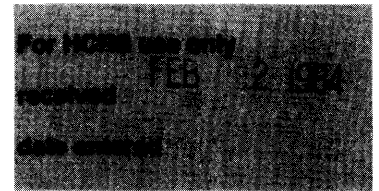


United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



## 1. Name

historic Housatonic Railroad Station

and/or common New Milford Railroad Station

## 2. Location

street & number Railroad Street N/A not for publication

city, town New Milford Bridge St. vicinity of congressional district 6th

state CT code 09 county Litchfield code 005

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: unused

## 4. Owner of Property

name Town of New Milford

street & number 10 Main Street

city, town New Milford N/A vicinity of state CT

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Milford Town Hall

street & number 10 Main Street

city, town New Milford, state CT

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect St.,

city, town Hartford, state CT 06106

## 7. Description

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

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### Setting

The New Milford Railroad Station is a simple, one-and-one-half-story, gabled-roof frame building which stands on an open site on a commercial street on the west edge of the village center. The long, rectangular structure is situated on a narrow lot between Railroad Street on the east and the railroad tracks on the west (photographs 1, 2 & 3). Standing across Railroad Street from the station is an imposing, three-story Renaissance Revival commercial block-front (photograph 2). The tracks extend in a north/south line parallel to the station and the street, following the upper edge of a plateau that drops to the flood plain of the Housatonic River Valley to the west. The depot forms one corner of the busy intersection of Railroad and Bridge Streets. Straddling the tracks south of the intersection are a former tobacco warehouse and a brick Italianate commercial building, both of which relate strongly in their architectural character to the station (photographs 1 & 3).

### Exterior

The railroad station is built on a seven-foot fieldstone foundation. The exterior dimensions of the building are approximately 23 x 90 feet. The exterior is faced with clapboards. The principal or Railroad Street elevation has nine regularly spaced bays containing five window openings alternating with four doors of the same height (photograph 1). A full height, three-sided bay, which echoes the ticket bay on the track side of the building, projects from near the midpoint of the elevation. All the windows are boarded up, however several retain their original two-over-two sash and glass panes (photograph 4).

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Title: New Milford Historic Resources Survey

Date: 1979           federal        state        county  
         x   local

Depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission  
59 South Prospect Street

City, Town Hartford    State CT 06106

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The doors are utilitarian, five-paneled and Victorian in their design. The only exterior surface ornament is a plain wood belt course which extends around the four sides of the building at the window sill level (photographs 2 & 3).

The opposite or west side of the station is identical to the east side (photographs 2 & 3). The projecting ticket bay extends slightly over the railroad platform. Two of the entrances retain their original wood steps.

The south end of the station has a central double door and a window to either side (photograph 2). A large, square window is framed into the window directly below the peak of the gable. The north elevation of the building has two single doors on the ground floor and a square attic window like that on the south side (photograph 1).

Although the existing roof is new, it replaces a second roof built in the 1940s. Its proportions and slope are approximately the same as the original roof. The original roof extended further on the street side and was covered with slate. The slate shingles were removed in the 1940s; at the same time the eave was cut back to accommodate truck traffic on the street.

The eaves of the roof are supported by original, wood brackets. Each bracket is composed of three, chamfered members bolted together to form an open triangle. The plank that forms the hypotenuse is filled with additional, curved sections near the ends to give the plank a graceful, tapered line. The lower end of each vertical part has an ogee-carved termination.

Extending as a continuation of the west roof eave is a long, gabled structure which shelters the waiting platform (photographs 1 and 2). The shelter is original, as are the cast-iron supporting posts. These are documented as part of a thorough newspaper description of the station written at the time of the building's construction.

The existing station is 26 feet longer than its reported length when built. It appears that the south 26 feet of the structure is the non-original section, accounting for the discrepancy in the length. The date of this addition is unknown, although a postcard depicting the station c. 1910

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shows the south extension in place. The subsequent annexation of the south room is substantiated by observations made by Mr. Frank Russo, who re-roofed the building in 1981. In his most revealing discovery, Mr. Russo noticed that at a point approximately 26 feet from the south end of the building, what appeared to be several old exterior wall supports, apparently never removed with the lower part of the wall, were still in place in the attic beneath the old roof. The new 26-foot addition provided the station with a second baggage room.

