

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 Bedford Depot
other names/site number Bedford Depot Park Historic District (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 80 Loomis Street and 120 South Road not for publication
city or town Bedford vicinity
state Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01730

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.)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director for
Signature of certifying official/Title Gara H. Metz, Executive Director Date 7/3/03
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

8/21/03

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex County, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

(Check only one box)

☐ building(s)
☒ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	building
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/rail-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/pedestrian-related

Recreation and culture/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Victorian Eclectic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick, granite block, concrete block

walls wood shingle

roof tile, asphalt shingle

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

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7. Narrative Description

Bedford is a suburban town located approximately sixteen miles northwest of Boston, just outside the Route 128/Interstate 95 beltway. Billerica borders the town on the north, Burlington and Lexington on the east, Lincoln on the south, and Concord and Carlisle on the west. The Concord River defines Bedford's western border, and the Shawsheen River is located in the eastern part of town. Bedford has several brooks that feed into either the Concord or Shawsheen Rivers. Three state highways – Routes 4, 225, and 62 – converge at Bedford Center, and U. S. Route 3, a limited access highway, passes through the northeast corner of the town.

Bedford Depot Park Historic District consists of two properties owned by the Town of Bedford and located at the terminus of the Minuteman Bikeway (Photo 1). The bikeway is a rail trail over the right-of-way of the former Boston & Maine Railroad. Located at the junction of two principal roadways, South Road and Loomis Street, and two former railroad lines, the historic district occupies just over one-half acre at the southern edge of Bedford's historic town center. The district's two buildings, a passenger depot (1874) and a freight house (1877, originally built as an engine house), are the only surviving railroad buildings in Bedford. Both buildings were moved to their present locations in the last quarter of the 19th century as operations at the railroad junction expanded. Together, these buildings form the centerpiece of a municipal park project, currently underway, that will provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in a setting that preserves the area's railroad history. The district is bordered by the Minuteman Bikeway to the south, South Road to the west, and contemporary commercial and institutional construction to the north and northeast, fronting Loomis Street.

Middlesex Central Railroad (Boston & Lowell Railroad), Bedford Passenger Depot

The only building of its kind extant in Bedford, the Passenger Depot, 80 Loomis Street (1874, MHC #179, Photo 2, see sketch map) is the second of two surviving passenger stations on the former Middlesex Central Railroad. A subsidiary of the Boston & Lowell Railroad, the Middlesex Central built the depot on its standard-gauge railroad line. This two-story, wood-frame, rectangular building has a brick and granite block foundation, cedar shingle siding, and a tile hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves. Wood trim includes a matchboard wood frieze on all four elevations, oversized wood knee braces at the eaves, and cornerboards.

The size and number of window and door openings on the two long (east and west) elevations have been altered from the original configuration, but this alteration is reversible. Openings were changed after the end of the period of significance, when the depot was retrofitted for offices for commercial tenants. The building is approximately seven bays across on the east elevation, three bays across on the west elevation, and one bay deep. The only entrance to the building currently is in the center bay of the three-bay west elevation, now flanked by an overhead door in a garage bay to the left and a contemporary bay window to the right. Replacement vinyl sash, most in a 1/1 configuration, appear on the first level on all four elevations and in the form of eave windows at the attic level on the two long elevations. Original windows were tall, narrow openings that extended to the frieze.

Historically, the depot had a wood deck that wrapped around the building, incorporating short flights of stairs at three door openings on the east elevation and two door openings on the west elevation. Each door opening incorporated a pair of paneled wood doors and was topped with a multi-pane rectangular transom that matched the height of the tops of the windows. The deck is shown on the depot on the 1962 Sanborn fire insurance map and was dismantled some time thereafter.

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In plan, the rectangular passenger depot was divided roughly into three principal spaces. The men's waiting room occupied the northern end of the building, the women's waiting room was at the center, and the southern end of the building was split between the baggage room (on the east side) and the express room (on the west side). The station agent's office, marked by a bay window in the fifth bay of the east elevation, had two interior ticket windows, each opening into a waiting area. Women's and men's lavatories were located between the women's waiting room and the baggage/express area. The interior spaces have sixteen-foot ceilings.

Originally, the passenger depot was situated on the west side of South Road, outside the boundary of the historic district. In 1877, establishment of a second standard-gauge railroad line at Bedford Depot created a railroad junction, and the passenger depot was moved to its present site at the junction, located on the south side of Loomis Street and east of South Road.

