

JAN 02 1990

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FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA

FORM NO.

N-024

NEWTON, MA MRA

Town Newton (Newton Corner)Address 785 Centre StreetHistoric Name Loren Towle Estate/ NewtonCountry Day SchoolUse: Present schoolOriginal residence

DESCRIPTION

Date 1920-26Source water & building dept. recordsStyle Jacobethan RevivalArchitect Arthur W. BowditchExterior Wall Fabric Roman brickOutbuildings several- see description

Major Alterations (with dates)

2nd school wing added 1960

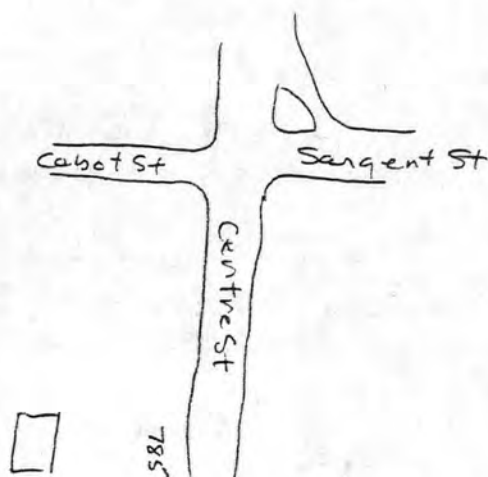
Chapel and school wing added- 1926

Condition goodMoved no Date n/aAcreage 639,845 sq ft. c 14.68ASetting well developed residential neigh-borhood- many large estates now ininstitutional use.Recorded by Candace Jenkins/Susan AbeleOrganization Newton Historical Comm.Date 12/86 : rev. 3/88

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

Sketch Map: Draw map showing property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection(s).

Indicate north



A 19/319 370 /4690390
B 19/319600 /4690340
C 19/319520 /4690080

UTM REFERENCE 019/319240 /4690170

USGS QUADRANGLE NEWTON

SCALE 1:25000

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Loren Towle Estate possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and associations. It is significant as the best preserved and most elaborate of several estate houses that were developed on the crest of Centre Street in the early 20th century (see N-A1 and 2). Designed by well-known Boston architect, Arthur Bowditch in 1920, it is a magnificent example of the Jacobethan Revival style with lavish imported interior finishes. Its quality is greatly enhanced by its Olmsted Brothers designed landscape and numerous remaining dependencies. The house also incorporates a distinguished Maginnis and Walsh designed chapel/school wing associated with its post-1926 history as the Sacred Heart School. The Loren Towle Estate meets criterion C of the NRHP.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

General Features of the Estate

The Towle Estate is located on a hilltop at the SW corner of Richmond Road and Centre Street in an area that was developed with several large estates during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A 1920s promotional brochure described this part of Centre Street as an ancient Colonial highway as well as a broad street lined with great elms and fine estates with sweeping views of the distant Charles River. Set well back from Centre Street at the end of a circular drive, the Towle Estate originally included a mansion house, several dependencies (service building, large E-plan greenhouse, garage and two cottages) to the north rear, and formally landscaped grounds to the south and west. All of these elements remain except the green house whose site is marked by a foundation and by its rear shed which was constructed of brick rather than iron and glass. Later additions to the estate include a 3½ story chapel and 2½ story school wing added to the north side of the mansion house in 1926, a large modern one story wing attached to the earlier addition by a glazed walkway in 1960, and a modern one story gable roofed outbuilding (now called Upstairs/Downstairs) to

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

Loren Towle never lived in the magnificent house which he created at 785 Centre Street. Begun in 1920, it was incomplete at the time of his sudden death in 1924 and had to be sold to settle the estate. Towle, a phenomenally successful real estate investor, served as Director of International Trust Co., Boston; Director of the Boston Chamber of Commerce; Director of the Boston Real Estate Exchange; Alderman, Newton Mass 1910-1911, President of the Newton Improvement Association 1912, and was a member of the Bostonian Society, Dalhousie Lodge, Hunnewell Club of Newton and the Newton Golf Club. The house and outbuildings were designed by Boston architect, Arthur W. Bowditch, who was responsible for numerous commissions such as the Old Court Building, 294 Washington Street, Boston. Olmsted Brothers designed the ground and gardens and the greenhouse was by Lord and Burnham.

