

FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

See Data Sheet

Blue Hills

AVO.
B

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MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View looking southwest. Right to left: 155-163A Main Street; 169-171 Main Street; 175 Main Street; and 185 Main Street.

Town/City: Avon

Place (*neighborhood or village*):

Name of Area: Goeres Square Area

Present Use: Commercial; Offices; Multiple family Dwelling

Construction Dates or Period: ca. 1870-1905

Overall Condition: Fair

Major Intrusions and Alterations: Fenestration rearranged; replacement windows; vinyl siding.

Acreage: 0.92 Acre

Recorded by: Stacy E. Spies

Organization: Avon Historical Commission

Date (*month/year*): December 2022

Locus Map



☐ see continuation sheet

INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

AVON

GOERES SQUARE AREA

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- ☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.

The Goeres Square Area is a collection of six buildings and one monument located on the west side of the historic "center" of Avon. The area is located at the wishbone-shaped intersection where East Main Street and West Main Street meet and merge to become Main Street. The Area consists of four commercial buildings, one former church (now containing offices), a former commercial building converted to residential use, and a monument atop an oblong traffic island at the south end of the Area. The Robbins house museum (AVO.11), a small park, and a newly-constructed fire department headquarters are located across the street from the Area on the east side of Main Street.

12 West High Street (ca. 1870, AVO.121) rests on a rusticated concrete block foundation and rises two stories to a gable roof with overhanging eaves. Clad with vinyl siding, the building's wood trim features a wide frieze, paired decorative brackets and gable-end cornice returns. A slender brick interior chimney rises from the south roof slope. The building is eight bays wide and four bays deep with an off-center entrance on the north (West High Street) elevation. The building is clad with vinyl siding and contains vinyl sash replacement windows.

159-163A Main Street (ca. 1850, AVO.117) consists of a 2-story, side-gabled main block with several 1- and 2-story storefront additions. Oriented to the east, the main block is eight bays wide and two bays deep with a sash window centered in the gable peaks. A deep, 1-story ell is attached to the north elevation. The first-floor storefronts, which extend the width of the building and ells, consist of a row of fixed-light, metal-frame windows set atop a veneered masonry base. A 1-story storefront capped with a hipped pent roof and parapet projects from the southeast corner of the building. The projecting storefront is covered with brick veneer and contains a row of fixed-light, metal-frame windows. A 2-story perpendicular ell attached to the southwest corner of the main block appears to be the original building on the lot. This ell has overhanging eaves and a slender chimney at the west end of the roof ridge. A 2-story, shed-roof addition is attached to the rear elevation. Except where otherwise noted, the building is covered with vinyl siding and contains vinyl sash replacement windows.

The 2-story frame building at 169-171 Main Street (ca. 1900, AVO.118) consists of a 2-story main block with a modified mansard roof and a 2-story, flat-roofed storefront block added after 1916. (The awkward roofline may indicate that this building is a much-altered version of a mansard-roof building that appears in this location in historic photographs. More research is recommended.) The storefront (likely added or updated in the 1950s or 1960s based on its appearance) contains a full-light, metal-frame center door flanked by two storefront windows consisting of plate glass set atop ridged metal panels. Two pairs of sash windows are located above the storefront. The building is covered with aluminum siding and contains metal sash windows throughout. A vestibule on the north elevation contains the stairs to the second floor.

The 1-story frame building at 175 Main Street (ca. 1900, AVO.119) is clad with wood shingles and capped by an asphalt-shingled roof. The storefront, which fills the streetside (east) elevation, contains a full-light, metal-frame door framed by full-height sidelights. Plate glass windows set atop masonry veneer bases form the flanking storefronts.

The former St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, 185 Main Street (1872, AVO.120) has been heavily modified since its conversion to office space. The steeple has been removed, as have the buttresses on the side elevations. The original windows have been removed and sash windows installed in a different arrangement. The hexagonal apse, although modified, remains at the rear (west) elevation. The front-gabled, 2-story frame building rests on a brick foundation

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punctuated with pointed-arch window openings. The building is covered with vinyl siding and contains vinyl sash windows throughout. A flight of brick veneer steps leads to the entrance centered on the façade.

The Soldiers' Monument (1905, AVO.900) is 22 feet high. The figure of an infantry soldier at the top is 5 feet, 6 inches high and faces north. The base is constructed of Quincy granite; the remainder of the monument is constructed of Westerly granite.¹ Two bas relief crossed swords are located above the inscription, which reads: In Grateful Remembrance // of the men // of Avon // Who fought to // Save the Union // 1861-1865. On the rear of the monument is inscribed: Presented by // Orlando Leach // To the Town of Avon // MDCCCXCV.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.

In Avon, Main Street, North Main Street and West Main Street, known in the 18th century as the "road to Bridgewater" and later as "the upper road," was laid out in 1737. East Main Street, known as "the lower road," was laid out in 1763. Main Street served as the center of East Stoughton's (now Avon's) local government and commercial center during the 19th century. The Avon Town House and the fire station were located on the east side of Main Street while stores and St. Michael's Church were located along the west side of Main Street. Enterprise Hall and Littlefield's shoe factory (neither still standing) anchored the south end of the intersection. Goeres Square is named for Avon resident Andrew L. Goeres (1894-1918), who was killed in action near Verdun, France during World War I. Goeres was a member of Company K, 165th Infantry of the 42nd Rainbow Division of the American Expeditionary Forces. Goeres enlisted on April 25, 1918 and departed Camp Devens on July 4 of that year. Goeres was killed on October 15, 1918. In March 1920, the town voted to name Avon Square, as it was then known, after Goeres.

The earliest portion of 155-163A Main Street (ca. 1850, AVO.117) appears to have been constructed circa 1850 as a house. Charles Smith purchased two parcels of land on the west side of Main Street in 1850 and 1851.² Charles Smith (1818-1904)³ and his wife, Susan (1830-1910),⁴ made their residence here, as shown on the 1858 map. Charles Smith worked as a boot manufacturer with a factory on East Main Street. After that factory burned in 1888, he moved the business to Brockton.⁵ James Ingham (1824-1895),⁶ who lived at 169 East Main Street (AVO.31), purchased the house in 1864⁷ and purchased the adjacent lot and building in 1870.⁸ James Ingham worked as a carriage painter as well as a house painter and wallpaper hanger, according to city directories and census records. By 1876, James Ingham had expanded the buildings to form the long, side-gabled building that forms the core of the present-day building. (See 1876 map below.) In 1887, real estate investor Hiram Blanchard purchased the property and it appears that going forward the building was used for commercial purposes with apartments above.⁹ In the first quarter of the 20th century, the building was occupied by George Morse's store that sold "boots, shoes & rubbers and Gents' Furnishings,"¹⁰ a barber, a dry goods store, and an express office.¹¹ Now greatly expanded, the building continues in commercial use, presently occupied by a pizza restaurant, a convenience store, a salon, and an income tax preparer.

¹ Hanna: 82.

² Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 192, p. 53 and 200, p. 198.

³ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/136299461/charles-smith>. Accessed Dec. 20, 2022.

⁴ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/136299497/susan-a-smith>. Accessed Dec. 20, 2022.

⁵ "Charles Smith Dead," *The Boston Globe*, 26 August 1904, p. 3.

⁶ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/88908999/james-ingham>. Accessed Dec. 20, 2022.

⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 323, p. 192 [382].

⁸ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 389, p. 61.

⁹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 587, p. 301.

¹⁰ 1911 City Directory.

¹¹ 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas.

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The 12 West High Street (ca. 1870, AVO.121) was originally located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and West High Street. The building was moved to its current location between 1920 and 1939. George W. Smith likely constructed the building circa 1870 to contain his grocery store. In 1873, he sold the building to James Ingham and Abijah Otis.¹² Census records note that Abijah Otis worked as a bootmaker until 1870, when his employment was recorded as “keeps beef market.” The 1898 city directory business listings note two businesses at this location (then identified as 24 and 26 Main Street): Abijah Otis’ fruit and produce store and McGonnigle & Son Grocers. The Otis family owned the property until 1921.¹³ The building presently contains four apartments.

St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Church, 185 Main Street (1872, AVO.120) was dedicated on August 11, 1872. Many of the church’s parishioners were Irish immigrants working in the area’s boot and shoe factories, who had begun to arrive in East Stoughton in the 1830s. In 1887, East Stoughton and Holbrook were made one parish and served by Reverend James J. Kelley. Rev. Kelley, who lived in Holbrook, served the parish for 10 years.¹⁴ In 1908, St. Michael’s became its own parish. By the turn of the 20th century, the parish population had grown to 108 families totaling 604 people.¹⁵ The parish continued to grow and by 1960, five services were held each week to accommodate all the parishioners.¹⁶ Having physically outgrown the building, a new church was constructed in 1964 on the west side of North Main Street next to the Baptist Church. St. Michael’s Church in its new location continues in use into the present day. In 1965, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston sold the old church at 185 Main Street to a private buyer, who converted the building into office space.¹⁷ The tower was removed, and the building was heavily altered to accommodate its new use. The building is presently used for offices.

