## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

[ ] removed from the National Register. [ ] other, (explain:)

OMB NO. 1024-0018, NPS FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTO	ORIC PLACES			DEC 1 2 1991
REGISTRATION FORM				as all with it ideas some
This form is for use in n	ominating or reques	cing deter	minacions	or enginitity to AL
individual properties or				
National Register Forms (1				
"x" in the appropriate box	x or by entering th	ne requeste	d informa	tion. If an item does not
apply to the property being	ng documented, ente	er "N/A" for	r "not ap	plicable." For functions,
styles, materials, and an				
subcategories listed in the	he instructions. Fo	or addition	al space	use continuation sheets.
Type all entries.				
1. Name of Property				
	Ross Park Carousel		-44	
other names/site number			- No.	
2. Location				
	Dogg Dowle		I not fo	w muhlication
	Ross Park			or publication
	Binghamton	- 1- 005	vicini	
state New York code NY	county Broome	code 007	zip code	2 13903
3. Classification	200			and the second s
Ownership of property	Category	Number of	resource	es within property
[ ]private	[ ]building(s)	Contrib	uting	Noncontributing
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listings: Broome County C	arousels	listed in	the Nati	onal Register 0
4. State/Federal Agency C As the designated authoric amended, I hereby certify eligibility meets the doc Register of Historic Place forth in 36 CFR Part 60. National Register criteria	ty under the Natior that this [x] nominate the commentation standardes and meets the property opinion, this	nation [] ds for reginated and property	request stering p nd profes [x] meets	for determination of properties in the National ssional requirements set [ ] does not meet the
1 1 1 1 1	1			12/12/21
Will D. XVO	w			/2/10/91 Date
Signature of certifying o	ficial			Date
Deputy Commissioner for H		n		
State or Federal agency as	nd bureau			
In my opinion, the proper [ ] See continuation sheet		oes not mee	t the Nat	ional Register criteria.
Signature of commenting of	r other official			Date
State or federal agency a	nd bureau			
5. National Park Service	Certification			
I hereby, certify that th			1	
[v] entered in the Nation	al Register.	1 . 10	1	
[ ] See continuation		150AH	X	xurse 1-25-07
		1	/	0 100 30
[ ] determined eligible for				
Register.[] see cont	inuation sheet. $\perp$		- 244	
[ ] determined not eligible National Register.	te for the		VA .	

Signature of keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use		
Historic Function (enter categories from intructions) Recreation/outdoor recreation		ions ries from instructions) door recreation
Recreation oddaoor recreation	<u>Recreation</u> out	AGOL TECTEUTION
7. Description		
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (ente	er categories from instructions)
	foundation	asphalt
NA	walls	wood
	roof	wood
	other	

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Ross Park Carousel is located within the confines of Ross Park Zoo, in an area known as the "flats," approximately 325' from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Spurr Ave. and Morgan Rd., and 387' 6" from the northwestern corner of the intersection of Kane Ave. and Morgan Rd. The nomination boundary, a circle with a radius of 28' 11", contains the carousel and its housing pavilion. Ross Park Zoo, the city's oldest public park and one of the nation's oldest public zoos, has been designated a Binghamton Urban Cultural Park landmark. The traditional feeling of a nineteenth-century pleasure ground, with the curvilinear paths and rustic wooded setting, has been maintained at Ross Park. Broome County is the present supervisor of the park.

The carousel housing structure is a wooden one-story, central-plan sixteen-sided open pavilion topped with an eight-sided cupola constructed over an asphalt foundation. The structure is constructed of sixteen solid  $6 \times 6$  wooden timbers that support the roof. The roof has a single pitch and was reshingled in June 1989.

The carousel holds sixty horses four abreast, all "jumpers," and two chariots on a sixteen-sided wooden plank platform. The carousel also has a restored Wurlitzer Military Band Organ, model #146-B. Around the central power mechanisms are arranged a single band of sixteen scenery panels, which alternate between restored paintings and mirrors. Each contains eight light bulbs. One panel reads "Allan Herschell Co. Inc --North Tonawanda, N.Y.," identifying the manufacturer. Rounding boards are unadorned, though moldings along the top and bottom edges exist. Shields between each rounding board contain original carved wooden heads. The sweeps are unadorned. Although this carousel retains all of its distinctive carved decoration, evincing its craftsmanship, the original paint does not survive. The entire carousel apparatus, including all of the figures, was repainted and restored in 1987-88.

Each of the carousel figures can be identified as a representative example of the unique type of hand-carved all wooden figures produced by the Allen Herschell Company from c1915 until 1935. Identification can be made by a formal stylistic analysis of the individual animals and by a comparison with known Allan Herschell Company types. Verification was made by the National Carousel Association and published in its most recent census (1990). In general, Allan Herschell Company carousel figures are characterized by their naturalistic detailing and compact size. Similar to other carved carousel figures, decorations on Allan Herschell figures appear in the form of applied "jewels," carved trappings, saddles and bridles and expressionistic faces.

Though no thorough or comprehensive study of Allan Herschell Company carved figures has been made to date, some preliminary conclusions based on a comparative analysis of known figures can be made. Within the general "Allan Herschell type" of carved figures, there are several distinct "subtypes." For horses, these are identifiable by two major characteristics: mane type and head placement. Manes are either flowing or "trojan"; heads are categorized as rearing, erect, down or tucked. Variations arrive by combining [X] See continuation sheet

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Ross Park Carousel Binghamton, Broome County, NY

Section 7 page 2

different mane types with head placements. There is at least one representative example of each subtype on the Ross Park Carousel.

8. Statement of Significance	44.	10 m					rise.					
Certifying official has considered the other properties: [ ] nation	e sign ally	ific	an s	ce tat	of the	his e	pro [x]	per l	ty in	relati	on to	
Applicable National Register Criteria	[x]	A [	: ]	В	[x]	C	[ ]	D				
Criteria Considerations	[]	A [	]	В	[]	C	[ ]	D	[]	E []	F []	G
Areas of significance Social History Recreation Art	Perio	d of	19		ific	anc	e - -		Sig	nificar 19	t Date	s
	Cultu na	ral	Af	fil	iatio	on			¥ .			
Significant Person	Archi Allan					mpa	ny					

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Ross Park Carousel is significant under criterion A as a tangible manifestation of welfare capitalism, an important theme in social history and labor relations that linked philanthropy, reform and social control in the period between World War I and the New Deal. As a recreational device donated to the community by its largest employer, the carousel served to promote the vision of employee life held by the employer, to encourage employees to spend their recreational time in company approved ways, and to facilitate company supervision of after hours activity. Thus, the benevolent actions of reform-minded industrialists such as George Johnson effected great influence over their communities as well as direct control over many aspects of the daily lives of their employees. The carousel is also significant under criterion C in the areas of recreation and art as a rare surviving example of a hand-carved all wooden carousel manufactured by the Allan Herschell Company in North Tonawanda, New York. This carousel features sixty houses, placed four abreast, and two chariots; this machine is one of three surviving Herschell four abreast models, all of which are in Broome County. Herschell carousel figures are characterized by compact size and naturalistic detailing. Figures are embellished with carved jewels, including trappings, saddles, bridles and faces, and exemplify four different combinations of head position and mane type. This carousel contains example of all four types. Carving of carousel figures at the Herschell factory was undertaken primarily by German immigrant craftsmen. This carousel retains all of its distinctive original carved carousel figures, which display fine craftsmanship, as well as its decoration, including alternating scenery and mirror panels, outlined in lights, shields decorated with carved faces and a Wurlitzer organ. The carousel, its organ and its figures were restored in 1988-9. Purchased in c1920, this carousel is one of six carousels donated to various Broome County communities by George F. Johnson (Endicott Johnson president) and his family between 1919 and 1934. The significance of this carousel is enhanced by the survival of its original wooden, sixteen-sided open sheltering pavilion and its integrity of location and setting within Ross Park, Buffalo's oldest public park and one of the country's oldest public zoos. [The park has not yet been evaluated for significance.]

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Ross Park Carousel Binghampton, Broome County, NY

Section 8 page 2

Between 1919 and 1934, EJ president George F. Johnson (1857-1948) and his family donated six carousels to the citizens of Broome County, New York, with the stipulation that their use should remain forever free of charge to the public. As a phenomenon, welfare capitalism was practiced by reform-minded industrialists who viewed themselves as benevolent patriarchs endowed with the resources to transform the poor and working class into a community of healthy and hard working citizens. To this end, proponents of welfare capitalism instilled popular notions of reform into the daily lives of the populace. Standards of living for wage-earners were raised through various paternalistic programs enacted by major U.S. corporations, among them affordable housing, decent working conditions and accessible recreational facilities. Johnson fulfilled his duty as a benevolent patriarch by taking an active role in determining the nature of the Endicott Johnson Corporation's workers' lives through the establishment of these programs, and the legacy of his acts determined, to a great extent, the present character of Broome County. Recreation in general was one of the most important considerations in Johnson's vision of a happy and contented life for his employees. A decrease in the number of hours in the average workday translated into an increase in leisure time; these hours were filled with corporate sponsored recreational activities. As a youth, Johnson was denied access to healthy recreation and childhood enjoyments available to a more affluent As a businessman, Johnson used recreation as a means to promote his personal vision of reform for the working class. seen as a picturesque diversion from the unsightliness of the industrial city in the nineteenth century, became an instrument for reform in the early twentieth, as planners chose to include urban parks in their designs for new towns and residential neighborhoods. For Johnson, these urban reform parks were an integral part of the overall effort to see his workers' lives improved. Carousels in particular became an icon of Johnson's reform-minded benevolence. Traditionally associated with amusement parks and carnivals, carousels were always considered a profitable commodity, intended by their manufacturers as a money-making concession and promoted as such in trade catalogs. Johnson's act of transforming these carousels from a symbol of greedy commercialism into a symbol of community charity by declaring them "forever free" and "for the pleasure of the people" solidified his position as patriarch and benefactor.

All wooden carousels have become increasingly rare in the United States. One of the most important and prolific producers of carousels, Allan Herschell manufactured thousands of all wooden

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Ross Park Carousel Binghampton, Broome County, NY

Section 8 page 3

machines during his lifetime. Each of the Broome County carousels is a superb representative example of one specific type from Herschell's long and significant oeuvre, namely the hand-carved all wooden type manufactured by the Allan Herschell Company between 1915 and the mid 1930s. According to the most recent census of the National Carousel Association (1990), only nineteen of these Allan Herschell Company hand-carved all wooden carousels remain in existence today. The six Broome County Carousels, however, are rare in that all remain fully operative and perform their original intended function of providing rides free of charge. Furthermore, five of the six have never been moved, an unprecedented record given the nature of the objects. All of the hand-carved carousel figures survive (although most have been repainted); two original band organs are intact; all of the original pavilion structures remain without major structural change; and each is maintained within a municipal urban park setting commensurate with its original function.

In addition to being intact examples of their types, the six Broome County carousels are distinguished by their fine craftsmanship, particularly that exhibited in their hand-carved figures. The American carousel industry was dominated in a large measure by German immigrant carvers. Most carousel figures were carved in a similar manner. Following carefully detailed patterns, less skilled joiners produced torsos and legs, while their highly skilled counterparts carved the more intricate heads, manes, saddles and trappings. The nearly three dozen individual parts of an animal were then glued together with wooden dowels added for strength. These pegs were later trimmed off in the final sanding process. In most cases, due to the nature and function of the objects, as many as ten coats of glazes, shellacs and varnishes were applied before the final colorful decorative coat was painted.

Figures on Allan Herschell carousels of this period are distinguished by short legs, drawn up close to the body in parallel positions, elongated heads with small eyes and long, Roman noses. Their expressions are generally fierce. All figures on the Broome County carousels are jumpers, an atypical characteristic.

Ross Park is the city's oldest public pleasance, with the land originally set aside in the early 1870s. Typical of mid-nineteenth century parks, it took the form of a ramble with trails for walking and riding, natural creeks with picturesque bridges and large wooded groves to shield one from the harsher realities of the city. Easy access by horse drawn street railways made Ross Park a highly

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Ross Park Carousel Binghampton, Broome County, NY

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visible attraction. Erastus Ross, who had donated the land, was among the financial backers of the Binghamton Street Railway Company, a firm that also owned and operated all recreational and entertainment concessions in the park. By the 1890s, Ross Park had become a typical "end of the line" draw with roller coasters, band and dance pagodas, refreshment stands and a carousel.

First mention of George F. Johnson in connection with the Ross Park Carousel is made in the proceedings of Binghamton's common council for the meeting of December 29, 1919. It reads:

Mr. George F. Johnson has purchased and will install a Merry-Go-Round in Ross Park to be free to all. This is but another manifestation of the interest Mr. Johnson takes, not only in our sister cities, but in Binghamton as well. Binghamton thanks Mr. Johnson.

Carousels had been in operation at Ross Park prior to Johnson's gift. A <u>Binghamton Press</u> article for May 28, 1920, a week prior to the Ross Park Carousel's opening, reported that "foundations are being placed for the big merry go round, which is to occupy the site of the former apparatus which was destroyed by lightning." Newspapers show that a carousel was located at Ross Park as early as 1904. Unverified sources also report a flier dating from 1897 that listed "merry-go-rounds."

By transforming previous money making ventures at Ross Park into a free attraction, Johnson secured his position as public benefactor. A personal letter from Johnson to Arthur LaRoche, commissioner of Binghamton's Department of Public Works, was written shortly after the Ross Park Carousel opened. It is here quoted in full:

It was a great pleasure, a day or two since, to see the merry-go-round in operation, and to even ride one of the big revolving horses myself, to be sure it was all right; and to have the assurance of the gentleman in charge, that the machine was running perfectly, and that the children (and I didn't need this assurance) were enjoying it thoroughly.

At I understand it now, provided the machine has met the requirements and specifications, and provided the bill is ready for payment and can be checked and forwarded to me, I am ready to pay for the machine as agreed, with the understanding that same is to be kept in good condition, to be operated daily whenever

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Ross Park Carousel Binghampton, Broome County, NY

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practical, free of expense to the children and others who may use it. This, if I am correct, was the original condition, well understood. If the machine works smoothly, and if the mothers and children (and once in a while the Dads) enjoy these rides, which I am sure they will, it will be a good investment, and one that I am happy to make.

I have been impressed with the wonderful opportunities at Ross Park for improvement; also impressed with the fact that today even, it is a splendid place for the people who have leisure time to go there and enjoy themselves in a healthy desirable way. I hope the Council will continue to make reasonably large appropriations for the improvement and upkeep of the Park.

There is no investment quite so good, in my judgement, for the public, as that which creates healthy recreation for the public. The money is so well spent as that which brings "the greatest good to the greatest number." And in this automobile-crazed Age, those who have to use the street cars or walk, always need a "place of refuge" as there does not seem to be, now-a-days, any room on the highways where they can be reasonably safe from bodily injury and perhaps sudden death, due to this same "Automobile Age." Now then, the Park becomes more than ever necessary for the children. Hence the attraction of the Park must be considered. Nothing else will bring people to our playgrounds, except the chance of enjoyment after they have arrived.

I am willing to do anything I can to help make Ross Park more attractive, and I welcome suggestions of possible chances for improvement.

Several references in the above letter are noteworthy. Johnson writes that "healthy recreation" is desirable for those with leisure time and that the park creates an atmosphere conducive to this attitude. But, it also appears that the carousel is seen in terms of an "investment": a necessary attraction intended to bring people to the park who may otherwise not have come. Johnson clearly saw the benefits afforded by removing people from the streets in the "automobile crazed" age, but the investment may also refer to ongoing changes in the function of urban parks. As a reformer, Johnson certainly sided with those who saw the advantage of

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Ross Park Carousel Binghampton, Broome County, NY

Section 8 page 6

organized recreation over unsupervised leisure time, and the carousel, in its capacity to "attract," became another recreational apparatus in the reformers' arsenal.

The housing structure for the carousel appears to have been constructed in conjunction with the carousel, although one source dates it as late as 1922. The park's orientation has been switched, after the closing of the main entrance, but the overall wooded setting is maintained. The carousel was designated a landmark by the City of Binghamton Committee on Architecture and Urban Design in 1977. According to the most recent census of the National Carousel Association, the Ross Park Carousel is one of only nineteen Allan Herschell Company all wooden carousels still in existence. Furthermore, it is one of only three of that firm's four abreast machines, all of which are located in Broome County. Of the approximately 100 band organs recorded in the census, less than half are still operating. The Wurlitzer Military Band Organ at Ross Park is one of only forty-seven still operating in conjunction with an operational carousel.

## SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

[] 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 # [] fother State agency [] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # [] proviously determined Engineering Record # [] University [] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # [] University [] Occurrental Data Acreage of property less than one acre  UMM References A   1 8    4 2 4 9 0 0    4 6 5 8 3 3 0  Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing [] See continuation sheet  Verbal Boundary Description  The nomination boundary encompasses only the carousel and its housing and the ground upon which they stand.  [] See continuation sheet  Eoundary Justification  The nomination boundary was drawn to include only the carousel itself and its housing. Although the park itself may be eligible, it has not yet been evaluated due to the specific focus of this theme.  [] See continuation sheet  II. Form Prepared By name/title CONTACT: Kathleen LaFrank - see also continuation sheet - organization Division for Historic Preservation date June 1991  The telephone 518-474-0479		[x] See continuation sheet
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Ross Park Carousel Binghamton, Broome County, NY

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### **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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### SECONDARY SOURCES

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Ross Park Carousel Binghamton, Broome County, NY

Section 11 page 2

Research and documentation prepared by:

G. Joseph Socki Consultant-Susquehanna Urban Cultural Park 45 Lewis Street Binghamton, NY 13901



NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

Section number

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# OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Page

Colombia		
Bro	come County Carousels MPS NEW YORK	
	Substantive Favior 1-25-92 DATE	LISTED
COV	VER Substantive Review	1-25-92
	Highland Park Carousel  Substantive Envior  Johnson, C. Fred, Park Carousel	1-25-92
	Johnson, George F., Recreation Park Carousel Substantive Review	1-25-92
4.	Johnson, George W., Park Carousel	1-25-92
5.	Ross Park Carousel Substantive Review	1-25-92
6.	West Endicott Park Carousel	1-25-92

## **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Sect	ion number Page
	SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD
	NRIS Reference Number: 91001966 Date Listed: 01/25/92
	Ross Park Carousel Broome NY Property Name County State
	Broome County Carousels MPS Multiple Name
	This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.
Sr	Signature of the Reeper Date of Action
/	Amended Items in Nomination:
	6. Materials: Roof  Asphalt is the appropriate roof material.
	This information has been confirmed with Kathleen LaFrank, NYSHPO, by telephone.
	DISTRIBUTION: National Register property file Nominating Authority (without attachment)

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION	the 15th
PROPERTY Ross Park Carousel NAME:	
MULTIPLE Broome County Carousels MPS NAME:	iteniliss - assiticati Serials Jeschiptive tost
STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Broome	A second
DATE RECEIVED: 12/12/91 DATE OF PERDATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/09/92 DATE OF 45'DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:	TH DAY: 1/26/92
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ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1/25/9	DATE
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DOCUMENTATION see attached comments VAN see a	ttached SID VIN

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OTHER COMMENTS	
Questions concerning this nomination	on may be directed to
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Nam: 12055 Park Carousel Location: Binghanton, NY - Broome CO NX Proto: G. toseph Socia, December 1990 Neg: G. Yoseph Sochi View: 1 of 8 - exterior looking north Brune Carty Corasde MPS NY



Navie: Poss Park Carassel

Location: Binghanton, NY-Broome Co-NY

Photo: G. Loseph Soclei, November 1990

Neg: 4. Loseph Soclei

View: 2 of 8- exterior looking sorth

Broome Canty Carasde MPS, MY



Name: Ross Park Carousel Location: Binghamton, NY - Broome CO NY Photo: G. Joseph Socki, December 1990 Neg: G. Voseph Socki Vew: 3 of 8 & poner mechanism: waim gear Breene Custo Carasela MPS, Ny



Name: Ross Park Carovsel
Location: Binghamton, NY-Broome Co NY
Photo: G, toseph Socki, December 1990
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View: 4 of 8 - scenery panel

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Name: Ross Park Carousel Location: Binghanton, NY-Broome Co NY Pholo: G. Hoseph Soclar, November 1990 Neg: G. toseph Soclai New: 5 of 8 - corned figues / chariot Breeze Carty Carasele MPS, Ny



Name: Poss Park Carousel

Location: Bingharton, NG -Broome Co NY

Phto: G. tesenh Socki, Decerber 1990

Neg: G. tesenh Socki

View: 6 of 8 - chariet

Brane Carty Course MPS My



Name: Ross Park Carousel

Location: Binghamton, My - Broome Co My

Photo: G. Voseph Socli, December 1990

Neg: G. toseph Socli,

View: 7 of 8 - carned figures

Browne County. Corosola MPS, MY



Name: Poss Park Cours ( 1)
Location is Bughamton, NY - Broome Co NY
Proto: G. Joseph Seeles, November 1990
Neg: G. Joseph Seeles, November 1990
View: 8 of 8 - correct figures

Breene Canty Carasala MPS, My

# Please refer to the map in the Multiple Property Cover Sheet for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64500444