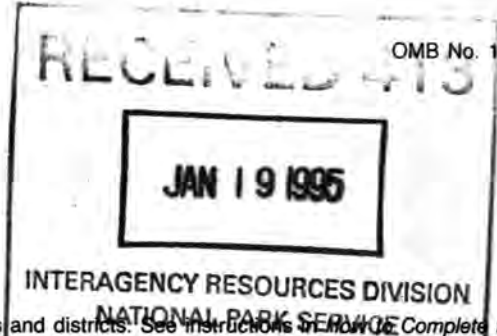


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name South Amherst Common Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 445 Shays Street; South Amherst Common
979-1081 South East Street; and 324 Pomeroy Lane N/A not for publication

city or town Amherst N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Hampshire code 015 zip code 01002

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith B. McDonough
Signature of certifying official/Title Judith B. McDonough, Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Office
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

for
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register Date of Action 2/17/95

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
18	7	buildings
2		sites
2		structures
		objects
22	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: storage barn, agricultural field

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

EDUCATION: library

LANDSCAPE: public common

RELIGION: church

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: storage barn

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

EDUCATION: library

LANDSCAPE: public common

RELIGION: church

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

GEORGIAN, FEDERAL, GREEK REVIVAL, ITALIANATE,

QUEEN ANNE, CRAFTSMAN, COLONIAL REVIVAL

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: granite, Brick

walls Wood: weatherboard, Brick

roof Asphalt, Metal

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

ca. 1740-1930

Significant Dates

1788: creation of Common

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Putnam, Karl S., Architect
Goss, Philip L. & Nutting, George

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 13 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	7 0 5 3 4 0	4 6 9 0 7 2 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 8	7 0 5 6 4 0	4 6 9 0 7 0 0

3	1 8	7 0 5 7 4 0	4 6 9 0 2 6 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	1 8	7 0 5 3 8 0	4 6 9 0 2 8 0

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title Bonnie Parsons, Senior Planner, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHCorganization Massachusetts Historical Commission date September 1994street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Multiple

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

South Amherst Common National Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County) Massachusetts
NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



Introduction

A focal point for local residents, the South Amherst Common is the center of a traditional New England farming village: a green planted with deciduous trees, a white-painted and spired Neo-classical church, a parsonage, a school, a library, and an assemblage of historic houses and agricultural outbuildings. The South Amherst Common represents the traditional, still agricultural character of this part of Amherst, and is symbolic of its community's values. Devoid of commercial structures and surrounded by farms and comfortable single-family houses, the Common is a gathering place for a part of Amherst distinctly different from the Center, with its educational and commercial focus, from North and East Amherst, areas that formerly combined farming with small industries, and from Cushman Village, a village historically associated with water-powered industries.

Setting

South Amherst is located two miles south of Amherst Center. The Common is located on a low ridge of land, which runs north and south between Mounts Castor and Pollux, slopes down to the Lawrence Swamp and Hop Brook on the east, and to the Plum Brook on the west. The Common is formed by the intersection of five roads radiating from the triangular green. South East and Middle Streets run north and south bordering the Common, Station Road and Pomeroy Lane run east and west from the Common, and Shays Street angles in a northwest direction. Two connectors crossing the Common divide it into five sections. (Photographs #1 and 3)

With the exception of one late 18th century house, the Stedman/Allis House, which is set far back from the Common and south-facing rather than east or west facing toward the Common, orientation towards the green and proximity to it is uniform. With this one exception, 18th century houses faced the road that became the Common, and subsequent to creation of the Common, 19th and 20th century houses and public buildings were built to face and to surround it neatly. Scale is consistent among the buildings, as is their workmanship. Beyond the boundaries of the Common district there are other historic houses, which have been excluded from the present nomination. Their association with the Common is either less strong than those directly on the Common, or they are separated from it by a number of noncontributing buildings.

An open green uninterrupted by public memorials, the South Amherst Common has a border of relatively young oak and maple trees with a few older elms dating from the 1890s. Without exception, the houses in the district are shaded by mature hardwoods, which were individually planted, and hence relate to the landscaping of the houses themselves, rather than to the road.

Beyond the fringe of houses along the Common, the rural nature of the village is underlined by views toward open pastures, swamp, and agricultural fields. (Photograph #9) Beyond the boundaries of the Common district along Shays Street, South East Street, Potwine Lane, Bay Road, and Middle Street

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**Section number 7 Page 2

are scattered buildings that were historically considered part of this village. There has been more recent infill along these roads as well.

Building DescriptionsInstitutional Buildings

Four extant buildings on the South Amherst Common once served institutional purposes. Of these, the former Town or Poor Farm (986 South East Street, MHC #687, 1869/1882) is now a private residential property. (Photograph #9) Two adjacent buildings on the southeast side of the Common are still important meeting places for residents: the South Amherst Congregational Church (1825) and the Munson Memorial Library and Community Center (1930). On the northwest side, the South Amherst School, built as a two-room elementary school for local pupils in 1902, now serves as an alternative junior and senior high school for students with special needs from the Amherst Regional District.

The oldest institutional building on the Common is the South Amherst Congregational Church (1066 South East St., MHC #669, 1825). (Photograph #2) Neo-classical in style, it is said to have been modelled after a Greenwich, Massachusetts, parish church whose site was later inundated by the Quabbin Reservoir. This was the first church of the South Amherst parish, built by two local carpenters in 1824-1825, and is a good example of the style that made reference to classical temples in Greece and Rome.

Rectangular in plan, the church has contemporary ells on the rear. It is a 2 1/2-story building with a front gable roof. The building is five bays deep and its entry facade has a projecting, pedimented pavilion three bays wide. The pavilion has three double-leaf entry doors, which are separated by pilasters and topped by dummy fans. In the center bay of the second floor is a Palladian window composition and above it in the gable pediment is centered a fanlight. A three-stage steeple rises from the junction of the main block of the church and the pavilion. The first stage is rectangular with louvred openings. Above this is a square stage, an arcaded belfry surrounded with a balustrade. The final stage is round and articulated with pilasters in low relief, surrounded by another balustrade, and surmounted by a weathervane.

In 1843, remodelling divided the interior space of the church into two floors. New pews and interior repairs were made in the 1880s. Stained glass windows were installed in the 1890s and removed in the 1947 in a "restoration" effort. In 1939, an addition was made to the building: the Seventh Day Adventist Chapel, which had been built in 1902 at the corner of Mechanic Street and Bay Road, was no longer in use, and so was given to the South Amherst Church. It was moved to the back of the church to serve as a kitchen. It is a utilitarian, single-story, gable-roofed, clapboard ell with no exterior ornament. New classroom space was built on the east side in the 1970s.

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**United States Department of the Interior
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South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**Section number 7 Page 3

On the opposite side of the Common is the South Amherst School (1001 South East St., MHC #676, 1900/1953). (Photograph #3) It is a brick school with architectural elements reflecting both the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles. The simplified volume of the building is Craftsman style. There is one main block set on a high basement under a slate-covered pyramidally hipped roof with cross gables. The single main block, the relatively broad eaves overhang, and the wide central chimney with its extended chimney cap are Craftsman-style features intended to emphasize simplified architectural forms that are no longer hidden beneath layers of ornament. Like many of its contemporaries, however, the building has not given up all ornament and uses Colonial Revival decorative details such as the diamond-shaped panes. At the same time, subtle brickwork provides a basement, watertable, and cornice in Colonial Revival style. An addition from 1953 on the south side of the school is an International Style, shed-roofed wing, one story in height. The addition makes no reference stylistically to the main school building, and in scale, siting, and materials it stands in contrast, rather than in complement, to the older building.

The Munson Memorial Library and Community Center (1046 South East St., MHC #652, 1930) was built with a \$30,000 bequest by Mary A. Munson, given in 1915 in memory of her husband, Parnell Munson. Designed by architect Karl S. Putnam of Northampton, the building is predominantly Colonial Revival in style. The library is constructed of brick, which has been painted white and "weathered" to a soft finish. The building is 1 1/2 stories in height and has a modified C plan. It has a rectangular main block, with two ells on the main facade. One ell is clapboard-covered, and one is brick. Entry to the building is through a three-arch, brick arcade. The arch motif is repeated on the east facade by four arched windows. A very steeply pitched slate roof with small dormers is in the English Cottage style which was given prominence by Edwin Luytjens in England in the first decades of the 20th century, and which developed as a residential style in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. The stylistic reference brings this building to a level of sophistication found elsewhere in the work of Karl Putnam. (Please see Section 8: Statement of Significance for further discussion of the work of Karl Putnam.)

