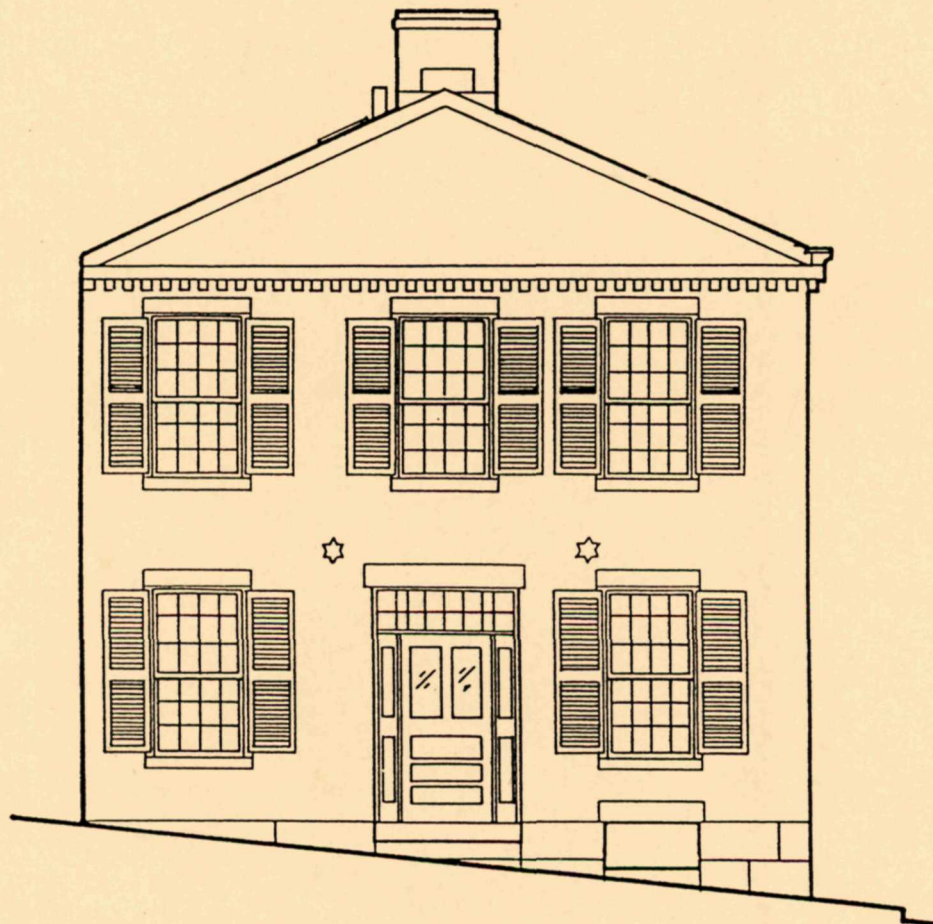


THE SMITH SCHOOL HOUSE

**Boston African American
National Historical Site**



Historic Structure Report

SMITH SCHOOL HOUSE
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

**Boston African American
National Historic Site**

Boston, Massachusetts

By

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PREFACE

The Smith School and its importance in the history of Boston public education should not be forgotten. Many remember the fight to achieve integrated schools in Boston in the 1960s and the 1970s. Few realize, however, that the same battle had been waged with the School Department and the City of Boston more than 100 years earlier. At issue was the Smith School, a public school exclusively for black children, that existed from 1835 to 1855.

My experience in researching the building that housed the Smith School was that few people remembered this institution. I was informed at the Boston School Department that the City of Boston did not have, nor had it ever had, a school by that name. The problem may be due in part to the lack of preservation of the city's historic records. A report entitled *State of the City's Records* found the conditions in the Boston School Department's Public Facilities Department to be as follows in 1987:¹

Archival and other inactive records are stored and arranged under completely unsatisfactory conditions that severely inhibit administrative retrieval and preclude public access. Historical records that remain in the custody of the School Department have suffered steady deterioration from unsatisfactory storage practices, harmful environmental conditions and improper handling.... Longtime employees of the department assert that a considerable amount of historical records was lost during the department's move from 15 Beacon Street to its present location [at 26 Court Street] in 1976.²

The search for documentary information on the Smith School House was equally discouraging. No original architectural drawings on the building are known to exist. Specifications for the remodeling of Boston schoolhouses for the years 1847-69 that were in the School Department in 1983 could not be located in 1990.³

Editor's note: the city's specifications for the remodeling of the Smith School House in 1849 were found in 1997, filed with state records in the basement archives of the Massachusetts State House; they have been included in this report as Appendix E.⁴

¹ The Public Facilities Department took over the management of the former School Building Department in 1966.

² Mark J. Duffy, *State of the City's Records: A Report on the Status and Condition of the Public Archives and Records of the City of Boston* (Boston: Municipal Archives and Records Project, Public Facilities Department, 1987), pp. 214, 217.

³ *Specifications for Grammar and Primary Schools*, 1847-69, two volumes, uncataloged. These volumes are listed as item C8 in the *Architectural Records in Boston* by Nancy Carlson Schrock, 1983.

⁴ "Specifications for Alterations and Additions to the Smith School House," *Specifications of public buildings of which Gridley J.F. Bryant furnished plans and instructions*, Vol. 1.

An early plan of the schoolhouse lot that is listed in an early index in the City of Boston Public Works Department, Engineering Division, has been removed and lost.⁵ Finally, a scrapbook entitled *Boston Public School for Colored Children* that contained newspaper clippings on the Smith School from the mid-19th century was found to have been deaccessioned from the collection of the Boston Public Library.⁶

Some information was found, however, in various archives throughout the city. These included the Boston City Council Library, the Boston National Historical Park, the Boston Public Library, the Bostonian Society Library, the Inspectional Services Department of the City of Boston, and the Massachusetts State Archives. That information has been compiled in this report in an attempt to document the history of the Smith School House.

⁵ City Plans, Volume 1, p. 21 (1866).

⁶ The scrapbook is cited in an article by Carleton Mabey dated 1968 and entitled "A Negro Boycott To Integrate Boston Schools," in *The New England Quarterly*.

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Architectural research of the schoolhouse commenced in January 1990. Research on the written history of the building was pursued by consulting both primary and secondary sources. The building itself was also examined in detail, using such tools as mortar analysis, paint analysis, and molding profile comparisons. Little destructive investigation was undertaken because that the building is now in use as offices. The existing conditions were recorded photographically and in architectural drawings.

The building has become known in recent years as the "Smith School." However, it was found in the course of the research that "Smith School" was used historically to refer to the educational institution, named for Abiel Smith, that met in the "Smith School House." Therefore, the term "Smith School House" will be used in this report. The more modern spelling of "schoolhouse" will be used when referring to the building in general.

The physical evolution of the Smith School House was determined by studying both the documented history of the building and the building itself. Analytical techniques were used to help identify and date the existing building materials. These included mortar analysis, paint analysis, wallpaper analysis, and molding profile studies. Appendices F, G, H, and I of this report contain detailed information on the building materials.

Many people deserve recognition for their assistance in preparing this historic structure report on the Smith School House. I wish to thank the staffs of both the National Park Service and the Museum of Afro American History for their cooperation during the on-site evaluation of the building. Special thanks go to Carter Lowe, NPS Site Manager; Ken Heidelberg, Chief of Interpretation; Monica Fairbairn, Museum Director; and Maurice Nobles, Jr., Museum Site Manager. Also helpful was Dorothea Powell, former NPS Site Manager, who took the time to talk with me from her new home in New Mexico. Paul Weinbaum, Historian for the Boston National Historical Park, helped in the historical research on the school. Steve Carlson, Cultural Resources Specialist with the Boston Park, also helped pull together the most recent information on the building. Bob Fox, Exhibit Specialist with the National Park Service Regional Office, donated his time and expertise to evaluate the structural conditions. Jana Gross, Architectural Technician with the National Park Service Regional Office, prepared the architectural drawings and the molding profiles that illustrate this report.

The Smith School House was built in 1834-35 by the City of Boston, which still owns it today. Research was therefore conducted in various city departments and archives. The names of those departments and organizations and the people who assisted me are as follows: Boston Athenaeum (Research Librarian); Boston Auditor's Office (Sally Deacon, staffer); Boston City Archives (Bill Brown, Assistant Archivist); Boston City Council (Robert Hannah, Researcher); Boston Inspectional Services Department (Bill Gurney, staffer); Boston Landmarks Commission (Diana Prideux-Brune, Historic District Administrator); Boston Public Facilities Department (Elizabeth Cousins and Ian Kerrigan, staffers); Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts (Mr. Zepp, Librarian); Boston Public Works Department, Engineering Division (William Chaput, staffer); Boston School Department, Division of Planning and Engineering (Andy Puleo, staffer); and, the Bostonian Society Library (Philip Bergen, Research Librarian).

EDITOR'S NOTE

Since the completion of the historic structure report (HSR) in draft form, the National Park Service began a project to complete the restoration and rehabilitation of the African Meeting House; to undertake the restoration and adaptive reuse of the Smith School House; and to link the two structures with a renovated courtyard.

The adaptive reuse selected for the Smith School House was determined as follows:

The historical significance of the building led to a decision that the restoration would not be for continued office use but as a multi-use facility incorporating permanent and temporary exhibits, the Museum's sales facility, and space for educational and interpretive programs and other functions.⁷

Archeological investigation of the Smith School House site was undertaken in 1991 by the Archeology Branch of the Northeast Cultural Resources Center. The information obtained from this work impacted the text of the draft historic structure report in several instances. Consequently, the draft text was amended—albeit minimally—during the editing process to reflect the new information. A report containing the complete results of archeological investigations at the Smith School House will be forthcoming from the Northeast Cultural Resources Center.

More recently, a team led by Stull and Lee, Inc., Coordinating Architects, produced the four-volume Final Report, Restoration and Adaptive Re-use of the Smith School House and African Meeting House in May 1994. Volume I consisted of the results of research by Anthony Cromwell Hill on the history of the efforts to desegregate education in Boston, and on the condition and use of the Smith School as an educational institution for black students prior to 1855. Volumes II and III contained reports on various tests, research, and investigations conducted on the building fabric by a variety of disciplines, including Robert G. Neiley, Architects; Rene Mugnier Associates, Structural Engineer; and SAR Engineering, Mechanical/Electrical Engineer. Since it was infeasible to revise the historic structure report to incorporate material from these studies, the reader interested in the complete body of information available about the Smith School House should consult these documents.

Throughout the design process, the draft HSR was available to the design team. Its findings and recommendations were taken into account—although not always followed—in the development of the Preliminary Design presented in volume IV of the Final Report, and ultimately in the final plans and specifications for the restoration project, which was begun by the NPS in April 1998.

⁷ Stephen P. Carlson, "Smith School Restoration to Begin," *The Broadside* (Boston NHP, No. 1, 1998), p. 1.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

The Smith School House is located at 46 Joy Street on the corner of Smith Court on Beacon Hill in Boston. The building was constructed in 1834-35, and it was dedicated on March 3, 1835. It was the first school building constructed by the City of Boston for the exclusive use of the children of African descent. Smith School served as a primary and grammar school for the black children of Boston for the next twenty years. It was an institution that was believed by the black community to symbolize unequal educational rights and unequal privileges. They protested by founding the "Equal School Association," circulating and signing petitions, boycotting the Smith School, and bringing a law suit against the City of Boston. Some of the leaders in this struggle were William Lloyd Garrison, Lewis Hayden, William C. Nell, and Wendell Phillips. Success was finally achieved 1855 when a new state law opened the public schools to all children regardless of their color or religion. Smith School continued in use as an integrated school until 1882. It was later used as a meeting place for black veterans of the Civil War.

The Smith School House is named for Abiel Smith, a Boston merchant who lived from 1746 to 1815. Upon his death, Smith willed assets valued at approximately \$5,000 to the Selectmen of the City of Boston. These were to be used for a school to educate the "People of color." The Auditor of the City of Boston listed the status of the "Smith Fund" in the annual report for the years 1835 through 1937. It was noted beginning in 1910 that the income from the fund was then credited for general public school expenses because there were no longer schools exclusively for colored children. An inquiry to the Auditor's office in 1990 revealed that the City of Boston no longer has a record of the Smith Fund. It is speculated that the fund was merged sometime after 1937 into a general fund for school expenses.

The Smith School House remains today in the ownership of the City of Boston. Beginning in 1984, the National Park Service used the second story as offices for the Boston African-American National Historic Site, at first under an agreement with the USO (then tenants of the building), and later under a letter dated March 9, 1987, from the City of Boston that authorizes the NPS to occupy the building in exchange for providing "interior and exterior maintenance and utilities as necessary and subject to the availability of funds." In 1994 the City of Boston formally leased the Smith School House to the Museum of Afro American History, which had occupied the first story of the building since the late 1980s.

Smith School House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Beacon Hill Historic District. As such, it is within the jurisdiction of the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission. The commission is authorized "to review proposed changes to the exterior architectural features of buildings within the historic district before any alteration is undertaken and before a building permit is issued."¹

The schoolhouse is also part of the Boston African American National Historic Site, established by Public Law 96-430 that was signed on October 10, 1980. The purpose of this enactment was to preserve "for the benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States as a national historic site certain historic structures and properties, located in Boston, Massachusetts, and associated with the creation and development of a free African American community within Beacon Hill prior to the Civil War."²

¹ Pamphlet entitled "Historic Beacon Hill District: Architectural Guidelines," by the City of Boston.

² Title I, Section 101, of Public Law 96-430, "An Act to provide for the establishment of the Boston African American National Historic Site in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and for other purposes."

This legislation referenced a boundary map (BOAF-80,000) dated March 1980, which identified 12 park sites, including the African Meeting House (1) and the Abiel Smith School (2), for inclusion in the park under cooperative agreements to be made between the National Park Service and the various property owners. As authorized under Public Law 96-430, such agreements have been concluded with the Museum of Afro American History for the African Meeting House and with the owners of the Lewis Hayden House. The National Park Service, as noted above, has occupied the Smith School House under agreement with the City of Boston since 1987, and, pursuant to Congressional direction and appropriations, has undertaken design and construction of a rehabilitation project for the structure. It anticipates including the Smith School House in future updatings of the existing cooperative agreement with the Museum of Afro American History.

The proposed use of the Smith School House has been identified in two National Park Service planning documents. A draft General Management Plan completed in 1984 states:

Under the proposed cooperative agreements, the exterior of the Smith School [House] will be preserved; the interior will be modified as needed for adaptive use....A range of related uses will be considered, including exhibition space, visitor orientation, and meeting space for veterans' groups and other small community gatherings.³

The Interpretive Prospectus for the site dated February 1989 adds:

The Smith School [House] is too important to be used exclusively for site administrative support. It should receive some preservation or restoration treatment for interpretive purposes while continuing to serve other functions as necessary....In the interim, as much as possible, the school should be open to the public and used for interpretive purposes. Staff offices for both the National Park Service and the Museum will remain in the building....The Abiel Smith School is the logical place to accomplish...general orientation and information [of the Black Heritage Trail properties].⁴

It is the recommendation of this historic structure report that the exterior of the building be preserved and restored to its appearance when it was last remodeled in 1849. The interior should be adaptively used. Special care should be taken to preserve the historic architectural materials within the building. For more details on these recommendations and a description of significant architectural materials, see the "recommendations" section of this report.

The Smith School House has been listed on the National Park Service's "List of Classified Structures," last updated in March 1994, as Structure Number 03 (IDLCS 40280). It is also considered to be a contributing resource to the Beacon Hill Historic District, which was designated as a National Historical Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior on August 8, 1963 (National Register 66000130).

³ National Park Service, *Boston African National Historic Site: Draft General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment*. Boston: North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, November 1984, p. 26.

⁴ National Park Service, "Interpretive Prospectus, Boston African American National Historic Site, Boston, Massachusetts." Typescript, n.d. [February 1989].

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Abiel Smith's Legacy, 1815

Abiel Smith, the person for whom the Smith School House is named, was a white man who lived from 1746 to 1815. He was the son of Job Smith of Taunton, and the husband of Lydia Otis of Scituate. Abiel Smith and Lydia Otis had no children, but together they ran a successful mercantile business in Boston. Their three-story brick house was south of the State House, at the corner of State and Devonshire Streets. The store was on the lower story and their home on the upper stories. Smith was described as a "thrifty, industrious man."¹ His great success as a merchant has been attributed to the money that he retained during the American Revolution when his wife and sister smuggled \$20,000 in gold coins past the British lines.² Lydia Otis predeceased her husband, who died in 1815.³ In his will, he bequeathed \$164,566.67 in cash and stocks, along with real estate and personal property of an undisclosed value. He is known best for the money that he left to Harvard University, the income from which was "to be appropriated to the maintenance and support of a Teacher or Professor of the French or French and Spanish languages."⁴ One person who benefitted from this legacy was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who held the Smith Professorship from 1836 to 1854.⁵

Less is known about Smith's support of education for the colored citizens of Boston. Abiel Smith was one of 10 gentlemen who in 1805 subscribed \$100 each for a schoolroom for the African School to be constructed in the basement story of the new African Meeting House.⁶ He also made provision in his will for the maintenance and support of a school or schools for the "people of colour" as follows:

I bequeath to the Selectmen of the Town of Boston for the time being, and to their successors in that Office forever, all my thirty shares in the Newbury Port Turnpike; all my twenty shares in the second Turnpike Road in New Hampshire [sic], my seventeen & an [sic] half shares in the Kennebeck bridge, my five shares in the bridge across from Tivertown to Rhode Island, my five shares in the Springfield bridge, my share in the Boston Theatre, my share in the bathing house in Boston with four thousand dollars in three per cent funded Stock of the United States in trust for the purposes following & no other; to wit, that they shall collect and receive the neat income thereon and appropriate and apply the whole income to the maintenance and support of a school or schools under their direction for the

¹ Robert L. Weis, *Abiel Smith and Lydia Otis* (privately printed: October 15, 1923), p. 5.

² Weis, pp. 6-7.

³ Obituary, *Boston Patriot*, Saturday, November 25, 1815.

⁴ Abiel Smith, "Last Will and Testament," Suffolk County Probate Court number 24791, signed and dated October 6, 1814. See Appendix A for a published transcript of the complete will.

⁵ Edward E. Hale, *Memories of a Hundred Years*, Vol. II (NY: The Macmillan Co., 1902), pp. 244-45.

⁶ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry dated Oct. 11, 1833, pp. 401-02. The schoolroom was finally completed and the school moved into it in 1808 (see Appendix B).

instruction of people of colour meaning Africans and their descendants either clear or mixed, in reading, writing and arithmetic, in such place, places, and manner, as said Selectmen shall deem best. And if said Selectmen shall and do accept this donation within one year after my decease for said purposes I then order my Executor to transfer to them all my title to said property for the purposes aforesaid.⁷

It has been said that Abiel Smith left his money for a school because of his regard for, and at the request of, Prince Saunders.⁸ Saunders was an instructor of the African School from 1809 to 1812 when the school met in the basement of the African Meeting House.⁹ He was described in 1817 as “a man of colour and of education.”¹⁰ A later recollection dated 1846 remembered Saunders as follows:

Prince Sanders [sic],—who was brought up in the family of a lawyer in Thetford, Vermont, and had acquired some polish of manners and knowledge of the world, by intercourse with intelligent persons, though his education was very limited,—was brought to this City principally by the influence of the late Dr. Channing and Mr. Caleb Bingham, for the purpose of teaching a school for colored children, and otherwise laboring for the elevation of the colored people. He was supported, in part, for several years, by the liberality of benevolent persons, while he taught this school....¹¹

Abiel Smith died suddenly, on the night of Tuesday, November 19, 1815, at the age of sixty nine.¹² His bequest to the Selectmen of the Town of Boston was conveyed to them in a letter dated January 1816 from Barney Smith, brother of the late Abiel Smith, and Executor of his last Will and Testament. Their reply is recorded in the Selectmen’s minutes, entry dated January 24, 1816:

This letter and the extract from the Will having been considered. Voted that the Chairman be desired to express to Barney Smith Esq. the high sense which the Selectmen entertain of the benevolent intentions of his late brother Abiel Smith Esq. toward the unfortunate and neglected portion of the human species, and of his liberal bequest to carry those intentions into effect; and that he inform him that they will accept the trust committed to them, with

⁷ “Last Will and Testament,” pp. 2-3.

⁸ City Document No. 23, “Report to the Primary School Committee,” June 15, 1846, p. 17.

⁹ City Document No. 23, 1846, pp. 16-17.

¹⁰ Charles Shaw, *Topographical and Historical Description of Boston* (Boston: Oliver Spear, 1817), p. 270.

¹¹ City Document No. 23, 1846, pp. 16-17.

¹² Obituary, November 25, 1815.

an assurance that no exertions shall be wanting on their part to promote the liberal views of the testator.¹³

Barney Smith presented the certificates of property to the Selectmen on December 4, 1816.¹⁴ Finally, on February 5, 1817, "It was voted to proceed to the choice of a Treasurer to receive and manage the fund left by Mr. Smith for the support of an African school."¹⁵ The city then assumed the entire support of the existing African School that met in the basement of the African Meeting House.¹⁶ The city had granted previously, beginning in 1812, \$200 per year for maintaining the school, under the direction of the School Committee. Proceeds from the new Smith Fund were used to pay the salary of an assistant instructor and to finance repairs to the existing school room.¹⁷

The African School, 1808-1834

The African School met in the basement school room of the African Meeting House beginning in 1808. It was the only school for colored children in Boston that taught both intermediate and primary classes.¹⁸ As explained in the previous section, the City of Boston had assumed partial support of the school in 1812, and the entire support in 1817 upon the bequest of Abiel Smith. The school was in the west part of the city, on the north slope of Beacon Hill, in School District No. 4. Barney Smith, brother of the late Abiel Smith, petitioned the city in 1826 for a "high school...for the coloured children of the City," but no such school was established.¹⁹ The City of Boston did, however, institute two more primary schools for colored children besides the African School. One was established in July 1820 and was in School District No. 8. The other was established in February 1831, in the north part of the city in School District No. 1 (later changed to School District No. 2). However, it was closed in September 1835 due to poor

¹³ *A Volume of Records Relating to the Early History of Boston Containing Minutes of the Selectmen's Meeting, 1811 to 1817, and Part of 1818* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office), pp. 159-60.

¹⁴ *A Volume of Records*, p. 206.

¹⁵ *A Volume of Records*, p. 212.

¹⁶ The African School commenced in 1798. It met first in private homes, later in a carpenter shop, and moved in 1808 to the newly completed basement room in the African Meeting House.

¹⁷ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for Oct. 11, 1833, pp. 401-02; *A Volume of Records*, entry dated May 20, 1818, pp. 290-91; and the *Boston Almanac*, 1849, p. 65.

¹⁸ The primary schools in the City of Boston were for children under the age of seven. The intermediate schools, also known as the grammar and writing schools, admitted children ages 7 through 14 (boys) and ages 7 through 16 (girls). Source: City of Boston numbered city documents.

¹⁹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entries for Nov. 26, 1826, and Jan. 13, 1827, pp. 203 and 207.

attendance. These primary schools most likely met in existing buildings, since there is no mention in the records of construction for new school buildings.²⁰

The poor condition of the African School's basement room in the African Meeting House came to the attention of the School Committee in the 1830s. The earliest indication of a problem is an entry in the records of the School Committee dated May 8, 1832:

Ordered, that the sub committee of the African School be instructed to investigate and report, the causes of tardiness, and non attendance of pupils at that School, and what measures ought to be adopted to remedy the evil, and improve the character of the school—And that Alderman Binney and Mr. Curtis be added to the committee for the purpose aforesaid.²¹

No response was forthcoming until September 3, 1833, when

Mr. Child offered the following vote and moved that the same be adopted, viz: voted that it is expedient and proper to provide a building at the expense of the City for the use of the African School, and that the Chairman be instructed to apply to the City Council, for an appropriation for that object. Read and referred to Mssr. Child, Binney and Fairbanks to consider and report.²²

Misters Child, Binney, and Fairbanks responded with a lengthy narrative that was entered in the school records on October 11, 1833 (see Appendix B of this report). In summary, they found the school room to be hot in summer, cold in winter, inconvenient, and unhealthy. They noted the obvious contrast between this school and the schools for white children in the City of Boston. They also pointed out that the colored inhabitants paid taxes for public education. They concluded by stating

The committee are therefore of opinion, that it is just and expedient that a suitable building be forthwith provided, at the expense of the City, to be placed in a healthy pleasant situation, for the accommodation of the African

²⁰ City Document No. 23, 1846, p. 18.

²¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry dated May 8, 1832, p. 341.

²² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for September 3, 1833, p. 396. "Mr. Child" was David Lee Child, a white lawyer and educator, who lived from 1794 to 1874. He was a devoted reformer who worked to end the institution of slavery. Child was one of 15 men who formed the New England Anti-Slavery Society on January 6, 1832, in the school room of the African Meeting House. He studied the beet-sugar business in Belgium in 1836 and built the first sugar operation in the United States in an attempt to find an alternative to slave-grown sugar cane. He was the editor of the abolitionist newspaper, the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* from 1843 to 1844. David Lee Child was the husband of Lydia Maria Child, an influential writer and author of *That Class of Americans Called Africans* published in 1833 and described as "the first hard-hitting, important antislavery book in America." Source: Helene G. Baer, *The Heart is Like Heaven: The Life of Lydia Maria Child* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), pp. 63, 65, 90, and 162-65.

School, and that the Honorable Chairman of the School Committee be instructed to make a request to the City Council, to that effect.²³

The report was read and accepted, but no action appears to have been taken on the recommendation.

The following year, in March 1834, a petition was submitted to the School Committee by J.G. Barbadoes concerning the poor conditions at the African School. The matter was investigated again by the African School Committee, which reported as follows:

The committee find the School decrepid in its condition, thinly attended and actually conferring very limited benefits on the class of persons for whom it is designed....the principal [causes] seem very obvious. The school has not received that attention nor been provided with those accommodations which are necessary to encourage the master and secure the interest and good feeling of coloured people....Can any reason be assigned why the African School in our own City should not be redeemed from its present state of depression and become a flourishing and effective school [?] The committee deem the object worthy at least of a fair experiment; and it is with a view to secure this object, and because they regard it as practicable, that they suggest the changes here as recommended.²⁴

Three changes were recommended by the committee. The first was to secure a new master—Mr. Abner Forbes—for the school. The second was to increase the salary of the master by \$200 per year. Third, it was advised “that measures be adopted to furnish for the School, a more commodious building. The committee regard this as reasonable and proper in itself, and highly important to the usefulness of the School.”²⁵ A vote was taken by the School Committee, and the first and third recommendations were accepted; the second was ruled out of order.

Steps toward a new school building were finally taken two months later, on May 13, 1834, when the following was recorded by the School Committee:

Ordered, that Mssr. Eliot, Williams, and Emerson be a committee to prepare an urgent memorial to the City Council in favor of an appropriation for a new African School house.²⁶

These gentlemen were Samuel A. Eliot, who was also a member of the Board of Aldermen, Henry Williams, and Frederic Emerson. Mr. Eliot was later inaccurately credited with “conceiv[ing] the design of furnishing a new house for its accommodation.”²⁷ It was also noted that “though he was

²³ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for Oct. 11, 1833, pp. 401-02.

²⁴ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for March 7, 1834, pp. 421-22.

²⁵ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for March 7, 1834, p. 422.

²⁶ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for May 13, 1834, p. 423.

²⁷ See Appendix D, “Introduction.”

strongly opposed, and several times thwarted and baffled in his plans, yet he steadfastly persevered till he saw the object accomplished.”²⁸

New School House, 1834-1835

The City of Boston finally constructed a new schoolhouse for the African School in fiscal year 1834-35.²⁹ An initial appropriation of \$2,500 was granted by the city in that year “for a building for the accommodation of the African School.”³⁰

A small lot was purchased by the City of Boston from the heirs of Joseph Powars for \$1,935.00 on September 30, 1834 (see Appendix C). The lot was situated on Belknap Street³¹, next to the African Meeting House on the north slope of Beacon Hill. The property deed for the transaction describes the lot as “a certain piece of land with the buildings thereon.” One of these “buildings” may have been a “10 foot building” described in an earlier deed dated 1810 that conveyed the west end of the property to Nancy Collins.³² The deed of 1834 further describes the lot as measuring 30 feet along Belknap Street to the east, 64 feet 5 inches along a 20-foot passageway³³ to the north leading to the African Meeting House, 30 feet along a 6-foot passageway to the west, and 64 feet 6 inches along the land of Nancy Collins to the south. The deed also notes that a dwelling house was 18 inches from the south lot line on the land of Nancy Collins, and that a pump was situated about 30 feet down the 6-foot passageway. With the property was “a privilege in said six foot passage, pump and well therein, which are to be in common for the owners of both

²⁸ See Appendix D, “Introduction.” It is interesting to note that Samuel Atkins Eliot (1798-1862) served as the Mayor of Boston from 1837 to 1839. He was subsequently elected to Congress where he voted for the Fugitive Slave Law and other pro-slavery measures. Source: manuscript card catalog, Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library.

²⁹ The fiscal year covered the period of time from May 1 of one year through April 30 of the following year.

³⁰ City Document No. 17, 1835, “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston,” p. 11.

³¹ The south end only of Belknap Street was changed to Joy Street in 1851 in response to a petition by the wealthy residents on the south slope of Beacon Hill who wanted to disassociate themselves from the colored residents on the north slope. The colored citizens responded with a similar petition to the city government who granted their request and renamed the entire street Joy Street in 1855. Source: Charles K. Whipple, “Boston in Slavery Times,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 17, 1893; and Allen Chamberlain, *Beacon Hill: Its Ancient Pastures and Early Mansions* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1925), p. 115.

³² Suffolk County Deed, Book 233, p. 113.

³³ This passageway was named May’s Court in 1812. It was changed to Smith’s Court in 1848. Source: Chamberlain, p. 249. Today it is commonly called Smith Court.

estates [the Smith School property and the African Meeting House property], each paying half the repairs thereof....”³⁴

Few details are known about the actual design and construction of the new school building. It is possible that the same procedure was followed in 1834 as was later described in city document dated 1847:

When a school house is to be built, a committee from the two branches of the City government is appointed to take charge of the work. They cause plans to be made; [and] they confer with a Committee of this [School] Board....The work is [then] necessarily entrusted to architects and builders....³⁵

Construction appears to have been underway by November 1834, based on a bill from Cushing Nichols requesting “a further advance of \$2,000 on account of erection of the African School House in Belknap Street.”³⁶ Cushing Nichols was a mason who resided at 14 Charles Street, according to the Boston Directory of 1834. He was probably a white man, given his listing in the main part of the directory, instead of the back section that was entitled “People of Color.” Work continued through the winter, and by February 10, 1835, it was noted that the “new School house on Belknap street...is now nearly completed.”³⁷ Shortly thereafter, on March 3, 1835, the new building was dedicated and the African School was removed to it from the African Meeting House (see Appendix D).

An entry separate from the construction cost is also cited in the city records as follows: “African School House:—Expended for rendering the building erected in Belknap Street, for Primary Schools, suitable for the accommodation of the African School. \$2,500.”³⁸ This may represent the cost of finishing and equipping the building for school use; it is too much money to have been paid for architectural plans or “renderings.”

The total cost to the City of Boston for providing a new building for the African School was \$7,485.61. These costs included \$1,935.00 for the lot on Belknap Street, \$3,050.61 for erecting the building, and \$2,500 for “rendering” the building.³⁹ No money from Abiel Smith’s bequest was

³⁴ Suffolk County Deed, Book 382, pp. 128-29.

³⁵ City Document No. 40, 1847, “Reports of the Annual Visiting Committees of the Public Schools of the City of Boston,” p. 36.

³⁶ Ellen F. Rosebrock, “A Historical Account of the Joy Street Block,” 1978, p. 18. No reference given.

³⁷ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for February 10, 1835, p. 440.

³⁸ City Document No. 17, 1835, p. 29.

³⁹ City Document No. 17, 1835, p. 29.

used for this project. Nevertheless, the School Committee renamed the African School the “Smith School,” as explained in their minutes of February 10, 1835:

Whereas the late Abiel Smith, Esq, bequeathed to the town of Boston, a large amount of property, devoted to the education of the children of the people of color, resident here;—and,

Whereas an opportunity is now afforded, by the erection of a new School house on Belknap street...for the accommodation of the above mentioned children, to show a suitable respect to his memory—therefore,

Resolved, that said School be hereafter known and called by the name of Smith School.⁴⁰

The School Committee further ordered on February 24, 1835, that this resolve “be published in the newspapers in which the ordinances and orders of the City are printed.”⁴¹

The dedication address of the new Smith School building was given on March 3, 1835, by Judge William Minot, the chairman of the committee of the school. (The address, and an introduction to the published version of unknown authorship, are reproduced as Appendix D). The introduction described the dedication ceremony as follows:

The exercises at the opening of the new school-house were very interesting and impressive. It was exceedingly gratifying to the large number of colored people and their friends who were present to see the perfect order and propriety in the behavior of the scholars. Judge Minot’s address on the occasion, will speak for itself....Rev. Mr. Barrett made an appropriate prayer, soon after which the audience quietly dispersed.

The prospects of the school are cheering. Everything connected with it seems to promise that it will long be a blessing to the colored inhabitants of the city.

It is apparent from the remarks of Judge Minot that the City of Boston had high expectations for the Smith School. Minot described education as the “surest remedy for the evils” of the present condition of the “whole colored population.” He also noted that “the erection of this house is a pledge of interest which the city now feels in your improvement, and an assurance that it will not be reluctant to furnish the means as fast as your necessities require them.”

⁴⁰ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for February 10, 1835, p. 440.

⁴¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for February 10, 1835, p. 441.

Smith School for Colored Children, 1835-1855

Introduction

The new schoolhouse on Belknap Street officially opened its doors as the Smith School—a public school for the colored children of the City of Boston—on March 3, 1835. However, actions to close the Smith School and thereby abolish segregated schooling were initiated by the colored citizens of Boston in 1840. Protests against the school continued until 1855, when integration of the Boston public schools was achieved by order of the state legislature. The building was remodeled once during this period, in 1849.

Rules and regulations were passed by unanimous vote for the Boston School Committee and the various public schools on September 28, 1841.⁴² These included the “Regulations of the Smith School” in four sections. Section one described the school as “designated for the instruction of colored children of both sexes.” Section two stated:

The colored population in the City not being sufficiently numerous to require more than one school, it has been thought proper to provide in this, the means of instruction in all the branches of learning, which are taught in the several orders of schools for white children.⁴³

Section three required that the instructors of the school be college-educated. Section four required that the text books be the same as those that were used in the other public schools in the City of Boston.

Grammar, Primary School, and Other Classes

The Smith School comprised “Grammar and Writing Departments, and two Primary Schools, for colored children” when it first opened in 1835.⁴⁴ The grammar and writing classes were for the older pupils, ages 7 through 14 for boys, and ages 7 through 16 for girls. A city document entitled “Public Schools” described the Boston grammar and writing schools in 1838:

In these schools are taught the common branches of an English education. In the several buildings, where the arrangement is complete, there are two large halls occupied by two departments, one of which is for a Grammar School, and the other for a Writing School. The scholars are organized in two divisions. While one division attends to Grammar, the other attends to Writing; exchanging half daily. In the Grammar department, the pupils are taught chiefly, Spelling, Reading, English, Grammar, and Geography; in the

⁴² City Document No. 22, 1841, “Rules of the School Committee and Regulations of the Public Schools.”

⁴³ City Document No. 4, 1851, “Rules of the School Committee and Regulations of the Public Schools,” p. 33.

⁴⁴ Listing of “Real & Personal Property” for the City of Boston, in City Document No. 17 for 1835, “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures.”

Writing department, they are taught Writing, Arithmetic, and Book-keeping.⁴⁵

Bowen's Picture of Boston, also published in 1838, further specified that the Boston schools were organized with the grammar division in an upper hall and the writing division in a lower hall, "the two branches being kept entirely distinct." Therefore, the first story of the Smith School House was probably occupied by the writing division, while the second story was used by the grammar division. Grammar classes were definitely meeting on the second story in 1846, because this is where a platform for recitation—the practice of reading aloud—was built in that year.⁴⁶ Given the arrangement of the grammar school, it is likely that the primary school classes, for children under the age of 7, met in the cellar story of the Smith School.

The classes that met in the Smith School House changed two years later, in November 1837, when the School Committee

Resolved, that one of the lower rooms of the Smith school house, heretofore occupied by a primary school be used as a place of instruction for children too old for the primary school, and not qualified to join any of the classes of the Smith School, and that the master of the Smith School take charge of the same under the sub committee thereof.—Report accepted and resolve passed.⁴⁷

It is interesting that only three months earlier, in August 1837, the Deacons of the African Baptist Church had conveyed the old schoolroom in the basement of the adjacent African Meeting House to the "Infant School Association for the Education of Colored Youth in the City of Boston."⁴⁸ Although it is nowhere stated explicitly, it appears from this transaction that the primary school classes that had previously met in the cellar of the Smith School were moved to the nearby African Meeting House.⁴⁹ Here they met until about 1840.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ City Document No. 23, 1838, "Public Schools," p. 8.

⁴⁶ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for February 12, 1846, p. 16.

⁴⁷ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, p. 51.

⁴⁸ Suffolk County Deed, Book 423, p. 102.

⁴⁹ Conflicting information is found in the listing of "Real and Personal Property" in the numbered documents of the City of Boston, which continued to describe "Grammar and Writing Departments, and two Primary Schools" in the Smith School House through 1841. It is possible, however, that these listings were not kept up to date.

⁵⁰ Suffolk County Deed dated 1855, Book 676, p. 302. The deed states that the Infant School Association had not used the basement rooms in the African Meeting House "for fifteen years and upwards," and that the association itself had been discontinued "for more than five years."

The use of the cellar story in the Smith School House changed again in November 1848, when the School Committee

Ordered, That the room on the lower floor of the Smith school house, now improved by a class of the Smith school be relinquished to the primary school committee for the use of the Intermediate school for coloured children. Read, accepted and the order passed.⁵¹

A previous entry had proposed that “both grammar and intermediate schools...be under the charge of the principal of the Smith school and two other Instructors.”⁵² It is not known what age students the “Intermediate school” taught; presumably, these were young pupils, because the school was under the jurisdiction of the primary school committee.

There is also some evidence that adult education classes were held in the Smith School House. The abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator* ran the following advertisement in several issues in the fall of 1834:

WRITING: A writing school will be opened in Belknap-street, for colored persons, as soon as a sufficient number may be obtained. All who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity, are invited to leave their names at this office.⁵³

Evening classes at the schoolhouse are mentioned in a letter written by C. Weston to D. Weston in March 1837:

[Thursday]...evening went to the Belknap street school house to teach the coloured people—it was interesting but—to teach under Nat Southard oh—it was tough enough on my very honor.⁵⁴

Physical Appearance, 1835-1848

The historical documentation cited in the preceding section suggests that the Smith School House contained three stories of classroom space: a primary school (and later intermediate school) in the cellar, the writing division of the grammar school on the first story, and the grammar division of the grammar school on the second story. General descriptions of Boston schools of the period further suggest that each story was a large “hall” with few or no partitions. Such an arrangement would have facilitated heating, and enabled one instructor to manage a large number of children.

⁵¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for November 15, 1848, pp. 233-34.

⁵² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for November 1, 1848, p. 231.

⁵³ *The Liberator*, issues dated September 13, September 27, and October 4, 1834. The classes may have met initially in the schoolroom of the African Meeting House, pending completion of the Smith School House in March 1835.

⁵⁴ Letter from C. Weston to D. Weston dated March 3, 1837, in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Boston Public Library.

Several specific descriptions are available of interior features within the schoolhouse and the exterior yard. A closet was constructed in 1837 for \$25 by Abner Forbes, master of the school, for storing teaching equipment known as “Philosophical School Apparatus.”⁵⁵ This equipment was used to illustrate the principles of pneumatics and electricity, and was therefore probably located in the writing department on the first story.⁵⁶ In 1846, the School Committee “Ordered, That the seats in the upper hall, of the Smith School, on which the classes sit, while they recite, shall be raised on a platform, so as to elevate the class which is reciting above the heads of the other scholars; or such other arrangement made as will best remedy existing inconveniences.”⁵⁷ It was noted the following year, in 1847, that the school lacked a library⁵⁸ and separate recitation rooms.⁵⁹ The school was, however, outfitted with both blackboards and globes.⁶⁰ The most complete description of the building is provided by a report made in May 1847 in response to a proposal to erect a new schoolhouse for the Smith School:

The building...has no recitation rooms; there is so small a space in the entries that no clothes can be hung in them. The yard for each division are but fifteen feet square, bounded on one side by the out houses and favoured [sic] on the other by a pump in questionable proximity. The only way to these great conveniences is through a dark and damp cellar. The internal arrangements of the house are peculiar; the building being so planned, that the oldest scholars are obliged to occupy the seats provided for the younger, and vice versa. The general appearance of the House within is singularly unclassic and presents as little of cheerfulness and comfort as can well be found in the same space....⁶¹

The yard outside was enclosed by a wall, whose north side is illustrated in an engraving of the African Meeting House published in 1843 (fig. 2). Also shown in this view is the north wall and the roof of what may have been the “out houses.” This is shown as one long, one-story building. It appears to have been located outside the yard and within the 6-foot passage to the pump described

⁵⁵ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, entry for May 3, 1837, pp. 28-29.

⁵⁶ Some of the principles that the equipment illustrated were the “Laws of Matter, Laws of Motion, Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Hydraulics, Pneumatics, Electricity, Optics, Magnetism, Astronomy, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Auxiliaries.” It was recommended that the equipment be kept in a case or closet with glazed doors and that the closet be located in the classroom. Source: City Document No. 25 for 1847, “Philosophical Apparatus,” pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for February 12, 1846, p. 16. This platform was apparently built, and still exists today at the west end of the second story.

⁵⁸ Letter dated September 23, 1847, from Ambrose Wellington, Principal of the Smith School, to G.B. Emerson, Chairman of the School Committee, in a scrapbook entitled “Letters of Teachers to George B. Emerson—1847,” Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library.

⁵⁹ City Document No. 40, 1847, p. 55.

⁶⁰ City Document No. 40, 1847, p. 31.

⁶¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for May 19, 1847, pp. 112-13.

in the deed of 1834. Such a placement agrees with the previously cited report that describes the yard as bounded on one side by the “out houses” and on the other side by a pump (fig. 15).

The earliest known view of the Smith School House exterior is a watercolor painting made sometime before the building was remodeled in the summer of 1849 (fig. 3).⁶² The orientation of the artist was downhill and across the street from the schoolhouse, looking upwards toward the buildings on the west side of Belknap Street. The schoolhouse is shown on a corner lot, bordered on its east and north sides by sidewalks and on its south side by a two-story building that may have been a house.⁶³ The design of the schoolhouse is Grecian Revival, as characterized by its pedimented facade, gable roof oriented ridge-parallel to Smith Court, and dentil cornice. Large windows without shutters are in the first and second stories, and smaller windows are in the cellar story facing Smith Court. Most interesting is the doorway in the first story of the east elevation, which is offset to the left, rather than centered as it is today. Three projections are visible on the roof: a chimney on the east end, what appears to be a vent pipe in the center, and a ventilator on the west end. The ventilating equipment was probably installed in 1847 or 1848 as part of the campaign to improve the heating and ventilating in the city’s schoolhouses.⁶⁴ Some artistic license seems to have been taken with certain other details, such as the walls that are rendered in a stone-like material, and the windows that are drawn with 15 instead of 24 panes of glass.

Another exterior view of the Smith School House was published as an engraving in the 1849 *Boston Almanac* (fig. 4). Here too, the front doorway is offset to the left side as it is in the watercolor painting. All details of the engraving, in fact, are identical with those of the painting except the placement of the pedestrians. The reason for this similarity may be that engraving was based on the painting, or vice versa. Whichever the case, both show the Smith School House as it existed before the alterations of 1849.

Remodeling, 1849

Problems with the Smith School House became apparent as early as 1838—only three years after its original construction.

⁶² This painting is one of a series of 24 that was made of the Boston public school buildings. The paintings have been dated incorrectly as “185?” by the Boston Public Library, where the collection now resides.

⁶³ A previous study assumed that this building was the “Home Club Stable” that was built on the lot sometime between 1836 and 1866 (Rosebrock, pp. 16-17). However, the steps at the front doorway are more in keeping with a residential structure rather than a stable. The earliest reference to a stable is a document dated 1860 (City Document No. 10, “Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings,” p. 154). Additional research indicates that the stable was built after 1852, based on a map that shows a small building on the lot, and before 1861, based on another map.

⁶⁴ City Document No. 46, 1847, “Reports and Other Documents Relating to the Ventilation of the School Houses of the City of Boston.”

In April 1838, the School Committee appointed a subcommittee “to ascertain what alterations, if any, are expedient to be made to [the Smith] School House and report thereon.”⁶⁵ Four months later, in August, a petition was presented to the School Committee by Primus Hall and others, “people of colour, praying that another story may be added to the Smith School house.”⁶⁶ The petition was forwarded on to the City Council, but no action was forthcoming. The Annual Visiting Committee reported in 1845 that the school was “not only in an unsatisfactory, but in a deplorable condition....[it] does not appear to be answering the objects for which it was instituted.”⁶⁷ Another committee was then appointed “to examine the condition of the Smith School house, and report what alterations, if any, are required to render it better fitted for its purposes.”⁶⁸ Two years later, in 1847, the Visiting Committee reported “the situation of the house is good, but there is great want of space and consequently of yard room. The house is large enough, but needs some repairs.”⁶⁹ Misterns Brooks, G.B. Emerson, and Coolidge were appointed as a committee in May 1847 “to consider the expediency of erecting a new school house for the Smith School.”⁷⁰ Their report, submitted two weeks later stated in part:

Your committee have examined the condition of the Smith sch. house, and find it perfectly deplorable; and are astonished it should have been suffered to remain so long without enlargement or repairs. The old school houses which have been abandoned were palaces in comparison with this; and we see no reason why this class of our children should not be provided for, especially considering that part of the expense of the school are paid by a fund. The building is much too small for its purposes....[Other details are quoted in the previous section.] Your committee unanimously agree in reporting, that the Smith school house is unfit for the use of the school, and recommend the adoption of the following order.

Ordered, That the City government be requested to erect a new school house, for the use of the Smith school upon some spot not far from the present one....Read and accepted.⁷¹

⁶⁵ *Report of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, entry for April 9, 1838, p. 93.

⁶⁶ *Report of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, entry for August 7, 1838, p. 99.

⁶⁷ City Document No. 26, 1845, “Reports of the Annual Visiting Committees of the Public Schools of the City of Boston,” pp. 22 and 159.

⁶⁸ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1842-45*, entry for September 11, 1845, p. 253.

⁶⁹ City Document No. 40, 1847, p. 31.

⁷⁰ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for May 5, 1847, p. 108.

⁷¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for May 19, 1847, pp. 112-13.

Again, no action was taken, and in January 1848 Mr. Brooks ordered “that the committee on School houses be directed to examine the Smith school house, and report on the expediency of enlarging it, or building a new one.”⁷² Mr. Barnes from that committee then reported in March 1848:

Ordered, That the City Council be requested to make alterations and repairs in the Smith school house and furnish it anew, in conformity to the ground floor plan, and the three floor plans of the proposed alterations herewith submitted and in accordance with suggestions contained in the report of the committee of this board, on the structure, alteration and ventilation of school houses on this subject, whole expense not to exceed six thousand dollars.⁷³

Still no work was done, prompting the committee who visited the Smith School on May 24, 1848 to remark as follows:

The school house itself is discreditable to the City, and only supportable because habit has hardened the pupils and instructors to the endurance of annoyances, which made the Committee rejoice, that the class was small and the examination short.⁷⁴

Another appeal was made in January 1849, “that the Committee on School houses be requested to examine the Smith School house and report on the expediency of altering it, or building a new one.”⁷⁵ Finally, in March 1849, it was

Ordered: That the Chairman of this Board be requested to apply to the City Council for an appropriation sufficient to meet the expense of altering the Smith School House in accordance with the plan drawn by G.J.F. Bryant last year.⁷⁶ The expenditure to be made under the direction of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Buildings.⁷⁷

⁷² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry dated January 12, 1848, p. 161.

⁷³ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for March 8, 1848, p. 183.

⁷⁴ City Document No. 31, 1848, “The Report of the Annual Examination of the Public Schools of the City of Boston,” p. 57.

