

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oak Grove Farm

other names/site number Lovell House

2. Location

street & number 410 Exchange Street

☐ not for publication

city or town Millis

☐ vicinity

state Massachusetts

code MA

county Norfolk

code 021

zip code 02054

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brona Simon

March 17, 2011

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon

Date

Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

5-4-11

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ private | ☒ building(s) |
| ☒ public-local | ☐ district |
| ☐ public-State | ☐ site |
| ☐ public-Federal | ☐ structure |
| | ☐ object |

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	building
2	0	sites
3	3	structures
0	0	objects
6	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: residence

AGRICULTURE: farm

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE: museum, outdoor

recreation, playing fields

DOMESTIC: residence

AGRICULTURE

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

COLONIAL: First Period, Georgian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK, STONE

walls WOOD: clapboards

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

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Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

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7. Description

Oak Grove Farm, located at 410 Exchange Street, Millis, MA, comprises a 2½-story farmhouse with First Period, Georgian, and Greek Revival features. The dwelling faces east on 108 acres of surrounding farmland, some of which has been converted to recreation land. The clapboard, side-gabled farmhouse [**Photo #1**] sits on a knoll overlooking Exchange Street, north of Millis Center, and just south of Towles Corner (known as Cranes' Corner in the 19th century) in North Millis. The farmland extends from Exchange Street westerly to Ridge Street and, on the south side, from Island Road northerly to the rear lot lines of dwellings that line Orchard Street between Exchange and Ridge Streets. The Oak Grove Farmhouse (also known as the Lovell House) and much of its surrounding farmland retain historic fabric and share a rich history associated with farming and industry in Millis. They are also associated with Lansing Millis, for whom the town is named. The boundaries for the property follow the lot lines of this large town-owned parcel.

Setting

Exchange Street is a north-south road leading north from Main Street in Millis Center to its intersection with Orchard Street, where it becomes Middlesex Street on the north side of the intersection. The northern section of Exchange Street, where Oak Grove Farm is located, was part of the early road from East Medway (now Millis Center) to Sherborn—along Plain Street to Exchange Street. Surrounding residential land uses include a series of uniform house lots along the southern side of Orchard Street (land that once was part of the farm), several duplexes on the south side of Island Road where the Lansing Millis mansion was located on the old Wheeler farm, and modest mid 20th-century residences on the west side of Ridge Street opposite the farmland. At Towles Corner, opposite the northeast corner of the farm, there are a few historic properties from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The 108-acre farm has a mix of well-drained, upland farmland in the northwest corner. Forested areas and wetlands extend southwesterly through the property (caused by the nearby Boggastow Brook and Pond to the northeast). Large maple trees are scattered around the house, and one mature maple is just behind the house in the angle formed by the main block and the rear ell. Some foundations of the enormous dairy complex that once stood behind the farmhouse are reportedly covered with soil. The area, now flat grassy fields, is west of the house and north of the parking area where other farm buildings were located.

Contributing features dating to the Oak Grove Farm era include the two old driveways lined with trees that once led from Island Road to the farmhouse in a northerly direction, and from Exchange Street to the farm buildings in a westerly direction. The impression of these driveways (now grassy) is visible, and each is lined with maple trees that form an alley where oak trees once stood. The old **entrance road** [**Photo #3**] from Island Road is marked by two **granite piers** and a high stone wall, all of which are now overgrown with voluntary trees and scrub. A **stone wall system** surrounding much of the property, built during the Oak Grove Farm period, remains intact along Exchange and Ridge Streets and Island Road. The stone wall that lined the northern boundary along Orchard Street remains in place for the most part, but

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due to creation of building lots on this northern boundary, the stone wall is no longer on the Oak Grove Farm parcel. The **site of a dairy complex [Photo #4]**, which once contained large barns and other farm structures, is directly behind the house (west) and the parking area noted below. Acres of **agricultural fields** and meadows are intact and continue to be farmed.

The farm also includes late 20th-century features such as recreational fields and playground structures, clustered together in the southeast corner of the property. These are accessed by driveways from Island Road and Exchange Street. The main driveway from Exchange Street passes the south side of the house and continues west to a large gravel parking area (part of the location of the large dairy barns). A modern playground is located south of the parking area. Southwest of the playground are baseball diamonds and parking that are accessible from Island Road. All driveways are dirt and gravel—a permeable surface. Soccer fields are framed on the north and east by the tree-lined allees (one from Island Road and one from Exchange Street) noted above. A long shed that once stood directly behind the rear ell of the house burned in the 1980s, and was replaced with a small tool shed that is counted as noncontributing in this nomination.

Building

The **Lovell-Oak Grove Farm House [Photo #1]** was developed in three phases. Evidence that has helped historians to understand the three phases are an 1880 photograph of the eight-bay house, an 1890 bird's-eye view of Oak Grove Farm Buildings, and architectural clues, particularly on the interior. In addition, the house had deteriorated while vacant for several years before it was taken over by the town and substantially rehabilitated in 1984. Existing fabric provided clues for the way in which to restore the house.

The original house appears to have been a five-bay, center-chimney, early 18th-century building comprising the five northernmost bays of the main façade. The center chimney was removed ca. 1884. The second phase, which likely dates to the second quarter of the 19th century, is a three-bay lateral addition that extended the main block to the south, making it the present 8 bays wide. Phase three is the rear ell, which was added behind the 19th-century part of the house in 1884. A full-length porch across the main eight-bay façade dates to ca. 1883-1884, and a full-width porch that runs along the south elevation of the rear ell was probably built at the same time as the rear ell.

The 2½-story, wood-clapboard farmhouse is situated on a slight knoll that slopes away from the northwest corner of the house. The foundation under the original part of the house is random-sized fieldstones, with added mortar on the north end where the exposed foundation is 3 to 5 ½ feet high. A granite block foundation is under the three-bay, 19th-century lateral addition on the south end. The foundation of the 1884 rear ell consists of fieldstone, mortar, and some brick. The land on which the rear ell sits slopes away from the main block, so that the exposed fieldstone foundation is gradually higher from east to west. The west end of the rear ell is carried by a section of brick foundation, which is nearly a full story above grade. The land behind the house and along the north side of the rear ell slopes away from the front of the building so that exterior cellar entries are cut into the high foundation walls. One is located in the rear elevation (the northwest end) in the original section and one is centered on the west gable end of the rear ell. **[Photo #2]**

The side-gabled roof, which is covered with asphalt shingles, is continuous across the original house and the three-bay lateral addition. In each gable end (north and south), the roof has a shallow rake with boxed cornice and narrow returns

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carried by flat cornerboards. Interior structural evidence shows that the roof was reconstructed when the lateral addition was made in the early 19th century. The gabled roof over the rear ell is similar in form and materials.

Two interior chimneys straddle the ridge of the eight-bay dwelling. These two chimneys date to ca. 1884, when Millis converted the dwelling to a boarding house for farm workers. Previously, a large center chimney straddled the ridge; a second chimney was centered on the three-bay lateral addition, just behind the ridge. Evidence of the main center chimney's location, which was aligned with the entrance door of the five-bay original house, can be seen on all four interior levels of the house—cellar, first and second stories, and attic. The 1880 photograph shows that the second chimney (on the lateral addition) also was much larger than the existing replacement. Both existing chimneys are rectangular (the original chimneys were square) and corbelled at the top. A single square chimney that is corbelled at the top straddles the ridge of the 1884 rear ell.

Most of the fenestration pattern remains as it has been for over 100 years, in terms of window locations. There have, however, been changes in the size and style of windows and doors over time. The door openings retain early to mid 19th-century casings, but have late 19th- to early 20th-century Victorian replacement doors. Each of the four-paneled doors on the main façade has two long octagonal lights over two shorter octagonal panels, and each panel is trimmed with heavy molding. A horizontal diamond-head decorative strip separates the two sets of panels. Each door is framed by wide, tapered pilasters on high bases with molded capitals supporting a cornice with deep ovolo molding butting up against the porch roof. This same surround is seen in photos that pre-date the porch, providing further evidence that the three-bay lateral addition was built in the second quarter of the 19th century, when these Greek Revival door surrounds would have been in vogue. Entrance doors in the rear ell, located on the south side, have replacement multilight and paneled doors, which were installed when the rear ell was converted to an apartment under the town's ownership. The style and appearance of the previous doors is unknown.

Wood windows are set in slightly projecting casings surrounded by narrow molding. Replacement 1/1 sash are set in openings that have been reduced somewhat. Evidence of the reduced opening is visible on the interior, where the casings of the earlier windows are still intact. Originally, the windows of the main house (eight-bay structure) had multilight configurations, probably 6/6 sash, but these had been changed to 1/1 sash in all elevations by 1880 (prior to Millis' conversion of this house to a boarding house for farm workers). The current windows, which are similar to those they replaced, date to the 1980s when the Historical Commission took over the boarded-up farmhouse. Windows on the main façade had louvered shutters according to the 1880 photograph. The 1890 bird's-eye view of Oak Grove Farm shows no shutters on the main façade. This was after the porch was added by Millis, when he converted the house to a farm workers' boarding house. For this reason, shutters were not replaced when the house was restored by the town. However, there is evidence of the pre-1880 shutters in the north gable end of the main block where deteriorating, wooden, louvered shutters flank the second-story and attic windows, all of which also have 1/1 sash.

Fenestration of the north and south gable ends of the main house includes one window in each peak, two first- and second-story windows aligned with one another, and two four-light cellar windows punched into the stone foundation. The rear (west) elevation of the house is partially covered by the rear ell extending behind the 19th century lateral

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addition. The rest of the rear elevation (of the original house) has three second-story windows and a single first-story window that are in locations consistent with 18th and 19th-century construction. In addition, each has 6/6 sash, which would be more consistent with windows of the early to mid 19th century. Two smaller first-story kitchen windows, which are nearly centered on this elevation, have small, 20th-century, 6/6 windows. A modern rear entrance door, with wood steps leading to it, is located slightly off-center in this rear elevation. The land directly behind the rear of the house is raised, with a retaining wall lining a ramp that leads to a cellar entrance near the northwest corner of the rear elevation. This entrance door is cut into the high stone foundation, and is shielded by a partially enclosed gable-front entrance porch with beveled clapboard siding.

