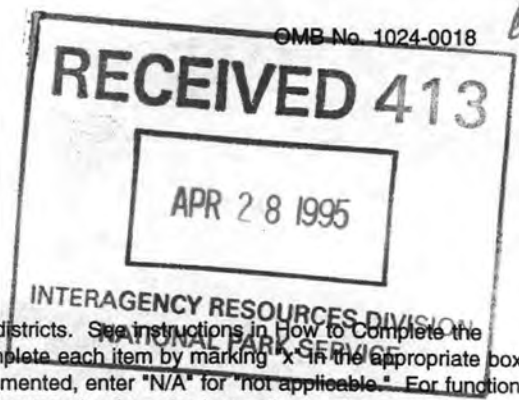


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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**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 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 Wilder Street Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 284 - 360 Wilder Street

N/A not for publication

city or town Lowell

N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01852

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

4/24/95

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

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): _____

Edson H. Beall

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action
Entered in the
National Register

5/26/95

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
29	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
29	2	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, Stick Style; LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls clapboard, shingle

roof slate, asphalt

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts



7. DESCRIPTION

The Wilder Street Historic District is a linear district which consists of both sides of Wilder Street on the portion of the street from just south of Middlesex Street southward to its intersection with Princeton Boulevard, in the section of Lowell historically (and presently) referred to as the Highlands. It is just under one block in length, spanning a distance of approximately 525 feet along Wilder Street and totaling 2.48 acres in size. The district is comprised of residential properties built primarily as single-family homes. The properties date almost exclusively from the 1870s and 1880s, the period during which the Highlands area experienced its most intense development as a new residential district of Lowell. The district contains a total of 31 resources: 29 contributing buildings and 2 noncontributing buildings. Of the 29 contributing buildings, 18 are residences and 11 are related carriage houses and garages. The properties are in good condition and most have experienced only a small degree of change to their historic appearance.

The district's topography is defined by the gently rising slope of Wilder Street from its northern end to where it adjoins the broad, level plain at the center and southerly end of the district. The streetscape consists of a wide straight street flanked by narrow sidewalks, and tree-lined only along portions of its eastern side. The age of the remaining trees suggests that both sides were most likely tree-lined at one time. The trees and landscape have matured to full size, providing shade as well as a more secluded setting for some of the homes.

The west side of the street contains a row of large, substantial homes, each set back about 30 feet from the street on large open lots with frontage ranging from 75 to 140 feet. Most of the homes on the east side of the street are set closer to the street, about 15 feet back, and much closer together, with most lot frontages ranging from only 65 to 80 feet. The result is a streetscape which illustrates the many architectural styles popular for residential architecture in Lowell in the 1870s and 1880s as well as an interesting mix of large and small houses reflective of the speculative development pattern which predominated in the Highlands during these years.

The district's boundaries are defined by the property lines of its individual buildings, excluding the two ends of the block where later intrusions have changed the character of the streetscape. It is centrally located within the Highlands area, and midway between two of the area's busiest streets, Middlesex Street and Westford Street, which both run east-west from the downtown area to the east to the Middlesex Village area. Topographically, the entire Highlands area is an elevated plain, hence its name, but it lacks the dramatically steep slopes of other Lowell hillsides also developed at the same time. The rectangular grid of its streets defined a pattern of main avenues with large homes set back on open lots, and a separate pattern of regularly-spaced smaller homes set in uniform rows up and down the many north-south blocks. Wilder Street is a slight exception to these patterns in that its west side consists of larger, more irregular lot sizes, probably because its lots were sold a few years prior to the bulk of large-scale speculative development in the area. Nonetheless, it is representative of the

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Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts

grid pattern and rhythmic streetscapes which typify the Highlands.

The Wilder Street District is a cohesive streetscape of fine homes representing the Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Stick Styles. The properties represent a range of sizes from quite modest to very large, all built within the span of two decades, and each exhibiting characteristic features of its style suited to its particular size and scale. Many of the homes include large carriage houses set behind them and designed in a matching style.

Among the district's properties are the following homes, listed here in chronological order. Numbers in parentheses refer to the attached Sketch Map, followed by MHC Inventory Numbers when these exist; then Photograph Number.

The houses at **344 and 348 Wilder Street** (MAP #9, 10; MHC #1030, 1031) are typical of the Italianate style homes of the mid 1870s. Small in size and modest in design, each features a gable-end facade of three-bay width. A hooded entrance survives in the northern bay of #348 as its most decorative element, defined by a flat roof supported by large, carved brackets with drop pendants. The gabled roofs have deep returns, and bracketed soffits are intact at #348. Bracketed corner pilasters with recessed panels, originally part of both designs, have been removed or concealed by recent aluminum siding.

At 291 Wilder Street is the **Charles W. Wilder House**, built in 1875-1876 (MAP #18; MHC #249; Photograph 1). It is a fine example of the Second Empire style and was built by the son of Charles H. Wilder, a successful Lowell provisions dealer who subdivided much of Wilder and Dover Streets in the 1870s. Its design consists of a large, irregularly-shaped two-story mass capped by a steep mansard roof. The slate mansard rests above a cornice with paired brackets and has hooded dormers featuring round-arched windows. Above the main mass rises a square tower with its own bracketed cornice and mansard roof with round-arched dormers and iron cresting. The building is faced in flush horizontal boarding and features quoined corners, hooded windows, several bay windows, and a flat-roofed porch at the southwest corner. At the southwest corner of the parcel is a matching Second Empire style carriage house, also faced in flush boarding, with quoined corners and a large square cupola. It features a broad curved gable centered on the facade, within which is a lancet window. A number of evergreen trees have matured in front of the house, making it now seem more secluded than was probably the original owner's intent.

