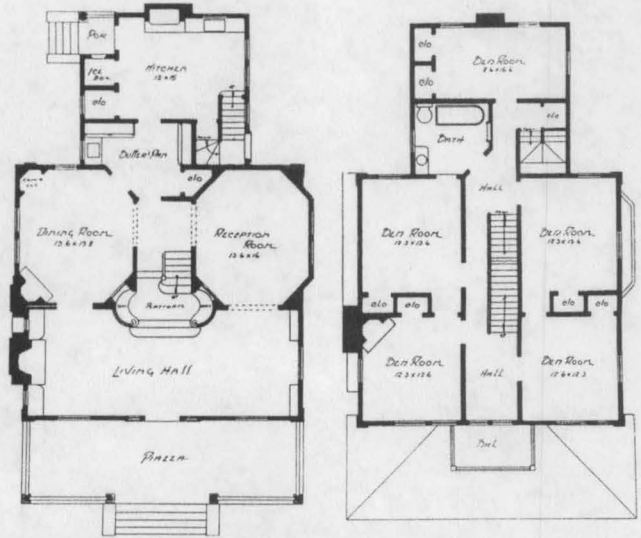


Robert A.M. Stern, Gregory J. Silvester + John Massengale
 NY 1900: Metropolitan Architects + Urbanists 1890-1900
 NY: Legends 1983



Dean Alvord house, Albermarle Road, Prospect Park South, Brooklyn. John J. Petit, 1902. CU



Dean Alvord house, Albermarle Road, Prospect Park South, Brooklyn. John J. Petit, 1902. Plans of first and second floors. CU

Queens

Queens developed much more slowly than Brooklyn. Its ocean shore was considerably further than Brooklyn's coast from the business districts of Brooklyn and Manhattan, while northern Queens, before the development of midtown Manhattan, was even more isolated. One of the earliest sections to attract attention from New York City was Far Rockaway, which had a large seaside hotel called the Marine Pavilion.⁵⁷⁹ Built in 1833, it was famous enough by 1850 to have attracted Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Washington Irving. A small suburban-style resort called Wavecrest, similar to those on Coney Island, developed near the hotel in the 1870s.⁵⁸⁰

In 1863 a developer named Dr. Thompson bought most of the land around Rockaway Beach, further to the west, and built a railroad from East New York to Canarsie, where he maintained a steam ferry across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway Beach which began the growth of the area as an amusement resort.⁵⁸¹ Soon, in 1869, a steam railroad was built to Far Rockaway and extended in 1872 to Rockaway Beach. Samuel Wood bought several hundred acres of land located between the Brower's Point railroad station and Jamaica Bay and renamed the area Woodsburgh.⁵⁸² He built a large hotel he called the Woodsburgh Pavilion and constructed a few houses, but the land was still largely undeveloped when Wood died in 1878.

In 1877 the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway Railway Company had built a trestle across Jamaica Bay to provide direct access to Rockaway Beach, and three years later the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company began running summer service over the bridge. A speculator named William Trist Bailey laid out a small subdivision of Far Rockaway he called Bayswater; the first Rockaway Yacht Club was built there, and the first hunt with hounds on Rockaway started there.⁵⁸³

The development of the peninsula was much more concentrated in the 1890s. Robert L. Burton, who had inherited majority control of Woodsburgh in 1878, began its development in earnest.⁵⁸⁴ Tearing down most of the old houses, he built a new village center and a restricted residential community which became quite fashionable. In 1892

Frederick J. Lancaster bought a nearby sandy waste with two or three houses and promoted it as New Venice.⁵⁸⁵

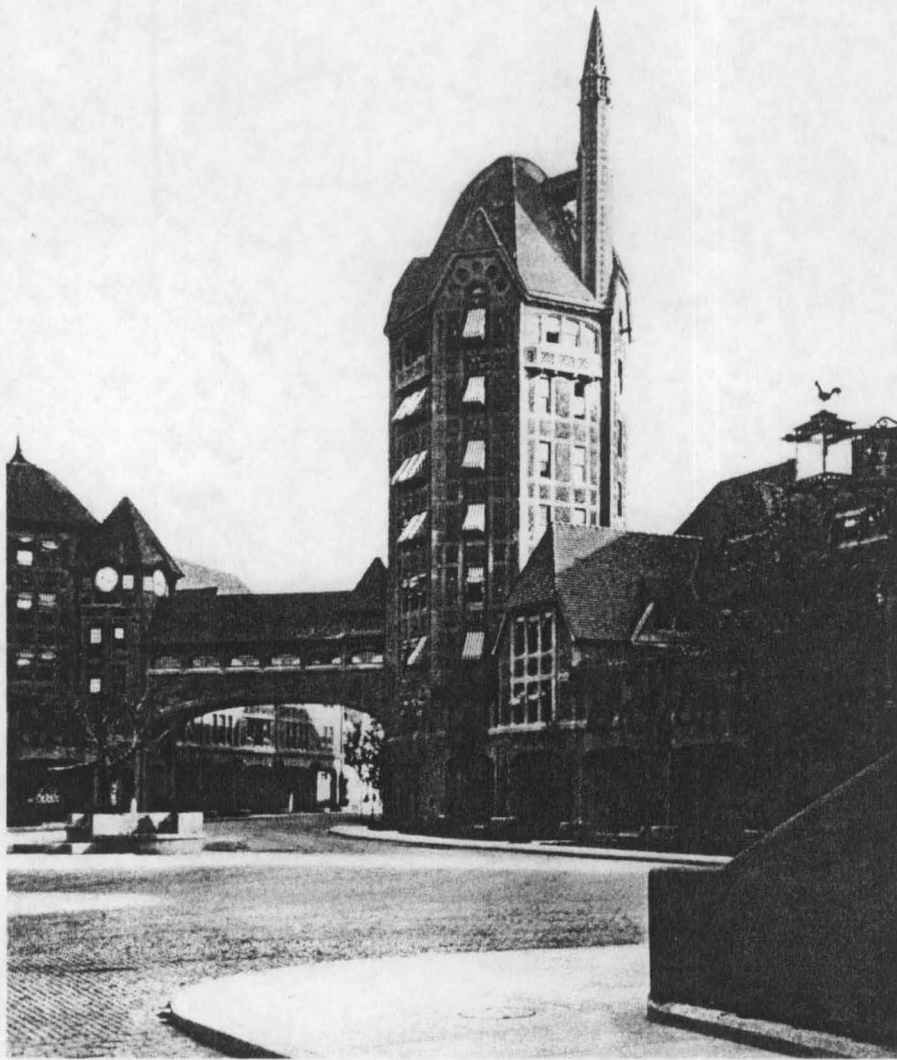
The largest development was made by two brothers, Newbold and Alfred Lawrence. Naming the project after themselves, they provided land for the Lawrence railroad station and built the Lawrence Association, which contained a school and a public hall.⁵⁸⁶ The new town was so successful that the Rockaway Hunting Club decided to move there from Bayswater and hired Bruce Price to design a new clubhouse.⁵⁸⁷

By 1898, when Queens was incorporated into New York, the Long Island Railroad had started its own service to Rockaway Beach, the Ocean Electric Railway, and the peninsula was firmly tied to the city. Nevertheless in 1915, 1916 and 1917 the local administrations of Far Rockaway and Rockaway Beach attempted to secede, and twice had the necessary bills passed in both houses of the state legislature, only to be vetoed by Mayor John Purroy Mitchel. One of the only early suburban developments in northern Queens was started by a New York lawyer named Albon P. Man, who between 1868 and 1870 bought nearly four hundred acres of farm land surrounding a branch of the Long Island Railroad.⁵⁸⁸ Calling the area Richmond Hill, he built a train station and a post office and hired the landscape architect Edward Richmond to lay out and manage the new town.

Development was slow until 1891, when Man died and his son Alrick assumed control of the project. Alrick Man paved the roads and laid sidewalks, as well as building many new roads and houses. But the development of Richmond Hill and northern Queens accelerated even more rapidly after 1906, when the borough's corrupt president, Boss Cassidy, was turned out of office. Elevated service from Manhattan was extended through Brooklyn to Jamaica Avenue and Liberty Avenue, and the Long Island Railroad opened a new line which passed through the northern section of Richmond Hill. Man built another station on the new branch and started a development he called Kew Gardens.⁵⁸⁹ The reformed Queens administration responded by installing a sewer system throughout both developments and making telephones and electric street and house lighting universal in the area.



Forest Hills Gardens, Queens. Grosvenor Atterbury and the Olmsted Bros., 1909-12. Aerial perspective drawn in 1910. CU



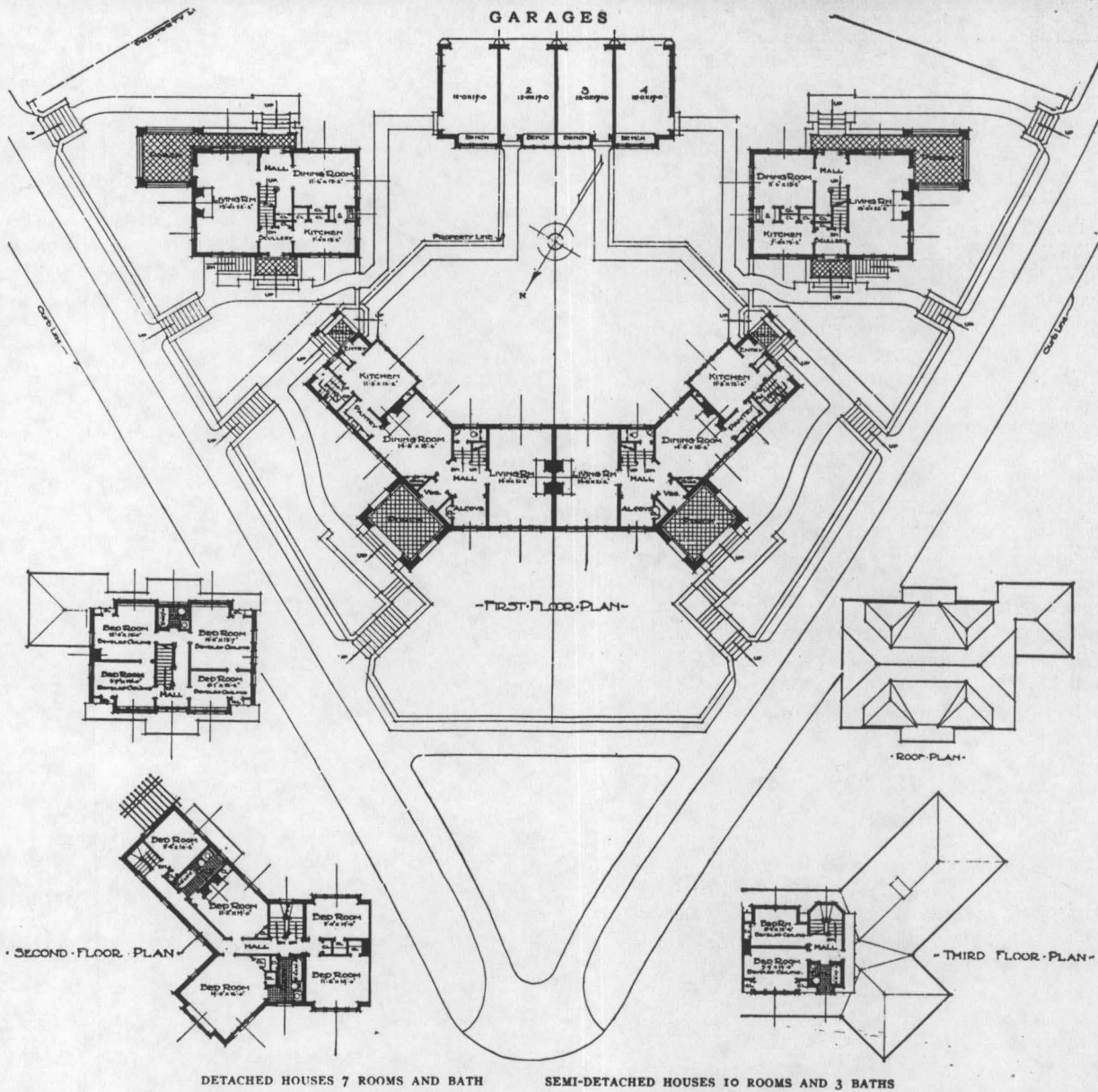
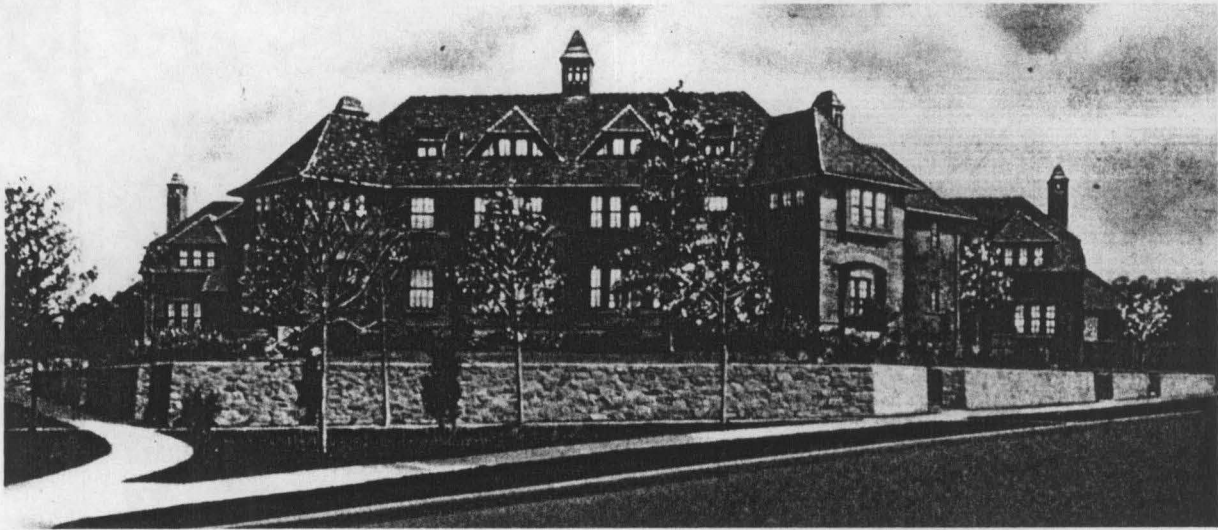
Station Square and Forest Hills Inn, Forest Hills Gardens, Queens. Grosvenor Atterbury, 1909-12. View from the southwest showing the tower of Forest Hills Inn. CU

The opening of the Steinway Tunnels in 1907, the Queensboro Bridge in 1909 and the Pennsylvania and Long Island railroad tunnels in 1910 spurred the growth of midtown Manhattan and shifted the attention of many developers from Brooklyn to Queens. Typically, the subdivisions were uninspired extensions of the city grid, like the nearly one thousand houses built by the Mathews Brothers on former farmland in Ridgewood.⁵⁹⁰ But early in 1909 the Russell Sage Foundation, founded in 1907 with a commitment to the improvement of the physical environment of the masses, purchased two hundred acres of land in Forest Hills, nine miles by train from Pennsylvania Station. They planned the first major project of the foundation, a new suburb called Forest Hills Gardens, and hired the Olmsted Brothers as planners and Grosvenor Atterbury as architect to build a model residential community as a pattern for future development.⁵⁹¹ Its unique combination of city planning and architecture achieved a dense, consolidated image of suburban living that made Forest Hills Gardens the pre-eminent expression of the suburban ideal of the Composite Era and the most important suburb built in New York, the only one to assume international importance. The founda-

tion's creation was hailed by the journalist-reformer Jacob A. Riis as an opportunity to document the social and economic conditions of the city, and by Professor Edwin Seligman of Columbia as a possible "laboratory of social experimentation."⁵⁹²

The Sage Foundation intended Forest Hills Gardens to be a village that mixed middle-class and wage-earner's housing, but its nearness to Manhattan made the land cost too high, and the development established itself as an upper-middle-class enclave soon after it opened in 1912. A number of serious attempts were made to keep the costs down: the highest density development was placed on the costly land nearest the train station, and much of the construction in the early stages utilized prefabricated panels.⁵⁹³

The most English of America's planned suburbs, Forest Hills Gardens was clearly dependent on the example of Parker & Unwin's work at Hampstead Garden Suburb outside London, which like Forest Hills Gardens was an aesthetic triumph but a failure at social reform. Station Square was the gateway to the community: the brick-paved plaza was dominated by the tower of the Forest Hills Inn and bordered on one side by the embankment of the railroad



Group XII houses, Forest Hills Gardens, Queens. Grosvenor Atterbury, 1910-12. View from the northwest and plans of the first and second floors. CU



Group houses, Willet Avenue to Middletown Street between Shelton and Colonial Avenues, Jamaica, Queens. Electus D. Litchfield, 1914. A group of seventeen houses. CU

and its station and on the other three sides by a continuously arcaded building that yielded the impression, as Samuel Howe observed, "of a college or cathedral city."⁵⁹⁴ Passing under two arches, the principal village streets led from the square to residential neighborhoods intended to contradict earlier, more romantically planned suburbs such as Llewellyn Park. In the prospectus of 1911, the sponsors stated that "fantastically crooked layouts have been abandoned for the cozy, domestic character of local streets, not perfectly straight for too long, but gently curving to avoid monotony."⁵⁹⁵ As one moved away from Station Square the urban character became more rural, suggesting a metaphorical journey from town to open country.

