Form 10-300

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

3. CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY (Check One)
- District
- Site
- Building
- Structure
- Object
- Historic
- National
- State
- County
- Local

OWNERSHIP
- Public
- Private
- Both

PUBLIC ACQUISITION:
- In Process
- Being Considered

STATUS
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- Yes:
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME: Harvard University
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: Cambridge
STATE: Massachusetts

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

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
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

93
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 mediæval 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.
Designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and erected in 1878-80 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.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

OR LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 ACRE

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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

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

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE CODE: D. C.

12. STATE LIASON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name ________________________________

Title ________________________________

Date ________________________________

13. NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date ________________________________

ATTEST: ________________________________

Keeper of The National Register

Date ________________________________
9. Major Bibliographical References  


