

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

For HCRS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received DEC 8 1991

date entered JAN 17 1992

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

**1. Name**

historic VARNEY SCHOOL

and/or common VARNEY SCHOOL

**2. Location**

street & number 84 Varney Street not for publication

city, town Manchester vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_ first \_\_\_\_\_

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Manchester

street & number City Hall; Elm Street

city, town Manchester, vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state New Hampshire

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds  
Hillsborough County Courthouse

street & number PO Box #370; 19 Temple Street

city, town Nashua, state New Hampshire

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 7. Description

---

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                              | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input 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 Varney School occupies a hillside site, south of the Piscataquog River, at the south-east corner of Bowman and Varney Streets. The schoolhouse is built of red brick and trimmed with rock-faced granite throughout. The entire structure rests on a high basement which is capped by a granite plinth; at the top of the second story, a stepped brick cornice extends around the building. Fenestration is asymmetrical except for the north and south elevations. Now covered with plywood, windows vary by story; except as noted, basement windows contain 3/3 sash, first and second story windows contain 9/2 sash and dormers contain paired 6/6 sash. All window surrounds except dormers, have granite lintels and sills; most windows on the north, east and west elevations have decorative console blocks supporting their lintels.

The building has a complex plan which consists of a 2½ story main building (north) and a two-story rear wing (south). Built in 1890 the main building has a cross plan with shallow east and west wings and is enclosed by a slate-covered hip roof with two dormers on each elevation except the south. The facade (north) is symmetrical about a central pavilion which rises from a wide granite arch at the first story to four 6/1 windows at both the second and third stories. Above the pavilion's second story is a wood-panelled gable with a semi-circular light; above the gable is a square-plan bell tower set on a slate-covered base and enclosed by a high hip roof with a copper finial. The landing of the bell tower is framed by square columns and Tuscan columns set in antis. The main entry set in a recessed porch is at the first story of the pavilion and consists of panelled doors framed by pilaster, wood panelling, sidelights and transoms. Flanking the pavilion at each story are two windows; these windows are separated by a panel of raised brick between the lintels of the first story and the sills of the second. At the attic are two slate-covered dormers, one on each side of the pavilion. Dormers have half hip roofs trimmed with copper crestings.

The east and west elevations of the main building are mirror images of each other. Moving north to south, each contains a group of four windows per story on the main body of the building, and four per story on the projecting wings. The west wing contains a wood-frame porch (ca 1900) in its southern most basement bay. South of the wings, each elevation contains a 2½ story light, the base of which contains a panelled door and hood on brackets. The rear (south) elevation of the main building is attached to the rear wing at the first two stories, above the rear wing the south elevation has a dormer with a central chimney and panelled gable.

The rear wing (south) is a two-story structure; its first story was built in 1890 and the second story was added in 1914-1915. This wing is enclosed by a flat roof surrounded by a low brick parapet. Extending around its elevations above the first story are two projecting courses of brick, a remnant of the wing's original cornice. Side elevations (east and west) contain four windows per story. The rear elevation (south) is symmetrical about paired oversized windows flanked by four additional windows per story.

Alterations to the building have been few, most of which are easily reversible. All windows have been covered by plywood to protect against vandalism. Iron fire escapes have been added to the east, south and west elevations (two each). Landscaping of the property has been altered both by the paving of former play areas and by the replacement of the original fieldstone retaining wall along Varney and Bowman Streets with a low wall of rock-faced granite slabs (ca 1900?). Originally the school's front door (north) was approached by a curved path which entered the property near the lot's northeast corner and from a mid-point in the lot's Bowman Street frontage. This curved path has been partially replaced by a straight path extending from the building's front door to granite steps near the center of the lot's Varney Street frontage.

## 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1890, 1914–1915      **Builder/Architect** Frederick W. Stickney, Architect (1890)

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Varney School possesses historical significance both as a well-preserved example of late-Victorian school architecture and for its use until recently as a grammar school.

Standing on a site overlooking the Piscataquog River, the Varney School was built in response to the residential development of West Manchester (formerly Piscataquog Village) in the 1880s - 1890s. Early in 1889, the City of Manchester established a committee to select a site for a new "West Side Grammar School". In May of the same year, the Varney School lot was purchased for \$6,700 and existing buildings were moved off the property. Plans for the new building were prepared by Frederick W. Stickney of Lowell, Massachusetts, a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who had an extensive architectural practice in Lowell. Although ground was broken for the foundation on November 15, 1889, construction of the school did not begin until the winter of 1890 and was not completed until the fall of 1890. The new school was dedicated on December 26, 1890 at which time it was praised by local newspapers as being "without doubt the most elegant and complete grammar school in the State." Other commentators praised the healthfulness of the site, which amply satisfied Victorian concerns with proper drainage and ventilation.

At the time of its completion, the building appeared nearly as it does today, except that its rear wing was then only one-story high with a pitched roof. The building's interior contained six classrooms at the first story, two classrooms and meeting hall at the second story and unfinished space for future expansion in the attic and basement. In addition, the building had been planned with the idea that a full second story would be added to the rear wing when additional space was needed, although this enlargement was not made until 1914 - 1915. In its present good condition, the school preserves all of its original decorative details and a plan which is characteristic of Victorian school building.

The building was named in honor of David Blake Varney, mayor of Manchester (1889 - 1890 & 1894 - 1895), who had served as the chairman of the school's building committee. In addition to serving two terms as mayor, Varney achieved local prominence as the superintendant of the Amoskeag Company's locomotive shop, treasurer of the Forsaith Machine Company, director of the Amoskeag National Bank and representative from Manchester to the state legislature.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Clarke, John B. Manchester: A Brief Record of its Past and a Picture of its Present.  
 Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1875.  
 Mirror & American (newspaper) Nov. 15, 1889; Nov. 16, 1889; Feb. 12, 1890; Dec. 27, 1890;  
 Dec. 31, 1890.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 57,128 sq. ft.  
 Quadrangle name Manchester South, N.H.

AGENCE NOT VERIFIED  
 UTM NOT VERIFIED  
 Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

**UMT References**

|   |                   |   |  |   |      |         |          |
|---|-------------------|---|--|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | <u>1</u> <u>9</u> | <u>2</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> | <u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u> | B |      |         |          |
|   | Zone              | Easting   | Northing   |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C |                   |   |  | D |      |         |          |
| E |                   |   |  | F |      |         |          |
| G |                   |   |  | H |      |         |          |

**Verbal boundary description and justification:** The nominated property includes only that property shown as Lot #2 on Manchester Assessors' Map #659; the boundaries of this lot correspond to those of the school house lot purchased for the Varney School by the City of Manchester in 1889.

**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 B.R. Pfeiffer

organization Architectural Conservation Trust date June 1981

street & number 45 School Street telephone (617) 523-8678

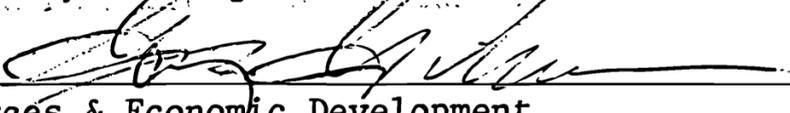
city or town Boston, state Massachusetts 02108

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

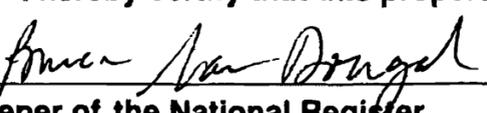
national  state  local

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature   
 Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date December 2, 1981

**For HCRS use only**

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

 date 1/11/82  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

FOR HCRS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED DEC 9 1981  
DATE ENTERED JAN 14 1982

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

