

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

For NPS use only

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

received FEB 2 1987

date entered MAR 6 1987

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

1. Name

historic Ethel Apartment House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 70 Patton Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Springfield

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Hampden

code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Joseph Phillips

street & number 36 Churchill Street

city, town Springfield

N/A vicinity of

state Mass. 01108

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 50 State Street

city, town Springfield

state Mass.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Inventory # 2696
title has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1973 federal state county local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street

city, town Boston

state Mass.

7. Description

Ethel Apartment House, Springfield, Massachusetts

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Description

70 Patton Street, Springfield, known as the Ethel Apartment House, is located one foot from the Patton Street line and occupies fifty feet of frontage. The building is sited on level ground with vacant lots to the west and north that have resulted from previous demolitions of earlier wood frame houses. Seventy Patton stands even with other buildings along Patton Street, including another apartment block, Laurel Hall, which is also being nominated to the National Register. Once a tree-lined fully residential late nineteenth century neighborhood, the area has given way to an elevated highway to the south and modern office and institutional buildings to the west and east. The remaining apartment blocks as well as the one story brick commercial structures nearby give evidence of a once viable late nineteenth and early twentieth century neighborhood.

This building was built as a four story red brick apartment building in 1912. The south, or front facade, features two bowed windows flanked by a central entrance. A light gray rough cut simulated ashlar dressing is present on the front facade from ground level to the first floor level. The same precast stone was used for window surrounds on the front facade. The centrally paired windows are divided by fluted wood mullions. Above the fourth story central window is a decorative panel of brick that highlights the central entry area. The building is capped by a tin cornice with modillions on the frieze. The roof is flat consisting of tar and gravel.

Both the east and west facades are five bays wide with the north (back) facade being divided into seven bays. The north facade also features a verandah of wood in deteriorated condition. All the windows are presently missing; however, 1/1 wood components were probably the original window as is evident from similar surrounding buildings from the same period. Granite was used for sills on all but the front facade windows.

The original 1912 building permit refers to 70 Patton Street as an eight unit apartment building which would have meant two apartment units occupied each floor. Presently, the interior is deteriorated due to vandalism and exposure to the weather. The owner plans to restore the building, taking advantage of the Economic Recovery Act of 1981.

8. Significance

Ethel Apartment House, Springfield, Massachusetts

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

Specific dates 1912

Builder/Architect Burton E. Geckler

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ethel Apartment Building, 70 Patton Street, Springfield, retains integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. The building is historically significant because it is representative of early twentieth century apartment house construction on a small scale. The building is architecturally significant for the fine quality of its rather simple but carefully articulated detailing. It is also one of a very few number of apartment houses in Springfield's North End built during the building boom of the early 20th century, and holds associations with the industrial growth and expansion of Springfield, especially the North End. The Ethel Apartment Building thus fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The "North End" of Springfield was a name given to the northernmost area of the downtown as early as 1827. The land that presently lies north of Interstate 291, and between the Connecticut River and Chestnut Street, was uneven and tended to be wet; thus the area was never developed into farmland. By 1837, the North End consisted of about fourteen estates and a fishhouse on the banks of the Connecticut River. In the 1840s, the Connecticut River Railroad was constructed running through the North End and parallel to the river. Although the railroad did not initially effect the area, its importance grew considerably after 1870.

In the years following the Civil War, Springfield experienced rapid growth and development. One of the most significant aspects of this growth was due to the establishment of the U.S. Armory in the city as a government manufacturer. The Armory's industry precipitated further industrial and commercial expansion, which began to spread to the North End where open undeveloped land lay adjacent to the Connecticut River Railroad.

The 1870 Springfield Atlas shows a change in the physical character of the North End that was occurring at this time. Several of the large estates had given way to new streets and evenly distributed single family house lots. However, the area of Patton Street that lay between Main and Dwight Streets continued to remain as a large unbroken tract of land belonging to the William Patton Estate. During the mid-nineteenth century, Mr. Patton was a well-known wholesaler dealer in "Yankee notions" whose avocation was real estate.

In 1873, the Wason Manufacturing Co., which built railroad passenger cars and related railroad items, relocated its business in the North End in what is now referred to as Brightwood. Even though the Wason Co. was located many blocks away from the Patton Street area, it had a definite impact on the changing character of the North End as a whole from a rural undeveloped area to a more industrialized one. With the hundreds of labor jobs created by the Wason Company came increased housing demands; thus, more streets and house lots were laid out.

continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Springfield, South, Mass. - Conn.

