

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

Form no.

M, W

4

BKL 1014

Brookline

Address 209 Sargent Road

Name Ignatius Sargent House

Present use Residential

Present owner The Northern Trust Co. /

Description:

Date 1845

Source Maps, Some Old Brookline Houses

Style Bracketed Mode

Architect Richard Upjohn

Exterior wall fabric Sandstone

Outbuildings (describe) Shingled 2-car garage

Other features 2 1/2 stories, square cross gabled roof, elaborate stone brackets, label moldings; loggia

Altered Yes\* Date

Moved no Date -

5. Lot size: 142,313 sq. ft.

One acre or less Over one acre X

Approximate frontage 125'

Approximate distance of building from street 225'

6. Recorded by Carla Benka; research-Leslie Larkin, Carla Benka  
Organization BHC

Date May 1983

\* Date unknown - 2-story wing added.  
1954 - Extensive interior alterations.

(over)

82/333-8

This house meets NR criteria A,B,and C, being the type of estates which socially prominent and financially elite Boston merchants established in the rural environs of Brookline; being an example of the domestic architecture of Richard Upjohn; and being the home of the Ignatius Sargent family.

7. Original owner (if known) Ignatius Sargent BKL 1614

Original use Single family dwelling

Subsequent uses (if any) and dates same

8. Themes (check as many as applicable)

Aboriginal		Conservation	<u>x</u>	Recreation	
Agricultural/Horticulture	<u>x</u>	Education	<u>x</u>	Religion	
Architectural	<u>x</u>	Exploration/ settlement		Science/ invention	
The Arts		Industry		Social/ humanitarian	
Commerce	<u>x</u>	Military		Transportation	
Communication		Political			
Community development	<u>x</u>				

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Number 209 Sargent Road is a 2 1/2 story house, square in form, with a cross gabled roof, eaves with elaborate stone brackets, large dentil string coursing above the second floor, and lable moldings over the 2nd and 3 rd floor windows. The exterior building material is dark sandstone, cut in blocks, and the foundation and side wall supports are of two foot stone blocks. A ten foot wide loggia wraps around three fourths of the residence with a roof overhang supported by masonry pillars (reeded) and Gothic stone arches with metal tracery.

The design appears to have been influenced by what A.J. Downing referred to in his book Cottage Residences as the Bracketed Mode, a combination of Italianate, Gothic Revival, and Swiss Chalet style features. The veranda, quite unusual for Brookline homes, is similar to one found at "Knoll" in Tarrytown, New York, the work of A.J. Davis. It provides a semi-enclosed transitional space between the setting and the symmetry of the house itself. This picturesque feature creates an appropriate connection to the landscaping the house, originally part of "Holm Lea", planned by both Ignatius and Charles Sprague Sargent, the latter an ardent believer in the "picturesque" as opposed to the "formal" school of landscape design. Today, 209 Sargent Road still commands a view <sup>toward</sup> Sargent's Pond, a man-made feature, as well as the broad lawns of the house lot itself. The property is just under three acres and features mature evergreens and hardwood trees which create a well protected and private setting.

We know that the house was built in 1845, and there are strong indications that it was designed by Richard Upjohn, although no drawings have been found. Upjohn designed a number of Gothic Revival style homes in Brookline, including those belonging to Theodore Lyman and John Thayer; both have been demolished. St. Paul's Church, also by Upjohn, still stands at the intersection of St.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

M.G. Van Rensselaer, "A Suburban Country Place", The Century Magazine, May, 1897  
Hazel Collins, "Landscape Gardening in Brookline", 1903

A.J. Downing, Landscape Gardening

Cynthia Zaitzevsky, Frederick Law Olmsted and the Boston Park System  
200th Anniversary of Brookline, Massachusetts (1905) p. 133

Wilhelm Miller-"Successful American Gardens VII - Holm Lea"(Library files)

Charity Bazaar- Holm Lea, June 6, 1908- Program-in Brookline Room

# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Brookline

BKL.1614

Form No:

82/333-8

M-4

Property Name: Ignatius Sargent House

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

## 9. Historical Significance

Paul Street and Aspinwall Avenue.

