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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 WHITMAN PARK

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number PARK/MAPLE/WHITMAN/HAYDEN AVENUE N/A not for publication

city or town WHITMAN N/A vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county PLYMOUTH code 023 zip code 02382

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.)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director

1/22/04

Signature of certifying official/Title Gala H. Metz, Executive Director

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

for
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

3/18/04

WHITMAN PARK
Name of Property

PLYMOUTH, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	building
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	structures
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: park-urban designed landscape

LATE VICTORIAN: Stick/Eastlake

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls WOOD

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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7. DESCRIPTION

The Whitman Park is a 14.3 acre town park designed by the Olmsted Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts in 1900 and redesigned by the same firm in 1931. Located just east of Whitman town center, the park is surrounded by a late-19th to early-20th century residential neighborhood and institutional properties. It is bounded by Park, Maple, Whitman, and Hayden Avenues. Colebrook Cemetery (ca. 1828) named after the small brook that once ran through the park, is located across Park Avenue to the northeast.

Whitman Park exemplifies the late-19th to early-20th century landscape design principles for which the Olmsted Brothers firm was nationally known. Some of the most significant and character defining features of the site that are original to the 1900 design include the varied topography, large mature trees, curvilinear gravel path system, open grassy play areas, Wading Pond, and the 19th and early 20th-century context. A Bandstand (ca. 1908), Civil War Monument (ca. 1908), Brigham Drinking Fountain (ca. 1924), and a few other structures and objects added during the first quarter of the 20th century reflect the evolving use and significance of the park to the community over time. A concrete Swimming Pool was constructed in the 1957, the Little League Ball Field in 1963, and a contemporary wooden Play Structure in the 1980s. These three structures are noncontributing due to the fact that they are less than 50 years old. The current overall physical condition of the park is fair to good, and many of the original elements of the 1900 and 1931 design remain intact.

Topography

Whitman Park has several open grassy play areas, wooded groves, and tree-lined walks. Moving in an eastwardly direction from Hayden Avenue (**Fig. 3**), the topography is level. The ground gently slopes eastward to the Wading Pond, located near the middle of the site, and then rises up to two small hills before it drops down to the "lower park" play area that abuts Maple Avenue. The topography of the site has not changed much since it was first set aside for a park by the town in 1880.

Vegetation

The park displays a good mix of hardwoods and evergreens, several from 1900 and many from 1931 (**Photos 1, 2, 6 & 12**). Of particular note, is a large mature purple beech located just west of the wading pond. Trees planted throughout the park include Norway spruce, white pine, red cedar, tulip tree and American plane trees. Clusters of trees are found on the two hills, around the pond and along street edges. Many of the trees are in poor health due to improper maintenance and/ or neglect. There are very few shrubs in the park, with the exception of those planted around the base of monuments and objects.

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Circulation System

The circulation system consists of granular and dirt paths that cross the park. Most of the path system that was laid out in 1900 and revised in 1931 is still present as initially intended except for a diagonal path leading through the ball field located in the southwest corner of the park and the eastern part of the path that ran on the north side of Whitman Avenue. These were removed when the baseball diamond and fence were constructed (1963) and the swimming pool installed (1957). However, many of the paths need to be repaired for drainage, and the surface material needs to be refurbished. The path width varies from five to twelve feet. Some of the wider paths are used for service vehicles, which causes further deterioration to the wider paths. A concrete sidewalk runs along the perimeter of the park on Park and Maple Avenue. Unpaved paths exist along Whitman and Hayden Avenues (**Fig.3 & photo 12**).

Structures, Monument, Objects and Open Space

A small wood and fieldstone Bandstand (ca.1908, restored 1988) is located just east of Hayden Avenue along the western edge of the park (**Photo 9**). The original park design by the Olmsted Brothers in 1900 proposed an elaborate Bandstand/Shelter to be located between the two small hills in the center of the park. The Town could not afford the cost of the Bandstand/Shelter so opted to build an independent structure for \$350 and located it where it stands today. The bandstand is seldom used except for storage. A Little League baseball field is located adjacent to the Bandstand in the southwest corner of the Park. The field crowds the bandstand and appears to make it difficult to function for concerts (**Photo 13**).

Two contemporary wood signs mark the southwest and northeast park entrances. A granite and stone Horse Trough that once stood in front of the old Congregational Church on Washington Street is located at the southwest park entrance across from Town Hall. Moved to the park in 1910, it was converted to a drinking fountain. In the 1960s, it became a planter.

Towards the middle of the park is a Wading Pond. The pond was created from a stream that ran through the middle of the park and was part of the natural drainage system that eventually emptied into Hobart Pond located east of the park. The pond was used for casual recreation long before the site became a park. When the Olmsted Brothers prepared their park layout in 1900, they enhanced the pond by establishing a controlled pond outlet and creating a generous sand edge with benches around the perimeter (**Fig. 11**). In 1994, the pond was dredged and an artesian well put in place to water the grass and fill the pond. The pond has recently undergone restoration. A blue-clay liner was installed in the spring of 2001 and the pond's edges have been stabilized. However, the perimeter sand edge has been replaced by grass that grows to the water's edge (**Photo 3**).

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The Hastings School Bell was placed on the northwest side of the park in 1998 in recognition of the 100 anniversary of the Hastings School (not extant), which was located north of the park on Alden Avenue. The historic cast iron bell is sixteen inches high and thirty inches in diameter. Weighing 300 pounds, the bell sits by itself at ground level in a small planting bed.

A Civil War Monument that was given to the town and placed on one of the park's hills in 1908 (**Photo 8 & Fig. 12**) is in excellent condition. The monument was intended to be reflected in the wading pond. Hence the "wading pond" is also referred to as the "reflecting pond." The bronze statue of a soldier rises above the monument's polished granite base. The entire height of the monument is 25 feet.

Along Park Avenue in the northeast area of the park is the Brigham Drinking Fountain, which is presently non-functional and in need of repair. The fountain was the gift of Albert H. Brigham (ca.1924) to the children of Whitman (**Photo 10 & 14**). Brigham was on the committee that secured the services of the Olmsted Brothers to prepare the original park plan in 1900. The fountain is a small marble obelisk topped with a bronze baby angel holding a water urn. Two bronze plaques are mounted on each side above a drinking bowl. The plaque that faces the park reads "Nature's greatest gift - pure water," the plaque that faces Park Avenue is inscribed: "Given to the children of Whitman in the memory of Hannah Jane Brigham wife of Albert Henry Brigham to express appreciation of the respect shown by them in refraining from using this playground during her illness." The fountain is located directly across from the Brigham home.

The eastern area of Whitman Park today retains the Ball Field (lower) and the play lawn as laid out in 1931. A large wood play structure was built in the 1980s (**Photo 15**), and a swimming pool was added in 1957 just west of the play structure.

Lighting throughout the park is limited and consists of a few cobra head fixtures mounted on twenty-foot poles.

Archaeological Description

Whitman Park is located in an area where environmental characteristics support the presence of ancient Native American sites. Six sites are also located in the general area (within one mile), further supporting the presence of Native sites in the park locale. One site, the Colebrook Cemetery Site (19-PL-463) is reported in Colebrook Cemetery between Park Avenue and Essex Street and may extend into the park. Native American artifacts have reportedly been found during grave excavations; however, the cultural affiliation of the site is unknown. The Whitman Park landscape contains many areas characterized by

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level to moderately sloping land surfaces that were originally located within 1,000 feet of wetlands. Drainage has always been a problem in the park. A stream originally drained east/west through the park then through Colebrook Cemetery to the Shumatuscacant River. The Cemetery was named after the brook. A small, partially natural pond, was located in the central part of the park along the brook. Much of the park was also originally characterized by marshy land, portions of which were graded to create a lower pond in 1900. The entire park is located within the interior Taunton River drainage. Grading has occurred in much of the park altering the natural landscape to an unknown degree. This process would have adversely effected any cultural resources that were present at those locations. Several small hills were originally located in the park, one of which was leveled in the 1880's for a baseball field. An area in the eastern portion of the park was also graded to create a woodland pond in 1900 then filled and re-graded again ca. 1931 for construction of the existing playing field. Other areas of the park were also probably re-graded prior to plantings. Given the information presented above, a moderate potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources within the park.

There is also a moderate potential for recovering historic archaeological resources in the park. Prior to development of the park, the area was part of the Whitman Estate, deeded to the town in 1880. The actual park area was part of the back pasture of the estate. Post-holes and other evidence of fences, walls and gateways may exist in the area. Stratigraphic evidence might also exist indicating landscape changes that were made when park development began in ca. 1880 and under Olmsted direction in ca.1900 and 1931.

(end)

WHITMAN PARK

Name of Property

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.)

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)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

PLYMOUTH, MA

County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1880-1954

Significant Dates

1880, 1900, 1931

Significant Person

(C complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Olmsted Bros.

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other: Dyer Memorial Library, Abington, MA

Name of repository:

MHC, Library of Congress, Whitman Town Hall

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Whitman Park retains integrity of design, location, setting, feeling, workmanship, and association, and meets National Register criteria A and C on the local level.

Whitman Park is significant as an excellent example of an intact late-19th to early-20th century neighborhood park designed by the Olmsted Brothers under the direction of John Charles Olmsted. The Park reflects the design principles for which the firm was nationally known, as well as the influence of landscape architecture as a newly established profession in the early twentieth century. Whitman Park is unusual in that the Olmsted Brothers firm designed it twice, first in 1900 and again in 1931. Both periods are still readable and surprisingly functional.

Whitman Park demonstrates the evolution of a typical town park through the first half of the 20th century, and it reflects changes that occurred nationwide in parks, recreation and aesthetics. Whitman Park remains as a critically viable public park serving the community as originally intended when the land was first set aside in 1880.

The **location** of Whitman Park remains as it was in the 1880s, just northeast of the town center. By 1900, Park, Maple, Whitman and Hayden Avenues formed the perimeter of the park, which was surrounded by residential neighborhoods, Colebrook cemetery, and two schools (**Fig.2**). The park is the same size and has remained in the same historic location since 1887. (**Fig.3**)

The park continues to display historic **integrity of design** through the:

- hierarchy of connecting paths whose varying widths encourage different levels of activities (**Photos 1 & 2**)
- curvilinear path lay out that provides opportunities to view the park from within from different vantage points (**Fig.4**)
- children's wading pond, though no longer used for that purpose, still retains its original shape and form
- open grassy lawns for play (**Photos 4 & 5**)
- shady treed areas for picnicking located near the small children's play area (**Photo 6**)
- recreational areas that are separated by topography, plantings, and pathways
- improvements to site drainage were implemented in 1901 and 1931

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However, all of the shrubs and ground covers that were implemented in 1900 and modified in 1931 have been removed.

In 1880, when the town received the twelve-acre lot from the Whitmans, it contained several small hills, scrub growth, a stream that ran through the middle of the site, and a low wet marshy area to the east. Town residents used the lot for casual play. Paths developed that crossed the site, and a pond was eventually made by damming the stream. One of the small hills was leveled off to become a rough baseball field. The Olmsted Brothers' 1900 design worked with the existing natural features. They reshaped the pond, enhanced the pathways, and added plantings and street trees. Taking advantage of the low wet marshy area and site drainage challenges at the time, they developed this area into naturalistic woodland with a pond (**Fig. 4, 5 & 6**).

The 1931 Olmsted Bros. design addressed challenges and corrected problems that had developed between 1900 and 1931. These are discussed in detail later in this section

The **integrity of setting** of Whitman Park as a historic designed landscape remains intact. The small hills that were originally part of the Whitman lot and later integrated into the Olmsted Brothers design still exist and are now studded with mature trees. The shallow Wading Pond, as designed in 1900, is clean and clear. It serves as a reflecting surface for the Civil War Monument as envisioned in 1908 when the monument was placed in the park. The surrounding pathways still connect to the outside neighborhood at significant street intersections. With few intrusions, the late-19th to early-20th century residential neighborhood that surrounds the park remains unaltered.

The physical elements that are representative of the park's period of significance (1880-1954) and that exhibit **integrity of materials** include:

- the recently rehabilitated Wading Pond as originally designed in 1900 except for the sand edges (**Photo 3**)
- many of the trees planted on the interior in 1900 and in 1931 (**Photos 1 & 6**)
- 1900 concrete tennis court (now a Basketball Court)
- many 1900 gravel paths
- Bandstand (1908), Civil War Monument (ca.1908), Brigham Drinking Fountain (ca.1924)
- 1931 lower park Ball Field (**Photo 7**).

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Integrity of workmanship is evident in the polished gray granite Civil War Monument placed in the park in 1908 (**Photo 8**), the small stone and wood Bandstand built in 1908 (**Photo 9**) along the western edge of the park, and the Brigham Drinking Fountain (ca.1924). (**Photo 10**).

Whitman Park still expresses a **feeling** of restfulness. Through the natural beauty of large mature tree stands, shaded picnic areas and the reflecting/ wading pond, the park provides a place to escape from the fast pace of hectic daily activities. Places to sit and experience the more gentle quality of the park are available along the paths and around the pond.

However, the quiet nature and more natural setting of the park's eastern portion as envisioned and implemented in 1900 no longer exist. The woodland pond and islands of trees were removed in 1931 in favor of more active play space and to correct chronic drainage problems (**Fig. 8**). However, the open green lawn for small child play still exists.

The internal path system, as originally designed and laid out creates a feeling of connectedness to various park activities as well as to the surrounding environment. Views within the park and to the outside provide a strong sense of place and time.

The only discordant activity in the park is the presence of the Little League Baseball Field located in the southwestern corner opposite the town hall (**Photo 11**). In 1900 and in 1931, the Olmsted Brothers warned against the permanent location of this activity in the park.

The lack of maintenance and continued problems with path drainage diminishes the potential "beauty" of the park.

Whitman Park retains **historic integrity** in its association with John C. Olmsted and the Olmsted Brothers firm. John C. Olmsted was the stepson of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's most well-known and influential landscape designer of the 19th century. John C. joined his father's firm in 1884 and worked closely with him until the senior Olmsted's retirement in 1895. On his own merit and in his work with his stepbrother Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., John C. Olmsted was responsible for many successful park commissions across the country.

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Frederick Law Olmsted, John C. Olmsted and the Olmsted Brothers

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) is America's most well-known and influential landscape designer. During the second half of the 19th century and into the 20th, he and his associates designed hundreds of parks and park systems, malls, suburbs, subdivisions, parkways, cemeteries, residential gardens, university campuses, and other public and private spaces across the country. His methods and approach to landscape design became standards for the landscape architectural profession and for community planning.

John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) was the son of Frederick Law Olmsted's brother, John, who died in 1857. Frederick married John's widow, Mary. John C. Olmsted was educated at Yale, and later became a partner with his stepfather from 1884-1889 when Frederick moved his office from New York to Brookline, Massachusetts. In 1889, Frederick's company was known as F.L. Olmsted and Company (1889-1893), and Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot (1893-1897), F.L. Olmsted and J.C. Olmsted (1897-1898) and finally the Olmsted Brothers (1898-1961).

