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THIRTEEN

NEIGHBORHOODS:

ONE CITY

analysis of Cambridge residential areas • Cambridge Planning Board • 1953

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THIRTEEN NEIGHBORHOODS: ONE CITY

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I PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

Extent of Residential Area of Cambridge

Cambridge has about 6.2 square miles of area, excluding water areas. Most of this is occupied by factories, colleges, business centers and public open spaces, such as cemeteries and recreation areas, so that only about 2.7 square miles are devoted to predominantly residential use, including residential streets. In this 2.7 square miles approximately 112,000 persons are concentrated, making up about 29,000 family groups.

Subdivisions of Residential Area

For various practical purposes it has long been necessary to divide the residential area of Cambridge and its population into smaller segments than the City total. This has been done by various agencies for statistical, administrative, and political purposes. Thus, the City is divided into census tracts, parish districts, school districts, wards and precincts, and other subdivisions. In only a few instances do the boundaries of these areas coincide.

In addition to these paper subdivisions, the residential areas of the City are geographically divided by natural and man-made barriers of a physical nature. These include railroad lines, major traffic arteries, and non-residential land such as areas of factories, stores, universities, and open space. Geographical distance between parts of the City further effectively separates residential districts.

The residential areas of the City are further characterized by less tangible but nonetheless real social and economic groupings. These are reflected to some extent in physical form, such as prevalent types of housing. Thus, for example, it is possible to divide the City into areas of high-class single family homes, areas of two and three family homes, areas of rooming houses and apartments, and areas of dilapidated tenements.

Neighborhoods for City Planning Purposes

None of the present divisions of Cambridge residential areas has been found suitable to serve city planning purposes, which embrace many specialized fields in a comprehensive view of the City. After considerable study the neighborhood unit principle was found to offer the best method of dividing Cambridge residential areas into workable sections for city planning purposes. As city planning includes within its scope the location of all major physical features of residential

areas - dwelling structures, system of streets, traffic routes, parking areas, shopping centers, schools, libraries, health centers, recreational areas, churches, social agencies, youth and welfare centers, and others - this analysis of residential areas should be of interest also to the various official and private agencies providing these facilities.

This report briefly describes the neighborhood unit principle and shows how it has been applied to Cambridge. Data on each proposed neighborhood and on other existing subdivisions of the City are included for easy reference. The planning and organizational activities which have already been carried on at the neighborhood level are summarized, and the potentialities for revitalization of civic life on neighborhood principles are outlined.

II C R E D I T S

Assistance on this Study

Many individuals and organizations contributed data for this study. The Planning Board is particularly indebted to the following: Dr. Edward O'Rourke and Miss Edna Skelley of the Cambridge Health Department; Miss Mabel M. Brown, Executive Secretary, Cambridge Tuberculosis and Health Association; Mr. Thomas J. Hartnett, Chairman, Cambridge Election Commission; Miss Elizabeth E. Barry, Cambridge Visiting Nurses Association; and Miss Jane Coogan, Statistician, Catholic School Bureau.

III THE NEIGHBORHOOD THEORY

Definition of the Physical Neighborhood

Credit for the development of the neighborhood unit principle in city planning is due to Clarence A. Perry and his associates, whose ideas on the subject were first published in 1929 in the monograph "The Neighborhood Unit" in Neighborhood and Community Planning, Volume 7, The Regional Plan of New York and its Environs, 1929. The monograph was later summarized by Perry in Chapter 3 of Housing for the Machine Age, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1939. A selected bibliography on the growth of the neighborhood principle is contained in The Neighborhood Unit Plan - Its Spread and Acceptance, James Dahir, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1947.

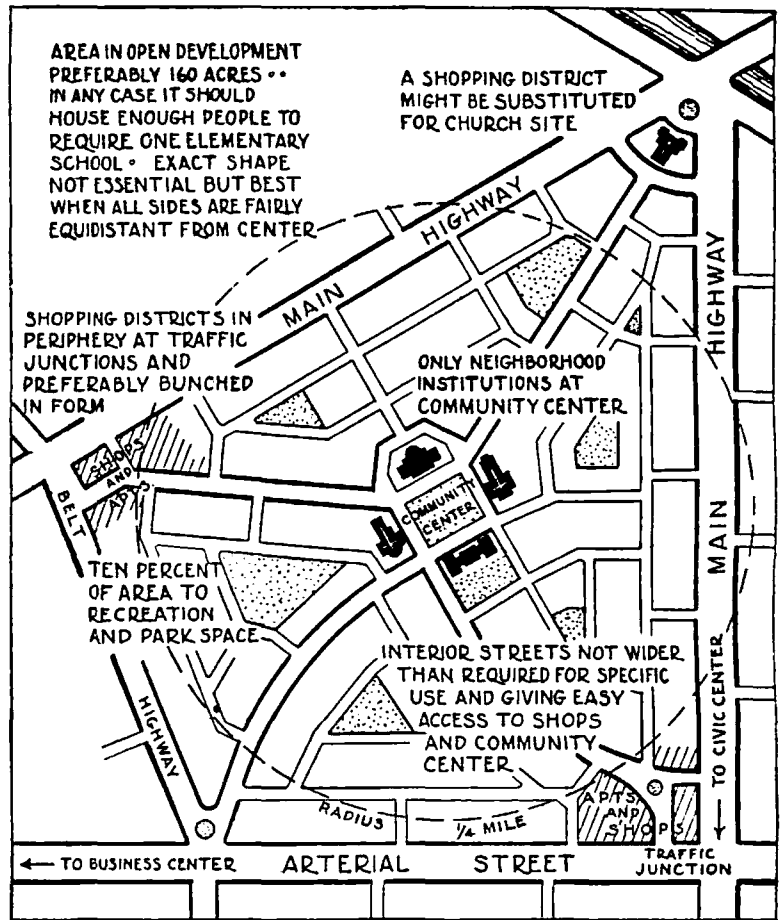
The neighborhood unit is a scheme for the organization of the community life of families. In Perry's own words, it is based on the following six principles:

- "1) Size: A residential unit development should provide housing for that population for which one elementary school is ordinarily required, its actual area depending upon its population density.
- "2) Boundaries. The unit should be bounded on all sides by arterial streets, sufficiently wide to facilitate its by-passing, instead of penetration, by through traffic.
- "3) Open Spaces. A system of small parks and recreation spaces, planned to meet the needs of the particular neighborhood, should be provided.
- "4) Institution Sites. Sites for the school and other institutions having service spheres coinciding with the limits of the unit should be suitably grouped about a central point, or common.
- "5) Local Shops. One or more shopping districts, adequate for the population to be served, should be laid out in the circumference of the unit, preferably at traffic junctions and adjacent to similar districts or adjoining neighborhoods.
- "6) Internal Street System. The unit should be provided with a special street system, each highway being proportioned to its probable traffic load, and the street net as a whole being designed to facilitate circulation within the unit and to discourage its use by through traffic."

right: ILLUSTRATION 1: AN IDEAL NEIGHBORHOOD COMPARED TO A NEIGHBORHOOD OF CAMBRIDGE: Perry's ideal neighborhood contains 6,000 persons and about 1,500 homes on an area of 160 acres. It is composed primarily of single family houses with an average density of about 37.5 persons per acre. Ten per cent of the land area, or approximately 16 acres, are devoted to public recreational and park space.

