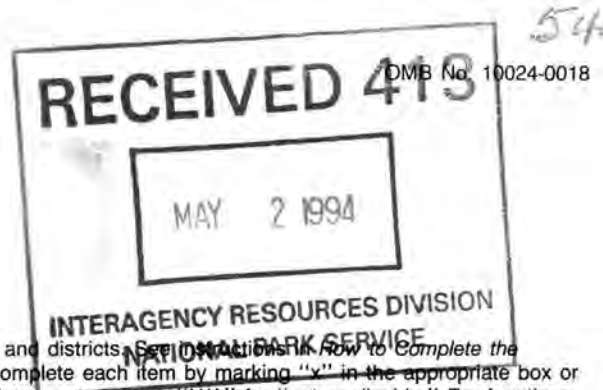


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District

other names/site number Williamstown Depot

2. Location

street & number Cole Avenue and North Hoosac Road N/A not for publication

city or town Williamstown N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Berkshire code 003 zip code 01267

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough 4/26/94
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough Date Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 6/3/94

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Name of Property

Berkshire County, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
		sites
2		structures
		objects
4	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: warehouse
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related
INDUSTRY: industrial storage

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: warehouse
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque
NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Marble: bluestone
walls Marble: bluestone, concrete, weatherboard

roof Slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIVISION

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7. DESCRIPTION

The town of Williamstown is located in the northwest corner of Berkshire County and the state of Massachusetts. It is bounded on the north and west by the states of Vermont and New York. The towns of North Adams, Clarksburg, and Adams bound the town on the east; the towns of New Ashford and Hancock are on the town's south line. The town boundaries are also defined by its topography: the ridge of the Taconic Range marks the boundary with New York, and the slopes of Mount Greylock, the highest mountain in Southern New England, form part of its eastern boundary. The most developed parts of the town are located in the flood plain of the Hoosic River, which flows out of North Adams in a northwesterly direction across Williamstown and into Vermont, eventually reaching the Hudson River at Stillwater, about 20 miles north of Albany. The Hoosic Valley provided the principal corridor for the town's rail connection to the Hudson Valley, and the river's flood plain north of the town center provided space for the railroad's freight classification yard, when Williamstown became a division point for the line in 1888.

The Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District is located on a strip of land on the river's north bank, which forms the district's south boundary. On the north it is bounded by the mainline railroad tracks of the Boston & Maine Railroad (now Guilford Transportation Industries). The district is bisected by Cole Avenue, which runs south-southwest from the rail yard, across the river about one half mile to the center of Williamstown. There are four buildings and two structures in the district. The two structures, both on the north side of Cole Avenue, are coal storage elevators. The two contributing buildings are a railroad passenger station, located at the south end of the district, and a freight station, at the north end. The two other buildings within the proposed district are mid-20th-century metal storage buildings and are considered noncontributing.

The district is considered part of a larger commercial and industrial area bordering the railroad tracks and the river. On the south bank of the river is the Mill Village Historic District (NR: 1983), dominated by the brick mill of the former Williamstown Manufacturing Company. Within the Williamstown Rail Yard district, the only actively used buildings are the two noncontributing metal warehouse buildings, and the passenger

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts

Section number 7 Page 2

station, which provides the office and storehouse for a local moving company. The architectural character of the district is largely industrial, with the exception of the railroad station, a low, single-story stone structure with Richardsonian Romanesque features. The district's distinction comes from its association with the railroad. These are the only rail-related structures in Williamstown, and the station is the only existing one in northern Berkshire County. At the time of the construction of the station, Williamstown was a major activity center for the railroad, and these remaining structures testify to that important role.

Williamstown Railroad Station, Map #1, Photo #1, Appendix A

The district's dominant feature is the Williamstown Railroad Station, built in 1898 to replace an 1859 wood-frame station which had burned the preceding December. Vaguely Richardsonian in appearance, the new station recalls the brownstone stations which Henry Hobson Richardson and his successor firm had earlier built for the Fitchburg's rival east-west line, the Boston and Albany Railroad. Large stone lintels over the window openings, rock-faced random-coursed ashlar stonework, and a slate roof contribute to this similarity. Unlike the B & A stations, the Williamstown station is constructed of Vermont marble, or "bluestone," imported from Rutland. The overhanging roof and the platform roof are supported by nicely finished heavy timbers, still in good conditions. Prominent on the station's west facade is a triangular gable window with sunburst glazing.

At the station's completion in December 1898, the *North Adams Transcript* described the unusual layout of the station:

The ticket and telegraph office is of hexagonal shape, the three front sides being formed by a large bay window in the front, and the remaining three sides extending back into the waiting room, making the latter almost a semi-circle. In the rear the building extends out several feet, and this part is cut up into a ladies' waiting room and toilet rooms. The gentlemen's toilet rooms are on the east side of the waiting room. On the west side of the structure is a stone portico, erected to add to the architectural beauty of the building rather than for any particular use. The baggage rooms stands 20 feet east and is joined to the depot by a covered platform. [North Adams Transcript 21 December 1898]

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 7 Page 3

Although the interior is largely intact, a second "office" has been carved out of the waiting room space by erecting a wall across the room, about a third of the distance around the "semi-circle." The building as a whole, now used as a storage warehouse for a local moving company, remains in good condition.

McMahon Coal Elevators, Map #2 Photo #2

Built between 1914 and the 1920s, the McMahon Coal Elevators consists of four 150-ton capacity concrete silos in a row oriented roughly northwest-southeast, parallel to the Hoosic River on the south and the Boston and Maine mainline to the north. Each silo is constructed of interlocking concrete "staves," bound by horizontal steel tension rings. Each stave is composed of multiple 3-foot sections. Coal discharged from a rail car into a hopper beneath the track was transported to the top of the silos by two vertical bucket-type elevators, which, like a small stair tower, were each enclosed in a wood-frame construction. At the top, a horizontal conveyor, also enclosed in a wood-frame enclosure, distributed the coal to a particular silo, where it was discharged and slid down a spiral chute following the inside perimeter of the concrete silo. The wood-frame parts of the structure are in fair-to-poor condition; the concrete silos are in very good condition.

Mason's Coal Elevator, Map #3 Photo #3

Mason's Coal Elevator, built in 1931, consists of three 100-ton silos made from interlocking concrete staves, bound together by numerous steel tension rings. The silos were charged by an inclined, electrically-driven vertical conveyor, consisting of a series of buckets, connected by pins to form a continuous belt. At the top the buckets emptied into one of three chutes which directed the coal to its intended silo. A gated opening near the base of the silo served to load trucks for house-to-house delivery. The elevator mechanism remains in excellent condition and appears to be operable.

Railroad Freight House and platform, Map #4 Photo #4

This is a wood-frame, one-story structure, whose earliest section is believed to have been constructed in 1879. A barn-like structure of sawn heavy timbers with mortised joints, the structure also retains a well-worn, heavy plank floor. Attached

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 7 Page 4

at the rear of the structure is an open freight platform with a roof supported on a row of single posts. There is a mid-20th-century addition to the front (east) end of the building, and the south side where a covered platform was enclosed in 1956 with wood-frame and metal siding. In spite of additions and alterations, the basic frame of the freight house remains intact. The building is in good condition, but is presently unused.

There are two intrusions on the site, both 20th-century metal storage buildings. The larger of these, the Connors Brothers Moving Company (Map B), is located only twenty-five feet from the railroad station and can only be considered an adverse influence on the historic character of the station. The second building (Map A), located near the coal elevators and freight house, is not out of context with the industrial nature of this part of the site.

Metal Storage Building, Map #A Photo #5

This is a noncontributing building built in the 1950s.

Metal Warehouse Building, Map #B Photo #6

This is a noncontributing building built in the 1960s.

Archaeological Description

No prehistoric sites are located within the boundaries of the proposed district, however, it is possible that sites are present. At least two prehistoric sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile). In addition, locational characteristics of the property including a flat, well drained riverine terrace bordering the Hoosic River are favorable for prehistoric site locations. Given the above information and the impacts from railroad facility construction, a low to moderate potential exists for significant prehistoric survivals.

A high potential exists for significant historic archaeological survivals within the district. Structural remains may survive from the original 1859 wood station which burned in 1897 (Appendix B).

(end)

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Name of Property

Berkshire County, Massachusetts
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
MA-1080
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1898-1944

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gifford-Wood Company

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District

Name of Property

Berkshire County, Massachusetts
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	648100	4731240
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	18	648300	4730950

3	18	648240	4730900
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	18	648080	4731210

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

Andrus Burr, Williamstown Historical Commission, with Peter Stott, NR Editing
name/title Consultant and Betsy Friedberg, MHC, National Register Director

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 1994

street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name see continuation sheet

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 8 Page 1

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District possesses integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship. The features of this district represent a key era in the development of the town of Williamstown, when the railroad was the dominant means of travel into and out of town for both goods and people. The rail yard provided a focus for the growth of the town in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and for the development of the Fitchburg Railroad. The district provides the only extant railroad station in the northern section of Berkshire County, and the structures are the last remaining vestiges of a once-important and active railroad yard. The freight depot represents the 19th century activity, and the coal silos the continuing 20th century activity. The Williamstown Rail Yard and Station are of local significance and meet criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Williamstown's earliest history begins with the aborted laying out of the town of West Hoosac by Col. Ephraim Williams. In 1739 Williams (1715-1755) had been named to a party of surveyors by order of the Massachusetts provincial government, ordered to lay out two townships, East and West Hoosac, at the headwaters of the Hoosic River. Harassed by New Yorkers disputing the province boundary, the Massachusetts surveyors were not able to complete the project for another ten years. During the French and Indian War, West Hoosac was the site of a frontier fort, and many of the town's original settlers were soldiers who served on the frontier, either in Fort West Hoosac or Fort Massachusetts, four miles to the east. The town was incorporated in 1765 and named Williamstown for Col. Williams, who had been killed in an ambush by French and Indian forces near Lake George on September 8, 1755. He left a large part of his estate to the town for the purpose of founding a free school, which in 1793 became Williams College.

The earliest settlers were of English origin via the Deerfield and upper Connecticut river valleys. Later settlers, around the turn of the 18th century, came from Rhode Island, and from the Scotch-Irish communities of New Hampshire. For the first forty years of the 19th century, Williamstown's economy was entirely agricultural based, and the population remained steady at about 2,000 people. Isolated by mountain ranges to the east and west,

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 8 Page 2

Williamstown was a very remote location until the opening of the railroad in 1859.

The earliest railroad to cross the county had been the Western Railroad (later part of the Boston and Albany Railroad), completed in 1842 through Pittsfield. Six years later, the Pittsfield and North Adams Railroad opened, to link the northern part of the Berkshire County with the Western's through route. The route through Williamstown was slower in being constructed, since it was wrapped up in the struggle to build a tunnel through Hoosac Mountain, to form a single east-west route linking the Connecticut and Hudson valleys. The Troy and Greenfield Railroad had not yet reached Williamstown when work was halted until the tunnel should be ready. The company, then under the direction of the tunnel's engineer, Herman Haupt, offered to extend the line eastward to Williamstown and North Adams if the town would subscribe to 3 percent of the railroad's stock. Much to North Adams' disappointment, Williamstown initially refused. Under pressure from businessmen of North Adams and Williamstown, town meetings in the Spring of 1858 finally elicited the necessary votes for the stock subscription. A key condition of the stock purchase was that all trains stop in Williamstown. The line connecting Williamstown and North Adams with Troy opened in June 1859.

The location of the station was also a matter of considerable debate. Although some town residents had advocated a downriver location at Moody's Bridge (where the present US Route 7 crosses the Hoosic), this location won less favor with many of the town's businessmen. The *North Adams Transcript* recalled the debate:

A lively campaign was waged, some of the leading business men going so far as to say that if the Moody bridge location was selected they would never ship a pound of freight over the road, but would haul all their freight to North Adams, to which point it could be brought by the Boston & Albany road from Pittsfield. [*North Adams Transcript* 19 March 1898]

John Cole's offer to give the land for the widening of the narrow lane (now Cole Avenue) also helped decide the town fathers to accept the present location.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
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Section number 8 Page 3

The opening of the railroad brought increases in economic activity and population. The Green River Mills, a grain mill on Water Street, opened the same year that the railroad opened; and the Williamstown Manufacturing Company, a manufacturer of print cloths, was organized in 1865 on land opposite the depot. By 1885 the firm employed 200 men and women. Paul Chadbourne, Williams College President, was its principal stockholder and landowner.

Nevertheless, it was the completion of the Hoosac Tunnel in 1875, that brought the most substantial change to the economic and cultural life of Williamstown and the North Berkshire area. From 1875 on, Williamstown was a relatively easy half-day's train journey from both Boston and New York City. In the 1880s and 1890s, there were twelve daily passenger trains stopping in Williamstown. The town's population grew to over 5,000 by the 1890s and included an influx of French Canadian families, many of whom worked in the mills. The greatly increased traffic on the road must have encouraged an expansion of the freight facilities, and the earliest portion of the existing freight house is believed to date from this period.

The district's period of greatest activity, however, dates to the establishment of the classification yard, shortly after the line was taken over by the Fitchburg Railroad. In 1887, the Fitchburg took over the Troy & Greenfield Railroad, by then in the hands of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which had paid for the construction of the tunnel in return for the company's common stock. A year later, in 1888, the Fitchburg reorganized the line, making Williamstown the division point between the Western and Tunnel divisions. As a consequence, the railroad established an important freight classification yard here. All Western Division and Tunnel Division freights terminated at, or originated at Williamstown. At Williamstown, slower trains could be shunted to sidings to allow passenger trains and fast freights take precedence. Here, engines needed for the Tunnel Division, could be attached to trains heading east and detached from westbound trains. The yard included a nine-stall roundhouse with a turntable, enginehouse, machine shop, and sixteen sidings. The site of the roundhouse, located east of the railroad tracks, is not included in the boundaries of the nomination as it no longer retains integrity.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 8 Page 4

In 1900, the Fitchburg, fearing the competition that would result from the pending merger of the New York Central and Boston & Albany roads, agreed to a long-term lease of the company by the Boston and Maine Railroad [Baker, Formation of the New England Railroad Systems, p. 198]. The new owners streamlined operations, and in 1911 electrified the short stretch of track through the Hoosac Tunnel. The result was that heavy freights could be run through without being re-constituted. Neither the helper engines based in Williamstown nor the classification yard were needed, and so the roundhouse and machine shop were soon closed. The line was reorganized as a single "Fitchburg Division," a designation that the railroad retained through the life of the Boston & Maine. Photographs from the period indicate that most of the railroad buildings, shown on the 1904 map of Williamstown had been demolished by the World War I era.

Despite the demolition of these buildings, the area continued in active use as an important railroad facility as represented by the coal storage silos. Pennsylvania coal was a major freight item throughout the last quarter of the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century. Early facilities had consisted of bunkers approached by a siding track, occasionally ramped. Two dealers, McMahon and Mason, had extensive business in Williamstown and the surrounding area. Williams College, with a large central steam-heating plant, was a major customer for coal until 1970. The coal elevators, built between 1914 and 1931, saw active use until after the second World War, when the use of coal for domestic heating declined. Both elevator complexes saw some use until the 1970s.

After World War I, Williamstown's industrial activity declined, and consequently the population dropped, reaching a low of 3,700 in 1920. Although the town's population has since recovered (today's population stands at over 8,000), the town's economy is now based around Williams College, the second largest employer in Berkshire County and the largest landholder in Williamstown. The post World-War II decline of rail service resulted in sharp cuts in passenger service. Service west of Williamstown was the first to be discontinued, making Williamstown the end of the line from Boston. Passenger service was retained on the line going east until December 1, 1958, only a few months short of the one hundredth anniversary of passenger service in Williamstown.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 5

The oldest of the structures in the district and the only surviving evidence of the rail yard's major period of activity, is the Freight House (Map #4, Photo #4), believed to have been constructed in 1879. An addition to the northwest was built a few years later. The freight house closed in 1939. The last freight agent was Mr. Charles K. Potter. In 1943 the building became a Wirthmore feed and grain store managed by Mr. Ralph Churchill. The store became an Agway outlet in 1968 and continued in this use until 1992 when the building was vacated.

The Williamstown Railroad Station (Map #1, Photo #1) was built in the midst of the most active period of the rail yard, and reflects the importance with which the railroad company viewed the town. Early in the planning process, it was announced that the new station would be "similar in many features to the one recently erected in Cambridge..." ["Depot to be of Stone," *North Adams Transcript* 2 February 1898], probably a reference to the great stone station erected by the Fitchburg in Cambridge, Massachusetts, only one year earlier. Designed by the Boston architect, W. W. Lummus, the Cambridge station was an imposing 2-story granite and sandstone Richardsonian Romanesque station with a central clock tower and hipped roof. Although the final design for the Williamstown station does not appear to have borrowed significantly from the Cambridge design, the Williamstown station brought style and a contemporary architectural design to Williamstown that was appreciated. The *North Adams Transcript* commented in December 1898: "The new depot is so nearly completed that it is now possible for one to realize what a handsome and modern station the town will have."

Students from Williams College were probably among its most frequent users, and for thousands of new students, the station was their first experience of Williamstown.

Although passenger service was discontinued in December 1958, the building retained its use as a freight agency. With the closing of the freight house in 1939, the freight agency had been relocated to the station. Major shippers were Cornish Wire Company, Mt. Hope Farm, the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Williams College, and Wirthmore Stores. The agent was required to handle less-than-carload (LCL) shipments. In 1957, the agent reported 46 carloads out and 525 carloads in; LCL shipments were considerably less: 70 out and 60 in for the same period. To achieve estimated annual savings of close to \$7,000, the railroad

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts

Section number 8 Page 6

closed the agency in June 1959. Carloads only would be accepted, under the jurisdiction of the agent at North Adams. The following month, the station building itself was sold to Connors Brothers Trucking Company, who remains the owners of the building.

The McMahon Coal Elevators (Map #2, Photo #2) were built by the Gifford-Wood Company of Hudson, New York, and it is presumed that the same company erected the Mason elevators, as they are of similar construction with many identical parts. The easternmost elevator and 150-ton silo was built in 1914 for the storage of coal by the Williams College heating plant. Prior to this, coal had been stored in open piles and loaded in horse-drawn wagons by hand-shoveling. The elevators represented a significant advance in the handling of this material. Three more 150-ton silos were added in the 1920s. These were joined at the top by a wood structure enclosing a horizontal conveyor. The abandonment of these structures marked the sudden change-over from coal to oil and gas for home heating, and the conversion in 1970 of the Williams College Heating plant to oil fuel.

