

436

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 24 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thompson School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Prospect Street N/A not for publication
city, town Webster N/A vicinity
state MA code MA county Worcester code 027 zip code 01570

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission 4/18/89
Signature of certifying official William A. Talmage Date
State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. 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:) _____

Betty L. Savage 6-7-89
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use Thompson School, Webster, Massachusetts	
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Education/Grammar School	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Residential/Apartments
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description	
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Jacobean Revival	foundation <u>brick</u>
_____	walls <u>brick</u>
_____	roof <u>asphalt, slate</u>
_____	other <u>stucco, wood</u>
_____	_____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Thompson School, Webster, occupies a rectangular parcel of land on the east side of Prospect Street, three house lots north of its junction with Lake Street. The building stands near the center of its lot, which consists of a lawn west of the building and paved parking areas at all other elevations. The schoolhouse is a freestanding masonry structure with a T-shaped floor plan. The building rises two full stories above a raised basement to a slate-covered pitched roof that encloses the third story. All elevations are faced with red brick and trimmed with cast-stone water tables, cornices, and copings. Windows vary by location; basement windows contain 3/3 wood sash set in arched brick surrounds. The majority of windows at the first and second stories are set in two-story groupings of four windows per story; windows within these groupings are separated between stories by stucco and wood panels designed to imitate half-timbering. Windows at the third story consist of groups of three (6/6) in each gable and paired windows (6/6) in dormers. The existing windows are a combination of original sash and sash installed during the recent rehabilitation to match originals. Rising from the center of the roof are four brick ventilator stacks designed to appear as brick chimneys.

The facade (west elevation) is symmetrical about a gabled central pavilion. Flanking the pavilion are six basement windows, two groups of eight windows each at the first and second stories, and two gabled dormers at the attic. The first story of the pavilion contains aluminum replacement doors set in an open vestibule that is set within a pointed arch. The entry is framed by buttressed piers that rise to a cornice, name placque, and false parapet. Above the entry is a tripartite window that rises to a pointed arch at the attic; sash at the second story are 6/6 while those of the attic are 9/3 and 6/3. The north elevation is asymmetrically arranged and exists in two planes due to the different dimensions of the rear ell. The west end of the elevation possesses three basement windows, a grouping of four windows at both the first and second stories, and a gable with a tripartite window at the attic.

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Continuation SheetThompson School
Webster, MassachusettsSection number 7 Page 1

Immediately east of this western plane, at the corner of the main building, is an entry surmounted by paired windows (6/6) with decorative half-timbered panels (at the mid-level landings of the stairhall). The entry contains double doors, each leaf of which consists of a wooden lower panel beneath a glass pane. The doors are set beneath a four-pane transom and recessed within a pointed arch. The arch is set within a slightly projecting brick pavilion. The east end of the north elevation (rear ell) possesses three basement windows and groups of four windows at the first and second stories.

The south elevation is the mirror image of the north elevation with the exception of its east plane (rear ell), which is a blank brick wall with only a single basement window.

The rear (east) elevation is symmetrical about the projecting gabled elevation of the rear ell. The east elevation of the ell possesses three windows at the basement, a grouping of four windows at the first and second stories, and a tripartite window in the gable. Flanking this gabled section (on the rear elevation of the main building) are two entries with shallow hoods and replacement aluminum doors and two windows at the basement, four windows (6/6 and 1/1) at the first story, four windows (6/6) at the second story, and two shed dormers at the attic.

The interior retains its original layout with a T-shaped hallway at the first story and long central hallways at the second and third stories (running north-south); apartment units open off of the hallways (one in each of the original classrooms). Many of the building's original finishes remain on the interior, including hallway doors, chair rails, and baseboard, and numerous window and door cases within the units.

The building was recently rehabilitated as part of a certified rehabilitation in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Archaeological Description

While no prehistoric sites are currently recorded on the property, it is possible that sites are present. One site has been recorded in the general area (within one mile). This factor in addition to the location of the property on a relatively flat terrace overlooking the French River less than 1,000 feet away indicates favorable conditions for native settlement and subsistence activities. In general, however, the potential for prehistoric or historic sites is low as a result of the small size of the parcel, the effects of school construction (1912-1913) on the parcel, and because pre-school historic resources are not known for the property.

8. Statement of Significance Thompson School, Webster, Massachusetts

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architectural
Community Planning and Development

1912-1938

1912

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Significant Person

NA

Architect/Builder

Walter F. Fontaine

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Thompson School, Webster, possesses integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, and historical association with the development of Webster as an industrial center in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A well-preserved example of late Gothic/Jacobean Revival architecture, the building is representative of the substantial public buildings that were constructed in Webster as an expression of civic pride during the town's period of industrial prosperity. The Thompson School thus meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places, with significance at the local level.

