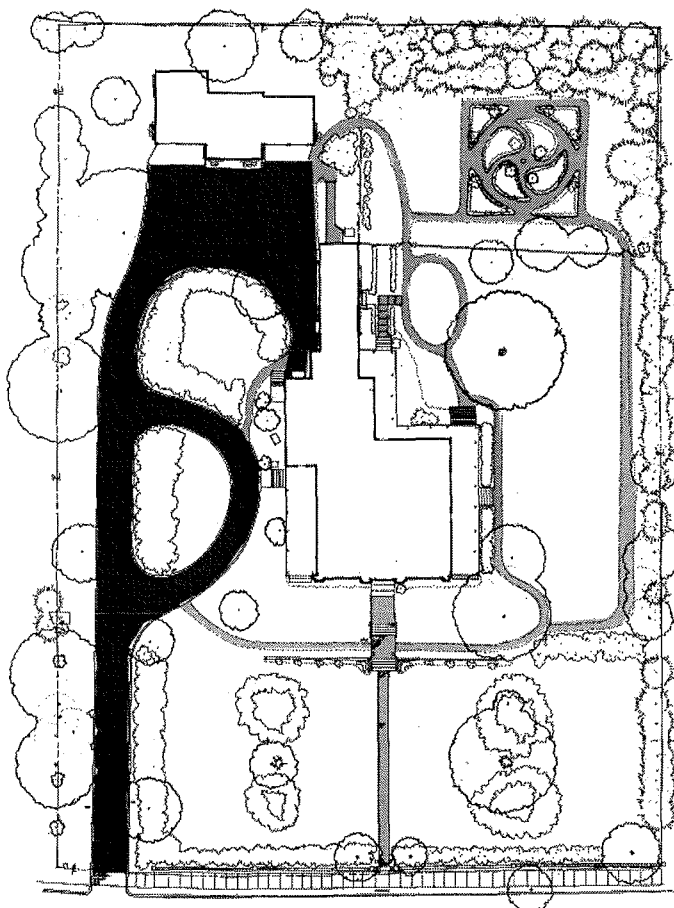


FIGURE 29

Circulation diagram, 1999.
Dark tone indicates vehicular
circulation, light tone indicates
pedestrian circulation.

Carriage Drive

The present alignment of the carriage drive, which runs along the western edge of the property, probably dates to the construction of the Longfellow carriage house in 1844, although part of it may date to earlier improvements by Andrew Craigie. The outline shown in Figure 7 is similar to what exists now, with a straight drive leading back from Brattle Street to the carriage house and a semi-circular turnaround leading to the blue entry on the west side of the house. There are few historic photographs of the driveway; one from around 1900 indicates that the surface may have been simply compacted earth. Later photographs and the 1935 plan by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) indicate that the driveway was surfaced with crushed stone. In 1985, the driveway was excavated to a depth of ten inches, widened, resurfaced with crushed stone, and a granite block edge was installed along the edges on an 18-inch footing.⁶¹

Front Path

The straight path leading from Brattle Street to the front door of the house dates to at least the Craigie period and possibly earlier. In the 1880 photograph shown above, the path appears to be compacted earth, maintained to the 8-foot width of the steps. Photographs from 1900 and 1917 support this evidence. In the nineteenth century, a narrow wooden boardwalk was placed over the path during the winter months. In the 1950s the front path was narrowed by Michael Gaffney, the caretaker, from its original 8-foot width to approximately five feet and a brick walk was installed, leaving a planting strip on either side of the path. The plantings along the path were replaced by grass by the 1970s.⁶² As the path nears the house it reaches a set of stone steps (still 8 feet wide) and then continues as an 8-foot brick path up another set of stone steps to the front door. The two sets of stone steps and the front steps of the house appear unchanged since 1880. North of the balustrade is an intersecting path which runs east/west providing access around the house. The western edge terminates at the vehicular turnaround leading to the blue entry, the eastern edge connects with the east lawn path system. This path is presently surfaced with a dark colored stone dust, a material added by NPS in the 1980s.



FIGURE 30

Front path, 1880 and 1998.
(Longfellow NHS [1880] and
Olmsted Center [1998])

East Lawn and Garden Paths

Many of the paths laid out by the Longfellows in the 1840s were on land that is no longer associated with the house. The paths remaining from this period travel across the front terrace to the east lawn, extend into and through the garden, return near Alice's garden and along the east piazza. There are entrances to the formal garden from both the east and west ends. The earliest twentieth century documentation of the path system outside the formal garden area is found on the HABS drawings of 1935 (see Figure 23). These show the configuration of the path system in the east lawn largely as it is today, except for the removal of paths associated with the side garden beds, which occurred around 1970.