Frederick Law Olmsted "retired" from his practice in 1895, but the dates of his office indicate that he was active at least to 1898. John C. Olmsted worked with his father for about 16 years. In 1886, they worked together on the Leland Stanford Jr. University in Palo Alto, California. Other projects closer to home included the Newton Park (1895), Plymouth Parks (1889-1892), Merrymount Park in Quincy (1892-1900), Orchard Park in Roxbury (1897-1913), Waltham Parks (1894-1895), and the Winthrop Parks (1893-1895).

John C. Olmsted became the American Society of Landscape Architect's first president. He was also instrumental in establishing the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. Though somewhat overshadowed by his famous father, John established himself in other ways. He is credited with introducing the concept of playgrounds in public spaces especially in urban settings. Understanding the evolution of social life in cities, John was particularly sensitive to the need for public play areas. His work with the South parks in Chicago brought praise from President Roosevelt. John was responsible for Keney Park in Hartford, Connecticut, Audubon Park in New Orleans and Essex County Park in New Jersey. He was the firm's principal designer for the Seattle Park system, a twenty-mile long greensward of parks. He designed the Portland (Oregon) Park system as well as numerous estates along the eastern seaboard and in Spokane and Vancouver, B.C.

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The basic tenets of John Olmsted's planning and design were consistent with his father's philosophy and approach. In keeping with the naturalistic tradition, he worked with the topography and the native vegetation and believed that each park should reflect the identity and character of the community it served.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957) was eighteen years younger than his stepbrother, John. Frederick and John became partners in their father's firm upon Frederick Sr.'s retirement in 1895. Frederick Jr. was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and like his stepbrother, was president of the organization. He taught the first course in landscape architecture (Harvard University) at the request of his father's friend and colleague, Charles Eliot, who was president of Harvard at that time. Frederick Jr. also established the first formal training program in landscape architecture at Harvard University in 1900.

Olmsted, Jr. was responsible for many of the extensions of regional parks in Washington, D.C. as part of the McMillan Plan. He became a leader in comprehensive planning and conservation. He was landscape architect for the Boston Metropolitan Park system from 1898-1920 that led to formulating the plan for California's extensive state park system.

History of Whitman Park

In 1879, the town of South Abington (renamed Whitman in 1886) voted to look for an appropriate parcel of land to be set aside for a town park. Two parcels were considered when the town settled on a twelve-acre lot donated by Augustus Whitman in 1880. The site was close to the town center and contained hills, woods, and plains all of which were regarded as desirable for a public park (**Fig. 1**).

By 1880, South Abington had grown into a busy shoe-manufacturing center. The construction of the Old Colony Railroad in 1845 that connected Boston (20 miles northwest) to the south shore went through South Abington. This important transportation link allowed manufactured goods to be well dispersed and to be shipped easily to busy seaports. With increased demands for leather goods and shoes during the Civil War, South Abington grew and developed rapidly during the later half of the 19th century. By 1900, the town had many prosperous residents who had been successful in developing other businesses as well. The town was considered to be a "manufacturing town," not a mill town. It had large estates with beautifully kept lawns, and the residents wanted a beautiful park.

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The Whitman family originally settled in Weymouth, Massachusetts before 1636. The family was involved in local and state politics. By the early 1700s some Whitmans had settled in South Abington. In 1829, Jared Whitman (b. 1784 in South Abington) built his home (not extant) on Washington Street (**Fig. 1, 15 & 16**). Jared's son, Augustus, born in 1821, was both a businessman and a farmer. In 1856 he started the Whitman and Barnes Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of mowing machine knives. Augustus also had a "model" farm in Leominster where he raised shorthorns. The family was well known and highly regarded.

The land that Augustus gave to the town for a park was previously used as the Whitman's back pasture and was located behind the Whitman estate on Washington Street. At this time, the park site was bordered by Essex Street to the north (now Park Avenue), other private pastures to the east, and residences along the south and west (**Fig 1**). In 1880, the Whitman's accessed their home from Essex Street rather than Washington Street. In 1882, Carolyn Hayden Whitman, Augustus' sister, gave the town an access way into the park along the family's drive. Whitman Avenue was laid out in 1883, forming the southern boundary of the park. In 1888, Maple Avenue was laid out to form the eastern boundary of the park. And finally, in 1891, the town voted to construct Hayden Avenue, named for Carolyn. Hayden Avenue was an extension of the Whitman's drive and formed the western border of the park.

The original twelve-acre parcel contained scrub growth, open meadows, clumps of hardwood, four small hills, a stream that bisected the parcel, and a low wet marshy area along the eastern portion. Surrounded by a growing neighborhood, the lot had been used for informal games of baseball and other recreation.

When Augustus Whitman gave the land to the town in 1880, his only restriction was that the town survey the site and appropriate a suitable amount each year for the Park's maintenance. The town selectmen minutes indicate that funds were duly set aside each year for the Park's maintenance and improvements.

That same year (1880), the town hired Ernest W. Bowditch (1850-1918) to survey the site. Bowditch was a well-known landscape designer as well as an engineer. He had established offices in Boston, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio that employed approximately sixty engineers and fourteen gardeners who worked on over 2,500 projects within a forty-year period.

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Bowditch was born in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1850 into a prominent Salem, family, which provided many opportunities during his career to associate with well known firms such as Peabody and Stearns and Cabot and Chandler of Boston. Educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Bowditch became a civil engineer in 1870. He later worked with the landscape gardener Robert Morris Copeland.

Bowditch had the technical understanding of a civil engineer and had been influenced by the naturalist tradition of English landscape design. He worked on several projects with the Olmsted Brothers (Castle Hill in Ipswich and the Rogers Fort Hill Park in Lowell) and shared their interest in community planning and design.

Bowditch completed the topographic survey for the newly acquired park parcel in 1880 and in 1881 he prepared a plan of Whitman Park for the town (**Fig. 9**). The original survey is not extant, but the 1881 plan for Whitman Park was recently found in the Whitman Department of Public Works vaults. The plan shows an irregular shaped pond in the middle of the site and a "lake" at the eastern edge of the site that ran north-south from Essex Street to the back lots of South Avenue. The small central pond is believed to have been created from the damming of an existing stream that ran through the lot. Bowditch's plan also showed paths meandering through the site, street trees along Essex Street and the western edge of the park, as well as groves of trees planted in certain areas. Bowditch had designed several open areas for "baseball and Parade Grounds" (SW), "windmill" (N), and "tennis and croquet lawns" (NE).

The original 12-acre park expanded in 1882 when the town voted to authorize the newly elected Park Commissioners to accept a piece of land given by Carolyn H. Whitman which was their private driveway off Essex Street. Again, in 1887, the town voted to purchase 1.5 acres from George E. Hersey located along the southeastern edge. This purchase straightened out the southern boundary of the park and enlarged the park to its present size of 14.3 acres.

Carolyn H. Whitman died in 1892 leaving the sum of \$2,000 to the town to be invested until it accumulated enough interest to cover the expense of beautifying the park.

March 5, 1900, the town appointed a committee of three and appropriated \$350 "to procure from

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a landscape gardener permanent plans for the laying out of Whitman Park”(Whitman Selectmen meeting notes). The three-member committee consisted of Walter E. Trufant, Charles E. Lowell, and A. Henry Brigham. A review of the original Park Plans appears to indicate that the correspondence between the “landscape gardener” and the town was primarily the responsibility of Walter Trufant.

On April 2, 1900, Mr. Trufant wrote a letter to Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted asking for a price for making surveys, sketches, and a grading plan of the park. He wrote, “considerable work has been done on it but it needs considerable more work to finish it.” He also indicated that the pond contained a swampy portion, several hills and generally small trees. In addition, the town requested the park have a bandstand with a basement for toilets, a tool house, picnic grove, and children’s play area. They expressed the desire to have a park that was isolated and scenic.

By 1900, Frederick Law Olmsted had formally retired from his practice (1895) and his stepson John C. Olmsted was heading the Brookline office. The committee secured the services of the Olmsted Brothers with John Olmsted as the prime contact.

June 30, 1900, John Charles Olmsted began a preliminary on-the-ground study of the park using a revised topographic plan prepared by Bowditch dated June 6, 1900 (**Fig. 9**). At the same time, John Olmsted took several photographs of the site depicting the park’s existing conditions. The photographs were taken from various vantage points. Little of the Bowditch 1881 park plan had been implemented. Some street trees, which appeared to be about 10 to 15 years old in 1900, had been planted along the periphery. These could have been part of the Bowditch plan. The area for the baseball field had been graded, but very little topsoil remained. Worn footpaths crossed the site, and a low wet mucky area with tree groves occupied most of the eastern edge. A small pond (**Fig. 17**) was located in the center of the park. Descriptions with the photographs indicate that the park had been used for baseball.

“...It has three little hills besides the one that was cut down on the ball field. The pond was in part a natural one. There was a wet hollow in part of valley above it in ball field, which was filled up. There are two short cuts across ball field which it is desired to get rid of. One is very large, and is shown on topographical map by dotted lines. The other further east and comes from east side of the pond. Others are gradually developing.” (J.C. Olmsted, June 30, 1900).

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Olmsted also noted that some subsurface drainage had been installed prior to 1900 but that it was inadequate and needed serious consideration. The "swamp among the trees" seemed to be the collecting area for the area's drainage. Silt, street runoff, and manure from nearby farms had drained into the lower part of the park.

John Olmsted regarded the small existing pond as an asset and thought that the park should have another pond developed from the "low mucky swamp in the unimproved portion of the park because of the fact that there is no means of adequately draining the swamp, and if not used as a pond it would have to be filled to some extent or also the present drain under Essex Avenue would have to be lowered several feet." (July 7, 1900, letter to William E. Trufant, Chairman of Park Plan Committee from John C. Olmsted). The water supply for the existing pond and the proposed pond was not adequate. Olmsted wanted the town to consider a separate town water supply that was clean and dependable for the ponds.

In August of 1900, the Olmsted Brothers began a preliminary grading study of the site (**Fig. 5**). Early design concepts show that the design stayed true to Frederick Law Olmsted's design approach whereby the path system followed as close as possible to the existing topography avoiding large cuts and fills while improving site drainage. Many of the existing trees were left in place, relocated, or enhanced by other plantings.

Initially, the town requested that the park design include a shelter/bandstand with public toilets. The 1900 Olmsted Bros. plan sited the structure between two small hills taking advantage of the natural topography. The proposed structure was to be two stories, the upper story being a simple roofed area one end of which could house a brass band and offer excellent views to the small wading pond to the west. Adjoining the building was to be a hard gravel area where many benches could be placed to accommodate those attending the concerts. Additional space was planned for those preferring to sit on the grass beyond the gravel area. The lower story of the shelter included the walk that connected the wading pool with the eastern part of the park. The public toilets were located at the lower level. Sand courts were planned for each side of the shelter building for children to play (**Fig. 5**).

The design was typical of the Olmsted approach to landscape design by balancing natural and man made features and creating a harmonious relationship between site elements. Unfortunately,

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the shelter was never built because of the lack of funds. The Olmsted Bros. included similar shelters in many of their park designs such as the shelter building for Prospect Park in Holyoke and the pavilion for Charlestown Heights (Ensign John J. Doherty Playground), in Boston (Charlestown).

As part of the 1900 Whitman Park Plan, the lower pond was constructed. **(Fig. 4 & 5)** Olmsted felt that it would be one of the most attractive features of the park. He envisioned this area to be a series of pools whereby in time the islands of trees would mature and reach over the pools. Walks and shrubbery borders would add to the "more quiet and more natural style." (11/3/1900 letter to Trufant from J.C. Olmsted) of this part of the park.

The low wet marshy area was lowered, creating a series of small islands and tree dotting the woodland pond. A depressed perimeter path separated the pedestrian from the street above providing for a more secluded more passive recreation experience in a naturalized setting.

The Olmsted Bros. reconstructed the existing small central pond so that it was a bit smaller, consistent in depth, and had a gradual broad sand edge. John Olmsted re-designed the pond to be deep enough for small children to safely wade and play with toy sailboats, and yet shallow enough to be used for ice skating in the winter. **(Fig. 11 & 13)**

1900 Planting Plan

In 1880, the town had begun planting street trees along Park Avenue (then Essex Street) at the edge of the newly designated park in an effort to improve the lot and begin to define the park space.

When the town contacted the Olmsted Bros. in 1900, they initially desired a park plan that would provide for a "complete and secluded piece of scenery" (letter to Mr. William Trufant, Chair of the Committee on Park Plan from the Olmsted Brothers, 7/7/1900). The firm responded by explaining that the character of Whitman Park could not be made secluded because it was not large enough, "...although the surrounding houses will be to a great extent screened by the street trees and other trees and shrubs to be planted in the park, yet there is no necessity for making an effort to entirely hide the houses from points within the park and it is certainly desirable to afford the residents of the vicinity at least glimpses into the park".

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The firm continued to explain their initial design intent by proposing to plant; "...very low bushes such as the wild rose. Such a mass of bushes would not interrupt the view either into or from the park but would serve to screen the bare ugly roadway of the street in the views from the park and would thus add greatly to the attractiveness of the park to the ordinary visitor. The eye would range from the lawns and shrubberies of the park across this low border shrubbery to the lawns and plantations among the private houses beyond, and it would seem almost the same as if the lawns of the houses connected with those of the park without the ugly interruption caused by the streets."

Working with the existing plantings, the Olmsted Bros. 1900 Planting Plan specified over nineteen different trees to be planted in groves, along paths, and to fill in and thicken the street tree plantings.

The original 1900 Planting Plan provided for a 12-foot minimum planting buffer between the street edge and the park. In many instances, this was considerably wider and contained many shrubs and trees (**Fig. 12**). Plantings were also proposed along paths, on embankments, and around the wading pool. Early postcards of the park show planting beds established in the southeast area near the intersection of Whitman Avenue and Maple Street.

The 1900 Planting Plan (**Fig 6**) proposed lightly planted groves of trees, perimeter trees along the streets, heavily planted bed of shrubs and ground covers and open grassy areas for concerts and play. The plants were used to enhance the character of the park's special places whether it was the low and quieter eastern portion or more recreational western part of the park. However, John Olmsted remarked that the planting should not be expensive and hard to maintain and that consideration for open grassy play would discourage the suggestion for a lot of flowerbeds. Instead, he envisioned various trees with ornamental shrubbery on the slopes, but "... owing to the nature of the wilder natural character of the low portion of the park, it seems appropriate to make a distinction in the character of planting by using in this portion of the park mainly the best of the native trees and shrubs indigenous in the locality"(letter to Mr. Trufant, 7/7/1900).

Circulation

The designed path system consisted of different width unpaved curvilinear paths that connected the park to important points leading to the surrounding neighborhood. The varying path width

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served to organize different levels and intensity of park use. Instead of straight lines, the paths were laid out in a meandering fashion except for those that existed and had developed prior to 1900. The path system provided the framework for the park, connecting to surrounding land uses, giving form and shape to spaces and providing for different levels of activities.

The 1900 Olmsted Bros. park plan (**Fig. 4, 5 & 6**) added new paths and enhanced existing ones. Promenades or "Malls," 12 feet in width, were designed along the north, west, and most of the south sides. The large existing diagonal path leading from the northwest corner to the high school (see the 1903 Plymouth County Atlas **Map 2 and Plan 1**) remained as did the paths coming from Alden Street and Hayden Avenue. The town had wanted the diagonal path cutting across the ball field in the southwest corner to be removed. The Olmsted Bros. plan removed this path and added a small short cut path above the playing field. A path along Whitman Avenue was planned to gently descend across the slope to the lower area. This layout reduced the amount of fill needed and made a graceful transition to the quieter eastern area of the park. This also afforded the opportunity to plant the embankment along Whitman Avenue with shrubs. Another path was planned to encircle the "woodland pond" and be well below the adjacent street levels. To accommodate for cross traffic, the 1900 plan laid out a diagonal path that was located at the top of the bank to the woodland pond. This path connected as well to the high school.

Recreation

When John C. Olmsted first visited the park site in 1900, he saw many opportunities to provide for recreation. Tennis and baseball had been going on at the site. Olmsted expanded on these activities by creating a wading pond 15 inches deep with a broad sand belt from the existing pond, areas for lawn games, a concert area, sand courts for small children, and a picnic grove for families. His vision for the park was to combine active and passive recreational opportunities that complimented and supported the community's needs. However, he alerted the town to incompatible uses. For example, he wrote to Mr. Trufant of Whitman on July 7, 1900: "We are of the opinion that the time will come when it will be found to be incongruous and unsatisfactory to have the ball field kept in the condition in which it will inevitably be, so long as large boys and full-grown men are allowed to use it for baseball, especially for match games. In our opinion, its use ought to be restricted before long to the small boys of the primary and grammar school ages. Such boys can have a great deal of amusement in playing baseball even if the conditions do not warrant giving them a full size match ball field. They can

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be made to play in different places at different times so as not to wear out the turf in streaks and patches. They do not throw or bat the ball nearly so hard and their playing therefore, will not be nearly so dangerous to little children and to visitors to the park generally. Without unwarrantable destruction of trees and other natural features, and without excessive cost for grading, it will be impracticable to provide in Whitman Park a larger and more suitable ball field for match games. The town ought eventually to provide a large, level field for base ball foot ball and the like elsewhere.”

In his final design notes dated 12/29/1900, Olmsted states:“...It must be recognized that there is not sufficient room in this park for base ball playing and that the character of its improvement and of the surrounding residences makes games of that sort objectionable.”

In 1901, the town voted to accept the Olmsted Brothers Plan for Whitman Park and appropriated funds annually for the care and maintenance of the park. Substantial amounts were allocated between 1904-1906 and in 1912, the Celebration Year.

The 1900 Olmsted Bros. plan was implemented relying on a fair amount of local labor. Hundreds of drainage pipes, stone retaining walls, and innumerable loads of fill were hauled to the site. Early postcards and photographs show embankments planted with a variety of shrubs and groundcovers, tree lined gravel paths, groves of trees, and the wading pond with its wide sand edging (Fig 11-14).

The town of Whitman never developed a town common, thus the park served both as their town common and town park. Hence, the park became the obvious location for memorials. In 1908, a twenty-five foot granite Civil War Monument was sited on one of the small hills in the park overlooking the central wading pond. That same year, the stone and wood bandstand was constructed where it stands today. In 1910, the park received a flag and flagpole, and the Horse Trough, which had stood in front of old Congregational Church on Washington Street, was converted to a drinking fountain and moved to the park. A gift of the Civic Department of the Whitman Women’s club, it served as a drinking fountain for about 50 years before being converted to its present use as a planter.

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1931 Olmsted Bros. Park Plan Improvements

In 1931, the town once again contacted the Olmsted Bros. for improvements to the park. The firm applied the same careful site analysis of existing conditions. They assessed and evaluated the history of use and maintenance. At this time, E.C. Whiting from the firm recorded existing conditions, especially of the lower eastern area where the series of pools and islands of trees had been implemented as part of the 1900 original design. In his site analysis notes, Whiting remarked, "Practically all the trees in the center of this area have been removed and some filling has been done over the floor of the valley and over the banks since the original survey was made...checking up on how the park was being used and making some notes about present conditions and about points where the old plan does not fit the present requirements. I think we might consider removing more trees and making the low eastern end of the park into a playground and removing as much as possible of other playground activities from other portions of the park, thus making it possible to keep the park proper in better looking shape."(May 9, 1931 Report of visit to Whitman Park by Whiting)

The initial drainage problems that John Olmsted had been concerned about and had tried to plan for in 1900 were not implemented. Thirty-one years later, Mr. Whiting concluded that the area was not draining properly. The town had the option of either lowering the existing drainage structures and re-doing the park subsurface drainage or filling the lower area. The firm recommended filling and re-grading the eastern part of the park and constructing a play field that was done and presently exists (**Fig. 8**).

The 1931 park plan revision eliminated the woodland pond and the island of trees in the pond. The pond weir was removed and a new drainage system was installed. This area then was filled and re-graded for a softball field and small children play area. The 1931 plan proposed to keep the plantings from the 1900 plan that were present but minimized the planting in the eastern area of the park because it was now being devoted to children's play (**Fig. 8**). Over time, all of the planting beds were removed. Some newer shrub plantings do exist around existing monuments and structures. In 1931, the firm suggested trees for the area where the 1900 shelter/bandstand had been proposed and in the old ball field area.

Though most of the 1900 plan had been implemented some problems had developed. An in-

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house memorandum from E.C. Whiting dated February 4, 1931, notes that several of the paths in the 1900 park design had been built as laid out, but had not been properly constructed or maintained over the last thirty-one years. In addition, new paths were needed to accommodate for the cross cutting to the new high school just north of the park. By 1931, the Civil War Monument (1908) had been installed and crosswalks had developed that threatened the integrity of the monument and the park's landscaping.

The Olmsted Brothers wrote regarding their May 23, 1931 design improvements to the park: "A new and fairly direct path is suggested to meet this situation [the issue of the cross traffic impact on the soldier's monument]. This path scheme assumes first the definite abandonment of the shelter building provided in the original plans, the rearrangement or entire relocation of the playground and ultimately the abandonment of the old ball field."

Cross traffic had developed between the junior high school on Whitman Avenue and Alden Street, thus, new paths around the wading pond were suggested. The corner of Whitman Avenue and Hayden Street was enlarged in recognition of it as being a main congregating area (**Fig. 8**).

In their remarks on the 1931 final park design regarding correction of paths, the Olmsted Bros. note: "The proposed walk across the present ball field need not be built until a satisfactory ball field can be provided elsewhere, but ultimately this southwest corner of the Park will better serve its real Park purposes if the ball field is eliminated and the area developed more effectively as a landscape unit and as a foreground for the Soldier's Monument."

Between 1900 and 1931, the park had become an important place for play for the surrounding neighborhood and the three nearby schools. Neither of the schools had playgrounds so the park was the only available space for children to play. In 1924, the northern area of the park had developed into a play area for small children. Two sets of swings, a shelter structure, a water fountain, an "ocean wave," and cement tennis courts existed in this area by 1931.

In order to meet the increasing demands for more recreation space, the Olmsted Bros. proposed creating a "play lawn for small children" be located in the southeast corner of the park and that a "playfield" (graded for softball use) be located in the northeast corner of the park where the second pond was located. In order to achieve this, the pond had to be drained and the treed islands removed. Two tennis courts were also proposed between the small children play area and Maple Avenue, however; those were never constructed.

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New structures, monuments and the increased pressure to provide for more active play space was the impetus for the 1931 design which changed, in part, the initial design intent of the 1900 Olmsted design. However, these changes reflected the evolution of early 20th century neighborhood parks. The 1931 design reorganized and relocated the children's play area to the eastern part of the park. In doing so, the woodland pond and the "more quiet and more natural style" of this area as planned in the 1900 design was eliminated (**Fig. 8**).

In the 1931 Olmsted Bros. design, the firm assumed that the existing bandstand added to the park in 1908 and located in its present place near Hayden Avenue would be permanent (**Photo 9 & Fig. 11**). With this, the Olmsted Bros. suggested that additional planting in the open field to the southeast (the ball field area) be accomplished to ultimately form a "concert grove" (**Fig. 8**). By filling in the eastern area and regrading it for a ball field as well as consolidating the entire active play areas to eastern part of the park, the firm believed that the western area of the park would more appropriately be developed for more passive recreation and enjoyment. The "concert grove" did not develop because the ball field stayed in its present location.

The Significance of Whitman Park as an Olmsted Brothers Neighborhood Park

Whitman Park was designed both for its aesthetic qualities and for the recreational needs of the community. Frederick Law Olmsted developed principles of landscape design that became the foundation of his work and the work of his associates. These principles, as well, provided guidance and direction for the emerging professional field of landscape architecture. Charles E. Beveridge, editor, of the Frederick Law Olmsted papers at the Library of Congress, summarized these principles of design, terming them "the Seven Ss":

Scenery: Design of "passages of scenery" even in the smallest spaces and in areas intended for active use. Creation of designs that give an enhanced sense of space: indefinite boundaries, constant opening up of new views. Avoidance of hard-edge or specimen planting, creating instead designs that have either "considerable complexity of light and shadow near the eye" or "obscurity of detail further away."

Suitability: Creation of designs that are in keeping with the natural scenery and topography of the site: respect for, and full utilization of, the "genius of the place."

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Style: Designing in specific styles, each for a particular effect. Primarily in the "Pastoral" style (open greensward with small bodies of water and scattered trees and groves) for a soothing, restorative atmosphere, or in the "Picturesque" style (profuse planting, especially with shrubs, creepers and ground cover, on steep and broken terrain) for a sense of the richness and bounteousness of nature, with chiaroscuro effects of light and shade that produce a sense of mystery.

Subordination: Subordination of all elements, all features and objects, to the overall design and the effect intended for it to achieve. The "Art to conceal Art."

Separation: Separation of areas designed in different styles, so that "incongruous mixture of styles" will not dilute the intended effect of each; separation of ways, in order to insure safety of use and reduce distractions for those using the space; separation of conflicting or incompatible uses.

Sanitation: Provision for adequate drainage and other engineering considerations, not simply arranging of surface features. Planning of designs so that they promote both the physical and the mental health of users.

Service: Planning of designs so that they will serve a "purpose of direct utility or service;" that is, will meet fundamental social and psychological needs: "so long as considerations of utility are neglected or overridden by considerations of ornament, there will be no true Art."

John C. Olmsted's 1900 design for Whitman Park applied both the Picturesque and Pastoral styles. He planted slopes with a profusion of shrubs and ground covers that effectively separated areas of use conflict and provided a richness of nature. He planted trees both in groves and separately and kept open grassy areas for play that enhanced the sense of space and opened up views. Olmsted worked with the existing topography and the pond to bring out "genius of the place." The design was predicated on the belief that the band shell/shelter was to be built. As a result, the views to and from the band shell and the pond were left open.

When the firm revised the design in 1931, the town had already constructed a small bandstand and placed it along the western edge. To maintain the integrity of the wading pond area, the firm suggested adding more plantings around the pond. This was done, later removed, and is about to be reinstalled along the southern slope of the pond using the original Olmsted plant list (**Fig. 6**).

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Both the 1900 and 1931 Olmsted Brothers designs upheld all seven principles of design as outlined above and described in detail in the Description Section. The two park designs both responded to the town's needs and expectations of what the park should offer at the time they were designed. They both also reflect the best in landscape architectural design responses to existing conditions, new challenges and creative thinking.

Significance of Whitman Park as a Late Nineteenth to Early Twentieth Century Town Park within the Context of the Municipal Park and Playground Movement

The Whitman Park is significant as a late-19th to early-20th century town park. It is representative of the Park and Playground Movement that began in the late 1800s along the east coast and spread rapidly across the United States.

The preferred naturalistic landscape design of emerging municipal parks was influenced by the Rural Cemetery Movement, specifically Mount Auburn in the early 1800s. Often sited outside city limits, rural cemeteries were romantic pastoral places of the Picturesque style that were visited by hundreds of city dwellers.

By the 1850s urban life had become intolerable in large growing cities, especially New York City. Early town planning addressed street layout that included small town parks but the latter were largely ignored. The opening of Central Park (1862) in New York City, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in collaboration with Calvert Vaux in 1858, gave the municipal Park Movement a jump-start.

The Park Movement remained very active across the country between the years of 1890 and 1920. During this period, Olmsted and his firm continued to apply the beauty of naturalistic landscape design to their parks regardless of size. The effect of bringing beauty and nature into the center of growing urban centers and developing neighborhoods offered a green oasis that was immediately accessible for rest, relaxation, recreation and socialization.

As the Park Movement grew, wealthy or prominent citizens, such as Augustus Whitman, wishing to enhance the town and leave a legacy, gave land, statues, benches, fountains and playgrounds. Developers began to realize the added value parks gave to real estate. Thus, new suburbs were laid out to include small neighborhood walk-to parks.

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The interest and value in developing municipal parks also influenced the Playground Movement, which had its start at about the same time (1890-1950). Town parks were often the only place available for children's play. It wasn't until the 1940s when schools provided playgrounds for children that day to day play activities began to reduce the pressure on municipal parks.

The Park Movement began addressing the need to provide places in parks where children could play safely. Neighborhood park designs began to include areas for small child play such as was done in the Whitman Park. John C. Olmsted in his proposed bandstand/shelter included small sheltered sand courts, the shallow pond for sailing toy boats, and open grassy areas for casual play. John, in particular, responded to these needs seriously. He understood the need for mothers with small children who were home all day to be able to be outside, and socialize with friends in an environment that would encourage safe healthy play for their children. Examples of his work and concern for this aspect can be seen in his designs for the small parks in Chicago's south end, Baltimore, Maryland, Louisville, Kentucky and closer to home; Ruggles Park improvement, Fall River, Crompton Park in Worcester, and Pulaski Park in Holyoke to name a few.

In 1900 when the Olmsted Bros. designed Whitman Park, the Corthell School, and the High School faced the park. The Hastings School was just a block away on Alden Street. Thus, Whitman Park was heavily used for children's play from the beginning. As noted, in 1924, Albert Brigham one of the Whitman Park Commissioners gave playground equipment for the park. In 1927, the first supervisor for summer playground activities was appointed.

