

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Middlesex	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Sever Hall

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
The Harvard Yard, Harvard University campus

CITY OR TOWN:
Cambridge

STATE Massachusetts	CODE	COUNTY: Middlesex	CODE
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Harvard University

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge 02138	STATE: Massachusetts	CODE
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Middlesex County Court House, South District

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: East Cambridge	STATE: Massachusetts	CODE
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sever Hall is a three-and one-half-story, oblonged-shaped, symmetrically-massed brick structure with a hipped roof, two large interior chimneys, and low twin towers on both long elevations. The building is 176 feet long and 75 feet deep. The walls are built of red brick, the foundations and trim are of Longmeadow stone, and the roofs are covered with red-orange tile.

The front (west) and rear (east) facades are divided into three wide bays by means of low twin cylindrical towers that are capped with steeply sloped roofs and have bay windows that continue upwards through the whole height of the walls. These four towers are the only really mediaeval element in the design. The windows on all four elevations are arranged in large groups or banks and their regular spacing provides the chief decorative interest of the composition. All windows have flat arches and molded brick mullions. Windows in the center bay of the west (front) elevation and at the corners have rounded corners cut in brownstone. Elsewhere these wedges of stone are unmolded. The prominent belt courses marking the levels of the second and third floors, and also of the cornice and its frieze, are executed in carved brick.

The center bay of the front (west) facade contains a large entrance comprised of a deeply-recessed low Syrian archway surrounded by moldings in cut brick. Above this central entranceway is a slightly projecting bay, two stories in height and suggesting a classical central pavilion, which is surmounted by a large pediment. The tympanum of the pediment and the panels set under the second and third story windows in the projecting bay are richly ornamented with floral patterns done in cut brick. The pediment is flanked by a pair of low wide dormers and by the large fluted brick interior chimneys.

The center bay of rear (east) elevation has a flat arched doorway which is topped by a broad triangular pediment. Above this, in the second story, is a slightly bulging broad and shallow bay supported on brick corbelling. Over the windows in this level is set a wide panel of cut brick richly decorated in floral pattern. In the roof above and occupying almost the entire width of the central bay, is a very long low dormer which effectively echoes in design the long low proportions of the whole building.

The interior has a cross hall plan on each floor and is divided into plainly finished class rooms and recitation rooms. Sever Hall is in good condition, still used for class room purpose, and is open to visitors.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

5. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1878-80**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and erected in 1878-1880 as a classroom building, Sever Hall is masterpiece built in the mature Richardsonian Romanesque style. "This is without question one of Richardson's greatest works of architecture," the architectural historian Henry-Russell Hitchcock has written. "It is, moreover, an almost unique masterpiece of the incredibly difficult art of building in harmony with the fine work of the past and yet creating a new style for a new day." (The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times) (Hamden, Conn., 1961), 191.

History

Commissioned by Harvard University in October, 1878, the plans for Sever Hall were prepared by Henry H. Richardson of Boston; the classroom building was completed in 1880. In this design Richardson abandoned the rock-faced granite and brownstone of his previous buildings and adopted the common red brick that had been used in the nearby 18th century structures standing in the Harvard Yard. He also even imitated the plain oblong and symmetrical masses of these Georgian and Federal period buildings in a successful effort to blend his new-styled edifice with this fine architecture of the past. Little-altered, Sever Hall still functions as a classroom building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Boston, 1963), 224.

Thomas E. Tallmadge, The Story of Architecture in American (New York, 1936), 175.

Massachusetts, A Guide to Its Places and People (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 197.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	42°	22'	27"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	71°	06'	58"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service DATE 7/9/70

STREET AND NUMBER:
801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE D. C. CODE

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Walter H. Kilham, Boston After Bulfinch, An Account of Its Architecture, 1800-1900 (Cambridge, 1948), 83.

Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (Philadelphia and New York, 1964), 362.

John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America; A Social and Cultural History (Boston and Toronto, 1961), 185, 189.

Marianna G. Van Renseelaer, Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works (Park Forest, Ill., 1967), 21, 69-71.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times (2nd ed., Hamden, Conn., 1961), 188-192.