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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 08 1988

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ayer Main Street Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Main Street N/A not for publication
city, town Ayer N/A vicinity
state Massachusetts code 025 county Worcester code 027 zip code 04132

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>12</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>12</u>	<u>10</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Valerie A. Talmage Jan. 29, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission;
State or Federal agency and bureau State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/rail-related
Commerce/trade
Government

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Government

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Mid-19th-Century Vernacular
Second Empire
Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation unknown
walls wood, brick, concrete
roof slate
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ayer Historic Main Street Historic District is a four block commercial district of eight acres, located on the north side of the Fitchburg Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad, and to the east of the now defunct Worcester and Nashua Division of the B & M Railroad. The present setting is of a main street commercial district, however, as it first developed in the mid-19th century, the area was little more than a railroad depot. To the west, the district is contained by the steep grade incline of West Main Street, and the northwestern continuation of Route 2A/III to Groton and Shirley. The district's eastern border is at the foot of the William P. Iverson Bridge (1950), which crosses over the eastbound Fitchburg Division railroad tracks.

The district contains 21 buildings of which 12 are contributing; of the noncontributing buildings one is vacant, five are near the fringes of the district, two represent the speculative development of the south side of Main Street in the early 1950s, and one represents subsequent development on the north side of Main Street. There is one noncontributing structure in the district.

The Ayer Historic Main Street Historic District is defined as the area of downtown Ayer which was affected by the development of the crossing of the north-south Worcester-Nashua Line and the east-west Fitchburg Line of the Boston & Maine Railroad. This district developed during the period 1872-1898 with a large number of brick commercial buildings representing various styles of architecture, and later grew on the south side during the period 1914-1954.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District is defined as the area of land and the buildings beginning at and including the Ayer Post Office Building and parcel (see Assessor's map, sheet #26:parcel #279), and continuing west along Main Street to Park Street, ending and including the Park Street Diner (sheet #26:parcel #106) and the Mobile Service Station (sheet #26:parcel #86). All buildings and parcels between these bounds with frontages onto Main Street are included in the district.

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The general character of the Ayer Main Street Historic District is that of a small urban/commercial center in a predominately rural/suburban community. Two major routes of transportation define this image, and give it credibility as a center of transportation. The east-west rail connection from Boston to Gardener and the through route of 2-A/111 to Shirley and Groton give the district a unique sense of connections to both the 19th-century railroad, and the 20th-century main street. Setbacks in the district are six to twelve feet in the core area, and up to fifty feet on the easternmost and westernmost bounds.

The built environment in the Ayer Main Street Historic District represents a variety of styles and at least two distinct periods in the community's development. The north side of Main Street is composed almost entirely of three and four story commercial brick buildings, constructed in the period 1872-1898. These were executed in an array of styles representing High Victorian Gothic, Neo-Classical, Italianate, and Second Empire. Three other buildings of this period are two and three story wood structures of various stylings.

The second set of buildings represents growth on the south side of Main Street, and the development of Park Street as an automobile thoroughfare to Shirley and Groton. These buildings were constructed from 1914 until circa 1954, on land sold by the Boston and Maine Railroad. This parcel contained a thin strip of land previously used for sidings and storage sheds, a thin strip of greenbelt, and the southernmost edge of Main Street, on which an interurban electric rail system ran until 1920. These buildings are in three categories: two are two-story commercial buildings, three are small wood "cottage" commercial structures, and the remaining are service-related structures (such as gas stations) associated with development and use of the automobile artery along Route 2-A/111.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District is distinct from other regional development for three primary reasons. The first major distinction is the high concentration of multi-story brick commercial structures. Such structures are not common in the Groton/Harvard/Ayer area of north-central Massachusetts, and the density of their construction leads us to the second distinction of the district: the post-fire development period of the late-19th century. In 1872, a fire devastated the entire commercial center of Ayer, then composed of a series of wood commercial structures. Between 1872 and 1898, most of the brick commercial buildings which now form the core of the district were erected. Thus, Ayer's Main Street was remodeled using a variety of vernacular interpretations of architectural styles that were popular in the

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last quarter of the 19th century. The third major distinction of the Ayer Main Street Historic District is that despite the decline of railroad transport through Ayer, the district continued to grow during the early-to-mid-20th century, largely as a result of the development of major autohighways; namely, Routes 2-A and 111.

The following are descriptions of the twelve contributing structures in the district listed in chronological order:

THE TURNER PUBLIC SPIRIT BUILDING (MHC #109, Assessor's #26:158): The Turner Public Spirit Building, built in 1868, is the only building on Main Street that pre-dates the fire of 1872. Moved to Main Street in 1878 from its location on "Merchant's Row" - a former mercantile district located on the western edge of the nominated district, across the railroad tracks - this building is representative of the kind of clapboard commercial buildings which dominated the area until the fire of 1872. The two-story flatroofed clapboard construction is detailed with classically inspired cornices and cornerboards, and two oversized, overhanging office bays on the second floor. The oversized bays were built later: the easternmost one prior to 1910; the westernmost one prior to 1920. The street-level facade is divided into two slightly projecting storefront bays, and a level facade is divided into two slightly projecting storefront bays, and a central entrance provides access to the upper level.

MEAD'S BLOCK (MHC #103, Assessor's #26:228): Built in 1872, Mead's Block is a three-story brick structure in the Second Empire style. Its five bay facade is divided into two large storefronts with central entrances, and a central access to the upper stories. Double-brackets and a wood cornice support the slate-shingled mansard roof, from which three dormer windows with scrolled casements, and bracketed "gull-wing" roof lines protrude. The building has two distinct storefront renovations: a late Art Deco octagonal plate-glass and enamelled steel storefront on the easternmost establishment, and a Colonial Revival treatment on the westernmost storefront. The former alteration dates to 1950, while the latter alteration began in June 1979.

THE PHELPS BUILDING (MHC #110, Assessor's #26:120): Used initially as a grain store when it was constructed in 1872, the Phelps Building is a three-story clapboard structure and features a raised first-floor entrance that provided easy access for the loading and unloading of wagons, and a half-basement store area. Originally, the structure also had a rear-ell and a pitched roof. Now it is capped with a third-floor mansard roof and dormer windows, and the ell is gone, both alterations having been made prior to 1900. The original details are greatly obscured by a recent vinyl siding and aluminum flashing "renovation" effort.

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PAGE'S BLOCK (MHC #107, Assessor's #26:187): The largest block on Main Street, Page's Block, a three-story brick commercial structure, 17 bays wide, with gambrel roof, was constructed, in 1872, by Thomas and Alfred Page. The first floor is composed of eight storefronts with a central access to the upper floors. On the second floor, double-hung windows run the length of the building and are detailed with marble sills and brick relief window hoods. On the third-floor, square-capped dormers project from the slate covered gambrel roof. The first winter after its construction, it became clear that pedestrians were in need of shelter from the snow and ice which fell from the roof. Subsequently, in 1873, a permanent sidewalk canopy was constructed to shelter the passerby. More recent and smaller scale alterations have been made to Page's Block storefronts. In the 1950s, an Art Deco style shopfront was added to the third shop unit from Washington Street, and during the mid-to-late 1970s the two easternmost shop units underwent glass and steel "modernization".

THE NUTTING BLOCK MHC #108, Assessor's #26:160): Erected in 1872, the Nutting Block is the only four-story building on Main Street. The two-bay-by-seven-bay structure has elevations on both Main and Pleasant Streets. Entrance to the storefront is via a central entry on Main Street; while access to the offices and apartments in the upper floors is via an entry on the Pleasant Street side. Constructed with Second Empire styling, the brick block features a slate mansard roof with dormers, supported by a double-bracketed wood cornice, two second-story bay windows on the Main Street facade and accompanying double windows on the third floor with corbelled, brick segmental arches. A granited name and date stone is set between the third-floor windows.

AYER TOWN HALL (MHC #101, Assessor's #26:231): The Ayer Town Hall was completed and dedicated in 1876, and is a tall, imposing, three-story brick structure richly detailed in the High Victorian Gothic style. The steeply pitched slate roof has an iron-crested polychromatic tower centered on the ridge. Other features of note include the richly detailed window hoods, brick and granite buttresses, marble and brick relief, and an elaborate wooden porch sheltering the entrance on the front facade.

THE SPAULDING BUILDING (MHC #106, Assessor's #26:223): Built by Judge John Spaulding in 1880, this building is Main Street's only example of Italianate styling. The three-story brick structure has a flat roof with wood cornice supported by wood brackets. The seven bays in the facade are divided by unadorned brick pilasters. Likewise, brick stringcourses divide the second and third stories. Windows are 2/2 sash and are decorated with marble keystones set within the segmental brick arches. A major storefront restoration effort began in September 1977. During this project a steel fire escape which led to a third-story central door was removed. The door itself

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was not an original feature, and was probably added as an emergency escape route in the early part of this century. Other alterations in the 1977 renovation included the construction of a plywood, steel, and glass storefront.

THE NORTH MIDDLESEX SAVINGS BANK (MHC #102, Assessor's #26:230): Built in 1898, the North Middlesex Savings Bank Building is Main Street's only example of Neo-Classical architecture. This three-story brick building was the last structure built during the post-fire reconstruction period (1872-1898), and is visually important as the first structure in the progression of commercial buildings down Main Street. It stands prominently at the transition from a more residential district to the commercial district, and is a landmark as the seat of local commerce.

THE FELCH-CARLEY BUILDING (MHC #104, Assessor's #26:225): One of only three surviving wood structures from the pre-1900s, the Felch-Carley Building is a small two-story commercial building. Its significance stems from the fact that it represents the style of architecture that dominated the district before the fire of 1872. Originally clad with clapboard siding, it was resided with wood shingles in 1970. Storefront alterations, from original wood frame to modern glass and steel, were performed in the mid-1960s as was the removal of a second-story window.

THE JOHN BARRY BUILDING (Assessor's #26:89): Built by John Barry in 1914, this building is Main Street's first example of early-20th-century commercial architecture, and the oldest building on the south side of Main Street. A long two-story commercial block, it is finished in concrete brick with wood cornice detail, square-cut stone lintels and sills on the second floor, a sign which runs the building's length, and large paned glass and steel storefronts.

THE ELI W. CARLEY BUILDING (Assessor's #26:91) Built by Eli W. Carley in 1916, this building was the second commercial structure on the south side of Main Street. Its two-story, concrete block construction is faced with stucco and complements the Barry Building (26:89). The building is clearly divided into four street-level shops finished with plate glass and steel and vertically contained by a building-length sign band. Second-story office windows alternate single, double-hung windows with bordered plate glass windows.

THE FIRST NATIONAL STORE (MHC #105, Assessor's #26:224): The First National Store Building, built in the 1930s, marks the second stage of Ayer's growth. It is the only single-story historic structure on Main Street, and features a brick facade with pre-cast concrete pilaster caps and roof edge. It currently is the location of a convenience store and provides access to the second floor of the Felch-Carley Building (26:225).

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There are nine noncontributing buildings in the district, all built after 1940. These buildings range from the Art Moderne style Park Street Diner (26:106), to the Colonial Revival style Post Office (26:279) of 1940, to single-story post-1951 frame commercial buildings such as those in the southeast corner of the district at 10-28 Main Street. The overall impact of these noncontributing buildings is minimal because of their placement near the fringes of the district, and because of their low density relative to the core area of the district.

The storefronts of many of the district's historic commercial structures have been modernized, thus hiding their historic character. Fortunately, important historic architectural details in the upper levels are intact. It is hoped that a community awareness program, local legislation, and the formal acceptance of the area as a National Register District will be able to reverse the current renovation trends which hide historic details. Ayer is a participating community of the Massachusetts Main Street Program, and the district has undergone major changes in its street, sidewalks, and amenities through this streetscape project. Local interest has been generated to renovate and revitalize the district's commercially viable, but as yet, untapped resources.

Archaeology

Some archaeological artifacts may be found on the sites of the pre-1872 commercial wood structures in the rear lots of parcels on the north side of Main Street (26:187, 223-25, 228, 230-31). Also, evidence of previous railroad loading docks and sheds may be present on the southern edge of the district on land held by the Fitchburg Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad.

Some potential archaeological remains of previous structures relating to the development of commerce and transportation in the district may be present. Possible potential sites would be located in the rear lots of parcels 26:187, 223-25, 228, 230-31 on Main Street, and alongside existing railroad tracks and beds on the south edge of the district on land currently held by the Boston and Maine Railroad. Any archaeological research and artifacts which are subsequently unearthed would provide the region with a model of development patterns associated with the growth and development of small towns in conjunction with the broad-scaled development of the railroad.

8. Statement of Significance Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Transportation
Architecture

Period of Significance

1848-1938

Significant Dates

1872

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District, in Ayer, Massachusetts, is a regional example of the changes and prosperity which accompanied the development of railroad transportation in the mid-to-late-19th century. The district possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Prior to the mid-1800s, Ayer functioned as outlying agricultural land to the communities of Groton and Harvard. However, upon the establishment of a major regional railroad junction there, Ayer developed into an important commercial center oriented toward servicing the railroad industry. The Ayer Main Street Historic District is significant for its associations with the development of commerce and commercial architecture in the mid-to-late-19th and early-20th centuries. The period of significance spans the years from the establishment of "Groton Junction" in 1848 to 1938 when the railroad junction and related commercial activity was in the midst of decline. The Ayer Main Street Historic District meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Ayer was first settled during the late-18th and early-19th centuries as farmland with "about a dozen farms of doubtful prosperity" (Hurd, History of Middlesex County). This farming community saw very little economic or industrial development, for "despite the presence of several good water power privileges, the remoteness of the town from older settlements remained so great that manufacturing was virtually impossible" (MHC, Reconnaissance Survey Report, 1980). This geographical and social barrier prevented Ayer from developing economically until the late 1840s.

Beginning in the mid-1840s, four railroad lines were established: the Fitchburg (1845), the Stony Brook (1848), the Worcester and Nashua (1848), and the Peterborough and Shirley (1848). These railroad lines all crossed paths in a part of Ayer that came to be known as "Groton Junction," now the Ayer Main Street Historic District. Sweeping arcs of steel, a series of crossovers, and a variety of sheds and platforms sprung up at the heart of this major junction. In 1848, the Union Depot was constructed over the

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Fitchburg Division line. It was a massive shed with covered platforms extending east and south from the north-south/east-west crossing, and there was a ticket office/restaurant located in the northeast sector of the crossing. This structure was at least partially extant in photographs through 1958. The railroad crossing at South Groton (later Groton Junction, and currently Ayer) was thus responsible for the existence and development of the Town of Ayer, and was unsurpassed as a regional transportation center:

The centralizing here of these great railroad systems has thus afforded direct and through service with all four points of the compass. Distance to be travelled is now measured in hours and minutes and not in miles. We are less than an hour from Boston on the through express, and have over fifteen trains per day each way. Being on the Hoosac Travel Route, we are, as a shipping point to all places West unsurpassed. The equipment of both railroads is unequalled; and we are afforded every railroad advantage which the age can boast.

If we may be permitted to indulge in geometrical figures we can say that we are at a common apex of three practically equilateral triangles - Ayer, Fitchburg, Nashua, Lowell; Ayer, Boston, Worcester. (Hurd, History of Middlesex County, Vol. II, p.659.)

Following the establishment of "Groton Junction", this area "became a fertile field for speculators who recognized its commercial and industrial potential and rapidly bought up and sold off large tracks of land" (Barringer, Workbook) and underwent a "series of engineering surveys and speculative purchases in the years 1848-1852 [which] laid out streets, established house lots and determined the position of a commercial district, all located within [a] short distance of the railroad depot." (MCRP: Report, 1978).

The east-west Fitchburg and Stony Brook Railroads and the north-south Worcester & Nashua and Peterborough & Shirley Railroads gave "Groton Junction" access to major rail lines running between Portland, Maine, and New York City, and between Boston and Albany, and to the markets of these cities. As a result, small-scale industrial and commercial establishments began to emerge in the early 1850s. In 1850, a plow factory, the first significant manufacturing establishment in Ayer, was opened by the Ames Plow Company. Then, in 1854, a large tannery was established, and shortly thereafter a small iron foundry began operating. While the Ames Plow Company relocated to Worcester in 1875, the tannery remained in business in Ayer into the 20th century, employing 100 people in 1900. Undoubtedly the tanned leather was shipped by rail to shoe factories throughout New England. More important in terms of employment was the railroad itself. By the late-19th century "Groton Junction" was "said to provide the largest classification yard in New England," and the railroad was the of Ayers principal employer.

