

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 HCRS use only

received

JUL 6 1982

date entered

1. Name

historic The Allen House

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 57 Rolfe Street N/A not for publication

city, town Lowell N/A vicinity of congressional district 5

state Massachusetts code 025 county Middlesex code 017

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input 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 Commonwealth of Massachusetts: University of Lowell

c/o Office of the President
street & number South Campus, University of Lowell

city, town Lowell N/A vicinity of state MA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Northern Middlesex Registry of Deeds

street & number Gorham Street

city, town Lowell state MA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of the Historic Assets (#166)
title of the Commonwealth has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date filed 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

city, town Boston state MA

7. Description Allen House, 57 Rolfe St., Lowell

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Allen House is sited on a rise on the west side of Rolfe Street in Lowell. At the time the house was built ca. 1854, over 7½ acres, which extended north and west of the house sloping down to the Merrimack River, accompanied the property. The house is now flanked by mid-20th century University of Lowell structures. Though the land behind the house is still open to Pawtucket Street, next to the river, it has been regraded to accommodate athletic fields.

Of the original landscaping scheme, which included a semi-circular drive from Rolfe Street with secondary drives encircling the house and leading to a carriage house north of the residence, only the main drive remains. The grounds immediately behind the house are terraced. These features are included in the nominated property. The house appears to be structurally sound, and is in fair condition with the exception of its interior which is deteriorating. The major problems are broken windows and falling plaster, both a result of the building's being vacant for the last several years.

Original House

The original portion of the Allen House is a 2½ story brick cross-gable structure. To this have been added several additions, most of which are 19th century or early 20th century and are similar in detailing to the original portion. They are described in a later section.

The original building was designed as a stylish Italianate residence enhanced by an attractive setting overlooking the river. Each elevation is ornamented with brick corbeling at the cornice. Quatrefoil lights pierce the four gables. The most unusual architectural feature is a corbeled apron, which extends across each gable, dipping in the center. The house is the only residence in Lowell to use this Romanesque Revival feature, although it can be seen on the Lowell Jail, completed two years later. Corners of the building are defined by paneled brick pilasters. The roof is sheathed in slate, and two paneled brick chimneys rise from the gable crossing. The house stands on a granite foundation with a molded water table.

Entrance to the building is gained through trabeated doorways located off-center in the east and west elevations. Fenestration is varied: 6/6 sash prevails with smaller windows of 4/4. Elaborately carved segmental and round arched wooden mouldings cap most windows. The service functions of the north wing are reflected in simpler sandstone caps and lintels. A few small later windows are filled with stained glass.

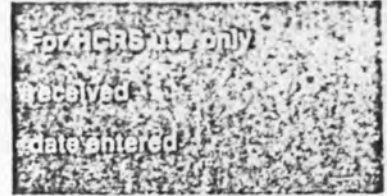
Later Additions

The earliest addition (1868) to the house is a gable-end wing set perpendicularly to the north section of the original house. Except that the

(see continuation sheet)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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Continuation sheet Allen House, Lowell

Item number 7

Page 1

corbels are tapered rather than straight and that the corbeled apron was omitted, architectural features are nearly identical to the original house. Second story fenestration on the north elevation is capped by wood drip mouldings with pendant drops.

In the late 19th century, the facade gable was extended by a one story angular bay with full length arched windows. In the late 19th - early 20th century a one story brick extension was built onto the south wing. Original design elements were carried through in its proportions and stylistic features such as corbeled cornice and paneled corner trim. Tripartite leaded French doors and windows with shallow iron balconies open onto the three exposed elevations, and a tall paneled brick chimney with individual flue pipes extends from the roof.

The enclosed Colonial Revival porch on the facade dates from 1930. At the northern end of the facade is an earlier open porch; chamfered wood posts are braced by sawn scroll brackets. At the rear of the property is a third (and largest) porch -- a flat roofed portico of the Doric order.

Interior

The interior of the Allen House is a mix of Italianate and federalist features, a common combination in Lowell's early Italianate residences. Door and window trim bear the heavy moulding of the Italianate period, while fireplace mantels are in the light Adamesque mode. Although the house has been severely vandalized, most of the significant architectural detail survives, including plaster cornices, ceiling medallions, interior French doors and a gracefully curved central stairway. The turn-of-the-century south wing addition is handsomely finished wood paneled walls, wide gilded plaster bands with floral ornament at the cornice and across the barrel vaulted ceiling and a carved mahogany mantle. Upstairs, a rear bedroom was refurbished in 1946 into a religious meeting room. Exposed rafters, trusses and posts, and applied decorative woodwork on upper wall surfaces are medieval in origin.

8. Significance Allen House, Lowell

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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1854 Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Allen House possesses integrity of location, materials and workmanship. Completed ca. 1854 it is architecturally distinguished as one of the few surviving Italianate estates erected in Lowell prior to the Civil War. The house is also significant for its associations with three prominent Lowell citizens. The Allen House thus meets criteria B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The house was erected for Abiel Rolfe who came to Lowell in 1839. He was employed as agent for the Lowell-Nashua Railroad and active in city politics. Rolfe resided in the house only ten years before the property was sold to Rollin White (1817-1892). White was an inventor of firearms. Between 1855 and 1865 he secured eight patents, including a system of loading a revolver cylinder from the rear. In Lowell he founded the Rollin White Arms Company which manufactured cartridge revolvers. His business was short-lived, however, due to a lawsuit for infringement filed by Smith & Wesson Company.

In 1890, White sold the house to Charles H. Allen (1845-1934). Of early New England stock, Allen ran a local lumber business with his father. After a single term as a state representative in 1881-82, Allen was elected Republican Congressman for Lowell (1885-89). In 1890 he made an unsuccessful bid for Governor of Massachusetts. In 1898 Allen was appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy by President McKinley and, two years later, the first civilian governor of Puerto Rico. In the early 20th century he became treasurer of the Whitall Manufacturing Company in Lowell and in 1910, president of the American Sugar Refining Company in New York City. As a prominent businessman, he served as director or trustee of numerous New York and New England businesses until his death.

The house remained in Allen's estate until 1945 when it was purchased by the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, a nursing order of nuns. Cramped quarters forced them to sell the property to the University of Lowell in 1957, who used the building as a dormitory and, subsequently, for classrooms and offices. Since the mid-1970's the house has been vacant.

Although the architect of the house is not known, it is possible that James H. Rand, a local architect who was active during this period and to whom at least one other Italianate residence and the Romanesque Revival Lowell Jail can be attributed, was involved. The original building was added to or altered by each of its owners, but in each instance extreme care was taken to adhere to its original proportions and stylistic features. The building today is the only surviving element of what was once a street lined with large, stylish houses in the westernmost residential section of the city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City Atlases, maps, directories and records.
Old Residents Historical Association, Contributions of the Old Residents' Historical Association, 1879-1926.
Who's Who in New England, 1916.
Gardner, Col. Robert, American Arms and Armsmakers, College Book Co., Columbus, OH

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Lowell

Quadrangle scale 1:25000

UMT References

A

1	9	3	0	8	4	4	0	4	7	2	3	5	1	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing										

B

Zone	Easting				Northing										

C

Zone	Easting				Northing										

D

Zone	Easting				Northing										

E

Zone	Easting				Northing										

F

Zone	Easting				Northing										

G

Zone	Easting				Northing										

H

Zone	Easting				Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lowell Assessors' Map, Lowell Engineering Dept., Lowell City Hall, Book 5, Sheets I21, J21, I22, J22. NB: nominated portion is a portion of the original lot, as indicated on enclosed engineer's map.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Registration Director, with Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Preservation Consultant for University of Lowell

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April, 1982

street & number 294 Washington St. telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state MA

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 Valerie Ann Talmage

title Executive Director, Mass. Historical Commission date June 28, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

