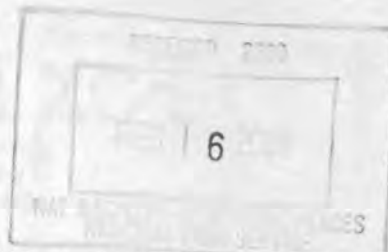


United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Propertyhistoric name Alewife Brook Parkway Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS

other names/site number _____

2. Locationstreet & number Alewife Brook Parkway n/a not for publicationcity or town Cambridge/Somerville n/a vicinitystate Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 02140, 02138, 02144**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

Signature of certifying official/Title Cara H. Metz, State Historic Preservation Officer
 Massachusetts Historical Commission

2/10/04

Date

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

Edgar R. Beall 3/15/04

Alewife Brook Parkway
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA
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

_____ building
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture: outdoor recreation

Landscape: park, natural feature, conservation area

Transportation: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Culture: outdoor recreation

Landscape: park, natural feature, conservation area

Transportation: road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other asphalt, concrete, granite, plantings, steel

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet

Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Alewife Brook Parkway, located in Cambridge and Somerville, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, is a 2.09-mile river parkway in Boston's regional park system administered by the former Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). (In July 2003, the MDC was reorganized as the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation within the newly created Department of Conservation and Recreation [DCR].) The Alewife Brook Parkway is a heavily traveled four-lane road that parallels Alewife Brook as it winds northward through medium-density suburban commercial and residential neighborhoods. The elevation of the roadway, which is generally flat, ranges from seven to twenty-six feet above sea level as it passes through the 120-acre Alewife Brook Reservation and connects Fresh Pond Reservation in Cambridge with the Mystic River Reservation in Somerville, where Alewife Brook empties into the Mystic River. Besides being a major north-south artery (the entire roadway is also designated as part of State Route 16), the Alewife Brook Parkway provides a direct link between the Mystic Valley Parkway and Fresh Pond Parkway. The southern section of Alewife Brook Parkway (from Concord Turnpike/State Route 2 to Fresh Pond Parkway) was extensively reworked in the 1980s and 1990s as part of the creation of the MBTA station and parking garage and subsequent intense commercial development of the area, and does not retain integrity. For the purposes of this nomination, only the one-mile-long northern segment, from the northern edge of Concord Turnpike/State Route 2 to Mystic Valley Parkway, is included in the present nomination. It is described, as follows.

Alewife Brook Parkway, Northern Segment - Mystic Valley Parkway to the northern edge of the Concord Turnpike/State Route 2 (Somerville/Cambridge)

The **northern segment of Alewife Brook Parkway (#1 on the data sheet)** is a four-lane undivided highway, a curvilinear river parkway that passes through flat land along the eastern side of Alewife Brook and the Alewife Brook Reservation. To the west of the parkway is a moderately dense suburban residential neighborhood with commercial infill at several corners. This entire segment of Alewife Brook Parkway is designated as State Route 16, while the southernmost section of this segment is also part of U.S. Highway 3 (as far north as Massachusetts Avenue/State Route 2A). The northern segment is the less altered of the two segments of the Alewife Brook Parkway.

Alewife Brook Parkway begins at the Mystic Valley Parkway, just southeast of the point where Alewife Brook empties into the Mystic River. A small **turf rotary with three miters (Mystic Valley Parkway Rotary and three miters, #2 on the data sheet)** directs traffic onto the roadways. The rotary has vertical granite curbs; in its center is a concrete post topped with a cobra-head lamp. Several DCR facilities flank the parkway here, providing a gateway and setting. To the east is a large and distinctive one-story brick

(continued)

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Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA

Section number 7 Page 2

building with a high mansard roof, the former Mystic Pumping Station, a building listed in the National Register of Historic Places (listed individually 9/18/89 and as part of the NRTRA Water Supply System of Metropolitan Boston 1/18/90). To the west is a pair of small one-story brick buildings, the current pumping station.

The northern segment of the parkway, approximately one mile in length, has a 40-foot-wide bituminous concrete-paved roadway, with four 10-foot lanes, two northbound and two southbound, and no median or parking lanes. The curbing is generally vertical granite. The bituminous concrete sidewalks, intermittent on both sides, are set away from the curb behind a planting strip.

The Alewife Brook Parkway is bordered by tree-lined (**Tree Allee, #3 on the data sheet**) parkland to the west, from the Mystic Valley Parkway southward to the Concord Turnpike/State Route 2 rotary. The parkway in this segment follows Alewife Brook, which flows from Fresh Pond and Little Pond into the Mystic River. The brook itself is lined with chain-link fences, mostly hidden among later trees and undergrowth. On the parkway's brook side, adjacent open space is quite generous, averaging about 300 feet in width. This open space buffers the surrounding East Arlington neighborhoods from traffic and serves as parkland where people enjoy biking, jogging, and walking.