The town of Webster was incorporated in 1832, joining land that was formerly part of Oxford and Dudley. In 1812, manufacturer Samuel Slater began purchasing land in Oxford and Dudley for the purpose of setting up a cotton factory; he began production in the area in 1913. Slater's acquisition of property around his new factory continued into the 1820s as his manufacturing interests grew. In 1832, a petition was filed that provided for the incorporation of the town of Webster, which would be occupied by the 1,168 inhabitants.

One of the first orders of business was the establishment of an appropriate public school system. At the first town meeting, a committee was appointed to divide the town into school districts; five districts were formed. The district system was used in Webster for over thirty years until it was abolished in 1867. By 1889 Webster had a population of nearly 7,000 people; the town's 382 school-age children were served by one high school and 13 primary and grammar schools. It is interesting to note that although the population of Webster slowly increased through the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, the number of public schools steadily decreased.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References Thompson School, Webster, MA

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Historical Survey for Webster.
Withey, Henry. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects Deceased (1970)
Hurd, Duane H. History of Worcester County, Massachusetts (1889)
Webster City Directories.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested HPCA # 11018MA
- 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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .5 acres

UTM References

A

1	9	2	6	1	8	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing	

C

Zone		Easting				Northing	

B

Zone		Easting				Northing	

D

Zone		Easting				Northing	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property boundary begins at a point on the east side of Prospect Street approximately 225 feet north of its intersection with Lake Street and runs east approximately 150 feet, then north approximately 125 feet, then west approximately 165 feet, then south approximately 140 feet.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary contains all land historically and presently associated with the school.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine S. Beard, Preservation Consultant, w/Betsy Friedberg, National Register
organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date November 1988 Director
street & number 80 Boylston Street telephone (617) 727-8470
city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1Thompson School
Webster, Massachusetts

It is unclear whether this can be attributed to a decline in school-age population or to the consolidation of existing schools. By 1902 there were nine schools operating in Webster, which at that time had a population of 8,804.

At the time the Thompson School was built (1912), there were nearly 12,000 inhabitants of Webster and still only nine schools. The Thompson School was built in 1912-1913 on the site of the former Prospect Street School (built in 1881), which was razed to make room for the larger grammar school. The new school was constructed at a cost of \$30,000 by contractors Walker & Doule Company of Providence, Rhode Island. The building was designed by Walter Francis Fontaine (1871-1938), a well-known southern New England architect who had an office in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. Fontaine studied architecture in Europe and began his career in the office of Providence architects Stone, Carpenter & Wilson. In 1903 Fontaine formed his own office, first in Providence and later in Woonsocket under the name W.F. Fontaine & Sons. He is known for his work as architect of numerous churches, schools, and public buildings, including St. Charles Borromeo Church in Providence, R.I.; St. Joseph's College in Fitchburg, Mass.; the First Methodist Church and Y.M.C.A. in Woonsocket, R.I.; and St. Mary's Catholic Church at Willimantic, Conn. No records have been found to indicate that Fontaine designed any other schools in Webster. Other architects employed by the school committee include M.A. Dyer and E.I. Wilson.

The Thompson School was named for Dr. John Thompson, a Webster physician who was an active member of the school committee from 1907 until his death in 1916 and was also on the school's building committee. Thompson was born in Webster, the son of Irish immigrant parents. He was a resident and practicing physician in the community for many years. Known as a cigar puffing, independent man with a passion for horses, he was instrumental in the construction of the Thompson School. When the school was completed, the flagpole, which stands in front, was donated by Thompson and his sister Nellie.

The Thompson School was erected for use as a grammar school and continued to be used as such until 1980 when the building was vacated. The school had a typical plan for its period and did not contain any large meeting spaces, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, or library.

With the exception of its main entry doors, which have been replaced, the building's exterior remains in unaltered condition, preserving such

continued

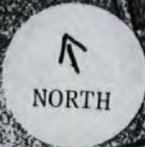
**United States Department of the Interior
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Webster, Massachusetts

characteristic elements of its period as its pointed arches, cast-stone trimmings, sham half-timbering, high dormered roof, and brick ventilator stacks. Additional significant details remain at the side entries, which retain original panelled double doors. The Thompson School is typical of the schools constructed in Webster in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in its symmetrical design, revival style architecture, and use of brick as the primary building material. The Filmer School (1898) and Bartlett High School (1905), both designed in the Neo-classical style, are similar well-preserved examples of Webster schools.

