

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



681

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 OLD BILLERICA ROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number Mitchell Grant, Billerica Rd., East Rd., Mill St.

2. Location

street & number 229-301 OLD BILLERICA RD. not for publication ☐

city or town BEDFORD vicinity N/A

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.)

Brona Simon
Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

May 17, 2007
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): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

7.11.07

OLD BILLERICA RD. HISTORIC DISTRICT
Name of Property

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MA
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	
32	17	building
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
34	17	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)

DOMESTIC: Single dwellings, multiple dwellings
RELIGION: Religious facility
AGRICULTURE: Agricultural fields, outbuildings

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single dwellings
RELIGION: Religious facility
AGRICULTURE: Agricultural fields, outbuildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: Georgian; EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal;
MID-19TH CENTURY: LATE VICTORIAN; LATE 19TH &
EARLY 20TH C: Colonial Revival; MODERN: International

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Granite & fieldstone
walls WOOD: Weatherboard, shake
STONE: Granite
roof ASPHALT
other STONE: Granite & fieldstone boundary walls

Narrative Description

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

(Please refer to continuation sheets)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 1

SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION

The Old Billerica Road Historic District is located in the northeast corner of the town of Bedford, Massachusetts, approximately 16 miles northwest of Boston. The resources of the district are detached single family homes arrayed along a half-mile stretch of Old Billerica Road running north and south, just west of US Route 3 (a limited access road) and just south of the Bedford-Billerica town line. On the east side, the district is bordered by modern single-family suburban housing developments at the south end (Mitchell Grant Way) and the north end (El-Wil Farm Road). On the west side, Old Billerica Road is intersected by a small suburban development (Autumn Drive/Pond Circle)

Old Billerica Road (Photo #1) is a two-lane paved north-south secondary road with a 40-ft. wide layout. The sharp S-curve in the road near the northern end of the historic district is the result of an early realignment of the road (1705) in order to accommodate tracts of private farmland. It later served to set off a half-mile private trotting racetrack maintained by the Parker family in the late 19th century.

The road is bordered on both sides by old fieldstone boundary walls and rows of mature hardwoods (mostly sugar maples). On the east side of the road, the topography is fairly flat and open. On the west side of the road, the grade begins to drop off and gradually descends toward Spring Brook to the west. Old Billerica Road is intersected by a private road on the east side that provides access to properties with particularly deep setbacks.

The Old Billerica Road historic district encompasses approximately 67 acres. Residential development of medium density (one house deep and widely spaced) is arrayed along both sides of the road with deep setbacks of varying dimension. Most of the houses face the road directly (east or west), but some of the older houses face south in the traditional farmhouse orientation. The stone boundary walls that border the road are primarily stacked or tossed walls representing the limits of former agricultural fields and pastures.

The architectural descriptions below describe the primary characteristics of the district beginning at the south end, proceeding north along the east side of the road to the northern limit of the district, then heading south along the west side of the road to the southern limit of the district. The abbreviation OBR refers to Old Billerica Road. The notation NC refers to a non-contributing resource.

East Side (S to N)

The **Michael Bacon House** (229 OBR, begun 1671, Photo #3) is a two-story, five-bay double pile Georgian farmhouse set back from the road with the traditional south-facing orientation. The side-gabled

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 2

building rests on a low quarry stone foundation and features wood clapboard siding, 6/6 windows, an asphalt roof with a prominent third-story gable overhang, and a massive brick center chimney. A small, enclosed entry portico shelters the central front door. There is a two-story addition on the northwest corner that includes a bay window. Stone walls border the driveway and separate the house from surrounding fields and pastures. A wood-frame barn with shiplap siding is located northeast of the house.

The next four houses are set along a private lane that runs east from Old Billerica Road. The parcel at the southeast corner of the intersection is an open pasture. The private road is lined on both sides with mature maples and pines.

The **Boeing House** (251-C OBR, 1900) is a complex of three connected buildings with several smaller outbuildings. It is located on the south side of the private lane, just east of the open pasture. The main house is a 1½-story wood frame building with a side-gabled roofline. It features wood clapboard siding, 12/12 windows and an arched entry portico. The front slope of the roof supports two hip-roofed dormers and two interior chimneys. The two-story southeast wing (B) is attached to the main house at an acute angle and is similar in form and detailing. The third section (C) is a sunroom addition attached to the previous section, also at an acute angle. There is a detached one-story, one-car garage/workshop at the north end of the property and a one-story boathouse/garage located west of the house. Both have wood clapboard siding and multi-pane windows. Basketball courts and a pool complete the site.

The **Wayman-Ceppi House** (251-A OBR, 1905, Photo #6) is a 2½ story, front-gabled wood frame building in the Victorian/Colonial Revival style. The gabled front elevation features a full porch (added in 1955) supported by four Doric columns and an offset entry with paneled sidelights. The walls are siding with wood clapboards accented by corner boards and skirt boards. The windows are 6/6 double-hung sash. The roof is covered with architectural asphalt shingles and there is a massive brick center chimney above the roofline. A large two-story hip-roofed addition with two brick chimneys extends west from the main house with a one-story attached garage at the west end. There is a stacked stone wall behind.

The **Parker-Wade House** (251-B OBR, 1898, Photo #8) is remotely situated at the end of a long driveway on the north side of the private lane. A rail fence enclosure (probably a former pasture) separates the house from the roadway. Rows of mature maples and pines border the driveway. The house is a 2½-story rectangular wood frame building in the Colonial Revival style. It rests on a low fieldstone foundation and features wood clapboard siding with decorative corner boards and horizontal

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 3

trim and two corbelled end chimneys. The offset entry on the long west elevation features a Doric-style entry portico with a dentillated cornice. It shelters a paneled door with full sidelights. The windows are 6/1 and 8/1, flanked by shutters, with four hip-roofed dormers set in the front slope of the gabled asphalt roof. The gable end features two paneled doors and a third-story overhang above. Private tennis courts abut the south gable end.

The **Nielsen-Francesconi House** (251 OBR, 1946) at the northeast corner of Old Billerica Road and the private lane is a 1½ story Cape or cottage-style building on a low concrete foundation. It features wood clapboard siding, a central entrance with a classical entry portico, 6/6 windows, and two gabled dormers in the main roof slope. There are modern additions at each end of the building. East of the house is a detached two-car garage with wood shingle siding and a gambrel roof. There is a wooden picket fence along the east side of the property joined to a wooden stockade fence.

The **Jonathan Willson House** (261 OBR, 1760) is a complex of several connected components under multiple rooflines. The buildings are all sheathed in vinyl siding that obscures the chronological sequence and hides any original detailing. The southeast section (A) is a square, two-story wood frame building, set on a fieldstone foundation with a low-pitched hipped roof. It has 6/6 windows, an exposed double-leaf entry, and a tall brick chimney toward the front. The building features a Craftsman-style enclosed porch with multi-pane casement windows and exposed rafter ends.

The center section (B) of the Jonathan Willson House is a 2½ story wood frame building on a quarry stone foundation with a steep gabled roof. The building features a combination of 2/2 wood windows and narrow paired windows, a wide eave overhang with cornice returns, two shed dormers and clipped gables in the main roofline. There are two interior chimneys with corbelled brick tops.

The northwest sections (C & D) of the Jonathan Willson House are two-story gable-roofed buildings set at right angles on a low fieldstone foundation. They feature 2/2 wood windows, prominent cornice returns in the gable ends, and corbelled chimneys in the asphalt shingle roof.

The **Voigt-LaLiberte House** (263 OBR, 1950) is a one-story flat-roofed Modernist building with a stucco wall surface, three-part windows, a recessed entry and a massive exposed brick chimney on the side. It is set back deep on the lot and has a vinyl-sided addition at the rear of the house.

The **Yeomans-Maher House** (275 OBR, 1954) is a two-story, three bay Colonial-style building with wide weatherboard siding, a gabled asphalt roof, and an end chimney. It features a new front stair and porch leading to a Georgian-style entry surround, and an insulated door with insulated sidelights. The

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 4

windows include 8/8 double-hung sash, large picture windows, and 3/3 casement windows (2nd floor only). There is an attached two-car garage at the north end of the house and a small wood-frame workshop (old garage) behind the house.

The **Keough House** (293 OBR, 1949) is a one-story side-gabled Cape or cottage-style building on a low concrete foundation. It features wood clapboard siding, 1/1 windows, an offset entrance, and an asphalt shingle roof with three skylights. There are one-story extensions at each end of the building. A detached one-story workshop/garage with wood double doors, wood shingle siding, and 6/6 windows is located behind the house.

The **El-Wil Farm House** (301 OBR, 1900, Photo #7) is a two-story Stick Style Victorian building on a high fieldstone foundation. It features a side hall plan with wood clapboard siding accentuated by corner boards, horizontal framing, and eave boards. The gabled front elevation features a modern wooden porch leading to a multi-light wood entry door under a brace-supported door hood. The windows are 6/6 with two through-cornice hip-roofed dormers in the slope of the asphalt-shingle roof. There is a tall brick chimney in the roofline, a screened porch at the southwest corner of the house, and a detached wood-frame garage at the rear.

West Side (N to S)

The **Doyle-Tirrell House** (298 OBR, 1999, NC) is a two-story hip-roofed modern Colonial-style residence on a poured concrete foundation. It has vinyl siding, 12/12 windows, a center entrance with leaded glass doors and sidelights, and a roofline covered in architectural asphalt shingles. There is a one-story attached ell with a two-car garage underneath.

The **Carlson-Gevorkian House** (296 OBR, 1952) is a 1½-story center chimney Cape-style cottage with a low foundation and an attached one-story garage and ell. The building features wood shingle siding, 8/8 wood windows, and a paneled wood door fronted by brick and concrete steps. The simple roofline has been raised at the rear and the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. There is a one-car attached garage at the rear and a small, detached one-story wood workshop on the side with 6/6 windows.

The **Maurice House** (292 OBR, 1988, NC) is located on the northwest side of the S-curve of Old Billerica Road. It is a modern two-story building on a concrete foundation with a vinyl-sided walls and arched window openings. The complex roofline is covered in architectural asphalt shingles. There is an attached two-car garage.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 5

Two properties (278A & 278B OBR) are located on the west side of an unpaved access road that leads north from the curve of Old Billerica Road.

The **Parker Stables-Iwanchuk House** (278-B OBR, 1836, Photo #5) is a long rectangular one-story building with fieldstone walls and a long gabled roof covered in gray slate. The building has wood panel doors, casement windows (1/1) set in the stone walls and two slate-shingled vents in the roofline. There is a greenhouse addition on the south side of the house and a mortared stonewall enclosure behind. East of the house is a detached 1½-story wood frame garage with shiplap siding, two vehicle bays, and a workshop addition on the east side.

The **Arthur Parker House** (278-A, OBR 1880) is a two-story wood frame building on fieldstone foundation built on the front-gabled Greek Revival side hall plan. The original form is evident, but the details are obscured by vinyl siding on the walls and soffits. The windows are 6/6 double hung sash with a vinyl-sided bay window bumped out on the south side. The original entrance opening has been refitted with an insulated metal door and a single sidelight. The gabled roofline has been raised on both slopes and is covered with asphalt shingles.

Back on the main road, the former **Rowse House**, now **Church of Christ** (276 OBR, 1923, Photo #9) is a two-story, rectangular wood-frame building in the Craftsman/Colonial Revival style. It rests on a mortared fieldstone foundation and is clad in weatherboard wood siding under an asphalt shingled hipped roof. The windows are 8/1 and 6/1 arrayed under drip caps in banks of three on either side of the central entrance on the first floor. On the upper level, the symmetry is echoed by a central bank of three windows flanked by a pair of windows on each side. All the windows are fitted with aluminum storm panes. The eave line features exposed rafters with carved ends. The entry porch (approached by a modern wooden access ramp) features Doric columns and pilasters supporting a semi-elliptical arched pediment. The entrance consists of an 8-panel door with full sidelights. There is a three-bay wood-frame garage located northwest of the main building, and an aluminum sided addition at the rear. A **church annex** (ca. 1990, NC) connected to the south side of the church is a one-story side-gabled structure on a poured concrete foundation with that is fully exposed at the rear. The building has an asphalt roof, vinyl siding and 1/1 insulated windows with applied stained glass panels. The enclosed entry portico features wooden steps, a pair of insulated metal entry doors, and a Colonial Revival pediment.

The **modern house** at 3 Autumn Drive (formerly 270 OBR, 1989, NC) is not visible within the historic district, but is included because of the rear of the parcel abuts the private lane between two contributing buildings - The **Arthur Parker House** (278-A, OBR 1880) and the **Parker Stables-Iwanchuk House**

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 6

(278-B OBR, 1836). The house is a two-story Colonial Revival-style structure with 6/6 windows, a side ell, a small garage, and a built-in pool.