Developer Henry J. O'Meara purchased the 49 acre estate in 1924, subdividing the western end of the property, along Cabot Street into house lots. The mansion house and outbuildings, with 17 acres, was acquired by Sacred Heart School, one of the oldest preparatory schools for young women in the Boston area in exchange for four Back Bay townhouses, which they had outgrown. Architects Maginnis and Walsh designed the chapel and school wing which were added immediately and the school opened on the Newton campus in the summer of 1926. A 300 seat auditorium/gymnasium was built in 1960, designed by Maginnis, Walsh & Kennedy. The firm of Maginnis and Walsh was nationally famous for its designs of Roman Catholic churches and institutions. Its most notable local examples are the buildings of Boston College on its Commonwealth Avenue campus.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Building Records: 785 Centre Street, Meridith and Grew Brochure for the Towle Estate, Publicity material from Newton Country Day School of the Sacred Heart.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Newton
(Newton Corner)

Form No:
N-024

Property Name: Towle Estate/Newton
Country Day School

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

Architectural Significance (cont)

the rear of the mansion house and directly south of the original outbuildings. All of the original buildings are designed in the Jacobethan Revival style, popular for large estates at the turn-of-the-century, and are constructed of light buff colored Roman brick with Indiana limestone trim, Vermont slate roofs, and dressed Deer Isle granite underpinnings. Despite their venerable appearance, the buildings were designed to incorporate modern features such as fireproof construction, central heating, electricity, their own pressurized water system, and connection with the city sewerage system.

Mansion House

The original portion of the house is rectangular in plan and rises $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories from a high basement to a gable roof. This basic mass is enlivened by asymmetrically placed wall dormers, clustered chimneys and strong cross gables which appear on both the front (E) and rear (W) elevations. The generous use of limestone trim provides articulation for major features and also adds to the building's architectural interest. Consistent uses include a molded water table, a string course above the second story, coping, finials, and rusticated window trim, in some cases with heavy tracery. Limestone is used most freely on the cross gables, especially the central one which includes a porte cochere fashioned entirely of carved limestone including escutcheons emblazoned with the letter T (the letter T is also worked into the massive Tiffany stained glass window above the entry). The rear or garden elevation (W) is similar in massing and detail to the facade, and it is set off by "broad terraces with carved balustrades and broad sweeping steps of limestone." The 1920s promotional brochure that provided this quote also provides detailed information about the interior spaces and finishes including plans and photographs. It states that the house was fireproof throughout with reinforced concrete floors, steel girders and terra cotta block partitions, and that despite its size and magnificance, large windows admitting copious amounts of sunlight, and perfectly proportioned rooms resulted in a "thoroughly homelike and liveable house." Electrical fixtures were fashioned by Edward F. Caldwell Co. of New York, and interior woodwork and painting were done by noted Cambridge furniture makers, Irving & Casson. The main stairhall, which one entered from the porte cochere, is finished with English oak as is the gallery or corridor which runs laterally along the front of the building. The conservatory at the south end is finished with a marble mosaic floor, American walnut paneling and bookcases, and a Convent Senna marble fireplace. The library is finished with African mahogany paneling and a fireplace of Sevanto marble. The billiard room is paneled in teak with a wide frieze of caen stone spanning the distance to the ceiling. The dining room is paneled from floor to ceiling in Honduras mahogany, while the breakfast room is paneled with French walnut.

Outbuildings

Behind the main house are one modern outbuilding and six original dependencies. The original structures complement the mansion house in style and materials, and proceeding from south to north, include the following: A one story gable roof service building with central cross gable above a large double-leaf door (the original central heating plant and water storage tanks were located in the basement), a $1\frac{1}{2}$ story shed with cross gable that was originally attached to the rear of a large elaborate greenhouse fashioned by Lord & Burnham, a one story garage with central cross gable which is similar to the service building, a two story single-family house with double cross gable, and a two story two-family house with triple cross gable. The latter two structures face north onto Richmond Rd.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

