

Area	Form no.
	31-147-9

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108

PHOTO (3x3" or 3x5", black & white)  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

Town Brookline MRA

Address 29 Linden Place

Historic Name Thomas Aspinwall Davis  
House

Use: Original residential - single family

Present residential - 2 family

Ownership:  Private individual  
Private organization \_\_\_\_\_

Public \_\_\_\_\_

Original owner Thomas Aspinwall Davis

SKETCH MAP

Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings or geographical features. Indicate north.

See attached Map.

Boston South Quadrangle  
UTM reference: 19/325550/4688610  
Map #: 39

DESCRIPTION:

Date 1844

Source Historical Sketches of Brook-  
By Harriet Woods line  
Style Italianate and Gothic Revival  
elements

Architect Information not available

Exterior wall fabric Clapboard

Outbuildings none

Major alterations (with dates) 1903 -

new cellar, also altered to two-family

Entrance portico added - date unknown

From middle of present

Moved house lots for #s Date 1903

21 & 22 Linden Pl. & St.

Approx. acreage Under one acre

Setting Formerly set in the large lot  
bounded by Linden St. and Linden Place  
this house was moved to make  
way for 12 other houses built  
on that lot, and is now closely flanked  
by three-deckers. Stands within its larger  
original lot, which was subdivided in 1903  
for 12 additional houses.

Recorded by Leslie Larkin

Organization Brookline Historical Commission

Date Fall 1980

29 Linden Place meets NR criteria A,B, and C, being one of the earliest houses to be built in the 1843 Linden Place subdivision, a planned residential area created by Thomas Aspinwall Davis, once Mayor of Boston, and first owner of this house which is an unusual example of the Gothic Revival/Italianate style. Because of the presence of much later infill, this house and other surviving components of the Linden Place development are being nominated individually.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

Number 29 Linden Place is a rectangular, 2½ story house with 2 central chimneys flanking an octagonal cupola, a long rear ell and a first floor bay window in the rear. It is now quite plain, although original elements of the Gothic Revival style remain in the decorative bargeboards and drip mouldings over the windows, and the design is articulated by the corner boards and matching string course. An old photograph (now missing) in the main library showed the house before it was moved, with a Gothic gallery across the front and the decorative bargeboards on the bargeboards continued along under the cornices. The gallery was probably removed, and the small portico substituted, when the house was moved in 1903, as its placement at the sidewalk left no room for the porch. A house (since  
(Continued)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

Harriet Woods, in Historical Sketches of Brookline, 1874, states, "The site of Linden Place was formerly an extensive cherry and apple orchard...This ground remained ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ the property of the Davis family until 1843...It was then laid out in house lots and sold at public auction. It was the first land thus sold in Brookline, and the highest price paid for any part of it was five and a half cents a foot...The central lot was taken by Mr. Thomas Aspinwall Davis, and for him was built the house now occupied by Mr. Goodnow."

T. A. Davis was the son of Ebenezer Davis 3d and a Miss Aspinwall - his greatgrandfather had emigrated from Wales to Roxbury in the late 17th century - and was born in the old Davis house on Harrison Place (Kent St.) in 1798. At 14 he was placed in a jeweller's shop in Boston, and although he had no formal schooling, he read a great deal and later studied law on his own. He became a partner in the jewelry business with Julius Palmer, and built this house on the triangle of land formed by Linden Place and Linden Street, spending time ornamenting the grounds with trees and shrubs. Davis entered politics, and after two unsuccessful attempts as a candidate for mayor of Boston, he was elected by a bare majority as a candidate of a new political organization called the Native American Party. (See Koren, below, for more information). The Hon. Thomas Aspinwall Davis served as Mayor of Boston for less than a year; he sent in his resignation due to ill health, but it was not accepted, and he was still nominally mayor when he died in November of 1845. Davis left a widow but no children. The house was soon sold, and Miss Woods states that it changed owners more frequently than any other in Linden Place.

Captain Benjamin Bradley was the next owner of this house, a man of some notoriety in the town. (See Miss Woods, p. 195, and Curtis, pp. 213-14).

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

(Continued)

- Woods, Harriet, Historical Sketches of Brookline, pp. 63-65, 195
- Koren, John, Boston, 1822-1922, 100 Years a City, City of Boston Printing Dept., 1923
- Maps, 1844, 1855
- Tax lists, 1861-69
- Boston Directories, 1845, 1867, 1869, 1870

(Continued)

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Brookline	Form No: 31/ 147-9
Property Name: Thomas Aspinwall Davis House	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

demolished) was built in 1850 in Cambridge with many similar features, including the octagonal cupola, the two flanking chimneys, the center gable and the decorative bargeboards all along the roof edge. (See Mid Cambridge, Cambridge Historical Commission, 1967, fig. 79). Although there are two smaller Gothic "cottages" (both altered) nearby at #1 and #9 Toxteth St., this house, with its cupola and large ell, is the only one of its kind in Brookline.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

According to Woods, he owned considerable property in Brookline Village, and he also owned and built a number of houses elsewhere. (See form for 116 Warren Street). He was a Town Constable and a captain in the militia, but he was best known in the town for his efforts to annoy neighbors by building unsightly structures in full view of their houses, and for establishing the settlements on Bradley's Hill (Philbrick Rd.) and near Jamaica Pond. After his death Albert M. Aldrich, a purveyor of butter and cheese at 4 Faneuil Hall Mkt., bought the property, and he soon sold it, with its stable and almost an acre of land to Seth K. Crowell in 1868. (See 44 Linden St. for disposal of the rest of the original house lot). Crowell ran Crowell, Bro. & Co., paints and oils, at 92 Sudbury St., Boston. The next year he had sold the property to Asa Goodnow, a tobacco merchant at 12 Central Wharf, who retained ownership for a number of years and was mentioned as the owner by Miss Wood in 1874.

In 1903 this house was moved from its location in the center of the house lot, facing Harvard St., to its present site in order to make room for new buildings, and where once it was the only house there, it now shares the lot with twelve other structures.

Further research has uncovered more information about Thomas Aspinwall Davis' role in the development known as Linden Place, which was the first such subdivision in the Village area. In 1834 and 1835 Davis acquired part of the land he developed by buying up the shares of his brothers Ebenezer Davis of Andover and Increase S. Davis of Wentworth, N. H. which would have come to them after their mother's death. The mother of all three, Lucy Aspinwall Davis Holden, had, after the death of her husband Ebenezer Davis in 1807, married James Holden, and the land on which Linden Place was laid out became known as Holden's Farm. In November of 1842 T. A. Davis bought from his mother and James Holden their 3/4 share of the land, "... being and lying in the centre of said Brookline containing 31 acres  $\frac{1}{4}$  and 37 rods - the said land being divided in two parts by the county road leading from Brookline to Cambridge and called Harvard Street and being the same land of the said Lucy held in virtue of her right of dower in the estate of her late husband Ebenezer Davis...".

In 1843 Thomas Aspinwall Davis proceeded to have the land platted into lots, on a plan drawn by A. Wadsworth, and to sell off the lots. Although a number of the lots were on the west side of Harvard St., between the present Pierce St. and School St., none of the houses built there re-

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

main today. Not all of the land was platted - E. F. Woodward's plan of 1841 shows that the land consisted of 18 acres and 3 rods of upland, and 8 acres and 1 rod of marsh. At least one parcel of land was sold with a house on it, but it is not clear whether Davis built the house or it had existed previous to the subdivision - in August of 1844 Davis sold to William I. Bowditch (see 9 Toxteth Street and 261 Tappan St.) lot 15, most of lot 14 and part of 13 "...with the cottage and grove thereon standing..."

Davis imposed a number of restrictions on what could be done with the lots and included amenities for all buyers - all proprietors of land held a right in common to Linden Park and the Court (present Pierce St.) and Avenue (Linden St.) were "to be forever kept open for the use and convenience of all the proprietors of Linden Place..." Furthermore, lots were sold "...upon the condition that no building shall be erected upon said tracts within thirty feet of Harvard St. or of the Court or Avenues laid down on said plan and upon the further condition that the only buildings to be erected upon said land or placed thereon, shall be dwelling houses and their appurtenances exclusive of all shopyards or other conveniences for manufacturing or mechanical purposes". (Lib. 141, f. 105, Deed) \*

By 1844 a number of substantial houses had been built in Linden Place (see 4 Perry St., and #s 12, 19 and 53 Linden St.). Charles H. Stearns remarked at the Brookline Historical Society's Annual Meeting in 1920 that "The houses built on this place were considered at the time of their erection, beautiful structures and the colony was rather aristocratic. It was a beautiful section of town and the land to the north and west, now covered with houses, was then a beautiful woods, with a brook running through it."

\* An addition to cited deed, dated Sept. 29, 1845, renders all conditions null and void after Jan. 1, 1850.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Stearns, Charles H., "President's Annual Address", Proceedings of the Brookline Historical Society, 1920, pp. 5 and 6.  
Deeds and Plans, Norfolk County Courthouse, Dedham - L. 105 f. 16, 1834, L. 109 f. 17, 1835, L. 139 f. 31, Nov. 24, 1842, includes plan by E. F. Woodward dated Nov. 26, 1841, L. 141 f. 105, May 1843, includes Plan by A. Wadsworth, L. 149 f. 92, Aug. 24, 1844

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received 9/14/85  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Brookline MRA  
State MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Cabot, Lewis, Estate

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

12. Candler Cottage

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

13. Chestnut Hill Historic  
District

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

14. Child, Isaac, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

15. Corey, Timothy, House #1

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

16. Corey, Timothy, House #2

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

17. Cypress-Emerson Historic  
District

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

18. Davis, Robert S., House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

19. Davis, Thomas Aspinwell,  
House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

20. Douglass, Alfred, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melvin Byers 10/17/85

Attest

85003260

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Davis, Thomas Aspinwall, House (Brookline  
MRA)  
Norfolk County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. SEP 1 1985  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87  
Date Due: 10/3/85 - 10/19/85  
Action:  ACCEPT 10-17-85  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership		Status	Present Use
		Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Pavis, Thomas Aspinell, House

29 Linden Pl.

Brookline (Ma) MA

NOV 1980



by Berkeley

NOV 1980



by Berkeley

29 Linden Place (31/147-9)  
Thos. Aspinwall Davis House  
Brookline (Ma) MRA  
Town of Brookline Map Jan 1981  
Scale 1/2" = 200ft.

