

BROOKS ESTATE

Historic Core Landscape Plan
Medford, Massachusetts

Project Data

Date: June 2000

Size: 7± of 60 acres

Context: Suburban Boston

Goals & Objectives:

Rehabilitate the Historic Core to its original form while:

- Celebrating the site's history, architecture and natural environment;
- Maintaining its historic integrity; and
- Providing modern conveniences and activity areas.

Project funded through the Massachusetts D.E.M.'s Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program

Project Description:

The 1880 Brooks Estate is the largest municipally owned open space in the City of Medford, Massachusetts. Boston architects Peabody & Stearns built Shepherd Brooks' estate, then known as Acorn Hill, in the Queen Anne style. The architects located the Country Place Era estate on one of the highest points, which afforded it majestic views of the property and beyond. In 1942, the City purchased the remaining portion of the estate and then in 1975 listed 60 acres on the National Register of Historic Places. Changes in ownership, in use and deferred maintenance have permitted successional growth to overtake the agricultural landscape. Even though the encroaching forests have changed the estate's sense of place, its historic integrity survives with significant historic and cultural values.

The purpose of this project was to rehabilitate six to seven acres around the manor house and carriage barn while respecting the estate's historic integrity and ecological diversity. EDC's schematic designs incorporated modern conveniences including outdoor garden rooms for special events and gatherings, new on-site parking to support the historic core's programmed activities and a network of paths and walks to encourage guests to stroll the grounds. These same paths connect the historic core to the surrounding estate's forest, pond, abundant wildlife and undulating topography.

Final products included an historic core landscape plan and report, budget projections and a period plant palette. Several public meetings were conducted to present recommendations and develop a consensus as part of this Massachusetts D.E.M.'s Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program, which, because of the final product, received another round of funding for implementation.



Historic picture taken from the cover of "The Shepherd Brooks Manor...A Victorian Gem..." Photo: Massachusetts Historical Society



Proposed Historic Core Landscape Plan