

INDIVIDUAL INVENTORY FORM

NHDHR INVENTORY NUMBER: CON0199

Name, Location, Ownership

1. Historic name: Walker School
2. District or area: North End
3. Street and number: 4 Church St.
4. City or town: Concord
5. County: Merrimack
6. Current owner: Concord School District

Function or Use

7. Current use(s): School
8. Historic use(s): School

Architectural Information

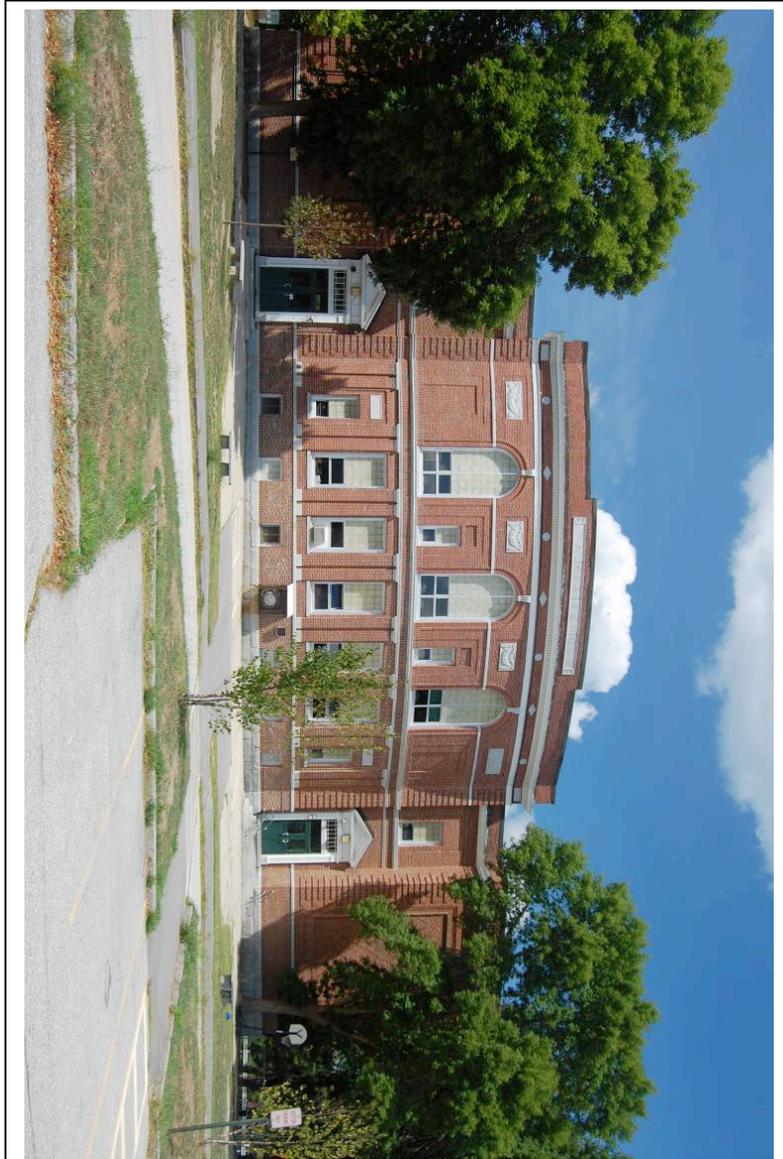
9. Style/type: Beaux-Arts
10. Architect/builder: Huse T. Blanchard
11. Source: Concord Annual Report, 1915
12. Construction date: 1914-1915
13. Source: Concord Annual Report, 1915
14. Alterations, with dates: sash (1976)
15. Moved? no yes date:

Exterior Features

16. Foundation: brick & granite
17. Cladding: brick
18. Roof material: tar & gravel, rubber
19. Chimney material: brick
20. Type of roof: flat
21. Chimney location: center, toward rear
22. Number of stories: 2 1/2
23. Entry location: façade & rear: off center, paired
24. Windows: translucent panel above hopper
Replacement? no yes 1976

Site Features

25. Setting: city neighborhood
26. Outbuildings: none
27. Landscape features: historical monuments & memorial benches
28. Acreage: 1.6 acres
29. Tax map/parcel: 59/3/1

