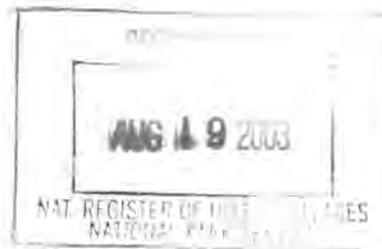


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fitchburg Historical Society

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 50 Grove Street n/a not for publication

city or town Fitchburg _____ vicinity _____

state Massachusetts code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01420

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director 8/13/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Gara H. Metz Date
Massachusetts Historical Commission, State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional Comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register
☐ removed from the
National Register
☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper E. Beall

Date of Action 10/3/03

Fitchburg Historical Society
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(Check only one box)

☒ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☐ public-Federal

☒ building(s)

☐ district

☐ site

☐ structure

☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1 building

1 sites

1 structures

3 2 objects

4 4 Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum, Park

EDUCATION: Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum, Park

EDUCATION: Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Georgian Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Rubblestone, Terra Cotta

walls Brick, Terra Cotta

roof Slate

other Copper gutters

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Continuation Sheet

Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number 5 Page 1

Contributing and noncontributing resources:

Resource	Material	Date	Status	Type
Fitchburg Historical Society Building	Brick and terra cotta	1912	C	Building
Park	NA	?	NC	Site
Sawyer Gun (cannon)	Steel	1863	C	Object
Watering Trough	?	1860s	C	Object
Sundial	?	1919	C	Object
Arbor	Iron	1999	NC	Structure
Park Bench	?	1999	NC	Object
Picnic Table	?	1999	NC	Object

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Description

Built in 1912, the Georgian Revival-style Fitchburg Historical Society headquarters faces east on Grove Street (photo 1). Nearly filling its 5909 square foot lot, it is set back approximately twenty feet from the street, and separated from the sidewalk by a narrow lawn edged with granite curbing and planted with a dogwood and an evergreen tree. A Civil War-period cannon known as the Sawyer Gun and a sundial (photo 5) are located to the left of the front stairs. The Sawyer gun was an extra made by Sylvanus Sawyer for the U.S. government. Never used in battle, it came into the possession of Charles H. Cowdrey, whose sons gave it to the Fitchburg Historical Society in 1919 when it was mounted on its present site. Along the south elevation of the building (photo 2), which overlooks the park, are a 1999 park bench and picnic table. Plantings include two maple trees and a crabapple tree. The latter is situated near a former watering trough (photo 4) filled with flowers and set in the middle of a triangular brick pad. The 1860s watering trough was moved to park several decades ago from its original location at the lower end of Main Street. A 1999 iron arbor (photo 5) along Grove Street marks the entrance to a brick path that meanders east west through the park to Elm Street. (Underlined resources are listed on the attached datasheet, which indicates their status as contributing or noncontributing depending on the age of the resource.)

Situated on a corner lot near the center of downtown Fitchburg, the Fitchburg Historical Society building at 50 Grove Street overlooks a vest-pocket Park owned by the Society and included in this nomination. The park, to the south of the Historical Society building, is located on a 4900 square foot triangular lot formed by the V-shaped intersection of Grove and Elm Streets. Between the park parcel and the Historical Society building parcel is the former Vine Street, a strip of land that is landscaped as part of the park. When Elm Street was constructed between 1871 and 1902, the City covered over Vine Street. The City of Fitchburg transferred ownership of the park and Vine Street to the Fitchburg Historical Society in 1992. The City formally abandoned Vine Street in 1998, but maintains a right of way for the Vine Street strip of land because it has old utility lines underneath.

Opposite the Fitchburg Historical Society on the west side of Grove Street are the **Old Post Office** (1903), which is now the District Courthouse, and the **Armory** (1891). Both buildings are in the Monument Park Historic District (NR 1978) and have their principal elevations facing Wallace Avenue. Property to the north, south and east of the Historical Society includes single and two-family houses, a late-20th century senior housing facility, and small professional offices. Most of the houses and offices were built from the 1840s to 1870s. Of particular note are the small-scale houses closely spaced along Central Street, one block west of the Historical Society. As the first settlement in the downtown area, the neighborhood is a quaint reminder of Fitchburg's early character. The houses were built between 1810 and 1845.

Fitchburg Historical Society Headquarters

Five bays wide by three deep, the symmetrical brick and terra cotta Fitchburg Historical Society building (photo 1) is rectangular in plan. It rises two stories from a raised basement to a hip roof framed of steel trusses and covered with slate. One brick chimney with a corbelled cap rises through the north slope of the roof. Below ground, the foundation is rubble stone; above ground it is faced with terra cotta applied to resemble blocks. Brick exterior walls are laid in alternating courses of stretchers and headers. With the exception of the chimney mortar, which is gray and likely dates to a repointing campaign, mortar joints are narrow and of a buff color that complements the brick and terra cotta building materials.

(continued)

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Fitchburg (Worcester), MASection number 7 Page 2

The main entrance, centered on the façade, is the building's most decorative architectural feature. A fine example of a Georgian Revival-style portico in the Tuscan order, the entry is framed by engaged terra cotta columns resting on tall plinths. The columns rise to support a denticulated entablature with the words "Fitchburg Historical Society" carved into the frieze. A wrought iron balustrade crafted with oval, diamond, and urn patterns surmounts the entablature. Beneath the entablature, a keystone round arch shelters a recessed double-leafed wood-panel door topped by a fanlight decorated with sunburst tracery. A flight of six granite stairs leads from the sidewalk in front of the building to the doorway.

