

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
80 Boylston Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02116

70-109

Marlborough

G

178

Town Marlborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Address 82 Florence Street

Historic Name Marlboro Electric Light Co.

Uses: Present electric light plant

Original electric light plant

Date of Construction ca 1901 and 1915

Source Maps; style

Style/Form utilitarian

Architect/Builder unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation brick and concrete block

Wall/Trim brick and rock-faced concrete block

Roof not visible

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures \_\_\_\_\_

none

Major Alterations (with dates) Windows re-

placed, basement openings filled in, others re-

duced 1-story concrete addition on NE, one

glass/aluminum door: late 20th C.

Moved  no  yes Date N/A

Acreage less than one acre

Setting Fills most of block on E. side of Flo-

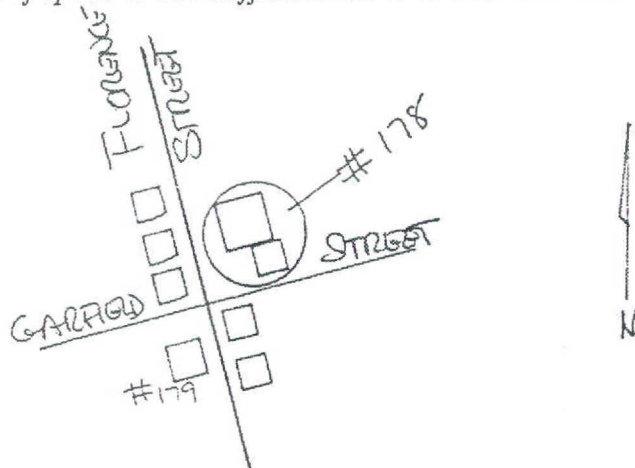
rence at Garfield, in neighborhood of primarily

wood-frame houses of 1880's-1910



Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Forbes

Organization for Marlboro Hist. Comm.

Date 4/30/94

## BUILDING FORM

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [ ] *see continuation sheet*

*Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.*

The Marlborough Electric Light Plant is a good example of the type of simple, functional brick industrial block that was being built by communities for this type of facility in the early years of this century. It is a large two-story brick structure with a nearly flat roof. It is almost completely unadorned, save for a plain brick parapet along the top of the north wall. Twelve window bays separated by projecting brick piers line the west facade; four extend along the south side. Those at the first story have granite sills, the ones at the second have concrete sills; all contain large paired replacement 1-over-1-sash windows. All the basement openings, which are segmental-arched, have been filled in with brick. Two entries interrupt the rhythm of the facade--a modern replacement glass-and-aluminum door in a reduced opening near the north end, and, four bays from the south end, a large double-leaf wooden glass-and-panel loading door under an eight-light transom in a high segmental brick arch.

Abutting the rear of the south elevation of the main building is a square, one-story, flat-roofed engine room of ca. 1915. It is built of the rock-faced concrete block that was just coming of age at that time, and has a cast-concrete cornice above a frieze embellished with medallions. This addition is four-by-four-bays, with modern louvered panels inserted in the window openings.

### HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [ ] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.*

This property has been the site for the generation of electrical power in Marlboro since electric lights were first turned on in the community in 1885. The first town-wide electric light plant was run by the Marlborough Schuyler Electric Company, which was organized on February 15, 1886. It was housed in a small structure that stood where the north end of the present building is now, a few rods south of the ca. 1870 Marlboro Gas Works, which had maintained the supply lines for the town's gas lights. The company became the Marlborough Electric Company in 1889.

This building was erected to replace the old one, probably at the time that service was extended to Southborough in 1901. It was extended again to Northborough in 1908, Berlin in 1909, Westborough in 1910, and Bolton in 1912. By 1915 the one-story concrete block addition had been built to house the engine room. In ca. 1920 a separate brick building (MHC #179), located diagonally across the Florence/Garfield intersection, was built as a power and transformer station. By 1929, this building also housed the Marlborough/Hudson Gas Co.

Eventually, as was the case with most communities in Massachusetts, Marlborough sold its electric company to a larger, regional group of utilities. The purchaser in 1938 was the Worcester Suburban Electric Co., which owned the system until 1951, when it merged with six other companies to form the Worcester County Electric Company. In turn, the larger company later became part of the Massachusetts Electric Company and its parent corporation, the New England Electric Company.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: Sanborns.  
Marlborough Directories.  
Marlborough Annual Reports,  
The Marlborough Enterprise: 325th Anniversary Edition, 9/15/85-9/22/85.

[ ] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*