

BROOKLINE PRESERVATION COMMISSION DEMOLITION REPORT

Address: 21 Crowninshield Road

Owner: 21 Crown LLC



Preliminary Findings of Historical/ Architectural Significance

The Arts & Crafts/Craftsman style house at 21 Crowninshield Road was built in 1910 from "private plans". The first owner was Louis Ross, a mining engineer.

This house is part of an enclave of similar stucco, brick and wood houses constructed between 1901 and 1926. This enclave, right behind Commonwealth Avenue, includes all of Crowninshield Road, Elba, Adams and Copley Streets, and the left side of Pleasant St. going north, from Crowninshield to the alley between Adams and Commonwealth Ave. It comprises the original estate of 16 acres that belonged to Harriet Sears Crowninshield and was given to her by her father, David Sears. Sears, who greatly admired Napoleon, called his property "Longwood" after the

latter's house on the island of Elba, and this probably explains the naming of Elba St. Sears gave each of his four daughters and three sons land in Longwood. Harriet married George C. Crowninshield from a prominent North Shore merchant family. Their son, Caspar, served with the 2nd Mass. cavalry in the Civil War and was eventually brevetted Brigadier General. After the war he married Elizabeth Copley Green, a descendant of John Singleton Copley - for whom Copley St. was probably named. The Crowninshields had a house on Beacon Hill as well.

In 1899 the Crowninshield heirs decided to sell the land, and the house was torn down and the land platted. One of the heirs was daughter Fanny C. Adams who had married John Quincy Adams, great-grandson of Pres. John Adams - thus providing the name for Adams St. Her son, Charles Francis Adams 2nd, and Charles E. Cotting, a descendent of Uriah Cotting, became trustees for the land over the period from 1900 to 1926, by which date all of the lots had been sold.

The area was developed very slowly - there was no one developer like Peter Graffam or David McKay nearby - instead, lots were sold to individual buyers. The long period of development explains the variety architectural styles of the houses in the area. The look of the area is surprisingly uniform, with mostly variations on the Arts & Crafts, Craftsman, Shingle Style and Georgian Revival style. The architects were among the most locally prominent in suburban residential architecture in the metro Boston area, including Harry Ramsay, Harland A. Perkins, T. Edward Sheehan, R.L. Davidson, Oscar Johns and Benjamin Proctor.

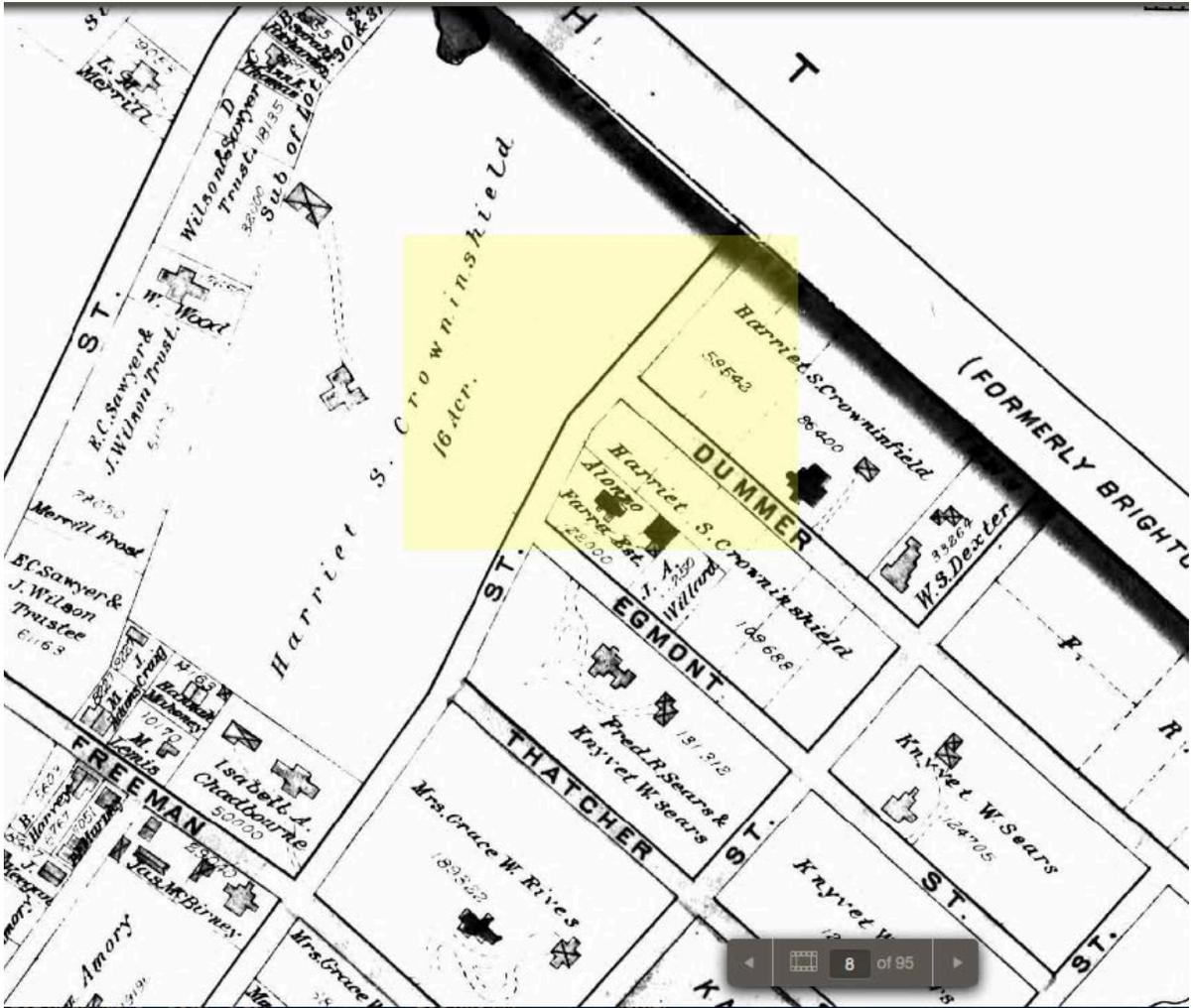
The area is significant because it shows the development of a defined residential over several decades, a district that was served by the nearby Commonwealth Avenue streetcar. Though all the houses vary somewhat in size, they are generally similar either in style (with some modifications) or in choice of building materials and massing. The original owners were generally in managerial or executive positions in Boston.

