

TOWN OF BROOKLINE

PRESERVATION COMMISSION



HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD BROCHURE

LONGWOOD AREA- LONGWOOD MALL

2005



Longwood Mall c. 2000

Longwood Mall is graced with what Charles Sprague Sargent, founder of the Arnold Arboretum, called “the finest exotic trees which have been planted in greater Boston and probably the finest grove of European Beech in the United States.” This park, and the beech trees which adorn it, were the work of David Sears (1816-1871), a Bostonian whose wealth often found outlet in charitable works and civic improvements. Sears bought the land east of St. Paul Street in the 1820’s. He named the property Longwood,

after the home of Napoleon on St. Helena. Longwood Mall is only one of several residential parks laid out by Mr. Sears when he developed this property during the 1830’s and 40’s. He was also responsible for Winthrop, Knyvet and Mason Squares North of Beacon Street. Christ’s Church, the beautiful edifice on Chapel Street, was also built under his direction as an ecumenical house of worship.

The European beech trees on the mall, *Fagus sylvatica*, are only a fraction of the over 14,000 trees he planted in Longwood. These beech trees may date from between 1836-1840 when David Sears was in Europe. They are believed to have originated in England and were rarely imported into this country at that time. In 1902, the Sears family donated Longwood Mall to the Town. It is listed in the National and State

Registers of Historic Places.

Charles S. Sargent, director of the Arnold Arboretum, summarized the contribution of David Sears in words which provide a fitting tribute:

“The beech trees planted by Mr. David Sears are Brookline’s noblest possession. If he had done nothing more for that town, he would have been its greatest benefactor, but to him the town is also indebted for laying out in a skillful and satisfactory manor a large and important residential section of town, the gift of four small parks, and the building of a handsome and monumental church.”



Logwood Area Map



Brookline Preservation Commission

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