Fenestration is symmetrical. Tall first story windows are framed by round arches composed of two rows of brick headers and a central as well as side terra cotta keystones. Resting on tall terra cotta clad sills, the double-hung sash consist of twelve-light lower sash and round-arch upper sash with eight lights topped by a sunburst muntin pattern in the arch. Second story windows, capped by splayed and keystone terra cotta lintels, are fitted with 6/6 sash. Because the building is set on a slight slope, the above ground portion of the basement is taller to the south of the entry than to the north. Basement windows on the north side have square, undecorated openings containing single six-light sash, while those on the south are rectangular and fitted with 6/6 sash. Basement windows are fitted with metal grills on the exterior.

In addition to the door and window surrounds, decorative features -- all fabricated in terra cotta -- include an elaborate modillioned and denticulated cornice, corner quoins, a flat belt course between the first and second stories, and a molded watertable course at the junction of the basement and first story. In general, these ornamental features along with the level of detail around the windows and the configuration of the sash are consistent on all elevations. The building is equipped with copper gutters and aluminum downspouts. The latter were originally copper, being replaced by the present downspouts approximately twenty years ago.

The south elevation (photo 2), with its three window bays overlooking the park, continues the symmetrical formality of the Grove Street façade. The north elevation (photo 1) is similar to the south, but the central window bay is occupied at the first story by a doorway reached by a flight of ten granite steps. A simplified version of the main entrance, this secondary entry features a fanlight and an iron balustrade. The north elevation also contains a stairway leading into the basement, and the windows in the western bays are blind at the first and second stories. The rear (west elevation; photo 3) of the building is less formal and more determined by the internal needs of the building. With the exception of two arched first-story windows in the southern bays, all windows are rectangular. At the second-story a door opens to an original iron fire escape leading to the ground.

Interior (See attached floor plans)

On the first floor, the main entry leads to a north-south oriented hall that runs to a secondary entrance on the north side of the building. At the south end of the hall is a large reading/archives room spanning the entire south end of the building. Two small exhibit rooms, a room-sized vault (accessible from the reading room) and a restroom occupy the northern sections of the first floor. Three-quarters of the second floor is given over to a large meeting room (47 x 34 feet; photo 8) on the south, while a hall, pantry, and small storage room occupy the north end. The basement plan follows that of the first floor with a large room for exhibits along the south and a boiler room, two storage rooms, a restroom, and another walk-in vault off a central hallway on the north. Located one above the other, the building's two vaults are constructed of steel, brick and concrete. Originally unfinished, the attic was adapted for use as object storage in 1985.

(continued)

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Important architectural features of the interior include a tall coved ceiling and a four-pendant cluster-type ceiling light in the second floor meeting room (photo 8), deep oak denticulated crown moldings on the first and second floors (photo 9), eared oak architraves around principal interior doors (photo 8), coved crown moldings and a three-pendant cluster-type ceiling light fixture in the first floor meeting room (photo 7), and a reproduction of an early 19th-century-style fireplace with beehive oven in the basement (photo 6). The latter is a "dummy" fireplace reportedly constructed with the building using bricks salvaged from the demolition of a railroad engine house. Floors in the principal rooms are maple, except for those in the basement, which are painted concrete (Building Conservation Assessment, 1999). Many of the interior furnishings of the principal rooms are original including the metal stacks and mission-style tables in the library. Windsor chairs, which were originally in the Library, are now in the lecture hall with the original folding theater chairs.

Alterations

The Historical Society building has sustained relatively few alterations over the past ninety-one years. Because of the high cost of fuel during the oil crisis of the mid-1970s, the Board of Directors added storm windows. The most significant change to the exterior of the building was the installation of new front doors in 1998. These are replicas of the original oak doors, which had ceased to close properly. In 1983 the board hired architect David Carlson to design plans to convert the attic to usable storage space. The project was completed by the Montachusett Construction Company in February 1985 at a cost of \$65,162. In the early 1980s, air conditioning was installed in the first floor and the basement. To accommodate the necessary ductwork, the ceiling of the first floor hallway was lowered. When the attic was renovated in 1985 air conditioning was installed there as well.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are recorded on the nominated property or in the general area (within one mile), sites may be present. Environmental characteristics of the property indicate a high potential for the presence of Native sites in this locale. The Historical Society building is located on a well drained, level to moderately sloping terrace in close proximity to wetlands. The Nashua River, a tributary of the Merrimack River, is located within 1,000 feet of the property to the south and southwest. In general, however, the potential for locating significant Native American resources on the Fitchburg Historical Society property is low. Impacts associated with construction and demolition of two earlier residences in the park, at the site of the library, Vine Street, and construction of the existing structure on the relatively small parcel (0.25 acres) would have destroyed any ancient Native American resources that may have been present.

A moderate potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Fitchburg Historical Society property. Artifacts and features may exist on the property related to its use as a meeting site for early 19th century reformers in the area. Structural evidence may survive from two 19th century residences located on the property prior to construction of the historical society building and creation of the park. One structure, for which little information survives, was located in the area of the park while the second structure (1868-1910) was located on the site of the existing historical society building. The latter structure was moved to a new location on High Street. Stratigraphic evidence from the Vine Street road bed originally located in the park locale may also survive.