**Description** Façade (south elevation)

35. Photo #1

36. Date August 2010

37. Direction: N

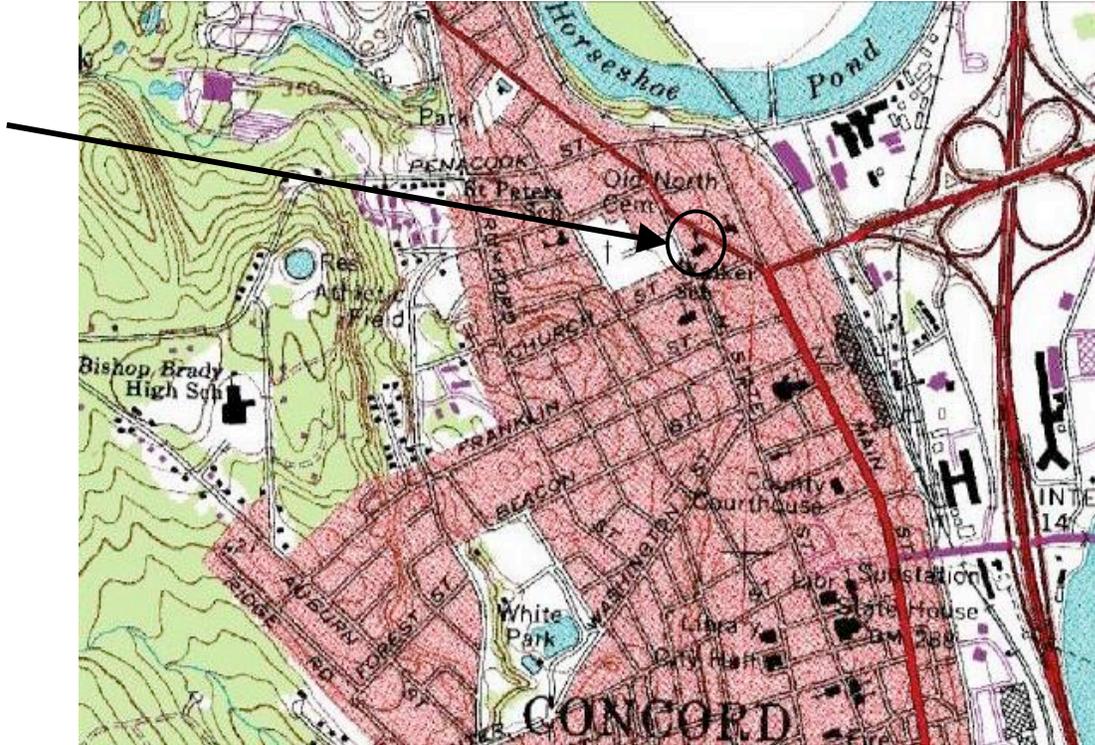
I, Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, confirm that the photos in this inventory form have not been digitally manipulated and that they conform to the standards set forth in the NHDHR Draft Digital Photo Policy (3/1/09-1/31/10). My camera was set to the following minimal specifications: 1496 x 2256/300ppi. These photos were printed at the following commercial printer: Concord Camera.

30. UTM reference: 19.293405/478742031. USGS quadrangle and scale: Concord, 1:24000**Form prepared by**32. Name: Elizabeth Durfee Hengen with Sarah Dangelas Hofe33. Organization: Preservation Consultant34. Date of survey: July-September 2010

