

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

Form numbers in this area TP 1-64	Area no. TPA 1
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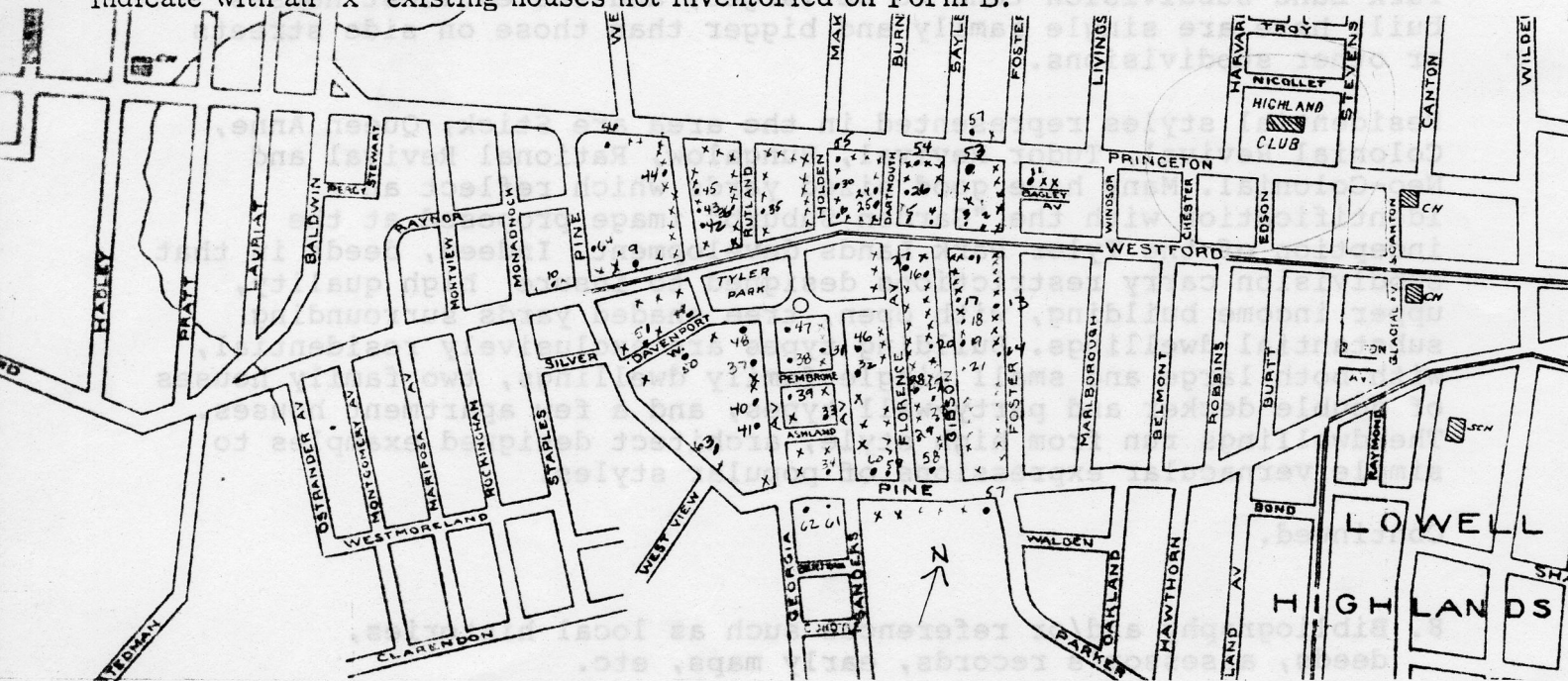
2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Town Lowell  
Name of area (if any) Tyler Park

3. General date or period c 1831- 1936

4. Is area uniform (explain):  
in style? varies from Federal to Neo-Colonial  
in condition? from poor to excellent  
in type of ownership? single family and rental  
in use? residential

5. Map. Use space below to draw a general map of the area involved. Indicate any historic properties for which individual reports are completed on Forms B thru F, using corresponding numbers. Show street names (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. Indicate with an "x" existing houses not inventoried on Form B.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE  
USGS Quadrant \_\_\_\_\_  
MHC Photo no. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Recorded by Architectural Preservation Associates  
Organization Tyler Park Neighborhood Association  
Date December, 1986

(over)

7. Historical data. Explain the historical/architectural importance of this area.

The Tyler Park area is architecturally significant as an excellent example of a late nineteenth century street car suburb which developed around a public park. The park and one of the planned developments was the work of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, one of the nation's most important landscape architecture firms.

Two houses are known to remain from the period before suburban development, 375 Pine Street ( ), a well developed Federal style, five bay, center entrance dwelling with a fine door surround and gate, and 469 Pine Street ( ), a vernacular Italianate, side hall cottage, with stock entry hood. A third house at 158 Sayles Street ( ) may have been moved to the site. The simple Italianate side hall plan, 2 1/2 story dwelling was probably remodeled and extended ca. 1893. A house at 597 Pine Street may predate 1879 but appears to have been considerably altered.