Atterbury was responsible for Station Square and some of the loveliest buildings in the Gardens, though other architects, including Wilson Eyre and Albro & Lindeberg, also built there. Atterbury's group house development on Puritan Avenue had three buildings arranged to form a court which was divided into individual gardens. The original design pioneered new strategies permitting individual ownership and communally held open space that became basic criteria for planned suburban development after World War I. Atterbury's group at the fork between Greenway North and Markwood Road had four houses, two of which were combined into a semi-detached unit.⁵⁹⁶ His design skillfully adapted the axial composition principals of the City Beautiful to the suburban milieu, simultaneously culminating the axis of Greenway North and providing an interior space that made a virtue of the site's awkward geometry.

Despite the fact that Forest Hills Gardens was an important monument of the Composite Era, its designers were aware that theirs was not purely a project of urban beautification and institutional symbolism. Forest Hills Gardens was to be an ideal model town sponsored by a foundation, but it was also a business proposition. Atterbury was aware in his writings of the problems that this seeming schizophrenia of intentions might bring with it. "It is unfortunate that the somewhat misleading word 'model' must be applied to such an eminently practical scheme as the development of the Russell Sage Foundation," he wrote,

"for the reason that there is a kind of subtle odium which attaches to 'model' things of almost any kind, even when they are neither charitable nor philanthropic—a slightly sanctimonious atmosphere that is debilitating rather than stimulative of success."⁵⁹⁷

Forest Hills Gardens did serve as a model for future development, however, perhaps most notably in the new towns and large subdivisions that were built during the First World War for munitions workers and shipbuilders.⁵⁹⁸ Electus D. Litchfield, who would later design Yorkship Village outside Camden, New Jersey, one of the best of the shipbuilding projects, in 1914 planned a small private development of about ten city blocks in Queens, adapting some of the lessons of Forest Hills to the gridiron and the requirements of speculative, middle-class housing.⁵⁹⁹ "The value of the land is such that in order that the house and lot may be sold at a price which will appeal to persons in moderate circumstances," the *Brickbuilder* reported, "the amount of land to be sold with each house must be as small as possible. On the other hand, it was desired to maintain, as far as possible, the suburban character of the neighborhood. For this reason, it was planned to build only a certain number of individual houses, free standing upon moderate sized plots, and to have the majority of the houses semi-detached or in groups of four or five, and in some cases in very extensive groupings."⁶⁰⁰

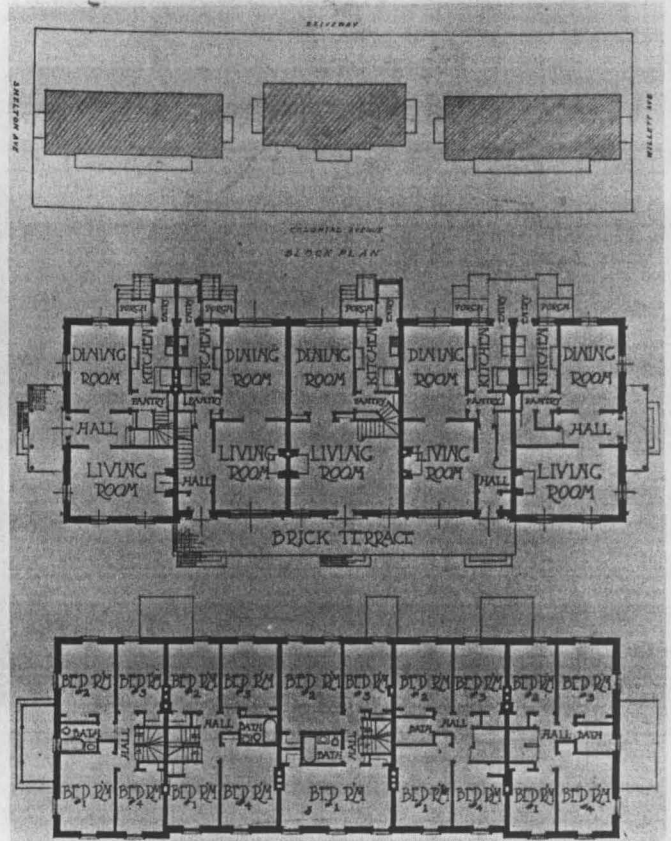
The largest, in fact, was seventeen houses under one roof. Although Litchfield attempted to balance the large block with three smaller group houses across the street, the sheer size of the group overwhelmed the simple Colonial style details. Yet all the houses worked quite well, particularly considering the modest dimensions of the individual units. Constructed of brick with slate roofs, the houses had custom exterior and interior woodwork. "While the interior finish is extremely simple in its character," the *Brickbuilder* said, "it displays the quiet good taste which appeals to people of refinement."⁶⁰¹

The Bronx

When New York consolidated the five boroughs in 1898, the borders of the new city encompassed large areas of



Group house, Willet Avenue to Middletown Street between Shelton and Colonial Avenues, Jamaica, Queens. Electus D. Litchfield, 1914. A 1914 view of a typical end unit in a group of four houses. CU



Group houses, Willet Avenue to Middletown Street between Shelton and Colonial Avenues, Jamaica, Queens. Electus D. Litchfield, 1914. Block plan and plans of the first and second floors in a typical grouping of four houses. CU

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606. "Country Club, Fieldston, New York, Dwight James Baum, New York, Architect," *Architect* 3 (October 1924): plates X-XII.

607. "Portfolio of Current Architecture," *Architectural Record* 35 (May 1914): 455-62; Carleton Van Valkenburg, "An Interesting Group of Houses," *American Homes and Gardens* 11 (October 1914): 331-35; and "House of Dwight James Baum, Riverdale [sic], N.Y., Mr. Dwight James Baum, Architect," *American Architect* 57 (June 2, 1915): plate. Baum also had a studio in Spuyten Duyvil, in the southwest corner of the Bronx below Riverdale. See "Architectural Studio, Dwight James Baum, Spuyten Duyvil Parkway, New York," *Architect* 3 (November 1924): plate XXVII. For additional works by Baum in Riverdale, see "House and Plans, J.B. Quinn, Fieldston, Riverdale-on-Hudson, N.Y.," *Architecture* 41 (April 1920): 118-19; "Designs for Double and Single Houses for Robert Fein, Riverdale-on-Hudson, N.Y.," *Architecture* 43 (May 1921): plates LXIX-LXXI; "Detail, House, Mr. B.L. Winchell, Riverdale, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (April 1924): plate XXIII; "House, Mr. William P. Hoffman, Fieldston, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (May 1924): plates XXXVI-XXXVIII; "House, Mrs. L. Duncan Bulkley, Riverdale, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (May 1924): plates XLI-XLII; "House, Mr. Robert Fein, Riverdale, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (May 1924): plates XLV-XLVI; "House, Judge Nash Rockwood, Fieldston, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (June 1924): plate LXIX; and "House, Estate of Mr. Cleveland H. Dodge, Riverdale, N.Y.," *Architect* 2 (June 1924): plates LXX-LXXII.

608. "Portfolio of Current Architecture," *Architectural Record*: 460; and Valkenburg, "Interesting Group of Houses": 331-33. Also see Carleton Van Valkenburg, "A Picturesque Hillside Home," *American Homes and Gardens* 11 (December 1914): 416-17.

609. "Portfolio of Current Architecture," *Architectural Record*: 462.

610. "Portfolio of Current Architecture," *Architectural Record*: 455-56, 459.

611. "Portfolio of Current Architecture," *Architectural Record*: 462.

612. Delafield, "Fashionable Suburban Section": 940.

613. J.J. Clute, *Annals of Staten Island, From Its Discovery to the Present Time* (New York: Vogt, 1877), 318. Staten Islander Cornelius Vanderbilt started his fortune by working on and later buying Tompkin's ferry line.

614. Quoted from the New Brighton prospectus, George A. Ward, *Description of New Brighton on Staten Island Opposite the City of New York* (New York: New Brighton Association, 1836). Also see an exhibition catalog prepared by Shirley Zavin and Barnett Shepherd, *Staten Island, An Architectural History* (New York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1979), 5; and Stern and Massengale, *Anglo-American Suburb*, 18-19. The prospectus was published in 1836, shortly before the founding of several other Staten Island suburbs such as Clifton, built by the Staten Island Association in 1837, and Elliotville, founded near New Brighton by Dr. Samuel McKenzie Elliot in 1839.

615. "County House, Ernest Flagg, Dongan Hills, Staten Island," *Architecture* 11 (January 15, 1901): 24-25.

616. Flagg's houses are published in his book *Small Houses, Their Economic Design and Construction* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922).

617. See *Dongan Hills, Where It Is, What It Is, and All About It* (New York: Dongan Hills Realty Company, ca. 1916), a prospectus at the New-York Historical Society.

618. *Dongan Hills*, no pagination.

619. John M. Carrère, "Better Taste in Small Houses: Suburban Development Has Been Too Rapid, It is High Time That We Paused To Contemplate Our Awful Achievement, Some Constructive Suggestions," *Country Life in America* 20 (May 15, 1911): 18-21; and "Works of Carrère & Hastings," *Architectural Record*: 63.

620. Carrère, "Better Taste in Small Houses": 21.

Design Notebook

Paul Goldberger

An honorable U.S. tradition of suburban planning.

THE suburb is, to most architecturally minded observers, the quintessence of banality. Dreary, unimaginative houses, scattered across the landscape with little concern for much of anything except carving up the earth in a way to give every one of those disjointed structures its little sliver of backyard, its closed-off, private piece of nature. The prevailing notion seems not so much community as separation — as a village whose physical layout seems to symbolize keeping apart, not joining together.

This conventional image is not without its truth — it surely fits Levittown and most of that development's post-World War II brethren, for example. Though the postwar suburban tract house had certain virtues as a building in itself, the ways in which it tended to be spread across the land made most tract developments disasters from a planning standpoint.

But it was not always so: There is a long and honorable, if too little known, tradition of thoughtful and conscientious suburban planning in the United States — a legacy of places neither boring nor indifferent to the landscape. Some are frankly rustic, like the altogether remarkable Llewellyn Park in West Orange, N.J., and others are urban and not a little quaint, like the gracious spread of Forest Hills Gardens in Queens.

This tradition is presented in a small but eloquent exhibition entitled, logically enough, "Suburbs," which opened this week at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, where it will remain on view until Jan. 24. Organized by Robert A. M. Stern and John Montague Massengale, the exhibition with its accompanying catalogue (which is called "The Anglo-American Suburb" and published as an issue of the British magazine *Architectural Design*) are a



This 1912 Forest Hills Gardens plan shows the axial roads and the neatly integrated homes and parks.

welcome event. It is not so much that Mr. Stern and Mr. Massengale have discovered new and relatively unknown suburbs — most of the material included is fairly well known to students of 19th- and 20th-century American housing — as it is that they have made an articulate case for the importance of a real suburban planning tradition in our history.

What is most impressive, even startling, in this exhibition is the testament it offers to the value of planning. This is an age in which the efforts of city planners are generally disdained, particularly by the vanguard of architects who argue in favor of letting the natural processes of city and suburban growth occur by themselves. So it is important to be reminded that planning has at least occasionally in our recent history managed to create civilized places — and that if a place is planned that need not seal its doom as an artificial community cut off from reality.

The exhibition consists mostly of drawings and photographs, many of them original and quite beautiful. Although no such distinctions are made, the catalogue groups communities as

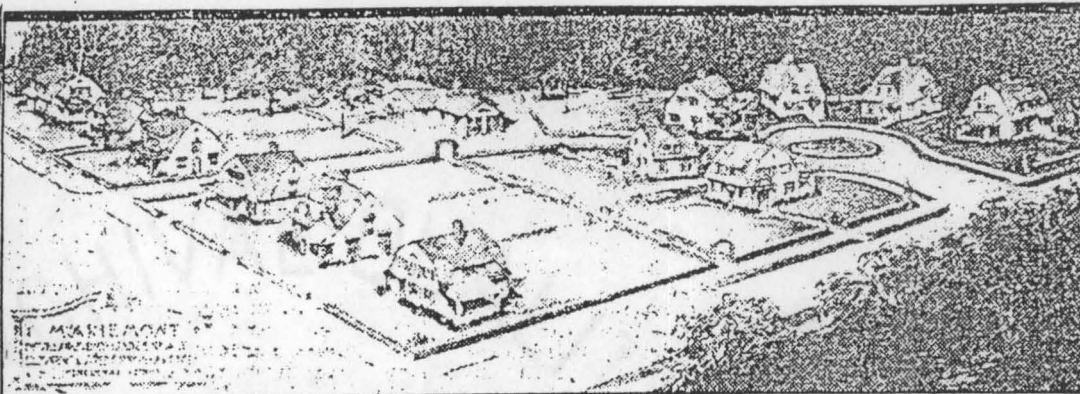
railroad suburbs (Llewellyn Park, Frederick Law Olmsted's Riverside, Ill., and A. T. Stewart's Garden City, L.I., among them); streetcar and subway suburbs (Forest Hills Gardens and Prospect Park South in New York City come here, as does Roland Park in Baltimore); resort suburbs (Coral Gables, Fla., and Tuxedo Park, N.Y., are examples here); "automobile suburbs" (such as Raddburn, N.J., and the Country Club District of Kansas City) and, finally, industrial villages (among them Pullman, Ill., Kohler, Wis., and Tyrone, N.M.).

Every one of these places has a certain wistful, pleasing appeal, for this is not the suburbia of the two-car garage and the backyard barbecue but the suburbia of the venerable, solid house, of the mature, sheltering trees and of the curving hillside roads. These communities conjure up a sense of stability, a sense that they are part of an established, solid world, precisely the opposite of the transient, flimsy air of newer suburbs.

The categories Mr. Stern and Mr. Massengale have created are appropriate, for within the tradition of older suburbs there really are several

NY TIMES

12 Nov. 1981 : C10



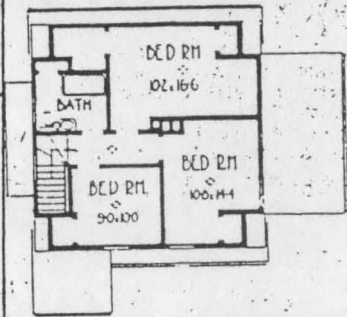
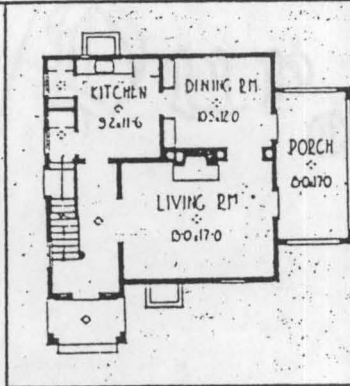
Several cottages cluster around a curved roadway in Mariemont, a Cincinnati suburb, designed in 1924.

subcategories, and the means by which we reach them — railroad, streetcar, automobile — are often as good an indication of their nature as any other statement about them. And the categories are surely a helpful way to place the projects in time.

