

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

SEP 30 1985

OCT 31 1985

1. Name

historic Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks

and or common Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks

2. Location

street & number 959-991 Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Springfield

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

code 025

county Hampden

013

code

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name South Commons, Inc.

street & number 1111 Main Street

city, town Springfield

N/A vicinity of

state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 50 State Street

city, town Springfield

state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title South End Neighborhood Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1983 #2882, #2886, #2887

☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☒ local

depository for survey records Springfield Historical Commission

city, town Springfield

state Massachusetts

cont./

7. Description

Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks, Springfield, MA

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 Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks consist of three, multi-story, brick buildings. Each was constructed during the late nineteenth century, and had retail stores on the first floor and tenement space above. Together, the three form a continuous block on the east side of Main Street in the South End. The Mills and Hale Blocks were built in 1874 by a local builder and are similar in appearance. A one-story storefront building, built in the first decade of the twentieth century, connects the turn-of-the-century Owen Block to the Mills and Hale Blocks.

The Mills Block is the northernmost of the three buildings and is located at the south corner of Union Street. It is three stories in height, eight bays wide, seven bays deep, and has a facade of pressed brick with yellow sandstone trimmings. At present, the brick and sandstone are painted. The first story of the facade is composed of two, three-bay storefronts flanking a central entrance to the upper stories. The storefronts currently have mid-twentieth century show windows, with "mirror wall" bases, and early-twentieth century transoms. The transom for the north storefront has leaded glass. A stone beltcourse extends across the facade, capping the storefronts, and separating the first story from the upper stories. The entrance to the upper stories is recessed, and reached by three granite steps. Its door is capped by a transom.

The facade's second and third stories have eight arched windows with stone hoods and sills. The hoods all have slightly projecting keystones.

The Mills Block is capped by a projecting, painted tin cornice with modillions, dentils, and a shallow paneled frieze. Behind the cornice is a flat roof.

The second and third stories of the Union Street side of the building feature windows which are identical to those on the second and third stories of the facade. The first story has a one-bay section of the facade's show window, with tiled base, leaded-glass transom, and stone cornice. One bay in from the rear is an arched doorway with double doors, transom, and one granite step. The next bay in has a small, bricked-in window opening with stone sill and keystone hood. The facade's decorative cornice also continues on this side for one bay.

The rear of the building is eight bays wide. The rectangular windows have stone sills and lintels. Half of the window openings have been bricked up, while the others are boarded over. Two interior brick chimneys are visible from the rear of the building. The south side of the building is a firewall, which is shared with the Hale Block.

The Hale Block is in the middle of this grouping of three buildings. It is three stories in height, sixteen bays wide, and has a facade of pressed brick with granite trimmings. The first story of the facade has four storefronts, four entrances to the upper stories, and is capped by a granite beltcourse. Three of the three-bay storefronts have original, recessed central entrances. The fourth storefront had its original entrance removed in the early twentieth century. Three of the storefronts currently have mid-twentieth century show windows with tile bases, and transoms covered with plywood or cement-and-wire-mesh. The other storefront is entirely boarded over. The entrances to the upper stories are recessed and reached by three granite steps. Each doorway is framed with granite and has a tall door with transom.

Continued

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

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MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS

Continuation sheet Springfield, MA

Item number 6

Page 1

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Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Survey done at State level. 1983. Forms #2882, #2886, #2887.

Massachusetts Historical Commission, 80 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet	MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS Springfield, MA	Item number	7	Page	1
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The second and third stories of the facade each have sixteen arched windows. A continuous granite sill links all of the windows on each story. Brick dentils and corbel table are added details of each sill. The window hoods, each of which has a raised, granite keystone and granite shoulders, are linked by shaped, granite stops. The stops are further ornamented with brick dentils and short corbel tables. All of the upper-story windows are currently boarded up.

The Hale Block is capped by a projecting painted tin cornice with modillions, brackets, dentils, and a shallow, paneled frieze. Behind the cornice is a flat roof.

The south side of the building has four windows on each of the second and third stories. Those on the second story have been blocked in with cement blocks. Four end chimneys project upwards from the top of the wall. The first story has a fire-wall, which is shared with the Owen Block's monitor. The north side of the building is also a firewall. This one is shared with the Mills Block. The rear of the building features arched window openings with brownstone sills, and doorways with brownstone lintels. Each of the four divisions of the building has three windows and a door per floor. On the upper stories the openings remain, while on the first story they have been blocked in.