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The railroad is the last remaining historic, industry-oriented structure currently existing in the Ayer Main Street Historic District. Other important structures which no longer exist include the Ames Plow Company building which burned down in 1886, and the Tannery which burned down in 1961. The railroad was the one industry, however, to which Ayer owed its existence:

We are in the truest sense, a railroad town; not simply a railroad centre, but an offspring of the iron-horse itself. It was the magic touch of its wand that conjured our promising and thrifty village from an uncompromising and almost stagnant country. At the advent of the railroads the limits of our present village comprised about a dozen farms of doubtful prosperity. (Hurd, History of Middlesex County, Vol. II, p.657)

The development of Ayer as a regional railroad transportation center also stimulated considerable commercial development. In fact, the development of the Ayer Main Street Historic District occurred in order to provide support services for the railroad and the above-mentioned industries. In the 1850s, several commercial buildings were constructed along Main Street. The growing transportation/commercial center attracted a large enough population that, in 1871, the town was incorporated and named after James Cook Ayer, a successful local businessman. However, in 1872, disaster struck as a fire leveled the entire Main Street area, destroying all but one of the original commercial buildings. While the fire obliterated the wood commercial buildings, it eventually led to the construction of the nominated district, a series of late-19th-century brick commercial and municipal buildings with a character appropriate to such a rural transportation center.

Following the 1872 fire, a major rebuilding campaign saw the construction of nine buildings between 1872 and 1898. These buildings include the Town Hall (1873): seat of the local government; the North Middlesex Savings Bank (1898): the major commercial institution in the town; Mead's Block (1872): originally the home of a furniture manufacturing firm, and currently a restaurant and lounge; The Felch-Carley Building (1872): a commercial building occupied then and now by an office and retail mix; The Spaulding Building (1880): used for a period of time as a courtroom and commercial building by Judge John Spaulding, and currently a clothing store. The Turner Public Spirit Building: one-time home of the local paper, "The Public Spirit", and John Turner's Steam Power print shop, is the only building on Main Street built before 1872. It was built in 1868, along what was then known as "Merchant's Row", and moved across the tracks to its present location, in 1878. The Phelps Building (1872), originally a grain store, also built after the fire, is now a multi-use commercial building. All nine of these buildings are located on the north side of Main Street.

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Although no major architects or craftsmen were known to have produced work within the Main Street Historic District, the architecture and construction methods generally used in the community of Ayer may have been influenced by James Park, "(who) had reputedly worked as a surveyor/architect for the Duke of Argyle in Scotland prior to emigrating to New England in the mid-eighteenth century", (M.H.C., Report). Regardless, however, of any implicit or explicit connection between the architectural stylings of the Main Street District and the reputed Scottish surveyor/architect, the fact remains that the district's architecture contains a wide variety of styles reproduced first and foremost in vernacular and pragmatic manners.

Following this post-fire period of prosperity and growth (1872-1898), Ayer's economy was subject to considerable fluctuation. In the early-20th century an interurban, electric trolley system was constructed. This system connected the Ayer central business district with Fitchburg and Shirley, providing a larger base of support for the businesses along Main Street. However, this service was abandoned in the 1920s as automobile transportation improved. In 1917, during World War I, Fort Devens, a military induction center, was opened near the district.

The military base proved to be both a blessing and a burden on the area. The wartime and brief post-war boom period, followed by periods of slow decline in the base's population, added to the economic instability of the Ayer commercial district. Adding to the woes of the Main Street Historic District was the general decline of the railroad as a transportation source, thus leading fewer travellers to stop in "Groton Junction." By the 1930s, the Ayer Main Street Historic District was in serious decline.

The unevenness of the 20th-century Ayer economy can be seen in the building pattern in the district. The south side of Main Street, once the site of a series of long, covered loading docks and an open park area (over which the trolley passed), came to be lined with smaller commercial blocks in the years between 1914 and 1954. In 1914-1916, two parcels were developed on the southwest side of the street on land previously owned by the Boston and Maine Railroad. The 1930s brought a "modern" commercial building to the north side of Main Street: The First National Store Building (26:224). The next spurt of development did not occur until 1951-1954 when five more parcels on Main Street were sold by the B & M Railroad; three on the south side moving east, and two in the northwest corner of the district at the corner of Main Street and Park Street. These five parcels were developed with small commercial cottage structures which do not contribute to the historical integrity of the district.

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As to what effect the more recent buildings have had on the integrity of the area, it must be noted that the Ayer Main Street Historic District is at its heart a commercial center in a rural/suburban locale. Although it was developed primarily through the commerce which the railroad industry brought to it in the mid-to-late-19th century, it also developed in this century through a series of land sales and commercial speculation. Thus, the Ayer Main Street Historic District contains elements from two distinct eras: buildings that remain from the railroad boom days, and buildings which reflect the community's continued but uneven growth as the local commercial center.

At present these 1950s buildings are noncontributing, though perhaps when they are fifty years old, they will be considered for inclusion in the district.

9. Major Bibliographical References Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

Barringer, Peggy. Architectural Workbook for Downtown Ayer. Ayer: Downtown Revitalization Project, 1981.

Conklin, Edwin P. Middlesex County and Its People, Vol. II. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1927.

Drake, Samuel Adams, ed. History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Vol. I. ("Ayer" by Samuel A. Green, M.D.). Boston: Estes and Lauriet Publishers, 1880.

Hurd, Hamilton, ed. History of Middlesex County, Vol. II. ("Ayer" chapters XLIX-LVII by George J. Burns). Philadelphia: S.W. Lewis Co., 1890.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Reconnaissance Survey Report. April 1980.

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. The Historic Architecture of the Montachusett Region. 1978.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Specify repository:
Massachusetts Historical Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 8.5 acres
 Quad: Ayer Scale: 1:25000

UTM References

A	<u>19</u>	<u>287660</u>	<u>4714920</u>	B	<u>19</u>	<u>287640</u>	<u>4714850</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>19</u>	<u>287420</u>	<u>4714860</u>	D	<u>19</u>	<u>287330</u>	<u>4715010</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

see assessors map

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The district includes the historically significant commercial buildings on Main Street. To the north and east are residential buildings, to the south is the Boston and Maine Railroad tracks, and to the west are residential buildings and modern commercial buildings with no historical significance to the district.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David R. Zarowin/MHC with T. Kent Hikida, Yankee Intern/Ayer Historical Commission
 organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date July 1987
 street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470
 city or town Boston state Massachusetts zip code 02116

AYER MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

<u>MHC #</u>	<u>ASSESSORS MAP #</u>	<u>HISTORIC NAME</u>	<u>STREET ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>STYLE</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
100	26:279	Ayer Post Office	Columbia Street	1940	Colonial Revival	B	NC
101	26:231	Ayer Town Hall	Main Street	1873	High Victorian Gothic	B	C
	26:330	Vacant land					
102	26:230	North Middlesex Savings Bank	3,5,7 Main Street	1898	Neo-Classical	B	C
103	26:228	Mead's Block	9-13 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
104	26:225	Felch-Carley Building	15-17 Main Street	1872	Clapboard Commercial	B	C
105	26:224	First National Store	19 Main Street	ca. 1930	Early-20th c. Commercial	B	C
106	26:223	The Spaulding Building	25 Main Street	1880	Italianate	B	C
107	26:187	Page's Block	33-47 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
108	26-160	The Nutting Block	49 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
	26:159	Vacant					
109	26:158	Turner Public Spirit (date moved to present location)	59-61 Main Street	1868 1878	Clapboard Commercial	B	C
110	26:120	The Phelps Building	63 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
111	26:121		67 Main Street	ca. 1953	Wood Commercial	B	NC

AYER MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
DISTRICT DATA SHEET

<u>MHC #</u>	<u>ASSESSORS MAP #</u>	<u>HISTORIC NAME</u>	<u>STREET ADDRESS</u>	<u>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	<u>STYLE</u>	<u>RESOURCE</u>	<u>STATUS</u>
112	26:106	The Park Street Diner	Park Street	ca. 1955	Art Deco	B	NC
113	26:86	Archer's Mobil Station	Main Street	ca. 1971	Automotive Garage	B	NC
114	26:329	Ayer Railway Depot B&M RR Switching Tower	Depot Square	ca. 1970's	1960s Commercial	B St	NC NC
115	26:88	Speedway Service Station	Main Street	ca. 1950	Automotive Garage	B	NC
116	26:89	John Barry Building	44-48 Main Street	1914	Early-20th c. Commercial	B	C
	26:90	Vacant land					
117	26:91	Phelps/Carley Building	30-38 Main Street	1916	Early-20th c. Commercial	B	C
118	26:92		26-28 Main Street	1951	Clapboard Commercial	B	NC
119	26:93		18-18A Main Street	1951	Clapboard Commercial	B	NC
120	26-94		16 Main Street	1954	Clapboard Commercial	B	NC

88000193

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ayer Main Street Historic District
Worcester County
MASSACHUSETTS

Substantive Review

FEB - 8 1988

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: _____

Date Due: 3/10/88 - 3/24/88

Action: ACCEPT

RETURN 3-23-88

REJECT _____

Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

see attached sheet

Recom./Criteria Return

Reviewer Savage

Discipline Architectural History

Date 3/23/88

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Is the Post Office federally owned? If so has the FPO for the Postal Service been notified of the proposed nomination. This needs to be included in nomination documentation.