⁷⁵ City Document No. 31, entry for January 17, 1849, p. 256.

⁷⁶ “G.J.F. Bryant” was Gridley James Fox Bryant (1816-99), a prolific Boston architect. By the time of this project, he had designed the Abbot Lawrence House (1838) and the Boston Long Wharf Bonded Warehouse (1846). Among his more famous Boston area buildings are the Suffolk County Jail (1848-51), the Mount Auburn Cemetery Tower (1853), the Massachusetts State House extension (1853-54), the Boston City Hospital (1861-64), and the Boston City Hall (1861-65). Bryant also prepared model plans for the primary school houses of the City of Boston in 1861. Source: folder with clippings on G.J.F. Bryant at the Boston Athenaeum, including articles by Ada Louise Huxtable. Also, City Document No. 13 for 1861, “Report on Plans of Primary School Houses.”

⁷⁷ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for March 7, 1849, p. 268.

No other entries are found in the records of the Boston School Committee concerning this project, nor has the referenced plan been located. This led an earlier study to conclude that the alterations were never made to the schoolhouse.⁷⁸ However, other sources confirm that the Smith School House was remodeled in 1849.

First among these sources is a set of specifications that apparently accompanied the G.J.F. Bryant plan (see Appendix E).⁷⁹ The earliest indication that work was actually being done on the schoolhouse is the attendance record for July 31, 1849, which notes that the small number of pupils at the Smith School was "on account of Repairs &c."⁸⁰ Work appears to have been completed by August 29, 1849, based on a report of that date that stated

The City Government...in accordance with an application from this [School] Board, have just finished some expensive alterations and repairs on the Smith School house, including an entire remodeling of the interior of the building, for the greater convenience and comfort of both pupils and teachers. All this has been done at a cost exceeding, it is stated, the sum of \$2,000.⁸¹

A postscript to the report further noted that the Smith School had reopened on Monday, September 17, 1849. The newly improved building was described as follows:

The schoolrooms, since their alterations and improvements, possess every desirable comfort and convenience. Their furniture, fixtures and apparatus, are all of the most approved description; and every thing has been done, which a considerate and liberal forecast could devise, to render the Smith School a source of pride and blessing to the Young of our Colored Population.⁸²

⁷⁸ Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association, "Architectural Historical And Engineering Assessment And Report...46 School Street For the Public Facilities Department, City of Boston" (typescript, June 1970), p. 7/E8.

⁷⁹ These specifications were probably included in the two-volume *Specifications for Grammar and Primary Schools (1847-69)*. These specifications were prepared by architects, one of whom was Gridley J.F. Bryant. The two volumes were identified in 1983 as being uncataloged and in the Boston School Committee's Department of Planning and Engineering, but could not be located during research for this report.

⁸⁰ City Document No. 39, 1849, "The Report of the Annual Examination of the Public Schools of the City of Boston," p. 55.

⁸¹ City Document No. 42, 1849, "Report of a Special Committee of the Grammar School Board, Presented August 29, 1849, on the Petition of Sundry Colored Persons, Praying for the Abolition of the Smith School," p. 13.

⁸² City Document No. 42, 1849, p. 70.

The actual amount expended on the work was less than \$2,000, according to the auditor of the City of Boston, who reported that \$1,739 was paid for “alterations on Smith School House.” This included \$95 for the “plans and surveys,” and \$1,644 for the “alteration and repairs.”⁸³ It is also interesting that the Smith School House is listed in the “Real and Personal Property” section of this document as having been “built in 1834, enlarged in 1849.”⁸⁴

Attendance

Scanty records are available for the Smith Primary School that met for a time in the cellar of the Smith School House. The only known reference to attendance in that school is a report for the half year ending in October 1837, which said

The progress of this school is very much retarded by the irregularity and want of punctuality in attendance on part of the children, and also by the scanty supply of books. The teachers complained that the parents are very indifferent in regard to sending their children to school, or in providing them with the necessary books. If these difficulties were removed, the Committee is of the opinion that this school can be raised to a high rank.⁸⁵

More complete attendance records are available for the Smith Grammar School that met on the upper stories of the Smith School House. These records cover the years 1838 to 1855. The largest number of students recorded in the grammar school was 165 in 1846; the smallest number was 60 in 1851. One factor affecting attendance was the ongoing boycott of the Smith School that was organized by William C. Nell’s “Equal School Association” (1844-55).⁸⁶ Another was the fact that the children were liable to be “called away to service of various kinds” in the spring.⁸⁷ All known attendance information is summarized in the table on the following page.⁸⁸

⁸³ City Document No. 21, 1850, “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston,” pp. 33 and 65.

⁸⁴ City Document No. 21, 1850, p. 140.

⁸⁵ City Document No. 22, 1837, “Semi-Annual Report of the Condition of the Primary Schools of the City of Boston,” p. 9.

⁸⁶ Carleton Mabey, “A Negro Boycott to Integrate Boston Schools,” *New England Quarterly*, 1968, 41(3): 341-61.

⁸⁷ City Document No. 31, 1848, p. 57.

⁸⁸ All attendance records were obtained from the numbered city documents as follows: 1838, City Document No. 23; 1845, No. 26; 1846, No. 28; 1847, No. 40; 1848, No. 31; 1849, No. 39; 1850, No. 38; 1851, No. 52; 1852, No. 50; 1852-53, No. 73; 1853, No. 65; and 1854, No. 74.

ATTENDANCE AT THE SMITH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>	<u>BOTH</u>	<u>AVERAGE</u>	<u>OTHER INFORMATION</u>
<u>1838</u>			158	109	
<u>1845</u>			163	109	4 classes
<u>1846</u>			165		Average age, 10
<u>1847</u>			143	90	1st class, 53 pupils 2nd class, 46 pupils 3rd class, 44 pupils
<u>1848</u>	69	55	124	66	
<u>1849</u>	48	56	104	53	Attendance small due to repairs
<u>1850</u>	24	40	64	25	
<u>1851</u>	22	38	60	37 1/6	Number of seats, 40
<u>1852</u>	28	42	70	44	Number of seats, 80; one pupil older than 15
<u>1852-53</u>	27	43	70	54.4	Number of seats, 80; one pupil older than 15; 69 pupils ages 5-15
<u>1853</u>	30	49	79	51	Number of seats, 80; no pupils older than 15; 79 pupils ages 5-15
<u>1854</u>	32	58	90	54	Number of seats, 80; 7 pupils older than 15; 83 pupils ages 5-15
<u>1855</u> pupils	33	51	84	42	No pupils older than 15; 84 ages 10-15

Teachers

Information was found on the instructors of the Smith Grammar School only. No information was available on the instructors of the Smith Primary School that also met for a time in the Smith School House.

Smith Grammar School was taught by two instructors in the years 1835-1855: these were a master, who was college-educated,⁸⁹ and a female assistant. Smith School had three masters during its 20 years as school exclusively for colored children: Abner Forbes, Ambrose Wellington, and Thomas Paul. Less is known about the female assistants who served under the masters.

Abner Forbes was a white man who taught at the Smith School from its inception in March 1835 until his replacement in September 1845. He had previously taught in the Franklin School, and was transferred in 1834 to the African School that met in the basement of the African Meeting House.⁹⁰ He was elected in January 1835 as an officer of the New England Anti-Slavery Society.⁹¹ Forbes was well regarded by the School Committee, who granted him a raise of \$200 per year in August 1835 “from a belief that the labors of Mr. Forbes are necessarily more arduous than those of any other public instructor in the City, and that they are ably and faithfully discharged.”⁹² The views of the School Committee were different 10 years later, when the annual visiting committee gave him a poor evaluation, possibly precipitating his dismissal in 1845. The visiting committee reported:

It is to be regretted that the present incumbent has not more faith in his desire of the colored population for the education of their children, and in the capacities of the children themselves; for we fear that, without much faith, and even some enthusiasm, no great harvest can follow the teacher's labors. We think this school calls loudly for improvement.⁹³

Ambrose Wellington—also a white man—replaced Abner Forbes in 1845. Wellington taught at the Smith School for four years, from September 1845 until September 1849. Little is known about his tenure. He received a poor evaluation in 1849, when the annual visiting committee reported that the school was “in almost all respects...in a very low condition....The general tone of the school was disorderly....There is no one of our public institutions that more needs reform.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Section three of the “Regulations of the Public Schools” for the Smith School specified that the master have this qualification.

⁹⁰ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for March 7, 1834.

⁹¹ *The Liberator*, January 31, 1835, Vol. V, No. 5, p. 19.

⁹² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for August 11, 1835.

⁹³ City Document No. 26, 1845.

⁹⁴ City Document No. 39, 1849.

In August of that year, two petitions were submitted by the colored citizens of Boston, both requesting that Mr. Wellington be replaced by a colored teacher.⁹⁵

Thomas Paul began serving as the first colored master of the Smith School House on September 17, 1849. Paul was the son of the late Reverend Thomas Paul, who had served as the pastor of the African Baptist Church from 1806 until 1829. Young Paul was a graduate of Dartmouth and had served as an apprentice to William Lloyd Garrison, publisher of *The Liberator*.⁹⁶ He was employed as the master of the Smith School until September 1855 when it ceased to be a school for colored children exclusively.

The duties of the masters of the Boston Public Schools were many, and included tasks outside the realm of teaching. The Boston School Committee ruled in 1841 that

It shall be the duty of the Masters to give vigilant attention to the ventilation and temperature of the school rooms. A regular system of ventilation shall be practiced, as well in winter as in summer, by which the air in the room shall be effectually changed, at the end of each school-time, before the house shall be closed.⁹⁷

It was also ruled the following year, in 1842, that the masters prescribe regulations to insure that the yards and outbuildings of the public schools be "kept in a neat and proper condition."⁹⁸

The job of the female assistant was to undertake the duties assigned to her by the master, and to instruct the girls in needlework.⁹⁹ The names of six of the assistants, and the years in which they worked at the Smith School, were: Abigail A. Eaton (1835), Sarah Forbes (1836-?), Susan Paul (sometime after 1836 and before her death in 1841), Chloe Lee (1841-? and 1849-50), Sarah H. Southwick (1848), and Charlotte M. Knowles (1852-54).¹⁰⁰ Sarah Forbes may have been related to Abner Forbes, the first Master of the Smith School. It is also possible that Susan Paul was the same Susan Paul who was the eldest daughter of the late Reverend Thomas Paul. This would have also made her the sister of young Thomas Paul, the master of the Smith School from 1849 to 1855. The Reverend's daughter was a life member of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, and was well-known as a lecturer on antislavery.¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ City Document No. 42, 1849.

⁹⁶ Mabee, pp. 348-49.

⁹⁷ City Document No. 22, 1841, p. 12.

⁹⁸ City Document No. 12 for 1842, "City of Boston Schools," p. 4.

⁹⁹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1815-36*, entry for February 10, 1835, p. 439. This is the first mention of a female assistant for the "African School."

¹⁰⁰ Information on the female assistants of the Smith School was obtained from the *Records of the Boston School Committee*, the numbered documents for the City of Boston, and the Boston Directories.

¹⁰¹ George A. Levesque, "Inherent Reformers-Inherited Orthodoxy: Black Baptists in Boston, 1800-1873," *Journal of Negro History*, p. 503 (note 21).

One other instructor, a music teacher by the name of James C. Johnson, appears in the records of the Smith School for one year only in 1852.¹⁰²

Heat and Ventilation

Proper heating and ventilating of the Boston public schools became a concern in the 1840s. The earliest documented record of this issue was a new regulation for the schools that was passed by unanimous vote on September 28, 1841. This required "the Masters to give vigilant attention to the ventilation and temperature of the school rooms."¹⁰³ Five years later, in 1846, the annual visiting committee reported on the general state of the heating and ventilating in the city's schoolhouses:

The greatest evils of our school rooms arise directly from their arrangement and provisions for winter. They are generally without fire-places and are heated by furnaces and stoves; small apertures are made in the ceilings or upper part of the walls, which sometimes by still smaller apertures communicate with the external air, and no other means are used to make a draught of air. The consequence is, that not one of the rooms of our common schools can be used in the severest day in winter without opening the windows in school-houses....

But a far greater evil than this...arising from the construction of our school-houses, is their want of ventilation: in many of the school rooms, in spite of all the efforts of the instructors, the air becomes so foul as to affect, every day, both pupils and teachers. This produces every year ill health, sickness, and, doubtless, permanent injury....¹⁰⁴

Improvements were undertaken the following year, in 1847, according to City Document Number 46 entitled "Reports and Other Documents Relating to the Ventilation of the School Houses of the City of Boston." According to this document, 16 grammar schoolhouses had been outfitted, according to plans and specifications, with:

the necessary flues, tops, and other apparatus for discharging the foul air; and they require nothing more for that purpose. We have altered, enclosed, or rebuilt, 21 stoves and furnaces, and set up and supplied with the ducts, valves, and c., 26 of the new ventilating stoves.... A few houses still require stoves or furnaces or alterations of the same.¹⁰⁵

The ventilating apparatus that was being installed on the rooftops was further described as a metal "Ventiduct" or "Ejecting Ventilator." This device had been invented by a local man, a "Mr.

¹⁰² City Document No. 73, 1852, "Second Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Schools of the City of Boston," p. 56.

¹⁰³ City Document No. 22, 1841, Section 11, p. 12.

¹⁰⁴ City Document No. 28, 1846, "Reports of the Annual Visiting Committees of the Public Schools of the City of Boston," pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁵ City Document No. 46, 1847, pp. 25-26.

Emerson.” The literature of the day recommended that the “Ventiducts” be positioned at a distance from the interior stove or furnace register so as to function most efficiently.¹⁰⁶

It is likely that the Smith School House was one of the 16 grammar schools that received new equipment, based on the report of the annual visiting committee in 1847, which noted: “The Ventilation of the [Smith] School occasioned a vacation of nine days.”¹⁰⁷ In addition, two early views of the schoolhouse show a rooftop apparatus that closely resembles the “Ventiduct” illustrated in the report of 1847. Both views predate the remodeling of the Smith School House that was undertaken in the summer (July-August) of 1849. One is the watercolor painting of the “Smith School” (fig. 3), and the other is an engraving published in the 1849 *Boston Almanac* (fig. 4).

More specific information on the heating and ventilating of the Smith School House was provided in a city report dated June 1851. Included in this report was a statement of the expenses for heating and ventilating the various schools for the period January 1, 1848, to May 1, 1851. The report also listed the quantity and types of fuel furnished to each school. The total cost of heating and ventilating the Smith School House was \$457.98. This included \$112.44 for “Ventilation,” \$63.01 for “Heating Apparatus” and \$282.53 for “Fuel Including Housing.” The types and quantities of fuel provided to the Smith School House were: coal, 39 1/2 tons; hard wood, 4 cords; p.p. [pitch pine?] wood, 2 1/2 cords; and bark, 2 1/2 cords. Also noted under the category “Kinds of Furnaces and Stoves” was “1 Clark’s Stove.”¹⁰⁸ Henry G. Clark of Boston patented an “Air-Heating Stove” in 1848, and it is likely that this type of stove was installed in the schoolhouse.¹⁰⁹

Use of the Smith Fund

Contrary to popular belief, the proceeds from Abiel Smith’s bequest were not used to construct the Smith School House. Instead, the money generated by investment of the Smith Fund was allocated to three uses:

- Paying for a portion of the salary of the master of the Smith School. This amount was approximately \$200 per year.¹¹⁰
- Buying books and stationery for pupils who could not afford them. This amount was usually specified “not to exceed \$35.00.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ City Document No. 46, 1847, p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ City Document No. 40, 1847, p. 54.

¹⁰⁸ City Document No. 39, 1851, “City of Boston Report of Superintendent of Public Buildings on Expenses of Warming and Ventilating School Houses.”

¹⁰⁹ Clark’s patent was dated August 10, 1848, and antedated February 10, 1848. The patent number is difficult to read, and was either number 5,704 or 5,764.

¹¹⁰ City of Boston numbered documents for the years 1834-55, entitled “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston.”

¹¹¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, entries for February 14, 1837, p. 7; February 13, 1838, p. 83; February 12, 1839, p. 137; February 14, 1840, p. 178; and March 16, 1841, p. 242.

- Paying for special projects or purchases. In 1837, for example, \$25 was granted from the Smith Fund to reimburse the master for a closet and other fixtures to hold the newly acquired teaching equipment known as “Philosophical Apparatus.”¹¹²

The investments of the Smith Fund changed over the years from the time they were bequeathed by Abiel Smith in 1815. Retained the longest were shares in the “Bridge across from Tivertown to Rhode Island,” which were listed until 1864. Omitted from the fund by 1835 were shares in the “Kennebeck Bridge,” the shares in the “Springfield Bridge,” and the “Stock in the United States.” Also dropped from the fund at later dates were the shares in the “Second Turnpike Road in New Hampshire” by 1842, the share in the “Boston Bathing House” by 1844, the shares in the “Newbury Port Turnpike” by 1846, and the share in the “Boston Theatre” by 1852. New investments added to the fund by 1835 were several shares in the Suffolk Bank, and approximately \$4,000 in the stock of the City of Boston. Added also in 1852 were several shares in the Boston and Providence Railroad Corporation.¹¹³

Efforts to Abolish Segregated Schooling

Petitions, boycotts, and a lawsuit were employed in the fight to obtain equal school rights, and more particularly, to abolish separate schools for colored children, such as the Smith School.

The earliest protest occurred in 1840, when a petition was submitted “asking the City Government to grant equal school rights.” The petition was signed by William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Francis Jackson, Henry W. Williams, and William C. Nell.¹¹⁴ No progress was made at that time.

Another petition was presented to the School Committee four years later, in May 1844, “praying that separate schools for colored children may be abolished and that they be permitted to attend the several schools of the City....”¹¹⁵ This petition was signed by Thomas Dalton and other colored citizens. A vote was taken by the School Committee, and the request was denied by a vote of 17-2.¹¹⁶ The colored citizens responded with a boycott of the public schools that would continue for the next 10 years.¹¹⁷

¹¹² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1837-41*, entry for May 3, 1837, pp. 28-29.

¹¹³ City of Boston numbered documents for the years 1835-50 entitled “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston.”

¹¹⁴ “Triumph of Equal School Rights in Boston: Proceedings of the Presentation Meeting Held in Boston, Dec. 17, 1855, Including Addresses by John T. Hilton, Wm. C. Nell, Charles W. Slack, Wendell Phillips, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Charles Lenox Remond” (Boston: R.F. Wallcut, 1856), p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *Records of the School Committee, 1842-45*, entry for May 7, 1844, p. 127.

¹¹⁶ *Records of the School Committee, 1842-45*, entry for May 15, 1844, p. 131.

¹¹⁷ Mabey, p. 344.

A similar petition was presented in March 1845, and was again rejected.¹¹⁸ A fourth petition was submitted the following year, in June 1846, to the Primary School Committee of the City of Boston. It was signed by George Putnam and 85 other persons. The petition charged:

the establishment of exclusive schools for our children is a great injury to us, and deprives us of those equal privileges and advantages in the public schools to which we are entitled as citizens. These separate schools cost more and do less for the children than other schools, since all experience teaches that where a small and despised class are shut out from the common benefit of any public institutions of learning and confined to separate schools, few or none interest themselves about the schools—neglect ensues, abuses creep in, the standard of scholarship degenerates, and the teachers and the scholars are soon considered and of course become an inferior class.

But to say nothing of any other reasons for this change, it is sufficient to say that the establishment of separate schools for our children is believed to be unlawful, and it is felt to be if not in intention, in fact, insulting. If, as seems to be admitted, you are violating our rights, we simply ask you to cease doing so....¹¹⁹

A subcommittee of the Primary School Committee was appointed to study the issue; it submitted a lengthy report in support of the existing system. The petition was denied by a vote of 59 to 16.¹²⁰

The fight for equal school rights, however, was not deterred. Three years later, in August 1849, a meeting was held at the African Meeting House. The notice of the meeting stated:

IMPORTANT NOTICE: GREAT SCHOOL RIGHTS MEETING

Every individual who wears a colored face is called upon to meet at the Belknap street Church, on Monday evening next, August 6, at 7 o'clock;—then and there to decide the question, whether we are satisfied to be humbugged out of our rights in regard to Common School instruction for our children; also, to remonstrate against the appointment of any individual as master in the Smith School, to continue in one moment as an exclusive School. Let our motto be, Down with the School! [Signed] J.T.H. [John T. Hilton] B.F.R. [Benjamin F. Roberts] L.B. [?]

Boston, August, 1849¹²¹

¹¹⁸ City Document No. 23, 1846, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁹ City Document No. 23, 1846, p. 1.

¹²⁰ City Document No. 23, 1846, p. 1.

¹²¹ City Document No. 42, 1849, p. 26.

Five petitions resulted from the meeting at the African Meeting House. Three petitions demanded the abolishment of the Smith School, and two petitions requested that the incumbent white master of the Smith School be replaced by a colored master. Those wishing to abolish the Smith School were John T. Hilton and others, a committee of colored citizens; Jonas W. Clark and 201 others, colored persons; and Robert E. Davis and 37 others, colored children. Those requesting a new master for the school were Joseph Russell and 33 others, and Reverend James Simmons and others. A special committee of the grammar school board was appointed to study the issues, and two reports were issued. One was a majority report in support of the present system. The other was a minority report in support of the petitioners. One argument of the majority report was that the bequest of Abiel Smith required the city to maintain an exclusive colored school. The minority report countered with a suggestion that the Smith Fund be used to educate colored persons moving to Boston from the South and elsewhere. Again, the majority report prevailed and the Smith School was retained. In a compromise move, a colored master was appointed to the school that September.¹²²

The legality of separate schools was tried in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in December 1849 in the case of "Sarah C. Roberts vs. The City of Boston." At issue was the fact that Sarah Roberts, aged five, had not been permitted by the City of Boston to attend the primary school in her neighborhood that was for white children exclusively. Sarah and her father Benjamin F. Roberts were represented by two lawyers: Charles Sumner, who would later become a United States Senator, and Robert Morris. Despite an eloquent argument by Sumner¹²³, the decision was made by the court in April 1850 that Sarah Roberts had not been "unlawfully excluded from public instruction."¹²⁴

The year following the Roberts decision, in May 1851, a bill was presented to the Massachusetts legislature that would ensure that "no child shall be excluded from any of the Public Schools of the Commonwealth on account of color or race...."¹²⁵ The Boston School Committee noted its disagreement with this bill, believing

the Public Schools of Boston are now liberally and happily organized with separate schools for the two principal races of children, offering equal opportunity to both....¹²⁶

The bill of 1851 did not pass, but a similar bill was proposed in 1854. A show of support was provided by petitions that were circulated by the colored community and signed by 1,469 people.

¹²² City Document No. 42, 1849, and *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for August 29, 1849, pp. 299-300.

¹²³ *Argument of Charles Sumner, Esq. Against the Constitutionality of Separate Colored Schools, in the Case of Sarah C. Roberts vs. The City of Boston, Before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, Dec. 4, 1849* (Boston: B.F. Roberts, 1849).

¹²⁴ Arthur Burr Darling, "Prior to Little Rock in American Education: The Roberts Case of 1849-1850," *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, 1957-60, p. 141.

¹²⁵ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1850-54*, entry for May 13, 1851, pp. 149-50.

¹²⁶ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1850-54*, entry for May 13, 1851, pp. 149-50.

Of the signatures, 87 were obtained by Lewis Hayden.¹²⁷ This time the bill did pass the legislature, and was signed into law by the governor on April 28, 1855.¹²⁸ The new act decreed that “no distinction shall be made on account of the race, color, or religious opinions, of the applicant or scholar” in all the common schools of Massachusetts.¹²⁹

Attainment of Equal School Rights

The Smith School for Colored Children was closed on August 31, 1855. The City Auditor noted, “children who formerly attended that School, are now accommodated in the various School Districts where they reside.”¹³⁰

Monday, September 3, 1855, was the first day of integrated schooling in the City of Boston. William C. Nell later recalled a scene he had witnessed the Sunday before in his neighborhood on Beacon Hill:

On the morning preceding their advent to the public schools, I saw from my window a boy passing the exclusive Smith School, (where he had been a pupil,) and, raising his hands, he exultingly exclaimed to his companions, “Good bye for ever, colored school! Tomorrow we are like other Boston boys.”¹³¹

The Boston School Committee did not make note of this historic event until one week later, on September 11, 1855, when it was recorded:

Mr. Tuxbury offered the following—Whereas, by a recent act of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, the several towns and cities are required to admit into their public schools all children of suitable age and qualifications, without distinction in regard to color, thereby rendering any further provision for the separate instruction of the colored children of this city unnecessary and inexpedient, therefore, ordered, That the school now existing in Joy Street, and designated as the “Smith School,” together with the Primary School and the school for Special Instruction connected therewith, and all other schools being for the exclusive education of colored children, be discontinued and abolished; and that the Secretary be directed to inform the several persons recently elected as teachers in said Schools, that their services in that capacity will no longer be required by the city.¹³²

¹²⁷ “Triumph of Equal School Rights,” p. 6.

¹²⁸ Mabee, p. 356.

¹²⁹ Darling, p. 141.

¹³⁰ City Document No. 48, 1856, “Auditor’s Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston,” pp. 60-70.

¹³¹ “Triumph of Equal School Rights,” p. 9.

¹³² *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1855-58*, entry for September 11, 1855, pp. 87-88.

Integrated School, 1855-1882

Previous studies on the Smith School House have assumed that the building ended its use as a school in September 1855. Additional research, however, reveals that the building continued in use as a schoolhouse until about 1881.

Records on the first year of integration, 1855-56, are scanty, suggesting that the schoolhouse may have been closed for a time. By 1856-57, the building was listed by the City Auditor as one of the city's "Primary School Houses," and further described as "Joy St. (old Smith Gr. Sch. House) built in 1834.—Enlarged [sic] 1849, 2 schools."¹³³ Similar descriptions of the building are found for fiscal years 1857-58, and 1858-59.¹³⁴ The value of the Primary School on Joy Street—presumably the old Smith School House—was assessed on May 1, 1859, at \$4,500.¹³⁵

The old schoolhouse was used as a grammar school again by the latter half of 1859 and through 1860, when it became "occupied by a branch of the Phillips Grammar School."¹³⁶ The reason for this was explained in a petition to the School Committee, to wit:

The present [Phillips School] building, on the corner of Pickney and West Centre streets, has not sufficient capacity to accommodate the pupils,—a part of whom attend school in the vestry of the Baptist church in Charles street, and another portion in the Smith Schoolhouse, formerly used by colored children, in Joy street....

The larger number [of pupils] have been for some years [sic] provided with quarters in the old Smith Schoolhouse, so called, on the slope of the hill and immediately adjacent to a large stable in Joy street.¹³⁷

Construction of a new schoolhouse for the Phillips School commenced sometime in 1860.¹³⁸ By September of the following year it was reported that

A new edifice for the Phillips School, has been erected at the corner of Anderson and Southac Streets.... It will enable the master to gather all his

¹³³ City Document No. 54, 1857, "Auditor's Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston," p. 265. Primary school was for children under the age of seven, according to City Document No. 23, 1859, "Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Boston," p. 18.

¹³⁴ City Document No. 29, 1858, p. 265, and City Document No. 41, 1859, p. 275, both entitled "Auditor's Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston."

¹³⁵ City Document No. 77, 1859, "Valuation of the City Property, 1859," p. 6.

¹³⁶ City Document No. 56, 1860, p. 318, and No. 53, 1861, p. 351, both entitled "Auditor's Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston."

¹³⁷ City Document No. 10, 1860, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings," pp. 152 and 154.

¹³⁸ City Document No. 10, 1861, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings," pp. 9-10.

scholars under one roof. It will be ready for occupation by the end of the year.¹³⁹

The new Phillips School House was finished sometime before December 31, 1861, according to a report that noted "the new Grammar School House for the Phillips District has been completed and is now in use."¹⁴⁰ The grammar school scholars were presumably removed from the old Smith School House by 1862, and the building reclaimed as a primary schoolhouse. The building is listed in the City Auditor's records as a "Primary School House" in the annual reports for fiscal year 1861-62, 1862-63, and 1863-64.¹⁴¹

It was also listed as a primary school by the Superintendent of Public Buildings in 1865, and described as follows:

Joy Street School. On the corner of Smith's Court; was built for and formerly used as a Grammar schoolhouse. Built in 1834. Three rooms. The cost of repairs, and supplies, and c. the past year [1864], has been, \$453.85; for fuel, \$251.00; making total of \$704.85.¹⁴²

A report was published by the city in 1865 entitled "Naming Primary Schoolhouses." The report noted that the names chosen were associated "with the names of gentlemen whose valuable and disinterested services claim for them the grateful memory of the community thus benefited."¹⁴³ It was thus that Abiel Smith was again honored by renaming the building the "Smith Primary School" house, even though it was no longer used as a school for colored children. The city government was requested to place name tablets on each building, although there is no documentation to verify that this was ever done.

Smith School House on Joy Street continued to be listed as a "School House" in the records of the City of Boston for the next 20 years. That the building was being used as a school is verified by its listing as a schoolhouse in the "Annual Report of the School Committee" for the years 1873 and 1875.¹⁴⁴ The exact date when it ceased to function as a school is not known.

¹³⁹ City Document No. 74, 1861, "Annual Report of the School Committee of the City of Boston," p. 9.

¹⁴⁰ City Document No. 8, 1862, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings," p. 8.

¹⁴¹ City Document No. 58, 1862, p. 356; No. 78, 1863, p. 375; and No. 65, 1864, p. 340; all entitled "Auditor's Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston."

¹⁴² City Document No. 12, 1865, "Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Documents," p. 38.

¹⁴³ City Document No. 101, 1865, "Report on Naming Primary Schoolhouses," pp. 4, 6, and 8.

¹⁴⁴ City Document No. 81, 1874, pp. 354-58, and City Document No. 104, 1876, p. 223. Although the reports are dated 1874 and 1876, they actually reported on the previous school years of 1873 and 1875.

City Storage Building, Circa 1882-1886

Smith School House was converted to use as a storage building for the City of Boston sometime after 1875 and before 1882. It is shown on the *Boston Atlas* for 1873, corrected to 1882, as the “City Storage Ho, Old Furn’e &c.” (i.e., “City Storage House, Old Furniture and etcetera.” That this was a change in the use of the building since 1873 is suggested because it has been “pasted over” with new paper—a device that was used to update the atlas. This atlas was updated seven times: in 1875, 1876, 1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, and 1882. Which year the Smith School House update was applied is not known.¹⁴⁵

The earliest mention in the city records that the schoolhouse was no longer in use as a school is the annual report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings for 1884. This document lists the Smith School House as being “used as a store-room.” The same notation is in the Superintendent’s report for the following year, and the City Auditor’s report for fiscal year 1884-85.¹⁴⁶

Use by Veterans’ Groups, 1887-1984

The Smith School House is presumed to have continued in use as a storage facility until 1887, when the Superintendent of Public Buildings reported that it was “Leased to Post 134, G.A.R., from Jan. 1, 1887, to Jan. 1, 1888.”¹⁴⁷ The Superintendent further noted that this was one of several buildings that had been “surrendered to this department as not wanted for school or fire purposes.”¹⁴⁸ The city records examined up to 1930 show that the building was leased to Post 134, GAR, through that year.¹⁴⁹ The Boston Directories also list Post 134 in the building for the next 10 years, through 1940.¹⁵⁰

The “GAR” was the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization for veterans of the Civil War. It was open to all honorably discharged soldiers and sailors of the U.S. Army, Navy, and

¹⁴⁵ The *Boston Atlas* viewed for this report is in the Fine Arts Department of the Boston Public Library.

¹⁴⁶ City Document No. 24, 1885, p. 16; No. 10, 1886, p. 16; and No. 76, 1886, p. 276.

¹⁴⁷ City Document No. 20, 1887, “Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings,” p. 6. The lease was presumably done as a result of a March 6, 1885, Massachusetts state law that authorized cities and towns to lease public buildings to GAR posts.

¹⁴⁸ City Document No. 20, 1887, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ City Document No. 100, 1890, p. 308; No. 4, 1895, p. 233; No. 4, 1900, p. 298; No. 4, 1910, p. 269; No. 4, 1920, p. 283; and No. 4, 1930, p. ?); all entitled “Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston.”

¹⁵⁰ Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association, p. 11/E12.

Marine Corps who had served between April 12, 1861, and April 9, 1865.¹⁵¹ Each post was named for a distinguished member, with Post 134 named for Robert A. Bell.¹⁵² City records from the 20th century indicate that this was a post for “colored” veterans.¹⁵³ Its members are said to have met every Thursday with regularity until later years, as members died and meetings became less frequent.¹⁵⁴

The earliest known photograph of the Smith School House was taken in 1890, only three years after Post 134 began to lease the building (fig. 8). Because the main subject of the photograph was Smith Court, only the lower portion of the building’s north elevation is visible. In this view, the building appears unchanged from its condition today, with only a few exceptions. The cellar doorway is fitted with a simple hinged door, although it does not appear to have been in common usage. The windows in the first story were fitted with 12-over-12 sashes.¹⁵⁵ The window sashes themselves are painted a dark color, while the frames are a light color. A wood sign is mounted between two of the first-story windows that reads “ - THIS IS A - PRIVATE WAY DANGEROUS PASSING.” Finally, the north wall enclosing the rear yard is solid brickwork, with no doorway as exists today.

Scanty documentary information is available on the Smith School House when it was used by Post 134. An “Egress Report” by the City of Boston Building Department noted that egress was sufficient at 46 Joy Street on May 31, 1916. The exterior brick coping was reported to be “in a very dangerous condition due to the bricks becoming loose,” according to a letter dated August 20, 1923. Finally, a defective wood bulkhead on the Smith Court side of the building was reported in correspondence dated September 10, 1927. The bulkhead was summarily repaired by a carpenter from the Public Buildings Department.¹⁵⁶

The Smith School House was next occupied by another veterans organization, the James E. Welch Post Number 56 of the American Legion. The American Legion was founded originally in 1919 as an organization for the veterans of World War I (1917-18). It was expanded in later years to include the veterans of World War II (1941-46), the Korean War (1950-55), and the Vietnam War

¹⁵¹ J. Franklin Jameson, *Dictionary of United States History, 1492-1895* (Boston: Puritan Publishing Co., 1894), p. 272.

¹⁵² No research has been done to determine who Robert A. Bell was and what his accomplishments were during the Civil War. It is recommended that Boston NHP try to learn if any members of Post 134 had served under Robert Gould Shaw in the famous 54th Massachusetts Regiment.

¹⁵³ Correspondence from the City of Boston Police Department, Office of the Commissioner, to the City of Boston Building Department; in the files of the City of Boston Department of Inspectional Services.

¹⁵⁴ Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association, p. 11/E12.

¹⁵⁵ While nine panes only can be seen in each double-hung window sash, the perspective of the view suggests that the sashes were in fact 12-over-12.

¹⁵⁶ All information on the building for this period is on file at the City of Boston Department of Inspectional Services.

(1961-75).¹⁵⁷ While Boston directories suggest that the American Legion took over the building at 46 Joy Street from the GAR in 1941, it is likely that the post was located there as early as 1920, when the State Legislature directed that cities and towns provide quarters (or funds for quarters) to all American Legion posts in the state. This assumption is supported by an application by the Welch Post for a "Public Hall License" at 46 Joy Street in 1937. The letter of response from the city said that no license would be issued until an additional means of egress was created, exit lights were installed, and the two hall doors were reversed to open outwardly.¹⁵⁸ This work was presumably done, and the post occupied the schoolhouse for several decades, according to occupancy permits issued to it by the Boston Fire Department through the year 1982.¹⁵⁹

By 1982, another veterans' organization was sharing the building with the American Legion. This was the John F. Kennedy Chapter 44 of the Disabled American Veterans. The USO—the United Service Organization—also occupied the building for a time.¹⁶⁰

The use of the building by these various veterans organizations (GAR, American Legion, and DAV) and the USO has not been researched. It is recommended that the park undertake a special history study on the use of the building by these groups and that those groups which still exist be contacted to determine what, if any, records or photographs are extant.

Architectural and Engineering Study, 1970

An architectural and engineering study of five Boston buildings, including 46 Joy Street, was undertaken by Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association, for the Public Facilities Department of the City of Boston in June 1970. The results of this study were written in a report that was entitled *Architectural, Historical, and Engineering Assessment And Report of Old State House, Faneuil Hall, Dillaway House, Parkman House, 46 Joy Street*. The chapter for each building was organized into five sections, including a historical report, an evaluation of the existing conditions, visual documentation (photographs and architectural drawings), short-term recommendations, and long-term recommendations.

The study found that the exterior of the schoolhouse had been little changed from its original appearance in 1835, with a few exceptions. First, the south side of the roof had been altered by changing the slope and covering it with tar and gravel. This also involved altering the east and west

¹⁵⁷ Telephone conversation, April 1, 1990, with the Massachusetts State Office of the American Legion.

¹⁵⁸ Letter dated November 4, 1937, to the Superintendent of Public Buildings from the Building Commissioner; in the files of the City of Boston Department of Inspectional Services.

¹⁵⁹ Three occupancy permits made out to the "James Welch Post 56" are hung on the west wall of the mechanical room in the Smith School House; these are dated 1970, 1972, and 1982.

¹⁶⁰ The "Disabled American Veterans" organization is mentioned as sharing the building with the American Legion in the report by Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association dated 1970. The "J.F.K. Chapter 44" is the name on the Fire Department's occupancy permit dated July 31, 1984. "U.S.O." is the name on the gas meter in the building for an entry dated December 28, 1984.

brick pediments that had been built up on their south sides. Second, two doorways in the north elevation on Smith Court had been filled in. Third, the front door had been replaced with a modern door. It was also stated that the location of the front doorway may have been moved from the south side of the east elevation to its present location in the middle. Fourth, most of the basement window sashes were thought to have been installed at a later date. Last, there were no window shutters on the front of the building, although some old hardware was still in place, including the pintles and shutter dogs.

The condition of the exterior was found to range from good to poor. In good condition were the granite foundation, the granite lintels on the west elevation, and most of the brickwork, including the cornice. In poor condition were the 12-over-12 window sashes, and the brownstone window lintels and sills.

Inside, it was found that modern materials had been installed in several areas, obscuring what may have been the original building fabric. The specific observations for each story are summarized here. The basement was divided into a large lounge to the west, a mechanical room in the middle of the east wall, and a small men's room in the northeast corner (fig. 9). There were two means of egress: the stairway to the first story in the southeast corner, and a wide exterior doorway in the north end of the west wall. The finish in the basement was described as a nonhistoric pine paneling, furred out about 1 foot from the foundation walls. The original foundation was visible in two closets, where it seemed in good condition. The framing of the first floor was covered by ceiling material, and four posts had been added in the lounge area for extra support. The earlier exterior entrance from Smith Court had been infilled with concrete blocks, and a closet created there.

The first story was divided into three areas: a front entry and stairway to the east, a large meeting room to the west, and a small kitchen in the northeast corner (fig. 10). It was observed that much original material remained in the first story, including the window frames, the window sashes, the wainscot, and some ceiling plaster. Even the kitchen was found to have retained some original material. These materials were described as being in run-down condition, especially the window sashes. The staircase in the entry and the frame of the front doorway were thought to be either original or of a slightly later date. Two posts had been added to the middle of the large meeting room as additional support for the second floor. Most unusual was a window of undetermined date in the partition wall between the entry and the meeting room. It had been covered over on the meeting-room side of the partition by later finish materials.

The second story consisted of a stairway in the southeast corner, a women's toilet room and a closet at the head of the stairway, a large meeting room to the west, and a small storage room in the northeast corner (fig. 11). Original materials were identified to be the window sashes, window frames, and wainscot. The windows were found to be in deteriorated condition, similar to those in the first story. An interesting feature of the meeting room was a pressed-metal ceiling that followed the original arched ceiling. It was thought to have been installed later, over an earlier plaster ceiling that may have been in poor condition. The wood floor in the meeting room was described as a later wood floor—in fairly good condition—that had been installed over the original wood floor. The partition wall dividing the women's room from the storage room was described as modern. Some original material was observed to remain in the storage room.

The short-term recommendations for the building were to install a fire-alarm system, install an emergency lighting system, repair the roof, repair the windows, and repoint the exterior masonry.

A security system was deemed to be unnecessary “due to [the] nature of [the] present tenancy”—the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans. The estimated total cost for the proposed work was \$12,503. The long-term recommendation for the building was to rehabilitate it completely. Proposed work included shoring the first and second floors, replacing deteriorated window sashes and other deteriorated window elements, restoring the roof to its original gable form, remodeling the interior rooms, installing new wiring, and installing new plumbing. No cost estimate was provided for this work.

Renovations, 1975

The Smith School House was renovated under contract with the City of Boston Public Facilities Department in 1975. The number assigned to the project by the city was “PFD-365-SD-2-74.” The architect was Stahl/Bennett, Inc., then at 177 Milk Street in Boston. Consulting Engineers were Lemessurier Associates, Inc., of Cambridge and Metcalf Engineering of Framingham, Massachusetts. The contract documents included specifications and three pages of architectural drawings. The specifications were entitled “Renovations to Smith School (46 Joy Street).” The drawings were titled on the cover page “Renovation of Old Smith School, Boston, Massachusetts.” They included Sheet A-1, “Plans, Elevations & Details,” and Sheet E-1, “Electrical Plans & Legend.” The drawings, including the cover page, are reproduced in this report as figures 12, 13, and 14. Bids for the job were received from five building contractors. Their prices ranged from \$30,629 to \$54,407. No documentation has been found on which contractor was chosen. If the criterion was low bid, the contractor was F. Diczno & Sons, Inc.

The information that follows is a summary of the specifications and the architectural drawings. It is a description of the work that was specified, not the work that was done.

A general description of the work is provided in the “Summary of Work” section of the specifications:

In general, the work includes upgrading of exterior weatherproofing of the building, structural reinforcing of the second floor and walls, new fire extinguishers, new shutters (one elevation only), restoration of original roof line, exterior painting of trim, new electrical service and emergency lighting....This Contract includes no interior finish work; it is anticipated that the tenants of the building [a Chapter of the American Legion] will do this work, as well as upgrading of wiring, plumbing and mechanical systems. [Section 1F-1].

Work on the exterior granite foundation and brick walls involved removing the old hardware, and raking and repointing the mortar joints. The entire surface was to be raked to a depth of one-half inch, except where sound mortar was found. The new mortar was to match the color of the existing mortar, described as an “egg shell” or a “straw” color. The mix for the new mortar was specified to be:

- 4 parts Portland cement, ASTM C-150, Type I or II
- 2 parts hydrated lime, ASTM C-207, Type S
- 4 1/2-1/6 parts light-colored mason’s sand

The mortar joints were to be tooled slightly concave. After repointing, the entire building was to be washed and rinsed from top to bottom.

Restoration of the brickwork was also required on the south sides of the east and west pediments. These had been built up when the roof was raised on the south side. This probably occurred in 1909, when the apartment building that exists today was built on the south adjacent lot. Work on the pediments involved removing the later brickwork that had been added to build up the south end of the roof. In the event that additional bricks were needed to restore the original lines of the pediments, it was recommended that old bricks be used from the partially disassembled wall in the backyard.

The work on the windows involved providing and installing five pairs of exterior wood shutters for the east elevation. No mention was made of shutter hardware.

The roof and gutter work needed was extensive. First, it was necessary to restore the original roof line on the south side. This involved removing the existing built-up roofing, including the later rafters and sheathing boards. Next, it was specified that all the existing slate roof shingles be removed and saved for reinstallation on the north side of the roof. The sheathing boards beneath the shingles were to be replaced wherever they were found to be unsound. Next, all existing flashing, vent hood, gutters, and leaders were to be removed. Only the vent hood was to be saved for reinstallation. New roofing materials were specified to be felt underlay (30-pound asphalt-impregnated), asbestos shingles for the south side of the roof only, new replacement slate shingles to replace the damaged slate shingles for the north side of the roof, new lead-coated copper flashing, and two roof vents to replace the existing vents. The new asbestos shingles were further specified to match the slate in color, and to be the heaviest weight, finest grade, self-sealing asbestos shingles available. The new slate shingles were specified to be dark gray in color, with two nail holes each, and 12 inches wide by 20 inches long by three-sixteenths of an inch thick. Also specified were all new lead-coated copper gutters, gutter hangers, leaders, and downspouts. Both downspouts were to be located on the rear (west) elevation.

All exterior woodwork was to be painted, of a color to match the existing. Exterior woodwork included doors, doorway frames, window sashes, window frames, window shutters (new), and cornices. The paint was to be an exterior oil-based type with a flat finish.

Inside the building, the most extensive work involved the reinforcing of the second floor. First, it was necessary to remove two columns and the entire lath and plaster ceiling in the large west room on the first story. Two small areas of ceiling were also removed in the entry and the small northeast room at the east wall. New structural materials included two steel I-beams, through-wall masonry tie rods and support angles, and eight exterior iron plates of star design. The steel I-beams were slated for installation in the ceiling of the large west room in the first story. The tie rods were specified to number two in the east elevation, four in the north elevation, and two in the west elevation. Their function was to tie the framing of the second floor to the exterior brick walls.

The electrical system was also specified to be upgraded at this time. This work involved first removing all abandoned wiring devices, panels, and other electrical equipment. Next, new equipment was to be installed including a panel main disconnect, wire, conduits, connections, and devices. Finally, a new fire- and smoke-detection and alarm system was slated for installation, as well as a new emergency lighting system.

No documentation has been found that confirms whether the work specified by the contract documents was carried out. However, examination of the building today indicates that the work was done. This was confirmed by a conversation with Frank Adams of Stahl Associates Architects, Inc., the architectural firm that prepared the contract documents. Mr. Adams had worked on the Smith School House project and remembered the job as a relatively small one. He was unable to locate any documentation on the contract, and did not remember the name of the contractor.

Offices, 1984-1990

The National Park Service established an office in the second story of the Smith School House in the summer of 1984.¹⁶¹ This was the office of the Boston African American National Historic Site, which had been established in 1980 by Public Law 96-430. The basement and first story were occupied in 1984 by the United Service Organization (U.S.O.), which maintained an agreement with the City of Boston to use the building. The National Park Service paid rent to the U.S.O. until 1987, when the U.S.O. moved to a new location. The National Park Service signed an agreement with the City of Boston on March 9, 1987, to occupy the schoolhouse in exchange for maintaining the interior, the exterior, and the building utilities. Sometime thereafter, the Museum of Afro American History moved their administrative office into the first story of the building.

Interior rehabilitation of the interior was undertaken by the National Park Service in 1988. Section-106 review of the project was initiated in June 1988 by the submittal of a "XXX" form with a two-page proposal entitled "Rehabilitation of the Abiel Smith School, 46 Joy St., Boston." This report proposed rehabilitation work in the basement, the first story, and the second story. The work would prepare the basement for use for small meetings and interpretation. The first story was to continue in use as the office of the Museum of Afro American History. The former kitchen was to be divested of its cabinets and nonhistoric paneling and reused as a small meeting or conference room. The second story was to continue in use as the office of the Boston African American National Historic Site. The existing storage room was to be used as a break room and food-preparation area.

Approval for the project was granted by the North Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service in a memorandum dated July 1, 1988. Work commenced shortly thereafter. No completion report was prepared after the work was finished. To determine what was actually done, it was necessary to compare the proposal with current conditions, and to interview members of the park staff involved with the work. Chapter III, "Periods of Alteration, Alterations 1985-88" contains a complete list of proposed actions, as well as an assessment of which were actually accomplished.

¹⁶¹ Telephone conversation, March 7, 1990, with Wendell Simpson, Assistant Superintendent, BNHP.