Structure

The station is a balloon-frame structure resting on a fieldstone foundation and large 3 x 10 inch joists placed 24 inches on center. This massive framing of the floor directly reflects the building's function as a public structure subjected to heavy, live loads. The full basement is seven feet deep, and housed water pipes, a furnace and coal storage.

Plan

The plan of the station, including the later baggage room, is nearly symmetrical and remains as it was originally built. The central section of the building consists of two distinct spaces, the mens' and womens' waiting rooms. Once separated by a partition spanning the corridor between them, the rooms are now open to each other, via the corridor (photograph 5). This hallway passes between the ticket and telegraph office (in left of photo) and the restrooms. Both the ticket office and toilets have openings onto each of the waiting rooms. There is a small baggage room in the north section of the station, entered through the north waiting room or through the end of the building. The survival intact of the original plan is confirmed in the following excerpt from the New Milford Gazette article describing the new station in August of 1886:

...The interior of the edifice is beautifully finished off. There are two waiting rooms, the north one for the gentlemen, the south for the ladies, the dimensions for each of them is 26 feet 6 inches by 22 feet. They are connected by a carved archway extending between two little apartments, each of which has a bay window and the inward sides of which are built in the shape of a bay window. The apartment of the west will be the ticket and telegraph office and is supplied

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with enameled glass windows, one opening upon each waiting room, which can be raised for the selling of tickets and the transactions of other business. In this office is a handsome Herring's safe, on which are inscribed the words "Housatonic R.R., New Milford, Ct." The other small apartment contains water closets of the most approved kind, the name being Zane's Sanitary Closets. The placing of these closets and the other excellent plumbing work, including two handsome marble washing basins, one for gentlemen, the other for ladies, which are located east of the archway on the east side of it, were done by Mr. D.A. Barlow of this village....1

Interior

Floors, ceilings and walls remain intact. The walls are sheathed with vertically laid, four-inch tongue-and-groove oak boards. The 12-foot-high pine ceiling is divided by raised moldings into rectangular, square, and triangular sections and is bordered by a more heavily proportioned cornice molding (photographs 4 & 5). The door and window openings have simple, molded frames, ornamented only by bulls-eye motifs in the corners. The ticket and telegraph office is finished in pine trimmed with cherry moldings. Office shelves, low closets and a counter remain in place, as well as the original "Herrings" safe, labeled "Housatonic Railroad, New Milford, Connecticut." Each of the ticket booth windows opening onto the waiting rooms has a single, clouded pane which could be raised during business hours, and an iron grill. According to the article the waiting rooms originally contained "perforated maple seats." These no longer remain. Following is another excerpt from the same article further describing the interior and reflecting the local source of the products and labor that went into the station's construction:

...The apartments of the depot are sealed with North Carolina pine trimmed with cherry moldings. The floor is laid with quartered oak. The interior of the woodwork has been covered with the invaluable Wheeler's patent wood filler, manufactured by the Bridgeport Wood Finishing Co. and on top of the wood filler has been placed a coat each of shellac and varnish. The sides of the waiting rooms are

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surrounded by perforated maple seats furnished by Gardiner and Co. of New York. The windows are all hung by weights. The curtains are furnished by C.H. Booth and the knobs and inside trimmings by Soule and Staub... The carpentry, masonry and other work, except that which has been otherwise specified, was done by the Housatonic Railroad Company's own workmen...<sup>2</sup>

Early Appearance

The early appearance of the station's exterior is known from photographs taken near the turn of the century (photographs, 6, 7, 8). All of these show that the building had typical, two-over-two window sash (some of which remain), decorative, sawn woodwork on the eaves, and a color scheme which highlighted the decorative elements. The ornamental eave trim appears as a simple, continuous chain of jigsawed wood rings extending along the cornice line of the long platform shelter as well as along the roofline of the station. The south end gables bore a perforated, jig-sawn bargeboard surmounted by a decorative spire rising a couple of feet above the gable peak. None of the decorative trim remains. According to Mr. Howard Peck, the town historian and long-time resident of New Milford, the depot was paved with 12 x 6 inch Belgian blocks cut from local granite. (The site has long since been paved for automobile parking.) Late 19th-century maps indicate a scales near the south end of the depot, and a freight house on the site. During the early and middle-20th century, a small, gabled-roof structure that housed the controls for the Bridge Street grade crossing stood near that street and beside the track.

