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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 Old Watertown High School

other names/site number East Junior High School, Middle School East, Brigham House

2. Location

street & number 341 Mount Auburn Street not for publication

city or town Watertown vicinity

state MASSACHUSETTS code MA county Middlesex code 017 zip code 02172

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

August 9, 2006
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

Patrick Andrews

Date of Action

9/22/2006

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7. DESCRIPTION

Built in 1913 and designed in the Elizabethan Revival style, the former Watertown High School is now an assisted living facility called Brigham House. (In this nomination, the building will be referred to as Old Watertown High School.) The castle-like building stands at 341 Mount Auburn Street in Watertown, a densely settled Massachusetts town six miles northwest of Boston. Set within a residential neighborhood that climbs the low hill behind it and fronted by a grassy playing field of approximately five acres, Old Watertown High School is arguably the most visually commanding building along Mt. Auburn Street (MA Route 16), the major thoroughfare leading east-west from Cambridge to Watertown Center. Located approximately one mile east of Watertown's commercial center, the north-facing building occupies a lot bound by serpentine Boylston Street on the west, curving Concord Road on the south, the Hosmer Elementary School on the east and the aforementioned playing field on the north. In the last half of the 20th century, the playing field, parts of the Hosmer School and the Old High School lot were combined as one large town-owned parcel, which gave Old Watertown High School its Mt. Auburn Street address. That larger lot was recently subdivided to separate the school property from the assisted living facility. (See attached plot/site plan as the Watertown assessors map does not yet reflect the subdivision.)

A linear driveway lined by parking spaces spans the north border of the site and separates it from the playing field. A small lawn in front of the school is planted with shrubs and evergreen trees. The grassy playing field is lined with mature trees along its west side, which is bordered by a parking lot. West of the school, a paved parking area is bounded by a grass strip and sidewalk along Boylston Street. On the south (rear), a lawn extends to the sidewalk at Concord Road. Shaded by four mature trees, the rear yard has recently been enhanced by a new gazebo (non-contributing structure) built for the residents of the assisted living facility. To the east of the Old High School, the current Hosmer School buildings, constructed in various building campaigns from 1954 to the present, extend nearly a block to the east. Although the footprint of the Hosmer School is probably at least three times that of the Old Watertown High School, the low, linear massing of the modern buildings diminishes their visual impact on Old Watertown High School and on the streetscape in general. To the west and south of Old Watertown High School lies a network of curvilinear streets lined with well-kept 2½-story, single- and two-family wood-frame houses with either front-gabled or hipped roofs. The delicate scale of these residential buildings combined with the "great lawn" effect of the grassy playing field enhances the monumental quality of Old Watertown High School.

Rising from a granite sill set on a concrete foundation below grade, with a high basement, the 3½ story red brick building is lavishly ornamented with limestone trim. Symmetrical in plan, the building consists of a long (approximately 160 feet) 3½ story main block, projecting three-story sections at each corner, and massive one-story bow-fronted sections centered on the facade and south elevations. (photos 1, 6) Flanking the central bow front on the facade are one-story square brick projecting porticos. With the exception of the porticos, the north and south elevations are similar in massing. The building footprint is generally that of an "I" turned on its side with half circles projecting from both sides of the shaft. The main block is sheltered by a steep, slate-covered hipped roof interrupted on the north and south slopes by a central Flemish cross gable flanked by hip-roofed dormers with Flemish gable ends. (photo #10) Like the main roof, the dormers and cross gables are sheathed in slate with copper ridge flashing. Two

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symmetrical large chimney-like brick ventilation ducts sit astride the ridge, and one small brick chimney projects from the south slope of the roof toward the east end of the ridge. The three-story corner sections, the bow-front sections, and the porticos have flat roofs (sheathed in rubber membrane) rimmed by brick parapets. The parapets on the corners sections and on the vestibules are crenellated, while those on the bow-fronts have a straight stone cap.

At the two main (north) entries, granite steps rise to the deep porticos composed of brick and stone piers supporting a stone basket-handle arch and heavy stone cornice surmounted by a crenellated brick parapet with a central Flemish gable. (photo #6) A boldly detailed shield decorates the gable. Surrounded by scrolls and consoles, the shield contains an open book set in relief. Other elaborately carved ornament found at the entrance porticos includes lions' heads at the principal cornice, a carved face on the keystone at the archway, triglyphs and carved panels at the frieze and above the capitals, shell and scroll details at the pier capitals, as well as rusticated dressed quoins on the piers. The recessed entries are framed by sidelights rising to a fanlight with sunburst-pattern tracery. Tall wooden three-panel double doors have recently been installed to replace a blocked-down opening (mid-20th c.).

Windows, many with elaborate trim, are concentrated on the facade and south elevations. They vary in size and trim as they rise up the building, but are generally grouped and mullioned with bold limestone surrounds, particularly prominent lintels, and often transoms. The windows typically contain double-hung wood sash of various dimensions and patterns of lights. The most common window is a 4/6 flat-arched sash at the first and second stories, and 4/6 with a segmental-arched upper sash at the third story. Large windows at the rear have 9/9 sash. The tall vertical steel windows in the front bow are grouped in sets of three with heavy stone mullions. The main sash are one light wide with two fixed vertically stacked lights over a 4-light casement. The double transom has 2-light sash. The windows at the rear bow are set in groups of three with tall 10-light vertical sash and a 4-light transom. Basement windows contain 4/4 sash at the north elevation, 2-light sash at the front bow, and single 6-light sash at the rear elevation. (photo #5)

On the facade, the windows in the one-story bow are enframed in a stone Gibbs surround. The third story windows, which also display Gibbs surrounds, are set in a Tudor arch surmounted by blind Tudor-arched panels. The louvered panels in the vent stacks astride the roof are set in a stone surround matching that at the third story windows. The gable windows also have Tudor arched lintels. The fenestration on the south elevation is similar to that of the facade, but the trim is simplified. Brick rather than stone frames the windows of the central bays as well as those on the bow-front section.

The symmetrical east and west elevations have projecting end pavilions framing a central recessed pavilion that is topped by a Flemish gable. The end pavilions have windows at the third story and basement, while the recessed central sections have three sets of double windows at the second and third stories. (photo #3) A group of three windows in the gable end has a tall central window and stepped stone surround. At the west elevation, a double entrance door is located in the central bay at the basement story (ground floor). (photo #7) This has been refurbished to serve as the main entrance into the assisted living facility. On the east elevation, a two-story connector formerly extended from the basement and first stories to the modern building that is now part of the Hosmer School. The

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connector, constructed in 1954, was a rectangular, flat-roofed structure. A glazed overhanging upper story sheltered an open space on the north, while louvered panels reached the ground on the south elevation. The connector was demolished as part of the current rehabilitation.

Among the most notable features of the building is its profusion of carved limestone trim, some of the most ornate of which has been described above. Other limestone ornament includes a watertable, sill courses, lintel courses, keystones, shields carved in relief at the lintels, a heavy molded sill course at the third story, molded hoods at various windows, carved compound arches and spandrels at the third story, and coping stone at the parapets. (photo #8)

Interior

Conversion of the Old Watertown High School building to an assisted living facility, required dividing the original classrooms and many other spaces to studio apartments with kitchenettes and private bathrooms. While interior finishes are generally new throughout, the original school corridors and stairways are intact, and the former auditorium, which occupied the front bow, is now a gracious dining room that showcases the original proscenium arch. (photo #4) The bow-fronted room on the south side of the building -- the former gymnasium -- is now apartments and offices. The large windows that characterize the building have been maintained, providing abundant light in the public as well as the private spaces. (As described above, the building has a high basement, three principal floors, and an attic. The floor plan of the present assisted living facility refers to the basement as the first floor, the first floor as the second, etc. The description and history herein, however, use the conventional basement, first, second, third and attic floor unless otherwise noted.)

The building now contains 60 apartments ranging from 313-545 square feet, plus lounges, a library, laundry rooms, activities room, dining facilities, kitchens, offices, and elevators. The original paired entrance vestibules on either side of the bow-fronted auditorium/dining room have been restored, but are now emergency/secondary exits. Lined with brick, they are finished with terrazzo floors and marble steps leading to a trabeated arch framed by multi-paned sidelights and transom. Doors from the vestibules that once led to the auditorium have been bricked up.

Originally, the three principal floors contained six classrooms generally located at each end of the building with a connecting hallway along the south elevation. Each classroom had a chalk board, bulletin board, and built-in bookcases with drawers below. Windows lined one wall and were recessed with no interior moldings, except for those on the attic floor, which had molded wood surrounds. The original windows and trim have been preserved or restored in the apartments. The original corridors displaying painted brick walls and recessed windows with simple wood surrounds on the interior and exterior walls have also been retained. On the third floor, midway along the corridor, a doorway framed by sidelights and a deep transom is flanked by a pair of interior windows. The openings, filled with textured glass, originally provided light from the hallway to a centrally located classroom. Now the opening leads into the elevator lobby.

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The original stairways, near each end of the main block, run to the attic. Displaying simple wood railings, square balusters and square newel posts, they have been preserved, but with the addition of a second banister to bring the height of the railings up to code. Tudor arches originally open between the stair and the south corridor were infilled with brick over time. The arches can still be read due to the recessed brick. The stair halls are enclosed.

Entries at the east and west ends of the building lead into what is now called the first floor, but is technically the ground floor or basement. The east entry, sheltered by the connector (see exterior description) joins a hall and administrative spaces. The west entry, which is now the main entrance to the assisted living facility, leads to a central reception room flanked by a cafe on the south and a spacious living room with fireplace on the north.

Archaeological Description

While no ancient Native American sites are located on the high school property, sites may exist. Eleven ancient sites are located in the general area (within one mile). Environmental characteristics of the property do not generally represent locational criteria (slope, soil drainage, proximity to wetlands) favorable for the presence of Native sites. While the school currently occupies a level and well-drained land surface, the site was likely graded prior to construction of the school, driveway, and parking areas. Natural soil stratigraphy in the area was also disturbed during the construction described above. The school is also located over 1,000 feet from the nearest wetlands, a locational factor that reduces the overall ancient site sensitivity of this location. Given the above information, the size of the nominated parcel (1.26 acres) and the extent of historic landuse on the parcel, a low potential exists for locating ancient Native American resources on the school property.

A low potential also exists for locating historic archaeological resources on the Old Watertown High School property. Prior to construction of the school in 1913, the nominated property and surrounding area was undeveloped and used as a cattle pasture, according to earlier maps. No significant archaeological resources are known or expected from historic landuse associated with the Old Watertown High School or the activities described above.

(end)

Old Watertown High 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): HPCA # 8865

- 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

EDUCATION

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1913 to 1956

Significant Dates

1913

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Charles Brigham, architect; John W. Duff, builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Watertown Public Library

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Charles Brigham for his hometown at no cost, the Elizabethan Revival-style Old Watertown High School at 341 Mt. Auburn Street was built in 1913. The early 20th century was a transitional period in American education, during which students were more likely to attend high school than ever before. Old Watertown High School offered a college preparatory curriculum, which was supported indirectly by its Elizabethan Revival design; a favored style for college buildings of the period. The curriculum also placed a new emphasis on the education of women and immigrants, as well as on the importance of physical education. In 1925, Old Watertown High School became the town's second junior high school, remaining in continuous use as a school until the late 1980s. The history of the Old High School reflects the rapid growth of Watertown as a prosperous industrial town and traces the evolution of the public school system in the early 20th century. Architecturally, the building is a well-preserved example of a school designed by Charles Brigham, one of the most prominent Boston architects of the day, as well as a Watertown native and civic leader. One of Brigham's last buildings, Old Watertown High School occupies a commanding location on Mount Auburn Street, is among the most architecturally significant buildings in Watertown, and is a rare example of the Elizabethan Revival style. Old Watertown High School retains integrity of design, location, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association; and fulfills National Register criteria A and C at the local level. The period of significance is from its date of construction to 1952. The end date is the standard fifty year cut off, established to allow for historical perspective, but it is also a date before which the east elevation was altered by an addition (see description).

Watertown, situated along the banks of the Charles River, was founded in 1630 as the first inland settlement in Massachusetts. Initially, the economic base was grounded in agriculture, grazing, and fishing. By the mid-18th century, the town's civic center had been consolidated at the corner of Mt. Auburn and Common Streets where the meeting house (burned in 1836) stood within the **Common Street Burial Ground** (MHC #800), a few blocks west of the site that became the location of Old Watertown High School in 1913. In the Colonial and Federal periods growth was rapid with the population more than doubling between 1765 (693 persons) and 1830 (1641 persons), by which time the power of the Charles River had been harnessed for the manufacturing of cotton duck, paper, medicines, soap, and candles.

By 1870, the population had reached 4,326, with Irish immigrants representing nearly a quarter of that number. While farming was a viable occupation during most of the 19th century, Watertown's economic base was firmly rooted in manufacturing. The invention in Watertown of a paper bag-making machine revolutionized the packaging industry. Ready-made shirts were being sewn first in homes and then in the Hathaway factory, which also included a laundry and spawned Watertown's starch industry. Economic expansion and development of new industries reached its peak in the late-industrial period (1870-1915). Particularly successful enterprises included Hollingsworth and Whitney Paper Mills, Lewando's French Dyeing and Cleansing Establishment, Empire Laundry Machinery Company, Metropolitan Laundry, Warren Soap Manufactory, Barker and Crystal Springs Starch factories, Actna Woolen Mills, Hood Rubber Company, and the Stanley Motor Carriage Company. In addition, Watertown was the center of a thriving cattle trade, which occupied the Union Market Stockyards off Franklin and Walnuts Streets.