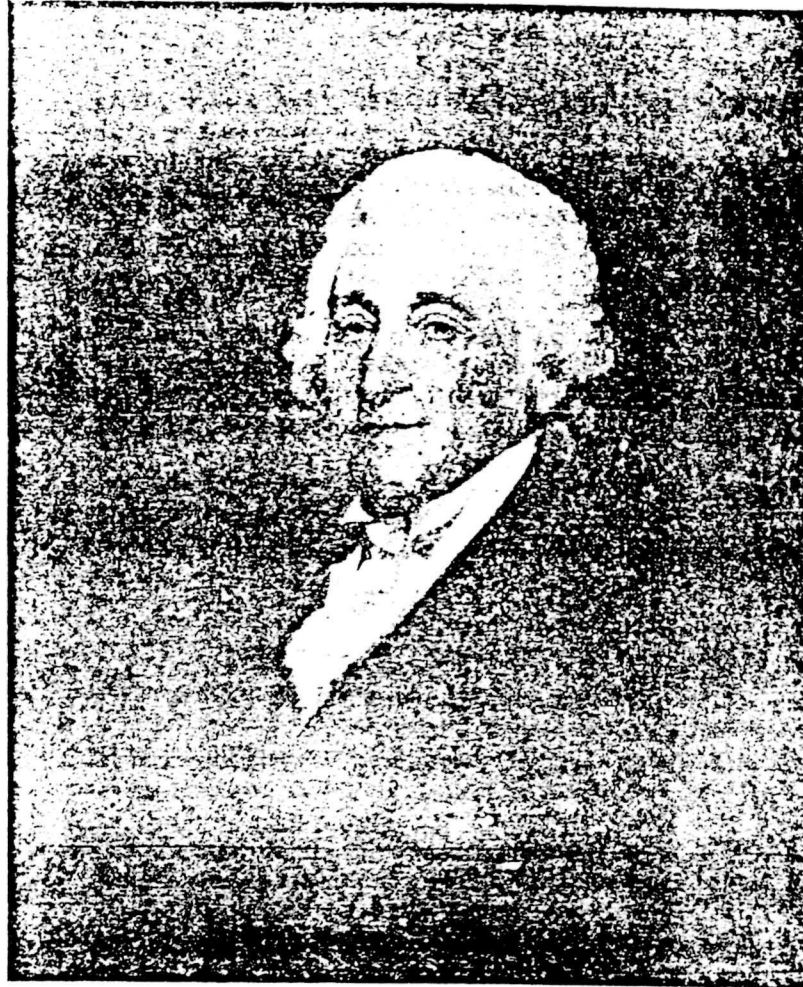


Figure 1. Portrait of Abiel Smith (1746-1815).



Figure 2. Engraving of the First Independent Baptist Church (African Meeting House), showing the north yard wall of the Smith School House.

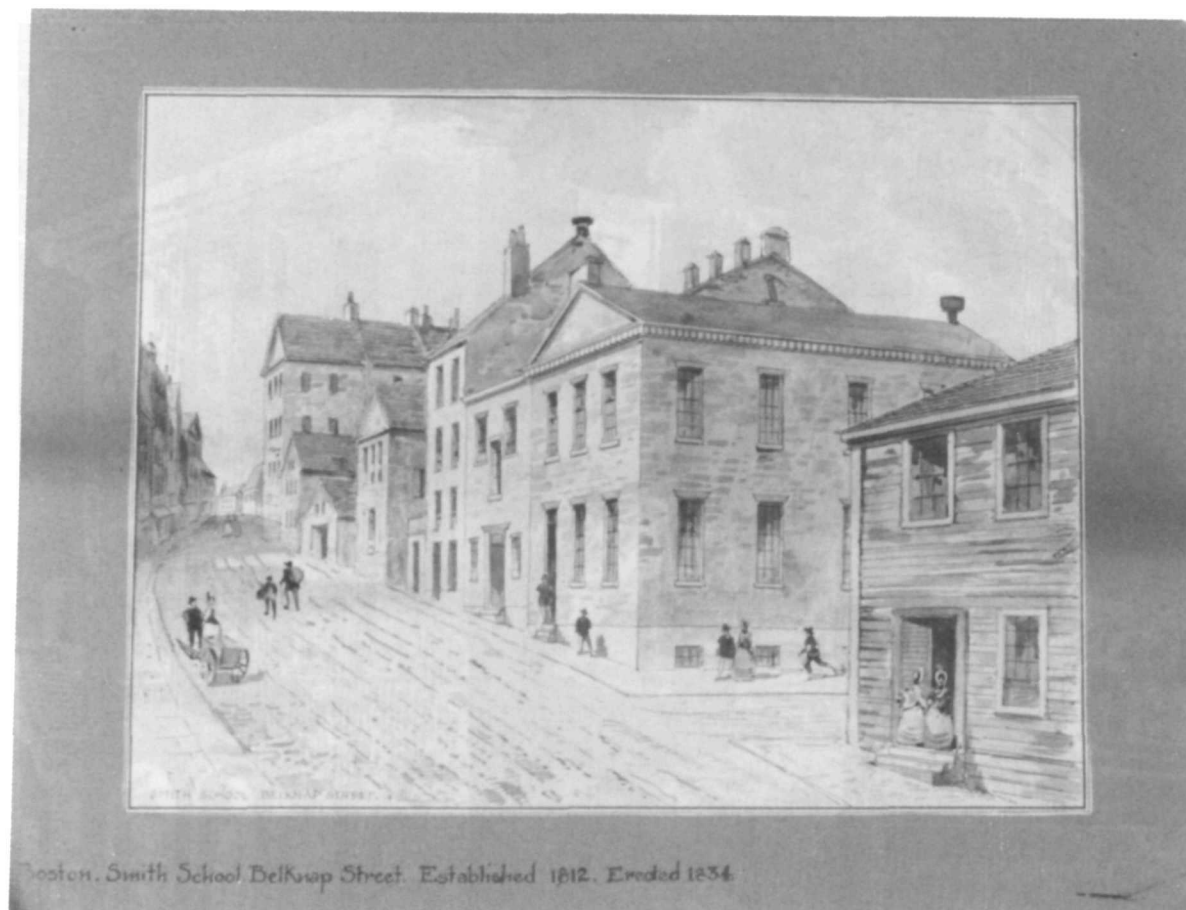
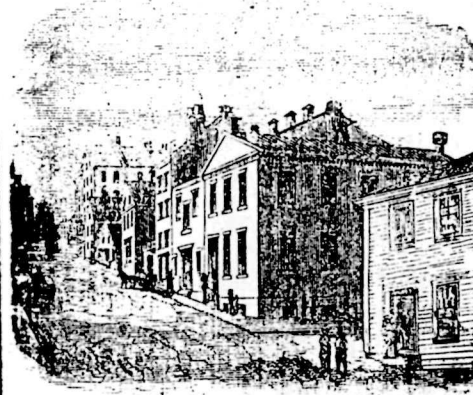


Figure 3. Watercolor painting of the “Smith School, Belknap Street,” circa 1848-49.



Belknap street. } **SMITH SCHOOL.** { Erected, 1834.
Established, 1812. } { Cost, \$7,485.61.
AMEROSE WELLINGTON, *Master.*
SARAH H. SOUTHWICK, *Assistant.*

This school is for colored children of both sexes. A school for Africans was commenced by themselves, in 1798, the Selectmen having first granted permission, and was kept in the house of Thomas Hall. The yellow fever broke it up, and three years afterwards it was revived by Rev. Drs. Morse of Charlestown, Kirkland of Harvard College, Chauncy, and Lowell, and Rev. Mr. Emerson of Boston. They provided for its entire support two years. It was then proposed to have the colored people hire a building, and a carpenter's shop was selected adjoining to the old church, and this continued three years. The site of the meeting-house was then selected, and purchased by subscription, and the African Baptist Church erected a house, of which the school occupied the basement. The room was completed in 1808, and immediately occupied by the school, and the reverend gentlemen mentioned supported the school, with aid from subscriptions, until 1812, when the town first took notice of it, granting \$200 annually. In 1815 Abiel Smith, Esq., died, and left a legacy of about \$5000, the income of which is to be appropriated "for the free instruction of colored children in reading, writing and arithmetic." The city then took the school under its entire charge, and in 1833 the ill-condition of the room attracted attention, and a Committee, of which D. L. Child was Chairman, reported in favor of a new house. The present house was built in the next two years, and on the 10th of February, 1835, the school was named for its benefactor. Its Masters have been Prince Saunders, James Waldach, John B. Russwurm, William Bascom, Abner Forbes, and the present incumbent, since 1836. Latest returns show only 78 pupils; attendance, 53.

Figure 4. Engraving of the "Smith School,"
1849.



Figure 5. Photograph of the First Independent Baptist Church (African Meeting House), circa 1860, showing the north yard wall of the Smith School House in the foreground.

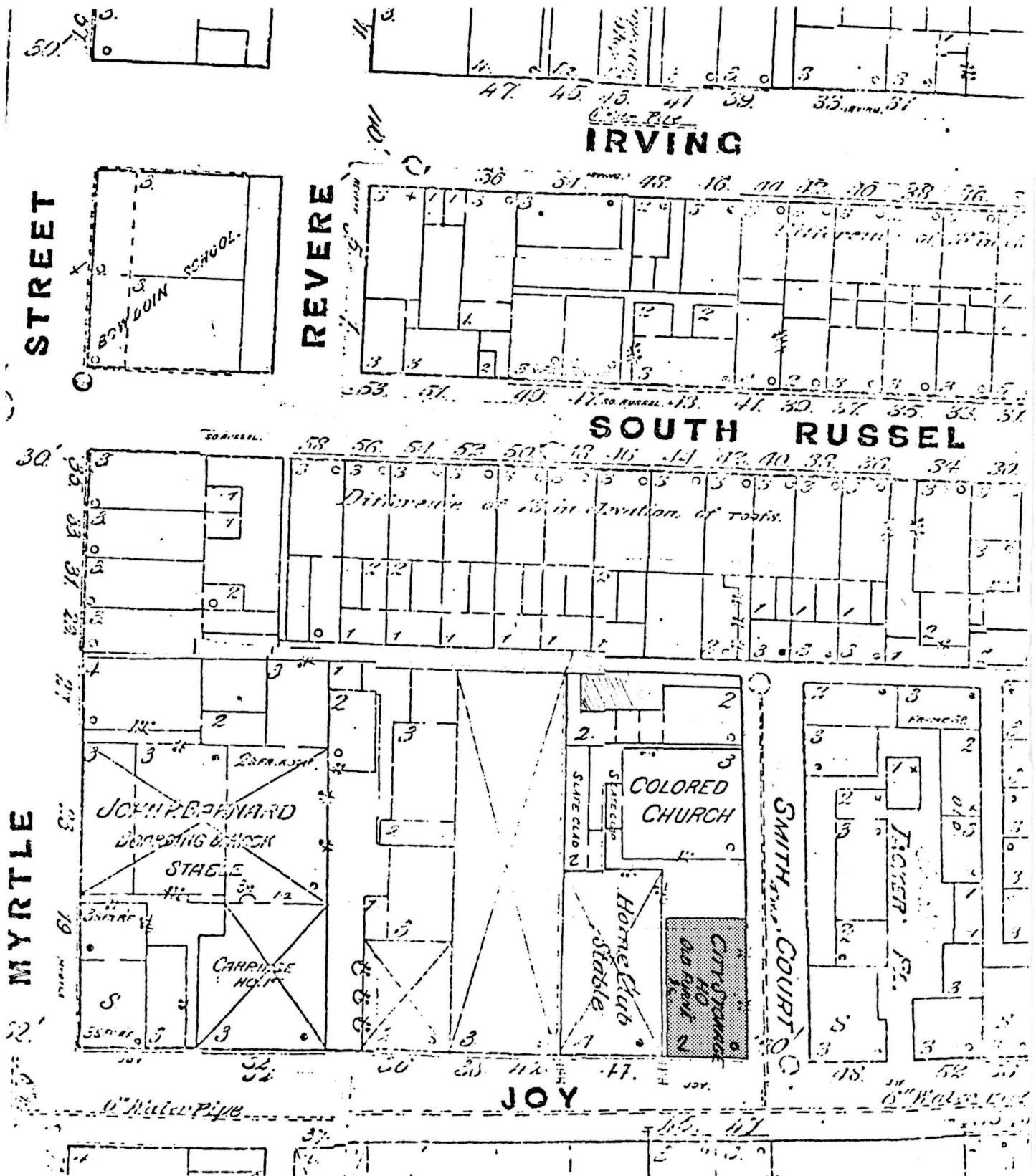


Figure 7. Plan showing the Smith School House, then used as the "City Storage Ho[use]," in the *Boston Atlas*, 1873 corrected to 1882.



Figure 8. View of Smith Court and the Smith School House, 1890.

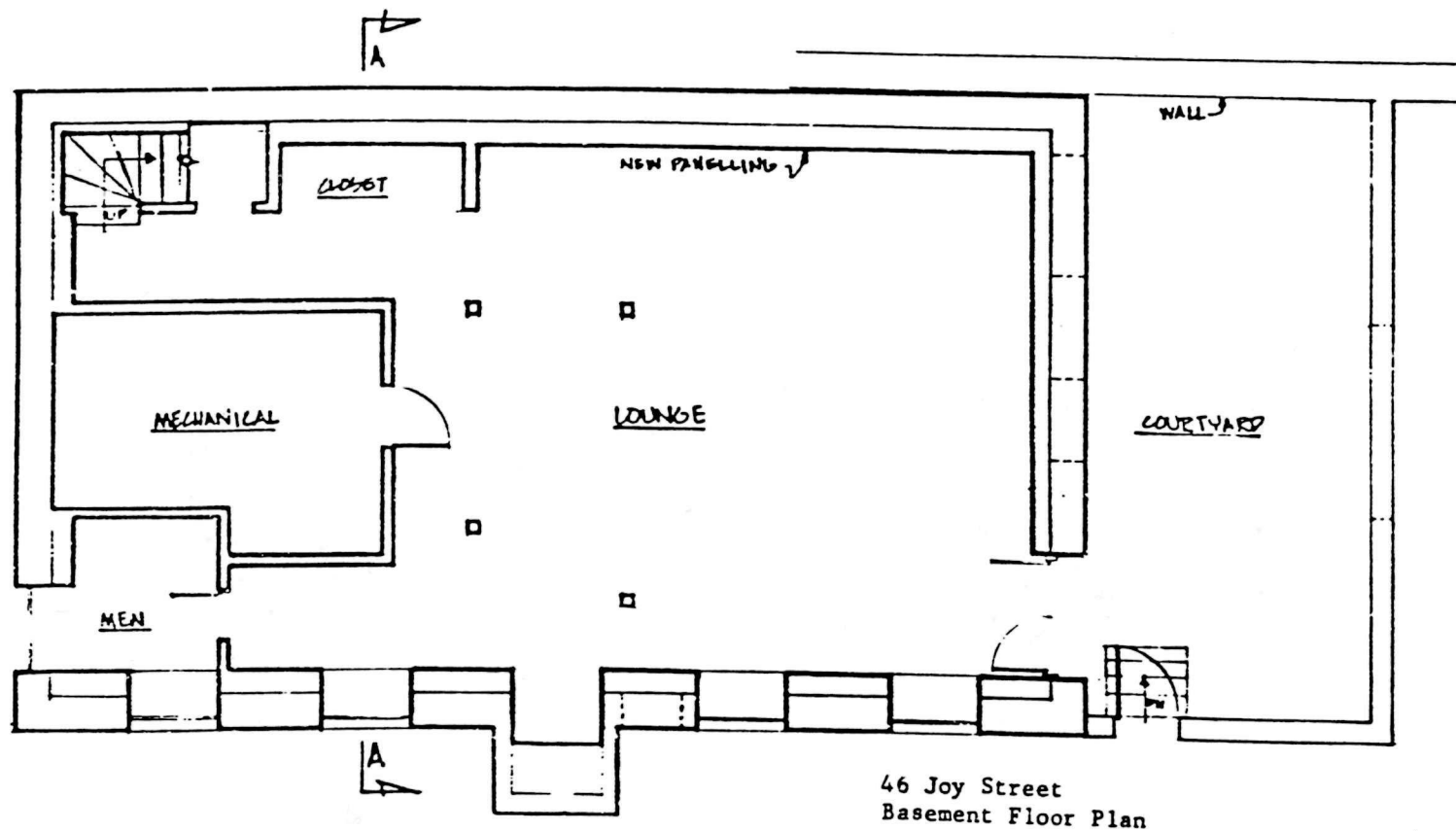


Figure 9. Smith School House: Basement floor plan, 1970.

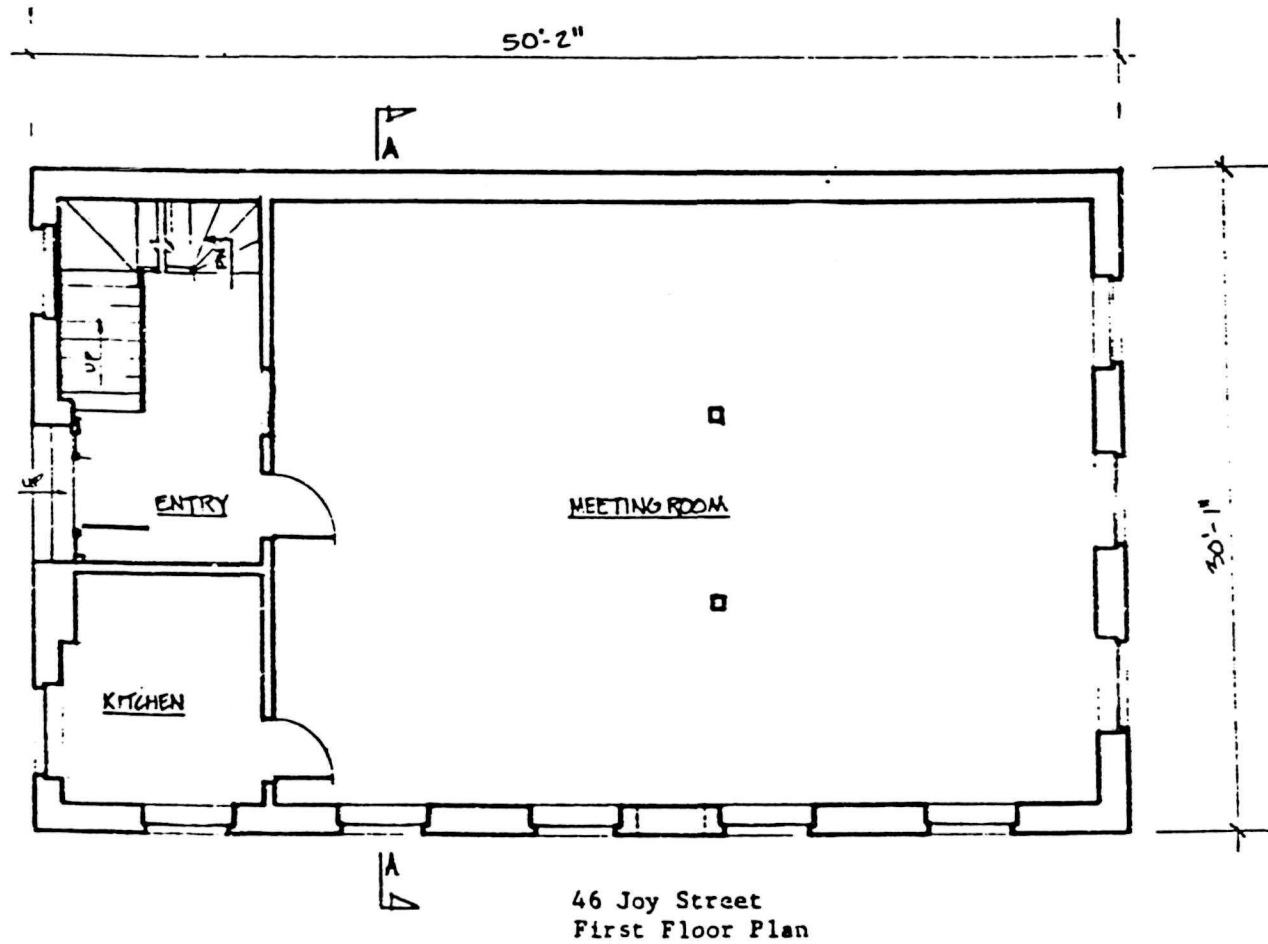


Figure 10. Smith School House: First-floor plan, 1970.

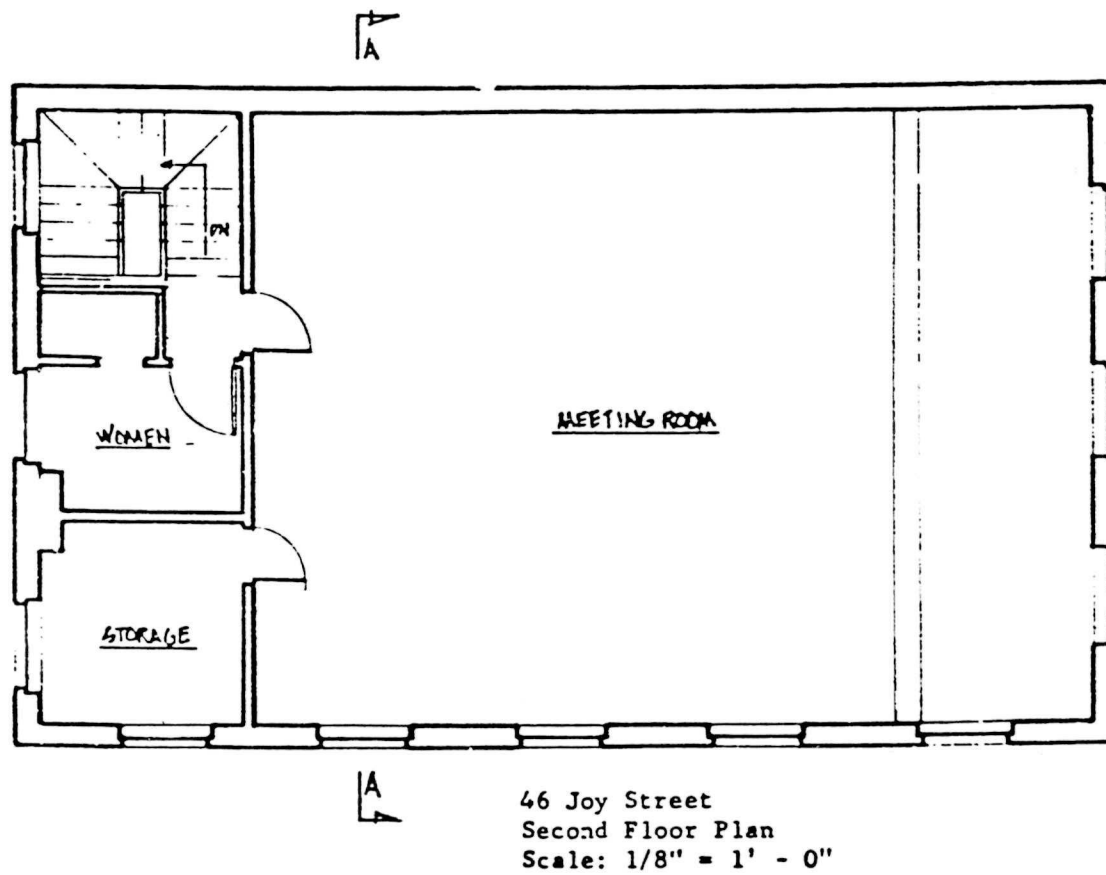
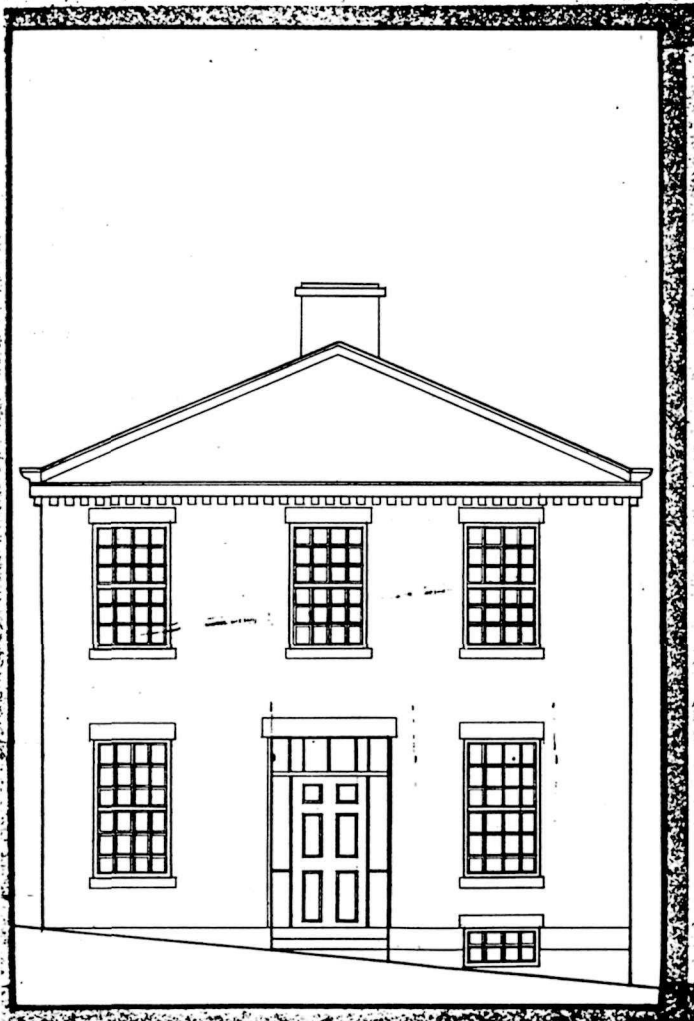


Figure 11. Smith School House: Second-floor plan, 1970.



RENOVATION OF OLD SMITH SCHOOL BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

**CITY OF
BOSTON**

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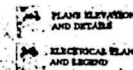
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PROJECT NO. PFD-365-SD-2-74

LIST OF DRAWINGS



DATE OCT 3, 1975
SET NUMBER

Figure 12. Cover page, "Renovation of Old Smith School," October 3, 1975.



Figure 13. Plans, Elevations & Details for the “Renovation of Old Smith School,” October 3, 1975.

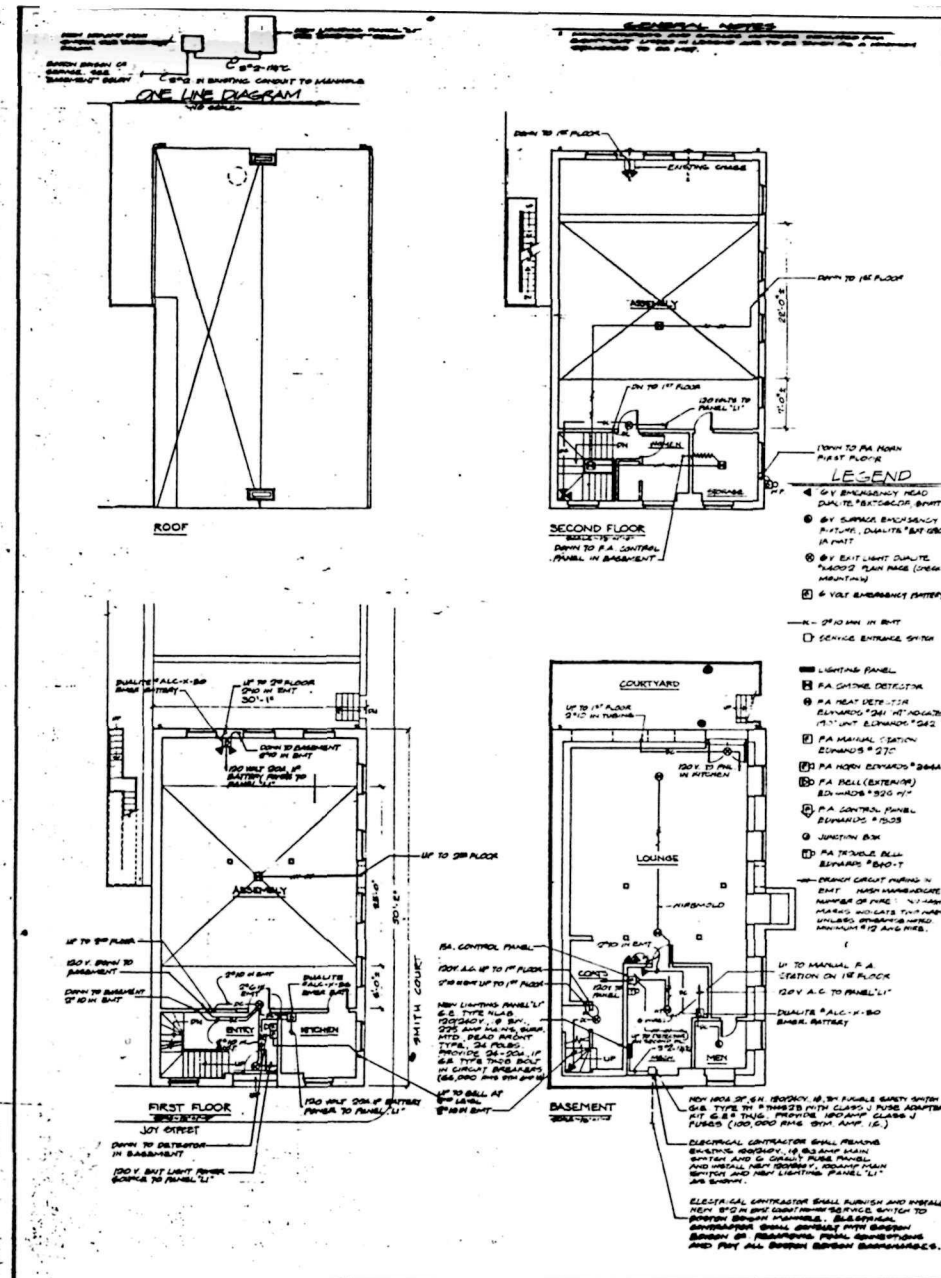
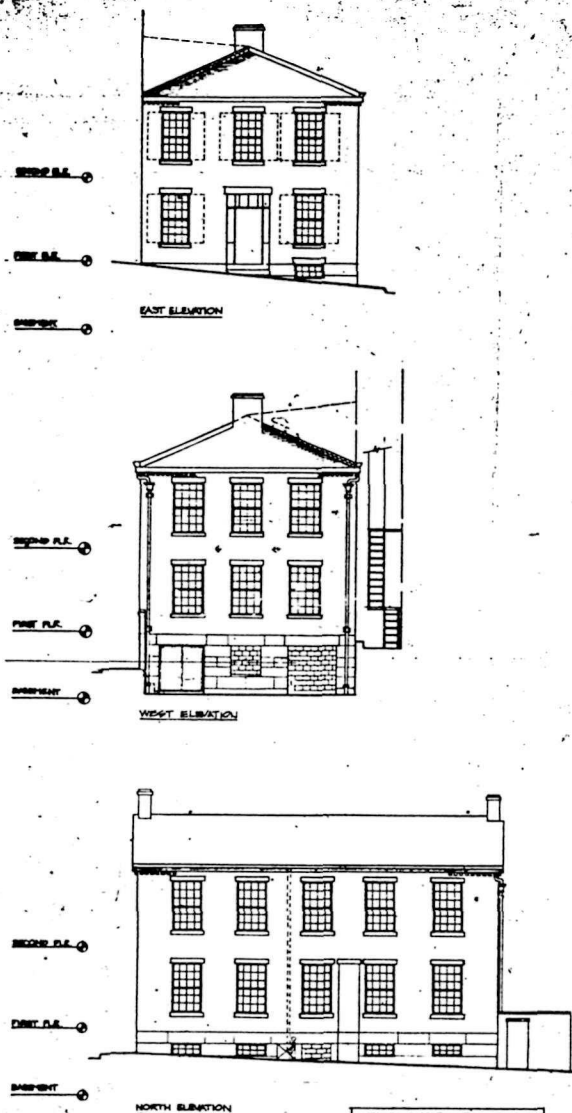


Figure 14. Electrical Plans and Legend for the "Renovation of Old Smith School," October 3, 1975.

III. DESCRIPTION OF PHYSICAL EVOLUTION

Editor's note: As stated previously, the plans and specifications prepared for the 1849 remodeling could not be found when this report was being written, so information about the building's appearance prior to and after the work was limited to that obtained from the architectural investigation. The drawings have remained missing, but the specifications were located in 1997 and have been included in this report as Appendix E. They confirmed many conclusions previously drawn from the architectural and archeological investigations, but contradicted a few. The following text has been updated to include their information, along with that from the architectural and archeological investigations.

ORIGINAL APPEARANCE, 1835

Exterior Appearance

General Information

Two views document the early exterior appearance of the Smith School House. These are the watercolor painting of circa 1848-49 and the engraving from the *Boston Almanac* of 1849 (figs. 3-4). The earliest photograph of the building is also an important historical document, even though it was taken many years later, in 1890 (fig. 8). The building today is only slightly changed from its appearance when it was constructed in 1835. Where changes have occurred—most notably to the doorways—it is often possible to determine the earlier configuration by studying the physical evidence. The written documentation is also useful in identifying the historic building materials.

Site

The schoolhouse was sited in 1835 on the north slope of Beacon Hill. The original lot size was 30 feet wide along Belknap Street (now Joy Street) by 64.5 feet deep along May's Court (now Smith Court). The lot was originally bounded on its south side by a nearby house, and on its west side by a passageway 6 feet wide.

A yard for the pupils was situated immediately behind the schoolhouse. A brick wall enclosed the north side of the yard as early as 1843 (fig. 2), and may have been part of the original construction in 1834-35. The original grade level of the yard is not known. Although there is a clear line in the building's west foundation wall with rubblestone below and cut granite above, the line does not appear to have related to original grade. As will be explained shortly, two original cellar doorways are known to have been in this wall; if grade had extended up as high as the rubblestone, either the doors would have been very short, or stairwells would have been needed to reach them. An 1847 report indicates that the yard was subdivided into two smaller yards.¹ The 1849 specifications suggest that the yard was paved with bricks laid in sand.

Based on figure 2, a shed of undetermined function stood at the north end of the west passageway by 1843; the 1847 report suggests that a pump and well were near the south end. An outhouse was also in the vicinity of the yard, and was described in 1847 as being within questionable proximity to the pump. The 1991 archeological investigation uncovered a line of stones in the yard that may be part of the first privy block. A shed in which to store wood for heating the building may also have been somewhere on the site.

¹ *Records of the Boston School Committee, 1845-49*, entry for May 19, 1847, pp. 112-13.

Foundation and Walls

The foundation walls of the schoolhouse were constructed of cut granite blocks above grade, and granite rubble below grade. The exposure of the cut granite foundation varied at each elevation due to the siting of the building. Least exposed was the south elevation, which was on the high side of the hill; most exposed was the north elevation.

The upper walls and pedimented gable ends were constructed of red brick. The brickwork was laid in the common bond pattern, with 11 rows of stretchers to one row of headers. The original mortar was an “eggshell” or a “straw” color, according to the architectural and engineering report of 1970. The 1835 mortar mix was most likely a mixture of mortar and sand.

Doorways

Four doorways existed in 1835: one in the east (front) elevation, one in the north (side) elevation, and two in the west (rear) elevation.

The front doorway is documented by the watercolor painting of 1848-49 and the engraving in the 1849 *Boston Almanac*. Both show the doorway offset to the left side and fitted with a transom window. The doorway is now centered in the wall, and previous studies have doubted the veracity of the two early renderings. However, both the 1849 specifications and the architectural investigation prove that the original doorway was indeed offset to the left. The specifications clearly describe the relocation of the doorway to the center of the wall. Also, the existing arrangement of the interior stairway to the second story is not original, based on the paint analysis. The original stairway was fit tightly into the southeast corner of the building, based on the framing of the second story, the uneven spacing of the east-elevation windows, and the knowledge that each story then consisted of one large classroom. This stairway could have been directly accessed from an exterior doorway that was offset to the left. Such an arrangement would have allowed pupils to enter the second-story classroom without disturbing the pupils in the first-story classroom.

Paint analysis indicates that portions of the original doorway still survive, having been reused in the present doorway. These include the transom window and the doorway frame. The doorway also had sidelights originally, although these have since been replaced by modern wood panels. The door itself may have had six panels, similar to the one surviving interior door that has been dated 1835.

The doorway in the north elevation provided access to the first-story classroom (see figure 16). This was located between two of the first-story windows. The doorway was closed up in 1849, but it is clearly recalled by several features in the wall, including a brownstone lintel, a brick patch, one granite step, and the stubs of two iron boot scrapers—one on either side of the former opening. This was a recessed doorway, with the steps ascending to the first story located within the walls of the schoolhouse. This is suggested by the placement of the boot scrapers and the location of the first step, within the foundation wall. The doorway opening in the exterior wall was probably fitted with a transom window but no sidelights, based on the height and width of the opening. The transom was probably similar in design to the transom that exists today above the front doorway. The door itself would have been inside, at the top of the steps. It may have had six panels, similar to the one surviving interior door that has been dated 1835.

The two doorways in the west elevation provided access from the two rear yards to the two cellar classrooms. They were at either end of the wall, aligned with the windows of the stories above them (see figure 15). As explained previously, it is not known how the doorways related to the original grade of the yard; stairwells may have been needed to access them. The doors here may have had six panels, similar to the one original interior door. The south doorway opening was wider than the north one. It was closed up with concrete blocks in the 20th century, but its brownstone lintel survives in the wall today. The north doorway remains in use today, although somewhat modified.

Windows

Windows provided the primary source of light to the interior classrooms of the Smith School House in 1835. They were therefore large and numerous. All of the windows were in three elevations only: the east, north, and west. There were no windows in the south elevation, for several reasons. First, a large house was very close to the schoolhouse on this side. This house is mentioned in the deed for the schoolhouse property dated 1834, and can be seen in the watercolor painting of 1848-49 (fig. 3). Second, wall space was needed for blackboards, and the physical evidence suggests that blackboards were on the interior south walls. Third, it may have been considered desirable to face students towards a wall with no windows, so as to minimize both glare and distractions.

The windows of the east and north walls are documented by the watercolor painting of 1848-49 (fig. 3) and the photograph of 1890 (fig. 8). The watercolor shows small windows in the north cellar wall, and large windows in the first and second stories of the east and north elevations. The east elevation is depicted as different from conditions today, as follows: (a) it does not show the extant cellar window in the east wall; (b) it shows a window in the center of the first story, where the front doorway is now located; and (c) there are no window shutters. Physical evidence suggests that the extant east-wall cellar window is original, and was inadvertently left out by the artist. As stated previously, it is known that the front entrance and the center window were reversed in position in 1849, after the painting was done.

The window sashes as depicted and the lack of shutters are more problematic. The painting shows the cellar window sashes with eight panes of glass, and the first- and second-story sashes with 15 panes of glass. Common practice suggests that the cellar windows had one sash per opening, hinged either at the top or at the bottom. The large windows, on the other hand, were probably fitted with two sashes per window; a six-pane sash and a nine-pane sash would produce a total of 15 panes, as seen in the painting. However, it is quite possible that the 15 panes of glass per window was another error by the artist. The earliest photograph of the building shows not 15 but 24 panes of glass per window, divided into two sashes of 12 panes each. These sashes were still extant in 1970, in deteriorated condition. Their age is not known, because all of the window woodwork, including the sashes, was replaced sometime after 1970. A similar problem exists with the window shutters; the age of the earliest shutters is not known, because those extant today date to 1975. One possible explanation for the differences between the watercolor painting and later views is this: the remodeling of 1849 may have included the replacement of window sashes and the addition of window shutters.

The watercolor painting does not show the south or west walls of the building. There were no windows in the south wall, due to the close proximity of a house there. It is assumed that the west wall had first- and second-story windows similar to those of the east wall, since such exist today. It is possible that there was one small window in the center of the west cellar wall. This location is now infilled with brickwork that appears to date to 1849. However, the former sides of the opening are clearly defined by the existing cut granite and rubble foundation, and the brickwork patch where the lintel was removed is evident. The lintel was situated immediately above the level of the foundation; the patch is approximately eight brick lengths long by four bricks high.

The original window lintels and window sills were of two different materials, granite and brownstone. This is based on an examination of the windows as they exist today, since it is unlikely that these building elements would have been replaced. Granite—a very hard igneous rock—was used for the lintels and sills of the cellar windows, and for the lintels only of the first- and second-story windows in the west elevation. Brownstone—a reddish-brown sandstone—was used for the lintels and sills of the first- and second-story windows in the east and north elevations, and for the sills only of the first- and second-story windows in the west elevation. The use of granite instead of brownstone for the upper windows of the rear (west) elevation seems an unusual choice. An explanation may be that insufficient amounts of either material were available to do the entire job, such that the odd pieces were relegated to the less-visible rear elevation.

Most of the original window openings survive today. Those in the north wall of the cellar measure about 4 feet wide by 2 feet high; those in the first and second stories measure about 4 feet wide by 7 feet high. One original window opening is known to have been altered since 1835. This is the center window in the first story of the east elevation, which was remodeled to become the front doorway in 1849. The materials from this window, including the lintel and sill, are believed to have been reused in the window that replaced the original doorway; this window exists today. Also, assuming that a west-wall cellar window did exist, it was bricked up in 1849.

Roof

The original roof was and still is a gable type, oriented ridge-parallel to Smith Court. It is documented by the watercolor painting of 1848-49 and by the 1849 engraving in the *Boston Almanac*. The original roofing surface was probably slate shingles. Slate shingles—possibly the original ones—remained on the roof in 1975. These were dark gray in color and measured approximately 12 inches wide by 20 inches long by three-sixteenths of an inch thick. Each shingle was pre-punched with two holes and installed using two nails. These shingles were all removed in 1975 and reinstalled on the north side of the roof, where they exist today.

The surface to which the slates were nailed were wide wood sheathing boards. Many old boards that may date to 1834-35 survive on the roof today. This was determined by viewing the undersides of the boards, which are visible in the attic. Some sheathing boards were replaced in 1975.

Flashing would have been used in 1834-35, as it is today, at the ridge, the chimneys, and the gutters. No original flashing survives, having been replaced with lead-coated copper in 1975. The original flashing material was probably lead.

A hatch on the south side of the roof toward the west end may have been an original feature. Its antiquity is difficult to establish, because its frame was completely rebuilt in 1975. The hatch provides direct access from the attic to the roof.

Cornice and Gutters

The cornice that exists on the building today is believed to be basically unchanged from its appearance as originally built in 1834-35. It is documented by the watercolor painting of 1848-49 (fig. 3) that shows a dentil design. This feature extended to the front (east) elevation where it formed the lower chord of a classical pediment. Today the cornice on the north side of the schoolhouse is composed of flat brickwork that projects slightly from the plane of the wall below. It is further articulated by projecting brick dentils that are immediately below the cornice. As in the historical view, the cornice and dentils extend to the front (east) side of the building to form the classical pediment. No such pediment exists on the rear (west) elevation, and there is no physical evidence to suggest that this differs from the historical appearance of 1835.

Less clear is the evidence for the gutters. While it is possible that gutters and downspouts existed in 1835, none are visible in the watercolor painting of 1848-49. If there was a drainage system historically, the downspouts may have been on the less-visible rear (west) elevation. The existing lead-coated copper gutters, leaders, and downspouts replaced existing gutters of an unknown date in 1975.

Chimneys

The two brick chimneys that exist today on the east and west ends of the roof were probably constructed in 1834-35. Each chimney contained two flues, making four flues total in the schoolhouse. Three of these flues are believed to have vented stoves that were used to heat the schoolrooms originally. The fourth flue may have been a fresh-air duct. The flues are visible today below the level of the roof at the end walls of the attic. The two flues of the east chimney are both brick and probably vented two stoves: one in the cellar and one on the first story. The two flues of the west chimney are made of two different materials: one brick and the other wood. The brick flue is believed to have vented a stove on the second story. The wood flue was most likely a duct for fresh air; today it extends as far as the first floor, and it may have also reached as far as the cellar floor originally.

The earliest documentation for the chimneys is the watercolor painting of 1848-49 (fig. 3). This view shows only the east chimney, similar to its appearance today. No chimney is shown on the west end of the roof, but rather a ventilator cap. While the ventilator cap may have existed by this time, it seems improbable that it existed independent of a chimney, given the physical remains of a brick flue. More likely, the ventilator cap was mounted to a chimney that was inadvertently left out by the artist. The ventilator itself is believed to have been installed in 1847.

Structure

General Information

The structure of the Smith School House as built in 1834-35 is little changed from its condition today. Descriptions of the structural systems are therefore based on the conditions as they exist in 1990. The building is two stories tall with a full cellar, a small attic, and a gable roof. It is three window bays wide by five window bays long, and measures about 30 by 50 feet.

Walls

The historic walls of the schoolhouse are masonry. The materials are rubble granite below grade, cut granite up to the level of the first floor, and bricks up to the level of the roof. The building as originally constructed was freestanding, with no other building abutting it. The north and south walls carried the majority of the loads from the floors and the roof, which were transferred by the beams and the trusses. The east and west gable walls were primarily self-supporting, except for minimal loads transferred by the ends of floor joists and roof sheathing boards.

Floors

Three floors existed in the historic schoolhouse: a cellar floor, a first floor, and a second floor. The cellar floor is now composed of a modern poured concrete slab that probably replaced a wood floor; no physical evidence was found for the framing of the original cellar floor. The first-floor framing is presumed to be historic. A more conclusive determination could not be made due to the covering of ceiling and flooring materials. The second-floor framing can be viewed from below by removing panels in the modern drop ceiling in the large office on the first story. It is assumed that the framing of the second floor was the same as the framing of the first floor, as would have been common for this type of building.

The second floor was supported by four large beams that spanned north-to-south. These beams were built directly into the brickwork of the north and south walls, between the five window bays. Floor joists were framed into the beams, except at the east and west gable ends, where the joists were framed directly into the brick walls. A large opening in the floor was framed in the southeast corner where a stairway connected the first and second stories. A similar opening was in the southeast corner of the first story, where an interior stairway descended to the cellar.

Roof

The gable roof was framed by four king-post scissors trusses. Other framing members included lower purlins, upper purlins, a ridge board, and rafters situated approximately 20 inches on center. The ends of the trusses may have been built directly into the brickwork of the upper north and south walls. The "scissors" configuration of the truss's lower chords enabled the ceiling of the second story to be arched. Framing for a hatch on the southwest side of the roof may have been an original feature.

Interior Appearance

General Information

The documentary information suggests that the interior of the Smith School House contained three classrooms—one in each story—and two or more entries so small that coats could not be hung in them. Information obtained by the architectural investigation generally verifies this description. The 1849 specifications state that prior to that year, the cellar story was divided into two rooms by a “partition wall lengthwise of the cellar.” However, it seems likely that only the north-side room was used for classes; the south-side room had insufficient windows. The first and second stories each had one large classroom. Each classroom had a separate exterior entrance. The cellar classroom was occupied by the Smith Primary School, and the classrooms on the first and second stories were occupied by the Smith Grammar School. The first story was used by the grammar school as the writing department, and the second story was used as the grammar school’s reading department. More information on the Smith Primary and Grammar Schools is found in Chapter II.

Cellar

Introduction

The only documentation concerning the original cellar, aside from the 1849 specifications, is a report to the school committee dated May 1847. This noted that the only way to reach the yard, the pump, and the outhouses was through a cellar that was dark and damp. Other information on the probable appearance of the cellar in 1835 was obtained from the architectural investigation.

Floor

The 1849 specifications state that the cellar floor prior to the remodeling consisted of “paving,” which was relaid at that time. It is not known if the paving material was bricks or stones; it is also not known if it was covered by a wood floor similar to the one in the basement of the adjacent African Meeting House, which housed a schoolroom for the African School from 1808 until 1834. Any physical evidence of the early floor is covered by a modern concrete floor.

Walls

The outer walls of the classroom consisted of the lower foundation walls of the schoolhouse. Small sections of the original walls may be seen today behind modern pine paneling that was installed sometime in the 20th century. These walls were composed of exposed granite rubble below and brickwork above. The material of the partition wall was probably brick, because the 1849 specifications indicate that it had a foundation and was load-bearing.

The walls appear to have been whitewashed at an early date. While it is difficult to say conclusively that the whitewash was an original treatment, the multiple layers observed in paint sample P001 suggest that it was. Whitewash would have lightened the walls, given them a uniform appearance, and sealed them from moisture to a limited extent. Other details may be learned upon removal of the modern paneling.

Baseboards or a low wood wainscot may have existed in the cellar classroom, although no physical evidence for either feature was found. More information may be obtained when the modern paneling is removed from the walls.

Ceiling

The ceiling was finished with plaster on wood lath. This is based on plaster stains that survive on the undersides of the floor joists at the north wall, within a later closet. The lath and plaster were removed sometime in the 20th century, when they were replaced by modern concrete plaster on wire lath.

Doorways

Two doorways, one at either end of the west wall, provided direct access from each cellar room to the outside. The south-end doorway was closed up with concrete blocks in the 20th century, and no doorway woodwork such as the casings, jambs, architraves, or doors survives. The north-end doorway remains in use today, although much modified.

