

SECTION 4

INVENTORY OF DISTRICT STRUCTURES

Putnam Street, East side

- 222-224. Brick three-family, Classical Revival roof. No brick course banding on walls. Decorative woodwork has been removed from porch.
- 226 Brick three-family, Classical Revival. Smaller than the building at 228-230, has one front door. No course banding. Porch has elaborate turnings and scroll work. No front bay. Wonderful Queen Anne sun burst in porch entrance gable.
- 228-230 Three-family, three story brick, Classical Revival. Porch columns appear of later period than the building at 232-234, but railing treatment is the same. No brick course banding.
- 232-234 Brick Classical Revival, three story "Perfect Six". Brick window cornices, different design on each floor. No brick course banding. Three-story porches are lyrical Queen Anne Style with Eastlake influence.
- 242-244 Frame three-story "Perfect Six" rarity. A frame version of the Perfect Six in the Italianate Style is unusual, and few multi-family buildings in Frog Hollow are built of wood. The three-story porch is a splendid example of Queen Anne detailing.
- 246 & 248 Are the same house from the same builder but with a Classical Revival roof and no third floor. The five houses located at 246, 248, 250, 252 and 254 Putnam Street were built by the Weed Co. about 1885.
- 250, 252,
254 Originally designed as two-family houses, are triplets except for porch design variation. Their ridge roofs, gable decoration, varied materials, bay front, brick course design, porch columns and brackets are of Queen Anne Style with Stick Style features.

Putnam Street, West side

- 245 Brick three-story, three-family, Classical Revival roof. Same decorative brick work and same porch as building at number 254, but with double doors.

- 247 Brick three-story, three-family, with Colonial Revival design elements: dentil courses (a string of wood blocks looking like teeth) along with a wide decorative frieze (board) under the eave overhang, and the three tier round columned porches. No decorative brick work.
- 249 Brick three-story, three-family version of building at number 248 with the same decorative brick work. Porch same as building at number 245 with double doors.
- 251-253 Brick three-family, Classical Revival. No decorative brick work. Porch has been altered.

The buildings at numbers 245 and 249 were built by the Weed Co. at the same time as the five houses (at numbers 246 to 254) across the street. Number 247 was built by the Hartford Real Estate Improvement Co. about 1895, and a private developer constructed the building at numbers 251-253 about 1889. The remaining structures were built by individual developers between 1885 and 1890. In Frog Hollow, the Weed Co. and its successor in real estate, the Hartford Real Estate Improvement Co. were the only large scale building developers.

Capitol Avenue South side

- 445 This structure, originally built as a residence, has been converted to office use. Changes made during the conversion include the addition of roof dormers and vinyl siding, a picture window in place of the original double hung windows, removal of pedimented crowns over front windows and alterations to the entrance veranda. Brackets at the roof overhang survive. This building is the only ridge roof example of the Italianate Style within the district.
- 447-449-
451-453 This Italianate double house embodies Palladian influence. Except for its chimneys, the structure remains symmetrical with its central three-story gabled entrance pavilion protruding sufficiently from its two flanking wings to create the facade's visual focal point. The decorative brick course banding and brick window treatment are nearly identical to the Weed built houses on Putnam Street suggesting that they were built by the same builder and within a few years of one another.
- 461 This small structure was built sometime after 1920 for some purpose unknown to us. It presently houses a delicatessen. The building's patterned brick facade and irregular coping show a concern by the builder about the building's streetscape presence on Capitol Avenue.

489-491 This building was constructed as a filling station after 1920. Its original brick street face now wears a Mansard bonnet and the walls are covered by various materials. It now serves as a luncheonette.

COLUMBIA STREET AND PARK TERRACE

Columbia Street and one contiguous block of Park Terrace contain three structures, each containing twelve row houses designed by George Keller. The individual houses in the rows have the same basic floor plan, but on the outside, Keller avoided sameness while maintaining a cohesive, consistent architectural composition. In these buildings, perhaps his most successful residential work, he employed design elements and massing seen in his earlier buildings along with new influences. The "Modern Gothic" Style which had been his characteristic idiom now embraced the plasticity of the Queen Anne Style that had its genesis in the picturesque designs of English architects, Richard Norman Shaw and Philip Webb. On Columbia Street and Park Terrace, George Keller masterfully orchestrated varied design elements including round and polygonal towers with conical roofs, bay windows, shed dormers, hip and Gambrel roofs, Shingle Style gables over brick walls, and gable roofs over individual porches.

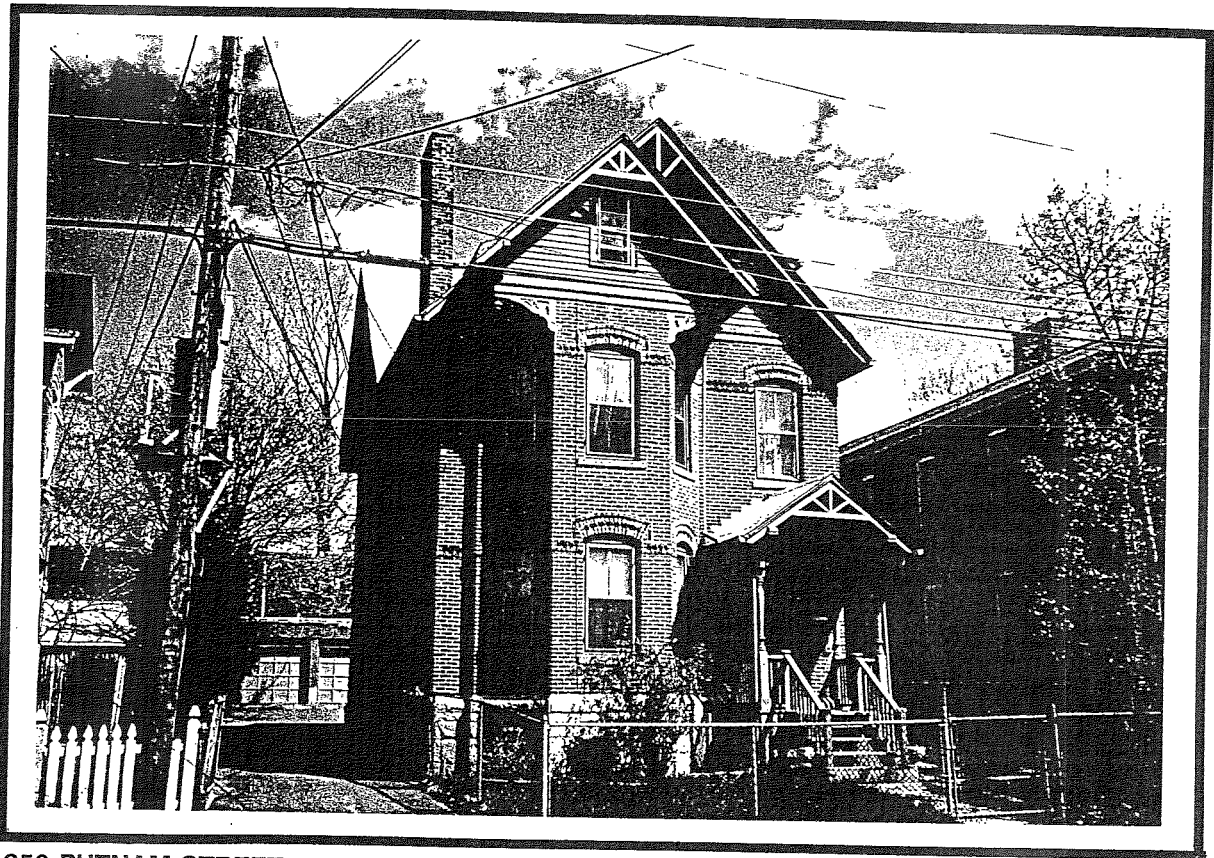
Columbia Street East side - 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24.
This first row of houses built in 1888 established the fundamental design of the other two that would follow: 12 houses in each row, having approximately the same area and floor plan. The "Modern Gothic" high pitched roof in this building, is broken by four large identical shingle-covered gables interspersed with smaller dormers. The long brick facade is broken by shingle-covered bays and a procession of individual porch entrances, ten with gables, two with hip roofs.

Columbia Street West side - 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23.
This row built in 1889 exhibits strong visual similarity with its neighbor across the street, but not as a mirror image. The basic roof line is the same, but now round towers with conical roofs terminate each end of the row with three large gables in between, instead of four. Dormers of different sizes fill remaining spaces in a different arrangement from the original.

Park Terrace - 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24.

This third version of Keller's rowhouses, constructed in 1895, presents variations from his first version that are more obvious. In the six-year interval since his second row was constructed, public interest in Colonial and Classical architecture emerged, and Keller made effective use of the new Styles. Gambrel roofs replaced the straight pitched ridge roofs of the earlier buildings. The houses at either end of the row face their gables directly front, clearly showing their Gambrel shape. Two octagonal towers, evoking the earlier style, occupy the mid section of the span. Gable and shed dormers alternate in the intervals between the end pavilions and the towers. Except for the wraparound porch of the north end unit, the houses have not been provided with full width sitting porches that are typical of the Columbia Street houses. But the characteristic of each house having its own entryway porch is maintained. Here the porches are designed in Colonial Revival Style, a clear departure from the earlier models. Ten of these have gables designed with pediments and two have shed roofs; each is supported by square columns. The look reflects Greek and Roman architecture on which much of Colonial design was based. The first floor bay windows are the one architectural element common to all three rowhouse structures. The buildings are also unified by the use of brick and shingle materials.

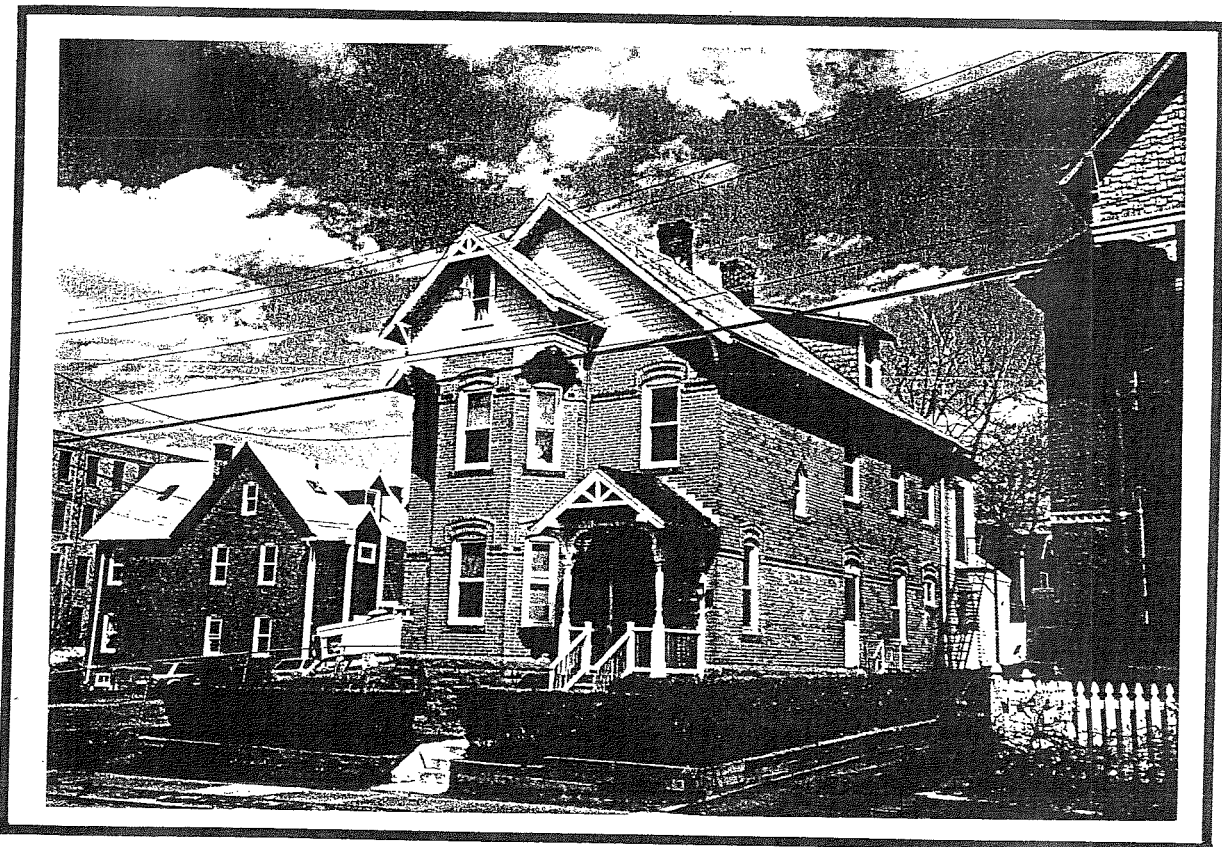
The house at 24 Park Terrace was Mr. Keller's home deeded to him as payment of his architectural fee. It was designed for that purpose and remains as the one unique space in the three buildings. The family moved in shortly after the Christmas of 1895 and lived there for the next 40 years. Until the 1920s, Mr. Keller's home was the only privately owned residence of all the houses comprising the three rows.



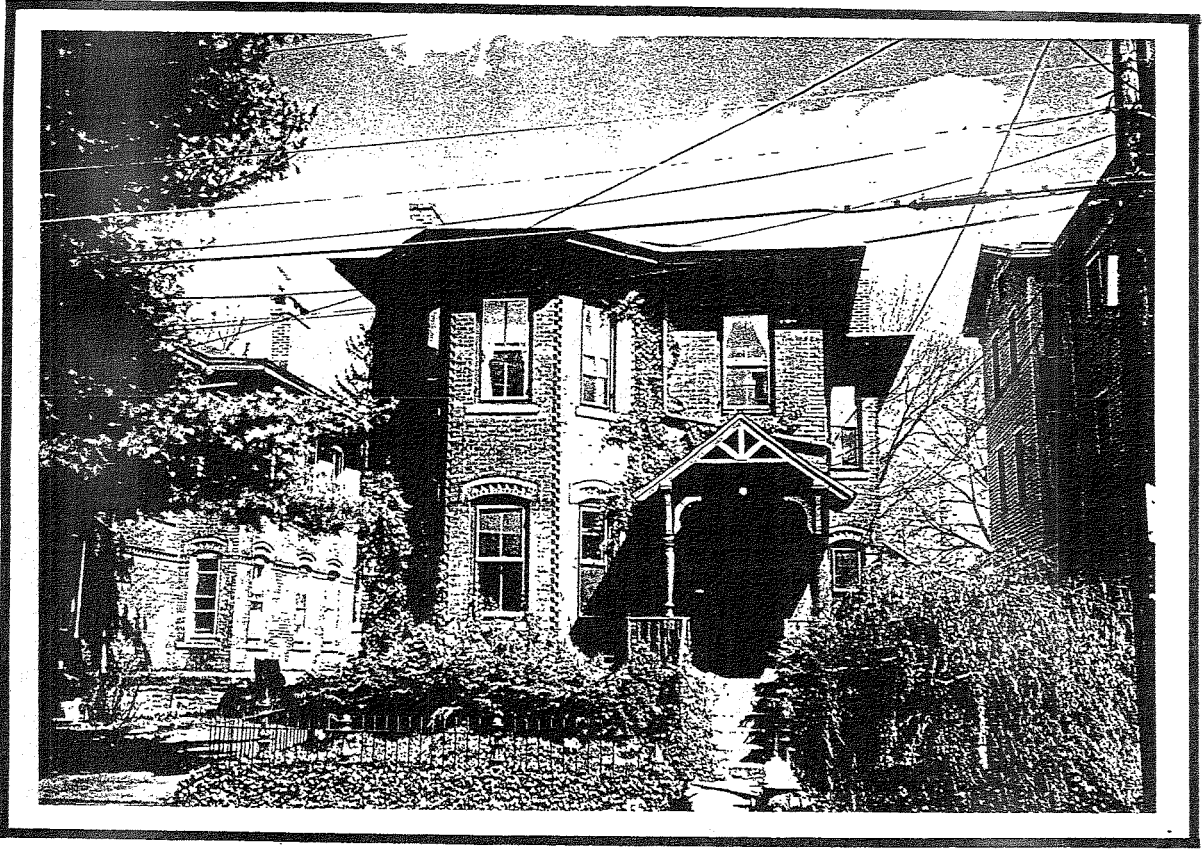
250 PUTNAM STREET

SECTION 5

PHOTOGRAPHS OF DISTRICT BUILDINGS



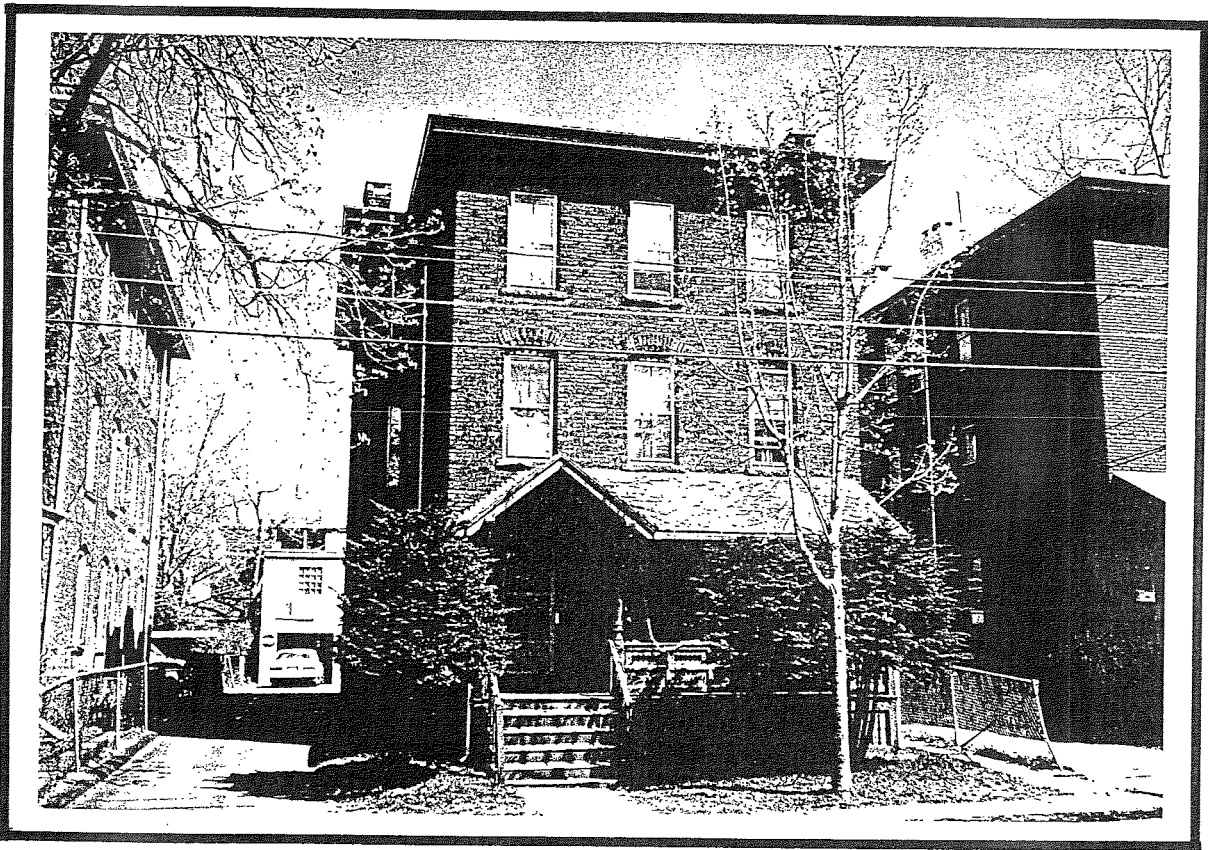
254 PUTNAM STREET



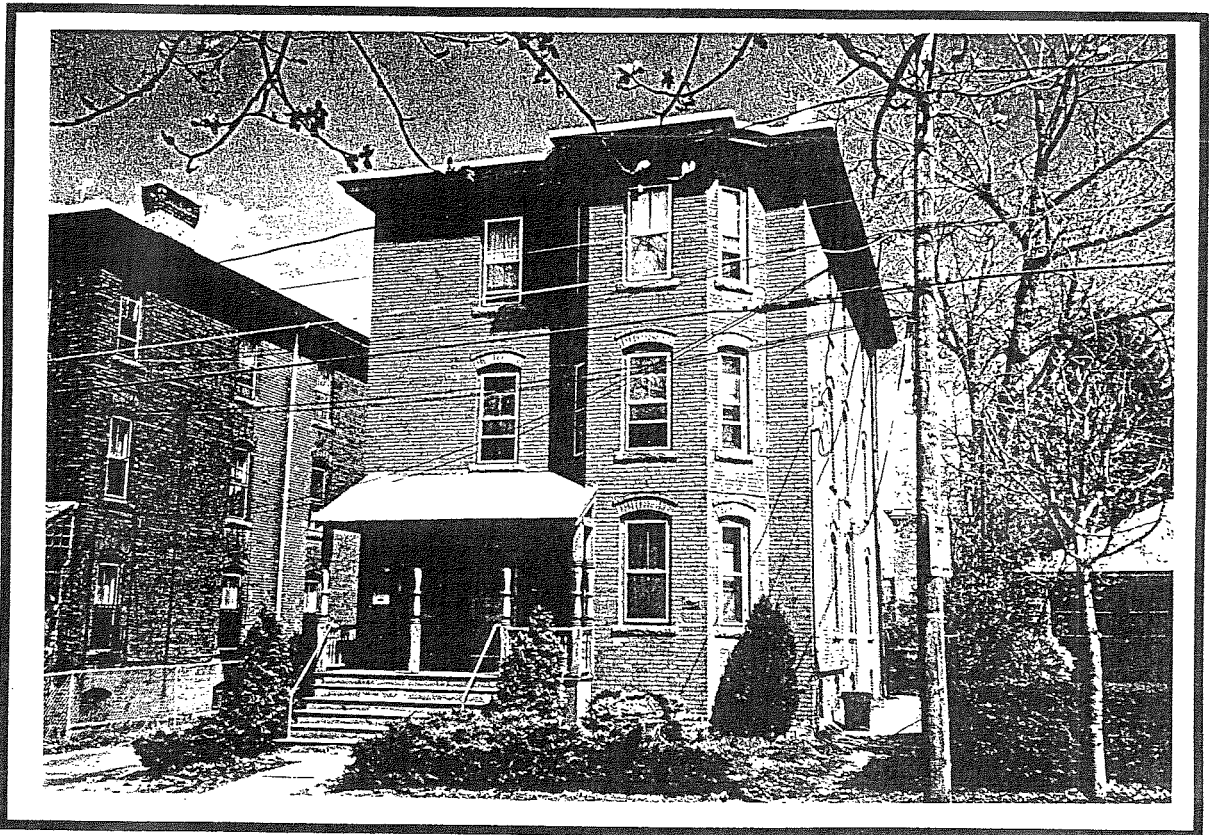
246 PUTNAM STREET (248 Putnam St. is similar, not pictured)



