

IDENTIFICATION 1 Wamesit Court MAP SHEET # 139

1) CURRENT OWNER Bert D. and Linda A. Masse OWNER OCCUPIED no

2) HISTORIC NAME \_\_\_\_\_

3) CURRENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

4) PROPERTY TYPE two family dwelling 5) ZONING CLASSIFICATION IA

6) TAXES: PAYMENTS owes 1992 taxes STATUS delinquent (10/2 /92)

7) WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF LHPD

HISTORICAL ABSTRACT

1) CONSTRUCTION DATE ca. 1830 (moved to present site ca.1860)

SOURCE city directories, style, 1980 Shelpley Bulfinch Report

2) ARCHITECT OR BUILDER \_\_\_\_\_

3) HISTORIC OWNER \_\_\_\_\_

4) ORIGINAL USE: GF residential UF \_\_\_\_\_

5) PREVIOUS BLDGS ON PROPERTY no DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SOURCE \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTIVE DATA

1) ARCHITECTURAL STYLE vernacular

2) PRESENT USE:

GF residential

UF \_\_\_\_\_

3) NO OF STORIES 1 1/2

4) PROP SQ FT 2,278

5) PLAN rectangular

6) ROOF endwall gable

7) STRUCTURAL SYSTEM wood frame

8) OUTBUILDINGS none

9) MATERIALS:

FOUNDATION rubblestone

FACADE aluminum siding

TRIM aluminum

10) NOTABLE SURFACE & LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS chain link fencing

VIEW FROM northwest PHOTO TAKEN Nov.1992



ADDRESS One Wamesit Court

VISUAL ASSESSMENT

1) CONDITION OF BUILDING FABRIC good

2) IF DETERIORATED, CAUSES n/a

3) INTEGRITY OF HISTORIC BLDG FABRIC: GF major but reversible changes

UF n/a

4) SURROUNDING LAND USES residential, light industrial

5) INTEGRITY OF PROPERTY'S HISTORIC SETTING (moved to present site ca.1860)

6) IMPORTANCE OF PROPERTY TO HISTORIC SETTING integral to character

ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

One Wamesit Court is part of a group of small frame vernacular houses which date ca. 1830 but were moved to their present site about 1860. Until late 1992, when #7 was demolished, there were six of these 1 1/2 story houses, arranged in two groups of three attached units facing each other across a central alley. The houses consist of a main block and side wings which attach to the adjacent house(s). One Wamesit Court is a two-family house which connects to #5 (which formerly connected to #7.) The simple structure is eight bays across; at bays 3 and 6 are entrance doors with transom lights above. The house has 6/6 windows, a center dormer, and brick chimneys. Aluminum siding covers the facade, including all trim.

ADDITIONAL HISTORICAL INFORMATION

SOURCES

SKETCH MAP

See Research Report

ARCHEOLOGICAL COMMENTS

Archeological remains which could be recovered in the very small yard would relate to domestic use of the site since 1860.

Research Report  
1-8 Wamesit Court  
ca.1830

Wamesit Court is a group of five 1 1/2 story vernacular frame houses located off Dutton Street in a predominantly industrial area. Originally there were six houses in the group (#7 was demolished in late 1992), arranged in two groups of three facing each other across an alley. Each house consists of a main block with side wings connecting it to the adjacent house(s).

Map and directory evidence indicates that these houses have been located at the Wamesit Court site since ca.1860. However, architects and historians familiar with Lowell's development and housing types date the Wamesit Court houses to the initial period of the city's industrial development, the 1820s and 1830s, indicating that they must have been moved here from another location. This type of modest, small scale worker housing, with an endwall-gable orientation, was not built in Lowell after the 1830's. By the 1860's, worker housing was larger, with some elaboration at the cornice.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that the Wamesit Court houses were originally built by the Lowell Manufacturing Company and located on the north side of the Lowell Canal, currently a paved area south of Bigelow-Lowell Building #1. This evidence includes an 1845 view of the Lowell Machine Shop, which shows in the background a series of five 1 1/2 story cottages resembling the Wamesit Court houses. This row of buildings last appears on the 1850 map of Lowell; by 1879, it had been either moved or demolished and its site left open. The Wamesit Court houses appear at their present site about 1860, during the years in which the Lowell Manufacturing Company row was removed. Wamesit Court first appears on the street list in the 1861 city directory. In 1861, the city directory lists Aaron W. Gilman, an engineer, as living in a house on Wamesit Court. Also, deed records of the sale of the property in 1861 mention buildings on the site. Wamesit Court is first indicated on a map in 1868, and the 1879 atlas clearly shows the present structures in place.

Further strengthening the circumstantial evidence is the fact that the canal-side Lowell Manufacturing Company row and the Wamesit Court buildings are the only known examples in Lowell of 1 1/2 story worker's cottages connected by lateral wings. This type is more common in south/central Massachusetts and may have been influenced by the Lowell Manufacturing Company's connection with Medway, Massachusetts. Further examination of Lowell Manufacturing Company records to determine the original function of their row building and how the company disposed of it might verify or refute any association between the two sets of buildings.

Finally, the Wamesit Court cottages are of late Federal design and proportions. Stylistically, they are most likely to date from the 1820s or early 1830s and are unlikely to postdate 1850.

The Lowell Manufacturing Company was chartered in February, 1828 to manufacture cotton and woolen goods. Production began in 1828 or 1829. From the time of its founding, the company developed along lines different from those of Lowell's other major cloth manufacturers, both in its products and in the organization of its millyard. Initially, the firm produced a type of coarse cotton cloth used as clothing for slaves in the American South, as well as handwoven carpets. Looms for carpet production, as well as many of the company's original employees, came from a small carpet factory which had been established in Medway, Massachusetts around 1826. This firm was purchased by the Lowell Manufacturing Company founders in 1827. Of the employees who moved from Medway to Lowell in 1828, two were associated with the introduction of carpet looms into the United States and with subsequent inventions which improved the efficiency of carpet weaving. In later years, another employee, Erastus Bigelow developed the world's first power loom for carpets.

Deed research indicates that the Wamesit Court site was purchased by William Fiske from the Proprietors of Locks and Canals in April, 1846. In October, 1861 Fiske sold the 15,000 sq.ft. property to David Perham for \$5,000, including "the buildings thereon." Perham purchased a small adjacent strip of land in 1866. In 1872, Perham sold the property to a large local landowner, Robert G. Bartlett, who continued to own it on the 1896 and 1906 atlases. The pattern of single ownership of the group of houses has changed and each unit is now owned individually.

SOURCES

Report, Lowell National Historical Park and Preservation District, Cultural Resources Inventory, prepared for Division of Cultural Resources, North Atlantic Regional Office, National Park Service, by Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott, Architects, Boston, Massachusetts, 1980. See Research Report on Lowell Manufacturing Company (company housing) and inventory form for Wamesit Court included under Lowell Manufacturing Company.

Maps, 1850, 1868. Atlases, 1879, 1896, 1906

Deed Research, Middlesex County Courthouse, North District (Lowell). Proprietors of Locks and Canals to Wm.Fiske, April, 1846 (Book 482, p.390). Wm.Fiske to David Perham, October 29, 1861 (Book 29, p.329). Ignatius Tyler to David Perham, extra strip of land, July, 1866 (Book 52, p. 153). David Perham to Robert G. Bartlett, March 2, 1872 (Book 85, p.43)