Two highly significant features of the passenger depot are the train order signals (ca. 1886, see Photo 2), mounted on tall metal poles that pierce the eaves of the building. Due to its location at the junction of two branch lines, the depot has signals on two sides of the building. Trains on the Lexington Branch to North Billerica used the signal on the north elevation, and trains on the Reformatory Branch between Bedford and Concord used the signal on the south elevation. At the top of each train order signal were two blades and three roundels, or colored lenses. Metal rods from each signal descended through the roof and extended along the building to the station agent's office, behind the bay window on the depot's east elevation. There, the agent used levers to control the signals. The original roundels, some of which are missing or broken and scheduled for replacement, are green, yellow, and red. The original signal blades were removed in the late 1950s when the Boston & Maine Railroad sold the building. Wood replicas, painted red with a white stripe on the front and black on the back, were fabricated and installed in 1999. The paint scheme was selected to recreate the blades as they looked in the 1950s. The train order signals indicated to approaching trains whether they could proceed through the junction or had to stop to obtain train orders (special instructions). [Bedford Depot News, May 1996, Aug. 1999, Sept. 1999]

After the Boston & Maine Railroad sold the passenger depot in the late 1950s, the building was converted to offices for commercial tenants, a use that continues today. The Town of Bedford acquired the passenger depot in 1999 as part of the Bedford Depot Park plans currently under development (see Significance).

Billerica & Bedford Railroad Engine House (later Boston & Lowell Railroad Freight House)

The former Engine House, now known as the Freight House, 120 South Road (a/k/a 84 Loomis Street, 1877, MHC #180, Photo 3, see sketch map) is the only building remaining from the short-lived Billerica & Bedford Railroad, a narrow-gauge line. One and one-half stories, the wood-frame building has a brick foundation, wood shingle siding, and a gable-front roof clad in asphalt shingles. The building displays overhanging eaves and wood cornerboards. There is a small, concrete-block "bump-out" addition with a shed roof across a portion of the rear elevation.

The building served originally as the railroad's engine house, then was converted to a freight house. Research suggests the building, like the passenger depot (see above), was first located on the opposite (west) side of South Road adjacent to the tracks, and moved to its present position some time after its acquisition by the Boston & Lowell.

Originally one bay wide and three bays deep, the Freight House has been modified somewhat in the number and size of its window and door openings, though the building's scale and massing have been maintained. After the Boston &

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Maine sold the building in the late 1950s, oversized doors on the two long elevations—south, facing the railroad tracks, and north—were boarded over and small, double-hung windows installed. A six-foot-wide, raised wood platform, now removed, on the building's south elevation met the height of rail cars on an adjacent siding and facilitated the exchange of items between the cars and the freight house. The platform appears on the 1962 Sanborn fire insurance map and was dismantled sometime thereafter. A door and an oriel window were added to the west elevation, now the façade of the building. On the interior, the main floor was an open area with a ten-foot ceiling and an attic above; the attic is now a finished floor.

Since the Boston & Maine Railroad sold the freight house in the late 1950s, the building has housed a grain store, a local meeting place for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a bakery and sandwich shop. The town of Bedford acquired the freight house in 1999 as part of the Bedford Depot Park plans currently under development (see Significance).

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American resources are located in the district or in the general area (within one mile), sites may be present. Environmental characteristics of the area indicate a high potential for the presence of Native American sites. The district is located on a well drained, level to moderately sloping terrace in close proximity to wetlands. Elm Brook, a tributary stream of the Shawseen River, drains easterly less than 1,000 feet south of the district. The confluence of Elm Brook and the Shawseen River is located less than one mile east of the district. The Concord River is located approximately two miles west of the district. The entire area described above is located with the Merrimack River drainage. In spite of the above information, the size of the district (approximately one-half acre) and construction impacts related to the Minuteman Bikeway, the earlier Boston and Maine Railroad right-of-way, and movement of the Railroad Depot and Freight House to the district in the last quarter of the 19th century indicates a low potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources in the district.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources in the district, however, they may have limited research value. Construction features and evidence of utilities associated with moving the Passenger Depot and Freight House to the district in the late 1870s may exist. These resources should be documented in construction plans for those buildings. Stratigraphic evidence may also exist in the area of the Boston and Maine Railroad roadbed, now the Minuteman Bikeway.

(end)

Bedford Depot Park Historic District

Name of Property

Middlesex County, Massachusetts

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

Transportation

Period of Significance

1874-1953

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Middlesex Central Railroad (Boston & Lowell Railroad)

Billerica & Bedford Railroad

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Friends of Bedford Depot Park, Inc., Bedford, MA

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8. Statement of Significance

Bedford Depot Park Historic District illustrates the establishment and growth of railroad operations in the town from the 1870s onward. The introduction of both standard-gauge and narrow-gauge railroad lines in the 1870s, and the expansion of passenger and freight service on standard-gauge lines in the late 1880s, established the depot area as a bustling industrial and freight center, the largest in Bedford's history. The district's two buildings, the passenger depot and freight house, are unique survivals of railroad-related activity in Bedford, where railroad operations were scaled back by 1931, reduced further in the post-World War II era, and eliminated entirely in 1977. Recent acquisition of the district's buildings by the town of Bedford is part of a larger plan to establish a small public park in the depot area, which is situated at the terminus of one of the most heavily patronized rail trails in the United States. Retaining integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the Bedford Depot Park Historic District meets Criteria A and C and Criteria Consideration B for moved properties of the National Register of Historic Places at the local level.