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By 1915, the population had quadrupled to 16,515 persons. Some of the growth was due to the arrival of street railways and the 1912 extension of the subway system from Boston to Cambridge, which made suburban life more attractive to Bostonians. But immigration patterns also made a substantial contribution to the population statistics as the ranks of the foreign born swelled in response to Watertown's ready supply of jobs. Irish and Italian immigrants were joined by waves of Armenians, who began arriving after the 1909 Adana Massacre in their homeland. Watertown remains an important center of Armenian culture within the New England region, supporting various Armenian churches, cultural institutions, and businesses.

The public school system in Watertown developed in concert with the booming economy and explosive population growth. By the mid-19th century, there were three school districts serving the east, west, and central sections of town, and civic leaders were discussing the need for a separate high school. It was built in 1853 on Common Street opposite the Burial Ground to serve the three upper grades. The building was damaged by fire in 1858, rebuilt, and reportedly incorporated into the present Phillips School building; now part of a complex containing school administration buildings, a senior center and the Watertown Council On Aging. In the 1890s, the town built a new grammar school on the land abutting the first high school on the north. Called the Francis School, it was also designed by Charles Brigham. The Francis School quickly became overcrowded, resulting in the building of the Hosmer School half a mile to the east on a site abutting that of the soon to be erected Old High School. When first constructed, the Old Watertown High School and adjacent Hosmer School stood alone in the newly laid out residential neighborhood. The modest two-family houses that characterize the present neighborhood were largely constructed during the first decade of the school's existence.

The decision to build the school was made at a particularly productive special town meeting, called on August 13, 1909. At the landmark meeting, Henry Clay Derby, a Watertown meat distributor, donated \$40,000 toward the erection of a new high school building as a "token of my affection for the Town in which I have lived nearly all of my life." Eugene N. Foss of Cohasset, later governor of Massachusetts, donated a 138,713 square foot plot of partly marshy land valued at \$15,000 to the cause. The accomplished architect Charles Brigham "offered to contribute the necessary plans and supervision of the building of the school."

A letter from Derby, read aloud at the meeting, explained that he had considered donating the funds for a new grammar school to serve the growing population in the southern section of Watertown, south of the Charles River, "... but now that an emergency has arisen, and it seems almost imperative that a new high school-house should be built, and also being much impressed with the unfortunate financial condition of the Town, I have thought it not unwise to modify to some degree my intention."

The land donated by Foss for the new high school had been a cattle pasture on the estate of Alvin Adams. After the death of Adams, trustees of his estate had subdivided the pasture into a conventional street grid, but the land remained undeveloped. Between 1904 and 1911 the estate was resurveyed and laid out with the present curvilinear street pattern, one block of which was donated by Foss to the town. The Foss tract was bound by the serpentine Boylston Street (W), curving Concord Road (S), and nearly straight Winthrop Street (since removed on the west) and Hancock

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Streets (also removed on the north, but now the location of the driveway in front of the school). Although the street pattern has changed, the boundaries of the existing parcel are similar to those of the Foss parcel. The rest of the subdivision was broken up into many small, irregularly shaped lots intended for residential use.

Charles Brigham (1841-1925), a Watertown native, was near the close of his long and prosperous career when he donated his design for Old Watertown High School. With fifty years of experience and numerous major commissions behind him, Brigham was nearly seventy. Born to Mary and John Brigham, a lumberman, Brigham was -- as a young man -- "single mindedly devoted to a future in architecture as a practical profession." As such, he was part of the generation that transformed the architectural profession from a hobby for gentlemen of means to a commercial enterprise. Charles married Rebecca Jordan in 1878. She died in 1910, and the couple had no children.

Brigham, who had attended Watertown public schools, had, in fact, been a member of the first graduating class (1857) of the Watertown's first high school on Common Street. A prominent Watertown citizen, he was a founder of the Watertown Historical Society and designer of the town seal. He served Watertown as a selectman, school committee member, water commissioner, and trustee of the public library. He was also a founder and president of the Watertown Cooperative Bank and a director of the Union Market National Bank. In addition, he was an early preservationist, helping to save Watertown's historic **Edmund Fowle House** (NR 1977, MHC #127) by moving it to his own land on Marshall Street.

After his graduation from high school in the late 1850s Brigham worked as a draftsman in the offices of Calvin Ryder. In the late 1850s or early 1860s he entered the firm of Bryant and Gilman; then the most prolific and nationally recognized Boston architectural office. During his employment with Bryant & Gilman, Brigham met his future partner of twenty years, the wealthy English-trained architect John Hubbard Sturgis. The notable partnership of Sturgis & Brigham (1866-1886) was influential in the introduction and popularization of Ruskinian Gothic concepts and forms in America through Boston's first Museum of Fine Arts in Copley Square (1876; demolished) and the **Church of The Advent** on Brimmer Street in Beacon Hill (1880, NR district 1966). After Sturgis returned to London, Brigham formed a partnership with John C. Spofford and then with Charles C. Coveney and Henry Bisbee. Most of Brigham's subsequent commissions were done under the auspices of these partnerships. Two of his "largest and most impressive architectural designs in Boston" include the extension of Bulfinch's Massachusetts State House (West Wing, 1899) and **The First Church of Christ Scientist Mother Church** (MHC #7520).

In addition to those famous commissions, Brigham designed many houses and fine buildings in Watertown including his own house (84 Garfield Street, 1890, MHC #156), the **Church of the Good Shepherd** (1888; MHC #150), the **Unitarian Parish House** (1889; MHC # 105), **Watertown Savings Bank** (1892; MHC # 54), and **Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church** (1912, MHC # 187). Brigham's firm also designed several notable high school buildings for other communities including the Renaissance Revival style **Needham High School**, (1896, MHC #39), and the Elizabethan Revival-style **Fairhaven High School** (1906, MHC #133, NR-1978), which is similar to the Old Watertown High School. The two schools, both of brick and limestone with slate-covered roofs and Flemish gables, differ significantly in plan and massing. While similar in size, the difference in construction costs for each school is

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striking. At Fairhaven, construction costs were estimated to range between \$500,000 and \$700,000, which was unusually high for the era. The building costs for Old Watertown High School totaled \$160,000. Both buildings are inspired by English designs of the early 17th-century Elizabethan period, which incorporated influences from Flanders into what was a transition from the Gothic to the Renaissance style. In addition to the Flemish gables, typical Elizabethan Revival features displayed at Old Watertown High School include the picturesque roofline, the symmetrical massing, strong horizontal belt courses, and crenelated parapets. Tudor-arched entries combined with classical Gibbs surrounds, and grouped mullioned windows with transoms enclosed by bold stone trim.