Llewellyn Park, created in 1853 by the architect Andrew Jackson Davis at the edge of Eagle Rock in Essex County, is like a single vast estate, with hills and forests and open lawns. The goal here is to give the illusion of country with the advantages of a village and of proximity to the city. The development's roads and houses are tightly intertwined, despite the considerable amount of space; the entire community feels like a vast version of the Ramble in Central Park, with country villas marking the space instead of lampposts.

It is no accident that Llewellyn Park was established in the same decade as Frederick Law Olmsted's and Calvert Vaux's Central Park design; both rely heavily on the mid-19th-century styles of rustic landscape design, itself derived from the English landscape tradition. Olmsted played a central role in the development of the American planned suburb — his Riverside, Ill., plan of 1869 was based on curving roads that followed the topography, and the entire idea was to integrate architecture and nature.

The goals were somewhat different in the in-town suburbs, the communities Mr. Stern and Mr. Massengale call streetcar and subway suburbs. There land was too precious to permit the total illusion of *rus in urbe*, and the social intentions were different. Many of these suburbs were intended for the middle class as a means of escape from crowded urban conditions. But they were dense and carefully laid out,



One of the larger cottages features three bedrooms, one bath and a porch.

more like old-style villages than country towns, with energetic and picturesque little commercial squares and, frequently, a mix of apartments and single-family houses.

Forest Hills Gardens, designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and completed in 1912 for the Russell Sage Foundation, is the prototype here — a utopian community underwritten by a foundation concerned with improving the housing lot of the middle class. Forest Hills Gardens remains, even today, an impressive design, an inventive mix of classical, Beaux-Arts formality in its main axial roads and Olmstedian informality in its residential streets.

Parks and houses are neatly integrated, as they are in virtually all these communities. For while there are vast differences in layout, housing design and social makeup among the suburbs, some common threads can be perceived. Serious attention to nature is perhaps the most important: in each place there is a desire to use the scale of construction to create a total landscape, a set of open spaces that com-

municate a total idea. In some cases, such as the celebrated utopian suburb of 1929, Radburn, N.J., there is literally a common open space shared by all residents; in others outdoor space is mostly private, but it seems to come together to create a coherent totality.

Related to this, surely, is that in none of the planned suburbs is architecture paramount. Though many, such as Tuxedo Park, Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Coral Gables, have buildings of great delight (and sometimes of real architectural importance), it is always the overall planning that takes precedence. The houses are only rarely uniform and they are almost never dull, but they do subordinate themselves to an idea larger than that of the individual structure sitting alone in the landscape. That an exhibition organized by a pair of architects could dare to take this stance is a pleasing event indeed. For the point of this exhibition, in the end, is to tell us that in the suburbs as in the city the whole must be greater than the sum of the parts.

A "MODEL VILLAGE" UNDER WAY

By LOUIS GRAVES

WHEN you have barely settled down to reading your magazine story—when the golden-haired heroine is just on the point of climbing down a rope ladder from the topmost window of a lofty tower—the conductor hurls the door open with a bang and emits a jumble of sounds that are supposed to represent "Forest Hills Gardens!" Whereupon you jump from your seat, rush out upon the station platform, and—what do you see? Nothing less than that same medieval tower from which the heroine was preparing to descend to her eager lover.

Can this be just "fifteen minutes from Broadway"? you ask yourself. Can this be on the same fragment of land—entirely-surrounded-by-water as prosaic Brooklyn and up-to-date Belmont Park and the Astoria gas-making plant? Can it be on the same hemisphere as Forty-second Street and Pittsburgh and Col. Henry Watterson and

the Cotton Exchange and the Constitution and George M. Cohan? No, it cannot. It is somewhere near the Rhine, and it's not new at all, because you've been transferred back a few centuries, like Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee. You've just accepted this as the only satisfactory explanation when you wake up. The ideas of the Sage Foundation Homes architect, Mr. Grosvenor Atterbury, have begun to take form and here is arising a village—a "model village," some people prefer to call it—the like of which is not to be found in all America. At bottom it may have all the common-sense practicability of modern America; artistically it is European. It smashes all the conventions of commonplace suburban building around New York. So surprised is the newcomer at the first view that the whole outlay seems a trifle bizarre. But when he has had a moment to free his memory of the chess-board aspect of East Appledale and Clear



Mountain and North Ardale and half a hundred other perfectly proper suburbs, the appearance of this rising village is inexpressibly soothing.

The public has been told a great deal of the motives that prompted the formation of the Sage Foundation Homes Company, so that it is not necessary to review them at length. Briefly the origin of the project was as follows: Russell Sage left his widow

are worth to men who can't afford them—but to demonstrate that conservative real-estate operators can provide homes near New York, with plenty of light and air and playground space, dispose of them to men of moderate means, and yet earn a fair return upon their investment.

Hitherto most of what has been said about Forest Hills Gardens has taken the form of promises and prophecies. Now the Foun-

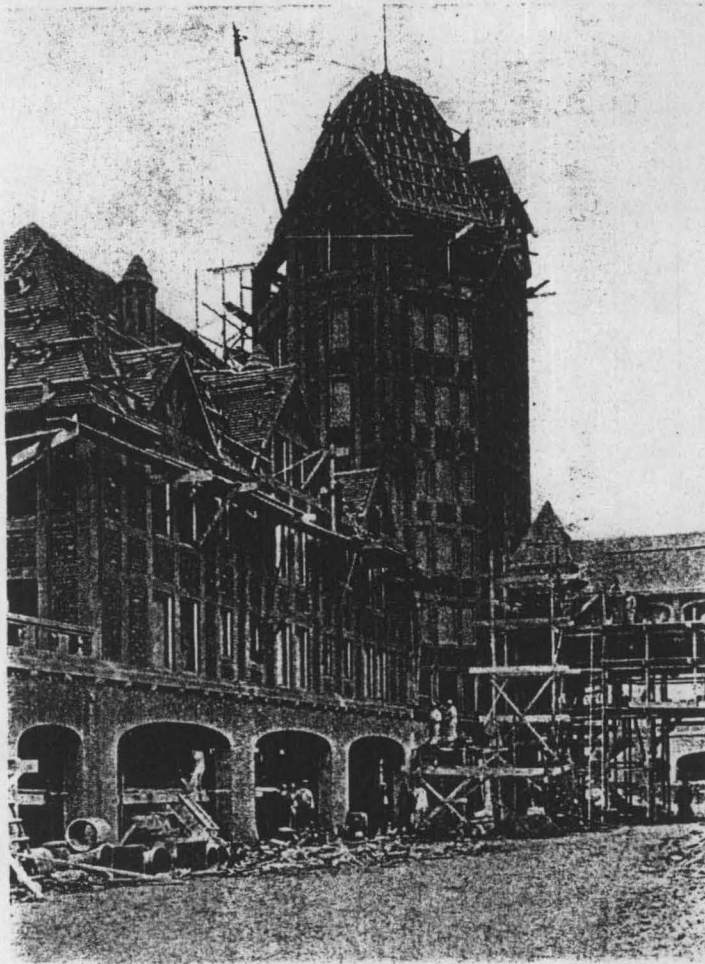


GENERAL VIEW OF STATION SQUARE FROM THE RAILROAD

many millions of dollars, and she set about to spend the income therefrom in a manner that she and her advisers thought would most benefit humanity. As good housing is one of the great problems of the day, nothing seemed more useful than to provide an object lesson in combining comfortable, healthful and low-priced homes with proximity to the heart of a great city

dation Homes Company has begun—we will use a phrase that may shock the eminent gentlemen who are responsible for this enterprise—it has begun to “deliver the goods.” Roads are laid out. Water mains and sewers are in service. New citizens are already living in their own homes and are traveling back and forth between there and New

BUILDING PROGRESS



LOOKING TOWARD STATION SQUARE PLAZA FROM OUTSIDE

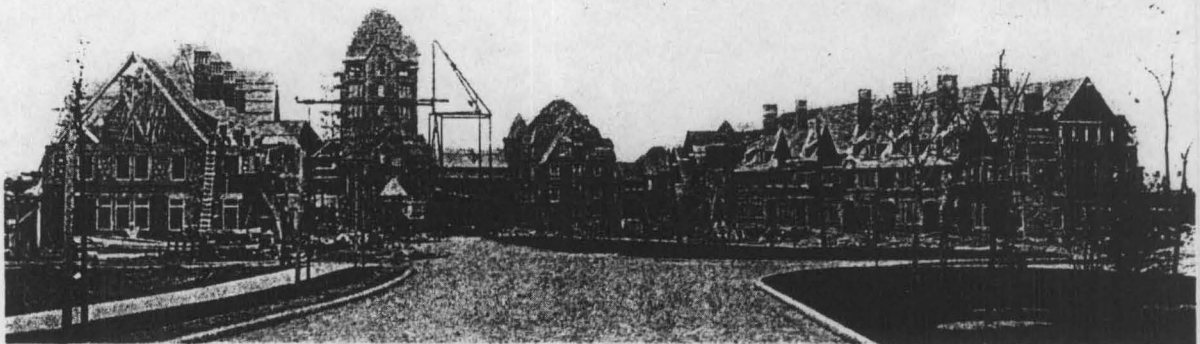
partment, Mr. Charles H. Scammell. In his automobile he whisked me from one group of houses to the other, east on this highway and west on that, until we had pretty well covered the 142-acre tract, and then we ended the sightseeing expedition by making a rapid survey of Station Square—the plaza immediately opposite the railroad

station, that is enclosed by the railroad, the hotel and two or three apartment houses. The brick flagging was not down yet, and the scaffolding was still disfiguring the gray stone walls, but the construction had progressed far enough to give us the general impression of what this square was to be. It is the tower of the hotel that gives the stranger the feeling that he has suddenly been transplanted in the old world.

At first the construction at Forest Hills was carried on by a general contractor, but as soon as the first contract was near completion the Foundation Homes Company itself took over all the building operations. Thus it is better able to execute exactly the plans of the architects. Every detail of the work—the planting of trees, the grading of streets, the mixing of stucco for the exterior of the dwellings, everything—is now under the direction

of the superintendent.

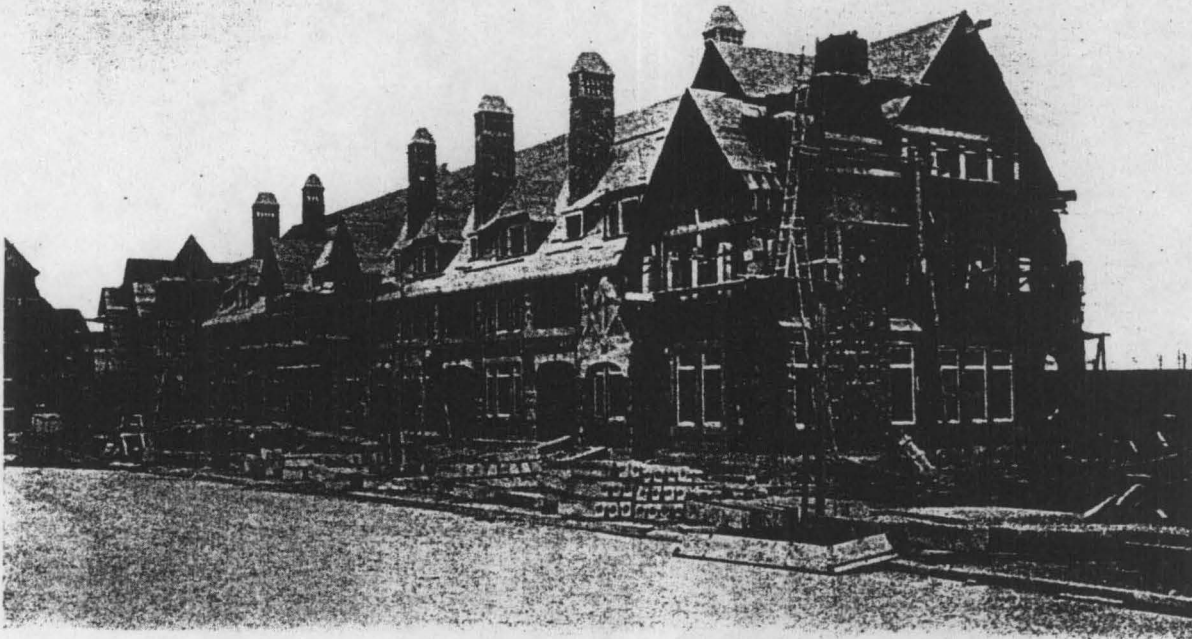
The visitor is deeply impressed with the thoroughness with which things are done here. On one corner of the property is a sort of factory and test house, where building materials are made and tested before they are put into use. For example, the architects may decide upon a reddish stucco



for a certain group of houses. Then follow a series of experiments to determine just what proportion of chipped tile ought to be used, how big the chips should be to give the most satisfying effect, and to what extent the mixture ought to be treated with acid to bring out the rich coloring. The stucco is not used in a dwelling until it is just right.

Again, a floor plan may require the use of heavy concrete beams. The ingredients of the concrete—sand, broken stone, cement—are mixed here in this factory with the

But from the very nature of the project no such motive enters into the calculation of those in charge of the undertaking at Forest Hills. The management is interested in building homes, not in a real-estate speculation. It advises prospective buyers not to buy for the purpose of reselling, but only if they intend to settle down with their families and live here. Of course, in time the property may appreciate in value and owners may be able to sell out at a profit; but that is an incident, not something to count



A GROUP OF DWELLINGS

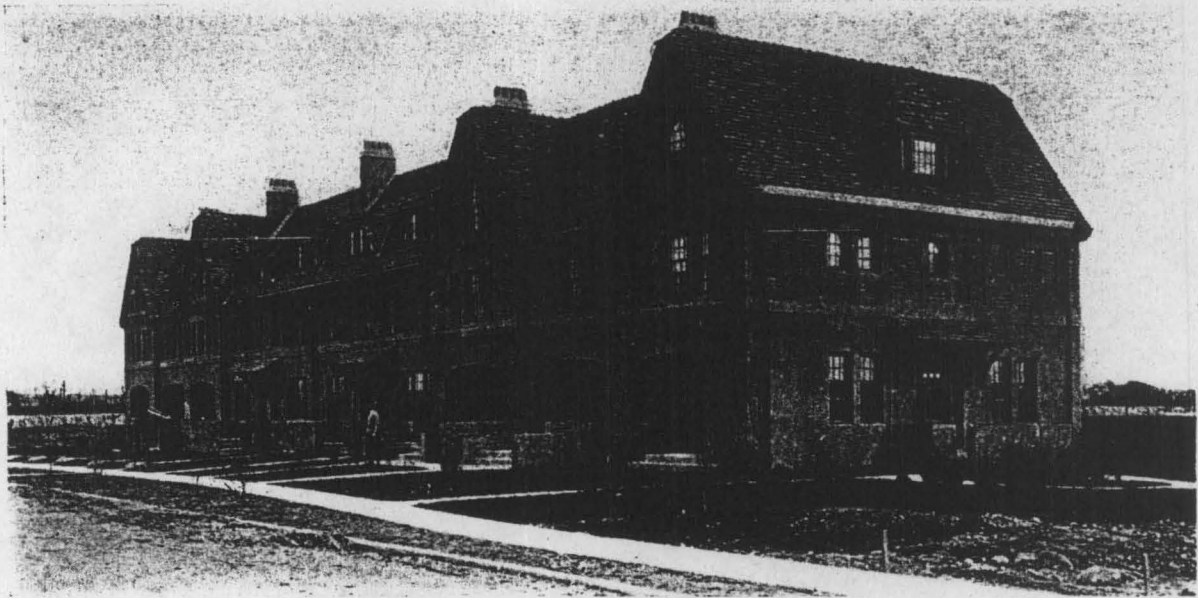
greatest care. When the beam is molded it is put through a severe test to make sure that it is strong enough. And it is the same with every other material that is to go into the buildings; nothing but the strongest and best is used.