The remainder of the housing was erected ca. 1888 to 1936 except for a few infill structures. Lots along Westford Street and in the Tyler Park Land subdivision tend to be larger, and the earliest houses built here are single family and bigger than those on side streets or other subdivisions.

Residential styles represented in the area are Stick, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Bungalow, Rational Revival and Neo-Colonial. Many have good sized yards which reflect an identification with the "Garden Suburb" image proposed at the inception of the Tyler Park Lands development. Indeed, deeds in that subdivision carry restrictions designed to insure high quality, upper income building, with open, tree shaded yards surrounding substantial dwellings. Building types are exclusively residential, with both large and small single family dwellings, two family houses of double decker and party-wall types, and a few apartment houses. The dwellings run from high style, architect designed examples to simple vernacular expressions of popular styles.

Continued.

8. Bibliography and/or references such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.

Maps, 1830, 1850, 1868, 1888, 1914  
Atlases: 1871, 1879, 1896, 1906, 1924, 1936  
Middlesex Registry of Deeds  
Lowell City Directories, 1861 - 1936

Continued.

## 7. Continued:

Many of the houses in the proposed district were built for their owners, but several builders active in the area constructed houses on speculation. Chief among them are Edmond Douglas, whose houses were built in the Tyler Park Lands, and Alfred Lequin who put up all the houses along Gertrude Avenue between 1922 and 1923.

Housing in the area is generally well finished and in good condition. Common elements are the use of high, ashlar, random coursed granite foundations, chamfered corners in Queen Anne dwellings, and the extensive use of stained glass for transom and stair windows.

The area in which the proposed Tyler Park Historic District (TPHD) is located was part of the town of Chelmsford until 1874. Much of the area was open, but stands of oak and pine woods are reported. It had been little developed farm land with a few old roads, notably Pine Street, a ca. 1663 - 1785 highway to Middlesex Village. A map of the area in 1830 shows Pine Street extending from Lowell to Middlesex Village, the site of the the origin of the short lived Middlesex Canal, (1793-1836). Westford Street may have been extended from Lowell to Chelmsford as early as 1851.

A map of 1871 shows only five houses in the area but also indicates a soap factory located about where Tyler Park is now, probably an outgrowth of farm production. Stevens Street represents the western-most suburban street. By 1879 suburban development had begun in the Lowell Highlands east of Foster Street, though building was still scanty. Residential development was spreading from Lowell towards Middlesex Village in response to the population growth of Lowell. Between 1890 and 1900 its population increased by one quarter, from 77,000 to 95,000. This growth was to continue until the 1920s, when Lowell's textile manufactureries declined.

About 1888 suburban development reached west beyond Foster Street. Mrs. Thomas Gibson, a grocer's widow, and James W. Bennett, a carpenter, gravel roofer and later politician, subdivided the old Gibson and Moore properties west of Foster Street with Gibson Street and Florence Avenue. In 1893 Mrs. Samuel Tyler sold a large piece of pasture which had belonged to the family for about a century to William Bent, a local attorney. First, however, she and her daughter Susan Emma Tyler, donated a 2.74 acre parcel of the tract to the City of Lowell for a public Park.

Bent commissioned landscape architect Charles Eliot to design the park and lay out the Tyler Park Lands around it. Eliot soon joined the renown landscape design firm of Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, and this park is the only wholly designed Lowell park by that firm. The subdivision was aggressively marketed as a healthful "Garden Suburb" to "prudent businessmen and merchants of Lowell" and all who had the means to buy and build houses, rather than exclusively rich families. Its residents did in fact represent a cross section of Lowell's middle and upper middle classes, and their homes reflect this.

Continued:

## 7. Continued:

In the teens and twenties other developers were active, James Holden, a butcher, developed Holden and Rutland Streets, which filled in with two family homes; C. S. Dodge subdivided Gertrude Avenue, later developed by Alfred Lequin; and James Smith developed upper Princeton Boulevard.

The proposed TPHD is historically significant as an intact example of the development of a middle class street car suburb, a residential outgrowth of continuously expanding Lowell. Between 1893 and 1920 the city experienced a transition in economics from a single focus on the textile industry to more diversified business climate, and politically from town to city. The plans and structures of the Tyler Park area reflect Lowell's growth and diversification in the hundred years between the mid 1830s and mid 1930s, when its development was complete.

8. Continued:

Lowell Water Records.

City of Lowell. Morning Mail Souvenire of the City of Lowell, Lowell, 1890.

Coburn, Fredrich, W. History of Lowell and its People, N.Y. 1920.

First Unitarian Church. The Lowell Book, Boston, 1879.

Lowell Daily Citizen. Lowell of Today, Lowell, 1893.

Lowell Morning Mail, 2/7/1893.

2/23/1893.

Lowell Sun, 5/26/1924

Miles, Rev. Henry A. Lowell As It Was And As It Is, Lowell, 1845.

Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott. Lowell National Historic Park and Preservation District: Cultural Resources Inventory, Boston, 1980.

Waters, The Rev. Wilson. History of Chelmsford, Lowell, 1917.

Vox Populi. 2/11/1893

