

PH0058092

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 01 1975

DATE ENTERED

APR 21 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park (preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Powder House Park at Powder House Circle

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE

Massachusetts

VICINITY OF

CODE
25

COUNTY

Middlesex

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Somerville

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall, Highland Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

VICINITY OF

STATE
Massachusetts

02143

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Middlesex Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Cambridge Street

CITY, TOWN

Cambridge

STATE
Massachusetts**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE

1968

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Boston,

STATE
Massachusetts 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Nathan Tufts Park in Somerville is located near a busy intersection of roads leading to Medford, Arlington, Cambridge, and Boston. To the south, east, and north of the park are early twentieth century houses, to the northwest is an open field, and to the west is a row of stores. The park is pleasantly landscaped taking advantage of the natural rocky formation, an old quarry with a variation in elevation of about 100 feet. Benches mark the paved walkways and the park contains elm trees, maples, evergreens, and shrubbery. Two small areas have been set aside as tot lots with playground equipment. Two structures are contained within the park, the Powder House (c. 1704-1720) and the Fieldhouse (1935).

The Powder House sits on the edge of the old "Two Penny Brook Quarry" and was built of stone quarried there. The bluestone walls of the cylindrical base are two feet thick, with brick lining the interior. There is an arched entrance on the northeast side, which was reinforced with cinderblock c. 1900. A higher opening on the southwest was also reinforced. The interior has a modern concrete floor, and a modern beam was added to support the roof. The conical roof is now shingled with composition roofing and a flag flies from a twenty foot pole at the roof's peak.

The Fieldhouse, built by the Work Project Administration, is located north-northwest of the Powder House and directly opposite Powder House Circle. The one story ridge roof structure is approximately fifty feet by twenty-two feet and has a small cylindrical tower, six feet in diameter, on the northeast corner. The building is constructed of stone, and the roof is slate on the north facade and composition shingles on the back. The main entrance to the building is through the tower, which contains a spiral staircase to the basement and a door to the main room. This room is panelled in knotty pine. A fireplace is situated in the southeast wall and a carved panel above it states "1936/This building was erected/ for the use and benefit of/the citizens of Somerville/as a Work Project of/the Federal Relief Administration/and the/Work Project Administration/Hon. Leslie E. Knox, Mayor".

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES c.1710, 1774, 1935

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Nathan Tufts Park derives its primary significance from the Powder House. This was built as a mill between 1704 and 1720 and its location at the crossroads among Charlestown, Menotomy, Cambridge and Mystic lent itself to use by farmers for miles around.

In 1747, the old mill was sold to the Province of Massachusetts for use as a powder house and this sale and new use led to its later significance. On September 1, 1774, General Gage led the raid in which 250 half-barrels of the Colony's store of powder were taken. The next day people from all the adjoining communities met, bearing arms for the first time, on the Cambridge Common. During the following war years, the powder house was a magazine for the revolutionary forces.

In 1822, the mill/powder house returned to private owners as part of property purchased by the Tufts' family, benefactors of neighboring Tufts University. For several decades, much concern was expressed about the fate of the powder house, but it was not until 1890 that it returned to public ownership. This happened when the heirs of Nathan Tufts deeded the structure and 65,000 square feet of land to the City of Somerville. Conditions included the city buying additional adjoining land and designating all of it as Nathan Tufts Park.

Nathan Tufts Park owes its preservation to the Powder House; without the latter, this five acres would probably have been subdivided along with the adjoining area around the turn of the century.

The Fieldhouse much more recently erected (1935) in Powder House Park is significant for different reasons. First, it is a product of the Work Project Administration and as such bears testimony for a particular era in America's history. Secondly, it was constructed for the use and benefit of the people of Somerville who now have an opportunity to restore it and use it as a mini-museum of Somerville's history.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bromley, George; Atlas of the City of Somerville; Bromley Co., Philadelphia, 1895.
 Drake, Samuel Adams; Old Landmarks and Historical Fields of Middlesex; Boston; Roberts Bros.; 1876
 Elliot, Charles, Somerville History; Somerville, 1896
 Hill, Herbert; Historical Heights and Points of Interest in Somerville; Boston, 1885
 Hopkins, G.M.; Atlas of the City of Somerville; Hopkins and Co.; Philadelphia, 1884

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 5 acres

*UTM OK
CD*

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 325760 4496180
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christine Boulding, Assistant Survey Director and Mary Cahill

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

March 1975

STREET & NUMBER

40 Beacon Street

TELEPHONE

617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Elizabeth R. Amador

TITLE Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Mar. 26, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

