



FOREST HILLS  
GARDENS  
CORPORATION

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FOREST HILLS GARDENS, NEW YORK 11375

*Forest Hills Gardens*  
&  
THE MAPS OF  
FOREST HILLS GARDENS

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# FOREST HILLS GARDENS

NO. 2/1994

THE FOREST HILLS, LONG ISLAND  
RAILROAD STATION, 1920



## INTRODUCTION

*Forest Hills Gardens* magazine serves to inform present and future residents about the planning, creation, and history of our community. The hope is that, once people understand something of the history and the fabric of their community, they will be better disposed to maintain and to preserve it. The articles in the magazine describe events, institutions, and structures which have been vital to the development of Forest Hills Gardens: the influence of European town planning, the evolution of the community through a study of its early maps, the West Side Tennis Club, and the building of the apartment houses. Perhaps the most important piece in terms of the preservation of Forest Hills Gardens is the photo essay on the railroad station and Station Square. This provides a record of the station and the Square when they were first constructed and suggests how they could look again if the current preservation



and restoration projects are successful.

During the past year, many residents, both past and present, have expressed their enthusiastic support for this publication. Other residents, particularly Turik Jalajel, Khalid Jalajel, and Nancy Grodin, have volunteered their time in indexing, storing, and preserving the archival documents at the Gardens Corporation offices. Finally, several residents have donated photographs, records, documents, and ephemera relating to the history of Forest Hills Gardens. Their support, volunteered time, and donated material are gratefully acknowledged.

Primary funding for this magazine comes from the Gardens Corporation. Additional funding came from a generous grant by the Forest Hills Gardens Taxpayers Association. I would like to acknowledge the support of both organizations.

— William E. Coleman, Editor



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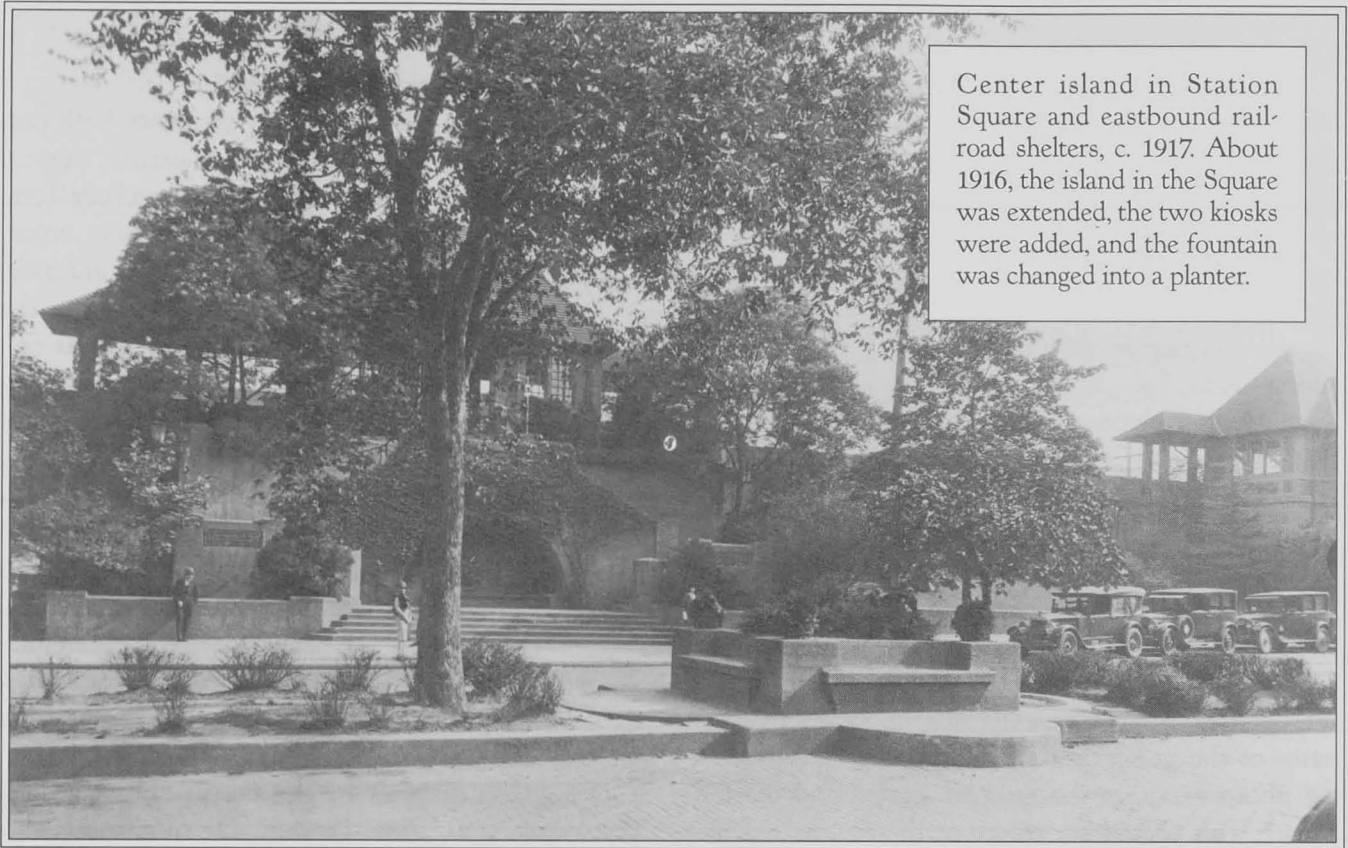


Editor: William E. Coleman

Associate Editor: Jane Sughrue Giberga

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Center island in Station Square and eastbound railroad shelters, c. 1917. About 1916, the island in the Square was extended, the two kiosks were added, and the fountain was changed into a planter.

## THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD STATION ~ AND STATION SQUARE, ~ FOREST HILLS, N.Y.: 1906-1993

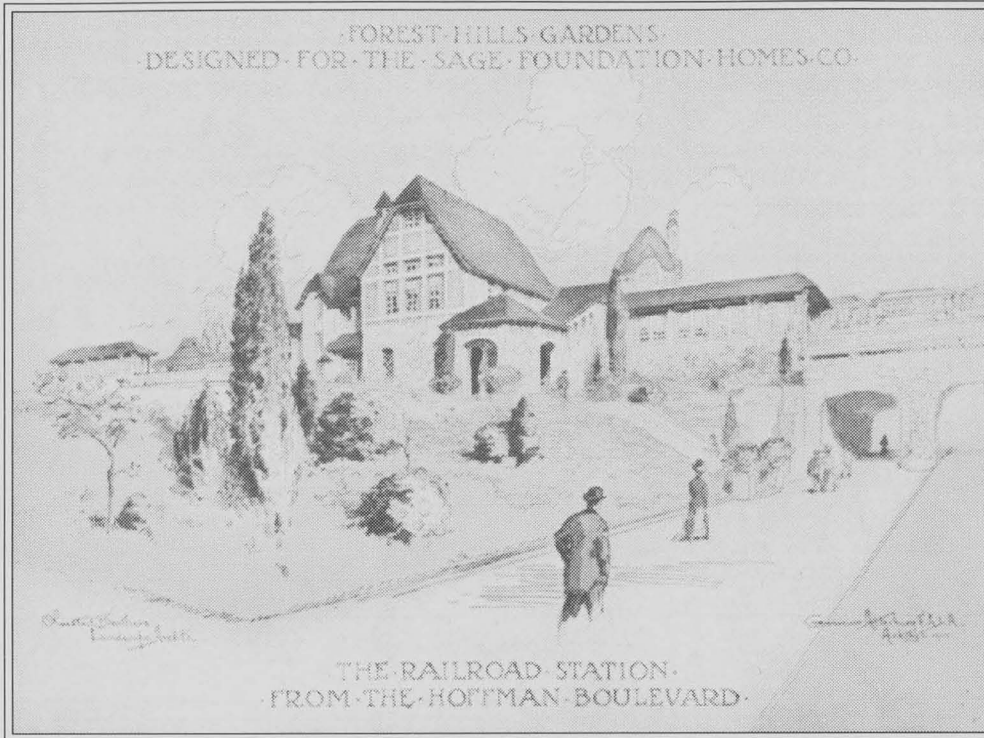
*By Ronald Marzlock*

Ronald Marzlock is a local historian and a board member of the Central Queens Historical Association. He has published many articles on Queens County history in local newspapers.

The Forest Hills Railroad Station and Station Square are the gateways to Forest Hills Gardens. Grosvenor Atterbury's railroad station in the Square links the community with the city. Frederick Law Olmsted's Greenways radiate from the Square, providing a passageway through the garden community to the woodlands of Forest Park. In his television series on American town planning, "*Pride of Place*," the architectural historian Robert A. M. Stern called Station Square, "one of the finest public spaces in America."

### RESTORATION OF STATION AND SQUARE

In recent years, residents have labored to preserve and to restore the structures of the railroad station and the Square. In the mid 1970s, the Forest Hills Village Improvement Society provided funds for work on the kiosks and the restoration of the clock in the Square. In 1992, a group of residents of the apartment houses in the Square restored the clock once again. The Gardens Corporation has earmarked funds for the restoration of the central island in the Square and the kiosks. The work with the most potentially far reaching consequences has been done in recent years by the Friends of Station Square. The Friends have mounted a campaign that resulted in a



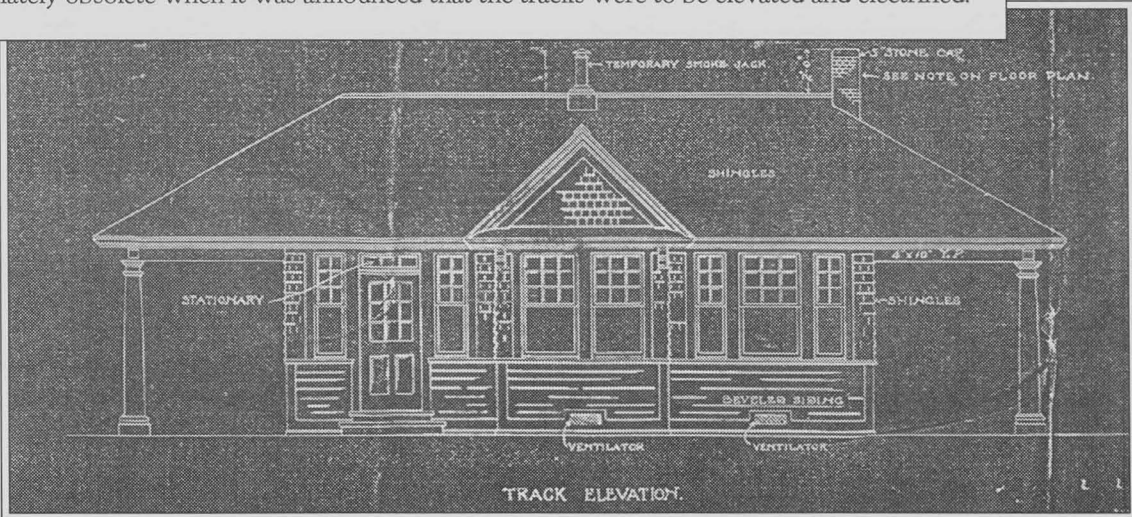
The original Atterbury and Olmsted sketch of the westbound railroad shelters and station (1910). The view is from the corner of Austin Street and Continental Avenue. The station, including the shelters on both tracks, cost \$50,000 to construct; the railroad paid \$10,000, while the Sage Homes Company and the Cord Meyer Corporation each paid \$20,000.

commitment on the part of the Long Island Railroad to preserve the railroad station and to restore the retaining walls which were damaged by a structural collapse in 1990.

Many residents today have no knowledge of the splendid original appearance of the railroad station and the structures in Station Square. If all

these projects succeed as hoped, however, Station Square and the railroad station should one day regain the appearance that they had in the early 1920s, when Atterbury and Olmsted had completed their work. The following photo-essay provides images of the Station and of Station Square as they were and, we hope, as they will once more be.

Architect's drawing of the original Forest Hills railroad station, July 1906. The station and the tracks for the steam-powered train were on street level. The station, which opened in 1908, was at 72nd Avenue and Austin Street. It was a one-story shingled building heated by a pot-belly stove. The station became almost immediately obsolete when it was announced that the tracks were to be elevated and electrified.



LONG ISLAND RAILROAD

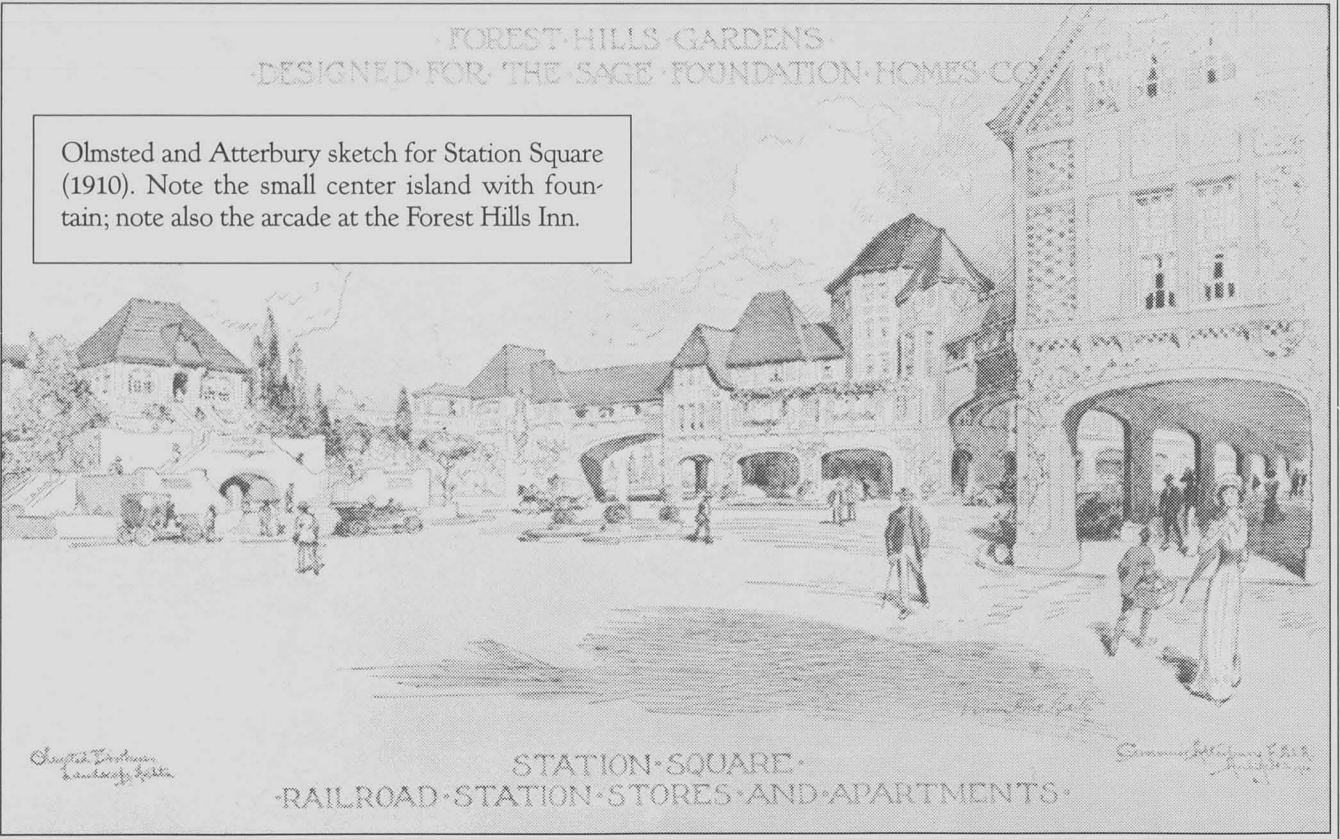
Forest Hills station: the driveway, shelters, and station along the westbound (i.e. city-bound) tracks, c. 1912. The photo was taken from the Austin Street exit of the driveway, near 71st Road. The driveway was designed and landscaped by the Olmsted Brothers firm, which did the landscaping for the rest of Forest Hills Gardens. The driveway had a plaza wide enough so that automobiles could discharge or receive their passengers at the entrance stairway to the city-bound tracks.



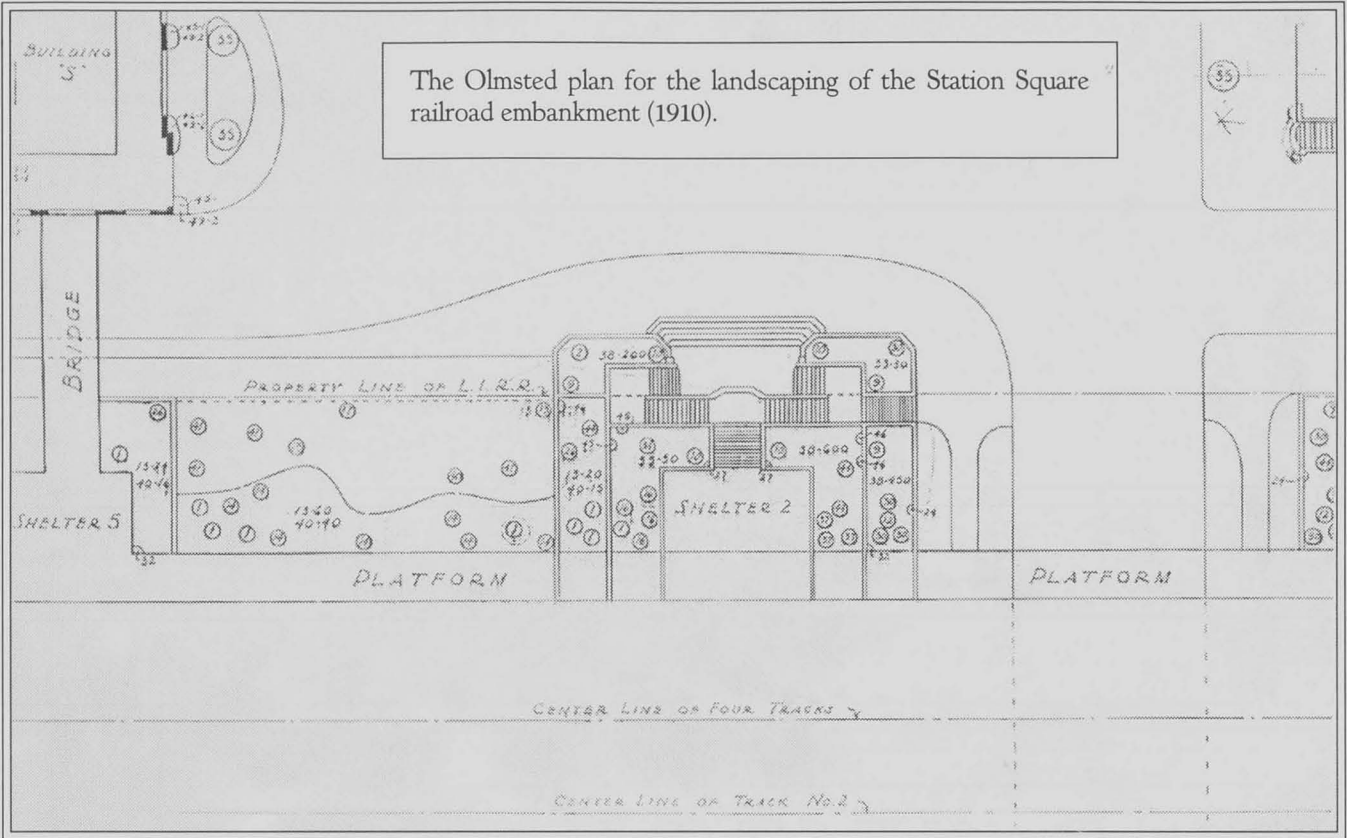
SUSANNA HOF

FOREST HILLS GARDENS  
DESIGNED FOR THE SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO.

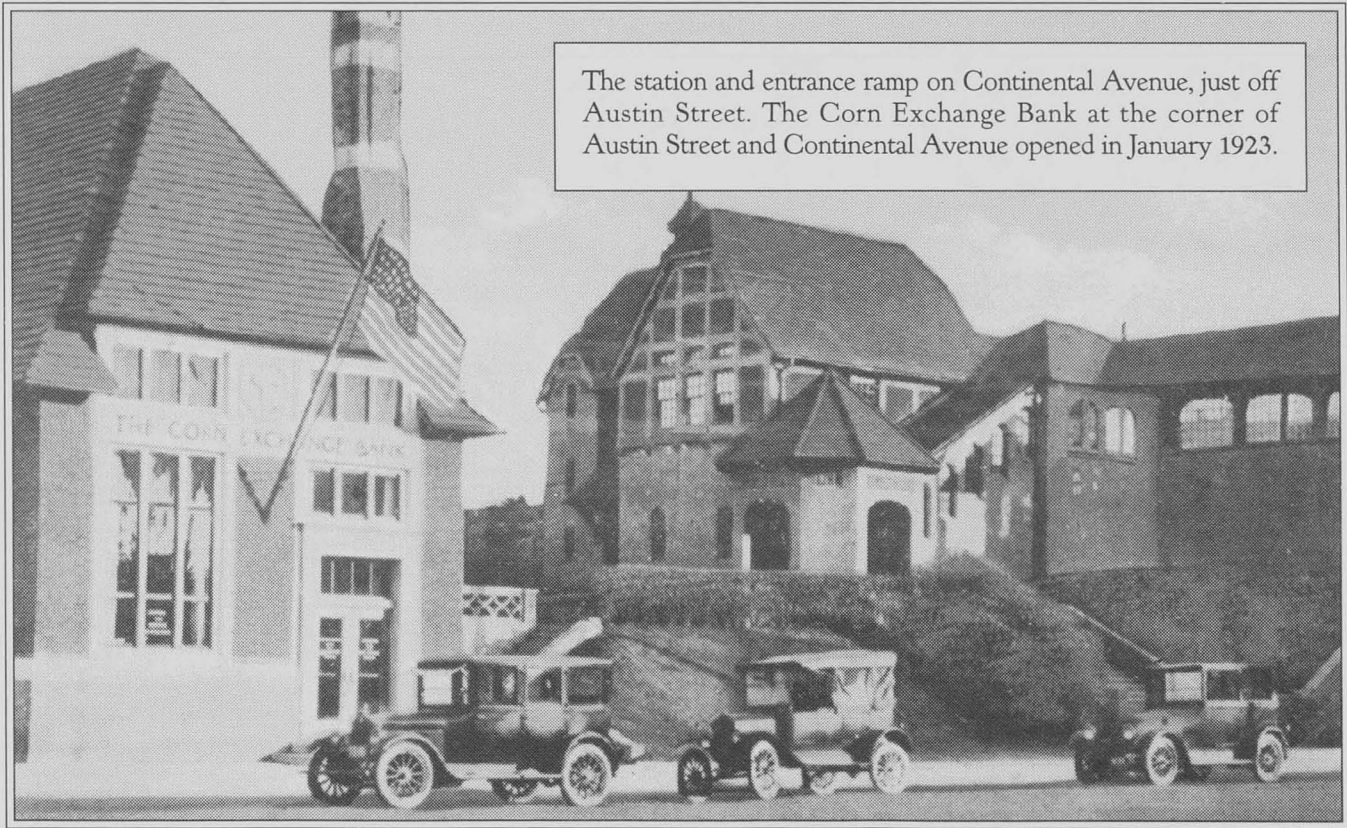
Olmsted and Atterbury sketch for Station Square (1910). Note the small center island with fountain; note also the arcade at the Forest Hills Inn.

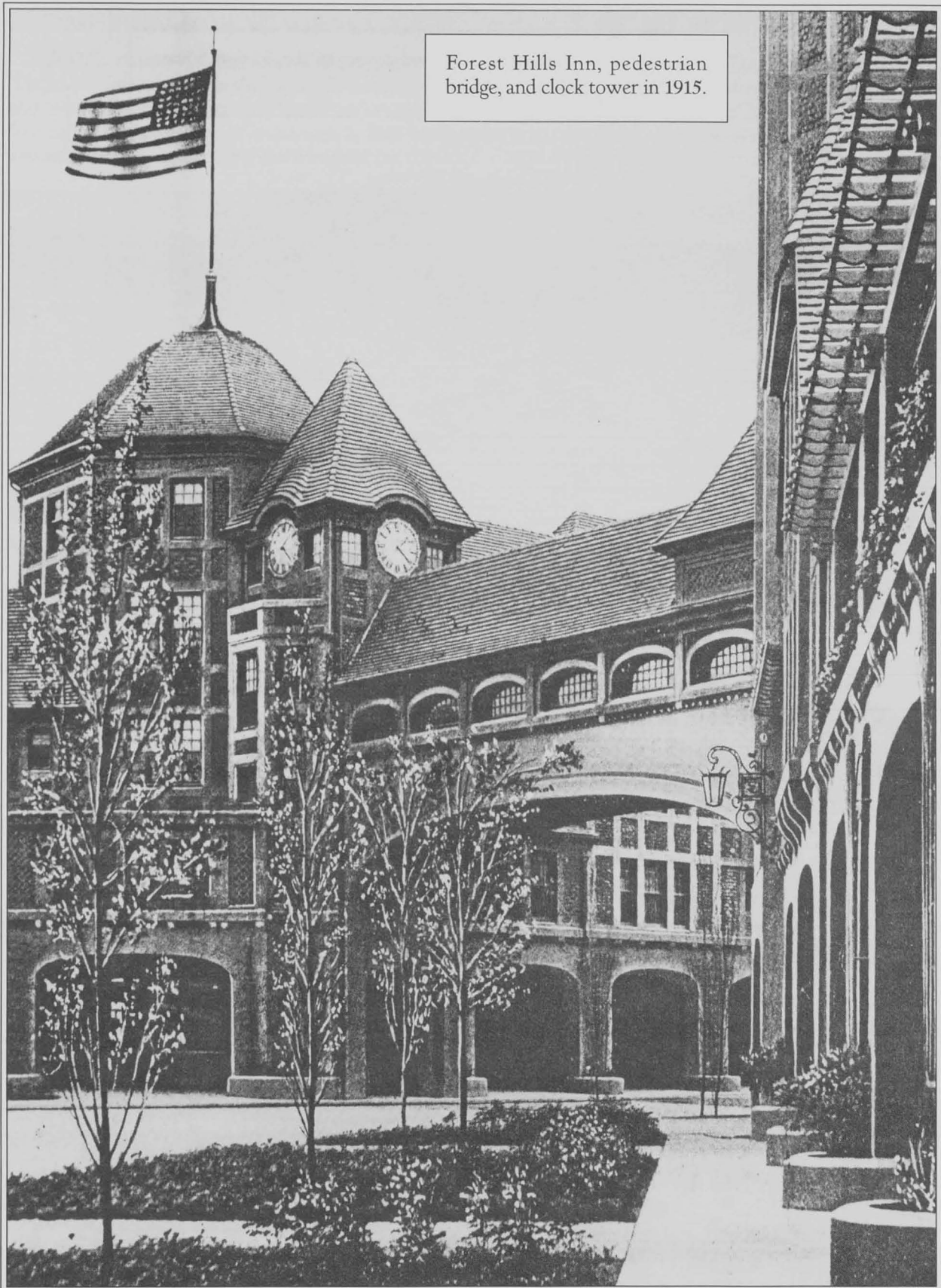


STATION SQUARE  
RAILROAD STATION STORES AND APARTMENTS



OLMSTED BROTHERS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, BROOKLINE, MASS. REPRODUCED COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

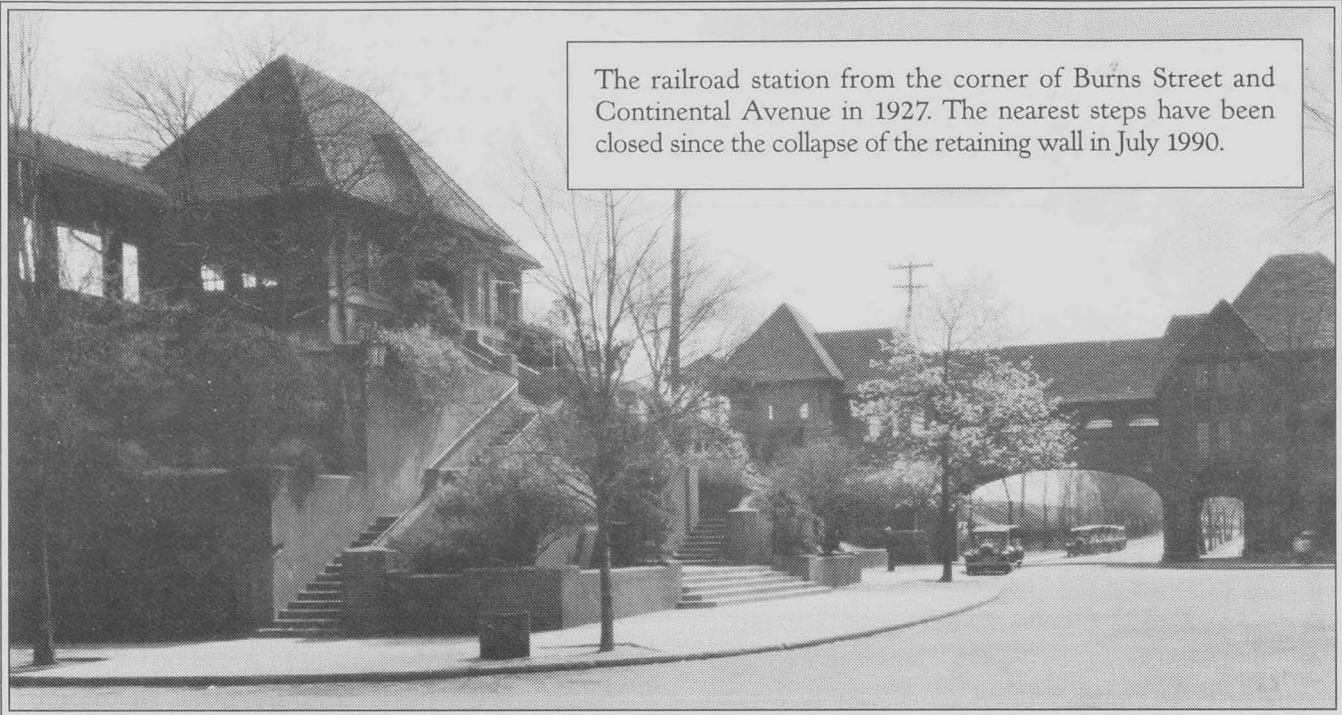




Forest Hills Inn, pedestrian bridge, and clock tower in 1915.

