

**The City of Newton:
A Survey and Inventory
of its Historical Records**

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Introduction & Goals of this Study:

It has been a great pleasure to conduct this survey and inventory of the City of Newton's historical records. Over the past few months, I have visited departments throughout the city meeting with staff to assess the extent and condition of historical records in the City's possession. I want to thank all of the people who generously gave of their time so this report would be as complete as possible. I hope that this report will assist the City of Newton to better understand the scope, content, condition, location and importance of the historical materials in its possession.

Method of Survey

City Departments were visited during June, July, August and September of 2011 to assess the condition of each storage area and the historical records held by the departments. An inventory form and database were created. (The database, in Excel, is submitted with this report.) Existing finding aids (including the databases maintained by the Clerks Office and the archivist at the Jackson Homestead, and the catalog at the Newton Free Library) were analyzed for information about which materials had already been collected.

Due to storage conditions in many departments, it was often not possible to collect information at the series level. In some units, materials were stacked so high--or were on top of file cabinets and shelving units, it was not possible to inventory them. In some cases, moving records would have disturbed cartons or volumes that were very dirty and showed evidence of mold infestation. Departmental employees who assisted me often noted they could not spend much time in these areas without experiencing allergic symptoms including sneezing and breathing difficulties. When items could not be inventoried at the series level, a summary figure for all materials in a particular storage area was estimated and is included in both the Departmental Summaries section of this report and in the database.

The State's Records Retention Schedules for Municipalities was the starting point for evaluating each department's historical materials- see: www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcpdf/MA_Municipal_Records_Retention_Manual.pdf) All records on these schedules listed as "permanent" have been deemed to have long term administrative or historical value. Many records are not required to be kept this long and may be destroyed but do not have to be if a municipality believes they have historical value. An example of this kind of record might be the Newton Conservation Commission's administrative files, which date from the late 1950s. Although they are mostly correspondence files--and thus do not have to be kept permanently--they document an important part of the City's history. At the end of their mandated retention period, they should be evaluated and those with historical value should be retained. There are many other examples of records like these. One suggestion would be to form a Committee of those interested in the preservation of the City's history to set guidelines for which materials should be preserved.

Discussion

While this report highlights many areas that need improvement if Newton's historical records are to be preserved, recent projects also demonstrate what is possible and can serve as models. When the Newton Free Library was dedicated in 1991, archival storage space was built and the compact shelving and vault there provide some of the most secure storage in the City. More recently, the City Clerk's Office has retrofitted its vault on the first floor of City Hall with compact shelving that has greatly increased its storage space. Records stored there are in excellent condition. They have been rebound, and are stored horizontally to protect their bindings. Other materials are stored in appropriate archival boxes and enclosures. There are several other vaults in City Hall that might be retrofitted in similar fashion. These vaults provide secure storage for permanent materials although it is not possible to install a fire suppression systems in them. The new Newton North High School was built with an an archives storage room which is secure, climate controlled and large enough to contain all of the school's historical materials.



Above: two views of the Clerk's vault in City Hall, which has been fitted with compact shelving to expand the storage space. Next page--a view of the new shelving units in North North High School's archives room where the school's newspapers are stored.



STORAGE AREAS:

Archival materials are stored in many locations in the City of Newton. Records management in the City of Newton is generally de-centralized, except that the City Clerk's Office and --more recently--the Information Technology Department--work with departments, the former to collect records that are historical and the latter to work on scanning and reformatting projects. Generally, however, each department is responsible for maintaining its records, reformatting them and applying to the Secretary of State's Municipal Records Division for destruction permission. The Police, Fire Dept. Schools, Health and Human Services, and Parks and Recreation and Public Buildings departments have their own storage areas. The majority of historical records are stored in the City Archives and Newtonian collections at the Newton Free Library, in the storage room of the Jackson Homestead, and at various locations within City Hall. All of these locations are currently full or almost full. The City Archives cannot accept any more records.

Unfortunately, with the exception of the Newton Free Library, several vaults in City Hall, and the archives room at Newton North High School, none of these storage areas were built to house archives. The State publishes bulletins with specifications for constructing and maintaining records storage areas (Technical Bulletin 1, *Performance Standards of Safes and Vaults* and SPR Bulletin 3-92 *Maintenance of Records Storage Areas*), both available on the Secretary of State's website. Except for the areas already noted, none of the storage areas examined meet these guidelines. Few have climate control are fire resistant, or have adequate security. This has had a negative impact upon many of the records, and those in the basement of City Hall are exceptionally dirty and show evidence of mold infestation.

Water Damage and Mold

Water damage was observed throughout the storage rooms in the City Hall, from the basement to the second floor. Approximately a year ago, after two heavy, consecutive rainstorms, the water table rose and offices and storage rooms in the basement of City Hall were inundated. Offices were evacuated for over four months while the damaged areas were repaired. Some storage areas were affected and many records had to be destroyed. Some of the records destroyed in the flood were permanent ones. While many areas were cleaned extensively, in others record cartons still sit on the floor showing evidence of past water damage.

Water damage was also observed on the first floor, particularly in rooms used for by Veteran's services and the Licensing Board; on the second floor in the storage areas used by the Solicitor's Office (the room behind the Aldermanic Chambers; and in the Ladies' Room opposite Room 214.) In addition, standing water was observed in the Boiler Room (on the floor) and in a sink in a storage room in the basement used by the Planning Department.

Although portions of the basement are air conditioned, there is no climate control. A vent pipe is uncovered in the Engineer's "cage" in the basement, and vermin or insects could easily enter the area, and infect not only that area but adjacent ones. Many records stored in the basement and other areas have obviously sat on shelves uncovered for long periods of time and are extremely dirty. Many show evidence not only of dirt but of mold. It is difficult to eradicate the latter and very likely that a mold could bloom and spread with the environmental conditions observed.



Water damage in City Hall: Above, standing water in the boiler room; at right, in a room used by Veteran's Services, plaster has fallen from a water-damaged area.



Damage was observed in other areas used to store records. The Solicitor's Office uses a shelf in the ladies room opposite its office; the ceiling there shows past evidence of water damage. (Below, left.) The walls and ceiling of the Inspectional Services offices have also been damaged by leaking water (Below, right.)



In early September, when Hurricane Irene threatened to hit New England, areas in the basement were sandbagged so that water would not reach the hallways. While the basement did not flood, the roof above the storage room used by the Solicitor's Office (behind the Aldermen's Chambers) did leak resulting in damage to record cartons stored there.



Staffing:

Despite storage conditions that can only be described as challenging, records inspected were usually meticulously maintained. All departmental personnel interviewed knew about the the State's Retention Schedules. One concern is the number of long-term employees who are planning to retire in the near future. These staff often expressed the fear the the when they leave the records will not be maintained as they have done, that records will be destroyed too soon (as mentioned the State's Retention Schedules give a minimum time records must be kept) and that finding aids are not in place so that records can be easily located. Many departments would like to transfer records to the City's Archives but have not been able to do so because the Archives is full.