In this, Forest Hills Gardens presents a distinct contrast to hundreds of other suburban settlements around New York. Though it is true that real-estate operators are coming more and more to realize that it is a wise policy to put up substantial dwellings, there are still many who have their

upon. The Foundation Homes Company aims to give men with limited salaries a chance to live in healthful surroundings, away from crowded city streets, at a fair price—that is the proposition in a nutshell.

It is consistent with the whole scheme that the homes should be made indestructible. Long before the ground was broken for foundations the architects had built a laboratory in New Jersey for the testing of all kinds of materials, to ascertain which of all others would most successfully combine the qualities of strength, imperviousness to

BUILDING PROGRESS

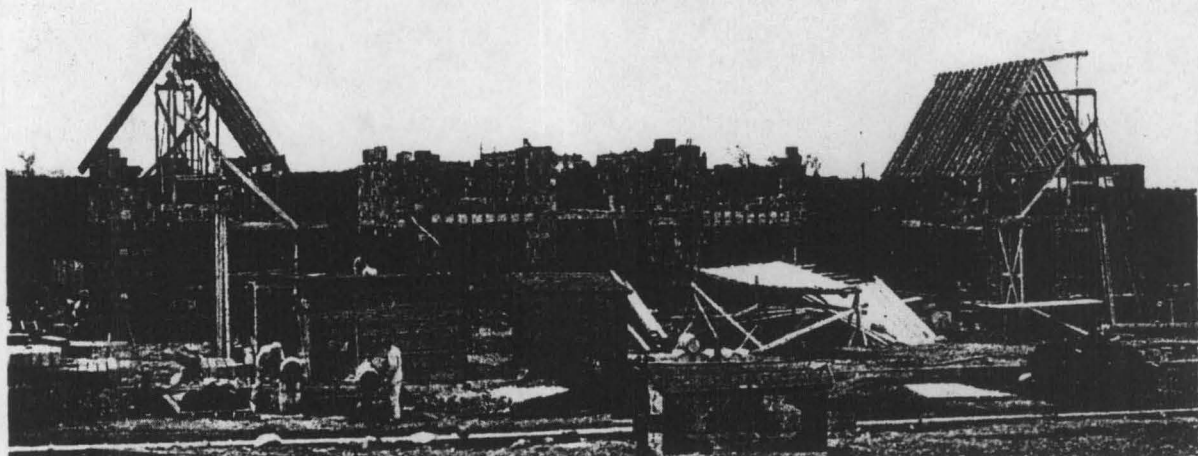


A ROW OF HOUSES READY TO BE OCCUPIED

blocks, the material that is now being adopted so widely for home construction. To form the exterior, stucco is applied to these blocks. And this stucco may be of whatever color the architects choose. From the artistic side, perhaps no one feature has received more minute attention than has the composition of the stucco. For it is this, when a great number of houses have been built, that will give the color tone to the whole settlement. Enough has been done already to show that the achievements in this direction are remarkable. To the texture of the stucco there is a richness which will inevitably make Forest Hills Gardens impress

the eye as does no other American village.

Perhaps the average American would say that the place has no street plan at all. As that phrase is ordinarily understood, it hasn't. Two main thoroughfares lead out from the railroad toward Forest Park, the public reservation that bounds the property on one side, and two curving avenues stretch from Station Square. The other streets will follow no fixed chessboard plan. Most of them will be quiet, "homey" streets, the use of which for thoroughfares will not be encouraged. Each one will have a character of its own; it will not be simply one of ten or twenty, all alike.





A DETACHED DWELLING. BRICK VENEER OVER HOLLOW TILE

Only part of the grading and surface finishing has been done, but the superintendent's automobile was able to pick its way to pretty nearly every block where anything was going on. Mostly the houses now under construction are in groups, three or four houses in a group, but there are some detached residences. The homes vary widely in price.

"It is a little amusing sometimes," said Mr. Scammell, "to hear what ideas people

have formed about this project. Some of them seem to think we're establishing some sort of 'institution.' Of course, those who've taken any pains to inquire have quickly found out that this is far from the truth.

"You can see from these houses already up that it's not going to look like any 'made to order' town. There are going to be all sorts of homes for all sorts of incomes, just as there are in the average suburb. There will be some streets more desirable than



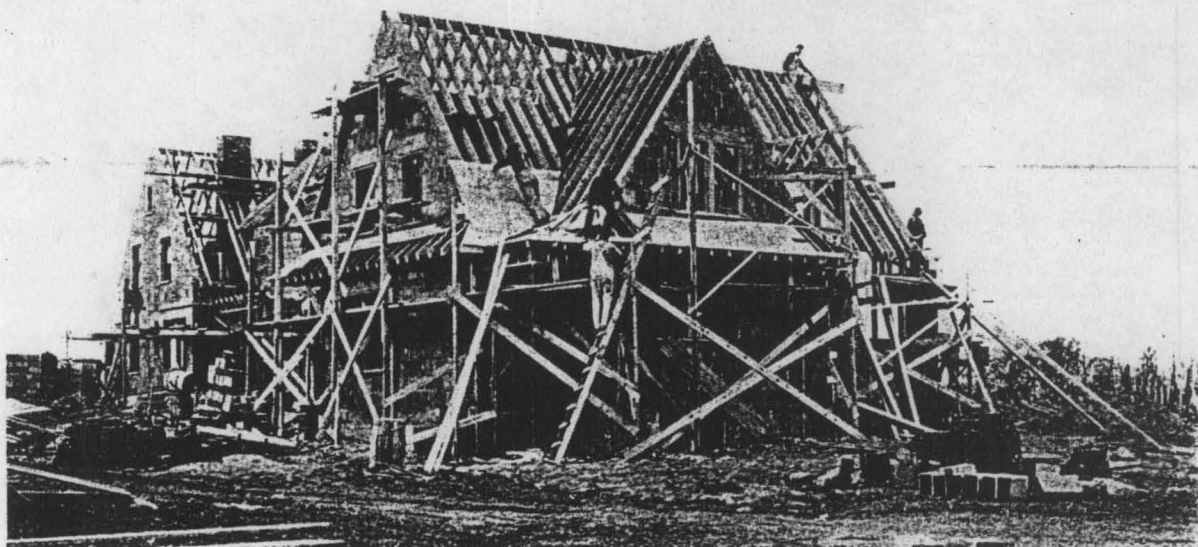
BUILDING PROGRESS

others, as there are everywhere. Over there you see going up a detached house that will sell, with the ground around it, for fourteen or fifteen thousand dollars. On the other hand, one of those inside houses in the row ahead of us—a house closed in on both sides—will sell for not more than six or seven thousand."

The Foundation Homes Company, just like any real-estate concern, has its selling department. The probable purchaser is supplied with prospectuses and street maps and as much word-of-mouth information as

gradually, this is not so of all. The company has set aside a limited number of homes for rent. Thus the doubter may make a trial of the place for a year before committing himself to permanent habitation there.

A record of the occupations of those who have purchased houses and lots up to date is illuminating as to what the character of the population will be. The percentages of the various occupations are as follows: architects and artists, 11 per cent.; authors, editors and reporters, 8 per cent.; doctors and



SEMI-FIREPROOF DWELLINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

he can absorb. He is told of school facilities, the proximity of Forest Park, and the altitude above sea level, and the healthfulness of the climate, the train schedules to and from the city, and everything else about which he likes to ask questions. If the tale that is unfolded is a little less boastful in its tone than that of the traditional vender of suburban lots, it is because the management of Forest Hills Gardens is conservative from start to finish. It wants to win a reputation more for its performances than for its promises.

Though most of the dwellers in the new

lawyers, 5 per cent.; engineers, 7 per cent.; teachers and educators, 12 per cent.; accountants, advertising agents and printers, 7 per cent.; brokers and manufacturers, 7 per cent.; merchants and managers, 15 per cent.; salesmen and clerks, 22 per cent.; railroad officials and in other occupations, 6 per cent.

The construction of the buildings at Forest Hills Gardens is continuing straight on through the winter. Outside work of a kind that could be done only in warm weather provides shelter for the inside work, and in the early spring a number of new houses will



TOWN PLANNING ON A LARGE SCALE

BY SAMUEL HOWE



THE New Yorker generally speaks of Forest Hills Gardens as a successful proposition. That is the way he disposes of it, in his brisk, analytical fashion. There is certainly something attractive in the name. There is much more that is interesting in the scheme. Here it is upon paper. These views were taken a few days ago. They are not enriched like painted pictures by some distinguished artist! They are just plain every-day views taken with a camera. The photographer worked under direction; that is, the scenes were selected for him. These photographs speak eloquently in a language that is acceptable the world over. They are not interesting bits, little show pictures, from the land of ancient courtesies, and romantic ideals. They are not inspiring memories from little by-ways and forgotten lanes, and sloping hillsides in remote sections of southern Europe, but they are views of new work, tangible evidences of American enterprise. They show how the place is wearing, how it is improving, how it is mellowing, and what an excellent place it is in which to live. It is full of shade and shadows, of interesting detail, and unexpected views, all interesting in color, usually stimulating the personality of the people in the neighborhood, and above all, and for all, one great golden opportunity for a home, for those who want a home, and who know what a home is.

The usual home-seeker, on visiting a real estate development, is invariably confronted with a very serious problem. He may be more than satisfied with that portion of the property which he proposes to purchase, he may be more than pleased with the outlook as it is today, but what of the morrow? Who will his neighbors be? How and just where will they build? What kind of trees, if any, will line the sidewalk? What treatment will be accorded the corner lots? And just what disposition will be made of the few delightful old trees, which give to the property a certain dignity and character? Boiled down into one sentence, the prospective purchaser is requested to be patient, to await results, which, at best are matters for speculation, often mad-cap speculation, or he is asked to exercise an imagination he may not have, and to conjure up a suitable setting for his house after his own fashion.

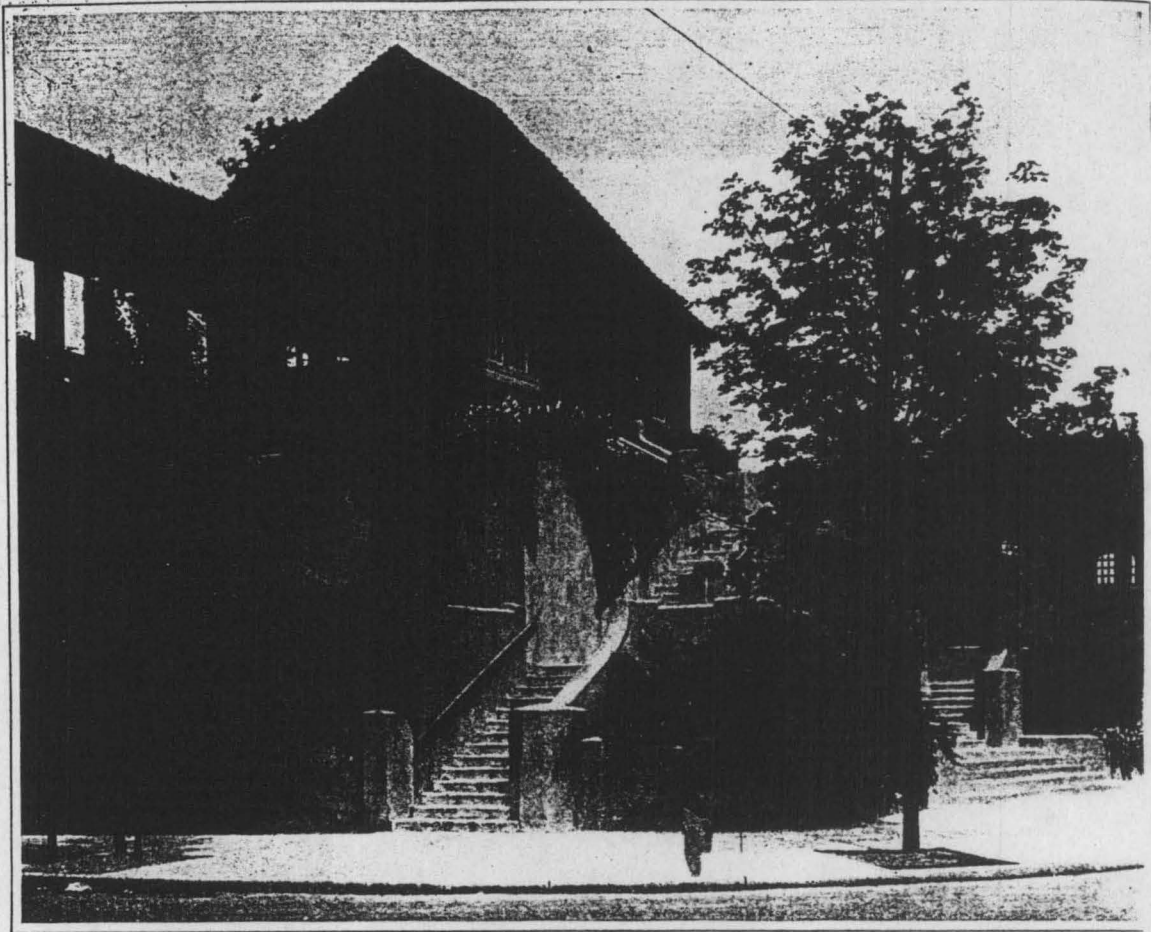
It would be futile, unfair, to assign to the industrious real estate agent a desire to misrepresent in any way, shape or manner. To him also is the future a blank. His business is to inspire confidence and, incidentally, to sell. He is the

last man to voluntarily deceive. It is the system which is unsatisfactory. The prospective purchaser is just a little unreasonably. He asks too much. He often presupposes a knowledge the real estate agent does not have, and has no means of getting. The questions are pertinent and timely. They are perfectly natural. The prospective purchaser is well within his rights. A man who expects to live a good share of his life in any locality would be foolish to ignore the immediate future, the general outlook of the district.

The garden city idea, which has inspired the designers of Forest Hills Gardens, varies from the ordinary real estate development idea in its general plan, which provides for the definite treatment of a large area in a specific manner. It provides that roads shall be laid out and planted, and that the estate shall be so divided up into lots as to give to each purchaser a certain individual attraction. Garden cities are made beautiful from their commencement, before the roads are cut, before drains are inserted, or houses erected. A certain uniformity of building is determined upon, covering the vexed question of style, cost, material. Many other questions are settled, such as the way in which the houses shall be grouped in their relation to each other. The study of these points lessens the uncertainty confronting the purchaser. Yet it permits certain individual interpretation likely to be acceptable.

When first the interesting drawings for this Dream City, as it was called, were exhibited in public on the walls of the Architectural League, and prominent clubs in this city and elsewhere, the whole scheme was rejected as being too idealistic, too far removed from the requirements of American people. The drawings were attractive. They were ambitious in the extreme. They were highly colored. The views before us are far more satisfactory. Not only do they pay delicate homage to the place as it is, but tribute to the gentleman who made those drawings, four or five years ago. They are before me now. In many cases the photographs are better than the prospective sketch, in spite of the color and the texture of the canvas, the well-drawn figures and the subtle introduction of movement in the foreground.

I recall, with no little satisfaction, the critical comment of visitors at the League, when first these drawings were on view. "This kind of thing is alright for England. I have seen it at Hampstead and Letchworth and at Port Sunlight. The triangle and the park at Bournville is the kind of thing that these gentlemen would like to introduce here. On paper it's a mighty interesting story. But it won't go here. Our people won't stand for it." It is so easy to criticise.



