

INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

NHDHR INV. NUMBER: CON0163

Name, Location, Ownership

1. Historic name: Dewey School
2. District or area: Upper West End Historic Neighborhood
3. Street and number: 38 Liberty Street
4. City or town: Concord
5. County: Merrimack
6. Current owner: Concord School District

Function or Use

7. Current use(s): vacant
8. Historic use(s): education

Architectural Information

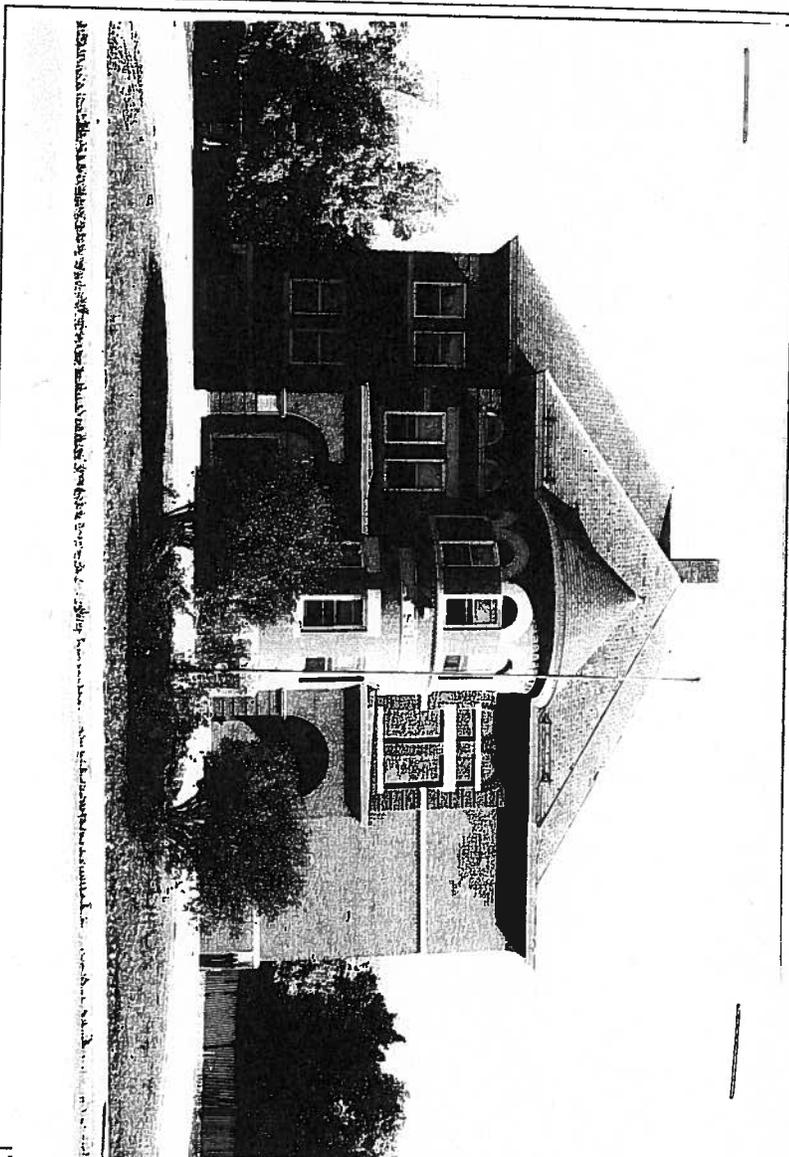
9. Style/type: Romanesque Revival
10. Architect/builder: James Randlett, arch.
11. Source: research
12. Construction date: 1900
13. Source: Research
14. Alterations, with dates: 1958
15. Moved? no yes date: _____

Exterior Features

16. Foundation: brick
17. Cladding: brick
18. Roof material: slate
19. Chimney material: brick
20. Type of roof: hip
21. Chimney location: ridge
22. Number of stories: 2
23. Entry location: west elevation
24. Windows: 1/1
- Replacement? no yes date: ca. 1989

Site Features

25. Setting: residential neighborhood
26. Outbuildings: none
27. Landscape features: none
28. Acreage: 1 acres

**Description**

35. Photo #1: Front (west) elevation 36. Date Nov 2007
37. Roll #1 Frame #15 Direction: E
38. Negative stored at: NHDHR

29. Tax map/parcel: 49-1-1
- 30 UTM reference: 19.292930/4786380
31. USGS quadrangle and scale: Concord, 1:24000

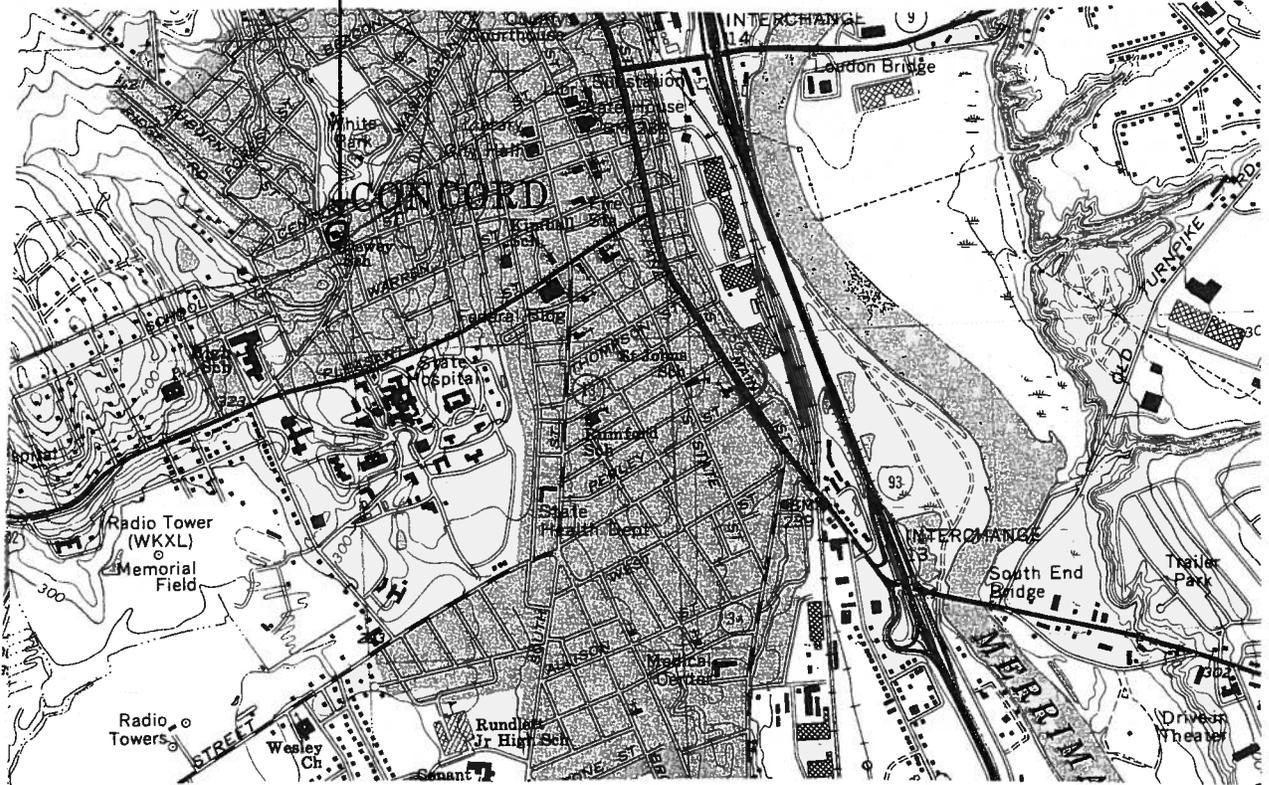
Form prepared by

32. Name: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen
33. Organization: Preservation Consultant
34. Date of survey: December 2007

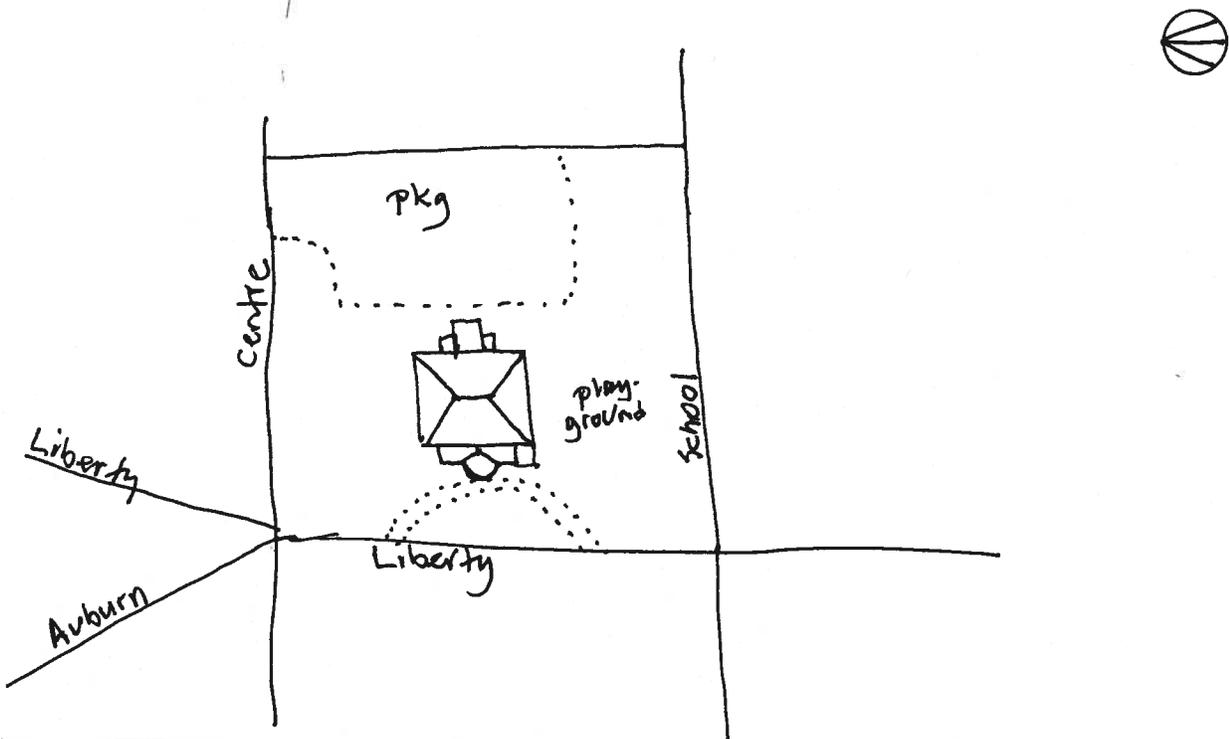
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39. LOCATION MAP:



40. PROPERTY MAP:



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41. Historical Background and Role in the Town or City's Development:

Dewey School was constructed in response to the rapid residential development in Concord's West End at the turn of the 20th century. In 1884, city laid out White Park, what is considered the first planned urban park in New Hampshire, on land donated by Armenia White. Six years later, William Fiske Thayer and three others purchased a large tract of land known as the West End, which extended from Liberty to Westbourne Streets—large enough to accommodate 120 house lots. Thayer erected a spacious residence for himself at 115 School Street and was soon joined by other prominent businessmen, professionals and civic leaders. With this growth and influx of influential citizens expecting commodious, modern, civic amenities, the existing, but modest, Bow Brook Schoolhouse no longer sufficed.¹

On June 27, 1898, following several years of discussion, Concord's Union School District voted to appropriate \$35,000 to purchase land and construct a new school building in the West End. Four months later, the district reduced the amount to \$30,000 and instructed its committee to purchase the west half of "the city lot," which was bounded by Centre, Liberty and School streets. The district also directed that the new school be built of local brick with local granite trim and employ local architects, builders and tradesmen in its construction.²

The site was a knoll of rocky marl (a mix of clay and calcium carbonate) that rose ten feet above the street level. Before construction could start, the district had to hire George Theobald to clear some 4,000 cubic yards of material—an expensive, difficult and unexpectedly time-consuming grading job. It wasn't until the spring of 1900 that work could begin on the actual building.³ Local architect James E. Randlett designed the new school. Randlett's work was well known in Concord; both as a solo practitioner and in partnership at various points with other local architects, George Griffin and Edward Dow, he drew plans for a number of the city's buildings, including the Cogswell School (1895), Rumford School (1902), City Stables (1905) and Garrison School (1906).⁴ The district selected J.L.A. Chellis as principal contractor, who charged just under \$20,000 for his work. Rowell & Plummer did the brickwork; Thomas Fox provided the granite stonework, and the slate roofing was executed by W.E. Darrah, all of Concord. The new school was dedicated on January 31, 1901. Dewey School was named for Reverend Harry P. Dewey, who served on the Board of Education from 1890-1899 and was a former pastor of South Congregational Church.

The new building was equipped with four schoolrooms—two on each floor—as well as two smaller rooms used for recitations, physical or industrial training, or other purposes. A light-filled basement provided play space in inclement weather. The building served both as an

¹ Hengen, 1988; 1904 *Annual School Report*. Dewey School was one of eight new schools erected within a period of sixteen years, reflecting the city's rapid population growth and need for larger, more modern schools.

² "Report of the Building Committee." In 1900 *Annual School Report*. One of the three members of the building committee was William Fiske Thayer, the developer of the neighborhood.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Hengen, "Concord Architect Files." Unpublished mss. The Cogswell School, which stood at the southeast corner of Broadway and West Streets, is no longer standing.

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elementary school and, for a period when it first opened, as a training school for primary teachers.⁵

Almost immediately after opening, the school was deemed crowded, and the district expressed concern that it should have been double in size. However, predicting enrollment proved difficult, as by 1908, school reports indicate they were in decline across the city.⁶ It was not until 1954 that overcrowding became sufficiently serious that one grade was relocated to Kimball School on North Spring Street. Even that move, however, did not solve the problem, and in 1958, the district planned to enlarge Dewey. Anderson and Nichols, an architectural and engineering firm from Boston with a Concord office, drew up plans that called for filling in the northwest and southwest corners and relocating the west entrances to a single entrance in the bowed bay. Above the original entrances, the windows were to be bricked up. A rear stair tower would offer a second means of egress. The additions would result in an additional two classrooms on each floor, for a total of eight. Whether the district resisted the ultimate cost, or whether the expansion was deemed excessive, is unknown, but only the southwest corner addition, yielding one new classroom per floor, as well as the stair tower, were constructed. The basement was remodeled to create a large multi-purpose room. The building also received a new heating system, rear stairwell, fire alarm bells, improved toilets, asphalt tile floors and fresh paint. That fall, the school opened to 171 students from K-3.⁷

Dewey School remained in continuous use as an elementary school until the end of the 2004 school year, when declining enrollments caused the school district to close it. For at least the previous fifteen years, only kindergarten and first grade students used the building.

42. Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts:

Elementary and secondary education, 1770-present.

43. Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation:

Dewey School is prominently located on the southeast corner of Centre and Liberty Streets, across from White Park; it faces west toward Liberty Street. Its one-acre lot is open and slopes steeply to the east to expose fully the basement level. A circular drive off Liberty Street accesses the front entrance, and a small parking area is located east of the building, accessed from Centre Street. South of the school there is a playground area.

The building is a two-story brick structure trimmed with Concord granite that terminates in a steep hip roof covered with slate. A brick chimney rises from the ridge. Window openings on the first story are flat-topped, while on the second they are arched with accentuating decorative brickwork. The exposed basement windows have segmentally arched openings. Additional ornamental use of brick appears in quoins, and an arched corbel cornice. The 1/1 sash dates from

⁵ "Report of the Building Committee." In 1900 *Annual School Report*; Lyford, 1902: 1294. The training school moved to Dewey from a school on Franklin Street.

⁶ 1905 & 1908 *Annual School Reports*.

⁷ 1958-59 *Annual School Reports*.

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the late 1980s, at which time the circular transoms on the second floor, once glazed, were infilled. A granite belt course extends around the building at the level of the second story sills, as well as above the basement level. Granite is also used for first story window sills, which are both individual and shared.

The west elevation, which contains twin front entrances, is prominently treated. A hip-roof pavilion features a conical-roof, centrally positioned, bowed bay that is flanked by one-story brick, arched, entry porticoes. Within the bowed bay, "Dewey School" appears on a granite tablet; above it is a band of arched windows with granite heads. One-story, arched, brick porticoes flank the bowed bay and provide access to the entrances. The northern entrance has a replacement glass and aluminum door system; the southern entrance has been bricked in since 1958, as have the window openings immediately above. At the southwest corner of the building, just right of the pavilion, there is a two-story, flat-roof addition that was erected in 1958. It lacks fenestration on the west side, but continues the original window pattern on the south.

The south and north side elevations are identical: two groups of three windows light each floor and are spaced apart by solid brick in the middle of the wall. The basement windows are fully visible on each side elevation. The rear (east) elevation has a facade gable in the middle, punctuated by four arched windows. Two brick entry porticoes that match those on the front shelter the two basement entrances, each of which has a replacement glass and aluminum door system. Between them is a three-story, brick tower that was added in 1958.

44. National or State Register Criteria Statement of Significance:

Criterion A: Dewey School is individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion A as an excellent representative example of the local school buildings erected in the City of Concord between 1890 and 1906. During that period, one of rapid development, the school district erected eight brick school houses, of which five remain: Dewey, Rumford (1902), Kimball (1905-07), Morrill Manual Training School on North Spring Street (1906-07), and Garrison (1906, West Concord). (No longer extant are the first Kimball School, built in 1890 on the site of Kimball Park on North Spring Street; Parker School, built on the corner of School, Green and State Streets for the high school in 1890 and later converted to ninth grade; and Cogswell School, which was erected in 1895 on the southeast corner of Broadway and West Streets.)

Dewey School is also eligible as a contributing building within the Upper West End Historic Neighborhood, which was identified as a potentially eligible National Register historic district in *Concord Master Plan 2030* (draft dated November 16, 2007).

Criterion B: Dewey School is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion B, as it lacks direct associations with people that have played a notable role in local or state history.

Criterion C: Dewey School is individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. It retains a high level of integrity and is an excellent example of Romanesque Revival school architecture from the turn-of-the-20th century. Character-defining features include its brick walls and decorative work, slate-clad hip roof, bowed facade bay, arched windows and entry porticoes,

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granite trim and overall massing. It was clearly designed and sited to be a prominent part of the stylish residential neighborhood in which it was located.

45. Period of Significance:

- A: 1901-2004 (the period during which the building functioned as a school)
- C: 1900 (the year in which it was constructed)

46. Statement of Integrity:

Despite alterations undertaken in 1958 and the more recent loss of historic window sash, Dewey School retains overall integrity of integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling and association.

47. Boundary Discussion:

The eligible boundary is the one-acre lot on which the school is located.

48. Bibliography and/or References:

City of Concord, *Annual School Reports*, 1898-1959.

"The Dewey School, Concord, NH." Dedication, January 31, 1901. On file at State Library.

Hengen, Elizabeth Durfee, "115 School Street," 1988. Inventory form on file at NH Division of Historical Resources.

Lyford, James O., ed., *History of Concord, NH*. Concord: Rumford Press, 1903, 2 vols.

Ordway, John C., *History of the Concord Schools, Public and Private, 1731-1900*. Rumford Press, 1903.

Maps & Plans

Building elevation and floor plans for 1958 remodeling. Drawn by Anderson & Nichols, May 5, 1958. On file with Concord SAU offices.

Sanborn Insurance Maps, 1906, 1914, 1928

Surveyor's Evaluation

NR listed: individual
 within district

Integrity: yes
 no

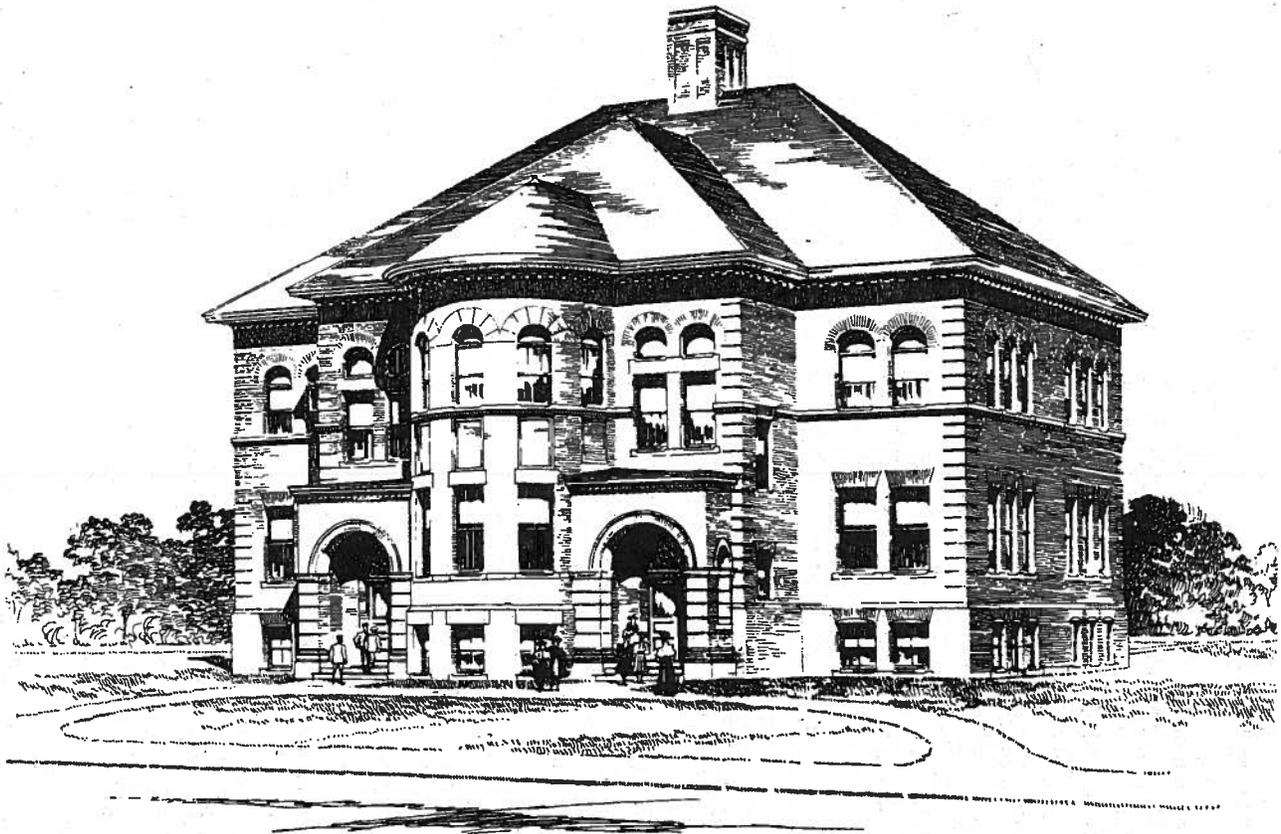
NR eligible: individual
 within district
 not eligible
 more info needed

NR Criteria: A
 B
 C
 D
 E

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Architect's drawing of Dewey School, 1900
from Ordway's *History of the Schools*, p. 102

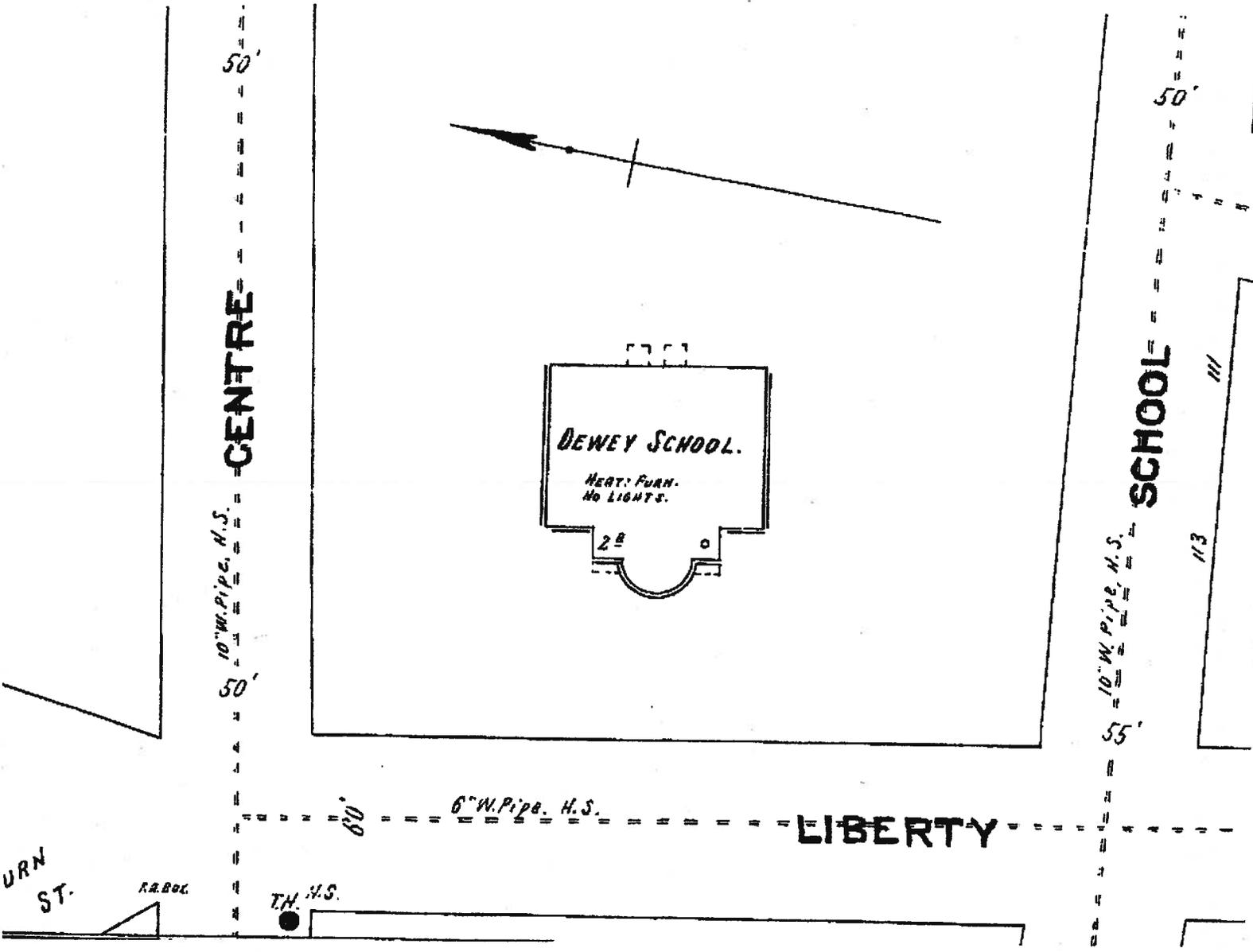


DEWEY SCHOOL.

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Sanborn Insurance Map, 1906
showing Dewey School as originally constructed



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Photo 2 description: West (front) and south elevations, showing 1958 infill in SW corner
Roll: 1 Frame: 17 Direction: NE

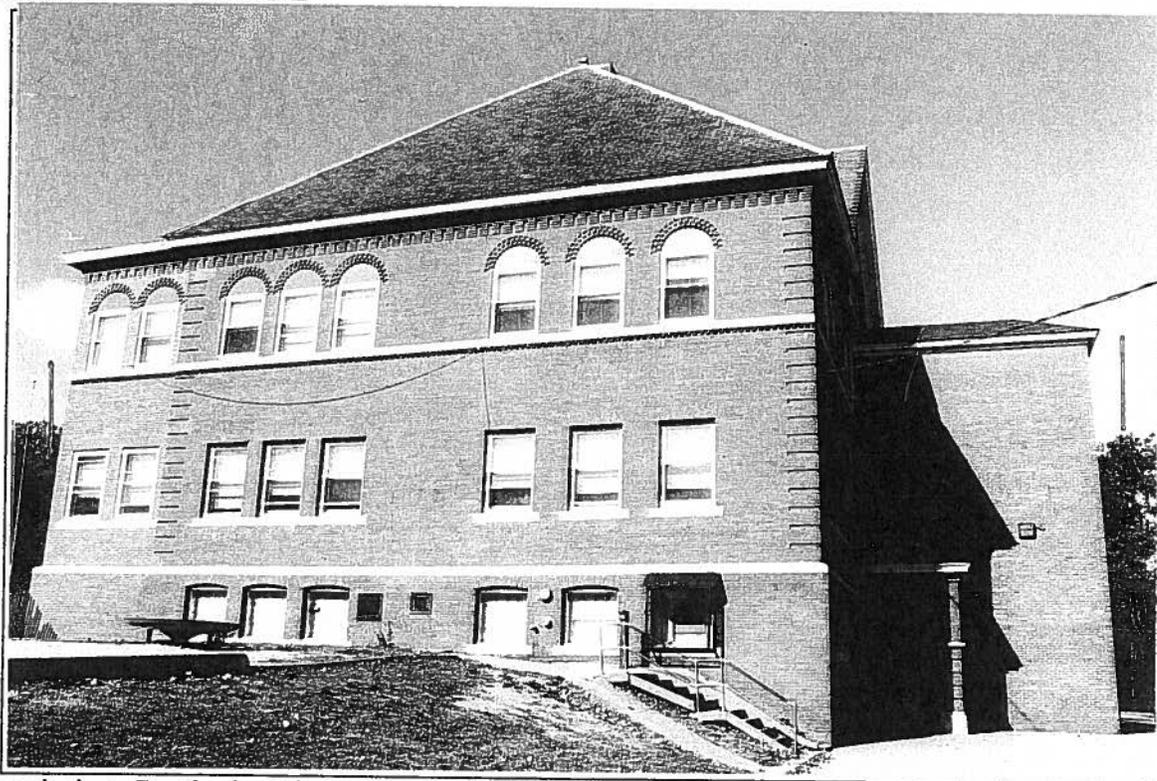


Photo 3 description: South elevation, showing 1958 infill (at left) and stair tower (at right)
Roll: 1 Frame: 19 Direction: N

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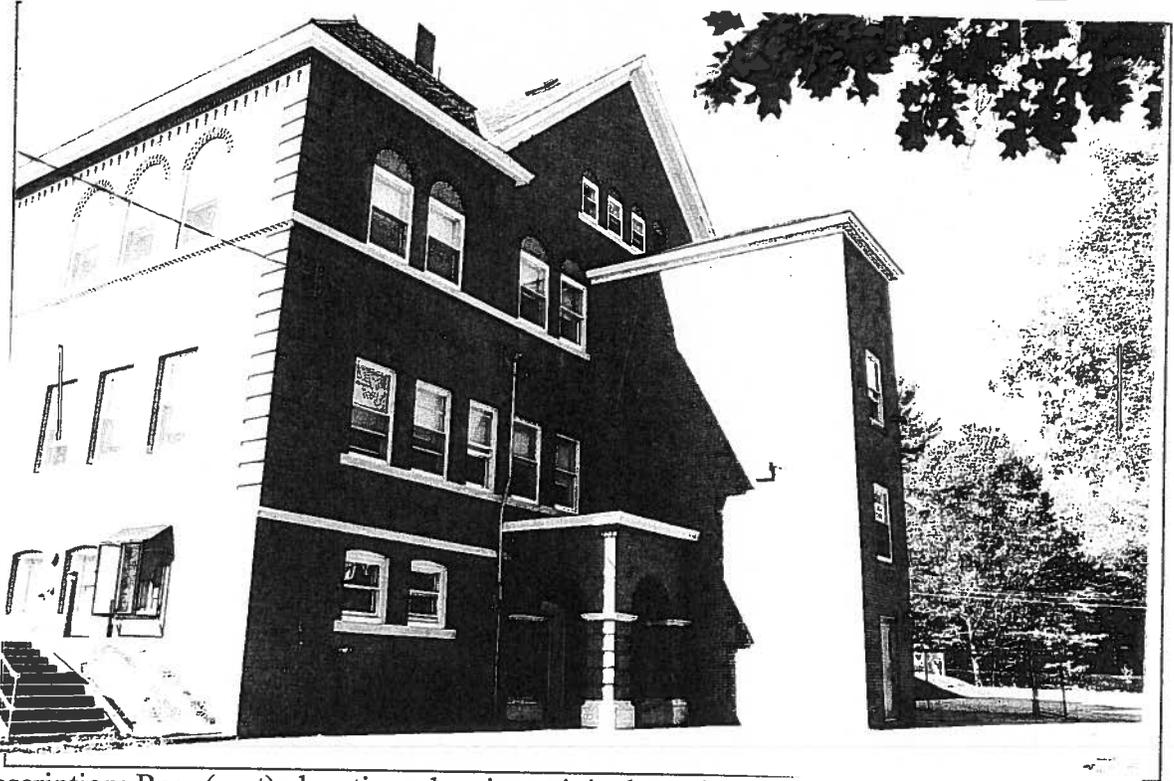


Photo 4 description: Rear (east) elevation, showing original porch entry and 1958 stair tower
Roll: 1 Frame: 20 Direction: NW



Photo 5 description: Rear (east) elevation, showing original portico entry, and north elevation
Roll: 1 Frame: 21 Direction: SW

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Address: 38 Liberty St., Concord Date taken: November 2007 Negative stored at: NHDHR



Photo 6 description: Looking toward Centre-Liberty-Auburn intersection, showing Auburn St. in background

Roll: 1 Frame: 22 Direction: N