During the 1930s, organized and structured play had become an established part of the Playground Movement across the country. To accommodate for the growing interest in active recreation, many parks added or included in their initial designs running tracks, gymnasiums, ball fields, and swimming pools. When the Olmsted Brothers were asked to return and revise the 1900 park plan in 1931, they found that active recreational activities had increased in the park. The original 1900 design had discouraged older children and adult baseball because of the limited space. Thus, much of the early design was dedicated to developing a town park in the Picturesque style that was popular at the time while incorporating opportunities for passive and limited active recreation. This is what the town requested and was typical of a successful manufacturing town in 1900.

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In 1931, the Olmsted Brothers were faced with a challenge to preserve the integrity of the initial design while meeting the current needs of the town. These changes and their impacts were discussed in detail in section 7.

During the years that followed World War II, neglect and intrusion of incompatible uses beset many of the Olmsted Brothers designed parks and public spaces. However, Whitman Park survived many of these changes. The 1938 hurricane destroyed many of the early trees but they were replaced with similar species in similar locations. Several objects have been placed in the park without design consideration, however, they are few and unobtrusive enough not to impact the overall feeling and design intent established by the Olmsted Bros. In fact, it may be that the absence of aggressive unguided contemporary maintenance and management techniques have allowed the original character defining elements to sustain themselves. The overall period of significance 1880-1951 is very readable. The park has retained integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Lastly, the park reflects and is representative of the Park and Playground Movement as important events in American history.

Archeological Significance

Since patterns of ancient Native American settlement in Whitman are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Archaeological survey and testing may locate evidence that Native American cultural materials reported at the Colebrook Cemetery Site (19-PL-463) extend into the park locale. Archaeological evidence at this site and other sites in the area may contain cultural material and evidence that documents site temporal periods, functions, variability, and settlement role within the interior portion of the Taunton River drainage. Ancient Native American sites in this area may contain information that documents a seasonal or functional role with sites along lower portions of the Taunton River drainage to the south and southwest. Information may also be present at sites in the nominated area that documents an interior adaptation of sites along the southeastern New England coastal plain. Ancient Native American sites in the Abington and Island Park locale may also contain important information relating to lithic technology, procurement and trade.

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute information about 19th century landuse patterns on the Whitman Estate and pastoral activities during that period. The park area was used as the back pasture of the estate; however, few archaeological remains likely survive

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associated with those activities. Stratigraphic analysis of test pit profiles and soil borings may contribute information relating to landscape changes resulting from park development; however, additional documentary and cartographic research combined with development of a specific research design would be needed to identify meaningful landscape issues to address.

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Klaus, Susan L. "Efficiency, Economy, Beauty the City Planning Reports of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. 1905-1915" in: APA Journal. Autumn 1991. pp 456-459.

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Magnarelli, Elsbeth T. and Betsy Fiedberg. National Register Application- Charlestown Heights. 1997

Mische, Emanuel Tillman. "In Memoriam" in: Parks and Recreation. April 1920. pp. 52-53.

Murphy, Kevin D. A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine Ernest W. Bowditch 1850-1918. Vol.V Number 3. 1988. Maine Historic Preservation Commission Augusta, Maine.

Olmsted, Frederick Law, Jr. "Housing and Town Planning. The Annals 51(101914). pp 172-181

Whiting, E.C., and W. L. Phillips. "Frederick Law Olmsted – 1870-1957" in : Landscape Architecture. Vol. 48 Number 3 pp. 145-157. April 1958. American Society of Landscape Architects Boston, MA.

Whitman Historical Commission. Historic Whitman Massachusetts. Plymouth County Tercentenary Edition. Harry B. Harding & Son Inc. Whitman, Mass. 1985

Whitman Historical Commission. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Harding & Son, Inc. 1975

Web sites

History link website. www.historylink.org

National Parks Government website. www.nps.gov/fia/background.htm

(continued)

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

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

**Whitman Park
Whitman (Plymouth), MA**

Section number 9

Page 3

Other

Charles Beveridge and Arleyn Levee, phone conversation

Massachusetts Historical Commission MACRIS Files

Massachusetts Historical Commission Vertical Files

United State Department of Interior
National Park Service
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site "Fairsted" Archives
99 Warren Street, Brookline, MA

Library of Congress, Reel #16. Washington, DC

Whitman Department of Public Works Street files

Whitman Park Department meeting notes 1881-1971 (Whitman Town Hall, Whitman Historical Commission vertical files)

(end)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The Whitman Park parcel is bounded on the north by Park Avenue, on the east by Maple Avenue, on the south by Whitman Avenue and on the west by Hayden Avenue. The parcel is recorded on Plan #4 – Block #46 – Lot #1 in the Whitman Town Assessor's office. The parcel contains 621,649 square feet .

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Whitman Park are clearly delineated by the Avenues that surround it, its ownership as a municipally owned park and its use as a town park. The boundaries as describe are the historical and present boundaries.

(end)

WHITMAN PARK
Name of Property

PLYMOUTH, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 14.3 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	340260	4660600	3. 19	341880	4660500
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2. 19	341900	4660740	4. 19	340220	4660420
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing

 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan S. Rockwell, Preservation Consultant with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January 2004

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone 617 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

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 WHITMAN

street & number W. SOUTH AVENUE telephone (781) 447-7601

city or town WHITMAN state MA zip code 02382

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

**Whitman Park
Whitman (Plymouth), MA**

Section number Page

Additional Documentation – Photographs

Photographer – Joan S. Rockwell

Date - May 2001

Location of original negatives – 16 Call Road, Colrain, Massachusetts 01340

Photograph number

Description of view

(Please use the marked up Figure 3 of the current Assessor's Map for a graphic location of the photographs)

- #1 Looking north towards Park Ave. from the interior of the park
- #2 Looking northwest toward Hayden and Park Ave.
- #3 Looking southwest over wading pond. Notice bandstand (center-right), Little League field (center-left) Photo similar to early 1900s photo in Fig. 18
- #4 Looking south towards Whitman Avenue
- #5 Looking west towards small interior hills Civil War Statue barely visible at left
- #6 Atop small interior hill (original plantings.) looking west.
- #7 Looking northeast towards ballfield (1933) former "woodland pond" area, Colebrook Cemetery (distant-center)
- #8 Looking southeast toward Civil War Memorial. Similar early 1900s photo (Fig. 12)
- #9 Looking north toward 1908 Bandstand, wading pond distant lower right
- #10 Children's marble water fountain (1924) Brigham house behind
- #11 Looking northeast from corner of Whitman and Hayden over Little League field towards Civil War Monument
- #12 Looking north down Hayden Ave.
- #13 Looking north over ballfield, wading pond center-rear
- #14 Close up of the children's water fountain plaque (south side)
- #15 Looking east toward new play structure Old Corthell School in rear, similar photo to early 1900s (Fig. 12 & 18)
- #16 Looking east towards Hayden Ave. Original gravel path and some original plantings

(end)

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

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

**Whitman Park
Whitman (Plymouth), MA**

Section number __ Page __

Additional Documentation – Maps, Plans, copies of postcards

- Fig. 1** Village of South Abington. 1879. Historic Whitman Massachusetts. pp 56-57.
- Fig. 2** Atlas of Plymouth Country. 1903
- Fig. 3** Whitman Assessor's Map. Plan #4 Block #46 Lot #1. Whitman, MA. 2001
- Fig. 4** Survey of Whitman Park; June 12, 1900. Ernest W. Bowditch, Landscape Gardener (Courtesy: National Park Service Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)
- Fig. 5** Whitman Park Whitman Mass. Grading Plan; November 22, 1900. Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. (Courtesy: National Park Service Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)
- Fig. 6** Whitman Park Whitman Mass. Planting Plan; December 11, 1900. Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. . (Courtesy: National Park Service Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)
- Fig. 7** Copy of Whitman Soldiers Monument; 1908. Geo. O. Custer Camp-11-SopV
- Fig. 8** Whitman Park Whitman Mass. Revised Planting Plan; July 1931. Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass. (Courtesy: National Park Service Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)
- Fig. 9** Whitman Park South Abington, Mass.; 1881. Ernest W. Bowditch, Landscape Gardener, 60 Devonshire Street, Boston Mass.
- Fig. 10** Bird's Eye View of the Town of South Abington; 1880s. Plymouth Co. Mass
- Fig. 11** Copy of colored postcards of Whitman Park wading pond (looking south and Bandstand looking northwest towards Hayden Avenue) after 1908. Dyer Library, Abington, MA.

(continued)

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

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

**Whitman Park
Whitman (Plymouth), MA**

Section number __ **Page** __

Fig. 12 Copy of colored postcards of Whitman Park southeast corner looking east Cortwell School in background & planted embankments., Civil War Monument looking east First school flagpole after 1908. Dyer Library, Abington, MA

Fig 13 Copy of colored postcards of Whitman Park looking north over wading pond and Tree lined path, after 1908. Dyer Library, Abington, MA

Fig. 14 Whitman Park after 1908. Dyer Library, Abington, MA

Fig. 15 Abington 1830. James Bates, Surveyor. Dyer Library, Abington, MA

Fig. 16 Abington 1848. E. Whiting, Surveyor. Dyer Library, Abington, MA

Fig. 17 Whitman Park prior to Olmsted 1900 plan. Copy of photo Historic Whitman Massachusetts. page 5.

Fig.18 Copy of colored postcards showing wading pond with sand edges looking southwest and southeast corner of Whitman Park. Dyer Library and Whitman Town Hall early 1900s

Fig.19 Copy of panoramic postcards unidentified intersection looking into the Whitman Park And looking north toward Park Avenue prior to 1908

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Whitman Park
Whitman (Plymouth), MA**

Section number data sheet Page

5. CLASSIFICATION

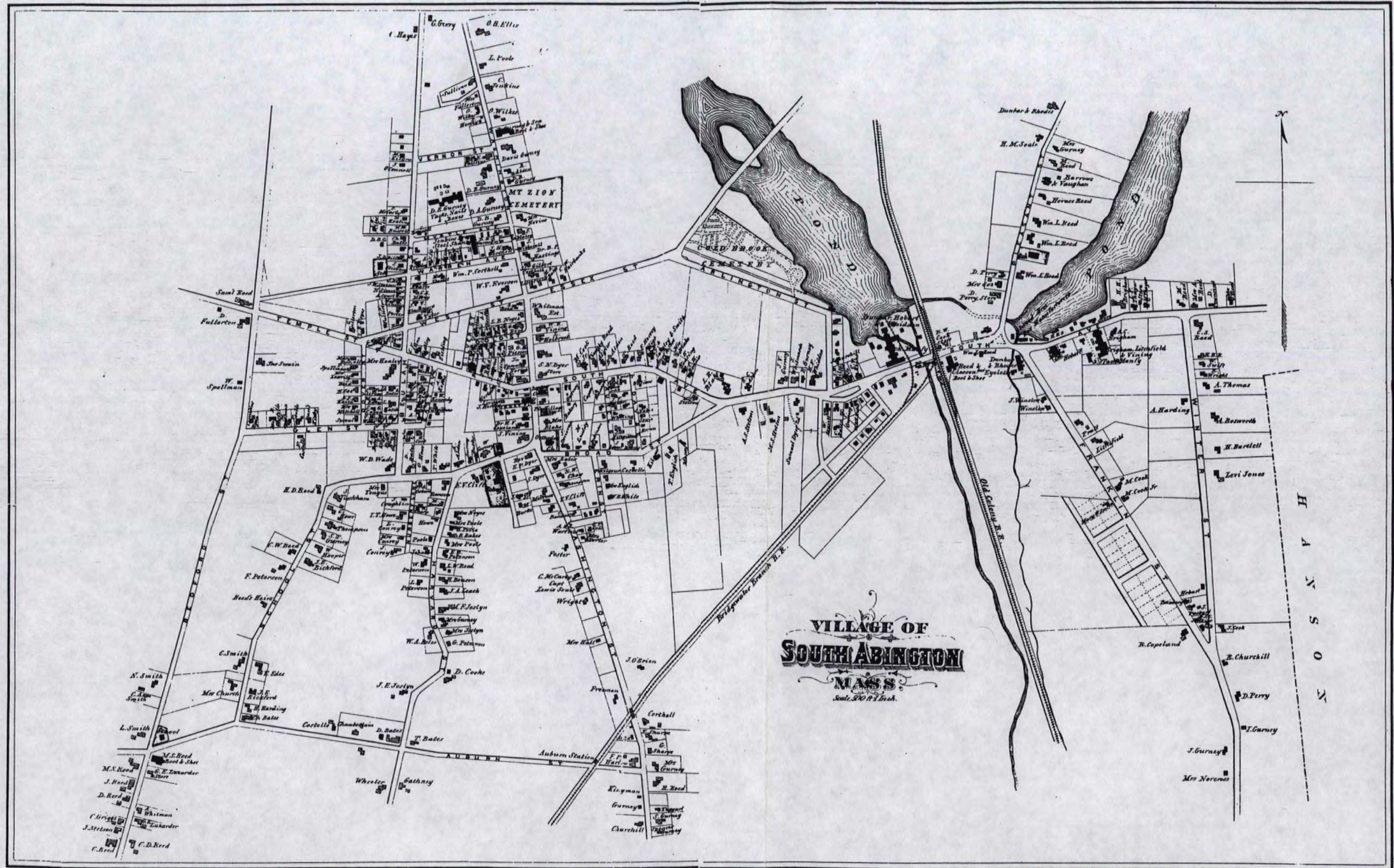
DATA SHEET (contributing and noncontributing resources within Whitman Park)

See sketch map for locations

Resource					
Letter	Name	Material	Type	Date	Status
A	Civil War Monument	granite/bronze	object	1908	C
B	Hastings School Bell	cast iron	object	1890s	C
C	Brigham Drinking Fountain	marble/bronze	object	1924	C
D	Horse Trough	granite/stone	object	early 1800s/1910	C
E	Wading Pond	natural	structure	before 1890	C
F	Bandstand	stone & wood	structure	1908	C
1	Swimming Pool	concrete	structure	1957	NC
2	Play Structure	wood	structure	1980s	NC
3	Little League Ball Field	natural	structure	1963	NC
G	Ball Field (lower)	natural	structure	1931	C
H	Basketball Court	concrete	structure	early 1900s	C
I	Circulation Paths	gravel	structure	1900s	C
	Whitman Park		site	1880	C

1879 Map

of South Abington FIGURE I



PLAN #4
BLOCK #46
LOT #1

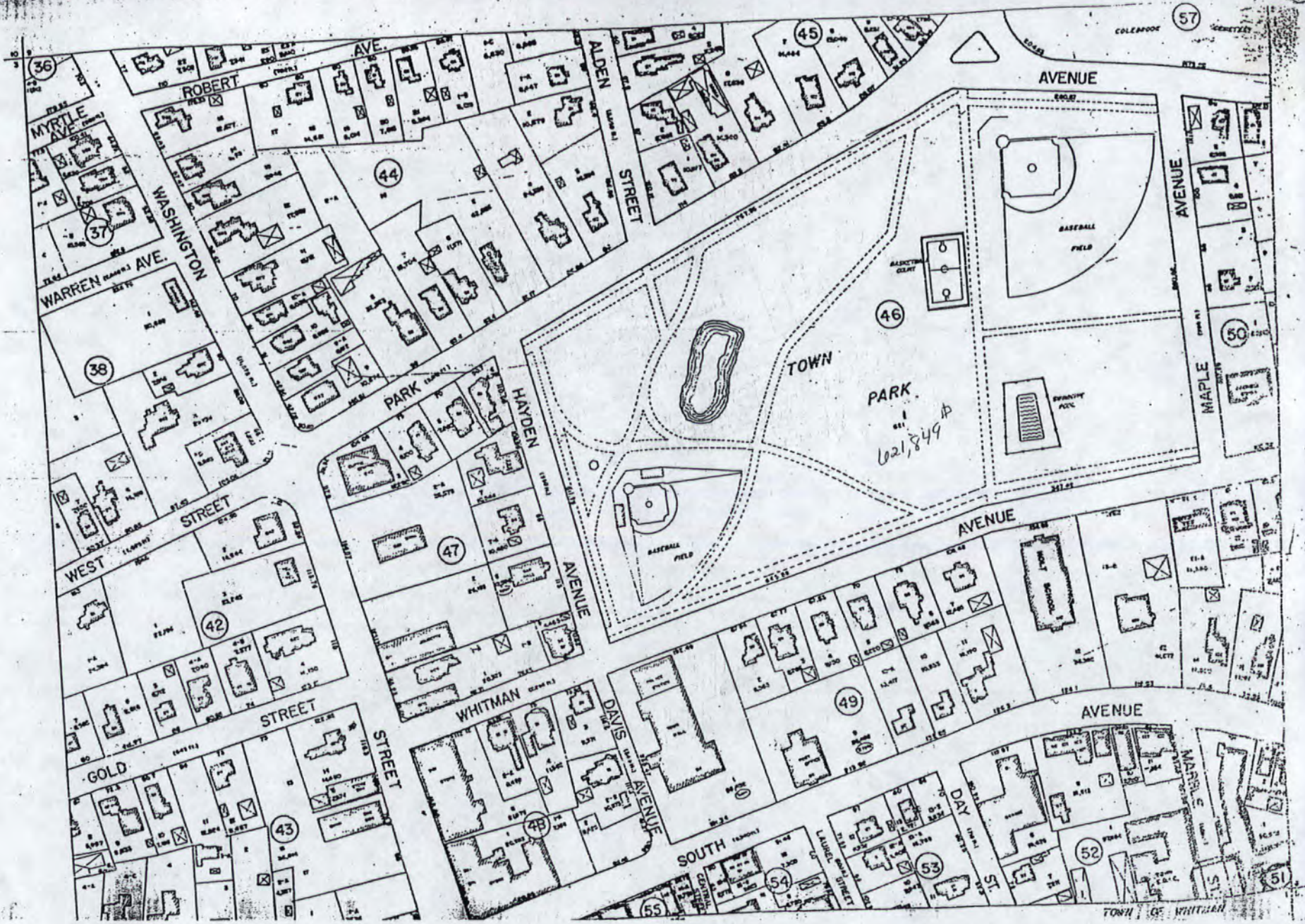
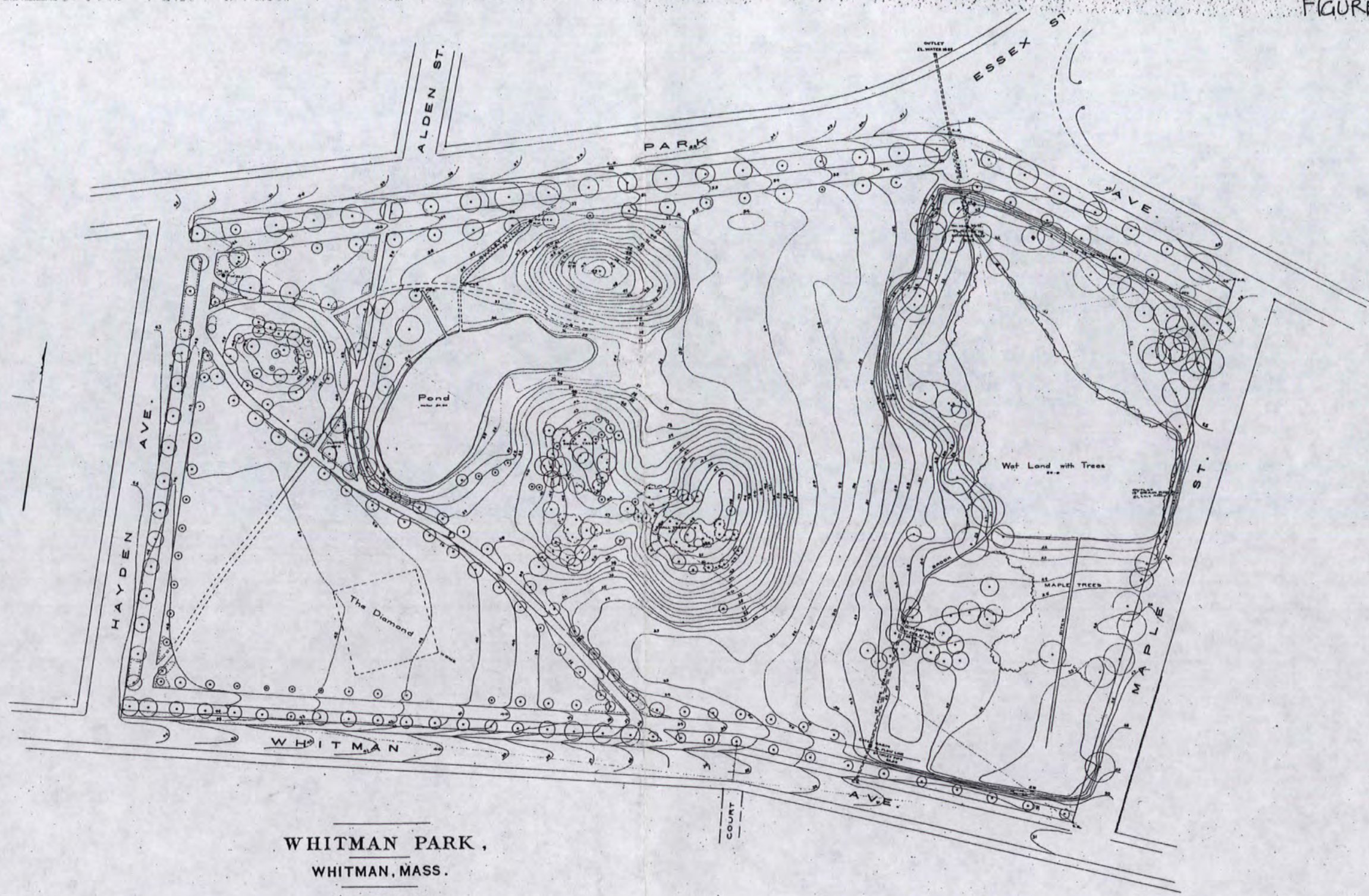


Figure 3 Whitman's Assessor's Map (2001) Plan #4-Block #46-Lot #1

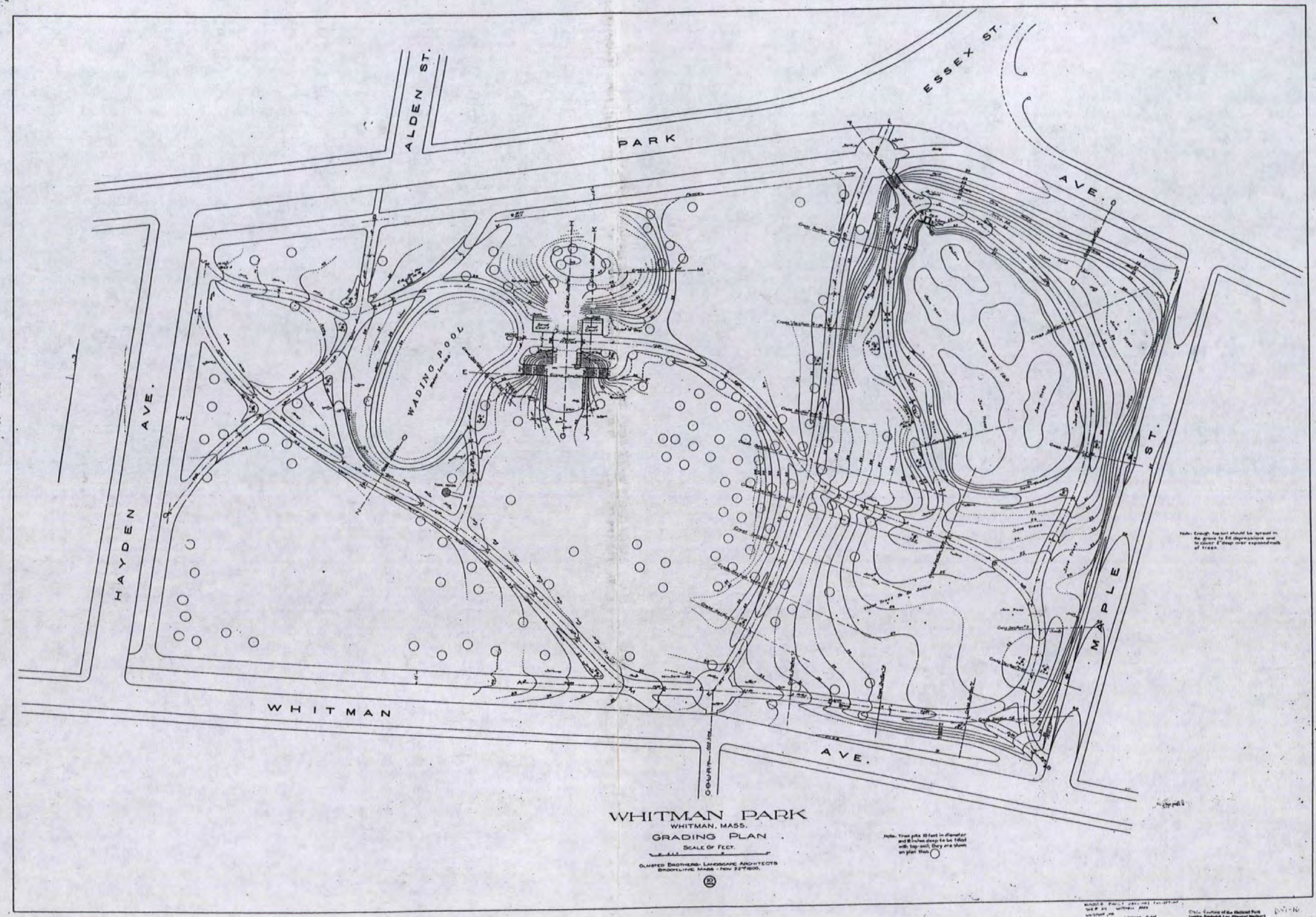


WHITMAN PARK,
WHITMAN, MASS.

SCALE 30 FT = 1 IN.
 ERNEST H. BORDTCH, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT,
 BOSTON, MASS. JUNE 18, 1906.
 2057 - 2

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
 ERNEST H. BORDTCH
 BOSTON, MASS.

Credit: Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted Park, Boston, MA
 Date: 1906
 Scale: 30 ft = 1 in.
 Title: Whitman Park



WHITMAN PARK
 WHITMAN, MASS.
 GRADING PLAN
 SCALE OF FEET
 OLNEY BROTHERS LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 BROOKLINE, MASS. - NOV 22ND 1930

Note: These pits 24 feet in diameter and 8 inches deep to be filled with top soil; they are shown on plan here.

Note: Enough top soil should be spread in the grass to fill depressions and to cover a deep over exposed roots of trees.

WHITMAN PARK - GRADING PLAN
 DATE: 11-22-30
 DRAWN BY: [illegible]
 CHECKED BY: [illegible]
 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Figure 7 Whitman Soldiers Monument, 1908



WHITMAN SOLDIERS MONUMENT

FIGURE B

- PLANTING LIST**
- 1 Quercus rubra 10'
 - 2 Quercus rubra 10'
 - 3 Quercus rubra 10'
 - 4 Quercus rubra 10'
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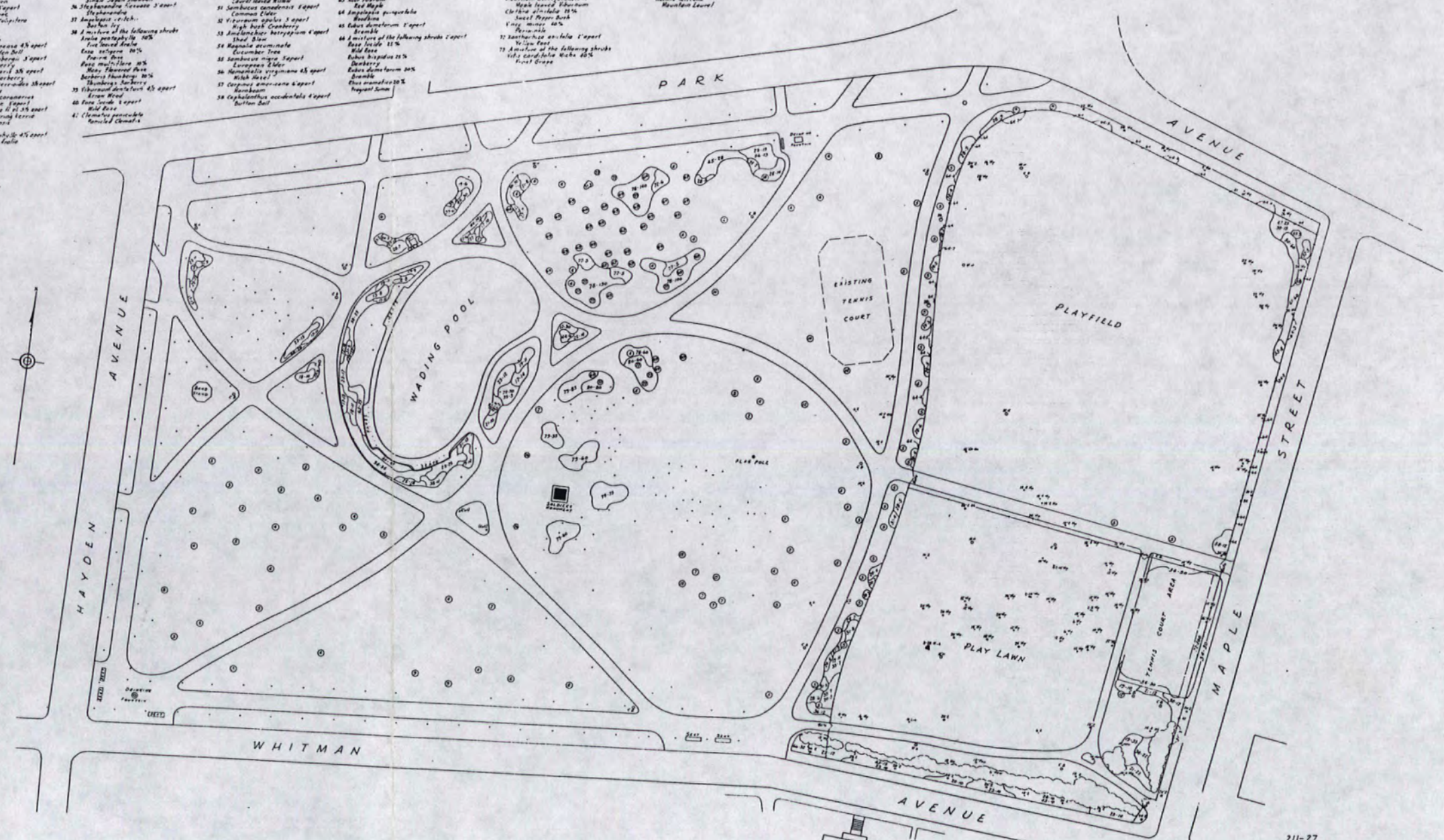
- 121 Quercus rubra 10'
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- 160 Quercus rubra 10'

PLANTING NOTE
 Plants to be used are indicated by two numbers: thus 10-1
 The first refers to the List and indicates the KIND, the
 second indicates the QUANTITY where the second number
 is omitted one plant is to be used



WHITMAN PARK
 WHITMAN - MASS.
 REVISED PLANTING PLAN
 SCALE 30'-1"
 DRAWN BY: [Name]
 CHECKED BY: [Name]
 JULY 1921
 FILE NO. 211 PLAN No. 27

211-27
 Drawn by [Name]
 Checked by [Name]

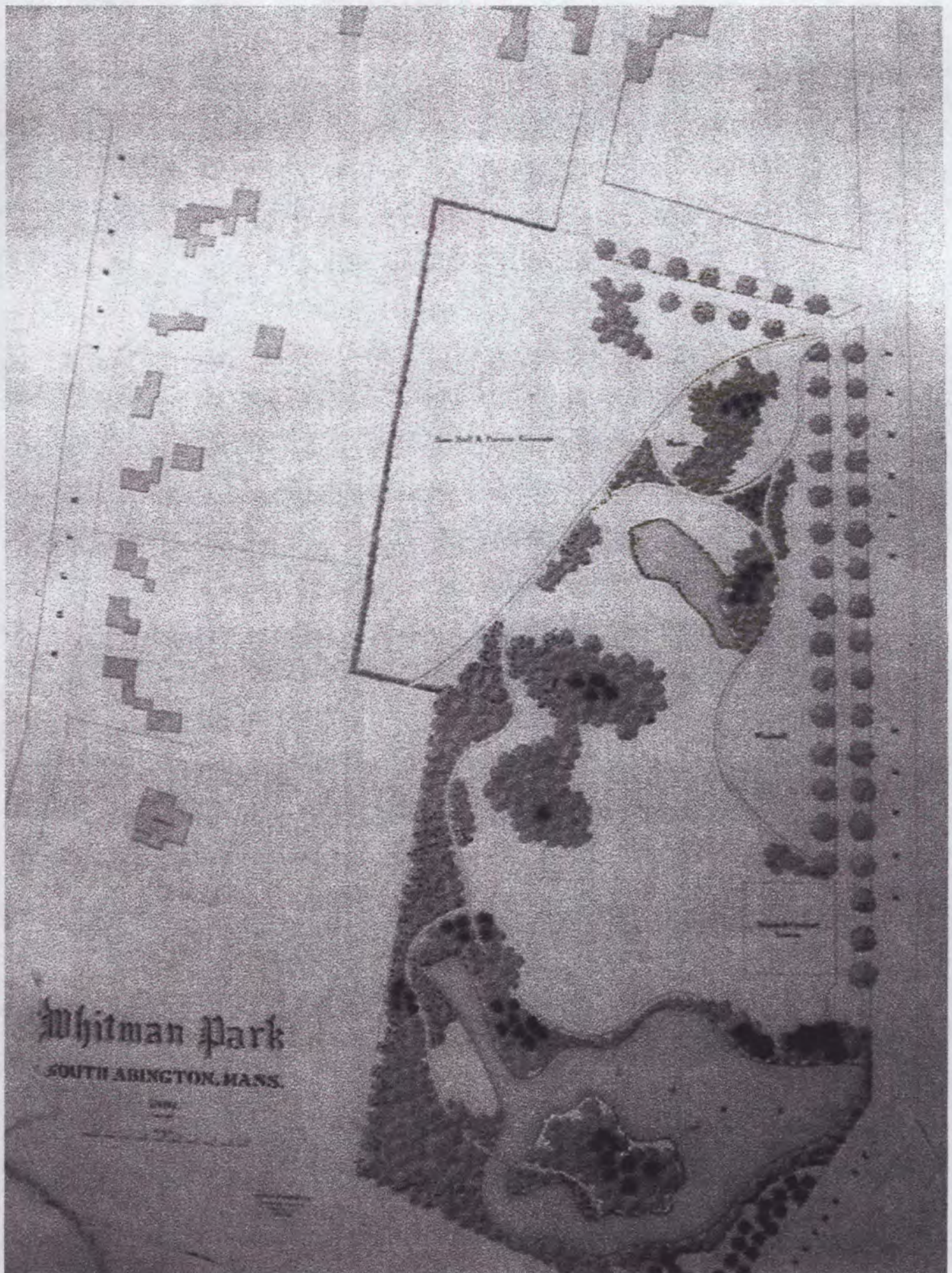
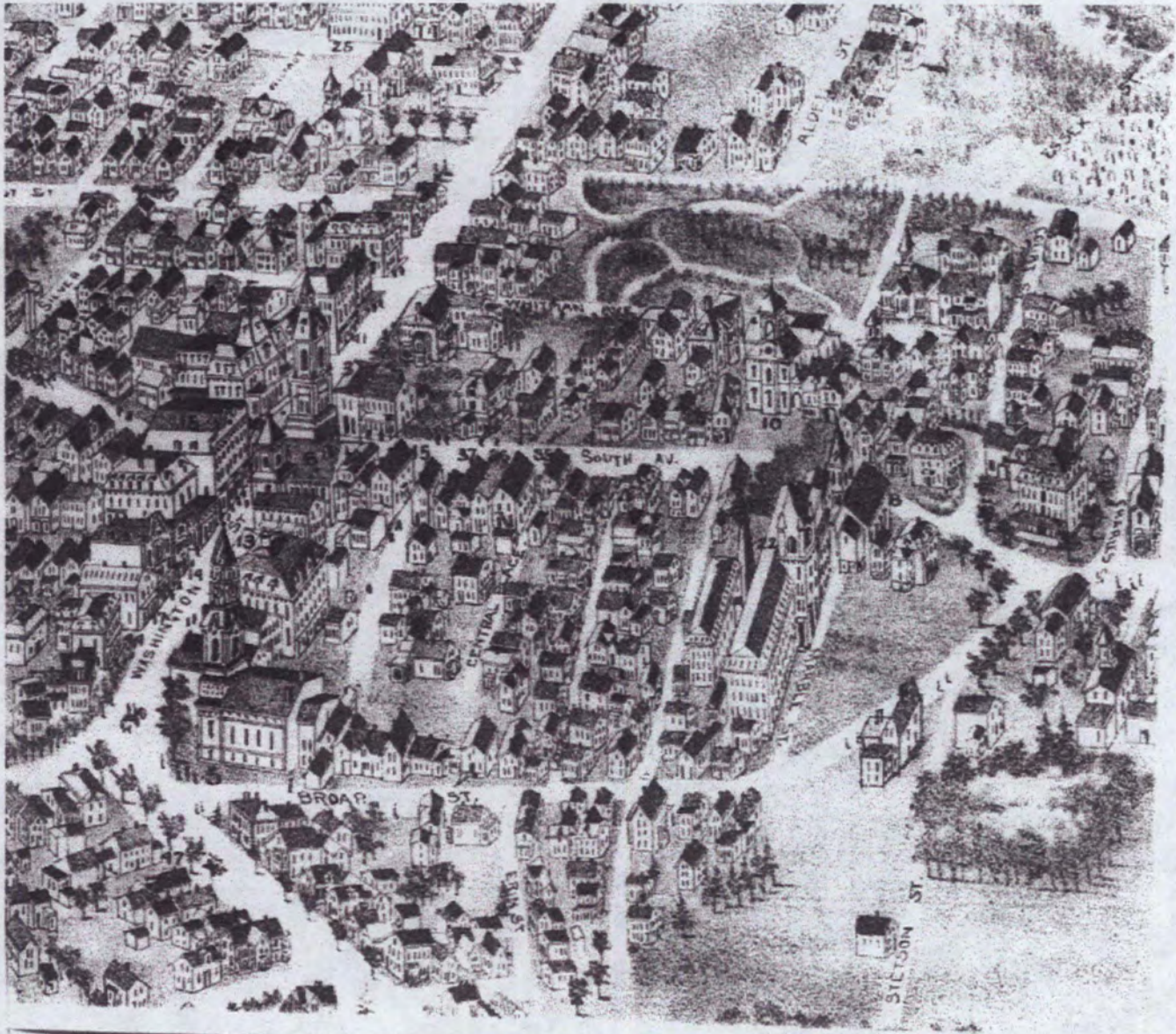


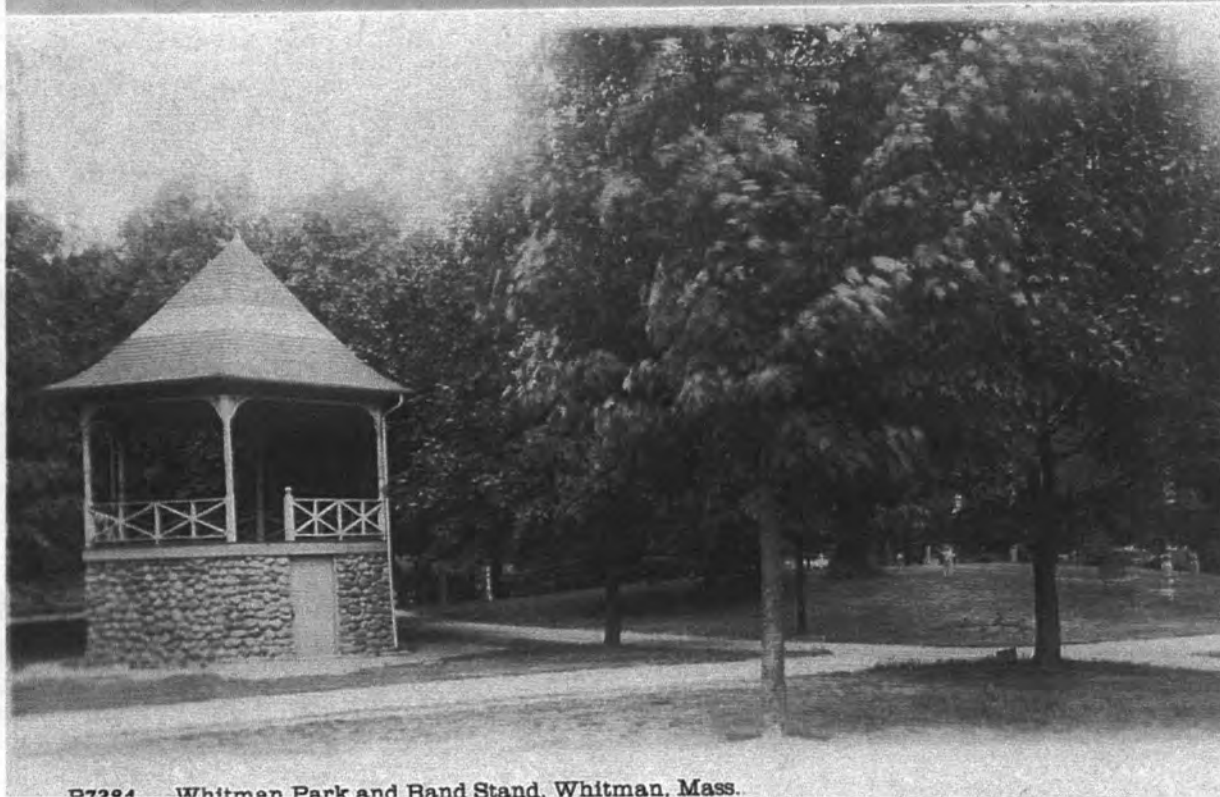
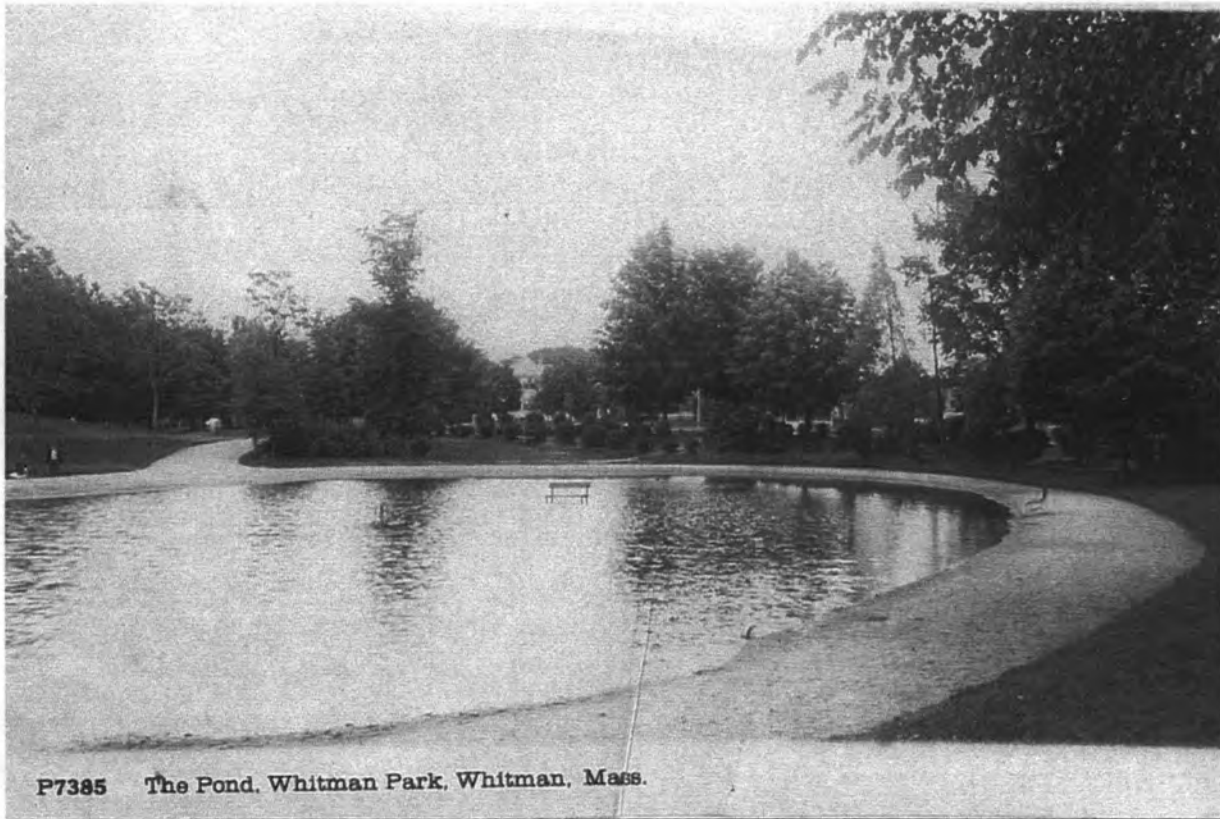
Figure 9 Whitman Park South Abington, Mass. Ernest W. Bowditch. 1881

*A Handdrawn Map of Whitman Park
Drawn by Ernest W. Bowditch in 1881*



Bird's Eye View Map of Whitman 1880

Figure 10 Bird's Eye View of South Abington, 1880



Postcards from pre-40's Whitman Park

Figure 11 Whitman Park wading pond looking south and bandstand after 1908



WHITMAN PARK, EAST ENTRANCE, WHITMAN MASS



Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, Whitman Park, Whitman, Mass.