The **Dobson-Harrington House** (262 OBR, 1951) is a two-story wood frame building on a concrete foundation. It features wood clapboard walls, 6/6 windows, and a hip roof with a single chimney. There is an enclosed one-story addition across the front of the building and a breezeway on the north side attached to a hip-roofed two-car garage. There is a picket fence at the rear of the property along Autumn Dr./Pond Circle.

The **Duane-Bluhm House** (258 OBR, 1934) is a 1½-story gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial-style house on a fieldstone foundation. It features wide clapboard siding, 12/12 windows, and three gabled and pedimented dormers along the front slope of the gambrel roof. Granite steps lead to a keystone arch with a recessed center entrance and sidelights. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and supports two brick chimneys. There is a 1½ story addition on a fieldstone foundation to the south and a one-story two-car garage on a fieldstone foundation to the southeast.

The **Sullivan-Demello House** (252 OBR, 1994, NC) is a two-story Colonial-style residence with a second-floor overhang and a gabled roofline. It has 1/1 windows, a dentillated cornice and a center entry portico with classical columns, a paneled door, and sidelights. There is an attached two-car garage at the south end.

The **Sullivan House** (246 OBR, 1957, Photo #4) is a 1½-story Dutch Colonial-style building with wood shingle siding and a gambrel roofline. It features 8/8 windows and a center entrance with a paneled door and sidelights. There is an arched wood lintel above the 1st floor window in the gable end. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has a single chimney set behind the ridge line. There is an attached two-car garage at the south end of the building.

The **Penland House** (242 OBR, 2006, NC) is a two-story Colonial-style building on a concrete foundation. It features wood clapboards, 6/6 windows, and a hipped roof. There is a two-car garage at the exposed basement level. The house is built on the site of the former Joseph Skinner house and blacksmith shop (built ca. 1860, demolished 2005).

A **new house** (234 OBR, 2006, NC) is currently under construction on a cleared site at the south end of the district. There is a poured concrete foundation and the framing for the new house is being erected.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 7

Outbuildings

All of the residential properties in the district included modern attached or detached garages. Many of the properties also include an old garage (sometimes converted to a workshop) and a variety of small tool sheds or other buildings. There is only one true barn remaining in the district at the **Michael Bacon House**, 229 Old Billerica Road.

On the District Data Sheet, outbuildings are considered contributing resources if they appear to be more than 50 years old and if they are contemporary with the main house or predate it.

Condition of Buildings

Most of the houses in the Old Billerica Road historic district have been updated and remodeled over the years to suit the needs and tastes of the owners. Some of the older houses were expanded at the turn of the 20th century (e.g., **Jonathan Willson House**, 261 OBR) while others were originally barns that were converted to residential use (e.g., **Boeing House**, 251-C OBR and **Iwanchuk House**, 278-B OBR). Secondary ells and extensions, porches and breezeways, raised rooflines, and artificial siding are common throughout the district, but the form and integrity of the historic resources are still evident. Insulated entry doors and replacement windows are common, but are generally installed within the historic openings. (**Yeomans-Maher House**, 275 OBR and **Arthur Parker House**, 278-A OBR)

Several properties have been preserved simply by virtue of never having been extensively remodeled. (**Rowse House/Church of Christ**, 276 OBR and **El-Wil Farm**, 301 OBR)

Only one property in the district has been fully restored. The exterior of the **Michael Bacon House** (229 OBR) has recently been restored to its 18th century appearance although the extent of interior remodeling is unknown.

Stone Boundary Walls

The boundary walls or stone fences that line Old Billerica Road and extend into many of the adjacent parcels are a defining visual feature of the historic district. The walls (Photo #2) are constructed of fieldstone – weathered remnants of gneiss and granite bedrock and glacial-transported materials that have been uniformly rounded. The walls are composed mostly of well-rounded boulders 10-20” in length (“two-handers”) with smaller “one-handers” and cobblestones inserted to make a tight fit. The stonewalls form a continuous boundary along both sides of Old Billerica Road, although the height,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 8

condition and character of the walls vary. Because the stone boundary walls are a defining characteristic of the district, they are considered collectively as a single contributing feature in this nomination.

The oldest walls (presumably 18th and early 19th centuries) are stacked or tossed boundary walls that resulted from clearing the adjacent fields and pastures. The newer walls (presumably late 19th and early 20th century) are mostly laid and mortared walls. The descriptions below follow the same sequence as the architectural descriptions, starting at the south end of the district, heading north along the east side of Old Billerica Road, crossing the road and heading south along the west side to the end of the district.

East Side Boundary Walls (south to north)

The **Michael Bacon House** (229 OBR, 1671) has the most extensive stonewall network of all the properties in the district. The knee-high stacked stone walls that flank the driveway extend along the west, south, and east sides of the houselot. The walls are generally in very good condition and most likely date from the 18th century.

A stacked stone retaining wall (approx. 250 ft.) runs north along Old Billerica Rd., then gives way to a knee-high laid wall near the pasture at the corner of the private lane. At the **Boeing House** (251C OBR) on the south side of the lane, the driveway is flanked by knee-high stacked stonewalls along both sides (approx. 50 ft.). The driveway walls probably date from the early 20th century.

At the **Wayman-Ceppi House** (251-A OBR, 1905), a stacked stonewall runs behind the house, marking the boundary with the Michael Bacon House. The boundary wall probably dates from the 18th or 19th century.

At the **Parker-Wade House** (251-B OBR, 1898), knee-high stacked stonewalls define the west and south property lines. The stonewalls probably date from the late 19th century.

The **Nielsen-Francesconi House** (251 OBR, 1946) at the northeast corner of Old Billerica Road and the private lane, has a tall granite post at the corner and a low stacked stone wall that rounds the corner. A knee-high retaining wall of fieldstone and quarried granite slabs runs north along Old Billerica Rd. (approx. 100 ft.). It probably dates from the early 20th century.

The **Jonathan Willson House** (261 OBR, 1760) preserves evidence of several generations of stone walls along the road and the property. At the southern end is a section of knee-high stacked stone wall along the road frontage (approx. 120 ft.), now mostly collapsed. Near the southwest corner of the house is a

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 9

granite post. From there runs a continuous thigh-high stacked stone wall (approx. 50 ft.). At the northern end of the property is a thigh-high stacked stonewall with a knee-high retaining wall below it, perhaps reflecting changes in the grade of the roadway. The walls probably date from the 18th and 19th centuries.

The **Voigt-LaLiberte House** (263 OBR, 1950) retains a small section of stacked stonewall along the roadway (approx. 10 ft.). The wall probably dates from the late 19th century.

The **Yeomans-Maher House** (275 OBR, 1954) features a thigh-high stacked and chinked stonewall that borders the S-curve of Old Billerica Rd. (approx. 350 ft.). The wall gradually reduces to knee-high height. A granite post is laid flat adjacent to the driveway. The boundary wall probably dates from the 19th century.

In front of the **Keough House** (293 OBR, 1949) is a thigh-high stacked stonewall (approx. 125 ft.) with partial chinking. Portions of the wall have collapsed. At the northern end of the parcel, a section of thigh-high stacked stonewall (approx. 35 ft.) survives in better condition with granite posts marking the driveway entrance. The boundary wall probably dates from the 19th and early 20th century.

The **El-Wil Farm House** (301 OBR, 1900) is fronted by a 20th century granite curb along the S-curve of Old Billerica Road. It is possible that an earlier stonewall may have been removed during road work.

West Side Boundary Walls (north to south)

At the north end of the historic district, the **Doyle-Tirrell House** (298 OBR, 1999) is fronted by a continuous knee-high stacked stone wall (approx. 125 ft.). The wall continues past the **Carlson-Gevorkian House** (296 OBR, 1952) for about the same length (approx. 125 ft.). The boundary walls probably date from the late 19th century. Some portions of the wall have collapsed into rubble.

The front lot line of the **Maurice House** (292 OBR, 1988) continues the knee-high stacked stonewall (approx. 250 ft.), some portions of which are collapsed. Two granite fence posts with gate hardware flank the driveway entrance to the property. The boundary wall probably dates from the late 19th century.

The access road running north from the west side of the S-curve on Old Billerica Road leads to the **Parker Stables-Iwanchuk House** (278-B OBR, 1836) and the **Arthur Parker House** (278-A OBR, 1880). The east side of the access road is marked by a continuous thigh-high stacked stonewall (approx. 300 ft.), an extension of the wall along the main road. It probably dates from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The west side of the access road has no stonewalls.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 10

At the **Rowse House/Church of Christ** and the church annex (276 OBR, 1923 and later), the front parcel line along the road is defined by a curved knee-high laid and mortared wall with a continuous concrete cap. The wall is double-faced and begins at a square laid stone pillar adjacent to the driveway. As the wall heads south it is interrupted at the front walkway by two square laid stone pillars with concrete caps and remnants of iron gate hardware. The wall continues southward as a knee-high laid and chinked wall with some sections partially collapsed. As it approaches the Autumn Dr./Pond Circle intersection, the wall deteriorates to remnants of a knee-high double-faced laid and mortared wall, banked on the roadway side, but exposed on the church side. The total length of all sections is approximately 120 feet. The boundary wall or stone fence probably dates from the early 20th century.

The **Dobson-Harrington House** (262 OBR, 1951) continues the knee-high stonewall along the front lot line (approx. 200 ft.). There are two quarried granite gateposts at the southeast corner of the property with space for a gate (no longer extant). Two additional granite posts mark the former location of the front walkway. The stonewall probably dates from the late 19th century.

The **Duane-Bluhm House** (258 OBR, 1934) is set off by a continuous knee-high stacked stone wall in good condition (approx. 100 ft.). The wall has two openings for the loop driveway, both marked by square stacked pillars of stone with pieced caps of flat stones and remnants of gate hardware. The stonewall probably dates from the late 19th century.

In front of the **Sullivan-Demello House** (252 OBR, 1994) is a remnant (approx. 20 ft.) of a knee-high stone wall, now collapsed. It probably dates from the late 19th century.

The **Sullivan House** (246 OBR, 1957) has a continuous knee-high stacked stone wall along the front of the parcel (approx. 125 ft.) and continuing along the north lot line. Most of the wall has collapsed into rubble. The wall probably dates from the late 19th century.

The **Penland House** (242 OBR, 2006) has no boundary wall along the property line.

In front of the **new house** (234 OBR, 2006) is a double-faced laid and mortared stonewall with a cement cap (approx. 60 ft.). The wall features square laid pillars at each end with upright copestones. It probably dates from the early 20th century.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 11

Summary

The road layout, stone walls, and houses of the Old Billerica Road historic district represent Bedford's historical development from an agrarian colonial community to a modern suburb. By documenting the range and quality of resources within the district, the National Register nomination will encourage responsible stewardship and help to preserve the historical and architectural character of the district.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are known in the district, it is possible that sites are present. Fourteen Native sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the district represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The district occupies a well-drained, level to moderately sloping hilltop location in the Bedford Springs area of town. Most wetlands in the area are located well over 1,000 feet from the district, with the exception of a small pond southwest of the district. The nominated area lies within the Shawsheen and Merrimack River drainage. Given the above information, the size of the district (approximately 67 acres), and known patterns of Native settlement in the Shawsheen/Merrimack River drainage, a moderate potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources in the district. The settlement sensitivity assessment presented above is similar to conclusions reached during a recent community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey of Bedford (Binzen, *et al* 2004). During that research, the town was divided into survey units to facilitate the town wide study with the Old Billerica Road Historic District being included in the Bedford Springs study unit. Most of the district area occupies a low to moderate sensitivity area within that unit with the western portion of the district bordering a moderate-to-high sensitivity area focused on the Spring Brook wetlands. Ancient sites in the area were characterized by Middle Archaic to Woodland seasonal hunting stations located along the margins of wetlands and in upland areas. Larger, complex, multi-component sites were predicted on bluffs overlooking the Shawsheen River in the eastern portion of the study unit immediately east of the district.

A high potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources in the district. While the district was included in the 1652 Mitchell Grant for the area, only the Michael Bacon House (1671) is known to exist in the area from this period. Structural evidence may exist from additions made to the original Bacon "half-house," as well as additional undocumented farmsteads, barns, and outbuildings from this period. Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) associated with 17th century settlement in the district might also survive. Similar archaeological resources may survive from 18th, 19th, and 20th century settlement in the district. Settlement in the area remained sparse during the Colonial and Federal periods. Structural evidence may survive from the former Joseph

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA**

Section number 7 Page 12

Skinner house and blacksmith shop (built ca. 1860, demolished 2005) originally located on the site of the present Penland House (2006) at 242 Old Billerica Road. Archaeological evidence from an 18th and/or 19th century blacksmith shop may also survive with the extant Bacon House at 229 Old Billerica Road.

Stone walls represent another important structure/archaeological resource in the district. Many of the stone walls located in the district reportedly date to the division of larger grants into smaller farmsteads in the 18th century. Additional historical research may demonstrate that some walls date to the earlier 17th century period and larger land grants.

