

**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

For HCRS use only

received APR 28 1982

date entered JUN 1 1982

1. Name

historic Tolman-Gay House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 1196 Central Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Needham

N/A vicinity of

congressional district Ninth

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Norfolk

code 021-

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both
Public Acquisition
☒ in process
☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Philip A. and Carol H. Christophe

street & number 1196 Central Avenue

city, town Needham

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

street & number High Street

city, town Dedham

state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Inventory of Historic Assets

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

Of the Commonwealth, #61

date 1976

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston

state Massachusetts

7. Description

Tolman-Gay House, 1196 Central Avenue, Needham

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Tolman-Gay House stands on its original site, a high point of land on the easterly side of Central Avenue, about 3/4 of a mile south of the original town center. Surrounded by spacious lawns, gardens and shade trees, it is part of a residential neighborhood which has grown up around it within this century. Now expanded, it was constructed in 1743 as a two story, wood frame dwelling with an L-shaped plan. It had a three bay facade (west) and a rear kitchen ell (northwest). The original fieldstone foundation remaining under this portion, measures 25' on the west by 30' on the north (see sketch). It is believed that this house was enclosed by intersecting gable roofs with a single chimney (which remains today) rising from the intersection.

Today, the Tolman-Gay House retains much of its original interior and exterior building fabric; the primary alteration to the structure has been the extension of the rear ell by two bays sometime after construction, and by a porch and garage, c. 1930. In addition, its gable roofs have been replaced by hip roofs.

The three bay facade (west) contains windows in the two northerly bays and the entry in the south bay; windows are located above all three openings at the second story. These windows, along with the rest in the original house, measure 27 1/2" X 45" and consist of 6/6 double hung sash with simple frames. The two stories are separated by a slight overhang.

The north elevation consists of two parts: the westerly end dating from 1743, and the easterly end from 1930. The westerly end is enclosed by a hip roof and exhibits a slight overhang separating the stories. Four windows are located on each floor level: proceeding from the west, one pair lights the original parlor; one pair lights the kitchen ell and lines up with the end of the original fieldstone foundation; two pairs light the first extension of the ell. The easterly end consists of a recessed section containing an entry and a window, and a garage containing double overhead doors and paired, flat roof dormers.

(see continuation sheet)

EXP. 12/31/84

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet Tolman-Gay House

Item number 7

Page 1

Similarly, the south elevation can be considered in two parts. The original west end contains a single window at each story and is divided by a slight overhang. The ell contains three windows at the second story and a single window at the first story; the others are obscured by a shed roof porch tucked into the corner of the original house, c. 1930. The east addition contains two windows (west) and a blank wall which is the rear of the garage; its roof includes shed roof dormers.

The rear (east) elevation is the side wall of the garage, and includes four windows at the first story and two at the second story.

The interior of the house retains much of its simple eighteenth century appearance. Parlor fittings include a fireplace wall (east) with raised field paneling and a molded cornice, panelled wainscotting with plaster above on the exterior north and west walls, and vertical sheathing on the interior south wall. The kitchen ell retains its large cooking fireplace with bake ovens. Both rooms reveal cased structural members. The front chamber is finished with vertical sheathing on its inner walls and a simple chair rail on the outer wall.

8. Significance

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)

Specific dates 1743 Builder/Architect Nathaniel Tolman

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Tolman-Gay House possess integrity of location, design, materials and workmanship as well as associations with the development of Needham since the mid-eighteenth century. It is important because of its location near the original town center, because its primary occupants, the Tolmans and the Gays, were active in the military and governmental affairs of the town, and because it retains its original design features which reflect its long history. Thus the Tolman-Gay House meets criteria A, B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The house was built by Nathaniel Tolman, the father of John Tolman, in 1743, the year of his marriage to Mehitable Dewing. Nathaniel died in 1775, and by his will, the house was given jointly to his wife and his young son, John Tolman. The front part of the house went to John, and the rear part of the house to his mother, with this provision: "The east end of the dwelling to the middle of the chimney and the cellar and the chimney under the same, with the liberty to pass and repass from said east end of the house to the road, and a common use of the well of water, and also one-half of the barn easterly of the floorway, viz. --the northwardly half with a common use of the floorway and convenient yard room by said barn with liberty to pass and repass from said barn to the same." The barn is long gone, but the division of the house can still be clearly traced in the present structure.

The name of John Tolman first appears in town records as one of the builders of the Second Meeting House in 1774, where he is identified as a "housewright" or carpenter. It is unknown if Nathaniel was also a carpenter.

On the morning of April 19, 1775, at the age of eighteen, John Tolman marched with the East Militia Company of Needham to the Lexington Alarm. On the afternoon of that day he received a musket ball in the chest at Menotomy, now Arlington, Massachusetts, where the Needham company were harassing the British troops in their retreat from Lexington and Concord. One of his companions on that day was Jonathan Gay, whose son Jonathan Gay, Jr. was to be the third owner of the house.

John Tolman apparently recovered quickly from his wound because he was present at the siege of Boston in October, 1775. His name also appears on the muster roll of the East Militia of January, 1776. In June of 1776 he signed up for six month's service in the "York" campaign, which ended with surrender of Burgoyne in October of that year.

(see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Clarke, George K.
Jones, Frederic

History of Needham, Mass. Boston, 1911
Old Houses in Needham, Needham, 1953

Files at the Needham Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 37,250 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Natick

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UMT References

A 119 3143710 41681381710
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Parcel One

Westerly, by Central Avenue by a curved line measuring 165.5 ft. more or less

N. Westerly, by the curved junction of said Central Avenue and Gay Street 36.14 ft.
more or less. (continued)

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 Candace Jenkins, Registration Director with the Needham Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date February, 1982
(617)

street & number 294 Washington St.

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Peter L. Weslowski

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date 4/21/82

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 6/1/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

EXP. 12/31/84

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National Park Service**

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Tolman-Gay House

Item number 8

Page 1

He was paid a bounty "for Ticonderoga" but he was apparently ordered back to Boston before the final battle of that campaign at Saratoga, because in October, 1776, he is listed as a sergeant at Roxbury.

He returned to Needham in 1778, to marry Elizabeth Fisher, but tradition has it that he thereafter returned to active duty and served for the rest of the war. When he finally returned home, he and his wife occupied the whole house, because his mother had remarried in 1777, and the property had been rented in the interval. He continued to serve in the militia, and he was commissioned as a captain in 1801. He was called up during the War of 1812, but the company did not leave Needham, and he was finally detached from service in 1814.

By 1783 he was again engaged at his trade; town records from 1783 to 1801 show a series of payments made to him for building coffins. Probably as a result of this work he served as sexton of the town's burying-ground from 1801-1804. He was also becoming involved in other town affairs. He was first elected as an assessor in 1797, and in 1801 he was agent of the town during the controversy over the division of the town, and he wrote the petition to the legislature which protested the division. This controversy dragged on until 1881, when the West Parish of Needham broke away and became the Town of Wellesley.

In 1804 John Tolman sold his property in Needham and moved to Vermont, where he died in 1835. In or about 1906 one of his descendants removed the bodies of John Tolman and his wife from Vermont and reinterred them in the Tolman family plot in the Needham Cemetery.

When he left for Vermont in 1804, John Tolman sold his house and land, which then consisted of thirty acres, to Jonathan Gay, Jr. the son of his old comrade-in-arms, Jonathan Gay, Sr. They had served together, not only in the early days of the war, but also in the "York" campaign.

The Gays were an old family in Needham. Jonathan's ancestor, Samuel Gay, became a landowner in 1683, three years after the purchase of the land of the town from the Indians. Jonathan Gay, Jr. was a schoolmaster in the town from 1803 to 1823. In 1914 he was elected as a representative to the General Court.

Jonathan Gay, Jr. and his descendants owned and occupied the house from 1804 until 1923, when it was finally sold out of the family. In recent years, much of the original thirty acres on which the house stood has been sold and subdivided, and the names of the streets in the subdivision bear the family names of descendants of Jonathan Gay, Jr.: Brackett Street, Gay Street and Smith Street. There is also Tolman Street, and a small pond called McIntosh Pond, which bears the name of another descendant of Jonathan Gay, Jr.

Since 1923, the house has had a succession of private owners who have maintained it well and preserved its historic character. Owners of the house since 1967 are Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Christophe.

EXP. 12/31/84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Tolman-Gay House

Continuation sheet

Item number 10 (Verbal Boundary Page 1

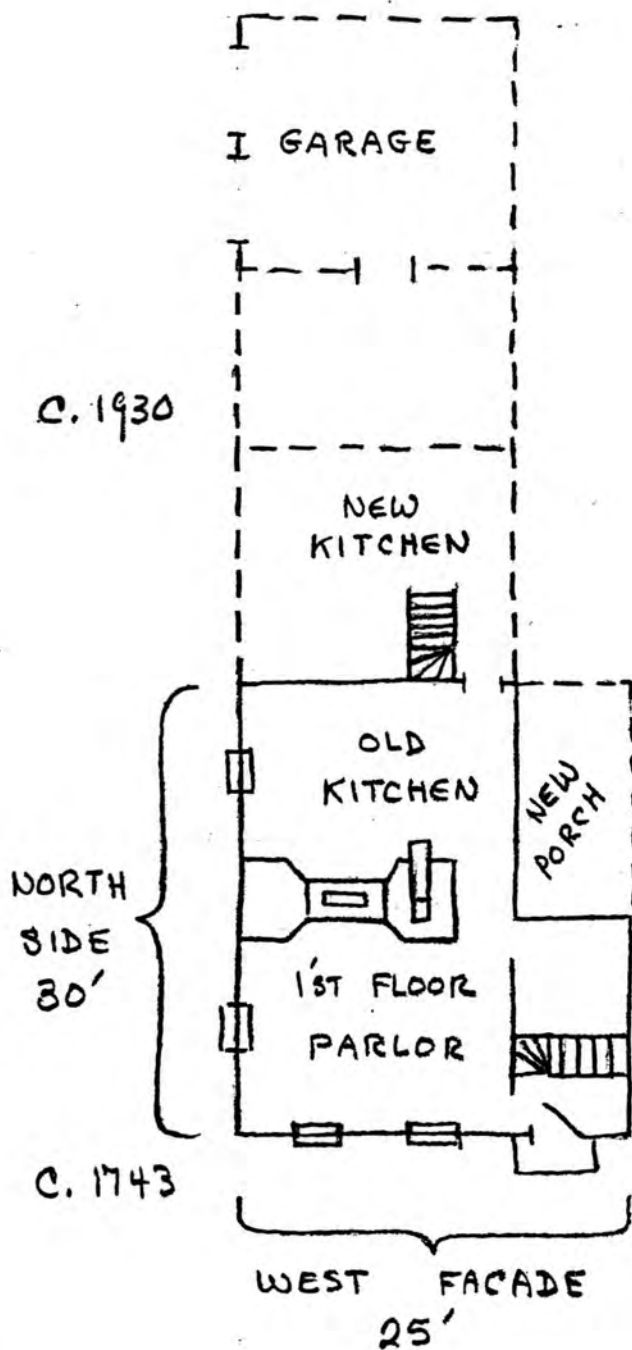
Description)

Northerly, by said Gay Street 21 ft. more or less
Easterly, by Lot #4, 81.69 ft. on the plan hereinafter mentioned 56.07 ft.
Northerly, again by said Lot #4, 81.69 ft.
Easterly, again by said Lot #4, 22.80 ft.
Northerly, again by said Lot #4, 58.59 ft.
Easterly, again by land of Richard W. and Elaine M. Casavant and by land of
William and Doris B. Hutcheson as shown on said plan 10 8.49 ft.
Southerly, by lot 3A, as shown on said plan, 166.36 ft., more or less,
Containing 24,964 sq. ft. of land.

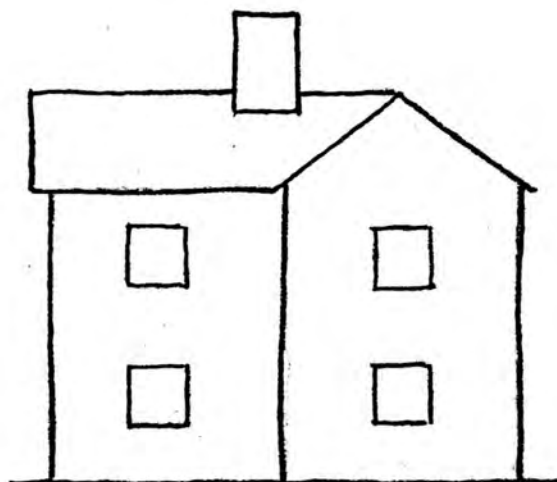
Parcel Two

Westerly, by Central Avenue, 80 ft.
Northerly, by Lot 5A as shown in the plan hereafter mentioned, 166 ft. more or less
Easterly, by land of William and Doris B. Hutcheson and land of Edward and
Catherine M. Hall, as shown on said plan, 148.83 ft.
Containing 12,286 sq. ft. of land

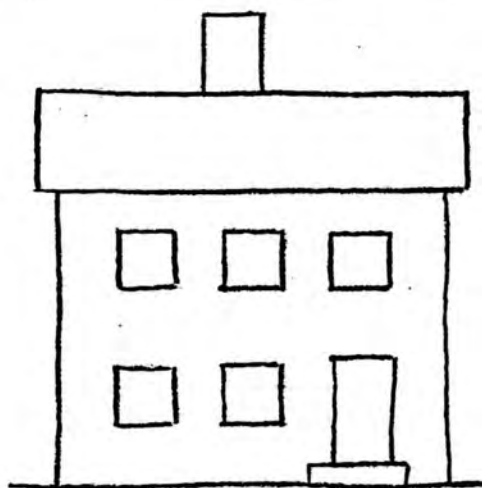
A.



B.



ORIGINAL SIDE VIEW
NORTH SIDE



ORIGINAL FRONT VIEW
WEST FRONT

TOLMAN - GAY HOUSE

C. 1743

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: Tolman-Gov House
State, County: MA, Norfolk
Federal Agency: _____

Working No. 4/28/82-1277
Fed. Reg. Date: FEB 1 1983
Date Due: 5/27/82 - 6/12/82

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6/1/82
Entered in the National Register ☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT

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

photos _____
maps _____

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

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
☐ see continuation sheet

omination 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	Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	

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 _____

UNIT 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: 202 272-35

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Tolman-Gay House
Needham, Mass.

Kenneth Watson
142 Hillcrest Road

1980

Photo # 1 of 2
North elevation

KENNETH C. WATSON
142 HILLCREST RD.
NEEDHAM, MA 02192

1196 Central Ave

North Elevation

Photo No. 1

Tolman-Gay House

NEEDHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Town Hall
Needham, MA 02192

R8-v-80



Tolman-Gay House
Needham, Mass.

Kenneth Watson
142 Hillcrest Road

1980

MISSION

Photo #2 of 2
South elevation

Tolman-Gay House

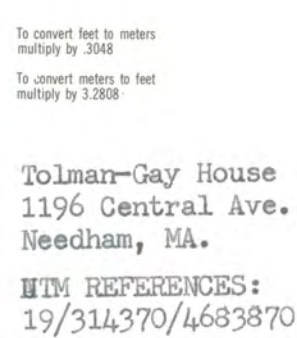
Photo No. 2

South Elevation

1196 CENTRAL AVE

KENNETH E. WATSON
142 HILLCREST RD.
NEEDHAM, MA 02192

R8-5-80



NEEDHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Town Hall
Needham, MA 02192

*Tolman-Gay House
Needham - Positive*

CJ

RECEIVED

APR 12 1982

MASS. HIST. COMM.

1196 Central Avenue
Needham, Massachusetts

April 11, 1982

Ms. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Dear Ms. Weslowski:

Thank you for your letter notifying us of the consideration of the Tolman-Gay house for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. We heartily endorse the nomination.

Built in 1743 this house remained within the original family descendants until the early part of this century. It has retained to this day a structure and finishing which are fine examples of early American, New England construction. It is worthy of your nomination and continued preservation.

Sincerely,

Philip A. and Carol H. Christophe

Philip A. and Carol H. Christophe

Carole H. Christophe



**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

April 22, 1982

Ms. Carol Shull, Acting Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Boston - Adams Nervine Asylum (state)
Boyalston - Keyes - Dakin House (local)
Grafton - Willard House and Clock Museum (state)
Hatfield - The Old Mill Site Historical District (local)
Holden - Rogers House (local)
Needham - Tolman - Gay House (local)
Newton - Slade - Hovey House (local) owner objects
Sturbridge - Oliver Wight House (state)
Upton - Knowlton Hat Factory (local)
Weston - Isaac Hobbs House (local)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
Registration Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CJ/amf



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



May 3, 2005

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

RE: Tolman-Gay House, Needham (Norfolk County), MA

Dear Ms. Shull:

It has recently come to our attention that the UTM reference for the Tolman-Gay House, Needham, Massachusetts, listed in the National Register in 1982, is incorrect. The correct UTM reference is: 19 314397 4683113. A corrected USGS map with the property location noted is enclosed.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure



TOLMAN - GAY HOUSE
NEEDHAM (NORFOLK)
MA
zone 19
314397 / 468313

CONVERSION SCALES

Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	500
6000	200
5000	100
4000	0
3000	0
2000	0
1000	0
0	0

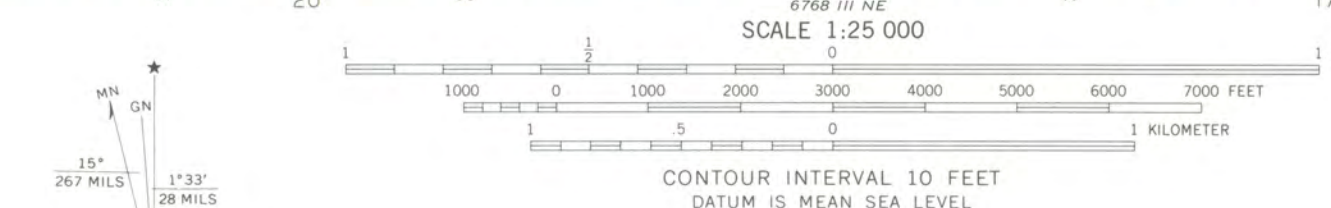
Feet | Meters

1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

To convert feet to meters multiply by .3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

PROJECT SITE →

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1940-1941
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1970
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route



NATICK, MASS.
N4215-W7115/7.5

1970

AMS 6768 IV SE-SERIES V814

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

Tolman-Gay House - Needham, Massachusetts



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Tolman-Gay House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Norfolk

DATE RECEIVED: 5/09/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/22/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 82004419

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6/22 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Accepted

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

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