End notes:

1. New Milford Gazette, August 6, 1886
2. Ibid.

# 8. Significance

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

Criteria A and C

Specific dates      1886      Builder/Architect      Housatonic Railroad Company

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The New Milford Railroad Station is significant to the local history of New Milford, Connecticut, as a structure that symbolizes New Milford's rise to importance as a center of regional trade and tourism during the last quarter of the 19th century (Criterion A). Built in 1886 as an amenity for arriving and departing Housatonic Railroad passengers, the new station building was critical to the promotion and development of New Milford as a popular weekend and summer resort accessible to New York City. Owing to its emblematic architecture and surrounding depot, the railroad station, more than any other building in town, exemplifies New Milford's boom town years, 1880 through 1890 (Criterion C). During this period, local commerce, population, and construction activity surged, marking the decade of greatest growth in New Milford since the 1840s, when the railroad was opened. The railroad station is also architecturally significant in being the only building constructed by the Housatonic Railroad Company remaining in the center of the town. In addition, the station building is substantially intact, and the original interior remains well preserved and in its entirety. The station is a structure archetypical of its function and era, and hence exerts a strong architectural presence in the community.

The New Milford Railroad Station was constructed by the Housatonic Railroad Company at the height of the line's operation and during a period of broad civic improvement and commercial investment in New Milford. During the 1870s, a rapid increase in tourist traffic in the scenic Housatonic and Berkshire Valleys had generated in New Milfordites a heightened sense of civic pride, evidenced specifically in the construction of several of the town's major municipal and institutional buildings during the 1870s and 1880s. There was reason for optimism; New Milford had become the regional center for the production and packing of Housatonic Valley tobacco. Improvements in railroad technology and the expansion of urban markets in the 1880s helped stimulate New Milford's dairy farming and small manufacturing-based economy, setting the conditions for significant local growth.



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property one

Quadrangle name New Milford

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UMT References

A 

1	8	6	3	2	3	2	0	4	6	0	3	7	5	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property consists of the plot of land occupied by the railroad station structure itself, bounded on the west by Conrail, east by Railroad Street, and by a line two feet from the foundation

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries line on the north and south.  
(Continued.)

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alison Gilchrist - edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization New Milford Trust for Historic Preservation date August 1983

street & number 64 Railroad Street telephone (203) 355-3765

city or town New Milford state CT

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

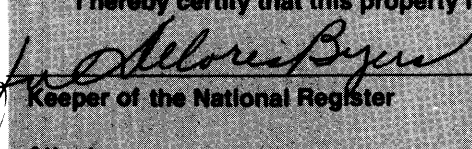
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 27, 1984

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the National Register date 3/1/84

 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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The new collective self-consciousness and its relation to area tourism is reflected in an article from the New Milford Gazette, dated June 12, 1885, one year prior to the construction of the present railroad station, which replaced an earlier station of unknown date and appearance.

Alighting from the train one is not favorably impressed with the appearance of the village. The railway station is dark, gloomy, and forbidding, and the adjacent buildings, though somewhat better in structure and architectural design, do not change much the first impression. As one passes up the hill towards Main Street, however, the change is favorable and rapid.<sup>1</sup>

The new railroad station was a major element in the public improvement of New Milford and in the attraction of new residents, weekenders and vacationers to the area. The physical upgrading of facilities used by the public was in the interest of both the town and the Housatonic Railroad Company, which enjoyed the resulting increase in passenger and freight traffic. The replacement of the station was initiated by New Milford citizens with the support of the town, and was readily carried out by the Company.

