National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Type an entire	ootherete applie						
1. Name	e						
historic	BELMONT PUE	BLIC LIBRARY					
and/or common	same)					
2. Loca	tion						
street & number	Main Street	c (corner of Mil	1 St. & M	lain St.)	n/a_ not	for publicat	ion
city, town	Belmont,	<u>n/a</u> vic	cinity of				
state No	ew Hampshire	code 33	county	Belknap		code 0	01
3. Class	sificatio	n					
district building(s) structure	Ownership _X public private both Public Acquisiti in process being conside X N/A	on Accessible _X_ yes: re	upied n progress e estricted	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainmen government industrial military	it	museum park private resident religious scientific transportati	on
4. Own	er of Pro	perty					<u>`</u>
name	Town of Be	lmont					
street & number	Belmont To	vn Hall, Main St	treet				
city, town	Belmont,	n <u>/a</u> vio	cinity of	sta	ate New H	lampshire	03220
5. Loca	tion of L	egal Des	criptic	on			
courthouse, regist	try of deeds, etc.	Belknap County Belknap County 64 Court Stree	Registry				
city, town		Laconia,		sta	ate New H	lampshire	03246
6. Repr	esentati	on in Exis	sting :	Surveys			
title Belmont H	istoric Resou	rces Inventory	has this pro	perty been determine	d eligible?	yes	
	1982			federal	state	_county _X	_ local
depository for sur	vey records	Lakes Region	ı Planninc	Commission			
city, town		Meredith,	-			ampshire	03253

7. Description

Condition X excellent deteriorated good ruins fair unexposed	Check one unaltered altered	Check one _X_ original site moved date N/A
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Belmont Public Library is a brick public library building which stands on its own lot at the north corner of Main Street and Mill Street in the village of Belmont. Rectangular in plan, the library is set with its long southeast facade facing Main Street. The one story, gable-roofed building is two stories high on the rear (northwest) facade, as the basement is fully exposed on the rear due to the slope of the lot. In the center of the main (southeast) facade is a gable roofed portico, while on the rear facade is found a small gable roofed entry porch, sheltering the basement door.

On the three public (southeast, northeast and southwest) facades, the foundation is poured concrete. On the rear facade, however, the exposed basement wall is brick, laid in flemish bond. On all four sides, the foundation and basement wall are topped by a watertable of specially moulded bricks. Above the watertable is a course of vertically laid bricks. But the rest of the main level walls are of brick, laid in flemish bond. (Some of the headers in both the main level and basement walls are burned black or gray, providing a little visual variety in the walls.) The lateral box cornices with friezes are ornamented by mouldings, modillions, and drill holes in the soffits. The gables are trimmed by shallower cornices with mouldings and returns of the lateral cornices. (Both gable cornices are interrupted by the wide projecting chimneys of the gable ends.) The slate roof is topped by a copper ridge moulding.

In the center of the three bay wide main (southeast) facade is the main entry, set in a semicircular brick arch. The ten panel door is flanked by three-quarter sidelights above moulded panels with baseboards. The leaded clear glass of the sidelights incorporates diamonds and curves in its ornate patterns. The door's side trim and the lintel shared by the door and the sidelights are ornamented with vertical fluting on their faces, as well as pateras at the intersections of the door jambs and the lintel. In the tympanum above the door and sidelights is a semicircular transom window, divided by a simple moulded wooden frame into two sections--a semicircular fanlight directly above the door, and an outer curved band around the fanlight. The transom window is again filled with ornately patterned leaded clear glass. The entry has a concrete sill and a moulded wooden outer frame. The semicircular brick arch itself has concrete ("cast stone") impost blocks and keystone, all three decorated with incised Greek frets. The entry is sheltered by a fine classical portico set on a concrete base with a brick floor. Two semicircular steps with concrete risers and brick treads serve the portico's central opening, which is flanked on each side by a pair of tall, tapered, wooden columns. The fluted columns have moulded bases with plinths and carved capitals, ornamented with acanthus leaves. The four columns and the two corresponding pilasters flanking the entry arch support the pedimented gable roof. The pedimented cornice has practically the same design as the building's lateral cornices, with the omission of the drill holes and the addition of an architrave and a deeper frieze. The name "BELMONT LIBRARY" is spelled out in bronze letters on the pediment's frieze. The tympanum is sheathed with flush boarding. The portico's slate roof again has a copper ridge moulding. Hanging from the center of the small portico ceiling (which, is trimmed by a dentiled cornice) is an ornate metal light fixture.