The house has two porches: a full-length porch across the main eight-bay façade that dates to ca. 1884, and a full-width porch that runs along the south elevation of the rear ell (described below). The front porch spanning the main façade is a primary feature that was added (after the 1880 photograph and before the 1890 bird's-eye view) when the owner of Oak Grove Farm, Lansing Millis, constructed his Mansion House on the south side of Island Road, and re-worked this dwelling as a boarding house for farm workers. The decorative punched paneling in the balustrade is the same as that used on the Mansion House. Most of the porch panels had deteriorated and were removed immediately after the town purchased the property. Based on examples of the paneling and the 1890 bird's-eye view of the farm, a template was made and new panels were cut with a repeating punched pattern to restore the porch to its ca. 1884 appearance. The deteriorated panels are stored in the cellar of the house. The shed-roof porch is supported by seven square posts, each on a shallow square base. The decorative panels are hung between the posts. A lattice apron screens the foundation of the house. Access to the porch is by way of concrete steps with replacement plain wood railing at the south end of the porch.

Other architectural trim includes unadorned cornerboards, a narrow watertable, and boxed eaves with a modest rake and narrow returns. The northeast corner post is rotting; therefore the covering cornerboard is partially deteriorated or removed.

The rear ell has three exposed sides. Most of the windows on each elevation have 6/6 replacement sash set in flat, unadorned frames. These windows are likely to have had 2/2 sash or 1/1 (see 1880 photograph), like the rest of the windows, when the ell was constructed ca. 1884. When the town acquired the property, most windows were boarded up with plywood. On the north side facing into the angle formed by the main house and the rear ell, there are three second-story windows in the first, third, and fifth bays. An exception to the 6/6 sash is seen on the north elevation of the rear ell. A large, modern, three-part, first-story window is composed of a central picture window flanked by 2/2 sash. Under this window there once was a small addition, probably two stories high, projecting from the rear ell foundation wall. The foundation of this small addition is evidence of its location; the footprint is seen on an 1893 plan of land of Oak Grove Farm, and the roof line is visible in the 1890 bird's-eye view of "Oak Grove Farm Buildings."

The west gable end of the ell is four stories high, with an exposed cellar wall of brick, in which there is a centered, enclosed, gable-front entrance porch with flanking 6/6 windows. There are two first- and second-story windows and one in the gable peak (attic), all with 6/6 sash. A small narrow window (1/1) is near the northwest corner post at the first story.

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The porch on the south side of the rear ell was built coincident with the ell, as is shown in the 1890 bird's-eye view of Millis. It was enclosed at a later date. When the town restored the house and created an apartment in the rear ell, the porch was opened, and the plain railing and unadorned square balusters were added. This plain, hipped-roof porch is carried by narrow square posts. Three concrete steps lead up to the wood porch deck and provide access to the two entrance doors within the porch. The porch has a lattice apron screening the foundation. The apron is higher on the west end and has a low door providing access to a storage area under the porch. In the 1890 bird's-eye view, the porch appears to be at grade and has no balustrade.

Interior. The original five-bay section of the house retains an entrance hall (former stairhall) with parlors on each side and four spaces across the back (see floor plan). The second-story plan is similar, with two chambers on each side of the stairhall (stairs removed) and three small rooms across the back. The original stairs from the entrance hall to the second floor were likely to have run parallel to the chimney stack. The stairs and chimney were removed at the same time. Currently, a set of stairs behind the north parlor leads to a small room behind the north bedchamber.

Readily visible evidence in the earliest section of the house suggests an original construction date in the first or early second quarter of the 18th century. If sufficient suitable sampling locations are present, dendrochronological dating might provide a more precise date. Of interest is the presence of exposed, decoratively carved, chamfered and beaded framing members. The north parlor summer beam has chamfers that end in well-defined stops [**Photo #5**]. In the south parlor and north chamber, summer beams are beaded, and beaded corner posts, girts, and plates are present in both the parlors and the chambers. There is no evidence that three exposed decorated summer beams were ever cased, although the summer beam in the south bed chamber is boxed.

Other visible 18th-century features include raised-field, two- and four-panel interior doors with some Suffolk and Norfolk latches, and wide floor boards in one parlor, the second-story chambers, and part of the entrance hall. Narrow floor boards were installed in part of the entry hall when the chimney and stairs were removed to make the hall deeper. The floor in the north parlor was changed to narrow boards in the late 19th or early 20th century. Plaster walls and ceilings retain old plaster and lath for the most part.

Original vertical plank walls have been found behind the lath and plaster in the north chamber, and in the small room behind the north chamber. Removal of part of the lath and plaster has exposed vertical beaded board walls [**Photo #6**]. Some of the plaster had failed due to water and fire damage and some had been removed for unknown reasons; thus, there are large sections of exposed vertical plank walls, which are believed to exist also in the north parlor below this chamber; however, there has been no investigation in that room.

Fireplaces have been filled in, and there is evidence of stoves vented through the former fireplace flues. All evidence of the fireplace, including firebox, surround, and hearth, in the north parlor has been removed; the one in the south parlor is unremarkable and probably a replacement. Most of the firebox has been bricked around a stovepipe. The surround is flat and plain, with a mantel shelf that is much longer than the fireplace opening and surround. It is unlike the fireplace surrounds in the chambers, which appear to be from the 18th century; the surrounds in the north and south chambers have flanking pilasters with a deep lintel topped by a shallow molded mantel.

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Behind the parlors on the first story there are four spaces. Behind the north parlor are a small room that has beaded posts and plates, a paneled door leading to the north parlor, and a wide hall with four doors—one between the hall and north parlor, one to the stairs leading to the second story, one to the modernized kitchen, and a modern back door. Behind the south parlor are the modernized kitchen and a hall that wraps behind the stairs of the lateral addition. At the second-story level there are three spaces behind the chambers. The two small rooms that are behind the north chamber have vertical board or plank paneling similar to that exposed in the north chamber. The stairs from the first story terminate in between these two rooms behind the north chamber. Behind the south chamber is a single room that has doors to the spaces on each side of the south chamber—one to the middle room behind the north chamber, and one to stairhall of the three-bay lateral addition.

The three-bay lateral addition (making up the eight-bay façade) consists of an entrance door and two window bays. The exterior door in the third bay from the left leads into a through-hall, with a set of stairs that rise to the second story, running parallel to the wall dividing the original five-bay house and the three-bay addition. One room, which has been redone with modern paneling and a new floor, is south of this entrance hall. This room now stretches to the back of the main house, with a partition removed that once separated a rear room from this front room. The space at the rear stretches across the back of this lateral addition and has a door leading to the cellar stairs, as well as to the hall connecting to the original part of the house. The plaster ceiling has been removed in this back room, exposing beams and joists that run perpendicular to the front of the house. An old entrance to the rear ell from this room has been boarded up. Second-story rooms of the lateral addition consist of the front-to-back stairhall, a chamber in the front (south of the stairhall), and a room at the back that has exposed joists similar to the room below. The exposed beams and joists in the three-bay lateral addition are unremarkable, with no chamfering and no signs that they were ever exposed prior to the 20th century. The alterations done to the three-bay lateral addition, which occurred prior to the town's ownership, destroyed evidence of how these spaces were used. In particular, there is no remaining evidence of a second kitchen that was probably part of this lateral addition when the original house was expanded in the second quarter of the 19th century.

The eight-bay house is constructed over a full basement with concrete floor. Access is by way of stairs from the back of the three-bay lateral addition. The basement stairs run under the front stairs (leading to the second story). The cellar is divided into two parts by a brick wall, with a door between the two sections. The dividing wall, however, is not under the former exterior wall of the original five-bay house. It is six feet north of this wall. The foundation walls are made of large and small fieldstones, now reinforced with mortar, in the section of the cellar under the original 5-bay house. The foundation walls of the early 19th-century addition are brick (west wall) and stone (south and east walls). The original framing of the central chimney can be seen in the cellar ceiling, where floor joists run parallel to the main façade between large structural beams under the front parlors, and perpendicular to the main façade under the back rooms of the original house. A narrow, brick chimney base rises a few feet south of the location of the original center chimney.

The roof appears to have been reconstructed when the five-bay house was expanded to an eight-bay house, as the framing is the same across the full length. Common rafters are mortised and pegged into a ridge pole and extend to the plates at the attic floor level. There are twenty pairs of rafters (twelve in the 5-bay section of the house and eight in the 3-bay section), each set approximately three feet apart, except where the center chimney rose, taking up a space of four feet

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between the framing rafters. Short braces extend from the ridge end of a rafter diagonally across to the next rafter in three locations—between the two southernmost rafters of the original house, the two northernmost of the early 19th-century section, and between the end rafter and next one in the early 19th-century section. The end rafters of the original house are covered with lath, plaster, and wallpaper—remnants of the finishes for a small room in this northernmost end of the original attic. The small room is separated from the rest of the attic by a partition wall with door. Two sets of stairs lead to the attic, one from each of the two main sections of the house. Both stairways begin at the back of the house and rise towards the front. Two chimneys rise through the attic, with the stacks set at an angle to pierce the roof at the ridge. One is a few feet south of the location of the original center chimney, and one is between the third and fourth rafters from the south end. Neither the cellar nor attic has access to the rear ell, which has been modernized and converted to an apartment that was not inspected for this nomination.

Archaeological Description

While no known ancient Native American sites are located on the farm property, sites may be present. Six ancient sites are located in the general area (within one mile), including the Samuel Howie Site (19-NF-285), which may extend to the Oak Grove Farm property. While the symbolism used to identify the site extends onto the northwestern corner of the farm, the site has not been systematically tested. The actual location where the artifacts were found lies west of Ridge Street, near Bogastow Brook wetlands. The site could easily extend onto the farm property. The Samuel Howie site was identified on the basis of artifacts collected by a local avocational collector, Lloyd W. Keyes of Millis. Artifacts contained in the Keyes collection included projectile points, point tips, scrapers, and bifaces. Diagnostic projectile points indicate a Late Archaic and Middle Woodland occupation at the site. Most ancient sites in the area are located on floodplains, upland terraces, and other landforms bordering Bogastow Brook, Bogastow Pond, and associated wetlands. Environmental characteristics of the farm property represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites. The farm is located on a well-drained, level to moderately sloping glacial outwash plain, most of which lies within 1,000 feet of wetlands. An unnamed tributary stream of Bogastow Brook flows northeasterly through the center of the farm, nearly bisecting it. The confluence of the unnamed tributary stream and Bogastow Brook lies approximately 1,000 feet east of the farm. The entire town of Millis lies within the Charles River drainage. Soils in the farm area are sandy, formed in glacial till in upland areas. Given the above information, the size of the farm (108 acres), and the extent of historic period land use, ancient Native American resources may exist on the farm property, and a high potential exists that additional ancient resources will be found.

A high potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Oak Grove Farm property, although much of that potential remains to be identified and physically documented. According to the Reverend E. O. Jameson, a late 19th-century local historian, the land of the Oak Grove Farm was owned and farmed by Josiah and John Rockwood as early as 1677, and a map, created in the late 19th century by George LaCroix depicting the town in 1713, shows that Rockwood had a house in about this location. Unfortunately, no known deeds or other primary documentation exists from the 17th century that associates this property with Josiah or John Rockwood. If a house was present, it would be the earliest and first occupation of the Oak Grove Farm. Potential archaeological survivals might include structural evidence of a residence, barn, outbuildings, and occupational-related features. Builders' trenches and related construction features

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may survive from the original construction of the extant house in the early 18th century, and from the several 19th-century renovations. Similar features may also survive for other farm structures that survive as archaeological sites. Structural evidence may survive from barns, stables, and other domestic- and agricultural-related outbuildings that span the farm's long period of use from the early 18th through 20th centuries.

Additional historical research, combined with archaeological survey, testing, and careful mapping, may identify the function, location, and internal configuration of structures associated with the Lansing Millis occupation of the farm beginning in the 1880s. Some foundations of the enormous dairy complex that once stood behind the farmhouse are reported to be covered with soil in an area that is now flat grassy fields west of the house and north of the parking area where other farm buildings were located. Some of the buildings in the dairy complex include several large barns, silos, stable, wagon house, icehouse, creamery, shed, piggery, ash house, and tool house. Occupational-related features (trash pits, privies, wells) may also survive in the area surrounding the house and agricultural buildings.

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Data Sheet

MHC #	Resource	Date	Resource Type	NR Status
11	Farmhouse	Early 18 th c./2 nd qrt 19 th c./ca. 1884	Building	C
	Granite piers	ca. 1884	Structure	C
	System of stone walls	1880s	Structure	C
	Driveway Allees	1880s	Structure	C
	Site of Dairy	1880s	Site	C
	Agricultural Fields	18 th , 19 th , 20 th c.	Site	C
	Playground	Late 20 th c.	Structure	NC
	Baseball diamond	Late 20 th c.	Structure	NC
	Soccer Field	Late 20 th c.	Structure	NC
	Tool Shed	Late 20 th c.	Building	NC

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

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

AGRICULTURE

Period of Significance

Early 18th century - 1961

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Lansing Millis

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☒ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: Millis Public Library, Millis Historical Commission

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8. Statement of Significance

Oak Grove Farm is significant at the local level for its association with the agricultural and industrial history of the Town of Millis. The farm and its residence are also significant for their association with the town's namesake, Lansing Millis. The house is the only structure remaining in the town that was used by him. It served as his home from 1879 to 1883, and it is the only extant building on the unique farm complex, which he named Oak Grove Farm. The farmhouse and surrounding farmland are also important for their long association with the Lovell family. Nathaniel Lovell, followed by his son Michael, owned the property from 1783 to 1874, and the house is often called the Lovell House. Architecturally, the house represents nearly three centuries of building evolution, and retains what appear to be late First Period, decorated, structural features in its earliest portion. The property meets criterion A for its historical associations, criterion B for its association with Lansing Millis, and criterion C for its surviving house with an early 18th-century core that was expanded over time, and remodeled in the Georgian and Greek Revival styles. The property retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The farm is significant at the local level for a period extending from the ca. 1725 construction date of the house to 1961, which is the National Park Service's fifty-year cut off.

Overview of the Development of the Town of Millis

Millis was settled as part of Medway in 1717, and incorporated as a separate town in 1885. Today, Millis has an area of 12.2 square miles and a population of nearly 8,000 persons. Located in Norfolk County, in southern Massachusetts, Millis is approximately 22 miles southwest of Boston in the Charles River Valley. It is bordered by Holliston and Sherborn on the north, Medfield and Norfolk on the east, Franklin on the south, and Medway on the west. The political boundaries of Millis were formed through a number of shifts in town lines and separation from earlier towns. Prior to English settlement, the territory belonged to Native Americans known as the Nipmucs. Its English settlement history began in the 1640s, when there was reference to a large area west of the Charles River as part of Dedham. In 1650, the western part of Dedham, including territory that eventually became Millis and Medway, was set off to form Medfield. The part that would become Millis had been known as Boggastowe, named by the Nipmucs. Medfield land that was west of the Charles River was incorporated as Medway in 1713. Throughout the 18th and most of the 19th centuries, Medway had two villages: East Medway and West Medway. In 1885, East Medway became incorporated as the town of Millis, named after successful businessman and railroad executive, Lansing Millis (1823-1885), who owned and established Oak Grove Farm on the former Lovell and Wheeler Farms.

Millis' situation on the Charles River made it a favored location for substantial Native American activity. Several east-west routes in the vicinity crossed the eastern town boundary, the Charles River, from Medfield into East Medway. These routes eventually became main roads in East Medway, such as the Old Mendon Road, which followed Dover Road and Village Street in a southwesterly direction, and Union Street, which led from Dover Road across to the northern part of Exchange Street. Plain Street and the upper part of Exchange Street formed an early north-south route, connecting

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East Medway with Sherborn to the north. Main Street became a major east-west transportation route with the opening of the Hartford and Dedham Turnpike (later to be called Main Street) in 1809.

Throughout the 18th and well into the 19th centuries, East Medway was a community of scattered farms engaged in agriculture and cattle grazing. There were two mills—saw and grist—during the early days: one at Boggastowe Pond and the other at Rockville, where a small mill village evolved in the 18th century. Early 19th-century industrial development at East Medway was marked by the success of the Holbrook bell company (1810). In the late 19th century, it was substantially influenced and fostered by Lansing Millis and his son Henry, both of whom were involved with Oak Grove Farm and other business enterprises in Millis during the late 1800s.

Although the railroad passed through Millis (then East Medway) as early as the 1850s and 1860s, it was not until the 1870s that service was firmly established. Known as the Woonsocket Division of the New York & New England Railroad when it first opened in the 1850s and 1860s, it had a number of fits and starts due to financial difficulties of the various lines. However, there was a stop in Millis by the 1870s—a stop that was frequently used by the Millis family. In addition, the railroad was an important factor in the success of Oak Grove Farm and other businesses started by Millis and his son, including the Steel Edge Stamping and Retinning Plant (MHC #40), the Joseph M. Herman Shoe Company building (MHC #128), and the Cliquot Club bottling company, which began on the farm and moved to Main Street in the 20th century.

18th-Century Development of the Lovell Farm

According to the Reverend E. O. Jameson, the late 19th-century local historian, the land of Oak Grove Farm was owned and farmed by Josiah and John Rockwood as early as 1677, and a map, created in the late 19th century by George LaCroix depicting the town in 1713, shows that Rockwood had a house in about this location. Jameson also stated that the Rockwood farm passed to William Burgess who had married Rockwood's daughter, Bethiah. Bethiah, born in 1689 to John and Bethiah Twichell Rocket, married Burgess in 1712. At the Suffolk Registry (Millis was part of Suffolk County until 1793 when Norfolk County was formed), there are no known deeds from the 17th century attributing this property to Josiah Rockwood or Josiah or John Rockett. (Deeds and vital records note that Rockwood, Rockett, and Rocket were interchangeable.) Definitive tree-ring dating analysis of the early framing features of the present house would be needed to confirm the nature of its associations with the early Rockwood and Burgess ownership of the property.

The first deed clearly related to this property that confirms part of Jameson's history is that from 1757, in which Bethiah Burgess, widow of William Burgess (d. 1754), sold three parcels of land to her "loving cousin Mary Varney, wife of John Varney," including this farm, which then was approximately 60 acres.

In 1783, John Varney sold the same three tracts of land to Nathaniel Lovell of Medfield. The first parcel was described in the deed of John Varney as "my home settlement with a dwelling house and barn and about 50 acres." Nathaniel Lovell (1747-1824), who had married Mary Knowlton (ca. 1745-1832) in 1779, farmed this land, which was eventually taken over by his son Michael Lovell (1779-ca. 1874). The first confirmation of a house on the farm was the 1783 deed of John Varney to Nathaniel Lovell. It is likely that this was the five-bay original section of the house.

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19th-Century Development of the Lovell Farm

Michael Lovell's proprietorship of the farm began in the early 19th century, and he continued to add to the farm, which eventually had over 100 acres bordered by four roads (Orchard, Exchange, Island, and Ridge) as well as lots in other parts of East Medway. Michael Lovell and Cate Daniels married in 1808 and had five daughters. Their daughters married in 1828 (Lydia to Hiram Carey), 1839 (Catherine to Gilman Carey and Abigail to George Crosby), and 1843 (Elizabeth to Eleazar Daniels). It is likely that some lived here to help with one of the largest farms in East Medway. This would account for the construction of a three-bay lateral addition sometime in the second quarter of the 19th century to accommodate more than one family. However, due to extensive changes on the interior by Millis in the late 19th century and others in the 20th century, there is no evidence of a second kitchen in the three-bay lateral addition. By the mid-19th century, this was one of the most productive farms in East Medway, as is attested to in the Agricultural Census of 1850 and 1860. Of 82 Medway farms recorded in the 1850 Agricultural Census, only five exceeded Lovell's farm, which was valued at \$7,500. There were 125 acres of improved land and 78 acres of unimproved, and at that time he had eleven milking cows as well as other livestock—horses, oxen, other cows, sheep, and swine. Lovell produced 100 pounds of butter and 200 pounds of cheese. He also farmed the fields, producing oats, hay, barley, corn, and potatoes. His bees produced 100 pounds of honey. At the same time, Abijah Richardson Wheeler (b. 1813 to Lewis and Betsy Richardson Wheeler) had a farm of slightly less value. Wheeler's farm, which eventually would be purchased by Lansing Millis, had been owned by Lewis Wheeler in the 18th century and had passed to his son, Abijah Richardson Wheeler, in the 19th century.

By 1860, there were 134 farms in East Medway, and Lovell's was one of only four valued at least \$10,000 or higher. All the rest were under this value. Abijah Wheeler's farm also was valued at \$10,000. Lovell had ten milking cows as well as other livestock, and by this time was specializing in butter, as his farm produced 1,000 pounds in that year. He continued to produce rye, oats, hay, potatoes, and corn, as well as orchard products. Due to Michael Lovell's age of about 80 years, it is likely that his daughters' husbands helped him on the farm. However, none appear in the 1870 Agricultural Census corresponding to this farm adjacent to Abijah R. Wheeler's farm. By 1870, most farmers had switched to milk production—Wheeler produced 2,100 gallons of milk, and Asa D. Morse, who farmed land southwest of Lovell's farm, produced 3,600 gallons of milk.

By 1874, Michael Lovell had died and his farm passed from his heirs, Mary B. Lovell (an unmarried daughter) and Gilman and Catherine Lovell Cary, to Augustus Allen of Newton, and was characterized as "our home farm" of "100 acres more or less." This deed and subsequent deeds described three parcels—the first two of which were the home farm of approximately 100 acres, and the third was the Neck Pasture of 27 acres. The farm was immediately sold to Nathaniel F. Goldsmith (and his wife, Mary E.) of Boston, who was the recorded owner on the 1876 Atlas of Norfolk County, which showed the location of the residence (this house) and noted that there were 150 acres; however, the deeds and town valuation lists never account for this amount of acreage until Lansing Millis' ownership. Goldsmith sold to Eliza G. and Edward E. Carlton of Newton in 1878, and the next year the Carltons sold the farm to Lansing Millis of Boston. Thus began the Oak Grove Farm era of the property.

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Oak Grove Farm – Late 19th Century

The arrival in 1877 of Lansing Millis (1823-1885) in East Medway was pivotal in the development of the town, and for this reason, Oak Grove Farm is significant for its association with the town's namesake. Millis had made his fortune as general manager of the "through freight" department of the Vermont Central Railroad, president of the Chicago, Boston, and Liverpool Refrigerator Line (a railroad company also), and president of the Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain Railroad Company. In 1843, he married Harriet Philadelphia Lavender from Sandhurst in County Kent, England, and they lived in New York until moving to Boston in 1855. Millis started as a railroad agent and manager and worked his way up to various high-level positions over the next 30 years of his life. In his last years, Millis moved to East Medway for its quiet bucolic setting and established his substantial dairy farm here at Oak Grove Farm.

In 1879, Millis purchased the Lovell Farm after a succession of out-of-town owners had bought and sold it over a five-year period. The initial purchase was three parcels—the same described in deeds from the Lovells in 1874, including the farm and the Neck Pasture. The two parcels bound by Exchange, Island, Ridge, and Orchard streets became the core of his Oak Grove Farm. Over the next several years, Millis purchased other farms, such as the Wheeler Farm on the south side of Island Road, where he built his Mansion House in 1883. Millis named his assembled farm for a stand of venerable old oak trees that reportedly lined the road in front of the Lovell House and that grew elsewhere on the farm. At this time, the house consisted of the eight-bay main block with its two entrances on the facade and two large chimneys (one centered on the ridge of the five northernmost bays, and one behind the ridge of the three-bay lateral addition). There was no rear ell or porch, and photographs indicate that the foundation was not nearly as exposed as it is today.

Millis and his family, including his wife and their three children—all married by this time—initially used the East Medway farm as a summer residence. Millis and his wife Harriet continued to maintain quarters at the Hotel Vendome in Boston, even when staying at their summer farm. In about 1880, Millis moved here full time and developed the working farm. The family lived in the Lovell House for the first three years, during which time Millis built barns, arranged stone walls, and prepared fallow land for farm crops and pastures by digging out stones—to create the stone walls encircling the property—and by digging up ferns. An 1880 report by a Mr. A. K. Tisdale noted that "the proprietor is rapidly fencing it with durable stone walls, which greatly add to the good looks of the highways, as well as the farm." Many of the stone walls continue to frame Oak Grove Farm. In 1883, Lansing Millis converted the Wheeler house on the south side of Island Road into his Mansion House. The large edifice with 36 rooms, referred to in Oak Grove Farm literature as the "Homestead," stood on the south side of Island Road, on the site of the old Abijah Richardson Wheeler homestead, until it was consumed by fire in 1937.

After Millis and his family moved to their new Mansion House on the south side of Island Road in the spring of 1883, he converted the Lovell farmhouse into a boarding house for his farm manager and approximately fourteen farmhands, many of whom were itinerant workers. This conversion included construction of the large two-story rear ell and removal of the large chimneys—the center chimney that straddled the ridge of the original five-bay house and the large chimney that rose behind the ridge of the three-bay lateral addition. These were replaced with narrower chimneys that provided flues for coal and wood stoves. (Heaps of coal are still piled in the cellar.) The long decorative porch across the eight-bay façade was added at this time, as were new entrance doors with long octagonal lights.

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Records from the 1880 Agricultural Census show that the Millis farm (the old Lovell farm at that time) was not yet the largest in East Medway. Of the 161 farms listed in the 1880 census, it was in the top 10% with 140 acres valued at \$7,200, producing 3,500 gallons of milk and 200 pounds of butter from the 25 milking cows. This was prior to the time Millis added the Wheeler farm to his holdings and built his extraordinary complex, which began in 1880. So, shortly after 1880, the Millis farm complex became the largest in the region by far. The buildings are reported to have had red roofs, and each barn had at least one cupola, according to period photographs. The three-story main barn was 140 feet long and 40 feet wide with two cupolas. Millis also built silos that held up to 900 tons of ensilage, which Millis mixed with wheat middlings (that part of the wheat grain remaining when ground for flour) for cow feed—a somewhat revolutionary practice at the time. Millis hired a farmer from Germany to care for his herd of Holsteins, imported from Holland, and polled Angus, probably imported from Scotland (home to this hornless breed). The cows produced around 1,200 cans of milk each day. It was sent to milk contractor, C. Brigham and Company, for distribution. In the winter of 1884, Oak Grove Farm began delivering its own milk, which was bottled at the farm in glass bottles. Henry L. Millis (son of Lansing Millis) ran the Oak Grove Farm Company from the Boston office on Washington Street.

Other livestock included about twelve horses, 200 fowl, and several pairs of oxen. Pigs were housed in another large outbuilding, the piggery, which had eleven pens in the 100 by 24-foot building. The pigs, too, were thoroughbreds imported from England—Berkshire (black pigs), Yorkshire (white pigs)—and from Chester County, Pennsylvania (white pigs).

Oak Grove Farm advertising brochures boasted 800 acres and delivery of milk to 20,000 people daily. Not only did the Oak Grove Farm Company sell milk, it also provided cream, eggs, butter, and ice cream. At the time of Millis' death he had 332 acres in Millis. Possibly there were other farms in surrounding communities that were owned by him. But the ownership of 800 acres as part of this farm is undocumented at this time. The 108 remaining acres (the present size of the Farm) are sufficient to convey its historical significance as a farm in Millis.

On his farm, Millis also started a small beverage (ginger ale) business in ca. 1880. Millis, his son Henry, and his friend Charles LaCroix started carbonating cider and bottling it for distribution among friends. Soon they made ginger ale using high-quality Jamaican ginger, and distributed it through the Oak Grove Farm Milk wagons, which advertised cider and soda. Henry Millis coined the name "Cliquot" for a then well-known French champagne. Before leaving town in 1898, Henry established a bottling facility next to the Herman Shoe Company on the south side of the railroad. At the turn of the last century, the beverage business was languishing, no doubt due in part to Henry Millis' departure. It was revived in 1901, however, and incorporated as the Cliquot Club Company. Production of ginger ale and other sodas took off, and the company became a multimillion dollar corporation, employing 250 persons by the late 1920s. The company was purchased by Cott in 1962, and continues in business today. Its genesis at Oak Grove Farm is mostly forgotten, but rounds out the history of this farm as an agricultural and industrial center.

Lansing Millis was honored for his upstanding character when East Medway separated from Medway and was incorporated in February 1885 as the town of Millis. He had become active in all aspects of the town—agricultural and industrial businesses as well as civic and religious activities—and was well known and loved by all. Millis was

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appointed the town's first moderator and was Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. However, he died three months later, and was unable to enjoy his namesake town.

Soon after Lansing Millis' death in 1885, the town assessed the value of all property in Millis. This 1886-1887 valuation showed the estate of Lansing Millis as having the Mansion House with stable, a small house, a five-acre house lot (referring to that part of the estate on the south side of Island Road—the old Wheeler place), and Oak Grove Farm, which included many buildings, acres of land, and livestock. Of 332 acres of farmland for which the estate was assessed (in various locations in Millis), 45 acres of woodland and 52 acres of tillage were part of the old Wheeler place, and are no longer part of Oak Grove Farm. The latter included 134 acres of tillage, four acres of pasture, and twenty acres of meadow. The farmhouse was accounted for as well as four barns (one referred to as a Wheeler barn, which probably was on land south of Island Road), a stable, wagon-house, icehouse and creamery, shed, piggery, ash house, and tool house. Livestock included ten horses, four oxen, and 53 head of cattle of which about half were Holstein—well-known as dairy cows. Other items listed in the valuation were eight carriages (most associated with the Mansion House, not the present farm), and in the Mansion House a piano, and an organ.

Oak Grove Farm was reported to have been the largest dairy farm in New England in 1890, and in 1893, a plan of land showing the many barns, houses, and roadways was developed. This plan was compiled by George A. Kimball and was included in an 1893 deed (Book 697, Page 233) at the Norfolk County Registry of Deeds. The plan was referenced in the numerous transactions that occurred as the farmland was consolidated under the name of Oak Grove Farm Company, of which Henry L. Millis was the president.

The heirs of Lansing Millis, particularly his son, carried on his legacy of entrepreneurship and public service, as well as ownership of Oak Grove Farm. Henry Lansing Millis (1855-1915) was involved in nearly every important business in Millis until he moved to Chicago in 1898. He ran his father's farm, which soon was one of the region's largest commercial dairies—the Oak Grove Farm Milk Company. Henry Millis served as treasurer of the Steel Edge Stamping and Retinning Company (60 Curve Street, MHC #40, Millis Center NRHD-2007), a building that he had financed. He built the new shoe shop for J. W. Thompson Shoe Company (114-124 Union Street, MHC #128, Millis Center NRHD-2007), later the J. Herman Shoe Company of Medway, to occupy. He also started the Millis Company, which financed the construction of approximately 60 houses on new streets laid out to accommodate modest workers' housing (many are included in the Millis Center NRHD, 2007). Henry Millis fulfilled his civic duties by serving as a selectman from 1887 to 1894, and as the first Millis representative to the General Court in 1886.

