

AUG 21 1989

1533

NATIONAL REGISTER

FORM B - BUILDING

AREA	FORM NO.
	34

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 BOYLSTON STREET  
BOSTON, MA 02116

WALTHAM, MA MRA

Town Waltham, MA

Address 74 Rumford Ave.

Historic Name O'Hara Waltham Dial Co.

Use: Present Industrial

Original same

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

DESCRIPTION

Date 1897

Source Sanderson

Style late 19th c. brick industrial

Architect unknown --

Exterior Wall Fabric brick

Outbuildings none --

Major Alterations (with dates) towers

added c. early 1900's, north segment

built (c1940) see reverse

Condition good

Moved no -- Date n/a --

Acreage 76-9-13 1.3 A. 57,225 sq.ft.

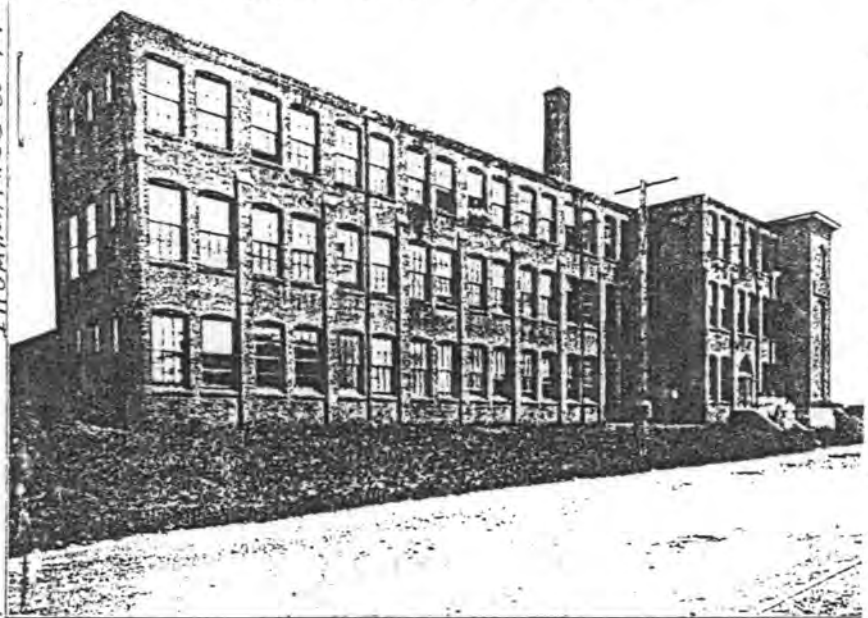
Setting Faces industrial area, w/turn of

century residential area to the north rear

wall overlooks Cram's Cove

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest

From: WALTHAM: THE EDISON ELECTRIC ILLUMINATING CO. 1909



Works of the O'Hara Waltham Dial Company.

UTM REFERENCE 19/315240 /4692900

USGS QUADRANGLE NEWTON

SCALE 1:25,000

Recorded by Edward W. Gordon

Organization Waltham Historical Comm.

Date August 1986

revised by C. Jenkins

## NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. occupies an important place within Waltham's remarkable collection of 19th century watch manufacturing related buildings. Founded in Waltham in 1897 by Daniel O'Hara of Cincinnati, Ohio, its well-crafted brick plant at 74 Rumford Ave. was built in 1897. It was the only company in Waltham devoted exclusively to making plain and hand-decorated watch dials as well as a wide range of precision work on glass, enamel, china and porcelain. The O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. possesses integrity of location, design (partial), setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

#74 Rumford Ave. is a somewhat altered example of a late 19th century brick industrial building. Essentially L-shaped in plan, the 3-story structure features distinctive panel brick corner towers. In general its main facade exhibits brickwork piers which extend from ground level to just above the second story. The 5-bay segment to the north of the southwest corner tower exhibits a center entrance set within a graceful arch. In general windows contain multipane wood sash and exhibit header brick lintels. This building was originally enclosed by broad gable roofs--as indicated on the 1898 Bird's-eye-view map. Evidently the low, 1-story segment abutting the cove-side wall also had a gable roof. This plant's distinctive panelled corner towers were added at some point after 1900, with the easternmost added first. Later and non-contributing additions include the one-story, six-bay, brick west wing, rear wood sheds, and mid-20th century replacement sash at the second story.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. was one of the late 19th c. "spin-off" companies from the American Watch Co. It was founded by former A.W. Co. employees Edwin D. Wetherbee and Daniel O'Hara. The former had been a watch dial maker while the latter had made solid gold watch cases. Wetherbee was born in Hanover, N.H. in 1857 and came to Waltham about 1878. He began to make watch dials on Moody St., but on the north side of the river. Daniel O'Hara was born in Newport, Kentucky and initially worked for the Duhme Jewellery Co., across the Ohio River in Cincinnati. He came to Waltham in 1881. Wetherbee and O'Hara initially set up shop on Bedford St., Waltham and operated under the name Waltham Dial Co. Eventually Wetherbee dropped out of the business and this company became known as O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. Its brick plant was created in 1897 on the eastern shores of "the Island," a peninsula which projects from the Newton shore.

Besides making plain and decorated watch dials, this company made a great variety of enamel dials for gas, electric and water meters, number wheels for counting meters, and even buttons for political campaigns. It was reported in "Representative Businessmen of Waltham" (1893), that "their (Wetherbee and O'Hara) business does not compete with or in any way injure that of such watch manufacturers as make their own dials; it is a distinct line in itself; requiring a special plant, special manipulation and special ability and training" etc.

(cont)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Maps--1874, 1886, 1898, 1911, 1915

"Representative Businessmen of Waltham"--.893 W.P.L. Collection

Nancy Seymour--"The Emergence of Waltham's South Side, from the Seventeenth Century to the Mid-Twentieth."

E.L. Sanderson--Waltham Industries--1957

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Waltham, Ma.

Form No:

34

Property Name: 79 Rumford Ave

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

Mr. O'Hara died in November 1912. Mr. Wetherbee died in January, 1913. On January 14, 1913, the O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. was incorporated under the name of O'Hara Waltham Dial Co., with Arthur Lyman president, Charles F. Stone, treasurer and Clarence F. French, Secretary

The O'Hara Dial Co. experienced economic difficulties during the Depression. During World War I this firm reached its peak employment figure, about 2000. By the late 1950's the firm closed its doors, and the factory was taken over by Eagle Signal Corp., makers of traffic signals headquartered in Moline, Ill. Currently the building is owned by a luggage and canvas product manufacturer, Pantos Canvas Corp. "The Island"'s Crescent Park was opened to housing and industrial development in 1890. In addition to the O'Hara Waltham Dial Co., canal and bicycle builders found this location congenial too--Crescent Park had been the property of Stephen Cram until 1872--Cram is seen to have kept several piggeries on "the Island".

REPRESENTATIVE BUSINESS MEN OF WALTHAM. - 1893

29

WALTHAM DIAL CO., Dials and Enameled Goods of Every Description Manufactured and Painted to Order in any Quantity; Fine Watch Dials a Specialty; Waltham, Mass.—The enterprise conducted by the Waltham Dial Company is of comparatively recent origin, it having been inaugurated in September, 1890; but it is already firmly established and widely popular, for it supplied a long-felt want in the watch trade, and it has been received in a way which shows that the expectations of its founder were justified by the facts. He believed that there was a field in this country for a manufacturer of fine watch dials, who could furnish within ten days duplicates of the finest watch dials known to the trade, or make special designs for the same; and, having this belief, they constructed in this city a new and costly plant for this specific work, embracing all the tools, methods and processes known to modern dial makers and enamel workers in this country and Europe. Their facilities for the manufacture of dials and enameled goods of every description are simply unequalled. They have exclusive control of the most improved processes for making and painting dials in quantity, and the patented machines and devices pertaining thereto, and they accomplish better and more lasting results than would otherwise be possible; inviting comparison of their work with that of other manufacturers. It is worthy of note that their business does not com-



pete with nor in any way injure that of such watch manufacturers as make their own dials: it is a distinct line in itself, requiring a special plant, special manipulation and special ability and training, and it has been welcomed by the leading members of the trade as a very valuable assistant; the company supplying some watch factories with dials for their entire product, and others with dials for their high grade movements. Although a specialty is made of the manufacture of fine watch dials, this work is by no means allowed to interfere with other departments of the business, and persons experimenting on novelties in glass, china, porcelain, enamel, etc., which require painting and "firing," can have their ideas carried out by expert artists and specialists employed by the company. Orders for fine scales, indicators and gradations for horological, optical, chemical, electrical, surgical and experimental purposes, and, in fact, any kind of work on glass, enamel, china and porcelain requiring accuracy and precision, will be performed at short notice and at moderate rates. The proprietor of this establishment, Mr. Daniel O'Hara, is a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, and has had long and varied experience in the dial and enamel business. He gives the many departments of the enterprise close and careful supervision, and is evidently determined to spare neither trouble nor expense in keeping it at the highest attainable standard of excellence.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Waltham, MA.