As Derby described in his letter read at the town meeting in 1909, the need for a new high school was pressing. The old Watertown High School on Common Street was filled beyond capacity, and even its corridors were serving as classroom space. Children were necessarily sent across the yard to the Francis Grammar School building for recitations and study period, and as a result, Watertown was losing students to neighboring towns.

In March 1910, a building committee--consisting of architect Arthur Gray, builder Chester Sprague, Charles Fitz, Joseph Keefe, Thomas Vahey and George Wright--submitted Brigham's plan and cost estimate for the proposed building. The Town immediately appropriated an additional \$100,000 to execute it. The committee soon found, however, that bids exceeded the appropriated funds for construction. "The plan however was so excellent in its design and in all of its details, that your committee were unanimous in their opinion that it would be better for the Town to increase its appropriation sufficient to carry into execution every detail of this plan, than to curtail or abridge it in any manner whatsoever.... \$20,000 will enable the committee to construct the building as designed, making it a first-class building in every respect." With the additional funds appropriated that November, there was a total of \$160,000 for construction costs.

Drawings were filed with Massachusetts Department of Public Safety on November 17th by architects Brigham, Coveney & Bisbee. The building permit (#891) was filed in Watertown on November 19, 1910, listing Charles Brigham of Brigham Coveney & Bisbee as architects and John W. Duff as builders. The address of the high school was Hancock Street, which is now reduced to a driveway in front of the school. Specifications for the brick and stone building were 164 feet long, 90 feet deep and 46 feet tall with a concrete foundation.

In February 1913, "after Washington birthday exercises, 219 pupils, carrying their books..., walked informally to the new building" from the former high school on Common Street half a mile away. Girls entered through the door on the right, and boys through the one on the left. Praising the new high school, one town official said, "Our high school, both in architectural beauty and in completeness of its equipment, is probably unsurpassed by any high school of its size in Massachusetts." (Hodges, p. 163).

At Common Street, the high school curriculum had been limited by spatial constraints. It had offered six tracks: Normal Preparatory Course, MIT Preparatory Course, College Scientific Preparatory Course, College Classical Preparatory Course, Commercial Course and a General Course. With the completion of the new Watertown High School, the school department was able to add new courses of instruction and a total of twenty-three classes. Programmatic changes, including a new emphasis on the education of girls and the immigrant population, were reflected in the arrangement and use of rooms.

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In his 1911 report, the superintendent of schools argued for improved women's education. He wrote: "The education of girls is always complicated by the fact that there is always a dual purpose in their pursuit of an education; first, more or less temporary employment, and second, ultimately, homemaking." As a result, the entire attic floor of the new Watertown High School was devoted to a course of instruction exclusively for girls -- Home Economics or Domestic Science. This new track included classes in sanitation and hygiene, bacteriology, biology, drawing, chemistry, physics, practical and scientific laundry work, first aid, home nursing, sewing, elementary dressmaking and millinery. Students made visits to the grocery store and other establishments, and planned a menu for a family. The facilities included a main kitchen (with 2 gas ranges and coal and gas stove combined), house kitchen, china closet, dining room and reception room. Dressmaking and millinery departments were on the right. The Domestic Science teacher was also responsible for the lunchroom, and it appears that the female pupils prepared lunches for the entire student body. A dumbwaiter led from the kitchens to the cafeteria and refrigerator in the basement.

Another important addition to the curriculum was a "well-rounded course in Physical Education" for all high school boys and girls. Previously, only those students who represented the school on athletic teams had benefited from Physical Education. Five periods of physical exercise over two weeks were intended to increase attention and increase interest in academic work. The new gymnasium, which occupied the bow-front section on the south elevation, was well equipped with "Swedish booms, traveling rings, dumb bells, etc." To the right of the gym were the girls' lavatories, showers, and wardrobe room with lockers. In front were forty-two dressing rooms and to the left were the boys' lavatories. Spectator galleries and the Physical Education office overlooked the gym and were accessible by spiral staircase.

The addition of Physical Education to the regular curriculum also resulted in the purchase of the present athletic field in front of Old Watertown High School on Mt. Auburn Street. Within a year of the completion of the school, the Chairman of the School Committee appealed to voters to purchase that plot as soon as possible, "as we realize that the price will never be so low as at the present." Until it was removed in the mid 1920s, a leg of Hancock Street crossed in front of the school and separated it from the playing field. The present driveway is a remnant of this street.

Another influence on the design of Old Watertown High School was a 1911 law that allowed school committees to "grant use of school buildings for entertainments and exercises of general interest and value to the community." The assembly hall, home economics rooms, and classrooms were regularly used by the Evening School. A rudimentary Evening School, largely serving Watertown's Armenian and Italian population, had been offered in the Hosmer school prior to the construction of the Old High School. The larger, better equipped Old Watertown High School allowed the town to open the school to other members of the community "who have been denied the privileges of a high school education." In the first semester, five rooms were used for the "elementary classes, composed entirely of our 'New Americans,' four rooms for commercial classes, two rooms for the millinery department and the whole upper floor for the work in dressmaking and cooking." Interest and progress in the Evening School was "attributable in large measure to the influence of the beautiful, comfortable and well-lighted rooms," as well as to the enthusiasm of the teachers.

In the assembly hall/auditorium at the front of the building, the Evening School offered a series of illustrated lectures, particularly adapted for the Armenian and Italian people of Watertown. The hall, finished in a pale pink,

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetOld Watertown High School
Watertown (Middlesex), MASection number 8 Page 6

accommodated 700. The large stage "will easily seat all pupils of the high school," which totaled 248 in the first year. The Massachusetts State Seal was displayed on the wall to the right of the stage, with the seal of the United States displayed on the wall to the left. Despite the new emphasis on industrial and domestic education, aspiration toward higher education was the predominant message of the assembly hall, where each of the fifteen windows displayed the seal of a New England college. Over the stage was Principal Frank Whitney's pet motto, "Carpe Diem."

Regular classrooms occupied the rest of the first and second floors, with laboratories and drawing rooms on the third floor. Each room, with oak-stained woodwork, was equipped with a "good-sized book case" and approximately forty-two seats. A telephone system connected all rooms, and drinking fountains were supplied in the corridors. The first floor held classrooms for math (Room 5), French (6), German (7), Latin (4), and recitation (3). The principal's office and an office and reception hall for the two male teachers were also located on the first floor. The principal's office held a large vault with shelves of sheet iron and a large clock that regulated time throughout the building.

