



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The attached property, the Lyon, Thomas, House, in Fairfield County, Connecticut, reference number 77001390, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register on 08/24/1977, as evidenced by the FEDERAL REGISTER/WEEKLY LIST notice of Tuesday, February 6, 1979, Part II, Vol. 44, No. 26, page 7440. The attached nomination form is a copy of the original documentation provided to the Keeper at the time of listing.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

2/19/2009  
Date

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

# 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 **Lyon, Thomas, House**

AND/OR COMMON  
**Lyon Cottage**

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
**southeast corner West Putnam Avenue and Byram Road**

CITY, TOWN **Greenwich** VICINITY OF **Fourth District** CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE **Connecticut** CODE **09** COUNTY **Fairfield** CODE **001**

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

See Continuation Sheet

NAME  
**Building: Greenwich Rotary Club and Greenwich Lions Club**

STREET & NUMBER  
**c/o Mr. Leonard S. Clark, 40 West Elm Street**

CITY, TOWN **Greenwich** VICINITY OF **Connecticut** STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
**Greenwich Town Hall**

STREET & NUMBER  
**Greenwich Avenue**

CITY, TOWN **Greenwich** STATE **Connecticut**

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
**Connecticut Statewide Inventory**

DATE **June 29, 1966**  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
**Connecticut Historical Commission**

CITY, TOWN **Hartford** STATE **Connecticut**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE 1926-27
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thomas Lyon House today is situated close to the south side of West Putnam Avenue just east of its junction with Byram Road. This site is very constricted. It slopes upward at the northeast and trees and shrubs are very close to the building. In addition, existing landscaping with high hedges, over abundant vegetation, terracing, entrance arbor, concrete and slate walks, brick cookout grill in rear (south-east) yard, and small frame shed in southwest yard do not enhance the house. On the hill, northeast of the house is the Byram School, but vegetation obscures it from the Lyon House. Across West Putnam Avenue, a busy four-lane highway, are commercial buildings. Nearby are the Byram River and the New York State border.

Prior to 1926 the house was located across West Putnam Avenue. It was moved in 1926-27 to save it from demolition due to a highway widening. At that time its exterior was restored by Theodore L. Blake, architect, and John L. Duge, contractor. However, since then numerous alterations have been made, particularly on the interior, without consideration for the architectural integrity of the structure. Fortunately most of these appear additive and could be removed.

Photographs taken prior to moving the house reveal that its original site was level and not overgrown by trees and shrubs. In addition, the house had a one-story open front porch and a side porch. Both of these appear to have been built in the 19th century and were removed in 1926-27. A barn or carriage house was behind the house.

Today the exterior of the late 17th century house is characterized by its lack of ornamentation, its salt-box massing, and its textured shingle wall surfaces. The two-story frame building is very small, having only three bays on its main (northwest) facade. The rear (south-east) slope of its steep gable roof extends over the lean-to ending about five feet above the ground. The roof is currently covered with composition shingle roofing. An outstanding feature is the massive, stone central chimney which was moved intact. Covering exterior walls are shingles with semi-circular butt ends. They are reproductions of the original shingles which were in place until 1926. Frederick Kelly said that the building had clay insulation between its studs. Window sash, in most cases, is 6/6 double-hung sash and probably dates from the 19th century. Inappropriate 20th century features include the front stoop with metal railing and storm door with hood, metal storm windows, window boxes, and the garbage bin attached to the north-east side of the house.

The first floor of the house has a two-room plan with kitchen in rear lean-to. Unfortunately recent panelling hides most original fabric. However, summer beams, corner posts, and the kitchen fireplace are partially visible. One room has an Adamesque mantel suggesting an early 19th century remodelling. The roof framing consists of a purlin system with wooden pegs.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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		

SPECIFIC DATES about 1690

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas Lyon House is typical of late 17th century shingle-covered architecture in the region around Stratford, Connecticut. It is a simple dwelling with center chimney, salt-box massing, restored shingle siding, and three-bay facade. Although moved and altered it is among the few 17th century houses still standing in this area and is typical of the type of dwelling built by the region's earliest settlers. The house was probably erected about 1690 for Thomas Lyon, Junior, the son of one of the earliest settlers in Greenwich. It was occupied by members of the Lyon family until 1926 when it was given to two Greenwich civic clubs who moved it to save it from demolition.

Thomas Lyon was among the first settlers of the town of Greenwich appearing on the land records as early as 1676. He died about 1690 and left his homelot on the Byram River to his son Thomas. It is probably that about this time Thomas Lyon, Junior, built the existing house. However, different sources give varying dates for its erection ranging from circa 1640 to circa 1701.

The house was visited by patriotic soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Trumbull recorded in his journal that on January 31, 1777, he took "post at Lyon's near bridge."

Occupants of the house include Gilbert ("Gentleman Gil") Lyon from 1719 to 1816; Abraham Lyon (1764- 1849); and Underhill Lyon, a prosperous farmer and prominent local citizen who died in 1920. Underhill Lyon's daughter, Mrs. Julia Saunders, gave the house to the local Rotary and Lions Clubs in 1926 when it was threatened by a highway widening project. The clubs saved the building by having it moved across the road in 1926-27 to town property. Due to finances the clubs were not able to use the building as an information bureau as they had hoped. However its exterior was restored with Theodore A. Blake serving as architect. Since 1927 the clubs have leased the building to tenants and a number of incompatible alterations have been made.

1. Quoted in Allan F. Kitchel, Jr., "Historic Houses of Greenwich: The Thomas Lyon Homestead Built Nearly a Century Before the Revolution," Greenwich Press, Feb. 4, 1937.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with Leonard S. Clark, Frederick Whelan, Al Henry, other representatives of the Greenwich Rotary and Lions Clubs, June 15, 1976.  
 Interview with William Finch, July 7, 1976.  
 Allan F. Kitchel, Jr. "Historic Houses of Greenwich: The Thomas Lyon Homestead Built Nearly a Century Before the Revolution," Greenwich Press, Feb. 4, 1937.

See Continuation Sheet

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one-third acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	18	613110	45401800	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

T. Robins Brown Consultant in Architectural History

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

July 1976

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203-566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

12/17/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4,9 PAGE 1

Lyon, Thomas, House Greenwich, CT.