The sensitivity assessment for known and predicted historic sites presented above is similar to conclusions reached for historic sites in the Bedford Springs survey unit of the community wide archaeological reconnaissance survey of Bedford (Binzen, *et al* 2004). That study identified a moderate to high sensitivity for historic archaeological sites in proximity to North Road and Old Billerica Road, both colonial-period thoroughfares. Potential historic resources in the area include sites related to the domestic and agricultural research context, typical of the district. Potential sites and features related to the Bedford Springs Resort may also exist in the area.

(end of Section 7)

OLD BILLERICA RD. HISTORIC DISTRICT
Name of Property

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant & 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

(Please refer to continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Please refer to continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1671-1957

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 1

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Billerica Road Historic District represents historical development patterns that have defined the character of Bedford from colonial times to the 20th century. The buildings, sites, and structures in the historic district retain their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. All of the properties are residential with the exception of the Rowse House/Church of Christ (276 Old Billerica Rd., 1923).

The district meets National Register Criterion A at the local level by embodying the historical phases of development in Bedford in response to improvements in transportation and technology. The Old Billerica Road district evolved from small-scale mixed grain and livestock farming in the colonial period to specialized agriculture and a rural retreat in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, the area took on the residential character of a modern suburb as technology and transportation improved.

The district also meets National Register Criterion C at the local level by preserving the distinctive architectural characteristics and styles of each period in Bedford's historical development. The district resources include stone boundary walls from the colonial period, single-family farmhouses from the 18th and 19th century, expanded farmhouses and cottages from the turn of the 20th century, and a variety of modest suburban houses from the first half of the 20th century.

The traditional road layout, fieldstone boundary walls, variety of architectural styles, and the absence of significant intrusions make Old Billerica Road a significant historical resource that merits listing as a National Register historic district.

CRITERION A: HISTORICAL EVENTS

The Town of Bedford, Massachusetts, was created from the adjacent towns of Concord and Billerica and was incorporated in 1729. Old Billerica Road (formerly known as East St. or Mill St.) is located in the northeast corner of Bedford, about one mile from the village center.

The history of the Old Billerica Road Historic District is the story of large 17th century land grants that were divided for family farms in the 18th century, converted to commercial agriculture and private rural retreats in the late 19th century, then subdivided for residential development in the 20th century. The original proprietors and the major farm families are the dominant characters in the story.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 2

The Mitchell Grant (1652)

The proposed historic district includes parcels on both sides of Old Billerica Road that were originally part of the Mitchell Grant of 1652. The Reverend Jonathan Mitchell was the second minister of Cambridge, Mass. The town of Cambridge laid claim to a portion of the land in what is now Bedford and granted 500 acres to him in 1652.

The Mitchell Grant of 1652 includes virtually all of the Old Billerica Road historic district and parcels on both sides of the current road. The grant was not surveyed until 1663 and actually amounted to some 650 acres. At that time it included a mill site and millpond (half a mile south of the Old Billerica Road historic district).

Rev. Mitchell died in 1668 and his widow leased the mill site and surrounding land to Timothy Brooks and Michael Bacon. (Mitchell Grant Way, a modern housing complex just south of the Old Billerica Road historic district, preserves the memory of the original 17th century land grant.)

The Roadway

The Shawsheen River watershed and the area now known as Old Billerica Road were granted to the town of Cambridge by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1642. Although the original intention was to initiate settlement in the area, the preliminary survey by Symon Willard and Edward Convers in 1642 found it "no way fit, the upland being very barren and very little meadow there, nor any good timber almost fit for any use."

In lieu of settlement, a "trucking station" or trading post was established on the Shawsheen River in 1642 to conduct trade with the nearby Pawtucket Indian village. A saw and gristmill was constructed on the falls of the Shawsheen about 1663, but the area remained sparsely populated for many years.

Old Billerica Road is a north-south route that roughly parallels the Shawsheen River to the east. The road was most likely laid out in the 17th century to provide access to the Indian trading post (1642) and the saw and gristmill site (1663).

The roadway has seen only one significant realignment. It took place around 1705 when a portion of the road was moved west near the location of the Michael Bacon House. The realignment, which resulted in the sharp bend at the north end of the proposed district, may have facilitated the division of farmland

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 3

among Bacon's five grown sons. It also allowed the expansion of the original Bacon House to its current five-bay form.

Maps from the 18th and 19th centuries designate Old Billerica Road as "Billerica East Road" (1794), "East Road to Billerica" (1830), East Rd. (1875), Mill Street (1887) and Billerica Rd. (1906). The prominent S-curve at the north end of Old Billerica Road is a distinctive feature that does not correlate to any of the usual geographical features such as a hill or steep incline. It seems to have resulted primarily from the 1705 realignment of agricultural land. The bend is indicated on maps from 1794 on and conforms to the current configuration. The southwest end of the curve sprouts a secondary road that runs due north and may have provided direct access to the agricultural fields.

At the turn of the 20th century, Arthur Parker laid out a racetrack for his champion trotters on the west side of Old Billerica Rd. just north of the curve. The secondary north road led directly to the stables (**Parker Stables-Iwanchuk House**, 278-B OBR) and the racetrack just north of them. The public road followed the curve to the east (the current S curve) and then continued north to Billerica. (The site of the racetrack is now occupied by single-family suburban houses.)

The 1945 Protective Bylaw (zoning) Map prepared by the Bedford Planning Commission shows the dirt racetrack still in place just north of the district and low density single-family homes along both sides of Old Billerica Road. By 1959 when the protective bylaw was revised, the racetrack was gone, US Route 3 was laid out east of Old Billerica Road and subdivision roads were in place throughout the area.

The layout of Route 3 in 1937 as a limited access road northeast of Old Billerica Rd. was designed to facilitate local commuting patterns. When it was finished in the 1950s, Route 3 quickly became a primary access route. Around that time the former main road (Billerica Road) received the modifier "Old" to indicate its long history. The middle section of Old Billerica Road is the focus of the proposed historic district.

Settlement and Colonial Periods: Michael Bacon and Descendants

One of the earliest English settlers along Old Billerica Road was Michael Bacon III. He emigrated from England to the Puritan colony of Massachusetts as an infant in 1640 with his father and grandfather (both also named Michael). The parents of Michael III settled first in Charlestown and then in Woburn (1644).

Michael Bacon III (1639-1707) was raised in Woburn and married his step-sister **Sarah Richardson** in 1660. Their three oldest daughters were born in Woburn in 1661, 1663, and 1667. The oldest son,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 4

Michael Bacon IV, was born in 1668 and the family moved to the Mitchell Grant in Billerica (now Bedford) shortly after. Bacon's second son Jonathan was born in Billerica in 1672. The family was eventually blessed with four more sons, Nathaniel, Josiah, Benjamin, and Joseph.

With Timothy Brooks, another Woburn resident, Bacon became interested in the potential for a saw- and gristmill site on the falls of the Shawsheen River in what is now Bedford, Mass., in the 1660s. The site was part of the Mitchell Grant, and Bacon may have participated in the planning and construction of the mill with Timothy Brooks as early as 1663.

In 1671, Bacon was digging clay to construct a chimney at his new house site along Old Billerica Road. About 1680, he purchased the Shawsheen mill and mill rights from Timothy Brooks who moved to Swanzey, New Hampshire. Bacon subsequently purchased the entire 500 acre Mitchell Grant from Rev. Mitchell's widow in 1682. According to the deed, he had already made substantial improvements to the property since the purchase included "all the housing, fencing [stone walls?], culture, mill or mill pond, brooks and streams, water and water-courses."

By the time Michael Bacon III died in 1707, his oldest son Michael IV had moved to South Carolina and his sons Jonathan, Nathaniel, and Josiah had each been given portions of the original Mitchell Grant as their own farms. The unmarried younger sons, Joseph and Benjamin, and their unmarried sister Ruth retained the central portion of the farm and the old farmhouse. Benjamin married Abigail Taylor in 1712 and the siblings chose to divide their interest in the property in 1715 on the eve of Joseph's marriage to Abigail's sister Rebecca Taylor.

When the property was divided, **Benjamin Bacon** (1687-1727) retained ownership of the old house and the core of the old Michael Bacon farm. When Benjamin died at age 39, he left his widow Abigail and four minor children, Benjamin II, John, Abigail, and Samuel.

The Bacon property was held in trust for **Benjamin Bacon II** (1713-1791) until he was old enough to take title to it. Benjamin II was married in 1740 and subsequently had six children. All died in childhood except for Benjamin's oldest son Benjamin III and a younger son, Elijah (1754).

Benjamin Bacon III (1741 – died before 1830) married in 1766 and expanded the old Bacon farmhouse again. Benjamin III occupied the west half with his wife and their eventual six children. His parents and his younger brother **Elijah Bacon** (1754-1788) occupied the east half. Benjamin Bacon III and his brother Elijah were both Minutemen who fought at the battle of Concord on April 19, 1775.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 5

In 1788, Benjamin Bacon III's wife and his married brother Elijah both passed away while living in the divided farmhouse. Benjamin III eventually married his brother's widow and gained full title to the old Bacon house and farm.

The next generation, **Benjamin Bacon IV** (1769-1839), was married in 1793 and took up residence in half of the shared house where his grandparents had lived until their deaths in 1791. His first son Elijah, born in 1796, was followed by ten other children.

Elijah Bacon (1796-after 1845), a farmer and blacksmith, was the last generation to live on the old Bacon farm which then included 109 acres. He and his wife had four daughters and one son (Henry Watson Bacon, b. 1839). Elijah moved from the farm to Bedford Center in 1845 and traded farming for a new venture -- manufacturing farm tools.

The former Bacon farm was split up with the eastern and northern portions (70 acres) going to Joseph Skinner, a farmer, blacksmith, and wheelwright, in 1846. The southern and eastern portions (60 acres) went to Luther Eaton in 1853.

After Joseph Skinner's death, his portion of the old Bacon farm was acquired by another farmer, Frank Frost (1889 map).

The **Michael Bacon House** (229 OBR, 1671, Photo #3) reflects the long occupancy of the Bacon family and the subsequent changes in ownership. It was originally constructed as a "half-house" with the chimney exposed on the west end about 1671. After Michael Bacon's death in 1707, the house and the central portion of the farm were inherited by his younger sons Joseph and Benjamin. Michael's son Benjamin Bacon added two rooms on the west side of the chimney in the early 18th century, making it a center chimney saltbox-style house. The roofline on the rear (north) portion was raised by Michael Bacon's great-grandson Benjamin Bacon III about 1766 to give the house its current appearance.

Beginning in the 1760s, the Bacon House was divided to accommodate two families. From about 1766 to 1788, Elijah Bacon and his older brother Benjamin Bacon III occupied the east and west halves of the house respectively with their families. The house was briefly reunited when Benjamin Bacon II married his brother's widow.

The western half of the house was occupied by Elijah Bacon until 1845 and then sold to Joseph Skinner, a blacksmith, and his wife Lydia (Fitch) Skinner in 1846. By 1861, Joseph Skinner had built a new house on the west side of Old Billerica Rd. (242 OBR, demolished 2005 and now replaced).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 6

The west portion of the Bacon house and related farmland passed through a series of owners and investors as part of the 220-acre stock farm owned by John Clifton of Boston and Medford (operated 1863 – ca. 1890). Orin W. Fiske acquired the west half of the house from the Clifton estate in 1870 and sold it to Arthur H. and Frederic Parker in 1893.

From 1841 to 1893, the eastern half of the old Bacon house was occupied by a series of families including Loammi and George Crosby (1841), Samuel Newell (1857), Joseph and Dorcas Skinner (1874) and Frank and Alice Frost (1882). The Frosts sold the east half of the “old Bacon house and barn” to Eleanor S. Parker, the sister of Arthur and Frederic Parker, in 1903.

Colonial and Federal Periods: The Jonathan Willson House

[Note: despite the discrepancy in the spelling of the family name, “Willson” and “Wilson” refer to the same family. Names are recorded in the nomination as they appear in original documents.]

Bedford was a sparsely populated rural community throughout the colonial and federal periods. The town-wide population of 523 noted in the first Federal census of 1790 had increased to 685 by 1830. While that represents an increase of 30% over forty years, the size of the community remained relatively small and only a handful of families lived in the vicinity of Old Billerica Rd.

Captain Jonathan Willson of Bedford (1733-1775) was related to the Bacon family by his second marriage in 1761 to **Elizabeth Stearns Bacon**, the widow of John Bacon (d. 1760). Shortly after the marriage, Willson built the house at what is now 261 Old Billerica Rd. He and his wife had one son, Jonathan Willson Jr. (b. 1763).

Capt. Willson was a member of the Bedford Minutemen and was killed at the battle of Concord, Massachusetts April 19, 1775. His widow and son (Jonathan Willson Jr., b. 1763) continued to live in the house after Capt. Willson’s death.

Jonathan Willson Jr. (1763-1797) married **Rebeckah Page** in 1784 and they had four children: Susanna (Sukey, b. 1785), Levi (b. 1788), Cyrus (b. 1790, died in infancy) and Nancy (b. 1792). After Jonathan Willson Jr. died in 1797, his widow Rebeckah married William Porter (1799).

Levi Wilson (b. 1788), the grandson of Capt. Jonathan Willson, gradually acquired full title to the house from his sisters and mother. In 1825, he sold the house and the 100-acre farm to Robert Edwards. The property subsequently passed through a succession of owners including George W. Wells (1839), Francis Cogswell (1844), and William Blake (1853).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 7

John Clifton purchased the Wilson house and farm in 1857 as part of the development of the Clifton Stock Farm. It was subsequently purchased by Arthur and Frederic Parker in 1893 and incorporated in the Parker enclave.

Early Industrial Period: The Clifton Stock Farm

From 1830 to 1870, Bedford's population gradually increased from 685 residents to 849. Several small mills and industries bolstered the local economy, but specialized agriculture directed toward the needs of metropolitan Boston seemed to hold the most promise.

Between 1857 and 1864, **John Clifton** of Boston and Medford acquired land along both sides of Old Billerica Road to establish a model livestock farm. Clifton purchased the former Wilson farm (81 acres) at the northern end of Old Billerica Rd. in 1857 and the adjacent westerly parcel (28 acres) in 1858. He added to that a portion of the southern part of the Bacon farm (27 acres) in 1859 and a portion of the northeasterly part of the Bacon farm in 1863. The farm eventually amounted to 220 acres and included the west half of the Michael Bacon house, the entire Wilson house and farm and several adjacent parcels.

Clifton died in 1870 before the Clifton Stock Farm had been able to achieve much success, but it did establish a model distinctly different from the small-scale family farms that had preceded it on Old Billerica Rd. The concept of large-scale specialty agriculture under single ownership and professional management responded to the growing needs of the metropolitan Boston area and the constant demand for meat, dairy, fresh produce and livestock.

Orrin W. Fiske, a real estate agent from Chelsea, Massachusetts, purchased the entire 220-acre stock farm from the Clifton estate in 1870 and may have continued to operate it for a few years. In 1893, he sold the Wilson house and farm as well as the west half of the Bacon Homestead to the Parker brothers who proceeded to make Old Billerica Road the site of a model farm and rural retreat.

Late Industrial Period: The Parker Family and Shawsheen River Farm

Bedford's rural character, proximity to Boston and convenient road and streetcar connections made it an attractive country retreat in the late 19th century. The town population of 849 in 1870 had increased to 1,208 by 1900. In addition, there were several families who maintained country homes in Bedford while retaining a primary residence in Boston.

The Parker family of Boston began to purchase land along Old Billerica Road in Bedford in the 1890s

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 8

and eventually owned almost all of the parcels in the proposed historic district. Through their own activities and through the disposition of the respective estates, the members of the extended Parker family were primarily responsible for the area's transition from working farms to a suburban residential neighborhood.

Arthur H. Parker, a gentleman farmer, and his brother **Frederic Parker**, a coal dealer, began acquiring land and buildings along Old Billerica Rd. in the 1890s. They first purchased the remnants of the Clifton Stock Farm (220 acres on both sides of Old Billerica Rd.) from Orin W. Fiske in 1893. At that time the property, renamed Shawsheen River Farm, included the west half of the old Bacon House (229 OBR) and the entire Capt. Jonathan Willson House and farm (261 OBR).

Arthur Parker's active interest in farming led him to acquire additional land, including the Skinner farm, the west half of the **Bacon house** (229 OBR, built 1671 and later), and the Ireland farm (35 acres on both sides of Old Billerica Rd., south of the proposed historic district).

Within ten years of Arthur and Francis Parker's initial land acquisition, their sister Eleanor S. Parker had purchased the former Frost farm which included ten acres of land and the older (east) half of the **Bacon house** and barn (229 OBR, built 1671 and later).

Another brother, Francis Stanley Parker, followed suit in 1903. He purchased from Charles Viles some 70 acres lying between Old Billerica Rd. and the Shawsheen River to the east.

By 1911, the Parker family holdings were at their peak and amounted to more than 350 acres adjacent to Old Billerica Rd. Virtually all of the properties in the proposed historic district were owned by the Parker family at that time. For the next four decades, the Parkers bought and sold small parcels, adjusted boundary lines and disposed of property through dozens of land transactions.

Arthur Hamilton Parker (b. 1870) owned most of the land on the west side of Old Billerica Rd. and managed it as an active farm. He assembled a dairy herd and a private stable of champion trotters. The **Parker Stables** (278-B OBR, built 1836) were expanded and he added a half-mile oval racetrack north of the proposed district (no longer extant). He lived in a modest existing house (**Arthur Parker House**, 278-A Old Billerica Rd., ca. 1880).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 9

A fire on September 15, 1915 destroyed Arthur Parker's large cow barn, wagon shed, and other farm buildings on the west side of Old Billerica Rd. The large house occupied by farm employees was saved and the racing stables were undamaged, but the total loss of buildings and livestock was valued at \$10,000.

In 1921, Arthur Parker sold his entire farm to Edith M. and Arthur E. Rowse. At that time the farm included 105 acres of the west side of Old Billerica Rd. and 20 acres on the east side.

Frederic Parker (b. 1865) and his wife **Mary McBurney Parker** began renovating and expanding the old **Jonathan Willson House** (261 OBR, built 1760 and later) and moved in with their four children in 1894. Targeting the Boston market, Frederic Parker developed a cluster of greenhouses to grow fresh lettuce and cucumbers on a commercial scale.

The greenhouses located near 229 Old Billerica Rd. (south of the proposed district) were sold to the Little family after 1920. They remained in use until 1938 when they were heavily damaged by the New England Hurricane and some were not rebuilt. The former greenhouse location is now the site of Bedfordshire Condominiums, a modern development. Frederic eventually sold his house and the seven acres fronting on Old Billerica Rd. to the Loomis family in 1937.

Francis Stanley Parker (b. 1863) and his wife **Harriet Armory Anderson Parker** built a new house at the end of a private lane (**Parker-Wade House**, 251-B OBR, built 1898) and occupied it with their two children. In 1932 after the death of her husband, Harriet Parker sold the rest of her interest in the Old Billerica Rd. property to William J. and Elsie M. Backes.

Eleanor Stanley Parker (b. 1866) purchased the old Frost farm in Bedford and lived in a house on the private lane east of Old Billerica Rd. (**Wayman-Ceppi House**, 251-A OBR, built 1905). She sold her house and land along Old Billerica Rd. in 1933, also to the Backes family.

The Parker families created a virtual enclave along both sides of Old Billerica Road during the late industrial and early modern periods. Four of the oldest houses in the district were updated or expanded by the Parker family: the **Michael Bacon house** (229 OBR, built 1671 and later), the **Jonathan Willson House** (261 OBR, built 1760 and later), the **Arthur Parker House** (278-A OBR, ca. 1880), and the **Arthur Parker stables** (278-B OBR, built 1836 and later).

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 10

Four of the homes along Old Billerica Road were built by the Parkers as new homes between 1898 and 1905, when Bedford represented a convenient semi-rural retreat. The Eleanor Parker House (**Wayman-Ceppi House**, 251-A OBR, built 1905), the Francis Parker House (**Parker-Wade House**, 251-B OBR, built 1898), a second Eleanor Parker House (**Boeing House**, 251-C OBR, built ca. 1900) and the Parker-Backes House (**El-Wil Farmhouse**, 301 OBR, built ca. 1900) represent the large lots and semi-rural character of early suburban development.

Modern Period: Suburban Development

Bedford's suburban character developed rapidly in the period between the two World Wars. The construction of the Veterans' Affairs Hospital ca. 1925 resulted in new employment opportunities in Bedford and a corollary demand for new housing. The establishment of Hansom Air Force Base in 1939 brought an influx of servicemen and their families to Bedford, which helped to boost the local economy. The population of 1,208 residents in 1900 had tripled to 3,807 by 1940.

Edith and Arthur Rowse, who purchased the Arthur Parker farm in 1921, built a substantial Colonial Revival style house at the bend in the road (**Rowse House/Church of Christ**, 276 OBR, built 1923, Photo #9). The house was later purchased by Harold and Dorothy Cleaves (1951), and then by Sebastian and Jane Olivo (1956).

In 1932 and 1933, William J. Backes and his wife Elsie M. Backes acquired 21 acres of farmland from the estate of Francis Parker and 10.5 acres from Eleanor Parker to establish El-Wil Farm. The land included three parcels on the private lane east of Old Billerica Rd. (251-A, 251-B, 251-C OBR) and the old farmhouse at the bend of Old Billerica Rd. (**El-Wil Farmhouse**, 301 OBR, ca. 1900). The Backes family operated the farm for fifty years, then sold the property for residential development. The subdivision (El-Wil Farm Rd.) marks the northern boundary of the proposed historic district.

After World War II, the network of paved roads and concurrent highway improvements (Route 3) encouraged the development of Bedford as a modern commuter suburb. Four of the homes in the Old Billerica Rd. district were constructed between 1945 and 1954 when post-war suburban development was at its early peak. They are the **Nielsen-Francesconi House** (251 OBR, built 1946), the **Keough House** (293 OBR, built 1949), the **Voight-LaLiberte House** (263 OBR, built 1950), and the **Yeomans-Maher House** (275 OBR, built 1954). In addition, the former **Parker Stable** (251-C OBR) was converted to a residence between 1947 and 1950.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 11

By a road layout of 1937 and an Order of Taking in 1952 (Middlesex County Registry of Deeds, Book 17861, page 218), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts truncated the eastern end of some lots in the northwest corner of the proposed historic district. Route 3 was constructed as a limited access road on the acquired land and had the effect of relieving some of the normal commuter traffic from Old Billerica Road. Since Old Billerica Rd. crosses over Route 3 but does not connect directly to it, the road construction may also have inadvertently helped to preserve some of the old properties by relieving development pressures in the area.

In 1955, the children of Frederic and Mary McBurney Parker (deceased) released their last interest in the family properties in Bedford. The new owners of the former Parker properties on the private lane east of Old Billerica Rd. (251-A, 251-B, 251-C, 251-D, 251-E, 251-F Old Billerica Rd.) formed a mutual syndicate in order to adjust parcel boundaries, maintain the common access drive, share pasture land, and provide a right of way to the barn at the **Michael Bacon House** (251 OBR). A Master Plan filed by the syndicate (Plan #193 of 1956) recorded the changes.

Recent History

In the last 50 years, Bedford's convenient location and semi-rural setting have made it an attractive commuter suburb. The population of 3,807 in 1940 more than doubled after World War II, reaching 8,592 in 1960. At the time of the 2000 census, Bedford's population stood at 13,676.

The rate of new residential development has diluted the impact of the town's historical resources and resulted in a more intensive pattern of development. The town is thriving, but the traditional character of the community is rapidly being overwhelmed by new development.

Until recently, the development pattern along Old Billerica Road was characterized by in-fill construction. Expanded garages, new sheds and occasionally new houses were constructed throughout the district throughout the 1950s and '60s, but without adversely affecting the character of the neighborhood. The former **Rowse House** (276 OBR, built 1923), purchased by the Bedford Church of Christ in 1971, represents the only nonresidential use in the neighborhood.

In the 1980s, the character of Old Billerica Road began to change in response to rising real estate values and increased demand for suburban housing. Subdivisions and condominiums now occupy the former farmland north and south of the proposed historic district. At least one historic house (the former **Skinner House** at 242 OBR, built ca. 1860) has been demolished in order to make room for new construction of upscale single-family homes.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 12

The establishment of a National Register district on a section of Old Billerica Road will complement Bedford existing historic districts in Old Bedford Center (a National Register district of 100 properties established in 1977), the Historic Wilson Mill District (National Register 2003, 12 properties), and Bedford Depot Park (National Register 2003, 2 properties). Together with a handful of individual nominations including the 2007 Shawsheen Cemetery, the National Register districts help to document and preserve key aspects of Bedford's history.

CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The houses arrayed along a one-half mile stretch of Old Billerica Road represent a sequence of architectural styles from the late 17th century to the mid-20th century. Several of the buildings are individually notable:

- The **Michael Bacon House** (229 OBR, Photo #3) was begun about 1671 and reached its current configuration about 1770. It is a well-preserved and restored example of an 18th century Georgian-style farmhouse. The site includes a network of stonewalls and an early 20th century barn.
- The **Parker Stables-Iwanchuk House** (278-B OBR, 1836, Photo #5) resulted from the residential conversion of the main stable for Arthur Parker's champion trotters. While stone foundations are common in the district, this is the only building constructed entirely of local stone. The adjacent garage was built for Paul W. Patton by contractor William Rouse of Bedford in 1949.
- The **El-Wil Farm House** (301 OBR, 1900, Photo #7) is a well-preserved example of a late Victorian farmhouse and the best example of Stick Style detailing in the district. It is unusual in that the original roofline, window and door surrounds, and wall treatments are still intact.
- The **Parker-Wade House** (251-B OBR, 1898, Photo #8) is the most elaborate residential expression of the early Colonial Revival style. The form and detailing on the house are well preserved and the house retains its original landscaped setting at the end of a private lane. A greenhouse and a remodeled family room were added in 1960. Jephtha Wade was the owner and W.H. Waite was the builder in charge of renovations.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 13

- The **Rowse House / Church of Christ** (276 OBR, 1923, Photo #9), a converted residence, is the only institutional building in the historic district and exhibits an effective blend of Craftsman-style and Colonial Revival elements. The mortared stonewall along the front of the property appears to be contemporary with the 1923 building.

Many of the other buildings in the historic district are modest examples of the respective styles and periods. The buildings have been sided, expanded, or remodeled over the years, but the basic form and integrity are intact.

The Federal Style of the late 18th century is evoked by the southeast portion of the **Jonathan Wilson House** (261 OBR, 1760). The square form and low-hipped roof hint at the possibility of other Federal-style details beneath the artificial siding.

Greek Revival and early Victorian styles of the mid-19th century are represented by front-gabled houses with a side hall plan. The **Arthur Parker House** (278-A, OBR 1880) exhibits the high foundation, side hall entrance, and prominent gable end characteristic of the period.

Late Victorian styles (Stick Style and Queen Anne) take advantage of balloon construction and other changes in building methods in order to present more varied floor plans. The rear sections (B & C) of the **Jonathan Wilson House** (261 OBR, 1760) show the characteristic steep roofline and paired windows and suggest the possibility of Victorian detailing under the existing vinyl siding.

The Colonial Revival style of the late Victorian era and the early 20th century utilized traditional building forms and details. The **Boeing House** (251-C OBR, 1900) had already assumed its wing-shaped Colonial Revival configuration by the mid-20th century. The former garage was expanded to form an attached family room in 1967. John E. Boeing was the owner, Richard S. Morehouse the architect for the remodeling, and Moore Construction Co., Inc was the builder.

The original late Victorian form of the **Wayman-Ceppi House** (251-A OBR, 1905) is still evident, but the size of the house was doubled in 1952 with a hip-roofed addition. Charlie Wayman of Lexington was the owner at that time and Otto V. Rose was the builder. The classical front porch was added in 1955.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 14

While there are no Craftsman-style bungalows in the Old Billerica Road historic district, the Craftsman revival of the early 20th century is represented in entryways and porch details. The **Jonathan Wilson House** (261 OBR, 1760) was updated with an enclosed Craftsman-style porch around 1910. The whole series of connected buildings was covered with vinyl siding in 1969 when it was owned by the Shaw family. The contractor was Living Vinyl Corp.

The International style with flat roofs and simple planes is not a common residential style in Massachusetts. The **Voigt-LaLiberte House** (263 OBR, 1950), the only International style building in the district, resulted from the remodeling of an existing building on the site. The original owner of the remodeled residence was Karl Voigt of Bedford.

The modern Cape Cod cottage is a form based loosely on traditional vernacular styles and became very popular in the decade after World War II. The Cape Cod-style **Nielsen-Francesconi House** (251 OBR, 1946) resulted from the extensive remodeling of a former stable on the site. The first owner of the house was Niels P. Nielsen of Bedford. The end wings were added in 1949. Another Cape-style building, the **Keough House** (293 OBR, 1949), was erected for Fred A. Keough, Jr. of Arlington, Mass. The contractor was James M. Anderson of Concord, Mass. The original roofline was raised in 2004. The **Carlson-Gevorkian House** (296 OBR, 1952) is a well-preserved example of the standard four-room Cape-style cottage. It was originally built for Walter and Betty Carlson.

The modern Dutch Colonial style house is usually a gambrel-roofed structure with gabled ends. Two good examples of the style are included in the Old Billerica Road district. The **Duane-Bluhm House** (258 OBR, 1934) was expanded in 1950 when dormers were added to the rear slope of the gambrel roof. The owner was J. Marshall Duane and the remodeling contractor was Custance Bros., Inc. The **Sullivan House** (246 OBR, 1957, Photo #4) was designed by Lester N. Lechter & Associates (J.J. Sullivan, Architect) for Mr. J. Sullivan of Cambridge, Mass. The builder of the 1½-story gambrel-roofed home was B.L. Weatherbee Corp. of Wilmington, Mass.

The modern Colonial-style house is a two-story side-gabled plan that utilizes some of the symmetry and classical detailing of 18th century buildings. The **Dobson-Harrington House** (262 OBR, 1951) was built for Miss Elizabeth R. Dobson. The contractor was William A. Rouse. The **Yeomans-Maher House** (275 OBR, 1954) was built by Frank Yeomans, the original owner. The plans were prepared by S. Henry Newman for Yeomans Building Supply in 1952. Both are good examples of a style that remains popular.

The buildings in the Old Billerica Road Historic District represent the work of local builders and contractors over three centuries. They are significant not for the quality of the individual designs, but for the spectrum of styles and periods that they represent in Bedford.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 15

SUMMARY

The Old Billerica Road Historic District is a well-preserved cluster of buildings, sites, and structures that represents the pattern of historical development in Bedford from the colonial period to the 20th century. The layout of the road, the stone boundary walls and the variety of architectural styles are strong visual reminders of the community's long history and the forces that shaped its development over time. As the community faces new development pressures, the Old Billerica Road Historic District will preserve a detailed record of the public and private actions that have defined this small part of Bedford.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Bedford are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Native American sites in the district may contain information that identifies the temporal and functional variability of sites within the Shawsheen River drainage. Native sites in the district may contain information that identifies site types near upland tributary streams during different periods of settlement and their relationship to larger, possibly base camp-type, habitation sites located along the Shawsheen River. Ancient Native sites in the district may be characterized by smaller, short-term occupations with specialized functions that focused on the exploitation of specific floral and/or faunal resources and lithic source materials, possibly located in glacial till. Detailed analysis of features, functional categories of artifacts, lithic source materials, and the internal configuration of archaeological sites may contribute important information to the above questions.

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information related to the early settlement of the district and town of Bedford. Additional historical research combined with archaeological survey and testing may help document the district's evolution from small-scale mixed grain and livestock farming in the Colonial Period to specialized agriculture and a rural retreat in the 19th century. Archaeological resources may contribute important evidence of the district's 17th through 19th century settlement and economy, which is poorly documented. Beyond the Bacon House (1671) at 229 Old Billerica Road, the Wilson House (1760) at 261 Old Billerica Road, the Parker House (1880) and stables (1836) at 278-A and 278-B Old Billerica Road respectively, and the Parker-Wade House (1898) at 251-B Old Billerica Road, all extant buildings in the proposed district date to the 20th century.

Archaeological resources associated with the extant structures described above and the site of the mid-19th century Skinner House comprise the sum total of our current known and potential archaeological knowledge of the district. Structural evidence of buildings and features associated with sites related to the domestic and agricultural historic context may contribute important information pertaining to the early settlement and evolution of the district and the economy that made those developments possible. Structural evidence of barns, outbuildings, and occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may survive on archaeological sites and with the extant historic structures identified above. Structural evidence from outbuildings and detailed analysis of the contents of occupational-related features (trash

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 16

pits, privies, wells) may contribute important evidence related to "cottage industries" and specialized aspects of agricultural production present on farmsteads in the 19th century. Archaeological resources may also contribute important information related to the evolution of 19th century rural retreats in the district and their relationship to specialized agriculture that developed during the same period.

(end of Section 8)

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1975 O - 348-100
CAPITOL BOND®
25% COTTON

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Maps & Atlases (arranged by date):

- 1760 A Plan of the Town of Bedford. (Maker unknown.)
1794 A Plan of the Town of Bedford. (Massachusetts State Archives #1170, maker unknown.)
1830 Plan of the Town of Bedford in the County of Middlesex, surveyed by John G. Holes, scale 100 rods to the inch. (Mass. State Archives #2010)
1857 Bedford, Massachusetts. H. F. Walling, published by Smith & Bumstead, Boston.
1871 Official Topographical Atlas of Massachusetts. Walling & Gray (Boston), published by Stedman, Brown and Lyon.
1875 Bedford. Middlesex County Atlas, D. G. Beers & Co.
1890 Bedford (Plates 25 & 26). Atlas of Massachusetts from Topographical Surveys by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), 1884-1888. Published by Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
1900 Bedford (Plates 3 & 4). Atlas of Massachusetts, published by George H. Walker, Boston.
1904 Atlas of the boundaries of the towns of Acton, Bedford, Concord, Lincoln, Maynard, Sudbury, Wayland, Weston, Middlesex County. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Harbor and Land Commission.
1906 Town of Bedford. Atlas of Middlesex County, G. H. Walker.
1928 Bedford Houses prepared by A.H. Webb, "copied by LFD" (Bedford Historical Society)
1929 Sanborn Insurance Map of Bedford, Massachusetts. Published by Sanborn Map Co., New York (updated to 1962)

1945 Protective Bylaw Map of the Town of Bedford. Bedford Planning Board.
1959 Protective Bylaw Map of the Town of Bedford. Bedford Planning Board (with amendments dated 1969, 1974, 1977).
1979 Zoning Districts, Town of Bedford, Mass. Bedford Planning Board.
2005 Town of Bedford Massachusetts Tax Maps #20, 23, 29 (Old Billerica Rd. area)
(n.d.) Early Grants in Bedford, Mass. "Map by LFD" (Bedford Historical Society).

Books:

- Brown, Abram English, History of the Town of Bedford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Bedford, MA: A. E. Brown, 1891.
Brown, Louise K., A Revolutionary Town. Canaan, NH: Phoenix Publishing Company, 1975.
Brown, Louise K., Wilderness Town: The Story of Bedford, Massachusetts. Publisher unknown, 1968.
Mansur, Ina and Lawrence, A Pictorial History of Bedford. Private printing.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA**

Section number 9 Page 2

Stearns, Jonathan French, Bedford Sesqui-Centennial, August 27, 1879: Historical Discourse. Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1879.
Thorson, Robert M. Exploring Stone Walls: A Field Guide to New England's Stone Walls. New York: Walker & Company; 2005.
Vital Records of the Town of Bedford, Massachusetts to the year 1850. Boston: New-England Historic Genealogical Society; 1903.

Bedford Historical Society Resources

Bedford Properties and Landmarks/Series II: Residences (includes files for #50A, 62, 229 and 261 Old Billerica Road).
Corey, Donald. "Outline of Presentation at the Bedford Historical Society General Meeting, March 23, 2005" (Topic; Old Billerica Road).
Directories and Guides file (includes directories of residents, 1887-2003).
Jenks Scrapbooks (Scrapbooks #1, 2 & 4 include clippings related to Old Billerica Road, 1907-1923).
Lieby, Clare C. (Jr.). "Michael Bacon and his House at Shawsheen." Typescript, 1974.
Photographs file (includes view of Jonathan Wilson Homestead, 261 Billerica Rd., by Charles O. Hodgeman).

Middlesex County and Town of Bedford Documents

Bedford Communitywide Comprehensive Survey Final Report. 2004
"List of Qualified Voters in the Town of Bedford with Residences as of October 5, 1962." Bedford Town Clerk.
Middlesex County Registry of Deeds (Southern District), Cambridge, MA
Town of Bedford Town Books, 1827-1863; 1864-1870s (Bedford Town Clerk's Office)
Town of Bedford Annual Reports, 1876-1890 (Bedford Town Clerk's Office)
Town of Bedford Annual Reports, 1890-1951 (Bedford Historical Society)
Town of Bedford, Building Permit Files, 1946-2006 (Bedford Building Dept. Office)

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Documents

Massachusetts Historical Commission, MHC Opinion: Eligibility for National Register for Old Billerica Road Historic District, Bedford. April 12, 2005.
Massachusetts Historical Commission, Reconnaissance Survey Report for Bedford. Prepared in March 1980.

(end of Section 9)

OLD BILLERICA RD. HISTORIC DISTRICT
Name of Property

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, MA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 67 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

A. Zone 19 Easting 314350 Northing 4708950

C. Zone 19 Easting 314500 Northing 4708650

B. Zone 19 Easting 314500 Northing 4708950

D. Zone 19 Easting 314400 Northing 4708650

 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Please refer to continuation sheets)

Boundary Justification

(Please refer to continuation sheets)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Lyon & Gregory Farmer (consultants) with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date May 2007

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

city or town Boston state Massachusetts zip code 02125-3314

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 owners

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state MA 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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The boundaries of the nominated district enclose approximately 67 acres and are shown as the shaded area on the accompanying GIS document titled "Old Billerica Road Historic District, Town of Bedford." The GIS document replicates information from the Town of Bedford assessors maps (Sheet 23/Blocks 29 and 20).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries of the National Register nomination delineate the developed and undeveloped parcels on both sides of a half-mile stretch of Old Billerica Rd. This section of Old Billerica Road retains evidence of the 17th century road layout and is bordered by stone fences (stonewalls) erected in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The residences along Old Billerica Road date from 1671 to the present and represent a sequential historical pattern of farmland division, in-fill construction and early suburban development.

The northern boundary of the Old Billerica Road historic district is located just north of the S-curve in the road and is bordered by the El-Wil Farm Rd. and a recent suburban residential development. The eastern boundary follows the eastern edge of the parcels which front on Old Billerica Road and the former Parker Family private lane. It is bordered by US Route 3, a limited access highway. The southern boundary marks the limit of the old stone boundary walls along the road and is bordered by the recent Mitchell Grant condominium development. The western boundary follows the west edge of the parcels that front on Old Billerica Road and its extension. It is bordered by a gradual slope that runs down to conservation land west of the district.

(end of Section 10)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA**

Photographs & Maps

Page 1

Photographs and Maps

Photographer: Gregory Farmer, Agricola Corporation (2006)

Location of Negatives: Bedford Historical Commission
10 Mudge Way
Bedford, MA 01730

Photographs

1. View of Old Billerica Rd. in Bedford, Massachusetts, looking northeast to the bend in the road. (Parker extension directly ahead at left; ramp at 276 Old Billerica Rd. visible at far left).
2. View of Old Billerica Rd. in Bedford, Massachusetts, looking southeast at typical section of stone boundary wall.
3. View of the Michael Bacon House (229 Old Billerica Rd., built 1671 and later) and adjacent stone boundary walls, showing west and south elevations, photographer facing northeast.
4. View of the Sullivan House (246 Old Billerica Rd., built 1957), showing south and east elevations, photographer facing northwest.
5. View of the Parker Stables (278B Old Billerica Rd., built 1836 and later), showing south and east elevations, photographer facing northwest.
6. View of the private lane running east from Old Billerica Rd., looking southeast to the Wayman-Ceppi House (251 Old Billerica Rd., built 1905).
7. View of the El-Wil Farmhouse (301 Old Billerica Rd., built 1900), showing north and west elevations, photographer facing southeast.
8. View of the Parker-Wade House (251B Old Billerica Rd., built 1898), showing west and south elevations, photographer facing northeast.
9. View of the Rouse House/Church of Christ (276 Old Billerica Rd., 1923), showing west and north elevations, photographer facing southwest.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 2

Historical Maps

- A. Early grants of land in Bedford (attached to a letter from Charlie Stearns to Messrs. Abbott and Leiby, August 24, 1966).
- B. Original (17th century) land grants near Old Billerica Rd. in Bedford (excerpt from Leiby, Michael Bacon and his House at Shawsheen)
- C. Explanation of original (17th century) land grants near Old Billerica Rd. in Bedford (excerpt from Leiby, Michael Bacon and his House at Shawsheen)
- D. "Town of Bedford, 1729-1735" showing locations of early dwelling houses (excerpt from Brown, Wilderness Town)
- E. Town of Bedford, 1857 (detail of Old Billerica Rd. area from Walling map, 1857)
- F. Town of Bedford, 1875 (detail of Old Billerica Rd. area from Beers' Middlesex Cty. Atlas, 1875)
- G. Town of Bedford, 1890 (detail of Old Billerica Rd. area from Atlas of Massachusetts, 1890)
- H. Town of Bedford, 1906 (detail of Walker's Middlesex County Atlas, 1906)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 3

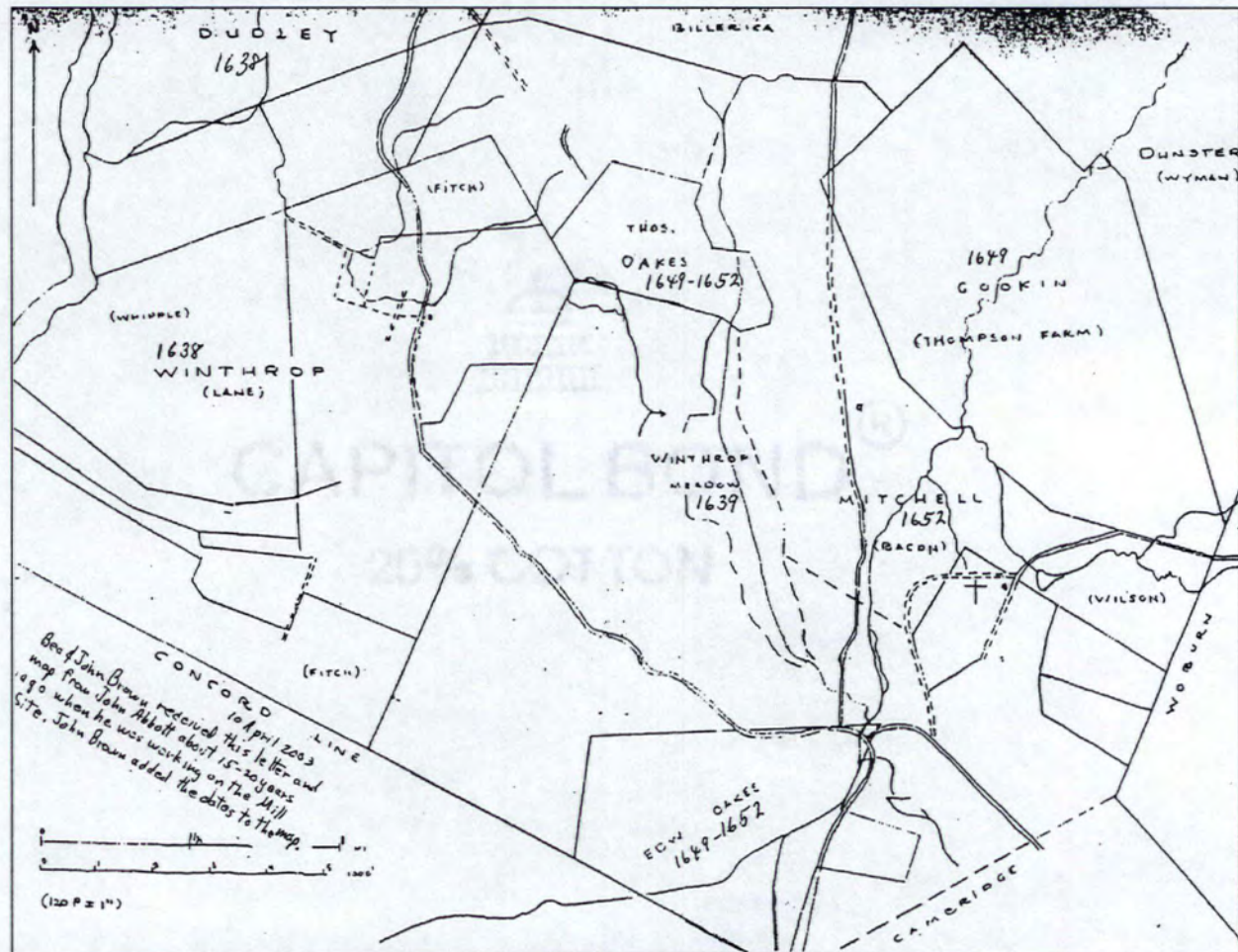


Figure A: Early land grants in Bedford (courtesy Stearns)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 4

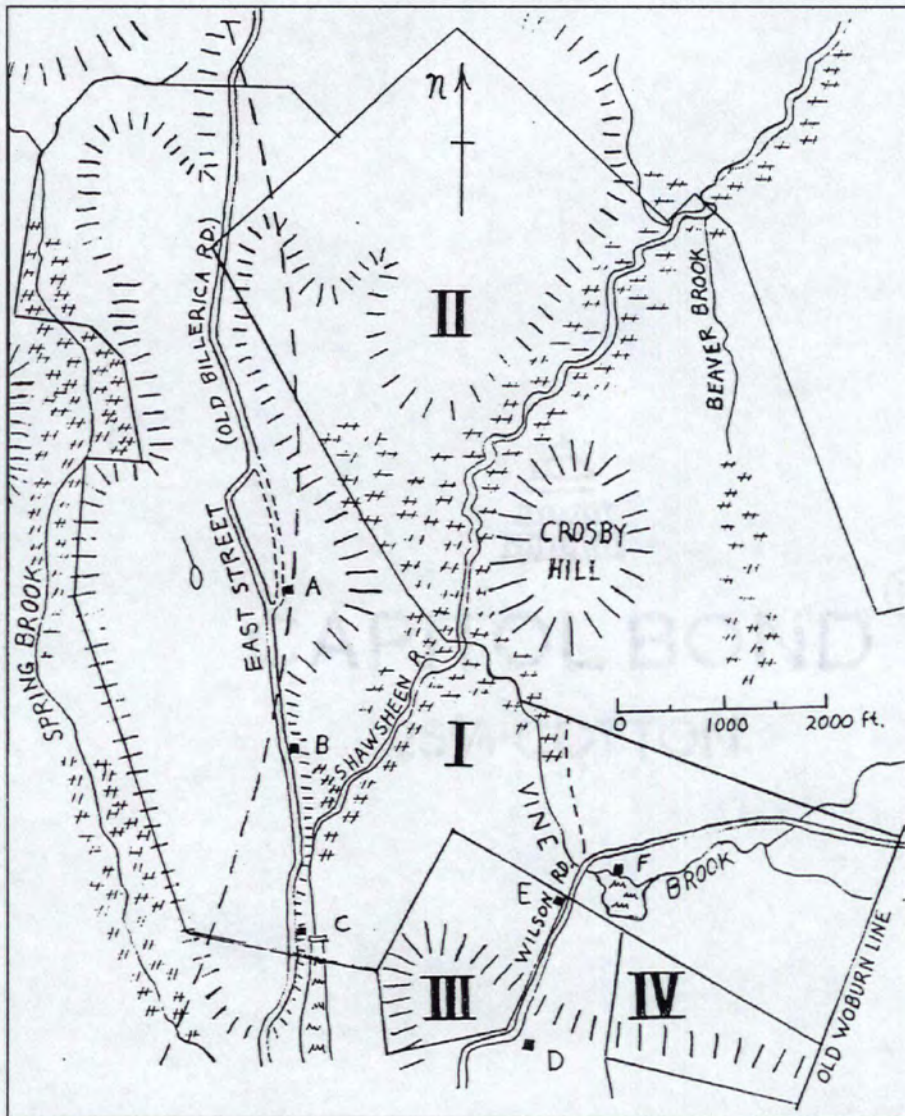


Figure B: Early land grants in Bedford near Old Billerica Rd. (courtesy Leiby)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 5

A-2.

I.

The original Mitchell Grant from Cambridge (1652) as it was laid out in 1663. Its total area, comprising some 650 acres, was well in excess of the 500 acres authorized. The major portion of this grant (lying to the west of the short dotted line and comprising approximately 500 acres) was purchased from the Widow Mitchell in July of 1682 by Michael Bacon III. Bacon had leased the property from the Widow for the preceding 11 to 14 years. The 137 acre area to the east of the short dotted line (the estimated location of "a trodden path" to Gookin's farm) was purchased by John Wilson in 1692. Like Bacon, he had leased the property for the preceding 12 years.

II.

The original 1652 grant by Cambridge to Capt. Daniel Gookin. This grant, comprising some 700 acres, also is well in excess of the 500 acres authorized. (Capt. Gookin and Rev. Mitchell were two of the most respected citizens of Cambridge. Hence the surveying committee was inclined to be overly generous.) Thompson, who purchased the Gookin Grant (ca. 1690), had to pay Billerica for the excess in accordance with the "Great Deed" of 1659 from Cambridge to Billerica.

III.

Grant of 40 acres to Michael Bacon III in 1680 by Billerica. The southwestern bound of this grant parallels the southern section of Bacon's mill-pond---an area which Bacon probably purchased from Timothy Brooks that same year (see text). Presumably Bacon acquired the land lying between this small grant and similar grants made to Wilson (see IV) and to John Johnson. (Johnson's grant was bounded on the north by Wilson's small grant, and, like Wilson's, on the east by the old Woburn Line.)

IV.