The setting for the northern end of the parkway is distinctive. To the west is the open parkland of the Alewife Brook Reservation, a landscaped, primarily turf, river terrace leading to the tree-lined banks of the brook. South of the current Mystic Pumping Station is the parking lot for the Dilboy Field complex. This complex includes two buildings, the George Dilboy Pool (ca. 1965) and Stadium (1921; 1956) and three recreational areas, the George Dilboy Tennis Courts, Playground, and Basketball Courts (all built ca. 1958). Dilboy Field is a stadium with a high concrete wall facing Alewife Brook, overlooking a grass football field/running track, originally developed by the City of Somerville and transferred to the former MDC in the 1950s. A bronze plaque high on the mostly blank side of the concrete stadium notes that the facility was dedicated in 1921 (by the City of Somerville) and rebuilt in 1956. (Plans for the extensive 1956 rebuilding by the former MDC can be found in the map room at DCR.) A set of freestanding metal-framed bleachers faces the football field on the brook side. South of Dilboy Stadium, the complex includes a swimming pool, tennis court, basketball court, and open turf playing fields. The reservation includes scattered mature specimen trees, including a 200-year-old oak tree northwest of the intersection of Alewife Brook Parkway with Powder House Boulevard, as well as maple, ash, and beech trees.

To the east of the parkway is a dense, low-scale (one- to two-story, late-19th to early 20th-century) residential development, with five streets that intersect the parkway at an acute angle. Two gas stations

(continued)

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Alewife Brook Parkway
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occupy the successive corners closest to the Mystic Valley Parkway. Residential street trees here are mostly ash.

Alewife Brook Parkway intersects Powder House Boulevard at a large oval rotary, more than 50 feet long, with three triangular miters to direct traffic. The **Powder House Boulevard Rotary and Miters (#4 on the data sheet)** are turf and edged with vertical granite curbing. The rotary, but not the miters, also features a mix of medium-aged (20 to 50 years old) and mature trees (more than 50 years old) of mixed deciduous types consistent with those seen along the roadway throughout the northern segment.

South of Powder House Boulevard, the parkway passes low-density public housing on the east (on the site of the Somerville City Farm), followed by a large parking lot in front of a grocery store and liquor store, at the intersection with Broadway. A short textured median, made up of granite paving blocks set flush with the roadway, has been installed leading up to this corner.

South of Broadway, the roadway offers views across Alewife Brook into St. Paul's Cemetery in Arlington. The curbing along the west side of the roadway here is Belgian block. The setting to the east of the parkway here includes a contemporary children's playground at Woodstock Street. Just south of Woodstock, the roadway crosses into Cambridge. South of Woodstock, on the site of the former Cambridge City Farm, is a complex of one- to four-story religious and educational buildings.

South of Massachusetts Avenue, the Alewife Brook Parkway crosses parkland, with turf lawns on both sides of the road, and, on the east, a line of oak trees that are approximately 50 years old. A contemporary playground occupies the widest part of this parkland, at the intersection of Columbus and Seagrave. Beyond the parkland on the east side is the Columbus Avenue and Seagrave Road neighborhood, with closely spaced one- to two-story early 20th century residential buildings. The northern segment of Alewife Brook Parkway ends at the northern edge of the Alewife Brook Parkway/Concord Turnpike/Route 2 rotary (formerly the Dewey & Almy rotary).

Archaeological Description

Twenty-four ancient Native American sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile) of the Alewife Brook Parkway including one site that may have extended into the roadway right-of-way. The Fresh Pond, East Side Site (19-MD-363), extends along the east side of Fresh Pond northward to the southern terminus of the Alewife Brook Parkway. Identification of the Fresh Pond Site locus is poorly defined and based on cultural materials collected in the 1880's. Several additional sites exist to the west of the parkway on the opposite side of Alewife Brook. Middle (8,000-6,500 B.P.) and Late Archaic

(continued)

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**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
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(6,000-4,000 B.P.) occupations have been reported at several sites in the general area. Environmental characteristics indicate a high potential for the presence of ancient Native American sites in the Alewife Brook Parkway locale. The parkway intersects several well drained, level to moderately sloping terraces and other landforms within 1000 feet of Alewife Brook, the Little River, and the Mystic River. The parkway is generally oriented north/south from Fresh Pond north to the confluence of Alewife Brook and the Mystic River. A large variety of upland, pond and riverine floral and faunal resources and favorable site locations were available for Native American subsistence and settlement activities in the Alewife Brook locale.

Documentary sources also exist that verify a favorable potential for the presence of historic resources in the parkway locale. European settlement has been documented in the area since the 17th century and a wide variety of domestic, industrial, and commercial resources are known in the region and in the vicinity of neighboring parkways. Additional historical and archaeological research can document specific resources located in the vicinity of the Alewife Brook Parkway

In spite of the high potential for the presence of both ancient Native American and historical archaeological sites along the parkway route, the potential for the recovery of intact and significant archaeological resources, both ancient Native American and historic within the nominated parkway area is low. Impacts related to construction and maintenance of the roadway and related facilities would have had an adverse effect on any ancient Native American or historic resources that may have been located in the parkway right-of-way. Fragmented portions of archaeological sites including deeply buried artifact concentrations and truncated features may survive within the right-of-way, however, it is doubtful NR eligible sites survive. Known sites, including any potential evidence of the Fresh Pond, East Side Site (19-MD-363) that existed within or extended into the parkway right-of-way have been essentially destroyed.

(end)

Alewife Brook Parkway

Name of Property

Middlesex, MA

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.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Conservation

Community Planning and Development

Engineering

Landscape Architecture

Transportation

Period of Significance

1908-1956

Significant Dates

1908-1928: parkway constructed

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Charles Eliot, Olmsted Brothers

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Metropolitan District Commission archives

**United States Department of the Interior
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**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
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SIGNIFICANCE

The Alewife Brook Parkway, in Cambridge and Somerville, Middlesex County, is significant as one of the early river parkways proposed for the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC) by Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, and designed a decade later by its successor firm, Olmsted Brothers. It is emblematic of the firm's principles of parkways creation. Alewife Brook Parkway is a heavily traveled, four-lane highway that parallels Alewife Brook as it winds northward through medium-density, suburban commercial and residential neighborhoods. Alewife Brook Parkway provides a direct link between the Mystic Valley Parkway and Fresh Pond Parkway. The northern segment of Alewife Brook Parkway (from the Concord Turnpike/Route 2 rotary to the intersection with Mystic Valley Parkway) retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The southern segment, from the Concord Turnpike/Route 2 rotary south to the Fresh Pond rotary, was extensively rebuilt in the 1980s and is excluded from the present nomination. The northern segment of Alewife Brook Parkway meets National Register Criteria A and C in the significance areas of community development and planning, engineering, landscape architecture, and transportation at the local level and fulfills the Parkways Registration Requirements for the associated Connecting Parkway and River Parkway property subtypes, under Section F of this Multiple Property Documentation Format nomination. The period of significance for the Alewife Brook Parkway, Northern Segment, is from 1908, the beginning of land acquisition for the parkway, through 1956.

The Alewife Brook Reservation encompasses 120 acres bordering Alewife Brook (also known as the Little or Menotomy River) in Arlington, Belmont, Cambridge, and Somerville, formerly a vast expanse of marshes crisscrossed by meandering streams and known as the Arlington Plain. Spy Pond in Arlington, Little Pond in Belmont, and Fresh Pond in Cambridge are all remnants of this marsh. The brook draining them got its name from the alewife, a North American relative of the herring, which swims upstream each year from the Mystic River to spawn. In early spring, Native American tribes would descend from their upland camps and set up summer camps along the banks of the marsh and, especially, the ponds to harvest their plentiful fish. This yearly ritual occurred from approximately 12,000 years ago until the seventeenth century. The Native Americans stored their catch to provide food during the winters. Harvard University's Peabody Museum displays a collection of artifacts collected from farms once located around and within the reservation, and the reservation may still contain significant archaeological sites.

Charles Eliot suggested building a parkway from the Mystic River to the head of the Charles River Basin, by way of Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond, as early as 1892. In 1896, he lamented that there were numerous "modern, broad highways and parkways" in the southern part of the Metropolitan Park District but none in

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**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA**

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the northern part, save the torturous connections through Cambridge and Somerville with the Fellsway. Eliot advocated "one good north-side parkway" for the district as a higher priority than the proposed Dedham or Woburn parkways. Although completion took several decades, Eliot's proposed route became the Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond parkways.

In 1897, the landscape architect's report discussed establishing a parkway connection from the southerly end of the Mystic Valley Parkway to Fresh Pond Park in Cambridge, with one possible route by way of Alewife Brook, another by way of Spy Pond, Arlington. The following year, MPC Engineer William T. Pierce noted that topographic plans had been drawn up of the lands between Mystic River, Medford, and Fresh Pond, Cambridge, and of the shores of Spy Pond, Little Pond, and Little River in Arlington, covering an area of 597 acres, as possible routes for the parkway along Spy Pond to be known as "Spy Pond Parkway." The route along Spy Pond was abandoned that year, however, in favor of the route following the course of Alewife Brook. Weighing the two alternatives, Olmsted Brothers reported to the MPC that although the Spy Pond route would be cheaper to construct, connect with a major population center, and have the additional benefit of the pond and the landscape potential of the area, the Alewife Brook right of way was cheaper. The Spy Pond Parkway would have to be built immediately, while the Alewife Brook Parkway could be finished after more pressing projects. The firm noted that "it may be wise to secure the cheap, low land along the brook at a moderate cost, leaving the greater expense and difficulties of construction to the future."

The final impetus for the construction of the Alewife Brook Parkway would come not from its importance as a connecting parkway, but from its connection with waterway improvements. In the first decade of the twentieth century, pollution clogged the slow-flowing wetlands of the Arlington Plain, pockmarked with clay pits and crisscrossed by drainage canals and railroads. The pollution came from many sources: flood overflows from the Cambridge sewers; waste from tanneries, glue factories, brickyards, and railroad sidings; the "gutter wash of horse manure"; and truck-market garden manure from Arlington and Belmont. As part of an effort to improve the sanitary conditions of the waterway, the MPC commissioned a report in 1904 for the State Board of Health suggesting improvements to the Upper Mystic River and Alewife Brook by means of tide gates and large drainage channels. Civil engineer John R. Freeman canvassed area doctors and recorded 800 cases of "malaria" in the immediate neighborhood, which he attributed to mosquitoes that bred in the marshes. Even more alarming, the malaria seemed to be "spreading away from the cheaper houses near the marshes and clay pits to the more expensive residential districts on the upland." Freeman declared, "These are a tax on the vital force and comfort of the community which demands a remedy." Freeman proposed deepening the main channel of the Mystic River and straightening, widening, and deepening Alewife Brook. The proposed channel would also provide an opportunity to connect existing parkways. "If land needed for this sanitary improvement could also be used for a parkway," argued Freeman, "it would add still further to the general welfare."

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**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
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In 1907, the MPC completed preliminary plans and estimates for purification of the Upper Mystic River and Alewife Brook, as well as land plans and sketches. In 1908, the MPC acquired land from the mouth of Alewife Brook at the Mystic River to Little and Spy Ponds in Arlington and Belmont, and it approved plans to acquire the remainder of the corridor to Fresh Pond. In 1909, the MPC awarded contracts to construct the new channel for Alewife Brook from Spy Pond to the Mystic River. While most of the new channel was not hardened, the constricted space between St. Paul's Cemetery in Arlington and the Boston Elevated Railway Company car barns in Somerville meant that the channel between Broadway Avenue in Somerville and Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge had to be constructed with gravity concrete retaining walls to accommodate both the channel and the parkway. The MPC topped the retaining walls with a pipe-rail fence of galvanized iron. By 1912, MPC contractors had completed all excavation work for the Alewife Brook channel.

In 1909, the MPC completed land takings for the development of the Alewife Brook Parkway, but not until 1915 did it prepare plans and estimates for the construction of the parkway, from Powder House Boulevard to Massachusetts Avenue. The parkway included a pre-existing half-mile portion of Powder House Boulevard (from the Mystic Valley Parkway to its present terminus), which Somerville transferred to the Commission in 1916. Construction of the parkway from Massachusetts Avenue to Powder House Boulevard commenced in 1916. A standard roadway section south of Powder House Boulevard shows a 26-foot-wide roadway, with a six-foot-wide parking lane and a nine-foot sidewalk on the eastern side of the roadway; no walk was built on the park side. In the constricted area in Somerville south of Broadway, it was necessary to move the sidewalk to the west side of the parkway and build a portion of the sidewalk overhanging the brook by six feet, through the use of concrete retaining walls. "By this method and by eliminating the planting strip," MPC engineer John R. Rablin noted, "it was possible to provide a roadway 26-feet and a sidewalk six feet in width." Past the constriction, the six-foot sidewalk continued on the west side of the parkway only. South of Woodstock Street, it diverged from the parkway, wandering in a curvilinear path through the middle of the turf between the parkway and Alewife Brook. The Alewife Brook Parkway, from Mystic Valley Parkway south to Massachusetts Avenue, opened to traffic on December 2, 1916. In 1917, the MPC drew up plans to reconstruct the Alewife Brook Parkway segment that had formerly been Powder House Boulevard.

In 1919, the West End Street Railway Company conveyed land in Somerville and Cambridge to the Commonwealth, presumably to widen the constricted area south of Broadway. During that year, the MPC also resurfaced the former Powder House Boulevard in Somerville with bituminous macadam. Although the parkway progressed no further during the next decade, industrial development came rapidly to the land opened up by the straightening of the Alewife Brook Channel. Chemical companies clustered to the east of the Alewife Brook Reservation in Cambridge: American Oil at Rindge Avenue in 1917, Dewey & Almy at Harvey Street in 1919, and Prest-O-Lite Corporation on Concord Lane in 1920. In 1928, developers filled

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Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
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Glacialis Ice Pond, just north of Concord Avenue on the west bank of Alewife Brook, for an industrial park. In 1929, the Commission (by 1920 the Metropolitan District Commission [MDC] but since 2003 reorganized as the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation within the newly created Department of Conservation and Recreation [DCR]) prepared surveys and plans to convey some of its land to Dewey & Almy. With new development lining the Alewife Brook, finishing the last stretch of parkway became imperative.

