

II

Residential Architecture

Nearly all houses in East Cambridge date from the 19th century, principally from 1820 to 1875. During this period Americans built in a variety of styles, but beneath the stylistic trappings the building tradition, at least in East Cambridge, remained conservative. Because the area was settled near the beginning of the century, the earliest house plans and basic forms, as well as the earliest styles, reflected 18th-century building practices. Houses were built in all the popular 19th-century styles until after the Civil War, but East Cambridge is particularly noted for its abundance of fine Greek Revival houses dating from the 1820s to the 1840s. By 1879, houses filled the main residential streets, so that the area has almost no examples of the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles that were so popular in other parts of Cambridge. After 1880, utilitarian, multifamily buildings with few stylistic features dominated residential construction.

19th-Century House Types

Throughout most of the 19th century, East Cambridge built only three basic house types, all survivals from the 18th century. An understanding of these types and the ways in which they were used provides a base for studying East Cambridge's residential styles.

The three principal house types at the beginning of the 19th century, when East Cambridge began to develop, were a four-room center-hall plan (Type A), a two-room center-hall plan (Type B), and a side-hall plan (Type C) (Fig. 142).

Type A was a continuation of the large 18th-century Georgian house, variations of which were built all along the Eastern seaboard (Fig. 143). Four-square and box-like in mass, this house was rigidly formal both inside and out, a heritage of the English Palladian tradition. The facade, oriented about a central, axial entrance, had five openings per floor (center door and four windows on the first floor, five windows on each of the upper floors). The plan consisted of four more or less square rooms per floor — two on each side of the center stair hall, which extended to the back of the house. Fireplaces were either on the outside wall (in which case there were four chimneys) or in the partition between the rooms (two chimneys). Sometimes subsidiary wings were attached to the side or rear, served by their own chimneys.

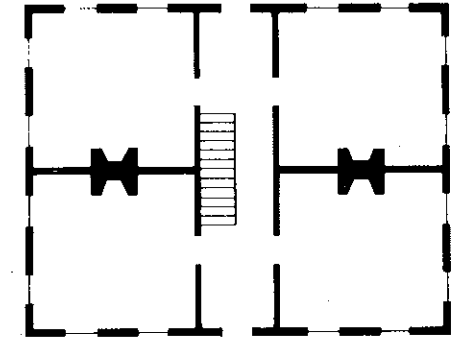
Type B, also surviving from the 18th century, was a smaller version of the center-hall plan (Fig. 144). It can be seen as a halving of the four-room model parallel to the front elevation; the same symmetrical five-opening facade was there, but the house was only one room

deep. The stairway in the entrance hall generally had three runs (two changes in direction), so that it could fit into the relatively confined space. The two principal rooms (each with a fireplace on the rear wall) flanked the entrance hall, and an ell to the side or rear took care of services.

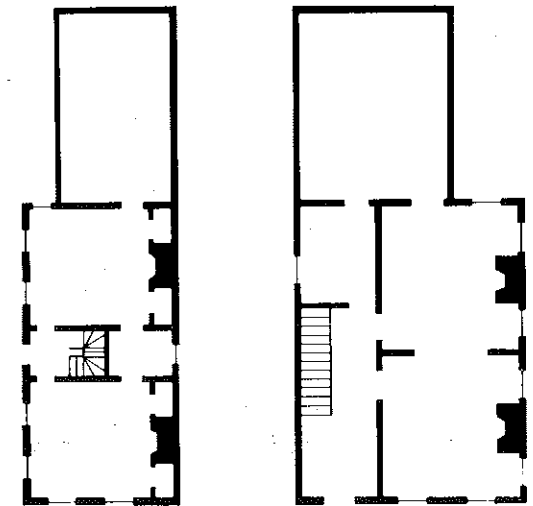
Type C can also be seen as a halving of the four-room center-hall plan, this time with the division made perpendicular to the front elevation (Fig. 145). Originally it was exclusively an urban type — the standard town house of Georgian London transplanted to the colonies. The facade had three openings per floor: a door and two windows on the first floor, three windows on each of the upper floors. The entrance at the side of the facade led into a long stair hall, off which opened the two principal rooms. Either one chimney was placed between these two rooms (providing each with a fireplace) or two chimneys were placed on the outside wall. Nearly always, an ell extended to the rear.

The freestanding four-room center-hall house (Type A) was the most coveted, but it was large and expensive to construct, and few were built in East Cambridge. It remained the ideal, however, inspiring numerous groupings of the other two types in pairs or rows.

Type B houses in East Cambridge were nearly always built with the narrow end to the street and with the symmetrical entrance facade facing the side of the lot. The earliest examples, from the 1820s, often had low hip roofs, but in the Greek Revival style, beginning in the 1830s, gable roofs were used exclusively. The type was at its apogee in America in the Late Georgian or Federal period; by the 1830s and '40s, it was used only for the most vernacular examples. Thus, Type B houses in East Cambridge are the smallest, least architectural of all the types. The small, free-standing, end-to-street version of the type is called in this book the worker's cottage, because it represents the simplest level of single-family housing during the first half of the century. Whole series of these worker's cottages still exist, particularly along Winter Street, punctuating the streetscape with their jagged silhouettes, which vary from one and a half to three stories high (see Fig. 167).



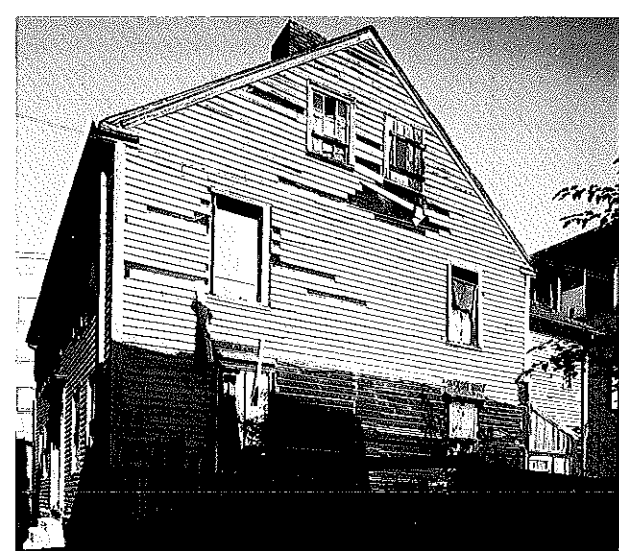
Type A



Type B

Type C

142. Single Family House Plans. Type A: Four-room center-hall plan; Type B: Two-room center-hall plan; Type C: Side-hall plan



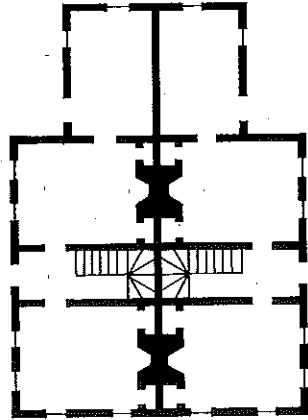
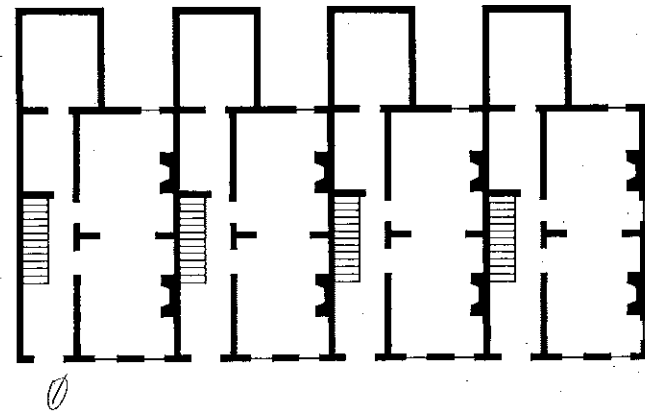
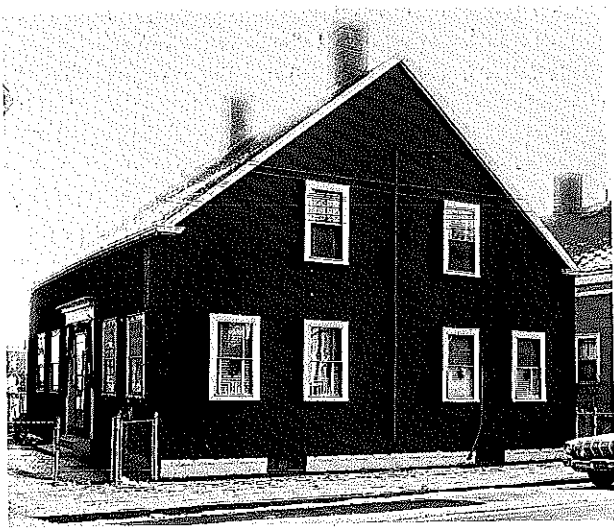
143. Type A, 467 Cambridge Street, 1824-25. Photograph 1964



145. Type C, 74 Otis Street, c. 1845 10 32 / 3.3A



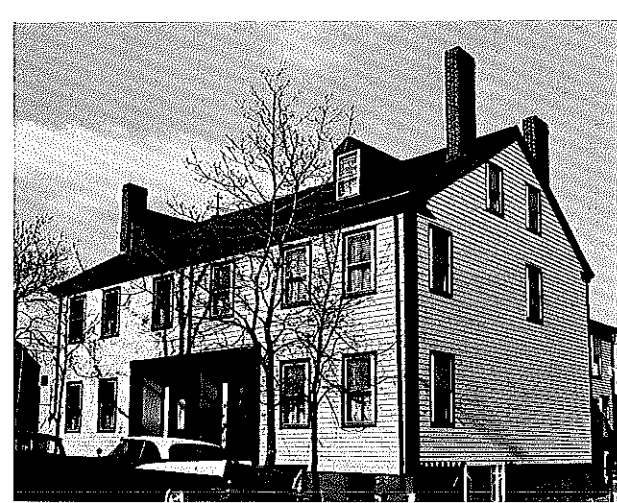
144. Type B, 42A Lopez Avenue, c. 1825. Moved, original location unknown 12 e 7 / 30



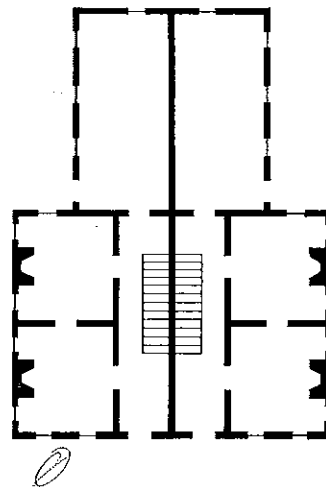
146. Type B double house, 98-100 Spring Street, 1840. Photograph 1964



147. Type C row houses, 208-224 Bridge Street, c. 1830. Photograph 1925



148. Type C double house, 73–75 Otis Street, c. 1830. Photograph 1964



Type B adapted itself particularly well to a double house (Fig. 146). The two halves were placed back to back, with entrances on the long, side facades and with party-wall chimneys rising up in the center; the roof was nearly always a gable, with its end facing the street. The type was not suited for row houses, except at the ends of rows, where the entrance could be around the corner (see Fig. 160).

Type C, the side-hall house, was the most prevalent type in East Cambridge, as well as the most interesting and varied. It was built freestanding, doubled, and in rows, nearly always two and a half stories high. In the 1820s this type had a gable roof, with its eave line to the street and with a single dormer in the center. In the Greek Revival period, the roof was turned so that the gable end faced the street; the single dormer became a single window in the pediment. The earlier three-opening facade survived, but as the century progressed a bay window was frequently substituted for the two first-story windows. The bracketed cornice became prevalent, and later the mansard roof appeared. Despite these stylistic modifications, the type itself hardly changed. The scale increased, and occasionally a single large parlor was substituted for the

traditional two square rooms; otherwise, the general use and arrangement remained the same.

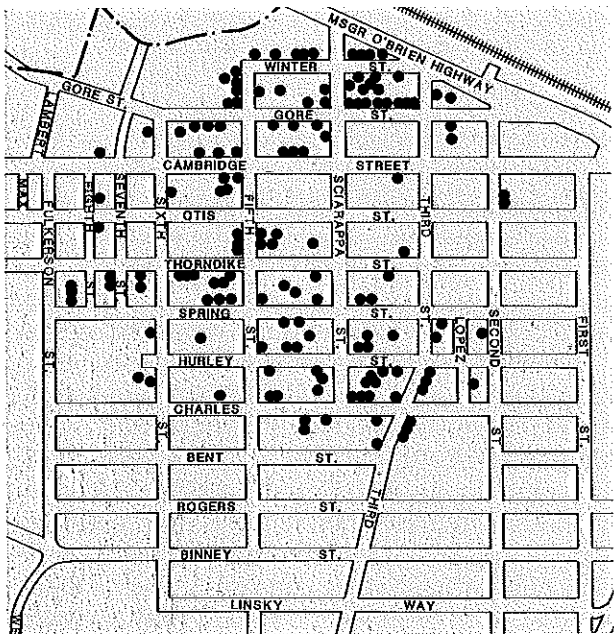
Near the beginning of the 19th century, in line with its 18th-century (and earlier) urban origins, Type C was most frequently used as a row house (Fig. 147). Later in the century there was a tendency toward the greater isolation of individual units; thus the double house and especially the detached house with its gable end to the street became more prevalent. Detached side-hall houses in the Late Georgian style, with their gable flank to the street and their square, boxy effect, looked like row houses cut off from their neighbors; when the Greek Revival brought about a reorientation of the roof profile so that the gable end faced the street, the type fared much better in its detached form.

Type C double houses nearly always had their doorways together in the center, their chimneys on the side walls, and the flank of the gable roof toward the street (Fig. 148). This configuration was followed for both practical reasons (it was hard to subsume two houses under a single gable-end-to-street roof) and aesthetic reasons (two small side-hall houses, so grouped, looked like the large, symmetrical center-hall type). Occasionally two side-hall houses were given a gable-end-to-

street roof, but the resulting pediment was generally so high that it appeared awkward and ungainly.

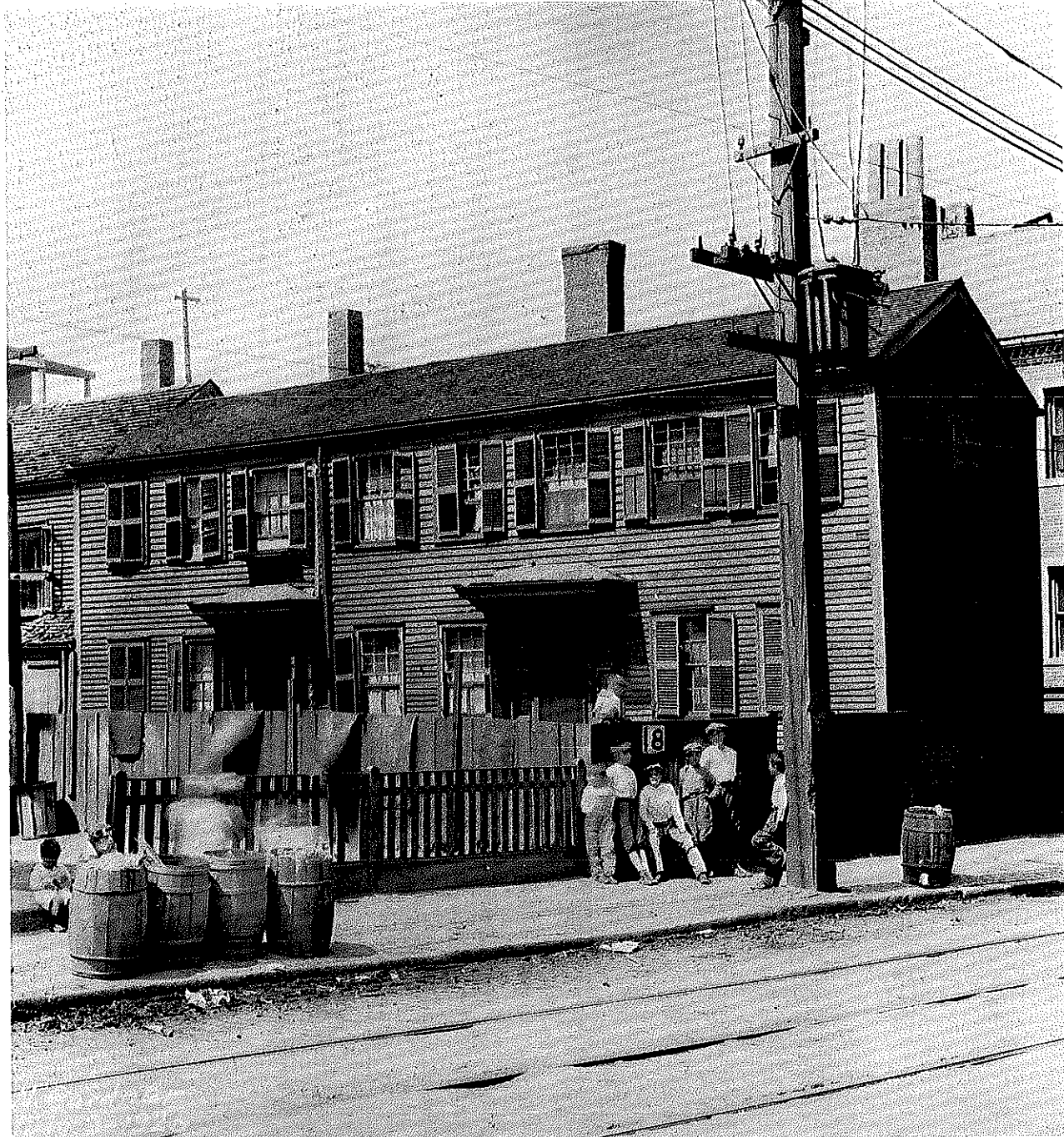
When used as a row house, the side-hall plan of necessity had its gable flank toward the street, so that the roofs of the adjoining houses would line up. Dormers (generally one per house) and chimneys (generally shared by adjacent houses) punctuated the roof line at regular intervals. Adjoining houses were either paired (with shared doorways, chimneys, and rear ells) or simply lined up next to each other with the same relative position of doors, windows, and other features.

