

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For HCERS use only

received MAR 3 1982

date entered APR 1 1982

1. Name

historic Joshua Lewis House

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 178 South Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Needham

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

9th

state Massachusetts

code 025

county

Norfolk

code

021

3. Classification

Category

☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership

☐ public
☒ private
☐ both

Public Acquisition

☐ in process
☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military

☐ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Robert J. and Joan Dunkle

street & number 178 South Street

city, town Needham

N/A vicinity of

state

Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number High Street

city, town

Deedham

state

Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Assets
title of the Commonwealth

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1977

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston

state Massachusetts

7. Description

NEEDHAM: Joshua Lewis House, 178 South Street

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Joshua Lewis House stands on a most favorable site of one and a half acres overlooking the meandering Charles River. The simple Georgian farmhouse is clearly vernacular in origin and remains largely unchanged in its architecture and setting.

The wood frame house is thought to have been built in 1776, and has the 2½ stories, gable roof, five bay facade, and central chimney characteristic of the period. Only one room deep in the main block, an original leanto and later side and rear wings extend the living space considerably. Original fenestration consists of six over six sash. Centered on the facade is a very simple entrance, its molded architrave framing a door and narrow full-height side-lights.

As is typical of the central chimney plan, the interior of the Joshua Lewis House features front parlors, a rear kitchen (in the leanto), and a steep narrow stairway in the front hall. Wainscotting, exposed corner posts, and original chimneypieces highlight the interior finishing.

Additions to the building include a two-story modern kitchen wing on the northeast side and a large two-story wing on the south side. Several new window units and an exterior chimney have been added at the rear of the house, but the main block---including its facade---remains essentially as built. The house is generally in good repair, thanks to the restoration and maintenance provided by the present owner.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1776

Builder/Architect Joshua Lewis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Joshua Lewis House possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship. It is an interesting architectural piece, but its major significance in local and national history derives from the people who have lived in it. The house has been associated with prominent local landowners of the eighteenth century, a noted wood-carver of the mid-nineteenth century, the innovative horticulturist Denys Zirngiebel and his friend Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and finally the artist N.C. Wyeth. The Lewis House thus meets Criterion B of the National Register of Historic Places.

The house was built circa 1776 by Joshua Lewis on property which had been inherited by his wife, Mary Lyon, from her father, a principal landowner in the town. Joshua Lewis and Mary Lyon were married in 1776, and the house was probably built in that year. After the death of his parents, the house was occupied and owned by Joshua Lewis, Jr. Little is known of these early Lewises, although Capt. Joshua Lewis, Jr., was listed on the rolls of the East Needham Militia Company in 1817.

The house was sold out of the Lewis family in 1835. After passing through two ownerships it was bought in 1858 by David Livingston, a well-known woodcarver of the time. The stairway of the Old Boston State House is an example of his work.

It was bought in 1864 by James Black, who rented the property to Denys Zirngiebel, who bought it from Black in 1874. Denys Zirngiebel was a Swiss horticulturist who had been a student of Louis Agassiz, the famous naturalist, at the University of Neufchatel. Zirngiebel followed Agassiz to the United States in 1855, and finally followed him to Cambridge and Harvard, where he took charge of the Harvard Botanical Gardens, which later became the Arnold Arboretum. At this time, it is said, he assisted Asa Grey in compiling Grey's Botany. In 1865 he established the Greendale Greenhouses on this property in Needham, and he sent a weekly shipment to Washington for the decoration of the White House. He was also credited with developing an improved system for heating greenhouses. The foundations of his own greenhouses are still visible along South Street, east of the house.

During these years a frequent visitor at the house was the poet Longfellow, who had become Zirngiebel's friend when Agassiz, Longfellow, and Zirngiebel were neighbors in Cambridge. Longfellow enjoyed the opportunity to talk French with the Zirngiebels. For years a large tree on the bank of the river behind the house was known as "Mr. Longfellow's tree" because, it was said that he often sat in its shade and that it was there he wrote "To the River Charles," which begins with the stanza:

"River! that in silence windest
Through meadows bright and free
Till at length they rest thou findest
In the bosom of the sea."

