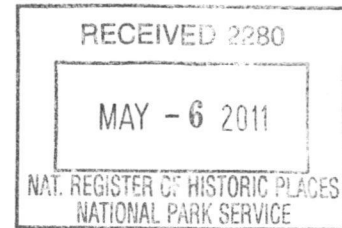


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Franklin County Fairgrounds

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 89 Wisdom Way

☐ not for publication

city or town Greenfield

☐ vicinity

state Massachusetts

code MA

county Franklin

code 011

zip code 01301

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Brona Simon  
Signature of certifying official Brona Simon, SHPO, MA Historical Comm.

April 27, 2011  
Date

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Joe E. Nelson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

6.15.11  
Date of Action

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
23	9	buildings
0	0	district
1	0	site
2	1	structure
0	0	object
26	10	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE, fair

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE, fair

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> & 20<sup>TH</sup> C. REVIVALS, Mission

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: ASPHALT, METAL

other: EARTH (race track)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Franklin County Fairgrounds

**City or Vicinity:** Greenfield

**County:** Franklin **State:** Massachusetts

**Photographer:** Neil Larson

**Date Photographed:** 2009

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1 of 18: Entrance Gate (A) from southeast.

2 of 18: View of Roundhouse (B) through Entrance Gate (A) from northeast.

3 of 18: View of Roundhouse (B) from south; Entrance Gate (A) in background, Kiwanis Hall (F) on right.

4 of 18: Interior view of Roundhouse (B) showing stairs and gallery.

5 of 18: View of roof framing in Roundhouse (B)

6 of 18: View of Kiwanis Building (F) and Fish & Game Building (D) from north, left to right.

7 of 18: View of Old Horse Barn (G) from SW. This building contains the Greenfield Agricultural Society's offices and a museum.

8 of 18: View of Old Sheep Barn (I) from SW; north end of [new] Sheep Barn (H) intersecting on right.

9 of 18: View of Cattle Show Ring (J) from NW, Sheep barn (H) on left.

10 of 18: View of Cow Stalls Building I (L) and Barn (K) from east, left to right.

11 of 18: View of Barn (K) and Cattle Stall Barns (L, M & N) from SE, left to right.

12 of 18: Detail of framing and materials in Cow Stall Building I (L) from NE. This framing is common to most barn-type buildings.

13 of 18: View of concession stands at east end of Midway (HH). Leyden Church Cafeteria (O), Oak Ridge Detachment of U.S. Marine Corps League Stand (P), Robbins Church Apple Pie Stand (Q) & Bernardston Kiwanis Club Stand (R), right to left. Check-in building stored in background far right.

14 of 18: View west on Midway (HH). Dole Building (S), Grandstand (X) and concession stands (T – W), left to right.

15 of 18: View of concession stands at west end of Midway (HH). Gourmet Catering Stand (T), Four Leaf Clover (Bernardston) Stand (U), Franklin County Rotary Club Stand (V), Greenfield Lions Club Stand (W), right to left.

16 of 18: View of Grandstand (X) from SW. Dole Building (S), Roundhouse (B) & Baby Barn (C) in background, left to right; Racetrack (GG) on right.

17 of 18: View of Scale Building (Z) and Stables Building (AA) from E, right to left.

18 of 18: View of Racetrack (GG) from SE. Dole Building (S) and Grandstand (X) on right; concession stands (CC, DD, EE) and Transformer Building (FF) on right in infield.

**Property Owner:**

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Franklin County Agricultural Society  
street & number 89 Wisdom Way, P.O. Box 564 telephone 413-774-4282  
city or town Greenfield state MA zip code 01302

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**FIGURES**

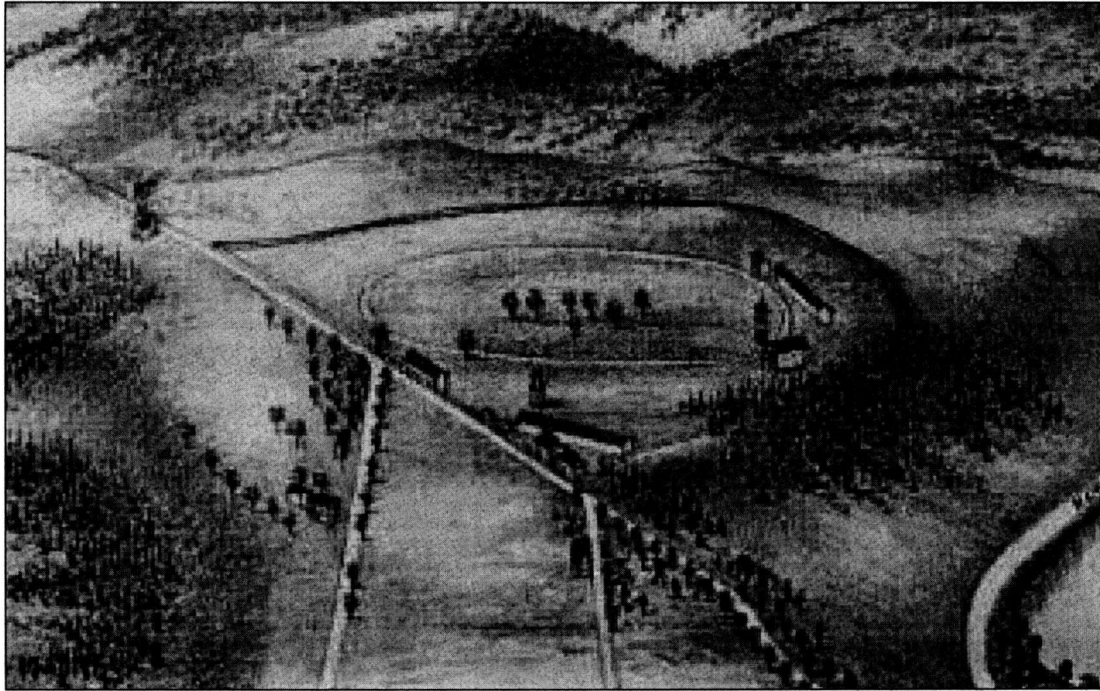


Fig.1: Detail of 1877 bird's-eye view showing plan of fairgrounds.

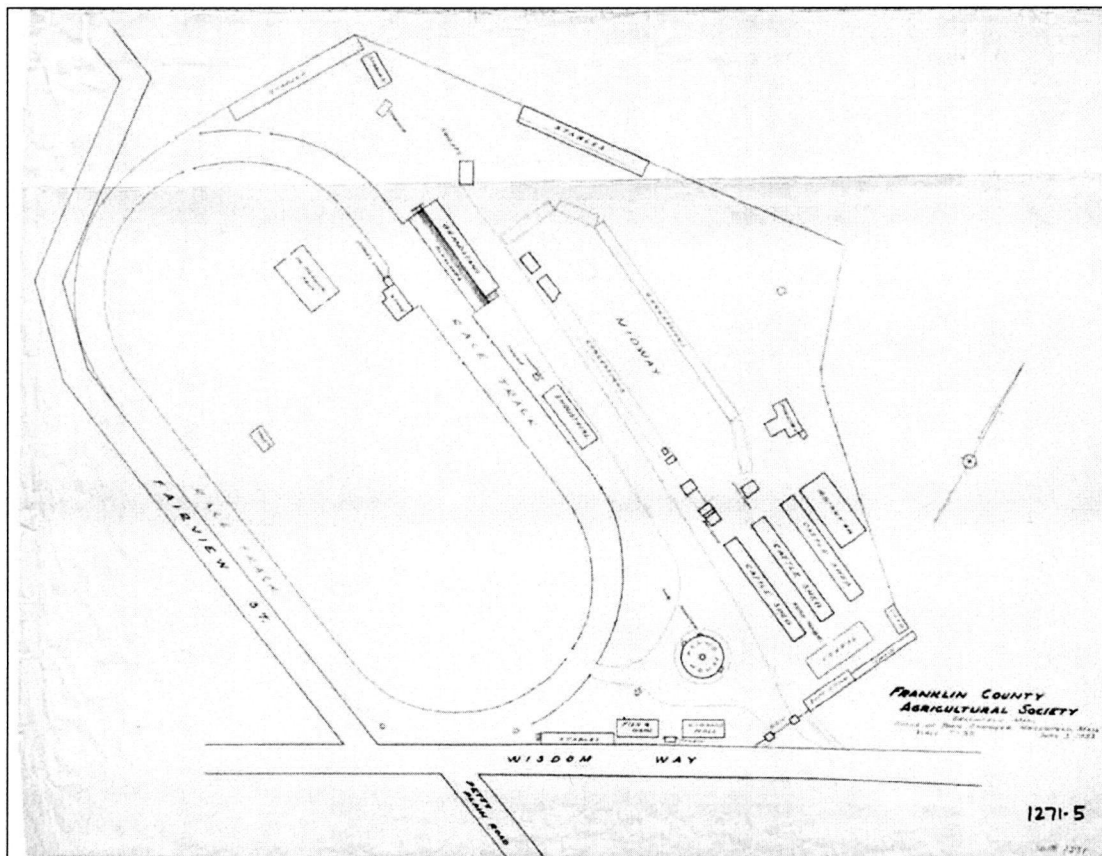


Fig. 2: Plan of Greenfield Fairgrounds, 1953. Source: [http://www.vhist.com/roberge/FDA\\_Files/fda\\_files/1000s/1200s\\_25-dpi/1271-5\\_25\\_wb.jpg](http://www.vhist.com/roberge/FDA_Files/fda_files/1000s/1200s_25-dpi/1271-5_25_wb.jpg).

**FIGURES**

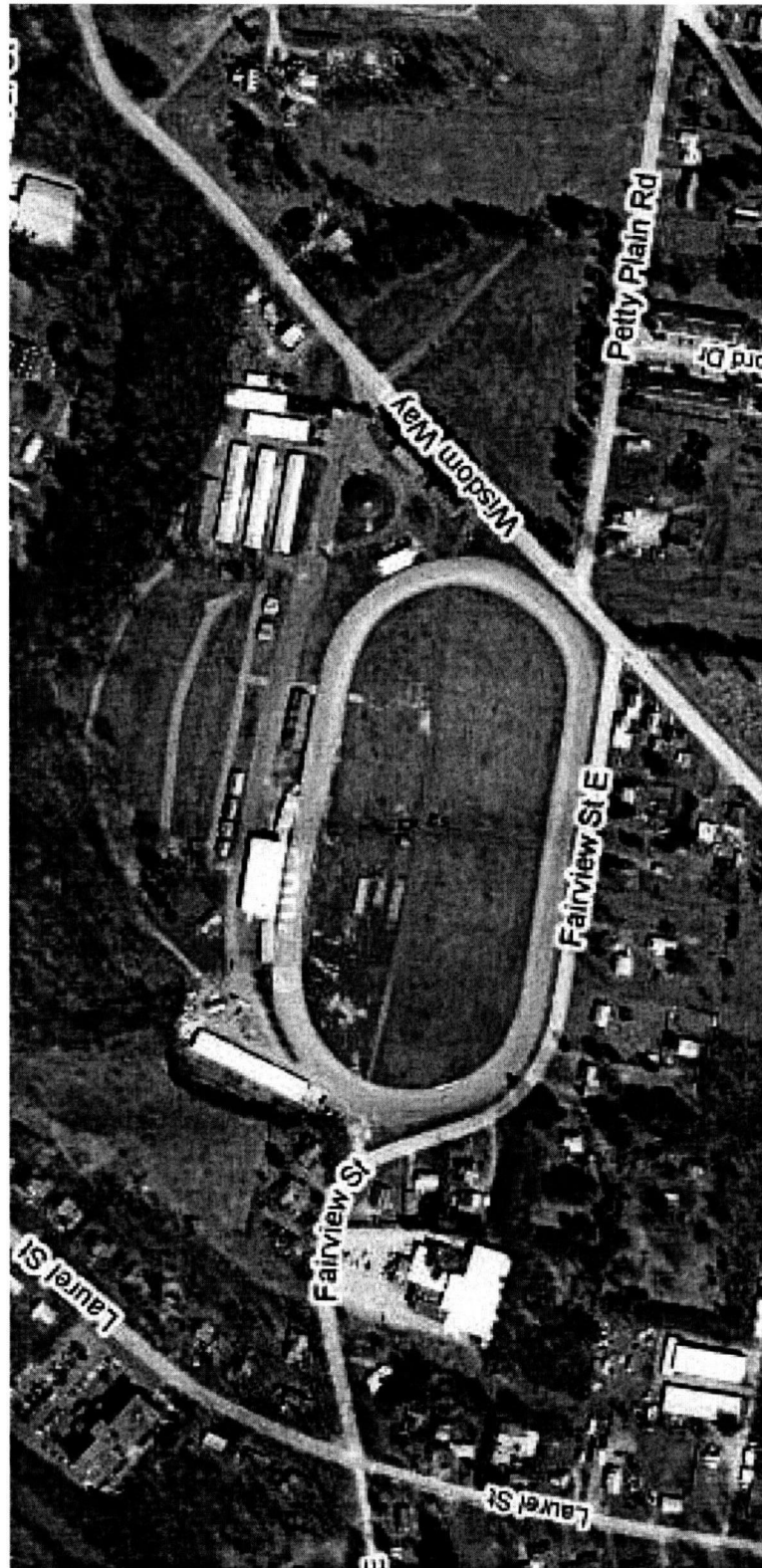


Fig.3: Aerial view of fairgrounds, north at left. Source: Google Maps.

FIGURES

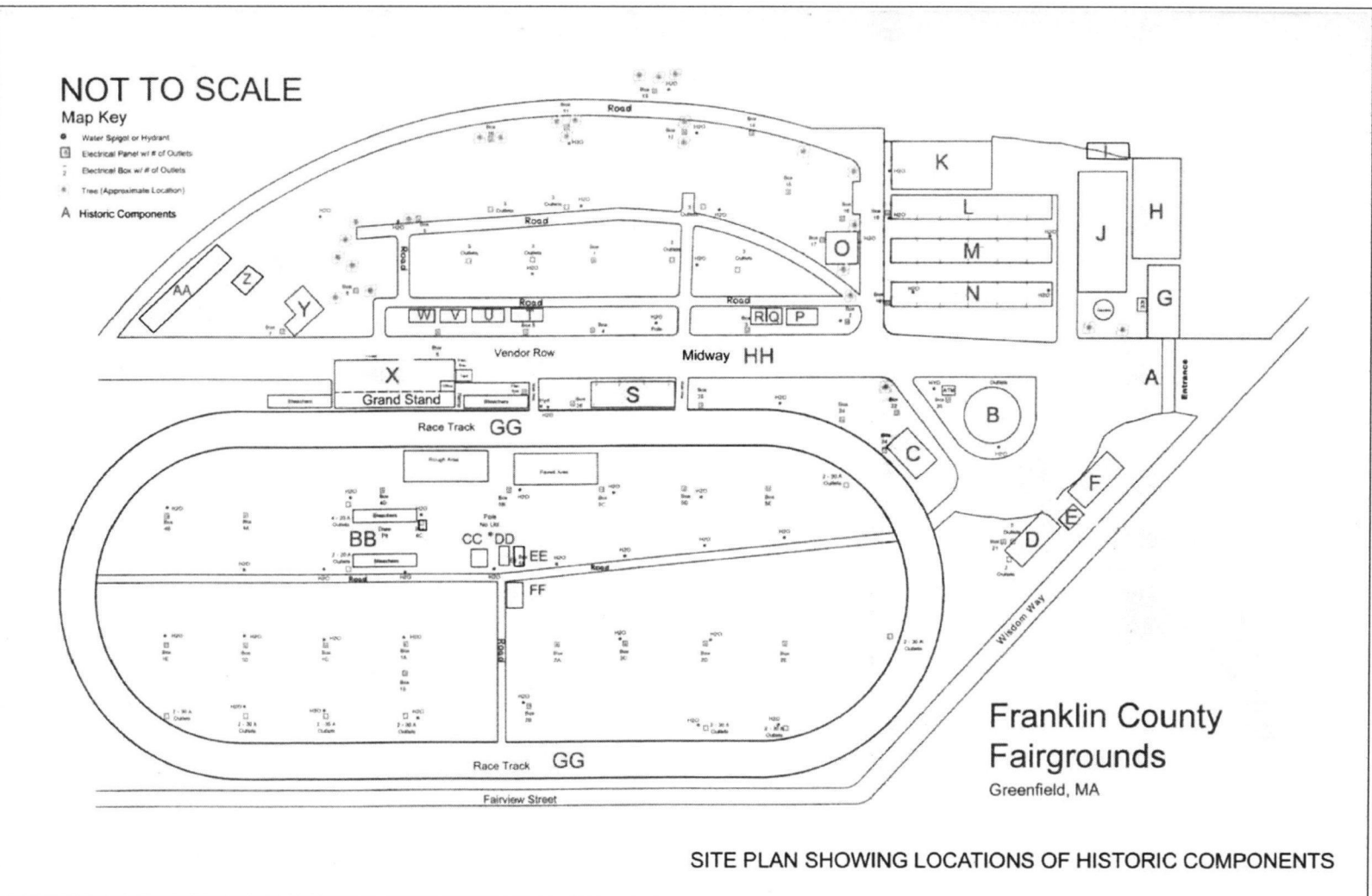
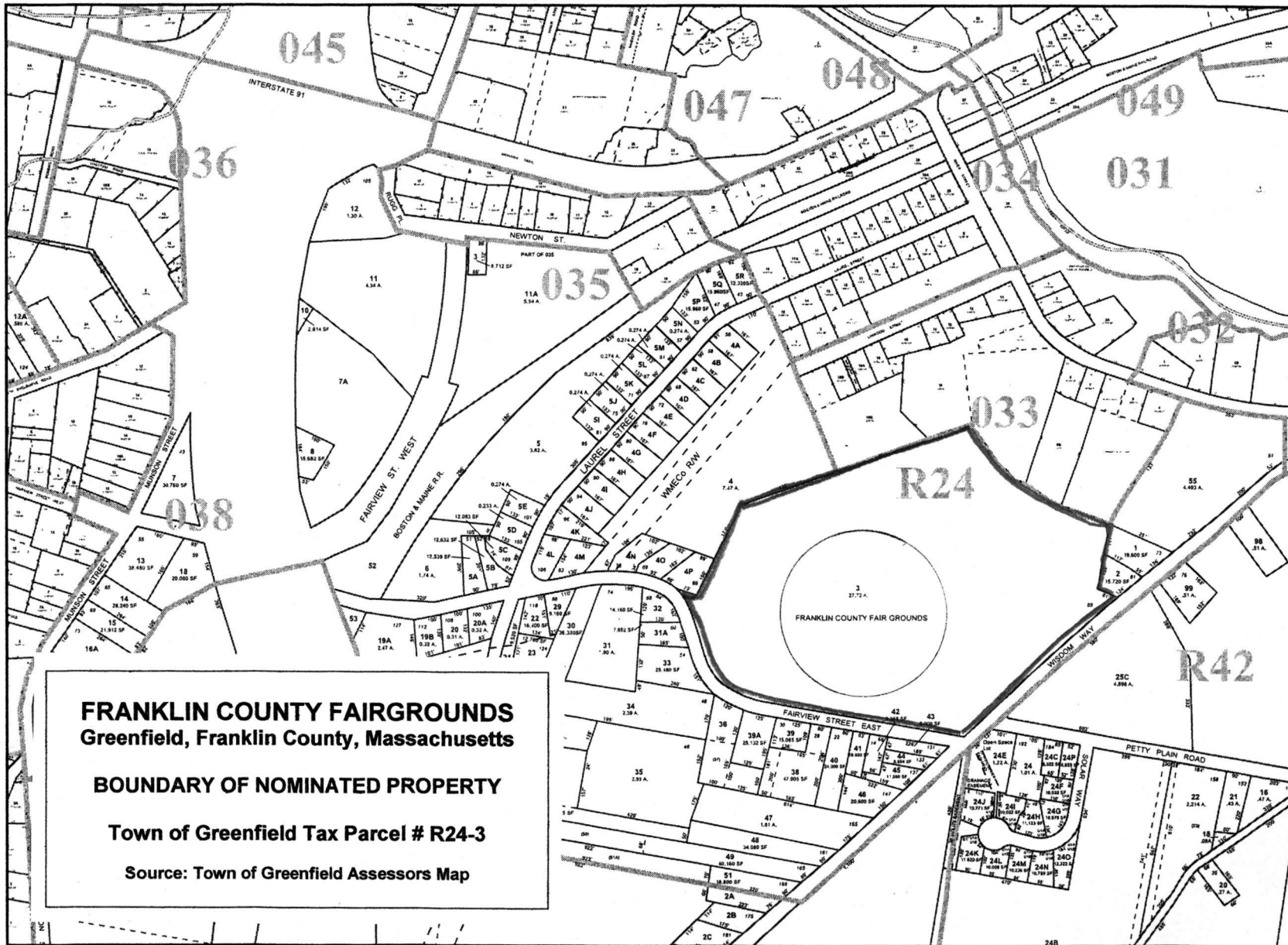


Fig. 4: Site plan. Letters with buildings relate to entries on property data list in Narrative description.



**FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**  
Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

**BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED PROPERTY**

**Town of Greenfield Tax Parcel # R24-3**

Source: Town of Greenfield Assessors Map

Greenfield, MA



Tax Map R24

**Legend**

- Streams
- Lot Line
- Former Lot Line
- Former ROW Line
- Lot Line / Edge of Water
- Right of Way Line
- Paper Street ROW
- Town Boundary
- Easement Line
- Map Sheet Edge
- 22** Map Lot #
- (22) Former Lot #
- 22** House Street #
- 2.2 A. or Area
- 22,222 SF (Acres or Square Feet)
- 022 Tax Map Sheet #

280 140 0 280 Feet  
1 inch equals 344 feet



Prepared by: Dept. of Planning & Development  
Data Sources: Town of Greenfield & MassGIS  
July 2008

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 1

**Narrative Description (continued)**

Next-oldest is the fairgrounds' entrance gate, built in 1917, again with the design and support of Frank O. Wells (FEATURE A, PHOTOS 1-3). The stuccoed wood-frame Mission-style building consists of two three-story towers with deep-eaved, hipped, tile roofs flanking a tile-roof archway and portcullis. Arched ticket windows are located at the base of the towers on the front and side walls, with doorways and second-story windows on the back walls. Ribbon windows are tucked under the eaves on all four sides of the third stories. Short, stuccoed wing walls extend from the side of the towers; they are topped by tile roofs. The south wall contains a doorway in the center, and there is a break in the north tower where a ticket window is located. A bronze plaque above the front ticket window on the northerly tower reads: "THIS ENTRANCE GATE ERECTED 1917 THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF FRANK O. WELLS PRESIDENT OF FRANKLIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, 1900-1904".

Exhibition buildings are concentrated near the entrance, with track-related buildings located at the western end of a wide midway running from the gate to the grandstand. The center stretch of the midway is reserved for permanent and temporary concession stands (Figs. 2-4). With the exception of the Roundhouse, exhibition buildings are generally long, rectangular buildings, one story in height, with gable roofs. Some of these buildings have side walls, others are open on one or more sides. In the latter instance, the buildings were designed to exhibit large farm animals, such as cows and cattle, horses, sheep, and swine (PHOTOS 9-12). Smaller domestic and wild animals are exhibited in walled buildings, and the "baby barn" was built for just that (PHOTO 6). The majority of walled buildings have wood novelty siding, although a few have vertical board siding, both with and without battens. None of the historic buildings have been altered with metal or vinyl sidings. Walled and open-sided buildings usually have wide entrances on the ends so fairgoers can walk through the exhibits, which are displayed or penned on the sides. Fenestration is randomly spaced on the exterior, reflecting varied interior functions; some buildings contain wide serving windows for food concessions that are shuttered when closed; some have counters cantilevered at the base.

A horse barn connected to the north entrance tower dates to the same time period, and it forms part of the perimeter wall at the gateway. Built ca. 1915, the walled barn has wood board-and-batten siding and two wide doors on the inside or west wall (FEATURE G, PHOTO 7). The southern end of this building has been reconfigured as the agricultural society's offices, and a museum has been installed in the remaining part. Adjacent to the north end of the horse barn, and continuing the gateway enclosure along Wisdom Way, is a sheep barn, a nonhistoric wood-frame building with corrugated metal siding (FEATURE H, PHOTOS 7-9). The west side of the barn is open for viewing penned animals within; it overlaps an older sheep barn (ca. 1950) at the northern extremity of the property (FEATURE I, PHOTO 8). Three nearly identical, long, open-sided buildings used for exhibiting cows are located west of the

**(continued)**

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 2

horse and sheep barns (FEATURES L, M & N, PHOTOS 10-11). They were constructed ca. 1910 and display barn construction techniques typical of that period (PHOTO 12). The cattle ring east of these buildings, where animals are judged, was covered by a steel canopy ca. 1985 (FEATURE J, PHOTO 9). North of the stall buildings, at the edge of the property, is another exhibition building in a more conventional barn form (FEATURE K, PHOTOS 10 & 11). Erected ca. 1940, it has three doors on the gable ends in the manner of a traditional New England barn, with side aisles for animal stalls and a central aisle for spectators.

There are three additional exhibition buildings located south of the Roundhouse: the Kiwanis Building, which was the location of 4-H exhibits when it was built (ca. 1950) and now houses a variety of displays; the Fish & Game Building, built at the same time, which continues to display wildlife; and the Baby Barn, a nonhistoric building erected ca. 1985 (PHOTO 6). The Kiwanis Building (FEATURE F) has numerous windows and a doorway on its front (west) façade, although it also has end doors in the conventional manner. It also contains food-service windows in the southwest corner. The Fish & Game Building (FEATURE D) has few windows consistent with the tanks and cages aligned along the long walls; there are end-wall entrances. Both buildings have exterior wood novelty siding, painted red with white trim, which associates them with the materials and colors of most of the other buildings on the property. The Baby Barn (FEATURE C, PHOTO 16) has a similar plan, but it is constructed with more contemporary methods using metal barn siding and roofing on a wood frame; large overhead doors are located on the ends.

A large exhibition building is located between the midway and the racetrack, in the midst of the concession area. Named for Stephen and George Dole who sponsored its construction ca. 1950, the large rectangular building has mostly blank side walls and end entrances (FEATURE S, PHOTO 14). There is a third entrance in the center of the north wall facing the midway, surmounted by a gable dormer and two louvered ventilators in the roof. Fair-related offices have been partitioned in the east end, where additional doors and windows are located. The fairgrounds experienced certain revitalizations in the 1950s, resulting in the construction of the preceding exhibition buildings and most of the existing concession buildings. All are characterized by their red-painted wood novelty siding and white-painted trim, which serves to unify the appearance of the fair buildings. Recent red metal roofs have been installed on a number of these buildings without diminishing their historic appearances.

The half-mile racetrack occupies the southern half of the fairgrounds; the oval measures 1,000 by 400 feet with a grassy infield trisected by service roads (FEATURE X, PHOTOS 16 & 18). The dirt track is approximately 40 feet wide and was designed for horse racing and training, although more motor vehicle events take place there presently. A track has been in this location since 1876, but as noted above, the existing track appears to have been realigned by 1895. A wood-frame grandstand dating to about that time was demolished ca. 1985 and replaced with the existing nonhistoric concrete and steel structure. Like its predecessor, the space under the stadium seating is enclosed for storage and/or exhibits. Large overhead doors are located at either end of the red steel-walled section, which resonates

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 3

with the design of the older exhibit buildings. Flanking the grandstand are steel bleachers mounted on concrete pads and without roof protection. A judging stand was located in the infield opposite the grandstand in typical racetrack fashion, but it was recently removed. Paved and unpaved staging areas are located nearby. The infield also contains a draw pit for horse- and oxen-team pull competitions (FEATURE BB, PHOTO 18). Although this is a historic fair event, the associated bleachers, fencing, and judges' stand are all of recent construction. Whether or not the draw pit is in a historic location is not known. The infield also contains a historic concession stand and three small non-historic buildings (FEATURES CC-FF, PHOTO 18). During fair times, the rest of the open infield is filled with temporary concessions and amusements.

Two additional related buildings are located at the western end of the racetrack. One is a scale building, constructed ca. 1930, containing a large platform beam scale for weighing fair animals (FEATURE Z, PHOTO 17). Large doors on the sides of the gable-roof, board-and-batten building, provide walk-through access to the scale. An extremely long wood-frame, metal-sided stable is located nearby at the western edge of the property (FEATURE AA, PHOTO 17). This nonhistoric building was erected in 1988, and has been leased to local riding clubs.

The final large category of fair buildings comprises the nine permanent concession stands, all but one of which are located along the north side of the midway (FEATURES O-R & T-W, PHOTOS 13-15). All are wood-frame construction and most have wood novelty siding, although two have been re-sided with grooved plywood sheet siding. Smaller ones have front-gable facades with single-shuttered serving windows; entrances are located on side walls so as not to interfere with customers (PHOTO 13). Larger stands have gable roofs with three or more service windows on their long sides and entrances on the gable ends (PHOTO 15). The largest concession stand is the Leyden Church Cafeteria, built ca. 1950; it has serving windows on its south and east sides, and a screened dining room wrapping around its north and west sides (FEATURE O, PHOTO 17).

As it currently exists, the Franklin County Fairgrounds represents a number of periods in its 140-year history. The site and its function are associated with its origination in 1876; however, no buildings or structures survive from this period, assuming the racetrack was reoriented and reconstructed based on its depictions on historic maps and a bird's-eye view. The oldest documented building is the Roundhouse, which was constructed in 1899, or 23 years after the fairgrounds opened. Over the next two decades, the Mission-style entrance gate, horse barn, and three cow-stall buildings were built. The fair expanded significantly in the 1950s, when three exhibition buildings appeared, including the enormous Dole Building. It was also in this period that most of the existing food concession stands were built by local food service establishments and charities. If there is a history of permanent concession stands before this period, it has not been documented; it likely indicates that food concessions became a prominent feature of county fairs in the Post-WW II Period. Two restroom facilities were also built in this era. In the 1980s the Grandstands, Stables, Cattle Show Ring shelter,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 4

and Baby Barn were built. These features are classified as noncontributing due to their recent construction. A more particular listing of the components of the fairgrounds is provided below.

FEATURE ID (see site plan)	BUILDING NAME	DESCRIPTION	DATE BUILT	RESOURCE TYPE	STATUS (contributing or non-contributing)	PHOTO NO.
	Fairgrounds	27.72-acre parcel with planned landscape containing buildings and structures supporting an agricultural fair, including a racetrack, grandstand, exhibition buildings and open space for temporary concessions	1876	Site	C	
A	Entrance Gate	Wood-frame gateway in Mission Style comprised of two tapered, 3-story, hipped-roof towers supporting segmental arch w/ gable roof, stucco exterior finish, clay tile roof; arched ticket windows on first story, doorways on westerly sides, ribbon windows under deep roof eaves, wood gate pocketed in arch when open; wing wall on S side. Bronze plaque on north tower reads: "This Entrance Gate Erected 1917 Through The Generosity Of Frank O. Wells President Of Franklin County Agricultural Society, 1900-1904."	1917	Building	C	1 2 3
B	Roundhouse	2-story wood-frame exhibition building, round plan, conical roof w/ lantern at top, wood novelty siding; entrance in front gable vestibules on NE and SW sides, square windows evenly spaced at top of wall under eaves; interior finished with gallery and stairs finished in rustic style. Wood plaque over NE entrance reads: "Designed & Built By Frank Orrin Wells - 1899 -"	1899	Building	C	2 3 4 5 16
C	Baby Barn	Wood-frame barn, front-gable metal roof, metal sheet on walls to imitate board-and-batten siding; metal overhead door on ends, windows w/ translucent fiberglass panels.	ca. 1985.	Building	NC	16
D	Fish & Game Building	1-story wood-frame exhibition building, metal gable roof (replacement) w/ louvered ventilator in center, wood novelty siding; entrances w/ overhead doors on ends, limited fenestration; interior has fish tanks on one side and animal cages on the other side of a center aisle.	ca. 1950	Building	C	6
E	Bathroom Building	1-story wood-frame service building, metal gable roof (replacement), wood novelty siding; entrances into men and women sections on gable ends shielded by panels.	ca. 1950	Building	C	

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 5

F	Kiwanis Building	1-story wood-frame exhibition building, metal gable roof (replacement) w/ louvered ventilator in center, wood novelty siding; entrances w/ overhead doors on ends, NW façade contains 2 large 6-pane windows, entrance w/ overhead door, and concession window (second concession window around corner on SW end; interior contains open exhibition room and concession stand in SW corner).	ca. 1950	Building	C	6
G	Old Horse Barn	1-story wood-frame stable building now used for offices and a museum, gable metal roof w/ shed extension on W side, wood board-and-batten siding; office entrance & flanking windows on S end, museum entrance centered on W side, additional doorway at N end.	ca. 1915	Building	C	7
H	Sheep Barn	1-story wood-frame shed building, corrugated metal gable roof, corrugated metal siding on three walls, W side completely open.	ca. 1985	Building	NC	7 8 9
I	Old Sheep Barn	1-story wood-frame shed building, asphalt gable roof, wood novelty siding; 4 bays on S façade, W bay enclosed, E bay under roof of Sheep Barn (H) built over it.	ca. 1950	Building	C	8
J	Cattle Show Ring	Open-walled steel-frame building, metal roof.	ca. 1985	Building	NC	9
K	Exhibition Barn	Wood-frame barn, metal-front gable (replacement), wood novelty siding; large central door flanked by smaller ones on E façade, 3 doors on W façade.	ca. 1940	Building	C	10 11
L	Cow Stall Building I	Wood-frame open-sided shed building, raised seam metal gable roof, T-111 plywood sheet siding; stalls enclosed on sides between exterior posts, center aisle for viewing. Building rehabilitated ca. 1990.	ca. 1910	Building	C	10 11 12
M	Cow Stall Building II	Wood-frame open-sided shed building, raised seam metal gable roof, T-111 plywood sheet siding; stalls enclosed on sides between exterior posts, center aisle for viewing. Building rehabilitated ca. 1990.	ca. 1910	Building	C	11
N	Cow Stall Building III	Wood-frame open-sided shed building, raised seam metal gable roof, T-111 plywood sheet siding; stalls enclosed on sides between exterior posts, center aisle for viewing. Building rehabilitated ca. 1990.	ca. 1910	Building	C	11
O	Leyden Church Cafeteria	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt gable roof, wood novelty siding; service windows on three sides, screened outdoor eating area on W.	ca. 1950	Building	C	13
P	Oak Ridge Detachment U.S. Marine Corps League Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, metal gable roof, T-111 plywood sheet siding (replacement); service window on S side.	ca. 1950	Building	C	13

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 6

Q	Robbins Church Apple Pie Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt front gable roof, wood vertical board siding; service window on S end, doorway on E side.	ca. 1955	Building	C	13
R	Bernardston Kiwanis Club Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt front gable roof, wood novelty siding; service window on S end, doorway on E side.	ca. 1950	Building	C	13
S	Dole Building	1-story wood-frame exhibition building, metal gable roof (replacement) w/ 2 louvered ventilators, wood novelty siding; entrances w/ garage doors on E & W ends and centered on N façade surmounted by gable dormer.	ca. 1950	Building	C	14
T	Gourmet Catering Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt gable roof, wood vertical board siding; 3 service windows on S façade, entrance on E end.	ca. 1955	Building	C	15
U	Four Leaf Clover (Bernardston) Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt gable roof, wood novelty siding; 4 service windows on S façade, entrance on E end.	ca. 1955	Building	C	15
V	Rotary Club of Franklin County Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt gable roof, wood T-111 plywood sheet siding; 3 service windows on S façade, entrance on E end.	ca. 1950	Building	C	15
W	Greenfield Lions Club Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt gable roof, wood novelty siding; 3 service windows on S façade, counter, gable dormer, entrance on E end.	ca. 1950	Building	C	15
X	Grandstand & Bleachers	Steel-frame entertainment seating building on concrete base, raised-seam metal gable roof, raised-seam metal siding in imitation of board-and-batten siding; open sides on south half, concrete steps w/ benches; large overhead doors on north, east, & west walls of enclosed north side; sets of fixed steel-frame bleachers on concrete pads on either side.	ca. 1985	Building	NC	16 18
Y	Bathroom & Showers Building	1-story concrete-block service building, asphalt cross-gable roof; front-gable front façade, brick veneer, separate entrances into men's & women's sections; showers in cross-wing section on SW side w/ separate entrances.	ca. 1950	Building	C	
Z	Scale Building	1-story wood-frame service building, metal gable roof, wood vertical board siding; large entrances on east and west sides aligned with scale within.	ca. 1930	Building	C	17

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 7 page: 7

AA	Stables Building	1-story wood-frame barn building, 3 sections w/ metal gable roofs, center section slightly taller; front façade of each section contains a large door and strings of stall windows placed high on the walls.	1988	Building	NC	17
BB	Draw Pit w/Bleachers & Judges Stand	Dirt competition area w/ chain-link fence & metal bleachers on sides; wood-frame judges stand.	ca. 1990	Structure Building	NC NC	18
CC	Jan's Concession Stand	1-story wood-frame food service building, asphalt cross gable roof, wood novelty siding; 3 service windows on N façade, entrance in rear ell.	ca. 1955	Building	C	18
DD	Storage Building I	1-story wood-frame manufactured shed building, asphalt gambrel roof, wood T-111 plywood sheet siding, entrance on side.	ca. 2000	Building	NC	18
EE	Storage Building I	1-story wood-frame manufactured shed building, asphalt gambrel roof, wood T-111 plywood sheet siding, entrance on side.	ca. 2000	Building	NC	18
FF	Transformer Building	1-story concrete-block service building, asphalt shed roof, entrance on W side	ca. 1980	Building	NC	18
GG	Race Track	Wide dirt oval, grass infield.	ca. 1890	Structure	C	16,18
HH	Midway	Wide pedestrian walkway, paved with asphalt.	ca. 1910	Structure	C	13 14 15

### Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites have been identified on the fairgrounds, sites may be present. Ten ancient sites are located in the general area (within one mile); most located on floodplains and upland terraces bordering the Green and Deerfield Rivers. Environmental characteristics of the fairgrounds represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The fairgrounds are located on an excessively drained, level to moderately sloping glaciofluvial terrace in close proximity to wetlands. The Green River is located within 1,000 feet north of the fairgrounds. The confluence of the Green and Deerfield Rivers is located approximately one-half mile to the southeast. The Deerfield River converges with the Connecticut River approximately 1½ miles east of the fairgrounds. Given the above information, the size of the district (approximately 27.72 acres), and known patterns of Native American settlement in the Connecticut River Valley, a high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources at the Fairgrounds. An archaeological survey is needed to determine the effects of historic land use on the integrity of potential Native American resources.

A high potential also exists for the recovery of historic archaeological resources on the fairgrounds property. Structural evidence and construction features may survive from a grandstand, judges stand, one or more exhibition buildings, and an observation tower known to exist on the property shortly after the fairgrounds was moved to its present location in 1876. None of these buildings are extant today.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

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Section number: 7 page: 8

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Stratigraphic evidence may also exist from the original design of the race track and later possible reconstructions. An 1895 map of Greenfield shows the racetrack in its current location. Structural evidence may exist from a large wooden building, also shown on the 1895 map, which was recently replaced by a building constructed of concrete and steel. Several buildings, no longer extant, are shown on the backstretch where the third turn parallels Wisdom Way. Structural evidence of outbuildings may also survive on the fairgrounds property. Archaeological evidence of occupational-related features (trash areas, privies, wells) may also survive on the fairgrounds property.

**(end)**

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

**Period of Significance**

1876 – 1961

**Significant Dates**

1876 – first year at this location

1899 – Roundhouse exhibit building built

1917 – Gateway entrance built

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Frank Orrin Wells

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Frank Orrin Wells

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance was established to bracket the historical period during which the Franklin County Agricultural Society has sponsored their annual fair on the property from 1876 to 1961. The latter date was selected to bring the period up to within 50 years of present time. No features constructed since 1961 have been determined to have exceptional significance.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is historically and architecturally significant as one of the oldest, largest, and most intact fairgrounds in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It has been on its current site in Greenfield since 1876; by then the Franklin County Fair was in its 26<sup>th</sup> year. Initiated in 1850, the fair is the fourth-oldest continuously operating fair in Massachusetts—only the Topsfield Fair (1818), the Three-County Fair in Northampton (1818), and the Barnstable County Fair in Falmouth (1844), are older. Franklin County farmers had been organized since 1818, the year the Massachusetts legislature authorized the creation of agricultural societies around the state. As a consequence of new state funding for premiums offered to “qualifying” agricultural societies, they associated with farmers from neighboring Hampshire and Hampden counties to form an agricultural society, which organized the first Three-County Fair in Northampton in 1818. Feeling underappreciated in the three-county association, Franklin County farmers separated from the larger group and organized an independent agricultural society in 1848, holding a cattle show on the Greenfield town common that same year. The Franklin County Fair has been sponsored from 1850 to the current day by the Franklin County Agricultural Society. The nominated property has been the site of the Franklin County Fair since 1876, when the society purchased the land with an existing racetrack. The track is one of three notable design features on the site, the others being an unusual cylindrical exhibition building known as the Roundhouse, built in 1899, and a Mission-style entrance arch erected in 1917. The Roundhouse evinces the progressive design of round and central-plan barns, but it was conceived and designed as a non-animal exhibition building. Both the Roundhouse and entrance arch were designed and sponsored by Greenfield businessman Frank Orrin Wells. A few exhibition buildings and the arrangement of the site with its racetrack, midway, and exhibition and concession areas also date to this period. The Franklin County Fairgrounds is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A for its historic and persistent association with Connecticut Valley and hilltown agricultural history, Criterion B for its association with Frank Orrin Wells, and Criterion C for the distinction and integrity of its site and structures.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)Agriculture

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is significant in the history of agriculture for the role it played in the organized movement for agricultural improvement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as for providing information and incentives to farmers to adopt progressive agricultural practices. Elkanah Watson introduced the first agricultural fair in nearby Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1810, and in 1818, the Massachusetts legislature authorized the incorporation of agricultural societies to promote agricultural improvements, at the same time allocating funds to be provided as premiums. Local and county agricultural societies offered other forms of assistance to farmers, but their principal activity was organizing annual fairs for farmers and farm communities to assemble, share ideas, and bond together in common effort. Fairgrounds began to proliferate soon after, and eventually develop into a statewide farm network that continues to this day. Franklin County farmers participated in one of the first fairs to be opened in Massachusetts in 1818 as members of the Three-County Agricultural Society, with farmers from neighboring Hampshire and Hampden counties. Franklin County separated from this association in 1848, and started its own agricultural society and fair at that time. The society found a permanent site for the fair on Petty Plain in 1876, and it has operated there continuously ever since.

Architecture

Agricultural fairgrounds are characterized by a number of historic features. First of all, they are defined by a large open space where farmers could display their animals in pens, and, later, permanent shelters. In addition, farm suppliers, merchants, hawkers, and other concessionaires occupied makeshift booths spread throughout the area. The fairgrounds also had to be large enough for hundreds of spectators to assemble and park their vehicles. Exhibition buildings were constructed to display farm produce, foodstuffs, and products of domestic manufacture. As was the case with the Roundhouse at the Franklin County Fairgrounds, exhibition buildings doubled as dining halls, indicating that food service was an early component of the fair experience. Animals and many types of farm and home production were exhibited to be judged, and arenas with judges' stands were created for this purpose. Racetracks were introduced to provide an area for judging animals and for parades and horse racing, which were popular forms of rural entertainment. Grandstands

were constructed to provide spectators with elevated seating to observe both functions. The existing grandstand on the Franklin County Fairgrounds has replaced an earlier building constructed soon after the site was opened in 1876. Over time, other more specialized and more permanent buildings became common for exhibiting animals and other farm and home production, as well as stands for food and other concessions. In the western Massachusetts towns where workhorse competitions were (and still are) popular, draw pits with their own spectator stands were common. The existing draw pit in the infield of the racetrack was constructed recently.

### Entertainment & Recreation

Nineteenth-century agricultural fairs, just as their Medieval European predecessors, were as much a form of community entertainment and recreation as they were motivators for farm improvement. It was a major late-summer event in rural society, and one of the most universal gatherings of the entire year. Community members from all walks of life convened to celebrate the seasonal harvest, farmers' hard work, and local pride of place. While exhibits were a main attraction, the fair offered a range of entertainments including food and refreshments, viewing vendors' wares, races and competitions, musical and theatrical performances, and carnival shows and rides.

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### **Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

The Franklin County Fair emerged at the dawn of what one historian has termed "the golden age of the agricultural fair,"<sup>2</sup> and at a time when the expected arrival of railroads in Franklin County presented both a promise and a threat to farmers there. What was probably the first cattle show in the county—the direct ancestor of the county fair—took place in Greenfield in 1848, a year before the Franklin County Agricultural Society was formed and three years after the state had granted a charter to extend rail service from Northampton to Greenfield. In the same year that the cattle show emerged the state also chartered the Troy & Greenfield Railroad.

The railroad opened new markets for Franklin County farm products, and made it far easier to transport both agricultural goods and livestock. "Railroads are beginning to do for Franklin County what they have long since done for more favored sections of the commonwealth," the committee formed to consider creating a county agricultural society observed in 1849. "The walls of separation between us and the great marts of trade and centers of business are being broken down and we are beginning to assume our proper position among the sisterhood of counties."<sup>3</sup>

However, the nation's fast-growing rail system also brought to the East products from the West's farms; farmers feared, rightly, that western farm products would inundate the East, force down the prices that their own products could command, and would quite likely force changes in what and how they farmed. Thus to farmers and those whose livelihood depended in part upon agricultural prosperity, formal organization must have seemed imperative both to prepare to meet new market demands and to counter western competition.

Industrial and commercial men, some of them gentlemen farmers, founded the agricultural society in large part because the group to which they then belonged—the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society—underrepresented, and thus undervalued, the agricultural achievements of Franklin County. According to historian Robert Kaldenbach, few Franklin County people were awarded premiums at that society's annual Three-County Fair in Northampton, even though more farmers lived in Franklin than in Hampshire County.<sup>4</sup> The 1849 committee declared that the Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society had become "strictly a Hampshire Society," and noted that Franklin County participation in that organization "has long since ceased to be anything more than a nominal affair." In addition, Franklin County farmers in a pre-railroad age found it difficult and time-consuming to attend, especially to drive herds of livestock to the annual Northampton event.

The Hampshire, Franklin, and Hampden Agricultural Society was formed in 1818, the year in which the state legislature authorized the creation of such organizations and offered those that met its financial and demographic requirements a subsidy to be used to award prizes, or premiums, for outstanding agricultural and domestic achievement. To qualify for the subsidy, a county had to have at least 25,000 residents, and the prospective society had to accumulate at least \$1,000

<sup>2</sup> Kenyon L. Butterfield quoted in Wayne Caldwell Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 81.

<sup>3</sup> *Greenfield Gazette and Courier*, 23 October 1849.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair: The First 150 Years* (Greenfield: Franklin County Agricultural Society, 1998), 7.

in order to match state funds.<sup>5</sup> In 1818 Franklin County, which had been carved from Hampshire County seven years earlier, met the population requirement, but it was still the most sparsely settled county in the state, and it is possible that raising the necessary capital was not then feasible.

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<sup>5</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 6.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 1

Statement of Significance (continued)

Developmental history/additional historic context information (continued)

The Three-County Fair was first held in 1818, just eight years after Albany merchant Elkanah Watson had initiated the first agricultural fair in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Though the roots of American agricultural fairs extend to medieval Europe, Watson's Berkshire County fair was the first to combine, in one event, all the disparate features of European and earlier American fairs and markets. The so-called "Berkshire Model" of the agricultural fair aimed to offer, as historian J. Ritchie Garrison has noted, "an educational forum for progressive husbandry, a showcase for local businesses, and entertainment for thousands of rural people."<sup>1</sup> Watson's earliest Berkshire County fairs included a cattle show, a parade including large teams of oxen, an agricultural ball, an address to farmers, and displays of livestock, fruits and vegetables, farm implements, and "domestic manufacturers"—useful and often decorative goods that farm families made—with prizes awarded in these and other categories.<sup>2</sup>

Elkanah Watson claimed that by 1819 all New England counties except those in Rhode Island had formed agricultural societies, but from 1823 to 1839 no new societies were created—in large part, historian Wayne Neely has argued, because the connection between hinterland and markets was difficult and poorly developed, and the corresponding interest in improvement lacking.<sup>3</sup> But the growth of urban areas and the increasing reach of the rail system, coupled with significant agricultural inventions in the 1830s—including Cyrus McCormick's reaper and John Deere's steel plow—began to present both the possibility and the need for increased productivity to satisfy expected market demand. It is within this framework that the Franklin County Agricultural Society was formed.

As Garrison has pointed out, Franklin County farmers had been involved in urban markets from the early 1800s, particularly in livestock. Farmers in the upland towns in the western part of the county had been selling beef cattle fed on their plentiful pastureland to farmers in the Connecticut Valley towns, who fattened them and drove them to markets in Boston and Springfield. Franklin County farmers also had large herds of sheep that provided wool for the growing textile industry. Garrison has noted that upland farmers produced more butter and cheese than the average household consumed, suggesting that surpluses were bound for sale in more populous places. Farmers throughout the county had raised broom corn for the local production of brooms marketed in Northeast and eastern Canadian cities.<sup>4</sup> However, fattening

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ritchie Garrison, *Landscape and Material Life in Franklin County, Massachusetts, 1770-1860* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Neely, *Agricultural Fair*, 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>4</sup> Garrison, *Material Life*, 55-56, 59-60, 65-67, 73-74, 79-80, 86.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 2

cattle and growing broom corn were no longer profitable for most area farmers by the time the Franklin County Agricultural Society was formed, and though raising cattle remained the centerpiece of the county's agricultural economy, farmers sought to develop new products and processes to use this resource.

The Franklin County Fair emerged from a cattle show that had taken place in Greenfield in 1848. According to local histories, 102 men in the county issued a notice of the coming fair and a call for participation in it. "We therefore agree to have a Cattle show or exhibition of all kinds of animals and agricultural products, to be had at Greenfield on Thursday the Ninth day of November, inst., at 10 o'clock in the forenoon," the subscribers noted, "hoping that this may be the commencement and entering wedge for the establishment of a permanent and annual Cattle show in our County."<sup>5</sup> The "commonly accepted story," according to local historian Lucy Cutler Kellogg, is that 100 pairs of cattle were shown around the Greenfield common. The 1848 show, and another in 1849, stimulated the creation of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, which sponsored its first cattle show and fair on 25 September 1850.

Both the 1848 and the 1850 cattle shows appear to have been initiated by men of means in Franklin County. Local historians have noted that most of the founders of the Franklin County Agricultural Society were investors in the Troy & Greenfield Railroad, and that none were farmers. Indeed, the founders group was composed largely of attorneys and manufacturers, but some industrialists, such as barrel manufacturer David R. Wait, had a vested interest in both agriculture and other commercial opportunities that a railroad could help create. In addition, a significant few were farmers. George Grinnell, among the organizers of the 1848 show, and Henry W. Clapp, first president of the agricultural society, both turned to farming late in life, after having accumulated considerable wealth in other fields. Grinnell (1786-1877), who was born and died in Greenfield, was a Dartmouth College graduate, a successful lawyer, and from 1824 to 1838 a representative to the state and federal legislatures. Upon his return to Greenfield in 1839 he resumed his law practice, but also began working his father's farm. By 1860, according to that year's federal agricultural census, Grinnell had a farm of 80 acres, only ten of which were unimproved, \$660 worth of livestock, and crops of hay, rye, wheat, corn, and potatoes. He had an orchard producing \$100 worth of fruit, and from his ten dairy cows he produced 125 pounds of butter.

Assessed at \$15,000, Grinnell's farm was then the third most valuable in Greenfield; Henry W. Clapp's farm was the second highest in value. Clapp, born in Greenfield ca. 1798, earned significant income from the manufacture of jewelry in New York City, and retired when he was only 37 years old. He thereupon returned to Greenfield, where he became the largest town investor in the Northampton-to-Greenfield rail

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<sup>5</sup> Lucy Cutler Kellogg, *History of Greenfield 1900-1929, Being Volume III of the Town's History* (Greenfield: Town of Greenfield, 1931), 1750.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 3

line and a partner in the John Russell Manufacturing Company, later the largest producer of cutlery in Massachusetts. By 1860 Clapp owned 140 acres, 100 of which were classed as improved land. Neither Grinnell nor Clapp were the town's greatest producers of any agricultural commodity, though he produced 800 pounds of butter—more than most farmers in town, but substantially less than the highest producers. Clapp had a modest collection of livestock and unremarkable production of corn, hay, and orchard products. Grinnell was solidly average in output as well. Their farms were of roughly average size compared to other Greenfield farmers; thus their value seems to have been largely in the quality of the land they occupied. Grinnell and Clapp were men on the model of Elkanah Watson, who had made his fortune in Albany commerce and established his Pittsfield farm to experiment in agricultural innovation.

Through 1875, the Franklin County Agricultural Society fair was staged in numerous locations. The display of farm tools and products was in Washington Hall on Main Street in Greenfield, the officers and members of the society met at the Second Congregational Church, the "agricultural dinner" took place at the American House hotel, and the plowing match was on the farm of Alfred Wells.<sup>6</sup> In 1856, an estimated 6-8,000 people attended the fair at its various sites, including a large number of fairgoers who had filled eight cars of a train from Worcester.

As early as 1856, the Franklin County fair had become even more dispersed. According to Kaldenbach, the livestock exhibits all took place on the Petty Plain, an elevated section south of the town center on the Deerfield border, on a tract built by an association of local trotting enthusiasts, the Greenfield Trotting Course.<sup>7</sup> In 1860, the society consolidated most of the fair activities on ten acres it acquired south of Main Street. An 1871 map of the town shows a new oval racecourse on the tract marked "Agricultural Grounds" on the north side of the Green River, and there it remained until the Troy & Greenfield Railroad routed its line over the parcel. In addition, the growth of Greenfield's downtown began to crowd the fairgrounds, which itself had become too small to accommodate the fair's increasing popularity.

In 1876, the Franklin County Agricultural Society sold its fairgrounds to the railroad and acquired several Petty Plain tracts, including 33 acres from the farmer James Newton.<sup>8</sup> Kaldenbach has stated that by that same year the fairgrounds included seven barns as well as an untold number of livestock pens and sheds, a water tank, an oval track, a judge's stand, and a grandstand that could seat 1,000 people and that featured a dining hall, kitchen, and ladies' sitting room in a space beneath the seats.<sup>9</sup> An 1877 bird's-eye view of Greenfield shows six buildings, three of them long and undoubtedly barns, the oval track, a stand

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<sup>6</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 61. The relation, if any, between Alfred and Frank O. Wells is unknown.

<sup>7</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 17, 20.

<sup>8</sup> Newton's holdings were considerable; the 1880 agricultural census shows that after the sale he owned 197 acres, more than half of it woodland.

<sup>9</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 20-21. *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society*, 1897 (Greenfield: E. A. Hall & Co., [1898]), states that at that time the grounds included a 1,200-seat grandstand with a dining room beneath it, but the language does not establish whether the grandstand had been built in 1897 or earlier.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 4

of seven trees, and what appears to be a judge's stand inside the track, a board fence surrounding the ground with an arched gateway near the site of the current gate, and what may be a grove along the north side. Aside from two other trees bordering the track, the fairgrounds is depicted as an open, treeless space. No grandstand is shown in this view.<sup>10</sup> Though most of the fair's events were staged at this site, the exhibits of farm goods, farm tools, and domestic manufactures continued to be housed in Washington Hall, about a mile from the grounds, until the Roundhouse was built in 1899.<sup>11</sup>

The Franklin County Fair was established on the Berkshire model and aimed to achieve the same goals. Primary among them was the display of agricultural improvement at all levels, and the diffusion of information about and practical interest in them. In their newspaper notice for the 1848 cattle show, the organizers stated their interest in "promoting the Agricultural and other interests of the County and vicinity," and their belief that "an exhibition of Cattle and other stock, and the various products of the farm and garden, will have a direct tendency" to do so by "stimulating and exciting a spirit of emulation among all classes of citizens, to improve the breed of cattle and other stock, etc."<sup>12</sup> In 1867, the society's commitment to improvement took the form of an endowed scholarship to the four-year-old "Amherst Agricultural College" for Edwin D. Nash of Northfield, who was already a student there. And in 1889 the "Report of Hall Exhibition" in the agricultural society's annual transactions asserted that while the display certainly delivered "pleasure and gratification," its primary aim "is, or should be, to elevate the tastes by the exhibition, and thus induce others to try and see what they can do."<sup>13</sup>

In these years, especially before the development of the land grant college system in 1862, the agricultural society was viewed as perhaps the most valuable institution in the general advancement of farming. In the early national period these societies tended to be composed only of educated and affluent men, and in the 1810s, Neely has stated, Elkanah Watson "had witnessed the comparative failures of the early learned agricultural societies to enlist the interests of the working farmers."<sup>14</sup> With a spate of new societies formed beginning in the late 1830s, however, at least one observer asserted that the agricultural society did more to improve farming than formal education. In his address to farmers at the 1867 Franklin County Fair, George F. Loring of Salem declared that "agricultural societies have constituted the most useful agricultural school for the last century. . . . An agricultural school can be no more than a collection of intelligent gentlemen, devoted to sciences as a guide to agriculture, and engaged in cultivating a single farm according to the best known principles." But its usefulness, Loring argued, "must depend upon a wide-spread community of farmers for the last grand process of proving and diffusing its theories." Loring asserted, "The facts discovered in the field by the diligent cultivator are often of more practical value than those laid down by the student in his closet."

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<sup>10</sup> *View of Greenfield, Mass. 1877* (Boston: O. H. Bailey and Co., 1877).

<sup>11</sup> Kellogg, *History of Greenfield*, 1751.

<sup>12</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society 1889* (Greenfield: E. A. Hall and Co., n.d.), 11.

<sup>14</sup> Neely, *Agricultural Fair*, 65.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 5

The agricultural societies depended in turn upon their annual fairs to present and encourage the spread of these principles to area farmers who, though some may have read about them in farm journals, were much more influenced by seeing firsthand and talking with other farmers about a new livestock breed or type of farm machinery that would make their work easier and more productive. The impetus of agricultural improvement was clear in advertising for the 1850 fair. The agricultural society's poster for that fair listed all classes of livestock, goods, and products in which premiums (cash prizes) would be offered and sought in particular entries of hoes, manure forks, spades, plows, cultivators, scythe snathes (the shaft or handle), rakes, hay forks, shovels, and yokes for oxen. The poster also announced that the society would award a ten-dollar premium to the "best plantation of white oak trees, raised from the acorn," and eight dollars for the best apple orchard.

Machinery for both the farm and the home was regularly exhibited at the fair. In 1874, the Greenfield Tool Company exhibited planes and other woodworking tools, as did the Millers Falls Company, and one Rowe man exhibited a washing machine, a frequent entry in 19<sup>th</sup>-century fairs. The display of agricultural machinery was often thin. At the 1889 fair, only two mowers, a pulverizing harrow, a horse rake, and a reaper were entered. The fair transactions noted, "It is a matter of regret that so few entries were made in this class, as it is the time when farmers should have a chance to compare the different implements and study their points of excellence with judgment unbiased by the talk of any particular agent."<sup>15</sup>

The gentlemen farmers, who had the means and leisure to experiment with new breeds, new seed strains, and new machinery, were among those who took the lead in attempting to spur broad agricultural improvement. In the early 1850s, according to Kellogg, "with a single exception, it was claimed that all the cattle in Franklin County were 'Short-horns,'" which had been introduced from England into Massachusetts in 1817, and were valued both as beef and dairy cattle. At the 1867 Franklin County Fair, James S. Grinnell, the son of George Grinnell, and former chief clerk of both the federal Department of Agriculture and Patent Office, exhibited the first locally owned Ayrshires ever shown in that venue. Ayrshires, known as superior dairy cows, were first imported to Windsor, Connecticut in 1822, and thrived in the soils and climate of New England, conditions similar to those in their native Scotland. As urban markets for dairy products grew more profitable, the Ayrshire and other high milk producers were more liberally represented at the annual fair. The 1867 committee on stock admitted that judges at earlier fairs had dismissed the Jersey as "not a good looking cow" and that premiums were not awarded even to superior specimens of the breed. But by 1867, the committee stated, "the lovers of good butter" should have been gratified that Jerseys were beginning to become a larger proportion of county herds. "The cow is really our step-mother," the agricultural society's committee on stock reported that year, "and no beast kept in the County is more profitable than the cow, with butter and cheese at the present prices."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society 1889* (Greenfield: E. A. Hall and Co., n.d.).

<sup>16</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society for the Year 1867* (Greenfield: Franklin Book and Job Printing Office, 1868).

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 6

Grinnell fit the gentleman farmer model in every respect. His entry of Ayrshires in the 1867 fair in fact took place while he was in federal government service in Washington, and could only have been a part-time farmer. After his return to Greenfield to take care of his parents in 1876, one area historian wrote, Grinnell "has devoted his time wholly to agricultural matters." This 1879 account noted that Grinnell worked the farm "cultivated by his grandfather one hundred years ago" and there demonstrated "by practical farming his knowledge in that most ancient and honorable occupation." The biography noted that Grinnell had a "rich agricultural library," and had been among the judges of agricultural machinery at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. "In the amount of labor performed, and in the extent of his knowledge and influence, his position is properly at the head of the agricultural interest in Massachusetts."<sup>17</sup>

Well before his introduction of Ayrshires to the fair, James S. Grinnell was a key exhibitor. He was secretary and later president of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, and at its first cattle show he joined the prosperous Charlemont farmers Hart and Roger H. Leavitt and "many of the most prominent Shelburne farmers" in the oxen display. In 1867, he was one of three who showed thoroughbred cattle in an overall "splendid exhibition" of herds, and his father exhibited fourteen varieties of pears and won first premium for overall garden vegetables. George Grinnell's wife took first premium in pears.<sup>18</sup> Another entering thoroughbreds in that fair was Josiah Fogg of Deerfield, a New Hampshire native who had worked in the crockery business in several southern cities and in Cleveland before moving to the Connecticut Valley. Fogg bought a farm and "commenced farming in earnest." By that year, the 1879 history noted, Fogg was considered "one of the most prominent farmers and stock-raisers in New England. His barn, when built, was considered one of the finest in the state."<sup>19</sup> In 1870, according to the federal census, Fogg's Deerfield farm was worth \$20,000 dollars, and his household included two domestic servants and three farm laborers.