The Owen Block is the southernmost of the three buildings and is located at the north corner of Hubbard Avenue. It is four stories in height, three double bays wide, five bays deep, and has a facade and south side of yellow brick with brownstone trim. The building has a one-story brick addition on its northern end, adjacent to the Hale Block. Including the addition, there are three, three-bay storefronts on Main St., each with central, recessed doorway. Each storefront has a paneled base and transom. The storefronts are capped off and linked together by a continuous tin frieze and cornice. Currently, all three are vacant and boarded up.

The upper stories of the Owen's Block facade are divided into bays by Ionic, yellow brick pilasters with brownstone bases and capitals. Each bay has two windows per floor. These windows have cut brownstone sills and lintels. None of the window frames remain.

The facade is capped by a projecting, painted tin cornice with modillions and festooned frieze. Above, is a flat roof.

The south side, or Hubbard Avenue facade, of the building features two, three-story oriel windows sheathed in tin. Each has a brownstone base, paneled spandrels, and projecting cornices. Individual windows on the bays are separated by attenuated, Corinthian columns. The first story of this side has no windows and is unadorned except for a short return from the corner storefront, and a tall, thin doorway near the rear corner. A thin, brownstone beltcourse caps the first story, and yellow brick pilasters extend up three stories from this beltcourse. This side is capped by a cornice and frieze identical to the ones on the facade. There is also a three-story fire escape on this side.

Continued

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Continuation sheet MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS Item number 7 Page 2
Springfield, MA

The rear of the building is five bays wide and composed of red brick. Full-height wooden porches, in poor condition, cover most of the rear. The north side of the Owen Block is also composed of red brick, and is six bays deep. It features a three-story oriel window, sheathed in tin. There also is a three-story fire escape on this side. The first story is a firewall, which is shared with the one-story addition.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

While no prehistoric or historic archaeological sites are recorded within the property, the potential for significant sites does exist. The property's location on the terrace above the Connecticut River and in close proximity to several confluence points makes it a likely spot for prehistoric sites. In addition, the property is located within the area settled during the 17th century and contain features or foundations from 17th through mid 19th century. As no historical archaeology has been conducted in Springfield, any surviving remains would be significant.

8. Significance

Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks, Springfield, MA

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)
				Community Development
Specific dates 1874, 1899		Builder/Architect Warren Mills, Frank W. Owen		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks possess integrity of design, setting, location, and materials, as well as important associations with the development of late-nineteenth century commercial architecture in Springfield. The blocks form a significant component of the South End neighborhood's Main Street streetscape. In addition, the Mills and Hale Blocks are two of the finest remaining Italianate commercial blocks in Springfield. Built in 1874 at a combined cost of \$50,000, they were the southernmost "urban" buildings on Main Street at the time of their construction. They are the oldest commercial buildings on Main Street in the South End, and also rank among the oldest commercial buildings standing in the city. The Owen Block is a good example of a small, turn-of-the-century, commercial block in Springfield. Built in 1899 at a cost of \$30,000, it features Classical Revival detailing, and is representative of the building boom that changed the appearance of Main Street in the South End during the late-nineteenth century and the early-twentieth century. As such, the Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks meet criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The six stores of these two buildings were occupied by neighborhood groceries, druggists, liquor dealers, laundries, and furniture dealers. The upper stories of the Mills Block were originally used as a boarding house, while those of the Hale Block were used for tenements. The 1880 U. S. Census lists fourteen families here, with the heads of the households listed as being: druggist, banker, clerks, cigar maker, baker, furniture dealer, mechanics, and bread peddler.

The stores of the Owen Block were described as being a grocery and dry goods emporium in the 1909 House Directory, and there were six tenements upstairs. The residents included a barber, plumber, realtor, mechanic dressmaker, and commercial traveler. In 1919 each of the tenements was sub-divided in three, and the resulting eighteen rooms were rented out.

Until the post-Civil War period, Main Street was a residential street in the South End. The last quarter of the nineteenth century and first quarter of the twentieth century completely transformed the street. The Mills and Hale Blocks are the first examples of the new, mixed-use, brick blocks that were to be built over the next fifty years, featuring stores at street level and residential rooms or apartments above. The blocks were all built to the lotline on the sidewalk, which also contributed to the developing urban character of the area. Union Street was one of the few streets in the neighborhood to extend easterly up the hill from Main Street to Maple Street, giving it a place of relative importance. The east side of Main Street, because of its more favorable exposure to the sun, was also more highly developed.