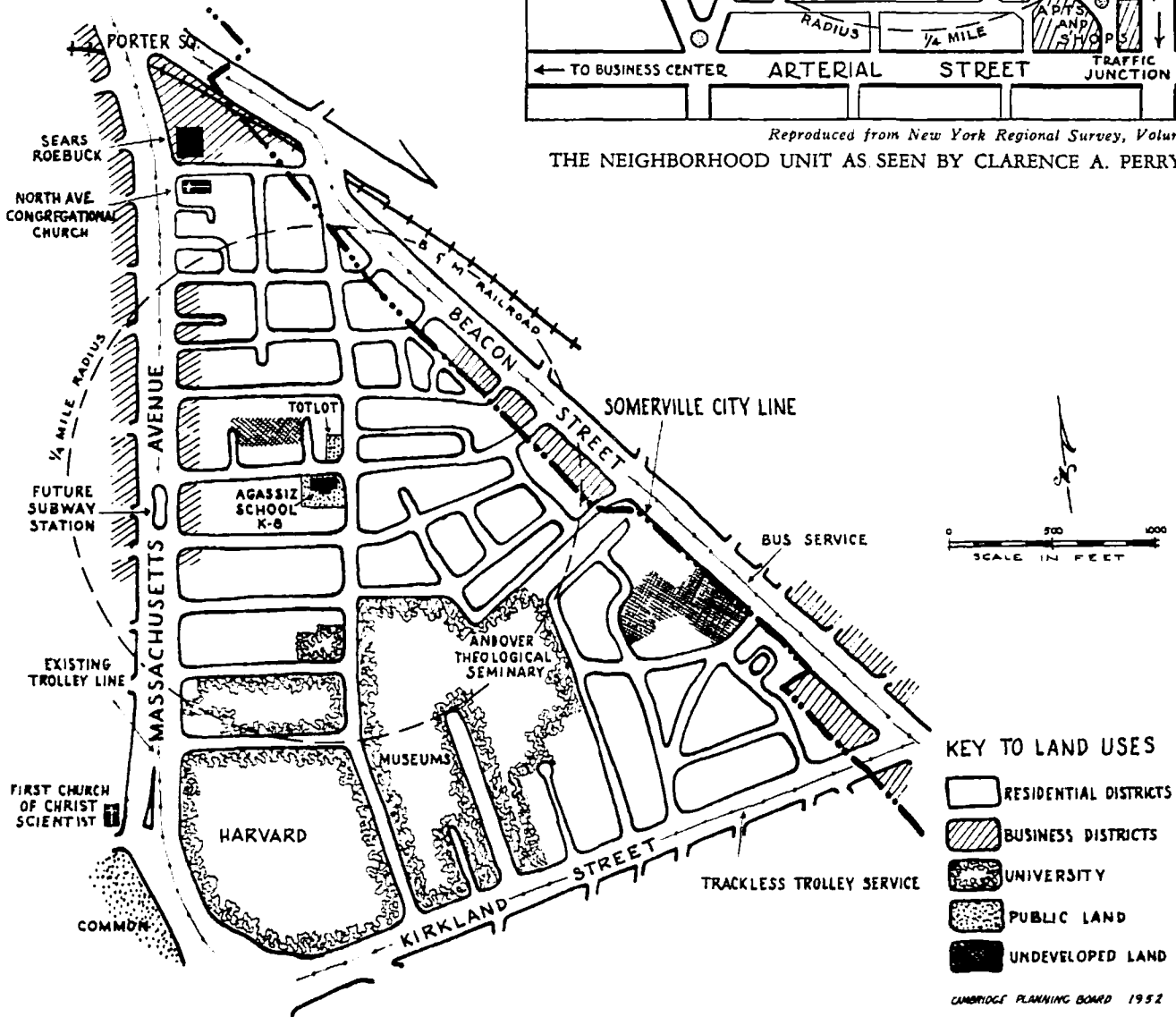
Neighborhood 8 in Cambridge contains about 5,353 persons and about 1,800 homes. Its area is 168 acres. It is thus roughly comparable in population and size to Perry's ideal. Its population is housed one-, two-, and multi-family houses at an average density of about 357 persons per acre. It is clearly bounded by main traffic streets with transportation routes and shopping facilities at the periphery.

In many respects the neighborhood as it exists today falls short of Perry's ideal. Although its residential area is much more crowded, less than one-half of one per cent of its area is devoted to public park and recreational space. Only seven-tenths of an acre of land are devoted to this use. The local street pattern is so laid out that there is no direct connection between part of the neighborhood adjacent to Kirkland Street and the remainder. The Cambridge and Somerville boundary does not correspond with the logical neighborhood boundaries. Classified by the Planning Board as a conservation area, protective measures are needed to preserve and improve the neighborhood's residential character.



Reproduced from *New York Regional Survey, Volume 7*

THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT AS SEEN BY CLARENCE A. PERRY



Associational Advantages of the Neighborhood

From the foregoing definition it can be seen that the neighborhood is essentially a residential grouping of suitable size and layout to favor the day-to-day activities of mothers and children. An elementary school, play spaces, and stores are provided within easy walking distance of every home. The local street system is laid out to keep the points of crossing of vehicles and pedestrians at a minimum. All those influences which detract from safe, healthful, and attractive environment for family living are deliberately excluded. Heavy automobile and truck traffic, trucking terminals, factories, and other undesirable influences that bring noise, fumes, smoke, danger or unsightliness are barred.

In each neighborhood the elementary school is the most important public building. Aside from the street and public utility system it represents the largest investment of public funds. For several hours each day for five days a week, ten months of the year, it hums with child activity. For the rest of the time it is all too often closed and deserted, as it has not been planned for any use except that of a school. Through proper design and operation, however, many of the rooms of a modern school - the auditorium, the gymnasium, the cafeteria, the shops, the arts and crafts rooms, and the health clinic - can be made to serve all age groups in the neighborhood. The school is so planned that these facilities are grouped in wings that can be operated when the rest of the school is closed. Other needed neighborhood facilities may also be included, including a branch library, a swimming pool, a recreation area and park, and possibly meeting rooms and administrative offices. Thus, the one-purpose school and its grounds can be transformed into a multi-purpose neighborhood center. This center could provide headquarters for the educational, health, recreational, and social activities of all age groups. It would not be closed a large part of the time but would have something going on every day of the week every month of the year.

Just as the arrangement of homes on the neighborhood principle is designed to favor family life in creating healthful surroundings, so such a neighborhood center could be designed to favor civic and associational activities by providing meeting rooms, play spaces, and other useful facilities. It is not difficult to foresee what effect such a center could have on local group activities. Social clubs, civic groups, parents' associations, athletic teams, hobby classes, and many other group activities would be stimulated. Creative outlets would be available for the leisure-time activities of young and old. Newcomers to the neighborhood would find it easier to become adjusted because of more groups to join and more opportunities to meet people. Just as a child feels he "belongs" in a happy home, so the family group could "belong" in a neighborhood with a vigorous associational life. Civic awareness, democratic participation, and local pride could develop real meaning for every home.

The neighborhood unit principle consequently offers a method of building up residential cells of such vitality that they are capable of resisting within themselves the forces of physical decay and social disorganization that are common to urban areas.

IV NEIGHBORHOODS OF CAMBRIDGE

Division of Cambridge into Neighborhoods

Map 1 shows the residential areas of Cambridge divided into thirteen neighborhoods. This division has been evolved after several years of study. Major geographical divisions between residential areas, such as railroad lines, heavy traffic streams, and non-residential land uses, were considered of first importance. The various existing subdivisions of the City which encourage associational life and group loyalties, such as school districts, parish districts, and wards, were taken into account. Other administrative statistical and service areas, such as census tracts and public health nurses' districts, were also considered. Attention was paid to the intangible but nonetheless real local loyalties that exist in various sections of the City, and local place names were adopted for neighborhood names wherever suitable. In the course of the study various agencies and individuals familiar with the residential structure of the City were consulted.

The table following page 23 sets forth comparable statistical data on the thirteen neighborhoods.

Clearly defined boundaries are given to each neighborhood for statistical and descriptive purposes although in actuality there are frequently no clear-cut dividing lines. The "center of gravity" of a neighborhood is more important than its boundaries. In the ideal neighborhood (see Illustration 1) the complex of public buildings and open spaces constitutes a powerful center of gravity which provides a physical and symbolic focus for local civic life. In some Cambridge neighborhoods the beginnings of such a center are visible in the form of school or public open space accessible to all parts of the area. In other neighborhoods, however, there is no existing physical organization of streets or public buildings that points to a "natural" neighborhood center.

In the neighborhood groupings no attempt has been made to draw neighborhood boundaries so that they include homogeneous social, economic, or ethnic groups. Democratic participation in civic life can best begin at the neighborhood level.

The organization of Cambridge residential areas on the neighborhood unit principle does not, of course, provide a complete analysis of the City for all planning purposes. There are other functional planning areas which have a commercial, industrial, or institutional focus, which overlap neighborhood lines. Among the more important non-residential functional planning areas are the following: the Central Square business district, Harvard Square business district, Harvard University, the West Cambridge industrial area, and the Kendall Square industrial area.

Limitations in Applying the Neighborhood Principle

The neighborhood unit principle cannot be applied to the residential areas of an old city like Cambridge without many practical compromises and modifications forced by existing conditions. Following are some of the major departures from principles made necessary by conditions in Cambridge, which are similar to limitations in other built-up urban areas:

- 1) LOCAL SERVICE AREAS OFTEN DO NOT COINCIDE WITH NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS. The most economic and efficient service areas for many public facilities such as schools, branch libraries, and health clinics do not always automatically coincide with logical neighborhood boundaries. Because of the compactness of Cambridge branch libraries are best provided in a few key locations serving several neighborhoods and adjacent to major shopping centers. Similar consolidation is desirable in some cases for local health clinics. Cambridge Highlands (Neighborhood 12) will never be large enough to justify an elementary school.
- 2) NEIGHBORHOOD SIZE VARIES. Logical geographical boundaries between residential areas do not always separate the City into districts of approximately uniform population sufficient to support one elementary school. Thus the largest neighborhood in Cambridge has about 16,000 people and the smallest about 500 people. (see table on page 24).
- 3) THERE ARE THREE SCHOOL SYSTEMS. Of the 14,000 elementary school children in Cambridge, 55% go to public school, 40% to parochial school and 5% to private school. Consequently the local public school is not the center of interest for all children and all parents. Because of this divided educational system the public school is a less effective force for neighborhood unity, and the area of homes necessary to support a public school is considerably larger than would be the case if there were only one school system.
- 4) ALL THROUGH TRAFFIC CANNOT BE DIVERTED AROUND CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS. The street system in the ideal neighborhood is so laid out that only local traffic is permitted in the residential area and all through traffic is diverted on the boundary streets. The street system of Cambridge, however, has so developed that main streets are not always properly located to form neighborhood boundary streets. Many streets passing through neighborhoods are especially wide and offer direct routes

across the City. The main arteries do not have capacity to handle all City and metropolitan through traffic, so that much through traffic filters through local residential streets. Consequently many residential neighborhoods are split into smaller sections by heavy streams of through traffic. Proposed superhighways, such as the Concord Pike Extension and the Belt Expressway, can be expected to divert a large part of this traffic if their locations and access points are properly planned in relation to residential neighborhoods. Even with these superhighways, however, many main streets that now pass through neighborhoods, such as Brattle Street, Huron Avenue, Cambridge Street, and Broadway, will still carry heavy traffic loads.

5) MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES ARBITRARILY DIVIDE RESIDENTIAL AREAS. Municipal boundary lines are so laid out that they run through many residential blocks in an illogical fashion. Areas of homes that would be unified according to their physical layout are divided into arbitrary political and administrative service districts. Since local civic life and municipal services form the focus of citizen interest and loyalty, municipal boundaries have been used as neighborhood boundaries, although in some cases they do not form logical boundaries in a physical sense.

For many of its services and activities the Cambridge family naturally looks outside of its neighborhood. The family automobile and a convenient public transportation system extend its geographical range. The public high schools serve the community as a whole. Church loyalties by and large do not correspond with neighborhood boundaries. Shopping, employment, amusement, cultural, and higher educational needs are met on a City and metropolitan pattern.

In spite of these limitations, however, the neighborhood unit principle fills an important local need for the organization of residential land use, service facilities, and associational and civic life in logical groupings within the City as a whole.

Some Cambridge Neighborhoods

Of the thirteen neighborhoods of Cambridge, the following most clearly demonstrate neighborhood unit principles in their present physical form: East Cambridge (Neighborhood 1); Strawberry Hill (Neighborhood 13); and the Agassiz School District (Neighborhood 8). Each of these neighborhoods has clearly defined geographical boundaries. The service areas of the public schools correspond closely to "natural" neighborhood boundaries. The local public schools are suitably located to form the beginnings of neighborhood centers. Local shopping facilities are close at hand.

In their existing condition other neighborhoods of the City are less satisfactory from an ideal point of view. North Cambridge (Neighborhood 11), for example, is a residential area which has a distinct identity of its own but yet is made up of many heterogeneous elements. Physically it is split by Massachusetts Avenue and by the Arlington

Branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad into various residential subgroupings. It is served by two Roman Catholic elementary schools and a French Canadian Catholic elementary school in addition to the public school system.

One of the least homogeneous neighborhoods of Cambridge is Neighborhood 10, the largest in total area. It is divided by Huron Avenue, Brattle Street, Fresh Pond Parkway, Mount Auburn Street and other main traffic ways. It contains several residential groupings at a "sub-neighborhood" level with a clear identity of their own. These include Larchwood, The Marsh, and Coolidge Hill. St. Peter's Parochial School and various private schools are strong competitors to the local public school system.

Cambridge Highlands (Neighborhood 12) is a special case. A small isolated residential section of Cambridge, its growth is restricted by nearby industrial land unsuitable for residence. It will never be large enough to support its own public elementary school.

Another special case is Neighborhood 2, which includes only M.I.T., related residential facilities, and nearby industrial blocks. This section of the City has, however, a clear identity unrelated to any residential area and with prominent geographical boundaries. Harvard and Radcliffe, on the other hand, cannot be separated by a hard and fast line from nearby residential areas.

V CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS IN PRACTICE

Neighborhood Plans

The division of residential Cambridge into neighborhood units has already proved of value for its primary purpose: the preparation of plans for the protection and improvement of residential areas. Two neighborhood plans were published by the Planning Board in 1952: Plan for the Strawberry Hill Neighborhood and Plan for Cambridge Highlands (see Illustration 2, page 12). Neighborhood surveys have been begun in other neighborhoods as the preliminary step to the preparation of neighborhood plans. The neighborhood concept has been applied in the consideration of sites for new elementary schools by the Advisory Committee on the School Building Program (see Illustration 3, page 14).

Organizational Campaigns

Cambridge neighborhoods have been used by the Cambridge Tuberculosis and Health Association as the basis for recruiting voluntary personnel and for X-ray surveys to discover and prevent tuberculosis. Voluntary first-aid and nursing personnel for civil defense have been also recruited on a neighborhood basis.

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The neighborhood concept has also been of help to Welcome Wagon Incorporated in defining areas of the City served by this organization. Three service areas have been adopted which include groups of neighborhoods related to the three major shopping centers of Central Square, Harvard Square, and North Cambridge.

The neighborhood concept is especially useful for organizational drives because the clearly defined boundaries of each neighborhood can be more easily grasped by volunteer workers than the more complicated boundaries of other divisions of the City, such as census tracts or wards. The general physical and, in some cases, civic homogeneity of the residential neighborhoods also aids in the stimulation of local interest and the recruitment of local personnel.

Coincidence of Other City Divisions with Neighborhoods

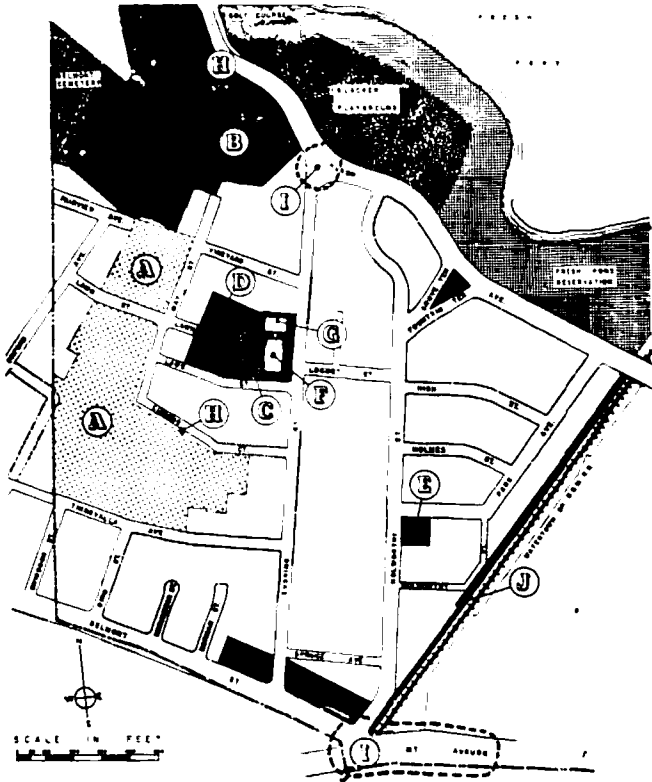
As has been previously described, one of the major objectives of the neighborhood unit principle is to strengthen democratic associational and civic life. In order to reinforce this objective, it would be desirable if all existing subdivisions of the City that shape associational life and focus local loyalties were modified to conform with the neighborhood pattern. Public school districts, for example, could be altered to coincide with neighborhood boundaries as part of a program of school improvement. Political wards likewise might be changed to correspond with the boundaries of neighborhoods or groups of neighborhoods. To facilitate statistical comparisons census tract boundaries could be altered so that tracts correspond with neighborhoods or several tracts make up one neighborhood. The latter condition is now substantially the case in East Cambridge where Census Tracts 1, 2, and 3 virtually coincide with Neighborhood 1.

Naturally all service areas cannot be made to coincide with neighborhoods, and the concept must be considered with practical common sense in relation to each individual service or facility. The coordination on the neighborhood principle of the many overlapping and specialized areas into which the residential parts of the City are now divided would, however, be a big step toward the organization of residential areas on a logical basis. Such coordination on a social and administrative basis would parallel and strengthen the efforts of city planning to organize residential areas on a physical basis.

Neighborhood Centers

As discussed in ~~PART III: THE NEIGHBORHOOD THEORY~~, an activities center is essential to the development of civic and associational life in the neighborhood. In its recommendations for new public elementary schools,

PLAN FOR THE STRAWBERRY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD



LEGEND

EXISTING LAND USE

- NO CHANGE PROPOSED
- RESIDENCE
 - OPEN SPACE
 - RECREATIONAL AREAS
 - SCHOOL YARDS
 - WATER RESERVATION
 - CEMETERY
 - BUSINESS

SUGGESTED LAND USES

- RESIDENCE
 - A CORCORAN PARK
- DEVELOPED OPEN SPACE
 - B RECREATIONAL AREAS
 - C SCHOOL YARDS
 - D PEAK RESERVATION
 - E IMPROVEMENT OF WAGGETT SCHOOL YARD
 - F ENLARGEMENT OF WAGGETT SCHOOL YARD
 - G TOTLOT

