

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **AUG 6 1979**

date entered **1 5 1979**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic THE FRANKLIN PIERCE HOUSE

and/or common THE FRANKLIN PIERCE HOUSE

**2. Location**

street & number 52 South Main Street \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Concord \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 2

state NH code 33 county Merrimack code 013

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Muriel and John Gravelle

street & number 48 South Main Street

city, town Concord \_\_\_ vicinity of state New Hampshire 03301

*see title sheet  
WATERS FURNACE  
50 S. MAIN ST  
CONCORD, N.H.*

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Merrimack County Registry of Deeds

Merrimack County Courthouse

street & number 163 North Main Street

city, town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Present Appearance: The Franklin Pierce house is a square masonry structure in the French Second Empire style. The exterior brick walls have been treated twice: first with mastic grooved to give the appearance of brownstone and secondly with lime-cement stucco. The patterned slate Mansard roof has dentilled cornice moulding and symmetrically-spaced dormer windows enriched by pediments and pilasters. Groups of triple brackets support the roof eaves. The round-headed central doorway consists of two doors with upper portions of glass. The entrance porch has square columns that support a flat roof decorated by paired brackets beneath its projecting eaves. A pair of round-headed windows are located directly above the entranceway. Narrow four-over-four paired windows with rectangular arches are located throughout the remainder of the building. The south elevation has a bay window with paired modillions supporting its projecting eaves. An ell is attached to the rear (west) elevation.

The east elevation faces Main Street and has a terraced lawn bordered by large granite blocks and an ornate cast-iron fence. There are two granite historical markers on the front lawn. One relates to General Pierce's occupancy and death. The other denotes the lot as the site of Garrison Number 7, one of the log forts constructed for defense against Indian attacks in 1747.

Original Appearance: The Franklin Pierce house was constructed in 1852 as a three story square brick structure with a flat roof, in the Italianate style. The house originally contained a parlor, hall, sitting room and dining room on the first floor, and four rooms on the second; a kitchen was located at the rear of the building. Later in the nineteenth century, subsequent to President Pierce's occupancy, the building was modernized in the French Second Empire style. Minor interior alterations made at that time include changes to the front stairway and redecorating.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

**Specific dates**                      1856                      **Builder/Architect**

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The house, owned and possibly built by Willard Williams, a "mechanic" in a local coach and wagon manufactory, was the last Concord home of President Franklin Pierce; he and his wife lived there intermittently after leaving the White House in 1857. Apparently Williams and his family maintained the house and boarded and cared for the Pierces in it, continuing an arrangement of the pre-presidential years during which Williams maintained another house (now destroyed) several doors away at the corner of South Main and Thorndike Streets.

Although the Pierces traveled extensively in the years after 1857, the Williams house was their base of operations, and those seeking the ex-President's counsel in a variety of matters visited there. From the front porch of the house in 1865 Pierce effectively addressed and consoled a mob assembled to protest the assassination of President Lincoln; in so doing he reassured the crowd of his own patriotism.

The house is also associated with Nathaniel Hawthorne, Pierce's college roommate and life-long friend. In the spring of 1864 Hawthorne--in failing health--visited Pierce in the house, remaining there ten days or more in an attempt to regain his strength. Later the two friends traveled north to Plymouth together; Hawthorne died there in a local hotel.

Mrs. Pierce, long in failing health, died in the house at 52 South Main Street in 1863; Pierce himself died there in the southeast front bedroom on October 8, 1869. (The bed in which he is said to have died is still in the room.) A funeral service was conducted there before the body lay in state at the capitol; burial in the old North Cemetery followed.

One of two extant Concord houses in which Pierce is known to have lived, the South Main Street House, together with the Pierce Manse (National Register) and the family homestead and Franklin Pierce's birthplace in nearby Hillsboro seem to provide students and the public with a comprehensive view of the domestic life of the fourteenth president of the United States.

Architectural Significance: The Franklin Pierce house is a significant example of domestic architecture in the French Second Empire style. Its location above street level provided a commanding view of busy Main Street and the Merrimack River beyond. Surrounded to the north and to the south by other French Second Empire buildings, the Franklin Pierce house stands within a fashionable residential neighborhood of late nineteenth century Concord.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Amsden, Grace Page, "A Capital for New Hampshire" (unpublished manuscript), Concord, 1961.  
 Ireland, John Robert, The Republic; or a History of the United States of America... 18 vols.  
 Chicago, 1888.  
 Lyford, James O. (ed.), History of Concord, NH. Concord, 1903.  
 Nichols, Roy Franklin, Franklin Pierce, Young Hickory of the Granite Hills. Philadelphia, 1931

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property LESS THAN 1 (All per agreement with City of Concord)  
 Quadrangle name Concord, NH Quadrangle scale 7.5  
 UMT References

A	<u>19</u>	<u>294120</u>	<u>4785960</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification  
 City of Concord, Tax Assessor's Records:  
 Parcel #305, Map #34, Block #1, Lot #7.

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

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John B. Gravelle  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date March 14, 1978  
 street & number 48 South Main Street telephone (603) 225-9268  
 city or town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

Commissioner, Dept. Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date 5/23/79

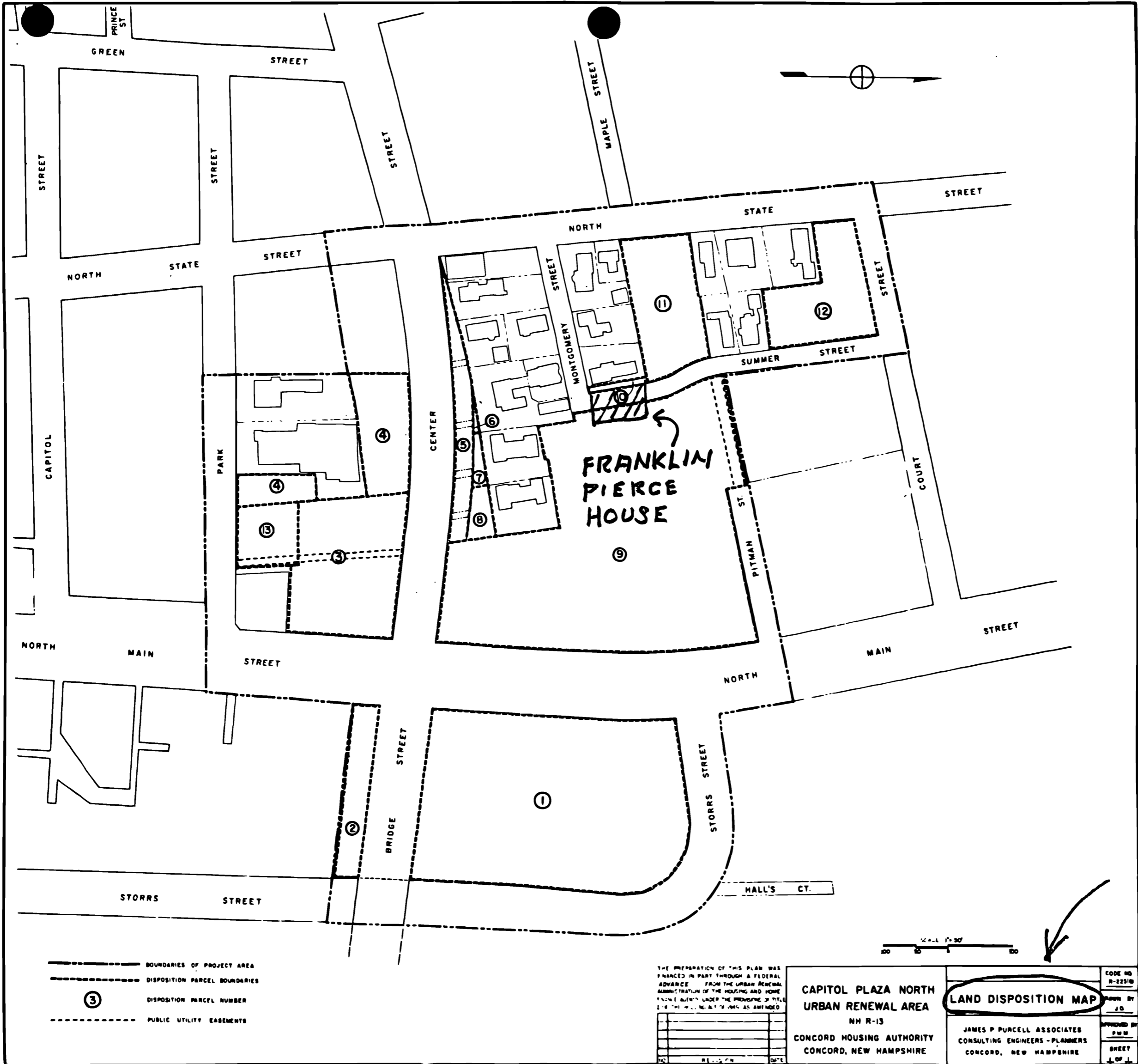
For HCRS use only

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

[Signature] Carol Shull date 10-15-79  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: [Signature] date 10/11/79

Chief of Registration



- BOUNDARIES OF PROJECT AREA
- - - - DISPOSITION PARCEL BOUNDARIES
- ③ DISPOSITION PARCEL NUMBER
- - - - PUBLIC UTILITY EASEMENTS

THE PREPARATION OF THIS PLAN WAS FINANCED IN PART THROUGH A FEDERAL ADVANCE FROM THE URBAN RENEWAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOUSING AND HOME FINANCE AGENCY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 23 OF THE U.S.C. AS AMENDED.

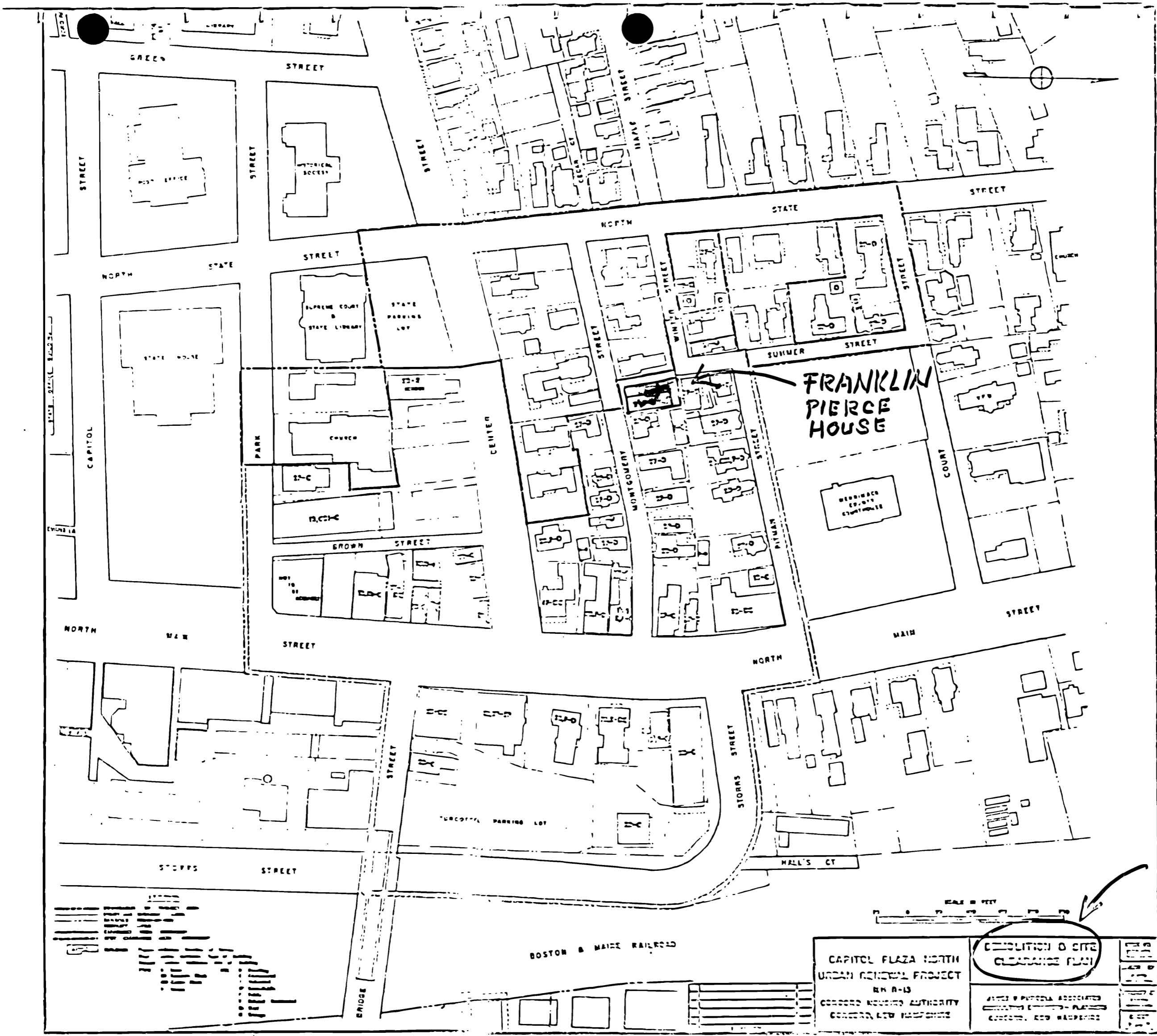
NO.	REVISION	DATE

**CAPITOL PLAZA NORTH  
URBAN RENEWAL AREA**  
NH R-13  
CONCORD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**LAND DISPOSITION MAP**

JAMES P. PURCELL ASSOCIATES  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS - PLANNERS  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

CODE NO. R-22510
DRAWN BY J.D.
APPROVED BY P.W.M.
SHEET 1 OF 1



FRANKLIN  
PIERCE  
HOUSE

CAPITOL PLAZA NORTH  
URBAN RENEWAL PROJECT  
R.N. R-13  
CONCORD HOUSING AUTHORITY  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

REVISION 10 SITE  
CLEARANCE PLAN

WILLIS W. PIERCE ASSOCIATES  
ARCHITECTS - PLANNERS  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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