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The two side bays of the main facade each contain a large fifteen over fifteen sash window above a moulded wooden panel. The window and the panel share a moulded wooden frame. The brick sill beneath the panel rests directly on the concrete foundation. In front of the panel is a wrought iron balconet with ornate geometric ironwork and tiny globes on the corners. The "cast stone" window lintel incorporates a "keystone" and two radiating "end blocks", all decorated with incised fretwork. The keystone is flanked by two small slanting panels. And the two sections of the lintel between the keystone and the end blocks are ornamented with incised boarders.

The two bay wide northeast and southwest gable ends are identical. Each is dominated by a central, shallowly projecting chimney. The wide chimney has the same concrete foundation, moulded brick watertable, vertically laid course of bricks, and flemish bond brickwork as the wall itself. The rectangular chimney narrows twice as it rises, the small sloped shoulders being covered by slates. Above the roof, a projecting row of headers marks the base of the chimney top, which is paneled on the sides and crowned by a simple concrete cap. In the foundation to each side of the chimney is a low concrete walled well for a four pane basement window. In the main level, the two bays flanking the chimney feature tall, narrow, six over six sash windows. These windows have moulded wooden frames, concrete sills with paneled faces, and concrete lintels, again with "keystones" and radiating "end blocks", decorated with incised fretwork, and with incised borders around the sections between the keystones and the end blocks.

The basement level of the rear (northwest) facade is six bays wide, with six over six sash windows in five of the bays. The windows have moulded wooden frames, brick sills, and flat brick arches. In the second bay from the east is the basement entry, a paneled door with a six pane builtin window, concrete sill, and plain wooden frame. The rear door is now sheltered by a small porch, with asphalt paved floor, simple square wooden posts, a board ceiling with builtin electric light, a flush boarded gable, close eaves and verges, and an asphalt shingled gable roof. The three bay wide main level of the rear facade contains three windows of the same design as those in the main (southeast) facade, complete with the same fifteen over fifteen sash, moulded underwindow panels, brick sills, moulded frames, wrought iron balconets, and ornate "cast stone" lintels.

The main entry opens into a small vestibule with a carpeted floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, and a plaster ceiling with a heavy moulded wooden cornice. From the center of the ceiling hangs an electric light. Both the southeast and northwest walls of the vestibule are largely filled by identical semicircular arched entries—the outer entry to the southeast and the entry to the main library room to the northwest. Each entry has a ten panel door, flanked by three quarter sidelights above moulded panels. Above them is a semicircular transom window, divided into a fanlight over the door and a curved outer band. The door's side trim and the lintel are paneled. The windows have ornately patterned leaded clear glass. The wooden semicircular arch itself is moulded with a paneled keystone.

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Most of the main level is occupied by one large room, the library proper, although some of the floorspace is taken up by the open stairwell, found against the southeast wall to the northeast of the vestibule. The floor, originally sheathed with rubber tile, is now carpeted. Bookcases with shallow moulded cornices and paneled ends line virtually all of the walls with the exception of the sides of the vestibule and that section of the southeast wall above the stairwell. The walls are sheathed with wooden paneling, with two rows of panels appearing above the bookcases and another two rows of taller panels in the exposed lower walls. The windows are set in shallow recesses, which have moulded outer frames. Within each recess, beneath the moulded sill of the window, is a moulded rectangular panel. The windows are now all equipped with modern padded window quilts. A heavy wooden cornice with mouldings, large dentils, and a deep moulded frieze tops the walls. The high plaster ceiling features five electric lights hanging on chains, two modern ceiling fans, and a paneled door for the unfinished and unused attic.