Across the street at **292 Wilder Street** is another of the district's earlier homes (MAP #2; MHC #2206), built ca. 1875-1879, thus making it a relatively early example of the Stick Style. The large, two-story mass is set close to the street but extends back for the lot's full depth. It is capped by a steeply-pitched slate hipped roof with a large clipped dormer centered on the facade and another clipped dormer on the north elevation. The facade features an L-shaped wrap-around porch with turned posts and a decorative base railing. Some of the windows are grouped in pairs, and others have

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts

shed-style hoods. The south elevation has a full-height three-sided bay with a pyramidal roof, adding to the building's sculptural qualities. To the rear is the original carriage house, in need of considerable repair. It features a clapboard exterior, a steep hipped roof with a central peaked dormer, and a tall hipped ventilator.

The **Orrin B. Ranlett House**, (MAP #13; MHC #258) marks the district's southwest edge, and is situated on a large open lot at the intersection of Wilder Street and Princeton Boulevard. Built ca.1877-1878 in the Italianate style, it faces east towards Wilder Street but several additions including an attached carriage house, and an enclosed late 19th century porch emphasize its southerly elevation. The house is a long rectangular mass, two stories in height, and capped by a hipped roof with a peaked Gothic dormer framing a pair of pointed lancet windows. The narrow facade has a full-height, three-sided bay across its entire width, flanked by matching one-story porches with decorative columns and incised fascias. Quoined corners and molded window hoods are also employed. Centrally situated along the south elevation is a projecting full-height pentagonal tower with a dormered roof, while extending out from the tower is a wood-enclosed sunporch with colored glass in the gable end of its ridge roof. The attached rear ell connects to a hipped roof, Italianate carriage house built ca.1880. It features a band of small peaked gables on its south and east elevations and a decorative cupola.

Also dating from ca.1877-1878 is the **James Buttrick House** at 307 Wilder Street (MAP #17; MHC #2211; Photograph 1). Designed in the Stick Style, this large 2 1/2 story house is set back from the street by a semi-circular drive. The main mass is T-shaped and has a projecting pavilion with Stick ornamentation in the narrow facade end, and triple windows with decorative wood spandrels at the lower two stories. The steeply pitched ridge roof above Stick-style brackets and cornices is highlighted by a square tower with gables on all four sides. At the southwest corner of the parcel stands a matching Stick Style clapboard carriage house of the same date, with a steeply-peaked central gable and a tall hipped ventilator.

The **George E. Evans House** at 328 Wilder Street (MAP #7; MHC #252; Photograph 2) dates from 1879-1880 and combines the Second Empire and Stick Styles in an unusual vernacular design. Situated on a large corner lot, the main mass of the 2 1/2 story house is a square block, clad in clapboard, with the center entrance bay marked by a projecting portico with Stick Style balustrades, brackets, square columns and a small trussed center gable. The design is dominated by the tall mansard roof with elaborate Stick Style trusswork in the central gable and flanking dormers. Other interesting features include shed-type hoods at the first story windows, a banded course of vertical boarding at the raised sill level, and an overhanging cornice with small Stick Style brackets. A small, flat-roofed garage with a modest Stick Style cornice is located at the rear of the parcel, with access from Grove Street.

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At 331 Wilder Street is the Asa C. Russell House, one of the district's largest and most elaborate designs (MAP #15; MHC #253; Photograph 3). It was completed in 1880 as one of the district's first Queen Anne style homes. Sited on the street's largest parcel opposite the intersection of Grove Street to the east, the 2 1/2 story home is surrounded by a level lawn which accentuates the house's visibility from all directions. The Russell House is a large squarish mass faced in clapboards, with its center entrance bay flanked by a three-sided, two story bay to the south and a large, two-story rectangular bay to the north. The slate mansard roof features a tall multi-sided tower at the southeast corner and multiple dormer treatments including open trusswork within a peaked triple-window dormer and a clipped dormer framing paired windows. The south elevation has attached at its center bays a porte-cochere with a clipped end, iron cresting at the ridge, and a multitude of carved wooden supports, balustrades and curved brackets. The matching carriage house is of clapboard, its central peaked gable flanked by 2/1 windows, and a tall hipped ventilator at the ridge.

The design of the Eastlake style porch on the William Bascom House at 340 Wilder Street (MAP #8; MHC #254; Photograph 4) is probably the finest porch in Lowell in this style. This prominent corner house aptly combines Eastlake and Stick Style features in its design. Completed in 1884, it is one of the district's later homes, and consequently a rather grand design is squeezed onto a relatively small corner lot. The main block of the house is square but a projecting bay on the north elevation, a rear ell and a one-story front porch give the impression of more irregular massing. The steep mansard roof is interrupted by a corner tower and a large central facade gable with jigsawed bargeboards. The clapboard exterior also has applied stickwork on the facade and vertical boarding and panelled spandrels on the north bay. The building's *pièce de résistance* is the elaborate one-story porch which spans the facade and is an impressive combination of jigsawed and turned woodwork. To the rear, the original carriage house has been removed.

At 350-352 Wilder Street stands the A.G. and A.V. Watson House, (MAP #11; MHC #257). It is the only property in the district built as a double house, yet it echoes the scale and proportions of its single-family neighbors. Constructed in 1888, its design is an amalgam of Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Stick Style elements. The main 2 1/2-story mass is a deep rectangular block with a slate mansard roof that reflects the Second Empire style. Pedimented window hoods, twisted rope brackets at the cornice, and a frieze of banded scallops and triangles are characteristic of the Stick Style. A 2-story rectangular bay in the south portion of the facade is capped by a tall pyramid-shaped

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roof with a finial top. Dormers also enliven the long side elevations. Both the north entrance bay of the facade and the rear portion of the south elevation feature open porches with turned balustrades and twisted rope spandrels, possibly a simplified interpretation of the William Bascom House's porch which was completed a few years earlier. To the rear is a fine carriage house, also featuring a Queen Anne design with a large peaked gable.

