

**NEWTON PUBLIC BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHASE II – ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Building Analysis

Angier Elementary School



Address: 1697 Beacon Street
Year of Construction: 1919

Level of Significance: High

Recommended Treatment Level: Rehabilitation

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance

Building History

Angier Elementary, located at 1697 Beacon Street in the Waban neighborhood of Newton, is the oldest school still in operation as part of the Newton school system. The building was designed by the Boston firm of Perry & MacNaughton, and was constructed between 1919 and 1921, the first school building built in Newton after World War I. During the War Newton experienced rapid population growth but constructed very few public buildings, and there was a pent up demand for new school facilities. Eventually fourteen new school buildings were built between 1919 and 1939 to accommodate the City of Newton's growing population and to replace the smaller, wooden schools of the 19th Century. The Angier School replaced the earlier Roger Wolcott School on the same site. All the schools constructed in the 20s and 30s were built of brick to meet the public safety concerns of the older wood structures. Most were designed in a Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival or Tudor Revival style.

The Angier School is representative of the Tudor Revival style. The building is constructed of brick with cast stone trim around window and door openings and as bands at the cornice and below the first floor. The building has a symmetrical front (south) elevation consisting of two primary entrances flanking a one-story bowed window bay. The walls around the entrances are embellished with cast-stone-capped buttresses and crenellated parapets. The building has tall narrow window openings set in groups, which originally had multi-pane wood sashes. The school was named after First Lieutenant Albert Edgar Angier, a member of the 308th Infantry during the First World War. He died in battle near Revillon on September 14, 1918 and was awarded the Citation for Distinguished Service Cross. Albert Angier's father, George Angier, served on the Board of Aldermen and the Newton School Committee and was the chairman of the School Committee from 1923-1924.

The firm of Perry & MacNaughton, located at 19 Congress Street, Boston, existed for only a short time in the late 1910s/early 1920s. Little information has been found about architect James H. MacNaughton. William G. Perry, however, went on to a long and distinguished career as a principal of the firm Perry, Shaw & Hepburn, which he joined in 1923. Perry is most well known for being the architect responsible for the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, the first large-scale restoration of a colonial site in the United States.

The building originally contained space for a community library for the neighborhood of Waban in addition to classrooms. However, as the population of Waban expanded the school began having issues with overcrowding. In 1924 the library space was much reduced. The books were moved into the newly constructed Waban Branch Library in 1929. To address continued overcrowding a two-story addition was constructed in 1936 as part of the Public Works Administration program. The addition was designed by Frank H. Colony, Jr. a resident of Newton Centre. Colony had previously worked in the Boston offices of C. Howard Walker and Densmore & LeClear.

Level of Significance

The Angier School is significant under National Register Criterion A as the first building constructed during the rapid expansion of the Newton Public School system in the 1920s and 1930s. The building maintains a moderate level of architectural integrity.

Bibliography

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- Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Form B NWT.3849—1697 Beacon Street". 1997, 1987, 1978.
- Strong, Isabel Lawrence. "First Lieutenant Albert Edgar Angier" excerpt from *Waban Early Days*. Newton, MA: Modern Press. 1944. <<http://www.wabanimprovement.org/oldsite/waban%20early%20days/angier.html>> (accessed November 29, 2011).
- "The Week in Trade: New England". *Electrical World* 75 (April 1920). 876.

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance: Historic Images
Additional Information Sources for Future Research

Historic Images



Figure 1: Angier School in 1925. (Credit: Historic Newton)



Figure 2: Angier School in 1929. (Credit: MACRIS)

Part 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features

Exterior Visual Character

Setting

- The school faces south towards Beacon Street and is flanked by two playgrounds. The rear property line directly abuts an MBTA right-of-way.

Shape

- There are two stories with a high basement, roughly square in plan, with a bowed one-story front extension and slightly projecting entrance bays with crenellated parapets at the street side.

Roof and Related Features

- A flat roof is hidden behind a low parapet with a metal parapet cap. The parapet is crenelated above the main entries.
- A brick chimney is visible behind the westernmost front entry.

Openings

- Each quoined cast stone surround typically encloses multiple sets of double-hung windows and transoms: sets of six at the second floor, sets of two at the first floor.
- The shorter basement windows align with the first floor windows. Some have concrete areaways and steel grates. Like the narrow ancillary windows upstairs, they have no cast stone surrounds or transoms.
- A characteristic full-depth horizontal mullion originally separated the transom panels from the double-hung sashes below. Most sashes had 6 panes; those at the bowed front extension had 4 panes each.
- The window units at the entrance bays illuminate the stairwells inside and were made taller with a second set of double-hung sashes below a second full-depth horizontal mullion.
- The delicately detailed original windows have all been replaced with thick aluminum frames and a combination of spandrel transom panels and fixed and awning sashes. Some basement windows have been replaced with louvers. This new configuration bears little resemblance to the original as seen in the historic photos, and is jarring, especially in comparison.
- The original pairs of paneled front doors had 9 lights each, and a 7-light transom within the Tudor arch surrounds. They have been replaced with shorter pairs of aluminum doors and the transoms have been replaced with 6-panel spandrels.
- The three pairs of doors with transoms at the rear projection are not original.

Projections:

- A bowed one-story (plus basement) extension is centered on the front (south) elevation.
- Two slightly projecting bays with buttresses at the corners denote the front entries.
- A projecting volume at majority of rear elevation appears to be the 1930s addition.

Trim and Secondary Features:

- There are brick buttresses with stone caps at either side of entrance doors.
- The original coping, cornice, water table, and quoined window and door surrounds are cast stone. The profiled cast stone coping has been replaced with metal flashing and a much lower profile.
- The school name, in metal lettering, appears on the south wall.

Materials

- The school is constructed of Flemish bond brick with cast stone trim.

Craft Details

- A cast stone school seal is set above each of the two front entries.

Interior Visual Character

Individually Important Spaces

Auditorium (current library)

- A low, dropped acoustical tile ceiling obscures the upper half of the space. The original coffered plaster ceiling is still in place above the acoustic tiles.
- The original balcony is currently walled in and divided into offices and storage.
- The stage is still intact, including the wood floor. At the top of the proscenium is the abbreviated quote from the Boston Public Library Board of Trustees: "Education is the Safeguard of Order and Liberty".
- The tall windows at both the north and south sides are in keeping with the original exterior windows, with a transom over each main window. These windows are currently covered up.
- Wall surfaces are articulated with pilasters and running trim, including cornices.
- Decorative hoods are in place over the doorways, with wood panel doors.
- The room contains a bronze plaque in honor of Albert Edgar Angier.

Corridors

- In the original building the corridor walls are finished in white glazed tiles, to full height.
- Corridors at the rear of the building are finished with buff glazed tiles.
- The original ceilings are hidden by dropped acoustical tile ceilings with integral fluorescent lights.
- There are various door styles, including wood panel doors, wood doors with large lights, and metal doors with faux-painted wood finish.
- The original floor finish is hidden by commercial carpeting.

Related Spaces

South (original) Stair Halls (2)

- The hall walls are white painted brick. Two courses of brick are laid at the interior wall to form a surround at the perimeter of the arched exterior doorway.
- Tall window units, with stained wood frames and aluminum sashes, illuminate the stairs.
- The stairs have utilitarian metal diamond plate treads, wood handrails, closely spaced vertical square metal balusters, and occasional scrolled metal lateral supports. There is an additional rail at the west stair.

North (addition) Stair Halls (2)

- The walls are finished in buff, glazed tile.
- The landings are painted concrete.
- The stairs feature utilitarian concrete-filled metal pan treads, wood handrails, closely spaced vertical square metal balusters and occasional scrolled metal lateral supports.
- There is a set of double metal doors to the corridor, each with 9 wire glass lights, flanked by 4-pane sidelights.

Gymnasium

- The gymnasium windows appear to be the only extant original wood windows.

Other Significant Interior Features

- The front classroom on the main floor contains a fireplace with a carved limestone front, brick firebox, paneled wood surround, and a shallow mantle with seven carved animal heads. It is flanked on either side by built in wood cabinetry.

Part 2 – Images



Figure 3: The windows of the front projection and of the general façade, although severely altered and far less elegant, retain vestiges of their original configuration in the wider horizontal mullion dividing the transom sashes from the lower sashes. Compare to the historic photo in figure 1.



Figure 4: The front entries are given visual importance through the buttressed projection, prominent window and cast stone door surround.



Figure 5: The rear wall and balcony of the original auditorium in the existing library space. The original ceiling is still in place above the dropped acoustic tile.

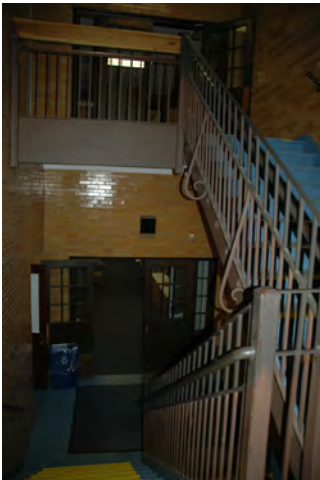


Figure 6: Rear stairwell with original banister and rails.



Figure 7: Fireplace in front classroom with stone surround and carved wood mantel.

Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations

Preservation Treatment Level

Angier Elementary School is still in use as part of the Newton school system, and as an active school has ever changing programming needs. To enable the school to continue to serve its primary educational function it is recommended that future work be performed according to the "Rehabilitation" Level of treatment outlined in the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. The Rehabilitation treatment allows for the building to be altered or added to through the construction of additions to support new uses while preserving those portions or features that convey the building's historic character.

The following bulleted list contains an analysis of existing conditions and recommended treatments for the significant features catalogued in Part 2 of this report.

Exterior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- Repair the bent and broken vertical mullion at rear basement window to prevent further water damage.
- The roof was not accessible for this survey. Water damage within the rear stair wells indicates possible roof leaks. Inspect the roof and repair as required.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Investigate patched cracks in mortar joints at the rear projection to confirm that there is no structural cause.
- Efflorescence, minor cast stone spalling and failing mortar joints in key locations indicate more water damage in some places than others. Provide weathercaps at sky-facing joints of the cornice of the main building and the low front projection. Provide flashing below the coping stones at the buttress steps.
- Efflorescence is present below each vertical mullion of aluminum windows. This is typical at all Newton schools with aluminum replacement windows, and appears indicative of water infiltration. Inspect all windows, including sealant joints, and repair as necessary.
- Remove rust and repaint all ferrous elements, including areaway grates and pipe railings.
- Review all conduits and other externally mounted elements. Remove extraneous ferrous elements. Replace elements in use with non-ferrous materials if possible, or maintain the paint coating.
- Replace the missing portion of pipe railing at the rear elevation ramp. Reset railings in the concrete ramp with a more appropriate detail. Coordinate with the concrete patch repair, below.
- Repair, resecure, or replace deteriorated wood elements as necessary. Paint all wood elements, including the original wood windows at the gymnasium, which appear to be in otherwise good condition.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Replace poorly matched brick and mortar typical at lintels of windows with no cast stone surround, at what appears to have been a previous steel lintel replacement. Tuck into adjacent brickwork.
- Replace broken bricks, primarily at the building corners.
- Remove the many poorly executed repointing campaigns, the latest of which is crumbling in some locations. Repoint the full building exterior with mortar to match the original composition and detailing.
- Repair spalled concrete and poor existing patching at the concrete areaways and ramp.

- Provide new cast stone coping with through-wall flashing at the parapet and at the front projection. New coping should match the original.
- Replace the spalled, non-original cast stone chimney coping with coping that matches the historic, overhanging profile. This may also help minimize the deterioration of mortar joints.
- Dutchman repair broken cast stone elements.
- Clean the building exterior, including:
 - General atmospheric staining: particularly at the cast stone entry surrounds.
 - Biological staining.
 - Efflorescence: minor and scattered instances.
 - Rust staining: below ferrous elements, including conduits.
- The original sconces over the front doors have been relocated to allow for the junction box at the top of the Tudor arch. Restore the sconces to their original condition and location.
- Conduct a thorough survey of window conditions, including the sash, frame, lintel and hardware. Initial exterior inspection indicates there may be some water infiltration into the vertical mullions, but otherwise the windows are generally in good condition. Evaluate the windows in conjunction with daylighting, ventilation and energy efficiency strategies (beyond the scope of this survey), to prioritize replacement. When replacing windows, install operable windows matching the appearance of the original windows.
- The grilles below some windows are not original. Evaluate their necessity in coordination with the HVAC strategy (beyond the scope of this survey) and window replacement plan (see previous entry). Replace with grilles that match the originals where appropriate. If the grilles are no longer necessary, tooth in brick infill to match the existing adjacent brickwork.
- The natural gas pipelines set behind bollards are very prominent at the front elevation. Investigate more appropriate locations.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance.

Interior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

- There is severe water damage along one wall in the north stair halls and adjacent classrooms. Repair the source, which is likely to be at the roof. Remove the spalled glazed tile, repair the wall behind as necessary, and provide new glazed tile to match the original.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- The Angier School was well-designed, and appears to be very well-constructed with qualities that are increasingly relevant again today, including daylighting, durability, and thermal mass. With the exception of the above-listed water damage, the building fabric is in excellent condition, with many years of serviceable life remaining. Conduct a space plan to address the current overcrowding and poor space allocation, and more appropriately utilize the unique, character-defining spaces and features to the advantage of the students and faculty. Consider the construction of a well-massed and sited addition, as has been successfully done at many of the other schools in the district.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Remove the dropped ceiling from the library to reveal the coffered ceiling and full height of the proscenium, wall panels, windows and pilasters.
- Refinish the wood floors in the basement classrooms.
- Repaint painted elements, including walls and radiators with peeling paint.
- Repaint metal stair elements, treads, and landings. Refinish wood handrails.

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- Investigate the necessity of dropped ceilings in the classrooms and corridors. If possible, restore the ceilings to their original height, exposing the full height of the windows and transoms. Coordinate with the window strategy in the exterior recommendations, above.
- Restore the library to its original finishes and paint colors, including at the decorative door trim and balcony.
- Investigate the purpose of the wall infill above the doors adjacent to the stage in the library. Repair infill, or restore to previous use as appropriate.
- Survey the condition of classroom and corridor cabinetry and display cases to ensure their working order. Repair as required.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features.