9. Map or Bibliographical References

Jones, Frederic, Old Houses, Needham, Mass., Needham, 1959
Clarke, George K., History of Needham, Boston 1921
Material from the files of the Needham Historical Society
Allen, Douglass & Douglass, Jr., N.C. Wyeth, New York, 1972
~~Interviews with members of the Wyeth family~~

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 1.25

Quadrangle name Newton

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UMT References

A

1	9
---	---

3	1	7	7	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	6	8	1	2	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

D

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

E

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

F

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

G

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

H

--	--

--	--	--	--

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

Verbal boundary description and justification

Northerly by South Street, 147.50 feet; Westerly, by land now or formerly of A. Newell Wyeth, 425.75 feet; Southerly by Charles River, 121 feet more or less; Easterly, by land now or formerly of Mary Winslow Crane, 454.94 feet.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wendy Frontiero, Preservation Planner, with the Needham Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date February 12, 1981

street & number 294 Washhington Street telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Peter L. Weslowski

title Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 2/17/82

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/1/82

Shelous Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

882

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 2

A scene of the river at this place appears in N.C. Wyeth's painting "Charles River Scene" which hangs in the Needham Public Library, given to the Library's N.C. Wyeth Collection by Mrs. N.C. Wyeth.

Henriette, the daughter of Denys Zirngiebel, married Andrew Newell Wyeth, who in 1881 built a house next door at 192 South Street, on land given to him by his father-in-law. In this house four sons were born to the Andrew Wyeths, the oldest of whom was Newell Converse, later to be known simply as N.C. Wyeth, one of the country's most famous artist-illustrators and the founder of the Wyeth dynasty of artists.

After the death of Denys Zirngiebel in 1905 the house was owned and occupied by his son, Denys, Jr., until he sold it in 1921 to his nephew N.C. Wyeth.

N.C. Wyeth had left Needham in 1902 to study under Howard Pyle in Chadds Ford, Pa. In 1921 he moved back to Needham with his young family, bought his grandfather's house, and built a studio on the land between the house and the river. It was in this studio that he painted the 20-foot lunettes for the Missouri State House, the famous murals for the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, and many of his illustrations. The studio is now incorporated into the house at 150 South Street.

The house itself appears in at least three of the artist's paintings. It appears in the background of "Paul Revere's Ride", an illustration for the Brander Matthews anthology, Poems of American Patriotism (Scribners, N.Y. 1922); and it appears in "Christmas Morning", painted for the cover of the December, 1913 issue of "Scribners Magazine." The elderly gentleman who appears in this picture was his Grandfather Zirngiebel, and the small boy was his youngest brother, Stimson. The portico which frames the front door in these two pictures was later removed by the artist himself. The house appears again, from a different viewpoint, in the painting "Portrait of My Mother." The scene of this picture is the kitchen of his father's house next door, and through the window can be seen the side of his grandfather's house. The small bent figure which again appears in this view is again his grandfather. The barn, a corner of which appears in this picture, still stands.

In 1924 N.C. Wyeth moved with his family back to Chadds Ford, and the house was occupied by his brother Stimson until it was sold again in 1931, this time to Lester and Hilda Bottomley, who lived in it until 1944. During these years a frequent visitor to the house was Mrs. Bottomley's cousin, the novelist Thomas Wolfe.