Mason's Coal Elevator (Map #3, Photo #3) was built in 1931 to replace a previous system involving open bunkers charged from above by hopper cars, and discharged into trucks by an electrically-driven belt-type conveyor on wheels. This system was problematic as the coal was often frozen into large lumps in winter. In addition, the open storage of coal was a security problem, prone to pilferage.

Architect / Builder:

The archives of the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society did not yield the name of an architect or designer for the Williamstown Station. It may well have been the work of the Fitchburg Railroad engineering staff, as newspaper accounts describe the frequent visits of Chief Engineer F. O. Melcher and engineer Cushing. The *North Adams Transcript* for August 6, 1898, reported the name of the building contractors as Porter and Hannum of North Adams.

The Gifford-Wood Company of Hudson was one of the nation's leading builders of coal and ice handling equipment. Gifford Brothers, an early 19th-century iron foundry in Hudson, had been one of the pioneers in the manufacture of ice-house elevator

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 8, 9 Page 7, 1

machinery. In 1905 the company was merged with the William T. Wood Company of Arlington, Massachusetts, established in 1834 to manufacture ice-cutting tools. For several years the company maintained two plants, in Hudson and in Arlington.

Archaeological Significance

Since patterns of prehistoric settlement in Williamstown are poorly understood, any surviving sites could be significant. Prehistoric sites in this area can help document the role of prehistoric settlement along the Hoosic River within the larger Hudson River drainage which lies predominantly in New York. Prehistoric sites in this area may also contain evidence of interaction with Native people to the east in the Connecticut River drainage whose tributaries drain neighboring towns east of Williamstown.

Historic archaeological remains at the Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District have the potential to document the earliest phase of railroad development which played a key role in the birth of local railroad facilities and the industrial development of the town. Structural remains of the 1859 station and related features can help reconstruct the original layout of the station and potential activities which occurred in the station locale. Reconstruction of the earlier station can be of particular importance since the Williamstown Station is the only existing station of it's period in northern Berkshire County.

(end)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Baker, George Pierce, *The Formation of the New England Railroad Systems: A Study of Railroad Combination in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968).

Barnes and Farnham, Atlas of Berkshire County, Massachusetts (Pittsfield, Mass. Barnes & Farnham, 1904).

Boston & Maine Railroad, Business Correspondence 1950-75.
"Massachusetts: Williamstown" Archive Box, Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society Archives, Mogan Center, Lowell, Massachusetts.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County),
Massachusetts

Section number 9 Page 2

Bradlee, Francis B.C., *The Boston & Maine Railroad: A History of the Main Road with its Tributary Lines* (Salem, Mass: Essex Institute, 1921).

Brooks, Robert R., *Williamstown, The First Two Hundred Years* (2nd ed., Williamstown: Williamstown Historical Commission, 1974).

Cambridge Historical Commission, *Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge* volume 5 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977).

Child, Hamilton, comp., *Gazetteer of Berkshire County, Massachusetts, 1725-1885* (Syracuse, NY: Journal Office, Jan. 1885).

Harlow, Alvin F., *Steelways of New England* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1946).

Historic American Buildings Survey, "Williamstown Railroad Station, Williamstown, Massachusetts." MA-1080. 7 sheets (1973), prepared under the direction of Dr. T.A. Sande, Williams College.

History of Berkshire County (New York: J.B. Beers & Co., 1885).

North Adams Transcript, multiple issues.

Interviews

Ralph C. Mason, current operator of Ralph C. Mason Oil Co., Inc., telephone interview 6 March 1992.

Ralph Churchill, retired manager of Wirthmore Feed Store, formerly located in Freight House, interviewed 7 September 1993.

Appendix A: Williamstown Railroad Station, Historic American Building Survey #MA-1080.

Appendix B: Original Williamstown Railroad Station, built 1859, burned 1897.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries for the Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District are depicted on the attached Williamstown Assessor's Map 119 (1"=100'), and consists of lot 17 and a portion of lot 118-90, extending north from Cole Avenue for 300 yards.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries were chosen to include all the remaining resources of the Williamstown Rail Yard and Station. The edges are defined by the Hoosic River on the west and the railroad right of way to the east.

(end)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Williamstown Rail Yard and
Station Historic District
Williamstown (Berkshire County)
Massachusetts**

Section number _____ Page _____

Property owners:

* Connors Brothers
370 Cole Avenue
Williamstown, MA 01267

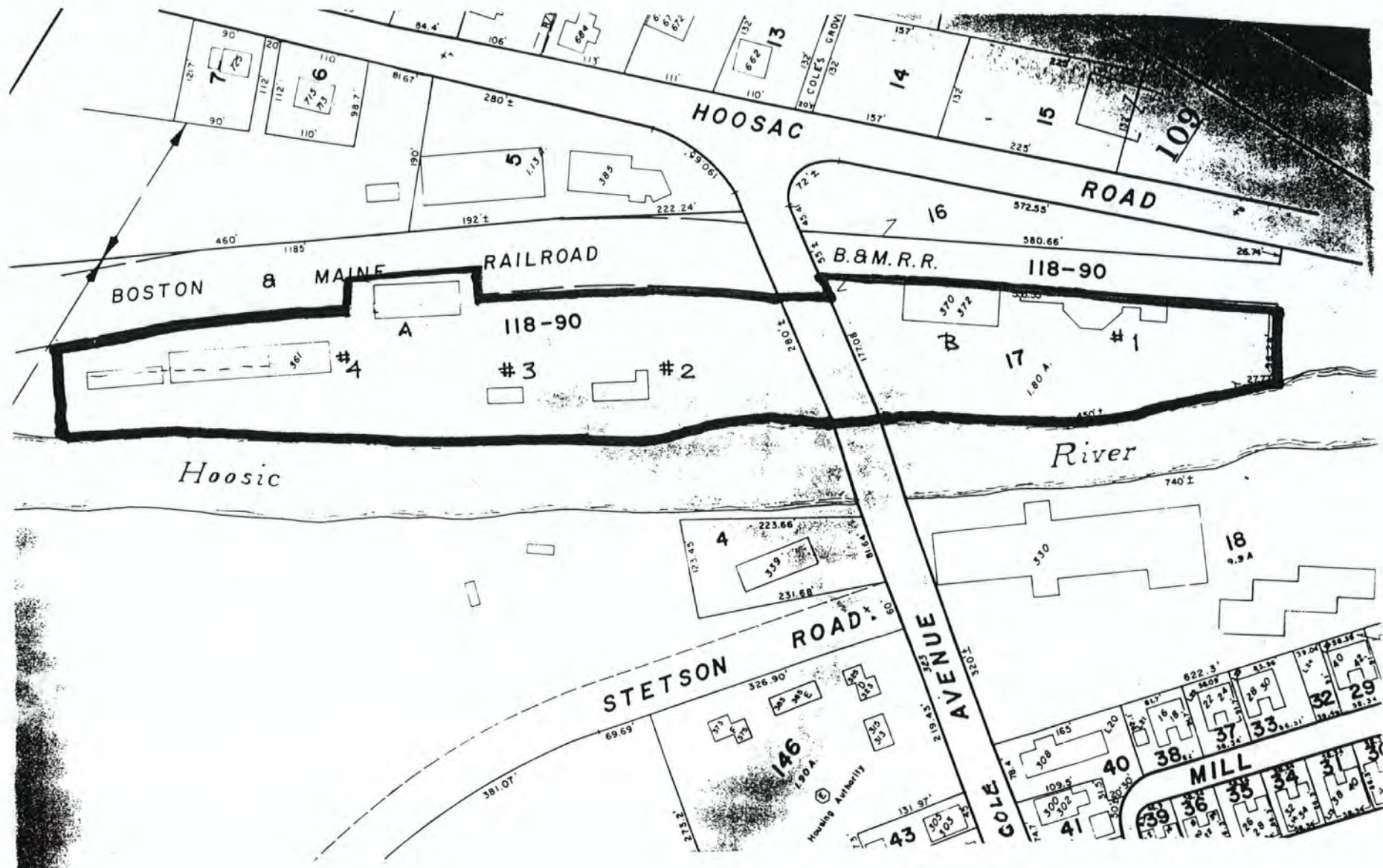
Williams College
Williamstown, MA 01267

Mr. Ralph Mason
Northwest Hill Road
Williamstown, MA 01267

* Guilford Transportation Industries, Inc.
Iron Horse Park
North Billerica, MA 01862

Donald Sibley
Director, Corporate Real Estate
Agway, Inc.
P.O. Box 4933
Syracuse, NY 13221

* indicates owner objection (see attached letters)



Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Hist. Dist.
 Williamstown (Berkshire County)
 Massachusetts

REDUCED SCALE



DETAIL FROM:

TOWN OF	
WILLIAMSTOWN	
SCALE	SHEET NO.
1"=100'	119
GORDON E. AINSWORTH & ASSOC., INC.	
SURVEYING • MAPPING • ENGINEERING	
SOUTH DEERFIELD, MASS.	



Appendix B: Original Williamstown Railroad
Station, built 1859, burned 1897

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD AND STATION HISTORIC DISTRICT
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

DISTRICT DATA SHEET

Map #	Historic Name	Date	Status	Style	Resource
1	Williamstown Railroad Sta.	1898	C	Richardsonian Romanesque	B
2	McMahon Coal Elevators	1914-1922	C	Industrial	ST
3	Masons Coal Elevator	1931	C	Industrial	ST
4	Railroad Freight House	1879	C	Utilitarian	B
A	Storage Shed	ca. 1955	NC	Utilitarian	B
B	Connor's Bros. Warehouse	ca. 1965	NC	Utilitarian	B

TOTAL RESOURCES: 4 Contributing

2 Noncontributing

2 Contributing Buildings
2 Contributing Structures

2 Noncontributing Buildings

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Berkshire

DATE RECEIVED: 5/02/94 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/17/94
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/02/94 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/16/94
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 94000544

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 6/3/94 DATE

Entered in the
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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

CLASSIFICATION

☐ count ☐ resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

☐ historic ☐ current

DESCRIPTION

☐ architectural classification
☐ materials
☐ descriptive text

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

☐ acreage ☐ verbal boundary description
☐ UTMs ☐ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

☐ sketch maps ☐ USGS maps ☐ photographs ☐ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Signed _____ Phone _____

Date _____



RAILROAD STATION
COLE AVE.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

1

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW OF STATION FROM NORTH

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD ; STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 1 of 14



McMAHON'S COAL ELEVATOR
COLE AVE.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

(2)

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW FROM EAST

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD : STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 2 of 14



MASON'S COAL ELEVATOR
COLE AVE.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW FROM NORTH-EAST

(3)

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD & STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 3 & 14



FREIGHT HOUSE

COLE AVE.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

4

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW FROM NORTH

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD : STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 4 of 14



METAL STORAGE BUILDING
COLE AVE
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

(A)

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW FROM WEST

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD : STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 5 of 14



CONNORS BROS. MOVING & STORAGE
Agents for
NORTH AMERICAN VAN LINES

NO
TRESPASSING

METAL STORAGE BUILDING
COLE AVE
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA.

(B)

PHOTO BY ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1992

VIEW FROM NORTH

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD & STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

PHOTO # 6 of 14



WILLIAMSTOWN TAIL
YARD ; STATION H.D.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CITY)



PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
FALL 1993

PHOTO # 7 of 14

McMATHON'S ELEVATOR



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD;
STATION H.D.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY)

MASON'S & MCMANUS'S

ELEVATORS

PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
1993

PHOTO # 8 of 14



WILLIAMSTOWN TRAIL
YARD: STATION H.D.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CNTY)



PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
1993

PHOTO #9 of 14

RIGHT HOUSE



BAGGAGE ROOM
R.R. STATION



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD
STATION H.D.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY)

PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
1993

PHOTO # 10 of 14



MASON'S ELEVATOR



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD
(STATION H.D.)

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY)

PHOTO: ANDREW'S BURR
1993

PHOTO # 11 of 14



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD
' STATION H.D.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY)

PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
1993

PHOTO # 12 of 14

3

MASON'S ELEVATOR



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD
STATION, H.D.
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY)

MASON'S ELEVATOR

3

PHOTO: ANDRUS BURR
1993

PHOTO # 13 of 14



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD
STATION H.D.

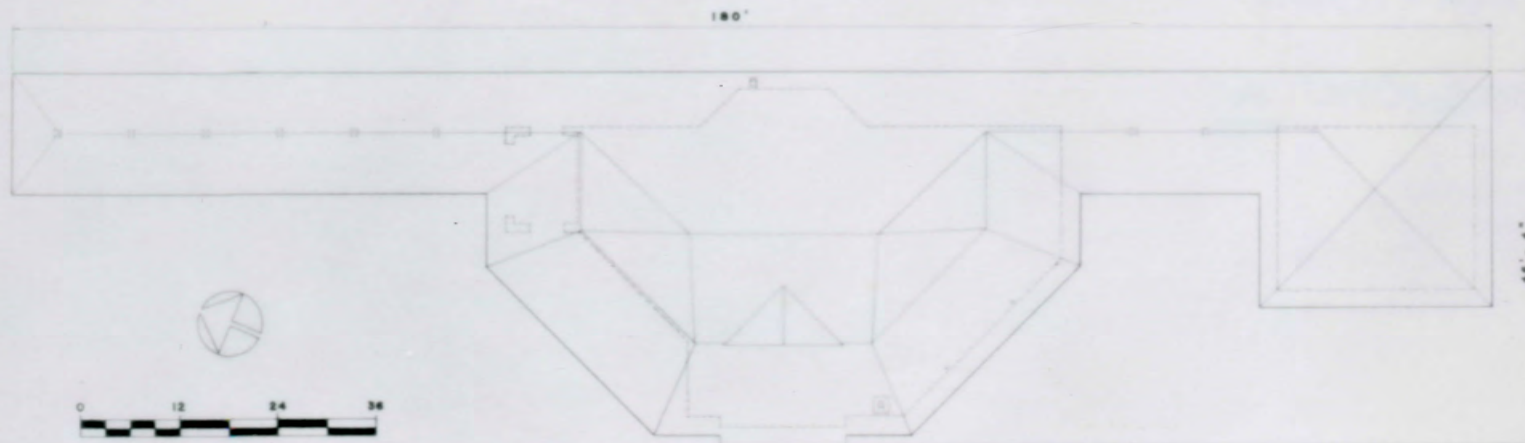
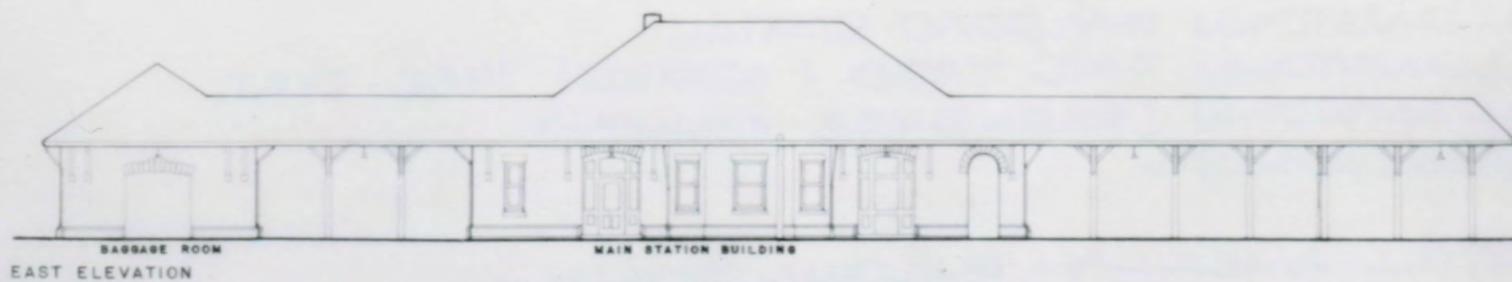
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
(BERK. CTY.)

PHOTO: ANDRUS RIVER
1993

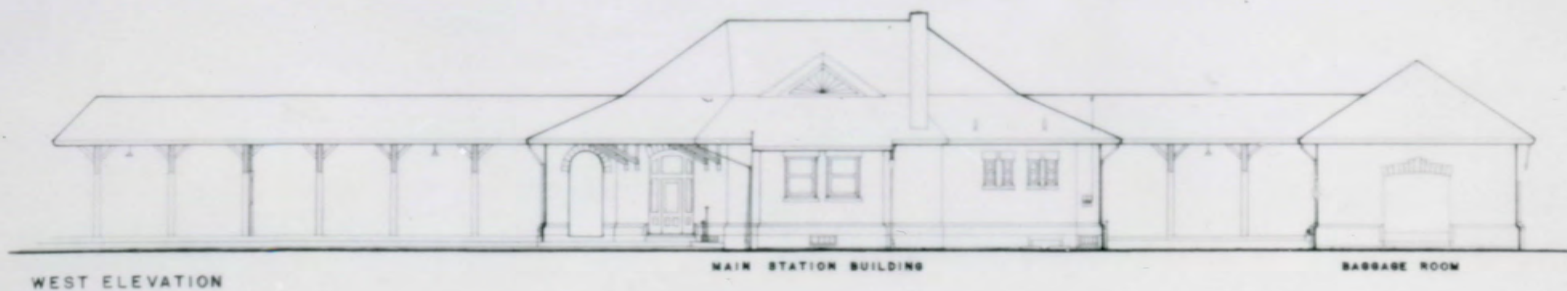
PHOTO # 14 of 14

3

MASON'S ELEVATOR



ROOF PLAN



DRAWN BY JOSEPH D. TACKER, 1975

PREPARED AT WILLIAMS COLLEGE

UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NAME AND LOCATION OF STRUCTURE
WILLIAMSTOWN RAILROAD STATION

WILLIAMSTOWN

BERKSHIRE COUNTY

MASSACHUSETTS

SURVEY NO.