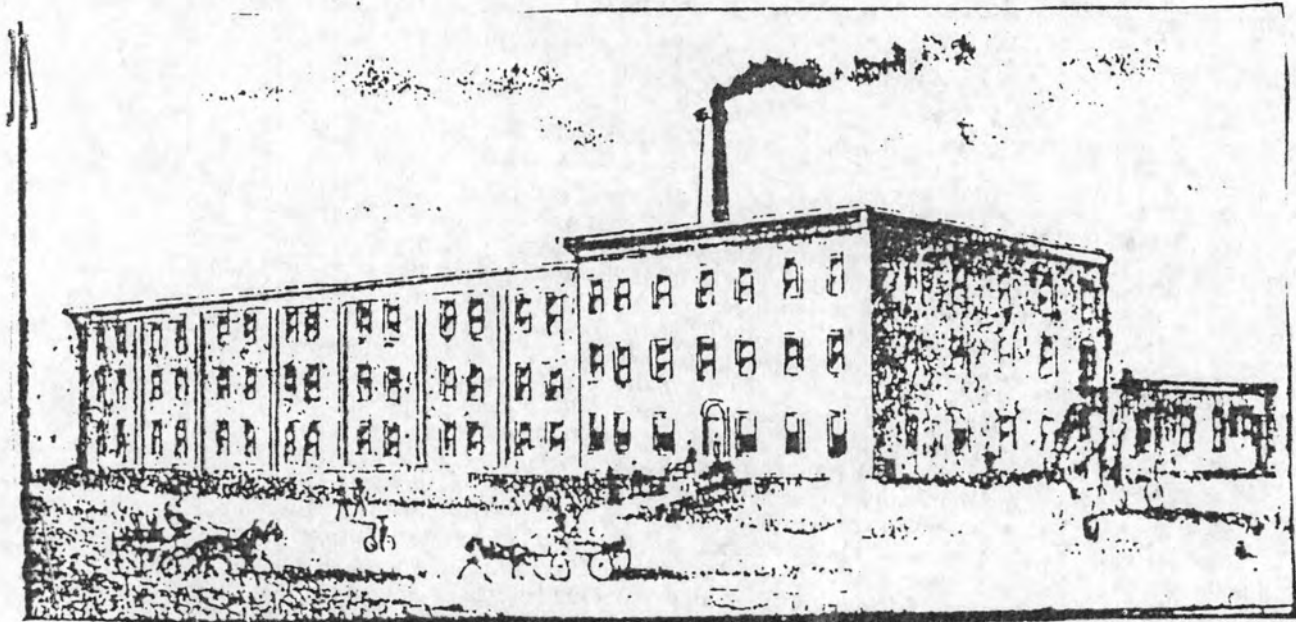
Form No:

34

Property Name:

O'Hara Dial Co  
74 Rumford Ave.

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.



WALTHAM DIAL CO.

From: 1898 Bird's Eye view Map of Waltham  
before addition of towered segments.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

AUG 21 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Waltham MRA  
State Middlesex County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review	Date/Signature
61. Mount Feaks Cemetery <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
<del>521C</del> 62. Mt. Prospect School for Boys <i>Substantive Review</i>	for Keeper <u>Boh L. Savage 3/9/90</u> Attest _____
63. Murray, Robert, House <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
<del>521L</del> 64. Newton Street Bridge <i>Substantive Review</i>	for Keeper <u>Boh L. Savage 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
65. North Lexington Street Historic District <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
66. O'Hara Waltham Dial Company <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
67. Olcott, John E., House <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
68. Oxford, The <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
69. Peck, John M., House <i>Entered in the National Register</i>	for Keeper <u>Melrose Byrum 9/28/89</u> Attest _____
<del>521R</del> 70. Piety Corner Historic District <i>Substantive Review</i>	for Keeper <u>Boh L. Savage 3/9/90</u> Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY O'Hara Waltham Dial Company  
NAME:

MULTIPLE Waltham MRA  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/21/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/05/89  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/21/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/05/89  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89001533

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 9/28/89 DATE

Entered in the  
National Register

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_  
REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_  
DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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CLASSIFICATION

count       resource type

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STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

