

CITY COUNCIL HEARING

31 JULY 1995

4:00 P.M.

**Public Safety around Schools and Playgrounds**

Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department  
Susan E. Clippinger, Director  
Lauren M. Preston, Deputy Traffic Director

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department has public safety as its highest priority. Obviously, creating a safe environment for the city's children is extremely important, especially at such important places as schools and playground. Like most of the issues the Department deals with, protecting the safety of our children depends not only on the actions of this department but also is enhanced by the coordinated involvement of several city departments.

Public safety concerns need to be addressed through regulations, signing, enforcement and education. Besides the responsibilities of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, there are other departments who play key roles including the Police, Schools, Recreation and others. These departments will continue to work in a cooperative way to protect the safety of the children using the city's schools and playgrounds. The city's Open Space Committee is an excellent example of this cooperative effort that helps create safe open spaces, including playgrounds right from the beginning.

The City of Cambridge has 14 public schools, 19 private and parochial schools and 67 city parks and playgrounds. At schools and playgrounds the direct responsibility of the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department is for the traffic regulations on the streets adjacent to the schools and playgrounds and enforcement of the parking regulations through the issuance of parking tickets. The Department is responsible for the design, installation and maintenance of the traffic control devices at intersections including crosswalks, signals and stop signs.

## **II. MUTCD--MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES:**

In order to make our roadways safer and more efficient, it is important that users understand how to use them. The users on most every road range from residents who are very familiar with the design and use, to first time visitors who are not familiar at all with the area.

By using signing and pavement markings that are universally known, we lessen the information the driver needs to process, thereby allowing for a safer environment. In an effort to assure uniformity across the country, all states have adopted the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration. There is an amendment that Mass. Highway Department has created that includes any amendments or addenda to the manual necessary to be consistent with Mass. Laws. This manual is vital as it sets standards and warrants for the design and application of all traffic control devices. As a document with legal standing, it is often the focus of tort claim lawsuits. The manual has undergone seven revisions since 1935 which has incorporated new and improved materials and technologies in transportation and revised techniques that reflect the accumulated knowledge and research that has been gained round the country over the last 60 years.

### **III SCHOOLS:**

Public School areas are given a high priority for maintenance of existing pavement markings and signing. The policy that our department has established is divided into several parts; marking, signing and parking.

A. MARKINGS: There are two reflective crosswalk designs the city uses. One is created with two parallel lines, the other and most visible type of crosswalk is referred to as either a zebra striped or international. All types require maintenance and reapplication of lines which is done by private contractors and checked by city staff. All crosswalks that lead directly into the school or at close by intersections that are heavily used by the children are zebra striped. All school crosswalks are painted in both the spring and the fall or are of a permanent retroreflective material which is patched when an area is worn.

B. SIGNING: The city uses two sign types in the vicinity of schools. One gives advance

warning of the school area with the other warning of crosswalks which are heavily used by school children. The City requires that all regulatory warning , guide and detour signs conform with the MUTCD.

C. PARKING: To provide clear sight lines and high visibility we remove parking along the street adjacent to the school buildings and grounds. This also provides access for emergency vehicles should they be needed and school buses.

D. SCHOOL ZONES: Currently there are no school zones in the city. School zones are regulated by state law and governed by the guidelines in the MUTCD and Chapter 90, Section 17. "A school zone shall only be construed to be that section of a way which abuts the grounds of a school and is posted and marked in accordance with these standards to indicate the applicability of the statutory speed limits of twenty miles per hour for all vehicles in accordance with the terms of the permit for the zone."

School speed zones, when approved by MHD, are effective "only during the school noon hour, school recess or during those periods when children are going to or leaving school during opening and closing hours".

E. WARRANTS FOR SCHOOL ZONES: The following minimum warrants are specified in the most recent edition of the MUTCD establishment of a school zone.

1. The school property abuts the public right of way within the limits of the proposed zone area.
2. School children have direct access to the street or roadway from the school property.
3. The zone contains a marked crosswalk.
4. The school must involve one or more grades below Grade 9.

A school zone is not warranted:

1. When children are not required to cross the street on foot within the limits of the proposed zone area and sidewalks are provided.
2. Where abutting school property is fenced or the crosswalk had been signaled except in the cases where investigation shows that there is no conflict between the signal indication and the school zone speed limit sign.

The purpose of the zone is to create the highest level of safety for the school children. It has been the Department's position as required in the 1965 version of the official standards for school zones that if school zones were to be established that all parking on both sides of the road, would need to be removed. This would create the highest level of visibility for drivers and pedestrians in the zone.

Recently, there has been a large outcry to establish school zones in the city. We have reviewed the school areas and propose to use the Harrington School as a test site to determine if the installation of a school zone has any effect on the safety or movement of traffic in the area.

The information that we gather from this study will aid in evaluating our policies and determining the best techniques or combination of techniques for providing the highest levels of safety around the schools.

F. PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS: The department's policy on signing for private schools is generally the same as for the public schools. Signs have been installed and cross walks marked where a large number of students are crossing at a specific location or at a busy intersection.

G. CROSSING GUARDS: School crossing locations have been established throughout the city and were examined in the early 80's to rank their need for Crossing Guards. This was

used to determine the present Crossing Guard locations which are reviewed by the School Department to insure the continued need. The Crossing Guards work for the Police Department. The police must staff crossing locations every morning and afternoon during the school year. They cover Crossing Guard absences with regular police officers.

H. PILOT PROGRAM: The Harrington School pilot program will be a cooperative effort of the City Departments effected. As a minimum this will include the Police and Schools. However, Human Services, the Library, Community Development and other may also have a role.

The zone will be the section of Cambridge Street from Willow to Berkshire. No changes to the current parking situation will be made. We will do speed studies before and after signing and before and after enforcement. There is also an important education component of school safety. We plan to work closely with the Police and the School to educate the children about traffic safety. It would be desirable to reach their parents also.

At the conclusion of the pilot program, we will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our efforts and recommend how the city should approach school zones and what are the criteria we would use to apply the program to other schools in the City.

#### **IV PLAYGROUNDS:**

Playgrounds are also given a high priority for maintenance of pavement markings and signing. The crosswalk designs are the same as those used at school crossings and the type determined by a combination of the pedestrian volume and traffic volume.

There is a standard "Playground" warning sign specified in the MUTCD which the Department has installed on the approach to all playgrounds. Parking is removed when it is necessary to improve safety and sight clearance but is done on a case by case basis.