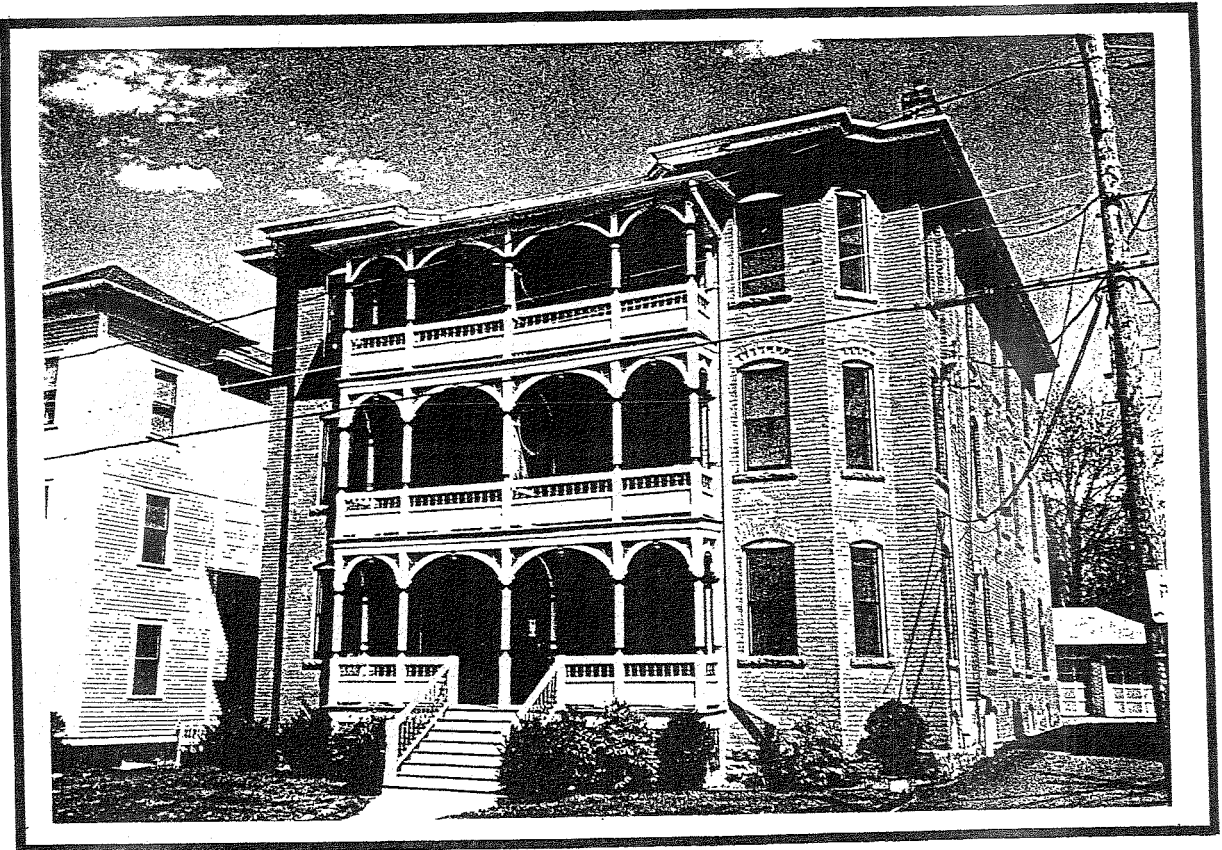
252 PUTNAM STREET



226 PUTNAM STREET



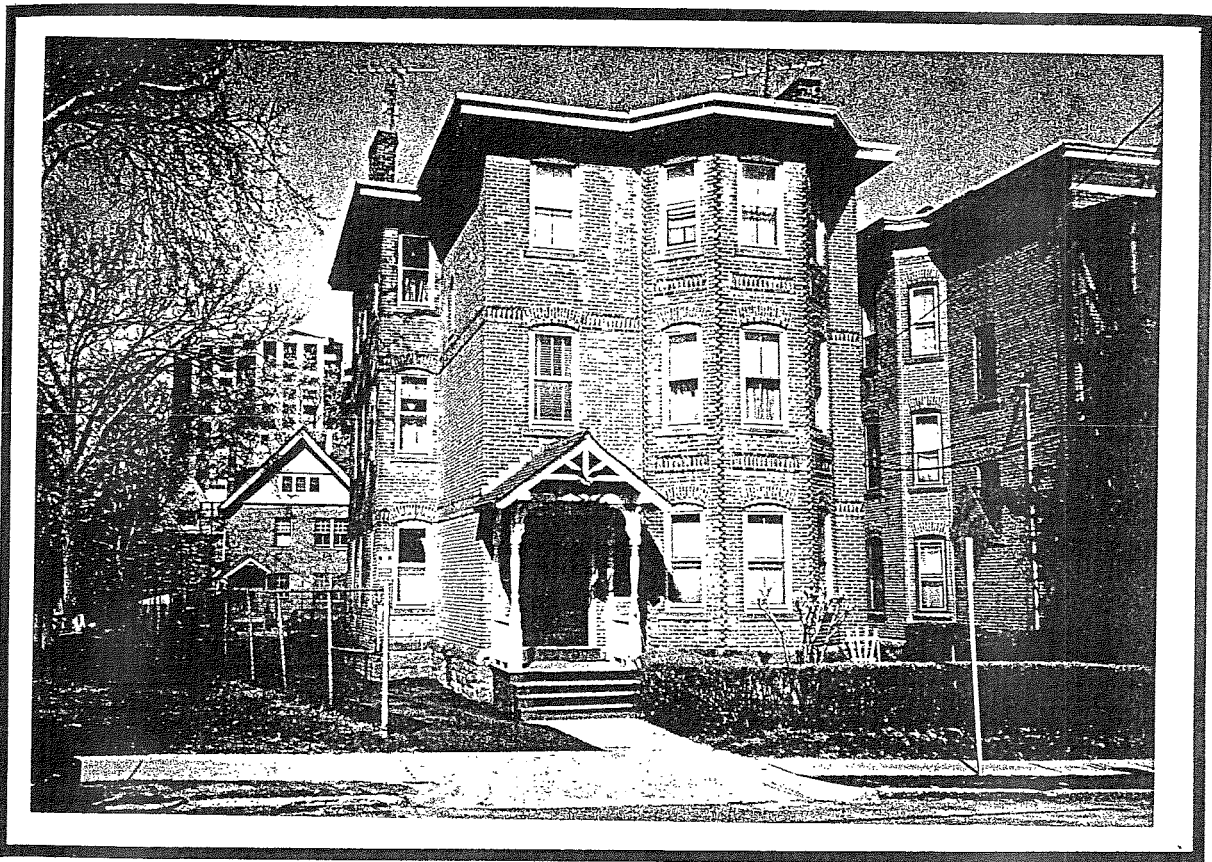
222 - 224 PUTNAM STREET



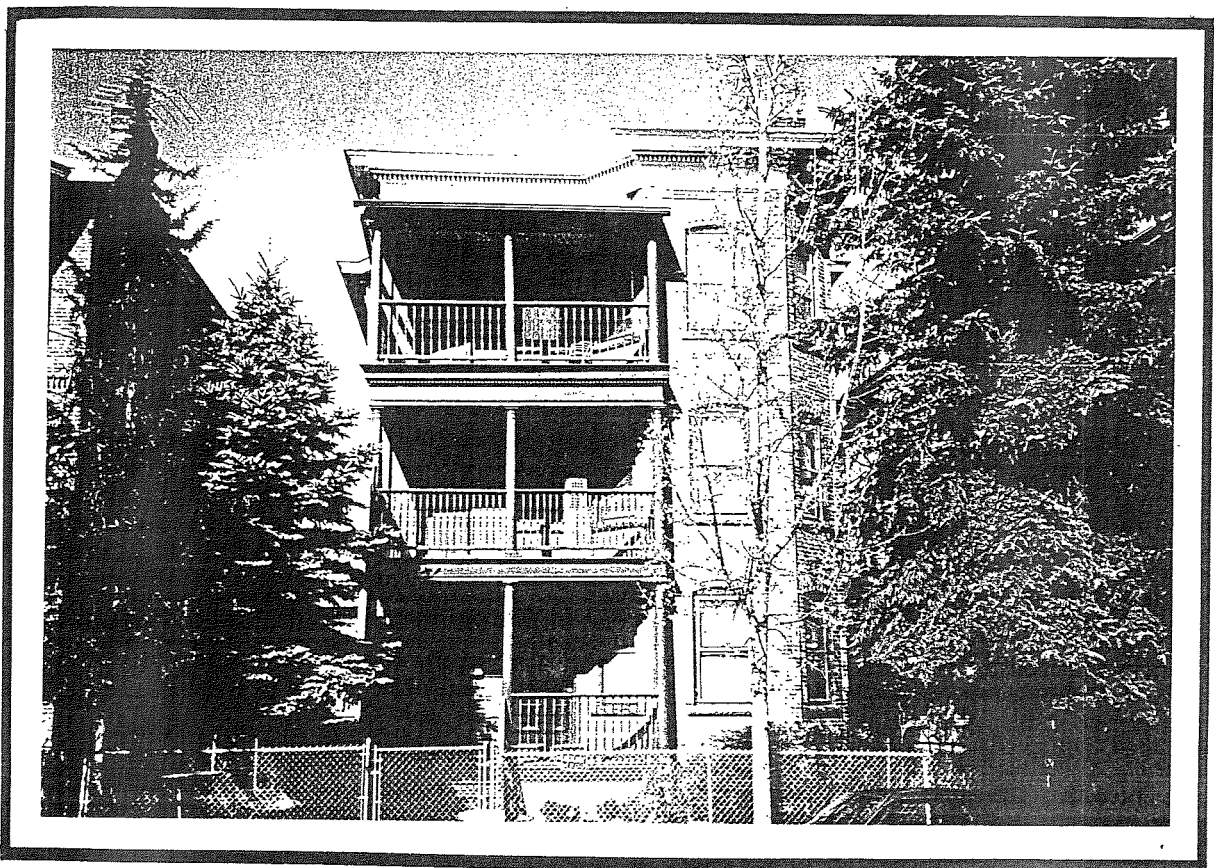
232 - 234 PUTNAM STREET



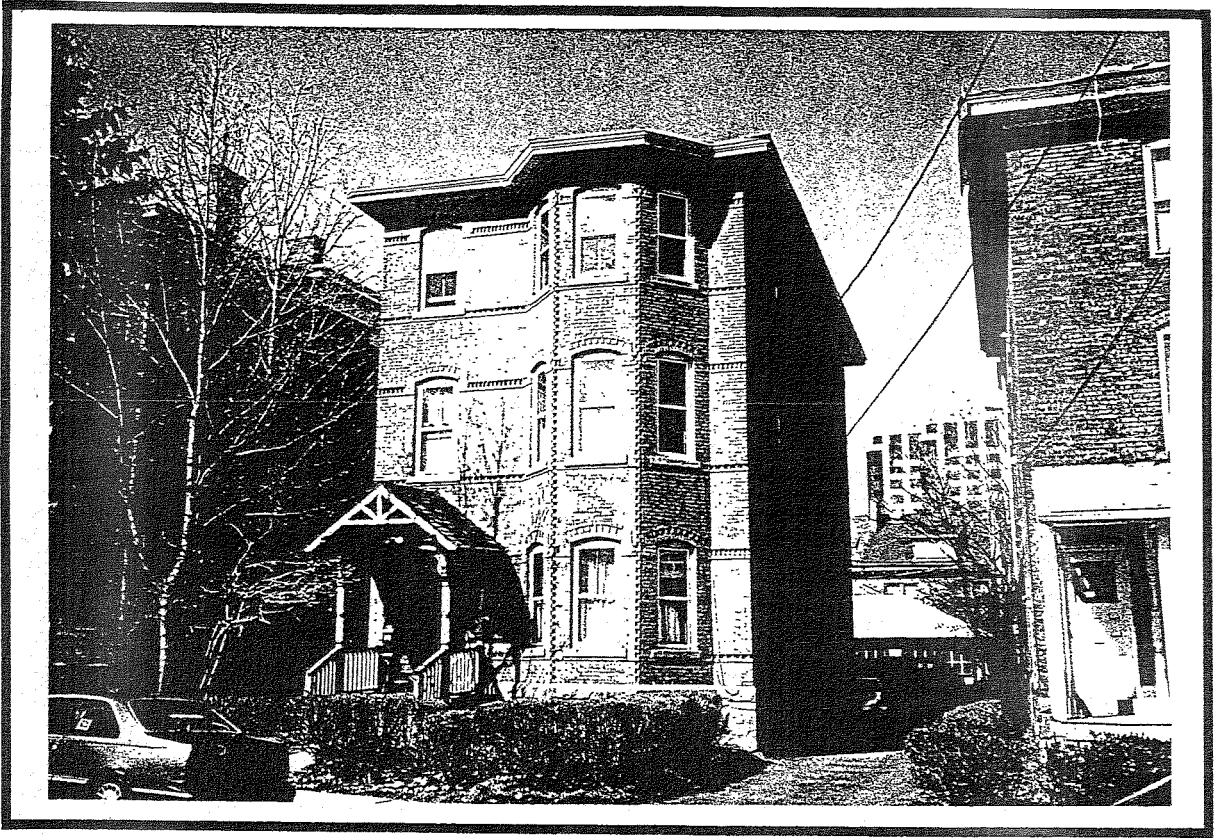
242 - 244 PUTNAM STREET



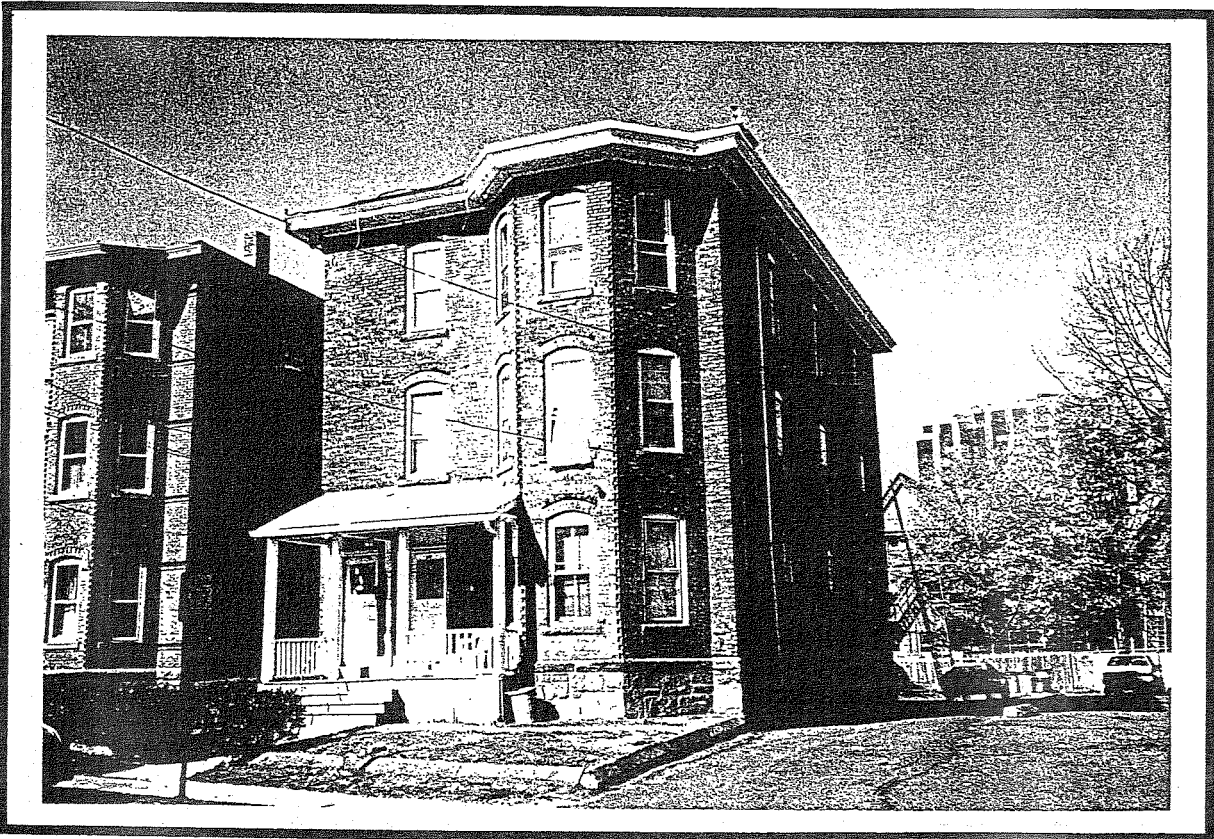
245 PUTNAM STREET



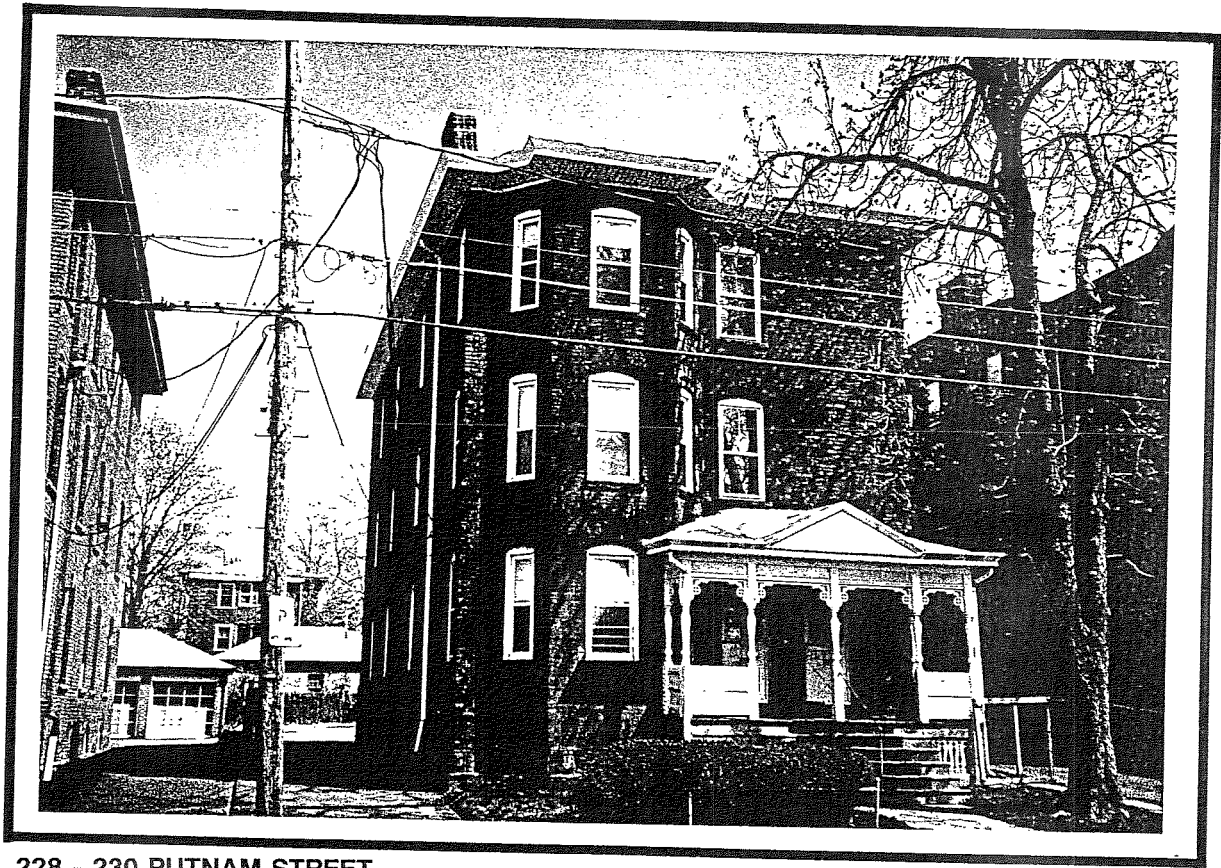
247 PUTNAM STREET



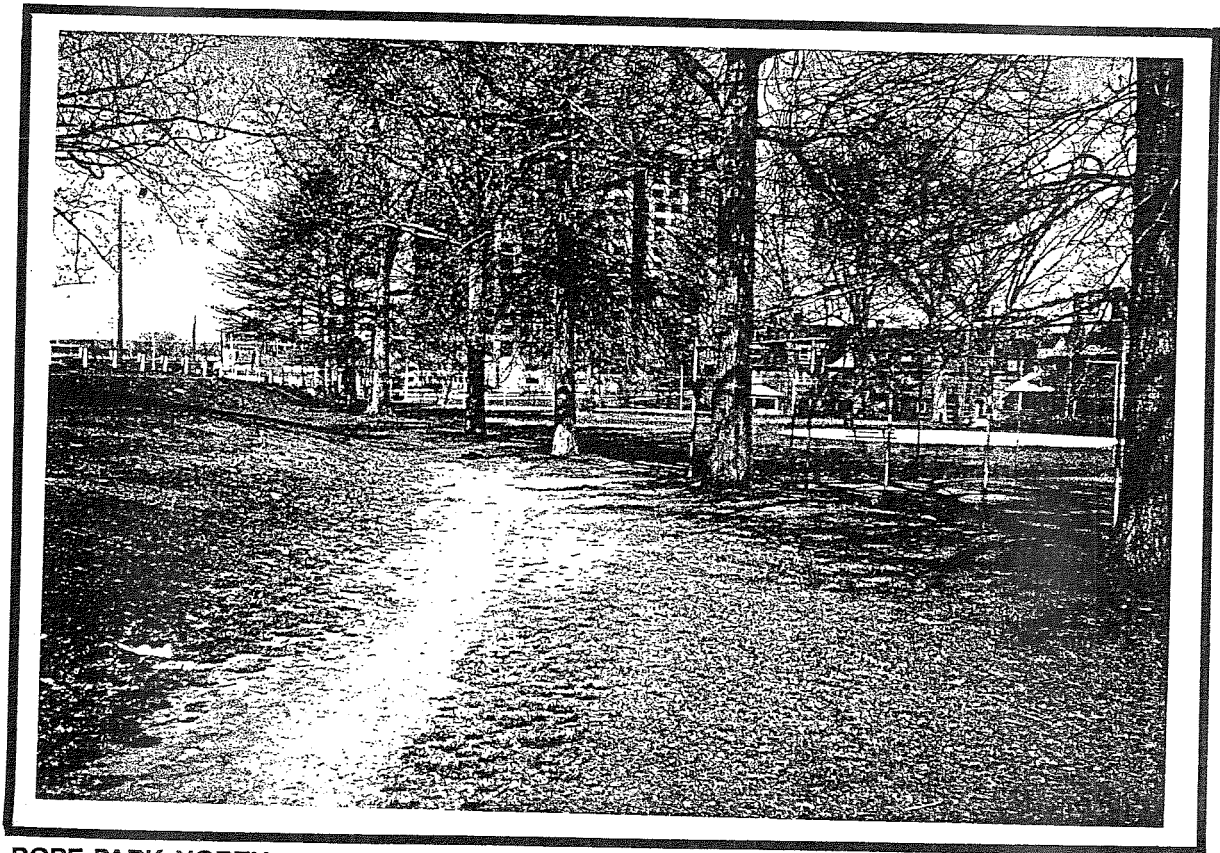