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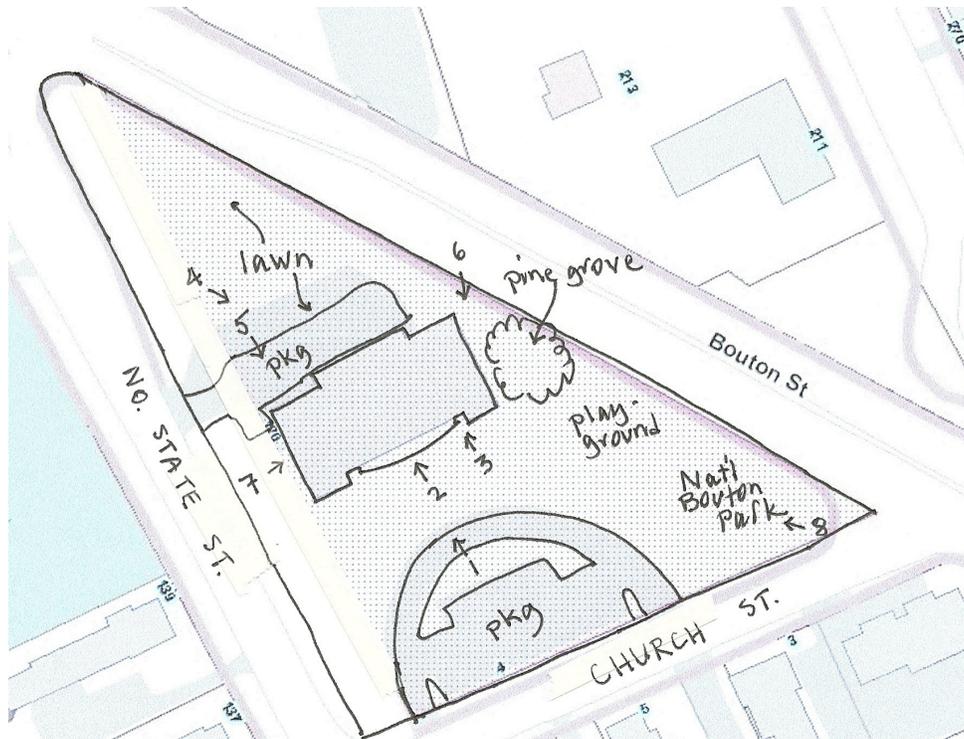
39. LOCATION MAP: USGS Map, Concord Quad, 1985



40. PROPERTY MAP:



NB: Building Description assumes building faces due south



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

Over a period of 100 years, Concord schools underwent two major and one minor construction campaigns to meet the ever-increasing student population. Yet, despite the seeming abundance of new schools, many of them were overcrowded within a few years of their opening.¹

The first flurry occurred during the late 1850s and into the late 1870s, in response to the dramatic growth caused by the arrival of the railroad. At least sixteen new schools were erected, most of which replaced overcrowded or outmoded wooden schoolhouses, in some instances with brick buildings: Rumford School (1858), Merrimack School (1858, still standing on Beacon Street), Eleven Lots School (1858), District No. 3 School (1862, still standing on Knight Street in West Concord), Third High School (1864, burned 1888), Bow Brook Schoolhouse (1864), Franklin Street School (1865), District No. 22 Schoolhouse (1867, Heights), Penacook School (1870, South State & West streets), District No. 1 Schoolhouse (1870, Horse Hill), Eastman School (1870), Walker School (1873), Dame School (1873), District No. 13 (1873, Sewalls Falls), Summer Street School (1877 and still standing at 12 Cross Street in Penacook), and Chandler School (1878, South & Fayette streets).²

Concord's growth at the end of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, fuelled in large part by the city's prosperous and varied industries, compelled a second building campaign that included eleven new schoolhouses within twenty-five years. Starting in 1889 with Franklin School, the flurry of construction followed with Parker School (erected as the fourth high school, 1890), the original Kimball [elementary] School (1890), Cogswell School (1895), Dewey School (1900 and still standing on Liberty Street), Rumford School (1902 and still standing on Thorndike Street but to be vacated in 2012), the first Harriet P. Dame School (1904), Garrison School (1905-06, still standing at 17 Knight Street in West Concord), a fifth high school, present-day Kimball School (1907, still standing at 17 North Spring Street but slated for demolition in late 2010), Morrill Manual Training School (1907, still standing at 16 Rumford Street but slated for demolition in late 2010), and the subject property Walker School (1915, still standing at 4 Church Street but to be vacated in 2012).

The period 1923-1942, when the city underwent a population bubble between the wars, saw the erection of yet six more schools: Millville School (1923, still standing at 2 Fisk Road), the sixth Concord High School (1927, still standing at 170 Warren Street), Conant School (1929, still standing at 152 South Street but slated for demolition in 2012), Eastman School (1936, still standing at 15 Shawmut Street but to be vacated in 2012), Penacook High School (1936, now Washington Street School and still standing at 26 Washington Street in Penacook) and a new Harriet P. Dame School (1942, still standing at 14 Canterbury Road but to be vacated in 2012).

The majority of the two latter building booms can be credited to the progressive vision of Louis J. Rundlett, who served as superintendent for almost fifty years, from 1885 to his death

¹ Of these twentieth century schools, only Dewey and Millville served developing neighborhoods; the remainder replaced earlier schools on or near their site. Interestingly, many of the schools that replaced an older one on or near the same site, it retained the earlier name.