LONG ISLAND LIFE. OCTOBER 1915.



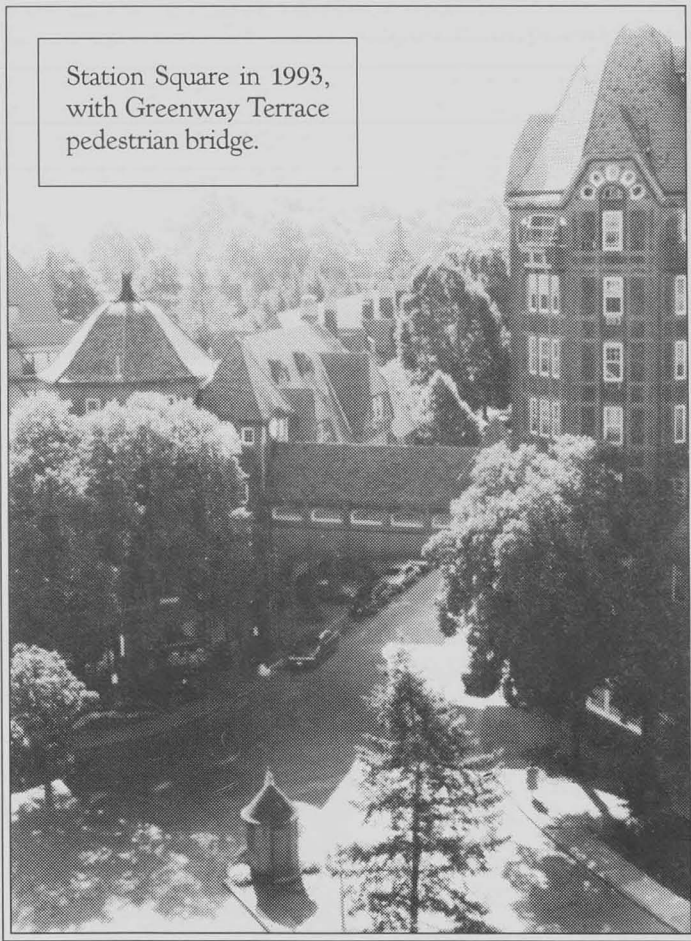


The railroad station from the corner of Burns Street and Continental Avenue in 1927. The nearest steps have been closed since the collapse of the retaining wall in July 1990.

LONG ISLAND RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPH



Police kiosk in the central island of Station Square, c. 1917. About 1916, the island in the Square was extended and the two kiosks were added. Because the nearest police station at the time was in Elmhurst, the police kiosk functioned as an outpost and call-in station.



Station Square in 1993, with Greenway Terrace pedestrian bridge.

WILLIAM COLEMAN

# FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, JR., ~ THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT, AND ~ THE DESIGN OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS

by William E. Coleman, Ph.D.

William E. Coleman is a Professor of English, Comparative Literature, and Medieval Studies at the City University Graduate Center. He chaired the Gardens Corporation's History Committee in 1992 and 1993, and is a board member of the Central Queens Historical Association.

**L**ate in 1908, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., was in Germany studying the town planning that had been accomplished in various German cities and suburbs. Olmsted (1870-1957) was the son and namesake of the most eminent American 19th century landscape architect. Among the more famous commissions of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1902), were Central Park (1858) and Prospect Park (1860s) in New York, which he designed with Calvert Vaux, Riverside Suburb near Chicago (1869), the Boston Park System (1870-1880s), and the plan for the World's Columbian Exposition (1893). As his father's student and, after 1898, his successor, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., had enjoyed equal renown. Among the better known commissions which his firm, Olmsted Brothers, had completed were the additions to the Boston Park System (1898-1920) and the McMillan Commission for the plan of Washington, D.C. (1901). In addition to these public

projects, the younger Olmsted served as a private consultant in the development of several residential suburbs. His best known community development work at the time of de Forest's letter was in Roland Park, Baltimore (1891). After his work at Forest Hills Gardens (1910), Olmsted would be a consultant in the development of Palos Verdes Estates, a community south of Los Angeles (1914).

## OLMSTED'S STUDY OF GERMAN TOWN PLANNING

Olmsted's particular purpose in visiting Germany was to study the landscaping, site planning, and street design that had been accomplished there. Germany was a center for town planning in

the early 1900s, due in a large part to the influence of the visionary architect and town planner, Camillo Sitte. In his book *Der Staedtebau* [Town Planning], published in 1898, Sitte proposed that modern town planning should freely imitate the arrangement of the medieval German towns. His point of reference was the picturesque irregularities which characterize the medieval towns. Many later planners had criticized these towns and had argued that the new towns should be developed along more "rational" plans. Sitte argued, however, that the medi-

ROTHENBERG, GERMANY. ONE OF THE BAVARIAN HILL TOWNS WHICH INSPIRED CAMILLO SITTE AND, LATER, RAYMOND UNWIN. IN FOREST HILLS GARDENS, THE INFLUENCE OF THE "BAVARIAN STYLE" ARCHITECTURE IS MOST EVIDENT IN GROSVENOR ATTERBURY'S BUILDINGS IN STATION SQUARE.



eval towns were the result of a conscious application of planning principles in order to produce a predetermined artistic effect. "Disorder" and "irregularity" were, in effect, two of the principles of medieval town planning, he contended; furthermore, these same principles should be taken into account in modern town planning.

Sitte continued this line of reasoning in the large format monthly architectural magazine, *Der Staedtebau*, which he edited beginning in 1903 and which took its name from the title of Sitte's book. For the editorial board of *Der Staedtebau*, Sitte assembled representatives of the "new" (but medieval-inspired) town planning from the major cities in Germany and Austria. These correspondents contributed long analytical articles, with drawings and photographs, of the planning and building activities in the German speaking world and elsewhere.

Olmsted had gone to Germany to study the new construction projects and to consult with the town planners who espoused Sitte's ideas. Among the planners whom he had arranged to meet was Dr. J. Stübben, a member of Sitte's editorial board and a town planner of Berlin.

By late December 1908, Olmsted had already seen the new projects in Dresden and Berlin and was planning to examine similar construction in Hamburg, Frankfurt, and Darmstadt. Before returning to the United States in late February or early March, he hoped also to visit housing construction in the French manufacturing cities and stop in England to survey the progress of the several so-called "garden cities" — Letchworth, Port Sunlight, and, particularly, Hampstead Garden Suburb.

#### ROBERT DE FOREST'S LETTER

Arriving at the Hotel Bristol in Berlin on December 20, Olmsted received a letter that had been sent three weeks earlier to his firm's headquarters in Brookline, a suburb of Boston, Mass. The letter had been written by Robert W. de Forest, Vice-President of the Russell Sage Foun-



HEATH CLOSE, HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB (1911). ARCHITECTS: RAYMOND UNWIN AND BARRY PARKER

ation for the Improvement of Living Standards. Mr. de Forest wrote that the Russell Sage Foundation had purchased a plot of land "in the suburban district of New York" and was considering the purchase of an even larger tract within the city. The Foundation's plan was to lay out these tracts differently from the rectangular grid of streets which had been the standard in New York since the early 19th century. In addition, wrote de Forest, the plan was "to make our garden city somewhat attractive by the treatment and planting of our streets, the possibility of little gardens, and possibly some public places." (The full text of de Forest's letter and of his subsequent correspondence with Olmsted is reproduced below.)

#### THE GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

In referring to the planned community as "our garden city," de Forest was providing Olmsted with a hint of the type of development which the Sage Foundation had in mind. In the last decade of the 19th century, many European architects and social reformers who had been alienated by the factory system and appalled by the desperate poverty of the urban poor turned their attention to the creation of architectural environments. They believed that the health, happiness, and even the moral well being of city dwellers could be improved by changing their living conditions. Many of these reform-

ers were inspired by the work of the English visionary Ebenezer Howard, whose book, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (1898), proposed a new kind of completely planned “garden city” as an antidote to crowded urban life.<sup>1</sup>

The garden cities which Howard envisioned were utopian communities where art, culture, and cooperative industrialism and ownership would be united. His idea was to create living spaces where the people of the industrialized cities would be reunited with the land, the fresh air, and the open spaces which their ancestors had left at the time of the Industrial Revolution.

In Germany and England, several attempts at constructing these new environments had already been made. Most of the construction in the German towns and suburbs had been influenced by the modified medievalism that Sitte was espousing in *Der Staedtebau*. In England, the new town planning often showed a dual influence: it combined the influence of Sitte’s medievalism with Howard’s ideas about town design.

When de Forest refers to “our garden city” in his letter to Olmsted, he is alluding to an ideal of town planning which Olmsted would instantly recognize. The “garden city” community which de Forest’s letter proposes — without the unattractive rectangular city blocks and with street plantings, gardens, and public places — is more characteristic of Howard’s English model than of Sitte’s German one.

In writing his letter, de Forest had several planned communities in mind. These were, in fact, the very places which Olmsted was visiting — the German cities and, more specifically, the Howard-inspired “garden city” style construction which had been completed in England: New Earswick (1901), Letchworth (1903), and, beginning in 1906, the community of Hampstead Garden Suburb.

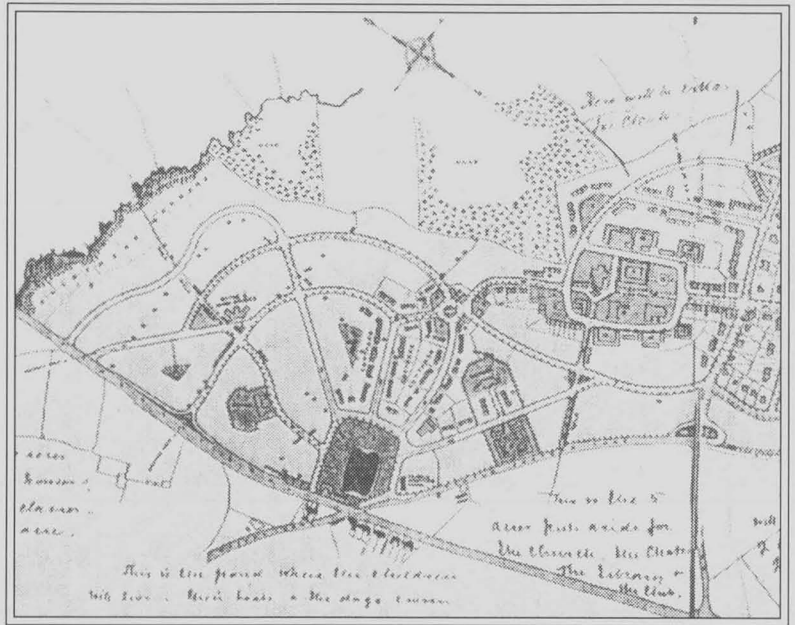


FIGURE A — PROPOSED GARDEN SUBURB AT HAMPSTEAD, NORTH LONDON (1905). RAYMOND UNWIN’S PLAN, WITH HANDWRITTEN COMMENTS BY HENRIETTA BARNETT.

#### DUE REGARD FOR PROFIT

Robert de Forest’s letter to Olmsted emphasized, however, that this housing venture on the part of the Russell Sage Foundation was not to be understood as a charitable undertaking. The project was to be a money-making one, done “with due regard for profit.” The point of the proposed suburban development was to prove, at a time that so many American suburbs were being created, that it is not necessary to sacrifice attractive housing design for the sake of profit. “I believe there is money in taste,” wrote de Forest in summarizing his point.

He concluded his letter by stating that the real estate work had been completed and that Grosvenor Atterbury had agreed to serve as consulting architect for the project. Would Olmsted be interested in serving “on the landscape garden side”?

#### OLMSTED’S REPLY

Immediately upon receiving de Forest’s letter, Olmsted composed a detailed reply. He first described the studies in German town planning

<sup>1</sup> Howard probably borrowed the description “garden city” from the name of the community which the industrialist Alexander Stewart developed on a 7000 acre site in the Hempstead Plains of Long Island after 1869. Stewart’s Garden City was built on a rectangular gridwork plan, however; nor did it have any of the town-planning and social-reform characteristics which Howard envisioned for his planned “garden city.”

which he had already completed. Then he offered to return at once to the United States if the project which de Forest had described would require his presence. If that were not necessary, he would like to study town planning in Hamburg, Frankfort, and Darmstadt. Time permitting, Olmsted also hoped to be able to spend a week or two in England. "The celebrated Garden City is still largely on paper, but I want to look at it, as far as it has got, and also to see Port Sunlight, and one or two other 'model villages' again, with new eyes."

#### HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB

The "celebrated Garden City" which Olmsted's letter refers to is Hampstead Garden Suburb which was being constructed in Hampstead, North London, adjacent to Hampstead Heath. Hampstead Garden Suburb was the idea of a philanthropist and social reformer, Dame Henrietta Barnett (1851-1936). Like many of the 19th century social activists who were inspired by Howard's ideas, Henrietta Barnett sought to improve the lives of the urban poor and middle classes by improving their living conditions. Her plan at Hampstead was to provide housing for inhabitants of all social classes and incomes.<sup>2</sup> In realizing this, she was able to secure the services of some of the best known early 20th century English architects, among them, Barry Parker, Raymond Unwin, and Sir Edward Lutyens.

Ground for the Suburb had been broken in May 1907, only nineteen months before Olmsted's letter of reply to de Forest. Olmsted, therefore, would have been able to study only the earliest construction at Hampstead. A plan for the Suburb had been completed as early as 1905, however. This plan, by Raymond Unwin, grouped row houses and detached houses along gently curving roadways. It also provided for landscaped public areas,

schools, and public buildings — all bounded by two undeveloped areas: a woods and the Hampstead Heath.

So, on the one hand, Olmsted was correct in noting that Hampstead Garden Suburb was still largely on paper. Yet the plans for the Suburb would provide him with information about just those areas which the Sage Foundation was engaging him for in New York: landscaping, site planning, and street layout. (See fig. A for Unwin's 1905 plan of Hampstead Garden Suburb.)

Parker and Unwin had been in contact with Camillo Sitte in Germany, and Sitte's architectural ideas were clearly reflected in the design for Hampstead Garden Suburb. One such idea that they borrowed from Sitte was the grouping of shops and public buildings at the entrance to Hampstead. This arrangement, which is character-



FIGURE B — PORT SUNLIGHT, LANCASHIRE (1888). BRACKET-SHAPED SEMI QUADRANGLE OF ATTACHED HOUSES. ARCHITECTS: W. AND S. OWENS

istic of a medieval town, was in turn used in the planning of Forest Hills Gardens. Station Square, bordered by the monumental sloping roofs of the Forest Hills Inn, the covered bridges linking the apartment houses, the street-level shops, and the Long Island Railroad station and embankment, is a modern version of a medieval German town square. Another idea which was transmitted from Germany via Hampstead Garden Suburb to Forest

<sup>2</sup> Like Forest Hills Gardens, however, Hampstead Garden Suburb has become a residence largely for upper income professionals and business people.

Hills Gardens was the arrangement and layout of the streets.<sup>3</sup>

### PORT SUNLIGHT

In his letter to de Forest, Olmsted mentions that he would also want to study the work at Port Sunlight. At that time, the village of Port Sunlight in Lancashire was twenty years old. Port Sunlight was developed as a factory town; however, its developer, W. H. Lever, had engaged the services



9 TO 11 MARKWOOD ROAD AND 206 TO 216 GREENWAY NORTH. MULTIPLE HOUSING PRESENTED AS A SINGLE ESTATE. ARCHITECT: GROSVENOR ATTERBURY. FROM SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO. PROSPECTUS (1913)

of a landscape consultant, Thomas Mawson, in creating the town. Mawson drew on the experience of the industrial town of Pullman, Illinois, outside of Chicago, which was the first planned community where a supervising architect collaborated with a landscape architect. Mawson's design for Port Sunlight combined open areas and parkland along with housing areas.

The architecture in Port Sunlight was Victorian in character and therefore did not influence home design in Hampstead Garden Suburb or in Forest Hills Gardens. However, the architects who created Port Sunlight did create two planning devices which are evident in Hampstead and which certainly are characteristic of the design in

<sup>3</sup> The influence of Sitte's ideas in Germany, as filtered through the work of Unwin and Parker in England, was pointed out in articles by several early 20th century American architects and town planners. Writing in *Architecture* in 1916, for instance, the architectural historian, Charles May, noted:

*Indeed, it is not too much to say that the entire method in German street and site planning of the present day is molded upon his [Camillo Sitte's] reasoning. In many respects the plan of Forest Hills is akin to those of the Modern German School. There is the same picturesque variety, the same variety of street width and set back. There is breadth without monumentality; balance without symmetry. [vol. 34: 163]*

Forest Hills Gardens. One such device is the grouping of houses into U or bracket-shaped units. Besides breaking up the potential monotony of straight row housing, these U-shaped units surround and frame a central lawn or garden. Many of the earliest groupings in Forest Hills Gardens — 33 to 41 Ingram Street, and 114 to 132 Greenway North, for instance — adopt this site plan.

Another characteristic of the homes in Port Sunlight was a design of multiple housing not as if it

consisted in identifiable units, but as if the unit was a large home or mansion. This strategy is used to good effect in several Forest Hills Gardens homes: — the unit comprising 9 to 11 Markwood Road and 206 to 216 Greenway North, for example. (See fig. B: a bracket-shaped housing arrangement from Port Sunlight that appears to be a single

large house, but which is in fact a row of several smaller attached homes.)

### THE OTHER MODEL VILLAGES

In his letter to de Forest, Olmsted noted that when he was in England he also hoped to see "one or two 'model villages' again, with new eyes." Olmsted was most likely referring to New Earswick and to Letchworth. New Earswick, near York, was developed starting in 1901. The designers were Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin, who would later work on the development of Hampstead Garden Suburb. Parker and Unwin next collaborated on the planning of Letchworth, beginning in 1904. Both New Earswick and Letchworth



31 TO 41 INGRAM STREET. BRACKET-SHAPED GROUP. ARCHITECT: GROSVENOR ATTERBURY.

conform to Howard's ideas about the ideal "garden city" where central public buildings were surrounded by parkland, houses, and gardens.

#### OLMSTED ACCEPTS THE COMMISSION

Olmsted concluded his letter by formally accepting de Forest's offer. He noted that he was interested in the project which de Forest was describing. He made a modest statement about his abilities, but hastened to add that he could not think "of any landscape man in America who knows any more, if as much" as he did.

#### ROBERT DE FOREST'S REPLY

On January 4, 1909, as soon as Olmsted's letter arrived, de Forest wrote a letter of reply, expressing his pleasure that Olmsted would accept the commission. He urged him to return to New York by the end of February, but agreed that the English garden cities would be "worth seeing and suggestive." He suggested Hampstead and Letchworth in particular, adding that the Sage Foundation had collected a good deal of information about them.

De Forest's letter concludes with a discussion of the difference between British and American social habits and land tenure. In designing the American suburb, Olmsted would have to keep these differences in mind. "The problem to be worked out here was largely an American one," de Forest noted, and Olmsted and Atterbury would have to work out American solutions in the design of the community, instead of merely duplicating British models.

#### OLMSTED'S REPLY TO DE FOREST

In reply to de Forest's remarks about American solutions to American problems, Olmsted wrote from Cologne on January 20, 1909. He agreed with de Forest that it would be impossible to completely adopt all the European housing ideas which he had been studying. It would be foolish to adopt "methods radically counter to American habits," he wrote. In addition to learning some things not to do, he added that he was learning many "technical details of construction, useful perhaps in totally different recombinations."

Olmsted had recently been in Holland to study workmen's housing that had been constructed at The Hague. He was particularly struck by the grouping of the houses so that open spaces were combined and concentrated. He also noted a system of brick paths from a main street. This reduced the amount of roadway needed to give access to all houses on a site. Olmsted's interest in this layout was such that he supplied two sketches of the houses at The Hague in his letter to de Forest. He also noted that the use of low fences on the gardens "gave scale to the space and made it look much larger than so much bare land."

This kind of workman's housing was never constructed in Forest Hills Gardens. However, the lessons which Olmsted learned about the use of pathways and low fences certainly seem to have been used in the layout of the row housing along Greenway Terrace and Continental Avenue in Forest Hills.

#### OLMSTED IN FOREST HILLS GARDENS

Following de Forest's instructions, Olmsted returned to New York by the end of February 1909

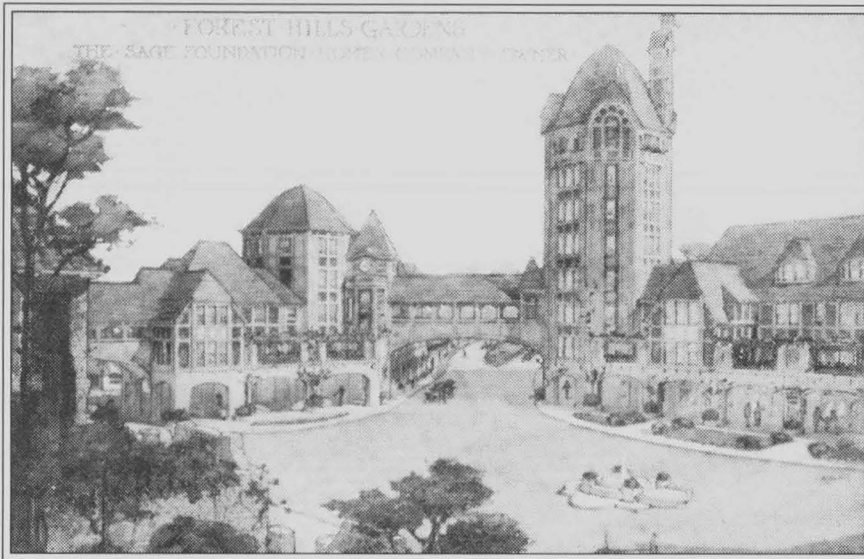
and thereafter dedicated his considerable energies to developing the master plan for Forest Hills Gardens. By 1910 he and Atterbury had worked out a general plan for Forest Hills Gardens. One of their renderings is reproduced in the "Maps of Forest Hills Gardens" collection that accompanies this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*. This map, dated 1910, and entitled "Study of the Layout of Forest Hills Gardens," first appeared in

and recede off into the distance clearly echo similar layouts in the garden cities of England.

#### OLMSTED'S LATER WORK IN FOREST HILLS

Olmsted's first concern was to provide plans for the streets, the public areas, and the parks in Forest Hills Gardens. These plans included lists of plantings and instructions for their installation. (See the photo

essay on Station Square which appears in this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*. This reproduces Olmsted's planting plans for the Forest Hills station of the Long Island Railroad.) Once these major commissions were completed, Olmsted and then the Olmsted Bros. firm worked on the siting and landscaping of Forest Hills Gardens homes. Grosvenor Atterbury's office approved the architectural plans for each home, while Olmsted's office consulted on the positioning of each home on a site and in relationship to its neighbors. The Olmsted firm subsequently provided plans for the landscaping of most of the larger homes. Olmsted's



THE PLAN FOR STATION SQUARE. BAVARIAN-STYLE TOWERS AND ENGLISH GARDEN-CITY PLANTINGS.

the prospectus for Forest Hills Gardens which the Sage Foundation Homes Co. published in 1912. The map envisions a street plan from Burns St. to Metropolitan Ave., with several private parks and public areas interspersed. The layout of the streets clearly reflects the ideas of Sitte in Germany and Parker and Unwin in England about street systems and site planning. In addition, the large amount of greenery — tree-lined roads, garden-encased homes, and landscaped public areas — clearly announces that the proposed community will conform to the tradition of the English-style garden cities.

This combination of German-inspired architecture and English garden-city planning is also evident in the view of Station Square which Atterbury and Olmsted published at the same time. Dominated by the tower of the Forest Hills Inn, Station Square presents a view of capped roofs reminiscent of the towns of medieval Germany. The trees and plantings which surround the Square

plans for Forest Hills Gardens have been preserved at the Olmsted Bros. Archive in Brookline, Mass. (The Olmsted Archive is a National Historic Site, under the direction of the National Park Service.)

#### CONCLUSION

The correspondence between Robert de Forest and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., is reproduced below. This provides an important insight into the ideas that inspired the developers and planners of Forest Hills Gardens. Adopting the ideas about construction that Camillo Sitte had proposed in Germany and about town layout that Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker had proposed in England, Olmsted and Grosvenor Atterbury created a community that echoes and adapts the vision of its European antecedents.

Note: I would like to acknowledge the help of Prof. Rosemarie Haag Bletter, City University Graduate Center, who offered valuable advice concerning the research for this article.



THE CORRESPONDENCE OF  
FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED, JR., AND  
ROBERT W. DE FOREST<sup>1</sup>

Dec. 7, 1908

PERSONAL

Dear Mr. Olmsted:

If I mistake not you are interested on the social as well as the aesthetic side of landscape gardening, and this is to ask whether you are, in your judgment, equipped on this side both with knowledge and interest so as to be able to take the part of advising landscape gardener in the following project, which I wish to be at this stage strictly confidential.

I am Vice-President of the Russell Sage Foundation for the Improvement of Living Conditions. We are proposing to go into housing on a fairly large scale, in the suburban district of New York. We have purchased a tract of land capable of layout as we may wish, of about 50 acres in extent,<sup>2</sup> and are contemplating the purchase of an even larger tract within the city limits for the same purpose.<sup>3</sup> Our plan is not merely to give houses but to lay out these tracts in some way different from the abhorrent rectangular city block, and to make our garden city somewhat attractive by the treatment and planting of our streets, the possibility of little gardens, and possibly some public places. It will be an equation between the cost of attractiveness and cheap rents. Nor are we simply considering the housing of so many people. We would like to set an example to the growing suburban districts of New York and other cities of how the thing can be done tastefully and at the same time with due regard for profit. I believe there is money in taste. We are expecting to do this on a business basis. We have our real estate expert. We also have a consulting architect in the person of my friend Mr. Grosvenor Atterbury. I wish to bring someone in on the landscape garden side, and it would mean a tentative layout after an examination of the tracts in question. Is this congenial to you? Can you undertake it promptly?

Sincerely yours,

Robert W. de Forest

Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.,  
Brookline, Mass

<sup>1</sup> This correspondence is reproduced courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center, Pocantico Hills, N.Y. I am grateful to Mr. Richard Frank, social studies teacher at P.S. 101, Forest Hills, who provided copies of these materials, based on his research at the Rockefeller Archive.

<sup>2</sup> This first tract of land (actually 48 acres) was a triangular-shaped property along Rockaway Blvd. in Jamaica about three miles from Forest Hills Gardens. The property, known as the Kokenhaven Farm, was to be developed as a community of model tenements. The Sage Foundation never went ahead with the plan and eventually sold the property.

<sup>3</sup> This "even larger tract" was the 142 acres of land which the Sage Foundation purchased from the Cord Meyer Development Company in the Spring of 1909 and which was developed into Forest Hills Gardens.

Conrad Uhl's Hotel Bristol,  
Berlin unter den Linden 5/6  
20 December, 1908

Dear Mr. de Forest:

On my arrival here this evening I find your letter of December 7th, forwarded two or three times.

Nothing could interest me more than such a problem as you have on hand. One of the chief objects I had in view in starting upon my present trip was to get a better knowledge of what the Germans are doing in the systematic control of urban development for the greater well-being of the people. I was going over some of the plans for the suburban quarters of Dresden yesterday with the Stadterweiterungs Direktor, and through him got hold of a book on the Dresden ordinances governing buildings, etc., of such interest that I had it in mind to write and call it your attention in case you did not know it — *Banordnung für die Stadt Dresden*.

Rather than miss having a hand in your project I would drop my trip at once and return to take it up; but I suppose that such haste is not necessary, and I should hate to miss the further study of German work, especially with such a problem in view. Subject to an earlier summons home my plans are these: — I shall call tomorrow on Dr. Stübben,<sup>1</sup> author of *Der Staedtebau*,<sup>2</sup> Berlin City Official, and an authority on the subject — and I shall be guided largely by his advice as to the rest of my trip. But I hope to visit again Hamburg and the Rhine cities, especially Frankfort, which appears to be doing a good deal of radical work in controlling suburban growth; and among other cities to visit Darmstadt, where the Grand Duke has taken a keen personal interest in the subject and tried a number of experiments, and where I expect to have an introduction to the Court through some German friends. I want also to see some of the French provincial cities, especially the manufacturing cities. With all the beastly American hustle I can put into it I do not see how I can tear myself away with any satisfaction before the first of February at the earliest. And then I want a week or two in England. The celebrated Garden City is still largely on paper, but I want to look at it, as far as it has got, and also to see Port Sunlight, and one or two other “model villages” again, with new eyes.

Well! You see how I stand. Will March be too late for me to report for duty?

My address is care of the American Express Co., 11 Rue Scribe, Paris.

I see, on referring back to your letter, that although I have gushed at some length I have not answered your question directly. I am, then, in my own judgment equipped with interest in the project, and with a modicum of knowledge, which I am diligently striving to increase. In fact I know very little about it; but I cannot think of any landscape man in America who knows any more, if as much. Sometimes I doubt whether the Germans know as much as one would gather from their writings. (Hush!)

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Law Olmsted

<sup>1</sup> Dr. J. Stübben, an architect and town planner, was the Berlin-Grunewald correspondent for Camillo Sitte's monthly magazine, *Der Staedtebau* [Town Planning] which was devoted to studies of the “new” planning which Sitte espoused.

<sup>2</sup> Stübben was an “author of *Der Staedtebau*” in that he contributed articles to the magazine and served on its editorial board.

New York, January 4, 1909.

Dear Mr. Olmsted:

I am just in receipt of your charming letter of December 20, in which you practically plead guilty to my accusation of your being "the man." We will hold things up until you get back, which I hope will certainly be toward the end of February. The English garden cities, though in embryo, are well worth seeing and suggestive. You can readily see Hampstead and Letchworth. We have here fairly complete data respecting them. The more I see of abroad, the less I think we have to learn there, for our conditions are so different, but I do not suppose we should ever be satisfied on this point (least of all you) before seeing what there was to be seen at least to demonstrate the fact that the problem to be worked out here was largely an American one. Methods of land tenure are very different, social habits are very different, and to run counter to ordinary methods of land tenure and social habits, even under the stimulus of continental or English success, would be a very doubtful experiment.

Sincerely yours

Robert W. de Forest.

Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted  
c/o American Express Co.,  
Paris, France

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Kölner Hof  
Köln  
20 January 1909.

Dear Mr. de Forest—

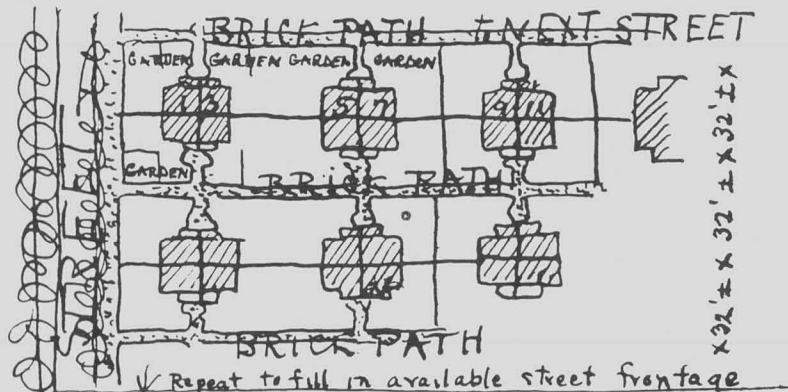
I have just received yours of the 4th.

I quite agree as to the impossibility of wholesale adoption of housing ideas from this side of the water. The "Stimulus of European Success" wouldn't be worth two straws in an attempt to adopt methods radically counter to American habits.

What I am getting, aside from general awakening, is mainly suggestions in regard to technical details of construction, useful perhaps in totally different recombinations. And then I am learning some of the things not to do. — As my travelling companion, Foster (of Chicago Park) says, "A man often fails to recognize his own mistakes until he sees the same sort of thing done

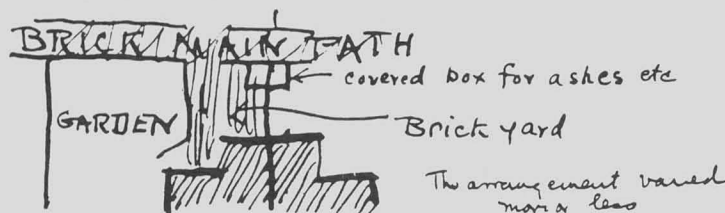
by some other fellow; and then he has a chance to reform."

I was very much interested to see at The Hague in execution what I have several times seen in plans as a project — a group of workmen's two story dwellings in blocks of four, back to back, with access by means of paths only. Something like this:



What interested me particularly was that they did not seem like "alley houses" as I had expected, but like detached residences with paths leading to them from the street. This effect was due in part to the large appearance of open space due to the concentration of all the open space attached to each dwelling upon two adjacent sides of it, and in contact with the open space of three other dwellings; and in part to the low fences of the gardens, which left the views open but gave scale to the space and made it look much larger than so much bare land. Also it is a good thing, I believe, with this class of tenants to avoid the back yard altogether on account of the difficulty of inspection.

My sketch is wrong in one particular. In nearly every case the path leading from the main path to the door is not common to two houses as I have drawn it, but separate, thus:



The plan was baldly rectangular, the houses were bald rectangular brick houses with flat roofs, there were almost no creepers on the houses, and the day was a gloomy, winter day, and yet the impression was cheerful and attractive. I believe the type a very valuable one. Of course its prime purpose is economy of land and of street construction.

I hope I don't bore you with writing at such length.

Sincerely yours,

Frederick Law Olmsted.

# ~ THE WEST SIDE TENNIS CLUB: ~ 100 YEARS OLD AND STILL GREEN

by Jane Sughrue Giberga

Jane Giberga is a freelance writer who has published short stories in several national magazines. A lifetime Gardens resident, she wrote the text for *Centennial: the West Side Tennis Club 1892-1992*, a history of the tennis club.

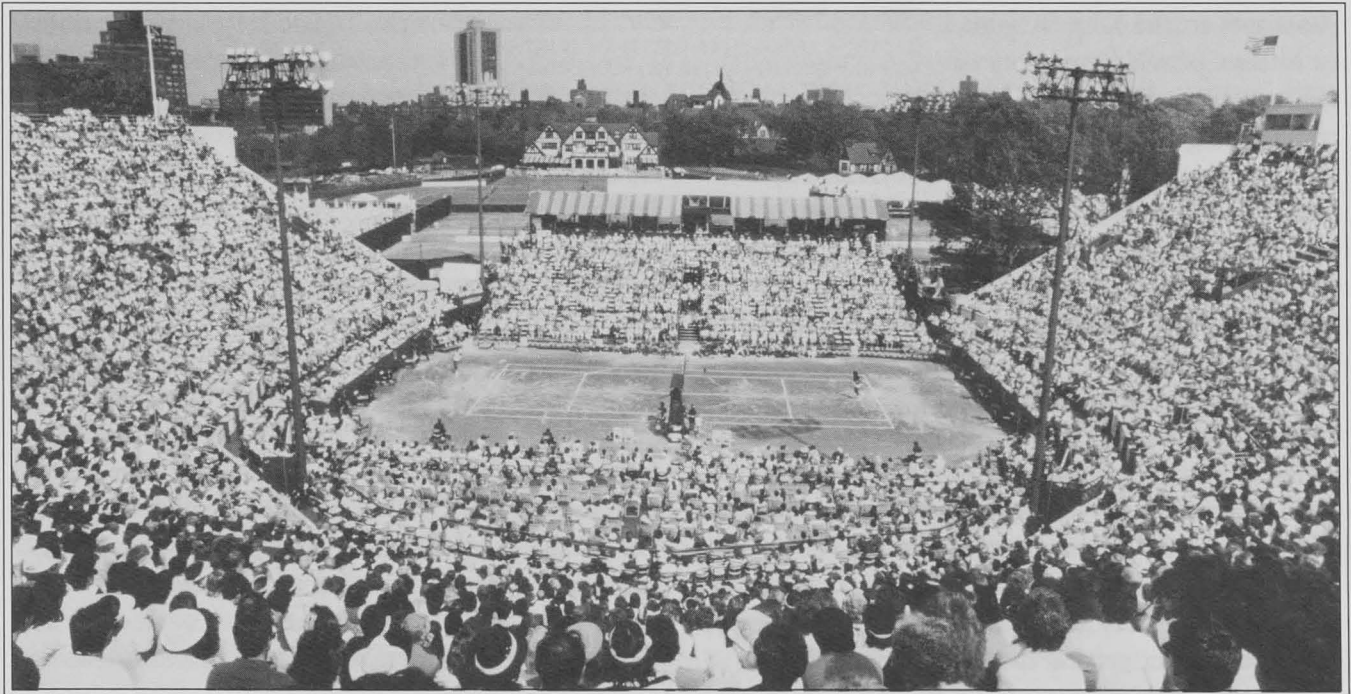
Eugenia Frangos, the photo editor for this article, is a long-time Gardens resident. She was also the photo editor for the *Centennial* history of the West Side Tennis Club.

**I**f Forest Hills Gardens is a charming evocation of an English country village, the West Side Tennis Club is a jewel in its neighborhood crown. Settled comfortably on Tennis Place since 1913, when the club founded in 1892 by thirteen talented and focused tennis buffs moved here from Manhattan, the West Side Tennis Club often surprises first-time visitors. It is minutes away from the bustle of midtown on the main city subway line, and the Long Island Railroad glides by several times a day in easy view of the north side courts. The Club is also situated between New York's two major airports: LaGuardia and JFK International. Despite these constant and noisy reminders of fast pace and life in

the frantic '90s, the Club remains what it has always been: an oasis of green velvet lawns and half-timbered Tudor architecture, an echo of an earlier, more graceful time.

Tennis dominates at West Side: grass courts, Har-Tru courts, red clay courts, Deco Turf courts. The summer schedule is crowded with club tournaments and features exciting professional events like the USTA Senior Women's Grass Court championship. This has become one of the most popular events of the season, attracting top senior women from all over the world to compete in the 40s, 50s, and 60s age categories in singles and doubles. One of life's truly great pleasures can be achieved sitting on the Club terrace on a balmy summer afternoon, sipping iced tea a few inches away from a grass court where a thrilling singles or doubles match is taking place.

Prior to 1955, the West Side Tennis Club was open only during the summer months. But a lively and growing group of bridge and platform tennis enthusiasts, as well as the invention of the



synthetic “bubble”, which could protect standard sized tennis courts against the winter winds and cold, prompted the Club’s Board to keep West Side open for its members year-round.

Driving past the Club on a bitter winter’s eve is always brightened by the sight of the bubble’s warm electric glow. Within its protective shell, battles are constantly waged between combatants in short pants and skirts wielding oversized racquets and chasing a small, fuzzy yellow ball as though their very lives depended on it.

But summer is the Club’s golden time. Summer in the city — even in leafy Forest Hills — is a time of heat, humidity and hours of melt-down daylight. Summer at the West Side Tennis Club starts early and finishes late. Courts fill up quickly, before the heat of midday, and later, footsore athletes join arriving bridge players and other social members for a delicious lunch on the patio. The Club’s dining room, serving lunch and dinner from April through October, and on weekends from February through December, has become one of the most popular and satisfying restaurants in the area. A gourmet kitchen provides a variety of culinary treats, and special dinners featuring fine wines to complement all this good food have been a highlight for several years. From the tennis and platform tennis players who’ve worked up fierce appetites to the social non-playing members entertaining guests or playing bridge, dining at West Side has become a delightful pastime in a charming and relaxed setting.

The decision made ’way back in 1913 to move from Manhattan to Forest Hills was reached after careful study by a hardworking Club search committee. That first time they walked down the steps from the railroad station in Station Square in full view of the gracious Forest Hills Inn with its unique tower, they may have begun fantasizing about the perfect setting they had found. The price

was right: \$77,000 for the ten acres involved, with a down-payment of \$2,000 in cash. A five per cent mortgage was obtained, and plans were drawn for a clubhouse which would cost \$25,000. It took slightly over a year to create the Club facility as we now know and enjoy it, with the exception of the stadium (which would open in 1923) and the grandstand.

In July of the following summer, World War I broke out in Europe. Fortunately for the West Side Tennis Club, Davis Cup play went on as scheduled. Twelve thousand people overflowed the wooden stands erected for watching the matches on the grass courts nearest the Club house, a strong indicator of how viable a spectator

sport tennis already was and a harbinger of big things to come. 1914 would end with America isolated by the war and there would be no tennis tournaments abroad until it was over. But the American National Championships would be played in 1915, and with them, a controversy was born. Should the championships continue to be held at the elegant and socially prestigious Newport Casino, played in a frothy atmosphere where the beautiful people watched one another more closely than any tennis match, or would



SUZANNE LENGLEN LEAVES THE COURT MIDWAY THROUGH HER 1921 SECOND ROUND MATCH WITH A DEFAULT TO MOLLA MALLORY.

Forest Hills provide a better site? West Side won out, but ironically, a similar complaint would be lodged against West Side in the late '70s by Slew Hester and the USTA, businessmen first with tennis as their “product” who felt the Club was “quaint” and “out-dated”. The Open era of tennis had outgrown the West Side Tennis Club, and would move to Flushing Meadows. Many argue that despite the greater crowd capacity of Flushing Meadows, (which also features an ever-expanding commercialism and some loosely-controlled chaos) the Forest Hills stadium is still the most ideally designed facility for viewing competitive tennis ever built.

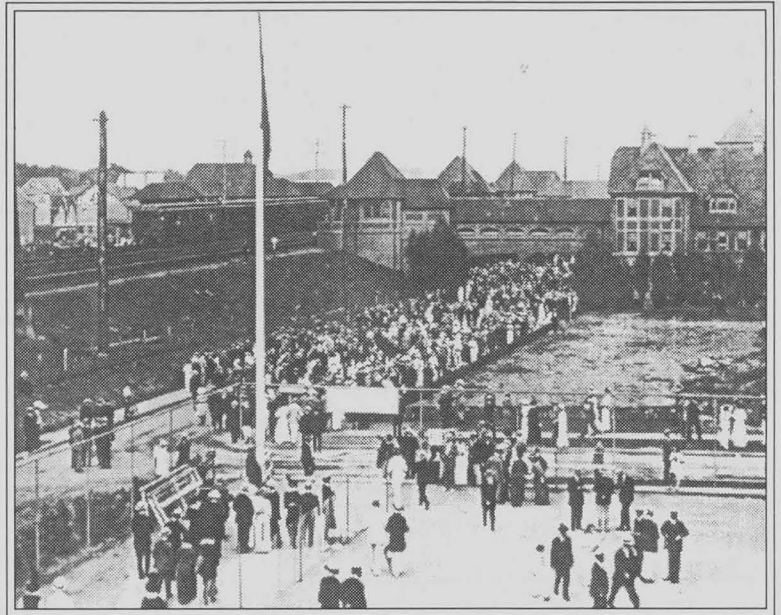
Many Forest Hills residents remember the heyday of tennis at West Side: massive crowds

pouring from the train and subway stations, private cars and stretch limousines creating grid lock on our narrow neighborhood streets. Driveway parking became a "cottage industry", born of the tournament's biggest headache: woefully insufficient available parking. Local merchants welcomed the annual crunch, and even inconvenienced residents felt the surge of excitement and probably indulged in some celebrity-watching. It was an exciting time to live here. But big money and bigger crowds, with television coverage pushing play onto screens around the globe, expanded tennis and the U.S. championships beyond what West Side could reasonably accommodate.

And the Club shifted gears, gradually but gracefully. Members reveled in their new-found court time. Previously, the tournament denied them access to most courts for weeks, even a month during the precious days of late summer. Junior programs flourished. West Side has enjoyed a series of teaching pros of the highest caliber, and Paul Gerken is the current Club professional, running summer clinics for kids and adults, bubble classes in winter, private and group lessons year round. Paul was a ranked player on the circuit for many years. He is a highly regarded and popular teacher with a staff of skilled professionals, and his pro shop, located downstairs in the Club house, is well-known for its large selection of the very latest in tennis equipment and clothing.

The West Side Tennis Club is an integral part of Forest Hills Gardens, though its membership also includes many Manhattanites, as well as people from other parts of Queens, Brooklyn, Long Island, Connecticut, and non-resident members from a wide variety of locales. For the past couple of years, the Club has hosted an Open House early in June to introduce the Club and its facilities to those new to the area, or perhaps just newly curious about the landmark that's been standing in their front or backyard for so many years.

A perusal of the gallery of photographs hanging in the front hall of the West Side club house is a visual history of American tournament tennis. The



BURNS ST. AND TENNIS PL. AFTER THE FIRST DAVIS CUP MATCHES IN 1914.

written part can be found most succinctly in the record books. From 1915 until 1977, the U.S. championships were held at West Side (except for 1921, '22 and '23, when the Germantown Cricket Club managed to wrest the men's competition away; West Side hung on to the women's Nationals and the Davis Cup Challenge Round during that time, drawing huge crowds for both). In 1917, the United States entered the War and the Championships were put on hold. In their place, a Patriotic Tournament was held at the Club as a fund raiser, contributing in conjunction with Red Cross tournaments held in other clubs around the country. Funds went to purchase ambulances, and volunteers from tennis clubs all over the country enlisted in the Ambulance Unit and were sent overseas.

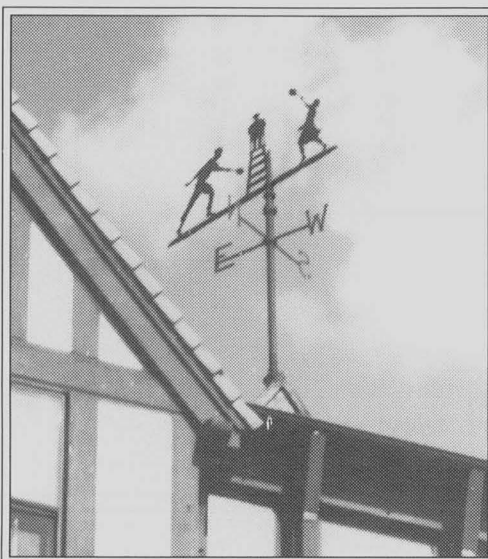
In 1918, the advisability of turning the grass courts into a pasture for sheep was considered by the Club's Board of Governors, but by exercising the greatest economy, this was averted. Later that year it was decided, with the advice and sanction of the War Department, again to hold the Championships, and this time, the proceeds went to War Camp Training activities.

In 1919, the Championships found two of the greatest rivals in the history of tennis in the men's finals, "Big" Bill Tilden and "Little" Bill Johnston, and the Club began its climb from the bleak days of

war into a period of prosperity. The span between the World Wars would be one of spectacular progress for tournament tennis and the West Side Tennis Club.

The 1921 ladies' championships would provide the only tournament appearance in America of the French sensation, Suzanne Lenglen. Women were still overdressing and under-achieving on the courts, but Mademoiselle Lenglen was something else. Her dresses were sleeveless and short — with the hem line just below the knee — and pleats that rippled when she moved. Free of the traditional costume of long hobble skirts and a big hat, Lenglen was also a free spirit. Her game owed more to ballet than tennis. She loved to leap and did so whenever she could. She loved center stage, but she gave people something exciting to watch. She had power and accuracy and a fierce desire to win. She would not win at Forest Hills. She defaulted to the American champion Molla Mallory, a physically sturdy contrast to the delicate Lenglen, and the crowd was furious. The argument raged for years over whether she was truly ill, as she claimed (*en français*) to the chair umpire, or whether Mallory's aggressive play in this early round so surprised the French toast of the tennis world, she wished only not to lose. She would play only one more match in Forest Hills: a mixed doubles exhibition which drew 14,000 spectators.

The huge crowd response prompted the planning and building of the first ever tennis stadium, an open bowl (modeled after the Yale Bowl in New Haven) which still stands just beyond the club courts. A walk beneath the stately arches which support the stadium seats brings back strong memories of the crowds, the shared excitement, the players, great and momentarily great, the matches, tense, unpredictable, often thrilling. Arthur Ashe became the first Open champion here in 1968. Years earlier, Maureen Connolly began her brief and meteoric rise in Forest Hills. Althea Gibson broke



THE EVER-CHANGING WEATHER VANE ATOP THE ENDURING WEST SIDE TENNIS CLUB.

the color barrier. Billie Jean King discovered playing at some clubs could be fun.

The Aussies dominated the men's game for years: Sedgman, Fraser, Emerson, Laver, Rosewall, Newcombe and Stolle, to name quite a few. Borg couldn't win here, and Connors won on two different surfaces: grass and clay.

The men's Tournament of Champions followed the last Open here, and drew big crowds and provided some amazing match play. But the stadium has stood silent,

empty, for the past three years, waiting for the right moment, the right sponsors, promoters, planners, players to remember where the sport is best served and to return to this perfect setting.

In the meantime, residents of Forest Hills Gardens and others bask in the sunshine on the terrace, play set after set of this extraordinary game of tennis, mostly for fun, though sometimes for trophies, rugged individualists honing their skills and venting the frustrations life in the '90s can bring. Sitting in the sunshine (or the moonlight) on the terrace, enjoying friendly conversation with a drink or a meal, it is hard to remember this is New York, tough, occasionally terrifying, hurry-up-and-wait New York. There is no grid lock at West Side. If one must wait for a court on a busy summer afternoon, there are friends to chat with, bridge games to kibitz, tennis games to watch. Sitting on the terrace, looking out at that peaceful stretch of well-manicured, incredibly green lawn, with flowering plants banking either side, enjoying that little breeze which somehow always blows at West Side, even on the hottest, stillest days, it is hard to believe the original idea for this place occurred to somebody one hundred years ago. It is certainly harder to believe what has endured and flourished since then.

A recently-published history of the West Side Tennis Club, entitled "Centennial" is available for purchase in the Club's business office.



# ~ THE MAPS OF ~ FOREST HILLS GARDENS

by Susan Purcell

Susan Purcell, a Gardens resident, is Manager of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation.

illustrations record the social imprints left upon it by its inhabitants.

W

ho, while wandering the winding streets of Forest Hills Gardens for the first time — or even the hundredth — has not wished for a map? Today, some eighty years after the idea of Forest Hills Gardens first began to take shape under the expert guidance of supervising architect Grosvenor Atterbury and landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (son of the developer of Central and Prospect parks), it is fascinating to take a renewed look at the maps created in the intervening years for promotion and planning purposes. They chart the evolution of the community and their

REPRINTS: MAPS OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS  
Enclosed with this issue are reprints of four of the most significant maps which are housed in the archives of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation: “Study of the Layout of Forest Hills Gardens” (1910); “Ye Olde Forest Hills” (1923-1934); “Forest Hills Gardens, 1927”; and, “Forest Hills Gardens Corporation” (1939). Both decorative and utilitarian, they post markers along the way to the realization of the first planned “garden city” community in the United States, which is present day Forest Hills Gardens. Two of the more fanciful maps, “Forest Hills Gardens 1927” and “Ye Olde Forest Hills,” illustrate the presence of some of its notable

MAP OF NEWTOWN, LONG ISLAND (1852). DETAIL. THE PRESENT FOREST HILLS GARDENS APPEARS ON THIS MAP TO THE EAST OF HEMPSTEAD SWAMP AND BELOW THE INDICATION FOR WHITE POT.



residents of the 1920s and 1930s, a time which saw the most intense and rapid development of Forest Hills Gardens and the surrounding area. It is hoped that perusal of these maps and of the several other maps reproduced in this article will take the reader on a personal journey through the streets, events, and people of Forest Hills Gardens during its first twenty-five years.

MAP OF NEWTOWN, LONG ISLAND (1852) Compiled by J. Riker, Jr.

This map, created at least five decades before Forest Hills Gardens was conceived in the mind of Mrs. Russell Sage, contains the tracts of land which became the Gardens. At that time Hempstead Swamp covered at least one half of this area, which was then called Whitepot. The approximate location of the Gardens was in the area bounded by Jamaica Turnpike (later Metropolitan Avenue) and the two unidentified roads

which probably became Queens Boulevard and Union Turnpike. The unidentified road to the north of the Gardens was White Pot Road, which eventually became Yellowstone Boulevard. There are only two names indicated on this map in the Gardens area which later became actual and permanent name fixtures in the “modern” Forest Hills Gardens: those of landholders “A. Whitson” (immortalized in Whitson Street) and “Ascan Backus” (for whom Ascan Avenue is named). The map, as a whole, indicates that this portion of Queens was composed of large tracts held privately as farms or homesteads, swamps and cemeteries. The swamps were drained and filled in as development progressed. However, the mosquitoes which bred in Flushing swamp continued to torment the residents of Forest Hills into the 1930s and beyond.

