

SG 2790



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 50-52 Lorne Street/4 Wilson Street

City or town: Boston State: MA County: Suffolk

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<u>Bruce Simon</u>		<u>June 28, 2018</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	SHPO	Date
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government		

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government


Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

8/24/18
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH and 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

Foundation: STONE

Walls: BRICK, STONE

Roof: EPDM

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments were constructed in 1915 in the Colonial Revival style. The three-story red-brick apartment building contains nine residential units and occupies most of its 4,784-square-foot lot. The building is located at the southeast corner of Lorne and Wilson streets in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood. The corner location results in two street addresses for the building: 50-52 Lorne Street and 4 Wilson Street. Boston's Dorchester neighborhood is one of the city's largest and most diverse neighborhoods; it lies south of downtown and is bordered by South Boston to the north and Roxbury and Mattapan to the west; the Neponset River and Boston Harbor form its southern and eastern boundaries. The neighborhood encompasses approximately six square miles and contains many smaller villages within its large boundaries. The closest of these villages to the Benjamin Silverman Apartments is Codman Square, which lies a little over a mile east of the neighborhood. Dorchester's diverse population includes both long-time residents and more recent immigrants from Ireland, Vietnam, and Cape Verde.

Lorne Street is located in a small, residential neighborhood situated between Blue Hill Avenue and the American Legion Highway along the southern tip of Franklin Park. It is one of two residential side streets off of Harvard Street. The majority of construction on these streets dates to the 1990s. Lorne Street terminates in a dead-end behind the Lena Park Community

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Development Corporation and the Edward E. Brook Charter School, originally the Home for Destitute Jewish Children (1911, NR 2014), which fronts the American Legion Highway. The Benjamin Silverman Apartments is one of very few buildings on Lorne Street that survived large-scale demolition in the late 1960s and 1970s of the multi-family housing constructed between 1908 and 1915 that once defined the street. The Benjamin Silverman Apartments are intact with exterior alteration limited to replacement of original doors and windows; it therefore retains the defining characteristics of historic integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Narrative Description

Exterior

The Benjamin Silverman Apartment building is one of five remaining historic buildings on Lorne Street. These include two ca. 1910 masonry apartment buildings, located a full block away, that anchor the corners of Lorne and Harvard streets; and three, heavily altered, frame triple-deckers along Lorne Street. The remaining buildings consist of frame, multi-family houses spread across double lots that were constructed in the 1990s.

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments have an irregular footprint with a staggered façade that steps back from Lorne Street. It occupies nearly its full lot and stands apart from its neighbors. A small alley and a driveway associated with the neighboring building separates the property to the east, and Wilson Street, a small private way, lies to the west. The setback on Lorne Street contains two small planting beds defined by concrete curbing; these are currently devoid of plantings.

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments are constructed of red brick laid in Flemish bond and face north onto Lorne Street. The building rests on a stone foundation and rises three stories over a raised basement to a flat roof. Typical of Colonial Revival apartment buildings of this era, cast-stone ornament enlivens the entries and fenestration and a wide galvanized iron ogee-profiled cornice with modillions crowns the building on its street-facing elevations. Also typical of urban Colonial Revival apartment buildings constructed on deep, narrow lots, the Lorne Street façade incorporates canted bays that allowed for additional light to reach the interior living spaces. All original windows and doors were replaced in the 1970s. All windows above the basement level currently hold 1/1 sash. Basement windows have been infilled with concrete block. Doors are a combination of glass (primary) and metal (secondary). Windows and doors date to the 2016–2017 renovation that used historic tax credits.

The staggered Lorne Street (north) elevation resembles a line of urban row houses more than a single apartment building (**Photo 1**). The façade is broken into three blocks and features two entrances: 50 Lorne Street, located in the eastern-most block, and 52 Lorne Street located in the central block. All fenestration is treated identically with cast-stone lug sills and lintels. The cornice extends the full length of the façade. The eastern-most block is the most forward on the site. It presents a canted bay with a single basement window in the central bay and a window in each of its three faces on the upper floors. Two flat bays beside the canted bay complete this

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

block. These bays are defined by a single basement window, ground-floor entry and flanking window, and two windows in each bay on the upper floors. The entry to 50 Lorne Street is reached by a flight of concrete steps with metal handrails (**Photo 2**). The entry and adjacent window are incorporated into a single cast-stone surround. The portion of the surround that frames the entry is scored to resemble blocks and wraps the corner to form quoins. A simple entablature with a corbelled cornice completes the surround. A non-historic, single-leaf glass door with a rectangular transom is set within the surround. The central block is recessed behind the eastern-most block; it consists of a single, flat entry bay with a window in each bay on the upper floors and a canted bay identical to the one on 50 Lorne Street. The entry to 52 Lorne Street is reached by a short flight of concrete steps with metal handrails and features the same cast-stone surround and door as 50 Lorne Street, without the adjacent window. The final block of this elevation is recessed behind the central block and consists of two flat bays with a window in each bay on all floor levels.

As a street facing elevation, the Wilson Street (west) façade received the same level of decorative treatment as the Lorne Street elevation, including incorporation of the cornice and cast-stone ornament adorning the entry and fenestration (**Photo 3**). This elevation extends seven bays. Basement-level windows are located in the second and sixth bays. The entrance is at ground level and is centrally located with three windows on either side. The entrance holds a non-historic, single-leaf glass door with a rectangular transom set within a cast-stone surround scored to resemble stone blocks and a splayed arch beneath a corbelled cornice (**Photo 4**). The second and third floors hold seven bays of windows.

The east elevation extends seven bays (**Photo 5**). As a secondary elevation, it does not display the level of detail present on the Lorne and Wilson street façades. The cornice, for example, is absent here. However, this elevation was historically visible from Lorne Street and is not devoid of ornament. All fenestration on this elevation features cast-stone lug sills and brick, segmental-arch rowlock windows. Basement-level windows are located in the first, third, and sixth bays. Each bay of the upper stories holds a window. The termination of this elevation leads to an interior courtyard behind the Lorne and Wilson street blocks.

Like the east elevation, the rear (south) elevation is devoid of the architectural treatment found on the Lorne and Wilson street façades (**Photo 6**). This elevation extends eight bays with four basement-level windows located in the first, third, sixth, and eighth bays, and single windows in each bay of the upper floors. These windows share the architectural treatment of those on the east elevation.

The irregular footprint of the building creates a narrow courtyard space where the blocks of the building intersect (Photos 7–8). These interior elevations feature single windows identical to those on the east and south elevations, secondary entrances with brick segmental-arch rowlock lintels, and connecting metal balconies at the intersection of the Lorne and Wilson street blocks.

Interior

The building retains its original plan. There are three units on each floor. The basement functions as storage and mechanical space. First-floor residential units have two and three

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

bedrooms. The second- and third-floor residential units have three bedrooms. Historic detail is present in the original stairs, but is largely absent from corridors and apartment units with the exception of some wooden baseboards, unit flooring, and windowsills.

Each entrance leads to a small foyer with stairs leading to first-floor lobbies (**Photos 9–12**). The floors in the foyers and lobbies are covered in vinyl composition tile (VCT). Single-leaf glass doors lead into the lobby spaces. The lobbies feature original stairs and single-loaded corridors that access first-floor units. The stairs have painted wood risers and non-historic VCT treads. They retain original wood detailing, including fluted newel posts, pendants, stringers, baseboards, and handrails. The simple slat balustrade may be original. These types of balustrades were common on secondary stairs. Given that the building has three primary staircases, the slat balustrade may have been an economical alternative to the vertical balusters more commonly seen on primary stairs (**Photos 13–15**).

Each address also has a secondary stair leading to rear exits located at the back of each block. These stairs also have VCT treads and wood risers, and retain wood baseboards, stringers, slat balustrades and handrails with some decorative newel posts and caps (**Photo 16**). Some window openings in the rear stairwells retain historic wood surrounds.

Single-loaded corridors provide access to the units. The corridors have non-historic VCT flooring (**Photo 17**). There are original wood baseboards in some areas and non-historic vinyl baseboard in other areas. Walls and ceilings are plastered and painted.

