

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 in 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 any 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 Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House

other names/site number Francis Tuttle House; Twin Chestnut Farm

2. Location

street & number 300 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Acton N/A vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01720

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Brona Simon DSHPO

Feb. 8, 2002

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State or 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 this 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):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 5/2/02

Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House  
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA  
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	Non-contributing	
3	1	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
5	3	objects
9	4	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)

DOMESTIC: single and double dwelling

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum; library

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL: Georgian

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: granite, fieldstone

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof WOOD

other

**Narrative Description**

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

Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House  
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA  
County and State

**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 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**

(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 AND DEVELOPMENT
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1760-1951

**Significant Dates**

1760  
1796-97

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Jonathan Hosmer (mason and builder)



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

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### 7. DESCRIPTION

The Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House is an outstanding example of a stylish double farmhouse of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is the best-preserved of Acton's three intact Colonial "saltboxes," and is unique in town for its combination of two distinctly different types of 18<sup>th</sup>-century house plans--a square-plan and a half-house. The building is a prominent presence in the busy crossroads commercial/residential area of Acton known as Kelley's Corner, where it occupies a slight rise on the north side of Main Street (Massachusetts Route 27), facing diagonally south over the street toward a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century shopping center. Three small, ca. 1950s, houses occupy small lots immediately west of the Hosmer House property. Massachusetts Route 2 passes a short distance to the east, and to the north, just beyond the wooded back section of the house lot, is the large combined campus of two elementary schools, a junior high school, and Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. All these abutting properties were once part of the large Hosmer family farm.

The Hosmer House is a long 2 1/2-story, side-gabled double house with a full-width rear leanto extending five feet beyond the northwest corner of the main house to form a tall "Beverly jog." The building stands on a fieldstone foundation topped with rough-cut granite blocks, has a wood-shingle roof, and is clad in wood clapboards. As viewed from the exterior, the asymmetrical main facade is seven bays wide at the first story, and six at the second (photo #1). There are three principal southern entries--one in the jog, and two on the main section, one for each part of the double-house, occupying the second and the fifth bays from the north end. Two large brick chimneys, both rebuilt above the attic floor in the 1970s, rise from the roof. One is a ridge chimney positioned nearly in line with the easternmost entry; the other is an interior chimney in the rear slope of the roof at the west end of the main house. The east gable end of the building displays a center window at each story and one in the attic, aligned vertically; in the east end of the leanto to their rear is a modern door and a 6-over-9-sash window at the first story (both are 1970s replacements, occupying the locations of a former door and window), and a small 6-over-6 window in the upper wall above the door (photo #4). The west gable end of the main house is also aligned with one window at each story; the west end of the leanto in the jog area has a paired modern kitchen window at the first story, and is windowless in the upper section, although the lines of a former small window there are evident in the pattern of clapboard

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replacement (photo #5). The rear (north) elevation below the sweep of the leanto roof is one story high, with an asymmetrical arrangement of three 6-over-9 windows, three 6-over-6's, and a 6-panel wood door, all of which are replacements. (Most of the rear wall was reconstructed in the mid-1970s, after a 1972 fire badly damaged the rear wall, the adjacent interior ceilings, and a makeshift back porch (photo #3).)

All the windows in the house are wood double-hung sash consistent with the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century, and with the evidence provided by the original openings, most of which have the box-like, projecting enframements typical of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. Windows on the first story of the facade are 12-over-12-sash. Above them, the enframements of 8-over-12-sash and one 6-over-9 at the second story extend into the molded cornice. (Replacement 19<sup>th</sup>-century 6/6 and 2/2 windows are shown in historic photographs of the building; the first story windows were in turn replaced after 1938 by 8/12's sized to fit the openings meant for 12/12's). The main windows in the end walls of the house are 9/9-sash.

The two principal southern entries are identical examples of finely-proportioned late-Georgian doorways, with tapered flat pilasters on plinths, molded capitals, and entablatures with high friezes, molded architraves, and molded, projecting cornices. The projecting window frames, their top edges trimmed with a simple molding, are consistent with the period of the doorways, indicating that the entire exterior may have been updated, and probably reclapboarded, in the late 1790s, when the house was enlarged. The six-panel main doors (presently obscured by vertical-board storm doors), are also typical of that period. The entry in the jog has a molded surround without a frieze, and a simpler cornice; its door is a different six-panel design, with the two smaller panels in the center. Other exterior detailing is also consistent with the 1790s. The cornerboards are narrow and unadorned, the roof rake at the gable ends is simply trimmed with double boards, and a water table rings the base of the wall at the top of the foundation. The boxed front eaves project slightly, and are trimmed with a bed molding, but without cornice returns on the gable ends.

### Jonathan Hosmer, Jr. House, 1760

The two side-by-side living units of the house were constructed a generation apart, in 1760 and 1796/1797, and are of two distinctly different plans. The eastern section is the 1760

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house of Jonathan Hosmer, Jr. (photo #2) The awkwardly-placed window just west of the main entry may have been inserted at a later date; if so, this building would originally have had a nearly symmetrical, three-bay facade. Its plan is not a conventional three-room/lobby-entrance arrangement, however. (See sketch plan) Both its square dimensions and lack of the usual front lobby entrance are more characteristic of a direct-entry square plan, an alternative Colonial-era floor plan that is rare in the Acton area. The facade door opens directly into the southwest first-story room, which is divided from the southeast room only by a partition wall of vertical feather-edged sheathing (largely hidden from view by a closet), and a four-panel door. Both of these front rooms are dominated by the slightly off-center mass of the chimney, which contains a diagonally-positioned corner fireplace in each room. The simple arched-board front of the fireplace in the southwest room was restored in the 1970s renovations. The fireplace opening in the southeast room is also segmentally-arched. The treatment here is much more elaborate, however, with a heavy Victorian molding above the opening, and a pair of slender ceiling-height fluted pilasters(photo #6). The pilasters may have been a direct imitation of another pair, which flank a china cupboard fitted into the northeast corner of the room, and topped with a dentiled and molded cornice (photo #7). (It is believed that this cabinet, of a style which predates 1760, may have been moved here from another location.) Both front rooms are plastered, with corner posts that are simply cased in flat boards.

In the leanto across the rear of the 1760 house is one large room, used originally as a kitchen, and today referred to as the "keeping room." Its focal point is the large, deep fireplace in the front wall, which has two bake ovens--one in the back wall of the firebox, the other, apparently a later addition, abutting the east end of the fireplace(photos #8-9). The long board above the openings is a 1970s covering for the heavy, charred fireplace lintel; the chimney face above it is covered with horizontal feather-edge sheathing. North of the fireplace are the enclosed stairs to the second floor. Much of both the structure and fabric of this room had to be replaced after the 1972 fire. The flared, exposed, rear corner posts survived the blaze, however, as did the chimney girts and a few ceiling joists, a portion of vertical feather-edge sheathing on the south wall, and the plaster and plain dado on the west end wall. Feather-edge sheathing was recreated for the rest of the fireplace

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wall, as was a new dado for the north and east walls. The ceiling was formerly completely plastered; the joists are now exposed.

The second story of the 1760 house has two front chambers, each with a small corner fireplace, and an unfinished room to the rear under the slanting roof of the leanto. Both chambers are plastered, with cased, flared corner posts. A partition wall of feather-edge sheathing divides them in front of the chimney. The segmentally arched fireplaces in these rooms are rare, extremely simple survivals that are surrounded by plaster, rather than wood trim. The one in the southwest room is entirely plastered over the brick of the chimney, which creates a curved form jutting into the room (photo #11-12). Above the southeast chamber fireplace are three simple wooden shelves, fitted into the concave curve created by the receding upper part of the chimney. Feather-edge sheathing forms the wall at the rear of this room, against the enclosed stairs.

### Simon Hosmer House, 1796-1797

The house built for Simon Hosmer abuts the west end of his father's residence (photo #1). Its layout is a more conventional two-room-plan, 2 1/2-story, three-bay half-house. Like the 1760 house, however, its main doorway opens directly into the first-story room. The diagonal fireplace in this room has a rectangular opening, with a molded surround that was recreated according to paint evidence found during the 1970s restoration. Fitted beside the chimney stack to the west of the fireplace is a fine example of a two-door wall cupboard, each door with a single raised-field panel. The H-hinges of the cupboard doors retain their leather washers, still visible under many layers of paint (photo #14).

In the leanto to the rear is the original 1790s kitchen, with an enclosed interior stair at its east end, and a modern double lavatory in its northeast portion. The face of the chimney above its large cooking fireplace is covered with long raised-field panels. The exterior bake oven is positioned just west of the firebox. This room extends west into the jog, where the interior face of the door in the front wall is covered with vertical board and hung on long strap hinges with pointed cusps (photo #13).

At the second story, the front chamber is the most elaborate of all the rooms in the

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building. This is the only room in the house with molded door frames, and has a stylish crown molding around the top of the wall. Its diagonally placed fireplace has a wide, molded, surround (photo #15). As in the 1760s house, the corner posts here are cased, but its summer beam, the only one exposed in the house, is uncased. A modern bathroom has been fitted into the rear second-story space under the leanto roof in this section, with a large closet to its east.

**Attic.** The two houses share a common attic space, with a principal-rafter and purlin roof structure. The rafters are joined at a four-sided ridge beam; the roof boards are laid vertically, and many have been replaced. An extremely rare feature preserved inside the attic is visible on the original west gable-end wall of the 1760 house, which was left in place when the building was extended in 1796-97. While the east gable is sheathed and clapboarded in the expected manner, this wall has riven lath, rather than sheathing, nailed to the west face of the studs. The lath is plastered between the studs on the east (interior) side, and stuccoed or plastered on the west (former exterior) side. Areas of red paint in an imitation brick design are well preserved on the stucco, suggesting that Jonathan Hosmer may have used his own house to advertise his masonry skills (photo #16).

### Setting

Although all the early outbuildings on the lot are gone, the roughly square 2.7-acre Hosmer House property still has the general character of a clustered farmstead that evolved over the course of two centuries. Standing close to the northwest corner of the house is Coughlin's Garage (Map #2), a one-story gable-front fieldstone building of 1922, with wood-shingled gables and an asphalt shingle roof. Restored and renovated in 1982 as the Albert R. and Mabel G. Jenks Library, it has vertical-board and tongue-and-grooved doors, 2-over-2-sash windows, and overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends. A fieldstone chimney rises through the northwest part of the roof. Directly behind the garage is an early-1990s vertical-board shed on a concrete foundation (Map #4). Across a grassed yard to its northeast is a small gable-roofed post-and-beam barn or livestock shed (Map #3) of 19<sup>th</sup>-century vintage, which was dismantled, moved to the site, and erected in 1993. It formerly stood at 4 Berry Road, Pittsfield, New Hampshire. The barn is also clad in vertical board, and has 6-over-6-sash windows and a pair of swinging doors, located on the long south side. Both the shed and barn have wood-shingle roofs.

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Objects of note in the area near the house include three square granite hitching posts, fitted with iron tie rings (Map #8), which probably date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A modern flagpole (Map #9) just southeast of the house is non-contributing to the nomination, as is a seven-foot-high wooden model of the old Acton Center Schoolhouse (Map #10) which stands under a grove of tall spruce trees northeast of the leanto. A fieldstone retaining wall (Map #5) across the front of the property is of 1970s construction; another section (Map #6) that supports the west side of the driveway from the street to the front of the Coughlin garage was in place by at least 1922 (photo #1). The fieldstone walls (Map #7) that line portions of the west property boundary, roadside, rear driveway, and an old lane east of the house, still lend a sense of pastoral atmosphere, and make a significant contribution to the character of the property. The ruins of a pre-1950 log cabin (Map #11) with brick chimney and foundation, visible through the trees a hundred yards northwest of the house, convey a sense of the property's early modern history.

### Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American resources have been identified on the Hosmer house property, sites may be present. One site has been identified in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property indicate the presence of locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, distance to wetlands) that are favorable indicators for some types of Native American sites. The Hosmer farm occupies well-drained, level to moderately sloping topography in close proximity to wetlands. An unnamed pond is located within 1000 feet north of the farm. The nominated property is located within the Assabet River drainage, a tributary of the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. Native American settlement spanning several millennia has been identified within these drainage basins. Given the above information, the size of the nominated property (2.7 acres) and impacts associated with historic landuse of the property, a moderate to high potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the property.

A high potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the nominated property. No early outbuildings associated with the farmstead are extant, indicating structural evidence of those buildings may survive. A 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, moved to the property from New Hampshire in 1993 survives on the property, however, archaeological evidence of earlier 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century barns may also be present. Structural evidence associated with a 20<sup>th</sup> century log cabin that burned in 1972 also survive northwest of the Hosmer house. Archaeological evidence of occupational features (trash

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pits, privies, wells) should also exist in the area of the farmstead.

(end)

### 8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House was built by members of one of Acton's most prominent families of the Colonial and Federal eras, and was owned in the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century by Francis Tuttle, Esq., a citizen who in his own time also helped shape the economy, culture, and development of the community. In spite of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century development of most of the rest of the original farm as a mixed commercial, residential, educational, and transportation area, the house and its immediate surroundings still convey their agricultural origins and their association with the long evolution of the part of Acton west of the town center. That evolution was exemplified by two generations of Hosmers on their hundred-acre farm, continued by Francis Tuttle's general farming and apple-growing, by the small farm kept by the Irish-born O'Neil family after the Civil War, and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the Todds' Twin Chestnut Farm and animal rescue facility--all of which contribute to the property's significance under Criterion A. The building is Acton's best-preserved example of a rear-lean-to (saltbox) house, and a rare example in town of a long double house, both parts dating to the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the 1760 house provides an extremely rare local illustration of the square plan, an uncommon alternative to the better-understood floor plans of the late Colonial era. Thus for its architecture, including the many illustrations it contains of the craftsmanship of its first owner, mason Jonathan Hosmer, the building also meets Criterion C. The property is significant at the local level and maintains integrity of location, design, immediate setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Acton, formerly part of Concord and first known as Concord Village, was incorporated as a town in 1735. It was a farming community and remained so until 1845, when the Fitchburg Railroad was completed through town and inspired a number of business ventures, especially in the south and west parts of town. However, Acton continued as a small town until the 1950s, when most of its remaining farmland began to give way to single-family subdivisions. Today, it is an extended suburb of Boston, with a population of over 18,000 residents. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area immediately southwest of the Hosmer House became a principal intersection on the Union (Harvard) Turnpike (later Massachusetts Route 111), which crossed the county road (later Elm Street, then Main Street), on its way to West Acton and Harvard. By the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, dense development had spread outward from

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the intersection to form a small commercial area called Kelley's Corner, and Massachusetts Route 2 had been built just east of the house.

The Hosmer House, one of Acton's three remaining Colonial "saltboxes", was built for, and apparently by, Jonathan Hosmer, Jr. (1735-1822) in 1760, the year he married Submit Hunt. They both came from large local farming families who were prominent in Acton town affairs. Both Hunts and Hosmers served in the Revolutionary War. Jonathan's brother Abner Hosmer was killed April 19, 1775 at the North Bridge in Concord in the initial volley of the "Concord Fight," and Submit Hunt Hosmer's father, Capt. Simon Hunt, commander of Acton's West Militia, led his troops to Concord that same day. Jonathan, Jr. and Submit's son Jonathan Hosmer III died at the Battle of Bennington in 1777. Jonathan, Jr., like his father, was a Selectman and a Deacon of the church. He also served as a Tythingman, Assignor of Pews, and occasionally as a preacher. He taught in the local schools, and eventually became Town Clerk and Town Assessor. Another son, Simon, for whom the west half of the house was built, also served the church as Deacon, led in the organization of a church musical group, and started a music program in the local schools.

Jonathan Hosmer, Jr. was a bricklayer and mason, as well as a farmer. The eight fireplaces in the Hosmer House, each one different from the other, attest to his skill. He advertised his trade by having the west end of his house plastered and painted to resemble brick. A portion of this exterior treatment can still be seen in the attic today, having been left in place when the addition was made to the west end of the house for Simon's residence in 1796-97.

In 1797, shortly after the house was enlarged, Jonathan and Submit conveyed the house and barn (which was located on the opposite side of the road), along with one hundred acres, to Simon. Jonathan was sixty-two at the time, and the conveyance, which was made under the condition that Simon should take care of his parents for the rest of their lives, illustrates an arrangement common in eastern New England at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Submit lived fifteen more years; Jonathan died, of a palsy, in 1822. One of the members of the household in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century was Quatros, an Afro-American man who had taken the Hosmer name. He was apparently the family's servant or laborer. Family reminiscences speak of his "snow-white hair, made more conspicuous by the eel-skin ribbon which gathered into a queue his graceful curls." Quatros lived on the Hosmer farm until his death in 1827.

In 1839, the year before his death, Simon Hosmer sold the homestead to Rufus Holden, a Concord farmer, who divided the acreage into several parcels that were sold separately. Much of the property, about 45 acres, was bought in 1846 by Francis Tuttle. Referred to as "Esquire," Mr. Tuttle (1791-1877) was a prominent Acton politician, and had owned the very successful general store at the center

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of town, as well as his family's homestead at the top of Nagog Hill just east of the town center. In his long life he served as Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Selectman, Justice of the Peace, and in the state legislature. It was largely through his personal supervision that the young trees planted along the Acton Common survived the drought of 1840. Shortly after the Fitchburg Railroad came through town in 1845, the year before he bought the Hosmer property, he became very active in real estate development in both South Acton and Acton Center. Of Francis Tuttle's eleven children, four daughters were married in the southeast parlor of the Hosmer House--a room that was thereafter referred to as "the wedding room": Eliza (Elizabeth) married Elnathan Jones, Jr. in 1851, Martha Etta married Zoeth Taylor in 1854, Sarah Jane married Jonathan Wetherbee in 1857, and Sophia married Henry (or Charles) Haynes in 1862. All the husbands were members of other prominent and prolific local families, making the house a family homestead to much of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Acton.

By 1860 Francis Tuttle's farm included about 50 acres. He apparently ran it at first as a general farm, with a few cows and fields of hay, corn, oats, and potatoes. In 1850, when butter making was a profitable venture for many Acton farmers, Francis Tuttle produced 300 pounds--equaling the output of the largest farmer in town. By 1860, while he still grew grains, potatoes, and hay, he had also developed extensive orchards. Henry Thoreau tells of traveling to Boxborough through Acton past the farm, where one could see "where Squire Tuttle lives and barrels his apples." (Thoreau, Henry David, *Journal*, June 19, 1851).

In the early 1860s Francis Tuttle apparently conveyed his farm to his son, Francis, Jr., who lived in Stow. He further divided the property, and in 1868 sold the house (apparently without the barn, and with only nine acres) to one of Acton's growing number of Irish immigrants, some of whom were able to purchase their own small farms around the time of the Civil War. The new owner was Edward O'Neil, who with his wife, Mary (Sheridan), who had also been born in Ireland, had been living in Concord with their young family. Mr. O'Neil owned the farm for twenty years. In 1888, he died of dropsy at the age of fifty, followed two weeks later by his son, Edward J. O'Neil, who succumbed to consumption at the age of 27. Mrs. O'Neil continued to live in the house with two other sons, William, who became a harness-maker, and John, until 1911.

In 1918 the property was purchased by George Todd, a composer for the *Boston Globe*, who lived here with his sister, Ethel, who was an artist for the same newspaper. The Todds modernized the house, bringing in town water and electricity, but apparently made no structural changes or additions to it. In 1921, Mr. Todd gave permission to his friend Harold Coughlin to build a fieldstone repair garage on the property. The building was the first automobile repair facility in town, and is today one of the best representatives of several fieldstone buildings constructed in Acton during the early modern

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period. Mr. Coughlin, who lived across the street, operated the repair business from 1922 to 1932, when he closed it to become Postmaster of the Acton Center post office.

Under the Todds, the place was named "Twin Chestnut Farm," for the two large chestnut trees that stood in the front yard until the Hurricane of 1938. Miss Todd was an animal lover, and provided care for hurt and sick animals. Many of them had been sentenced to extermination by the courts, and were brought out from Boston by her brother. At times there were over 100 animals residing at Twin Chestnut Farm.

George Todd died in 1951, and his sister in 1969, after which the property became part of an estate left to their seven nieces and nephews. One of the heirs, Julia Todd, lived for a time in a cabin that had been built a short distance behind the house sometime during the Todds' ownership. The cabin burned down in 1972, the same year that another fire damaged the back of the house.

In 1974, in preparation for the building of an elementary school, the Acton Town Meeting voted to take the Todd property by eminent domain for expansion of the school campus that had occupied the adjoining property to the north since the late 1920s. A 2.7-acre portion with the house and garage was divided out, however, and turned over to the Acton Historical Society. Over the next two years, the Society used a bicentennial grant to restore the house, which has been furnished with appropriate pieces of furniture, many of which have come from Acton families. The Simon Hosmer section at the west end was fitted out as a tenant's apartment; its rent provides steady income for the upkeep of the property. In 1982, under a design by architect Lawrence A. Sorli, the Coughlin Garage was converted to a library of local history and a repository for Acton documents. It is open to the public two mornings a week and at other times by appointment. During the spring and fall of each year, approximately 400 second graders from the Acton schools visit the Hosmer House and Jenks Library, where volunteer guides instruct them about the history of Acton, its people, and the way they lived. Open House for the public is also held one Sunday a month, when visitors are welcomed to tour the library and the house.

### Archaeological Significance

Although numerous ancient Native American sites have been identified near the main channels of the Concord, Sudbury and Assabet Rivers located to the east and south of the Hosmer farmstead,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

Section number 8 Page 5

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few sites have been systematically excavated in the area limiting their interpretable value and making surviving sites in the locale potentially significant. The above pattern is especially true for sites located along tributary streams and near ponds in the uplands of those drainages. The Hosmer farmstead is located in such an area. The nominated property is located over 1000 feet from the nearest stream but does lie within that distance of an unnamed pond located north of the farm. Potential ancient Native American sites in this locale may contribute information that identifies the role and importance of areas with these locational characteristics to local and regional settlement models within the drainages identified above. Upland sites located near ponds or other similar bodies of water may have functional or seasonal importance in a relationship to larger habitation sites in core areas located along the Concord, Sudbury, Assabet and even Merrimack Rivers. Ancient Native American sites in the area may also contribute information that helps define regional trade patterns particularly between interior and coastal locales. The Merrimack River and its tributaries represent a regionally important transportation corridor for both the prehistoric and historic periods. Ancient sites in the area may contain information indicating how ideas as well as material culture were transmitted through these transportation networks.

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to provide detailed information on the social, cultural and economic patterns that characterized several prominent families and a farmstead that helped shape the agricultural and social evolution of the part of Acton west of the town center. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing can help locate outbuildings and occupational related features (trash pits, privies, wells) that helped shape the layout and character of a clustered farmstead as it evolved over two centuries of town development. Structural evidence of outbuildings and their locations may contribute information relating to both agricultural and domestic activities on the farm and how these changed through time. Detailed analysis of the contents of occupational related features may also contribute important information relating to the above activities and potential cottage industries that may have also been present. Evidence from outbuildings and features may identify the extent that agriculture and husbandry combined to form the Hosmer farmstead. Information from occupational-related features can also contribute information relating to the lives of the different families and individuals that lived on the farm and the extent to which their lives characterized life in the western part of Acton during the 18<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

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### 9, MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

#### Books, articles, pamphlets, and unpublished manuscripts

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Nylander, Robert. Notes on the Hosmer House. Undated.

Phalen, Harold R.. History of the Town of Acton. Cambridge, MA: Middlesex Printing, Inc., 1954.

#### Public Documents

##### United States government

Federal Census—non-population schedules, 1850, 1860.

##### Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Survey of Historical and Architectural Resources,

Acton, Mass. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1972, 1990.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.

##### Town of Acton

Annual Reports; Assessor's Valuations.

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##### Plans, Maps, and atlases

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Middlesex County. New York: 1875.

Hales, John G. Plan of the Town of Acton. 1830-31.

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(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

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### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Hosmer House property are those recorded and shown on Acton Assessor's Map F-3, Parcel 74.

#### Boundary Justification

The property boundary includes the entire parcel on which the Hosmer House is located, and comprises the remaining undivided portion of the original farmstead owned at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Jonathan and Simon Hosmer.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

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

## RESOURCE COUNT

C = contributing; NC = non-contributing  
B = building; O = object; Si = site;  
St = structure

MAP#	NAME OR DESCRIPTION	DATE	STATUS	TYPE
1	Jonathan and Simon Hosmer House	1760/1796-97	C	B
2	Coughlin Garage	1922	C	B
3	Barn	19th C.	C	B
4	Shed	ca. 1990	NC	B
5	Fieldstone retaining wall (front)	20th C.	NC	O
6	Fieldstone retaining wall (west)	19th-early 20th C.	C	O
7	Fieldstone walls	pre-20th C.	C	O
8	Granite hitching posts (3)	19th C.	C	O
9	Flagpole	late-20th C.	NC	O
10	Schoolhouse model	late-20th C.	NC	O
11	Ruins of log cabin	early-20th C.	C	Si

<u>TOTAL RESOURCE COUNT:</u>	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Non-contributing</u>
BUILDINGS	3	1
STRUCTURES:	0	0
OBJECTS:	5	3
SITES:	1	0
<b>TOTAL: 9</b>	<b>TOTAL: 4</b>	

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Jonathan & Simon Hosmer House  
Acton (Middlesex), MA

Section number photo Page       

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### PHOTOGRAPHS (8 x 10")

- photographs 1 to 7 by David Harris, 1998
- all negatives in possession of Acton Historical Commission

1. Front view of Hosmer House from across Main Street, looking north
2. Front and southwest end of house, showing part of "Beverly jog"
3. Rear view of house, looking south
4. East end of house, looking southwest
5. Beverly jog: west end of house, looking northeast
6. Interior, Jonathan Hosmer House, 1760: fireplace, southeast first-story room
7. Interior, Jonathan Hosmer House, 1760: china cabinet, southeast first-story room

### SUPPLEMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHS (3 1/2 x 5")

- photographs 8 to 16 by Anne Forbes, 1999

8. Kitchen (keeping room) fireplace, Jonathan Hosmer House
9. Interior bake oven, kitchen (keeping room) fireplace, Jonathan Hosmer House
10. Fireplace, southwest first-story room, Jonathan Hosmer House
11. Fireplace, southeast chamber, Jonathan Hosmer House
12. Fireplace, southwest chamber, Jonathan Hosmer House
13. Kitchen fireplace and exterior door in jog, Simon Hosmer House
14. Parlor fireplace and wall cabinet, Simon Hosmer House
15. Chamber and fireplace, Simon Hosmer House: looking northwest
16. Painted stucco detail on former west gable, Jonathan Hosmer House

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Hosmer, Jonathan and Simon, House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 3/20/02      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/10/02  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/26/02      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/04/02  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000432

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    5/2/02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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



① Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA, Middlesex County  
Photographer, October, 1958 David Harris  
Neg. in AHC Files, Town Hall, Acton #1

Front of Hosmer House from across Main St. looking North



Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA, Middlesex County

Photographer: David Harris, October, 1998

Neg. in AHC Files, Town Hall, Acton #24

Front and South side of Hosmer House, showing parter "Beverly jog"  
taken from South lawn



③

Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA, Middlesex County

Photographer - David Harris, Oct. 1998

Neg. in AHC Files, Town Hall, Acton #10

Rear view of Hosmer House showing saltbox roof  
taken from yard looking south



④ Hosmer House, 300 Main St, Acton, MA, Middlesex  
County

Photographer: David Harris, October, 1998

Neg. in AHC. Files, Town Hall, Acton #13

East end of Hosmer House, looking Southwest



5

Hosmer House, 300 main St, Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer: David Harris, October, 1998

Neg. in AHC Files, Town Hall, Acton #9

"Beverly jog": west end of Hosmer House



⑥ Hosmer House, 320 Main St. Acton, MA  
Middlesex County

Photographer David Harris, Oct 1992

Neg. in R.C. Files, Town Hall, Acton #6

Living Room fireplace, Southeast 1st story room



① Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer: David Harris, October, 1998

Neg. in AHC Files, Town Hall, Acton, MA, #5

Corner Cupboard in Hosmer House Living Room  
(Southeast 1<sup>st</sup> story room)



Hosmer House, 300 Main St, Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg - AHC files, Town Hall #13  
⑧

Fireplace, Keeping Room  
(kitchen)



14  
Hosmer House, 300 Main St, Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg. AHC Files, Town Hall #14  
⑨

Beehive oven, Keeping Room fireplace  
(interior bake oven)



Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA.  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg - AHC Files, Town Hall #12

⑩ Dining Room Fireplace =  
SE 1st story room Jonathan Hoxer  
House



Hosmer House, 300 Main St, Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg - R-2 Files, Jewell Hall #19

Fireplace, southeast chamber,  
Jonathan Hosmer House

1 3 5 1  
4 2 3 2 3  
1 2 3 4 5  
6 7 8 9 10  
11 12 13 14 15  
16 17 18 19 20  
21 22 23 24 25  
26 27 28 29 30  
31



Hismer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes, 12/99

Neg. - AHC Files, Town Hall #20

⑫ Southwest Chamber Fireplace,  
Jonathan Hornett House



Hasmer House, 500 main ST. Acton M.A.<sup>22</sup>  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg - AHC Files, Town Hall #22

⑬ Kitchen Living 1999 Addition

(Simon Hasmer House)



Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA.  
Middlesex County

Photographer - Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg. - RHC Files; Town Hall #23

(14)

Living Room Fireplace - 1740 Addition  
+ wall cabinet (Simon Hosmer House)



Hosmer House, 300 Main St. Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County,

Photographer, Anne Forbes 12/99

Neg - AHC Files, town Hall #24

(13)

Fireplace - 1790 Addition Chamber  
(Simon Hosmer House)  
- looking northwest

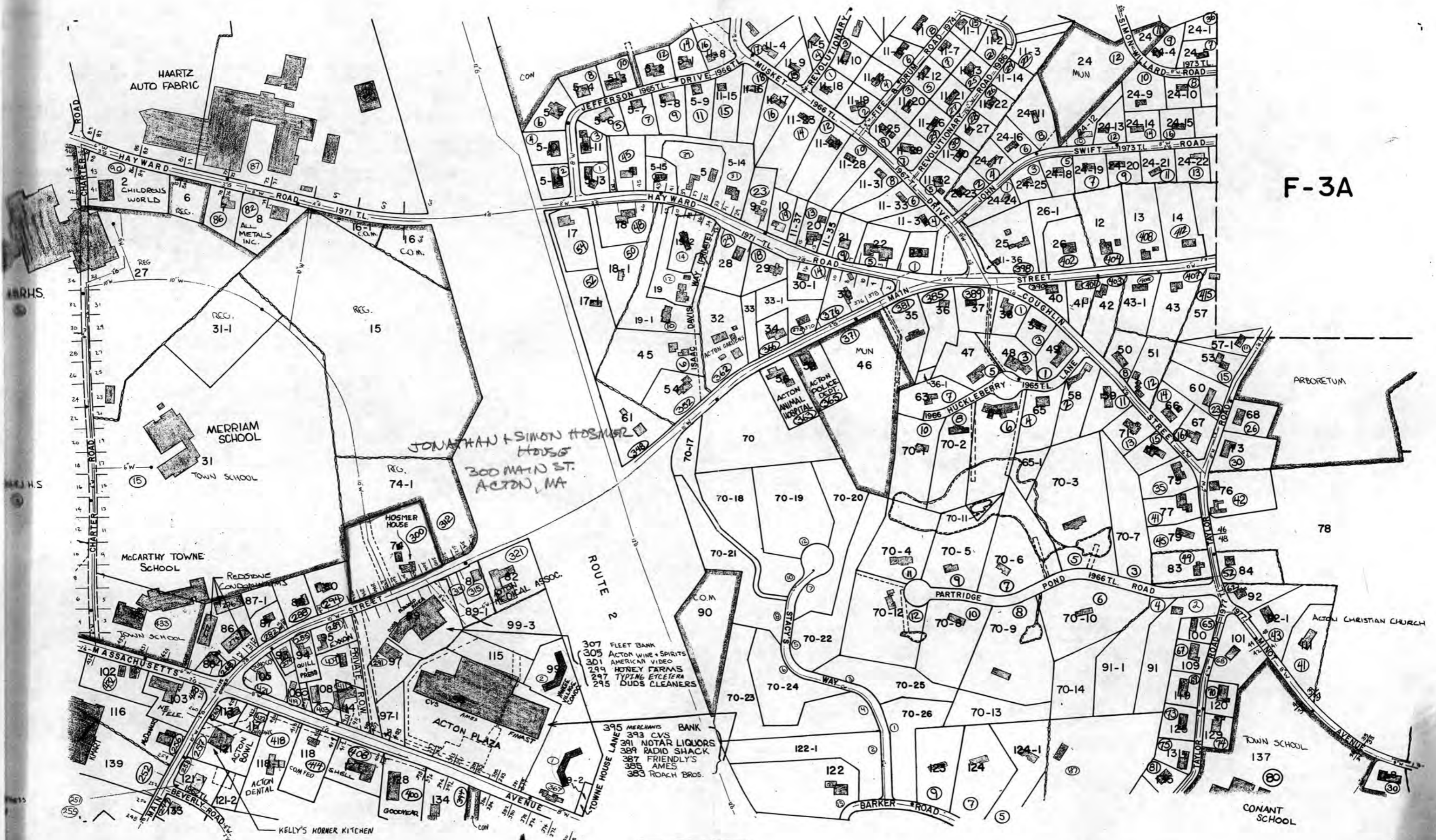


Hosmer House - 300 Main St. Acton, MA,  
Middlesex County

Photographer, Anne Forbes 12/99 = 2

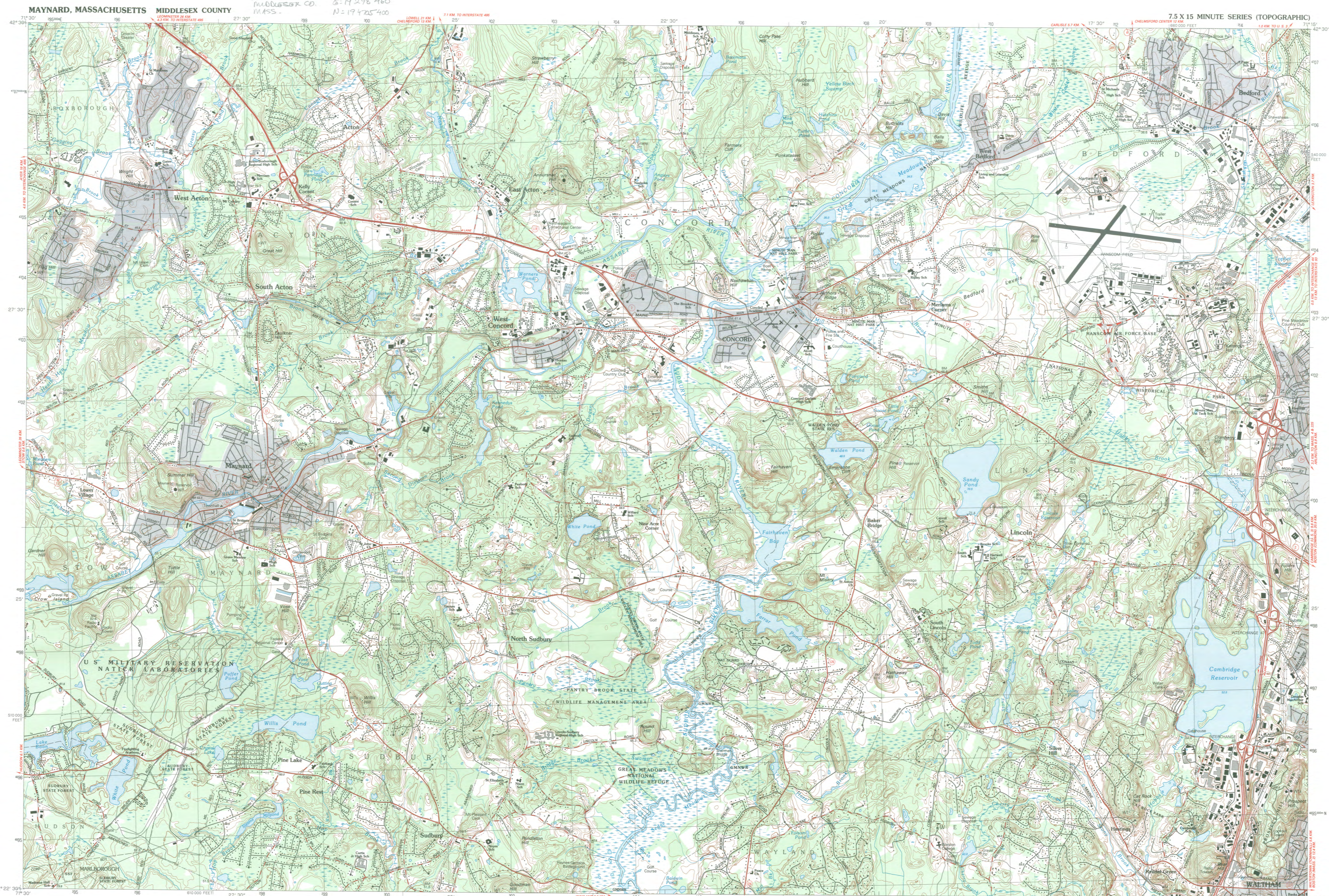
Negatives on file - AHC Files, Town Hall

(16) Attic - showing piece of stucco scored  
to resemble brick - original exterior  
treatment of sides. (former west  
gable, Jonathan Hosmer House)



4 NORTH

E-2	E-3	E-4
F-2A	F-2	F-3
F-2B	F-3A	F-4



# Maynard MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric topographic map



### 7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



1987

Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works  
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies  
Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1978 and 1981. Field checked 1978. Map edited 1987  
Supersedes Maynard and Concord 1:25 000-scale maps dated 1965 and 1970  
Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19  
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, maintained zone 1927 North American Datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 41 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet	True	Magnetic	1	2	3
1	3.2808	151°	136°	4	5	
2	6.5616			6	7	8
3	9.8424	UTM grid convergence (GN and 1983 magnetic) at center of map		1 Ayer	2 Billerica	3 Reading
4	13.1232	Diagram is approximate		4 Hudson	5 Boston North	6 Marlborough
5	16.4040			7 Framingham	8 Boston South	
6	19.6848					
7	22.9656					
8	26.2464					
9	29.5272					
10	32.8080					

ISBN 0-607-23457-1  
9 780607 234572

### Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road, trail
- Route marker: Interstate; U. S.; State
- Railroad: standard gauge; narrow gauge
- Bridge: drawbridge; section line: location approximate
- Fourbridge; overpass; underpass
- Built-up area: only selected landmark buildings shown
- House; barn; church; school; large structure
- Boundary:
  - National, with monument
  - State
  - County, parish
  - Civil township, precinct, district
  - Incorporated city, village, town
  - National or State reservation; small park
  - Land grant with monument; found section corner
  - U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section
  - Range, township; section line: location approximate
- Fence or field line
- Power transmission line, located tower
- Dam: dam with lock
- Cemetery: grave
- Carpetground; picnic area; U. S. location monument
- Windmill; water well; spring
- Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
- Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
- Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression
- Distorted surface: strip mine, lava; sand
- Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate
- Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
- Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small
- Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
- Land subject to controlled inundation; woodland
- Scrub; mangrove
- Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

MAYNARD, MASSACHUSETTS  
42071-D3-TM-025  
1987

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

February 8, 2002

Ms. Carol Shull  
National Register of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Mail Stop 2280, Suite 400  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Hosmer House, 300 Main Street, Acton (Middlesex), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg  
National Register Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Acton Historical Society  
F. Dore Hunter, Acton Board of Selectmen  
Anne Forbes, Consultant  
Anita Dodson, Acton Historical Commission  
Roland Bartl, Planning & Economic Development

220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
(617) 727-8470 • Fax: (617) 727-5128  
[www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc](http://www.state.ma.us/sec/mhc)