The surface of the pedestrian paths has changed over the years. Nineteenth century photographs indicate that the paths were most likely compacted earth like the front path. Annotations on the HABS plans indicate that by 1935 the paths were gravel. In the early 1970s the paths were edged with steel to facilitate maintenance. Some of this edging has recently been removed, due to its deteriorating condition. In 1987, much of the path system was excavated and resurfaced with stone dust and sand. Secondary historic paths on the property include a path between the driveway turnaround and the kitchen door, and two paths, described as boardwalk on the 1935 HABS plans, connecting west to the Dana house. Today the northern most of these connections is gone. In 1994 the southern connection was reinstated on the former Dana property although only a portion of it exists on the Longfellow NHS.

BUILDINGS

House



FIGURE 31

View of house, 1903.
(Longfellow NHS)

The Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow house was built in 1759 for John Vassall. It was greatly expanded in the 1790s by Andrew Craigie. The rear wall was moved back 10 feet, an ell was added at the back and 12-foot piazzas were built at either side. A few years later the piazza was extended on the east and north sides, and the west entrance was added. Although the interior has been modified a number of times over the past two centuries, there have been few exterior modifications since Longfellow's time. Most noteworthy was the construction of the room often called the billiard room in 1858, and its subsequent removal by Alice Longfellow around 1910.⁶³ Glass panels were installed to enclose the east piazza around 1900 and removed circa 1922.⁶⁴ The house, particularly the front facade, which has changed little since Colonial times, has become a symbol of traditional American values, an icon of the Colonial Revival era.

Carriage House

The present carriage house was built in 1844 to replace a number of deteriorated outbuildings. While the Vassalls and Craigies needed many outbuildings to support the activities of their large estate, the Longfellow property was much smaller and required only a single carriage house, later used to store Alice Longfellow's automobile and house her chauffeur. The east wing may have incorporated portions of an earlier barn.⁶⁵ The carriage house has remained largely unchanged since Longfellow's time except for minor modifications, notably extension of the west wing northward in 1904 and replacement of the wood shingle roof with asphalt shingles sometime after 1904. A lattice fence at the back on the east side existed at least until 1935.⁶⁶ The front of the carriage house is the most visually prominent facade. Photos from 1900 on show wooden trellises with grape vines on either side of the central door. The carriage house is currently undergoing a major rehabilitation to convert it for public meeting space. See the "Historic Structures Report" and "Historic Resource Study" for more detailed discussions of building history and existing conditions.

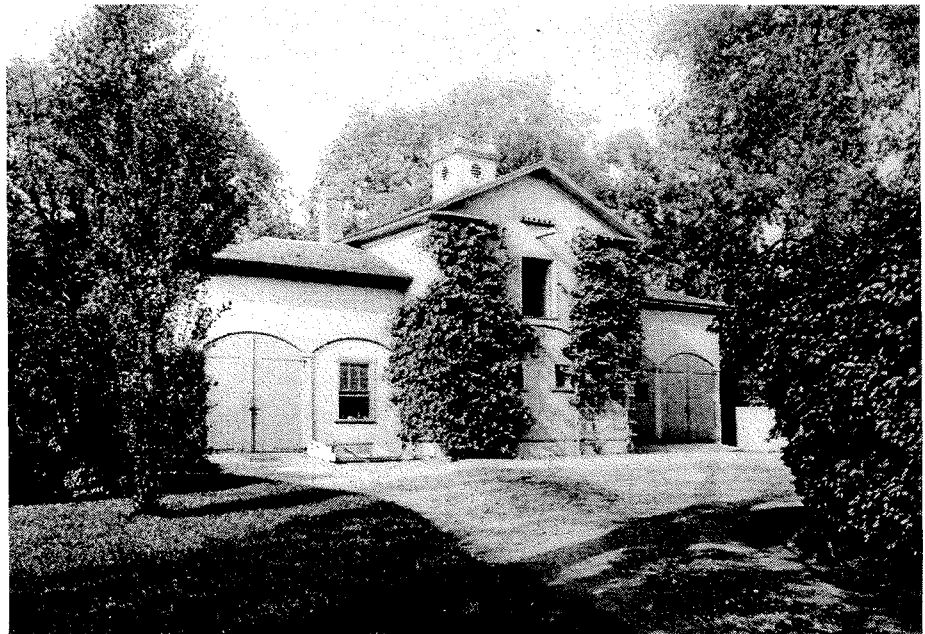


FIGURE 32

View of vine covered carriage house, circa 1900.
(Longfellow NHS)