The house was bought in 1962 by its present owners, Robert and Joan Dunkle, who have effectively restored it and added an ell to the rear and a studio to the old barn.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCRS use only

received MAR 3 1982

date entered APR 1 1982

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 3

The Joshua Lewis House property may contain archaeological remains from both the prehistoric and historic periods. A number of prehistoric archaeological sites are known to exist along the Charles River settings of elevated level land similar to that of the Joshua Lewis House property. As such, prehistoric remains may be present on this site as well. Historic archaeological remains in the form of early domestic refuse and indicators of small structures, plantings and other ground disturbances known as features may also exist on the property. Should they exist, these kinds of data can complement the above ground material culture in an interpretation of the cultural use of the landscape.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

Property: Lewis Joshua House
State, County: MA, Norfolk
Federal Agency: _____

Working No. 3/3/82-590
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83
Date Due: 4/1/82 - 4/17/82
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 4/1/82
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT
Entered in the National Register
photos 2
maps 1

☐ 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
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

for NPS use only

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

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UBIT 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: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Joshua Lewis House
Needham
Norfolk County
Massachusetts

KENNETH E. WATSON
142 HILLCREST RD.
NEEDHAM, MA 02192

Photo Credit: Kenneth Watson
Negative filed: Kenneth Watson
Identification: North facade
Date: 1980

MAR 3 1982



Joshua Lewis House
Needham
Norfolk County
Massachusetts

KENNETH E. WATSON
142 HILLCREST RD.
NEEDHAM, MA 02192

Photo Credit: Kenneth Watson
Negative filed Kenneth Watson
Identification: West facade
Date: 1980

MAR 3 1982

Needham, Mass.