EVEN SO UTILITARIAN A THING AS A RAILROAD STATION HAS BEAUTY. GROSVENOR ATTERBURY, ARCHITECT

The accompanying views, still on paper, by the way, but in a language intelligible to the man of the street, show the folly of the critics of the League and are a splendid triumph for the enthusiasts of the scheme.

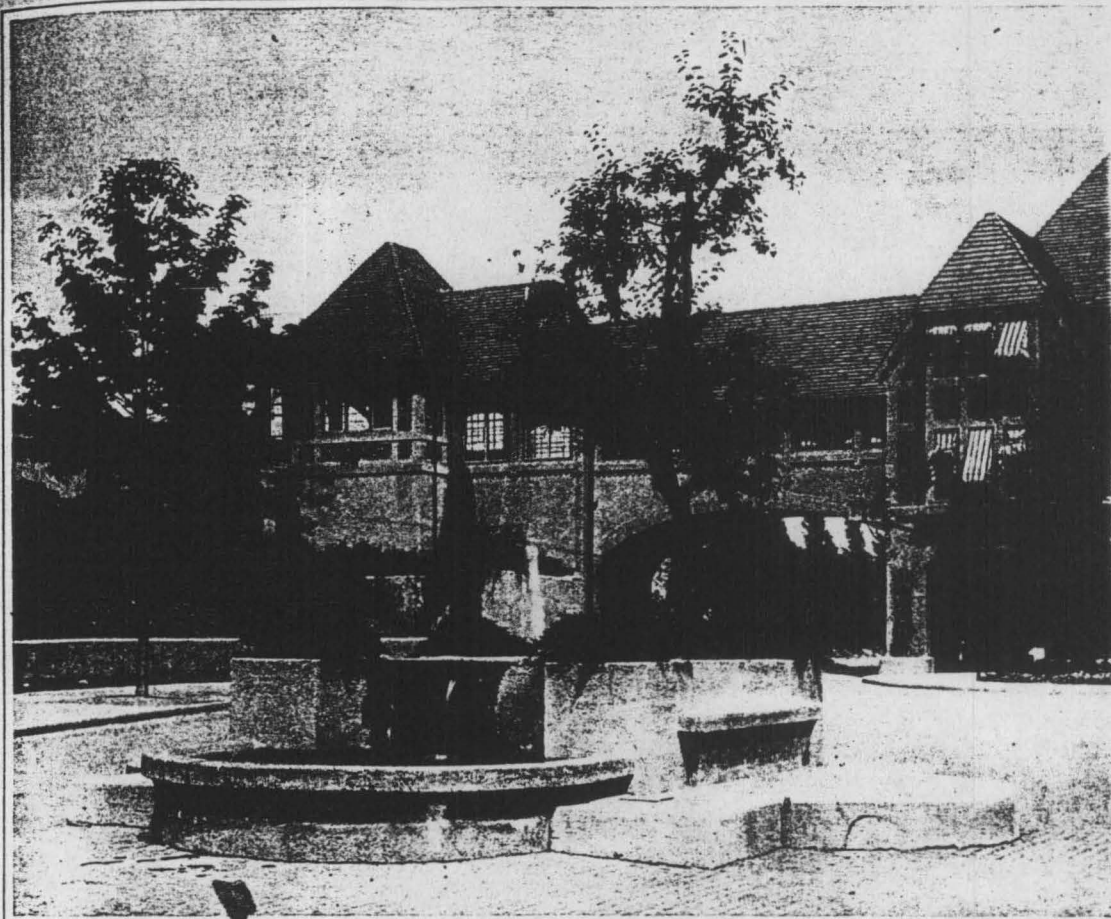
To quote, in part, an official announcement, "Forest Hills Gardens is known technically as a suburban land development of one hundred and forty-two acres, within the city limits, on the new line of the Long Island Railroad, at the Forest Hills station, nine miles in distance and thirteen minutes in time from the Pennsylvania terminal in New York, and about three miles on the New York side of Jamaica. The railroad is directly at the entrance of the estate." It is still further known as a business investment of the Russell Sage Foundation, conducted on strictly business principles for a fair profit. Mrs. Sage has been, for a long time, interested in the need of better and more attractive housing facilities in the suburbs, for persons of moderate means, who could pay (it is well to bring things down to dollars and cents), from twenty-five dollars a month, upwards, in the purchase of a home.

Of course, these houses are well contrived, fitting the site, the pocket-book and the family. Some of them are in groups of three and four. Some are semi-detached. One group, may I write, blessed by the cognomen 13, comprises two detached and two semi-detached, single family houses. The former run east and west, the latter north and south, and so form three sides of a square. They each have an individual garden and

have an unusually interesting diagonal view of the road which they front, and present to their neighbors an interesting picture. They are built of brick, being known, technically, to be of semi-fireproof construction, with rough-cast surfacing, and, like the rest of the houses, are roofed with red tile. The eaves overhang, after the fashion of many of the peasant cottages in rustic England. It is through a hooded porch that the front door is reached. There is in the living-room an admirable open fireplace.

The buildings balance well with each other, a certain symmetry is observed which contributes to the quality of repose and of wholesome restraint. This speaks splendidly for the whole-souled management, for the industry and skill of the supervising architect, for the general lay-out of the place.

There is a whole lot of common sense in the geography or philosophy or planning—call it what you will. The backyards, if such a name can be given them, are made interesting. They are planted. The family laundry is concealed behind trellis enclosures, open, yet sheltered. Underground half-sunken driveways lead the automobile to the garage. The houses are grouped so as to form a picture as well as shelter for the inmates. There is nothing arrogant or affected about any of the houses. To me some of the little detached cottages costing but a few thousands are as delightful and ennobling to the place as the larger, more costly houses. Block 39 is another illustration of what I mean. Here the



THE FOUNTAIN IN THE CENTRAL COURT AND THE COVERED BRIDGE BETWEEN THE RAILROAD STATION AND THE HOTEL

houses face the informally picturesque depression—for the engineer has great respect for topography, the natural undulating surfaces of the ground and of the little hills, and hollows are considered and preserved. The small houses face this little garden and turn their backs upon the road. The kitchen and offices generally front the road. There are also some delightful cottages built in terrace form, the entrances to which are grouped and hooded and the rooms made individual by consistent attention to essentials—open fireplaces, casement windows and windows well grouped to enjoy certain vistas.

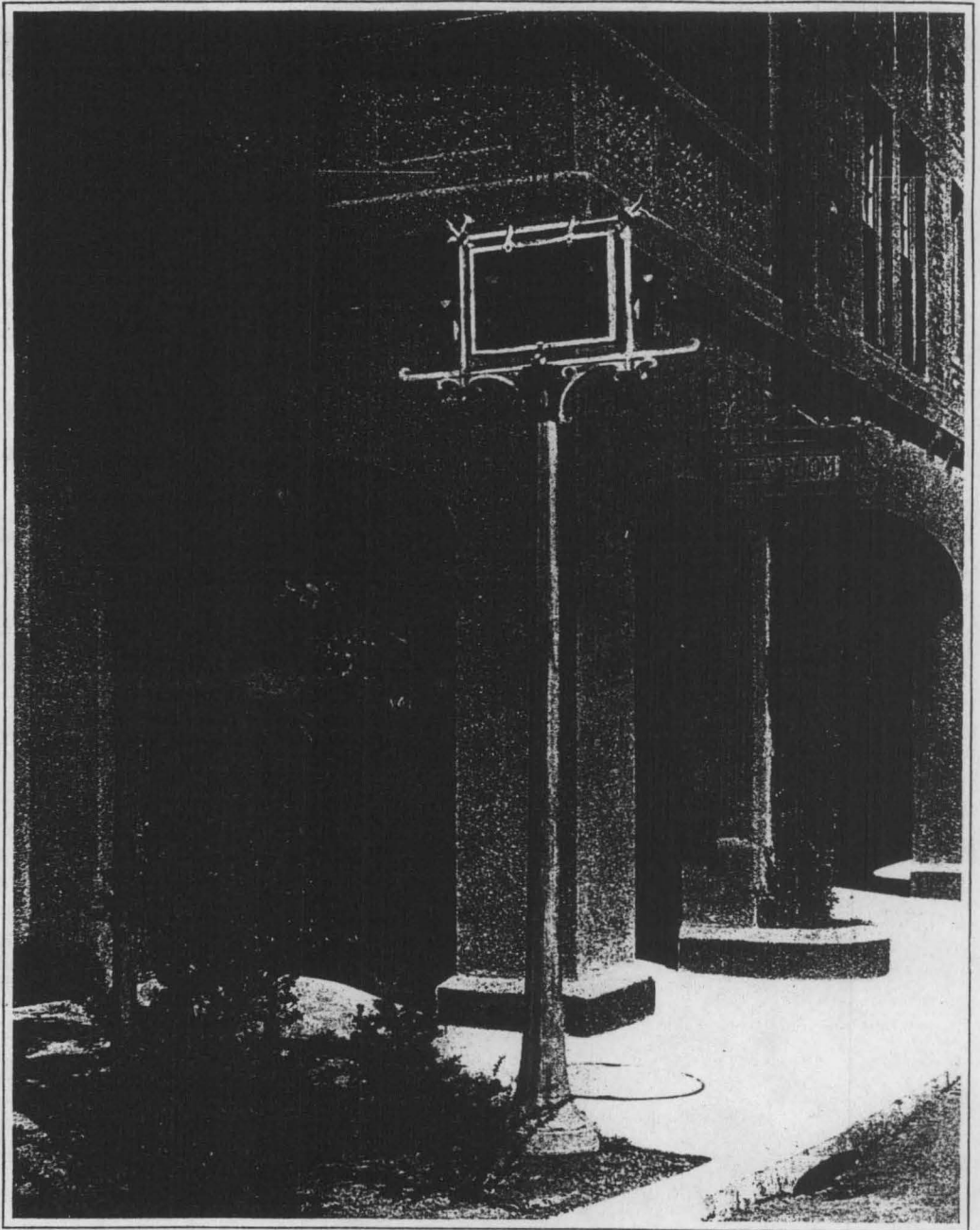
The golf enthusiast will be pleased to learn that the adjoining park challenges his skill; courts for the squash player are built upon the top of the hotel building, and tennis courts adjoin the Japanese Tea Garden. The Jamaica High School still has accommodations for additional scholars.

The houses are built of every-day materials. Right royally have the architects clung tenaciously to their self-imposed task of making the best out of good, hard, well-burnt brick, of ingeniously contrived concrete, applied to unexpected and unusual purposes, such as trellis grating, copings to walls, chimneys, shafting and caps, corbelling, impostes and curbing, water troughs, bowls and large six-sided and square vases for dwarf-growing juniper trees that love to cling to a rock-like substance. The bricks are laid in many varieties of bond. They are rich in color, texture and occasionally diversified

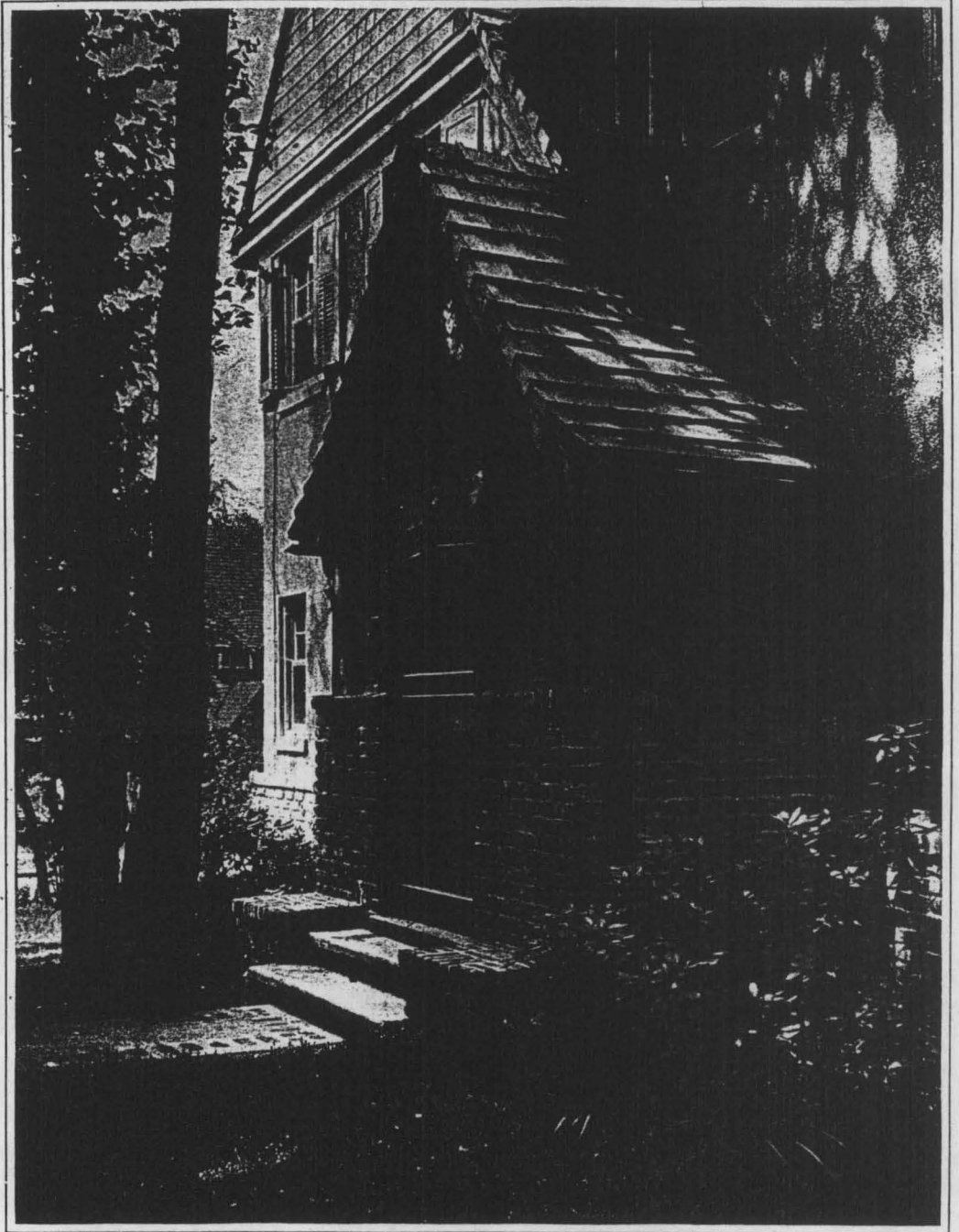
even in joint. There are cheap bricks; that is, they are reared from the fire, not selected, and they are all the better for it. They build in splendidly together and make a very interesting picture. They go well with the style of the road and the rock which has been blasted from the foundations of the neighborhood, used as base and dwarf fencing.

Someone—a woman of course—wrote the other day the one great thing about the writing of Arnold Bennett, in his "Tales of the Five Towns," was the remarkable manner in which he maintained a certain quiet, equable interest along a definite line, dealing with every-day, middle-class people, their every-day ambitions, and with this material he held his public charming them delightfully by his fantastic method of expression. Just so have the architects of Forest Hills clung to an attractive use of simple materials.

