

A SELF GUIDED WALK PAST CRANFORD'S LOST ARCHITECTURE – NORTH SIDE

Total distance: 1 mile

BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

Much of Cranford's history and many early buildings have been lost. This walking tour points out the locations of structures and sites that were significant to our town's past, most of which no longer survive.

	<i>Start at the Cranford Hotel at Walnut Ave and South Ave.</i>	<i>Distance</i>
1 	An earlier version of the Cranford Hotel is said to have been built in 1882, but the present building dates back to 1892. The hotel fronted directly on the railroad tracks until the grade crossing was eliminated in 1930.	<i>Start</i>
	<i>Look just beyond the Hotel</i>	
2 	Martin Hess, who built the Cranford Hotel, was the father of Oscar Hess, who for many years conducted a plumbing business on South Union Avenue, just beyond the hotel, until the site was cleared for the City Federal Savings Bank which was replaced by Cranford Crossing.	-
	<i>Go under the railroad bridge</i>	
3 	The triangular Clock Park that is bounded by Eastman, North, and North Union Aves was the site of the Potter-Chronicle Building. Also called the Flat-Iron building, it was the home of the weekly local newspaper for many years. It was razed in 1923.	<i>1 block</i>
	<i>Continue in the same direction on North Union, crossing North Ave</i>	
4 	Another triangular building at the corner of North Union and North Ave is occupied by a bank. This site was occupied in the early days by Rath's Plumbing shop and by Potts Grocery store.	<i>1 block</i>

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	<i>Continue on North Union</i>	
5	In this same block, on the opposite or north side of North Union Ave were two important residences. Josiah Crane Sr. had his home on the property that ran from the bank building on the corner to about Bell's Pharmacy. His home would probably have been #13. This is also the site of a later livery stable that subsequently became the home of the <i>Cranford Citizen and Chronicle</i> and then later Burditt's die and tool plant. In 1963 the buildings behind them were cleared for the parking lot but the buildings facing the street were undisturbed.	<i>1/2 block</i>
	<i>Continue on North Union</i>	
6		<i>1 block</i>
	<i>Look across North Union</i>	
7		-
	<i>Continue on North Union across Alden</i>	
8		<i>1 block</i>
	<i>Look across North Union</i>	

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9	 On the north side of North Union at Springfield, A.P. Purves owned the property from #101 to #115. His home was built as part of the development undertaken by his brother-in-law Alden Bigelow. Mr Purves became mayor of Cranford and it was at this home that both William Howard Taft and Theodore Roosevelt talked to the people of Cranford during the 1912 presidential campaign.	-
<i>Continue on North Union</i>		
10	 Alden Bigelow's homesite is the parking lot, on the same side starting at about 117 and going to the property line of the Presbyterian Church and back to Miln St. He lent his first name to Alden St, and did a great deal to develop Cranford as a commuter town. His home, called Marlborough Place, was built in 1863 and named for the town where he was born. It included a coach house, a hen yard, and hundreds of fruit trees.	1 block
<i>Continue on North Union</i>		
11	 The present Presbyterian Church building dates to 1894, but is the second on the property. The first was erected in 1869, with a new manse farther up Springfield Ave. The manse was razed when the church began its expansion along Springfield beginning in 1951 and completed in 1969.	1/2 block
<i>Look across North Union and Springfield</i>		
12	 Across Springfield stood the Charles Day House which was used as police headquarters until the municipal building was completed in 1962, and it was then demolished.	-
<i>Look further along North Union</i>		

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13	The woodshed of the Crane home was moved across the street and remodeled to become the home of H. H. Phillips. The building is the current home of the Cranford Historical Society's Museum.	-
	<i>Turn on Springfield Ave and walk north to Miln</i>	
14	On the site of Gray's Funeral Home and the 9/11 Memorial/Josiah Crane Park stood the residence of Josiah Crane Sr. and Jr. It was erected in the 1700's, facing on North Union Ave, and was razed in 1915.	<i>1/2 block</i>
	<i>Continue on Springfield Ave and walk north to Miln</i>	
15	At the corner of Springfield and Miln is a condominium formerly the Christian Science Reading Room. It was built in 1909 and stands on the site of a house owned by Josiah Crane Sr but occupied by a family named Wilcox.	<i>1/2 block</i>
	<i>Continue on Springfield Ave to Holly St</i>	
16	The remodeled home at the corner of Springfield and Holly St is on the site of the 1898 Grant School building. It had replaced the original 1868 building which had been expanded in 1884. The school was abandoned in 1936 but in 1942 Union Junior College moved in and remained there until 1963.	<i>1 block</i>
	<i>Return to Miln and Springfield and walk down Miln</i>	
17	On the left is the current Cleveland Plaza. The Cleveland School was erected on this site in 1914 and named for former President Grover Cleveland. It was a modern, fire-proof building with a brick exterior and tile interior walls. The building was converted from a school to a commercial building. Marlborough Place, the home of Alden Bigelow, went from North Union to Miln.	<i>1/2 block</i>
	<i>Continue down Miln</i>	

18	The building at the southwest corner of Miln and Alden was the Cranford Community Center, which replaced an A&P food store. Just beyond this point stood the Walter Crane and Washburn home, which had been built by John Crane in the early 1880's. It was razed for the parking lot in 1963.	1/2 block
	<i>Continue down Miln</i>	
19	At the site of the parking lot at about #106 Miln stood the William Bigelow home. William was a brother of Alden.	1/2 block
	<i>Continue down Miln</i>	
20	 The original public library with 10 columns, erected in 1910 from a \$10,000 Carnegie Foundation grant, stood next to the Bigelow home and both were razed in 1961 for the parking lot.	-
	<i>Continue down Miln to Eastman</i>	
21	The row of stores at the corner replaced the original Drysdale house which was moved to 14 Holly St. Mrs Drysdale was the daughter of Alden Bigelow.	1/2 block
	<i>Look across Eastman</i>	
22	 The Post Office, erected in 1935, stands on the site of the home of Dr J. K. MacConnell. Farther up Eastman St is MacConnell Park, named for the doctor who sold the property to a group of citizens who then dedicated it as a park. Dr MacConnell's home was converted to a restaurant by Frank Hayashi. He added an extra dining room to the home to accommodate the Rotary Club formed in 1923, and used, as well, by other Cranford clubs and organizations.	-
	<i>Turn left on Eastman, walk under the railroad bridge to return to the Cranford Hotel and the start of tour</i>	1 block
	<i>TOTAL DISTANCE</i>	1 mi
<i>This tour is based on one originally published in 1971 in "Centennial Highlights: 1871 – 1971" by the Cranford Kiwanis Club.</i> <i>Thanks to the Cranford Historical Society for the photos from our past.</i>		

About the Cranford Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB)

HPAB was established in 1993 by the Township of Cranford. Our goal is to maintain Cranford's unique character while recognizing the homeowners' right to create a home reflecting their style. Our mission is to aid in the preservation of Cranford's architectural heritage through documentation of significant structures, education of the public as to the value of preservation, and advice to the Township on laws and activities impacting preservation. For more information contact Maureen Strazdon at 908-347-9970.

