

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT COVER SHEET

Please submit completed form to: Architectural Survey Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06103

I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic)		
	Waveny Park / Mrs. Lewis H. Lapham Property		
	COUNTY	TOWN/CITY	VILLAGE
	Fairfield	New Canaan	
	JOB NUMBER		
	Primary: 03393 Related Job Numbers:		
	Landscape Type		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Park, Parkway, Recreation Area. Scenic Reservation <input type="checkbox"/> City/Regional Plan, Improvement Project <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision, Suburban Community <input type="checkbox"/> College/School Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Residential Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Public Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Estate / Homestead <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery / Burial Lot / Memorial / Monument <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Commercial / Industrial Building <input type="checkbox"/> Country Club / Resort, Hotel, Club <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Church <input type="checkbox"/> Arboretum, Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition, Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous		
	DATE OF ORIGINAL PROJECT: 1907-1940		
	SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS:		

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DESIGNER(S) (primary)

- Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
- John Charles Olmsted
- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
- Other firm member(s): Percival Gallagher, Abiel Chandler Manning
- Other notes:

Other Designers (prior to or following Olmsted project):

Repositories consulted with source materials

- Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Olmsted Archives (online albums)
- Library of Congress
- Olmsted Online (OlmstedOnline.org)
- National Archives and Record Administration
- Connecticut State Library
- Hartford History Center
- Other: National Register nomination for Waveny

Observations regarding features characteristic of Olmsted firm design

Waveny is a Country Place-era estate and gentleman's farm with landscape features designed by the Olmsted firm during the early twentieth century. The Tudor Revival-style house was designed by noted New York City architect William B. Tubby for Lewis H. Lapham in 1912–1914. Northeast of, and close to, the house are earlier service buildings designed by Stamford designer-builder Frank Shea for Thomas W. Hall circa 1895 in the first phase of the estate's development; several other secondary buildings and structures are at a greater distance north and west of the house. The house, sited atop the highest elevation on the property, is the focal point of the estate. North of the house is a walled arrival court, while east of the house is a formal walk system with a cross axis centered around a fountain and terminated north and south by built garden structures. The garden structure at the north end of the walk is set within a walled garden. In addition to these elements, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects designed the entrance drive, meadow and field arrangements, plantings around the house, and a planted berm to limit the visual impact of the nearby Merritt Parkway, built in 1935. The property, which extends over 285 acres of open fields and meadows edged by woodland. Property boundaries are marked by stone walls to the east, south, and west.

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The property was transferred to the Town of New Canaan in 1967 and converted to a public park. A portion of the property was altered by the Town through construction of several large buildings and structures between 1967 and 1973, including two water towers. There is also a large parking area located near the house to accommodate visitors. Former fields are now used for recreation but retain their open character.

The entrance drive sequence, arrival court, formal walks, and gardens around the house retain a high degree of integrity, as do the fields south of the house. The wooded area along the Merritt Parkway also contains the berm recommended by the firm. Surviving features associated with the Olmsted firm design are discussed in detail in a 2019 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the property.

