

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

			D253
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Photograph

Insert here or on a Continuation Sheet a digital photograph (either color or black and white).

A paper photographic print (3½x5¼" or 4x6" must **also** be attached to the form in this space or to a Continuation Sheet. Prints, from a photo-quality inkjet printer, must use brand name paper and inks approved by MHC. Attached photographs should be clearly identified with town name and property address. See MHC's Guidelines for Inventory Form Photographs.

Locus Map

Insert here or on a Continuation Sheet a map clearly showing the location of the property including the name of the nearest road or street and at least one other intersecting road or feature.

Assessor's maps are preferred, but other forms of detailed plans such as an excerpt from a USGS topographic map or an aerial or satellite photo clearly marked are also acceptable. See MHC's Guidelines for Inventory Form Locational Information.

Town/City: Palmer

Place: (neighborhood or village):

Depot Village

Address: 24 Converse Street

Historic Name: Palmer High School

Uses: Present: education until July 2017

Original: education

Date of Construction: 1922

Source: Inscription over entry

Style/Form: Georgian Revival

Architect/Builder: E.C. + G.C. Gardner
Spfld. MA (see sheet)

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Brick and Concrete cinder block

Wall/Trim: red brick, stone or cast stone with concrete trim

Roof: flat/membrane

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (with dates): 1962 rear addition

architect - Charles Wesley Dingman
Builder - H.J. Madore Inc. (see sheet)

Condition: Generally good (see sheet)

Moved: no yes Date:

Acreage: 2 acres

Setting: residential

Recorded by:

Organization: Palmer Historical Commission

Date (month/year): April 2017

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

TOWN

ADDRESS

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

D-253

Architect/Builder Henry Munier Co. Spfld, MA Engineers
(continued)

Major Alterations continued

Replacement of windows and exterior doors 1992-1993
several large classrooms were divided to make smaller classrooms.

Architectural Description (continued)

Blocky rectangular plan with slightly recessed eaves. Staggered brick courses on ext.
Slightly offset side of bay with supporting corinthian columns.
Brick Arts details on front facade, sides and main canopied entries.
2 1/2 stories including a raised basement
one brick chimney
Dedication plaque over the front entryway. Date plaque on front.
Original pole and wall lights near front entryway.
Auditorium has stage + balcony surrounded by windows for visual access from hallways.
Decorative stair railings inside
Original woodwork largely intact.
Large rear modern addition relatively inconspicuous

School makes effective contrast with the Romanesque Revival building formerly the high school and grammar school situated a block away

Condition (continued)

Building needs code upgrades.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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	D-253
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Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.
If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

(see sheet)

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

See bibliography sheet

Historical Narrative

After years of urging by the superintendent of schools, Charles Hobson, in 1919 a committee recommended the building of a new high school and its grounds as a place for “the mental, physical, and recreational-along with which necessarily follows the moral-improvement of our young people.” At the same time a suggestion was made that a memorial for the soldiers that fought in the recent war, WWI, take the form of a new school.

In 1921 land was purchased from Henry Converse in Depot Village for the purpose of building a new high school. In 1922 the school was built and opened for the school year beginning in September 1923. A “memorial approach” was constructed across from the new school with tree plantings and memorial stones and later a WWI German cannon was added to honor deceased WWI veterans.

On the right hand side of the school a WWII memorial was built in 1953. In 1983 a memorial to the fallen veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars was added. In 1962 an addition was added to the rear of the school.

The Willard Fountain, dated 1900 and donated to the town by the Women’s Christian Temperate Union, was moved to a small greenway park on the left hand side of the school (date unknown). A commemorative walkway in 1969 and a senior park in 1982 were established around the Willard Fountain. In 1962 -1963, an addition was added to the rear of the school replacing the old gymnasium and adding a new gymnasium, a library, a new cafeteria and extra classrooms for the growing student population in Palmer.