NEWTON, MA-MHA	
Community: Newton (Newton Corner)	Form No: N-024
Property Name: Towle Estate/Newton Country Day School	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

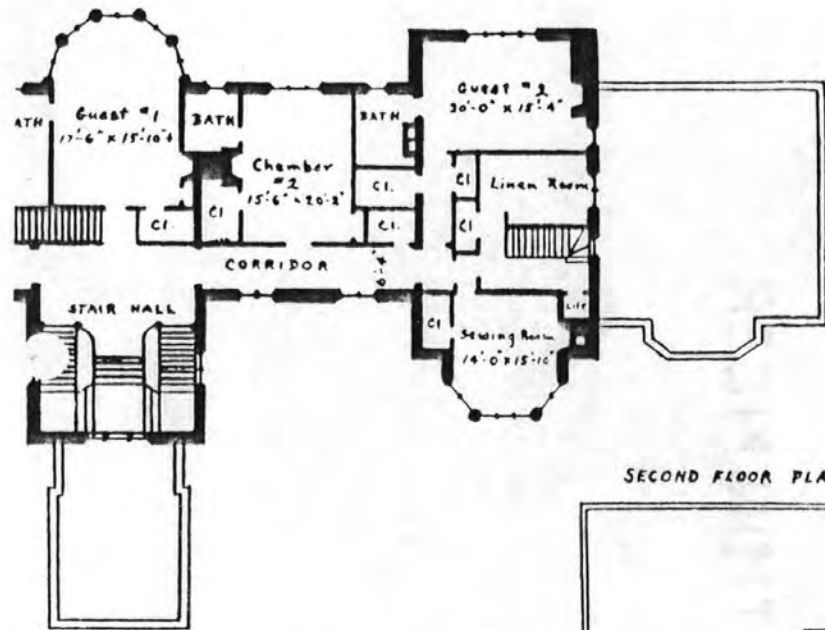
Architectural Significance (cont)

Landscape

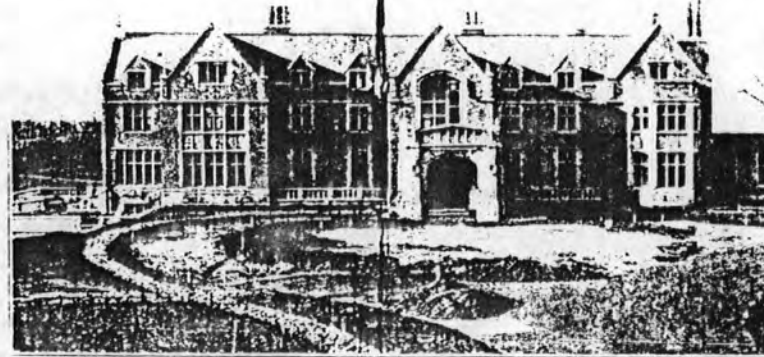
According to the 1920s promotional brochure, "Southeast of the house is the rose garden with its trefoil coping of Indiana limestone; directly south, approached from the terrace, is a sunken garden, and to the southwest a rockery. The grounds were laid out by Messrs. Olmsted Brothers, the famous landscape architects." Although plantings have not been consistently maintained, coping and terraces remain as well as an allee of trees extending the north-south axis of the house between the rose garden and the sunken garden.

See attached plans of main house and grounds, and xerox photographs of main house and grounds- from Meridith & Grew brochure.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