Delmar Byer

Entered in the
National Register

date

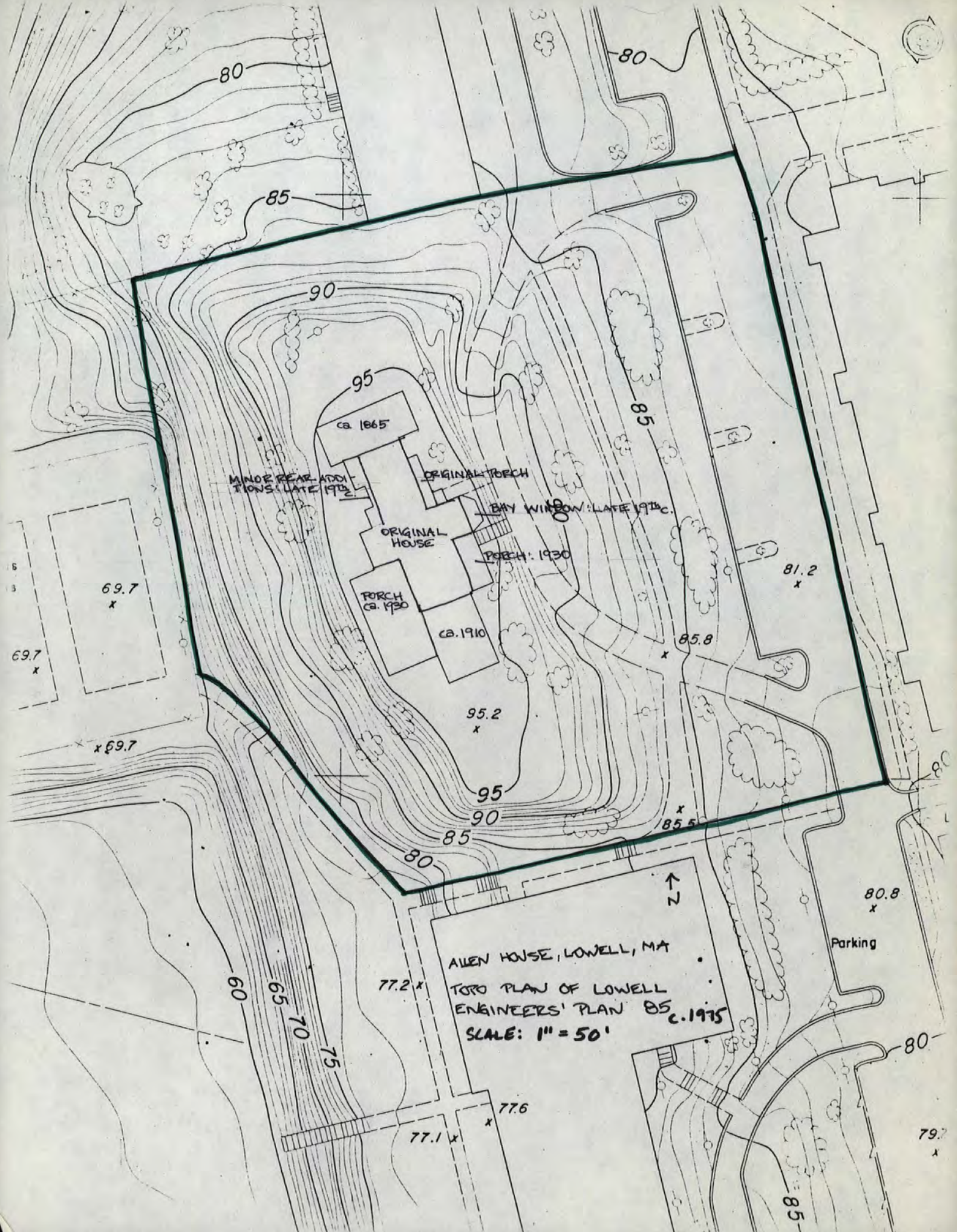
8/11/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



MINOR REAR ADDITIONS: LATE 19th C.

ORIGINAL PORCH

BAY WINDOW: LATE 19th C.

ORIGINAL HOUSE

PORCH: 1930

PORCH ca. 1930

ca. 1910

95.2 x

85.8 x

81.2 x

85.5 x

80.8 x

ALLEN HOUSE, LOWELL, MA

TOPO PLAN OF LOWELL ENGINEERS' PLAN 85 c. 1975

SCALE: 1" = 50'

Parking

79.7 x

69.7 x

69.7 x

x 69.7

77.2 x

77.6 x

77.1 x

60

65

70

75

80

85

80

80

85

90

95

85

95

90

85

80

N



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Allen House, Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS,

Working No. 7/6/82-1934

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-1-83

Date Due: 8-4-82 / 8-20-82

Action: ACCEPT 8/11/82

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

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

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT 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



Allen House'

57 Rolfe Street, Lowell, MA

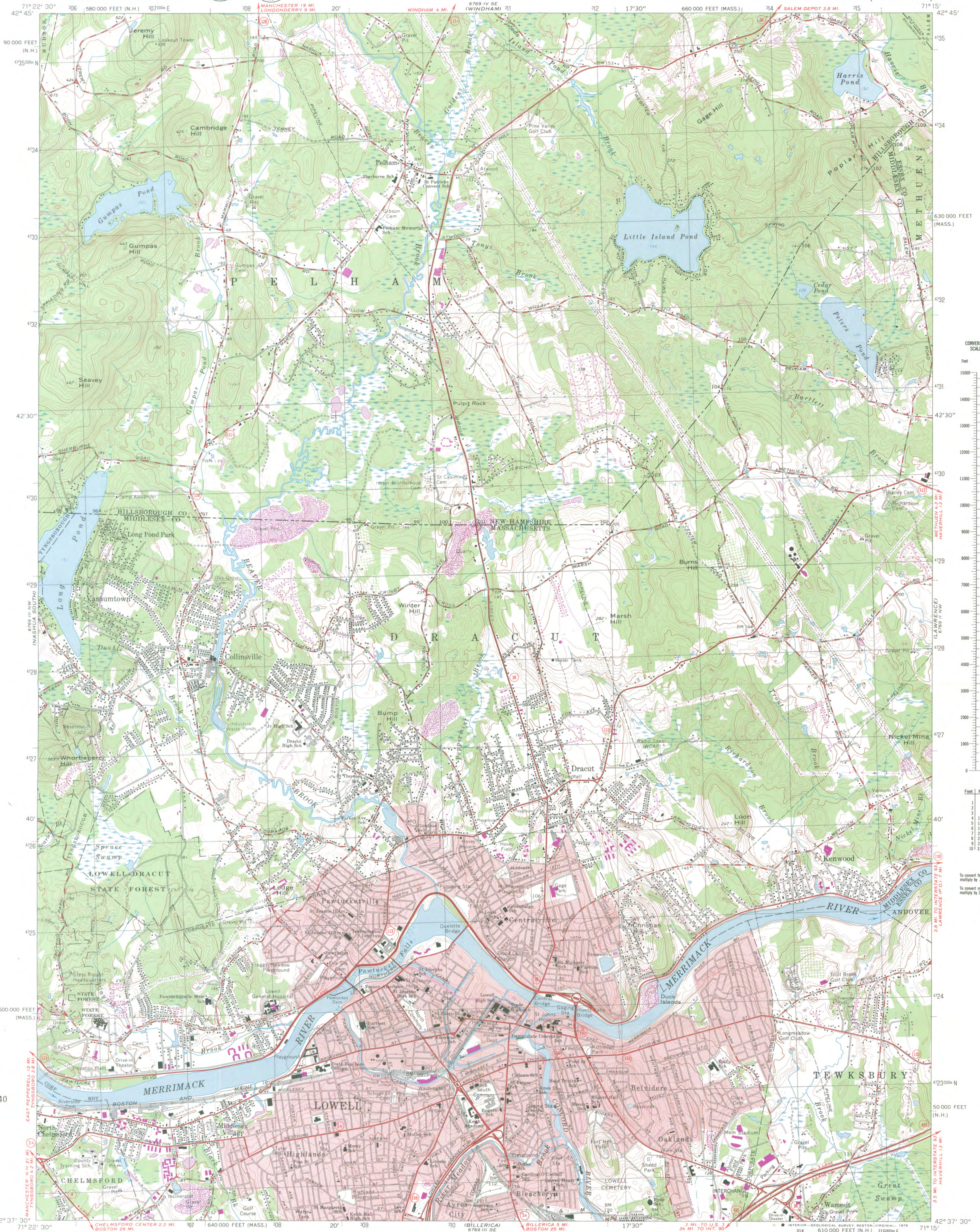
Elizabeth Durfee Hengen

1982

45 Cabot St., Winchester, MA

East elevation (facade)

File in...



CONVERSION
SCALES

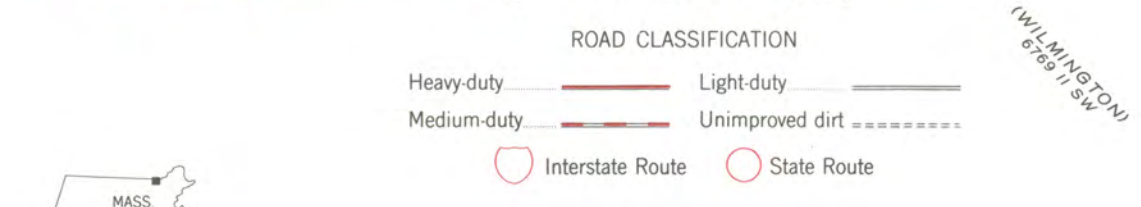
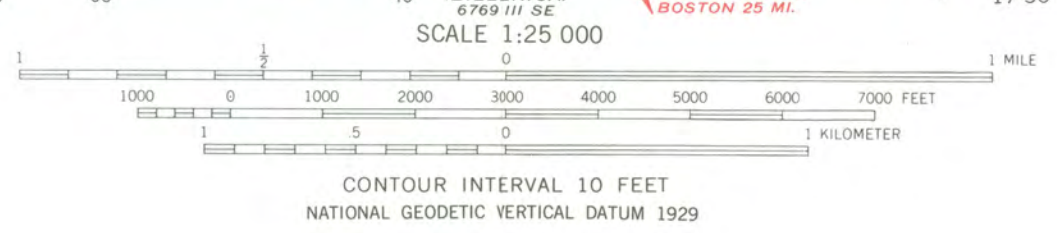
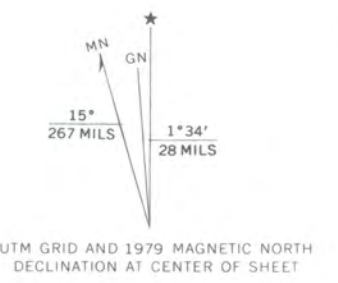


Feet	Meters
1	3048
2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21336
8	24384
9	27432
10	30480

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

Allen House
Lowell
Middlesex Co., MA
UMT Reference:
A 19/308440/4723540

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1939 and 1944. Revised 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and New Hampshire coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid
zone 19
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map
Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1977 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979



LOWELL, MASS. - N. H.
N4237.5 - W7115.7.5
1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6769 III NE-SERIES V814

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



**MASSACHUSETTS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

6/28/82

Ms. Carol Shull, Acting Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street
Boston, Massachusetts
02108
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY
Secretary of State

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

- Becket: Becket Center Historic District (local)
- Billerica: Manning Manse (local)
- ✓ Lowell: Allen House (local)
- Lowell: South Common Historic District (local)
- Lowell: Washington Square Historic District (local)
- Lowell: Wamesit Canal and Whipple Mill Complex (local)
- Northampton: Dimock Estate (local)
- Westfield: Landlord Fowler Tavern (local - DOE: 11/79)



All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 - 75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination forms.

Sincerely,

Candace Jenkins

Candace Jenkins
Registration Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

CJ/sac