STRUCTURES AND SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Front Fence

The front fence, which runs along Brattle Street, is one of the most prominent and distinctive features of the property. It consists of a central wooden section in an open latticework design flanked on either end by a solid brick wall with periodic buttresses and a capstone. The brick wall, which dates to Vassall's era, may have extended all along the front of the property originally. The central wooden section of the fence, which first appears in an 1815 perspective drawing of the property (Figure 5), was added by Andrew Craigie in a Chinese Chippendale pattern popular in eighteenth century England.⁶⁷ Large decorative pillars are located where the wooden fence joins the masonry and on either side of the central entrance gate. Smaller posts are used in intermediate locations. Other than the 1954 removal of a ten foot section from the west end of the brick wall to accommodate automobile traffic, there are no known changes to the fence, although it has been repaired many times over the past two centuries.



FIGURE 33

Front fence, circa 1969.
(Longfellow NHS)

Balustrade

The low, wooden balustrade that runs along the upper terrace on either side of the front entrance walk was built in 1872, an early project initiated by Alice Longfellow. Her father was reportedly not enthusiastic about this feature but it has remained ever since. Woodbine (Virginia creeper) covered the balustrade from the 1870s until at least 1940, and was planted again on either side of the stairs in 1985. Since at least the mid 1970s, shrub roses have also been grown on the balustrade. The balustrade has been repaired several times, most recently in 1997, but the work was primarily replacement in kind; there are no known alterations.

Formal Garden

Relatively little is known about the Vassall and Craigie gardens, but Longfellow's garden is better documented. Around 1844, Longfellow planted a garden on the site of the present formal garden. A watercolor by N. Vautin (Figure 8), painted around 1845, is the only evidence that remains of this early romantic garden. In 1847, English garden designer Richard Dolben laid out a more formal and geometrical garden with a central, circular bed, 30 feet wide, with smaller panels at either end. This garden was described by the poet's brother, Samuel Longfellow, as having "a great Gothic Catherine's wheel or Rose-window in the centre" and was a direct precursor of the present garden.⁶⁸ Although little is known about specific plantings during Longfellow's lifetime, Alice Longfellow described the garden as "somewhat elaborate flower beds . . . surrounded by low borders of box and filled with a variety of flowers."⁶⁹

In 1904 Alice Longfellow hired landscape architect Martha Brookes Brown (later Hutcheson) to redesign the formal garden.⁷⁰ Hutcheson's design respected the basic layout of the earlier Dolben plan but updated it with more extensive planting beds, new fences and an elaborate arbor at the east end of the garden (the arbor was removed in 1932 because it had deteriorated). No plans or plant lists have been found for Hutcheson's work, but there are many photographs which appeared in garden magazines of the period.⁷¹ The existing sundial in the center of the formal garden is a replica of the original, which was added to the garden in 1908 by Alice Longfellow.⁷²

4. CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

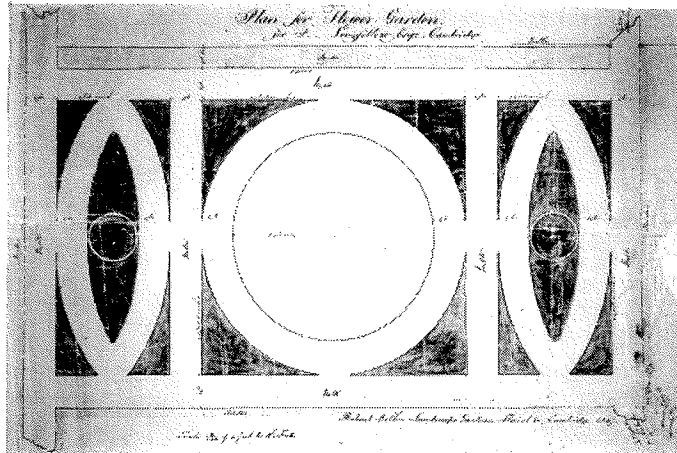


FIGURE 34

Richard Dolben's plan for Longfellow garden, 1847. (Longfellow NHS)