The significance of 209 Sargent Road is attributable to a number of factors. First, it is one of the more architecturally significant houses in Brookline and probably the town's only remaining example of domestic architecture by Richard Upjohn. Second, it is the only surviving major building that was part of the world famous Sargent estate, and last, it was for many years the home of Ignatius Sargent, well known merchant, enthusiastic horticulturalist, master planner of Holm Lea, and father of Charles Sprague Sargent. (See Sargent's Pond)

Ignatius Sargent was born in Boston in 1800, a descendant of William Sargent who came from Exeter, England to Agawam, Massachusetts about 1625. Ignatius Sargent had no formal education, but began his apprenticeship in trade and banking with Thomas H. Perkins and his brother James (See 450 Warren Street). At the age of 21, he founded the firm of Sargent and Brooks (Peter Chardon Brooks) with offices on Central Wharf in Boston. They were well established in trade with the East Indies. In 1830 Sargent became a director of the Globe Bank and twelve years later, its president. In addition, he was a director of the Western Railroad which, after its consolidation with the Boston and Worcester, became the Boston and Albany; a director of the Connecticut River Railroad; and manager of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company.

During the 1830's he lived at #2 Joy Street on Beacon Hill, next to Colonel Thomas H. Perkins. In 1845 he purchased four adjoining plots of land which had belonged to the Murdock, Kendrick, and Clark families, and moved to Brookline, presumably of Perkins who lived there during the summer months. Sargent built his brownstone mansion in 1845, but did not take up year round residency in Brookline until 1852. Between 1845 and 1873 Sargent purchased neighboring estates and eventually owned 150 acres of land, the largest private estate in the Boston area. Here he indulged his interest in horticulture, "transforming the rolling terrain into handsome parkland and gardens" (Sutton). Among the estates which Sargent purchased were those belonging to the Lee and Cook families. In the case of the latter, much had already taken place in terms of landscaping and horticultural activities. The Lee estate, some of which was in Jamaica Plain, consisted of 23 acres of land as well as a house, stable, and greenhouse. In Downing's day, it was famous for its rare imported rhododendron and mountain laurel.

Thomas Lee established his country seat about 1825, purchasing land which had belonged to the Buckminster family. The Buckminsters were one of the original families of Brookline, and their farm comprised at least a part of the Sargent estate. In describing the land of her ancestors, Eliza Buckminster Lee, wife of Thomas, wrote "If we may infer anything from the selection of Thomas Buckminster's farm in Brookline, he must have had an eye for picturesque beauty. His dwelling stood at the foot of wooded heights covered with a dense shrubbery, and fringed all up the rocky sides with delicate pensile branches and hanging vines. A rapid brook descending from the rocky heights ran past his door, spreading out and winding in the meadow in front. Jamaica Lake... slept tranquilly in full sight of the house." It should be noted that Mrs. Lee wrote a number of books from her home

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

BKL.1614

Community:	Form No:
Brookline	82/333-8 M-4
Property Name: Ignatius Sargent House	

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here, including Sketches of New England and Naomi.

Eliza's husband, Thomas, was a horticulturalist and contemporary of the Perkins brothers. He was particularly fond of azaleas and rhododendron cultivation, and in describing Lee's home in Brookline, A.J. Downing wrote, "Enthusiastically fond of botany and gardening in all departments, Mr. Lee has here formed a residence of as much variety and interest as we ever saw in as moderate a compass. It is indeed not only the most instructive place to the amateur of landscape gardening, but to the naturalist and lover of trees. There is a great deal of variety in the surface here and while the lawn in front of the house has a polished and graceful air, one or two other portions are quite picturesque." In referring to his lawn, Mary Poor, in her "Recollections of Brookline" wrote: "It was our first realization of the meaning of that word, so common even then in English books."

The Lee estate was purchased by Daniel Dwight (see 190 Warren Street) in 1868; he sold it to Sargent three years later. The Cook property was bought by William Dwight. He owned it for eight years before selling it to Sargent in 1873. Although Sargent owned it in the 1870's, he still allowed Dwight's son, Charles, to live in the cottage (see 126 Cottage Street). In 1868, Ignatius Sargent entrusted his son Charles with the full time management of the estate which was also a working farm at this time. It was in the late 1860's that the planting of rhododendron on a large scale was commenced and that the last era of tree planting began. Like his predecessors Thomas Lee and Ignatius Sargent, Charles Sargent purchased rare species and then went one step farther by hewing out the "glorious vistas" for which Holm Lea was so well known. It might also have been at this time that Sargent's Pond took on its present appearance, having been transformed by Charles Sargent from a naturally boggy spot with a brook flowing near it into a picturesque pond.

Although it was Ignatius Sargent who purchased the land, it was his son who ultimately designed the plan which would unite the three major estates: Cook, Lee, and Sargent, undoubtedly implementing many of his father's ideas and wishes. (For more on the estate and Charles Sargent, see Sargent's Pond)

Ignatius, whose success in grape culture was so great that he exhibited bunches of the Black Hamburg grape weighing between four and six pounds, died in 1884. His estate was left to his second wife, Henrietta Gray Sargent. After her death in the mid 1890's, Charles Sargent, Jr. et al became the trustees. Ignatius Sargent's home came into the hands of his grandson, James M. Codman, Jr., an attorney. Another grandson, Henry Sargent Codman, became a landscape architect and joined the firm of Olmsted and Olmsted. A granddaughter married the architect Guy Lowell, while another granddaughter married William Ely and lived at 130 Warren Street. The estate was subdivided, beginning in the late 1920's, and this house was purchased by Samuel Mixter.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

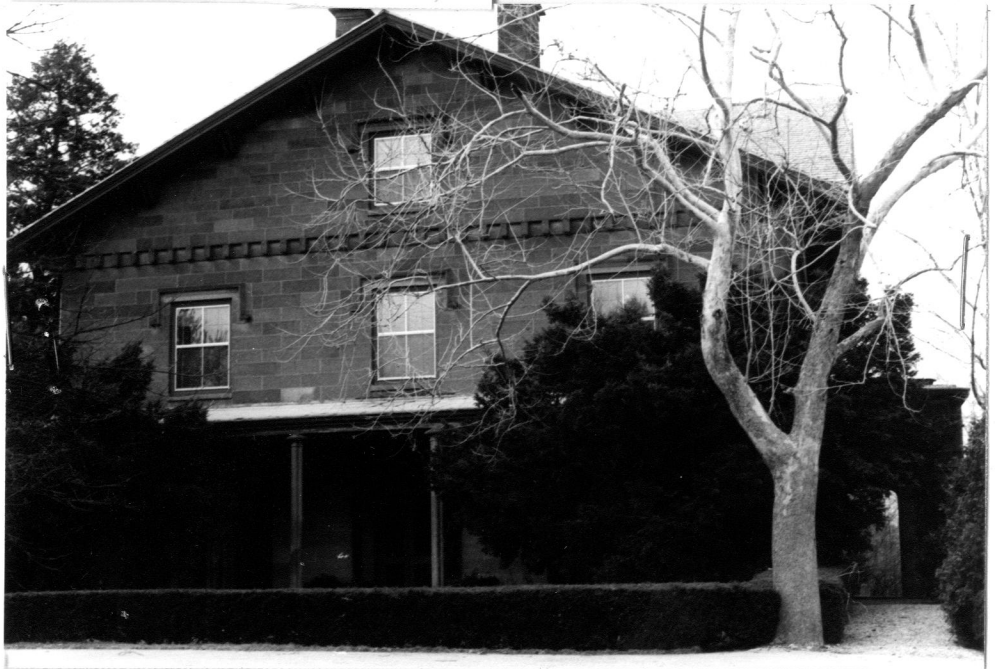
BROOKLINE

Form No:

M-4

Property Name: IGNATIUS SARGENT HOUSE

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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Community:

