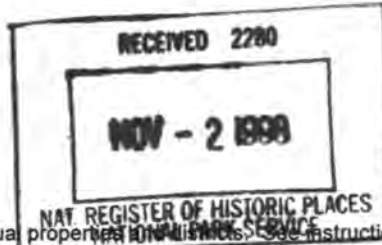


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1448

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name BELMONT RAILROAD STATION

other names/site number BELMONT LIONS CLUB BUILDING

2. Location

street & number 1 COMMON STREET not for publication

city or town BELMONT vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county MIDDLESEX code 017 zip code 02478

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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  
 nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough  
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

10/23/98  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the  
National Register
  - removed from the  
National Register
  - other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

12.4.98

BELMONT RAILROAD STATION

Name of Property

MIDDLESEX, MA

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ building sites

\_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: railroad station

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: club house, civic

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN:

Craftsman

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation fieldstone

walls fieldstone, cast stone, stucco

roof clay tile

other wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior  
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Belmont (Middlesex County)  
MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 1**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Location/Setting

The Belmont Railroad Station/Lions Club Building is located in the Town of Belmont which lies eight miles west of Boston in eastern Middlesex County. It is bordered by Cambridge (est. 1636; east), Watertown (est. 1630; south), Waltham (est. 1738; southwest), Lexington (1713; northwest), and Arlington (1867; north). Belmont is a small (4.6 square miles, 2,992 acres), densely developed, primarily residential suburb. It consists of generally level, fertile land, rising to 341 feet at the top of Belmont (formerly Wellington) Hill in its northeasterly section.

The former railroad station defines the southern edge of Belmont Center which is the town's commercial and institutional hub. The Town Hall and Electric Light building are located northwest of the station on the north side of the railroad tracks and embankment. The station stands at the northwest corner of Concord Avenue and Common Street, where it faces south toward the latter. The station is part of a small, commercial and institutional node that developed at the intersection of these two important roadways and the rail line. A small park with a World War memorial provides a transition between the station and its neighbors. It also provides long approach views, setting the station off to advantage.

Site

The station was constructed as part of a larger project designed to relieve congestion at the heavily traveled at-grade crossing on Concord Avenue. In 1907, a steep embankment was constructed to carry the railroad tracks over Concord Avenue. Portions of the embankment are buttressed with a fieldstone retaining wall topped by granite coping and a decorative cast iron picket fence. The station is built into the south side of the embankment west of Concord Avenue. Concord Avenue passes under a graceful, arched bridge constructed of massive granite blocks a short distance east of the station. A smaller pass-through west of the station allows pedestrians to pass under the tracks in safety. The various elements of the project are unified by their masonry construction.

The nomination includes the station building, the granite arch bridge, the pedestrian underpass, and the embankment between the two latter elements.

Architectural Style/Character-Defining Elements

The station is an excellent example of the rustic Craftsman Style that was popular at the turn-of-the-century for a variety of building types. Characteristic features include the uncoursed fieldstone first story, the half-timbered upper story, and the overhanging red tile roof with

(continued)

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decoratively cut, exposed rafter ends. The design is also characteristic of small town railroad stations of the period. Exterior elements that speak most clearly to the building's specialized function are the stairs and ramps that wrap around the south, east, and west sides to bring passengers to the elevated tracks and covered waiting platform on the north side. All of these elements are expressed as open colonnades that are flush with the exterior walls of the building and are contained beneath the main roof. Except at the western end of the Common Street facade, the supporting members of the colonnade consist of squared, cast stone columns with molded bases and capitals derived from the classical Tuscan order. Now painted dark brown, the columns originally appeared in their natural light gray color.

Materials/Character-Defining Elements

The variety of materials used to construct the station are typical of its style and period. The red tile roof is one of the station's most distinctive and visible features. The tiles were produced at the celebrated Ludowici-Celadon Company of New York and Ohio. They were Imperial Spanish in standard clay red, with hips, ridges and decorative cresting of the same material.

Another key feature is the random-laid, mortared, fieldstone first story that anchors the building firmly to its steeply sloping embankment site. While the roofing tiles were imported, the fieldstones were of local origin. Local farmer David L. Thomas hauled those stones downhill from nearby Highland Stock Farm on Belmont Hill to the station at the foot of the hill. His use of dray and horse to supply materials for a railroad station illustrates the rapidly changing technology of the period. A total of 365 tones of stones were used above ground, with additional tonnage of larger, below ground foundation stones.

