

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 23 1973

1. NAME

COMMON:

Highland Park

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Roxbury High Fort *use this name*

2. LOCATION Congressional District 9

STREET AND NUMBER:

Beech Glen St., Fort Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY:

Suffolk

CODE

025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☐ Building	☒ Public	☐ Occupied	Yes:
☒ Site ☐ Structure	☐ Private	☐ Unoccupied	☐ Restricted
☐ Object	☐ Both	☒ Preservation work in progress	☒ Unrestricted
			☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☒ Park
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

City of Boston - Parks and Recreation Department

STREET AND NUMBER:

City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Registry of Deeds - Suffolk County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

Somerset Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Boston Landmarks Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969-72

☐ Federal☐ State☐ County☒ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Boston Redevelopment Authority

STREET AND NUMBER:

City Hall

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE:

Massachusetts

CODE

025

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ Excellent☐ Good☐ Fair

(Check One)

☒ Deteriorated☐ Ruins☐ Unexposed☒ Altered

(Check One)

☐ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Highland Park comprises 3.66 acres of open land situated on the crest of a rocky hill in Roxbury, commanding a dramatic view of Boston. The park, bounded by Beech Glen St., Fort Avenue, Fort Ave. Terrace, is an integral part of a residential neighborhood of brick row houses and detached wood structures, where curving streets conform to the hilly topography. Natural outcroppings of puddingstone cover much of the park area, otherwise overgrown with natural grass and weeds. At the highest point a Victorian water standpipe mounted on an earthen platform marks the area of a Revolutionary War fort. Curving walkways lead from three entrances around the park to the standpipe and fort. These walks form a partial circuit, incomplete only on the south where puddingstone formations would interfere with grading or paving. The walks are connected to the top platform by granite steps one flight on each of the southwest and southeast sides and five flights on the northwest. There is a puddingstone embankment on the northeast side of the fort and stairs. A puddingstone retaining wall with one opening forms a boundary along Fort Avenue Terrace to the entrance on Beech Glen Street. At the extension of the line of Glen Fort Avenue Terrace, natural puddingstone formations eliminate the need for a wall.

The fort is a quadrangular earthen platform with bastions at each corner and a concrete paving outline, occupying a quarter of the land area. An 1875-1917 program of restoration and revitalization created a partial reconstruction of the Revolutionary War fort, situated on the highest point of the hill in the northwest corner.

The standpipe, constructed in 1869 as a functional device of Boston's Cochituate Water System, rises from the northeast corner of the fort platform. The exterior standpipe is a brick, granite trimmed, circular tower; however, a gabled octagonal base and a gabled octagonal observatory articulate an additional design concept. A gabled attendant's office added to the base in 1907 reinforces the theme. Small lancet-arched windows which are staggered in the outside wall harmonize with the pointed steeple which crowns the observatory. Cast iron finials and spire once graced both the steeple and observatory. Missing also from the latter is an iron balcony added in 1907. Inside the structure an iron pipe five feet in diameter and eighty feet high remains, although no longer containing water. A spiral staircase built within a three foot space between the iron pipe and masonry leads to the lookout.

Of the many commemorative markers placed on the site throughout the years only two remain: a memorial marker on the standpipe lists the brigades of men who were involved with the fort in the Revolutionary War; another memorial marker placed in 1877 indicating the site of the fort stands just off to the north side of the standpipe.

[continued]

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Boston,
Highland Park

(Continuation Sheet) #1

(Number all entries) 7. Description

To date the most obvious changes to the site and structure have been the result of neglect since the 1930's. Most of the vegetation -- grass, weeds, and a few small trees -- is uncultivated natural growth. The puddingstone retaining walls are basically in good condition, although mortar patchings are necessary in some areas. A few scattered rusty iron bars, remnants of play equipment, pierce the undergrowth. The lines of the reconstructed fort have been obscured by erosion and growth of grass and weeds. The concrete pavement outline is now cracked and uneven, although slabs of new concrete have been added in a few areas. On the exterior of the standpipe, the brick and mortar have deteriorated; most of the paint has peeled; the roofs are gaping. The standpipe is no longer used as an observation tower; therefore, the entrance is locked, and the windows have been boarded or bricked. In the octagonal base and attendant's office, the pointed arches have been filled with brick, and the entrance arch has been filled to fit a rectangular double door, now boarded. Recently the City removed the hazardous balcony and added six concrete benches and ten globe lamps to accommodate those local residents who still enjoy the park.