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLIC BUILDINGS

- F HEALTH CLINIC, WAGGETT SCHOOL
- G SYN & NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER, WAGGETT SCHOOL

SUGGESTED STREET IMPROVEMENTS

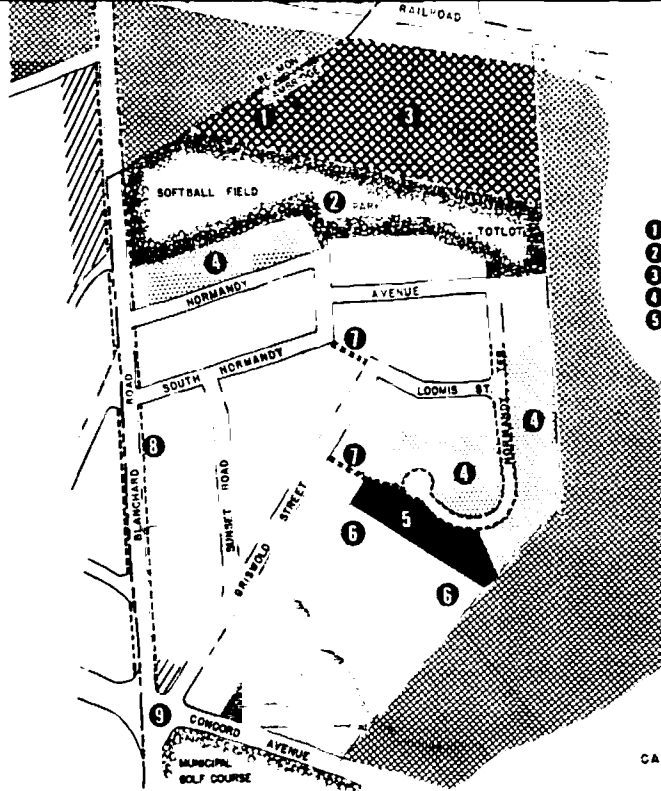
- H STREET WIDENING, CHURCH ST & HURON AVE.
- I INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENT, MAPLE CHURCH ST. & BRIDGE-BUILDING ST.

MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

- J ENFORCEMENT OF ZONING ORDINANCE
- K SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT
- L IMPROVEMENT OF STRUCTURES & YARDS
- M LANDSCAPING ALONG RAILROAD

CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD 1952

Plan For Cambridge Highlands

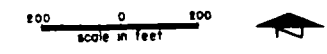


KEY TO PROPOSALS

- 1 new culvert, pond filled
- 2 recreation area
- 3 new industry
- 4 new homes
- 5 sanatorium residences
- 6 landscaping
- 7 pedestrian walks
- 8 street widening
- 9 intersection improved

KEY TO LAND USES

- | | EXISTING | PROPOSED |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|
| RESIDENCE | [Pattern] | [Pattern] |
| T.B. SANATORIUM | [Pattern] | [Pattern] |
| RECREATION | [Pattern] | [Pattern] |
| BUSINESS | [Pattern] | [Pattern] |
| INDUSTRY | [Pattern] | [Pattern] |



CAMBRIDGE PLANNING BOARD 1952

the Cambridge Advisory Committee on the School Building Program has considered new schools in terms of their use as neighborhood centers for all age groups. Among the rooms and spaces that can be made to serve many age groups on a round-the-clock schedule by proper planning are the auditorium, the cafeteria, the health clinic, the shops, the arts and crafts rooms, the gymnasium and lockers, and the school playground. Many of the existing school buildings in Cambridge which will not be replaced by new schools could also be remodelled or enlarged to serve as neighborhood centers. The plan for Strawberry Hill (see Illustration 2), for example, calls for the addition of health and gymnasium facilities to the Haggerty School to serve both school and neighborhood needs.

Neighborhood Conservation and Rehabilitation

Cambridge residential areas, like those in many other cities, are constantly subject to threats of deterioration and blight. Organized on a neighborhood basis, citizens' protective and improvement associations would be of great benefit in conserving or rehabilitating residential values. There are many instances where undesirable business and industrial intrusion into a residential district has been prevented by alert and united citizen action. Protection of homes and environment of Cambridge families is as much a matter of concern to local citizens as it is to City officials. The neighborhood unit principle offers a sound framework for the organization of "grass roots" programs to preserve and improve residential areas.

left: ILLUSTRATION 2: COMPLETED PLANS FOR CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS: These two neighborhood plans were published by the Planning Board in 1952. The Strawberry Hill plan calls for provision of a neighborhood center wing on the existing Haggerty School along with ultimate expansion of the school playground. These and other proposals are designed to make this conservation neighborhood more attractive and livable. Special emphasis is placed on the health and safety of mothers and children.

The Plan for Cambridge Highlands stresses protection from industrial encroachment, provision of neighborhood recreation space, and beautification of streets and public property. This neighborhood is a special case in that it will never be large enough to support an elementary school. Children must be transported by bus to schools in another neighborhood.

Planning for Urban Redevelopment and Public Housing

It is axiomatic that urban redevelopment projects of a residential nature and public housing projects should be conceived in terms of their close integration with the residential neighborhood of which they form a part. Corcoran Park, the most recent Federal public housing development of the Cambridge Housing Authority, is an example of a public housing development planned to harmonize with its neighborhood setting. By coordinating programs of improvement to local facilities, such as recreation areas and schools, and programs of housing conservation and rehabilitation with public housing and redevelopment projects in the framework of a neighborhood plan, trends toward residential decay can be reversed.

Neighborhood Councils

Many City agencies deal with the public at large in public informational or educational activities. In addition to the Planning Board these include the Health Department, the Library Department, the Civic Unity Committee, the Civil Defense Agency, and the Recreation Commission. These agencies frequently find it difficult to find existing channels of communication to carry on local programs within the limits of their available personnel. The organization of non-partisan neighborhood councils of local residents interested in common problems would help fill this gap. Such councils would also be valuable to non-official agencies carrying on health, welfare and other social services. They could likewise be effective in preventive programs dealing with vandalism, juvenile delinquency, and other social problems. The organization of such neighborhood groups can probably best be carried out by local social agencies. In the final analysis they depend on local initiative and enthusiasm for their success. Once set up, however, they could be a valuable creative tool for responsible democratic government.

left: ILLUSTRATION 3: STUDY PLANS FOR CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS: These three sketch plans have been prepared prior to the completion of final neighborhood plans in order to evaluate the best location for new elementary schools and neighborhood centers. The letters and numerals on the plans refer to alternate sites that were considered. The diagrams show how residential areas served by one elementary school are unfortunately divided by non-residential land uses and major traffic routes. In the ideal neighborhood residential areas would be grouped around the school without such intervening barriers.

VI DESCRIPTION OF MAPS

Reference Maps Included

Map 1 shows Cambridge neighborhoods and Maps 2-9 show the other existing subdivisions of the City with a physical, associational, statistical, or service connotation that were of major consideration in adapting the neighborhood unit principle to Cambridge conditions. There are, of course, other divisions of the City such as Police, Fire, and Sanitation Districts. These were not taken into account as they are simply administrative service areas and not elements in a neighborhood consciousness.

The following descriptions of the subdivisions of the City shown on Maps 1-9 include, wherever possible, reference to the pertinent agency, the date of most recent revision, the basis for definition, and relevant comments.

MAP 1: NEIGHBORHOODS: The thirteen neighborhoods of Cambridge were defined by the Planning Board staff and approved by the Planning Board in 1952 after several years of study. A definition of the neighborhood and a description of its application to Cambridge make up Parts III and IV of this report.

MAP 2: PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS: Public elementary school districts were adopted by the Cambridge School Committee on November 1, 1937. Map 2 was drawn from the School Department's Street Index of School Districts issued in January 1942. Among all other maps in this series school districts are unique in that they do not always make use of streets or other physical barriers as subdivisions between districts. The zig-zag lines between some school districts are caused by the fact that addresses on both sides of a main street fall in one school district whereas addresses on the intersecting side streets fall into an adjacent district.

For practical purposes school districts individually or in combination, coincide closely with the neighborhoods designated on Map 1. In most cases only a relatively slight revision of school district boundaries would be required to obtain complete conformance with neighborhood boundaries.

MAP 3: PARISH DISTRICTS: Parochial school districts generally correspond to the parish district for each affiliated church, all district boundaries being determined by the Archbishop. Parish boundaries are adjusted from time to time as the need arises, although the last complete parish was formed in 1926 - Immaculate Conception in North Cambridge.

Map 3 locates the eight parish parochial schools (including Sacred Heart in East Watertown that serves Cambridge) and four nationality schools - three in East Cambridge and one in North Cambridge - which serve Italian, Polish, Lithuanian, and French nationality groups in the general area.

Parochial schools in Cambridge have developed in number and size with the growth of the Catholic Church. In the early part of the nineteenth century St. John's Parish (now Sacred Heart) in East Cambridge covered the entire City of Cambridge. By 1848 the population had grown so that a new parish - St. Peter's - was established in Old Cambridge, and Prospect Street became the dividing line between the two districts. By 1867 the districts were further divided and part of each was given to a new parish - St. Mary's in Cambridgeport.

Within the next decade part of St. Peter's district became the basis for a new St. Paul's Parish (1875). In 1883 the original St. John's (in East Cambridge) was changed to Sacred Heart and a new Church was dedicated. In 1893 another section of the rapidly growing St. Peter's became the new St. John's in North Cambridge and twelve years later part of St. Mary's became the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1908 the western half of Sacred Heart became St. Patrick's, and in 1926 the Immaculate Conception Parish was formed in North Cambridge, taking in parts of Cambridge, Arlington, and West Somerville.