(end)

Fitchburg Historical Society

Name of Property

Worcester, MA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1912 to 1953

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Henry M. Francis & Sons

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository:

Fitchburg Historical Society

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Statement of Significance

Built in 1912, the Fitchburg Historical Society headquarters is architecturally significant as one of the finest Georgian Revival-style buildings in Fitchburg and as the work of Henry M. Francis and Sons, Fitchburg's most renowned architecture firm of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Designed by Frederick and Albert Francis, sons of the founder, the Fitchburg Historical Society Headquarters is a state-of-the-art example of an institutional building created to house historical collections. As such, it features fireproof vaults, an exhibit/museum room, a library and archive room, and a large meeting room. Given that the vast majority of local historical societies in Massachusetts operate out of historic houses, schools, old town halls, or other buildings that have been adapted for use as a historical society, the Fitchburg Historical Society headquarters is a rare example of a building constructed for that purpose.

Adjacent to the Monument Park Historic District (NR 1978), the Historical Society headquarters stands among Fitchburg's grandest civic and institutional buildings including the **Worcester County Courthouse** (84 Elm Street; 1871), **Christ Church** (569 Main Street; 1868), the old **Post Office** (Wallace Avenue; 1903), and the **Fitchburg Amory** (14 Wallace Avenue; 1891/1914). In addition, the Society now owns and overlooks a small park that contributes open space to the dense urban streetscape. The grounds of the Historical Society are used to display such objects as the Sawyer Gun, a Civil War era rifled cannon, and a Watering Trough, both of which are contributing resources in this nomination (see attached list).

Historically, the building is significant for its continuous association with the Fitchburg Historical Society, which collects historical documents, photographs, artwork, and artifacts that trace the history of this industrial city on the Nashua River. The collection, housed in the building and available to researchers, provides a record of the existence of the early settlers in the 1700s, documents the activities of the industrialists and the immigrants who made 19th century Fitchburg "the machine city of New England", and marks the contributions of the residents of today in an effort to preserve the history of the present as well as the past for future generations. The Fitchburg Historical Society building retains integrity of design, location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association; and fulfills National Register criteria A and C at the local level. The period of significance begins with the completion of the building in 1912 and ends in 1953, or fifty years from the present to allow for historical perspective.

Development of Fitchburg

Originally the western part of Lunenburg, Fitchburg became a separate town in 1764 and a city in 1872. The power of its major waterway, the Nashua River, was harnessed early for the grist and saw mills needed to support the agricultural community. In the early 19th century paper and textile mills, which would drive the economy for the next 100 years, made their debuts along the banks of the Nashua. Paper manufacturing began in 1805, followed by textiles in 1807. By 1832, seven textile factories and numerous other industries were operating, but the rugged terrain was a serious drawback to the transportation of goods. Alvah Crocker, Fitchburg's legendary paper manufacturer and civic leader, began the effort to bring the railroad to Fitchburg, accomplishing the task in 1845, and ushering in a period of unprecedented growth and prosperity for the town. In one year, 1845 to 1846, the population rose from 3,883 to over 5,000.

In the 1850s, Fitchburg was the third largest cotton manufacturer in Massachusetts. Despite two severe financial panics, the period of 1872 to 1900 -- the so-called "Golden Years" that began with Fitchburg becoming a city--was a time of prosperity driven by a flourishing industrial sector. Between 1850 and 1900 products manufactured in Fitchburg grew by 2,100 percent, and the population, augmented by a steady stream of immigrants seeking work in Fitchburg's industries, grew from 5,120 to 31,531.

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The economic boom, which continued well into the 20th century, is reflected in many modest as well as high-style residential buildings and a fine collection of commercial, civic and institutional structures. As part of this legacy, the Post Office, Courthouse and Armory along with other buildings situated around Monument Park form an impressive grouping along Main Street. (See Monument Park Historic District, NR 1978.) It was the intention of the founders that the Fitchburg Historical Society building, constructed to house the history of the city, be erected in the vicinity of these fine public buildings.

It is also fitting that the building is an accomplished example of Georgian Revival architecture. Reflecting the intense nationalism of the early 20th century, the style revives the classicism of Georgian architecture, which was fashionable in America from the mid-to the late-18th century, and is thus associated with the colonial era, the American Revolution, and the early days of the republic. The revival of the relatively sedate Georgian style was also a reaction to the flamboyant architecture of the Victorian period during which each decade saw an increase in the complexity of building plans and rooflines as well as in the amount of ornament applied to both the interior and exterior. Industrialization, immigration, and urbanization, combined with the centennial in 1876 and the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition celebrating the discovery of America, caused Americans to look back at their own history and to gravitate, for the first time, to architectural styles associated with the American past. Thus, it seems particularly appropriate that a building intended for use as a repository of local history would be designed in the Georgian Revival style.

The Fitchburg Historical Society

The Fitchburg Historical Society had its beginnings in 1892 when James F.D. Garfield (1828-1911), one time publisher of *The Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel* as well as a leading businessman and civic-minded citizen, invited several men interested in the preservation of Fitchburg's archives and artifacts to a meeting at his home at 81-83 Grove Street (not extant). Among the invitees were Atherton P. Mason, Henry A. Willis, Gen. John W. Kimball, Ebenezer Bailey and Frederick Currier. Mr. Willis became chairman, Mr. Garfield secretary, and Mr. Mason librarian of the fledgling organization, which pledged to encourage a "love of research and collect and preserve such material ... as may be useful to the future historian and interesting to the public." On February 3, 1896, the Fitchburg Historical Society was incorporated with seventy members. Garfield became the secretary of the Society, which held its meetings in private homes and city hall, storing its collections wherever appropriate space could be found. Mr. Garfield assumed the role of Librarian in the year before his death in 1911. His house on Grove Street was taken down in the late 1970s. In its place is a driveway to a day care center and the senior housing facility.