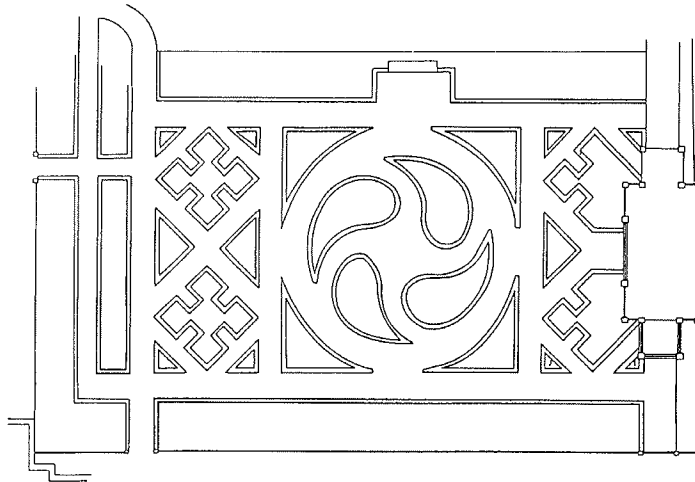


FIGURE 35

Diagram of formal garden as it existed after 1904. This layout reflects the design of Martha Brookes Hutcheson for which no plans survive. (Longfellow CLR, Vol. 1)

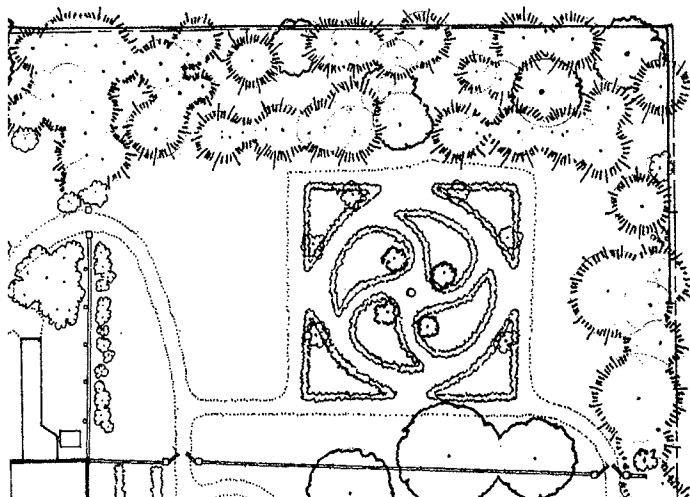


FIGURE 36

Formal garden today with side beds removed and denser perimeter plantings. (Historic Plant Inventory, 1995)

In 1925 Alice Longfellow hired landscape architect Ellen Shipman to update the formal garden. Shipman retained the garden forms established by Hutcheson, concentrating on the replacement of plantings within the existing beds. This work was well documented in plans, plant lists, annotations and receipts. Little is known about plantings in the formal garden between 1925 and 1970. It seems likely that after Alice Longfellow's death, planting decisions were left largely to the gardener, Michael Gaffney, and that plants were routinely moved and replaced. Plans prepared in 1935 by HABS do not list herbaceous material, nor did plans prepared in 1968-9.

Another major change to the formal garden occurred around 1970 when the Cambridge Plant and Garden Club, working with landscape architect Diane Kostial McGuire, removed the two side beds to facilitate maintenance, as the garden had become severely overgrown. Subsequent work in the formal garden by the National Park Service has altered plant material but not the basic structure of the garden. The garden gates, removed in the 1980s because of deterioration, were repaired and replaced in 1997. The garden fence has also been repaired, with sections replaced in kind.

Alice's Garden

The small enclosed garden east of the woodshed known as Alice's garden was designed by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow Jr. as part of his ongoing work at the property and one of his few landscape design projects there.⁷³ The lattice shelter, based on a Japanese motif, and the bench are the most distinctive remaining features of this garden. Two smaller features have been removed from Alice's garden: a rose arbor separating this area from the formal garden disappeared sometime after 1972 and a swan sculpture also disappeared (date of removal unknown).

The plantings associated with Alice's garden have evolved over time and are not character defining. Originally a simple garden of ferns, vines and a low hedge, Alice's garden had become a tangle of vines and shrubs by the 1960s. By 1977 a second hedge had been added to the interior of the garden, and in 1985 new perennial plantings were installed. Not all of this plant material has survived and the garden has been replanted with perennials. Bluestone paving was added to the area in the 1980s when the east piazza was used as the primary visitor entrance.

