

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received SEP 23 1985

date entered OCT 24 1985

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

1. Name

historic Engine House #34
and/or common Western Avenue Fire Station

2. Location

street & number 444 Western Avenue na not for publication
city, town Boston (Brighton) na vicinity of
state Massachusetts code 025 county Suffolk code 025

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>na</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name 444 Western Avenue Trust, Frederick LaSelva and Frederick Fink, Trustees
street & number 20 Province Street
city, town Boston na vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Suffolk County Registry of Deeds
street & number Pemberton Square
city, town Boston state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets
title of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1979, Inventory # AB530 federal state county local
depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street
city, town Boston state Massachusetts

7. Description Engine House #34, 444 Western Avenue, Boston (Brighton), MA

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>na</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Engine House #34, dating from 1887-1889, is located in the Brighton section of Boston on the south side of Western Avenue. The immediate neighborhood is characterized by a mix of commercial, industrial, and residential uses. A parking lot abuts the station to the west, while a three-story wood frame commercial/residential structure stands to the east. The station is a two-story, red brick building with brownstone trim. It rests on a granite foundation and is enclosed by a gable slate roof with copper flashing, gutters, and downspouts. Stylistically, it combines the round arches of the Romanesque Revival with the asymmetry and variety of the Queen Anne. Predominant features include a round-arched engine bay and gable window, both with brownstone archivolt; brownstone buttresses, beltcourses and broad lintels; a narrow brick corbelled cornice; and, finally, a hose drying tower with pyramidal roof.

The building has survived largely intact with the following exceptions: original windows have been removed and their openings bricked down to accommodate smaller, metal 1/1 double-hung sash; doors have likewise been removed and replaced; and the roof has lost two original ventilators, as well as a central cupola added at some time after the original construction. These alterations, which are reversible, likely occurred in the mid-twentieth century when the fire station was decommissioned.

The main facade (north) is dominated by a single round-arched engine bay centered at the first story, and by a steep cross gable containing a smaller round-arched opening, offset to the west above the roofline. Both arches are distinguished by brick voussoirs, which are wedge-shaped, in the gable and by molded brownstone archivolt. The first-story arch springs from molded brownstone impost blocks, which are aligned with a beltcourse to a heavy lintel. To the west, a decorative buttress extends the wall plane while rising from the first-story beltcourse to another that forms the sills of the second-story windows. The three second-story windows are evenly spaced across the facade and are headed by a wide continuous lintel. The rooftop gable contains a third beltcourse from which its round arch springs, and is finished with brownstone coping.

The west elevation is asymmetrically arranged, and is characterized chiefly by heavy lintels, which, at the second story, rise above a narrow corbelled brick beltcourse. Proceeding southward at the first story, openings include an entry and four evenly spaced windows followed by a blank bay and terminated by a wider entry. At the second story, three windows are aligned with the door and windows below, followed by a blank bay, then two more windows; the southernmost window is set beneath the brick beltcourse. A chimney, with buttressing at its lower north face, rises above the roof. Four segmentally arched basement windows, currently boarded up, are revealed behind a coursed rubble areaway.

Continued

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Continuation sheet Engine House #34
Boston (Brighton), MA

Item number 7

Page 1

The east elevation is similar in design to the west but lacks the entries. Proceeding southward, openings include five vertically aligned windows at both stories, followed by a blank wall at the first story and by two additional windows at the second story. Extremely narrow windows occupy the southernmost bays at both stories. A hose drying tower, rising above this last bay, balances the chimney on the west elevation, and even mimics its buttressing. The tower is further distinguished by a narrow window at the buttress level, by an encircling beltcourse at the top of the buttress, and by long louvered openings on all four faces of the freestanding tower itself. The tower is terminated by a second beltcourse, a brick corbel table, and a pyramidal roof.