The most common East Cambridge houses, therefore, were Type C, the side-hall plan (used singly, doubly, or in rows), and Type B, the two-room center-hall plan (used singly, doubly, and occasionally at the ends of rows). Stylistic changes had little effect on the use and arrangement of these plans. They arose from 18th-century prototypes and were predicated on the ideal of every man in his own house (even if it was attached to its neighbors). The first really important housing change in East Cambridge came with the development of the flat, when living units began to be divided horizontally rather than vertically. Gradual rather than sudden, this changeover was more or less completed by the late 1870s, and by the late 1880s whole blocks of flats had been built, particularly on the western edge of the neighborhood, along Seventh and Ninth streets. Few single-family houses, large or small, were built in East Cambridge after 1880.



149. Late Georgian/Federal houses in East Cambridge

flat file



150. 198 Bridge Street, c. 1825, just prior to demolition in 1925 2308

19th-Century Residential Styles

Late Georgian/Federal, 1820–50

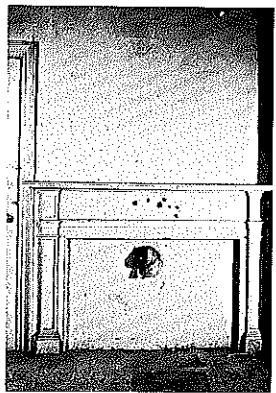
East Cambridge has a number of Late Georgian houses (Figs. 149–150). Some date from the 1820s, but quite a few were constructed after 1830. Most are relatively modest in scale and, when they are compared with Bulfinch's work on Beacon Hill between 1796 and 1806, it is clear that the houses in East Cambridge constitute a rear-guard of the Federal movement.

Four-room central-hall houses (Type A) were unusual in this district of modest living accommodations. One example remains at 467 Cambridge Street, but the windows and doors have been removed, and it is hidden behind a later commercial block (see Fig. 143). Built in 1824–25, the main entrance of this once imposing house had sidelights and a customary if somewhat clumsy elliptical fan (Fig. 151). There were also good but simple Federal fireplaces in both the first- and second-floor rooms (Fig. 152).

The area's most striking surviving Late Georgian buildings are brick. Most are Type C (side-hall plan): a substantial town house at 59 Thorndike Street (1827) (see Fig. 155), a six-house row at 204–214 Third Street (1826–27) (see Fig. 163), and a simple dwelling with brick ends but wooden flanks at 96 Thorndike Street (1826–27) (Fig. 153); a few such as 200 Bridge Street (1825) follow Type B (see Fig. 158). In these examples, the familiar sheer plane of the facade controls the design, and the attenuation and refinement characteristic of the Federal style are evident. The main cornice is created by the slight projection of a few



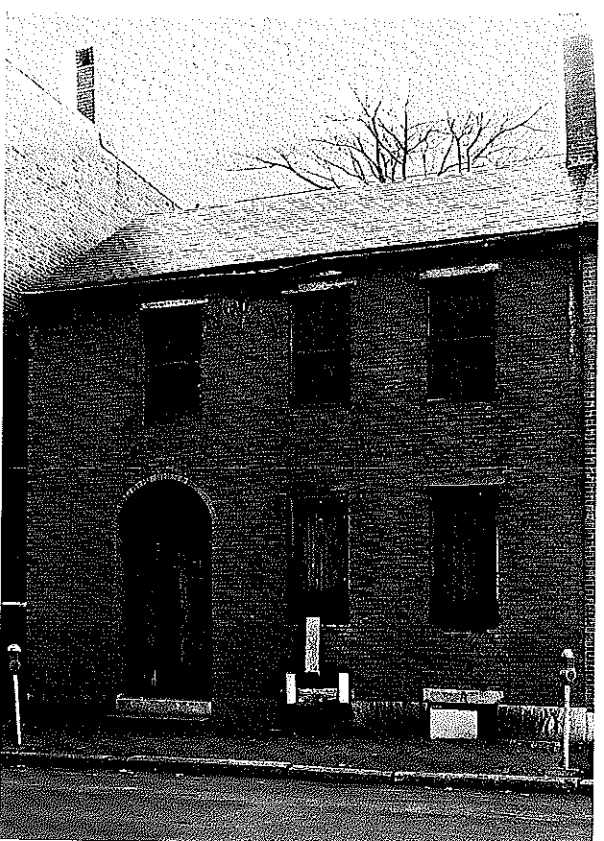
151. Entrance, 467 Cambridge Street, 1824–25. Photograph 1964



152. First floor mantel, 467 Cambridge Street. Photograph 1964



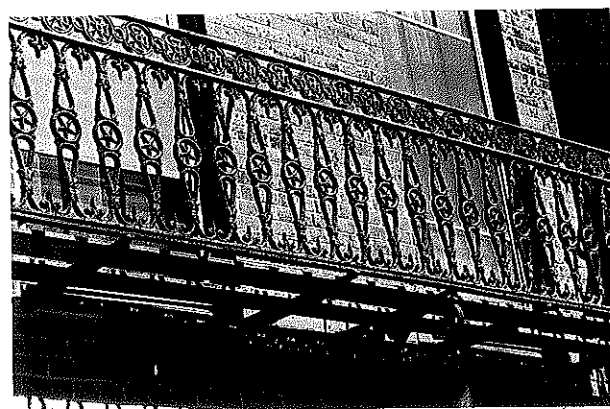
153. 96 Thorndike Street, 1826–27. Photograph c. 1968



154. 26 Second Street, 1826–27. Demolished c. 1966. Photograph 1964



155. 59 Thorndike Street, 1827-28 1277/6



156. Cast-iron balcony, 59 Thorndike Street 4851/4



157. Etched sidelight, 59 Thorndike Street

1289/

rows of brick, one course of which is set at an angle or indented in a manner that recalls a dentil course. The foundations are made of granite blocks, but most of the flush lintels are brownstone. The brick used for the facing has a somewhat coarser texture and a more red-brown color than the smooth, salmon-colored pressed brick used in the fifties, and it is slightly larger in dimension ($7\frac{3}{8}$ by $3\frac{1}{2}$ by $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches) than the common brick used elsewhere in the house. (Modern bricks are even larger: 8 by $3\frac{3}{4}$ by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches.) The face brick is laid with regular stretchers and alarmingly few headers to tie to the common brick core. The mortar joints for both the face and common brick masonry are fairly thin ($\frac{3}{16}$ inch), but the joints are not as thin nor are the bricks laid quite as regularly as in the 1850s and 1860s.

The simple, flat, rectangular quality of the facade is sometimes relieved by an elliptical brick arch that opens into a recessed entrance porch, such as 96 Thorndike Street, 26 Second Street (demolished) (Fig. 154), and 262-266 Cambridge Street (demolished) (see Figs. 164-165). Other Late Georgian examples have simple square entrances such as 202-214 Third Street and 204-210 Cambridge Street (demolished) (see Fig. 162). In both cases, the main door is flanked by sidelights and capped by a rectangular top light as wide as the door and sidelights together. The interior trim of

brick houses does not differ from that of wooden buildings of the same time.

One of the best examples of a Late Georgian brick house that survives in East Cambridge is 59 Thorndike Street (1827-28); it was built by Atherton Stevens, a prominent Cambridge merchant and a descendant of the 17th-century settler Atherton Haugh (Fig. 155). In 1827, when the Third Congregational Society of Cambridge purchased a lot for a church at the corner of Thorndike and Third streets, it sold the west part of the lot to Stevens to help cover the cost of construction. Stevens occupied 59 Thorndike Street for six years and then sold the property to W. S. Rodgers, who, in 1843, sold it to John L. Sherriff; his brush factory was one of East Cambridge's most prominent early industries.

Following the pattern established by the church, 59 Thorndike Street is built close to the sidewalk, thus reserving open space at the rear of the lot; its generous side yard provides rare open space in the densely built neighborhood. The narrow brick town house, with its low pitched roof and double end chimneys, is a striking example of the Late Georgian in East Cambridge. The sheer plane of the facade controls the design, and the attenuation and refinement characteristic of the style are evident. A wooden octagonal dormer on a paneled base projects from the center of the front slope of the roof above a handsome sawtooth brick cornice. The windows on the first and third floors contain standard six-over-six sash; the second-floor windows extend to the floor, indicating the main living floor of the house. An elaborate cast-iron balcony extends across the second floor, further emphasizing the major rooms at this level (Fig. 156). The recessed entrance has a six-panel door with etched sidelights and a rectangular top light, characteristic of the style (Fig. 157). The window sills are wood but the lintels are granite; they were originally painted to simulate brownstone. The foundation also is granite.

The interior detailing reflects the elegance of the facade while showing the influence of the bolder proportions of the Greek Revival style, which was gaining popularity in the late 1820s. The main parlor is placed longitudinally across the front of the second floor, tak-



159. Parlor fireplace, 200 Bridge Street 12/13/13

ing advantage of the 18-foot width of the house. The window and door frames have pediments and battered stiles, suggesting an Egyptian Revival influence, and a delicate waterleaf moulding echoed in the plaster ceiling.

Equally impressive is the earliest surviving free-standing brick house built in East Cambridge (Fig. 158). This house originally stood at 200 Bridge Street, where it was built for James B. Barnes in 1825. Barnes was a glassmaker from Dorsetshire who immigrated to the United States in 1817, at the age of 28. He rose to prominence in the New England Glass Company and was known primarily for designing the company's red lead furnace in 1819. In its original location, the gable end of the Barnes House was angled to follow the line of Bridge Street. The formal five-bay center-entrance facade faced the side yard and was thus protected from the traffic along this main thoroughfare. The outside trim includes a sawtooth brick cornice and recessed arched doorway similar to those of other Federal brick houses in the area (i.e., 262–266 Cambridge Street; 1829), but the flat trim around the windows and doors is unusual—a lime and sand parging material tinted light tan to resemble stone. Inside, elegant Federal fireplaces highlight the rooms on the main floor (Fig.

158. James B. Barnes House, 200 Bridge Street, 1825. Moved to 109 Hampshire Street in 1984. Photograph 1925



160. 45-51 Gore Street, before 1821

159), and a tight central stairway with a slender, turned Federal newel post leads to the plainer rooms on the second floor. In the 1920s, the house was moved back on its lot and turned 90 degrees to accommodate the widening of Bridge Street; in its new location it has been reoriented to its original position, with the angled gable end facing the street.

The most substantial brick houses of the 1820s were erected by the Lechmere Point Corporation in an attempt to set a high architectural standard for its newly developing area. Unfortunately, only one group of corporation houses has survived. The Federal block at 45-51 Gore Street and 25 Third Street is the oldest known structure in East Cambridge and the only one built by the Lechmere Point Corporation (Fig. 160). Although its exact date is unknown, it had to be before

1821, when the corporation sold the block to Governor Christopher Gore, a stockholder who speculated widely in East Cambridge real estate on his own account.

The two-story brick block contains four houses under what was originally a single gable roof running parallel to Gore Street. The houses at each end of the row are entered through doorways placed in the center of each facade; the two houses in the middle of the row are entered from Gore Street and appear to have typical side-hall plans. Only the building facing Third Street remains substantially unchanged. The pedimented gable now has asphalt siding, but it originally probably had flush boarding; on the brick wall below, only the deeply recessed center entrance relieves the undetailed facade. The first floor of 47 Gore Street has been simplified and the windows changed. The unit at

49 Gore Street has been remodeled with arched windows and an additional story, and a mansard roof has been added to number 51.

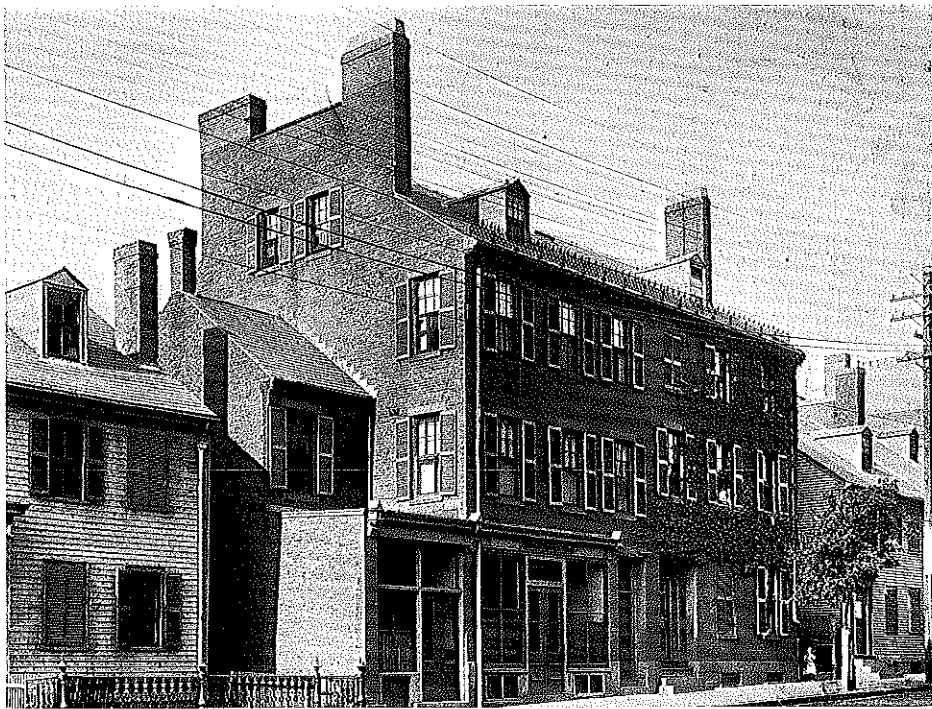
Even more ambitious were the elegant three-story brick rows that the corporation put up in the early 1820s on the west side of Second Street between Otis and Cambridge streets (Fig. 161). These rows are known only through photographs, for they were demolished in 1896 to make room for the Registry of Deeds; there were no doubt other, similar corporation rows, particularly near the courthouse, but no visual records remain. Domestic building on the scale of the Second Street row was not attained in East Cambridge again until the 1850s, with the building of 55-61 Otis Street (see Fig. 209).

The Lechmere Point Corporation encouraged its proprietors and other individuals to follow its example in building substantial brick row houses. Thus it sold property on Second Street in 1822 with the restriction that any buildings "be built of brick conformable to the other four houses on the Square" (see Fig. 161). Typical private developments in the 1820s were the three-story row at 204-210 Cambridge Street, built by 1825 on the site of the present Registry of Deeds (Fig. 162); single houses such as 26 Second Street (1826-27), which followed the row house form (see Fig. 154); and the two blocks discussed below. The early brick rows seemed to set a trend, and row houses became more common in East Cambridge in the early- and mid-19th century than in other parts of the city.

A six-house brick row from 1826 still stands at 204-214 Third Street (Fig. 163). The owners, Edmund Munroe, a former proprietor of the Lechmere Point Corporation, and Deming Jarves were both principals in the New England Glass Company. Located along the lower part of what was then known as Court Street, which provided the only access from Cambridgeport and the West Boston Bridge to the courthouse, this row was fairly isolated from the settled part of East Cambridge. It was conveniently close, however, to the New England Glass Bottle Company, which Munroe and Jarves established in 1826 just southeast of the houses, and the row became known as the Bottle House Block (see p. 187). It is not known whether this



161. 27-31 and 33-39 Second Street, early 1820s. Demolished 1896



162. 204-210 Cambridge Street. Demolished 1896 1060



163. 204-214 Third Street, 1826 12.8421/29

row was originally built to house glassworkers; the company closed in 1845, and the corner house of the row became a tavern, as it remains today. To date, three of the units have been restored.

No longer surviving is the well-documented block of two Federal brick houses at 262-266 Cambridge Street (Fig. 164). Amos Binney, a merchant and Agent of the Charlestown Navy Yard who was the second largest shareholder in the Lechmere Point Corporation, built these attached houses in 1829. After the corporation was dissolved in 1822, Binney continued to deal extensively in real estate and by 1830 owned forty-one houses in East Cambridge. Like most of his holdings, the two houses on Cambridge Street were built as rental or speculative property; they remained in his family's possession until 1866.

The generous setback of these houses is unusual in East Cambridge, but they were originally part of a larger architectural unit with the Methodist church and

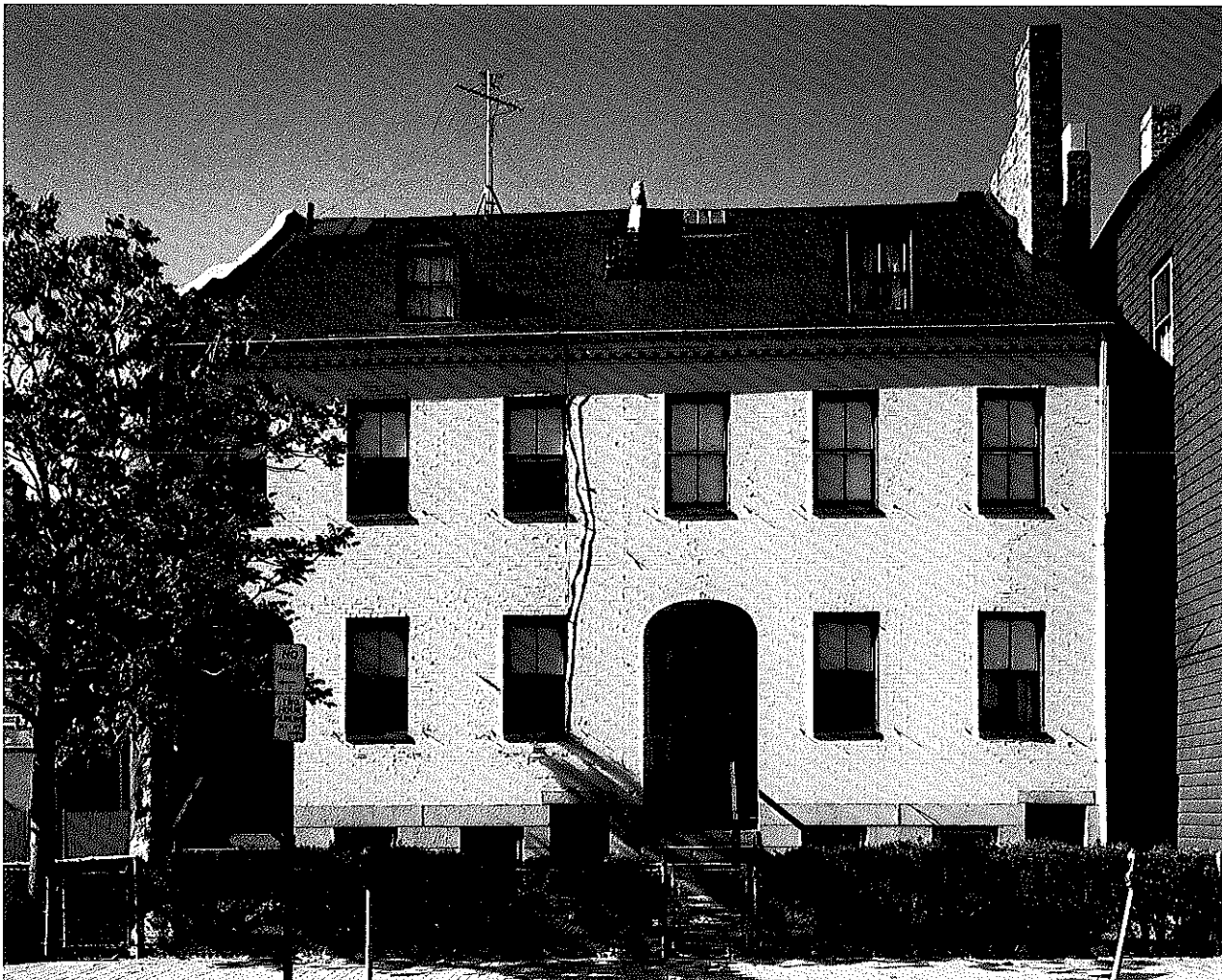
parsonage (1823-26), now demolished (see Fig. 290). The church faced Third Street while the parsonage, built at its rear wall, faced Cambridge Street. Binney had been a member of the church building committee, and his two houses continued the Cambridge Street facade of the parsonage and the church.