The upper walls of the building are covered with rough finished stucco with decorative half-timbering. In most areas the half-timbering appears in a rectilinear pattern that defines and repeats the window pattern. Above the west end stairs, the timbers are laid in a more lively pattern of verticals and diagonals that suggests the movement of the stairway.

According to a 1915 Boston & Maine Railroad valuation survey, other materials used to construct the building include spruce framing, granite block stairways, a brick chimney with 6" granite cap and tiles lining, and cypress gutters. On the interior, paneled wainscoting, and door and window casings are made of ash.

Plan

The station is built on a long east-west rectangular plan. As noted above, the building core is encircled by a covered colonnade that contains gently sloping ramps on the south and west sides,

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stairs on the east, and a waiting platform on the north track side. An internal service stair runs along the east wall. According to original building plans, the interior of the upper, track-level story contained a waiting room in the western half and a baggage room at the eastern end. The central core of the station contained a ticket office, men's and women's restrooms and a stairway. An elevator was planned adjacent to the baggage room. A bowed ticket office was centered on the north wall and contained beneath the waiting platform.

It appears that the south and east-side ramps were primarily intended to bring passengers from the ground level to the east-end baggage room at track level. The west-side stairs brought passengers to the waiting platform and west-end waiting room.

General Features

The station rises to two stories on its primary Common Street (south) side. The less visible track side (north) is one story due to the steep slope of the embankment. Visually, the exterior consists of two sections. The western half is enclosed by a hip roof. The eastern half is enclosed by a gable roof with an extended front (south) slope. Its form is echoed by the stair that ascends on the west side. The distinctive red tile roof is one of the building's primary character-defining elements.

Exterior Elevations

South Elevation: The primary Common Street facade is covered by a ramped colonnade that rises from west to east. Contained beneath the main roof, and flush with the outer wall surfaces, the ramp skillfully interweaves interior and exterior spaces. The floor of the ramp is paved with cast stone blocks laid in a diamond pattern. The ceiling is covered with narrow matchboards. The building wall behind the colonnade is fieldstone at the first story and half-timbered rough-cast stucco at the second.

The western half of the south facade is three bays long. At the first story, those bays take the form of segmental arch openings within the fieldstone wall. These regularly spaced openings decrease in height from west to east reflecting the rise of the ramped corridor within. The arch vousoirs consist of vertically placed stones of similar size. A fourth opening at the west end provides views of a stair that leads directly to the railroad tracks and waiting platform. The stuccoed and half-timbered second story continues the plane of the outer ramp wall. Here, three nearly square window openings are aligned above the first story arches. The openings contain paired, fifteen-pane casement sash headed by twelve-pane transoms. The windows are framed by wooded strips that reinforce the rectilinear pattern of the half-timbering.

(continued)

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The eastern half of the front facade is five bays long. The fieldstone first story contains a single, segmental arched door opening in the fourth bay from the west. It opens into a recessed vestibule which accesses first floor storage areas. The second story consists of a colonnade whose graduated openings reflect the ramped corridor that rises along the entire front of the building, continuing the pattern established at the first story of the west half. The openings are defined by squared cast stone columns with molded caps and bases.

East Elevation: The four bay, east gable elevation is two stories at its south end and one story at the north, reflecting the steepness of the embankment into which it is set. Here the fieldstone first story tapers from full height at the south end to a few courses at track-side. The wall carries an open colonnade, similar to that seen on the south elevation. The colonnade rises to a half-timbered gable. All but the southernmost of the colonnade bays were filled with concrete block after passenger service was curtailed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

West Elevation: Like the east end, the west end of the station is set into the embankment and rises sharply from south to north. It is covered by a stair that rises to the north-side waiting platform. The stair consists of a closed fieldstone rail that carries a colonnade and half-timbered upper wall. The open south bay provides entrance to both the stair and the south elevation ramp. The stair roof consists of a long front slope and short rear slope, echoing the form of the east gable end.

North Elevation: The one story north elevation rises from the top of the embankment and faces the tracks. Then entire length is fronted by a covered waiting platform that is contained beneath the main roof and continues the colonnade details established on the other elevations. The building walls behind the colonnade is centered on the gentle bow of the former ticket office.

Alterations:

The Belmont Railroad Station/Lions Club Building possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The primary south elevation facing Common Street, and the west end elevation have not experienced any significant degree of change. The north (track-side) and east ends of the perimeter colonnade were filled with concrete block in 1973 due to vandalism and issues of liability.

In addition, the original clay roof tiles have been replaced with red asphalt on the north side. Rock throwing and other acts of vandalism were encouraged by the cessation of regular passenger service in the late 1950s, coupled with low public visibility and the secluded nature of this rear elevation. The result was broken roof tiles that left the building open to the weather and further damage.

(continued)

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The interior plan remains little changed, and interior spaces retain many of their original fittings.

Bridge

Adjoining the railroad station to the east is a single span, filled spandrel stone arch bridge, 85 feet in width. Both the intrados of the arch and the spandrel walls are neatly coursed and the voussoirs are uniformly cut. Ornamentation includes curved, stepped wingwalls, spandrel iron coping, and an iron railing atop the coping. The bridge formerly carried the Central Massachusetts Railroad on a third track, but the line was consolidated with the rails of the Fitchburg Division in 1952, the third track abandoned and the rails removed. The two tracks that remain in service carry the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's Fitchburg commuter rail line. The 65-foot span length makes this arch the third longest masonry arch on the commuter rail system after bridges in Framingham and Attleboro.

**Archaeological Description**

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded on the property, sites may be present. Four prehistoric sites are located in the general area (within one mile). Most of these sites are recorded along the shorelines of nearby ponds including Spy, Fresh and Little Ponds or along the Beaver Brook drainage to the west of the nominated property. In general, however, the potential for locating prehistoric sites on the Lions Club property is low. Environmental characteristics of the nominated parcel are not well suited for most types of prehistoric sites. Wetlands are not present within 1000ft of the property and the embankment into which the railroad station was built was constructed in 1907. Previously, the railroad crossed Concord Avenue at grade. Given the above factors and the small size of the property (.01 acres), the potential for recovering significant historic archaeological resources on the property is also low. Beyond the existing railroad grade and tracks, which were present prior to the construction of the embankment and station, no other historic resources or land use have been identified for this location.

(end)

Belmont Railroad Station  
Name of Property

Middlesex, 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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TRANSPORTATION

#### Period of Significance

1907-1948

#### Significant Dates

1907-08

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

N/A

#### Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Belmont Historical Society

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MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 1**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

**Criteria Statement**

The Belmont Railroad Station complex is an outstanding local landmark on both historical and architectural grounds. Introduction of the Fitchburg Railroad in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century played a pivotal role in the subsequent founding and development of the Town of Belmont. As the last of four stations to serve Belmont Center, the station building and bridge represent the consolidation of rail service, and its full integration into the surrounding community through elimination of the at-grade crossing with Concord Avenue. The station thus meets National Register criterion A. The station also meets criterion C as a highly distinctive example of Craftsman-influence architecture that compliments its surroundings and provides a well conceived transition between the commercial and governmental buildings of Belmont Center and residential neighborhoods to the south. In addition, its form and plan are representative of turn-of-the-century railroad station design.

The station complex possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and associations. It is important on the local level with a period of significance that extends from its construction in 1907-08 to 1948, the fifty year cut-off date established by the National Register. Under the ownership of the Belmont Lions since the mid-1950s, the building had maintained a highly visible role in the life of the community and continues to make a vital contribution to Belmont's unique character.

**Historical Significance**

Belmont was incorporated as a town on March 18, 1859 from parts of the surrounding communities of Waltham (1738), Watertown (1630), and West Cambridge (1807). The act of incorporation was largely the result of successive transportation changes that improved access to the Belmont area and stimulated slow but steady growth. The process culminated in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with the introduction of rail service which had far more profound effect than any of the preceding roadways.

Most authors of Belmont history have recognized the primary role played by the railroad in the establishment of the town. Middlesex County historian and former Belmont resident Thomas W. Davis stated that:

"No town in New England, unless it be a railroad center, owes its existence as a distinct municipality more directly to railroad enterprise, than does the town of Belmont."

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Current town historian Richard Betts echoed that observation:

“No town in New England owes its existence more directly to the railroad than Belmont... The railroad [of 1843] made the purely agricultural community available for residences of well-to-do Bostonians, and they rapidly took advantage of the opportunity... the picturesque former Boston & Maine Railroad Station... was erected in 1907 when the grade crossing at Concord Avenue and Common Street was eliminated and the underpass constructed.”