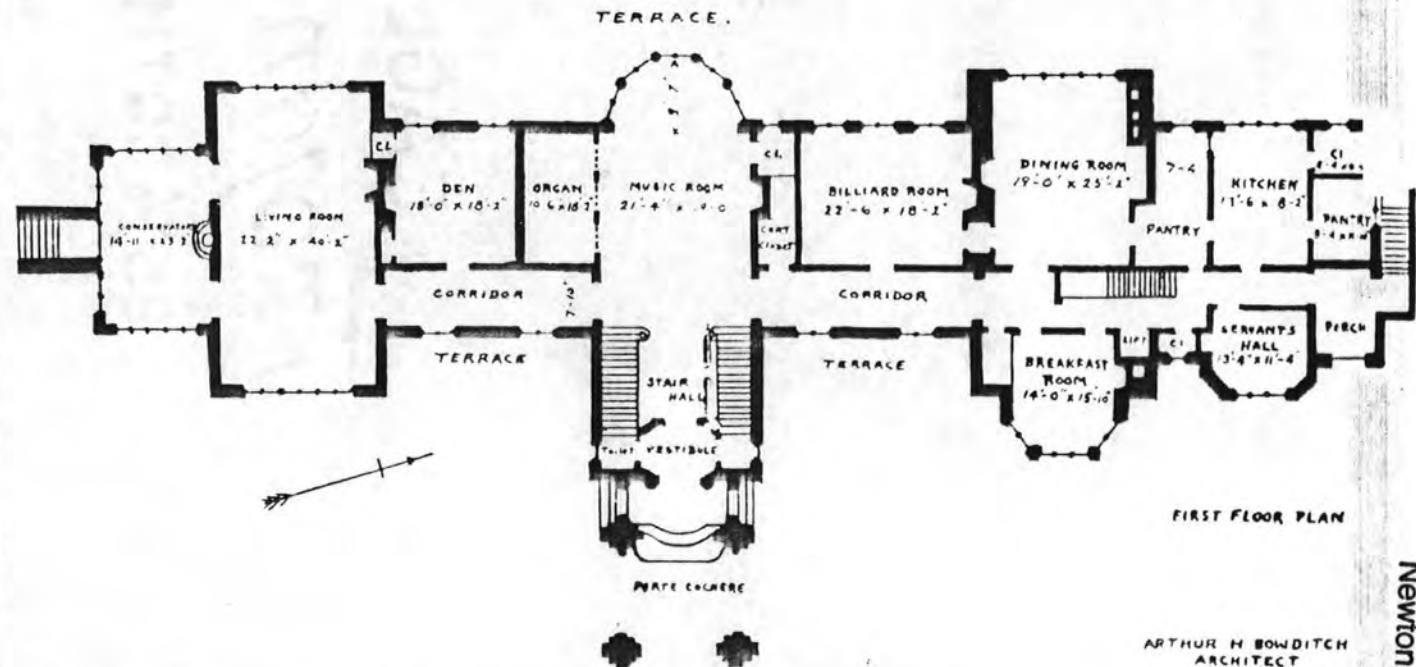


SECOND FLOOR PLAN



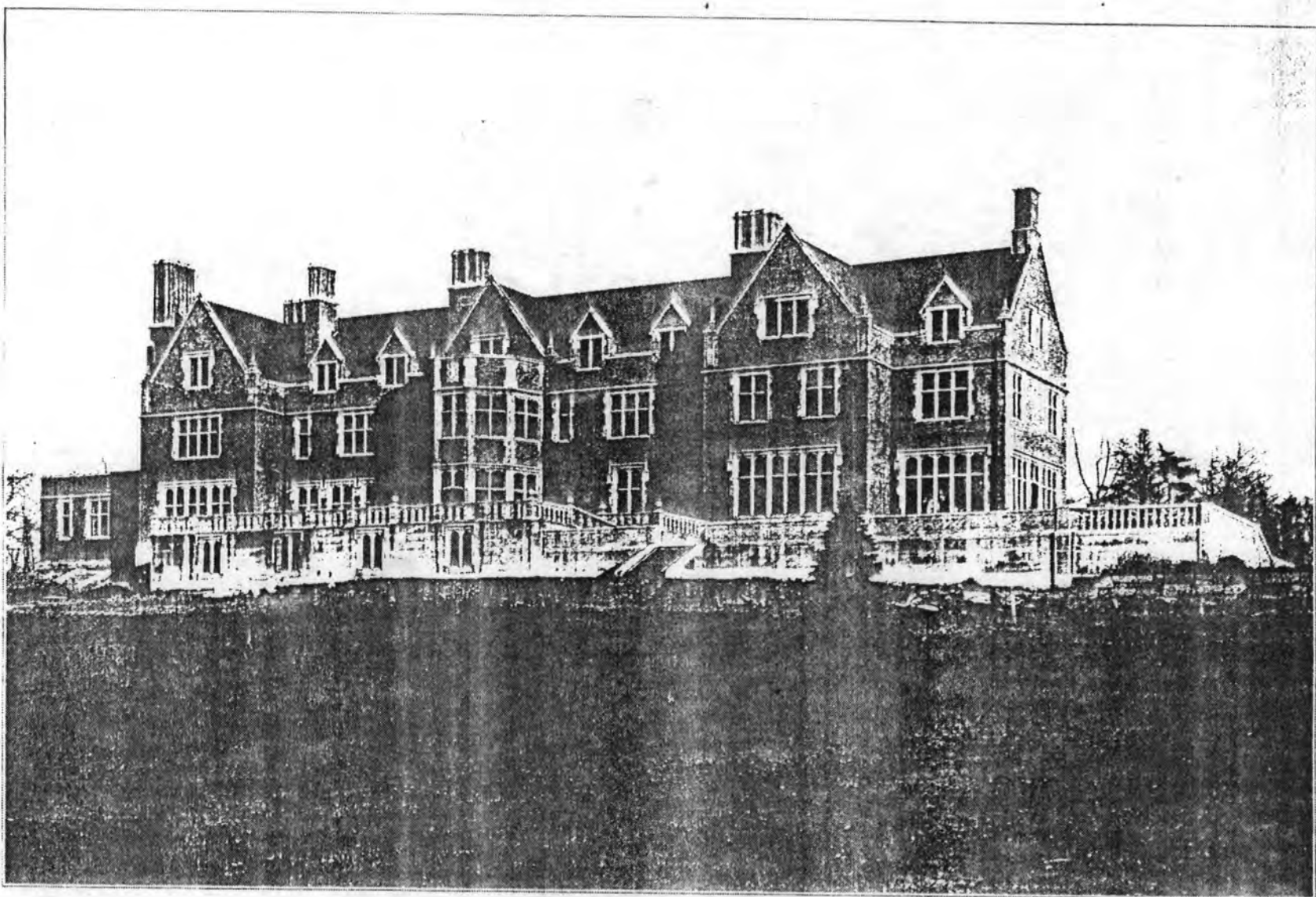
is a happy solution by the
1. of the problem presented
of the great natural advan-
n should give the desired
arrangement of rooms and the

gh the vestibule, one enters
tent open to the ridge pole
indow over the stairs, and
n, with its expanse of win-
view. The feature of the
broad galleries or hallways
light and bringing the main
he view and the prevailing
has east, south and west