The second floor held classrooms for English (room 8), commercial geography (9), bookkeeping (11), shorthand (13), and typewriting (12). On two sides of the commercial geography room were cases displaying agricultural objects. The bookkeeping room, a large space overlooking Mt. Auburn Street, included a counting desk, filing cabinet, and movable blackboards. Also located on the second floor were the stock room, girls' lavatory, infirmary, library, recitation room, study room, and a teachers' room, presumably for the eleven female teachers.

The third floor held classrooms and laboratories for drawing and the sciences including freehand drawing (20), mechanical drawing (21), biology (22), lecture room (18), physics (16), chemistry (17) and a photograph room. Mr. Robinson, the physics teacher, had his office in the rear of the lecture room.

The increasing population of Watertown with corresponding increases in high school enrollment affected the structure of the school system as a whole. On the first day of the 1913 school year, the ninth grade was moved to the high school from its previous location at the elementary school. In a decision that is typical of other school districts of the period, elementary schools began to serve grades one through eight, and high schools incorporated a four year course of study starting with grade nine. Old Watertown High School also provided temporary space for the eighth grade in basement Room . In 1915, "The Six and Six Plan" stipulating six years of grammar school, three of junior high, and three of senior high, was considered in Watertown. However, it was not until 1922 that the first junior high school in Watertown opened as the **West Junior High** (MHC #329). That same year, a committee was appointed to acquire land for a new, centrally-located high school with a capacity of 800.

Within less than ten years of its construction, attendance in the Brigham-designed building had more than doubled. The surrounding neighborhood, platted but undeveloped in 1911, had been transformed in the intervening years by a surge of construction of modest single-and two-family houses. There were complaints about the school's narrow interior corridors, limited locker space, and the small lunchroom with no daylight. As arrangements were made for the construction of a new senior high building, high school classes were relegated to the three upper floors, while junior high classes took over the first floor and basement.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****Old Watertown High School
Watertown (Middlesex), MA**Section number 8 Page 7

In September 1925, the third and present Watertown High School, designed by A. Houston Burr, opened nearer the center of town on Columbia Street, a block away from the first Watertown High School on Common Street. At the opening exercises "this 1926 model" was described as if it were an automobile --"air-washed, vacuum cleaned, and equipped with 4-wheel brakes." This new building was in decided contrast to the picturesque Elizabethan Revival-style structure of the previous decade.

With the opening of the new high school, the Brigham-designed building became the East Junior High School and eventually the Middle School East. In 1954, the school was enlarged with a modern addition designed by Coletti Brothers. Drastically different in design, fenestration and massing, it housed a new gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria and some small rooms in a two-story connector. The old Hosmer School, to the east, was demolished ca. 1960 to be replaced on the same site by a new Hosmer School. In the late 1980s, the Brigham-designed Old Watertown High School (by then the East Junior High) was closed due to low enrollment. Seventh and eighth graders were consolidated at the Middle School and ninth graders were incorporated into the existing high school. The gym, auditorium, and cafeteria of the 1954 addition became part of the Hosmer School. The connector was demolished as part of the current rehabilitation. Old Watertown High School stood vacant until its recent conversion to an assisted living facility called Brigham House. The adaptive reuse project enables this noble edifice to continue to serve the public, enhance the streetscape, and delight passersby for generations to come.

(end)

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Continuation Sheet

Old Watertown High School
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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Floyd, Margaret Henderson. "A Terra Cotta Cornerstone for Copley Square: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1870-1876, by Sturgis and Brigham. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, May 1973.

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Hodges, Maud deLeigh. "One Hundred Years of Watertown High School, 1953." TMs. Watertown Free Public Library.

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Placzek, Adolph K., ed. *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*. New York, 1982. S.v. "Charles Brigham." by Margaret Henderson Floyd.

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Withey, Henry F. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., 1970. S.v. "Charles Brigham."

Maps and Atlases

Bailey's Birds Eye Map of Watertown. 1879

Beers Atlas of Watertown. 1874

Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Watertown, Massachusetts, 1904, 1911, 1916, 1923, 1928, 1951, 1971.

(continued)

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Old Watertown High School
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Stadley, Atlas of Watertown. 1898.

Walker, Atlas of Watertown. 1889

Drawings

Brigham, Coveney and Brisbee, *Plans for Watertown High School*, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Public Safety Archive, 1910.

Coletti Brothers, *Plans for Additions and Alterations to Existing East Junior High School*, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Public Safety Archive, 1954.

(end)

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Old Watertown High School
Watertown (Middlesex), MA

Section number 10 Page 1

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of Old Watertown High School at 341 Mount Auburn Street are those recorded as follows on the current lease to the property:

A certain parcel of land situated in the City of Watertown, Middlesex County Massachusetts, shown on a plan entitled "ALTA Plan of Lease Parcel in Watertown, MA, located at 341 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown, Massachusetts Prepared for BARAN Partners, LLC dated February 20, 2002, by SITEC, Inc., 12 Welby Road, New Bedford, MA 02745" and more particularly described thereon as follows:

Beginning at a point, which is the northeasterly corner of the parcel shown as the Lease Parcel,

Thence S 17° 12' 16" W, a distance of 218.23 feet more or less to a corner,

Thence N 89° 13' 59" W, a distance of 8.94 feet to a point of curvature,

Thence along a curve turning to the right, having a radius of 226.80 feet, a distance of 407.02 feet to a point to curvature,

Thence, along a curve turning to the right, having a radius of 537.90 feet, a distance of 16.07 feet to a corner,

Thence, S 73° 04' 59" E, a distance of 299.73 feet to the point of beginning.

Containing 57,289 square feet, or 1.32 acres more or less.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel upon which the Old Watertown High School presently stands and closely follows the original site of the building.

(end)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Old Watertown High School
Watertown (Middlesex), MA**

Section number photos Page 1

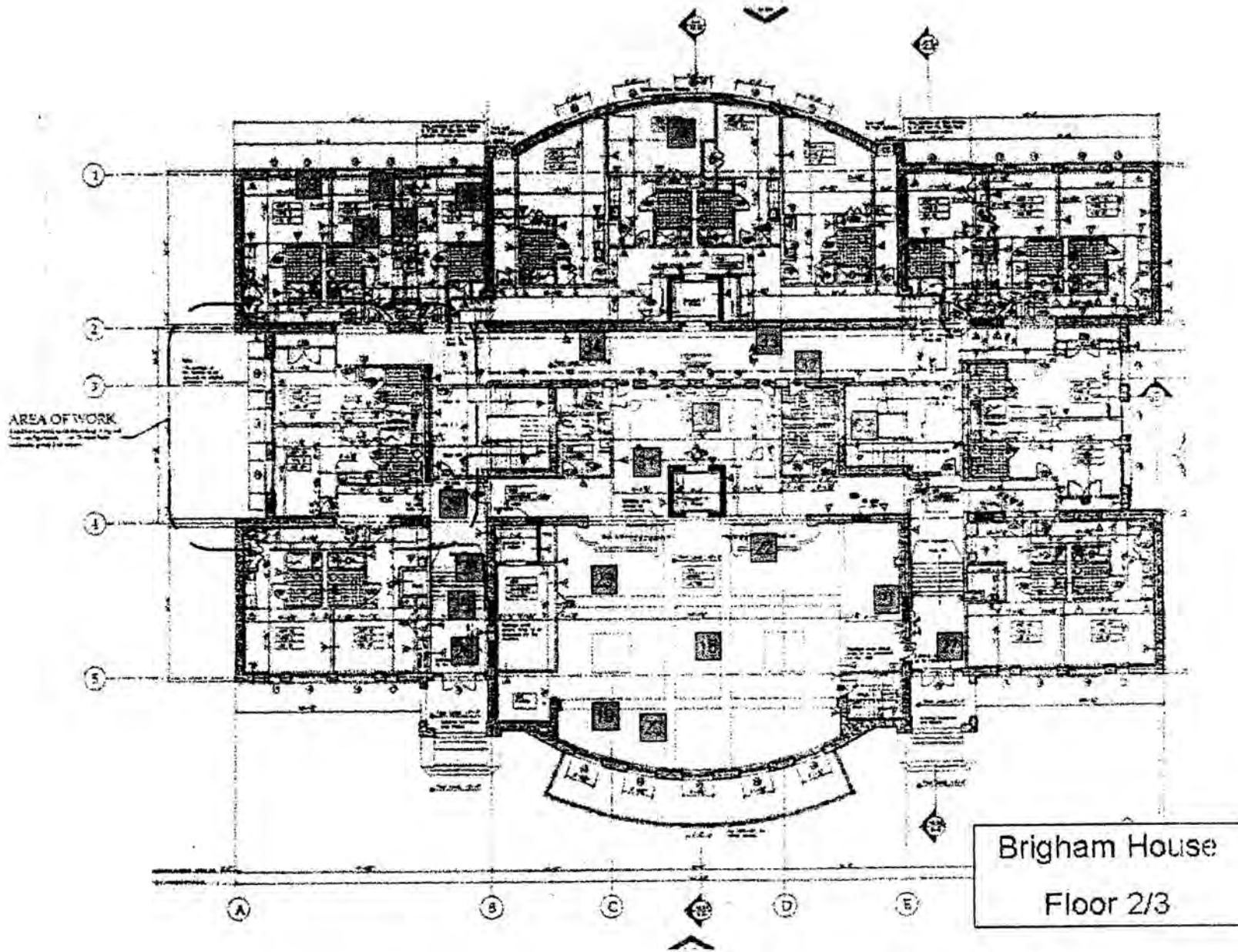
PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Looking south, since-demolished school building to left.
2. Looking southwest
3. Looking northwest, south and east elevations
4. Interior, present dining room, former auditorium
5. Looking south, north elevation
6. Detail, detail of front (north) portico and bow front at former auditorium
7. Looking east, west and south elevations
8. Looking northeast, south and west facades
9. Detail, bow front of former gymnasium, looking north
10. Detail, Dutch gables and brick vent stacks, looking north`

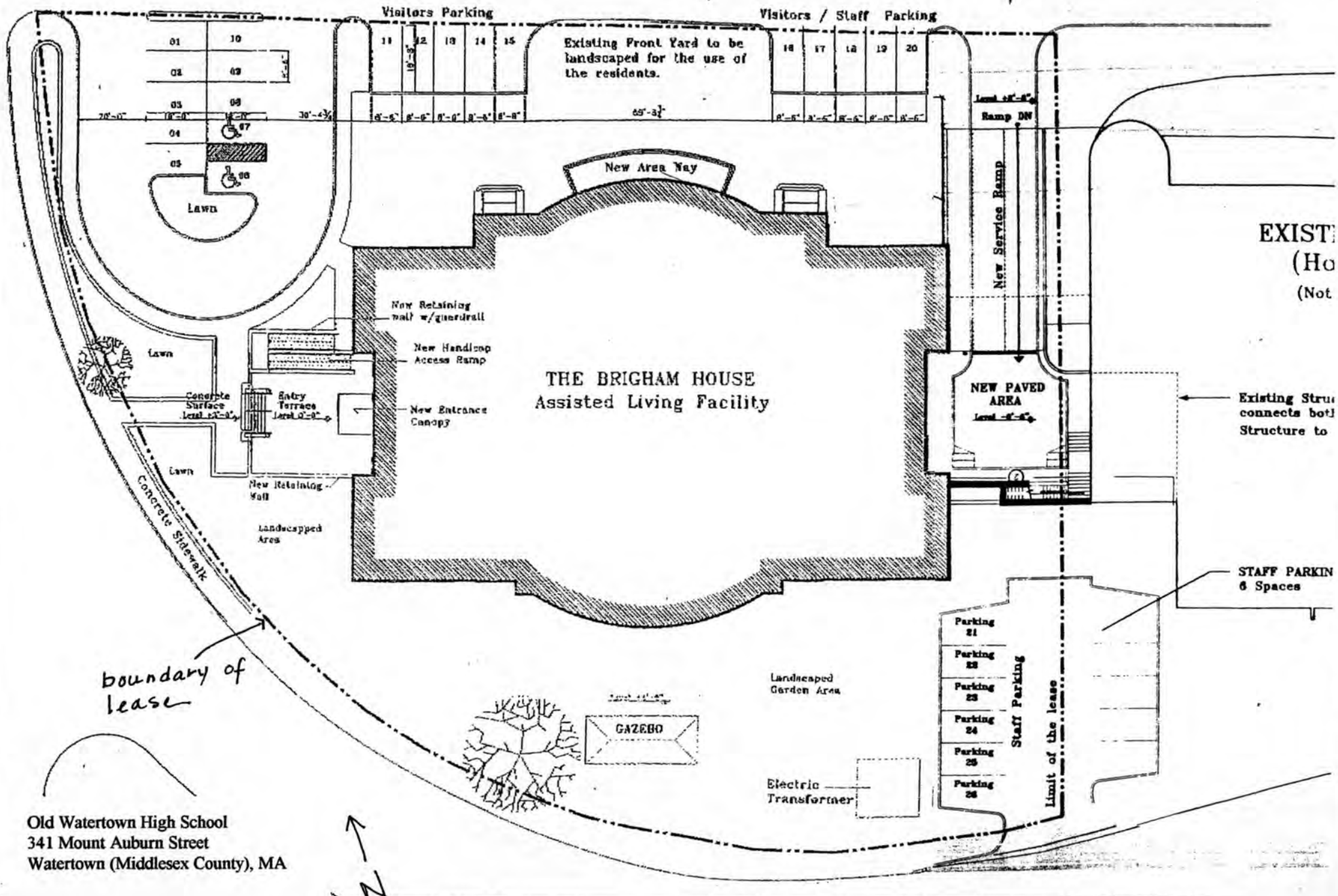
Photographs taken by Leslie Donovan, Tremont Preservation Services

Date: May 2002, June 2005

Negatives with Tremont Preservation Services.



