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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 Center School

other names/site number Burlington Library and Reading Room

2. Location

street & number 13 Bedford Street not for publication

city or town Burlington vicinity

state Massachusetts code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 01803

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.)

Brona Simon

4/13/06

Signature of certifying official/Title Brona Simon, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Date

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

Edson H. Beall

Date of Action

6-21-06

Center School
Name of Property

Middlesex, 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

1		building
		sites
		structures
1	2	objects
2	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: schoolhouse

GOVERNMENT: police station

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

CULTURE museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls clapboard

roof asphalt

other

Narrative Description

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

Center School

Name of Property

Middlesex, MA

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Education

Period of Significance

1855-1956

Significant Dates

1855 construction

1897 end of use as school

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

David Clark

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ _____
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Center School
Name of Property

Middlesex, MA
County, State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References See continuation sheet.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 19 315100 4707940
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. 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 Heli Meltsner consultant, with Betsy Friedberg, NR Director, MHC

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April 2006

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 Town of Burlington, MA

street & number Town Hall, 29 Center Street telephone 781-270-1635

city or town Burlington state MA zip code 01803

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

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA**

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Narrative Description

The Center School, built in 1855 as a one-room rural schoolhouse, is prominently placed in Burlington Center at an historic crossroads facing the Town Common. The transitional Greek Revival/Italianate style clapboard schoolhouse on high brick foundations rises 1½-stories and attic to a front-gable roof. It is characterized by quoins, an arched cupola with original weathervane, large 6/6 double hung windows, and a segmental arched window with footed sill in the gable field. The building appears to be based on a model schoolhouse plan, published by the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1838; its exterior design is thought to have been adapted from two 1853 schoolhouses erected nearby in Lexington. Its central door placement and Colonial Revival style surround reflect a change of use when the abandoned school with two entries was altered in 1898 to serve as the Town's first Public Library building. The library would remain in the building for seventy years. The Center School is in good condition and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It meets Criteria A and C on the local level for its historical and architectural significance. The building played an integral and important part of the growth and development of Burlington as a community through its use as a school, library, police station, and finally as a museum. Architecturally a combination of Greek Revival and Italianate styles, the schoolhouse is a blend of both styles and a unique building in the town of Burlington.

The Center School at 13 Bedford Street stands in Burlington Center across from Simonds Park and the Common and serves as their southern gateway. Ranged about the large Common or nearby are contemporary Town government buildings, the 1898 Union School, a Colonial Period burial ground, an historic house and tavern, a park and a gas station. A post World War II house and a garage are the Center School's immediate neighbors. Its location at the approximate center of the town played a significant role in its erection. The north-facing building is set on a quarter-acre corner lot at the southwest intersection of Bedford and Cambridge Streets. Landscaping includes an evergreen hedge along the south lot line and contemporary evergreen foundation plantings, a small lawn, a tree and an oval flowerbed on which a wood flagpole (ca. 1967) and a small memorial

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**Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA**

stone (1992) dedicated to Lt. Robert A. Vignean are placed. A narrow gravel driveway runs near the southern boundary of the lot behind the building. Both objects are noncontributing.

Exterior

The 30' x 42' building is rectangular in plan and one story and attic high. It is set on high, red brick foundations. The front-gabled, asphalt shingle roof is finished with deep returns and raking molding. A plain cornice extends along the west and east elevations. Wide wood Italianate quoins at the building's four corners span the clapboarded area. An end-wall chimney rises through the ridge of the north elevation and a ventilator emerges from the center area of the ridge.

A two-stage, square Italianate cupola is set forward on the roof ridge: the first stage is sided in wide clapboards, the flushboarded second stage features a round-arch opening on each side that springs from wooden imposts and is closed by heavy turned balustrades. The cupola's shallow hip roof is finished with a fine wrought iron weathervane with feathered arrow. It is thought to have been forged by Richard Alley, a blacksmith who lived in Burlington in the mid-19th century.

The façade or north elevation is one bay wide. The 1898 Colonial Revival central door surround features a basket-handle-arched transom, half-length sidelights and a two-part cornice. Although the door surround was damaged in a 1970 fire it was salvaged and repaired. The door itself was replaced. A narrow wood segmental-arched sign may be a survival of the 1898 block painted sign that was placed over the library's entry ca. 1898. The original sign reading PUBLIC LIBRARY-READING ROOM appears to have been repainted with the legend: BURLINGTON PUBLIC MUSEUM. Centered on the gable field is an Italianate segmental arched window with a simplified hood-mold and footed sill. The wooden stairs and spindle rail to the entry are contemporary.

The west and east elevations are similar. The shutters date from at least 1898 but possibly from 1855, the late 20th century storm windows are 2/2. On the east, four large 6/6 windows with contemporary sash but possibly original surrounds are placed over three

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Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

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smaller 6/6-basement windows. The northernmost basement bay has been filled. On the west elevation only two of the four main floor windows remain. The southernmost opening was blocked when the stair to the basement was repaired in 1970, and a ca. 1898 door to the exterior with six-light transom occupies the position of the most southernmost bay. A contemporary wood stair and landing give access to this door. There are two 6/6 basement windows on this elevation; both the southern and northernmost have been filled.

The south or rear elevation has no windows lighting the main room but a plain rectangular 6/6 window is centered on the gable field. A contemporary gable-roof vestibule shelters an exit from the basement on the southeast corner. A possibly original at-grade basement door opening with fieldstone retaining walls and contemporary door is located near the southwest corner.

Interior

The interior, floored in hardwood installed in 1898 that replaced the original probably pine floor, is divided into two rooms, a large main room and the vestibule. The front door opens to a 32' x 8 1/2' vestibule or anteroom. The vestibule's south wall, which has two openings to the main room, was heavily repaired in 1970 after extensive fire damage. A closed stair in the southwest corner of this room leads to the basement. A matching stair to the basement on the southeast corner was eliminated in the 1898 library rehabilitation and a cloakroom, now a storage room, was inserted in its place. It retains both wide-board vertical and horizontal wainscoting and coat-hooks. The vestibule, renovated in 1898 for the library, in 1969 for use as the Town Police Station, and again in 1970 for use as the Town Museum, retains little original finish, but for the 1898 hardwood floor. The walls are finished with a ca. 1970 wood-paneled dado with murals above depicting local historic events painted by local residents Don Gorvett and Jeff Weaver.

The thirty-two foot square undivided main room is fourteen feet high. Much of its original design and finish remain. Its intact pressed metal ceiling and ornate egg and dart

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**Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA**

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cornice probably date from the 1898 renovation as a library. Beaded board wainscoting rises to windowsill height. A picture rail encircling the room set lower on the plastered walls is probably original, as are the crown mold Italianate lintels that enrich the three windows on each side elevation. The age of the two-part solid folding interior shutters with small, white porcelain knobs is not known.

The entry at the rear of the west elevation may have been inserted as an alternate egress when the building was rehabilitated as a library in 1898. It has the same lintel as the other doorways. The six-panel door probably dates from this time. The basement was remodeled in 1969-1970 for use as a Police Station and later for the Town Museum. It retains no original organization or finish except for the interior shutters. There is evidence of one original rear entrance; another may have been demolished when the rear entry addition was erected in the mid-to-late 20th century.

Archaeological Description

No ancient Native American sites are located on the school property or in the general area (within one mile). While environmental characteristics of the nominated parcel represent some locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) that are favorable for the presence of Native sites, the potential for locating ancient sites is generally low. The school does sit on a well drained, level to moderately sloping landscape; however, the nearest wetlands are located over 1,000 feet from the school, a locational characteristic that adversely effects the site sensitivity for this location. Given the above information and the effects of school construction on the on the small (one-quarter acre) lot, a low potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the school property.

A moderate potential exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the school property. Archaeological features and/or structural evidence may survive from privies in the area surrounding the school or water closets beneath the now remodeled basement. The school was constructed in 1855; however, the basement was still unfinished in 1857

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indicating water closets were likely not built during the initial construction, possibly indicating the presence of a privy outside the school. Structural evidence of outbuildings and trash deposits including sheet type refuse may also exist on the school property.