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to *Steph L. Savage (202) 343-9540*

Signed *Patrick Andrews* Date *3/23/88* Phone: _____

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REVIEW COMMENTS**

Ayer Historic District
Worcester County, MA

The nomination is being returned for reasons relating to the period of significance, the area of transportation, the large number of noncontributing resources, and the boundary justification.

The period of significance ascribed to the district is 1848-1938. The year 1848 was apparently chosen for its association with the inception of Groton Junction when much of the town was laid out. Please clarify which extant resources currently convey significance from this early period, none are indicated in the inventory (the earliest building indicated is 1868).

Presumably transportation was indicated because the commercial function of the district developed around the railroad in the 1850s; however, no extant contributing resources have been identified in the inventory which specifically reflect association with transportation from this period versus commerce. Section #8, page 2, paragraph 1, states that "the railroad is the last remaining historic, industry-oriented structure currently existing in the district."; however, the railroad is not delineated on the sketch map as being within the district boundaries and in the boundary justification the railroad is described as "to the south" of the district. Please review, clarify and provide further justification in the documentation on this point.

The issues of the large number of noncontributing resources and the boundary justification go hand-in-hand. The justification for inclusion of 10 noncontributing buildings and structures (or 45%) out of a total of 22 resources is very weak. The inclusion of the predominantly 1950s noncontributing buildings which are primarily located on the southern side of Main Street is not sufficiently justified and their inclusion at all seems questionable, they significantly dilute the district's sense of time and place. Their inclusion because they represent a later period of development and may be considered contributing when they reach 50 years of age is not sufficient justification for the current delineation of an eligible historic district.

Generally, we do not advocate the jerrymandering of boundaries in cases when noncontributing and contributing resources are interspersed and the district as a whole reads as a geographical entity. However, from the sketch map and the selective photographic documentation on this section of the district this does not appear to be descriptive of this district. The 2 contributing buildings on the south side of Main Street are

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REVIEW COMMENTS**

Ayer Historic District p.2
Worcester County, MA

contributing buildings on the south side of Main Street are located in the middle of the district and the district is extended to include noncontributing buildings at the southeastern edge and to the west and northwest to include additional noncontributing buildings and a noncontributing structure. In this case it seems appropriate to tighten the boundaries to exclude a large number of noncontributing resources and strengthen the district. Please reevaluate the district boundaries and provide a revised boundary description and justification.

Additionally, it appears from the documentation that the Phelps Building located at 63 Main Street (MHC #110) has been drastically altered and may not retain sufficient integrity to contribute to the district's significance. Please address. The Felch-Carley Building located at 15-17 Main Street (MHC #104) has also been drastically altered by storefront alterations, and the application of wood shingles which has obscured its primary character-defining feature, that of clapboard construction. Please address.

Is the Post Office owned by the Postal Service? If so, was the Federal Preservation Officer for the Postal Service notified of the proposed nomination? If so, this notification needs to be part of the official nomination documentation submitted. If not, never mind.

✓
now
excluded
from
boundary
so N/A...

Beth Savage

88000193

FEB 02 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ayer Main Street Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Main Street

n/a not for publication

city, town Ayer

n/a vicinity

state Massachusetts code 025

county Worcester code 027

zip code 04132

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>12</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<u>3</u>	<u> </u> structures
<u>16</u>	<u>4</u> objects
	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Valerie A. Tammage
Signature of certifying official

1/26/89
Date

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

Beth S. Buzge
Signature of the Keeper

3-16-89
Date of Action

Beth S. Buzge Signature of the Keeper

_____ Date of Action

Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/rail-related

Commerce/trade

Government

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Government

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mid 19th-Century Vernacular

Second Empire

Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation unknown

walls wood, brick, concrete

roof slate

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ayer Historic Main Street Historic District is a four-block commercial district of _____ acres, located on the north side of the Fitchburg Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad, and to the east of the now-defunct Worcester and Nashua Division of the B & M Railroad. The present setting is of a main street commercial district; however, as it first developed in the mid-19th century, the area was little more than a railroad depot. To the west, the district is contained by the steep grade incline of West Main Street, and the northwestern continuation of Route 2A/111 to Groton and Shirley. The district's eastern border is at the foot of the William P. Iverson Bridge (1950), which crosses over the eastbound Fitchburg Division railroad tracks. The 19th century residential neighborhood that bounds the historic district to the north is potentially eligible for the National Register.

The district contains fourteen buildings of which twelve are contributing; of the noncontributing buildings, one is a commercial structure of 1872 whose later alterations now render it ineligible; the other is a recent commercial building.

The Ayer Historic Main Street Historic District is defined as the area of downtown Ayer which was affected by the development of the crossing of the north-south Worcester-Nashua Line and the east-west Fitchburg Line of the Boston & Maine Railroad. This district developed primarily during the period 1872-1898 with a large number of brick commercial buildings representing various styles of architecture, and later grew on the south side during the period 1914-1954.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District's boundaries are defined as the area of land and the buildings beginning at and including the Ayer Town Hall and parcel (see Assessor's map, sheet #26: parcel #221), and continuing west along Main Street just short of Park Street, ending at and including the Phelps Building (sheet #26: parcel #120).

The general character of the Ayer Main Street Historic District is that of a small urban/commercial center in a predominately rural/suburban community. Two major routes of transportation define this image, and give it credibility as a center of transportation. The east-west rail connection from Boston to Gardner and the through route of 2A/111 to Shirley and Groton give the district a unique sense of connections to both the 19th-century railroad, and the 20th-century main street. Setbacks in the district are for the most part six to twelve feet in the core area.

See continuation sheet

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 1

The built environment in the Ayer Main Street Historic District represents a variety of styles and at least two distinct periods in the community's development. The north side of Main Street is composed almost entirely of three- and four-story commercial brick buildings, constructed in the period 1872-1898. These were executed in an array of styles representing High Victorian Gothic, Neo-Classical, Italianate, and Second Empire. Other buildings of this period are two- and three-story wood structures of various stylings.

The second set of buildings represents growth on the south side of Main Street, and the development of Park Street as an automobile thoroughfare to Shirley and Groton. These buildings were constructed between 1914 and ca. 1918, on land sold by the Boston & Maine Railroad. This parcel also contained a thin strip of land previously used for siding and storage sheds, a thin strip of greenbelt, and the southernmost edge of Main Street, on which an interurban electric rail system ran until 1920. One of these structures, the Cornellier Building (sheet #26: parcel #329), once held associations with the railroad as a grain warehouse; others are commercial buildings.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District is distinct from other regional development for three primary reasons. The first major distinction is the high concentration of multi-story brick commercial structures. Such structures are not common in the Groton/Harvard/Ayer area of north-central Massachusetts, and the density of their construction leads us to the second distinction of the district: the post-fire development period of the late 19th century. In 1872, a fire devastated the entire commercial center of Ayer, then composed of a series of wood commercial structures. Between 1872 and 1898, most of the brick commercial buildings which now form the core of the district were erected. Thus, Ayer's Main Street was remodeled using a variety of vernacular interpretations of architectural styles that were popular in the last quarter of the 19th century. The third major distinction of the Ayer Main Street Historic District is that despite the decline of railroad transport through Ayer, the district continued to grow during the early to mid 20th century, largely as a result of the development of major autohighways; namely, Routes 2A and 111.