The award of premiums was not restricted to men of means and agricultural education, but covered a wide swath of the county's population. At the 1852 fair, so many county people won premiums that it took three months of the weekly newspaper to publish all their names.<sup>20</sup> In 1867, there were 340 "hall exhibits" at the fair; in 1874, 242; and in 1889, nearly 800 entries, nearly 350 of which won premiums.<sup>21</sup> Livestock entries in 1874 included 69 head of oxen organized into four town teams, 114 cows, 165 head of cattle in eight herds, and 462 sheep. The premiums signified not only the fair's interest in improvement, but its aim to showcase the best that the rural economy had to offer. As Neely noted, "It is only at the fair that

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<sup>17</sup> *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1879), 1: 129-30.

<sup>18</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society for the Year 1867* (Greenfield: Franklin Book and Job Printing Office, 1868), 31-37.

<sup>19</sup> *History of the Connecticut Valley*, 2: 608-9.

<sup>20</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Transactions 1867; Twenty-Fifth Annual Report Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society for 1874* (Greenfield: Franklin Printing Office: Field & Hall, 1874); *Transactions 1889*, 11.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 7

collective achievement, relatively speaking, is made the subject of popular interest and vivid demonstration.”<sup>22</sup> Men exhibited furniture and other handcrafts; women entered bread and both plain and fancy articles for the home—handmade linen towels, quilts, carpets and rugs, oil paintings, and waxwork. “The many beautiful things brought in by the ladies of the County simply testify to the fact of improved civilization, and a higher standard of thought and refinement existing in our homes,” the 1889 report stated. The hall exhibits demonstrated the often-unheralded achievements of rural women, and in fact offered the only forum for such a display.

Still, however widespread the participation, the fair may not have represented a cross-section of the county’s rural achievement. The 1889 report hints as much: “It is wonderful to view the beautiful articles brought in for exhibition by the ladies of the County,” it noted, “or that portion of it that is accustomed to contribute of their products for our annual fair.” It is worth noting as well, that at least according to selected fair reports, some of the largest farmers in Greenfield—the town that was most active in the various competitions and that often earned the greatest part of the total premium—either did not enter livestock or products or received no premiums if they did. John Thayer, for example, had the largest herd of milking cows in Greenfield in 1860 and 1880, and produced the largest amount of butter of all Greenfield farmers in 1860, but in the 1867 transactions his name is not among the list of seven premium winners in dairy, “milch,” and stock cows. In the same 1860 agricultural census, Joseph Felton and Frank Mather had the largest sheep herds but won no premium in any sheep class in 1867.

By highlighting the best in the rural economy, agricultural societies and their proponents hoped to instill an interest in agriculture among younger generations who had shown the tendency to abandon New England farming for western lands and industrial and urban occupations. The “grand object” of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, the 1867 transactions stated, was not only “the improvement of our stock” but also “the cultivation of a love for agricultural pursuits” especially “among our young people.”<sup>23</sup> The speaker at the agricultural dinner of 1850 argued that “Massachusetts alone might sustain twice her [population] if all her improvable land should be cultivated . . . if her young men, who seek a freer and more easily cultivated soil in the west, or who waste their energies in cities with the idle expectation of a rapid fortune in mercantile pursuits, would . . . reclaim her bog meadows and make some of her rough places plain.”<sup>24</sup> The committee on stock stated similarly in 1867:

The gist of the matter is, don’t let our boys and girls learn from us that we are ashamed of our business, that farming is degrading, dirty work, and that we long for some higher sphere in which to move. But contrawise, let us show them that we love our calling, that we will ennoble it and honor it, and we do not desire to exchange the farm and its toils

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<sup>22</sup> Neely, *Agricultural Fair*, 230.

<sup>23</sup> *Transactions* 1867, 38.

<sup>24</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 12.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 8

and its independence, for any of the tempting professions, the ‘glittering generalities’ which so easily take with children and *weak minded* men.<sup>25</sup>

The Franklin County Fair, like all other agricultural fairs, also aimed to be an important social venue—or, as Loring put it, “a jubilee for our agricultural people.” In its earliest years, the agricultural fairs were viewed as antidotes to isolation, and even after improved transportation and communication made isolation less a feature of rural life, the fairs still ranked as major annual holidays well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and arguably to the current day. From the start, the Franklin County Fair served not only as a regional exhibition, but also as something of a museum. The hall exhibitions included such “antiquities” as Indian relics, “ancient” pewter and silver, and homespun towels and clothing; people also entered their personal collections of such items as stamps and coins. Some features straddled the line between agricultural exhibition and spectacle, such as gigantic vegetables and the town ox teams. In 1918, James D. Avery of Buckland won first premiums in all oxen classes, and at the Franklin County and many other fairs he exhibited his two teams of immense oxen. Avery’s ox, Mack, held the world’s draft record at 11,284 pounds, was six feet high and more than ten feet broad; Avery’s father once sat in a rocking chair on Mack’s back, a scene photographed for local newspapers.

From the start as well, and sometimes to the chagrin of fair organizers, the “jubilee” of the fair included entertainment that often had little relation to rural life and no educational value. In 1856, the Welch and Lent Circus entertained fairgoers with performing horses and monkeys. For untold years the Franklin County Fair was also called the “Live Wire Fair” because of its popular high-wire acts, often staged within the track oval with their own bleachers. In 1894, the Franklin County Agricultural Society introduced the fair’s first coaching parade, which featured decorated horse-drawn floats and bicycles, as well as local marching bands. “The fact that many people were attracted to Greenfield streets who did not go to the fair grounds shows what an attraction the coaching parade was in comparison with the ‘fair’ proper,” the 1897 transactions noted, “and suggests that we do not do enough to *entertain* those who attend our exhibitions.” At that time the fair organizers turned away any entertainer or other person it deemed “objectionable,” but the agricultural society’s secretary argued that “fakirs,” presumably including magicians, should not be excluded from the fairgrounds. The society soon began to pay for vaudeville acts at the fair, and by 1918 the fair included a midway, probably set up in its current location north of the grandstand. Novelty animal acts were a consistent feature. The agricultural society’s poster for the 1900 fair noted that “one of the special attractions will be an ostrich hitched to a sulky and trotting at a two minute clip,” and it advised prospective fairgoers not to “miss seeing the trained goats.”<sup>26</sup>

(continued)

<sup>25</sup> *Transactions* 1867, 39.

<sup>26</sup> The Franklin County Fairgrounds museum displays the 1850 and 1900 fair promotional posters as well as many posters from other fairs and a collection of fair artifacts, including a spotlight earlier used to illuminate the high-wire acts.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 9

The fair's biggest draw, however, was racing of all sorts on the half-mile track. In 1867, George Loring had disparaged the "growing mania for the track and trotter," and in 1876, some society members objected to the acquisition of the trotting park because of its association with pleasure horses and gambling. But the fair had, almost from the first, included horse races as well as premiums for pleasure as opposed to working horses. Winners of the pacing, trotting, and speed races earned premiums far greater than livestock and other exhibitors, as high as \$100 compared to the highest, \$30 premium in most other categories. In 1913, fully 37% of the \$2,884.60 paid out in premiums at the fair went to race winners.<sup>27</sup> In that year, the society's horse department acknowledged the popularity of the races among "the lovers of speed," but the exhibition of other horses "was not up to the standard of former shows," and should, it advised, be elevated as a class of livestock. By 1908, the fair also featured motorcycle races. At the 1943 fair, according to the *Greenfield Recorder*, 30,000 people—twice what the grandstand could hold—watched the trotting race.<sup>28</sup> The first "auto thrill show" was staged in 1950, and three years later "Irish Horan's Dare Devils"—otherwise known as the Lucky Hell Drivers—performed at the fair. In 1969, the first demolition derby took place on the track.<sup>29</sup>

Before 1899, the fair's exhibits were still offsite, a situation remedied by the construction of the Roundhouse near the entrance to the fairgrounds. The round wood building was funded, and is believed to have been designed and built, by Frank Orrin Wells (1855-1935), the son of the mechanic and farmer Elisha Wells (about 1821-95). Elisha Wells was born in one or the other of the west Franklin County towns of Charlemont or Buckland. At some unclear point he moved to Windsor, Vermont, to oversee the forge at a gun factory, possibly N. Kendall and Company (later Robbins, Kendall, and Lawrence and later still Robbins and Lawrence), founded in the late 1830s. During the Civil War, Wells' eldest son, Frederick E. (1846-1936), worked at the same factory, and both left at that time to work at E. G. Lamson Company, a manufacturer founded in the Franklin County town of Shelburne Falls that had moved its production of scythe snathes to Windsor in 1848. After the war the family moved to Greenfield, and Elisha Wells became an early salesman for the Greenfield tool manufacturer Wiley and Russell, founded in 1872. His son Frederick was a bookkeeper there, and his son Frank Orrin apprenticed in the same shop.<sup>30</sup>

In 1876, Elisha Wells and his two sons left Wiley and Russell to establish their own company, which became Wells Brothers and the primary competitor to Wiley and Russell. In 1880, Elisha was shown in the census as a "commercial traveler," evidently occupying the same role he had at Wiley and Russell,

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<sup>27</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society 1913* (Greenfield: E. A. Hall & Co., n.d.).

<sup>28</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 26.

<sup>29</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 27-29; *Treasurer's Annual Report of the Franklin County Agricultural Society 1848-1953* (typescript).

<sup>30</sup> Garrison, *Material Life*, 230; Herbert M. Darling, "Historical Notes on the Greenfield Tool Industry," *Tools & Technology* (newsletter of the American Precision Museum) 1, 4 (Winter 1977) and 2, 1 (Spring 1978). Elisha Wells and his family are shown as residents of Buckland in 1860; it may be that the family spent part of the summer on a farm there, as the Buckland census was taken in mid-July that year.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 10

and the brothers worked in the invention, patenting, and production of improved dies. In 1912, Frank O. Wells and Frederick Payne organized the Greenfield Tap and Die Corporation, a merger of Wiley and Russell and Wells Brothers. Between 1912 and 1920, several small tap and die makers were also brought into the company and in the latter year Frank O. Wells founded Wells Corporation, which soon acquired other small tool shops. That Wells was recognized as a leader in his industry is indicated by his appointment during the Coolidge administration to an international commission investigating the possibility of standardizing screw threads in American and European manufacturing companies.<sup>31</sup>

Wells, like other Greenfield civic and business leaders, was only a generation removed from farming, and he may have been born on the Buckland farm where his family was living in 1860. As a manufacturer as well he would have had an interest in improving the exhibition area of the Franklin County Fair, as new home and farm machinery was regularly displayed and his company's products went into the manufacture of such machinery. Wells envisioned the hall as a reception area, a display space, and a dining room or restaurant. In August 1899, the *Greenfield Gazette and Courier* reported a controversy about the floor of the hall, which some felt should not be installed at all. "No matter how adequate the building, it will fail in its purpose if floorless," the newspaper argued, for it would discourage the display of "fancy work exhibitions," become "nasty with mud" in the rain, and diminish the possibility of using or renting the Roundhouse for non-fair events. The matter was quickly resolved. Less than a month later the newspaper stated, "The exhibition hall at the grounds will be completed by the middle of next week. It promises to be all that its advocates claim for it, and is an attractive building of its kind. It is to have a good floor of Southern pine, matched boards. The hall will combine exhibition and dining accommodations. A flag pole is to crown the top of the cupola and Old Glory will float from it during the fair."<sup>32</sup>

Frank O. Wells appears to have been an avocational architect, for he is credited with the design of the 1905 Weldon Hotel, the Weldon Garage, and several other houses and buildings in Greenfield. A year after the Roundhouse was completed, he was elected president of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, a position he held through 1904. In 1917, Wells designed and funded a new gateway for the fairgrounds to replace the earlier gate and ticket office, which, at \$200, was the least valuable of all fairground structures in 1913. Wells' new gateway featured two towers with the red tile roofs and stucco exteriors he used on the houses he designed. The gate was dedicated at the 1920 fair.

By 1913, the society's transactions report, the Franklin County Fairgrounds was a 27-acre tract, worth \$6,000. The most valuable structure was, taken together, the grandstand and judges' stand at \$3,000, next the horse sheds at \$2,000, and then Wells's Roundhouse at \$1,800. The transactions pegged the value of

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<sup>31</sup> Darling, "Historical Notes"; *Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Greenfield* (1982), MHC website, <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/CT-Valley/gre.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> *Gazette and Courier*, 9 September and 12 August 1899.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 11

the cattle sheds at \$1,500, the track at \$1,000, and the poultry house at \$300. All told, the estimated value of the fairgrounds was \$16,025. That year the society spent a little more than \$500 to build a restroom on the grounds. The fair took in \$4,461.85 in gate admissions and more from separate venues within the fairgrounds, including \$704.55 in grandstand admissions and \$80.65 at the "oyster tent."<sup>33</sup>

Over the ensuing years the fair's revenue rose and fell, partly with the weather, but it appears to have remained slightly profitable or matched its expenses in most years. According to a centennial booklet produced by Greenfield's First National Bank in 1922, attendance at the "Live Wire Fair" had increased over the past five years from 12,000 to 35,000 people, the latter figure higher than the average annual attendance today. The bank held the same view of the society's importance that fair promoters had articulated from the start. "No organization," the booklet noted, "has been of greater value than the Franklin County Agricultural Society in stimulating farm enterprise."<sup>34</sup>

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the fair began to place more emphasis on the participation of young people, perhaps, as earlier, to stimulate their interest in sustaining the county's farms. The 4-H organization was founded in 1902, the fair created a Youth Department, and other boys' and girls' groups competed for premiums, chiefly in hall exhibits. In 1934, the agricultural society sponsored its first countywide track and field meet at the fairgrounds, and public schools closed on the fair's final day every year to allow students to take part. In the 1930s too, the society held band, cheerleader, and twirling competitions that involved high schools throughout the area, and in the mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century decades, the fourth day of the fair was called 4-H Day and was devoted to these clubs' activities.<sup>35</sup>

Both the exhibition hall and the track have continued to perform their historic functions into the current day. Racing of all sorts took place on the track through at least the early 1960s, and fair photographs at midcentury showed the live wire act within the oval as well as a substantial parking lot for fairgoers' cars. Today, the Franklin County Horsemen's Association occupies one of the stables on the grounds, and uses the track for practice.

The Franklin County Fair survived the Depression years when other Massachusetts fairs struggled or ceased altogether. In 1932, according to Kaldenbach, four of the state's 23 major fairs were cancelled, and the state, pressed as well, reduced the amount of premiums it sent to county agricultural societies. From at least the 1880s, the Franklin County Agricultural Society helped make ends meet by renting the fairgrounds in its long off-season. In 1889, the society earned \$102 in usage fees from a circus, the "Hibernian Picnic," the Kearsarge Baseball Club, and a Catholic picnic. In the 1900s, it continued to collect revenue from the fairgrounds' use for ethnic society, church, fraternal organization, and company

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<sup>33</sup> *Transactions of the Franklin County Agricultural Society* 1913 (Greenfield: E. A. Hall & Co., n.d.).

<sup>34</sup> *One Hundred Years in Greenfield, 1822-1922* (Greenfield, MA: First National Bank, 1922), 41-42.

<sup>35</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 25, 28; Mary Benedetti, Franklin County Fair Museum, interview with Kathryn Grover, 5 September 2006.

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is located on an elevated plateau on the south side of the Green River, at the southwestern outskirts of Greenfield, Massachusetts. Known as the Petty Plain, the location was cleared from a pine stand reputed to have been a Native American hunting ground. The nominated property is bounded by a wooded bluff on its north side, and by large cemeteries on the east and south (Fig.3). Scattered residences exist around its southern extremities. The Mohawk Trail (State Rt. 2A) enters Greenfield from the west a short distance north of the fairgrounds; Interstate Rt. 91 was constructed nearby to the west. The main entrance to the fairgrounds is located on Wisdom Way, which descends the bluff and connects to the town center. The racetrack oval occupies the southern half of the property, with a grandstand and stable located near its northwest turn. A paved midway, along which permanent concession stands are sited, is aligned with the track's northern stretch. Exhibition buildings are concentrated in the northeast corner of the grounds near the entrance gates on Wisdom Way. There are large grassy open areas north of the midway and in the center of the racetrack oval where temporary concessions and amusements are set up during fair time and other events. The property contains a total of 32 buildings, of which 23 are contributing; there are three structures, including the racetrack and midway, which are contributing features.

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### Narrative Description

The Franklin County Agricultural Society's annual fair first opened in 1848 on the town green, and by 1860 had established fairgrounds along the Green River on the outskirts of Greenfield. The fairgrounds are depicted in this location on an 1871 map of the town; it contained a racetrack. Five years later, the fairgrounds were moved to their present location, crowded out by the spread of the town center and the construction of the Troy & Greenfield Railroad through the space. The oval racecourse on the existing fairgrounds is oriented on a different axis in its depiction on an 1877 bird's-eye view of Greenfield, suggesting that the track was reconstructed at a later date (Fig.1). The view shows six buildings, including what appear to be a grandstand and judges stand at the west end of the track, one or more exhibition buildings, and an observation tower. None of these buildings are extant; however, the dimensions and setting of the property appears to have remained the same. A map of Greenfield published in 1895 shows the track in its current location, as well as a grandstand, a large wood building replaced in 1985 with the existing one constructed of concrete and steel. Additional buildings are pictured along the backstretch where the third turn parallels Wisdom Way; none of these are extant.

The oldest building on the property is an exhibition building known as The Roundhouse, which was erected at the fair's semi-centennial. Constructed in 1899, it was designed and promoted by Frank Orrin Wells, a local industrialist and supporter of the fair who became president of the Franklin County Agricultural Society the following year. This distinctive circular-plan building is 72 feet in diameter and two stories tall, with a conical roof surmounted by a lantern at the apex (FEATURE B, PHOTOS 2 & 3). The exterior is covered with wood novelty siding, bent and nailed to closely spaced log posts visible on the interior. Tall log posts positioned 12 feet within the exterior wall are topped by purlins placed about midway along the run of the sawn rafters; every other post also supports log braces that extend to the oculus at the top of the roof, evidently to carry the weight of the lantern (PHOTO 5). The interior posts also carry the inside edge of a gallery 12-feet wide, with wood balustrades inserted in between them. The gallery is illuminated by 24 square windows evenly spaced around the top of the exterior wall. A grand rustic staircase connects the main floor with the gallery on the west side of the building; a second, smaller run of stairs is located along the wall just inside the eastern of two opposing wide entrances, which are contained in one-story, gable-roof vestibules (PHOTO 4). A newspaper article announcing the plans to erect the Roundhouse estimated the cost at \$1,200, which was to be raised by subscription.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Gazette and Courier*, Greenfield, MA, 5 August 1899.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 12

picnics. The Roundhouse was used for arts and crafts exhibits assembled by the Franklin County Grange, and for a few years a summer stock theater used the vast space. In 1949, young people from the five western Massachusetts counties assembled on the grounds for a 4-H Dairy Show, and in 1953, both a Boy Scout jamboree and part of the Greenfield's bicentennial celebration took place there. One local history noted that on one afternoon after the centennial's road race and a massive parade before 50,000 people, "more than 3,000 persons, despite wet ground, were fed at minimal cost a chicken barbecue dinner, cafeteria style, by the New England Poultrymen's Association at the fairgrounds. They were the vanguard of 15,000 spectators who by then were exhausted but thoroughly happy people. A two-hour program of barbershop quartet singing and square dancing was conducted before the grandstand as police handled what was the largest crowd ever at the Franklin County Agricultural Society's grounds."<sup>36</sup>

Like other fairs in an age of rapid modernization, the Franklin County Fair began to look backward and to attempt to create, at least for a few days, a sense of a smaller, face-to-face community. In 1959 an "Old Timers Day" was among the fair events, as was an "heirloom style show" and a square dance. There was also a "community sing," an event the fair had sponsored earlier. In 1918, the society had paid more than \$1,000 to W. F. LaHiff of Leominster, Massachusetts, for three "attractions"; in the same period LaHiff had conducted community sings at fairs in Upstate New York and elsewhere. "It is this rural flavor which has kept it [the fair] going and the numerous little fairs going these many years," the *Greenfield Recorder* asserted in one 1950 issue. "Any change to the contrary will spell almost certain death for them."<sup>37</sup> In the society's 1960 annual report, however, society president Alvin F. Oickle acknowledged that the world in which the fair operated was changing and that the fair, as it always had, must change with it.

The agricultural fair once served a unique role in our society . . . that of teacher, entertainer, salesman and reunion secretary. It still does, of course, but tradition and the homelies [*sic*] that the fair represent have less meaning to today's generation. They still want the fair; more, perhaps, than ever before. But they want a smarter fair; one more modern and offering even greater and greater exhibits and entertainment. It is not enough to 'sell' tradition any more. . . . But make no mistake, a Society that has been functioning 110 years does not just die because a period of weakness has caused doubt. Rather, we welcome this situation. It pointedly calls us to examine our role, our functions, our methods. It underlines the need to keep exploring, probing for that which makes this business of ours as old as agriculture and as new as tomorrow.<sup>38</sup>

Today the Franklin County Agricultural Society continues to maintain the fairgrounds and host the

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<sup>36</sup> Charles Sidney Severance, *History of Greenfield 1930-1953*, vol. 2 of *History of Greenfield* (Greenfield: Town of Greenfield, 1954), 2411.

<sup>37</sup> Kaldenbach, *Franklin County Fair*, 27.

<sup>38</sup> "President's Report," 1960 *Annual Report of the Franklin County Fair and of the Franklin County Agricultural Society* (mimeograph); the ellipsis is Oickle's.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

Section number: 8 page: 13

Franklin County Fair during four days in early September. The fair still attracts thousands of visitors from the region, with many of the same exhibitions of animals, farm and home production, and arts and crafts, as well as displays by local businesses. The open space is filled with carnival rides and amusements and temporary concessions, with parking for automobiles rather than carriages. Exhibition buildings, animal sheds and concession stands have been maintained and rebuilt over the years, with a number of more permanent buildings taking the place of those more casually constructed. Additional stables were constructed in the last 50 years, during a period when the racetrack was used during non-fair periods for horse training; now they serve only for boarding. In 1986, a historic wood grandstand that was characteristic of turn-of-the-century agricultural fairgrounds in Western Massachusetts was condemned and replaced with the current steel-framed structure. Currently, the track is used for car racing and demolition derbies rather than horse events. In the interest of defraying maintenance costs, the owner actively seeks to rent the facility to other users. Cattle and dog shows take place there, along with local trade shows and charity events. Still, the principal purpose of the fairgrounds is to host the annual agricultural fair.

In 2009-2010, the Franklin County Agricultural Society received emergency funding from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund to assist with in-kind wood shingle roof replacement, foundation work, and other much-needed repairs.

**Archaeological Significance**

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement and subsistence in Greenfield are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites in this area can be important by contributing information that increases our understanding of Native American adaptations to temperate forest riverine environments in noncoastal areas. Potential sites in this area may contribute important details related to the importance of settlement and subsistence in the vicinity of upland tributaries, and their relationship to site distributions and subsistence activities along the main course of the Connecticut Rivers and its tributaries, including the Green River and the Deerfield River. Native sites in this area may represent a specialized adaptation to upland environments, or they may be part of an overall riverine adaptation based in the Connecticut River valley. Native sites in this area may also contain important information that identifies the associations within tool assemblages and cultural sequences in the local area and region. Information may be present from sites in the area to help analyze patterns of Native American exchange in the region. One interpretation for the region identifies the Connecticut River as an important north-south corridor for transportation and exchange. Secondary drainages of the Connecticut River, such as the Deerfield River and its tributaries, including the Green River, are hypothesized to have served as east-west corridors, enabling wider movement of people and goods. Ancient-period Native American sites in the district locale may contain information that helps test these models and/or offer alternative hypotheses.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDSS

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Greenfield, Franklin County, Massachusetts

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Section number: 8 page: 14

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The significance of potential historic archaeological resources described above remains to be demonstrated. Structural evidence of buildings and landscape features shown on late 19<sup>th</sup>-century cartographic resources of Greenfield may contribute important information related to architectural features and construction techniques used for specific and groups of buildings; however, this information may also be available from documentary sources. Careful mapping of potential archaeological resources identified above may contribute important information related to the layout of facilities located at the fairgrounds, and how these buildings and facilities changed from those present at the start of the fairgrounds in 1876 and the structures present today. Functional interpretation of structural remains, combined with detailed analysis of the contents of occupational-related features, may contribute important information related to changing agricultural methods, techniques, and equipment during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and their influence on Connecticut Valley and hilltown agricultural history.

(end)

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been Requested)

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # N/A

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # N/A

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☒ Other

Franklin County Agricultural Society,

Name of repository: Greenfield, MA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): GRE. 3. 904

**10. Geographical Data****Acreage of Property** 27.72 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>696130</u> Easting	<u>4716840</u> Northing	4	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>695620</u> Easting	<u>4716740</u> Northing
2	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>695940</u> Easting	<u>4716580</u> Northing	5	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>695660</u> Easting	<u>4716880</u> Northing
3	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>695660</u> Easting	<u>4716630</u> Northing	6	<u>18</u> Zone	<u>695980</u> Easting	<u>4716940</u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The 27.72-acre nominated property is bounded on the east by Wisdom Way, the south and west by Fairview Street, and on the west and north by lines following the edge of the plateau on which the fairgrounds is sited above the Green River. See attached parcel map for a more particular description.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary represents the historic area of the Franklin County Fairgrounds, which was established on the site in 1876. A parcel opposite the entrance on the east side of Wisdom Way purchased in recent years by the Franklin County Agricultural Society for parking is not included in the nomination.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Neil Larson & Kathryn Grover for Betsy Friedberg, NR Director  
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 2011  
street & number 220 Morrissey Blvd. telephone 617-727-8470  
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125  
e-mail nlarson@hvc.rr.com / kgrover@kgrover.com

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 1.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA  
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 1: Entrance gate from SE

FRANKLIN COUNTY  
**FAIR**  
SEPT 10<sup>th</sup> thru 13<sup>th</sup>



MA\_GREENFIELD (FRANKLINCOUNTY)\_FAIRGROUNDS2.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds

Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 2: View of The Roundhouse through Entrance Gate  
from NE



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 3. x/f

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA  
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 3: View of The Roundhouse from south, Entrance  
Gate in background & Kiwanis Hall on right



WELCOME TO  
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIR

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| • Exhibit       | Exhibit 1 |
| • Horse Pen     | Exhibit 2 |
| • Pig & Sheep   | Exhibit 3 |
| • Baby Hospital | Exhibit 4 |
| • Restaurant    | Exhibit 5 |
| • Amusement     | Exhibit 6 |
| • Baby Hospital | Exhibit 7 |
| • Restaurant    | Exhibit 8 |
| • Amusement     | Exhibit 9 |

Franklin Co.

MA\_GREENFIELD(FRANKLINCOUNTY)\_FAIRGROUNDS 4.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 4: Interior view of The Roundhouse showing  
stairs to gallery



MA\_GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS S..tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 5: View of roof framing in The Roundhouse



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 6.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 6: View of Kiwanis Building (left) and  
Fish & Game Building (right) from north



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 7.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA  
Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 7: View of Old Horse Barn from SW



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 8. Kf

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 8: View of Old Sheep Barn (left) and north  
end of Sheep Barn from SW



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 9. tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 9: View of Cattle Show Ring from NW,  
Sheep Barn on left



MA\_GREENFIELD(FRANKLINCOUNTY)-FAIRGROUNDS 10.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 10: View of Cow Stalls Building I (left) and  
Barn (right) from east



MA\_GREENFIELD(FRANKLINCOUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS II..tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 11: View of Barn (left) and three Cattle  
Stall Buildings from SE



MA-GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 12. k/f

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 12: Detail of framing and materials in  
Cow Stall Building I from NE



~~MA - FRANKLIN~~

MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 13..tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larsen, 2009

PHOTO 13: View of Concession Stands at  
east end of Midway



MA\_GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 14.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 14: View west on Midway showing  
Dole Building (left), Grandstand  
(background) & Concession Stands (right)



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 15.tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larsen, 2009

PHOTO 15: View of Concession Stands at  
west end of Midway



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 16. k/f

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 16: View of Grandstand from SW  
Dole Building, The Roundhouse and  
Baby Barn in background



MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 17. tif

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larsen, 2009

PHOTO 17: View of Scale Building (right)  
and Stables (left) from east

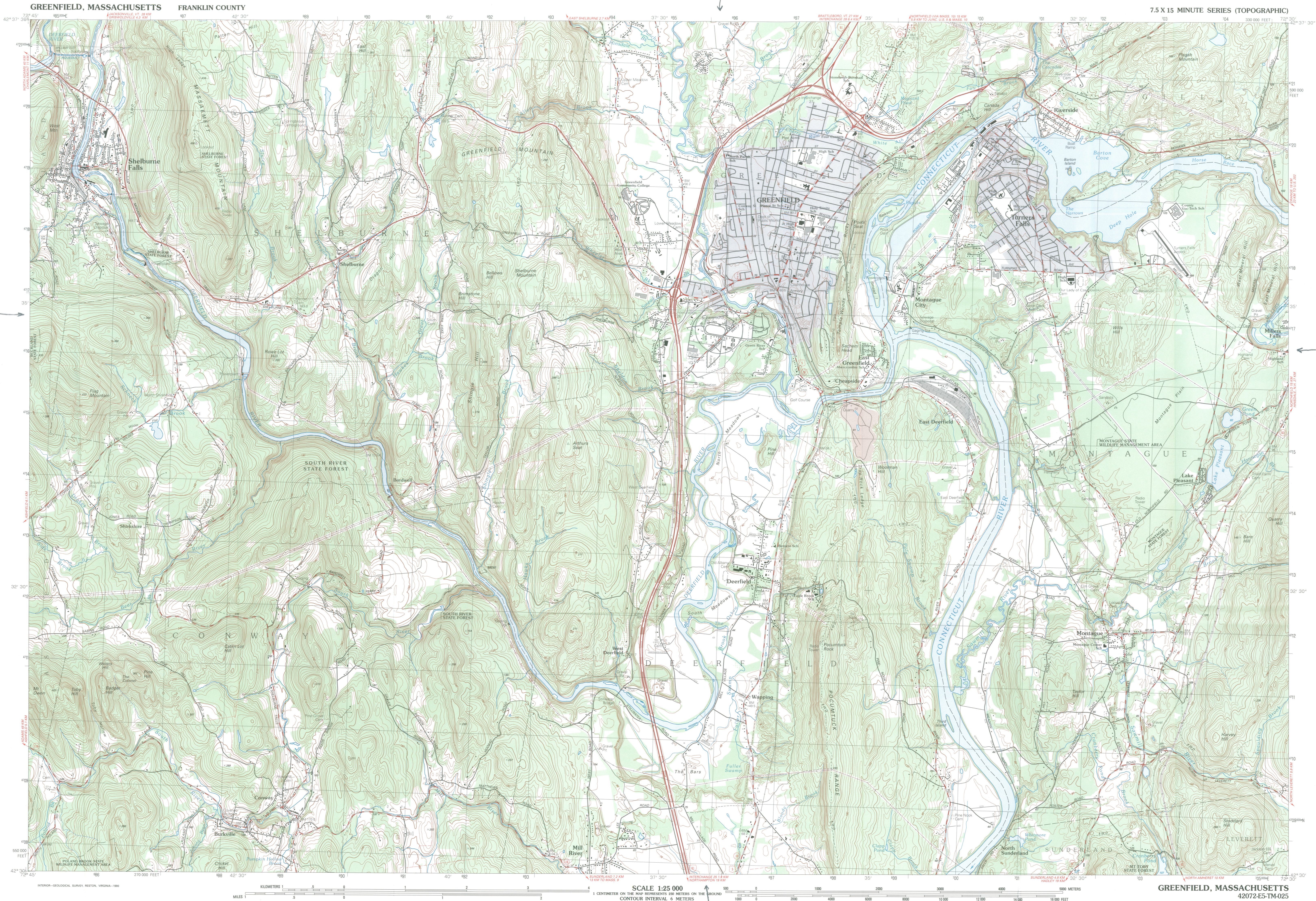


MA - GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN COUNTY) - FAIRGROUNDS 18. k/f

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
Greenfield, Franklin Co., MA

Photo by Neil Larson, 2009

PHOTO 18: View of Race track from SE  
Dole Building & Grandstand on right  
Concession Stands on left



FRANKLIN CO. 42072-E5-TM-025

GREENFIELD

MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric

topographic map

GREENFIELD (FRANKLIN) MA

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE

SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1990

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1981. Field checked 1984. Map edited 1990

Supersedes Greenfield 1979 and Shelburne Falls 1978

1:25,000-scale maps

Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 18, Universal Transverse Mercator

10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 5 meters south and 38 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 6 METERS

NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER

OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE

Meters	Feet
1	3.2808
2	6.5617
3	9.8425
4	13.1234
5	16.4042
6	19.6850
7	22.9659
8	26.2467
9	29.5275
10	32.8084

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

DECLINATION DIAGRAM

UTM grid convergence (CN) and magnetic declination (MN) at center of map

Diagram is approximate

ADJOINING MAPS

1	2	3
4	5	
6	7	8

1 Rowe

2 Barnardston

3 Northfield

4 Ashfield

5 Orange

6 Goshen

7 Williamsburg

8 Shutesbury

ISBN 0-607-23490-3

9 780607 234909

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light-duty road, hard or improved surface

Unimproved road; trail

Route marker: Interstate, U.S.; State

Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage

Bridge; drawbridge

Footbridge; overpass; underpass

Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown

House; barn; church; school; large structure

Boundary

National, with monument

State

County, parish

Civil township, precinct, district

Incorporated city, village, town

National or State reservation; small park

Land grant with monument; bond section corner

U.S. public lands survey: range, township; section

Range, township; section line: location approximate

Fence or field line

Power transmission line, location

Dam; dam with lock

Cemetery; grave

Campground; picnic area; U.S. location monument

Windmill; water well; spring

Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave

Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation

Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression

Distorted surface: strip mine; lava; sand

Sounding; depth curve

Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream

Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small

Sandy; marsh

Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation

Woodland; scattered trees

Scrub; mangrove

Orchard; vineyard

Primary highway, hard surface

Secondary highway, hard surface

Light-duty road, hard or improved surface

Unimproved road; trail

Route marker: Interstate, U.S.; State

Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage

Bridge; drawbridge

Footbridge; overpass; underpass

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State

County, parish

Civil township, precinct, district

Incorporated city, village, town

National or State reservation; small park

Land grant with monument; bond section corner

U.S. public lands survey: range, township; section

Range, township; section line: location approximate

Fence or field line

Power transmission line, location

Dam; dam with lock

Cemetery; grave

Campground; picnic area; U.S. location monument

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Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small

Sandy; marsh

Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation

Woodland; scattered trees

Scrub; mangrove

Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA-1990

GREENFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

42072-E5-TM-025

1990

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Franklin County Fairgrounds  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 5/06/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/22/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000359

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

\_\_\_ACCEPT \_\_\_RETURN \_\_\_REJECT \_\_\_\_\_DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Additional Documentation Approved**

RECOM./CRITERIA

REVIEWER

DISCIPLINE

TELEPHONE

DATE

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

January 10, 2013

Mr. J. Paul Loether  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Mr. Loether:

Re: Technical Amendments for National-Register listed properties in Greenfield (Franklin County) MA

As we digitize our inventory of historic resources, we are discovering discrepancies in property addresses due to renumbering, changing the address to a side street that abuts the parcel, or assigning a precise addresses where none had existed. We are, therefore, writing to request technical corrections in the National Register records for the following:

Franklin County Fairgrounds (NRIND 6/15/2011)—correct address is 85 Wisdom Way (formerly 89)

11359  
909

Garden Theater Block (NRIND 9/1/1983; NRDIS 10/13/1988)—correct address is 361 Main Street (formerly 353-367)

Newton Street School (NRIND 10/27/1988)—correct address is 99 Mohawk Trail (formerly Shelburne Road)

Main Street Historic District (10/13/1988)—the correct address for Avenue Lighting is 2 Fiske Avenue (formerly 10). A corrected copy of the relevant page of the district data sheet is enclosed for your file.

Please let me know if you need additional information to correct your records.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure  
XC: Greenfield Historical Commission

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Franklin County Fairgrounds  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Franklin

DATE RECEIVED: 5/06/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/27/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/13/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/21/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000359

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6-15-11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places**

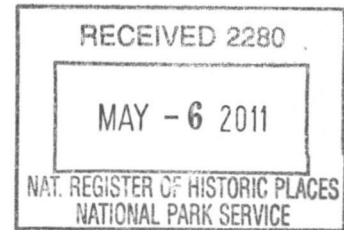
RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

April 27, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
1201 Eye Street, NW 8<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Franklin County Fairgrounds, Greenfield (Franklin), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

*Betsy Friedberg*  
Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: William F. Martin, Mayor, City of Greenfield  
Franklin County Agricultural Society  
Marcia Starkey, Greenfield Historical Commission  
Neil Larson, Kathryn Grover, Consultants  
Roxann Wedegartner, Greenfield Planning Board