

John Woodward House

50 Fairlee Road, Waban

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARKS NOMINATION REPORT

Prepared by Kevin J. West

Boston University Preservation Studies Program

May 7, 1997

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARKS PROGRAM

50 FAIRLEE ROAD

The Newton Historical Commission, with the assistance of Boston University Preservation Planning student, Kevin J. West, prepared this landmark report, completed in June 1997.

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4. Function or Use

a. Historic Function (s)

- Domestic/Residential
- Commercial
- Social/Institutional
- Public/Governmental

b. Current Function (s)

- Domestic/Residential
- Commercial
- Social/Institutional
- Public/Governmental

The John Woodward House is assessed as a residential use structure, with a 1997 valuation of \$224,800 and an additional \$288,200 for the surrounding land. The combined value of the building and land is \$513,000.

5. Description

a. Neighborhood Description

The John Woodward House is located in the Waban district of Newton. Waban remained a sparsely settled farming community until the construction of the Highland Branch of the Boston and Albany Railroad in 1886. As a result of this direct transportation link to the city of Boston, Waban soon became a desirable residential community.

The Victorian style homes built during this period, combined with widely varying terrain contribute to the area's continued charm and character. Over time this suburban growth engulfed the property of the John Woodward homestead. The house is now flanked by a residential subdivision built during the first half of the twentieth century. Situated to the north of a shallow ravine, the foliage screened property is bordered to the southwest by the Green Line of the MBTA.

b. Architectural Description

(1). materials

foundation: field stone

walls: wood clapboard

roof: asphalt shingles

windows: vinyl replacement

ornamentation: minimal

vegetation: no foundation plantings, numerous shade trees, shrubs and bushes throughout the property

The John Woodward House is a two-story, wood frame, first period building. With an irregular four bay facade oriented to the south, its narrow gable end faces Fairlee Road. Numerous wings and additions contribute to the house's organic asymmetrical appearance. The only attempt at adornment is a small Colonial Revival entrance vestibule projecting from the otherwise simple facade.

As with most surviving First Period houses the exterior has been altered over the years. The main core of the John Woodward House is of the hall-and-parlor, single pile type. A narrow one-story lean-to addition across the rear extends past the northern corner of the house. The southward facing door on the lean-to extension sits under a small hipped-roof porch.

A large two-story ell built during the mid-nineteenth century extends perpendicular to the facade from the western corner of the house. At the southern end of the ell is an enclosed sun-room with sash windows and a modern atrium style door. A more recent one-story addition projects from the west elevation of the ell and a multiple windowed shed roof dormer across the northeast side of the ell creates a third level of living space. The smaller two-story addition located where the ell attaches to the main house and earlier rear lean-to appears to have been constructed prior to the larger ell.

The center entrance of the original house is flanked by later sidelights and covered by a Colonial Revival vestibule. The vestibule is composed of two slender columns supporting a pedimented portico and is fully enclosed with a storm door and full height glass panels. Except for the enclosed sun room, all of the earlier sashes and surrounds in the house, including those of the ell and lean-to, have been replaced with 6/6 vinyl clad windows.

The entire house is sided with wood clapboards and except for the mid-nineteenth century ell, is trimmed with plain corner and gable fascia boards. The second floor facade windows are framed into the cornice and all facade and street facing windows of the original house are flanked by fixed louver wood shutters.

The house's original roof was dismantled and reframed in the early eighteenth century by inserting the original framing members into new rafters. The large, brick center chimney is joined by three smaller chimneys - one in the rear lean-to and two located in the large ell. All roof surfaces are covered with asphalt shingles.