# School Warning Sign

Black on Yellow Background  
36" x 36"



# School Crossing Sign

Black on Yellow Background  
36" x 36"



# Playground Warning Sign

Black on Yellow Background  
36" x 36"



## **Cambridge Public Schools**

Agassiz

Fitzgerald

Fletcher

Graham/Parks

Haggerty

Harrington

Kennedy

King

Longfellow

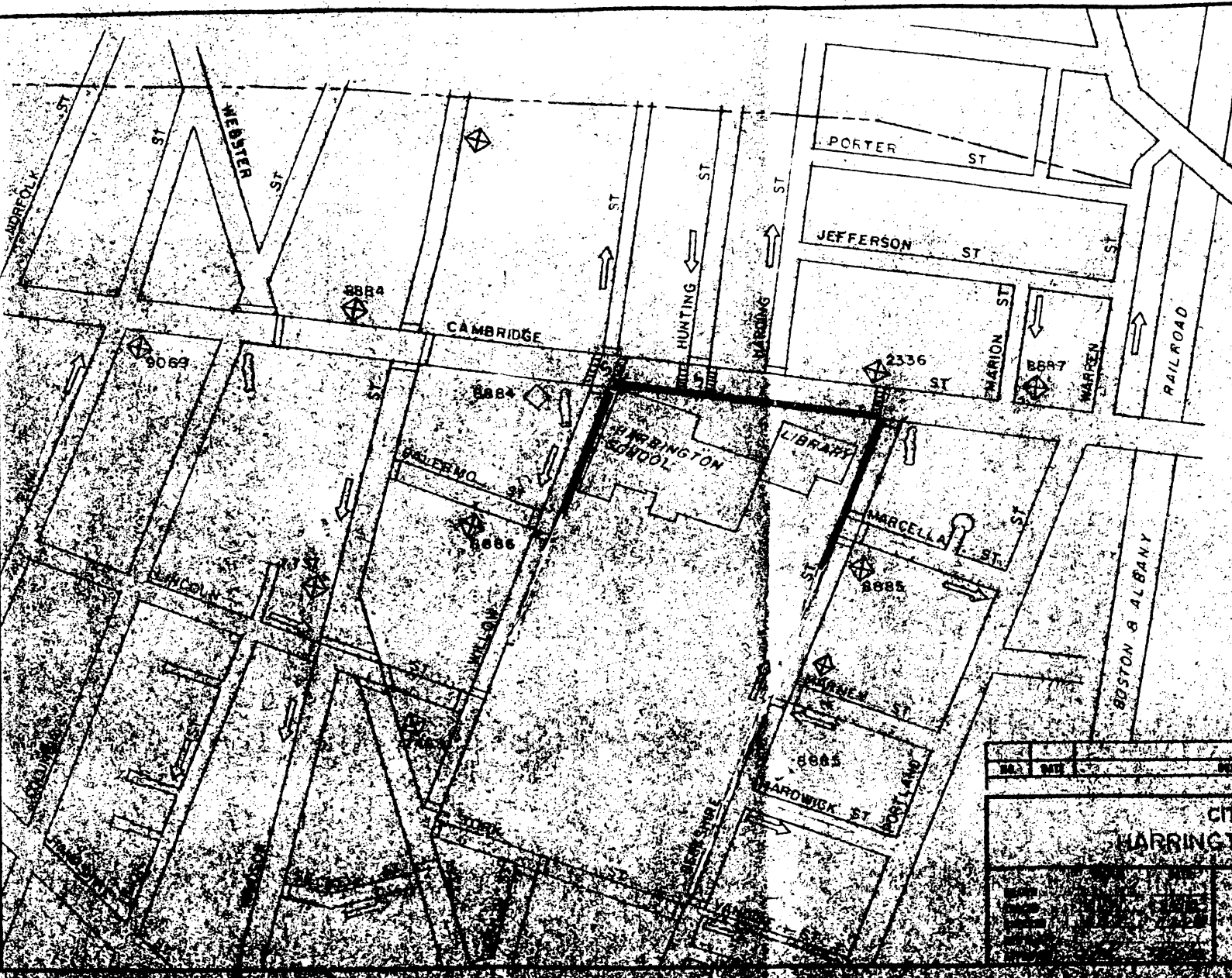
Morse

Peabody

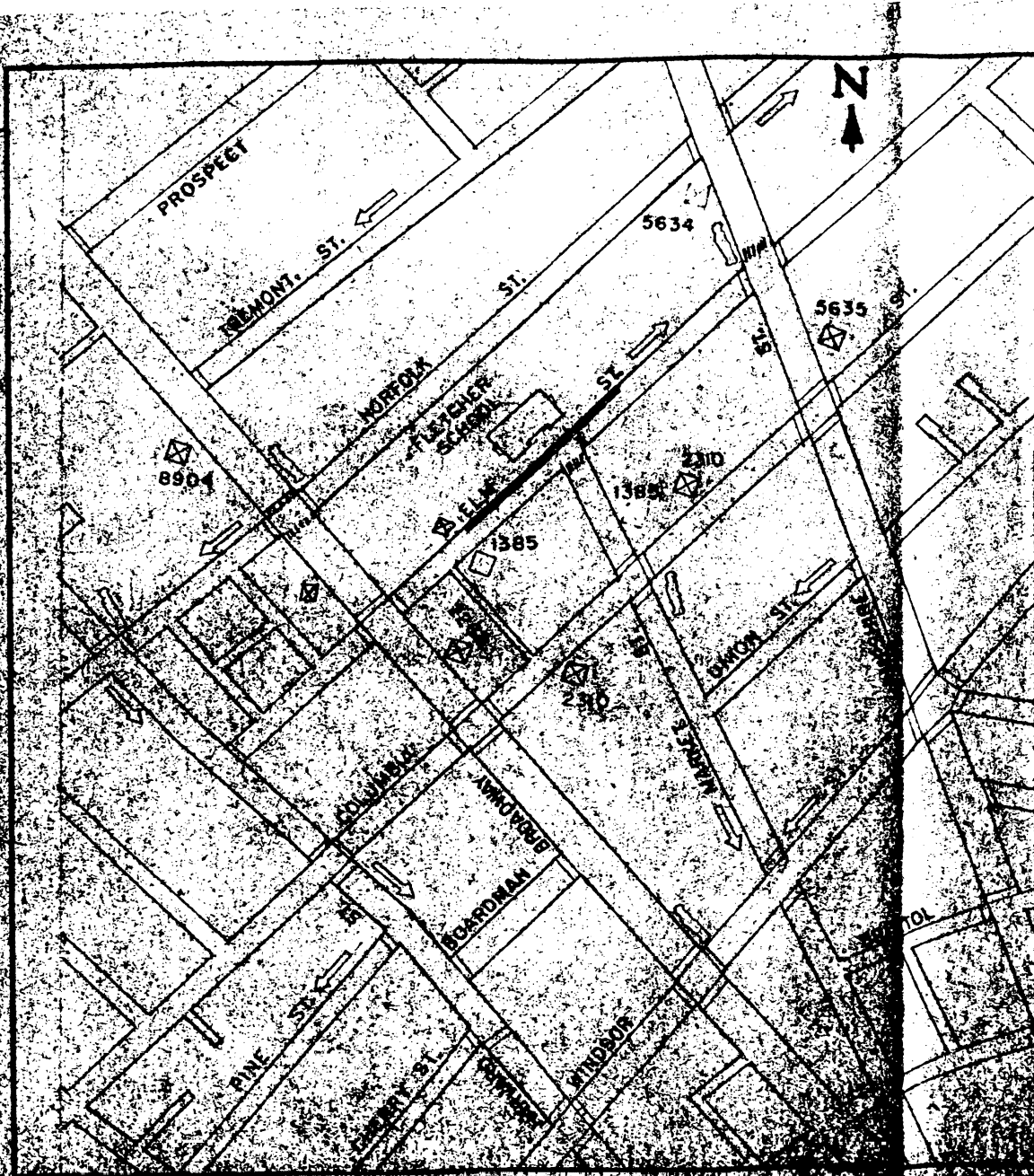
Roberts

Tobin

Rindge and Latin

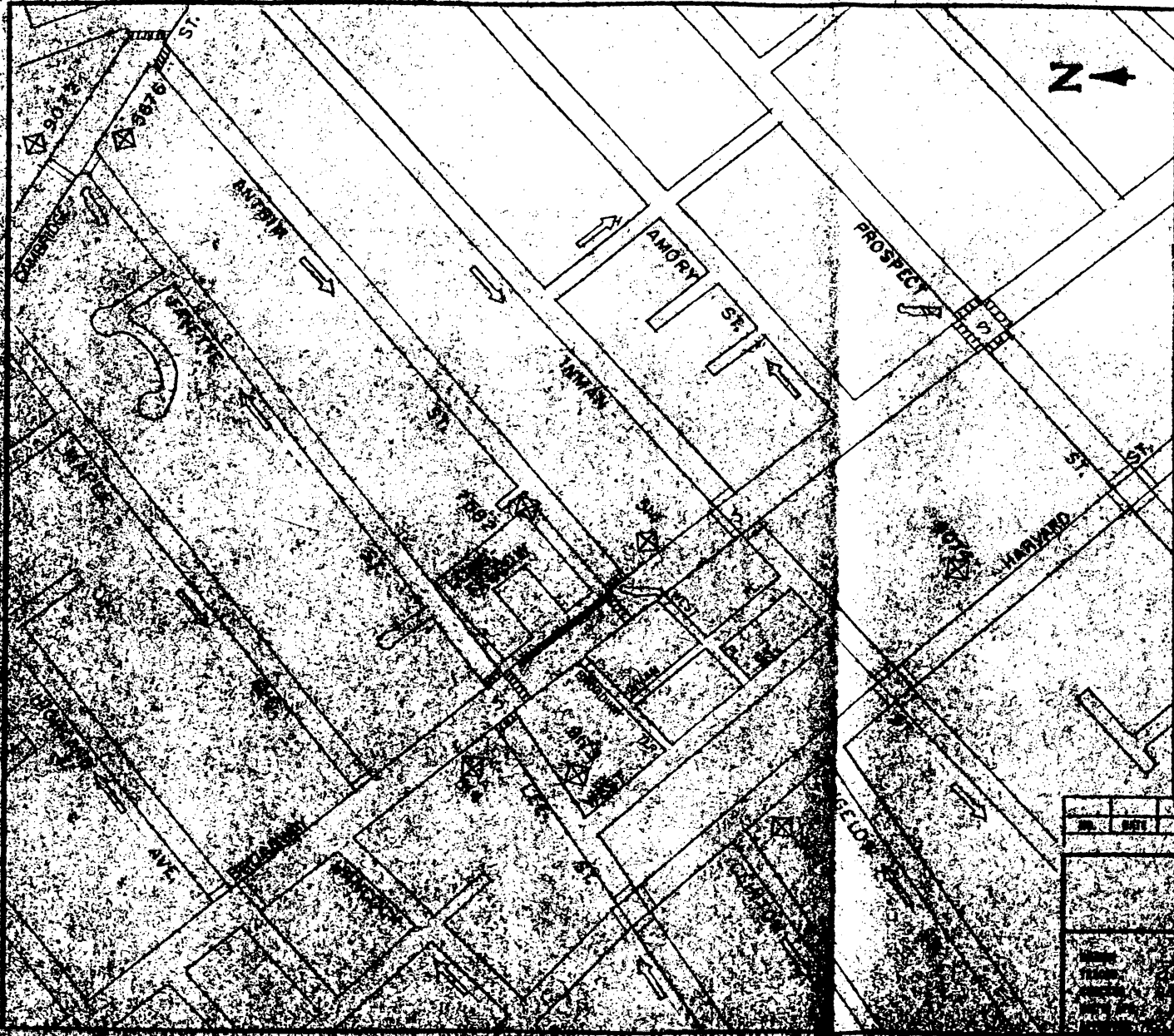


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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE HARRINGTON SCHOOL AREA				
ENGINEER				
PLANNER				
DRAWER				

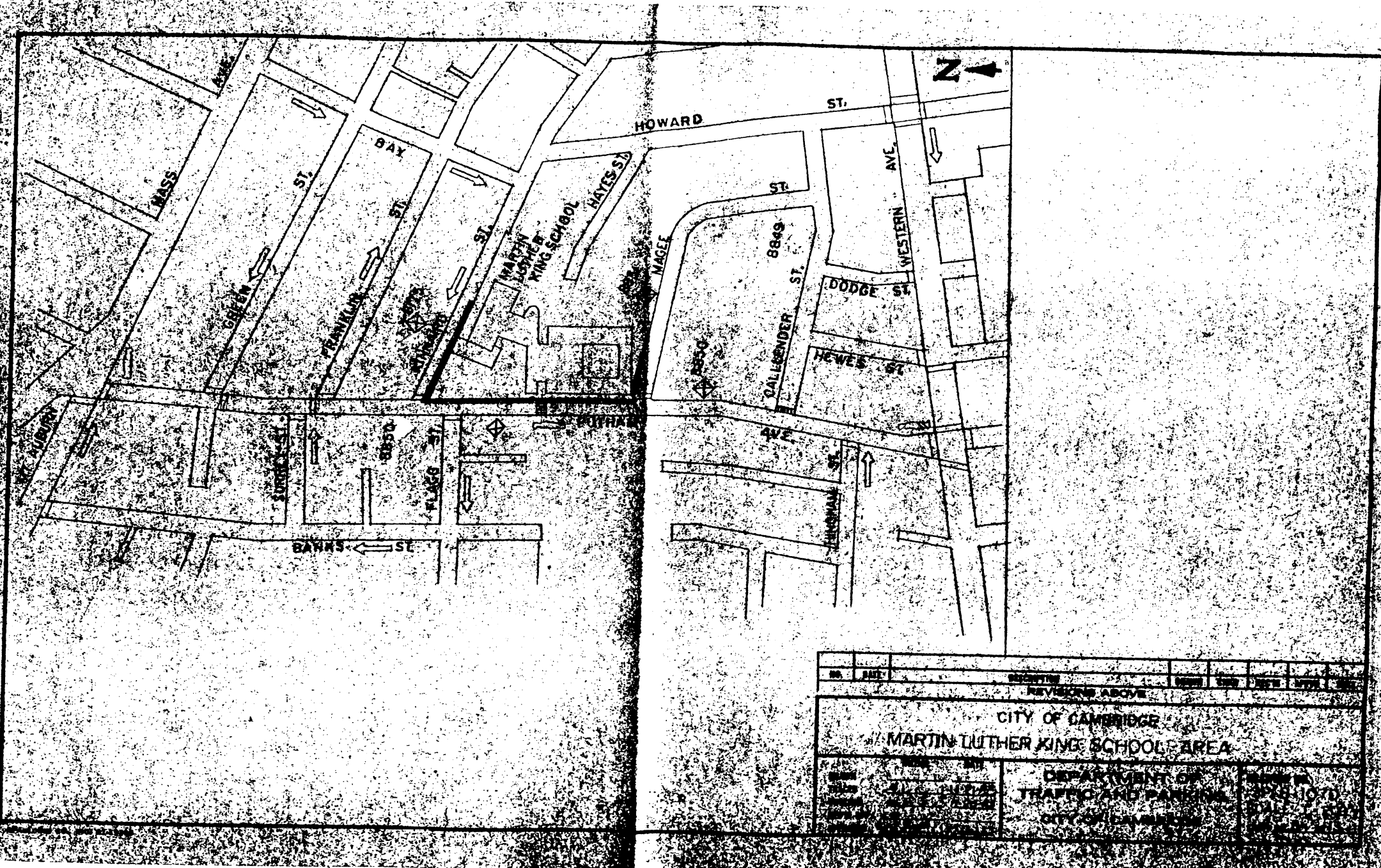


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FLETCHER SCHOOL AREA					
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NO.		BY		DATE	

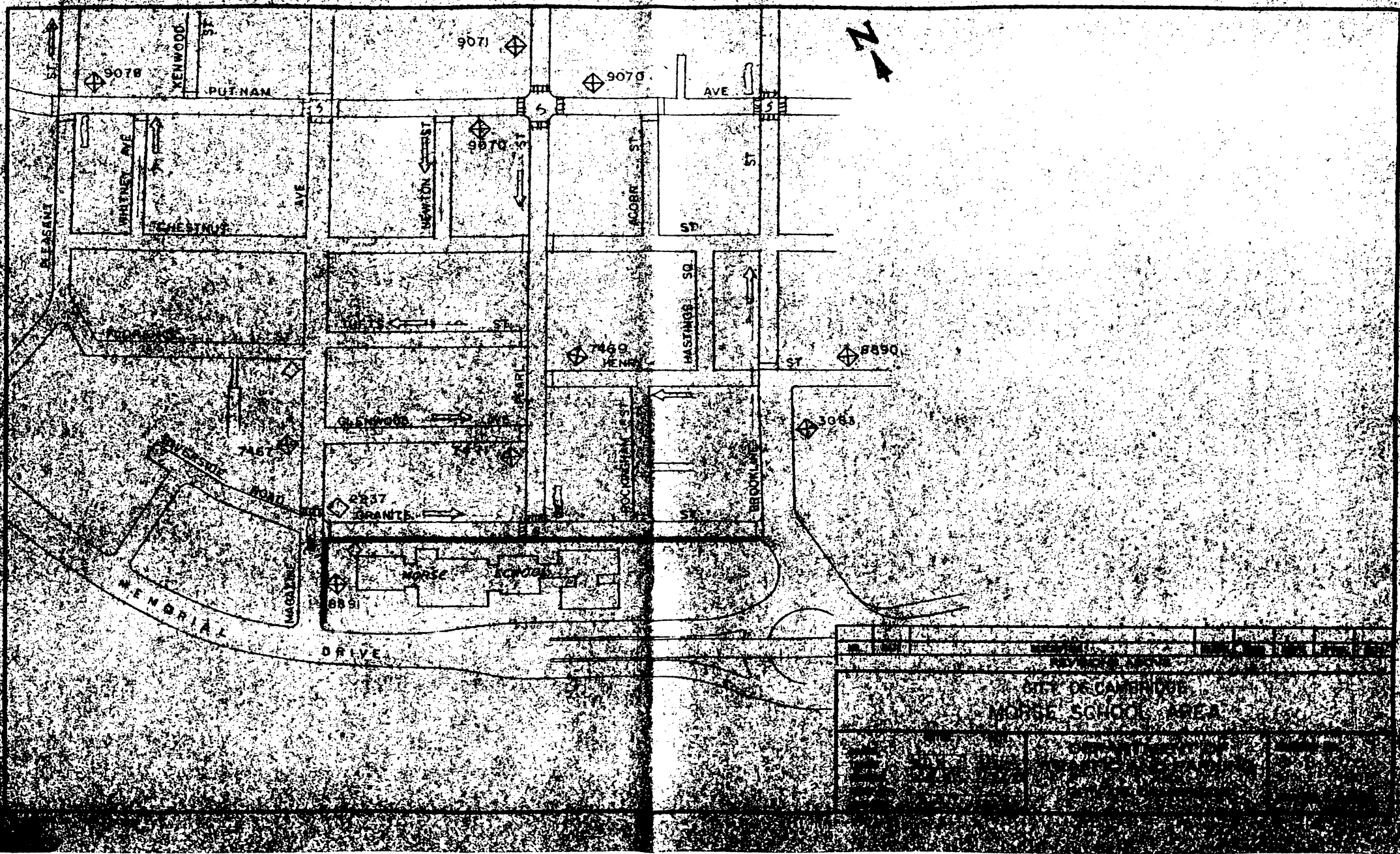




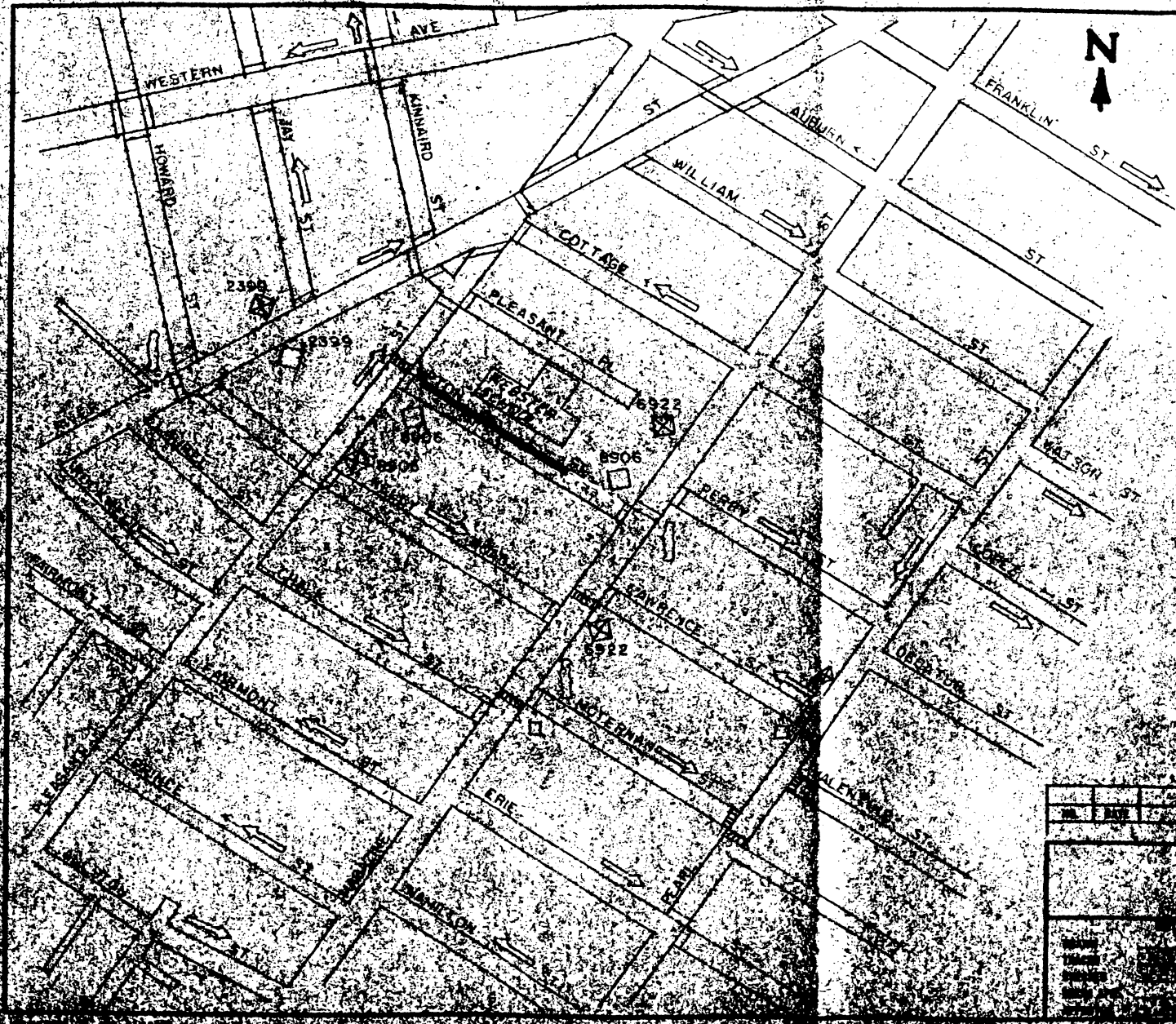
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DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND PARKS			PHOTO			



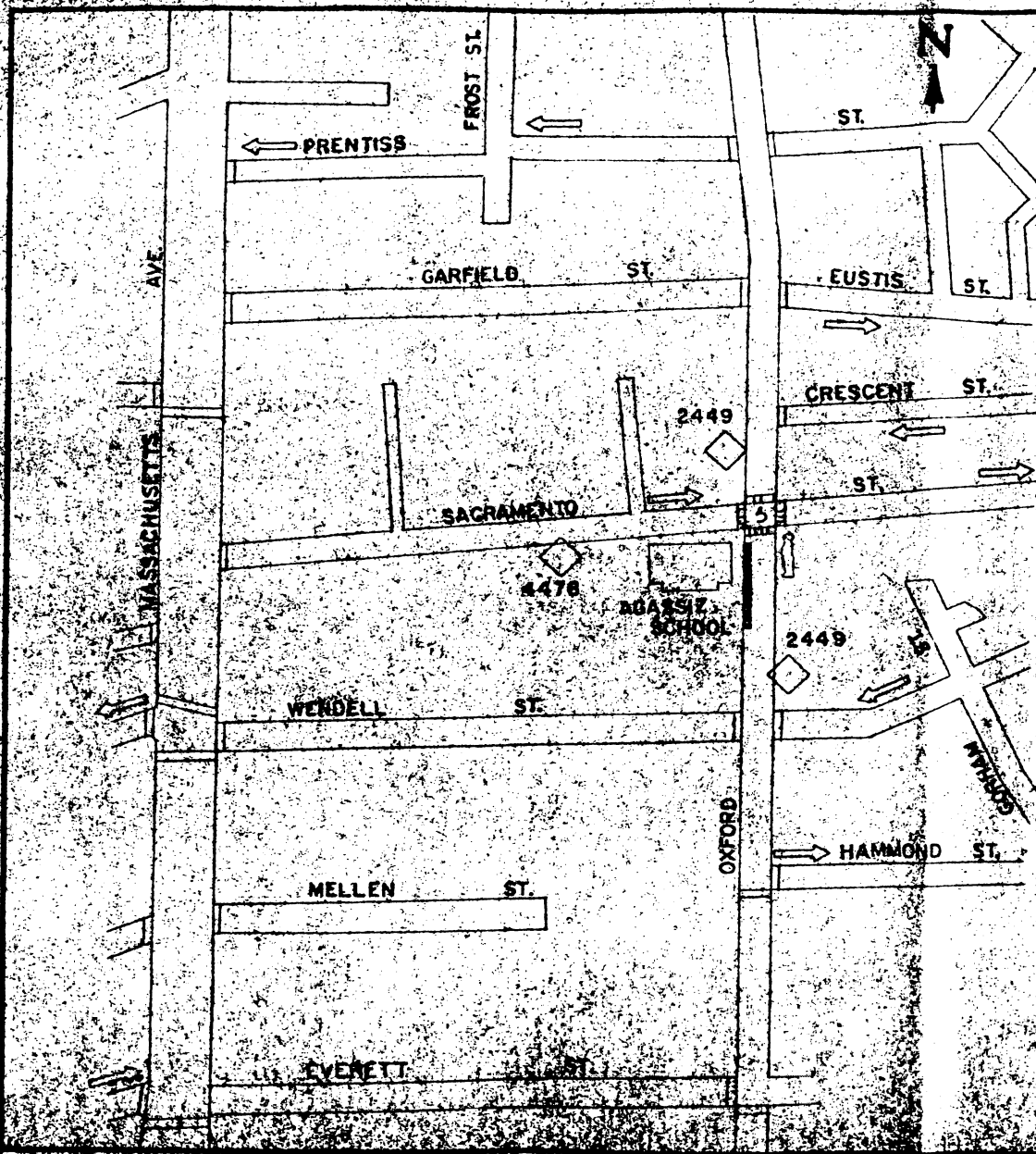
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<b>CITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b> <b>MARTIN LUTHER KING SCHOOL AREA</b>						
<b>DEPARTMENT OF</b> <b>TRAFFIC AND PARKING</b>				<b>PLANNING</b> <b>SECTION</b>		
<b>CITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b>						