The last property built during the district's historic development period was the **Edward S. Woodies House** at 312 Wilder Street (**MAP #5; MHC #2213; Photograph 5**). Dating from 1893, it is a Colonial Revival style design. The 2 1/2 story house is faced in clapboards and has a cross-gable plan to create wide gable ends on both the facade and sides. A modillioned cornice and dentil band enrich the gables. The facade's second story north bay is recessed above the large semi-circular, two-bay, raised entrance porch which features round columns and balustrades of Classical design, and a matching rooftop balustrade.

The district contains only one modern intrusion and one altered non-contributing property. The one modern building is a two-unit home built in the 1960s (**MAP #A; MHC #2210; Photograph 7**) at **301 Wilder Street**. It is a "Colonial" style building inserted onto a small lot sold off from the adjacent James Buttrick property. The carriage house behind the house at **348 Wilder Street** (**MAP #10; MHC #2219; Photograph 8**) has been converted into a residence with unsympathetic barnboard siding, a new entry, windows, and roof which have destroyed its historic integrity. These two intrusions are modest in scale and one is concealed behind another building, making their impact on the district quite minimal.

The Wilder Street Historic District has not lost any of its important structures. However, it should be noted that the district boundaries were specifically drawn to exclude an unsympathetic renovation just beyond its northeast edge and modern properties beyond both its northwest and southwest corners which replaced several fine estates from the 1870s. Within the district's boundaries, all original buildings remain, although several have recently received new siding and some detailing has been either removed or concealed.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded within the district, it is possible that sites may be present. Three sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). In general, however, the potential for significant prehistoric remains is low because locational characteristics of the property, particularly its distance from water, are not favorable for prehistoric sites.

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**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
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A moderate potential exists for the recovery of historic remains in the district. Late nineteenth-century occupational related features including trash areas and sheet refuse patterns could be present in the vicinity of the district's residential properties. Properties on the west side of the street may have a greater probability for these recoveries since larger stately houses were built on large open lots in that area while the western side of the street is characterized by smaller homes set closer together on smaller lots. Structural remains are not expected as a major archaeological resource within the district. Most of the area was used as agricultural land from the 17th century through the Civil War. No evidence exists for structures in the area from that period. All original buildings remain within the district boundaries from its period of development.

(end)



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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1870 - 1945

Significant Dates

1875, 1877, 1884

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Lowell Historic Board

Wilder Street Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex County, MA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 2.48 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 Zone	308720 Easting	4722970 Northing	3. 19 Zone	308840 Easting	4722740 Northing
2. 19 Zone	308800 Easting	4723040 Northing	4. 19 Zone	308740 Easting	4722740 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

Margo B. Webber, Preservation Consultant, Lowell Historic Board
name/title with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 1995

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 multiple

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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.

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Section number 8 Page 1

Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wilder Street Historic District, Lowell retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship feeling, and association, and fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register on the local level.

Under Criterion A, the Wilder Street Historic District is significant for its role in the late-nineteenth century expansion of Lowell's finer residential neighborhoods, particularly the Highlands area. This was a time when the city's textile industry remained strong, generating economic prosperity among a growing middle class of businessmen. They were eager to build fine homes in the more prestigious outlying areas of the city which were being subdivided by real estate entrepreneurs. The Wilder Street district reflects the range of home-building opportunities which the new Highlands middle class residents made use of in the 1870s and 1880s.

Under Criterion C, the district is a well-preserved example of a characteristic Highlands streetscape of the late nineteenth century and one of the few streetscapes in the area which still remains intact. The homes on Wilder Street are important architecturally as outstanding examples of the Second Empire, Italianate, Stick, and Queen Anne styles which were extremely popular in the 1870s and 1880s. The properties range in size from modest to quite large and are situated on lots of considerably different sizes, yet each in its own way exhibits many artistic elements of its style and contributes to the visual harmony of the streetscape. The district's period of significance spans from 1870 to 1945, encompassing the period from when the street's first homes were built to the early-to-mid 20th century as the district continued to be a prominent residential neighborhood in the City of Lowell.

Criterion A: Development of the Wilder Street area in the 1870s and 1880s was part of a city-wide growth of new residential neighborhoods for Lowell's growing middle class of successful businessmen and entrepreneurs. Lowell was originally a part of the village of Chelmsford, settled in 1653 by a land grant of the General Court, and located at the outer fringe of English-ruled territory. The promise of fertile meadows bordering the Concord and Merrimack Rivers had prompted the original settlers to brave the danger and isolation of such a remote outpost. Over the next century, Chelmsford's growth was impeded by constant Indian assault, although several new settlers moved further eastward towards Black Brook. This area and parts further eastward soon came to be known as East Chelmsford, and were primarily farmsteads which contributed to a safe, self-sufficient agrarian community.

Middlesex Village grew up as a small manufacturing and trade center for the area following the 1788 announcement to build the Middlesex Canal for transporting farm goods around Pawtucket Falls. The Canal, opened in 1804, ran thirty one miles from East Chelmsford south to Charlestown, offering an efficient and less costly means of transporting farm products to Boston markets. It remained in operation until 1853, although once the railroads arrived in 1830, it experienced a steady decline in

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts

use. Meanwhile, farmers continued to expand their acreage eastward into the area later to be known as "The Highlands."

The Proprietors of the Locks and Canals, in 1821, began a study for a new canal system along the Merrimack and in 1822 opened their first textile mill, the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. The next few years brought the rapid creation of an entire industrial village, not only geographically and visually distinct from Chelmsford's agrarian character, but also completely foreign to the original Chelmsford community both socially and economically. In 1825, East Chelmsford petitioned to be incorporated as a separate town. With a population of 2,000, the new town was incorporated on March 1, 1826, taking the name of Lowell from Francis Cabot Lowell, the visionary force behind its creation.

The subsequent industrial growth of Lowell during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been well documented. Its role as a "model city" for other New England mill towns is undisputed. Yet, for all the attention paid to Lowell's industrial focus, the outer limits of the city (it was incorporated in 1854) remained primarily agricultural until after the Civil War. Among these areas, the land between Middlesex Village to its west and the new mill village of Lowell to its east, geographically defined by its higher ground, was commonly referred to as "The Highlands," a name which continues to define this section of Lowell.

In the 1830s, the first residential areas in the city were within walking distance of the mills. The mill companies erected boarding houses for their laborers. Fine free-standing homes were often built and owned by the mills for their overseers and agents. Early on, Pawtucket Street was among the most desirable addresses and many fine homes were built there. An important factor in its development was that the prevailing westerly and northwesterly winds tended to keep the factory smoke away.

As time went on in the 1850s and 1860s, the population increased. Other areas of the city began to compete with Pawtucket Street as desirable addresses for the mills' upper management, most notably the three areas known as Belvidere Hill, Centralville, and The Highlands. As described in the 1897 Illustrated History of Lowell and Vicinity:

"The city has settled itself down between the hills to perform its labors, but climbs up to the high land for its pleasure and its rest. . . . The Highlands, though having less of the air of restfulness than Belvidere, impresses one as cheerful and homelike in an unusual degree."

This separation of home and work reflected the broader conflict that the new industrialists faced in Lowell, as in other New England mill towns. This conflict pitted the smoke, disease and congestion of urban life against the desire to maintain a pastoral landscape. The pastoral setting was reserved for the homes of only those who could afford to build there.

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The nature of Lowell's changing work force also had an impact on the move to new middle class neighborhoods. The original work force of farm girls and native men was largely replaced in the 1850s and 1860s by Irish immigrants, followed by substantial new influxes of French-Canadians in the 1870s and 1880s, and by many Eastern European groups after that. These new groups tended to cluster together in certain parts of town: the Irish in "The Acre;" the French-Canadians in "Little Canada;" and so on. These districts, close to the mills, became densely built up with tenements, making any proximity to them unwanted by the more successful classes.

Development of Lowell's new neighborhoods in the 1860s and later was also influenced by the new horse-drawn and later electric trolley lines, which made them readily accessible to the mill district. The first horse railway line ran along Pawtucket, Merrimack, and East Merrimack Streets to Nesmith Street at the base of Belvidere Hill, opening in 1864. Another line from Merrimack Square going west along Central and Middlesex Streets and shortly thereafter extended to Westford Street stimulated real estate subdivision of the old farmlands in the Highlands area. It became common for successful businessmen to purchase several acres of land, divide it up into small lots, create a new street or two down the middle, and frequently to name the street after themselves.

Wilder Street was one of many streets developed in this way in the 1870s and 1880s. The area was purchased by Charles H. Wilder, whose own large estate was just a block to the west. Wilder was a local landowner, provision dealer and farmer who acquired most of the Wilder Street area in the 1860s. The west side of the street had larger parcels which may not have all been owned by Wilder. The east side of the street, as well as both sides of Dover Street, the next street to the east, were divided by Wilder into a total of 71 lots. The lots were then sold to separate owners in the 1870s and 1880s. The first homes to be built were a mixture of large, impressive homes on the west side of Wilder Street and several more modest homes on its east side, followed in the late 1880s by many smaller, more modest homes on narrower lots along Dover Street and the southeast portion of Wilder Street. By 1896, every house lot in the two block area had been sold off and built upon.

This was a time when the textile industry for the most part continued to remain strong. The city's downtown commercial district expanded considerably with new brick commercial blocks to service the needs of a growing population, enabling many new businessmen, professionals, and shopkeepers to prosper.

The range of original occupants of the Wilder Street district reflected the growth of this new middle class during the 1870s and 1880s, and it was considered one of Lowell's finest streets. Among its early residents were, at #219, Charles W. Wilder, son of Charles H. Wilder, and also a partner in Hunt & Wilder, provision dealers. At #319 lived Albert F. Nichols, a partner in Cole and Nichols, an iron and brass foundry, at #307 lived James Buttrick, treasurer of the Thorndike Manufacturing Company, and at #331 lived Asa C. Russell, general manager of the Thorndike Manufacturing Company. Solomon Dexter, a wholesale produce dealer, lived at #343, while #353 was built by Lowell grocer

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

Orrin B. Ranlett. At #328 lived George E. Evans, City Engineer for many years, and at #340 lived William Bascom, son of a prominent Lowell businessman. Among the owners of the more modest homes were Emery Lovejoy at #320, a foreman for the Lowell Machine Shop. At #312 lived Edward S. Woodies, also associated with the Lowell Machine Shop. Robert Bartlett, at #360, was in the real estate business, while other early occupants were listed in city directories as bookkeepers, agents, and widows of local businessmen.

Wilder Street retained its reputation as a neighborhood of fine homes throughout Lowell's history as a textile manufacturing center. By 1930, the Highlands had more housing stock than needed, and the eventual slow decline of many of its properties was beginning.

Criterion C: The Wilder Street Historic District is architecturally significant as a cohesive streetscape of fine homes representing the Second Empire, Italianate, Queen Anne and Stick Styles. The properties represent a range of sizes from quite modest to very large, all built within the span of just over two decades, and each exhibiting characteristic features of its style suited to its particular size and scale.

The district has been compared to other late-nineteenth century residential neighborhoods in Lowell which have been surveyed, and more specifically to other period streetscapes within the Highlands. Although much smaller in size than either Belvidere Hill or Centralville's Christian Hill, Wilder Street is reflective of the growth of many smaller subdivisions in the Highlands and retains its rhythmic pattern and the architectural integrity of individual structures much better than most other streetscapes in the Highlands.

A pattern of large stately homes set back from the street on open lawns dominates the district's character, although its easterly side is in fact comprised of considerably smaller houses set quite close together and closer to the street as well. Many of the homes include large carriage houses set behind them and designed in a matching style.

Wilder Street itself is wide and straight, lined by sidewalks and by mature trees at both ends, in its heyday symbolic of the pastoral setting so desirable for the new middle class.

Within the district, homes of both modest and grand scale were built in the Second Empire style. The Charles W. Wilder House (MAP #19) is its grandest example, but the A.G. and A.V. Watson House (MAP #11), the Robert Bartlett House (MAP #12) and #306 Wilder Street, (MAP #4) despite later siding of the latter two, also illustrate typical stylistic features such as mansard roofs, corner towers, decorative cornices and window hoods.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

The Italianate style is well represented in several of the mid-1870s homes, including the modest gable-ended cottages at #344 and #348 Wilder Street (MAP #9, 10), and houses at #284 and #300 Wilder Street (MAP #1, 3) which exhibit a greater degree of decorative detailing. High-style examples of the Italianate are found in the Solomon Dexter House (MAP #14) and the Orrin B. Ranlett House (MAP #13) with their ornate bracketed cornices, sculptural window hoods, projecting bays, incised wooden porch trim, and handsome carriage houses of similar design.

Fine examples of the Stick Style are represented by #292 Wilder Street (MAP #2) and by the James Buttrick House (MAP #17), the Albert Nichols House (MAP #16) and the George E. Evans House (MAP #7). All are of considerable size and their designs are dominated by richly embellished gables, dormers, porches, and a host of different turrets, projecting bays, and applied trim combinations.

The Eastlake style is notably represented in the William Bascom House (MAP #8) with its intricate front porch. The Queen Anne style is aptly demonstrated in the Asa C. Russell House (MAP #15) and in the more modest A.G. & A.V. Watson House (MAP #11). In both instances, irregular massing, projecting bays, decorative cornices and window hoods, and turned wood porch trim highlight the designs, while the Russell House's elaborate porte-cochere is its most outstanding feature.

Within the district, all of the period homes remain. One large home has been converted to a rest home, the Albert Nichols House at #319, and one parcel, the James Buttrick property at #307, has been subdivided to permit a newer two-unit residence to one side. Several large homes immediately outside the district boundary have been replaced by a modern apartment building and by small tract homes. However, despite these changes beyond its bounds, the district itself continues to hold a reputation as one of the Highlands' grandest streets, and retains its historic character and integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling and association.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological remains described above have the potential of providing detailed information on a segment of Lowell's middle class that developed during the 1870's and 1880's. Wilder Street was largely occupied by new businessmen, professionals and shop keepers who settled the area as part of Lowell's 19th century growth as a textile manufacturing center. The area was considered one of Lowell's finest streets. Analysis of potential refuse areas associated with these could provide socio-cultural information on the inhabitants and potential activities conducted on the property. Archaeological survivals may also be present which with comparative analysis document the differences and/or similarities between smaller less well to do occupants on the west side of the street and the more affluent or stately occupants on the eastern side.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9, 10 Page 1, 1

**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coburn, Frederick W., The History of Lowell and Its People, vols. 1 & 3, NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1920

Illustrated History of Lowell and Vicinity, 1897, p.769-770

Lowell City Atlases, 1879, 1896, 1924, 1936

Lowell City Directories, 1871-1916

Massachusetts Historical Commission Inventory Forms, prepared by Carole Zellie for the Lowell Division of Planning & Development, January, 1981

(end)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the parcel defined as #284 Wilder Street, the boundary runs eastward along the northern edge of said parcel for a distance of 161.03 feet and turns southerly along said parcel's eastern (rear) boundary. It follows the eastern boundary of said parcel for its full length of 125 feet, then continues in a southerly direction along the eastern (rear) boundaries of #292, 300, 306, 312, 320 and 328 Wilder Street, crosses Grove Street and proceeds in a southerly direction along the eastern (rear) boundaries of #340, 344, 346, 350 and 360 Wilder Street. It then turns westward along the southern boundary of #360 Wilder Street for a distance of 116 feet, turns northward along the western boundary of said parcel for a distance of 60 feet, and proceeds westward across Wilder Street and then along the southern boundary of #353 Wilder Street for its length of 157.43 feet. The boundary then turns northward along the western (rear) boundaries of #353, 343, 331, 319, 307, 301, and 291 Wilder Streets until reaching the northwest corner of #291 Wilder Street where it turns eastward for a distance of 196.14 feet along the northern boundary of said parcel, crosses Wilder Street to the east, and turns northward along the western boundary of #284 Wilder Street until reaching the point of origin. (see attached city of Lowell Assessors Map #103)

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Justification:

This boundary includes all of the remaining large late-19th century homes along the western side of Wilder Street and a range of well-preserved homes dating from the 1870's-1890's on the eastern side of the street. Together, these two components reflect the important development trends taking place during this period: individual estates built by prosperous merchants and businessmen and rows of smaller lots laid out and sold off by developers for individual homes.

The boundary excludes a row of modern single-family homes recently built on the site of a large estate to the north of #291 Wilder Street as well as an unsympathetically renovated estate with a large rear addition to the northeast at #270 Wilder Street. At the district's southerly edges, a modern apartment building replaces an earlier estate on the southwest corner of Princeton Boulevard and now separates the district's stately homes from more modest and more heavily altered ones to the southwest. South of #360 Wilder Street, the homes, although dating from the same period, have experienced many alterations and are also more modest in design than most within the district.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell (Middlesex County)
Massachusetts**

Section number Photos Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS

The identification information listed below pertains to all photographs:

Photograph by: Margo B. Webber

Date: May 1994

Original negative at: Lowell Historic Board
Division of Planning & Development
50 Arcand Drive
Lowell, MA 01852

- Photo 1: View looking northwesterly from Wilder Street towards east elevations of (L to R) 319, 307, 301 and 291 Wilder Street.
- Photo 2: View looking northerly from Wilder Street towards west elevations of (R to L) 328, 320, and 312 Wilder Street.
- Photo 3: View looking northwesterly from Wilder Street towards south and east elevations of 331 Wilder Street, the Asa Russell House.
- Photo 4: View looking northerly from Wilder Street towards west elevation of 340 Wilder Street, the William Bascom House.
- Photo 5: View looking southeasterly from Wilder Street towards west elevations of (L to R) 300, 306, and 312 Wilder Street.
- Photo 6: View looking southwesterly from Wilder Street towards east elevation of 319 Wilder Street, the Albert Nichols House.
- Photo 7: View looking northwesterly from Wilder Street towards east elevation of 306 Wilder Street.
- Photo 8: View looking easterly at west and south elevations of converted carriage house at rear of 348 Wilder Street.

(end)

**WILDER STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
LOWELL (MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MA
DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

MAP#	LOWELL #	MHC#	HISTORIC NAME	STREET ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	RESOURCE TYPE	STATUS
1	103-114	2203	House	284 Wilder	1870s	Italianate	B	C
	103-113	2204	Garage	284 Wilde	early 20th c.	No Style	B	C
18	103-123	249	Charles W. Wilder House	291 Wilder	1875-1876	Second Empire	B	C
	103-122	2205	Carriage House	291 Wilder	1875-1876	Second Empire	B	C
2	103-112	220	House	292 Wilder	ca.1875-1879	Stick	B	C
	103-111	2207	Carriage House	292 Wilder	ca.1875-1879	Stick	B	C
3	103-110	2208	House	300 Wilder	1870s	Italianate	B	C
	103-109	2209	Carriage House	300 Wilder	1870s	Italianate	B	C
A	103-108	2210	Two-Unit House	301 Wilder	1967	Colonial	B	NC
4	103-124	250	House	306 Wilder	1870s	Second Empire	B	C
17	103-107	2211	James Buttrick House	307 Wilder	1877-1878	Stick Style	B	C
	103-106	2212	Carriage House	307 Wilder	1877-1878	Stick Style	B	C
5	103-105	2213	Edward S. Woodies House	312 Wilder	1893	Colonial Revival	B	C
16	103-125	251	Albert Nichols House	319 Wilder	ca. 1877-1878	Stick Style	B	C
	103-121	2214	Carriage House	319 Wilder	ca. 1877-1878	Stick Style	B	C
6	103-104	2215	Emery W. Lovejoy House	320 Wilder	ca.1870-1874	Italianate	B	C
7	103-126	252	George E. Evans House	328 Wilder	1879-1880	Stick/Second Empire	B	C
	103-103	2216	Garage	328 Wilder	1879-1880	Stick Style	B	C
15	103-127	253	Asa C. Russell House	331 Wilder	1880	Queen Anne/Stick	B	C
	103-120	2217	Carriage House	331 Wilder	1880	Queen Anne	B	C
8	103-128	254	William Bascom House	340 Wilder	1884	Eastlake/Stick	B	C

**WILDER STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
LOWELL (MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MA
DISTRICT DATA SHEET**

MAP#	LOWELL #	MHC#	HISTORIC NAME	STREET ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE	RESOURCE TYPE	STATUS
14	103-129	255	Solomon Dexter House	343 Wilder	1879	Italianate	B	C
	103-118	2218	Carriage House	343 Wilder	1879	Italianate	B	C
9	103-116	1030	House	344 Wilder	1879	Italianate	B	C
10	103-130	1031	House	348 Wilder	ca.1875-1879	Italianate	B	C
	103-117	2219	Carriage House (converted)	348 Wilder	ca.1875-1879 alt. ca. 1980	No Style	B	NC
11	103-131	257	A.G. & A.V. Watson Hse.	350-352 Wilder	1888	Second Empire/Empire	B	C
	103-115	2220	Carriage House	350-352 Wilder	1888	Queen Anne/Stick	B	C
13	103-132	258	Orrin B. Ranlett House	353 Wilder	ca.1877-1878	Italianate	B	C
12	103-102	2221	Robert Bartlett House	360 Wilder	ca.1870-1874	Second Empire	B	C
	103-101	2222	Carriage House	360 Wilder	ca.1870-1874	Second Empire	B	C

KEY: B: Building C: Contributing Resource
NC: Noncontributing Resource

TOTAL OF 31 RESOURCES: 29 Contributing Buildings 2 Noncontributing Buildings

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Wilder Street Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 4/28/95 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/10/95
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/26/95 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/12/95
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 95000662

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 5/26/95 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



319, 307, 301, 291 (L to R) Wilder St.