214763

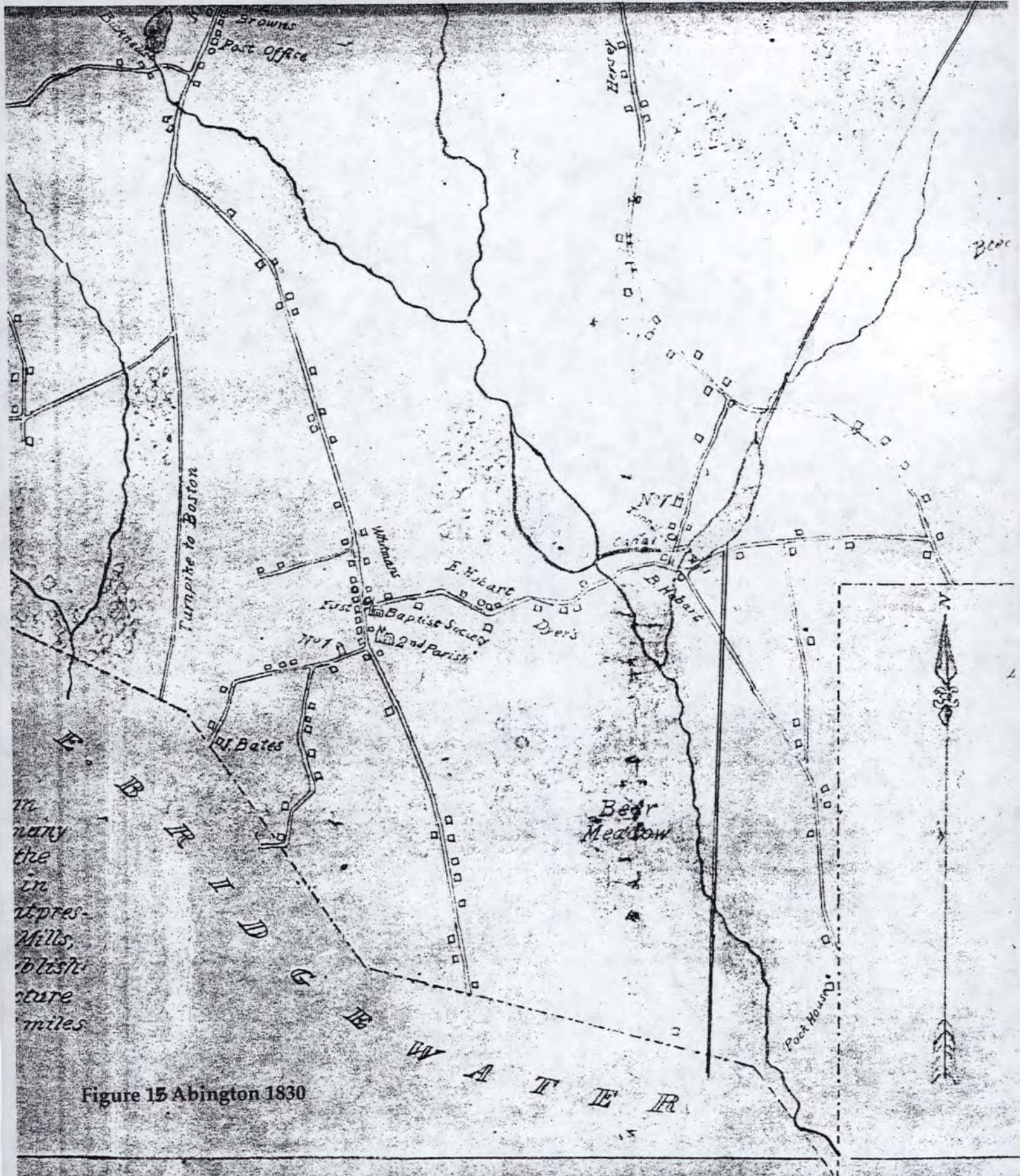
Postcards from pre=40's Whitman Park
Figure 12 Whitman Park SE corner looking east and Civil War Mounument



Figure 13 Whitman Park looking north over wading pond and a typical tree lined gravel path, after 1908



Figure 14 Whitman Park after 1908



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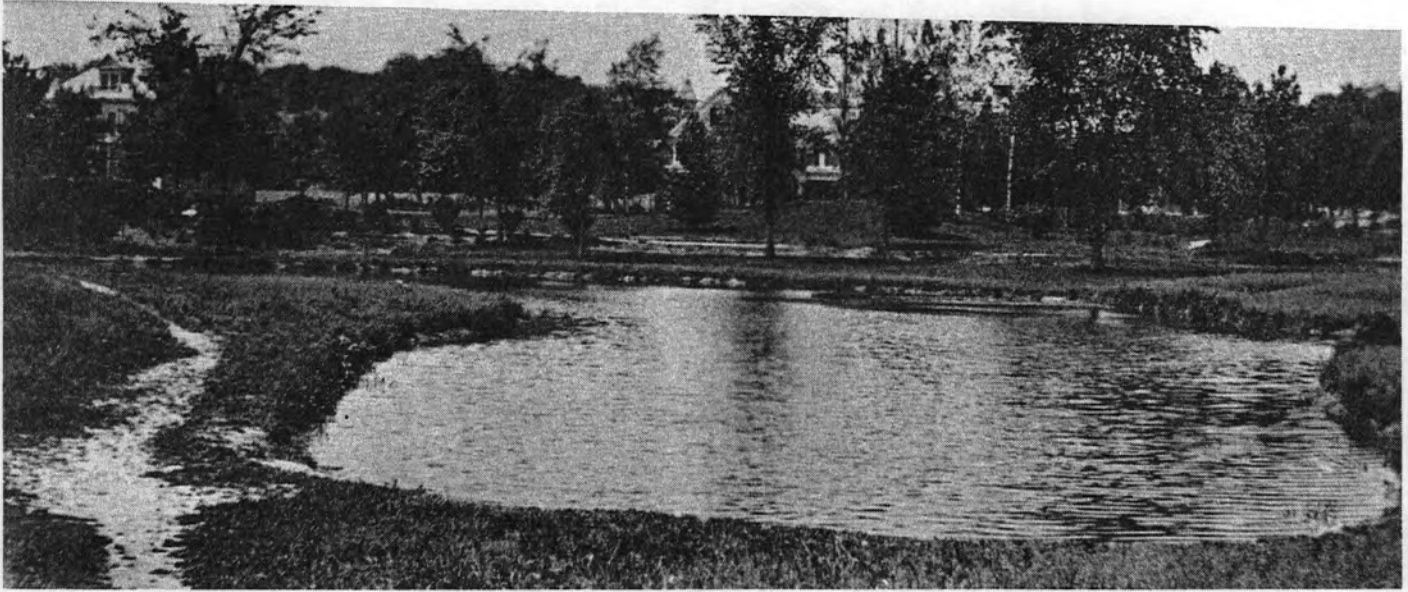
Figure 15 Abington 1830

W A T E R



Figure 16 Abington 1848

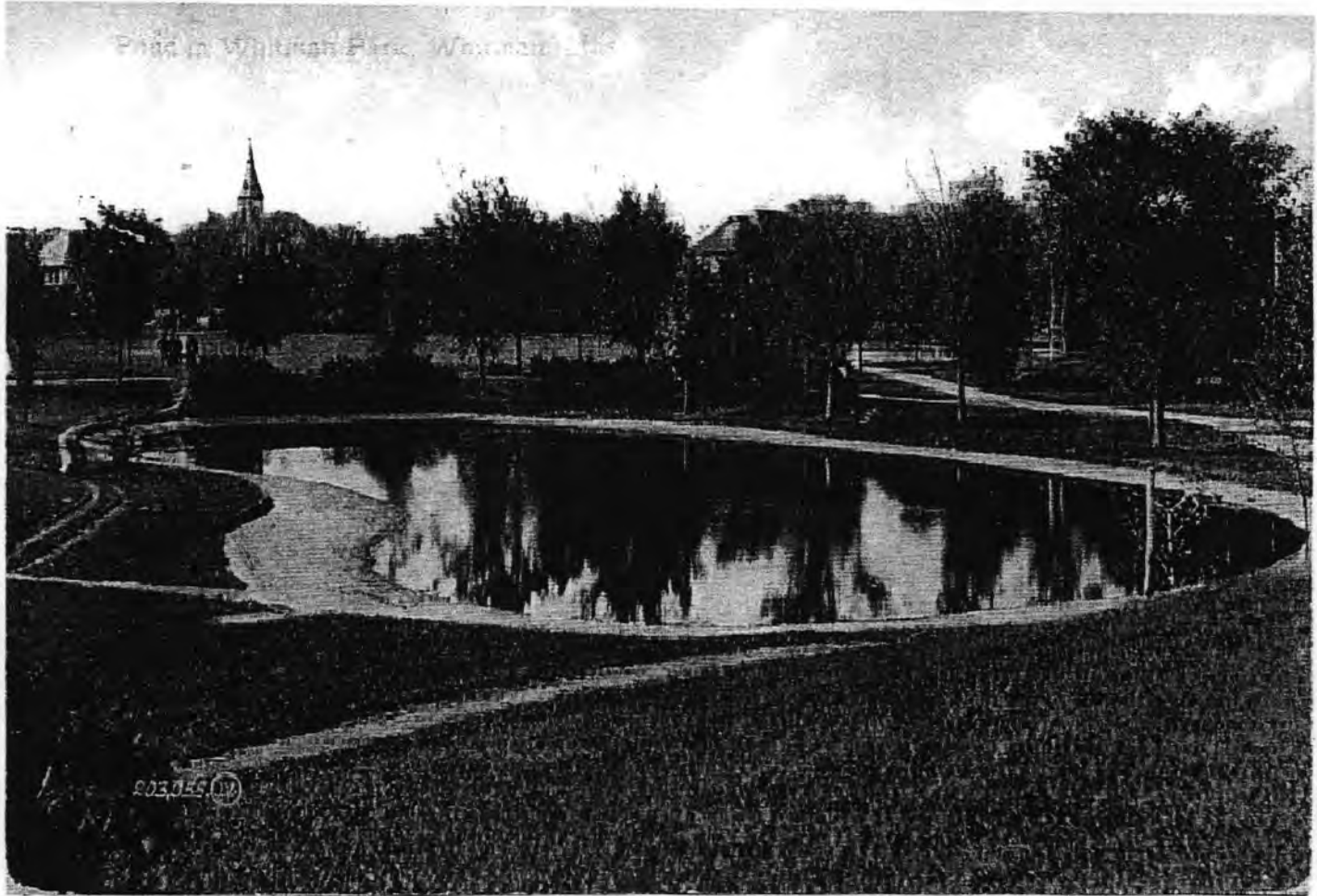
of the



The original Park Pond in 1900, part of Cold Brook, which ran from southwest of Whitman Center to the Hobart Meadow at the Damm Hole, so called.

Figure 17 Whitman Park wading pond prior to 1900

Pond in Whitman Park, Whitman Mass.



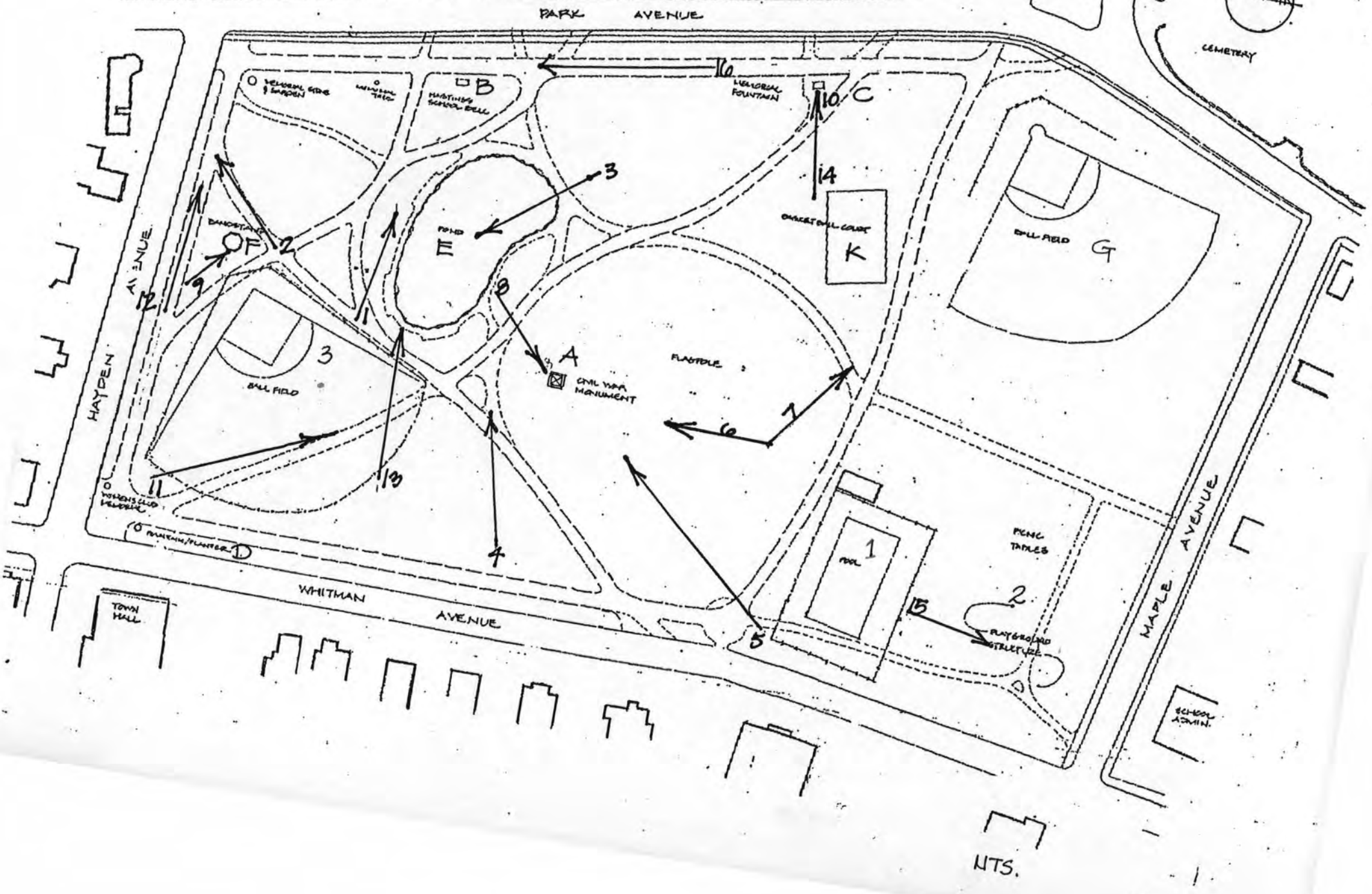
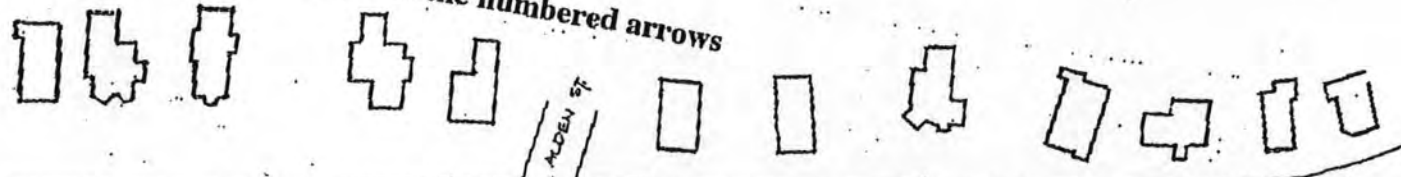
WHITMAN PARK EAST ENTRANCE. WHITMAN MASS