During the Colonial period, present-day Belmont was a lightly inhabited and rather remote agricultural area west of Boston. It was crisscrossed by a network of roads that connected early communities like Watertown (1630), Concord (1635), Cambridge (1636), Lexington (1713) and Waltham (1738). The few early houses were located along those roadways which included Common, Pleasant, School, and Washington Streets.

The Concord Turnpike of 1803-04 (now Concord Avenue) provided a direct, well maintained link with Cambridge and Boston and so represented a major improvement to the existing road system. It encouraged development of a few small-scale industries like blacksmiths and wheelwrights, along with public accommodations in the form of hotels and taverns. In undoubtedly improved business for the existing Wellington Tavern of 1799 which stood near the intersection of the Turnpike with Pleasant and Common Streets in what is now Belmont Center.

By the 1840s Belmont had achieved a population of about 125 families, but remained a bucolic, lightly settled agricultural community whose economy was based on market gardening. Local farmers supplied surrounding towns, including Boston and Cambridge, with fresh fruit and vegetables. Strawberries were one of the principal crops. In addition, several wealthy Bostonians established notable summer estates in the area. Both market gardens and summer estates were directly related to improved connections with Boston.

Construction of the Fitchburg Railroad through present-day Belmont during this decade dramatically changed the fortunes of the would-be town by further improving the Boston link and making Belmont more accessible to the city's rapidly growing population. The Fitchburg line originated in 1841 as a private venture by Frederick Tudor to connect his Fresh Pond Ice Company in North Cambridge (at the Belmont town line) with his wharves on the Charlestown side of Boston Harbor.

In 1843 the Fitchburg Railroad obtained a charter from the Massachusetts legislature to operate a rail line that would link the state capitol and regional hub in Boston with the thriving industrial center at Waltham, and thence westward to Fitchburg. To simplify the process, the principals took over Tudor's existing "Ice Railroad" which already spanned approximately half the distance.

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A topographical survey determined that the most advantageous westward route from Fresh Pond would pass through the present-day Belmont. Specifically, this route proceeded northwesterly, on a course parallel to the 1803 Turnpike, then turned southwesterly, following the southern foot of Wellington (now Belmont) Hill and the course of Beaver Brook onward to its confluence with the Charles River in Waltham. Had it not been for Tudor's pre-existing line, the Fitchburg Railroad would almost certainly have traversed more populated areas along the banks of the Charles or Mystic rivers.

Two stations were established at present-day Belmont Center and Waverley Square where they served several small residential enclaves of distinctly different character. The flatlands around the latter were subdivided into small lots by a land company, while the hillsides of the former attracted wealthy individuals who built large estates. Winslow Homer, who stayed at the summer house of his uncle, William Flagg, was one of several artists who came to Wellington Hill in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1854 the population of Belmont had increased sufficiently for 126 residents, led by Charles Stone, to petition the state legislature for incorporation as a new town. The name Belmont was suggested in honor of John Perkins Cushing's grand 1840 estate *Bellmont*. The initial petition failed as did several ensuing attempts. Success was finally achieved on March 19, 1859 after the Belmont Congregational Society was established and a church erected on Concord Avenue in answer to one of the main arguments against incorporation.

Belmont Center has been served by four railroad stations whose design and scale reflected depot architecture of the period as well as the character of the town they served. All stood in the vicinity of the present station building. Little is known of the first station which was constructed soon after 1843 and destroyed by fire in 1851.

The second station was a diminutive wood-frame structure of picturesque, octagonal design that originated as a schoolhouse in the early 1840s. After 1851, it was first rented, and then sold to the railroad. After it was replaced by a new station in 1879, the schoolhouse/depot was moved to the nearby Underwood estate. In 1981 the Belmont Historical Society moved it to a small town park across Common Street from the present station, in one of Belmont's most ambitious preservation efforts.

The third Belmont Center station was constructed in 1879 on the east side of Concord Avenue, south of the railroad tracks. It was a much larger, two story wood-frame building that was designed in a handsome Victorian Gothic style. It was described in a Report by the Board of Selectmen as "a handsome and commodious depot." When it was replaced in 1907-08, the 1879 station was moved southward on Concord Avenue and converted to use as a tenement house.

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While in service, however, the third Fitchburg Railroad Station was joined by a smaller station constructed to serve the 1881 Massachusetts Central Railroad whose tracks paralleled those of the Fitchburg Railroad. The two stations were accompanied by an attended gatehouse that stood between the tracks. The gatehouse and attendant recognized the dangerous congestion at the Concord Avenue crossing. The rapidly worsening problem resulted from introduction of the second rail line, increased numbers of carriages and streetcars, and the beginnings of automobile traffic.

The bridge was constructed as part of the 1906 grade-crossing elimination program in Belmont. As early as the 1870s the Board of Railroad Commissioners lamented the number of grade crossings being constructed on new lines. In 1890 the Commission introduced a bill which became the Massachusetts Grade Crossing Elimination Act. Under the terms of the act, any municipality could petition the Railroad Commission for the removal of a railroad grade crossing. In the Commission granted the request, costs would be apportioned between the railroad (65%), the Commonwealth (25%) and the town or city in which the crossing was located (10%).

The Fitchburg Railroad was absorbed by the Boston & Maine in 1902. This followed a typical pattern that occurred throughout New England and the nation as larger and better capitalized lines absorbed small local lines to create national networks. The new owners quickly initiated plans to improve the at-grade crossing.

In 1906 the B & M offered the idea of elevating the railroad tracks above Concord Avenue and other intersecting roadways so that street traffic could pass beneath. The first proposal was for a steel girder bridge to carry the tracks over the street. This utilitarian solution did not find favor with Belmont leaders who successfully lobbied for a more aesthetically pleasing alternative that would better suit the prosperous residential character of the town.

The strikingly handsome low-arched masonry bridge that still distinguishes the southern approach to Belmont Center results from the efforts of several of the town's elder statesmen including Henry O. Underwood and Edwin Atkins. Similar efforts occurred in other communities that recognized the importance of railroads as local gateways and the key role they played in establishing impressions of community character.

The graceful granite arch bridge was part of an ensemble that also included an embankment with pedestrian pass-through and the present station. In granting provisional approval, the state Railroad Commission described the grade change project thus:

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“At Belmont, they proposed that the tracks of the Fitchburg and Massachusetts Central divisions, which run from this district, close beside one another although at present provided with separate stations, shall be raised far enough to allow Concord Avenue and other streets centreing [sic] at Belmont station to pass underneath. The plan includes a handsome stone-arch bridge for carrying the tracks over the streets; and a new station westerly of the point of crossing, instead of on the sites easterly of the crossing that are already used for station purposes.” (Boston *Transcript*, February 2, 1907)

As noted above, the railroad played a pivotal role in the founding and subsequent development of the town. As the last of four stations to serve Belmont Center, this building represents the consolidation of railroad service, and its full integration into the surrounding community through elimination of the at-grade crossing. Together with the contemporary embankment and granite bridge, the station constitutes a notable example of community design, and makes a proud and unified statement about the solidly conservative residential character of the town they served in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Architectural Significance**

The Belmont Railroad Station is a highly distinctive piece of Craftsman-influenced architecture that complements its surroundings and provides a well-conceived transition between the commercial and governmental buildings of Belmont Center and residential neighborhoods to the south. It is larger and more elaborate than any of its other predecessors and is the first of masonry construction. Although original drawings of the station have survived, the unfortunately do not specify the architect.

The architectural quality of the Belmont Railroad Station has been recognized by many sources. For example, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Belmont Town Report notes that Belmont Center developed “around a notable Victorian town hall and depot.” Similarly, the comprehensive, community-wide Belmont survey conducted in 1982, evaluated the station as “A pivotal structure in the proposed extension to the Pleasant Street Historic District” and as meeting the National Register criteria on an individual basis as well. Specific aspects of its design also illustrate general trends in the evolution of railroad station design. Key elements include the ramps and stairways that encircle the building to bring both baggage and passengers from street to track level.

(continued)

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MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 6**Modern Period/Belmont Lions Club**

Belmont train service peaked in the 1920s and then entered a long period of decline and trucks usurped freight business and personal automobiles stole passenger traffic. This scenario is typical of railroads through the state, region, and nation. By 1954, the daily average of passengers boarding at Belmont Center had dropped to about fifty.

The mid-1950s mark the beginnings of the station's modern history. At that time, the railroad initiated plans to demolish the station. Their goal was to replace it with a simple concrete block structure, or to find a buyer and avoid the cost of demolition. Fortunately, the Belmont Lions Club stepped forward to purchase and preserve the historic station building.

The Belmont Lions Club was organized on May 27, 1948 as the 100<sup>th</sup> Lions Club in Massachusetts and the fourth service club in Belmont. The earlier Belmont organizations were the Rotary, Town, and Kiwanis Clubs. The original group of 26 charter members initially met in private homes. On August 20, 1948 they formally adopted the Belmont Women's Club as their headquarters.

Less than eight years after their formation, on January 6, 1956, the Belmont Lions Club announced that they had purchased the Belmont Center railroad station from the Boston & Maine Railroad. An article in the Belmont *Citizen* described the Lions as a "non-profit civic service corporation" and noted that they intended to renovate the building as a meeting place for the club and a center for both club and community activities. The article also stated that:

"The Belmont station has fallen into considerable disrepair and has been the victim of much juvenile vandalism since it has ceased to be used actively as a station. It is hoped that once Belmont's youngsters and their parents realize the building is now the property of a local group dedicated to the service of teenagers and needy adults, that such expensive depredations will stop. All the money spent on the repairs will be that much less for needed local projects."

When the Lions held an open house in late November 1956, the Belmont *Herald* reported that Belmont was one of only two clubs in the state that owned its headquarters. (*Herald*, 11/15/56)

In the fall of 1957, the B & M petitioned the state Department of Public Utilities to discontinue passenger service at all of its stations within the MTA area, including the Belmont and Waverley stations. Vice-President of the railroad, G.F. Glacy, testified that the B & M could no longer compete with the low rates and frequency of service offered by the publicly subsidized Metropolitan Transit Authority:

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Belmont Railroad Station  
Belmont (Middlesex County)  
Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 7

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“The B & M can no longer continue the wasteful duplication of transportation at the 26 stations on its lines in territory served by the MTA where the Boston and Maine is no longer competitive in either fares or frequency of service; and the Boston & Maine can no longer afford to furnish passenger service which has virtually no patronage and which has been operated only because of custom and without reference to public necessity.” (Belmont *Citizen* clipping, “B & M Would End passenger Service Here.” 9/27/57)

Passenger service was curtailed soon thereafter. Limited commuter service from Belmont to Boston was reinstated on March 4, 1974 during a severe energy crisis, and continues today.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetBelmont Railroad Station  
Belmont (Middlesex County)  
MassachusettsSection number 9 Page 1

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"Belmont Owes its Existence to a Railroad," *Belmont Citizen*, July 10, 1980. Belmont Historical Society. Vertical Files: Railroads and Transportation, clipping

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(end)

Belmont Railroad Station  
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** less than one

### UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 Zone	320840 Easting	4695800 Northing	3. Zone	Easting	Northing
2. Zone	Easting	Northing	4. Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC  
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date September 1998  
street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617-727-8470  
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Belmont Lions Club / Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority  
street & number 1 Common Street / 10 Park Plaza telephone 617-484-9816 / 617-222-5000  
city or town Belmont / Boston state MA zip code 02474 / 02115

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503. NPS Form 10-900 OMB No.

1024-0018  
(Rev. 10-90)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Belmont Railroad Station  
Belmont (Middlesex County)  
Massachusetts

Section number 10 Page 1

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**Boundary description**

The nominated property is delineated on Assessor's Map #31, lot #11 of the Town of Belmont. It includes the Belmont Railroad Station, its passenger platform currently in use for commuter traffic, and the adjoining Concord Avenue bridge on the east side of the platform. -

**Boundary justification**

The nominated railroad station and its adjoining platform is still currently used for MBTA passenger traffic on the Fitchburg branch of the commuter train system. Portions of the platform rest atop the adjoining Concord Avenue bridge that was built as an unimpeded grade crossing in 1906 as part of the entire station complex.

(end)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Belmont Railroad Station  
Belmont (Middlesex County)  
Massachusetts

Section number photos Page \_\_\_\_\_

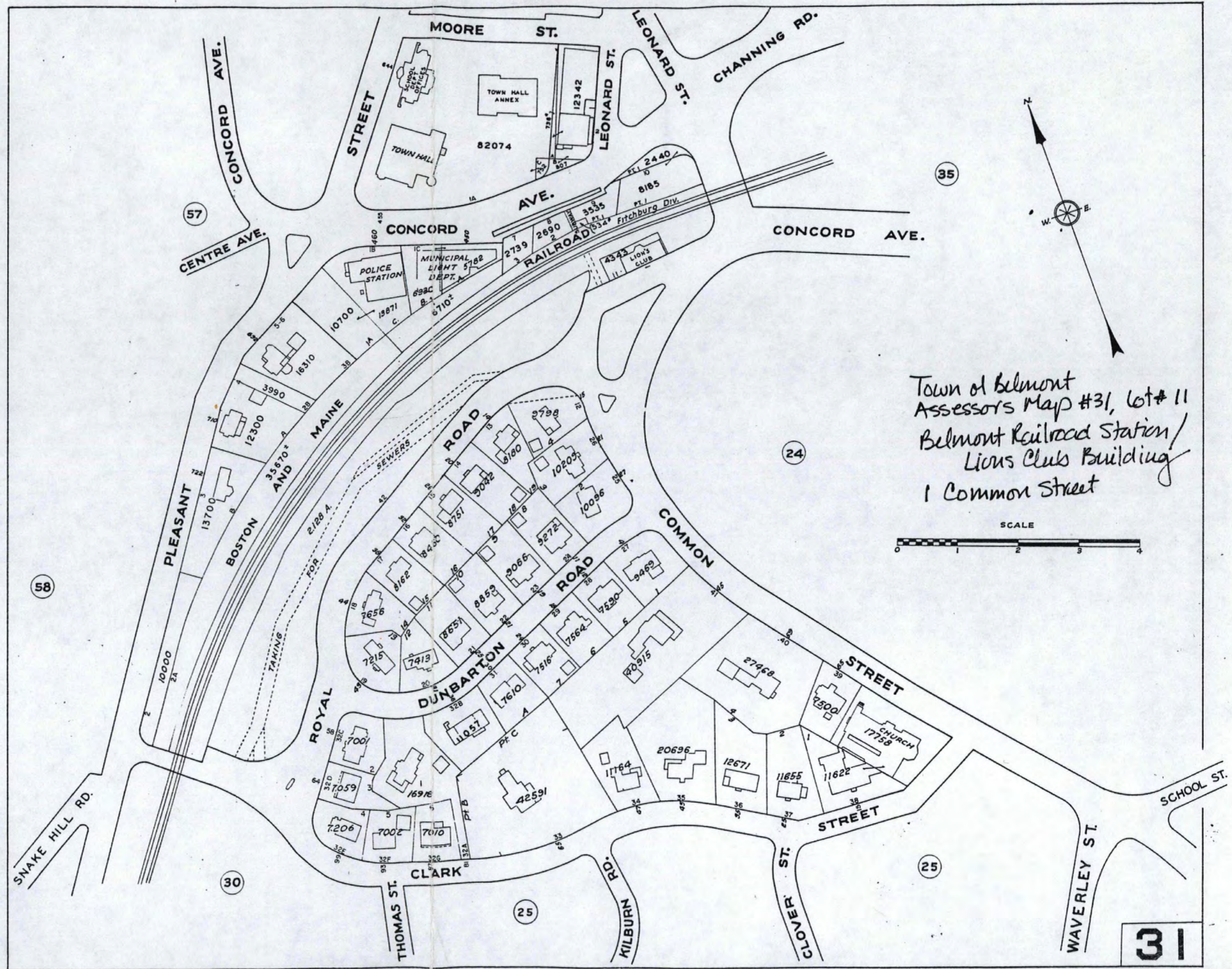
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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

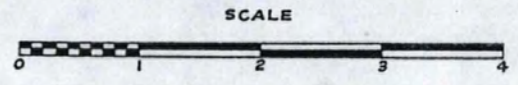
Taken by Candace Jenkins, 1998  
Negatives in collection of Ms. Jenkins

Photos 1, 2 (8 x 10), photos 3, 4 (3 x 5)

1. Depot, facing NW (July 1998)
2. West and south elevations, facing E (March 1998)
3. Pleasant Street bridge, facing S (February 1998)
4. Bridge, facing N



Town of Belmont  
 Assessor's Map #31, Lot # 11  
 Belmont Railroad Station/  
 Lions Club Building  
 1 Common Street



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Belmont Railroad Station

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 11/02/98      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/17/98  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/03/98      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/17/98  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 98001443

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: N    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    12.4.98 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Entered in the  
National Register*

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



Belmont Railroad Station July 1998

1 Common St.

Belmont, MA

Facing NW

Candace Jewlans

17 Stude St, Belmont



Belmont Railroad Station 3/1998

1 Common St.

Belmont, MA

Candace Jenkins

17 Slade St.

Belmont, MA

West & South elevations facing east





Belmont RR Station 2/98

1 Comm St, Belmont, MA

Bridge facing S

Candace Jenkins, 17 Slade St, Belmont

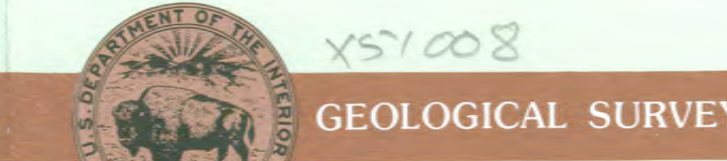
# Boston North MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works  
 Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies  
 Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1974. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1985.  
 Supersedes Boston North and Lexington 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1971.  
 Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 13272 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.  
 Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19  
 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum to place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 over the projection line 6 meters south and 41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks.  
 There may be private landholdings within the boundaries of the National or State Reservations shown on this map.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.3 METER  
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS  
 DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
 SHORLINES SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.9 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE	DECLINATION DIAGRAM	ADJOINING MAPS
Meters		1 2 3
Feet		4 5 6
1 3,280		7 8
2 6,561		
3 9,842		
4 13,123		
5 16,404		
6 19,685		
7 22,966		
8 26,247		
9 29,528		
10 32,809		
11 36,090		
12 39,371		
13 42,652		
14 45,933		
15 49,214		
16 52,495		
17 55,776		
18 59,057		
19 62,338		
20 65,619		
21 68,900		
22 72,181		
23 75,462		
24 78,743		
25 82,024		
26 85,305		
27 88,586		
28 91,867		
29 95,148		
30 98,429		
31 101,710		
32 104,991		
33 108,272		
34 111,553		
35 114,834		
36 118,115		
37 121,396		
38 124,677		
39 127,958		
40 131,239		
41 134,520		
42 137,801		
43 141,082		
44 144,363		
45 147,644		
46 150,925		
47 154,206		
48 157,487		
49 160,768		
50 164,049		
51 167,330		
52 170,611		
53 173,892		
54 177,173		
55 180,454		
56 183,735		
57 187,016		
58 190,297		
59 193,578		
60 196,859		
61 200,140		
62 203,421		
63 206,702		
64 210,000		
65 213,280		
66 216,560		
67 219,840		
68 223,120		
69 226,400		
70 229,680		
71 232,960		
72 236,240		
73 239,520		
74 242,800		
75 246,080		
76 249,360		
77 252,640		
78 255,920		
79 259,200		
80 262,480		
81 265,760		
82 269,040		
83 272,320		
84 275,600		
85 278,880		
86 282,160		
87 285,440		
88 288,720		
89 292,000		
90 295,280		
91 298,560		
92 301,840		
93 305,120		
94 308,400		
95 311,680		
96 314,960		
97 318,240		
98 321,520		
99 324,800		
100 328,080		

ISBN 0-607-23443-3  
 9 780607 234433

## Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road, trail
- Route marker: Interstate; U. S. State
- Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
- Bridge: drawbridge
- Footbridge; overpass; underpass
- Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Boundary:
  - National, with monument
  - State
  - County, parish
  - Civil township, precinct, district
  - Incorporated city, village, town
  - National or State reservation; small park
  - Land grant with monument; found section corner
  - U. S. public lands survey; range, township, section
  - Range, township; section line; location approximate
  - Fence or field line
  - Power transmission line, located tower
  - Dam with lock; dam with spillway
  - Cemetery; grave
  - Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument
  - Windmill; water well; spring
  - Mine shaft; prospect; shaft or core
  - Conical: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
  - Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
  - Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
  - Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
  - Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
  - Rapids; large and small; falls; large and small
  - Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
  - Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland
  - Scrub; mangrove
  - Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

Belmont Railroad Sta.  
 1 Common St.  
 Belmont, MA 02478  
 Middlesex County  
 1/320840/4695740





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

October 23, 1998

Ms. Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Belmont Railroad Depot, 1 Common Street, Belmont (Middlesex Co.), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Belmont Lions Club Building Committee  
Candace Jenkins, Preservation Consultant  
William R. Skelly III, Chair, Belmont Board of Selectmen  
Lydia P. Ogilby, Chair, Belmont Historical Commission  
Edward Jones, President, Belmont Lions Club  
Jeffrey Wheeler, Town Planner