STREET MAP: ATLAS OF THE CITY OF  
NEW YORK, BOROUGH OF QUEENS,  
NEWTOWN, WARD 2 (1909)

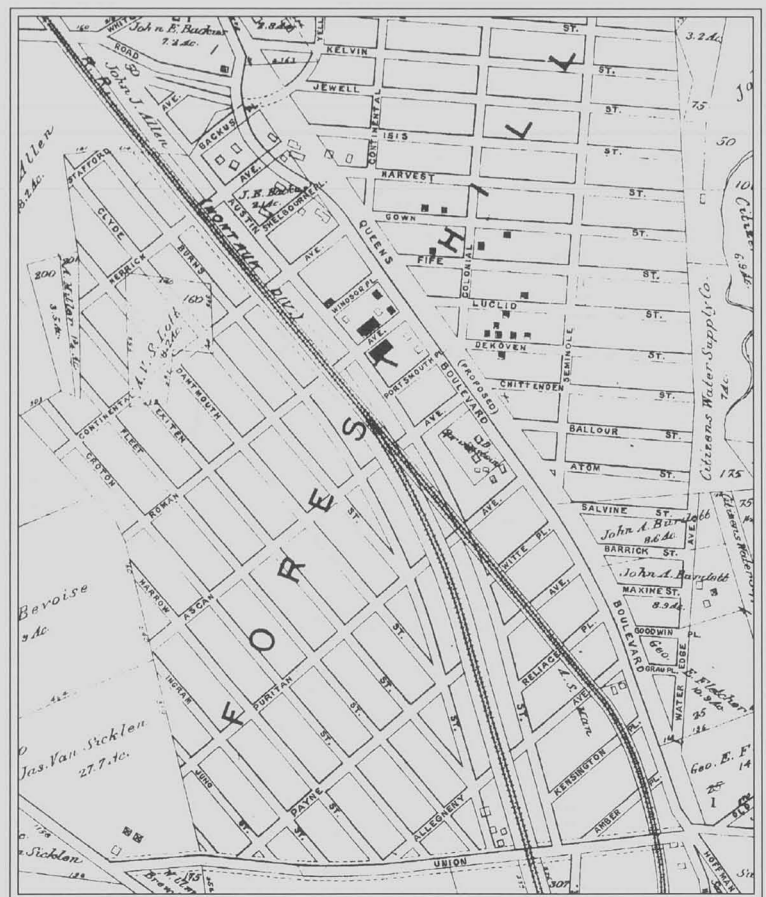
George W. and Walter S. Bromley

Executed for Cord Meyer, who owned almost the entire Forest Hills tract and probably assigned the street names, this map depicts a regular, hard-angled, grid block design for the area which would become Forest Hills Gardens. In this early conception, the evenly sized blocks would have run perpendicular to Queens Boulevard. This is the “what-might-have-been” map. Even a cursory study of this map as compared to any of the maps done for the Sage Homes Foundation, shows the dramatic design differences of the streets of Forest Hills Gardens as later conceived by Atterbury and Olmsted. In the design for the Gardens, the two “passage” streets of Continental and Ascan avenues kept their names and straight configurations. Several other street names survived, but the streets were redesigned to incorporate the gently curving lines of the Atterbury/Olmsted vision: Dartmouth, Exiter (sic, Exeter), Fleet, Groton, Harrow, Ingram, Puritan. A few streets and their names appeared only on this map, then disappeared: Allegheny and Payne, for example. The area

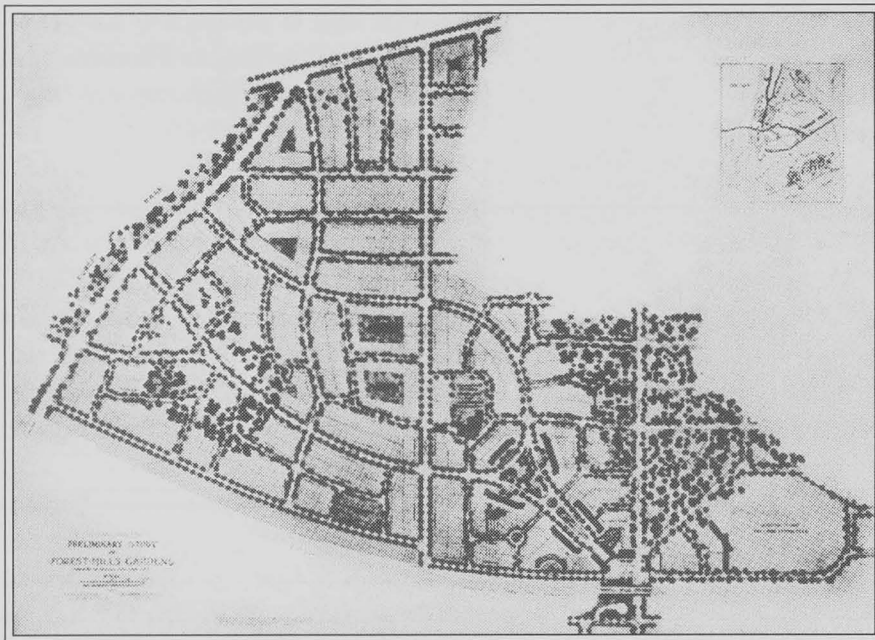
north of Queens Boulevard depicts the grid block design as it was later developed. Most of the names of these streets were changed to numbers, e.g. Colonial Street became 110th Street, Dekoven Street became 72nd Road. In this segment of the map, Flushing Creek can be seen snaking around the Citizens Water Supply Co.

ORIGINAL PLAN FOR FOREST HILLS GARDENS

Forest Hills Gardens was born in 1909 when the real estate developing firm of Cord Meyer sold 142 acres for \$754,000 to the Russell Sage Homes Foundation. Two additional tracts, one of 32 acres and another of 31 acres, were subsequently acquired or planned. The first additional tract contained land south to Metropolitan Avenue. (See “Birds Eye View” map and Map 1.) The third tract contained 10 acres which became the site of the West Side Tennis Club when the club, which had been founded on the



ATLAS OF NEW YORK CITY (1909), DETAIL THE “MIGHT HAVE BEEN” MAP WITH PROPOSED STREET LAYOUT FOR THE CORD MEYER PROPERTIES, INCLUDING THE TRACT THAT WAS LATER DEVELOPED AS FOREST HILLS GARDENS.



OLMSTED AND ATTERBURY PROPOSAL FOR THE LAYOUT OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS (1910). FROM THE 1912 SAGE HOMES COMPANY PROSPECTUS.

west side of Manhattan, moved to Forest Hills Gardens in 1913. Therefore, original plans saw Forest Hills Gardens covering over 200 acres of land. During the course of development, some of this acreage was sold off and the plans for these areas were discarded. (See Map 6.) The whole of the land acquired for Forest Hills Gardens was formerly the site of six farms. By 1923 the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation had acquired the Forest Hills Gardens stock from the Russell Sage Homes Foundation, thereby forming the non-profit membership entity of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation which continues in existence.

STUDY OF THE LAYOUT OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS (1910) Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Grosvenor Atterbury

This map appeared in the prospectus, "Forest Hills Gardens," published in 1912 and 1913 by the Sage Foundation Homes Company and was reprinted for distribution with this edition of *Forest Hills Gardens*. The Sage Homes Company prospectus contained photographs of houses, maps, projected views, and street scenes of over thirty sites within the property. This map is significant as it is a very early depiction of the joint vision of the two men, an architect and a landscape architect, who worked

together to realize their concept, new to America, of a garden community within a city.

AMERICA'S FIRST URBAN GARDEN COMMUNITY

The map depicts the configuration of the streets as they actually came to be. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the landscape architect, designed the streets of Forest Hills Gardens to follow the gently rolling contours of the land. Working with Olmsted, Grosvenor Atterbury, the noted architect, designed houses and plot configurations which incorporated concepts of traditional English country design within a garden environment.

MAJOR THOROUGHFARES

The two wide streets which proceed straight through the property, Ascan Avenue and Continental Avenue, were placed there to continue the city's gridwork plan, which is characteristic of the streets in the surrounding area. Continental and Ascan avenues were designed to carry traffic quickly through the Gardens. The two main avenues, Greenway North and Greenway South, which radiate from Station Square in gentle curves that follow the natural grades and features of the land, provide access to the center of the Gardens and lead to the entrance of Forest Park across Union Turnpike. The grid-like pattern proposed and used by New York City in the rectangular layout of the streets and blocks which surrounded the Gardens had no provision for curved avenues like those designed for Forest Hills Gardens.

SECONDARY STREETS

The narrower, secondary streets of Forest Hills Gardens, also gently curved, were designed to follow the topography of the property and to connect with the adjacent street layout of the New York City plan, which was tentative at this time. This map shows street development to Metropolitan Avenue.

## CURVING STREETS

The designer, working in partnership with Grosvenor Atterbury, avoided straight lines. With the exception of the two "passage" streets of Continental Avenue and Ascan Avenue, all the 40-odd streets in the Gardens are slightly curved, presenting ever-changing vistas, and were laid out to discourage their use as thoroughfares. To foster a "cozy, domestic character" (as described in a 1911 prospectus: *Forest Hills Gardens: The Suburban Land Development of the Russell Sage Foundation*), the roadways of the "local streets" were made narrow to permit additional space to be devoted to planting areas (curbplots) and the front gardens which are the characteristic feature of the entire development of the Gardens.

## AREAS FOR COMMON USE

A major element of the design of the Gardens can be seen clearly on this map. It is the setting aside of certain areas for the common use of the residents; approximately five acres were allocated for parks and public spaces. Due to the immediate presence of the large 500-acre Forest Park across Union Turnpike, there was no need to allocate large areas for recreation or sport in the Gardens. The public Green, designed to contain paths, lawn and ornamental plantings, runs up the center of Greenway Terrace between the two sets of streets and is the residential focus of Forest Hills Gardens, as the adjacent Station Square is the business focus. Station Square performs the function of a traffic center and contains the railroad station which is the transportation connection with the city. A small view (Key Map) illustrates the presence of railroad lines to Brooklyn and Montauk, Long Island, in the area surrounding Forest Hills Gardens. In addition to the Green and Station Square, two other spaces in other parts of the tract were set aside for small parks: Hawthorne Park, between Burns Street and Beechknoll Road, and Olivia Park, which is nestled between Markwood Road and Deepdene Road in a natural hollow. It was part of the designers' concept

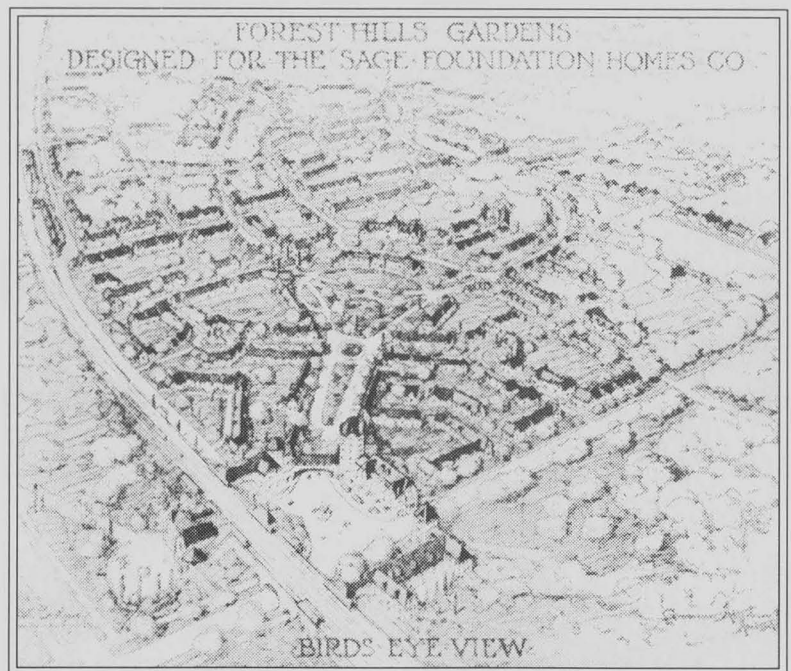
that the liberal provision of land for common use added to the salable value of the individual lots upon which houses were built.

## PRIVATE PARKS

An important design feature of Olmsted's plan for Forest Hills Gardens is the several private parks which occupy interior portions of some blocks. The two larger interior parks seen at the middle of this map were later developed into streets, Ivy Close and Fairway Close. (For detail, see Map 1, below.) But several of these parks, which were meant to be used by the smaller children as play areas away from traffic, survived the final development of the Gardens. Not designated for public use, these parks are reached directly from the back yards of the houses on the block.

## BIRD'S-EYE VIEW: FOREST HILLS GARDENS DESIGNED FOR THE SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO. (1910) Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Grosvenor Atterbury

This idealized maplike drawing which focuses on the central portion of the Gardens was executed jointly in 1910 by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Grosvenor Atterbury. The drawing was subsequent-



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS. OLMSTEAD AND ATTERBURY SKETCH (1910). FROM THE 1911 SAGE FOUNDATION PROSPECTUS.

ly published in 1911 in the Sage Foundation Homes Company's *Suburban Land Development* sales prospectus. It is a landscaped overview, with Station Square at its center, and shows street development, including the Greenways North and South in an easterly direction to Union Turnpike, south to Metropolitan Avenue (later eliminated from the Gardens), and, north to the Long Island Railroad along Burns Street.

#### NO STREETS PLANNED

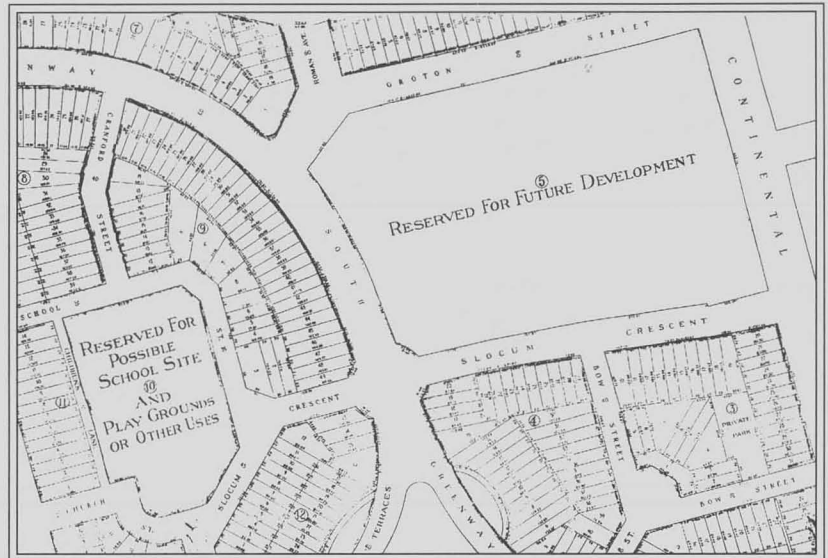
#### WEST OF CONTINENTAL AVENUE

The streets and paths in the area west of Continental Avenue had yet to appear. The southern area, known as the Vanderveer tract, was later developed as the Van Court properties. The drawing shows the houses which had been planned to that time, including the Station Square buildings which became the Forest Hills Inn at Station Square, and the row houses on both sides of Greenway Terrace. Several single-family homes are envisioned for the site that was eventually occupied by The Leslie Apartments at the top of the Green of the Greenway Terraces. Olmsted's meticulous attention to design detail can be seen in the landscape and planting plans which he did for some of the larger homes built in the early years of development, as well as for the parks and Station Square.

#### SURVEY MAP #1 (APRIL 1910)

C. B. Fancy

This was the first survey map done for the Sage Foundation Homes Co. It was commonly known as the first "Fancy" map for the Civil Engineer, C.B. Fancy, whose signature appears on it. The developed area does not go to Metropolitan Avenue, or west of Continental Ave except for several lots on which was built the Inn



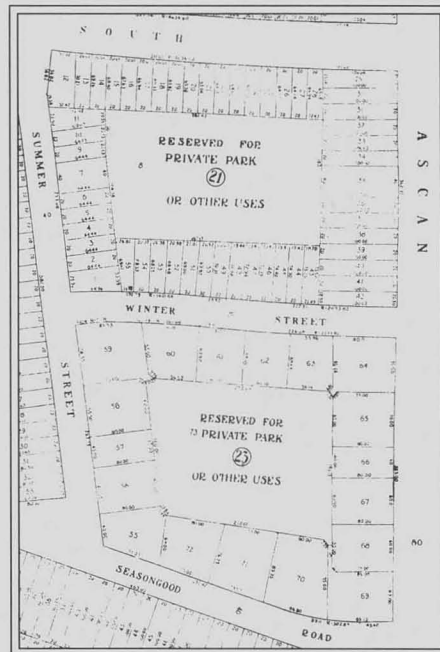
MAP 1 (1910), DETAIL. TWO UNDEVELOPED AREAS: OLIVE PLACE AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL / PLAYGROUND SITE.

building at 2 Dartmouth Street.

#### UNDEVELOPED AREA: OLIVE PLACE

A large undeveloped area shown on this map as bounded by Groton Street, Continental Avenue, Slocum Crescent and Greenway South later saw the addition of Olive Place as an east/west transverse street. (See detail.) An area was reserved for a possible school site, later P.S. 101 and its playground.

Block 21 (encircled by Ascan Avenue, Winter Street, Summer Street and Greenway South) and Block 23 (encircled by Ascan Avenue, Seasingood Road, Summer Street and Winter Street), were both designed to contain enclosed private parks, accessible only from the rear of the houses on those blocks. (See detail.) These interior parks were later developed into the north/south streets of Fairway Close and Ivy Close, respectively.



MAP 2 (1912), DETAIL. PROPOSED PRIVATE PARKS BEHIND ASCAN AVENUE HOUSING BLOCKS. THE PARKS WERE NEVER DEVELOPED, AND THE AREAS BECAME FAIRWAY CLOSE AND IVY CLOSE.

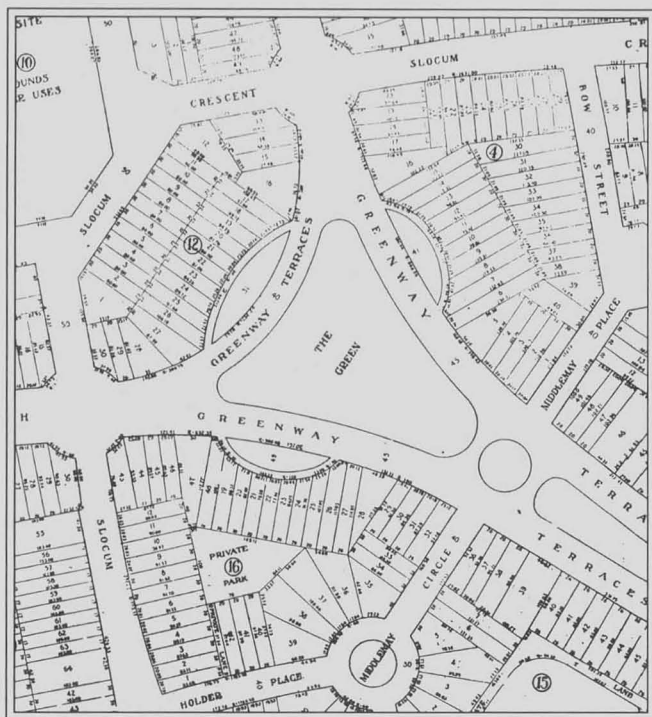
#### THE VILLAGE GREEN

Flagpole Park, which runs down the middle of Greenway Terrace, was called "The Village

Green.” Flanking the Green on three sides were blocks which contain semi-circular front driveways. (See detail.) The driveway in Block 12 was later transformed into the front pathway for The Leslie Apartments, built in the 1940s. The other two driveways on the north and south terraces (Blocks 16 and 4), were never actualized. The only set of houses which share a front circular drive like the ones envisioned in this map are the houses at 45 through 71 Burns Street. Space was allotted for two parks in this early map. Block 42 became Olivia Park (for Mrs. Russell Sage) and block 27 became Hawthorne Park (for the type of trees which were planted there).

#### ORIGINAL STREET NAMES

This map shows a substantial number of Gardens streets planned to bear names different from those finally selected. It is believed that persons with real estate interests in the Gardens assigned the earlier street names. The comparison of street names which follows illustrates that some Gardens streets which ultimately were given distinctive and charming names had some very pedestrian beginnings in 1910. For example, one of the streets surrounding the proposed school site was duly proposed as “School Street.”



MAP 2 (1912). DETAIL. PROPOSED SEMI-CIRCULAR DRIVEWAYS ALONG GREENWAY TERRACE.

Fortunately, more creative options were adopted:

MAP #1 (1910)	MAP #2 (1912)
Arch Street	Archway Place
Beech Street	Beechy
	(later, Beechknoll) Road
Church Street	Standish Road
Fairfield Street	Shorthill Road
Glen Road	Deepdene Road
Highland Street	Upshaw Road
Juniper Street	Seasongood Road
Litchfield Street	Borage Place
Middleton Circle	Middlemay Circle
Middleton Street	Middlemay Place
Northfield Street	Markwood Road
Norwood Street	Overhill Road
Park Street	Park End Place
Ridgeway Road	Wendover Road
School Street	Russell Place
Short Street	Holder Place
South Street	Norden Road
Upton Street	Rockrose Place

#### MAP #2 (OCTOBER 1912)

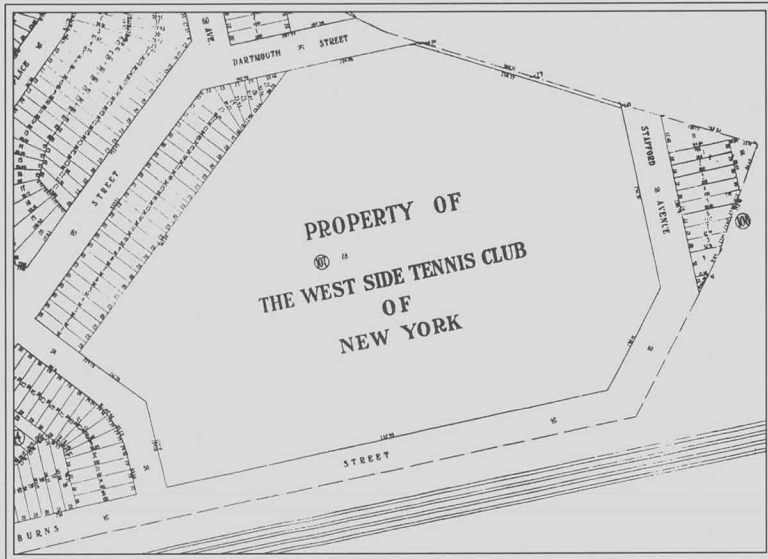
C. B. Fancy

On this map, like Map #1, Forest Hills Gardens is shown to be developed between Union Turnpike and Continental Avenue, but not further west. Nor was development seen to extend southward to Metropolitan Avenue. And, except for Beechknoll Road, which is here shown as “Beechy,” all the streets in the Gardens are shown to have the names that they bore from that time hence. Olivia Park has appeared by name on this map, along with Groton Lane (the walkway between Groton Street and Olive Place) and Crescent Lane (the walkway between Olive Place and Slocum Crescent).

#### SURVEY MAP #3 (APRIL 1913)

C. B. Fancy

As the development of the Gardens proceeded, concepts displayed on the Olmsted/Atterbury “Bird’s-Eye View” drawing continued to be displayed on this map. Both sides of Ascan Avenue from Whitson Street to Metropolitan show development as part of the Gardens. The Gardens is projected south to Metropolitan Avenue, including



MAP 3 (1913). DETAIL. WEST SIDE TENNIS CLUB PROPERTY AND THE STAFFORD AVENUE PROPERTY WHICH IS NO LONGER PART OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS.

blocks on Kessel, Loubet, Manse, Stratford and Guilford streets which were never developed as part of the Gardens (with the exception of a portion of Kessel Street). The area west of Continental Avenue was acquired, including a small triangular plot west of Stafford Avenue which was later sold and disappeared from Gardens property. (See detail.)

#### ALTERNATE PLAN FOR BLOCK 23

An alternate plan for Block 23 (see detail) illustrates the idea of having a street, passage or common lane run east/west between Summer Street and Ascan Avenue. This common passage eventually became Ivy Close, with the Close rotated to run north/south through that block between Seasongood Road and Winter Street. Several small private parks are projected, like the one bounded by houses on Shorthill Road, Goodwood Road, Greenway North and Puritan Avenue. Final street names are in place.

#### MAP #5 (JULY 1918)

C. B. Fancy

This map continues to show real estate development to Metropolitan Avenue. The tri-

angular plot on Stafford Avenue is shown, as are both Fairway Close and Ivy Close.

#### MAP #6 (FEBRUARY 1921)

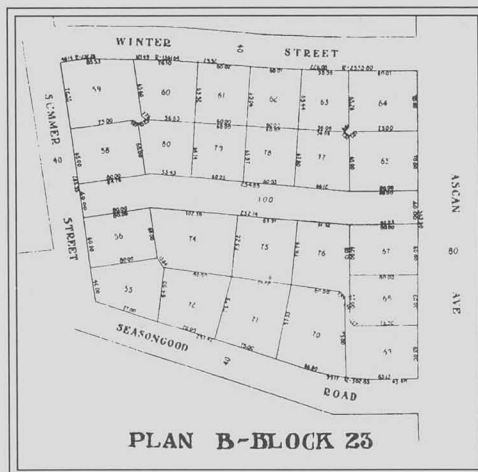
C. B. Fancy

On this, the last map done by the Sage Foundation Homes Co., the Gardens is still projected to be developed to Metropolitan Avenue, a last view of what might have been. Two small private parks are shown in this area, including one bounded by Kessel Street, Union Turnpike and 75th Road and another bounded by Metropolitan Avenue, Manse Street, Lucy Place and 72nd Road. (See detail.) The tip of land west of the West Side Tennis Club continues to be shown as Gardens property. New street names are in place and what had been an undeveloped plot is shown here as now containing Olive Place.

#### "HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY HOME IN YE OLDE FOREST HILLS" (1923-1934)

Everet Hendricks (Eric Sloan)

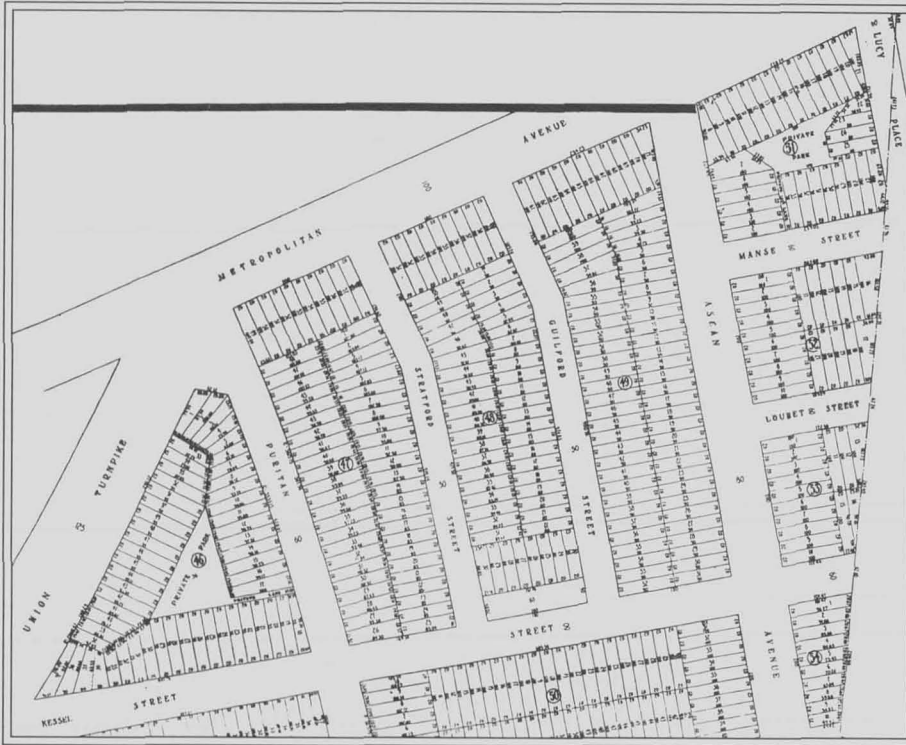
This map, certainly created for fun, and old enough to include street names for the area north of Queens Boulevard, instead of the grid number names which replaced them, contains a myriad of local references, in-jokes and visual puns which appear all around the street portion of the map. It was reproduced in the brochure for the Queens Historical Society's "Forest Hills Gardens and Vicinity" Exhibit in 1989 and is reprinted for distribution with this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*. It is known that Thomas Hart, a local realtor whose name appears in its own heart-shape, mid-left section, commissioned this work.