In 1991 the School became Converse Middle School when a new Palmer High School and Elementary School campus was completed. In March, 2017, the Palmer School Committee voted to close the school in June 2017, due to the costly upgrades that would be necessary for it to remain a school building. The town is exploring an alternative use of the school building to continue benefitting the citizens of Palmer.

The school is beautifully nestled in a residential area with a town owned cemetery, a sports field constructed by the WPA in 1935-1936, and a commemorative playground, Eager Playground, directly adjacent to the school campus. Since its inception the school and its adjacent town owned facilities, has fulfilled the educational, civic and recreational needs of the town and provided a site to honor its veterans.

[If appropriate, cut and paste the text below into an inventory form's last continuation sheet.]

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible Eligible **only** in a historic district
 Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by _____
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

Unsure if
this needs to be
filled out now.

Do not know what
the criteria are for
filling out this form,
(Criteria Considerations)

Bibliography

1. Original Palmer High School Blueprints 1921-1922.
2. Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Palmer, 1922, Town Warrants, Articles 81, 82, 83. p. 95-96
3. Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Palmer, 1919, Superintendent of Schools Report, p.19
4. Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Palmer, 1918. Superintendent of Schools Report.
5. Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Palmer, 1920. Superintendent of Schools Report
6. Annual Report of the Town Officers of the Town of Palmer, 1921. Superintendent of Schools Report
7. Mass Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Report, Community: Palmer. July 1982
8. School Building Committee Reports: Addition Plan. Palmer Historical Commission Files. (Date unknown)
9. Palmer High School Pamphlet for New School. Palmer Historical Commission files. (date unknown)
10. Palmer Ware News section of the Springfield Daily News. High School Architecture Has Come a Long Way. 1962?
11. Newspaper article. Springfield Daily News. Work Accomplished by WPA at Palmer. 1937. Palmer Historical Commission files.
12. Newspaper picture with caption. Korean and Vietnam Memorial addition. January 13, 1983. Palmer Journal
13. Historic Walking Tour of Palmer (Depot Village) The Town of Seven Railroads. Pamphlet. Palmer Historical Commission.

KnowHow #3

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

What You Need to Know about Listing on the National Register

The National Register is the nation's official list of buildings, districts, sites, structures, and objects important in American history, culture, architecture, or archaeology. The National Register program is administered through the Massachusetts Historical Commission on behalf of the National Park Service.

Nominations are based on comprehensive local inventories of cultural resources. Inventories are generally compiled on a communitywide basis by local historical commissions and record basic information about the historic, architectural, and archaeological significance of individual properties and districts in a community. The completed inventory allows preservation decisions to be made within a consistent context, and identifies properties that are eligible for listing in the National Register.

1. How do I get my property listed in the National Register?

Contact your local historical commission or the MHC to determine whether an inventory form has been prepared for your property or if any additional information is required; ask your local historical commission to forward their recommendation to the MHC regarding your property's eligibility for the National Register. The MHC staff will then evaluate your property to determine whether it meets the criteria for listing in the National Register either individually or as part of a National Register District.

Criteria for Listing

The criteria for listing in the National Register are:

- a) association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- b) association with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- c) embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- d) likelihood of yielding information significant in history or prehistory.

Properties must meet at least one of the above criteria to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

The MHC staff evaluation team meets regularly to evaluate properties for the National Register. The object of the evaluation is to determine whether the property meets the criteria for listing. Decisions are based on MHC's knowledge of the resource and its integrity, and an understanding of the significance of the resource within its context. The inventory serves as the basis for all evaluation decisions. When the evaluation team does not have sufficient information to render a decision, additional information may be requested. When National Register districts are being evaluated, MHC staff may make a site visit prior to completing the evaluation.

If your property is eligible, the MHC will send you a nomination form and an instruction manual. You may wish to work with the local historical commission in completing the nomination or seek the assistance of a professional preservation consultant.