Figure 18 postcards showing wading pond and SE corner of Whitman Park

Figure 19 Panoramic views of Whitman Park before 1908



Photographs correspond to the numbered arrows



N.T.S.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Whitman Park

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Plymouth

DATE RECEIVED: 2/04/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/17/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/19/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: 3/17/04

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000187

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 3/18/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Entered in the
National Register**

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.



LOOKING NORTH TOW. PARK AVE.
FROM INTERIOR OF PARK.

Whitman Park
Whitman, Ma

1



16/6A

LOOKING NW TOWARD HAYDEN, PARK AVE.

Whitman Pl.
Whitman Pl.

#2



18

LOOKING SW OVER WADING POND.

BANDSTAND (RIGHT-CENTER)

LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD (LEFT-CENTER)

SIMILAR TO VIEW 1900s (FIG. 18)

Whitman Park
Whitman MA

#20



LOOKING S. TOWARDS
WHITMAN AVE.

Whitman Park
Whitman MA
4



LOOKING W AT INTERIOR HILLS
CIVIL WAR STATUE AT L

Whitman Park
Whitman MA

#5



ATOP SMALL INTERIOR HILL
ORIGINAL PLANTINGS
LOOKING W

K/Whitman PK
Whitman Mo

#6



LOOKING NE TOW. BALLFIELD (1933)

COLEBROOK CEMETERY IN DISTANCE

Whitman PK
Whitman MA
#7



LOOKING SE TOWARD
CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL

Whitman PK
Whitman H₁₂
#8



LOOKING N TOW. 1908 BANDSTAND
WADING POOL (R)

Whitman PK
Whitman MA
#9



CHILDREN'S MARBLE WATER
FOUNTAIN (1924)

Whitman PK
Whitman MA
Roll 1 #16

#10



LOOKING NE FRM CORNER
OF WHITMAN & HAYDEN OVER
LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD.

Whitman PK
~~Whitman PK~~
#11



LOOKING N ALONG HAYDEN AVE.

Whitman Park
Whitman MA

#12



LOOKING N OVER BALLFIELD
WADING POND IN CENTER

Westman PK
Westman MA

#13



NATURE'S
GREATEST
GIFT - PURE
WATER

CHILDREN'S WATER FOUNTAIN
PLAQUE.

Roll #13
Whitman PK
Whitman MA
#14



LOOKING E TOWARD NEW PLAY STRUCTURE
OLD CORTHELL SCHOOL IN REAR.

Whitman Park
Whitman, WA

#15

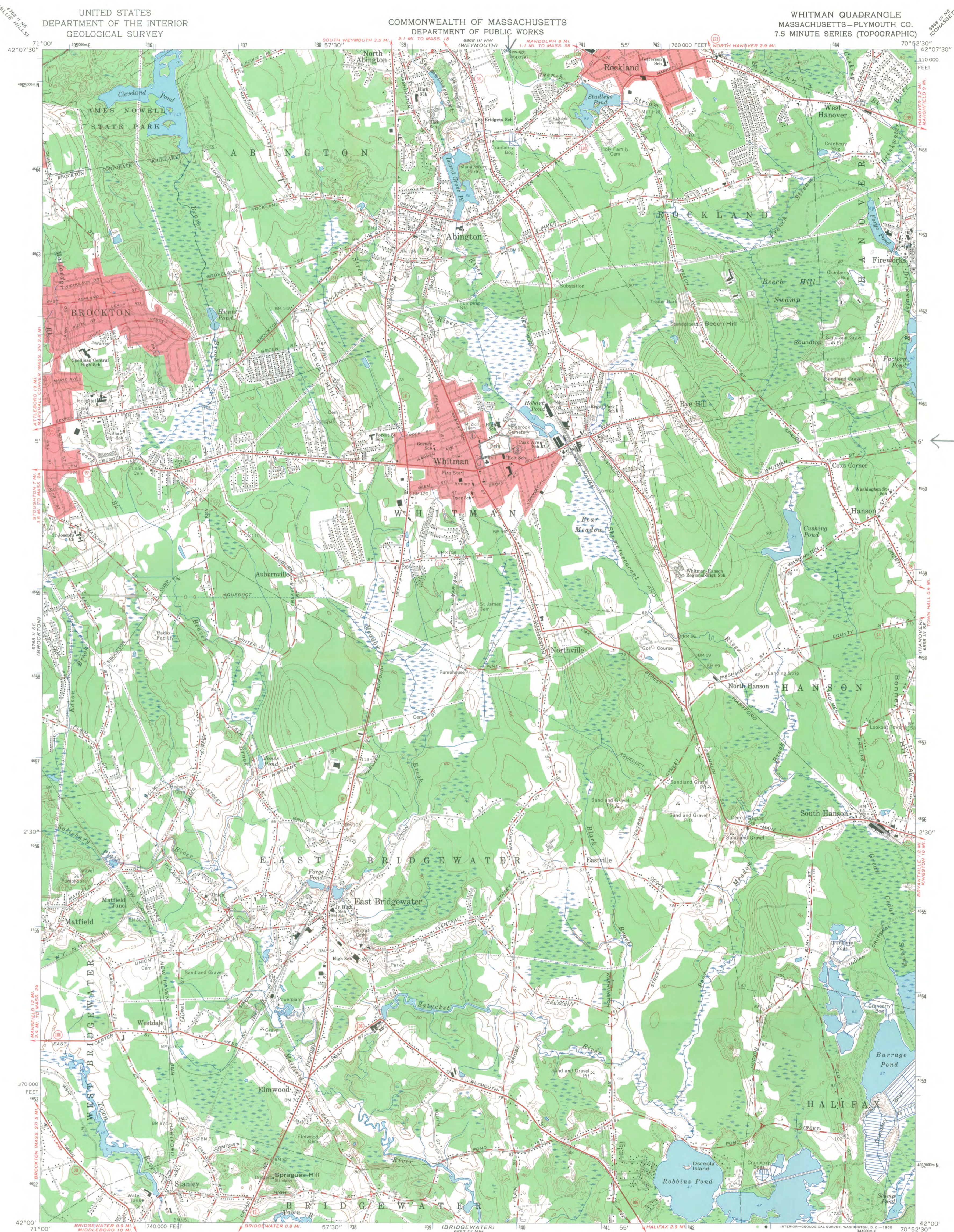


LOOKING E TOW. HAYDEN AVE.

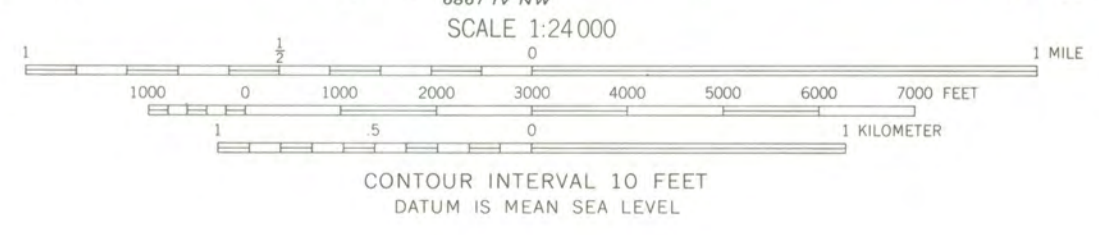
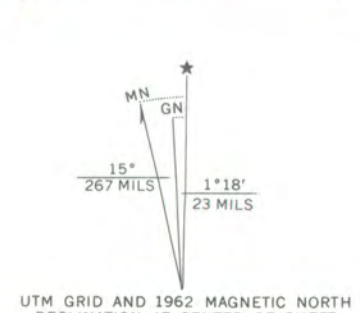
ORIGINAL GRAVEL PATH, SOME ORIGINAL
PLANTINGS

Whitman PK
Whitman MA
#16

WHITMAN PARK
WHITMAN (PLYMOUTH) MA



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
Topography by planimeter surveys 1935-1936. Revised 1962
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone.
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

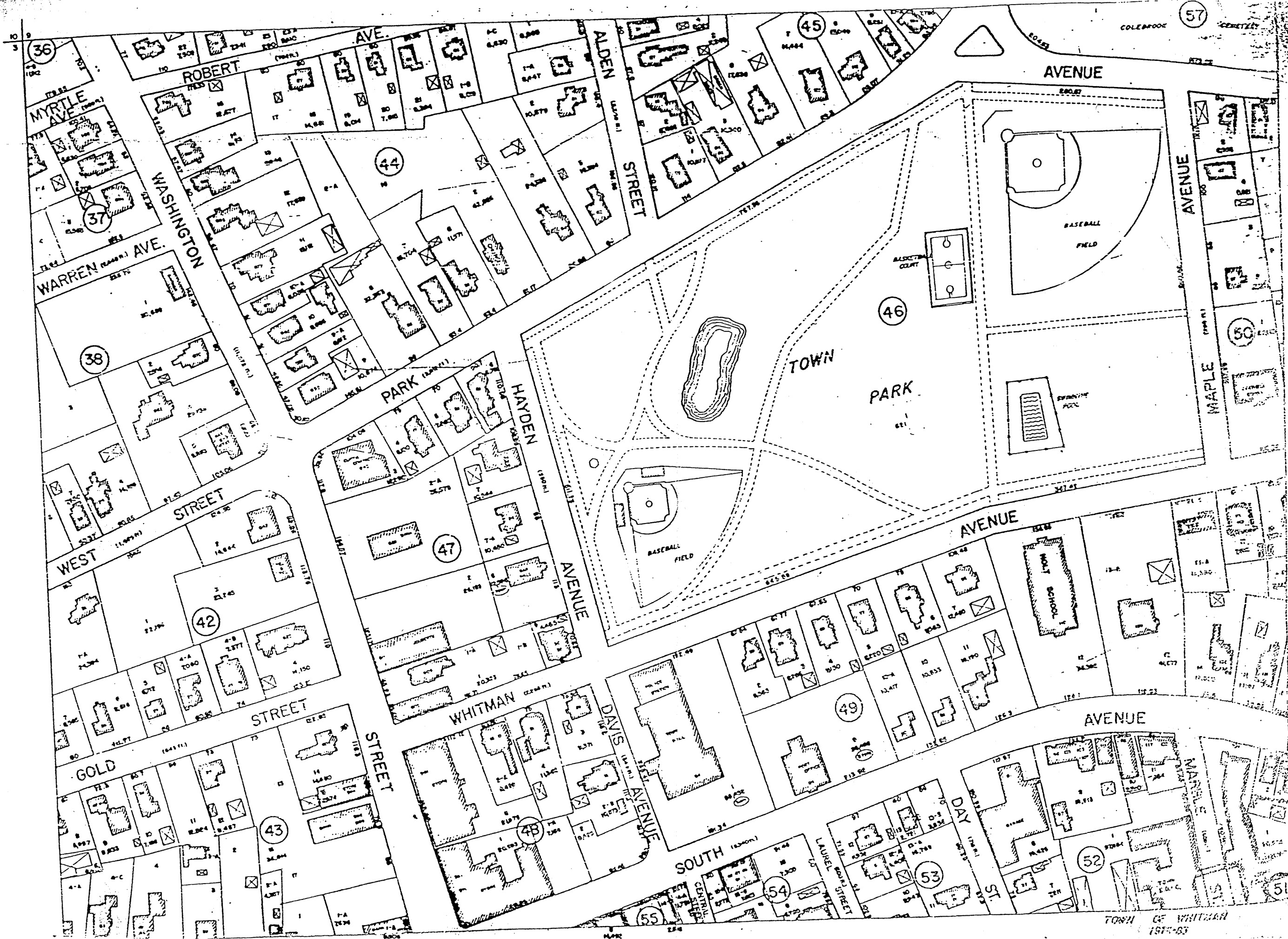
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
State Route	

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

WHITMAN, MASS.
N4200-W7052.5/7.5

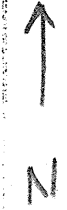
1962
AMS 6868 III SW—SERIES V814

169



NEALY

4



JAN 21 1934

MASS. HIST. COMM.

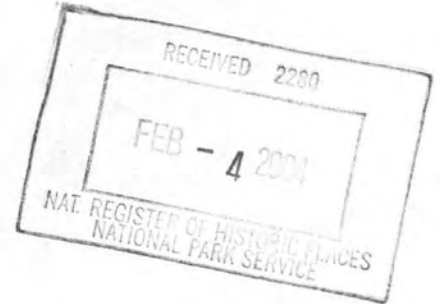
TOWN OF WHITMAN 1875-83



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

January 23, 2004

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Whitman Park, Whitman (Plymouth), 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: Joan Rockwell, preservation consultant
Eunice McSweeney, Whitman Historical Commission
Beth Stafford, Board of Selectmen
Donald McLean, Planning Board
Francis Lyman, Town Administrator