

United States Department of the Interior
National Park 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 NPS use only

received

JUL 21 1987

date entered

AUG 20 1987

1. Name

historic Phineas Lawrence House (preferred)

and/or common Phineas Lawrence/Coffin House

2. Location

street & number 257 Trapelo Road N/A not for publication

city, town Waltham N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts code 025 county Middlesex code 017

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name George S. Coffin

street & number 257 Trapelo Road

city, town Waltham vicinity of state Massachusetts 02154

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 40 Thorndike Street

city, town Cambridge state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth
title #111A-B-1 has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date September 1978 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description Phineas Lawrence House, Waltham, Massachusetts

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site
☒ good 	☐ ruins	☒ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	(see text)	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Phineas Lawrence House is located in the northeast section of Waltham, Massachusetts, on Trapelo Road, a major east/west route through the city. This section of Waltham is part of the Waltham Highlands, and is characterized by very rugged, steeply contoured topography, much of it between 200 and 300 feet in elevation. The Highlands area is the source for several important brooks which feed into the Charles River, and the Lawrence House is located approximately a quarter of a mile west of the Beaver Brook.

The Phineas Lawrence House is set back twenty-five feet from Trapelo Road as it begins its rise from the Beaver Brook valley. Much of the land on the southern side of Trapelo Road and the area just west of the Lawrence House on the north side of Trapelo Road is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and is occupied by three hospitals for chronically or mentally ill patients. Most of the hospital facilities are not visible from Trapelo Road and as a result the Lawrence House has a commanding view of largely open land to the southwest.

The Phineas Lawrence House is the only nineteenth century building in a small enclave of twentieth century residential structures in this largely institutional section of Waltham.

The Lawrence House, which faces southwest, is sited on a one-acre wooded lot between Porter and Baldwin Roads and is bounded along Trapelo Road by a drylaid stone wall. The house is a ca. 1810, two-story, five-bay, center hall plan structure, four bays deep with a ca. 1860 two-story, five-bay ell off the rear (north) elevation. A ca. 1925 garage addition has been appended to the east side of the ell. A small, late 19th century one story gable-roofed barn is located to the side of the house on the eastern edge of the property. The nomination thus consists of two contributing buildings and one contributing structure.

The Phineas Lawrence House was built in the Federal style. The front facade consists of five regularly fenestrated bays with 6/6 double hung sash. All windows have wooden louvered shutters and the exterior cladding is clapboard with narrow cornerboards. A small, ca. 1925 one-story, hipped roof entry portico encloses the original front center doorway. The structure has a granite foundation and a gable asphalt shingle roof, with three chimneys. (Two chimneys punctuate the front slope of the roof, one the rear slope.) The chimneys are not identical in construction or placement. A fourth chimney rises from the ell's gable roof. The side (east and west) elevations of the Lawrence House are constructed of brick to the cornice line; the gables are wood framed with clapboard exterior. Two double hung windows with 6/6 sash surmounted by a small lunette window characterize both east and west gables. Four bays wide and regularly fenestrated with 6/6 sash, the east facade of the original house is bilaterally symmetrical except for a small lattice entrance porch, ca. 1925, located on the northern end of the east elevation. The doorway is Italianate in style and was probably added around 1860 when the ell was likely built.

continued

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**National Register of Historic Places
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Phineas Lawrence House, Waltham, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 1

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The original 6/6 fenestration of the west facade has been altered: two windows have been made into doors and one window opening has been made smaller. A ca. 1935 one-story flat roofed porch, with plain board pilasters and moulded capitals, has been added to the west elevation. These minor alterations in the form of window replacement and additions do not alter the character of the original structure.

The rear ell echoes the character of the original structure in its two-story height, gable roof, and clapboard siding. Its Italianate entrance on the east elevation and its granite ashlar and mortar foundation suggest a mid-nineteenth century construction date. The ell is irregularly fenestrated with 6/6 sash and it is attached to the ca. 1925 garage addition.

Interior features are simple, but include some fine panelling and intact original fireplaces. The spatial arrangement is that of a traditional center hall plan with two rooms on either side of a center hall. The rooms on the east side of the house have been combined into a single large room and some of the second floor chambers have been altered to include modern conveniences. A second "back" stair services the rear ell. These alterations in room arrangement do not compromise the character of the original dwelling.