In August of 1910, Garfield called a meeting of Historical Society board members to announce that he would donate a piece of land that he had recently purchased from Charles Wilder, at the corner of Grove and Vine Streets (the latter no longer exists; see description), so that a permanent home for the Society could be erected there. The Wilder house was moved to High Street (it is unknown if it still stands). Serendipitously, the chosen site of the Fitchburg Historical Society was already historically significant as a place where 19th century social reformers gathered under the many oak trees that once graced the property, hence the name Grove Street. Abolitionists, anti-tobacco advocates, temperance workers and those who sought improved conditions for the insane were popular speakers "on their soap boxes" on this site called 'The Grove.'

Accepting Garfield's land donation, the society began soliciting funds for the building, raising more than \$10,000 within a year. According to the *Fitchburg Sentinel* (June 7, 1912), Garfield himself was one of the most generous contributors. To

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design its headquarters, the board hired Fitchburg's most prominent architectural firm – Henry M. Francis and Sons. The firm, established by Henry Martyn Francis in 1868, was renamed in 1902 when Francis's sons Frederick Leighton (1870-1919) and Albert F. (1876-1946) joined the firm. After H. M. Francis died in 1908, his sons carried on the business in the manner that had made their father famous. Known for its stylistic versatility, the firm's work includes buildings in the Second Empire, Queen Anne, Richardson Romanesque, Stick, Shingle, Gothic, Colonial Revival, Renaissance and Georgian Revival styles. Located on Main Street in Fitchburg until 1943, H.M. Francis and Sons left a design legacy in Fitchburg and New England that includes at least thirty schools, twenty-five churches, fifteen libraries, a large number of public buildings and more than two hundred houses. The Fitchburg Historical Society building is the city's most important public building designed in the Georgian Revival style by H.M. Francis and Sons, who fulfilled the Society's expectation that its headquarters would be equal to that of the imposing civic buildings nearby.

Local contractor and lumber dealer, John Dudley Littlehale was chosen to build the Society headquarters, which was described in the *Fitchburg Sentinel* as "...practically a product of Fitchburg labor..." Local subcontractors included F.A. McCauliff, who was responsible for the foundation and other granite work; John Dockendorff, masonry and brick work; William Edwards Slate Company, roofing; Jennison Plumbing Company, heating and plumbing; and Albert C. Ferry, electrical wiring and installation of light fixtures. Atlantic Terra Cotta of New Jersey supplied the terra cotta trim.

The cornerstone for the building was laid in a grand ceremony on August 5, 1911. The Society headquarters were completed by March 1912, at which time all artifacts and documents were placed in the building. The first meeting in the building was held on May 20, 1912, and the formal dedication took place on June 4, 1912.

In his remarks at the dedication ceremony, Henry S. Burrage commented on the incorporation of fireproof vaults into the building stating: "Surely, we can no longer put our trust in so-called fire proof buildings. The recent destruction of the Equitable Building in New York has illustrated this fact. For the preservation of our most valuable manuscripts... treasures that cannot be replaced, safes and safety vaults must be provided." The *Sentinel* elaborated on what was then state-of-the-art fireproof construction, reporting that the building's ceilings, partitions, floors and stairways were of reinforced concrete, and that the balustrades were of wrought iron. Exterior building materials included Harvard water-struck brick, terra cotta trim, and steps, buttresses and underpinnings of Fitchburg granite. Interior finishes included marble floors in the main vestibule, oak and quartered oak doors and moldings, and polished brass light fixtures equipped with both gas and electricity. In addition, the building was equipped with a fire escape at the time of construction.

Sadly, James F. D. Garfield died on December 14, 1911 and did not live to see the completion of the Historical Society's outstanding building. His daughter, Theresa N. Garfield devoted herself to the Society, working as the librarian from 1912 until her own death on Dec. 11, 1972. During her years of service, the Society's collections grew rapidly, and were used for research by residents and visitors who were also invited to view the artifact collections displayed in the basement. The next director, Eleanora West, served the Society for twenty years. She initiated outreach programs about Fitchburg people and topics, and established the Society's first relationship with the public schools. Ruth Penka, director from 1992 to 1999, brought a new sense of professionalism to the Society, while expanding outreach into the business community and collaborating with others to produce commemorative booklets. The current director, Betsy Hannula, arrived in 2000 and brought many years of historical society management to the job. She has set several priorities for the organization, top among them to make the facility handicapped accessible and to catalog the collections on a computerized database.

These director/librarians along with generous members built a premier collection of more than 200,000 items focused on

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pre-industrial Fitchburg, Fitchburg's role in wars, social activism in Fitchburg, businesses and industries, religious institutions, Fitchburg people, and Fitchburg architecture. Highlights include extensive reference material on the Civil and Revolutionary Wars, the railroad, and H.M. Francis & Sons' architectural drawings. The collections include textiles as well as artifacts from the colonial period and from businesses of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Society's library contains books documents, manuscripts, maps, scrapbooks, photos, and albums, plus an extensive collection of original *Sentinels* from 1848 to 1976. In 1965, the Historical Society acquired many of the paintings and artifacts formerly housed in the second floor gallery of the old public library (replaced by the present public library).