Oak Grove Farm – 20th Century

In 1901, the Oak Grove Farm Company property was sold to Michael Cunningham, who continued to farm it for several decades. He purchased the same three parcels including the "home farm" and the Neck Pasture, and in 1905, his holdings were accounted for in the town's valuation list. At that time and soon after his purchase, Cunningham had 118½ acres of tillage, the Neck pasture (now at 60 acres), a house, three barns, a stable, piggery, icehouse, tool shed, six other sheds, a granary, and very little livestock (four horses, one colt, one cow and one two-year old calf). The Cunninghams occupied the property for over 30 years.

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In 1944, Michael Cunningham's heirs—William F. Cunningham, Thomas H. Cunningham, Mary Josephine McDonald, Alice M. Cunningham, Frances C. Lyons, and Anna V. Nolan—sold Oak Grove Farm to Adolph Izbicki and his family, all of Cambridge. The Izbickis purchased the 118-acre farm and ran it as a dairy farm into the mid 20th century. In 1960, Izbicki divided the land along Orchard Street into thirteen house lots, which were then sold individually for construction of the many modest capes and ranches that line the southern side of Orchard Street between Exchange and Ridge Streets. This division of land reduced the farm from 118 acres to its present 108 acres.

The town of Millis purchased the 108-acre Oak Grove Farm in 1984, exercising its right of first refusal under Chapter 61 of the Massachusetts General Laws, in response to plans to sell to a Medway developer. The plan of the developer had been to construct houses and condominiums on the 108-acre farm. When the town learned of the potential sale, it realized that this was the last large tract of land near the town center that could be used for recreational purposes. At the time the town purchased the property, the house was unoccupied, boarded up, and in disrepair. In addition, the historical significance of the house was not appreciated until the Millis Historical Commission lobbied to have the house transferred to its care.

In 1986, the Department of Public Works cleared areas, created jogging paths, opened the wide tree-lined lane from Island Road, and mowed around the house. Soon thereafter, the house was transferred to the Historical Commission, which had a report prepared describing the house (a copy of the report has not been found). Soon thereafter, the Historical Commission partnered with the Tri-County Regional Vocational School in Franklin to re-roof the farmhouse with asphalt shingles donated by GAF, a local shingle company occupying the old Steel Edge Stamping and Retinning Plant, originally built by Henry Lansing Millis. The late 19th-century ell of the house was rehabilitated to accommodate a tenant, and restoration of the main house was implemented over the next several years, including new windows, reconstruction of the front porch, removal of modern drop ceilings, and removal of failed plaster on second-floor walls, which revealed vertical planks that were an early finish.

In 1987, the Conway School of Landscape Design assisted the town in developing a Master Plan for the property. The land, including the farmhouse, was divided into three zones: one area for community activities near the farmhouse, including passive and active recreation; one area for conservation—the wetlands area; and an area for agriculture, including hayfields and pastures, particularly in the northwest quadrant of the property.

Oak Grove Farm Today

The town has generally adhered to the 1987 plan. Soccer fields, baseball diamonds, a playground, and two parking lots are located in the southeast corner of the property, with access from Exchange Street and Island Road (just west of the old lane marked by granite posts, which now is overgrown). The farmhouse sits on a knoll north of the active recreational land. The land slopes away from the house to meadows on the north and west sides, and a broad lawn slopes down to Exchange Street on the east side. Fields in the northwest quadrant of the property are cultivated. A cart path leads from the main house westerly through the property to trails that pass through open and wooded land. The Oak Grove Farm Commission manages the land, while the Historical Commission continues to be responsible for the

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farmhouse. The Commission holds monthly meetings here, and opens the partially restored farmhouse to the public with some regularity. The town ownership has preserved a rich resource for residents of and visitors to Millis.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Millis are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Ancient sites located on the Oak Grove Farm property may contribute important information relating to Native settlement and subsistence activities in the Charles River drainage, especially the least-documented interior portion of that drainage. Native American sites along tributary streams and ponds of the Charles River may include smaller sites related on a functional and/or seasonal basis with larger sites and core areas along the main drainage of the Charles River. Ancient sites in this area may represent a specialized adaptation to specific resources and environmental characteristics located in the uplands and wetlands to the north and west of the farm

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information related to the settlement and agricultural history of Millis from the 17th through 20th centuries. Historical and archaeological research may yet contribute evidence relative to the claims of late-19th century local historian E. O. Jameson that the Oak Grove Farm was the site of the Rockwood farmstead as early as 1677. No deeds are currently known to support this claim. Archaeological testing may be the only way to end this debate with systematic testing to either identify the Rockwood farm or its absence. On the other hand, this debate could continue since the scale of the Oak Grove Farm could have easily destroyed most traces of the Rockwood farmstead, especially if later buildings were constructed on the same site.

The first confirmation of a house on the Oak Grove Farm was the deed of John Varney to Nathaniel Lovell. The early 18th-century construction date for the house results from the presence of First Period architectural features, including chamfered beams, paneling, and evidence of an early center chimney. Excavation and analysis of builders' trenches and other construction features may contribute information that further documents the early 18th-century construction date and later renovations/additions to the building. Similar research may also contribute information related to architectural features of the house no longer extant and techniques used in construction.

Structural evidence of barns, stables, and other domestic and agricultural-related outbuildings may contribute important information related to the domestic and agricultural evolution of the Oak Grove Farm. Until the Lansing Millis ownership of the farm in the 1880s and the creation of the large dairy complex that stood behind the farmhouse, the identification, function, and configuration of barns, stables, and other domestic and agricultural-related outbuildings is poorly documented. Historical and archaeological research may contribute important information related to these characteristics from the early 18th century to the development of the dairy complex by Millis in the late 19th century. Identification of the location, function, and configuration of these buildings can establish the physical characteristics of the farm at specific points in time and under different ownership. Important information may also exist that demonstrates how the farm changed over time and under different economic conditions. Similar research may also identify the full range of agricultural and domestic activities present in the Millis dairy complex. While the overall activities of the dairy complex have been identified, the association of these activities with the sites of specific buildings, historically and

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archaeologically, has not occurred. Historical research and archaeological testing in the area of the dairy complex may identify the sites of agricultural and domestic activities associated with this phase of the farm's evolution, and detailed plans of their location and patterning.

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Norfolk Registry of Deeds. Dedham, MA. Grantor and Grantee Indices. Deeds:

Street Directories: 1884, 1889, 1896, 1914-1915.

Suffolk Registry of Deeds. Boston, MA. Grantor and Grantee Indices 1639-1799. Deeds: Book 90, Page 9; Book 140, Page 245.

Town of Millis. <http://www.millis.net/>

Vital Records to 1850. Medfield and Medway. New England Genealogical Society.

(end)

10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property** approximately 108 acres**UTM References** See continuation sheet. (Medfield Quad Map)

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	304560	4672873	3. Zone	Easting	Northing
Zone	Easting	Northing	19	304379	4671956
2. 19	304862	4672220	4. 19	304106	4672697
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheet

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Gretchen G. Schuler, preservation consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, MHC NR Directororganization Massachusetts Historical Commission date March 2011street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125-3314**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Town of Millisstreet & number 900 Main Street telephone 508-376-7040city or town Millis state MA zip code 02054

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 1

GEOGRAPHIC DATA

UTMs

The four UTM references are the four corners of the large 108-acre parcel.

- 1) 19/304560/4672873 NE corner
- 2) 19/204862/4672220 SE corner
- 3) 19/304379/4672697 SW corner
- 4) 19/304106/4672697 NW corner

A fifth UTM Reference point – for the house on the property is: 19/304755/ 4672439

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries follow lot lines on Assessors Map #s 11, 12, 15, and 16 for Parcel #16-4.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the entire town-owned parcel as it is configured today, which closely resembles the 19th-century farm, minus the lots along the south side of Orchard Street that were separated from the main parcel through a plan of land to create 13 small house lots in 1960.

(end)

Photographs

All photographs (except Photo #7) included with this Nomination were taken in June 2007 by Gretchen G. Schuler, preservation consultant writing the nomination.

Photo #	View
1. Oak Grove Farm - House	Main facade
2. Oak Grove Farm - House	Rear elevation and wing
3. Oak Grove Farm – Allee	Allee and lane leading from Island Road to farm
4. Oak Grove Farm – Meadow	Meadow northwest of house – location of barns
5. Oak Grove Farm – Interior	North Parlor – Chamfered Summer Beam
6. Oak Grove Farm – Interior	North chamber – Plank Siding under plaster
7. Oak Grove Farm – 1880	“O.G. F. Farm House 1880 E. Medway Mass.”

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 2



Aerial View of Oak Grove Farm, bordered by the rear lot lines of dwellings along the southern side of Orchard Street on the north, Island Road on the south, Exchange Street on the east and Ridge Street on the west.