In the center of the southeast wall is the vestibule, which projects into the main room. Its chief feature is the entry, which has the same design on the main room side as it does in the vestibule itself, with two exceptions. The door is flanked by narrow paneled pilasters, while an ornately carved keystone tops the arch's moulded frame. The arch reaches to the frieze of the room's cornice. In each spandrel above the arch is a moulded panel with a curved lower edge. In the southeast wall, to each side of the vestibule, is found a large fifteen over fifteen sash window, set in the usual moulded framed recess above a moulded sill and a moulded panel. A radiator was set in front of the western window, while the eastern window lights the stairwell. Three more large fifteen over fifteen sash windows of the same design appear in the northwest wall. Radiators stand in front of the east and west windows. Projecting from the northwest wall on each side of the central window are two bookcases, which create a small workspace for the librarian and her desks, directly opposite the vestibule.

The main feature of each narrow end of the room is the central projecting fire-place and chimney breast. The wooden sheathed fireplace projections differ in design. But the two tall six over six sash windows flanking each fireplace are all of the same design, with the typical moulded sill, underwindow panels and moulded framed recesses. (A small radiator was placed in front of the southern window at the north-east end.) The southwest fireplace projection is the more ornate. The fireplace itself has a brick interior, and black slate hearth and surround. The slate surround has a shouldered wooden architrave. Above the architrave, two large ornate consoles support a moulded cornice. Mounted on the overmantel above the cornice is a large bronze dedicatory plaque, which is framed by two fluted Ionic pilasters, set on the cornice and supporting a pediment. The room's main cornice is continued around the shallow fireplace projection. The northeast fireplace again has a brick interior and a black slate hearth. But the surround is ceramic tiles, featuring colored tiles depicting children's stories. The surround has a moulded wooden frame. Above the

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fireplace, the chimney breast is paneled. The lower panel contains a large bronze plaque, with a verse entitled "Opportunity". Again, the room's cornice and frieze tops the fireplace projection.

Against the southeast wall is the stairwell, which is protected by a wooden balustrade with simple square balusters, moulded hand rail, and square posts with paneled sides and moulded caps. The walls of the stairwell itself are plastered with moulded baseboards and simple moulded cornices. Two wooden steps lead down to the carpeted landing in the corner next to the vestibule. A long flight of wooden steps then descends along the outer wall to a hardwood floored landing. A two panel door with moulded frame in the northwest wall connects the landing to the basement's secondary hall.

The basement is a little more complex than the main level. About two thirds of the lower level is occupied by the auditorium at the southwest end. Next to the auditorium is the main hall, which leads from the rear door to the secondary hall which parallels the stairwell, the two halls forming an L around the furnace room in the north corner. In the east corner, beyond the stairwell and the secondary hall, is the small restroom.

Entering the basement from the rear door, we find ourselves in the rear hall. The outer door, a paneled door with six pane builtin window and plain frame, is as wide as the hall. The hall's hardwood floor is interrupted by two steps up to the outer door. The hall has plaster walls with moulded baseboards and a plaster ceiling. Moulded frames surround the doorless opening to the secondary hall at the southeast end of the hall, and the two panel doors, to the auditorium in the southwest wall and to the furnace room in the northeast wall. (The furnace room door also has a metal louver in its lower panel.)

The auditorium has a hardwood floor and plaster walls with moulded baseboards. Modern light fixtures hang from the plaster ceiling. The southwest end features a central, projecting, rectangular fireplace and chimney breast, which, like the rest of the walls, is plastered with moulded baseboards. The fireplace itself has a brick interior, hearth and surround, and a moulded wooden frame. On the plastered chimney breast is found a cast metal eagle (a recent addition) and a bronze plaque with another inspirational poem. To each side of the fireplace is a high four pane pivoting window, with moulded frame and sill. The southeast wall is windowless, while the northwest wall has two pairs of six over six sash windows. Each pair shares a moulded sill, but the windows have their own moulded frames. The northeast wall has two two panel doors with moulded frames, a central door to the hall, and a southern door to a small closet under the stairs. (The closet also has a hardwood floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards and a slanted plaster ceiling.)