HISTORIC AMERICAN

BUILDINGS SURVEY

SHEET 2 OF 7 SHEETS

DATE OF SURVEY

1975

WILLIAMSTOWN RAILROAD STATION
WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD ; STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
#MA-1080

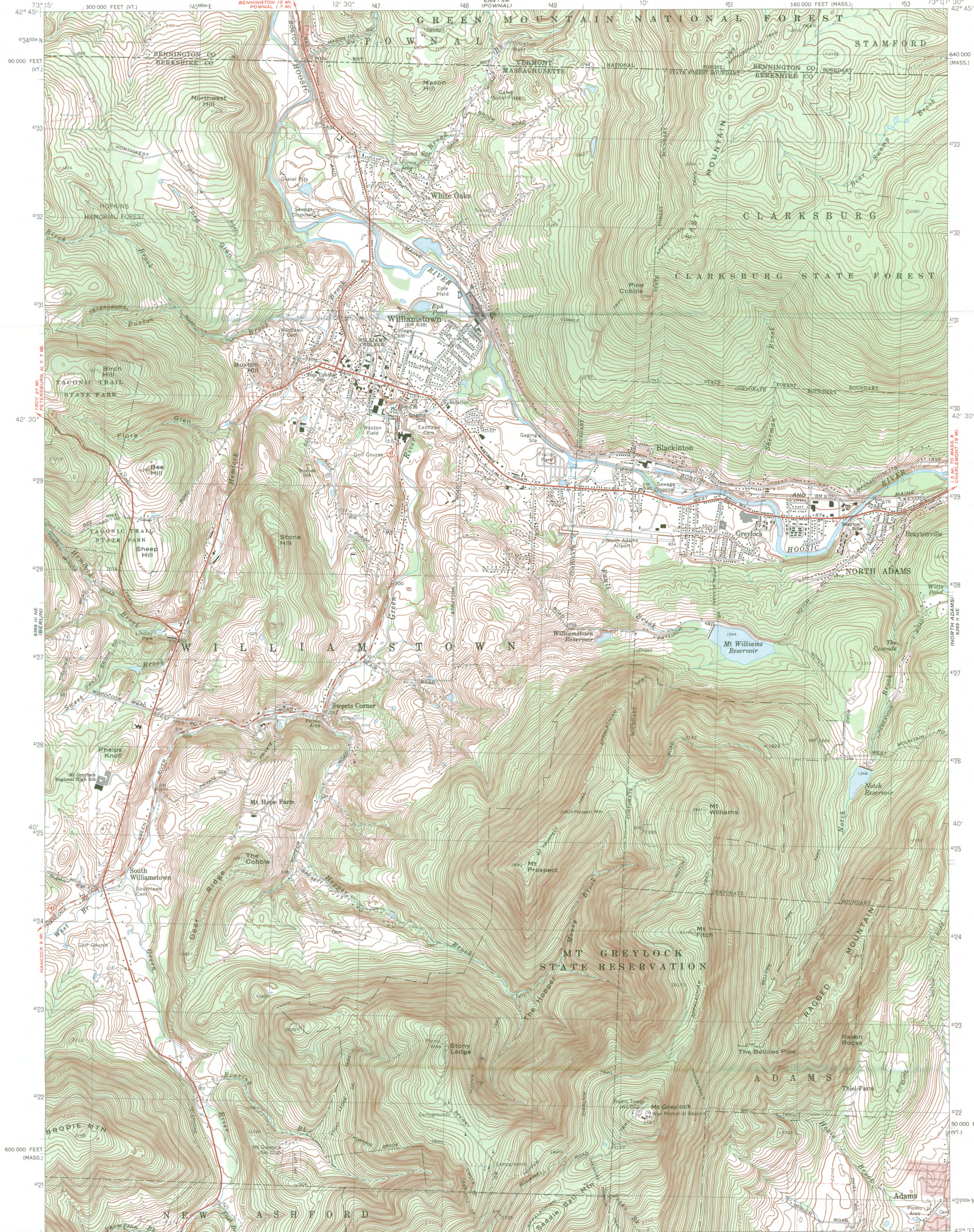
APPENDIX: A

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD & STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

WILLIAMSTOWN QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS-VERMONT
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



CONVERSION SCALES

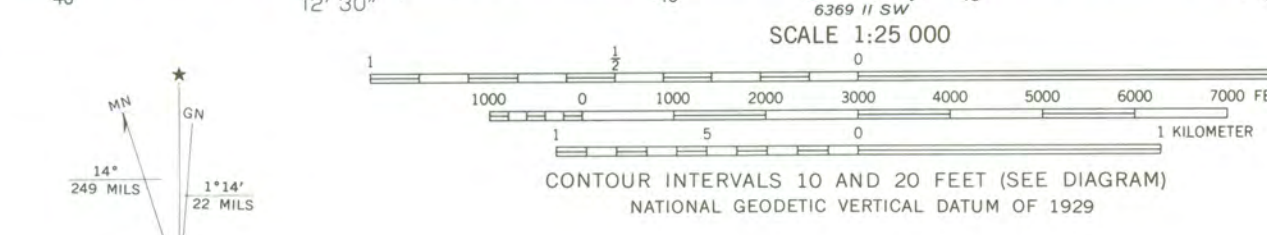
Feet	Meters
15000	4500
14000	4000
13000	3500
12000	3000
11000	2500
10000	2000
9000	1500
8000	1000
7000	500
6000	2000
5000	1500
4000	1000
3000	500
2000	2000
1000	500
0	0

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

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1942. Field checked 1944. Revised from aerial
photographs taken 1972. Field checked 1973
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Vermont coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 5 meters south and
36 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



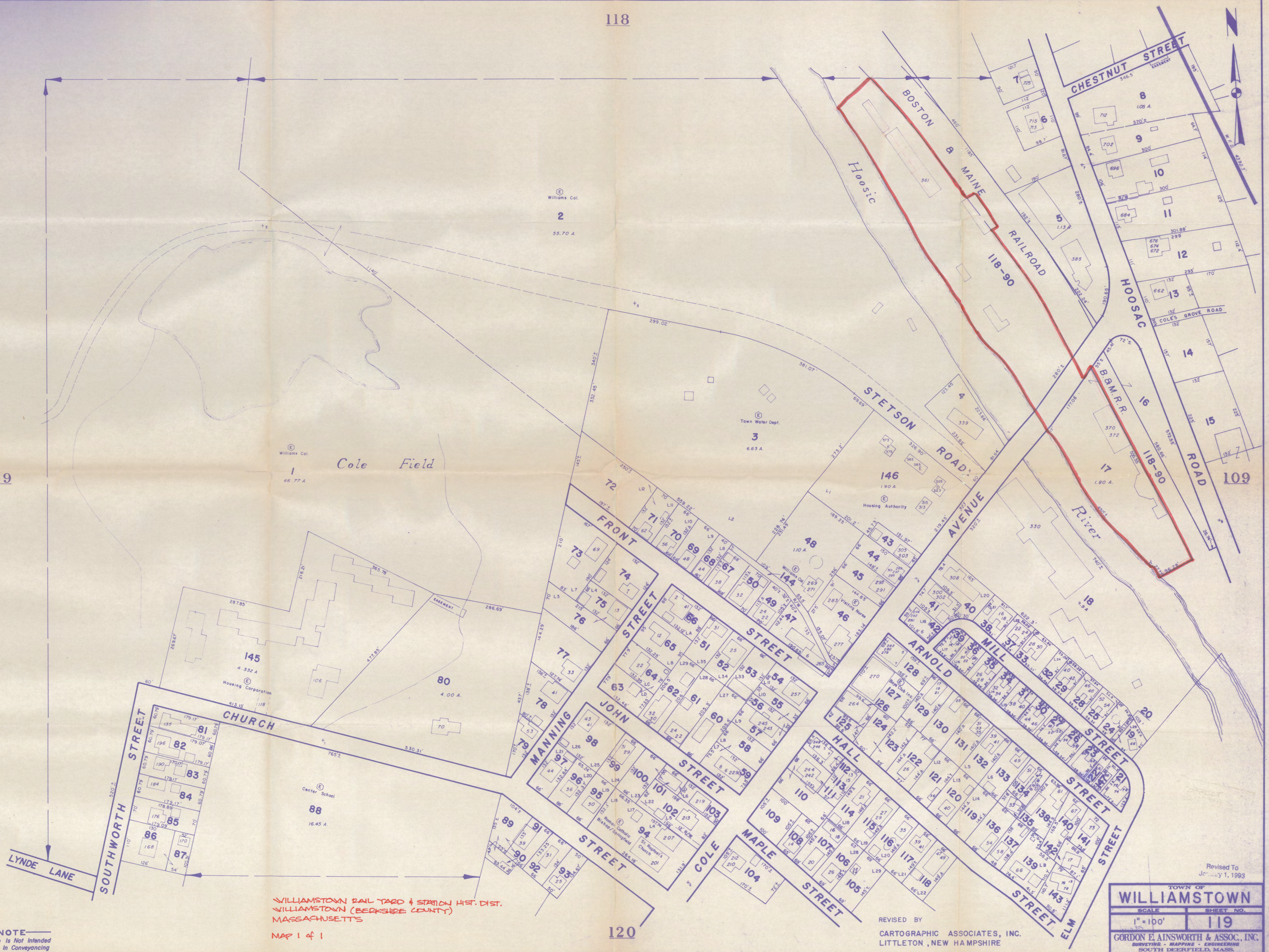
ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road

Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS. - VT.
42073-F2-TF-025
1973
DMA 6369 II NW-SERIES V814



WILLIAMSTOWN RAIL YARD & STATION HIST. DIST.
WILLIAMSTOWN (BERKSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

MAP 1 of 1



Phone ~~xxx-xxx-xxx~~ 458-8141

WM
BF
✓

CONNORS BROS. MOVING & STORAGE

370 Cole Avenue
WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 01267

RECEIVED

MAR 14 1994

March 10, 1994 MASS. HIST. COMM.

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Judith B. McDonough, Ex. Director
State Historic Preservation Officer
80 Boylston Street
Boston, Ma. 02116

RE: Railyard & Station located
at 370 Cole Avenue
Williamstown, Ma. 01267

Dear Ms. McDonough,

As owner of the above property and at the advice of my attorney, I do not wish to have my property listed on the National Register. Please be advised that at this time I am objecting to this nomination.

Sincerely,

Ellen Bayliss

Ellen Bayliss

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
BERKSHIRE, ss

Subscribed and sworn before me this 11th day of March, 1994.

Maureen N. McGuire
Notary Public

MAUREEN N. MCGUIRE
Notary Public
My Commission Expires
September 16, 1994

402 Amherst Street - Suite 300
Nashua, NH 03063-1287
603 595 1614
603 595 2414 FAX

B-✓ LHM
LAF BF
(X) 12106 VDK
(1254) NR FILE

GUILFORD TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRIES, INC.

April 4, 1994

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED
P 865 069 132

RECEIVED

APR 08 1994

MASS. HIST. COMM.

Mr. Allen Johnson
Massachusetts Historical Commission
80 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

Re: Williamstown Railyard and Station
Williamstown, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Pursuant to your recent letter and our subsequent conversation, please be advised that the Boston and Maine Corporation does not own the railroad depot, coal elevators or the four remaining freight houses which occupy the former railyard in the vicinity of 361 Cole Avenue. While the Boston and Maine Corporation is the land owner, the freight houses are owned by Agway, Inc. and the coal elevators are owned by Williams College. Further, the depot together with land underneath in the vicinity of 370 Cole Avenue, is owned by Ellen Bayliff.

The buildings owned by Agway were formerly under a lease agreement which Agway has subsequently terminated. As part of this termination, Agway is required to remove the buildings from the site and restore the premises to its original condition.

It is my understanding that your letter was written at the request of the Williamstown Historical Commission who is currently in the process of placing this site on the historical register. Please be advised that the Boston and Maine Corporation does not desire this site be placed on the historical register as it would impair the railroad's use of the premises.

Mr. Allen Johnson
Page Two
April 4, 1994

Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me.

Sincerely,

BOSTON AND MAINE CORPORATION

By: Steven R. Towle
Steven R. Towle
Assistant to the Vice President

Subscribed and sworn to before me, in my presence,
this 4th day of April, 1994, a Notary
Public in and for the County of Hillsborough,
State of New Hampshire.

Ingeborg McGuffee
Notary Public
My commission expires February 13, 1996

SKT:img

c: National Register of Historic Places
(above Via Certified Mail P 865 069 131)
Ellen Bayliff
Donald Sibley



April 22, 1994

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Williamstown Rail Yard and Station Historic District,
Williamstown (Berkshire County), Massachusetts, 01267.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has 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. Of a total of 5 owners, the MHC has received 2 letters of objection.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Andrus Burr, Williamstown Historical Commission
Charles Bonenti, Chair., Williamstown Historical Commission
Steven Ledoux, Town Manager
Joyce Jack, Librarian, Williamstown Public Library
Peter Stott, Preservation Consultant