

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Inventory No:</b>           | SBR.32   |
| <b>Historic Name:</b>          | Southborough District Schoolhouse #5   |
| <b>Common Name:</b>            | Southborough Water Department Bldg - Flagg School  |
| <b>Address:</b>                | 25 Common St   |
| <b>City/Town:</b>              | Southborough   |
| <b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>   | Southborough   |
| <b>Local No:</b>               | 54-4   |
| <b>Year Constructed:</b>       |  |
| <b>Architect(s):</b>           | Flagg, Dana  |
| <b>Architectural Style(s):</b> | Greek Revival  |
| <b>Use(s):</b>                 | Fire House; Museum; Other Governmental or Civic; Public School; Warehouse                                    |
| <b>Significance:</b>           | Architecture; Community Planning; Education; Politics Government   |
| <b>Area(s):</b>                | SBR.AG: Southborough Town Center<br>SBR.A: Main Street Area  |
| <b>Designation(s):</b>         |  |
| <b>Building Materials(s):</b>  | Roof: Asphalt Shingle<br>Wall: Wood Clapboard; Wood<br>Foundation: Brick; Stone, Uncut; Concrete Unspecified |



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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FORM B - BUILDING

Assessor's number

USGS Quad

Area(s)

Form Number

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Massachusetts Archives Building  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125

54-4

Marlborough

A

32

Town Southborough

Place (neighborhood or village) \_\_\_\_\_

Southborough center

Address 25 Common Street

Historic Name Flagg School

(District School #5)

Uses: Present museum and town offices

Original district school

Date of Construction 1859-60

Source Town Reports

Style/Form Greek Revival

Architect/Builder Builder: Dana Flagg



Exterior Material:

Foundation concrete

Wall/Trim wood clapboard

Roof asphalt

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

(on same parcel as Town House and Town Pound)

Major Alterations (with dates) building lengthened

and converted to equipment storage--1894; converted to museum and offices--1999 (see text)

Condition fair

Moved [ ] no [x] yes Date 1894

Acreage 1.99 acres

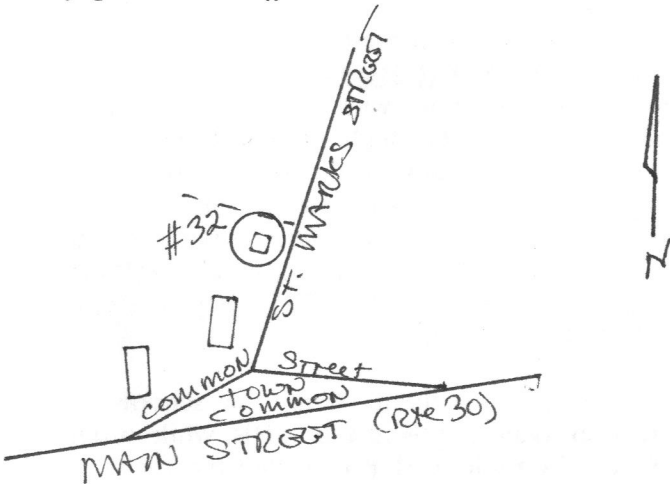
Setting At northeast corner of Town House

parking lot, behind Pilgrim Church. Ground drops

to playing fields at rear.

Sketch Map

Draw a map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets, including route numbers, if any. Attach a separate sheet if space is not sufficient here. Indicate north.



RECEIVED  
Recorded by Folger/Schuler, consultants

Organization Southborough Historical Commission

Date April, 2000

MASS. HIST. COMM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION [ ] *see continuation sheet*

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

This little building has survived both hard use as a one-room district schoolhouse and three conversions in its 140-year-old existence. It is a one-story schoolhouse of a design typical of its era. A gable-roofed building, it was built with five window bays down each long side, and a gable-front facade marked by a prominent wall pediment and several other features of the Greek Revival style, such as the large quoins at the front building corners. A trapezoidal wooden panel reading "Flagg School, Built c. 1860" is centered in the pediment in the position that was probably originally occupied by a lunette, a signboard, or a triangular window. Today, while there are still five large 6-over-6-sash windows on the east side of the building, the first bay of the west side has a small 4-over-4-sash, and the fourth bay has recently been fitted with a glass-and-steel door. All the window sash are modern replacements, and the louvered shutters shown in some ca. 1900 photos are gone, but what appear to be the original heavy drip moldings remain at the window openings.