(end)

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Burlington's determination to repeatedly salvage this prominently sited building has resulted in four uses, as a school, public library, temporary police station, and finally town historic museum. While only the first two uses fall within its period of significance, its nearly one and one-half century use as a public institution says much about the value it holds for the citizens of Burlington. An instance of the community's commitment to the building is the fact that, for its first use as a school, the public contributed needed furnishing and educational materials above what the School Committee was willing to commit. Similarly, for its second as a library, a resident provided significant funding for its rehabilitation while others gave grants for its collection. The Town Museum was rehabilitated with funds raised by the community and a state grant and is administered by local volunteer effort with Town support.

At its incorporation as a Town in 1799, Burlington had four schools, one in each of the south, north, east, and center districts. When the Center schoolhouse was moved to the western part of town in 1839, parents in the Center began agitating for a replacement near the Meeting House. Town Meeting warrants for the construction of a new Center School were voted down in every year between 1839 and 1843, and again in 1849, 1852, and 1855. Residents, torn between the desire for convenient access to a school for Center residents and keeping taxes low, voted in April 1855 for a Center school "for a term not exceeding sixteen weeks by a male teacher in winter" [quoted in Fogelberg, Burlington, p. 238]. After reversing that vote, bitter debate and yet more voting, a 48 to 45 decision was made to build a school at the Center in 1855.

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Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

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Abner Marion, Esq. a prominent Center stage tavern keeper and farmer, donated one quarter of an acre of land for the lot. It was well located, across from the Common and near the Meeting House. The building was erected at a cost of \$2,329.82. The school had two water closets in the basement divided to give each gender its own private area, and three stoves. Apparently the basement was still basically unfurnished in 1857.

Similar to the public spirited contributions of its library reuse, the town's Friends of Education and Progress contributed the weathervane on the cupola, educational materials such as maps, geometrical cubes and geometrical solids, diagrams, two globes, and furnishings such as a table for the teacher, a thermometer, and window curtains.

Under the forceful and influential leadership of Horace Mann, who served from 1838 to 1848 as Massachusetts' first Secretary of the Board of Education, the Commonwealth rapidly energized, organized, and improved its public school system. Among other advances, Mann founded normal schools for teacher training, started pilot programs, and institutionalized state norms of all sorts. The reform movement he set in motion produced changes in educational policy and the architecture of the state's schoolhouses.

In 1847 Mann reported that for years, the condition of the state's schoolhouses "had been growing worse and worse." [Tenth Annual Report, Board of Education, 1847, Dutton and Wentworth, Boston, 1847.] He would have known this intimately as he was educated in a one-room schoolhouse in Franklin, Massachusetts. He reported that the schoolhouses were increasingly dilapidated, in contrast to every other building type that had been erected in the state. "In 1837, not one third part of the Public School-houses in Massachusetts would have been considered tenantable by any decent family, out of the poor-house or in it." They were smoky with poor ventilation, had no proper toilet facilities, and had painful, unhealthy seating.

Beyond the physical health of the student, Mann was concerned about the lack of comfort, neatness and elegance, adequate space for each pupil, and separation of the sexes for toileting. He believed that creating more pleasant and healthier conditions would better facilitate learning, the great equalizer of Americans. His efforts towards the

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Burlington (Middlesex), MA**

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improvement of schoolhouse design resulted in what he thought of as almost a revolution. This building was almost certainly a reflection of Mann's reform campaign.

A supplement to Mann's First Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education (1838) concerned the design of schools, complete with model plans and designs for fixed desks. This school was not very different from the plans for village schoolhouses published in the First Report and another of Mann's plans reprinted in Henry Barnard's Practical Illustrations of the Principles of School Architecture of 1851. The interior for one 1838 plan featured the same two entries, one for boys and the other for girls. They led to small cloakrooms and thence to the large room, with a small wood storage room between them. In the later plan this room was used for small class recitations.