Quadrangle scale 1 : 25,000

UTM References

A 18 1698500 4664570
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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 Joan Wiegel

organization Preservation Consultant

date November 1986

street & number 117 Middle Street

telephone 413 - 253 - 7014

city or town South Amherst

state Massachusetts

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

Joseph R. O'Connell DSAPD

title Deputy Massachusetts Historical Commission
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1/16/87

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

William Byer
Keeper of the National Register

Approved in the
National Register

date 3-6-87

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet Ethel Apartment House Item number 8 Page 1
Springfield, Massachusetts

By 1882, the pressure to develop the remaining large estates mounted and finally William Patton divided up his estate. He named the new east/west street after himself and began constructing "small cottage houses" on both sides of Patton Street. The 1899 Springfield Atlas shows Patton Street as a completely developed residential area with single family wood framed dwellings lining both sides.

The Springfield Street Railway system began laying its tracks in the North End during the 1880s. Soon after, the center for the entire street railway for Springfield was located in Memorial Square; the North End's center and an area located just three blocks from Patton Street. As the street railway system developed with new trolley barns being constructed along Main Street, commercial development also continued to expand. By 1900, the industrialized North End and urbanized way of life precipitated a great need for more housing that was affordable, close to the workplace, and accessible to transportation routes. The areas located near the industrialized zones where many single family homes had been built in the late nineteenth century were being redeveloped into higher density areas to accommodate for the housing needs of the expanding working class. This change in housing type and density become evident on Patton Street where several wood framed one and two family structures were razed or moved to make room for apartment blocks. In 1910, the first apartment block was constructed along Patton Street. The Ethel Apartment House followed in 1912, and by 1920, there were six apartment blocks along Patton Street.

Apartment house construction in Springfield began in the late 1890s. The first blocks were built on the fringes of downtown by the local firm of Gangier and Angers. By the early years of this century, there were several other local firms involved in this type of residential construction. Money was available for construction, the demand was there, and interest rates were low. At first, blocks were limited to prominent intersections and major thoroughfares, but this quickly changed. In 1903, the Springfield Republican commented in their year-end building report that there was a decrease in the construction of the "cheap double tenement house, formerly so characteristic of the city" and that the apartment house was taking its place. In 1915, the Republican commented favorably on the passing of a local ordinance to stop "the obnoxious, cheaply constructed three-decker." The quality of the early apartment blocks built in Springfield during the first third of the twentieth century established a precedent for future development. Most of these blocks featured decorative facade treatment consisting of projecting tin cornices, stone trim, and wire-cut or pressed brick. Though there were several areas in the city that saw large groupings of apartment blocks, many of the early apartment blocks were built singly, or in a small groups on side streets. Laurel Hall is a good example of the latter and remains as one of a few

continued

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Ethel Apartment House
Continuation sheet Springfield, Massachusetts Item number 8 Page 2

apartment blocks of this type from this period for small developers, some of whom even lived in one of the apartments. The design of these blocks was spread among Springfield's large community of architects in the early twentieth century.

The Ethel Apartment Building is a good representative of a type of multiunit construction from the middle of Springfield's "Apartment Era", a period of prosperity and rapid development that lasted from ca. 1910 to the Depression. The building was constructed in 1912 for Jacob Blisky for \$14,000. An existing wood frame house that previously occupied the site was moved to the rear of the property and stayed there until about 1973, when it was demolished.

Jacob Blisky was a successful North End retailer. In 1907, Blisky began a small business selling vegetables door to door. By 1910, Blisky rented space along Dwight Street where he sold wholesale dry goods. His business grew, until in 1930, Blisky opened up a department store at 595-597 Dwight Street where one could buy a housedress for 15 cents and a man's suit for \$8.75.

The architect for the Ethel Apartment House was Burton E. Gechler (1881-1961). Gechler worked as an architect in Springfield for over fifty years. From 1905 to 1932, he was associated with John W. Donohue, the official architect for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield. According to his obituary, Gechler designed several churches and schools while associated with Donohue, including Our Lady of Hope Church and Holy Family Church in Springfield and Holy Cross Church in Holyoke. During the same period, Gechler worked alone. He is known to have designed a large apartment building at 145-51 Sumner Avenue (1916), stucco houses at 98 Bellevue Avenue (1914) and 335 St. James Avenue (1911), and an eleven-story office building at 95 State Street (1929) in downtown Springfield. The latter cost \$54,000 to build and topped out at 125 feet, Springfield's height limit reached by only four other buildings in the early twentieth century. All of the above mentioned buildings are standing.