MAP 3 (1913). DETAIL. ALTERNATE PROPOSAL FOR BLOCK 23. NEITHER THIS NOR THE PROPOSED PRIVATE PARK FOR THE SITE WERE DEVELOPED. THE AREA EVENTUALLY BECAME IVY CLOSE.

#### A MYSTERY SOLVED

The map embodies several basic mysteries, including the identity of the artist, "EX" who did the map "All . . . by hand, think of it." It is the early work of young artist Everet Hendricks



MAP 6 (1921), DETAIL. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN KESSEL STREET AND METROPOLITAN AVENUE, WITH PRIVATE PARKS. THE SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES COMPANY NEVER DEVELOPED THE AREA, AND THE LAND WAS EVENTUALLY SOLD TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS.

who later became quite well known as a painter of New England landscapes under the name Eric Sloan. That this map was created some time after 1923 can be deduced by the appearance lower right of "List of Rules, Gardens Corporation" which represents the establishment of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation in 1923. Not shown is the Interborough Parkway which was built in 1934. Therefore, this map was produced sometime between 1923 and 1934 — but probably in the early 1930s — by the quirky and humorous artist who tweaked the local citizens with the amusing little drawings around the border of the map. The trolley line, seen running along Metropolitan Avenue, served the community from 1913 until 1935, which saw the advent of the Independent Line subway into this part of Queens. The streets south of Metropolitan Avenue had names of women: Sara, Lilly, Lucy, Flossie, Johanna, Lydia, Wanda, Viola, Ursula and Theresa. Lucy Street remains.

#### MYSTERIES TO SOLVE

Readers who possess information leading to the unraveling of any unexplained, or wrongly

explained cartoon clues on this map, or the 1927 decorative "flapper-style" map which is described later in this article, are invited to contact the writer at the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation office (2 Tennis Place, Forest Hills, New York 11375) with such information.

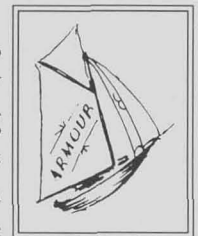
#### KEY TO MAP

The following is an alphabetized listing of the names and "tags" found in the border drawings. Gardens addresses indicate residency or association. Several of the indicated individuals do not have a commonly known association to the drawings which accompany their names. For example, A.P. Armour, primarily known for inventing the door for phone booths, and making

a fortune at it, has his name adorning a large, sleek sailboat in the drawing on the map.

#### Names and Drawings:

**Armour, Albert Phelps** (sailboat), lived at 132 and 113 Greenway North. A maker of airplanes during Word War I, his main claim to fame was his invention of the accordion door for telephone booths, which he sold to Western Electric in 1929 for \$3,000,000. Enough for a yacht.



**Aten, Maurice** (banjo).

**Brydle, Fenton R.** (book), 75 Continental Avenue.

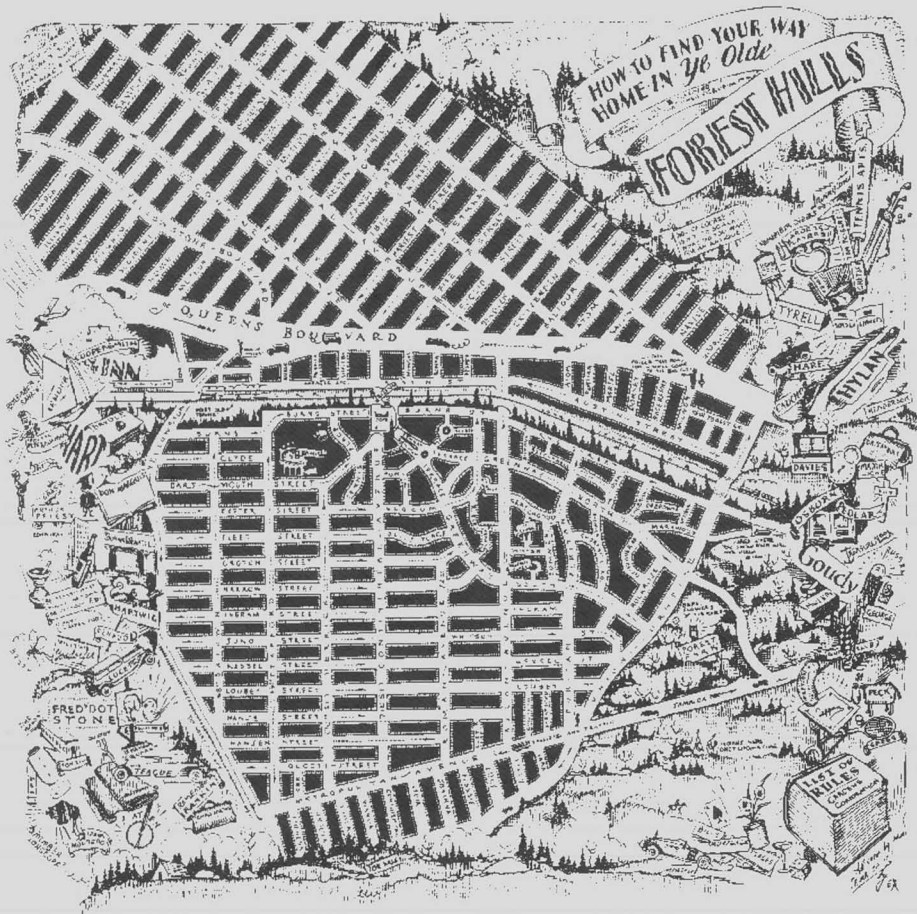
**Cauchois,** (coffeepot).

**Chalmers, Thomas C.** (physician's bag), lived and maintained an office at 88 Continental Ave. He was a popular general medical practitioner who delivered babies, including, Forest Hills Gardens resident Betty Pretlow at her family's residence at 55 Exeter Street.



**Chan,** ("rates too"), near notation regarding the bot-





Salon of this store (according to a editor at *Vogue* quoted in the ad which appeared in the 1931 Gardens Players program) “will stress that famous fifty-dollar range so agreeable to the young and allowed.”



Earle, Guyon Locke Crocheron (lock, Major Locke), builder of 6 Burns Street and 4 Dartmouth Street (Tennis View Apartments), plus 150 homes in the Gardens.

Edna Jean was the name of an apartment building which stands at 71-58 Austin Street. Ed Kenny, of Kenny’s Pharmacy on Continental Avenue, owned this building, which he named for his wife Edna and daughter Jean.

Forest Park (bees, flowers and tin cans). Courting and sparking were followed by matrimony

tled comforts dispensed during prohibition by Ed Kenny the pharmacist on Continental Avenue.

Cheek, Frank (“remember cheeks”).

Coopersmith, Irving (scales of justice), was an attorney who had his offices at the corner of Continental Avenue and Austin Street.

Croy, Homer (water tower), 10 Standish Road, was a writer for the *Saturday Evening Post*. He published several novels, among them, *West of the Watertower*. In later years he was a screen writer. He was also a close friend of Dale Carnegie, who dedicated a book to Croy. During the first World War he headed the company which supplied motion pictures to the American troops in Europe. Both Mr. and Mrs. Croy were active members of the Gardens Players and at the first subscription performance of the troupe on June 9, 1916, Croy was the Prompter.

Davies, John R. (judge), 27 Exeter Street.

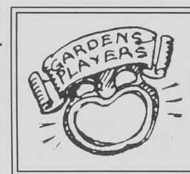
Denton, Eugene K. (woman holding banner), 170 Slocum Crescent, owned The Tailored Woman, Inc., at 632 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. The Debutante

even back then. “Here’s where you show your girl the view. Oh yeah.”

Fox, Claude R. (cross), was the funeral director at the Fox Funeral Home, which was originally located on Queens Boulevard at Roman Avenue and afterward was established on Metropolitan Avenue.

Fireworks at Flagpole Park. Refers to the July 4th festivities which were organized by the Celebrations Association.

Gardens Players. A popular and long-lived association of residents of Forest Hills Gardens and vicinity whose objective was to “promote avocational dramatics,” and who produced many professional theatrical events over its more than twenty-five years of existence. Many of the professional writers and performers who lived in the Gardens, including Walter Hartwig, Albert Howson, Robert Tappan, Ralph Renaud, Homer Croy, and others, lent their creative skills to the artistic endeavors of the Gardens Players. They produced



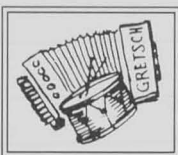
works like *Shall We Join The Ladies?* or *Who Shot Arnold Rothstein?* which was performed on April 25th and 26th, 1930. Albert Howson performed "Milestones of Song." The high calibre of their work can be deduced, since the troupe performed on Broadway in the National Little Theatre Tournament in 1930. Scores of local businesses were active advertisers in the programs for these events through the 1930s.

**Gosdorfer, Lewis C.** (sign), 71-25 Kessel Street, was the president of the United Bank of Long Island and a Forest Hills realtor.

**Goudy, Frederic** (large type name), 40 Deepdene Road, one of America's most renowned printers and typeface designers ran the Village Press in his home with his wife, Bertha, who did the typesetting for his publications. For the residents of Forest Hills Gardens, he produced the programs and proclamations for the 4th of July celebrations between 1915 and 1920. An article about Goudy appeared in the 1992 issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine.

**Gress** (tennis racket).

**Gretsch, Fred William Richard** (drum, accordion), 27 Shorthill Road, was a guitar, drum, and accordion maker and inventor of the famed acoustic "Gretsch Guitar."



**Gun Club** (feet with patterned leggings).

**Hare** (polo player).

**Hart, Thomas** (heart-shaped name), 3 Greenway Terrace, was a major realtor, civic leader and one of the few Democrats in the Gardens of that time. His offices were at the corner of Austin Street and Continental Avenue (the space which later housed the King George Coffee Shop and is presently the Cohen Vision Center).

**Hartwig, Walter** (bird), 78 Dartmouth Street, was a theater producer who directed, produced and acted in performances of the Gardens Players, the local thespians. See notation for "Gardens Players" above and "Actors on a stage, with Director" below.



**Henderson, Eldridge**, lived at the Grosvenor Apartment (150 Burns Street); he was a real estate broker who had his offices at 21 Continental

Avenue.

**Hylan, John F.**, Mayor of New York City, lived at 2 Olive Place.

**INN**, The Forest Hills Inn at 1 Station Square. Completed by 1912, it was in use as a hotel until the early 1960s.

**Irvington's Electrical Company**, electrical contractor, 16 Continental Avenue, and 72-20 Austin Street.

**Kaufman, Profane Pete** (man sawing wood) was a carpenter and builder and lived at 3 Continental Ave. His son was a writer for the Marx brothers.



**Kenney, (also Kenny) Ed**, (mortar/pestle, bottle), ran his pharmacy on the present site of Columbia Savings Bank at 106-19 Continental Avenue. An advertisement which appeared in a Gardens Players program in April 1930 said, "For — Drugs, Sodas, Cigars, Apartments in Forest Hills, See Ed. Kenny . . ." As "Forest Hills' most versatile citizen," Kenny provided prescriptions which were deemed "perfect" (according to an ad which appeared in the same publication the following year). It was rumored that, in addition to prescriptions, he supplied bottled spirits at his "soda fount" for thirsty patrons until 1933.

**List of Rules Gardens Corporation** (very fat book at lower right), refers to the establishment of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation in 1923 as enforcer of our Covenants and Restrictions.



**Locke, Major**, (lock).

**Longcope**, ("remember Longcope").

**Luce, Theodore** (car), was associated with the Lincoln Motor Cars Company, with "Salons" on Broadway and Park Avenue in Manhattan and had his own gas tank at his home at 35 Greenway North.



**Mantle, Robert Burns** (stage), 44 Seasongood Road, was the drama critic for the *New York Daily News* during the 20s, 30s and 40s, and chronicled the history of both playwrights and plays from 1919 through his active career into the 1940s. Burns

Mantle's fame as a critic was so well established that he merits a mention in Joseph Kesselring's famous play, *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1941). The drama critic, Mortimer Brewster (played by Cary Grant in the film version), has just discovered that his elderly aunts have been poisoning elderly gentlemen and burying them in the family basement. In shock, he telephones his editor about a replacement for the play he is supposed to review that evening:

"Look, Al, the fellow who sets my copy. He ought to know about what I'd write. His name is Joe. He's the third machine from the left."

"But, Al, he might turn out to be another *Burns Mantle!*"

(In John Gassner, Ed. *Best Plays of the Modern Theatre*. 2nd series. New York: Crown, 1947, p. 475.)

In 1917, Mantle, who served with the Forest Hills Company (8th Co., 9th Artillery, New York Guard), was a member of the Entertainment Committee for Rainbow Night (September 29th) when more than a thousand soldiers from a midwest Armory division were fed in Gardens homes and entertained in Station Square.

**Marquis, Don** (open book), 51 Wendover Road, noted poet, columnist *The Evening Sun*, *The Tribune*, and playwright, was also the creator of the popular verse-composing cockroach,archie, who was too small to manipulate the shift key on the typewriter, hence his lower case poems. Marquis once described Forest Hills as "the cleanest suburb of Brooklyn." Archie wrote the following poem about Forest Hills Gardens which appeared in a local newspaper, the *Post Lamp*



ever since i came to  
live at forest hills  
i have led a  
life of fear  
the place is so clean  
that if the  
community spirit  
discovered a cockroach  
in the town  
i would be stepped  
on i am compelled  
to keep off the streets  
in the daytime for  
fear the community spirit

will get me and the  
only chance i get  
for fresh air and  
exercise is after  
the sun has gone down  
and as a consequence  
i suffer in health  
i suppose when  
the new community house  
is built even there  
there will be no  
provision for insects  
i wake up at  
night screaming  
having dreamed that the  
community spirit  
finally got me  
as far as i can see  
the only insects  
allowed in forest hills  
are moths and mortgages  
they both work  
while you sleep  
archie

**Miller** (bricks or books). Possibly William M. Miller of 266 Burns Street who was a director of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation or Dr. Leslie William Miller who was a local surgeon-dentist.

**Montiero, Frank** (photographer), was a famed local portrait and wedding photographer.



**Mosquitos**. Flushing Meadow was a swamp at this time, and a notorious source of the mosquitos that tormented residents of Forest Hills.

**Osborn, Gardner** (book).

**Peck, Fred C.** (horse), lived at 3 Roman Avenue and owned and operated the Adirondacks Riding Stable, probably in neighboring Forest Park.



**Pedlar, Louis** (book).

**Ponzio, James** ("Jim's Wagon"), ran a diner restaurant on Queens Boulevard.

**Pretlow, William** (peanut), of 4 Dartmouth Street ("Gardens Apartments", later "Tennis View Apartments"), and 55 Exeter Street, president of Pretlow & Co., was the Virginia peanut broker who sold peanuts to Hershey, National Biscuit Company

(later Nabisco), Bazzini, and others.

**Priest, Arthur H.** (lawyer).

**Quinton, V.N.** (pliers), was a dentist who practiced at 2 Continental Avenue. His work was advertised (in a Gardens Players program of 1933), as being “neither financially nor physically painful.”

**Quinn** (bolt of cloth).

**Rankin, Rob** (“remember Rankin”), repeated several times.

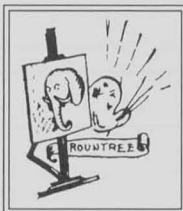
**Renaud, Ralph** (pen), 336 Burns Street, 16 Puritan Street, wrote and directed 4th of July Pageants held in Olivia Park between 1916 and 1919, and



helped to arrange the Metropolitan Opera performances in the park in 1920. He was involved with the early years of the Gardens Players and wrote several of their plays, including *The Flying Door-Mat*, *An Exposition of Relativity in One Lesson*.

**Rogers, Tom** (t-square), was an architect, probably of homes in the Gardens; he had his office at 2 Continental Avenue.

**Roundtree, Herman** (easel with picture of elephant), 173 Slocum Crescent, was a well-known illustrator of wildlife and designer of posters whose work appeared in *The Sportsman* and *Field and Stream*. He



learned his art by sketching at the Philadelphia zoo. A reproduction of his color illustration of the July 4th, 1917, Celebration in Flagpole Park was sent to Forest Hills Gardens residents along with the *Gardens News* in August 1990.

**Sage, Russell** (ticker tape) was an enormously wealthy financier who earned most of his fortune in the stock market — thus the ticker tape as his symbol. After his death, his wife, Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, used her inheritance to create the Russell Sage Foundation in 1907. The Foundation in turn created a subsidiary, the Sage Homes Foundation Company, in 1909, which developed Forest Hills Gardens.

**Salvini Street** (see map location upper right quadrant). This street (which was out of alphabetical order, coming as it did after Atom Street), was named for the Italian foreman of the immigrant construction crew that performed the essential, but

rough, tasks of building the roads and sewers of Forest Hills Gardens under the auspices of Cord Meyer. The Sage Homes Foundation asked for and received the agreement of the Cord Meyer firm to remove these workers (its subcontractors) from the land where they had been camping out. This space was the flat and unadorned area which became the sites of the Long Island Railroad station, Station Square and the Forest Hills Inn. Payroll records of the time identify these workers as “Italian #1,” “Italian #2,” etc., to the number 24. These workers laid tens of thousands of bricks by hand which were not even visible as the foundations for the several hundred manhole structures found in the sewers and streets of Forest Hills Gardens. Structures of this nature built today would be of pre-cast concrete.

**Saybolt, W.F.** (doctor’s bag), of 35 Greenway Terrace, was a general practitioner and took care of Forest Hills residents.

**Sparkes, Boyden** (book), 201 Puritan Avenue, was a writer.

**Stone, Fred and Dot:** Olive Place, 5 Russell Place, 150 Greenway North. Fred was a very well known vaudevillian singer, comic and dancer. He was a featured performer at the opening celebrations of the Community House in August 1926 and also performed with the Gardens Players. The Stones were close friends of Will Rogers.

**Tappan, Robert**, of One Ascan Avenue and 128 Whitson Street, was architect and designer of St. Luke’s Church on Greenway South, and building developments, including the private enclaves of Arbor Close (1926) and Forest Close (1928) just north of Austin Street between 73rd Road and 75th Road for which he won the Queens Chamber of Commerce First Prize. He also designed single family homes in historic locations in Jackson Heights and was the lead architect during the 1920s at the incomplete Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine, in Manhattan. Mrs. Tappan was active with the Gardens Players and worked on settings for performances.



**Teague, Walter Darwin** (automobile), was architect to the 1939 World’s Fair and designer of the bullet-nosed Studebaker. He designed costumes for the

Gardens Players' 4th of July performances.

**Tennis Apartments** (rolling pin): a reference to the buildings at 4 Dartmouth Street and 6 Burns Street which later became known as Tennis View Apartments.

**Treasure Nook**

**Tyrell, Franklin**, 71-50 Austin Street, real estate broker.

**FOREST HILLS GARDENS, 1927  
N.M.F.**

This decorative map was executed after the style of the flapper-age artist John Held by the unknown artist "N.M.F." in 1927. It is the third of four maps that were reprinted for distribution with this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*. We note that the triangular tip of land just west of the West Side Tennis Club, which was originally part of Forest Hills Gardens, would disappear from the property within the following decade, possibly to finance future development of other parts of the Gardens. Although several Kessel Street properties in the vicinity of 75th Avenue bear deeds which indicate that the properties are within the Gardens, this 1927 map of Forest Hills Gardens does not include the area.

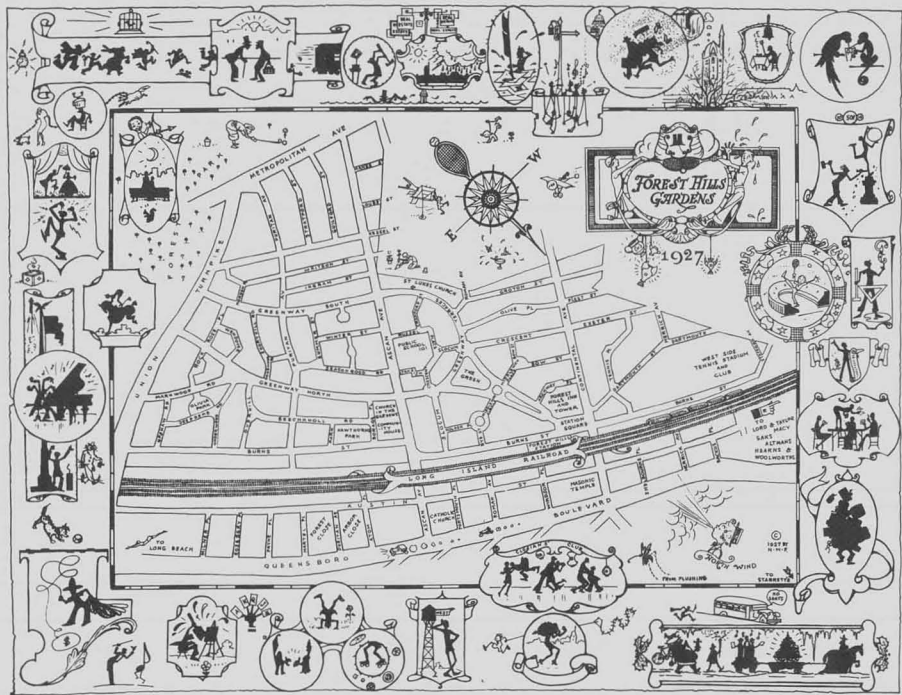
**Illustrations:**

**Actors on a stage, with director.** Gardens Players, see "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing. The director in this silhouette sports the distinctive nose profile of Walter Hartwig (see listing in "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map).

**Arbor Close, private development** designed by Robert Tappan and built by Cord Meyer. See "Tappan" in "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.

**Architect with ornamental letter G.** Grosvenor Atterbury, supervising architect of Forest Hills Gardens.

**Artist at easel, with big brush.** See "Roundtree" in "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.



**Card players.**

**Cards** (poker hand)

**Cats fighting, girl standing on head, roller skater Carolers; Santa.** The Forest Hills Gardens Celebrations Association was a community group that organized the yearly Christmas event — Santa on his motorized sleigh continues the practice of visiting Gardens children on Christmas eve to this day — and the 4th of July celebrations.

**Closians' Club** (jitterbuggers). This establishment catered to the residents of Arbor Close and Forest Close, the private developments north of Austin



Street which Robert Tappan designed and Cord Meyer built. The Club consisted of a clubhouse, two tennis courts, and a small golf course on the strip of land opposite the Closes, between Austin Street and the railroad tracks.

**Commuters running for train** (milkman and top-hatted gentleman). This obviously refers to Station Square where the commuters stepped off the Long Island Railroad directly into the heart of Forest Hills Gardens. It was long-rumored that the apartment houses which lined Burns Street housed the mis-

tresses of railroad-commuting gentlemen who stopped off in Forest Hills and then continued to their final destinations on Long Island.

**Cowboy with lasso.** Will Rogers, the famous performing comic cowboy, lived in Kew Gardens and sent his children to the Kew Forest School, the co-educational school which had classes from kindergarten through college preparatory and was located on Union Turnpike at the easterly border of the Gardens.

**Davis Cup** (tennis insignia around name of map "Forest Hills"). The international team competition was held at the West Side Tennis Club between 1914 and 1959. The Davis Cup competition was one of the main public match draws which, over a period of ten years, from 1923, helped to finance the building of the concrete 14,000 seat horseshoe-shaped stadium at the West Side Tennis Club.

**Diner** (pitchfork and wieners at formal table).

**Flapper** (with silhouette of Inn).

**Fireworks.** July 4th was celebrated in Forest Hills Gardens with gatherings, competitions, speeches, and performances, all created and performed by residents.

**Forest Close,** private development designed by Robert Tappan and built by Cord Meyer. See "Tappan" in "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.

**Forest Hills Gardens** (weeping man and woman tennis players). Since 1913, Forest Hills Gardens has been the home of the West Side Tennis Club. American players Helen Wills and William Tilden dominated play in 1924 and 1925. In 1926 Tilden was defeated by Rene Lacoste in Davis Cup play and by Henri Cochet at Forest Hills. In 1927 Tilden again lost to Rene Lacoste, hence his sorrow.

**Honeymoon couple.**

**Honeymoon in Niagara Falls.** Washington, D.C.

**Ice block on man's head.**

**Jockey on race horse.** Possibly refers to Hirsch Jacobs, 176 Slocum Crescent. Although Jacobs did not come to



national prominence as a breeder and trainer of race-horses until the 1940s, this drawing may refer to his early days of involvement with racing.

**Man axing radio.** John Vincent Lawless Hogan of 239 Greenway South was a pioneer in radio technology and was the inventor of the single dial for AM/FM reception. He owned several radio stations, including WQXR, in 1936. A lecturer and consulting engineer, Hogan founded the Institute of Radio Engineers.

**Mosquitos** (from Flushing). (See "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.)

**N.M.F. 1927.** Who was the artist who created this map?

**Ocean Club at Forest Hills** (to Long Beach).

**Orator with declamation.** Albert Sidney Howson, of 34 Tennis Place, was a Broadway thespian and later played Shakespearean repertory. Warner Brothers employed him as censorship director and scenario editor. He was deeply involved in the Forest Hills Gardens community. He became president of the Community House in the early 1930s, worked with the Forest Hills Gardens Celebrations Association, and was the managing director of the Gardens Players. Howson was often seen on Gardens streets, wrapped in a cape, quoting Shakespeare. He gave a yearly Memorial Day speech at the Flagpole in the Green.

**Orchestra conductor with note.** James Hal Kemp of 53 Continental Avenue was a radio orchestra conductor who worked internationally, and at the New Yorker and Pennsylvania hotels in Manhattan. Practice sessions were held on the second floor of the building just east of the present day T-Bone Diner on Queens Boulevard.

**Park bench, couple under the moon.**

**Parrot/monkey.**

**Pianist.** Edward Abbe Niles, of 14 Beechknoll Road, was a prominent attorney and an expert on music copyrights. He was an



enthusiastic and accomplished pianist and co-authored, with W.C. Handy, the book, *Treasury of the Blues*. He was active at the West Side Tennis Club as a lineman. Niles's wife, Katherine, was for many years, the coordinator of the Forest Hills Gardens Debutante Cotillion and set up ballroom dance classes at the Forest Hills Inn.

**Real estate companies** (sunny weather over Forest Hills Gardens, rain elsewhere.) The 1920s saw enormous real estate development in Forest Hills. Neighborhoods were established and fortunes made.

**Sculptor with hammer and chisel.** Adolph Alexander Weinman, of 234 (studio) and 236 (residence) Greenway South, was a sculptor most famous for his design of the Mercury dime (issued 1916-1945) and the Liberty half-dollar (1916-1945). He designed the facades of the New York City Municipal Building (1912) and the Washington, D.C. Post Office (1933), and the



Pietà above the main (Ascan Avenue) portal of the rebuilt Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church (1939). His best known local work is the granite and bronze War Monument on Flagpole Green. It was executed and erected to honor the 102 Forest Hills men who served in the Great War. An article about Weinman appeared in the 1992 issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine.

**Singers** (marionettes).

**Shopping expedition** (man carrying towering load of purchases). Eugene Denton, see "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.

