

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 3 1987

date entered SEP - 8 1987

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

1. Name

historic N/A

and or common Bassickville Historic District

2. Location

street & number 20-122 Bassick Avenue; 667-777 Howard Avenue; N.A. not for publication

1521-23 Fairfield Avenue; 1350-1380 State Street
city, town Bridgeport N.A. vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Fairfield code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N.A.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple private (See continuation sheet.)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bridgeport City Hall, Town Clerk's Office

street & number 45 Lyon Terrace

city, town Bridgeport state Connecticut 06604

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See continuation sheet.

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1987 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut 06106

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bassickville Historic District is located in the west end of the City of Bridgeport, one block north of the Amtrak railroad line and two blocks from U.S. Route 95. It includes most of the property laid out in 1883 for the rental housing development known as "Bassickville" between Fairfield Avenue on the north and State Street on the south, including Bassick Avenue in its entirety and the west side of Howard Avenue. A small district of little more than three acres, it contains 39 buildings (38 contributing and one non-contributing). Thirty-one of the contributing buildings are nearly identical single-family, Stick-style cottages and two are double-family cottages of the same style, all built as rental housing between 1883 and 1885 (Photographs #1-5). The remaining five buildings include an early twentieth-century Colonial Revival-style duplex, a multi-family tenement, and a brick commercial block, composed of three buildings. One of the small cottages, 667 Howard Avenue, does not contribute to the district.

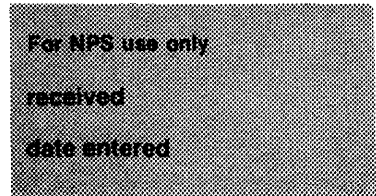
The wood-framed Bassickville cottages were designed to house one and two families. Single-family houses predominate that are one-and-one-half stories in height with cross-gable roofs, bay windows, and shed-roofed side porches. Although few houses have retained all their original architectural features, all of them, as constructed, displayed king-post trusses with pendant drops in the gable peaks, set off by board-and-batten siding or imbricated shingles, with panelled barge boards supported by simple scroll-shaped brackets at the eaves. Clapboard siding was used on the rest of the exterior walls, divided by vertical and horizontal trim boards in a typical Stick-style fashion. The two-family duplexes were created by joining two single-family cottages, producing an extended facade with gables and porches at each end with a small porch in the center (Inventory #31, 34; Photograph #6).

The similarity between the Bassickville cottages is readily apparent today despite the fact that some porches have been enclosed and many of the houses have been sheathed in artificial siding (asbestos or aluminum). Several of the cottages on Bassick Avenue are still in largely original condition. The original exterior fabric displayed on 52 Bassick Avenue includes the siding, the open porch, and panelled bargeboards. The integrity of this house can be confirmed by comparison with a reproduction of an 1888 photograph of a Bassickville cottage which appeared in the Scientific American that year. (See attached Exhibit A; Photograph #9.) The house depicted in the photocopy, 769 Howard Avenue, has had its porch enclosed. Other well-preserved cottages include 67, 73, 76, and 84 Bassick Avenue (Inventory #11, 13, 14, 16; Photographs # 7, 8, 10).

Demolition and later infill have altered the original appearance of the Bassickville development to some degree. Bassick Avenue has been the least affected, with demolition limited to one property at the south end on the west side. With the exception of the duplex at 57-59, a fairly compatible Colonial Revival-style infill building in 1907 (on a lot that had been reserved in the original layout for access to the rear of the properties), the two sides of this street are mirror images, with all the small entry porches located on the south side. Of the four tenements built as part of this development on Fairfield Avenue, enlarged versions of the duplexes on Howard Avenue, only one remains (Inventory #27). Its neighbor to the east at the head of Howard Avenue was demolished as recently as 1980. Four cottages and one duplex were torn down on Howard Avenue, leaving five vacant lots between 675 and 727, a section excluded from the district. (See also item #10 for boundaries.) The single non-contributing property is located on the south end of this latter street (Inventory #28; Photograph #11). Inappropriate additions to the building have compromised its integrity.

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Bassickville Historic District

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Inventory of Contributing and Non-Contributing Buildings with Owners

Inv. #	Address	Description/Date	Owner/Address if different	C/NC	Photo-graph #
1.	20 Bassick Avenue	Stick-style cottage, 1883	Antonia and Luisa Romero	C	
2.	28 Bassick Avenue	"	Jean H. LaBrecque	C	
3.	31-33 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Jose and Lizette Orama c/o 51 Bassick Avenue	C	
4.	36 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Mattie R. and Broadus Bell	C	
5.	43 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Georgina Arana	C	
6.	44 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Miguel and Esther Cintron	C	
7.	51 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Jose and Lizette Orama	C	
8.	52 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Efiginio and Ramona Rivera	C	9
9.	57-59 Bassick Avenue	Colonial Revival duplex 1907	Rudolfo and Antoinette Ivancic	C	
10.	60 Bassick Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Lorenzo and Deborah Pettway	C	
11.	67 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Harry and Josephine Rogers	C	10
12.	68 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Est. Edgar Chapman 223 Washington Street Bridgeport 06604	C	
13.	73 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Bennie Babbs	C	10
14.	76 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Dean and Gloria Timmons	C	7,8
15.	83 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Margaret and Arthur Tutu	C	

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16.	84 Bassick Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Charles C. Bergis	C	7,8
17.	87 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Willis and Elizabeth Pelletier	C	
18.	92 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Catherine M. Lynam	C	
19.	99 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Jose Velazquez	C	
20.	100 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Jose and Margarita Peilot	C	
21.	105 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Weldon and Nettie Pettway	C	
22.	108 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Robert and Pearl Fesko	C	
23.	115 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Sanong, Bquany and Kham- poung Thiphonphan	C	
24.	116 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Dzemail and Antonia Ramadanovic	C	
25.	121 Bassick Avenue	" 1885	Sango and Prakhong Ngiebsangat	C	
26.	122 Bassick Avenue	" 1883	Fernando and Emenciana Ramirez	C	
27.	1521-23 Fairfield Avenue	Stick-style tenement 1885	Charles Jr. & Ruth McCarthy 1203 N. Benson Road Fairfield, CT 06430	C	
28.	667 Howard Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Maria Kalentjos	NC	11
29.	675 Howard Avenue	"	Franz D. Albrecht	C	11
30.	725-7 Howard Avenue	"	Felix M. and Martina Rodriguez	C	
31.	729-35 Howard Avenue	Stick-style duplex 1883	Juan A. and Ramonita Muniz	C	
32.	743 Howard Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Astley R. and Hingely Campbell	C	

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33.	751 Howard Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Stephen and Yolán Holecz	C	
34.	755-61 Howard Avenue	Stick-style duplex 1883	Carmela Filippone	C	
35.	769 Howard Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Mario and Manuela Raton	C	
36.	777 Howard Avenue	Stick-style cottage 1883	Lillian Kelso	C	
37.	1350 State Street	19th-c. commercial 1885	ILR Realty Corp. Box 265, Stamford, CT 06904	C	11
38.	1354-66 State Street	19th-c. commercial 1883	West End Corp. 1360 Boston Avenue Bridgeport, CT 06610	C	11
39.	1370-80 State Street	20 th-c. commercial ca. 1910	West End, Corp. same address as above	C	

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Representation in Existing Surveys

Historical Architectural Survey of Bridgeport, Phase II, 1987.

Depository for Survey Records

Connecticut Historical Commission
59 South Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-C. 1910	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Criterion C

Specific dates 1883 - 1907 **Builder/Architect** I. W. Parker (builder)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bassickville Historic District is significant as a cohesive, generally well-preserved, late-nineteenth-century housing development, composed primarily of vernacular Stick-style cottages built between 1883 and 1885, which are representative examples of the working class housing produced in that period by technological advances in the building trades (Criterion C). A forerunner of the mass-produced housing of Bridgeport in the twentieth century, Bassickville is historically important as one of the first rental-housing developments in the city.

Architecture

The architectural integrity of the district as a whole is exceptional, but is especially evident on Bassick Avenue. The repetition of the steeply pitched roofs gives this streetscape a pleasing uniformity and accentuates its nineteenth-century character. Here also an exceptional number of houses have retained their original exterior fabric, mute testimony to the skill of the original builders and the care of the present-day owners.