(Aerial View from <http://local.live.com>)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 3



Parking

Playground

Farmhouse

Allee of Maples

Soccer Field

(Bird's Eye View from <http://local.live.com>)

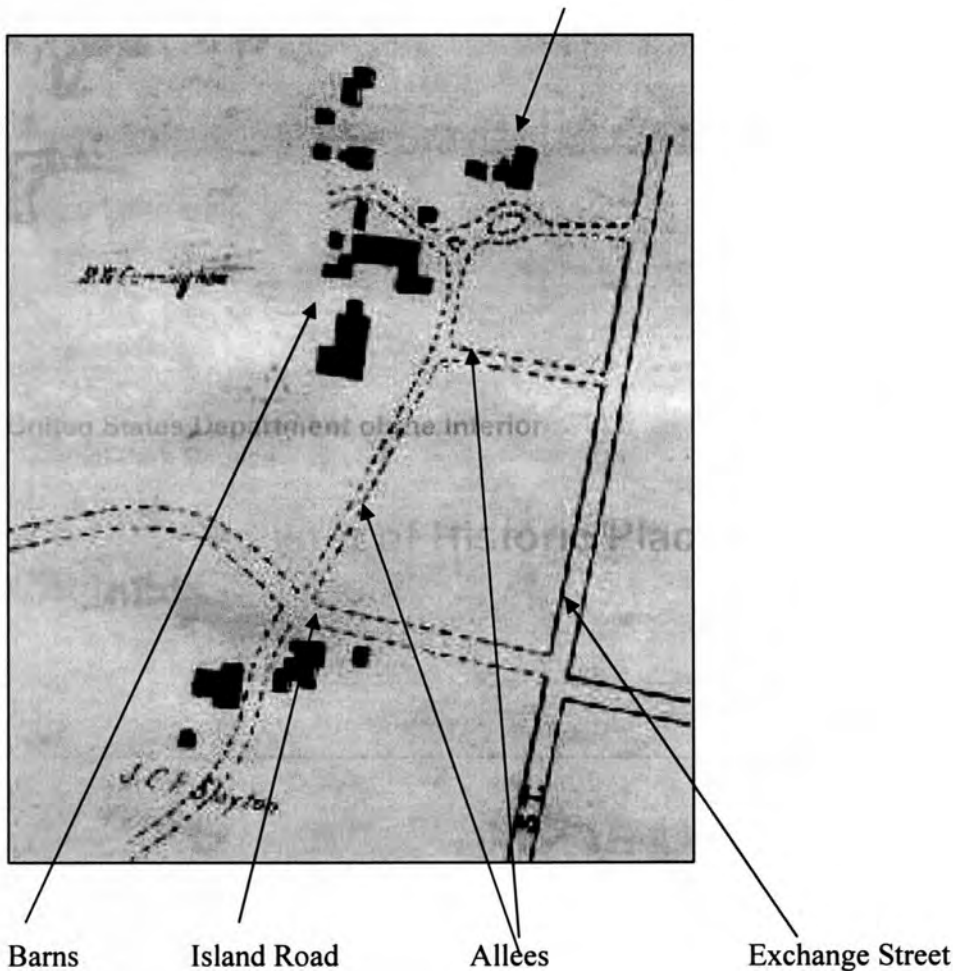
Oak Grove Farmhouse

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 4



"Plan of Oak Grove Farm (Original Tract) in Millis, April 3, 1893," compiled by George A. Kimball, Civil Engineer. Copied from town website. Same as viewed in Deed at Norfolk County Registry of Deeds, Book 697, Page 233.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 5



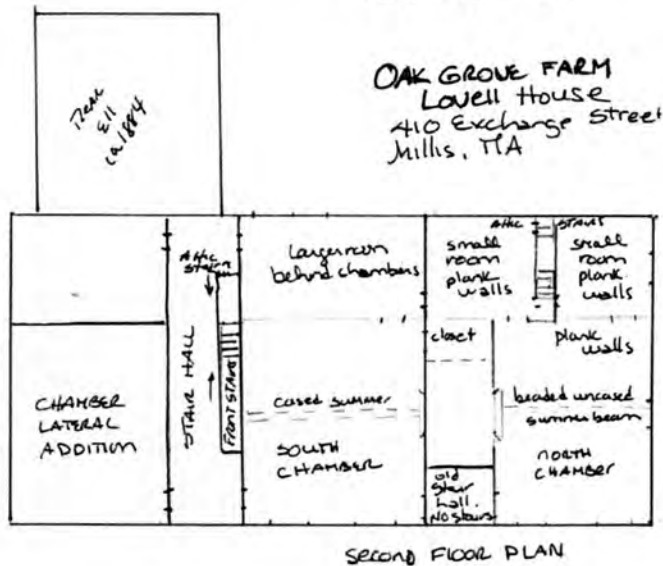
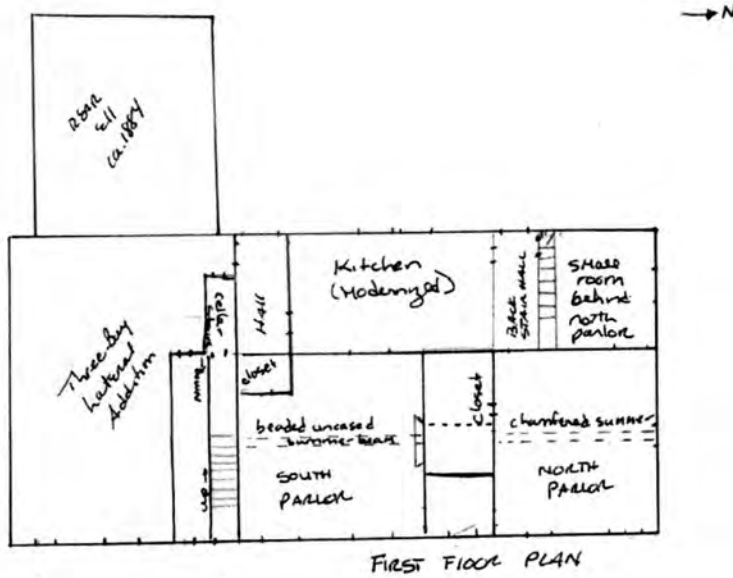
O.G.F. Farm House 1880 E. Midway Road

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Oak Grove Farm
Millis (Norfolk) MA

Section number 10 Page 6



NOT TO SCALE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Oak Grove Farm
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 3/23/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/14/11
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/29/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/08/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000247

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 5.4.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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



Oak Grove Farm
Millis, Norfolk County, MA

410 Exchange St
Gretchen Schuler

June 2007

Main (east) facade looking west, northwest

Photo #1



Oak Grove Farm
Norfolk County, MA
410 Exchange St. Mills
Gretchen Schuler

June 2007
Bear Elevation, Near Ell Looking SW
Photo #2



Oak Grove Farm
Norfolk County, MA
Alto. Exchange St, Millis
Cristen Schuter

June 2007
Allee from Island Road Looking north
Photo # 3



Oak Grove Farm
Norfolk County, MA
410 Exchange St. Mills
Gretchen Schuler

June 2007

Meadow Behind house looking NW
Photo #4



Oak Grove Farm
Norfolk County, MA
410 Exchange St, Millis

Heather Schuler
June 2007

North plaster - summer beams w/ chandelier
Photo # 5



Oak Grove Farm
Norfolk County, MA
410 Exchange St, Mills
Gretchen Schuler

pre 2007
North chamber - vertical board wall
behind lath

photo # 6



L. Miller

1880

Millis, MA

Norfolk County

410 Exchange St.

Oak Grove Farm

Farmhouse - ca 1880

Photo # 7

Oak Grove Farm
Assessors Map
#16-4

PARK
TOWN
4

108.70 AC

FILED NO 243 ABB OF 1993 PLBK 413

11-26

EXCHANGE ST.

R-I-60000

BOGASTOW BROOK

53
33.08 AC
COE - EASEMENT 226EI
(28.33 AC)

17

Norfolk Co.
Mills, MA
Oak Grove
Farm
410 Exchange
St.
Assessors
#16-4

15

R-II-25000
R-III-15000

LOCK ROAD

LANSEING VILLAGE

MAPLE AVE.

SOUTHWOODS CIR.

ISLAND RD.

RD.

SEWER EASEMENT

25 DRAIN EASEMENT

25 DRAIN EASEMENT

25 DRAIN EASEMENT

25 DRAIN EASEMENT

25 DRAIN EASEMENT

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25 DRAIN EASEMENT

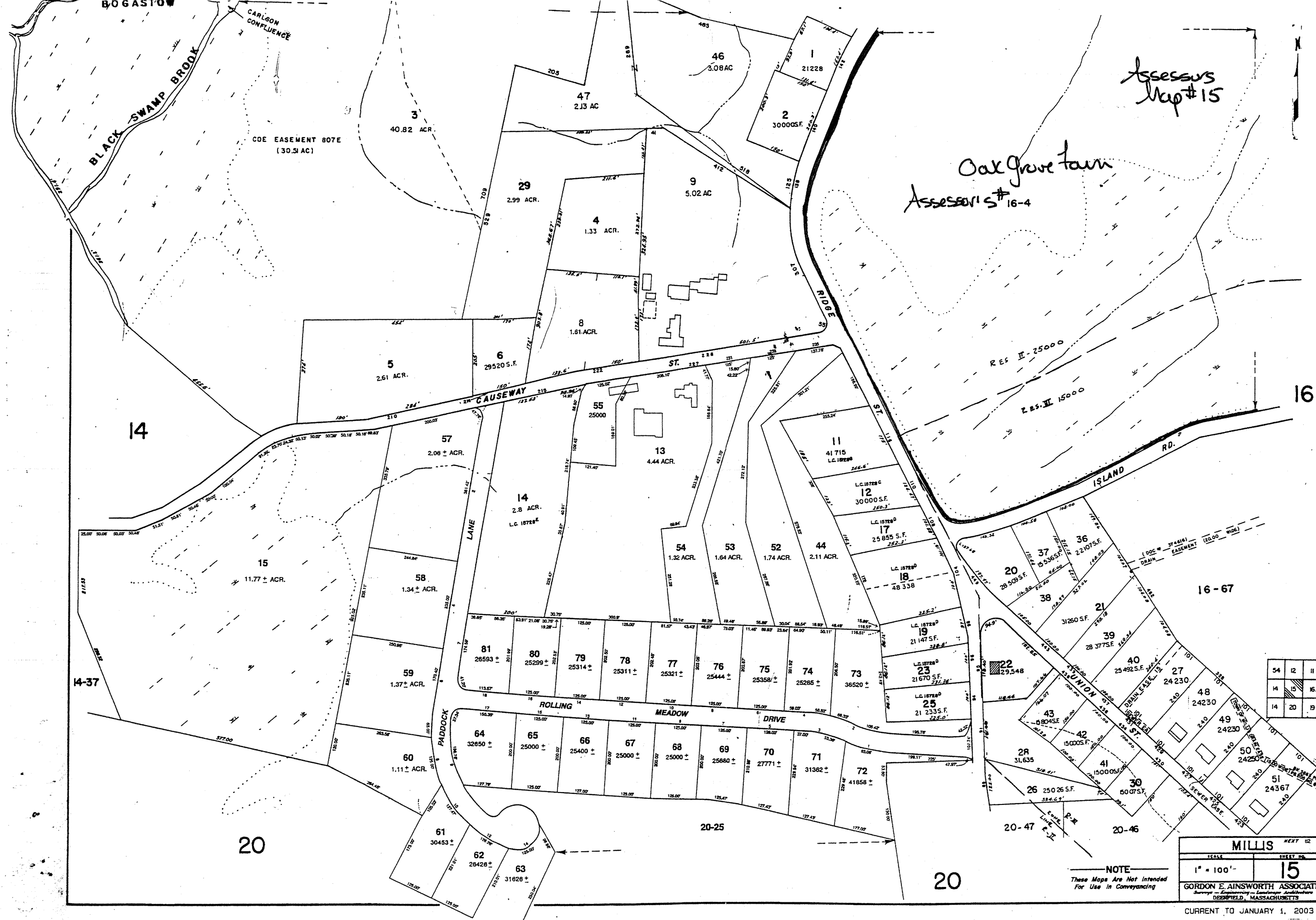
54
16.0-S
COE EASEMENT 226E2P

NOTE
These Maps Are Not Intended
For Use In Conveyancing

MILLS	
SCALE	SHEET NO.
1" = 100'	16
WAYNE S. CARLSON & ASSOCIATES	
MILLS, MASSACHUSETTS	

CURRENT TO JANUARY 1, 2004

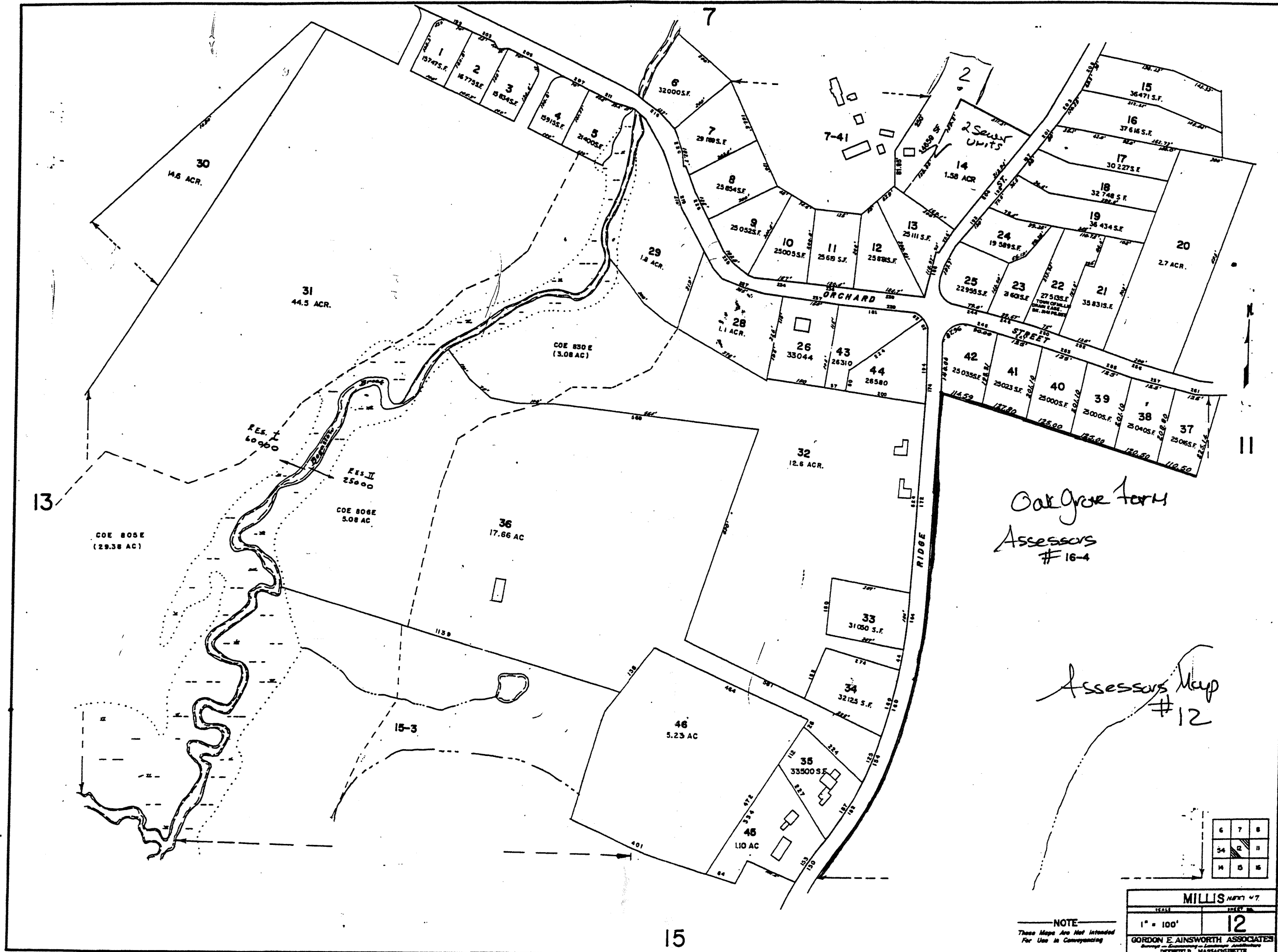
19



Norfolk Co.
Millis, MA
Oak Grove farm
410 Exchange St
Assessors
#16-4

NOTE
These Maps Are Not Intended
For Use In Conveyancing

MILLIS NEXT 15
SCALE 1" = 100'
GORDON E. AINSWORTH ASSOCIATES
Surveyors - Engineering - Landscaping - Architecture
DEERFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
CURRENT TO JANUARY 1, 2003

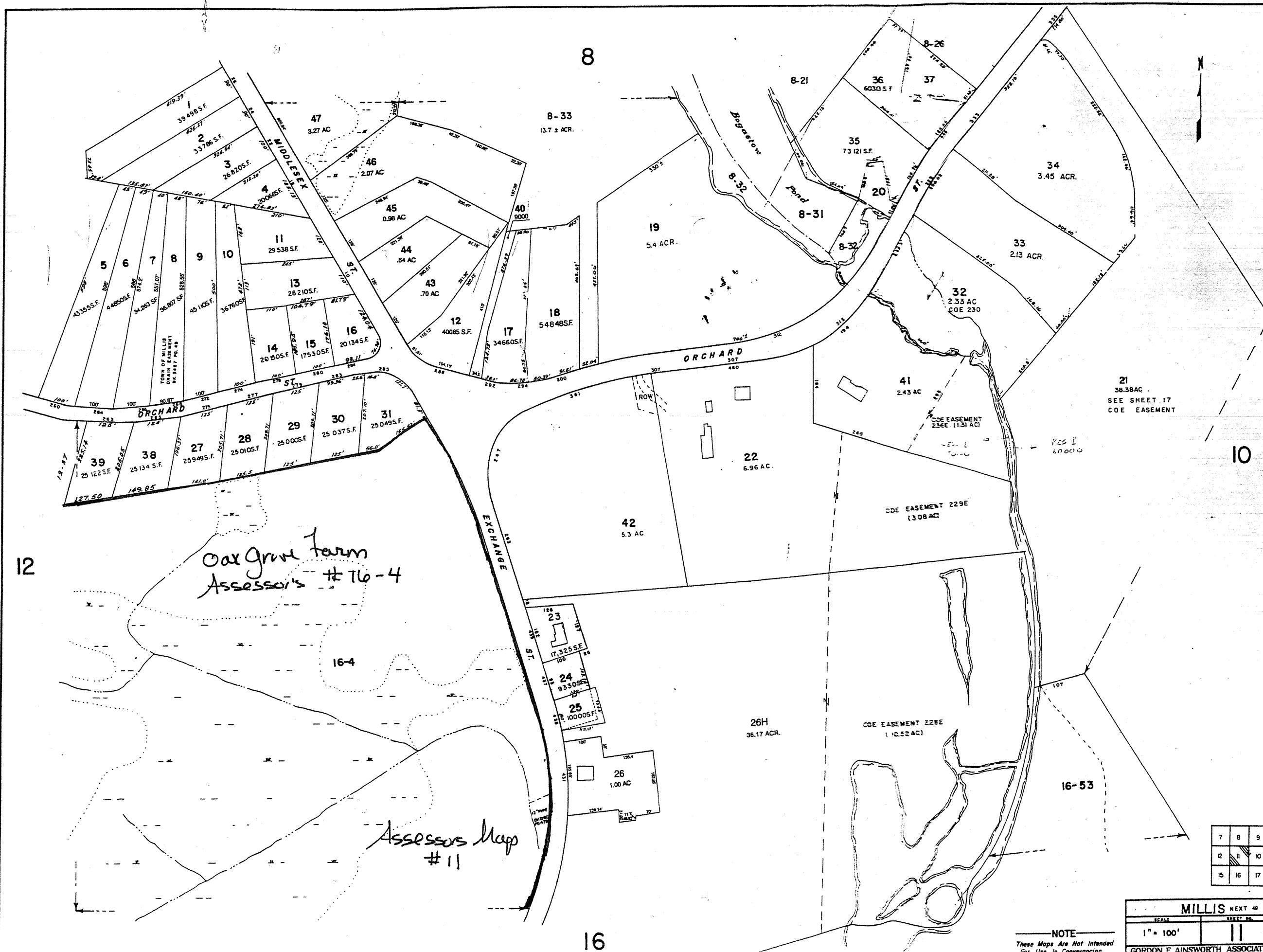


Norfolk County
Millis, MA
Oak Grove Farm
410 Exchange St
Assessors
#110-4

Oak Grove Farm
Assessors
#16-4

Assessors Map
#12

MILLIS MAP #12	
SCALE	1" = 100'
DATE	12
GORDON E. AINSWORTH ASSOCIATES	
Surveyors & Engineers in Land, Surveying, Mapping, and Planning	
DORCHESTER, MASSACHUSETTS	

