

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 in 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 any 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 Miss Toy Town Diner

other names/site number Blue Moon Diner (preferred); Bernier's Diner; Worcester Lunch Car Company #815
(The Diners of Massachusetts MPS); Skip's Blue Moon diner

2. Location

street & number 102 Main Street n/a not for publication

city or town Gardner n/a vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01440

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Betsy Friedberg National Register Director 10/8/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Gara H. Metz, Executive Director Date
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 this 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

Date of Action

Edson Beall

12/4/03

Blue Moon Diner
Name of Property

Worcester, Massachusetts
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

(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	
1	0	building
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Twentieth-Century Commercial Architecture:

The Diners of Massachusetts

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: New England Barrel Roof Diner

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete block

walls porcelain enamel

roof asphalt shingle

other

Narrative Description

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

Blue Moon Diner

Name of Property

Worcester, 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 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.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1949-1954

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Worcester Lunch Car Company

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Diners of Massachusetts MPS
Blue Moon Diner
Gardner (Worcester Co.), MA

Section number 7 Page 1

7. Description

Blue Moon Diner, 102 Main Street, Gardner, MA (1949) is a very well preserved and late example of the diners built by the widely known Worcester Lunch Car Company. Produced as Worcester Diner #815 and originally known as the Miss Toy Town Diner in Winchendon, MA, the Blue Moon was renamed and moved to its present site in Gardner in 1954. Blue Moon Diner is located in Gardner's central business district, on Main Street (State Route 68) about two blocks south of City Hall. The diner is oriented with its narrow end to the street on a small lot with parking on the south side.

Seven bays wide and three bays deep, the Blue Moon is a wood-frame diner that displays the barrel-roof form for which the Worcester company is best known. The diner rests on a concrete foundation, and has porcelain enamel wall panels that are pale yellow with blue trim. The barrel roof is clad with asphalt shingles. The principal entry, located in the narrow end on the west side fronting the street, has a projecting canopy. Entries contain stainless steel doors with a sunburst motif. Windows have single-hung steel sash and transoms above. Signage includes the exterior wall panels, reading *BLUE MOON*, a contemporary externally lit rooftop sign, and a noncontributing contemporary standing sign (ca. 1970). Exterior wall panels were installed after the diner was restored in the mid-1980s under the guidance of diner historian and consultant Richard J. S. Gutman.

A one-story, wood-frame wing at the rear (eastern end) of the prefabricated diner has a flat roof and is clad with vertical board siding. Accessible from the interior through an original door at the eastern end of the diner, the addition incorporates table seating on the interior as well as expanded kitchen space and restrooms. Due to the placement of the diner on its lot, the addition is a secondary feature that does not compromise the integrity of the factory-built diner.

The restored interior has a full-length marble counter with staff entrances at each end, fourteen steel counter stools upholstered with vinyl, and wooden booths along the front wall. Booths have upholstered seat backs. The tables have cream-colored laminate tops with blue borders and steel edges, and rest on wood legs. The grill and food prep areas are located behind the counter, with expanded kitchen operations in the addition. The color scheme of the interior tile work is principally blue and cream with black tile and steel accents, as seen at the counter apron, the walls beneath the windows, and tile floor. The barrel ceiling is blue laminate with wood braces. Wood finishes include the finely detailed wood entry surrounds, the narrow end walls, some cabinetry and the range hood in the back bar area, and the window trim. Walls in the back bar area are enameled.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are located on the diner property or in the general area (within one mile), it is possible that sites are present. The diner is located in an urban setting on level to moderately sloping topography at the foot of Washington Hill. Natural soil types in the area have been obscured or destroyed because of urban development, however, the original soils in the area may have been well drained. The diner is located well over 1,000 feet from the nearest wetlands, a locational characteristic that reduces the overall ancient Native American site sensitivity of this location. Given the above information, the small size of the nominated area (less than one acre), and construction impacts related to moving the diner to its present location in 1954, a low potential exists for locating significant ancient Native American resources on the diner property.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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The Diners of Massachusetts MPS
Blue Moon Diner
Gardner (Worcester Co.), MA

Section number 7/8 Page 2/1

A low potential also exists for locating significant historic archaeological resources in the nominated area. No historic resources have been identified at this location prior to movement of the diner here in 1954. Given that information and impacts related to construction of the diner and its utilities on the small parcel (less than one acre), a low potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources.

(end)

8. Statement of Significance

Blue Moon Diner, Gardner (1949), is a fine and late example of the traditional barrel-roofed diner produced by the Worcester Lunch Cart Company, the state's premier diner builder and a major force in the design and construction of Massachusetts diners prior to World War II. As a postwar example of the Worcester company's handcrafted work, Blue Moon Diner illustrates the diner form most closely associated with the history of Massachusetts diners since the 1920s, and was restored in the mid-1980s under the guidance of diner historian and consultant Richard J. S. Gutman. The Blue Moon is locally significant for its long association with Gardner native and diner man Arthur L. Bernier, who moved the diner to Gardner in 1954 from its original location in Winchendon, MA. The last diner in Gardner, the Blue Moon also is significant for its place in the city's rich history of lunch wagons and diners, dating to the early years of the 20th century. For these reasons, the Blue Moon Diner is of exceptional significance. The diner's relocation to Gardner is typical of the portable nature of diners and has not adversely affected its historic and architectural integrity. The Blue Moon maintains a roadside orientation and setting in its current location. Retaining integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, Blue Moon Diner meets Criteria A and C and Criteria Considerations B and G of the National Register at the local and state levels.

The Blue Moon was originally known as the Miss Toy Town and located on State Route 12 in Winchendon, Massachusetts. The Worcester Lunch Car Company, which assigned the production number 815 to the diner, delivered the building on April 14, 1949. Gardner native Arthur L. Bernier reportedly paid \$22,000 for the Miss Toy Town. Bernier also owned the original Blue Moon Diner on the present site in Gardner. Account books of the Worcester Lunch Car Company refer to a maintenance call to the Blue Moon Diner in Gardner as early as August 1928.

By the early 1950s, his Gardner diner needing repairs, Arthur Bernier replaced the building with the Miss Toy Town, which he moved from Winchendon. The Gardner operation was renamed Bernier's Diner, and celebrated a grand opening on October 28, 1954. The diner continued to operate under this name until 1960, when it was closed due to the failing health of Bernier's wife. The building was vacant for several years, and changed hands three times between 1976 and 1983.

Recent owner Dennis (Skip) Scipione, a veteran of the Fitchburg Police Department, acquired the diner in 1984, changed the name to Skip's Blue Moon Diner, and restored the building in consultation with diner historian Richard J. S. Gutman. Will Anderson included the Blue Moon in his 1989 book, *New England Roadside Delights*. In 1993, the diner was seen in the Paramount movie, *School Ties*. [Diner menu] In 2000 the diner was purchased by its present owner and the historic name Blue Moon Diner was restored.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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The Diners of Massachusetts MPS
Blue Moon Diner
Gardner (Worcester Co.), MA

Section number 8/9 Page 2/1

Blue Moon Diner is the last diner in Gardner, part of a legacy of mobile lunch carts and stationary diners in the city that dates to 1909. At least five lunch carts operated in Gardner in the mid-1920s alone. Frank M. Burns established three lunch carts/diners in the city, among them Burns Diner (later the Parker Street Diner) on Parker Street (ca. 1909-1970s), the Minute Man Diner in Union Square (1930-1942), and another diner on East Broadway across the street from the South Gardner Hotel (1929-1942). From 1943 to 1958, Billie Viefield operated Billie's Diner, a lunch cart at 240 Main Street. The present Blue Moon Diner appears to have been one of three diners in the city in 1954, the year the diner was moved from Winchendon and re-opened as Bernier's Diner. [Richard]

Architecturally, the Blue Moon Diner is very similar on the exterior to at least two other Worcester County diners manufactured by the Worcester Lunch Car Company: Charlie's Diner, 344 Plantation Street, Worcester (1948), which followed the Blue Moon in production number (#816) but was fully paid for and therefore installed about eight months before the Blue Moon; and the Miss Worcester, 302 Southbridge Street, Worcester (1948) [NR pending 2003], produced as Worcester diner #812. All three diners are seven bays wide, three bays deep, pale yellow with blue trim, and have entries in the narrow ends beneath flat canopies that project beyond the barrel roof of the diner. The Worcester Lunch Car Company sold its last new diner in 1957, three years after the Blue Moon Diner was moved to its present site in Gardner.

(end)

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Diner Finder Deluxe: Massachusetts*. Watertown, MA: Coffee Cup Publications, 1991.
Gutman, Richard J. S. *American Diner Then and Now*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993.
Interview with diner historian Richard Gutman, November 23, 1998.
Menu for Skip's Blue Moon Diner, Gardner, Massachusetts (includes history).
Richard, Mike. "Blue Moon Diner: surviving piece of Americana." *The Gardner News* (June 28, 1986), pp. 1, 3.
Worcester Lunch Car Company Record Books, vol. 2, Account book of lunch car construction 1928-1931 (for reference to older Blue Moon Diner); and vol. 9, including file cards with service information ca. 1950s. Worcester Historical Museum.

(end)

Blue Moon Diner
Name of Property

Worcester, Massachusetts
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19 254220 4717660
Zone Easting Northing

2.
Zone Easting Northing

3.
Zone Easting Northing

4.
Zone Easting Northing
— 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

name/title Kathleen Kelly Broomer, consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date October 30, 2003

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Jamie Brouillet c/o Jamie Floyd

street & number P.O. Box 914 telephone 978-632-4333

city or town Gardner state MA zip code 01440

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503. NPS Form 10-900 OMB No.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

The Diners of Massachusetts MPS
Blue Moon Diner
Gardner (Worcester Co.), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown on the accompanying detail of the City of Gardner assessors' map O-23.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the diner since its placement on the site in 1954.

(end)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Miss Toy Town Diner
NAME:

MULTIPLE Diners of Massachusetts MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 10/20/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/19/03
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 12/05/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/04/03
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03001242

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 12/4/03 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Entered in the
National Register*

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



Blue Moon DINER

Blue Moon
DINER

BOOTH
SERVICE

Diners of Mass. MPS

Skip's Blue Moon Diner

102 Main Street

Gardner, Worcester County, Mass.

KK Broomer

Neg: MHC

September 2001

Photo 1 of 2



Diners of Mass. MPS

Skip's Blue Moon Diner

102 Main Street

Gardner, Worcester County, Mass.

KK Broomer

Neg: MHC

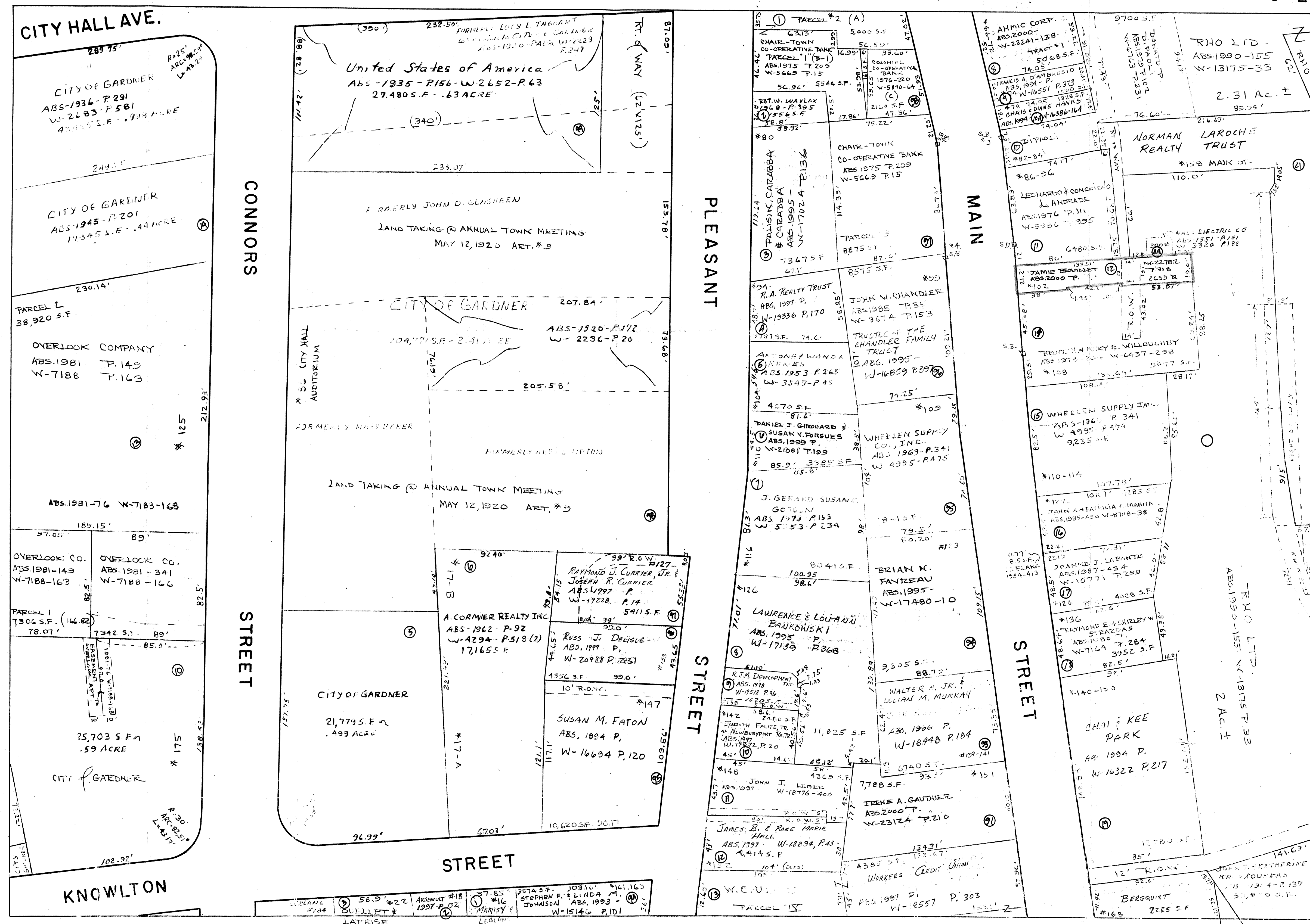
September 2001

Photo 2 of 2

The Diners of Massachusetts MPS
Skip's Blue Moon Diner
102 Main Street, Gardner
Worcester County, Mass.

City of Gardner Assessor's Map
September 2001

0-23





Fitchburg

MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map

7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names

1988

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1988
Supersedes Fitchburg 1969 and Gardner 1970 1:25,000-scale maps
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19
Universal Transverse Mercator
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 39 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet	UTM grid convergence (GCN) and 1983 magnetic declination (MD) at center of map. Diagram is approximate.		1	2	3	
1	3.2808		35 MILS	4	5	1 Winchendon 2 Ashburnham 3 Townsend 4 Ayer 5 Barre 6 Sturbridge 7 Hudson	
2	6.5617						
3	9.8425						
4	13.1234						
5	16.4042						
6	19.6850						
7	22.9658						
8	26.2467						
9	29.5275						
10	32.8084						

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

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	Secondary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	Unimproved road, trail	Route marker: Interstate, U. S., State	Railroad: standard gage, narrow gage	Bridge: drawbridge	Footbridge; overpass; underpass	Build-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown	House; barn; church; school; large structure
Boundary:	National, with monument	State	County, parish	Civil township, precinct, district	Incorporated city, village, town	National or State reservation; small park	Land grant with monument; bond section corner	U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section	Range, township; section line: location approximate
Fence or field line	Power transmission line, isolated tower	Dam; dam with lock	Cemetery: grave	Campground; picnic area; U. S. location monument	Windmill; water well; spring	Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation	Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
Bathymetric contours: index, intermediate	Parental lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	Swampy; marsh	Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation	Woodland; scattered trees	Scrub; mangrove	Orchard; vineyard		

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

SKY'S BLUE MOON DRIVER
GARDNER, WORCESTER CO., MASS.
THE DRIVERS OF MASS. MAPS
19 254720 4717600
FITCHBURG QUAD
1:25000



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 14, 2003

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Blue Moon Diner, 102 Main Street, Gardner (Worcester), MA
(The Diners of Massachusetts MPS)

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

cc: Kathleen Kelly Broome, consultant
Peter Sargent, Gardner Historical Commission
Jamie Brouillet
Robert Hubbard, Planning and Economic Development
Daniel Kelley, Mayor, City of Gardner