Floor Plan 2/3
 Old Watertown High School
 341 Mount Auburn Street
 Watertown, MA



Visitors Parking

Visitors / Staff Parking

Existing Front Yard to be landscaped for the use of the residents.

New Area Way

THE BRIGHAM HOUSE
Assisted Living Facility

NEW PAVED AREA

GAZEBO

Electric Transformer

Parking 21
Parking 22
Parking 23
Parking 24
Parking 25
Parking 26

Staff Parking

Limit of the lease

EXISTING
(House)
(Not)

Existing Structure connects both
Structure to

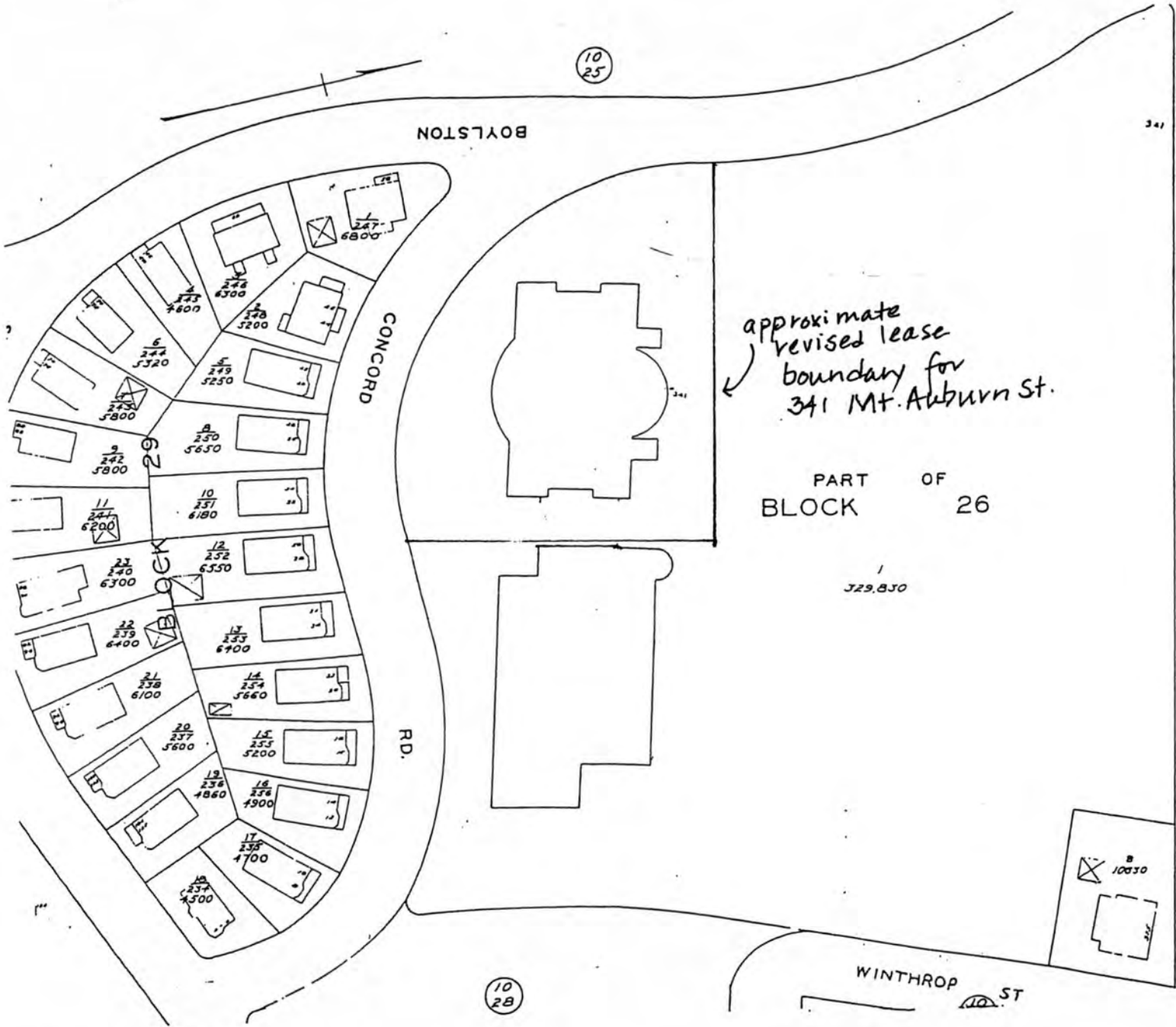
STAFF PARKING
6 Spaces

boundary of lease

Old Watertown High School
341 Mount Auburn Street
Watertown (Middlesex County), MA



SECTION 10
BLOCKS 26-----29



approximate revised lease boundary for 341 Mt. Auburn St.

PART OF BLOCK 26

329,830

MT. AUBURN STREET

Revised To January 1, 1969

12 A

Old Watertown High School
341 Mount Auburn Street
Watertown (Middlesex County), MA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Watertown High School, Old

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MASSACHUSETTS, Middlesex

DATE RECEIVED: 8/10/06 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/25/06
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/09/06 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/23/06
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 06000860

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 9/22/2006 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*Historically and architecturally significant early 20th century
Public School building*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A&C

REVIEWER Patrick Andrus

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 9/22/2006

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.



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn Street
Watertown, MA
Photo #1



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #2



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #3



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #4



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo # 5



341
MOUNT
AUBURN
STREET

Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #6



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #7



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #8



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #9



Old Watertown High School
341 Mt. Auburn St.
Watertown, MA
Photo #10



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

August 9, 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:

Old Watertown High School, 341 Mt. Auburn St., Watertown (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.

Note: Watertown assessor's maps are in the process of being updated, reflecting changes in the immediate vicinity of the Old High School. When we receive the new versions, they will be forwarded to the National Register office for insertion into the file.

One letter of support has been received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsy Friedberg".

Betsy Friedberg
National Register Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission

enclosure

cc: Leslie Donovan, consultant
Clyde Younger, Town Council
Roger Erickson, Watertown Historical Commission
John B. Hawes, Jr., Planning Board

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Town of Watertown
Administration Building
149 Main Street
Watertown, Massachusetts 02472
617.972.6426 tel.
617.972.6484 fax.

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Roberta Lane, Vice-Chairperson
Donald Berg
J.B. Jones
Henrietta Light
Mury O'Looney
Marilynne Roach

Christopher Hayward
Preservation Agent

Daphne Collins
Administrative Assistant

June 14, 2006

Ms. Brona Simon
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Acting Executive Director
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Re: National Register Nomination
341 Mount Auburn Street, Watertown

Dear Ms. Simon:

Thank you for allowing the Watertown Historical Commission the opportunity to provide input on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's decision of whether to nominate 341 Mount Auburn Street to the National Register of Historic Places. We regret that we cannot attend the meeting in person.

The Watertown Historical Commission is charged by the Town Council for the preservation, protection and development of the historical and archeological assets of the town, pursuant to G.L. c.40, §8D. In addition, since 341 Mount Auburn Street is a building owned by the Town of Watertown, we are uniquely situated to provide technical advice on its historic and architectural nature.

The Watertown Historical Commission strongly supports nominating this important building to the National Register. It is our opinion that this nomination satisfies both Criteria B and C for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The former high school satisfies Criterion B because it is associated with architect Charles A. Brigham, a significant person to the town. Mr. Brigham was a native son of Watertown, educated in our schools and heavily involved in the life of the town. He served as Selectman, a member of the School Committee, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library for more than thirty years (1889-1922). He was also Director of the Union Market National Bank, the first President of the Watertown Cooperative Bank, a long-time member of the Watertown Historical Society and even served on the town's Water Commission from 1900-22. Some of his service to the town was very high-profile and yet some of it was also very inconspicuous and hints at Mr. Brigham's commitment to the town.

Mr. Brigham was instrumental in the preservation of the Edmund Fowle House and contributed his design services to the First Parish Church for the former Parish House (now the church). He also donated plans for a high school building (later the East Junior High School, and presently "Brigham House" an assisted living facility), which is the subject of this current hearing. He also designed the Watertown town seal.

He was thoroughly a native son of Watertown who gave back to his town tremendously and without cost. The building at 341 Mount Auburn Street exemplifies his magnanimous relationship to the town: donating his time and energy for public betterment. And it is this value which links Mr. Brigham to the building at 341 Mount Auburn Street.

The building also satisfies Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places because it is the work of a master, possesses high artistic values and retains its integrity of location, design, setting and materials.

Mr. Brigham is best known as an innovative architect whose work initiated fusion of the complex eclectic references of the English Queen Anne revival with American colonial revival design. The resulting New England houses of the 1880s by Brigham and other Boston architects defined the shingle style in one of the most original and distinguished epochs of American architectural history, from which other notable architects, such as Henry Hobson Richardson, emerged.

Mr. Brigham is also known as architect who designed a number of important buildings, including a wing on the Massachusetts State House, the Maine State House, the Christian Science Church in Boston, many mansions as far west as California (Redlands, the Pacific home of Albert C. Burrage) and as far south as Valparaiso in Chile, and also in the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Fairhaven, Massachusetts as well as public buildings in these cities.

Mr. Brigham designed Museum of Fine Arts, in Copley Square, introducing the use of terra-cotta to building structures in the United States (demolished in 1909); Church of the Advent, on Brimmer Street, Boston; YMCA at the corner of Boylston and Berkeley Streets; the Laconia Public Library, Laconia, New Hampshire; and New Bedford Institution for Savings among others. Interestingly, Brigham even designing subway stations in Boston, including the now demolished Scollay Square/Adams Square station as well as the Stoughton Railroad Station in a Richardsonian manner in 1887.

Mr. Brigham also designed a number of residential buildings in Newport, Rhode Island and Boston's Back Bay, including Albert C. Burrage's residence in Boston, introducing the ornate French Chateausque style to a typically staid New England.

Mr. Brigham designed St. Mark's Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts, the Coddington School in Quincy, Massachusetts, a significant number of public buildings in Fairhaven, including the Elizabethian-influenced high school, complete with gargoyles, Millicent Library, Unitarian Church, town hall and Tabitha Inn. In Fairhaven, Brigham also designed the spacious country mansion of Henry H. Rogers.

The Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System lists 71 buildings designed by Brigham. The Watertown Historical Commission has identified more than 40 buildings in Watertown that were designed by Brigham.

The former high school also satisfies Criterion C because the building possesses high artistic values and retains its integrity of location, design, setting and materials.

The building is an Elizabethan-inspired design, with many elements of the English Gothic Collegiate style and touches of French Chateausque. The building maintains the symmetrical massing that is characteristic of the Elizabethan style, including the symmetrically projecting wings. The massing is also a late manifestation of the symmetrical Chateausque in the United States, which after World War I, were generally asymmetrical.

The Gothic elements include castellated parapets that crown the projecting wings, a large central block extending upward uninterrupted through the cornice into shaped parapets with cement vergeboards inset, steeply pitched roof and various cast cement trim used for the window (some quoining) and door surrounds.

The Chateausque elements mimic many of the Gothic, including the window quoins, pointed dormers with pinnacles, steeply pitched roof and large central block extending upward uninterrupted through the cornice and window hood molds with label stops.

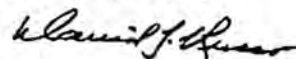
The choice and use of these varied architectural elements in this compact frame represent an ingenious creation that, in a concrete way, emphasizes the sacredness and importance of education. The coherent fusion of varied (often seemingly contradictory) architectural elements that is present here is, indeed, a hallmark of Mr. Brigham's work.

Importantly, the building also retains integrity of location, design, setting and materials. Originally, the building was set on a large plot of land, approximately seven acres. Since then, a number of other school buildings have been built to the east, including one that connected to subject building. However, the building remains unobstructed on all other sides and retains an important measure of space around it, as it was originally designed.

The connector building that attached the subject building to other buildings in the complex has been demolished and the building stands alone again, providing the building with its original spatial integrity. Indeed, except for the doors and several windows, the building retains all of its architectural integrity of design and materials.

In summary, we believe that 341 Mount Auburn Street satisfies the relevant and necessary criteria to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and we therefore respectfully request that the Massachusetts Historical Commission nominate the building for the National Register.

Very truly yours,



David J. Russo, J.D.
Chairperson



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth
Massachusetts Historical Commission

October 6, 2006

Mr. Patrick Andrus
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street, N.W. 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005



Re: Old Watertown High School, Watertown (Middlesex), MA

Dear Patrick:

Enclosed please find a revised copy of the photography page for the Old Watertown High School NR nomination, reflecting the additional information omitted from the original copy. Please replace this page in the Park Service's file.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Philip Bergen".

Philip Bergen
Preservation Planner