

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

For NPS use only

received DEC 6 1984
date entered JAN 3 1985

1. Name

historic St. Patrick's Church

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 284 Suffolk Street N/A not for publication

city, town Lowell N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Middlesex code 017

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Archdiocese of Boston

street & number 212 Commonwealth Avenue

city, town Brighton vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds - Middlesex County Courthouse

street & number 360 Gorham Street

city, town Lowell state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title	Inventory of the Historical Assets of the Commonwealth #282 and	has this property been determined eligible?	☐ yes ☒ no
	Lowell Cultural Resources Inventory		
date	1980	☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local	

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description

St. Patrick's Church, Lowell, Massachusetts

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

(1904: interior rebuilt following fire)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Patrick's Church is located on Suffolk Street in the part of central Lowell traditionally known as "The Acre." Sited on a level lot of 8,140 square feet, the church, which faces east, is surrounded on three sides by residential buildings. The Western Canal (NR 1976: Locks and Canals Historic District) flows past the Church's east side, and across the canal, on Lewis Street, stands the Greek Orthodox Holy Trinity Church (NR 1977).

Construction of St. Patrick's Church began in 1853 and was not completed until 1874. A major fire struck the building on January 11, 1904, and although it destroyed much of the church's interior, the exterior remained intact. The building retained its 1853-1874 Gothic Revival exterior, but the interior was reconstructed with early 20th century materials. The church was rededicated on November 18, 1906.

Stylistically, the church is derived from 13th century English Gothic ecclesiastical precedents. Its plan is essentially a cruciform, with symmetrical transepts projecting from the rectangular nave. It is five bays wide on its main elevation. A 160-foot-tall steeple located at the east end dominates the building. Construction is of coursed rubble masonry with ashlar granite trim.

The church's main entrance is at the base of the steeple, which rises four stories to a broached spire. The steeple is flanked by symmetrical, two-story hipped roof projections containing secondary entrances and, on the second story, a bank of three lancet-arched windows. The corners of both the steeple and the main block are embellished with buttresses and quoins.

The steeple base was constructed in four stages: the first contains an entrance in the base surmounted by a lancet arch with tracery; the second includes a tripartite lancet window with trefoil-shaped Gothic tracery; the third holds a single narrow lancet window; and the fourth, the belfry, contains a pair of lancets. The spire is ornamented by eight lancet dormers with crockets and cruciform finials. It is further ornamented by a narrow band of quatrefoils near the top of the steeple and by a three-part finial surmounted by a cross.

The nave consists of two-story side aisles with a three-story main block containing a clerestory. Access to the nave is through the steeple's main entrance, and flanking that entrance, through similar secondary entrances heading the side aisles. The nave's approximate dimensions are 270 feet in length, 100 feet in width through the transept, and 70 feet from floor to ceiling. It seats slightly more than 1,200 persons.

To the north and south, 2 1/2-story transepts project from the nave. Both wings are punctuated on the end walls by a large pointed-arch window with elaborate Gothic-style tracery. On the southern side, under the transept gable, the vestry projects slightly. It is a small rectangular extension similar in style and detail to the rest of the building and was added in 1906. Balancing the vestry is a granite blind arch.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet St. Patrick's Church Item number 7 Page 1

The west, rear elevation has a projecting single-bay center gable flanked by two bays on either side. The center gable contains a single large Gothic window with ornate tracery, while flanking bays, divided by buttresses, contain both Gothic and blind windows.

The interior of the church remains as it was at the time of the 1906 reconstruction. Marble columns separate the nave from the side aisles. The ceilings of both the nave and the aisles have eight-part rib vaulting with floral-patterned bosses. Three altars adorned with statues and sculptural reliefs and a series of religious frescoes enrich the interior.

Archaeologically, the property has some potential for prehistoric sites, given its proximity to Pawtucket Falls. Two prehistoric sites (19-MD-47; 19-MD-53) have been recorded within one half mile of the property. In terms of historic archaeological potential, the following might be expected: builder's trenches and related construction features, evidence of earlier sites or structures (especially the original wood framed church), refuse scatter, and possibly privies or trash pits related to the surrounding residential neighborhood or the early decades of the church.

8. Significance

St. Patrick's Church, Lowell, Massachusetts

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

Specific dates 1853, 1906 Builder Architect Patrick C. Keeley

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Patrick's Church, built in 1853, is significant as the first Catholic Church to serve the sizable population of Irish textile workers in mid-19th century Lowell, and thus holds close associations with that industrial city's development. Architecturally, the church is significant as the earliest local example of the work of nationally known ecclesiastical architect Patrick C. Keeley and as a fine and well-preserved example of the Gothic Revival style. Built on the site of Lowell's first Catholic Church, St. Patrick's retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling and thus fulfills criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

Lowell's manufacturing system--the "Lowell Experiment" of a planned industrial community--developed under the direction of the Incorporated Proprietors of Locks and Canals beginning in 1821. The city and canals developed rapidly, and its textile mills relied in its early years on the labor of young native-born mill workers, primarily women. In the 1840s, however, Irish laborers began to flock to Lowell, transforming the workforce and, ultimately, changing the nature of labor relationships in Lowell's factories. The immigrants brought with them their strong ties to the Catholic Church, ties encouraged by the paternalistic Lowell proprietors as a means of exercising control over their laborers.

Unlike the New England-born mill workers, most of whom were unmarried young women, the immigrant laborers did not live in carefully supervised boardinghouses built for them by the Proprietors, a central part of the original Lowell Experiment. Instead, most of the Irish population built crude shelters when they first arrived, on a tract of land that came to be known as "The Acre." In 1830, entrepreneur Kirk Boott, agent of the Proprietors of Locks and Canals, donated land in The Acre for the purpose of building a church. A small wood-frame structure, the predecessor of the present St. Patrick's Church, was erected in 1830-1831. Under the guidance of a series of Irish-born priests, the original St. Patrick's became a center for the Irish community, providing spiritual guidance, education and health care, and perhaps most importantly to the Proprietors, discipline and social control.

Much of The Acre was unavailable for purchase before the 1840s, but in 1845, a decades-old land dispute was resolved and house lots were put on the market. Substantial housing began to replace the crude shelters. The population of The Acre continued to swell. By 1853, the Irish community's increasing size and wealth made it both necessary and possible for them to replace their original wood church. St. Patrick's was rebuilt in grand style between 1853 and 1874.

St. Patrick's was designed by Patrick C. Keeley (1816-1896), a well-known ecclesiastical architect who emigrated to New York from Ireland in 1841. During the course of his career, Keeley designed over 500 Roman Catholic churches, primarily in New York and New England. His designs include the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston (1875, NR 1973); St. Mary's, Newport; and the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Providence (1893; NR 1975). While St. Patrick's is Keeley's earliest church in Lowell, his later works in the city include The Church of the Immaculate Conception (1868); St. Michael's Church (1884-1900); and St. Peter's Church (1892-1900; NR 1982).

Architecturally, St. Patrick's is significant as a finely detailed and well-preserved example of the Gothic Revival style in ecclesiastical building. The church stands as the most imposing building in The Acre and is significant also as the first of many churches built by

9. Major Bibliographical References

Coolidge, John Mill & Mansion (New York: Russell & Russell), reissue 1967
Cheney, Liana, et al., The Religious Architecture of Lowell, Massachusetts
(Lowell: Lowell Museum), 1984
Whitney, Henry F. & Elsie R., Biographical Dictionary of American Architects
Los Angeles: Hennessy & Ingalls, 1970

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8,140 square feet

Quadrangle name Lowell

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A 19 309870 4723820
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Attached Boundary Map)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Friedberg, Preservation Planner (MHC) with Bob Weble, Lowell National Historic Park, and K. Taff, City of Lowell, (1978), Division of Technical Preservation & Maintenance
organization MHC Lowell National Historical Park date 10/84

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie A. Talmage

title State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

date November 16, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

1/3/85

for Nelson Byers
Keeper of the National Register

date

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

JAN 3 1985

Continuation sheet St. Patrick's Church Item number 8 Page 1

Lowell's successive waves of immigrant groups. Visible from St. Patrick's across the Western Canal is the Greek Orthodox Holy Trinity Church, erected in 1908 (NR 1977).

St. Patrick's was struck by a major fire on January 11, 1904, that gutted most of the church's interior but did little damage to the building's exterior. Within three years, however, the interior had been reconstructed, and the church was rededicated on November 18, 1906. Archbishop O'Connell, a Lowell native who later became archbishop of Boston, presided.

Since its construction, St. Patrick's has continued to serve the residents of The Acre. The area remains the neighborhood most closely associated with Lowell's immigrants, and has been home successively to Irish, Greek, and today, Hispanic residents. The U.S. Congress recognized the national significance of Lowell's immigration history in 1978 (PL 95-290). St. Patrick's was identified as eligible for the National Register in 1980 as part of Lowell's Cultural Resources Inventory, a massive planning study prepared by Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott.

Expected archaeological resources may contribute to the significance of the property by helping to document: construction techniques and subsequent modifications; relationship between church and community (are there distinctive archaeological deposits associated with churches? How did sacred and secular activities overlap in a high density urban setting?); and social organization, especially changes in patterns of ethnicity and social status.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

St. Patrick's Church
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTS

DEC 6 1984

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/4/86

Date Due: 1/3/85 - 1/20/85

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 1-3-85

☐ RETURN

☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

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

Entered in the
National Register

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

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	☒ Public Acquisition	☐ Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ excellent | ☐ deteriorated |
| ☐ good | ☐ ruins |
| ☐ fair | ☐ unexposed |

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



EAST. FRONT

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

#1

St. Patrick's Church

1/84

East (front) elevation of
St. Patrick's



NORTH - SIDE
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH

#2

St. Patrick's Church

1/84

North (side) elevation of
St. Patrick's



See sheet 8

- PROPERTY BOUNDARY
- SECONDARY BOUNDARY
- PARK BOUNDARY
- PRESERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- EXCLUDED AREAS

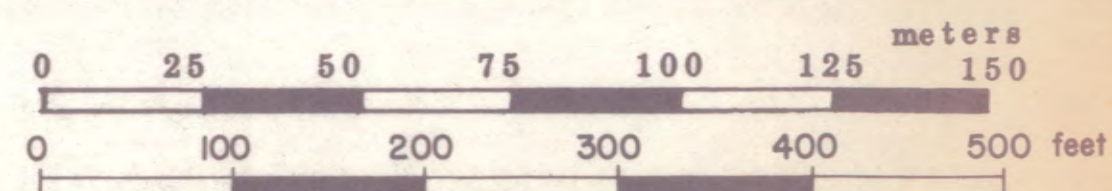
SHEET 7 OF 17

Saint Patrick's Church
Lowell, MA

Cultural Resources Inventory
Base Map, 1979
Lowell National Historic Park
Scale: 1" = 100'

DATE: OCTOBER, 1979

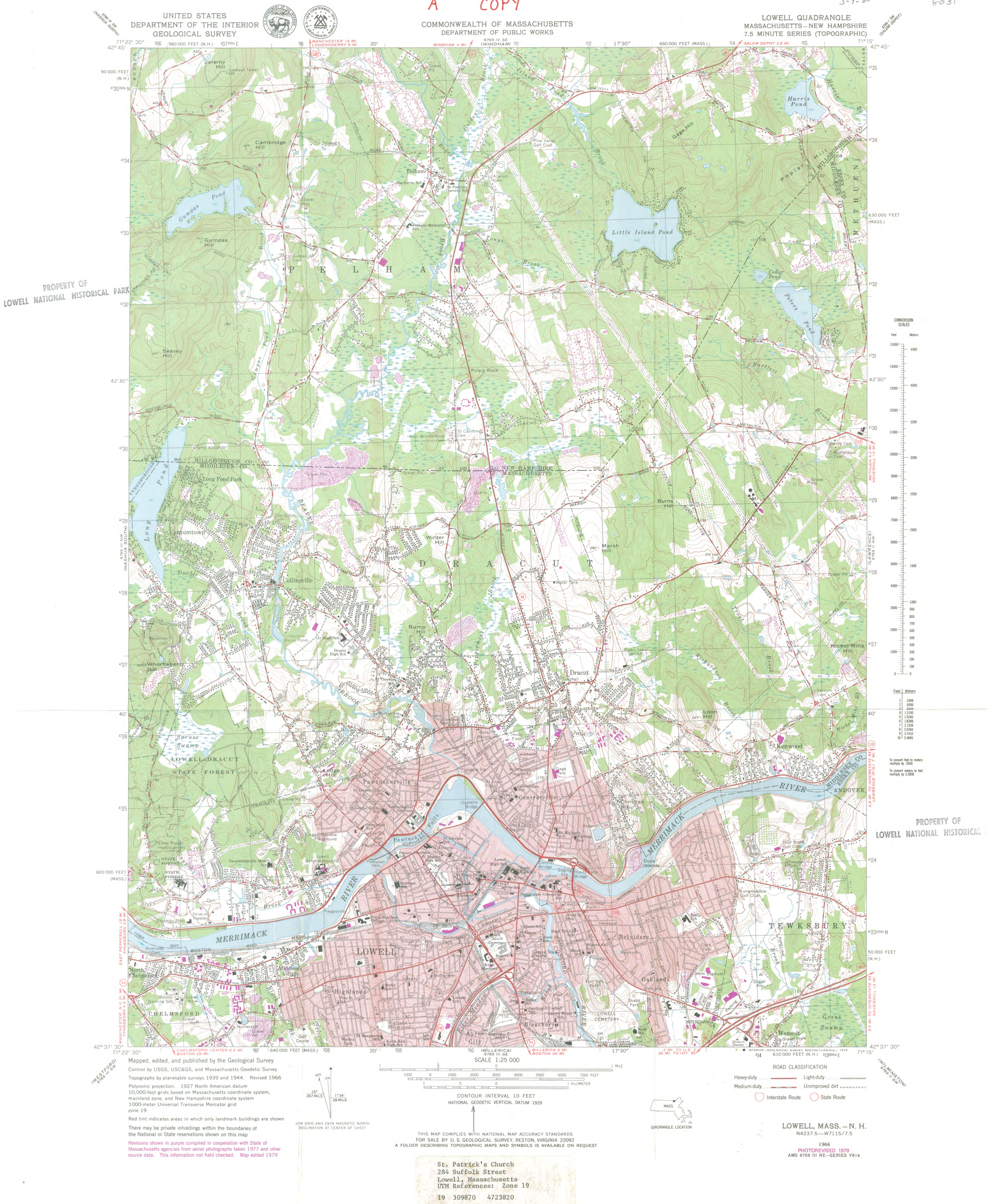
FORMAT REV. MAR 1975



N

prepared for
DIVISION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES
NORTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
and
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
by
SHEPLEY BULFINCH RICHARDSON AND ABBOTT

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL
PARK AND PRESERVATION DISTRICT
TITLE INVENTORY BASE MAP



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



A COPY
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

LOWELL QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS-NEW HAMPSHIRE
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

3-7-80 8031

PROPERTY OF
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

CONVERSION SCALES

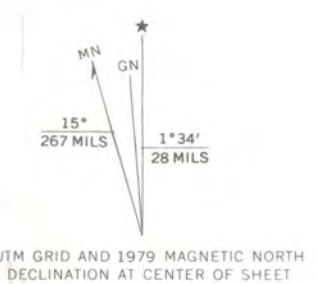
Feet	Meters
1500	450
1400	420
1300	390
1200	360
1100	330
1000	300
900	270
800	240
700	210
600	180
500	150
400	120
300	90
200	60
100	30
0	0

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.305
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

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

PROPERTY OF
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1939 and 1944. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and New Hampshire coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid
zone 19
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

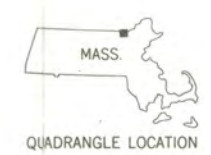


SCALE 1:25 000
1 000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER
CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM 1929

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

St. Patrick's Church
284 Suffolk Street
Lowell, Massachusetts
UTM References: Zone 19
19 309870 4723820

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route ——— State Route ———



LOWELL, MASS. - N. H.
N4237.5 - W7115.7/5
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6769 III NE - SERIES V814