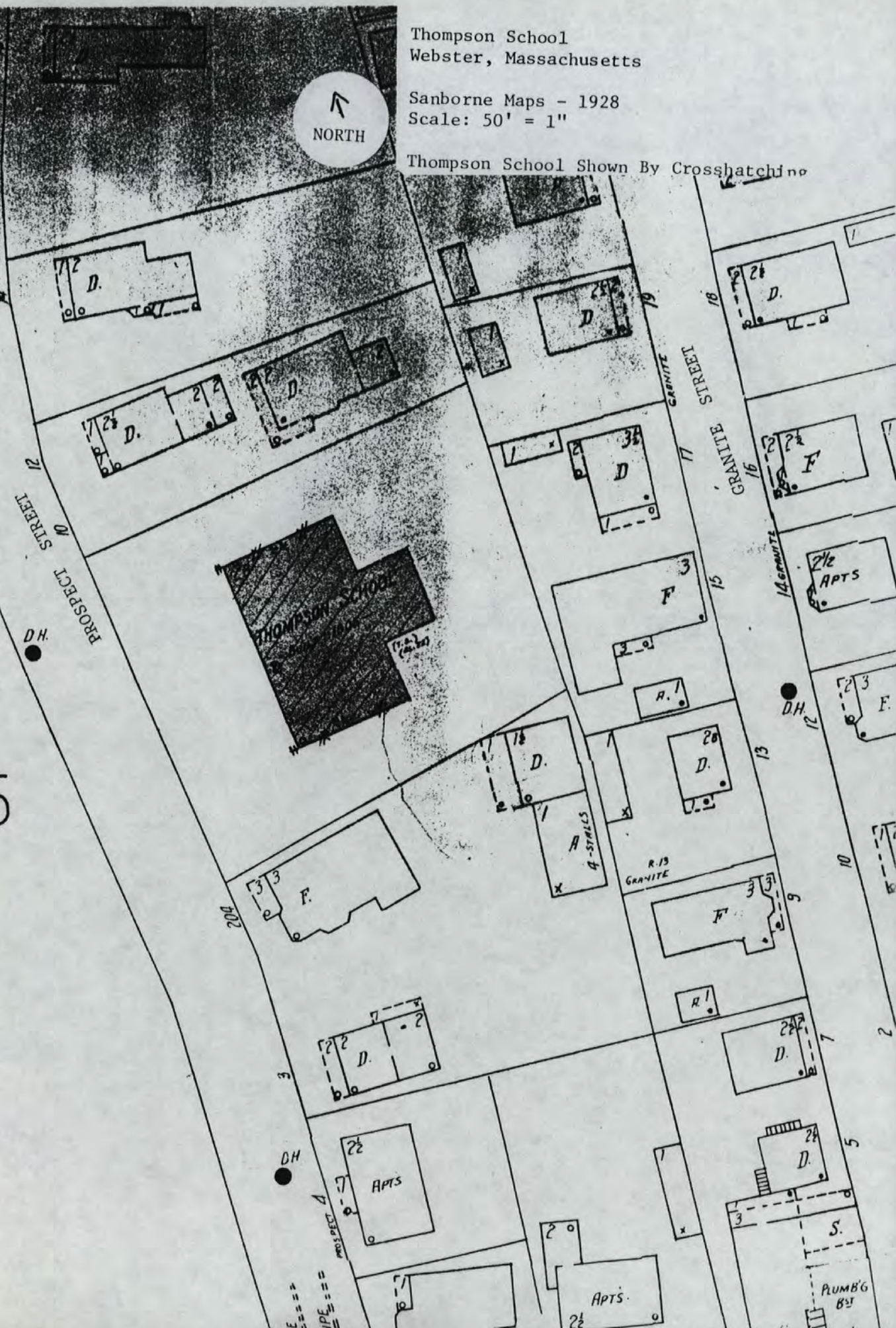
Thompson School
Webster, Massachusetts

Sanborne Maps - 1928
Scale: 50' = 1"

Thompson School Shown By Crosshatching



5



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Thompson School
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Worcester

DATE RECEIVED: 4/24/89 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/09/89
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/25/89 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/08/89
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 89000436

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 6/7/89 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Well preserved Gothic Revival
School associated with community's
historical development during a period
of industrial prosperity*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A+C
REVIEWER Jorge
DISCIPLINE Architectural History
DATE 6/7/89

*Part I certified: 4-18-84
Part II certified: 4-21-84
Part III certified: 11-30-88*

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

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Thompson School
Prospect Street
Webster, MA

Photographed by: Christine S. Beard
ACT for Massachusetts
45 School Street
Boston, MA

View: Looking northwest at facade (east elevation)