Scores of newspaper articles of the period report of the popularity of New Milford as a weekend and summer resort, describing the scenic attractions and recreational activities available in the Housatonic Valley and nearby Lake Waramaug. One New Milford Gazette article from 1884 points out that families would not have chosen the area for a vacation site had the husband not been able to travel from New York City on Friday evenings for the weekend.<sup>2</sup>

Two years before the replacement of the station, the town's largest summer hotel, the Weantinaug Inn, had opened. During its first season the Inn, sited near the head of the Green, was reported by the newspaper "filled to overflowing with nearly one hundred people who have never visited the place before."<sup>3</sup> In May of 1886, as the new station was being completed, the Housatonic Railroad stepped up its passenger service, running "special summer trains" bound for New Milford and nearby Lake Waramaug.<sup>4</sup> In the same month the Weantinaug House was reported to "lack sufficient room to accommodate all

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who applied,"5 suggesting that competition for hotel rooms would be even stiffer at the height of summer. The hotel released a partial guest list which bears 27 names from New York City, 13 from Bridgeport, and 15 from Norwalk. Both Bridgeport and Norwalk were conveniently accessible by rail; New York was a two-and-one-half hour train ride. The hotel operated a regular livery service to and from the depot, an arrangement that directly associates tourism with the use of the railroad station.

The Housatonic Railroad Company itself took an active role in promoting area tourism. During the 1880s the company's department of public relations published two booklets, "From New York to the Hills and Homes of the Berkshires" and "Over the Berkshire Hills." These pamphlets, which extolled area attractions, described excursions on trains with such names as the "Berkshire Hills Limited Express."

Use of the train by vacationers, weekenders and commuters continued through the middle of the present century. Passengers with ultimate destinations of Washington, Roxbury and Litchfield arrived and departed from the New Milford depot, the Shepaug Line's passenger operation from Hawleyville (Newtown) having been abandoned in 1930. With the gradual decline of rail passenger service in the late 1960s, the New Milford station building was closed. The last passenger train stopped in New Milford in 1970.

The New Milford Railroad Station is also significant because it served as the center of long-distance communications in the area. The station's ticket office housed a telegraph key which transmitted and received news and messages until its replacement by telephone in 1950. Hence, in addition to its social function as a point of arrivals and departures, the station building became a natural meeting place as people gathered to learn the news and receive telegraph messages. Telegram delivery lists from 1900 indicate that messages were hand-delivered to customers at the time, around town. Many of the addressees in 1900 were businesses, institutions and prominent citizens. At some point, the delivery system was abandoned and customers had to appear at the station to receive messages, according to Stanley Percy, a grandson of a 50-year telegraph key operator. Mr. Percy recalls of his grandfather's job:

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In the days before radio he used to broadcast the scores of the World Series and the ball games. He would tell farmers and merchants when their livestock (and goods) had arrived. He announced the results of the presidential election. People used to gather around the station. Everybody knew him.<sup>6</sup>

David Lynch, a former train gate operator at the New Milford depot also remembers the station as an informal community gathering place as people came to pick up their telegrams.<sup>7</sup>

Architectural Assessment

Despite the losses of its original roof and its decorative exterior trim, the station building remains substantially intact. The general appearance and character of the structure, which instantly identify the building as a railroad station typical of its time and community size, have been well retained. The overall impression of the "railroad station" type is visually reinforced by the survival of such elements as the curved brackets and the board-and-batten ticket bays (photographs 1, 2 and 3). Because the station has great physical and symbolic presence in the town of New Milford, it is a structure of local architectural significance.

The station is also important for more specific aspects of its architecture. The interior of the building is outstanding in its integrity. Except for some built-in seats and a short partition wall that separated the waiting rooms, the interior finishing of all the rooms and the interior plan remain perfectly intact. The vertical "railroad car" siding that faces all the walls, the simple, molded door and window frames, and the moldings at the ceiling remain, their originality confirmed by comparison of the existing fabric with the historic description cited earlier. This extraordinary interior is, to the knowledge of the consultant, the most complete and extensive Victorian public space in New Milford.

In its original, symbolic capacity as the gateway for tourists arriving by train, in its historic role as a central gathering place for the resident population, and in its uniqueness as the sole architectural remnant of the Housatonic Railroad Company in downtown New Milford, the Housatonic Railroad Station is of primary significance to the local commercial and social history of this Connecticut community.

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End notes:

1. New Milford Gazette, June 12, 1885
2. Ibid., May 9, 1884
3. Ibid., August 8, 1884
4. New Milford Gazette Annex, May 1886
5. Ibid.
6. The News-Times, January 31, 1982
7. Ibid.

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(unpublished).

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Lockwood and Brainard Company, Hartford, Connecticut, 1882.

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The Times/Journal Advertiser; Page from old railroad station's  
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New Milford Trust for Historic Preservation

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The boundaries of the nominated area delineate a rectangular parcel which contains the plot occupied by the railroad station building, or approximately 25 x 92 feet. The surrounding parking lots, which were once part of the depot, are excluded from the nominated area because these no longer serve their historic function.

The Housatonic Rail Road  
At Its 1889 Extension

Canaan Union Station

Amesville Shop Site

1841 Culvert

1840's Stone Bridge

New Milford Station  
 Yard Trackage

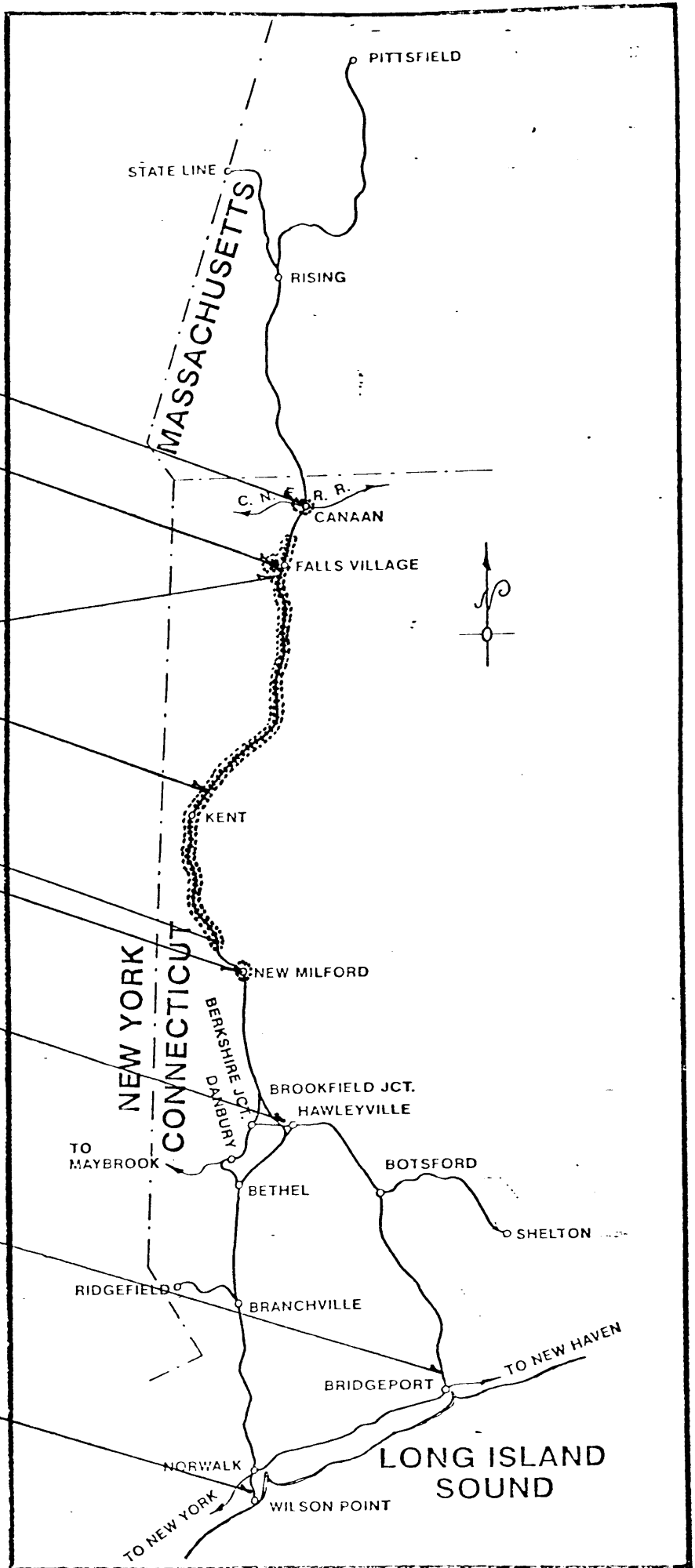
Other Sites Mentioned

Hawleyville Tunnel

Housatonic Ave. Track

Wilson's Point Trackage

map courtesy Housatonic  
 Railroad Company, 1982





RAILROAD  
STATION

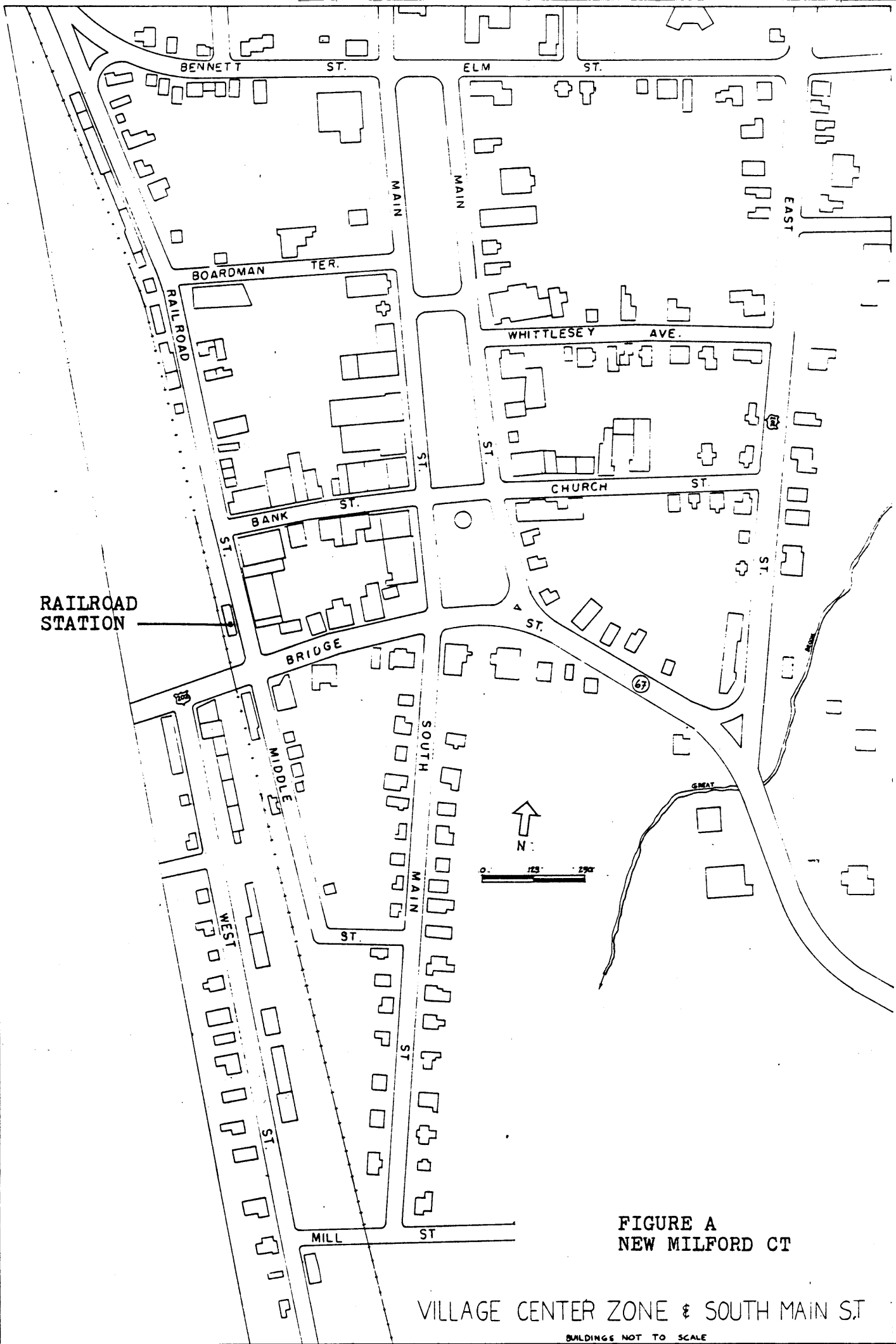


FIGURE A  
NEW MILFORD CT

VILLAGE CENTER ZONE & SOUTH MAIN ST

BUILDINGS NOT TO SCALE