

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

JUL 1 1980

RECEIVED

AUG 6 1980

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Old Central High School

AND/OR COMMON

Central Annex

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

First Street

CITY, TOWN

Pittsfield

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Massachusetts

— VICINITY OF

CODE

025

COUNTY

Berkshire

CODE

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

— BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: being converted to housing

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Pittsfield Neighborhood Associates

STREET & NUMBER 86 North Street

CITY, TOWN

Pittsfield

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Berkshire County Registry of Deeds (Middle District)

STREET & NUMBER 24 Wendell Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Pittsfield

STATE

Massachusetts

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Inventory of the Historical Assets of the Commonwealth #2016

DATE

1978

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

294 Washington St., Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Central High School faces west on the common in the center of Pittsfield and is located two blocks east of North Street, the city's main artery. It is a free standing structure which is U-shaped in plan and symmetrical in elevation. The Beaux Arts style structure rises two stories from a high basement to be enclosed by a complex hip roof accented by finials. It is constructed of buff brick with a rock faced sandstone basement, marble & terracotta trim, and a slate roof. Consistent features include a smooth finished water table, banded rustication of the first story, a molded stringcourse separating first and second stories, rectangular window openings headed by splayed lintels with keystones and a modillion cornice.

The main elevation (west) is composed in three parts, a recessed central section with projecting end pavillions. The nine bay central section is also tri-partite with a slightly projecting five bay center. The center entry, which is raised above the basement, is framed by paired Corinthian columns carrying a full entablature and a balustrade. The round arched doorway has a molded keystone; carved swags occupy the spandrels. A panel with cartouche and festoons occupies the frieze. The roof is broken by a cross section which contains a two story dormer. This consists of a tri-partite base with 1/1 windows, transoms and a carved entablature, and a one part upper section with a round arched pediment containing a cartouche. This entire composition is flanked by conventional dormers with traingular pediments. The end pavillions are four bays wide with blank interior walls. Dormers with round arched pediments pierce the roof on all elevations.

The south elevation is sixteen bays long and is asymmetrically organized. From west to east windows are grouped as follows: three, two, one, two, five, three. An entry which is a flattened version of that of the facade is located beneath the central pair of windows. The single windows to the west of the entry do not conform to floor level. Three evenly spaced dormers break the roofline. The north elevation is identical to the south.

The east elevation has a slightly recessed center section with four bay wide end pavillions. A five bay wide, one bay deep ell projects from the center of the building. Its basement, which is higher than that of the rest of the building has round arched windows and is finished with banded rustication. The upper stories are united by elongated window openings terminating in round arches with keystones. Carved spandrels are located just beneath the impost level. Single bays, containing simple arched entries, flank the ell. The end pavillions are treated as the other elevations, and have dormer with arched pediments.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1898                                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT                                      Pierce & Bruhn, New York

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Central High School possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship and significant associations with the educational history of the community. Additionally, its Beaux Arts design is relatively elaborate for a school building. Important features include its symmetrical plan, classical entries, marble trim, elaborate dormers and complex roofline accented by finials.

When Pittsfield's High School building on South Street burned in 1895, the City sought a design for a new building to be located adjacent to "The Common" on First Street. This area had been bought for use as a town cemetery in 1833. The advent of the railroad in 1842 cut off a sizeable portion of the northern section and seriously restricted the size of the cemetery. As a result, a decision was made to relocate the cemetery where there was room for future expansion. In 1850, the present Pittsfield Cemetery was organized on Wahconah Street, and by 1872, all the graves had been moved to that location from the Common. The disuse of the property for a cemetery made it a prime location for the construction of the new high school..

The advertisement for designs for the new building brought 130 responses. The architects finally chosen were Messieurs Pierce & Bruhn of New York City. Their cost estimate was over the \$75,000 budgeted for the construction of the new building. However, the resulting structure was and is one of the most important architectural statements in the City. Its impressive design is further enhanced by its location on the Common, one of the most visible locations in the City.

At the time of the school's completion, the Common was partly equipped as a playground and was provided with walks, benches, and shade trees. The bandstand, which had stood on Park Square was moved there, and this piece of land found a new focus as a park, complementing the new High School building.

By 1914, however, the High School, built to accommodate 600 students was crowded with 914. In 1931, a new high school building was constructed, and Central was converted into a Junior High school. With the opening of the Junior High Schools in 1953, the building was again vacated, unused until 1959, when the Junior Highs' experienced a surge in their student population. By 1961, the pinch had subsided, and the building became the birthplace of Berkshire Community College. With the removal of Berkshire Community College to its new facility, and the reduction in school building use, it seems that Old Central High School, which has been a cornerstone of Pittsfield's educational system for over 80 years, has finally ended its educational career. It is now in the process of being converted to housing.



Property Old Central High School  
State MA, Berkshire Working Number 7/1/80/1744

**TECHNICAL**

**CONTROL**

Photos 1  
Maps 1

*This building is significant both for its architectural quality and for its 80 year association with the educational history of the town of Pittsfield. Built in 1898, the two story plus basement brick building is an unusually elaborate example (for a public school bldg.) of the Beaux arts design. The bldg. is prominently sited on the town common. It is one of the most architecturally important buildings in town and for 80 years played played the leading, then a prominent role in the town's educ. system.* **HISTORIAN**  
*- this Bldg. has been determined eligible at HUD request* **ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**  
*accept Patrick Andrew 7/30/80*

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_ Send-back \_\_\_\_\_ Entered JG 6 1980  
Federal Register Entry 2.3.81 Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_



Old Central High School  
First Street  
Pittsfield, Mass.

*Berkshire Co.*

David Douillet 1978  
Pittsfield Historical Commission

Photo #1 of 1  
Southwest elevation facing northeast

AUG 6 1980

AUG 6 1980

JUL 1 1980

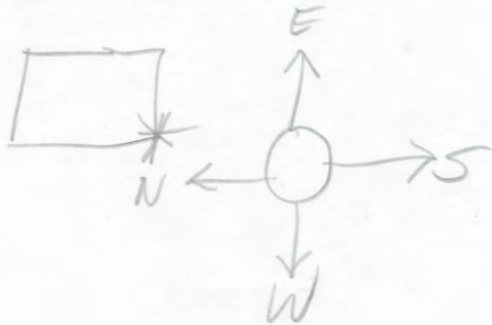
JUL 1 1980

①

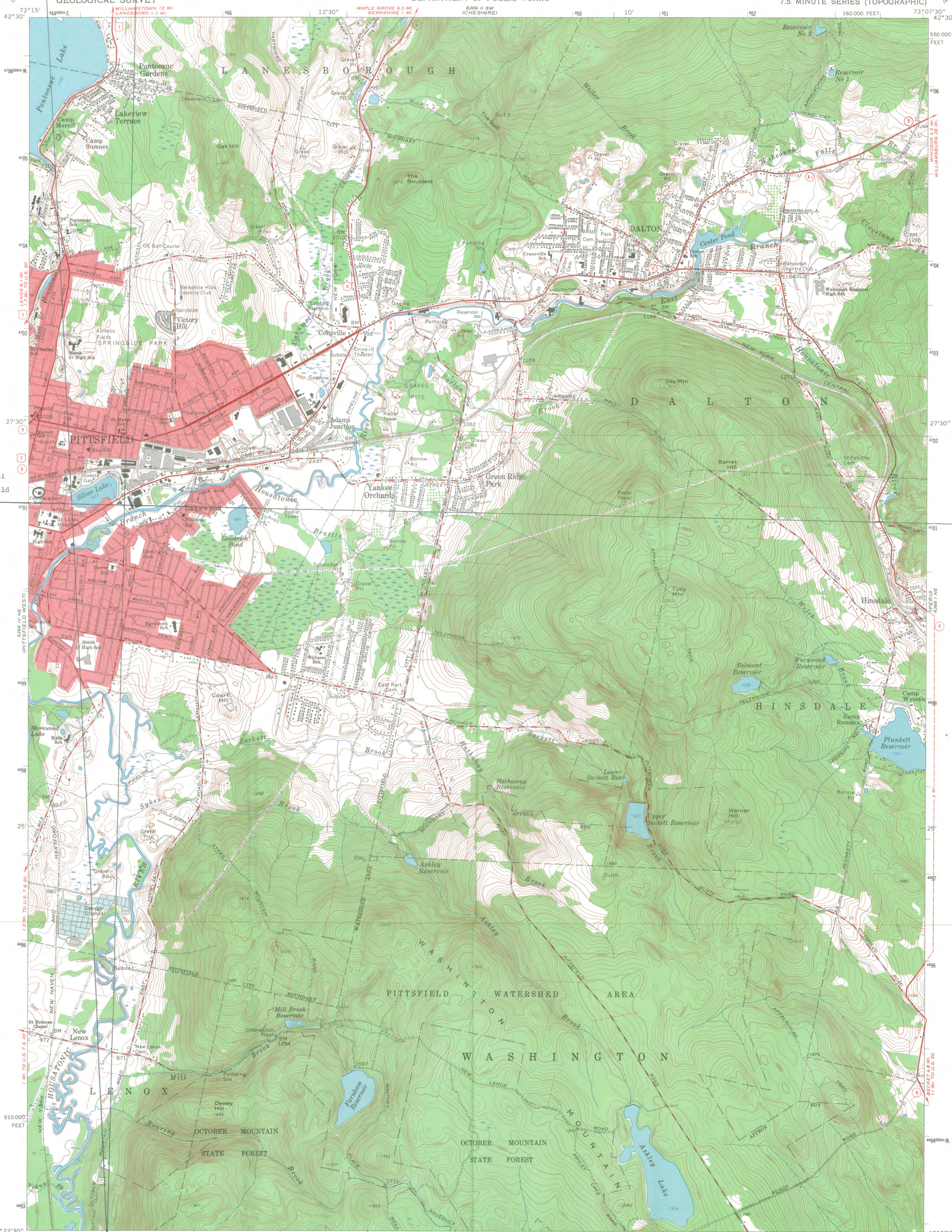
OLD CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL  
PITTSFIELD, MA.

DOUILLET 1978

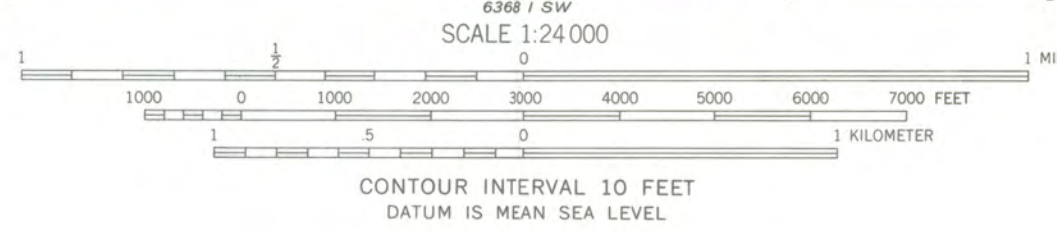
PITTSFIELD HISTORICAL COMM.  
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION



Old Central High School  
First Street, Pittsfield  
UTM REFERENCES:  
18/644 010/4701120



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, Massachusetts Geodetic Survey, and  
Massachusetts Harbor and Land Commission  
Topography by planetable surveys 1943-1944. Revised 1959  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 18, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

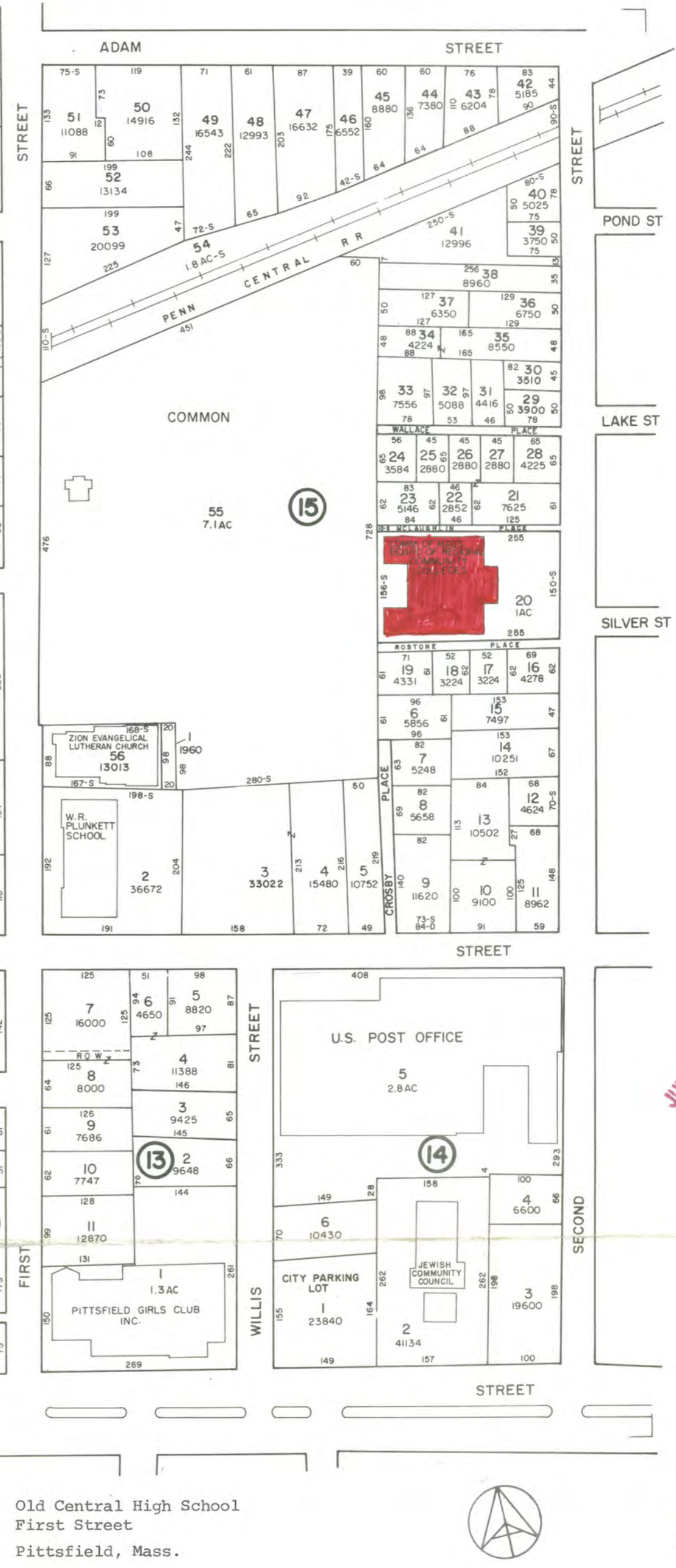
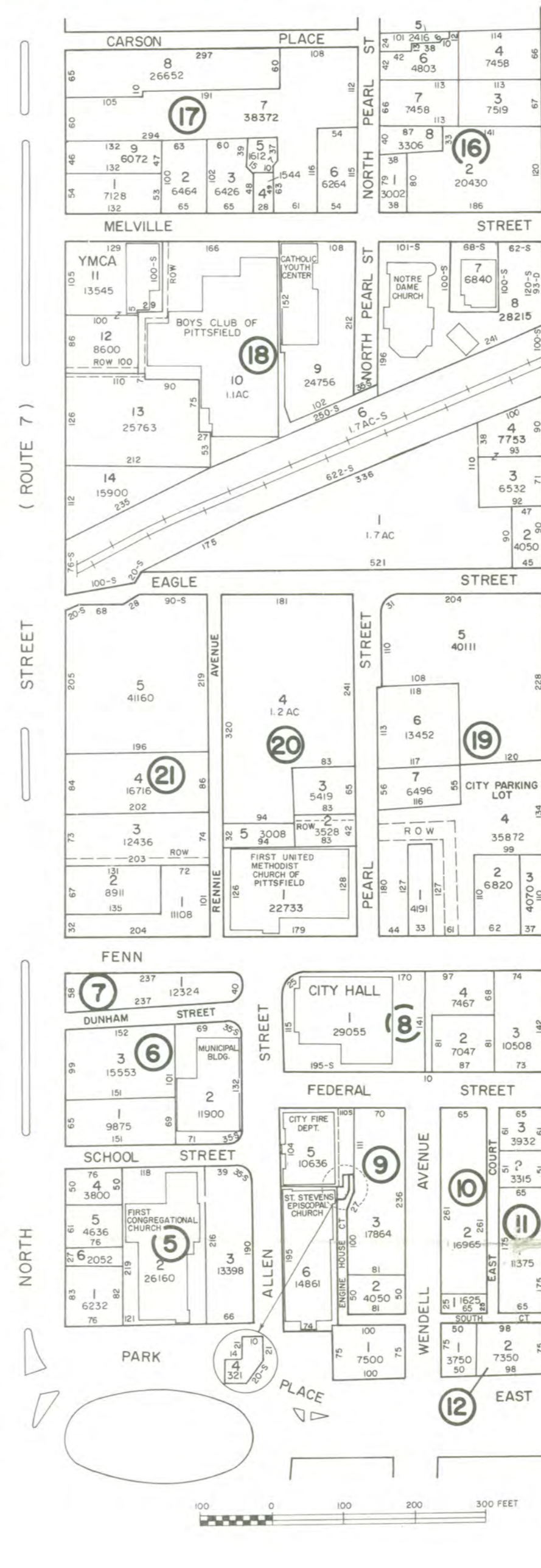
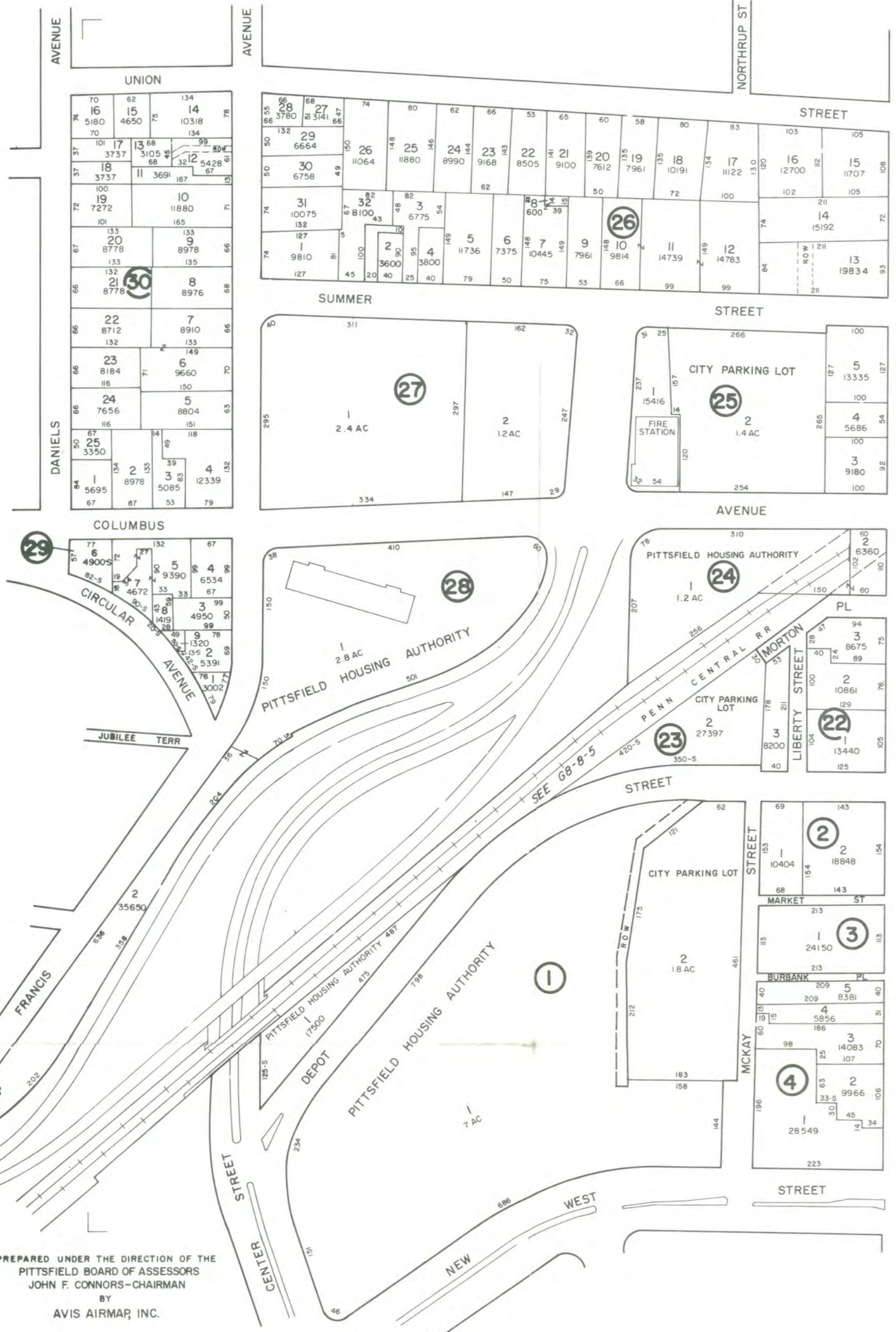
Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PITTSFIELD EAST, MASS.  
N4222.5-W7307.5/7.5  
1959  
AMS 6368 I NW-SERIES V814



CITY OF PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS  
ASSESSORS MAPS



PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE  
PITTSFIELD BOARD OF ASSESSORS  
JOHN F. CONNORS-CHAIRMAN  
BY  
AVIS AIRMAR, INC.



Old Central High School  
First Street  
Pittsfield, Mass.



JUL 1 1980

G10	H10	I10
G9	H9	I9
G8	H8	I8

Advisory  
Council On  
Historic  
Preservation

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1522 K Street NW.  
Washington D.C.  
20005

JAN 28 1980

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JAN 28 1980

Mr. Edward Machado  
Environmental Officer  
Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
Area Office  
Bulfinch Building  
15 New Chardon Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

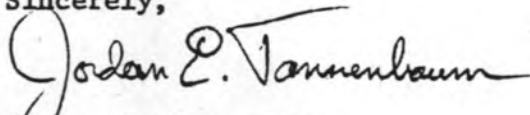
Dear Mr. Machado:

On January 14, 1980, the Council received revised plans for treatment of the auditorium roof, Central Annex, Pittsfield, Massachusetts. This information was submitted to the Council to satisfy our previous "conditional no adverse effect" for conversion of the Central Annex into housing units for the elderly.

After review of the revised plans (Barry Architects Inc./Central Annex and North Street-MHFA No. 79-093-R/#7924, sheets A 7 and A 11) the Council has no objections to the project as proposed. This concludes our review of the Central Annex project as required by the Council's regulations "Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 CFR Part 800).

We commend the developer and architect for their innovative design solution for this re-use project.

Sincerely,



Jordan E. Tannenbaum  
Chief, Eastern Division  
of Project Review

# Office of Community and Economic Development

City Hall

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

(413) 499-1100



Charles L. Smith  
Mayor

Janet L. Goldberg  
Commissioner

June 5, 1980

Stephen D. Barry  
Barry Architects, Inc.  
29 Wendell Ave.  
Pittsfield, Ma. 01201

Dear Steve:

Just to confirm our conversation of June 4, I would agree with you that the roof trusses on the Central Annex should be a color that it is compatible with other elements of the building. Since, as you pointed out, the windows will be bronze, and since the trusses are already brown, I would agree that a dark brown would certainly be an appropriate color. I might also add that the retention of the trusses and the copper roof ornament have certainly added another dimension to the renovation of the Annex, one that is particularly effective. I certainly applaud the flexibility that allowed that feature of the building to be retained.

I am looking into why you have not received a response from Mr. Mandell on the retention of the wainscoting. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Yours very truly,

Diane U. Kallmann  
Historical Resources Planner

cc: Bob Kuehn  
Deanna Saviski



**MASSACHUSETTS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

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

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

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY  
Secretary of State

June 23, 1980

Ms. Carol Shull, Acting Keeper  
Registration Branch  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
DOI W434  
Washington DC 20243



Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms:

Ipswich - Historic Resources of the Central Village, Ipswich, Mass.  
(partial inventory: historic and architectural (National))

Greenfield - Weldon Hotel (local)

Pittsfield - Old Central High School (local)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Sincerely,

*Christine Boulding*

Christine Boulding  
Survey Director

CB/mt  
encls.

*Commonwealth*  
PROVER BOND  
25% COTTON FIBER  
U.S.A.

# Office of Community and Economic Development

City Hall

Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

(413) 499-1100



Charles L. Smith  
Mayor

Janet L. Goldberg  
Commissioner

W450

June 30, 1980

Lee Nelson  
Chief, Technical Preservation  
Services Division  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Nelson:

Project number: MA-80-0120

As the preservation planner for the City of Pittsfield, I am concerned about the denial of certification that has been received on the application of Pittsfield Neighborhood Associates (June 4, 1980). Having prepared the National Register nomination for the Old Central High School, and having taken comprehensive photographs of the interior of the building, I do feel that I am familiar with its configurations.

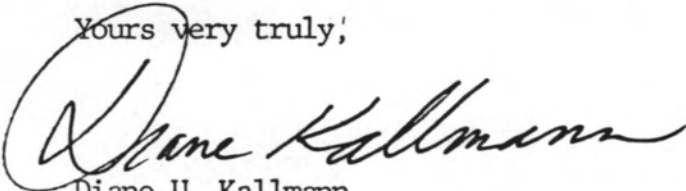
The developer of the Old Central High School has involved the City, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the Advisory Council in the development of a design that would both insure the preservation of the building, while it at the same time met the standards of both the local building codes, as well as HUD's minimum property standards for substantial rehabilitation. A number of configurations were considered, with the final one being agreed upon by those involved as the only one which satisfied the various codes and standards, while preserving the exterior integrity of the building to the greatest degree.

Perhaps the most important issue is that the development of the Old Central High School might have been abandoned were it not for the adaptations made, as the cost would have been prohibitive. This might very well have resulted in the further decay, vandalism, and the final destruction of the building. The compromises worked out, in addition, were a demonstration that older buildings can be adapted to meet today's needs, and that modifications mandated by local, state and HUD standards could be facilitated where necessary. It may be difficult to convince a developer to enter into such a project in the future if he feels that anything short of "restoration" will be rejected.

I certainly hope that your office will look favorably on the appeal of Pittsfield Neighborhood Associates for tax certification. If I can be

of any assistance, or if you have questions, please feel free to call.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Diane Kallmann". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Diane U. Kallmann  
Historical Resources Planner

cc:PNA



Pittsfield Historical Commission  
City Hall · Pittsfield, Massachusetts · 01201



Pittsfield Historical Survey and  
Planning Project  
a joint effort of the  
Pittsfield Historical Commission and Planning Board

June 30, 1980

Lee H. Nelson  
Chief, Technical Perservation  
Services Division  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage, Conservation and Recreation Service  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Nelson:

W450

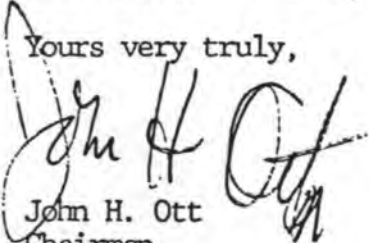
The Pittsfield Historical Commission would again like to go on record with their support of the application for certification of rehabilitation of the Old Central High School, Pittsfield, Ma. (W450). It was our stand at the time that the modifications to the Old Central High School were the only way to allow a cost-effective reuse for the building. It was our feeling at the time, that the alternate to changing the design was the probability of the entire project being shelved. That action would almost certainly have resulted in the ultimate destruction of the building, a consequence which would have grave impact on the City of Pittsfield, and the immediate neighborhood to the school.

We know that a tremendous amount of work has gone into minimizing the impact of construction on the building, and feel that the compromises worked out with our local staff, the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and the Advisory Council represent an acceptable solution to the problems.

We are extremely distressed that your office is not able to support this carefully worked out compromise. We feel that while your standards outline the optimum solutions, the phrase "whenever possible" allows for some flexibility when the change could affect the ultimate fate of the building.

We respectfully urge your office to reconsider the denial of certification and act favorably on the application of Pittsfield Neighborhood Associates. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

  
John H. Ott  
Chairman



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY  
OLD CITY HALL • 45 SCHOOL STREET  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108 • (617) 723-6800

July 1, 1980

Deputy Associate Director  
for Cultural Programs  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C. 20240

Re: Central Annex/Pittsfield, Mass.  
Project: #MA-80-0120  
MHFA #79-93-R

Gentlepeople:

We are writing in support of the rehabilitation work on the above-captioned project. We feel that the development team has provided an innovative solution that both preserves the historic character of the building while providing 62 units of much needed housing.

In the MHFA review process, we examine the building from the site to the completion of construction. During this process, we were aware that the development team was faced with a difficult problem in preserving and converting an important building in the City of Pittsfield. With them, we examined and rejected a number of alternative solutions. The resulting solution was approved by MHFA as the best of the alternatives.

We feel that the development team has gone beyond the norm in its efforts to preserve the historic character of the building and endorse its application for eligibility under the 1976 Tax Reform Act.

Sincerely yours

*Raymond A. Johnson*  
Raymond A. Johnson  
Design & Technical Officer

RAJ/JMF

cc: Housing Associates

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered AUG 6 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Old Central High School	Pittsfield Berkshire County

Also Notified

Honorable Paul Tsongas  
Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Honorable Silvio O. Conte

NR Byers/arb 8/19/80

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski  
Executive Director, Massachusetts  
Historical Commission  
294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.