OFFICE OF THE  
MORSE SCHOOL AREA

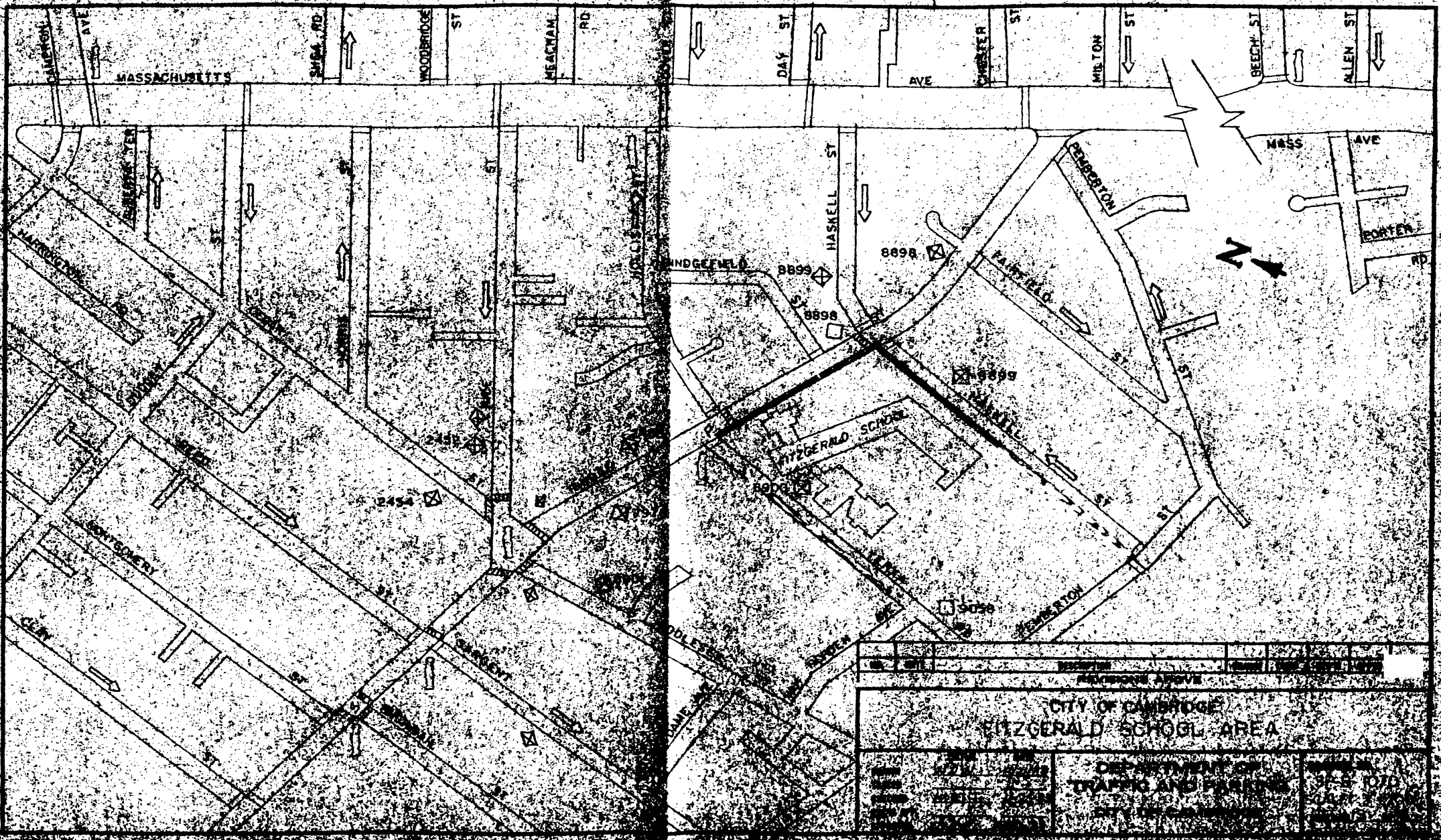


DIVISION OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT		CITY OF CAMBRIDGE	
PLANNING DEPARTMENT		WEBSTER PERIOD AREA	
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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE		CITY OF CAMBRIDGE	

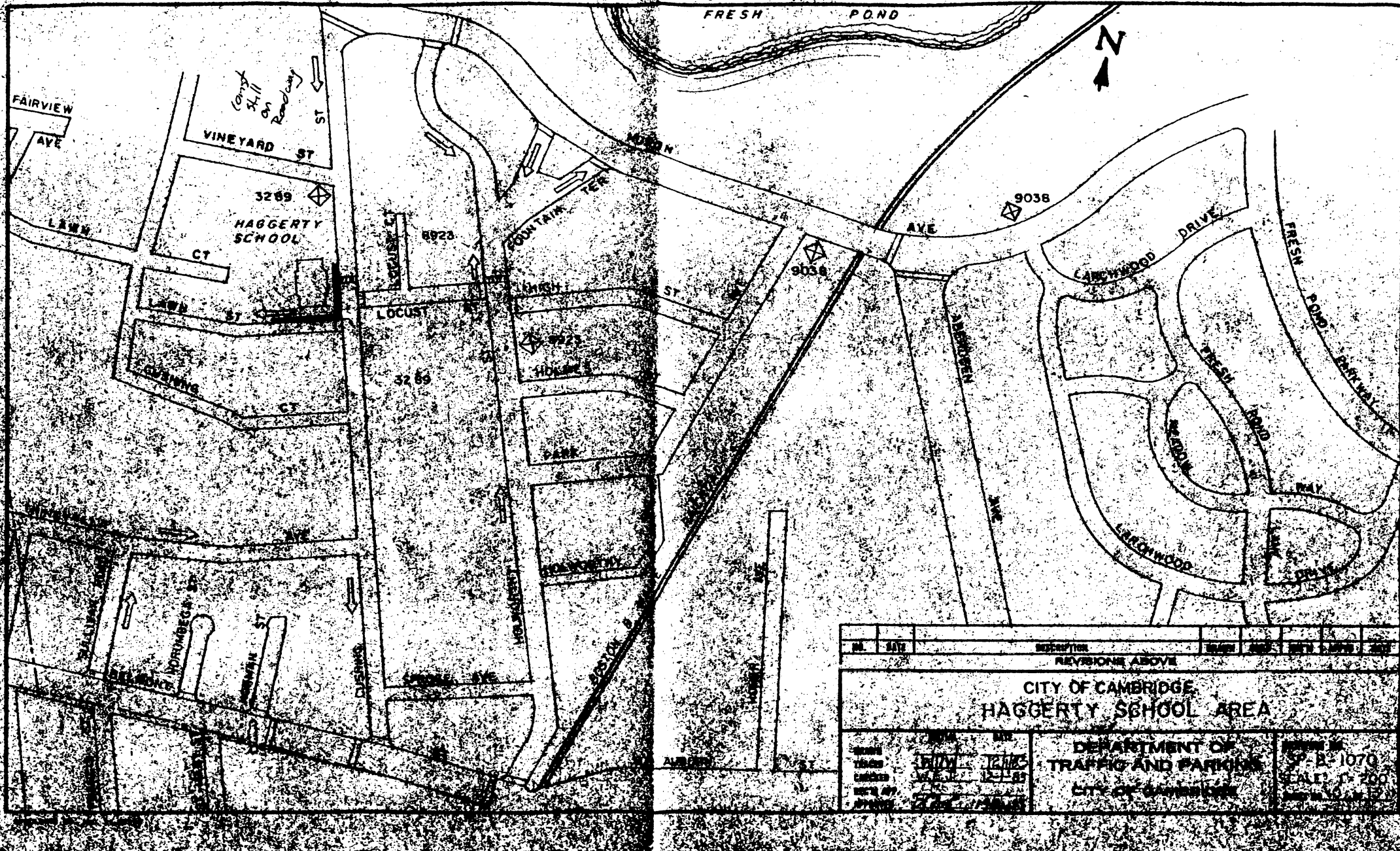


UNDER CONSTRUCTION

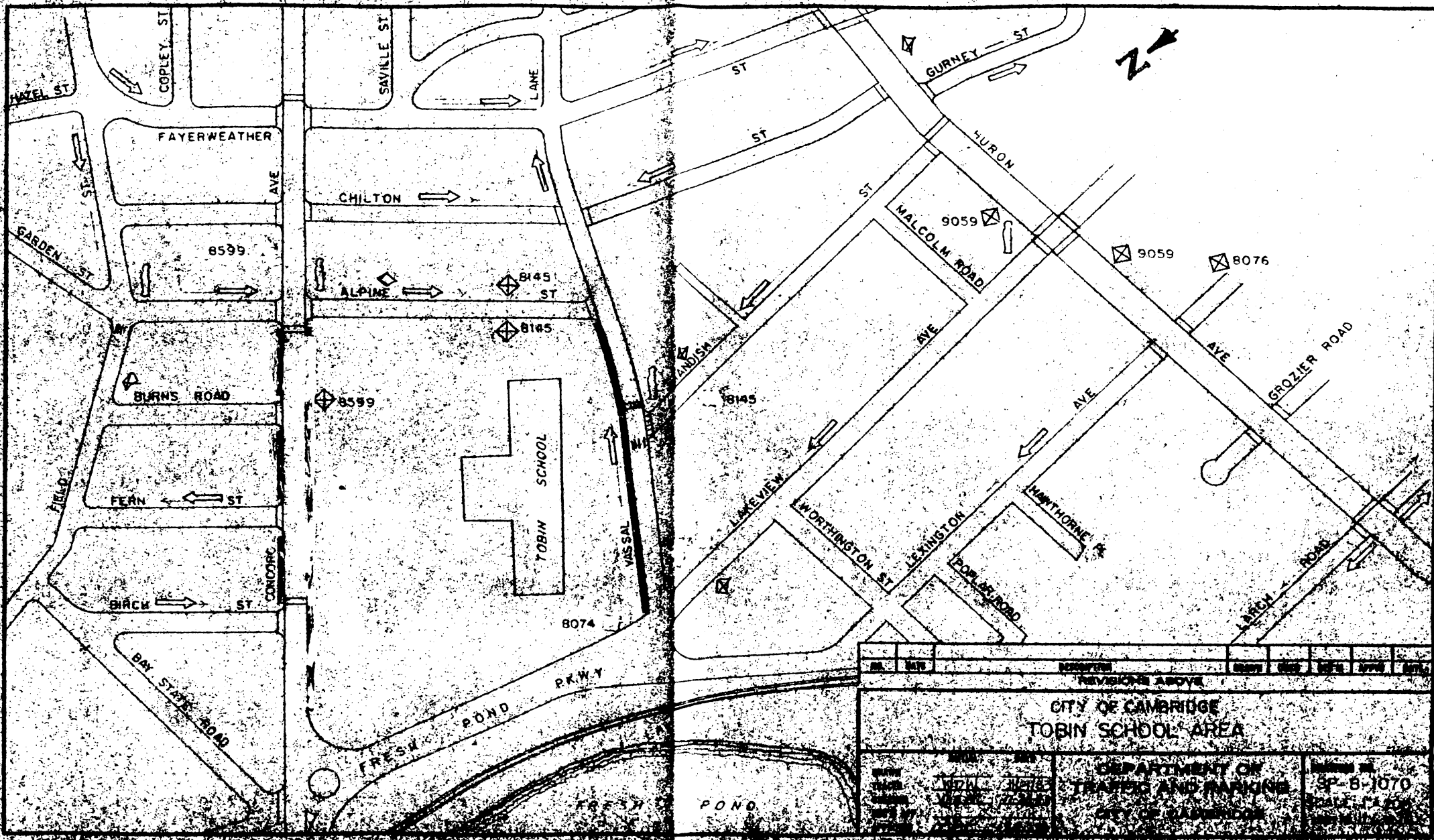
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		REVISIONS ABOVE				
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE AGASSIZ SCHOOL AREA						
		DEPARTMENT OF STREETS AND PARKING				



DATE	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE FITZGERALD SCHOOL AREA		
DEPARTMENT OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING		
DATE	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED



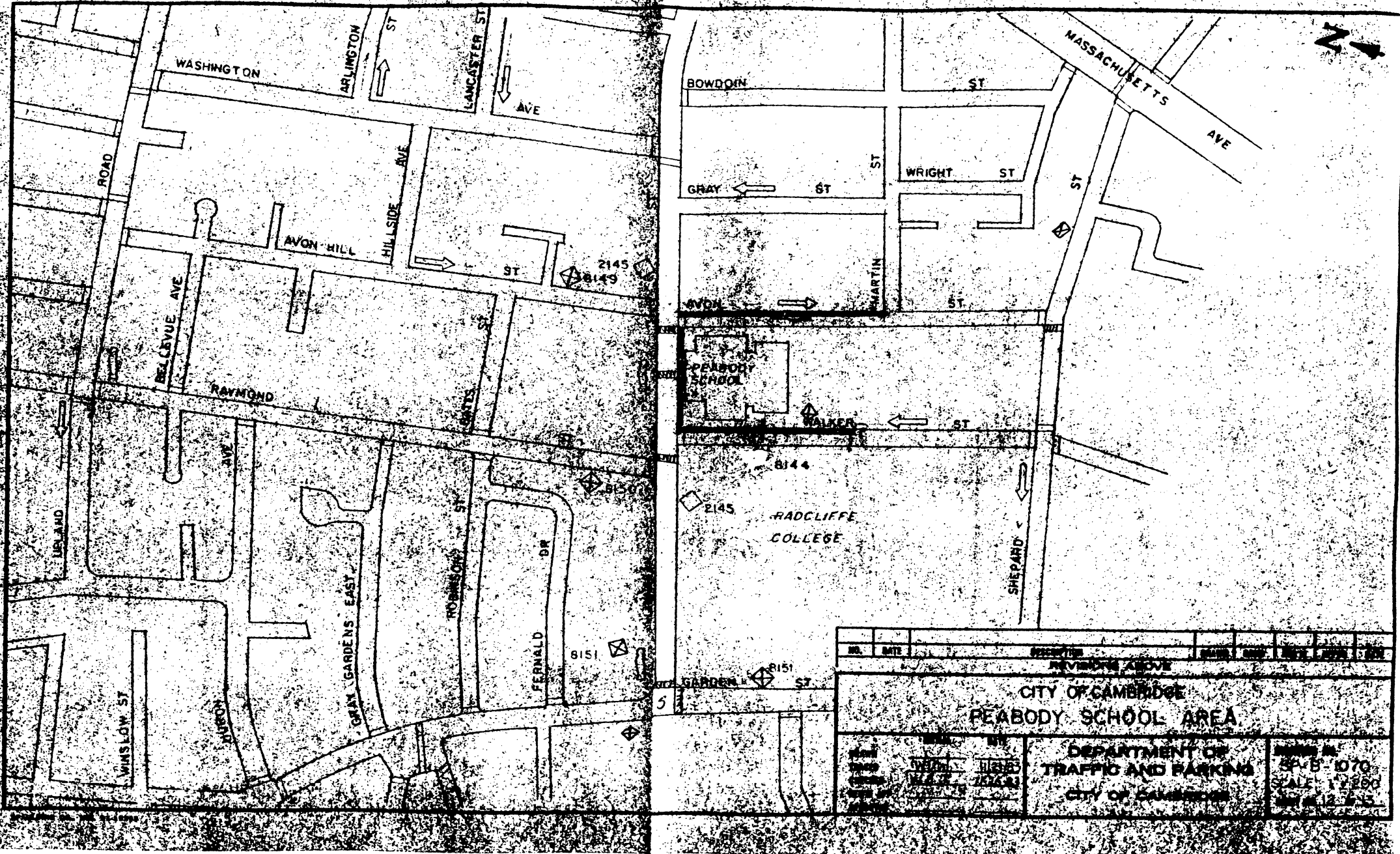
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		REVISIONS ABOVE				
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DESIGNED BY	DATE	SCALE	<b>DEPARTMENT OF</b> <b>TRAFFIC AND PARKING</b>		<b>SCALE: 1" = 200'</b> <b>DATE: 10/1/87</b>	
DRAWN BY	DATE		<b>CITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b>		<b>SCALE: 1" = 200'</b>	



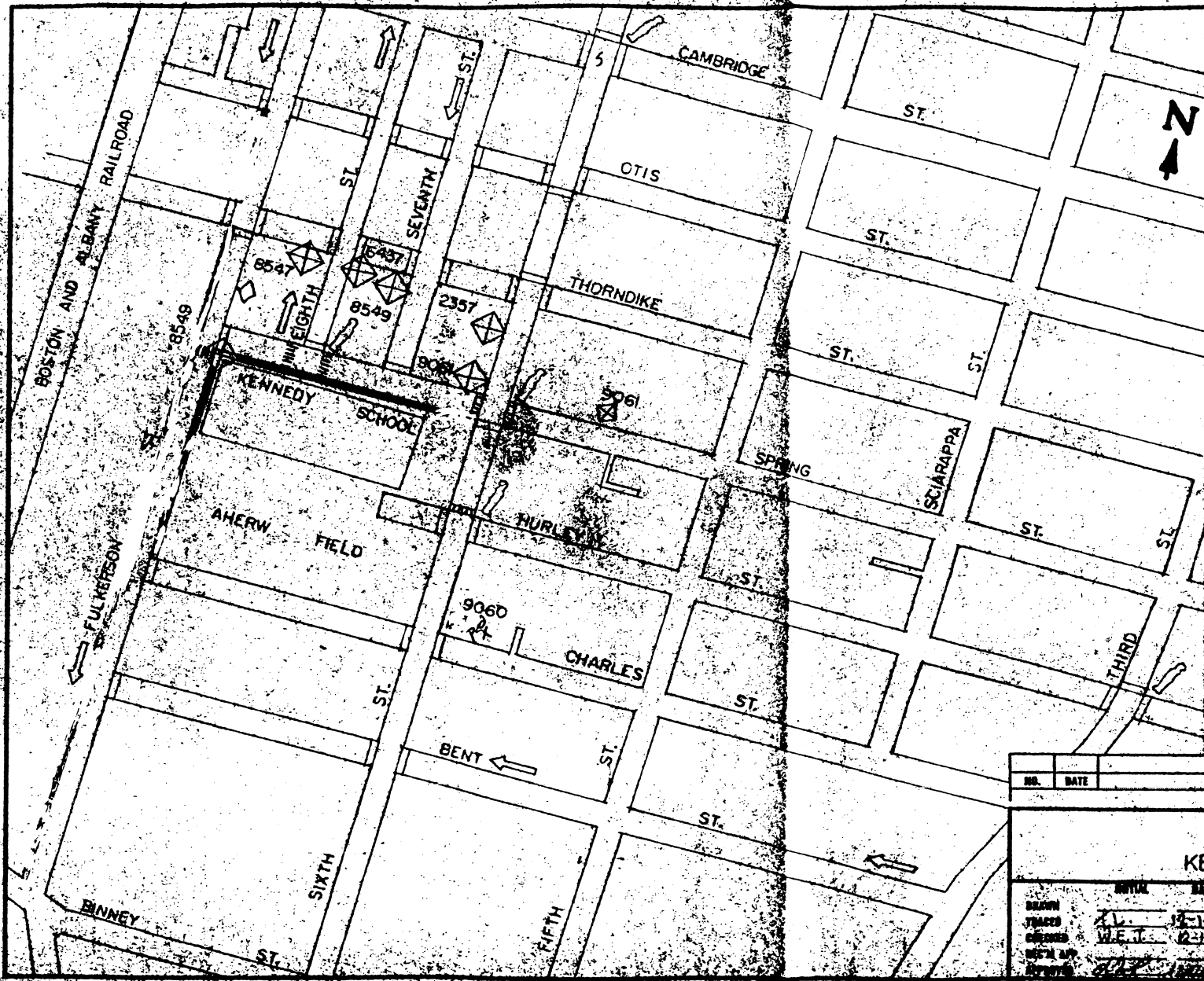
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
TOBIN SCHOOL AREA

DEPARTMENT OF  
TRAFFIC AND PARKING  
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

DATE: 8-1-70  
SCALE: 1" = 100'



NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	SCALE	DATE	BY
REVISED ABOVE					
<b>CITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b>					
<b>PEABODY SCHOOL AREA</b>					
<b>DEPARTMENT OF</b>			<b>SCALE: 1" = 200'</b> <b>DATE: 12-7-55</b>		
<b>TRAFFIC AND PARKING</b>					
<b>CITY OF CAMBRIDGE</b>					



NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	DRW	CHKD	REC'D	APPRD	DATE
REVISIONS ABOVE							
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE KENNEDY SCHOOL AREA							
DESIGN	INITIAL	DATE	DEPARTMENT OF TRAFFIC AND PARKING CITY OF CAMBRIDGE				
TRACED	<i>W.E.T.</i>	<i>12-1-83</i>					
CHECKED	<i>W.E.T.</i>	<i>2-1-83</i>					
APPROVED	<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>1/10/83</i>					
			DRAWING NO.		SCALE 1" = 200'		
			SP-B-1070		FIRST EDITION 1975		

◊ school children crossing  
 ◊ school children

INDEX OF PARKS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

N#

NAME

N#	NAME
01	AHERN FIELD/KENNEDY SCHOOL COMPLEX CENTANNI PARK COSTA LOPEZ/TAYLOR PARK FRONT PARK GORE STREET PLAYGROUND HURLEY STREET/VFW PLAYGROUND LECHMERE CANAL PARK SILVA PLAYGROUND
02	CHARLES RIVERFRONT
03	DONNELLY FIELD ELM HAMPSHIRE PARK GANNETT PLAYGROUND/WARREN PALS
04	COLUMBIA STREET PARK HARVARD STREET MAIN STREET AND BISHOP ALLEN DRIVE MARKET STREET TOT LOT PINE STREET TOT LOT SENNOTT PARK WASHINGTON ELMS TOT LOT
05	ALBERICO PLAYGROUND CENTRAL SQUARE LIBRARY DANA PARK FORT WASHINGTON FULMORE PLAYGROUND HASTINGS SQUARE LOPEZ STREET PLAYGROUND MAGAZINE BEACH MORSE SCHOOL/LINDSTROM FIELD OLD MORSE PLAYGROUND
06	COOPER PLAYGROUND LIBRARY PARK/WAR MEMORIAL LONGFELLOW SCHOOL MAPLE AVENUE TOT LOT PAINE PLAYGROUND VELLUCCI PLAZA/INMAN SQUARE WILDER LEE
07	CORPORAL BURNS PLAYGROUND FRANKLIN STREET PARK HOYT FIELD KING COMMUNITY SCHOOL RIVERSIDE PRESS PARK SULLIVAN PARK
08	AGASSIZ ALDEN PLAYGROUND SACRAMENTO FIELD
09	CAMBRIDGE COMMON CORCORAN FIELD/RAYMOND STREET PARK PEABODY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND ST. PETER'S FIELD

INDEX OF PARKS BY NEIGHBORHOOD

N#

NAME

10

JFK MEMORIAL PARK  
 LARCH ROAD PARK  
 LONGFELLOW PARK  
 LOWELL PARK  
 LOWELL SCHOOL PLAYGROUND  
 MEMORIAL DRIVE TOT LOT  
 TOBIN SCHOOL/FR. CALLAHAN PLAYGROUND  
 WINTHROP SQUARE

10/12/13

FRESH POND

11

CLARENDON AVENUE PARK  
 COMEAU  
 PARKWAY TOT LOT  
 RINDGE FIELD  
 BERGIN PLAYGROUND  
 RUSSELL FIELD  
 SLEEPER TOT LOT

12

SANCTA MARIA FIELD/RAFFERTY PLAYGROUND

13

GLACKEN FIELD  
 HAGGERTY SCHOOL/STRAWBERRY HILL PARK

