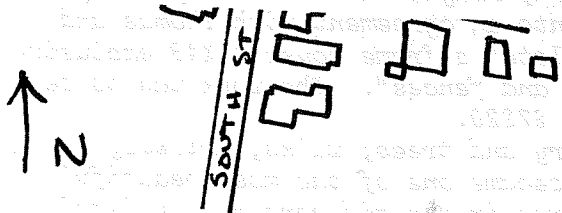


Area	Form no. 38B-35
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988



Northampton

off Lyman Rd.

Local Name Fort Hill Estate

Original residence

Present nursery school

Ownership: Private individual
 Private organization Smith College

Public _____

Original owner Samuel Whitmarsh

Construction:

1838; c. 1870; c. 1905

Source Reg. of Deeds and S D R

Architect T. and W.F. Pratt- original

Exterior wall fabric clapboard

Buildings _____

Alterations (with dates) _____

remodeled- c. 1870 and c. 1905

Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage over one acre

Setting _____

Recorded by E. Lonergan

Organization NHC

Date June 1980

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

See Below

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

South St. was laid out well back from the brow of the Mill River terrace . The Mill River flowed through the center of town, curving around Fort Hill, and then flowing southwesterly into the old Ox Bow (known as Dank's Pond, Hulbert's Pond or Ned's Ditch).

In 1664 the local tribe of Indians applied to the townsman for a gift of land to build a fort on. The land was granted but with several restrictions including: no "pawway", no liquor, no other tribes of Indians, keeping the Sabbath, and responsibility for keeping the fences intact at the meadow aine and restraining their dogs from killing th settlers' cattle, sheep or swine. James R. Trumbull, Northampton's historian who liv during the 19th century, offers evidence to support the local tale that this fort was located at the jutting brow of the river terrace.

By 1670 the selectmen had had enough, "considering the greate abuse by the Indians in horrible drunkennes profaning the Sabbathbkreakinge downe our fences and in steellinge our Corne and in keeping Swine about the fort that destroy our Corne". They were ordered to vacate their fort within six months. The Indians probably retreated to top of the high bank of the Connecticut River on the western side, between Hatfield and Northampton (also known as Elizabeth's Rock). They were driven from here during the first year of King Phillip's War. This was the last point of land ever held by Indians in Northampton.

Samuel Whitmarsh, a merchant tailor from New York, bought the lands comprising most of Fort Hill in 1829 and 1830. In 1838 he entered into an agreement with Thomas and William F. Pratt, "housewrights" to "finish and complete" a frame house 44X48 exclusive of verandah, a barn 30x40 with 25x30 wings, "outhouses, and fences". The work was to be done by Sept. 1, 1839 and the Pratts were to be paid \$7220.

The grounds were laid out with a garden, shubbery and trees; walks, driveways, and terrace were built; and a greenhouse was built. It became one of the most beautiful places in the COnnecticut River Valley and was featured in the mid-century tourists' guides as the perfect place for a carriage ride, the grounds being kept for just such excursions. Continued

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INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Northampton	Form No: 38B-35
Property Name: Fort Hill Estate	

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

Samuel Whitmarsh introduced silk raising and manufacturing to Northampton. During the early 1830's he began stocking 100 acres with engrafted trees in Florence, on the slopes of the Mill River terrace. The Northampton Silk Co. was founded and set up shop in Florence. A large cocoonery, 200' long, 26' wide and two stories high was built on the Fort Hill Estate. However, by 1840 the mill property was for sale, a victim of the crash of silk culture.

Whitmarsh's problems carried over to his personal estate, and his property was foreclosed on by the Northampton Bank, the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Co., and several other creditors. In 1843 the property was sold to George Browns, identified only as being from Boston. Mr. Browne also went into debt and sold the property, consisting of the house and 20 acres, to Joanna C. Nichols in 1846 for \$7500. Mrs. Nichols is identified as being from Northampton and, when she sold the property two years later, is described as a widow.

The next owners were Joseph and Emily West, of New York City, who purchased the approximately 25 acres for \$15,000 and a \$6000 mortgage in 1848. The Wests appear to have used this as their main residence, but didn't maintain ownership very long, selling the property to Jacob Singmaster of New York City for \$32,500. in 1857. Mr. Singmaster also maintained the property for 9 years, but seems to have used it as a summer residence, as he is listed from Stroudsbury, Pennsylvania when he sells the property in 1866.

The new owners of the 27 acre estate were Catherine and Edward H.R. Lyman from Brooklyn. The Lyman's paid \$20,000 for the property and kept it in their family until 1946, when the property was conveyed to Smith College. Soon after the Lyman's purchased the property they remodeled the house extensively inside and out. A Mansard roof was added as well as a three-story tower.

Mr. Lyman was a native of Northampton, but had gone off to make his fortune. He settled in Brooklyn and became a partner in A.A. Low and Co., tea and silk importers. This estate was purchased as his summer home, and remained such until his death in 1899. Mr. Lyman is best known in the city as the benefactor of the Academy of Music, for which he bought the land and had the structure erected at a cost in excess of \$100,000.

Mr. Lyman's son, Frank Lyman also maintained the estate as his summer residence. In the early 20th century he again had the home extensively remodeled and modernized. The home now took on a "Colonial Revival" look, but certain details, such as the heavy cornices of the windows, evoked the earlier Victorian mansion. In 1931 Frank Lyman retired from his Brooklyn business and made this his permanent home, living here until his death in 1938.

His widow maintained the property until 1946 when she sold it to Smith College. At that time the main house was turned into a dormitory. More recently it has served as the ElizabethMorrow Morgan Nursery School.

During the 1960's low rise faculty apartments were constructed on the estate near South St., and the rear portion of the estate has served as a nursery for Smith College.

Besides the main house there are several other structures still standing from the "Fort Hill Estate" days. These include a large Victorian brick carriage house (already inventoried), a mid 19th century board and batten cottage, which recently served as the residence of noted artist Leonard Baskin and was enlarged by Northampton architect Karl Scott Putnam, and two small late 19th century frame buildings, one of which is covered with board and batten and served as a laundry.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

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