² The Merrimack and Rumford schools were constructed from the same set of plans. [Lyford, 1903: 1255]

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in 1934. Rundlett was a powerful man in Concord and his legacy can still be seen in these buildings and in some of the educational activity in the city.³

Walker School is the second schoolhouse of that name on this site and serving Concord's North End. However, the history of this site dates back to the city's early settlement years, when the first framed meeting house, known as the North Meeting House, was erected here in 1751, used as a place of worship by the entire community. In addition to its ecclesiastical use, the building functioned as the town meeting hall and even the state meeting hall in the late 18th century. It was here that New Hampshire's state convention ratified the United States Constitution in 1788. After the separation of church and state, the building was occupied by the Methodist General Biblical Institute from 1847 to 1867. Three years later, it burned, and Concord's Union School District purchased the site for a schoolhouse.

That first Walker School, built in 1873, was a 2 ½ story, mansard-roof building with a center tower. With four classrooms, it replaced an older brick school that had stood on State Street since 1820. In 1892, a kindergarten class was introduced to the school. Concord had been the first city in the state to establish kindergarten as a part of the public school system. The kindergarten class was put in the Chandler School the previous year.⁴

The new school was named for Reverend Timothy Walker, the town's first settled minister and spiritual leader of the new community; ordained in 1730, he served as minister for fifty-two years. Walker not only preached on this site, but lived nearby at 276 North Main Street.

The first Walker School educated North End students for over sixty years, but with an average of forty-seven pupils to a room, was deemed overcrowded by at least 1885, when the top floor was renovated for classrooms.⁵

It took several more years, however, before the issue was addressed. In April of 1913, the city finally passed a warrant article to build a new Walker School. Proceeds from the sales of the abandoned Merrimack and Tahanto school lots (\$4,250) was put to the new Walker school.⁶

The article called for a building that could accommodate at least 450 pupils, "either by altering and adding to the building now standing on said lot or by the erection of a new building as the Board of Education may by vote determine." The result was a resolution to "build a new school building of granite (of the rock face, broken, ashlar type, with Hammond trimmings), using the brick in the old building for interior walls, said building to be sufficiently monumental to properly mark the spot where legislature of this state ratified the constitution of the United States."⁷

In August, 1913, the drawings for the new school were on public display in the window of Martin's drug store downtown. The architect was Huse Templeton Blanchard, an 1897 graduate of Concord High School, practicing at the time in New York City. The newspaper reported that it was a "pleasing design" with the rear of the building nearly as attractive as the front. The façade

³ Bourassa, Cheryl, "Repeating the Course." In *Crosscurrents of Change: Concord, N.H. in the 20th Century*. Forthcoming publication of Concord Historical Society, 2010.

⁴ Ordway: 1903: 1297.

⁵ Ordway: 1272.

⁶ *Concord Annual Reports*, 1900: 157; 1913: 189-190; 1915: 80-82.

⁷ *Concord Annual Report*, 1913: 189-190.

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was to be “some distance” south (further forward) of the older school’s front line. Safeguards from fire, and ample access to sunlight and good air were of primary concern.⁸ The ventilation of school buildings had been an expressed concern as far back as 1820-30, when open fireplaces with large chimneys were replaced by cast-iron stoves. With the loss of a chimney’s natural ventilation, the need for an improved better fresh air supply was quickly realized. Various early solutions included making the upper window sash operable (previously immovable) and installing transoms over doors. By 1870 and through the late 19th century, a variety of patented ventilation systems were experimented with in the city’s schools.⁹

During the summer of 1914, the contractor, Hutchinson Building Co., of Concord, dismantled the old Walker school house. That fall, about 150 pupils were displaced—sent to the Chandler, Kimball, Dewey, Franklin, Merrimack and Tahanto schoolhouses. The new school opened on February 1, 1915 with 334 students, and a public dedication ceremony held a week later. The address that provoked most interest was that of Rev. George H. Reed, who promoted a plan for an apolitical, cooperative parent-teacher association, a new idea at the time.¹⁰ With the completion of Walker School, the Board of Education declared that “no group of pupils [is now] occupying an inadequate and unfit building.”¹¹