Many of the Society's founders and early members gave their personal collections to the Society for the benefit of the people of Fitchburg. Others wrote articles and books on the history of the community. Frederick Currier, for example, wrote dozens of books about the city – its streets, post office, stores, etc. Later in the 20th century women such as Doris Kirkpatrick and Barbara Crocker used their knowledge of Fitchburg's history to research and write the history of Fitchburg in two volumes, also donating the original research materials to the Society.

In addition to collecting, publishing has been an important goal of the Historical Society. The first ten years are documented in the *Proceedings*, a five-volume publication of the papers presented at the Historical Society's meetings. The Society published local histories, The City and the River and Around the World in Fitchburg in 1967 and 1975 respectively. Other publications highlight the industrial history of Fitchburg, for example, Fitchburg's Golden Age by Ruth Ann Penka, which was published in 1994. In addition the Society assists local businesses in researching the history of their organizations for publications created for anniversary years.

An integral part of the fabric of life in Fitchburg, the Historical Society is committed to collecting, preserving, and interpreting the history of the city. The library is a resource for newspaper reporters and students from all levels, kindergarten through college. The Historical Society hosts regular programs to bring Fitchburg history to the public and to local schools. In 1964, the Historical Society spearheaded the city's bicentennial celebration, sponsoring a tour of architecturally and historically significant houses. In conjunction with the City's economic development office, the Society has developed brochures on the architecture of H.M. Francis, Fitchburg's ethnically diverse neighborhoods, and cultural events.

Objects and structures in park

The Park was given by the City of Fitchburg to the Fitchburg Historical Society in 1991, and a redesign and facelift took place in 1998. A brick walkway was installed weaving through the park and a brick pad was laid around the watering trough. The iron arbor, a park bench, a picnic table, new shrubs and reseeding of the grass were all included the new landscaping design.

The Sawyer Gun is one of eleven rifled cannons made by Sylvanus Sawyer of Fitchburg for the Civil War. In 1862-1863, Sawyer, an inventor with a machine shop (not extant) on Water Street in Fitchburg, contracted with the government to produce ten guns. To be on the safe side, he actually produced eleven guns, all of which worked perfectly. Artemus Smith and Hale W. Page, whose foundry was attached to Sawyer's shop, cast the guns of steel, which was rare at the time. The ten guns ordered by the government were used in the Civil War, while the extra one came into the possession of Charles H. Cowdrey. His sons, Henry and Charles F. Cowdrey, donated it to the Fitchburg Historical Society in 1919 when it was mounted on its present site by Wiley and Foss.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number 8 Page 5

The sundial was placed on the lawn in its present site in 1919. Charles Fosdick, long-time supporter of the Society, donated the sundial and Foss and Janes donated the pedestal.

The watering trough, originally located at the lower end of Main Street, was moved to the park several decades ago (the precise date of the move is unknown). The trough dates to the 1860s, when Fitchburgers created a public water supply primarily to respond to the danger of fire. The trough is one of two. The other was placed in the Upper Common. The watering trough on the grounds of the Fitchburg Historical Society was made into a planter during the renovation of the Park in 1998.

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above have the potential to contribute important information relating to the social, cultural, and economic development in Fitchburg during the town's 19th and early 20th century period of economic prosperity. Structural evidence and the contents of occupational related features that may survive at the sites of two residences located in the park area and in the vicinity of the historical society building. Detailed analysis of these sources may contribute information relating to the architectural features and layout of the buildings and the activities that occurred on the surrounding properties. Artifacts and features may also survive from reform meetings that occurred on the property prior to the construction of residential properties and the historical Society building. Stratigraphic evidence associated with the original route of Vine Street may also contribute information on 19th century road building technologies in the area.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Fitchburg City Directory: 1917 (J.D. Littlehale).

Fitchburg Weekly Sentinel. "Dedication of its new building." [Fitchburg Historical Society]. June 7, 1912.

Kirkpatrick, Doris. The City and the River. Fitchburg, MA: Fitchburg Historical Society. 1971.

Unpublished Reports and Sources

Fitchburg Historical Society Files: H. M. Francis & Sons original architectural drawings, obituaries for H.M Francis, Frederick L. Francis, and Albert Francis, historic photographs.

Fosdick, Charles. "The Sawyer Gun." A paper presented to the Fitchburg Historical Society. Nov. 17, 1919.

Hill, Allen Charles, AIA. Building Conservation Assessment for the Fitchburg Historical Society. 1999.

MHC files: Inventory Form 5 (Fitchburg Historical Society Building).

Roberts, Michael (Timelines). Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. April 1998.

Turk Tracy & Larry, Architects. Comprehensive Communitywide Survey of Fitchburg. August 2000; (On file at the MHC).

Turk Tracy & Larry, Architects. Monument Park Expanded Area. Area Form O. April 2000. (On file at the MHC).

(end)

Fitchburg Historical Society
Name of Property

Worcester, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	270000	4718280		3.	
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
2.			4.		
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>See continuation sheet</u>					

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betsy Hannula, Ex. Dir. Fitchburg Historical Society with Betsy Friedberg, National Register Director

organization Mass. Historical Commission date August 2003

street & number 220 Morrissey Blvd. telephone 617-727-8470

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02125

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Fitchburg Historical Society

street & number 50 Grove Street telephone 978-345-1157

city or town Fitchburg state MA zip code 01420

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of two parcels shown on the City of Fitchburg Engineers Map sheet 30, parcels 55 (park) and 56 (Fitchburg Historical Society). The two parcels are further described in there respective deeds recorded at the Worcester County Registry – Northern District as follows:

Deed for the land on which the building sits: “A certain plot of land situated in said Fitchburg, on the westerly side of Grove Street, and bounded as follows, viz.

