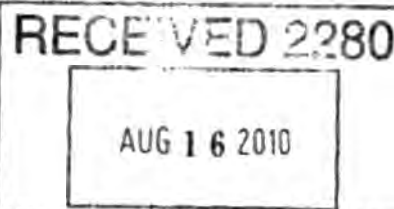


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

806



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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Webster Grammar School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 95 Hampshire Street

☐ n/a not for publication

city or town Auburn

☐ n/a vicinity

state Maine code ME county Androscoggin code 001 zip code 04210

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

James S. Fretwell SHPS 8/10/10
Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

☒ entered in the National Register

☐ determined eligible for the National Register

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): _____

Joe Edison Beall
Signature of the Keeper

9.30.10
Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1	0	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

None

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/Not in use

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS/

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

STONE/cast stone

roof: SYNTHETICS/rubber

other: METAL/iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Constructed in 1915-1916 following the design of architect Harry S. Coombs, the Webster Grammar School is a two and a half story Colonial Revival brick building with parapet wall and flat roof, raised foundation, and cast stone trim. The school is located in a residential neighborhood of Auburn in Androscoggin County, Maine. The building has two wings that create a U-shape mass with a small courtyard at the rear. The building features a symmetrical five part façade dominated by a projecting pavilion containing four, two story, Doric columns and the recessed, main entry. The school is set on the north side of Hampshire Street with the front façade facing roughly southwest. There is a narrow lawn in front of the building, a sidewalk parallel to Hampshire Street and a grassy median with large trees. Willow Street, which runs roughly northeast, is the west boundary of the property and ends at Webster Street which forms the northern boundary of the property. The area between the street and building on the west and northern sides of the school are paved. A paved playground is on the southeast side of the building. The three sides of the playground not bounded by the building are enclosed with a chain link fence.

Narrative Description

The building is a U-shaped brick masonry structure set on an elevated basement capped with a continuous cast stone water table. All windows have cast stone sills and either cast stone or brick lintels. The continuous entablature consists of painted galvanized iron cornice and architrave with brick frieze. The original brick parapet has been increased in height with a flush utilitarian brick parapet with large metal louvers placed in irregular intervals around the entire perimeter of the building. The EPDM roof is mostly flat. All exterior doors have been replaced with modern flush doors.

The front façade faces southwest and is a five part neo-classical composition with a five bay center entrance pavilion flanked by two classrooms on each side. The center entrance pavilion has four engaged two story Doric columns supporting a white painted wooden entablature with Webster Grammar School in metal letters attached to the frieze and a modillion cornice above. The three bays between the columns contain arched openings on the first floor and square topped windows with cast stone keystones on the second floor. The original second floor window sash have been removed and most of the opening has been filled in except for a single rectangular casement sash. Two of the three first floor arched openings have the original eight-over-twelve square topped double-hung windows set on wooden base panels, the third arched opening is a recessed entrance in the middle bay defined by consoles set into the top corners of the opening. All three arches have cast stone relief panels set into the tympanums, the windows have cast stone keystones and the entrance has a cast stone cartouche keystone. The center entrance stairs recede through an opening in the pavilion base and lead up to the deeply recessed entry doors. The second and fourth bays of the five-part façade have a grouping of five windows on the first and second floors that are currently filled in with T1-11 and casement windows on each end. Each window bay has three window openings in the center separated from a window on each end by brick. Each grouping has a continuous cast stone sill and lintel with Greek key pattern blocks. The basement level has five bays of double-hung six-over-six wood windows. The end bays of the façade do not have any windows, but are decorated with a large recessed brick panel. Within the full height brick panel is a small brick inset with cast stone corner blocks. The blank exterior wall signifies the chalkboard walls on the interior classrooms. The basement level has three bays of double-hung six-over six wood windows.

The northwest and southeast sides of the building are nearly identical except for the secondary entrance and rear classroom wings which project forward from the plane of the building on the northwest elevation, and recess behind the plane of the building on the southeast. The northwest elevation is five bays wide. The first, third, and fifth bays are comprised of a bank of five windows on the first and second floors and five double-hung windows in the basement similar to the front façade. On this elevation, all basement windows have been covered with plywood. The second bay is comprised of a secondary entrance with Colonial Revival door surrounds, pediment and pair of Doric columns and original 18-light transom. The bank of windows above the entry is made of double-hung vinyl replacement windows, the center of which is six-over-six flanked by two narrower two-over-two sash. The transoms above these windows are filled in with T1-11. The sill and lintel with Greek key pattern blocks are made of cast stone. The fourth bay is comprised of a pair of windows on the first and second floors with cast stone lintel and sills. At each opening, one six-over-six vinyl replacement window is extant and the other is filled in with T1-11. At the basement level is a projecting brick entry secondary to the other prominent Colonial Revival entrance.

The southeast elevation is a mirror image of the northwest elevation except that the Colonial Revival style entrance is located in the fourth bay. A bay of single windows on all three floors is inserted between the third and fourth bays. The

windows on the first and second floors are double-hung six-over-six vinyl replacement sash and the basement opening has been covered with plywood.