Following legislation passed in 1928, the Massachusetts Department of Public Works built the final portion of the parkway, the "Alewife Brook Parkway Extension," between Concord Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge, in 1929-1930, and turned it over to the Commission for maintenance. From Massachusetts Avenue south, the roadway, 40 feet wide with granite curbing, was built across open parkland. Seagrave Road and Columbus Avenue, with their dense suburban development and curb cuts, were left unchanged, as parallel access roads. The western side of the parkway here had no sidewalk; the roadway edge was lined with a two-rail wooden fence on concrete posts. On the eastern side, a three-foot-wide planting strip paralleled the parkway, with a six-foot-wide gravel and peastone walk and two-rail wooden fence on concrete posts separating it from the parkway. The roadway surface was bituminous macadam asphalt. Because of the heavy traffic on Massachusetts Avenue (including the medial Boston Elevated Railway), this intersection was built as a signalized intersection. Farther south, the 1929 roadway included steel-truss bridges (with bituminous concrete roadways) over the Boston & Maine Railroad branches (replaced in the 1980s). The peastone eastern sidewalk continued to Rindge Avenue, crossing the bridges as a concrete sidewalk. In 1931, the MDC graded and loamed the area adjacent to the parkway from Massachusetts Avenue south to the Boston & Maine Railroad.

Under authorization of Chapter 450, Acts of 1931, the MDC awarded a contract to widen the northern half of the parkway (between Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, and Mystic Valley Parkway, Somerville). The roadway of a portion of this parkway was of "insufficient width for four-lane traffic and the pavement had been in bad condition for a considerable period." A typical section along the Cambridge-Somerville border north of Massachusetts Avenue shows that the roadway was straightened slightly, widened from 26 feet to 40 feet, and paved in bituminous penetration macadam. Existing granite edgestones at the corners were reset and new granite block edging was added to fill in between the corners. On the east side of the parkway, a six-foot planting strip set off a six-foot sidewalk. MDC contractors completed the widening on November 18, 1931. Along the former (and wider) Powder House Boulevard, this work included straightening the road slightly, resetting and infilling curbstones, and reestablishing consistent six-foot planting strips and six-foot concrete (west side) or gravel (east side) sidewalks.

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**Alewife Brook Parkway
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Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA**

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Within a couple of years, the newly completed Alewife Brook Parkway became a link in the new statewide system of limited-access highways, as State Route 2 was built over the former marshy corridor along the Arlington-Cambridge line. State Route 2 connected with the parkway in 1934 at a large rotary just west of the Dewey & Almy complex, built atop a portion of Yates Pond, and informally known as the Dewey & Almy Circle.

The second half of the decade saw further improvements to the Alewife Brook Parkway, including two projects in 1935: a six-foot-wide gravel footpath 1,700 feet in length built along the south bank of Alewife Brook from Massachusetts Avenue south to the railroad bridge, and the construction of a traffic circle (to replace a former triangular miter) on Alewife Brook Parkway at Mystic Valley Parkway. In 1937, the MDC installed lighting standards and concrete bases on Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge, from the Concord Turnpike to Concord Avenue. As Concord Avenue became a main suburban artery in the 1930s, numerous gas stations and restaurants were built along its intersections with Alewife Brook Parkway and Fresh Pond Parkway.

In 1947, the MDC completely reconfigured the intersection of Alewife Brook Parkway and Concord Avenue. Formerly, a triangular miter 60 feet by 80 feet by 90 feet had occupied the intersection, along the northern edge of Concord Avenue, to direct traffic between the parkway and the arterial avenue. In its place, the MDC built an enormous rotary, 150 feet in diameter, to give each roadway equal access to the intersection. The circular roadway around the rotary now consisted of two to three lanes, 30 to 40 feet wide. Three large miters helped direct traffic, the largest, a trumpet-shaped miter on the east side of the rotary, was 80 feet wide at the rotary. The rotary had vertical granite-faced pre-cast concrete curbing and a turf cover. Now called the Fresh Pond Rotary, it is included within the Fresh Pond Parkway National Register nomination.