The small barn located on the property is a wood frame and wood shingled structure with a gable side roof.

Archaeology

Because of the proximity of Beaver Brook, prehistoric travel routes or settlement sites may exist in the vicinity of the Phineas Lawrence House. The house is sited on a remnant of a once large farm estate and evidence of long demolished outbuildings may exist.

Because the Phineas Lawrence House is architecturally intact and in good condition, archaeological research would probably not provide extensive additional information on the development of the house. Archaeological research might provide information on outbuildings and the daily workings of a 19th century farm.

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/humanitarian
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ theater
☒ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ transportation
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☒ other (specify)
				Community Development
Specific dates ca. 1810, 1860, 1925		Builder/Architect	Unknown	
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)				

The Phineas Lawrence House, 257 Trapelo Road, Waltham, Massachusetts, has significant associations with Waltham's early development and its agricultural past, as well as possessing integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. The Phineas Lawrence House is important architecturally as one of the few remaining Federal-period farmhouses, which were typical of Waltham's early agricultural period. The property also includes a late 19th century barn; it, too, is considered contributing. The house was also the birthplace and home of Phineas Lawrence (1826–1924), who chronicled the history of the Trapelo Road area of Waltham and the Brown family in his book A Brief History of the Trapelo Browns. Lawrence was also a prominent Waltham civic leader and businessman who contributed to the development of Waltham from town to city. The Phineas Lawrence meets Criteria A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the local level.

The area occupied by present-day Waltham was originally part of the large Watertown land grant, one of the earliest settled areas of Massachusetts. By 1738 Waltham established itself as an independent town whose prosperity was derived from farming and dairying activities. Up until the early 19th century, Waltham was thinly settled, and the topography of broad valleys between Charles River tributaries lent itself to large farm estates. With the advent of industrialization, the river and brooks that ran through Waltham and Watertown became attractive factory sites. The farm estates prospered by providing foodstuffs to the burgeoning population of mill workers and town residents.

Increased industrial development and town growth caused local roads, such as Trapelo Road and Lexington Street, to be improved and extended. These roads became major east/west (Trapelo Road) and north/south (Lexington Street) transportation links during the Federal period and farmers such as the Lawrences prospered. The Phineas Lawrence House, probably constructed by Lawrence's father and uncle, is typical of Waltham's Federal period farmhouses built by successful agriculturalists. The large scale of the house, the use of brick and granite, and the fine interior finish details reflect the Lawrence family's prosperity in the early 19th century.

As the farm flourished and family size increased, it became necessary to enlarge the house, and the two-story rear ell was added sometime around 1860. Phineas Lawrence continued to maintain a dairy farm on the property throughout the 19th century, even though large-scale farming in Waltham was becoming less economical. Extremely long-lived, Lawrence survived most members of his family, and at his death in 1925 the house was purchased by a man named Trenholm. Trenholm improved the property, adding the garage, porch, and east and south entrance pavilions. These changes do not compromise the architectural integrity of the house, but do reflect the changes in the property from a working 19th century farm to a 20th century suburban house.

continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

Form B, number 111A-B-1, MHC, Boston, MA

"Some Historic Houses", Majorie W. Childs, 1962, Waltham Public Library

"The Trapelo Browns", Phineas Lawrence, Published 1982 by

George Coffin, Waltham Public Library

"Phineas Lawrence House 1807", George S. Coffin, Bicentennial Edition.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lexington

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A 19 318360 4691581010
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached sheet

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

state		code	county	code
-------	--	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan E. Hollister/Preservation Consultant with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

organization Mass. Historical Commission

date March 1987

street & number 80 Boylston Street

telephone 617 727-8470

city or town Boston

state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Valerie A Talmage

title Executive Director, State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 15, 1987

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

8/20/87

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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Phineas Lawrence House, Waltham, Massachusetts

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

1

When the Commonwealth took, by eminent domain, much of the land along Trapelo Road for institutional use, Trenholm managed to save much of the Lawrence Homestead by subdividing the land and developing suburban tract homes along Baldwin and Porter Roads. Compensation of so many residents was infeasible for the Commonwealth, and as a result of the subdivision the once-extensive Lawrence farm was reduced to its present one-acre size.

Phineas Lawrence was a life-long resident of Waltham and always lived in the house at 257 Trapelo Road. Born in 1826, the fifth of eight children, Lawrence undoubtedly witnessed the evolution of this house from a relatively contemporary structure to a home that reminded industrialized Waltham of the area's agricultural beginnings. Phineas Lawrence was a successful and prominent businessman and skillfully managed the family dairy farm. Active in local politics, Lawrence served on the first and second Boards of Alderman for the City of Waltham and was Chairman of the Board of License Commissioners. In addition to these successes, Lawrence was a dedicated local historian of the Trapelo Road area. Lawrence not only concerned himself with local genealogy, but documented the history of the Trapelo Road area, paying particular attention to the development of the road from settlement times to 1858. Lawrence also concentrated on the major farms and estates in Waltham and their owners and families. Eventually, he completed an exhaustive study of his ancestors, the Brown family. Directly related to the Browns through his mother, Lawrence traced the family history which boasted deacons, pastors, Waltham selectmen, a U.S. District Attorney, Congressman, and Senator. Phineas Lawrence hoped his work in tracing the settlement of Waltham and the Brown family genealogy would someday assist other historians interested in Waltham's development and much of the present-day knowledge of Waltham and its history is due to Phineas Lawrence's interest in his town's early years.

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Continuation sheet

Item number

10

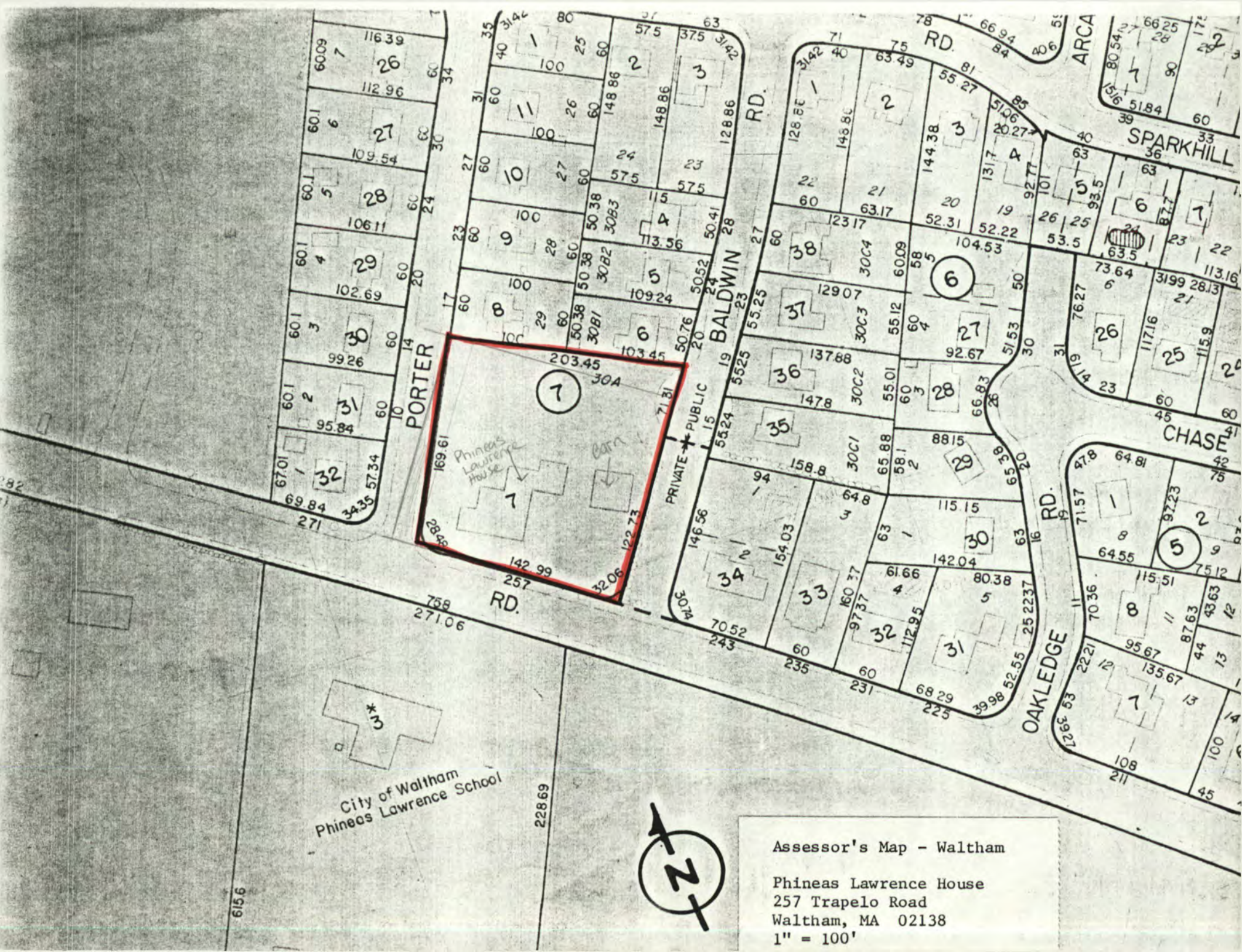
Page

1

10. Verbal boundary description and justification:

The boundaries of the Phineas Lawrence House follow the rear property line of 257 Trapelo Road and the street curblines along Porter, Trapelo, and Baldwin Roads. Starting at the north corner of Trapelo and Baldwin Road, running northwesterly along Trapelo Road 135 feet; turning right following Porter Road 130 feet; turning at a right angle and running 140 feet in a south-easterly direction; turning right and following Baldwin Road back to the starting point at Baldwin and Trapelo Roads. See attached assessors map for exact delineations of boundaries.

Adjacent residential properties on the north, east, and west of these boundaries reflect mid-twentieth century residential development and are different in scale, style, and use of materials. Incompatible larger development in the form of nonresidential institutional structures (the Phineas Lawrence School and the Fernald School) has occurred on the southern boundary of the Phineas Lawrence House.



87001397

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEETLawrence, Phineas, House
Middlesex County
MASSACHUSETTSWorking No. JUL 21 1987
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 8/20/87 - 9/4/87
Action: ACCEPT 8-20-87
RETURN
REJECT
Federal Agency: _____Entered in the
National Register

- ☐
- 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 sheetNomination 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 _____

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: _____



PHINEAS LAWRENCE HOUSE
257 TRAPELO ROAD
WALTHAM, MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: Susan E. Hollister, April 20, 1985
35 Concord Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138
PHOTO 1 of 2

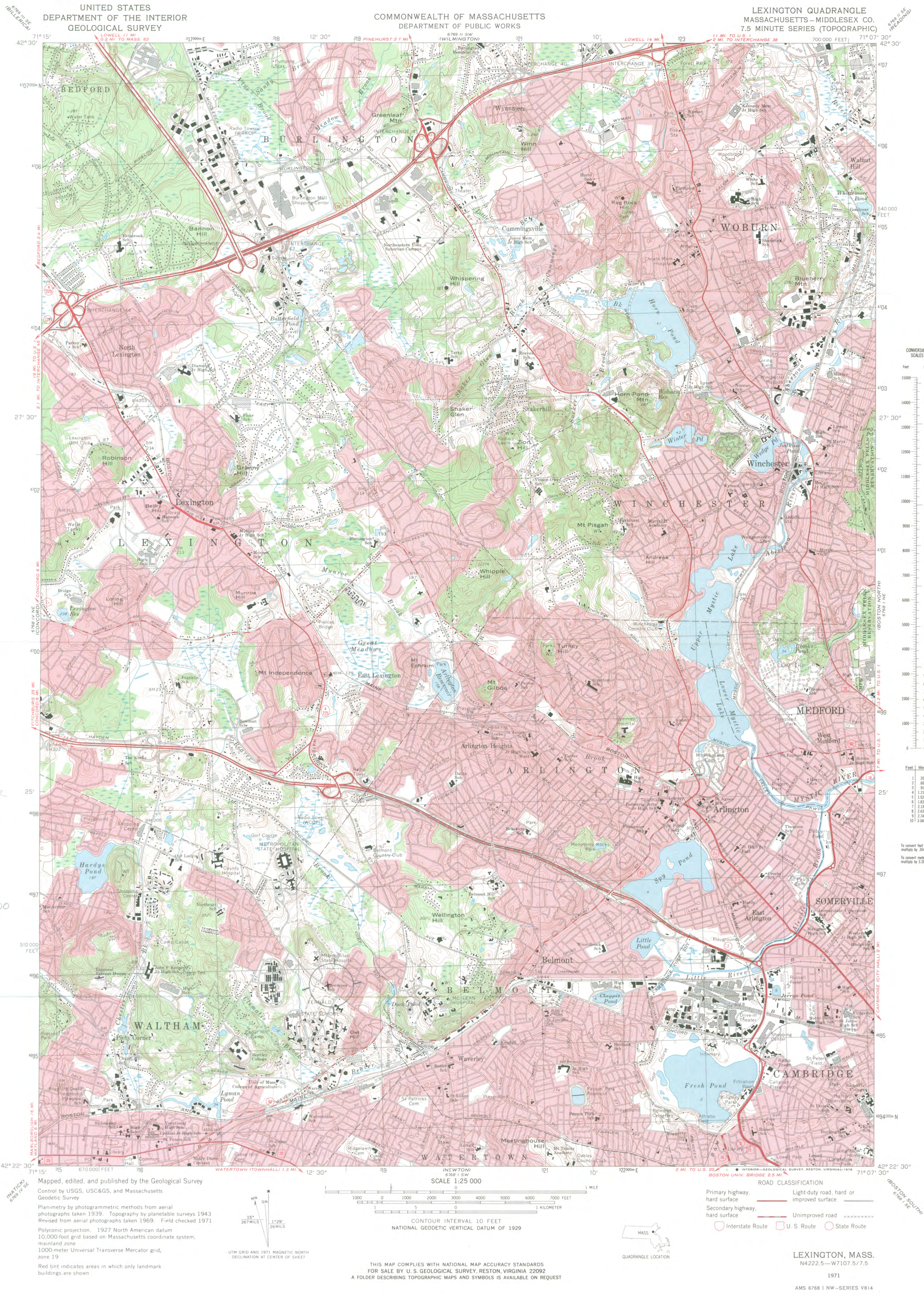
VIEW: EAST ELEVATION OF 257 TRAPELO ROAD.
PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN FROM A POSITION
FACING WEST.



PHINEAS LAWRENCE HOUSE
257 TRAPELO ROAD
WALTHAM, MA

PHOTOGRAPHER: Susan E. Hollister
35 Concord Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02138

VIEW: SOUTH(MAIN) AND WEST(SIDE) ELEVATIONS
OF 257 TRAPELO ROAD. PHOTOGRAPH
TAKEN FROM A POSITION FACING NORTHWEST.



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

LEXINGTON QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS—MIDDLESEX CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Phineas Lawrence House
257 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02154

Quad Lexington
Scale 1:25000

UTM References:
19/318360/4695800

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts
Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1939. Topography by planetable surveys 1943
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971
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

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

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

LEXINGTON, MASS.
N4222.5—W7107.5/7.5
1971
AMS 6768 I NW—SERIES V814



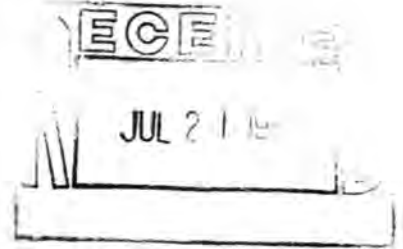
P635 548131

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary of State
Michael Joseph Connolly, Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission
Valerie A. Talmage
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

July 12, 1987



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 you will find the following nomination forms:

Two Boston properties are being submitted:

Congress Street Fire Station, 344 Congress Street

New Riding Club, 52 Hemenway Street, HPCA #0618-84-MA-85-0799

Concord, Mott Shaw, Thomas Estate, 317 Garfield Road, HPCA #10297MA

Southbridge, Southbridge Town Hall, 41 Elm Street

Waltham, Lawrence, Phineas House, 257 Trapelo Road

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 form.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

BF/lis

Enclosure