The following are descriptions of the twelve contributing structures in the district, listed in chronological order:

THE TURNER PUBLIC SPIRIT BUILDING (MHC #109, Assessor's #26: 158): The Turner Public Spirit Building, built in 1868, is the only building on Main Street that pre-dates the fire of 1872. Moved to Main Street in 1878 from its location of "Merchant's Row"--a former mercantile district located on the western edge of the nominated district, across the railroad tracks--this building is representative of the kind of clapboard commercial buildings which

continued

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 2

dominated the area until the fire of 1872. The two-story flatroofed clapboard construction is detailed with classically inspired cornices and cornerboards, and two oversized, overhanging office bays on the second floor. The oversized bays were built later: the easternmost one prior to 1910; the westernmost one prior to 1920. The street-level facade is divided into two slightly projecting storefront bays, and a central entrance provides access to the upper level.

MEAD'S BLOCK (MHC #103, Assessor's #26: 228): Built in 1872, Mead's Block is a three-story brick structure in the Second Empire style. Its five-bay facade is divided into two large storefronts with central entrances, and a central access to the upper stories. Double brackets and a wood cornice support the slate-shingled mansard roof, from which three dormer windows with scrolled casements, and bracketed "gull-wing" roof lines protrude. The building has two distinct storefront renovations: a late Art Deco octagonal plate-glass and enamelled steel storefront on the easternmost establishment, and a Colonial Revival treatment on the westernmost storefront. The former alteration dates to 1950, while the latter alteration began in June 1979.

THE PHELPS BUILDING (MHC #110, Assessor's #26: 120): Used initially as a grain store when it was constructed in 1872, the Phelps Building is a three-story clapboard structure and features a raised first-floor entrance that provided easy access for the loading and unloading of wagons, and a half-basement store area. Originally, the structure also had a rear ell and a pitched roof. Now it is capped with a third-floor mansard roof and dormer windows, and the ell is gone, both alterations having been made prior to 1900. Despite a "renovation" effort, which included vinyl siding and aluminum flashing, as well as some replacement windows, the building's form and plan, including the important loading area with entrance, remain essentially as they were ca. 1900; the building is therefore considered contributing.

PAGE'S BLOCK (MCH #107, Assessor's #26: 187): The largest block on Main Street, Page's Block, a three-story brick commercial structure, seventeen bays wide with gambrel roof, was constructed, in 1872, by Thomas and Alfred Page. The first floor is composed of eight remarkably intact storefronts with a central access to the upper floor. On the second floor, double-hung windows run the length of the building and are detailed with marble sills and brick relief window hoods. On the third floor, square-capped dormers project from the slate-covered gambrel roof. The first winter after its construction, it became clear that pedestrians were in need of shelter from the snow and ice that fell from the roof. Subsequently, in 1873, a permanent sidewalk canopy was constructed to shelter the passersby. More recent and smaller scale alterations have been made to Page's Block storefronts. In the 1950s, an Art Deco-style shopfront was added to the third shop unit from Washington Street, and during the mid- to late 1870s the easternmost shop units underwent glass and steel "modernization."

continued

United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 3

THE NUTTING BLOCK (MHC #108, Assessor's #26: 160): Erected in 1872, the Nutting Block is the only four-story building on Main Street. The two-bay-by-seven-bay structure has elevations on both Main and Pleasant Streets. Entrance to the storefront is via a central entry on Main Street; while access to the offices and apartments in the upper floors is via an entry on the Pleasant Street side. Constructed with Second Empire styling, the brick block features a slate mansard roof with dormers, supported by a double-bracketed wood cornice, two second-story bay windows on the Main Street facade, and accompanying double windows on the third floor with corbelled, brick segmental arches. A granited name and date stone is set between the third-floor windows.

AYER TOWN HALL (MHC #101, Assessor's #26: 231): The Ayer Town Hall was completed and dedicated in 1876, and is tall, imposing, three-story brick structure richly detailed in the High Victorian Gothic style. The steeply pitched slate roof has an iron-crested polychromatic tower centered on the ridge. Other features of note include the richly detailed window hoods, brick and granite buttresses, marble and brick relief, and an elaborate wooden porch sheltering the entrance on the front facade. A low retaining wall of granite whose pointed posts echo the building's gothic style survives, as does a Women's Christian Temperance Union water fountain of cast iron, complete with mounting block.

THE SPAULDING BUILDING (MHC #106, Assessor's #26: 223): Built by Judge John Spaulding in 1880, this building is Main Street's only example of Italianate styling. The three-story brick structure has a flat roof with wood cornice supported by wood brackets. The seven bays in the facade are divided by unadorned brick pilasters. Likewise, brick stringcourses divide the second and third stories. Windows are 2/2 sash and are decorated with marble keystones set within the segmental brick arches. A major storefront restoration effort began in September 1977. During this project a steel fire escape, which led to a third-story central door, was removed. The door itself was not an original feature, and was probably added as an emergency escape route in the early part of this century. Other alterations in the 1977 renovation included the construction of a plywood, steel, and glass storefront.

THE NORTH MIDDLESEX SAVINGS BANK (MHC #102, Assessor's #26: 230): Built in 1898, the North Middlesex Savings Bank Building is Main Street's only example of Neo-classical architecture. This three-story brick building was the last structure built during the post-fire reconstruction period (1872-1898), and is visually important as the first structure in the progression of commercial buildings down Main Street. It stands prominently at the transition from a more residential district to the commercial district, and is a landmark as the seat of local commerce.

continued

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United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 4

THE JOHN BARRY BUILDING (Assessor's #26: 89): Built by John Barry in 1914, this building is Main Street's first example of early 20th century commercial architecture, and the oldest building on the south side of Main Street. A long two-story commercial block, it is finished in concrete brick with wood cornice detail, square-cut stone lintels and sills on the second floor, a sign which runs the building's length, and large paned glass and steel storefronts.

THE PHELPS/CARLEY BUILDING (Assessor's #26: 91): Built by Eli W. Carley in 1916, this building was the second commercial structure on the south side of Main Street. Its two-story, concrete block construction is faced with stucco and complements the Barry Building (26:89). The building is clearly divided into four street-level shops finished with plate glass and steel and vertically contained by a building-length sign band. Second-story office windows alternate single, double-hung windows with bordered plate glass windows.

THE CORNELLIER BUILDING (Assessor's #26: 329): Built ca. 1918, and used first as a grocery, later as a grain warehouse, the Cornellier Building is a modest, utilitarian clapboarded structure with a simple cornice and cornerboards. The gable roof is masked by a false front with heavy cornice. Despite the loss of its original entrance, and a later rear addition of concrete block, the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a remnant of the district's commercial and industrial character in the early 20th century.

THE FIRST NATIONAL STORE (MHC #105, Assessor's #26: 224): The First National Store Building, built in the 1930s, marks the second stage of Ayer's growth. It is the only single-story historic structure on Main Street, and features a brick facade with pre-cast concrete pilasters caps and roof edge. It currently is the location of a specialty store and provides access to the second floor of the Felch-Carley Building (26: 225).

There are two noncontributing buildings in the district. One, The Felch-Carley Building (MHC #104, Assessor's #26: 225), is a two-story commercial building erected in 1872. Twentieth-century alterations include the replacement of the original storefronts with modern glass and steel, the removal and/or replacement of second-story windows, and the sheathing of the building with shingles. The other noncontributing building is a modern railway depot constructed ca. 1970 (the original depot is no longer extant). Noncontributing objects include four recent war memorials. The overall impact of these noncontributing buildings is minimal because of their placement near the fringes of the district, and because of their low density relative to the core area of the district.

continued

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ayer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, Massachusetts

Section number 7 Page 5

While storefronts of several of the district's historic commercial structures have been modernized, thus hiding their historic character, important historic architectural detail in the upper levels is intact. It is hoped that a community awareness program, local legislation, and the formal acceptance of the area as a National Register District will be able to reverse the current renovation trends, which may hide historic details. Ayer is a participating community of the Massachusetts Main Street Program, and the district has undergone major improvements in its streets, sidewalks, and amenities through this streetscape project. Local interest has been generated to renovate and revitalize the district's commercially viable, but as yet untapped resources.

continued

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

Ayer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, Massachusetts

Section number 7 Page 6

Archaeological Description

Some archaeological artifacts may be found on the sites of the pre-1872 commercial wood structures in the rear lots of parcels on the north side of Main Street (26: 187, 223-225, 228, 230-231). Also, evidence of previous railroad loading docks and sheds may be present on the southern edge of the district on land held by the Fitchburg Division of the Boston and Maine Railroad.

