

NEWTON LOCAL LANDMARKS PROGRAM

320 NEVADA STREET

The Newton Historical Commission, with the assistance of preservation planner, Gretchen Schuler, prepared this landmark report, completed in June 1997.

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**Silver Lake Cordage Company - 320 Nevada Street
469-471 Watertown Street (formerly)**

1. *Name of Property*

- a. *Historic Name:* Silver Lake Cordage Co.
- b. *Common Name:* same

2. *Location*

- a. *Street Address:* 320 Nevada Street
- b. *Zip Code:* Nonantum, 02158
- c. *Assessor's #:* 14/008/0010

3. *Classification*

- a. *Ownership of Property:* private
- b. *Type of Property:* building
- c. *National Register Status:* NR DOE, NR MRA, 1986

4. *Function or Use*

a. *Historic Functions:* The Silver Lake Cordage Company, constructed in 1867, manufactured cord, rope, and trolley and bell pulls. The industrial activity of Silver Lake Cordage Company continued until 1928 after which the building was the site of the National Packaging Machinery Company which was a continuation of the industrial use.

b. *Current Functions:* In 1985 the deteriorated Silver Lake Cordage Company was rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and reused for commercial use and some light manufacturing.

5. *Zoning*

The property is in a Manufacturing Zoning District which allows a two-story (as-of-right) building with a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 on a minimum lot of 10,000 square feet or a three-story (Special Permit) building with an FAR of 1.5. The present lot is 125,116 square feet and the building gross floor area is 88,846 square feet.

6. *Description*

a. *Neighborhood Description:* Located in Nonantum the Silver Lake Cordage Company building is set back from the main commercial thoroughfare, Watertown Street, and screened by a modern block at the edge of Watertown Street. The building faces Nevada Street and is opposite modest residential properties which originally were constructed in the late nineteenth century as workers' housing. Thus the large manufacturing building is surrounded by residential, commercial and other light manufacturing sites.

Architectural Description: The structure consists of an eleven-bay center block of four stories topped with a mansard attic story and flanking eleven-bay, four-story additions each repeating the architectural elaboration of the original block.

(1) *Materials:*

Foundation: granite block and concrete

Walls: brick

Roof: Slate and copper

Windows: metal frame 9/9 and 12/12

Ornamentation: Simplicity of symmetry and repeated designs with center tower, segmental arched fenestration and corbeling.

(2) *Vegetation:* Shrubbery plantings around base of building, a few clusters of coniferous trees at corners of property along Nevada Street.

(3) *Verbal Description:*

Historical appearance: The earliest part of the building is an eleven bay, four-story brick structure with a mansard attic story, and projecting center entrance stairhall tower. The end bays of the original block are slightly projecting on both the front and rear elevations and have mansard caps with steep concave slopes and a single dormer. Pedimented dormers with curved brackets and twelve-over-twelve sash are cut into the mansard roof and aligned with each vertical bay of the four-story building. Slightly projecting piers frame each bay and meet the building's corbeled cornice in a splayed fashion. The corners of the center tower and of the slightly projecting end bays of the original building also have these slightly projecting vertical piers. Brick bands defining each floor intersect with the vertical piers, so that each bay is framed and two bands separate the raised basement bays from the first story. Each window has a segmental arched head with corbeled stops and twelve-over-twelve sash set into the openings.

The most prominent feature of the main elevation is the stairhall tower with its cupola and copper turret. The centered tower projects forward by one bay and is a single bay wide with slightly projecting piers defining the corners. The four stories include the entrance in the raised basement level, and three window bays above. The half story in brick of this tower has two round ocular windows and corbelled and dentil cornice. The concave mansard roof rises above the mansard roof of the original block and is topped by a cupola with a nine-light window on each side and accentuated corner curved brackets supporting the copper polygonal turret. A distinctive weathervane is on top of the turret.

On each side of the original eleven bay block are symmetrical additions, each of eleven bays - the north side added in 1880 and the south side in 1918. The same architectural detail such as window shape and configuration, slightly projecting piers between each vertical bay, and architectural trim is carried out in both additions.