Bedford is a suburban town situated in the Concord River valley, about sixteen miles northwest of Boston. The town was incorporated in 1729 from parts of Concord (1635) and Billerica (1655). Bedford was a location of early English settlement. Mill sites and houses survive near the Concord River, which forms the town's western boundary, and the headwaters of the Shawsheen River in the eastern part of town. During the Colonial period, Bedford had a productive agricultural economy, with dairying a major specialty. By virtue of its location on the principal route to Concord from the northeast, Bedford was closely associated with the opening events of the American Revolution; seventy-seven men from Bedford fought at the Old North Bridge in Concord on April 19, 1775.

The town center began to take shape soon after incorporation, eventually becoming a well-preserved, Federal-period core with its meeting house (1816-1817) and high-style residences. Industrial and commercial activity in Bedford began in earnest in the first quarter of the 19th century, with shoe manufacturing (1805) and the mining of ochre (1812) for making yellow ochre mineral paint. The 1830s brought rapid growth, fueled by the expansion of local industry, which then included the production of handmade shoes, the manufacture of coarse paper and blinds and sashes, tanning and currying, and the mining of "Bedford rubies." In the northern part of town at Bedford Springs, a resort hotel (demolished) operated by 1842. This commercial enterprise was significantly enlarged in the late 1850s with the addition of the eleven-acre, manmade Fawn Lake. Bedford constructed a combined Town Hall and central school building at the Town Center in 1856.

The Late Industrial period brought major transformations to Bedford's landscape, when the Boston & Lowell Railroad (chartered 1830) began railroad service to Bedford in the early 1870s. In 1870, the Boston & Lowell acquired the Lexington & Arlington Railroad, a line that had opened in 1846 between the town center in Lexington and the brick yards in West Cambridge (later known as Arlington), where passengers would transfer to the nearby Fitchburg Railroad's main line to continue to Boston. Originally known as the Lexington & West Cambridge Railroad, the railroad changed its name in 1867, when the town of West Cambridge changed its name to Arlington. Soon after acquiring the Lexington-Arlington line, the Boston & Lowell built new tracks from the Arlington station

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connecting to its own Boston-bound main line at Somerville Junction in North Somerville. Under the ownership of the Boston & Lowell, the number of daily passenger trains on the Lexington-Arlington branch line increased, and Sunday service was added.

In 1872, the Boston & Lowell created a subsidiary corporation, known as the Middlesex Central Railroad, for the purpose of extending its Lexington branch line eight miles beyond the original terminus in Lexington, passing farther west through Bedford to Concord Center. The groundbreaking was held on August 1st of that year. Six months later, the town of Bedford purchased \$20,000 of stock in the Middlesex Central line. The railroad opened the extension on August 4, 1873. A temporary depot building alongside the track (exact location unknown) at Bedford was replaced the following year with the Passenger Depot, 80 Loomis Street (1874, MHC #179, Photo 2, see sketch map). In its original location, the passenger depot occupied a site on the north side of the railroad right-of-way, west of South Road. With the establishment of the Bedford depot in 1874, the town of Bedford widened and straightened South Road, the principal roadway connecting the station with the town's institutional core near The Great Road. Shortly thereafter, Loomis Street was opened as an easterly approach to the station from The Great Road, ending at South Road near the passenger depot. In 1879, the Middlesex Central extended the Lexington branch line another two and one-half miles farther west from Concord Center to Reformatory Station, across from the prison in Concord.

Construction in 1877 of the Billerica & Bedford Railroad established Bedford as a railroad junction and spurred considerable expansion of the depot area. The impetus for the line came from the residents of Billerica, the town directly north of Bedford. Billerica had been largely bypassed by railroad construction in the second and third quarters of the 19th century: the Boston & Lowell Railroad passed through North Billerica, two miles from the town center, and the Middlesex Central Railroad, the Boston & Lowell subsidiary, skirted Billerica to the south.

The town [Billerica] was an island between two great arteries of commerce, and the citizens were clamoring for an inexpensive railroad of their own to connect Billerica with its extremities and the outside world. Such a line, it was reasoned, would be justified by the outbound traffic to Lowell, Concord, Lexington and Boston, while no doubt a considerable inbound tourist traffic could be generated for the summer hotel at Bedford Springs. ["Born and Buried," reprinted in *Bedford Depot Park News*, December 1996]

Locally, the line would serve the shipping and receiving needs of farms and industry.