Fully realized local interpretations of the Stick style, the Bassickville cottages resemble designs which appeared in the builders' books of the late nineteenth century, such as those published by W. T. Palliser of Bridgeport. Although there is no record of the use of a Palliser design, these buildings are typical of the genre. While the working class urban neighborhoods that were promoted by these publications and facilitated by the use of mass-produced millwork usually display more variety of form and style, as do the houses on the east side of Howard Avenue built after 1855 as private homes, the Bassickville cottages are typical examples for the period, a rare example of a nineteenth-century rental housing development, possibly the earliest in Bridgeport.¹

Historical Background

Bassickville was entirely planned and overseen by its founder Edmund C. Bassick, a wealthy businessman and real-estate entrepreneur from Chicago who moved to Bridgeport in 1880.² A farmer's son originally from Maine, Bassick went to sea at age 14. In 1851, following a voyage to Australia as second mate, he was the first to discover gold on that continent, precipitating the gold rush of the early fifties there. After 20 years prospecting in the American West, he owned some of the largest gold mines in the United States, especially the "Bassick" in Colorado, and had extensive holdings in coal lands.

Bassick recognized the potential for development in Bridgeport's west end, an area of scattered houses and farm land. After buying a house at the corner of State Street and Hancock Avenue, just west of the district, he bought up all the property between Howard and Hancock Avenues and laid out Bassick Avenue, a new street, for his development in 1883, bringing master carpenter I.W. Parker from Waldo, Maine, to supervise construction. Building houses in groups of 14 at a time, Bassick installed sidewalks, sewers, trees, and shrubs, even choosing the flowers for the front yards of the houses because of his

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bridgeport Farmer, 1883.
Bridgeport Post, 1898, 1907.
Bridgeport Standard, 1882-1885.
City Directory, Bridgeport, 1884.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.4

Quadrangle name Bridgeport

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	18	6	5	10	0	16	10	4	15	5	19	0	18	10
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N.A.

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant, National Register Coordinator edited by John Herzan,

organization Cunningham Associates date 10/1/86

street & number 98 Washington Street telephone (203) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state Connecticut

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

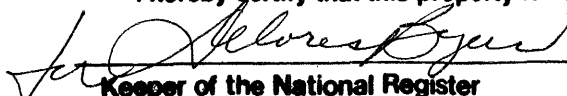
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date July 29, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 date 9/8/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Bassickville Historic District, Bridgeport, Connecticut

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lifelong interest in horticulture.³ By March of 1883, he built the houses on the east side of Bassick and the west side of Howard Avenues. His brick commercial block on State Street, with stores and apartments, was also constructed that year. By 1885, the Bridgeport Standard reported that 400,000 board feet of lumber was used in the construction of 14 more houses on the west side of Bassick Avenue along with the four larger tenements on Fairfield Avenue. Bassickville was completed in March of 1885 with 70 tenements under the supervision of Bassick's son-in-law and leasing agent, Charles Fleming.

Rented out promptly to temperance advocates at \$15 a month per family, the cottages were described as having three rooms on each floor "all wood-finished", with spacious closets.⁴ Most of the original tenants on Bassick Avenue were employed locally in the building trades (sawyer, joiner, painter, stonecutter, or mason), or in Bridgeport industries, including four at the R.H. Wolfe Company, a wire mill, one as foreman. Two others were supervisors at the National Fertilizer Company and the Fairfield Chemical Works in Black Rock. Only two tenants held what today would be called white-collar jobs: one as a draftsman for an architect, the other as a clerk.⁵

To make room for the last group of cottages on the west side of Bassick Avenue, Bassick moved nearby to another house on Fairfield Avenue, the former home of P.T. Barnum, "Lindencroft". Before his death in 1898, his remaining undeveloped property through to Hancock Avenue and on lower State Street was utilized for his commercial nursery with ten greenhouses, specializing in flowers and some truck garden products. It was not until 1907 that any more development took place in this area. Additional lots were laid out for the construction of private homes on Butler Street, a new street between Bassick and Hancock, and on both sides of Hancock Avenue. The last remaining lot on the west side of Bassick Avenue was purchased at this time for the construction of the Colonial Revival-style duplex, along with the extension to the commercial block on State Street.

Notes:

1. The William D. Bishop Cottage Development, a National Register district, dates from 1800-81. It was apparently built as a speculative development rather than rental housing.
2. The biographical information is derived from obituaries printed in the Bridgeport newspapers, primarily the Bridgeport Post, March 14, 1898.
3. Bridgeport Standard, November 16, 1885.
4. Ibid. Temperance was a condition imposed by the landlord.
5. Bridgeport City Directory, 1884.