The rear elevation of the building has original offset (shifted northwest) projecting wings that create a small courtyard between them. Each wing has three bays, the first and third of which are blank brick walls with brick inset panels and decorative upper brick panel with cast stone corner blocks typical of the front façade. The center bay of each wing is comprised of single six-over six double-hung vinyl replacement windows on the first and second floors. The basement level of each wing has nine bays of windows all covered with plywood. The recessed portion of the rear elevation has three bays. On the first and second floors each bay is comprised of six-over-six double-hung windows flanked by two-over-two windows on each side. The first floor windows are the original wood sash. The second floor windows are replacement vinyl sash. The basement level has a projecting brick entrance with pressed metal cornice.

Defining the interior plan is the two-story auditorium at the center of the front mass, around which classrooms open off long corridors that mimic the "U" shape of the building's footprint. The two main stairs are located on the north and east sides of the building between the rear wing and main mass of classrooms and auditorium. Between each classroom are bathrooms and coat rooms or "wardrobes" (as labeled on the original architectural drawings), currently filled with lockers. The first and second floors are essentially identical in layout with classrooms, coat rooms, and toilets around the perimeter of the building. The circulation pattern of the basement level is similar to the other floors but connects to a gymnasium in each of the rear wings. The boiler room and original coal pocket are located in the basement below the auditorium.

Modern for its time, the school had up-to-date heating, lighting, ventilation, and sanitation systems at the time it was constructed. Walls between classrooms and corridors are furred out to contain chases for ductwork and piping providing heat, ventilation, and hot and cold water. The structural system is also modern. In addition to the masonry bearing wall construction of the classrooms, steel is used to frame the two-story space of the auditorium and the balcony. As stated in the 1917 *Report of the Board of Education*, "the building is thoroughly up to date, the best of material was used in its construction, and the workmanship was of the best [quality]."¹

The auditorium is oriented northwest to southeast with the stage on the northwest side. The only exterior wall faces northeast with three groupings of three windows on each level looking out into the small courtyard. Double doors open into the space from the main corridor and rear of the auditorium and balcony. The ceiling is coffered and acoustical ceiling tiles are inserted in the coffers where skylights were originally located. The northeast and southwest walls are divided into bays with plaster pilasters that conceal structural steel columns. The pilasters align with the coffered ceiling above. The stage is framed by two pilasters and a proscenium arch with plaster and composite ornament and plaster scrollwork accents. Above the arch is a framed recessed panel with plaster scrollwork ornament at each corner and centered at the top. Original stained wooden stairs are located on both sides at the rear of the auditorium to access the balcony. The balcony is supported by steel trusses and has the original wooden fixed inclined seating on the southeast and southwest sides. The northeast side of the balcony is filled in with walls from floor to ceiling that create practice rooms which were added in the 1950s. Some of the original schoolhouse pendants are hung from the ceiling around the perimeter of the balcony. The roof of the auditorium is supported by a deep truss joist system.

Each classroom typically has a bank of five windows along one exterior wall and chalk boards along the other three walls. Each classroom also has a built-in storage cabinet on the furred wall between the corridor and classroom. All floors are covered in carpet and ceilings are suspended acoustical ceiling tile. Walls are painted plaster. The modest original interior wooden trim, including classroom doors, and stairway railings are all still in place throughout classrooms and corridors. The predominant door style throughout is a four-panel door with single glass light. The wood trim has a combination of painted and varnished finishes. A subtle detail throughout, the wood trim and plaster wall finish have a bull-nosed edge at the termination into the wall or frame.

The gymnasiums in the basement of the rear wings have painted brick masonry walls with wood bead board wainscot on the lower third of the wall. This has a painted finish in one of the gyms and stained finish in the other. The original wood floors are still intact.

Alterations to the exterior are limited to the removal of classroom windows and replacement of the majority of those remaining; replacement of the original roof and removal of skylights; removal of low brick wall at main entry stairs; replacement of all exterior doors; and the increase in height of the brick parapet as a result of the new roof installation over the original. The exact date of these alterations is unknown but the brick retaining wall and original exterior steps were removed from the main entrance prior to 1958. According to original architectural drawings, the exterior stairs at the recessed main entry led to a landing and turned ninety degrees in both directions at the plane of the façade. A low brick wall with cast stone coping stood in front of the landing and stairs and was removed in the 1950s. The new roof was built

¹ 1917 "Report of the Board of Education," *City of Auburn (Maine) Annual Report*, 122.

over the existing and the brick parapet increased in height in 1995. The single change that has had the most impact on the historic integrity of the building was the removal and replacement of the majority of original windows. Otherwise, the existing brick masonry, cast stone trim, and wood trim and columns remain intact and in relatively good or repairable condition. The classroom window sash have been removed and the large openings have been filled in except for the installation of two single rectangular casement sash. The service room, stairway and second floor auditorium windows have vinyl replacement sash.

The interior floor plan, including corridors, stairways, 21 classrooms, assembly rooms and service rooms has not been significantly altered. As originally designed and constructed, each floor had ten classrooms. Each classroom had its own wardrobe. The rooms on either side of the main entrance were the principal's office and teacher's room. On the second floor, the area above the main entrance was a library and medical room. The basement level was segregated by gender. The southeast side was dedicated to female students and comprised the girls' gymnasium, playroom, locker room, toilets, and domestic science room. The northwest side of the basement was dedicated to male students and comprised the boys' gymnasium, locker room, playroom, toilets, machine room, and wood working room.