The one large room, in which single desks could be arranged in long vertical rows or double to quadruple desks arranged in shorter horizontal rows, contained a teacher's platform located at the narrow end of the room furthest from the entry. The 1838 plan did not have a basement, but builders were encouraged to build one for the warmth they could provide and to house a furnace, thought vastly superior to the stoves commonly used. The 1838 plan called for a building 53' x 35' exclusive of portico "if a cheap rather than a tasteful building is required". Windows were to be placed high. The main room was 48' x 35', while the Center School's main room was 32' square.

The fact that Center School was designed to be much larger than any of the existing schools in town may owe something to two facts. The first was a law passed in 1852 mandating school attendance for pupils five to fifteen years of age. Since regular attendance had been a troubling problem in this agricultural town with a stable population, it was probably clear that if enforced, classes would be larger.

The second concerned the education of older students. While Mann had urged that younger children be taught in district schools and older ones at a central high school, the Center School did not limit itself to children twelve years and above until 1857, although the building may have been designed with this eventuality in mind. The Center School was the obvious candidate as it was the newest of the schoolhouses and centrally located.

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For at least the first ten years a man, thought to have more control over the older boys, taught the Center School. In 1868 the school admitted 45 students "by qualification," meaning the more advanced students were admitted irrespective of age. The town had just instituted graded study, though all students continued to study in the one room.

The Town, always strapped for cash, spent as little as possible on the maintenance of the school. In 1874 the School Committee reported that two stoves were "so badly broken as to be perfectly useless." [Annual Town Report, 1874, School Committee Report, p. 75.] It converted to coal that year but did not repair the leaking roof. They also reported that students at the Center School "joined it for the purpose of enjoying themselves and in doing as they pleased." [*ibid*] The remedy was a new male teacher who made limited progress with his 43 students, aged 11-19, divided into an astounding 28 classes.

It would take a professional School Superintendent to convince the still-rural residents of Burlington to abandon their ancient district school system of one-room schoolhouses and to plan for and build a centralized, consolidated school. When the consolidated Union School was finally constructed on the Common in 1897, the five district schools, including the then 43-year old Center School, immediately became redundant.

In what must have been a negotiated agreement, in 1900 the Selectmen auctioned off the Center School for one dollar to Abner Marion Jr., son of the man who had originally donated the land. When he returned the lot to the Town, Edward S. Barker, a summer resident, recent appointee to the Library board and a wealthy insurance broker for the State Mutual Life Assurance Co. of Boston agreed to pay for its conversion to a Town library. He and his wife gave the money as a memorial to their two children.

Burlington's first public library, started with \$1,000 in 1856, was located on a shelf in Cutler's store in the Center. After a stay in a private home it relocated in 1879 to the just-enlarged, now demolished Town Hall (1844). The Center School building was the town's first building given entirely to the library. After the rehabilitation funded by the Barkers the Burlington Library-Reading Room opened in 1898. Although a second grade class was installed in the Reading Room in 1920 and 1921 when the Union School became

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overcrowded, the schoolhouse continued to serve as the Town's library building for seventy years. The library was the recipient of two different thousand-dollar donations by Town citizens, one by David Simonds in 1890, the other by Cora McIntire, a former one-room schoolhouse teacher, in 1941.

After the rehabilitation, the large classroom was divided down the center by a rail separating the Library from the Reading Room. Five rows of book stacks were located to the right of the rail, a table, chairs, and magazine rack were located to the left in the reading room.

In the early 1950s a new federal highway system was developed to connect the nation's major metropolitan areas. The completion of MA Route 128 (now I-95) in 1954 spurred the transformation of Burlington from a small town of 2,500 in 1950 to the fastest-growing suburban town in the state with a population 12,953 only a decade later. By the mid-1960s the building had become too small for its library purpose. The building closed on September 12, 1968 when the larger new Sears Public Library, constructed across the Common, replaced it. The Burlington Historical was put in charge of the vacant building. The Commission had been formed just the year before after the near-loss of another one-room schoolhouse galvanized a preservation movement in town.