Neighborhood historian Arthur Krim noted "In the decades following the Second World War, West Cambridge was totally transformed from a fringe industrial area to a regional shopping center." While steel-fabricating plants turned the Rindge Avenue Extension west of the parkway into Steel Row, and W.R. Grace continued producing chemicals at the former Dewey & Almy site, much of the corridor directly adjacent to Alewife Brook Parkway did become shopping centers. In 1949, the former New England Brick Company land west of the Alewife Brook Parkway became White Village Shopping Center, and in 1962 the Prest-O-Lite site directly across the parkway became Fresh Pond Shopping Center. The former clay pits of New England Brick Company, east of the parkway and immediately south of Rindge Avenue, were used as landfills until the late 1960s, when the high-rise Rindge Towers (Fresh Pond Apartments) and Jefferson Park public housing were constructed upon them.

The late 1960s saw protests against a planned eastward extension of State Route 2 across Alewife Brook

(continued)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA**

Section number 8 Page 6

Parkway and through Cambridge, as part of the Northwest Expressway/US 3. Following a 1970 expressway moratorium by Governor Francis Sargent and a 1971 review, these plans were abandoned. Part of the load on the roadway was absorbed a decade later, when the MBTA extended the Red Line subway westward to a new terminus at Alewife Station in 1984-85, built partially with funds from the aborted expressways. While historically the Alewife Brook Parkway has crossed the many railroad lines of West Cambridge on bridges, only three bridges carry the parkway today, all south of the State Route 2 intersection, and all built after the period of significance. From north to south, these bridges allow underpasses for a highway access road (1984) and the MBTA Red Line (1983), while a large arch bridge carries the parkway over the MBTA Commuter rail corridor and Terminal Road (1996). The parkway south of the bridge was widened in the 1990s, probably in conjunction with the bridge construction. Because of this intense construction and reworking of the parkway in the 1980s and 1990s, the section of Alewife Brook Parkway between the State Route 2 intersection and the Fresh Pond rotary has lost its historic integrity and is therefore excluded from the present nomination.

Today, the Alewife Brook Parkway is a busy suburban arterial, and the southern portion a part of State Route 2. However, it still links some of the largest open spaces in Cambridge, from the MDC-managed Little Pond (just across the city line in Belmont) east and north towards the Mystic River in Somerville. Within Cambridge itself, it links MDC land and neighboring wetlands owned by the Arthur D. Little Company with Jerry's Pond, Yates Pond (Clay Pit Pond), Russell Field, and Fresh Pond. The former Fitchburg cut-off railroad, now a stone-dust bike path called the Minuteman Trail, connects the Alewife Brook Parkway and Alewife T Station with the northwestern suburbs. The Alewife Brook Parkway is a physical and visual connection between these open spaces, not only for vehicles, but also for pedestrians and cyclists.

(end)

Alewife Brook Parkway
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ca. 12 acres

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	324560	4697800 (Mystic Valley	19	323760	4696040 Southern
Zone	Easting	Northing Parkway)	3.	Easting	Northing boundary
2. 19	324340	4696920 (Broadway)		4.	
Zone	Easting	Northing	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 Virginia Adams, Shary Berg, Tim Orwig, Emily Maass, PAL, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February 2004

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 Comm. Of Massachusetts/Dept. Conservation and Recreation/Division of Urban Parks and Recreation

street & number 20 Somerset Street telephone 617-727-5264

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02108

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 Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Alewife Brook Parkway
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA**

Section number 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary for Alewife Brook Parkway is drawn to encompass property historically and currently associated with the roadway that retains its historic integrity. This includes the parkway corridor and adjacent planting strips and sidewalks, where they exist. Where sidewalks and planting strips do not exist, the nomination includes all the land that extends back ten feet from the current edge of the parkway. The boundary does not include adjacent MDC-owned parkland that is not directly related to the parkway. The specific termini for Alewife Brook Parkway are as follows:

Alewife Brook Parkway: The northern terminus for Alewife Brook Parkway corresponds to a line of convenience drawn at along the southern edge of Mystic Valley Parkway in the town of Somerville. Although the parkway itself continues as far as the Concord Avenue/Fresh Pond Parkway/Fresh Pond rotary in Cambridge, the southern terminus for the purpose of this nomination corresponds to a line of convenience drawn at the eastern, outer perimeter of the intersection between the parkway and State Route 2 at the Alewife Brook MBTA station, Cambridge.

(end)

Photographs

Photographer: Emily Maass, PAL

Date: July 2002

Negatives location: PAL, Pawtucket, RI

1. View facing N along Alewife Brook Parkway toward intersection of Mystic Valley Parkway
2. Looking N near Massachusetts Avenue (MA Route 2A)

**Alewife Brook Parkway
Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts
District Data Sheet**

#	NRHP Listed	MHC #	Name	Town	Location	Date	Status	Type
#1			Alewife Brook Parkway Northern Segment	Cambridge and Somerville	Connecting Parkway located between Mystic Valley Parkway in Somerville and the Concord Turnpike/ Route 2 Rotary in Cambridge	1908-1917	C	Structure
#2			Mystic Valley Rotary and Meters (3)	Somerville	At the intersection of Mystic Valley Parkway and Alewife Brook Parkway	early 20th century	C	Structure
#3			Alewife Brook Parkway Tree Border	Cambridge and Somerville	Borders parkway from Mystic Valley Parkway in Somerville and the Concord Turnpike/ Route 2 Rotary in Cambridge	early 20th century	C	Site
#4			Powder House Boulevard Rotary and Meters (3)	Somerville	At the intersection of Powder House Boulevard and Alewife Brook parkway in Somerville	1930s	C	Structure

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Alewife Brook Parkway
NAME:

MULTIPLE Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 2/16/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/02/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/17/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/31/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000249

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 3/18/04 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

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



Alewife Brook Parkway
Somerville, MA

#1

<NO. 7 >016 © BN
0029 37-N N N-5 NN GR08 Z101/100



Alewife Brook Parkway
Somerville, MA

#2

<NO. # >020 © BN
0029-37 N N N-5 NH GR08 Z101/100



ALEWIFE BROOK RY. 42071-D1-TM-025

Boston North

MASSACHUSETTS
CHAMPAIGN/LEWISTOWN
(MIDDLESEX) MA

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

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

1985

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 1978. Field checked 1979. Map dated 1980.
Superimposed Boston North and Lexington 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1971.
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS chart 13272 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes.
Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 18
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, installed since 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 6 meters south and
41 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.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
CONTING ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.9 METERS

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

CONVERSION TABLE	DECLINATION DIAGRAM	ADJOINING MAPS																															
<table><tr><th>Meters</th><th>Feet</th></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>3.2808</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>6.5617</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>9.8425</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>13.1234</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>16.4042</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>19.6850</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>22.9659</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>26.2467</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>29.5276</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>32.8084</td></tr></table>	Meters	Feet	1	3.2808	2	6.5617	3	9.8425	4	13.1234	5	16.4042	6	19.6850	7	22.9659	8	26.2467	9	29.5276	10	32.8084		<table><tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td></tr></table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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4	5	6																															
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To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

UTM grid convergence (1983 and 1985) at center of map
Diagram is approximate

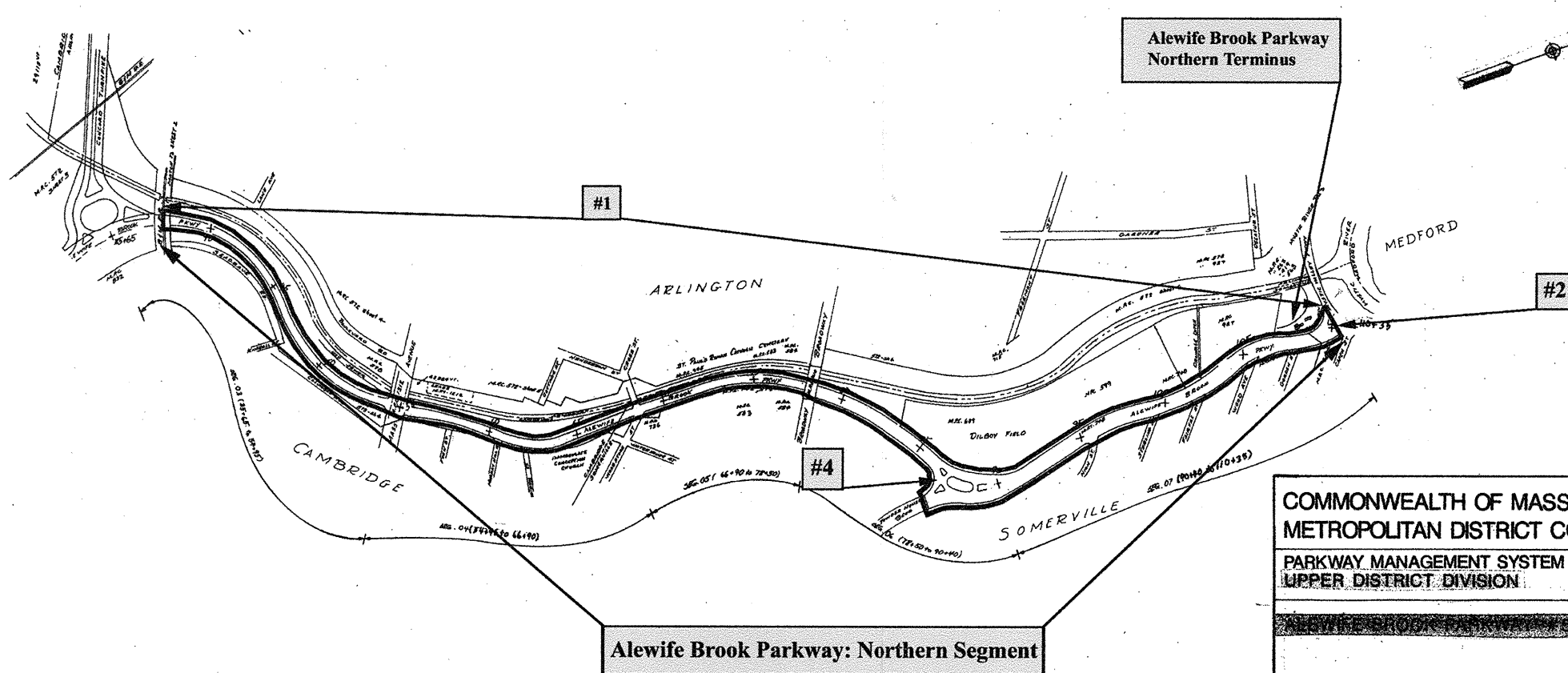
1 Billerica
2 Reading
3 Salem
4 Maynard
5 Lynn
6 Framingham
7 Boston South
8 Hull



Topographic Map Symbols

Primary highway, hard surface	.....
Secondary highway, hard surface	.....
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface	.....
Unimproved road, soil	.....
Route marker: Interstate, U. S. State	.....
Railroad: standard gage, narrow gage	.....
Bridge: drawbridge	.....
Fordbridge: 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, found section corner	.....
U. S. public lands survey: range, township, section	.....
Range, township, section line: location approximate	.....
Fence or field line	.....
Power transmission line, located 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	.....
Disturbed surface: strip mine, lava, sand	.....
Bathymetric contours: index, intermediate	.....
Perennial lake and stream: intermittent lake and stream	.....
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	.....
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp	.....
Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland	.....
Soak; meadow	.....
Orchard; vineyard	.....

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request



1. Alewife Brook Parkway: Northern Segment
2. Mystic River Rotary and Miters (3)
3. Tree Allee
4. Powder House Boulevard Rotary and Miters (3)

**STATION AND SEGMENT PLAN:
ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY**

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION

PARKWAY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - STA. AND SEG. PLAN

UPPER DISTRICT DIVISION

ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY - F504



Vanasse/Hangen
Consulting Engineers & Planners
60 Birmingham Parkway, Boston, MA 02135
617/783-7000

DESIGNED BY
VAG

DATE
APRIL, 1986

DRAWING NO.

DRAWN BY
NBF

SCALE
NOT TO SCALE

UD-4

CHECKED BY
VAG

SHEET OF
11

JOB NO.
1120

01790X

Meters

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

To convert multiply by

To convert multiply by

Top

Primary high
Secondary t
Light-duty r
Unimproved
Route mark
Railroad: st
Bridge; dra
Footbridge;
Built-up are
House; barr
Boundary:
National,
State ...
County, p
Civil tow
Incorpora
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Land gra
U. S. put
Range, tr
Fence or fi
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Dam; dam
Cemetery;
Campgroun
Windmill; v
Mine shaft
Control: hc
Contours:
Distorted s
Bathymetri
Perennial l
Rapids, lar
Submerger

ubje
ma
d; v

Alewife Brook Parkway

Name: BOSTON NORTH
February 11, 2004

Caption: Alewife Brook Parkway
Cambridge, Somerville, MA

SCALE 1:25 000

1 CENTIMETER ON THE MAP REPRESENTS 250 METERS ON THE G
CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS



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

February 9, 2004

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:

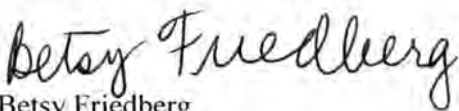
Enclosed please find the following nomination:

Alewife Brook Parkway, Cambridge/Somerville (Middlesex), MA
Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston (Parkways) MPS

The nomination was voted eligible by the State Review Board and been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property in the Certified Local Government community of Somerville were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. The owners of the property in Cambridge were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

We request expedited review of this nomination.

Sincerely,


Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: William F. Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
DCR/DUPR: Sean Fisher, Karl Haglund, Samantha Overton, Joseph Orfant, Julia O'Brien, Rick Corsi
Public Archaeology Laboratory, consultants
Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder, EOE
Patrice Kish, Betsy Shure Gross, DEM
Elizabeth Vizza, Halvorson Company
Cambridge: Michael A. Sullivan, Mayor; Charles Sullivan, Cambridge Historical Commission; Thomas Anninger, Planning and Economic Development
Somerville: Mayor Joseph Curtitone; Kristi Chase, Somerville Historic Preservation Commission; Brandon Wilson, Somerville CLG Coordinator; Jeffrey Levine, Planning Director