Significant interior alterations did not occur until the 1950s. When a new principal took charge in 1950, some minor changes to the building occurred including the conversion of a classroom into a library, the basement coal bin into a cafeteria, and the enclosure of the northeast side of the balcony into multiple practice rooms. Originally, the basement only had a small lunch room, but sometime in the mid-twentieth century, the school curriculum shifted from two sessions with a large break in the middle of the day where students went home for lunch, to a single session where students had their lunch at school. The auditorium had always been used for practicing music and the school deemed it necessary to provide additional practice rooms for students in a location that would not interfere with other activities.

On the first floor, non-historic stud walls finished with gypsum board were added to the classroom southeast of the main entrance dividing it into two rooms. The southeast classroom across from the rear of the auditorium was also subdivided with late-twentieth century stud partitions centered on a mullion between two windows. A large opening was cut into the wall between the classroom and wardrobe southwest of the new partition wall as well as the wall between the classroom and the bathroom southwest of the partition in order to enlarge both new classrooms. The new walls in these two modified areas in the south corner of the building have been cut around the original wood trim of the chalkboards and wood base leaving the historic trim intact. The wardrobe for the classroom in the west corner of the building was modified to receive an elevator which projects into the adjacent classroom on the first and second floors. On the second floor, an original partition has been removed between the former library and medical room within the center entry pavilion to create a larger space. Alterations to the basement are primarily limited to the reconfiguration of the bathrooms and addition of partitions in the boys' and girls' playrooms on the northwest and southeast ends of the building.

Alterations to finishes have been limited to carpeting on the floor, infill of classroom transoms, and a dropped acoustical ceiling installed throughout. The classrooms retain their blackboards, baseboards and built-in storage cabinets. The northwest side of the building has sustained significant water damage evident by visible leaks and stripped paint from walls and ceilings.

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 a 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1915-1918

Significant Dates

1915-1916

1918

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation**Architect/Builder**

Coombs, Harry S. (Architect, 1878-1939)

Otto Nelson Company, Bangor, ME (Builder)

Period of Significance (Justification)

The period of significance includes the date of construction of the building and the time it was in transition from a partial elementary and junior high school to 1918 when it became the first official junior high school in Auburn.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Constructed in 1915-1916 in a residential neighborhood in Auburn, Maine, the Webster Grammar School is eligible for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criterion A for Education as one of the first junior high school to be organized and put into operation in New England as a result of changes in educational philosophy in the early twentieth century. Two years after opening, the school was officially made the junior high school and functioned as such until 1981 when it became an intermediate school for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. The period of significance from 1915-1918 includes the date of construction until the school became the official junior high. Webster Grammar School is also significant under Criterion C, Architecture, for embodying distinctive characteristics of an educational institution that exemplify the transition occurring in the curriculum and structure of public education at the time. The Webster Grammar School is also a significant example of early 20th century Colonial Revival school design by well known Maine architect Harry S. Coombs.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)**Criterion A: Education**

Webster Grammar School is significant under Criterion A for Education because it is one of the first junior high schools in New England. The form of the building represents the transition in the educational system of Maine in the early twentieth century from a curriculum based on Classical studies to one emphasizing Manual Arts and practical subjects. Influenced by a national movement in educational philosophy in the 1910-20s, the form and use of the school reflects the tumult of a city grappling with rapid growth in student enrollment and adjustments to the quality and structure of public education. Constructed in 1915-16, the period of significance of the building continues in the first few years of transition until the school became the official junior high school of Auburn in 1918.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the quality of public education came in to question as Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University from 1869 to 1909, argued in a speech to the National Education Association (NEA) that freshman in college were inadequately prepared in their public schooling years, beginning a push for the teaching of academic subjects in later elementary grades.² It was common for students not planning on going to college to drop out of school after eighth grade and begin work. The aim of junior high schools was to strengthen the curriculum and education making it more suitable for an adolescent age group, accommodate individual interests and abilities to encourage students to remain in school longer before leaving to begin work, and utilize teachers specially trained to work with that age group. As this change in educational philosophy was becoming more widely accepted, there was still no exact prescription of what constituted a 'junior high school' in physical design as well as educational pedagogy. Particularly common in the earliest junior highs, the structure of the schools varied greatly as each experimented with the change at various levels. The first junior high school opened in California in 1910. Within the next decade, over 800 junior high schools were established across the country.³

In the years from 1907-1915, the Maine State Legislature passed multiple bills and resolutions related to educational requirements of schools including regulation of the number of days of schooling per year, curricula to be taught, qualifications for teachers and superintendents, and requirements to receive funding.⁴ In the 1915-16 Annual Report of the Board of Education to the city of Auburn, it is stated that "the aim and effort of the present Board [is] to maintain the standard of our schools as second to none in the State. That we have been successful, in part at least, is shown by the fact that desirable families are constantly moving here in order to enjoy the advantages of our schools."

The quality of the educational system in Auburn drew tuition students, especially to the high school, from twenty nearby cities and towns. In 1914, school attendance had increased 98% over the previous five years.⁵ The shoe manufacturing industry in Auburn was at its height in the early twentieth century. With twelve factories, Auburn was the fifth largest shoe production center in the United States in 1922, and employed approximately 8,000 people. As the population increased, school enrollment also increased and quality of education became even more important. Like many schools at the time, increased enrollment and changes to curriculum caused overcrowded conditions in the classrooms and other facilities. The first Webster Grammar School, built in 1874 at the corner of Spring and School Streets, was no exception, and other

² P. Gayle Andrews, "Junior High School," *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, available online at <http://www.oxfordjournals.org/childhood/In-Ke/Junior-High-School.html>.

³ Thomas H. Briggs, *The Junior High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920), 37.

⁴ "Increase in Children of School Age," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 7 April 1915

⁵ 1916 "Report of the Board of Education," 81-82.

issues such as poor lighting and ventilation and increased noise due to the proximity of the building to the railroad lines, initiated the need for a new school. After transferring Webster School's fifth grade to three different elementary schools in the area, continued increased enrollment at all locations proved that a long-term solution was needed.⁶

John Hooper was the principal of Webster School from 1908 to 1950 and was a leader in the development of junior high schools in New England. The traditional grade system of Maine and other areas of New England included nine grades in elementary plus four in high school for a total of thirteen grades. Principal Hooper, instigated the change in the system to that typical of the mid-Atlantic region which comprised a total of twelve grades.⁷ Other schools in New England were also making the change to one less grade. Reducing the number of grades was also considered as one means of easing overcrowded classrooms. Rather than switch to the 6-3-3 plan typical of Mid-Atlantic states, Auburn adapted the plan to suit the needs of the community and the existing school facilities. Courses were revised to overcome the break between the grammar and high schools. Special consideration was given to students who were prone to drop out of school at a young age by introducing practical and vocational subjects earlier in the curriculum to encourage students to stay in school as long as possible.⁸ Principal Hooper stated that, "individuality of the child must be taken into account in the training."⁹ Auburn instituted a 7-5 program (7 elementary, 2 junior high and 3 high school grades) and moved the ninth grade to Webster School rather than enlarging the existing Edward Little High School. Webster School officially became the junior high two years after opening in 1916.

The layout of the new Webster Grammar School is significant because it reflects some of these changes but also maintains many features typical of earlier educational institutions. Like many other early junior high schools across the country, the development of Webster Grammar School occurred during a time of rapid growth in school attendance and philosophical demand for more varied and vocational subjects to better prepare students for jobs after leaving school. The physical form of the school represents the transition to a junior high system because of the carry-over of unique floor plan relationships and programmatic uses of the building from earlier school models. Particularly evident on the basement level was the segregation of sexes for activities and specific subjects. Newspaper articles describe the way in which boys and girls were not allowed to fraternize in the earlier Webster Grammar school building on Spring Street. Manual Arts training was located in the basement with classrooms for domestic science, wood working, and a machine room. The original plans for Webster Grammar School show the basement level segregated by gender for physical and vocational activities. Each side had a gymnasium, locker rooms, toilets, and playrooms. The southeast side was dedicated to girls and the northwest side to boys. The gender divide was further expressed by the location of the wood and machine shop on the boys' side as manual arts training to prepare male students for work in factories or mills. The domestic science room was located on the girls' side and provided practical training for girls to become skilled housekeepers. The upper floors do not appear to represent gender segregated spaces. However, when the building was completed, the first floor was originally dedicated to elementary grades and the second floor to junior high grades, a system typical of earlier schools in Maine.

Webster School also began offering night classes for Manual and Domestic Arts subjects in 1916.¹⁰ The Domestic Arts courses were relatively new to the program and reflected the progressive spirit of the school system at the time.¹¹ Music programs were not as common among public schools at the time, and a 1915 newspaper article stated a summer school course was to be offered by the State superintendent of schools providing regular grade teachers the ability to teach music in more public schools. Music instruction at Webster School was carried out in the auditorium.

By 1958, enrollment at Webster School was 665 students. Tuition students from other districts and counties were no longer accepted because of the high number of local students. At times, enrollment at Webster School was more than 700.¹² By 1981, the Auburn School Department enrolled a total of 4,927 students. Shifting away from the 7-5 structure, a new middle school for seventh and eighth grades opened in 1981. Webster School became an intermediate school for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students. The school remained in operation until 2006.

⁶ 1914 "Report of the Board of Education," 142-143. School Reports and newspaper articles noted the poor light quality of the school and the necessity to close early on "dark days." On March 7, 1914, an article in the *Lewiston Saturday Journal* interestingly noted that "some of the girls who are not strong in health at this age, find the climb of three long flights of stairs a serious handicap...some pupils have been obliged to lose schooling because of this very condition."

⁷ The 6-3-3 system had six grades in the elementary, three in junior high, and three in high school.

⁸ Manual Training and Domestic Science courses were added to the curriculum in 1908. "The Webster Grammar School- A Model School of Maine," *Lewiston Evening Journal*, 3 February 1917.

⁹ "The Webster Grammar School- A Model School of Maine," *Lewiston Journal*, 3 February 1917.

¹⁰ 1916-1917 "Report of the Board of Education," 126.

¹¹ "The Webster Grammar School- A Model School of Maine," *Lewiston Journal*, 3 February 1917.

¹² "Webster School Civics Students Learn by Compiling Its History," *Lewiston Journal*, 15 February 1958.

Criterion C: Architecture

The Webster School is eligible for listing under Criterion C at the local level as a building that represents and embodies a particular, transitional period in school construction in Maine. The design and detail of the building reflects the changes to education curriculum in Maine in the early twentieth century. Designed by local architect Harry S. Coombs, Webster Grammar School is a Colonial Revival Style school that retains integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling and association.

The design of Webster Grammar School is significant because it bridges the transition in educational philosophy while also meeting the practical needs of the community relating to increased student enrollment and adequacy of facilities. Auburn experienced overcrowded conditions in all schools in the early twentieth century. For a period of several years, grade levels and teachers were shuffled to various schools to alleviate crowded classroom conditions before the construction of a new school was achieved. When first constructed, the grammar school contained grades five, six, and seven on the first floor and junior high grades eight and nine on the second floor. After two years, when grades were consolidated to form the junior high school, the school was exclusively used for junior high students in the eighth and ninth grades.

Representative of more traditional form and structure of schools, the layout of the classrooms is not innovative, but the incorporation of manual arts training with the gender-divided spaces of the basement level are a unique resolution to integrating new subjects while following the earlier structure of school organization. At the former Webster Grammar School, boys and girls were strictly separated. The playground was split and boys used a door to enter and exit that was on another side of the building from the entrance used by the girls. It was not considered proper etiquette for boys and girls to mingle.¹³ This attitude carried over to the design of the new school which had separate gymnasium, playroom, toilets, and locker room for boys and girls located on opposite sides of the building on the basement level. Boys and girls were integrated in the classrooms except for the vocational subjects. Manual Arts training was located in the basement and followed the same division of the other spaces. Wood working and the machine shop was located on the boy's side and the domestic science room which taught cooking, sewing, and housekeeping was located on the girl's side. It is unknown at what time these areas were desegregated by gender and opened up to other functions.

Since it is one of the earliest junior high schools in the New England, the architecture of Webster Grammar School is a significant example of the transitional and even experimental period of junior high development, clearly illustrating that Auburn was attempting to provide quality public education by instituting progressive educational philosophies while adapting them to meet the needs of the community.

The Webster Grammar School, which served the students of Auburn for ninety years until its closure in 2006, is also a hallmark in the statewide architectural legacy of the Coombs family and of early 20th century school building in the Colonial Revival style. Born October 27, 1878, Harry S. Coombs was the son of Lewiston architect George M. Coombs and grandson of John Coombs, a shipbuilder in Brunswick. After training under his father and dissolving a partnership with his brother, Coombs began his own firm in 1913 and designed multiple schools throughout the state of Maine. Coombs attended Lewiston public elementary and high schools and graduated from Nichols Latin School in Lewiston in 1897. He attended Bowdoin College and graduated in the class of 1901 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Harry immediately joined his father's firm of Coombs & Gibbs as a draftsman, appearing on the firm's letterhead as early as 1905. However, a photograph dated 1894 of George M. Coombs' architectural atelier, showing George, young Harry working at a drafting table, and George's future partners Eugene J. Gibbs and Harry C. Wilkinson, shows that Harry had been working for his father well before he attended Bowdoin College.

The firm of Coombs, Gibbs & Wilkinson lasted four years, from 1896-1900, during which time it worked on over 100 projects including new construction and alterations to private residences, churches, public and commercial buildings throughout the state. After Wilkinson departed for a job in Washington D.C. in 1900, the firm of Coombs & Gibbs continued working successfully across the state into 1910, following the death of George M. Coombs in 1909. Following Eugene Gibbs' departure from the firm in 1910, Harry and his older brother Fred (who had joined Coombs & Gibbs in 1908) continued in partnership as Coombs Brothers until Harry went out on his own in 1913.

One of the first projects Harry S. Coombs completed once on his own was the Chamberlain primary school in Auburn. Completed in 1914 in the Collegiate Gothic style, this small school building opened its doors just one year after Freeman Funk & Wilcox's Waterville High School 1909-1913, also in the Collegiate Gothic style. A red brick building with contrasting light colored stone trim, the Chamberlain School had classroom windows set in groups much like the groups of three, four, and five at the Waterville High School. However, all of the classroom windows at Chamberlain were set in

¹³ Ibid.

groups of five, a design feature shared by Coombs' later Colonial Revival Webster Grammar School (1915-1916), Sanford High School (1916), and Stearns High School in Millinocket (1922-1924). Of these three buildings, all designed in the Colonial Revival style with a five-part neo-classical front façade composition, including center entrance pavilion and projecting perpendicular end wings, the Webster School falls squarely in the middle in terms of size and level of ornamental detailing. Further similarities include the basic tri-partite 2 ½ story vertical composition of the buildings with raised basement capped with cast stone water table, two floors of classrooms topped with a nicely detailed and well proportioned cornice and finished with a brick parapet. Stearns High School shared the same separation of male and female students for physical activities and manual arts training courses on the basement level.¹⁴

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

In 1968 the Auburn History Committee published a book entitled *Auburn – 100 Years a City: A Study in Community Growth*, in which the following observation was made, "It can be truly stated that Auburn made shoes, but shoes made Auburn." In the 1830s North Auburn and West Auburn were on the stagecoach route from Portland to Farmington which was the primary route of mail and commercial transportation. They also had water power from the Little Androscoggin River and its tributaries, and as a result these villages, not Auburn - which was on the wrong side of the Androscoggin River to harness that waterway for industrial power, developed into burgeoning centers with grist and saw mills, furniture factories, metal work shops, stores, schools, churches, and social meeting places. West Auburn was the location of the first organized shoe factory in the state, the Minot Shoe Company in 1836. When Auburn became a town in 1842 it encompassed these two outlying communities and had a total of fifteen school districts. By 1854 it had sixteen districts and the school population was changing from agricultural to a community where most of the boys attending school were shoemakers. The center of the shoe making industry shifted in 1849 when the railroad came to Auburn and by the close of the Civil War in 1865, Auburn shoe factories had doubled their production of boots and shoes from the preceding four years. In the years between 1865 and 1900, production increased from 6,000 pairs of boots and shoes a year to 6,000,000. In the first two decades of the 20th century Auburn became the "White Shoe City of the World" with the Cushman-Hollis Company and Dingley-Foss Shoe Company, who made white canvas comfort and athletic shoes sold nationally and internationally. *Auburn – 100 Years a City* notes, "At the height of the white shoe run, in 1917, Cushman-Hollis was employing 2,100 persons with a daily output of 26,000 pairs." By 1922 Auburn was the fifth largest shoe production center in the United States. With 12 factories employing about 8,000 persons, Auburn's production rate was 70,000 pairs of shoes a day. Despite increasing competition nationally, the Great Depression and labor difficulties in the 1930s, the shoe manufacturing industry remained a strong economic force in Auburn until the last quarter of the 20th century.

When Auburn became a city in 1869 it had twenty-five school districts and twenty-eight school buildings, only ten of which were deemed to be in suitable condition. In 1874 the old Spring Street Grammar School building was replaced with a new brick structure. Between 1890 and 1895, School Superintendent William Stetson renamed the Auburn schools to honor famous men of state and nation, and the Spring Street Grammar School became Webster Grammar School.

Inspired by Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party, Auburn's city election of 1913 brought into city government a number of new city officials, including mayor Alvin W. Fowles. Under this administration, local architect Harry S. Coombs was hired to design the new Chamberlain Primary School, which was constructed on High Street. The land for a "modern, new Webster Grammar School" was also procured at this time. Henry R. Porter, a successful lumber businessman, took office of Mayor in 1915. His administration also retained the architectural services of Harry S. Coombs, a bond issue was floated, and construction was started on the new Webster Grammar School on Hampshire Street. Constructed by Otto Nelson Company of Bangor, Maine, the new school cost \$92,000.¹⁵ The following year the council increased the city's 20-mill tax rate to 22½, and consequently was able to make road improvements and complete the construction and equipping of the new grammar school. The *Lewiston Evening Journal* of September 11, 1915 reported, "For the first time since the opening of the grammar building on Spring Street, the old bell on the former Webster grammar school was silent Monday morning and a new tone was struck by the call from Hampshire Street, where a modern building has been erected." The new school had 800 registered students and was built to accommodate both junior high and upper grade grammar school children with seven rooms devoted to the junior high (eighth and ninth grades) and thirteen to the elementary grades (fifth, sixth, and seventh grades). The 1919 *Biographical History of Maine* entry for Harry S. Coombs notes "many of the largest and handsomest buildings in Lewiston have been erected from his plans, . . . In the neighboring city of Auburn, he has

¹⁴ Leonard C. Monahan, Principal, "The George W. Stearns High School," *The Northern*, 13-15.

¹⁵ Nelson severely underestimated the cost of the new building and, as a result, went out of business on account of the money lost on the project.

erected among others the handsome building of the Webster Grammar School, which is conceded to be one of the finest schools in the State of Maine."

Former President Taft presented a speech on the League of Nations from the front steps of Webster School on May 23, 1919. Originally intended to take place in the 1100-seat auditorium, the large audience turn-out forced an impromptu change of venue.¹⁶

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Andrews, P. Gayle. "Junior High School," *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*, available online at <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/In-Ke/Junior-High-School.html>.

Auburn History Committee. *Auburn – 100 Years a City, A Study in Community Growth*. (Lewiston, Maine: Twin City Printery), 1968.

Biographical History of Maine, Centennial Edition. (New York: The American Historical Society), 1919.

Briggs, Thomas H. *The Junior High School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1920.

Monahan, Leonard C., Principal, "The George W. Stearns High School," *The Northern* (School Publication). Circa July 1923. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Reed, Roger. "George Coombs, Architect" undated manuscript in the architect research files at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Reed, Roger. "Preliminary Check List of Projects and Drawings, George M. Coombs Firms, Lewiston, Maine" (Augusta: Maine Historic Preservation Commission), 1994.

Newspaper Articles

"Auburn's Webster School to celebrate 80th Birthday." *Lewiston Sun-Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 11 September 1996.

"Considering Two Auburn School Bids." *Lewiston Evening Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 4 March 1915.

"Ex-President Taft Gives Views on League of Nations." *Lewiston Daily Sub*, (Lewiston, Maine). 24 May 1919.

"Increase in Children of School Age." *Lewiston Evening Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 7 April 1915.

"A New Grammar School House is Needed." *Lewiston Saturday Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 7 March 1914.

"New Webster Grammar School Building in Use." *Lewiston Evening Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 11 September 1916.

"The Webster Grammar School- A Model School of Maine." *Lewiston Journal, Illustrated Magazine Section*, (Lewiston, Maine). 3 February 1917.

"Webster School Civics Students Learn By Compiling Its History." *Lewiston Journal Magazine Section*, (Lewiston, Maine). 15 February 1958.

"Webster School Notes 75th Year." *Lewiston Sun-Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine). 12 September 1991.

Annual Reports

¹⁶"Webster School Civics Students Learn by Compiling Its History," *Lewiston Journal*, 15 February 1958.

WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Name of Property

ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY, MAINE

County and State

"Report of Board of Education," *City of Auburn (Maine) Annual Report*, 1914, 1915-1916, 1916-1917.

"Report of Superintendent of Schools," *City of Auburn (Maine) Annual Report*, 1914, 1915-1916, 1916-1917, 1949.

"Schools," *City of Auburn (Maine) Annual Report*, 1948.

"Department of Education," *City of Auburn (Maine) Annual Report*, 1950, 1951, 1953, 1954, 1982.

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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: **Androscoggin Historical Society**
Maine Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.4

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 19 401401 4883631
 Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The subject property is described by the City of Auburn's Tax Map # 250, lot # 354.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This is the current legal description of the property as assigned by the City of Auburn. This is very likely the historic boundary of the property as well because the block is bounded by streets on all sides and a newspaper article from 1914 mentions the lot of the property as being "about an acre."

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy Cole Ives and Melanie Smith

organization Sutherland Conservation & Consulting

date 6/08/2010

street & number 295 Water Street, Suite 209

telephone 207-242-2480

city or town Augusta

state Maine

zip code 04330

e-mail melaniesmith@sutherlandcc.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Webster Grammar School

City or Vicinity: Auburn

County: Androscoggin

State: Maine

Photographer: Melanie Smith, Sutherland Conservation & Consulting

Date Photographed: 4/13/10

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 6. Entrance pavilion at front façade.

2 of 6. View looking east from corner of Hampshire and Willow Streets.

3 of 6. Side elevation facing parking lot.

4 of 6. Rear elevation.

5 of 6. View from stage looking toward balcony and rear of auditorium.

6 of 6. View from balcony looking toward stage in auditorium.

Property Owner:

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

name _____

street & number _____

telephone _____

city or town _____

state _____

zip code _____

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. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Webster Grammar School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MAINE, Androscoggin

DATE RECEIVED: 8/16/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/16/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/01/10 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/30/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000806

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 9.30.10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

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.



WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL; ANDROSCOGGIN CO., ME



WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL ; ANDROSCOGG IN CO., ME

20F6



WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL ; ANDROSCOGGIN CO., ME



WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL; ANDROSCOGGIN CO, ME



WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL ; ANDROSCOGGIN CO., ME



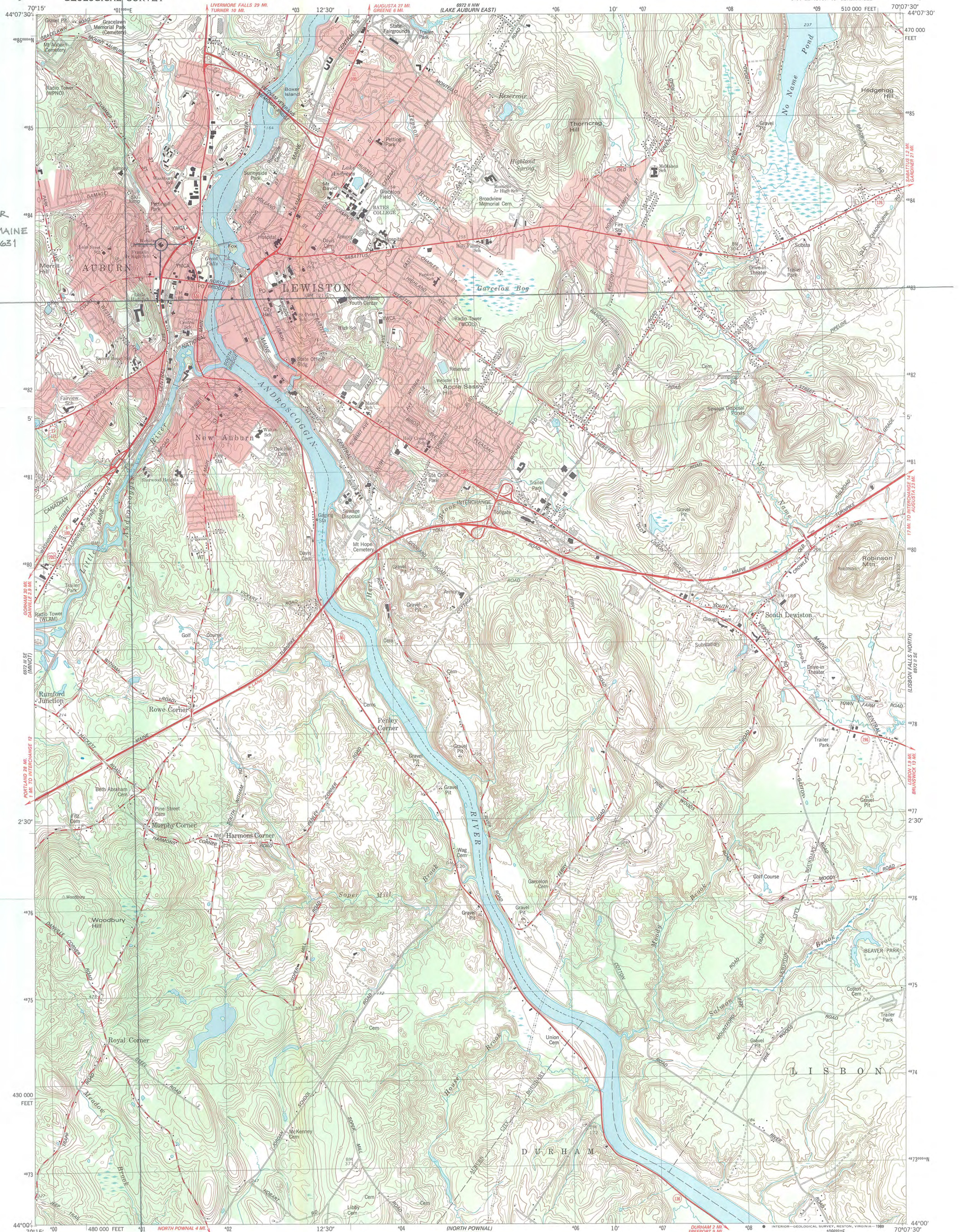
WEBSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL; ANDRO SCOGGIN CO., ME

60FG

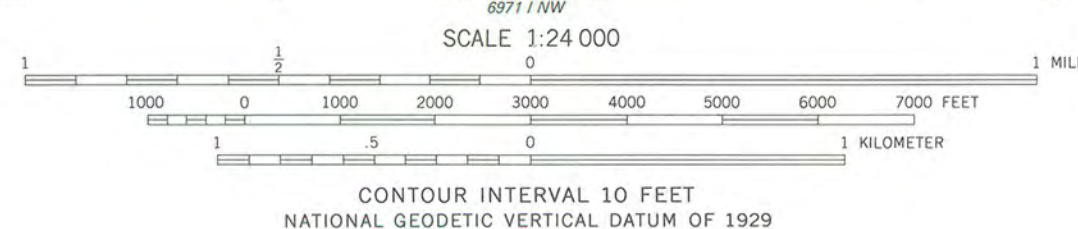
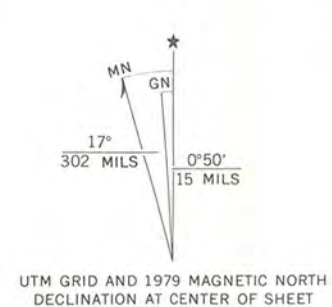
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LEWISTON QUADRANGLE
MAINE—ANDROSCOGGIN CO
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 LEWISTON 15' QUADRANGLE

WEBSTER GRAMMAR
SCHOOL
ANDROSCOGGIN CO., MAINE
UTM: 19/401401/4003631



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Maine Geodetic Survey
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1973. Field checked 1975. Map edited 1979
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Maine coordinate
system, west zone (transverse Mercator)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 19
1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 4 meters south and
42 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U.S. Route
State Route

LEWISTON, MAINE
SW/4 LEWISTON 15' QUADRANGLE
44070-A2-TF-024

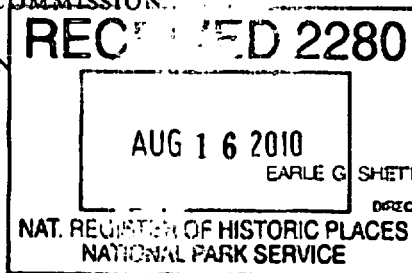
1979

DMA 6972 II SW—SERIES V811



JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
55 CAPITOL STREET
65 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333



13 August 2010

Keeper of the National Register
National Park Service 2280
National Register of Historic Places
1201 "I" (Eye) Street, NW,
Washington D.C. 20005

To Whom It May Concern:

Enclosed please find two (2) new National Register nominations for a property located in the State of Maine:

Webster Grammar School, Androscoggin County
Waterville High School, Kennebec County

Please note, the accompanying photographs were developed from film, thus there is no CD for these properties.

If you have any questions relating to these nomination, please do not hesitate to contact me at (207) 787-2132 x 2.

Sincerely,

Christi A. Mitchell
Architectural Historian

Enc.



RECYCLING SYMBOL



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

September 30, 2010

Notice to file:

This property has been automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the fact that the publication of our Federal Register Notice: "National Register of Historic Places: Pending Nominations and Other Actions" was delayed beyond our control to the point where the mandated 15 day public comment period ended after our required 45 day time frame to act on the nomination. If the 45th day falls on a weekend or Federal holiday, the property will be automatically listed the next business day. The nomination is technically adequate and meets the National Register criteria for evaluation, and thus, automatically listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Edson Beall
Historian

National Register of Historic Places

Phone: 202-354-2255

E-mail: Edson_Beall@nps.gov

Web: www.nps.gov/history/nr