The furnace room has a painted concrete floor, plaster walls and ceiling.

Moulded frames surround the two panel hall door in the southwest wall, the six over

six sash window in the northwest wall, and the high, four pane pivoting window in the

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northeast wall. The secondary hall, like the main hall, has a hardwood floor, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, and a plaster ceiling. Again, moulded frames surround its openings, the doorless opening to the main hall in the northwest wall, the two panel door to the restroom at the northeast end, and the two panel door to the stairs in the southeast wall. The stair door is reached by two wooden steps, with a short flanking balustrade, having simple square balusters, a ramped, moulded hand rail, and a square newelpost with paneled sides, moulded base and cap. The restroom has a painted concrete floor, the usual fixtures, plaster walls with moulded baseboards, and a plaster ceiling. Plain trim surrounds the hall door in the southwest wall, but the high four pane pivoting window in the northeast wall has a moulded frame and sill.

The lot, less than a quarter acre in size, has a five sided shape. It slopes to the rear (northwest), so poured concrete retaining walls are found to each side of the building, in line with the rear facade. The grounds are almost entirely grassed, with foundation shrubs on the two gable ends and the front corners of the building, and one large maple tree on Mill Street. A metal flagpole with concrete base (erected in 1975) stands on the front lawn, east of the asphalt paved walk from the street to the main entry. Another asphalt paved walk starts at the street corner, goes past the southwest gable end, then takes a right angle to parallel the rear facade, and ends at the municipal parking area on the lot adjoining the library property to the northeast. A short asphalt paved walk from the rear walk leads to the library's rear entry.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community planning landscape architecture reconservation law some economics literature some education military some engineering music his exploration/settlement philosophy the industry politics/government transfer.	cience culpture ocial/ umanitarian
Specific dates	1927-28	Builder Architect Wells & Hudson, architects	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Belmont Public Library is significant architecturally, both as one of the best small public libraries in the Lakes Region, and as one of the region's best examples of the Colonial Revival style.

The Belmont Public Library, established in 1893, moved, after a short stay in a village business block, into the second story of the new Hose House, built by the Town in 1896. The Hose House was a rather simple, two and a half story, gable-roofed, wooden building, which housed not only the library but also the selectmen's office and the fire station. By the 1920's, the library was beginning to outgrow its quarters in the Hose House. There was an obvious need for a public library building. In February of 1927, George E. Duffy and Walter F. Duffy, the owners of the Belmont Hosiery Company, the textile mill that dominated the economy of Belmont village, offered to give the Town a new library building, fully equipped and accompanied by an endowment fund. At the annual town meeting on March 8, 1927, the Duffy brothers' offer was accepted by a unanimous vote, followed by the Town's vote of thanks. For the design of the library, the Duffys turned to the Hanover architectural firm of Wells & Hudson (Harry A. Wells and Archer E. Hudson), who proposed an excellent small Colonial Revival building. It was decided to place the library on the prominent Main Street site occupied by the Accordingly, in May, the Hose House was moved to a lot on Fuller Street and the bandstand, also on the land, was moved further back from Main Street, to provide a suitable site for the new building.

Ground was broken for the library building at the end of April. The contract for the masonry was awarded to Ford T. Sanborn, a Tilton mason. But the rest of the construction was apparently not contracted out. The Duffys hired Balmont men to do the work, under the supervision of a local master builder, Eli Perron. (Allen Agle, the superintendent of the Belmont Hosiery Company, also oversaw some of the work, such as the site preparation.) By June 22, the concrete foundation was "in position, ready for the brick super-structure". The brick walls were up by the middle of August and the roof on by the end of that month. By mid September, the roof was slated and the exterior was nearly finished. By mid January, the building was "nearly completed". And, on February 4, 1928, the library was dedicated with appropriate ceremony, Walter Duffy formally presenting the building to the Town. The public library opened for business in its new quarters on the same day.