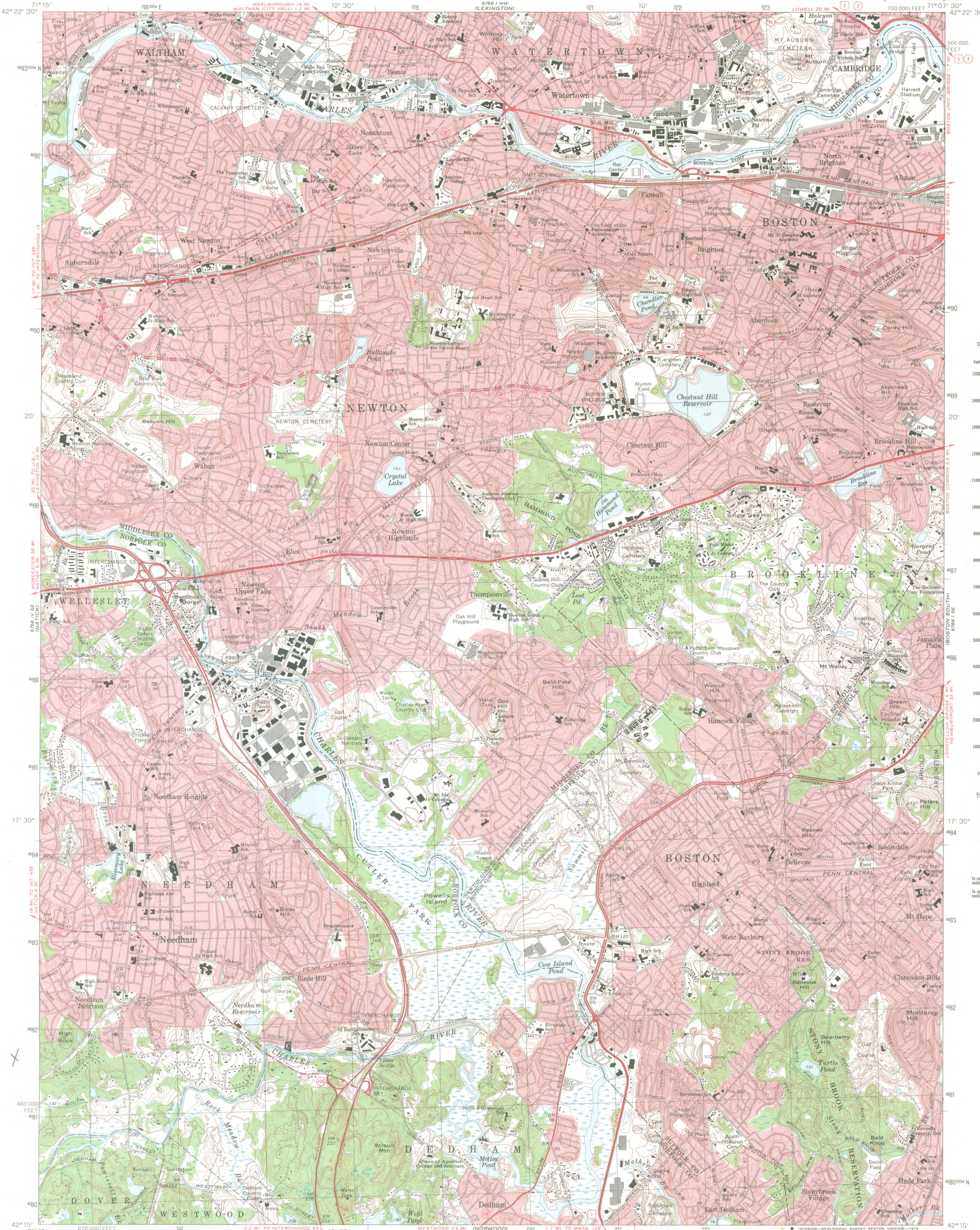
West facade

Photo #2

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

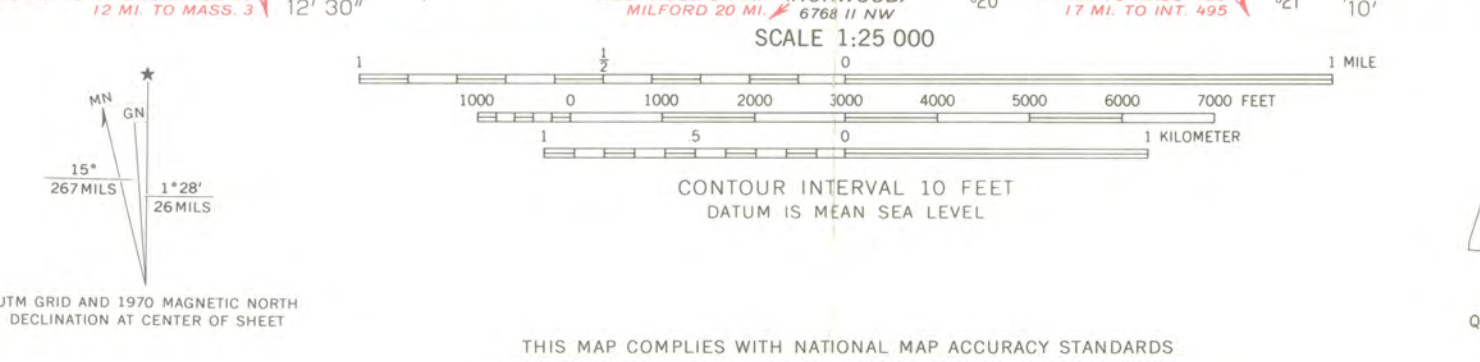
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

NEWTON QUADRANGLE
MASSACHUSETTS
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Joshua Lewis House
Needham, MA
UTM Reference
19/317740/4681270

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 planimetric 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
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved 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 6768 I SW-SERIES V814

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered APRIL 1, 1982

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Melrose Town Center Historic District	Melrose Middlesex County
American Net and Twine Company Factory (Cambridge Multiple Resource Area)	Cambridge Middlesex County
Townsend House	Needham Norfolk County
<u>Lewis, Joshua, House</u>	Needham Norfolk County

Notified

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Honorable Paul E. Tsongas
Honorable Edward J. Markey
Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Honorable John Joseph Moakley

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, NPS
North Atlantic Regional Office, NPS

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski
Executive Director, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108