

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

21-85

Marble-head N

BEV.
AS

see data
sheet

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

Photograph



Photo 1. Entrance to Hurd Stadium, looking east from Essex Street

Town/City: Beverly

Place (neighborhood or village):
Montserrat

Name of Area: Hurd Stadium and Cooney Field
Athletic Complex

Present Use: athletic field/sports facility

Construction Dates or Period: 1912-2016

Overall Condition: excellent to poor

Major Intrusions and Alterations:

Modern metal grandstand and concession stand at Hurd Stadium; modern concrete dugouts at Cooney Field; replacement window sash on 1936 Field House

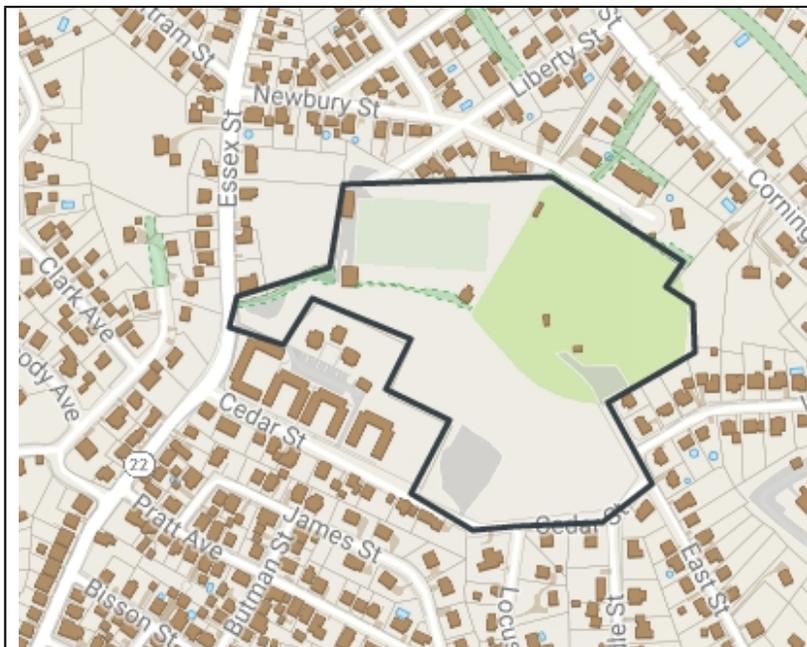
Acreage: 9.77

Recorded by: Wendy Frontiero and Pamela Hartford

Organization: Beverly Historic District Commission

Date (month/year): September 2016

Locus Map (north at top)



 see continuation sheet

4/11

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

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

BEVERLY HURD STADIUM & COONEY FIELD

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area Letter Form Nos.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Hurd Stadium and Cooney Field Athletic Complex, 105R Essex Street (1912-2016) occupies an irregular, nearly 10-acre site in the Montserrat neighborhood, a primarily residential area that was densely developed with single-family houses in the early to mid 20th century. The athletic complex abuts a major local thoroughfare, Essex Street (also known as Route 22), on the west and a mid 20th century public housing complex on the south. Hurd Stadium (football) occupies the western portion of the property, and Cooney Field (baseball) occupies the eastern part.

The site is largely flat, with a high section of land along the south edge (providing pedestrian access) and a short, steep slope down to the playing fields on the north. The perimeter of the site is wooded; most of the interior of the parcel is covered with turf. Asphalt and stone dust walkways provide the major circulation paths. There are three access points into the property. On the west, a curvilinear, asphalt-paved driveway off Essex Street leads to a large Field House (1936) and is abutted by a small gravel parking area near the street (Photo 1). On the north, an asphalt-paved drive extends from Liberty Street to a small parking area between the modern Hurd Stadium Grandstand (2015) and Hurd Stadium Concession Stand (1998) at the northwest corner of the property. Near the southeastern portion of the site, a gravel drive extends from East Street and terminates in a small gravel parking area immediately to the east of Cooney Field. A wide, grass-covered path allows pedestrian passage from Essex Street along the southern border of Hurd Stadium to Cooney Field.

