

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

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

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

For HCRS use only

received NOV 17 1983

date entered DEC 15 1983

1. Name

historic Lighthouse Point Carousel
and/or common Lighthouse Point Park Carousel

2. Location

street & number Lighthouse Point Park, Lighthouse Avenue NA not for publication
city, town New Haven NA vicinity of congressional district Third
state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of New Haven
street & number 157 Church Street
city, town New Haven NA vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hall of Records
street & number 200 Orange Street
city, town New Haven state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no
date 1983 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local
depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission
city, town 59 South Prospect Street, Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☒ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☒ original site (building only)
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ unexposed	☒ unknown	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lighthouse Point Carousel, built in 1916, is located in Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven, Connecticut. The park is an eighty-acre seaside recreation area located along the east side of New Haven harbor. (See Exhibit 1.) The Lighthouse Point Carousel, an example of early twentieth-century carousel and seashore architecture, remains in its original setting in the park. To reach the park, one drives south through a large single family, residential area dating approximately from 1920 to 1960. The Carousel is located near the southernmost section of the park. At an elevation of 5 feet above sea level, it stands approximately 130 feet north and 200 feet east of Long Island Sound. (See Exhibit 2.) The lighthousekeeper's cottage and the lighthouse for which the park is named, both of which date from the nineteenth century, remain within 200 feet of the Carousel. These properties are, however, not included in this nomination. Nearby are rock jetties, a sandy beach, Morris Creek, and tidal wetlands. The Carousel Pavilion is the largest of five structures in the park. The others are not related in style, function, or date of construction, and have replaced older, original buildings.

Carousel Building

The carousel building was constructed in 1916 in a Renaissance Revival style. It is approximately 150 by 90 feet. It has two sections: a square pavilion which houses the carousel and a section lower in height which housed restaurant concessions and other amusements. (See Photograph 1.) Both sections are one-story, high-ceilinged spaces with a light, airy feeling. The smaller section has a low-pitched gable roof, and, while less detailed than the carousel pavilion, contains features which echo those in pavilion half. (See Photographs 2 & 3.) The south and west elevation, for example, are glazed with sash similar to that of the pavilion side. The relative simplicity and smaller size help to accent the pavilion that houses the carousel. On both sections, the exterior walls are composed of vertical beaded boards. The west facade has 5 high arched bays flanked by two large rectangular windows. The windows are double hung, have 8 over 8 pane glazing, and fluted pilasters. The windows in the arches are 12 over 12 double hung windows that slide up to allow sea breezes to enter and give the carousel its open feeling. The top of each arched bay is punctuated with 25 mullioned panes shaped to conform to semi-circular arch. Between each arch is an engaged half column above which is decorative molding and a keystone. There are four carved medallions between the five arches. The pavilion rises into a large octagonal monitor containing a clerestory with 2 by 2 square windows. At the top of the monitor, there is a large decorative metal ventilator. Directly below is the carousel.

Carousel

The carousel rests on a platform approximately sixty feet in diameter. It supports columns, the iron and steel mechanical works that move the horses, the band organ, and the roof. The mechanical works and the organ are located within an enclosed central cylinder currently covered by fiberglass sheets. (See Photograph 4.) The carousel is surmounted by a flat, circular roof ornamented by a canvas cornice ring on which are painted landscape scenes interspersed with scrolls and mirrors. (See Photograph 5.) This outer ring is supported both from the center of the roof and by the sweep struts, the beams from which the horses are supported. There is an inner ring whose ornate tin rosettes with floral motifs ranging from sunflower to tudor rose are punctuated by the insertion of the sweep struts. Attached to the struts are one-inch and two-inch spiraling brass poles, for the standing and jumping horses respectively, which have been dated to c. 1916. The crown of the inner housing consists of twenty scenes painted in oil on canvas depicting various harbor views and seascapes, each accentuated by

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Lighthouse Point Carousel, New Haven, CT

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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by scrollwork of black, brown, and ochre around each frame. Beneath the crown, and of decorative importance, is a Grecian frieze of pressed tin painted in gold leaf.

In the middle of the inner housing, below the inner ring, is a row of bevelled glass mirrors measuring approximately six by eighteen inches. They were intended to reflect the arched lights which hang before them. Beneath, where there originally stood mirrors or large painting which screened the mechanical works, is fiberglass. Between the fiberglass and the floor are thirty-one framed tin panels which conceal the centerpoles and four supports and which provided a place for the band organ. While the top of the central housing is intended to rotate, the fiberglass and lower tin panels are stationary.

The carousel figures are fine examples of their craft. Several of the smaller inside horses retain their original paint. The majority of the figures have not been painted since 1929, when Irving Sharpe was authorized to do so by the City of New Haven. There are two distinctive styles, although they are similar in size. One type of horse displays less articulation in the blankets, saddles, and harnesses. The other is the more flamboyant, with deeply carved manes that seem windblown. The ten horses of the former style were placed in the inner ring, perhaps because of their appearance. Each style suggests that it was the work of individual carvers. The population of the carousel is one camel, two chariots, and sixty-nine horses, of which forty are galloping and twenty-nine are standing. The horses are placed in rows with three standing and four jumping alternating. Although in need of paint, and in some cases, tails, the chariots in the shape of dragons (Photograph 7), the horses (Photograph 6), and the camel (Photograph 8) are of exceptional quality and are structurally sound.

The outer rim or 'rounding board' of the carousel is unusual in that it is decorated by twenty oil paintings of details of the New Haven harbor and surrounding locales. The scenes depict many modes of transportation: steamboats, row boats, sailing ships, barges, and trains. They are also adorned by lighthouses, mermaids, and nymphs. Each is separated from the next by a shield which disguises the nuts and bolts holding the rounding board together. The shields are enhanced by light bulbs. The design of the frieze on the inner housing is identical to that of the Lake Compounce carousel in Southington, Connecticut.

The carousel is driven by a motor. It is attached to the metal centerpole, the four cross supports, bevel gear, eccentric gear, seven sister gears, and drive unit assembly by a drive belt. There are twenty sweeps, supporting stay sweep rods, quarter poles, drop rods, and ten sets of cranks which make the horses jump.

The original organ was removed for repairs and cleaning in the late 1950s. It was never returned. The city subsequently leased a small band organ from Anthony Juliano, the owner of the Savin Rock Carousel. He sold his carousel to a concern in California, and the leased organ was sold to an amusement company in Ohio.

The building is currently secured with plywood over about half of its formerly glazed surfaces in an effort to protect it from the elements and from vandals. (See Photographs 1 & 3.) The horses and their poles have been temporarily removed from the site and are stored for safekeeping.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
☐ prehistoric	☐ archeology-prehistoric	☐ community planning	☐ landscape architecture	☐ religion
☐ 1400–1499	☐ archeology-historic	☐ conservation	☐ law	☐ science
☐ 1500–1599	☐ agriculture	☐ economics	☐ literature	☒ sculpture
☐ 1600–1699	☒ architecture	☐ education	☐ military	☐ social/
☐ 1700–1799	☐ art	☐ engineering	☐ music	☐ humanitarian
☐ 1800–1899	☐ commerce	☐ exploration/settlement	☐ philosophy	☐ theater
☒ 1900–	☐ communications	☐ industry	☐ politics/government	☐ transportation
		☐ invention		☒ other (specify) local history/ recreation

Specific dates circa 1916 **Builder/Architect** Carvers: Charles Looff, Timothy Murphy and Charles Carmel

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of the Lighthouse Point Carousel and its building lies in the association with recreational activity in the Lighthouse Point Park of New Haven. Located at the end of a trolley line, it was easily accessible to working class families seeking to enjoy a day at the shore. In an era of the six-day work week, such parks needed to be close at hand. (National Register Criterion A) The carousel is an important example of craftsmanship, carving, and painting in merry-go-round design and workmanship. The carousel and its building are among a dwindling number of a unique form of seaside and amusement architecture. (National Register Criterion C) The carousel was part of popular entertainment in America for fifty years spanning the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the turn of the century, carousel suppliers annually filled orders for thirty to forty merry-go-rounds each. Connecticut now has only nine, of which seven are functioning.¹

Social History (A)

Like many amusement parks of the era, Lighthouse Point Park was built and operated by a trolley company seeking new ways to increase ridership. The park, built from 1911 to 1917, was one of the two amusement areas which flanked New Haven Harbor at the time. The other, Savin Rock Park, was demolished and its carousel was moved to California. Two ferry boats ran between Savin Rock and Lighthouse Point. In 1925, the New Haven Parks Commission bought the amusement park, adding to its earlier acquisition of the lighthouse and its land from the federal government. Not wishing to compete with the larger park at Savin Rock, the commission chose to emphasize bathing rather than amusements. Nevertheless, operation of the carousel, a major source of park income, was continued. There is strong evidence, however, that the Parks Commission changed the location of the carousel. A map drawn at this time by the city engineer depicts two carousel buildings: a rectangular one in the spot where the carousel is now located and a circular building in a location further north (Exhibit 3). The New Haven City Plan map drawn in 1925 corroborates the existence of two buildings, as do photographs. The round carousel building (Photograph 9) was probably demolished sometime after the Parks Commission purchased the park, and the carousel was moved into the rectangular building (Photographs 1 and 2).