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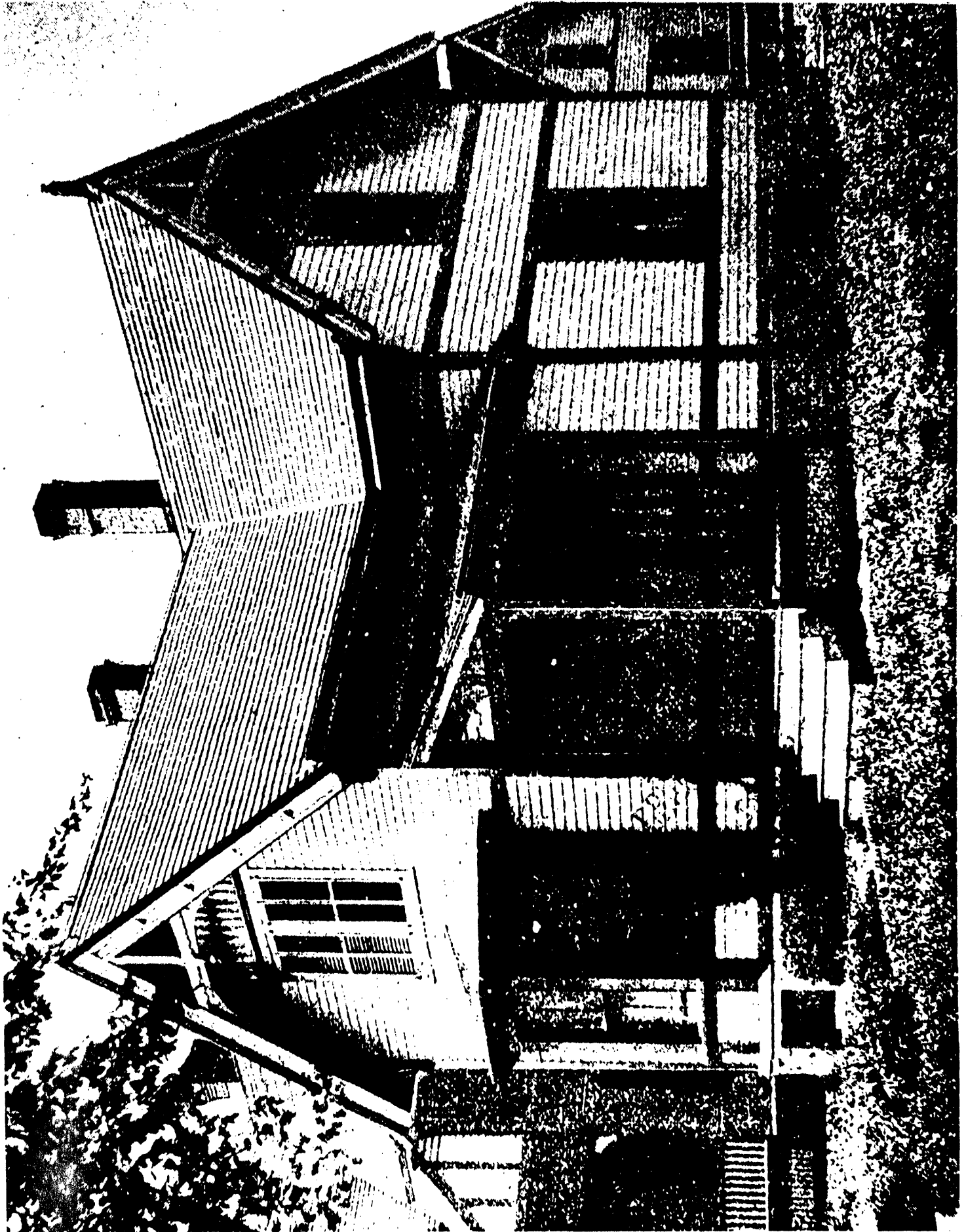
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The district is bounded on the west by Bassick Avenue in its entirety, on the east by the west side of Howard Avenue, on the north by Fairfield Avenue, and on the south by State Street, an area which encompasses all the remaining properties known as Bassickville in 1885. The individual properties encompassed by the district are listed by street number and owner in Item #4. Specifically excluded from the district are the vacant lots on Howard Avenue between 675 and 725-727 since the Bassickville cottages there have been demolished.