Some potential archaeological remains of previous structures relating to the development of commerce and transportation in the district may be present. Possible potential sites would be located in the rear lots of parcels 26: 187, 223-225, 228, 230-231 on Main Street, and alongside existing railroad tracks and beds on the south edge of the district on land currently held by the Boston and Maine Railroad. Any archaeological research and artifacts which are subsequently unearthed would provide the region with a model of development patterns associated with the growth and development of small towns in conjunction with the broad-scaled development of the railroad.

Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1868-1938

Significant Dates

1872

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ayer Main Street Historic District, in Ayer, Massachusetts, is a regional example of the changes and prosperity which accompanied the development of railroad transportation in the mid-to-late-19th century. The district possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Prior to the mid-1800s, Ayer functioned as outlying agricultural land to the communities of Groton and Harvard. However, upon the establishment of a major regional railroad junction there, Ayer developed into an important commercial center oriented toward servicing the railroad industry. The Ayer Main Street Historic District is significant for its associations with the development of commerce and commercial architecture in the mid to late 19th and early 20th-centuries. The major period of significance spans the years from 1872 to 1898, the years of a major rebuilding campaign following a devastating fire and extends to 1938, when the railroad junction and related commercial activity was in the midst of decline. A single building predates the fire. The Ayer Main Street Historic District meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Ayer was first settled during the late 18th and early 19th centuries as farmland with "about a dozen farms of doubtful prosperity" (Hurd, History of Middlesex County). This farming community saw very little economic or industrial development, for despite the presence of several good water power privileges, the remoteness of the town from older settlements remained so great that manufacturing was virtually impossible" (MHC, Reconnaissance Survey Report, 1980). This geographical and social barrier prevented Ayer from developing economically until the late 1840s.

Beginning in the mid-1840s, four railroad lines were established: the Fitchburg (1845), the Stony Brook (1848), the Worcester and Nashua (1848), and the Peterborough and Shirley (1848). These railroad lines all crossed paths in a part of Ayer that came to be known as "Groton Junction," now the Ayer Main Street Historic District. Sweeping arcs of steel, a series of crossover, and a variety of sheds and platforms sprung up at the heart of this major

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Barringer, Peggy. Architectural Workbook for Downtown Ayer. Ayer: Downtown Revitalization Project, 1981.
- Conklin, Edwin P. Middlesex County and Its People, Vol. II. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc. 1927.
- Drake, Samuel Adams, ed. History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Vol. I. ("Ayer" by Samuel A. Green, M.D.). Boston: Estes and Lauriet Publishers, 1880.
- Hurd, Hamilton ed. History of Middlesex County, Vol. II. ("Ayer") chapters XLIX-LVII by George J. Burns). Philadelphia: S.W. Lewis Co., 1890.
- Massachusetts Historical Commission. Reconnaissance Survey Report. April 1980.

Montachusett Regional Planing Commission. The Historic Architecture of the Montachusett Region. 1978.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 5.5 acres
Scale: 1:25000

UTM References

A 19 287630 4714930
Zone Easting Northing

C 19 287420 4714860

B 19 287550 4714850
Zone Easting Northing

D 19 287360 4715010

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See assessors maps

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The district boundaries were drawn to include the historically significant commercial buildings on Main Street. To the north and north east are residential buildings, to the south is the Boston and Maine Railroad tracks, and to the west are residential buildings and modern commercial buildings with no historical significance to the district.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Zarowin/MHC w/ T. Kent Hikida, Pres. Cons. & Betsy Friedburg, NR Dir., MHC
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January, 1989
street & number 80 Boylston Street, Suite 310 telephone 617 727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116

FEB 2 1989

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 1

junction. In 1848, the Union Depot was constructed over the Fitchburg Division line. It was a massive shed with covered platforms extending east and south from the north-south/east-west crossing, and there was a ticket office/restaurant located in the northeast sector of the crossing. This structure was at least partially extant in photographs through 1958. The railroad crossing at South Groton (later Groton Junction, and currently Ayer) was thus responsible for the existence and development of the Town of Ayer, and was unsurpassed as a regional transportation center:

The centralizing here of these great railroad systems has thus afforded direct and through service with all four points of the compass. Distance to be travelled is now measured in hours and minutes and not in miles. We are less than an hour from Boston on the through express, and have over fifteen trains per day each way. Being on the Hoosac Travel Route, we are, as a shipping point to all places west unsurpassed. The equipment of both railroads is unequalled; and we are afforded every railroad advantage which the age can boast.

If we may be permitted to indulge in geometrical figures we can say that we are at a common apex of three practically equilateral triangles--Ayer, Fitchburg, Nashua, Lowell; Ayer, Boston, Worcester. (Hurd, History of Middlesex County, Vol. II, p. 659.)

Following the establishment of "Groton Junction," this area "became a fertile field for speculators who recognized its commercial and industrial potential and rapidly bought up and sold off large tracks of land" (Barringer, Workbook) and underwent a "series of engineering surveys and speculative purchases in the years 1848-1852 [which] laid out streets, established house lots and determined the position of a commercial district, all located within [a] short distance of the railroad depot." (MCRP: Report, 1978).

The east-west Fitchburg and Stony Brook Railroads and the north-south Worcester & Nashua and Peterborough & Shirley Railroads gave "Groton Junction" access to major rail lines running between Portland, Maine, and New York City, and between Boston and Albany, and to the markets of these cities. As a result, small-scale industrial and commercial establishments began to emerge in the early 1850s. In 1850, a plow factory, the first significant manufacturing establishment in Ayer, was opened by the Ames Plow Company. Then, in 1854, a large tannery was established, and shortly thereafter a small iron foundry began operating. While the Ames Plow Company relocated to Worcester in 1875, a large tannery remained in business in Ayer into the 20th century, employing 100 people in 1900. Undoubtedly the tanned leather was shipped by rail to shoe factories throughout New England. More important in terms of employment was the railroad itself. By the late 19th century, "Groton Junction" was "said to provide the largest classification yard in New England," and the railroad was Ayer's principal employer.

continued

FEB 2 1989

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 2

While the railroad line itself survives adjacent to the Ayer Main Street Historic District, other important railroad-associated structures no longer exist, including the Ames Plow Company building, which burned down in 1886, and the Tannery, which burned down in 1961. The railroad was the one industry, however, to which Ayer owed its existence:

We are in the truest sense, a railroad town; not simply a railroad centre, but an offspring of the iron-horse itself. It was the magic touch of its wand that conjured our promising and thrifty village from an uncompromising and almost stagnant country. At the advent of the railroads the limits of our present village comprised about a dozen farms of doubtfully prosperity. (Hurd, History of Middlesex County, Vol. II p. 657)

The development of Ayer as a regional railroad transportation center stimulated considerable commercial development. In fact, the development of the Ayer Main Street Historic District occurred in order to provide support services for the railroad and the above-mentioned industries. In the 1850s, several commercial buildings were constructed along Main Street. The growing transportation/commercial center attracted a large enough population that, in 1871, the town was incorporated and named after James Cook Ayer, a successful local businessman. However, in 1872, disaster struck as a fire leveled the entire Main Street area, destroying all but one of the original commercial buildings (the sole survivor was the Turner Public Spirit Building of 1868, moved to its present site some ten years later). While the fire obliterated the wood commercial buildings, it eventually led to the construction of the nominated district, a series of late-19th century brick commercial and municipal buildings with a character appropriate to such a rural transportation center.