Beginning at the most easterly corner thereof, at a stone bound at said Grove Street and at land late of T.K. Ware; thence N. 54 W by said Ware land seventy (70) feet, more or less, to a stone bound at land formerly of Benjamin Snow; thence southwesterly by said Snow land eighty-five (85) feet, more or less, to said Grove Street; thence northeasterly by said Grove Street eighty five (85) feet, more or less, to the place of beginning. Being the same premises conveyed to be my Charles D. Wilder et all, by deed dated April 15th, 1910, recorded with Worcester North District Deeds, book 253, page 300, excepting and reserving the buildings upon the premises, with right to remove the same within a reasonable time.

Deed for the park adjacent to the building.

“ A lot of land, located on the westerly side of Grove Street in said Fitchburg, and bounded and described as follows, viz. Beginning at the most southerly corner thereof at the junction of Grove and Brook Streets; thence running North 58 degrees 22' West by said Brook Street four and 68/100 (4.68) feet to the easterly side of Elm Street; thence North 23 degrees 26' West by said Elm Street eighty-one and 57/100 (81.57) feet to land of the said City of Fitchburg; thence North 31 degrees 16' East by last mentioned land nineteen and 65/100 (19.65) feet to the southwesterly side of Vine Street; thence South 59 degrees 11' East by said Vine Street seven and 49/100 (7.49) feet to an angle in said street; thence South 55 degrees 11' East by said Vine Street forty-eight (48) feet; thence southeasterly on a curved line, having a radius of forty-five and 39/100 (45.39) feet by said Vine Street a distance of fourteen and 79/100 (14.79) feet; thence southerly on a curved line having a radius of eight and 04/100 (8.04) feet by said Vine Street a distance of ten and 04/100 (10.04) feet to said Grove Street; thence South 35 degrees 03' West by said Grove Street fifty-two and 76/100 (52.76) feet to the place of the beginning. Containing 3151 square feet, more or less.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes all the land, as described above, owned by the Fitchburg Historical Society.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

Section number photo Page 1

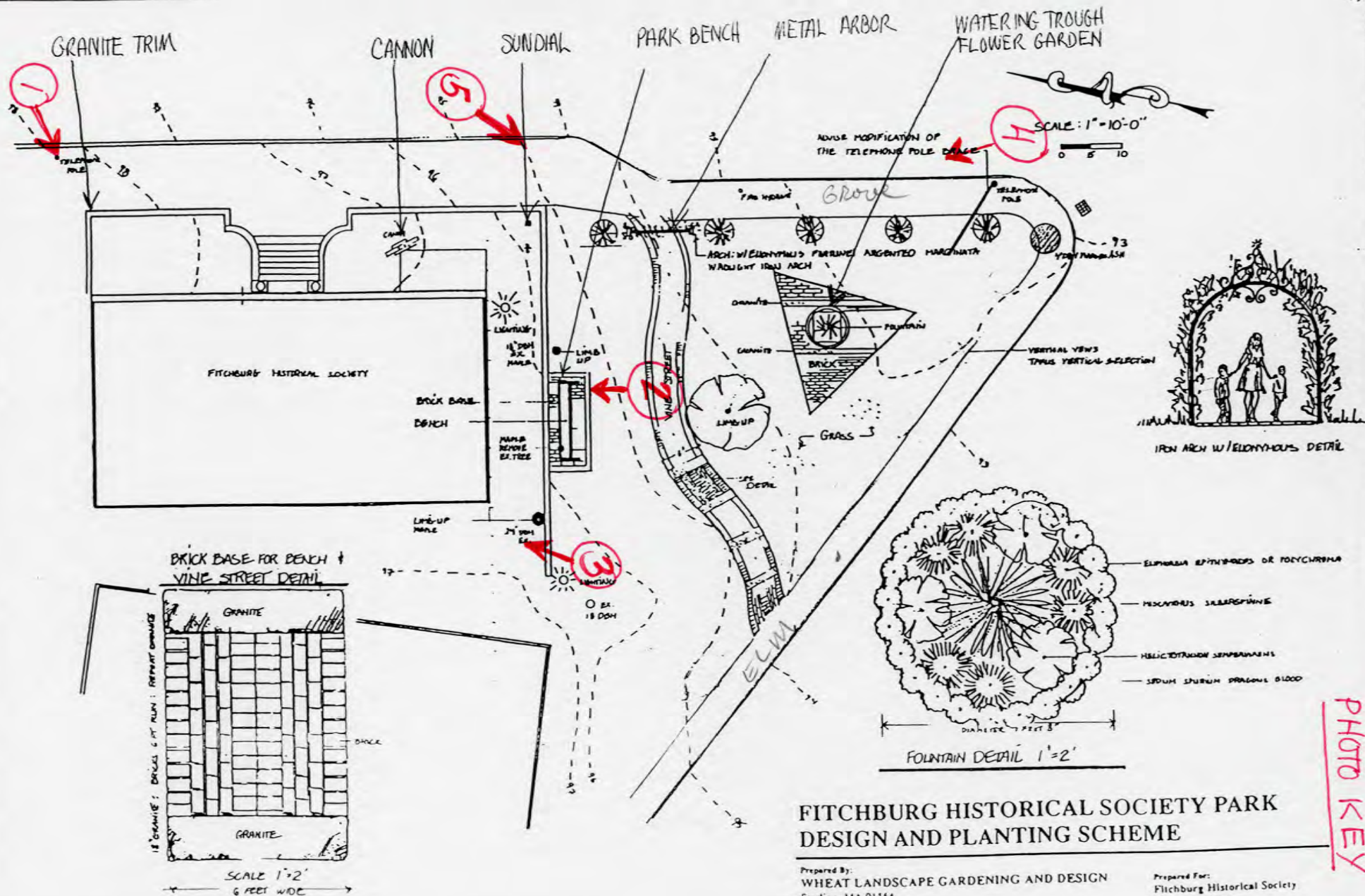
PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographer: Betsy Hannula, Fitchburg Historical Society