Photo: 1 of 2

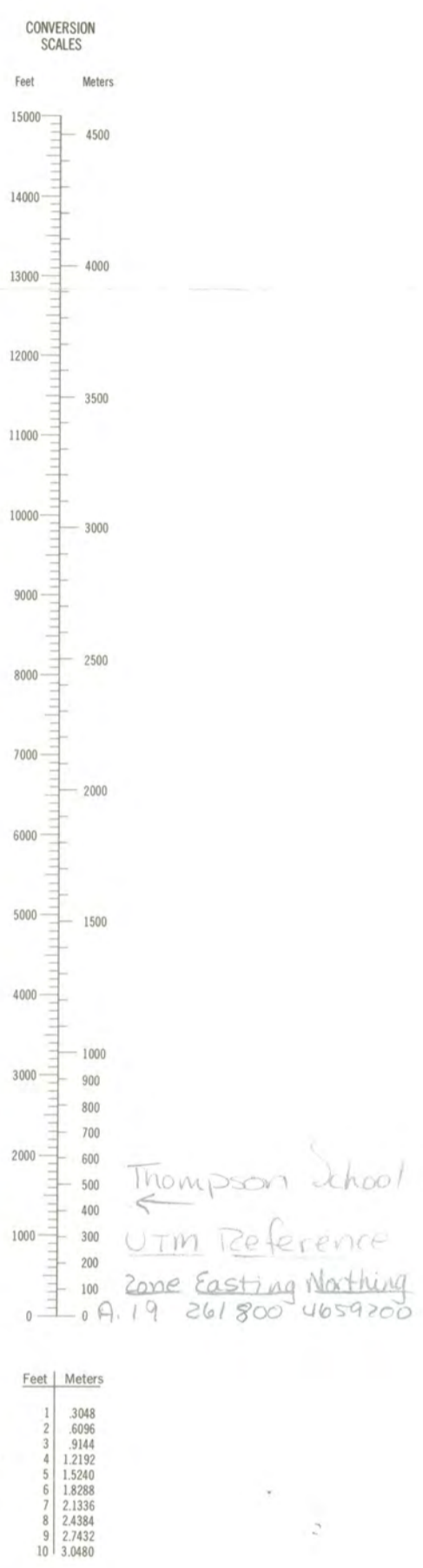


Thompson School
Prospect Street
Webster MA

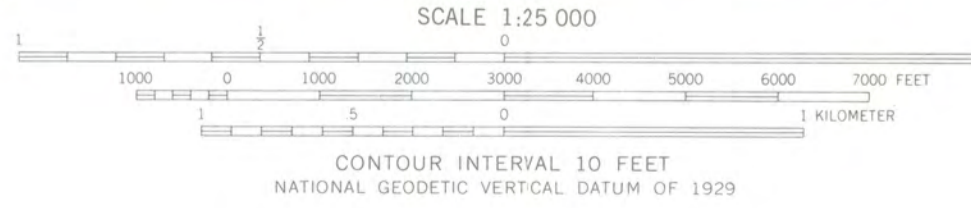
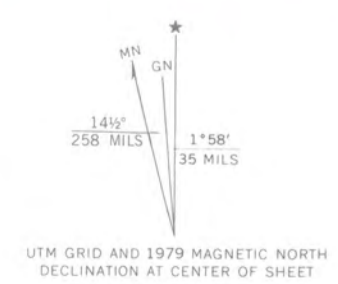
Photographed by: Christine S Beard
ACT for Massachusetts
45 School Street
Boston MA

View: Looking north at south elevation of
rear wing

Photo: 2 of 2



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Topography by planetable surveys 1942-1943. Revised from aerial
photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1969
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone, and Connecticut coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,
zone 19
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern
are subject to controlled inundation



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Revisions shown in purple compiled in cooperation with the State of
Massachusetts agencies from aerial photographs taken 1975 and other
source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1979

WEBSTER, MASS.—CONN.
N4200—W7152.5/7.5
1969
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 6668 III SW—SERIES V814



April 18, 1989

Carol Shull
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

APR 24 1989

NATIONAL
REGISTER

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination form:

Leominster, Cluett Peabody & Company, 123 First Street
Leominster, Whitney & Company, 142 Water Street
Norfolk, Norfolk Grange Hall, 28 Rockwood Road
Webster, Rock Castle School, Prospect Street, HPCA #11019MA
Webster, Thompson School, Prospect Street, HPCA #11018MA

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer. Owners were notified of pending State Review Board consideration 30-75 days before the meeting and were afforded the opportunity to comment. Comments received to date are attached to the nomination form.

Sincerely,

Betsy Friedberg

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

Enclosure:

✻
BF/