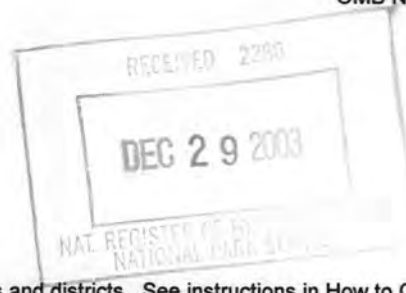


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Benedict Fenwick School

other names/site number Sister Clara Muhammad School

2. Location

street & number 150 Magnolia Street n/a not for publication

city or town Boston (Dorchester) n/a vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Suffolk code 025 zip code 02125

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.)

Peter Friedberg, National Register Director 12/22/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Gara H. Metz, State Historic Preservation Officer Date
Massachusetts Historical Commission

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

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 2/11/04

Benedict Fenwick School
Name of Property

Suffolk, MA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
building	
sites	
structures	
objects	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

Name of related multiple property listing

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

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
Georgian Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
walls brick

roof SYNTHETICS: rubber
other CONCRETE, STONE: marble, METAL: copper
SYNTHETICS: fiberglass reinforced polyester

Narrative Description

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

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Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MASection number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Benedict Fenwick School is located in the dense residential neighborhood that lies between the commercial thoroughfares of Blue Hill Avenue, Roxbury, and Columbia Road in the Dorchester section of Boston. The immediate neighborhood is characterized by a mix of wood frame single-family homes and tenements typical of Boston's late 19th and early 20th century streetcar suburbs. A single family home occupies the lot to the south of the school, with both late-19th century and newly constructed multi-family housing across Magnolia Street to the west. Local community development organizations and the City of Boston are currently restoring the district's original density by erecting affordable housing on vacant lots in the vicinity. The two-family housing to the north and east of the school is the result of these efforts.

The former Benedict Fenwick School faces west on the east side of Magnolia Street and is set back approximately 20 feet from the sidewalk. **(photo #1)** It occupies the crest of a ridge overlooking Ceylon Street and is sited slightly northeast of the residential park defined by the intersection of Bird and Wayland Streets. The site slopes down several feet from the front to the rear (east) of the lot. The recent landscaping includes grass and plantings around the building, a fenced playground at the rear and parking at the north and east sections of the lot. The rear of the lot had served as a playground for the school, but no original equipment survived prior to the current rehabilitation. A new metal picket fence runs along the sidewalk in front of the building; the south and east borders of the lot and the playground are rimmed by a chain link fence.

A wide sidewalk leads from the street to the front entrance steps, and a sidewalk runs along the south edge of the driveway to the north (side) entrance. The driveway surrounded by parking runs east from Magnolia Street, north of the building and turns south behind the building.

A two-story, red brick building comprising an eclectic combination of styles, the Benedict Fenwick School's most predominant feature is its Neoclassical massing and tapestry brick detail. **(photo #2)** The building has an 11-bay front block that projects forward two bays from the rear block of the building, which is wider and contains the two wings that project out toward the rear (east). Although they are the same length, the north wing has eight bays and the south wing has nine bays along its side elevation.

The Benedict Fenwick School suffered a fire in 1999 that destroyed most of the roof and second floor. Despite the fire, the building retains integrity of location and design. After standing vacant for three years, the building has been rehabilitated by its present owner as 15 units of affordable housing.

(continued)

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Continuation SheetBenedict Fenwick School
Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MASection number 7 Page 2

The ornamentation on the main (west) facade consists of tapestry panels of brick and concrete, brick panels and other cast stone ornament. The red brick walls rise to a FRP (fiberglass reinforced polyester) cornice, which follows the profile of the original cast stone cornice and is surmounted by a paneled brick parapet topped by cast stone coping with a copper cap. The parapet rims a flat roof. Recessed bays set between unadorned brick pilasters are ornamented at the second story spandrels with concrete panels with a double X pattern in brick. Other brick detail includes a sloping watertable, a brick header course at the 1st story window sills, a header and soldier course beneath the cornice and brick panels infilled with concrete at the parapet. At the corners and framing certain bays, vertical brick panels with diamond-shaped drops are infilled with concrete.

The shallow projecting central pavilion is surmounted by a round arched concrete gable with patterned brick. A cast stone sign with the name Benedict Fenwick School is set in the parapet and framed by two small square concrete panels. At the base of the pavilion, the main entrance consists of a bold classical cast stone entry. The architrave surround at the door is ornamented with a simple keystone. This is framed by two large consoles supporting a dentil cornice and a segmental arch. The tympanum is ornamented with dark green marble background and a circle. The entrance is approached by four steps set between concrete supporting walls with new metal railings. These steps were replaced prior to the recent rehabilitation. Above the entrance, a paired window is flanked by two narrow windows, below which are narrow vertical spandrels filled with a concrete panel with X patterns in brick. **(photo #3)**

The side elevations of the front block are two bays deep. The north elevation is a brick wall ornamented with a large brick panel trimmed inside with a concrete strip. This is framed by two narrow vertical panels faced with concrete. **(photo #1)** The south elevation has two bays of windows. Both of the side elevations have typical brick and concrete paneled parapets and they have the vertical panels with the diamond shaped drips at each corner, matching those on the facade.

The west facade on each of the side wings is set back two bays from the front block. The brick walls with no openings match the detail found on the north elevation of the front block.

The north and south elevations of the building are similar but not identical and the ornamentation matches that on the main facade including the spandrel panels, parapet detail and soldier courses.

Each elevation has an entrance in the west bay and over the entrance is an oversized window, which lights the stair. **(photo #3)** A brick surround at the entrance is surmounted by a simple

(continued)

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dentil cornice supported on brackets enriched with acanthus leaves. At the roof above this bay, a round arch is centered in a stepped parapet, which is otherwise ornamented with a single long concrete panel flanked by two square panels.

On the north elevation, there are five regular bays matching those on the facade and one bay with narrow windows and one bay with paired windows. The exterior steps and landing at the north entrance were rebuilt as part of the rehabilitation. On the south elevation there are seven regular bays matching those on the facade and one bay with varied size windows.

The east elevation is the least ornate, retaining the major elements of the facade. **(photo #4)** Brick sills and flat arches are typical at the windows. The sloped brick water table, a projecting brick sill course at the first story windows, and the FRP cornice and copper-clad coping at the parapet comprise most of the detail on this elevation. The vertical and horizontal concrete panels at the parapet and at the corners are found on the east elevation of each of the wings. Otherwise on the east elevation, the north wing has a blank brick wall; the south wing has two windows at the second story, four at the first story including a single narrow window. The north elevation of the south wing is blank while the south elevation of the north wing has four bays of typical windows. The east elevation of the main block is 12 bays wide with narrow windows at the end bays.

The flat roof is rimmed by a parapet. The entire original roof was lost in the 1999 fire, leaving just one brick chimney standing above the roof. The original drawings show five ventilation stacks with hipped hoods and two skylights that rose above the roof. It is not known whether they were built. They are not visible in a historic photograph of the building and it is assumed that if they were constructed, they were set too far back from the parapet to be visible from the street.

At some time in the past, the back face of the parapet and the cast stone coping were entirely wrapped with copper flashing with a crimped edge at the base of the coping on the facade. This detail was reinstalled as part of the rehabilitation, to protect the parapet. Paired glass and wood panel entry doors have a 6-light upper panel and a single wood panel below. The exterior doors have been rebuilt based on one remaining set of original doors and were installed as shown in the original drawings at the main (west) entrance and the two side (north and south) entries as well as at the rear. **(photo #5)**

(continued)

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The typical windows have 9/9 aluminum sash, the narrow windows have 4/4 sash and the basement windows are varied with 6/6 sash and paired 8/8 sash. The windows above the side entries are a tripart window with a double transom. The 9/9 center window was flanked by 4/4 windows. One original wood double hung window has been retained and repaired at the first story of the south elevation.

INTERIOR

Typical of many schools, the first and second floors have a north-south corridor running the length of the building terminating at full height stair halls. At the first floor, the exits are beyond the stair halls. The main entrance corridor is centered on the west side of the first floor corridor. The north and south stairs, which run from the basement to the second floor, have wood treads and risers, square wood balusters and a wood banister. **(photo #8)** The square wood newel posts have chamfered edges. Steel supports have been added to the stairs for reinforcement.

The north-south corridor retains its original width. Details were built to suggest the original, such as a picture rail, wood floors and simple door surrounds with a cap molding. Residential units are located on the first and second floors, which originally contained classrooms with adjoining coat rooms. A kindergarten and a Nurses' Room also were located at the first floor. The main entrance corridor and vestibule have terrazzo floors, marble treads and risers, a marble border and marble dado. The original vestibule partition with new doors remains at the main entrance and at the north and south entries. **(photo #7)**

The second floor classrooms were laid out in the same location as on the first floor and there were some minor variations in the smaller rooms. The space over the main entrance corridor contained a lavatory and a book room. Next to the stair, the south wing contained the Women Teachers' Room and the north wing the "Masters Room."

The basement originally contained the girls' and boys' lavatories, indoor playrooms, one each for girls and boys, the boiler room, janitor's room, and two heating chambers. The basement now contains three residential units, utility and service rooms, offices, and a community room.

(end)

Benedict Fenwick School

Name of Property

Suffolk, 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): HPCA# 6018

- ☐ 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

Education

Health/Medicine

Period of Significance

1912-1953

Significant Dates

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

McLaughlin, James E.

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Benedict Fenwick School
Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MA**Section number 8 Page 1**Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Benedict Fenwick School in the Dorchester area of Boston is an early example of a modern building type that reflects the early 20th century belief in the restorative powers of fresh air. The "open-air school" sought to protect children against tuberculosis and other ailments by maximizing the flow of fresh air in the classroom. Some open-air schools were almost entirely glazed, while others, like Benedict Fenwick, simply emphasized light and air through increased fenestration. This development in medical theory manifested in required changes to the design of public schools in Boston, a city that led the nation in the effort to improve public health through the public school system. The Benedict Fenwick School was designed and constructed in 1911 and 1912 just after the adoption of a new policy on open-air and fresh-air classrooms by the progressive Boston School Committee. The Benedict Fenwick School is significant under National Register Criteria A and C, representing a national trend in public health reform and the impact of that reform on both the public education system and school building design.

The open-air classroom phenomenon "was based on principles learned from European sanatoria where doctors had demonstrated that the right environment could help improve health."¹ It was intended to cure patients with tuberculosis, pneumonia and other infectious diseases in an age preoccupied with public health prior to the discovery of antibiotics. Johannes Duiker's Open Air School in Amsterdam (1930) and Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium in Finland (1929-32) attest to the pervasive and persistent belief in the therapeutic value of open air building design in the first half of the 20th century.