Windows

Four windows were in the upper north wall of the cellar. These were small, measuring only 4 feet wide by 2 feet high. All four exist today, spaced two on either side of the remains of a doorway. There were no windows in the south wall, due to the close proximity of a house on the south adjacent lot. There was probably one window at the north end of the east wall; one exists here today. The watercolor painting of 1848-49 does not show it (fig. 3), but the present window opening seems to be an integral part of the foundation construction, and it is the same size as the original cellar windows in the north elevation. There may also have been a window in the center of the west wall; this area is now bricked up. If so, the "lengthwise" partition was probably not centered.

It is not known if any of the historic window woodwork or sashes survive, because the existing window openings are boarded over on their interior and the exterior sides. Each window sash may have had eight panes of glass, as shown in the watercolor painting.

Stairway

Interior access to the upper stories from the cellar was also possible by means of a stairway in the southeast corner. This original stairway is missing today, having been replaced by the present stairway in 1849. However, it is thought to have been in the same location as the present one, based on the framing and the fenestration in the upper stories. The original stairway may have been enclosed by wood partition walls, although no physical evidence for the walls was found in 1990, due to the presence of modern paneling.

Utility Systems

Heat was probably supplied to the cellar classroom by burning wood in a cast-iron stove. The flue for the stove was in the east wall, where the furnace is vented today. Exactly where in the room the stove was situated is not known, since the stovepipe could have been a long one.

The primary source of light in 1835 would have been the windows. Lamps that burned oil or candles may have been used to supplement the natural light on dark days.

First Story

Introduction

The first story was divided into three separate areas: the front entry, the side entry, and the classroom. No historical descriptions are known to exist of the first story. Documentation says only that the entries were small, and that the first story was used by a department of the Smith Grammar School—most likely the writing department. Specific information on the interior features of the classroom and the entries in 1835 were obtained by the architectural investigation.

Front Entry

The front entry was situated in the southeast corner of the building. It functioned as the primary entrance to the classroom in the second story, and as the secondary entrance to the classrooms in the first story and in the cellar. The most important part of the entry was the cramped staircase that curved up to the second story and down to the cellar. Neither the entry nor the stairway exist today, both having been replaced in 1849 by the present larger entry and stairway.

The historic configuration of the front entry has been deduced from several pieces of information. These include the written documentation that describes the original entries as too small to hold coats, the watercolor painting of 1848-49 that shows the front doorway offset to left, the existing framing of the second floor, and the existing, unevenly spaced fenestration of the east elevation. The only feature from the original entry that may survive in situ is the floor, a few boards of which can be seen beneath the stairway today. Some elements from the original front doorway also survive, reused in the present front doorway when it was created in 1849. These elements include the left side and lintel of the architrave, and the transom window. One of the entry's interior doors may also have been reused in 1849. This door, now located on the second story, has six panels and is of mortised construction. The age of all of the doorway elements was based on an analysis of the painted finishes.

Side Entry

The side entry was squeezed between the third and fourth windows of the north elevation. The physical evidence on the outside of the building suggests that the stairway from the sidewalk up to the first story was within the building. It was probably contained within a vestibule that had side walls of frame construction and a doorway at the top of the stairway. This entry was the primary entrance to the classroom in the first story. Although it was removed in 1849, physical evidence of the entry exists in the form of a large brick patch in the wall on the exterior side, and a wood patch

in the wainscot on the interior side. A patch in the floorboards might also be found when the later carpet and linoleum tiles are removed.

Classroom

A large classroom comprised the rest of the space in the first story. It must have been of unusual shape, judging by the intrusions of the front entry in the southeast corner and the side entry at the north wall.

Floor

The floor of the classroom was wood floorboards. These survive today beneath later flooring materials (wall-to-wall carpet and linoleum). It is unlikely that the floor was covered in 1835 with a carpet or floor cloth for reasons of economy and maintenance.

Walls

The classroom walls were finished with wainscot and plaster. The wainscot was approximately 2 feet 7 inches high. It was composed of random-width beaded boards installed horizontally with a cap molding. The plaster was applied directly to the exterior brick walls. It is likely that the interior partition walls for the entries were also plastered, although this could not be confirmed because the partitions were removed in 1849. Most of the original wall materials survive today in what is now the large museum office. Original wainscot exists at the north, west, and south walls. Original plaster presumably survives above the wainscot and beneath a later skim coat of modern plaster.

Ceiling

The ceiling was finished with plaster applied to wood lath. While most of the original ceiling plaster was removed in 1975, it may survive in the areas now known as the entry and the northeast corner office.

Doorways

Two doorways are thought to have opened to the classroom, one from the front entry and one from the side entry. Both entries and their doorways were removed in 1849. Their appearance has been conjectured based on the available documentation and physical evidence.

It is known that a front entry and stairway were located in the southeast corner of the first story. Access to this entry from the first-story classroom would have enabled one to go down the stairway to the cellar, up the stairway to the second story, or out the front doorway. It is therefore assumed that a doorway was within the partition wall of the entry at the north wall.

A second doorway provided direct access from the classroom to the outside. This was probably located at the end of a small vestibule that projected into the room from the north wall. The vestibule contained the stairway that exited onto May's (now Smith) Court. Physical evidence of the opening in the exterior north wall for the vestibule can be seen in the form of a patch in the

wainscot. One original six-panel door that may have been reused from one of these two classroom doorways is in the second story today.

Windows

Ten large windows allowed natural light into the classroom. Two were in the east wall, five in the north wall, and three in the west wall. The five windows at the southeast corner of the classroom are documented by the exterior watercolor view of 1848-49 (fig. 3). Nine of the original 10 window openings survive today. The one missing window, in the middle of the east elevation, was enlarged to create the present doorway in 1849. No historic window woodwork remains, having been replaced with all new woodwork—including the trim and sashes—in the 1970s.

Blackboards

Blackboards or other teaching aids may have been hung on the south wall, the only wall without windows. The Smith School House was outfitted with blackboards in 1847 according to the historical documentation, although it is not known where or in which classroom they were installed.

Utility Systems

The classroom was probably heated by burning fuel in a cast-iron stove. The flue for this stove is believed to have been within the east wall, between the two windows. The exact location of the stove within the room is not known. The fuel used in 1835 was probably wood.

The primary source of light in 1835 was undoubtedly natural light. Supplementary light could have been provided by oil lamps and/or candles on dark days.

Finishes

Little is known about how the classroom was finished originally. The paint analysis indicates that the first finish on the wainscot was a white lead oil-based paint. No information is available on how other features in the room were treated, such as the other woodwork in the room, the plaster walls, the plaster ceiling, and the wood floor. A plausible treatment for the other woodwork would have been to paint it white similar to the wainscot. A white paint or calcimine may also have been the finish of choice for the walls and ceiling, so as to lighten the room as much as possible. A typical treatment for the floors at this time would have been to leave them unfinished.

Second Story

Introduction

The second story appears to have been devoted entirely to one large classroom, except for the southeast corner where the stairway enclosure was located. This classroom was used by the grammar department of the Smith Grammar School. Its appearance in 1835 was determined primarily on information obtained from the architectural investigation.

Floor

The floor was level in 1835, with no raised platform as exists today at the west end of the room. The floor was composed of wood floorboards that were said in 1970 to exist beneath a later wood floor. Presumably the original floorboards still survive today beneath the later wood floor, which is now covered with modern carpet and ceramic tiles.

Walls

The walls were finished with two materials: wainscot and plaster. The wainscot was approximately 2 feet 3+ inches high and composed of random-width beaded boards installed horizontally with a cap molding. The walls above the wainscot were finished with plaster applied directly to the brick walls. Much of the original wainscot and the original plaster survives today.

Ceiling

A unique feature of the original ceiling was its arched design. This configuration was made possible by the trusses in the attic that had lower “scissors” chords. The ceiling was finished with plaster applied to wood lath. Analysis of one of the plaster keys (M001) found that the 1835 plaster was a lime type with a hair binder and poorly sorted sand that contained large pebbles. Most of the original plaster ceiling is preserved today beneath a pressed-metal ceiling that was installed sometime in the late 19th century. Exposed plaster exists at the east end of the building, but its age has not been established. A hatch to the attic at the west end of the ceiling may also date to 1835.

Doorways

It is doubtful that there were any doorways in the second-story classroom in 1835. Rather, the entire second story appears to have been completely open with no partition walls. This is based in part on the paint analysis, which indicates that the present north-south partition wall is a later addition. The concept of one large “hall” is also in keeping with the historical writings of the period about the Boston Public Grammar Schools.

Windows

The second-story classroom was illuminated by 11 large windows. Three were in the east wall, five in the north wall, and three in the west wall. All of the original window openings survive today in unaltered condition. None of the original woodwork remains, having been completely replaced in the 1970s.

Blackboards

The Smith School House was furnished with blackboards by 1847 according to the historical documentation. If blackboards existed in the second-story classroom, these would have been mounted on the one wall without windows—the south wall. No physical evidence for the blackboards was identified on the plaster wall during the architectural investigation.

Stairway

Nothing remains of the original stairway, which was replaced by the present stairway in 1849, according to the paint analysis. The configuration of the historic stairway is therefore conjectural, being based on the historical documentation and the physical evidence.

The stairway was the only entrance to the classroom in the second story. It appears to have been located in the southeast corner of the building, based on the location of the front doorway and the front entry in 1835, the framing of the second floor, and the spacing of the windows in the second story of the east elevation. A close look at the spacing of the windows reveals that the south window was offset to the south, disrupting the even spacing of the windows. This seems to have been a deliberate design solution that reflected the interior placement of the stairway (fig. 17). By offsetting the window, it was possible to fit in a railing at the upper stairway landing. Railings instead of partition walls may also have enclosed the stairwell on its north and west sides. Such an arrangement would have been in keeping with the open floor plan, and would have had the additional advantage of not blocking the light from the southeast window.

Utility Systems

The second-story classroom was probably heated by burning fuel in a cast-iron stove. The flue for the stove appears to have been in the west wall between the north and center windows. A brick flue is visible in this location today in the attic story. The hole for the stovepipe might remain behind a flag case that was attached to the wall sometime after 1880. The fuel in 1835 was most likely wood.

The primary source of light in 1835 would have been natural light. Supplementary light could have been supplied on dark days with oil lamps and/or candles.

Finishes

The paint analysis suggests that the second-story classroom was finished in a manner similar to the first-story classroom in 1835. The original wainscot was painted with a white lead oil-based paint. No information is available on the finishes for the floor, the plaster wall, or the plaster ceiling.

PERIODS OF ALTERATIONS

Alterations, 1836-1854

New Closet, 1836

A new closet was built in 1836 to hold teaching equipment known as “Philosophical Apparatus,” according to the records of the Boston School Committee. This closet is presumed to have been in the first-story classroom where the writing department for the Smith Grammar School met. It was the writing department that taught the subjects for which the philosophical apparatus would have been used. No specific descriptions of the closet were found in the historical documentation, nor does any trace of the closet survive today.

Recitation Platform, 1846

The School Committee ordered in the winter of 1846 that a platform be built in the upper hall of the Smith School. The stated purpose of the platform was to raise up the seats of the scholars who were reciting above the heads of the other scholars. It is thought that this platform was indeed built, and that it is the one extant at the west end of the second story today. This platform spans the entire width of the room and measures 28 feet long by 5 1/2 feet deep. It is reached by one step that also extends across the width of the room. The structure and floorboards of the 1846 platform and step are assumed to be preserved beneath a later covering of modern wall-to-wall carpet. Future investigation beneath the platform may reveal important information about the early finishes of the second-story classroom.

Ventilation, 1847

Modifications appear to have been made to the Smith School House to improve its ventilation in 1847. This is based on the historical documentation as recorded in the numbered documents of the City of Boston. Exactly what this work entailed is not known. The watercolor painting of 1848-49 (fig. 3) shows equipment on the roof that may have been installed in 1847. This includes what appears to be an ejecting ventilator on the west end of the roof and a ventilator pipe in the center of the roof. The ejecting ventilator no longer exists, but a metal shaft that resembles the ventilator pipe at the center is on the roof today. This vertical metal shaft extends through the attic and opens to the ceiling of the large room on the second story. A baffle within the shaft could probably be controlled from the room below to regulate the flow of air. Also within the attic is a wood flue at the west wall that was presumably used for ventilation. This flue extends down as far as the first floor today, and may have originally continued as far down as the cellar floor. Its location at the west wall suggests that the flue may have been connected to the rooftop ventilator illustrated in the watercolor painting.

Remodeling, 1849

Introduction

The Smith School House was remodeled in the summer of 1849. Drawings and specifications for the work were prepared by Gridley James Fox Bryant, a Boston architect (see Appendix E). The cost for the remodeling, including both planning and construction, was \$1,739. The schoolhouse was described after the alterations and improvements were completed as possessing furniture, fixtures, and apparatus that contributed to the comfort and convenience of the school.

Site Work

The specifications state that the two “yards” in the rear of the building were to be dug out to the level of the cellar flooring, and new walls were to be built around them. (Apparently the area remained divided into two yards in 1849.) The single block of privies was to be removed, and two new blocks of privies with cesspool vaults built beneath them. Water was to be brought from the roof of the schoolhouse from the conductors through aqueducts into the vaults, and a new barrel drain was to connect with the common sewer of the street.

Exterior Work

Doorways and Windows

The cellar received one new doorway, in the center of the north wall directly below the middle window (see figure 18). The specifications contain much detail about this doorway, and the physical evidence of it is clearly evident today, even though the opening has been infilled with concrete blocks. (It can be seen in the later closet at the north wall.) The doorway opening was within the granite foundation, so that granite blocks comprised the jambs and lintel. Because the cellar was below the grade of Smith Court, steps leading down to the doorway were needed. These steps were situated within a stairwell that projected out from the building and into the sidewalk. The exact size of this stairwell may be ascertained today, based on the granite blocks that define it at the sidewalk level.

Such a stairwell must have posed some problems in its day, such as the hazard of people falling into it from the sidewalk, and the tendency of such a feature to collect rainwater. For these reasons, it is possible that the stairwell was either covered over when not in use, or fitted with guardrails at the sidewalk level. That the former may have been the case is suggested by the photograph of 1890 (fig. 8), which shows the stairwell covered with boards, and the portion of doorway opening above the sidewalk closed with a pair of short doors. The iron pintles for these doors’ hinges, mounted in the granite jambs, exist today.

The two original doorways in the west cellar wall were deepened to match the reduction of grade in the yard, and fitted with new granite thresholds. The physical evidence suggests that an original cellar window in the center of that wall was also bricked up at this time. The specifications suggest that the closure was related to the installation of a new heating system. They state that “two flues 8 by 12 inches are to be commenced from the cellars and properly connected with the present flues over the said cellar.” The two new flues were for two furnaces; the “present” flues were those embedded in the brick west wall for the earlier cast-iron stoves at first- and second-story levels. The

center of the west cellar wall is the only place the new flues could have “commenced from the cellars” and connected with the existing flues.

In the first story, the original window opening in the center of the front elevation was converted to a new front doorway. The paint evidence indicates that several pieces of the original doorway’s woodwork were reused for the new doorway, including the exterior frame, the transom window, the interior left-side architrave, and the interior architrave lintel. The removed window components were likewise used to create a new window where the doorway had been.

The original doorway in the north elevation to the first-story classroom was completely removed and the opening bricked in. Although the specifications do not actually say this, the paint on the interior wainscot that patched over the opening provides indisputable evidence that this did happen. Perhaps this was a change decided upon during construction.

Finishes

The specifications state that new exterior woodwork was to be painted with three coats of “white lead” paint, and that old exterior woodwork was to receive two coats of the same. The final coat was a mustard-color oil-based paint that contained lead, based on paint analysis of the early paint layers on the transom and frame of the front doorway.

Structure

The specifications directed the workmen to

Support the present first and second floorings with new girder sticks and piers and iron columns as found necessary in consequence of the removal of the present interior party wall of the cellar and the present partitions in the first story....

Four new brick piers were to be built in the cellar, and still other piers beneath the new front entrance doorway.

Interior Work

Plan

The interior plan of all three stories was greatly changed in 1849. The lengthwise partition in the cellar was removed. The first story was repartitioned to create one large entry, one classroom, and a small room in the northeast corner off the classroom. The second story received a corresponding but larger room off its classroom.

The changes in plan required the complete removal and rebuilding of the three-story staircase, which is described in great detail in the specifications. Also required was the removal and patching over of the side entry vestibule, and the installation of new partition walls and wainscot.

Floors, Walls, and Ceilings

The specifications state that “In relaying the paving of the cellars, they are to be deepened as much as can be done safely...without injury to the foundations of the walls of the building.” It is not known why the word “cellars” is used; the specifications are clear that the lengthwise partition formerly in the cellar was to be removed as part of the remodeling.

The specifications would suggest that very few original interior finishes on the upper floors survived the work:

The partitions and every thing connected therewith in the two stories (first and second) of the building including also the stairways are all to be removed....All the upper floors are to be removed and the lining of the walls of the two stories....New upper floors of “best planers” are to be laid throughout the first and second stories...the boards to be in narrow widths....A platform is to be built across each of the School rooms, as seen in the plans.

However, the architectural investigation indicates that the following original interior features were in fact retained: the wood floors, the outer plaster walls and ceilings, the wainscot in the classrooms on the first and second stories, and one (or more) of the six-panel doors. Also retained was the recitation platform on the second story that had been installed in 1846.

One interesting woodwork element that was installed atop the wainscot in the second-story classroom in 1849 was a wide concave-shaped molding. This molding was on the south wall and on the south side of the east wall only, suggesting that it may have functioned as a chalk and eraser holder for the blackboards. Its date of installation is based on the paint analysis. No such molding exists in the first-story classroom.

Finishes

The specifications stated that “the entire interior wood work of every part of the building excepting only the floors and stairs” was to be given two coats of paint and then grained in imitation of oak. The paint analysis did indeed find such graining: a yellow oil-based paint that contained lead, followed by a coat of varnish.

Utility Systems

Oddly, the specifications make no mention of improvements to the school’s lighting system. One might think that gas lighting would have been installed, replacing earlier oil lamps and/or candles.²

Extensive improvements were made, however, to the heating and ventilating systems. The specifications mention “the pots, pipes, registers and other metal fixtures of two Furnaces.” They also state: “Cut out recesses as directed for ventilating flues in each story to received wooden boxes

² Research on the nearby African Meeting House indicates that gas lighting was introduced there only six years later, in 1855.

or flues. Put in funnel stones and registers to each of the present flues in each story where directed.” Finally, they cite new “smoke, hot-air, and ventilating flues.”

It is possible that one of the two furnaces cited in the specifications was already in the building by 1849, and that only one furnace was purchased new. The Superintendent of Public Buildings reported in June 1851 that between January 1, 1848, and May 1, 1851, \$63.01 had been expended on the heating apparatus at the Smith School House that included “1 Clark’s Stove.”³ (The superintendent also reported that the school used both coal and wood.) Henry G. Clark of Boston patented an “Air-Heating Stove” in 1848, and it was likely his stove that was installed in the schoolhouse. More research into Clark’s patent may determine how the stove functioned within the Smith School House.⁴

The specifications state that the first and second stories were to receive one sink each, supplied with “Cochituate [city] water” by heavy lead pipe five-eighths of an inch in diameter. The sinks were to have hose cocks, and waste pipes leading to “the drains.” This equipment may have been the subject of the following grammar-school expense in the auditor’s annual report for the fiscal year 1853-54: “Plumbers’ Bills for Water Works,” and “Water Rates, Viz, 22 Schools at \$15.”⁵

Alterations, 1855-1882

No alterations were documented as having been made to the schoolhouse while it was in use as an integrated primary school, and as a temporary branch of the Phillips Grammar School. Toilets may have existed inside the building by circa 1860, based on the exterior photograph of that date that does not show the outhouses of 1849 (fig. 5).

Alterations, Circa 1882-1886

No alterations were identified as having been made to the schoolhouse while it was in use as a storage building for the City of Boston.

Alterations, 1887-1970

Many changes were made to the Smith School House during the time it was used by the GAR Post Number 134 from 1887 to circa 1920, and by the American Legion Post Number 56 from circa

³ City Document No. 39, 1851.

⁴ The patent number was difficult to read and is either 5,704 or 5,764.

⁵ City Document No. 59, 1854, “Auditor’s Annual Report of the Receipts and Expenditures of the City of Boston,” p. 37.

1920 to 1982. The documentation for this period is scanty, so that most of the information that follows is based on the architectural investigation and the architectural/engineering report of 1970.⁶

The earliest changes, made sometime between 1887 and 1900, were identified as having occurred in the large former classroom in the second story. Chief among these was the installation of a pressed-metal ceiling that was installed over the original plaster ceiling, probably because the latter was in poor condition. The earliest metal ceilings date to 1868 and were of crude corrugated iron. Stamped metal ceilings similar to the one in the Smith School House began to be advertised in the 1880s. Metal ceilings reached their height of popularity between the years 1895 to 1915.⁷

Two large wooden flag cases were attached to the west wall of the former classroom on the second story. These were situated between the three windows in the west wall, with one on either side of the center window. While it is possible that the flag cases may have been associated with the Smith School, the findings of the paint analysis indicate that these cases were installed at a later date. This is further verified by a wallpaper that was found behind the north flag case. The paper stock is mechanical wood pulp and the design is machine-printed, both of which date the wallpaper as post-1855. In addition, the predominantly red floral design is a type that was popular in the latter part of the 19th century. For more details on the wallpaper, see Appendix H.

Another early addition to the second story is found in the small northeast room. This is a shallow closet built against the west wall. It was thought initially that this may have been the same closet that was built by Master Abner Forbes in 1837 to house the new teaching equipment for the Smith School known as "Philosophical Apparatus." It was later discovered, however, that the west partition wall against which the closet was constructed had been installed in 1849. The paint analysis confirmed that the closet was of later construction, possibly installed in 1887. The closet is made of narrow matched-board paneling. It has two compartments and two doors, the north one of which is made of the same matched-board material as the closet itself. The south door is an old four-panel door reused from somewhere other than the Smith School House, based on its painted finishes.

A major change to the roof was made at some point, probably in 1909 when the existing apartment building was constructed on the south adjacent lot. This work involved changing the slope of the south side of the roof by building a new roof on top of the existing roof, and building up the south sides of the east and west gable ends with new brickwork. The south edge of the roof was butted and flashed into the brickwork of the new building. Although the roof has since been changed back to its original appearance, remnants of flashing from the raised roof survive today in the brick wall of the south adjacent building (see figure 34).

The cellar was extensively remodeled sometime in the 20th century. This may have occurred as late as 1952, which is the date of manufacture stamped on the toilet in the northeast toilet room. Two of the three cellar doorways were closed up—the 1849 one in the middle of the north wall, and

⁶ Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association.

⁷ Mary Dierickx, "Metal Ceilings in the U.S.," *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1975, pp. 83-84; and "A Glance Back at Tin Ceiling," *The Old-House Journal*, March 1979, p. 29.

the original one at the south end of the west wall. The precise date of this work is not known.⁸ However, the material used to close both doorways is concrete blocks.

Other 20th-century changes involved the following work:

- replacement of the existing floor with a poured concrete floor and linoleum tiles;
- replacement of the existing lath and plaster ceiling with a new ceiling comprised of concrete plaster on wire lath;
- installation of four columns to give additional support to the first floor;
- construction of a mechanical room at the east wall, using concrete-block partition walls;
- furring out of the remaining exterior walls and installation of wide pine paneling;
- installation of a toilet room in the northeast corner of the cellar;
- installation of a counter, or bar, and a sink at the west end of the cellar; and
- installation of new light fixtures.

Alterations of unknown date that were probably done in the 20th century include:

- installation of electrical service;
- installation of the existing steam-heating system, including the cast-iron radiators in the first and second stories;
- replacement of the front door and sidelights with a modern door and wood panels;
- installation of two columns in the large room in the first story to give additional support to the second floor;
- installation of a kitchen in the northeast corner room in the first story;
- installation of linoleum tiles in the first story;
- installation of a new wood floor in the second story;
- partitioning of the northeast room in the second story to make a toilet room and closet at the head of the stairway; and
- paving with macadam the sidewalk on the Smith Court side of the building.

⁸ Previously these closures were thought to have occurred before 1937, based on a letter of that date denying a public hall license because there was only one means of egress from the building. However, it is now believed that the extant doorway at the north end of the west cellar wall has remained open since its creation in 1834-35, so the 1937 letter must have not included cellar doorways.

Alterations 1970-1984

Numerous changes were also made to the schoolhouse between 1970 and 1984, including major renovation work in 1975. The building was still being used by veterans' groups at this time.

All of the old window sashes and window woodwork in the first and second stories were replaced with new sashes and new woodwork sometime between 1970 and 1975. This work occurred sometime after June 1970, when an architectural/engineering report stated that the old 12-over-12 window sashes were extant but deteriorated. These presumably had been replaced by the current windows by the fall of 1975, when other restoration work was undertaken that did not include the windows. No record was found for the work, perhaps because the job cost less than \$2,000 and was therefore done as a work order with the City of Boston. The new window sashes were double-hung and fitted with 12 panes of glass each. Some of the glass panes appear to be old due to their irregularities, and may have been reused from the old sashes. Also replaced at this time was the window trim on both the exterior and the interior sides of the windows, including the jambs, architraves, sills, stools, and aprons.

A contract was undertaken in 1975 with the City of Boston Public Facilities Department to renovate the "Old Smith School." The work that was specified for this contract is documented in the contract documents, which are described in the "Historical Background" section of this report. The work that was actually done is summarized below:

exterior walls

- remove extraneous hardware;
- rake out and repoint the mortar joints;
- install eight through-masonry tie rods at the second-story level with exterior cast-iron end plates in a star design; and
- remove the circa-1909 brickwork from the south side of the east and west gable ends, and restore the gable ends at the same time as the roof.

doorways and windows

- parge the deteriorated brownstone lintels and sills with a mortar mix pigmented to resemble the brownstone; and
- install new wood shutters at the east-elevation windows only.

roof and gutters

- remove the circa-1909 roofing materials from the south side of the roof;
- remove all the slate shingles from the roof;

- reinstall the old slate shingles on the north side of the roof, and install new asphalt shingles that resemble the slate on the less-visible south side of the roof;
- install new lead-coated copper flashing; and
- install new lead-coated copper gutters and downspouts.

second-story structure

- remove the two columns supporting the second floor in the large room on the first story;
- reinforce the second floor by installing two new steel I-beams and eight through-masonry tie rods;
- remove the lath and plaster ceiling in the large room on the first story in order to gain access to the framing of the second floor; and
- install a new drop ceiling in place of the old plaster ceiling.

utility systems

- update the existing electrical system; and
- install a new fire- and smoke-detection and alarm system.

The second story was updated two years later, in 1977: the hall closet was removed and the toilet room was partitioned to make two separate toilet rooms. The date was determined based on the date of manufacture stamped on the undersides of the two toilet-tank covers. Also probably installed at this time were the ceramic tiles on the floors and lower walls of the two toilet rooms.

The toilet room in the cellar was also remodeled in 1977. This involved installing a new plasterboard partition wall to make an anteroom, moving the sink and urinal from the toilet room to the anteroom, installing a mirror in the anteroom, and installing a shower in the toilet room. This remodeling is known to have been done sometime after June 1970, based a plan of the cellar included in the architectural/engineering report that does not show the anteroom.

The heating system was updated on December 28, 1984, when the fuel was changed from oil to natural gas and the existing steam boiler was installed. This date is recorded on both the gas meter and on the owner's manual, which is stored in an envelope in the mechanical room.

Alterations, 1985-1988

The last work that was done on the Smith School House was undertaken by the National Park Service, which has occupied the building since 1984. The work that was done in 1988 was primarily cosmetic in nature and involved cleaning, painting, and interior decorating. Since no completion report was prepared for the project, knowledge of the specific tasks actually done had to be deduced

from the proposal that was submitted for Section 106 compliance, the conditions that exist today, and a conversation with one of the maintenance employees who did the work. The identification of materials such as cleaning products and paints was based on the materials that were found stored in the cellar's north closet.

The basement was intended to be used for small meetings and interpretation. Work proposed here included the following:

- clean the paneling with "Butcher's One-Step Cleaning Wax";
- paint the ceiling;
- install new light fixtures where previous fixtures had been removed;
- inspect the electrical system for possible safety problems; and
- clean the rest room, and either repair or replace the plumbing fixtures, and add a new fiberglass shower enclosure.

It was expected that the first story would continue in use as the office of the Museum of Afro American History, with the former kitchen being renovated as a small meeting or conference room. Work proposed was as follows:

- clean, paint the walls and trim, and install new gray wall-to-wall carpet over the existing tile floors, and on the stairway to the second story;
- replace the panels of the suspended ceiling in the large room with new panels, and install additional ceiling light fixtures; and
- clean the small northeast room (former kitchen) cleaned thoroughly, remove the cabinets and nonhistoric paneling, and smooth and paint the walls.

It was foreseen that the second story would continue in use as the office of the Boston African American National Historic Site. The existing storage room would be used as a break room and food-preparation area. Proposed work included the following:

- clean, paint the walls and ceiling, and install new gray wall-to-wall carpet;
- install new light fixtures along the walls of the large room;
- outfit the storage room with a small sink with cabinets and counter top;
- install an exhaust system and new ceilings in the two rest rooms; and
- remove the nonhistoric wall paneling from the hall outside the rest rooms, and plaster the walls.

Paints used in this work were as follows:

- ceilings and walls -- California Ceiling White, Acrylic Latex, Interior Flat;
- interior trim -- Benjamin Moore, Interior Enamel, Semi-Gloss Latex, Rose"; and
- floor in cellar toilet room -- "True Value Interior/Exterior Oil-Base, Floor and Trim Enamel, Battleship Gray.

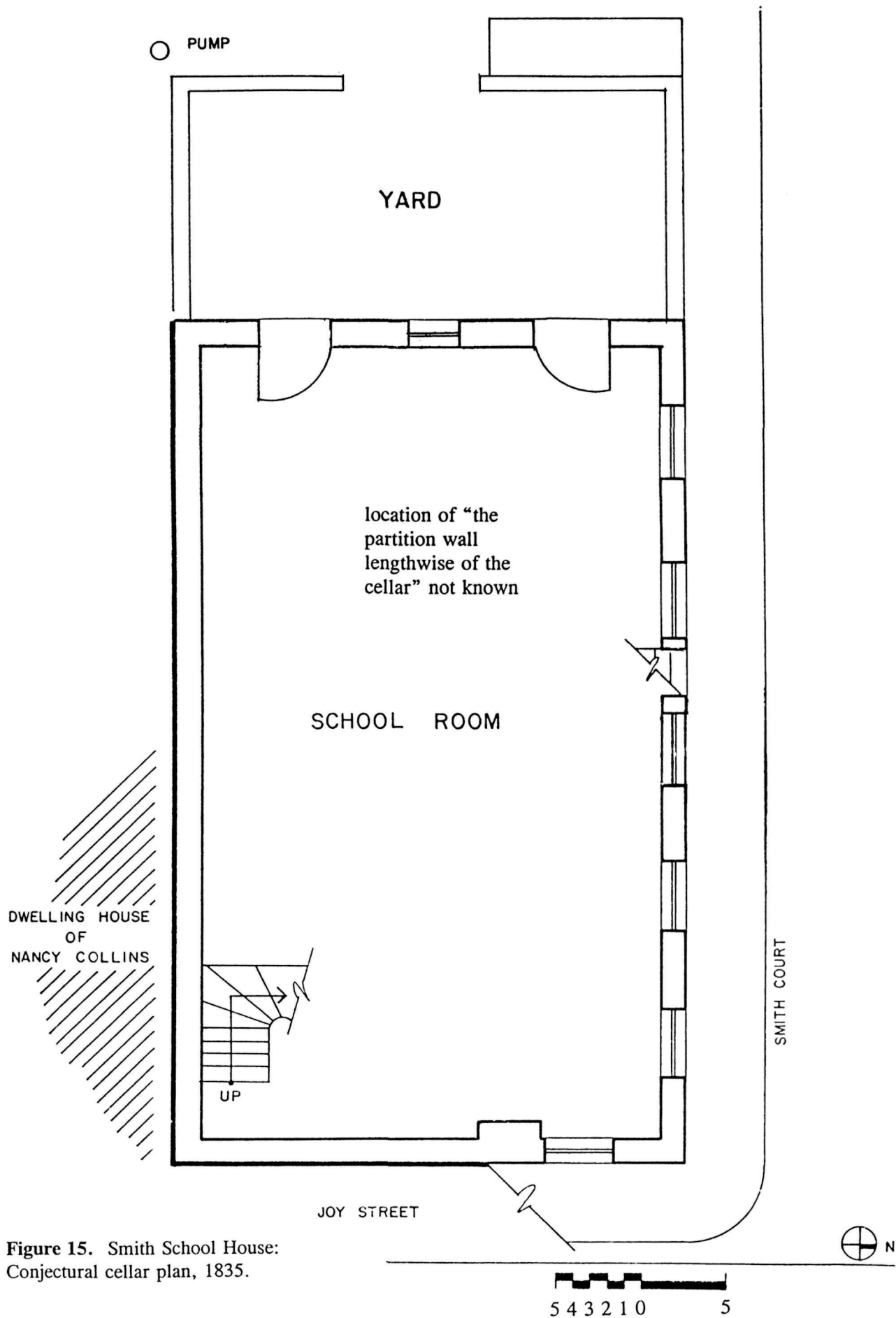
The sink and counter top proposed for the small northeast room in the second story was apparently not installed. Work that was done but not mentioned in the proposal included:

- removing the wainscot from the northeast room on the first story;
- installing plasterboard walls over the old plaster in that room;
- removing old trim and old doors from various doorways, and installing new trim and new doors; and
- replacing the single door in the cellar doorway at the north end of the west wall with a pair of modern metal fire doors.

The justification for removing the wainscot and the doorway woodwork was its deteriorated condition. All old materials were discarded.⁹

Air-conditioning units were installed by the National Park Service in the windows of the first and second stories at an unknown date.

⁹ Telephone conversation, April 26, 1990, with Varnie Carter, Maintenance Foreman—Buildings, BNHP.



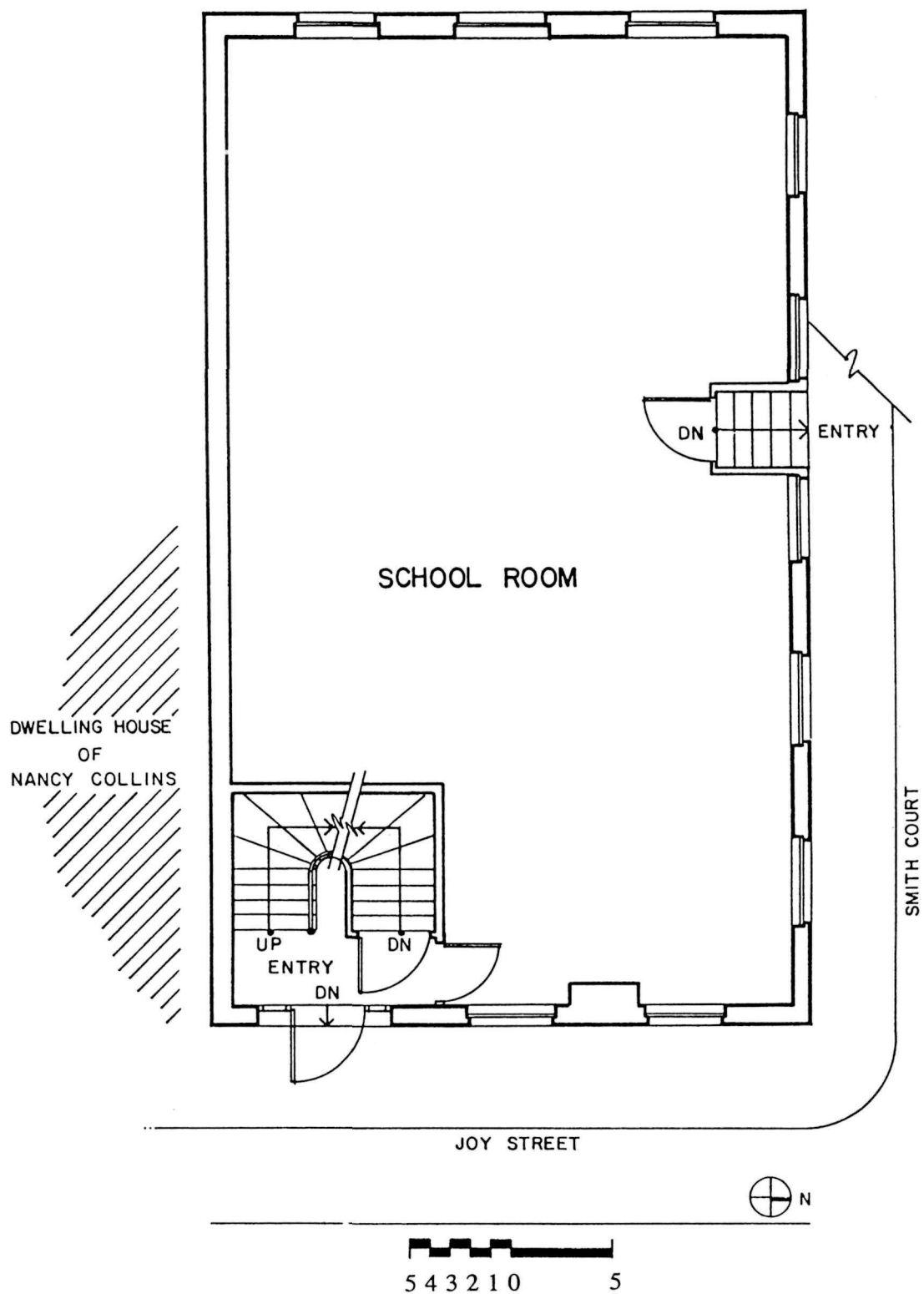


Figure 16. Smith School House: Conjectural first-floor plan, 1835.

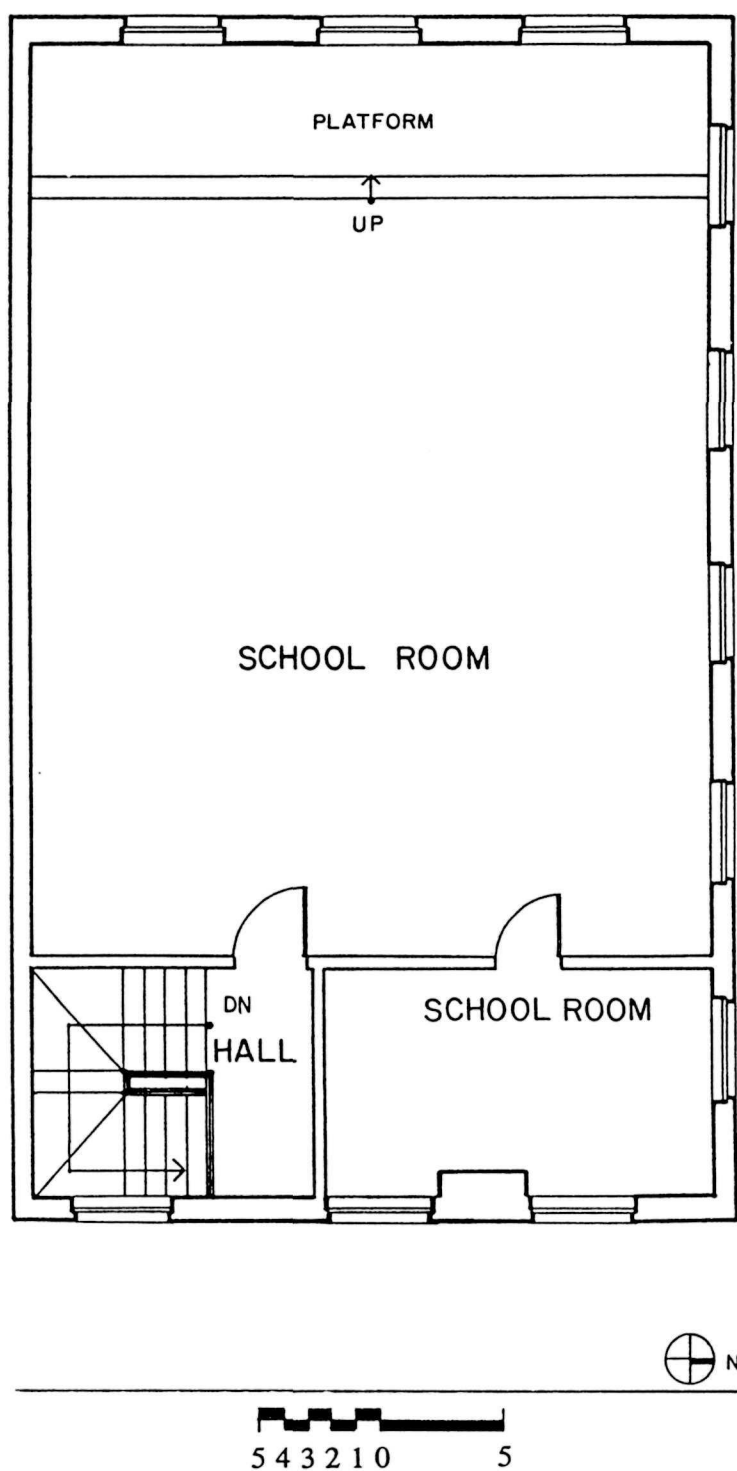


Figure 17. Smith House School: Conjectural second-floor plan, 1835.

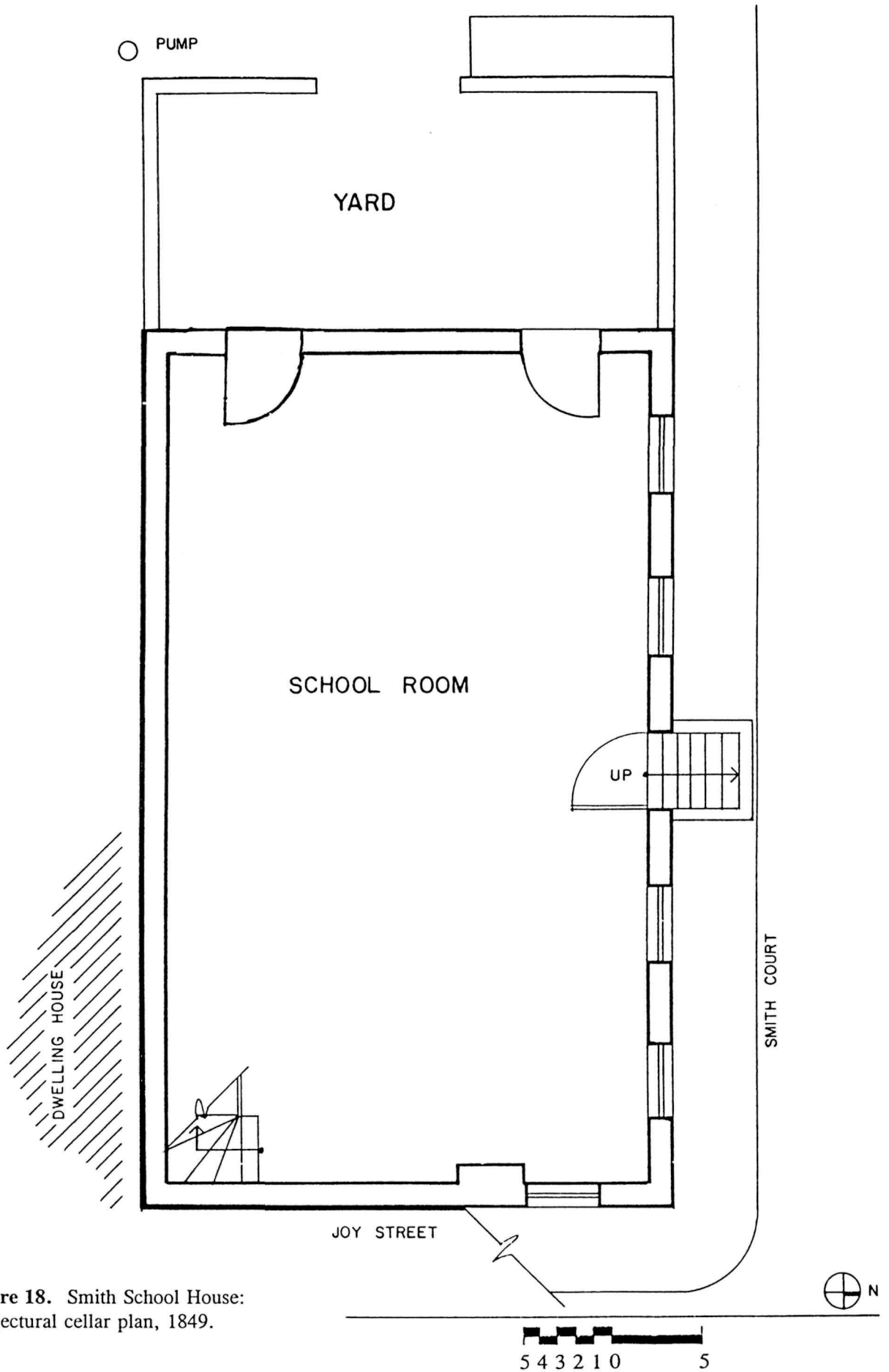


Figure 18. Smith School House:
Conjectural cellar plan, 1849.

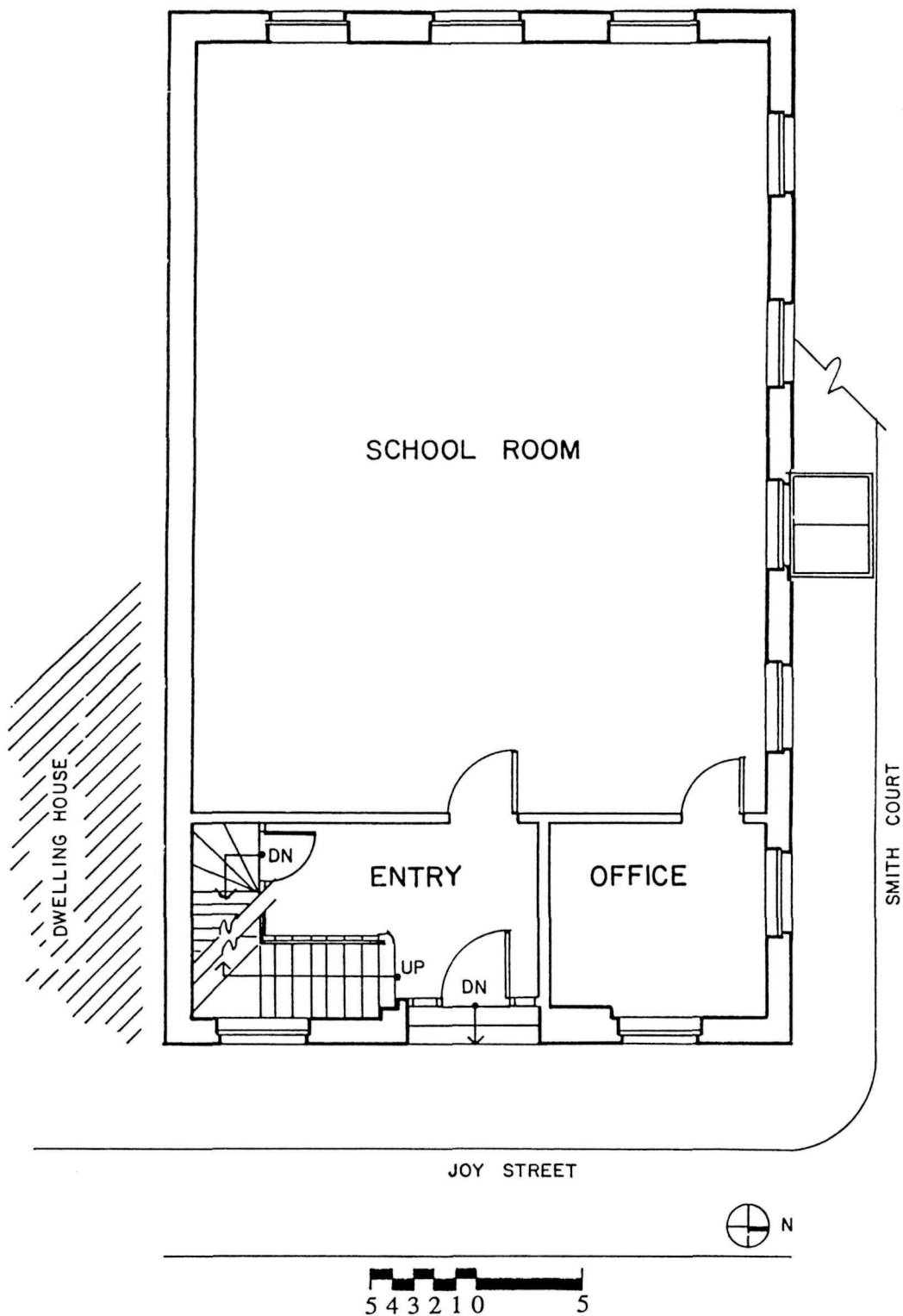


Figure 19. Smith School House: Conjectural first-floor plan, 1849.

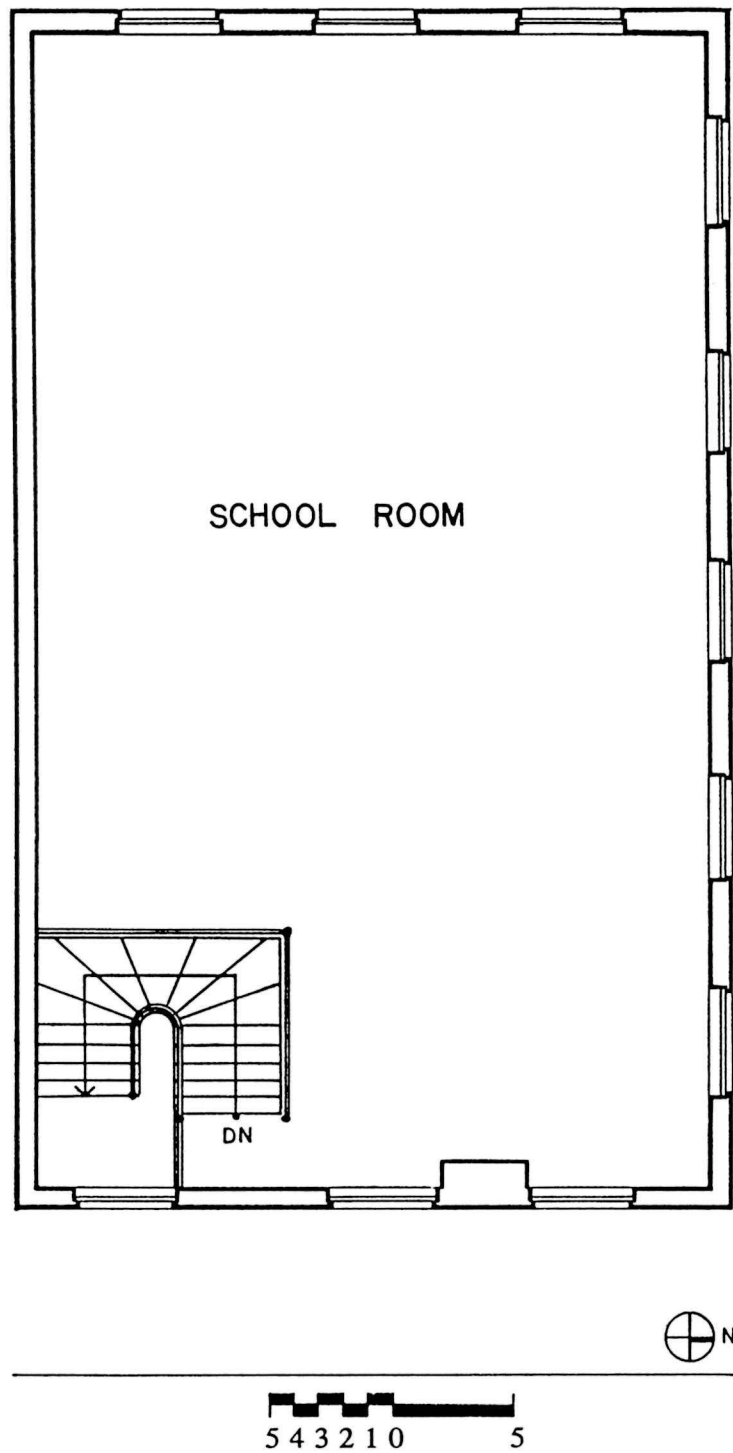


Figure 20. Smith School House: Conjectural second-floor plan, 1849.

IV. EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

Introduction

The exterior appearance of the Smith School House today is depicted in figures 21-34. It is only slightly changed today from its appearance after its remodeling in 1849. Notable exceptions include various features of the site, several elements of the front doorway, and the cellar openings in the north and west walls. These are discussed below in detail.

The Site

The Smith School House remains on its original site on the north slope of Beacon Hill. The property is still bordered on its east side by a street and on its north side by a passageway, although their names have been changed. Belknap Street to the east has been known as Joy Street since 1855, and May's Court to the north was renamed Smith's Court in 1848.¹ The 6-foot passageway to the west that contained a pump and well survives today as a piece of property that no one seems to own and on which no taxes are paid. No evidence of the pump and well are visible. The property to the south now has a five-story brick apartment building that was erected in 1909. This building is intrusive both for its size and because it was built directly up against a portion of the Smith School's south elevation.

While the schoolhouse takes up most of its site, there is also a sidewalk along its east and north sides and a small yard to the rear. The grade of the sidewalks does not appear to have changed significantly since 1835. They are bounded on their street sides by granite curbs that most likely date to the 19th century and are in fair-to-good condition. The sidewalk along Joy Street to the east is paved with bricks set in sand that were installed by the city sometime within the last 20 years. While the bricks themselves are not historic, they reproduce what was most likely the historical appearance of the walk in the 19th century. Modern intrusions in the Joy Street sidewalk in front of the schoolhouse include a fire hydrant at the south end and a manhole cover at the north end. The sidewalk along the Smith Court side of the schoolhouse is paved with macadam that replaced earlier brick paving sometime after circa 1937.

The yard behind the schoolhouse measures approximately 15 feet deep by 30 feet side. It was historically bounded on its north, west, and south sides by a brick wall. The north brick wall is intact except for the addition of a doorway sometime in the 20th century. The west wall was in deteriorated condition in 1975, and it was completely disassembled sometime thereafter. A small portion of the low south wall remains today, but in mostly ruinous condition.

The grade of the yard adjacent to the west wall of the building is similar to the historic (1849) grade, judging by the threshold level of the historic doorway in the north end of the wall (see

¹ This is commonly known as Smith Court today.

figs. 30-31).² The 1991 archeological investigation found that this area was dug out, and the steps to the doorway in the north yard wall were built, probably sometime in the 1980s. The grade of the rest of the yard is as much as 3 feet higher than historic grade, primarily due to the deposition of dirt and construction debris in the yard since 1975. Documentation indicates that the veterans' groups headquartered in the building in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also performed some repaving, which may have affected the grade level.

The yard was described in 1847 as bounded on one side by the outhouses, and on the other side by the pump. The 1991 archeological investigation found a line of stones in the yard that might have been part of the pre-1849 privy block's foundation.

The Building

Foundation

The granite foundation walls are original (1834-35) and in good condition. They were last repointed with a mortar mix containing portland cement in 1975. A portion of the rubble foundation is exposed today on the west elevation where it was originally covered with earth. The regrading of the back yard that exposed the foundation occurred in 1849.

Walls

The brick walls are original (1834-35). They are in good condition generally, except for some bricks that are pitted, and a few joints that are missing mortar. The walls were last repointed with a mortar mix containing portland cement in 1975. The brickwork of the south sides of the east and west gable ends was restored as part of the roof restoration in 1975. Through-wall anchors with cast-iron, star-shaped end plates were installed in the walls in 1975 to stabilize the second floor.

Doorways

The schoolhouse has two functioning exterior doorways, both of them historic. One is in the first story of the front (east) elevation; it dates to 1849. The other is in the cellar story of the rear (west) elevation; it is thought to be original, although much altered. Three other historic doorways have been closed up.

The existing front doorway is in the center of the east elevation in the first story. It replaced an original window opening in 1849. Several components of the doorway are earlier than 1849, and were apparently reused from the original front doorway. These early components include the doorway frame and the transom window. Other reused features may include the granite step and the brownstone lintel. Cast-iron boot scrapers may have been installed on either side of the doorway in 1849—their stubs remain today. The lintel is parged with a pigmented mortar that was probably

² As explained previously, the original (1835) grade is not known, but the 1849 specifications called for it to be lowered as part of the remodeling of that year.

applied in 1975. Modern components of the doorway that were installed sometime in the 20th century are door itself, the door hardware, and wood panels that replaced the sidelights.

The existing rear doorway is at the north end of the west wall of the cellar. The specifications for the 1849 work indicate that it was one of two doorways in this wall at that time. The doorway has a granite lintel and a pair of modern metal fire doors.

The original front doorway, at the south end of the east elevation, was converted to a window in 1849. There are no obvious patches in the brickwork to suggest that a doorway had ever existed here. Instead, the evidence is found in the 1849 specifications; the window spacing, which suggests location for the front entry and stairway different from those of today; and the information obtained from the paint analysis.

The original doorway in the first story of the north elevation was closed in 1849. Its location is clearly defined by the brickwork patch that fills the opening. Other clues include original features that survive within the wall, such as the first granite step, the brownstone lintel, and the remnants of two cast-iron boot scrapers. The lintel is parged with a pigmented mortar that was probably applied in 1975.

The 1849 doorway in the cellar story of the north elevation was closed sometime in the 20th century. Its location is discernable by the modern concrete blocks that in fill the opening. Historic doorway materials that survive here include the granite lintel, the granite jambs, and the granite retaining walls for the stairwell that extend out into the sidewalk. The stairwell is paved with macadam today, so it is not known if the steps survive below the level of the sidewalk.

The original cellar doorway at the south end of the west elevation was also closed sometime in the 20th century, and is also infilled with modern concrete blocks. Its brownstone lintel survives today within the wall. Both the lintel and the masonry patch are parged with a mortar that was probably applied in 1975.

Windows

All window openings in the Smith School House are in the east, north, and west elevations of the building. This appears to have been the historical arrangement, determined by the proximity of a building on the adjacent south lot in 1834 and the functional needs of the interior classrooms. Most of the window openings that exist in the schoolhouse today are original and date to the construction of the building in 1834-35. The few exceptions are as follows:

- the cellar window in the east elevation, possibly installed in 1849; and
- the first-story window at the south end of the east wall, created from the original doorway opening in 1849.

A brickwork patch in the center of the west foundation wall may have been the location of an original window opening; it includes the outline of a lintel. Mortar analysis has dated the brickwork to the 1849 remodeling; the specifications for that work suggest it was introduced to extend existing stove flues down to new heating equipment in the cellar.

Of the window openings that exist today, all retain their original lintels and sills. The sills and lintels of the cellar openings are granite in good condition. Granite was also used for the lintels of the windows in the first and second stories of the west elevation. These are also in good condition. A less-durable brownstone was used for the sills of the windows in the upper stories, and the lintels of the windows in the upper stories of the east and north elevations only. Most of the brownstone is parged with a pigmented mortar that was probably applied during the exterior restoration of 1975. This parging exists on the lintels and sills in the east elevation, and the lintels only in the north elevation. Exposed brownstone exists at the window sills of the north and west elevations only. These sills are in various stages of deterioration, with all exhibiting some degree of delamination, cracking, chipping, and general wear.

All of the window sashes and trim in the first and second stories of the building were replaced sometime in the 1970s and are in good condition. All of the cellar window openings are boarded over, so that the condition of their sashes is not known. A report on the building in 1970 assessed that all the cellar sashes were of later manufacture, except possibly the sash in the east cellar window.

Window shutters exist at the five windows of the east elevation only. These shutters were installed in 1975 as part of the exterior restoration of the building. Shutters were believed to have been on the east elevation of the building at an early date, based on the presence of old shutter hardware including pintles and shutter dogs. The historical research suggests that shutters were not original (see figs. 3-4), but they may have been installed during the remodeling of 1849. Because no shutters remained on the building in 1975 and no historical views of the shutters exist, the style chosen for the new shutters must have been a guess. Each shutter leaf has two panels of equal size, and each panel is fitted with 20 fixed louvers. The shutters were not removed for this study so it is not known how much, if any, of the old hardware was left in place in 1975.

The historical appearance of the windows is most disrupted by four air-conditioning units. Two are in the north elevation and two are in the west elevation. These units remain in the windows year-round.

Roof

The appearance of the roof today dates to the exterior restoration of 1975. Presumably original slate shingles are on the north side of the roof only, where they were reinstalled in 1975. Black asphalt shingles cover the less-visible south side of the roof. The ridge cap and other flashing is lead-coated copper. A ventilation apparatus that may date to 1847 is mounted on the center ridge of the roof; it is coated with a black tar-like substance. There are two modern sewer vent pipes, both at the east end of the roof. One is visible from the street, because it is in the lower north slope of the roof; it probably services the cellar toilet room. The other is less visible, because it is in the south slope near the chimney; it probably vents the toilet rooms on the second story. A hatch that provides direct access to the attic is in the south slope at the west end of the roof. The hatch appears to have been newly constructed in 1975, although it may have reproduced an earlier hatch that was in deteriorated condition. Remnants exist of flashing from the former roof alteration of circa 1909 in the upper brick wall of the adjacent south building (see fig. 34).

The wide wood sheathing boards to which the slate and asphalt shingles are nailed are probably original (1834-35). The undersides of the boards may be viewed from the attic. Some boards are new, and were most likely installed in 1975.

The condition of the roof is generally good, except for three slate shingles that are cracked, and the asphalt shingles, which are somewhat brittle.

Cornice and Gutters

The brickwork cornice retains its original 1835 appearance despite repairs made to it in the 20th century. The most recent repairs probably date to 1975, when the entire building exterior was repointed.

The existing drainage system was installed on the building in 1975. It was learned from a conversation with an architect who worked on the building that the design of the present system was not based on historical research. Existing drainage components include gutters, leader boxes, and leaders, all made of lead-coated copper. Gutters are on both the north and south sides of the building. The leaders and leader boxes are mounted at the far corners of the west elevation. Both drain to a sewer pipe at the lower northwest corner of the west elevation.

The drainage equipment appears to be in good condition, although there is a problem with water backing up in the winter in the southwest corner of the building. Water seepage has caused damage to the plaster in the second-story office of the National Park Service.

Chimneys

The schoolhouse has two chimneys: one on the east end of the building, the other on the west end. Both are simply designed and constructed of brick. Only one flue in the east chimney is in use today, as the vent for the boiler of the central heating system.

The chimneys are in good condition. They were most recently repointed in 1975. In addition, the east chimney has a coat of cement parge on its top course of brickwork on the west side—presumably applied in 1975 to repair bricks that were in poor condition. The west chimney is encircled by two metal straps that appear to be the obsolete supports for a former antenna.

Signs

Several nonhistoric signs are attached to the east and west exterior walls. All but one were installed sometime after 1984 by the Museum of Afro American History and the National Park Service.

Two signs are attached to the east elevation. One is bolted to the south side of the front doorway and reads “Administrative Offices, Museum of Afro American History and Boston African American National Historic Site, In the Historic Abiel Smith School, 46 Joy Street.” The second

sign is suspended over the sidewalk from a metal support that is bolted near the north corner of the building. Its purpose is to direct visitors to the “African Meeting House” farther down Smith Court.

Three signs are clustered on the east corner of the north elevation. One is a small metal sign that explains the historical significance of “Smith Court.” The second is a glass-door display case in which notices are posted by the “Museum of Afro American History: African Meeting House.” The third is an older wood sign that reads “Private Way, Dangerous Passing.”

Flagpole

A large flagpole is mounted to the sill of the center window in the second story of the east elevation. No flagpole appears in the early views of the schoolhouse (figs. 3-4), and no references to a flag or a flagpole were found in the historical records. However, it was common practice for schools to have a flagpole. Additional research may reveal whether the installation of a flagpole in this location dates to the later historic period, or to the years when the building was used by veterans’ groups (1887-1984).

Finishes

The primary exterior finish of the Smith School House is unpainted brickwork. There is no indication that the exterior brickwork of the building has ever been painted.

The only exterior features of the schoolhouse that are painted those made of wood. The front doorway’s side panels, transom window, and ceiling are painted white. Also painted white are the window sashes and trim of the first- and second-story windows. The window shutters on the east elevation are painted black. The painted finishes are in good condition, although they look somewhat worn.

Protection Equipment

Fire-safety equipment extant on the exterior of the building dates to 1987. This equipment includes a light over the front doorway, a light over the back doorway, an alarm mounted to the upper north wall at the east corner, and a rigid electrical conduit mounted to the interior side of the yard’s north wall. Intrusion-alarm equipment was also installed in 1987.

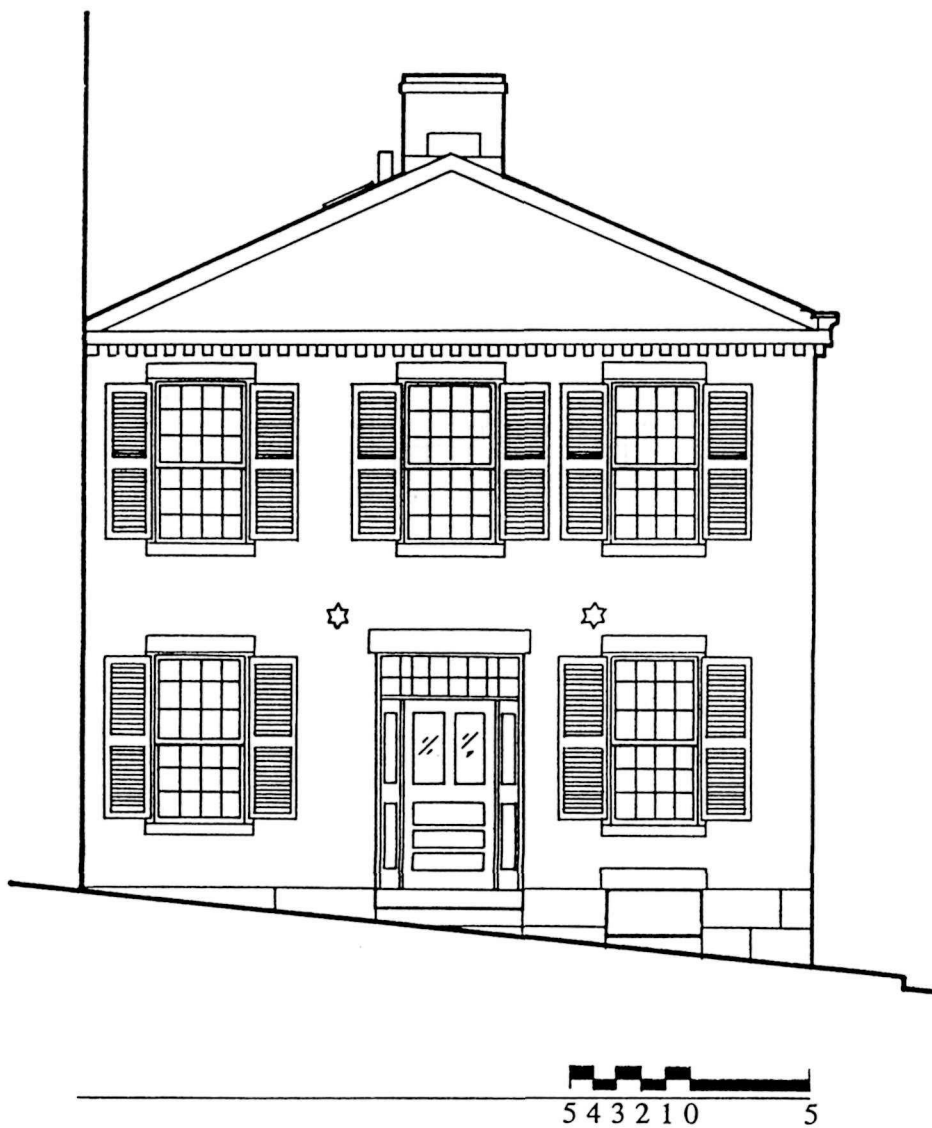


Figure 21. Smith School House: East elevation (1990).

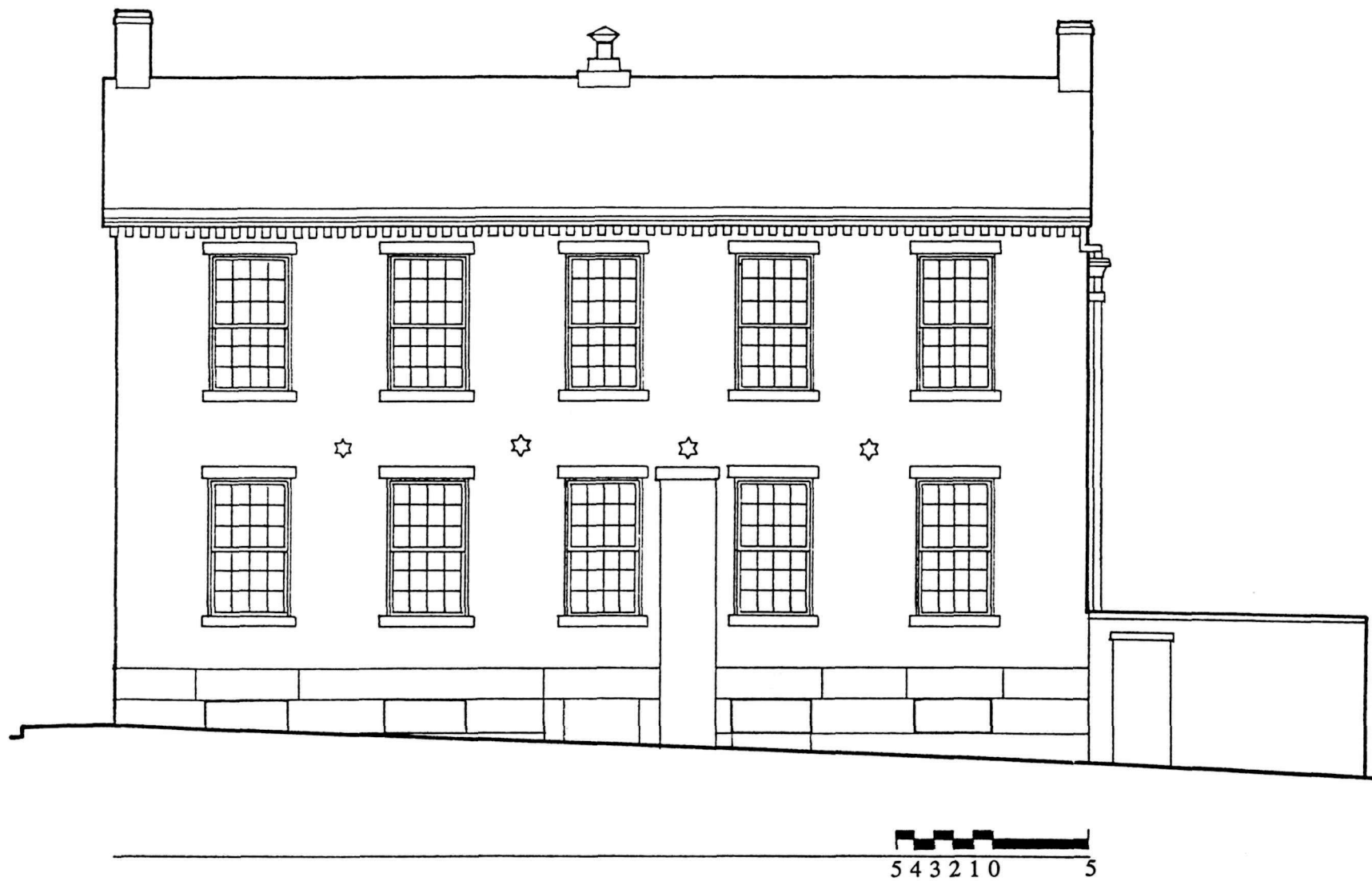


Figure 22. Smith School House: north elevation (1990).



Figure 23. Smith School House: West elevation (1990).



Figure 24. Smith School House: East (front) and north elevations (1990).



Figure 25. Smith School House: East elevation, first story (1990).



Figure 26. Smith School House: East elevation, doorway transom (1990).



Figure 27. Smith School House: East elevation, doorway steps (1990).



Figure 28. Smith School House: North elevation, infill of two former doorways (1990).



Figure 29. Smith School House: north and west elevations (1990).



Figure 30. Smith School House: detail of lower west elevation (1990).



Figure 31. Smith School House: detail of north yard wall (1990).



Figure 32. Smith School House: Roof, looking east (1990).



Figure 33. Smith School House: Roof, looking west (1990).



Figure 34. Smith School House: Junction of roof with adjacent south building, showing flashing line remaining from circa-1910 roof alteration (1990).

STRUCTURE

Walls

The walls appear to be in sound condition following their stabilization in 1975. While some settlement has occurred, most notably at the west wall, there does not appear to have been recent movement.

Floors

Of the three floors in the schoolhouse (fig. 35), only two —the first floor and the second floor—date to the original construction in 1834-35. The cellar floor was replaced by the existing modern cast-concrete floor sometime in the 20th century. The original framing of each the first and second floors consists of four beams that span north-south, and floor joists that span east-west.

The first floor was reported in 1970 to feel springy and to have considerable sag despite four columns that supported it in the cellar. No stabilization was done on the floor in 1975, and the same conditions exist today that were described in 1970.

The second floor was stabilized in 1975, and the equipment installed at that time exists today. This includes two steel I-beams and through-wall anchor bolts that tied the floor structure to the exterior east, north, and west walls. Despite this work, one specific area of the second floor still sags noticeably when walked upon, perhaps due to a cracked floor joist.

Roof

Most of the original (1834-35) roof framing remains in the building today. The roof framing components include the four king-post scissors trusses, the ridge board, the lower purlins, the upper purlins, and the roof rafters. These seem to be in good condition, except for some water stains that may predate the reroofing of 1975. See the subsequent section "Interior Elements, Attic" for more information on the roof framing.

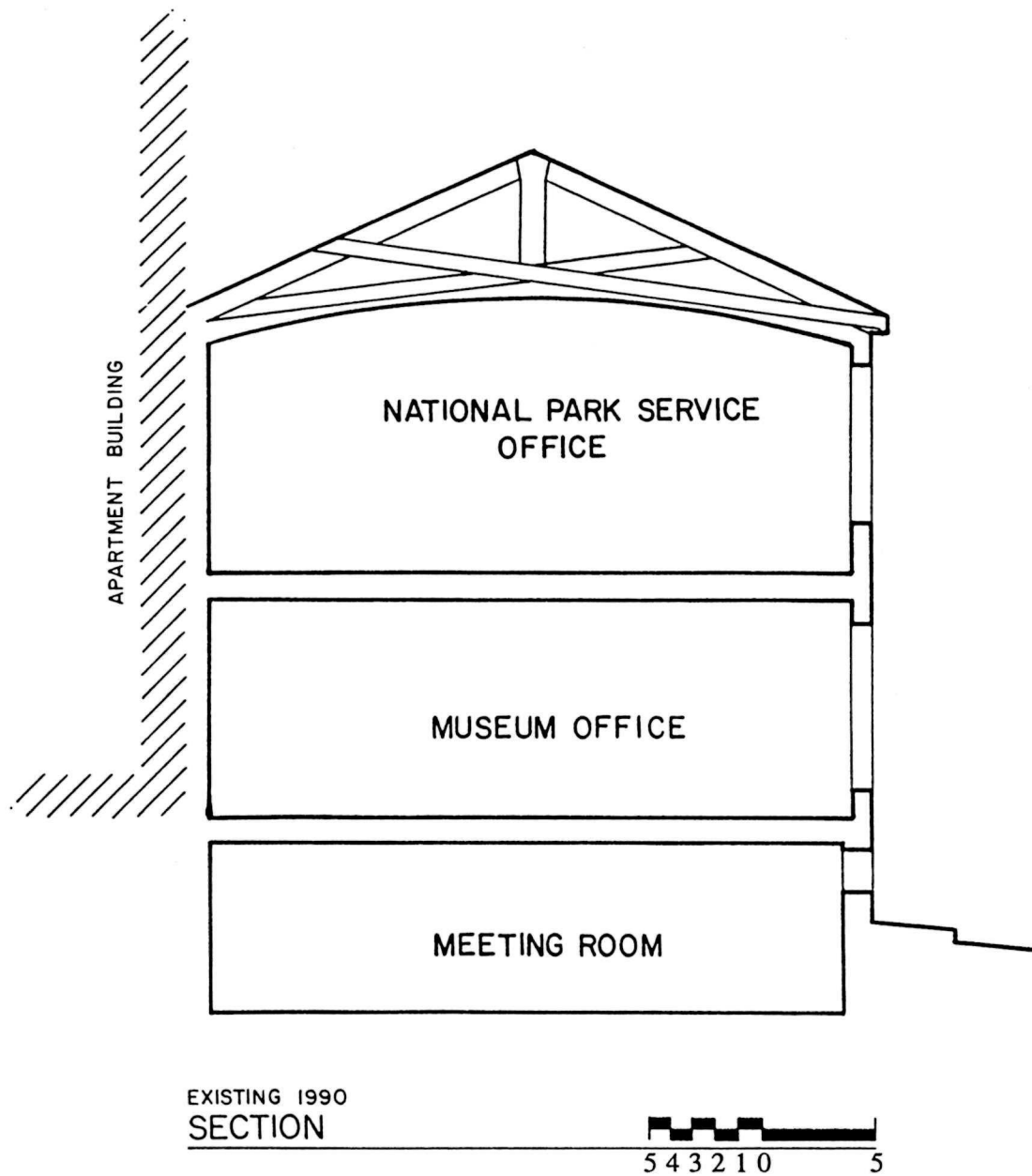


Figure 35. Smith School House: section looking west (1990).

INTERIOR ELEMENTS

Cellar

General Information

The cellar is depicted in figures 36-48. It was completely remodeled sometime in the 20th century, possibly as late as 1952. What was originally one large classroom in 1835 is now partitioned into a large meeting room to the west, a small mechanical room to the east, and a toilet room in the northeast corner. The cellar is used only occasionally for meetings and class groups.

Floor

The floor is composed of modern cast concrete. This floor is believed to have replaced an earlier wood-framed floor. No evidence of the earlier floor was found during the architectural investigation.

The concrete floor slopes slightly, most notably in the large meeting room. In addition, the floor is elevated approximately 6 inches in the northeast toilet room, most likely to accommodate plumbing. The boiler in the mechanical room is raised on a concrete platform that measures 6 feet 6 inches wide by 6 feet 10 1/2 inches long.

The concrete floor has three finishes. First, it is unfinished in the closets off the main room and in the mechanical room. Second, it is covered with linoleum tiles in colors of yellow and blue in the meeting room and the anteroom off the corner toilet room. Third, it is painted "battleship gray" in the toilet room.

Walls

Most of the exterior walls in the cellar are furred out about 1 foot 6 inches from the foundation and paneled with wide-board knotty pine paneling with a varnish or a shellac finish. This paneling is of fairly recent vintage and may have been installed sometime in the 1950s. Doors in the paneling in the meeting room are for three closets: one in the north wall at the former exterior doorway, one in the south wall beneath the stairway, and another in the south wall to the west of the stairway closet. The original granite and brick walls are visible in the north closet and at the east wall of the mechanical room. Remnants of an early whitewash finish are visible on the closet walls.

Concrete-block walls partition the mechanical room at the east end of the cellar. These were probably used to create a fireproof room for the heating system. They are believed to be contemporary with the pine paneling.

A later plasterboard wall partitions an anteroom to the west of the corner toilet room. This is thought to have been installed circa 1977 at the same time that alterations were made to the toilet room on the second story.

Ceiling

The ceiling is composed of hard cement plaster on wire lath. It too probably dates to the circa 1950s remodeling of the cellar. Physical evidence of the earlier/original lath and plaster ceiling is visible in the north closet. This evidence is in the form of white plaster stains on the undersides of the ceiling joists.

Four posts, encased with pine boards, support the ceiling/first floor. These are in the large meeting room and support the two center beams that span north-south. They are believed to have been installed during the remodeling of the cellar to provide additional support to the first floor.

Doorways

There are several interior doorways and one exterior doorway in the cellar. All date to the remodeling of the cellar or later. Three closets open off the large meeting room on the north and south sides of the room. The doors are made of the same pine paneling as the walls. The door hardware is a black colonial-style reproduction. The doorway to the interior toilet room is the same vintage as the closets. It is fitted with a solid wood flush-style door that is either varnished or shellacked.

The doorway to the mechanical room has a modern hollow-core door. It is lined on its interior side with a metal fireproof material known as "Titekote." Vents in the lower portion of the door provide ventilation to the mechanical room. The doorway to the anteroom of the toilet room is also fitted with a modern hollow core door.

An exterior doorway is in the north side of the west wall. It was installed sometime in 1937 or later. It is believed to have replaced an original window opening. Today the doorway is fitted with a pair of modern metal fire doors that swing outward.

The evidence of one historic doorway only is visible in the cellar today. This is the Smith Court doorway in the north elevation that may be seen in the north closet. The doorway is clearly defined by the concrete blocks that enclose the opening.

Two other historic doorways existed previously in the west wall: one in the center of the wall in 1835, and another wider doorway that replaced the center doorway circa 1849. This later doorway was in the south side of the west wall and itself replaced what was probably an original window opening. No evidence of these doorways is visible from inside today due to the presence of the later pine paneling.

Windows

Four windows, now boarded over, are in the upper north wall of the cellar. These are original openings that date to the 1834-35 construction of the building. Provision was made for the windows when the wall paneling was installed in the circa 1950s by constructing deep window surrounds. It is not known if any historic woodwork survives at these windows due to their present inaccessibility.

One historic window, in the east wall of the toilet room, was paneled over when the cellar was remodeled. This is therefore the most likely window to have intact historic woodwork.

Two historic window openings are missing from the west wall. One, in the south side of the wall, was enlarged to a doorway circa 1849. The other, in the north side of the wall, was enlarged to the present doorway sometime in the 20th century. No physical evidence survives of the windows.

Counter

A counter at the west end of the meeting room is constructed of the same pine boards that panel the walls; it is therefore probably contemporary with the remodeling of the cellar. It is likely that the counter area functioned as a bar where alcoholic beverages were served judging from the “Budweiser” beer clock that hangs on the wall behind it. The counter itself is a low partition with a wide flat top surface. Immediately behind the counter is a stainless steel sink with running water. The wall behind the counter has a mirror and shelves.

Stairway

Interior access to the upper stories of the schoolhouse is possible by means of a stairway in the southeast corner of the cellar. The structure of this stairway dates to the 1849 remodeling of the building. Most of the stairway finishes, however, are later including the beige-color linoleum on the treads, metal strips on the front edge of the treads, and the same pine paneling on the walls that exists in the cellar. Other modern additions include the metal pipe railing at the east and south walls, the wall light and electrical receptacle at the east wall, and the emergency light at the east wall.

Features of the stairway that are historic include the structure of the stairway itself (1849), the sloped ceiling that may retain its early plaster finish (1849), and the floorboards in the niche in the upper stairway (1835 and 1849).

Finishes

Except for remnants of an early whitewash finish on the original foundation walls, all of the finishes in the cellar date to the 20th century. These are summarized below:

- the poured concrete floor is either unfinished, covered with linoleum tiles, or painted a “battleship gray” color;
- a resinous finish such as a varnish, a shellac, or a polyurethane covers the knotty pine paneling;
- white latex paint covers the concrete block partition walls and the cement plaster ceiling; and
- pink latex paint covers the doors and door trim in the east partition wall.

Utility Systems

Heating System

The cellar is heated by the steam pipes that convey steam from the boiler in the mechanical room up to the radiators on the first and second stories. These pipes are suspended from the ceiling at the north and south walls. Heating pipes are also concealed behind the paneling at the north and south walls. The mechanical room itself is a source of heat if the door is left open.

The "Burnham America" steam boiler for the central heating system is on a raised concrete platform in the mechanical room. It is fueled by natural gas. The owner's manual for the boiler is in an envelope in the mechanical room and provides the following information. The boiler was installed on December 28, 1984, at the same time as the gas meter at the east wall. It was installed by "C & F Plbg. & Htg. Co. Inc." of 18 Melrose Street in Boston. Its boiler model number "U412 Steam," and was manufactured by the Burnham Corporation of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Several problems exist with the boiler. First, it is difficult to control the heat within the building, resulting in overheating in the winter. Second, the park staff needs to periodically drain the system of accumulated water. Third and most alarming, the boiler has been a source of gas leaks. One recent visit by the Boston Gas Company in response to a call from the staff confirmed that there was not one but several leaks in the vicinity of the boiler. These were repaired by the Boston Gas representative.

Plumbing System

Plumbing fixtures abound in the cellar. They are located in the mechanical room, the meeting room, and in the toilet room and anteroom. In addition, a soil pipe is behind the paneling on the north wall.

The hot-water heater for the building is in the mechanical room. This is a "Smith Permaglas" 50-gallon tank manufactured by the A.O. Smith Corporation. It is also fueled by natural gas. The owner's manual is in a pocket on the tank, although the date of installation is not recorded.

A stainless-steel sink with three sets of active faucets is behind the counter in the meeting room. The maintenance staff reports that the drain in the sink has a tendency to clog.

The toilet room is outfitted with a toilet and a shower that are both in working order. The toilet has a white porcelain finish, and is dated "Jul 16, 1952" on the underside of the tank cover. The shower is a modern fiberglass insert that was probably installed in 1988 as part of the interior renovation of the building.

The anteroom of the toilet room has a sink and a urinal. Both are cast iron with a white porcelain finish. Their date of manufacture is not known, but they are believed to have been moved to this location from the toilet room circa 1977.

A floor drain and sump pump are in the large closet in the south wall of the meeting room. This is a modern pump that was probably installed sometime within the last 10 years.

Electrical System

The electrical fixtures in the cellar date from several periods, the earliest being the remodeling of the cellar sometime in the 1950s. The electrical wiring in the building was updated in 1975.

The circuit-breaker box for the building is in the mechanical room, on the south wall. It is a modern unit that probably replaced an earlier fixture in 1975. Other electrical equipment in the mechanical room includes three bare-bulb ceiling fixtures, a light switch on the west partition wall, and one two-plug receptacle above the light switch. Fire- and intrusion-protection equipment is discussed in a separate section.

The large meeting room is well-equipped with 18 separate lighting fixtures and five electrical receptacles. The electrical wiring is concealed behind the wood paneling on the exterior walls, and elsewhere within rigid conduits. The lighting fixtures include four fluorescent lights in the ceiling, two fluorescent lights above a mirror at the west wall behind the counter, two incandescent lights with glass globe shades in the ceiling, eight incandescent lights with glass globe shades at the north and south walls, and two incandescent lights with glass cylinder shades on either side of the mirror at the west wall. The ceiling lights are operated by one switch mounted to the concrete block partition wall; the wall lights are operated individually by switches at the fixtures. One additional bare-bulb light fixture is in the large closet at the north wall. The five receptacles are equipped to receive two plugs each. Three receptacles are mounted on the west wall, one on the north wall, and one on the south wall. A functioning clock that features the "Budweiser" beer logo is plugged into one receptacle at the west wall.

The toilet room and the anteroom of the toilet room are each equipped with a fluorescent ceiling light and an incandescent wall light. The incandescent wall light in the anteroom is operated by a switch at the fixture itself. The other three lights are operated by a light switch in the anteroom. There are no electrical receptacles in either room.

Protection Systems

Fire-detection and alarm system was installed in 1975 and updated in 1987. The control panels for this system are in the mechanical room on the south wall. One is a red metal box that is labeled "Fire Control Panel." The panel is divided into four zones including the basement, the first story, the second story, and the attic. A second box is colored blue and labeled, "Pyrotronics Monitor Systems, Model MX-203." Emergency lighting is part of the fire safety equipment and includes an "Emergi-Lite" in the upper southwest corner of the mechanical room.

Fire-detection and alarm equipment is also located elsewhere in the cellar. Manually operated fire extinguishers are placed in strategic locations. Heat detectors are in the ceiling of both the meeting room and the anteroom of the toilet room. Emergency lights are in the meeting room, the toilet room, and in the stairway. A fire alarm pull-station box is mounted to the north wall of the meeting room. An electrified "EXIT" sign is on the east wall next to the stairway. An emergency siren is in the meeting room. Finally, the exterior doorway in the west wall is fitted with outward-opening fire doors, panic bars, and an emergency alarm that is activated when the doors are opened.

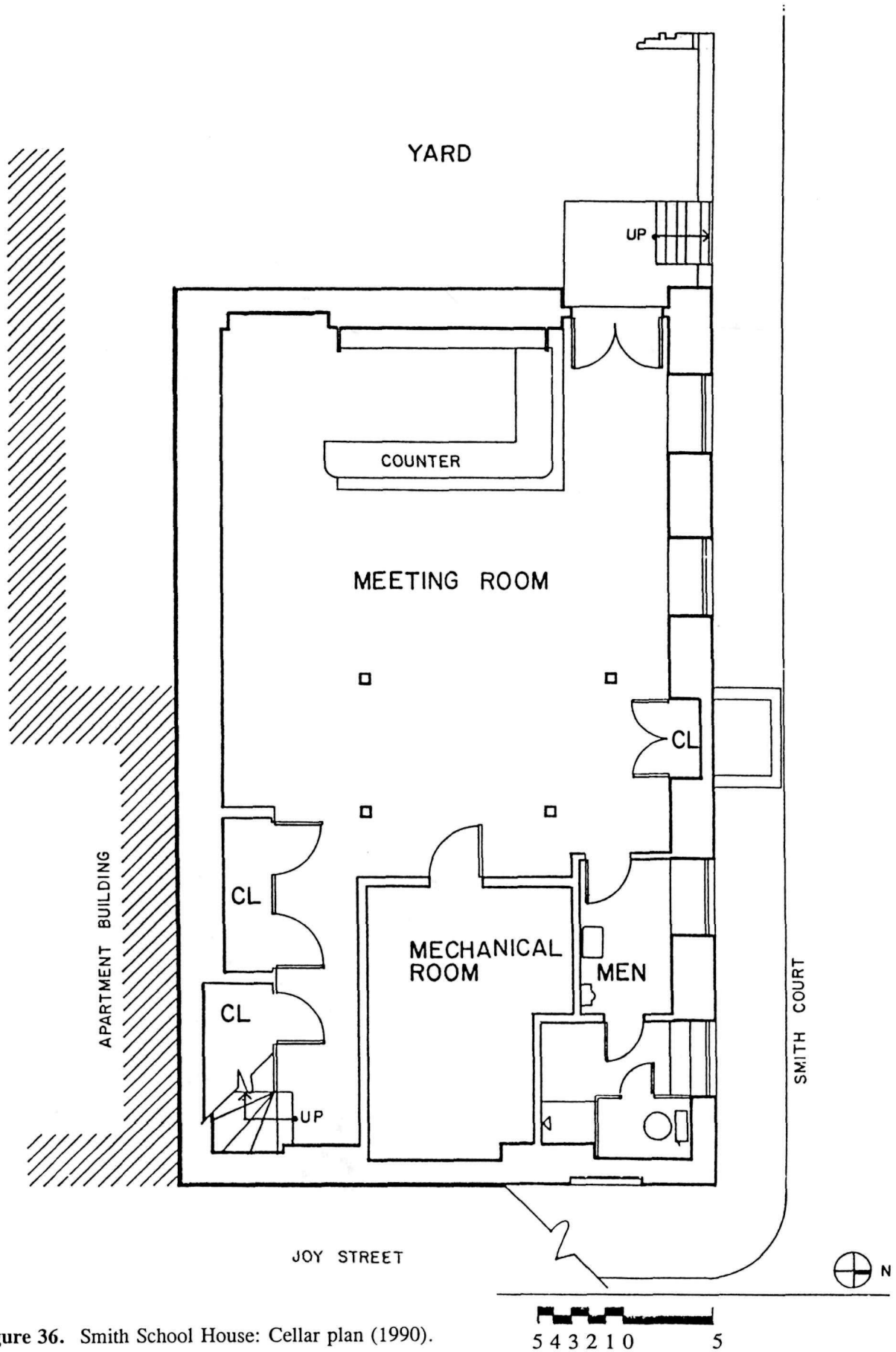


Figure 36. Smith School House: Cellar plan (1990).



Figure 37. Smith School House: Cellar, meeting room, looking northwest (1990).



Figure 38. Smith School House: Cellar, meeting room, area behind west counter (1990).



Figure 39. Smith School House: Cellar, meeting room hall, looking east (1990).



Figure 40. Smith School House: Cellar, section of original wall, as seen in the later north closet of the meeting room (1990).

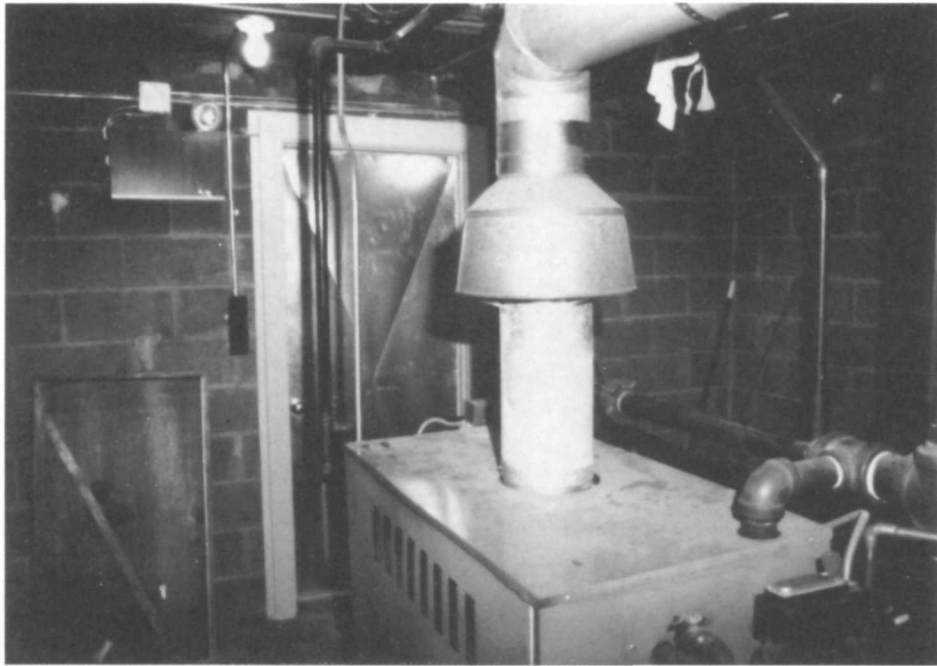


Figure 41. Smith School House: Cellar, mechanical room, looking west (1990).



Figure 42. Smith School House: Cellar, mechanical room, looking southeast (1990).

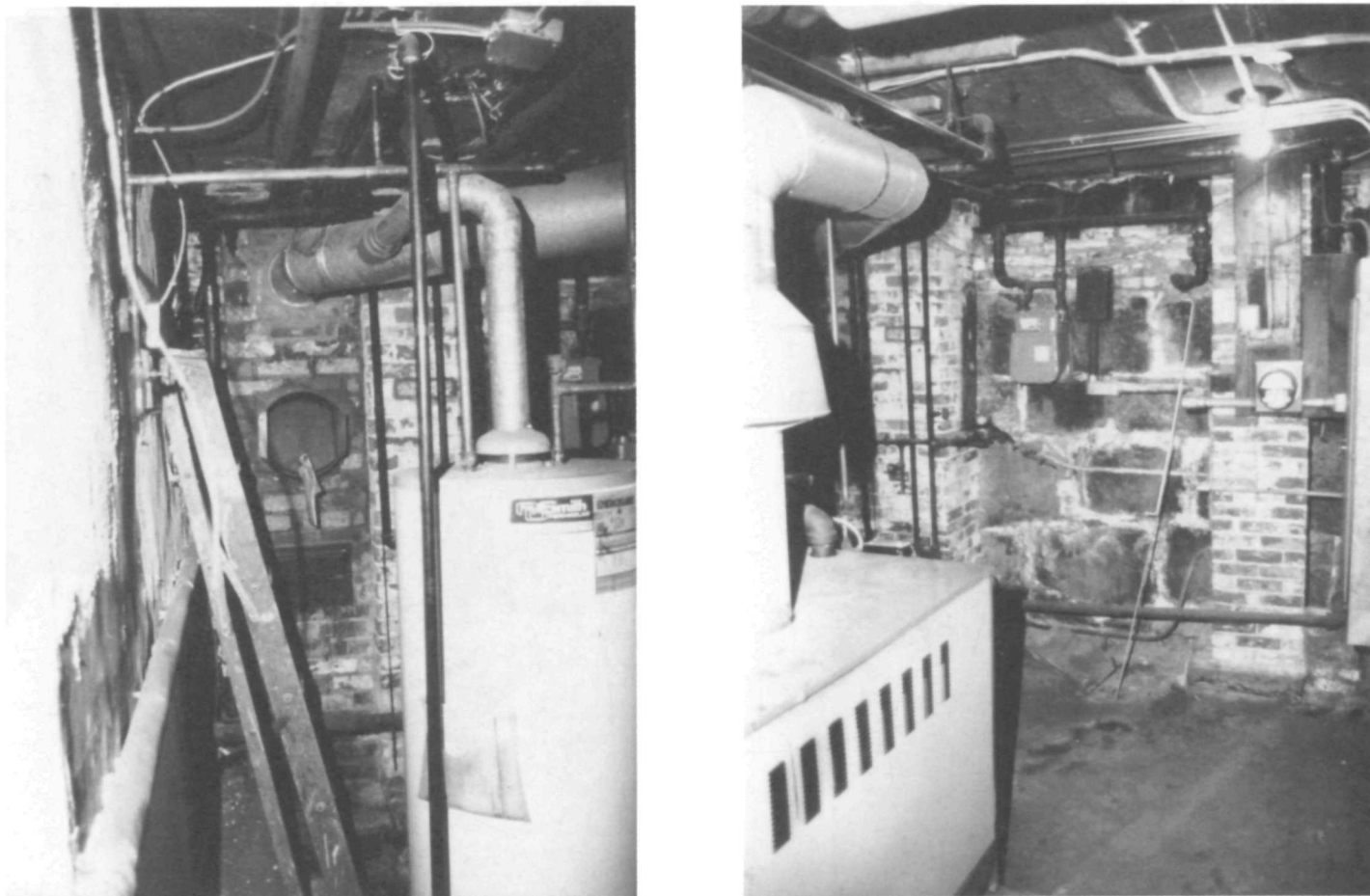


Figure 43. Smith School House: Cellar, mechanical room, looking east (1990).

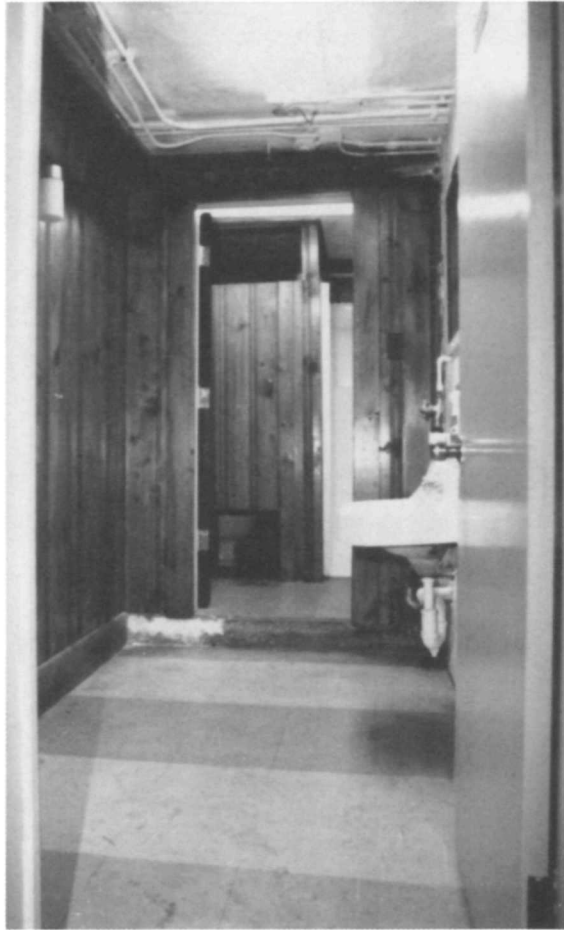


Figure 44. Smith School House: Cellar, men's ante-room, looking east (1990).

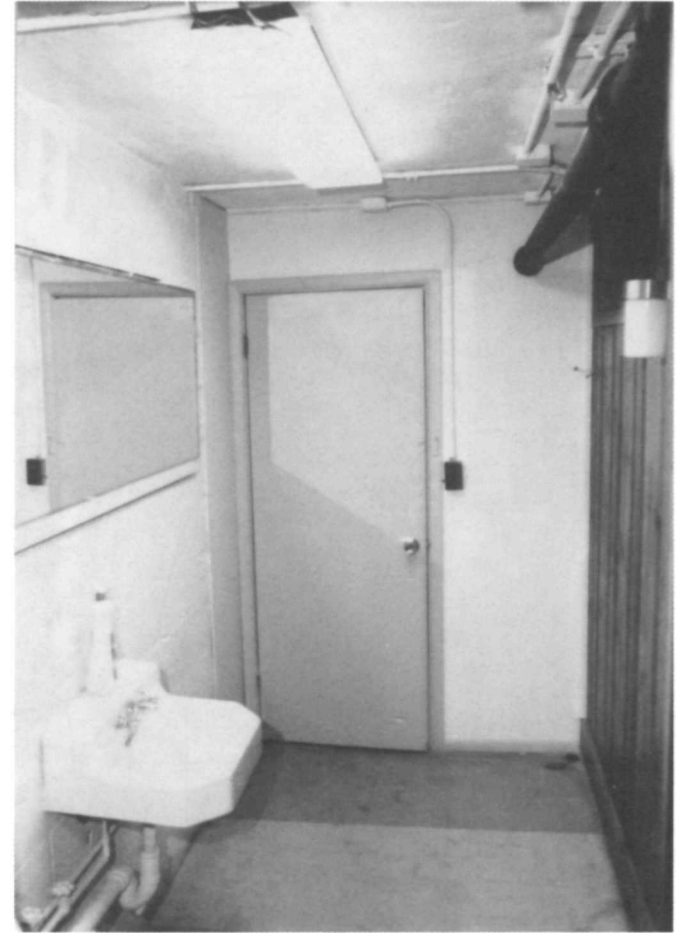


Figure 45. Smith School House: Cellar, men's ante-room, looking west (1990).



Figure 46. Smith School House: Cellar, men's toilet enclosure (1990).

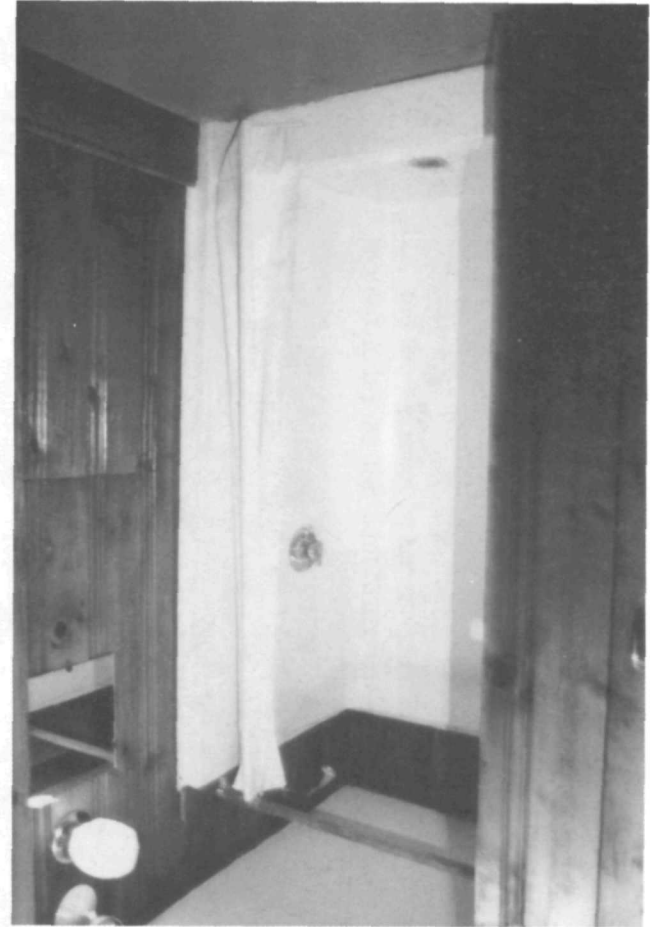


Figure 47. Smith School House: Cellar, men's shower enclosure (1990).



Figure 48. Smith School House: Cellar, stairway to the first story (1990).

First Story

General Information

The general configuration of the first story (fig. 49) is unchanged from its appearance in 1849 when the existing partition walls and stairway were installed. Based on the physical investigation, original features that survive from 1834-35 include the floor, the exterior walls, some portions of the ceiling, the window openings, and the wainscot in the former classroom at the north, west, and south walls. The first story is used today as the administrative office of the Museum of Afro American History.

Entry and Stairway

The layout of the first-story entry (figs. 50-52) is unchanged from its appearance in 1849. It functions today, as it did in 1849, as the main entry into the building. It also serves as an information center for posting notices, and as an area for the temporary storage of materials such as shovels, sand, and office supplies.

Floor

The floor is covered with gray wall-to-wall carpet in good condition that was installed in 1988. The carpet covers green linoleum tiles that in turn cover wood floorboards. The wood floorboards are presumed to date to the original construction in 1834-35. Their condition is not known.

Walls

The exterior east wall of the entry dates to the original construction of 1834-35, while the north, west, and south partition walls date to the remodeling of 1849. The walls are plastered, and are now covered with a modern textured finish. It is not known if the plaster beneath the texturing is historic or of later date. This could be determined by removing samples of plaster for analysis.

The lower walls are finished with baseboards that are modern plain boards 4 inches high. It is not known when they were installed or what earlier materials they replaced.

A modern cork bulletin board is attached to the north wall near the west corner.

Ceiling

The ceiling is plastered with a modern textured finish similar to the walls. A small portion of the ceiling at the east wall was removed and replastered in 1975 when an anchor was inserted through the exterior wall to stabilize the second floor. The remaining textured plaster may have original plaster beneath it, or plaster from a later period. This could be determined by removing samples of plaster for analysis. The stairwell for the present stairway, which was built in 1849, occupies the southeast corner of the entry ceiling.

Doorways

There are three doorways in the entry: one exterior doorway in the east wall, one interior doorway in the west partition wall, and one interior doorway in the south partition wall.

The exterior doorway replaced an original window in this location in 1849. It includes elements that were reused from the original doorway at that time, elements that were newly installed in 1849, and elements that were installed sometime in the 20th century. This was determined based on information obtained from the paint analysis and stylistic characteristics. Features that date to 1834-35 are the architrave on the north side, the architrave lintel, and the transom window sash. Newly installed in 1849 was the wide architrave on the south side. The wood threshold may also date from this time. Modern features of the doorway are the door itself, which is glazed with two panes of glass, and the wood panels on either side of the doorway, which replaced long, narrow sidelights. The date of installation for the door and wood panels is not known, but was probably sometime in the 20th century.

The west interior doorway gives access to the large room that functioned historically as a classroom. The doorway opening is presumed to be original to 1849 when the partition wall was built. All other elements are later and were installed during the renovation of 1988. These include the jambs, the architrave, the hollow-core door, and the door hardware. The threshold is covered with carpet.

The south interior doorway leads to the cellar stairway. The doorway opening is believed to date to 1849. All historic woodwork associated with the doorway was replaced at a later date. This includes the jambs, the architrave, and the hollow-core door. Only the two door hinges are old, and may have been reused from the original door. Each hinge leaf is attached with four screws.

Windows

Several windows provided natural light in the entry in 1849. Some remain today.

The upper portion of a large window exists in the east wall of the stairway to the second story. This window was installed in 1849 in place of the original front doorway. It is an unusual arrangement, in that the stairway (which was also installed in 1849) covers a portion of the window. All that remains today of the 1849 window is the opening itself. Modern window elements installed sometime between 1970 and 1975 include the jambs, the architrave, and the sashes. Also later are the venetian blind and two horizontal boards installed across the opening to prevent people from falling through the window.

An interior window in the west partition wall, to the south of the doorway, was described in the report of 1970. The report noted that the window had been covered over with a later finish on the opposite side of the wall. Today the window is also covered over on the entry side of the wall. It is not known if the window was a feature of the 1849 wall, or if it was a later addition. More information might be obtained by opening the wall.

Stairway

The present stairway to the second story (figs. 53-54) dates to the remodeling of 1849. This is based both on the 1849 specifications and information obtained by the paint analysis. This stairway replaced the original stairway that was in this same approximate location, but of a different configuration. It is U-shaped, with 18 risers and two interim landings. Other historic (1849) elements include the wood newels, the handrail, and the balusters; a wood shelf at the south wall that is 5 inches wide; and the wainscot. The wainscot of 1849 closely replicated the original wainscot of 1834-35 on the lower walls of the classrooms. The stairway wainscot is about 2 to 3 feet high, and is composed of boards that range from 4 to 6 inches wide. These boards are installed horizontally and at an angle so as to follow the rise of the stairway.

The east and south walls of the stairway are plastered with the same modern textured finish as the walls in the entry. It is not known if any historic plaster survives beneath the textured skim coat. The treads and risers of the stairway are covered with a gray carpet that was installed in 1988.

Finishes

Most of the finishes in the entry and stairway date to the 1988 renovation of the interior. The finishes are summarized below:

- gray carpet covers the floor;
- white latex paint covers the textured plaster walls, the ceiling, and the stairway wainscot;
- pink latex paint covers the baseboards, the trim of the east and south doorways, the trim and sashes of the east window, the upper molding of the stairway wainscot, and the east shelf at the stairway;
- glossy black paint covers all elements of the stairway, including the treads, risers, newels, handrail, and balusters;
- a dark varnish covers the door and the wood side panels of the exterior doorway; and
- a clear resinous finish such as shellac or polyurethane covers the trim and door of the west doorway, and the door only of the south doorway.

Utility Systems

Heating System

The entry and stairway are heated by one steam radiator at the north wall. This radiator has 20 fins and measures 3 feet tall by 4 feet long. It has a decorative casting, no manufacturer's identification, and is painted a metallic silver color. An obsolete switch that was probably for an oil burner in the cellar is on the upper south partition wall. No physical evidence was found for historic heating equipment. This area may have been unheated in 1849.

Plumbing System

There is no plumbing equipment in the entry or the stairway.

Electrical System

The electrical equipment in the entry includes one light, three light switches, and one automatic doorbell. The light is a ceiling fixture suspended by a chain and fitted with one incandescent bulb. It is operated by a switch on the west wall to the left of the doorway. A second light switch is on the east wall to the right of the exterior doorway; it controls a light fixture in the upper stair hall. A third light switch is on the south wall to the left of the doorway; it controls the light in the cellar stairway. The bell for the automatic doorbell is on the north wall near the east corner.

Protection Systems

Fire-protection equipment in the entry is mounted to the north wall, and includes a pull-station alarm box and an illuminated "EXIT" sign. The control panel for the intrusion-alarm system is attached to the north wall. It is wired to the front door.

Museum Office

The museum office (figs. 55-58) is the largest room on the first story. It was used as a classroom for the Smith Grammar School from 1835 to 1855. The configuration of the room today is unchanged from its appearance in 1849, when the north entry vestibule was removed and the existing east partition wall was installed. Earlier features also survive in this room, such as the original 1834-35 window openings and the wainscot on the exterior north, west, and south walls. The room is now used as the administrative office of the Museum of Afro American History, and as a book and gift shop for the Black Heritage Trail.

Floor

The floor is covered with gray wall-to-wall carpet that was installed in 1988. Beneath the carpet are black linoleum tiles, and beneath the tiles are wood floorboards. The floorboards may date to the original construction in 1834-35.

Removal of the later floor materials should uncover a patch in the floor at the middle of the north wall. Such a patch would have been necessary to close up the original vestibule stairwell that was removed in 1849.

Walls

The room is enclosed by three exterior walls on the north, west, and south sides, and by one interior partition wall on the east side. The exterior walls date to the original construction of the building in 1834-35; the partition wall dates to the remodeling of the building in 1849. Missing are partition walls for the original side-entry vestibule that projected from the north wall. The vestibule was removed in 1849.

Wainscot covers the lower portions of all four walls. It is composed of horizontal boards of various widths and is finished at its top edge by a cap molding. The height of the wainscot is approximately 2 feet 7 inches. The wainscot is of a similar style on all four walls of the room, as

if it had been installed at one time. The paint analysis, however, indicates that the wainscot on the north, west, and south walls dates to 1834-35, while the wainscot on the east wall dates to 1849. Also installed in 1849 was a patch in the wainscot at the north wall, in the location of the former entry vestibule.

The walls above the wainscot are finished with plaster. The plaster is applied directly to the brick of the original north, west, and south walls, and to wood lath on the 1849 east partition wall. It is not known if any of the original 1834-35 plaster survives on the brick walls. The east partition wall, on the other hand, was observed to retain 1849 plaster beneath a later application of cement plaster. A plaster sample removed from this wall (M002) was found to contain calcium carbonate, sand, and a hair binder. The sand component of the 1849 plaster is a fine-grain white quartz with some orange-color grains.

Ceiling

The ceiling is a modern suspended type with a metal grid and removable panels. Light fixtures are incorporated into the ceiling panels. The ceiling was installed in 1975 to replace the original lath-and-plaster ceiling that had been removed to facilitate the structural stabilization of the second floor. New ceiling panels and additional light fixtures were installed by the National Park Service in 1988.

Some remnants of the original 1834-35 ceiling survive on the joists above the suspended ceiling. These include scraps of lath, lath nails, and plaster keys. In addition, white plaster stains are evident on the undersides of most of the joists.

Doorways

Two doorways are in the room in the east partition wall. One doorway, in the center of the wall, is the only exit from the room to the front entry. The second doorway, to the north of the center doorway, enters a small office. Both doorway openings are believed to date to 1849. All associated woodwork, on the other hand, was installed in 1988. This includes the jambs, the architraves, the hollow-core doors, and the door hardware.

An original doorway dating to 1834-35 had existed previously at an entry vestibule that was removed in 1849. Evidence of the doorway may survive on the floorboards in the form of markings, or "ghosts," outlining the locations of the former threshold and architrave. Removal of the later floor carpet and linoleum tiles is necessary to determine if this evidence exists.

Windows

There are seven large windows in the room: four in the north wall and three in the west wall. All seven window openings date to the original construction of the schoolhouse in 1834-35. All associated window woodwork is later, having been installed sometime between 1970 and 1975. This includes the window jambs, stools, architraves, aprons, and 12-over-12 sashes.

A window existed at one time in the east partition wall, to the south of the center doorway. This window was described in the report of 1970 as being covered over by a later finish. No

evidence of the window is visible today. It is not known if the window was a feature of the 1849 wall, or if it was installed at a later date. More information might be obtained by opening the wall.

Blackboards

No physical evidence for the blackboards was found during the architectural investigation. If blackboards existed in the first-story classroom during the Smith School era (1835-55), they were probably on the windowless south wall.

Closet

A closet was constructed in the Smith School House in 1837 to hold teaching equipment known as "Philosophical Apparatus." It is thought likely that the closet was on the first story, as explained in detail in the "Historical Background" section of this report. It is not known if the closet was removed during the remodeling of 1849. No physical evidence of the closet was found on the first story during the architectural investigation.

Finishes

The finishes in the room date to the remodeling of 1988 and include the following:

- gray carpet on the floor;
- a suspended ceiling over the ceiling;
- white latex paint on the wainscot boards and the plaster walls;
- pink latex paint on the wainscot cap molding, the window trim, and the window sashes; and
- a clear resinous finish such as varnish or polyurethane on the woodwork of the two doorways at the east wall.

Utility Systems

Heating System

Heating equipment includes steam radiators, a thermostat, and exposed pipes. Four radiators are in the far corners of the room: two at the north wall, and two at the south wall. The radiators are cast iron. Each is composed of 17 fins and finished with a silver metallic paint that is flaking. The thermostat is on the east partition wall, to the south of the center doorway. It does not work, according to the maintenance staff. Four insulated pipes convey the steam up to the radiators on the second story; two are at the north wall, and two at the south wall.

No physical evidence of the earlier heating system except the brick flues was found during the architectural investigation.

Ventilation System

The room is cooled during the hot months by two modern air-conditioning units mounted in the lower portions of two windows: one in a north window, the other in a west window. These units remain in the windows year-round.

Ventilation was obtained in the room historically by opening the windows. In addition, a vent box was built into the west wall between the south and center windows (see fig. 57). It exhausted stale air through a wooden flue built into the west chimney. The vent box survives today, although it was modified in 1975 to serve as a cabinet for a fire extinguisher.

Plumbing System

No plumbing equipment exists in the room today, nor was there any plumbing equipment in the room historically.

Electrical System

The electrical equipment includes light fixtures and electrical receptacles. The room is lighted artificially by 26 light fixtures. Of these, eight are incandescent lights that are mounted to the walls. Each wall fixture is fitted with one bulb, a glass shade, and a switch that operates the light. A total of 18 fluorescent light fixtures are in the ceiling. Some were installed in 1975 and others in 1988. They are operated by two switches on the east wall, south of the center doorway.

Electrical receptacles number 12 and are on all the walls. Two of the receptacles are more modern than the others, and were installed for the exclusive use of the air conditioners. The number of receptacles is extremely inadequate for the needs of the museum, whose equipment includes personal computers, electric typewriters, a refrigerator, and a microwave oven. Many of the receptacles have been equipped for larger capacity by means of adapters.

Protection Systems

The room is well-equipped with fire-protection equipment, most of which was installed in 1975 and updated in 1987. This equipment includes ceiling smoke detectors, an emergency siren on the east wall, emergency lighting on the west wall, an illuminated "EXIT" sign above the center doorway in the east wall, and two fire extinguishers in cabinets—one at the west wall and the other at the east wall.

Northeast Office

A small office (fig. 59) is in the northeast corner of the first story. The general configuration of the room is unchanged from its appearance in 1849 when the existing west and south partition walls were installed. The historic use of the room is not known. It may have functioned as the office of the master of the Smith School or as the school library. Few historic features remain, due to several changes that were made in the 20th century. The room was being used as a kitchen in 1970; it was most recently remodeled for use as an office, in 1988. It now serves as the office for the director of the Museum of Afro American History.

Floor

The floor is covered by gray wall-to-wall carpet that was installed in 1988. It is not known what material exists beneath the carpet.

Walls

The north and east exterior walls are original and date to 1849, while the south and west partition walls date to 1849. The walls are now finished with plasterboard and a modern baseboard that was installed in 1988. The old wainscot and most of the plaster was removed at this time.

Ceiling

The ceiling is a modern suspended ceiling composed of a metal grid, drop-in panels, and built-in lights. It was installed in 1988 at the same time as the plasterboard walls. The condition of the ceiling above the suspended ceiling is not known.

Doorways

There is one doorway in the room, in the west partition wall. This doorway is presumed to be contemporary with the wall that was built in 1849. Only the opening itself dates from 1849. Installed in 1988 were the doorway jambs, the architrave, the hollow-core door, and the door hardware.

Windows

There are two large windows in the office: one in the north wall and one in the east wall. Both are original window openings that date to the construction of the building in 1834-35. All of the woodwork associated with the windows is new, having been replaced sometime between 1970 and 1975. The new woodwork includes the window jambs, stools, architraves, and 12-over-12 sashes.

Finishes

The finishes in the office date to the remodeling of 1988. They include the following:

- gray carpet on the floor;
- a drop ceiling on the ceiling;
- white latex paint on the plasterboard walls;
- pink latex paint on the woodwork trim, including the baseboards, the window trim, and the window sashes; and
- a clear resinous finish such as varnish or polyurethane on the doorway woodwork.

Utility Systems

Heating System

The room is heated by one steam radiator at the north wall beneath the window. This radiator has 10 fins and measures 2 feet 1 inch long by 3 feet 9 1/2 inches high. It is finished with a silver metallic paint that is chipped.

The flue for the stove that heated the original classroom in 1835 is believed to be in the east wall in the southeast corner of the office. Physical evidence of the flue may survive beneath the modern plasterboard.

Plumbing System

There is no plumbing equipment in the office.

Electrical Equipment

Electrical equipment includes two fluorescent ceiling light fixtures, one light switch on the west wall, and two-plug receptacles on the south and east walls.

Protection Systems

The office is equipped with a smoke detector in the ceiling and an emergency light mounted to the upper south wall.

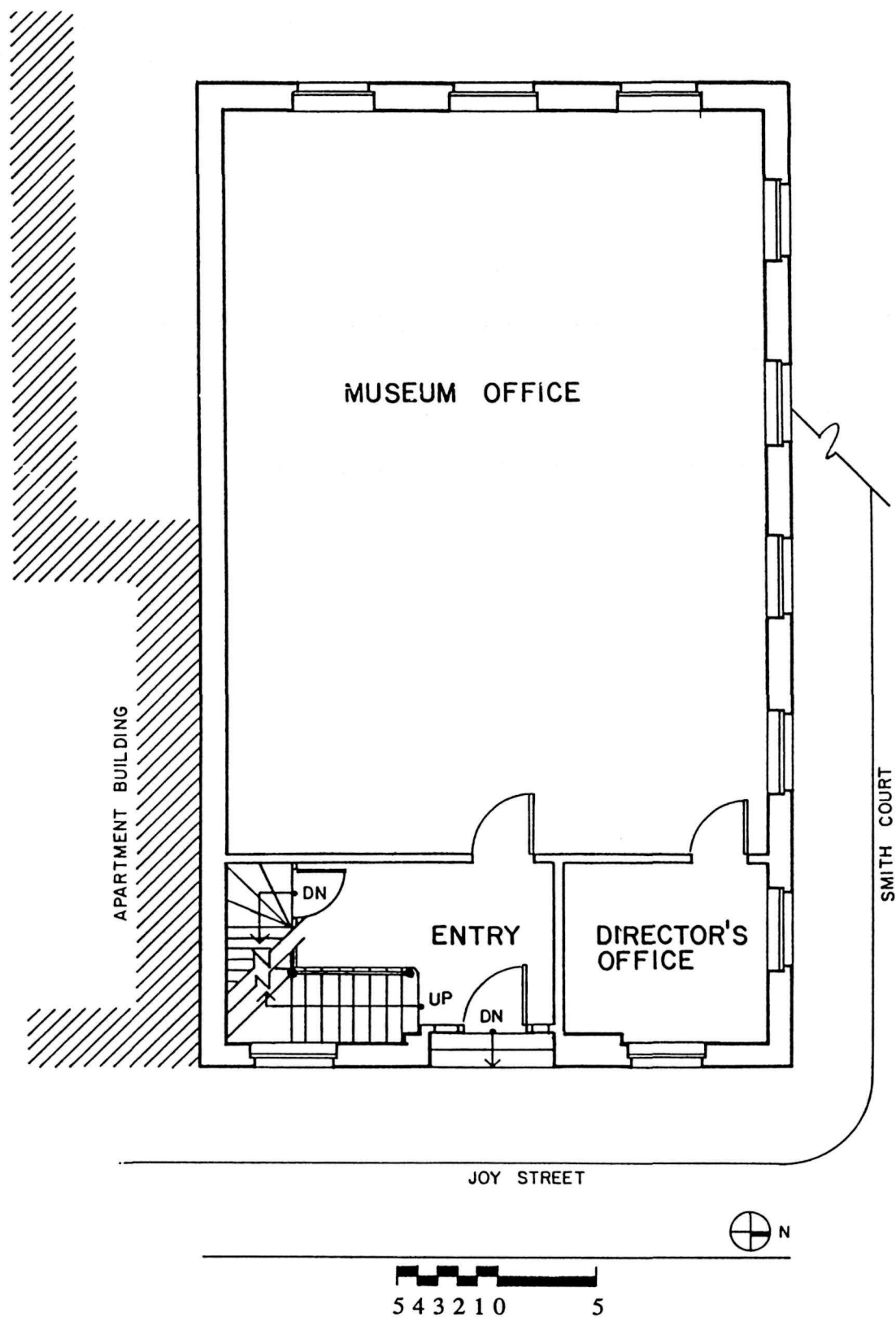


Figure 49. Smith School House: First-floor plan (1990).



Figure 50. Smith School House: First-story entry, looking east (1990).

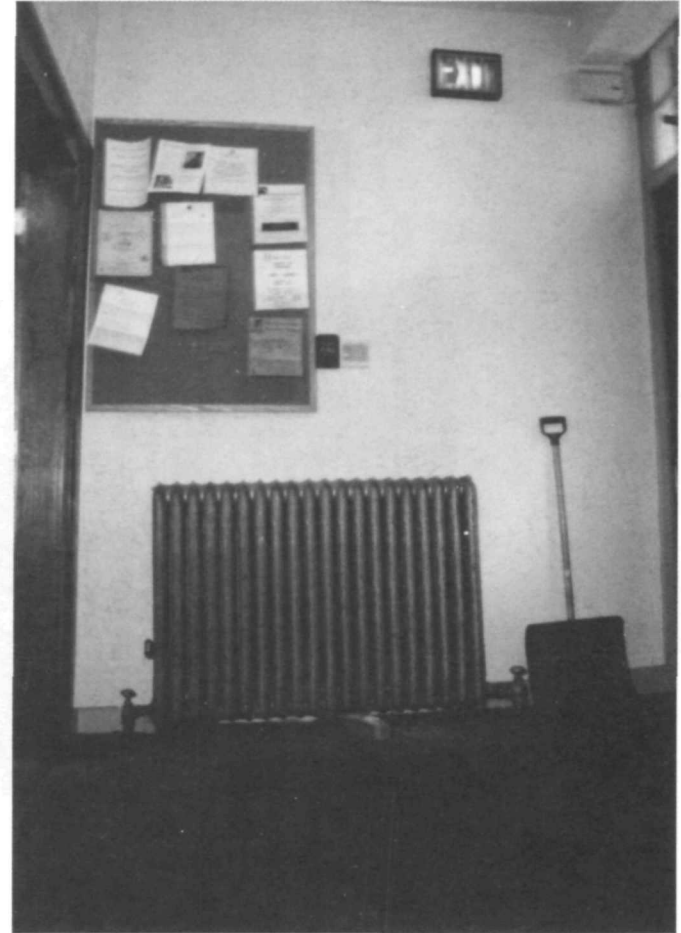


Figure 51. Smith School House: First-story entry, looking north (1990).



Figure 52. Smith School House: First story, entry, looking southwest (1990).



Figure 53. Smith School House: First-story entry, stairway to the second story (1990).

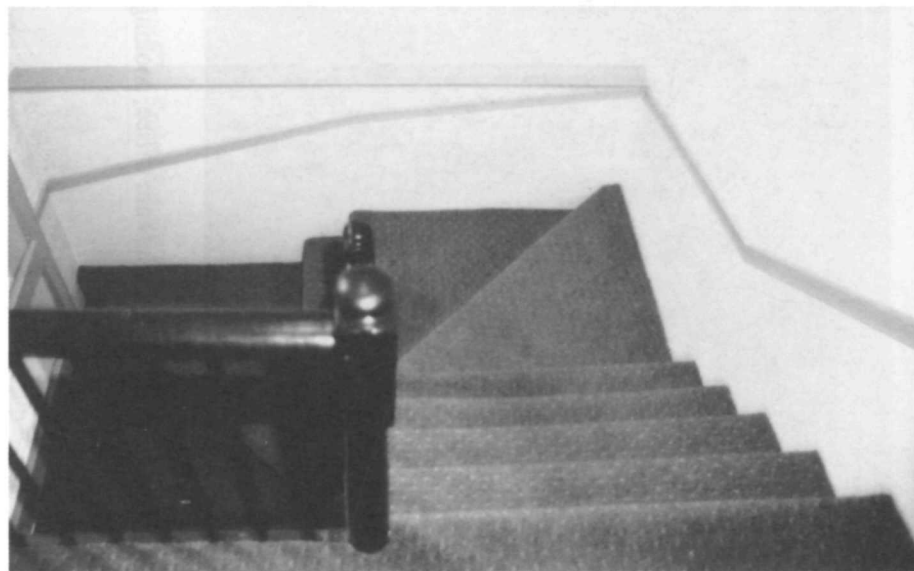


Figure 54. Smith School House: First-story entry, stairway to the second story, looking south from second-story hall (1990).



Figure 55. Smith School House: First story, museum office, looking east (1990).



Figure 56. Smith School House: First story, museum office, looking south (1990).



Figure 57. Smith School House: First story, museum office, looking west (1990).



Figure 58. Smith School House: museum office, looking north (1990).



Figure 59. Smith School House: First story, northeast office, looking northwest (1990).

Second Story

General Information

The general configuration of the second story (fig. 60) is mostly unchanged from its appearance in 1849, when the existing southeast stairway and hall were built, and the southwest corner of the story was partitioned off as a small schoolroom (see fig. 20). However, today the south half of the small schoolroom is subdivided into two toilet room; the north half is used as a storage room. Features that survive from the original construction in 1834-35 include the floor, the exterior walls, the ceiling structure, the window openings, and some of the wainscot. The second story is used today as the administrative office of the Boston African National Historic Site of the National Park Service. Modern toilet rooms for the offices are also on this story.

Hall

The hall in the second story (fig. 61) is at the top of the stairway in the southeast corner of the building. Its general configuration today matches that following the remodeling of 1849, when the present stairway and the hall's north and east partition walls were installed. The hall functions today, as it did in 1849, as a thoroughfare between the stairway and the large second-story room to the west. It also provides access to two modern toilet rooms on the north side of the hall. For a period of time prior to 1977, the east half of the hall was partitioned off as a closet (see fig. 11), but this closet was removed circa 1977.

Floor

The floor is covered by gray wall-to-wall carpet that was installed in 1988. The condition of the floor beneath the carpet is not known.

Walls

The hall is enclosed by one original exterior wall to the east, 1849 partition walls to the north and west, and the 1849 stairway and balustrade to the south.

Alterations have been made to the walls in the 20th century. A modern textured plaster has been applied to all the walls. It is not known if earlier plaster exists beneath the textured skim coat. Also, modern baseboards consisting of plain boards 4 1/2 inches high have been installed on the north and east walls.

Ceiling

The ceiling is pitched at two angles and encompasses both the hall and the stairway. The south side of the ceiling curves gently, similar to the ceiling in the large room to the west. The north side of the ceiling is not curved, but pitched in a flat plane and at a steep angle down to the north partition wall. The entire ceiling is covered with the same modern textured plaster as the walls.

There is some question as to how much this ceiling has been altered. It is likely that the curved south portion of the ceiling is original to the 1834-35 construction, and that the textured plaster was applied sometime in the 20th century. Less certain is the unusual configuration of the north side of the ceiling; it may date to the remodeling of 1849, or may be a 20th-century alteration. More information could be obtained by opening a small portion of the ceiling to examine its framing and the condition of the upper north partition wall.

Doorways

Three doorways open off the hall. One is in the west partition wall and two are in the north partition wall.

The west doorway opens to the large second-story room. The doorway opening is believed to be contemporary with the partition wall, which was installed in 1849. No original 1849 woodwork survives at this doorway, with the possible exception of the wood threshold. All of the other woodwork was installed in 1988. This includes the door jambs, the architrave, the solid wood six-panel door, and the door hardware.

The two doorways in the north partition wall are nonhistoric. The doorway at the west end of the wall was installed sometime before 1970 to access a single toilet room with a large closet that jutted out into the hall (see fig. 11). The doorway at the east end of the wall was created circa 1977, when the closet was removed, and the single toilet room was subdivided to create a second toilet room (see fig. 58). The circa-1977 doorway was farther east than the closet doorway had been.

Both doorways have identical components, which indicates that the older, west-end doorway was modernized when the east-end doorway was created circa 1977. These components include a marble threshold, a plain-board architrave, a hollow-core door, and modern door hardware.

Windows

There is one window in the east wall of the upper stairwell, which lights the second-story hall. This is an original window opening that dates to the construction of the schoolhouse in 1834-35. All woodwork associated with the window is later, having been installed sometime between 1970 and 1975. This includes the window jambs, the stool, the apron, the architrave, and the 12-over-12 sashes.

Stairway Balustrade

A balustrade in good condition runs along the east half of the south side of the hall. It functions as a barrier between the hall and the stairwell. The balustrade is contemporary with the existing stairway, which was installed in 1849. It is composed of one turned newel, 13 balusters of plain tapered design, and a handrail.

Finishes

The finishes in the hall date to the renovation of the interior in 1988. They include the following:

- gray carpet on the floor;
- white latex paint on the plastered walls and ceiling;
- pink latex paint on the baseboards and the woodwork of the two north doorways;
- a clear resinous finish such as varnish or polyurethane on the woodwork of the west doorway; and
- glossy black paint on the stair railing.

Utility Systems

Heating System

There is no heating equipment in the hall.

Plumbing System

There is no plumbing equipment in the hall.

Electrical System

One electric light fixture is suspended from the ceiling by a chain. This fixture is fitted with one incandescent bulb and a modern white glass globe. It is operated by a switch in the first-story front entry. A light switch on the north partition wall between the two doorways operates the two light fixtures in the adjacent toilet rooms.

Protection Systems

The hall is well-equipped with fire-protection equipment. This includes one smoke detector in the ceiling, emergency lights in the southeast corner of the stairwell ceiling, and a fire extinguisher and case on the west wall, south of the doorway.

Toilet Rooms

General Information

Two toilet rooms (fig. 62) are off the second-story hall. These were created circa 1977, by subdividing one large toilet room; the large toilet room itself had been created prior to 1970 by subdividing the small schoolroom constructed in 1849 (see fig. 11). Prior to 1849, this area was the east end of the large second-story classroom. Little historic material remains in the modern toilet rooms.

Floor

The floors of both toilet rooms are covered with small ceramic tiles. The tiles were probably installed in the 1970s. It is not known if the original wood floorboards survive beneath the tiles.

Walls

The walls enclosing the toilet rooms date to various periods. The east wall of the east toilet room is original (1834-35). The south wall of both rooms dates to 1849, as does the west wall of the west toilet room. The north wall of both rooms was built sometime before 1970, when the first, large toilet room was created here. Finally, the wall that separates the two toilet rooms was installed circa 1977.

The lower walls of both rooms are covered with ceramic tiles, and the upper walls are covered with wallpaper.

Ceiling

The ceiling in both toilet rooms is a modern suspended ceiling with a metal grid and removable panels. The original 1834-35 plaster ceiling exists above the suspended ceiling.

Doorways

Each toilet room has a separate doorway in its south wall leading to the hall. The west doorway was installed sometime before 1970 for the first, large toilet room here (fig. 11). The east doorway is near but not at the former location of the doorway from the large toilet room to the closet. (The doorway was closed up and the present doorway created when the large toilet room was subdivided circa 1977.) All components of the two doorways are modern, including their marble thresholds, plain board architraves, hollow core doors, and door hardware.

Windows

There is one window in the east wall of the east toilet room. The window opening dates to the 1834-35 construction of the schoolhouse. No original woodwork survives at the window. The existing woodwork appears to have been installed sometime between 1970 and 1975. This includes the window jambs, stool, apron, architrave, and 12-over-12 sashes.

Miscellaneous Features

Each room is equipped with a toilet-paper dispenser on the north wall, a paper-towel dispenser next to the sink, and a large mirror above the sink.

Finishes

Most of the finishes in the two toilet rooms date to circa 1977 and later. They include the following:

- small beige and brown ceramic tiles on the floor;
- larger ceramic tiles with a green design on a white background on the lower walls;
- wallpaper with a textured mat-like finish on the upper walls; and
- pink latex paint on the woodwork of the two doorways.

Utility Systems

Heating System

There is no heating equipment in either toilet room.

Plumbing System

The plumbing fixtures in both toilet rooms are believed to have been installed circa 1977. All fixtures are on the center wall that separates the rooms from each other. The west room is outfitted with a sink and a toilet that have a white porcelain finish. The toilet is made by Eljer, and is dated "MAR 10, 1977" on the underside of its toilet-tank cover. The east room is outfitted with a sink, a urinal, and a toilet. All three have a white porcelain finish. The toilet is made by Eljer, and is dated "MAR 22, 1977" on the underside of its toilet-tank cover.

Electrical System

Each toilet room is equipped with one fluorescent light fixture on the upper wall above the sink. Both fixtures are operated by one switch in the adjacent hall.

Protection Systems

There is no fire-protection equipment in either room.

Park Office

General Information

Most of the second story is occupied by a large office (figs. 63-71). Its general configuration is unchanged from its appearance following the remodeling of 1849, when the east end was partitioned off for the new stairway and a small schoolroom (see fig. 58). Original features dating to 1834-35 include the floor, the exterior walls and their wainscot, the curved ceiling, and the window openings. The raised platform at the west end of the room was built in 1846. Features from the later veterans' era (1887-1984) include the flag cases and the pressed-metal ceiling.

This room functioned historically as a classroom for the Smith Grammar School. It is used today as the administrative office for the Boston African American National Historic Site of the National Park Service.

Floor

The floor is covered with gray wall-to-wall carpet that was installed in 1988. Beneath the carpet are wood floorboards that were observed in 1970 to overlay the original wood floorboards. The floor was assessed as having “serious wear problems” before it was carpeted in 1988.

The raised platform at the west end of the room was built in 1846, according to the records of the Boston School Committee. Its purpose was to raise the students who were reciting above the heads of the students who were doing other lessons. This platform extends across the entire width of the room; it is 5 feet 7 inches deep, and raised two steps above the level of the floor. It also is covered with gray wall-to-wall carpet.

Walls

The north, west, and south walls of the large office are original exterior walls that date to the construction of the schoolhouse in 1834-35. The east wall dates to the remodeling of 1849.

The lower walls in the room are finished with wainscot. The wainscot dates from two periods, according to the findings of the paint analysis, although all the wainscot is of a similar style. It is approximately 2 feet 3 inches high and composed of random-width horizontal boards with a cap molding. The wainscot on the north, west, and south walls is original and dates to 1834-35. The wainscot on the 1849 east partition wall is contemporary with that wall. Also installed in 1849 was a wide concave molding that was attached to the upper edge of the existing wainscot at the south wall, and to the new wainscot at the south end of the east wall. The probable function of this molding was to hold the chalk and erasers that were used on the blackboards.

The walls above the wainscot are finished with plaster. The plaster of the original north, west, and south walls is applied directly to the brick. The plaster at the 1849 east partition wall is applied to wood lath. It is not known if any plaster from 1834-35 or 1849 survives on the walls. An application of a textured plaster that is obviously modern exists in the center of the west wall between the flag cases. Some water damage has occurred to the plaster in the southwest corner of the room. This is believed to have been caused by water that backs up from the south exterior gutter in the winter.

Ceiling

The ceiling is an original feature that dates to the construction of the building in 1834-35. Its arched configuration was described in 1970 as “one of the more interesting architectural features of the building.”³ Framing for the arch is provided by the four original trusses whose lower chords are a scissors configuration.

³ Architectural Heritage, Stahl Association, “Architectural, Historical, And Engineering Assessment and Report of: Old State House, Faneuil Hall, Dillaway House, Parkman House, 46 School Street, For The Public Facilities Department, City Of Boston” (Boston: June 1970, unpublished), p. E25.

Another noteworthy feature of the ceiling is the decorative pressed metal that covers it. This metal sheathing was probably installed sometime between 1887 and 1915, based on the documented availability of this type of material and the fact that a veterans' group began to lease the building in 1887. The metal was applied over an original plaster ceiling. The plaster was applied to wood lath, as seen through an opening in the ceiling at the west end of the office. A plaster sample (M001) removed from this location found the plaster to be a lime type with a hair binder and poorly sorted sand that contained large pebbles.

Two openings exist in the office ceiling. One is the attic hatch that is in the west end of the ceiling. The opening is square, framed with wood, and fitted with a door composed of tongue-and-groove boards. The second opening is a ventilator in the center of the room. The opening is round and leads to ventilation equipment in the attic and on the roof. This equipment is believed to have been installed in 1847, based on the historical documentation.

Doorways

Two doorways open off the office. Both are in the 1849 east partition wall and are believed to be contemporary with the wall.

The south doorway in the east wall is the only exit from the room to the hall. The only features that survive from 1849 are the doorway opening itself and possibly the wood threshold. All other woodwork dates to 1988, including the jambs, the architrave, the solid wood six-panel door, and the door hardware.

The north doorway in the east wall opens to a small storage room in the northeast corner of the building. This doorway is significant for being the only interior doorway in the building that retains historic material from both 1834-35 and 1849. The age of the doorway elements was determined based on stylistic design, construction techniques, and the information obtained by the paint analysis. Doorway elements that date to 1834-35 are the door and the door hinges that were reused here during the remodeling of 1849. The door is of mortised construction with six recessed panels. It is hung by two four-knuckle hinges, each leaf of which is attached with four screws. Doorway elements that date to 1849 are the doorway opening, the jamb, the architrave, and possibly the threshold. The architrave is characterized by its Grecian-style ogee molding that ornaments its perimeter.

The doorway described above is in only fair-to-poor condition. The door itself has suffered from the removal of its original doorknob and the installation of later hardware, including a Victorian-style mineral doorknob, a Yale-type lock, and a padlock latch. A later hole 2 3/4 inches in diameter is in the upper portion of the middle stile; its original function is unknown. The finish on the door is mottled and alligatored beneath its most recent layer of pink latex paint. The architrave is in better condition than the door, but it, too, has suffered loss of wood due to the installation of the door hardware previously described.

Windows

There are seven windows in the office: four in the north wall and three in the west wall. All seven window openings are original and date to the construction of the building in 1834-35. All

associated window woodwork is later, having replaced the original woodwork sometime between 1970 and 1975. This includes the window jambs, stools, aprons, architraves, and 12-over-12 sashes.

Blackboards

Blackboards existed in the classrooms of the Smith Grammar School, according to the historical documentation. No blackboards survive in the room today, nor is there any physical evidence of their attachment on the walls. All that remains to suggest that blackboards existed here is the wide concave molding along the top of the wainscot that probably held the blackboard chalk and erasers. This molding is on the south wall and the south end of the east wall. It appears to have been installed in 1849, based on the paint analysis.

Picture Molding

A picture molding encircles the room on all four walls. Its date of installation has not been determined.

Finishes

Most of the finishes in the office date to the renovation of the interior in 1988. They include the following:

- gray carpet on the floor;
- white latex paint on the wainscot boards, the plaster walls, and the pressed-metal ceiling;
- pink latex paint on the wainscot cap moldings, the window woodwork, and the woodwork of the north doorway in the east wall; and
- a clear varnish or polyurethane on the woodwork of the south doorway in the east wall.

Utility Systems

Heating System

The room is heated by four steam radiators in the four corners of the room at the north and south walls. The radiators are of various lengths ranging from 16 to 19 fins. All are of cast-iron construction, have decorative designs, and are finished with a metallic silver paint. A thermostat is on the east wall to the south of the doorway to the storage room. It controls the heat in the entire building.

No evidence of any earlier heating system was found in the room.

Ventilation System

Two modern air-conditioner units are in the windows: one at the north wall, the other at the west wall. These units are left in the windows year-round.

Ventilation in the room was provided historically by opening the windows, and by opening a flue in the center of the ceiling (fig. 68). The flue is believed to have been installed in 1847, based

on the historical documentation. The ventilation equipment survives on the roof (fig. 33) and in the attic (fig. 74).

Plumbing System

There is no plumbing equipment in the office.

Electrical System

The office is equipped with 11 light fixtures and 12 electrical receptacles.

Of the 11 light fixtures, five are suspended from the ceiling and six are mounted to the walls. The ceiling lights are suspended by chains and fitted with incandescent bulbs and white glass shades. They are operated by switches mounted on the east wall. It is not known when these lights were installed, although they are an old-style fixture similar to those seen in older public buildings. The six wall fixtures are more modern, having been installed by the National Park Service in 1988. Three fixtures each are mounted to the north and south walls. They are fitted with fluorescent bulbs and are operated by switches on the east wall.

There are 12 electrical receptacles in the room. Of these, two are more modern than the others and were installed for the exclusive use of the air conditioners at the north and west walls. The other 10 receptacles are distributed as follows: three on the north wall, two on the west wall, three on the south wall, and two on the east wall. Each is equipped to receive two electrical plugs. The receptacles in this office are used less than those in the museum office downstairs. This appears to be due to the smaller number of staff members, less computer equipment, and the absence of kitchen-type appliances.

Protection Systems

The office is well-equipped with fire-protection equipment. This includes three smoke detectors in the ceiling, emergency lighting at the upper west wall, an illuminated "EXIT" sign above the east-wall doorway to the hall, an alarm horn above the same doorway, and a case-mounted fire extinguisher south of the doorway.

Storage Room

General Information

The storage room (figs. 72-73) is a small room in the northeast corner of the building. It was part of the area partitioned off from the large classroom in 1849 to make a smaller room. The role of the smaller room in 1849 is not known, although it probably functioned as a smaller classroom—perhaps for reciting lessons. This room was itself subdivided in the 20th century to create the present storage room and a large toilet area (see fig. 11). Today, the storage room is used by the Boston African National Historic Site for storing office supplies, bottled water, brochures, and uniforms.

Floor

The floor is covered with gray wall-to-wall carpet installed in 1988. The condition of the floor beneath the carpet is not known.

Walls

The walls of the storage room date to three separate periods. Both the east and north exterior walls are original and date to the construction of the building in 1834-35. The small projection at the south end of the east wall contains the flues for the building's original heating stoves. The west partition wall was installed in 1849. The south partition wall was installed sometime before 1970 for the new toilet room. This wall does not reach all the way to the ceiling, due to the fact that the large toilet room had a suspended ceiling.

Original wainscot dating from 1834-35 exists on the north and east walls. It is composed of horizontal boards and a simple cap molding, similar to the original wainscot in the adjacent office. The wainscot exists behind the 1849 partition wall at the north wall, which is further proof that the partition was installed at a later date.

The walls above the wainscot are plastered. They are now finished with a modern textured plaster that was applied at an unknown date. It is not known if historic plaster from 1834-35 and 1849 survives on the walls beneath the textured finish.

Ceiling

The ceiling is arched similar to the ceiling in the adjacent office. This is an original configuration that dates to 1834-35. The ceiling is finished with of an unknown date plaster. A square hole is visible in the ceiling above what is now the west toilet room. Further investigation is required to determine if this is an original opening or a later alteration.

Doorways

The storage room's one doorway is in the 1849 west partition wall; it is contemporary with that wall. The door itself is an original door from 1834-35 that was reused here, according to the information obtained from the paint analysis. It has been described in connection with the large classroom.

Windows

There are two large windows in the room: one in the north wall, the other in the east wall. Both are original window openings that date to the construction of the building in 1834-35. All woodwork associated with the windows was replaced with new woodwork sometime between 1970 and 1975. This includes the window jambs, stools, aprons, architraves, and 12-over-12 sashes.

The room as it existed in 1849 had three windows. The third window survives today in the east wall of the east toilet room.

Closet

A closet sits along the west wall north of the doorway to the office. It is a wide and shallow closet with two separate compartments. The walls of the closet are narrow matched boards. The paint analysis suggests that the closet was constructed in the late 19th century, perhaps as early as 1887 when the GAR began to lease the building. Each compartment of the closet is fitted with a full-length door. The north door is composed of the same matched boards as the body of the closet. The south door has four panels and appears to have been reused from a location other than the schoolhouse, based on the paint evidence.

Finishes

Most of the finishes in the storage room date to the interior renovation of 1988, and include the following:

- gray carpet on the floor;
- white latex paint on the wainscot, the plaster walls, and the plaster ceiling; and
- pink latex paint on the doorway woodwork and the closet (exterior and interior) at the west wall.

Utility Systems

Heating System

One steam radiator is on the east wall in front of the window. It is composed of 13 fins and finished with pink latex paint.

Plumbing System

There is no plumbing equipment in the storage room.

Electrical System

One modern fluorescent light fixture is suspended from the ceiling; it is operated by a switch on the south partition wall near the west corner. It was not possible to determine if there are electrical receptacles in the room due to the presence of boxes and other materials piled against the walls.

Protection Systems

The storage room is equipped with one smoke detector on the ceiling.

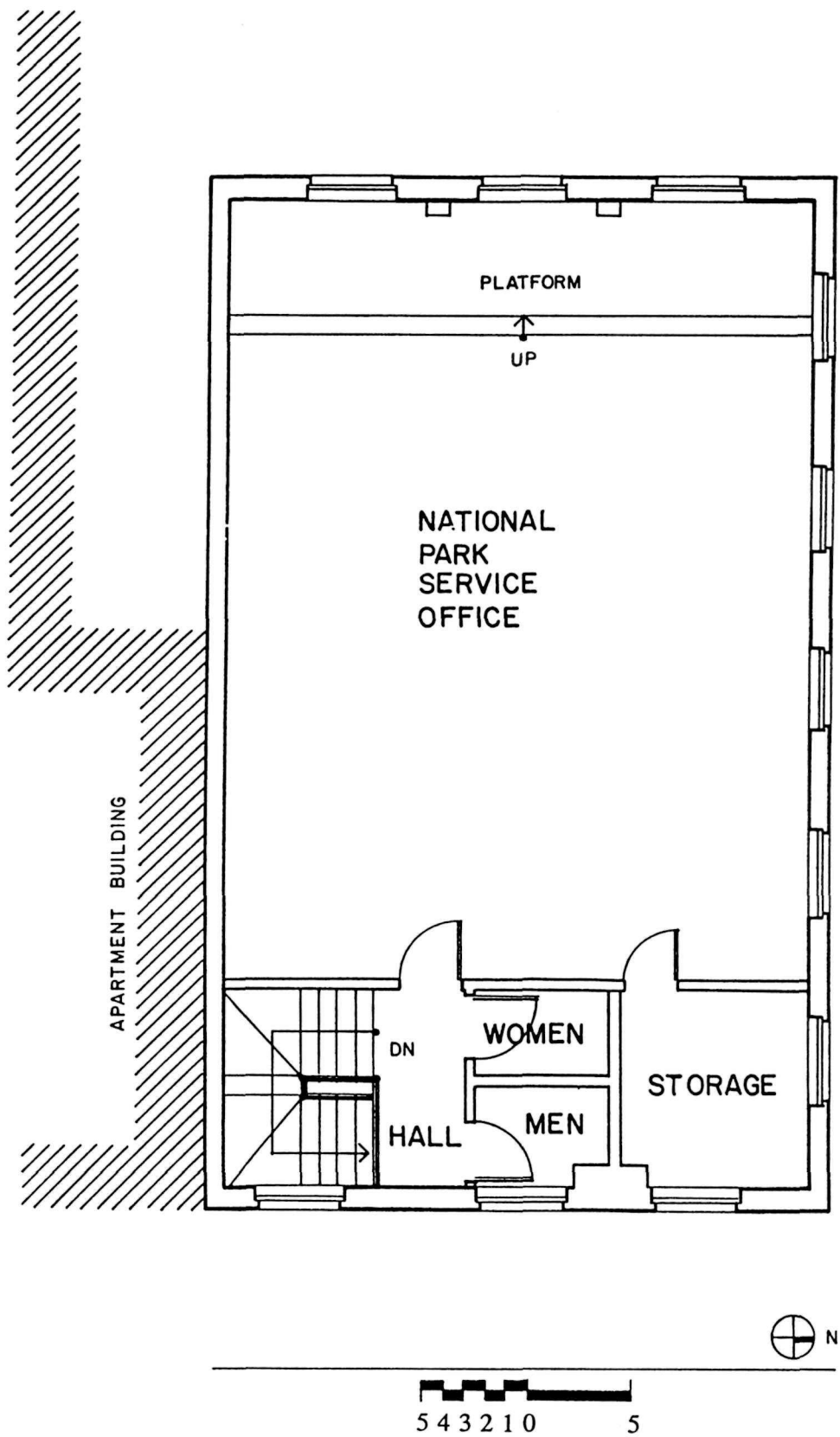


Figure 60. Smith School House: Second-floor plan (1990).



Figure 61. Smith School House: Second-story hall, looking northwest from first-story entry (1990).



Figure 62. Smith School House: Second story, women's toilet off hall (1990).



Figure 63. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, looking east (1990).



Figure 64. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, looking south (1990).



Figure 65. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, looking west (1990).



Figure 66. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, looking north (1990).

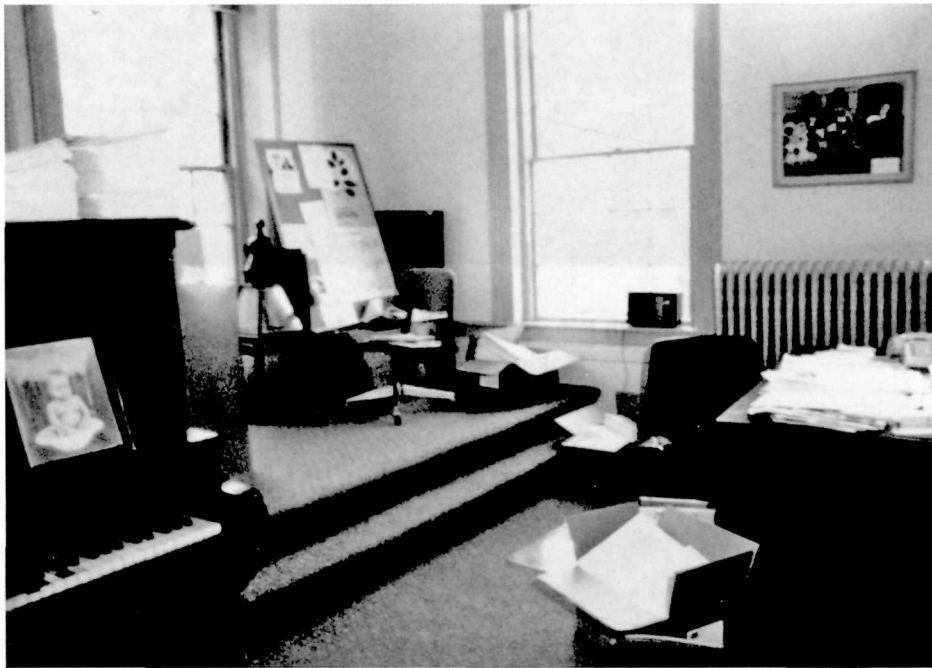


Figure 67. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, northwest corner, showing recitation platform (1990).



Figure 68. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, ceiling looking west (1990).



Figure 69. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, ceiling and attic hatch at west wall (1990).



Figure 70. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, 1835 door reused in 1849 west-wall doorway to storage room (1990).



Figure 71. Smith School House: Second story, NPS office, storage-room side of reused 1835 door (1990).



Figure 72. Smith School House: Second story, storage room, west-wall closet (1990).

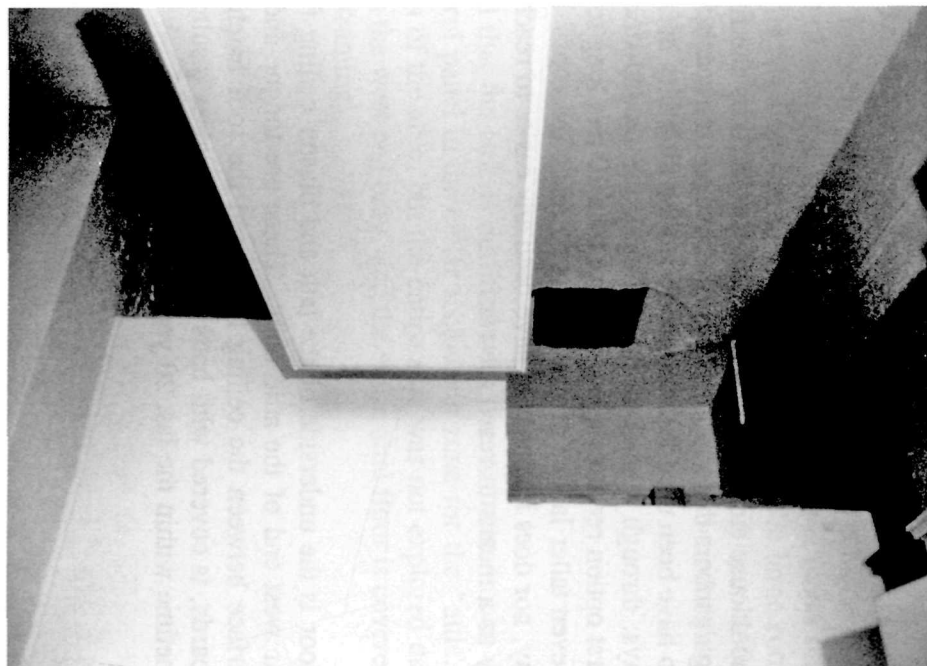


Figure 73. Smith School House: Second story, storage room, upper south wall (1990).

Attic

General Information

The attic in the schoolhouse (figs. 74-77) is the space created by the four king-post trusses and other structural framing members that support the roof above and the second-story ceiling below. The attic does not appear to have been used for storage due to the difficulty in reaching it. Entrance is gained in one of two ways: through a hatch in the ceiling of the second-story office, or through a hatch in the roof. The first option requires a ladder more than 10 feet long to reach the hatch; the second option requires an even taller ladder or scaffolding to reach the roof. Either way, the attic is not accessible easily today, nor does it appear to have been any easier to reach historically. When used at all, it was probably as a means to reach the roof.

Floor

Most of the attic floor is the underside of the lath and plaster ceiling for the second story. Floorboards exist at the far west end of the attic only. These are tongue-and-groove boards that provide a safe walking surface between the ceiling hatch and the roof hatch. The entire floor, including the wood floorboards, is covered with batts of pink fiberglass insulation. The insulation was probably installed sometime within the last 20 years.

Structural Framing

The framing of the attic is described in detail in Chapter IV, "Structure." The four original king-post scissors trusses are the most significant feature of the attic structure.

Hatches

Two hatches provide access to the attic. Both are at the west end of the building, and both are assumed to be original features that date to the 1834-35 construction. The roof hatch frame and cap were rebuilt in 1975. Few changes appear to have been made to the ceiling hatch.

Utility Systems

Heating System

Flues are in the east and west gable ends of the attic. They are enclosed with brickwork, and were probably used by the heating stoves.

Ventilation System

Another flue is on the south side of the west wall. It is made of wood, and was an air vent. Another piece of ventilation equipment in the attic is a vertical metal shaft of large diameter in the center of the attic. Its function was to draw stale air from the large room on the second story and expel it through the roof. The flow of air could be controlled by a baffle, the external controls for which are visible on the north side of the shaft. This ventilation device is believed to have been installed in 1847, based on the historical documentation.

Protection Systems

It is assumed that the attic is outfitted with one or more smoke detectors, based on the fact that the central control panel in the cellar includes a zone for the "attic." No detectors were seen during the inspection of the attic, but the entire attic was not explored due to the dangerous footing (floorboards exist on the west end only, and the entire attic floor is covered with fiberglass insulation which obscures the framing).



Figure 74. Smith School House: Attic, looking east at king-post scissors trusses (1990).



Figure 75. Smith School House: Attic, looking northeast at rafters and purlins (1990).



Figure 76. Smith School House: Attic, looking up at the ridge board (1990).



Figure 77. Smith School House: Attic, looking southeast at roof hatch (1990).

UTILITY SYSTEMS

Heating System

Existing Elements

The schoolhouse has a steam heating system that is fueled by natural gas. The system includes a steam boiler in the cellar, five cast-iron radiators on the first story, and five cast-iron radiators on the second story. The heat is controlled by a thermostat in the large office on the second story; other thermostats in the building are nonfunctional.

It is not known exactly when the steam heating system was installed in the building, although it is assumed to have been sometime in the late 19th or the early 20th century. The radiators on the first and second stories are a type that were popular between about 1890 and 1910.⁴ The present boiler, a "Burnham America," was installed in 1984 at the same time that the natural-gas line was introduced.

The building occupants have experienced several problems with this heating system including gas leaks at the boiler, water accumulation within the boiler, and an inability to control the heat.

Historical Remnants

The schoolhouse is believed to have been heated in 1835 by three cast-iron stoves: one in the cellar classroom, one in the first-story classroom, and one in the second-story classroom. Little is known about the heating system after the remodeling of 1849, except that one "Clark's Stove" is known to have been in the building. All that remains of the early heating systems that utilized stoves are the flues at the east and west walls and two brick chimneys. The stovepipe holes could probably be found by removing selected areas of plaster from the walls in the vicinities of the flues.

Ventilation System

Existing Elements

The first and second stories are now cooled by window-mounted air-conditioning units. Two units are on the first story and two units are on the second story. They are retained in the windows of the north and west elevations year-round.

⁴ "Radiators," *The Old-House Journal*, September-October 1988, p. 28.

Historical Remnants

The classrooms of the Smith School House were cooled and ventilated historically by opening the windows. Removal of stale air was also facilitated by flues: one in the west wall vented the first-story classroom, while one in the ceiling of the second-story classroom vented that space. Physical remnants of both flues are preserved today in the attic.

Plumbing System

Existing Elements

The existing plumbing system consists of the following elements in the cellar:

- a sewer pipe at the north wall;
- a 50-gallon “Smith Permaglas” 50-gallon hot-water tank;
- a toilet room outfitted with a sink, a urinal, a toilet (dated “JUL 16, 1952”), and a shower;
- a stainless-steel sink with three faucets behind the counter; and
- a sump pump at the south wall of the cellar.

The second story contains two toilet rooms, together containing two sinks, one urinal, and two toilets (one dated “MAR 10, 1977,” the other dated “MAR 22, 1977”).

In addition, the attic and roof have two vent pipes, one on the north slope of the roof for the cellar toilet room, and one on the south slope of the roof for the second-story toilet rooms.

Historical Remnants

Originally the schoolhouse’s only facilities were a water pump and “out houses” that were behind the building. New privies were constructed during the remodeling of 1849, according to the specifications for that work, and two sinks with running water and waste pipes were installed inside the building, one each in the first and second stories. The recent archeological investigations found the following:

- what may be the former location of the pump, at the south end of the west passageway;
- what may be part of the foundation of the pre-1849 privy block, in the yard;
- the cess pits of the 1849 privy block, in the yard; and
- what may be the drains for the two interior sinks, in the yard.

Electrical System

Existing Elements

The present electrical system was upgraded in 1975. It has a capacity of 100 amperage, 120/240 volts. Components of the system include the following elements:

- a main circuit breaker box in the cellar;
- wall and ceiling fixtures in the cellar, the first story, and the second story; and
- electrical receptacles in the cellar, the first story, and the second story.

Historical Remnants

The schoolhouse did not have electrical service during the years 1835-55. Electrical service was probably installed sometime in the late 19th or early 20th century.

Protection Systems

Existing Elements

Fire-Protection System

The existing fire-protection equipment dates to 1987. It includes centralized smoke and heat detectors, emergency pull boxes, horn alarms, lighted exit signs, emergency lighting, and strategically placed fire extinguishers. The control panel for the system is in the mechanical room in the cellar.

Intrusion-Detection System

The existing intrusion-alarm system also dates to 1987. It includes a control panel is on the north wall of the front entry, which monitors unlawful entrance through the doorway here.

Historical Remnants

Fire-Protection System

The danger of fire must have been a concern during the historic period of 1835-55 when stoves were used to heat the building. Fire-protection equipment used at that time may have been pails of sand or water that were kept close at hand. There is no written record or physical evidence to suggest that the schoolhouse has ever had a fire.

Intrusion-Detection System

The schoolhouse was probably protected from unauthorized intruders by locks on the exterior doors and windows. No historic locks survive today, due to the replacement of all historic exterior doors and the window sashes in the 20th century.

Energy Conservation

Steps were taken in the 1970s to conserve energy in the old schoolhouse by installing new window sashes throughout the building, and by installing fiberglass insulation on the floor of the attic. Other energy-saving features are the automatic door closer on the front door and insulation on the steam pipes in the cellar.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Treatment

It is the recommendation of the 1984 General Management Plan that the exterior of the Smith School House be preserved, and that the interior be modified as needed for adaptive use. Suggested adaptive uses include office space, exhibit space, visitor orientation, and meeting space for small groups. The 1989 Interpretive Prospectus recommends that the building receive preservation or restoration treatment for interpretive purposes while continuing to serve other functions.

This historic structure report concurs with preserving the exterior of the schoolhouse and adaptively using the interior. It is also suggested that a limited amount of restoration work be undertaken on the exterior. This is explained in more detail in the sections that follow.

Editor's note: As explained previously, a team led by Stull and Lee, Coordinating Architects, investigated the Smith School House and produced a four-volume report Restoration and Adaptive Re-use of the Smith School House and African Meeting House in May 1994. A Preliminary Design was developed and presented in volume IV of the report; the design was approved and used for the preparation of final plans and specifications for a major restoration project, which was begun by the NPS in April 1998. Throughout the design process, the draft historic structure report was available to the design team; its findings and recommendations were considered, although not always followed.

The Name "Abiel Smith School"

Current usage of the name "Abiel Smith School" is inaccurate. Documentary historical research has determined that: (a) the African School was renamed the "Smith School" by the city of Boston on February 10, 1835; and (b) the building was generally referred to during the historic period of 1835-55 as the "Smith School House." It is therefore recommended that the building be called by its historical name.

Compliance

The Smith School House is a historic building that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Beacon Hill Historic District. As such, any changes that are proposed for the exterior of the building must be reviewed by the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission before a building permit is issued.

Compliance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act is required if federal funds are used on the schoolhouse. This is a review process that determines whether or not a proposed treatment will have an adverse effect on the historic character of the building. Work must also be in compliance with state and local building codes, because the schoolhouse is owned by the City of Boston.

EXTERIOR ELEMENTS

Introduction

Preservation and a limited amount of restoration is recommended for the exterior of the Smith School House. "Preservation" is defined in the National Park Service document *NPS-28* as an undertaking that "shall maintain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a structure. Substantial reconstruction, restoration of lost features, or removal of accretions are not included in a preservation undertaking." "Restoration" is defined as "the act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a structure and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work."

The exterior of the Smith School House as it exists today is little changed from its historic appearance in 1849 when the building was remodeled. This date falls within the historic period of 1835-55 when the building was used as a school for colored children exclusively. The most significant alterations have been made to the cellar story of the west elevation and to the yard wall. Lesser alterations include changes to the front doorway, closure of the cellar entrance off Smith Court, and the installation of modern equipment and signs. Another factor is the general deterioration of the building materials due to settlement, weather, and age.

It is therefore recommended that the existing exterior of the schoolhouse, including the site, be preserved. Selected features that have been altered since 1849 should be restored to their 1849 appearance, based on the physical evidence. Deteriorated historic building materials should be repaired using great care.

The specific work that is needed to preserve and restore the Smith School House exterior to its 1849 appearance is summarized below.

The Site

North Sidewalk

- Remove the nonhistoric asphalt paving and replace with brick paving similar to the east sidewalk paving.

The Yard Wall

- Remove the doorway from the north yard wall and close the opening with bricks.
- Remove the electrical conduit from the interior side of the north yard wall.
- Remove the steps from the interior side of the north yard wall, but save the steps for reuse elsewhere.
- Restore the missing west and south yard walls, based on the physical evidence and the architectural plans of 1970.

The Yard

- Maintain the historic (1849) grade of the yard, based on the findings of the archaeological investigation recommended previously. Some compromises may be necessary to accommodate aspects of desired reuses (e.g., handicapped access into the cellar from the yard).

The South Building

- Address the intrusive presence of the 1909 apartment building immediately adjacent to the Smith School House through the interpretive program. A house was located close to the schoolhouse during the historic 1849 period but did not touch it; the house was later replaced by a stable. A precise restoration of the site to the 1849 period would require removing the present south building. This is not feasible: the apartment building is privately owned, and its removal would be prohibitively expensive.

The Building

Foundation

- Repoint mortar joints where necessary, using the same mortar mix recommended for the exterior restoration of 1975.
- Restore the historic appearance of the west wall of the cellar by restoring the cellar doorways there (see “Doorways,” below).

Walls

- Repoint mortar joints where necessary, using the same mortar mix recommended for the exterior restoration of 1975.
- Remove the nonhistoric signs from the east and north walls.
- Retain the eight star-shaped tie-rod plates in the east, north, and west walls, even though they are not historic. These were installed in 1975 to stabilize the second floor and thereby serve an important function. Some consideration might be given to painting the stars to match the brick wall, to make them less obvious. (They are now painted black.)

Doorways

Repair Front (East) Doorway

- Remove the nonhistoric door and wood side panels.

- Design and install a front door based on the historic six-panel door on the second story.
- Design and install sidelights based on the style of the historic transom above the doorway.
- Design and install cast-iron boot scrapers on either side of the doorway. Their style should be based on old boot scrapers that survive on Beacon Hill. Their location should be based on the existing iron stubs.
- Assess the condition of the parged brownstone lintel and repair as necessary.

Recreate Side (North) Cellar Doorway

- Remove the asphalt sidewalk paving from the area over the stairwell, and remove the concrete blocks from the doorway opening.
- Install steps if these are found to be missing upon the opening of the historic stairwell.
- Design and install a door that is based on the historic six-panel door on the second story.
- Design and install a bulkhead covering for the stairwell.

Recreate Rear (West) Cellar Doorways

- Remove the present metal doors from the 1835 doorway at the north end of the west wall, and the concrete-block infill from the 1849 doorway at the south end of that wall.
- Restore the stairwell and steps based on the findings of the archaeological investigation. Consideration may also be given to installing a ramp instead of steps to enable handicapped access into the cellar.
- Investigate both doorway openings closely for evidence of their historic frames and doors, including possible sidelight configuration.
- Design and install doorway frames and doors based on the findings of the physical evidence.

Windows

Nonhistoric Elements

- Remove the boards covering the cellar windows.
- Remove the four air-conditioning units from the north and west windows.
- Remove the flagpole from the second-story window in the front (east) elevation, if further research proves that no flagpole was present here historically.

Cellar Windows

- Examine the cellar windows for evidence of the historic 1849 frames and sashes.
- Restore the cellar frames and sashes based on the information obtained.

Brownstone Sills and Lintels

The brownstone window sills and lintels date to the original construction of the schoolhouse in 1834-35 and should be preserved if possible. This presents a challenge, because some of the brownstone is parged with a pigmented mortar that was applied in 1975, and the brownstone that remains exposed is in deteriorated condition. A study needs to be done to determine the following:

- can the nonhistoric parge be removed without damaging the brownstone?
- should the parge be retained even though it is not historic?
- should parge be applied to the brownstone that is still exposed to arrest its deterioration?
- does another treatment option exist that would not cover over the brownstone as does the parge?
- is the brownstone so badly deteriorated that replacement should be considered?

First- and Second-Story Windows

- Preserve the window frames and sashes on the first and second stories, even though they are reconstructions installed in 1975.

Window Shutters

- Preserve the window shutters on the east elevation, even though they are reconstructions installed in 1975.

Roof

Slate Shingles

- Preserve the slate shingles on the north side of the roof.

Asphalt Shingles

- Replace the asphalt shingles on the south roof slope with new shingles. The new shingles should match the color of the historic slate shingles on the north roof slope as closely as possible.

Vent Stacks

- There are two sewer vent stacks on the roof, one on the north side and one on the south side. The north stack is highly visible and detracts from the historic 1849 appearance of the building. It should be removed entirely or relocated.

Cornice and Gutters

- Assess the condition of the brickwork cornice; repoint as necessary using the same mortar mix that was recommended for the exterior restoration in 1975.
- Maintain the existing gutters, which were installed in 1975. Address the problem of the south gutter that freezes and backs up water into the building at the southwest corner.

Chimneys

East Chimney

- Clean the furnace flue if necessary.
- Assess the condition of the brick mortar; repoint if necessary using the 1975 mortar mix.

West Chimney

- Remove the two metal antennae straps.
- Assess the condition of the brick mortar; repoint if necessary using the 1975 mortar mix.

Finishes

- Prepare and paint the exterior woodwork, including the doorway frames, doors, transom, sidelights, window frames, and window sashes. The paint type should be an alkyd with a gloss finish. The paint color should be yellow, similar to the color that was on the building in 1849.
- Prepare and paint the exterior window shutters in the east elevation a color that is appropriate to the 1849 period. The paint type should be an alkyd with a gloss finish. The paint color should be green, similar to the green that was used on the African Meeting House. The exact color that was used on the schoolhouse could not be determined because the existing shutters are reconstructions installed in 1975.

Protection Systems

The existing fire-protection equipment was installed in 1987. It includes emergency lights over the front and rear doorways, and an alarm on the upper north wall near the east corner. The equipment is intrusive and detracts from the historic 1849 appearance of the schoolhouse. Several treatment options exist, as follows:

- retain the equipment, because the safety of the building and its occupants is more important than the historical appearance of the exterior;
- remove the equipment, because it detracts from the historical appearance of the building;
or
- install new equipment that is less intrusive.

STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

The second floor of the schoolhouse was stabilized in 1975. Some consideration should be given to stabilizing the first floor today. It is recommended that a structural engineer be consulted for this work. Stabilizing the first floor will likely involve removing the nonhistoric plaster ceiling in the cellar to assess the condition of the floor structure. Several benefits will be derived from this work, including the opportunity to examine the historic framing, the removal of four nonhistoric support posts in the cellar, and the achievement of a safe floor.

INTERIOR ELEMENTS

Introduction

Adaptive use of the Smith School House is recommended, as suggested by the General Management Plan. No specific use is recommended by this historic structure report. Instead, the several issues that need to be considered when deciding how the building will be used are presented here.

The Smith School House played an important role in the history of the black citizens of the City of Boston in the 19th century. It is situated immediately adjacent to the African Meeting House and it is on the Black Heritage Trail. A use that is in keeping with the historical significance of the schoolhouse would be most appropriate.

The Smith School House is a small building by modern standards. It consists of three stories only—a cellar, a first story, and a second story. Each story has a gross area of approximately 1,612 square feet.

The schoolhouse today has only one means of egress from each of its three stories. This limits the number of people who can be on any one story at any given time, as defined by the State Building Code. The code allows approximately 16 people in the cellar, 32 people in the first story, and 16 people in the second story (780 CMR Section 436.4.4).

Neither the historic (1849) or current configuration of the schoolhouse is suitable for wheelchair accessibility. The front doorway is three steps above the level of the sidewalk, and the rear doorway is four steps below the level of the sidewalk. No elevator or other lift exists in the building to provide access between the stories. The introduction of handicapped access will therefore necessitate an alteration to the historic appearance of the building. Such an alteration would have the least impact if it were incorporated into the cellar story of the west elevation, where it would not be visible from Smith Court. Similarly, the introduction of an elevator within the building would have the least impact on historic building materials if it were installed in the northeast corner of the building.

Public parking at the Smith School House does not exist. Parking on Beacon Hill is severely restricted and is limited primarily to residents with resident stickers. Smith Court is a private way that allows limited parking for official business only.

Historic Building Elements

General Information

The layout of the schoolhouse today is little changed from its appearance in 1849. Historic elements that should not be changed include the three-story staircase, the configuration of the rooms in the first story, and the configuration of the rooms (except the toilet rooms) in the second story.

Many historic building elements dating to 1834-35 and 1849 survive in the schoolhouse and should be preserved. These are itemized below by story.

Cellar

- stairway (1849)
- exposed granite walls (1834-35)

First Story

- stairway (1849)
- floorboards (1834-35)
- exterior walls (1834-35)
- partition walls (1849)
- wainscot (1834-35 and 1849)
- doorway openings (1849)
- window openings (1834-35 and 1849)

Second Story

- stairway (1849)
- floorboards (1834-35)
- exterior walls (1834-35)
- partition walls (1849)
- wainscot (1834-35 and 1849)
- arched plaster ceiling (1834-35)
- ceiling openings (1834-35 and ca. 1847)
- doorway openings (1849)
- trim at one doorway (1849)
- one six-panel door with hinges (1834-35)
- window openings (1834-35)

Attic

- floorboards (ca. 1834-35)
- four king-post scissors trusses and other structural members (1834-35)
- ventilation equipment (ca. 1847)
- hatches (1834-35)

UTILITY SYSTEMS

Heating and Cooling Equipment

Some thought should be given to installing a new heating and cooling system. Several problems exist with the present steam-heating system that are discussed elsewhere in this report. The rooms on the first and second stories are cooled with window-mounted air conditioner units that detract from the historic appearance of the building's exterior.

Plumbing Equipment

None of the plumbing equipment is historic. It may therefore be altered as required. Consideration need only be given to minimizing the impact of new plumbing equipment on the historic building elements listed previously.

Electrical Equipment

There is no historic electrical equipment in the building. The electrical system may therefore be altered as required for the building occupants. Special care should be taken to minimize adverse impact on the historic building elements listed previously.

Energy Conservation

Some steps could be taken towards making the Smith School House more energy efficient. These include:

- schedule a free "Energy Audit" with Boston Gas;
- install weatherstripping on the interior sides of the windows;
- install a new and efficient heating and cooling system; and
- install set-back thermostats.

PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Fire-Protection Equipment

The existing fire detection and alarm system was upgraded in 1987. It is an adequate system, although the equipment is intrusive on the historic appearance, both exterior and interior, of the building.

It is recommended that the present fire-protection system be evaluated after it is decided how the building will be used. This evaluation should determine whether or not the system is in compliance with the State Building Code for its intended use. The evaluation should also ascertain if it is possible to replace the existing equipment with devices that are more in keeping with the historic schoolhouse.

Intrusion-Detection Equipment

An evaluation should be made as to the adequacy of the present intrusion-detection equipment, and the advisability of installing a more comprehensive system.

VI. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Abiel Smith's Last Will and Testament, 1814

Abiel Smith died on November 19, 1815. The *Boston Patriot* reported on November 25, 1815, that this occurred "on Tuesday night, suddenly, Abiel Smith, Esq., aged 69."

The transcript that follows of the "Last Will & Testament" of Abiel Smith is copied from pages 9 through 12 of *Abiel Smith and Lydia Otis* by Robert Lewis Weis, 1923. This transcript is a printed copy of the original handwritten will, signed by Abiel Smith and dated October 6, 1814. The original document is in the collection of the Massachusetts State Archives in Dorchester. It was cataloged by the Suffolk County Probate Court as number 24791.

Abiel Smith's Will

[113:559] On 6 October, 1814, "Abiel Smith of Boston.... Esquire" made his will. Bequests were as follows:

"In the first part I give to Doctor Ephraim Otis of Scituate" \$6000, "to be equally divided between his six children after his decease, except his son George A. Otis"

To "the heirs of Mary Lincoln of Hingham late deceased" \$4000.

To "Susannah Haliburton wife of William Haliburton Esquire of Windsor Nova Scotia" \$5000, "to be equally divided after her decease between her son William Harsey Otis and her Daughter Abigail Fales"

"I also give said William Harsey Otis" \$1000.

To "the heirs of Rachael Dewolf of Windsor Nova Scotia" \$4000.

To "Priscilla Clap of Scituate" \$4000, "to be divided after her decease between her son Otis Allen, and daughters Priscilla and Nancy equally."

To "Nancy Wheeler wife of Daniel G. Wheeler of Worcester" \$500.

To "Fanny Clap now living with me" \$2000.

To "the sister of my late Wife Ruth Otis" \$2000.

To "Abigail Otis sister of my late Wife the use during her life of" \$3000, "the Principal to be divided equally after her decease between her three children Joseph Charles and Abigail"

To "the children of Charles Otis deceased by his second wife" \$5000.

"I also bequeath to Samuel Fales of Boston Merchant George A. Otis of Milton Merchant and William A. Fales of Boston, Esquire, to them their survivors survivor and associates in trust for the sole use of Polly Lewis wife of Thomas Lewis of Boston Merchant" \$8000, "on the same terms and conditions as several Notes, Mortgages, and a State Bank Certificate were conveyed to said Fales Otis & Fales by an Indenture in three parts, made by and between Thomas Lewis, said Fales, Otis & Fales and said Polly, then Polly Clap, on the twenty third day of November last to wit 1813. That said Polly may at all times during her married life command and control the principal Interest or income thereof to her own Sole use and upon her own Seperate receipt therefor without hinderance of of said Thomas Lewis or any other person, as well principal security . securities . choses in action touching the the same by any last will or Testament, or writing in the nature of

Abiel Smith's Will

a last Will or Testament signed in the presence of two or more witnesses as though she were sole and unmarried, and in case said Polly should die without having made a last Will and Testament or writing in nature of a last Will and Testament the trustees or associates who may then have and hold said eight thousand dollars in trust or any part or investment* or increase thereof are hereby ordered to assign and transfer the same to the heirs at Law of said Polly or in case said Polly should become a widow by the death of said Thomas Lewis Then said trustees and associates are ordered to convey said Eight thousand dollars with every part or increase thereof to said Polly, But if my title should fail to the debt recovered in Judgment of Court against Thomas Lewis late deceased or Thomas Lewis now living, or to the Real Estate set off on Execution from them or either of them then this bequest for the benefit of said Polly is to be null and void."

"These bequests are as an acknowledgement of the Virtuous and industrious habits of my late wife and her mother and continued friendship of her relations."

"In the second part I give to my niece Hannah Cushing" \$5000.

To "each of my two Nephews William A. and Stephen Fales" \$5000.

To "the heirs of my late Brother Job Smith" \$5000.

To "the heirs of my late Brother John Wilsson, Ebenezer & Allen Smith" \$21,666.66 2/3, "to be equally divided between those of them who shall be living or have left children at the time of my decease. I give this bequest from respect to said heirs and their connections, and not from respect to their Fathers."

To "the children of my sister Sarah Clap" \$20,000, "to be equally divided between the living and such as may have left children at the time of my death."

"I give to my Brother Barney Smith the use and improvement of my three Houses situated on the south side of State Street and south of the old State House or Town House in Boston during his life with all their appurtenances to be equally divided between his three children by my late Wifes sister Anna, after his decease in fee forever."

To "George A Otis" \$2000.

"And whereas John Marston of Quincy has been friendly towards me, and as I have Real Estate set off to me by Execution

*"investment."

Abiel Smith's Will

on Judgment of Court on Mortgages made to me by Thomas Lewis late of Boston deceased, and by Thomas Lewis & Son both in Boston and Malden subject to defeasance. Now if said Real Estate should not be redeemed to Law but be and remain my property I then give to said John Marston one house being one half meaning the southerly half of the Brick Block in Fish Street now Occupied by a Mr Brintnall and a Mr Parker with the shop in front thereof and cellar under the same, but if said Real Estate should be redeemed in behalf of said Lewis by Payment of the debt for which it was mortgaged, I then in lieu of said House give to said John Marston" \$5000, "but if my title should fail either to the debt or to the Real Estate thus set off or to any part thereof then this gift or bequest shall be null and void"

"I bequeath to the Selectmen of the Town of Boston for the time being and to their successors in that Office forever, all my thirty shares in the Newbury Port Turnpike all my twenty shares in the second Turnpike Road in New Hampshire, my seventeen and an half shares in the Kennebeck Bridge my five shares in the Bridge across from Tivertown to Rhode Island my five shares in the Springfield Bridge, my share in the Boston Theatre, my share in the Bathing House in Boston with Four thousand dollars in three per cent funded Stock of the United States in Trust for the purposes following and no other, (to wit) that they shall collect and receive the neat income thereon and appropriate and apply the whole income to the maintenance and support of a school or schools under their direction for the instruction of People of colour meaning Africans and their descendants either clear or mixed, in reading, writing and Arithmetic in such place, places & manner as said Selectmen shall deem best, and if said Selectmen shall and do accept this Donation within one year after my decease for said Purposes I then order my Executor to transfer to them all my title to said Property for the Purposes aforesaid"

"And whereas the value of Personal Property is uncertain and fluctuating I order that my Executor may Pay the bequest herein made to the heirs of my late Brother John Wilson Ebenezer and Allen Smith in the stocks of the Union Insurance Company in Boston or in the six per cent funded Stocks of the United States at par. . . which shall then be due or held by me"

"I give Barney Smith my Tomb."

To "James William Esquire of Taunton" \$500.

To "Peter Phelps who formerly lived with me" \$1500.

To "Hannah Wright who has lived with me" \$400.

"I also order that any gift or bequest herein made in dollars may be paid by my Executor in the three per cent funded Stock of the United States at the rate of forty percent discount on said Stock. . . or in the six per Cent Stock or Stocks of the United States which promises six percent Interest at Par. . . or in my stock in any Bank at Par."

"I give to the Harvard University at Cambridge the nominal sum of" \$20,000, "in the three per cent funded Stock of the United States as a fund the interest or income thereof to be appropriated to the maintenance and support of a Teacher or Professor of the French or French and Spanish Languages at said University either singly or in company with any other fund which may be given or appropriated to the same Purpose."

"I give to Lydia Smith, daughter of my Brother Barney Smith the nominal sum of Twenty thousand dollars in the three per cent funded Stock of the United States in compliment to her name she having been named for my late dear wife by her consent recommending it to her in case of her future Marriage to secure it to herself by the best legal advice"

"My bequest to Hannah Wright I give to her as Hannah Tailor she having married a man by the name of Tailor since I began this Instrument"

"And if my Estate should be sufficient at the time of my decease, I give to the Harvard University at Cambridge the further sum of" \$10,000, "to be used as a fund for the same purposes as prescribed in my bequest heretofore made in this instrument to said University."

"All the Residue of my Estate I give to my brother Barney Smith and I hereby appoint my Brother Barney Smith Executor to this my last Will and Testament"

The witnesses were Hubbard Oliver, Nathan Leech and William Endicott.

The following persons have held the Abiel Smith professorship of French and Spanish Languages and Literature at Harvard University:

George Ticknor 1817—1835

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. . . 1836—1854

James Russell Lowell

(Emeritus after 1886). 1855—1891

Jeremiah Denis Matthias Ford. . . 1907—

APPENDIX B.

Report on the African School, 1833

The following is a transcription of two handwritten entries in the *Records of the School Committee*, volume dated 1815-36, in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of the Boston Public Library. These entries are the earliest-known references to erecting a new school building for the African School that was later renamed the Smith School. The second entry also provides an early history of the African School. The original spelling and punctuation have not been changed.

Sept. 3, 1833

Mr. Child offered the following vote and moved that the same be adopted, viz: Voted that it is expedient and proper to provide a building at the expense of the City, for the use of the African School, and that the Chairman be instructed to apply to the City Council, for an appropriation for that object. Read and referred to Mssrs. Child, Binney and Fairbanks to consider and report. (p. 396)

Oct. 11, 1833

The committee on the subject of the African School House, have attended to the subject, and respectfully report.—The African School in Boston, was commenced by the people of colour, in the year 1798, a license for that purpose having been first obtained from the Selectmen of that town. It was kept in the house of Mr. Primus Hall, and was supported by subscription, the prevalence of the yellow fever in that year dispersed it.

The late Rev. Dr. Morse of Charlestown, the Rev. President Kirkland, and the Rev. Drs. Channing Howell and the late Rev. Mr. Emerson revived it about three years afterwards. For two years, those, and some other gentlemen whose names are unknown to the committee provided for the entire support of the same school, and the coloured children were instructed therein gratuitously. At the expiration of that time the contributors proposed that they would continue to furnish a teacher, if the coloured inhabitants would provide a room. They acceded to the proposal and hired a carpenter shop, situated contiguous to the present school house and furnished it for a school room. Here the school was continued during three years. Meantime the site of the present school house and meeting house was purchased. On behalf of the School the coloured Inhabitants subscribed a considerable sum, and the late Chief Justice Parsons, the late Abiel Smith, Lieut. Gov. Phillips, and seven other gentlemen subscribed one hundred dollars each. The African Baptist Church erected the house of which the basement story is now occupied in part by the School. There appears to have been a verbal agreement that the whole of that story should be appropriated for a school room, for the coloured youth of Boston, of all religious denominations, and it also appears that Judge Parsons, and other gentlemen made that a condition of their donation. Some difficulty appears to have arisen in finally adjusting the respective rights of the Church and School, which was terminated by a committee of the latter consenting to accept a part of the basement story for a school room. The remainder was leased for dwelling houses, and the rent devoted to the support in part of the ministry in said Church.

It remained for the coloured Inhabitants to finish the interior of the school room. This they did by subscription; about two hundred dollars appears to have been subscribed, but much of it being subscribed by coloured seamen, and the embargo coming on, only ninety eight dollars were in effect collected. The whole expense was about three hundred dollars, and the deficiency of about two hundred appears to have been made up by the committee of the coloured Inhabitants, viz: Mssrs. Primus Hall, Fortune Symones [Symmes?] and Cyrus Vassall. Mr. Abel Barbadoes

generously contributed to the labor of lathing and plastering. In 1808, the room was completed and was immediately occupied by the School. The Rev. gentlemen aforementioned continued to defray the expenses of instruction, assisted by the voluntary contribution of those coloured parents who were able until the year 1812. In that year, the town for the first time took notice of the institution. The sum of two hundred dollars was then paid from the town treasury, and the same sum continued to be paid annually for the same; for a number of years. At the same time the coloured people raised the sum of three hundred dollars annually for the same object.

Upon the death of the late Abiel Smith, Esq. in the year 1815, the City assumed the entire care and support of the School. The only expense, which the City has paid for the school room has been for repairs, but this has been less than the income from Mr. Smith's truly charitable bequest.

The situation of the room is low and confined. It is hot and stifled in Summer and cold in Winter. But this is not the only or greatest objection to it. The obvious contrast between the accommodations of the coloured, and other children, both as to convenience and healthfulness seems to your committee to be the principal cause of this School being so thinly attended. The committee cannot but regard this distinction both as insidious and unjust. If it be desirable to educate youth and form within them such rules of life as may save the expense and disgrace of prison discipline, when they come to be men, then it is peculiarly the duty of the City to provide fully for the instruction of the children of colour. If any distinction be made between them, and others, it ought to be in their favour, and not against them; for their parents are precluded by custom and prejudice from those lucrative employments which enable whites to be liberal and public spirited. When it is considered that during all the time that the coloured Inhabitants have been paying their proportion of taxes towards the education of all the white children and youths in the City the wonder will be that they did so much, not that they did not do more for themselves.

The committee are therefore of opinion, that it is just and expedient that a suitable building be forthwith provided, at the expense of the City, to be placed in a healthy pleasant situation, for the accommodation of the African School, and that the Honorable Chairman of the School Committee be instructed to make a request to the City Council, to that effect. All which is respectfully submitted.

D.L. Child
J. Binney
S. Fairbanks

The foregoing report was read and accepted.
(pp. 401-02)

APPENDIX C.

Deed for Purchase of Smith School House Lot, 1834

Suffolk County Registry of Deeds
Book 382, Page 128

The following pages are a copy of the deed that conveyed the lot upon which the Smith School House was built to the City of Boston on September 30, 1834. Sellers were the heirs of Joseph Powars, and the selling price was \$1,935.

and assigns the estate described in the within deed of Nathaniel W. Appleton, the same being recorded in Suffolk Registry of Deeds, Lib 341, folio 159, to wit: all the right title and interest which the said City Bank have, under or by virtue of said deed together with this deed To have and To Hold the aforementioned premises, with all the privileges (and appurtenances thereto belonging to him the said Matthew Bolles Junr. his heirs and assigns, to his and their use and behoof forever. In witness whereof the said President Directors and Company of the City Bank, have by Elephaset Williams their Cashier, caused this deed to be executed and signed and their Corporate seal to be affixed therunto this second day of October in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Four. Elephaset Williams Cashier and a seal. Signed sealed and delivered in presence of George Winley Junr. H. Williams, Suffolk Co. Boston Oct. 2^d. D. 1834. Then the above named President, Directors and Company of the City Bank by Elephaset Williams, their Cashier, acknowledged the above instrument, to be their voluntary act and deed Before me Saml H. Williams Jus. Peace, October 2^d. 1834 at eleven o'clock and thirty five minutes A.M. Received Entered and Examined

J. H. May & Co. Regr

I know all men by these Presents That Phelps & Co. Abner Phelps of Boston in the County of Suffolk Physicians and Joanna Austin Stanford of said City of Boston Widow (late Joanna Austin Powers only daughter and heir at law of Joseph Powers of Boston aforesaid in

in the County of Suffolk a female and her personal
wealth of Massachusetts in consideration of thirteen
hundred & thirty five Dollars paid by the City of
Boston aforesaid, the receipt whereof is hereby ack-
nowledged, do hereby give, grant, bargain, sell and
convey unto the said City of Boston & its successors
& assigns, a certain piece of land with the buildings
thereon situated at the Western part of said Boston
in Belknap Street, at the upper corner of a twenty
foot passage way leading from said Belknap Street
to the African Meeting House, bounded as follows
to wit: in front on Belknap Street thirty feet running
from the corner of said twenty foot passage way up
Belknap Street, then Southwesterly by land of Nancy
Collins running from said Belknap Street, along said
Collins' land at the distance of eighteen inches from
the dwelling house on said Collins' land until it
comes to a six foot passage way, in the rear of the
lot & measuring on said Collins' other land sixty
four feet six inches, then turning and running along
said six foot passage way in which the pump stands
about thirty feet, until it comes to said twenty
foot passage way leading from Belknap Street to
the African Meeting House, then on said twenty
foot passage way, to said corner of Belknap Street
sixty four feet five inches, with a privilege in
said six foot passage, pump and well therein
which are to be in common for the owners of both
states, each paying half the repairs thereof, the grant-
ed premises being the same piece of land which
was formerly the estate of the above named Joseph
Powers deceased, & came to the said Joanna his
daughter

daughter by his last will, and afterwards with ¹²⁰
other estate conveyed by her to the said Abner Phelps
as a Trustee for her sole use and benefit by deed
dated the nineteenth day of December, A.D. 1827, &
filed by him by virtue of said deed & a bond
of even date therewith, recorded in the Suffolk Reg-
istry of Deeds Lib 324. folio 67. & by in pursuance of
the trust aforesaid it being the intention of these
present to convey all the legal & equitable estate &
interest whatever of the Grantors & each of them
in the premises, To Have and To Hold the above
granted premises with the privileges and appurte-
nances thereto belonging to the said City of Bos-
ton, and its successors, and assigns, to their use
and behoof forever. And we the said Abner Phelps
& Joanna Austin Stanford respectively, for ourselves
and our respective heirs, executors, and administrators
do covenant with the said City its successors and
assigns, that said Abner is lawfully seized in fee
of the aforesaid premises, that they are free
from all encumbrances, that we have good right
to sell and convey the same to the said City
held in mortgage as aforesaid, and that we will and our heirs executors and administrators shall warrant & defend the same to the said City
of Boston, & its successors and assigns forever, against
the lawful claims and demands of all persons
In witness whereof we the said Abner Phelps &
Joanna Austin Stanford, together with Elizabeth
S. Phelps, wife, of said Abner, in token of her
relinquishment of dower, in the granted premises
have hereunto set our hands and seals this
thirtieth day of September in the year of our
Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Thirty Four.
Joanna A. Stanford & a seal. Abner Phelps &
a

APPENDIX D.

Address at the Dedication of the Smith School, 1835

The following is a published transcript of the address given at the dedication of the Smith School by William Minot on March 3, 1835. It is preceded by an "Introduction" of unknown authorship.

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4265.406

Minot, William
address at the dedication of the
Smith School. Boston, 1835. 12 p.

INTRODUCTION

In the year 1798 Elisha Sylvester, a white man, kept a school about three months for the benefit and at the expense of the colored inhabitants of Boston. The school was kept at the house of Primus Hall, near the corner of George and May streets, at which place it was continued, with some interruptions, till the year 1808. During this period the school was principally supported by benevolent white gentlemen. Messrs. Brown and Williams, two gentlemen from Harvard University, were successively the teachers.

In the year 1808, the benefactors of the school informed the parents of the scholars that they should not support the school any longer unless they would furnish a school-room and provide fuel for the school. The colored people immediately took measures for furnishing a suitable room. A subscription was opened among themselves, and Messrs. Primus Hall, Fortune Symmes, and Cyrus Vassall were appointed an executive committee to take charge of the business. The committee made arrangements for finishing a room in the building which was then erecting in Bulknep street, for a house of public worship. This cost them \$180. About that time the Select-men of Boston appropriated \$200 a year towards paying an instructor. This sum, however, being insufficient, those parents who were able paid 12½ cents a week for each scholar they sent. The teachers who had charge of the school, while it was kept on this plan, were Cyrus Vassall, in 1808, Prince Saunders, from 1809, to 1812, and Peter Tracy, from 1812 to 1817. These three teachers were all colored men.

In Jan. 1818, Mr. James Waldo, a white man, was appointed teacher, with a salary of \$400 a year, at first, which was afterwards raised to \$500, in consideration of his wife's

assistance. In 1821 he was succeeded by John B. Russ-
 wurt, a colored man. In 1824, Mr. Russwurt left the
 school for the purpose of entering Bowdoin College in
 Maine, and he was succeeded by Mr. William Bascom, who
 remained in the school till the spring of 1834, when Mr.
 Forbes, the present teacher, was appointed in his stead. The
 known ability and long experience of Mr. Forbes, together
 with his ardent devotion to the welfare of the colored race,
 induced the friends of the school to expect that he would
 be eminently useful; — and they have not been disappoint-
 ed. Under his care the school has prospered beyond all
 former example. The number of scholars has rapidly in-
 creased, while their marked improvement, both in their
 minds and manners, affords ample testimony that they have
 a teacher who is deeply interested in their welfare, and who
 is zealous and untiring in his labors for their good.*

The exercises at the opening of the new school-house
 were very interesting and impressive. It was exceedingly
 gratifying to the large number of colored people and their
 friends who were present to see the perfect order and propri-
 ety in the behavior of the scholars. Judge Minot's address
 on the occasion, will speak for itself. It needs no compli-
 ment. Rev. Mr. Barrett made an appropriate prayer, soon
 after which the audience quietly dispersed.

The prospects of the school are cheering. Everything
 connected with it seems to promise that it will long be a
 blessing to the colored inhabitants of the city.

* A new house for the school has long been needed, for want of which its prosper-
 ity has been retarded, and its usefulness greatly diminished. In the summer of 1834,
 Samuel A. Eliot, Esq., of the Board of Aldermen, knowing the pressing wants
 of the school, and actuated by laudable benevolence, conceived the design of fur-
 nishing a new house for its accommodation. Though he was strongly opposed, and
 several times thwarted and baffled in his plans, yet he steadfastly persevered till he
 saw the object accomplished. He deserves the lasting gratitude of all persons in-
 terested in the school, for his zeal and perseverance in carrying forward this praise-
 worthy undertaking. Much credit is due to Messrs. Henry Williams and Frederic
 Emerson, (members of the Sub-Committee of the school for last year,) for their
 efforts in advancing the interests of the school.

ADDRESS.

On the 2d of March 1835, the school for colored children in Boston was removed from the African Meeting-House, to a convenient and spacious house erected by the city for its reception. On that occasion a short address was made by the Chairman of the Committee of the school, the substance of which follows.

We are assembled, my friends, for the purpose of dedicating this house to the instruction of the children of the colored people of this city. It is a joyful occasion to all who feel an interest in the business of education. To the parent especially it offers for his child the greatest blessing which society can bestow; and excepting religion, the greatest which the child can receive; and to the whole colored population, it presents the surest remedy for the evils of their present condition.

In this day of the prosperity of the school, it is proper to look for a moment to its origin, and to inquire to whom you are indebted for suggesting so signal a benefit. In estimating the character and capacity of the colored man; it ought always to be remembered, that the white man came educated to this western world, and has improved himself by two centuries of instruction. He was proud of his freedom, and rejoiced in his knowledge, but he forgot the claims of his colored brother, and suffered him to grow up in darkness and ignorance; and it is only in the present age, that these just claims have been listened to. The education of the colored man is of very recent origin, a thing of yesterday.

It is a little more than thirty years ago since this school was founded by a few colored men, who, deploring their own want of education, determined if possible, that their children should be exempted from so great a misfortune. They were poor and humble, and could hardly spare a pittance from their necessary subsistence; yet they contributed their scanty means, and by great exertions were enabled to employ a schoolmaster, and to erect a school-house.

Of these contributors, all are now deceased except the venerable Primus Hall, whose long life has been marked by uniform integrity, and a disinterested desire to aid and improve his brethren. He has his reward in the consciousness of having done well, and in the general respect of the community; and I trust *you*, children, will never forget the gratitude you owe to your ancient benefactor.

The school languished for many years without public notice or sympathy, and it was not till the erection of the African Meeting-House in 1808, that it attracted the patronage of the town.

The Select-men then agreed to support a master, if the colored people could prepare a room in the meeting house for a school. This required a new and great effort, but it was accomplished, principally by the exertions of Mr. Hall, who contributed a large sum for that purpose. Still the school was not properly cared for or provided by the city, until about ten years since, when a respectable master was appointed, and from that time to the present, it has continued to increase and prosper.

It is no more than justice to the present master to state, that he is in every respect well qualified as an able and accomplished teacher, and eminently so, by his deep interest in the character of the colored people and his

zeal for promoting their improvement.* Among the principal causes which led the public and the City Government to yield to your just claims to the blessings of education, was the munificence of Abiel Smith Esq. who bequeathed a large sum for that object. And the city, in respect to his memory and gratitude for his bounty, have given his name to the school, which will hereafter be known as the Smith School. This act of kindness was singular, and not universally approved by the contemporaries of the donor, but its consequences have proved his foresight as well as his benevolence.

The Committee have been well satisfied with the condition of the school, in general. They have noticed instances of proficiency in the children of both sexes, which would be creditable to any school in the city, and which proves that they are capable of the highest degree of improvement; and the Committee entertain a hope that this school may be one efficient means of removing the prejudices heretofore existing against the character and capacity of colored people. An opinion was formerly entertained, not among the vulgar alone, but by some learned and ingenious men, that nature has made a marked distinction in the minds of the two races; — that although the colored man had a heart susceptible of the most generous and noble emotions, and a capacity to investigate and discover truth, and was consequently an accountable moral agent, yet he had not, equally with his white brother, a power of endless improvement. Better views however are beginning to prevail on this subject. For myself, I cannot, I dare not believe, that a wise and good God has limited the capacity of any portion of his children, for virtue and intelligence, or that he

* Rev. William Bascom was appointed in September 1824, and was succeeded by the present Master, Mr. Abner Forbes, in April 1834.

will deny to any, the glorious rewards which he has promised to all who serve him faithfully.

I believe that education has made the distinctions in society from which you suffer, and that to education you must look for a remedy. The progress of truth is discouragingly slow in this world, but truth is not entirely stationary; it moves a little, and it is in our power to accelerate its course. This power in your hands, is education; but I mean education in its highest sense. Not merely the acquisition of arts and sciences, not book knowledge merely, but the cultivation of those virtues, which elevate and adorn the character, the practice of industry, of temperance, of modesty and veracity, of humanity and obedience to the laws, and of all those dispositions which render others and ourselves happy. These are the means by which you are to improve your condition, and raise your rank, and force the world to acknowledge your claims to equality. — But you must be patient, and not expect in a few years these results which it has cost nations whole ages to reach. The character of a race is altered by slow and insensible degrees, and a very long course of cultivation is requisite to the production of the fruits of knowledge. You cannot hope to be exempted from the laws which govern our moral and intellectual nature; and it would be folly impatiently to reject the first degrees of improvement, because they are distant from perfection.

You live in a free country, whose laws are equal to all, and which provide you, equally with the whites, the facilities of education; and you live in a community willing that you should enjoy the rights which the laws have secured to you. The erection of this house is a pledge of the interest which the city now feels in your improvement, and an assurance that it will not be reluc-

tant to furnish the means as fast as your necessities require them. A female teacher will immediately be provided, from whose aid much advantage may be expected, especially to the girls, who in addition to the other branches, will be taught needle work.*

The Committee expect that the scholars will repay the interest of the public and of their parents, by new and increased exertion, that every one of you will resolve to improve yourselves to the utmost extent of your power; and that you will prove, by your diligence and obedience, that you are sensible of the privileges which you enjoy. I know that some of you are necessarily prevented from attending school regularly, but I entreat the parents to consider the great importance of punctual and regular attendance. It is discouraging to the master to attempt to teach a child who attends school only two or three times a week, and in fact such attendance is of little or no use to the child. Unless this admonition is effectual, we cannot hope for that spirit and longing after knowledge which are the first manifestations of a desire for education.

*Miss Abigail H. Eaton, a young lady well qualified for the station, has since been appointed.

TO THE COLORED CITIZENS OF BOSTON.

After reading Mr. Minot's excellent address, you will perhaps not be sorry for a few remarks on some of the topics to which he alludes.

The situation of the people of color in this country, has been hitherto, in some respects, unfortunate. They are all descended from slaves, and therefore many of them are poor and ignorant. Their color also being different from that of the great mass of the people, has been the cause of prejudices against them. In consequence of these prejudices, the disadvantages of ignorance and poverty have been much increased, for they have not had an equal opportunity with white men in their situation, to acquire knowledge and property.

Happily for you, the prejudices against your complexion are beginning to subside; and you find that many white persons now treat you as well as they would if you were of their own color. The building of a new and convenient school-house for you by the city, is a strong proof that your claims to equal treatment with other citizens are not forgotten.

You all, no doubt, are desirous of improving your condition. How are you to do it?

First, get knowledge. The person who knows any one thing, is, in that respect, superior to one who does not know it. A boy to run of errands, who can read the names on the doors of houses, is more useful than one who cannot.

The carpenter, the printer, the cooper, the mason, the shoemaker, the dyer, and the blacksmith, all get higher wages than a mere day laborer, who understands no trade, because each of them knows something useful to other men, which the other does not.

Any person who has peculiar skill in any art or business, will obtain higher wages, than one who has less skill. A seaman who has gained some knowledge of his business, always has better pay than a raw hand. A person who has great readiness in keeping accounts will be better paid than one who has less skill. A clerk who writes a quick and handsome hand, will more readily find employment than one who writes slowly and badly.

You should use every endeavor to give your children useful knowledge. The parent who does not send his children to school or give them equivalent instruction, is really more criminal than one who treats them with unreasonable harshness. To whip a child from mere passion, is cruel. But it is much more cruel too keep him away from school. No one can tell the injury which a boy or girl may receive from having his mind neglected when young. Do not some of you experience inconveniences from not having had sufficient early education? Are you willing that your children should lie under the same disadvantages?

When your children become old enough to leave school, try to place them in some honest and regular employment. They will find it easier now to get trades, than it ever has been before. You have many white friends who will gladly assist you in finding places for your children.

The knowledge which is necessary for immediate use in life, needs no recommendation. But other knowledge is desirable, which cannot be brought into daily use. The very act of acquiring knowledge is delightful, and its possession is a constant source of satisfaction. Those of you

who are too old to go to school should form yourselves into societies, as you have already done to some extent, for improving your minds. You should attend lectures on scientific subjects, such as astronomy, chemistry, electricity, and magnetism. As prejudice does not allow you to attend with white persons, you should engage lecturers for yourselves.

Books are now so cheap, that a great deal of good reading can be had for a little money. Every one therefore should endeavor to borrow or to own such books as will improve his mind. Take a newspaper if you can afford it. You will always find agreeable and useful instruction in the numbers as they come along. Most of you would read the *Liberator* with more interest than any other.

Extreme poverty is an evil, therefore you should endeavor to acquire property by honest industry. It is scarcely necessary to tell you that economy is one of the best means of increasing property. If any of you have a little money which you do not know how to employ, do not waste it in idle enjoyment, but put it into the Savings Bank. There it will be increasing till you want to use it.

If any of you get a little money or capital, try to make it produce you more money. A man who has a horse and truck, or even a hand-cart, or a saw and horse, can get more money in the same time by employing himself as a truckman, hand-cartman, or wood sawyer, than he could as a mere day-laborer. So a person who buys type and presses and becomes a master printer can earn much more money, by judicious economy, than a journeyman. He gets an income from the capital he has invested. So the blacksmith who buys his tools and stock and works for himself, will, if he be fully employed, make more money than a journeyman in the same time.

You all feel it desirable to acquire money enough to enable you to live comfortably, and knowledge enough to make

you appear respectable in the eyes of your neighbors. But virtue is beyond comparison more desirable than knowledge, or talents, or wealth. The first concern of each one of you, for himself and his children, is, to be good. You should be kind, true, temperate, industrious, and honest, and teach your children to be so.

Every man and woman, and every boy and girl who can understand what it means, should join a temperance society. Intemperance is not perhaps the greatest of all vices. But whoever becomes habitually intemperate, is likely to become the slave of many other vices. You all know that a man who is in the habit of drinking to excess, will always neglect his business and his family, and is very apt to lie, to steal, to cheat, and to quarrel. If he goes on, without reformation, he is almost sure to end his days, in the almshouse or the jail.

A person who enjoys a good character, and no one can get a permanently good character, without being what he seems, will be respected whatever may be his situation. He will always find it easier to obtain employment than one whose character is bad. A steady course of good conduct will conquer even prejudice. You all know that every man of you who behaves well, is sure to gain friends, even among persons of a different complexion.

But such a course of conduct should not be followed solely or chiefly because it will gain the respect of your neighbors, and the affection of your friends, or because it aids you in acquiring property. No person will be very good, who is governed solely by such selfish motives.

You should teach your children to try to be good, because it is right. Tell them that they will be happy exactly in proportion as they are good, — happy from the consciousness of doing their duty. Tell them to read the New Testament, and imitate the character of Jesus Christ, — his benevolence, his industry, his purity, his humility, his sin-

cerity, and his piety. Do not make them study the gospels as a task, but teach them to love the Savior's character, and then they will be sure to imitate it.

Send your children to the Sunday school, and when they come from school talk over with them the lessons of religion and morality which they have heard. Your children will be more deeply impressed by what they learn, if they find you are interested in it.

It would be easy to enlarge these hasty suggestions, but it would fill a volume to say all that might be said. One great inducement to good conduct which ought to operate on all free persons of the colored race, is the tendency which such conduct has to put an end to slavery. Instances of the good behavior of such persons, both individually and collectively, afford powerful arguments in favor of abolition, while every instance of misconduct is, unjustly I admit, brought forward as conclusive against emancipation. Recollect then that in doing well, you are promoting the welfare, not only of yourselves, but of more than two millions of your countrymen.

The foregoing remarks come from a friend, one who wishes that every law which makes a distinction between a colored and a white man should be repealed, and that all those prejudices which prohibit the colored man from aspiring to every office and employment which is open to the white, should be abandoned.

To many of you, perhaps, these remarks will appear quite superfluous and unnecessary, and no doubt are so. Let such endeavor to circulate them among their poorer brethren, by whom a little friendly advice is needed.

APPENDIX E.

Specifications for Remodeling the Smith School House, 1849

Special Collections
Massachusetts State House

Title page (written in pencil)

Specifications of public
buildings of Boston

Gridley J. F. Bryant

Architectural plans and instructions

Vol. I

61 p 2 m.

207

N. 38.

(4)

SPECIFICATIONS

FOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

TO

THE SMITH SCHOOL HOUSE,

On Belknap Street, Boston.

SPECIFICATIONS of materials to be provided and labor to be performed in remodeling the Smith School House, situated on Belknap Street, Boston, in accordance with a set of Drawings, made for the City of Boston, by Gridley J. F. Bryant, Architect, said works are to be executed and completed under the direction and to the acceptance of the Committee on Public Buildings, acting for and in behalf of said "City."

DESCRIPTION.

The present block of privies and vaults with their contents are to be cleaned out, taken down and removed. The partition wall lengthwise of the cellar is to be taken down and removed together with the foundation.

The partitions and every thing connected therewith in the two stories of the building including also the stairways, are all to be removed and cleared from the

premises. All the upper floors are to be removed and the lining of the walls of the two stories.

The yards in the rear of the building are all to be dug out to the level of the cellar flooring, and the drains lowered to the proper level below said yards and cellar floors. The present entrances and some of the windows are to be changed, filled up, altered and made anew as required by the new plans.

All other works now standing in and connected with the building either inside or outside of the same, which require to be removed or in any manner changed, in the opinion of the Committee aforesaid, in order to fully complete the contemplated changes and additions to the same, are to be done and finished complete as said Committee may direct.

Properly protect the earth and wall of the adjoining Estates where they connect with the School House yards, while the new privies and new yard walls are building. Clear and cart from the premises all earth, rubbish and filth caused in making the said additions, not required in the erection and completion of the same. The new vaults are to be dug out complete, as also the new drain and cesspool in the yards.

A new cellar doorway is to be dug out and stoned with a solid lime mortar wall around it, 18 inches thick, to be "topped" with a hammered granite curb in three pieces, set and leaded and cut with a rebate 2 inches by 1 inch. The upright underpinning of the present entrance doorway on the *side* of the house is to be reformed and properly altered and cut with rebates for the new cellar doorway; the present *end* doorway is to be changed to the centre of the said end, the old opening filled up and formed complete as a window (with cap and sill) and the new opening (in the centre) to be cut out, refitted, and made with steps and plat-

form and threshold, and also "return" pieces, the whole to be of fine hammered Quincy granite.

The two rear doors of the cellar are to be lowered at the bottom of the same, the steps removed, and new threshold of granite fitted to each one, at the intended level of the yards aforesaid.

Four new brick piers 3 feet long and 1 foot thick are to be built in the cellar, the full height of the same, each pier is to have a square stone "leveler" beneath the same. Solid brick piers are to be built beneath the intended new entrance doorway, of proper form and arrangement. The cellar and yards are to be repaved with bricks laid in sand and well rammed; the sidewalks outside the building are to be repaved as required in consequence of the changes made to the building.

Two new blocks of brick privies with cesspool vaults beneath the same are to be built where indicated by the plans, they are to be fully equal in quality of workmanship and arrangement to the blocks of privies recently built at the "Quincy School House," and the water from the roof of the School House is to be brought from the conductors, through aqueducts, into said vaults. A new barrel drain is to be built from the vaults to join in a proper manner the common sewer of the street and a large and perfect cesspool is to be built of bricks in each yard, with a curb and trap to the same, the whole properly connected with the drains.

The yards are to be enclosed with walls each 12 inches thick and 9 feet high, to be capped with North River Flagging set in cement. In relaying the paving of the cellars, they are to be deepened as much as can be done safely (in the opinion of the Committee) without injury to the foundations of the walls of the building, two flues 8 by 12 inches are to be commenced from

the cellars and properly connected with the present flues over the said cellar.

All filling up, cutting out and other necessary changes required to be performed to the present brick and stone work of the building, in order to complete and finish the intended alterations and additions is to be properly executed by the Contractors.

The sum of \$350, is to be appropriated by the Contractors for the Committee to purchase the pots, pipes, registers and other metal fixtures of two Furnaces, the Contractors to set the same and furnish all brick and stonework required therefor, without charge upon the sum above stated.

All the new partitions are to be plastered with the best of "two coat work" rubbed smooth; the present plastering of the walls and ceilings is to be entirely new throughout the building with best two coat work.

The roofs of the privies are to be tinned and painted—two new copper conductors put to the same, and new copper gutters to be put up on the sides thereof.

Wire nettings on strong frames are to be made and fixed in each of the cellar window openings.

The Cochituate water is to be introduced from the outside wall of the building, into the first and second stories thereof by $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch heavy lead pipe, carried to a sink in each of said stories, and fitted with a hose cock, and waste pipes are to pass from each sink down to the drains. Cut out recesses as directed for ventilating flues in each story to receive wooden boxes or flues. Put in funnel stones and registers to each of the present flues in each story where directed.

CARPENTRY.

Reframe the first and second floorings with such new headers and trimmers as are required for the new stair-

ways, smoke, hot air, and ventilating flues, and around the new cellar doorway and front entrance doorway. Fill up and properly complete the present stairway and other openings now in the floorings not required for use. Piece out the under floors in a perfect manner. Support the present first and second floorings with new girder sticks and piers and iron columns as found necessary in consequence of the removal of the present interior party wall of the cellar and the present partitions in the first story; all said new supports are to be arranged and completed entirely satisfactory to the Committee, and to be done as they direct.

Set the new partitions complete with the old partition stock, as far as it is of proper quality, the whole to be placed for five nailings to a lath, and to be bridged with two rows of strong plank pieces securely nailed and fitted, each partition to be fitted with plank caps, sill, and door jambs.

Refurr the walls and ceilings complete, as required in consequence of the several changes and additions made to the building, and do said furring with sound, dry pieces of boards $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide and 1 inch thick, to be nailed strong and secure.

Build one new flight of "square framed stairs," as seen by the plans; they are to be 4 feet in width, and to have 4 plank stringers, southern pine risers, 7-8 of an inch thick, and southern pine treads $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches thick with moulded noseings, the hand rails to be of cherry wood $3\frac{1}{2}$ by 4 inches moulded complete, the posts to be of cherry wood 5 inches square, except the bottom post which is to be seven inches square, and all of them to be neatly turned and moulded as directed; southern pine balusters are to be put into the flight, 1 inch diameter, 3 to each tread of the stairs, and continued around the well room; enclose the flight aforesaid with

matched plank partition and doorways, and build a plain wrought cellar flight beneath the same to pass to the cellars. To be a step ladder put up in the second story to pass up into the roof.

The requisite new windows and doors are to be made, hung, fastened, and finished complete, in the usual style of School houses, and such doors and windows as require to be repaired or altered, in the opinion of the Committee, are to be made good in every particular. New upper floors of "best planers" are to be laid throughout the first and second stories, and truly leveled, smoothed, and nailed; the boards to be in narrow widths.

All new wrought wood work and other work usually done, is to receive three coats of white lead paint, and the old wood work throughout is to receive two coats, the whole of the best quality of stock. A platform is to be built across each of the School rooms, as seen by the plans. Grain in imitation of oak, in the best style, the *entire* interior wood work of every part of the building excepting only the floors and stairs. Paint the entire outside wood work as directed.

Paint with two coats and

Except the interior
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APPENDIX F.

Mortar Analysis

Definition and Introduction

Webster defines mortar as “a plastic building material (as a mixture of cement lime, or gypsum plaster with sand and water) that hardens and is used in masonry or plastering.”¹ Mortar was used at the Smith School for both the original construction in 1834-35 and for the remodeling in 1849. It was used to lay the exterior granite foundation and brick walls, and to plaster the interior rooms.

Mortar Analysis

Three samples of mortar were removed for analysis. These were assigned log numbers “BOAF 03 M001, M002, and M003.” The log numbers are a three-part code that describe the site, the building, and the mortar sample number. In this code, “BOAF” is Boston African American National Historic Site, “03” is the structure number, and “M001” is the mortar sample number.

The mortar analysis involved simply separating out the sand components for comparison. This was accomplished by pulverizing each sample with a mortar and pestle, dissolving the calcium carbonate with a diluted solution of hydrochloric acid (one part 38% hydrochloric acid to five parts water), and decanting the resulting solution from the sand. The sand was then washed with water and dried under heat lamps. Observations were recorded of the sample hardness, presence of hair binder, and sand type.

¹ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1983, p. 773.

Mortar Samples

<u>Sample</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Date</u>
BOAF 03 M001	Plaster keys of arched ceiling, second-story NPS office, now covered by a ca.-1880s pressed-metal ceiling. Sample obtained from the attic near the ceiling hatch	1834-35
BOAF 03 M002	Plaster keys at east partition wall, first-story Museum office, at the location of the wainscot's missing cap molding	1849
BOAF 03 M003	Brick mortar from the interior of yard's north wall	1834-35

Observations and Conclusions

All three samples are a lime mortar. Hair binder, most likely from cows, was observed in the two plaster samples (M001 and M002), but not in the brick mortar sample (M003). The sand types are distinctive. Samples M001 and M003, both dated 1834-35, have a sand that contains grains of various sizes including large pebbles. It is interesting to note that the sands of the two samples are similar, even though one is an interior plaster (M001), and the other is an exterior brick mortar (M003). Sample M002, dated 1849, is a fine-grain sand that is composed primarily of white quartz, with lesser amounts of an orange-color mineral, a dark-gray color rock, and mica flakes.

It was concluded that the difference in mortar sands is a useful dating device for distinguishing 1834-35 mortar from 1849 mortar at the Smith School.

APPENDIX G.

Paint Analysis

Objective

The objective of paint analysis at the Smith School was two-fold. First, it was designed to date various architectural elements based on a comparison of the paint evidence. Second, it was hoped to reveal how the historic architectural elements had been finished during the period 1835-55.

Methodology

Small samples of paint were extracted at the site using an X-Acto knife fitted with a number 18 blade. A total of 49 samples were taken from the exterior and interior of the building and placed in individually labeled envelopes. These samples were then transported to the Building Conservation Branch of the Northeast Cultural Resources Center where they were assigned log numbers and examined under the microscope.

The paint-sample log numbers are a three-part code that describes the site, the building, and the paint sample number. Sample number one, for example, was assigned log number "BOAF 03 P001." In this code, "BOAF" is Boston African American National Historic Site, "03" is the site structure number for the Smith School, and "P001" is paint sample number one.

After labeling, each paint sample was mounted in a wax-filled petri dish and examined under the microscope at 10 to 70 times magnification. The microscope used was a binocular Bausch and Lomb "Stereozoom 7." Certain characteristics of each paint sample were noted and recorded, such as paint-layer colors (chromochronologies) and paint types. Paints containing lead were identified by a spot chemical test using a solution of sodium sulfide and water. Paints composed of calcium carbonate (CaCO_3), such as whitewash and calcimine, were identified by a spot test using diluted hydrochloric acid.

Dating of specific paint layers was accomplished by comparing paint samples from the various architectural elements. The stairway to the second story, for example, was installed as part of the remodeling of 1849. The paint analysis confirmed that the stairway was missing the earliest paint layers found on the wainscot in the schoolrooms on the first and second stories. Therefore, the first layer of paint on the wainscot was dated 1835, and the first layer of paint on the stairway was dated 1849.

Paint Sample Locations

BOAF 03 P001	Cellar, north brick and granite wall, behind later pine paneling.
BOAF 03 P002	Cellar stairway, floorboards beneath the stairway to the second story at the first-story level.
BOAF 03 P003	Cellar stairway, wainscot beneath the stairway to the second story at the first-story level.
BOAF 03 P004	First-story museum office, wainscot at the south wall, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P005	First-story museum office, wainscot at south wall, top molding.
BOAF 03 P006	First-story entry, east exterior doorway, right side architrave.
BOAF 03 P007	First-story entry, east doorway, architrave lintel.
BOAF 03 P008	First-story entry, east doorway, transom muntins.
BOAF 03 P009	Stairway to the second story, south wall wainscot, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P010	Stairway to the second story, south wall wainscot, top molding.
BOAF 03 P011	Stairway to the second story, wide shelf at the south wall.
BOAF 03 P012	Stairway to the second story, upper newel.
BOAF 03 P013	Second-story hall, handrail at stairway railing.
BOAF 03 P014	Second-story hall, balusters at stairway railing.
BOAF 03 P015	Stairway to the second story, fascia board beneath the hall railing.
BOAF 03 P016	Second-story National Park Service (NPS) office, south wall wainscot, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P017	Second-story NPS office, south wall wainscot, cap molding (below concave molding).
BOAF 03 P018	Second-story NPS office, south wall wainscot, top concave molding.
BOAF 03 P019	Second-story NPS office, west plaster wall behind the northwest flag case.
BOAF 03 P020	Second-story NPS office, southwest flag case at the west wall.
BOAF 03 P021	Second-story NPS office, northwest flag case at the west wall.

BOAF 03 P022	Second-story NPS office, southwest window, architrave.
BOAF 03 P023	Second-story NPS office, southwest window, sash.
BOAF 03 P024	Second-story NPS office, pressed metal ceiling.
BOAF 03 P025	Second-story NPS office, east doorway to the northeast room, six-panel door.
BOAF 03 P026	Second-story NPS office, east doorway to the northeast room, architrave.
BOAF 03 P027	Second-story storage room, west doorway, six-panel door.
BOAF 03 P028	Second-story storage room, west doorway, architrave.
BOAF 03 P029	Second-story storage room, north wall wainscot, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P030	Second-story storage room, closet siding at west wall.
BOAF 02 P031	Second-story storage room, closet interior walls.
BOAF 03 P032	Second-story storage room, closet door (four panels), room side.
BOAF 03 P033	Second-story storage room, closet door (four panels), closet side.
BOAF 03 P034	First-story museum office, east wall wainscot—north side of room, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P035	First-story museum office, east wall wainscot—north side of room, top molding.
BOAF 03 P036	First-story museum office, east wall wainscot—south side of room, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P037	First-story museum office, east wall wainscot—south side of room, top molding.
BOAF 03 P038	Second-story NPS office, east wall wainscot—north side of room, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P039	Second-story NPS office, east wall wainscot—north side of room, cap molding (<u>not</u> concave).
BOAF 03 P040	Second-story NPS office, east wall wainscot—south side of room, horizontal boards.
BOAF 03 P041	Second-story NPS office, east wall wainscot—south side of room, top concave molding.

BOAF 03 P042	Second-story NPS office, north wall wainscot, inside closet.
BOAF 03 P043	Second-story NPS office, north wall wainscot, covered by closet woodwork at northwest corner.
BOAF 03 P044	First-story entry, east doorway, left side architrave.
BOAF 03 P045	Exterior front doorway, transom window.
BOAF 03 P046	Exterior front doorway, framing.
BOAF 03 P047	Exterior front doorway, side panels.
BOAF 03 P048	First-story museum office, east plaster wall above drop ceiling (1975).
BOAF 03 P049	First-story museum office, north wall wainscot, horizontal boards, patch at former doorway.
BOAF 03 P050	Second-story storage room, east wall wainscot, top molding.
BOAF 03 P051	Second-story storage room, east wall wainscot, lower molding.

Paint Chronochronology: Exterior Front Doorway
(paint samples P045, P046, and P047)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. yellow*
ca. 1849	2. mustard yellow*
	3. dark green
	4. dark green
	5. dark green
	6. dark green
	7. moss green
ca. 1887	8. dark green
	9. dark green
	10. <u>white</u>
	11. <u>light yellow</u>
	12. <u>yellow</u>
	13. <u>white</u>
	14. green
	15. black
	16. dark green
	17. <u>white</u>
	18. <u>white</u>
	19. <u>white</u>

* denotes lead paint

— denotes dirt and/or poor adhesion between paint layers.

Paint Chronochronology: Cellar Walls
(paint sample P001)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. whitewash
	2. whitewash
	3. whitewash
	4. whitewash
	5. whitewash
	6. whitewash
	7. whitewash
	8. whitewash
	9. whitewash
	10. whitewash
	11. whitewash
	12. whitewash
	13. whitewash
	14. whitewash
	15. whitewash
	16. whitewash

Paint Chronochronology: Front Entry Woodwork
(*paint samples P006, P007, P008, and P044*)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. white*
	2. <u>light gray</u> *
1849	3. yellow varnish
	4. yellow
	5. yellow varnish
	6. red
	7. red
	8. red
	9. orange-brown
	10. brown
	11. light blue
	12. brown
	13. brown
	14. white
	15. red
	16. yellow
	17. pink

* denotes lead paint;

— denotes dirt and/or poor adhesion between paint layers.

Paint Chronochronology: First-Story Museum Office Woodwork
(*paint samples P004, 5, 34, 35, 36, 37, 48, and 49*)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. <u>white</u> *
	2. <u>light gray</u> *
	3. <u>white</u> *
1849	4. yellow varnish
	5. yellow
	6. yellow*
	7. red*
	8. brown (varnish?)
	9. red
	10. yellow
	11. brown
	12. light blue
	13. white light green
	14. green
	15. blue
	16. white and pink

* denotes lead paint

— denotes dirt and/or poor adhesion between paint layers

Paint Chronochronology: Stairway to the Second Story
(paint samples P009-015)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>		
	Wainscot	Newel and Handrail	Balusters
1849	1. white* yellow* varnish	varnish	varnish
	2. yellow		
	3. yellow varnish	orange-brown	
	4. red		
	5. red	red	red
	6. red		
	7. orange		
	8. brown	brown	brown
	9. white	blue and white	white
	10. brown	brown	brown
	11. brown	orange-brown	
	12. dark brown	dark brown	
	13. red	orange-brown	
	14. light blue	black	black
	15. yellow	black	
	16. white and pink		

* denotes lead paint

Paint Chronochronology: Second-Story NPS Office, Woodwork
(paint samples P016-022, P024-026, and P038-041)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. cream* light gray*
	2. light gray*
1849	3. white* yellow* varnish
	4. yellow
	5. yellow varnish
ca. 1887	6. red varnish
	7. red varnish
	9. orange-brown
	10. brown
	11. green
	12. brown
	13. green
	14. light green
	15. light blue
	16. blue
1975	17. white
	18. pink

* denotes lead paint;
 — denotes dirt and/or poor adhesion between paint layers.

Paint Chronochronology: Second-Story Storage Room, Woodwork
(paint samples P027-033 and P042-043)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Paint Layers</u>
1835	1. cream* <u>light gray*</u>
	2. <u>light gray*</u>
1849	3. white yellow varnish
	4. yellow
	5. yellow varnish
ca. 1887	6. red red varnish
	7. brown
	8. white
	9. blue
	10. light green
	11. green
	12. light blue and blue
	13. white and pink

* denotes lead paint;

— denotes dirt and/or poor adhesion between paint layers.

APPENDIX H.

Wallpaper Analysis

No wallpapers finish the walls today in the Smith School. Remnants of one wallpaper only were found in the large room on the second story, behind one of the two flag cases mounted to the west wall. The paper has a light red floral pattern on a background of rust red. The paper stock is a mechanical wood pulp and the pattern is machine-printed, suggesting that the paper was manufactured sometime after 1855. The pattern itself is typical of late 19th-century wallpapers, circa 1880-1900.² The wallpaper was therefore probably hung by the veterans, group "G.A.R. Post 134," which leased the building from 1887 through the 1930s.

² Catherine Lynn, *Wallpaper in America: From The Seventeenth Century to World War I* (NY: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1980).

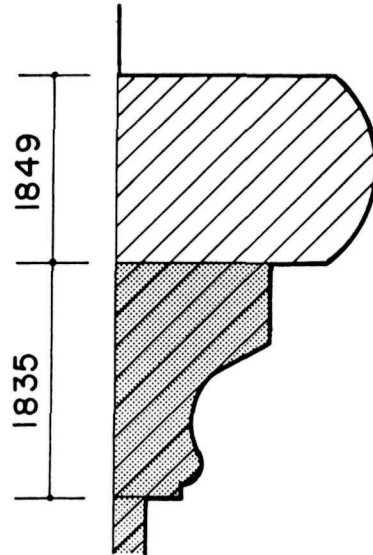
APPENDIX I.

Moldings Analysis

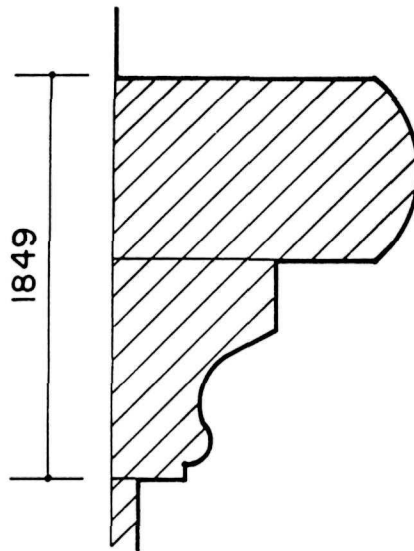
Molding profiles were obtained at the Smith School House by using a woodworking profile gauge ("Vitrex" model number 1030). Profiles were first roughly traced at the site and later transferred to the pages that follow. Molding profiles are by Jana Gross, Architectural Technician, National Park Service.

MOLDING PROFILES : 1835 & 1849

FIRST FLOOR – LARGE ROOM



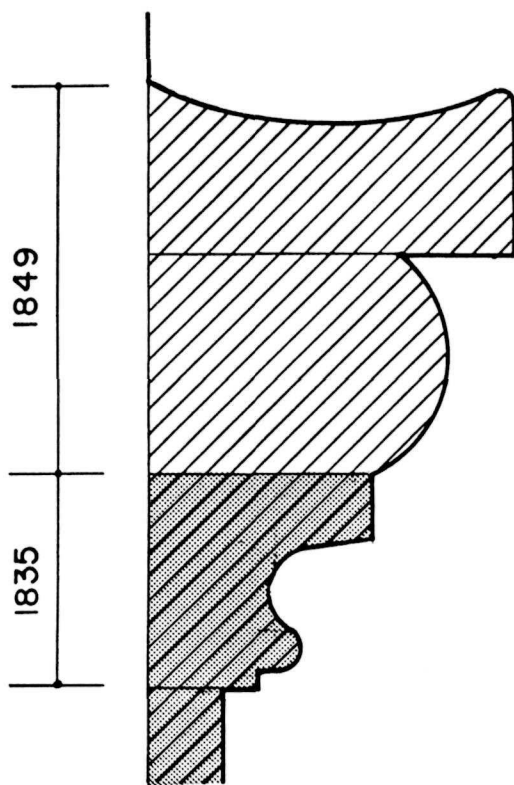
WAINSCOT-SOUTH WALL



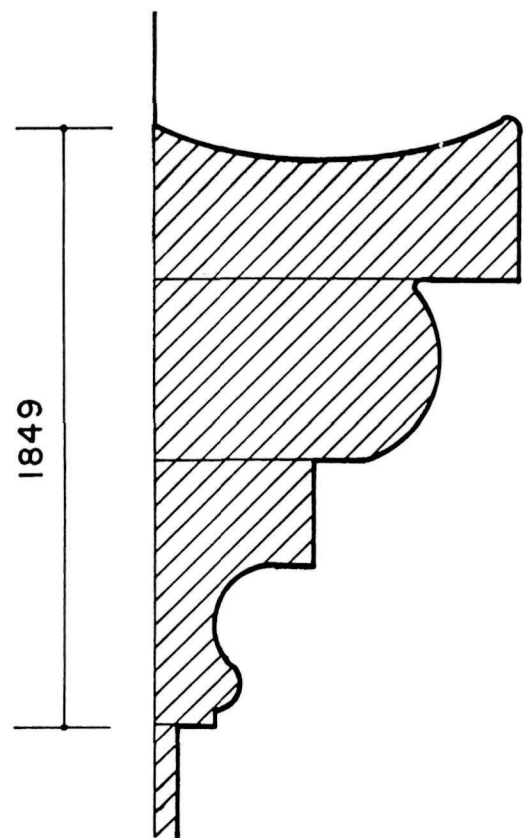
WAINSCOT-EAST WALL

MOLDING PROFILES : 1835 & 1849

SECOND FLOOR – LARGE ROOM



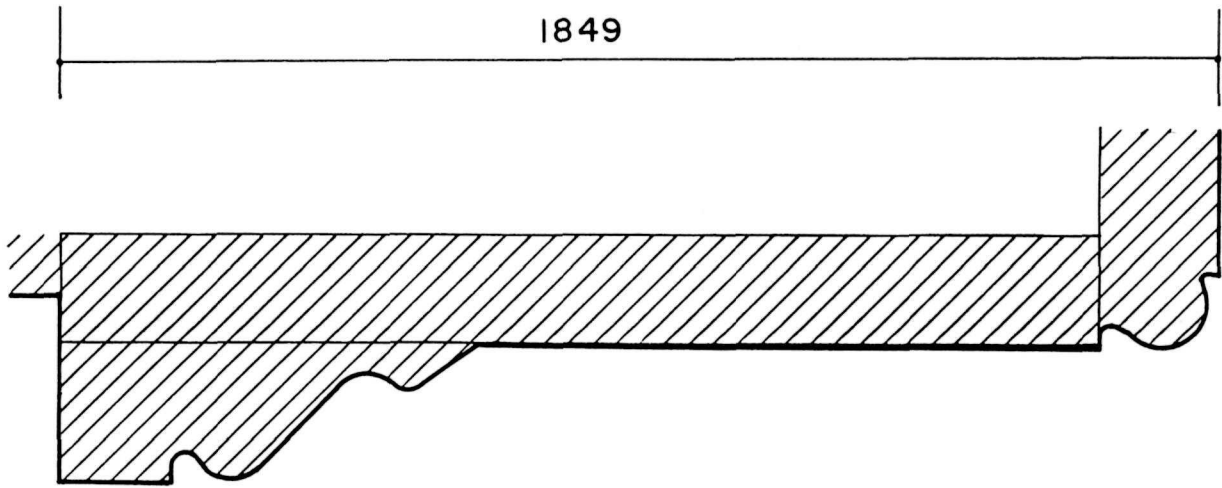
WAINSCOT – SOUTH WALL



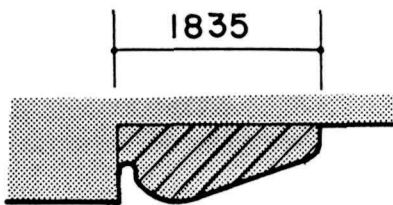
WAINSCOT – EAST WALL

MOLDING PROFILES : 1835 & 1849

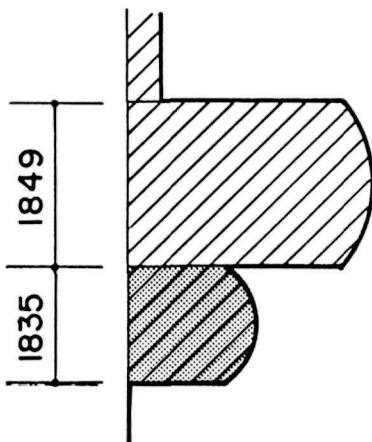
SECOND FLOOR - NORTHEAST ROOM



ARCHITRAVE - WEST DOORWAY



DOOR PANEL - WEST DOOR

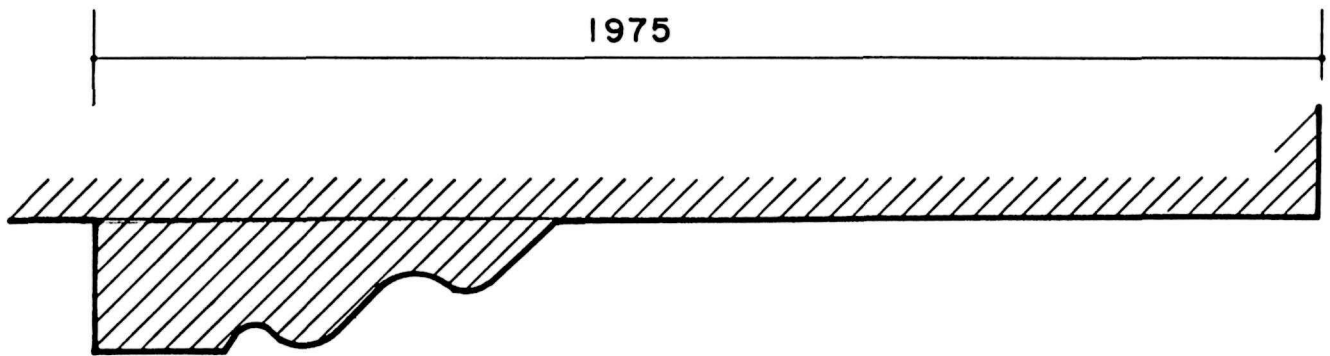


WAINSCOT - EAST WALL

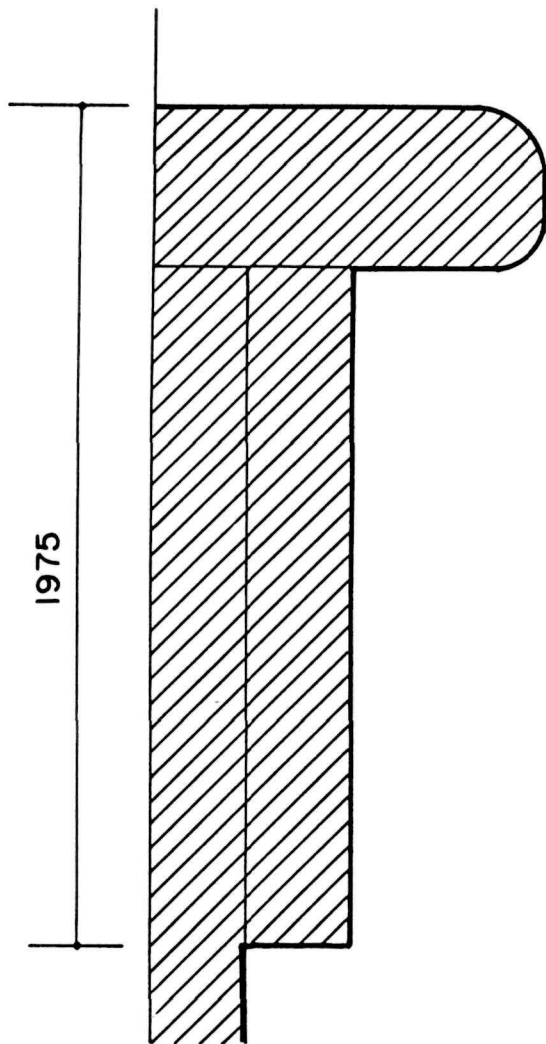
FULL SCALE

MOLDING PROFILES : 1975

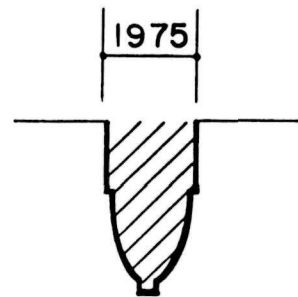
SECOND FLOOR - LARGE ROOM



ARCHITRAVE - NORTH WINDOW



STOOL & APRON - NORTH WINDOW



MUNTIN - NORTH WINDOW

FULL SCALE

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1849-50, No. 21;	1894-95, No. 4;
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