The district boundaries were drawn to encompass all the extant resources included in the rental housing development built by Edmund Bassick in 1883-1885.

Exhibit A: 769 Howard Avenue in 1888.
Photocopied from the Scientific American
Architects' and Builders' Edition.



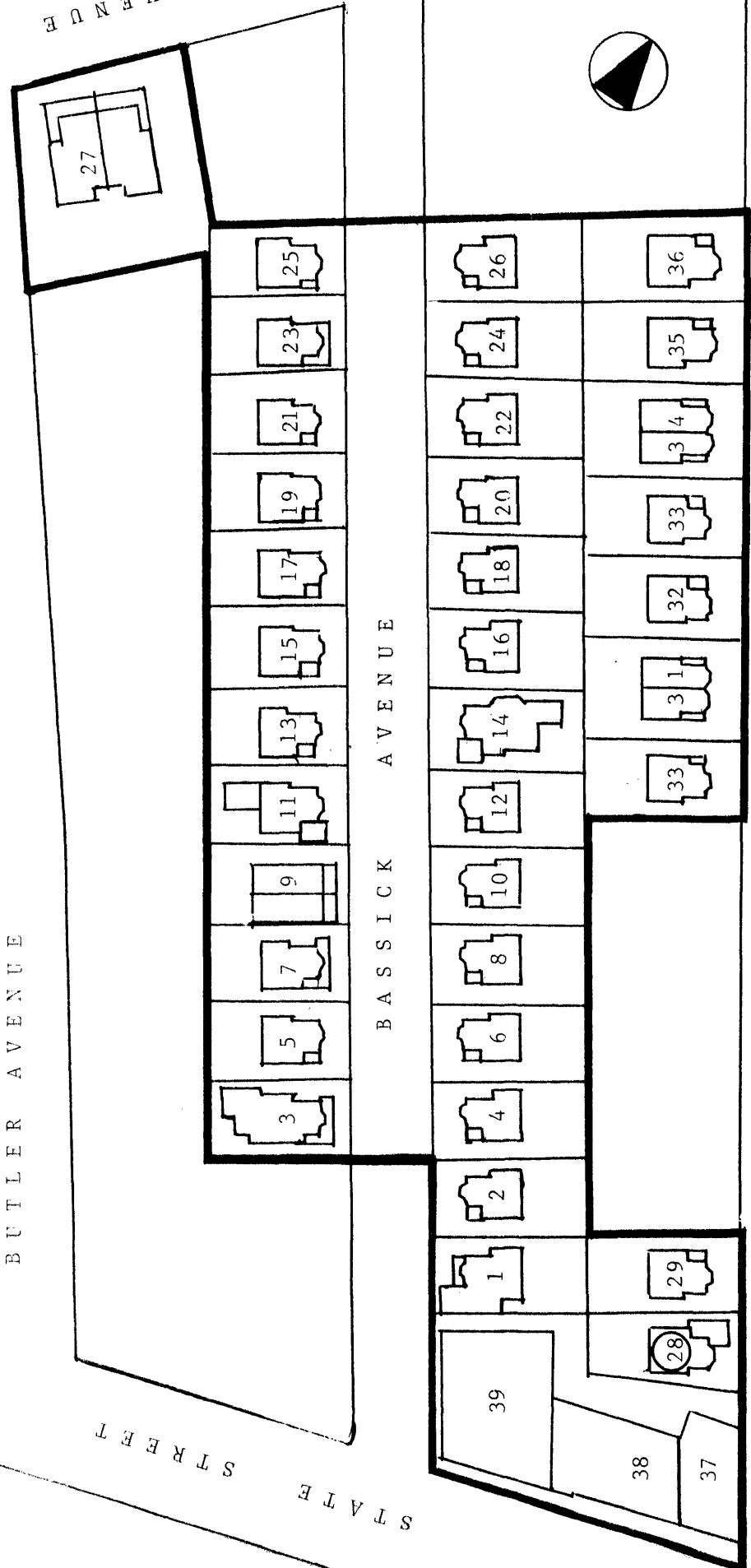
BUTLER AVENUE

FAIRFIELD AVENUE

STATE STREET

BASSICK AVENUE

HOWARD AVENUE



BASSICKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Bridgeport, Connecticut

Scale: 1" = 100'

- # Contributing Building
- # Non-contributing building

Solid dark line indicates boundary of Historic District