The earliest manifestations of the influence of open-air theory in American school and tenement housing design appear in about 1910 in buildings like the Benedict Fenwick School in Boston and East River Homes in New York City. To protect residents against tuberculosis, the innovative East River tenements included dozens of triple-hung windows to allow plenty of fresh air into each room as well as an open-air school on its roof.² The Benedict Fenwick School was one of several constructed immediately after the Boston School Committee recommended in

(continued)

¹ David P. Handlin, *The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 205.

² Handlin, 205-206

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Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MASection number 8 Page 2

November 1910 that all rooms in new school buildings have one wall "open wholly from floor to ceiling to the outer air." The policy was intended to benefit all children "as all are vitally affected by the matter of ventilation," but especially to benefit delicate children with anemia or tuberculosis.³

Boston had a history of leading the country in a movement to reform public health through the school system. In 1894, Boston was the first in the nation to adopt a system of medical inspection in schools, a system which continues today. In 1907, it was the first to establish a Department of School Hygiene.⁴ In 1908, the same year that "instruction as to tuberculosis and its prevention" became a required subject in schools throughout the Commonwealth, Boston assigned a teacher to an "open-air class" for children with tuberculosis on Parker Hill. Between 1909 and 1913 many additional open-air classrooms were added to the Boston schools.⁵

The Annual Documents of the City of Cambridge, which are much more descriptive than those of Boston, thoroughly record the rise of the open-air school in that city beginning in 1910. The first open-air school served as a kind of quarantine for pupils in the public schools identified for isolation by the Anti-Tuberculosis Association or the medical inspector. The students, ranging in age from five to fifteen, were placed in a house remodeled expressly for that purpose by removing the entire southern wall to allow the free flow of air into the classroom. Each child was provided with "a chair bag, a leg blanket, a soapstone footwarmer, a worsted toque, a pair of woolen gloves and an outside coat." When the health of a student improved, he or she could return to regular classes.⁶

Cambridge converted single rooms in existing schools for open air use beginning in 1913, but did not build new structures for that purpose until 1916. The Agassiz School (now demolished)

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³ City of Boston (1912), 15-16.

⁴ City of Boston (1927), 78-79.

⁵ City of Boston (1929), 113-117.

⁶ City of Cambridge, *Annual Reports* (1911), 40-43; (1916), 281.

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was designed with buttresses in order to minimize the dead wall space, and to provide approximately 25% more light and air to each classroom than existed in "even the most modern schools of Boston and vicinity" at the time. Only two of its rooms were intended for permanent open-air use.⁷

In 1915, the privately owned and operated Rivers School in Brookline (now in Weston) and the Cooperative Open Air School (now Shady Hill School) in Cambridge opened as experiments in open-air education. They were supported by a group of Boston doctors and Harvard professors respectively and, being little more than an open shelter, offered an open air education to all pupils in its strictest form. The Cooperative Open Air School met on the porch of a private home for two years before constructing four buildings "built of wood and looking from the street side like low brown barracks. There was one large expanse of windows on the inner side... [that] were kept open, even in zero weather."⁸ Similarly, the Rivers School classes were conducted in bungalows designed by the doctors with folding windows that prevented rain and snow from entering while permitting the free flow of air. Since there was no central heat, the children were well bundled like their peers in the Cambridge public school system.⁹

The Boston schools adopted comprehensive open-air policies for the benefit of all children several years before the experimental private schools or the City of Cambridge. The entire Boston public school system was affected by an order that was passed as early as November 1910, recommending that "all rooms in new school buildings shall, on one side at least, open wholly from floor to ceiling to the outer air, in order that during warm weather, at least, the pupils may have as much fresh air as possible." Funds were allocated for the Benedict Fenwick School just three months after the adoption of this policy, making it one of the first in the city and region to be designed specifically for open air classrooms with large banks of windows characteristic of the movement.¹⁰ The architect was appointed in June 1911 and the building permit was issued on November 11, 1911 with an estimated cost of \$56,000.¹¹

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⁷ City of Cambridge (1916), 282; "Proposed New Agassiz School," *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 10, 1915.

⁸ Edward Yeomans, *The Shady Hill School: The First Fifty Years* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Windflower Press, 1979), 102.

⁹ Eric R Delinsky, *Open Windows, Open Minds – A History of the Rivers School* (1991), Privately published, 1.

¹⁰ City of Boston (1912), 15-16.

¹¹ City of Boston (1911), 8; Building permit for 150 Magnolia Street, 1911.

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The Boston School Committee spent the next year educating parents and teachers about the benefits of the open-air theory and developing an expanded policy that was adopted in January 1912. The policy addressed routine classroom ventilation and cleaning procedures, but also affected the design of school buildings as indicated in the November 1910 order. Furthermore, every school building, whether new or old, was required to have "at least one fresh-air room not especially for anemic children." These "fresh-air rooms" for healthy children were distinguished from the "open-air rooms for anemic and delicate children" which were far fewer in number and limited to children of no more than two grades.¹² Since this policy was the primary concern of the Boston School Committee in 1911, James McLaughlin, the young architect of the Benedict Fenwick School, must have carefully considered the new fresh-air requirements in designing the new school that year.

McLaughlin, born in Nova Scotia to Irish parents, had been listed as a draughtsman in the Boston City Directories since 1893. In the 1910s when he practiced independently as an architect, his works were made available to a national audience through the *American Architect*. His practice that focused in the Boston area included at least two other school buildings, the Saltonstall School in Salem (1916) and the Boston Trade School (1917). He designed Fenway Park (1912) in a panel brick design similar to that of the contemporary Benedict Fenwick School. Other published McLaughlin designs of this era include the Commonwealth Armory (1916, demolished 2002), South Terminal Station in Boston (1918) and his own home in Brookline (now Brighton, 1914). When McLaughlin died at age 92 in 1966, his funeral was held in the home where he had lived for 52 years.¹³

Constructed on an unused Magnolia Street parcel containing approximately 80,000 square feet that had been transferred by the Commissioners of Public Works to the Board of Schoolhouse Commissioners, the Benedict Fenwick School was originally a part of the Phillips Brooks district.¹⁴ Within its first year, it was transferred to the new John Winthrop district that was established on December 1, 1911.¹⁵ The school was named for the second Catholic Bishop of

(continued)

¹² City of Boston (1912), 14-19.

¹³ *Boston Globe*, February 17, 1966; *Boston City Directories*; Death records; *Avery Architectural Index*.

¹⁴ City of Boston (1911), 8. The transfer of land was approved on April 4, 1911.

¹⁵ City of Boston (1912), 34; (1913) "New Schoolhouses."

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the diocese of Boston, who was appointed in 1825 when the Catholic population in Boston was quite small. In response to increased Catholic immigration in the 1840s following the potato famine in Ireland, Fenwick established new parish churches, the first school for Catholic children in Boston, and Holy Cross College in Worcester.¹⁶ Despite its namesake, the Benedict Fenwick School was from the beginning open to all religious denominations. Rabbi Phineas Israeli served as the first president of the parent association in its district.¹⁷

The Benedict Fenwick School opened on September 11, 1912. That year, attendance in the Boston Public Schools was "the largest ever known."¹⁸ However, four new school buildings including Benedict Fenwick, two large additions, and several temporary portable school buildings ensured that nearly every child had a seat.

Just before opening day, Dr. Franklin B. Dyer of Cincinnati was appointed the new Superintendent of Boston Schools. Although he had not been responsible for instituting the open-air policy, he heartily embraced it, "beginning at the very beginning to have the rooms continually flooded with fresh air."¹⁹ Dr. Dyer, who "has visited all of the cities of any size in the country and knows much concerning their schools and courses of study," was of the opinion that Boston "one of the finest school systems in the country."²⁰ He visited thirty or more schools in the week before opening day "and without exception have found them in perfect condition."²¹

There was an active parent-teachers association (the Brooks-Winthrop Home and School Association) in the John Winthrop district, as well as a kindergarten, which met in the basement of the Benedict Fenwick School. PTAs and kindergartens were both relatively new phenomena

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¹⁶ City of Boston (1913), Appendix E. "Benedict Fenwick," *American National Biography*.

¹⁷ City of Boston (1913), 201.

¹⁸ *Boston Transcript*, September 11, 1912.

¹⁹ *Boston Globe*, September 10, 1912.

²⁰ *Boston Globe*, September 3, 1912.

²¹ *Boston Globe*, September 10, 1912.

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Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MASection number 8 Page 6

in the American public school system. The Department of Parent Teacher Associations had been formed within the National Congress just a few years earlier in 1907. While the first American kindergarten had been founded in Boston as early as 1870, the national PTA was still advocating that kindergartens become a part of the public school system in 1911.²²

As a Boston elementary school designed in 1911, the Benedict Fenwick School would have held grades one through eight (in addition to the kindergarten). The eight-grade system, adopted in 1906 to replace a nine-grade system, remained controversial in the 1910s. As late as 1919, a superintendent of the Boston schools found himself defending this improvement to the system against "the taunt of 'Fads and Fancies.'" At the turn of the century, few students had continued beyond the elementary school level to high school. "Those who went beyond were as much distinguished as those who go to college today," recalled the superintendent in 1919. The nine-year elementary system was abandoned, the superintendent explained, to promote high school attendance and encourage children to remain in school as long as possible.²³ In Boston, the present elementary, junior and senior high school system began on a limited basis in 1913. The first junior high in Boston was called an Intermediate School.²⁴

Other improvements to early 20th century Boston schools included reducing the quota of students per teacher. Originally of 12 rooms accommodating 528 students, or 44 students per room, the Benedict Fenwick School was designed with new quota restrictions in mind, which would by 1915 reduce the teacher/student ratio to 1 to 40. In 1927, the quota would be reduced again to 35 students per teacher, about half the amount that prevailed in the 1880s before quotas were established.²⁵ Teachers in Boston were ranked as master, submaster, first assistant in charge and lesser assistants. The first submaster of the John Winthrop district was Joseph A. F. O'Neil and the ten assistants named were all unmarried women. O'Neil also served as the recording secretary for the Home and School Association.²⁶

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²² City of Boston (1913), 201. www.pta.org.

²³ City of Boston (1919), 11-12.

²⁴ City of Boston (1929), 117.

²⁵ City of Boston (1911), 11; (1929), 172.

²⁶ City of Boston (1912), 34; (1913), 201.

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General guidelines on ventilation were to be observed in this and all Boston schools by January 1912. Guidelines for the "fresh-air rooms" for healthy children were subject to the judgment of the individual teachers and were less rigid than those of the private experimental open-air schools. "As a general rule the windows on two sides of these rooms should be kept open, or the windows on one side wide open, at all times, except when the temperature in the room goes below 60 degrees Fahrenheit, or when rain, high wind, dust or some other special conditions seriously interferes.... Children...should be allowed to wear their outer clothing whenever they feel cold without it, rather than to deprive other children in the room of the air they need.... Teachers should especially watch children seated near the windows, and should see that every child is warm enough to work and enjoy himself."²⁷