Date: September 2000

Negatives location: Fitchburg Historical Society

1. Front (east) and north sides elevations.
2. South elevation
3. West elevation
4. Park and south elevation
5. Park and view of surrounding neighborhood on south side
6. Interior: basement fireplace
7. Interior: ceiling molding in Library, first floor
8. Interior: ceiling molding in Lecture Hall, second floor
9. Interior: ceiling molding in Lecture Hall, second floor



Note: Existing conditions such as property boundary lines, topography, roadway configuration, and features such as existing trees, and drinking fountain were obtained from a plan entitled Survey of Fitchburg Historical Society, drawn by EMG Associates and Michael Davidson, July, 1997.

FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY PARK DESIGN AND PLANTING SCHEME

Prepared By:
WHEAT LANDSCAPE GARDENING AND DESIGN
Sterling, MA 01564
508-422-8278

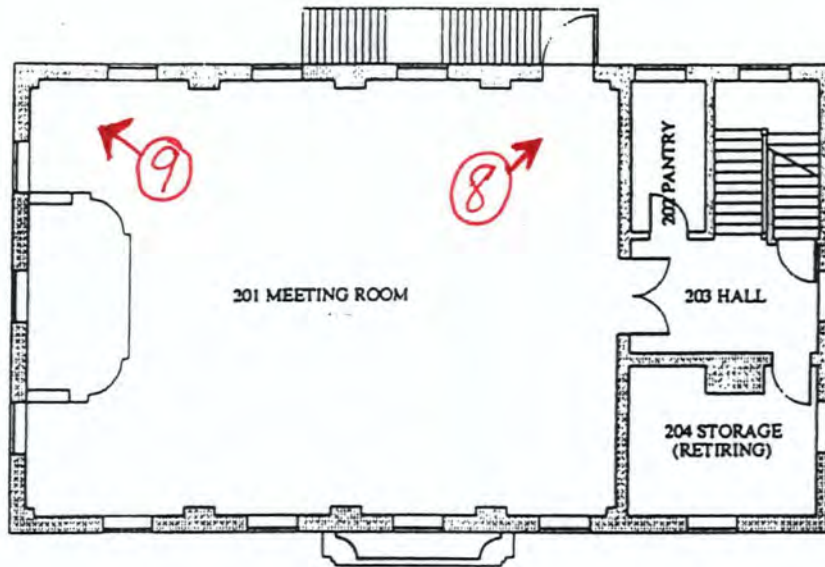
Prepared For:
Fitchburg Historical Society
Fitchburg, MA