Following the 1872 fire, a major rebuilding campaign saw the construction of nine buildings between 1872 and 1898. These buildings include: the Town Hall (1873), seat of the locale government; the North Middlesex Savings Bank, the major commercial institution in the town; Mead's Block (1872), originally the home of a furniture manufacturing firm and currently a restaurant and lounge; the Felch-Carley Building (1872), a commercial building occupied then and now by an office and retail mix (presently noncontributing); and The Spaulding Building (1880), used for a period of time as a courtroom and commercial building by Judge John Spaulding, and currently a clothing store. The Turner Public Spirit Building, one-time home of the local paper, "The Pubic Spirit," and John Turner's Steam Power print shop is the only building on Main Street built before 1872. It was built in 1868, along what was then known as "Merchant Row," and moved across the tracks to its present location, in 1878. The Phelps Building (1872), originally a grain store, also built after the fire, is now a multi-use commercial building. All nine of these buildings are located on the north side of Main Street.

continued

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetAyer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, MassachusettsSection number 8 Page 3

Although no major architects or craftsmen were known to have produced work within the Main Street Historic District, the architecture and construction methods generally used in the community of Ayer may have been influenced by James Park, "(who) had reputedly worked as a surveyor/architect for the Duke of Argyle in Scotland prior to emigrating to New England in the mid-eighteenth century" (MHC, "Report"). Regardless, however, of any implicit or explicit connection between the architectural styling of the Main Street District and the reputed Scottish surveyor/architect, the fact remains that the district's architecture contains a wide variety of styles reproduced first and foremost in vernacular and pragmatic manners.

Following this post-fire period of prosperity and growth (1872-1898), Ayer's economy was subject to considerable fluctuation. In the early 20th century, an interurban electric trolley system was constructed. This system connected the Ayer central business district with Fitchburg and Shirley, providing a larger base of support for the businesses along Main Street. However, this service was abandoned in the 1920s as automobile transportation improved. In 1917, during World War I, Fort Devens, a military induction center, was opened near the district.

The military base proved to be both a blessing and a burden on the area. The wartime and brief post-war boom period, followed by periods of slow decline in the base's population, added to the economic instability of the Ayer commercial district. Adding to the woes of the Main Street Historic District was the general decline of the railroad as a transportation source, thus leading fewer travellers to stop in "Groton Junction." By the 1930s, the Ayer Main Street Historic District was in serious decline.

The unevenness of the 20th-century Ayer economy can be seen in the building pattern in the district. The south side of Main Street, once the site of a series of long, covered loading docks and an open park area (over which the trolley passed), came to be lined with smaller commercial blocks in the years between 1914 and 1954. In 1914-1916, two parcels were developed on the southwest side of the street on land previously owned by the Boston and Maine Railroad (the John Barry Building and the Phelps/Carley Building). A small, utilitarian structure tucked behind the Barry Building (the Cornellier Building, ca. 1918) served at various times as a grocery and a warehouse--it is presently a restaurant. The 1930s brought a "modern" commercial building to the north side of Main Street: The First National Store Building. The next spurt of development did not occur until 1951-1954, when five more parcels on Main Street were sold by the B & M Railroad: three on the south side moving east, and two at the corner of Main Street and Park Street. These five parcels, developed with small commercial structures, lie just outside the district boundaries.

continued

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Ayer Main Street Historic District
Ayer, Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 4

The Ayer Main Street Historic District is at its heart a commercial center in a rural/suburban locale. Although it was developed primarily through the commerce brought to it by the railroad industry in the mid- to-late-19th century, it also developed in this century through a series of land sales and commercial speculation. Thus, the Ayer Main Street Historic District contains elements from two distinct eras: buildings that remain from the railroad boom days, and buildings that reflect the community's uneven growth as the local commercial center in the mid-20th century.

**DISTRICT DATA SHEET
AYER MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
AYER, MASSACHUSETTS**

MHC #	ASSESSORS MAP #	HISTORIC NAME	STREET ADDRESS	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	STYLE	RESOURCE	STATUS
101	26:231	Ayer Town Hall	Main Street	1873	High Vict. Gothic	B	C
		Women's Christian Temperance		ca. 1875		O	C
		Union Water fountain					
		War Memorial		1861-1918		O	C
		Civil War Memorial		1861-1865		O	C
		War Memorial		1912-1984		O	NC
		War Memorial		1919-1941		O	NC
		WWII Memorial		1941-1945		O	NC
		Korean & Vietnam War Memorial		1950-1975		O	NC
		Granite retaining wall with gothic posts		ca. 1873		St	C
	26:330	Vacant land					
102	26:230	North Middlesex Savings Bank	3,5,7 Main Street	1898	Neo-Classical	B	C
103	26:228	Mead's Block	9-13 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
104	26:225	Felch-Carley Building	15 Main Street	1872, with later altera- tions	Clapboard Commercial	B	NC
105	26:224	First National Store	17-23 Main Street	ca. 1930	Early-20th Century Commercial	B	C
106	26:223	The Spaulding Building	25 Main Street	1880	Italianate	B	C
107	26:187	Page's Block	33-47 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
108	26:160	The Nutting Block	49 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
	26:159	Vacant					

PLAT	SECTION	OWNER	STREET ADDRESS	BLK	LOT	STATE	CONSTRUCTION	DATE
100	100	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	100	100	CA	1000-1000	1000
101	101	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	101	101	CA	1000-1001	1000
102	102	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	102	102	CA	1000-1002	1000
103	103	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	103	103	CA	1000-1003	1000
104	104	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	104	104	CA	1000-1004	1000
105	105	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	105	105	CA	1000-1005	1000
106	106	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	106	106	CA	1000-1006	1000
107	107	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	107	107	CA	1000-1007	1000
108	108	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	108	108	CA	1000-1008	1000
109	109	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	109	109	CA	1000-1009	1000
110	110	THE HUNTING CLUB	1000 10th St	110	110	CA	1000-1010	1000

13th and 14th
 DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
 OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
 1300 13th St, N.W.
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

FEB 2 1989

**DISTRICT DATA SHEET
 AYER MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
 AYER, MASSACHUSETTS**

MHC #	ASSESSORS MAP #	HISTORIC NAME	STREET ADDRESS	DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	STYLE	RESOURCE	STATU
109	26:158	Turner Public Spirit	59-61 Main Street	1868; 1878; (date moved to pre- sent location)	Clapboard Commercial	B	C
110	26:120	The Phelps Building	63 Main Street	1872	Second Empire	B	C
114	26:329	Cornellier Building	Depot Square	ca. 1918, 1975	Early 20th Century Utilitarian	B	C
114A		Ayer Railway Depot		ca. 1970s	Commercial	B	NC
116	26:89	John Barry Building	44-48 Main Street	1914	Early 20th Century Commercial	B	C
	26:90	Vacant land					
117	26:91	Phelps/Carley Building	30-38 Main Street	1916	Early 20th Century Commercial	B	C

Total	C	NC
Buildings	12	2
Structures	1	-
Sites	-	-
Objects	3	4
	<u>16</u>	<u>6</u>

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MASSACHUSETTS
DISTRICT HISTORIC STREET MAP
DISTRICT MAP SHEET

FEB 2 1989

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Ayer Main Street Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 2/02/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/19/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 88000193

NOMINATOR: STATE

DETAILED EVALUATION: Y

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 3/16/89 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Small regional commercial district associated with railroad prosperity of the mid-late-19th-century. Initial return issues have been addressed in the resubmission.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C
REVIEWER Savage
DISCIPLINE Architectural History
DATE 3/16/89