Brookline

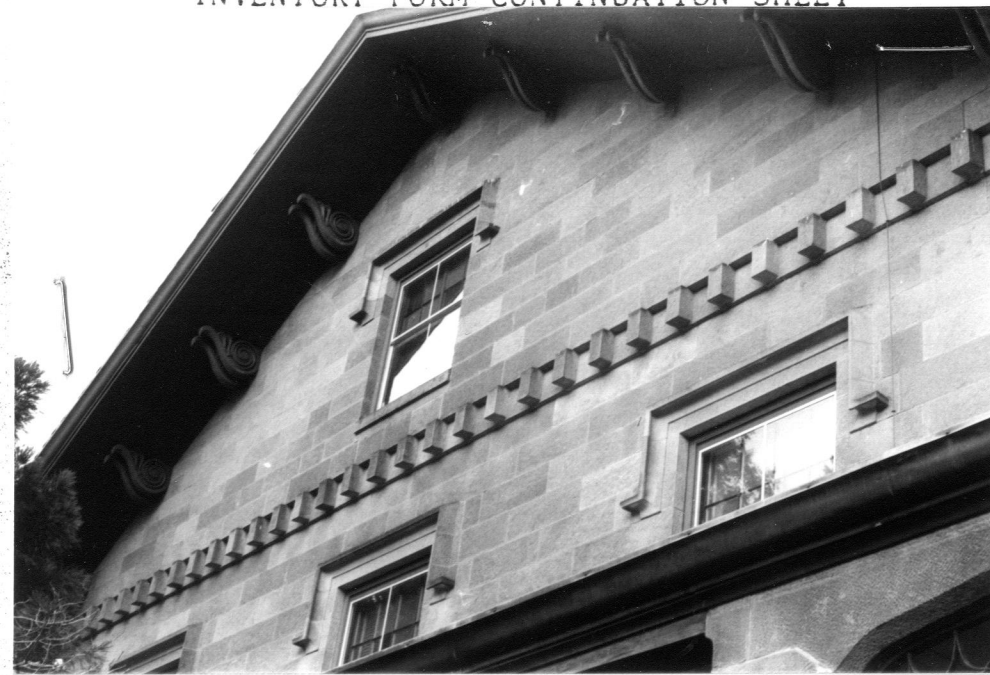
Form No:

M-4

Property Name: Tanager Sargent House

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BKL 1614



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Community:

Brookline

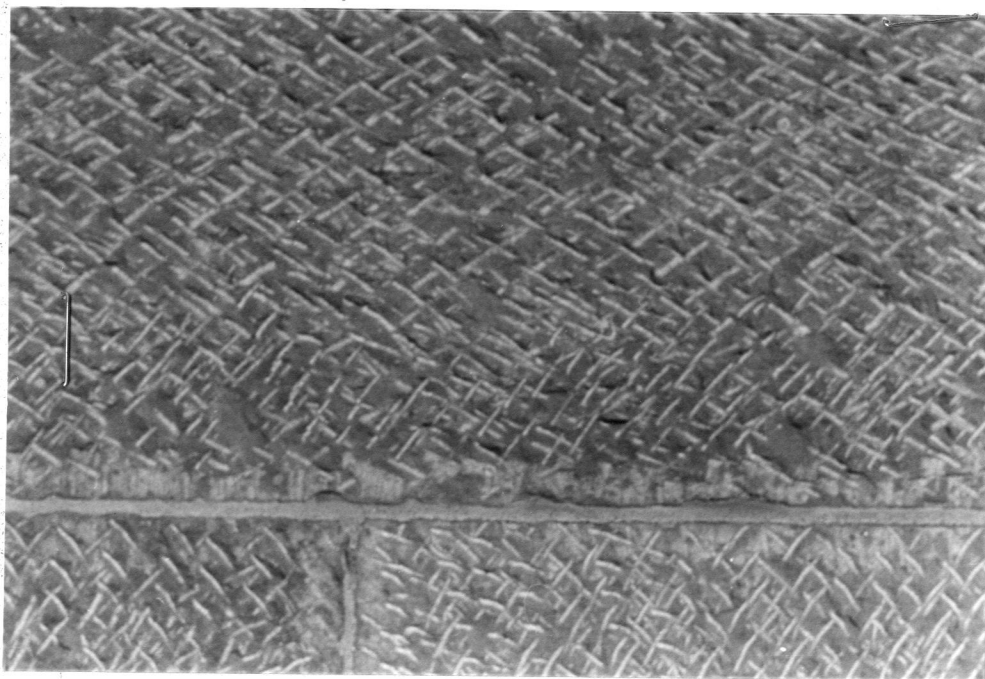
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M-4

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BKL.1614



Detail of sandstone block  
(exterior wall)



Exterior wall  
(Sandstone)

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