

SE

FORM A - AREA

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

Form numbers in this area

274- 320

Area letter

A

Town Lowell

Name of area (if any) Chapel Hill

General date or period 1830-80's

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

Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

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)

see attached

Recorded by Elizabeth Durfee Hengen

Organization DPD Architectural Survey

Date 1/81

(Staple additional sheets here)

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

Chapel Hill has the greatest concentration of early-mid 19th century houses in Lowell. Settlement initially occurred along Gorham Street, the original route from East Chelmsford to Billerica, but by 1831 Central, which curves to the east to circumvent the hill, Chapel and Lawrence streets had been laid out, with a number of short, cross streets connecting them. The area today is roughly bounded by North and Union Streets to the north, Linden and Gorham Streets to the west, Central and Abbott Streets to the south and the Concord River to the east.

Growth in the area was rapid. By 1832 about 50 buildings, including 2 churches had been erected. If the remaining houses from this period are representative, they were federalist double houses, usually with a Greek Revival entrance. During the next two decades the Greek Revival style predominated. Laterally sited, sidehall and a few broad gabled houses were built, mostly of frame construction, although several brick structures survive (547 Central, 478 Gorham, 1 Centre). At 23 Ames Street stands the only rubblestone house. (See Continuation Sheet)

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

Chapel Hill's early and rapid growth is attributable to its being the only area near to the mills that was neither owned by Locks and Canals nor separated by a river. Although Belvidere Village was also settled in the 1820's, its growth as a workers' community was thwarted by the 1821 Nesmith purchase of the land east of High Street.

Chapel Hill derived its name from the First Universalist Church that was built on Chapel Street in 1828. Early settlers were a mixture of store owners, policemen and skilled laborers. Central Street, on which were located the large and more prestigious houses had several prominent residents, including a mayor. The many sidehall cottages that filled the cross streets were inhabited by masons and semi-skilled employees of the mills.

Semi-skilled workers were Irish, drawn from their native country to Lowell's mills during the potato famine of the 1840's. By 1842 their numbers had grown sufficiently to erect St. Peter's Church at the northern end of the area. In 1892 a larger church was built across from the courthouse (see South Common Area).

At the turn of the century the Irish wave of immigrants had given way to Portugese who initially settled on the southern side of the hill. In 1902 St. Anthony's parish was formed, and a couple of years later, a parish house and church begun.

The area today remains heavily Portugese, although many Hispanic people have recently moved in.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps: 1821, 1831, 1832, 1841, 1850, 1868  
Atlas: 1879, 1896, 1906, 1924, 1936  
Plan of Locks and Canals Land Sale, 1845  
City Directories



INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:  Lowell	Form No:  A
Property Name: Chapel Hill Area	

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A major land auction in 1845 of Locks and Canals holdings precipitated development between Gorham and Chapel Streets, particularly Keene, Cedar and Linden Streets where lots were sold to developers.

Between 1850 and 1880 the sidehall Italianate house became the most familiar building type. Struck by the ornamented mansions being erected in Belvidere, Chapel Hill builders chose specific elements which were easily mass produced in mills and applied them to their sidehall houses. Most common were bracketed entrance hoods, panelled corner boards, bay windows and liberal use of eave brackets. 139 Chapel, 801 Central Street and houses along Cedar Street are typical examples; more elaborate Italianate residences are found at 574 Central and 80 Linden Street

A number of mid-19th century 4-6 unit tenements survive in the area around Lawrence Street. Of simple design, these were typically 1½ or 2½ story buildings with paired entrances and bracketed hoods (310-26 Lawrence, 24-8 Mill).

Chapel Hill's streets were all in place by 1868. As land both within the area and throughout the city became scarcer, the small scale character of the area was disturbed by multiple dwellings of 3-4 stories. Earlier ones built in the 1880's employed Queen Anne detailing, but by the turn of the century, architectural ornament was minimal and absentee landlords abounded.

Although the two 1830's churches have been removed, non-residential buildings of note include three schools: The Coburn School (1848), The Cottage Street Primary School (1858) and the Italianate Lyons St. School; a firehouse, and an early 20th century rectory.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

PROPOSED NATIONAL  
REGISTER BOUNDS

■ INVENTORIED BLDG.







INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:  Lowell	Form No:  A
Property Name: Chapel Hill Area	

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

## BUILDINGS INVENTORIED IN CHAPEL HILL AREA

Ames Street	Ames Street School
23 Ames Street	-
18-24 Auburn Street	-
11-13 Cady Street	Cady House
Cedar Street	Streetscape
448-58 Central Street	-
490 Central Street	Central St. Engine House
547 Central Street	Scripture's Bakery
557-61 Central Street	Joseph Locke House
571-3 Central Street	Abbott House
574 Central Street	Hocum Hosford House
604 Central Street	-
621-7 Central Street	-
648 Central Street	Samuel Wood House
708-10 Central Street	-
736-38 Central Street	-
739 Central Street	Central Street School
801 Central Street	-
834 Central Street	-
840-44 Central Street	-
850-54 Central Street	-
893 Central Street	St. Anthony's Parish
920 Central Street	Lyon St. School
995-7 Central Street	-
1&3 Centre Street	Spaulding House
11 Centre Street	William Nichols House
41 Chapel Street	Cyril French House
60 Chapel Street	John Mead House
74-6 Chapel Street	Sprague House
75 Chapel Street	-
80 Chapel Street	Cottage Street School
98 Chapel Street	-
128 Chapel Street	-
139 Chapel Street	-
9-11 Elm Street	-
400 Gorham Street	Harvey Snow House
412 Gorham Street	-
414 Gorham Street	-
478 Gorham Street	-
492 Gorham Street	-
31 Groves Street	-
49-55 Keene Street	-
*122 Lawrence Street	Colburn School
*202 Lawrence Street	Peter McDermot House
*224-8 Lawrence Street	A.N. Richmond House
*310-26 Lawrence Street	Richmond Mills Housing
80 Linden Street	-
24-8 Mill Street	-

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

\*Included in S.B.R.A. report (NPS)

(OVER)



16-24 Pollard Street  
 257-59 South Street  
 38-40 Union Street  
 Walnut Street  
 7 Wamesit Street  
 12-14 Whipple Street

-  
 -  
 -  
 Streetscape  
 -  
 Tilton House

\*included in SBRA report (NPS)

DATE: 11/11/11	
PROJECT:	1
LOCATION:	1000 100