

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

MAY 23 1983

1. Name

historic Thom Block (preferred)

and/or common Flat Iron Building

2. Location

street & number 83 - 89 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Milford N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Worcester code 027

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☐ public	☒ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☒ private	☐ unoccupied	☒ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☐ in process	☒ yes: restricted	☐ government
	N/A being considered	☐ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☐ museum
			☐ park
			☐ private residence
			☐ religious
			☐ scientific
			☐ transportation
			☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Howard M. Feldman and Lidia M. Feldman

street & number P. O. Box 581

city, town Hopedale N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Registry of Deeds

street & number 2 Main Street

city, town Worcester state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth, #202 has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1980 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description

Thom Block, Milford, Massachusetts

Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered

☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Thom Block, a four-story, flat roofed, granite commercial block is situated in the downtown business district of Milford. The building covers nearly all of the 3000 square feet, trapezoidal-shaped parcel on which it stands; it fronts on Main Street on the southeast, Calley Square on the northeast, and Spruce Street on the northwest. Due to its shape, the Thom Block is commonly known as the Flat Iron Building.

The street facades of the Thom Block are built of locally quarried, rock faced granite blocks. The windowless southwest wall is a red brick (24" thick at the base, 8" thick at the top), and was originally shared with an adjoining commercial block which was destroyed during the 1960s. Heavy timber framing - some members as thick as 8" x 10" - braces load-bearing walls and rests upon vertical granite slabs at basement level.

The street facades are composed of coursed and random sections of ashlar, with suggestions of quoins at the Calley Square corners. Rectangular windows with one over one sash are framed by plain granite lintels, slightly projecting sills, and jambs of alternating wide and narrow blocks. The facades are simply articulated by granite belt courses and unusually decorative storefronts. The building was at one time topped by a metal cornice, added probably in the late 1920s to prevent roof leaks and removed several years ago after serious deterioration.

Below a granite frieze, the Main Street storefronts are separated by seven polychromatic piers which alternate blocks of polished and rock faced granite. The piers are each capped by a carved modillion block. At the building's northeast corner, a recessed entrance is supported by a polychromatic column of polished granite cylinders separated by narrow bands of rock faced granite. A rudimentary, rough hewn capital block surmounts this column. Eight granite piers line the Spruce Street storefronts as well, although these are neither polished nor polychromatic.

The major ornament of the upper stories is a large plaque on the Main Street facade just above the recessed entrance. Two Corinthian colonettes are spanned by a frieze and plinth on which "THOM" and "1891" are carved, respectively. The whole is surmounted by a semi-circular pediment.

Although the building's exterior is in very good condition, the interior is in poor shape. Significant interior features are few, but include wood framed plate glass storefront windows and the stores' original pressed metal ceilings. The upper floors' configuration has been extensively and repeatedly altered throughout the building's history. Although little original fabric remains within the upper stories, their architectural and historical significance appears to have been negligible.

Originally, the Thom Block contained three stores on the first floor, each with access to both Main and Spruce Streets, and nine rooms in each of the upper stories. At present, the building's only occupants are a small clothing store and Alson's Auto Parts, both on the first floor.

8. Significance

Thom Block, Milford, Massachusetts

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400-1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500-1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☐ sculpture
☐ 1600-1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700-1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☒ 1800-1899	☒ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☐ 1900-	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☐ other (specify)

Specific dates 1891 **Builder/Architect** James Thom

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Thom Block retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location and setting. The building is significant for its associations with Milford's late 19th century industrial prosperity and as a fine example of a granite commercial block of the period; it meets criteria A and C of the National Register.

Since the mid 19th century, granite quarrying has been Milford's largest and most important industry. H. H. Richardson's Boston and Albany railroad stations and his Allegheny County Courthouse are built of Milford granite, as are McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library and Pennsylvania Station. Other notable structures of Milford granite include the New York City Public Library, Boston's South Station, and Washington's Executive Office Building and Museum of Natural History. Milford granite was shipped to all corners of the U. S. and as far afield as Europe.

Although Milford's granite industry declined precipitously in the early 20th century, the town's late 19th century commercial blocks continue to dominate Main Street and to define its character. The Thom Block is the town's only surviving granite commercial block, and as such serves as a prominent visual reminder of the industry whose prosperity built much of Main Street. Although rock faced granite ashlar is not unusual in Massachusetts, load bearing walls of randomly sized courses are notably less common, particularly among buildings of the late 19th century. In addition, the Thom Block's polychromatic piers of polished and rock faced granite are unique in the region.