Some employees have made exceptional efforts to preserve the history of their departments. Captain Mark Roche of the Fire Department, for example, maintains the museum at Fire Department Headquarters, and has worked to collect records and artifacts that would otherwise have been discarded. Dave Norton and other Inspectional Services employees are working to create an index to the over 100,000 sets of plans the department has in its basement storage room.

Finding Aids:

The Clerk's Office, the Jackson Homestead and the Newton Free Library all have finding aids to the archival records they hold. Unfortunately, there is no one place where a person researching Newton's history can locate all of these, and it takes a skilled researcher to find the materials held by these organizations. The Clerk's Office and the Jackson Homestead have each created databases; the Newton Free Library does collection-level cataloging for most of its archival records with the exception that artifacts are in a separate database; also many older City reports have been catalogued at the item level. At the Jackson Homestead, many collections have not been processed and are listed, as such, on their database.

The finding aids do show how decentralized record keeping is in Newton. One example is the Engineering Department's collection of glass plate negatives. The Jackson Homestead has copies, arranged in binders. The City Archives has the microfilm created when the glass plates were copied. The original glass plates themselves are on shelves in the Engineer's storage area in the basement of City Hall. While they are in photographic enclosures, they are not in boxes and could easily fall on the floor and be broken.

The City's website offers a wealth of information to the researcher, however this is not collected in one place. Several departments post minutes (which are permanent records) and others digital maps and other historical materials but, again, these are not collected in one place.

Scanning and Reformatting of Records:

Many departments are turning to scanning their records as a solution to their records storage issues. In 2010, Inspectional Services stopped accepting plans submitted on paper and now only accepts those on CDs. Whether Newton has in place the appropriate systems to maintain digital

records and either reformat them or migrate them as systems become obsolete is unknown and should be studied further before widespread digitization becomes the norm. Some departments were unaware, for example, that meeting minutes must be kept in paper format and cannot be kept only digitally (SPR Bulletin 2-92.) Additionally, some departments personnel have said they have so many items to digitize they do not think they can undertake projects without additional assistance. Inspectional Services has an estimated 88,000 building jackets (each which may contain many pieces of paper).

As digital records become more common, storage for back up media must be considered. How-- and where will the building plans on CD be stored in the coming years? While the CDs will not require as much space as the blueprints did, they will need to be stored in climate controlled space and migrated to new media as CDs become obsolete.

Recommendations:

Overall:

1. The City of Newton needs to develop a comprehensive archives and records management program such as exists in other municipalities. A good example is the City of Boston, whose “Office of City Clerk Archives and Records Management Division (the “City Archives”) develops and implements citywide policy and procedures for the systematic management and disposition of all the municipal government records of Boston. As per statute, chapter 68, section 6 of the Acts of the Commonwealth of 1988 these records include those of “any city department, agency, board, office, commission or public corporation.”
2. The City of Newton needs to begin planning to create climate controlled, secure storage space for its archives and departmental records. The archives area in the Newton Free Library is full. There are currently more historical records held by City departments than are in the City Archives. Given the current conditions, particularly in the City Hall basement storage areas, it is only a matter of time before there is a devastating loss--not only of historical records but also of the records that departments need to function. In the short term, options such as storing records off-site should be considered.

Specific Recommendations:

- i. The City should move toward centralizing its archives and records management functions. This is particularly important as departments move towards scanning and digitizing records. An archivist/records manager working with the Clerk’s Office would ensure that this process would proceed with the greatest efficiency.
- ii. The Clerk’s Office, the Jackson Homestead, and the Newton Free Library should work together to ensure they are not collecting overlapping materials. In particular, the Jackson Homestead and the Newton Free Library should amend their collections policies so they do not collect documents that are, according to Massachusetts law, the responsibility of the City Clerk’s Office. This of course, may only be done if the Clerk’s Office has appropriate personnel and storage space to carry out this mandate.
- iii. Improve finding aids: the Clerk’s Office, Jackson Homestead and Newton Free Library need to work together to create finding aids to their collections which are accessible to researchers. It would be ideal if there was one place that these could be published and the creation of an on-line archives should be considered.
- iv. Systematically destroy obsolete records that do not have historical, administrative, fiscal or legal value. Many storage areas are filled with records that have passed their retention period and could be destroyed after applying for permission to do so from the Secretary of State’s Office.
- v. Some of the City’s “at risk” records are those which are not listed as requiring permanent retention on the State’s Schedules. However, these files document the history of the City of

Newton, and many should be retained. It is recommended that a group of historical “stakeholders”--working with an archivist--be appointed to discuss and make recommendations about which of these records document the City’s history and should be kept. Departments holding large amounts of these records include: the Executive Office, Health and Human Services, and the Planning Department.

- vi. Create a disaster plan for records so that in the event of a flood or other disaster, a recovery plan is in place.
- vii. Seek out and collect the records of departments that do not have many historical records; encourage departments to collect materials that document their department’s history and activities.

At Risk Records:

Immediate attention should be given to projects that stabilize and improve the conditions where the following records are stored and/or to preservation and conservation of the records themselves:

a) the approximately 100,000 sets of plans that Inspectional Services has stored in the basement of City Hall. These date back to 1911; most are blueprints, are rolled (they should be stored flat), fragile, and extremely dirty. On visits to this area, mold was observed on the records and on the walls;

b) records stored at offsite locations, particularly in the records storage room used by Public Buildings, Health and Human Services, and the School Department. All of these have substantial numbers of historical records;

c) Archival records stored in the basement areas of Newton City Hall. These areas include those containing: records of the Election, Engineering, Planning, Comptroller’s Treasurers, and particularly the Executive offices;

d) Archival records of the Veterans Services and Licensing departments on the first floor of Newton city Hall;

e) the Engineering Plans & Maps--a proposal has been submitted to preserve and digitize these records. This is a worthwhile project which would protect materials that are used on a daily basis that area also historically important. However, the records listed in a--d above are at greater risk of destruction due to the extremely poor conditions under which they are stored.

f) Artwork: several pieces of artwork were found during the course of this survey, and they should be transferred to the City Archives.

Overall Ratings of Departmental Records

1 = Low historical importance/Poor condition

2 = Historically important, permanent retention not required in State's Retention Schedules/Storage Needs Improvement

3 = Historically very important/State requires permanent retention/Condition is excellent.

