

Valentine-Fuller House and Garden
125 Prospect Street (southwest corner
of Prospect and Harvard Streets)
Cambridge
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-283A

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An addendum to
Valentine-Fuller House
125 Prospect Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts
in HABS Catalog (1941) and to
Valentine-Fuller House and Garden
in HABS Massachusetts Catalog (1965)

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

VALENTINE--FULLER HOUSE AND GARDEN

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125 Prospect Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts
in HABS Catalog (1941), and to
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Location: 125 Prospect Street (southwest corner of Prospect and Harvard Streets), Cambridge, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The house and garden were destroyed in 1937. The site is now occupied by three apartment houses.

Statement of Significance: The house, which had an attached carriage house and stable, was one of the most handsomely designed and impressive residences in all Cambridge. The garden, which measured approximately 210' x 510', was unusually large for its neighborhood and was substantially unaltered from its original plan. House and grounds together comprised a particularly fine intact example of an outstanding mid-nineteenth-century Cambridge suburban estate.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: In the seventeenth century the property was a portion of lands granted to Governor Thomas Dudley. By 1756 it was part of a holding owned by John Bannister.

1756 John Bannister to Ralph Inman
1788 Estate of Ralph Inman to Leonard Jarvis
1801 Seized for debt by U. S. Government and sold at auction to Jonathan Austin
c. 1848 Austin (?) to Charles Valentine, who had the house built and the grounds laid out.

Antoinette F. Downing, Elisabeth MacDougall, and Eleanor Pearson, Report Two: Mid Cambridge (Cambridge: Cambridge Historical Commission, 1967), passim.

1865 Widow of Charles Valentine (?) to Robert O. Fuller, May 1, 1865

- c. 1937 Heirs of Mrs. Robert O. Fuller to developers,
who demolished house and grounds.

Letter dated May 1, 1968 from Mrs. James A. Dunlap, Jr.
in HABS files.

2. Date of erection: 1848.
3. Architect: Not known.
4. Original plans, elevations, etc.: None known.
5. Alterations and additions: Photographs c. 1865 and c. 1890 indicate that carriage house second-floor east windows were lengthened between above dates. HABS garden plan of 1937 indicates a south stable door which does not show in photograph taken c. 1890. Cast-iron gazebo near southeast corner of garden was already gone when garden was measured and drawn by the HABS in 1937. No other alterations before total demolition are known.
6. Important old views: Vignette on Walling Map of Cambridge, 1854. Carte de visite photograph c. 1865 and large group of exterior and interior photographs c. 1890 in possession of Mrs. James A. Dunlap, Jr., Old Littleton Road, Harvard, Massachusetts 01451.
7. Sources of information:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Correspondence, April-May, 1968 with Mrs. James A. Dunlap, Jr., granddaughter of Robert O. Fuller, in HABS files.

Walling Map of Cambridge, 1854, in Cambridge City Hall.

Myers, Denys Peter, "A Partial Catalogue of Greek Revival Buildings Extant in Cambridge." Unpublished paper, School of Architecture, Harvard University, 1937.
 - b. Secondary and published sources:

Downing, Antoinette F., MacDougall, Elisabeth, and Pearson, Eleanor. Report Two: Mid Cambridge. Cambridge: Cambridge Historical Commission, 1967.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Charles Valentine (?-1850) was a prominent merchant and proprietor of a soapworks in Cambridgeport. He left a portion of his estate in 1850 to the First Evangelical Congregational Society for the erection of the Prospect Congregational Church, built in 1851 from plans by Alexander R. Esty on the lot adjoining the south boundary of the Valentine-Fuller garden.

The Hon. Robert O. Fuller (1829-1903) was a prominent merchant and iron dealer who served on the Cambridge City Council (1865-66) and in the Great and General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (State Legislature) as a Representative (1871) and Senator (1872-73). Fuller rented the Valentine House in 1862, purchased the property in 1865, and resided there until his death. He was a leading member and generous supporter of the Central Square Baptist Church.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Valentine-Fuller House was a restrained, dignified, and distinguished masonry example of the Italianate bracketed manner with a semicircular central front bay, a fine cast-iron front porch, widely overhanging eaves, and flat monitor roof. A carriage house and stable attached to the rear service wing and extending to the south were consonant with the design of the main block.
2. Condition of fabric: Demolished in 1937.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Approximately 112' x 100' /main block approximately 50' (three-bay front) x 40', two stories plus concealed attic; rear two-storied service wing approximately 24' x 32'; attached two-storied carriage house and stable approximately 67½' x 30'.
2. Foundations: Dressed granite ashlar, large blocks; projected beyond plane of upper walls 6-8".
3. Wall construction: Brick, smoothly stuccoed and scored to resemble light brown stone ashlar. Outer walls were double, with air space between them.