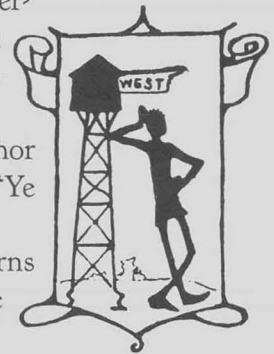
**Starrett's.**

**Tennis player in stadium.** Center Court at the West Side Tennis Club in Forest Hills Gardens hosted the Davis Cup matches and the American National Championships and featured tennis greats like "Big" Bill Tilden who, before he turned professional in 1931, won seven United States singles championships and three Wimbledon championships. He was unbeaten in the U.S. Championship men's singles in Forest Hills from 1920 through 1925, and again in 1929. The player is depicted as missing a

ball, perhaps a reference to Tilden's broken winning streak in 1926. The local site of his many victories, the West Side Tennis Club had moved to Forest Hills Gardens after 1913. The Club, a ten-acre, sixty-three tennis court private facility was, with Wimbledon, a setting for national and international tournament tennis. In 1992, the Club celebrated its one hundredth anniversary.

**Water tower.** Homer Croy, author of *West of the Watertower*. See "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.

**Writer with quill.** Robert Burns Mantle or Ralph Renaud. (See "Ye Olde Forest Hills" map listing.)



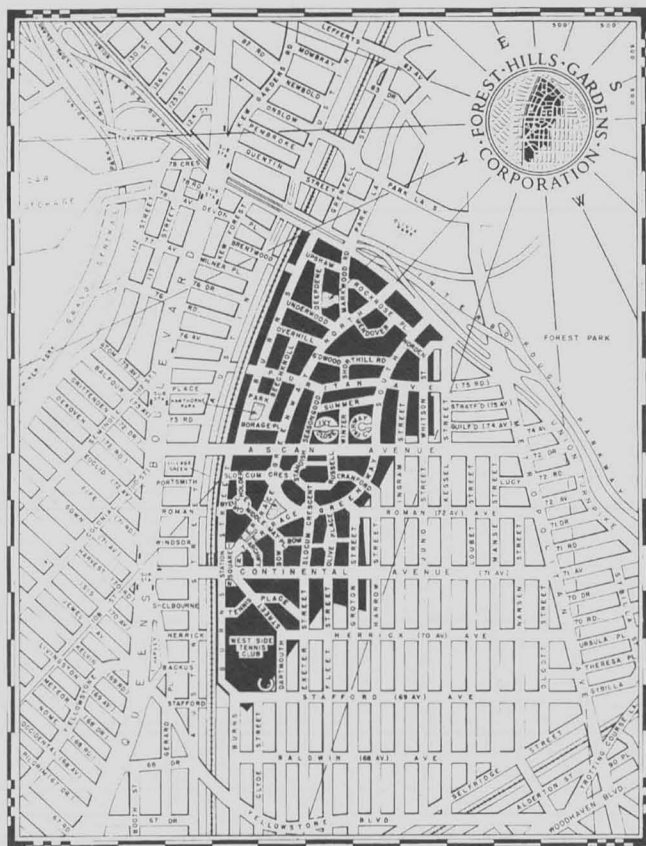
#### STREET MAP: FOREST HILLS GARDENS CORPORATION (1939) Steward Wagner

This workhorse is the map which clearly shows the location of every Gardens street. The map, in its original colors, is the last of the series of four that was reprinted for distribution with this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine.

The map has been in continuous use since it was created in 1939 to reflect an important change in the Corporation. In the late '30s a private developer used the appellation "Forest Hills Gardens" for several of his houses which were not in the Gardens. As noted in the Gardens bulletin of November 1939, "Our good name has become sufficiently distinguished so that others have indicated some disposition to trade on it, or borrow it." In order to safeguard the use of the name Forest Hills Gardens, the Corporation, which had up to that time customarily used "the Gardens" when referring to our community, formally and legally changed its name. The "Gardens Corporation" became the "Forest Hills Gardens Corporation" and "The Gardens" became "Forest Hills Gardens." The 1939 map was commissioned and published to reflect this important change.

The reverse side of the 1939 map carried this "sales" statement:

The portion of the map shown solid is known as "FOREST HILLS GARDENS" and is a highly restricted community in Forest Hills, Long Island, New York,



FOREST HILLS GARDENS CORPORATION (1939). THE MAP WAS COMMISSIONED WHEN THE NAME OF THE COMMUNITY WAS FORMALLY AND LEGALLY CHANGED FROM "THE GARDENS" TO "FOREST HILLS GARDENS."

started in 1908 by the Russell Sage Foundation at the instigation of Mrs. Russell Sage. Forest Hills Gardens Corporation fosters a congenial atmosphere and encourages a selected group of property owners by administering the restrictions "to promote and sustain in Forest Hills Gardens and vicinity in all suitable ways the living and aesthetic conditions for which the Gardens was founded". Forest Hills Gardens Corporation owns and maintains the streets, parks, sewers, and other community property.

This statement reflects certain social and ethnic attitudes commonly held by a certain portion of the membership of the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation in the 1930s. The map shows the area north of

Queens Blvd with the original street names and the numbered identifications which followed: e.g., 71 Avenue north of Queens Blvd was once known as Gown Street. This map shows the location of the two subway stations, Continental Avenue and 75th Avenue, plus the Interborough Parkway.

### CONCLUSION

Despite the modifications and changes reflected in the succession of maps produced between 1910 and 1939, Forest Hills Gardens remained faithful to the original vision of its several creators as development continued for the next thirty or more years. Olmsted and Atterbury had conceived a unique garden-city community of mixed housing, set along seven and one-half miles of quietly curving streets in a design both practical and aesthetically pleasing. Central to their dream were the co-ordinated elements of Station Square, the hub from which the major streets of the Gardens wended picturesquely. Although the sequence of maps displayed changes, the primary concepts remained. The maps show the alterations in borders, with deletions of property to the south and slight changes to the west, but its basic layout remained as was originally proposed by its primary engineers. Street names were revised and improved, but the genius of its designers survived; Forest Hills Gardens was developed according to their original ideas.

The decorative maps celebrated the characters who lived, worked and played in the Forest Hills neighborhood in its formative years. These were its founding citizens who left their marks upon the social and business fabric of the community. These maps, and others which are maintained in the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation archives, continue as valued historical records of the community's unique and enduring heritage.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I would like to acknowledge those who provided information that was useful in the writing of this article: William Coleman (Chair, History Committee, Forest Hills Gardens Corporation), Jeff Gottlieb (President, Central Queens Historical Association), Susanna and Robert Hof (Forest Hills Gardens), Ronald Marzlock (Central Queens Historical Association), and Betty Seeler (Forest Hills Gardens). William Asadorian (Long Island Division, Queens Borough Public Library) supplied a copy of the 1909 "Bromley" map of Forest Hills. For the "Maps of Forest Hills Gardens" series which is included with this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*, Ronald Marzlock provided the original of "How To Find Your Way Home in Ye Olde Forest Hills" and Betty Seeler provided the original of "Forest Hills Gardens, 1927."



# THE APARTMENT HOUSES OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS

by Jeff Gottlieb and William E. Coleman

Jeff Gottlieb is president of the Central Queens Historical Society. A social studies teacher at Benjamin Cardozo High School, he has published and lectured extensively on Queens County history.

William E. Coleman is the former chair of the History Committee, Forest Hills Gardens Corporation. His article on Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., appears elsewhere in this magazine.

W

ere the apartment houses of Forest Hills Gardens an afterthought or an integral part of the community envisioned by Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage, brought to economic reality by Robert de Forest, and designed by Grosvenor Atterbury and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.? This question is an important consideration since the apartment buildings — 1 Station Square (1912), 10 Station Square (1912), 2 Dartmouth Street (1912), 4 Dartmouth Street (1917), 6 Burns Street (1920), 1 Ascan Avenue (1922), 150 Burns Street (1931), 20 Continental Avenue (1931), 10 Holder Place (1934), 150 Greenway Terrace (1943), and 25 Burns Street (1961) — form such a large block of housing units in Forest Hills Gardens. Of the 1600 units of total housing in the Gardens, 650 are in the eleven apartment buildings.

## ORIGINAL PLAN:

### ONE APARTMENT HOUSE

The original plan for Forest Hills Gardens included a single apartment house: a twelve unit building in Station Square which extended along the Continental Avenue side of Station Square and had an entrance at 2 Dartmouth Street. Eventually, when other, larger apartment houses were built, these were limited to the Station Square area and to the Burns Street land strip that borders the Long Island Railroad tracks. The only exception was The Leslie, at the head of Flagpole Green, but that apart-

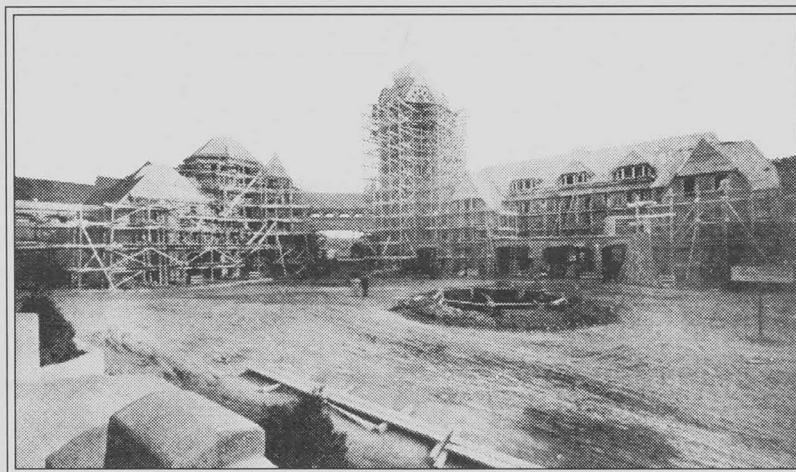
ment house was built only after a protracted dispute and legal battle that lasted more than a decade.

## APARTMENT HOUSES AS A BUFFER

The question remains, however, why the apartment houses were built in their present locations. One theory is that the apartment structures in Station Square and along Burns Street were meant as a “screen” or buffer to protect the heart of the Gardens from the Long Island Railroad and the outside world. Certainly, the almost uninterrupted line of apartment house blocks and attached housing that progresses along Burns Street from Tennis Place to Union Turnpike does serve as both a wall and a screen for Forest Hills Gardens.

## APARTMENT HOUSES AND MRS. SAGE'S IDEAL

Besides serving this practical purpose, the apartments and the two-family housing along Burns Street serve an important purpose connected with the creation of Forest Hills Gardens. The denser housing makes it possible to realize one of the goals of Margaret Olivia Sage in underwriting the development of Forest Hills Gardens: the creation of a community with housing for people of various financial means.



FOREST HILLS INN AND STATION SQUARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, JUNE 1911.  
SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO. PROSPECTUS, 1912.

The "idea" for Forest Hills Gardens was based on English planned communities such as Port Sunlight (which dated from the 1880s) and the "garden cities" of Letchworth, New Earswick, and Hampstead Garden Suburb (which were created in the first decade of this century).<sup>1</sup> Each of these communities combined a mix of attached and detached housing for residents from various economic groups. Mrs. Sage and the directors of the Russell Sage Foundation had originally hoped to achieve the same thing in Forest Hills Gardens. But soaring land prices in Queens County in the 'teens and '20s plus the cost of constructing the infrastructure of the community made it clear that Forest Hills Gardens would not be able to provide the same kind of single-family houses for people of modest means as had been done in England. The development of the apartment houses provided a solution to that problem, however; for the apartment houses opened the community to hundreds of renters who might not otherwise be able to enjoy the amenities which Forest Hills Gardens offers.

With the completion of the last of the apartment houses, 25 Burns Street, in 1961, this brought the number of apartment units in the community to 650 — or 40% of the total housing in Forest Hills Gardens. Since the apartment houses themselves occupy only 15% of the (expensive) land area, this has been a means of providing relatively inexpensive housing to those who might not otherwise have been able to afford it.

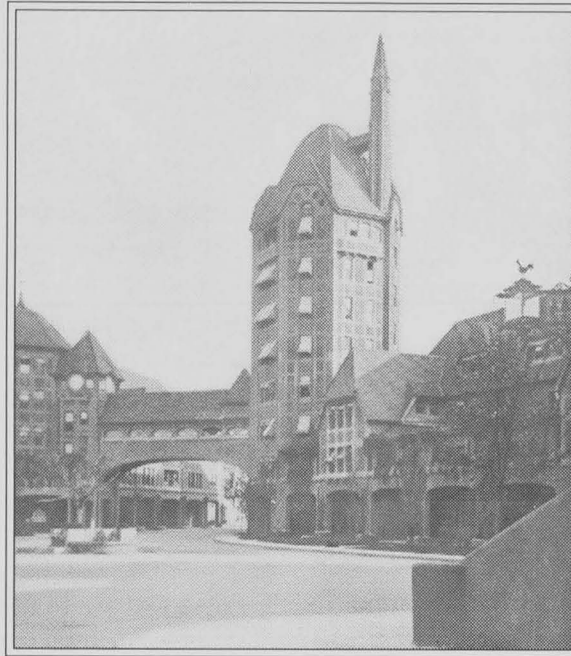
During the past two decades, ten of the eleven apartment houses in the Gardens have been reorganized as co-operatives. Under these co-oper-

ative arrangements, the apartments have been sold from about \$70,000 to about \$350,000. Thus, even with the erection of the apartment houses, Forest Hills Gardens is still not a community which can provide housing to every economic group. But the apartment houses at least serve to ensure that a greater variety of residents can live in the community.

~ THE ~

APARTMENT HOUSES

What follows is a history of the eleven apartment houses that were erected in Forest Hills Gardens between 1912 and 1961. Our history discusses the architecture of each building and the redesign of several of the buildings in the intervening years. We also present some of the notable residents of the apartment houses during the past 80 years.



THE FOREST HILLS INN, 1912. MAIN BUILDING AND ANNEX. WITH PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS. NOTE OPEN ARCADE ALONG FRONT OF MAIN BUILDING. SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO. PROSPECTUS, 1912.

**Forest Hills Inn.** (1912) 1 Station Square

**The Raleigh.** (1912) 10 Station Square

Architect: Grosvenor Atterbury

Builder: Sage Foundation Homes Co.

Any history of the apartment buildings of the Gardens, should begin with the Inn. Work on the construction of the Inn began in August 1910. Opened on May 1, 1912, the Forest Hills Inn was built for \$120,000. It was designed by Grosvenor Atterbury, the Supervising Architect of Forest Hills Gardens. Among Atterbury's accomplishments at the time were two projects in Manhattan: the Russell Sage Foundation building at 4 Lexington Avenue, corner of 22nd Street (now the Gramercy Towers Apartments) and the restoration of the interior of City Hall, from 1901 to 1920.

A total of nine stories, the Inn was a hotel for transient and permanent residents, typical of

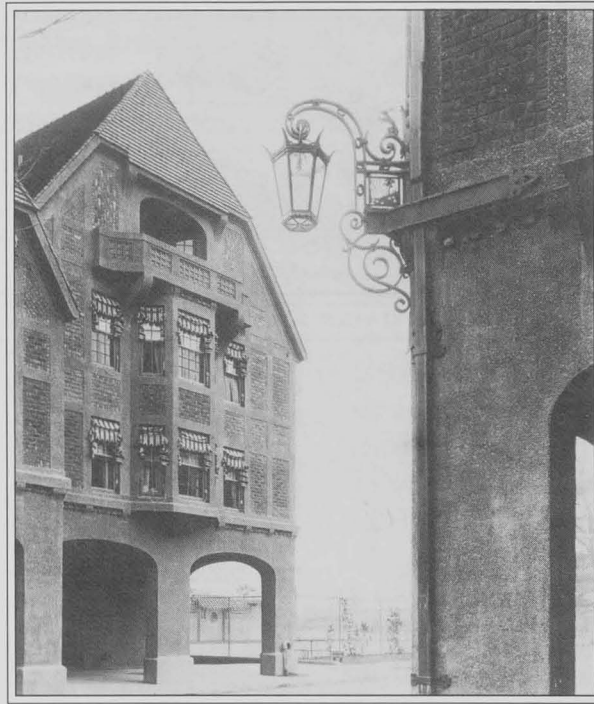
<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the European origins of our community, see the article "Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the Garden City Movement, and the Design of Forest Hills Gardens" in this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine.

such accommodations near railroad stations. (The Homestead — now a nursing home — next to the Kew Gardens Long Island Railroad station comes to mind.) Capped by a Bavarian-style tower, the Forest Hills Inn combines half-timber, Tudor touches, orange-tile pitched roofs, solid masonry, and stucco and pebble/concrete surfacing in the lower stories. The complex serves as an example for the rest of the Gardens, which it serves as gateway.

### TWO-BUILDING HOTEL

The Inn originally consisted of two structures: a main building with a large tower at 1 Station Square and a second building (now called the Raleigh) at 10 Station Square. The enclosed pedestrian bridge at the beginning of Greenway Terrace joined the two buildings. These, in turn, were linked to the Long Island Railroad platform by a similar bridge that spans Burns St. The two-building complex contained a total of 150 outside rooms.

An early brochure, which the Sage Homes Company published shortly after the construction of the Inn complex, emphasized that the 150 rooms, which were arranged singly or in suites, had “running water, electric light, and telephone.” Not all had baths, however, and none had kitchens; both these limitations were to require elaborate and sometimes awkward solutions when the complex was later converted into apartment houses. The same early brochure also notes that the furniture in the rooms at the Inn “avoids the stereotyped style of hotel equipment, and is simple in design, attractive, and serviceable.”



THE FOREST HILLS INN AND THE MARLBORO, C. 1917, PRIOR TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CONTINENTAL AVENUE PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE. IN THE REAR, ON THE PRESENT SITE OF THE INN APARTMENTS, CAN BE SEEN TENNIS COURTS AND AN ENTRANCE TO THE FOREST HILLS INN'S TEA GARDEN.

### HOTEL FACILITIES

In addition to reception rooms and smoking rooms, which opened “on a vine-screened loggia overlooking the Square,” the Inn had a dining room on its ground floor, plus a billiard room and a squash court. Adjacent to the Inn, at the beginning of Greenway Terrace, was a Tea Garden with grass, shrubbery, and a fountain. “The Tea Garden,” stated the early brochure, “is most attractive and popular for afternoon tea or for coffee and cigars after dinner.” Adjoining the Tea Garden were tennis courts. The courts, which were on the site of the present Inn Apartments (20 Continental Avenue), were accessible from Continental Avenue and also via a rear entrance to the Tea Garden.

In addition to its own amenities, the Inn included a row of shops under a covered arcade on Station Square that connected the arcade along the Greenway Terrace side of the building with the one that runs along its Continental Avenue side. The arcade and shops, which are evident in the earliest views of the Forest Hills Inn, were later incorporated into the structure of the Inn.

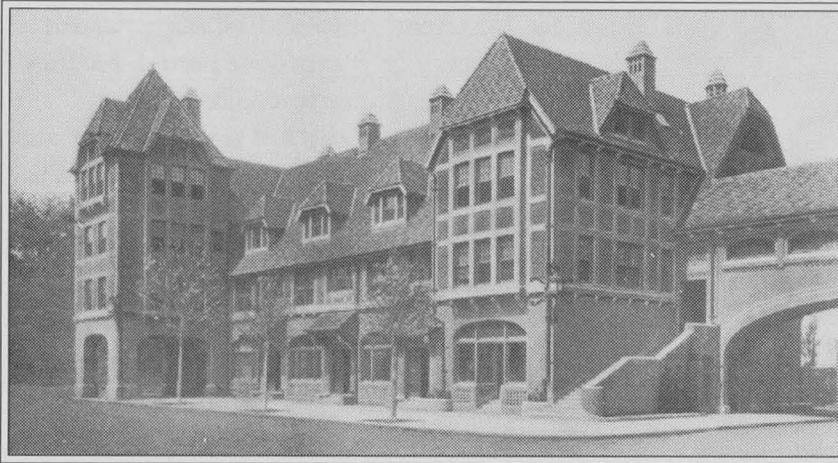
### FULL-TIME STAFF

A full-time staff of 40 to 50 worked — and lived — at the Forest Hills Inn. Most were maids, but others worked in the laundry, kitchen, dining room, and other parts of the service establishment. The Inn served a roster of a hundred or more temporary and permanent residents. The New York State census of June 1915, for example, lists 109 guests at the Inn and a staff of 44 to care for their needs.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For more information on the demography of our community in its first decade, see William Coleman, “Forest Hills Gardens in 1915: A Profile” in the 1992 issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine.

## ROOM AND BOARD RATES

The cost for all these services, in 1912 prices, was not inexpensive: \$11 to \$18 a week for room and board. By the mid 1920s, room rates at the Forest Hills Inn had risen to reflect the general increase of prices during that decade. In 1924, for instance, single rooms, all meals inclusive, cost \$30 to \$35 weekly (\$45 with private bath). The most expensive arrangement in 1924, a suite consisting of a parlor, bath, and two bedrooms, cost between \$110 and \$135 weekly, including meals for two persons.



HOUSEKEEPING APARTMENTS (MARLBORO APARTMENT) IN STATION SQUARE, 1912.  
SAGE FOUNDATION HOMES CO. PROSPECTUS, 1912.

## CONVERSION OF 10 STATION SQUARE

By the mid 1920s, when the home construction boom was transforming the topography of Queens County, fewer people viewed Forest Hills Gardens as a semi-rural area where one could spend a weekend or a vacation. As a result, the Forest Hills Inn was attracting fewer short-term visitors. It was therefore decided to convert the 10 Station Square building to an apartment house while retaining the 1 Station Square building as a hotel, restaurant, and reception center. In this conversion, the 40 rooms in the building at 10 Station Square were reconfigured into 27 apartment units and renamed the Raleigh apartments.

## FOREST HILLS INN AT MID-CENTURY

In the late 1940s and the 1950s, the Forest Hills Inn was under the management of the Knott Hotels organization. Among its amenities was the Fountain Room, which overlooked the Tea Garden

and which was used for weddings, receptions, and dinner parties. Two of the Inn's other reception and dining rooms were the Terrace Room and the Green Foyer. The main dining area was the Windsor Room on the Inn's ground floor, with the adjacent Unicorn Lounge and Bar decorated in the style of an English tap room. (This is the area which until recently was occupied by one of the Beefsteak Charlie's restaurants.)

By the mid 1960s, when an enormously popular series of open air concerts was held in the West Side Tennis Club stadium, the Unicorn Lounge taproom had changed its name to The Three Swans. A brochure of the period described it as "an authentic English pub, adorned with British antiques, in an atmosphere of saddle leather, pewter, copper, and oak beams. Hearty English fare." Among the entertainers at the piano bar in The Three Swans was a young pianist named Barry Manilow.

In warm months, the Sidewalk Cafe was set up along the front of the Inn on Station Square. Below street level was the Tournament Grille, a cocktail, luncheon, and dinner space. The Grille was often frequented by personalities of the tennis world such as Pancho Segura, Pancho Gonzalez, Jack Kramer, Margaret Osborne du Pont, and Maureen Connolly, who stayed at the Inn during the late summer tennis championships at the nearby West Side Tennis Club. The old Grille still serves its old functions as a dining space and bar. Its names have been Annie's and, most recently, Keegan's.

## CONVERSION INTO APARTMENT UNITS

After 55 years as a hotel, the Forest Hills Inn became an apartment building in 1967. This change required an extensive interior remodeling of the structure. Since many of the original hotel rooms in the 1 Station Square building did not have baths and since none of them had kitchens, these essential services had to be installed. During this conversion, most of the smaller single rooms were combined to make larger apartment units, while the

kitchens and bathrooms were placed in whatever spaces were available. In the present reconfiguration, the Forest Hills Inn at 1 Station Square contains 50 apartments.

In 1981, the Forest Hills Inn, the Raleigh, and the third apartment building in Station Square, the Marlboro, were converted into co-operative apartments.

### **The Marlboro. (1912) 2 Dartmouth Street**

Architect: Grosvenor Atterbury

Builder: Sage Foundation Homes Co.

The Marlboro, on Station Square and Continental Avenue, was originally designed as so-called "housekeeping apartments" — what we would today call apartment units. The Apartment House, as it was called in the early brochures, contained twelve units of three, five, or six rooms plus bath. Three of these apartments were duplexes with private hallways and stairways. The building, which was under the management of the Inn, can rightly be called the first apartment house in Forest Hills Gardens. Since the building was designed as residence units, each of the apartments had essential services such as a bath and a kitchen. When the Forest Hills Inn was converted to apartment units and later to an apartment co-operative it was not necessary to re-engineer the systems of the 2 Dartmouth Street building in order to install these services.

That the Apartment House was a different kind of building from the Inn was apparent in the original design of the bridges in Station Square. As previously mentioned, a covered pedestrian bridge linked the railroad platform and 10 Station Square, while a second one linked 10 Station Square and 1 Station Square. However, the pedestrian bridge did not originally continue around Station Square and link the Forest Hills Inn with the Apartment House. The apartment building did

have its own link to the railroad platform — a pedestrian bridge and waiting room that was constructed shortly after the building was completed in 1912 — but the Inn and the Apartment House were not connected by a bridge. The bridge that now spans Continental Avenue, linking the Forest Hills Inn and 2 Dartmouth Street, was constructed almost a decade later in 1921.

The housekeeping apartments at 2 Dartmouth Street, some of which were duplexes, have also been internally reconfigured. The original 12 units have been subdivided into 20 apartments.

### CONVERSION INTO CO-OPERATIVE

In 1981, the owners of the three apartment buildings in Station Square, a corporation headed by Warren Reiner and Raymond Kaiser, sponsored a conversion of the properties into co-operatives. The three buildings are organized as parts of a cooperative unit: Station Square Inn Apartments.

Reiner and Kaiser retained a long-term lease of the commercial properties in the Station Square, however. One hopes that the Reiner-Kaiser group will strive to attract businesses that will complement and enhance the character of Station Square. One also hopes that they might one day restore the Tea Garden which has languished during the past few decades, a sad remnant of its splendid former self.



GARDENS APARTMENT, (4 DARTMOUTH STREET), C. 1920, WITH WOODED TRACT ALONG TENNIS PLACE.

MILLER ART CO. POSTCARD

## Gardens Apartment. (1917)

(Tennis View Apartments) 4 Dartmouth Street.

Developer: Guyon Locke Crocheron Earle

Builder: Fred F. French Co.

The Dartmouth Street building was the first large apartment house project approved in Forest Hills Gardens. Built adjacent to the 1912 "house-keeping apartments" in Station Square, the Gardens Apartment occupies a plot at the corner of Dartmouth Street and Tennis Place. The Gardens Apartment was also the beginning of the wall of apartment buildings and attached one- and two-family homes that would eventually stretch along the boundary between Forest Hills Gardens and the Long Island Railroad. When that wall was finally completed in 1961 (with the construction of 25 Burns Street), it served to shield the Forest Hills Gardens community along its border with the Long Island Railroad between Union Turnpike and Tennis Place.

### ANCHOR OF "RAILROAD WALL"

John Demarest, vice president of the Sage Homes Company, had resolved that the block bounded by Burns Street, Continental Avenue, Dartmouth Street, and Tennis Place was to be the anchor for this stately wall of buildings. In order to secure the "railroad wall," Demarest determined that the Burns-Continental-Dartmouth-Tennis block would be entirely occupied by apartment

buildings. Nowhere else in Forest Hills Gardens is there massed such a concentration of large-volume buildings.

When Guyon L. C. Earle, a Gardens resident and developer, approached him in 1916 about erecting an apartment house in the Gardens, Demarest offered him the Dartmouth Street property for the building. The apartment house which Earle erected on the 190 x 120 foot plot contained 64 apartments, 12 of them studio apartments and 52 of them apartments of between three and six rooms.