James Thom came to Milford around 1889. Soon after joining Milford Pink Granite Quarries as a "foreman stone-cutter," Mr. Thom was the target of a "murderous assault" by a disgruntled quarry laborer by the name of Scampini. Shortly thereafter, Thom submitted his resignation. He then turned his attention to other pursuits such as proprietorship of a local bicycle-horse-carriage racetrack and of Milford's two semi-professional baseball teams.

In the spring of 1891, Thom set to work erecting the building which bears his name. Just prior to its scheduled completion, a fire gutted the entire interior, including James Thom, Jr.'s street level clothing store. The Thom's were not to recover from this calamity and subsequently defaulted on the mortgage; they removed to Maine in 1895.

The Craddock Hotel and the Ancient Order of Hibernians occupied the Thom Block's upper floors for most of this century. The street level stores have housed Trotta's Barbershop, Mainini's Liquors, a key shop, and a saloon which was entered from Spruce Street.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Milford Journal (5/7/1890, 3/2/1892, and 10/15/1892).

Milford Directories (1880-1940).

Milford Pink Granite Quarries company records.

Milford Historical Commission, History of Milford (Milford:C. Kraft Press, 1980).

(Continued)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .15

Quadrangle name Milford

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	9
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2	9	1	8	6	0
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4	6	6	8	4	2	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

B

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Zone

Easting

Northing

C

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E

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification The 71' x 28' x 65' x 62' Thom Block nearly covers the entire 3,000 square feet trapezoidal shaped parcel on which it stands, indicated in the Assessor's records as Lot #550 on Sheet #48. Beginning at the eastern
(Continued)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wendy Frontiero, Preservation Planner, with
Thomas J. Morgan, Consultant

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February 22, 1983

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Peter C. Weslowski

State Historic Preservation Officer,
title Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 4/28/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 6/23/83

for *Shelous Byers*
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

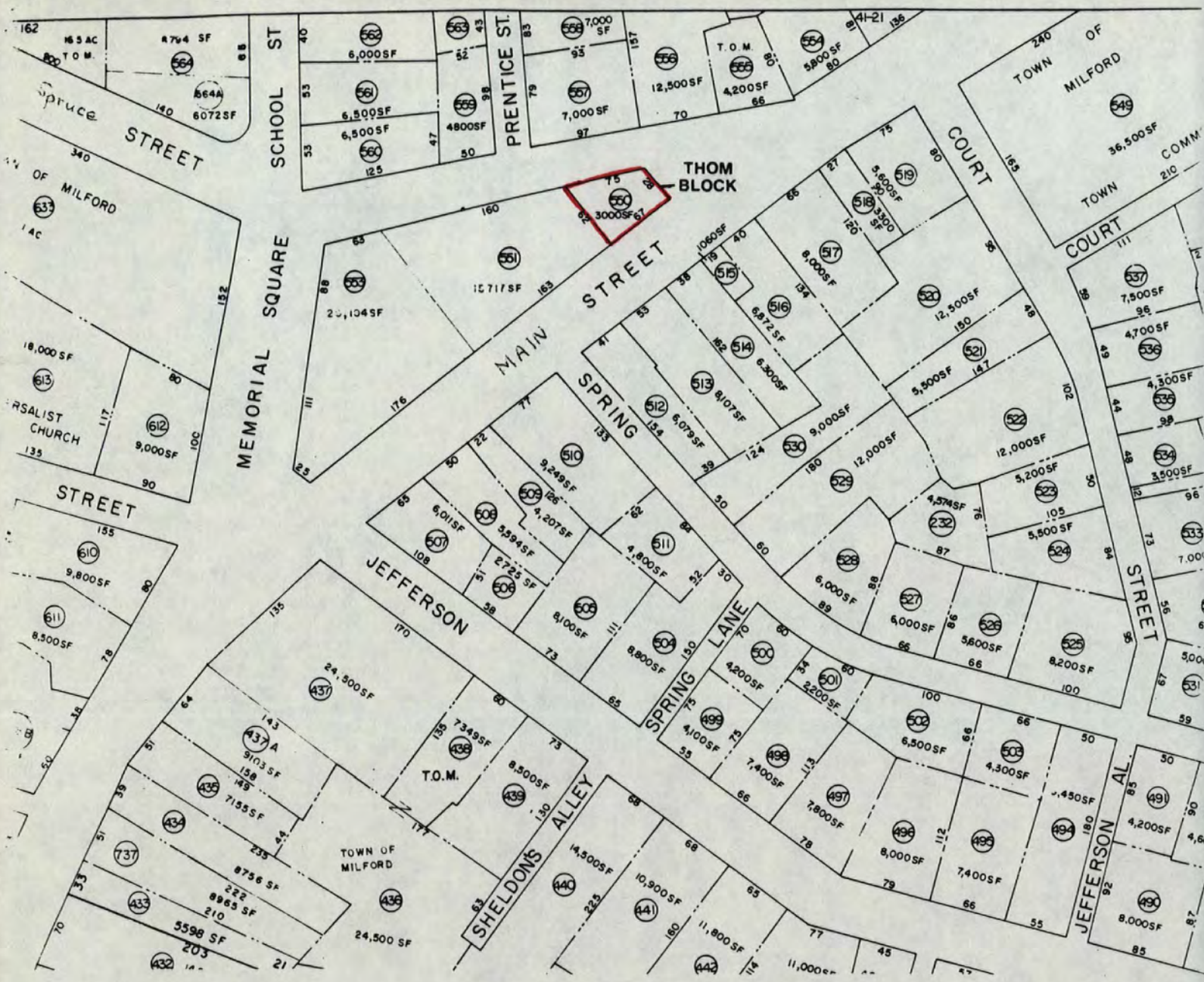
Continuation sheet Thom Block, Milford, Mass. **Item number** 9 and 10 **Page** 1