^{&#}x27;The Hose House site, although it had been occupied by a municipal building for over thirty years, was actually the property of the Belmont Hosiery Company. It was not until December 17, 1928, ten months after the building had been turned over to the Town, that the library lot was deeded to the municipality.

Laconia News & Critic, June 22, 1927.
Laconia Democrat, January 13, 1928.

⁴Unfortunately, George E. Duffy died in the summer of 1927 and did not live to see the building completed.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Da	ita				
Acreage of nominated property22 & Quadrangle nameGilmanton, NH UTM References	Quadrangle scale 1:625000				
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Verbal boundary description and justification					
(see	continuation sheet)				
List all states and counties for properties	overlapping state or county boundaries				
state N/A code	county code				
state N/A code	county code				
11. Form Prepared E	3y				
name/title David Ruell					
organization Lakes Region Planning Commission date January 23, 1985					
street & number Main Street telephone (603) 279-8171					
city or town Meredith,	state New Hampshire 03253				
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification					
The evaluated significance of this property with	in the state is:				
national state	X local				
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.					
State Historic Preservation Officer signature	The ! Thene				
title New Hampshire Historic Preserva	ation Officer date 7/29/85				
For NPS use only					
I hereby certify that this property is included	Paterned in the Glin / Co				
Keeper of the National Register	date // 2/12				
Attest:	date				
Chief of Registration	<u> </u>				

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The Belmont Public Library is remarkably well preserved. The only exterior change has been the addition, in the 1970's, of a small entry porch to shelter the basement door. Interior changes have also been limited, the mounting of a metal eagle above the auditorium fireplace in 1974, the carpeting of the main level floors in 1979, the installation of quilted window curtains in 1982 and of two ceiling fans in 1984. Otherwise, the library building appears exactly as it did when it was opened to the public in 1928.

The Belmont Public Library is actually a small and rather simple building. it is distinguished by its good materials, excellent design, and fine detailing. The materials used in the building, from the hardwood floors in the basement to the slate roof, are all of high quality. The exterior is well proportioned, with the entry portico and the projecting end chimneys adding variety and interest, but not overwhelming the basic rectangular, gable-roofed block. The details are excellent, including the flemish bond brickwork with its watertable, the cornices with their fine mouldings, (particularly the lateral cornices with their modillions), the central arched doorway with its leaded glass sidelights and transom window and its brick arch with ornamented keystone and impost blocks, the excellent classical portico with its tall, elegant columns and pilasters and well proportioned pediment, the windows with their ornate lintels and sills, (particularly the larger windows with their balconets and underwindow panels), and finally, the two impressive gable end chimneys. The interior was also well designed and built. The subsidiary spaces in the basement, notably the auditorium, are pleasing rooms. The vestibule, with its large arched entries, is also an attractive space. But, the main room, the library proper, is the most impressive, with its paneled walls lined with bookcases, its arched entry, the grand fireplaces and chimney breasts, and the high ceiling with its heavy dentiled cornice. The main room is a dignified, almost elegant, space. In summary, the Belmont Public Library is notable throughout for its high quality of material and ornament, and for its well thought out, albeit simple, design.

The choice of the Colonial Revival style for the Belmont Public Library was not unusual. By the 1920's, the Colonial Revival was the preferred style for New Hampshire libraries, from small town libraries, such as the Belmont library, to large institutional libraries, such as Baker Memorial Library at Dartmouth College (1926-28). And the style remained popular for libraries through the 1930's and up to the present day. Of the eleven public libraries built in the Lakes Region since World War I, eight have been Colonial Revival in design, including the Gilford Public Library (1924-25), the Gafney Library in Sanbornville (1925), the Moultonboro Public Library (1929), the Ossipee Public Library (1938-39), the Gilman Library in Alton (1951), the Freedom Public Library (1968-71), and the Tuftonboro Free Library (1969-70). The Belmont Public Library is easily the best of these eight buildings. Indeed, it is architecturally the finest of all the public libraries erected in the region since the First World War. For small public libraries of similar quality, one must turn to such

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pre-war buildings as the Samuel H. Wentworth Library in Sandwich (1915), the Nichols Memorial Library in Centre Harbor (1909-10), and the only pre-war Colonial Revival library, the Wakefield Public Library (1902-03). The Wakefield Public Library⁵ is, in fact, the only rival to the Belmont Public Library among the region's Colonial Revival library buildings. The Belmont Public Library must therefore be ranked highly among the Lakes Region's public buildings, both as a fine library building and as an excellent example of the popular Colonial Revival style.