Not long after the adoption of the fresh-air and open-air policies, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health began a ten-year nutrition study, weighing and measuring 94,000 Boston elementary school children. When over 9000 suspect children were more thoroughly examined, 1200 cases of malnutrition and 200 cases of tuberculosis were identified. Upon receipt of the alarming results of the report in 1926, the Boston school system immediately established nutrition classes to provide much needed medical and nutritional care to underweight and sickly children. Advantages of the 2 ½-hour rest and nutrition classes over the open-air classes were outlined in the Superintendent's report of 1927. The nutrition class "includes all of the pre-tuberculosis and malnourished children, irrespective of grade; it obviates the necessity of special open-air class teachers; and it maintains continuous close contact between the school and the home. As soon as a child attains normal weight and health he returns to the regular school program." An illustration of the Nutrition and Rest Class at the Ulysses S. Grant School in the report shows rows of cots occupied by hooded and blanketed children in a room dominated by double banks of open windows. The upper three-quarters of the walls were fenestrated, and the lower quarter held long runs of radiators. Although these nutrition classes of 1926 altogether replaced the open-air classes of the previous decade, the large-windowed rooms from the 1910s were readily adapted to their new use.²⁸

By 1940, the fresh-air concept appears to have been completely abandoned, even forgotten, by Boston school officials and employees alike. Maintaining heating and ventilation regulations were the responsibility of the sanitary inspector, who wrote, "Keeping schools warm enough is

(continued)

²⁷ City of Boston (1912), 18.

²⁸ City of Boston (1927), 79.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetBenedict Fenwick School
Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MASection number 8 Page 8

not a problem. But keeping the room temperature, in schools without heat control, from rising to a degree at which the children show the effects in flushed faces, listlessness, and drowsiness, requires constant watchfulness and checking." The proper temperature was given as 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit. In a school heated entirely by radiators, "air must be admitted through open windows with deflectors at the bottom to prevent drafts." In schools with heat control, "plenum fans" must be kept running to ventilate and heat the classrooms and to ensure that the rooms "are not overheated to the extent that they have been in the past."²⁹

According to the building permits, there was no major work done on the Benedict Fenwick School building by the City of Boston, who owned it until the early 1980s. The few permits for which the school department did apply in the early part of the twentieth century were abandoned. In 1918, they were denied a permit to take down and rebuild walls in the basement because the plans and specifications were deemed insufficient. In 1948, they planned to provide additional egress, partitions, doors, etc., a new fire escape and new bathrooms in the basement but again were not granted a permit. The first building permit to be issued was not until 1952 when a stand for a siren was erected on the roof "in accordance with the plans of the civil defense."³⁰

The Benedict Fenwick School was closed by the City of Boston in July of 1981. Electricians and plumbers were hired to check the systems before the reopening of the school in 1982 under its new owner, the American Muslim Mission.³¹ It reopened as the Sister Clara Muhammad School, named in honor of the wife of the famous Nation of Islam leader, Elijah Muhammad. Described as a role model for the Black Woman, she embodied "modesty, purpose and total commitment to her husband and her Nation." She had no official position in the Nation of Islam (which was male dominated), but was active in work among its women followers until her death in 1972. Wallace Muhammad, her son, gave new direction to the Nation of Islam, renamed the World Community of Islam and later the American Muslim Mission.

The present owner purchased the building on August 4, 1999 from the Masjid Al-Quran, Inc. (formerly known as the American Muslim Mission, Boston Masjid). The rehabilitation of the building has recently been completed creating 15 units of affordable housing for families.

(end)

²⁹ City of Boston (1940), 102.

³⁰ Building permits, 1918, 1948, 1952.

³¹ Building permit, 1982.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Benedict Fenwick School
Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographic References

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Delinsky, Eric R. *Open Windows, Open Minds – A History of the Rivers School*, Weston, MA: The Rivers School, 1991.

Handlin, David P. *The American Home: Architecture and Society, 1815-1915*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979.

James E. McLaughlin. *Avery Architectural Index*.

James E. McLaughlin. Death Certificate. Massachusetts Vital Records.

McLaughlin. (obituary). *Boston Globe*, February 18, 1966, p. 32.

"Mrs. Elija Muhammad, 72, Black Muslim Leader's Wife." *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 1972

"Proposed New Agassiz School." *Cambridge Chronicle*, April 10, 1915.

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Yeomans, Edward. *The Shady Hill School: The First Fifty Years*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Windflower Press, 1979.

(end)

Suffolk, MA
County, State

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1. 19	329200	4686480
Zone	Easting	Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

— See continuation sheet

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 Leslie Donovan, Ann Clifford, Tremont Preservation Svcs., with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date December 2003

street & number 220 Morrissey Boulevard 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 One-50 Magnolia LP c/o Enrique Tamago

street & number 594 Columbia Road #302 telephone

city or town Dorchester state MA zip code 02125

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Benedict Fenwick School
Boston/Dorchester (Suffolk), MA**

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The Land with buildings thereon located at 150 Magnolia Street in the Dorchester District of the City of Boston, the former Benedict Fenwick School and more particularly bounded and described as follows:

NORTHWESTERLY: by Magnolia Street, Two Hundred Six and 43/100 (206.43) feet;

NORTHEASTERLY: by land now or formerly of the City of Boston, One Hundred Sixty-Five (165.00) feet;

SOUTHEASTERLY: by two lines, by land now or formerly of the City of Boston, One Hundred Sixteen and 37/100 (116.37) feet and by land now or formerly of Francisco Figuaroa and land now or formerly of the Sec. of Housing and Urban Development, One Hundred (100.00) feet;

SOUTHWESTERLY: by two lines, by land now or formerly of the 366th Infantry, AMVESTS No. 128, Thirty-Six and 12/100 (36.12) feet and land now or formerly of William Owens and land now or formerly of Raul Hernandez and Elizabeth Hernandez, One Hundred Forty (140.00) feet.

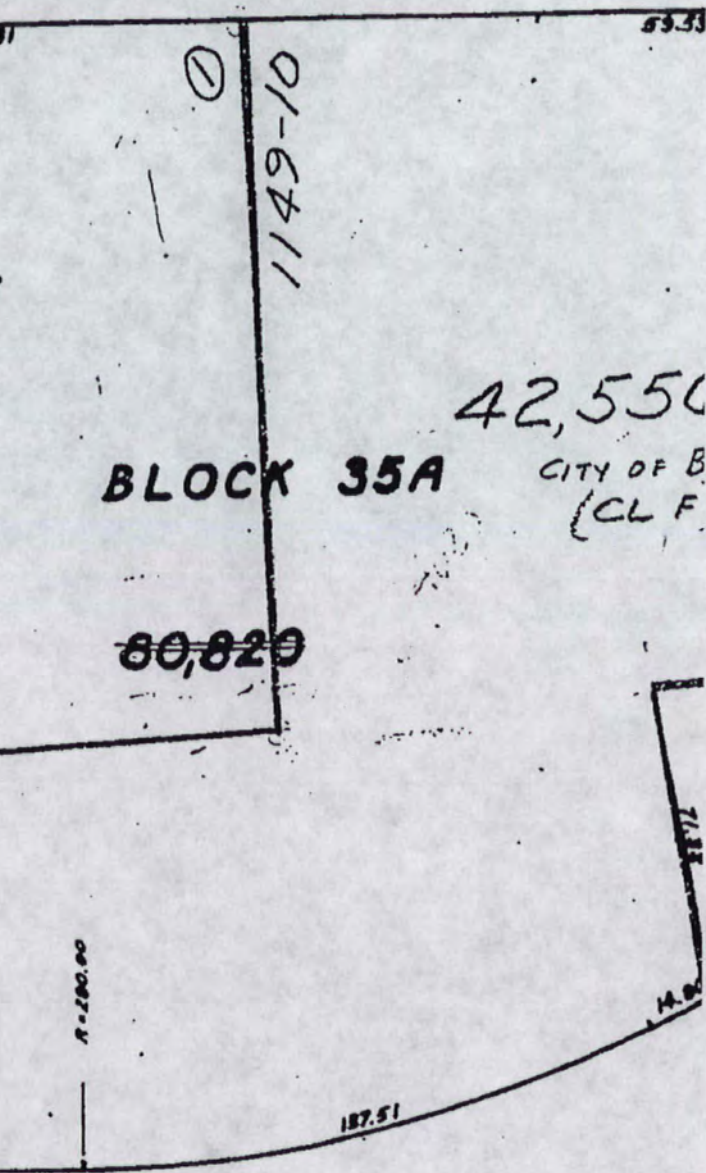
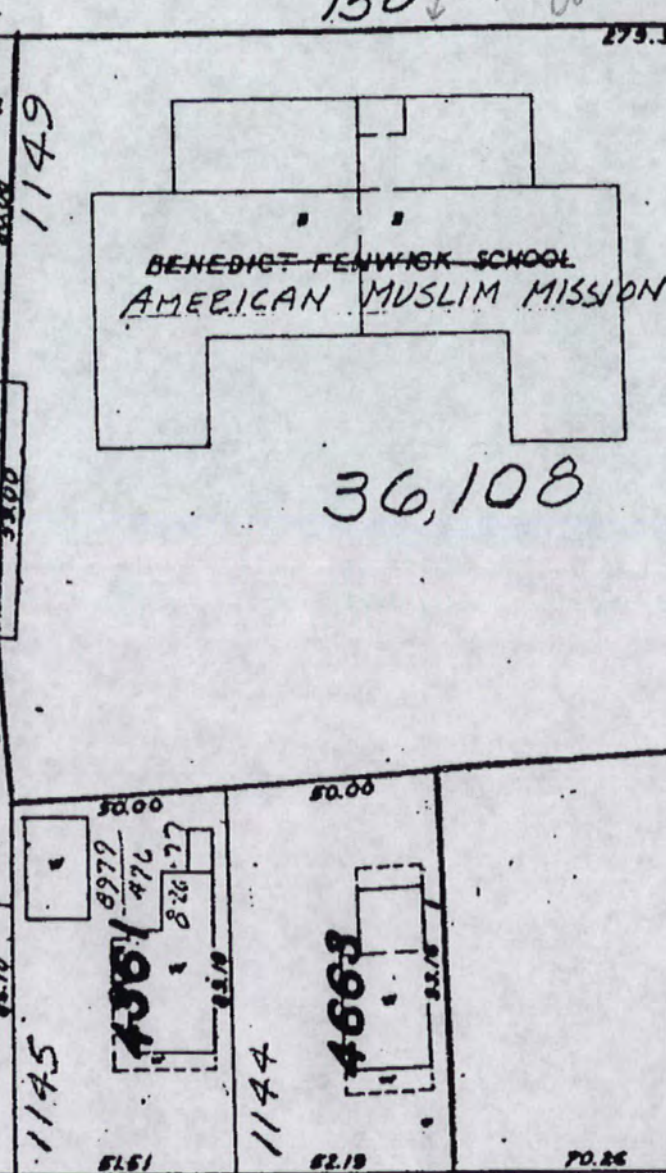
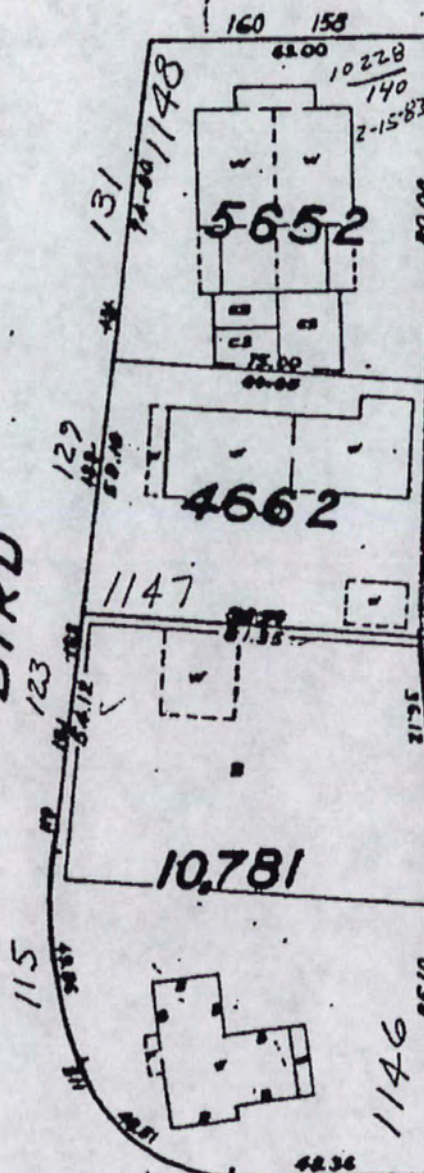
Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Benedict Fenwick School since the building was constructed in 1912.

(end)

BLOCK 36
13006

BIRD



150 Benedict Fenwick School
boundary line at
150 Magnolia St
Dorchester, MA

MAGNOLIA

BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
AMERICAN MUSLIM MISSION

36,108

BLOCK 35A

42,550

CITY OF B
(CL F)

60,820

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Benedict Fenwick School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Suffolk

DATE RECEIVED: 12/29/03 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/27/04
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/11/04 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/11/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000023

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: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 2/11/04 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
150 MAGNOLIA STREET
DORCHESTER, MASS.

PHOTO 1





BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
DORCHESTER, MASS.
150 MAGNOLIA STREET

PHOTO 2



BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL

150 MAGNOLIA ST.

DORCHESTER, MA

PHOTO 3



BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
150 MAGNOLIA ST
DORCHESTER, MA
PHOTO 4

BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL



BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
150 MAGNOLIA ST.
DORCHESTER

PHOTO 5



BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
150 MAGNOLIA ST.
DORCHESTER, MA

PHOTO 6



BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL
150 MAGNOLIA ST.
DORCHESTER, MA
PHOTO 7

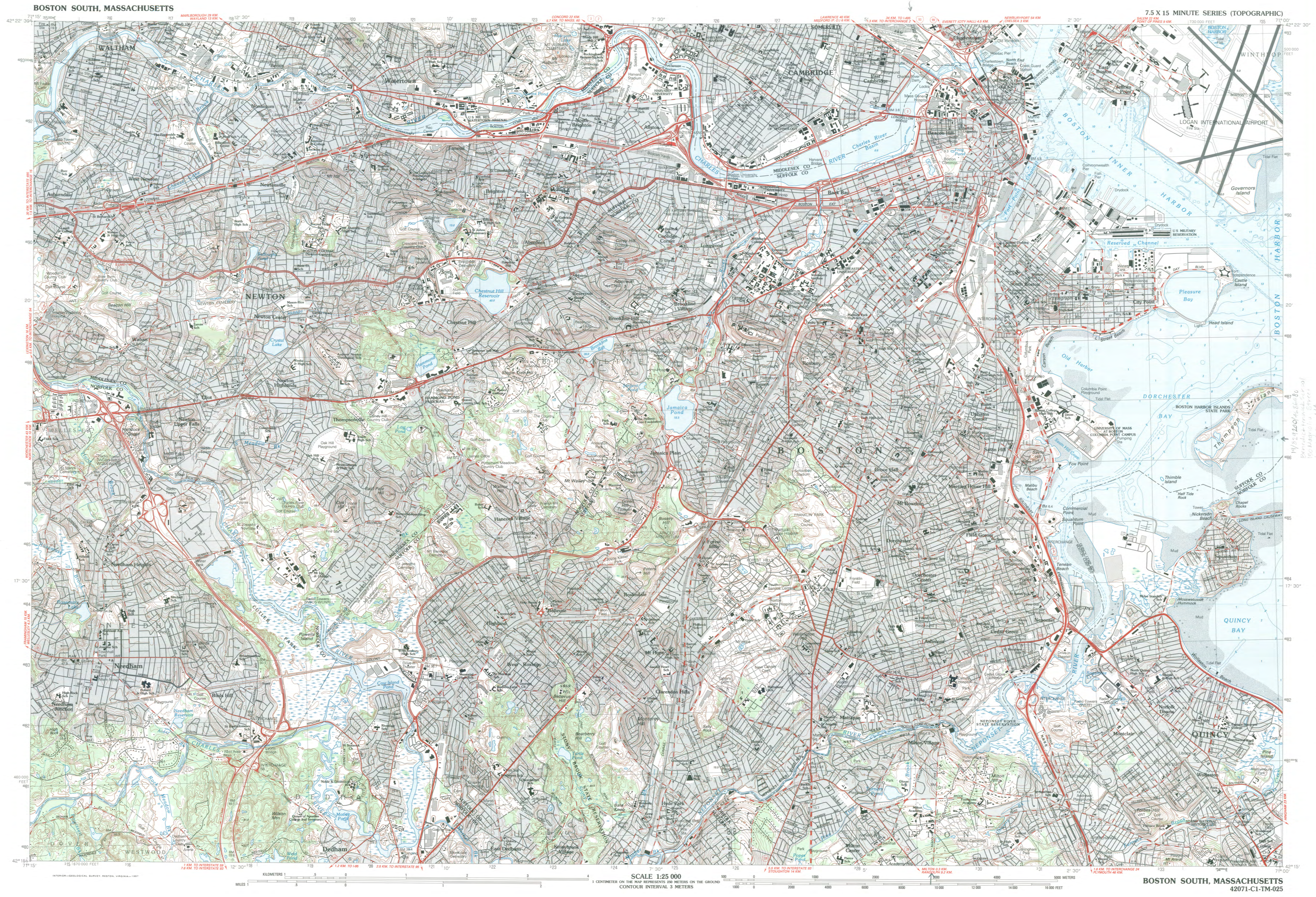


BENEDICT FENWICK SCHOOL

150 MAGNOLIA ST.

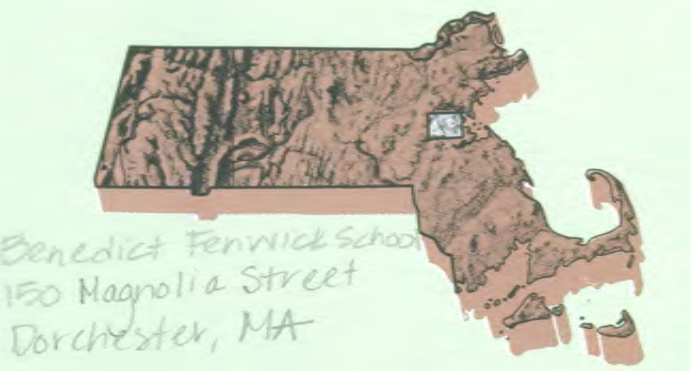
DORCHESTER, MA

PHOTO 8

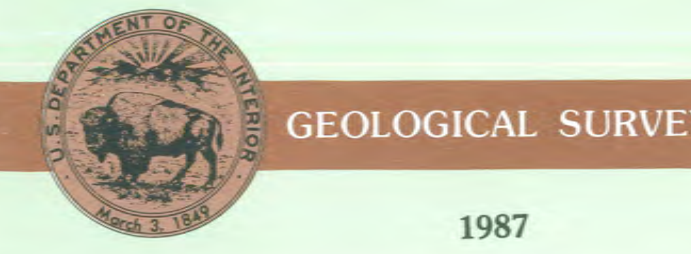


Boston South MASSACHUSETTS

1:25 000-scale metric
topographic map



- 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 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1987
Supersedes Newton and Boston South 1:25,000-scale maps dated 1970
Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 13270 (1985) and 13272 (1982). This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 19
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, modified zone
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 42 meters 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
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 0.3 METER
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN METERS
DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
SHOULDER SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 2.5 METERS
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

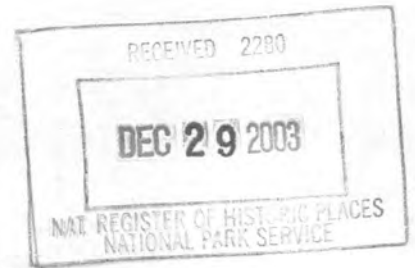
CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM	ADJOINING MAPS		
Meters	Feet		1	2	3
1	3.2808		1	2	3
2	6.5617		4	5	
3	9.8425		6	7	8
4	13.1234				
5	16.4042				
6	19.6850				
7	22.9659				
8	26.2467				
9	29.5275				
10	32.8084				
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GN) and 1987 magnetic declination (MM) at center of map Diagram is approximate	1 Maynard 2 Boston North 3 Lynn 4 Framingham 5 Hull 6 Medford 7 Norwood 8 Weymouth		
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048					



Topographic Map Symbols

- Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road, trail
Route marker, Interstate; U. S. State
Railroad: standard gage; narrow gage
Bridge: drawbridge
Footbridge; overpass; underpass
Railroad area: only selected buildings shown
House; barn; church; school; large structure
Boundary:
National, with monument
State
County, parish
Civil township, precinct, district
Incorporated city, village, town
National or State reservation: small park
Land grant with monument; found section corner
U. S. public lands survey: range, township; section
Range, township; section line: location approximate
Face or field line
Power transmission line, located tower
Dam; dam with lock
Cemetery; grave
Campground, picnic area; U. S. forest monument
Windmill; water well; spring
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave
Control: horizontal station; vertical station; spot elevation
Contours: index, intermediate, supplementary; depression
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand
Soundings: depth curve
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small
Submerged marsh; marsh, swamp
Land subject to controlled inundation; wooded
Scrub; mangrove
Orchard; vineyard

A pamphlet describing topographic maps is available on request
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092



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

December 23, 2003

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

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Benedict Fenwick School, 150 Magnolia Street, Boston, (Suffolk), MA

The nomination has been voted eligible by the State Review Board and has been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. State Historic Preservation Officer. The owners of the properties in the Certified Local Government community of Boston were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 60 to 90 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Chair, Boston Landmarks Commission
Leslie Donovan, Preservation Consultant
Hon. Thomas Menino, Mayor, City of Boston
Roisin Billett, CLG Coordinator, Boston Landmarks Commission
One-50 Magnolia LP, Enrique Tamayo