The two main floors of the building held a kindergarten, six classrooms on each floor and a 500-student-capacity assembly hall. In addition, a teachers’ room was on either side of the auditorium. Classrooms were outfitted with “Moulthrop movable chairs,” the latest in school furniture. Each hallway had two drinking fountains. The kindergarten, in particular, was noteworthy. It occupied the entire space within the bowed front wall on the first floor and was touted by the district as “one of the most commodious in the country.” With fifty-six children, it was certainly the largest in the district. (The space was considered capable of accommodating seventy-five.) It also had its own bathroom.¹²

The basement had the lavatories, mechanical systems (including a steam heating plant fueled with coal installed by Stone & Underhill, of Boston), and janitor’s room, as well as rooms used for early manual training. Those classes included domestic science (or cooking) and woodworking. A teacher from the Morrill Manual Training School (now Morrill Building) was sent over to teach the classes, attended by elementary students from Walker, Eastman, St. John’s and Garrison schools. The woodworking room was located near the stairs to allow easy access without disturbing the rest of the school and fitted out with fifteen work benches brought over from the basement of the high school (the building currently called Kimball School).¹³ All of the basement rooms had a telephone connection.¹⁴ A sewing room, also part of the manual training program, was located in an as yet unoccupied upstairs classroom and held twenty-four individual sewing tables.

The building committee, made up of Omar S. Swenson, Harry H. Dudley and Dr. Dennis E. Sullivan, had sought to erect a building that would both alleviate overcrowding in a handful of

⁸ *Concord Monitor*, 20 August 1913: 2.

⁹ Ordway, 1903: 1304.

¹⁰ *Concord Annual Reports*, 1913: 95-96; 1915: 80-82; *Concord Monitor*, 9 February 1915: 7.

¹¹ *Concord Annual Report*, 1914: 59.

¹² *Concord Annual Reports*, 1914: 74, 76; 1915: 88.

¹³ *Concord Monitor*, 20 August 1913: 2; 9 February 1915: 7.

¹⁴ *Concord Annual Report*, 1914: 108-9.

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Concord's schools and also accommodate future growth in population. The opening of a new box factory in the North End was a concern at the time, though it was not expected to create a large increase in the population. The final design resulted in a building deemed large enough to accommodate future growth, with several rooms not in use at the outset. It allowed for future additions to the north or south walls of the end pavilions without affecting interior light conditions.¹⁵

The new school was also touted for its modern, fireproof construction: it had brick walls, steel frame, concrete floors, brick and hollow tile partitions, and steel and concrete stairways. Wood was limited to flooring (birch), interior finishes (doors, windows and their frames) and the roof. Standpipes ran through the building and hose and nozzles were found on each floor. With four exits to the building—two on the north and two on the south—and doors fitted with panic bolts, congestion en route to the doorways was deemed practically impossible.

Sweeping general repairs were made to all of the Concord schools in 1922 and 1923 after the Board of Education engaged local architect George W. Griffin to inspect and evaluate all of the schoolhouses. The repairs for Walker school were among the most costly at over \$3,200. The work included painting, plumbing, and water-proofing, as well as other unspecified work.¹⁶

Ca. 1950, the cafeteria in the basement was enlarged. By 1953, the school was arranged as twelve classrooms, plus a kindergarten and a general purpose room.¹⁷ The windows in the auditorium were replaced by the Kalwall Corporation of Manchester in 1976 with an upper translucent panel and lower hoppers.¹⁸

As early as 1915 the school grounds were used for commemorative plaques. That year, the Rumford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed the first marker on the grounds. In 2004, the southeast corner was dedicated as Nathaniel Bouton Park, given to the city by Dick and Roddy Flanders Ashley.

42. Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts:

105. Elementary and secondary education, 1770-present.

43. Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation:

NB: Building Description assumes building faces due south

Walker School is located on a triangular 1.6-acre lot that is bounded by streets on all sides: Church Street to the south, Bouton Street to the east, and North State Street to the west. Much of the lot is encircled with a chain link fence. A circular drive with adjacent parking off Church Street accesses the building. The area west and north of the building is lawn, with parking close by the school. East of the school there is a playground between a pine grove to the north and a group of commemorative monuments set in a landscaped park known as Nathaniel Bouton Park.

¹⁵ *Concord Annual Reports*, 1913: 95-96; 1914: 61-63, 162; 1915: 8.

¹⁶ *Concord Annual Reports*, 1922: 63; 1923: 72.

¹⁷ "A Report to the Citizens of Concord," in *Concord Monitor* September 1953 (four-part series).

¹⁸ *School District Annual Report*, 1955: 20; 1976 Drawings on file at SAU Maintenance. Penacook's Summer Street School received similar sash at this time. The translucent panels were both manufactured and installed by the Kalwall Corporation in Manchester, NH, which was one of two leading producers of this product. Though they dramatically affected the original appearance, these fiber-reinforced translucent sheets were popular for window sash replacement due to their strength and light-transmitting qualities.

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One monument, a bronze and metal plaque set in a mounted boulder and dating from 1962, honors the North Meeting House, which stood on this site 1751-1870, and local Revolutionary War soldiers; it is a replacement for an earlier marker erected by the DAR in 1915. A second recognizes the two former buildings on the site, the meeting house and the first Walker School, and includes images of each and the inscription that was over the entrance of that school. The third monument, installed in 2004, identifies the park by name and its donors, Dick and Roddy Flanders Ashley. Several memorial benches are also scattered within the park, as well as near the school's main entrance.

The school is a two-story, flat-roof, symmetrically organized, brick structure designed in the Beaux-Arts vernacular. Its raised basement is punctured with windows and rests on a double row of rock-faced granite blocks. Windows have flared brick lintels, vary in size and have replacement sash throughout: translucent panels made by Kalwall above one or two hopper sash below (installed in 1976). (The original sash was multi-paned; the arched windows had glazed fanlights.) Dressed granite is used for the water table, window sills, and appears extensively on the façade, as described below. A molded wooden cornice encircles the building and all outer corners are defined with brick quoins. A rectangular brick chimney, open at the cap, rises from the back roof of the building.

The south-facing façade consists of a broad, bowed, taller center section and end pavilions with a short connecting link that contains the two front entrances. Each entrance features a pediment above a classical surround. The main cornice, as well as the rakes of the pediment, are denticulated. Paneled pilasters frame the doorway, terminating in fluted capitals. Above each pilaster, in the frieze, is a Federal type oval set in a panel. The double doors are aluminum, set below a single-light replacement transom. (Historically, the doors were wooden and filled the entire opening.) The primary transom, just beneath the entablature, is original; its muntins form a grid pattern. The center bow is the focal point of the façade. The two main stories have tall window openings that are arched on the top story. First story window bays are divided by paired brick pilasters with dressed granite caps and bases. Second story windows alternate a large arched opening trimmed with two brick courses and capped by a curved, granite keystone with a diminutive opening with recessed brick panel above. Between each arch there is a recessed granite panel filled with swags. A double granite belt course with a row of bricks laid vertically separates the stories. Above the top story a parapet crowned with a molded and denticulated cornice is decorated with wooden rectangular, circular and diamond panels. Within it is a granite nameplate inscribed "Walker School." The façade elevations of the end pavilions lack openings, but are dressed with a large brick panel filled with red and green brick to form a diagonal pattern with inner diamond medallions.

The rear elevation closely mirrors the façade, although the center section is flat, rather than bowed, and the parapet lacks ornament. The wall is punctured by nearly continuous tall, rectangular, grouped windows with a wide, wooden panel distinguished with roundels and diamonds between stories. A narrower version of the ornamental brick end panels divides the center section into two. The two entrances match those on the façade, but lack the pedimented classical surround. The two side elevations are identical, with fenestration and brick detailing nearly matching that of the rear center section.

With the exception of some minor changes to the floor plan, the interior of Walker School has changed little since it was constructed nearly 100 years ago. The two front entrances lead into a

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foyer with double, multi-pane wooden doors retaining early hardware and a multi-pane transom with rolled figured glass above. A hallway runs east-west across the first floor, connecting the two north-south stair halls and providing access to classrooms. Early, likely original, coat hooks line its walls. Stairs, located in the rear of the building, have metal newels and square balusters and wooden handrails; additional short flights to the first floor are found by the front entrances. They are now enclosed by glazed firewalls.

The classrooms, which are arranged along the sides and rear of the building, have a chair rail on all walls, blackboards set in wooden frames; cupboards with glazed doors and drawers, closet and a bank of windows along one wall. Doors are wooden and have either a square glazed (rolled figured glass) upper panel above horizontal panels or merely five horizontal panels. The former kindergarten room has been subdivided into several spaces, though the current library occupies a good portion of it. Concrete-clad steel beams support the ceiling. The 2nd floor auditorium remains undivided and features a curved stage and arched proscenium; ante rooms on either side of the stage; six-panel Colonial Revival doors; coffered ceiling, walls with pilasters, raised molding to simulate paneling, chair rail and paneled wainscot; exposed birch flooring; arched windows with keystones; and a skylight in the ceiling. Outer corners have low partitions with similar wall treatment; it is unclear whether they are an original feature. An early, wooden bookcase with glass doors survives in the 2nd floor southeast teachers' room.

The basement, which has been used for classrooms from the outset, has arched doorways, original doors and retains much of its original floor plan.

Despite Walker School's near-100-year history, it is one of only two historic public school buildings in Concord that remains in use—or did until this academic year—and has never received an addition. (Kimball School on North Spring Street is the other.)

44. National or State Register Criteria Statement of Significance:

Walker School is listed on the National Register as a contributing building within the Concord Historic District (1975).

It is also eligible individually under Criterion A for its associations with the history of public education in Concord and as a good example of an early 20th century elementary school erected to meet an ever increasing neighborhood population. Its interior continues to reflect critical issues of the day, particularly sufficient interior light and fire protection.

The school is additionally eligible under Criterion C as one of the city's only examples of Beaux-Arts architecture and the only school designed in that style. Though a vernacular expression of the style, it possesses the following character-defining exterior features: rigidly symmetrical design with five clearly articulated parts (prominent bowed front, end pavilions and connectors), arched openings, flat openings set between paired pilasters, pedimented doorways, denticulated molding, fluted caps, quoins, and extensive use of diamond and circular motifs, as well as swags. On the interior, the style is best expressed in the auditorium, with its coffered ceiling, wall pilasters and extensive use of molding, arched windows with keystones, chair rail and paneled wainscot, and six-panel doors.

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45. Period of Significance:

A: 1915-1960 (the period during which the school functioned as a school; the end date reflects the 50-year cut-off for the Register)

C: 1915 (the year construction was completed)

46. Statement of Integrity:

Despite the loss of historic window sash and exterior doors, Walker School retains a high level of integrity of location, design, materials, setting, workmanship, feeling and association on both the exterior and interior.

47. Boundary Discussion:

The eligible boundary is the entire 1.6-acre lot that is associated with Walker School.

48. Bibliography and/or References:

Bourassa, Cheryl, "Repeating the Course." In *Crosscurrents of Change: Concord, N.H. in the 20th Century*. Forthcoming publication of Concord Historical Society, 2010.

Concord, City of, *Annual Reports of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Concord*. 1900-1923.

Concord, City of, *Concord Union School District Annual Reports*, 1929-55.

Concord Daily Monitor, 1913-1927, 1953.

"Concord's 150th Anniversary." *The Granite Monthly*, vol. 10, nos. 5 & 6 (1915).

Ordway, John C., "Schools, Public and Private." In *History of Concord, New Hampshire*, edited by James O. Lyford. Concord: Rumford Press, 1903, Vol. II, pp. 1203-1310. (Chapter also appears as separate booklet, published that year by Ordway.)

Maps & Plans

1914 Sanborn Insurance Map

1928 Sanborn Insurance Map

1949 Sanborn Insurance Map

1976 Drawings and specifications for windows. On file at SAU Maintenance Office, 29 Pembroke St., Concord, NH.

Photograph Collections

Concord Public Library, Concord Room

New Hampshire Historical Society

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Surveyor's Evaluation

NR listed: individual
within district

NR eligible:
individual
within district
not eligible
more info needed

NR Criteria: A
B
C
D
E

Integrity: yes
no

HISTORIC MAPS & VIEWS



First Walker School (1873-1935)
Collection of Concord Public Library



Walker School, ca. 1915
From Granite State Monthly, 1915: 172

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TABLET DEDICATED JUNE 8, 1915

INSCRIPTION

**On this historical site was built—1751
The first framed meeting house
Where the New Hampshire Convention
Ratified the Federal Constitution
Thereby assuring its adoption
June 21, 1788**

A Memorial

**To the soldiers of this town who
Took part in the War of the Revolution**

**Placed by Rumford Chapter
Daughters of the American Revolution
1915**

From Granite State Monthly, 1915: 494

(This tablet was replaced with the current one in 1962)

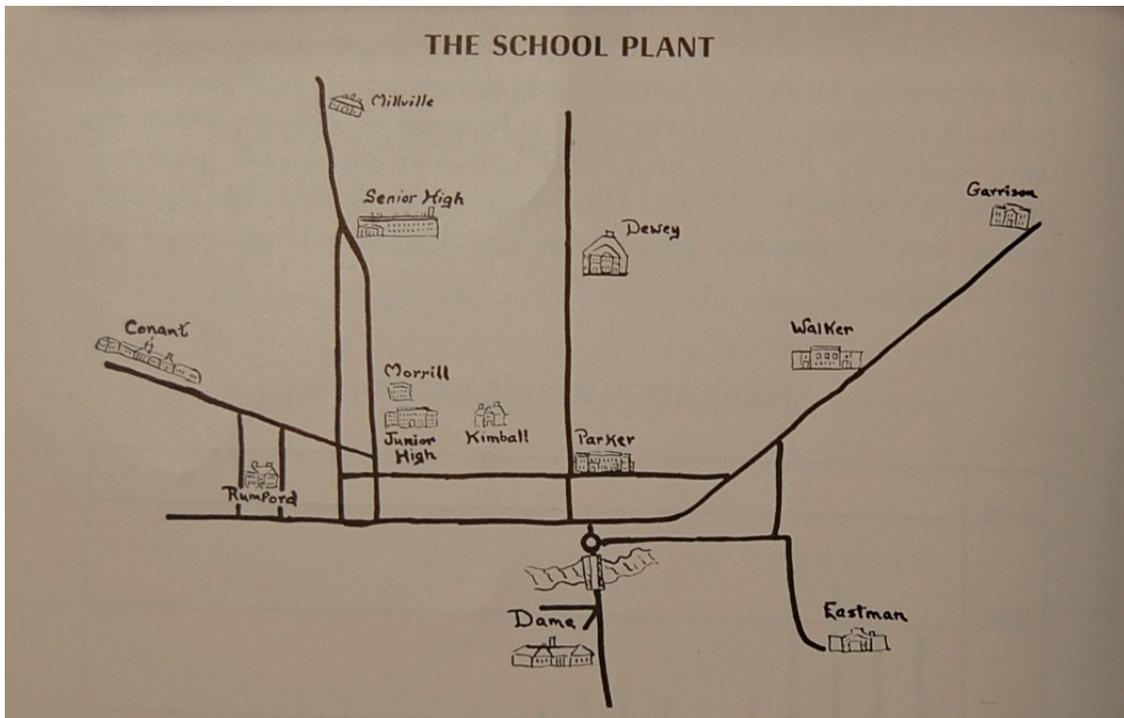


“Special School” in the Walker Building

From School District Annual Report, 1925: 29.



View showing original window sash
From Concord Annual Report, 1950



Drawing showing all schools in use in 1951
From 1951 School District Annual Report

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Photo #2 Description: Detail of bowed facade
Direction: N



Photo #3 Description: Detail of east front entry on façade
Direction: N

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Photo #4 Description: Rear (north) elevation
Direction: SE



Photo #5 Description: Detail of ornamental brickwork found on each elevation (rear elevation shown)
Direction: S

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Photo #6 Description: East elevation
Direction: SW



Photo #7 Description: Detail of wooden trim between stories on side and rear elevations (shown on west elevation) Direction: E

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Photo #8 Description: Southeast corner of lot, showing commemorative markers and bench
Direction: NW



Photo #9 Description: Interior, showing west front lobby with original doors and transom
Direction: N

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Photo #10 Description: Detail of stairway found in both stairwells (shown in west stairwell)
Direction: N



Photo #11 Description: First floor hallway, showing original doors and late 20th c. firewall for stairwell
Direction: W

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Photo #12 Description: 1st floor, southwest classroom, showing original cupboard, door & blackboard
Direction: N



Photo #13 Description: 1st floor, north (on left) classroom, showing bank of window openings with replacement sash (typical) Direction: NE

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Photo #14 Description: 2nd floor, southeast classroom
Direction: N



Photo #15 Description: 2nd floor, auditorium, showing stage, wall pilasters and six-panel door
Direction: N

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Photo #16 Description: 2nd floor, teachers' room west of auditorium, showing original, glass-front bookcase
Direction: SW



Photo #17 Description: 2nd floor, auditorium, showing wall trim and corner partition
Direction: E

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Date taken: August 2010



Photo #18 Description: Basement classroom, northwest corner (possibly the original woodworking room)
Direction: NW