A grant of 30 acres to John Wilson in 1685 by Billerica

Figure C: Early land grants in Bedford near Old Billerica Rd. (courtesy Leiby)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 6

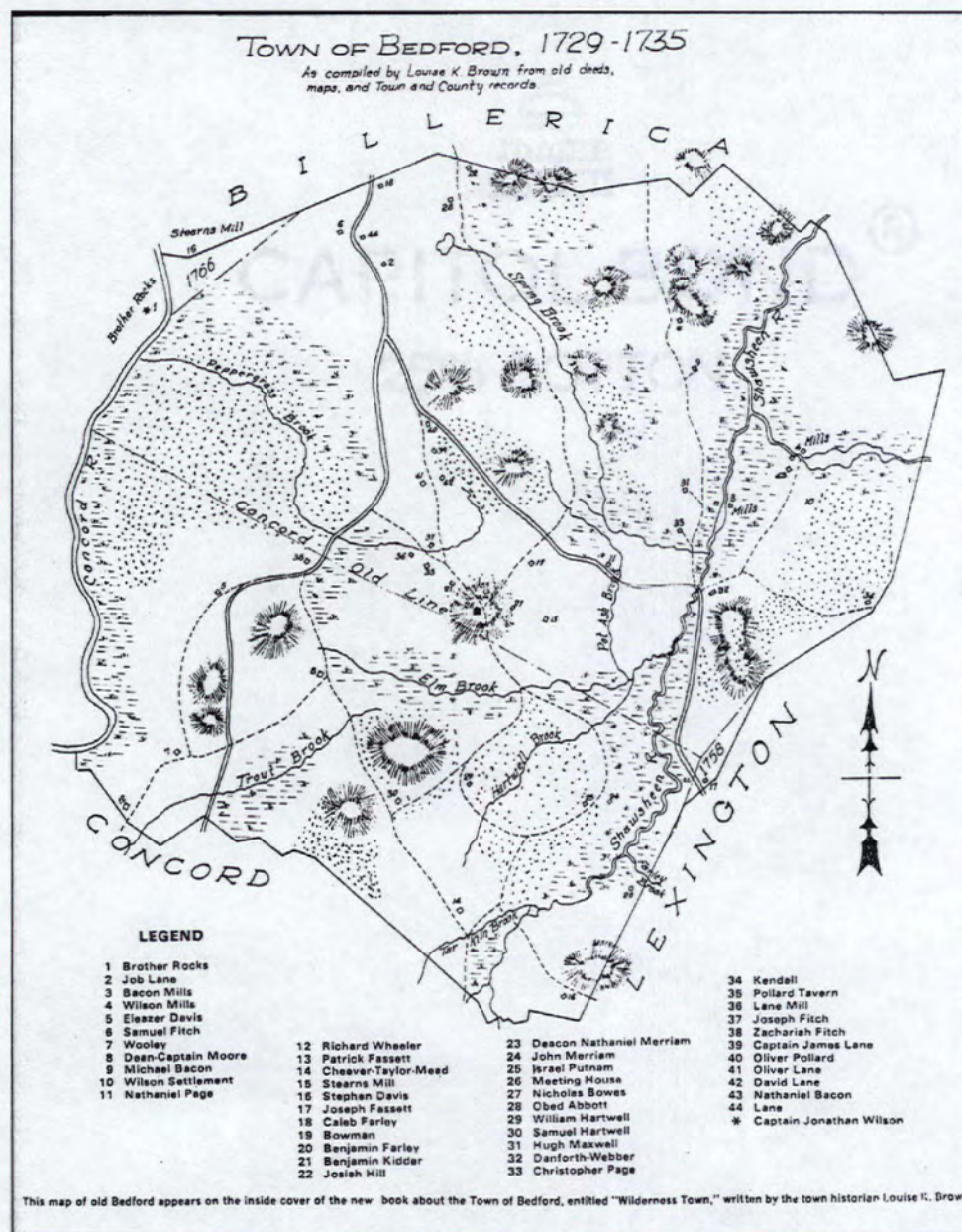


Figure D: Early settlement in Bedford, 1729-1735 (courtesy Brown)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 9

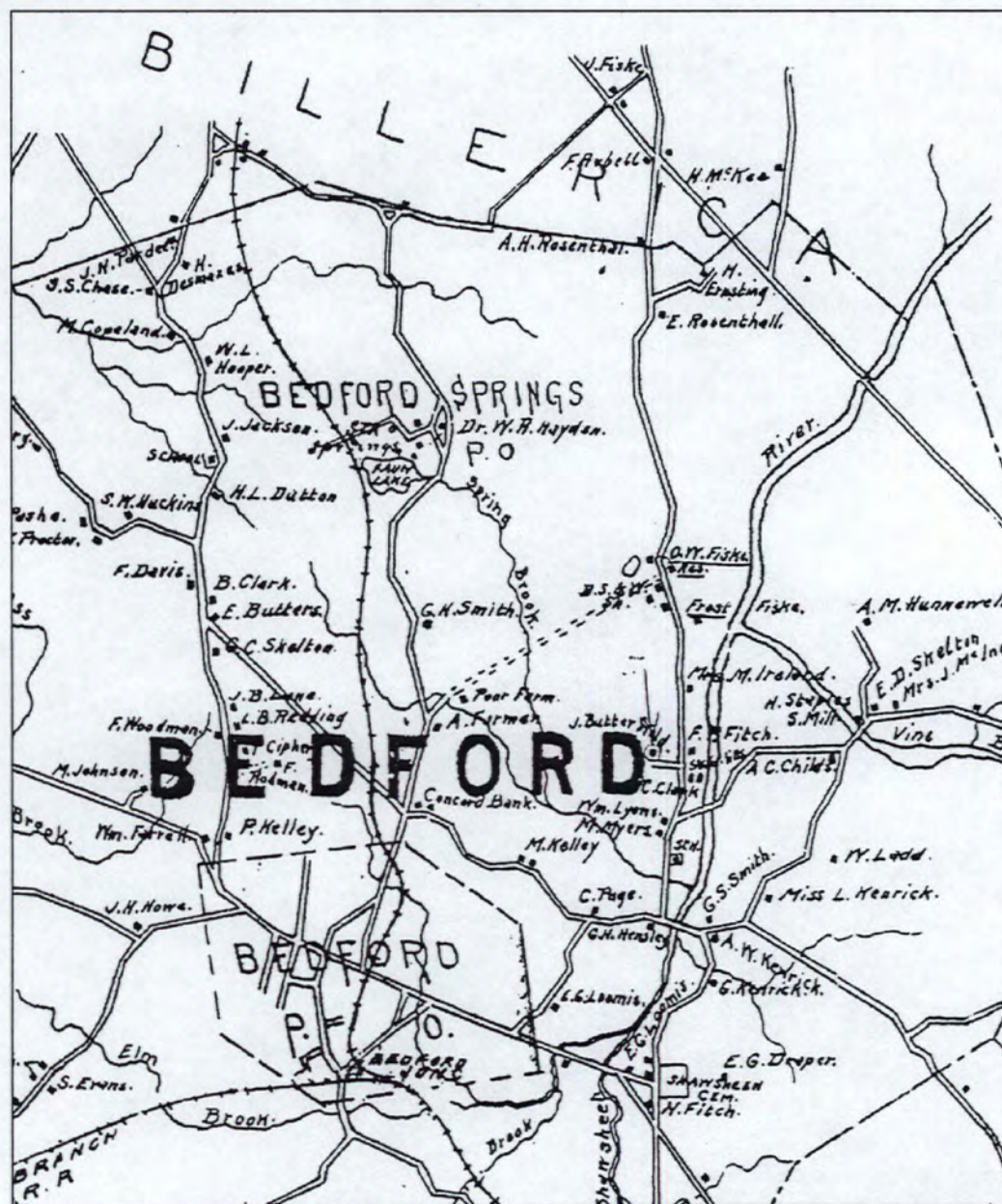


Figure G: Old Billerica Rd., Bedford (detail from 1890 atlas)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Old Billerica Road HD
Bedford (Middlesex), MA

Photographs & Maps

Page 10

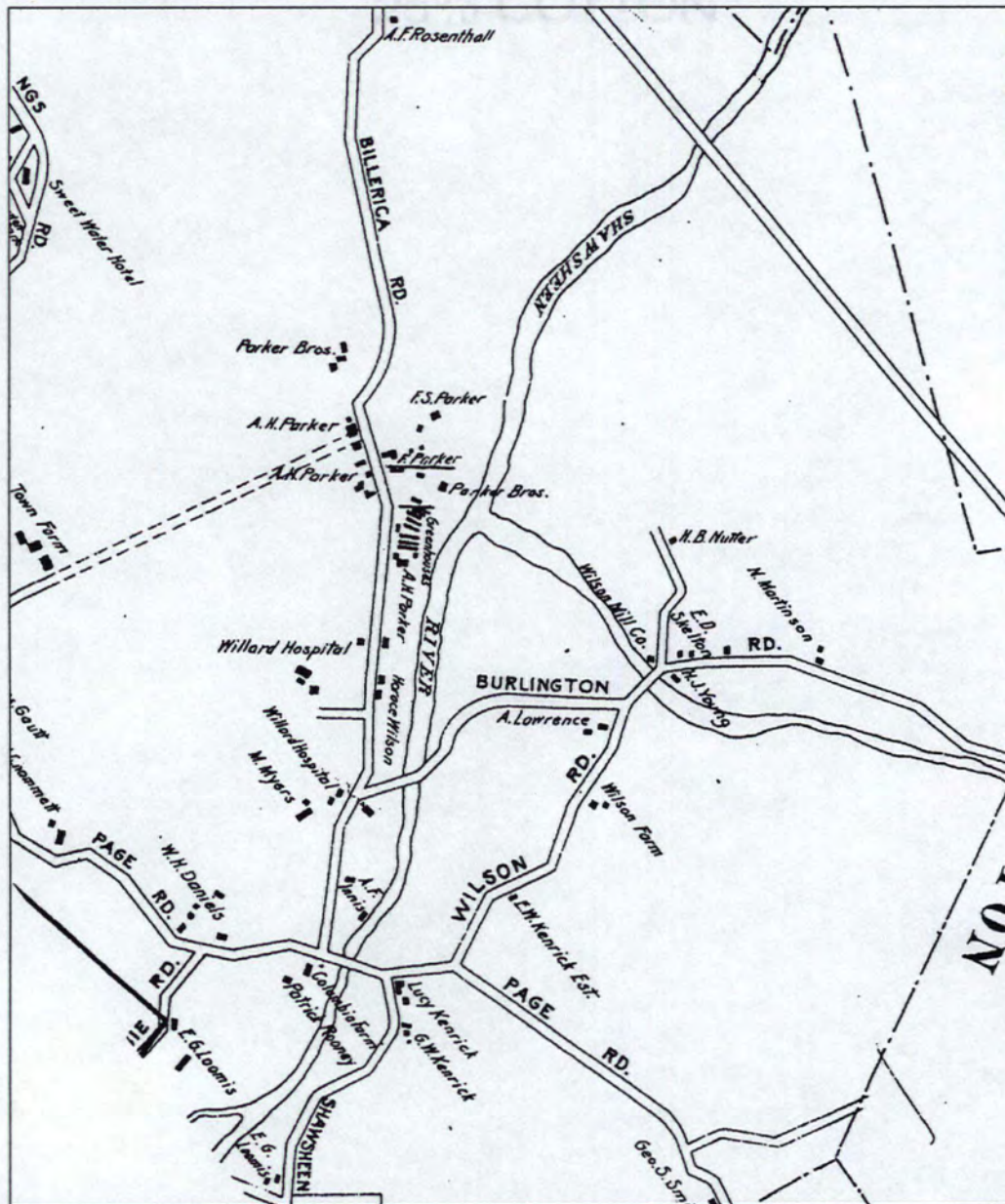
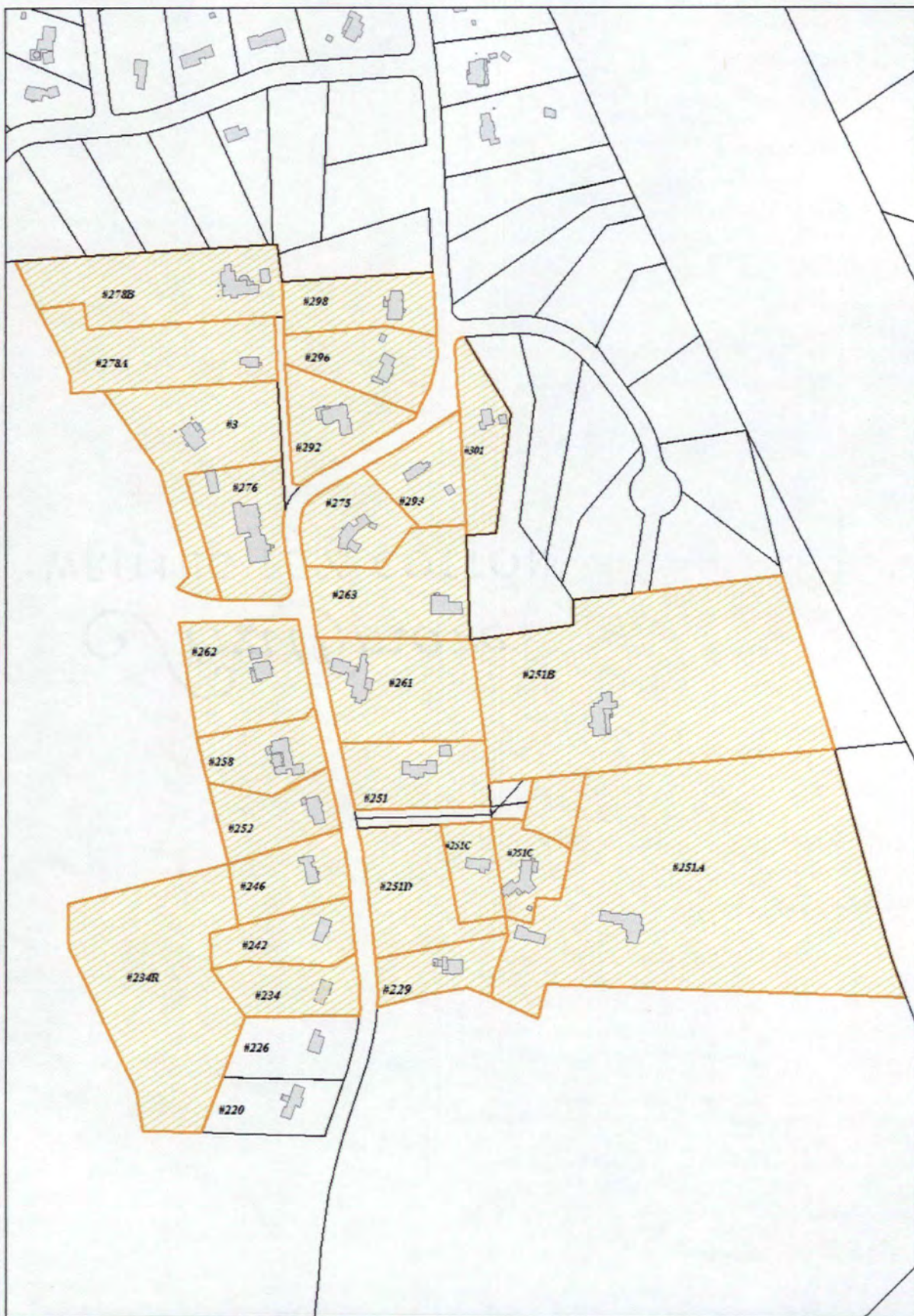