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

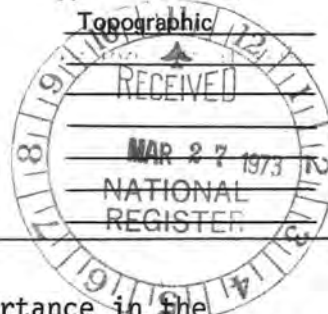
- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☒ 18th Century ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1775, 1869-70

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☐ Religion/Philosophy | ☒ Other (Specify) |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | ☐ Topographic |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | |
| ☒ Architecture | ☒ Landscape Architecture | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | |
| ☐ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | |
| ☐ Commerce | ☒ Military | ☐ Transportation | |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Highland Park's significance is of manifold importance in the topographical, military, architectural, and landscape history of Boston.

The strategic location of the highlands gave it topographical significance. Situated on the top of a hill, the site overlooked the only land route in and out of Boston (along the neck) during the eighteenth century.

Because of this location, Highland Park earned military significance as one of the first sites selected for fortification during the Revolutionary War. Built in the summer of 1775 from the designs of Henry Knox and Josiah Waters (Minuteman Generals), the fort was a quadrangular earthwork about twelve roads square with a bastion at each corner and embankments eight feet to fifteen feet high. Major-General Wm. Heath, a commanding officer in the Roxbury area, mentioned this fort as "being perhaps the first attempt at a regular fortification" (in the colonies). During the siege of Boston, the High Fort was a vital section of the encirclement which prevented the British from receiving supplies and reinforcements and eventually forced their evacuation.

Residents and mayors of Roxbury in the first half of the nineteenth century attempted to preserve High Fort as a Revolutionary landmark. The plans were futile, however, and the fort fell into disrepair.

The architecture prominence of the site was established when it became a part of Boston's Cochituate Water System. Between 1869 and 1870, a year after the annexation of Roxbury to Boston, the old fort was demolished to make way for the construction of a standpipe to provide fresh water for the Roxbury area. Designed by Messrs. Standish and Woodbury to enhance the site, this circular brick tower with its granite trimmings, gabled roofing, and decorative fenestration remains a significant example of Victorian Gothic architecture. Despite the rare qualities of this standpipe in 1880, its functional aspects became obsolete when the city abandoned the Cochituate Water System.

Highland Park had attracted over its first one hundred years a Revolutionary fort and a Victorian standpipe. Each was placed on the crest for its functional topographic advantages; however, the site outlived

[continued]

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bradlee, Nathaniel J. History of the Introduction of Pure Water into the City of Boston with a Description of its Cochituate Water Works, 1868

Drake, Samuel Francis Town of Roxbury 1878

Fitzgerald History of the Water Works 1868-1876 1876

Lossing, Benson J. Field-Book of the American Revolution 1852 [continued]

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds		
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"		
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"		
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"		

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: four acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Marcia Myers (BRA) for Elizabeth R. Amadon, Survey Director

ORGANIZATION: Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE: January 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
40 Beacon Street

CITY OR TOWN: Boston STATE: Massachusetts CODE: 025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name John F. Danne
Secretary of the Commonwealth and
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Title Commission

March 21, 1973

Date

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

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/23/73

ATTEST:

John F. Danne
Keeper of The National Register

Date

4/18/93

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Boston, Highland Park

(Continuation Sheet) #2

STATE	Massachusetts
COUNTY	Suffolk
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 28 1973

(Number all entries) 8. Significance

the usefulness of both architectural monuments. Having been transferred from the city's Water Department to the Park Department the structures and grounds had suffered. In 1895, the site received deserved attention. At that time appropriations were made to restore the well-known tower and its grounds. Under pressure from the Roxbury Military Historical Society (now the Roxbury Historical Society) the Superintendent of the Common and Public Grounds commissioned Frederick Law Olmsted, master landscape architect, to prepare an extensive renovation. Olmsted's involvement extended through his firm until 1916.

The improvements carried out between 1895 and 1916 as a result of Olmsted's proposals included: reconstruction of the quadrangular shape of the fort; creations of walkways and seating arrangements to follow the puddingstone terrain; the planting of appropriate vegetation; construction of a retaining wall on Fort Avenue; and the addition of a battery of four revolutionary cannons and gun carriages. For the standpipe, appropriations included adding an iron balcony, an attendant's office, and bronze memorial plaques. Finally the edge of park was extended approximately 44,000 square feet to the northwest which gave a protective boundary from later neighborhood construction. After the restoration, the park was compared favorably with the Bunker Hill Monument both for historic significance and the pleasurable view of the city. As a result Highland Park once again emerged as an important landmark in the city - this time as significant landscape architecture.

The park today still commands community interest and civic pride, although the problems of the surrounding neighborhoods are great. Development plans for the area recognize the importance of Highland Park as an open space area combining recreational value and visual and historic features linking the community to its past.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

Boston, Highland Park

(Continuation Sheet) #3

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 23 1973

(Number all entries)

9. Bibliography

Olmsted Associates Inc. records, photos, plans, 1895, 1911-1913

Shurcliff, History and Description of Boston Metropolitan Parks 1900

Wheildon, William Paul Revere's Signal Lanterns . . . and the Monument at Highland Park

Winsor, Justin, ed. Memorial History of Boston 4V. 1880



PROPERTY

Roxbury High Fort STATE *MASS.*

WORKING NUMBER

*3.27.73.2633**SO FFAK*

TECH REVIEW

Photos

1

Maps

*2**6/6/73*

CONTROL REVIEW

HISTORIAN

*marginal signs**Accept - AMZ
3/29/73**708
3-27-
73*

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

*Good photo
of tower**Accept 4-2-73
Shull
Accept
KH
4/2/73*

ARCHEOLOGIST

interviewed by AFK 4/4/73.

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

*Name -
"Roxbury High Fort"**accept
Cato
4-2-73*

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

*Good Photo**OK Photo
for Muntz
4/13/73*

National Register write-up

Send-back

Federal Register entry

6-5-73

Re-submit

Entered

APR 23 1973*Photo graph*



NPS Number 4/23/73

Title: Roxbury High Fort

Loc. Suffolk, Mass.

view of standpipe from south

looking north

①

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

③

③

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

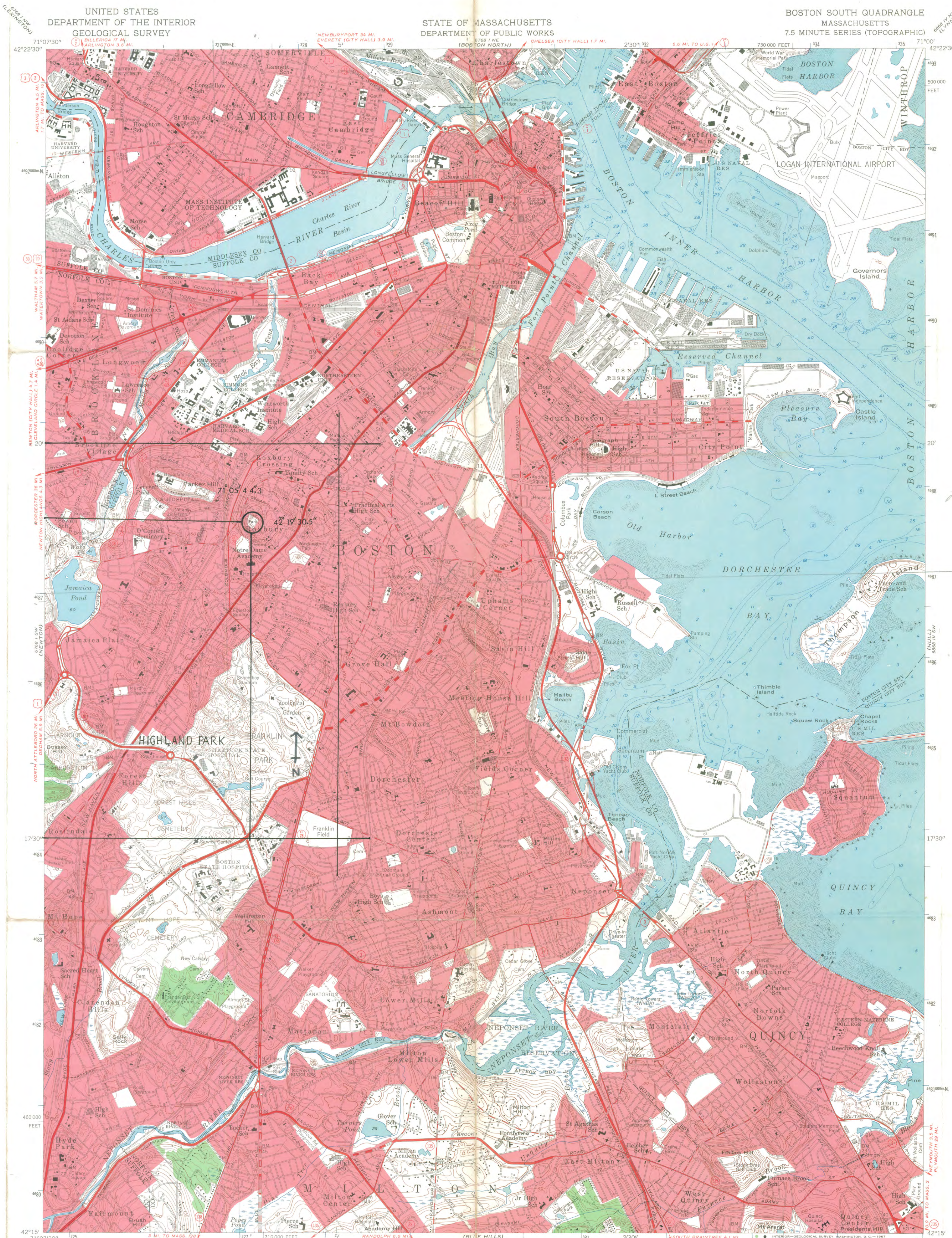
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Massachusetts	
COUNTY Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER APR 23 1973	DATE

1. NAME			
COMMON: Highland Park			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Roxbury High Fort			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Beech Glen Street, Fort Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Boston (Roxbury District)			
STATE: Massachusetts	CODE 025	COUNTY: Suffolk	CODE 025
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: USGS Boston South, Mass.			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1956			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



SEE INSTRUCTIONS



413
2/19
E327770
N4687340

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

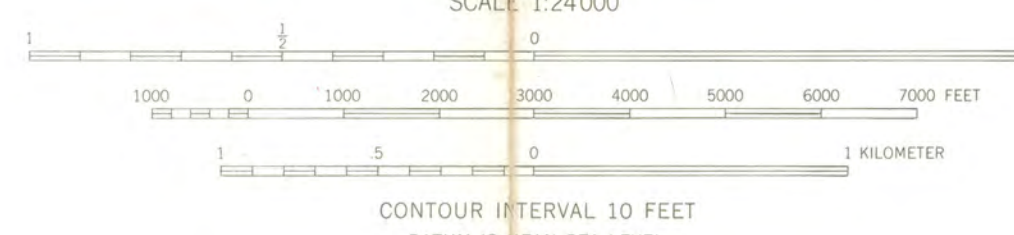
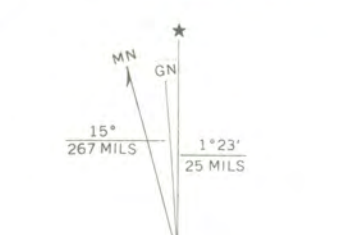
Control by USGS, USC&GS, Mass. Harbor & Land Commission, and Mass. Geodetic Survey

Topography by planetable surveys 1943. Culture revised by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1955. Field check 1956.

Hydrography compiled from USC&GS chart 246 (1956)

Polygonic projection. 1927 North American datum. 10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts (Mainland) coordinate system. 1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 19, shown in blue.

Boundaries in tidewater areas from information supplied by Mass. Dept. of Public Works. Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown.



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route

BOSTON SOUTH, MASS.
N4215-W7100/7.5

1956

AMS 6768 I SE-SERIES V814

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Massachusetts	
COUNTY Suffolk	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 28 1973

1. NAME

COMMON: Highland Park
AND/OR HISTORIC: Roxbury High Fort

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Beech Glen Street, Fort Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Boston (Roxbury District)

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE
025

COUNTY:
Suffolk

CODE
025



3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: Photogrammetric maps compiled 1962 from ariel photos, Spring, 1961
Fairchild Aerial Survey, Inc., L.A., Calif.

SCALE: 1" = 100'

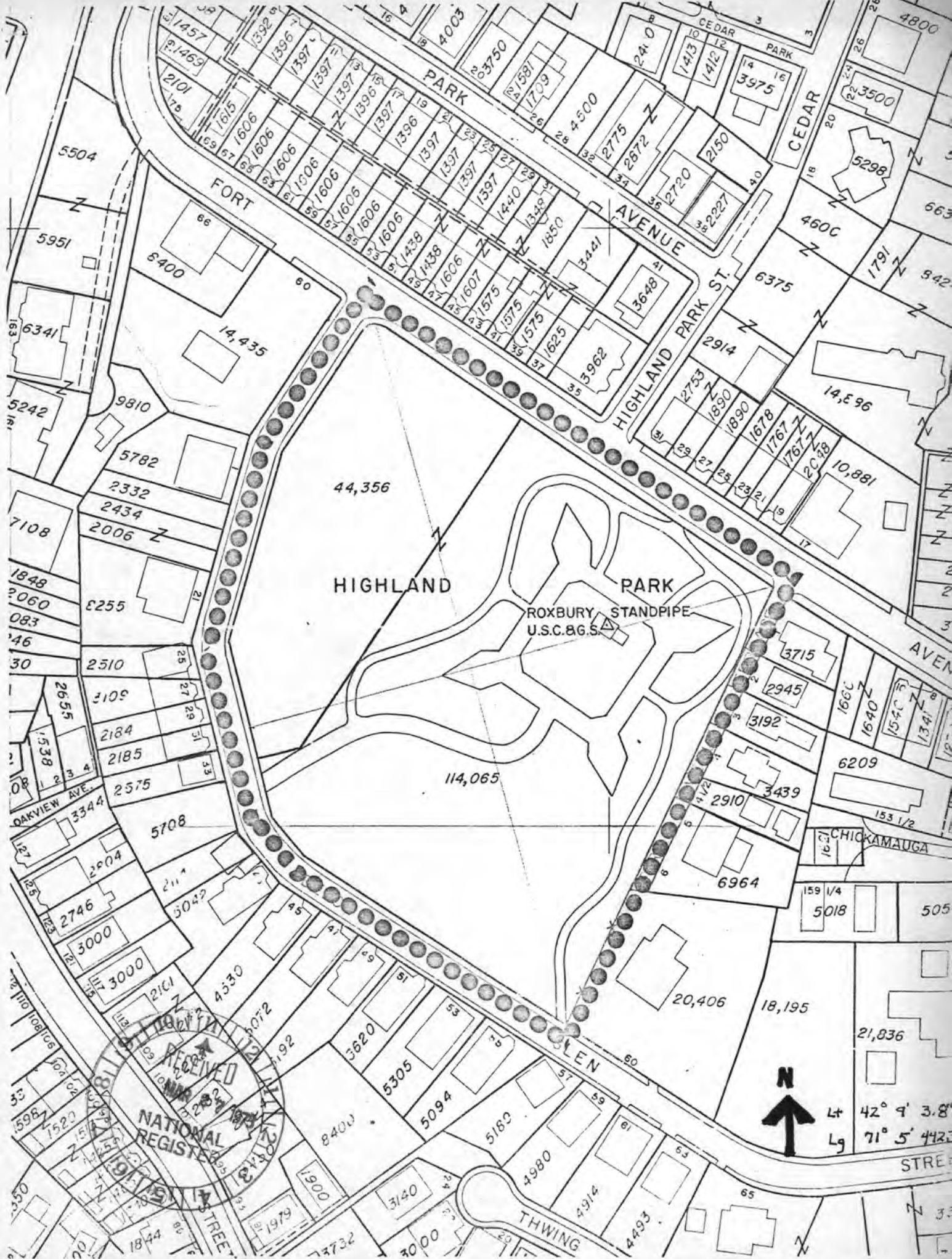
DATE: 1962

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



44,356

HIGHLAND

PARK

ROXBURY STANDPIPE
U.S.C. & G.S.

114,065



Lt 42° 9' 3.8"
Lg 71° 5' 44.2"

NATIONAL REGISTER

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **MASSACHUSETTS**

Date Entered **APR 23 1973**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Wistarishurst	Holyoke Hampden County
Roxbury High Fort	Boston (Roxbury District) Suffolk County
Eliot (John) Square District	Boston (Roxbury District) Suffolk County
The Wayside Inn Historic District	Sudbury Middlesex County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Silvio O. Conte
Hon. John Moakley
Hon. Robert Drinan

Hon. John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts
Historical Commission
40 Beacon Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Director, Northeast Region

PHR NRowland: pcl 5/7/73

FROM:

HAROLD F. O'NEIL