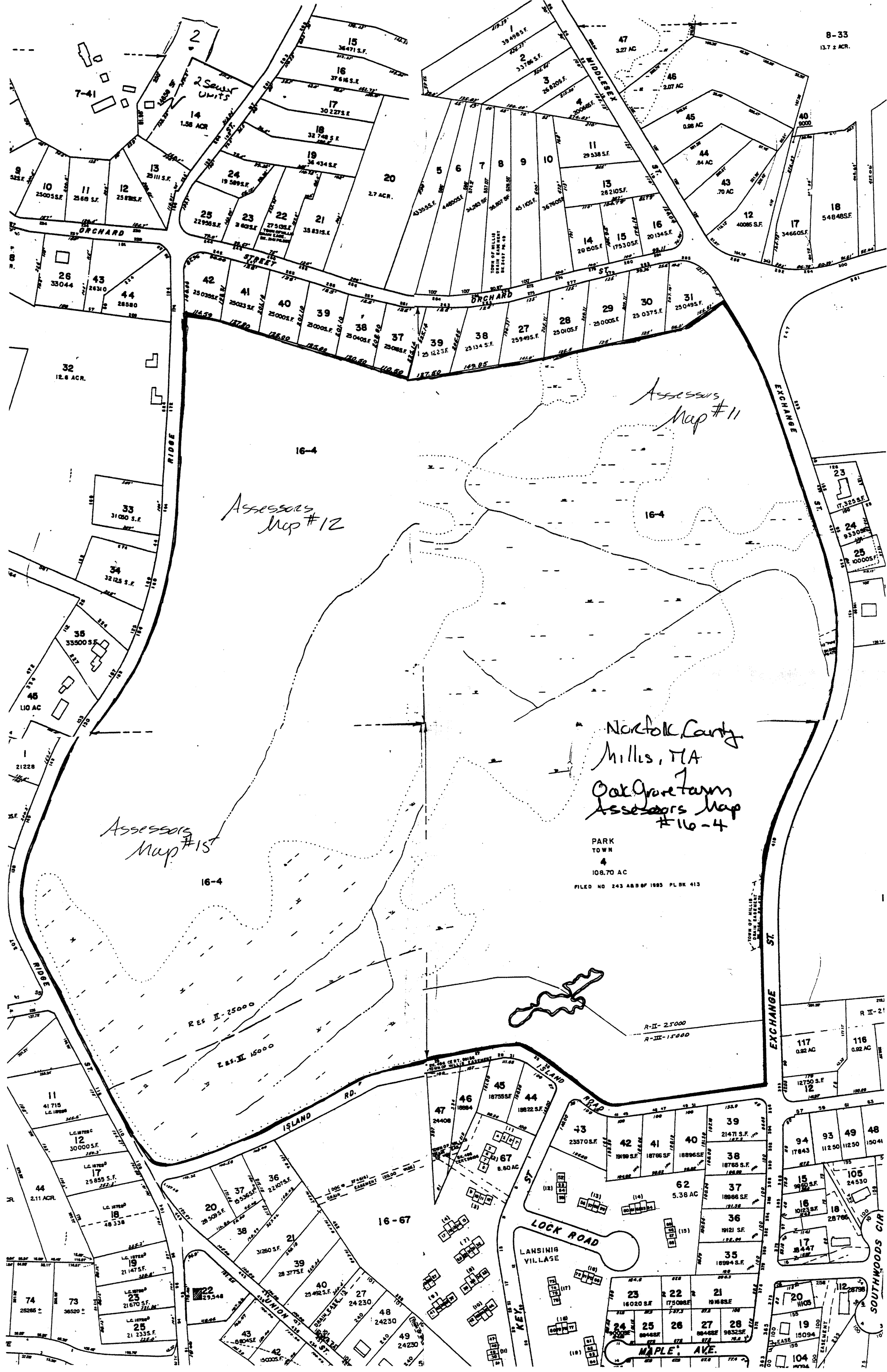


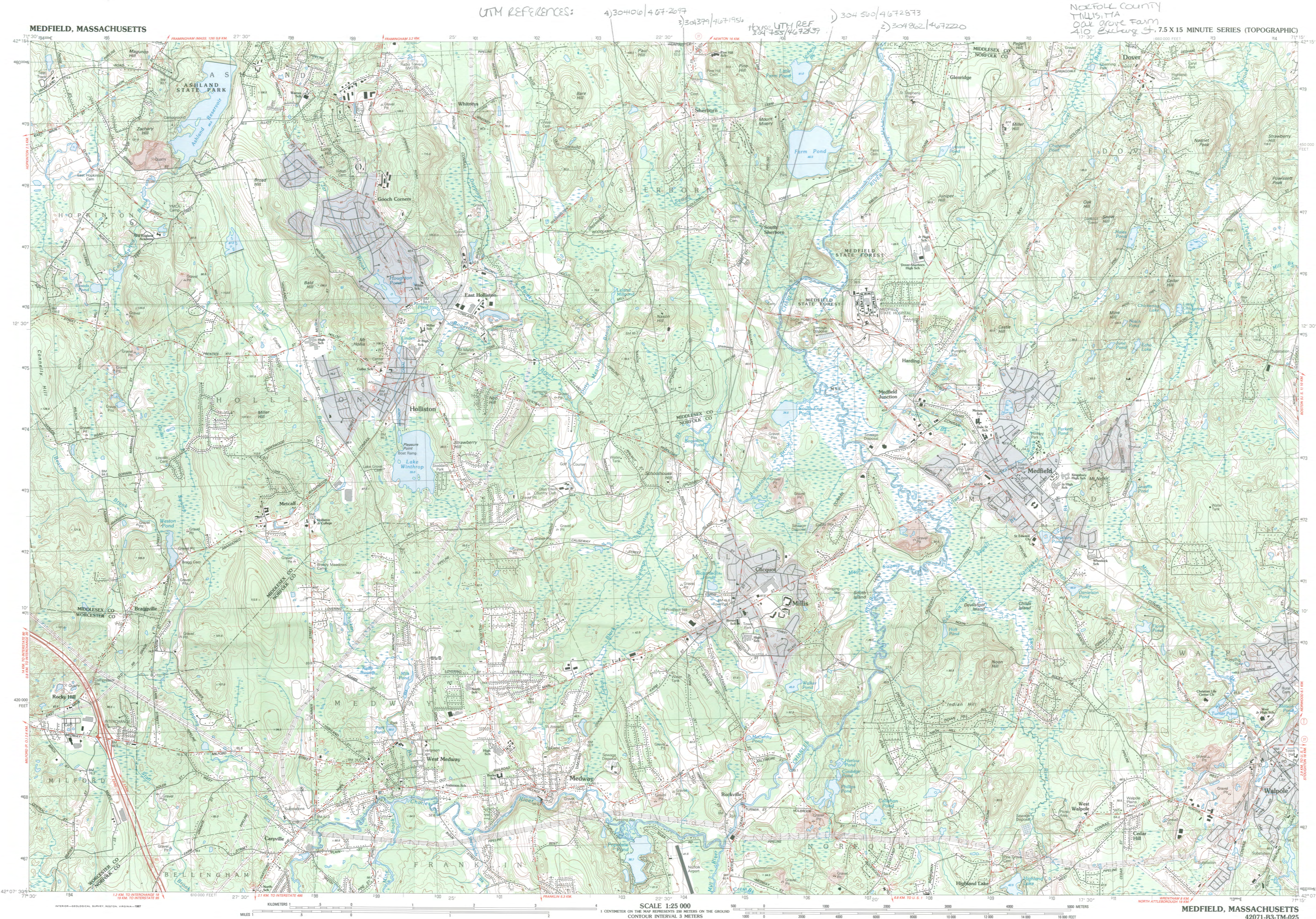
Norfolk Co.
 Millis, MA
 Oax Grove Farm
 40 Exchange St.
 Assessors
 #16-4

7	8	9
12	11	10
15	16	17

MILLIS NEXT 40	
SCALE	SHEET NO.
1" = 100'	11
GORDON F. AINSWORTH ASSOCIATES	

NOTE:
 These Maps Are Not Intended
 For Use In Conveyancing





Medfield
MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING

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

1987

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works

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

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1981. Field checked 1981 and 1982. Map edited 1987. Supersedes Holliston 1969 and Medfield 1970 1:25,000-scale maps

Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone 1927 North American Datum

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks

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

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS

NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CONTOUR ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER

OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet	UTM grid convergence (GTM) and 1983 declination (MIL)		1	2	3
1	3.2808	1° 15' 15" N		1	2	3
2	6.5617	1° 15' 15" N		4	5	6
3	9.8425	1° 15' 15" N		7	8	9
4	13.1234	1° 15' 15" N		10	11	12
5	16.4042	1° 15' 15" N		13	14	15
6	19.6850	1° 15' 15" N		16	17	18
7	22.9658	1° 15' 15" N		19	20	21
8	26.2467	1° 15' 15" N		22	23	24
9	29.5275	1° 15' 15" N		25	26	27
10	32.8084	1° 15' 15" N		28	29	30

To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (GTM) and 1983 declination (MIL) diagram is approximate

Diagram is approximate

1 Marlborough
2 Framingham
3 Boston South
4 Milford
5 Needham
6 Uxbridge
7 Franklin
8 Brockton

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail
Route marker: Interstate; U.S.; State
Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
Bridge: drawbridge
Footbridge: overpass; underpass
Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
House; barn; church; school; large structure

Boundary:
National, with monument
State
County, parish
Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation; small park
Land grant with monument; found section corner
U.S. public lands survey; range, township, section
Range, township, section line: location approximate
Fence or field line
Power transmission line, isolated tower
Dam; dam with lock
Cemetery, grave
Campground; picnic area; U.S. location monument
Windmill; water well; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
Rapid; large and small; falls, large and small
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland
Scribble; mangrove
Orchard; vineyard



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

March 17, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Oak Grove Farm, 410 Exchange Street, Millis (Norfolk), MA

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

Sincerely,

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

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Donald Hendon, Chair, Millis Board of Selectmen
Beth Krimmel, Millis Historical Commission
Gretchen Schuler, Consultant
Catharine Macinnes, Millis Planning Board

Massachusetts Historical Commission Digital Image Submission Form

Please submit one form for each group of digital images
Millis, MA Oak Grove Farm 410 Exchange Street

About your digital files:

Camera Used (make, model): Pentax, Optio 33L

Resolution of original image capture (camera setting including resolution and file format):

Photos 1, 2 and 3: 2048 x 1536 b/w jpeg saved as TIFF files

Photos 4, 5 and 6: 1600 x 1200 b/w jpeg saved as TIFF files

File name(s) (attach additional sheets if necessary) check here ☐ to refer to attached photo log:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Oak Grove Farm ¾ view front and side _____ | 5) Oak Grove Farm, North Parlor, Summer _____ |
| 2) Oak Grove Farm rear elevation and rear ell _____ | 6) Oak Grove Farm, North Chamber _____ |
| 3) Oak Grove Farm – allee of maples from Island Rd _____ | |
| 4) Oak Grove Farm – meadow behind house _____ | |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

About your prints:

Printer make and model: HP Officejet 6210 All-in-One

Paper: brand & type (i.e., Epson Premium Glossy Photo)

HP Premium Plus Photo Glossy Paper (4"x6") and Premium Photo Glossy (8"x10") _____

Ink: *HP Vivera inks 94 b/w cartridge, 95 tri-color cartridge* _____

Signature: (By signing below you agree that the information provided here is true and accurate.)

Signature: 

Date: 7/20/07