Gechler had received a degree in architectural engineering from M.I.T. in 1905 and immediately moved to Springfield. After leaving the office of John W. Donohue, Gechler continued to practice in Springfield until his death in 1961.

Social, economic, and technological changes in the mid-twentieth century caused the ultimate downfall and deterioration of the North End area. The old North End from Carew Street on the north to Liberty Street on the south, from the Connecticut River on the west to Chestnut Street on east was almost completely demolished during the urban renewal efforts of the 1960s. By the early 1970s, the area had been totally transformed except for a few landmarks and reminders of the industrial and apartment era of the late nineteenth and

continued

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Continuation sheet Springfield, Massachusetts Item number 8

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early twentieth century. The train station and Hotel Charles remain on the southern boundary, and two multi-story factories remain on side streets in the middle of the old neighborhood. Of the apartment blocks and tenement houses on Bond and Patton Streets, the Ethel Apartment building is one of the few survivors. The south side of Patton Street has been demolished, the sections of these two streets between Dwight and Chestnut Streets is gone, and there has been considerable demolition of individual buildings in the remaining sections. The Ethel Apartment House stands as a significant reminder of an important period in the industrial expansion of Springfield.

In spite of the area's transformation, the Ethel Apartment Building enjoyed full tenant occupancy until the mid-1970s. Since 1979, the building has stood vacant.

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Ethel Apartment House

Continuation sheet Springfield, Massachusetts Item number 9

Page 1

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Springfield Building Department: Building Permits

Springfield Daily Republican, 1911-1916

Springfield Directories: 1912-1915

Springfield Maps and Atlases: 1882-1920

Springfield Vertical file: photographs (Springfield Library)

Secondary Sources

Clark, James Henry, Street of Springfield. Vol. II, p. 77. Springfield, Mass., 1947.

Goff, Nancy, Springfield's Ethnic Heritage: The German Community. Springfield, Mass.: American Bicentennial Publication, 1976

Mercantile Illustrating Co., Picturesque Springfield. New York, 1895.