Cooney Field (1912 - late 20th c), in the southeast portion of the property, comprises a baseball field surrounded by low chain link fencing, modern concrete block dugouts on the sidelines, and the original, concrete Cooney Field Grandstand (1914) to the south. To the west, the football field at Hurd Stadium is surrounded by low chain link fencing, asphalt-paved walkways on the north and south and a paved vehicular drive on the west. Its modern metal grandstand lines the northern edge of the playing field, accompanied by a small concrete-block Ticket Booth (ca. 1936) immediately to its west, a modern concrete block concession stand and bathroom building along the west side of the field, and the 1936 Field House (1936) to its southwest. Another, combination Field House and Comfort Station (1928) is located near the center of the south edge of the property, between Hurd Stadium and Cooney Field. Historic structures in this complex are described below in order of construction date. (Photos 2, 5, 8, 9)

The Cooney Field Grandstand (1914) (Photos 2, 3, 4) is located at the south edge of the baseball field, lining the natural slope of the land in this area. Poured concrete forms the structural posts, a series of entrance platforms and stairs at the base of the grandstand on the north, and the monolithic bench seats. A broad elevated platform lines the base of the grandstand, entered by a staircase on its east and west ends. An angled projection in the center of this platform swells out around a pair of small stairs that converge on a small landing that accesses the bench seating above. The angled projection, end and center stairways, and the base of the bleacher seats are framed by low, paneled concrete walls. The monolithic bleacher seats also serve as the only steps for the grandstand seating. The walls around the sides and top of the grandstand are surmounted by a heavy, plain metal pipe railing.

The Field House and Comfort Station (1928) (Photos 6, 7) located to the west of Cooney Field, near the southeast corner of Hurd Stadium, is a T-shaped structure consisting of a nearly square main block and a narrow ell to the north. The building is constructed of concrete bricks and rises one story to a hip roof with exposed rafter ends and standing seam metal cladding. Fenestration is generally asymmetrical, with flat concrete sills and lintels at the windows and doorways. All windows are blocked in, with no sash visible. Most openings are for large, individual vertical sash; the north elevation

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of the main block contains a double-wide opening. The east (façade) elevation contains a center projection with a shed roof extending from the east slope of the main roof; it features a small ticket window on the south and east sides with a vertical metal grille in each opening. A single-leaf door is set in the facade just to the north of this projection. The south and west elevation of the main block each contain two windows; the south elevation also has a blocked-in offset doorway. The ell contains two single-leaf doorways on its east elevation. An L-shaped, monolithic concrete water fountain is set in front of the 1928 Field House and Comfort Station and may be early or original to it. The building is presently used as a locker room for visiting football teams.

The Field House (1936) (Photos 11, 12) at the southwestern corner of Hurd Stadium is similar to the 1928 building, constructed of concrete block and rising one story to a hip roof with exposed rafter ends and standing seam metal cladding. The 1936 building, however, uses textured concrete blocks and has a fully exposed basement on the north side, reflecting the grade change at this location. Windows consist of a variety of horizontal, square, and large vertical openings, many of which have been filled in with wood panels and metal mesh coverings; their only trim is flat concrete sills. Entrances typically contain single-leaf doors and flat concrete lintels. All but the south elevation are asymmetrically composed.

The west façade of the 1936 Field House has irregular fenestration, with two large square openings (one with 3/3 sash) at its northern end and, at the southern end, four horizontal openings high on the wall and three small ticket windows with vertical metal grilles; a single-leaf doorway is set slightly off-center. The south elevation of the 1936 Field House is symmetrical, with an infilled center doorway and four horizontal window openings at the top of the wall. The asymmetrical north elevation contains one square window opening with modern vinyl sash at its northern end and an off-center, single-leaf door that is surmounted by a small brass plaque proclaiming its construction as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1935-36. The two-story high north elevation features three single-leaf doorways interspersed with three large vertical openings on the lower level and five square window openings with modern vinyl sash at the top of the wall on its east end. This building presently houses storage downstairs and locker rooms upstairs; the interior was renovated and the vinyl window sash installed in 2016.

A broad set of concrete steps with wood treads traverses the grassy slope to the east of the 1936 Field House, immediately adjacent to the building (Photo 12). The paved driveway from Essex Street terminates at the west façade of this building. A broad, modern ramp carries the paved driveway down to the north of the Field House and connects to the modern concession stand on the west side of the football field and to the north entrance to the property.