A.R. Weertman

DATE

4/21/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Charles Adams

DATE

4-18-75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Records of the Board of Aldermen, Vol. 50, 1934
Samuel, Edward A. and Kimball, Henry, H.; Somerville, Past and Present;
Boston, Samuel and Kimball, 1897

POWDER HOUSE

Property Lofts, Nathan, Park

Middlesex

State Massachusetts Working Number 4.1.75.593

TECHNICAL Sketch map

CONTROL

Photos 3
Maps 1

OK pl
4.4.75

Not a distinct as checked, but

HISTORIAN

Accept
W. R. Luce
4/8/75

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

*INCLUDES 1935 WPA BLDG.
PROBABLY MORE WORK DONE ON
POWDER HOUSE THEN INDICATED.*

ACCEPT
LEBOVICH
4-7-75

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Cole
4.11.75

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

James O
4.18.75
for Montoya

National Register Write-up _____
Federal Register Entry 6-3-75

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered APR 21 1975

INT:2106-74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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TYPE ALL ENTRIES ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Middlesex

STATE

Massachusetts

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

J.M. Grant

DATE OF PHOTO

February 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Somerville Historical Commission

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Park, looking east

PHOTO NO.

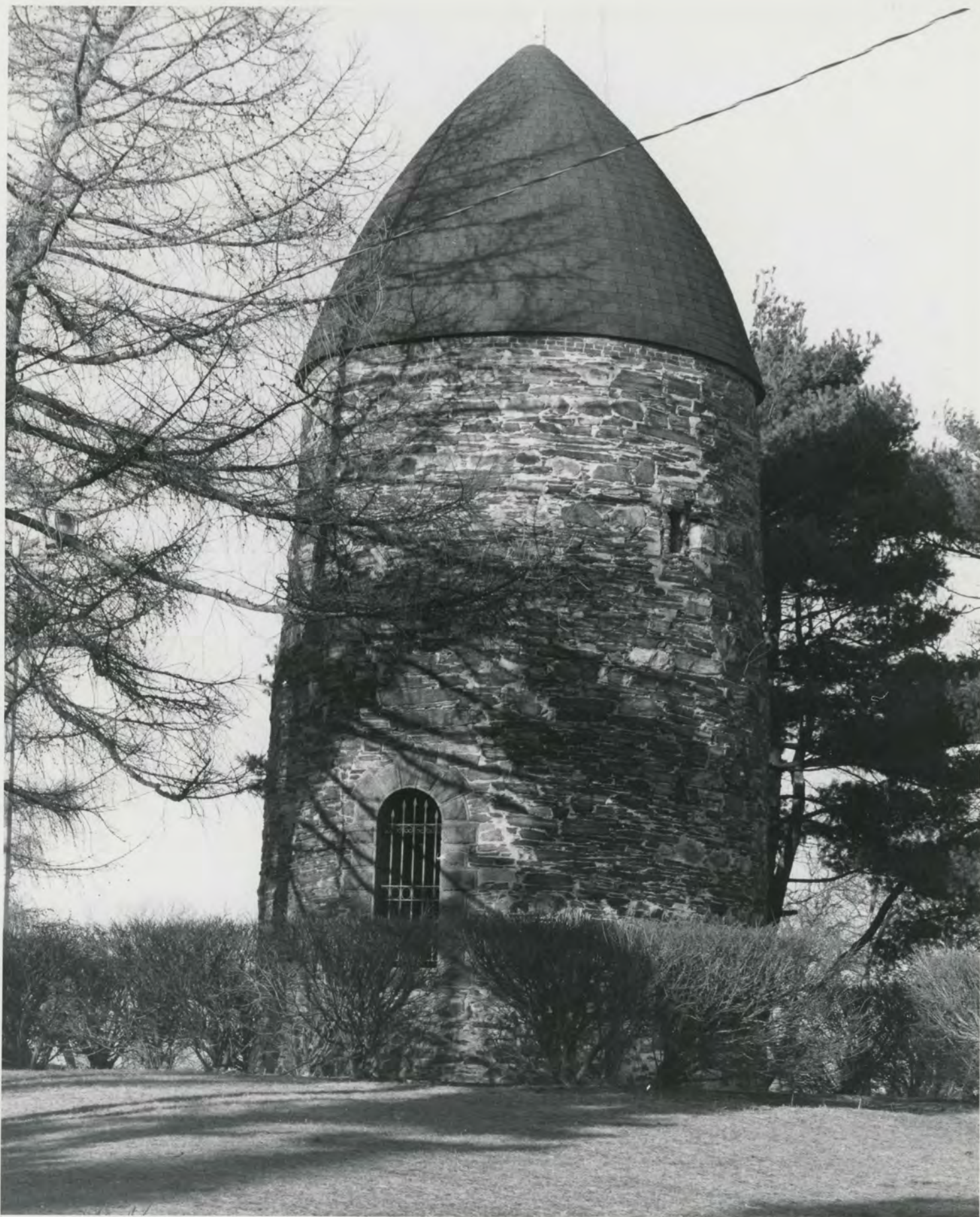
1

#103

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Nathan Tufts Park, looking east
Photo no. 1

#103



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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HISTORIC

Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Middlesex

STATE

Massachusetts

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

J.M. Grant

DATE OF PHOTO

February 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Somerville Historical Commission

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Powder House, north elevation

PHOTO NO.

2

#203

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

#203

Powder House, north elevation
Photo no. 2



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Middlesex

STATE

Massachusetts

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

J.M. Grant

DATE OF PHOTO

February 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Somerville Historical Commission

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT. GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Field House, north facade

PHOTO NO.

3

#333

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Field House, north facade

Photo no. 3

#333

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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DATE ENTERED APR 21 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Middlesex