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

ARTHUR H. BOWDITCH
ARCHITECT

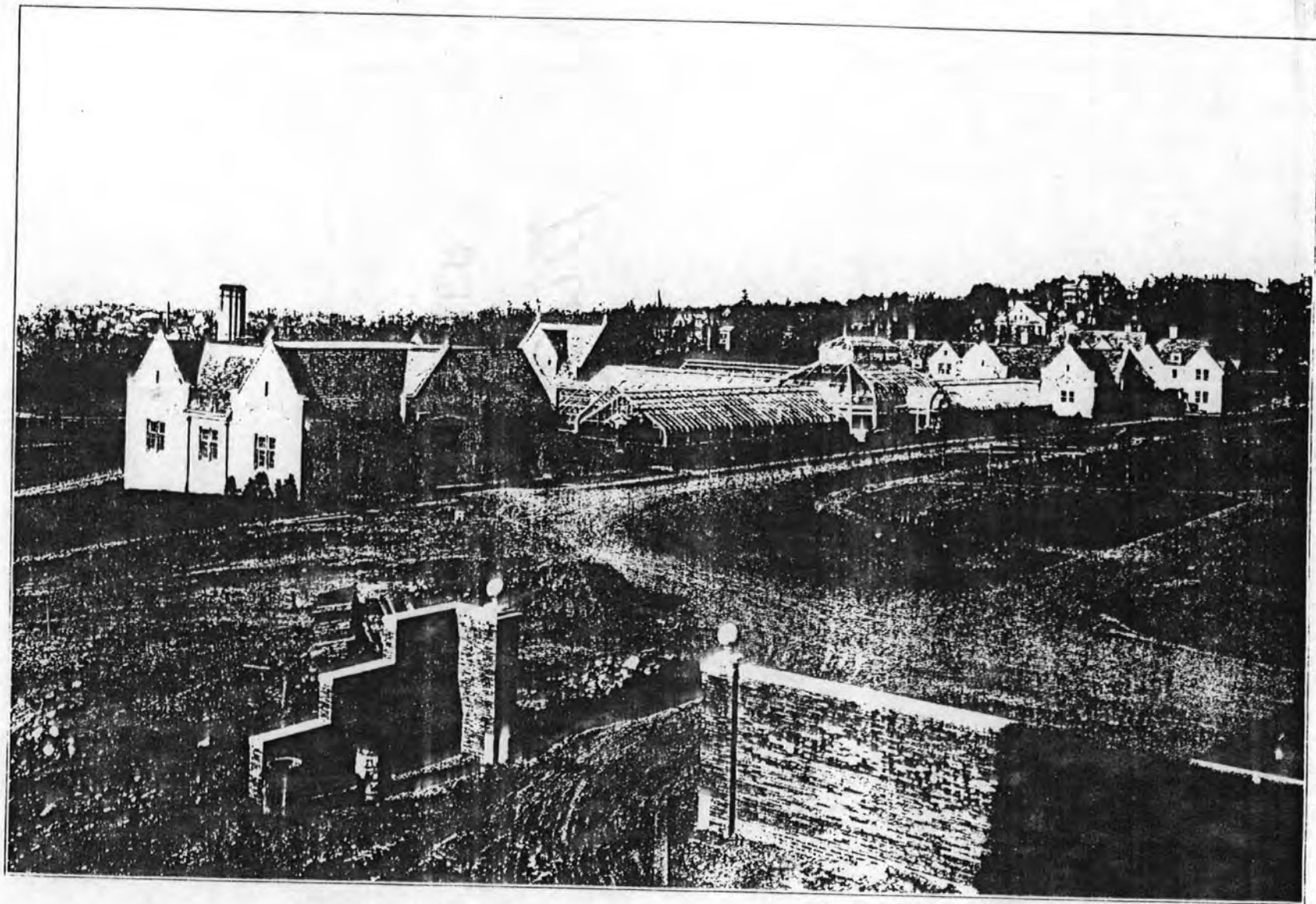


The Mansion House, showing the Western and Southern Terraces

Towle Estate/Newton Country Day School
785 Centre Street

Newton, MA-MRA

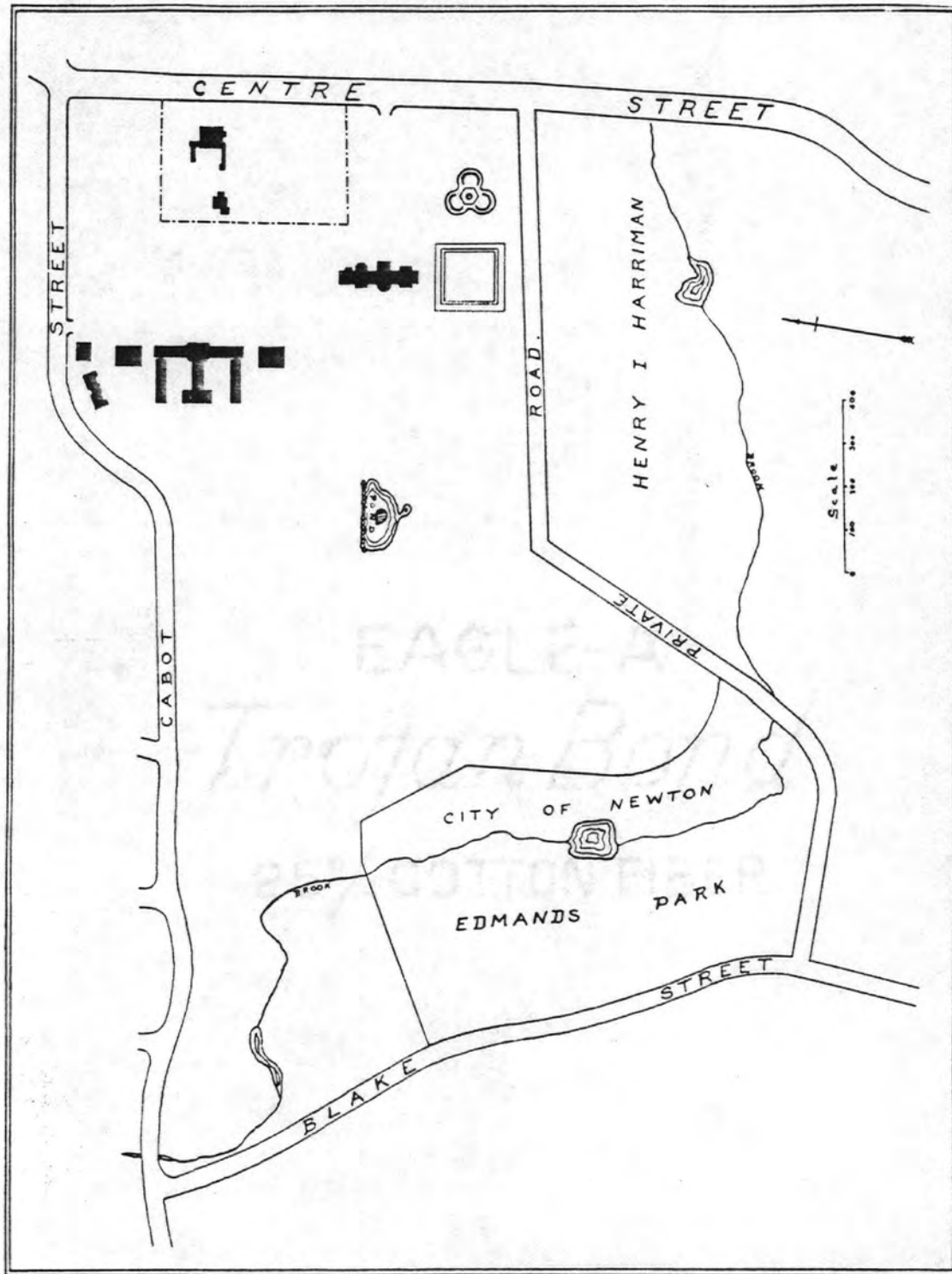
Towle Estate/Newton Country Day School
785 Centre Street



Service Building, Greenhouses, Garage and Cottages - A portion of the Gardens

Newton, MA-MRA

Towle Estate/Newton Country Day School
785 Centre Street



Plan of the Land, showing location of the Buildings

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Newton MRA
State Middlesex County, MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

161. Second Church of Newton **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/16/90
Attest _____
162. Stratton, Edward B., House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/16/90
Attest _____
163. Towle, Loren, Estate **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/16/90
Attest _____
164. Waban Branch Library **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/16/90
Attest _____
- Sub Return*
165. Walker Home for Missionary Children **Substantive Review** Keeper _____
Attest _____
166. Warren, Levi, Jr., High School **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/16/90
Attest _____
167. Boston College Main Campus **Substantive Review** Keeper Ret.
Return Historic District Attest _____
168. Church, William L., House **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/21/90
Attest _____
169. Farlow Hill Historic District **Entered in the National Register** Keeper Delores Byers 2/21/90
Attest _____
170. Newton Cottage Hospital Historic District **Substantive Review** Keeper Beth L. Savage 2/21/90
Attest _____

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Towle, Loren, Estate
NAME:

MULTIPLE Newton MRA
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 1/02/90 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/13/90
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/01/90 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/16/90
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 90000026

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 2/16/90 DATE *Entered in the
National Register*

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA _____
REVIEWER _____
DISCIPLINE _____
DATE _____

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
 UTMs boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

 sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

_____ Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



Loren Towel Estate/
Newton Country Day School
785 Centre St.
Newton, MA

Newton, MA-MRA

undelivered

C. Jenkins

1/87

req. @ Jackson Homestead

N-024

87-4-25



Loren Towel Estate/
Newton Country Day School
785 Centre St.
Newton, MA
Gouldsby

Newton, MA-MRA

C. Jenkins
1/87

neg. @ Jackson Homestead

87-4-26



Newton, MA-MRA

785 Centre Street

SBL: 13-18-1,2

Engineering Map - 1979

Page: 46 and 59

Scale: 1"=1000' Reduced 64%