The lower part of the main south facade of the building has undergone the most alteration over time. What would have been two entrances (one for boys and one for girls) were replaced in 1906 by two wide double-leaf panel doors for the town center fire apparatus. Those doors were in turn replaced by overhead panel-and-glass garage doors in the mid-twentieth-century, when the building was used by the town water department. In 1999 the garage doors were removed, and the facade was returned to a schoolhouse-like arrangement of two 6-panel walk-in doors (these are 6-panel stained and varnished wood doors), with a large 6-over-6-sash window between them. For the surrounds of both the doors and window, the distinctive moldings of the side-wall windows were copied.

The rear of the building, which represents a ten-foot section that was added when the building was moved, has two large multi-light windows at the main story, and in the east part of the exposed basement story, a modern metal overhead garage door. The large exterior chimney that rises up the center rear of the building is in about the same position that a single rear end-wall chimney would have occupied. In the basement story of both long sides of the building are two 4-over-4-sash windows.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE [x] *see continuation sheet*

*Explain 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.*

The Flagg School is one of two surviving nineteenth-century schoolhouses in Southborough, and is still owned by the Town. The other, the former Southville Grammar School at 28 Highland Street, has been converted to a house. The building was constructed in 1859-60 as part of a town-wide campaign to replace the six small, aging one-room schoolhouses in the outlying districts of Southborough. Popularly called the Flagg School, as it was located in the angle of Flagg and Deerfoot Roads in an area of southwest Southborough long occupied by several branches of the Flagg family, this schoolhouse was officially the District (or Ward) #5 Schoolhouse. According to Town Reports, plans for the new schools were drawn up by an architect (his name is unknown), and built by local residents. Both the #5 (Flagg) and #6 (West End) Schools were built primarily by Dana Flagg, who was paid \$925 for this one. E. D. Rockwood, a Flagg Road neighbor, was paid \$100 in that year for part of the construction.

Over the years, the Flagg School consistently had the smallest enrollment of all the schools in Southborough's farm districts, averaging sixteen and eighteen enrolled pupils in the 1860s, while often having only twelve or thirteen in attendance. The 1861 School Committee Report called the Flagg "a backward school," and in the words of the 1864 School Report, "the want of numbers is still a crying evil in this school, and one for which we see no present remedy." As at the other schools, the annual school term for the Flagg School after the Civil War was usually thirty weeks, divided into three terms of about 45 to 50 days each.

[x] Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, a completed National Register Criteria Statement form is attached.*

## INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Community    | Property     |
| Southborough | Flagg School |

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
 Massachusetts Archives Building  
 220 Morrissey Boulevard  
 Boston, Massachusetts 02125

|         |          |
|---------|----------|
| Area(s) | Form No. |
| A       | 32       |

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, cont.

In 1894, as part of a centralizing of the public school system, the Town decommissioned the Flagg School, and moved the building to the center, to its present location behind the Pilgrim Church. There it apparently continued as a school for a short time, at least until the new Peters High School was opened in 1900. In 1906 it was converted to use by the Centre Fire Company, which stored fire apparatus in it for many years. After the town's first true firehouse was built in 1926 at 5 Main Street, the Fire Department moved out, and the building was occupied by the Tree Warden for a while. It was subsequently used for general storage until the late 1950s, when it was fitted up for use by the town Water Department.

The Flagg School was not the only old schoolhouse to be converted to other uses by the town. Another, probably very similar school building behind the Town House (apparently the District #1 School), was converted in 1901-02 for the storage of equipment by the town Highway Department. Either that one, or a third schoolhouse on the Town House property, was used for a time as a parish house by St. Mark's Church.

In 1999, at a cost of approximately \$45,000, half paid by the Town, half contributed by the Southborough Historical Society, and with work contributed by students at the Assabet Valley Regional Vocational High School, the little building was again converted to new uses. The building is now leased by the Southborough Historical Society, with one room occupied by the town Recreation Department. The basement is divided between a utility area at the rear, and storage and library space for the Historical Society archives at the front.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES [ ] *see continuation sheet*

Maps and Atlases: 1831; 1856, 1857 (former Flagg School); 1870 (present building, shown at former location); 1898 (shown at present location).

The Marlborough Directory. Various dates and publishers.

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone: a History of Southborough, MA. Portsmouth, NH: Peter Randall, 1990.

Town of Southborough: Annual Reports--1860, 1894, 1906, 1927. School Committee Reports--various dates.

Research by local residents.

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, Massachusetts 02125

Community  
Southborough

Property Address  
Flagg School

Area(s)  
A

Form No(s).  
32

## 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 Forbes/Schuler, Consultants  
*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The old Flagg School is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A for its association with Southborough's community and educational life. Built in 1859-60, it is one of only two surviving nineteenth-century district schoolhouses in Southborough.

It also fulfills Criterion C as a well preserved example of pre-Civil War local school architecture, still retaining the general form and detail of a typical one-room schoolhouse design of the era.

For all the above reasons it is also eligible as a contributing property in a National Register district encompassing the historic residential and institutional meetinghouse center of the town.

The property retains integrity of location (since 1894), design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting and association.





A  B SOUTH  
 n Southborough  
 et address Common St.  
 e Water Dept Bldg  
 ginal use School House  
 sent use Water Dept Bldg  
 sent owner town of Southborough  
 n to public Yes  
 Date 1859 Style N.R. mnn.

- Art/sculpture
- Education
- Government
- Literature
- Music
- Travel/communication
- Military affairs
- Religion/philosophy
- Indians
- Development of town/city

Source of date town report 1859  
 Architect \_\_\_\_\_

3. CONDITION: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added garage in cellar

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material: 1/2 stone 1/2 brick  
 WALL COVER: Wood clapboard Brick Stone Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 ROOF: Ridge Gambrel Flat Hip Mansard \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tower Cupola Dormer windows Balustrade Grillwork \_\_\_\_\_  
 CHIMNEYS: 1 2 3 4 Center End Interior Irregular Cluster Elaborate  
 STORIES: 1 2 3 4 ATTACHMENTS: Wings Ell Shed \_\_\_\_\_  
 PORCHES: 1 2 3 4 \_\_\_\_\_ PORTICO \_\_\_\_\_ Balcony  
 FACADE: Gable end: Front/Side Ornament: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Entrance: Side Front: Center/Side Details: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied  
 Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards \_\_\_\_\_

5. Indicate location of structure in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings

6. Footage of structure from street  
Property has \_\_\_\_\_ feet frontage on street



Recorder \_\_\_\_\_  
 For \_\_\_\_\_  
 Photo 1-26A Date 1971

SEE REVERSE

RELATION OF SURROUNDING TO STRUCTURE

SBR.32

1. Outbuildings \_\_\_\_\_

2. Landscape Features: Agriculture Open Wooded Garden: Formal/Informal  
Predominant features \_\_\_\_\_  
Landscape architect \_\_\_\_\_

3. Neighboring Structures

Style: Colonial Federal Greek Revival Gothic Revival Italian Villa Lombard Rom.  
Venetian Gothic Mansard Richardsonian Modern

Use: Residential Commercial Religious Conditions: Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated

GIVE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE OF SITE (Refer and elaborate on theme circled on front of form)

Originally built as a school house in 1859, the building was moved from its location on Flagg Road. It has been somewhat remodelled but is instantly recognizable as one of the old school houses.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND/OR REFERENCE

① HDSC Report 1972

1898 Atlas - School house - original location

RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

Original Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Deed Information: Book Number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Registry of Deeds