

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
458-488	BH

Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form

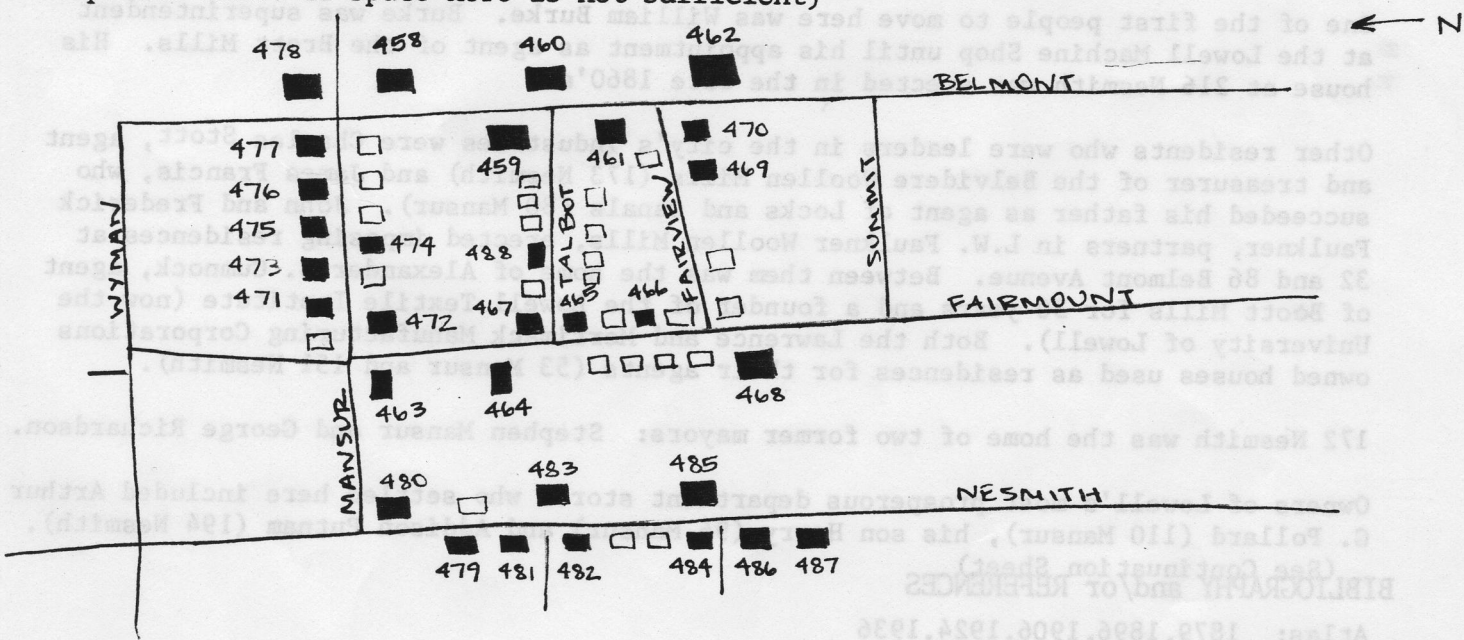
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Town Lowell

Name of area (if any) Belvidere Hill

General date or period 1870-90's

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen

Organization DPD Architectural Survey

Date 1/81

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Belvidere Hill is defined as the area roughly bounded by Wyman, Belmont, Fairview and Nesmith streets for a total of approximately 38 acres. The area was originally part of a large purchase of land by John and Thomas Nesmith in 1831 (but not included in the subdivision plan filed the following year) and Samuel Wyman's farm which extended east from Belmont Avenue. The natural topography of the area, which affords views over the city and, from Belmont Avenue, the city's highest elevation, east toward Tewksbury and beyond, encouraged the development of large, stylish residences.

Most of the houses were undoubtedly architect designed. Grounds accompanying the houses were  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 acre and frequently included a rear carriage house and long, curving drive. Along Fairmount Street a continuous granite retaining wall is still maintained.

Although one or two mid-19th century houses were built on Nesmith Street, major development did not occur until after 1868 when lots east of Fairmount Street

(See Continuation Sheet)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Residents of Belvidere Hill were among the city's leaders in business, industrial, political and social affairs. Development of the area followed the 1840-50's settlement of the land around the fashionable Washington Square (see area form). After the Civil War, prominent citizens turned to the hill for the erection of large, elegant residences.