The Billerica & Bedford Railroad, the first two-foot, common-carrier, narrow gauge railroad in the nation, began operating August 31, 1877. ["Research tells of first B&B run," *Bedford Depot News*, July 1997] The line extended 8.63 miles between the stations at North Billerica and Bedford Center, passing through the resort that operated on Fawn Lake at Bedford Springs from the early 1840s to 1913. George E. Mansfield of Hyde Park, Massachusetts, a narrow-gauge enthusiast who believed that two-foot-gauge railroads were the wave of the future, persuaded the residents of Billerica to adopt his "hitherto untried scheme." [Karr, 59] Mansfield eventually was named the railroad's general manager. Dr. William Richardson Hayden, a chemist and pharmacist who acquired the hotel at Bedford Springs in 1856, was an officer in the Billerica & Boston corporation. The Billerica & Bedford was financed by private investors and attracted worldwide attention. ["Bedford's two-footer was the country's first," Karr, 59; Bedford inventory]

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Narrow-gauge railroads were thought to be cheaper to construct, maintain, and operate than railroads of conventional width. The narrow-gauge line would be cheaper because the rails and ties would be smaller, less land was required for the right-of-way, and the smaller rolling stock was less expensive to build and required less coal to operate than the conventional rolling stock. ["Bedford's two-footer was the country's first;" Karr, 59-60] The Billerica & Bedford line featured twin locomotives, *Ariel* and *Puck*, of the patented Forney type, "distinguished by the extension of the engine frame in back of the firebox to accommodate the normal tender requirements for fuel and water while utilizing a four-wheel swiveling truck beneath for support." ["Born and Buried," reprinted in *Bedford Depot Park News*, March 1997] Other rolling stock included two forty-foot passenger cars known as *Fawn* (a combination baggage coach seating twenty people) and *Sylvan* (seating thirty). One of the line's nine flat cars was outfitted with a boxcar body; others were converted to form gondolas for hauling coal, gravel, and other supplies. ["Born and Buried," reprinted in *Bedford Depot Park News*, May 1997]

The east-west standard-gauge line of the Middlesex Central Railroad and the north-south narrow-gauge line of the Billerica & Bedford Railroad merged at a point south of Loomis Street and east of South Road. In 1877, the passenger depot (1874) was moved from its original location on the west side of South Road to the junction, where it served passengers from both lines. The same year, the Billerica & Bedford Railroad constructed an engine house, now known as the Freight House, 120 South Road (a/k/a 84 Loomis Street, 1877, MHC #180, Photo 3, see sketch map). Measuring about 22 feet by 36 feet, the building housed the railroad's diminutive twin locomotives on two tracks inside, and incorporated a built-in 15,000-gallon wooden water tank. The former engine house is the only building surviving from the Billerica & Bedford Railroad. ["Freight house closer to restoration," *Bedford Depot News*, July 1999]

The Billerica & Bedford Railroad was considered functionally sound, and daily revenue exceeded operating expenses. However, under-capitalization during the building phase ultimately led to the bankruptcy of the corporation, the closing of the railroad, and the sale, in June 1878, of the rolling stock. The rolling stock was delivered to the Farmington, Maine area where it was used in the operation of the Sandy River Railroad. Some of the track later was used in the narrow-gauge line of the Edaville Railroad in (South) Carver, Massachusetts.

The mid-1870s was a period of economic crisis nationally. The Middlesex Central line opened in Bedford just one month before the prestigious Philadelphia banking firm of Jay Cooke & Company failed due to overspeculation on railroad stocks. The Panic of 1873, brought about "chiefly by unrestrained speculation in railroad construction and wildcat investment schemes in a variety of ventures," involved a ten-day closing of the New York Stock Exchange and led to the worst economic depression the nation had experienced up to that time. More than 18,000 business failures were recorded in 1876-1877 alone, and many railroad corporations became insolvent during the period. The depression nationally began to lift in 1878. [Buck, p. 45; Johnson, p. 613] That George Mansfield succeeded in persuading the residents of Billerica and private investors to build the narrow-gauge line on the heels of the country's worst depression is significant.

After operations on the Billerica & Bedford narrow-gauge line ceased, the Boston & Lowell Railroad acquired the engine house and converted the building for use as a freight house on its standard-gauge line. Research suggests the building, like the passenger depot, was first located on the opposite (west) side of South Road adjacent to the tracks, and moved to its present position sometime after its acquisition by the Boston & Lowell. An important fixture in the

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community for many years, the freight house served as the holding area for packages and large deliveries transported by rail. Incoming deliveries such as grain and outgoing shipments of farm products were crucial to Bedford's economy. New cars, boats, and prefabricated trusses for local buildings were among the items delivered to Bedford for pick-up at the freight house.

On May 31, 1885, the Boston & Lowell Railroad opened passenger and freight service over a new standard-gauge line built in the right-of-way of the defunct narrow-gauge railroad. Henceforth, the Lexington Branch of the Boston & Lowell ran from Boston to North Billerica via Bedford; at one time trains were run between Boston and Lowell using this route. The Boston & Lowell trackage linking Bedford with Reformatory Station in Concord became known as the Reformatory Branch. In 1887, the Boston & Maine Railroad acquired both standard-gauge lines, including Bedford's passenger depot and freight house, when the corporation absorbed the Boston & Lowell Railroad.