Continued

9. Major Bibliographical References

Springfield Directory, 1875-76, P. 411
Springfield Daily Republican, Dec 30, 1899
Springfield Vertical File: Springfield Builders: Mills, Warren; Owen, Frank E.
Springfield Maps & Directories: 1860 - 1930

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .4 acre

Quadrangle name Springfield South

Quadrangle scale 1 : 25000

UTM References

A 18 699710 4663380
Zone Easting Northing

B 18 699750 4663350
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Begin at the southeast corner of Main and Union Streets, then extending 198.66 feet southerly along Main Street to the north corner of Hubbard Avenue, then easterly 82 feet along the northerly side of Hubbard Avenue to a point. From here extend 87.59 feet northerly, then 6.25 feet easterly, and then 110.20

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

(continued)

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	N/A	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Zimmerman, Director, Preservation Planning, with
Edmond P. Lonergan, Preservation Consultant

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission

date August, 1985

street & number 80 Boylston Street

telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston

state Massachusetts

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ 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

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/23/85

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

Entered in the

National Register

date 10-31-85

for Allouez Bryan
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS
Springfield, MA Item number 8 Page 1

The Mills and Hale Blocks were built by Warren Mills, a carpenter and builder who practiced his trade in Springfield for almost fifty years. He is first listed in the local directories in 1846, but little is known of his work here. These blocks are his only known surviving buildings.

The Owen Block was built by Frank E. Owen, a carpenter and builder who worked and lived in Springfield for over thirty years. Again, little is known of his work.

The Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks are currently being rehabilitated to become apartments, under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, taking advantage of the tax incentives provided by the 1981 Economic Recovery Tax Act, as amended in 1984.

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

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Continuation sheet MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS
Springfield, MA Item number 10 Page 1

feet to the south side of Union Street. From this point extend westerly 66.20 feet along the south side of Union Street to the point of beginning.

The nominated property consists of the three buildings shown on the accompanying Springfield Building Department map (Assessor's Block Plan 612) and outlined in red. The Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks, though constructed as separate buildings, are being nominated as a complex. This is because they present a unified and cohesive appearance, and because they occupy the entire eastern side of one block in Springfield's South End. Furthermore, all three share a common function with retail storefronts on the ground floor and rental residential space above. In addition, the blocks are closely similar in size, scale, massing and materials and were constructed within twenty-five years of each other. By the early twentieth century, the three blocks presented a completely unified street floor of storefronts.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Mills-Hale-Owen Blocks
Hampden County
MASSACHUSETTS

SEP 30 1985

Working No. _____

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87

Date Due: 10/31/85 - 11/14/85

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 10-31-85

☐ RETURN

☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Entered in the
National Register

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	
	☐ unaltered	
	☐ altered	

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: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Mills/Male/Owen Blocks
- 959-991 Main St. Springfield MA -

Photog. E. Lanergan Jan 85 Neg: E.L.

Photo: 1066 View South on Main from Union



Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks
- Springfield MA 959-991 Main St -

Photog. E. Lonerger Jan 85 Neg. E.L.
- Photo: 2066 View North Main from Hubbard -



Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks

959-991 Main St. Springfield MA

Photog: E Lonergan Jan 85 Neg: EL

Photo: 3086 Detail: Mills/Hale Facades



Mills/Male/Owen Blocks

959-991 Main St. Springfield MA

Photog: E Loneragan Jan 05 Neg: EL

Photo: 4066 Detail: Owen facade



Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks

959-991 Main St Springfield MA

Photog: EL Morgan Jan 05 Neg: EL

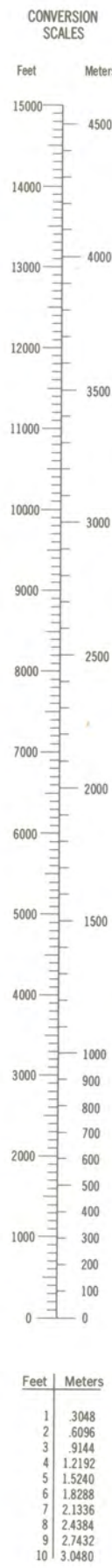
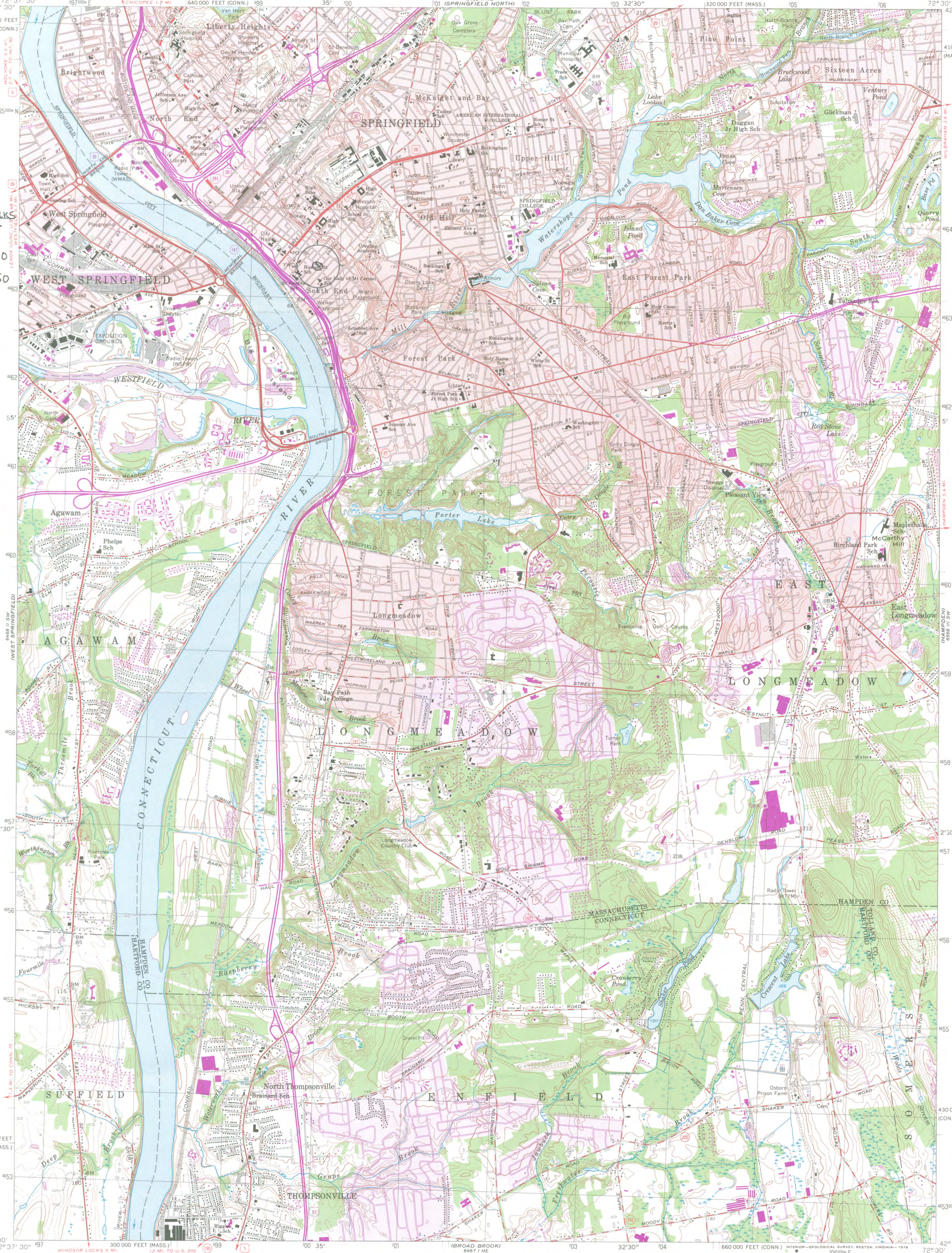
Photo: 5066 Rees-Owen Block



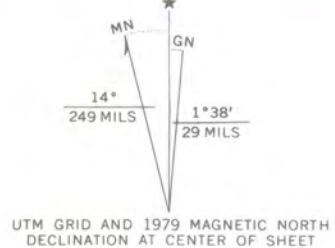
Mills/Hale/Owen Blocks
- 959.991 Main St Springfield MA -

Photog: E Lonerger Jan 85 Neg: EL
- Photo: 6066 View: Union St Rear Mills/Hale Blocks -

SPRINGFIELD MASS
MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS
Springfield South Quad
UTM References:
18/699710/4663380
18/699750/4663350



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, Massachusetts Geodetic Survey,
and Connecticut Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1933 and 1942
Culture revised from aerial photographs by photogrammetric
methods. Aerial photographs taken 1957. Field check 1958
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Connecticut coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



SCALE 1:25 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

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



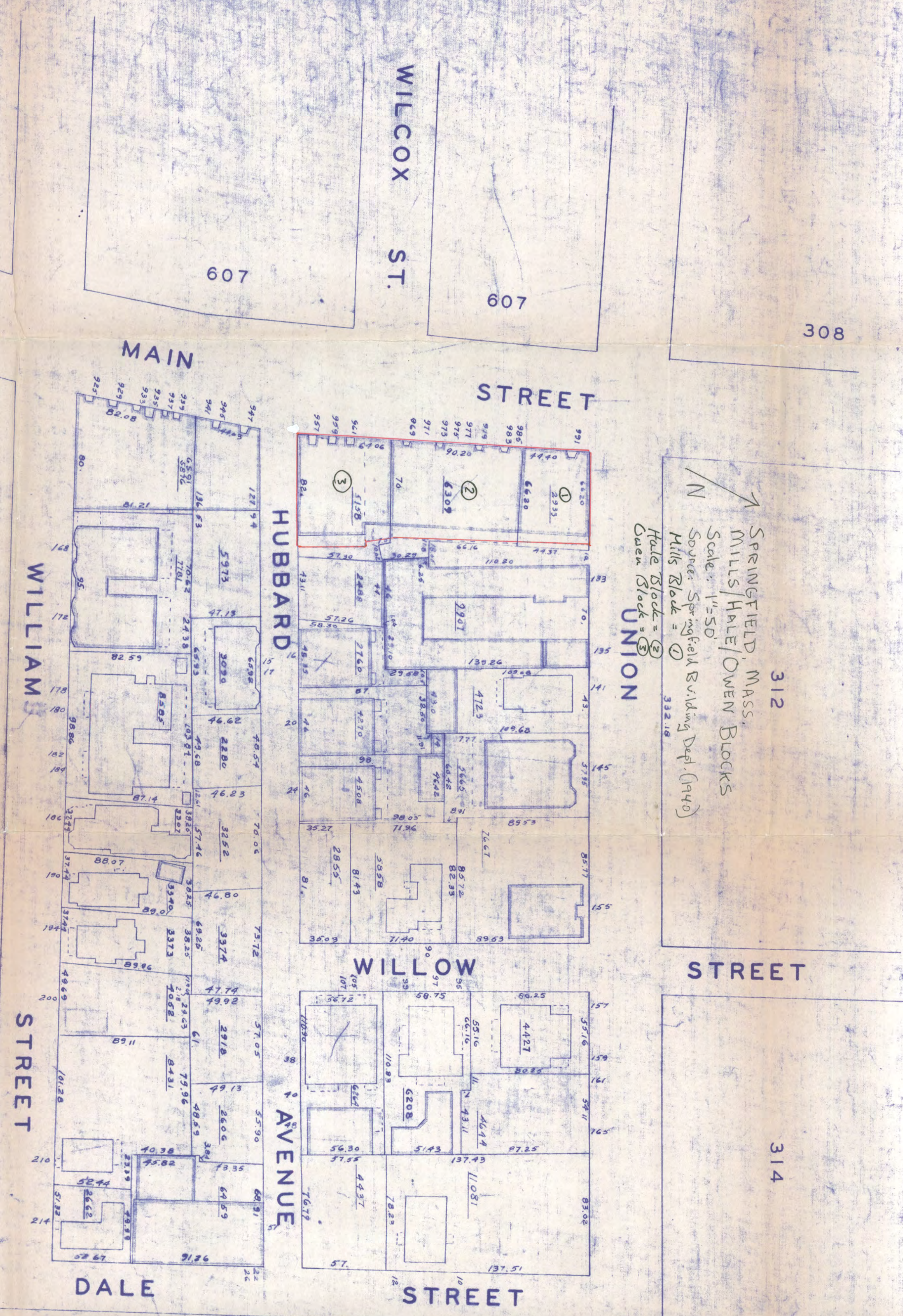
ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty Light-duty
Medium-duty Unimproved dirt

U.S. Route State Route
Interstate Route

SPRINGFIELD SOUTH, MASS.-CONN.
N4200-W7230/7.5

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6468 II SE-SERIES V814



SPRINGFIELD, MASS.
MILLS/HALE/OWEN BLOCKS
Scale: 1"=50'
Source: Springfield Building Dept. (1940)
Hale Block = ②
Owen Block = ③
Mills Block = ①
332.18

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
DRAWN BY: [illegible]
CHECKED BY: [illegible]
REVIEWED BY: [illegible]
DATE: [illegible]
REVISED BY: [illegible]