4. Framing: Not determined.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Semicircular one-storied front (east) porch had low granite platform about $4\frac{1}{2}$ ' deep approached by seven splayed granite steps. Steps were flanked by cast-iron railings supported by one baluster per step and terminating in vasiform openwork newel posts. Porch was sheltered by wooden-floored balcony supported by broad cast-iron openwork uprights of rinceau pattern, openwork spandrels, and a convex tendril-patterned frieze. Balcony extended beyond porch across second-floor flanking windows, its ends supported by cast-iron brackets, and had a delicately patterned railing of slightly convex profile.

Rectangular wooden one-storied flat-roofed side (south) porch on granite base was approached from south side by six rectangular granite steps and extended from wooden rectangular one-storied conservatory in form of bay window to within about 3' of front corner of main block. Roof had flat-soffited overhanging eaves supported by small paired brackets and was continuous with conservatory roof. Roof section over porch was supported by slender paired wooden uprights between which were curvilinear open spandrels meeting at carved central pendants resembling inverted acroteria.

Somewhat smaller rectangular wooden one-storied flat-roofed porch with same detailing was placed within northwest angle between rear of main block and north wall of service wing and was approached from narrow (north) end by two steps. Unsheltered wooden south stoop approached by six wooden steps running full width of stoop fronted south wall of service wing between enclosed one-storied wooden back entry to main block and east wall of carriage house.

6. Chimneys: Main block had two chimneys, both on south half of roof, one above plane of west wall, the other parallel to it on east-west axis and south of monitor. Service wing roof had one chimney near center. Stable had one chimney approximately centered at north wall adjoining carriage house. Chimneys were of smoothly stuccoed brick, rectangular, of moderate height, and had thin flat cornices and widely spaced dentils. All except stable chimney had single long inset panels on their wider sides.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: All doorways of main block and service wing were rectangular. Wooden paired front doors were curved in plan, had square lower panels, and tall upper panels each glazed with two lights of ruby glass etched clear in a floral pattern. Hardware was silver or silver-plated. Rectangular transom, also curved in plan, had six etched ruby glass lights bordering two clear lights.

Entrance from south porch into cross hall and entrance from northwest porch into service wing had wooden four-paneled doors below rectangular transoms. West door to service wing entry and east door to carriage house, both approached from south stoop, and back (west) doors to carriage house and stable had no transoms above them. Front (east) door in semicircular central bay of stable was of vertical boards, was curved in plan, and had rectangular four-light transom.

Two wide elliptically-headed carriage house doorways and two similar doorways flanking central semicircular stable bay had sliding doors of vertical boards. Above the latter were two hay doors, similar except that their openings were horizontal rectangles. Cellar entrance was below grade on west wall of service wing and was approached by granite steps leading down and flanked by granite retaining walls.

- b. Windows and shutters: Window over front (east) door was curved in plan and was composed of paired French doors, each with three clear lights bordered by twelve etched ruby glass lights. Transom above was divided by central mullion and had two clear lights, each bordered by eight etched ruby glass lights. All windows had rectangular openings with flush lintels. Those on first and second floors had slightly projecting rectangular granite sills, wooden double-hung six-over-six-light sash with very thin muntins, and, except for windows in curved bays of house and stable, wooden exterior shutters with movable louvers. Attic windows (west wall of main block only) had no sills. Cellar, attic, and cupola windows had three lights set horizontally.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: All roofs were flat, tin-covered.
- b. Cornice, eaves: No cornice. Eaves of main block had very wide projection and flat soffits in two sections, inner section supported on large curvilinear paired brackets, outer section cantilevered. Service wing had similar eaves of somewhat lesser projection and smaller-scaled brackets. Carriage house and stable eaves were cantilevered without any supporting brackets.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: No dormers or towers. Low flat-roofed approximately square monitor cupola was centered on main block roof. Stable had approximately square monitor cupola centered on roof. Monitor had rectangular louvered opening on each face and concave hipped tin roof terminating in turned wooden finial and gilded ball into which was set iron vane with gilded weather cock.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There was a full basement under main block and service wing.
- b. First floor: Front hall about 10' wide was semi-circular at entrance (east) and stair (west) ends. At right (north) of front hall main block was occupied by drawing room slightly less than 20' x 40'. Southeast corner contained parlor. West of parlor was a cross hall running from front hall to south entrance. Southwest corner contained dining room with conservatory projecting from south wall. Library on axis with front hall occupied space remaining in main block between dining room and drawing room. Ceiling height of principal rooms was over 13'.