Wilder Street Historic District

Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA

Photo 1 of 8



328, 320, 312 (R to L) Wilder St.
Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell, Middlesex Co. MA
Photo 2 of 8



Asa Russell House, 331 Wilder St.
Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell, Middlesex Co. MA

Photo 3 of 8



William Bascom House, 340 Wilder St.
Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA
Photo 4 of 8



300, 306, 312 (L to R) Wilder St.
Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA
Photo 5 of 8



Albert Nichols House
319 Wilder Street
Wilder Street Historic District
Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA
Photo 6 of 8



300 Wilder Street

Wilder Street Historic District

Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA

Photo 7 of 8

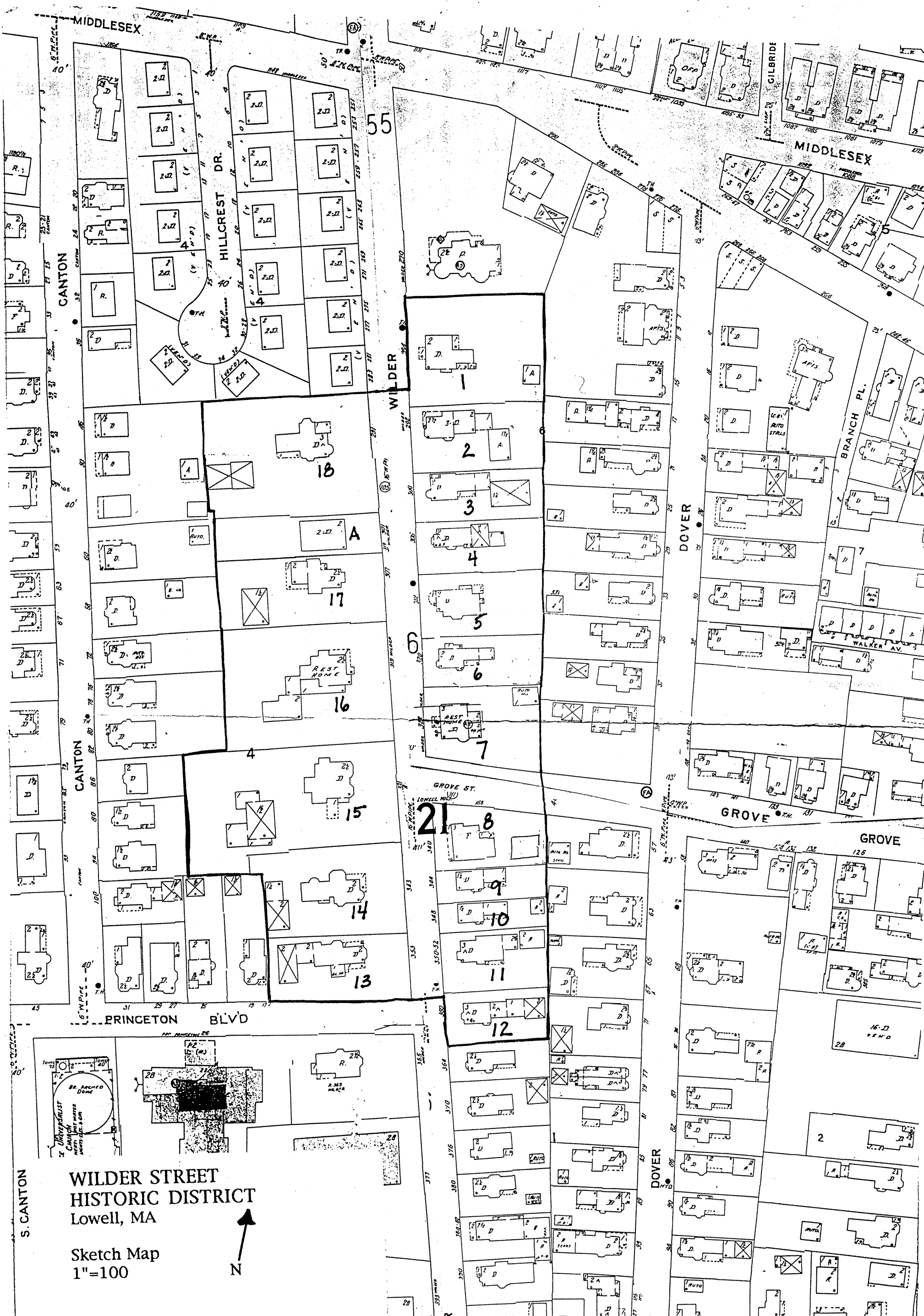


348 Wilder Street (rear)

Wilder Street Historic District

Lowell, Middlesex Co, MA

Photo 8 of 8



**WILDER STREET
HISTORIC DISTRICT**
Lowell, MA

Sketch Map
1"=100





WILDER STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
Lowell, MA

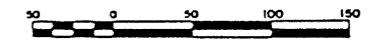
Assessor's Map # 103
1"=125'



REVISIONS	
DATE	REV. BY

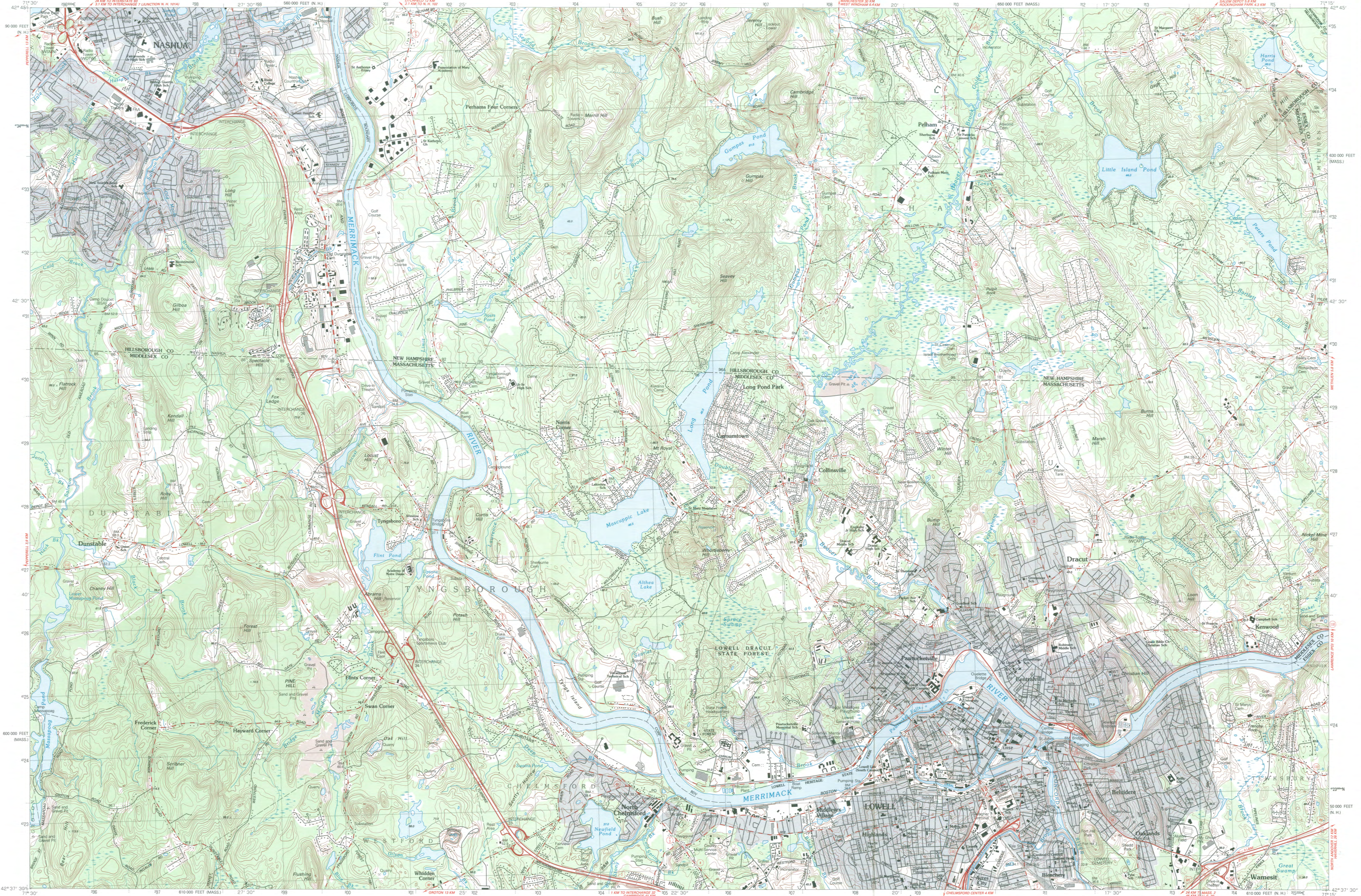
PROPERTY OWNERSHIP MAPS
**CITY OF
LOWELL, MASSACHUSETTS**
DATE: JAN 1, 1982

SHEET INDEX		
86	102	120
87	103	121
88	104	122

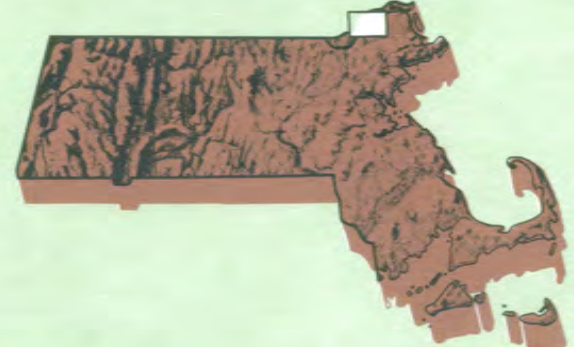


PREPARED BY
HUNNICUTT & ASSOCIATES, INC.
A DIVISION OF L. ROBERT KIMBALL & ASSOC.
ENGINEERS - APPRAISERS - CARTOGRAPHERS
ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

TOPOGRAPHIC PLANS DATED 4-30-80
USED AS BASE FOR OWNERSHIP MAPPING



Lowell MASSACHUSETTS-NEW HAMPSHIRE 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



1987

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 1981. Field checked 1983. Map edited 1987. This area also covered by 7.5-minute 1:24,000-scale maps: Nashua South 1965 and Lowell 1966. Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19 Universal Transverse Mercator. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone, and New Hampshire coordinate system 1927 North American Datum. To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 40 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks. There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet	Diagram showing magnetic declination from true north.		1	2	3
1	3.2808			4	5	6
2	6.5616			7	8	
3	9.8424					
4	13.1232					
5	16.4040					
6	19.6848					
7	22.9656					
8	26.2464					
9	29.5272					
10	32.8080					

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (GN and 1987 magnetic) at center of map. Diagram is approximate.

1 Millis
2 Nashua
3 Haverhill
4 Townsend
5 Lawrence
6 Ayer
7 Billerica
8 Reading

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

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 gage; narrow gage
- Bridge: drawbridge
- Footbridge; overpass; underpass
- Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Boundary: National, with monument; State; parish; Civil township, precinct, district; Incorporated city, village, town; National or State reservation; small gage; 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; dam with lock
- Canetary; grave
- Campground; picnic area; U. S. tourist campground
- Woods; water wall; spring
- Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
- Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
- Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
- Distorted surface; steep slope; levee and dike
- Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
- Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
- Rapids; large and small; falls; large and small
- Swamp; marsh
- Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation
- Woodland; scattered trees
- Scrub; mangrove
- Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

RECEIVED 413

APR 28 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

April 24, 1995

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Wilder Street Historic District, 284-360 Wilder Street, Lowell (Middlesex County),
Massachusetts, 01852.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Because the city of Lowell is a participant in the Certified Local Government program, the owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60-120 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

FOR

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Mayor Richard Howe, City of Lowell
Stephen R. Stowell, Administrator, Lowell Historic Board
Margo Webber, Preservation Consultant
Anne O'Brien, Pollard Memorial Library