Residential units have non-historic single-leaf metal-clad entrance doors that are set within metal frames. Units are typically laid out with bedrooms and living rooms at the front of the units, with kitchens and additional bedrooms at the rear. The connecting balconies on the rear of the building are accessible through the secondary stair halls. Wood floors remain in some unit hallways, living rooms, and bedrooms, though most areas have non-historic VCT flooring. The units also retain original windowsills (**Photo 18**). Kitchens have non-historic VCT flooring, cabinets, and fixtures. Bathrooms also have non-historic VCT flooring, tiles, fixtures, and finishes. Units have non-historic rubber baseboards throughout. Walls and ceilings are plastered and painted.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1915-1968

Significant Dates

1915

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Benjamin Silverman
William P. Hatch

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments were constructed in 1915 on Lorne Street, a side street in a small residential subdivision west of Blue Hill Avenue between Harvard Street and Franklin Park. Lorne Street, originally known as Lena Park, was laid out in 1908 and was swiftly developed with multi-family residential buildings occupied in large part by working-class Russian Jewish immigrant families. Aided by streetcar lines, Dorchester absorbed a significant number of Jewish immigrants moving out of the North and West Ends of Boston during the first quarter of the 20th century, and remained a thriving Jewish community into the 1950s. The Benjamin Silverman Apartments are locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development for their association with the integration of the Jewish community into Dorchester. The building is additionally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a well-preserved example of a Colonial Revival-style apartment building. It is one of the few remaining buildings on Lorne Street that represents residential development for Dorchester's Jewish immigrant community. The period of significance for the Benjamin Silverman Apartments begins in 1915, when the building was constructed, and because of its continuous use as an apartment building, the period of significance ends in 1968, or 50 years from the present. The standard 50-year cutoff for historical significance was suggested by the National Park Service to allow adequate time for properties to be considered in an objective historic context.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Development of Lorne Street and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments are located at 50-52 Lorne Street and 4 Wilson Street in an area of Dorchester that is located on the Roxbury border. At the time of the building's construction, Lorne Street was within the boundary of West Roxbury just over the Dorchester border. At various points this area has been considered part of Roxbury and West Roxbury as well as Dorchester. These three Boston neighborhoods share a common history of development. Both Dorchester and Roxbury were founded by English settlers in 1630 and remained independent towns until the third quarter of the nineteenth century; Roxbury was annexed to the city of Boston in 1868, Dorchester in 1870. West Roxbury broke away from Roxbury, incorporating as a town in 1851 and became part of Boston in 1874. All three began as rural farming communities with networks of roads connecting outlying farms and small villages. Three of these early local roads are in close proximity to Lorne Street and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments: Harvard Street, which intersects with Lorne Street to the east, the American Legion Highway, on the western side of Lorne Street's dead-end, and Blue Hill Avenue, located one block east of Harvard Street. Harvard Street is one of Dorchester's oldest roads, dating to the 17th century; the American Legion Highway was laid out as Canterbury Street in 1825, and likely served as a public highway prior to that time, and Blue Hill Avenue

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

was laid out as the Brush Hill Turnpike in 1804.¹ Dorchester, Roxbury, and West Roxbury remained largely rural, characterized by farms and country estates, until the mid-19th century when the Boston & Providence Railroad was introduced through these neighborhoods in 1835. These rail lines made Boston accessible to commuters and initiated the transformation of these rural towns into early suburbs for wealthy Bostonians. Large, single-family homes in proximity to rail station stops were constructed on established streets, while smaller house lots were developed close to the stations. Electric streetcar lines arrived in the late 19th century, further increasing the ease and reducing the cost of commuting, heralding rapid suburban development of these neighborhoods for middle- and working-class families.

Located on the outskirts of West Roxbury, Roxbury, and Dorchester, the area in the vicinity of Lorne Street remained sparsely developed until the first decade of the 20th century. This area was roughly defined by Austin, Harvard, and Calder streets and the American Legion Highway (known as Canterbury Street until the late 1920s). Austin Street was laid out in 1868, marking the boundary of a 50-acre farm belonging to Arthur W. Austin. Calder and present-day Angell (known as Autumn Street until 1898) streets were added in 1872. However, it was not until the closing years of the 19th century that development along Calder and Angell streets was initiated, spurred by their proximity to the electric streetcar lines along Blue Hill Avenue that were introduced in the 1890s (**Figure 1**). The area between Austin and Angell streets was slower to develop. This may have been due to the proximity of the land to the Austin Farm, which was functioning as an almshouse in the 1870s and became incorporated into the Boston Insane Hospital beginning around 1884; the Austin Farm became the women's campus of the institution in the 1890s.

Lorne Street was laid out as a private way called Lena Park in 1908. The origin of the name is unclear, as there is no indication that there was a park by that name in the vicinity. The name was changed to Lorne Street in 1916 when it was made a public street. No documentation of the reason for the name change has been discovered. Lena Park was laid through land previously owned by a George W. Seaverns and his wife Harriet. George Seaverns was from a well-known Roxbury family, the son of Joel and Ann Seaverns. The Seaverns family owned more than 37 acres of undeveloped land between Blue Hill Avenue, Morton Street, and Harvard Street in addition to the nearly five-acre parcel through which Lena Park Street was laid out.² Shortly after the establishment of the new street, the Home for Destitute Jewish Children was constructed at the end of the street, fronting on the American Legion Highway (then Canterbury Street). The institution, which was dedicated in 1911, was home to orphaned Jewish children under the age of sixteen. Lena Park Street was thus hemmed in on two sides by institutions for marginalized populations: the mentally ill and the homeless. The street was rapidly developed with multi-family housing. By 1914 masonry apartment buildings on either side of the street anchored both ends of Lena Park (**Figure 2**). Only the corner buildings at 337 Harvard Street/2-4 Lorne Street and 1-9 Lorne street remain today. The lots in between the apartment buildings were developed with frame multi-family housing. Judging by the three remaining structures that

¹ The portion of Harvard Street that intersects with Lorne Street was known as Back Street until 1896, but was historically part of a continuous local road. City of Boston, A Record of the Streets, Alleys, Places, etc. in the City of Boston (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department), 1910.

² 1894 Bromley Dorchester Atlas; 1896 Bromley West Roxbury Atlas.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County and State

date from this period and census records, these were probably two-family houses and triple-deckers. The only undeveloped lot on the street in 1914 was the lot slated to be the site of the Benjamin Silverman Apartments.

The 1910 census reveals that the majority of the residents of Lena Park during its earliest years were Russian-Jewish immigrants who emigrated between 1892 and 1909, though there were a small number of Canadian, American, and second-generation Irish families living on the street as well. These were largely working-class families who were renting their apartments and working as tradesmen—tailors, stitchers, cigar-makers, peddlers, salesmen, and clerks.

Among the early residents of Lena Park were Myer and Benjamin Silverman, both Russian-Jewish immigrants and house carpenters. The exact nature of their relationship is unclear but they were most likely relatives.³ Myer Silverman resided at 26 Lena Park in 1910. Benjamin Silverman and his wife Anna moved into the neighborhood by 1913, residing next door at 30 Lena Park. Prior to moving to Lena Park, Benjamin resided in the West End of Boston and engaged in a few small real estate deals in that neighborhood.⁴

In 1915, Silverman purchased the lone vacant lot on the block from D. Brown and erected his apartment building. Brown also owned the apartment buildings at either end of the southern side of Lena Park: 337 Harvard Street/2–4 Lena Park and 56–58 Lena Park (no longer extant). Silverman purchased the neighboring apartment building at 56–58 Lena Park around this time as well. The area between the two lots became Wilson Street, a half-block-long private way that was to permanently remain open for the purpose of providing light and air as well as drainage, the maintenance of which would be the responsibility of the owners of the two lots.⁵

Silverman worked with architect William P. Hatch in the design of his building. Hatch was a Missouri-born architect and engineer active in the Boston area in the 1910s and 1920s. He lived on Ashland Street in Dorchester in 1910 and on West Brookline Street in the South End by 1920. In addition to the Benjamin Silverman Apartments, Hatch designed a one-room store addition to the building at 1 Lorne Street on the corner of Harvard Street the same year in which he designed the Benjamin Silverman Apartments. Hatch also purchased a brick apartment building in Roxbury on Blue Hill Avenue during this period (no longer extant), and designed brick apartment buildings in the Fenway and Brighton, frame apartment buildings in Cambridge, and a commercial structure on Beacon Hill.⁶ Many of these buildings are no longer extant, but those that remain were all designed in the Colonial Revival style.

Silverman remained a resident of Lena Park (renamed Lorne Street in 1916) until the mid-1920s. Despite filing for bankruptcy in 1920, his wife retained ownership of the two apartment

³ Both men shared a residence on Wellington Hill Street in 1930.

⁴ Newspaper accounts of real estate transfers indicate Silverman was participating in property development in the west end in the late 1890s. "Real Estate Matters," *Boston Daily Globe*, June 3, 1898.

⁵ "Exhibit A," Property Deed for Wayne Apartments, October 3, 1988. Book 413, pg. 5. Title No. 83405.