8. Significance

Engine House #34, 444 Western Avenue, Boston (Brighton), MA

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

Specific dates 1887-1897

Builder/Architect Charles Bateman

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Engine House #34, dating from 1887-1889, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship as well as significant associations with the expansion of Boston's Fire Department, especially in outlying areas. It exemplifies the high standard set for municipal buildings in Boston in the second half of the nineteenth century, and is a good example of the work of city architect Charles Bateman. Additionally, it is significant as a reflection of the rapid late nineteenth century development of the Brighton section of Boston following its annexation in 1874. It thus meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The City of Boston has attempted to control the incidence and spread of fire since the mid-seventeenth century, generally in response to the ravages of major conflagrations. In 1653 an ordinance was passed requiring that chains, crooks, and ropes be kept at meetinghouses, and that all citizens keep ladders tall enough to reach the roofs of their buildings. The first engine company was formed in 1679 accompanied by legislation preventing the erection of wood-frame buildings.¹ In 1713, the town was divided into fire districts under the control of a Board of Firewards.² By 1800, Boston had fourteen engine companies and had located its first fire hydrant on Washington Street, near the present Dover MBTA Station.³

In 1825, three years after Boston's incorporation as a city, a series of disastrous fires led to a reorganization of the fire protection system. Centralization was seen as the path to efficiency, so in 1826, the old system of Firewards was abolished in favor of a Fire Department "consisting of a Chief Engineer and as many other engineers, fire wardens, engine men, hosemen, and hook and ladder men as may be necessary."⁴ Two years later, in 1828, the fire department consisted of buckets, 2,000 feet of hose, 25 hose carriages, and 15 reservoirs in various parts of the city, containing a total of 35,000 gallons of water.⁵

In 1873, following the previous year's disastrous downtown fire, the City Council was asked to consider appointment of an independent board to control and manage the fire department. The result was passage of an ordinance on October 13, 1873, to "Establish a Fire Department" consisting of three Fire Commissioners, a Chief Engineer, a Superintendent of Fire Alarms, ten assistant engineers, and other officers, enginemen, telegraph operators, and other members to a total of 550.

The Board members were to be fulltime paid city employees who would raise the standards and performance of the department.⁶ In 1886, the department was supplemented by the establishment of the Office of the Fire Marshall, which acted as its police arm, examining the cause, circumstances and origins of fires.⁷

Continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

Barry, Charles A., The Boston Fire Department--History of a Boston Institution, 1631-1880, compiled from clippings from the Boston Courier, 1880.

Brayley, Arthur Wellington, A Complete History of the Boston Fire Department, John Dale & Co., Boston, 1889.

Continued

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 16,312 square feet

Quadrangle name Newton

Quadrangle scale 1: 25,000

UTM References

A

1	9	3	2	3	6	4	0	4	6	9	1	9	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The nomination is confined to the fire station and the lot on which it stands. There is no potential for a historic district in the area. Please see attached City of Boston Topographic and Planimetric Survey Map.

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

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Preservation Consultant

organization na

date April 1985

street & number 17 Slade Street

telephone 617-484-2395

city or town Belmont

state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Valerie A Talmage

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

date Sept. 12, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 10-24-85

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Continuation sheet Engine House #34 Boston (Brighton), MA Item number 8 Page 1

An excellent description of the personnel, equipment, property, and day-to-day workings of the newly organized department is provided by a Special Report of the Fire Department, prepared by the Board of Fire commissioners at the request of the mayor in 1890. That report makes it clear that the department was striving for greater professionalism and accountability, and was increasing its presence in the city's rapidly developing outer neighborhoods. Improvements mentioned include the use of civil service examinations to select new recruits, establishment of a thirty-day drill school to provide comprehensive training and instruction, setting of a mandatory retirement age of sixty-two, and institution of annual departmentwide inspections of two weeks duration by the Chief of the department and the Board of Commissioners.