Karen Gostenhofer, Gostenhofer Designs
September 1, 1997

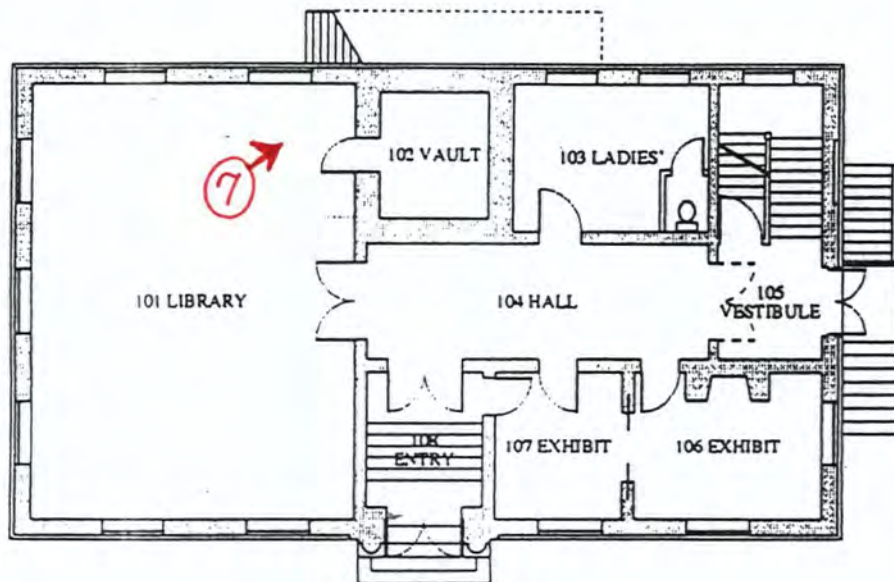


CALLLED NORTH

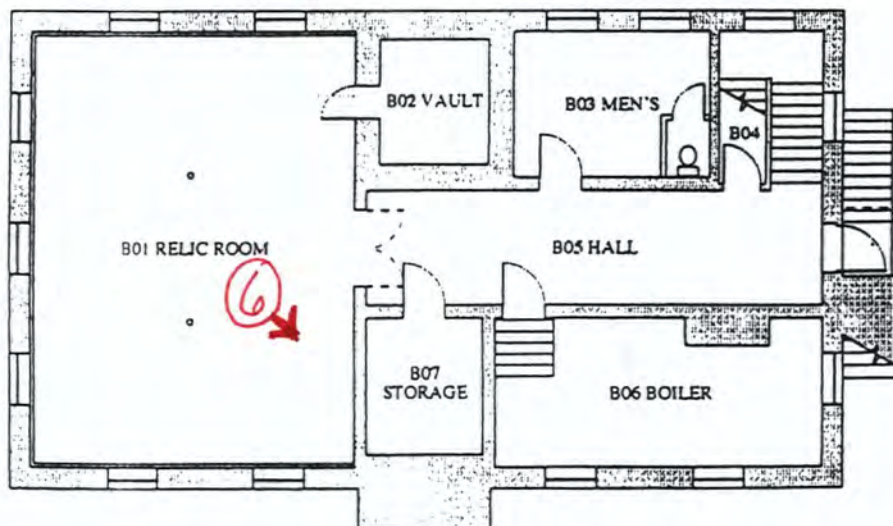
PHOTO KEY



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



BASEMENT PLAN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Fitchburg Historical Society
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 8/19/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/24/03
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/10/03 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/03/03
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 03000992

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 10/3/03 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



*Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420*

**Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000**

1 of 9: East + north elevations



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Betsy Hannah
Sept. 2000

2 of 9: South elevation



*Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420*

**Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000**

3 of 9: West elevation



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 283
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000

4 of 9: Park, and South + East elevations



*Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420*

**Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000**

5 of 9: Park facing Elm St.



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000

6 of 9: Basement fireplace



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000

7 of 9: Ceiling molding 1st floor library



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000

8 of 9: Coved ceiling 2nd Floor lecture hall



Fitchburg Historical Society
50 Grove St. P.O. Box 953
Fitchburg, MA 01420

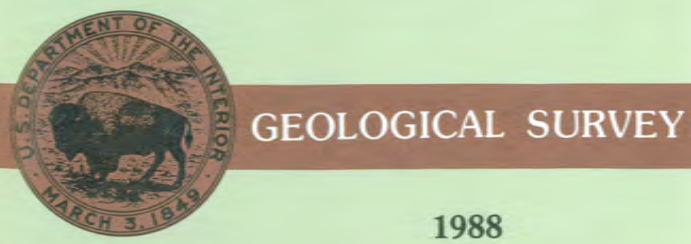
Betsy Hannula
Sept. 2000

7 of 9 : Ceiling molding 2nd floor Lecture Hall



7.5 X 15 MINUTE QUADRANGLE
SHOWING

- Contours and elevations in meters
- Highways, roads and other manmade structures
- Water features
- Woodland areas
- Geographic names



Produced by the United States Geological Survey in cooperation with Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts agencies

Compiled by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1980. Field checked 1981. Map edited 1988

Supersedes Fitchburg 1969 and Gardner 1970 1:25,000-scale maps

Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19

Vertical Transverse Mercator

1:000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum

1969 to place on the predicted North American Datum 1983.

Along the projection lines

1969 west as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Black dots indicate areas in which only landward holdings are shown

Thin red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

CONTOUR INTERVAL 3 METERS
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet			1	2	3	
1	3.2808						
2	6.5617						
3	9.8425						
4	13.1234						
5	16.4042						
6	19.6850						
7	22.9659						
8	26.2467						
9	29.5276						
10	32.8084						

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM		ADJOINING MAPS			
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GN) and 1988 magnetic declination (MN) at center of map. Diagram is approximate		1	2	3	
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048							
				</			

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

Topographic Map Symbols

highway, hard surface
secondary highway, hard surface
light-duty road, hard or improved surface
unimproved road, road
state route; Interstate; U. S.; State
road; narrow gauge; narrow gage
bridge; drawbridge
culvert; overpass; underpass
tunnel; arched; collected; lowland; hillside above
sewers; barn; church; school; large structure
boundary
State, with monument
County name
County name
Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation; small park
Land grant with boundary
U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section
Range, township; section line: location approximate;
corner or field line
over transmission line, located tower
line seen with look
amatory; grave
[?] [C] [C] [C]
prominent; picnic area; U. S. location monument
Indicative water well; spring
T
T
X
X
vertical elevation; spot elevation
portends; index; intermediate; suppression; depression
startled surface: strip mine, lake, sand;
rhythmic contours: index, intermediate
contour label and name
pitfalls, large and small; hills, large and small
swamp; marsh
unmarshed marsh: land subject to controlled inundation
floodplain; scattered trees
lake; reservoir
arch; viaduct

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request

50 Grove St., Fitzburg, MA 01420
Fitzburg Historical Society
↑



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission



August 4, 2003

Ms. Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Fitchburg Historical Society, 50 Grove Street, Fitchburg (Worcester), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the property were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30 to 45 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure

Cc: Steven Svolis, Fitchburg Historical Commission
Betsy Hannula, Executive Director, Fitchburg Historical Society
Dan Mylott, Mayor, City of Fitchburg
Michael Lanava, Planning and Economic Development