Section 9: Major Bibliographical References (Continued)

Interviews with Milford residents Robin Philbin (3/25/1982), Dwight Matson (4/1/1982), and Michael DeLuca (4/2/1982).

Section 10: Geographical Data: Verbal Boundary Description (Continued)

corner of the premises at a point where Spruce Street enters Main Street, the boundary runs southwest 67 feet along the west line of Main Street, thence northwest 62 feet along land formerly of Raftery to Spruce Street, thence east 75 feet along the south line of Spruce Street to the west side of Calley Square, thence southeast 28 feet along the southwest line of Spruce Street to the point of beginning. See also attached sketch map.

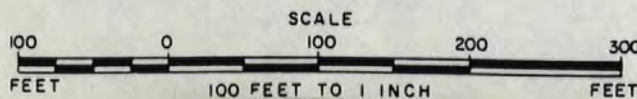


TOWN OF MILFORD

Massachusetts

ASSESSORS ATLAS

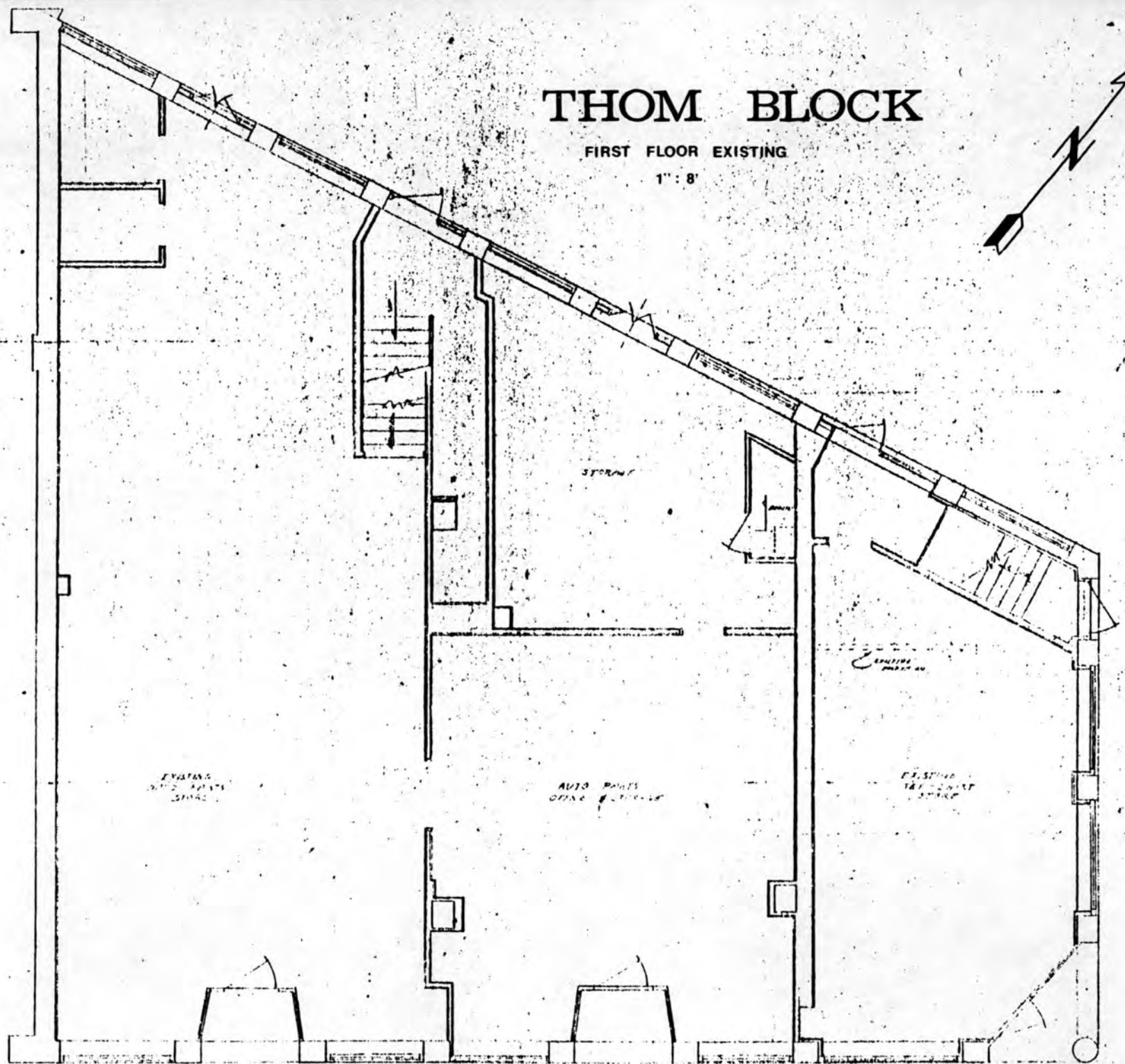
MAY OF 1968



THOM BLOCK

FIRST FLOOR EXISTING

1" = 8'



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thom Block
Worcester County
MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 23 1983

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84
Date Due: 6/23/83 - 7/7/83
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6/23/83
☐ RETURN
Entered in the National Register ☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

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

Entered in the National Register ☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments: _____

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
☐ 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
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ original site
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☐ moved date _____

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

Address of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

USIT 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

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Thom Block
83-89 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757

April 1982

Photo: Tom Morgan
Negative: 50 Federal St.
Boston
(617) 542-1006

Photo # 1 ~~015~~
Looking north at Thom Block's SW &
SE elevations



MODERN
OFFICE SPACE
AVAILABLE
FELDMAN REALTY
478-3214

ALSON
AUTO PARTS

Thom Block April 1982
83-89 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757

Photo: Tom Morgan
Negative: 50 Federal St.
 Boston
 (617) 542-1006

Photo # 2 ~~45~~
Looking SW at Thom Block's Calley
Square facade.



Thom Block April 1982
83-89 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757

Photo: Tom Morgan
Negative: 50 Federal St.
 Boston
 (617) 542-1006

Photo # 3 *45*
Looking south at Thom Block's NE &
NW facades.



Thom Block April 1982
83-89 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757