Bedford's expanded rail connections spawned a number of industries and other railroad-dependent businesses in the area of the depot in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly on Loomis Street and South Road near the depot. Most of the industrial buildings, however, were demolished by the mid-20th century. Beginning in the 1880s, the area had a grain elevator and a pickle factory, as well as a series of wholesale and retail dealers of grain, hay, coal, and lumber. Adjacent to the railroad junction was Bedford Lumber and Manufacturing Company, later known as Middlesex Lumber & Supply. At the time of its establishment in 1891, Bedford Lumber was the largest industry ever founded in the town, employing fifty people. The company manufactured building materials such as doors and window sash, and was a dealer of lumber, grain, hay, and coal. Also in the vicinity of the Bedford depot was a canning factory, a manufacturer of pile wire knives for carpet looms and wrought iron novelties, a textile company that dealt in wool waste, and a short-lived enterprise that manufactured razor blades. A livery service operated in the depot area until the 1920s.

Trains changing direction in Bedford used a wye, located on the western side of South Road outside the district. The wye (not extant) was trackage in a Y-shaped plan that ran south of the line. Trains headed down one leg of the Y in a southerly direction, then backed up the opposite leg in a northerly direction in order to return to the main track.

Bedford Depot acquired greater importance in the regional transportation network with the May 1902 introduction of the Concord & Boston Street Railway, a subsidiary of the Lexington & Boston Street Railway. At the town center, the line left The Great Road, one of Bedford's principal transportation arteries, to swing by the depot via South Road and Loomis Street before continuing eastward on The Great Road. Later the same year, the street railway line was extended up North Road to Billerica, ultimately connecting to Lowell.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Boston & Maine Railroad scaled back its service through Bedford Depot. On the Reformatory Branch between Bedford and Concord, passenger service was discontinued on April 24, 1926, though the section between Bedford and Concord Center remained open for freight traffic. A similar reduction in service occurred on the Lexington Branch line through the former narrow-gauge right-of-way, where, on December 31, 1931, the Boston & Maine ended passenger service between Bedford and North Billerica. The railroad kept this 8.63-mile section of track open for freight traffic.

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The post-World War II years brought the construction of new limited-access highways that facilitated automobile travel to Bedford and precipitated the end of the town's railroad era. In the state's construction of its "circumferential highway" around Boston (the present State Route 128), the section from Lexington near Bedford's eastern town line southward to State Route 9 in Wellesley was built from 1949 to 1951. The new Route 128 allowed auto-borne travelers to bypass congested town centers and fueled the postwar expansion of the Boston suburbs. In the northeast corner of Bedford, U. S. Route 3 was constructed in 1953 in an effort to bypass the 1920s path of the highway through town centers north of Bedford. [Bedford inventory]

By the 1950s, reduced demand for train service from Bedford to Boston brought decreases in the number of trains running on the line, from three round trips a day in 1950 to a single run each way, per day, eight years later. Steam locomotives were replaced in 1956 with self-propelled Budd Rail Diesel Cars (RDCs), which did not need to be turned around at Bedford, the end of the line. When first introduced on the line, three-car RDC trains were used, though the railroad cut back to two-car trains by the mid-1960s and single-car trains in the 1970s. [Bedford Depot News, December 1999] Boston & Maine formally abandoned both lines west and north of Bedford in 1962. A year later, the town of Bedford acquired those portions of the two right-of-ways that are within town boundaries.

The Boston & Maine Railroad operated its freight house at Bedford until 1953. Bedford's station agent was recalled, and less-than-carload freight was transferred to Lexington. The freight house was then sold to a private party. In the years since the end of the period of significance, the freight house has been used as a grain store, a local meeting place for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a bakery and sandwich shop. The town of Bedford acquired the building in 1999. [Bedford Depot News, June 1996; "About the Freight House" leaflet]

As for Bedford's passenger depot, the 1962 Sanborn fire insurance map indicates the building no longer served as a railroad station at that time and instead was used as a "motor freight station." [1962 Sanborn] At that time, the Boston & Maine was running just two trains (one inbound to Boston and one outbound) per day to Bedford. The building was converted to offices for commercial tenants, a use that remains today. The town of Bedford acquired the depot, with the freight house (see above), in 1999.

While the passenger depot was no longer used by the railroad, passenger train service to Bedford did continue until 1977. On December 26, 1976, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) acquired the commuter rail assets (both the rail corridors and the rolling stock) of the Boston & Maine Railroad, and awarded the Boston & Maine a contract to operate commuter rail service on the MBTA's behalf. The Boston & Maine retained the trackage rights to run freight over its former lines. Fifteen days after the purchase, a snowstorm on January 10, 1977 blocked the Lexington branch, and the unplowed condition of the branch line made it difficult for the outbound train from Boston to Bedford to reach its destination. After several days of no service, the MBTA announced that passenger service on the Lexington branch would be discontinued due to the relatively high cost of operation and low patronage. The last freight train ran on the branch line on January 31, 1981.

In 1991, the Lexington branch right-of-way was "rail-banked" to permit construction of the Minuteman Bikeway through the towns of Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. The bikeway is considered an interim use of the railroad corridor, which is being retained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for possible mass transportation needs in the future. The land along the bikeway's 10.5 miles is leased to the three towns. The rail-trail conversion was fueled

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 6

by the Clear Air Act of 1977 and funded by the Commonwealth at a cost of \$2 million. In 1992, the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy named the Minuteman Bikeway "America's 500th Rail-Trail." The bikeway has proven to be one of the most heavily patronized rail-trails of nearly eight hundred in the United States. ["The Minuteman Bikeway" brochure; *Bedford Depot News*, December 1995, June 1996] The former narrow gauge right-of-way is now known as the Narrow-Gauge Rail-Trail, which begins at Loomis Street north of the historic district.

Preservation Planning

A non-profit membership organization, the Friends of Bedford Depot Park, Inc., works closely with the town of Bedford on the preservation effort at the local level. Formed in January 1995, the Friends organization is dedicated to preserving and honoring Bedford's railroad history, establishing the small park in the historic depot area, and promoting the Bedford community and the Depot Park project (see below). The Friends group publishes a monthly newsletter, and its volunteers staff the museum, gift shop, and food concession that currently operate in the historic freight house. Fund-raising merchandise and refreshments are sold to visitors on the adjacent Minuteman Bikeway. Proceeds from the sale of beverages and food items are deposited into a revolving fund, established in March 2001 by Town Meeting, to be used for the future park and related historic preservation efforts.

In May 1996, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, the regional planning agency for the Boston area, selected the town of Bedford's proposed *Minuteman Bikeway/ Depot Park Transportation Enhancement Project* for reimbursement funding under the federal and state governments' Transportation Enhancement Program. In addition to town acquisition of the passenger depot and freight house, which was accomplished in 1999, the project calls for landscape beautification, improved signage and public amenities for pedestrians and cyclists such as restrooms and water fountains, period-style benches and lighting, and increased public parking area for cyclists and commuter bus patrons. Exteriors of both the freight house and the passenger depot are to be restored.

At the freight house, the ground floor will house a public display area for photographs and artifacts pertaining to local railroad history. A reconstituted platform on the south elevation, adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway, will provide access to a retired Boston & Maine Railroad passenger car, RDC #6211 (1955, MHC #903, Budd Company, manufacturer). This self-propelled rail diesel car, which was acquired from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), is typical of the RDCs that operated over the railroad line to Bedford for more than twenty years beginning in 1956. The Boston & Maine Railroad had the largest fleet of RDCs in the world. Soon after the MBTA acquired the Boston & Maine's commuter rail assets in 1976, the agency began converting the RDCs into unpowered trailers and control cars. Not only was RDC #6211 never converted, but the car was neither sold nor scrapped as others were in the late 1980s, and eventually became the last Budd RDC in the MBTA's possession. [*Bedford Depot News*, July 1995] RDC #6211 will be moved from a temporary storage location (across South Road from the Depot Park Historic District) to its new location adjacent to the freight house, and restored. [*Bedford Depot News*, July 1999] The Budd Car is significant to Bedford's railroad history and will enhance the historic value of the Bedford Depot Park Historic District in the future. However, the car is not proposed for inclusion in the historic district at this time, because of its current location outside district boundaries, and its construction date, which postdates the district's period of significance.

Cost over-runs have caused the Depot Park project to be divided into phases for implementation. In September 2001, the Massachusetts Highway Department advertised the site work for bid. This work will cover the basic construction

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 7

of the park: landscaping, lighting, benches, rail car siding, and parking lots. Currently, building and rail car restorations and the beautification of landscaping on the east side of the building are slated for implementation during a future project, as the town of Bedford anticipates submitting another funding request under the Transportation Enhancement Program. In a separate but related project, the town has funded the preparation of the National Register nomination for the Bedford Depot Park Historic District. National Register listing would promote the educational value of the district and enhance the municipal park project currently underway.

Archaeological Significance

While historic archaeological resources may exist in the Bedford Depot Historic District, they probably have limited research value indicating they might contribute minimally to the significance of the district. Construction features associated with moving the freight house and depot to the district and evidence of utilities may exist, however, they should be documented on construction plans for the facilities and other written documents. Stratigraphic evidence may also exist that describes the fill sequence and surface preparation of the Boston and Maine Railroad right-of-way and later Minuteman Bikeway. These activities should also be replicated in other areas of those structures and may also be documented in design and as built construction plans and other historic records. Stratigraphic evidence of the Boston and Maine Railroad right-of-way surface and the Minuteman Bikeway may also have limited research value.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

Section number 9 Page 1

9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Bedford Historic Preservation Commission. Communitywide Historic Properties Survey, Bedford, Massachusetts. [cited in district nomination as "Bedford inventory."] Bedford Historical Society, 1999.
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- Friends of Bedford Depot Park, Inc. "Significant dates in our local railroad history. Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford, Massachusetts." [timeline] Revised 02/24/99 for Bedford Historical Society meeting.
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- Maps and Atlases
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- 1894 *Plan of Centre of Town of Bedford, Mass.* Albert C. Wood, C. E.
- 1906 *Atlas of Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Vol. II*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co.
- 1916, 1929, 1940, 1962. Fire Insurance Maps, Bedford, Massachusetts. NY: Sanborn Co.