6. History of Property

a. Deed History

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds

Date: June 16, 1994

Book: 24624

Page: 109

Local Landmark Designation

Department of Planning and Development

City of Newton, Massachusetts

Date: August 11, 1992
Book: 22284
Page: 421

Lots A & B1
Grantee: Joseph & Ruth Weiler
Grantor: Donnah Canavan

Date: October 7, 1987
Book: 18628
Page: 251

Lots A & B1
Grantee: Donnah Canavan
Grantor: Peter Gumpert & Donnah Canavan Gumpert

Date: July 30, 1974
Book: 12675
Page: 382

Lots A & B1
Grantee: Peter Gumpert & Donnah Canavan Gumpert
Grantor: Reta A. Hitchcock

Date: December 6, 1956
Book: 8868
Page: 564

Lots A & B1
Grantee: Reta A. Wolley
Grantor: Jesse K. Park & Willard B. Woodward

Date: October 5, 1956
Book: 8832
Page: 353

Lot A
Grantee: Jesse K. Park & Willard B. Woodward
Grantor: Newton Waltham Bank & Trust Co.
Trustee, Estate of Frederick R. Woodward
Probate Record No. 208675 Sept-10-1956

Date: April 16, 1945
Book: 6850
Page: 106

Lot B1
Grantee:
Grantor: Estate of Edith B. Woodward
Probate Record No. 324647

Date: December 8, 1937
Book: 6174
Page: 99

Lots 1 - 13 & B2
Grantee: Robert J. M. Fyfe
Grantor: Edith B. Woodward and
Newton Waltham Bank & Trust Co.

All of the above reference the following: "Plan of Land in Waban, Massachusetts"
by Everett M. Brooks, Civil Engineer

Date: February 23, 1937
Book: 6174
Page: 100

Plan No. 1173

Probate Record No. 208675 - Last Will and Testament of Frederick R. Woodward

“Upon the decease of my said wife, my trustees shall maintain said homestead property as a place of historical interest, and may employ therefor such custodians or caretakers and employees as to said trustees shall seem best, with power in their discretion to rent such part or parts of the premises as may not be needed for the purpose and apply the income therefor, after the payments above stipulated have been made, to the maintenance of the property for the purposes aforesaid.”

In 1956, after the death of Edith B. Woodward, widow of Frederick R. Woodward, her brother and administrator of her estate, Jesse K. Park, petitioned the Probate Court requesting that the trust established under the will of Frederick R. Woodward for the maintenance of said Homestead as a place of historical interest, be terminated. The court approved the petition due to insufficient assets in the trust to maintain the Homestead as stipulated in the will of Frederick R. Woodward and because the trustees were unable to find any existing charitable organization to take over and maintain the property.

The court also ruled that the Homestead property be turned over to Jesse K. Park and Willard B. Woodward, brother of Frederick R. Woodward.

b. Development History

The John Woodward House was owned and occupied by eight generations of the Woodward family until 1956, when it was sold by the estate of Mrs. Frederick R. Woodward. From that point, the property has changed hands three times and is currently owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Weiler who purchased the property in 1992.

It is generally believed that the house was built by John Woodward (1649-1732) in 1681. John's father George Woodward, and grandfather Richard Woodward, were born in Ipswich, England, sailed to America aboard the ship Elizabeth in 1634, and settled in Watertown, Massachusetts. Born in Watertown, John moved to Newton in 1676.

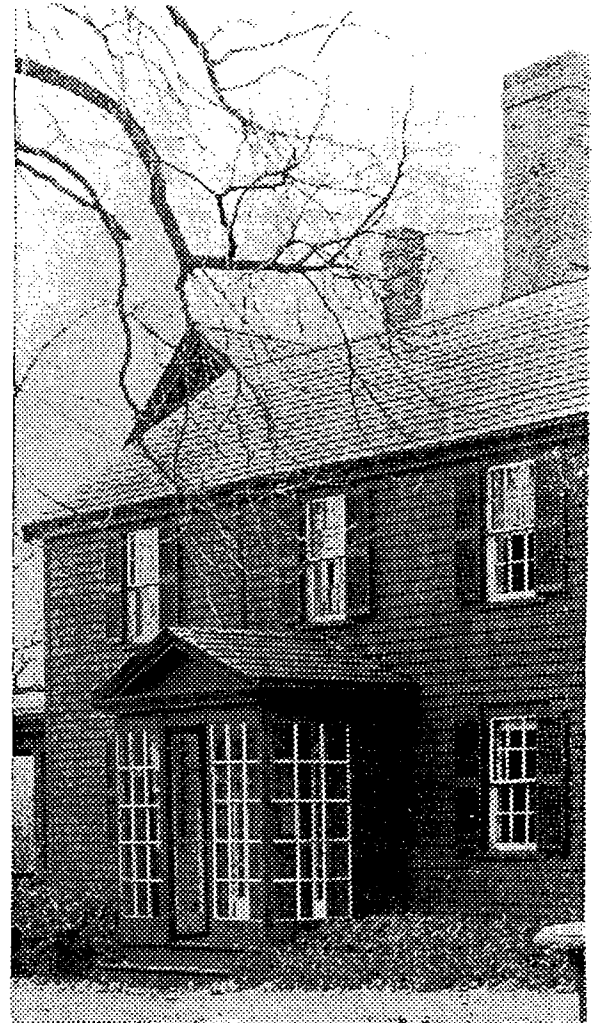
In 1681 John and his wife Rebecca received a 30 acre parcel from his father-in-law, Richard Robbins. The property extended from the present day Woodward Street south to the Charles River. In 1686 John Woodward purchased the adjoining 75 acre “farm and framehouse” from Eben and Margaret Stone; his land holdings then comprised of 105 acres.