Lighthouse Park provided escape from the crowded life of the city. A trolley ride led city dwellers into a world of amusement, sea breezes, and holiday atmosphere. The common man could 'vacation' for pennies away from the congestion and stress of city life on his day off. Parks, amusement parks in particular, provided everyone with a recreational space inviting and different. Lighthouse Park and the carousel flourished in these early years. The park saw renewed activity during the Depression and World War II, when the populace needed the diversion that the park could provide.

Although the Parks Commission had set aside money for the maintenance of the carousel and its building, the two began to deteriorate. They were never fully repaired after the hurricane in 1938. Public pressure to close the park increased, peaking when a small boy was electrocuted on one of the rides. In 1957, the commission considered selling the carousel, it had become so dilapidated. Although the carousel was kept,

¹. Carousel census was completed by the National Carousel Committee.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Atlas of the City of New Haven, 1911, Hall of Records, 200 Orange Street, New Haven, CT
Conversations with Sally W. Fecteau, Wallingford, Connecticut; 1982, 1983
Cameron, Tracey, Proposal for Lighthouse Point Carousel Restoration, 1979
Fried, Frederick, A Pictorial History of the Carousel, New York, 1964

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Woodmont, CT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet.

The boundary description that follows was chosen to recognize the carousel and its building, and provide a moderating space between it and its setting.

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Noel S. Sutherland, Consultant

organization Friends of Lighthouse Park Carousel date 15 June 1983

street & number Mayor's Office 157 Church Street telephone Co Chair (203) 777-0582

city or town New Haven state Connecticut

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

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date November 8, 1983

For HCRS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 12/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Lighthouse Point Carousel, New Haven, CT
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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received
date entered

all other buildings which formed the original amusement park were demolished at this time. The carousel was eventually closed to the public, and boarded up. Approximately ten years ago, the horses were removed for storage to await funding for their refurbishment.

Architecture (C)

The design of the facade of the carousel pavilion is an adaptation of the Renaissance Revival to a wood building for recreational use. The carousel is an elaborately detailed design. The original building of 1905 (Photograph 9 and Exhibit 3) was replaced by the present one in 1916 under the direction of Thomas Shanley, a New York restaurateur and head of the East Shore Amusement Company, the original developer of Lighthouse Point Park. The carousel was run on commission by Timothy Murphy, originally from Brooklyn, New York. He operated a string of carousels at seaside amusement areas on the east coast. Murphy had received his early training in the assembly and operation of carousels from Charles Loeff, a Rhode Island craftsman who was one of the major carousel makers of the time. After Loeff died in 1918, Murphy, on his own, created hybrid carousels composed of the work of several carvers. For this reason it is believed that some of the horses at Lighthouse Point Park were carved by Loeff. But two experts of the National Carousel Association see the hand of Charles Carmel of Brooklyn in some of the figures. Murphy probably used Carmel as a carver for several of his reworked carousels. The mix of plain and bombastic styles and the age of the horses are typical of Murphy's remodelling of other Loeff carousels.

In 1925 Murphy sold the carousel to the New Haven Parks Commission for \$8500. Murphy, who was proprietor of the Savin Rock carousel and the building of the carousel at Lake Compounce, had begun to convert the stationary carousels, like the one at Lighthouse Point Park, into ones which moved up and down.

The seventy figures and two chariots that comprise the carousel represent high quality examples of elaborate carousel sculpture. Each horse is positioned either standing or jumping and is wearing a bridle, harness, blanket, and saddle carved in wood decorated with pieces of metal. The tails are of real hair. They are carved in two distinct styles which further supports the idea that this is a composite carousel whose horses are attributable to several carvers. One style is simpler, but by no means plain. The carving here is both less elaborate and gives the horses less expression. Approximately half of the horses are carved in the more bombastic style (Photograph 6). The dragon chariots appear to be carved in the latter style, with fully rendered wings, legs, and scales (Photograph 7). The camel is equipped with a bridle, blankets, and a saddle which sits just behind his hump (Photograph 8). All the carousel sculptures exhibit a diversity of expression, position, and embellishment. No two appear identical. There are dozens of colors decorating the blankets, harnesses, tassels and saddles.

The Lighthouse Point Park carousel is significant historically for two reasons. First, the merry-go-round is part of an important tradition of carousel craftsmanship and design which is at the base of one of the more important forms of American entertainment. Second, the carousel building is a good example of the seashore amusement architecture of the early twentieth century. Both the building and the carousel are high quality examples of their type. With minor restoration work, they could be brought back to their original condition (Photograph 9).

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Continuation sheet

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New Haven Parks Department Records.

New Haven Register, Dana Collection, New Haven Colony Historical Society.

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

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Lighthouse Point Carousel, New Haven, CT

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Boundary description for Lighthouse Point Carousel, for use with Exhibit 2

Beginning at a point 38' due west from the northwest corner of the structure,
(marked as "x"):

South, 172' more or less, SSE 63' more or less;
East SE 62' more or less;
NE 94' more or less to the edge of a circular parking area,
continuing approximately 122' more or less to a point
approximately 30' due east of the structure on this circle.
North 66' more or less;
West 154' more or less; and
South to original point (marked as "x").

83003576

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Lighthouse Point Carousel
New Haven County
CONNECTICUT

Working No. NOV 17 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: 2/5/85

Date Due: 12/15/83 - 1/1/84

Action: ☒ ACCEPT 12/15/83

Entered in the RETURN

National Register REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ excellent | ☐ deteriorated |
| ☐ good | ☐ ruins |
| ☐ fair | ☐ unexposed |

Check one

- ☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

- ☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

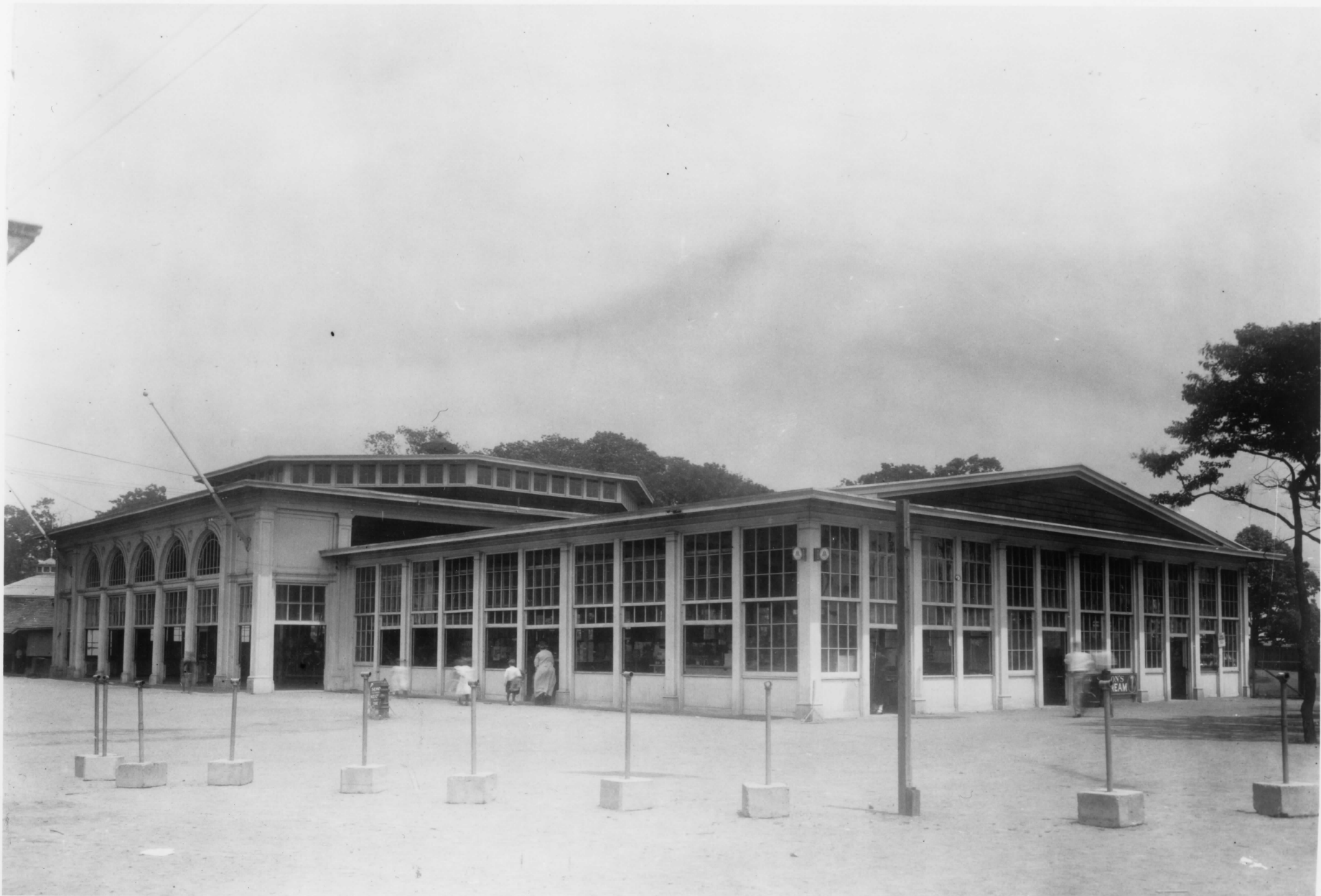
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet









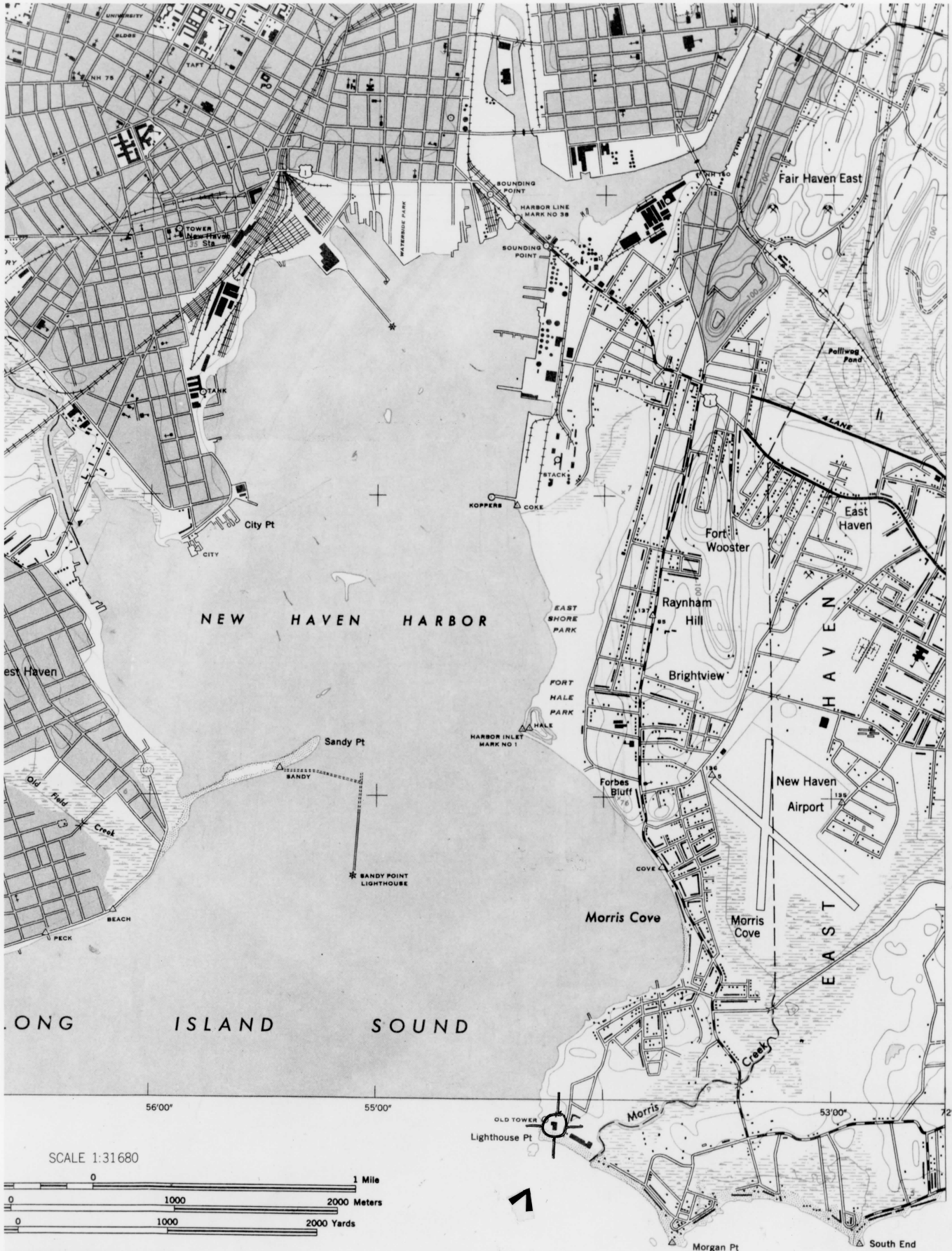


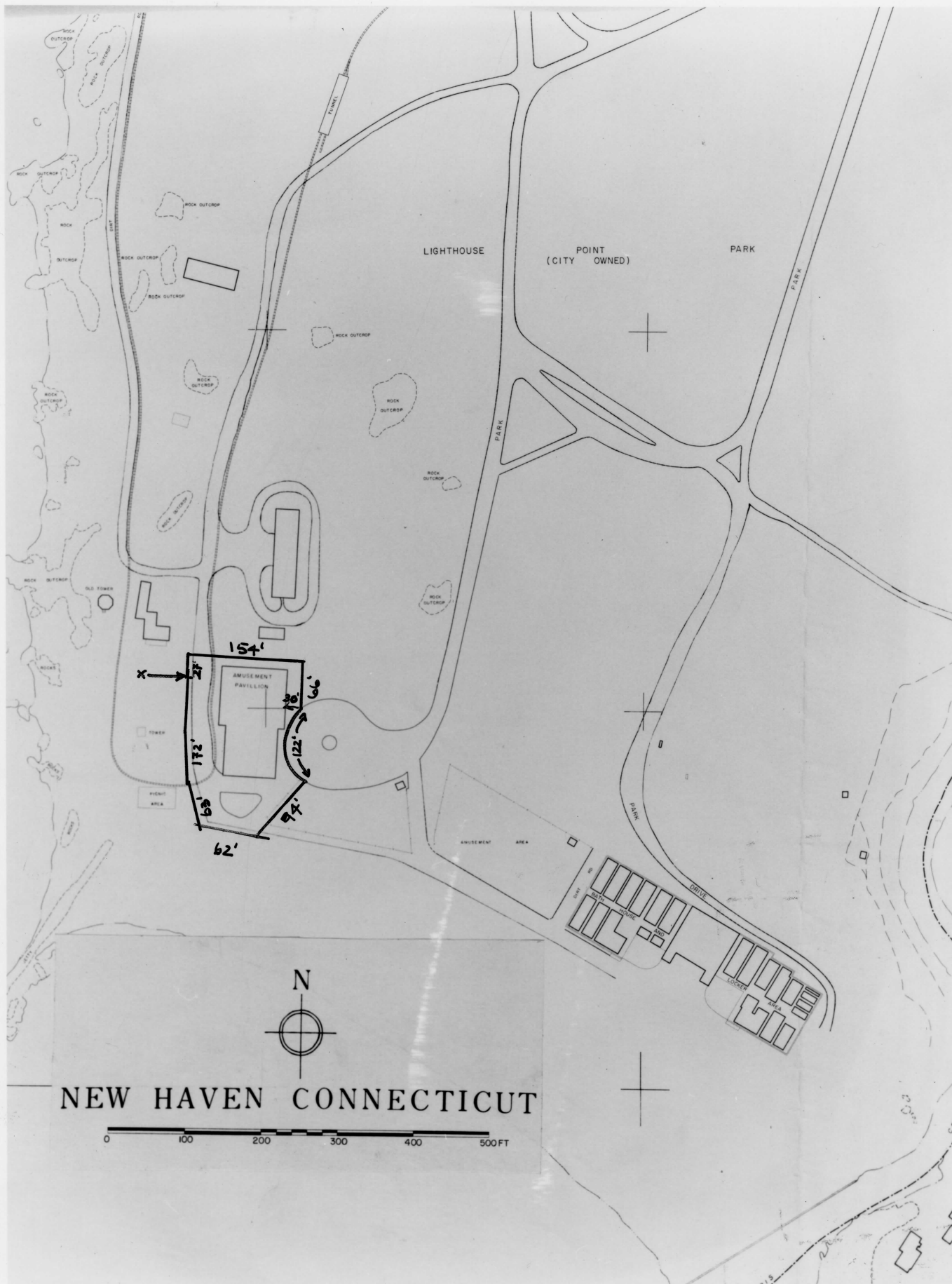


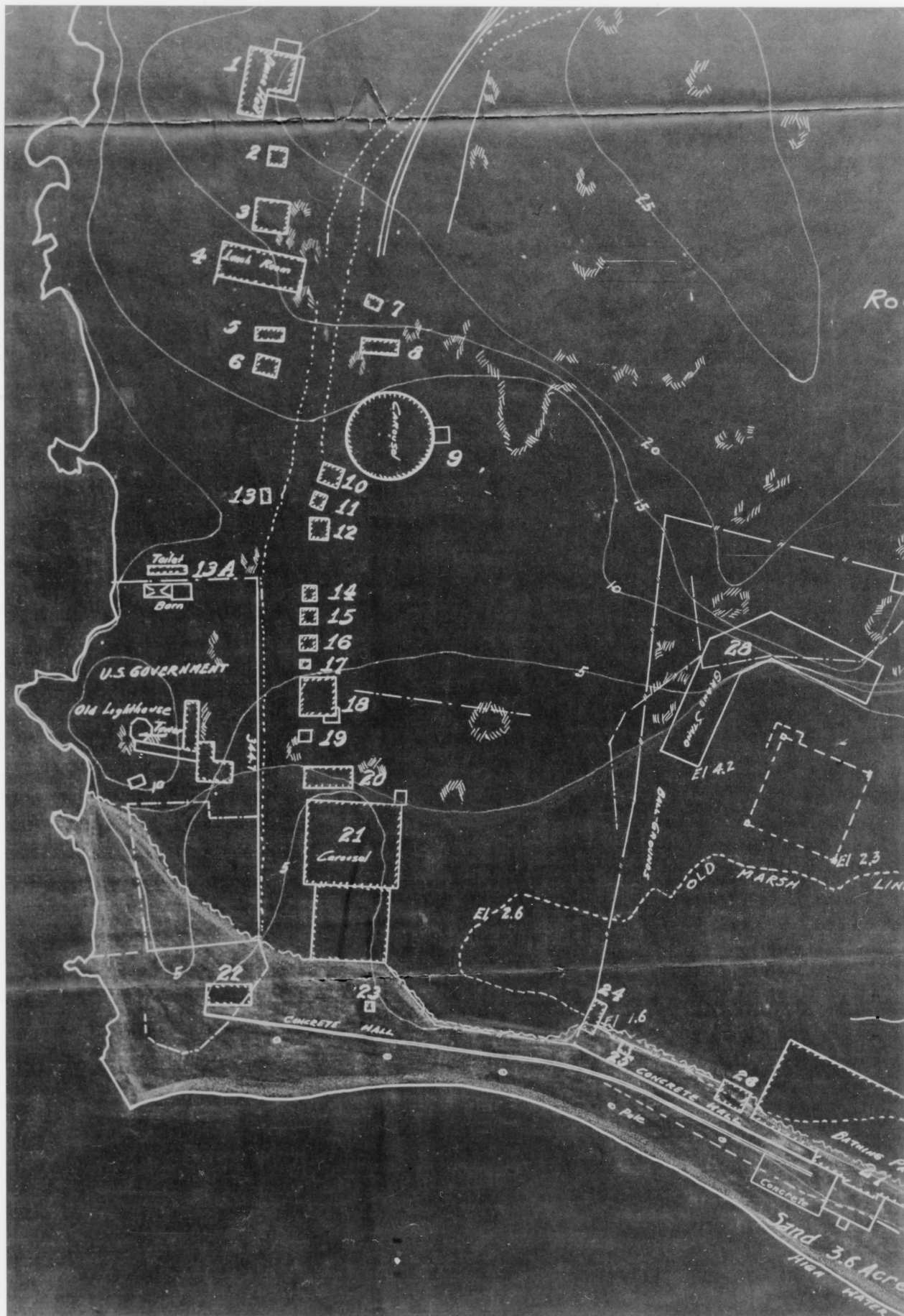


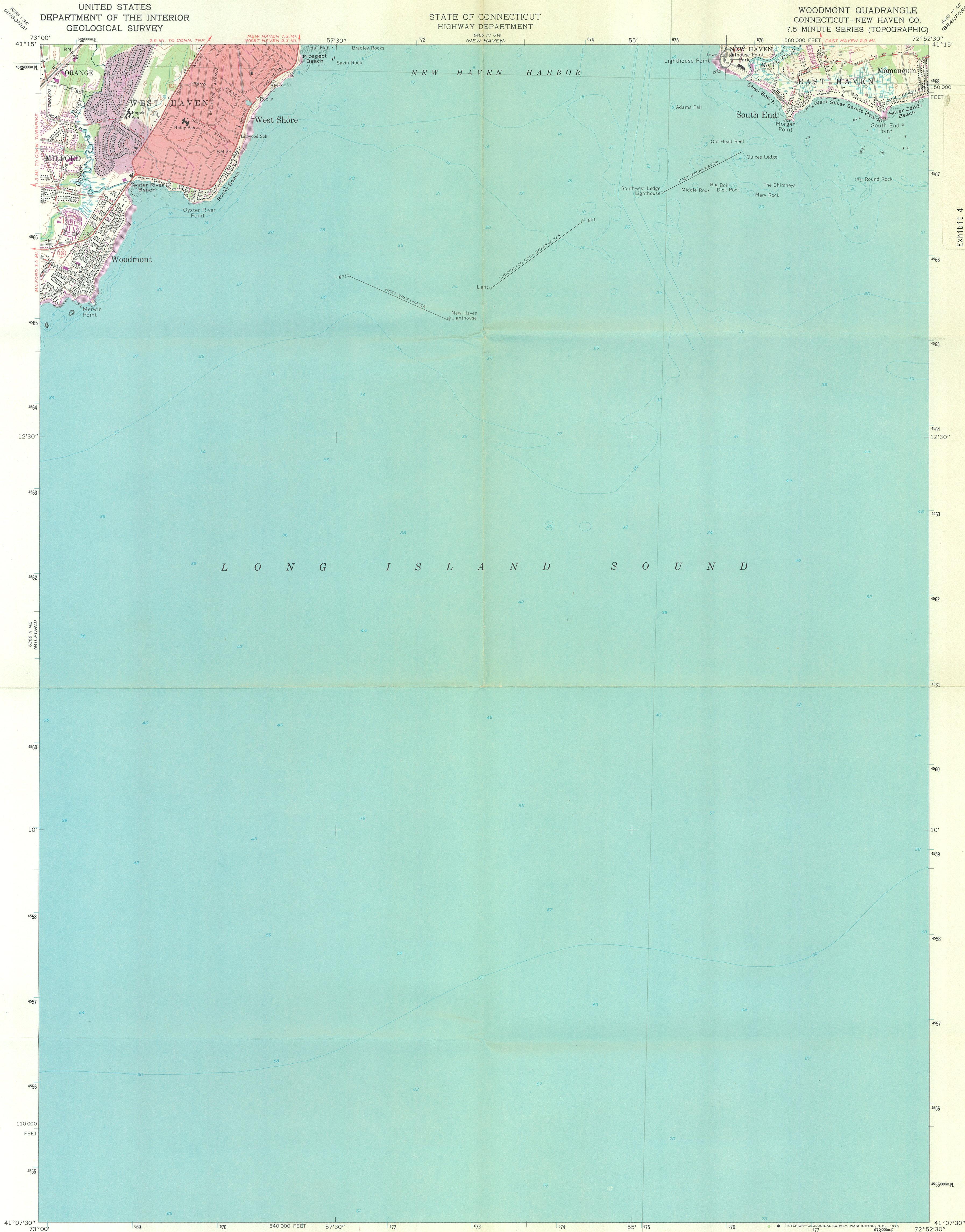












Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Connecticut Geodetic Survey
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods
Aerial photographs taken 1949. Field check 1951. Revised 1960
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts
218 (1958) and 1212 (1960). This information is not
intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Connecticut coordinate system,
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue
Red tint indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 6.2 FEET

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
State Route

WOODMONT, CONN.
N4107.5—W7252.5/7.5

1960
PHOTOREVISED 1971
AMS 6466 III NW—SERIES V816

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

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with
Connecticut Highway Department from aerial photographs
taken 1971. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

Exhibit 4
Lighthouse Point Carousel
Lighthouse Point Park, New Haven, CT
Lighthouse Point
USGS map: Woodmont, Conn.
UTM Reference: 18 675660 4568300
Zone Easting Northing