Residential Buildings and Outbuildings

A description of the residential buildings in the district follows and is arranged chronologically by styles.

The thirteen houses located in the proposed district range in period from the mid 18th century to the mid 1950s. Roughly one third of these are Colonial- and Federal-period houses with five-bay symmetrical fronts. Approximately another third are Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne houses dating from 1859 to 1900, and four houses are Colonial Revival and built after 1950. There are nine outbuildings in the district, eight of which contribute to its significance. At the former Town Farm are two barns, one is a livestock barn, and the other is a horse/equipment barn. Two silos remain from the early 20th century as well. One has deteriorated considerably; however, as a pair they stand as reminders of the farm's dairy history. A second livestock barn in the district is found at

(continued)

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 4South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts

445 Shays Street (MHC#683). A large gabled building, it was converted to use as a poultry barn in the 20th century, and this conversion is evident from the windows inserted on the exterior, which relate to floors added to the interior for poultry. Two carriage houses remain, one altered to the point of becoming noncontributing. The second dates to ca. 1860 and is found at 1081 South East Street. The best preserved barn is found at 1072 South East Street and dates after the house of 1806, but is still a 19th century building. It is a two-story barn with equipment entrances and hayloft rigging. There is one contributing garage from the 1920s at 324 Pomeroy Street, which rounds out the range of outbuildings contributing to the district.

Georgian Style

Located at the south end of the Common and facing north, the Nathaniel Coleman House (1055 South East St., MHC #674, ca. 1742) is the only Colonial-period house in the district. Rectangular in plan with a rear two-story ell, it is a 2 1/2-story, side-gabled, frame house with a center chimney. Georgian in style, the house has garrison overhangs in each gable end, a feature which is infrequently found in the region and is a carryover from First Period houses of the 17th century. The building is five bays wide and one bay deep and is set on brick foundations. Windows are 6/6 sash, and surrounds have simple cap lintels. Second-story windows on the main facade are set close to the cornice line, a characteristic of the Georgian style. The main entry was altered during the Greek Revival period to a broad, trabeated surround with pilasters flanking 3/4-length sidelights. Attached to the south ell is a one-story equipment barn with sliding doors which may date to ca. 1910, the date of the addition of the second story on the ell.

Federal Style

Five Federal houses in the district were built between 1780 and 1820. These side-gabled houses, except for the Stedman/Allis House, are located at the south end of the Common near the Coleman House and are regionally high-style examples of the period.

The Jonathan Dickinson House (445 Shays St., MHC #683, ca. 1740, 1780-1785) is angled on its lot to be oriented toward the Common. (Photograph #4) It is a Federal-style house, rectangular in plan with a rear ell. Although there is no primary documentation on its date, the 1 1/2-story ell has been dated ca. 1740 by town tradition, which would make it the oldest structure in the district. In comparison to the nearby Nathaniel Coleman House, the main block of the Dickinson House, indicative of its later date, is larger in scale. It is five bays wide and two bays deep and has a broad gable roof. A conservative feature is its center chimney plan. Of particular interest are the two door surrounds of the main block. The main entry references English Adamesque influences as it picks up the refinements of the style designed by the Adams brothers in England. The Adamesque style in New England is characterized by details in low relief, narrow proportions, and intricate carving. This door surround is tall, narrow, and composed of pilasters in low relief with carved festoons on its entablature above a five-light transom. A side entry repeats the narrow proportions and has a high

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South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

entablature ornamented with fine dentils. Northwest of the house is a large 19th century livestock barn which was altered by the addition of windows to raise poultry in the 1940s. (Photograph #5)

The Stedman/Allis House (989 South East St., MHC #686, 1790 according to Assessor's records) is a stylistically curious house. Unlike the other houses surrounding the Common, it is set back on its lot and oriented toward the south and an old road that is no longer extant. It is 1 1/2 stories in height and, with its five-bay width and three-bay depth, it is almost square in plan beneath an unusually steep pitched roof. The house was given an update during the Greek Revival period with full eave returns on the gable end forming a pediment towards the Common, a wide cornice, and a Greek Revival door surround. The architrave surround itself is unique in South Amherst. Its corner acroteria suggest that its designer was looking at patternbooks for inspiration. An ell was added to the south facade in 1972.

The Elisha Smith House (1072 South East St., MHC #672, 1806), like the Jonathan Dickinson House, is Federal in style with a conservative center-chimney plan. A foundation cornerstone gives its date as 1806. This house, too, is distinguished by the quality of its details, in this case, a row of modillion blocks along the front eaves and fine dentils at the cornice. The door surround, which includes a six-light transom, is ornamented with dentils as well. The broadly proportioned house is five bays wide and two bays deep, and its widely spaced windows have 6/6 sash. Northeast of the house is a large, two-story, 19th century barn with double doors on tracks for equipment to enter. The house and barn are situated on a long lot extending east and are the district's only properties still associated with an agricultural parcel.

The Enos Dickinson House (324 Pomeroy Lane, MHC #678, ca. 1820) is the only brick house in the district. (Photograph #6) Although it faces south toward Pomeroy Lane on a raised corner lot rather than toward the Common, the Federal-style house makes clear reference to the importance of the Common by placement of an oval patera, or wooden dummy fan, in the east facade gable. A first floor store was also formerly entered from the east gable end, but its door is now filled in. The 2 1/2-story building is five bays wide and an unusual four bays deep, probably to accommodate its Federal ornament at door and window surrounds. The door surround has a delicately leaded fanlight set within a ribbed arch soffit, and window surrounds have splayed lintels and narrow granite sills. Painted white in the 1950s, the surface of the brick has a soft appearance.

The house at 1081 South East Street (MHC #671, ca. 1790 and prior to 1833) has had a number of changes made to it, which have complicated its plan and elevation. (Photograph #7) While it appears on the map of 1833 and has distinctive Greek Revival features consistent with that date, the main block of the house appears to have a late 18th century construction date. The crown moldings on the east facade windows are early features as is the five-bay elevation with windows set close to the cornice on the second floor. Now it is a two and a half story house, T shaped in plan with a rear ell. The five-bay main section of the house has a central entrance; the two outer bays on the north, however, are paired beneath a transverse gable. This gable has full eave returns, which form a pediment with an oculus in its center, giving the house its Greek Revival style together with the

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**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 6**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

trabeated door surround with Greek Revival triglyph motifs on the entablature. A 20th century shed-roofed portico has been added. Adjacent to the house, a 19th century carriage house has been altered and expanded, but retains much of its original appearance.

Greek Revival Style

There is one purely Greek Revival-style house in the district. The W. J. Armstrong House (1025 South East St., MHC #675, ca. 1860) is a stylistically modest, 1 1/2-story house with its gable end oriented toward the Common. (Photograph #8) Three bays wide, it has a side hall plan with ells on the south and west. The entrance surround has an entablature supported on pilasters. Windows have simple cap surrounds, and there is a gabled dormer on the north. Incorporated in the west ell is an equipment shed, which is frequently found in the area.

Italianate Style

The Town Farm (986 South East St., MHC #687, 1882) underwent a number of transformations before coming to its present designation as the only Italianate-style building on the Common (Photo #9). In 1839, a farm was bought and the farmhouse on the site used as the town farm. A new east wing was added to it to house the women residents, then the pre-1839 house section was moved away (unknown destination) in 1869, and a new main block and north wing were added. But in 1882, the whole building burned down, and the present farmhouse was constructed on the old foundations. Situated at the north end of the Common, the frame house is two stories in height. It is square in plan with a 2 1/2-story rear ell, which gains its height from the sloping land. An unusual combined hipped and side-gabled roof is the result of the reconstruction of the former north, gabled wing, which is now gone. The 1882 building appears to have been reconstructed in the earlier Italianate style with some Colonial Revival details added. For instance, the asphalt shingle-sided house has a three-bay facade which is entered through a Colonial Revival style portico with paired posts. The wide eave overhang on the hip roof section, and the wide cornice in which are several grille openings, are Italianate features of the house. Never an elaborate house stylistically, it is, nevertheless, part of a complex of farm buildings that maintains the agricultural appearance of the district. In the farmyard are a large, gambrel-roofed livestock barn which dates from 1941. It is the replacement for an 1882 barn, which burned and was rebuilt. There is a second horse and livestock barn with an equipment shed addition, and two silos (one of which is half gone).

Queen Anne Style

The South Congregational Church Parsonage (1067 South East St., MHC #673, ca. 1770 and 1890) has a history of major alterations. A building was already on this site by 1833, and church records indicate it was built ca. 1770. In 1881, it was bought for the church parsonage, and about 1890 it was turned slightly on its lot, the front block of the house removed, and a new one built by Frank L. Pomery of South Amherst. The 1 1/2-story ell remains from the earlier building. The ell itself was

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
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South Amherst (Hampshire County)
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altered during the ministry of Rev. Lyman (1869-1873), and it may be that the addition of the porch and altered windows date from this time. The 1890 front portion is a modest, side-gabled frame block with some Queen Anne features. It is 2 1/2 stories in height and three bays wide. The three-bay width of the house, together with the double windows, are indications of its turn-of-the-century date. Simplifying and economizing, builders often used larger windows but fewer bays, and taller but narrower proportions. These trends are visible in the main block of this house. A gable-entry portico on turned posts is the strongest stylistic element. Contemporary scrollwork has been added recently, but the Queen Anne references are clear. South of the house is a former carriage house that has been altered considerably by the removal of original windows and their replacement with new, larger windows, and the addition of new siding for reuse as a studio. Alterations have meant the loss of integrity of the building.

Neo-colonial Style

Four Neo-colonial houses were built on the Common in the 1950s. All of these are 1 1/2 story, side-gabled, cape-style houses with clapboard exteriors, and all incorporate garage wings or connect a garage to the house by a "breezeway." Built after the period of historical significance, they are noncontributing but have a minimal impact on the district as they are oriented toward the Common, respect the setback, and were designed at a level of workmanship consistent with the remainder of the district. Their addresses and construction dates follow: 1030 South East St., 1952; 1016 South East St., 1957; 1006 South East St., 1957; and 979 South East St., 1959.

Several known buildings and numerous unrecorded outbuildings have been lost in the district. The following houses have been described and mapped, but are now lost. North of the library was a house that appeared on the map of 1873 as the Orin Williams House. It was located near the houses at 1006 and 1016 South East Street. It burned down sometime after 1873 and was associated with arson. A building in the same location appears on the map of 1833 but not on that of 1860; and this is the site of the one-room brick school that was taken down and replaced, so this may have been the site of two previous buildings that were lost. Circa 1827, Lyman Knowles is recorded as operating a carriage-building shop fronting the green. It is not noted on the map of 1833. Ansel Percival for several years around 1825 kept a tavern on the Common. Neither is its exact location noted on the map of 1833.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded within the district it is possible that sites are present. Two prehistoric sites are recorded in the general area (within one mile), both located on terraces adjacent to the Fort River. In general, however, the potential for significant prehistoric survivals within the district is low because the area's locational characteristics, especially it's the long distance from water, are not particularly favorable for prehistoric site locations.

(continued)

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7, 8 Page 8, 1**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
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There is a high potential for significant historic archaeological remains within the district. Controlled testing and excavation can help to locate potential domestic/agricultural sites on the west side of the common which was reportedly occupied by ca. 1740. Only one example survives in the area from this period. Archaeological survivals may also exist in 19th century farmsteads in the district including the Orin Williams farm which burned after ca. 1873. The Willimas Farm was located north of the library near houses at 1066 and 1016 South East Street. Two additional structures were also originally present at this location. A structure which predated the Orin Williams House is indicated on the 1833 map but not the 1860 map at the same location. The area was also the site of a one room brick school which was moved. Archaeological remains can also help reconstruct the extent and sequence of occupation at the Town Farm (986 South East Street) which began as a private farm in 1839. The original farmhouse was moved away in 1869. The structure which replaced the original house burned in 1882 after which the present farmhouse was constructed on the old foundations. Agricultural outbuildings and occupations related features (trash pits, privies, wells) spanning the mid-eighteenth through 19th centuries also likely survive in association with farmsteads and residences which no longer survive and with those still extant. Archaeological survivals ranging from structural remains to occupational related features may also survive from numerous commercial or business enterprises originally located around the common area, none of which survive today. Jonathan Warner ran a cabinet shop which also served as a meetinghouse until the present meetinghouse was completed between the meetinghouse at 1066 South East Street and the Elisha Smith House (1806) at 1072 South East Street. Elisha Smith ran a tavern, general store and shoemaking business, all probably run from his house. Ansel Percival also kept a tavern on the common by 1825. A carriage shop fronting the common was operated by Lyman Knowles in 1827. Other commercial ventures reported on South East Street south of the common include a business run by Eli Dickinson (1830) which manufactured wooden faucets and later children's carriages and sleds and a dry goods and grocery store operated on the James Kellogg farm by ca. 1817. James Kellogg purchased the Dickinson faucet business in 1835 and manufactured bench planes and molder's planes.

(end)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The South Amherst Common Historic District meets National Register Criteria A and C on the local level. The district has contributed to the broad patterns of our history as an area in which Native Americans were known to have travelled, where English settlement took place as early as 1730 and where their agricultural way of life evolved from relatively independent farms on which most of the needs of the farming family were met, to highly specialized 20th century farms concentrating on orchard and market garden production. The Common as a village center found throughout New England is exemplified here in South Amherst. In addition, the district contains architecture distinctive for its level of artistry from the Georgian through the Craftsman/Colonial Revival periods.

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The district possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

With the Common as its symbolic and practical center of community activity, South Amherst has maintained its identity as a separate village within the town of Amherst. Since the mid-18th century when families from Hadley, Hatfield, and Northampton settled its hilly terrain, this conservative and stable part of town has been supported by active farms. The Common, at an intersection of roads developed in the early years of settlement, was formally recognized as a center for southern Amherst in 1788 when a portion of the broad division road was reserved for public use. Prosperous local farmers and traders during the Federal period built a number of substantial houses on the Common. Newly set off from other Amherst parishes in 1825, South Amherst residents soon marked this place, already busy with a school, artisan shops, and retail activity, with a white-spired, Neo-classical church. Amherst located its Town Farm here in 1837. (Photograph #9)

As educational, commercial, and industrial activity transformed other sections of Amherst, the South Amherst Common, bypassed by the trolley, surrounded by orchards, cultivated fields, and views of the Holyoke Range and Pelham hills, became a more consciously maintained place, shaped to embody residents' conceptions of a traditional New England village center. The Common, named "Fiddlers' Green," for the fiddling contests held on it during the 19th century, was groomed and planted with trees in the 1890s and became the setting for Fourth of July picnics and games; commercial activities ceased and the Common was consciously preserved as a park. A Neo-Colonial library and community center built on the Common in 1930 added an important local gathering place.

The agrarian landscape of South Amherst began to give way to significant suburban development after the Second World War, but newer residents have been vigilant in preserving the traditional character of the Common. The District's period of significance is from ca. 1740 to 1930: ca. 1740 is the date of the earliest standing structure, and 1930 is when the Munson Memorial Library and Community Center was built and when the primacy of small farm agriculture in South Amherst came to an end. The following narrative will outline the significance of this period.

Plantation Period (1620-1675)

Although there is not a great deal known about the Native Americans living in the Connecticut River Valley in the 17th century, names of some of the leaders and their groups and descriptions of their hunting and planting activities can be drawn from early documents drawn up by the first English settlers. Collectively known as "River Indians," they were a number of small tribes living along the Connecticut River. There were the Capawonks, Norwottucks, and Nonotucks in the first Hadley plantation area, and they were loosely allied with or part of a larger group known as the Nipmucks. Mid-17th century leaders in what is now Hadley, Amherst, and Hatfield were Umpachala, Chickwallop, and Quonquont, who are known from the documents recording sale of land to the English. These Native Americans were hunters, they fished the Connecticut River, raised corn,

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squash, and beans, and trapped for furs. They had more or less permanent settlements, at least one of which was fortified, and seasonal summer camps along the river. Conflict with Native American groups from outside the region was often brutal and predated arrival of the English. In fact, the English were initially welcomed by the Nipmucks for the protection they offered.

In 1658, John Pynchon of Springfield bought from the Nonotucks or Norwottucks land that became the settlement of Hadley, including present-day Amherst and Hatfield. In 1659 the first settlers arrived from Hartford, Wethersfield, and Windsor, Connecticut. Known as "strict Congregationalists," they got permission to leave their parishes and establish a new parish after a long controversy over the issues of baptism, membership, and parish rights. The settlement was in Hadley center the first winter and had expanded across the river by the summer of 1660. Common lands and homelots were laid out for both sides of the river by 1661, and there was ample land for settlers to graze their livestock and cut wood in the Hadley/Hatfield area of the plantation for a number of years. It was not until 1672 that Hadley petitioned to expand to East Hadley, which was described as the "common feeding place" for their cattle, indicating that the growing settlement intended to allocate more land for pasture and cultivation while it was available and uncontested by neighboring settlements. Known as East Hadley, this common feeding place was later to become Amherst.

Early roads in the Plantation were often originally Native American trails. The earliest road in South Amherst was Bay Road, which was a Native American trail at the foot of Mt. Holyoke running east and west between Hadley and Brookfield. During the Plantation Period, it was used as a cart path by the settlers, and by 1675 it was improved as a military supply route between Brookfield, Hadley, and Northampton. Later on, Bay Road was the part of the stage route connecting Boston to Albany.

Colonial Period (1675-1775)

Although there may have been more than one path connecting Hadley center with its eastern lands, there is no certain evidence that there were any people living in the area at the beginning of the Colonial Period. Consequently, none of the series of wars with Indians, which began in 1675 with King Philip's War, took place in East Hadley. Hadley and the newly formed Hatfield residents did not venture far from the protection of their palisades during the most threatening periods of conflict, and this may explain why it took until 1703 before the town voted to allot the common land in East Hadley to residents. By this time, Hadley and Hatfield's populations had increased, due in part to the many people from Greenfield, Deerfield and West Brookfield who came there for safety. East Hadley land was consequently becoming more important for homelot expansion as well as for cultivation and pasture. A treaty with the Indians was signed in 1720 in Boston, and soon after this took place settlement began in East Hadley, ca. 1728.

East Hadley had been surveyed in 1703 and laid out in three divisions of land that lay between Mt. Holyoke and the Mill River. These three divisions were later to become Amherst, and included the area now known as South Amherst. The first and second divisions were laid out in wood lots 240

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rods in length and from 3 to 134 rods wide. There were sixty lots in the first division and thirty-seven lots in the second division. Width of the lot was determined by the number of males in the family. The more sons a head of household had, the greater the width of his allotment. The third division was set up as ninety-three wood-lots, which were two miles in length and of variable width and were essentially common grazing lands for the newly created home lots.

The survey of 1703 provided for two north-south roads dividing the divisions and three east-west roads in the first and second divisions. The width of the planned roads was set at 40 rods (which is 660 feet) and when they eventually were laid out, this width came to have considerable significance for the town. The north-south street on the 1703 plan between the second and third division of woodlots evolved to today's South East Street north of the South Amherst Common, and Middle Street.

Residents of Hadley and Hatfield did not venture beyond their palisades to settle in East Hadley in 1703, but that did not prevent them from using it for speculation. In the area of South Amherst, the distribution of allotments became an opportunity for land speculation, which continued into the 1740s. For instance, large tracts of land off the present east side of the Common were purchased in December 1729 by Samuel Brown of Salem from Ezekiel Kellogg, a trader from Hadley. Kellogg later bought the land back and re-sold it to Samuel Gager of Norwich, Connecticut, in March 1740. Gager in turn sold it in 1745 to Joseph Smith of Hadley. The land on the west side of the Common was owned by several persons living in Hatfield and Hadley before it was actually occupied ca. 1740.

Despite the popularity of speculation, by 1731 there were eighteen families listed as living in all of East Hadley. Their homesteads were scattered throughout the area, since the land was distributed in satellite lots to the existing Hadley town center, rather than laid out as a community from the start. The town center remained at Hadley, and the distance to meetinghouse became inconvenient to a larger number of people as more families settled in East Hadley. They moved to create and were granted a separate precinct in 1734, which meant they could establish a second church in the new Hadley parish.

Aside from the distance, residents began to realize that their separation from the center of Hadley put them at a disadvantage in their representation in town affairs. Their taxes were being paid, but they felt they were not receiving a fair return. Against Hadley's protests, the East Hadley Precinct next petitioned and was accorded status as the district of Amherst in 1759. Being a district meant that they had all the rights of a town except for representation in General Court.

Agriculture in Amherst during the Colonial Period diversified. Indian corn and wheat continued to be grown; rye, oats, barley, flax, peas, beans, and pumpkins were added. By the end of the period, potatoes were also being cultivated, as well as and small patches of tobacco for personal use. Cows and sheep were kept on many farms, mainly to provide for their individual families.

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South East Street south of the Common and Shays Street (in a different locus at the Common) were laid out in 1759 by the County. Thus, South Amherst was a crossroad by 1760, and the origin of its identity as a village in Amherst started with this fact. Amherst's separation from Hadley as a district coincided with a period of activity in road building, and South Amherst became the nexus of a number of these important roads. South East Street running north from the intersection was in use by 1750, and ten years later it ran south of Pomeroy Lane. West Street was also completed by 1758 and connected to South East Street by Shays Street in 1759. Middle Street connected Bay Road to the crossroads by ca. 1730. The roads followed much the same routes as they do today with the exception of Shays Street, the east end of which ran further north near the present South Amherst School.

Nathaniel Coleman is the first recorded resident in the South Amherst Common District. Coleman was born in Hatfield in 1709 and was a grandson of Thomas Coleman, who was one of the first settlers of Hadley. He was a Quartermaster in the Cavalry in 1725. He was married in 1739 and was Selectman in the years 1760, 1767, and 1769. Coleman is thought to have built this house shortly after his marriage (1055 South East St. MHC #674) ca. 1742. The house demonstrates a building practice that occurred rather frequently in the region: the house was built within the boundaries of the road. In Hatfield, the meetinghouse and schoolhouse were built on the unused portion of the public highway, and this was done in Amherst as well. The town later issued deeds to some of these buildings, and that is the case with Nathaniel Coleman's house. Amherst deeded what was referred to as "street land" ca. 1780 to this property.

Dame schools were operating in several homes during the Colonial Period, but Amherst district voted in 1761 to build several schools, one of which was to be in the south. The first South Amherst school was built in 1764 just south of Nathaniel Coleman's lot and, once again, built in the road.

Federal Period (1775-1830)

The Revolutionary War was thoroughly supported by the majority of Amherst residents, but the exceptions are notable and point out some town characteristics that did not dissolve at the end of the conflict. That there were Loyalists in Amherst was not unusual for towns in the valley. In Amherst, the Loyalists were several of the most well-to-do families, and they had the force of moral suasion on their side in the person of Rev. David Parsons, the first parish minister. Parsons' congregation attempted to sanction his lack of support for the Revolution, but he remained in his position, and at the end of the war continued to preach until his death in 1781. Meanwhile, some of the Loyalist families who were concentrated in Amherst center maintained their prominence in the economy; however, many soon left Amherst.

Shays' Rebellion, which grew out of a series of protests between 1782 and 1787, further divided Amherst residents. After the Revolution, with no Constitution in place and currency in very short supply, farmers rose in protest when the courts began to take away their land and imprison them for debts. Many Amherst residents took part in the protests and maintained their support through armed

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violence in Northampton and Springfield, when the neighboring towns of Hatfield and Hadley had renounced the rebellion precisely for the violence. Other Amherst residents were among the forces protecting the courts. During Daniel Shays' retreat through Amherst, soldiers chasing him and his followers noted that there were few men to be found in Amherst. One of the Shays supporters was Waitstill Dickinson of South Amherst, who had to sign an oath of allegiance toward the government at the end of the conflict.

A distinction continued to grow between the Amherst center residents who were the elite, and the adjacent villages of East Amherst and South Amherst whose residents were less influential farmers and small business owners. Reflecting these divisions, East Amherst set up its own church in 1782 in a move that seems to have been more political than for the convenience of distant parishioners. Amherst Center drew academic institutions and commercial development, while South Amherst resolutely remained a rural center mixed with small enterprises, and East Amherst developed as a village of cottage industries.

The character of the South Amherst Common emerged after the Revolution. In 1788 the town narrowed its highways and sold the excess land to abutters and others. However, they reserved the full width of the road in Amherst Center, East, and South Amherst, creating commons for those three. The South Amherst Common was established at its main intersection, and although it was not the full width of the road, it provided a focal point for small businesses that grew up near it, or in some cases right on it.

Business Development

One of the first businesses was established by Eli Dickinson sometime after 1830 south of the Common on South East Street, between Potwine Lane and Bay Road. His home and shop, which appear on the map of 1833, were outside the district boundaries and are no longer extant. Dickinson manufactured wooden faucets and collected old shoes for the leather parts of the faucets. Without nearby waterpower, he used horsepower to turn his lathe. He sold this business and left South East Street, going on to become a well-known manufacturer of children's carriages and sleds, with his shop elsewhere in South Amherst.

James Kellogg came to South Amherst ca. 1817 and opened a dry goods and grocery store on his farm south of the Common on South East Street. On the map of 1833, Kellogg's house and shop appear just north of Dickinson's, still outside the boundaries of the Common district. It was Kellogg who bought Dickinson's faucet business adjoining his property in 1835 and began the manufacture of bench planes and molder's planes. He eventually moved to another area in Amherst that became known as Kelloggville, his planes were well known for their high quality.

Lyman Knowles about 1827 began building carriages on a shop fronting the Common. As Kellogg was later to do, Knowles moved in 1832 from South Amherst to East Amherst as his business grew.

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Knowles' shop does not appear on the map of 1833. Jonathan Warner ran a cabinet shop across from the Common in a small building between the meetinghouse (1066 South East St. MHC #669) and the house of Elisha Smith (1072 South East St., MHC #686). It also served as a meetinghouse until the current meetinghouse was ready of occupancy in 1825. No trace of this shop exists today.

South Amherst residents were resourceful. Records show that Elisha Smith between 1784 and 1822 had a tavern in his house at 1072 South East Street (MHC #686), was a teamster transporting people and goods, and maintained a retail store, all the while making and repairing shoes.

According to research by James Avery Smith in "A Record of the Streets and Ways in the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts," for several years after 1825 Ansel Percival also kept a tavern on the Common. No evidence of this tavern remains today. Other taverns were established on Bay Road, which was the stage route between Albany and Boston. Jonathan Bridgman lived in South Amherst and kept a tavern on Bay Road, together with a brickworks supplied by clay deposits in the area. George Nutting also ran a brickworks in the area and a planing shop with his brother. The area of their enterprises became known as Nuttingville.

Taken altogether, manufacturing activity made South Amherst a vital area and springboard for a number of businesses that grew and moved away. None of the shops is left in the Common District; however, many of the houses and the meetinghouse built during the period do remain.

Agricultural Development

During the Federal period, the practice of agriculture underwent considerable change becoming more diversified and beginning to extend to a market beyond the immediate family and neighbors. Families devised what Christopher Clark in The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts 1780-1860 refers to as "strategies" first, to relieve the strains of providing land for their children and second, to meet the needs of women in the family labor scheme. As the amount of land available to pass on to the next generation dwindled, families had to look outside the farmstead for income to support themselves. Similarly, as the burden of labor on women was lessened with the advent of imported textiles, they had time freed up to turn to other farming activities. A strategy evolved in Amherst to adjust to these strains. As we have noted earlier, South Amherst was not an area of vast pastureland, and the soil did not compare with the alluvial land beside the Connecticut River. However, it was suited for limited dairy farming, and rather than relying primarily on their own ability to produce food in an independent fashion, farmers in Amherst and South Amherst, as records show, began developing their dairy production as a source of outside income. Women dropped the production of textiles for family use between 1815 and 1830 and turned to the production of dairy products, butter, and cheese to make ends meet. Clark points out that during this period, Amherst produced the fourth largest quantity of butter of any town in Massachusetts.

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South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**Residential Development

The population of Amherst grew more than 90% between 1765 and 1790, and some of the expansion took place in South Amherst. Jonathan Dickinson (445 Shays St., MHC #683, ca. 1785) came to South Amherst from Shutesbury and one of the next houses built on the Common after Nathaniel Coleman's. (Photograph #4) Set back from the road, the placement of the house reflects the width of South East Street before it was narrowed above and below the Common in 1788. Dickinson had married a Coleman from next door, and they had six children. Two of his sons contributed to the area of the Common during the Federal Period. Nathaniel gave the land on which the South Amherst church was built, and Enos built the house at 324 Pomeroy Lane (MHC #678, 1820). The brick for this house is thought to have come from the brickworks operated by Jonathan Bridgman on Old Bay Road. Bridgman was producing bricks by 1818.

Amherst assessor's records date construction of the Stedman/Allis House at 989 South East Street (MHC #686) to 1790, and it most likely dates from before 1802, as it is oriented toward the original location of Shays Street, which was rerouted in that year. Some accounts attribute its building to Hiram Allen who was the first Postmaster of South Amherst.

The Elisha Smith House was one of the next houses to be built (1072 South East St., MHC #672, 1806). As noted above, Smith is known to have run a tavern, general store, and shoemaking business; the latter he may well have conducted from this house.

The house at 1081 South East Street (MHC #671, ca. 1790) also dates from this period, although it was to undergo alterations during the Greek Revival period that followed. (Photograph #7)

Institutional Development

In 1821, Station Road was built east from the Common as a "cour-du-roy" road across the Lawrence Swamp, adding another road to the intersection at the Common, and Pomeroy Lane from West Street to Middle Street was set out by the County Commissioners in 1829. The year 1825 saw two important additions to the South Amherst Common. A two-story brick schoolhouse, an early example of the Greek Revival style, was built on the location of the present school with its playground on the Common, and the same year the South Amherst Parish Church was completed (1066 South East St., MHC #669). (Photograph #2)

In 1824, South Amherst residents met and voted to organize their own parish church, the Third Parish of Amherst. A society was organized and moderated by Nathaniel Dickinson; Elisha Smith was clerk. Church meetings were led by Rev. Horatio Billings Chapin and were held in Enos Dickinson's house (324 Pomeroy St., MHC #678) (Photograph #6) or in the John Warner cabinet shop (now gone) next to the house of Elisha Smith (1072 South East St., MHC #672). A committee went to Greenwich to select a building style, and church members subscribed \$3,300 for its construction. George Nutting

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and Philip L. Goss of South Amherst were the builders, and the new congregation provided the hewn granite foundation stones. There is no record of objection in the other Amherst parishes to the formation of the South Amherst parish as had been the case in East Amherst.

At the end of the Federal Period, South Amherst was a discreet village with a cluster of houses at the Common, together with its own parish church, school, and a number of manufacturing businesses; meanwhile, agriculture continued as the economic mainstay for most of the residents.

Early Industrial Period (1830-1870)

The Early Industrial Period in South Amherst was a development of what had already been established during the Federal Period. Industry and agriculture diversified, a number of new residences were built on the Common, and its institutions grew in number and range of activities.

Manufacturing and Agricultural Development

Amherst center at this time was producing carriages, woolen cloth, palm leaf hats, boots and shoes. Residents of South Amherst, no doubt, took part in these manufacturing activities, but small-scale industries also continued to grow in South Amherst. A general store and post office were established at 324 Pomeroy Lane (MHC #678) in 1841 with Hiram Allen the first Postmaster. (Photograph #6) Ebenezer Nutting and his brother E. Porter continued their business in Nuttingville, expanding from planes to other tools. Nuttingville was located outside the district, south of the Common at the intersection of South East Street and Bay Road. Asahel Dwight and William Dickinson manufactured wooden pumps, shingles, and broom handles in a shop on Middle Street. The map of 1860 shows a sawmill in Nuttingville on a branch of the Hop Brook, but industry in both Amherst center and South Amherst was severely limited by the lack of water for power. This limitation became crucial at the opening of a railroad between Albany and Boston in the 1830s. The railroad, which came nowhere near Amherst, put the town at a disadvantage in competition with other towns which not only were serviced by the railroad but also had ample waterpower available for industrial expansion. Amherst's small businesses simply could not compete. Only palm leaf hatmaking, which was a home-based industry, continued on a fairly large scale.

The advent of the New London Northern Railroad just a mile to the east of the Common was a boost for agriculture in South Amherst. Farmers could compete and distribute their produce to new markets via the railroad, which was in place in 1853, linking Amherst to Palmer and from there to Springfield and Boston. Output rose and crops became more diversified. In 1860, 93.4% of Amherst's farms raised dairy cows, 90% raised potatoes, and in decreasing percentages raised corn, swine, oats, rye and wheat. Farming after 1840 became more intensive and scientific.

While they still raised crops for their own use, farmers began to specialize and produce more perishable goods (meat, butter, vegetables) for the increasing non-farm population around Amherst; the

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mill city of Holyoke was, understandably, the largest market.

There were agricultural crazes here as elsewhere, as people tried new endeavors. Timothy Smith of South Amherst introduced growing white mulberry trees for silkworm cultivation in 1830. A number of farmers got quite involved in growing mulberry trees before it became evident after about eight years that silkworms were not fit for the climate and the industry was not going to fulfill its promise. According to James Avery Smith, there are mulberry trees still to be seen in South Amherst. More longlasting was the development of scientific dairy farming which increased milk production per acre of arm from the 1840s. Amherst was the center of much of the progressive dairy movement. The first cattle show in Amherst was held in the center Common in 1846 and it grew every year. In 1849, fifty-two yoke of oxen from South Amherst alone were exhibited. In South Amherst dairy cows for milk, butter, and cheese were kept at several of the farms on the Common (1055 South East Str., MHC #674 and 986 South East St., MHC #687) and sheep were raised too (1072 South East St., MHC #672). Other crops were hay and corn, rye, apples, and tobacco. Maple trees and vegetable gardens supplemented farm incomes.

Institutions

One of these farms was the Amherst Town Farm or Poor Farm, whose establishment was approved in 1837 by town vote. In the following year, the Medad Vinton farm was bought in South Amherst on the Common (986 South East St. MHC #687) to house the very poorest citizens and those with mental problems. (Photograph #9) As early as 1778, Amherst had voted for a poor house to care for those who could not take care of themselves. While numbers were still small, the town preferred placing people in families, but by the late 1830s there were too many for this solution and the farm was established, caring for maximum of about twenty-five persons. The Town Farm operated until 1915. Along with social services, South Amherst was a center for several social movements of the time. In 1837, an antislavery society was formed; meetings held in the schoolhouse on the Common. The list of members includes most of the residents around the Common. Tradition holds that South Amherst families participated in the Underground Railway for runaway slaves. For instance, Clara Dwight, South Amherst historian, mentions an escape stairway for slaves at Deacon Thomas Reed's house (1072 South East St., MHC #672, 1806) and Randall Prescott, Sr., in 1960 discovered a hidden room at 935 Bay Road large enough to hide five people.

The schoolhouse was also the site of the first meetings of the South Amherst Lyceum, in 1839. Composed of many of the same people who belonged to the antislavery society, the Lyceum held debates and promoted speakers on the issues of the day in order to educate and improve public speaking skills of its members.

Self-improvement took another form in 1842 when the South Amherst Total Abstinence Society was established. The first formally organized temperance group in Amherst, its members met to listen to speakers and held other programs for a year.

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South Amherst merited its own post office in 1841, and the first postmaster was Hiram Allen. Waitstill Dickinson, who lived at 445 Shays Street (MHC #683), was the second, taking over in 1844 when he operated the post office and general store from the Enos Dickinson House on the Common (324 Pomeroy Lane, MHC #678). (Photograph Nos. 4 and 6) The post office was generally located in the home of the postmaster: as the postmasters changed, so too did the location of the post office. Dickinson was succeeded by Charles F. Haywood in 1849 and later by Deacon Thomas Reed, who kept the post office in his house (1072 South East St., MHC #672) for a number of years before it returned to Pomeroy Lane.

Religious life diversified during this period. The South Amherst Methodist Church was formed and the church built on Bay Road in 1847. The third parish church of South Amherst also underwent changes. A tumultuous period of dissension began in 1852 and resulted in a split in the congregation. At one point in 1859, the two groups of members were meeting at the same time in the church on different floors. One of the groups constituted itself as the Congregational Church of South Amherst and hired Rev. James Merrick when he was fired by the other group. They held their services in the church on a different floor. Eventually, the split was resolved, and the two congregations came back together.

Residential Development

The only Greek Revival house dating entirely from this period is the W. J. Armstrong House at 1025 South East Street (MHC #675, ca. 1850). (Photograph #8) Mary Armstrong was a schoolteacher. Other residents around the Common were Lucinda Manley, a widow, and her daughter Ellen. Both were dressmakers and lived in the Stedman/Allis House (MHC #686) as of the 1850s. Deacon Thomas Reed lived at 1072 South East Street (MHC #672) and was a sheep farmer; J.L. Merrick lived at 1055 South East Street (MHC #674) and was the minister for the South Amherst church.

The Early Industrial Period in South Amherst is characterized by its socially responsible development, much of which took place around the Common in its church, school, and homes. Agriculture was firmly established as the primary occupation; small industry continued to supplement the economy.

Late Industrial Period (1870-1915)**Agricultural Development**

The Late Industrial Period was the heyday of small farm agriculture in South Amherst. Scientific advances promoted by the Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst helped dairy farmers increase production and enabled market gardeners to cultivate their land more intensively. Better organization extended distribution of the dairy products and provided leverage for improved prices. In 1882, The Amherst Cooperative Creamery Association was formed and included members from South Amherst such as Rev. James Merrick, who raised cows at 1055 South East Street. The Bay State

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 12**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

Creamery was formed in 1889 for those dairy farmers who sent their products mainly to Holyoke .

Improvements in transportation, communication, and utilities facilitated the business of agriculture. Trolleys ran on West Street to the Boston and Maine railroad station in 1897, with a spur down Main Street in Amherst center connecting to the New London North Railroad station in the same year. Telephones were set up in 1895, houses and barns were electrified, and public water came to the village in 1911. Small industries continued. For instance, wooden faucets and children's sleds were still being produced in South Amherst in 1900. C. L. Alexander's brickworks were thriving near the Boston & Maine railroad tracks at the Lawrence Swamp. However, new industries did not replace those that closed, and the small-scale industrial base of South Amherst declined overall in favor of stronger agricultural enterprises.

Whereas in neighboring towns, immigrants arrived in considerable numbers at this time, in South Amherst the population did not change appreciably. Tobacco growing was introduced, but it did not reach the scale that it did in nearby Hatfield and Hadley, so South Amherst was not as attractive to the Irish and Eastern European immigrants who elsewhere were hired as farm laborers. Rather, Massachusetts Agricultural College was influential in South Amherst agriculture during this period. Early in the period Baldwin apples were grown at three orchards in the area, on Potwine Lane, Pomeroy Lane, and Bay Road. MacIntosh apples were first tried in 1888, and orchard land was set aside on many farms by 1900. But the industry caught on in 1907, when the College rented fields to experiment with apple growing and fertilizers. In 1908 two professors, Sears and Waugh, bought land on Bay Road to establish a progressive orchard. By 1910, twenty apple orchards were being established in South Amherst.

Residential and Institutional Development

Since neither the trolley nor the railroad line passed through the village center, the Common remained quite untouched during this period.

Furthermore, during the last two decades of the 19th century, towns and cities across the country began to their public spaces in what became known as the "City Beautiful" movement, and an appreciation of enhanced public spaces was not lost on South Amherst residents. In April of 1883, the Village Improvement Society of South Amherst was formed at a meeting in the church. Their goals were "to promote by all practical measures the improvement and beauty of public and private property in South Amherst," and their first projects were the Common and the grounds in front of the church. They approached the public improvements with a practical as well as a an aesthetic bent, by first plowing and planting potatoes on the Common, then laying out roads and walks, and sprucing up the grounds in front of the church. In 1886 potatoes were no longer part of the scheme; the Common was graded and the northern section planted with grass. Three streetlights were added in 1887, and elms were set out two years later. Conscious preservation of the Common for its picturesque qualities dates

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 13**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

from this period. From 1879 to 1895, South East Street was called Greene Street in a gesture towards the importance of the green.

One new farm went up on the east side of the Common: the Orin Williams farm appears on the atlas of 1873, and an early photograph documents its appearance. The farm buildings burned, however, and their lot on the Common became the site of the library in 1930.

In 1882 the Town Farm was burned down by one of its residents, but it was quickly rebuilt.

Another major change took place on the Common when the house at 1067 South East Street (MHC #673) was bought by the church and made into the Parsonage in 1881. Rev. George Lyman, who was minister of the church between 1869 and 1873, had owned the house during his ministry, and prior to that the Nathaniel Coleman House (1055 South East St. MHC #674) served as the parsonage. A few years after they bought it, the church had Frank Pomeroy and his son Reuben, who were builders and lived on Shays Street, remove the main block of the house and construct an up-to-date section in the late Queen Anne style.

The area of South Amherst around the Common took on a noticeably different social aspect when Mary Ann Coy Munson moved to Shays Street with her husband Parnell Munson. This era was described by several local writers as a time in which South Amherst took on its special character as a closely knit community, and much of its spark was attributed to the Munsons. They came from Chicago, where Parnell Munson was Marshall of the city, but Mrs. Munson was originally from South Amherst. The couple built a large Italianate house on Shays Street and proceeded to enter the affairs of the community. Parnell Munson was the first President of the South Amherst Improvement Society, and Mrs. Munson was active in the church and promoted town-wide activities involving many of the children who lived around the Common. At her death in 1915, Mrs. Munson donated money to the village for the library.

In 1902, the South Amherst School (1001 South East St., MHC #676, 1902/1953) replaced the one-room elementary school on the Common. (Photograph #3)

Early Modern Period (1915-1940)

The Early Modern Period encompassed a shift in agriculture from the small farm to large-scale orchards and poultry farms. Over 400 acres were devoted to apple orchards in 1920, and scientifically managed poultry farms were publicized with pride. One example of the shift to poultry raising in South Amherst is the livestock barn at 445 Shays Street, which was converted to a poultry barn ca. 1940 (MHC #683). (Photograph #5)

At the same time, commuting by automobile and improved roads put South Amherst within range of more urban areas. In 1931, Massachusetts Agricultural College became Massachusetts State College

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 14**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

and drew a large number of new faculty who found South Amherst's farmhouses appealing. So as the small farm lost its viability, farmers were replaced by commuting professionals and South Amherst took on a more suburban character.

One of the first areas to see suburban residential development was Shays Street, where a fair number of lots were laid out on agricultural land for Neo-colonial houses. Residential development did not affect the Common, however. The only building that occurred during this period on the Common was construction of the Munson Memorial Library and Community Center at 1046 South East Street (MHC #652, 1930). Its architect, Karl Scott Putnam, considered the Common an unspoiled survival of early New England, and he brought his Smith College classes there to study it. The library was appropriately designed as a community center and took over this function from the church and school. Putnam was active in western Massachusetts, particularly in Northampton and Amherst, with twenty-four institutional and forty residential commissions in Northampton alone. Included in his work are restoration projects such as the Parsons House on Bridge Street in Northampton, alterations to existing buildings such as the Smith College Library, and new construction such as the two residences he built for Mrs. Florence Adams in Northampton and in North Carolina. The Smith College Archives maintains project lists and holds drawings from many of his projects. Among his clients were the artist Leonard Baskin, the inventor Edwin Land, and textile manufacturer Joseph Skinner of Skinner State Park.

Meanwhile, the Common became the site of community celebrations for the Fourth of July and other occasions, and its value as an open park space was appreciated even more. The area took on a romantic cast through the poems of Robert Francis, son of Rev. Eben Francis, who lived at the Parsonage in the 1920s and 1930s and wrote frequently of the Common and the people who lived around it.

Changes to existing buildings continued to take place. The Town Farm was sold to a dairy farmer in 1915; the general store on Pomeroy Lane was closed and the post office closed in 1927. The Goman family built greenhouses (now gone) and raised flowers at 1081 South East Street in 1937. (Photograph #7) The hurricane of 1938 blew out a stained glass memorial window (ca. 1890) in the church and caused significant damage to the roof.

Much of what we know about South Amherst during the Late Industrial and Early Modern periods was recorded by William H. Atkins, a South Amherst resident from 1905. Atkins took notes on longtime residents' recollections, recorded building construction dates and movements, and published articles in the local press on South Amherst's history. His notes and articles were collected by his daughter Marjorie Atkins Elliott in two books, Leave the Light Burning: South Amherst, Massachusetts (1973) and North of Norwottuck (1985).

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
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South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts****Since 1940**

After World War II, suburban growth increased a great deal in South Amherst as it did everywhere. Poultry farming and dairying continued, but orchards hit a slump with declining prices. In general, only the hardiest of agricultural businesses persisted, and South Amherst became a rural suburb of Amherst proper. As a result, perpetuation of the rural appearance of the Common and its surrounding lands became a more self-conscious effort, one that was necessary in order to maintain the separate identity of South Amherst. Homes that were built on the Common in the 1950s were designed in the Neo-colonial style, which harmonized with the earlier homes and buildings. The only exception to this effort to maintain a homogeneity was the 1953 addition to the school, which was built in the International Style.

In 1966 residents successfully resisted a plan to redirect Route 9 through South Amherst, and today the Common maintains its architectural and historical integrity built up during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological remains described above have the potential to help reconstruct mid-18th through 19th century components of the district which no longer survive and help define construction sequences and dates of construction for several structures which are in question. Archaeology could help clarify when the Dickinson House at 445 Shays Street was constructed. Primary documentation is lacking for the house although an ell is dated to ca. 1740 by town traditions. Components of this house could predate the house built by Nathaniel Coleman in ca. 1742, the first recorded resident in the district. One of the more important contributions of historic archaeology in the district could be a reconstruction of the district's 19th century commercial enterprises. Structural remains of shops and detailed analysis of related features could provide information on technologies and materials used in local manufacturing of carriages, faucets, and planes. This information can also be used to identify where commercial activities took place either in homes or in specific shops. Overall, archaeological survivals can help identify the role of manufacturing within a previously agricultural oriented community and the relationship of local manufacturing and agricultural production within the larger regional economy.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Maps and Atlases

1833 Map of Amherst

1860 Walling Map of Amherst

1873 Beers Atlas of Amherst

(end)

1993

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County)
Massachusetts**

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the South Amherst Common district are illustrated on the Town of Amherst tax map 20D, which is attached.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the South Amherst Common and those properties abutting it that have historically been associated with the Common and village activities. The boundaries follow lot lines of those properties. Beyond the boundaries of the district, there is a small increase in the number of noncontributing properties; however, the area retains its overall feeling of open space, with new construction sited so as to maintain this feeling. The more recent buildings are generally consistent with those of the district in high-quality workmanship.

(end)



**South Amherst Common Historic District
South Amherst (Hampshire County), Massachusetts
District Data Sheet**

Lot #	MHC #	Address	Historic Name	Date	Style	Type	Status
20D-00		South East Street	South Amherst Common	ca. 1788		Si	C
20D-23		979 South East	house	1959	Neo-colonial	B	NC
			shed	ca. 1959		B	NC
			shop	ca. 1959		B	NC
20D-24	686	989 South East	Stedman/Allis House	ca. 1790	Federal	B	C
20D-54	687	986 South East	Town Farm	1869/1882	Italianate	B	C
			livestock barn	1941		B	C
			silo	ca. 1910		St	C
			silo (partial)	ca. 1910		St	C
			horse/equipment barn	1887-1888		B	C
20D-25	676	1001 South East	S. Amherst School	1902/1954	Craftsman/International	B	C
20D-26		1001 South East	school yard			Si	C
20D-34		1006 South East	house	1957		B	NC
203-35		1016 South East	house	1957	Neo-colonial	B	NC
20D-13	675	1025 South East	W.J. Armstrong House	ca. 1850	Greek Revival	B	C
20D-27		1030 South East	house	1952	Neo-colonial	B	NC

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: South Amherst Common Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Hampshire

DATE RECEIVED: 1/19/95 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/31/95
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/16/95 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/05/95
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 95000100

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 2/17/95 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

CLASSIFICATION

___ count ___ resource type

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

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

___ acreage ___ verbal boundary description
___ UTMs ___ boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

___ sketch maps ___ USGS maps ___ photographs ___ presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



South Amherst Common

Hampshire, MA

G. Farmer

B-11

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View north east

Photo No. 1

PHOTO # 1 of 9



South
Church
SUNDAY
10:12

1066 South East Street South Amherst Common

Hampshire, MA

G. Farmer

8-91

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View south east

Photo No. 2

PHOTO #2 of 9



1001 South East Street, South Amherst Common
Hampshire, MA
G. Farmer
8-91
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
View west
Photo No. 3

PHOTO # 3 of 9



445 Shays Blvd, South Amherst Common
Hampshire, MA

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Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View West

Photo No. 4

PHOTO #4 of 9



445 Shays Street, barn, South Amherst Common

Hampshire, MA

G. Farmer

8-91

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View south west

Photo No. 5



324 Pomeroy Lane, South Amherst Common
Hampshire, MA

C. Farmer

8-91

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View North

Photo No. 6

PHOTO # 6 of 9



1081 South East Street, South Amherst Common

Hampshire, MA

G. Farmer

8-91

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

U:ew wst

Photo no. 7

PHOTO #7 of 9



1025 South East Street, South Amherst Common

Hampshire, MA

G. Farmer

8-91

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

View north west

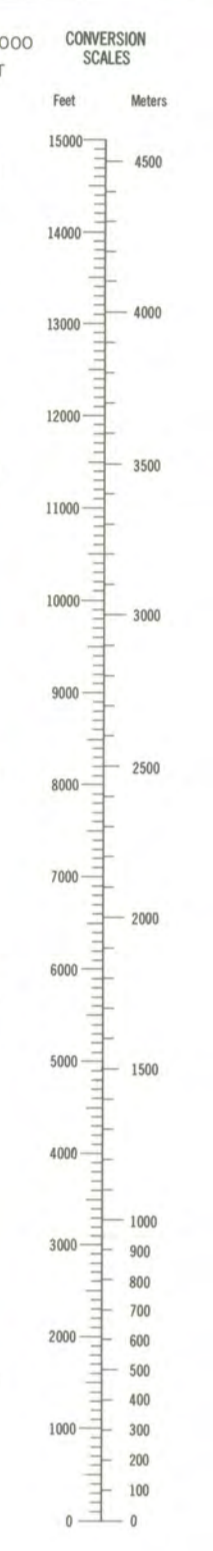
Photo No. 8



406 South East Street South Amherst Common
Hampshire, MA
Greg. Farmer
8-91
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
View South east
Photo No. 9



SOUTH AMHERST COMMON HIST. DIST.
AMHERST (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS
UTM REF POINTS 1-4



Feet	Meters
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2	6096
3	9144
4	12192
5	15240
6	18288
7	21288
8	24288
9	27288
10	30288

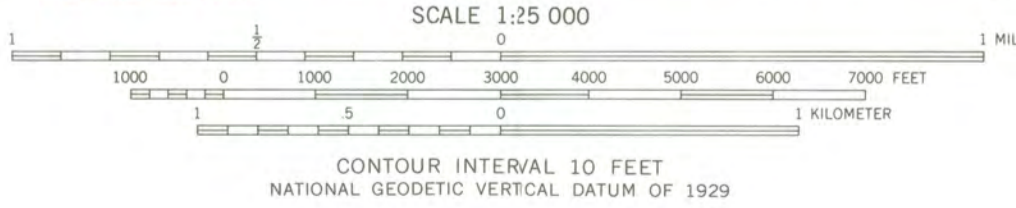
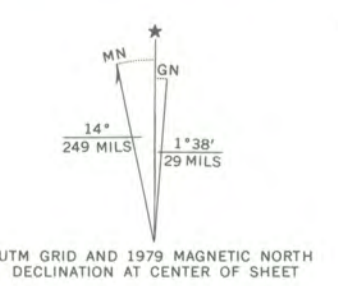
To convert feet to meters multiply by 3048
To convert meters to feet multiply by 0.3048

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1935. Revised 1964
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 18

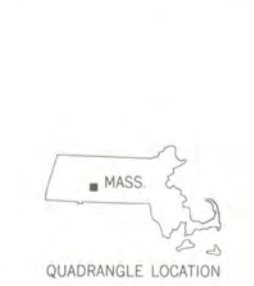
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1976 and other source data. This information
not field checked. Map edited 1979

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 5 meters south and
38 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

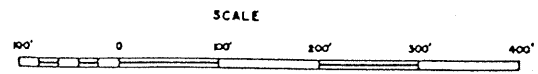


ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt - - - - -
Interstate Route (red circle) U.S. Route (red square) State Route (red circle)

MT. HOLYOKE, MASS.
42072-C5-TF-025
1964
PHOTORELIEF 1979
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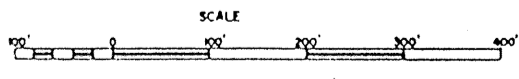
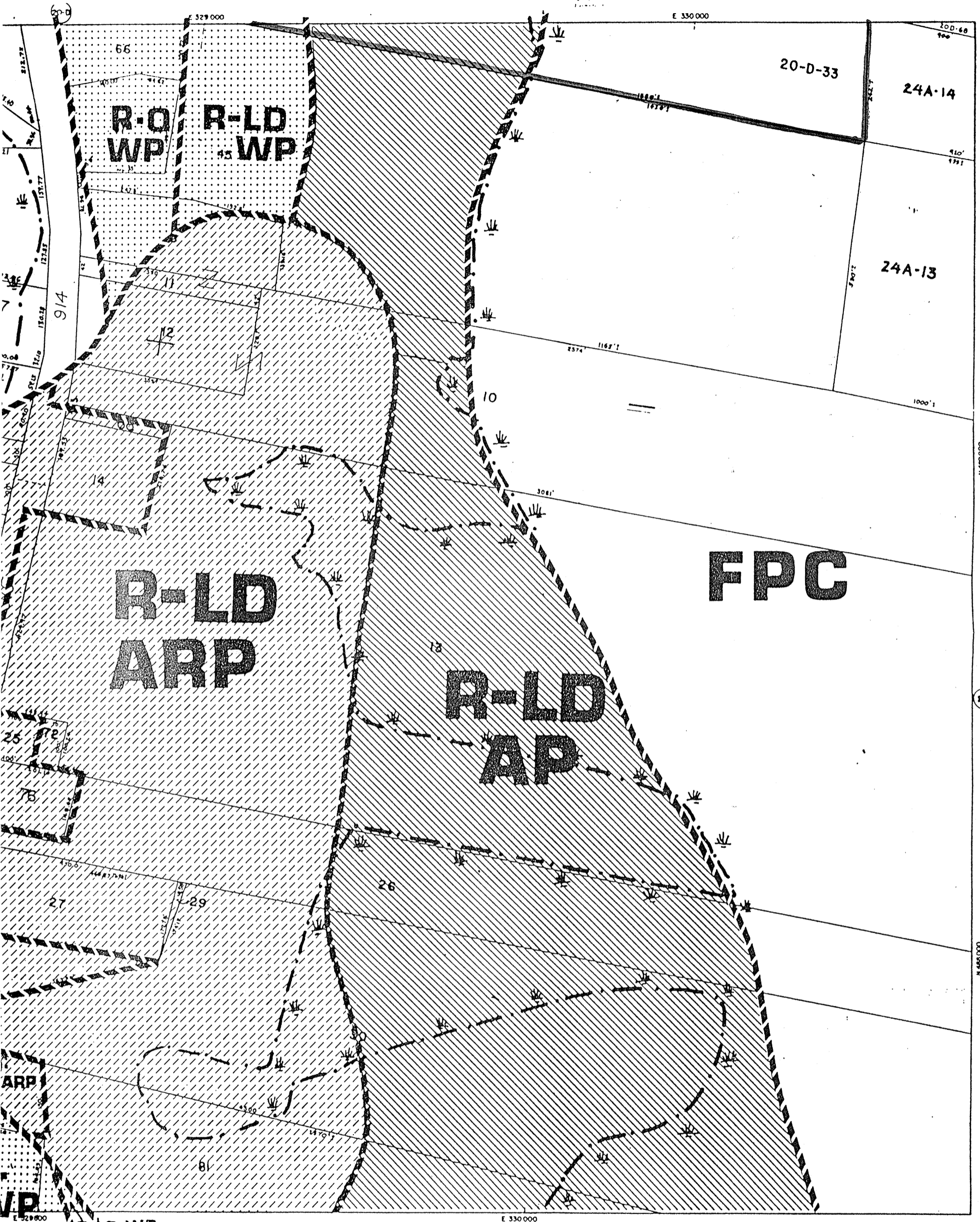


TOWN OF
AMHERST
 MASSACHUSETTS



SOUTH AMHERST COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT
 AMHERST (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY)
 MASSACHUSETTS

AMHERST ASSESSORS MAP #20D



SOUTH AMHERST COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT
AMHERST (HAMPSHIRE COUNTY)
MASSACHUSETTS

AMHERST ASSESSORS MAP #23B

NOTE
These Maps Are Not Intended
For Use In Conveyancing

23-B



Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125



January 4, 1995

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

South Amherst Common Historic District, Amherst (Hampshire County), Massachusetts, 01102.

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has 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.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Ann May, Chair., Amherst Historical Commission
Elisa Campbell, Chair., Amherst Board of Selectmen
Bonnie Parsons, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Bonnie Isman, Director, Jones Library