Specifically, the report stated that the department was composed of 692 active members, and that it was organized as follows:

34 engine companies, including engine 31; the fireboat; 16 ladder companies; 10 chemical engine companies; 8 independent hose companies; and the water tower. These companies are distributed through the 10 fire districts into which the City has been divided, each district being under the immediate supervision and command of a district chief.⁸

As far as apparatus and equipment were concerned, the report stated:

There in active service, 34 steam fire-engines including the fire-boat; 16 ladder trucks; 10 chemical engines; and 8 hose carriages, or wagons belonging to independent hose companies. At the repair shop there are 7 spare engines. Three new engines, two of the Clapp & Jones pattern, and one Silsby, have just arrived, but at this writing have not been assigned to active duty or received the usual tests. They are second size engines of new model, each with a guaranteed capacity of 700 gallons per minute.⁹

In addition, the department owned close to 200 horses "for the propelling power of the apparatus."¹⁰

After discussing several stations then under construction or authorized for construction, the report closed with a plea for continued support and expansion:

In the outlying sections of Boston there has been so much building enterprise for the past few years, that new colonies have sprung up in various parts of Roxbury, West Roxbury, Dorchester, Brighton and elsewhere, which feel, with frequently considerable show of reason, that better protection against fire should be afforded them. It may not be possible to grant all they desire or perhaps need, at once; but their petitions in several cases deserve fruitage in the not distant future.¹¹

Continued

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date entered

Engine House #34
Continuation sheet Boston (Brighton), MA Item number 8 Page 2

Engine House #34 is representative of the late nineteenth century expansion and improvement of the Boston Fire Department. Its construction was first mentioned in official city reports in 1887, when the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners stated that "a new engine house is in process of construction in Brighton (district 8)."¹² The annual report of 1889 indicated completion of the station, saying, "the new engine house at Brighton has been accepted and occupied by an engine company numbered 34. It practically doubles the protection afforded the Brighton district, and is called upon to cover, in cases of considerable emergency, within the city proper."¹³ Stations at East Boston, Roslindale, and Charlestown were under construction at the same time, and by the following year, a second Brighton station was proposed for Harvard Avenue (NR, 1983).¹⁴

Charles J. Bateman supervised construction of Engine House #34 during his second nonconsecutive one-year term as City Architect (1883-1884; 1888-1889). Born in Cambridge on March 4, 1851, Bateman was educated in public schools and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. This training was followed by a seven-year apprenticeship in the offices of Faulkner & Clarke, one of which was spent in their Chicago office. Bateman then practiced with George Ropes for three years before opening his own Boston office in 1876. Bateman was best known for design of large institutional structures, both public and private, but he also designed numerous private homes. Public buildings included schools on O Street, Auburn Street, and Hammond Street as well as the Roxbury High School. Private commissions included parochial schools in Charlestown, Malden, Waltham, and East Boston, as well as St. Cecilia Church in Back Bay, St. Catherine's Church in Charlestown, and Most Precious Blood Church in Hyde Park.

Boston Landmarks Commission records indicate that approximately seventy five fire stations, both active and decommissioned, remain in Boston today. One third of these are considered potential candidates for the National Register of Historic Places or for other historic designations. Only fifteen, including Engine House #34, were constructed in the 19th century, with the earliest dated at 1860. While Engine House #34 is not the oldest, the finest, or the best preserved, it is representative of the design, scale, and quality of late 19th century firehouse construction in Boston. It also compares well to the firehouses currently listed in the National Register, namely the Gothic Revival-style Eustis Street firehouse of 1860 in Roxbury, the Romanesque Revival-style firehouse of 1888 at 941 Boylston Street in the Back Bay, and the Classical Revival-style firehouse of 1890 at 16 Harvard Avenue in Allston.

Engine House #34 is a significant indicator of the development of Boston's Brighton section, reflecting its rapid population growth and accompanying need for city services such as police and fire and protection. It is also important as a part of the body of municipal design work by Charles Bateman. Finally, it is significant as a handsome example of the Romanesque Revival style, which, according to the Boston Landmark Commission's survey of Brighton/Allston, is rare in that area.

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date entered

Continuation sheet Engine House #34
Boston (Brighton), MA

Item number 9

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annual Reports of the City Architect, of the Board of Fire Commissioners, of the Fire Marshall, and of the Superintendent. 1887-1890

Board of Fire Commissioners. Special Report on the Fire Department.
1890. City Document #64

Boston Public Library. Architects' File.

FOOTNOTES

1. Brayley, A. W. A Complete History of the Boston Fire Department.
This book includes numerous photographs of fire stations around the city. Most are 2-3 stories with hose drying towers and are executed in a variety of styles including Italianate, Mansard, Victorian Gothic, and Romanesque Revival. This station is moderate in terms of size and execution.
2. Ibid, p. 31.
3. Ibid, p. 107.
4. Ibid, pp. 149-150.
5. Barry, C. A. The Boston Fire Department. Unpaginated.
6. Brayley, op. cit., p. 291.
7. Annual Report of the Fire Marshall of the City of Boston. Wright & Porter Printing Co., 1887. Unpaginated.
8. Board of Fire Commissioners. Special Report on the Fire Department. City Doc. 64., p. 4.
9. Ibid, p. 7.
10. Ibid, p. 15.
11. Ibid, pp. 17-18.
12. Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners. April 30, 1887. City Doc. #81.
13. Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Fire Commissioners. April 30, 1889. City Doc. #93.
14. Board of Fire Commissioners. Special Report, op. cit., p. 17.
15. Boston Public Library. Architects' File.
16. Boston Landmarks Commission. Brighton/Allston Historic Resources Survey.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

³⁴
Engine House # ~~85~~
Suffolk County
MASSACHUSETTS

SEP 23 1985

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 10/24/85 - 11/7/85
Action: ACCEPT 10-24-85
 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 sheet

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



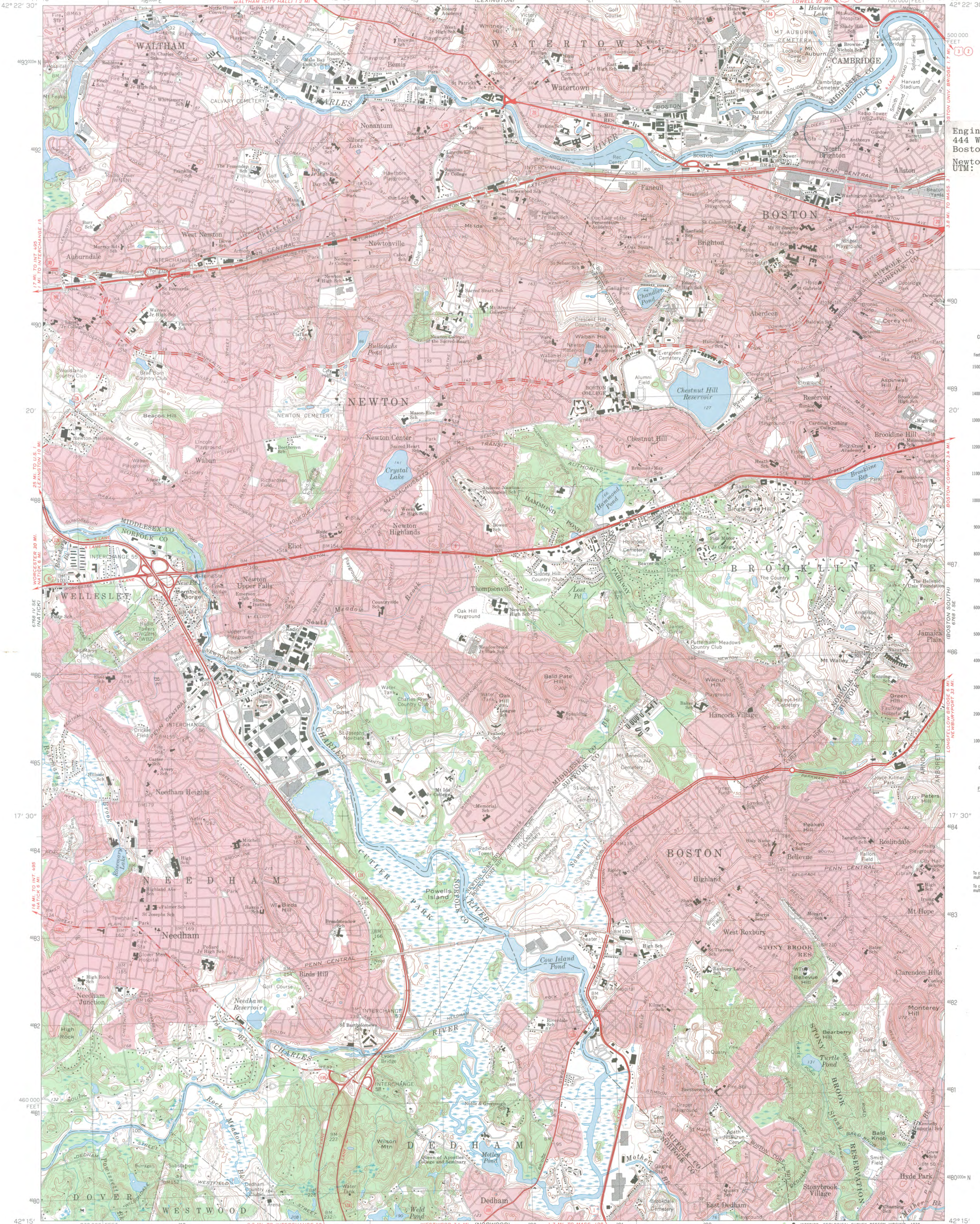
Engine House #34
444 Western Avenue
Boston, Mass.