In the meantime five nationality parishes had been established - four in East Cambridge and one in North Cambridge, as follows: Notre Dame de Pitie (French) in North Cambridge (1892); St. Anthony's (Portuguese, 1902); St. Hedwig's (Polish, 1907); Immaculate Conception (Lithuanian, 1910); and St. Francis of Assisi (Italian, 1917) all in East Cambridge. All but St. Anthony's now have schools operated by the parish church and serve specific nationality groups in the general area.

The only diocesan school in Cambridge (i.e. under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop) is the Matignon High School in North Cambridge (not shown on Map 3).

While the local Roman Catholic Church and its affiliated schools is an important organization making for homogeneity and group loyalties in the areas of service, because of the size of parish districts conformity with neighborhood divisions is not always possible. It should be noted, however, that the parish districts for the Sacred Heart Church in East Cambridge, for the Blessed Sacrament Church in Cambridgeport and for St. John's in North Cambridge coincide to substantial extent with important neighborhood boundaries.

MAP 4: CENSUS TRACTS: Cambridge Census Tracts were set up for the 1940 Census by a local Census Tract Committee, which was organized at the request of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Miss Elizabeth Morrison, at that time Executive Secretary of the Family Society of Cambridge, was Chairman of this Committee.

The U.S. Census Tract Manual (Third edition, January 1947) describes census tract procedure at some length. Following are quotations from the Manual's definition of tracts.

"Ideally, tracts should be as nearly equal in population as possible and should have an average population of about 7,500...In the densely populated sections of the City, tracts of very small area will have large populations, of course; but in no case should the population of any one tract exceed 12,000...Size and homogeneity of population and uniformity in characteristics of dwellings rather than area should be the basic criteria in laying out tracts. Each tract, however, should be compact...

"It is important that the boundary lines of the tracts be definite. These boundary lines should ordinarily be the centers of streets. Rivers, railroad tracks, and park boundaries may be used where these are definite and permanent dividing lines between one section of the city and another. Alleys should not be used since they tend to disappear as the City develops. Neither should "imaginary" or "described" lines be used since they cannot be identified in the field...

"So far as practicable, each tract should contain a population reasonably homogeneous both as to racial characteristics and as to economic status. The type of living accommodations of the area affords the best available index to economic status... It is recognized that the racial and economic characteristics of the population may not be maintained over a long period of years. In general, however, the same changes will occur throughout a small area so that eventually there will again be homogeneity although the characteristics may be different from those of the original population. In any case, any one tract should not originally include areas with widely dissimilar characteristics. It would be unfortunate to have one part of the tract composed of expensive homes and the other part composed of slum dwellings since over-all or average statistics for the tract would not reflect the status of either group.

"Especial care should be taken to include all of a given housing development in one tract. If the development is large enough, it may constitute a separate tract.

"It is a good idea to allot a single tract to each very large, permanent institution within the city...

"A few cities have had the same ward boundaries for a long period. In these instances, they have found it advantageous to design tracts to

conform with ward boundaries, since many agencies have previously maintained their records on a ward basis and since population data from previous censuses are also available by wards. If ward boundaries are not likely to remain permanent or if they violate the other criteria for tract boundaries, a good design of tracts should not be sacrificed for the sake of conforming to ward boundaries."

The original Cambridge Census Tract Committee gave especial emphasis to physical boundaries and social factors - population, race, nationality, neighborhood loyalty, and economic level - in tracting the City. Population in each original tract ranged from 3,000 to 5,000. Ward lines were maintained wherever possible. Economic and population factors were fairly consistent within each tract but ethnic groups were considered too fluid in Cambridge to form the basis for tract definition.

Prior to the 1950 Census a new Census Tract Committee was set up at the request of the Bureau of the Census. Professor Douglas P. Adams of M.I.T. is the Chairman of this Committee. After some consideration of the desirability of changing tract boundaries, it was decided to retain the original tracting for the 1950 Census in order to facilitate the comparison of 1950 Census figures with 1940 figures.

This Committee has prepared a Census Tract Street Index which shows the tract in which every street number in Cambridge is located. This Index may be obtained upon request from the Cambridge Community Services.

Because of their general disregard of major physical and traffic barriers between residential areas, the boundaries of Census Tracts in general do not coincide with neighborhood boundaries. The table of neighborhood data shows what Census Tracts are contained in each neighborhood. East Cambridge (Neighborhood 1), the Agassiz area (Neighborhood 8), and North Cambridge (Neighborhood 11), correspond most closely to individual or groups of Census Tracts. It would be desirable to consider revising Census Tract boundaries for the 1960 Census so that groups of tracts can be combined to form neighborhoods on a City-wide basis.

MAP 5: WARDS AND PRECINCTS: Wards and precincts in Cambridge as they now stand were defined in 1934 by the City Council. They are set up by authority of Sections 1-10 of Chapter 54 of the General Laws of Massachusetts. Section 1 states:

"In 1924 and every tenth year thereafter in December a city by vote of its City Council may make a new division of its territory into such number of wards as may be fixed by law. The boundaries of such wards shall be so arranged that the wards shall contain as nearly as can be ascertained and as may be consistent with well-defined limits to each ward an equal number of voters."

Section 2 designates the manner in which wards are divided into precincts, as follows:

"Each city shall be divided into convenient voting precincts designated by numbers or letters and containing not more than 2,000 voters. Every ward shall constitute a voting precinct by itself or shall be divided into precincts containing as nearly as may be an equal number of voters consisting of compact and contiguous territory entirely within the ward and bounded so far as possible by the center line of known streets or ways or by other well-defined limits..."

The City Charter under which Cambridge was incorporated as a city in 1846 provided that the City be divided into three wards. By 1857 the number had been increased to five and section 8, Chapter 75 of the Acts of 1857 required that "the City shall in the month of October, 1857, and every fifth year thereafter revise the boundaries of said wards...for the convenience of the inhabitants."

Previous to the creation of an Election Commission in Cambridge in 1921 all business pertaining to wards and ward boundaries was handled by the City Clerk's office for the Common or City Council. Beginning in 1921 the Election Commission took over this function, and now operates under Chapter 54, Sections 1-10, G.L.M. quoted above.

The work of the Commission has almost doubled since it began. The number of polling places has increased from 36 in 1920 to 55 in 1952, one for each of the 55 precincts in the City. Although State law allows a City to have as many as 2,000 registered voters in each precinct before requiring a change of boundaries, it has been the practice in Cambridge to limit the number as much as possible to 1,000 for greater efficiency of operation. With the substantial increase in voter registration in the fall of 1952, however, several precincts now exceed the 1,000 limit set by the Commission.

In addition to being a convenient administrative device for organizing and carrying out elections the ward and precinct organization is probably one of the most important elements in civic life. Although the present wards in Cambridge show little relationship with neighborhoods, the reorganization of wards according to the neighborhood unit principle would be an important step toward relating civic interests with functional physical areas.

MAP 6: PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES' DISTRICTS: Public health nurses' districts were last defined by the Cambridge Health Department in the summer of 1952. Each of the fifteen districts of the City is covered by one public health nurse. In addition there are special nurses for the City at large and a supervisory staff.

The nurses' districts are set up to equalize the work load on each nurse, As approximately two-thirds of each nurses work is spent in the schools, the local school population is an important factor in determining the size

of the district. Other considerations include the work load imposed by home calls and by well-child conferences. Method of transportation available is also a consideration, as the nurses in three of the districts make their calls on foot. Shifts in population, especially among the lower income groups caused by housing projects, and other developments influence the need for nursing services and are the major cause for revision.

Nurses' districts are an element in building neighborhood loyalties in that the nurse can be an important, frequently-seen friend of the family, especially among the lower income groups.

MAP 7: LOCAL PLACE NAMES: Map 7 has been plotted by the Planning Board staff on the basis of considerable research into Cambridge history. While not inclusive of all names given to various parts of the City, the map shows those where there is general agreement and sound historic foundation.

Avon Hill refers to the general area of Avon Hill Street (formerly Jarvis Court) and named so by W. A. Mason in 1882 since it was practically an extension of Avon Street up the hill.

Cambridge Highlands is the small residential area adjacent to the Cambridge Sanatorium. Its name dates from early subdivision plats and has been adopted as the name for Neighborhood 12.

Cambridgeport was the name given to the original village which developed around Lafayette Square. Canals and docks were developed in this area prior to the Civil War with the hope of converting Cambridge into a seaport. Cambridgeport has been designated as the name for Neighborhood 5.

Captain's Island was the name given to a small hillock once situated in a salt marsh in the Charles River at the end of Magazine Street. At high tide this hillock became an island. In the early 1630's the town granted this area "for cowyards" to Captain Daniel Patrick, who as a former "common soldier of the Prince's Guard in Holland", was employed to exercise and drill the militia of the Colony. His name appears with seven others in the list of inhabitants at Newtowne in 1632. Although he owned the land for only a short time it has been known as Captain's Island ever since. In 1817 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts purchased this land from the heirs of Francis Dana and the following year built a "public magazine of powder" from which Magazine Street got its name.

Coolidge Hill was named for Josiah Coolidge, farmer and florist, who at one time owned most of the upland east of Coolidge Avenue and south of Mt. Auburn Street.

