

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Winn Memorial Library

and or common Woburn Public Library

2. Location

street & number P.O. Box 298, 45 Pleasant Street not for publication

city, town Woburn vicinity of

state Massachusetts code county Middlesex code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Woburn, Board of Library Trustees

street & number City Hall, 10 Common Street

city, town Woburn vicinity of state Massachusetts

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Middlesex South Registry of Deeds

street & number 208 Cambridge Street

city, town Cambridge state Massachusetts

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington state DC

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Winn Memorial Library at Woburn is the only one of Richardson's library buildings that has not been enlarged. It is located in the civic center of town facing Pleasant Street.

The plan is a Latin cross with the longitudinal axis containing the stack wing, reading room, picture gallery, and museum. The following detailed description of the building is taken from the Anniversary bulletin of the library:

The building, 163 feet in length sets back 75 feet from the street and is surrounded on all sides by a lawn. The architecture is Romanesque with variants of English Victorian Gothic design. It is basically of MacGregor brownstone from Longmeadow quarries in Springfield, Massachusetts with Ohio cream colored sandstone and some light granite used for trim and decoration.

The roof of deep red tile from Akron, Ohio was replaced in 1914 with copper and red slate as the nearest approach to the original scheme while the ridges, hips, and finials in copper were exactly reproduced in form and dimension perfectly preserving the architectural outline of the building. Replacement tiles like the originals were out of the question, not only because they proved impractical and lacking in durability, but the cost was exorbitant.

The Tower, 78 feet high attracts immediate attention from passersby. It contains a circular staircase from the vestibule to the second floor over the Reference Room. At the base of the Tower is the portico, very colorful with its horizontally striped columns. It has an interesting gargoyle at the outside corner--a ferocious looking eagle with the mouth of a lion. To the rear is the memorial plaque.

Two huge Medieval Doors open from the portico into the Vestibule. From here you enter the Art Gallery which, because of lack of space, has had many of its paintings removed and stored. Until the late 1960's this gallery displayed several of the paintings from Charles Bowers Winn's personal collection. This room was made especially as an Art Gallery with moldings at several levels from which to hang the pictures. Winn expressly stated in his will that there be a proper place to exhibit paintings. Furniture designed by the architect was originally placed here.

The Octagon to the east, 28 feet in diameter with dome ceiling approximately 36 feet high appears as a separate section and at first was set up as a "Lady's Parlor" with the room, the fine collections of stuffed birds, rocks, minerals and fossils scientifically arranged and labeled. This very valuable collection was the gift of the Hon. John J. Cummings, uncle of Charles B. Winn, a trustee of Woburn Public Library and a treasurer of M.I.T. In 1914 this collection was moved to the third floor of the building

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates 1876-1879 **Builder/Architect** H. H. Richardson, Architect
Norcross Brothers, Builders

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Winn Memorial is the first of Richardson's great series of library designs and it is here that he establishes the characteristic, asymmetrical plan that gave these educational structures variety, coherence, and real monumentality. The Woburn library still belongs to the Victorian high Gothic style but it bears the emphatic stamp of individual genius and it is one of the most important designs of the architect's most creative period between 1870 and 1878.

The history of the library begins with the one of the most prominent Woburn families, the Winns:

The first born child recorded in the town was Increase Winn, born, December 5, 1641. Many of the family are listed as holding offices of a civil and military nature in the town and no other family can be said to have done more for the welfare of the town than Jonathan Bowers Winn and his son Charles Bowers Winn.

The Hon. Jonathan Bowers Winn was a schoolteacher in North Woburn and Wilmington, and after learning the currier's trade, became a partner of the leather-manufacturing firm of J. B. Winn & Co. We are told J. B. Winn was a genius in business and finances. Although Woburn began as an agricultural town, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the leather industry became the principal source of employment.

Jonathan Bowers Winn married Nancy W. Cummings, daughter of Deacon John Cummings of Woburn and they had two children: Marcia Ann, born August 25, 1836, married Hon. Edward D. Hayden of Woburn and died January 8, 1862, and Charles Bowers Winn born May 15, 1838, unmarried and died December 19, 1875.

Charles Bowers Winn was the only survivor of Jonathan Bowers Winn and inherited his fortune. He survived his father by only two years and bequeathed to the town approximately \$227,000 for the Woburn Public Library. Although there were subscription libraries as far back as 1789 this was Woburn's first free public library open to all....

In 1853 Jonathan Bowers Winn, a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention in Boston, heard of Boston's plan for a Free Public Library. At his local town meeting he proposed that the town match his delegate's salary of \$300 to start a free circulating library in Woburn. The town agreed to match the gift, appointed a Library Committee, and gave a room

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.7 acres

Quadrangle name Lexington Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

UTM References

A

1	9	3	2	2	8	6	0	4	7	0	5	0	0	0
Zone		Easting					Northing							

B

Zone		Easting					Northing							

C

Zone		Easting					Northing							

D

Zone		Easting					Northing							

E

Zone		Easting					Northing							

F

Zone		Easting					Northing							

G

Zone		Easting					Northing							

H

Zone		Easting					Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification *See continuation sheet 9-1*

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Pitts, Historian

organization National Park Service, History Division date

street & number 1100 L Street, NW telephone (202)343-8166

city or town Washington state DC 20013-7127

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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and the Octagon was converted to a reading room for both ladies and gentlemen. In 1917 it was designated a Children's Room and completely furnished with new oak furniture and shelving. Here the children were served until 1976. At that time the Children's collection was transferred to the lower floor and the overflow from the Stack Room was shelved here.

The Reference Room 22 feet by 60 feet, to the west of the Gallery, has a flat ceiling and shelves approximately 4 feet high of butternut wood. Originally several classical busts were displayed on the top of the shelves but in recent years they gave way to books. More of the original paintings are hung on the walls here with two beautiful enameled medallions above the arches. Architecturally this room is noted especially for its massive fireplace of Ohio limestone over which is a stone clock which kept time for many years but now is ornamental.

In 1900 when the Children's Department was first instituted it was housed in half of this room. This, however, proved a rather unsatisfactory arrangement for the serious adult readers in the other half.

The Stack Wing is noted for its "simplicity and solidity," characteristics of Henry Hobson Richardson's best work. This section, 67 feet by 30 feet, is enhanced by a beautiful barrel ceiling 28 feet high. This is of the same butternut wood as the arches and columns. The intricate carvings, representing flowers, leaves, fruits, etc., at the tops of these columns and throughout the building, are each different and attract the attention of sightseers as well as the students of architecture. This wing with its fourteen alcoves has always contained the majority of the book collection and is little changed except for additional lighting, a section partitioned off at the west end for office space and a stairway cut in the floor near the office for an emergency fire exit. Again, because of a space problem, in 1976 the contents of the first three alcoves on the south side were relocated in the Octagon and the other overcrowded alcoves were rearranged to alleviate the congestion. The alcoves extend to a second level and the upstairs balconies are entered by means of two circular iron staircases, the one on the south side continuing up to the second floor. Rows of windows in alcoves and balconies and around the back of this section give a continuous band of light around the wing. The architect tried to plan windows for as much light as possible--not merely for decoration.

The Second Floor over the Reference Room consists of a large room, facing (south) Pleasant Street. It was formerly used by the Trustees but is now the "Local History Room." The north half of this floor consists of four rooms, originally the living quarters for the custodian and his family who worked and lived here for approximately twenty-five years. Today some of the Library's early furniture, paintings and artifacts are arranged here.

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The Third Floor or Attic is one large room and was originally used as a meeting place. Housed here now are the museum cases with their valuable collections along with the antique furniture department, which was originally set up in the basement in the early years of the Library, and some very interesting artifacts of historical value which have been acquired gradually.

The Lower Level of the building, under the Stack Wing is divided into two sections: on the south side, stacks have been installed to take care of books that are less called for or are of more specialized subjects. Back copies of periodicals are also stored here. The north side is fitted with offices where books are ordered, catalogued and processed. Since October 1976 the Children's Department is in the section under the Reference Room where there is room for 7500 books as compared to 5000 in the Octagon....

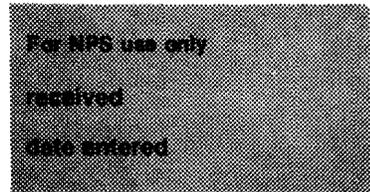
The vault, where valuable papers and books are kept, the custodian's work room and the heating system are all located under the Octagon.

Although the structure of the building has not been altered, many changes were made in the interior and its equipment, to better increase its usefulness and serve the reading public. Among the changes: electric lights replaced gas lights in 1917 and since then the electrical fixtures have been added to and changed for a more modern type of fluorescent lighting; the heating apparatus has been updated; linoleum or carpeting covers the floors and staircases.¹

As is customary with Richardson buildings, the exterior finish is richly textured, and in this building Richardson used a particularly handsome polychromy. The interior wood finish is also beautifully detailed, especially the typical twotiered alcoves spanned by the wood barrel vault. The architect also designed all of the furnishings.

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at Town Hall for this library. Thus the Woburn Public Library was founded in 1855 and opened to the public August 20, 1856. The Legislature by a special act of incorporation in 1885 secured it.

In 1875 the room became inadequate with over 6400 volumes and 1300 pamphlets. There were 1600 subscribers from a population of 10,000. As the town had no means for the appropriate building and the library kept growing steadily, the legacy of Charles Bowers Winn was most welcome.

Because Charles shared his father's interest in a free library he bequeathed to the town \$140,000 for a library including land, building, books, pictures and furniture. Charles Bowers Winn wanted the bulk of the gift to be for this original building and furnishings with the hope that the town and its citizens would maintain it.

He did not want any honor for himself for this gift and clearly stated in his will that the building be known as the Woburn Public Library or some name of similar general nature and having no personal reference. He did, however, want to memorialize his father whose fortune he inherited thus the plaque in the portico which reads: "This building was erected in memory of Jonathan Bowers Winn from funds bequeathed by his son for the use, benefit and improvement of the people of Woburn." In his will he also bequeathed his collection of pictures stating that if he had not been prevented by ill health it was his intention to have added to the collection a large number of paintings... by some of the most celebrated artists in Europe and our own country.

The contract for constructing the building was awarded to Norcross Brothers, the same company which built Richardson's Trinity Church in Boston during the period 1873-1877. Charles B. Winn wanted the building to be an architectural ornament in the town. Five of the best architectural firms of Boston and New York submitted plans: Gambrill and Richardson, Cummings and Sears, Ware and VanBrunt, Peabody and Sterns, Snell and Gregorson. The firm of Gambrill and Richardson was chosen....

Each of the other competing architectural firms was given \$200.

It is interesting to note costs at that time:

Norcross Brothers--for the building, stonewalk, furniture and labor
\$81,000

H. H. Richardson for the design and supervision of the building \$5000

For grading the site \$2000

For the original heating system \$2000

Total cost of the building when ready was between \$90,000 and \$100,000.

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The land on which this building was erected comprised the lots owned by J. B. Winn and also one owned by the widow of Horace W. Davis on Pleasant Street.

When the building was completed and opened to the public, 8,000 books had been moved from the old library and approximately 8,500 new volumes were purchased. This was an impressive beginning although these books scarcely showed on the shelves which were estimated to house 50,000.²

On May 1, 1879, Woburn's new library opened to the public.

When the competition for the library was held, Richardson was still in partnership with Charles D. Gambrill in New York. This partnership had existed since 1867 with Gambrill acting as business manager while Richardson was responsible for design. When construction began on Trinity Church in 1874, Richardson moved to Brookline, Massachusetts, where he lived for the next twelve years. The partnership was finally dissolved in 1878 as Richardson gained full professional maturity. For the last eight years of his life, Richardson ran a large architectural firm from his Brookline residence employing the finest artists and craftsmen of that time, including Charles Folen McKim and Stanford White. The final form of the Woburn library is in the Richardson style; with rusticated stone, the tower with an interior stair, the Romanesque-arched portal, the horizontal window massing all as geometrically ordered as the classicism that preceded it. Richardson successfully combined this "classicism" and his own "romanticism," thus combining successfully the main conflicting aspects of American modernism. The architects who succeed H. H. Richardson fell into these two conflicting forces--McKim and Stanford White were to build pure classical buildings and Louis Sullivan, the great 19th century romantic, would draw his inspiration from Richardson's Marshall Field Warehouse in Chicago. Sullivan's Heir, Frank Lloyd Wright, was to finally epitomize the romantic strain in American architecture.

Footnotes

¹Anniversary Report. Woburn Public Library. 1879-1979. pp. 5-10.

²Ibid., pp. 4-5.

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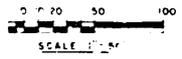
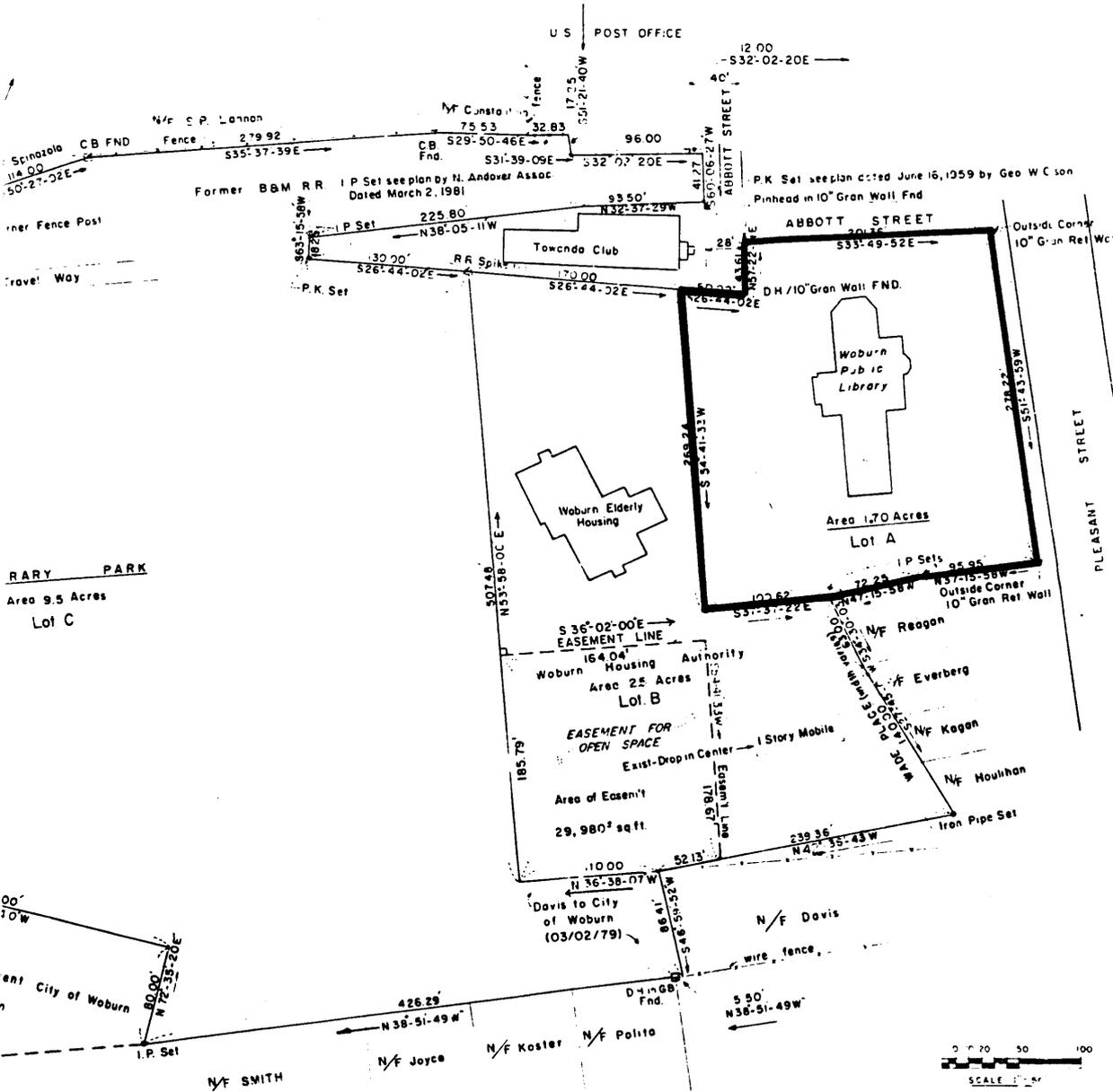
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Van Rensselaer, Marianna Griswold. Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works. Boston: 1888, rev. ed. New York: Dover, 1969.

_____ "The Woburn Public Library", The Woburn Journal, November 18, 1881.

Boundary Description and Justirication:

The boundary encloses the library and grounds historically associated with it. The boundary is that described in the Deed of Release and Reservation dated June 25, 1981 and recorded in the deed records of the County of Middlesex, Commonwealth of Massachusetts in book 14422, pages 544-45, copy attached. The boundary is shown in red on a copy of a portion of the Plan of Land cited in the deed and attached herewith.



ION TAKEN FROM
RAIN EASEM'T
RN, MASS.,

I CERTIFY THAT THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE RULES AND REGULATIONS
OF THE REGISTERS OF DEEDS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF MASS.

Date _____ Name _____

CITY OF WOBURN, MASS.
PLAN OF LAND

LIBRARY PARK, WOBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY
AND WOBURN HOUSING AUTHORITY APR

K&M ASSOCIATES
CONSULTING ENGINEERS
488 MAIN STREET
WOBURN, MASS. 01801