Waban was still Indian country when the Woodwards settled there. According to family history, Indians continued to live on the Woodward property until late into the eighteenth century. Waban remained a rural farming community until the construction of the railroad in 1886. This link to the city of Boston provided the impetus for the residential development already experienced by other sections of Newton.

This suburban expansion quickly encroached on the Woodward homestead as parcels were sold for development. Today, very little of the original property remains. The house now sits on a

1.25 acre lot surrounded by an early twentieth century residential subdivision. The plan for this subdivision can be seen in Middlesex County Registry of Deeds - Book 6174, page 100, dated Feb. 23, 1937.

c. Historic Photographs



Additional photos are on file at the Jackson Homestead.

Also see photos taken as part of this landmark study report.

7. Significance of Property

a. Period Significance

1681 - 1937

One of the few remaining seventeenth century residences in Newton, the house was continually occupied by eight generations of the Woodward family for 275 years.

b. Historical Significance

The historical significance of the John Woodward House lies not only in its date of construction and its existence as one of the last remnants of the rural community that was once Waban, but in the generations of the Woodward family that inhabited it.

John Woodward (1649 - 1732) was actively involved in the politics of Newton, serving in a variety of positions such as fence viewer, tithingman, and constable. This commitment to community service was passed down to future generations. In 1773, his grandson Captain John Woodward was one of a committee of fifteen chosen to urge the people of Newton against the buying, selling, and use of India teas.

Captain John, age 51, and his son Ebenezer, age 17, were both present at the Battle of Lexington on April 19, 1775. In 1776 Captain John was moderator of the Town Meeting at which it was unanimously voted that Congress be requested to declare the colonies independent. He was Town Clerk and Treasurer of Newton in 1778, and was re-elected each year until succeeded by his son, Ebenezer, in 1795. Captain John also held the position of selectman for seven years and representative to the General Court for two.

Elijah Woodward, son of Ebenezer, also held the office of Town Clerk and Treasurer from 1826 until his death in 1845, and was elected as a representative to the General Court for four years. A surveyor by trade, Elijah assisted W.E. Ward in producing the 1831 map of Newton, an invaluable historical resource.

As time passed, portions of the property were sold for development as the town of Newton became an ever larger suburb. In 1937 the last remnants of the once 100 acre plus farm were transformed into a residential subdivision, leaving the homestead as a solitary symbol of Newton's rural history.