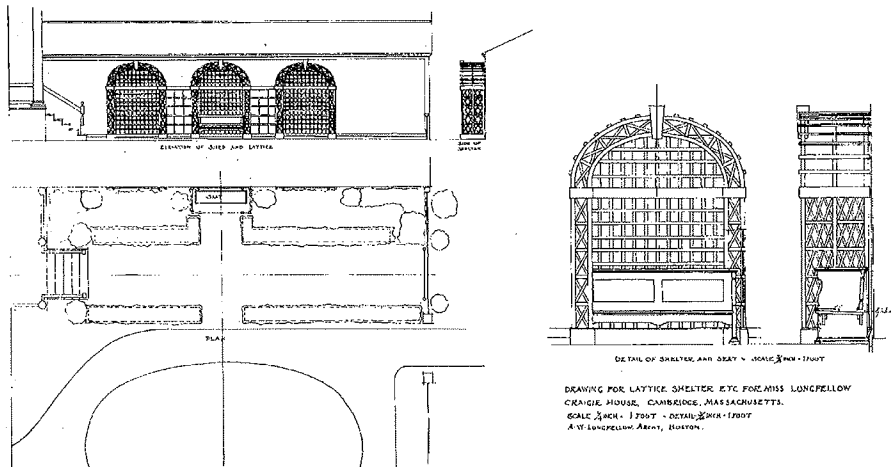


FIGURE 37

The architectural features designed by Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow Jr. are the most distinctive aspects of Alice's garden.
(Longfellow NHS)

VEGETATION

Other than the reduction in the size of the property, the greatest landscape change has been the gradual simplification of vegetative character. During Longfellow's lifetime, there was generally a profuse, overgrown look to the property which was characteristic of the late nineteenth century. Under Alice Longfellow's care, the grounds assumed the more manicured style of the early twentieth century with more extensive flower beds. After Alice's death in 1928, emphasis shifted to accommodating public use and making the best use of limited maintenance funds, resulting in a landscape with a more institutional appearance.

Decline, disease and devastation of plants have also impacted the character of the vegetation. In particular, the hurricane of 1938 toppled the locust hedge on the east boundary along with several other large trees. Over time Dutch elm disease and other problems have killed many of the elms which surrounded the house, and there have been numerous replacements. The dramatic change in maintenance and technology over the last hundred years has also played a role.

FIGURE 38

The profuse vegetation of the 1880s gave the property a very different appearance than it has today.
(Longfellow NHS)



Specimen Trees

One of the most distinctive features of the Longfellow NHS is the forecourt of elms that frames the house. It is not known exactly when they were first planted, but they appear in an 1815 sketch of the property, and they posed a challenge to Henry Longfellow in the late 1830s when he was a tenant of Elizabeth Craigie's. Tar bands in historic photographs and drawings attest to Longfellow's constant battle with the cankerworms that plagued the elms.

Longfellow replanted eight elms between 1844 and 1846, but half of these did not survive. There is little specific documentation of the elms between 1846 and 1922, but Longfellow's notes suggest that the number may have been reduced from ten to eight trees. In later years, old age brought on the decline of several trees. In 1922, six elms were planted on the front lawn. By 1972, when the National Park Service acquired the property, only two of these remained. In 1988, eight 'Liberty' elms were planted to replace the missing elms. Seven of these have survived and are growing well.

The enormous American linden northeast of the house predates the Longfellow years and may well be the oldest plant on the property, possibly dating to the Vassall period. This tree is currently exhibiting signs of stress, exacerbated by an April 1997 storm when it lost a major limb. It was propagated in 1993 by the Olmsted Center and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University in anticipa-

tion of its eventual decline. Other mature trees located along the driveway and at the front of the property are primarily ash and maple, most of which date to the twentieth century. As late as 1935 there were more large trees remaining, many of which were destroyed in the 1938 hurricane.

While the Historic Plant Inventory completed in 1995 lists the existing scarlet oak near the west bay of the carriage house as 75-100 years old, early photos and the 1935 HABS plan indicate a poplar in this location. It is likely that this tree was replaced by the oak in the late 1930s, making the current oak at least 50-60 years old.

Lilacs

The lilac hedges that screen the house from Brattle Street and the carriage drive are another important landscape feature. Planted in 1844 by Henry Longfellow, the lilacs were strongly associated with the poet; he often expressed his fondness for this spring blossom, and it was said that he would not leave the house when the lilacs were in bloom. The overall configuration of the lilac hedges has not changed since the poet's time, but recently the hedges have begun to thin out and have been pruned more aggressively, giving a less profuse appearance than existed in either Henry or Alice Longfellow's time. The National Park Service has planted additional lilacs to fill in thin areas and is currently addressing soil fertility problems associated with the lilac beds.