(continued)

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Name of Property

Middlesex County, Massachusetts
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 19	312840	4706020
Zone	Easting	Northing
2.		
Zone	Easting	Northing

3.		
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 Kathleen Kelly Broomer, Preservation Consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date June, 2003

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts 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 Town of Bedford

street & number 10 Mudge Way telephone (781) 275-1111

city or town Bedford state Massachusetts zip code 01730

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 Reduction 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**

**Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts**

Section number 9/10 **Page** 2/1

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

-----, MHC Reconnaissance Survey Report: Bedford. March 1980.

"The Minuteman Bikeway. A guide of America's 500th Rail-Trail. Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford, Massachusetts." Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway, 1999.

(end)

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated district is shown on the accompanying detail of the Town of Bedford assessor's map. The district encompasses about one-half acre at the southeast corner of South Road and Loomis Street, immediately adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the two parcels associated with the passenger depot and the freight house.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

Section number Page

District Data Sheet

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts

<i>Assessor's Map/Parcel</i>	<i>MHC #</i>	<i>Historic Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Resource Type</i>	<i>Status</i>
63/162	179	Middlesex Central RxR (Boston & Lowell RxR) Bedford Passenger Depot	80 Loomis St	1874	Victorian eclectic	B	C
63/162a	180	Billerica & Bedford RxR Engine House (later Boston & Lowell RxR Freight House)	120 South Rd (a/k/a 84 Loomis St)	1877	Victorian eclectic	B	C

Number of Resources Within District

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings	2	0
Sites	0	0
Structures	0	0
Objects	0	0
Total	2	0

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

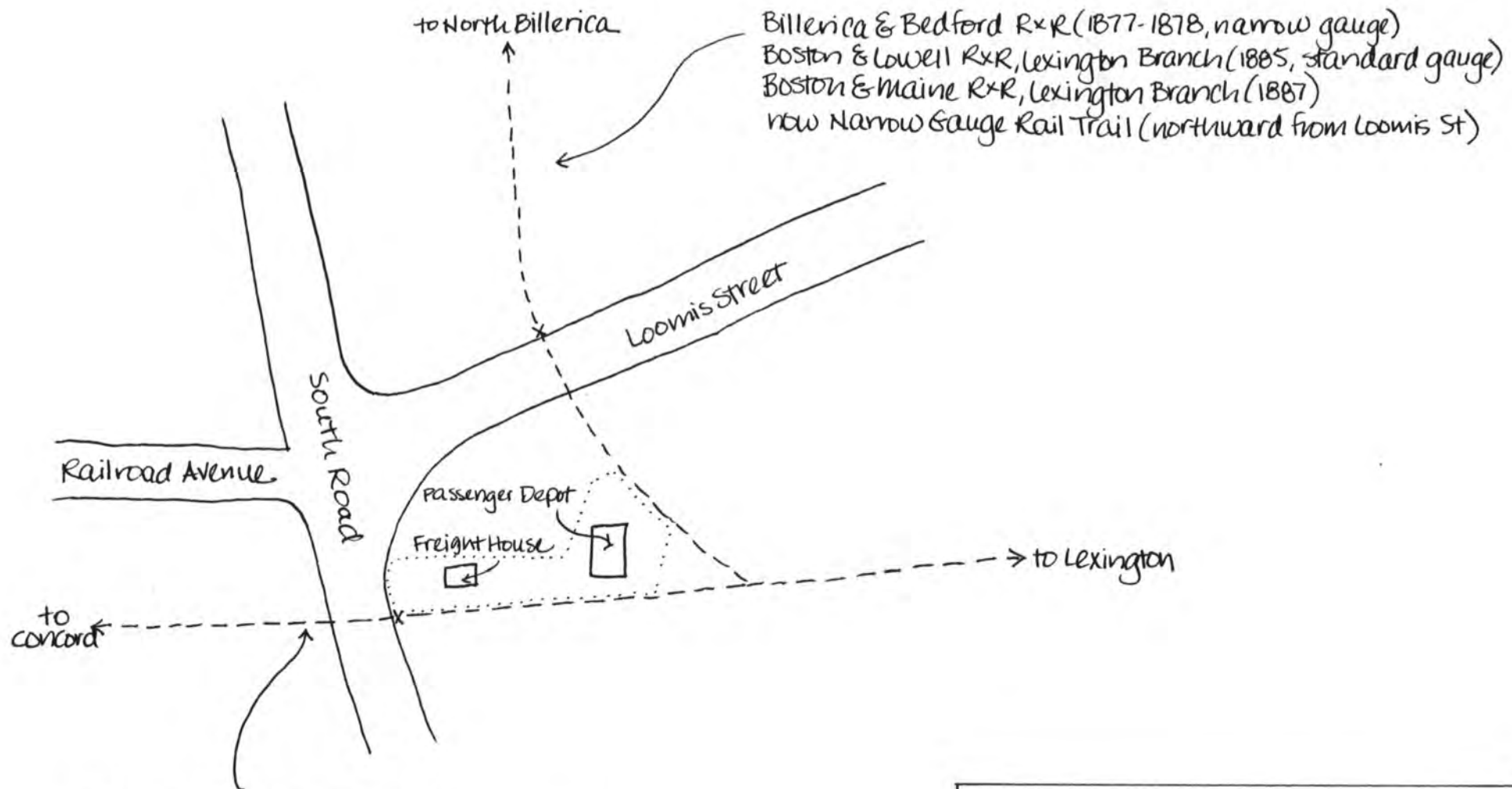
Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Bedford (Middlesex Co.), Massachusetts