4. Owner of Property

Page 1

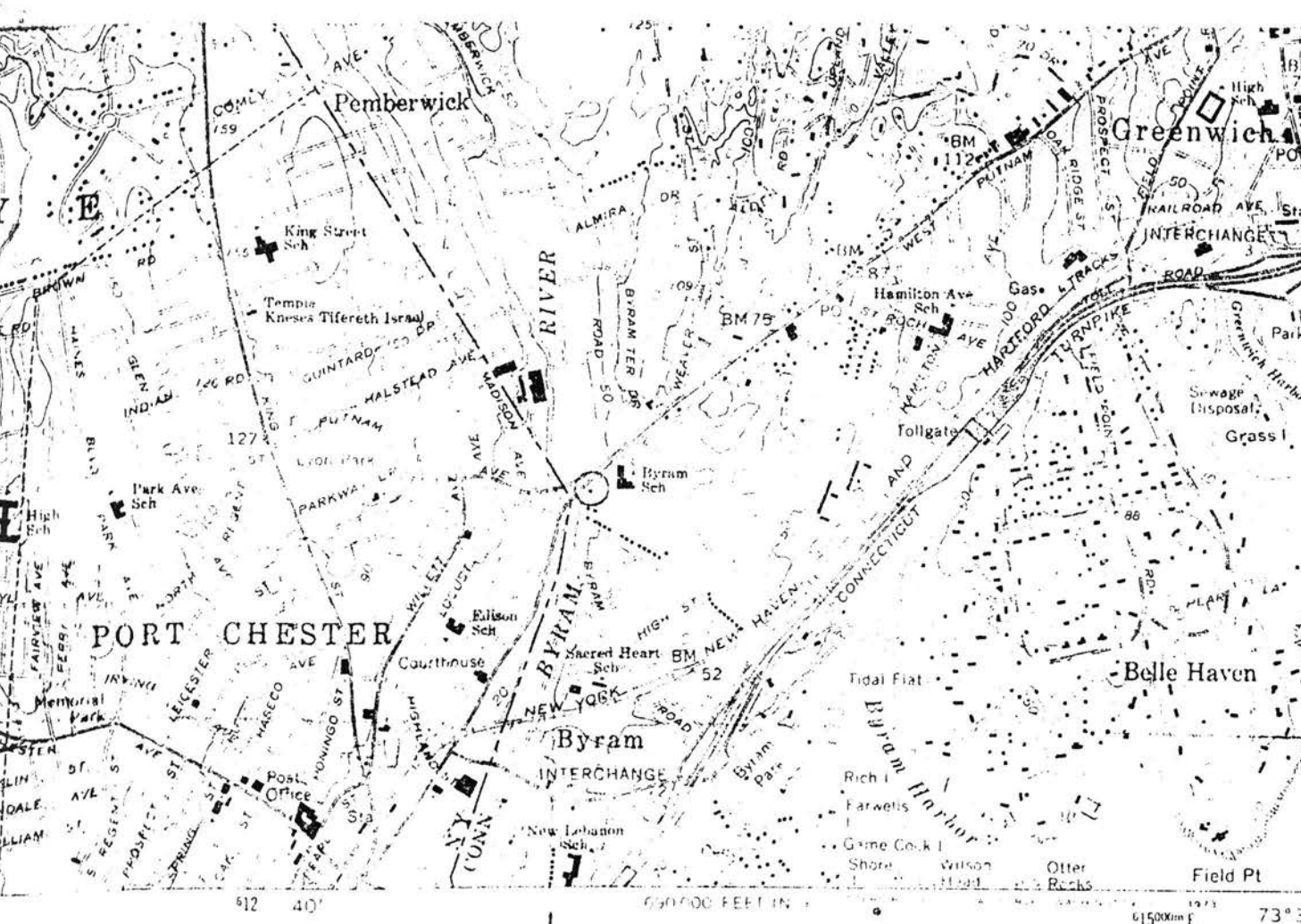
Name: Land: Town of Greenwich  
Greenwich Town Hall, Greenwich Avenue  
Greenwich, CT.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Letter from Harold L. von Brock, Greenwich Assessor, to T. Robins Brown,  
May 14, 1976. Files of TRBrown.

J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New Haven:  
Yalpe, 1924; reprint ed.; New York: Dover, 1963, pp. 80, 85.

Spencer P. Mead, Ye Historie of Ye Town of Greenwich, New York: Knicker-  
bocker Press, 1911, pp. 468, 607.



Lyon, Thomas,  
House  
Greenwich, CT.  
UTM Reference:  
18/613110/  
4540800

370 000 FEET  
(N 1)

4540'00m N.

41°00'

73°37'30"

(BAYVILLE)  
6245'1 NE

FEDERAL ROAD  
 STATE ROUTE  
 U.S. ROAD  
 STATE ROUTE

GLENVILLE, CONN.—N. Y.

N4100—W7337.5/7.5

1960

AMS 0265 II SW SERIES V816

1 MILE  
 1 KILOMETER

STANDARD  
 TON D. C. 20242  
 AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



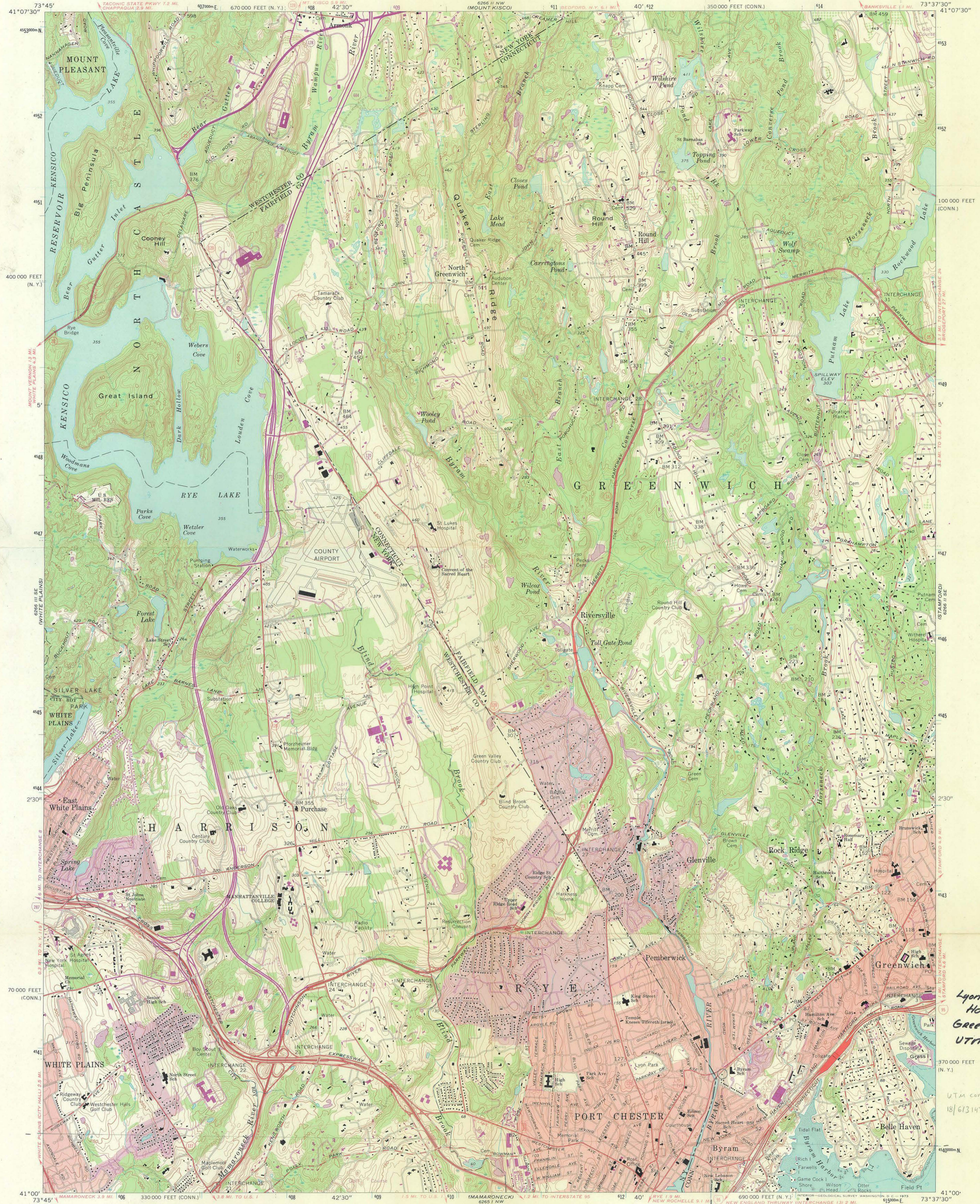




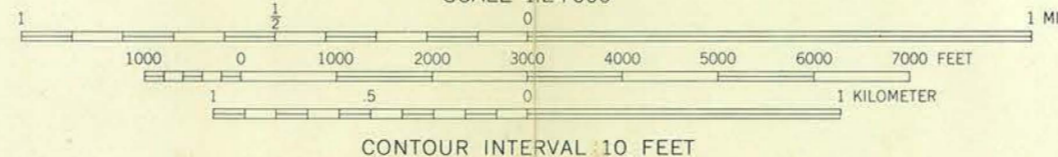
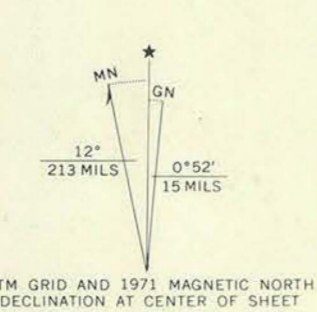




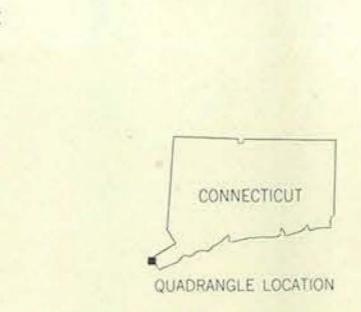




Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USCGS, USCE, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1949. Field checked 1950-1951. Revised 1960  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USCGS Chart 222 (1959)  
This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Connecticut coordinate system, and  
New York coordinate system, east zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is uncheckd  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 7.3 FEET



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
○ Interstate Route □ U.S. Route ○ State Route

GLENVILLE, CONN.—N.Y.  
N41100—W7337.5/7.5  
1960  
PHOTOREVISED 1971  
AMS 6266 II SW—SERIES V816

Lyon, Thomas,  
House  
Greenwich, CT.  
UTM Reference:  
18/613110/  
4540800  
UTM correction 10/1/07  
18/613147/4541022



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: PROPOSED MOVE

PROPERTY NAME: Lyon, Thomas, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: CONNECTICUT, Fairfield

DATE RECEIVED: 6/07/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/24/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 77001390

NOMINATOR: STATE

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: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*No information provided on the site planing, New Foundation, etc.  
for most property. This appears to just be a corner of SLR on  
changed location.*

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_

DISCIPLINE *Historic*

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE *7/24/13*

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.