Set on a high, dressed stone basement with passageways through to the back yards, the facade of Binney's block showed the severe geometrical lines characteristic of late Georgian and Federal urban architecture, relieved only by elliptical arches framing the recessed doorways and the brick dentil cornice at the roof line (Fig. 165). The form of the roof represented an ingenious solution to gaining interior space when the cornice of the houses needed to match that of the church: the third floor was expressed on the front only as dormers in the roof, but at the back it was a full upright story, making that elevation three full stories plus basement. A similar arrangement occurs at 59

Thorndike Street, where the lines of the house were determined by an existing church building. The demolition of these two houses was a great loss to the neighborhood, as they were among the last to show the fine residential qualities that the Lechmere Point Corporation and its proprietors had envisioned for East Cambridge.

The latest attached brick houses of this style still standing in East Cambridge are 30-32 and 34 Second Street (Fig. 166). Built only three to six years before the Greek Revival row directly to the south at 36-46 Second Street (1842), they show how little the row house form and plan changed during this period. Only the exterior ornamentation indicates the transition from one style to the other.

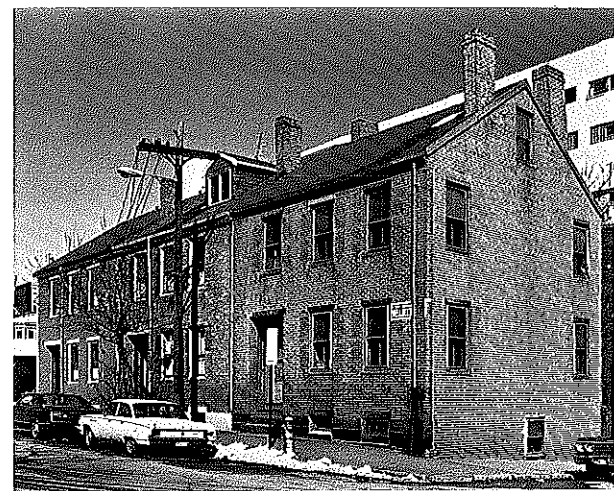
More Late Georgian houses in East Cambridge were built of wood than brick; they were generally similar in form but more modest than the brick examples described above. These wooden houses have a similar



164. 262-266 Cambridge Street, 1829. Photograph 1969 221/23



165. Entrance, 262-266 Cambridge Street. Photograph 1964 0



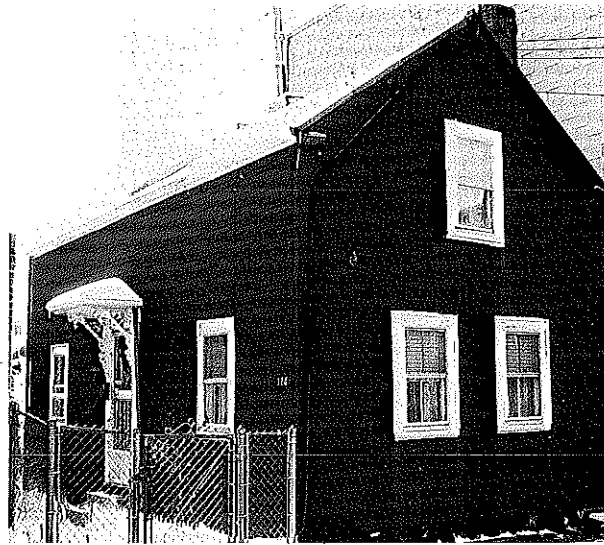
166. 30-32 Second Street (1839) and 34 Second Street (1836). Photograph 1970 309/8A



167. Winter Street worker's cottages, c. 1940
missing



168. 86 Gore Street, 1821 4851-13 or 14



169. 124 Thorndike Street, 1841. Photograph 1964



170. 11 Eighth Street, 1870. Photograph 1964

light cornice marking the intersection of the facade and sloping roof (Fig. 167). The cornice generally projects a bare 4 inches, but it is augmented by a wooden rain trough that returns at the end of the facade. The upper-story window caps fit tightly against the eaves, a hold-over from the 18th century (see Fig. 150). Sometimes the wooden mouldings that support the cornice are interrupted by the window opening; in other instances, the moulding breaks forward over the window frame. The gable ends are finished with a crown moulding on the raking cornice that projects about 3 inches from the wall. These light but nicely scaled cornices emphasize the geometric content of the building mass.

Structurally, some of these wooden Late Georgian houses employ a heavy framework of vertical posts and horizontal plates, girts, and sills that goes back to the 17th century. By the 1820s, framing members were generally smaller and framing methods simpler, but traces of the old system can still be seen in the corner posts in most early wooden houses in East Cambridge. By this time, however, some of the plates and girts were concealed by dropped plaster ceilings, as in the first floor of 467 Cambridge Street (1824).

Wall surfaces between the large framing timbers were traditionally constructed in one of two ways. One system used studs of varying sizes (but heavier than today's nominal 2 by 4s). A nonstructural insulating material sometimes filled the space between the studs, and split lathing nailed to the studs supported the interior plaster. Stud construction combined with a braced frame was the most common structural system in East Cambridge, and after 1840 it became general until the introduction of the Western or platform frame in the 1890s. The balloon frame, which was introduced in Chicago in the 1840s, was never popular here.

A second, more unusual system used 1- to 1½-inch-thick boards placed vertically between the large horizontal girts and sills. Exterior siding and interior lath were nailed directly to these vertical boards. The walls in this system were thin (¾ to 3½ inches), which caused the window frames to project as much as 1¾ inches beyond the outside face of the wall. A few houses, such as 467 Cambridge Street, used studs for exterior walls and vertical boards for interior partitions.

The most common form of Late Georgian wooden construction in East Cambridge is the worker's cot-

tage, a long, narrow (12 to 16 feet wide) dwelling generally set with the narrow end to the street and the center entrance facing a side yard. Built throughout the area between 1820 and 1870 and set close together with no setback, these cottages created a feeling of urban density, yet retained a private entrance and open area in the side yards. When placed at the rear of a lot, they were sometimes set with the long side toward the street so that they resembled larger, four-room center-hall houses. Their basic form is a holdover from the 18th century, and the only exterior trim is usually a simple cornice derived from the same period. Roofs are either hipped, which seems to be the earliest form (86 Gore Street, 1821), gabled (124 Thorndike Street, 1841), or flat (11 Eighth Street, 1870), although some flat roofs may stem from later alterations (Figs. 168–170).

The gabled worker's cottage is probably the most prevalent wooden house type in East Cambridge (Fig. 171). Built as single or double houses, these cottages range from one to two and a half stories. All, however, share a standard two-room center hall plan and a uniform three-run stair, which could be squeezed into a



171. 146 Thorndike Street, 1829-30. Photograph 1964 J-23



172. Rear facade, 146 Thorndike Street. Photograph 1985 126925/14



173. Front entrance, 98 Spring Street, 1840. Photograph 1964 O



174. Bedroom mantel, 467 Cambridge Street, 1824. Photograph 1964



175. Stairs, 75 Winter Street, 1838. Photograph 1964 O

cottages were built together and have survived.

One of the best preserved examples is the two-and-a-half-story cottage at 75 Winter Street, constructed in 1838 and recently restored (Figs. 177–178). The characteristic Late Georgian eaves and cornice contrast with the bracketed entrance hood added in the 1870s — a common 19th-century embellishment to these otherwise plain dwellings (Fig. 179). The interior follows the standard plan, with a steep three-run stair (see Fig. 175); the fireplace shows the elaboration that these houses sometimes achieved (Fig. 180).

The smallest worker's cottages on Winter Street were numbers 67–71, constructed in 1843–44 by

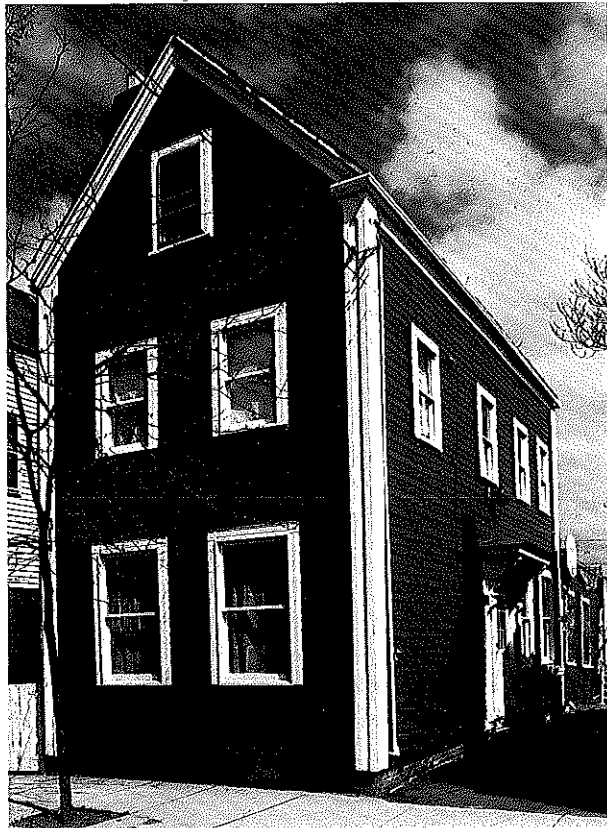
rented and then sold the cottages to artisans (Fig. 181). A comparison with 146 Thorndike Street, built fourteen to fifteen years earlier, shows how little this type changed over time.

The majority of workers living in the Winter Street cottages at midcentury were skilled and semiskilled craftsmen and factory workers, but the glassworkers ranged from general laborer to superintendent. Thomas Leighton was a master glassmaker who had been brought to East Cambridge from England in 1826 to become superintendent of the New England Glass Company. When he decided to build a house, he chose Winter Street and put up a characteristic two-and-a-



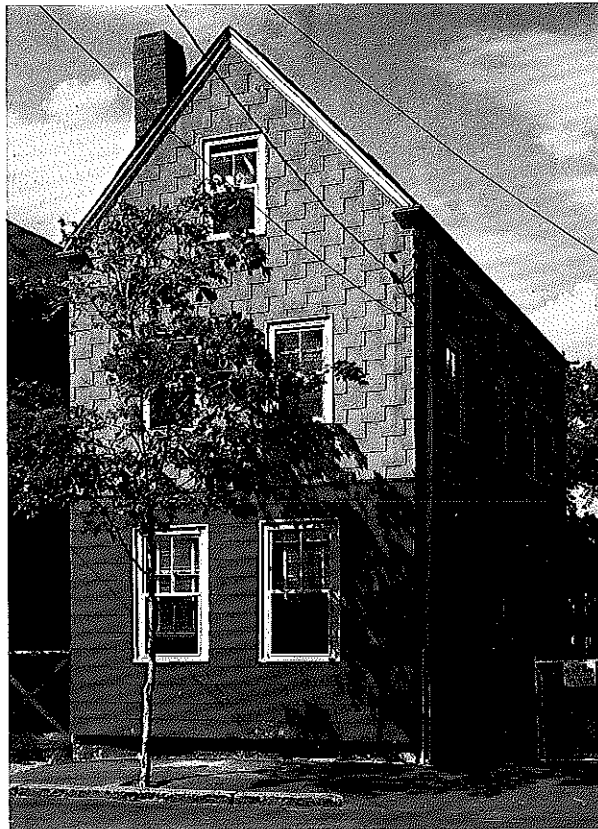
181. Worker's cottages, 67–71 Winter Street, 1843–44

128420/10



177. 75 Winter Street, 1838, after restoration

5851



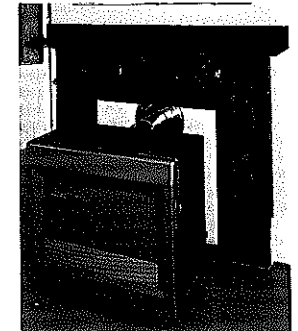
178. 75 Winter Street in 1964

41



179. Entrance, 75 Winter Street

1277/21

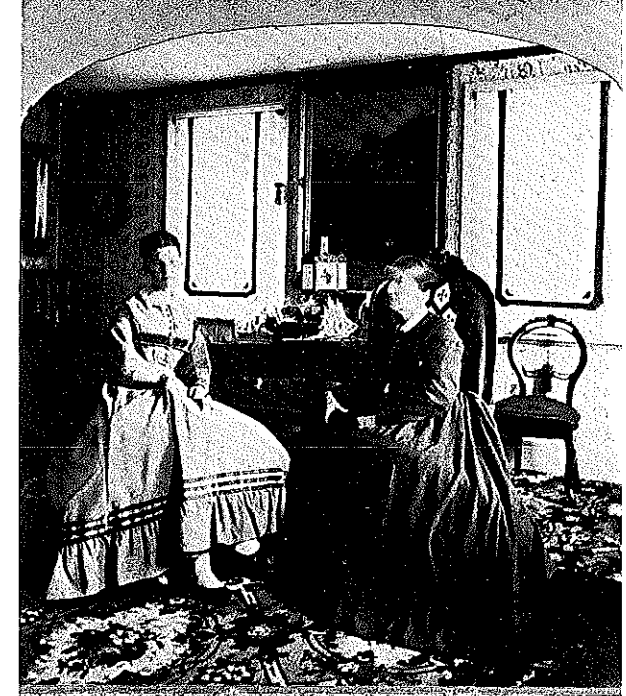


180. Fireplace, 75 Winter Street. Photograph 1964

0



182. Thomas Leighton House, 22 Winter Street, 1833–34. Photograph c. 1860 2337



183. Leighton family members in the parlor of 22 Winter Street. Photograph c. 1860 2935

half-story worker's cottage (Fig. 182). Although it was somewhat larger than many on the street, it did not differ in any other way, showing that these houses, while perhaps modest and behind the times in architectural style, were a respectable choice for all classes of employees.

A rare 19th-century interior view of 22 Winter Street shows that the Leightons lived comfortably; the ruby glass newel post ornament, fashioned as a gift for Thomas Leighton, shows how even such modest houses were not without touches of elegance (Figs. 183–184). Leighton may have chosen the workers' neighborhood of Winter Street because of his background as a glassmaker rather than as a manager, but

he was a capable superintendent and highly respected in the community: After he died, in 1849, his son became superintendent, and the house remained in the Leighton family until 1890.

Greek Revival, 1840–55

The Greek Revival style is what one remembers about East Cambridge (Figs. 185–186). The preferred style of builders when the district was in its heyday, the Greek Revival houses are notable for their variety and high quality as well as for their quantity. Streets such as Thorndike and Spring are essentially Greek Revival

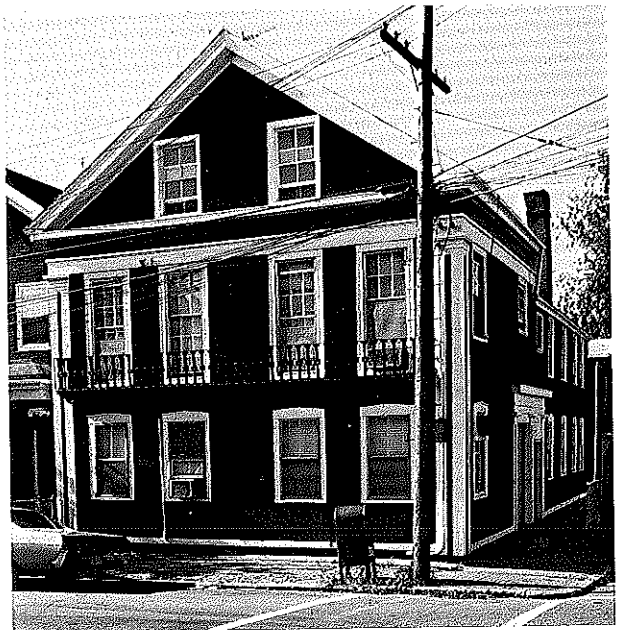


184. Ruby glass newel post ornament, 22 Winter Street

B1311



189. Pilaster and entablature detail, 74 Thorndike Street, 1843-44
4852-8



190. 80 Sciarappa Street, 1846-47. Photograph 1968
J-18

the removal of its pilasters and capitals in the process of siding and modernization.

Greek Revival entrances employed the same rectangular front door compositions with side and top lights that were used in the neighborhood's Late Georgian houses. In masonry buildings, however, an ample brownstone lintel replaced the elliptical entrance arch of the earlier period. Compare 262-266 Cambridge Street (1829) (see Figs. 164-165) with 55-61 Otis Street (1851) (see Fig. 209). The windows continued to use 9-by-12-inch glass panes, but the exterior window frames of wooden houses were wider and often had corner projections, or crossettes. Exterior shutters continued in use. Most walls were clapboard, but flush siding was sometimes used for facades, particularly on pediments and under porches. Slate continued to be the principal roofing material, and foundations were granite slabs or the slatelike Somerville argillite known locally as ledgestone.

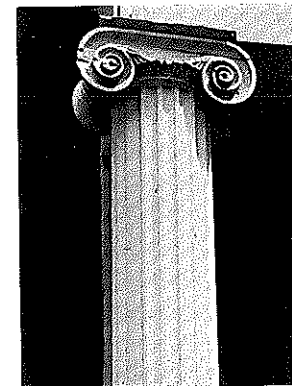
Despite its many similarities to the Late Georgian, the Greek Revival is evidence of the beginning of a new restless and assertive spirit in American architecture. Instead of being content to repeat standard Federal dwellings with their exquisite details, designers began to demand more conspicuous "show" and to search for variety. At the same time, however, they expressed themselves within a still limited range of familiar house plans and a restricted decorative vocabulary. The Greek Revival period, therefore, is pivotal and transitional, and the buildings exhibit an intriguing interplay of a fixed repertoire of forms and correct Classical detailing on the one hand and the new spirit of experiment and expressiveness on the other.

One help in attaining this new expressiveness was the presence of mass-produced ornamentation, which allowed even the vernacular builder to add a flourish to his building. Although this embellishment was largely a matter of selection rather than creation, the range of available ornament was larger than before. The corner house at 80 Sciarappa Street was a good example until it was covered with aluminum siding a few years ago (Fig. 190). Built by a local carpenter, Charles Pendexter, in 1846-47, this house featured paneled corner

plasters, pedimented windows, and a second-floor cast-iron balcony on Thorndike Street. In earlier periods, such a modest house would probably not have had a balcony, but by 1846 cast-iron balconies were within a modest budget. Other cast-iron balconies of the period occur at 51-61 Otis Street (1851) and originally at 100 Otis Street (1848-49) (see Figs. 207 and 209).

Columned entrance and side porches abound in Cambridge's Greek Revival houses; their fluted columns and intricate capitals are the kinds of elaborate ornament that could have been used earlier only in the most expensive work. Hollow-core columns 10 feet tall, for example, cost \$3.60 in James Gallier's *Price Book for Estimators* of 1833, and Doric capitals could be assembled from stock turned and shaped by machinery.

Most surviving examples of columned Greek Revival houses in East Cambridge use Ionic capitals and fluted columns (Fig. 191); a few domestic examples of the simpler Doric capitals exist (Fig. 192), but none of the more elaborate Corinthian capitals, such as those used in the 1848 remodeling of the old Superior Courthouse. Few East Cambridge columns had plain shafts; most were fluted. A few examples of reeded columns also exist (69 Thorndike Street, 1844, and 80 Thorndike Street) but this treatment was unusual in East Cambridge (see Fig. 197).



191. Detail of Ionic capital and fluted column, 42 Second Street, 1842
18521-14



192. Detail of Doric capital and plain column, 98 Otis Street, c. 1845
18521

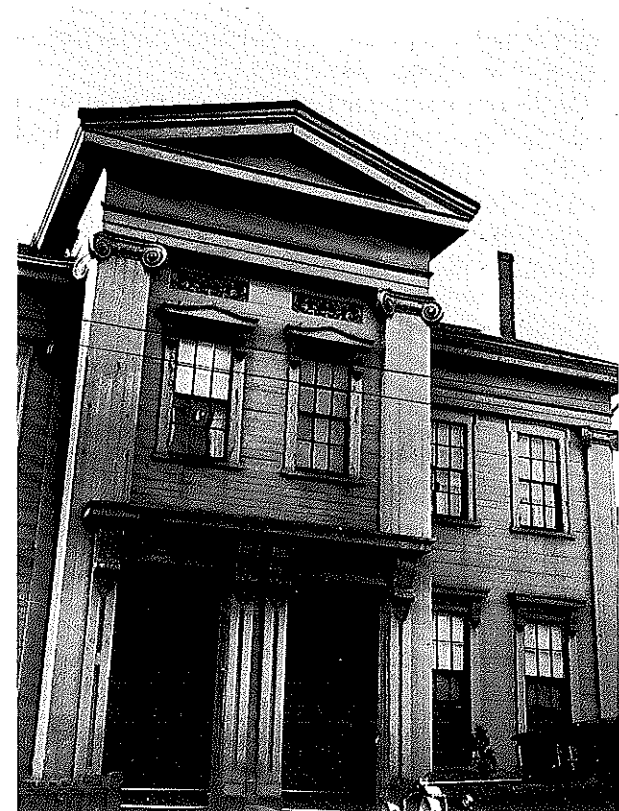
193. London putty decoration, in recessed entrance, 66-68 Otis Street, 1846-47. Photograph 1964

1846

Some houses of this period also include bas-relief decoration. While resembling hand carving, this decoration was often made from "London putty," which could be formed in a mold (Fig. 193). When hardened, glued in place, and painted, it can scarcely be distinguished from expensive, hand-carved work, and it was used for both exterior and interior decoration in East Cambridge, as in the window corner blocks on 67-69 Otis Street (1839).

The best example of the exterior use of this material in East Cambridge is 66-68 Otis Street. As originally built in 1846-47 by William Hall, a lumber dealer, and Andrew Jones, a mason, this T-shaped house was the most elaborate double Greek Revival house in East Cambridge, combining both unusual ornament and

stock Greek Revival elements (Figs. 194-195). Ornamentation was concentrated on the projecting entrance bay, which has monumental two-story corner pilasters with Ionic capitals and is surmounted by a Classical entablature and pediment; the ends of the house display the same treatment with corner pilasters and pediments. The second-story windows on the entrance bay had the most elaborate detail, with pedimented caps supported by consoles and decorated rectangular panels above, while the second-floor windows on the main part of the house had simpler pediments. The long first-floor windows had projecting mouldings supported by similar decorative consoles. The facade of the house was unfortunately stripped of much of its original decoration in the 1940s and covered with sid-

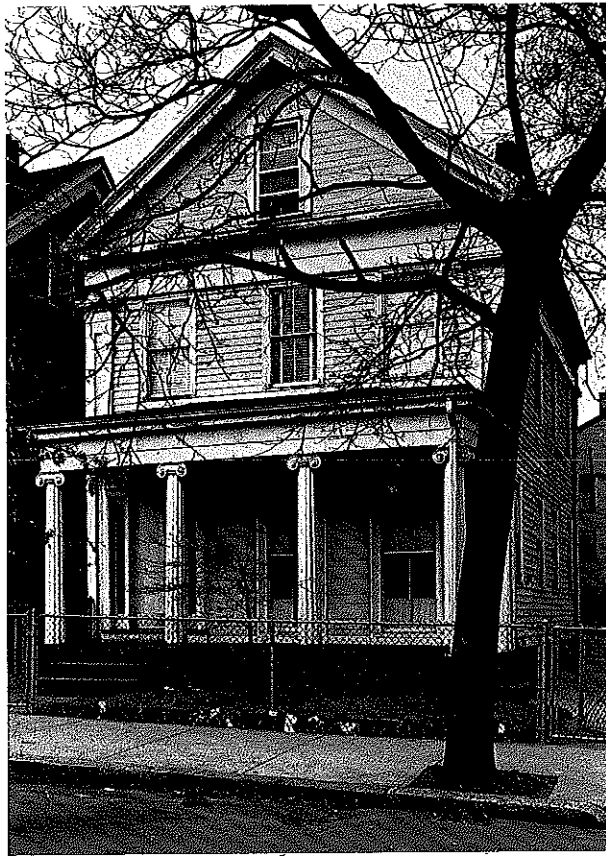


194. 66-68 Otis Street, 1846-47. Photograph c. 1935

6-650



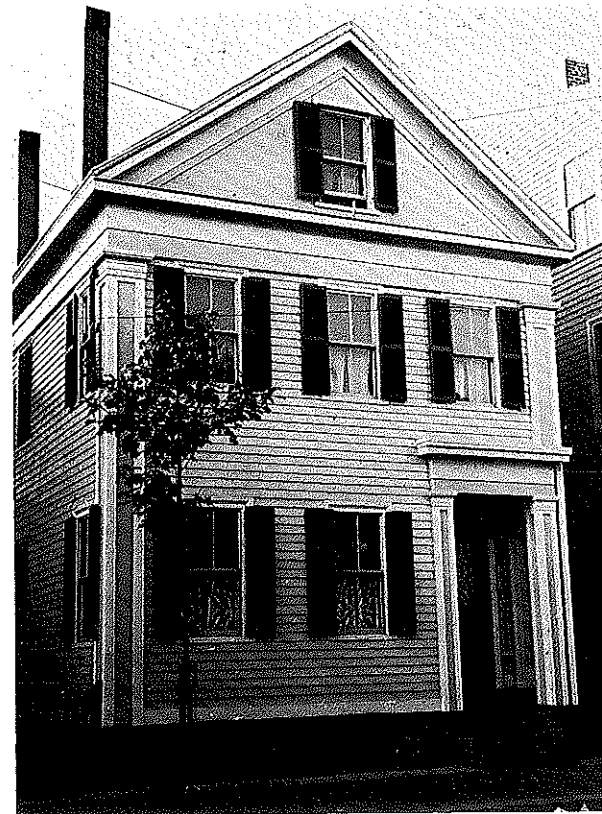
195. 66-68 Otis Street, after siding. Photograph 1964



196. 69 Thorndike Street, 1844. Photograph 1970 showing original clapboards 302-24A



197. Porch detail, 69 Thorndike Street. Photograph 1964



198. 102 Thorndike Street, 1844. Photograph c. 1935

6-68

ing; only the recessed entrance, with paneled pilasters, decorative consoles, pediments, and entablatures, remains as evidence of the house's former glory.

By the 1840s, the earlier worker's cottage with a center-hall entrance facing the side yard began to lose favor, and the Greek Revival house with a side-hall entrance in the gable end facing the street became the most common house type in East Cambridge. Built usually of wood, these houses rose one, two, and occasionally three stories, but two stories was most common. Porches in this period varied in both type and placement. There were recessed and projecting porches, small entrance hoods, and large verandas; the latter were placed all the way across the front or along the flank, though side porches were less common because of East Cambridge's narrow lots. The number and variety of Greek Revival porch designs found in the area make them particularly noteworthy and indicate the many variations on a standard theme that are typical of vernacular architecture.

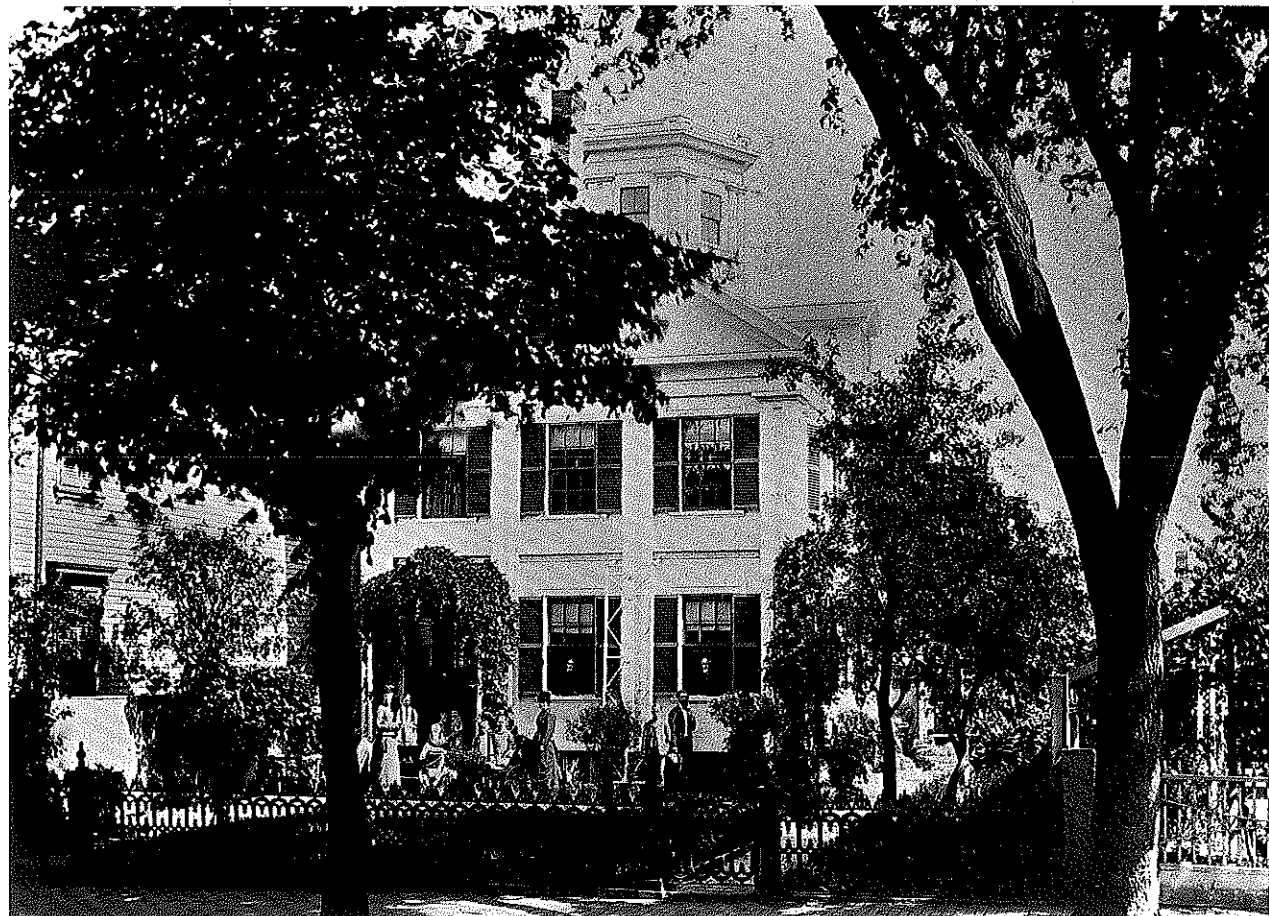
One of the best examples of a Greek Revival single house in East Cambridge, before it was covered with aluminum siding, was 69 Thorndike Street, built by Moses Bates in 1844 (Fig. 196). The original character of the house is evident in photographs taken in the 1960s, when the house was maintained with much sensitivity to its architectural detail. Three bays wide, with the entrance pushed to one side, the facade readily explains the interior of the dwelling. Floor-length windows on the ground floor and smaller ones above (some retaining the 9-by-12-inch lights) are characteristic of the period. The corner pilasters give a sense of completeness to the facade; a comparison with some of the other facades on the block shows how much is lost when such decorative accents are removed. Flush siding on the facade emphasizes the importance of the pilasters and recalls the ashlar construction of the Greek prototype. The gable suggests a Classical pediment with the horizontal cornice carried across the facade. The pitch of the roof is a compromise between the prototype and Yankee practicality; a slope as low as a proper Greek pediment would not allow sufficient headroom in the attic. Finally, a good front porch across the whole facade displays quite "correct" Ionic capitals,

although with curious reeded columns; the reeded pilasters framing the main entrance are a 1940's replacement (Fig. 197). All in all, this was a textbook example of a single-family Greek Revival house of the 1840s. Many simpler two-story examples had no projecting porches, but such features as paneled corner pilasters, handsome pilastered entrances, and proper pediments gave these houses a dignified appearance (Fig. 198).

Several more unusual variations of the Greek Revival two-story house, such as 93 Otis Street (1842–43) and 74 Thorndike Street (1843–44), are also important in East Cambridge's architectural development. Although it follows the typical two-story side-hall plan with rear ell, 93 Otis Street is an unusually imposing house for East Cambridge (Fig. 199). It is set well back on its spacious lot, unlike its neighbors, which are built close to the sidewalk. This lot was part of the four blocks around Otis and Fourth streets that the Lechmere Point Corporation had initially reserved because they constituted the highest point of land in East Cambridge, and the proprietors felt they would become the most desirable when the area began to develop.

In 1842, the 41-by-100-foot lot on Otis Street was purchased by Royal Pomeroy Deshon, a housewright who apparently came from Maine but who had been working in East Cambridge since about 1838. He built 93 Otis Street in 1842–43 for himself, no doubt in anticipation of his marriage in 1843. His only other documented work in Cambridge is St. John's Church on Fourth Street, for which he contracted in 1842 to construct the frame, roof, and other woodwork, but he probably worked on many other houses during the 1830s and 1840s, when the area was growing so rapidly.

Deshon was extremely competent and spared no expense in making his own house architecturally distinguished. The facade of 93 Otis Street is divided into three bays by paneled pilasters below the main gable, which is treated as a pediment, suggesting the temple front that was the ideal of the Greek Revival style. The pilaster treatment continues around the sides of the building, an elaborate touch for the area and the only example known in East Cambridge. Deshon also took full advantage of the lot's elevation and crowned



199. 93 Otis Street, 1842–43, Royal Pomeroy Deshon, housewright 1069

his house with a large hexagonal cupola articulated with paneled pilasters and a complete entablature.

Deshon died in 1848, and the following year the house was sold to Horatio Hovey, a distinguished figure in his time. He came to the area in 1824, at the age of nineteen, and worked as a clerk in Atherton Stevens' grocery store until 1839, when he opened his own grocery. A pillar of the East Cambridge business community through most of the 19th century, Hovey retired in 1886 but continued to live at 93 Otis Street until his death, in 1899. Siding now covers the house, obscuring much of its original detail.

More unusual in form is the T-shaped house at 74 Thorndike Street, with its open two-story corner porches and pedimented gable echoed in the shape of the gable window (Fig. 200). Built in 1843–44 for Peter Wellington of Lexington, the house's two-story pilasters and square porch posts, as well as its unusual form, set it apart from its more conventional neighbors (Fig. 201).

While most Greek Revival houses in East Cambridge had two stories, houses of a single story were not necessarily less stylish. One of the most delightful one-story Greek Revival houses was built in about 1845



200. 74 Thorndike Street, 1843-44 5851-28



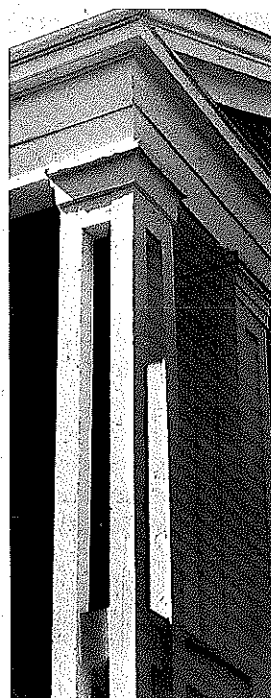
202. 318 Hurley Street, c. 1845. Photograph 1964 0



203. 111-113 Thorndike, c. 1845. Photograph 1970

302/12A

201. Detail, 74 Thorndike Street 4852-5



and moved to its present site at 318 Hurley Street in 1872 (Fig. 202). With pilaster strips and a complete entablature carried around the sides as well as on the front, this house was more elaborately trimmed than many larger structures in the Greek Revival vernacular. Unfortunately, it has now been covered with aluminum siding, but the original doorway remains. The entrance is a complete composition, with Ionic pilasters framing the door and lights, and the architrave is scored with two lines to recall the three-part architrave of the Ionic order.

Many of East Cambridge's Greek Revival houses are double rather than single houses. A double house differs from two adjacent row houses in that it has windows in three outside walls rather than two. Two different plans were followed: two side-hall houses set side by side and entered from the street or two center-hall or side-hall houses set back to back and entered from the side yard. The main gable could be set facing either the street or the side yard. If the gable faced the street, the entrances faced the side yard, as at 111-113 Thorndike Street (Fig. 203). If the gable

faced the side yard, the house could have either paired entrances facing the street, such as 67-69 Otis Street (1839) and 103-105 Otis Street (1843-44) (Fig. 204), or an entrance in each gable end, such as 126-128 Otis Street (1844). An unusual variation was the use of an entrance pavilion and cross gables, as at 66-68 Otis Street (1846-47), a house already noted for its elaborate ornamentation (see Fig. 194).

The two-and-a-half-story frame house at 67-69 Otis Street (1839) is a good example of a Greek Revival double house, with paired doors and gables flanking the street (Figs. 205-206). The original owner, Abiel Goss, was a carpenter who built the house with corner pilasters, a full entablature, and a one-story porch facing the street. For years the house stood in ruinous condition, but it was completely restored in 1985-86 (except for the porch columns, which should have been fluted with Ionic capitals) and is once again a good example of this type.

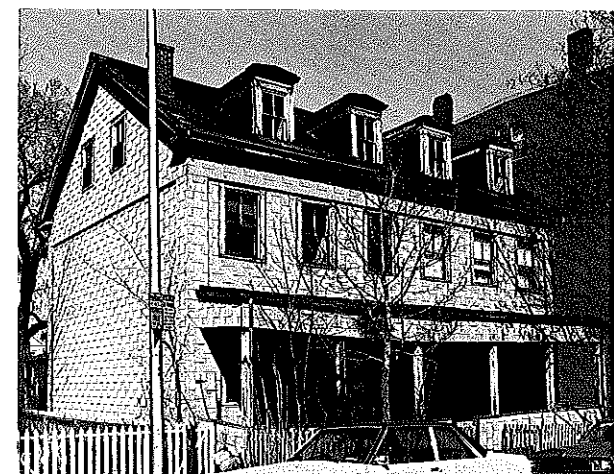
While most of the area's Greek Revival houses were built of wood, several handsome brick examples survive. Builders of masonry Greek Revival houses

showed a preference for granite foundations, brownstone lintels, and pressed-brick facades. The pressed brick is more salmon-colored, with a harder surface, and sharper edges than the common brick used for other walls. Brick joints are thin (about $\frac{3}{16}$ inch) and raked, and the mortar was often darkened with lamp-black.

One of the best examples is the freestanding single brick house at 100 Otis Street, built in 1848–49 for Oliver Taylor (Fig. 207). The pressed brick and three-story height of this house give the facade a rather stark, formal appearance that is reinforced by the shallow brownstone pediments over the first-floor windows and the main entrance, which constitute the major ornamentation. Originally, a handsome cast-iron balcony ran



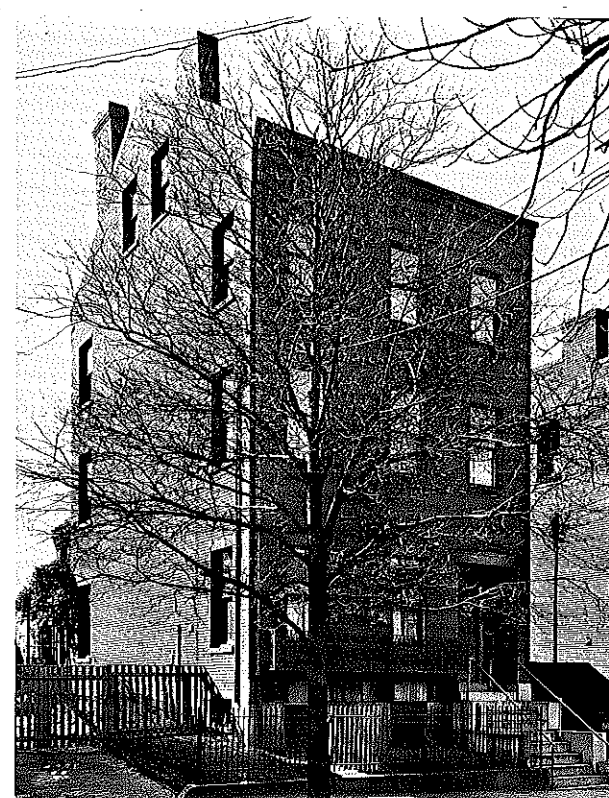
204. 103–105 Otis Street, 1843–44 9951/90-10



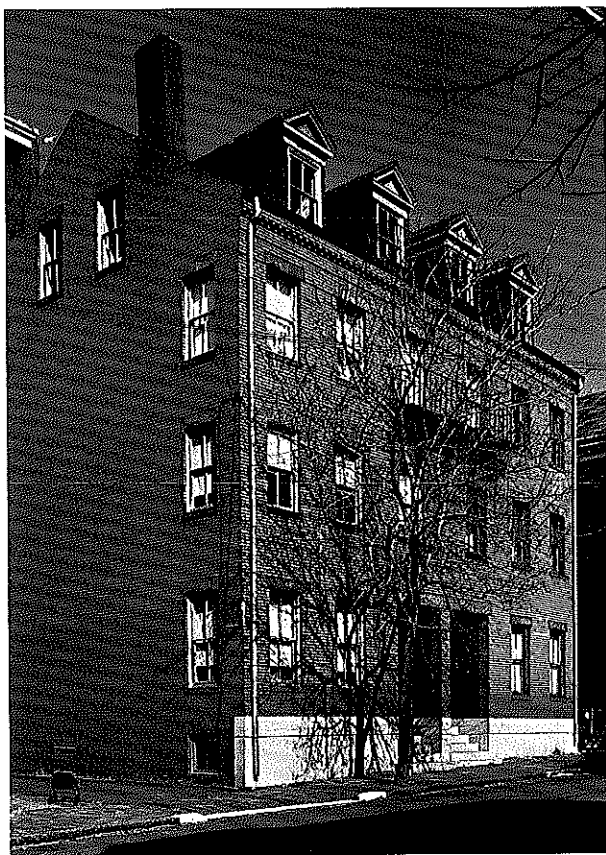
205. 67–69 Otis Street, 1839. Photograph 1984 12 39/36



206. 67–69 Otis Street in 1987 (after restoration) ☉



207. 100 Otis Street, 1848–49. Photograph c. 1920 ☉



208. 131-133 Spring Street, 1855. Photograph 1970
300/34-57A



209. 55-61 Otis Street, 1851, William A. Hall, builder
48512/2

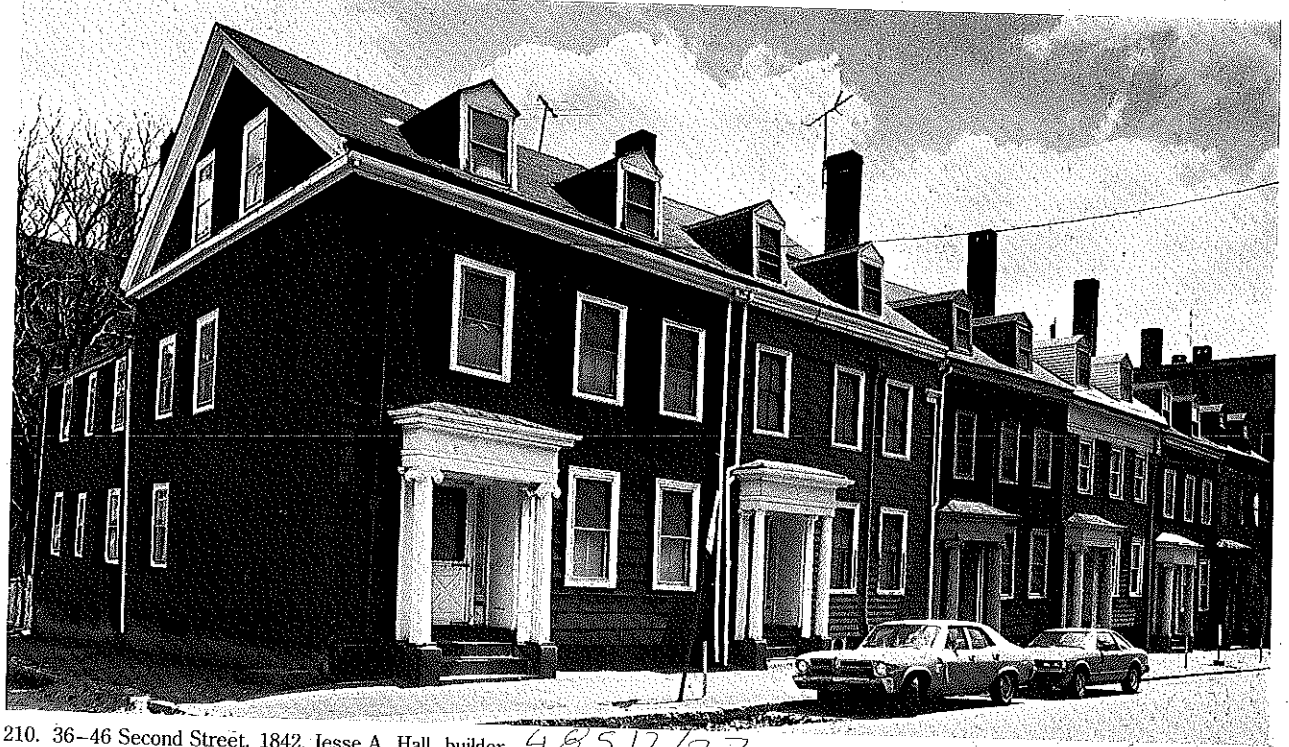
in front of the first-floor windows; this has unfortunately not survived.

The elaborate brick houses at 131–133 Spring Street provide an excellent example of a masonry Greek Revival double house with paired entrances facing the street (Fig. 208). Described as “first class” in the *Cambridge Chronicle* in 1855, when they were under construction, these three-story houses built of pressed brick for William Needham have a high granite base, brownstone trim, and recessed entrances. Dormers on both the facade and the wide double ell are capped by full Greek Revival pediments, giving them a stately character similar to that of the brick rows on Second Street (see Fig. 161).

In addition to its single and double houses, East Cambridge has many Greek Revival row houses, both brick and frame. All row houses follow the same fundamental plan as the typical single house: they are three bays wide, two rooms deep, and have a side hall with a stair; there may or may not be an ell. Any variety in row house design results from the building material, the height to which it is carried, the degree of decoration, and the placement within the row (the end houses were often slightly wider than the others).

One of the most striking rows that survives is 55–61 Otis Street (1851) (Fig. 209). The date is significant, for the same houses could have been built on Louisburg Square in Boston twenty years earlier. If they had an architect, his name is not important, since he merely repeated a familiar pattern. The builder and first owner was William A. Hall, a lumber dealer and entrepreneur who developed several groups of dwellings in East Cambridge. Valued at \$5,500 when built, each 25-foot-wide house contained four formal rooms (parlor, library, dining, and reception rooms), seven bedrooms (three of them small), and services (kitchen, storage, furnace, and halls). The fourth stories of the two middle houses were added in 1903.

The complete brick entablature of the facade and the square-headed entrance are typical of Greek Revival row houses. The elongated windows of the second floor are in proportion to the 11-foot ceilings and identify the drawing rooms on the *piano nobile*. The interiors have fine marble mantels, and the wood trim is impressive.



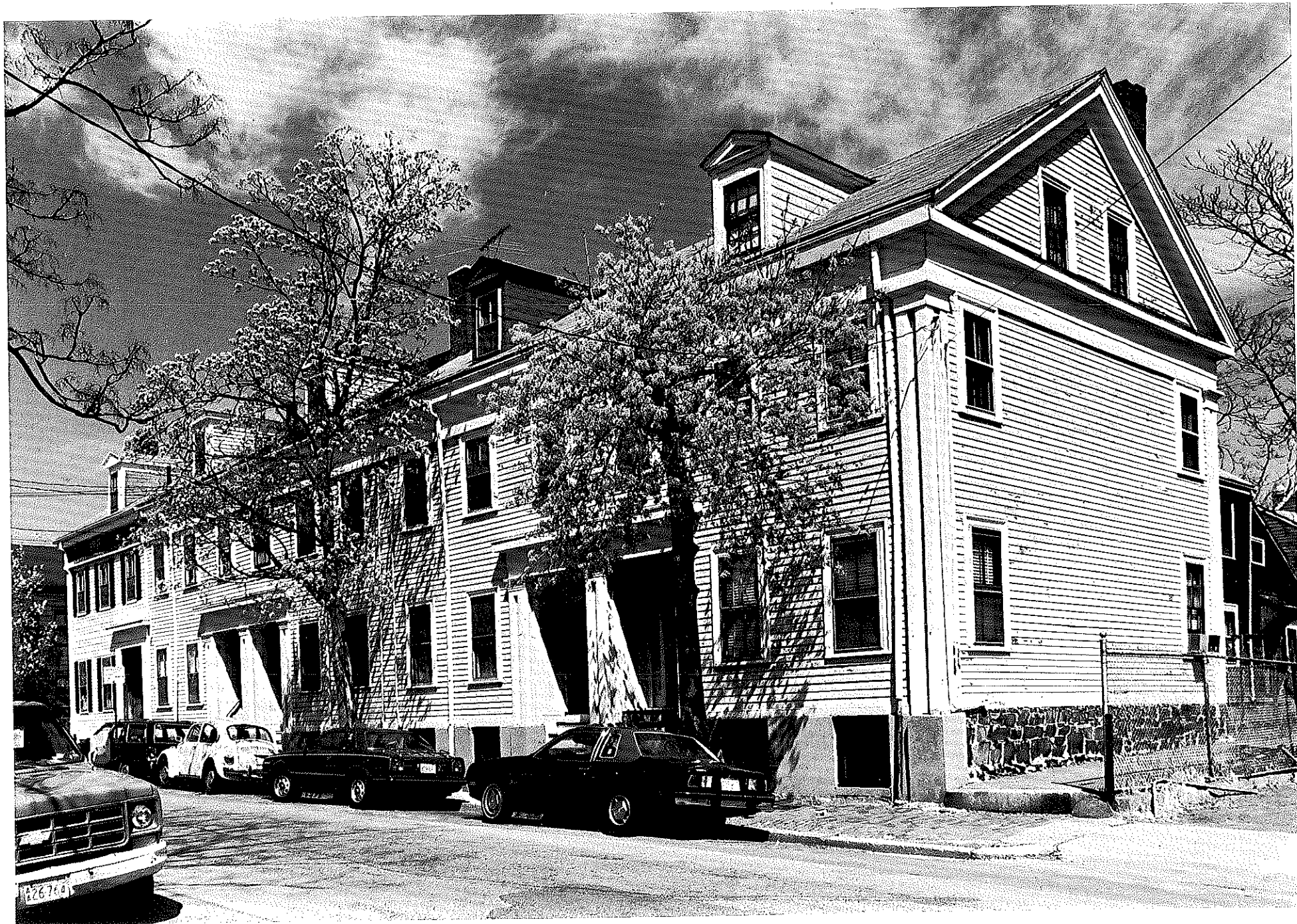
210. 36–46 Second Street, 1842, Jesse A. Hall, builder 48512/27

The doors on the main (second) floor are more than 8 feet high and are surrounded by excellent architrave mouldings with crossettes. The front parlors have plaster ceilings with recessed panels as fine as Greek Revival craftsmen could devise. Number 61 has been carefully restored, and could provide an example for others in the row.

A comparison of this block with five other groups of Greek Revival row houses and their assessed values at the time of their construction underlines their basic similarities as well as the variations in detail and value that were possible within the formula. Somewhat earlier and less costly than the Otis Street row is the block of six frame dwellings at 36–46 Second Street (1842) built by Jesse A. Hall, a lumber dealer and one of the most prominent figures (like his son, William) in early East Cambridge real estate (Fig. 210). Two stories

high and lacking ells, these houses each contain two formal rooms on the first floor, five bedrooms, and services. As they are set on a hill, each house has a kitchen in the basement, which is on the same level as the back yard; an early photograph taken from Boston shows that the houses backed directly onto the tide flats (see Fig. 36). Except for party walls of brick, the houses are built of wood and vary in width from 21 to 26 feet. When completed, each house was taxed at \$2,000. This row has very good exterior and interior woodwork: projecting Ionic porches, intricate front stairs, a scroll newel post, and handsome interior trim, although the wooden mantels in the parlors and dining rooms seem unusually plain.

In 1856, the first year in which the Cambridge directory consistently listed house numbers, the residents of 36–46 Second Street included a clergyman,



211. 67-75 Spring Street, 1847 48512/6



212. 72-78 Spring Street, 1845. Photograph 1964



213. 84-92 Spring Street, 1844. Photograph 1964

an attorney, and four dealers in lumber, wood and coal, and produce, as well as a salesman for one of the glass companies. The residents of this handsome block were primarily professionals and substantial businessmen, similar in occupational class to the builder and owner, Jesse Hall, who lived at 36 Second Street until his death in 1860.

Three blocks away at 67-75 Spring Street (1847) are five frame houses built by Thomas Norris and valued at \$2,100 each (Fig. 211). Most of the houses are 22 feet wide, but the one on the end is 31 feet. The facade has a simple entablature, recessed entrance porches, and single pilasters at the corners of the row. The houses have good marble fireplace surrounds, elaborate scroll-type stairs, and rear ells to provide additional service space and bedrooms. The residents of this row in 1856 were primarily skilled and semi-skilled craftsmen, but they also included a wood and coal dealer and a shoestore owner.

Across the street at 72-78 Spring Street (1845) is a row of four dwellings by the same builder, Thomas Norris (Fig. 212). Their lower valuation of \$1,605 can be explained by the narrower lots (21 feet), and simpler facades, with neither pilasters nor entablature but only projecting paired porches supported by simple Doric columns. These are some of the few columns of this style in East Cambridge. Unlike 36-46 Second Street, in which each house has an individual columned porch, here the porches have been paired, reducing the amount of ornamentation, and the houses are mirror images of each other. Like the row across the street, these houses were occupied in 1856 primarily by skilled craftsmen: carpenters, a blindmaker, and a pump and block maker.

By comparison, the simplified row of five 20-foot-wide houses at 137-145 Otis Street (1851) has neither projecting porch, entablature, nor columns, and inside it lacks the characteristic scroll newel post and marble

mantels. Although each house is two stories high, the ell has only one story, reducing the number of rooms. Their similar valuations of \$1,600 can only be explained by rising prices at this later date.

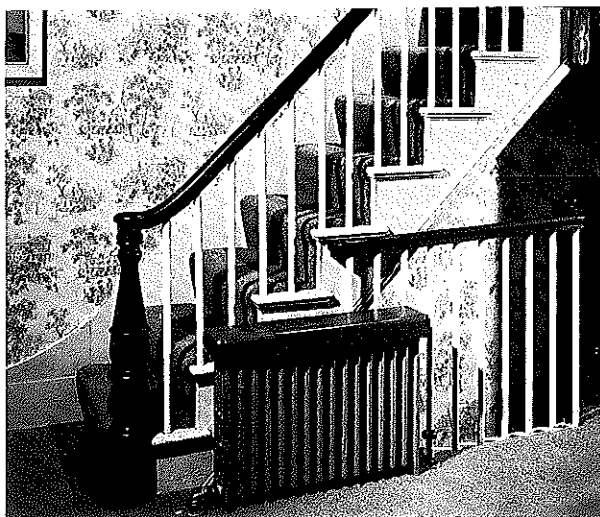
Last in the comparison is the five-house row at 84-92 Spring Street (1844), which is also narrow but lower, with only one story to the main entablature (Fig. 213). Following the same basic side-hall scheme but reduced to living room, kitchen, and three bedrooms, each house was valued at only \$500 when it was built. Like much of Spring Street, this row was occupied in 1856 by skilled and semiskilled craftsmen: carpenters, an organ builder, a brushmaker, and two pyrotechnists, who were making fireworks on an island in the marsh south of Charles Street.

An important interior feature of the average East Cambridge Greek Revival residence, whether a detached house or part of a row, was the stair. Three kinds are found. The most elaborate curls both the



214. Stair, 61 Otis Street, 1851. Photograph 1964

38



215. Newel post, 84-92 Spring Street, 1844. Photograph 1964

35

handrail and bottom (curtail) step into a scroll about the newel post (Fig. 214). The rounding of the curtail step and handrail is reflected in the bowed contours of the three or four steps above, and together they create a graceful, cascading effect at the bottom of the flight. Sometimes, as at 36-46 Second Street, the risers form an oblique angle with the wall rather than the usual 90-degree angle, which gives something of the effect of a spiral stair. Toward the top, the stairs again bend easily in a quarter circle, and the rounding movement is repeated in the wall, strings, and handrail. The handrail curves in this manner at each floor and flows from top to bottom without interruption. Balusters are simple, rounded, and sometimes slightly tapered. The elabo-



216. Back stairs, 46 Second Street. Photograph 1964

30

rate scroll newel goes back to Bulfinch's work on Beacon Hill, and it was used continuously in the most expensive residential work in East Cambridge, Cambridgeport, and Dana Hill until the Civil War. Its appearance, therefore, is not confined to Greek Revival houses.

An intermediate stair design uses straight runs for the strings and handrails and employs a heavy newel post with a potbellied profile (Fig. 215). Turned from a 5-inch timber, this design avoids the polygonal faces that became popular after the Civil War, but it also lacks the grace of the earlier scroll design. The potbellied newel appeared in East Cambridge in the mid-forties, and was used through the sixties. It was used for the upper floors in elaborate houses or for the first-floor newel in simple houses after about 1845. The newel and handrail were usually finished in a dark natural wood, but the simple round balusters were painted.

The third and simplest stair design uses the same straight runs and handrail just described but an even simpler newel post (Fig. 216). It is, indeed, nothing more than the 3-inch post with nicely turned knob and shank that was used in early Georgian buildings. In Greek Revival houses, this newel design is used for the back stairs in expensive houses, for the upper floors in moderately priced dwellings, and for the first-floor stair in the very simplest interiors.

Another central feature of the Greek Revival interior was the parlor fireplace, which incorporated a coal grate, a conventional hearth for burning wood, or a hot air register. The most common mantel of the 1830s and '40s is made of black marble and follows a severe, rectilinear form. Later, more elaborate rooms had gray or white marble mantels; the most elegant example is the gray marble composition decorated with anthemion shapes in low relief in the main parlor at 61 Otis Street (Fig. 217). The chimney breast against which the mantel is placed almost always projects into the room and is emphasized by the plaster cornice brought forward around it. In upper bedrooms and in simpler houses, the mantel casing is of wood, while some unimportant rooms have only a wooden shelf above a tiny fireplace or flue opening.



217. Parlor fireplace, 61 Otis Street. Photograph 1964 39



218. Doors connecting parlors, 69 Thorndike Street, 1844. Photograph 1964 10

thy of mention. Again, the degree of elaboration of the wood trim differs with the cost of the house and the relative importance of the room, but it is always composed of stock items. The most expensive door and window trim contains shallow recessed panels with inset rosettes or anthemion designs and often crossettes in the upper corners. Since the woodwork is always painted, it is hard to tell that this ornamentation is often a casting made of London putty and not hand carved. The window and door frames of important rooms often have a projecting cornice or a pedimented lintel to add richness (Fig. 218). As in the 18th century, such rooms provide recesses in the window jambs for inside shutters. Bedrooms and service rooms use less complicated woodwork, but the door and window casings are generally accented with mouldings of some complexity, and the corners of the frames often have a square projecting lintel block.

A final matter concerns the heating and cooking arrangements and mechanical equipment of these houses—a somewhat difficult topic since the original facilities have all been replaced. Through the 1830s, houses were warmed with wood burned in fireplaces in the principal rooms; cooking was done in fireplaces and brick ovens in the cellar. Iron stoves came into use about 1840, and shallow, coal-burning fireplaces equipped with iron grates appeared in East Cambridge in about 1845. Thereafter, less important rooms merely had an outlet through which a stove pipe connected with the chimney flue. Meanwhile, the brick oven was brought up to the first floor, and the kitchen fireplace was soon replaced with an iron range.

Although expensive, a central hot air furnace could be found in large Boston area dwellings by 1840. At first, hot air ducts were provided to rooms only on the two lower floors, sometimes to only the first one; upper chambers or those in the ell would have individual grates or stoves. Beginning in the 1840s, large houses with furnaces on Dana Hill often omitted fireplaces in the individual rooms. In East Cambridge, the transition to central heating is unclear. While most of the houses inspected that dated from 1820 to 1870 had fireplaces or stove outlets in all the rooms, some had hot air



219. Second floor fireplace with hot air register insert, 67-69 Otis Street, 1839 1218/9A

furnaces at a very early date. At 67-69 Otis Street (1839), the installation of a hot air furnace evidently took place early enough that the register insert of pressed tin in a bedroom fireplace is a complete Greek Revival entablature with Ionic pilaster capitals and anthemion (Fig. 219), while at 69 Thorndike Street (1844) the parlor fireplace was converted to a register with a marble insert that matches the veined black marble mantel. The consistency of style and material make it unlikely that either conversion could have occurred after 1850.

Plumbing has been subject to even more updating, and it seems safe to assume that no unaltered bathroom or toilet facilities exist. According to the descendants of Oliver Taylor, the house at 100 Otis Street (1848-49) had the first full bathroom in East Cambridge. Such plumbing installations depended on private wells and cesspools, however, since Cambridge did not start a municipal water system until 1852 or a sewer system until the middle 1850s.

A company to produce illuminating gas was franchised in 1852. Electric lines were strung through East

houses at widely different times. The house at 59 Otis Street, for example, did not have electricity until 1922.

Italianate-Bracketed, 1855–75

A large structure and plenty of land were needed to display the irregular massing and picturesque setting of the full Italianate style. In small buildings, the enthusiasm for the Italianate fashion was satisfied by an overlay of bracketed ornamentation on the facade of a house that was not notably different from the Greek Revival. In the course of the 1850s, the decorative bracket became the symbol of being up to date, and such ornamentation displaced the Classical forms of the Greek Revival.

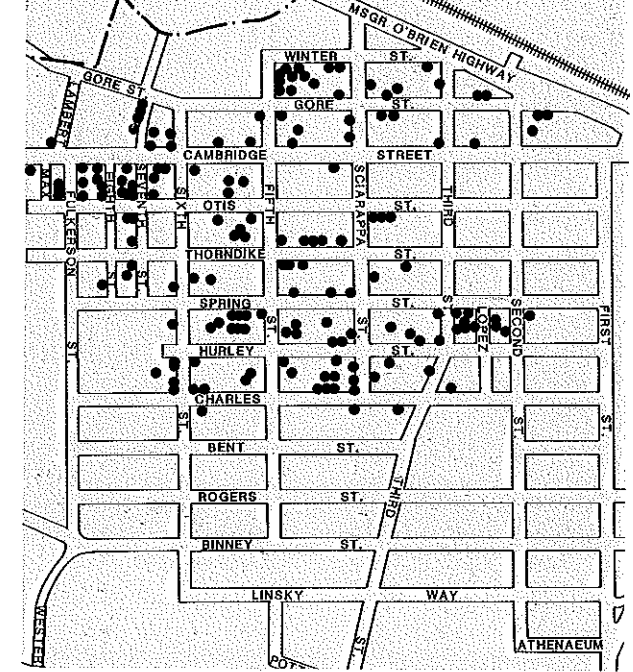
During this period, numerous Bracketed houses were built in East Cambridge. Most of them followed the side-hall entrance plan with the gable end to the street that had been established in the Greek Revival period, but they added the new style of ornament, including the characteristic decorative brackets (Figs. 220–221). The massing tended to emphasize the vertical more than in Greek Revival times; interior ceiling heights increased, and the roof slope was slightly steeper than before. The house mass became more plastic as well: the overhang of the cornice was emphasized by decorative brackets, and projecting bay windows, almost never found in Greek Revival work, were often used. Windows showed more variety, and windowpanes are usually larger than in the preceding period; two-over-two sash became common. Windows and doors were emphasized by the addition of projecting cornices and sills were supported by yet more brackets. Sometimes these cornices assumed the proportions of hoods. This growth in plasticity was not confined to Bracketed buildings alone, but was part of the gradual change in 19th-century architecture that first became noticeable in Greek Revival work and reached a climax in the Queen Anne style of the 1880s.

Other characteristics of the Bracketed style include round-headed windows, which almost always appeared in the facade gable and often in bay or oriel windows



220. 109 Thorndike Street, 1857–58

4852

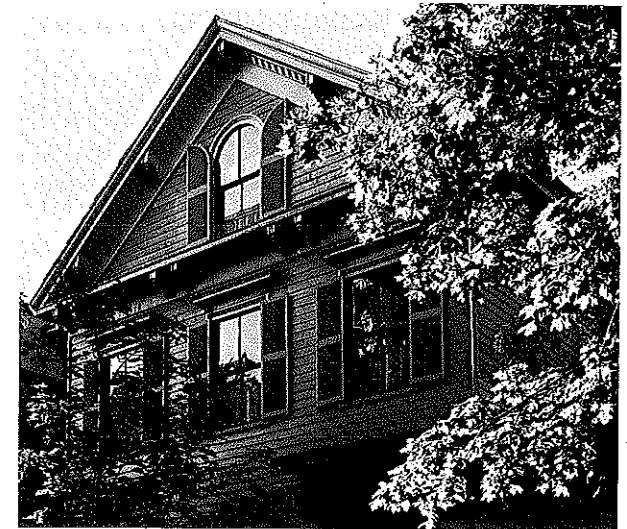


221. Italianate houses in East Cambridge

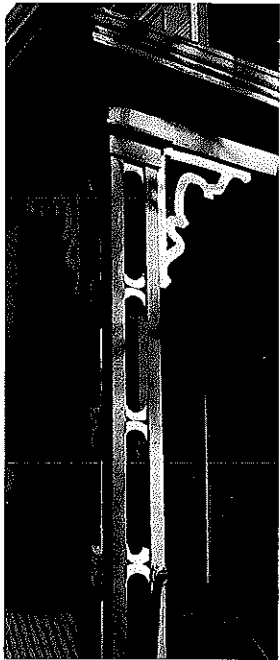
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(Fig. 222). At front entrances, the earlier Greek Revival single door with side lights was replaced by double doors with two round-headed glass panels, often of etched or cut glass. Classical features were rejected by builders and clients alike as old-fashioned. Gables were no longer treated as pediments with a horizontal cornice carried across the facade at eave level, although an occasional holdover of this feature can be found in Bracketed work, as at 134 Otis Street (see Fig. 229). Pilasters were discarded in favor of quoins or simple corner boards. Classical columns were less in evidence than before, as porches were carried on plain square posts that were often paired and connected by arched wooden tracery (Fig. 223).

Although primarily associated with the Italianate/Bracketed style in the late 1840s and 1850s (the 1850s and 1860s in East Cambridge), bracket decoration long continued to be a popular element of architectural design. First devised by architects in about 1840, the



222. Gable, 134 Otis Street, 1868–69. Photograph 1964



223. Porch detail, 131 Otis Street. Photograph 1964



224. Bracketed door hood, 129 Otis Street, c. 1865. Photograph 1964

bracket motif soon entered the vernacular and continued in use for about fifty years, although the actual design of the brackets evolved over this period. Inexpensive to manufacture and easily installed, brackets dressed up a building considerably; some of the most elaborate brackets occur under door hoods, many of which were added in the 1870s and 1880s to update earlier houses (see Figs. 227–228). Thus, the presence of brackets is no sure indication of date nor of designation of a building as Italianate or Bracketed style.

The vernacular architecture of East Cambridge contains no examples of the earliest bracket designs, but three stages in their development can be distinguished. The first brackets were moderately large and fashioned of heavy, solid pieces of timber. Often the center of the composition was left open since the bracket was made of three members: a vertical, which abuts the wall, a horizontal piece, which supports the overhang,

and a long strut, which usually assumes a curvilinear profile (Fig. 224). Turned work in moderate amounts is found in the form of pendants. In gables, the brackets hang vertically, but the edges are parallel to the angle of the raking cornice.

After the Civil War, brackets were still large but the center area was generally solid (Figs. 225–226). More important, these brackets, which could still be very thick, were actually built up of a number of 1-inch boards, each of which was easy to shape independently before being nailed together. To achieve decoration, the outside boards were often cut with a jigsaw; another method used sections of turned wood cut in half and applied to the surface; a third used ½-inch boards cut in intricate shapes and applied to the bracket sides as a kind of low relief. All ornamentation was machine-made, and the decorative effect depended on a general richness and profusion of detail rather than on subtleties of hand execution. Standard designs were produced in quantity and used in abundance throughout East Cambridge.

The last phase of bracket design occurred after 1880. A few medium-size brackets used on hoods over doors have turned or chamfered struts, but most brackets of this period are relatively small. By this time the bracket had declined in fashion and was used only in the cheapest kind of building where a semblance of decoration was desired. Jigsawed and applied details were still used, but the decorative shapes show an indebtedness to the Queen Anne movement with reeded intrados or fanlike designs in the sides (Figs. 227–228). Finally, in about 1895, the bracket disappeared entirely, its function having been usurped by more elaborate stamped metal cornices and Colonial Revival modillions.

East Cambridge has several good Bracketed houses of relatively modest size. Most of them date from the late 1850s and 1860s, although some row houses in the same style were built after 1873, showing how popular this style continued to be.

One of the finest side-hall Bracketed houses is 134 Otis Street, built in 1868–69 for Benjamin Hoyt, a partner in the very successful granite business of A. C. Sanborn & Company, located on the wharves near Craigie's Bridge (Fig. 229). The main gable of the



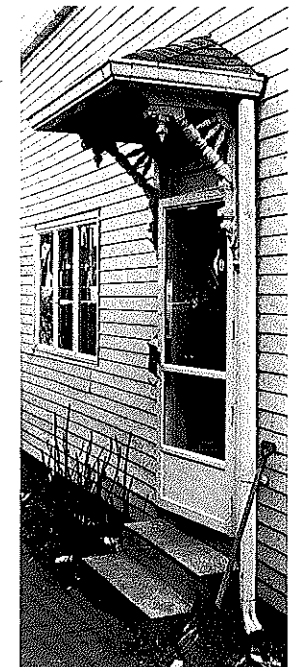
225. Bracket, 122 Gore Street, 1870–71
120422/4



227. Bracketed door hood, added 1880s, 129 Thorndike Street, by 1868
120421/10



226. Bracketed door hood, 133–135 Otis Street, c. 1875
48722



228. Bracketed door hood, added 1880s, 124 Thorndike Street, 1841



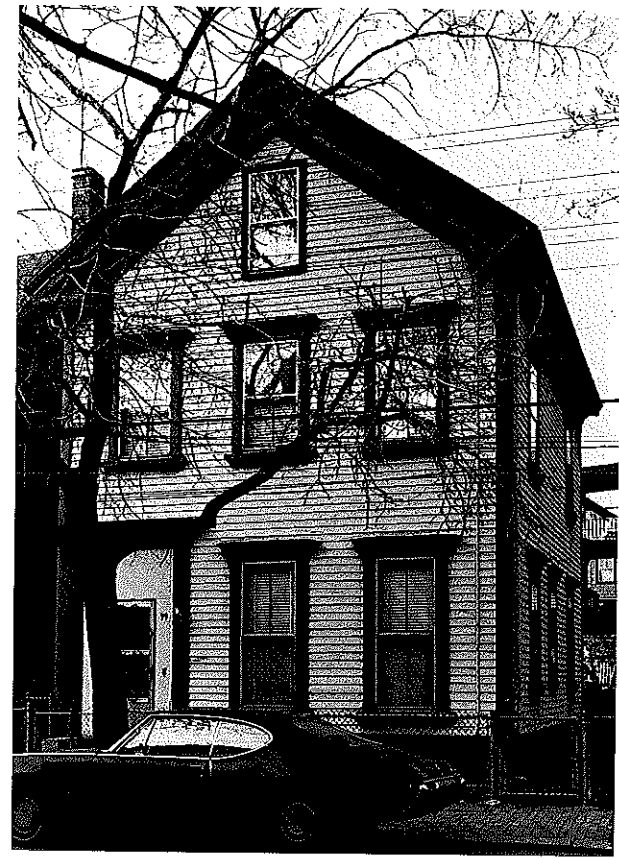
229. 134 Otis Street, 1868–69. Photograph 1965 *J*



230. Cast iron fence, 109 Thorndike Street, 1857–58. Photograph 1964 *Ø*

house contains the style's characteristic round-headed window and bracketed cornice, while the front entrance provides a textbook example of this style, with double doors, decorative glass, and a projecting hood supported by large decorative brackets. Set directly on the sidewalk on a narrow lot, the house concentrates its main ornamentation on the street facade; the sides have much plainer window trim, although the dentil cornice with paired brackets continues around the sides. The house remains in excellent condition, complete with original shutters and clapboards, and is an important asset to the neighborhood.

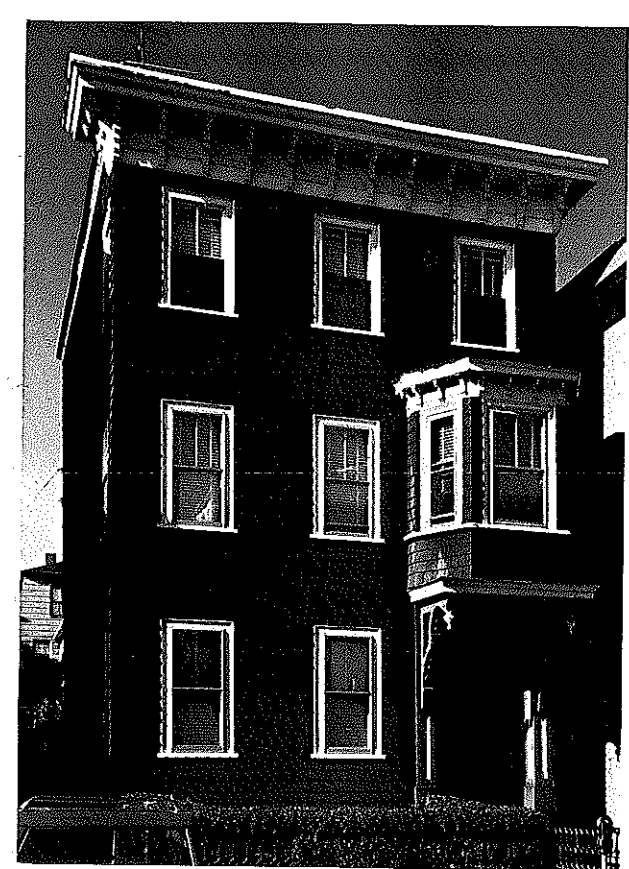
Built ten years earlier, 109 Thorndike Street (1857–58) follows a similar form but with very plastic ornamentation, including heavy window cornices and sills supported by brackets and a bracketed entrance hood (see Fig. 220). A second-story bay over the door further emphasizes the main entrance, which is deeply recessed and has the characteristic double doors and decorative glass panels. Equally robust in design is the ornate cast-iron fence and gate in front of the house, an unusual survivor (Fig. 230). Although the clapboards have been covered with asphalt siding, the house re-



231. 99 Thorndike Street, 1857. Photograph 1970
302-15A



232. 83 Winter Street, before 1854. Photograph 1970.
303/5A



233. 400 Cambridge Street, 1857. Photograph 1969
221/7A

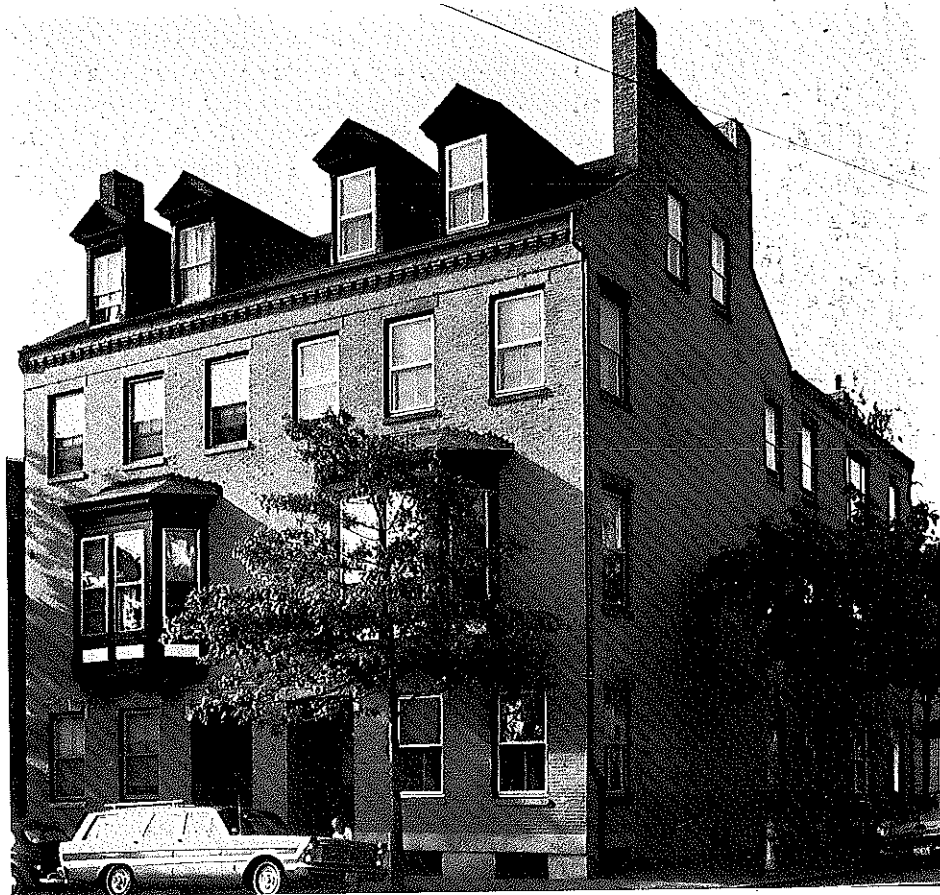
tains all of its original ornament in good condition and is a valuable example of this style. Built by Charles Eaton, who worked in Boston, it was sold in 1860 to Charles Stevens, a clerk at the Registry of Deeds, and in 1877 to Louis Vaupel, the chief engraver at the New England Glass Company. By 1877, the Bracketed style was no longer really current, even in East Cambridge, but Vaupel, according to his diary, judged the house well constructed "of the best material" and a highly desirable place to live.

Other, simpler houses, such as 99 Thorndike Street (1857), 116 Thorndike Street (1865-66), and 84 Winter Street (by 1873), followed the same side-hall form and style but had brackets only supporting door hoods, not

at the cornice level. The house at 99 Thorndike Street originally had dentils instead of brackets in the cornice, but it has been so stripped and covered with inappropriate siding that its style is now barely discernible (Fig. 231). By contrast, 116 Thorndike Street remains in good condition, and though simpler than the examples discussed above, exhibits many characteristic features of the Bracketed style: a round-headed window in the gable end, a short horizontal cornice return, a second-story bay and entrance brackets (Fig. 232), and turned brackets supporting a deep entrance hood. Even simpler are 83 Winter Street (before 1854), with its second-story bay and entrance brackets (Fig. 233), and 84 Winter Street, with only a bracketed entrance hood.

While most Bracketed houses from this period rise two and a half stories and have gable roofs, some, such as 400 Cambridge Street (1857), are a full three stories high and have a flat roof outlined by an overhanging bracketed cornice, which extends slightly around the top corners of the facade but does not continue along the sides of the building (Fig. 233). The three-story double house at 80-82 Otis Street (1861) seems to follow an earlier form, with paired end chimneys and pedimented dormers, but the oriel windows supported on large consoles and the incised brownstone window lintels betray its later date (Fig. 234).

After 1873, several long rows of wooden houses and large square brick buildings in the Bracketed style were



234. 80-82 Otis Street, 1861

48/16



235. 110-112 Gore Street, 1873-75. Photograph 1970

324/1A

built in East Cambridge to meet the rental housing needs of the growing population. These rows were primarily three-story flat-roofed buildings in which a bracketed cornice and recessed entrances with bracketed hoods provided the only ornamentation. Such brick buildings occur at 110-112 Gore Street, built between 1873 and 1879 for Charles Linnehan, a well-known East Cambridge landlord (Fig. 235). The wooden rows were generally built on the peripheral streets, such as Sixth, Seventh, and Spring streets and Max Avenue (formerly Parnell Street), where larger

plots of land were still available. Typical are the Bracketed rows at 1-19 Seventh Street (1873), built by the heirs of John A. Ellis (Fig. 236), and 52-60 Spring Street (1879-80), built by a local carpenter, F. H. Stickney. Similar rows were built by 1873 for Charles Linnehan along what is now Max Avenue, on the very western edge of the neighborhood.

The interiors of most Bracketed dwellings in East Cambridge follow a side-hall plan with double parlors and a dining room and kitchen in the ell, but there is some variety in the relations of these rooms. Sliding

doors connecting parlors were no longer as popular as in Greek Revival times. The houses at 134 Otis Street and 116 Thorndike Street combine the two parlors into a single room (Fig. 237). Double parlors remain at 107 and 109 Thorndike Street, but they are connected by a conventional door placed off center to allow more flexibility in the use of the rooms. The second floor generally contains three large bedrooms, a small "hall room" over the front door, and a servant's room over the kitchen; two finished rooms and two large storage closets are in the attic.



236. 1-19 Seventh Street, 1873 4854/24



237. Parlor, 134 Otis, 1868-69. Photograph 1964

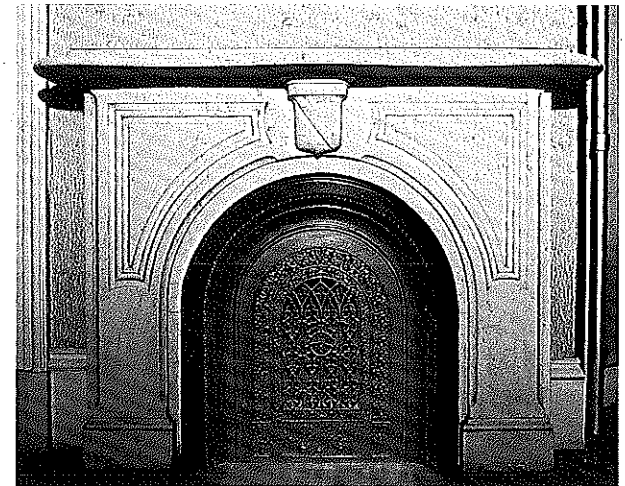


238. Newel post, 109 Thorndike Street, 1857-58. Photograph 1964

Stairway designs show important changes. The scroll newel post of earlier times was abandoned in favor of a stout, turned newel post that is similar to the pot-bellied newels of medium-priced Greek Revival construction (Fig. 238). However, the later newels are larger (8-inch diameter) and the mouldings heavier, and they usually stand on an octagonal base. The handrail is wider, with a more complex profile, and the balusters are thicker and elaborately turned. Although both stairs and rail turn at the head of the flight, the graceful, sweeping quality of earlier designs is gone.

Marble mantels continued to be popular and those in East Cambridge houses show only minor differences from earlier ones (Fig. 239). Almost all are equipped with round-headed coal grates or hot-air registers, and the mantels of gray and white marble use more intricate mouldings. All of these mouldings, however, could be cut by machine.

The house interior underwent a marked change in feeling as dark-stained woodwork replaced the light, painted surfaces of Greek Revival times. Even in mod-



239. Fireplace, 109 Thorndike Street, 1857-58. Photograph 1964

est houses, the quality of the wood used for doors and trim is very good. Ceilings are higher, and the plaster cornices are heavier than before. Molded plaster rosettes set in the center of the ceilings of important downstairs rooms are quite ornate. After the Civil War, gas outlets became usual, and newel posts on the main floor were often drilled to accommodate a lamp.

Another characteristic of these Bracketed houses is the decorative glass that is found in the front doors and sometimes in interior doors and windows as well. Often the design is only etched, but sometimes it is both cut and etched. Designs range from diaper patterns to fruits and flowers. Light coming into the somber interior through the facets of cut glass and small areas of clear glass forms a sparkling complement to the Victorian interior. These decorative glass panels were probably produced at the New England Glass Company or the Bay State Glass Company in East

Cambridge, but this cannot be proved. The side lights of a few Greek Revival houses also contained decorative glass panels, but they were generally etched, not cut.

Mansard, 1860–75

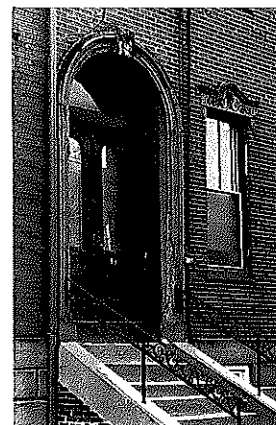
East Cambridge's best residential architecture was erected before the Civil War. At that time, the area retained a pleasant, uncrowded quality, and the most desirable lots on the gentle slopes of Putnam Hill were filled with substantial dwellings. After the war, there was a trend toward less expensive, multifamily houses in which the space allotted to an individual family was significantly reduced. The more crowded conditions and lower standards of construction for these new buildings were not conducive to outstanding architect-

ture. As a result, the later 19th century styles are not as well represented in East Cambridge as in other parts of Cambridge. Fortunately, several interesting Mansard houses built here in the 1860s and 1870s provide exceptions.

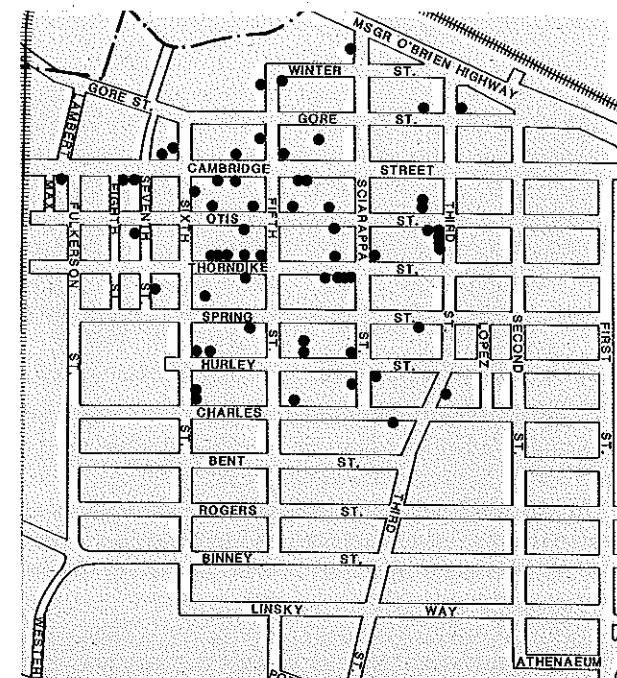
East Cambridge got its first mansard-roof houses soon after the style was accepted in Boston, in about 1857. In 1860, S. S. Hazard began building what was described in the *Chronicle* as "a valuable brick block of . . . houses with French roof" at 83–95 Third Street, across from the courthouse (Fig. 240). Containing a high brownstone basement, two main floors, and a mansard roof, this row of seven dwellings, which became known as Quality Row, is much closer to contemporary work in the South End of Boston than to that in the Back Bay. The point is important because the South End work belongs to the vernacular, with old-fashioned Italianate overtones, while the Back Bay



240. 83–95 Third Street, 1860. Photograph 1964 5-10



241. Doorway with rope moulding, 89 Third Street 1852 1/2



242. Mansard houses in East Cambridge

buildings illustrate the new Academic French manner, which was being imitated by architects in Boston. East Cambridge, as before, followed the conservative rather than the progressive current of building. In the Third Street block, only the mansard roof is symptomatic of the new manner, and it may have been selected for purely practical reasons. The arched entries with rope mouldings and the curious curvilinear brownstone lintels on the facades, while unusual for East Cambridge, look back to the early 1850s in Boston (Fig. 241). Unfortunately, this row has had serious structural problems, caused by the omission of headers in the face brick and the deterioration of the brownstone. In 1986 the face brick was replaced, and cast stone replicas were substituted for the brownstone elements.

The mansard roof offered a number of practical advantages. Breaking the roof into two sections with two roof slopes and giving the bottom part a steep pitch allows additional headroom in the attic. The rooms in the top story are thus almost as large as those on the lower floors, and this full extra story of usable space can be obtained without the expense of carrying the outside walls through an additional story. The gain in space was particularly advantageous in East Cambridge, because desirable building lots on the hill were rapidly disappearing from the market. Of the approximately seventy-five Mansard houses built in the area, only about a dozen were single family residences (Fig. 242).