One of the first people to move here was William Burke. Burke was superintendent at the Lowell Machine Shop until his appointment as agent of the Brott Mills. His house at 216 Nesmith was erected in the late 1860's.

Other residents who were leaders in the city's industries were Charles Stott, agent and treasurer of the Belvidere Woollen Mills (173 Nesmith) and James Francis, who succeeded his father as agent of Locks and Canals (80 Mansur). John and Frederick Faulkner, partners in L.W. Faulkner Woollen Mills, erected imposing residences at 32 and 86 Belmont Avenue. Between them was the home of Alexander G. Cumnock, agent of Brott Mills for 30 years and a founder of the Lowell Textile Institute (now the University of Lowell). Both the Lawrence and Merrimack Manufacturing Corporations owned houses used as residences for their agents (53 Mansur and 151 Nesmith).

172 Nesmith was the home of two former mayors: Stephen Mansur and George Richardson.

Owners of Lowell's most prosperous department stores who settled here included Arthur G. Pollard (110 Mansur), his son Harry (96 Mansur) and Addison Putnam (194 Nesmith).

(See Continuation Sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Atlas: 1879, 1896, 1906, 1924, 1936

Maps: 1850

Illustrated History of Lowell (1897)

Northern Middlesex Registry: deeds and subdivision plans



# INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Lowell

Form No:

Property Name: Belvidere Hill (Area)

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

were laid out. The first houses to be erected on Nesmith Street had generous lots that extended back to Fairmount Street. Of these eight residences on the east side, only 5 remain and except for 218 Nesmith, the lots have been subdivided.

Italianate and Second Empire buildings predominated until the 1880's when the Queen Anne style prevailed. 24 Fairmount is representative of the scale and elegance of the Second Empire houses. In character with later fashion, Queen Anne residences were grander and more lavishly ornamented, employing a variety of exterior wall fabrics, turrets, & applied woodwork for a picturesque silhouette (209 Nesmith, 85 Fairmount and 110 Mansur).

On the crest of the hill sits one of the most imposing residences in the city. 86 Belmont Avenue is a highly sophisticated Romanesque Revival house constructed of rough faced granite blocks.

During the 1890's and 1900's the Colonial Revival style was widely used after which development tapered off. Among the houses built during this period is 124 Mansur Street, a grandiose, fully developed example of the style with a carriage house in the same mode. More modest yet confidently executed Colonial Revival houses are found at 221 Nesmith and 57 Belmont.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

William S. Lamson was associated with the manufacturing of his father's ingenious invention, the Lamson Store Service Device which allowed speedy transferral of customers' payments to a cashier (209 Nesmith).

Several successful building contractors also lived in the area. John Howe, who erected many mills, city-owned buildings and the Hotel Vendome in Boston lived at 85 Fairmount Street. Levi Sprague, whose firm constructed the original mills of the Lawrence Corporation and many buildings in the city of Lawrence, resided at 52 Mansur.

From 1886-1898 a number of residences were erected by relatives of original owners. 7 and 25 Fairmount Street were built on subdivided lots of 172 and 194 Nesmith Street. Sarah Francis built a home next to her son's (68 Mansur) and William Sprague at 221 Nesmith.

The area today remains one of the city's most desirable neighborhoods. Although a few lots have been subdivided, the area has retained its late 19th century character through landscaping and few architectural alterations.

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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Lowell	Form No:
Property Name: Belvidere Hill (Area)	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

LIST OF BUILDINGS INVENTORIED IN THIS AREA

32 Belmont Avenue  
47 Belmont Avenue  
52 Belmont Avenue  
57 Belmont Avenue  
86 Belmont Avenue  
7 Fairmount Street  
24 Fairmount Street  
25 Fairmount Street  
46 Fairmount Street  
62 Fairmount Street  
85 Fairmount Street  
25 Fairview Street  
33 Fairview Street  
52 Mansur Street  
53 Mansur Street  
68 Mansur Street  
77 Mansur Street  
80 Mansur Street  
96 Mansur Street  
110 Mansur Street  
124 Mansur Street  
151 Nesmith Street  
172 Nesmith Street  
173 Nesmith Street  
187 Nesmith Street  
194 Nesmith Street  
209 Nesmith Street  
216 Nesmith Street  
221 Nesmith Street  
227 Nesmith Street  
26 Talbot Street

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