National Register of Historic Places  
Memo to File

# Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.

Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

77001390



TO: J. Paul Loether, Chief  
National Register of Historic Places  
FROM: Stacey Vairo, National Register Coordinator  
SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this 3 day of June  
2013, for nomination of the Thomas Lyon House (more  
Connecticut Greenwich, CT documentation)

to the National Register of Historic Places:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Multiple Property Nomination form
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Original USGS maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pieces of correspondence
- X \_\_\_\_\_ Other more documentation

COMMENTS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Please insure that this nomination is reviewed
- \_\_\_\_\_ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- \_\_\_\_\_ The enclosed owner objections do \_\_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_\_  
constitute a majority of property owners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

77001390





Preserving Our Past  
*for the Future*

December 13, 201

PO Box 4719  
Greenwich, CT 06831  
203-661-6343  
greenwichpreservationtrust.org

Ms. Stacey Vairo

NR Coordinator

Historic Preservation & Museum Division

One Constitution Plaza Second Floor

Hartford, Connecticut 06103

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Jo Conboy

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ASSISTANT TREASURER  
Joseph Kantorski

SECRETARY  
Margaret Conboy

ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
Paul Pugliese

Re: Thomas Lyon House Move, Greenwich, Connecticut

Building to be moved: Thomas Lyon House, Byram Road and U.S.1

Dear Ms. Stacey,

Enclosed is the application for the relocation of the Thomas House on the corner of Byram Road and U.S. 1 near the border of New York State.

I trust all is in order. If you have any questions please call me at 203 661-6343 or you may e-mail me at [gptrust0909@aol.com](mailto:gptrust0909@aol.com).

Thank you for your assistance; it is a pleasure working with you.

Sincerely,

Jo Conboy  
Chairman

Enclosures: 12 Applications  
12 Maps  
12 of each picture

December 13, 2012  
Ms. Stacey Vairo  
NR Coordinator  
Historic Preservation & Museum Division  
One Constitution Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Re: Thomas Lyon House Move, Greenwich, Connecticut

Building to be moved: Thomas Lyon House

The Thomas Lyon House is a circa 1695 Colonial structure that was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. It was moved to the current site from an original location north across U.S. 1 (also known as Boston Post Road as well as West Putnam Avenue) in 1927. The Lyon House is the oldest unaltered Colonial structure in Greenwich. While the structure is in a fair state of preservation, the structure has shown a decline in its overall state since placement of the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. Its current location leaves it vulnerable to future deterioration and vandalism, which likely will lead to its demolition.

### **Reason for Move**

Located at the corner of Byram Road and U.S. 1 near the border of New York State, the house is owned by the Town of Greenwich. In 2007, the Town assumed legal responsibility of the property when its previous owner, the Lions Club Foundation, could not adequately maintain the house due to costs. A few years prior, the Thomas Lyon House was listed by the Connecticut Circuit Riders of the Connecticut Trust as one of "The Most Threatened Historic Places in Connecticut" (2004). At that time, the town's First Selectman had threatened to tear down the structure because it was in disrepair. Concerned citizens banded together to begin proper stabilization and restoration efforts and with a change in political leadership, the Thomas Lyon House was saved from demolition.

The structure has remained vacant since 2003 and has since been vandalized multiple times. James Sexton (Research on the Architectural Fabric of the Thomas Lyon, Jr. House Byram, Connecticut *Phase II*) stated "The current location of the Lyon house does present several inherent problems, including but not limited to, a serious problem with runoff from the neighboring hill and very limited parking".

In order to preserve the house, a group of local Greenwich residents formed the Thomas Lyon House Committee in 2006 to insure the house's survival and investigate possible uses for it. In 2008, the Thomas Lyon House Committee established the Greenwich Preservation Trust ("GPT" -- a 501.3.c) that adopted as its first goal to work with the Town of Greenwich to restore and find an appropriate use for the structure. GPT was responsible for documenting the age and condition of the house with a title search, conducting a dendrochronology study and producing two historic structure reports. The recommendations of the historic structure report state that "a move is required for the

house to survive.”

In early 2012, the Greenwich Preservation Trust was presented with a conceptual plan by Connecticut's Southwest Regional Planning Agency for the improvement of Route 1 from Stamford to Port Chester (N.Y.) as it effects traffic circulation. The plans alter the current road design and may pose a threat to the Thomas Lyon House

### **Current Condition**

The building form, itself, has not changed since it was listed on the National Register in 1977. The building was originally located on West Putnam Avenue (the opposite side of its current location). In 1927, the house was moved to its current site, at the junction of Byram Road and U.S. 1 (West Putnam Avenue), to save it from demolition due to a widening of U.S. 1. The building was installed on a small and constricted parcel with trees and shrubs close to the building, a school building at the top of the hill (now a senior low cost housing community) and limited access to the house. Its location at this major intersection where Connecticut meets New York at its U.S. 1 crossroad makes the house almost invisible to cars speeding by on the busy 4-lane road.

The following current exterior physical condition (unchanged) is described from section 7 description in the 1977 National Register Nomination prepared by T. Robins Brown (Consultant in Architectural History, Connecticut Historical Commission).

Today the exterior of the late 17th century house is characterized by its lack of ornamentation, its salt-box massing, and its textured shingle wall surfaces. The two-story frame building is very small, having only three bays on its main (northwest) façade. The rear (south-east) slope of its steep gable roof extends over the lean-to ending about five feet above the ground. The roof is currently covered with composition shingle roofing. An outstanding feature is the massive, stone central chimney that was moved intact. Covering exterior walls are shingles with semi-circular butt ends. They are reproductions of the original shingles which were in place until 1926. Frederick Kelly said that the building had clay insulation between its studs. Window sash, in most cases, is 6/6 double-hung sash and probably dates from the 19th century.

Threats to the current condition of the Thomas Lyon House do exist and need to be acted upon. As stated by James Sexton (*Research on the Architectural Fabric of the Thomas Lyon, Jr. House, Byram, Connecticut, 2008*) “The biggest current issue in preserving the Lyon House is moisture. If this condition is not remedied soon, it could lead to substantial damage to the structure”. Water infiltration is another threat as water from the hill above the house runs down into the house whenever it rains or snows.

The interior also remains relatively unchanged since listing on the National Register, but with results showing neglect and restoration of windows, ceilings, plaster, and other interior finishes are required. They are described as being in poor to fair condition and in need of attention (see Sexton, 2008).

## Historic Significance

As noted in the nomination, the Thomas Lyon House is among the few seventeenth century houses still standing in the area and typical of the type of dwelling built by the regions earliest settlers. The house was erected ca. 1690 for Thomas Lyon, the son of one of the earliest settlers in Greenwich. It was occupied by members of the Lyon family until 1926, when it was given to two Greenwich civic clubs who moved it to save it from demolition.

The Thomas Lyon House meets the following Criteria for evaluation as signified by the National Register for Historic Places.

Criterion B: That it was associated with the lives of significant persons in our past.

Thomas Lyon, Sr. was married first to Martha Johana Winthrop, the daughter of Elizabeth Fones (later Elizabeth Feake who, along with her husband, Robert, and Captain Daniel Patrick made the first purchase of land from the Asamuck and Patomuck tribes in Greenwich).

After Martha Joanna's death about 1652, Thomas Lyon, Sr. married Mary Hoyt of Stamford with whom he had four sons and four daughters. He was persecuted for his adherence to the Quaker tradition, occasioning his second wife to write to John Winthrop, Jr., Governor of Connecticut, explaining that her husband could not act against his conscience and pleading for intercession.

With his friend Joseph Banks, Thomas Lyon, Sr. was granted about 80 acres on Byram Neck in 1676. He owned property in Fairfield, Greenwich, and Rye and established a mill on Blind Brook in the latter town. His letters show him to be a literate man, given to spelling his name as both Lion and Lyon, and when he died in 1690, his estate was considerable enough to provide a homestead for each of his sons, including the homelot on which the Thomas Lyon Jr. house was built, and a monetary gift for his daughters.

The story of the abolition of slavery in Connecticut, beginning with the Gradual Emancipation Act in 1784 and culminating with the required emancipation of all slaves in 1848, was reflected in the actions of Greenwich's slave owners and those who opposed slavery. Seth Lyon, the eldest of the nine children of Abraham and Hannah Mills Lyon, was born in 1790 on the Lyon Homestead at Byram Bridge. After his wife's early death in 1835, Seth needed help to raise his two young sons, as well as help on the farm. It may have been then that he hired Peter John Lee, a fugitive slave from Virginia, and his wife, to help on the farm and in the house.

In 1836, Lee was enticed across the Byram Bridge into New York State and was captured by "blackbirders" who took him to New York City; from there he was transported back to the South. His capture became a cause célèbre in New England and was recounted in abolitionist newspapers and anti-slavery tracts<sup>1</sup>.

Peter John Lee's story intertwined with the Lyon family is one of several accounts of African American history that is beginning to be documented in Greenwich.

Criterion C: That it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

The significance of the Lyon house comes, in part, simply from its existence. The house is one of only a small number of 17<sup>th</sup> century houses left in the state of Connecticut. As Abbott Cummings suggested in *Connecticut Preservation News*, the number of well-documented 17<sup>th</sup> century houses left in the state is quite small. He suggests that only seven houses have been well enough documented to confirm that they do in fact come from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Lyon House certainly seems to belong in this elite company.

The Thomas Lyon House was built in three stages, probably between 1695 and 1715. First two rooms, one-over-one with an attic, and a bay for the entry, stairs and chimney; then a second one-over-one wing was added, creating a center-chimney house of four rooms and an attic; finally the one-story lean-to kitchen was added, creating the traditional saltbox shape.

This demonstrates the evolution of the house throughout the colonial period, and therefore Thomas Lyon House is a good example of "First Period" architecture (settlement to c. 1725).

The house provides a Fairfield County example of seventeenth century architecture to students of Connecticut's buildings. The majority of the other early buildings in the state are clustered around New Haven and Hartford and so the Lyon house provides an interesting counterpoint to those better-known buildings. Especially intriguing is the building's proximity to the Dutch cultural hearth of western Long Island, New York City, and the Hudson Valley. While the Dutch government had relinquished control in 1664, Dutch influence continued in the area long after that.

### **Local Significance**

The Lyon house is an important physical reminder of the history of the Town of Greenwich. But it is more than just that. Its association with a single family in four centuries of the town's history demonstrates a dichotomy that has existed in Greenwich since the second half of the nineteenth century: even as the town became populated by some of the richest people in the country there remained a group of Yankees living in town, people who descended from the town's earliest families. And rather than knock down the homes of their ancestors many of these people lived in those houses. The house serves as a reminder of the local aspect of preservation – the people who have preserved Greenwich's architectural heritage are those who have felt the strongest tie to it. Often that connection is a family one. This is not to suggest that the Lyon family had sentimental connections to the house throughout their occupation of it. However, by the time of Underhill Lyon's death (20<sup>th</sup> century) and Julia Saunders's gift of the house to the Rotary and Lions Clubs, a sense of preservation had been established in the family.

The story of the Lyon House is one of an early preservation victory. The effort that went into preserving the house in 1927 reflects its importance to the community at that time.

There was enough popular support for the saving of the house at the time of the move, perhaps because it was thought to be the oldest in the community, that money could be raised to do it. Of course, the plans to turn it into a tourist center were never realized, but the popular support for the preservation of the building demonstrates an interesting attitude toward history in Greenwich at that time.

The involvement of architect Theodore Blake (of the firm Carrere & Hastings) in the project is also interesting because he is an architect commonly associated with high society architecture in Greenwich at the beginning of the twentieth century. He is known for designing mansions and Rosemary Hall, not for the grass roots preservation and restoration that went into saving the Lyon House.

### **Move Site**

Due to several factors, the Thomas Lyon House must, again, be moved in order to ensure continued preservation. The move, which is within the same town owned parcel (as well as having been owned by the Lyon family), also affords an opportunity for increased public exposure to and celebration of the House.

The house is to be moved from the busy four-lane U.S. 1 thoroughfare to a park ground owned by the Town of Greenwich, 150 yards south of the house's current location. The site will not dramatically change the context of the house. The site is an ideal place for an educational facility being close to a nearby school as well as being surrounded by residential properties. It will be visually prominent in its park setting with an adjacent parking lot to provide adequate parking and safe access to and from the structure. The re-orientation of the house to its historically appropriate compass direction will provide an overview of its previous two locations.

The new site will have a new foundation with a full-depth basement to contain all mechanical and electrical hookups for the building. Proper drainage and sunlight will prevent moisture damage.

Consultation with Historical Perspectives, Inc. (a cultural resources consulting firm that offers a wide variety of services from archival research and archaeological reconnaissance surveys to visual impact analysis and historic structures recordation since 1982) resulted in a Phase I Archeological Resources Survey and Phase II Intensive Survey that yielded the proposed site of the Thomas Lyon House relocation will not impact the archeological sensitivity of the area.

Two proposals have been presented for adaptive reuse of the structure after it has been moved. One consideration focuses on the building being used as a multi-purpose educational facility rather than strictly as a museum. This would allow for appeal to a larger segment of the community and, perhaps, attract more funding. It would also help the building to stand out in a town that has two existing house museums and a region that already has many more house museums than the public seems willing to support. (It should be noted that the Greenwich Historical Society has chosen to focus the

interpretation of its eighteenth century building as much on its modern history as on its Colonial past.)

The other consideration is to have the building be interpreted as a study house – with no furniture, with structure exposed in places, and with a focus on the construction and development of the building. The openness of the building would still allow it to be used for temporary installations and functions that do not compromise the building's fabric (The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Historic New England, and a number of smaller organizations all have houses in their collections that are used in this way).

Both possibilities require the house be moved from its current location so as to afford proper and safe accessibility for the public, but will not adversely affect the structure.

### **Building Conservation**

Although the building will not be altered for its new use, the building does require some degree of conservation. Plans for this work are not complete, but all elements will be conserved following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

### **Move Process**

Although plans for the move are not yet complete, it is the GPT's intention to ensure that the proposed move will follow all relevant National Park Service guidance, particularly contained in John Obed Curtis' *Moving Historic Buildings* (1979). The building will first be examined by a structural engineer and the appropriate move method finalized.

Plans for the move will be provided to the Town of Greenwich's Historic District Commission, the Town of Greenwich's Department of Public Works and Planning & Zoning and can also be provided to SHPO for approval if necessary.

### **Summary**

As important as the absolute age of the house is that the Thomas Lyon House clearly demonstrates characteristics of what architectural historians call "First Period" architecture (settlement – ca. 1725). The structure began as a two-story building with one room on each floor and a bay for the entry, stairs and chimney (this type of building is often called a one-over-one because of the disposition of rooms on each floor).

Equally important is the relative state of preservation: much of the early fabric of the house remains in place. While the house has changed and grown over time, these alterations appear, for the most part, to have been additive. Rather than removing historic fabric and replacing it with new material, additional layers were added to the structure, preserving the earlier material.

The Greenwich Preservation Trust believes that the house is truly a unique structure in its

story of architectural history as well as multi-generational family historicity. Keeping the house on the National Register of Historic Places after its move allows continuous adherence to the National Parks Service's policies regarding historic structures as well as providing "good practices" for others to follow when researching successful NRHP structure moves (to date, documentation of successful moves is low).