As the population in East Cambridge increased from 6,319 in 1855 to 10,033 in 1875 and the number of families from 1,247 to 2,135, two or three families were often crowded into space originally built for one. With the addition of a mansard roof, old single houses were often converted into flats. An instructive example is 457-459 Cambridge Street, a large double house (1848-49) that was changed into stores on the first floor and apartments above in 1871. By adding a mansard roof to the front part of the house, the owners created a full fourth story, while the slope of the original roof continued on the rear and north sides. A mansard roof was also added to the Greek Revival house at 112-114 Thorndike Street.

Other than the mansard roof, the characteristics of



243. 390-392 Cambridge Street, 1869. Photograph 1964

this style are somewhat hard to specify at the level of vernacular architecture by the time they have been combined with features from other styles. These buildings have a pronounced feeling of verticality, which results from the tall roofs as well as the high-ceilinged rooms. A building like 390-392 Cambridge Street (1869) further emphasizes this vertical element by the way the tall, narrow entrance pavilion pushes out in front of the main building and is capped by a mansard roof of its own (Fig. 243).

This house is clearly the most elaborate Mansard in the area and is somewhat closer to the academic norm than most: the pediments over the windows and the fluted brackets that support them, the greatly elongated windows of the main story, the dentil course of the cornice, the elaborate dormers, the segmental arches of the entrance porch, and the exaggerated keystones are all related to the academic tradition (Fig. 244). More fanciful is the lambrequin edging along the top of the mansard roof, which looks more like a curtain than a structural member. The brackets of the cornice, however, would be equally at home on a late Italianate facade. Built for William L. Lockhart, East Cambridge's



244. Detail, 390-392 Cambridge Street. Photograph 1964



245. 60 Otis Street, 1871. Photograph 1970

297/0A



246. 462 Cambridge Street, 1866. Photograph 1964

most prominent coffin manufacturer and a successful real estate dealer, the house served as his residence until 1878 and remained in his ownership until 1898. It was rehabilitated and painted in appropriate period colors in 1985–86.

The tall, single house at 60 Otis Street (1871) continues the elegance of the Third Street row but without the floridity of 390–392 Cambridge Street (Fig. 245). Set slightly back from the street, the house attempts to follow through in the style implied by the roof. The elaborate door enframing is especially noteworthy: the elliptical arch complete with keystone directly above the door and the strongly projecting door hood, also with an elliptical arch, create an unusual degree of plasticity. This impression is furthered by strong window lintels, a bay window that extends through the bracketed cornice, and the arched, hooded dormer. Although the house has been re-sided, it retains its style and sophistication.

Another, simpler example is 462 Cambridge Street (Fig. 246), built in 1866 by a local carpenter, Amasa

Studley. The deeply projecting door hood supported by sawn and lathe-turned brackets, the arched dormers, and the dramatic curve of the mansard roof provide the major stylistic features of this otherwise straightforward side-hall dwelling.

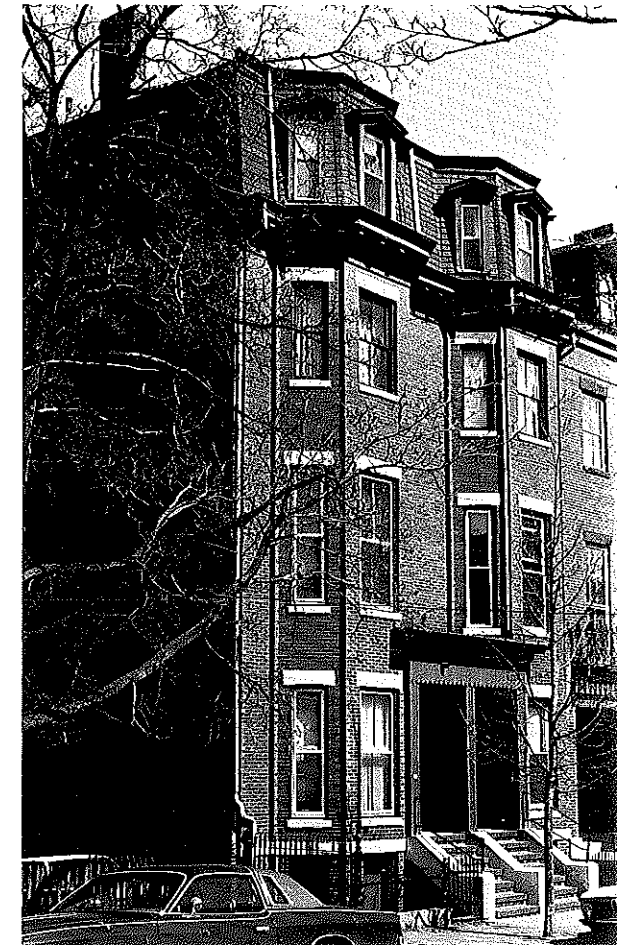
More common in East Cambridge in this period were double houses and rows of attached houses built in the Mansard style in both brick and wood. Typical is the wooden double house at 122–124 Otis Street (1870–71), with its paired entrances and heavy brackets and window mouldings, built by James Dennison, a prolific East Cambridge carpenter, and the double house at 95–97 Otis Street, with its two-story bays and bracketed window hoods. The double house at 11–13 Sciarappa Street has paired bay windows that dominate the facade by rising the full height of the building, including the mansard roof.

Double houses sometimes rose three full stories below a mansard roof to take full advantage of the narrow building lots in East Cambridge. Daniel Sortwell, the owner of a prosperous distillery on Cambridge Street and president of the Cambridge National Bank in East Cambridge, built the brick double house at 63–65 Otis Street in 1871–72 to rent out (Fig. 247) while he lived next door at 59 Otis Street in an elegant Greek Revival row.

The mansard roof enjoyed a long period of popularity in East Cambridge. The last use of this style was a row of three wooden houses at 93–97 Thorndike Street constructed in 1885, a full twenty-five years after the first appearance of the mansard roof in the area (Fig. 248). In spite of the roof form, the greater plasticity of this row, with its facade alternating between closely spaced bay windows and deeply recessed entrances, gives a suggestion of the freer and more flamboyant Queen Anne style, which was in full swing in most areas by the 1880s.

East Cambridge's Mansard houses of the 1860s generally followed the basic floor plan of earlier Greek Revival dwellings, and the interiors are not unlike those found in Bracketed houses. The woodwork was originally dark, although much of it has since been painted a light color. The high-ceilinged rooms have heavy plaster cornices, chimney breasts that project some 18

inches into the room, and round-headed fireplaces. Because they generally came after Bracketed work, stair designs in Mansard houses reflect the changes that began to affect the economy after the Civil War. As the price of labor climbed, builders found ways to simplify the construction process. Stairs ran in straight flights, and the handrail ran between newel posts at each end; however, this new arrangement was less graceful than the continuously flowing rail and curving steps of Late Georgian and Greek Revival houses.



247. 63–65 Otis Street, 1871–72

49852/24 or 25



248. 93-97 Thorndike Street, 1885



249. Newel post, 392 Cambridge Street, 1869.
Photograph 1964

Concurrently, the bottom newel post took on a larger, more monumental form (Fig. 249). Square or polygonal rather than turned from a single piece of timber, its intricate shape was compiled from a number of parts and mouldings.

Queen Anne, 1875-95

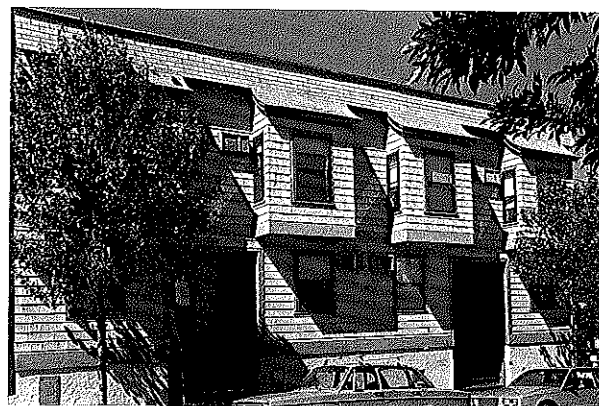
The Queen Anne movement scarcely touched East Cambridge. After the 1870s, most residential building in the area consisted of multifamily dwellings. Tall, three-story apartment houses or three-deckers and crowded tenements were sandwiched between or behind existing houses in the old, built-up sections or were added to the already crowded, low-lying areas west of Seventh and south of Hurley streets. Much of this late building is architecturally nondescript and lacks the flamboyancy of some Queen Anne tenements in Cambridgeport. These offered low rents and builders could not afford to be very ambitious architecturally. The only structures in East Cambridge meriting the larger investments to give them a characteristic Queen Anne ornateness were public and commercial buildings, such as the Putnam School (1887) and 305 Cambridge Street (1877) (see Figs. 303 and 331).

Unlike earlier 19th-century styles, the Queen Anne movement was diverse and individualistic. The intellectual aims of this style were fine craftsmanship, an honest use of materials, untrammled interior space, and freedom from academic rule or archaeological precedent. But at an everyday level, craftsmanship often meant machine-made decoration and creative freedom a profusion of picturesque features drawn from many sources.

In East Cambridge, some indications of the Queen Anne influence are a variety of exterior wood surfaces (clapboards, tongue-and-groove paneling, shingles cut in decorative patterns), a wide range of late bracket forms, and wood surfaces decorated by gouging, chiseling, turning, or chamfering. When the possibilities of wood were exceeded, the designer had recourse to molded synthetic materials for such details as the curious medallion busts above the entrances of the mod-



250. 53-59 Sciarappa Street, 1882. Photograph 1964



251. 53-59 Sciarappa Street

est frame row houses at 53-59 Sciarappa Street (1882), now unfortunately completely re-sided (Figs. 250-251). Because of the emphasis on surface richness and applied ornamentation, Queen Anne buildings, more than others, suffer from the addition of artificial siding.

Another new material used by the Queen Anne builder was the stamped metal cornice, which added ornamentation without added cost. Pressed in metal dies and durable if kept painted, galvanized iron cornices often show 19th-century American design at its most exuberant. However, few exist in East Cambridge today. Some are additions to earlier buildings,



252. 140 Otis Street, 1895, John E. Muldoon. Photograph 1964 J-27

such as the 1903 cornice added to 57–59 Otis Street (1851); others date from the turn of the century, such as the modest example at 526 Cambridge Street. The deep wooden cornice added in the 1880s to 536 Cambridge Street is more elaborate than any other, wood or metal, that remains along the street.

Queen Anne interiors have even darker varnished surfaces than the natural woods of Mansard houses. Rooms are still excessively high, and a wooden picture rail some 12 inches below the ceiling frequently takes the place of the older, elaborate plaster cornice. Doors often have transoms, and the woodwork of stock design varies little. The face of the trim is cut with complex profiles and the lintel blocks with a series of concentric rings. Superficially, it resembles Greek Revival trim but is much more mechanical. Queen Anne overmantels combine mirrors and small shelves, but often fireplaces are entirely eliminated.

Large Queen Anne houses have wide stairways with several changes of direction. In East Cambridge tenements, however, the stairs generally have a single run; newel posts are turned from 6-by-6 timbers and terminate in some kind of globe. In some triple-deckers and in buildings with stores on the ground floor, the stairs are narrow and enclosed by walls. Wainscoting of vertical tongue-and-groove boards is usual in the hallways.

The last private mansion to be built in East Cambridge falls at the end of this period. Erected in 1895 for Catherine Coveney, the wife of John W. Coveney, a prominent East Cambridge undertaker and politician, 140 Otis Street is exactly what one would expect for the period — Queen Anne moving toward Colonial Revival (Fig. 252). Still Queen Anne are the roof, central dormer window, and the paired bay windows; inside, the stair rises in three picturesque runs, and two corner fireplaces exemplify a simple Queen Anne taste. But the detail of the house inside and out is Late Georgian and relatively “correct.” As in all Colonial Revival buildings of the time, much use is made of machine-made molded decorations for window trim, capitals, and mantelpieces. Much of this was removed in 1988, when the house was covered with vinyl siding.

To design the house, the Coveney family hired John Muldoon, the chief designer at the Irving & Casson furni-



253. 170-174 Thorndike Street at Eighth, c. 1905. Photograph 1944

ture company, who had begun an architectural practice in 1890 and subsequently produced a number of Colonial Revival houses in Cambridge. Except for two factory buildings for Irving & Casson, Muldoon's only other known works in East Cambridge are a Colonial Revival double house, 41-43 Fifth Street (1890), and the fire stations at Third and Otis (1892, demolished) and Third and Gore streets (1895) (see Figs. 311-312).

By the 1890s, however, the days of large single-family houses in East Cambridge were over. The most desirable land was already taken; space for the Covey house had been obtained by demolishing two older houses. The remaining vacant land was in the low-lying, less desirable residential areas, which generally attracted builders of multifamily, less expensive housing (Fig. 253). In August 1890 alone, the *Cambridge Tribune* reported, seven three-story wooden tenement blocks were under construction, mostly on filled land near Sixth, Bent, and Vine streets.

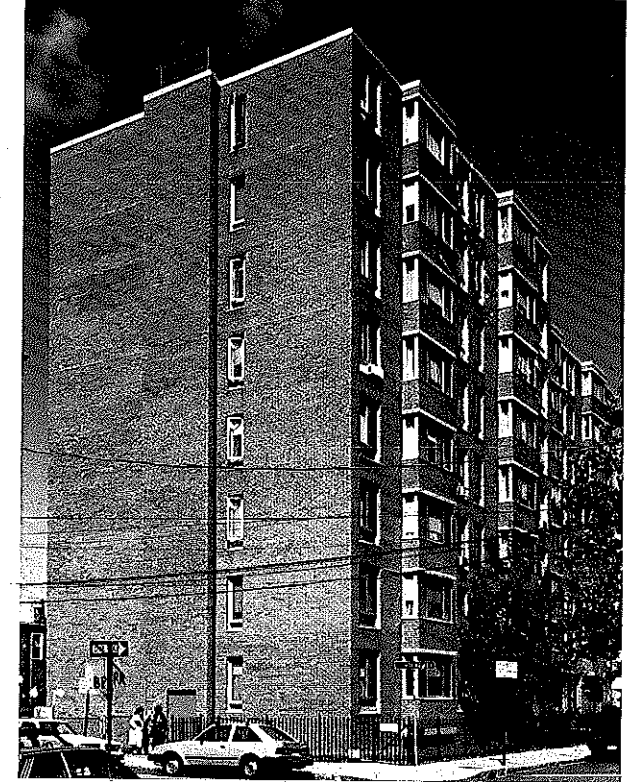
With apartment buildings pushing up land values and the area becoming more and more a workers' district, it was natural that East Cambridge men of wealth built their homes elsewhere. Louis Vaupel, the former chief engraver at the New England Glass Company, commented on both phenomena. In 1894, he wrote that in spite of the financial panic, many apartments were built in the area, as people who had saved some money wanted to invest in something secure. At the same

time, many of the better classes moved away. For instance, William Goepper, whose family had been barrel manufacturers in East Cambridge and who had lived on Otis and Thorndike streets for years, chose to build an elegant new Colonial Revival house on Dana Hill (340 Harvard Street; 1897).

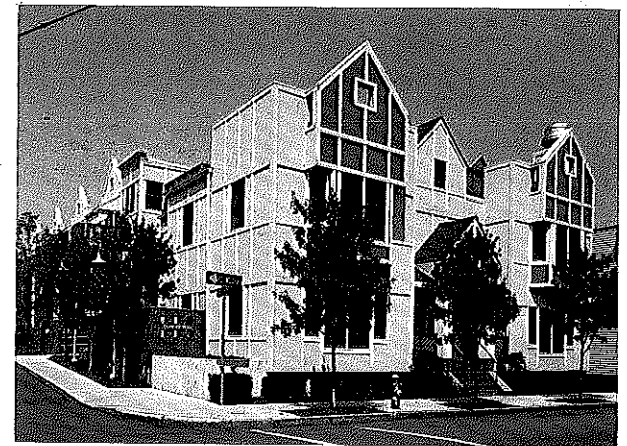
Housing construction in East Cambridge virtually ceased after 1900, when all the available sites had been developed. No significant activity occurred until the Cambridge Housing Authority began the Harry S. Truman elderly apartments on Eighth Street in 1968 (Fig. 254). Designed by Paul G. Feloney, the eight-story Truman apartments integrates well with its surroundings because of the use of brick and because the narrow streets do not allow the height of the building to become oppressive. The twenty-story Miller's River apartments (1972), another housing authority project, stands alone on a cleared site and dominates its surroundings. Only the adjoining Mary A. Castriotta neighborhood health center at 663-669 Cambridge Street (1974) relates well to its surroundings.

In the mid-1980s, the market-rate housing boom that other neighborhoods had been experiencing since the late 1960s finally reached East Cambridge. Townhouses began to proliferate on the fringes of the neighborhood, on sites that had been abandoned by industry. A double row of townhouses has replaced a former barrel factory at 130 Gore Street in a configuration eerily similar to that of such 19th-century tenements as Squire's Court (see Fig. 452). The new townhouses and condominiums on Fulkerson Street are the most astonishing construction in East Cambridge in many years (Fig. 255). Designed by the FAR Group, in part around some former factory buildings, their Postmodern false fronts and pastel colors are already dated and strike an incongruous note in the neighborhood.

Another project of note is the Pavilion (1986), a mid-rise condominium development between Gore and Cambridge streets designed by the Washington firm of Perkins & Will. The site had lain vacant for many years, and a great opportunity was offered to reintegrate the fabric of the neighborhood. However, the pale brick, inappropriate setbacks, and awkward massing are entirely out of character with East Cambridge building traditions.



254. Truman Apartments, 27 Eighth Street, 1968, Paul G. Feloney 12.86/4



255. Thorndike Place, 217 Thorndike Street, 1986, FAR Group



256. Bulfinch Square, 52 Otis Street, 1813–1924. Historic rehabilitation by Graham Gund Associates, 1981–86