MHC staff will review your nomination submission for completeness and may request additional information. When complete, the nomination will be edited and processed by MHC staff, who will present it to the State Review Board of the Massachusetts Historical Commission at one of its quarterly National Register meetings.

The State Review Board will review the nomination and vote whether or not to nominate the property to the National Register of Historic Places. After being voted eligible, the nomination will then be forwarded to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

2. What are the benefits of being listed in the National Register?

Recognition: The National Register recognizes the significance of a property to the community, state, and/or nation.

Tax Incentives: National Register listing allows the owners of income-producing properties certain federal tax incentives for substantial rehabilitation according to standards set by the Department of Interior.

Protection: National Register properties are afforded limited protection from adverse effects of federally assisted projects; and, through automatic inclusion in the State Register of Historic Places, limited protection from state actions.

KnowHow #3

Grants: Inclusion in the State Register of Historic Places, which comes automatically with National Register listing, provides eligibility for matching state grants for restoration of properties owned by private nonprofit organizations and municipalities, when such grants are available.

3. Will National Register listing restrict the use of my property?

Listing in the National Register in no way interferes with a property owner's right to alter, manage, or sell the property when using private funds, unless some other regional and/or local ordinance or policy is in effect. If you use state or federal funds to alter your property, or need state or federal permits, the alteration will be reviewed by the MHC staff. Local funding and permitting do not trigger MHC review.

4. What is a National Register District?

Properties may be nominated to the National Register either individually or, if they are located within areas containing other significant properties, as districts. A National Register District may include any number of properties. The benefits and protections afforded by listing are the same.

5. Can my property be listed in the National Register if my community's inventory is not comprehensive?

Yes, in some cases. There are three exceptions to MHC's policy not to consider properties for the National Register in communities without comprehensive inventory.

If you can demonstrate that:

- 1) you, as the owner of income-producing property, are planning to do certified rehabilitation work and need National Register status in order to use the federal investment tax credits;
- 2) your property is in imminent danger of destruction; or
- 3) your property is of demonstrated state or national significance,

you may then submit a letter to MHC requesting a National Register evaluation for your property, stating why you want to have the property listed. However, you should note that without comprehensive inventory information, the eligibility of properties is difficult to establish. You will probably need to conduct supplemental inventory work to provide a context for evaluating the significance of your property.

6. If my house is listed in the National Register, are grant monies available for rehabilitation work?

Unfortunately, at present, the MHC does not administer federal or state rehabilitation funds for private homeowners. State grant monies, when available, are awarded only to properties owned by municipalities and non-profit organizations. Federal tax credits are available for substantial rehabilitation of income-producing and commercial properties.

7. Can I object to having my property listed in the National Register?

Yes. Once you receive notice that your property is being considered for listing in the National Register by the State Review Board, you may submit a notarized letter of objection to MHC. If your property is within a proposed National Register district, you will be invited to a public meeting in your community, prior to the State Review Board meeting, at which MHC staff will be available to answer questions about the listing. If your property is within a proposed National Register district, a majority of property owners (more than 50%) must submit notarized objections in order to prevent listing. If a majority of property owners do not object, the nomination may move forward and the properties for which there are objections will remain in the nominated district. If a majority of owners do object, the National Park Service may still formally determine the property(ies) eligible for listing, although actual listing will *not* occur.

8. Where do I go for assistance in preparing a National Register application?

Your local historical commission, local historical society, and library can provide useful resource material. Professional preservation consultants can assist you or your local historical commission with completion of the National Register nomination form. Also, when funds are available, matching Survey and Planning grants are awarded annually through MHC to fund professional National Register work. For more information, contact the MHC.

Know How #3 has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior.

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Office for Equal Opportunity, U. S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, Room 1324, Washington, D. C. 20240

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical Commission
Massachusetts Archives Building, 220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125
Phone: (617) 727-8470 Fax: (617) 727-5128
Website: www.scc.state.ma.us/mhc