The Town of Brookline has hired a consultant, under a MHC grant, to make an in-depth survey of this area for possible nomination to the National and State Registers.

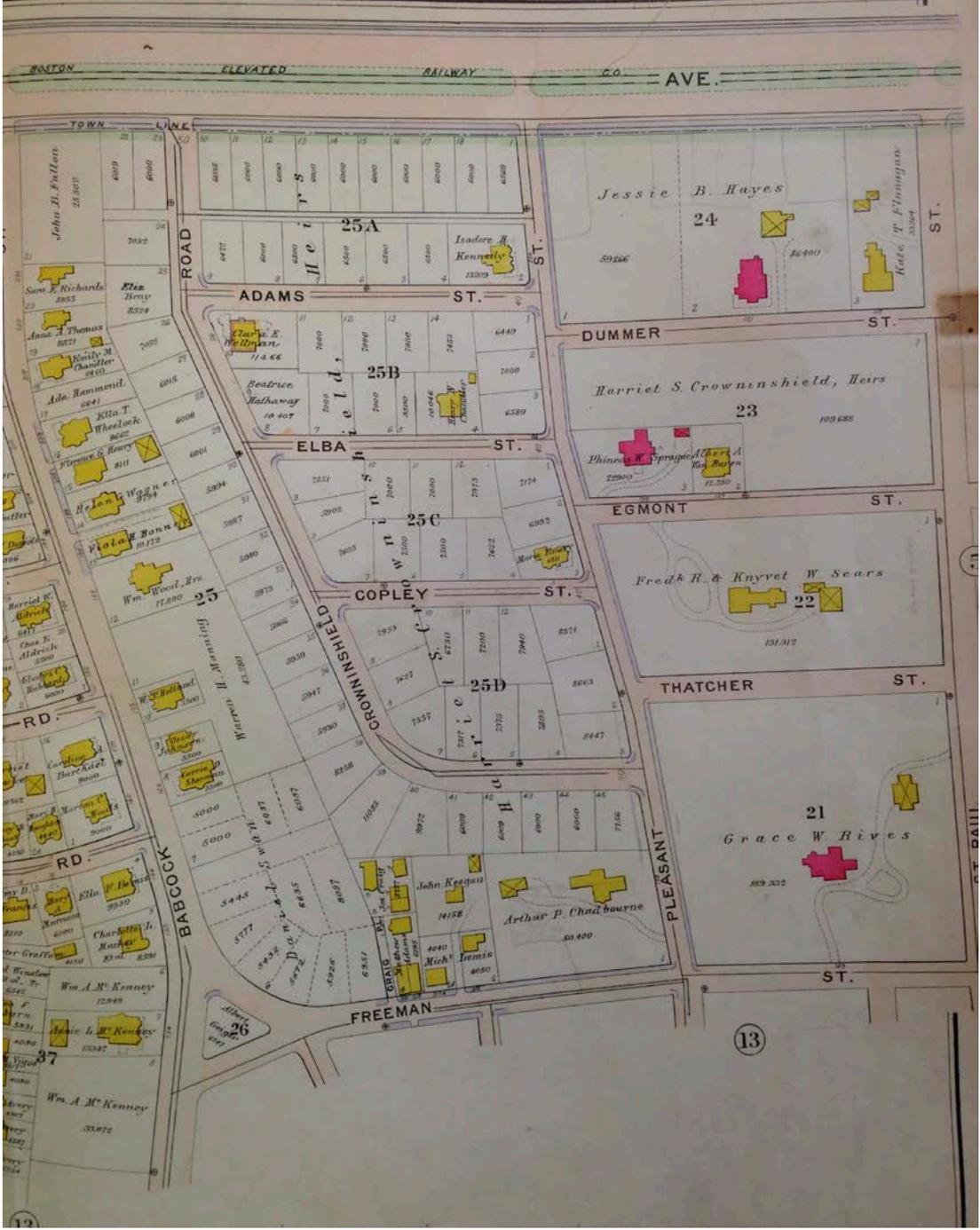
The house at 21 Crowninshield has a stucco exterior, a curved arched entryway, exposed rafters, an eyebrow dormer, a sunroom and elongated windows on the east façade. The house at 21 Crowninshield Road meets the following criteria for an initial determination of significance:

- c. The building is associated with one or more significant historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the Town or Commonwealth; and
- d. The building is historically or architecturally significant in terms of its period, style, method of construction, or its association with a significant architect or builder, either by itself or as part of a group of buildings.

The house retains its integrity in terms of its location setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. It forms part of the cluster of houses along Crowninshield Road with similar massing, heights, proportions and setbacks.



Plat showing Crowninshield property



1909 Brookline Atlas -showing lots of the Crowninshield area



View of Crowninshield Road