AEA - AFA - AFRes - AL - ARMA - HNS - ROA - SPA - U.S.CDC

37 FRANKLIN STREET

BELMONT, MA 02178

TELEPHONE: (617) 484-6553

TO:

Office of Archeology and Historic Preserv.
National Park Service,
US Dept of Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Boston FTS: 617-223-6475

DATE: 20 Nov 73

FILE NO.: MIL

SUBJECT: Material for my book on citizen soldiers.

YOUR REF.: The National Register
of Historic Places,
1972 (as of 6/71).

—FOLD HERE—

According to an announcement by the Roxbury (Boston) Historical Society, the ROXBURY HIGH FORT among other sites, has recently been included on the National Register of Historic Sites.

So, I promptly went to the Boston GPO here in my JFK Bldg and bought your above cited handbook... but when I got home, noticed it had a cutoff of June 1971....

When you get the time, kindly send me a story about the Roxbury High Fort...I wish to include it in my chapter on forts and campsites.

If need, be you can reach me on the above cited FTS phone. Thanks

by



12-7
CS

DEC 13 1973

H34-PR

~~Mass.~~

Mr. Harold F. O'Neill
37 Franklin Street
Belmont, Massachusetts 02178

Dear Mr. O'Neill:

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the nomination of Roxbury High Fort to the National Register of Historic Places.

We are pleased to advise you that Roxbury High Fort was nominated by the Kentucky State Historic Preservation Officer and entered in the National Register April 23, 1973. We are enclosing a brochure which describes the National Register program and a copy of the nomination form on the property, which may be of assistance to you in preparing your chapter on forts and campsites.

Thank you for your interest in the historic preservation programs of the National Park Service.

Sincerely yours,

Charles A. Herrington
Chief, Branch of Registration
National Register

Enclosures

cc:

Hon. John F. X. Davoren, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Chairman,
Massachusetts Historical Commission, 40 Beacon Street, Boston,
Massachusetts 02108 w/cy inc.
Director, Northeast Region w/cy inc.

DI

PR w/cy inc.

SSHull:ntw 12/6/73

BASIC FILES RETAINED IN PR