Service wing contained back stairs, north and south entries, large "ironing room," china closet, and, at west end, large kitchen and pantry. South door from kitchen led to L-shaped corridor in carriage house containing stairs (to stable and grounds staff quarters and loft) and leading to a "necessary" behind carriage room. Stable had open plan.

- c. Second floor: Not recorded.
 - d. Attic: Main block had an attic with windows in rear (west) wall only. Plan not recorded. Monitor must have lighted most of attic.
2. Stairways: Front stairs had twenty-two risers and ran along north wall of front hall. Uppermost nine risers turned in forty-five degree curve. Lowest two risers swelled forward slightly. Bottom riser end and mahogany railing formed volute in plan. Open spiral of alternating turned and plain round tapering banisters surrounded larger turned newel post.

Backstairs rose in straight flight along east wall of "ironing room" toward north. Stairs to loft in carriage house ran in straight flight toward west along north wall of corridor. Whether backstairs and carriage house stairs were enclosed or open is not certain.
 3. Flooring: Old photographs show first-floor interiors fully carpeted. Standard practice was to lay soft pine flooring when carpeting was intended.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on wooden laths. Hall and parlor walls were painted. Drawing room and dining room walls were papered.
 5. Doorways and doors: Interior doorways were rectangular. Front hall and parlor doorways were flanked by single-paneled pilasters with molded composition capitals derived from the order of the Tower of the Winds at Athens. Pilasters carried Greek entablatures with boldly projecting cornices. Entablatures were enriched by bead and reel, leaf and tongue, and egg and dart running moldings. Drawing room doorways were similarly trimmed except that pilaster capitals were of the fully developed Greek Corinthian order. Doors of front hall, drawing room, and parlor were mahogany, each with two tall vertical panels. Door at west end of front hall was curved in plan. Dining room had simply molded architraves of dark wood. Wide doorway on north wall of dining room leading to library had a sliding door.
 6. Decorative features and trim: In addition to trim of above-mentioned doorways, ceilings of principal rooms also had molded enrichments. Front hall had delicate plaster cornice of acanthus leaves and large circular foliated centerpiece of irregular outline. Drawing room had deep plaster cornice with running moldings of waterleaf, beading, egg and dart, and acanthus leaf

- patterns, and large rectangular inset panel edged with acanthus leaf border. Two large acanthus leaf centerpieces were within panel. Parlor ceiling had molded plaster cornice identical with drawing room cornice, inset panel, and center rosette. Dining room had molded plaster cornice and circular centerpiece of concentric moldings. Library ceiling had oval dome.
7. Notable hardware: Doors of principal rooms had silver or silver-plated hinges, plain round knobs, and key-plates. Principal rooms and chambers had silvered bell pulls of circular form with vertical handles which, when pulled a quarter turn to the right (parallel with the wall plane), activated concealed wires attached to bells hung on spiral springs in the service wing.
8. Lighting: All lighting was originally (1848) by gas, later electrified. Hall had four-sided brass and ormolu lantern of unusually felicitous neo-rococo design with etched glass. Pipe was concealed by spiral brass sleeve. Niche at turn of stairs contained bronze (or bronze-finished zinc) draped female figure with upraised left arm holding gas globe. Wrought-iron six-sided lantern (a later addition) apparently of Italian or Spanish workmanship was suspended from chain in stairwell.

Drawing room had two four-light gasoliers with vasiform glass shades. Each had pendent ormolu finial above which was glass bowl crowned with ormolu wreath from which projected branches entwined with ormolu foliage. Branches were "supported" by foliate chains. Above bowl, spiral brass stem was ornamented by vasiform glass baluster. (A quite similar gasolier c. 1850 of Massachusetts provenance combining glass and brass elements now in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, is attributed to either the Boston and Sandwich Glass Company or the New England Glass Works with the metal parts attributed to the I. N. Hooper Foundry.)

Parlor had later (c. 1890) brass five-light gasolier composed of four tubes with upcurved terminations braced by a square floral repoussé strut through which depended a spiral brass tube ending in a gas lamp with painted glass shade of inverted bowl form with pierced brass open crown under a smoke catcher.