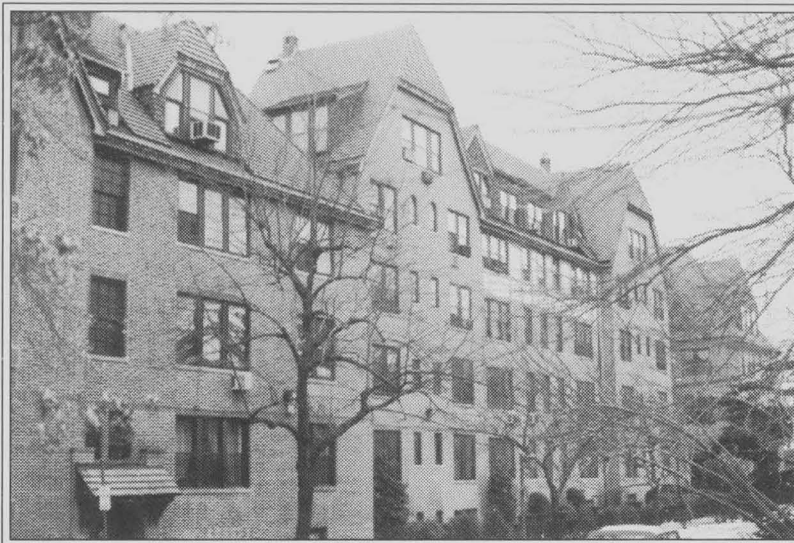
### AN APARTMENT HOUSE FOR THE COMMON MAN

The earliest brochures for the property emphasized that the apartments would not have dining rooms, libraries, and maids' rooms but would have a larger number of bedrooms than most apartments contain. The *Forest Hills Gardens Bulletin* (July 28, 1917) contained a drawing of the "Dutch kitchen" that each apartment would have. This kitchen had "a cozy breakfast alcove . . . in one corner and a working alcove in the other."

The "message" in this advertisement was that the Gardens Apartment was not intended as a luxury living space. It was not for families who expected libraries and formal dining areas as part of their housing requirements. Nor was it for families with live-in servants. Instead, the Gardens Apartment would house families often with several children — families which prepared their own breakfasts and ate them in the kitchen.

An important feature of the Gardens Apartment was its location. Adjacent to the transportation hub at Station Square, it was a few minutes' walk to the railroad station and to the trolley line (and later, the subway station) on Queens Boulevard. It also overlooked the West Side Tennis Club and a wooded section bounded by Dartmouth Street and Tennis Place.

In recent years, the 4 Dartmouth Street apartment has become a co-opera-



TENNIS PLACE APARTMENT, (6 BURNS STREET), 1993.

tive development. It is managed in a unit scheme with its neighbor, the Tennis Place Apartment at 6 Burns Street. The corporate name of the two apartment houses is the Tennis View Apartments.

#### ALRICK MAN

A well-known resident of 4 Dartmouth Street was Alrick Man, Jr. Man was a member of an eminent local family — his grandfather Albon Man founded Richmond Hill and his father Alrick Man developed Kew Gardens. Alrick Man, Jr., labored unsuccessfully to bring the West Side Tennis Club to the family's development, Kew Gardens, in 1912. After moving to Forest Hills Gardens, Man spent much of his life being affiliated with the United States Tennis Association. He was the non-playing Captain on the Association's Davis Cup Committee, from 1947 to 1955.

#### Tennis Place Apartment. (1920)

(Tennis View Apartments)

6 Burns Street

Architects: Timmons and Chapman

Developer: Guyon Locke Crocheron Earle

The remaining plot in the block bound by Continental Avenue, Dartmouth Street, Tennis Place, and Burns Street would eventually be occupied by another apartment house. The Tennis Place Apartment was built in 1920. (When it was joined with the 4 Dartmouth street building, the corporate name of the two apartments was changed to the Tennis View Apartments.) The 6 Burns Street apartment, which Guyon L. C. Earle erected adjacent to his Garden Apartment, completed the block.

The 111 apartments in the building enjoy the same sort of "common man" design — without libraries and maids' rooms — that characterizes Earle's adjacent apartment house at 4 Dartmouth



1 ASCAN AVENUE, 1993.

WILLIAM COLEMAN

Street. Among Earle's investment partners in this project were Robert Mallory Harriss and William Leslie Harriss. The Harriss brothers were later involved in more than a decade-long lawsuit against the Gardens Corporation concerning the construction of The Leslie apartment at 150 Greenway Terrace. (For details of this, see the discussion of The Leslie, below.) The two adjacent apartments which Earle erected are now managed as a joint cooperative, with 164 apartments.

#### PHILIP BOUVIER HAWK

One prominent resident of 6 Burns Street was Philip Bouvier Hawk, a well-known research food chemist. Hawk

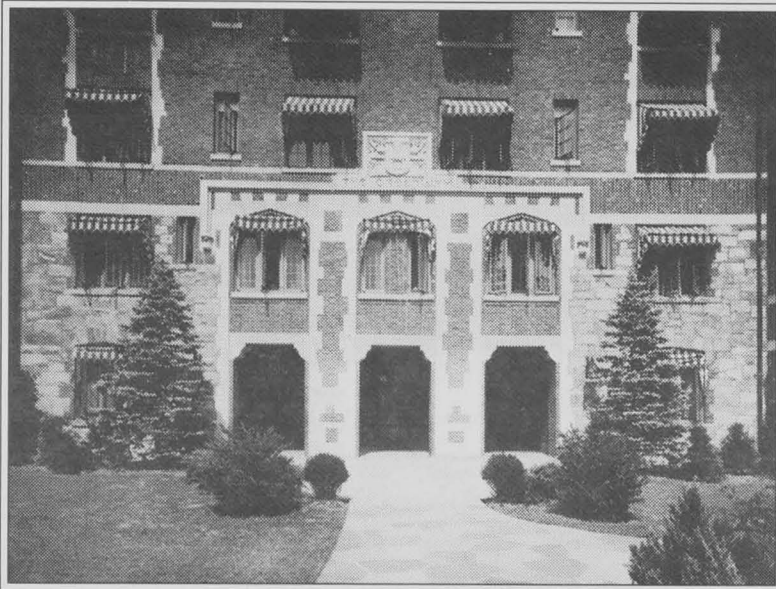
was a three-time (1921, 1922, 1923) winner of the National Veterans Tennis Championship. He was also President of the West Side Tennis Club (1931-1932) and as a member of the Davis Cup Committee.

#### Forest Arms Apartments. (1922)

1 Ascan Avenue

Architect: Douglass Fitch

The original plan for the Forest Arms Apartments was for an apartment building surrounding a large garden courtyard with an entrance on Burns Street. Later revisions of the building plans removed the courtyard. When the building was completed in 1922, it was the fifth apartment house in Forest Hills Gardens. Three apartment buildings occupied the block bounded by Burns Street, Continental Avenue, Dartmouth Street, and Tennis Place. Two other apartment houses were positioned at either end of Burns Street between Station Square Ascan Avenue: the 10 Station Square building (which had been converted to apartments in the 1920s) at one end and the Forest Arms Apartments at the other.



THE GREENWAY, (10 HOLDER PLACE), MID 1930s.

The 51-unit Forest Arms consisted of two five-story wings along Ascan Avenue and Burns Street and a central seven-story tower at the intersection of the streets. The building had 4, 5, and 6 room apartments, including maid's rooms. The larger apartments had three baths. It is clear that the Forest Arms was designed as a luxury building. In recent years, it has become a co-operative apartment house.

#### FAMOUS RESIDENTS

Among the better-known residents of the Forest Arms were John Bull, Buckminster Fuller, and Robert Tappan. Bull, a commercial artist, was born in Oslo, Norway, in 1893. Arriving in the United States in 1925, he became a citizen in 1931 and did work at the *New Yorker*, *Life*, *McCalls*, *Colliers* and other magazines. Bull had exhibitions in Norway, Denmark, New York, and Los Angeles.

R. Buckminster Fuller, who invented the geodesic dome and coined the term "spaceship Earth," was a Harvard College dropout, but a fine urban planner and a worker for the technological perfection of humankind. Robert Tappan, an MIT graduate, was the architect of St. Luke's Church, Forest Hills Gardens. He designed the Pilgrim Street (67th Road, between 108th and 110th Streets) houses, the Arbor and Forest Close developments off Austin Street, and private homes for the Queens-

boro Corporation, which developed Jackson Heights. Tappan was also head architect at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

#### The Greenway. (1930)

10 Holder Place/72-11 Burns Street

Architect: Benjamin Braunstein

Builder: Kresse Holding Corp.

Built in 1930, The Greenway is an excellent example of tudor architecture. The stone facing of the building has abundant seam-face granite and limestone detail. The main lobby walls are paneled in oak, with marble base, and the stairways and upper hallways are floored with hand-made tiles in a range of colors.

The five floor apartment house is divided into suites of from three to six rooms. In addition, the building has two six-room penthouse apartments each with three baths, an extra lavatory, and tiled outdoor garden space. The early brochures for The Greenway emphasized that its windows were "of plate glass of the finest quality, set in steel casement sash."

When the building was completed in 1930, the Queens Chamber of Commerce awarded it a first prize citation, noting the "excellence in design" and the "civic value" of the building. Today the 43-unit building is organized as a cooperative apartment.

#### ARCHITECT: BENJAMIN BRAUNSTEIN

The Greenway was designed by Benjamin Braunstein. Born in Turkey and educated at the Hebrew Technical Institute and at the Beaux Arts Society, Braunstein was noted for tudor styling and for art deco flourishes on his buildings. Among the buildings which he designed in Forest Hills are The Portsmouth (72-22 Austin Street), Sutton Hall (109-14 Ascan Avenue), Tilden Arms (73-20 Austin Street), New Hampshire (110-31 73rd Road), and Holland House (73-37 Austin Street). Elsewhere in Queens he designed the Kew Mowbray (82-67 Austin Street, Kew Gardens), the Bayside Tudor Hawthorne Court (215-37 43rd Avenue), Glen Oaks Village in Bellerose, and Mitchell Gardens in Flushing.



**Inn Apartments.** (1931) 20 Continental Avenue  
Architects: Robert T. Lyons (interior design)  
Grosvenor Atterbury (consultant; exterior design)  
Associate: John Almy Tompkins

Until the Inn Apartments (20 Continental Avenue) were constructed in 1931, that area along Continental Avenue adjacent to Station Square was used as a tennis court in warmer months. In winter, it was flooded and it served as an ice skating rink.

The Inn Apartments and the Grosvenor Square at 150 Burns Street, which was also completed in 1931, were the last large commissions which Grosvenor Atterbury completed in Forest Hills Gardens. Although Atterbury continued as Supervising Architect in Forest Hills Gardens for another decade until his retirement, this work required him merely to review and approve new construction. The two apartment houses were, in effect, Atterbury's swan song in Forest Hills.

In designing the "housekeeping apartments" in Station Square, Atterbury had to conform to the brick and pebble-finish masonry that characterized the other buildings in the Square. The apartment block in the Square was also designed with the "garden-city" housing styles in mind. Atterbury's design for his first apartment building in Forest Hills Gardens combined high quality craftsmanship without expensive detailing.

In designing the Inn Apartments, however, Atterbury was free to create a building for a wealthier clientele. The architect of record for the building was Robert T. Lyons, who designed the structure and its interior spaces. Atterbury provided the exterior design and served as a consulting architect for the project. Atterbury specified a brick exterior

with a good deal of rough granite fieldstone detailing. The detailing continues in the entrance and the public areas of the building.

Among the luxuries which Lyons specified for the 110 two- and three-unit apartment units themselves were drop living rooms with galleries, wood burning fireplaces, casement windows, cedar-lined closets, built-in cabinets, and built-in linen closets. All of the bathrooms were furnished (as the advertising brochure stated) "with colorful, modern appointments."

Although the Inn Apartments were a separate structure, they were operated in conjunction with the Forest Hills Inn. The same group, Knott Hotels, managed both buildings and provided dining, maid, and linen services for the Inn and the Inn Apartments.

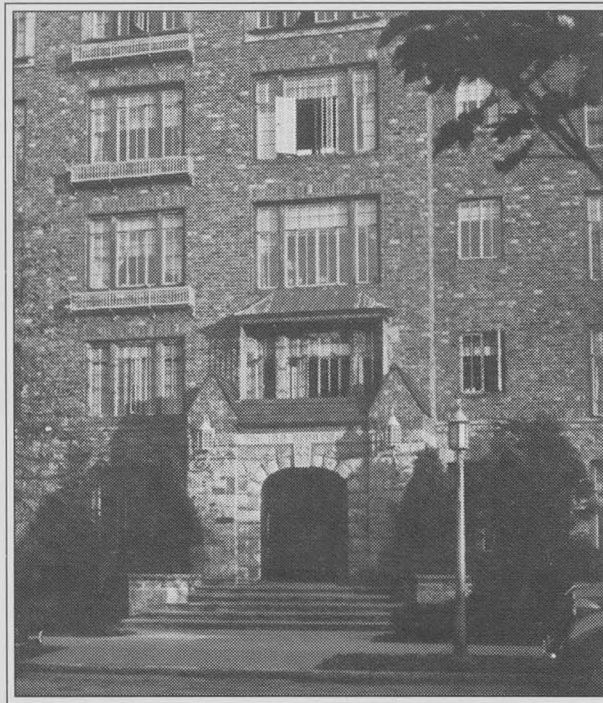
#### CO-OPERATIVE APARTMENT

Like all the other Forest Hills Gardens apartment houses except The Leslie, the Inn Apartments is a co-operative. The resident-owners have spent much time and money landscaping the planted areas that front the building along Continental Avenue and the building's rear gardens off Archway Place.

#### LUCY ALLEN SMART

One of the best known residents of the Inn Apartments was Lucy Allen Smart (1877-1960). Mrs. Smart was the editor of the bi-weekly *Forest Hills Gardens Bulletin* for the Sage Homes Company until it ceased publication in December 1924. (The

last issue of the *Bulletin* contained her 16-page "History of Forest Hills from the Time of the Indians," which was reprinted and distributed to Gardens residents in 1990.) By profession, Mrs. Smart was a librarian; in 1937 Mayor LaGuardia appointed her to the Board of Trustees of the Queensboro Public



INN APARTMENTS, (20 CONTINENTAL AVENUE), C. 1955.



LUCY A. SMART

Library — one of the first women to be placed on the Board. Lucy Allen Smart is best remembered for her association with Kew-Forest School, where she served first as Assistant to the Headmaster, then as librarian, Dean of Girls, and, beginning in 1941, Dean of the School. She held this position until her retirement in 1956. After her retirement, Mrs. Smart moved from her home at 45 Deepdene Road to the Inn Apartments (#6A), where she lived until her death four years later.

### The Grosvenor Square (1931) 150 Burns Street

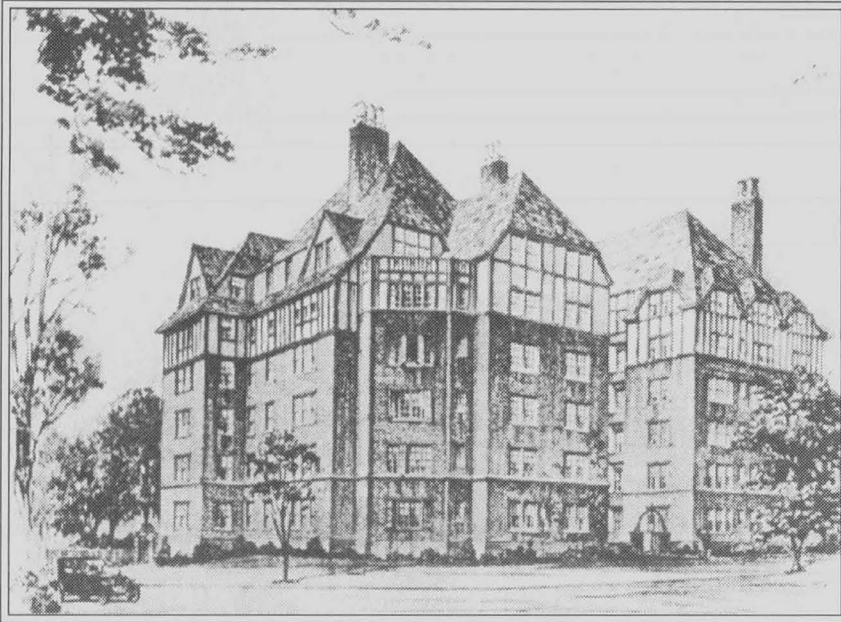
Architects: C. F. and D. E. McAvoy (interior design)

Associate: A. H. Eccles

Grosvenor Atterbury (consultant; exterior design)

Associate: John Almy Tompkins

Builder: Schimmenti and Terranova



THE GROSVENOR SQUARE, (150 BURNS STREET), 1931. FROM THE FIRST ADVERTISING BROCHURE.

The Grosvenor Square apartments were, with the Inn Apartment, the second apartment building erected in Forest Hills Gardens in 1931. The Grosvenor Square and its neighbor, One Ascan Avenue, frame and stand guard over the Ascan Avenue entrance to Forest Hills Gardens. The early brochures for the apartment make prominent notice of the fact that Grosvenor Atterbury served as consultant to the project and designed the exterior

of the building. He served the same function that year for the Inn Apartments at 20 Continental Avenue. When the apartment was completed it, fittingly, was named for the Supervising Architect of Forest Hills Gardens.

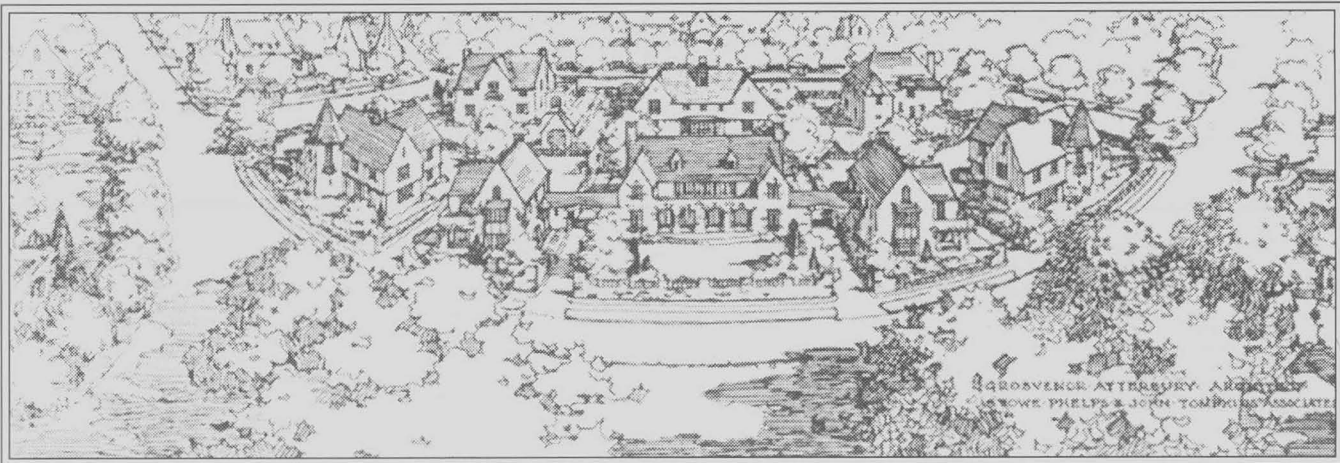
The building offered several other luxury touches. It was built around a central garden court which facilitated cross ventilation. The building also had a 25 x 50 foot "Tudor Entertainment Gallery" which residents could reserve for dinner, bridge, or dance parties.

When it was built, The Grosvenor Square contained 22 apartment units. The simplest of these was a one bedroom, one bath apartment with kitchenette. The most luxurious apartment occupied an entire floor in the west wing. This consisted of 12 1/2 rooms plus six baths and a dining alcove. In the intervening years, the apartment house has been reconfigured and the larger apartments subdivided, so that the building now contains 43 units which are organized as a co-operative apartment.

#### NOTABLE RESIDENTS

Bert Bacharach, the award-winning composer, lived at the 150 Burns Street apartment in the 1940s. A 1946 graduate of Forest Hills High School and president of his senior class, Bachrach wrote the scores for the film *Alfie* and the Broadway musical *Promises, Promises*. His Oscar, in 1970, was for the song "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head."

Mortimer Dewey Gold, born on the day Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet in the Spanish-American War, lived at 150 Burns in the late 1930s. Gold's father began the family fortune by developing William Gold and Company Cemetery and Monument Works, at Bayside Cemetery, Ozone Park, Queens. The elder Gold also founded Temple Israel, Jamaica, in 1918. Mortimer, an old hand at charitable fund raising, discovered Jackie Gleason in 1940, bringing him on stage for a benefit.



"BLOCK TWELVE CORPORATION" PROPOSAL FOR THE SITE, 1923. ARCHITECTS, GROSVENOR ATTERBURY, STOWE PHELPS, AND JOHN ALMY TOMPKINS. *THE FOREST HILLS BULLETIN*, AUGUST 25, 1923.

**The Leslie.** (1943) 150 Greenway Terrace  
 Architects: Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner  
 Builder: Edmund J. Naughton

The Leslie was opened in 1943 after a decade and a half of proposals and counter proposals, lawsuits, appeals, and further litigation. These various proposals and disputes pitted the community and the Gardens Corporation against the developers, Robert Mallory Harriss and his brother William Leslie Harriss. Both of the Harrisses were Gardens residents: Robert lived at 160 Greenway North and William lived at 25 Ingram Street.

The story of the struggle that culminated in the creation of The Leslie is a fascinating chapter in the history of Forest Hills Gardens. The site of The Leslie — called Block 12 in the Sage Company maps — was originally designated for single-family homes. In fact, a home was built at 101 Slocum Crescent in the mid 'teens. The rest of Block 12 was not developed, however, and the Sage Homes Company constructed a temporary wooden sales office there. In 1922, when the Sage Company announced its intention to withdraw from Forest Hills Gardens, the Company's stock was purchased by John Demarest. Demarest was the vice president of the Sage Homes Company who had been in charge of the development of Forest Hills Gardens. Along with his purchase, Demarest secured approval from

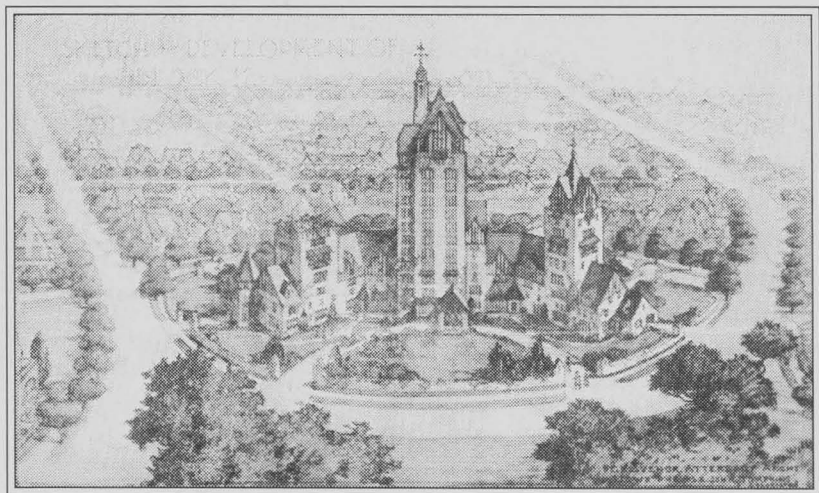
the Sage Foundation and the Sage Homes Company to develop an apartment house on Block 12.

#### BLOCK 12 PROPOSAL

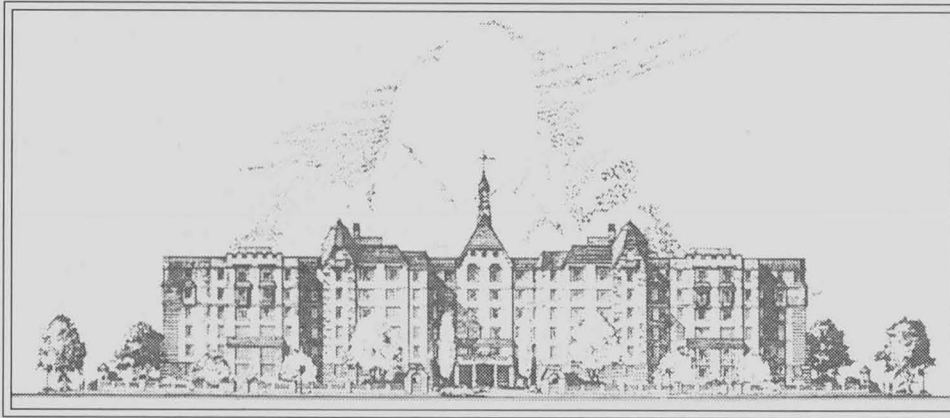
In the summer of 1923, Austin Hanks, the owner of the house at 101 Slocum Crescent, organized a group of Gardens residents, the "Block 12 Corporation," with the hope of raising the funds necessary to purchase the block and to develop it for single family homes. The Block 12 group had Grosvenor Atterbury prepare a sketch of the development they hoped to sponsor. (See illustration.)

#### FIRST HARRISS PROPOSAL

The Block 12 Corporation was not successful in purchasing the property, however. In January 1924, Demarest sold the property to Robert and



FIRST HARRISS PLAN FOR BLOCK 12: THREE-TOWER COMPLEX FACING A CIRCULAR DRIVEWAY, 1925. ARCHITECTS: GROSVENOR ATTERBURY, STOWE PHELPS, AND JOHN ALMY TOMPKINS.



THE LESLIE. ARCHITECTS' DRAWING, FEBRUARY 1941.

William Harriss. In June 1925, the Harriss brothers had Grosvenor Atterbury prepare a plan for an apartment block. This combined a large central tower, two smaller flanking towers and two- and three-story attached houses. (See illustration.) The complex would be organized as a cooperative and would house about 39 families. The community and the new Gardens Corporation did not approve the Harris proposal, however.

In November 1926, the Harriss brothers were able to purchase the Hanks home at 101 Slocum Crescent. Citing the 1922 designation of Block 12 for an apartment development, the Sage Homes Company and the Sage Foundation subsequently declared that the former Hanks property could be part of an apartment house development.

In 1929, the Harriss brothers filed plans for a 59-apartment structure on Block 12. This was to have two fifty-foot high wings and a central tower 150 feet tall. The Gardens Corporation was still unwilling that an apartment house be build on Block 12. Late in 1929 the Harriss brothers sued the Corporation in New York State Supreme Court, but lost the first round of the case.

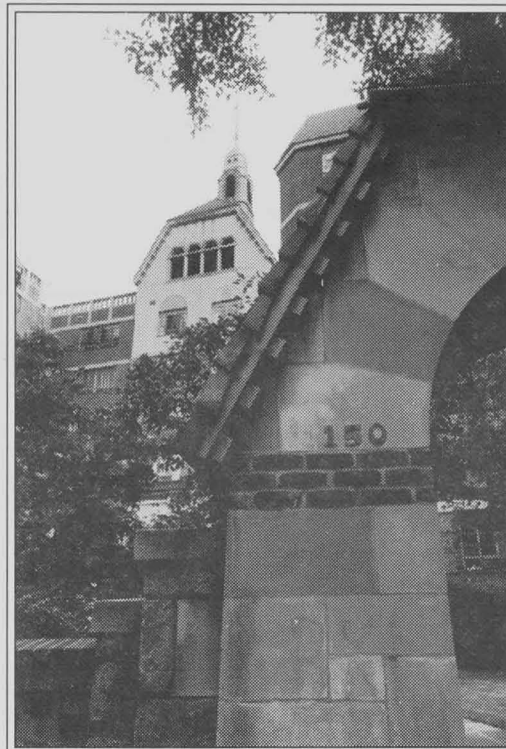
## THE LESLIE

The lawsuits continued through the 1930s. In the meantime, the old Hanks house at 101 Slocum Crescent stood vacant, becoming known as the "haunted house" to a generation of local children. The Hanks house was eventually demolished and the Harriss interests prevailed. The final Harriss proposal, in 1941,

was for a 96-unit apartment house. This was considerably larger than the 39-apartment complex that had been proposed in 1925.

The architects for the building were Alfred Fellheimer and Steward Wagner. Wagner had done some previous work in Forest Hills Gardens, having produced the "official" 1939 map of the community for the Forest Hills Gardens Corporation. (Wagner's map is one of the four maps of the community which are being distributed with this issue of *Forest Hills Gardens*.)

With its deep setbacks and terraces and large open garden spaces, The Leslie occupies only about 30% of its plot. The building is faced with a combination of brick, rough-hewn granite, and limestone. Three towers, with Bavarian-style roofs reminiscent of Station Square, dominate the facade. The central tower is capped by ornamental ironwork that is similar to the ironwork atop the tower at the Church-in-the-Gardens. The earliest Sage Homes Company layout for Block 12 featured a central semi-circular driveway. In the final design for The Leslie, this appears as a wide, semi-circular flagstone pathway. The entrance gates to



THE LESLIE, (150 GREENWAY TERRACE), 1975.

GIUGLIELMO NARDELLI FOR THE FOREST HILLS VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

the pathway are set in the building's low stone and brick fence along Greenway Terrace. The stone gates with their tile-roofs and the stone fences resemble similar gates and fences along the Terrace.

#### ROBERT MALLORY HARRISS

Robert Mallory Harriss was the chief developer of the property, since his brother William Leslie Harriss died during the period that the project was under litigation. (When the building was erected, Robert Harriss named it for his brother.) Robert Harriss was a political conservative who backed Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, the anti-New Deal "radio priest," in the 1930s. He was head of "Queens Democrats for Wilkie" in 1940 and supported Douglas MacArthur for president in 1948.

When The Leslie was completed, Harriss was awarded a first prize citation by the Queens Chamber of Commerce. The citation praised Harriss "for excellence in design and civic value" of The Leslie. Today the 96-unit building is owned by the Helmsley management interests, who do an exemplary job of maintaining the property. The Leslie is the only one of the apartment houses in Forest Hills Gardens which still operates on a rental basis.

#### **Garden Arms. (1961) 25 Burns Street**

Architect: Thomas Galvin

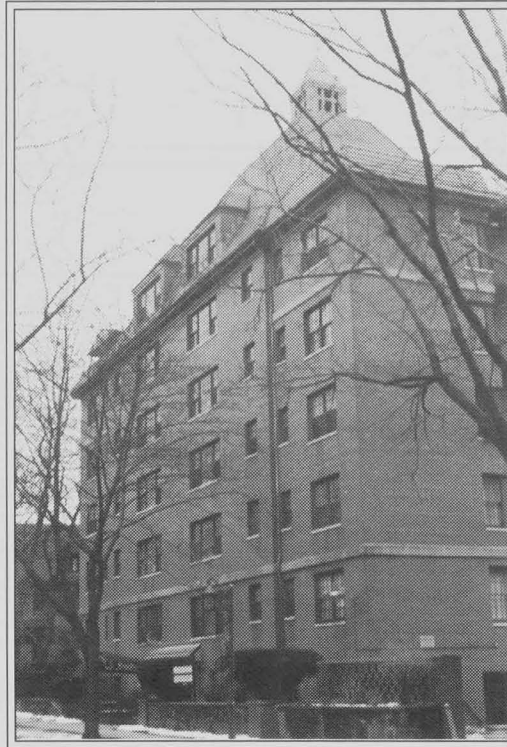
Developers: Serge Tarenzi and Victor Bocchino

The Garden Arms stands on what was a large Victory Garden during the Second World

War. After the war, it was a vacant lot until Victor Bocchino and Serge Tarenzi bought the property with the intention of constructing the present building.

Thomas Galvin was architect of the property, which opened in 1961. In later years Galvin served as head of the New York City Board of Standards and Appeals and as Operating Officer of the Battery Park City authority. In 1983, at the request of Gov. Mario Cuomo, Galvin assumed control of the development of the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center; the project was completed successfully in 1986. Galvin later chaired the Gardens Corporation's Architectural Committee.

The 26-unit Garden Arms is organized as a co-operative. With its construction, the era of apartment-house building in Forest Hills Gardens came to a close. The Garden Arms is the last of the eleven apartment buildings which, with the exception of The Leslie, stretch in a long chain along the Burns Street boundary of Forest Hills Gardens.



WILLIAM COLEMAN

THE GARDEN ARMS, (25 BURNS STREET), 1993.

#### CONCLUSION

The eleven buildings and the hundreds of lives within them represent a desire for good living. Rising land values in the 'teens prevented the realization of Mrs. Sage's ideal of a mixed community with private homes for people of all economic circumstances. That ideal has never been fully realized in Forest Hills Gardens, but the apartment houses have been a means of creating a more varied community than would otherwise have ever been possible.

Acknowledgements: Our thanks to Leonard Lombard (Forest Hills Gardens), who provided copies of materials about the Forest Hills Inn, and to Ronald Marzlock (Central Queens Historical Association), who provided copies of early advertising brochures for the Forest Hills Gardens apartment houses. Martha Keehn (Forest Hills Gardens) supplied a photograph of the Gardens Apartment. Paul and Isobel Shanley (Forest Hills Gardens) supplied the Guglielmo Nardelli photographs from the Forest Hills Village Improvement Society.

Note: This issue of *Forest Hills Gardens* magazine uses typefaces designed by the typographer Frederic Goudy, who operated the Village Press in Forest Hills Gardens between 1913 and 1923. The cover for this issue is set in Trajan Title type, which Frederic Goudy designed in 1930 for the dedication memorial at the Community House of the Church-in-the-Gardens. The magazine is set in two types which he designed in 1911 for use together: Kennerley Old Style for the text and titles and Forum Title for the initials, captions, and subtitles.

The magazine was designed by Miriam Weinberg Dustin, Hillsboro, NH, and printed by Excel Mimeo and Printing, Forest Hills, NY.



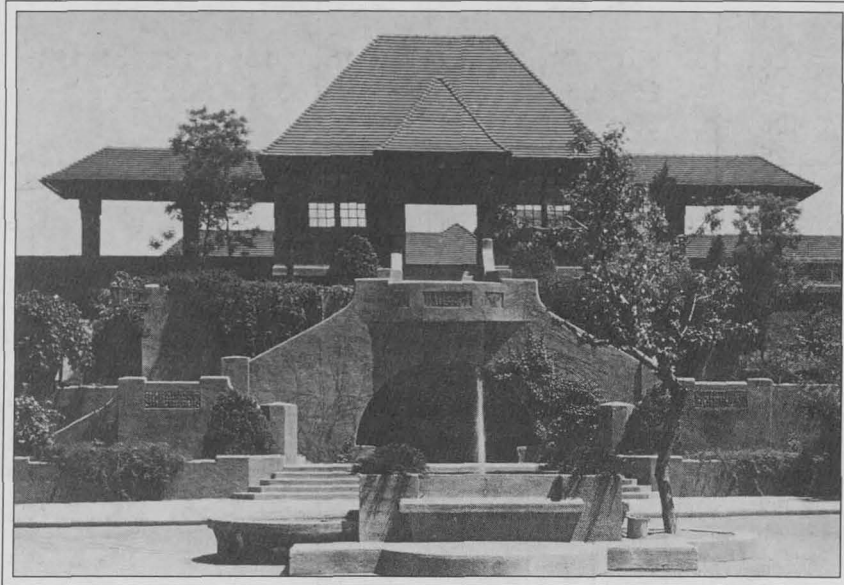
GUGLIELMO NARDELLI FOR THE FOREST HILLS VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

STATION SQUARE IN 1975,  
WITH THE CURVING STREETS OF  
FOREST HILLS GARDENS AND  
FOREST PARK IN THE DISTANCE.

# Forest Hills Gardens



## THE MAPS OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS



The following materials are available for purchase in the office during regular business hours. If your order is to be mailed, please use the order form below. The prices below also include a small donation so that the Architecture and Archives Committee can continue to publish other items of interest concerning the planning, history, and preservation of Forest Hills Gardens.

1. *Forest Hills Gardens* no. 2 and *The Maps of Forest Hills Gardens*: \$15.00
2. Unfolded copy of the 1927 large format (17" x 22") map of Forest Hills Gardens, suitable for framing: \$ 7.00
3. Copies of over 200 photographs of homes, streets, and buildings in Forest Hills Gardens. The original photographs were taken between 1912 and the mid 1950s. The 8" x 10" photographs are available for examination in the office. Each photograph comes mounted in a protective plastic sleeve. The list of available photographs is on the rear of this sheet. \$10.00

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Please send

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Photographs of Forest Hills Gardens: 1910-1955

<u>Street</u>	<u>House Numbers</u>
Ascan Avenue	26, 33, 80, 104, 125, 133, 150, 155, 184 to 194
Beechknoll Road	12, 24, 26, 66, 74 to 86, 80, 80 to 92, 83
Bow St.	26, 39, 50
Burns St.	25 [2 photos], 35 to 45, 71, 164, 216, 252 to 256, 263 [2 photos], 292, 303, 380 and 382, 394 and 396, 810, 78-18
Continental Ave.	20 [Inn Apartments], 47, 80, 86, 87, 97 [2 photos], 117, 134
Cranford Street	16, 17
Dartmouth Street	2 [Marlboro Apartments], 4 [Tennis View Apartments], 72
Exeter Street	27, 45
Fairway Close	21
Fleet Street	35
Greenway North	3, 35, 47, 72, 72 and 82, 93, 115, 120, 120 to 126, 120 to 132 [2 photos], 150, 160, 167, 205 [2 photos]
Greenway South	14 [2 photos], 24, 34, 37, 50, 61, 70, 75, 84, 90, 100, 119, 120, 170, 180, 194, 210, 215, 229, 250, 256, 260, 270, 275
Greenway Terrace	3, 34, 43, 66, 78, 86, 150 [Leslie Apt.]
Groton St.	15, 36, 77, 80
Ingram Street	12, 22, 36, 39, 39 and 41, 50
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Middlemay Circle	1, 3, 7, 12, 23
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Park End Place	18
Puritan Avenue	2, 12, 81, 100, 110, 114, 125, 154, 187-205, 195-197
Rockrose Pl.	24, 78, 82
Russell Pl.	5
Shorthill Road	8 [2 photos], 41, 64, 65
Slocum Crescent	16, 22, 36 to 54, 41, 44 to 54, 54, 80, 101 (demolished), 135, 149
Standish Road	12
Summer Street	26, 48, 60
Tennis Place	32, 65, 66, 82, 99
Underwood Road	24
Upshaw Road	2
Union Turnpike	115-27
Wendover Road	24, 27, 36 [2 photos], 41 and 51, 54
Whitson Street	116, 148
Winter Street	19 [2 photos], 29, 39

In addition, historic photographs are available of Forest Hills Gardens streets, institutions (P. S. 101, Forest Hills Inn), the railroad station, the construction of Forest Hills Gardens, and the (demolished) 18th century farmhouses in Forest Hills.

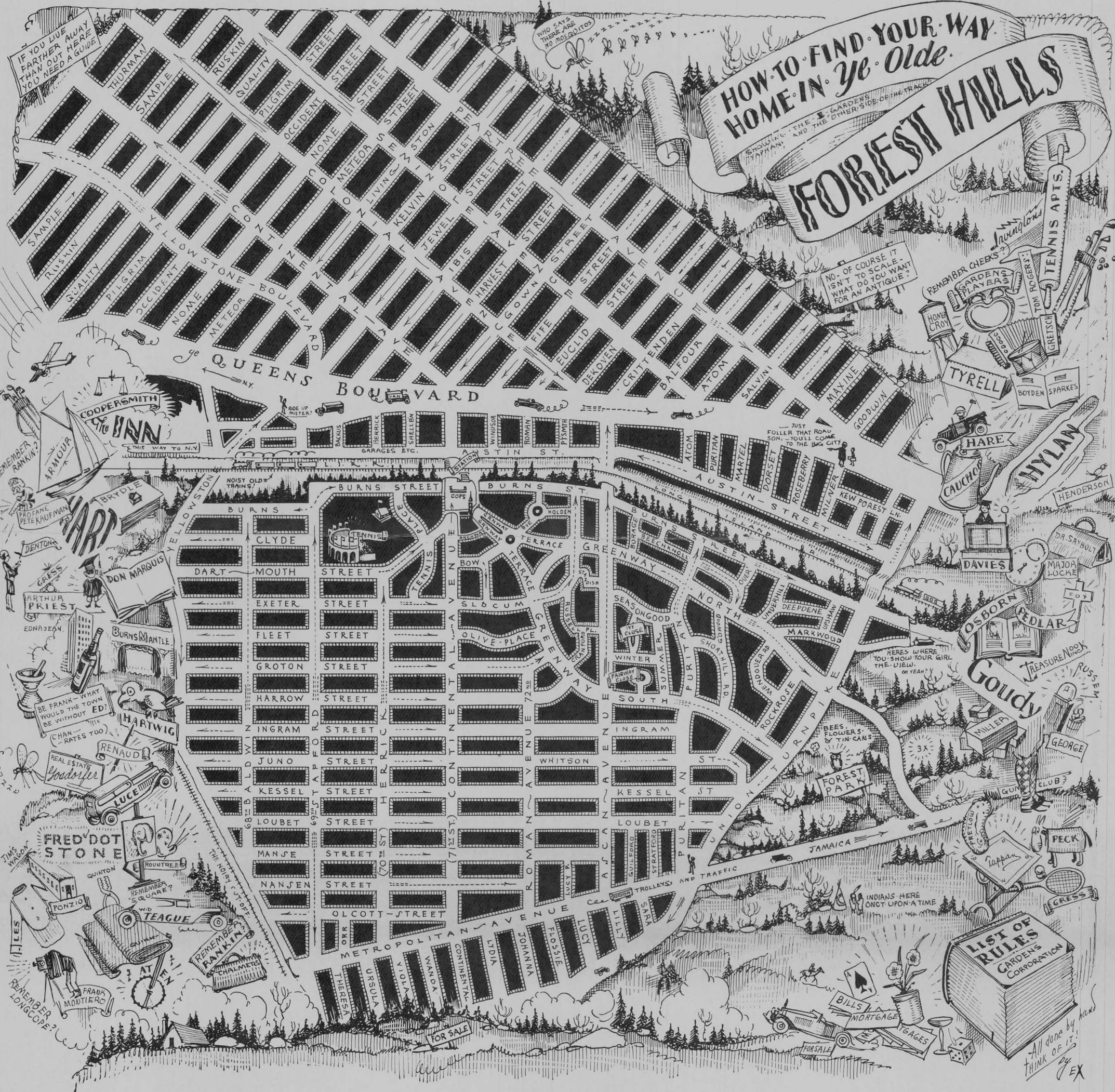
IF YOU LIVE FARTHER AWAY THAN OUT HERE YOU NEED A GUIDE

WHO SAYS THERE ARE NO MOSQUITOS

HOW TO FIND YOUR WAY HOME IN ye Olde

# FOREST HILLS

SHOWING THE GARDENS AND THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TRACK



COOPERSMITH  
THE INN  
ARMOUR  
PROFANE RANKIN  
DENTON  
GROSS  
ARTHUR PRIEST  
EDNA JEAN  
BURNS MANTLE  
HARTWIG  
RENAUD  
GODDARD  
LUCY  
FRED DOT STONE  
QUINTON  
PONTIO  
LES  
REMEMBER LONGCOPE?

REMEMBER CHEEKS?  
GARDENS PLAYAS  
TYRELL  
BOYDEN SPARKES  
TENNIS APIS.  
HOMER CROFT  
GRETSON

HARE  
HYLAN  
HENDERSON  
DR. SAYBOLT  
MAJOR LOCKE  
OSBORN  
FEDLAR  
Goudy  
TREASURE NOOK  
RUSSEN

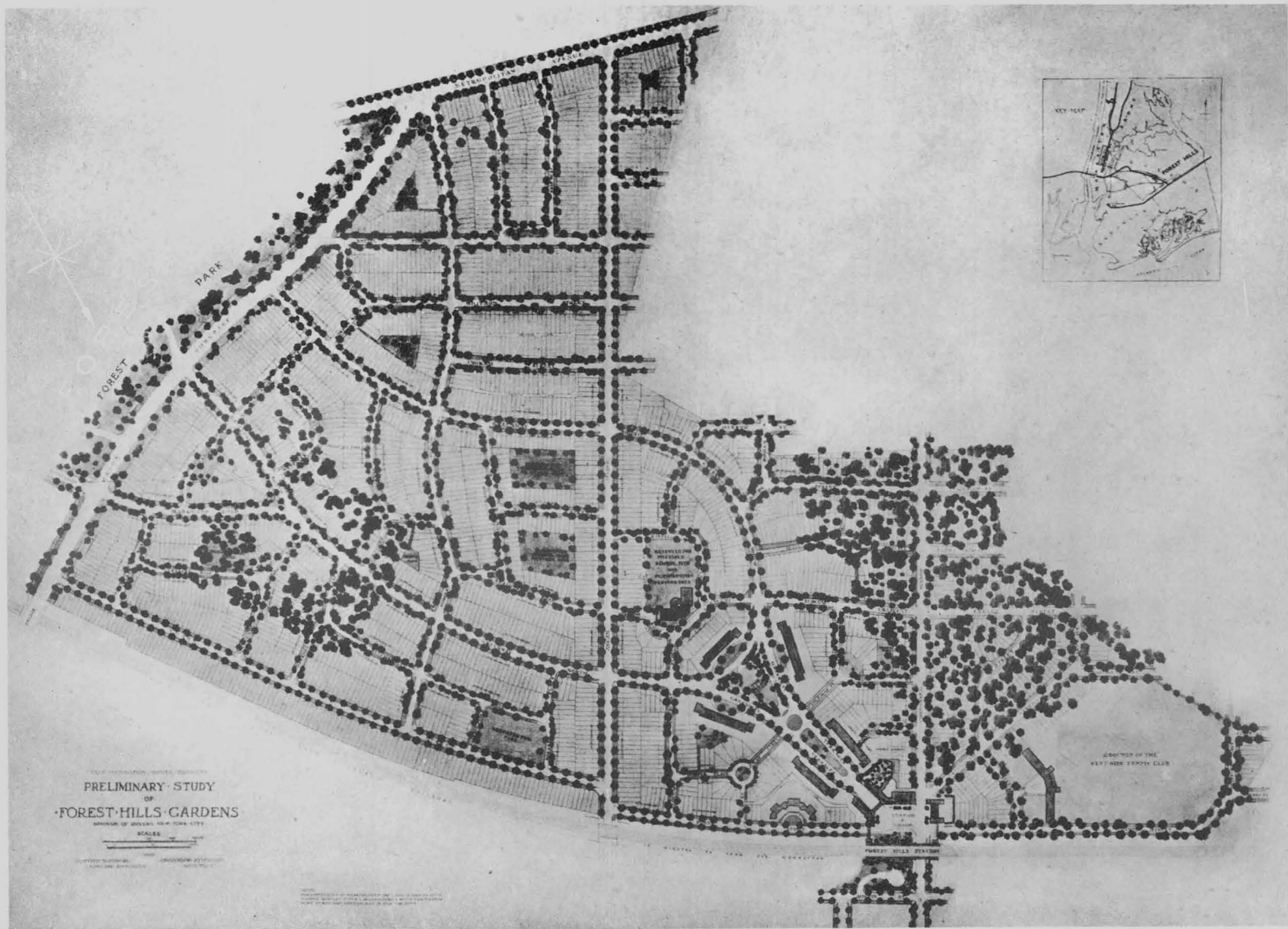
BEES FLOWER'S TUN-CANS  
HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOW YOUR GIRL THE DIEW!  
ON YEAH?  
3X  
MILLER  
GEORGE  
CLUB  
PECK

INDIANS HERE ONCE UPON A TIME  
BILLS  
MORTGAGE  
FOR SALE  
FOR SALE  
LIST OF RULES  
GARDEN'S CORPORATION  
All done by hand  
THINK OF IT!  
PEX

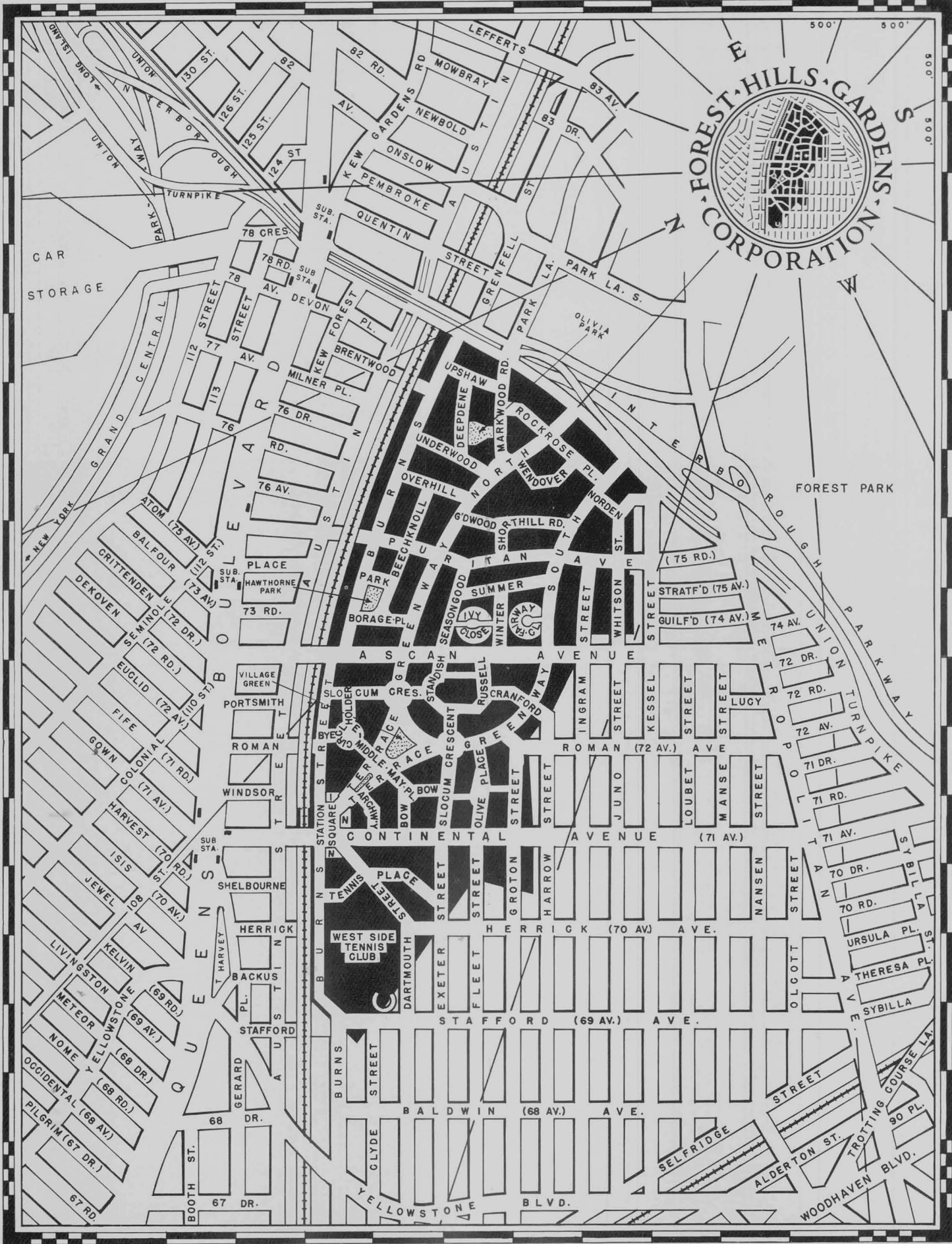
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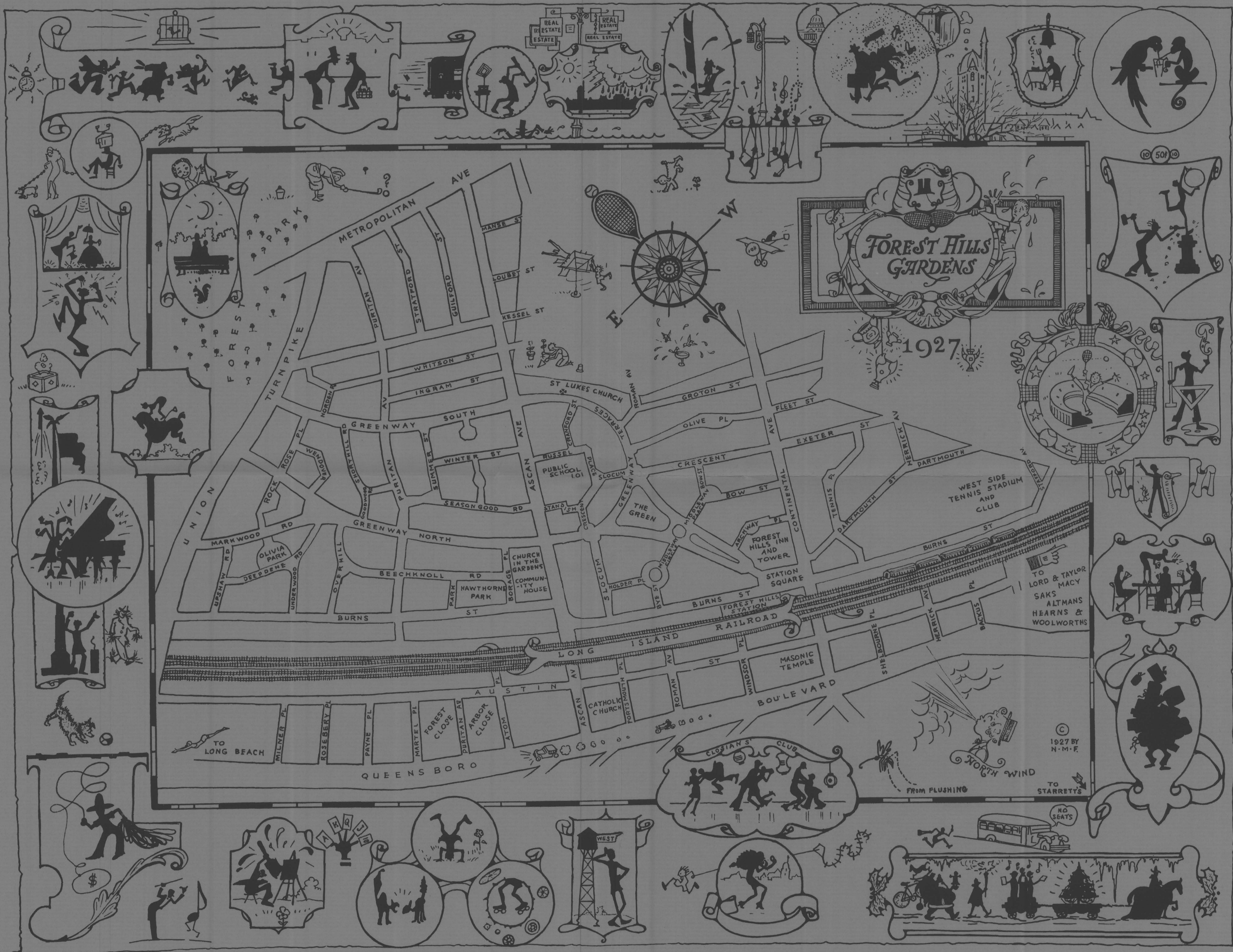
FOR SALE

FOR SALE



STUDY OF THE LAYOUT OF FOREST HILLS GARDENS





REAL ESTATE

REAL ESTATE

REAL ESTATE

# FOREST HILLS GARDENS

1927

10 50F 10

© 1927 BY N.M.F.

TO LORD & MACY  
SAKS  
ALTMANS  
HEARNS &  
WOOLWORTHS

FROM FLUSHING TO STARRETT'S

NO SEATS

TO LONG BEACH

QUEENS BORO

CLOSTAN'S CLUB

NORTH WIND

BOULEVARD

WINDSOR

STATION

BURNS ST

STATION SQUARE

FOREST HILLS INN AND TOWER

CRESCENT

OLIVE PL

GROTON ST

ST LUKES CHURCH

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