Section number photos Page 1

Photographs

Historic Name: Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Location: Loomis Street and South Road, Bedford, Massachusetts
Photographer: K. K. Broomer
Date: July 2001
Location of Negatives: Bedford Historic Preservation Commission

Photograph #	View
1	View E showing Freight House (center), Passenger Depot (center left, rear), Minuteman Bikeway (right), and adjacent contemporary construction (left, not in boundaries of historic district).
2	Passenger Depot, Middlesex Central Railroad (Boston & Lowell Railroad), 80 Loomis Street. View SE toward Minuteman Bikeway. The northernmost of the depot's two train order signals is visible on the roof in this view.
3	Boston & Lowell Railroad Freight House (formerly Billerica & Bedford Railroad Engine House), 120 South Road (a/k/a 84 Loomis Street). View SE toward Minuteman Bikeway.



Middlesex Central R x R (1873)
 Boston & Lowell R x R, Reformatory Branch (1885)
 Boston & Maine R x R, Reformatory Branch (1887)
 now Minuteman Bikeway (eastward from South Road)

Billerica & Bedford R x R (1877-1878, narrow gauge)
 Boston & Lowell R x R, Lexington Branch (1885, standard gauge)
 Boston & Maine R x R, Lexington Branch (1887)
 now Narrow Gauge Rail Trail (northward from Loomis St)

BEDFORD DEPOT PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
 BEDFORD, MIDDLESEX CO., MASS.

September 2001
 Not to Scale

.... District boundaries
 --- Railroad right-of-way
 X Rail trail terminus



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bedford Depot
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 7/08/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/23/03
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/08/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/22/03
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03000791

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 8/21/03 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



BEDFORD DEPOT PARK

BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD

FREIGHT HOUSE



Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Loomis Street and South Road
Bedford (Middlesex County), Mass.

KK Broomer

July 2001

Neg: Bedford Hist. Pres. Comm.

Photo 1 of 3

View E showing freight house (center), passenger depot (center-left, rear),
Minuteman Bikeway (right), and adjacent construction (left, not in
boundaries of district).



Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Loomis Street and South Road
Bedford (Middlesex County), Mass.

KK Broomer
July 2001

Neg: Bedford Hist. Pres. Comm.

Photo 2 of 3

Passenger Depot, Middlesex Central R.R. (Boston & Lowell R.R.), 80 Loomis St.
View SE toward Minuteman Bikeway. The northernmost of the depot's
two train order signals visible on roof in this view.



Bedford Depot Park Historic District
Loomis Street and South Road
Bedford (Middlesex County), Mass.

KK Broomer

July 2001

Neg: Bedford Hist. Pres. Comm.

Photo 3 of 3

Boston & Lowell R x R Freight house (Formerly Billerica & Bedford
Railroad Engine house) 120 South Road (a/k/a Bt Loomis Street).
View SE toward Minuteman Bikeway.

Bedford Depot Park Historic District
 Bedford, Middlesex County, Mass.
 Town of Bedford
 Historic Maps
 Parcels 162 and 162A
 September 2001





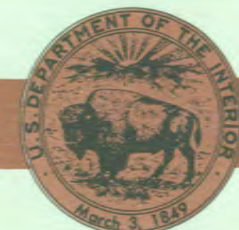
Maynard MASSACHUSETTS

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



GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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 1978 and 1981. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1987
Supersedes Maynard and Concord 1:25 000-scale maps
dated 1965 and 1970

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,
move the projection lines 6 meters south and
41 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		1	2	3
1	3.2808				
2	6.5617		4	5	
3	9.8425				
4	13.1234		6	7	8
5	16.4042				
6	19.6850		1	2	3
7	22.9659		4	5	6
8	26.2467		7	8	
9	29.5276				
10	32.8084				
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (G) and 1983 magnetic declination (M) at center of map Diagram is approximate			
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048					

ISBN 0-607-23457-1
9 780607 234572

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	
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; dam with lock	
Cemetery; grave	
Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	
Windmill; water well; spring	
Mine shaft; prospect; shaft or cave	
Control: 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

MAYNARD, MASSACHUSETTS
42071-D3-TM-025

1987



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

July 2, 2003

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Bedford Depot Park HD, 80 Loomis Street and 120 South Road, Bedford (Middlesex), 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 in this Certified Local Government community were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Donald Corey, Bedford Preservation Commission
Richard T. Reed, Town Administrator
Gordon Feltman, Board of Selectmen
Kathleen Kelly Broome, Preservation Consultant
Richard Joly, Planning Director
Neil Leary, James Shea, Friends of Bedford Depot Park