Dana Hill derived its name from the Dana family, who owned a large estate in the vicinity of Dana Street and who attached certain development regulations to their lands when subdivided. For years these were known as the "Dana deed restrictions".

East Cambridge was the name given to the new village on Lechmere Point which developed after the opening of the Craigie Bridge in 1809. It has been adopted as the neighborhood name applying to the residential area east of the Boston and Albany Branch Railroad, which was its original connotation.

The Gold Coast is the name given by Cambridge people in the neighborhood to an area of Harvard residence halls in the vicinity of Claverly and Westmorley Halls, where wealthy men's sons lived.

Kerry Corner was the name given to Bank Street in the block between Flagg and Cowperthwaite Streets because the majority of residents there came from County Kerry, Ireland.

Larchwood is presumed to have been derived from the same source as Larch Road—a long row of larch trees along the easterly line of what was the John C. Gray estate.

The Marsh, as its name indicates, was a swampy area in the vicinity of Foster and Mount Auburn Streets. Of the many marsh areas along the Charles River it is the only one which has survived in name to the present day.

North Cambridge, so-called because of its location in relation to the rest of the City, has been designated as the name for Neighborhood 11.

Observatory Hill is so-called because of the Harvard Observatory which was first located there in 1846.

Old Cambridge is the original settlement founded in 1620 in the area of Harvard Square.

Strawberry Hill was the name given to the section of Cambridge south of Fresh Pond by local residents in the last century. It has been adopted as the neighborhood name for Neighborhood 13.

The Village, a contraction for "Greasy Village", is the name given to an area a few blocks square east of Brookline Street in the vicinity of Allston Street. It is derived from the fact that Reardon's soap factory was located there for many years.

West Cambridge applies generally to the industrial area west of the Alewife Brook Parkway.

In order to strengthen local neighborhood loyalties, it would be desirable to have a name for each of the neighborhoods of Cambridge. However, no generally accepted names could be found for most of the residential sections of the City. This may be considered as an indication of a lack of associational and civic life related to the home and its surroundings.

MAP 8: PREDOMINANTLY RESIDENTIAL AREAS: This map was drawn by the staff of the Planning Board in 1952. The pink areas comprise about 1,718 acres--about 38% of the total area of Cambridge.

MAP 9: RAILROADS AND MAJOR TRAFFIC ROUTES: This map was drawn by the staff of the Cambridge Planning Board in 1952 from traffic flow data. The widths of the bands are in a general sense proportionate to the amount of traffic. This traffic system has its origin in the eighteenth century when a system of radiating turnpikes was developed from Boylston Street, which connected with the first bridge across the Charles linking Boston with the north and west. Other major streets were laid out following the construction of the other bridges in the nineteenth century. As the City grew, blocks of homes were built on the farms and wastelands lying between the old turnpikes. The major traffic streams that cross residential areas today are the outcome.

DATA ON CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOODS

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

AREA

POPULATION

OCCUPIED DWELLING UNITS

no.	name	public elem. school	census tract no.	total land & water area in acres	predominantly residential land inc. res. streets in acres	predominantly residential land excl. res. streets in acres (a)						OCCUPIED DWELLING UNITS			
							1940 pop. (b)	1950 pop. (b)	students & stud. fam. in coll. & univ. housing in 1950 (c)	1950 pop. adjusted	net change 1940-1950	1950 density in persons per acre (d)	1940	1950	change
1	East Cambridge	Putnam (K-8) Thorndike (K-8)	1, 2, 3; part of 4	432	73	60.7	9,043	8,232	-	9,232	- 811	113	2,103	2,208	+ 105
2		none	11; part of 4	448	29	24.0	913	4,118	3,295	1,823	+ 3,205	63	226	494	+ 268
3		Kelley (K-8) Gannett (K-3) Wellington (K-8)	6, 7; part of 4, 8, 9	139	79	65.8	10,616	9,627	-	9,627	- 989	122	2,619	2,666	+ 47
4		Fletcher (K-8) Roberts (K-8)	4, 5; part of 8, 10, 11	182	109	90.9	11,202	11,319	-	11,319	+ 117	104	2,694	3,190	+ 496
5	Cambridgeport	Morse (K-8) Hillard (K-8) Webster (K, 4-8)	12, 13, 14; part of 10, 11	395	175	145.8	14,353	13,767	-	13,767	- 586	79	3,390	3,814	+ 424
6		Longfellow (K-8)	part of 9, 10, 17, 18	291	210	174.2	15,092	17,459	1,512	15,947	+ 2,367	76	4,288	4,817	+ 529
7		Houghton (K-8)	15, 19; part of 10, 17, 18	167	69	57.4	7,812	9,314	2,337	6,977	+ 1,502	101	2,078	2,230	+ 152
8		Agassiz (K-8)	16; part of 25	168	93	77.5	4,717	6,738	1,384	5,353	+ 2,021	57	1,408	1,805	+ 397
9		Peabody (K-8)	part of 20, 21, 25, 26, 27	406	207	172.6	10,578	12,615	801	11,814	+ 2,037	47	3,220	3,884	+ 664
10		Russell (K-8)	21, 22, 24; part of 20, 23	754	378	315.2	12,007	12,798	68	12,730	+ 791	34	3,217	3,768	+ 551
11	North Cambridge	Ellis (K-8)	28, 29, 30; part of 25, 27	575	224	187.0	11,914	12,237	-	12,237	+ 323	55	2,854	3,271	+ 417
12	Cambridge Highlands	Russell (K-8)	part of 23, 26	356	18	15.0	451	478	-	478	+ 27	27	102	124	+ 22
13	Strawberry Hill	Haggerty (K-8)	part of 23	174	54	45.1	2,181	2,038	-	2,038	- 143	38	518	524	+ 6
TOTAL CITY				4,487	1,718	1,431.0	110,879	120,740	8,397	112,343	+ 9,861	70	28,717	32,795	+ 4,078

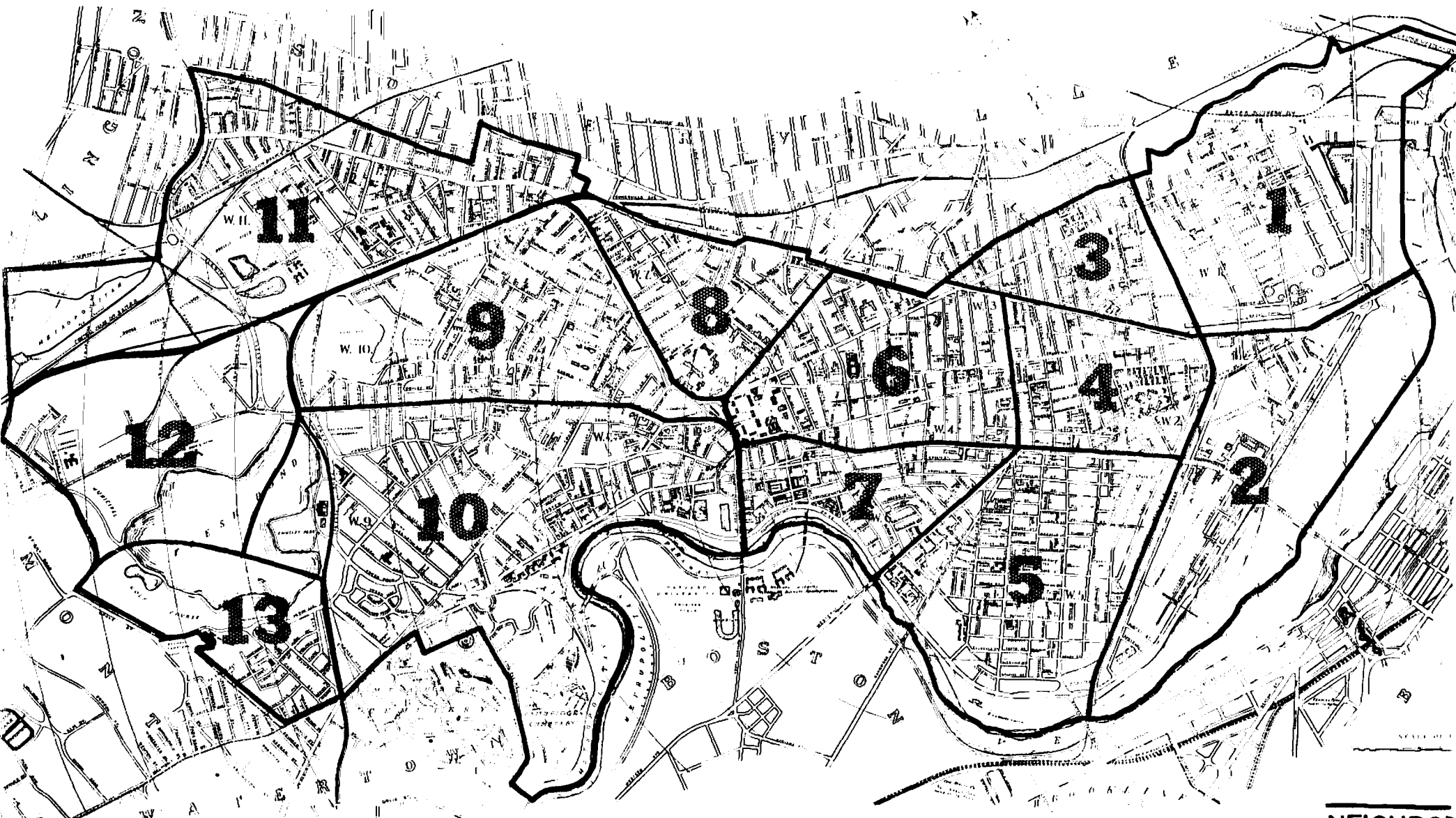
Notes: (a) Streets assumed at 20% of total residential land area. Areas devoted to college and university dormitories not included.

(b) U.S. Census Tract Data interpolated according to neighborhood as necessary.

(c) Students and wives and children of students living in college and university housing as reported by college and university authorities.

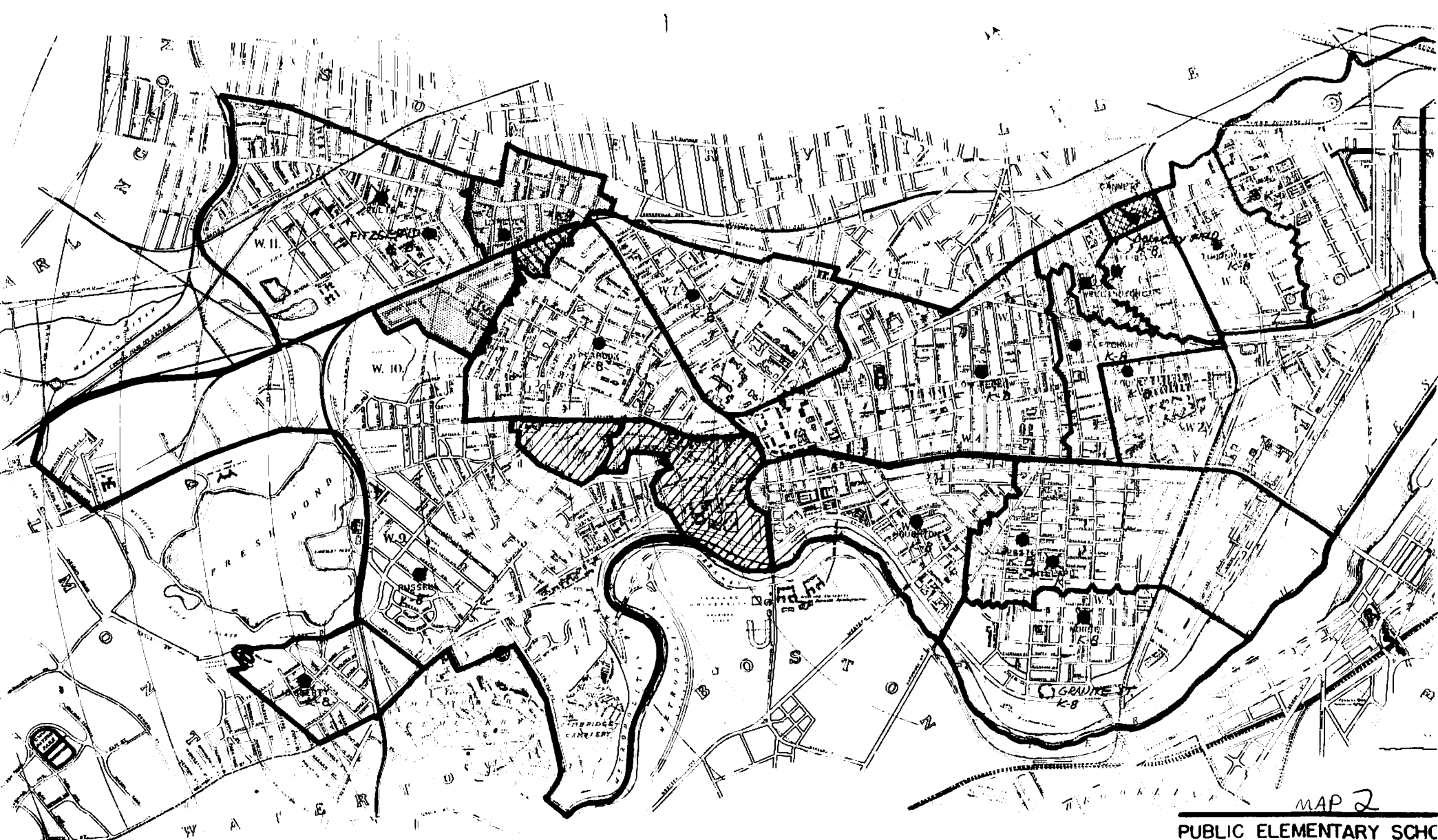
(d) Density based on ratio of adjusted population to predominantly residential land, including residential streets.

Source: Compiled by staff of Cambridge Planning Board





MAP 1

NEIGHBORHOODS

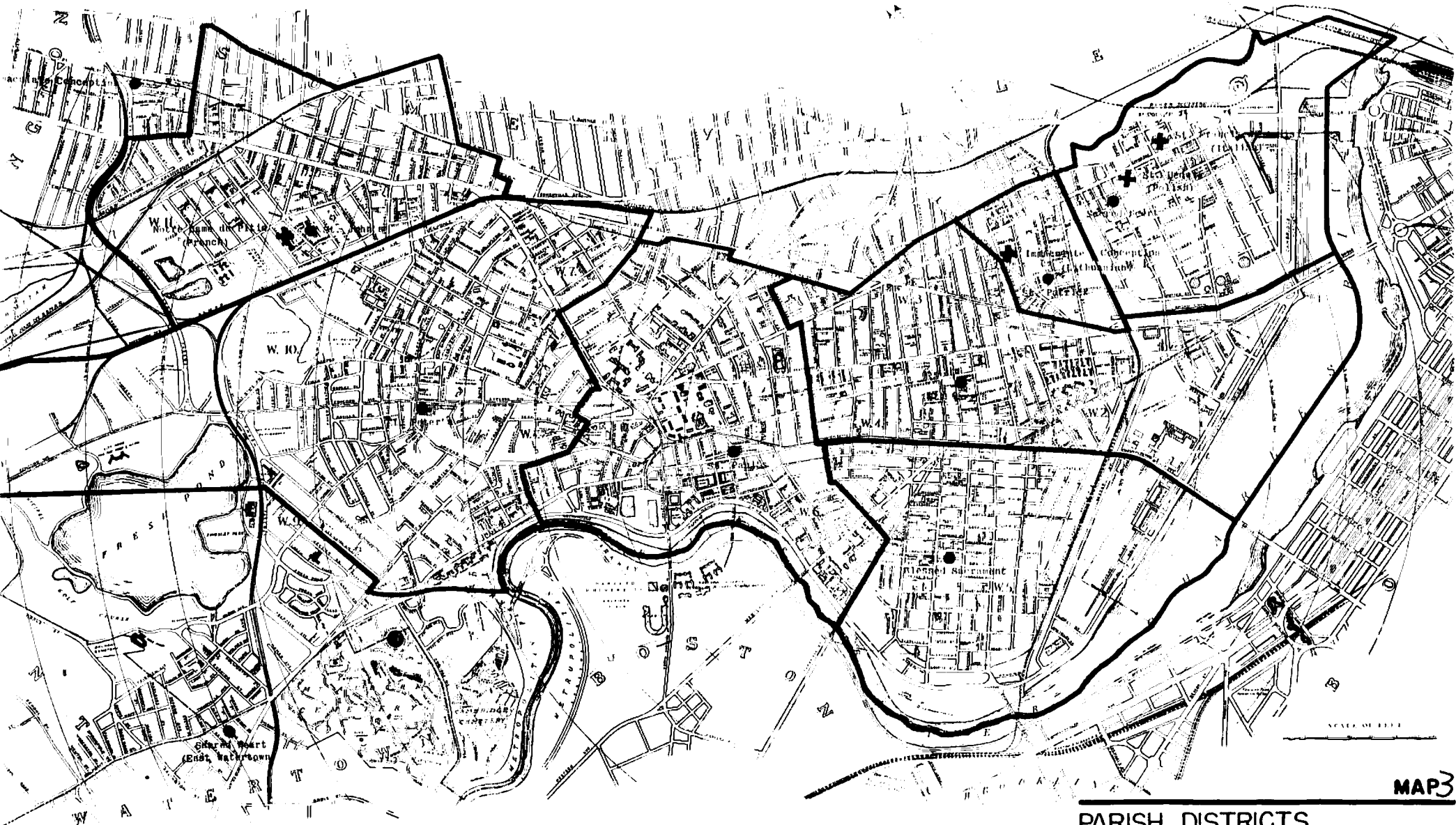


MAP 2

PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHC

-  PEABODY: K-8 OR
RUSSELL: K-8 OPTIONAL
-  LINCOLN: K-6
ELLIS: 7-8

Lincoln: in K-6
 Peabody: in 7-8
 Gannett: in K-3
 Wellington: in 4-8

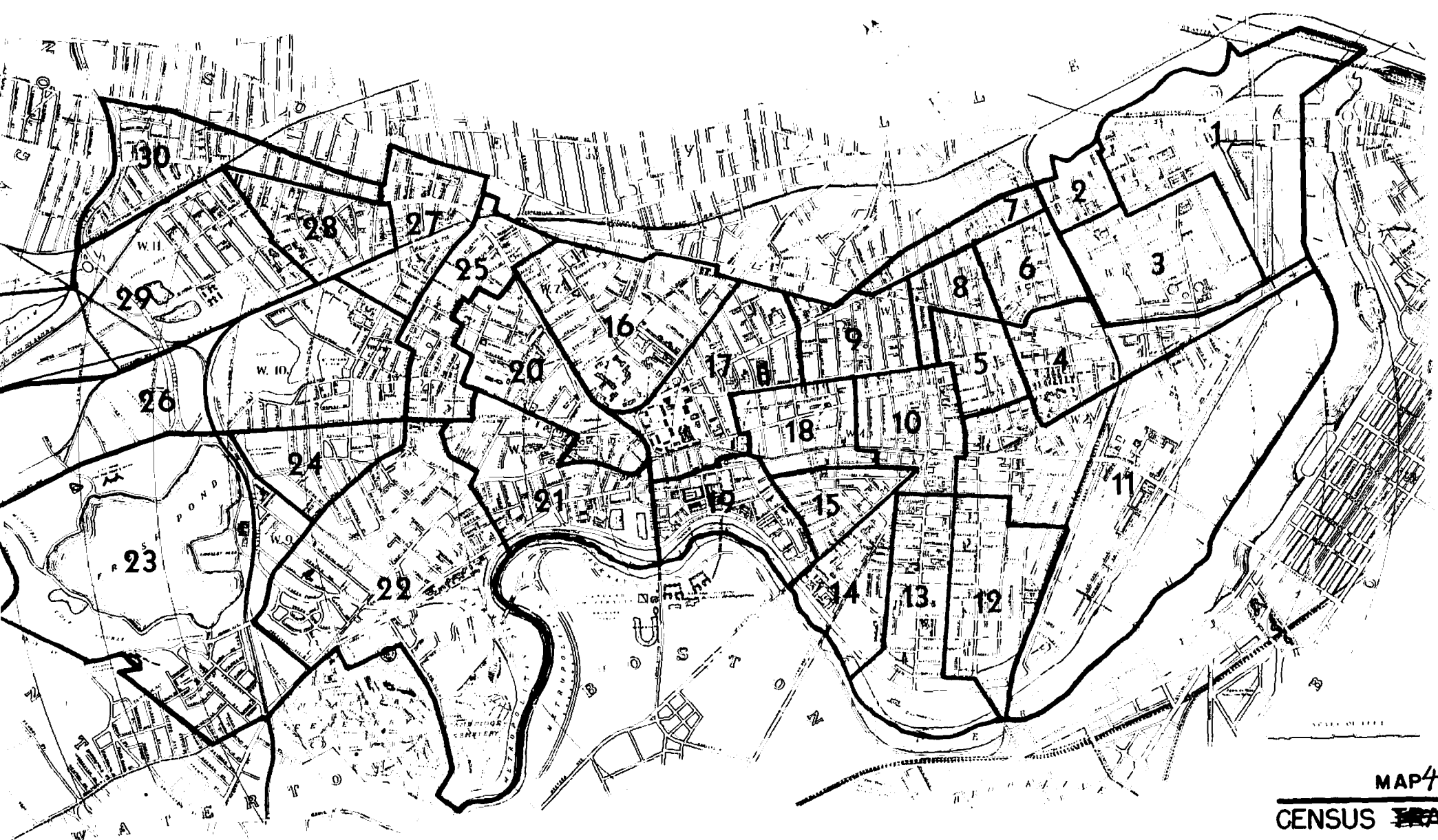


MAP 3

PARISH DISTRICTS

(PAROCHIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS)

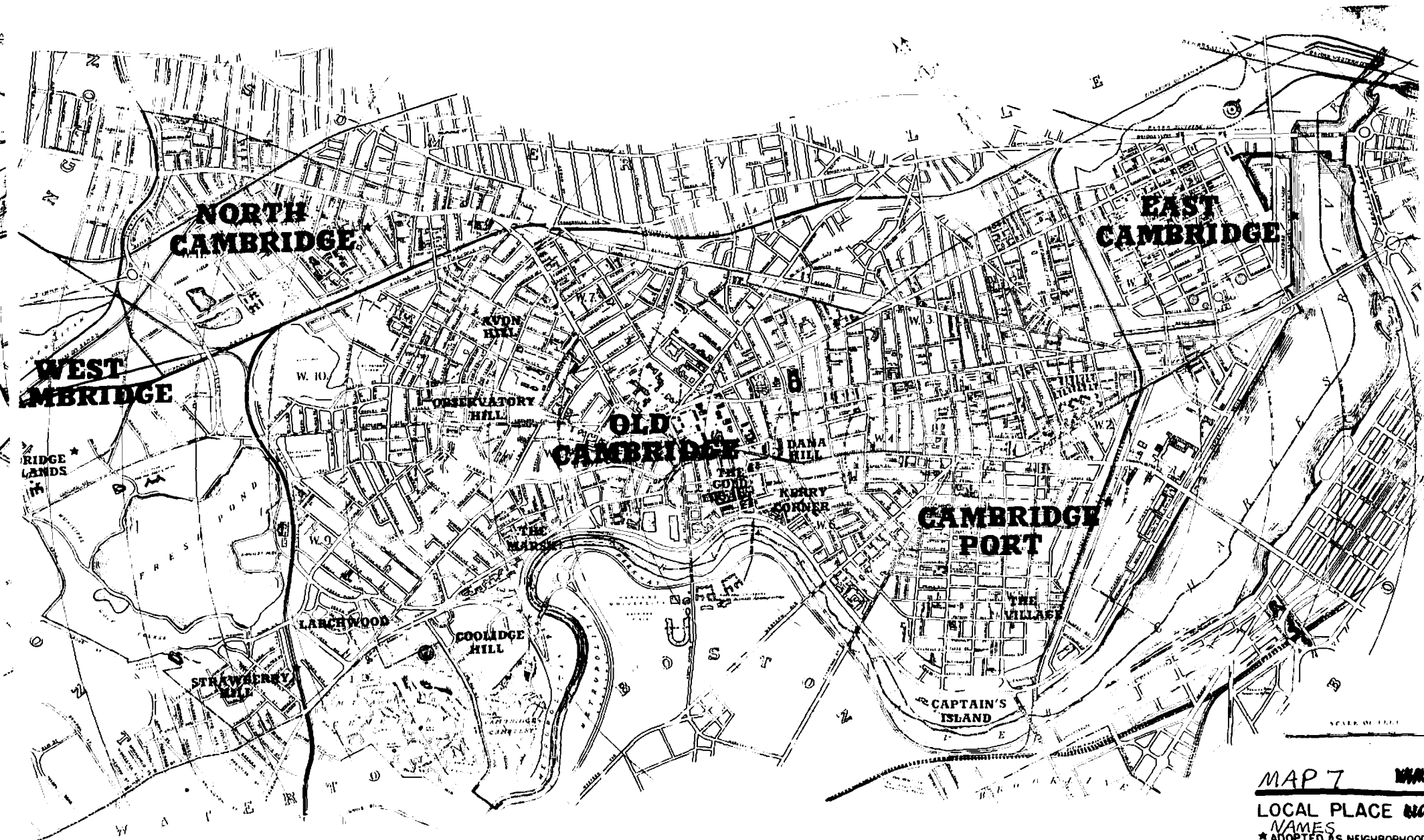
- ✚ OTHER PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS SERVING NATIONALITY GROUPS ARE WITHOUT SPECIFIC PARISH BOUNDARIES.



MAP 4
CENSUS TRACTS



MAP 6
PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES' DISTRICTS



**NORTH
CAMBRIDGE**

**EAST
CAMBRIDGE**

**WEST
CAMBRIDGE**

**OLD
CAMBRIDGE**

**CAMBRIDGE
PORT**

**STRAWBERRY
HILL**

LARCHWOOD

**COOLIDGE
HILL**

**CAPTAIN'S
ISLAND**

MAP 7

LOCAL PLACE

NAMES

*** ADOPTED AS NEIGHBORHOOD
NAME**

T H I S S T U D Y is part of a development plan for Cambridge. Other major published reports which form part of the plan are as follows:

Recreation in Cambridge*, 1947: Analysis of Municipal Recreational Facilities.

War Memorial Site Survey*, 1949: Prepared for the Veterans' War Memorial Advisory Committee.

Harvard Square Parking Study*, 1949.

Planning for the Belt Route*, 1951: Analysis of Freeway Location.

Schematic Plan for Future Cambridge, 1951: In 1950 City Annual Report.

Housing Conditions in Part of Cambridge, 1952: Findings of the Housing Survey conducted for the Committee on Home Hygiene.

Plan for the Strawberry Hill Neighborhood, 1952.

Plan for Cambridge Highlands, 1952.

* Out of print