	Importance	Condition of Records	Condition of Storage Area
101 City Clerk	3 3 3	3 (library) 2 (basement) 3 (vault/1st fl)	3 (at capacity) 2 3
103 Executive	3	1	1
104 Comptroller	3	2	2
105 Purchasing	2	3	2
106 Assessing	3	2	2
107 Treasurer/Collector	3	2	2
108 City Solicitor	3	2	1
109 Human Resources	3	2	2
111 MIS	2	2	2
112 Elections	3	2	1
113 Licensing/ 503 Veteran's Services	3 3	2 1	2 1
114 Planning & Development	3	2	2
115 Public Buildings	3	2	2
201 Police Department/Civil Defense	3	3	3
210 Fire Department	3	2	2
220 Inspectional Services	3	2 (ofc) 1 (bsmt)	2 (ofc) 1 (bsmt)
240 Sealer, Weights & Measures	2	3	2
401 Public Works	3	2	2 (ofc) 1 (bsmt)
501 Health & Human Services	3	2	1
502 Senior Services	3	3	2
601 Newton Public Library	3	3	3 (at capacity)
602 Parks and Recreation	3	2	2
603 Newton History Museum	3	3	2 (at capacity)
School Department	3	3	2

DEPARTMENTAL SURVEYS

DEPARTMENT: 101. CITY CLERK/BOARD OF ALDERMEN

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 3
CONDITION OF STORAGE 2 (basement)
3 (ofc vault)
3 (library)

Types of Records: Municipal Retention Manual Schedule 01 and 07; also various other departments send records to the City Clerk

Contact Person: David Olson

Where Stored: 3 storage areas: (1) in the Newton Free Library (compact shelving and vault; (2) Clerk’s Vault, first floor; (3) basement “cage”

Estimated Cubic Feet: @200 in basement; other areas, not determined

Dates: 1600?--present

Notes: The storage areas in the Newton Free Library are climate controlled and secure, although the halogen fire suppression system is no longer used. These areas are at capacity and no more records can be accepted. The vault in the Clerk’s Office has been recently fitted with compact shelving to allow more storage space. This area is well organized and the materials stored in it are in excellent condition. There are also locking cabinets outside the vault. This vault does not have a fire suppression system as the walls cannot be breached. The third area used is in the basement, one of the locking “cage” areas similar to that used by other departments. This area is not climate controlled and there is no fire suppression system. The Clerk’s Office has also scanned many records, many of which are particularly useful for historical and genealogical research. These are available on the Clerk’s website. The Clerk’s office also holds workshops for other departments to advise them on the requirements of record-keeping. The Clerk’s Office maintains a searchable database of its historical records. This is a very useful database; its many fields make it searchable by series/content/date/Supervisor of the Public Record #, etc. In the future, this database should serve as a model and should be expanded upon.

Recommendations: During the course of this survey, many departments said they wished to send records to the City Archives, which is at capacity. Unless records can be transferred to the City Archives, they are at serious risk of being lost or destroyed particularly when staff members leave or departments are moved. Hiring an archivist/records manager and building or securing adequate storage for historical records would benefit the City. Its unique history would be preserved, departments would no longer have to deal with obsolete records, and access to records by the public would be enhanced, increasing governmental transparency.

DEPARTMENT: COUSENS FUND

The Cousens Fund has already sent historical material to the City Archives and has nothing more to send at this time. Sally Pellegrum, who is the administrative person working at the Cousens Fund, would like to find more information about Horace Cousens since his gift to the City of Newton, which established the Fund, is the single largest one made to Newton and has helped so many citizens of Newton.

DEPARTMENT:

103. EXECUTIVE

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 1
CONDITION OF STORAGE 1

Types of Records:

Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule, 01, Records in Common; particularly correspondence, photographs, contracts and reports. There appears to be many Assessors Records (Schedule 04) including maps, and property record cards.

Contact Person:

Andrew Warner

Where Stored:

Newton City Hall, basement, locked "cage".

Estimated Cubic Feet:

@400 cubic feet

Dates:

@1870--2010

Information entered into Database: Yes, as a summary figure, not series level

Notes: Many of the records appear to be historical, but were very difficult to access. The "cage" where they are stored is piled with old equipment making it very difficult to accurately inventory the contents of the room. It appears to hold the Mayor's Office administrative files from @1940--2010. There are also boxes of press clippings, large framed copies of historical photographs and a Newton "Monopoly" game. There is no climate control in this area and at least one storage unit nearby (the Engineer's) has an uncovered vent pipe through which water, vermin, or insects, could enter the building. The oldest records in Executive area are very dirty and have red rot, a mold infestation. There also appear to be many Assessors records in this area, including old Assessors maps (some of which date from the mid-1870s) and drawers of 5x8" files with Assessing information. These date back at least to the 1950s. While it is likely that much of these materials have passed their retention period and can be destroyed, they should be carefully reviewed as many document historic events.

Recommendations: All the material in this "cage" needs to be carefully evaluated. While the State's Retention Schedules do not require that correspondence be kept permanently, this material documents the history of the Mayor's Office. The history of other departments is also documented in these files. The oldest material will need to be cleaned before being moved from this location due to dirt and past mold infestation.



DEPARTMENT: 104. COMPTROLLER

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 02
Accountant/Auditor

Contact Person: David Wilkinson

Where Stored: Basement, City Hall; Vault, Comptroller's Vault,, 1st Floor, City Hall

Estimated Cubic Feet: @100

Dates: 1890s--present

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: Most permanent records for this department are filed with the Clerk's Office. These include appointment of Accountant (02.001); Oath of Accountant (02.002); and the Appointment of and Oath of Assistant Accountant (02.007 and 008. The Report of Estimate Expenses (02.016) is also kept by the Clerk's Office. The archival copy of audit reports is also kept in the Clerk's Office, as are budget documents. PDF files are posted on the City's website. The department is now trying to scan all bids. The vault (near the Comptroller's Office) has historical materials, which should be evaluated as to whether they have historical value; these are included on the database. The Comptroller's "Cage" in basement has records which need to be evaluated as to their historical value. These include 43 auditors ledgers which date from the early 1900s; and metal boxes which contain cards that document expenses by department/street, etc. (@1922-1927.

Recommendations: Department appears to be keeping many records that can be disposed of. During the course of this survey, the Secretary of State's Records Management Unit was contacted to see if they could visit and advise on which records needed to be kept. (Both this office and the Treasurer's Office requested visits). However, there has been no response regarding this. Many of these materials (such as Transaction Reports) are computer print-outs and if these must be kept permanently, reformatting should be considered as it is unlikely the paper will last permanently. At the least, all materials should be re-boxed into archival containers and sent to climate-controlled storage.



DEPARTMENT: 105. PURCHASING

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 2

CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3

CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 01 and Schedule 01 and Schedule 18

Contact Person: Rose Durham

Where Stored? Basement storage room, City Hall

Estimated Cubic Feet: 275

Dates: 1998--2011

Information entered onto inventory database? No

Notes: The Clerk's Office keeps the record copy of all contracts; the files in the department can be disposed of after 1-7 years. Purchasing also has a storage room in the basement, adjacent to that of the Elections Department, which contains approximately 275 cubic feet of material. The oldest records (1998--2004) are stored in file cabinets while the more recent ones are in boxes which are on the floor and tables.

Recommendations: The Purchasing Department should, on a yearly basis, apply to destroy records listed on the State's retention schedules. It appears they are keeping many records much longer than is required.



DEPARTMENT: 106. ASSESSING

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 04
Contact Person: Elizabeth Dromey
Where Stored? First floor office; various locations in City Hall Basement;
Executive Office's storage area, basement

Estimated Cubic Feet:

Dates: 1880s--present

Information Entered into Inventory Database: Yes

Notes: The Assessing Department's tax maps are in the Engineering Office. The earliest records of the Department appear to be in the Executive Office's storage area in the basement and are in poor condition. (Large ledgers have red rot but are stored in such a way that they are inaccessible. Property record cards are in file cabinets but there are so many boxes piled in front of them they are difficult to examine.) The Department would like to send its pre-1970s records to the City Archives. The Assessing Department is currently working to digitize its current files.

Recommendations: Materials stored in the basement should be cleaned and sent to the City Archives.



DEPARTMENT:

107. TREASURER/COLLECTOR

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE:	3
CONDITION OF RECORDS	2
CONDITION OF STORAGE	2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedules 01, 08 and 24

Contact Person: Rosemarie Woods

Where Stored? 3 “cages” in the basement of City Hall

Estimated Cubic Feet.: 500+ cubic feet

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: The records in these storage areas were affected by the flood of approximately a year ago, and some were destroyed. Payroll records, which must be kept permanently, are stored in these areas, some on record cartons on the floor. Others have been placed on pallets. Payroll verifications, which must be kept permanently, are stored in these areas, apparently from the mid-1990s through 2010. These are on computer paper that will not last permanently. Older payroll records, beginning in 1913 and going through 1990 have been microfilmed and are available in the Archives Room of the Newton Free Library; librarians say that they are often referred to. (These are listed on the Clerk’s database). Also in these storage areas are @200 cubic feet of cancelled checks, which must be kept for seven years according to the State’s Retention Schedule. Payroll tax books are also stored in these rooms and should be transferred to the City Archives. (There are at least 15 oversize volumes of these records.)

Recommendations: The Department would like to schedule a visit with Terry French of the State Records Management Unit for advice on which records must be retained and which can be destroyed. A request was forwarded to Mr. French, but he did not schedule a visit during the course of this survey. It was also suggested that the Department investigate whether the Management Information Systems has copies of payroll verifications on file in the event that there is a gap between those microfilmed (and available in the Archives) and what the Department now holds. Since these are permanent records, the Department should consider microfilming since the rate at which they accumulate--approximately 1 cubic foot/a week, makes them difficult to store and access.



DEPARTMENT: 108. CITY SOLICITOR

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE 1

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 01

Contact Person: Donnalyn Kahn

Where Stored? Storage room, 2nd floor, City Hall behind the Alderman's Chambers;
shelf in ladies room opposite Solicitor's Office..

Estimated Cubic Feet @449

Dates: 1980s--present

Information Entered onto Inventory Database? Summary information, not individual series

Notes: Most departmental records are stored in a room behind the Aldermen's Meeting Chambers. This room also provides access to the cupola so others have a key to this space. This room was unlocked on several visits to it. The room does not have climate control and showed evidence of water damage to the walls and floors. After Hurricane Irene, there was a puddle of water on the floor and several boxes were damaged. Periodically, the attorneys go through the files and destroy records that are no longer needed. Historically important ones, including photographs, have been sent to the City Clerk's Office/Archives. There were also a few boxes of records stored in the ladies' room across the hallway from the Solicitor's Office. The ceiling of this room also showed evidence of past water damage.

Recommendations: The Department needs secure, climate controlled storage.



Record cartons stored in the room on the second floor of City Hall behind the Aldermanic Chambers show evidence of past water damage.

DEPARTMENT:

109. HUMAN RESOURCES

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedule 01
Contact Person: Delores Hamilton
Where Stored? Two basement storage areas, Newton City Hall (including a room it shares with the Health Department)
Est.Cubic Ft.: 294 cubic feet in basement room
Dates: 1989--present

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes, summary information only

Notes: The Department is one of four that is working with the MIS Department on scanning projects. It has begun scanning because it is running out of space; scanned material is saved on the City's Service. The Department is not retroactively scanning material. HR also has a storage room in the basement near the Cafeteria (which it shares with the Health Department). In the flood, some permanent records were destroyed--the State was consulted and records to be destroyed were identified in as much detail as possible.

The basement room contained approximately 294 cubic feet of records. Although many were in file cabinets, others were on the floor or on top of the cabinets and vulnerable to water damage from either leaks above or from rising waters.

Recommendations: All permanent records in this room should be re-boxed into archival record cartons and moved to a new storage area or to off-site storage.



The Human Resources storage room in the basement of City Hall (left). Health and Human Resources also uses this storage area, and some permanent records (the Disabilities Commission minutes, for example) are stored here.

DEPARTMENT: 111. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE:	2
CONDITION OF RECORDS	2
CONDITION OF STORAGE	2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 01; other departments as necessary

Contact Person: Joe Mulvey

Where Stored? First floor, City Hall; 9-track tapes in basement

Estimated Linear Feet: 9 track tapes, approx. 12 linear feet

Dates: Unknown

Information entered onto inventory database? 9 track tape information

Notes: MIS has a contract with a company called LaserFiche (Duplitron) which scans documents in a format that is searchable and difficult to tamper with. Four departments have been authorized to use this service: Human Resources, the City Clerk's Office, the Alderman's Office and Inspectional Services. The latter, however, is not yet using it. Departments generally work on their own to scan the materials in their offices. MIS no longer has equipment to play the 9-track tapes stored in the basement. They contain financial records. When requests are made for information in these tapes, MIS turns the entire tape over to the requestor (the IRS, for example).

Recommendations: Re-formatting of documents is underway in many departments and will continue as departments deal with the space issues and the desire of departments to provide access to the records they hold. Storage--both of original documents and of newer media (such as CDs) should be considered as electronic media need storage conditions that are not now available in City Hall. Below: Nine-track tapes are stored in a basement area of City Hall.



Department: 112. ELECTION

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3

CONDITION OF RECORDS 2

CONDITION OF STORAGE 1

Kinds of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedule 07

Contact Person: Craig Manseau

Where Stored? Basement of City Hall, storage room

Dates: 1880s--present

Estimated Cubic Feet: @300; many oversize volumes

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes, by series

Notes: The room being used by the Elections Department in the basement is not climate controlled; employees use a fan when working there. Unfortunately, this may have the unintended consequence of making this worse by blowing mold spores around the room. Evidence of past mold infestation was seen on many of the oversize volumes in the room and there is the likelihood that a change of conditions in the room could cause the mold to grow and spread. Staff who work in the room report sensitivity to conditions in the room; one employee said it caused her to go to the hospital with an asthma attack. The records in this room are of great interest to those tracing their history, looking for evidence of naturalization, etc. Members of the public used to come here with staff to access these records, particularly the card files, which list voters alphabetically. While these card files are not listed on the Municipal Retention Schedules, staff consider them extremely important as the cards summarize information kept in yearly books, and are the first place to go to when looking for information about when residents registered to vote. This room also contains other records listed as “permanent” under the municipal retention schedules. However, many of the books are in very poor condition and show evidence of mold infestation. The room was affected by the flood of about a year ago. Inventory forms were filled in for much of the information in the room, but not all material was accessible--some very old books (dating back to the 1800s) are piled in such a way and are so dirty that it was not possible to examine them closely. In addition, a closet in the main Elections Department office on the first floor was examined and it shows evidence of past water damage and peeling paint.