⁶ Local newspaper accounts indicate Hatch designed three large apartment buildings at 52–60 Cypress Road in Brighton, two brick and terra-cotta apartment buildings at 90 and 94 Peterboro Street (no longer extant) and two three story dwellings at 216–218 and 222–224 Franklin Street in Cambridge. The commercial structure on Beacon Hill is included in the MACRIS database, 156–172 Cambridge Street.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County and State

buildings at 50–52 and 56–58 Lorne Street in addition to their own house at 30 Lorne Street. Silverman continued working on Lorne Street as well. In 1925 he was listed as a co-owner of 1–3 Lorne Street, where he repaired fire damage to the building. Two years later, still an owner of the building, he added rear porches. By this point, his residence was on Wellington Hill Street, a little further south along Blue Hill Avenue in Mattapan.⁷ Silverman died between 1927 and 1933 when his wife Anna returned to Lorne Street, widowed.⁸

The first residents of the Benjamin Silverman Apartments recorded in the 1920 census conformed to the demographic already established on Lorne Street a decade earlier. All eight families residing in the 9-unit building were Russian-Jewish immigrants who had arrived between the 1890s and 1916. All were working-class families with the household heads employed as factory workers, teamsters, painters, tailors, cobblers, cloth cutters, and sewing-machine agents. The apartments up and down Lorne Street were filled with the same types of families. This was a neighborhood predominantly of renters of Russian-Jewish heritage. Some families had arrived around the turn of the century, others were more recent arrivals. Many were employed in the shoe and clothing business as well as grocers and building tradesmen.

By 1924, Lorne, Angell, and Calder streets were densely developed, yet the area between Lorne and Angell streets would remain undeveloped until the 1950s. Wilbert Street, which runs parallel to Lorne Street, was laid through land owned by the Home for Destitute Jewish Children and subdivided into lots of roughly 4,000 square feet by 1924, but those parcels would not be developed until the 1990s (**Figures 3-4**).

Despite its relative isolation, Lorne Street and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments remained densely occupied by Jewish immigrants through the mid-20th century. In 1930 there were a few second-generation Jewish families, but the majority of residents of the street were Jewish immigrants hailing from Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, and Latvia. Most of these residents arrived in the United States after 1910, several as late as 1929. They continued to be employed in working-class professions including, cobblers, cap makers, salesmen, house painters, and florists. The Benjamin Silverman Apartments reflected the pattern of residents on the rest of the block with several Russian-Jewish immigrant families arriving after 1910. The building was also home to Polish, Austrian, Swedish and Dutch immigrants also arriving after 1910. A decade later, the residents of Lorne Street and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments remained of the same demographic with some second-generation Jewish families as well as first-generation immigrants. They continued to represent the countries and be employed in the industries of the earliest residents of the street. The Home for Destitute Jewish Children became a Jewish Community Center in 1934 and merged with the Young Men's Hebrew Association (YMHA) in 1959. The proximity of this cultural center to Lorne Street undoubtedly contributed to the extended attractiveness of the street to Jewish families.

The demographics of the Lorne Street neighborhood represent a significant moment in Dorchester's history when the neighborhood was home to a thriving Jewish community during the first half of the 20th century. The vast majority of Jewish immigrants to Boston came from

⁷ City of Boston Inspectional Services records for 1–3 Lorne Street.

⁸ 1933 Boston City Directory.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Russia, fleeing state-sanctioned repression of their faith and culture under the Russian tsar in the late 1880s and early 1900s, though many also came from Poland, Germany, and Austria.⁹ These immigrants initially settled in the North End, then moved into the West End between 1895 and 1905 which remained the largest Jewish district in Boston until about 1910.¹⁰ Typically, these immigrants arrived as skilled tradesmen. Many found employment in Boston's textile and shoe industries, often beginning as peddlers and accumulating enough capital to open their own small businesses.¹¹ Beginning in the 1890s and continuing through 1917, many of the Jewish immigrants who had become successful in their trades began moving to less dense areas of the city like Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan, which were just beginning to blossom into attractive streetcar suburbs.¹² Benjamin Silverman's trajectory reflects this path; he arrived from Russia in 1896 as a carpenter, lived and worked in the West End of Boston, and migrated to Dorchester in 1913.

What originated as a small movement of the more elite Jewish population out of the North and West Ends became a mass exodus by 1918; in 1920 approximately 44,000 Jews were living in Dorchester and Upper Roxbury.¹³ However, this second wave of Jewish immigrants moving into Dorchester differed from their predecessors as the population was typically working class. At this time, many of the more affluent Jewish settlers of Dorchester began to move to Boston's outlying suburbs of Brookline and Newton. However, the working-class Jewish population of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan continued to thrive in the second quarter of the 20th century, increasing their numbers to 77,000 by the early 1930s. Unlike some Jewish neighborhoods in Dorchester, Lorne Street was immediately home to a working-class population, which was probably due to its relative isolation on the western side of Blue Hill Avenue, and its proximity to the state hospital and orphanage, neither of which would have been attractive to the upwardly mobile elite.

A testament to the growing Jewish population in Dorchester, religious schools and synagogues were constructed throughout the neighborhood. In 1914, Lorne Street was briefly home to a Hebrew Sunday School organized by the Dorchester Ladies' Auxiliary of the Congregation Hadrath Kadash while a new synagogue was being constructed nearby on Blue Hill Avenue.¹⁴ The Chai Odom Synagogue, located a short distance from Lorne Street at 103 Nightingale Street, was built in 1922 (BOS.6624). As the Jewish population in Dorchester grew, so did the number of businesses that served them: kosher butcher shops, bakeries, grocery stores, and fruit shops lined Blue Hill Avenue and Harvard Street. These shops were included in the corner buildings at Lorne and Harvard streets including a Jewish grocery at 1 Lena Park in 1913.¹⁵

By the mid-20th century, the Jewish population of Dorchester was beginning to follow their predecessors into Brookline and Newton. However, as late as 1950, about 70,000 Jews still

⁹ Jonathan D. Sarna, Ellen Smith, and Scott-Martin Kosofsky, The Jews of Boston (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 65.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹⁴ "New Hebrew Sunday School Organized," *Boston Sunday Post*, November 29, 1914.

¹⁵ "Wanted Jewish Boy to work in Grocery Store with good References," *Boston Post*, October 14, 1913.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County and State

resided in the Dorchester.¹⁶ The racial demographic of Dorchester began to change between 1950 and 1960. During this time Dorchester's Jewish population migrated in increasingly large numbers to Boston's outlying suburbs; between 1950 and 1960, the Jewish population of Dorchester shrank from 70,000 to 47,000. This trend continued over the next decade in Dorchester: in 1970 there were 16,000 Jewish residents of Dorchester, and by the end of the decade only several hundred remained.¹⁷ The shift in demographics away from the Jewish community in the 1960s coincided with a growing number of African-Americans moving from the southern United States to the North known as the Great Migration. Dorchester became the center of civil rights activism; it was home to Martin Luther King, Jr. throughout the duration of his Ph.D. studies at Boston University. A majority African-American population began settling in the Blue Hill Avenue section of Dorchester. The population of Lorne Street reflected this pattern. By the late 1950s, the demographic on Lorne Street had begun to shift from a predominantly Jewish neighborhood to one that included other backgrounds. City directories indicate residents of the Benjamin Silverman Apartments and Lorne Street still had Jewish surnames in 1959, but there was also a mix of people with Irish and Italian surnames. By 1965, very few residents with Jewish surnames remained.

The Colonial Revival Movement and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Architect William Hatch utilized the highly popular Colonial Revival style in his design for the Benjamin Silverman Apartments in 1915. This style was immensely popular in the United States from the late 19th through the mid-20th centuries. It was the dominant architectural vocabulary of apartment house buildings in Dorchester in the first three decades of the 20th century. While early interest in the colonial past was triggered by the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago cemented the enthusiasm for reviving its relics in the minds of the nation. The occasion marked the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's discovery of America, and presented visitors with innumerable opportunities to experience the colonial past. Colonial architecture was on exhibit in many of the state buildings erected at the fair; their decorative interiors, commemorative displays, and historical exhibitions flooded the fairgrounds.¹⁸ Massachusetts recreated the John Hancock House, built on Beacon Hill in 1737 and demolished in 1863. This colonial celebration coincided with mass immigration to the United States in the 1880s and 1890s, which fueled a desire to underscore and impart American values. Reviving elements of the colonial past was reassuring at a time of great change.

Colonial Revival architecture began as loose interpretations of colonial-period buildings, but took a more serious turn in the early 20th century when publications like *The American Architect and Building News* began publishing measured drawings of colonial buildings and the *White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs* printed photographs of colonial precedents.¹⁹ The single-most defining characteristic that was reproduced in the revival movement is an emphasis on the door surround of the main entrance, which often features pilasters or slender columns

¹⁶ Sarna, Smith, and Kosofsky, 151.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁸ Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Curious Relics and Quaint Scenes: The Colonial Revival at Chicago's Great Fair," *The Colonial Revival in America*, Alan Alexrod, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton Company), pp. 184-216.