169-171 Main Street (ca. 1900, AVO.118) was likely constructed for investor H. Lawton Blanchard to contain a storefront on the first floor and an apartment on the second floor. In 1916, the first floor was occupied by a bakery. Benjamin Schifino purchased the building in 1917¹⁸ and lived on the second floor with his family. An Italian immigrant, Benjamin Schifino worked in a shoe factory in Brockton. The 2-story (streetside) addition, constructed after 1920 and before 1938,¹⁹ contained a storefront on the first floor. The property remained in the Schifino family until 1951.²⁰

The commercial building at 175 Main Street (ca. 1900, AVO.119) originally contained two storefronts. In 1916, the north portion of the building was occupied by a cobbler. For many years, the building was rented to Avon Coal & Oil, which subsequently purchased the building in 1960.²¹ Avon Coal & Oil sold the building in 1985. The building is presently occupied by a barber shop and a clothing store.

The Civil War Soliders’ Monument (1905, AVO.900) was dedicated on May 30, 1905. The monument was a gift of Orlando Leach (1834-1918),²² “a direct descendant of Captain Simeon Leach, who had led the East Stoughton company during the American Revolution. A native of East Stoughton himself and an 1860 graduate of Yale University, Mr. Leach served as a captain during the Civil War, assigned the administrative work among the sea island of South Carolina. Admitted to the bar in 1863, he entered the publishing business in New York City after the war. At the end of a long and

¹² Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 449, p. 59.

¹³ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1498, p. 362.

¹⁴ Hanna: 59.

¹⁵ Hanna: 59, citing Robert F. Doyle, “History of St. Michael’s, 1872-1946,” in *St. Michael’s Church, Parish Reunion, May 3, 1946*, in the collection of the Avon Historical Society (in 1988).

¹⁶ <https://stmichaelavon.org/parish-life/about>. Accessed Sept. 14, 2022.

¹⁷ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 4309, p. 282 [458].

¹⁸ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 1387, p. 490.

¹⁹ Commonwealth of Massachusetts plan, 1920 and “Sweden Day” photographs, July 1928, Noyes Scrapbook.

²⁰ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 2985, p. 289.

²¹ Norfolk County Registry of Deeds Book 3893, p. 317.

²² <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/178154519/orlando-leach>. Accessed Dec. 20, 2022.

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successful career there, he returned to his hometown and immersed himself in public affairs. He held a variety of public and church offices, including selectman.”²³

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²³ Hanna: 81.

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AREA DATA SHEET

Assessor's #	MHC #		Street Address	Construction Date	Style	Acreage
D6/ 2/ 10/ /	AVO.116		145-147 Main St.	1993	No Style	0.12
D6/ 2/ 9/ /	AVO.117		155-163A Main St.	ca. 1850	No Style	0.26
D6/ 2/ 8/ /	AVO.118		169-171 Main St.	Ca. 1900	No Style	0.17
D6/ 2/ 7/ /	AVO.119		175 Main St.	Ca. 1900	No Style	0.13
D6/ 2/ 6/ /	AVO.120	St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church	185 Main St.	1872	No Style	0.19
--	AVO.900	Soldiers' Monument	Main St.	1905	--	
D6/ 2/ 20/ /	AVO.121		12 West High St.	Ca. 1870	Italianate	0.05

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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION



View looking northwest. L to R: 175 Main Street; 169-171 Main Street; 155-163A Main Street; 145-147 Main Street. 12 West High Street partially visible below church steeple.



View looking southwest from Main Street toward West Main Street. Soldier's monument visible at left. 185 Main Street partially visible at right.



View looking southwest toward 12 West High Street.



View looking northwest toward 145-147 Main Street.

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View looking northwest toward 155-163A Main Street.
Original house may be the front-gabled section at left rear.



View looking southwest toward 169-171 Main Street.



View looking northwest toward 175 Main Street (left) and 169-171 Main Street (right).



View looking west toward 185 Main Street.

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View looking northeast at south elevation of 185 Main Street. Note apse remains at west end of building.