Please call me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Jo Conboy  
Chairman, Greenwich Preservation Trust

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<sup>1</sup> The following are a sampling of documents offering evidence of Peter John Lee's capture by Tobias Boudinot, E. K. Waddy, John Lyon, and Daniel D. Nash: New York Committee of Vigilance. (1837). *The first annual report of the New York Committee of Vigilance for the year 1837 together with important facts relative to their proceedings*. (p. 16, 73, 76, 82). New York.  
Benedict, S. W., Nash, D. D., & New York (State) Supreme Court, (1839). *State of New York : In Supreme Court Seth W. Benedict ads Daniel D. Nash*. Utica, N.Y.  
American Anti-Slavery Society. (1840). A northern freeman enslaved by northern hands. *The American anti-slavery almanac for 1839*, 1(4), 19.  
Nell, W. C., Steward, A., Ruggles, D., Pennington, J. W. C., Findlay, W. W., Douglass, F., West, W. W., & Burns, A. (1926). Letters of negroes, largely personal and private [part 6]. *The journal of negro history*, 11(1), 193.  
Quarles, B. (1969). The black underground. *Negro digest*, 18(4), 10.





# TOWN OF GREENWICH

Office of the Selectmen (203) 622-7710 Fax (203) 622-3793  
Town Hall • 101 Field Point Road • Greenwich, CT 06830  
E-Mail: dmarzullo@greenwichct.org

Drew Marzullo  
Selectman

January 14, 2013

Dear Ms. Viaro,

I am writing to you to day so that you will allow the already bestowed designation of National Register of Historic Places be kept on the Thomas Lyon House in the event of its being moved.

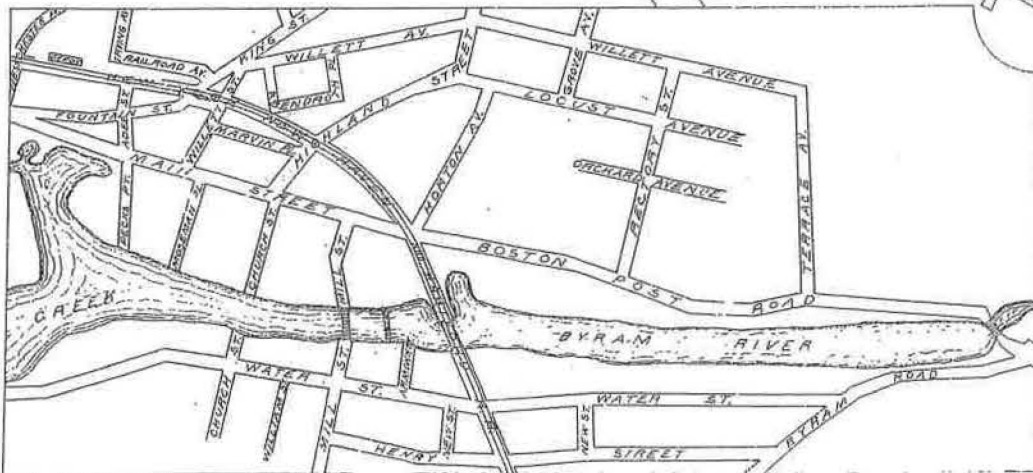
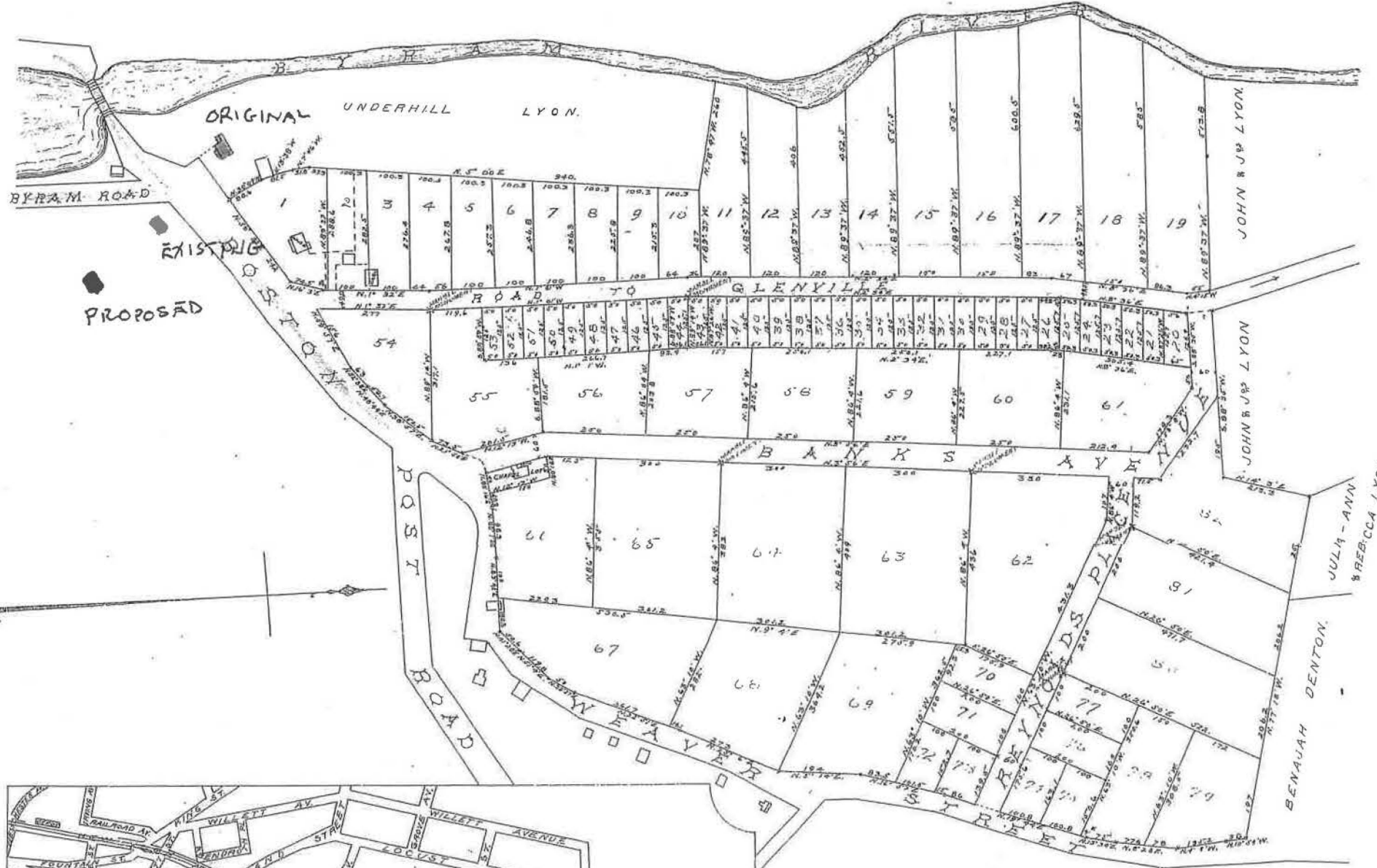
Currently, the Thomas Lyon House (c1695) is owned by the Town of Greenwich and it is the oldest of the many properties that the town is responsible for that are listed on the National Register. Several years ago, the Town partnered with the Greenwich Preservation Trust to begin to prepare a preservation and conservation plan for this 17<sup>th</sup> c structure. The Trust has issued a variety of reports, conducted interviews with numerous consultants and provided custodial efforts to stabilize and provide a solid the future for the Thomas Lyon House. The Town of Greenwich has not had to expend any tax-payer dollars for this structure so our gratitude to the Trust is immense!

Preserving the Thomas Lyon House of course preserves a historical landmark. But it also allows for the social substance of this unique Colonial to shine. The Greenwich Preservation Trust has uncovered stories that show the house's relationship to the Revolutionary War, to slavery and the Freedom Trail, to commerce and the Byram River and to a variety of 20<sup>th</sup> century historic preservation efforts to sustain it. The house is more than wooden beams and shingles, is a public statement whose form has real consequences for its neighbors and occupants. No other structure in Greenwich affords all this under one roof and I consider it an irreplaceable example of history. The Trust has recently begun to expose the different aspects of the Thomas Lyon House's history to the different grade levels in our public and private schools. Again, this action could not have been provided solely by the Town.

**I urge you to strongly consider approving that the Thomas Lyon House retain its National Register of Historic Places distinction should the house be moved.**

I thank you for your time.

Drew Marzullo  
Selectman

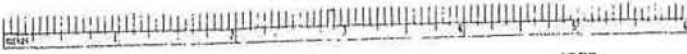


NUMBER 1

**BUILDING LOTS**  
 NEAR THE VILLAGE OF  
**PORT CHESTER, N. Y.**  
 OFFERED FOR SALE BY  
**BYRAM LAND IMPROVEMENT CO.**  
 IN THE TOWN OF  
**GREENWICH**  
**CONN.**

I hereby certify that the accompanying map on which this certificate is written is a substantially correct map of a survey made by me of the lands of the Byram Land Improvement Company, which said Company owns in Greenwich Connecticut, and in and to which said Company has an interest at this date, said Company having caused said survey to be made by me.

J. A. Kirby,  
 Port Chester, May, 1882



Hall & McChesney Inc.  
 ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS  
 100 N. WALL ST. NEW YORK, N. Y.

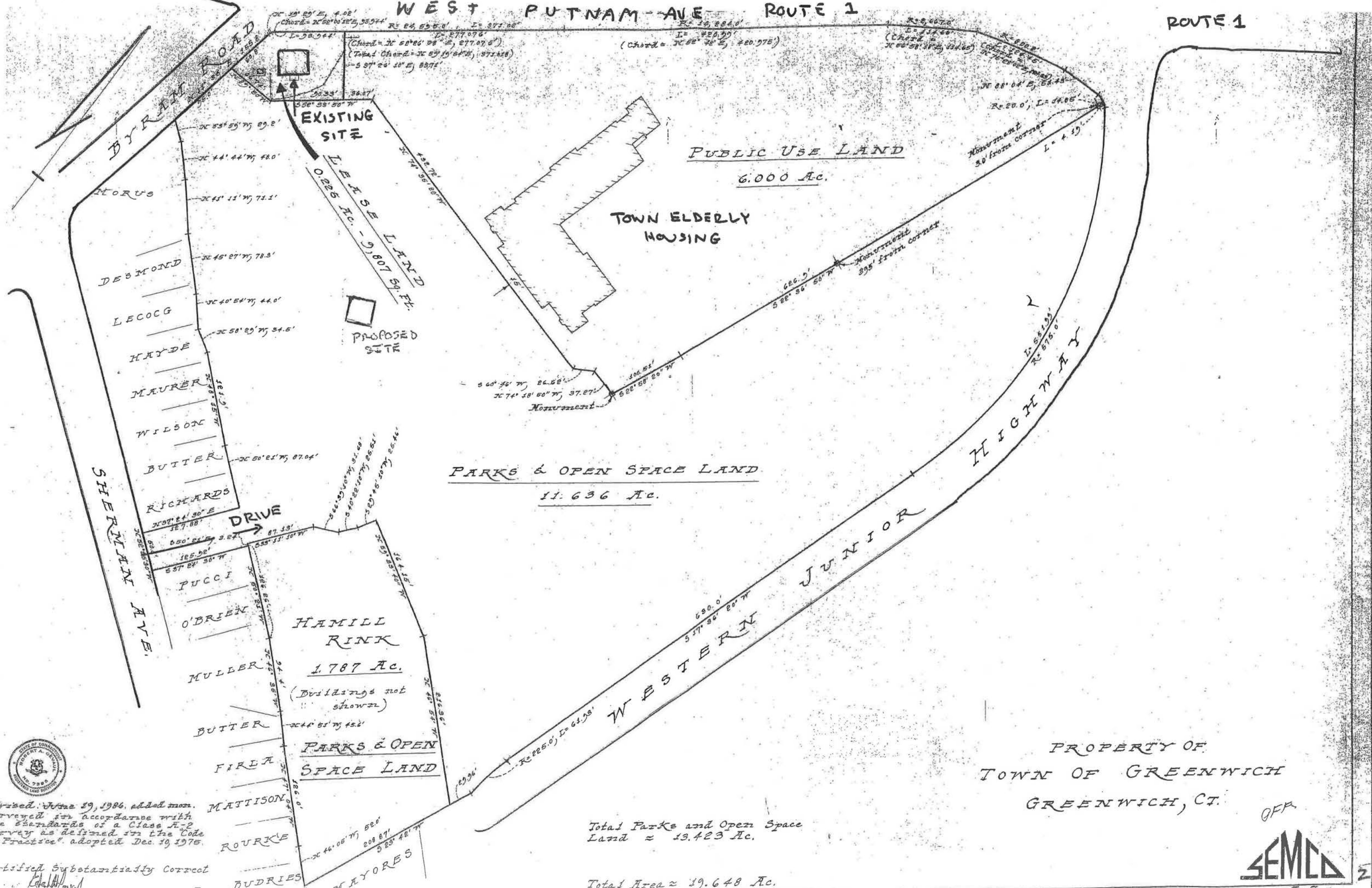
1878  
 our 100th year  
 1878

RECEIVED ON FILE JANUARY 18 1883 RE BIRCH  
 by Geo. G. McNeil  
 TOWN CLERK.

SCALE: 1 IN. = 200 FT.  
 ORIGINAL SCALE: 1 IN. = 120 FT.

WEST PUTNAM AVE ROUTE 1

ROUTE 1



Revised: June 19, 1986, added more  
 surveyed in accordance with  
 the standards of a Class A-2  
 survey as defined in the Code  
 Practices, adopted Dec. 19, 1975.

certified Substantially Correct  
 [Signature]

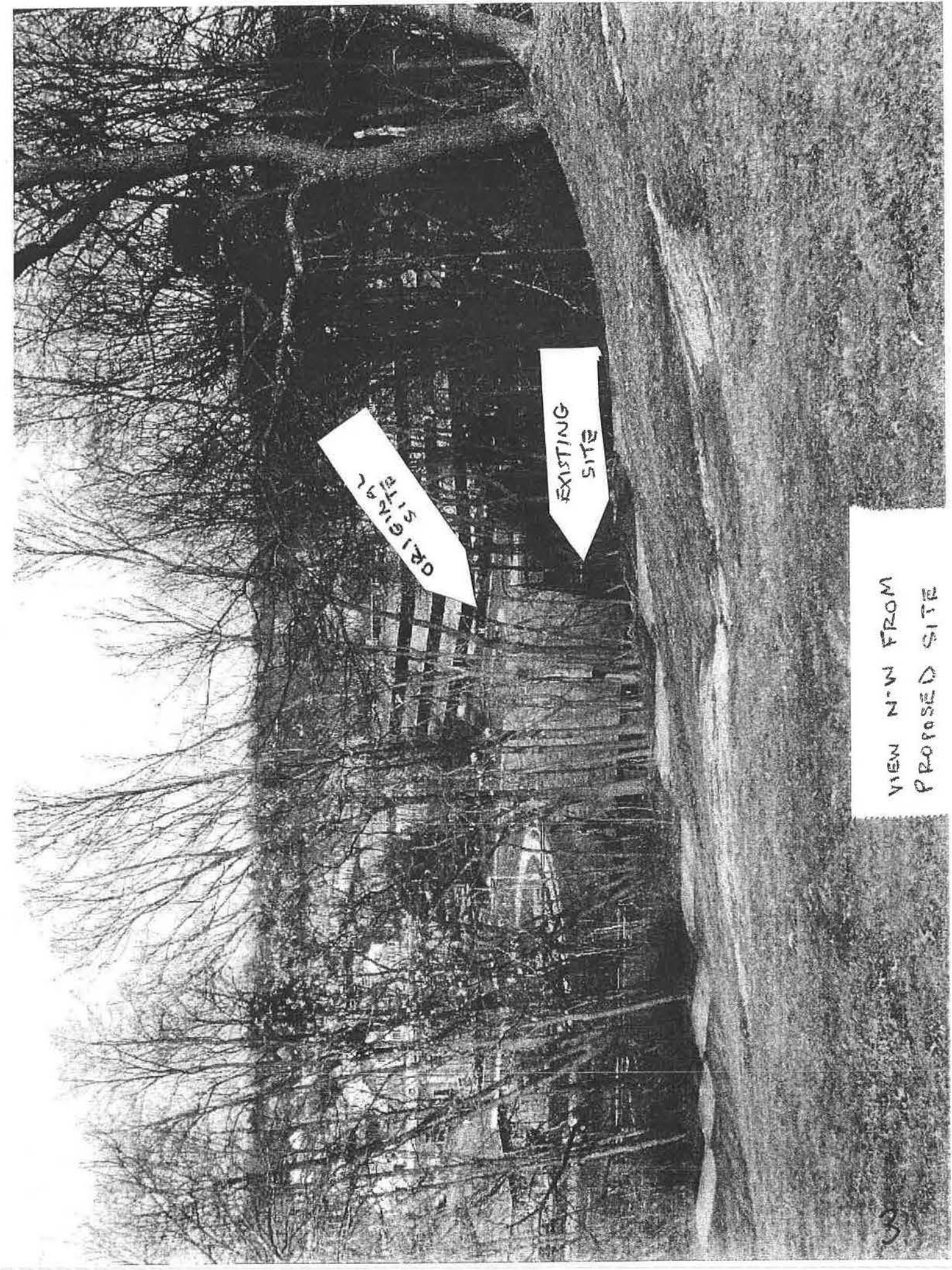
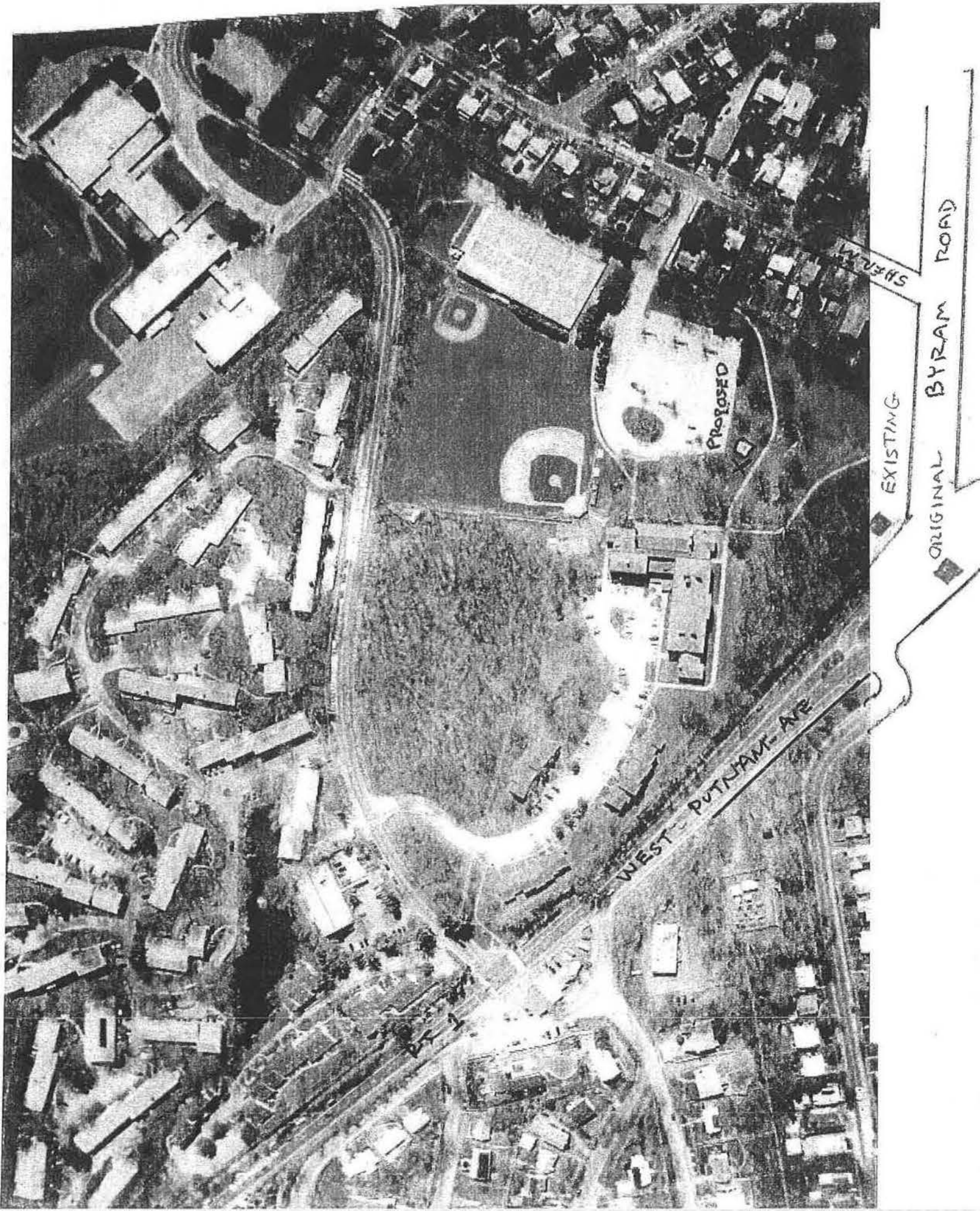
Total Parks and Open Space  
 Land ≈ 13,423 Ac.

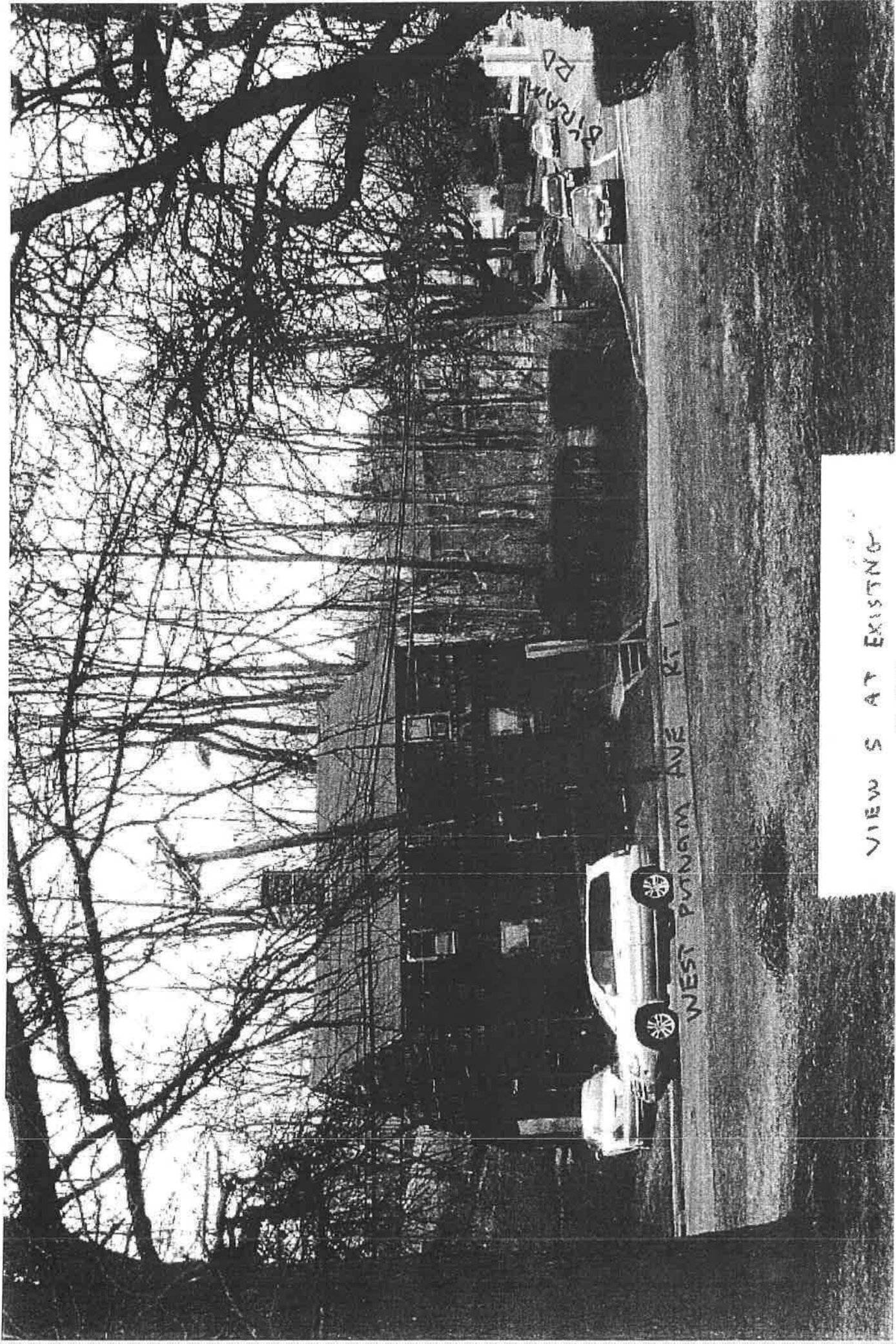
Total Area ≈ 19,648 Ac.

PROPERTY OF  
 TOWN OF GREENWICH  
 GREENWICH, CT.

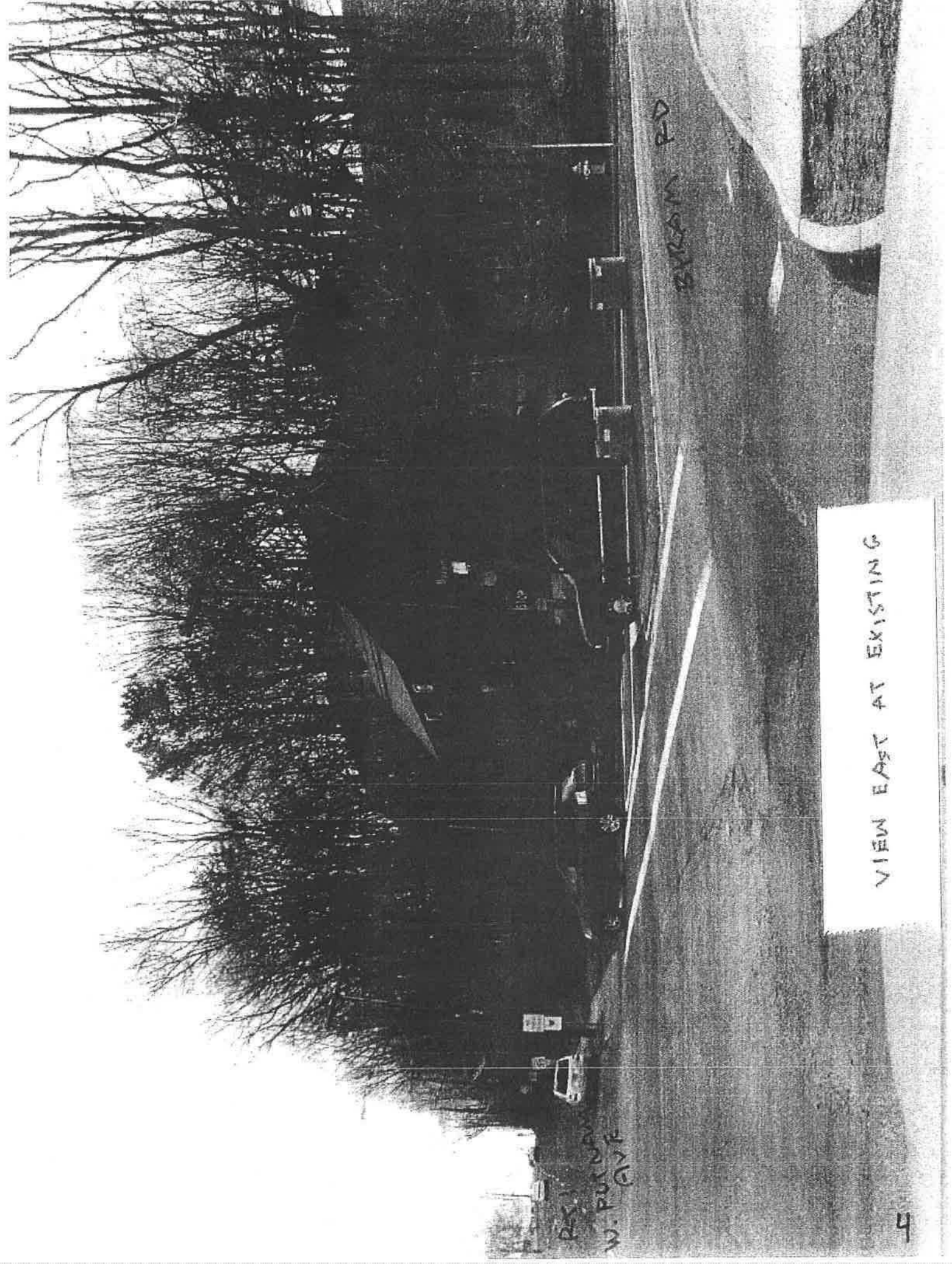
OFF







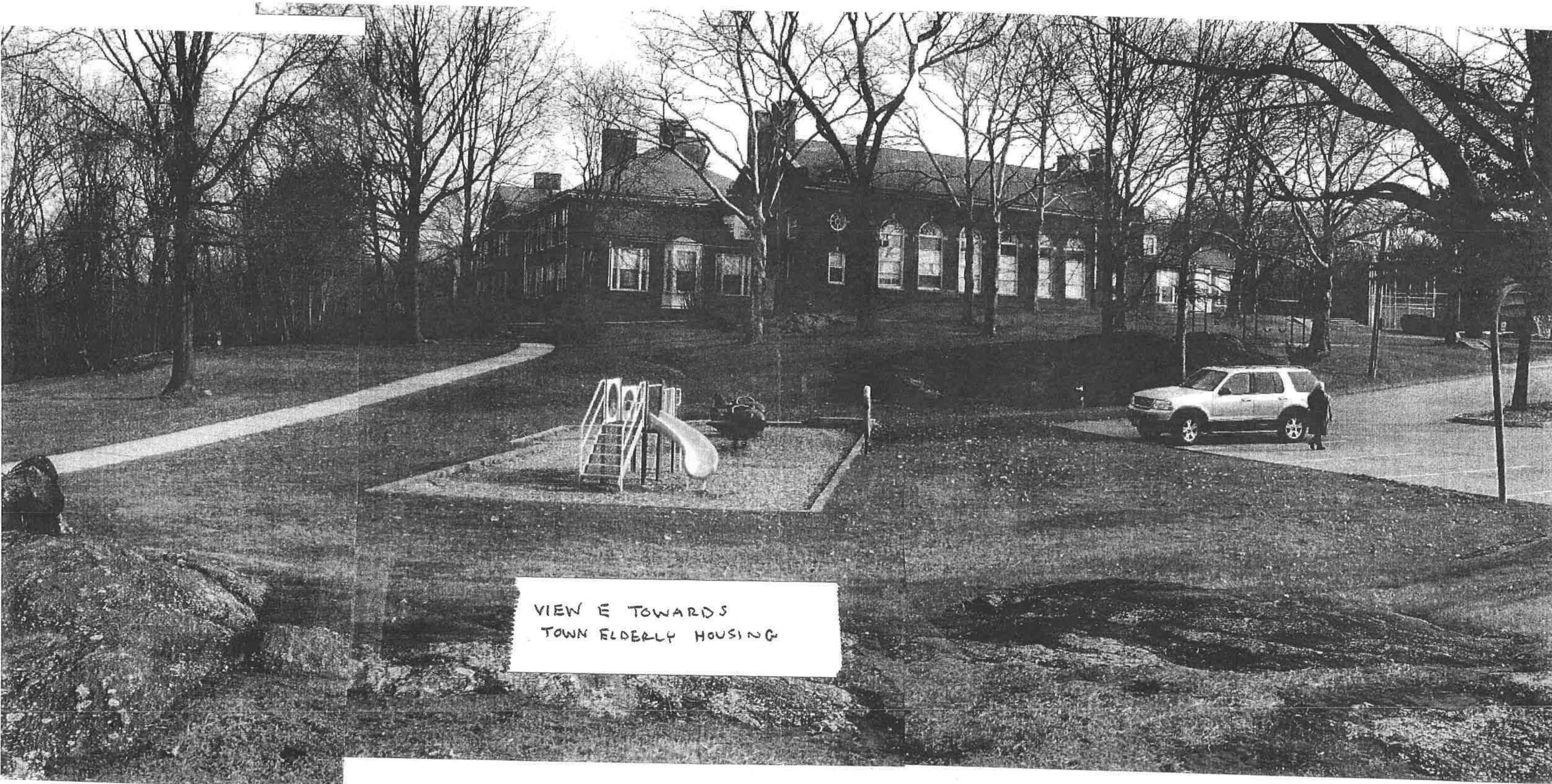
VIEW S AT EXISTING SITE



VIEW EAST AT EXISTING SITE



VIEW S-W AT PROPOSED SITE



VIEW E TOWARDS  
TOWN ELDERLY HOUSING