---

FUNCTION

historic       current

---

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification  
 materials  
 descriptive text

---

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

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage       verbal boundary description  
 UTM's       boundary justification

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps       USGS maps       photographs       presentation

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OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

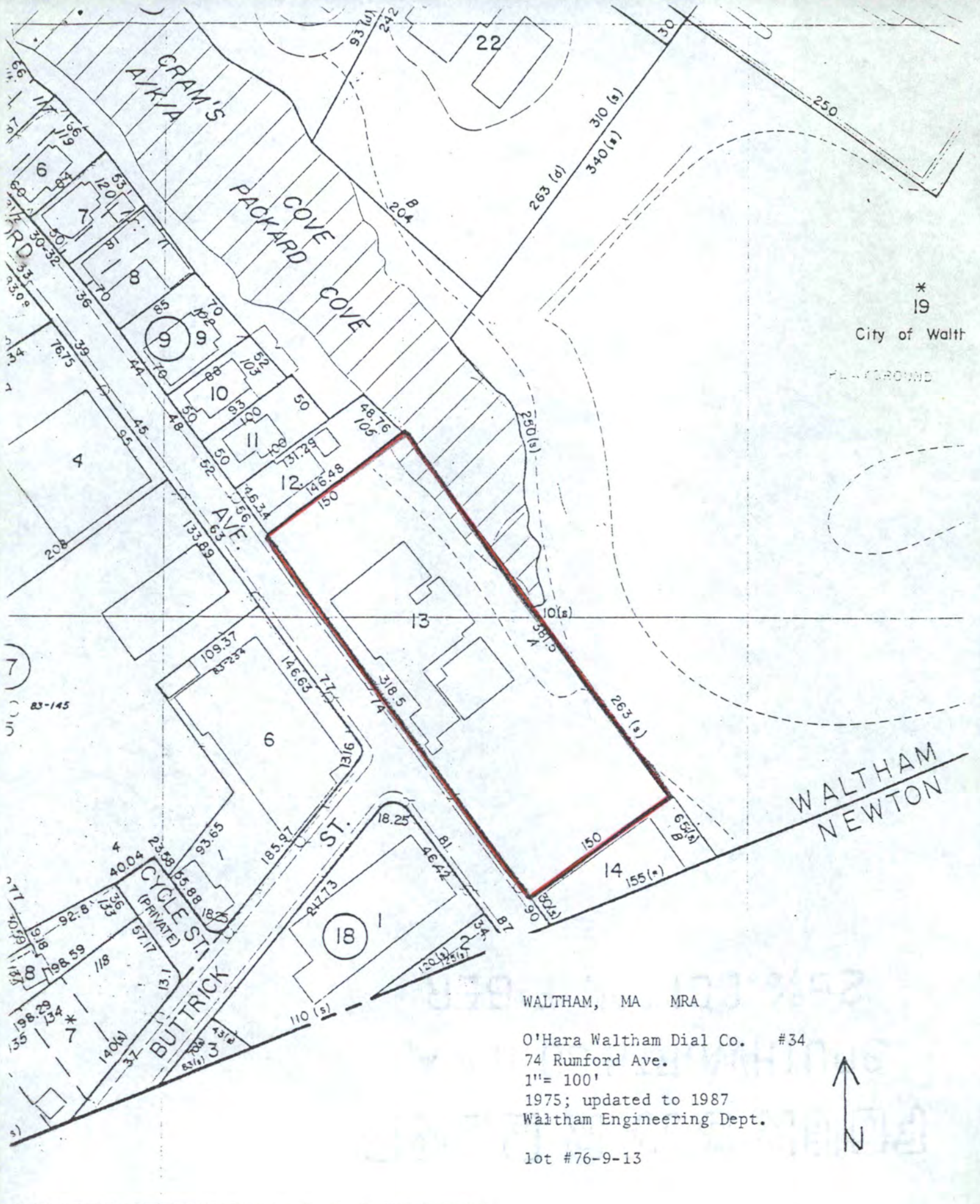


Clara Walters Dial Company

WHC # 34

74 Rumford Ave

Waltham Ma MA.



\*  
19  
City of Waltham  
PLAYGROUND

WALTHAM  
NEWTON

WALTHAM, MA MRA  
 O'Hara Waltham Dial Co. #34  
 74 Rumford Ave.  
 1" = 100'  
 1975; updated to 1987  
 Waltham Engineering Dept.  
 lot #76-9-13



Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000301