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	COUNTY Fairfield	TOWN/CITY New Canaan	VILLAGE											
	STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) 677 South Avenue													
	OWNER(S) <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRIBAL <input type="checkbox"/> EASEMENT													
	LAT/LONG COORDINATES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center Point <input type="checkbox"/> Polygon 41.121683, -73.489645													
	PARCEL INFORMATION Acres: 300 PID(s): MBLU(s): 30/51/121, 30/9/H1, 30/51/119													
	USE (Present) Public park		(Historic) Private residence											
	SURVEY TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> Reconnaissance-Level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intensive-Level													
	D E S C R I P T I O N	LANDSCAPE TYPE (Check all that apply) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designed <input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Ethnographic <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Linear <input type="checkbox"/> System/Multi-Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park- Active Recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Park-Passive Recreation or Commemorative <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:												
		DATE OR PERIOD (Include source of date) 1907-1940 (Olmsted Research Guide Online)												
DESIGNERS (Entities that created, designed, constructed, or shaped the landscape) Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects														
DESIGN SCOPE (For designed landscapes, explain what work was commissioned) Site plans for the entrance and arrival sequence, plantings, and gardens near the house														
LOCATION OF DRAWINGS/IMAGES/SOURCE MATERIAL Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site; Library of Congress														
VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (Check boxes for the qualities that are key features of this landscape. If attaching descriptive narrative, consider these categories.) <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Features</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Drainage</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topography</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Boundaries</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Design Style:</td> </tr> </table>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation	<input type="checkbox"/> Drainage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Design Style:
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C O N D I T I O N	EXISTING CONDITION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recognizable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Extant/Not Recognizable Changes: Although portions of the park now support active recreation, the core garden area around the house and the entrance drive sequence remain intact		
	POTENTIAL THREATS <input type="checkbox"/> None Known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Improvements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onsite Development <input type="checkbox"/> Adjacent Development <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Overuse <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deferred Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental – specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify: _____		
E N V I R O N M E N T	SETTING (One sentence description) The property is located within a residential neighborhood; the Merritt Parkway edges the property to the south		
	VEGETATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintained Open Land <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Open Land <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specimen Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify: _____		
	SLOPE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Level/Nearly Level <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Steep Slope Elevation (ASML): 315'		
	CONNECTICUT PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE (Eco-Region) <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Highlands <input type="checkbox"/> Western Uplands <input type="checkbox"/> Western Coastal Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Central Valley <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eastern Coastal Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Uplands		
	Soil Description: Varied soil types, including Woodbridge, Paxton and Montauk, and Ridgebury sandy loams, with varied drainage.		
H I S T O R Y	SUMMARY (Provide a brief overview in this space. More detailed narrative can be attached.) Gardens and other landscape features were designed for the Lapham property by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. Features designed by the firm include the entry drive and associated allée planting, forecourt entrance/arrival area, walks, screen plantings around the utility area, brick walls and walled garden, various plantings around the house, meadows, and a berm to screen views of the Merritt Parkway.		
	NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATION Entered by: <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Eligible (Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D) <input type="checkbox"/> Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Not Evaluated Explanation: Waveny is individually listed in the National Register, Olmsted Brothers design contributes NR Listed: <input type="checkbox"/> District-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> District-Non-Contributing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Documentation		
R E P O R T E D B Y	NAME Liz Sargent and Lucy Lawliss	ORGANIZATION Red Bridge Group	DATE December 2021
	ADDRESS 2100 Green Street, San Francisco, California 94123		
	PHOTOGRAPHER Liz Sargent	DATE November 13, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permission to use photographs (public domain)
	SURVEY METHOD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Visit/In-Person Walkover <input type="checkbox"/> Drive-through/Windshield (no permission) <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Review Only		

ATTACHMENTS (Include the following items in the PDF)

- Location Map Site Map Photographs with captions Historic Images (if applicable)
 Narrative Description of Property Historical Narrative of Property References

Forms containing sensitive information may be withheld from public disclosure (CGS 1-210)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (Visual Assessment Summary)

Layout & Spatial Relationships: Waveny Park features the preserved elements of the Lapham House complex to the south of the entrance drive, while active recreation and New Canaan High School are located to the north of the entrance drive. The property is edged to the south by the Merritt Parkway, to the west by Lapham Road, to the north by Old Stamford Road and Farm Road, with a likely property boundary between the park and the school grounds that include the active recreation complex, and to the east by South Avenue. The house sits atop the high point on the property. It is approached via a winding entrance drive from Lapham Road, that continues as an exit to South Avenue. The forecourt of the building is reached via a spur road leading south from the entrance drive to an elongated oval in front of the house contained by brick walls and plantings. Fields are to the south and west of the house. To the east are formal gardens. Woodlands and a berm are between the house precinct and the Merritt Parkway to diminish its visual and audible impact on the property. Woodland edges the house precinct to the east. A large parking area is north of the forecourt, while a cluster of service/support buildings edge the parking area to the east.

Circulation: In addition to the entrance drive and road leading to the forecourt, there are roads providing access to the parking area, which is set in a grove of trees, and walks around the house. These include a long straight walk east of the house that connects a series of formal garden elements. The entrance drive, first established circa 1895, was adjusted based on plans prepared by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects in 1912, with changes made in 1984 to accommodate park use of the estate.