¹⁹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 321.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County and State

supporting a pediment or entablature as seen in the Georgian style, or a fanlight above the door as seen in the Federal style. Other characteristic elements of the revival style include elaborate cornices, symmetrical fenestration arrangement, light-colored brick, bay windows, multi-pane double-hung sash windows commonly featured in pairs, and in urban examples, bowed fronts, which allowed for increased light to reach apartments in buildings erected on deep, narrow lots.

20

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments were constructed at the height of the popularity of the Colonial Revival style. While the building's ornament is understated, its features are typical of the Colonial Revival. The most striking of these elements is the wide, iron cornice with ogee profiling and modillions. Other representative features include the incorporation of angled bays on the Lorne Street elevation, the use of cast stone for emphasis on door surrounds and fenestration, and the regular organization of windows on all elevations. These openings would likely have held multi-light wood sash originally, though no original plans have been located to confirm this. Extant apartment buildings designed by William Hatch in Brighton and Cambridge also conform to the Colonial Revival style, revealing his familiarity with the expression.

Hatch and Silverman's choice of the Colonial Revival was typical for developers in the first decades of the 20th century. These men were interested in developing marketable properties and the Colonial Revival would have been an architectural vocabulary that was familiar to them and to future residents. The apartment buildings at the eastern end of Lorne Street where it intersects with Harvard Street were constructed in the Colonial Revival style. These buildings were constructed five years before the Benjamin Silverman Apartments. While the brick apartment buildings at the western end of Lorne Street are no longer extant, it is very likely that these also employed Colonial Revival characteristics given the popularity and near universality of its use in apartment buildings throughout Dorchester at this time. It would be a logical choice to emulate comparable buildings in the neighborhood for an investment property. An American architectural vocabulary, one that was familiar throughout the neighborhood, would have been appealing to future buyers and future residents, regardless of their heritage.

Lorne Street and The Benjamin Silverman Apartments post-1968

By 1968, there was little evidence of the Jewish stronghold that characterized Lorne Street and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments for four decades. A sign of the declining Jewish population in Dorchester, nearby synagogues were closing and relocating to Newton by the late 1960s, including the Chai Odom Synagogue on Nightingale Street, which closed in 1968. During this period, the Jewish community center and the YMHA moved out of their building at the end of Lorne Street. In the mid-1960s, a group of 25 residents of Lorne Street founded the Lena Park Housing Development Corporation to address neighborhood blight and took ownership of the former Jewish Community Center in 1970. A testament to the blight on Lorne Street at the time, several of the buildings at the western end of the street were demolished in 1969, and the Benjamin Silverman Apartments were deemed unsafe and dangerous by the city of Boston's Inspectional Services Department, which noted that the building was being vandalized, and was missing windows and doors in 1970. The Benjamin Silverman Apartments were saved in 1972

²⁰ Ibid., 326.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Name of Property

Suffolk, MA

County and State

when the building was completely renovated for use as affordable housing.²¹ However, blight on the rest of the street was such that by 1977 over half of the buildings on Lorne Street had been demolished.²² In 1988 the Benjamin Silverman Apartments were refurbished a second time for continued use as affordable housing, and by the mid-1990s Lorne Street had been rebuilt with frame houses widely spaced on double lots that were also designated for use as affordable housing. This continues to characterize the streetscape today.

In 2016–2017, the Benjamin Silverman Apartments underwent a renovation using historic tax credits for continued use as affordable housing. Work was focused on addressing issues of deferred maintenance on the interior and exterior of the building including the repointing and repair of masonry where necessary, the replacement of non-historic windows and doors, repainting and replacement of non-historic finishes and fixtures on the interior and the refinishing of historic wood floors. All work met the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

²¹ City of Boston Inspectional Services Department. Building permit records for 4 Wilson Street, 1970 & 1972.

²² 1977 Boston Metro Aerial [USGS], Mapjunction.com. Accessed November 29, 2016.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): BOS.17061

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.293866 Longitude: -71.091484

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Benjamin Silverman Apartments are located at 50-52 Lorne Street and 4 Wilson Street at the southeast corner of Lorne and Wilson streets in Boston, Massachusetts. The property boundaries are confined to parcel 1404286000 as outlined on the attached assessors map.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the Benjamin Silverman Apartments conforms to the boundaries of the original city lot on which the building was constructed.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Roysin Bennett Younkin, Associate at MacRostie Historic Advisors, with Betsy Friedberg

organization: Massachusetts Historical Commission

street & number: 220 Morrissey Blvd

city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02125

e-mail betsy.friedberg@sec.state.ma.us

telephone: 617-727-8470

date: 5/17/2018

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Benjamin Silverman Apartments

City or Vicinity: Boston

County: Suffolk State: Massachusetts

Photographer: Emily Dominijanni

Date Photographed: November 21, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 18: Lorne Street (north) elevation, looking south.

2 of 18: Entrance details, 50 and 52 Lorne Street, looking south.

3 of 18: Wilson Street (west) elevation, looking southeast.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

- 4 of 18: Wilson Street entrance, looking east.
- 5 of 18: East elevation, looking southwest.
- 6 of 18: South elevation, looking northeast.
- 7 of 18: Interior courtyard, looking northwest.
- 8 of 18: Interior courtyard balconies, looking north.
- 9 of 18: Entry foyer, 50 Lorne Street, looking north.
- 10 of 18: Entry foyer, 50 Lorne Street, looking south.
- 11 of 18: Entry foyer, 52 Lorne Street, looking south.
- 12 of 18: Entry foyer, 4 Wilson Street, looking east.
- 13 of 18: Main Stair, ground floor, 50 Lorne Street, looking southwest.
- 14 of 18: Main Stair, ground floor, 52 Lorne Street, looking south.
- 15 of 18: Main Stair, ground floor, 4 Wilson Street, looking east.
- 16 of 18: Typical secondary stair, 50 Lorne Street, looking southwest.
- 17 of 18: Typical corridor, 50 Lorne Street, third floor, looking west.
- 18 of 18: Typical unit living room, 52 Lorne Street second floor, looking north.

Figures (all used with permission):

- Figure 1: 1899 L.J. Richards Atlas of Dorchester, West Roxbury, and Brighton.
- Figure 2: 1914 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas.
- Figure 3: 1924 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas.
- Figure 4: 1924 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

Figures

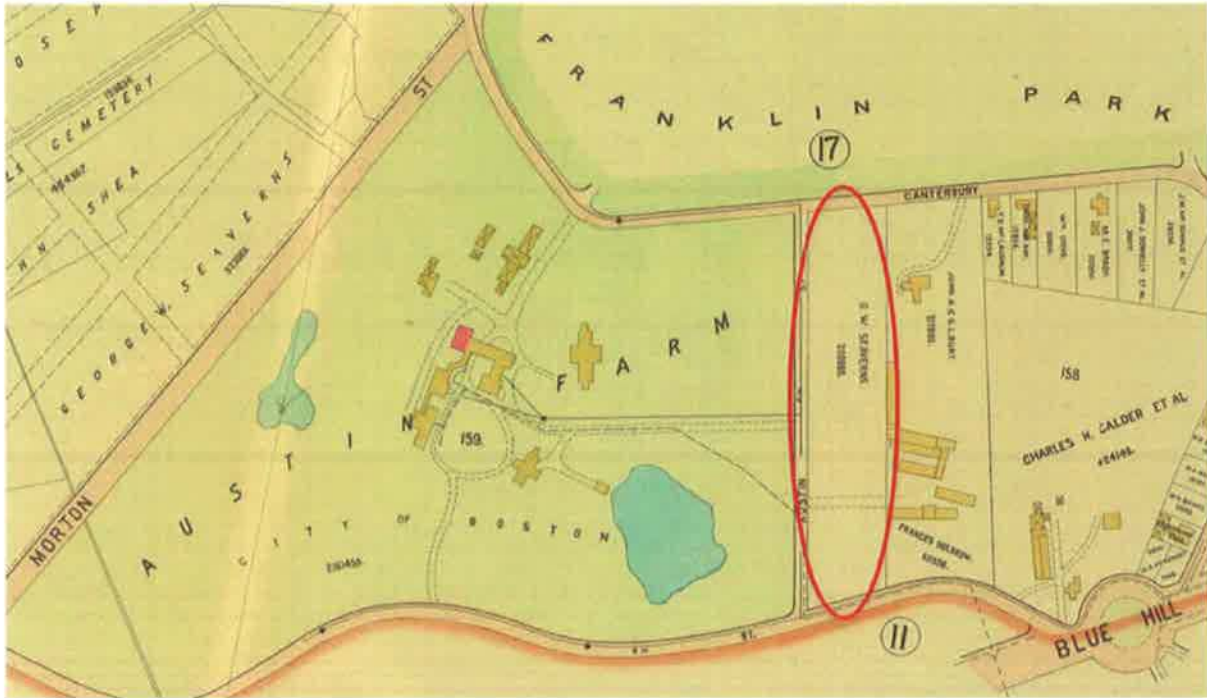


Figure 1: 1899 L.J. Richards Atlas of Dorchester, West Roxbury, and Brighton. The George Seaverns parcel that will become the location of Lorne Street in 1908 is circled in red.

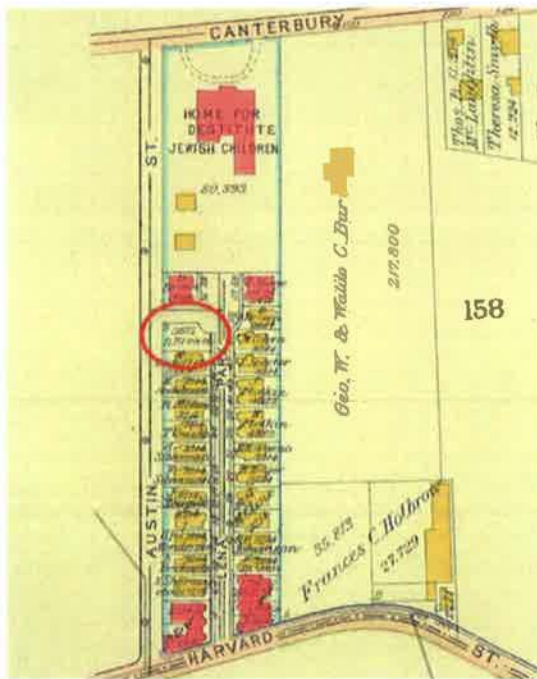


Figure 2: 1914 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas. The only vacant lot, the future site of the Benjamin Silverman Apartments, is circled in red.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

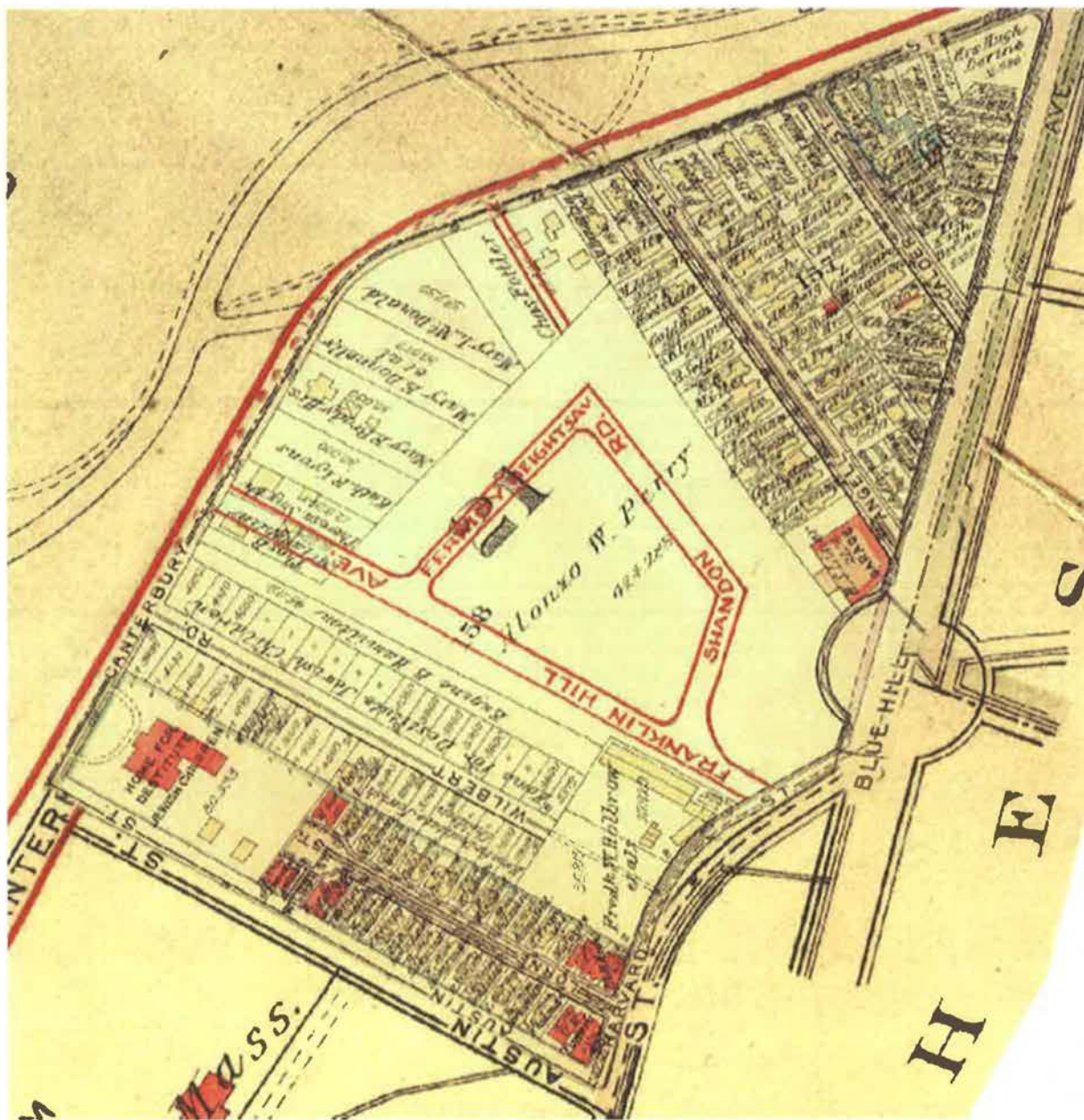


Figure 3: 1924 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas showing the dense development of Lorne, Angell, and Calder streets and the early subdivision of the land in between.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

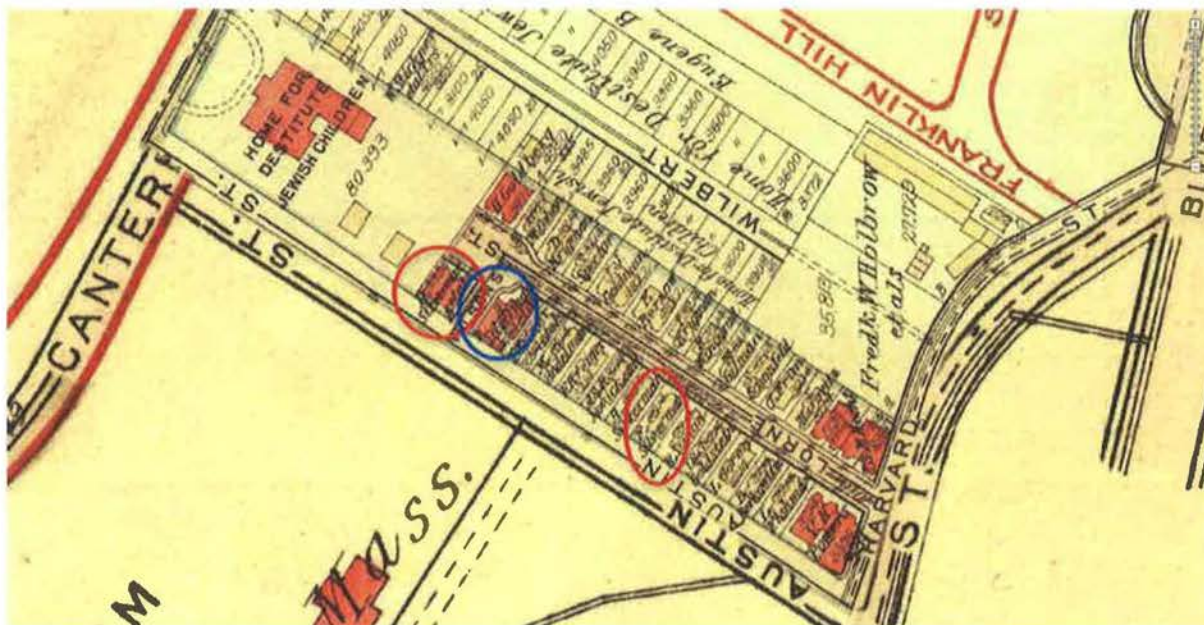
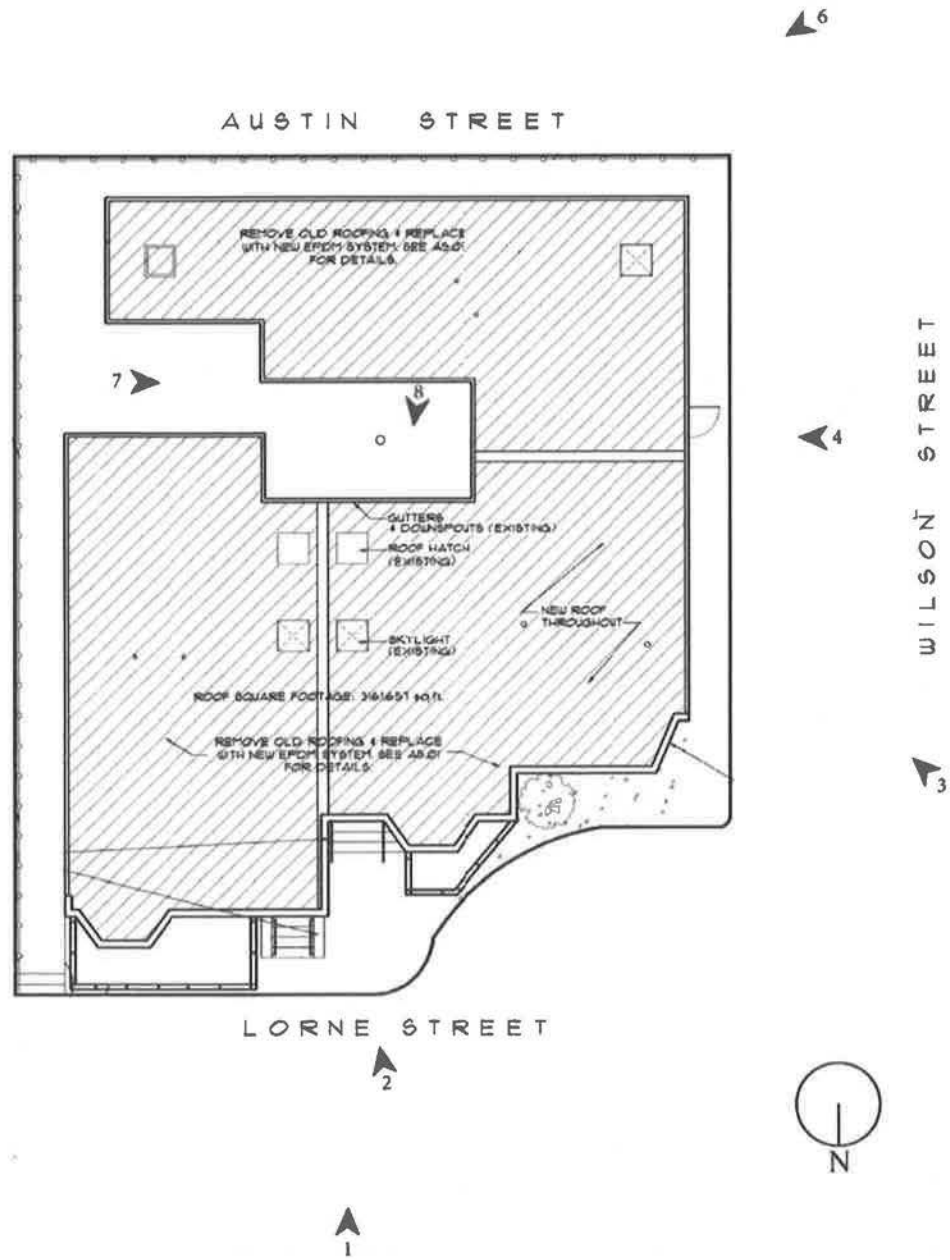


Figure 4: 1924 West Roxbury Bromley Atlas, view of Lorne Street. Properties owned by Benjamin Silverman's wife, Anna, are circled—the Benjamin Silverman Apartments are circled in blue.

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

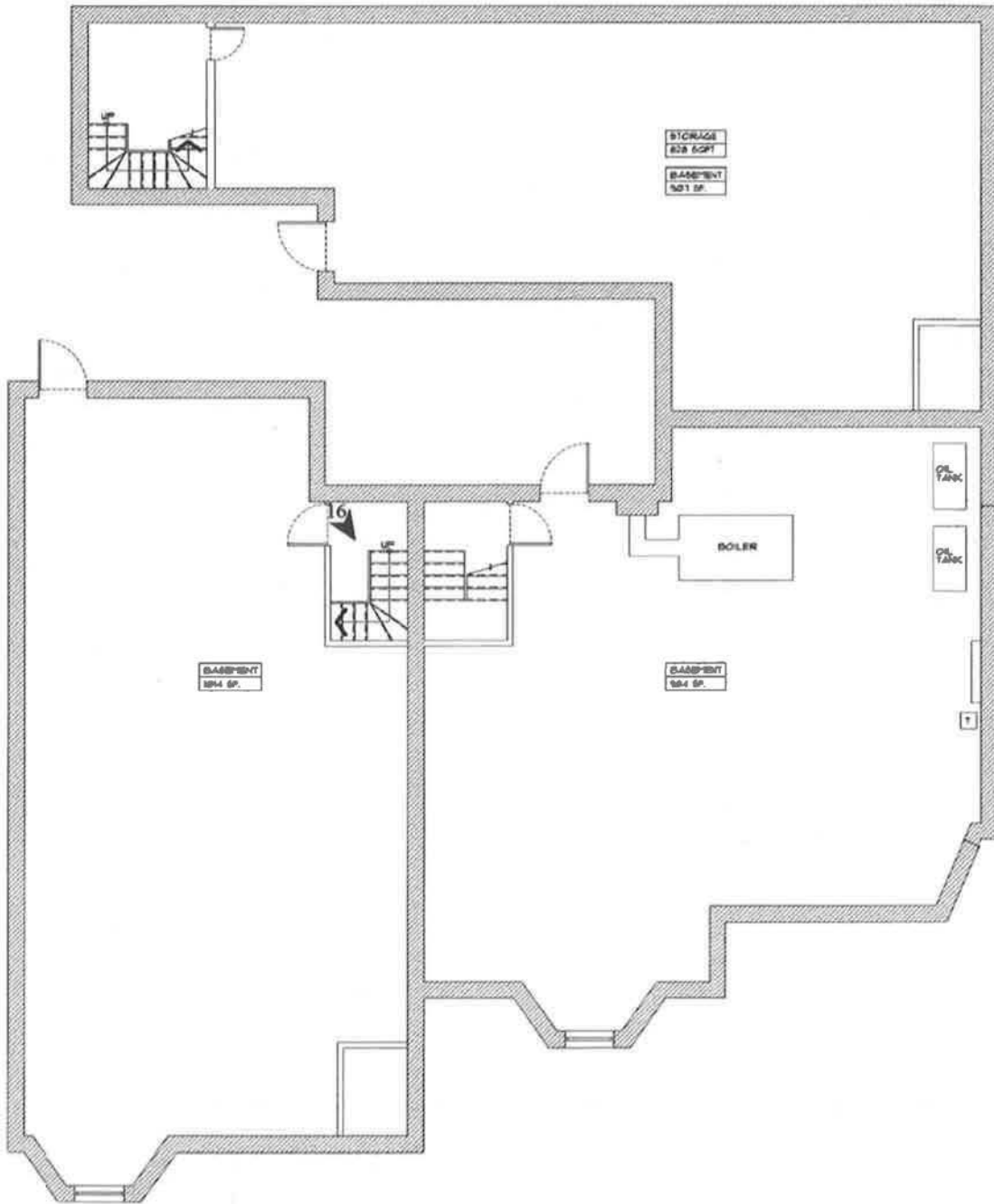
Floor plans and Photo Keys



Location of exterior photographs

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

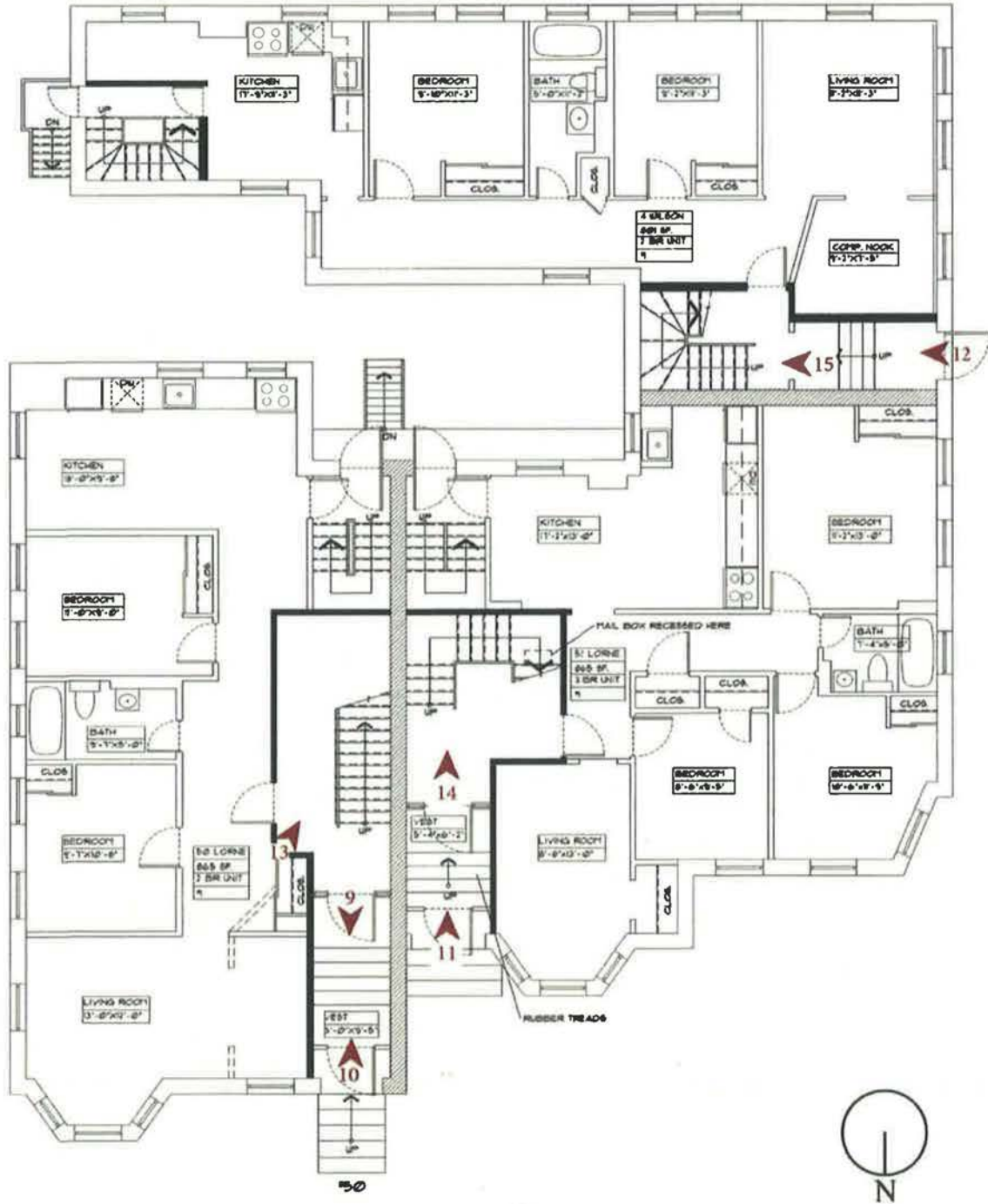
Suffolk, MA
County and State



Basement photographs

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

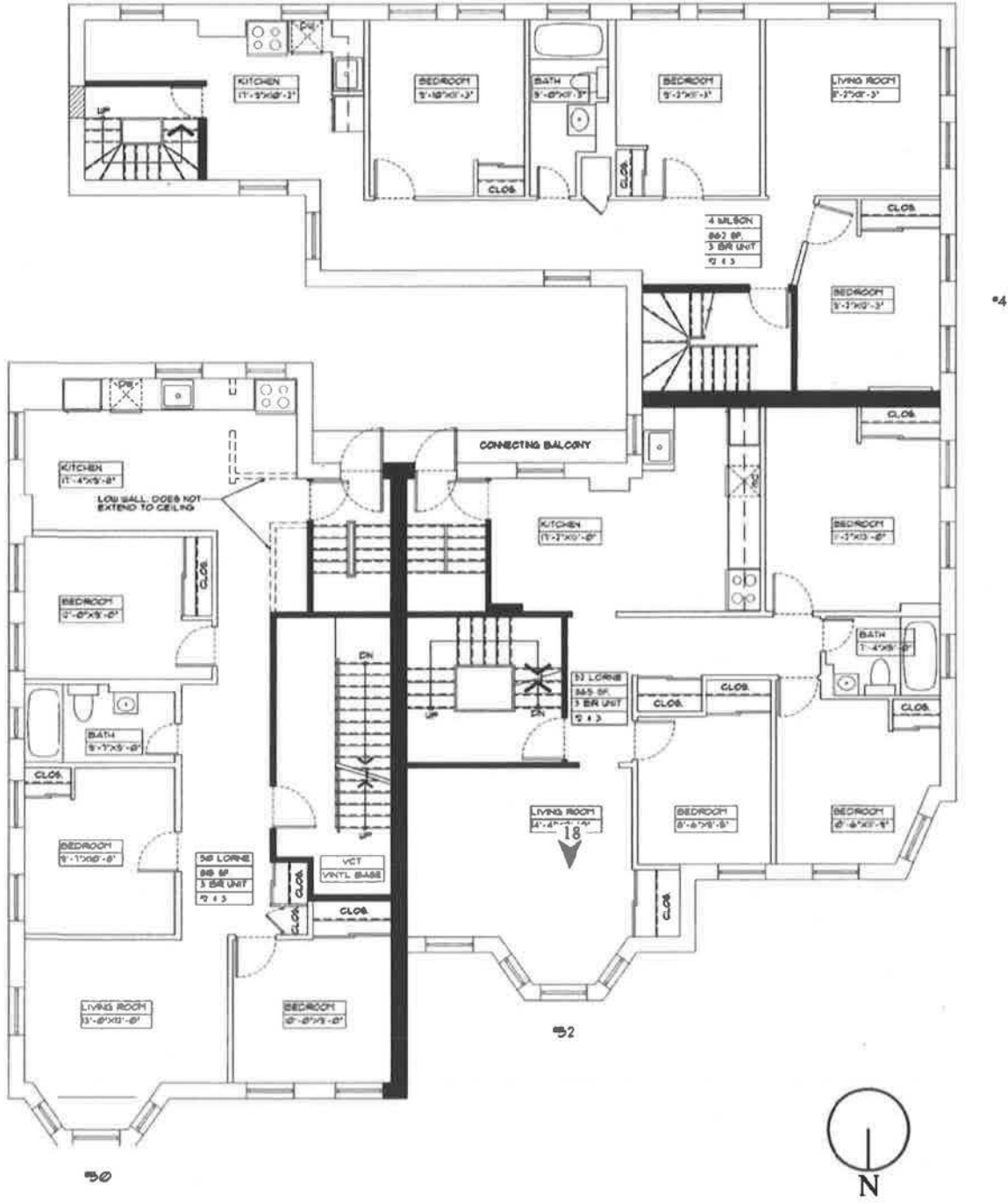
Suffolk, MA
County and State



First floor photographs

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
 Name of Property

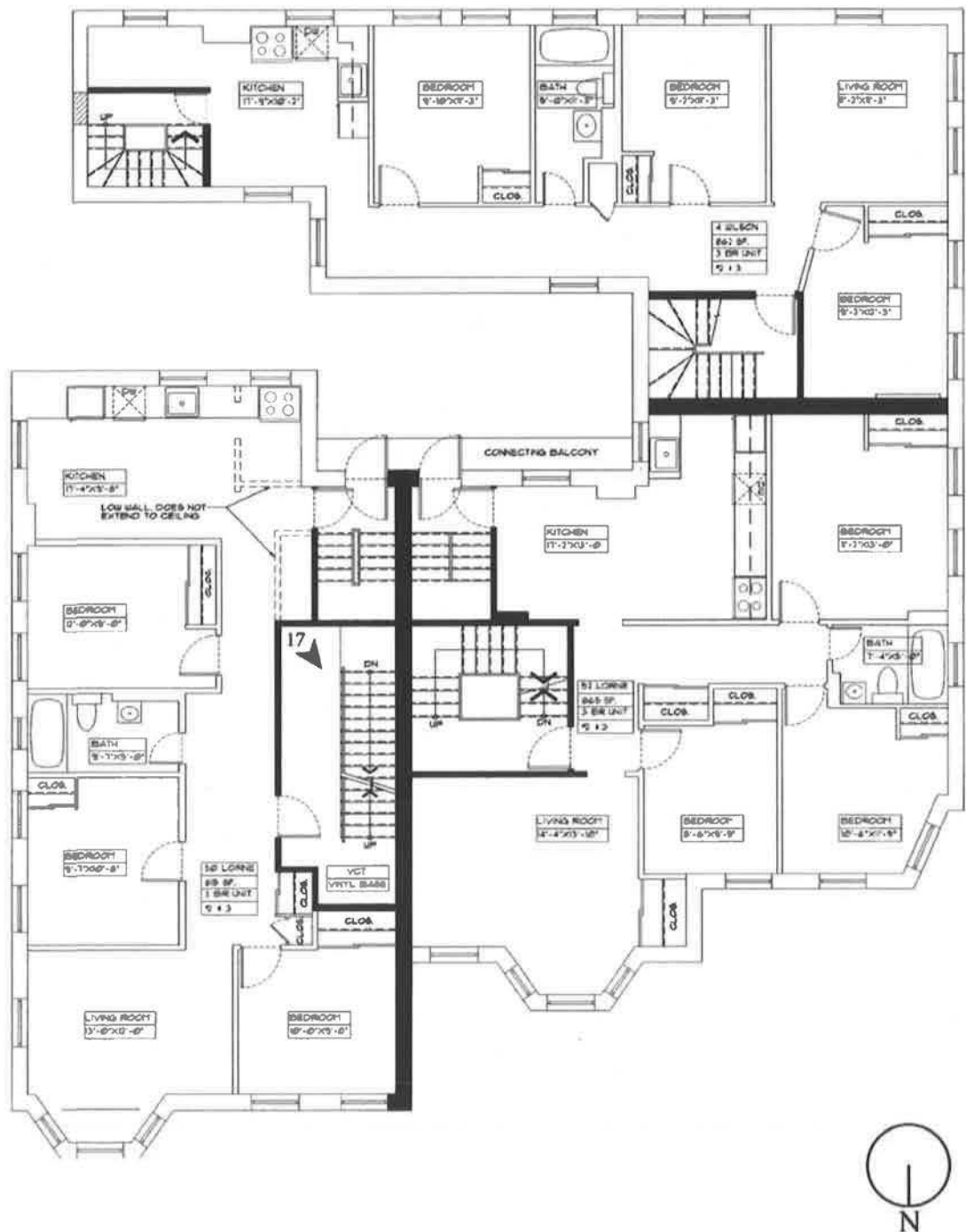
Suffolk, MA
 County and State



Second floor photographs

Benjamin Silverman Apartments
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State



Third floor photographs

Benjamin Silverman Apartments, 50-52 Lorne Street, Boston



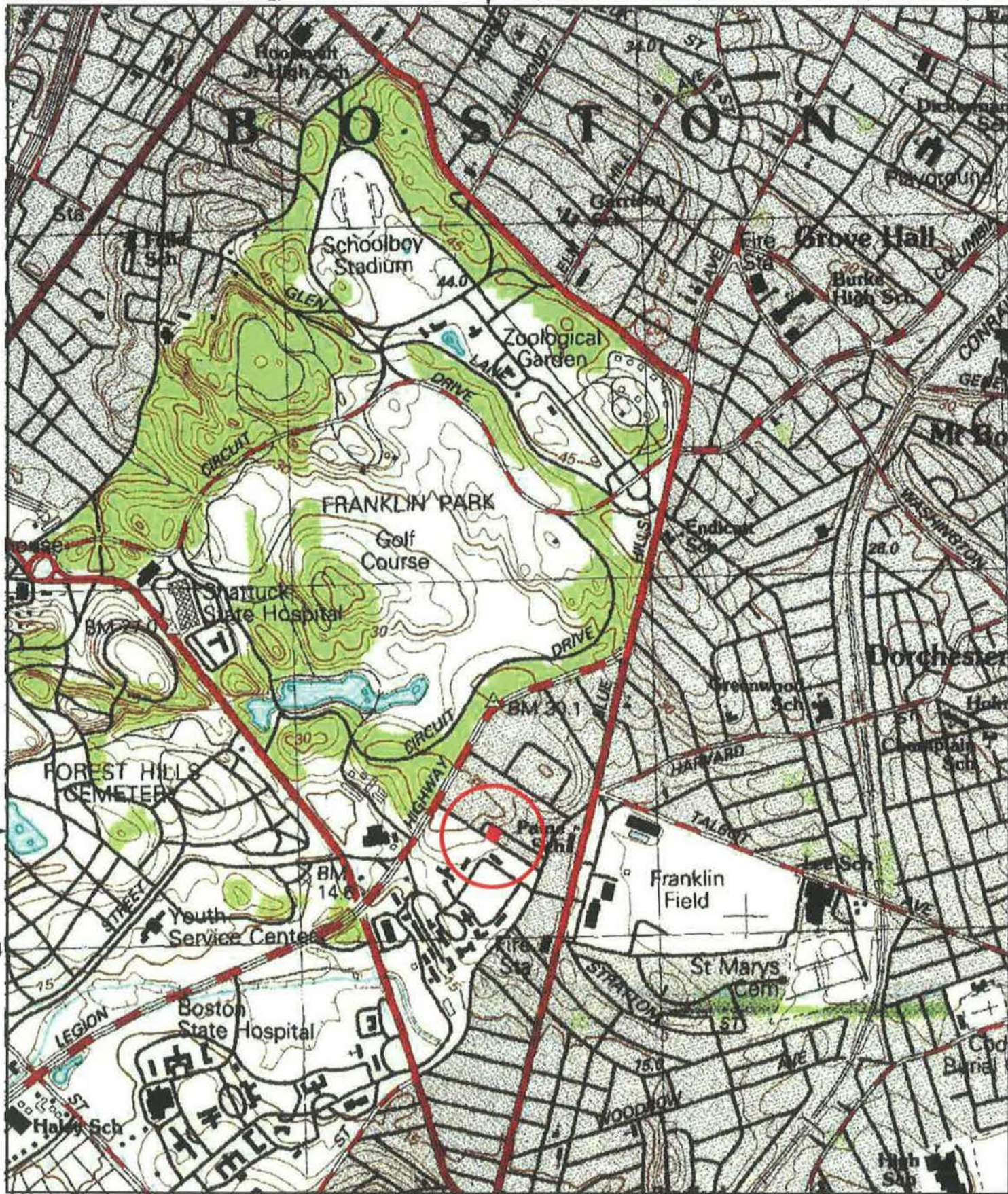
Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intelmap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, C/ G, N, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



**MAP FOR REFERENCE ONLY
NOT A LEGAL DOCUMENT**

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STREET

NO PARKING
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WILL BE
TICKETED
AWAY
AT SCHOOL'S
EXPENSE



Small pink sign with illegible text, possibly a contractor's name and phone number.

DANGER
HARD HATS AND
SAFETY GLASSES
REQUIRED IN THIS AREA

Filla



CRUZ









DRUG-FREE BUILDING
ANYONE CAUGHT USING,
SELLING, OR SUGGESTING
DRUGS ON THIS PROPERTY
WILL BE PROSECUTED
USING THE FULL EXTENT
OF THE LAW.
NO TRESPASSING
POLICE WARRANT NOTED
PRT Management Co., Inc.





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ANYONE FOUND SMOKING,
POSSESSING, OR USING
DRUGS ON THIS PROPERTY
WILL BE PROSECUTED
UNDER THE FULL EXTENT
OF THE LAW.
NO TOLERANCE