STATE

Massachusetts

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE

Sketch map

SCALE

None

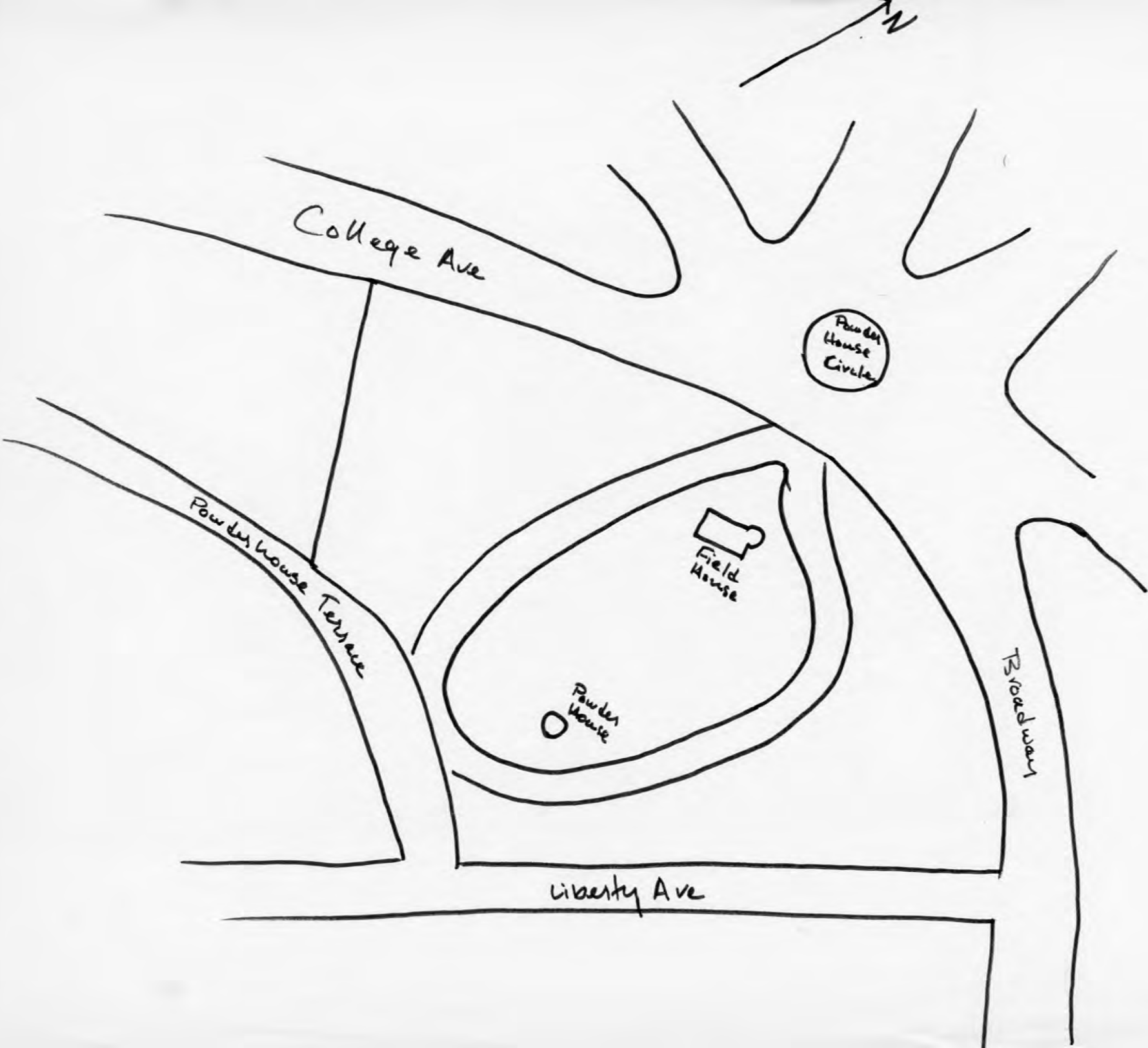
DATE

February 1975

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

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Nathan Tufts Park

AND/OR COMMON

Powder House Park

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Somerville

___VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Middlesex

STATE

Massachusetts

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE

United States Geological Survey

SCALE

1:24000

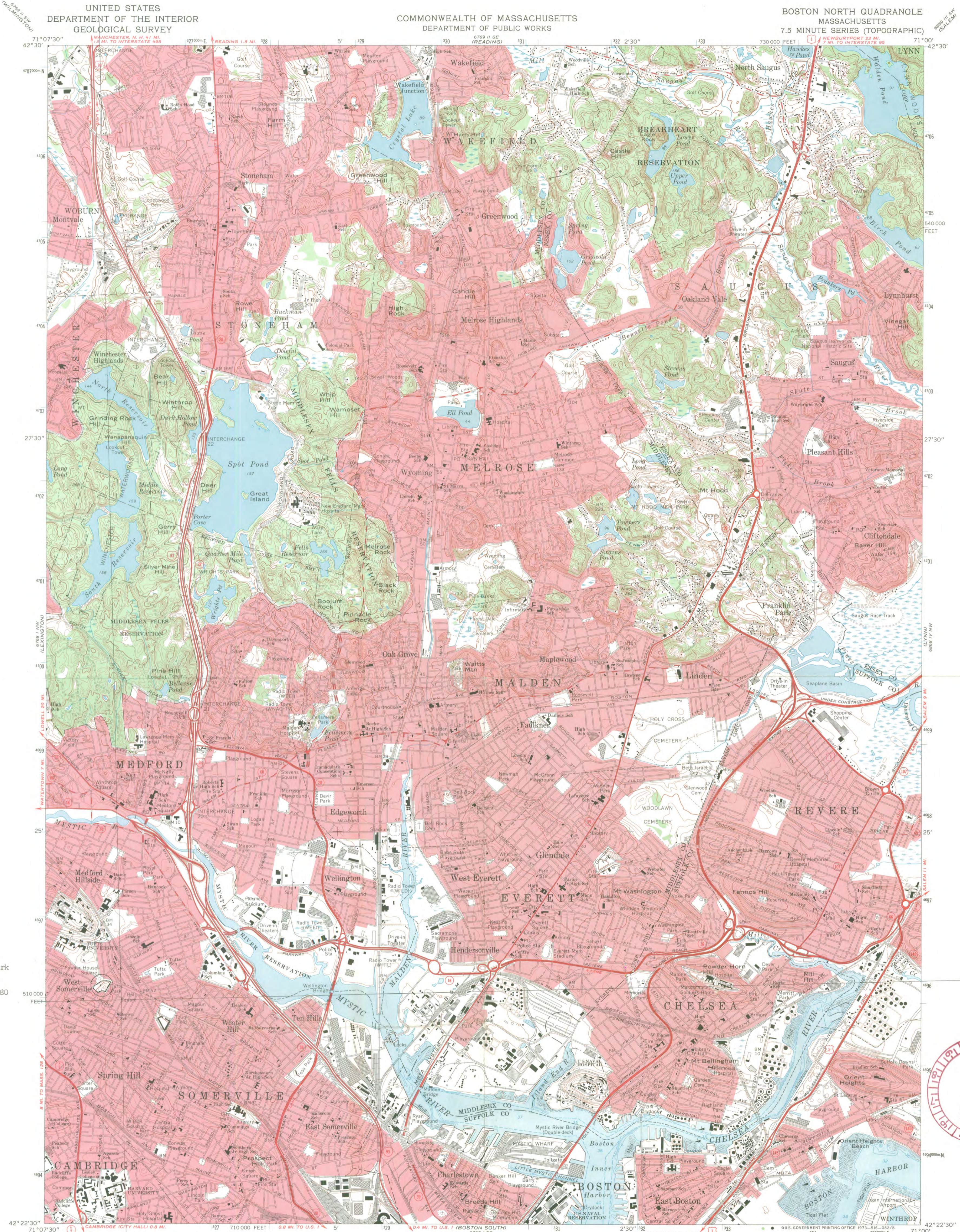
DATE

1971

4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

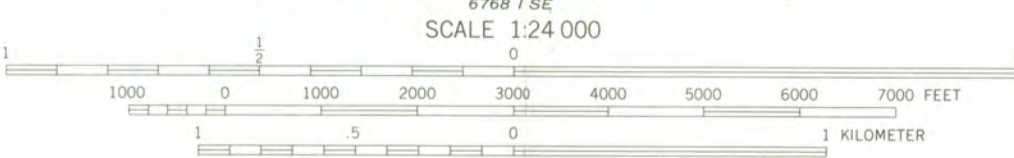
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES



Somerville
Powder House Park
UTM reference:
19/325760/4696180



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USCGS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USCGS Chart 248 (1971)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Boundaries in lidewater areas from information supplied
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 9.5 FEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BOSTON NORTH, MASS.
N4222.5—W7100.7.5
1971
AMS 6788 I NE—SERIES V814

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APR 21 1975

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Unitarian Universalist Church and Parsonage	Medford Middlesex County
City Hall Historic District	Lowell Middlesex County
First Baptist Church	New Bedford Bristol County
Powder House Park	Somerville Middlesex County
Mount Auburn Cemetery	Cambridge Middlesex County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy	State Historic Preservation Officer
Hon. Edward W. Brooke	Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon
Hon. Torbert H. Macdonald	Executive Director
Hon. Paul E. Teongas	Massachusetts Historical Commission
Hon. Jerry E. Studde	40 Beacon Street
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.	Boston, Massachusetts 02108
Regional Director, North-Atlantic Region	

PR

MMott/bsh

4/22/75

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 3/23/77
Reviewer INITIALS: DJY
NR DOE April 21, 1975

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Powder House Park

OTHER NAMES: Nathan Tufts Park *see*

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER ~~Powder House Park at~~ Powder House Circle

CITY, TOWN Somerville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 8th

STATE Massachusetts

VICINITY OF

COUNTY Middlesex code 017.

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline)

FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):

NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST

SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR Substantially intact-1
- unknown - 4
- not applicable - 7

EXTERIOR Substantially intact-2
- unknown - 5
- not applicable - 8

ENVIRONS Substantially intact-3
- unknown - 6
- Not applicable-9

- Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0

CONDITION -

EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED
- Unexcavated

- UNALTERED
ALTERED
- Reconstructed
- Excavated

ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED
- Unknown

ACCESS -

Yes-restricted

Yes-unrestricted

No access

Unknown

historic district?

YES

NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES

NO

IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE:

~~SEE 42~~

NO

Saved?

YES

NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- as mill and powder house
now- park

SIGNIFICANCE:

- ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC

- ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC

- AGRICULTURE -3

- ARCHITECTURE -4

- ART

- COMMERCE

- COMMUNICATIONS

- CONSERVATION

- ECONOMICS

- EDUCATION

- ENGINEERING

- EXPLORATION

- INDUSTRY

- INVENTION

- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

- LAW/Gov't/politics

- LITERATURE

- LITERARY -18

- MUSIC

- PHILOSOPHY

- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

- RELIGION

- SCIENCE

- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

- TRANSPORTATION

- OTHER (SPECIFY)

- entertainment

- health

- recreation

- settlement

- socio/cultural

- urban & commun planning

Claims

"first" YES NO

"oldest" YES NO

"only" YES NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

N.A.

architect/m.builder:

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

W.P.A.
(Fieldhouse)

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES:

personal

(label role
&
appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century):

✓ 1704-1720 (Powder House), 1936 # (Fieldhouse)
~~1716~~ ~~1935~~

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

1774

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

1774 - Rev. War - mill converted to Powder House

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

5

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

✓ Small landscaped park which includes the coursed bluestone cylindrical Powder House (1704-20) with round-arched openings and conical cap and the ashlar, 1-story, gabled Fieldhouse # (1936) ~~to PA~~ with 2-story entrance tower. Originally built as a mill; the Powderhouse ~~was converted to~~ ^{served as} a magazine during the Revolution ^{War}; Fieldhouse ^{built during the W.P.A. era} for use of Somerville citizenry.

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)