Photo: Tom Morgan
Negative: 50 Federal St.
 Boston
 (617) 542-1006

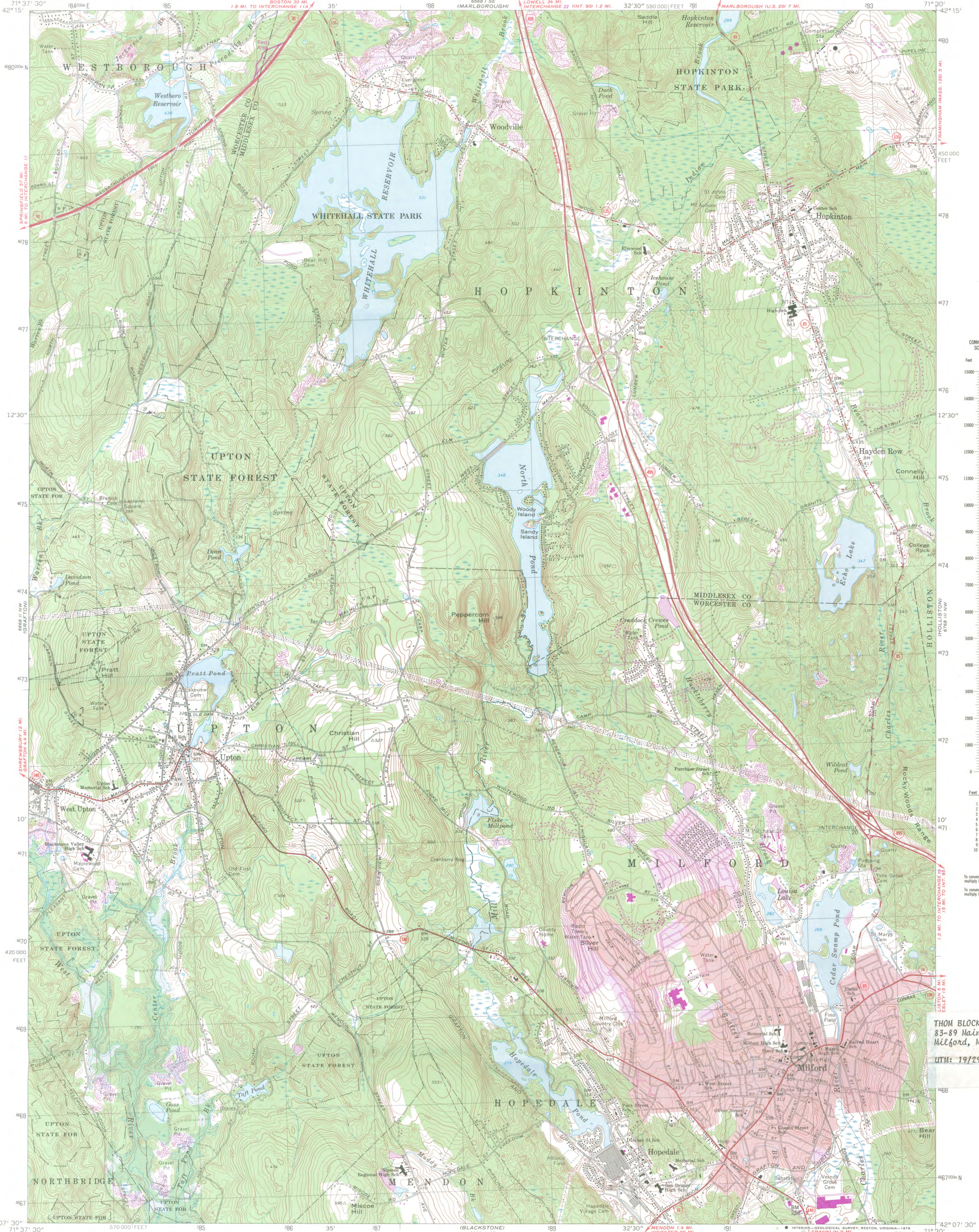
Photo # 4 ~~015~~
Main St. facade detail, second story,
Thom Block's E corner.



Thom Block April 1982
83-89 Main St.
Milford, MA 01757

Photo: Tom Morgan
Negative: 50 Federal St.
Boston
(617) 542-1006

Photo # 5015
Looking SW into recessed entry at
Thom Block's NE corner.



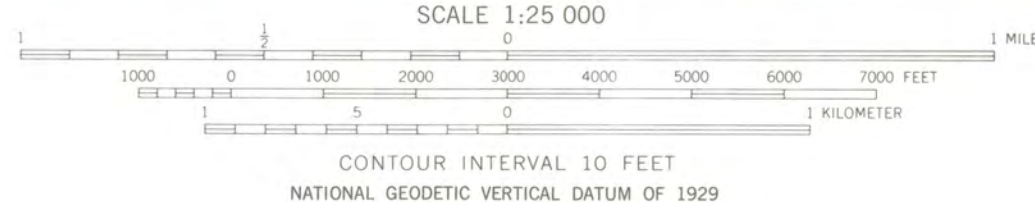
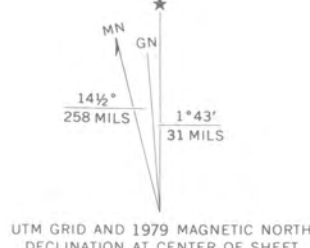
Feet	Meters
1	0.3048
2	0.6096
3	0.9144
4	1.2192
5	1.5240
6	1.8288
7	2.1336
8	2.4384
9	2.7432
10	3.0480

To convert feet to meters
multiply by 0.3048

To convert meters to feet
multiply by 3.2808

THOM BLOCK
83-89 Main Street
Milford, MA
UTM: 19J291860/4668420

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1942-1943. Revised from
aerial photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968
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
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Area covered by dashed light-blue pattern is subject to
controlled inundation by West Hill Dam
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

Interstate Route

State Route

MILFORD, MASS.
N4207.5—W7130/7.5
1968
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6668 II NE—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

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
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

Thom Block