



The Stevens-Coolidge Place

Public Garden and Gathering Place



Above: Conceptual plan of The Stevens-Coolidge Place by Mikyong Kim Design Architects. Enhancements showing current plans for new entrance from Chickering Road, parking, Garden Gathering Center, and expanded gardens

The Trustees and Its Public Gardens

Gardening and garden visitation have increased significantly for Americans seeking to fill their leisure time. More people are engaging with public gardens on different levels of activities, including garden visits, educational activities, and outreach through events. Connecting people to the natural world is more important than ever. The Trustees' public garden strategy is focused on enhancements for public enjoyment.

Over the last few years, The Trustees has bolstered its commitment to the conservation, preservation and enhancements of our special cultural and horticultural properties. Through these efforts we have invested in the restoration and revitalization of some of our most significant cultural garden landscapes with the most pressing restoration and visitor engagement needs including Castle Hill on the Crane Estate and Naumkeag in Stockbridge.

In the next three to five years, the organization has expanded its focus to include other properties which require investment in conservation, engagement, and revitalization. This next phase of investments includes **The Stevens-Coolidge Place**, one of our cherished cultural landscapes, which has already undergone significant restoration of the legacy gardens by Trustees staff and the dedicated

and talented volunteers who support the care of the property. Situated within a thriving and growing community of young families, established historic homes, and preservation-lovers, The Stevens-Coolidge Place represents an opportunity to welcome visitors and residents to enjoy the outdoors, appreciate gardens, learn about local history, and grow their love of cultural landscapes and conservation. We believe we can do more to invite visitors and residents to experience this special place while also expanding our knowledge of why this place matters.

The thoughtful reworking of our entrance and visitor orientation as well as an exciting and dynamic expansion of garden displays will continue to support and improve The Stevens-Coolidge Place as a gathering garden space for the North Andover and surrounding communities. For history lovers, the revitalized gardens and house will also reveal more of the significance of the Stevens and Coolidge families in local and regional history. Additionally, revitalized interpretation and programming will help to shine a light on the estate and grounds as an example of a romantic country place estate.

Vision

The Stevens-Coolidge Place will entice its visitors to immerse themselves in the special kind of beauty that only plants and gardens can offer. In addition to educating the public about the great variety of plants available for use in the garden, a rich menu of public events will explore and interpret the beauty of gardens, horticulture and nature. Visitors will enjoy a memorable experience that inspires them to bring the full benefits of plants into their gardens at home, and special activities for families and children will help to create our next generation of garden enthusiasts and culture aficionados.

A Garden Gathering Place

The Trustees is investing in revitalizing The Stevens-Coolidge Place to deepen its horticultural appeal as a public garden and engage guests through public tours, self-guided experiences, educational activities and special community programs. A grant for this project has allowed The Trustees to hire top professionals in landscape design and building architecture to plan and design this exciting project.

We are focusing on improvements in four areas:

- ▶ Infrastructure: New entrance, parking, and “Gateway to the Gardens” orientation and teaching space
- ▶ Horticultural investments and additional gardens
- ▶ The historic house and the collections
- ▶ Open space and trails for the community

The project has three phases

1. **Infrastructure and visitor experience** will include the new entry and parking, a *Gateway to the Gardens* space for orientation and educational programming.
2. **Horticultural and house investments** are planned for a summer 2021 completion. They will include expanded display beds and landscape areas and restorative care of the historic house.
3. **Open space and trails** will activate additional acres on the west side of Chickering Road. We will design a network of open space recreation trails on the property for public enjoyment.

Garden Improvements

The existing historic gardens (Perennial, Rose, & Potager), which have been preserved by Trustees volunteers and staff, will continue to be maintained. Helen’s meadow will be augmented with pollinator supporting perennials and seasonal mowed paths for wandering. A new entry garden is planned for the Garden entrance. Adjacent to the main house, new gardens are being planned and will expand the footprint of this historic space.

Ecology

The Trustees conservation practices on The Stevens-Coolidge Place will continue to protect grassland and wet meadow habitat important for plants and wildlife, with an emphasis on grassland birds and pollinators in Helen's Meadow and the surrounding fields.

Accessibility

Most pathways throughout the garden and property will be made accessible to support visitors with limited mobility according to ADA legal standards. This will substantially improve the access to the gardens for more people.

Public Programming and educational opportunities

Building on recent success in public programming, an expanded, year-round calendar of activities will explore the beauty of gardens, horticulture, and nature. New public programming will reach a local school audience, kids, and families from the community. We are providing site specific educational programs, such as Monarch Butterfly Story Hour and Nature Play Group.

The Stevens-Coolidge Place offers a few large events, like our popular Father's Day BBQ and our holiday illumination event, Winterlights, which we hope will become a family tradition for the people in North Andover.

Community Outreach

Trustees hosted a series of open houses for neighbors, community members, and others interested in the project. Information sessions were held on January 30, May 1, May 22, June 26, July 24 and August 7. Flyers were dropped in abutters' mailboxes to advertise meetings. Our outreach included public relations on Social Media, visitor satisfaction surveys and focus groups which gathered feedback from current visitors. The project will be reviewed by appropriate North Andover regulatory agencies, including Public Hearings with the Planning Board that all are welcome to attend.

Public Meetings

- ▶ Board of Selectmen: Presentation to the BOS on *August 12*
- ▶ Conservation Commission: First public hearing, *August 28*
- ▶ Historic Commission meeting: *September 9*
- ▶ Planning Board: initial meeting, *September 17*
- ▶ **Planning Board: *November 5, 7 pm***

For exact times and locations, please see: <https://www.northandoverma.gov/home/pages/upcoming-meetings>.

More Information & Contact

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Background Facts: *The Stevens-Coolidge Place*

PROPERTY: Settled in 1729 and farmed for six generations, the family home was converted into a Colonial Revival country estate between 1909 and 1936.

FORMER OWNERS: Helen Stevens and John Gardner Coolidge.

SIGNIFICANCE: The property is a rare surviving example of a New England family farm turned country estate and gardens.

GARDEN DESIGN: Architect Joseph Everett Chandler, and landscape designers Louisa Bancroft Stevens and Ellen Painter Cunningham.

DONATED: In 1962 the property was bequeathed to The Trustees.

THE TRUSTEES MISSION: To preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts.