FORM A - AREA

 MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
  BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  02125

Photograph

Aerial photograph, courtesy of Microsoft Local Live, viewing the central portion of the district from the southeast.

Town/City: Town of Falmouth

Place:

Name of Area: Belvidere Plains

Present Use: Primarily residential; some commercial

Construction Dates/Period of Significance:
1800 - 1960

Overall Condition: Good

Major Intrusions and Alterations: None

Acreage: approx. 126 acres

Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates, Woodstock, NY
www.larsonfisher.com

Organization: Falmouth Historical Commission

Date: October 2008

Locus Map

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

The Belvidere Plains survey area extends roughly from King Street on the west (including those lots east of and fronting on King Street) to Falmouth Harbor on the east and from just south of Main Street on the North to the Vineyard Sound on the South. A total of 316 resources have been documented in the area: 302 of them are dwellings (273 single family; 35 multi-family, mostly houses adapted for apartments but also the large public housing project containing 7 multi-family buildings), one is a garage on a freestanding lot but accessory to an adjacent residence, six are commercial buildings (1 within a converted dwelling), and one recreational structure (a tennis court). The terrain in this area is essentially flat and just above sea level, which made it easy to farm in the early days of the town’s settlement. The 1846 map shows that the only road into this area was King Street, which stretched between Main Street and a Clinton Avenue that extended only a couple hundred feet east of King. Forty four years later, as the 1890 map depicts, only the western half of Queen Street had been constructed and Clinton Avenue completed eastward past Bowman’s/Deacon’s Pond into Falmouth Heights. It would be nearly a century before the current network of roads would be established. Fig. 1 depicts the development of roads between 1880 and 1930. It was the accessibility of water frontage at the south edge that attracted summer tourists to the area—no doubt spillover from the Falmouth Heights resort development in the late 19th century. (See Historical Narrative section.) That southern portion of the neighborhood was platted and named “Belvidere Plain,” from which the larger neighborhood stretching northwards gained its name: “Belvidere Plains.” The northern section was first developed by year-round residents—tradesmen, shop-keepers, and other working class folks—who clustered close to Main Street. They made their living by meeting the needs of the more wealthy summer residents; thus these two areas developed concurrently.

The residential architecture of the area reflects this early dichotomy of classes in the earliest settlement of the area, as illustrated in the continuation sheets containing photographs. However, the central portion of Belvidere Plains, located between the two late-19th and early 20th century settlements took much longer to be developed. Historic maps indicate that Scranton Avenue was not in place in until about 1910 and only its southern portion was in place in 1942, let alone the network of local streets between King Street and Scranton Avenue. Indeed, some undeveloped parcels still remain—see page 1 for an aerial photograph of the survey area, which shows a large central parcel that has been subdivided with lots currently for sale. Much of this central portion was developed at the close of World War II in response to an overwhelming demand for housing. Today the area is comprised nearly completely of residential uses. The period of architectural significance is 1880 - 1960. Those buildings constructed in 1959 and 1960 will soon turn 50 years old, and therefore have been considered historic in keeping with the National Register standards and in the interest of long-term planning considerations.

Besides containing an impressive range of styles, the Belvidere Plains survey area is notable for the harmonious integration of buildings built over the period of 200-plus years. This is due to the preferred use of traditional materials—wood shingles and clapboard (76%)—and the frequent repetition of traditional styles—most notably the ubiquitous Cape Cod Colonial (30%). Also, the scale and massing of even the newest buildings tend to be compatible with the older dwellings. The largest houses are found primarily in the older north and south sections, with a gradual stepping down of size and massing between those areas to a predominantly one- and two-story mix of post WWII houses. A good number of the houses are intact (retain architectural integrity): 57 of those built by 1960. Almost all the houses built since that time are intact. The total number of houses that have been altered is 116; about 38%. The main alteration that has occurred has been limited to the replacement of windows—45 in all. The rest have had siding applied, have been substantially remodeled or resided. More
importantly, of the 309 resources within the survey area, over 80% are considered “contributing” to the historic character of the neighborhood. Many of the mid-20th century homes that are now, or will soon turn, 50 years of age are in proximity to one another as a result of small subdivisions and create visually harmonious blocks.

The architectural styles and building forms found in Belvidere Plains have been categorized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd Empire</td>
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<td>Federal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Four Square</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gothic Revival</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bungalows</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Greek Revival</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cape Cod</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>Ranch</td>
<td>55*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch Colonial Revival</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Total # of properties</td>
<td>315*</td>
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* This number includes 7 entries for the buildings that comprise the Public Housing Complex at 211 Scranton Avenue.

In addition to the above-categorized resources, there are 86 contributing accessory structures associated with the primary buildings. To be contributing they were identified as having been built at the same time or earlier than the primary building. Most of the accessory buildings are garages, representing the large number of mid-20th century houses. They also include two barns, which represent the area’s farming history, along with three carriage houses and 15 sheds. See Photo 12.

Federal and Greek Revival Styles
The Federal period and Greek Revival-style houses are the earliest dwellings in Belvidere Plains. The only house categorized as Federal in style is at 49 King Street (FAL.1372-Photo 1), despite later alterations. The Town Assessor lists it as having been constructed c.1800. Because only one house was located along King Street by this time (not in this location), the house must have been moved here sometime between 1880 and 1890, probably from Main Street as it transformed into Falmouth’s central commercial district during that decade.¹ Refined, flattened surfaces with classical details on a symmetrical 3- or 5-bay front facades define Federal period houses. There is also only one example of the Greek Revival style, albeit quite altered. It is the Fannie Smith house at 26 King Street (FAL.1365).² The simple gable style could be easily mistaken for the Cape Cod style, but the tall first story suggests that there was once a substantial cornice at the eave line, which has been covered by vinyl siding. The entry vestibule has been altered as well and is perhaps an early Colonial Revival addition, as evidenced by its pediment. A large shed dormer addition on the front further obscures the original form of the house.

Second Empire Style
One of the picturesque styles that first began to appear in the 1850s was Second Empire, sometimes referred to as “Mansard” style, based on its major feature—a mansard roof. The style was inspired by the Paris skyline and

¹ The house is depicted on the 1890-91 U.S. Coast Survey map but not on the 1880 map of the area (from the archive collection of William M. Dunkle).
² In 1924 William H. Hewins stated that the house was the residence of “Aunt Fannie Smith” in 1854 and that it was moved in order to make room for a new house for Mrs. Rogers on Main Street and that it had been moved to King Street and owned by A. E. Powers.
became very popular in the 1870s, though it fell out of fashion by the early 1880s. Only two buildings in Belvidere Plains clearly exhibit this style: **14 King Street** (FAL.1363 – Photo 2) and **34 King Street** (FAL.1368). The house at 14 King Street was originally built c. 1840 and moved to its present location from Main Street, which means that it was remodeled after its move. Just two doors to the south, the James and Emma Huckins House, at 34 King, built c.1880, has also been remodeled with a portion of the mansard roof clad with wood shingles extending upward from the dwelling’s walls and a hipped roof added and clad with asphalt shingles.

**Gothic Revival Style**
There are only 11 Gothic Revival-style houses in Belvidere Plains, which isn’t surprising given that its era of strongest popularity predates most of the development of the neighborhood. One of these was previously surveyed in 1989: the Rev. Clark Cornish - Capt. Oliver P. Robinson House at **72 King Street** (FAL.730). The Gothic Revival-style houses in Belvidere Plains are not emblematic of its High Victorian expression, but rather in the stripped down version that maintained a strong popularity right through the end of the 19th century. Characterized by strong vertical massing, steeply pitched roofs and wrap-around porches, it began to incorporated Queen Anne-style ornamentation at the end of the 1800s after that style had made its debut. What sets it apart from the Queen Anne style, however, is its front-gable form with the roof extending down to a half-story position, a more compact and regular footprint, and often with a cross-gable that extends over a recessed side ell. Almost all the Gothic Revival-style homes in Belvidere Plains are located in the northern close to Main Street. Examples of these are, **71 and 75 King Street** (FAL.1377 and FAL.1378, respectively Photo 3.) and **56 King Street** (FAL.1375 - Photo 4). The Elijah Fish House at **75 Queen Street** (FAL.1467 - Photo 5) is very similar to those along King Street and has a box bay that was also typical of the Gothic Style. All of these are 1½-stories in height and exhibit the front gable form.

**Shingle Style**
The Shingle Style was first introduced in this region of the country in the 1880s by Architect Henry Hobson Richardson and is named for the wood shingles that invariably clad it. A gambrel roof is a typical, though not universal, characteristic and cross gambrel roofs often extend over side ells or wings. Other architectural features include asymmetrical facades, bay windows, and a variety of dormers (including eyebrow). Most of the 13 Shingle-style homes found in Belvidere Plains are located in the southern, resort, section of the neighborhood. These are mostly rather scaled down versions of the style, which can be quite grand. More lavish examples are numerous throughout Falmouth, especially along its waterfront. Neighboring houses at **16 Timothy Nye Cartway** (FAL.1559 - Photo 6) and **20 Timothy Nye Cartway** (FAL.1560 - Photo 7), both built c.1900, are very similar to each other, as are the nearby house at **1 Wheeling Avenue** (FAL.1561 - Photo 8). The Robert L. Studley House located at **66 Spinnaker Lane** (FAL.1539 - Photo 9), built c.1923 is one of the more expansive Shingle-style homes in Belvidere Plains. The Shingle-style house **15 Frances Avenue** (FAL.1337 - Photo 10), built c.1921 (quite late for this style) is another of the larger ones in the neighborhood.

**Colonial Revival Style**
The Colonial Revival-style house has evolved since it first appeared soon after the nation’s Centennial, which celebrated all things dating to the Revolutionary period, including the architectural expression of that time. This is the second most frequent style found in Belvidere Plains with 57 assigned to this category (which excludes the Colonial Revival subsets of Cape Cod and Dutch Colonial Revival). Some of the early examples in Belvidere Plains include **118 Clinton Avenue** (FAL.1304 – Photos 11 & 12), and **30 Queen Street** (FAL.1461 - Photo 13). The George W. Fish House at 118 Clinton Avenue dates to c.1880. It displays an early rendition of the style: a front gable form with eave returns, corner pilasters, 3-bay front facade and side passage plan. Shutters complete the style, although not hung authentically. Only the windows don’t conform but rather reflect
a Gothic Revival taste that was typical of this period. The house at 30 Queen Street, built c.1885, is a smaller version of this Colonial Revival form being 1½-story in height rather than a full 2 stories. While some of the windows have been replaced, it has some 6-over-1 sash windows, which are typical of the Colonial Revival style. Note its resemblance to the house just down Queen Street at number 75. This demonstrates a period of stylistic transition from Gothic Revival to Colonial Revival, even while the front gable form is retained. The house at 30 Queen has eave returns typical of the Colonial Revival style, yet it uses pillars rather than columns and has full front porch, a popular feature during the Gothic period. Later Colonial Revivals tended to have a gable form (the gable ends on the sides) with either 3- or 5-bay front facades and center entrances. The house at 20 Taylor Court (FAL.1557 – Photo 16) built c.1924 typifies this rendition. This one has a quirk, though, with the Colonial Garrison form (overhanging second floor) on the gable end side rather than front. Two notable examples of the Colonial Revival style are sited across Clinton Avenue from each other: 189 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1318 - Photo 14), built c.1920, and 186 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1317 - Photo 15) built c. 1928. Both have hipped, rather than gable roofs, and exemplify the more grandiose, formal, and Georgian take on the style. The Colonial Revival style continues to be popular as demonstrated by the many recently constructed homes that exhibit it, such as the 2003 house at 65 Lowry Road (FAL.1417) Indeed, whole apartment complexes, such as the one at 174 Queen Street (FAL.1484), are given this architectural treatment, which helps to blend them into the established historic surroundings.

Queen Anne Style
The style is an eclectic mixture of architectural influences and is typified by an irregular footprint, multiple rooflines, angled corners, protuberances, such as towers and bay windows, and wrap-around porches with turned columns and scroll sawn brackets and braces. Classic examples have highly decorated surfaces—such as decorative shingling and colored glass windows. The style was popular in the late 19th century and because of Belvidere Plains late development, only two houses fall into this category. The house at 21 Pleasant View Avenue (FAL.1452 - Photo 17) is an intact example of the style. Its c.1900 construction date (according to the Town Assessor) probably accounts for some of the Craftsman features.

Classical Revival Style
200 King Street (FAL.1404 - Photo 18) c.1921 Although the deed information on this house indicates a c.1921 construction date, the Classical style of the house with simple gable roof, center entrance, 2-over-2 windows and a wrap-around porch suggest that it may have been moved to this site and could date to as early as 1880. (The Assessor’s date of 1820 is probably a typographical error and meant to be 1920.) Although the associated 3-car garage is later, c.1940, it is contributing to the historic character of the area since it attests to the growth in automobile ownership of that era.

American Four Square Form
Only four buildings in Belvidere Plains have been categorized as American Four Square, which is actually a building form rather than an architectural style. This is because any number of stylistic elements can be applied to it. Basically these houses are large cubes with simple hipped roofs, very often with one or more dormers, and front porches. All four of the American Four Squares in this neighborhood were built between 1920 and 1930, the heyday of the style and are located at:

- 11 Fairview Avenue (FAL.1322)
- 30 Fairview Avenue (FAL.1327)
- 38 Fairview Avenue (FAL.1329)
- 21 Queen Street (FAL.1458 – Photo 19)
Craftsman/Bungalow Style

Bungalows and Craftsman style houses have some overlapping features—which may be a result of them becoming popular at the same time. Natural materials, exposed rafter ends, dormers, and careful detailing are all characteristic of a Craftsman-style house, which were often applied to Bungalows (though the latter can just as easily utilize Colonial Revival details such as Doric Columns and shutters). The most recognizable Bungalow is one with a swooping gable roof with front dormer extending out over a full front porch, as exemplified by **134 King Street** (FAL.1395 – Photo 20). The house at **17 Nye Road** (FAL.1425 - Photo 21), built in 1920, is a perfect blending of the hipped-roof Bungalow with Colonial Revival details like the Doric columns and 6-over-1 windows. Another intact example of a Bungalow with Craftsman detailing, built in 1929, is located at **47 Fairview Avenue** (FAL.1330 - Photo 22).

Cape Cod Style

By far the most numerous style found in Belvidere Plains is the Cape Cod with 95 in this classification. It is actually a sub-category of the Colonial style, which accounts for its being almost continually revived since America’s 1876 Centennial. (Twenty of the “Capes” in Belvidere Plains were built after 1960.) This style is one story in height with a gable roof and has a center entrance, like its larger cousin, the Colonial Revival. The earliest Capes located here have more often than not been modified with dormer additions, window alterations, and side and rear ell additions. An early example in Belvidere Plains is the house at **5 Harrisburg Avenue** (FAL.1355 - Photo 23), built c.1800 and which reputedly was moved to its present location from another town. Another house that was reputedly moved across Bowman’s Pond (now Falmouth Harbor to its present location at **305 Scranton Avenue** (FAL.1528 - Photo 26). This house, which was built c.1900, reveals features that are transitional between the Gothic Revival and Colonial Revival style. Other, more recent examples of the classic Cape Cod style include:

- **#s 169 & 159 Allen Avenue** (FAL.1277 & FAL.1276, respectively - Photo 25), built 1954 and 1971
- **65 Belvidere Road** (FAL.1288 - Photo 26), built 1950
- **22 Brown Court** (FAL.1296 - Photo 27), built 1966.

Dutch Colonial Revival

The Dutch Colonial Revival Style, like the Cape Cod Style, is a subset of the Colonial/Colonial Revival style, but is distinguished by its use of a gambrel rather than gable roof, while sharing its floorplan and fenestration. It became popular in the 1920s and 30s during the period when the interior of Belvidere Plains was just beginning to develop, thus there are only nine of them. The house at **28 Nye Road** (FAL.1424 - Photo 28), built c.1910 is an intact, early example of the style with Craftsman features such as exposed rafter ends. The Dutch Colonial at **24 Allen Avenue** (FAL.1255 - Photo 29), is an interesting specimen with its *false* gambrel roof—an illusion created by the addition of a pent in the form of a gambrel on the gable ends. This house has particularly fine detailing, with its paneled corner pilasters, substantial cornice, and pedimented entry porch. The house is distinct from its surrounding neighbors with its stucco cladding rather than the usual wood shingles.

Ranch Form

There are 55 Ranch-style houses in Belvidere Plains, many of them making up small enclaves, such as Handy Lane, that were developed after WW II. The style is identified by its strong horizontal massing, low pitched roofs, either gable or hipped, and wide overhanging eaves. The Ranch form is clearly of the automobile era and

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4 The Town Assessor’s date on this house is 1900, though it could well be older by 20 years, given its broken-eave dormers, that were a typical feature of the Gothic Revival style that was in vogue during the last three decades of the 19th century.
Unlike houses in previous times, the garage is typically attached, often with an open breezeway, and pulled up in line with the front facade. Like American Four Square buildings, the Ranch style can take on a number of different styles—Modern is the classic treatment, which often incorporates large picture windows, carports, and long, thin Roman bricks that reinforce the horizontality of the building. In Belvidere Plains, however, wood shingles is the cladding of choice, which tends to give a Colonial Revival aspect, especially if shutters are added. Five of the six Ranch houses on Handy Lane, #s 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 have identical or mirror image floorplans, fenestration with 3-part picture windows, though at least one has been altered (#3), and Colonial Revival detailing. The house at 3 Handy Lane (FAL.1349 - Photo 30) exemplifies the pattern. The sixth house, # 7, is also a 1950s Ranch, but with a hipped roof. Another 50s-era Ranch is located at 93 Allen Avenue (FAL.1263 - Photo 31). Here the style is more Modern, with a double attached garage pushed forward of the front facade and the overhanging eaves of the low-pitched hipped roof sheltering the front entrance much like a porch. The 3-part picture window is also in evidence; the shutters are probably not original. Another version of the Ranch form is when it incorporates a front or rear wing (Rotated Ranch) as depicted by 27 Hatch Road (FAL.1362 - Photo 32). One of the few large properties in Belvidere Plains is that at 211 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1511 & FAL.1512 - Photo 33) owned by the Falmouth Housing Authority and constructed in 1960. The seven buildings on this site all display the Ranch style as applied to multi-family units. The complex is less intrusive than it might otherwise be because of the predominantly wood shingle exteriors.

**Commercial Properties**

There are six commercial properties within the Belvidere Plains survey area. Falmouth Marine’s waterfront warehouse complex at 278 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1523 - Photo 34) is the largest and most obvious one. Located along Scranton Avenue (which was not constructed to its current length until the 1940s) the large functional building is with its multiple gable ends, clerestory windows, and asbestos shingle cladding is typical of warehouse uses in this mid-century period. While it is a visual barrier to the water, it is also an authentic expression of historic waterfront activity. The Flying Bridge restaurant at 220 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1518) is also a large presence on the eastern, water edge of the neighborhood. It has been renovated, expanded and updated since its 1939 construction date and is an unpretentious edifice that visually announces its restaurant function, complete with waterfront theme and nautical decorations. The Clam Shack at 227 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1321 – Photo 35) and adjacent office at 217 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1320) are rustic buildings without any overt architectural style, though they impart a good deal of historic character to this southeastern section of Belvidere Plains since the Clam Shack generates traffic and social activity. Some commercial properties have been adapted from their original residential use. The house at 14 Nye Road (FAL. 1424 -Photo 36), for example, was originally a modest, but charming Craftsman Cottage. Its adjacency to Main Street made it attractive for use as a real estate office and a large addition was constructed off its rear, visually overwhelming the original house. Other alterations have been made. For example the porch railing rebuilt to current building code standards, which disturbs the proportions of the front porch.

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

The earliest of the Cape towns to develop summer resort areas, Falmouth turned to tourism as agriculture and manufacturing—the two strongest prongs of its economy—were in rapid decline.\(^5\) Never robust, the town’s industrial enterprise suffered its first blows as whaling from the port, once a local specialty, ceased altogether and as the number of saltworks dropped from forty-two in 1845 to four in 1865.\(^6\) An 1886 town history noted

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\(^5\) James C. O’Connell, *Becoming Cape Cod: Creating a Seaside Resort* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England for University of New Hampshire, 2003), 13, has asserted that Falmouth Heights, developed by Worcester investors beginning in 1872, was “the Cape’s first planned resort,” built on a site that Falmouth’s last salt works had occupied only shortly before.

that Falmouth “does not rank as a manufacturing town. Its attempt at new industries, such as the erection of
glass-works, proved, as a venture, as brittle as the fabric sought to be made.”⁷ Between 1885 and 1895, one
state study reported, the number of manufacturing plants in Falmouth increased, from twenty-one to twenty-
five. However, due largely to the closure of the guano plant in Woods Hole in 1889, both the capital invested in
these factories and the value of goods they produced plummeted over those ten years. While $1.67 million of
capital had supported manufacturing in 1885, only $37,905 underlay it in 1895; the value of products fell from
$992,555 to $114,584 over that time. No Cape town suffered a more severe blow to its industrial strength.⁸ Still,
other Barnstable County towns generally shared Falmouth’s weakness. As the 1895 state study noted, “There is
hardly a factory in the whole county, certainly not one of importance.”⁹ By 1920 Falmouth was one of six Cape
towns with more than three factories, but its capital investment and product value stood fifth among those six.¹⁰

Falmouth’s agricultural economy, based for most of the 1800s on the production of corn and grains, also grew
less viable. Especially after the Old Colony Railroad connected Falmouth to the outside world beginning in
1872, Cape farms could not compete with western farms in the production of these basic foodstuffs. But the
railroad also had a positive effect on Cape agriculture. In Falmouth what the census often termed “general
farmers” turned to specialized agriculture focusing on single crops—cranberries, strawberries, oysters, turnips,
and potatoes—that could thrive in the peculiar Cape soils. Rail brought such products to more and wider
markets, thus making it possible to sustain their cultivation. And the presence of a notable and growing number
of tourists encouraged farmers to turn as well to market gardening, which served the needs of consumers close
by. “A number of persons are engaged in farming here,” the 1895 study noted of Falmouth, “there being a good
summer market.”¹¹

The railroad created this summer market; in fostering tourism on a meaningful scale it thereby created an
entirely new sector of the economy. Local historians noted the trend from the 1870s. One wrote in 1890,

That sensible practice, happily increasing among city people, of checking themselves each year
in the rush and hurry of business, to take a vacation at the seaside, has already modified, to a
great extent, the resources and prospects of Cape Cod. Available building sites for summer
cottages are rapidly being occupied by those who build more or less elaborately and spend the
larger portion of the year here. This is especially true in Falmouth, where several people of
large means claim their residence. More than one-half of all the taxes of this town are paid by
four such families.¹²

The pace of vacationing and tourist settlement was greatly quickened by the automobile. As production
increased and prices fell, owning one became widespread: where there was one car for every 9,499 persons in

⁷ The Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Falmouth, Massachusetts, June 15, 1886
(Falmouth: the town, 1887), 48.
Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor, Public Document No. 15. (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1897), 48,
50.
¹⁰ Department of Labor and Industries, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, “Population and Resources of Cape Cod,” Part 3, Annual
93.
¹² Deyo, History of Barnstable County, 153. It seems likely that three of the families Deyo referred to were those of Joseph Story Fay,
Edward Pierson Beebe, and Arthur Beebe.
In 1900, there was one for every thirteen persons in 1920. By 1894 the commonwealth had laid out Route 28 and had “improved” (paved) it by the early 1920s. In 1922 the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries reported that “it is only within a score of years that, as a result of the introduction of the automobile, the summer population has become so great as to render ‘the entertainment of summer visitors’ an important industry on the Cape.” The state estimated the number of summer visitors in Falmouth at ten thousand.

The summer resort at Belvidere Plain appears first to have been planned in the 1870s, the same decade during which the resort areas of Menauhant, Megansett, and Falmouth Heights arose. Falmouth Heights was “the Cape’s first planned resort,” according to Cape historian James O’Connell. Belvidere Plain, which early residents perceived to be bounded by Deacon’s Pond (earlier Bowman Pond and now Falmouth Inner Harbor) on the east and Shore Street on the west, was indeed a flat plain and home to five salt works in the early 1830s. By the time developers conceived the resort area of Belvidere Plain, all five had vanished from the landscape.

The first plan for Belvidere Plain, though undated, was devised by April 1873 (Fig. 2). Its apparent creator was Marcus Starbuck, born about 1840 on Nantucket to the merchant George Starbuck. In 1870 Starbuck is shown with “no occupation” in the federal census for Nantucket, but between early September and early December 1872 he had moved to Falmouth and become a real estate broker; he is so identified on the plan. The other principal appears to have been C. H. Robinson, a Nantucket contractor. However, no deeds to Starbuck describes the acreage embraced by the plan, and aside from several identified lots it is not clear that he owned the land; he may have been developing it for as yet unidentified landowners in that area. By 1880 Starbuck was working as a railroad office clerk in Boston, by which point his involvement in the town virtually ceased. He died in 1890, and his son and namesake, identified as a gold miner in the White Oak, California, census of 1910, sold the family’s final Falmouth parcel in 1934.

The Belvidere Plain plan contained 240 lots, 144 south of Clinton Avenue and 96 north of it. On the north side of Clinton and west of Swing Lane, sixteen lots ranged along a block of two proposed streets, never built; another eighty were shown on both sides of Scranton Avenue running some five blocks north of its intersection with Clinton. Fourteen buildings, all south of Clinton Avenue, appear on the plan, which also called for three parks—William’s Park on the southwest shore of Palmer’s Pond (called Park Lake on the plan), Linden Park between that pond and the south side of Clinton Avenue, and Observatory Park at the plan’s northeastern corner on Scranton Avenue. It also called for two scenic avenues—Vineyard Avenue on the ocean and Wilkes Barre Avenue along Deacon’s Pond. However, fifteen of the twenty-five streets and avenues the plan envisioned were never created. Aside from Clinton Avenue, in part predated the plan, only Waterside Avenue (on the plan called Garnet Avenue and Mansfield Avenue), Spinnaker Lane (then Hiawatha Avenue), Harrisburg, Wheeling, Sheridan, Girard, and Scranton Avenues were developed. Nearly every other aspect of the plan was never put in

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16 These five are shown on the 1831 John G. Hales map, “Plan of the Town of Falmouth in the County of Barnstable.”
17 The date of Starbuck’s move to Falmouth is determined by the place of residence indicated on deeds; see Llewellyn Hewins et al. to Marcus Starbuck, 9 September 1872, Barnstable County Registry of Deeds book 110 page 281 (hereafter cited as BCD book:page), and Francis Lawrence to Marcus Starbuck, 5 December 1872, BCD 113:326. From April 1873 deeds state that Starbuck’s “Plan of Belvidere Plain at Falmouth Mass” was registered at the time, but it cannot be located online; it was copied on 20 November 1931, however, and appears in Barnstable County Registry of Deeds plan book 23, page 19 (hereafter cited as BCP book:page).
place, and this study found almost no deeds that cited the Belvidere Plain plan. Instead, most of the earliest deeds to nonresidents for Belvidere Plain land cite as existing owners James Smalley, George H. and Emma S. Davis, the heirs of master mariner William Bourne, the brothers Timothy and Paul Nye, and the hotelier George W. Fish.

Belvidere Plains is not far removed from the town center, like other resort areas such as Menauhant and Megansett are, but at least through 1900 it remained sparsely occupied. So too did the area north of it, bordering Falmouth’s central business district, which Falmouth residents now consider part of Belvidere Plains neighborhood. The 1873 plan showed fourteen houses in the area, but probably only two of them—75 Waterside (then Garnet Avenue), c.1870, and 308 Shore Street, c.1822—have survived to the current day. Longtime summer resident Helen Lowry Wyman judged the houses surrounding the one her family first rented at 11 Wheeling Avenue (FAL.1562) in about 1895 as “primitive.”

“The only water was from a pump in the kitchen. Our only light was from oil lamps or candles. Our cottage had a succession of sheds for laundry, coal, wood and privy.”

Wyman’s comment at least suggests that these earlier cottages were not sufficiently large, comfortable, or equipped for later summer people. Most of the dwellings for which the Town Assessor lists early dates cannot be documented to have been built then. For example, 149 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1309), is said to have been built in 1870, but its lot was almost surely vacant until at least 1889. At least one early house, at 5 Harrisburg Avenue (FAL.1355 – Photo 23), has an 1820 construction date but it was moved to its current site between 1910 and 1930.

Clinton Avenue was probably built to or near its current length by 1873: deeds in this year allude to it as “the new road leading to Falmouth Heights,” and it was called Falmouth Heights Road for some years afterward. Falmouth maps show only Shore Street running south from Main Street to Vineyard Sound through 1858; King Street first appears on the 1880 Walker atlas map of the town with only one house having been built on it and no indication of land ownership along it. As late as 1910 only four houses stood on the west side of King Street between Queen Street and Clinton Avenue and only five on the east side.

Perhaps the earliest to build a summer home in the area were George and Abby A. Faulkner, who acquired more than two acres along Clinton Avenue in 1882 and 1883 from George W. Fish. Faulkner was a manufacturer of morocco leather in Malden and Boston; Fish was the son of shipbuilding agent Thomas Fish of Falmouth. Cape historian Simeon Deyo identified George W. Fish as “the popular hotel proprietor” who from 1886 had owned and managed the six-year-old Hotel Falmouth. Deyo stated in 1890 that the place was “the only hotel here now open all the year. . . a well managed house on the modern American plan—which is also fairly patronized by the summer visitors.” In 1884 Faulkner sold part of this Clinton Avenue tract to Samuel B. Capen, a Boston carpet manufacturer whose family summered in Belvidere Plain through at least the late 1920s. In the same year Connecticut insurance executive Christopher E. Roberts acquired property, and three years later Joseph W. Goodnow, a baker and confectioner with several stores in the Boston suburb of Jamaica Plain, bought a tract between Deacon’s Pond and the shore. Roberts and Goodnow’s nephew Albert were longtime Belvidere Plain summer people.

19 George W. Fish to Abby A. Faulkner, 23 September 1882, BCD 152:273; Fish to George Faulkner, 26 June 1883, BCD 153:573.
The resort, however, grew slowly. As late as 1895, according to Wyman, the area was thinly populated, “all open fields and fenced-in pastures and beach grass. There were a few houses on Clinton Avenue and a very few near the beach.”

In that year Wyman’s father, Maxwell John Lowry of Newton, purchased his first Belvidere Plain tract. By 1900 only thirteen people (one of them a coachman) were listed in the Falmouth directory as summer residents in this area. The 1908 South Shore Blue Book listed fourteen; at that time ninety-three were listed as Megansett summer people.

Wyman noted that her father and Albert W. Goodnow, who first acquired property in the area sometime before 1907, bought many Belvidere Plain lots in the area and sold them to individuals. Belvidere Plain summer resident Gus Widmayer has stated that Lowry “was not a developer per se but had an active interest in seeing the many parcels put to good use by respectable families.” However, the subdivision of most of the area into house lots was the work of four men—William Doogue of Boston (1913), Architect John E. Dwight of New York City (1924), Farnsworth K. Baker of Boston (1927), and Manuel M. Sylvia of Falmouth (1946).

The Falmouth Assessor has dated the house at 200 King Street (FAL.1404 – Photo 18) to 1820 though the 1910 map of the area does not depict a house there. The house stands on what, in 1910, was a large, vacant tract owned by Henry C. Lewis, a farmer and grocer who lived on Main Street in the house he converted to the Hotel Falmouth in 1880. Six years later his uncle George W. Fish took over the hotel’s management. In October and December 1920 Lewis sold three acres of this tract to Harry W. Crooker of Newton, a Boston shoe manufacturer, and the language of the deed suggests that no house had been erected on it still by that point. Crooker must either have had the house built or moved to the property, for three years later, when he sold the property to Katherine S. Conley of Boston, the deed transferred the buildings and their contents as well. Conley’s husband Frederick was a Boston attorney who remained owner of the house until 1951, by which time he had moved to Newton. In that year Conley deeded the property to the couple’s three daughters, Grace and Kathleen of Newton, and Claire DeMarco of Boston. In 1983 Grace, then Grace Nicholson, and Kathleen Conley sold the property to John N. and Marsha G. McKnight of Groton, Massachusetts. Marsha McKnight, remarried by 2006, transferred 200 King Street to herself and Bridget Townsend, probably her daughter, and placed it in trust.

The house at 118 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1304 - Photos 11 & 12) dates to c. 1880. The house was built on what had been pasture and agricultural land owned jointly by the brothers Timothy and Paul Nye. The brothers were among the twelve children of Samuel Nye, who had moved from the family’s longtime home of Sandwich to Falmouth sometime before 1788. Four of their brothers—Stephen (born 1777), Francis (born 1788), James (born 1793), and Samuel (born 1795)—lived in North Falmouth, and beginning in the early 1870s their descendents were among the first to sell land in Megansett to off-Cape men. Francis’s son Francis Augustus Nye (born 1823) was directly involved in the development of that North Falmouth resort. Timothy and Paul Nye were both farmers and appear to have lived on adjoining tracts in Belvidere Plain; Timothy was a Falmouth selectman for two decades and the man for whom Timothy Nye Cartway was named. In 1859, three years

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22 The South Shore Blue Book (Boston: Boston Suburban Book Co., 1908).
before he died, he conveyed his half-interest in the 17.5-acre tract to George W. Fish; in 1864 Fish deeded his interest in the eastern half to Paul Nye, and on the same day Paul Nye deeded his interest in the western half to Fish. This western half extended from Clinton Avenue on the south to what became Fairview Avenue on the north.

By March 1915 George W. Fish had died, and in May of that year his children George L. Fish and Carrie Fish Cameron sold their half of the tract to Manuel M. Sylvia of Falmouth, along with a small piece fronting on Clinton Avenue that their mother Malora Fish had acquired two months earlier. Between 1893 and 1900 Sylvia had emigrated from the Azores to the United States with his brother Joseph; Joseph, and probably Manuel, were in Falmouth by 1903. In 1910 Sylvia was working as a gardener on a private estate; by 1930 he and his family had moved to Somerset, Massachusetts, near Providence. The deed refers to the property as Fish’s “homestead lot,” so Fish clearly had had the house built sometime between his purchase of the tract in 1864 and the sale to Sylvia in 1915.

In 1920 Sylvia sold a house lot on Clinton Avenue from his 8.58-acre tract, but further subdivision did not take place until after his death. At the end of 1946, Sylvia’s son Joseph, who was also his executor, registered a plan for a small subdivision that created two additional Clinton Avenue house lots and two others on Allen Avenue but left the rest of the land undivided (Fig. 3). The plan also showed the extension of Allen Avenue, which divided the Sylvia property south of Fairview Avenue, laid out and created by 1930. In February 1947 Joseph M. Sylvia sold one of the new Clinton Avenue lots, about thirty thousand square feet of this larger parcel, to Norma G. Fohey of Falmouth. Nothing is yet known about her and her husband. In 1958 their son Aloysius Fohey sold 118 Clinton Avenue to Edgar W. and Vivian Center of Needham, and in 1985 they deeded it to the current owner, their son Clifford, then living in Anchorage, Alaska.

Another nineteenth-century house in Belvidere Plain is 1 Wheeling Avenue (FAL.1561 – Photo 8), built between August 1886 and August 1890; the town dates the house to 1887. The dwelling stands on a narrow lot at the southwest corner of Wheeling and Girard Avenues and was part of the property of Falmouth laborer James Smalley. In August 1886 Smalley sold the lot to Nathan S. Ellis, a Falmouth road building contractor who may have built the house; after the turn of the century Ellis worked as a highway surveyor and a landscaper. Deeds transferring the property back and forth between Falmouth’s George E. Clarke and Ellis’s wife Rubietta in 1890 indicate that a house had been built by that year. In 1900 the Ellises sold the property to the Boston attorney George W. Anderson, who turned it over the next day to Caroline L. Perry of Brunswick, Maine; Anderson lived at 20 Wheeling by that time in a house no longer standing.

Perry was the wife of the minister Charles A. Perry, and the couple owned the house until 1927, when they sold it to Peter J. and Hannah R. Donaghy of Boston. Born in England of Irish parents, Donaghy came to the United States in 1881, when he was fourteen years old. By 1910 he had become an attorney. In 1947 his son,

25 Timothy Nye to George W. Fish, 28 September 1859, BCD 76:432; Fish to Paul Nye, 14 March 1864, BCD 70:494; Paul Nye to Fish, 14 March 1864, BCD 177:33.
26 Emma S. Davis to Malora A. Fish et al., 24 March 1915, BCD 336:88; George L. Fish and Carrie Cameron to Manuel M. Sylvia, 25 May 1915, BCD 336:143; Silas Hatch, conservator of the property of Malora A. Fish, to Sylvia, 29 May 1915, BCD 339:462.
28 James Smalley to Nathan S. Ellis, 13 August 1886, BCD 185:563; Ellis to George E. Clarke, 8 August 1890, BCD 188:302; Clarke to Rubietta Ellis, 8 August 1890, BCD 188:303; Nathan S. Ellis to George W. Anderson, 18 October 1900, BCD 246:451; Anderson to Caroline L. Perry, 19 October 1900, BCD 245:285. On Anderson see Widmayer, Gentleman’s Guide, 77.
Harold Rhyner Donaghue, also a lawyer, sold the property to Emerson B. and Catherine M. Tifft of Hopedale, Massachusetts. Emerson Tifft, born in 1892 in Connecticut, was working as a mechanical engineer in a cotton mill in Cohoes, New York, in 1920; for most of his career he was an executive in the Draper Corporation in Hopedale, a large manufacturer of looms for cotton mills. The Tiffts owned the property until 1976, when they sold half-interests to Robert J. and Sylvia D. Drummond of Winchester, Massachusetts, and Stephen A. Cone of Boston; two years later the Drummonds acquired Cone’s share. In 1994 the Drummonds sold 1 Wheeling Avenue to James J. and Celia A. McBride of Wellesley. According to Widmayer, McBride was the retired managing director of the accounting firm Deloitte and Touche in Boston, and it was through Celia McBride that the couple came to Belvidere Plain: in Wellesley she belonged to a health club run by Betty Green, who owned a summer house on Spinnaker Lane. In 2003 the McBrides sold the property to Henry D. and Mary M. Jones of Surrey, England.29

A number of houses were built in Belvidere Plains around the turn of the twentieth century. The Falmouth farmer and carpenter Elijah H. Fish is believed to have built 75 Queen Street (FAL.1467 – Photo 5) in 1897 on land that had earlier belonged to the heirs of Paul Nye. Fish acquired the seven-acre tract, adjacent to Nye’s homestead lot, in 1867. The 1910 Walker atlas map shows his lot running along the south side of Queen Street to Taylor Court but shows no buildings on the parcel. In 1923 Fish’s widow Patience and daughter Etta Evans sold a portion of this tract with its buildings to Arthur H. Ingram of Falmouth. Ingram, a Newfoundland native who came to the United States just three years earlier, occupied the property with his family, and by 1930 he worked as a janitor at the Falmouth Town Hall. In 1932, after Ingram’s death, his children deeded the property to Charlotte Ingram, either his widow or his daughter, who owned and occupied the house until 1969. After that year the house changed hands seven times. Its current owners, Charles and Caroline Bacon, were living in the house when they acquired it in 2005.30

The two neighboring houses, one at 16 Timothy Nye Cartway (FAL.1559 – Photo 6) and the other at 20 Timothy Nye Cartway (FAL.1560 – Photo 7) were built c.1900. Gus Widmayer, whose family has owned number 16 since 1971 and number 20 since 1987, stated that three separate structures had been joined to create number 16 in about 1900, one a playhouse for the children of John Elihu Dwight, another for the Dwights’ domestic help, and the third a building whose use Widmayer did not identify but that had been moved from a site near Sheridan Avenue. The 1910 Walker Atlas map of the area does show two small buildings on the site of number 16 and a house on the site of 20, no doubt the house that stands there today.31 However, a deed of 1924, after Dwight’s death, suggests that the three buildings had not been joined by that date.

John Elihu Dwight was born in South Hadley, Massachusetts, in July 1846, the year that his father, the chemist John Dwight (1819-1903), and his uncle, Dr. Austin Church, founded the company whose most renowned product was Arm and Hammer Baking Soda. The firm Church and Dwight was created in 1896 by the merger of John E. Dwight and Company and Church and Company, formed by two sons of Austin Church to compete


with Dwight’s venture. John E. Dwight, who had begun his career as a miller and flour merchant in the
Midwest, became associated with his father’s company between 1880 and 1900 and was the second vice
president of Church and Dwight at the time of his father’s death.  

Dwight had begun buying Falmouth land in 1890 and bought the section on which these two houses stand from
James Smalley at the end of that year. In 1916 he acquired two lots from the 1913 subdivision of the estate of
William Doogue, the superintendent of the Boston Public Grounds Department and a summer resident of
Belvidere Plain since at least 1900. (See Fig. 4.) This subdivision covered the area between Spinnaker Lane
and the east side of the Timothy Nye Cartway and created seven lots, six of them between Clinton and Girard
Avenues and one long lot extending along both sides of Harrisburg Avenue from Girard to its termination at the
shore.  

Dwight’s own summer home was at the corner of Surf Drive and Mill Street, but he owned the entire tract
between Harrisburg Avenue on the west, Sheridan Avenue on the east, Clinton Avenue on the north, and Girard
Avenue on the south. Dwight appears to have been an architect by vocation who built several homes in the
area—two of them being 169 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1315) and 20 Timothy Nye Cartway (Photo 7)—all
marked by the use of columns. Dwight died by July 1924, at which time his children prepared a plan of the
Harrisburg-to-Sheridan tract showing nine lots—five fronting on Clinton, three fronting on Girard, and the site
of 16 Timothy Nye Cartway (Photo 6) fronting only on that road (Fig. 5).  

In that same month, Dwight’s children deeded four of the lots and their buildings to James A. Collins, who was
then manager of the New Bedford division of New England Telephone and Telegraph. This deed states that the
transferred property “is the larger tract owned by the late John E. Dwight at said Belvidere Plain, upon which is
situated a house formerly occupied by McVitty, a house known as the Cahoon House, a house known as the
Play House, and a house which was formerly occupied by John E. Dwight Jr. and lies easterly of a strip of
vacant land owned by the said John E. Dwight,” this strip lying between the cartway and Harrisburg Avenue; in
1916 Dwight had bought that lot, three years earlier as part of the estate of William Doogue. Judging by the
1910 Walker Atlas, the Cahoon house is now 149 Clinton Avenue, Dwight’s house appears to have been 20
Timothy Nye Cartway—though local histories do not indicate that he ever lived anywhere other than on Surf
Drive—and the McVitty House and Play House must have been the two small buildings shown on the 1910
map just north of number 20. Thus it seems that the properties making up 16 Timothy Nye Cartway were not
joined until after this 1924 transfer.  

On the day he received it Collins turned the tract over to Falmouth realtor Kathryn Green, who promptly sold
lot 8, on which 16 Timothy Nye Cartway stood, to Katherine S. Crooker of Falmouth, wife of the Boston shoe
manufacturer whose summer home had most recently been 200 King Street. Crooker sold the property two
years later to Helena W. Flanagan of Brookline. Flanagan owned the property for the next two decades, and
between 1947 and 1971, when the Widmayer family bought number 16, it had been transferred four times. 

32 Benjamin Woodbridge Dwight, The History of the Descendants of John Dwight of Dedham, Mass. (New York: John F. Trow and
33 James Smalley to John E. Dwight, 3 December 1890, BCD 190:522. 
34 “Plan of William Doogue Estate Belvidere Plain, Falmouth, August 1913,” BCP 2:3. 
37 John E. Dwight Jr. et al to James A. Collins, 11 July 1924, BCD 409:95; George W. Anderson to Dwight, 16 September 1916, BCD
346:139.
the latter year Gertrude M. Widmayer of Acton, Massachusetts, bought the property. Her husband Francis J. Widmayer II owned the specialty die-cut product company Orion Industries in that town. The Widmayers, who had earlier summered in the Catskills or on Long Island, named their compound (which included 20 Timothy Nye Cartway) Cartway-by-the-Sea and placed it in trust in 1987.38

Numerous houses in Belvidere Plain date to about 1920, when the resort seems truly to have begun to grow. One of these, the house at 79 Girard Avenue (FAL.1348), stands on fill created after 1907 when the state dredged Herring River to create Falmouth Inner Harbor from what had been Deacon’s Pond. The state acquired the land from Albert W. Goodnow, whose uncle Joseph—who by 1910 had become a real estate broker—appears to have owned all or most of the land south of Clinton Avenue between Sheridan Avenue and the pond. Originally part of the James Smalley tract, Joseph Goodnow acquired it from the heirs of master mariner William H. Bourne and sold the part on which 79 Girard was later sited to the realtor Erwin A. Bigelow of Norwood, Massachusetts. In July 1902 Bigelow sold the land in two deeds to Albert W. Goodnow’s wife Henrietta. By 1910 the Goodnows had built a house on the western part of this tract, now 63 Girard Avenue (FAL.1347), with a curved driveway leading to it from the south side of Girard Avenue. The next year Henrietta Goodnow sold a 1.5-acre piece of this tract to Marion C. Robinson of Houghton, Michigan, whose husband Deen was an attorney and New England native. Robinson sold the parcel on which 79 Girard stands to Maxwell J. Lowry in 1917 and, according to his daughter Helen, Lowry built the house in 1919.39

Born in 1862, Maxwell J. Lowry was the son of the Boston twine merchant Maxwell Lowry, who had been born in Ireland about 1820. Lowry Jr. was a wholesale patent leather merchant who also, Widmayer stated, owned a “Japannery” in Mansfield. In a Japannery, workers colored patent leather black by a process using naptha, lampblack, guncotton, and other products dangerous in combination. He first came to Belvidere Plain, according to Widmayer, because “he achieved a financial position to consider a summer home,” and George Faulkner, a family friend who summered on Shore Street, recommended the area.

Lowry modified the house in the 1930s so that the family of his daughter Helen and her husband William Charles Wyman, the son of an Iowa crockery merchant, might also live there in the summer. The families occupied 79 Girard Avenue until both Maxwell and his wife Abba Lowry died in 1947. Three years later their son Maxwell and daughters Elizabeth and Ruth, then married to druggist William B. Durkee, deeded the property to the Wymans. They owned and occupied 79 Girard until 1957, when they transferred it to the Helen L. Wyman Trust, and the co-trustees sold the property to current owner Brian J. McLaughlin of West Bridgewater in 1997.41

Also built about 1920 was the house at **40 Nye Road** (FAL.1432). Nye Road had initially been an L-shaped way called Fish Street; later the section running south from Main Street was renamed Nye Street, and the section running west to King Street was called Queen Street. Nye Street had not been laid out from Main Street by 1890 but does appear on the 1910 Walker atlas plate for this section. The Town Assessor lists the construction dates for **55 and 59 Nye Road** (FAL.1439 and FAL.1441) as 1850 and 1840, respectively, one of these properties having been owned by Elijah Fish in 1910, however neither appears on the 1880 map of the area. Three houses, **27, 28, and 90 Nye Road** (FAL.1428, FAL.1429, and FAL.1449), the last on the northeast corner of the road’s junction with Queen Street, are dated to about 1910, and all of the other houses between numbers 14 and 52 have been dated to about 1920.

The earliest deed for the 40 Nye property, from 1913, provides a history of the property’s ownership. The tract had initially been part of Paul Nye’s land, an undivided sixth of it was transferred to his son Sylvanus T. Nye, Sylvanus Nye deeded it to his son Fletcher Nye, and after Fletcher Nye’s death it passed to his widow Addie. She remarried and had died by 1913 and her second husband, Edwin W. Kallman, inherited the tract. Born in Sweden about 1877, Kallman came to the United States in 1895 and in 1913 was a grocer in Fresno, California.

In 1913 Kallman sold his sixth of the Nye tract, located along the east side of Nye Road, to three of Paul Nye’s grandchildren—Celia F. Donaldson, the daughter of Nye’s daughter Martha, and Mary Ida and Francis Shiverick, the children of his daughter Celia. About a month later these three, with Julia Shiverick, widow of Celia Nye Shiverick’s son John C. Shiverick, transferred the property to Edwin F. Lawrence Jr., a foreman at his father’s Falmouth coal yard. By July 1936 Lawrence had defaulted on his mortgage, and the property was sold at auction to mortgage holder Wareham Savings Bank. The bank promptly sold it to Ella R. Leonard, whose husband George was a clerk at a Falmouth gas station. In 1962 the Leonards deeded the property to their son Russell and his wife Verna, and three years later they sold it to Walter K. Buguey of Falmouth. In 2006 Buguey deeded 40 Nye Road to Mark Buguey as trustee of the Buguey Family Realty Trust.42

Built about 1924, **45 Swing Lane** (FAL.1548) was one of the first dwellings to be built in a large, irregularly shaped subdivision ranging from Clinton Avenue to Queen Street and from the lots on the west side of Scranton Avenue to a line extended south just west of Nye Road; a small lot in this subdivision ran from Clinton Avenue to the inner harbor. In February 1923, John Robinson, a Falmouth native who worked for a time in an eyelet factory in New Bedford, submitted a plan showing the small parcel on the south side of Clinton and a vast parcel on the north (Fig. 6). This tract had about 210 feet of frontage on Clinton and about 277 feet on Queen Street, but at its widest extent it measured 826 feet and at its longest 1314 feet. The 1913 plan clearly was made to demarcate the boundaries before Robinson sold the larger tract, in 1924, to Farnsworth Keith Baker of Boston, Albert Goodnow’s son-in-law.43 Born in 1894, Baker was the son of the Boston realtor Edward F. Baker, and by World War I he was a student at Harvard College. While at Harvard he married Albert Goodnow’s daughter Anna, and in 1920 he is shown as a college student in the Goodnows’ Boston household. What he did for work after his Harvard graduation is not clear, but by the time he registered for the draft during World War II he was working at Falmouth High School.

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43 “Plan of Land in Falmouth Feb. 1923,” Land Court plan 9480A; John Robinson to Farnsworth K. Baker, 19 March 1924, Land Court certificate 818.
In November 1926 Baker registered a subdivision plan for the large Robinson tract that created sixty-two lots divided by new roads—Harborway (now Swing Lane), Richards Road, Bourne (now Lowry) Road, Lewis (now Belvidere) Road, Hatch Road, and Robinson Road (Fig. 7). According to Wyman, Albert Goodnow built 45 Swing Lane, the first house on the road, which the town dates to 1924; the lane may simply have been a right-of-way to Clinton Avenue at that time. It and the house were certainly in place by 1930, as the Sanborn fire insurance map for that year indicates.

In September 1939 Farnsworth Baker sold lot 4—on which 45 Swing Lane then stood, though the deed does not mention the house—and lot 5 adjoining it to Charles Stuart Robertson, who owned the curtain manufacturing firm Robertson Factories in Taunton. Harborway was renamed Swing Lane for Robertson’s wife Elizabeth and her parents, Philip C. and Bessie C. Swing. They summered at 198 Clinton Avenue and 22 Swing Lane and lived the rest of the year in Cincinnati, Ohio; Philip Swing was an attorney. Robinson died in 1989 and his wife by 2002, and in that year the couple’s children sold it to the Harborway Corporation of Milton.

Like Swing Lane Taylor Court, extending south from Queen Street, was created about 1920 on the land of Henry H. Taylor, a Falmouth electrician. Both 16 Taylor Court (FAL.1556), on the east side, and 21 Taylor Court (FAL.1558), on the west, are listed by the Town Assessor as being built in 1920 and are the earliest of the four on that short lane. Taylor acquired some part of this land in 1910 from William H. Hewins, who in that year owned a house and lot on the southeast corner of King and Queen Streets, but recorded deeds do not establish when he bought the land on the east side of the court, the site of 16 Taylor Court. In 1922 Taylor sold the parcel to Otto Solberg, a Norwegian immigrant who worked in a machine shop in Brockton in 1920. No buildings are mentioned in this deed, but Solberg’s deed of 1930 to Mary Ellen and Francis Edward Cannon does allude to buildings. It seems likely, then, that 16 Taylor Court was built by Solberg c.1923.

In 1950 Mary Ellen Cannon subdivided the tract she purchased from Solberg into two lots, now the sites of 16 Taylor Court and 27 Queen Street (FAL.1460), the latter built about 1952. In 1964 Mary Cannon’s estate sold Lot B on the Cannon Plan, or 16 Taylor Court, to David F. and Marjorie L. Smith of Falmouth, whom the deed shows as living across the street at number 15 at the time. The Smiths sold it to another couple, Clifford J. and Gloria Ann Hamill, four years later, and another four years later, in 1972, the Hamills sold it to another Falmouth couple, James M. and Sondra J. Winter. They owned the property for twenty-six years. In 1998 the Winterses sold 16 Taylor Court to Peter L. and Kristen P. Kalajian of Camden, Maine; they sold it in 2002 to its current owners, Daniel M. and Melissa B. Alberts, who were living at 16 Taylor Court at the time of the sale.

The house at 15 Taylor Court (FAL.1555), across the street, was built about 1935 presumably by Annie M. Travis, who had acquired the lot from Henry H. Taylor in 1929. Nothing has so far been discovered about Travis and her husband, Edward St. Clair Travis, who owned the property until 1946. In that year they sold it to

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44 “Subdivision of Lot A shown on plan 9480A . . . Land in Falmouth,” November 1926, Land Court Plan 9480B.
45 Farnsworth K. Baker to C. Stuart and Elizabeth S. Robertson, 22 September 1939, Land Court certificates 5182 and 5183; Philip S. Robertson et al. to Harborway Corporation, 20 May 2002, Land Court certificate 166034.
Alfred L. and Esther L. Welch of Falmouth. Born about 1914, Alfred Welch was from Somerville and the son of a railroad “interlocker.” The Welches sold the house fifteen years later to David and Marjorie Smith, and in 1965, a year after they moved to 16 Taylor Court (FAL.1556), the Smiths sold the property to Frank T. and Ose Manheim of Falmouth. By 1980 Keith D. Besse of Mashpee owned the property. Besse sold it ten years later to Harry L. and Mary T. Bryden of Falmouth, who sold it two years later to current owners Ann P. McNichol and William R. Martin.48

As the population of Belvidere Plains grew denser, other streets were developed to provide access to small house lots on formerly large tracts. Fairview Avenue, for example, was extended by 1930 east from King Street to what had been the east line of the Manuel M. Silvia property. The house at 47 Fairview Avenue (FAL.1330 – Photo 22), at the southwest corner of that street’s intersection with Allen Avenue, is said to have been built in 1929 and, if so it was the house was built by Antone Jason DeMello, who bought the lot from Sylvia in August 1928. Born in 1891 on the Azorean island of St. Michael, DeMello emigrated as a small child and by the First World War worked as a farm laborer and a driver for Herbert H. Lawrence of Falmouth, who ran a teaming and milk operation and a general farm in Teaticket. By 1930 DeMello, his wife Rose, and his two daughters Sylvia and Claire all worked in a laundry, likely the nearby Robbins Hand Laundry once located at 100 King Street. In 1935 DeMello sold the property to Chauncey L. Crocker of Falmouth. Crocker owned 47 Fairview Avenue until he died, and in 1988 his sons John and George sold it to Robert H. and Kathleen M. Steinberg of the Hatchville section of Falmouth. In 1998, after the Steinbergs divorced, Robert H. Steinberg deeded 47 Fairview to his former wife, and she sold it in June 2008 to Michael Wallace and Patricia L. Hudson of Dorchester.49

A large portion of Belvidere Plains dates to the Second World War and the post-war housing boom as the Farnsworth Baker and Manuel Sylvia subdivisions gradually developed to accommodate steady and substantial increases in local population. Through 1880 the number of people living in Falmouth dropped consistently, if somewhat unsteadily. Between 1880 and 1900 Falmouth’s population increased by 44 percent, but between the turn of the century and 1920 growth was static. From 1920 through 1980 the town’s population rose more than 80 percent at each twenty-year interval. It nearly doubled between 1920 and 1940, a phenomenon that reflects at least in part the increasing desirability of the Cape for retirement homes.

Among these wartime and postwar houses is 41 Belvidere Road (FAL.1285)/lot 31, which the Assessor’s records list as built in 1940 but which was probably built c.1948. In August 1941 Farnsworth Baker sold twelve lots in the subdivision to John F. Ferreira, a second-generation Portuguese American who worked in 1920 in farming and domestic service. The lots covered the northern end of Lewis Road (now Belvidere Road) where it terminates at Hatch Road; more than half of the block that extends south to Lowry Road and east to Robinson Road. Seven years later Ferreira sold lot 31 to Yvonne B. Authier, whose husband Joseph was a house


carpenter; the couple had moved to Falmouth from Nantucket by 1930. When the Authiers sold the property a year later to Falmouth plumbing contract John J. Fay Jr., the deed mentioned buildings on it.\footnote{Farnsworth K. Baker to John F. Ferreira, 11 August 1941, Land Court certificate 5970; Ferreira to Yvonne B. Authier, 22 September 1948, Land Court certificate 10098; Authier to John J. Fay Jr., 17 November 1949, Land Court certificate 11123.}

Fay sold 41 Belvidere Road two years later to Frank V. Ross of Falmouth, who defaulted on his mortgage by June 1953, at which point mortgage holder Standard Homes, Inc., of Boston took possession of the property. Nine days later the company sold it at auction to Doris L. Guliamas, who had been born in New York State in 1913 but was living with her husband John in Cambridge by the early 1950s. John Guliamas died in 1984 and his wife three years later. By that time Thais A. Scardino was shown in land court documents as the “surviving registered owner,” and in 1995 he placed the property in trust. In 2005 Scardino as trustee deeded the property to himself individually.\footnote{John J. Fay Jr. to Frank V. Ross, 6 August 1951, Land Court certificate 13010; Richard N. Hatch, Standard Homes, Inc., foreclosure notice, 15 June 1953, Land Court certificate 15313; Standard Homes to Doris L. Guliamas, 26 June 1953, Land Court certificate 15347; petition, Thais A. Scardino, 20 June 1988, Land Court certificate 114614; Scardino to self, trustee, 41 Belvidere Road Falmouth Realty Trust; Scardino, trustee, to self, 8 January 2007, Land Court certificate 182098.}

The Handy Lane subdivision involved land once owned by Paul Nye and later by Elijah H. Fish. In 1921 Fish’s widow, Patience, and her daughter Etta Evans deeded the acre of land south of Queen Street on the east side of what became Handy Lane to Joseph MacKilligan of Falmouth. Then in 1916 and 1921 Patience and Etta sold land on the west side of the lane to George H. D. Handy of Falmouth.\footnote{Patience B. Fish and Etta Evans to George H. D. Handy, 22 September 1916, BCD 344:471; Fish and Evans to Handy, corrective deed, 2 January 1918, BCD 355:428; Fish and Evans to Handy, 26 October 1921, BCD 381:392; Fish and Evans to Joseph MacKilligan, 15 September 1921, BCD 379:493.} The 1921 deed was for land adjoining Handy’s “homestead lot” and \underline{87 Queen Street} (FAL.1473) was constructed shortly thereafter and the early 1950s before Handy Lane was fully developed.

George H. D. Handy was a painter whose father, Andrew, was the foreman on the Mill Street estate of Nathaniel H. Emmons, the son and namesake of a well-known Boston shipbuilder and commission merchant. Emmons was an early and longtime Falmouth summer resident. Joseph MacKilligan had emigrated from Scotland in 1890 and his wife, Margaret, joined him from Scotland five years later. The couple must have married soon afterward: their six children were all born in Massachusetts between 1896 and 1910. By 1910 he was working as a church gardener in Falmouth. Six years later MacKilligan became a naturalized citizen and was working as a church sexton.

The house at \underline{99 Queen Street} (FAL.1476), standing on the northwest corner of what is now Handy Lane, was probably built shortly after MacKilligan acquired the one-acre tract in 1921. In 1948 MacKilligan’s children—William G. of Cleveland, Evelyn M. Bassett of Norwood, and Donald B. MacKilligan of Falmouth—sold three lots on the east side of Handy Lane to their sisters Elspeth and Isabella, both of Falmouth. There is evidence that the three houses were built a couple of years before July 1954, when Handy and the MacKilligan sisters registered a plan for Handy Lane and the subdivision on both sides and at its southern end. (See Fig. 8.) In December 1954 the MacKilligan sisters sold their property to Alexander R. Green of Falmouth, and two years later he sold \underline{#6 Handy Lane} lot 6 (FAL.1352) to James Thomas and Angel G. Kalperis of Falmouth.\footnote{“Plan of Land of George H. D. Handy, Elspeth and Isabella D. MacKilligan, Falmouth, Mass.,” 8 July 1954, BCP 117:73; William G. MacKilligan et al. to Elspeth and Isabella D. MacKilligan, 16 September 1948, BCD 703:101; MacKilligans to Alexander R. Green, 29 December 1954, BCD 895:512; Green to James Thomas and Angel G. Kalperis, 6 March 1956, BCD 936:16.} It
appears that the Kalperises may have emigrated from Greece earlier in 1956, as a TWA passenger manifest shows them as passengers on a flight from Greece to Boston in January of that year.

In 1962 the Kalperises sold 6 Handy Lane to Bertha Rose of Waquoit, who owned the house for fifteen years. She sold it in 1977 to Roger A. and Jane E. Lewis, who moved from New York City to Falmouth by 1983, when they sold the property to Douglas E. and Maria T. Moore of Woods Hole. Six Handy Lane is currently owned by Maria G. Moore, perhaps their daughter.54

Because it lies next to the harbor, land north of the Baker subdivision on Scranton Avenue became for the most part industrial space. In 1918 a tract ranging from East Main Street to the land of Frances S. Sisson on the south—the Baker subdivision lay directly south of the Sisson tract—was called the “Syndicate Land.” The parcel was owned by eleven Falmouth residents, including Henry H. Taylor; either they or their heirs had acquired it in 1883 from the guardian of Meltiah Lawrence, who had been judged insane. Beginning in 1918 the eleven owners sold their interests to Franklin L. Homan of New Haven, Connecticut, president of the American Oyster Company. Falmouth had begun to cultivate oysters by the late 1870s, and by 1922, according to a state report, “Falmouth oysters have become famous throughout the country.”55 Founded in 1891, the American Oyster Company both grew and traded in oysters. In 1930 Homan sold the property to the company.56

In 1952 American Oyster sold its large lot to Saltesea Packing Company of Providence, Rhode Island, which in 1960 sold a portion of it to the Falmouth Housing Authority.57 The seven buildings of public housing on the west side of Scranton Avenue between Queen Street on the north and Salt Sea Lane on the south, at 211 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1511 – 1517 - Photo 33), must have been constructed soon afterward.

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55 Deyo, *History of Barnstable County*, 140; “Population and Resources of Cape Cod,” 70.

56 Joshua L. Robinson, guardian to Meltiah Lawrence, to Robinson G. Bodfish et al., 11 December 1883, BCD 164:577; Eugene Carpenter to Franklin L. Homan, 26 September 1918, BCD 358:103, and subsequent deeds to Homan; Homan to American Oyster Company, 24 July 1930, Land Court certificate 2540. Homan’s tract is shown in “Plan of Land in Falmouth, July 1919,” Land Court plan 7639A; “Subdivision of Land shown on Plan 7639A,” 17 January 1930, Land Court plan 7639B; “Subdivision of Land Shown on Plan 2639A,” 25 February 1931, Land Court plan 7639C.

57 American Oyster Company to Saltesea Packing Company, 30 September 1952, Land Court certificate 14814; Saltesea to Falmouth Housing Authority, 12 February 1960, Land Court certificate 24736; see “Subdivision Plan of Land in Falmouth,” 18 September 1959, Land Court plan 7639Y, which shows the housing authority lot as lot 21.


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Maps
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1871 Atlas of Massachusetts, published by Stedman, Brown & Lyon, Boston MA
1892 Cape Cod and Vicinity, published by Geo. H. Walker & Co., Boston, MA
1910 A Plan of Belvidere Plain for Marcus Starbuck and C. H. Robinson by J. Davis Robinson
1934 Selectmen's Map of Falmouth
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1936-1949 Falmouth Selectmen's Map

Online Resources
Barnstable County Registry of Deeds
Federal Census and genealogical information primarily accessed through Ancestry.com
Fig. 1. Road development in Falmouth pre-WWII.
Fig. 2. Early plan of Belvidere Plain.

Fig. 3. Plan of Land of Manuel M. Silvia Estate, December 31, 1946.
Fig. 4. “Plan of William Doogue Estate – Belvidere Plain - Falmouth” dated August 1913.

Fig. 5. “Plan of Land in Falmouth – Belvidere Plains formerly owned by John E. Dwight” dated July 1924.
Fig. 6. “Plan of Land in Falmouth, 9480A” dated February, 1923.
Fig. 7. Subdivision of Lot A, shown on Plan 9480A, Jan. 26, 1927.
Fig. 8. “Plan of Land of George H. D. Handy, Elspeth and Isabella D. MacKilliagan,” dated July 8, 1954.
Photo 1. Federal-period house at 49 King Street (FAL.1372), built c.1800 (altered).

Photo 2. Second Empire style house 14 King Street (FAL.1363) built c.1840.
Photo 3. Gothic Revival-style houses at 71 & 75 King Street (FAL.1377 & FAL.1378), right to left.

Photo 4. Gothic Revival-style house at 56 King Street (FAL.1375), built c. 1889.
Photo 5. A simple Gothic Revival-style house at 75 Queen Street (FAL.1467), built c.1897.

Photo 6. Shingle-style house at 16 Timothy Nye Cartway (FAL.1559), built c.1900.
Photo 7. Shingle-style house at 20 Timothy Nye Cartway (FAL.1560), built c.1900.

Photo 8. Shingle-style house at 1 Wheeling Avenue (FAL.1561), built c.1887.
Photo 9. Shingle-style house at 66 Spinnaker Lane (FAL.1544), built c. 1923.

Photo 10. Shingle-style house at 15 Frances Avenue (FAL.1337), built c. 1921.
Photo 11. Colonial Revival-style house at 118 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1304), built c. 1880.

Photo 12. Small barn at 118 Clinton Avenue.
Photo 13. Colonial Revival-style house at 30 Queen Street (FAL.1461), built c. 1885.

Photo 15. Colonial Revival-style house at 186 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1317), built c. 1928.

Photo 16. Colonial Revival-style house at 20 Taylor Court (FAL.1557), built c. 1924.
Photo 17. Queen Anne-style House at 21 Pleasant View Avenue (FAL.1452), c. 1900.

Photo 18. Classical Revival–style house at 200 King Street (FAL.1404), built c. 1921.
Photo 19. House with the American Four Square form at 21 Queen Street (FAL.1458), c. 1920.

Photo 20. Bungalow at 134 King Street (FAL.1395), built c.1920.
Photo 21. Bungalow at 17 Nye Road (FAL.1425) with Colonial Revival details, built 1920.

Photo 22. Craftsman-style Bungalow at 47 Fairview Avenue (FAL.1330), built 1929.
Photo 23. An early Cape Cod house at 5 Harrisburg Avenue (FAL.1355), built c.1800.

Photo 24. The house at 305 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1528), built c. 1900, displays a transition between the Gothic Revival and Cape Cod/Colonial Revival styles.
Photo 25. Cape Cod-style houses along Allen Avenue: #169 (FAL.1277), built 1963 and #159 (FAL.1276), built 1971, left to right.

Photo 26. Cape Cod-style house at 65 Belvidere Road (FAL.1288), built 1950.
Photo 27. Cape Cod-style house at 22 Brown Court (FAL.1296), built 1966.

Photo 29. Dutch Colonial Revival-style house at 24 Allen Avenue (FAL.1255), built 1925.

Photo 30. Ranch-style house at 3 Handy Lane (FAL.1349), built 1950.
Photo 31. Modern-style Ranch house at 93 Allen Avenue (FAL.1263), built 1950.

Photo 32. Rotated Ranch-style house at 27 Hatch Road (FAL.1362), built 1955.
Photo 33. Ranch-style public housing at 211 Scranton Avenue (fronting Salt Sea Lane), Building #s 2 and 1, left to right, (FAL.1512 & FAL.1511), built 1960.

Photo 34. The Falmouth Marine waterfront warehouses at 278 Scranton Avenue (FAL.1523), c. 1940.
Photo 35. The Clam Shack, a rustic restaurant building on the waterfront, at 227 Clinton Avenue (FAL.1322), built 1962.

Photo 36. A Craftsman cottage at 14 Nye Road (FAL.1424), 1920, converted to commercial use.
National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

☐ Individually eligible  ☐ Eligible only in a historic district
☐ Contributing to a potential historic district  ☒ Potential historic district

Criteria:  ☐ A  ☐ B  ☒ C  ☐ D

Criteria Considerations:  ☐ A  ☐ B  ☐ C  ☐ D  ☐ E  ☐ F  ☐ G

The Belvidere Plains neighborhood contains many distinctive examples of late 19th - to mid-20th century buildings and represents the evolution of residential development in the town over this time period. Beginning as two distinct areas—early year-round dwellings at the north end and high-style summer cottages on the southern waters edge—it has melded together through continual development in the first half of the 20th century. Despite its architectural diversity, the area comprises a harmonious whole due to the high level of retention of original forms and massing and shared exterior cladding materials (mostly wood shingle). In addition, more recent subdivisions and developments blend seamlessly into the overall character of the area as a result of their complementary scale and function. As a whole, as well as in its older sections, the neighborhood contributes to the historic character of the town.

Statement of Significance by Jill Fisher, Larson Fisher Associates

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*