A small Ticket Booth (ca. 1936) (Photo 10) structure near the northwest corner of the football field, serving the north entrance to the Stadium, is presumed to have been built by the WPA. Measuring only about 6 feet by 8 feet, the rectangular structure is constructed of plain concrete block rising to a simple wood fascia and very low pitched shed roof with minimal overhangs. Its north (façade) elevation contains a symmetrical pair of square ticket windows with vertical metal grilles. The west elevation has a slightly off-center entrance with no door; the south and east elevations are blank.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

Hurd Stadium and Cooney Field have been the premier athletic facility for the city of Beverly for more than a century. Prior to the construction of this complex, the city's major public athletic venue was Peabody's Field, located near Hurd Stadium on the opposite side of Essex Street, west of the Montserrat train depot. That property was owned by wealthy real estate developer Henry W. Peabody, whose summer estate, Parramatta, was also located in the neighborhood. Peabody offered to sell the property to the city for a permanent ball park, which was envisioned to include baseball fields, tennis courts, a running track, and croquet lawn. Peabody died before the city made a decision, however, and the land was sold in 1909 for residential development.

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As part of the progressive movement of social reform, Beverly adopted the Massachusetts Playground Act of 1909, requiring the establishment of public playgrounds in municipalities of more than 10,000 people. The city's park commissioners noted that

"Playgrounds are now universally regarded as essential to the physical and moral health of every growing community, and are considered a necessary part of the equipment of a modern city, the park system and playgrounds being the poor people's summer resort, and money expended here brings its return in health and happiness" (*Municipal Documents for 1910*: 509)

In 1909 the mayor identified land already owned by the City adjacent to the Poor Farm (established in 1872) as "a good site" for complying with the provisions of the Playground Act (*Municipal Documents for 1909*: 18). In 1910, the City Council took the land on the north side of the Poor Farm expressly to create an athletic field for high school baseball and football; plans were developed in 1911 by the Mayor, Overseers of the Poor, Parks Department, high school faculty, superintendent of schools, and chairman of the school board. In 1912, the School committee reported that

"The new municipal athletic field... will furnish a broad foundation upon which to build an ideal course in physical education... We take space to thank all who assisted in securing for our use and the city's improvement the site for one of the best athletic fields in New England" (*Municipal Documents for 1912*: 50).

Approximately \$2,500 was spent in that year to develop the field; nearly all of it was paid to contractor Samuel Dexter. Building permits show that a masonry grandstand was built at the athletic field in the fall of 1914; William M. Bailey, contractor. William M. Bailey (ca. 1869 – 1945) was president of the William Bailey Civil Engineering and Construction Co. of Boston. As noted in his obituary, he was "A graduate of the University of Maine... [and] active in engineering for 56 years. He was a life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and vice-president of the Massachusetts Housing Association" (*Boston Herald*, 3 Dec 1945). Bailey was also active in a number of fraternal and philanthropic organizations. Bailey's only other known project in the state is the Wiley & Russell Bridge on Meridien Street in Greenfield (1917, GRE.921), a concrete arch bridge with Neo-Classical details, now demolished. The Cooney Field Grandstand is an early example of concrete construction in Massachusetts.

Originally called the High School Athletic Field, the facility included a baseball field, football field, and quarter-mile running track. High school, recreational, and semi-pro leagues shared the site, whose early highlight was a game between Babe Ruth and his Red Sox Independents (a "barnstorming" exhibition team) and an amateur Marblehead team on October 10, 1919. With more than 1500 fans watching, Ruth hit a home run and the Independents won 2 to 0, but not before a Marblehead pitcher had the honor of striking out Ruth one time. Ruth was traded from the Boston Red Sox to the Yankees two months later.

The Athletic Field was renamed Cooney Field in 1921 at the request of the Earle T. Wardell Post of the American Legion, in honor of Robert James Cooney (1891 – 1916). A member of Beverly High School's Class of 1910, where he was a popular athlete, Cooney was one of the first Beverly natives to die in World War I. Cooney had emigrated to Canada at the age of 20 and enlisted in the Canadian military. He is buried in a military cemetery in Pas de Calais, France.

Football was played at Cooney Field until 1937, when the sport was moved into the new Hurd Stadium immediately to the west of Cooney Field. Planning for a new, dedicated football field had begun as early as 1931, and additional land was transferred from the Department of Public Welfare to the Public Works Department in 1932. Building permits for 1936 show the completion in December of that year of a grandstand, field house, ticket office, and locker rooms for a total cost of \$25,000. The owner was the City of Beverly's Public Works Department and the contractor was the Works Progress Administration Project. The stadium was named for B. Sumner Hurd, a long-time principal at Beverly High School in the early 20th century and a strong supporter of high school athletics. Hurd Stadium originally had wood grandstands on both sides of the field, but there is also reference to masonry stands—the design/configuration is presently unclear.

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The Public Works Department reported in 1936 that “An entirely new football stadium has been constructed on the so called new Athletic Field just west of Cooney Athletic Field. This new field has been officially named the B. Sumner Hurd Athletic Field. A new field house of concrete blocks has been built here”, containing an office room, assembly room, showers, men’s and women’s toilets, and heating equipment (*Municipal Documents for 1936*: 171). A new set of wood bleachers with a seating capacity of about 3,500 was installed on the south side of the new football field, and an old set of bleachers was moved from Cooney Field to the north side of the field. Public Works reported that “This new layout is a decided improvement over the old arrangement and restores the grounds on the Cooney Field to their original condition and makes it one of the best playing fields for baseball in this vicinity” (*Municipal Documents for 1936*: 172). Approximately \$800 of city money was spent on the new facility, while the WPA contributed close to \$15,000.

The original grandstand seating was replaced in 1953 by metal bleacher stands; the present seating on the north side of the football field was constructed in 2015. The 1936 Field House has been re-dedicated to Clarence “Clammy” Foster, a trainer for Beverly teams from 1944 to 1984.

Hurd Stadium is used today mainly for high school football games, along with many youth programs. Cooney Field continues to host a variety of recreational softball and baseball leagues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Municipal Records and Reports

City of Beverly, Building Department. Building Permits, 105r Essex Street.
-----, *Municipal Documents*, 1909 – 1936.

Maps and Atlases

George H. Walker & Co. Atlas of City of Beverly. Boston: 1897.
George H. Walker & Co. Atlas of City of Beverly. Boston: 1907
Yaeger-Klinge, Atlas of the North Shore, Massachusetts. Boston: 1919.

Archives and Repositories

Essex County Registry of Deeds <http://salemdeeds.com/salemdeeds:Default2.aspx>

Secondary Sources

Boston Herald, 3 December 1945.
Brown, Edward Brown. *That's the Stuff, Kid*. Beverly, MA: Beverly Historical Society, 2010.
Personal conversation with Edward Brown, 30 August 2016.
Symmes, Richard W. *North Beverly Remembered*. Concord, NH: Village Press, 1982.
Greenlawn Cemetery, Salem, Mass. Plaque on monument to Pvt. Robert James Cooney.

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AREA DATA SHEET

MHC #	Parcel ID	Street	Historic Name	Date	Style
BEV.998	21-85	105R Essex St	Cooney Field and dugouts	1912 - L 20 th	No style
BEV.999	21-85	105R Essex St	Cooney Field Grandstand	1914	No style
BEV.1203	21-85	105R Essex St	Field House and Comfort Station	1928	No style
BEV.1204	21-85	105R Essex St	Field House	1936	No style
BEV.1205	21-85	105R Essex St	Ticket Booth	Ca. 1936	No style
BEV.9000	21-85	105R Essex St	Hurd Stadium Football Field	Late 20 th c	No style
BEV.1206	21-85	105R Essex St	Hurd Stadium Concession Stand	1998	No style
BEV.9001	21-85	105R Essex St	Hurd Stadium Grandstand	2015	No style

SKETCH MAP (north at top)



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Figure 1 (north at top)



Yaeger-Klinge atlas, 1919.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 2. Cooney Field, looking northeast from grandstand. (PH)



Photo 3. Cooney Field Grandstand, looking southwest. (PH)



Photo 4. Cooney Field Grandstand, looking east.



Photo 5. Cooney Field, looking west towards 1928 Field House and Hurd Stadium.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 6. 1928 Field House and Comfort Station, east elevation.



Photo 7. 1928 Field House and Comfort Station, north and west elevations.



Photo 8. Hurd Stadium (west end) looking northwest, showing (L to R) Concession Stand, Ticket Booth, and Grandstand.



Photo 9. Ticket Booth, north and west elevations.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES



Photo 10. 1936 Field House, west and south elevations.



Photo 11. 1936 Field House, east and north elevations, and adjoining concrete steps.