249 PUTNAM STREET



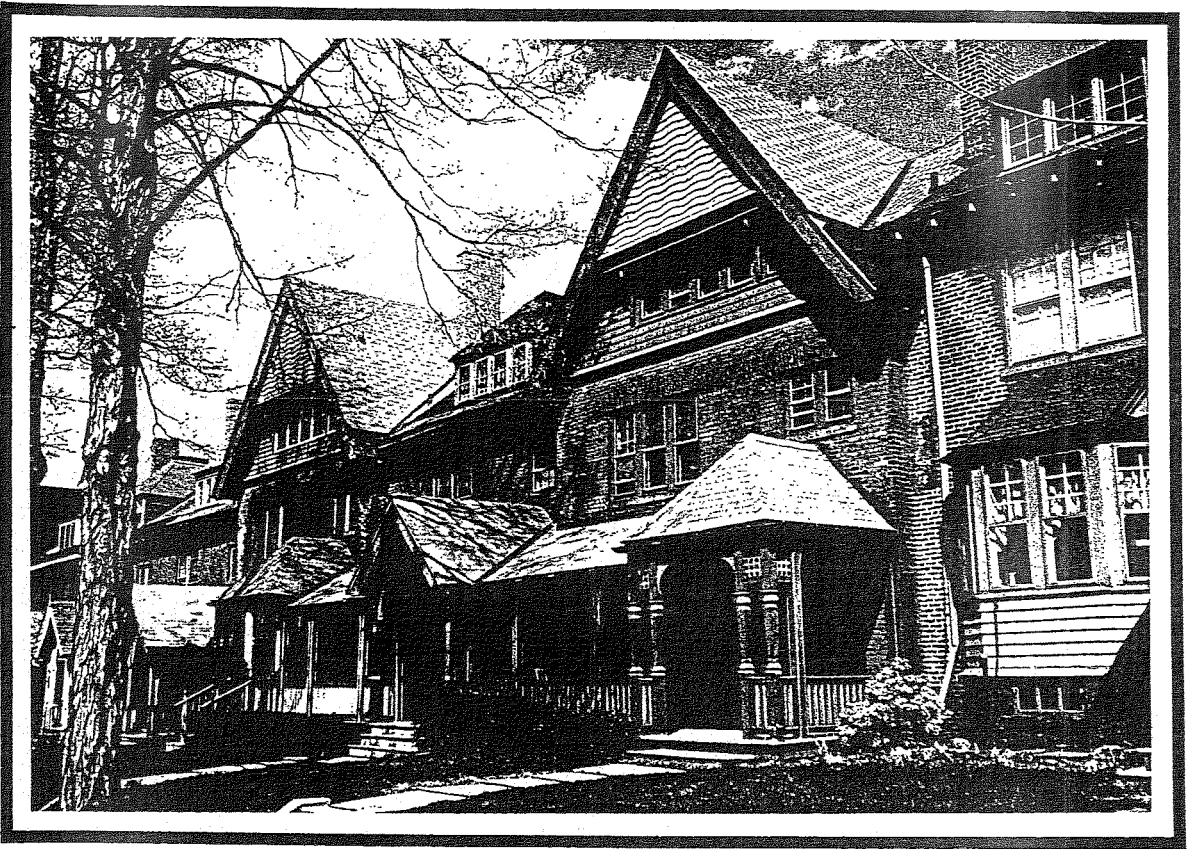
251 - 253 PUTNAM STREET



228 - 230 PUTNAM STREET

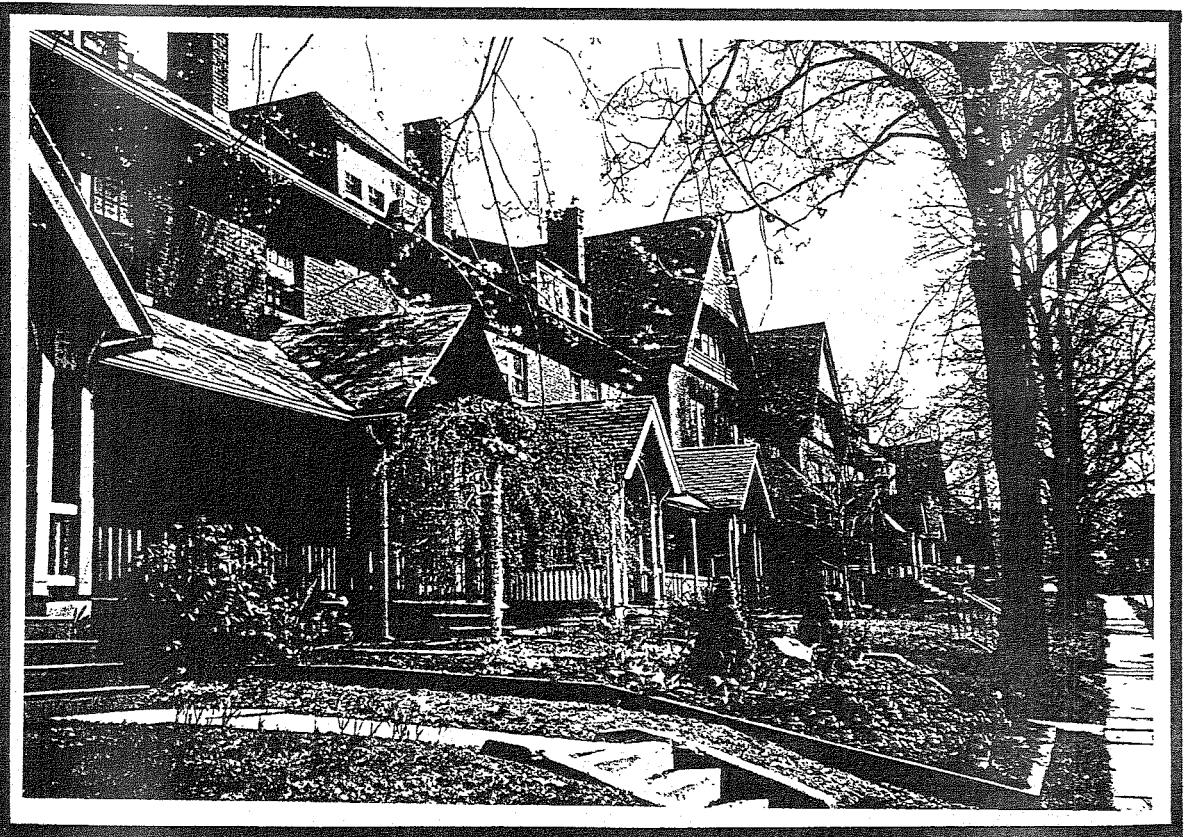


POPE PARK NORTH

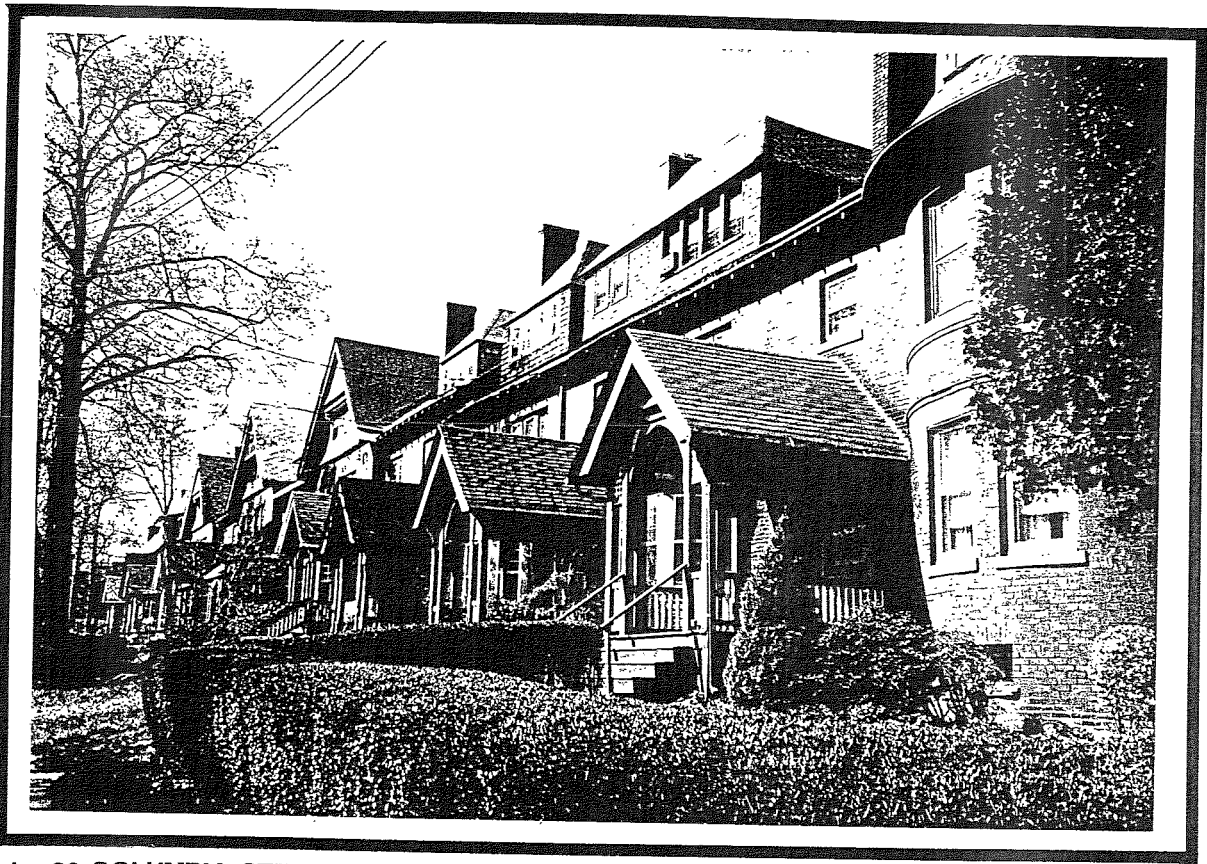


10, 12, & 14 COLUMBIA STREET

ARCHITECT : GEORGE KELLER

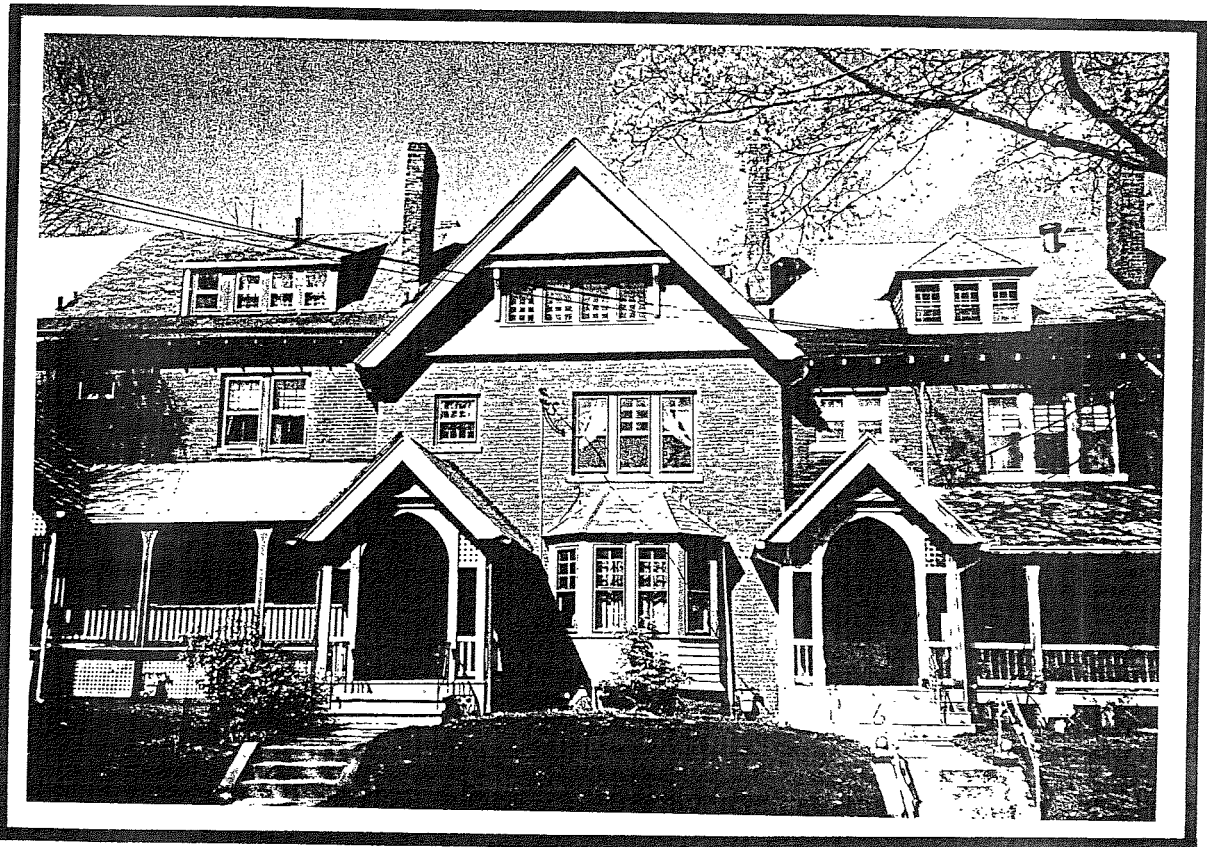


2 - 24 COLUMBIA STREET

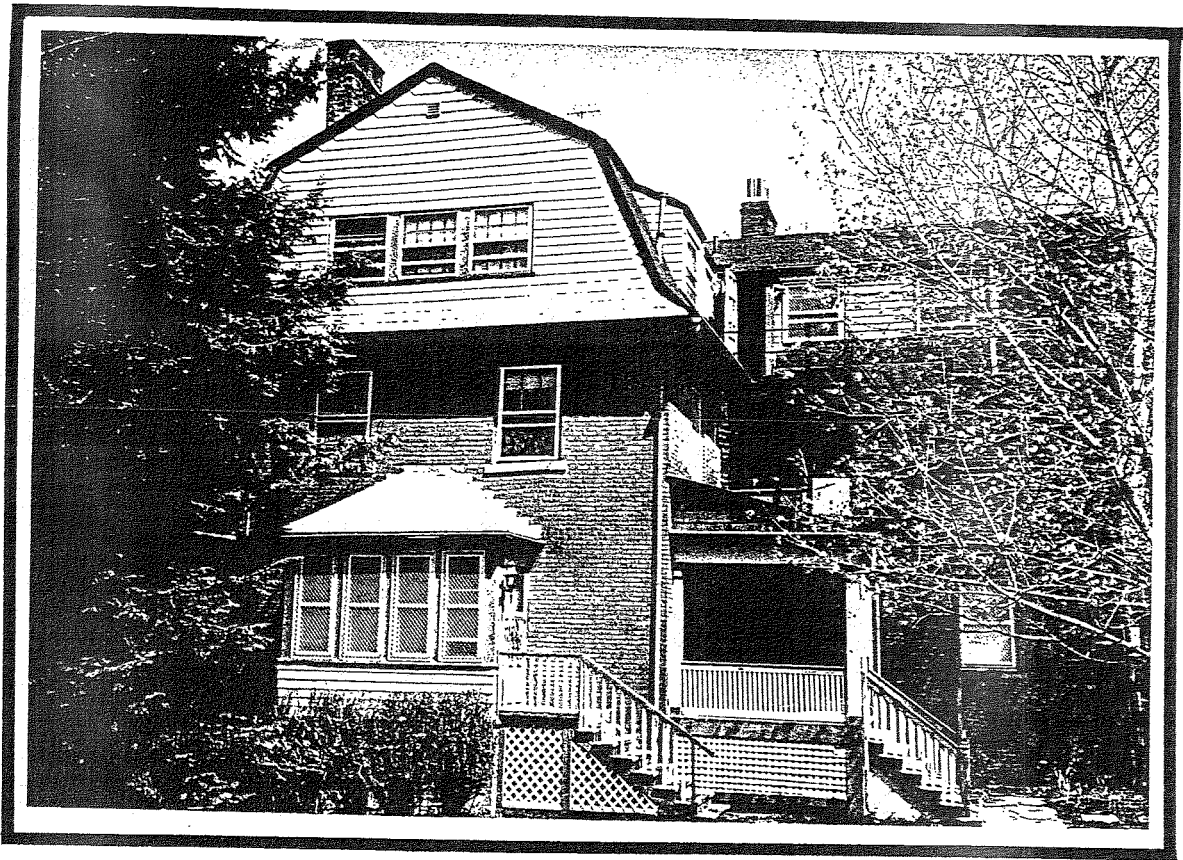


1 - 23 COLUMBIA STREET

ARCHITECT : GEORGE KELLER

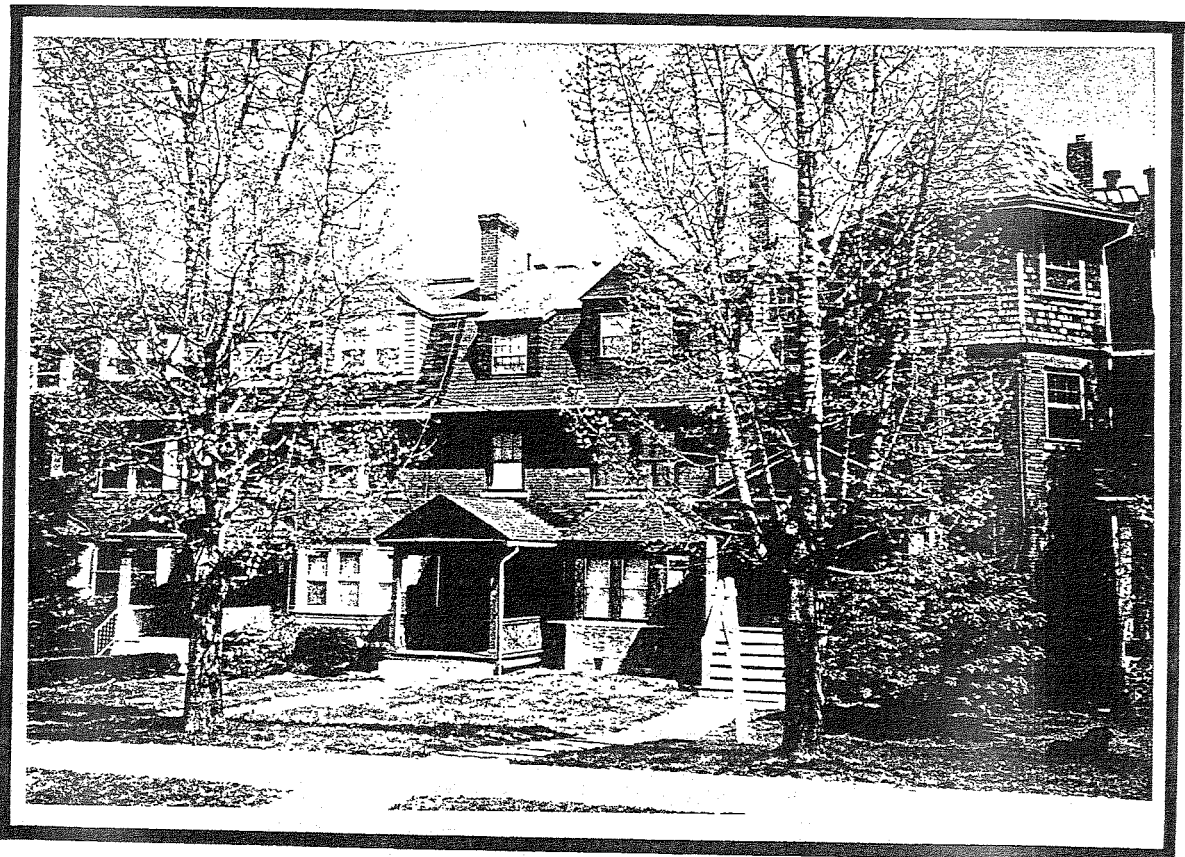


15, 17, 19, COLUMBIA STREET

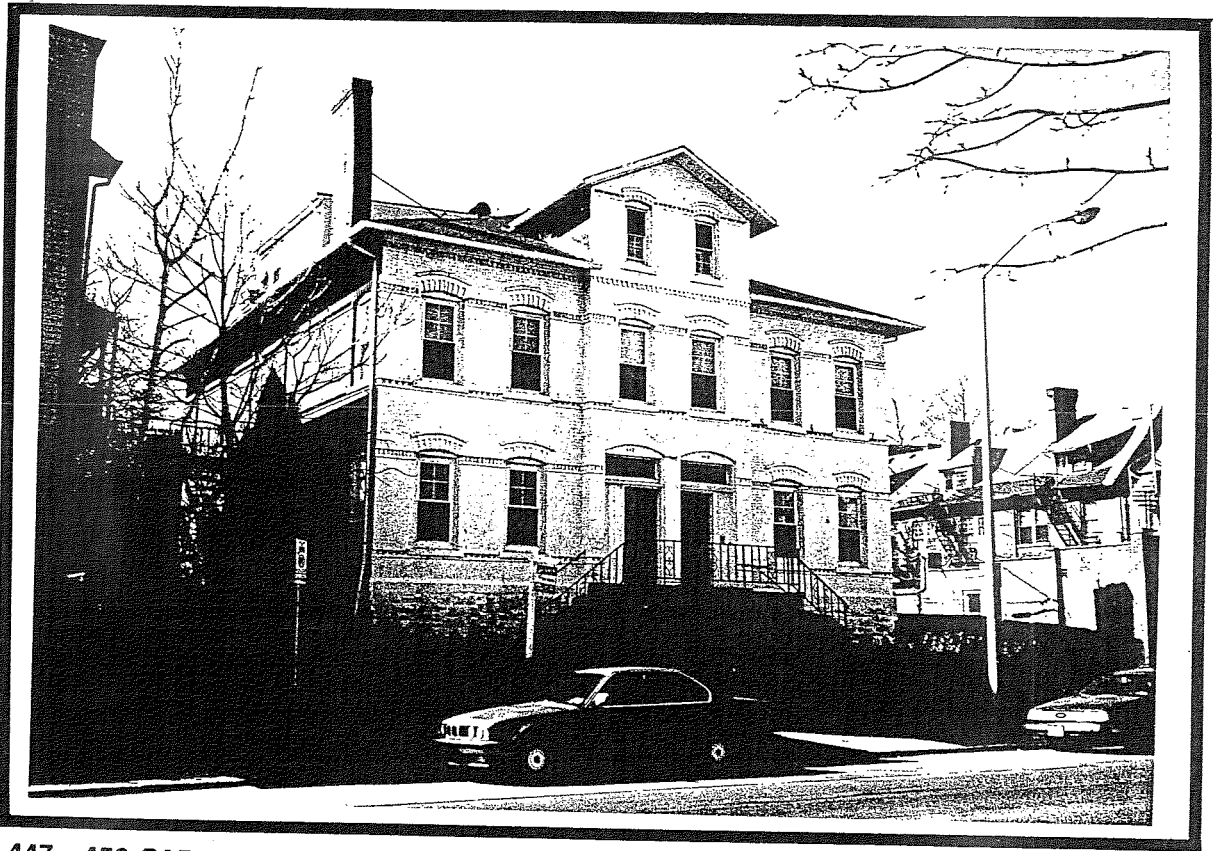


24 PARK TERRACE

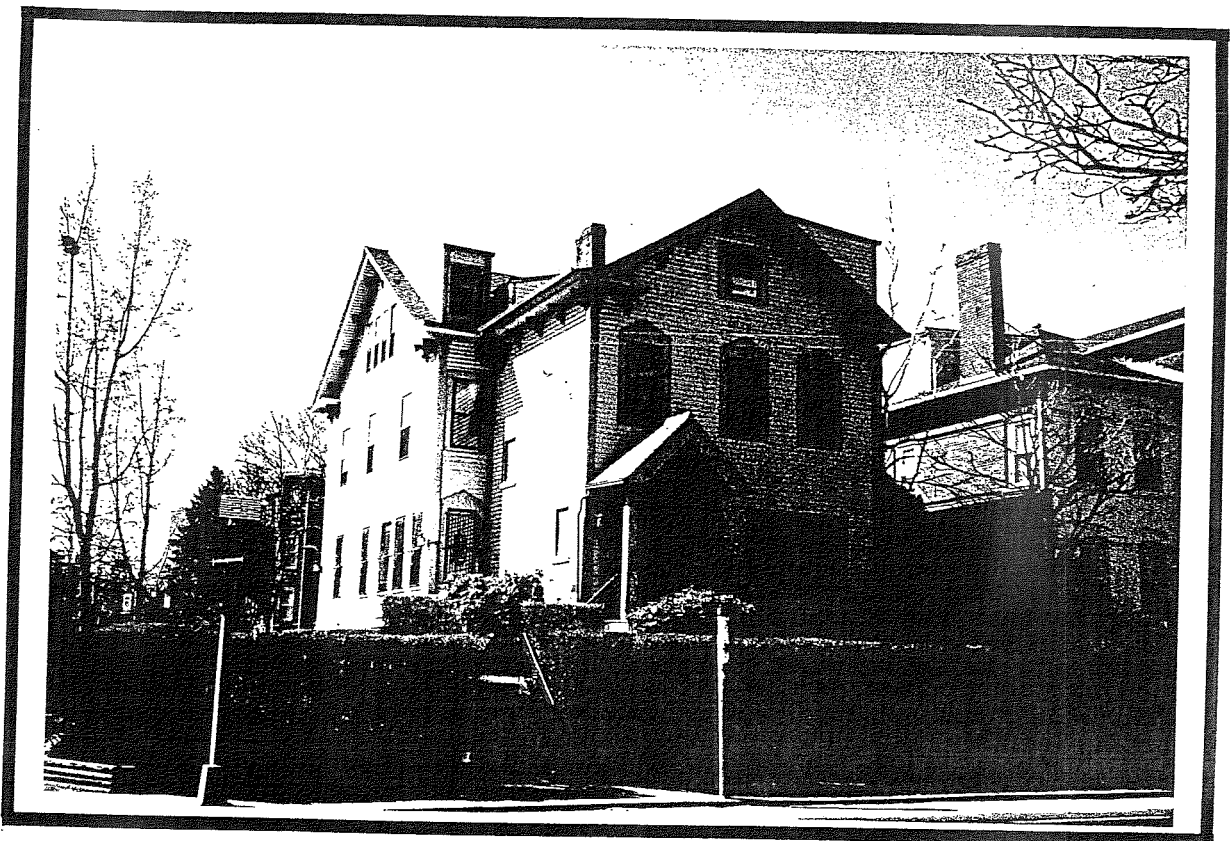
ARCHITECT : GEORGE KELLER



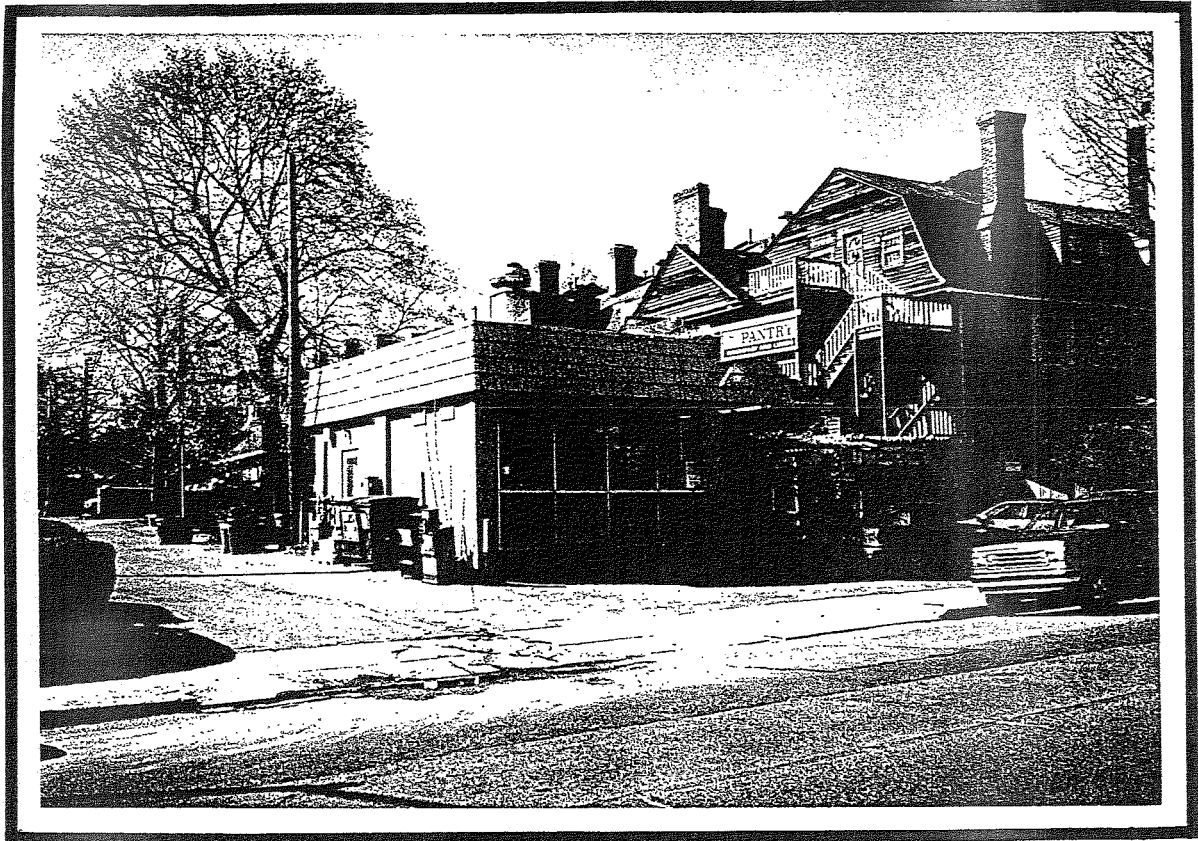
2 - 24 PARK TERRACE



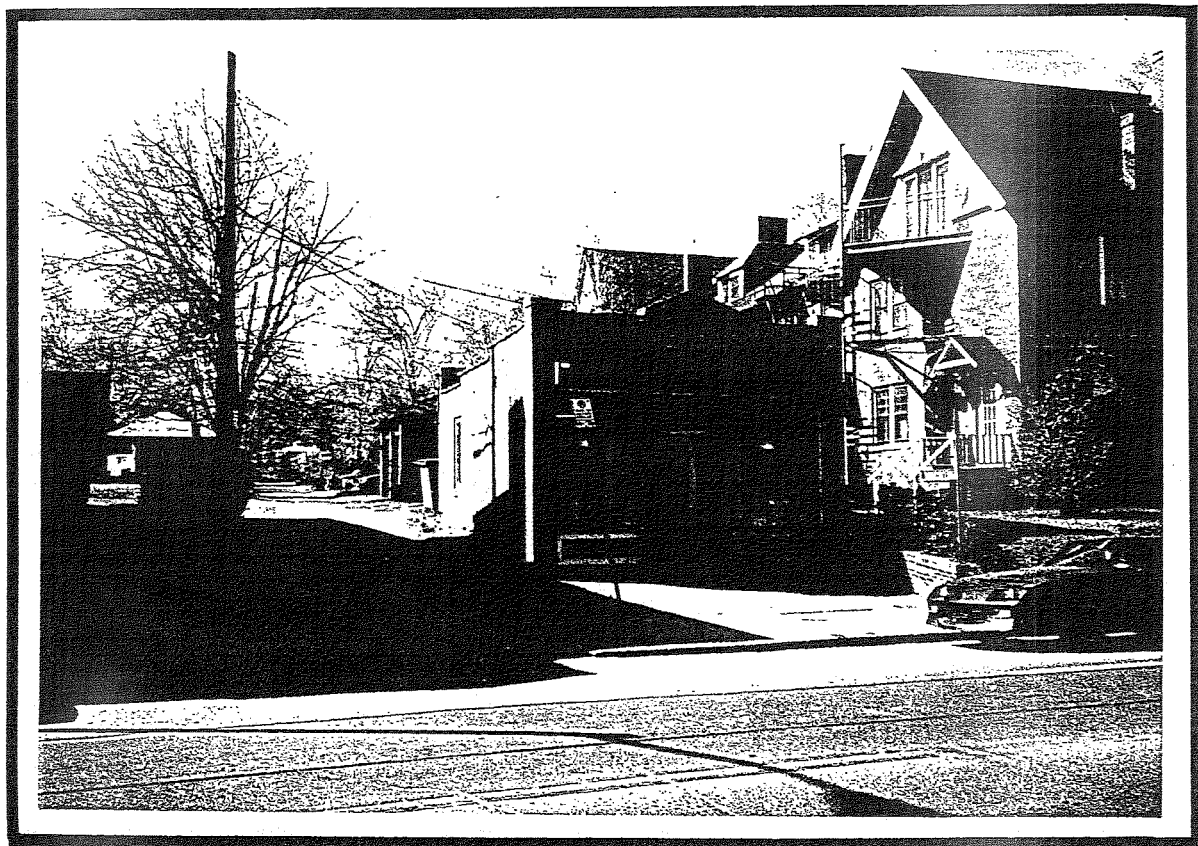
447 - 453 CAPITOL AVENUE



445 CAPITOL AVENUE



489 - 491 CAPITOL AVENUE



461 CAPITOL AVENUE

SECTION 6

GEORGE KELLER: A Short Biography

George Keller was born on December 15, 1842 in Cork, Ireland and emigrated to New York with his family in 1853. Formal schooling ended when he was 14 or 15 years of age. Architecture as his vocation may have been inspired by his father's occupation as a wallpaper manufacturer in Cork. He also did well in art classes at school in New York. His first job with a builder provided him the opportunity to learn drafting skills. Later while working for architects, he learned design and building techniques and was introduced to engineering and construction methods during his activity at the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard. It was work he enjoyed and he had a talent for it. Through books and travel, he continued his education well into his professional career and proved himself to be a good student.

While working at the shipyard, he was invited to Hartford by James G. Batterson and offered work at his Steam Marble Works as a designer of Civil War gravestones and monuments. Batterson was a Hartford entrepreneur involved in many activities. In addition to being president of the Marble Works, he was founder and president of The Travelers Insurance Co. and would later become the contractor for construction of the Connecticut State Capitol, the W. K. Vanderbilt residence in Newport, and the Library of Congress in Washington. The Civil War created an unprecedented demand for gravestones and monuments. Batterson possessed the needed materials, the organization, and the machinery. Keller, as designer, completed the operation.

He came to Hartford, but his stay was short. Responding to a better offer from the Naval Yard, he returned to Brooklyn. But Batterson was not through. In 1865, he again found Keller and proposed an even better offer. And this time, at age 22, Keller was back in Hartford to stay until his death on July 7, 1935.

He left Batterson's employ and opened his own office in 1872. The following year, he obtained his first important commission; the Seyms Street jail. Keller had professional credentials now and was gaining a good reputation in the city. Hartford was growing and a building boom was underway. He was ready with experience and talent. Commissions began to flow. He had also begun entering competitions while still in New York. It would be a way of life for him until the end.

Keller was awarded the most prestigious commission of his career in 1884 when he won the competition to design a memorial to President James A. Garfield, who had recently been assassinated. A year earlier he had obtained the commission for the Soldiers

and Sailors Arch in Bushnell Park. Office buildings, houses, churches, public and private memorials, monuments, libraries, and one synagogue occupied him consistently for about thirty years.

In the late 19th Century, architects in Hartford were often championed by a particular social and business leader. For Keller, it was James L. Howard, an influential business leader known as the father of the life insurance industry in Hartford. He was president of his own manufacturing company, president of a bank, director of several insurance companies, president of the Hartford Gas Co., a politician, and, at one time, Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut.

When the Weed Co. embarked on the second phase of its residential development plan that would produce residential buildings on Columbia Street, Howard may have influenced the company to depart from its Putnam Street plan and to hire Keller. It was, coincidentally, at this time that the Weed Co. was becoming the Pope Manufacturing Company. During this transition, all housing and land slated for development was sold to the Hartford Real Estate Improvement Co., an enterprise probably formed for this purpose by James Howard, who became its president. The Park Terrace row was commissioned by this Company.

As the 19th Century came to a close, public taste in design was changing. Colonial Revival and Beaux Arts Classicism were emerging as the most popular styles and George Keller was unwilling, by conviction to accommodate them. His commissions became smaller in scope and fewer in numbers, and he began losing most of the competitions that he entered. His last public commission which was erected in Hartford in 1931, consisted of a design for the base of the statue of Lafayette.

George Keller married in 1887. He and his family which now included one child moved into the house at 24 Columbia Street in 1889. Six years later, in December of 1895, the family, now five in number, moved into the residence at 24 Park Terrace which had been deeded to him as his design fee. This would be the family home for the next 50 years, and it was where he died on July 7, 1935. Though he owned his home, he remained financially insecure, brought on in large part because of his refusal to adjust his architecture to changing taste, convinced that the Classical and Colonial Revival Styles were junk. But the Kellers were a generous family that welcomed the high and low to share whatever they had.

References

Burpee, Charles W., "History of Hartford County", S.J. Clark Publishing, 1928.

Personal recollections of Miss Concordia Gregorieff.

Ransom, David, "George Keller", Stowe-Day Foundation, Hartford, 1978.



(Source : Ransom , D . ; " GEORGE KELLER " , Hartford , Connecticut , Stowe - Day Foundation , 1978 .)

GEORGE KELLER
c . 1925 - 1930

SECTION 7

ORDINANCE - PROPOSED

Please Note:

The following proposed ordinance is not presented in legal ordinance format. It is submitted here for use as a basis in formulating the final legal draft of an ordinance to be presented to the Court of Common Council for adoption if this proposal is approved by a minimum of two-thirds of all property owners within the District responding by ballot issued by the Town Clerk.

GEORGE KELLER HISTORIC DISTRICT

A. DESCRIPTION OF DISTRICT BOUNDARY LINE

In order to perpetuate, preserve and protect those distinctive buildings, places and their environs which are associated with the history of Hartford, of Connecticut and of the United States, or which are indicative of a period, or which are characteristic of an architectural style, and through the development of appropriate settings for such buildings and places, there is hereby established the "George Keller Historic District", the boundary of which is particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the southerly street line of Capitol Avenue and the westerly street line of Putnam Street;

Thence southerly along the said westerly street line of Putnam Street to the point of intersection of the aforementioned westerly street line of Putnam Street and the westerly extension of the northerly property line of 254 Putnam Street;

Thence easterly across Putnam Street and along the northerly property line of 254 Putnam Street, a distance of 190 feet more or less to a point marking the northeast corner of the said 254 Putnam Street;

Thence southerly, along the easterly property lines of 254, 252, 250, 248, 246, 242-244, 232-234, 228-230, 226 and 222-224 Putnam Street, partly by each, a distance of 480 feet more or less to a point marking the southeasterly property corner of 222-224 Putnam Street;

Thence westerly along the southerly property line of 222-224 Putnam Street and across Putnam Street; a distance of 195 feet more or less to a point in the west street line of Putnam Street;

Thence southerly along the said west street line of Putnam Street to a point of curvature;

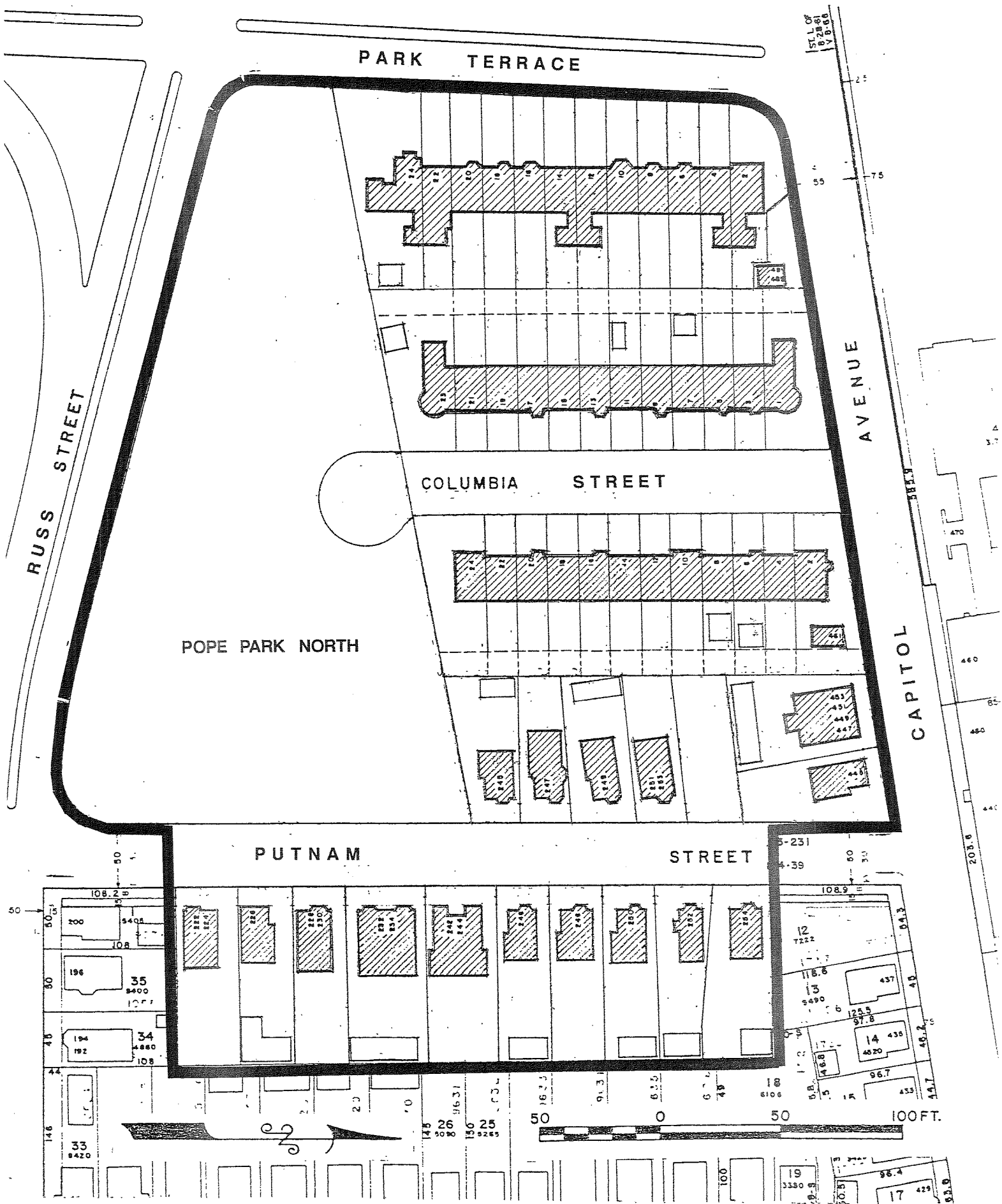
- Thence along a curve to the right, connecting the west street line of Putnam Street to the north street line of Russ Street; said curve having a radius of 40 feet delta of $95^{\circ}-50'-50''$ and a length of 66.91 feet, more or less, to a point of compound curvature;
- Thence along the north street line of Russ Street on another curve to the right having a radius of 678.03 feet, delta of $9^{\circ}-33'-57''$ and a length of 113.2 feet more or less to a point of tangency;
- Thence continuing along the said north street line of Russ Street, a distance of 424.10 feet to a point of tangency;
- Thence along a curve to the right, connecting the north street line of Russ Street to the east street line of Park Terrace, said curve having a radius of 40 feet, delta of $76^{\circ}-57'-38''$ and length of 53.73 feet to a point of tangency;
- Thence northerly along the said easterly street line of Park Terrace, a distance of 380.80 feet to a point of curvature;
- Thence along a curve to the right, connecting the aforementioned east street line of Park Terrace to the south street line of Capitol Avenue; said curve having a radius of 40 feet, delta of $79^{\circ}-10'-50''$ and an arc of 55.28 feet;
- Thence easterly along the south street line of Capitol Avenue, a distance of 246.48 feet to the point and place of beginning.

The boundary of the "George Keller Historic District" is also shown on a map filed in the Hartford Land Records of the Town Clerk's Office, which map is hereby made a part of this Ordinance by reference.

C. ADMINISTRATION

The Local Historic Properties Commission as constituted pursuant to Chapter 97a of the Connecticut General Statutes and Section 28-170 of the Municipal Code of the City of Hartford and in accordance with Section 7-147r of the Connecticut General Statutes is hereby designated to administer the George Keller Historic District.

Consistent with the provisions of said Chapter 97a of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Rules of Procedure adopted on January 20, 1994 by the Local Historic Properties Commission and as they may be amended from time to time, shall be applicable to the administration of the District.



C. MAP HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY LINE.