POLICE DEPARTMENT (NY, NY)















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Benjamin Silverman Apartments

Multiple Name: _____

State & County: MASSACHUSETTS, Suffolk

Date Received: 7/10/2018 Date of Pending List: 7/31/2018 Date of 16th Day: 8/15/2018 Date of 45th Day: 8/24/2018 Date of Weekly List: _____

Reference number: SG100002790

Nominator: State

Reason For Review:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver | <input type="checkbox"/> National | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG | |

Accept Return Reject 8/24/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: POS: 1915-1968; AOS: Community Planning and Development, Architecture; LOS: local

Recommendation/ Criteria A & C

Reviewer Lisa Deline Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2239 Date 8/24/18

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission



June 28, 2018

Dr. Julie Ernstein
Deputy Keeper
Acting Chief, National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW, Stop 7228
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Dr. Ernstein:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Benjamin Silverman Apartments, Boston (Dorchester) (Suffolk), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owner of the property in the Certified Local Government community of Boston were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and was afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: John B. Cruz III, Cruz Development Corporation
Roysin Bennett Younkin, consultant, MacRostie Historic Advisors
Albert Rex, consultant, MacRostie Historic Advisors
Mayor Martin Walsh, City of Boston
Rosanne Foley, Executive Director, Boston Landmarks Commission
Kathleen Von Jena, Boston Landmarks Commission, CLG Coordinator
Lynn Smiledge, Chairperson, Boston Landmarks Commission