View looking south toward Soldiers' Monument.

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View looking south from the intersection of West High Street and Main Street, circa 1888. 12 West High Street visible in foreground in its original location. White building at center is 155-163A Main Street. St. Michael's Church at 185 Main Street is partially visible in distance. Source: Avon Historical Commission collection.



Right to left: 169-171 Main Street, 175 Main Street, 185 Main Street (St. Michael's Church). 1960s? Source: Avon Historical Commission Collection.

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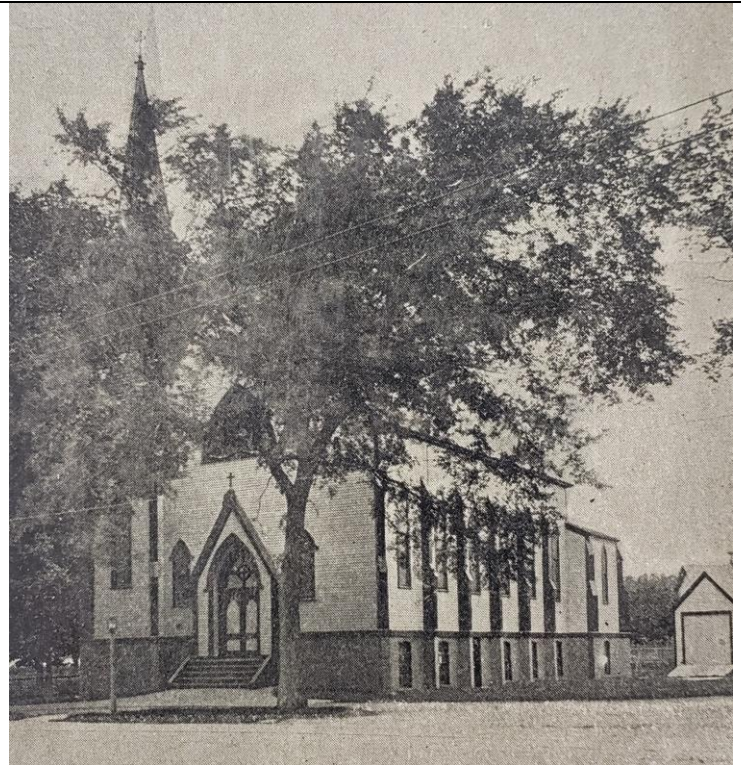
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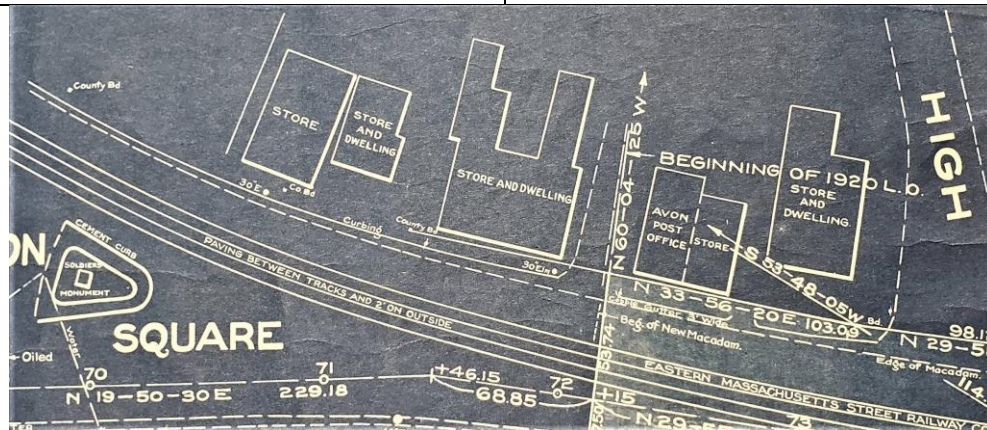
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159-1563A Main Street circa 1912. This projecting ell now contains a pizza restaurant. Source: Avon Historical Commission collection.



St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church, 185 Main Street. (As seen in 1894.) Source: Avon Historical Commission collection.



1920 Highway Department Plan. From left to right: 175 Main Street, 169-171 Main Street and 155-163A Main Street. 12 West Main Street at original location at right. Post office building is present-day location of 145-147 Main Street. Source: Avon Historical Commission collection.

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1940s postcard view of Goeres Square. View looking northeast. Source: Avon Historical Commission collection.