There are also bridle and walking trails added circa 1930, with additions between 1980 and 2007 to accommodate park use. The long Axial Walk is east of the house. There is also the Flower Walk that crosses the Axial Walk and the Garden Walk.

Topography: The house is sited on a high point atop a broad knoll of relatively level upland topography. The land descends to the east of the house, with the gardens formed within the declining topography. Below the formal gardens, the land continues to descend to a pond fed by Stony Brook that includes a channelized section. The land also descends to the north of the entrance drive; the recreation fields are set topographically below the house precinct.

Plantings/Vegetation: Remnants of an allée of trees that once followed the entrance drive survive, along with mature trees north of the house, foundation plantings around the building, and ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowering plants associated with the formal gardens. There are hedge plantings and roses within the forecourt. Cutleaf Japanese maples edge the long walk east of the house. The formal gardens contain flowering plants set within clipped hedges of evergreen shrubs. A walled Rose Garden contains various ornamental plantings. The meadows are dotted with trees and edged by woodlands. Much of the landscape around the house is maintained in turf lawn.

Buildings/Structures/Objects: Waveny House was designed in the Tudor Revival style by noted New York architect, William B. Tubby, in 1912-1914. The house was built within an existing estate that featured earlier buildings and had been used for agriculture since the eighteenth century.

Other buildings that support management of the property include a 1903 Superintendent's House, the 1915 Tea House, a Rose Garden Shelter, Entrance Gate, and Walls, an 1895 Potting Shed, circa 1900 Power House, circa 1900 Carriage Barn, 1903 Superintendent's Well, and 1915 Bungalow and associated Garage.

There is a statue of Gwendolyn and a stone fountain pool nearby on the terrace east of the house.

Two stone bridges are associated with the drive as it leads towards South Avenue that date to circa 1895. Entrance pier and gate features at the perimeter roads date to circa 1895, with alterations based on Olmsted Brothers plans prepared in 1913.

CONTINUATION SHEET Wavey Park (#03393) / 677 South Avenue, New Canaan

Stone walls include both agricultural features dating to the early eighteenth through the late nineteenth centuries and additional walls built circa 1920 based on designs prepared by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects.

Brick walls designed by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects are present around the forecourt and the gardens east of the house.

Recreational Space: Additions to the property to accommodate park use include platform tennis courts, a dog park, recreation fields, swimming and splash pools, a bath house, and pool houses.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Waveny was originally a vernacular agricultural property that began to be managed as a gentleman farm circa 1895. The 285-acre property was assembled by Thomas W. Hall as Prospect Farm in 1895 and later incorporated into Lewis H. Lapham's Waveny estate. As developed by the Laphams with the help of architect William B. Tubby and Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, the Waveny landscape was adapted from a working landscape that contained fields, meadows, and woodland patterns surviving from the early eighteenth century to a Country Place era retreat of bucolic views and spatial qualities, with formal spaces for recreation and entertaining. The house was sited collaboratively by Tubby and members of the Olmsted firm. The Tudor Revival-style house, built in 1912–1914, was located immediately south of Thomas Hall's Colonial Revival-style house designed by Frank Shea and built in 1895; Hall's House was then demolished. The landscape plans, composed of an amended earlier winding entrance drive, forecourt, open meadows, and formal gardens, reflect the Olmsted Brothers' landscape architecture approach to design, including both preservation and adaptation of the existing landscape established during the late nineteenth century by Frank Shea for Thomas Hall. Although features of the property have evolved and been lost or altered to accommodate park use, the broad strokes of the historic vernacular and designed landscapes, expansive open meadows, woodland pockets, and curving drives survive, along with the Olmsted-designed layout of hardscape and the terracing patterns of the formal gardens that link architectural and landscape spaces.¹

Design features include the formal entrance forecourt north of the house with an elongated oval driveway contained by a loggia and long terrace on the south, and a covered porch and outdoor living room on the west; the expansive open meadows viewed from the house; and the arrangement of formal gardens east of the house. These include a walled rose garden with a gate and shelter designed by Olmsted Brothers and a Tudor Revival style tea house designed by William B. Tubby sited along a long formal walk.

Members of the Olmsted firm involved in the designs for the property included John Charles Olmsted, Percival Gallagher, Edward Clark Whiting, and horticulturist A. Chandler Manning. The design reflects many of the principles and the design philosophy and approach established by Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. The work of the firm elevated the experience of the landscape, enhancing the visual aesthetics of the surrounding agricultural and woodland areas. The siting of Waveny House, and the arrangement of terraces and the forecourt, the integration of ornamental elements, and the variety of expansive views and intimate spaces contribute to an overall composition that demonstrates the value of landscape architecture. The firm later designed a berm along the southern boundary of the property in 1938 as a sound barrier to the traffic carried by the road. White pine trees were planted on top of the berm for screening.

The property was later donated to the Town of New Canaan in 1967 and converted to a municipal park. The Town built several large buildings and structures between 1967 and 1973, including two water towers. Recreational facilities have also been added to the lower lying area north of the house, leaving the gardens untouched.

¹ Virginia H. Adams, Gretchen M. Pineo, Kristen Heitert, Emily Giacormarra, and Michelle Johnstone, National Register of Historic Places nomination: "Waveny" (2019).

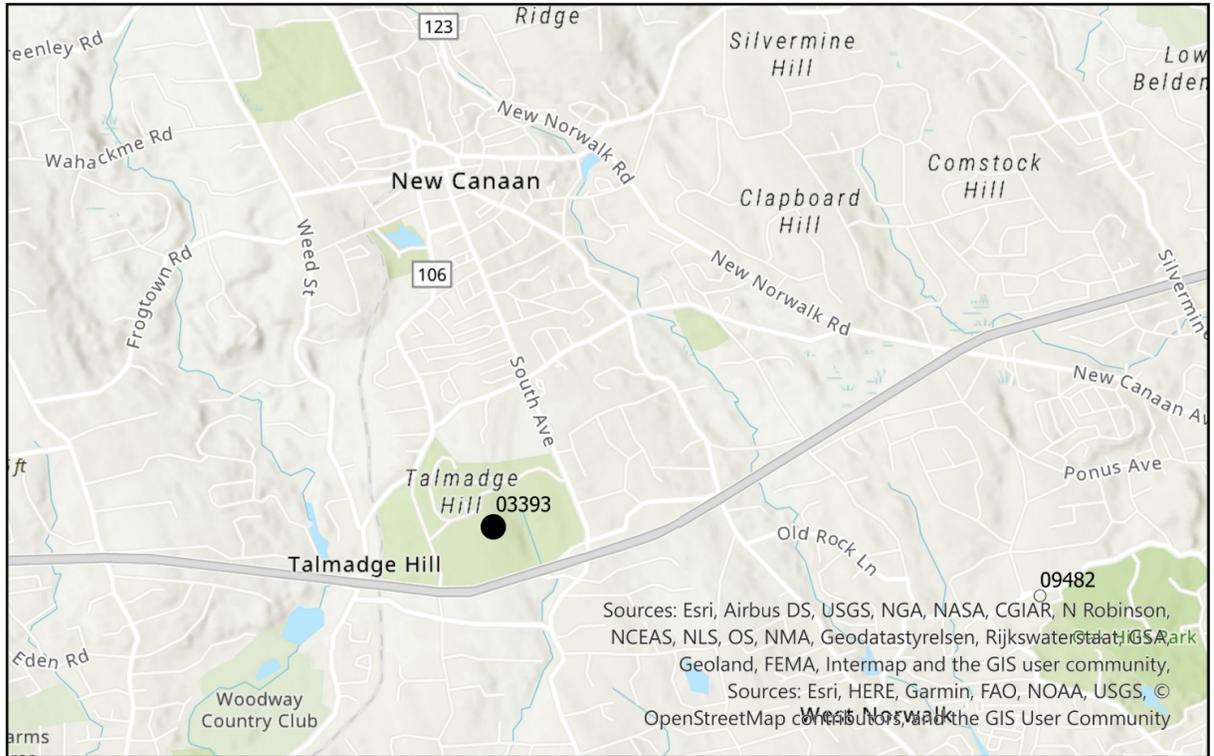
CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT

CONTINUATION SHEET Wavey Park (#03393) / 677 South Avenue, New Canaan

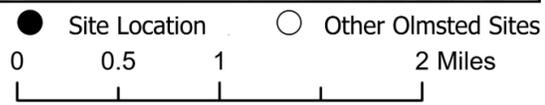
REFERENCES

Adams, Virginia H., Gretchen M. Pineo, Kristen Heitert, Emily Giacormarra, and Michelle Johnstone. National Register of Historic Places nomination: "Waveny." 2019.

GRAPHICS



JOB: 03393 LOCATION: New Canaan

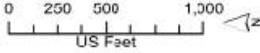


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CONTINUATION SHEET Wavery Park (#03393) / 677 South Avenue, New Canaan

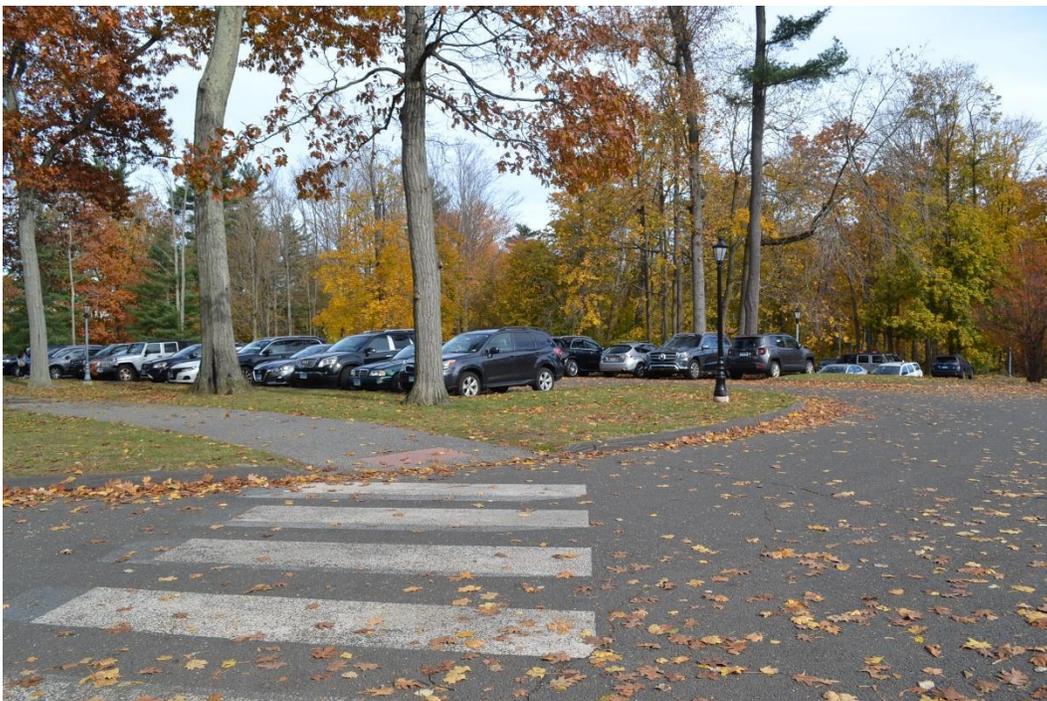


JOB: 03393 LOCATION: New Canaan PROJECT: Wavery Park





View southwest along the tree-lined entrance drive near the house. (All photographs taken by authors in 2021 unless otherwise noted)



View northeast of the parking area near the house from the entrance drive.



View south across the forecourt toward Waveny House.



View north from the porte cochere across the forecourt.



View southwest across the meadow near the house.



View east toward the tea house at the end of the long walk east of the house.



View north along the long walk toward the fountain pool edged by hedges.



View west toward the south façade of the house.



View northeast toward the walled rose garden, gate feature, and shelter beyond.



View southeast toward the pond east of the house.



View west toward the stone piers at the South Avenue entrance into Waveny Park.