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

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

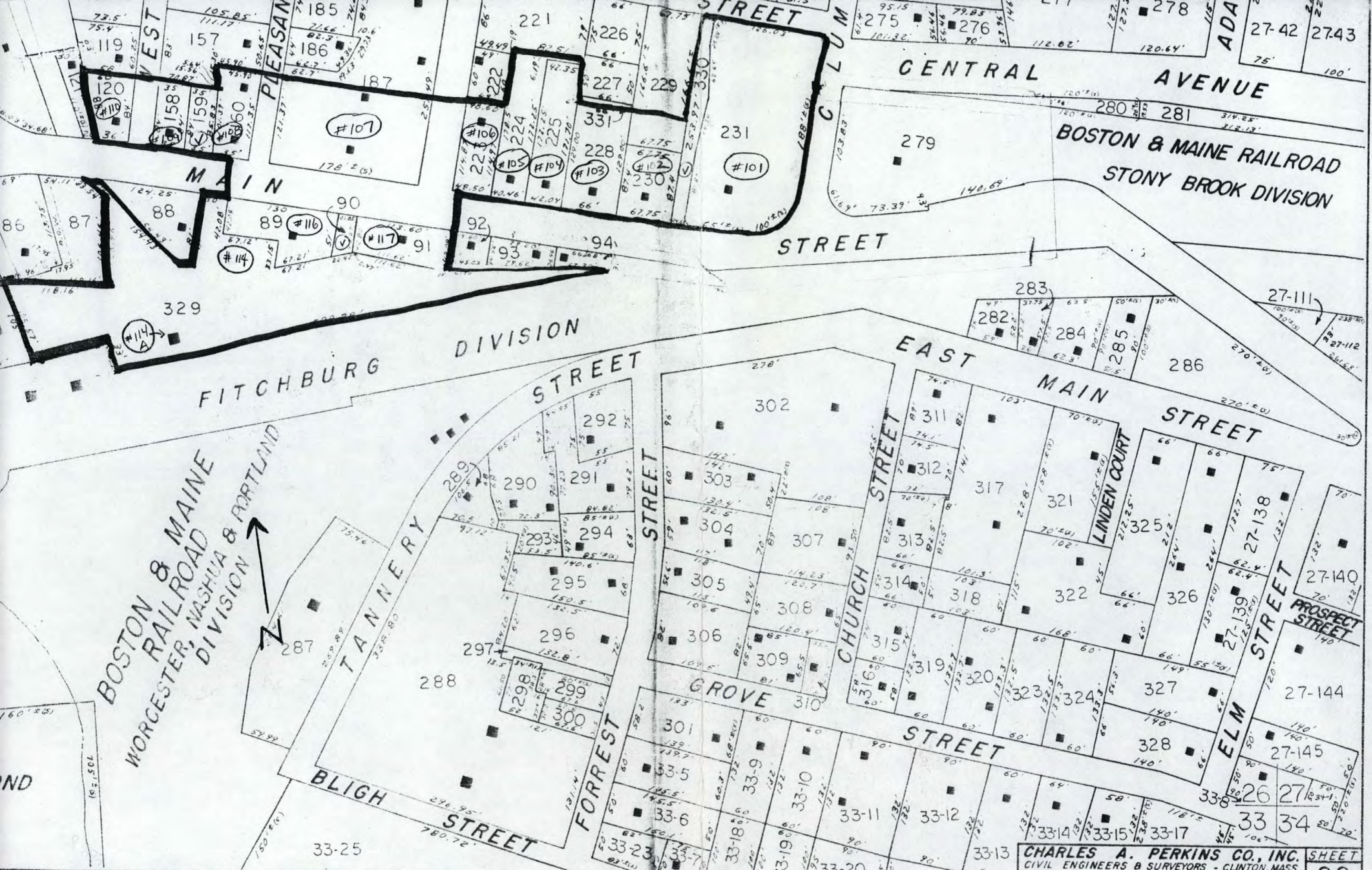
OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____

Date _____



BOSTON & MAINE
 WORCESTER, NASHUA & PORTLAND
 DIVISION

CHARLES A. PERKINS CO., INC.
 CIVIL ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS - CLINTON, MASS.
 SCALE: 1" = 100'
 SHEET 26
 REVISED: DEC. 1979

AYER MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT, AYER, MASS.

(#) = MHC inventory number

FEB 2 1989



Property Name: Streetscape
Street Address: Main Street
Community: Ayer, MA

Photographer: T. Kent Hikida
Date: August 1985
Location of Neg: Ayer Historical
Commission

Photo #1 of 6
Description of View: View of
Main Street from East.

FEB 8 1988

STREETSCAPE
MAIN STREET
AYER, MASS.
AYER MAIN ST. HIST. DIST.

PHOTO: T. KENT HIKIDA
DATE: 8/85
LOC. OF NEG: AYER
HIST. COMM.

PHOTO #1 OF 4
DESCRIPTION OF VIEW: MAIN STREET
FROM THE EAST



ICE CUBES
Imported WINES AND BEERS

AYER PACKAGE STORE INC.

DELIVERY SERVICE

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BOT



Property Name: John Barry Bldg.
Street Address: 44-48 Main St.
Community: Ayer, MA

Photographer: T. Kent Hikida
Date: August 1985
Location of Neg.: Ayer Historical
Commission

Photograph #5 of 6

Description of View: View of
street facade of an early
20th century commercial
block.

FEB 8 1988

JOHN BARRY BLDG.
44-48 MAIN ST.
AYER, MASS.

AYER MAIN ST. HIST. DIST.

PHOTOS.: T. KENT HIKIDA

DATE: 8/85

LOC. OF NEG.: AYER HIST.
COMM.

PHOTO # 2 OF 4

DESCRIPTION OF VIEW: STREET FACADE,
EARLY 20TH C. COMMERCIAL BLOCK



Property Name: Page's Block
Street Address: 33-47 Main Street
Community: Ayer, MA

Photographer: T. Kent Hikida
Date: August 1985
Location of Neg.: Ayer Historical
Commission

Photograph # 4 of 6
Description of View: View of
the major commercial
block on Main Street.

FEB 8 1988

PAGE'S BLOCK
33-47 MAIN ST.
AYER, MASS,
AYER MAIN ST. HIST. DIST.

PHOTOS: T. KENT HIKIDA
DATE: AUG. 1985
LOC. OF NEG: AYER
HIST. COMMISSION

PHOTO # 3 OF 4
DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR COMMERCIAL
BLOCK ON MAIN ST.



Property Name: Spaulding Bldg.
Street Address: 25 Main Street.
Community: Ayer, MA

Photographer: T. Kent Hikida
Date: August 1985
Location of Neg.: Ayer Historical
Commission

Photograph # 3 of 6
Description of View: View of
buildings from West:
Spaulding Bldg. to
North Middlesex Bank Bldg.

FEB 8 1988

SPAULDING BLDG
25 MAIN ST.
AYER, MASS.

AYER MAIN ST. HIST. DIST.

PHOTOG.: T. KENT HIKIDA

DATE: 8/85

LOG. OF NEG.: AYER
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

PHOTO #4 OF 4

DESCRIPTION OF VIEW: FROM WEST:
SPAULDING BUILDING TO N. MIDDLESEX
BANK BLDG.



AYER MAIN STREET
HISTORIC DISTRICT
Ayer, Massachusetts

QUAD - Ayer
Scale 1:25000

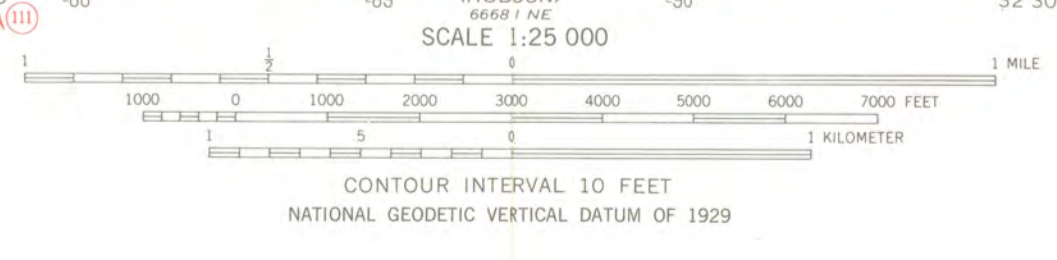
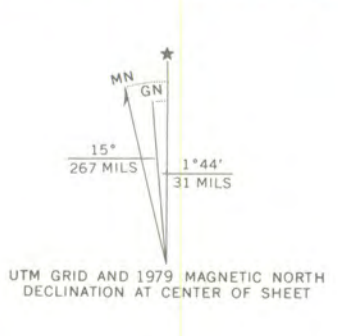
UTM References:
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B 19/287550/4714270
C 19/287420/4714860
D 19/287360/4715010

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4200
13000	4000
12000	3600
11000	3300
10000	3000
9000	2700
8000	2400
7000	2100
6000	1800
5000	1500
4000	1200
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2000	600
1000	300
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To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1923 and 1935. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



AYER, MASS.
N4230-W7130/7.5
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6669 II SE-SERIES V814

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



P 093544734

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Valerie A. Talmage

Executive Director

State Historic Preservation Officer

January 29, 1988

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the nomination forms for the following properties:

Ayer, Ayer Main Street Historic District, Main Street

Boston (Hyde Park), Dedham Manufacturing Company Historic District
Knight and Readville Streets, Damon Place; HPCA #0771-85-MA-85-0793

Stockbridge, Shadow Brook Farm Historic District, Route 183

They have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. No comments have been received to date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

BF/es

Enclosure

FEB 8 1988



FEB 02 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

January 26, 1989

Ms. Carol Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the revised nomination form for the following district,
which was returned by your office for technical corrections:

Ayer Main Street Historic District, Ayer, Massachusetts

All corrections have been made, as requested. Please contact me if you have
any further questions.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure