

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

Building Analysis

Education Center



Address: 100 Walnut Street
Year of Construction: 1921

Level of Significance: High

Recommended Treatment Level: Rehabilitation

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance

Building History

Originally the Frank Ashley Day Junior High School, a public school building designed in the English Revival style by the firm of Brainerd, Leeds and Kellogg, with additions built in 1934 and 1966. The building currently houses Education Department offices and the Newton Early Childhood Preschool.

The school, named after local resident and community benefactor Frank Ashley Day (1852-1914), was one of several school buildings constructed within Newton in the late 1920s through 1930s in response to the rapid population growth the city experienced beginning in the mid-1800s. After World War I, a period of time that saw limited public building construction, the need for new schools had become particularly acute. Eventually, fourteen new school buildings were constructed in Newton between 1921 and 1939 to meet this increased need.

The F.A. Day School was the first Junior High School in the City of Newton. It opened just four years after the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education issued its 1918 report, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, which recommended replacing the traditional 8-4 plan of education with the "6-3-3" plan. By introducing a junior high school into the educational system, students were able to make a more comfortable transition from elementary to high school.

The school was designed by Edmund I. Leeds of the Boston architectural firm of Brainerd, Leeds and Kellogg. Leeds was a lifelong Newton resident. He studied at MIT and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and won second prize in Boston's prestigious Rotch Traveling Scholarship in 1897. He and William Hungerford Brainerd went into practice together in 1900, along with Arthur J. Russell until 1905. Engineer A.S. Kellogg was a part of the practice from 1919-1922. The firm was known for its public and semi-public buildings, and has a number of buildings now on the National Register of Historic Places to its name.

The school expanded its footprint with a two-story addition in 1934, designed by Boston architect James H. Ritchie and Associates. Ritchie was born and educated in Scotland. From 1908 until his death in 1964, he practiced in Boston. During his career, he designed many institutional buildings, including several in Newton, and two houses for himself in Newton.

From approximately 1923-1927, Ritchie was in a partnership of Ritchie, Parsons & Taylor; during these years, his firm remodeled the Somerville City Hall (1923-4) and designed the Lexington High School (1924) and the Newton Centre Branch Library, now the Health Department Building (1927). In the years following this partnership, James H. Ritchie and Associates designed the Ward Elementary School (1928), the Police Headquarters and Courthouse (1931) and built an addition on the F.A. Day Junior High School, now known as the Education Center. Ritchie remained active until the early 1960s. His firm, later named The Ritchie Organization, is still in practice today, as TRO Jung|Brannen, one of the largest international architecture/engineering firms in the northeast.

Level of Significance

The original building is 90 years old and retains most of its original design features and materials. It was Newton's first Junior High School and an early example of this school type. The main building and its addition were well-designed by prominent local architects.

References

- Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Form B NWT.3637—100 Walnut Street" (1997, 1987).
Massachusetts Historical Commission, "Form B NWT.3606—225 Nevada St" (1987), 2.
National Register of Historic Places, Continuation Sheet. Newton 20th Century MRA Amendment. Newton, MA.
Lounsbury, John H. and Gordon F. Vars. "The Future of Middle Level Education: Optimistic and Pessimistic Views."
Middle School Journal. Volume 35, Number 2, November 2003.

<http://www.troj.com/history.aspx>

PART I - Analysis of Historical Significance: Historic Images

Additional Information Sources for Future Research

Historic Images



Figure 1: Image from 1925. Note pediment above entry bay. (Credit: Historic Newton)

Part 2 – Description of Historically Significant Features

Exterior Visual Character

Setting

- On a west-facing slope in a residential neighborhood. Playground to the south.

Shape

- Three-story rectangular block with side wings set at a 45 degree angle. A well-designed 1934 addition is located at the rear, but is not visible from the street elevation. Various smaller elements, possibly part of 1966 addition, are non-contributing.

Roof and Related Features

- Flat roof hidden behind parapet wall with cast stone copings. Metal cap covering parapet coping. No exterior gutters or leaders.

Openings

- The window openings typically consist of horizontal bands of one to five 6-over-6 double-hung windows with soldier course brick over steel lintels and cast stone sills. All the original windows have been insensitively replaced with shorter aluminum windows with thick vertical mullions and fixed transoms. Air conditioner units are visible at some sashes.
- The larger, cast stone quoin frame and mullions over the north entry originally held two 6-paned paned windows set over two 4-over-6 double-hung windows.
- Some windows along the rear of the south wing have been infilled with brick.
- At the 1934 rear wing, tall windows are set between brick buttresses.
- At the main entry a pair of paneled wood doors with six lights each are set within an elaborate stone surround. The doors have retained their original configuration; the transom and its muntins have been replaced with a single aluminum window.
- The north and east replacement doors and transom originally matched the front door. The north wing rear entry door and sidelight are not original.
- On both the north and south sides of the rear wing, a pronounced doorway exits out onto the roof of a lower projection.

Projections:

- The single story decorative limestone front entry vestibule includes scuppers at the crenelated parapet, carved seals and book, an arched doorway, and granite paving.
- A full-height projection marks the rear and side entries, with a cast stone north entry hood.

Trim and Secondary Features:

- Limestone and cast stone trim, beltcourses, shallow water table, spandrel panels, and buttress coping. The parapet coping, if it still exists, is covered in flashing
- The cornice is mostly cast stone but turns to brick at back elevations.
- A metal sign covers the original, carved school name at the parapet above the front door.
- Ferrous pipe rails at north exterior stair appear to be original

Materials

- Common bond brick with Flemish bond at every 8th course. Limestone and cast stone trim. Granite stairs and cheekwalls at south entry.

Craft Details

- Basketweave brick patterned panel at the north and south end facades.
- Cast stone panels, including stone seal and Tudor arches, at wall above front entry
- Simple cast stone panel set above side entries, within a frame of soldier course brick

Interior Visual Character

Individually Important Spaces

Corridors:

- Ceilings: plaster, with series of non-original linear fluorescent fixtures; original ceiling at third floor is hidden behind acoustical tile dropped ceiling
- Walls: glazed ceramic tile approximately 7' up the walls; painted exposed bricks above
- Floors: covered with non-original commercial carpet; quarry tile at the entry
- Doors: typically wood with 9 lights
- At the second floor corridor three half-round brick arches indicate the entry to the 1934 rear addition, now the Curriculum Resource Center, and the stairs to the first floor below. Two have transom panels with painted scenes, donated by the class of 1923 and 1924.
- There is a 12-pane window in the wall between the open stairway and the short corridor to the Curriculum Resource Center.
- Skylights above the third floor corridor have shed-roof profiles and wire glass.

Stair Halls:

- The stair halls are separated from the corridors with glazed walls, consisting of a pair of doors with 12 lights each, 4-pane sidelights and multi-pane transoms. This is typical for the Newton schools of this time period.
- Walls and ceilings consistent with those of the corridors
- Stairs: metal pan stairs with concrete treads and landings. Stained wood handrails.
- Radiators are located in built-in wall recesses, below large window.

Related Spaces

Other Significant Interior Features

Part 2 – Images



Figure 2: one of two murals within the arches above doorways. This one was given by the Class of 1923.



Figure 3: like many of Newton's school buildings of this era, the stairs are separated from the corridors with double doors, sidelights and transom panels.



Figure 4: the articulated main entrance bay. Note that the pediment has been removed. Compare with historic photo in Figure 1.



Figure 5: the north (shown) and south sides of the 1934 rear wing are articulated with tall windows between buttresses and a doorway above a lower volume.

Part 3 – Treatment Recommendations

Preservation Treatment Level

The Education Center is still in use as part of the Newton school system, and as an administrative center has ever changing programming needs. To enable the building to continue to serve its primary 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 which 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)

- The roof was not accessible for survey. Consistently missing mortar at brick cornice indicates there may be water damage resulting from problems at the roof. Inspect the roof, including interior drains, and repair as required.

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

- Joints are missing at cast stone and brick cornice. Repoint and install weather caps at sky-facing joints.
- 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.
- Investigate windows for cause of horizontal cracks in the water table above the windows; vertical cracks in the foundation below windows. Remedy, and repair cracks.
- Properly prepare and repoint cracked and missing mortar joints, which may be causing further water damage. If possible, coordinate with full building repointing, below. Includes:
 - rear stair. Evidence of previous center handrail. Repair cracking.
 - below scuppers at entry vestibule. Indicates not enough of a drip edge at scupper. Investigate appropriate details to remedy.
 - granite coping of rear stair cheek walls: provide through-wall flashing below coping.
- Remove rust and repaint all ferrous elements, including pipe rails.
- Replace in kind missing railing at rear stair.
- Investigate source of water damage at concrete stairs, including detailing and remedy.
- Repair poor patches and considerable cracking, including at concrete stairs, foundation, pipe penetrations.

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Remove extraneous ferrous elements from building exterior. Patch as required.
- Evaluate whether exposed conduit is necessary. If not, replace with more appropriate solution. If so, consider replacing with non-rusting metal conduit.
- Non-original grilles below window bays. Coordinate with HVAC strategy (beyond the scope of this survey) and replacement of windows with operable windows to match original. If grilles are no longer necessary tooth in brick infill to match existing adjacent brickwork.
- Repair copper louvers at rear wing.
- Soldier course at window lintels has been extended inconsistently beyond edge of windows. Restore to original width. Reset remaining bricks to tooth into field.
- Replace broken bricks (minimal); reset loose bricks at base of rear stair cheek walls.

- Replace cast stone at water table where previously replaced with brick, above the new basement windows, rear wing. Repair chipped concrete lid at non-original brick “box” at north entry.
- Provide Dutchman repair at broken granite coping due to rusted handrail fasteners.
- Remove sloppy, non-original pointing. Properly prepare and repoint whole building exterior.
- Remove sealant at ghosting of non-extant, non-original shed roof with large overhangs over 2nd floor window, south wing.
- Clean building exterior, including:
 - Efflorescence: including below the vertical aluminum window mullions; at exterior stairs.
 - Rust staining: at rear stairs, pipe rails, conduit and other ferrous elements; severe at rear wing
 - Copper staining: including at entry vestibule.
 - Water staining: including at entry vestibule
 - Biological staining: at cornice; at water table, at foundation, granite cheek walls of south wing
 - General staining

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Maintain clog-free drains, including at roof and exterior basement stairs.
- Monitor spalled limestone at front entry. Use non-salt deicer to prevent further damage.
- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features.

Interior Recommendations

Critical/Urgent (Timeframe: As soon as possible)

First Priority (Timeframe: 1-3 years)

Second Priority (Timeframe: 3-5 years)

- Stair treads and landings appear to have had an applied coating; coating is very scratched and worn. Clean, apply finish coating.
- Railings are generally in good condition. Repaint metal stair elements. Clean and refinish wood handrails.
- Some of the doors, including those between the stairs and corridors, are worn. Repair and refinish.

Maintenance (Timeframe: Ongoing)

- Continue regular maintenance of character-defining features.