Candace Jenkins 1985
Belmont, Mass.

View facing southeast
Photo #1 of 1

678 1/2 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 15
1.7 MI. TO INT. 495

678 1/2 MI. TO INTERCHANGE 15
1.7 MI. TO INT. 495



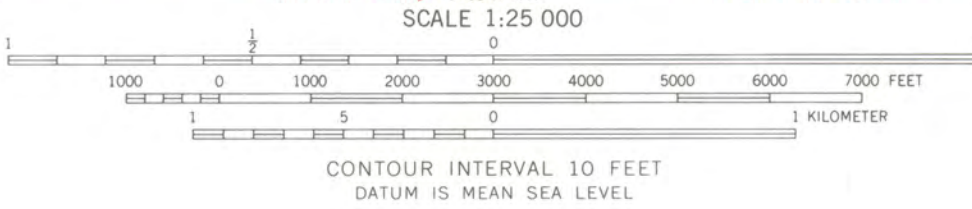
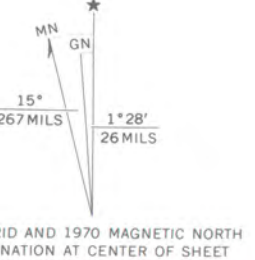
Engine House #34
444 Western Avenue
Boston (Brighton), MA
Newton Quadrangle
UTM: 19J32364674691980

CONVERSION
SCALES



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

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
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 1970
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



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



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

NEWTON, MASS.
N4215—W7107.5/7.5

1970

AMS 6788 I SW—SERIES V814

CITY OF BOSTON
TOPOGRAPHIC AND PLANIMETRIC SURVEY

695E
498N



Engine House #34
444 Western Avenue
Boston (Brighton), MA
City of Boston Topographic
and Planimetric Map 26N-5E
1965 Scale: 1"=100'

0 100 200 300 400 500 FT.
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5'
500 FOOT GRID BASED
ON MASSACHUSETTS COORDINATE SYSTEM, MAINLAND ZONE
THE LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE GRID NUMBERS ARE OMITTED

SHEET INDEX

		27N-6E
26N-4E	26N-5E	26N-6E
25N-4E	25N-5E	25N-6E

BOSTON
MASSACHUSETTS
1965

Prepared under the direction of the Boston Redevelopment Authority
Control based on U.S.C. & G.S. and the Mass. Geodetic Survey
Mapped by Lockwood, Kessler & Bartlett, Inc.
Photography by Lockwood, Kessler & Bartlett, Inc., Dec. 1964, Apr. 1965
North American Datum 1927, Vertical Datum Based on Boston City Base
Property Data derived from City of Boston Assessors Plans.