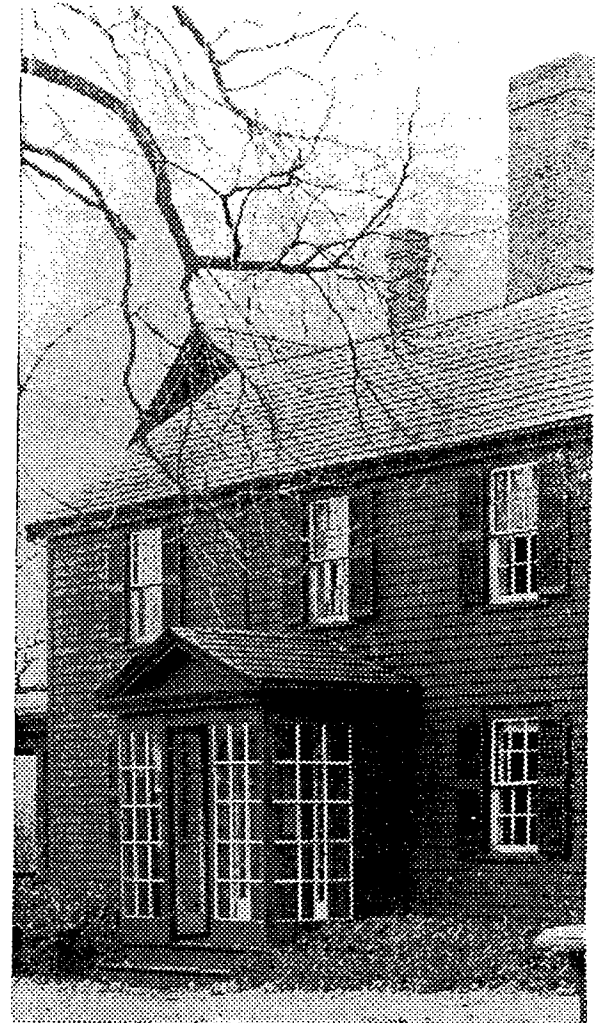
c. Architectural Significance

The John Woodward House is architecturally significant as one of the oldest houses in Newton. It is also one of twelve remaining pre-1800 dwellings in Newton listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built in 1681 during the First Period of colonial construction, the house has been much altered over the years. However, despite the large addition to the rear and the Colonial Revival entrance vestibule, it still remains a fine example of early New England architecture. The simple solid lines of the original house typify the durability necessary to sustain 300 plus years of change.

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d. Landmark Designation Criteria of Significance

Sec. 22-93, Ordinance T-288

Section 22-93 states the criteria for landmark designation.

It states that the Commission:

may . . . designate as a landmark any property within the City being or containing a structure or landscape which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the City or Commonwealth and/or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of period, style, method of construction, or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures.

The John Woodward House meets criteria (1) and (2) of Ordinance T-288 for its important associations with one or more historic persons, with the broad architectural, political, economic and social history of the City, and for its historic and architectural significance in terms of its period, style, and method of construction.

It is associated with the Woodward family, early settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and prominent citizens in eighteenth and nineteenth century Newton. It symbolizes the early years of Waban, a once sparsely populated agricultural community, that has since developed into a prosperous suburb. It provides an important link back to the early history of both the neighborhood and community.

Architecturally, the John Woodward House is significant as one of the oldest houses in Newton. The main core of the house is typical of surviving First Period homes with post and beam timber construction and a hall-and-parlor, single pile floor plan. It is therefor significant for its period, style, and method of construction.

8. Recommendations

Section 22-90, Ordinance T-288.

Section 22-90 states the purpose of landmark designation.

It states that the purpose of this enactment is to:

. . . promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the preservation and protection of the distinctive architecture and other characteristics of buildings, structures, landscapes, and places significant in the history and prehistory of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Newton and through the maintenance and improvement of settings for such buildings, structures,

landscapes, and places and through the encouragement of compatible development and the discouragement of destruction of or damage to such resources.

a. Preservation Recommendations

The John Woodward House is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is protected from the adverse effects of federally licensed, permitted, or funded projects and, through listing on the parallel State Register of Historic Places, from the adverse effects of state funded projects. At the local level, it is covered by provisions of the city's zoning code.

The National and State Registers provide limited protection from public projects through review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The zoning provisions establish various standards and govern the allowable uses of the property. However, the Massachusetts Historical Commission's powers do not allow for review of privately-funded projects, nor can zoning codes address any issues regarding building appearance.

Other options for the preservation of the John Woodward House include designation as a local landmark under Ordinance T-288 or placement of a preservation easement on the property under the provisions of MGL Chapter 184.