Figure H: Old Billerica Rd., Bedford (detail from 1906 atlas)

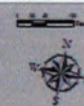


Revised 3/20/07

Proposed Historic District Town of Bedford

Created by Bedford GIS
November 2005

Disclaimer:
The information displayed on this map is not intended to be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was created. The Town of Bedford does not warrant the accuracy of this data. Users are responsible for determining the accuracy of the information shown on this map.



OLD BILLERICA ROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT								
BEDFORD, MA								
(Oct 2006)								
Address1	Address2	Parcel ID	Bldgs	Age	Owner	Hist Name	Resource	Status
229	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0023	House	1671	Leiby	Michael Bacon Hs.	Building	C
			Barn	1924			Building	C
234	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0010-A	House	2006	Scott-Brown	Scott-Brown Hs.	Building	NC
234R	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0010-Y	None	NA	Town of Bedford			Vacant
242	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0010	House	2006	Penland	Penland Hs.	Building	NC
246	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0009	House	1957	Sullivan	Sullivan Hs.	Building	C
251	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0032	House	1946	Francesconi	Nielsen-Francesconi Hs.	Building	C
			Garage	1964			Building	NC
251A	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0022	House	1905	Ceppi	Wayman-Ceppi Hs.	Building	C
			Addition	1952			Building	C
			Garage	1949			Building	C
251B	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0037	House	1898	Wade	Parker-Wade Hs.	Building	C
			Toolshed	1979			Building	NC
251C	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0025	House	1900	Boeing	Boeing Hs.	Building	C
			Family Room	1940			Building	C
			Pool House	1967			Building	NC
			Garage	1967			Building	NC
			Old Garage	1900			Building	C
			Boathouse	1998			Building	NC
251D	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0024	Pasture	NA	Boeing			Vacant
251E	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0039	None	NA	Town of Bedford			Vacant
251F	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0022-A	Pasture	NA	Ceppi			Vacant
252	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0008-A	House	1994	Demello	Sullivan-Demello Hs.	Building	NC
			Garage	1995			Building	NC
258	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0008	House	1934	Bluhm	Duane-Bluhm Hs.	Building	C
			Garage	2003			Building	NC
261	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0033	House A	1760	Haviland	Jonathan Willson Hs.	Building	C
			House B	1900			Building	C
			House C	1900			Building	C
262	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0007	House	1951	Harrington	Dobson-Harrington Hs.	Building	C
			Garage	1951			Building	C
263	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0034	House	1950	LaLiberte	Voigt-LaLiberte Hs.	Building	C
			Addition	1950			Building	C
3	Autumn Dr.	023/029.0001B	House	1989		Jameson Hs.	Building	NC
			Garage	1989			Building	NC
275	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0035	House	1954	Maher	Yeomans-Maher Hs.	Building	C
			Old Garage	1954			Building	C
			New Garage	1969			Building	NC
276	Old Billerica Rd	023/029.0001-A	House	1923	Church	Rowse Hs./Church of Ch	Building	C
			Fellowship Ha	1960			Building	C
			South Additio	1984			Building	NC
278A	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0018	House	1880	Chapman	Arthur Parker Hs.	Building	C
278B	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0017	House	1836	Iwanchuk	Parker Stables	Building	C
			Rear Addition	1980			Building	NC
			Garage	1949			Building	C
292	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0020-A	House	1988	Maurice	Maurice Hs.	Building	NC
293	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0021	House	1949	Keough	Keough Hs.	Building	C
			Old Garage	1949			Building	C
296	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0020	House	1952	Gevorkian	Carlson-Gevorkian Hs.	Building	C
			Old Garage	1952			Building	C
298	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0020-B	House	1999	Tirrell	Doyle-Tirrell Hs.	Building	NC
301	Old Billerica Rd	023/020.0023	House	1900	Karpinski	El-Wil Farm Hs.	Building	C
			Garage	1950			Building	C
None	Old Billerica Rd		Stone Walls	18-20th C		Boundary walls	Structure	C
None	Old Billerica Rd		Road layout	1670		Old Billerica Rd.	Structure	C
Summary								
	Contrib.	Non-Contrib.	Total					
Buildings	32	17	49					
Structures	2	0	2					
Vacant land	0	4	4					
District Total	34	21	55					

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Old Billerica Road Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 5/29/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/19/07
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/04/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/12/07
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 07000681

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 7.11.07 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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the
nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





Photo #2: View of typical stone boundary wall
Old Billerica Rd. Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts

June 2006



Photo #3: View of the Michael Bacon House (229 Old Billerica Rd, 1671)
Old Billerica Rd. Historic District, Bedford, Massachusetts.
June 2006



photo #4: View of the Sullivan House (246 Old Billerica Rd., 1957)
Old Billerica Rd. Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts

June 2006



Photo #5: View of the Parker Stables (278B Old Billerica Rd., 1836)
Old Billerica rd. Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts June 2006



Photo #6: View of the Wayman-Coppi House (251 Old Bellerica rd. 1905)
Old Bellerica rd. Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts, June 2006



photo # 7: View of El-Wil Farmhouse (301 Old Billerica Rd., 1900)
Old Billerica Rd. Historic District
Bedford, Massachusetts

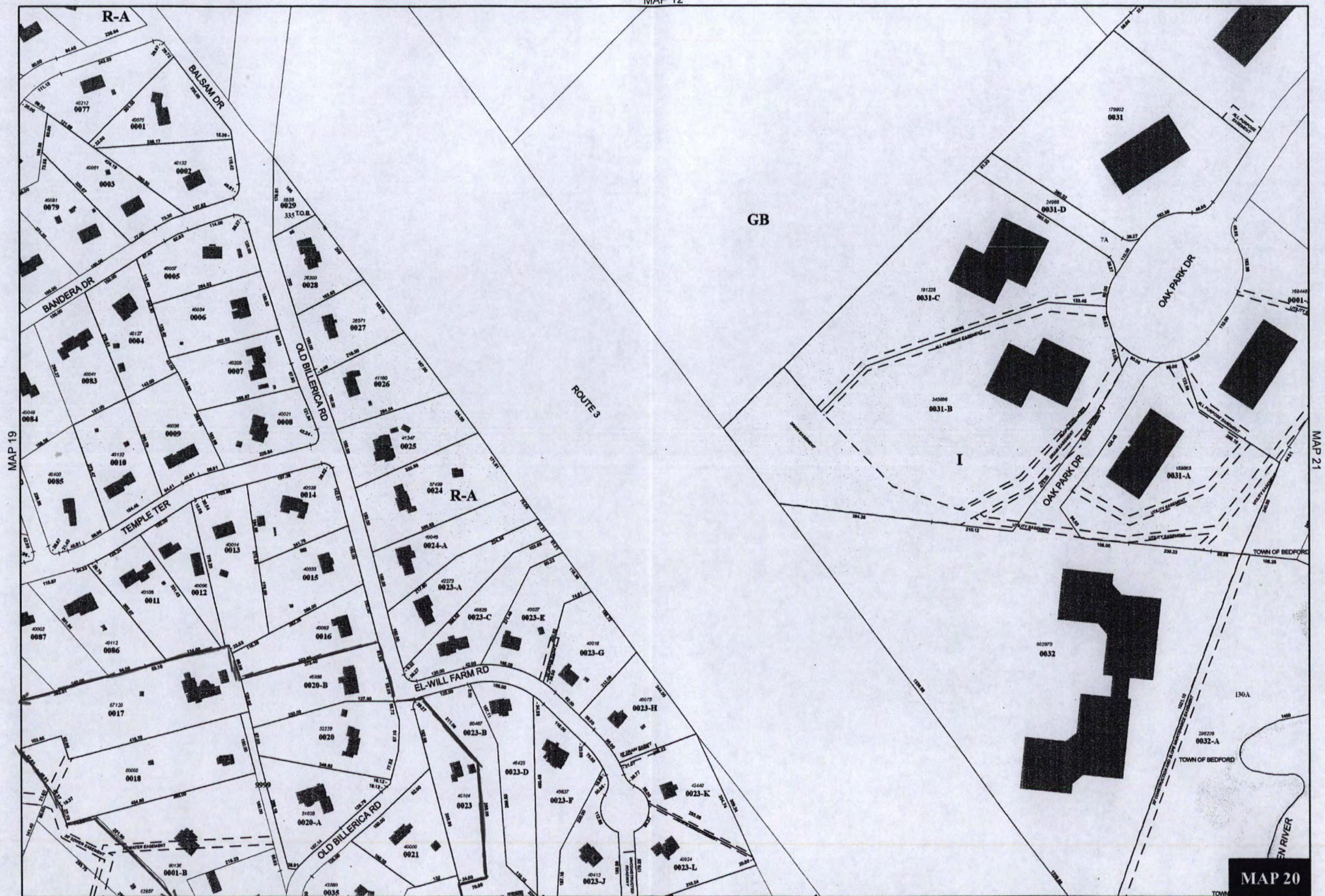
June 2006





Photo #9: View of the Rowse House / Church of Christ (276 Old Billerica Rd, 1923)
Old Billerica Rd Historic District, Bedford, Massachusetts.
June 2006







OLD BILLERICA RD
HD
BEDFORD (MIDDLESEX)

Billerica

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
1948. Field checked 1962. Map edited 1987.
Supersedes Westford 166 and Billerica 1965 1:24,000-scale maps
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19
Universal Transverse Mercator
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 the red 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	3.2808			1	2	3	
2	6.5617			4	5		
3	9.8425						
4	13.1234						
5	16.4042						
6	19.6850						
7	22.9659						
8	26.2467						
9	29.5275						
10	32.8084						

TOWNSHIP AND RANGE COORDINATES	
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808	UTM grid conversion (NAD 83) magnetic declination (MN) and 1983 magnetic declination (GN) at center of map Diagram is approximate
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048	

TOWNSHIP AND RANGE COORDINATES	
1	Townsend
2	Lowell
3	Lawrence
4	Ayer
5	Reading
6	Hudson
7	Maynard
8	Boston North

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
Roadway 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
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, dam project
Centimetric: gage
Campground: picnic area; U. S. location monument
Windmill; water well; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; shaft or cave
Contour: isolated contour; isolated station; spot elevation
Contour: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava; and
Bathymetric contour: index; intermediate
Partial lake, pond, reservoir, intermittent lake and stream
Rapid, large and small; falls, large and small
Swamp; marsh
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation
Woodland; scattered trees
Sinks; meadows
Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



BILLERICA, MASSACHUSETTS
42071-E3-TM-025



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

May 17, 2007

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Old Billerica Road HD, 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 the Certified Local Government community of Bedford 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: Gregory Farmer, Martha Lyon, consultants
Robert Slechta, Donald Corey, Bedford Historic Preservation Comm.
Sheldon Moll, Board of Selectmen
Steven Spector, Bedford Planning Board