At the rear is the original boiler house and tall chimney, both of brick. The square boiler house has a mansard slate roof and displays the dentil and corbeled cornice and segmental arched recessed panels on the brick sides. The polygonal brick smoke stack is about twice the height of the mansard roofed center section of the building. Also on the rear side is a projecting stairhall tower with mansard roof at the center of the earliest center block. The end bays of the rear elevation project forward the width of two bays. The south end is one bay wide and the north end is two bays wide.

The north and south end/side walls are slightly different from each other. The north end, which is part of the 1880 addition, is five bays wide with the center bay consisting of three openings of which the windows flank a slightly dropped bay that resembles a door. Each of the five bays of the north end wall is defined by buttresses. The horizontal banding is carried around the entire building and intersections with the buttresses to form narrow caps on the buttresses or piers at the top of each floor. The south end wall, part of the 1918 construction displays five bays of uniform width and separated by buttresses that are more pronounced than all others.

Fenestration pattern is uniform for each of the three construction periods, 1860, 1880, and 1918. The end bays of the two additions and those of the earliest block and the projecting stairhall tower have nine-over-nine sash and all others have twelve-over-twelve sash.

Current appearance: The most noticeable non-historic change is the canopied entrance facing Nevada Street. The interior door of the stairhall tower retains its segmental arched opening. The door is glass and is shielded by the projecting enclosed glass canopy. The other major change, which is well executed and not

noticeable until one carefully inspects, is the replacement of wood sash with metal windows retaining the historic configurations, profiles and dimensions.

There are modern additions at the rear of the building although done in brick and echoing some elements of the late nineteenth century design. To the left of the center stairhall tower is an addition projecting tower which eliminates two of the rear dormers on the mansard center section. Projecting from each wing is a one-story flat roofed six-bay addition with a two-bay slightly projecting hipped roof end section. The window bays of these two additions have segmental arched tops and windows are solid glass. The rhythm of the building with slightly projecting ends, towers and segmental arched fenestration with brick piers are architectural details drawn from the historic industrial fabric.

7. *History of Property*

- a. *Deed History* The property is recorded in Land Court Book 989, Page 34.
- b. *Development History* The Silver Lake Cordage Company was chartered in 1866 and the building was completed in 1867 located on the shores of Silver Lake. The architect for the building was George F. Meacham (1831-1917) who lived in Newton in years later designed and built his house at 303 Franklin Street.

The Silver Lake Cordage was one of two steam-powered factories built in Nonantum in this period. The technology for manufacturing braid and cord was noted to be a “new process unlike anything in this country or ...in the world”. Charles Burr of Auburndale was the president. Within three years the new company had failed and was reorganized in 1870 as the Silver Lake Company. By 1880 the company doubled its production and its space by adding the eleven-bay north wing. Over 150 persons worked to produce heavy cordage, sash rope, trolley and bell pulls, clothesline and steam packing.

Business for the Silver Lake Company was thriving well into the 1900s and again expanded by adding the eleven bay south wing in 1918 using the same architectural detail as the original building and first addition of 1880. The Silver Lake Company moved to Georgia in 1928 after which the building was owned by National Packaging Machinery Company which had been organized in 1909 as U.S. Automatic Box Machine Company, manufacturers of machinery that made boxes and cartons. By this time Silver Lake had been filled for new construction including additional industrial properties. Some of this property was once Silver Lake.

8. *Significance of Property*

a. *Period of Significance* The period of significance for this property extends from its construction date in 1867 to 1928 when the Silver Lake Company moved from this notable building.

b. *Historical Significance* The building is historically significant for the role it played in shaping the character of the Nonantum area of Newton. One of two steamed powered mills, the building and the business helped to establish this area as the industrial section of Newton with workers' housing surrounding the mills.

c. *Architectural Significance* The Silver Lake Cordage Company is one of the most distinguished brick mills of the period and has been compared to the Waltham Watch Company in Waltham. It is the best local example of industrial architecture of the nineteenth century and establishes the character of Nonantum, once known as North Village.

d. *Landmark Designation Criteria* The Silver Lake Cordage Company meets criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 22-93 of Newton's Ordinance T-288. The property is:

- individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places;
- importantly associated with the development of Nonantum as an industrial village of Newton with mill workers' housing surrounding;
- historically and architecturally significant for its representation of industrial application of the Mansard Style;
- at a location and setting which continues to be used and has been preserved through re-adaptive use.
- representative of the original design retaining much of its original fabric.

9. *Recommendations*

a. *Preservation Recommendations* The property was restored in 1985-1986 as a tax act project using the investment tax credit. Wood window sash were replaced with metal windows, maintaining the same light patterns and mullion profiles. This restoration was completed according to the Secretary of Interiors Standards.

b. *Important Features* Of greatest importance are the scale and massing of the building, the rhythm of the fenestration pattern, and architectural detail such as the projecting stairhall tower, the mansard roof, and dormer caps.

10. *Standards for Design Review*

a. *General Standards* All projects affecting the property should be evaluated by considering the effect that proposed changes would have on the general design, arrangement, texture, and material of the features involved and the relationship of such features to the surrounding area. In the case of additions, the appropriateness of size, shape and location of the additions is of critical concern. The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation should provide a baseline for review of changes to a landmark property.

b. *Specific Standards* The setback of this building from Nevada Street is an important feature for viewing the building and fully appreciating its size, scale and overall feeling.

Specific design standards have been addressed in the 1986 historic rehabilitation of the property such that the overall appearance of the building is unchanged from the original intention. Original wood windows have been replaced with metal windows of the same sash configuration and with a product that retains dimensions, mullion bar shadows, and feeling of original windows.

Exterior Walls

- No new openings should be allowed nor could they be practically added to the main and side elevations.
- No existing openings should be filled so that the original opening is not recognizable. Thus a change in an existing opening must be done in such a fashion as to still read as an opening.
- Brick should be maintained and cleaned only after consultation with a materials conservator.

Windows

- All windows have been converted from wood to metal which has been done sensitively. Original window design and arrangement of openings should be retained.

- Deteriorated and missing window elements and architectural features should be replaced with material and elements which match the original in material, color, texture, size, shape, profile, configuration and detail of installation or that are consistent with the replacement windows. Any replacement should be of the same high quality.

Entrances/Doors

- The original entrance design has been altered to accommodate modern use. If evidence of original entrance doors is available and a change is necessary replication would be appropriate.
- When replacement is necessary, it should be based on physical and documentary evidence or on appropriateness of style with the period of architecture. However, the modern entrance canopy, while not of the period, is of a scale that is not intrusive.

Roof

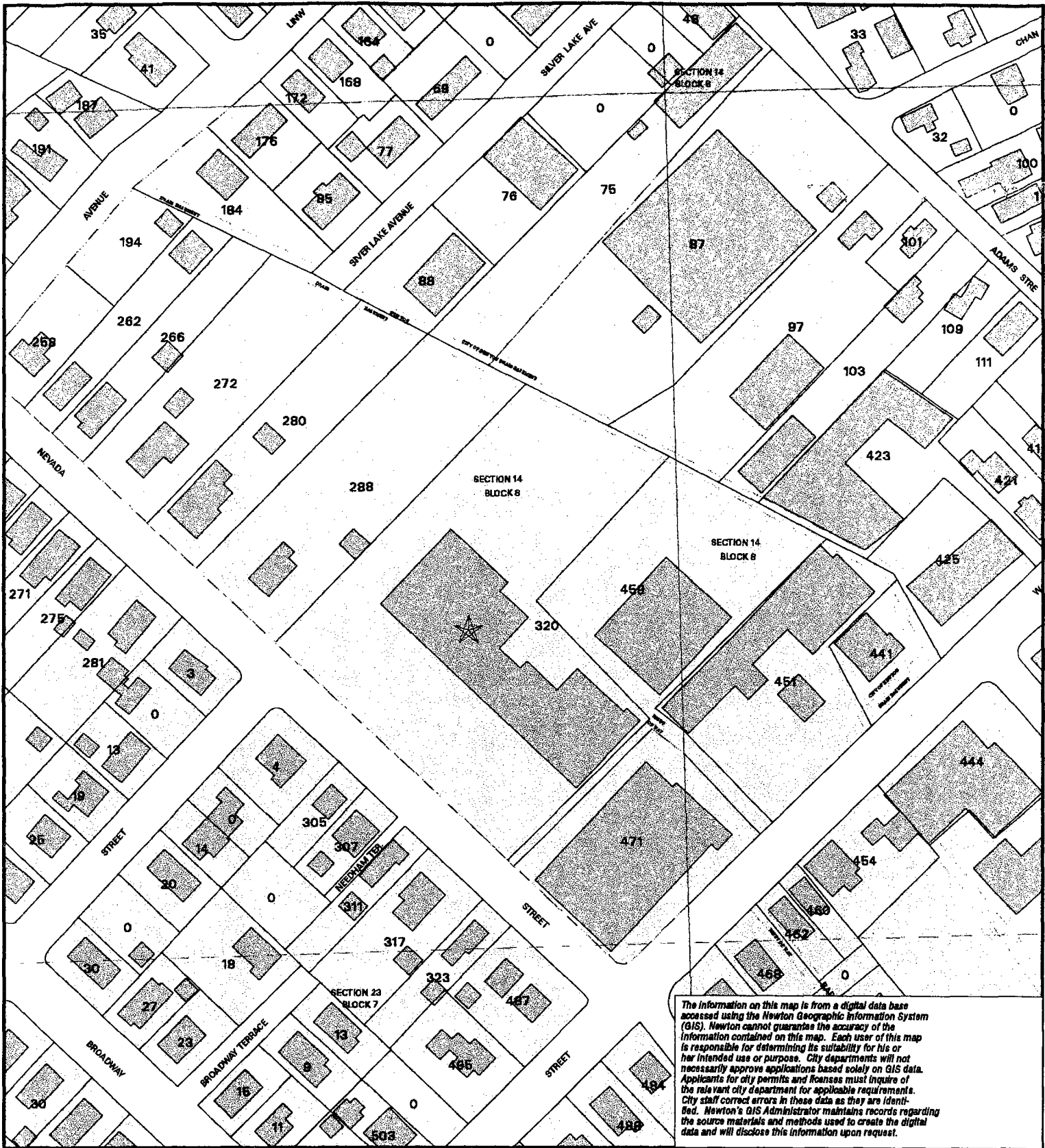
- Roof elements and shape should be preserved. The mansard roof of the center section with end dormer caps is a key feature and should be replicated if elements fail.
- The slate shingles and the shape of the cupola also are key features that should be preserved. If economically unfeasible, compatible substitute materials may be considered.
- All replacement flashing and drainage should be copper or match the original materials.

Additions

- Additions if necessary should only be considered at the rear of the building.
- Any additions should be designed so that they are differentiated from the original building.
- New additions should be not be located near the main or front facade, nor extending from the sides of the original block.

11. *Notification*

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>S/B/L</u>
288 Nevada St.	14/008/0011
305 Nevada St.	23/007/0023
307-309 Nevada St.	23/007/0024
311 Nevada St.	23/007/0011
317 Nevada St.	23/007/0010
323 Nevada St.	23/007/0009
451-455 Watertown St.	14/008/0008
459 Watertown St.	14/008/0010A
469-471 Watertown Street	14/008/0009



Newton Assessor's Sheet

Map Produced on: July 15, 1997

Property boundaries from Newton Assessor's property maps
 Zoning or land use information from Assessor's CAMA database
 Map projection & coordinate system: Massachusetts State Plane - NAD83

CITY OF
NEWTON
 MASSACHUSETTS
 PLANNING DEPARTMENT
 1000 COMMONWEALTH AVE.
 NEWTON CENTRE, MA 02159

Scale: 1" = 152 ft.

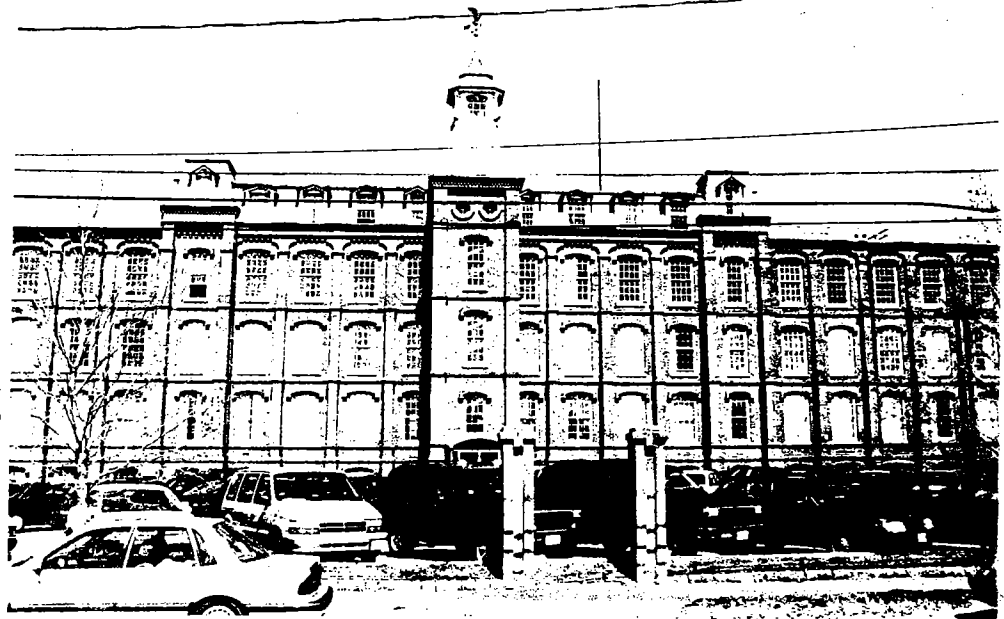


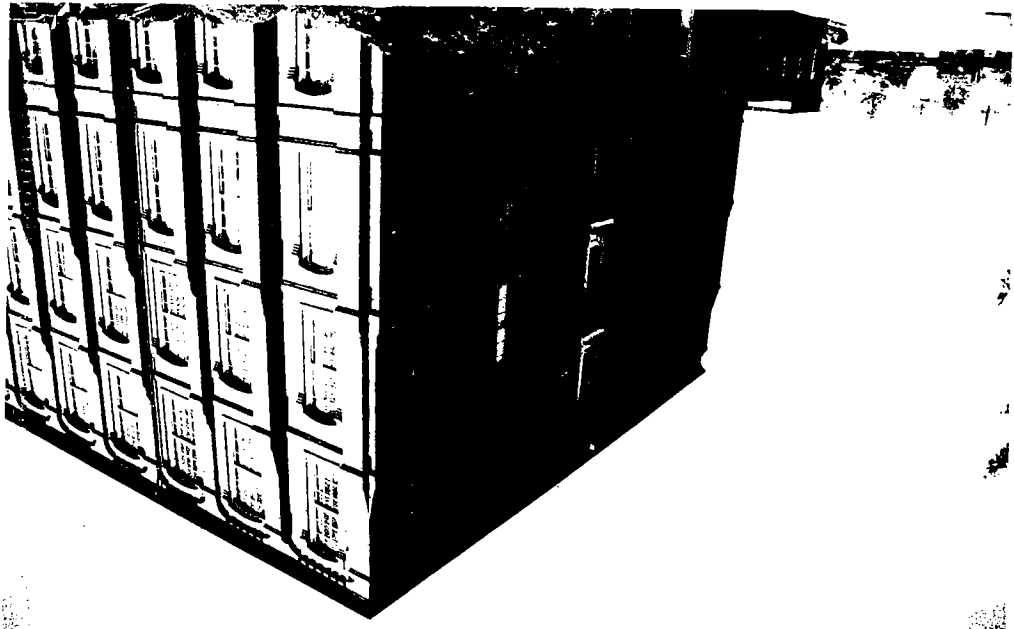
Parcels labeled with Address Number



MAIN FACADE
REAR

320 Nevada St aka 464-471 Watertown St

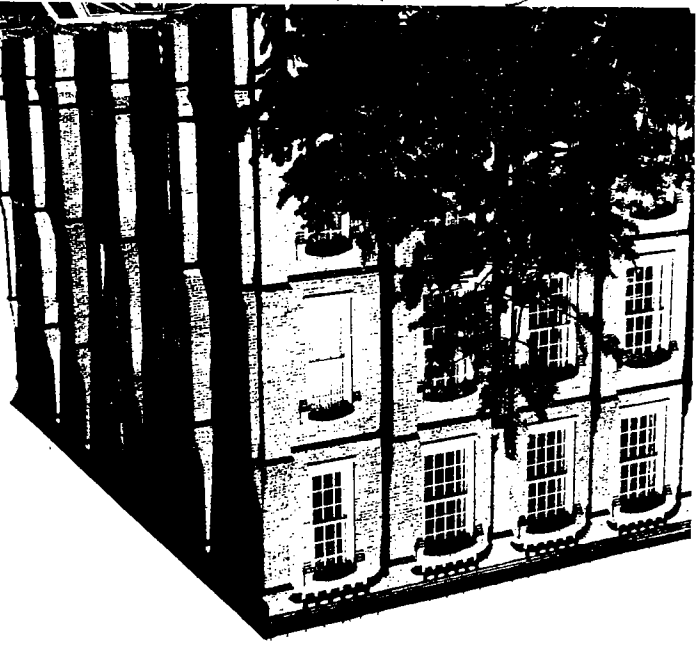




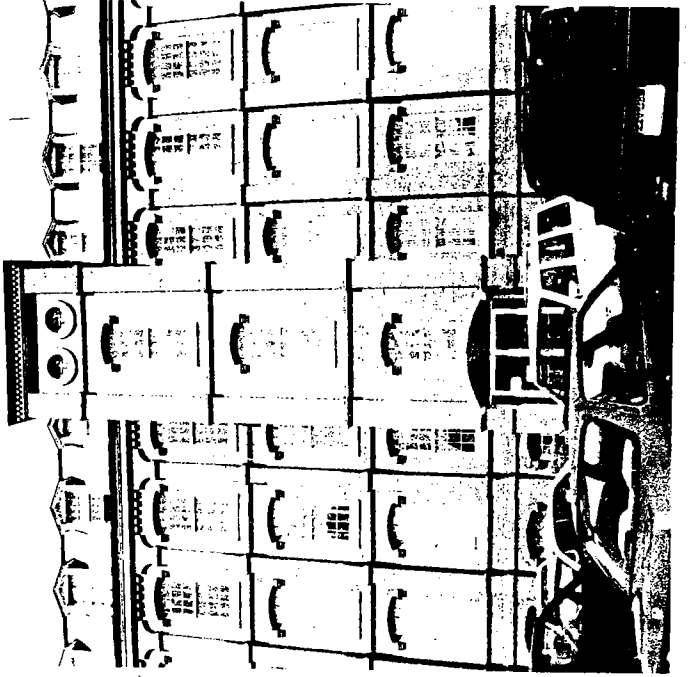
NORTH END - 1880



STAIR HALL TOWER



SOUTH END - 1918

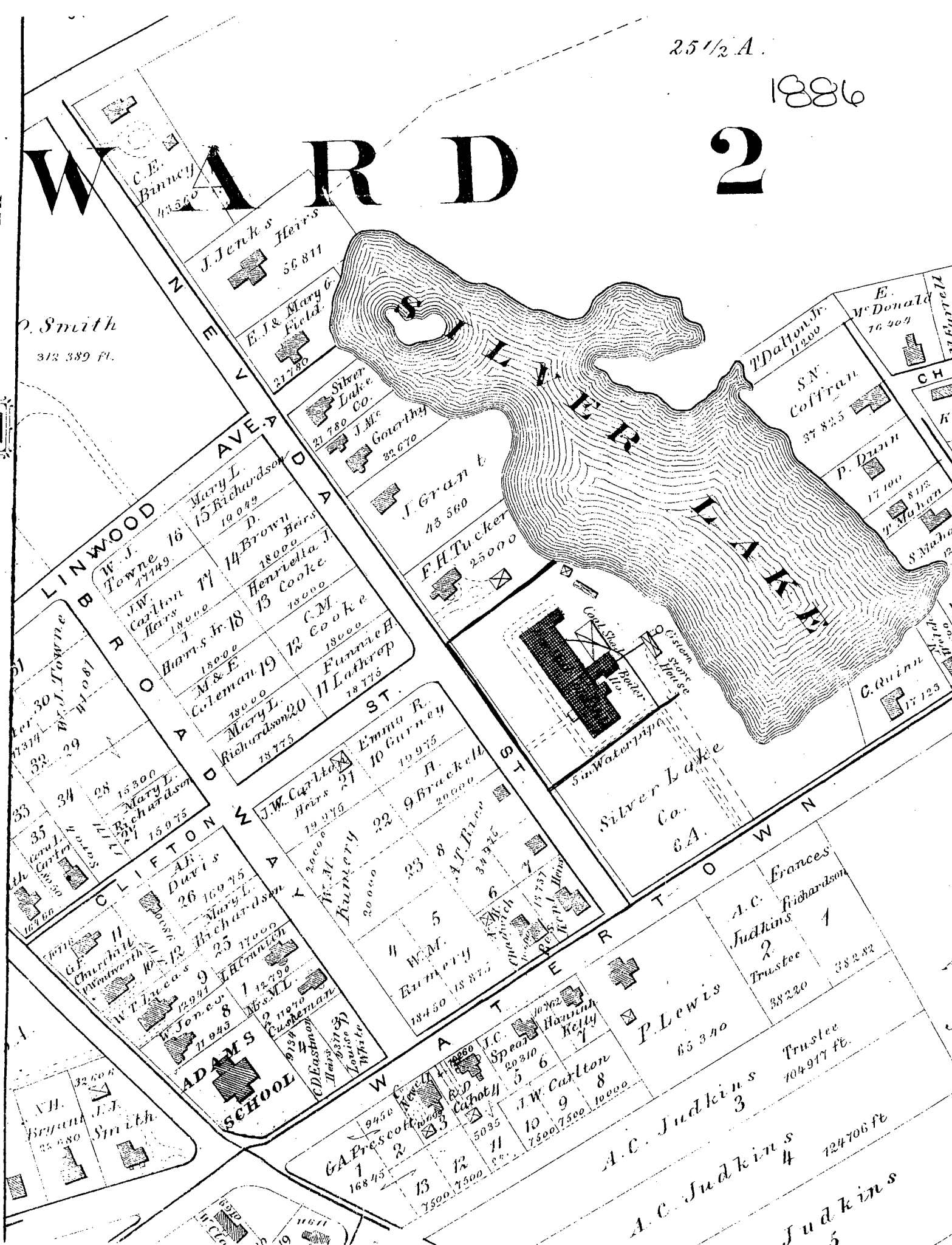


MAIN ENTRANCE

320 Nevada Street

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS AND MAPS

WARD 2



P. Smith
312 389 ft.

C.E. Binney
43349

J. Jenkins Heirs
56 811

E.J. & Mary G. Field
27 780

Silver Lake Co.
27 780

J.M. Goerthy
32 670

J. Grant
43 560

F.H. Tucker
25 000

Emma R. Gurney
10 975

A. Brackbill
9 2000

A.T. Jones
34 745

W.M. Emery
184 50

J.C. Spear
20 210

R.D. Cahot
5035

J.W. Carlton
7500

A.C. Judkins
7500

Mary L. Richardson
15 10049

D. Brown Heirs
14 18000

Henrietta J. Cooke
13 18000

C.M. Cooke
12 18000

Fannie H. Lathrop
11 18 775

J.W. Caplan Heirs
19 975

W.M. Runery
20 20000

A.T. Jones
23 34 745

W.T. Jones
11 945

M.S. M.L.
10 11 270

C. Easton Heirs
10 3737

Louise W. White
10 3737

D. Dalton Jr.
12 200

S.V. Coffran
37 825

P. Drinn
17 100

S.M. Mahan
17 812

S. Mahan
12 2

E. McDonald
16 209

C. Ruinn
17 723

A.C. Judkins 3
65 340

A.C. Judkins 4
124 706 ft

Judkins 5

1907

9a. 11336

Jonathan W. Bemis Hrs.

17a. 21326 Land
2a. 27770 Water

2

21-3

NEVADA

Jos. Jenks Tr.

Ellen M. Meyers

SILVER LAKE

Wm H. Mague

Nellie M. Eustis

Hrs. DeJany

Trim Kinsla

AVE.

J. Cheever Fuller

Angie H.T. Moore

Fannie E. Carlton

Laura MacDonnell

Moses Coleman et al

J.F. Lothrop

M.R. Atkinson

John F. Lothrop

John F. Lothrop

John F. Lothrop

Jas Boyz

Henrietta

J. Cooke

Chas M. Cooke

AC Jenkins

J.F. Lothrop

M.R. Atkinson

John F. Lothrop

John F. Lothrop

John F. Lothrop

Mrs. John Grant

Geo. H. Shapley

Silver Lake Co.

Curtis Abbott

Jas P. Quinn et al

Ann J. Quinn

Hrs. Simon Mahan

Chas. Quinn Est

Wm F & W. Slocum

Hrs. David Evans

Chas. Quinn Est

Chas. Quinn Est

BROADWAY

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ST.

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ARCHILL

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