Arriving at Forest Hills Gardens by the railroad, the visitor feels at once the heart of the little place, getting an impression of the Gardens as a whole. The word "village" is good enough for anyone, after Thoreau's lucid characterization, still "town" is better, because it involves the idea of individual ownership. The approach is unexpected, the first view is a general view of the whole scheme. The railroad runs along an elevated embankment, and from a height the group of houses are seen. It is a settlement, the court of which is dominated by a large building, which gives to the modern American suburb much of the quiet picturesqueness of



SEVERAL ARCHITECTS AND A WELL-KNOWN LANDSCAPE GARDENER HAVE WORKED TOGETHER IN FOREST HILLS GARDENS



IN THE COMBINING OF BRICK, WOOD AND PLASTER, THE ARCHITECT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY SUCCESSFUL

THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

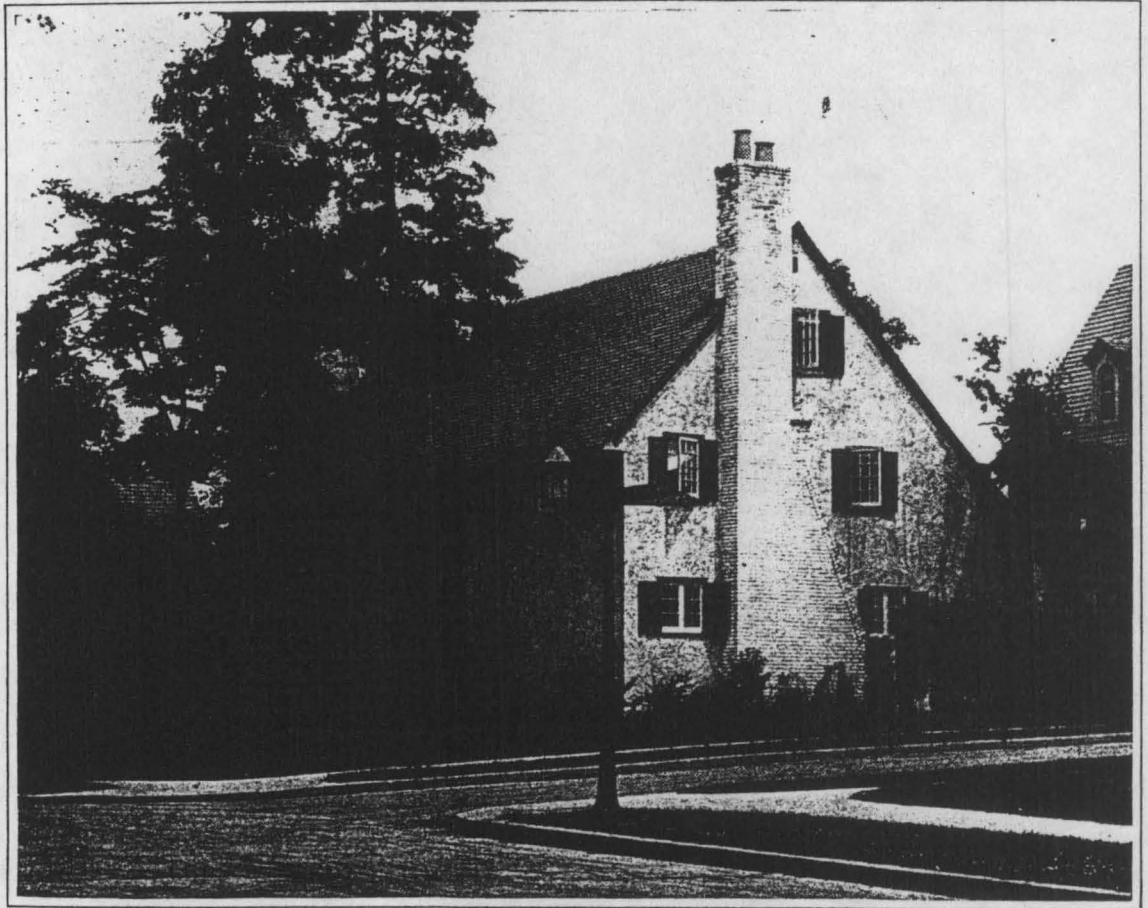
dressy or an 'airy' place. One little house is so delightful that I must describe it. You have to climb up to the second floor to reach the front door. It is built of brick. The ends of the brick project, very much as they do in Holland. I almost expected to find a three-wheeled cart, drawn by a little lady with a wrinkled brown face, selling delicious cream cheeses for three sous."

It pays to own a home. The payment is character. The payment is a stimulating impulse of self-education, of self-expression and of self-reliance. You feel the limitations of the ordinary apartment or flat, and that their popularity, fortunately for the community, is now slowly but surely on the wane. As the facilities for reaching the city increases, so does the demand for small houses in the suburbs. The spirit of America will be better, stronger for fostering the love of home. The flat and the apartment are simply abiding places, not by any stretch of the imagination can they be accepted as homes. Recently I visited Forest Hills Gardens, a suburb recalling somewhat the garden cities at Krupp and Essen, in Germany, and Roland Park, Baltimore, Whitinsville and Hopedale, in Massachusetts. Here are bright, cheerful houses, well arranged, well trimmed lawns, hedging carefully cut. The effect is admirable. The roads are quiet, bright,

well-swept, distinctly joyous, in that they form essentially part of the district, and are distinctly private roads to private houses. You feel this. You feel that you are in no way trespasser but are welcome. Of course, all things of this kind are matters of association. A person loves a picture, a melody, a verse, because it calls up for him forgotten memories of times when he was young, in love, or peculiarly happy. And so does he transmit to the village he loves.

Some people might like to think of the garden city as a tiny principality, presided over by a strong personality, who, in some subtle manner, at times humorous and again defiant, but always good natured, endeavors to extract from everyone so fortunate as to be within its boundaries, the natural good and worth-whileness of each character, so as to make of this neighborhood a pleasing page in the history of the locality.

The last view of the Gardens, as we return to town, invites a general summing up of everything. Homes are needed for the people, of that there is not any doubt, and anything which will throw light upon the thought in a practical way, by illustrating what so many thousand dollars will do in a given position, is indeed welcome. We, as a nation, are thinking, changing, growing. We are learning. The nation is alive to the need of this increase of individual ownership.



IN THE WORK OF ALBRO & LINDBERG IS SEEN A MOST HOMELIKE SMALL HOUSE

Aug. 11 1916

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A SUBURBAN TOWN BUILT ON BUSINESS PRINCIPLES

FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED

Forest Hills Gardens, whose landscape features are described by Mr. Olmsted in the following article, is a business investment of the Russell Sage Foundation. The town is situated within the boundaries of New York City, and while not differing materially from other Long Island real estate enterprises, emphasizes English garden city features that are so often unknown in our American suburbs. Ample playground and recreation facilities are provided and minute attention is given to an attractive city plan that conforms to the tentative plan of Greater New York. This idea of a well-rounded policy of suburban development—a policy that coincides with the plan of the greater city—might well be applied to the outlying sections of any large community. It is so seldom that an American town plans its growth with an idea of future development that the example of Forest Hills Gardens is noteworthy.—*Editor.*

The Russell Sage Foundation, as a means of earning the income which it uses in various lines of philanthropic work, has invested a part of its capital in a suburban land company operating in the Borough of Queens, in New York City. This concern, the Sage Foundation Homes Company, has bought a tract of some 160 acres on the Long Island Railroad sixteen minutes from the Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan and is developing it into building lots. As a business proposition the enterprise differs in no essential respect from those of other land companies except in this: that whereas the ordinary land-company will put upon the market only the same old standard article in the way of city lots that is already selling successfully in the vicinity, the Sage Foundation Homes Company is willing to risk something by introducing to some degree what may be regarded as novelties in the New York retail land market, novelties which it believes the public will appreciate and pay for, which if successful will be copied by others and raise the general standard, but which are not sufficiently certain in their appeal to induce the average real estate man to try the experiment on his own account.

There is a speculative element in any transaction in city land, but what the Sage Foundation Homes Company is doing, as many land development concerns all over the country are doing, is not mere gambling in land values,

as in the case of those land speculations where the only source of profit is the unearned increment. It is conducting, in fact, a process of manufacture and merchandising. As raw material it has bought agricultural land at wholesale, although at suburban prices which include a large and purely speculative advance secured by previous holders. It is manufacturing that land in some cases partially and in other cases wholly, into good individual suburban dwellings, with all that term implies in the way of equipment and surroundings. Finally it is marketing the product at retail, in various styles and stages of completion, to suit the purchasers and tenants, from the vacant lot on a clean, paved, planted street, to the non-housekeeping apartment of one to four rooms and a bath in a building with a restaurant, a garden and a squash court.

Its profits, as in the case of other well-conducted land companies, are those of the manufacturer and merchant who performs an actual service to the community; they depend not at all on holding land for a speculative rise, but on turning it over as quickly as possible to the retail purchaser at reasonable retail prices, with the least possible loss through accumulated interest and taxes.

In laying out Forest Hills Gardens there has been an attempt to secure the full benefit resulting from three important principles in city planning, the advantages of which are coming to be more and more

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clearly recognized as part of the rapidly advancing expert knowledge of the subject.

One of these principles relates to the main thoroughfares, which should be direct, ample and convenient, no matter how they cut the land. Two eighty-foot streets are carried straight through the property, on lines 1,200 feet apart, fixed by the location of bridges under the railroad and in accordance with New York city's tentative street plan covering adjacent territory. A boulevard 123 feet wide, also coinciding with the city's tentative street plan, is provided along the line where the property fronts on Forest Park, a 536 acre tract forming the largest reservation of public park lands in the Borough of Queens. In addition, two avenues seventy feet wide, with an ample set-back of buildings, radiate from Station square, where the most important of the eighty-foot streets passes under the railroad, on direct but gently curving lines, so located as to secure the best grades and the most agreeable settings through the midst of the property to the entrances of Forest Park and to the boulevard which is to follow its easterly boundary. These two important lines would be wholly unprovided for under the usual rectangular layout of New York streets and blocks. Other streets secondary to the above in importance are sixty feet in width, also with a set-back for buildings, and follow lines which are direct but carefully related to the topography and which connect with the adjacent street layout of the city's tentative plan.

A second principle, which is very important to supplement the first, but which has been too generally ignored in American street layouts, is that these streets which are not needed as thoroughfares should be planned and constructed to meet the purposes of quiet attractive residence streets. To this end the local streets at Forest Hills Gardens are laid out so as to discourage their use as thoroughfares. While not fantastically crooked, they are never perfectly straight for long stretches; and their roadways, well paved with bituminous macadam, are narrow, thus permitting additional space

to be devoted to the front gardens which will be one of the characteristic features of the whole development. Probably one of the most notable characteristics of Forest Hills Gardens from the point of view of the homeseeker, when the plans are fully realized, will be the cozy domestic character of these local streets, where the monotony of endless, straight, wind-swept thoroughfares which are the New York conception of streets, will give place to short, quiet, self-contained and gardenlike neighborhoods, each having its own distinctive character.

A third principle that has controlled the design of Forest Hills Gardens is the deliberate setting apart of certain areas for the common use and enjoyment of the residents. The fortunate location of the tract on the very borders of Forest Park has, of course, made it wholly needless to provide any large park within the tract itself, but in spite of this advantage, a public green has been formed at the point where the two main avenues divide, within view of the station and central to that part of the property which is farthest from Forest Park. This will form the residential focus of the community just as the neighboring Station square will be its business focus. The portion of the green lying between the roads and devoted wholly to lawn and paths and ornamental planting occupies one and one-half acres, but the size of the whole open space of the green, from building line to building line, is about three and one-half acres. Beyond the upper end of the green and upon its axis is reserved a public school site and in connection with it, sufficient space for a school playground and for school gardens.

The Station square itself, although primarily a traffic center, is of considerable size, and the whole of the surrounding architecture, including the railroad station and its approaches, is being developed as a single composition, with a regard for the pleasure which the residents may derive from its use, that is impossible in the individualistic development of business centers which usually occurs even in the most costly and most fashionable suburban districts.

In addition to the school playground and the green, a space of about an acre



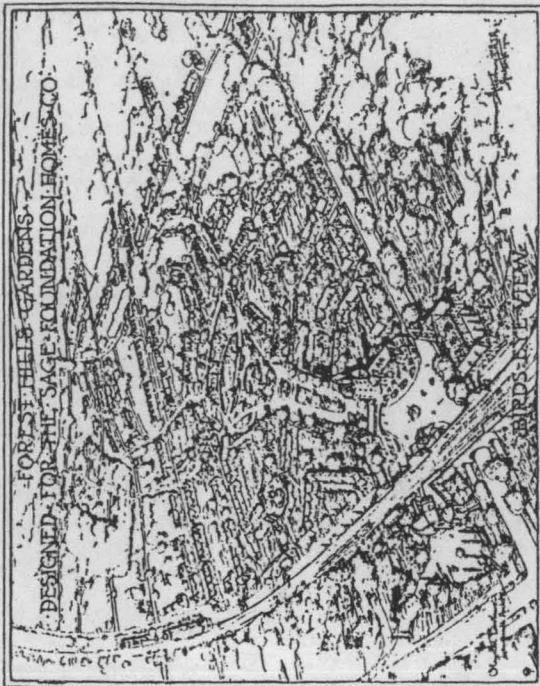
and a half, surrounded by streets, is being held in another part of the tract for use as a public recreation ground. The most novel recreation feature is that of enclosed "block playgrounds." These are spaces of varying shape and size, occupying the interior portion of some of the blocks and intended for the exclusive use of those living on the surrounding lots. They cannot be used for the active, noisy games of large boys and will not be open to the general public or to loafers, but will provide places where the smaller children of the block can find room to play instead of being forced out upon the streets. They will be reached through gates, directly from the back yards of most of the houses in these blocks.

Where land is of such high value as is bound to be the case within a quarter of an hour of Seventh Avenue and 32nd street, such a liberal provision of land for common use and enjoyment is possible, upon a sound commercial basis, only by paying a round price for it; and in the last analysis the price must be paid by the occupants of the lots. It is therefore a fair question how that price is to be paid - just what loss is to be set off against the gain.

The question may be answered in two ways. On the one hand, lots having

such advantages are thereby made more desirable, and are actually worth more to their occupants and worth more in the open market, lot for lot, than similar properties without these advantages; just as lots on a paved and sewered street are worth more than upon a street that is unimproved, the increased market value going to cover the cost of the improvement. In the opinion of most students of city planning and of many experienced and progressive real estate operators of large practical experience, land set apart for public recreation purposes in reasonable amount and in an intelligent manner, adds considerably more to the saleable value of the adjacent lots than it costs to set it apart.

In other words, for a slight increase in lot prices the wholesale dealer in land can probably afford to give something which is worth to the purchaser more than the amount of the necessary increase in the price of lots. On the other hand, it is possible by a reduction in the size of the back yards, so slight as not to reduce their practical usefulness, to save enough land for these neighborhood purposes without increasing the prices. Some of the lots in Forest Hills Gardens, therefore, being intended for homes of moderate size, are made shallower than the customary New York lot



on which the deep, badly lighted tenement house has developed, and will have the advantages already described with no increase of cost; while in order to suit every purchaser other lots are laid out of the usual depth, and in a few cases of more than the usual depth, for a price that is but slightly advanced.



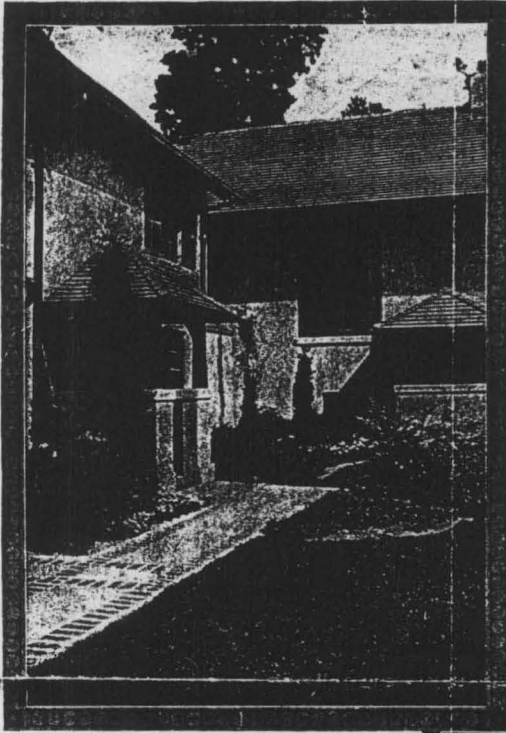
SYLLABI OF BOSTON-1915 CONFERENCES

The following syllabi have been prepared by two of the conferences of Boston-1915 as indicating the needs of the city in the particular fields covered. From each of the syllabi will be chosen two or more of those projects which are most needed and which it is practicable to carry through within a reasonable time. Several additional conferences will have reported before the publication of the February number of NEW BOSTON. All programs will be co-ordinated by a Joint Syllabus Committee made up of representatives from each of the conferences.

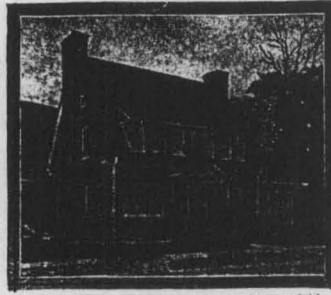
The Neighborhood Conference

1. Agencies:

- (a) Improvement Associations.
 - 1 New organizations in those districts not already covered.
 - 2 Increase in membership, attendance and interest in associations.
- (b) Settlements and Neighborhood Centres.
 - 1 Better general knowledge of the undertakings, and results of same in existing settlements.
 - 2 Moral and financial support of same.
 - 3 The establishment in the suburbs of Boston of a chain of social centres for neighborhood welfare.
 - 4 More general use of the information possessed by the settlements for city and neighborhood advancement.
- (c) Better social inter-district relations, such as would be brought about by exchange of educational and social courtesies between schools, churches, settlements, and improvement associations, etc.



A corner in the central garden of a four-house group



A charming Renaissance cottage of warm-toned tapestry brick

to work out the problems of a typical American home-community so as to yield the greatest possible efficiency—that is, the best general plan, the most permanent sort of construction, the most harmonious and beautiful design and adornment, a congenial grouping of residents, and the strictest economy for both promoter and clients. For this is a business as well as an educational enterprise. It will have educational value to other home-builders in direct proportion to its success in yielding a fair profit to the Foundation.

AS A philanthropy it would be meaningless. As a money-maker it demonstrates to all American communities that they can be sightly, comfortable, inviting and actually charming to a degree unguessed, and all virtually without extra cost.

Forest Hills Gardens shows ideally the value of streets run to follow the natural contours of the land instead of laid off in tiresome, uninteresting rectangles. It shows as well the gain in beauty and money by cooperative gardening. It demonstrates the possibilities of little-known building-materials and the practicality of building small, simple houses that are preeminently useful and yet dignified and beautiful. It has proved the good sense and economy of building these houses in small, related groups and of leaving ample park spaces among the groups. And especially it has shown that there is a real gain to the pride and pleasure of the householder when all his neighbors' houses harmonize with his in color.

A good many Americans are apt to sniff at the mere suggestion of color-harmonies in houses. It sounds "artistic," and therefore fantastic. Perhaps that is because they have never seen it tried.

HOUSES THAT FIT THEIR NEIGHBORS

A MODEL AMERICAN COMMUNITY, PLANNED BY A GREAT PHILANTHROPY, TO SHOW HOW WELL WE MIGHT BUILD

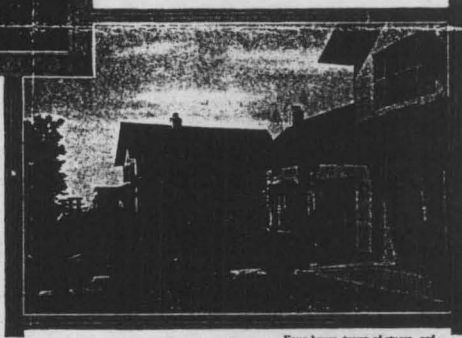
By CARLYLE ELLIS

TO SHOW Americans of moderate means the very best way to go about building a home for themselves, the Russell Sage Foundation, that extraordinary philanthropy created by Mrs. Sage with the late financier's fortune, has gone into a unique enterprise. Or rather it has gone into an old business in a unique and worthy way.

It has undertaken a real-estate promotion and the building of a model residential community in the outskirts of New York City to show how well this sort of thing can be done; to demonstrate by example what excellences of living most Americans sacrifice because they know no better.

This community is Forest Hills Gardens, out on Long Island, nine miles from the center of the metropolis. The autochrome photographs reproduced on this page show a few of the houses and groups of houses built by the Foundation there, to demonstrate how much more a fair amount of money can do when it is used with honesty, brains and good taste in the building of a house than it usually does.

But Forest Hills Gardens is much more than that. It is a serious, thoughtful attempt



Four-house group of stucco, red-tiled, with a common garden

A more expensive house that would not "kill" the little ones



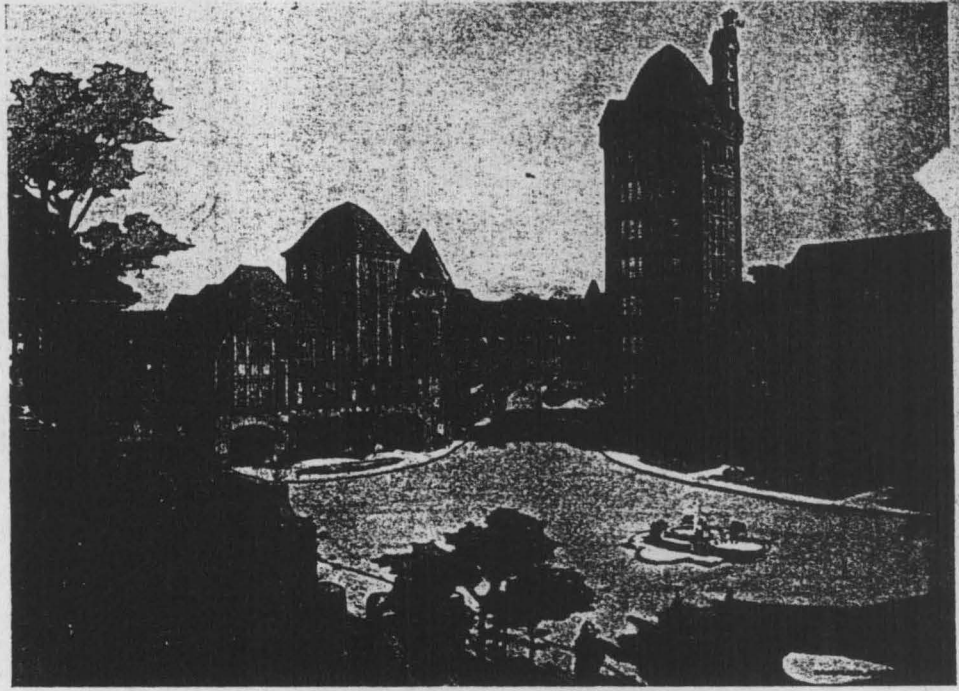
They resent dictation about even more public things than the colors they choose for their houses. They feel no obligation to their neighbors in the matter, and rather like to show their American independence by some novel atrocity. But let some gay-hearted peasant from Europe move near-by and proceed to decorate his domicile sky-blue, purple and yellow, and your good American is profoundly shocked and grieved. He wants to know if there is no law to stop such outrages.

It is because Forest Hills Gardens has taught us such illuminating things about the architectural value of color that these illustrations were made by the new color-photography. It vastly increases the practical value of anything that could be written about this most significant undertaking.

The lesson is obvious. These little houses suggest the homes of rich men. They are not at all. Many of them have been and can again be built for six or seven thousand dollars. They look expensive because their proportions have been carefully thought out, their detail studied lovingly, and their color planned by artists who understand and respect color. That is all. At Forest Hills Gardens you see many of these little houses adjoining great mansions that cost many times as much, and yet they never look out of place or cheap. That surely is the final test of their excellence.

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View of Station Square from the railroad platform. Shops and non-housekeeping apartments. Designed by Grosvenor Atterbury for the Sage Foundation Homes Co.

A MODEL TOWN IN AMERICA

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUBURBAN TOWN AFTER THE IDEALS OF ARCHITECT, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT AND THE SAGE FOUNDATION

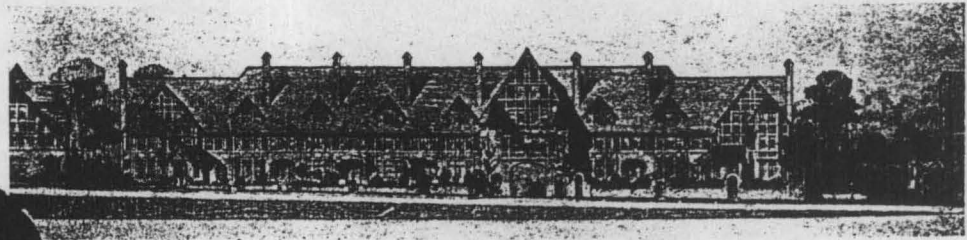
By JOHN A. WALTERS

FACING certain economic conditions, such as the high value of land in the neighborhood of a big city, the cost of railroad commutation and present-day conditions of home life, the Russell Sage Foundation Homes Company is building a model suburban residential town within a quarter of an hour of the heart of New York.

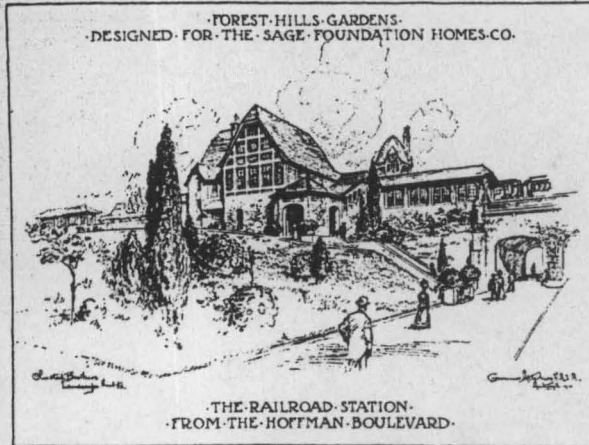
Forest Hills Gardens, as the town has already been named, was carefully and comprehensively laid out by the

landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted. The architectural development is in charge of Grosvenor Atterbury, who is planning attractive, substantial and durable buildings. An experienced business management has been called in to conduct the enterprise at a fair profit.

This is the first time that a proposition of this kind has been tried in this country. England has her "garden cities," there are model towns in Germany, but America has up to now grown in a more or less haphazard way.



Group of small single family houses designed for the Sage Foundation Homes Co. by Grosvenor Atterbury
(118)



The railroad station from the Hoffman Boulevard

For the first time we shall see if suburban development cannot have a distinct educational value, while it pays reasonable dividends.

Mrs. Russell Sage and those whom she has associated with her in the Foundation have been profoundly impressed with the need of better and more attractive housing facilities in the suburbs for persons of modest means, who could pay from \$25 a month upward in the purchase of a home. They have thought that homes could be supplied with some greenery around them, with accessible playgrounds and recreation facilities, and at no appreciably greater cost than is now paid for the same roof room in bare streets without any such adjacency. They have abhorred the constant repetition of the rectangular block where land contours invite other street lines. They have thought that buildings of tasteful design, constructed of brick, cement or other permanent material, though of somewhat greater initial cost, were really more economical in their durability and lesser repair bills than the repulsive, cheaply built structures which are too often the type of New York's outlying districts.

In laying out Forest Hills Gardens Mr. Olmsted bore in mind three important principles in city planning: first, that the main thoroughfares should be direct, ample and convenient; second, that purely local streets should be planned and constructed to meet the purposes of quiet, attractive residence streets in the best possible manner; third, that certain areas should be deliberately set apart for the common use and enjoyment of residents. Accordingly, the town has two 80-foot streets running straight through it, and a boulevard 125 feet wide. Local streets, while not fantastically crooked, are never

perfectly straight for long stretches. The monotony of endless, straight, wind-swept thoroughfares, which are the New York conception of streets, will give place to short, quiet, self-contained and gardenlike neighborhoods, each having its own distinctive character.

A public green has been formed at the point where the two main avenues divide. This will form the residential focus of the community as the neighboring Station Square will be its business focus. The Station Square itself, though primarily a traffic center, is of considerable size, and the whole of the surrounding architecture, including the railroad station and its approaches, is being developed as a single composition, with a regard for the pleasure which the residents may derive from its use, that is impossible in

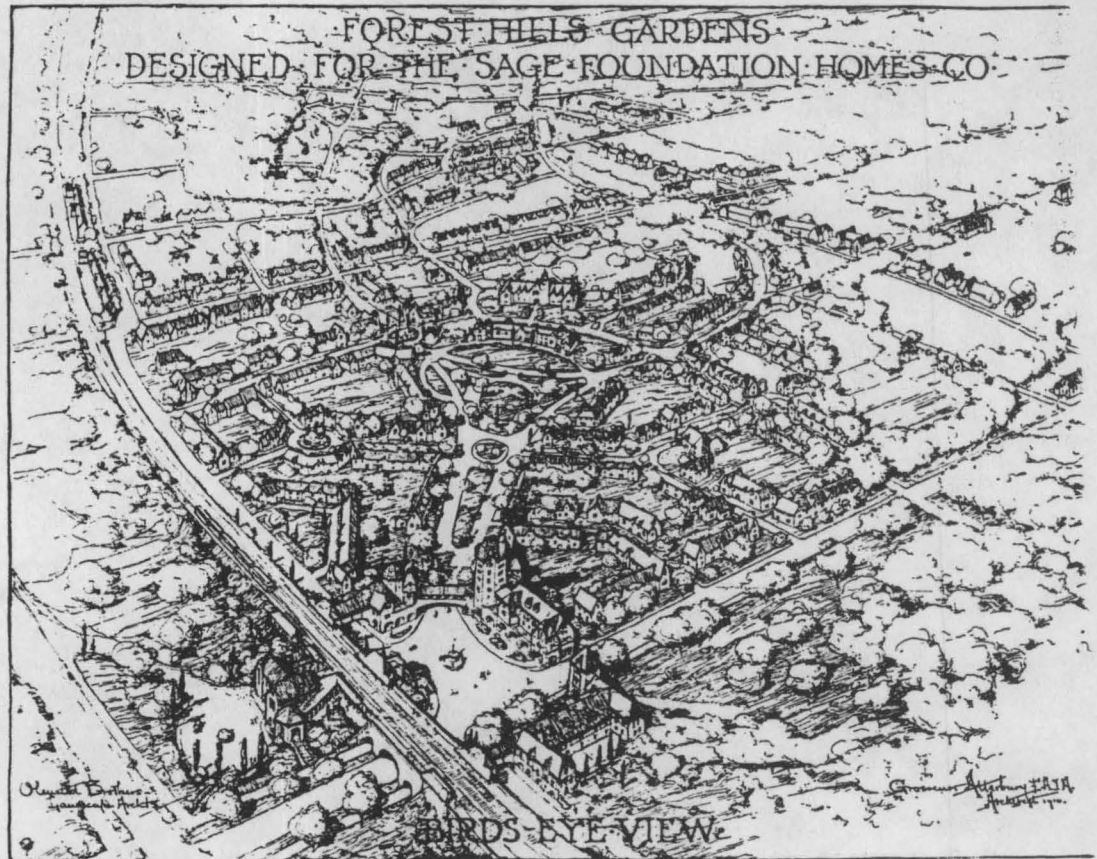
the individualistic development of business centers which usually occurs in suburban districts.

Adjoining the railroad station and forming the Station Square are three and four-story buildings designed by Mr. Atterbury. They will contain stores, offices and restaurant, and in the upper stories small non-housekeeping apartments, both for men and women. From this center out toward Forest Park, which bounds the property on the southeast, the houses are planned to correspond to the varying values of the lots as determined by their size, location and prospect, the larger single family dwellings containing ten or twelve rooms and the smaller four or five. Following the land and road contours these are combined in smaller and more detached groups as the property becomes more hilly.

From an architectural point of view the greatest opportunity—apart from certain novel uses of material and methods of construction—will lie in that general harmony of design which is possible only where the entire scheme of development is laid out and executed under such a system



Station Square, railroad station, stores and apartments



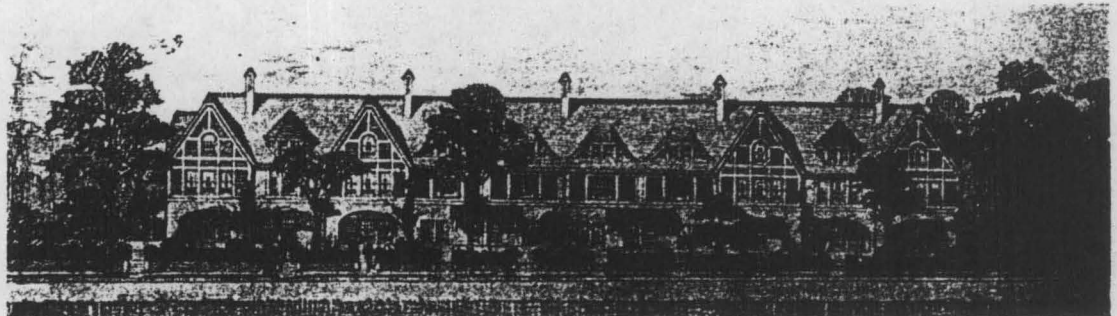
Bird's-eye view of Forest Hills Gardens as laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted

of cooperation by the various experts as in the work for Forest Hills Gardens.

As a matter of fact, the chief difference between the development here and any other land development so far undertaken in America is in that of design and "town planning." By this is meant both the designing of the houses, whether to be built singly or in groups, and the designing of the roads, the lots and the various public open spaces. It is chiefly in the quality of design that a new, distinctive and, it is hoped, educational work is sought to

be accomplished. Study was directed to the problem of a better use of the land, from both its economic and its esthetic viewpoints, than is afforded by the usual rectangular subdivision.

This is what the Sage Foundation Homes Company expects to realize. It will provide more healthful and more attractive homes for many people. It will demonstrate that more tasteful surroundings and open spaces pay in suburban development, and thereby encourage imitation. It will encourage more economical methods of marketing land.



Larger single family houses designed by Mr. Atterbury for the Sage Foundation Homes Co.

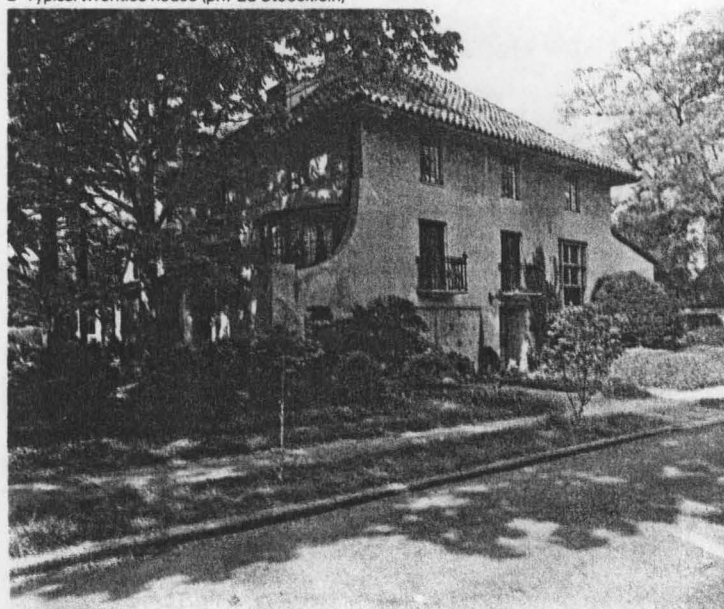
Forest Hills Gardens

Queens, New York. Russell Sage Foundation, developer. Grosvenor Atterbury, architect. Olmsted Brothers, landscape architects. 1912



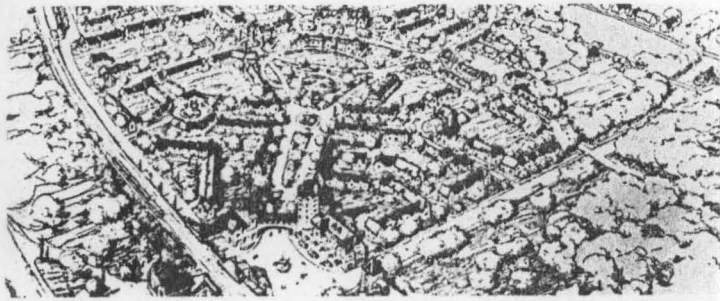
1 Grosvenor Atterbury, Greenway Terrace, 1912 (ph: Marta Gutman)

2 Typical twenties house (ph: Ed Stoecklein)

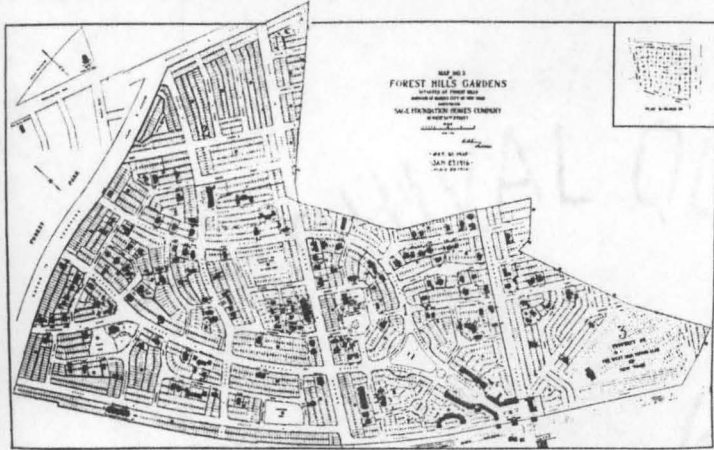
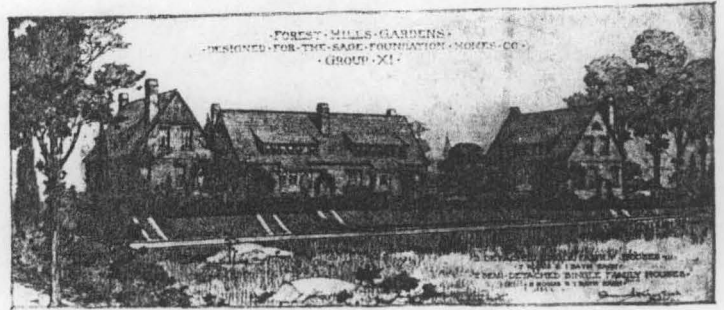


3 Two house development (ph: Ed Stoecklein)

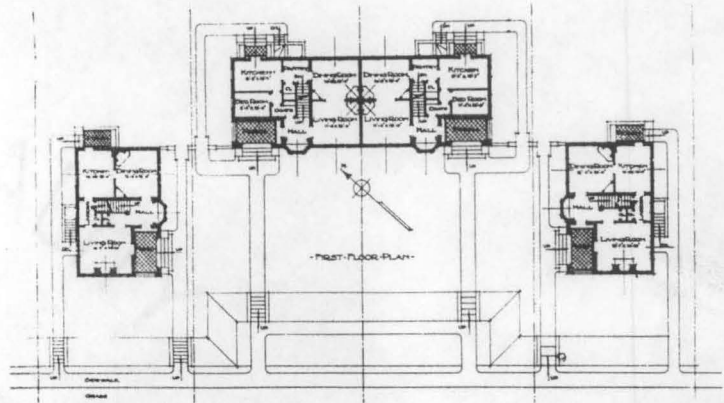




4 Grosvenor Atterbury and Olmsted Brothers, 1910



5 Plot plan of 1916



6 Grosvenor Atterbury, Group XI, 1914

Forest Hills Gardens, designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and the Olmsted Brothers, was built in 1912 by the Russell Sage Foundation as a model suburban residential town 15 minutes by rail from Manhattan. The Sage Foundation intended Forest Hills Gardens as a village of lower-income housing, but its nearness to Manhattan made the land cost too high, and the development quickly became the upper-middle-class enclave it remains today.

A number of serious attempts were made to keep the costs down: the highest density development was placed on the costly land nearest the train station, and much of the construction in the early stages utilised prefabricated concrete panels, an early example of this technique applied to residential architecture. But as Lewis Mumford observed, in his article 'Mass Production and the Modern House', Forest Hills Gardens is 'an attempt that failed. Atterbury designed ... for industrial workers in the fashion that he did for the upper middle classes....'

Forest Hills Gardens is the most English of American planned suburbs, clearly dependent on the work of Parker & Unwin and on the example of Hampstead Garden Suburb. But unlike the diffusely organised Hampstead Garden Suburb, Forest Hills Gardens is a sequentially organised community based on a continuous line of movement from the railroad station to Forest Park, a metaphoric journey from town to open country.

The gateway to Forest Hills Gardens is Station Square, a brick-paved plaza dominated by the tower of the Forest Hills Inn, bordered on one side by the embankment of the railroad station and on the other three by a continuously arcaded building, containing apartments and shops, that spans the two principal streets leading from it into the residential neighbourhoods of the village. The impression that one

gets in the Station Square is, as Samuel Howe observed, that 'of a college or cathedral city. The arching from one section of the hotel to the other also does much to help the illusion.'²

Despite the participation of the Olmsted firm, Forest Hills Gardens was intended to contradict the earlier, more romantic, and anti-urban suburbs such as Riverside. In the prospectus of 1911, the sponsors stated that 'fantastically crooked layouts have been abandoned for the cozy, domestic character of local streets, not perfectly straight for long stretches, but gently curving to avoid monotony'.³ As one moves away from the square the character become more rural. Though most of the land was sold in its undeveloped state, an architectural review process was initiated under the direction of Atterbury and his successors.

The loveliest of Atterbury's own designs is the group of houses that stretch along either side of Greenway Terrace as it leads from Station Square. But other groupings, such as that on Puritan Avenue (development group XXVIII), are in some ways more interesting. In group XXVIII, three buildings are arranged to form a central court and thereby enhance the sense of privacy. This court, divided into individual gardens with private entrances from the street, is a small testament to Forest Hills Gardens' chief planning virtue, its sensitive balance between individual expression and communality that later inspired a resident, Clarence Perry, to base his highly influential planning strategy, the 'neighbourhood plan', on his experience there. Atterbury's group XII at the fork between Greenway North and Markwood Road consists of four houses, two semi-detached, and successfully culminates the axis of Greenway North while providing an interior open space which makes a virtue of an outwards geometry. Other architects of dis-

tinction built at Forest Hills Gardens in its initial stage of development, including Wilson Eyre, and Harrie T Lindeberg - Lindeberg's house and studio for the artist Boardman Robinson is particularly distinguished. A few blocks of flats are also included within the village: in addition to the flats at Station Square, the Fred F French Company in 1917-18 built a much larger six-storey elevator complex on Dartmouth Street, the Gardens Apartment. Another of their buildings, the Leslie Apartments, was not completed until 1943 on an awkward site along Greenway Circle.

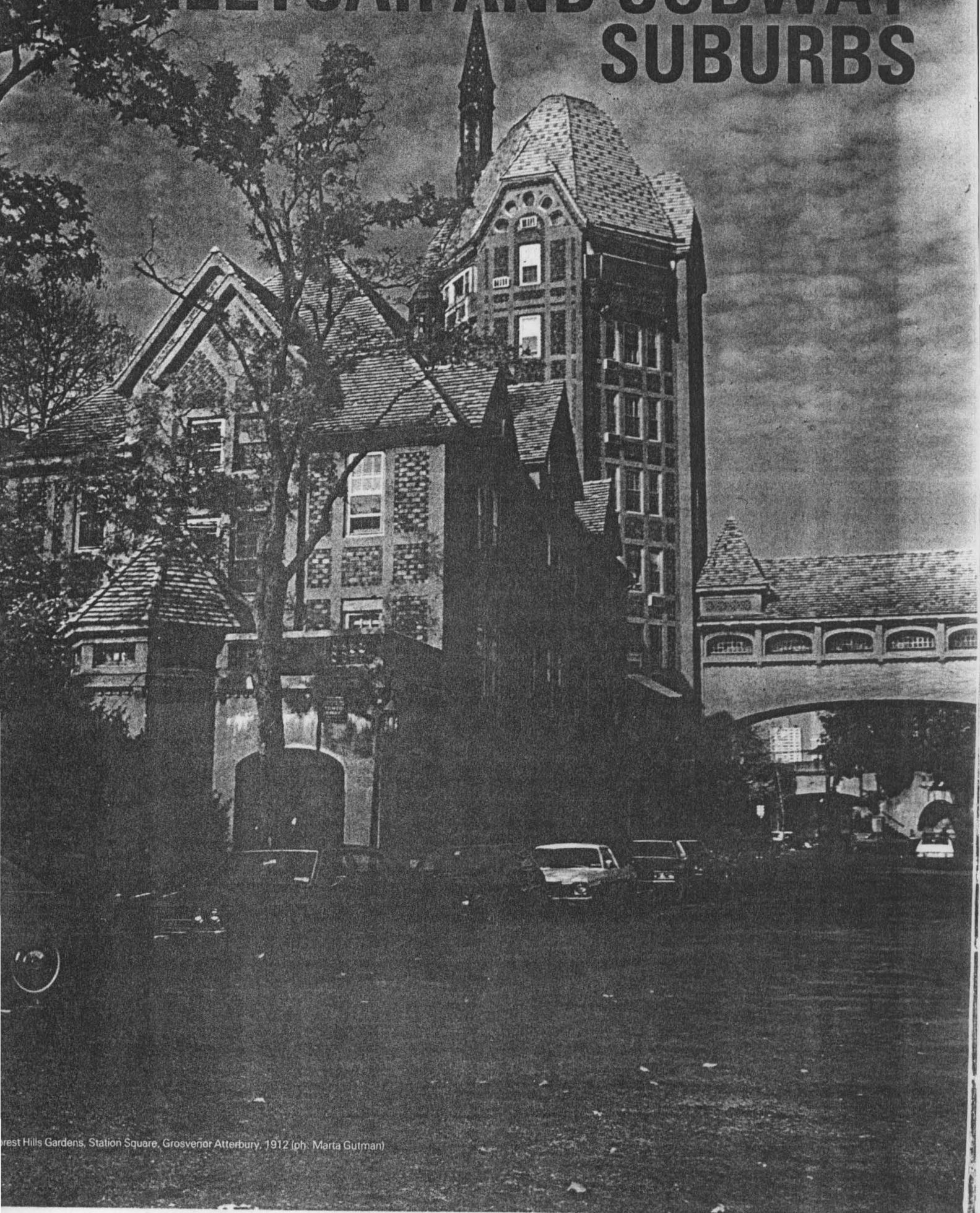
Forest Hills Gardens is unique in that it is at once a 'model' community and a 'business' proposition; Atterbury was aware of the problems that this seeming schizophrenia of intent might bring with it. He wrote: 'It is unfortunate that the somewhat misleading word "model" must be applied to such an eminently practical scheme as this development of the Russell Sage Foundation, for the reason that there is a kind of subtle odium which attaches to "model" things of almost any kind, even when they are neither charitable nor philanthropic - a slightly sanctimonious atmosphere that is debilitating rather than stimulative of success.'⁴

To contemporaries, Forest Hills appeared an anomaly, 'a supposedly model town ... built largely of contiguous houses in more or less continuous rows directly adjoining plowed fields....'⁵

Notes

- 1 In *Architectural Record* 67, January 1930, pp 13-20; February 1930, pp 110-116.
- 2 In his articles 'Forest Hills Gardens', *American Architect* 102, October 30 1912, pp 153-160.
- 3 Christopher Tunnard, 'The Romantic Suburb in America', *Magazine of Art* 40, May 1947, pp 184-187.
- 4 In his article 'Forest Hills Gardens, Long Island', *Brickbuilder* 21, December 1912, pp 317-318.
- 5 Atterbury, *op cit* (*Brickbuilder*), p 317.

STREETCAR AND SUBWAY SUBURBS



Forest Hills Gardens, Station Square, Grosvenor Atterbury, 1912 (ph: Marta Gutman)