Dining room had four-light brass and ormolu gasolier with curvilinear arms of tendril design and large vasiform baluster entwined with an ormolu fruit-bearing

vine and supporting a more slender baluster terminating in a foliate cluster at ceiling height. Library had a slightly simpler three-light gasolier with scrolled arms which was hung with chains passed over pulley wheels and terminating in counterweights, thus making it adjustable in height. A seal in the central pipe prevented gas leaks.

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9. Heating: House was originally heated by a hot air furnace, stoves, and fireplaces. Dining room had simple white marble mantelpiece with cast-iron liner and sealed fireplace with plugged stovepipe hole. Parlor had later (c. 1890?) wooden mantelpiece with brick-lined fireplace. Both mantels were centered on the west walls of their respective rooms. Drawing room had no mantelpieces.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: House and attached carriage house and stable faced east at 125 Prospect Street on the southwest corner of Prospect and Harvard Streets in extensive grounds and was flanked on the south by the still extant Prospect Congregational Church. Prospect Street, the main thoroughfare from Central Square, Cambridge to Union Square, Somerville, failed to develop as a street of fine residences, as did Harvard Street, which leads up Dana Hill toward Harvard Square. The Valentine-Fuller estate was therefore the easternmost outstanding residence along Harvard Street. The area is now increasingly given over to apartment houses.
2. Enclosures: Cast-iron fence about 3'-6" high set in granite plinth ran across Prospect Street frontage and west along Harvard Street side about 130' to a point parallel with northwest corner of main block of house. Cast-iron fence had tapered round colonettes with square bases and simple flared capitals above annular necks. Principal supports spaced at intervals were clusters of four colonettes. Plain railing had openwork cresting with finials somewhat resembling fleurs-de-lys. Prospect Street entrance had four very slightly tapered square granite posts with widely flaring cavetto cornices and low square capping blocks. Two posts terminated runs of cast-iron fence. Two larger posts of same pattern were set back about 8' from property line and flanked driveway. Between pairs of inner and outer posts were granite obelisks. Rest of Harvard Street (north) side, and rear (west) boundary had high board fence. South side was originally unfenced. Later, a light hooped wire fence was set up. Hedge set off front lawn from driveway.

3. Outbuildings: Carriage house and stable were attached to service wing of house and were not freestanding outbuildings. Circular cast-iron summer house about 10' in diameter stood near southeast corner of grounds. Summer house had eight slender reeded columns which supported crowning openwork railing similar to, or identical with, slightly convex balcony railing on front of main house. Within railing eight openwork ogee-shaped arches rose to center and terminated in finial. There was never a roof. Four sections of latticed iron railing alternating with four unrailed sections were set between lower portions of columns.

4. Walks: Sidewalks along Prospect and Harvard Streets were brick with granite curbs. Walks and driveway in grounds were surfaced with loose gravel. Temporary wooden walks were laid down in winter. Driveway ran from entrance to stable and carriage house and enclosed oval island of lawn and trees south of house. Island was lighted by ornamental cast-iron gas lamp with molded base and octagonal shaft supporting octagonal glazed lantern with glazed top supporting large chinoiserie finial. One walk ran across front of house and along north side of property with spur walk to cellar entrance. Another walk ran along part of south border and across middle of back yard.

5. Landscaping: Grounds, as recorded in 1937, were laid out in lawn with informally planted trees and shrubs. House stood on sloping-banked grass podium about 12' wide and 2' to 3' above rest of grade. Contour of property rose about 5' from east to west. Old photograph (c. 1890) indicates a kitchen garden behind house and stable. Sidewalks along both streets were planted with American elms. Front lawn had horsechestnut tree in front of house and a western catalpa and common lindens near entrance driveway. Driveway island had two sugar maples. A lilac hedge separated lawn from north side of driveway. Another lilac hedge bordered part of south boundary. Backyard had seven black walnut trees, eleven pear trees, a common locust, a white ash, and a common linden. North lawn had common lindens, sugar maples, a yellow wood tree, a Lombardy poplar, and two American elms. South lawn had sugar maples, a common linden, and a silver maple. In addition to common lilac, shrubs used were black currant, sweek mock orange, and mapleleaf viburnum.

Prepared by Denys Peter Myers
 Architectural Historian
 National Park Service
 April 17, 1970

ADDENDUM TO
VALENTINE-FULLER HOUSE & GARDEN
125 Prospect Street
Cambridge
Middlesex County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MA-283

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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