Recommendations: Records in this room should be professionally cleaned and transferred to secure, climate-controlled storage.



Note: The Licensing Board and Veteran's Services have the same staff and share storage rooms

DEPARTMENT: 113. LICENSING BOARD

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3

CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2

CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Retention Schedule 01

Contact Person: John MacGilvray and Pat Sweeney

Where Stored: Two rooms, first floor, City Hall

Estimated Cubic Feet. @100

Dates: @1900--present

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: Licensing records are kept in the main Licensing Board office, and in 2 nearby storage rooms, which are down the hallway from the Licensing Board office. Most of the Licensing Board's records are permanent ones, as listed on the State's Municipal Retention Schedules. The clerk for the Licensing Board, Pat Sweeney, has worked for the department for many years and says she keeps everything since applicants and their attorneys want to see all information available for an establishment when applying for licenses, and she must be able to locate files easily. Folders containing licensing materials have been meticulously typed and filed; the rooms are kept locked. Licensing Board files are in filing cabinets. However, the rooms are not climate controlled, and show evidence of water damage; in one plaster has fallen onto a nearby desk.

Recommendations: It is important to the department to be able to easily access older records; compact shelving might be considered as it would reduce the amount of space necessary to house these files.



Views of two rooms used by the Licensing Board and Veterans' Services. Both show evidence of water damage, and historical records in these rooms have been damaged by the poor environment, although many records are maintained in file cabinets and are in relatively good condition.

DEPARTMENT: 503. VETERANS' SERVICES

OVERALL RATINGS:

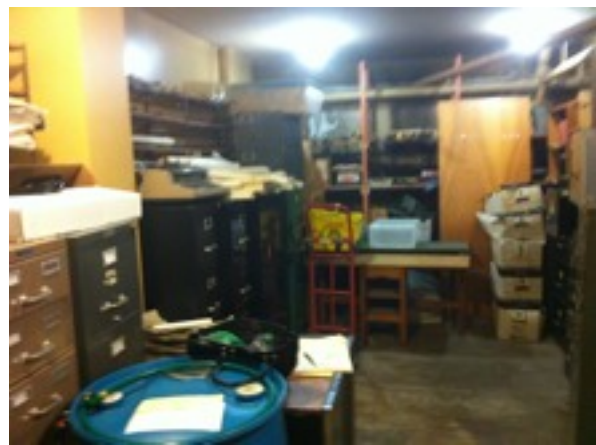
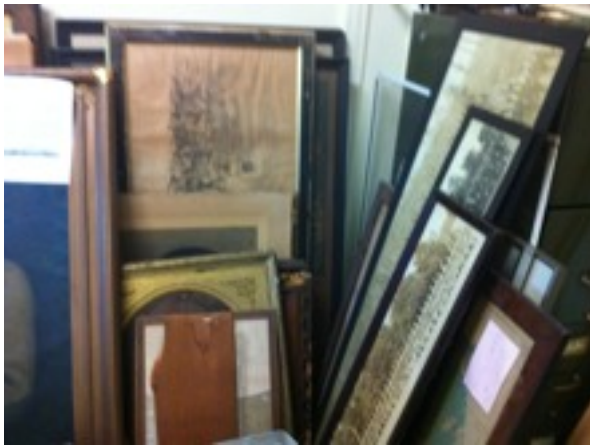
HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 1
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 1

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 01, 25
Contact Person: John MacGilvray and Pat Sweeney
Where Stored? Three rooms, 1st floor of City Hall
Dates: @1870--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: @140

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: As mentioned above, conditions are not good in these rooms, particularly the one that says "American Legion" on the door, where water damage has caused plaster to fall onto a desk and records. In the room located between the ladies and men's room at the end of this corridor, obvious water damage was not apparent but there are pipes running through the top of the ceiling. Records that have been left out, uncovered, are in poor condition. Some of the oldest show evidence of past water damage and are extremely dirty. Although there are empty file cabinets in some of these rooms, records have been left out, on desks, in shopping bags, and in other inadequate storage containers. In addition, there are paintings and framed photographs and awards stacked on the floors. It is unclear if all the Veterans Case files must be kept; the Retention Schedules allow them to be destroyed 20 years after the last assistance was granted, "provided no indications of dependent claims in the future" but department staff do not know how this decision could be made and thus keep the files.

Recommendations: The Veteran's Case files should be examined to see if they need to be kept; it appears they might be eligible for destruction. There are many other materials in these rooms that are historically important and these should be cleaned and transferred to the City Archives.



Historical photographs are stacked on the floor in one storage room (left); in another room there are many photographs on open shelves.

DEPARTMENT:

114. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE 2

Types Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 01, 09, 13, 15

Contact Person: Various, as indicated in each section, below

Where Stored? Basement storage rooms, Newton City Hall

Estimated Cubic Feet: Conservation: @66 cubic feet.; Historic Planner, @50;
Community Preservation Program 10 cubic feet

Dates: 1950s?--present

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes:

Conservation Commission (Ann Phelps): Administrative files for the Conservation Commission date back to the enabling legislation, which was passed in 1957, although the majority are from 1970, when the Wetlands Protection Act was passed and the Conservation Commission was created. Ms. Phelps believes these files are historically important and wants to keep them although they do not have to be retained permanently according to the State's Retention schedules. She also keeps an entire folder of material for each property that comes before the Commission and does not dispose of materials as the Schedule 09 says. She currently has 6 four-drawer legal size file cabinets by street, plus another record carton of material to be filed. (Many people do not record conservation easements, and without the Certificate of Compliance the files cannot be closed out.) In the basement are 2-four drawer legal files. Ms. Phelps noted that the Engineering Dept. consults her files

Community Preservation Program (Alice Ingerson): There are @ 10 cubic feet of CPA records, which include administrative files, active projects and minutes. The minutes have been scanned and are on the website.

Historic Planning. (Brian Lever): The files for this office date back to the 1970s. Six-4-drawer cabinets are in the second floor planning office; a few older ones are in the Planning Dept.'s storage area in the basement. Mr. Lever says many records documenting historic planning were lost in the recent flood. He posts the minutes on the City's website. Mr. Lever noted that the the City needs a method to evaluate historical significance and figuring out what should be maintained. He recommended setting up a committee of persons who are involved with historical records so they could create such a system. Mr. Lever said it was often difficult to locate historical information in the city and said a "finding aid to the finding aids" would be helpful for those conducting historical research.

Urban Land Use: The Clerk's Office keeps the official copy; what the division keeps is of secondary importance

Zoning Board of Appeals: Never destroys any parts of the files. The Board of Appeals used to handle these appeals until the ZBA came into existence. All decisions are kept in a binder as part of a packet, as when individuals appeal they want to see the entire packet. There are @ 1 dozen appeals a year.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT -- Continued

Recommendations: Some Planning Department offices are located in the basement and were affected by the flooding of about a year ago. In addition to the office areas, there is a storage area used by the Planning Department, where many of the department's oldest files are being kept. A dehumidifier is in use, although there is standing water in a sink. The Department needs secure, climate-controlled storage.



Planning Department records are stored in a basement room where a dehumidifier is kept running, but there is standing water in a sink in the same room.

DEPARTMENT:

115. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 01; 06?

Contact Person: Art Cabral

Where Stored? Records Storage Room, 52 Elliot Street

Dates: 1920s?--present

Estimated Cubic Feet: @400

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes, summary, not individual series

Notes: Conditions appear relatively good in this storage room, although some records are very dusty. The room is, however, very full and staff have not had the time to evaluate records and dispose of those that do not need to be retained. The department keeps many plans; Art Cabral estimated that there are 60 buildings and at least 1800 individual plans must be kept. As opposed to Inspectional Services--which keeps plans as approved--Public Buildings keeps the "as built" plans. Mr. Cabral believes that the plans of buildings that have been demolished may be destroyed but he has not as yet pulled those of the old Newton North High School.

Recommendations: The records in this room should be carefully evaluated before any are disposed of. There is a wide variety of materials here, including blueprints, photographs, framed maps, and paper records. It is likely that documents here might fill gaps in other collections or provide supplementary information about publicly-owned buildings. However, there are also many records that have passed their retention schedules and should be destroyed, such as paid invoices, etc. See photos below.



DEPARTMENT: **201. POLICE DEPARTMENT; 230 Civil Defense**

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 3

Kinds of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 01, 16
Contact Persons: Capt. Steven Smith; Jeanne Sweeney; Chief Cummings
Where Stored? Police Department Headquarters
Dates: 1900?--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: Unable to determine

Information entered onto inventory database? No

Notes: Captain Smith is records manager/evidence manager for both the Police Department and Civil Defense. He has reorganized the records and evidence rooms and devised new online systems for keeping many routine department records. (In doing this, he worked with the staff at the Records Management Unit at the State Archives.) For some materials, he scans, backs the records up on the server and creates a cd.) The records storage room and evidence room are very secure and climate-controlled.

In terms of historical materials, I met with both Chief Cummings and Jeanne M. Sweeney, who has been with the department over 20 years. Many of the oldest materials were given to the Jackson Homestead. The Chief would like to create a small museum celebrating the department's achievements, and is looking for materials. He has had cabinets made; they are in the hallway outside his office. He would like to find photos, artifacts and ephemera that document Police Dept. activities, as the Department has very few. Ms. Sweeney showed me one binder of personnel cards from the early 1900s, which give names, years of service, and when the person retired. Because the cards were so fragile, she did have these laminated and they are now in a 3-ring binder (approx. 50 pages, with 4 cards laminated per page). The department has many "firsts" including being the first department in the country to hire women as police officers--in 1975 it hired 18 women. Ms. Sweeney said that the department never destroys personnel files and can look for information in these that document events that happened in the department. However, for the Museum, the Dept. is hoping to locate: photographs, materials that document some of its special units, such as the Civil Disorder Unit of the 1960s. It was also one of the first departments in the country to hire women. The Police Department is also thinking of re-printing a history of the Department, which was privately printed, entitled *Newton Police 1874--1994*. (About 200 copies were printed and distributed, but the Department has only one copy left)

Recommendations/Follow Up: The Jackson Homestead does have the historical photographs used in the book noted above. Also both the Jackson Homestead and the Newton Free Library have copies of the book. The Police Department would appreciate assistance in locating the materials noted above.

DEPARTMENT: 210. FIRE DEPARTMENT

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Kinds of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 01, 12
Contact Person: Capt. Mark Roche
Where Stored? Headquarters Museum (1st and 2nd floor); Station 2
Dates: Early 1870s--present time.
Estimated Cubic Feet: 12 cu.ft.

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes, summary figure

Notes: The Fire Department's Headquarters on Centre Street has a museum on the first and second floors. On the first floor, near the entryway, is a "Pung" -- a sleigh with a boxlike body on runners. These were used by the department in the winter to respond to fire when hose wagons could not be used. Hanging near it are 4 framed photos, some of which are original, and a display of alarm boxes. On the second floor in the hallway (near the chief's office) are 4 large photographs (reproductions) framed showing various scenes of the Newton Fire Department. There are also 20 framed 8x 10 photos, all of which except one that appear to be originals. These include one of a horse drawn engine taken in 1893. In a nearby room, are more artifacts and documents and photographs in cases as well as original poster "location of fire Signals" framed and hanging on the wall, and a series of framed photographs of captains (8x10") most of the fairly recent color photos. In the cases are objects and ephemera (Fire Dept. Regulations of the 1880s, an old permit); there were 4 scrapbooks of more recent vintage on one shelf (color photos taken during the Fireman's Ball in the 1980s; others with no identification. On top of one case were what appeared to be 2 books of documents but these were too high up to be seen clearly without a ladder. Another framed photograph (11x14", a Bachrach reproduction) was entitled: "First Fire Chief's Motor Car June 11, 1903."

The person who has organized most of this is Lt. Mark Roche, who has not only purchased materials on e-bay, but has also rescued some from Newton City buildings that are being cleaned out. Capt. Roche has an office at Station 2, and has recently found approximately 2 additional cubic feet of old ledgers that date back to the late 1890s. These record alarms sounded and damage done to buildings.

Recommendations: The Department should place materials not on display into archival folders; it would also be good to make them available to researchers perhaps by scanning selected materials, such as ledgers and photographs.

DEPARTMENT:

220. INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE:	3
CONDITION OF RECORDS:	2 Ofc/ 1/Bsmt
CONDITION OF STORAGE:	2 Ofc/ 1 Bsmt

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedule 06
Contact Person: John Lojek
Where Stored? Basement Storage room, Newton City Hall; 2nd floor, Newton City Hall
Dates: @1900--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: 88,000 building jackets (470 c.f.); 100,000 sets of plans

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes:1) Property Jackets. The building department maintains files by property address in its 2nd floor office. There are break-outs by condos and by schools. It has 7 lateral file cabinets, which are approximately 80% full and now contain about 470 cubic feet of records. The building inspector would like to scan these records but feels he needs a major grant to do so. The Inspector does not feel that his staff could do this job without additional personnel. He would like the information in these plans to be tied into the existing GIS system, which would be “property-centric.”

2) Building Plans: The oldest appear to date from 1911. The majority of these are blueprints, and are stored in a room in the basement. David Norton , a building inspector has for the last 18 months been working on inventorying the plans in this basement, which were originally filed by year and permit number. He has created a form to collect information in each bundle on the street address, year, and permit number. He and other inspectors work on this one day a month. Many plans were on the floor and some were destroyed during the flood. While inventorying, Mr. Norton and other inspectors are weeding out duplicates and also will be discarding plans of residential structures that have been destroyed. There are an estimated 100,000 sets of plans in this room, and perhaps as many as 3,000,000 individual sheets of paper.

Recommendations: The blueprints in the basement are in poor condition, fragile and dirty and their storage area is inadequate. (They are also rolled when they should be stored flat.) The room they are in is in extremely poor condition. There are obvious leaks and there is what appears to be active mold on the walls and on the plans. Staff members are trying to index them but can only devote one day a month to this. High priority should be given to cleaning these plans, moving them to an appropriate storage facility, and indexing them.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES: Basement Storage Room:



Building plans dating back to at least 1911 are stored in this basement room, which shows evidence of water damage and mold. (In the photograph at right, the rolled plan in the foreground is covered with what appears to be white mold.) These plans should be cleaned and moved to another location; they should be stored flat, in a secure, climate-controlled space.



DEPARTMENT: 240. SEALER WEIGHTS AND MEASURE

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 2

CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3

CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 21

Contact Person: Mitch Baker

Where Stored? 1st floor office, City Hall

Dates: 2000-2010

Estimated Cubic Feet: 2 c.f.

Notes: Records are being kept in an office, stored in binders. The climate appears good and the records were in good condition. Mr. Baker said that records are now being kept on line and paper records will no longer be kept.

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Recommendations: Eventually transfer these to the Archives.

DEPARTMENT: 401. PUBLIC WORKS (including: Storm Water Management, Sewer, Water & Engineering)

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 1 (bsmt)
2 (ofc)

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedule 11
Contact Person: Darryl Azure
Where Stored? Engineering Office/1st Floor, City Hall; Basement Storage room
Dates: 1880s--?
Estimated Cubic Feet: In basement: @450 c.f.

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes, for certain series; summary figure for others stored in basement.

Notes: This Department has many permanent records that document Newton's built environment, many of them dating back to the 1880s. They include water and sewer books and many maps and plans. Because the plans are in daily use, many of them are in deteriorating condition and need conservation work. The Engineering Office has recently contacted Brown's River Preservation to get estimate for this work and for scanning the plans. The Department has already scanned other permanent records, including the water and sewer books, and they are available on-line to the department but not to the general public. The plans that would be conserved are located in the Engineering Department's 1st floor office and most are stored flat, in appropriate filing cabinets. However, the basement storage "cage" has materials that were not were not included on the Brown's River estimate. The Department's contact, Darryl Azure, says he doesn't know which of these materials actually need to be kept and most appear to be ones that the Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedules allow to be disposed of. However, glass plate negatives that date from the late 1880s through at least the 1960s are also in the "cage" and must be considered at risk. This "cage" is not an appropriate place to store historic documents. There is evidence of the recent water damage; records that are on the floor appear to have dried out, but they are exceptionally dirty and water-stained. This area has so many boxes piled up--an estimated 376 cubic feet of records--that it was not possible to accurately inventory. It is likely there are many historical documents in this area. There are is also old equipment, a book of Sanborn maps, and copper plates once used for a Parks Department publication. There are also map cases--(16 drawers in all,) which contain maps and blueprints--some of these drawers could not be opened they were packed so full. There is also material sitting on the floor.

Recommendations: The Department has submitted a grant proposal to preserve and digitize its oldest records. However, this did not include material in the basement, where it appears significant historical material is stored. This room is open to the outside, has no climate control, and some materials were damaged in the flood. Stored here, on shelves (but not in boxes) are the glass plate negatives that have been microfilmed and printed out (the microfilm is in the City Archives; use copies are at the Jackson Homestead's archives.).

PUBLIC WORKS--continued



A view of the Public Works storage area in the basement of City Hall. In the rear, along the back wall, is an uncovered vent pipe that could allow insects and vermin to enter the room. Below, left: glass plate negatives are shelved in this room. Bottom right: the file cabinets are so full of plans that they cannot be opened.



DEPARTMENT:

501. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 1

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Records Schedules 01 an 05
Contact Person: David Naparstek
Where Stored: Basement, Centre Street office; City Hall, basement area shared with Purchasing
Dates: 1960s--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: @226

Information entered onto inventory database? Summary, not individual series.

Notes: The Department is currently located in an old library building in Newton Centre. It moved there in 1993 and that year there was major flooding and many records stored in the basement were destroyed. This record storage room is still being used and permanent records are being stored there. The State is creating databases of certain files --for example of the locations of wells, and hazardous waste, so the Department will not have to keep this information. The Department also keeps forms which note where asbestos is located which go back to the early 1970s. The state is creating a database of these properties also. The basement has @226 cubic feet of materials, including many permanent ones including burial records, food records, TB records, old brochures and materials that document the activities of the department over many years. They appear to date from the 1970s until @2007. These need to be processed and historical materials saved and sent to the City Archives. The Department has a rich history; the City Archives currently has materials concerning the Polio Immunization Program of the 1950s.

Recommendations: The Department is due to be moved from this building, most likely to a location in City Hall. It is recommended that an archivist/records manager assist with identifying materials that can be disposed, and assisting to box up the ones that should be saved for administrative, legal, or historical purposes to send to the Archives. Record that are to be destroyed need to be shredded due to confidentiality of the records; the Department also needs to get advice from the State about certain records, such as massage therapists, over which it no longer has jurisdiction.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES--continued



Three views of the main storage area used by Health and Human Services, in the basement of its Centre Street building. Other records of this department are stored with those of the Human Resources Department, in the basement of City Hall. Soon after the Department moved to Centre Street, there was a flood in this basement and records were destroyed.



DEPARTMENT: 502. SENIOR SERVICES

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 01;10
Contact Person: Jayne Colino
Where Stored? Basement, Senior Services Center, Walnut Street
Dates: 1979--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: @2 cubic feet

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: Senior Services has a small records storage room in the basement of its building, a former public library building. This summer, an intern has been working to compile its minutes. There are approximately 40 cubic feet of other records stored in the records room, but all are covered under the retention schedules and can be destroyed after relatively short periods (most 1--3 years; grant files, 7 years). There is a small display of historical photographs, which are copies from ones the Newton Free Library has.

Recommendations: Continue the project to collect all the minutes. The Center might also like to collect, if possible, old programs and newsletters that show the activities the Center has sponsored since its beginning.

DEPARTMENT:

601. NEWTON FREE LIBRARY

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 3

Types of Records: Archival records from many departments
Contact Person: Nancy Johnson
Where Stored? Compact Shelving, inside Special Collections
Dates: 1890s?--present
Estimated Cubic Feet: Not determined

Information entered into inventory database: No, except for a recent donation--when a staff member left the Office of Volunteer Services she donated 9 cubic feet of materials from that office to the library. (The library already maintains a database for artifacts and most archival collections are catalogued at the collection level.)

Notes: The library has catalogued most of its archival collections (located in the compact shelving area of the Newtonian Room) at the collection level. In addition, many City documents have been catalogued at the item level and are also in the catalog. (Ms. Johnson said that much of this information--for example, School Annual Reports--would not be catalogued in this fashion today.)

There appear to be some overlap between what the Library collects and what the City Clerk's office has. While it is usual that libraries have archival materials (such as departmental annual reports), the record copy should always be kept by the Clerk's office. A recent donation is a case in point: approximately 9 cubic feet were received from a staff member who had left the Mayor's Office of Volunteer Services. These documents should have been given to the City Archives, as they reflect the activity of one of the City's departments.

The library's compact shelving for archival materials is now almost full. Additionally, the compact shelving is an automatic system and parts are no longer being made. Other issues are that many archival materials need conservation work, and there is no place to store maps and artifacts.

The Clerk's Office has both an vault and an Archives room in the Library. Both these areas are now full.

It should also be noted that the the Library has many pieces of art displayed in its building, many of which have come from other public buildings in Newton.

Recommendations: The Library knows it will need to address its space constraints in the not too distant future.

DEPARTMENT: 602. PARKS AND RECREATION

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3

CONDITION OF RECORDS: 2

CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedule 01
(Meeting Minutes)

Contact Person: Bob DeRubeis

Where Stored? Parks & Recreation Office, Crescent Street

Dates: 1955-present

Estimated Cubic Feet: 2 c.f.

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: The only permanent records the department maintains are the Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes. They have scanned 2 of the earliest books and sent the originals to the Clerk's Office; the others are in their office, in a 3-ring binder. They send permits to the Law Department. The Jackson Homestead has records of the historical cemeteries. The department had no photographs or other material documenting its history, although Mr. DeRubeis said that managers might have newsletters, photographs or other information documenting departmental activities but these would have to be collected. Records are kept in a locked filing cabinet; building is old, wood and does not have climate control.

Recommendations: It would be good to collect newsletters, photographs and other materials that document the department's rich history.

DEPARTMENT:

603. NEWTON HISTORY MUSEUM

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3
CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3
CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records:

Personal papers and records that document Newton’s history; emphasis is on non-governmental records although the collection does include some of these.

Contact Person:

Sara Goldberg

Where Stored?

Jackson Homestead archives/some offsite at Carr School

Dates:

1770s--present

Estimated Cubic Feet:

Not determined

Information entered onto inventory database? No, The Jackson Homestead maintains its own database.

Notes: The Jackson Homestead’s mission is “to encourage the inquiry and exploration of Newton within the broad context of American history.....” The Homestead collects, preserves, and exhibits historical artifacts of local significance and presents public programs that involve the diverse population of Newton and the region.” Its collections policy is broad, too, and objects and artifacts are collected that reflect all aspects of life and work in Newton and should have a Newton provenance.” The staff at the Jackson Homestead place a high value on making materials accessible to the community for research and available to the general public. During the course of this survey and inventory, quite a few City Departments have said that they have sent materials to the Jackson Homestead for preservation. The Jackson Homestead’s archives is now full and there is little room to store acquisitions. Some materials are apparently stored at the Carr School, but access was not gained to this area during this survey. The Homestead has been seeking funding to renovate it storage area, which is not climate controlled.

The Jackson Homestead has certain City-generated documents, including Historic Buildings Surveys and notebooks with prints of the Engineering Offices’s glass plate negatives. It has a collection policy. Many persons think of the Jackson Homestead, rather than the City Archives, as the place to send (and find) historical documents generated by the City.

Recommendations: There should be clarification about which City documents are held by the three groups that now hold them: the City Archives, the Jackson Homestead, and the Newton Free Library.

Right: The archives storage spaces at the Jackson Homestead are at capacity



DEPARTMENT: SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

OVERALL RATINGS:

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE: 3

CONDITION OF RECORDS: 3

CONDITION OF STORAGE: 2

Types of Records: Massachusetts Municipal Retention Schedules 01 and 20

Contact Person: DeDe Reade and Mary Burns

Where Stored? Superintendent's Office and School Committee Offices, Walnut Street

Dates: Late 1800s--present

Estimated Cubic Feet: @200

Information entered onto inventory database? Yes

Notes: An attempt was made to reach many of the individual schools before schools closed for the year. An e-mail was sent to all school librarians asking whether they held or knew of historical documents, photographs, etc. at each school. There were few responses and those that did reported they had no material, or in several cases, photographs they had obtained from the Jackson Homestead. The libraries of Newton North H.S. and Newton South H.S. were also visited. The former has an archival storage room, with ample storage for its materials. Collection information has also been entered into a database but at the time of this study, only box lists were available, which were created when the move from the old to the new school was made. Newton South has fewer archival materials, but does have all yearbooks from 1961--present, which are kept in the Librarian's Office. Newton North H.S. does have some materials it would like to send to the City's Archives (for example, some School Committee reports). At the School Department's headquarters on Walnut Street, historical material is kept in the Frazier Room and in a vault in the Superintendent's Office. In addition to School Committee meeting minutes, a good deal of material was found that document the history of the building of Newton North H.S. The METCO office was also visited but they reported having no materials documenting the history of the program. They suggested any such materials would be at METCO's Boston headquarters. Artwork was found at the School Department, in particular the paintings of the *Mayflower* and others in this series that were the gift of the Class of 1925. (See Artwork section of this report.)

Recommendations: The School Department would like to send much of its archival materials, including the paintings, to the City Archives. Although it was attempted to reach the schools and find historical materials, it would be good to have someone visit each school, and meet with custodians as well as library and administrative personnel, to find materials that have been stored in attics and basements of the buildings.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT--continued



The cabinet in the Frazier Room, where many of the School Department's permanent records are stored. At the bottom right of the photograph are records concerning the building of Newton North High School.

ARTWORK

While conducting this survey/inventory, some pieces of art were discovered, and are listed below. Photographs (such as those were found in the Veteran's Services) are not included on this list but are included in the survey/inventory.

Description of Art:	Where located:	Approximate Size
Ship-- <i>Mayflower</i> ? signed by Marshall Johnson; Plaque says "Gift of the Class of 1925"	School Dept., outside Room 215	@2' x 3"
<i>Pilgrims</i> also by Marshall Johnson?	Custodian's room (out of frame) near room 215	@3' x 5'
<i>Indians watching arrival of Mayflower</i>	<i>Custodian's room</i>	@3-1/2'x5'
<i>Pilgrims</i> -- in a large hall perhaps representing early governing session Plaque says "Gift of the Class of 1925"	Custodian's Room	@3-1/2'x5'
<i>House</i>	Custodian's Room	@3-1/2x5'

The above paintings are oil on board.

It is likely the first 4 above were all done by Marshall Johnson, as they appear to be part of a series. Johnson is described on the internet (VallejoGallery.com) as: born in 1860, died in 1921. He was born in Boston, and attended the Lowell Institute becoming a member of the Boston Art Club also associating with Copley School. At 18 he went to sea. He also studied under William Edward Norton, the American artist who placed a high priority on the spiritual aspects of a painting. He maintained a studio on Boston's India Wharf until his death.

7 Ceramic murals	School Department, 2nd floor hallway	various sizes, ranging @3'x2' to 8' x 7-1/2'
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These were created in 1978 by 5th, 6th and 7th graders.

Artwork --continued

Description of Art	Where Located	Approximate size
Large Fan (in frame)	Newton South H.S. near library	3-1/2'x 4'

This fan was given to the school in recognition of its role in the Student Exchange program with China.