

MAPLEWOOD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Designation Report for Historic Landmark

Landmark # D-003-06

November, 2005

1. Name of Designated Site: Grasmere Park, including Durand-Hedden House, and all structures on lot
2. Historic name of property: Durand-Hedden House and related land and structures
3. Street Address: 521, 523 and 525 Ridgewood Road
4. Tax Map information: Block 8-5 Lot 238
5. Current owner (name, address, phone): Township of Maplewood  
574 Valley Street  
Maplewood, NJ 07040  
973-762-8120
6. Description at time of designation, including size and placement on lot, outbuildings, etc.:

Grasmere Park consists of 1.7 acres of property on which stands the Durand-Hedden House, two related houses, a multi-purpose building, a meadow and gardens. A small, intermittent stream runs west to east through the property. A driveway enters the property near its northern edge, runs behind the Durand-Hedden house where it is extended to form a parking area and continues up the hill toward the rear of the lot. The other houses are located along this drive: 521 Ridgewood Road was built at the approximate site of a barn or carriage house (date c.1923); and 525 Ridgewood Road, built in 1930 by the residents of the Durand-Hedden house. A small building with no street address, originally a garage and now a workshop/storage/store, (built 1941) is located behind the house, near the northern property line. There is a Colonial Revival style herb garden and an historic-type children's garden to the south and rear of the house. To the north are Victorian-style garden beds and there are numerous mature trees and shrubs throughout the lot. A bluestone sidewalk runs around both sides of the house and parallel to the street, from the front porch northward to meet the driveway.

The main house sits on a rise, facing and parallel to Ridgewood Road. The southern half of the building (constructed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century) consists of a 1 ½ story, three bay wide section fronted by a shed-roof porch. Under the porch the building is faced with beaded wooden clapboards and it is built on a rubble stone foundation. On the northern side is the 19<sup>th</sup> century section, with a gable front set perpendicular to the original part, two and one half stories tall. It sits on a concrete foundation and is faced with plain clapboards. It is one bay wide and has an enclosed (originally open), one-story, shed-roofed porch attached to the northern façade. Two brick chimneys extend from the ridgeline, one near the southern end of the structure and one centered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century section.

*Front façade:* On the ground story of the older section, there is a doorway in the northernmost bay. The Italianate style wooden door has two round-headed glass panels with two raised wooden panels below. It is framed by a wooden, Greek Revival style, eared surround. The two windows to the south have wood, double-hung 9/6 sash (historically recreated in 1981). This story is fronted by a wooden porch (presumed to be constructed mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to replace a smaller porch extending just past the door) supported on narrow, squared posts and reached by a set of three stairs near the center of the façade and another stair at the southern end. The porch roof is covered with asphalt shingles. At the second story there are two dormers (probably added in the 19<sup>th</sup> century) with wood-framed casement windows set in the pitched, slate-covered roof. (This roof was originally covered by wood shingles.)

The later section of the house, in the Gothic Revival style, also has a slate-covered roof with overhanging eaves supported by simple wooden brackets. A full-height, three-section bay window (historically recreated 1985-86) projects from the façade at the ground story, and has an asphalt-shingled roof. At the second story is a pair of double-hung, wooden sash windows with wooden shutters. At the third story, under the eaves is a small, round-headed window with shutters.

*Northern façade:* Most of the ground story is covered by a one-story wooden porch with shed roof. The porch is now entirely enclosed by wooden sash, (original, meant to be removed in summer) multi-paned windows over low, paneled walls. An original railing (balustrade) which stood outside the panels has been removed in anticipation of future restoration work. The porch is reached by a doorway in the rear, which is fronted by a small open, porch with plain wooden balustrades. Next to the open porch, on the ground story, is a small, paired wooden casement window. In front of the enclosed porch, is a sloped cellar door (historically recreated 1997). At the second story are two 6/6, double-hung wood sash windows. Each has a pair of wooden shutters held by iron shutter dogs. Centered under the wall gable at the third story is a small, round-headed window. It has 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash and wooden shutters.

*Rear façade:* On the older section of the house (to the south), an open, shed-roof porch extends over the ground story, shielding a wooden board and batten door with iron hinges (not original) and a window with 4/4 wood sash (historically recreated 1982). Three plain wood columns support the porch roof. This porch probably replaced a smaller, original one at this location. At the second story three gabled dormers (probably added mid 20<sup>th</sup> century) project from the pitched roof, each with paired casement windows.

A one-story addition (early 20<sup>th</sup> century), of local ashlar sandstone, extends from the middle of the rear of the house. Two windows are located at the back of this addition, a double-hung, 6/6 wood sash window and a fixed sash, 6 paned window, and another double-hung window is on the northern wall of the addition. A trellised enclosure extends from this addition and shields the single wooden door that is located in the 19th century section. There is another paired casement window to the north of this door.. The second story of this section of the façade has two double-hung, 6/6 wood sash windows.

*Southern façade:* This façade is symmetrically arranged around the ashlar stone chimney base at the center of the ground story. There is an extension for an oven (historically recreated 1981) which is framed in wood and topped by a shingled roof. The stone is flanked by two double-hung, 6/6 wood sash windows with wooden shutters. At the second story are two smaller, paired wooden casement windows. Two small rectangular window opening are located at the basement level.

The *multi-purpose building*, behind the house and toward the north, is used for storage, a store and a workshop. It has two sets of double wooden, paneled doors (historically recreated c. 1986) and a single wooden door that opens under the porch that extends in front of the building. The porch has a concrete floor and is supported on three squared wood columns. The building sets into the hill as it rises toward the back of the lot. It has a pitched roof covered by asphalt shingles and paired wooden windows on each side.

*521 Ridgewood Road:* This 2 ½ story Colonial Revival style house (built c. 1923) is clad in wood shingles with a pitched roof and a porch extension on the southwest corner of the house. The front façade is three bays wide with the entrance door in the westernmost bay and two wood, double hung, 6/1 windows in the other bays. There are two similar windows on the second story and one on the third story. On each side façade is a broad second story dormer with two pairs of double hung windows. There is a door on the northern façade with wooden stairs (historically recreated in c. 1996) leading down to the ground level. A ground level garage is located under the house on the eastern façade, along with another entrance door at the basement level.

*525 Ridgewood Road:* This house, built in 1930, is a 1 ½ story clapboard-sided building, symmetrically designed with a central entrance and paired windows on each side. There are two pedimented dormers at the second story. An extension on the north side of the building houses a garage. It is set back from the main plane of the house and is fronted by a small, ground level porch.

7. Ownership history for property: [deed research ongoing; early history based on research by former township historian, Beatrice Herman]

1718 part of a 428 acre land patent taken over by E. Jersey Proprietor, Dr. John Johnston  
1731 James Parker, grandson of Dr. Johnston and manager of his estate after his death  
1787 Obadiah and Susannah Hedden purchased 25 acres and buildings of the plantation  
1804 Dr. Watts Bonnel and Eunice Bonnel  
1804 Langhorn Burton Raynor and Letty Raynor  
1808 Abraham and Ester Bell  
1812 Henry and Electa Baldwin Durand  
1846 Heirs of Henry Durand upon his death: James Madison and Sarah A. Durand, Cornelia Ball and Marcus De Lafayette Ball and John N. Crawford  
1866 Edward Badger and Julia Badger  
1867 Jenny (Jane?) Wilson and William Wilson  
1901 William H. Kemp, Sr. and Isabel F. Kemp  
1905 Carrie Reynolds Hatch, wife of Edwin H. Hatch  
1918 Clifford A. Sloan and Helen M. Sloan  
1923 Margery G. Ripley, wife of William Chauncey Ripley  
1971 Agios Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church  
1977 Township of Maplewood

## History

*The first European settlers in what is now Essex County came to Newark from the New Haven Connecticut Colony, led there by Robert Treat in the mid-seventeenth century. By 1678, the outer limits of the Newark Colony stretched to the top of the First Watchung Mountain. Early roads from Newark were surveyed, often along old Indian trails two of which eventually became South Orange and Clinton Avenues. Settlers from the Newark Colony, in search of land to farm or to develop early industry, moved west along these roads. They established farms where they grew wheat, rye, Indian corn and fruit trees, raised cattle and set up grist and saw mills. Over the course of the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, small settlements developed in the western and eastern parts of what is now Maplewood. These settlements took on local names; that in the west eventually took the name of Jefferson Village, the east, North Farms. A few local roads developed creating links between farms in the area, including Ridgewood, Elmwood, Parker, Tuscan and Valley. Another important artery, the Newark-Springfield Turnpike, was built in 1806. Because those who settled here primarily came from England, their farmhouses generally followed English traditions and were built close to these main arteries. Early families such as the Balls, the Crowell's, the Baldwin's, the Beach's, the Brown's, the Smith's, and the Hedden's bought large plots of land and eventually members of these extended families owned property throughout the area.*

### OBADIAH AND SUSANNAH HEDDEN

1787-1804

1) Extensive deed and map work by the Township Historian, Beatrice Herman led her to determine that the original structure of the Durand-Hedden House was once the late 18<sup>th</sup> c. homestead of Obadiah Durand. Obadiah's great grandfather, Edward Hedden and his wife Jane had moved to Robert Treat's Newark Colony from Massachusetts roughly 100 years earlier. They subsequently were among the first pioneers from the Colony to settle the "uplands of Newark" at the side of First Newark Mountain included in the Indian Purchases of 1676-7. Their plantation's location was [believed to be] in the vicinity of the current Claremont Avenue and Ridgewood Road. Edward and Jane Hedden had six children including Joseph, the grandfather of Obadiah.

In 1718 several improved roads were built by the Colony including what would become Ridgewood Road, heretofore a rugged trail. Simultaneously, two land patents were issued by the Board of Proprietors of East Jersey for two adjoining plantations on either side of the road in the region that would later be called Jefferson Village. [*The Board of Proprietors, founded in 1681-2 disregarded the Colony's Indian deeds, claimed large tracts of land in the name of the king and considered settlers on them to be tax paying tenants.*] Proprietor Dr. John Johnston took over the southernmost Land Patent. *This 428 acre plantation was where the Durand-Hedden House was later built.* The other, a 72 acre plot to the north was granted to Daniel Dod, a surveyor and original member of the Treat Colony. Soon thereafter Joseph Hedden married Rebecca Dod, a cousin of Daniel who bore 13 children, including Ebenezer, Obadiah's father. By 1742 Ebenezer had acquired the 72 acre plantation of his maternal relatives, the Dod's, which lay between the Johnston Patent and Timothy Ball's farm. Ebenezer married (research ongoing on the

identity of his wife) and this is where it is assumed Obadiah Hedden and his siblings were born. Obadiah, like his father before him was bound to the laws of the Fundamental Agreement instituted by the founders of Newark. Each accepted his share of the responsibilities of maintaining the society. Obadiah was appointed an Overseer of the Highways in 1762, 1767, 1769, 1771-74, and 1786.

There is some evidence that Obadiah Hedden may have maintained a building or fields on the Johnston estate in addition to buying his father's 72 acre holding to the north. In 1770 Obadiah was one of six local men objecting to their status as tenants to meet with James Parker, the grandson of Dr. Johnston and manager of his estate, to discuss the purchase of plots. Though deeds were drawn that day, it was not until after the Revolutionary War, in which Obadiah, his father and several brothers fought, that the transaction was finalized. In March 1787 Obadiah Hedden was the first of nine to purchase 25 acres of the Johnston/Parker plantation and all buildings. *The Durand-Hedden House stands on this acreage.* The materials and structure of the original portion of the house confirms that it was built ca. 1790 as per restoration consultant William McMillen.

The Durand-Hedden House began its life as a small post and beam construction side hall farmhouse with a second floor loft. The surrounding fields for seasonal crops may likely have run down the hill to the end of the property just beyond the East branch of the Rahway River, while a meadow to graze cattle and horses ran up beside and behind the house. A wood lot likely would have been above this, closer to the ridge of the First Watchung Mountain. The 1790 tax ratables for Newark Township show that at that time Obadiah had 50 acres altogether, 3 horses, 4 cattle and one slave.

Obadiah Hedden's wife Susannah (last name unknown) died in 1804. Obadiah quickly sold his house and all of his landholdings in the area and moved to Morristown. In 1805 he married Susan Miller. Obadiah Hedden died in New Vernon in 1812 and apparently left no direct heirs.

DR.WATTS AND EUNICE BONNEL	1804-1804
LANGHORN AND LETTY RAYNOR	1804-1808
ABRAHAM AND ESTER BELL	1808-1812

2) The Durand-Hedden House transferred hands three times over the next eight years. In 1804 Dr. Watts and Eunice Bonnel of Union purchased the 3 ½ acre homestead lot from Obadiah Hedden. Eunice was the daughter of Nathaniel Ball, a brother of Timothy. In the same year the Bonnel's sold the house and lot to Langhorn Burton Raynor and Letty Raynor of New York City. The Raynor's retained the property for four years, selling it to Abraham and Ester Bell of Ahersemus in Bergen County in 1808.

HENRY AND ELECTA DURAND	1812-
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3) In 1812 the ownership of the property stabilized with its purchase by Henry and Electa (Baldwin) Durand, the parents of eight, four of which lived to adulthood.. Henry was

born in 1780 and grew up with nine brothers and sisters on the neighboring farm of their father John. Among his brothers was the well-known artist, Asher B. Durand. Their grandfather Samuel had settled in the area in the 1750's. Henry, like his father and grandfather, was a farmer, a watchmaker, a jeweler and an inventor. He and his brother Cyrus Durand invented machines to cut the parts of the clock's they made and also invented a line of lathe and presswork operations that improved bank note engraving. Reportedly, they were called "the inventive, mechanical brains of Newark." It is very likely that in the 1820's or 1830's Henry and Electa Durand updated the style of their small farmhouse with the dog-eared surround (shouldered architrave trim) around the front door, a Greek Revival decorative element.

JAMES MADISON DURAND, CORNELIA AND -1866  
MARCUS DE LAFAYETTE BALL, AND  
JOHN N. CRAWFORD

4) Henry Durand died in 1846. The heirs of the Durand-Hedden House property were his son James Madison Durand, his daughter, Cornelia Ball and her husband Marcus de Lafayette Ball, and son-in-law John N. Crawford, husband of Lydia, daughter of Henry and Electa. James Madison Durand, a jeweler like his father, founded an important Newark jewelry making firm called Durand and Co in 1838. In 1868, he was the first to introduce strung pearl necklaces to America. Cornelia and Marcus de Lafayette ran the well-known South Orange Hotel for many years and were landholders in South Orange Village. John Crawford was a successful storekeeper. Henry's heirs did not sell the house until 1866 most likely maintaining it for the family matriarch, Electa, who lived there until ca. 1860 and who died in 1865.

EDWARD AND JULIA BADGER                      1866-1867  
JENNY AND WILLIAM WILSON                      1867-1901

5) In 1866 Edward Badger, a carpenter, and his wife Julia of the Township of South Orange briefly became the owners. A year later in 1867 Jenny and William Wilson of Hoboken, both Irish immigrants, acquired the property. Mr. Wilson was a liquor importer. The 1870 census shows them living in the area with five children. The Wilson's owned the property for 34 years until, as a widow, Jennie sold it in 1901 to William H. Kemp, Sr. and his wife Isabel. By 1880, however, the Wilson's had moved to New York and most likely rented out the house or used it as a summer retreat, a convenient train ride from the city.

*The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century addition to the house, with its Gothic Revival gable and eve brackets and Italianate door, bay window and hall newel post and staircase railing could have been built during the house's ownership by 1. the heirs of Henry Durand, 2. the Badgers, or 3. by the Wilson's. The new wing provided a front and back parlor, two ample second floor bedrooms and a sun porch. Two front dormers were also added to the roof of the original building to bring more light to the second floor. The catalyst for this addition and other changes for the Durand heirs might have been the increased financial and social standing of the family, for the Badgers*

*it might have been Mr. Badger's skill at carpentry and his desire for financial gain as a builder, and for the Wilson's it might have been the increased space and modern amenities required by their large family.*

WILLIAM AND ISABEL KEMP Sr. 1901-1905

CARRIE AND EDWIN HATCH 1905-1919

CLIFFORD AND HELEN SLOAN 1919-1923

6) A second period of flux in ownership took place during the first quarter of the 1900's. The Kemps bought the Durand-Hedden house at the turn of the century when Maplewood was beginning its growth as a suburb. Since their residence is listed elsewhere in several contemporary directories, the house probably served as a real estate investment along with other properties. Mr. Kemp had been a successful grain broker in New York and was a man of influence in the community. He was the head of the school board and later became the founder of the Maplewood Bank and Trust.

The Kemp's sold the Durand-Hedden property to Carrie and Edwin Hatch in 1905. The Hatch's again appear to have bought the house as an investment along with other acreage in the area. Edwin Hatch was a Vice President of the Mutual Trust Company and a broker in New York and a contemporary directory lists their residence elsewhere. Instead, according to the directory and the federal census the parents of Edwin, John C. Hatch and his wife Betty, both in their 70's, and their middle aged daughter were living in the house as renters. A divorce or the death of Mr. Hatch appears to have prompted the sale of the Durand-Hedden House by Carrie Hatch, "unmarried," to Clifford and Helen Sloan in 1919. Mr. Sloan was variously listed as an advertising manager and a literary author. By 1923 the couple had "removed to Long Island." It is interesting to note that Clifford Sloan was the brother of management genius Alfred P. Sloan. Both worked in Newark, probably at the same location. In 1923 Alfred Sloan became the head of the new company of General Motors and relocated to Detroit.

Maps and surveys show that the small sandstone addition on the first floor adjacent to the kitchen was built during the Hatch's tenure. This undoubtedly served as "servants quarters". The 1920 census records the names of a married couple at the site when the Sloan's were in residence whose occupations were "houseman" and "servant."

WILLIAM AND MARGERY CHAUNCEY RIPLEY 1923-1971

7) The next occupants of the Durand-Hedden House were the William Chauncey Ripley family whose ownership lasted almost fifty years from 1923 - 1971. Mr. Ripley was the third-generation to run a large marine (heavy timber) lumber company in Newark. The Ripley's dubbed the property "Four Acre Farm," a reference to John Durand's old homestead to the south and took great pride in renovating the house and grounds. In the 1920's they built the middle house (521) on the location or the foundation of a barn as a rental property and in 1930 built the upper house (525) for a widowed sister of Mr. Ripley. In 1941 they acquired a small strip of property to the north of the house and constructed a one-car garage. This is currently a multi-use outbuilding. At some point

they also walled the stream running through the property with local stone. Mr. Ripley died in 1950.

AGIOS DEMETRIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH 1971-1977

8) In 1971 Margery Ripley, a widow, sold the house to Agios Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church of Newark. The new owners presented a plan to build a new church and a parking lot on the site that would require the demolition of the Durand-Hedden House, the two other houses and most of the trees. On the eve of the celebration of the bicentennial, Maplewood citizens and the Township Committee opposed the destruction of this historic property. Despite winning a court battle in their favor, the church decided to abandon their plan.

TOWNSHIP OF MAPLEWOOD 1977-Present

9) In December 1977 the Township of Maplewood was able to preserve the 1.7 acre property and its historic buildings through the assistance of NJ State Green Acres funds. In 1978 the grounds were established as a passive park, which received the name Grasmere Park in 1985 in honor of Mayor Robert Grasmere who championed the preservation of the property. Since 1979 523 Ridgewood Road has been managed as an historic house museum dedicated to Maplewood history by the non-profit educational organization, the Durand-Hedden House and Garden Association, Inc. Various plans were originally proposed for 521 and 525 Ridgewood Road including utilizing them as community meeting, teaching and storage space and taking them down in phases in order to create more open space. At this time they are being maintained as rental properties for occupants with caretaker responsibilities.

8. Statement of significance, incorporating criteria for designation:

According to the criteria set forth in Section 7 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the Township of Maplewood (#2166-01), Grasmere Park, including the Durand-Hedden House and related land and structures is qualified to be designated a local Historic Landmark.

Criteria 1. It is “of particular historic significance to the Township of Maplewood by reflecting of exemplifying the broad cultural, political, economic, or social history of the community.” This property was first inhabited by some of the earliest settlers that came out from the Newark Colony after it was settled in the mid-seventeenth century, Edward Hedden and his wife. Hedden’s grandson, Obadiah Durand probably constructed the first part of this house c. 1790, as shelter for his family as he worked to open his property for farming. It is thus one of the earliest farmhouses constructed and still extant in this part of Essex County.

Criteria 2. It is “associated with as historic personage(s) important in local history.” In addition to being one of the first settlers to reach this area from the Newark Colony, Edward Hedden’s



descendants fought in the Revolutionary War and were among the earliest members of the community of Jefferson Village. Later owners included Henry and Electa Durand, who was the brother of artist Asher B. Durand and who continued his father and grandfather's jewelry and watchmaking business in Newark and Walter H. Kemp who was a local businessman and founder and president of the Maplewood Bank & Trust Company. During the twentieth century, the house and grounds were owned for almost fifty years by the William Chauncey Ripley family, owners of an important marine lumber company in Newark, who were responsible for the construction of the other houses on the lot.

Criteria 4. The property is “an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of architecture.” The Durand-Hedden house was constructed in two main periods, the first being c. 1790, as a 1 ½ story post and beam construction, side hall farmhouse with a large stone and brick chimney and beehive oven for cooking and heating, two main living areas on the ground story with a loft and small bedrooms above. It was extended c. 1850-70 with a Gothic Revival style section added to the north. Typical of early houses, new sections were added on in the popular style of the period when owners needed more space and had a larger family to provide for. The other houses on the lot are typical of the historical revival styles that were being constructed throughout Maplewood during the nineteen twenties and thirties.

Criteria 7. It is “able or likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.” As reconstruction projects have taken place near the Durand-Hedden house in recent years, some archeological exploration has been carried out and artifacts have been uncovered relating to life during the earlier periods of habitation on this land. Further research is likely to yield more information.

## Sources

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