Perimeter Plantings

The eastern boundary of the property was planted with an "acacia" hedge by Henry Longfellow in 1844 to screen the newly constructed Oliver Hastings house. This hedge (which was honey locust, not black locust) extended north from the front terrace and screened the east lawn from the adjacent Hastings property. By 1935, the acacia hedge consisted of eleven honey locust trees and three elms. The 1938 hurricane decimated all but three of the honey locusts; the hedge was later replanted with white pine, yews and hemlocks. Some time prior to 1904, a low barberry hedge was planted south of the acacia hedge dividing the front lawns of the Longfellow and Hastings properties. The barberry hedge was replaced with red pine some time between 1935 and 1954. Evergreen trees were planted on the northern edge of the garden after the field behind the house was sold in the 1950s. This planting has matured during the twentieth century, creating a dense screen to the north. The west boundary, on the other hand, is much more open and is planted with a mix of oaks, maples and tulip trees.

Vines and Small-Scale Plantings

Vines were used liberally at the Longfellow NHS during the nineteenth century, giving the property a lush, mysterious character. In addition to the roses at the front door, several other vines, which are no longer extant, grew along the base of the house. These include a wisteria on the southeast column of the east porch, Dutchman's pipe on the southwest column of the west porch and two unidentified vines on either corner of the house. Like the roses, all of these vines appear in photographs from the late nineteenth century. Most of the vines that still existed were removed in 1977 when the house was restored by the National Park Service. The foundation plantings, particularly on the east side, date to the post-1950 period. The grape vines on the front facade of the carriage house are among the few historic vines remaining. They date back to at least 1900 (see Figure 32).



FIGURE 39

Vine-covered balustrade.
Photo by Mrs. J. H. Thurston,
circa 1882.
(Longfellow NHS)

CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

▲ CD feature which existed during period but has subsequently been altered

■ CD feature which existed during period and remains intact

	Vassall Period 1759-1790	Craigie Period 1791-1841	HWL Period 1841-1882	AML Period 1882-1928	
FEATURE					COMMENTS
SPATIAL ORGANIZATION AND LAND USE					
Setting (Brattle St., river)	▲	▲	▲	■	Modified by development
Site Boundaries				■	Reduced from estate to residential lot
Spatial Organization	▲	▲	■	■	Core area intact since 1840s
Topography (core area)	■	■	■	■	Unaltered since eighteenth century
Views (to river, from street)	▲	▲	■	■	Key views intact
CIRCULATION					
Carriage Drive			■	■	Alignment intact since 1840s, surface altered
Front Path			■	■	Narrowed, resurfaced 1950
East Lawn and Garden Paths			▲	■	Side garden paths removed 1960s, paths resurfaced in 1980s
BUILDINGS					
House	▲	■	■	■	Modifications by Craigie and AML
Carriage House			■	■	Minor modifications by AML
STRUCTURES/ SMALL-SCALE FEATURES					
Front Fence	▲	■	■	■	Minor modification in design 1950s
Balustrade			■	■	Rebuilt in same form
Formal Garden			▲	▲	Loss of side beds and arbor, plantings altered since AML
Alice's Garden				▲	Plantings altered by NPS
VEGETATION					
Elms	▲	▲	▲	▲	Considerable loss since 1920s
Specimen Trees	▲	▲	▲	▲	Linden is oldest tree on site
Lilacs			■	■	Now more sparse
Perimeter Plants			▲	▲	Have grown up since AML
Vines/Small-scale Plants			▲	▲	Less profusion

FIGURE 40



View from southeast

LONGFELLOW NHS

5. CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Significance

The Vassall/Craigie/Longfellow property, now the Longfellow National Historic Site, has long been recognized as nationally significant for its association with George Washington and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and as an outstanding example of Colonial Georgian architecture. A series of recent studies commissioned by the National Park Service has brought awareness to other aspects of the site's history and recognition of potential new areas of historical significance.

The 1996 "Historic Resource Study" recommended that the property be considered significant for its association with the Colonial Revival and early historic preservation movements in the United States under National Register Criterion A. It also recommended extending the period of significance to 1947 because of the association with these two themes. The "Historic Resource Study" also evaluated the potential significance of the property for its association with Alice Longfellow under National Register Criterion B and with Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. under Criterion C, but determined that the property was not eligible for National Register listing based on either of these associations. The 1997 "Historic Furnishings Report" identified the importance of furnishings dating to Alice Longfellow's period and recommended that the house be furnished largely to that period. Archeological investigations undertaken during 1997 revealed new evidence of early occupation, particularly in the area of the carriage house, but there has been no formal recommendation regarding archeological significance. As part of the re-assessment of the property, the history of the landscape was carefully documented in Volume 1 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*, while Volume 2 evaluates the significance and integrity of the property with regard to National Register criteria.



FIGURE 41

Stairs at west portico.
Photo by Mrs. J. H. Thurston,
circa 1882.
(Longfellow NHS)

The Longfellow NHS has a long and distinguished history as a designed residential landscape with important features remaining from each of the major periods of occupancy. It represents several major styles of landscape design implemented over a period of nearly two centuries, including both Colonial and Colonial Revival, and reflects the work of several notable designers between 1844 and 1925. The survival of a single property with both Colonial and Colonial Revival features, as well as strong historical associations is particularly noteworthy.

The landscape contributes to the significance of the property in each of the established areas of significance and should also be recognized as significant under Criterion C in two categories: as an example of the early Colonial Revival style (local or state significance) and for its association with Martha Brookes Hutcheson (local or state significance).

Integrity

Landscape integrity was evaluated for five periods beginning in 1759 and extending through 1950. These are the major periods associated with the use of the property and correspond roughly with major periods in the evolution of New England residential landscape design. While the integrity is least for the earlier periods and greatest for the most recent, one of the remarkable aspects of this property is the layering of historical features and the strong association with and appreciation for earlier periods. Each period builds upon earlier ones, retaining key features but also adding an overlay of new features.

For the Vassall (1759 - 1790) and Craigie (1791 - 1841) periods, the overall integrity is low, due largely to the substantial reduction in the size of the property since then. However, even for these two periods, there is some landscape integrity in the front lawn area, the portion of the property that retains the greatest number of Colonial and early Federal era features. While there is greater integrity for the Henry Longfellow period (1841 - 1882) than for the two earlier periods, the landscape has only moderate integrity for this period because of the reduction in size of the property since then and the loss of many small-scale features associated with this period. As with the two earlier periods, the front lawn area has a higher integrity than the rest of the site. For the Alice Longfellow period (1882 - 1928), landscape integrity is also moderate, although higher than for the Henry Longfellow period. The greatest changes have been loss of designed landscape features in the formal garden area and development of the lot behind the Longfellow NHS. The transition from a private garden to a more institutional landscape has also adversely affected the overall character of the property. For the Harry Dana/Longfellow Trust (1928 - 1950) period, the landscape integrity is high. The spatial organization and most of the major landscape features remain intact. The property as a whole, but especially the front lawn, carriage drive area and east lawn reflect a high integrity of design and feeling.

Period of Significance

The 1979 National Register nomination establishes the period of significance as 1759 (construction of the house) to 1882 (Henry Longfellow's death). However, the property is currently interpreted to 1928, the year of Alice Longfellow's death, to incorporate the many changes made by Alice after 1882. Recent research has identified additional areas of potential significance that extend into the twentieth century. The "Historic Resource Study" recommended that the period of significance for the property be extended to 1947. This date corresponds with the death of William Sumner Appleton, Longfellow family member, advisor and first director of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. It is also close to the 1950 death of Harry Dana, the last Longfellow descendant to occupy the property.



FIGURE 42
East porch prior to 1882.
(Longfellow NHS)

Alice Longfellow was the last family member to make major changes to the landscape. Her death in 1928 coincided with the period when the landscape was at its peak, incorporating major design features from each of the earlier periods including important garden improvements undertaken by Alice herself. Harry Dana's stewardship of the property from 1928 to 1950, and that of Annie Longfellow Thorp, which extended until 1955, was an era when the landscape changed very little. During the period from 1929 through 1950, limited Longfellow Trust finances necessitated that only routine maintenance work be accomplished and the landscape began a slow and gradual decline. Thus, the landscape contributes to significance from 1759, when the estate was first laid out, through 1928, the year of Alice Longfellow's death.

TREATMENT IMPLICATIONS

Like a patient being treated by a team of medical experts, the Longfellow NHS has been carefully scrutinized from a variety of perspectives. Its landscape, buildings, collections, furnishings, archeological resources and former residents have been thoroughly poked, prodded and analyzed by numerous specialists. Voluminous reports have been produced on a wide range of subjects, offering enthusiastic but sometimes contradictory advice. At the same time, management goals have been reevaluated, new needs recognized, old expectations reassessed and many stimulating discussions have been held about the future of the property.

The next step in putting the pieces back together is to develop a comprehensive treatment plan that respects and integrates the varied perspectives of the specialists and is also responsive to management needs. Earlier approaches must be reevaluated in light of the expanded understanding and appreciation of the property and evolving needs. Several findings of this report may have substantial impact on potential management decisions regarding the landscape.⁷⁴ The 1979 *Master Plan* is based on an understanding of site resources and priorities that dates back to the 1970s. Even the 1995 management objectives workshop preceded completion of several important studies. A 1998 review of treatment options, based on all research to date, recommended that the treatment period be extended to 1928 to incorporate changes made by Alice Longfellow.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*, which guide National Park Service management of historic properties, identify four possible treatments: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. The implications of each treatment for landscape at the Longfellow NHS are described below.

PRESERVATION This approach would prescribe the maintenance and repair of landscape features as they currently exist. It would allow replacement of existing features in kind, yet would not permit the addition of new features deemed necessary for the continuing use of the site and would perpetuate the current confusing and misleading presentation of the landscape.

REHABILITATION This approach would allow changes that improve the utility or function of the site to make possible its efficient use while preserving those portions or features that are important in defining its significance.

RESTORATION This approach would require the depiction of the site at a certain period of time, most likely 1928. Restoration of the landscape to Henry Longfellow's period would be virtually impossible because the site boundary has changed and many of the small-scale landscape features associated with the poet are no longer extant. In addition, later overlays of design, notably the early twentieth century work in the formal garden, are significant in their own right and would have to be destroyed if the landscape were restored to an earlier period. Restoration of the landscape to Alice Longfellow's period would be technically possible and would not negate the earlier era except in the formal garden, which is significant for Alice's period and poorly documented for the poet's period. Missing features, most of which date to the early 20th century, are well-documented in plans and photographs.

RECONSTRUCTION This approach would be appropriate only if the landscape had been destroyed or if an earlier landscape was determined so significant that its recreation was determined to be critical to the interpretive mission of the park. This treatment would not be appropriate at Longfellow NHS.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

Additional Research

While much has been accomplished in the past few years to enhance understanding and appreciation of the complete history and significance of the Longfellow NHS, there is still more to be done. Much of the work revolves around evolving areas of scholarship such as the Colonial Revival and historic preservation movements, and the Colonial Revival style of landscape architecture. Memorialization is another common theme which is emerging at many historic sites and cannot currently be fully evaluated as it lacks a sufficient body of published work to establish an adequate historic context. All of these topics may need to be reevaluated in the future as further contextual work is accomplished on a national level. Alice Longfellow's relationship to the landscape remains poorly understood. Of particular interest is her role as design patron and preservationist at Mount Vernon and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, as well as in her own home. Another area of potential interest is the relationship and possible interaction of the three landscape designers who worked with Alice Longfellow to shape the formal garden. As treatment decisions are made, more detailed research may be needed in these and other areas to support specific recommendations.

Amended National Register Nomination

A number of recent studies have brought new understanding to the history of the property and its resources. The findings of these studies need to be integrated into a comprehensive analysis of the property as a whole. The National Register evaluation process offers an ideal opportunity to place each of the individual analyses within a larger historical and intellectual framework as a basis for future planning and treatment recommendations. Preparation of an amended National Register nomination form should be one of the highest priorities for the Longfellow NHS.

Landscape Treatment Plan

Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Cultural Landscape Report* document the landscape history of the Longfellow NHS and evaluate the historical significance and integrity of the property but neither offers guidance regarding treatment of the property. Treatment decisions must take into account not only the landscape, but also park management and interpretive needs, and the findings of other recent reports regarding the property. Completion of a landscape treatment plan should be a high priority for the park.

APPENDIX B

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY CHART FOR LONGFELLOW NHS

Entries in bold Areas of significance already established in the existing National Register documents.
Entries in italics Areas of significance that have been recommended in technical reports, but not formally recognized by the National Register Program or the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer.

	LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE (RESOURCE)	LANDSCAPE ROLE IN SIGNIFICANCE	PERIOD
CRITERION A - EVENT			
American Revolution	National (property)	Contributing	1775-1776
<i>Historic Preservation</i>	<i>National (property)</i>	Contributing	through 1947
<i>Colonial Revival Movement</i>	<i>National (property)</i>	Contributing	through 1947
CRITERION B - PERSON			
John Vassall	Local (property)	Contributing	1759-1774
George Washington	National (property)	Contributing	1775-1776
Andrew Craigie	Local (property)	Contributing	1791-1819
Henry Longfellow	National (property)	Contributing	1837-1882
CRITERION C - DESIGN			
ARCHITECTURE			
Style:			
Georgian	National (house)	Contributing	1759
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE			
Property Type:			
<i>Designed Residential</i>	<i>Local (landscape)</i>	Contributing	1759-1882
Style:			
<i>Colonial Revival</i>	<i>Local/state (landscape)</i>	Independent	1904-1928
Designers:			
<i>Hutcheson</i>	<i>Local/state (landscape)</i>	Independent	1904-1928

This chart is based on information from the 1979 National Register nomination, the Cambridge Historical Commission, the "Historic Resource Study" and Volume 2 of the *Cultural Landscape Report*.