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date entered

Ethel Apartment House

Continuation sheet Springfield, Massachusetts Item number 10

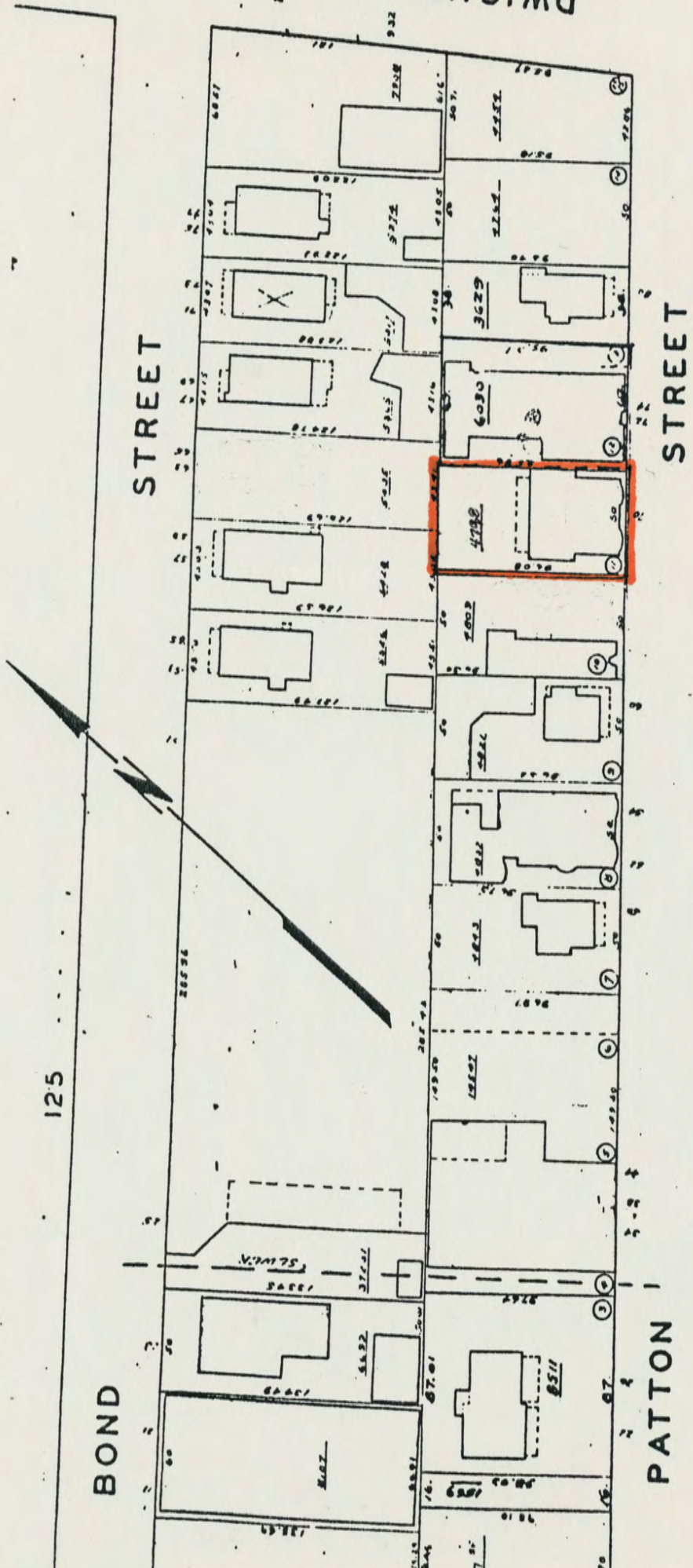
Page 1

Location and Legal Description

Beginning at a point in the Northerly line of Patton Street, distant six hundred twenty-three and 20/100 (623.20') feet Easterly from its intersection with the Easterly line of Main Street, and running thence Easterly on Patton Street fifty (50') feet; thence Northerly at right angles with Patton Street, ninety-five and 86/100 (95.86') feet to land now or formerly of John R. Lynch; thence Westerly on last-named land and land now or formerly of Thomas P. Sheehan, fifty (50') feet; and thence Southerly at right angles with Patton Street, ninety-six and 08/100 (96.08') feet to the place of beginning.

Subject to restrictions of record, insofar as they may be now in force and applicable.

Being the premises numbered 70 Patton Street.



Ethel Apartment House
 70 Patton Street
 Springfield, MA

#212
 Block Plan of Springfield
 Scale: 1"=50'

1-291

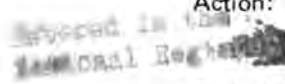
87000353

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Ethel Apartment House
Hampden County
MASSACHUSETTS

FEB 2 1987

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-2-88
Date Due: 3/6/87 - 3/19/87
Action: ACCEPT 3-6-87
 RETURN _____
 REJECT _____
Federal Agency: _____



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

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

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

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

1. Name _____

2. Location _____

3. Classification	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
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



THE ETHEL APARTMENT HOUSE
70 PATTON STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MA.

JOAN WEIGEL 3/85
GTRUMBULL RD. NORTHAMPTON, MA.

#1 OF 2
LOOKING NORTH AT WEST WALL



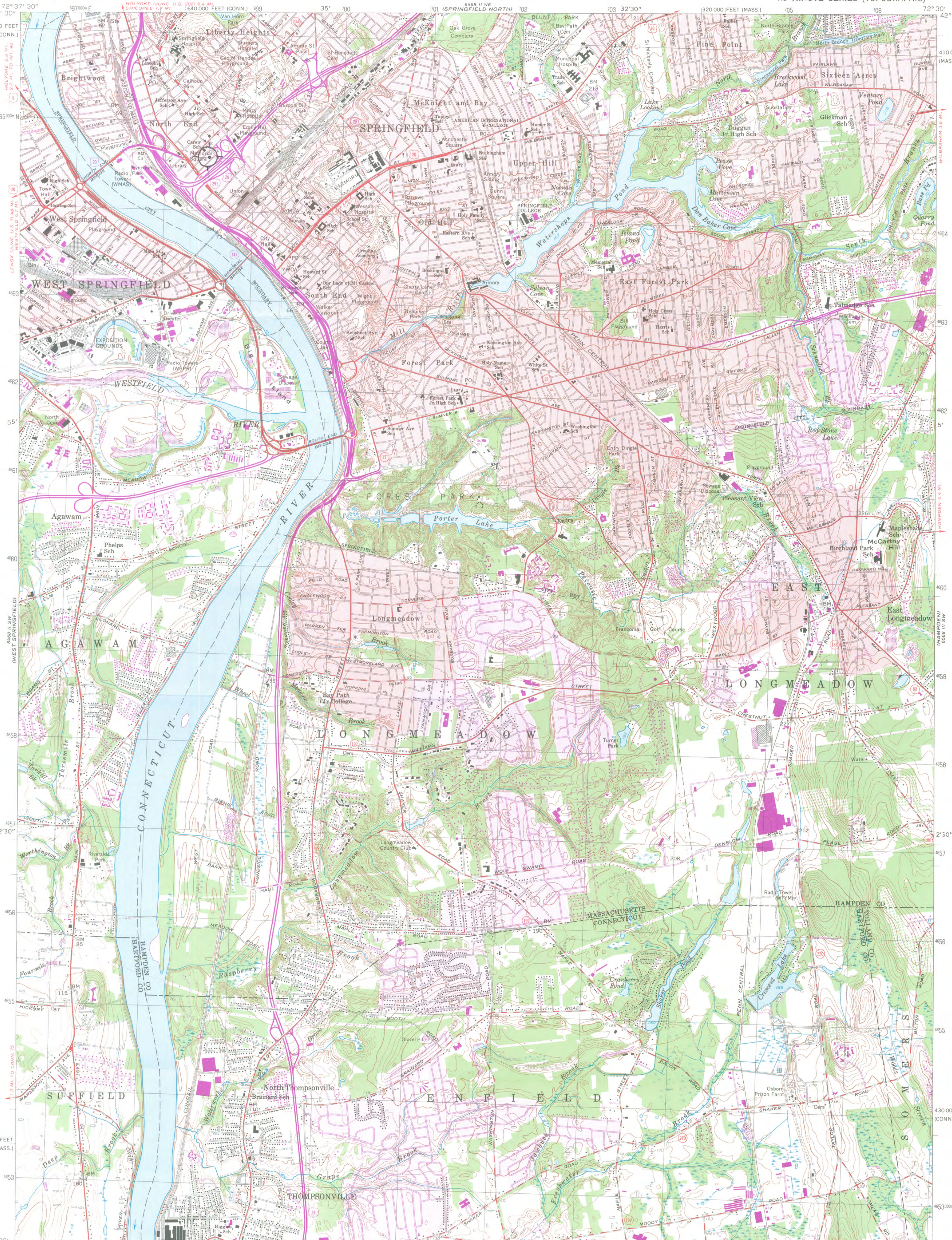
THE ETHEL APARTMENT HOUSE
70 PATTON STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MA.

JOAN WEIGEL 3/85
6 TRUMBULL RD. NORTHAMPTON, MA.

#2 OF 2

FRONT (SOUTH) FACADE THAT FACES
PATTON ST.

Ethel Apartment House
70 Patton Street
Springfield, MA
Quad: Springfield-South
UTM Reference
18/698/500/4664/570

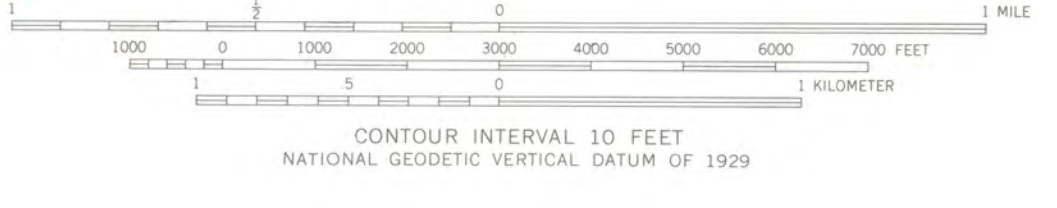
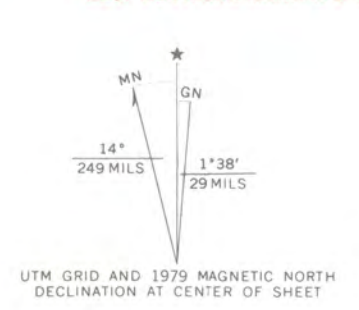


CONVERSION SCALES

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

To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey and Connecticut Geodetic Survey.
Control by USGS, USC&GS, Massachusetts Geodetic Survey, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey.
Topography by planetable surveys 1933 and 1942
Culture revised from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods. Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1958
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone, and Connecticut coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



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

SPRINGFIELD SOUTH, MASS.-CONN.
N4200 - W7230/7.5
1958
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6468 II 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