The Historical Commission did not keep it for long as the Police Department, deprived of its housing when the old Town Hall was demolished, almost immediately and without notice to the Commission, made temporary use of the building. In August 1970, a disgruntled youth threw a Molotov cocktail at the station, causing a fire and damaging the interior, particularly the basement and the wall between the vestibule and the main room.

The fire caused the exit of the Police Department and its return to the Historical Commission. Mrs. Elizabeth Bennett Lowther, a member of both the Society and the Commission, spearheaded its reuse as a town history museum. With money from the insurance company, additional funds raised by flea markets, resident donations and a grant for \$4,551 the Commission was able to repair the damage.

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It repaired the wall dividing the classroom and the vestibule, refinished the floor, and remodeled the already altered basement for meetings. The Burlington Historical Society commissioned the murals on the vestibule walls. The Burlington Garden Club provided landscaping for the previously bare lot. The museum holds the Historical Commission's historical collections.

Architectural Significance

The Center School, a fine example of a mid-19th century one-room schoolhouse, is a model of then current educational planning and architectural style as interpreted by local and regional artisans. The masonry of the foundation and basement was the work of Mr. French of Woburn, the carpentry was the work of David Clark of West Cambridge, now Arlington.

The exterior of the school is thought to have been modeled on a school in Lexington, probably one of the two nearly identical buildings--the Tidd and Scotland Schools erected in 1853. The Center School reproduced the basic form of these buildings: a one-story clapboard rectangle on high brick foundations, front-gable roof, façade with two entries and a forward-placed cupola. But while the Lexington schoolhouses were also transitional between the Greek Revival and the Italianate; in style they tended more towards the Greek Revival, having a full pediments, plain cornerboards and doors with simple architrave surrounds. Their Italianate elements include the double arches of the cupolas, cornices with deep modillions and dentils, and oculus windows in the pediment.

In contrast, the Center School was finished with more overt Italianate stylistic elements: an open gable field with a central segmental arched window on footed sill, quoins, and a balustrade closing the arches of the cupola. While the cornice at the Lexington schools was ornate, in Burlington it was left plain. For comparison, no graphic representation remains of the original Center School entries.

It would appear that the interior plan for the school resembles, or was actually modeled on one of a set of plans created by the Massachusetts Board of Education 17 years earlier. Perhaps the lack of innovation in the interim was not so much because Burlington was

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Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

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especially conservative or lacked money for more up-to-date plans, but because few new ideas for grammar school organization were available, the organization of the classroom and teaching methods having remained fairly constant during that period. While one-room schoolhouses were not ubiquitous, they were the norm in rural schools at mid-19th century.

The separation of the sexes, expressed on the exterior and on the interior with two sets of doors, stairways, and exits to the privies, represents a continuation of pedagogic and architectural tradition. Boys and girls sat on opposite sides of the classroom and "were segregated as much as possible when outside the supervision of the teacher." Fogelberg 8/20/1991, *Daily Times Chronicle*, "The Building with Four Lives"]. This expression remained during the forty-three years the building remained a schoolhouse.

The increased size and more elaborate ornamentation of the Center School does differ significantly from the then-existing Burlington schoolhouses. In contrast to the small size and relative plainness of the West School (1792, remodeled 1837), the Center School demonstrated an entirely different attitude towards building for public education. The Town must have determined to construct the finest and largest building rather than the cheapest way to enclose the minimal space it could for its budget. The transitional nature of the building is seen in reference to the late 19th century Union School that replaced it. That building was built at two stories, with four rooms and corridor on each floor to accommodate its graded classrooms.

Burlington Public Library and Reading Room

The 1898 renovation was planned to change the building's image as well as its function from schoolhouse to library. However, much of the building's design and materials were retained, perhaps because it was a local landmark, perhaps to conserve the limited funds available. The traditional two-entries, then the clear mark of an educational institution, were altered to a single, monumental, center entry. Its Colonial Revival style surround was an idiosyncratic mix of Federal and Italianate architectural features: a flattened semi-elliptical arch of the fan light supporting a wider, eared architrave-like frieze and dentiled cornice. The effect is of a charming but homemade design.

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Similarly, the matching staircases for boys and girls were no longer required and occupied needed room. Space found by demolishing one was used to store coats. The rear exit was probably installed at this time. The teacher's platform was removed and a new hardwood floor installed, uniting the room. It is possible that the pressed metal ceiling was installed at this time or slightly later. Manufacturers claimed that metal ceilings were highly decorative, fire resistant, more permanent, cheaper to maintain than plaster, and improved sanitation.

The Burlington Historical Museum

The Historical Commission, whose mission was preservation, made little attempt to alter the building when the Burlington Police Department vacated after the fire. Instead it focused on repair and maintenance. As the walls of the vestibule were damaged in the fire and replastered after it, murals could be placed there without affecting valuable historic fabric. The collaboration of the Historical Commission and the Historical Society here is notable.

Community Preservation

The Town of Burlington has persistently retained this iconic building when it proved too small for the current use, first as a library, police station and finally as a public museum. It mobilized funding from private parties and from public grants to rehabilitate the building to suit a change of use, but consistently preserved the character-defining elements that made it a local landmark. Because of the rapid mid-to-late 20th century transformation of Burlington from a rural town to a bedroom and shopping community there are comparatively few historic buildings in town. The Center School clearly has emotive value as an enduring reminder of the community's heritage. The Town is seeking National Register listing both to gain eligibility for grants that will help further restore the building and to recognize the special place it holds for its residents. The building is maintained by the Town of Burlington but sustained by the volunteer effort of the Historical Commission, the Historical Society, and the population of the town.

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

**Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA**

Archaeological Significance

Historic archaeological resources described above may contribute important information relating to 19th and early 20th century education in Burlington and the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of students that attended the Center School. Additional documentary research combined with archaeological survey and testing may locate artifacts and structural evidence that identifies architectural details and parts of the school no longer extant. Important information may exist that traces the evolution of sanitary facilities in educational buildings during the mid to late 19th century. Artifacts and structural evidence may exist that identifies the date of construction and form for the water closets installed in the basement of the school. Potential privy remains outside the school may indicate the presence of archaeological evidence that documents the early stages in the evolution of sanitary facilities from separate outdoor privies to indoor water closets. The evolution of sanitary facilities is a subject often ignored in architectural description of buildings, but frequently documented and sought after in archaeological studies. Detailed analysis of the contents of privies, trash deposits, and sheet refuse patterns may contribute important information relating to educational methods and techniques used at the school and the social, cultural, and economic characteristics of students at the school and local Burlington population.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

Section number 9 Page 1

Major Bibliographical References

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"Center School Had a Stormy Start", July 31, 1979.
"The History of a Museum", Feb. 8, 1983.
Nov. 1, 1988.
"Burlington Public Library", May 6, 1990.
Jan. 2, 1991 (photograph).
"The Building with Four Lives", Aug. 20, 1991.
June 8, 1993.
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- Mann, Horace, Tenth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education, Supplementary to the First Annual Report, Dutton and Wentworth, Boston, 1847.
- Public Broadcasting System, School: The Story of American Education, "Horace Mann", <http://pbs.org/kcet/publicschool/innovators/mann.html>

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

Section number 9/10 Page 2/1

Simpson, Pamela H., Cheap, Quick and Easy: Imitative Architectural Materials, 1870-1930, Univ. of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1999.

Town of Burlington, Annual Report, "School Committee Reports", 1855, 1874

Maps and Atlases

1794 Samuel Thompson, Plan of Woburn

1855 Middlesex County, copied fragment of a wall map

ca. 1875 Beers Atlas of Middlesex County, single page

ca. 1889 Walling Atlas of Middlesex County, single page

(end)

10. Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Center School are the lot lines described for 13 Bedford Street on the Burlington Assessors Map dated 1969, revised 2000 as Map 29, Lot 143.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of Lot 29-143 represent the extent of current and apparently historic municipal ownership.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

Section number photo Page 1

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Name Center School
2. Address 13 Bedford Street
Burlington, MA
3. Photographer Heli Meltsner
4. Date of Photograph April 14, 2004:
5. Negative Location Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125

#	Resource	Looking	Roll	Neg. #
1	Exterior: North & East elevations	SW	88016	26
2	Exterior: West & North elevations	NE	88016	24
3	Exterior South & East elevations	NW	88016	25
4	Exterior Door detail	S	37049	11
5	Interior: Main Rm. North wall	NE	37049	3
6	Interior: Main Rm. South & West walls	SW	37049	10
7	Interior: East & South walls	SE	37049	6
8	Basement: shutters	W	37049	5

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

Section number _____ Page _____

DATA SHEET

Historic Name	Date	Status	Style	Resource
Center School building	1855	C	Italianate	B
Weathervane	1855	C		O
Flag Pole	ca. 1967	NC		O
Vigneau Memorial	1992	NC	stone	O

Contributing buildings	1
Contributing objects	1
Noncontributing objects	2

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Center School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 5/09/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 6/06/06
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/21/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/22/06
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000523

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 6-21-06 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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1



OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

Center School
Burlington (Middlesex), MA

The coordinates originally provided for the Center School were 19 315100 4707940. The correct location is 2.7 miles due East of this point at **19 319516 4707940** (North American Datum 1927).

Corrected March 2009

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY Center School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 10/28/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 12/13/11
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000523

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 _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept

REVIEWER EB

DISCIPLINE Kist

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 12-9-11

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.



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA
PHOTO #1.



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA
PHOTO # 2



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA

PHOTO # 3



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA

PHOTO # 4



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA
PHOTO # 5



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA.
PHOTO #6



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA
PHOTO # 7



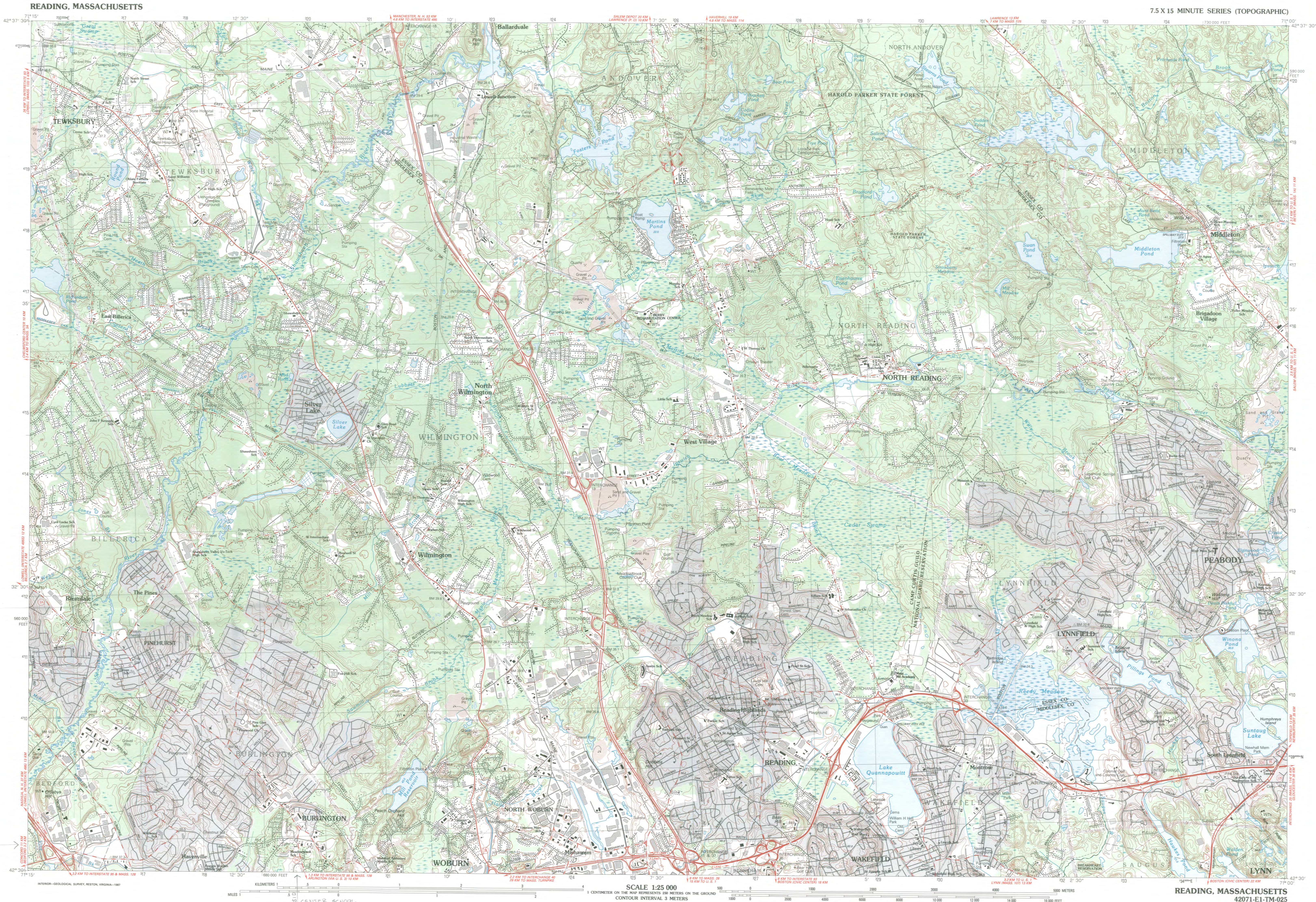
CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON, MA
PHOTO # 8



SCALE 1 INCH = 100 FEET

CENTER SCHOOL
13 BEDFORD STREET
BURLINGTON, MA

22	23	24
28	29	30
34	35	36



CENTER SCHOOL
BURLINGTON 42071-E1-TM-025

Reading 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

1987

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 Wilmington 1965 and Reading 1966.
1:24,000-scale maps
Projection and 1000-meter grid, zone 19
Universal Transverse Mercator
10,000-foot grid ticks based on Massachusetts coordinate system, mainland zone. 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters south and 41 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 DATUM OF 1929
CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.5 METER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

CONVERSION TABLE		DECLINATION DIAGRAM	ADJOINING MAPS			
Meters	Feet		1	2	3	
1	3.2808		1	2	3	
2	6.5617		4	5		
3	9.8425					
4	13.1234					
5	16.4042					
6	19.6850					
7	22.9659					
8	26.2467					
9	29.5276					
10	32.8084					
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808		UTM grid convergence (GN) and 1987 magnetic declination (MN) at center of map Diagram is approximate				
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	.....
Fourbridge; overpass; underpass	.....
Built-up area: only selected landmark 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	.....
Fence or field line	.....
Power transmission line, isolated tower	.....
Dam; dam with lock	.....
Cemetery; grave	.....
Campground; picnic area; U.S. location monument	.....
Windmill; water well; spring	.....
Mine shaft; prospect; adit or cave	.....
Control: national station; vertical datum; spot elevation	.....
Contours: index; intermediate; supplementary; depression	.....
Distorted surface: strip mine, lava, sand	.....
Bathymetric contours: index; intermediate	.....
Perennial lake and stream; intermittent lake and stream	.....
Rapids, large and small; falls, large and small	.....
Swamp; marsh	.....
Submerged marsh; land subject to controlled inundation	.....
Woodland, scattered trees	.....
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

April 13, 2006

Dr. John Roberts
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Dr. Roberts:

Enclosed please find the following nomination form:

Center School, 13 Bedford St., Burlington (Middlesex), MA

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

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Heli Meltsner, consultant
Gary Gianino, Board of Selectmen
Norman Biggart, Toni Faria, Burlington Historical Commission
Chair, Burlington Planning Board



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 20, 2011

Mr. J. Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Re: Additional Documentation (Technical corrections of UTM's)

In the process of mapping National Register nominations for our GIS database, we have identified errors in UTM coordinates for 23 properties. The errors vary from a few hundred feet to hundreds of miles, often due to transposition of numbers.

As recommended by Edson Beall, we are enclosing a continuation sheet for each of the nominations. Please let me know if you need more information in order to correct your records.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosures