December 18, 2020

Tina McCarthy, Preservation Planner
Brookline Preservation Commission
Via email: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

RE: 25 Cottage Street and 222 Warren Street

The New England chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (NE/SAH) strongly urges the Brookline Preservation Commission to impose a delay on the demolitions of both 25 Cottage Street and 222 Warren Street.

As the home and sometimes office of architect Henry Hobson Richardson during the most important part of his too brief career, 25 Cottage Street is of an importance that needs no explanation to the members of your Commission. The role of the house and site in Richardson’s career exactly parallels that of the nearby “Fairsted,” a National Historic Landmark now operated as the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site to interpret the career of Richardson’s sometimes collaborator. In addition, 25 Cottage Street is one of a handful of surviving examples of the rare, so-called Jamaica Planter style of early 19th century summer houses that are almost unique to Brookline – another example being Isabella Stewart Gardner’s Green Hill, which stands between 25 Cottage Street and Fairsted in the Green Hill Historic District. If 25 Cottage Street were in Boston or Cambridge, it would certainly be considered for landmark status; in addition to its individual importance, 25 Cottage Street is identified as a property of “major historical significance” in the Green Hill Historic District. The loss of 25 Cottage Street would have a negative effect on the community’s historic character.

In addition, the proposed demolition of 222 Warren Street, a most remarkable house both internally and externally, should be delayed. Built by 1857, the house is a good example of the Second Empire style and is significant for its associations with landscape architect John Charles Olmsted, a founder of the influential Olmsted Brothers firm. Among the house’s notable design elements are unusual vaulting, a character-defining feature of the interior.

It is our understanding that the current owner of these two properties has suggested that 25 Cottage Street might be relocated and saved, but at the expense of 222 Warren Street. It is also our understanding that not long before the present owner took title, a very substantial offer for both 25 Cottage Street and 222 Warren Street, with the intent of preserving both, was turned down. Every effort should be made to explore the possibility of the present owner effecting a preservation-minded solution.

Lastly, given the proposed demolition of these two very important houses, we recommend that the Commission advocate for an addition to the Brookline Demolition Delay ordinance that would require marketing National Register listed-buildings proposed for demolition to buyers who will retain them.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth W. Rochefort, President
New England chapter, Society of Architectural Historians (NE/SAH)
December 11, 2020

Tina McCarthy
Preservation Planner
Town of Brookline
Via email: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

Dear Ms. McCarthy,

The Boston Preservation Alliance rarely weighs in on issues outside of the city limits of Boston. The issue at hand is one of those rare occasions. Given the site’s significance and association with Boston, I feel we must write to urge appropriate action.

The Alliance is extremely concerned about the egregious proposal to demolish the home of H.H. Richardson, one of the nation’s premier architects and among Boston’s most treasured. I do not need to reiterate his importance and influence, as I’m sure you and your colleagues are intimately familiar, as are many in the general public – just one sign of his significance. When last under threat this site was placed on Preservation Massachusetts’ Most Endangered list.

The demolition of historic properties is an irreversible, poorly conceived, and short-sighted act. These places serve as important touchstones for today and future generations – places of memory, holders of stories, and essential resources to teach the past. It is important to recognize that we are stewards of these irreplaceable resources and when one community allows for the demolition of a historic site, it is a loss for us all. H.H. Richardson was an influential player in Boston’s architectural landscape, and around the country, making his home nationally significant. Furthermore, the loss of a home so intertwined with a well-known historic figure signals to owners of other historic properties, especially those of less obvious significance, that preservation is not a viable, valuable path.

I urge the Brookline Preservation Commission to not only impose its full demolition delay but to immediately establish a process during that delay to work with the property owner to develop an alternative path that preserves this unique piece of our shared heritage.

Sincerely,

Greg Galer
Executive Director
17 December 2020

Brookline Preservation Commission
c/o Tina McCarthy
Brookline Town Hall
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

RE: H. H. Richardson House, 25 Cottage Street

Members of the Preservation Commission:

I was extremely dismayed to learn that the former home of American architect Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) is again threatened. It is quite disturbing that this house, which is so clearly significant, should now be endangered. At the Hearing of 29 December, I urge you to issue a "stay" that will delay demolition for at least 18 months in order that the opportunity is provided to save the house and protect it in perpetuity.

As you are no doubt aware, Richardson moved to the house in 1874, initially operating his office from the first floor parlor. In 1878, he brought his entire office to the Brookline house, working in a series of drafting room additions to the rear. After Richardson's death, his successors moved their office to a more conventional space in Boston, but Richardson's wife, Julia Gorham Hayden Richardson, was able to purchase it, and the house was passed on to their descendants for more than a century. Because the house remained in the family, it has survived nearly intact.

H. H. Richardson's combination of his family life and his work life in the home-studio at 25 Cottage Street was unusual in its time, but it was clearly significant. As Richardson was never entirely healthy during his twenty year career as an architect, the combination of home and studio (today we would say home and office) allowed him to supervise the work of his staff, yet retreat to his bed when his health problems flared up. Indeed, late in his life, Richardson occasionally even met clients in his bedroom; the Glessners recorded that on February 11, 1886, Richardson, then very ill, marked the location of the gas lights on the interior elevations of their house in Chicago while confined to his bedroom.

Through much of his career, Richardson collaborated with the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. In the 1880s Olmsted moved to Warren Avenue in Brookline, and there is no doubt that one reason he chose that location was to be close to Richardson. Today, of course, the Olmsted property is recognized and protected as the Olmsted National Historic Site. Protecting Richardson's house as well would recognize the significance of the relationship between the two properties.

Richardson's home-studio was discussed and illustrated with a plan in the national publication American Architect & Building News on December 27, 1884. In 1888, Marianna Griswold Van Rensselaer's devoted Chapter 19 of her Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works (the first biography of an American architect) to a discussion of Richardson's working methods with a focus on the home-studio, including a photograph. The architect Frank Lloyd Wright would use Richardson's home-studio as a model when he created his Oak Park office attached to his family's home just a few years later. Throughout his life Wright would interweave his home and his practice.

Just over a month ago, a developer acquired the Richardson house at 25 Cottage Street (and the properties at 39 Cottage Street and 222 Warren Avenue). The developer quickly filed an application to demolish the Richardson house.

Now the Brookline Preservation Commission must step up and require an 18-month stay on demolition, and then initiate discussions with the developer and other interested parties about its long-term preservation.

Richardson is widely recognized as one of the most important architects in American history. This house, in combination with the already-protected Olmsted Site tells a story that can be told by no other properties. The Richardson house is a significant part of the history of Brookline, of Massachusetts and of the United States.

I hope you will take the strongest possible stand in favor of preservation of the Richardson house.

I trust you will recognize the important responsibility you hold for protection of this important architectural and cultural monument.

Sincerely

Jeffrey Karl Ochsner FAIA, ACSA DP
Professor/Department of Architecture
December 17, 2020

By email: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov
Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

Re: Proposed demolition of Perkins-Richardson House, 25 Cottage Street

Dear Members of the Commission:

We are writing to express our deep concern over the proposed demolition of the Perkins-Richardson House. The house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as one of the most important structures in the Green Hill National Register District. We therefore urge the Commission to use its powers under the Town’s Demolition Delay By-Law to issue an 18-month stay of demolition. As intended by the by-law, the delay period will give an opportunity to explore feasible development scenarios for the site that will preserve this irreplaceable part of the shared cultural heritage of Brookline, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation, while meeting the goals of the property owner.

Jay Wickersham, an architect and lawyer, is a founding partner in the law firm of Noble, Wickersham & Heart; he was the 2018 president of the Boston Society of Architects. Chris Milford, a practicing architect and historian, is a principal of Milford & Ford Associates in Wellesley, Massachusetts, specializing in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings. Wickersham and Milford have written and lectured widely on Richardson, and served as lead consultants to the civic group that successfully advocated to save the Ames Shovel Works in North Easton, Massachusetts, a National Register complex adjacent to five Richardson buildings. Hope Mayo was the Philip Hofer Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts (now retired) at Harvard University’s Houghton Library, where she was responsible for the H. H. Richardson drawings collection of over 4,000 drawings produced by the architect and his staff.

The three of us are currently preparing the first in-depth publication from Harvard’s Richardson collection. Most of these drawings, including Richardson’s original hand sketches, were created in the house or the adjacent studio structure. Drawing upon this ongoing research, we want to focus in this letter on the historic significance of the Perkins-Richardson House as one of the birthplaces of modern American architectural design and practice.
**Historic significance of the Perkins–Richardson house**

The historic significance of the Perkins-Richardson House is well documented in the National Register nomination that was prepared by the Commission in 1983. See MACRIS Inventory, No. BKL.M. The house meets three separate criteria for National Register listing.

1) **The house is a site that embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, . . . or that possesses high artistic values.**

The Perkins-Richardson House is one of the most important structures in the Green Hill National Register District, which contains some of Brookline's oldest and most architecturally distinguished homes. Built c. 1803 by Boston merchant Samuel Goddard Perkins as a summer escape from the city, the house with its two-story columned porch was one of a handful of houses built in this style within the district; such houses are found almost nowhere else in New England.

2) **The house is a site associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.**

The Green Hill District and the adjacent Town Green District were the focus of early European settlement in Brookline in the 17th century. In the early 1800s a group of leading Boston merchants built their summer homes here, establishing Brookline as one of the nation’s first residential suburbs. Those same merchants were pioneers in establishing global trade networks; Samuel Perkins was a partner in the largest US firm trading in China in the first half of the 19th century.

During the second half of the 19th century, the Green Hill / Town Green Districts became the locus for an extraordinary group of some of America’s leading artists, intellectuals, and reformers, with the architect H. H. Richardson, the nation’s greatest architect during the post-Civil War era, at its center.

3) **The house is a site associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.**

The significance of Samuel Perkins has already been described above. The greatest significance of the Perkins-Hooper-Richardson House is its role as one of the birthplaces of modern American architecture. It also marks the important collaborative partnership between Richardson and our greatest landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted.¹

Richardson rented the house from Edward “Ned” Hooper, a Harvard classmate and the brother-in-law of Richardson’s close friend Henry Adams. He lived there from 1874, when he moved to Brookline, until his death in 1886. During that time, Richardson worked on almost

all of the projects for which he has long been recognized as one of America’s most important architects. The house served both as his home and as an integral part of his design studio.

For the first four years that Richardson lived in the house, he continued to practice long distance through his New York partnership, Gambrill & Richardson. He prepared sketches and preliminary drawings for his buildings in the private study he set up in the north parlor; the south parlor contained his architectural library, where he also entertained clients. Richardson sent his sketches and drawings to New York, where the office staff worked them up into design studies, presentations, and working drawings. His principal design assistant, Stanford White, traveled to Brookline so regularly to consult with Richardson that he was given his own drafting table in Richardson’s parlor; other staff may have made the same trip on occasion.

In 1878 Richardson ended the partnership with Gambrill and started his own independent office in Brookline. It was at this time that he built the first range of attached drafting rooms, known as “the coops,” to provide a workplace for his growing staff, which numbered 25 by the time of his death. The collaborative design process that he created within the studio enabled Richardson to transition his office into a larger and more efficient organization, where the value of his design ideas could be captured and maintained across multiple projects, from government buildings to libraries to warehouses, from railroad stations to rural houses.

Richardson himself continued to work out of the parlors in the house; it was not until 1884, two years before his death, that he built a new separate study / library, attached to the house and the coops. Throughout Richardson’s time in Brookline (including after he built his new study / library), his declining health required that much of his creative design work took place in the upstairs bedroom of his house. When the architect was bed-ridden, as he frequently was, the staff could pin up their drawings on the cork-lined walls of the bedroom for his critique. In this manner, the house became a birthplace of both modern architectural design and modern architectural practice.

Richardson fostered a relaxed and lively atmosphere in Brookline. The staff played ball games at lunchtime, freely consulted the books in Richardson’s office and the library in the house, and were invited to suppers and weekend parties with his family, friends, and clients. Richardson also profited from the intellectual stimulation provided by his neighbors and other frequent visitors; they included the horticulturalist Charles Sprague Sargent, creator of the Arnold Arboretum; the historians Henry Adams and Francis Parkman; and the reformer Edward Atkinson. Olmsted moved to Brookline in 1881 because of his longtime friendship and artistic partnership with Richardson. Fairsted, his own house and studio, located a five minute walk away and owned by the National Parks Service, was deliberately modeled on Richardson’s method of fusing work and family life.

After Richardson’s death in 1886, his landlord, Ned Hooper, and his leading client, Frederick Lothrop Ames, provided invaluable legal and financial assistance to the architect’s young assistants, helping them to form the successor firm Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge (still active today as Shepley Bulfinch). This is one of the first known examples of an architectural firm
that continued after the founder’s death, and another key milestone in the evolution of modern architectural practice.  

**Conclusion**

We are fortunate to live in a state where the architectural and preservation community possesses deep expertise and experience in preserving and reusing historic buildings – even when success may seem difficult or impossible. We know this from first-hand experience, having been intimately involved in the creative reuse of the historic Ames Shovel Works in North Easton, MA as mixed-income housing. In this case, where it appears that consideration of the site’s redevelopment is in an early stage, there is time to explore and consider a wide range of alternative courses of action. The neglect that the house has suffered by being left vacant for over 20 years underscores that the only sure way to preserve a historic building like the Perkins-Richardson House is to find a new use that keeps it alive and a contributing part of the community.

The Town of Brookline is known for some of the richest and most varied historic architecture in Massachusetts. The Perkins-Richardson House is one of the town’s most important historical landmarks. We hope that the current property owner will be open to working cooperatively with the Commission, other Town agencies, and members of the preservation and architectural community to find a way to meet the needs of all parties.

Sincerely,

Jay Wickersham  
Chris Milford  
Hope Mayo

cc: Society of Architectural Historians  
SAH / New England Chapter  
Preservation Massachusetts  
Historic New England  
Boston Preservation Alliance  
Friends of Fairsted  
Boston Society of Architects

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December 19, 2020

By e-mail: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington St.
Brookline, MA 02445

RE: Proposed demolition of 25 Cottage Street

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am gravely concerned that the proposed demolition of HH Richardson residence at 25 Cottage Street would erase an important part of the history of Brookline and our national heritage. The listings of this house in the National Register of Historic Places as well as the Green Hill National Register District clearly show that this important structure with its rich history should be maintained. Towards that end, I am requesting that an 18-moth stay of demolition be granted to allow time to explore and agree to a mutually agreeable development solution for all parties. Considering the unique nature of this property and its history, a carefully reasoned approach is appropriate and called for.

HH Richardson was a giant in American architecture and often credited with laying the groundwork for the careers of other architects such as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. During his lifetime 5 of the 10 most popular buildings in America were of his design. The American Institute of Architects to this day identifies Trinity Church in Boston as one of the 10 most important buildings in the country. And HH Richardson also fostered the development of modern American practices in architecture, emphasizing collaboration. To this day, the successor firm to HH’s practice, Shepley Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbot continues its uninterrupted practice in Boston as a leader and one of the oldest architectural firms in the country.

Harvard University has an extensive collection of HH Richardson drawings (over 4,000), and other designs of his are in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. He is commonly acknowledged as the first “superstar” architect in the United States and the first to develop a vernacular style unique to this country.

The Green Hill Historic District and surrounding area evolved to become a magnet for many intellectuals, reformers, and artists in the mid to late 19th century. In many ways this group in Brookline created an environment which greatly affected the direction of the country’s evolution. HH Richardson was the pre-eminent architect of his generation, and greatly influenced the subsequent development of architectural styles both here and abroad. Richardson’s collaborative style, both within his team as well as his close association with other noted luminaries of other
design disciplines such as Frederick Law Olmstead, John LaFarge, and Augustus St. Gaudens has permanently affected the course of architecture in this country.

I am very glad that The Brookline Preservation Commission is in place to bring detailed expertise to the consideration of an 18-month stay of demolition for the 25 Cottage Street property. This historic landmark is irreplaceable. I am confident that a satisfactory approach can be found to protect the interests of all parties and to preserve our heritage. But there needs to be adequate time to understand the priorities, considerations and concerns of all parties to be able to arrive at a proper solution which benefits all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Philip F. Shepley
45 Sherman Sat.
Belmont, MA 02478
Tel. (617) 803-3634
December 18, 2020

Ms. Tina McCarthy
Preservation Planner
Town of Brookline, Mass.

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

By now, you’ve probably been besieged by letters imploring the Brookline Preservation Commission to delay the demolition of the H. H. Richardson House at 25 Cottage Street when the BPC meets at the end of this month. Please add my plea to the pile. I use the house in my American Architecture course as a prop for talking about Richardson’s biography but it also serves other, more interesting purposes. Richardson was evidently drawn to the place because this “Jamaica planter’s” house reminded him of buildings in his native Louisiana. Through the work of John Michael Vlach and others, the complex connections between African, Caribbean, and New Orleanian house types have grown clearer. Richardson’s house forces us to see even that story as incomplete. What are the implications of such a building showing up on the outskirts of Boston? What does it mean that antecedents can be found in publications like English architect John Plaw’s *Sketches for Country Houses, Villas, and Rural Dwellings* (1800), with its depiction of “Cottages…with a Viranda [sic] in the manner of an Indian Bungalow”? How do architectural ideas travel through commercial and social networks, blurring conventional distinctions between high-style and vernacular, North and South, urban and suburban, local and cosmopolitan? These questions should tee up any discussion of Richardson’s choice of residence but they are clearly important in their own right, especially (but not only) as interest in slavery’s Northern legacy increases within and beyond academia. I hope the BPC will do its utmost to keep this important building standing, not just for the next eighteen months but for posterity.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Aaron V. Wunsch
Associate Professor
Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
and Department of Landscape Architecture
December 21, 2020

Submitted by email: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov, vbirmingham@brooklinema.gov

Brookline Preservation Commission
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445

RE: Proposed demolition of the Perkins-Richardson house, 25 Cottage Street, Brookline

Dear Brookline Preservation Commission,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Fairsted, I am writing in opposition to the proposed demolition of the Perkins-Richardson house, 25 Cottage Street in Brookline, for which a public hearing is scheduled on December 29. Please note that this is one of two letters submitted by the Friends of Fairsted, including one for Cliffside at 222 Warren Street, both of which relate to the Green Hill neighborhood that supported a nationally significant community of designers who together shaped the built environment of Brookline, Boston, and the nation. It is our strong desire that the Commission impose the mandatory delay period to allow a constructive process with the property owner that will hopefully result in the retention of the Perkins-Richardson house.

Friends of Fairsted is the non-profit partner of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (Olmsted NHS) located at 99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA. Fairsted served as the home and office of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted beginning in 1883 and continued as the Olmsted firm’s principal office until it was acquired by the National Park Service. It is a National Historic Landmark and the most important property in the National Park System devoted to the history of landscape architecture. The Friends of Fairsted Board of Directors consists of landscape architects, historians, curators, educators, and neighbors. Among the Directors, Alan Banks, former NPS supervisory ranger at the Olmsted NHS has conducted many tours of the neighborhood and Brookline parks and lectured widely on the Olmsted firm. Lauren Meier, President is an editor of the final two volumes of the Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, the Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm 1857-1979, and was responsible for the restoration of the Olmsted NHS grounds. Landscape historian, Arleyn Levee is the national expert on John Charles Olmsted and has published and lectured widely on the successor firm.
Friends of Fairsted consider the Perkins-Richardson house, 25 Cottage Street, to be nationally significant for its association with renowned architect, H. H. Richardson and landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, and as a contributing resource to the Green Hill Historic District. The history of the house is well documented in the Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth (inventory forms in the Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) database) as well as in the Green Hill Historic District documentation of the Brookline Multiple Resource Area National Register Nomination. The district is identified as significant in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture and Architecture, meeting National Register Criteria A, B, and C. The Friends interest is twofold: preserving the home of architect H. H. Richardson as well as the neighborhood of historic homes and estates that shaped the history of design practice in Brookline, Boston and the nation beginning in the 1870s. This also includes the adjacent property at 222 Warren Street, known as Cliffside, which was the home of John Charles Olmsted, partner in the Olmsted firm.

Frederick Law Olmsted began his landscape design practice in 1857 with Calvert Vaux at Central Park and later included his sons John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1857). The Olmsteds’ work on the Boston Park System began in 1878 and by 1879 FLO began renting houses in Brookline. According to Cynthia Zaitzevsky, it was the architect H.H. Richardson, a friend from their days on Staten Island, who introduced Olmsted to the idea of living in Brookline. By 1881, work on the Boston Park System was increasing and Olmsted stayed with Richardson at 25 Cottage Street that winter, later renting the Perrin house at 356 Walnut Street, followed by the Taylor house on Dudley Street opposite the Brookline Reservoir. H.H. Richardson had suggested that he design a house “a beautiful thing in shingles?”1 for Olmsted on land next his house at 25 Cottage Street, which served to be impractical for a number of reasons. Instead, Olmsted acquired the Clark farmstead at 99 Warren Street and moved his family and office there, shaping Fairsted’s buildings and landscape into a model combination of Olmsted’s ideal residential grounds and a full-scale professional office. One aspect of this acquisition is the construction of a new house for the Clark sisters, now 14 Fairmont Street, which was designed by John Charles Olmsted and completed by 1884. The shingled form was likely influenced by Olmsted’s ongoing association with H. H. Richardson. Fairsted’s location provided close proximity to Richardson and Charles Sprague Sargent, with whom he was collaborating on the Boston and Brookline parks as well as the Arnold Arboretum. Thus, Olmsted Sr. was well acquainted with the Brookline neighborhood and

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consciously chose this setting to create the nation’s first full-scale professional landscape architecture practice.

Prior to moving to Brookline, Olmsted and Richardson served together on the Staten Island Commission in the late 1870s. Olmsted had collaborated with a number of architects, but it is perhaps his work with Calvert Vaux in New York and H. H. Richardson that is the most well-known. Many historians have also suggested that Richardson’s studio in Brookline gave Olmsted a model from which he created his own professional landscape architecture practice in Brookline. Prior to 1883, his practice had been a relatively small operation. Once situated in Brookline, Olmsted and his son, John Charles Olmsted began to expand the practice, working out of the North Parlor and adding Charles Eliot and Henry Codman to the firm. As the operation expanded F.L. and J.C. Olmsted added an office wing. This building expansion continued into the 20th century as the successor firm, Olmsted Brothers (J.C. Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.) constructed a second floor to the office wing with drafting rooms and a plans vault that today form an essential part of the National Historic Site. Thus Fairsted formed an atelier with apprentices, similar to the Richardson office. This made possible an extensive nationwide design focus, expanding the Olmsted firm’s work to include municipal park systems, institutional and residential grounds and the design of subdivisions.²

Olmsted’s collaboration with Richardson is far-reaching, continuing long after the architect’s death with the successor firm of Shepley, Rutan & Coolidge and with John Charles and the Olmsted Brothers firm after the retirement of Frederick Law Olmsted (Sr.). Among the most important collaborations between Frederick Law Olmsted and H.H. Richardson are:

- Boston park system bridges and structures (such as Stony Brook gatehouse, Boylston Street bridge)
- Ames family commissions in North Easton, MA (Oakes Ames Memorial Town Hall and Oliver Ames Free Library, F. L. Ames gate lodge, Old Colony Railroad Station)
- Railroad stations for the Boston & Albany Railroad (Auburndale, Chestnut Hill, Palmer, and many others)
- Several libraries (Converse Memorial Library, Malden, MA; Crane Memorial Library, Quincy, MA; Billings Memorial Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, etc.)
- New York State Capitol, Albany, NY
- Buffalo State Hospital, Buffalo, NY
- Stonehurst, Robert Treat Paine house, Waltham, MA

² Ethan Carr, Amanda Gagel and Michael Shapiro, editors. Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume 8: The Early Boston Years, 1882-1890 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) 2013, p. 3.
- Ephraim Gurney house, Beverly, MA

Continued work with Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge:
- Emerald Necklace parks, Boston and Brookline, MA
- Stanford University Campus, Palo Alto, CA
- World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicago, IL
- Emerald Necklace, Boston and Brookline, MA
- Joseph H. White house, Brookline, MA

Regarding the architectural significance of the Perkins-Richardson house, many historians and architects have documented the importance of the home and office to H.H. Richardson’s body of work, resulting in a distinctive American architectural style that was continued by the successor firm Shepley Rutan and Coolidge. This house and its neighbor at 222 Warren Street, have been identified as the most important, architecturally significant buildings in the Green Hill Historic District. Despite some losses, it is the view of the Friends of Fairsted that the 25 Cottage Street property has sufficient integrity to retain its historic associations. To the Olmsted community and Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, the preservation of Richardson’s home is essential to the historic context that led Frederick Law Olmsted to settle in Brookline, laying the foundation for the development of the landscape architecture profession in the U.S.

The importance of the Perkins-Richardson house to the Green Hill neighborhood and its relationship with Fairsted is also discussed by James O’Gorman and cited in the MHC Inventory form for 25 Cottage Street. In Brookline, Richardson was “surrounded by the friends of his wife and the refined and cultured society whose association and sympathy he craved. Stimulating and influential neighbors such as Sargent, [Edward] Atkinson and Olmsted could further his career. No one doubts Richardson’s talent, but it was his close ties to his Harvard club and classmates and his Brookline neighbors that gave him opportunities, especially during the years he was establishing his reputation, to exercise his talent.” Like the Olmsted firm, many of the architects who trained under Richardson at 25 Cottage Street went on to establish important architectural practices of their own, including Robert Andrews, Herbert Jacques, and Alexander Wadsworth Longfellow, Jr. George Shepley and Charles Rutan formed the successor firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge that continues today as Shepley Bulfinch.

In conclusion, Friends of Fairsted hope that the Commission will concur that the Perkins-Richardson house at 25 Cottage Street retains its historical significance and impose the mandatory 18-month delay period. In addition, we hope that the Town

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3 See Carla Benka. Inventory Form for 25 Cottage Street, BLK.1607, Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1983.
will consider working with the property owners on a plan that will result in the preservation of the primary structures at both 222 Warren Street and 25 Cottage Street.

Sincerely,

Lauren Meier ASLA, President, Friends of Fairsted
Editor, Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted

Cc: Jason Newman, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
Dede Petrie, President and CEO, National Association for Olmsted Parks
December 22, 2020

Ms. Tina McCarthy
Preservation Planner
Town of Brookline
333 Washington Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

Dear Ms. McCarthy,

I write to strongly urge the Brookline Preservation Commission to issue a full 18-month stay on the demolition at 25 Cottage Street (known as the HH Richardson House), and furthermore, that the Commission and the local government in Brookline utilize any and all resources at its disposal to find an alternative to demolition.

Henry Hobson Richardson and his Romanesque style reshaped the American landscape—and much of that work took place at the now-threatened house in Brookline. It's not just a local treasure, it's a national one. That property, whether designated as such or not, is a national historic landmark. A property of such caliber should not be sacrificed to development—a shortsighted action that subjugates our national history to short-term gain. Just as it would be unthinkable to destroy Frank Lloyd Wright's house and studio in Oak Park, Illinois, it should seem equally unimaginable to destroy H. H. Richardson's house.

Please think creatively on this problem. If the house is destroyed, Brookline forever loses an invaluable portion of its historic fabric—one that could (and should) be an asset to the community.

Respectfully,

Michael J. Emmons, Jr.
Assistant Director, Center for Historic Architecture & Design (CHAD)
Instructor, Historic Preservation program
Joseph R. Biden School of Public Policy & Administration
University of Delaware
December 21, 2020

Brookline Preservation Commission  
c/o Tina McCarthy, Preservation Planner  
333 Washington Street  
Brookline, MA 02445  
Via Email: tmccarthy@brooklinema.gov

RE: Proposed demolition of 25 Cottage Street, Brookline

Dear Members of the Commission and Ms. McCarthy:

Preservation Massachusetts writes to express our overwhelming concern over the proposed demolition of 25 Cottage Street in Brookline, known as the Perkins-Richardson House. Our organization joins many concerned local citizens, colleagues and partner organizations who are deeply opposed to the demolition of the home of one of the country’s most influential and well known architects, Henry Hobson Richardson. Richardson’s mark upon American architecture can be found from Chicago to New York and of course Boston where it is respected and revered. Yet his unassuming home in Brookline, where he lived, worked and trained other architects, is once again facing an extremely uncertain future.

Our current concern echoes that from 2004, when our organization included the house on our list of Massachusetts’ Most Endangered Historic Resources. The dedicated efforts of the then-property owners and local advocates, The Committee to Save the H.H. Richardson House and other organizations, clearly demonstrated the importance of the property, the house and its legacy, not only to Brookline, but to Massachusetts and the country. In 2007, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the house to its 11 Most Endangered Properties.

The proposed demolition of 25 Cottage Street and, as we understand two adjacent properties, is an irreversible decision with precedent setting implications. A troubling trend in Massachusetts, and especially in the metro-Boston area, are teardowns of historic properties where land value is extremely high. This systematic erasure of historic fabric negatively impacts community character, streetscapes and the integrity of historic neighborhoods in which these existing buildings can represent opportunity, rather than obstacles.

As the applicant has no clear plans for the site at this time, Preservation Massachusetts strongly urges the Brookline Preservation Commission to impose the full 18-month demolition delay on 25 Cottage Street. We also urge the Commission and the Town of Brookline to work with the applicant on alternative measures that will save, preserve and truly protect this extremely important piece of Brookline and Massachusetts’ history. Our organization is available to your commission for assistance and looks forward to being able to assist once again in securing the future of the H.H. Richardson house.

Sincerely,

James W. Igoe, President

Erin D. A. Kelly, Associate Director
Brookline Preservation Commission 333 Washington Street Brookline, MA 02445

Re: Proposed demolition of the H.H. Richardson House, 25 Cottage St.

Dear members of the Commission,

Brookline’s Richardson House and nearby Olmsted House are truly exceptional places of memory containing powerful stories about two of America’s most influential and beloved artists, planners and visionaries. Their collaborative civic buildings and public parks provide not only models, but anchors for American society, tethers that hold our communities together in the face of many challenges.

Richardson’s own bedroom in Brookline speaks of a great artist’s extraordinary dedication to his work even as he became increasingly debilitated. Accommodating the bedroom for his own disabilities, Richardson installed corkboards on the walls so that he could work from bed surrounded by drawings tacked up by his draftsmen. He attached pulleys to his starry ceiling to haul himself out of that bed when sparked by an idea.

Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate is one of those brilliant and uniquely American ideas that secured international acclaim for Richardson. The once private estate in Waltham has become the kind of vital and meaningful community center that Richardson and Olmsted so famously envisioned for this country.

Like the Richardson house, Stonehurst was threatened by development and preservation organizations were reluctant to take on the property without an endowment. Activists were able to convince the City of Waltham of its extraordinary value, and now Stonehurst belongs to the people and is one of the most popular places in the city for residents to find individual peace or gather with friends and strangers. A tiny staff, Friends group, and close partnerships with the local library and schools ensure its place in the community. We make it work and you can too.

You have an opportunity here to leave your own meaningful legacy for Brookline and the nation by preserving the H.H. Richardson House for the people in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

Ann Clifford, Curator
Stonehurst, the Robert Treat Paine Estate
An American masterwork by H.H. Richardson & F.L. Olmsted owned by the City of Waltham