⁵The Wakefield Public Library was entered on the National Register on September 8, 1983.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- Interview Magnus McLetchie, January 15, 1985.
- Interview Norma Roulx, January 16, 1985.
- Interview Donald Leith, January 16, 1985.
- Interview Helen Hill, January 16, 1985.
- Interview Russell and Carry Cushing, January 16, 1985.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The nominated property is a five sided lot, bounded on the southeast by Main Street, on the south by Mill Street, and on the northwest, north and northeast by other property of the Town of Belmont. The boundary is shown as a dark line on the accompanying map entitled "Belmont Public Library, Belmont, N.H." The nominated property includes the Belmont Public Library and the lot on which it has stood since 1928. (Belmont Property Map 20, Lot 41)

Boundaries of the nominated property have been highlighted in yellow on the attached sketch map (9-10-3)

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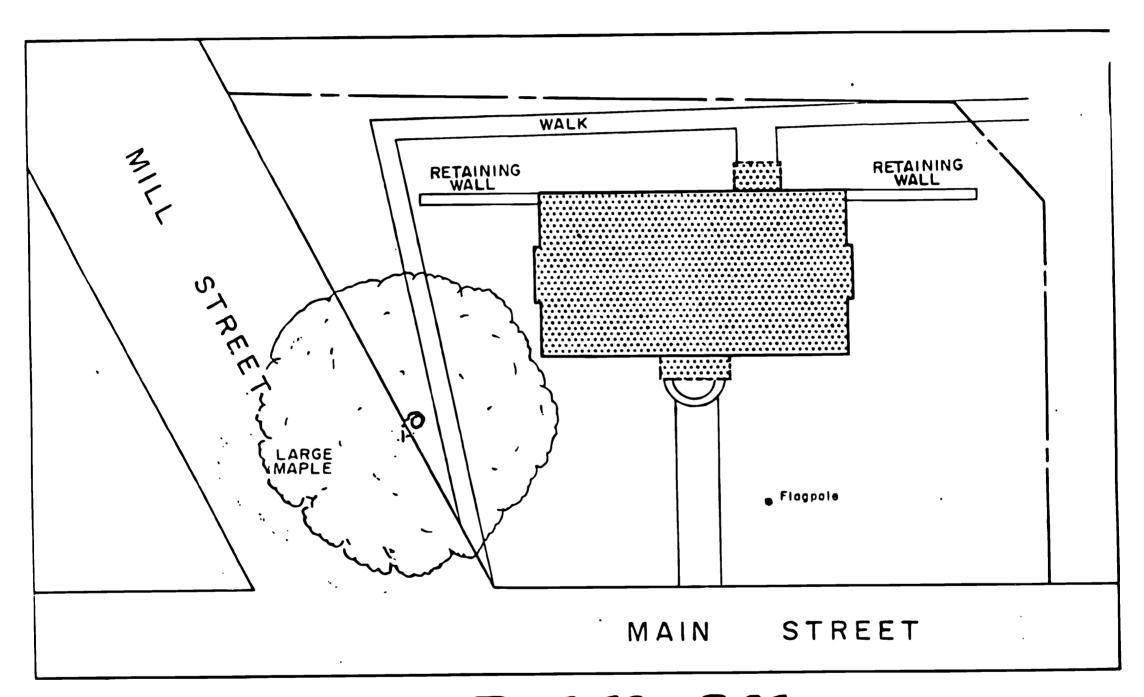
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Belmont Public Library Belmont, N.H.





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