The present owner could place a preservation easement on the property, thereby granting the Commission review over exterior alterations as a condition of the deed. Designation of the John Woodward House as a local landmark can be initiated by the Newton Historical Commission. Landmark designation provides the greatest level of protection for the property from public and private actions with its parallel listing on the state register and affords the Newton Historical Commission and the public the ability to review exterior alterations by private individuals.

b. Important Features

Surviving First Period houses are generally endowed with simple unadorned lines and solid massing. The John Woodward House is embodied with such features and every effort should be taken to preserve them. Any future additions or alterations should be respectful and sympathetic to the character of the building.

Those changes and additions to the John Woodward House which have taken place over the years are evidence of the property's history. Their significance should also be recognized and respected.

c. Future Research

9. Standards for Design Review

a. General Standards

The Commission's primary charge under Ordinance T-288 is to review any construction, demolition, or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features of a landmark. This land

mark study report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics which led to consideration of the property as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, those features should be preserved and/or enhanced in any construction, demolition, or alteration.

Section 22-96 of the ordinance sets the factors to be considered by the Historical Commission in reviewing changes to landmarks. The Commission is directed to consider:

the historical and architectural value, and significance of the building, structure, landscape, or place - the general design, arrangement, texture, material, and color of the features involved - and the relation of such features to similar features of buildings and structures in the surrounding area.

In all cases, a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship, or Non-Applicability must be issued by the Historical Commission prior to making any changes to a landmark. The Commission does not have the authority to regulate the interiors of landmarks nor can they control changes to exterior architectural features not subject to public view. However, Certificates of Non-Applicability must be issued for those changes. All applications must be carefully reviewed by the Commission at a public hearing, in accordance with Ordinance T-288.

b. Specific Standards

1. Historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Existing changes and additions are evidence of the history of the property and neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions must not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinctive character of the landmark, neighborhood and environment.

8. New additions should be done in such a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the land mark would be intact.
9. Preserved and protect as much as possible the setting and streetscape views of the John Woodward House.
10. Exterior Walls - retain wood clapboards and trim and remove inappropriate shed-roofed dormer from nineteenth century ell.
11. Windows - existing vinyl sash windows should be exchanged with six-over-six wood sashes and casings when replacement becomes necessary.

10. Notification (date list prepared: 5-6-97)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
Joseph & Ruth Weiler	50 Fairlee Road, Waban - owners
Mark Bourne	26 Fairlee Road - abutter
Geoffrey & Dorothea Sherwood	36 Fairlee Road - abutters
Richard & Linda Price	60 Fairlee Road - abutters
Ruth Mackay	16 Fairlee Terrace - abutter
Robert & Rosalie Griesse	19 Fairlee Terrace
Irving & Ruth Kauffman	20 Fairlee Terrace
David Todres & Judith Sharlin	10 Fairlee Road
Carolyn Swift	16 Fairlee Road
Carol Marks	21 Fairlee Road
Qaing Yu & Junying Yuan	22 Fairlee Road
Janet Holly	35 Fairlee Road
Merrill Lindquist & Hugh Durdan	51 Fairlee Road
Adam Levin & Irwin Freedberg, TRS	55 Fairlee Road
Patricia Brightman	63 Fairlee Road
Renee Stein	71 Fairlee Road
Robert & Guitelle Sandman	72 Fairlee Road
Elliott & Cheryl Loew	32 Stanley Road
Albert & Lillian Ward	36 Stanley Road

Niranjan & Usha Shah	42 Stanley Road
Irvin Kooris & Allyn St. Lifer-Kooris	50 Stanley Road
Bernice Dawkins	56 Stanley Road
Sumner & Gloria Rosoff	62 Stanley Road
Meryl Minden	70 Stanley Road
Deborah Shapiro, TR	78 Stanley Road
Irvin & Edith Newman	82 Stanley Road
Miklos Breuer	88 Stanley Road
Mary Blank	94 Stanley Road
Leah Goldman	100 Stanley Road
John Campbell & Barbara Dougan	108 Stanley Road
Wilbur & Irma Diamond	114 Stanley Road



Front facade



Rear Ell

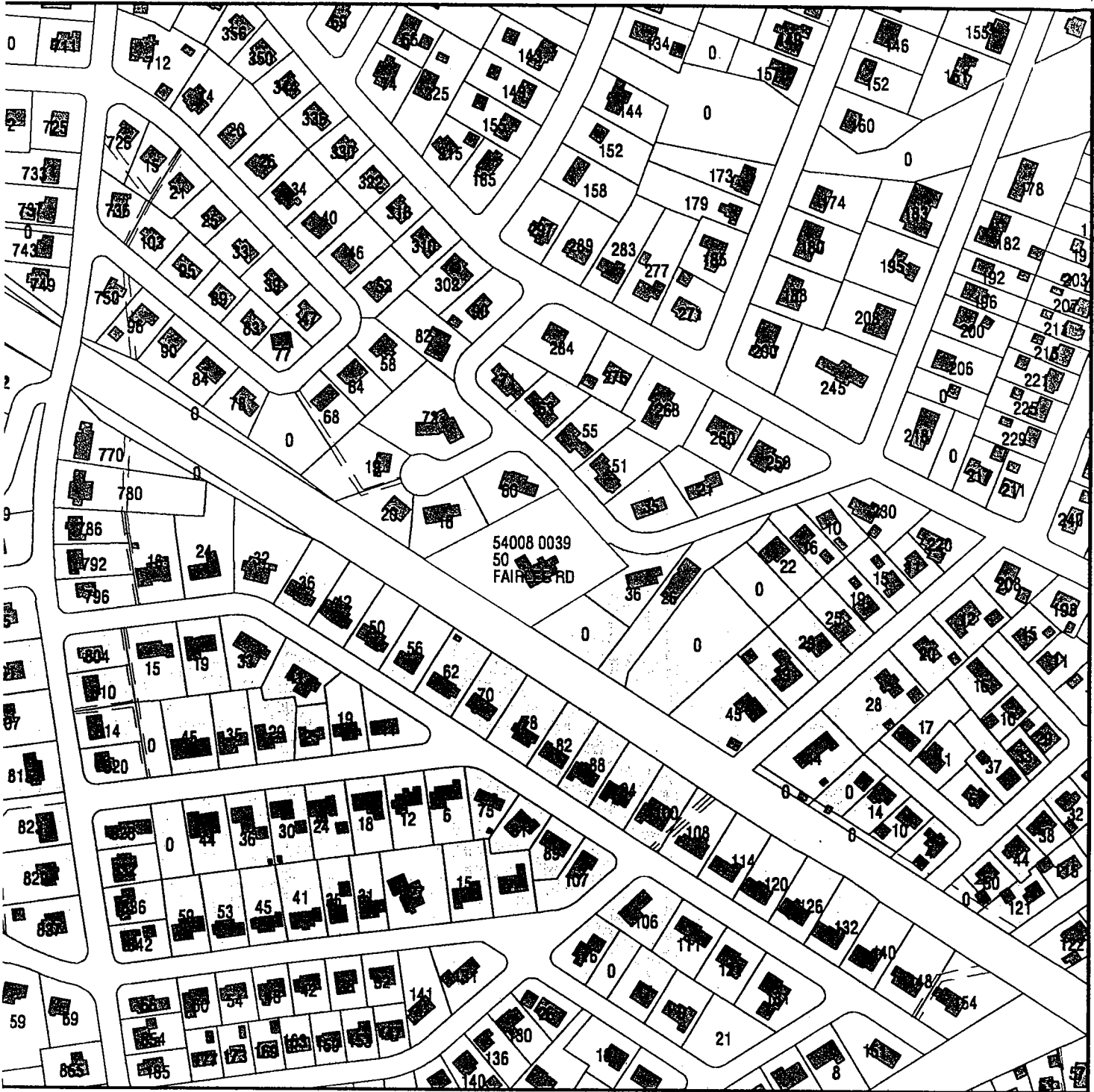
50 Fairlee Road



Plan + side elevation



I-Id	Address	Draft Map, Not a Legal Document		Map-Id	Zone	LU	Sq-ft
		S-date	Sale-price				
008 0039	50 FAIRLEE RD	9208	483100	116NW	SR2	101	52060



Assessor's Base Map

Map Produced on: May 06, 1997
 Property boundaries from Newton Assessor's property maps
 zoning or land use information from Assessor's CAMA database
 map projection & coordinate system: Massachusetts State Plane - NAD83

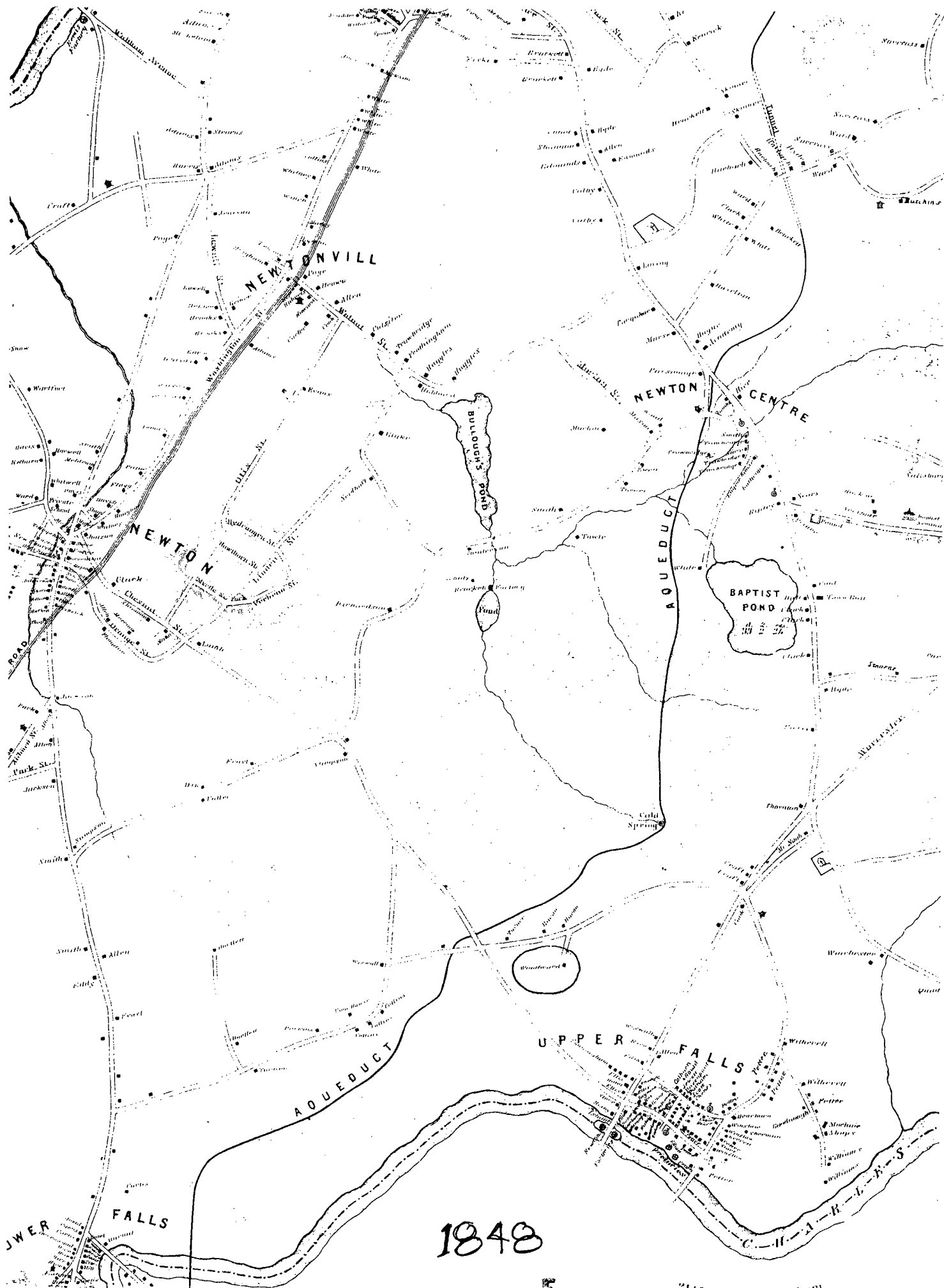
CITY OF
NEWTON
 MASSACHUSETTS
 ASSESSING DEPARTMENT
 1000 COMMONWEALTH AVE.
 NEWTON CENTRE, MA 02159

Scale: 1" = 274 ft.

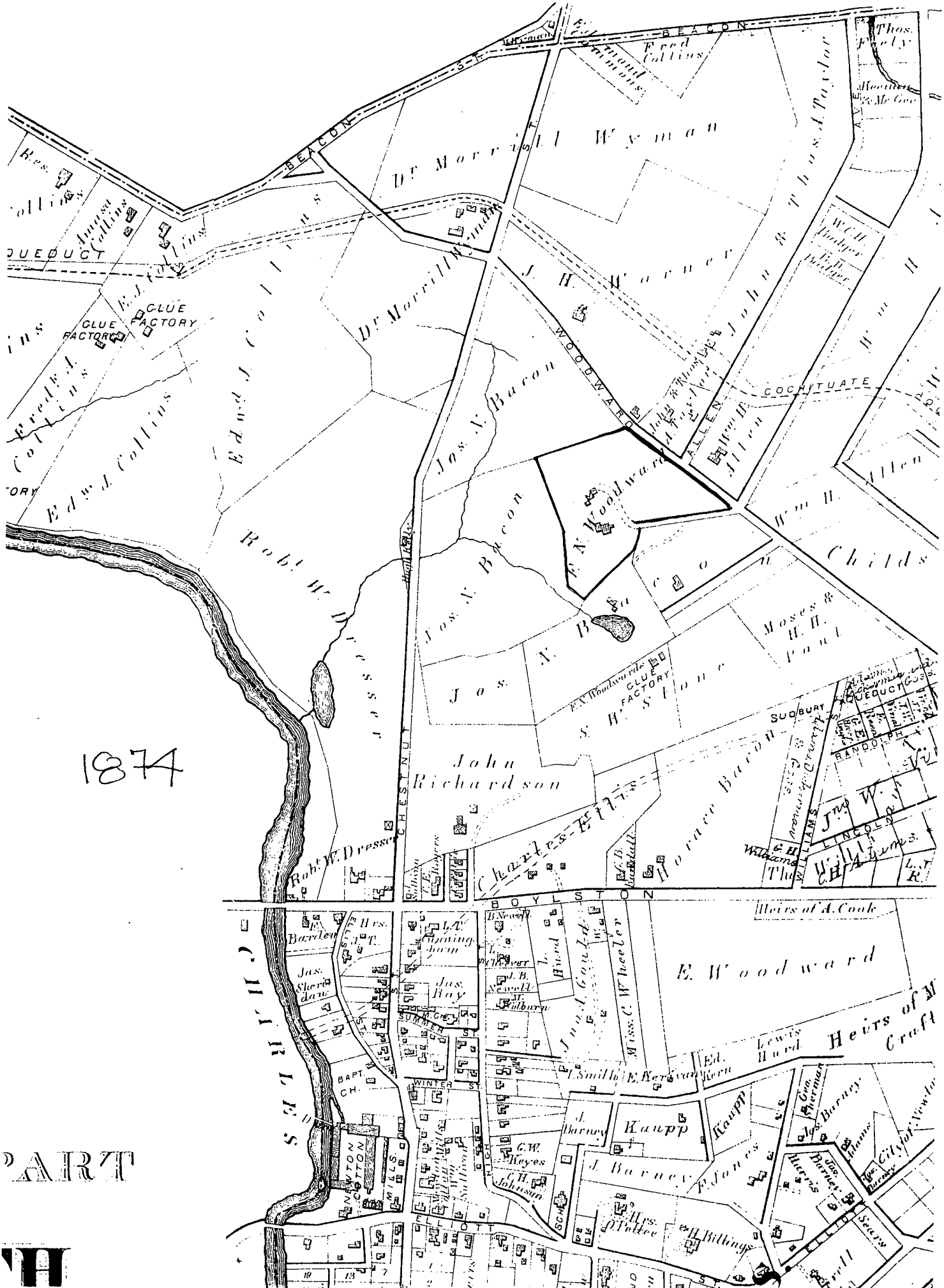


Parcels labeled with Lot Number

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS



1848



1874

PART

W

