

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

Scanned Record Cover Page

Inventory No:	SBR.164
Historic Name:	South Union School
Common Name:	Southborough Cultural Arts Center
Address:	21 Highland St
City/Town:	Southborough
Village/Neighborhood:	Cordaville; Southville;
Local No:	03-3;
Year Constructed:	1911
Architectural Style(s):	Classical Revival;
Architect(s):	Cooper and Bailey; Hurley, Thomas P.;
Use(s):	Art Gallery; Auditorium; Community Center; Library; Meeting Hall; Other Governmental or Civic; Public School;
Significance:	Architecture; Art; Community Planning; Education; Military; Politics Government; Social History;
Area(s):	SBR.B
Designation(s):	Nat'l Register Individual Property (02/18/2011);
Building Materials:	Wall: Brick; Concrete Unspecified; Wood; Foundation: Brick; Concrete Unspecified;
Demolished	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125
www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

This file was accessed on: Friday, August 11, 2023 at 6:42 PM

FORM B – BUILDING

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

03-3 Marlboro B 164

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

Town SOUTHBOROUGH

Place (neighborhood or village) Southville/Cordaville



s 21 Highland Street

c Name South Union School

Present institutional / educational

Original institutional / educational

Construction 1912

Town Annual Report - School Committee Reports

Form Classical Revival

ct/Builder Cooper & Bailey - Architect
Thomas P. Hurley - Contractor

r Material:

Foundation brick and concrete

Wall/Trim brick/wood trim

Roof unknown - flat roof

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures none

Major Alterations (with dates) Vents and caps on chimneys.

Condition good

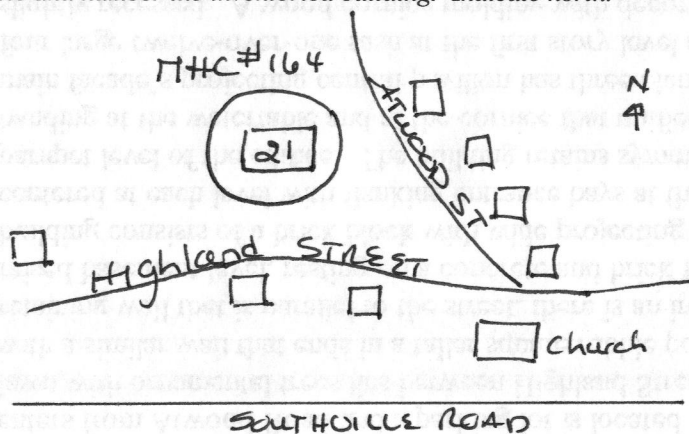
Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date n/a

Acreage 130,680 square feet/ ca. 3 acres

Setting In between two villages of Southville and Cordaville, high on hill overlooking Highland St. and Southville Road with low steps approaching lined with low rubble wall - open sloping lawn in front separated by rubble wall with iron railing marking plateau on which school and play ground and parking sits, mature trees surrounding.

Sketch Map

Draw a map showing the building's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between inventoried building and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried building. Indicate north.



Recorded by Schuler/Forbes

Organization Southborough Historical Commission

Date (month/year) 03/00

RECEIVED

JUL 03 2000

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

MASS. HIST. COMM

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

☐ see continuation sheet

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

One of few brick buildings in the southern villages of Southborough this important Classical Revival school sits high on a hill overlooking the two villages of Southville and Cordaville. The top of the steep sloping lot is terraced and has symmetrical stairs that ascend from Highland Street to the school site on top. Vehicular traffic enters from Atwood Road and a parking lot is located behind the school and playground on the west side. A lawn with ornamental trees lies between Highland Street and the rubble stone retaining wall. The stairs are lined with a similar wall that ends in a taller square rubble post with a flat coping similar to the wall. On top of the retaining wall that is parallel to the street, there is an iron railing. The School is a two story building with a raised basement level, resting on a concrete and brick foundation, that is oriented in a southerly direction. The building consists of a brick block with wide projecting central pavilion in which there are strings of four windows centered at each level with flanking entrance bays at that project slightly at the second story and wide cornice or parapet level of the edifice. The building retains symmetrical massing and design details with concrete and brick banding at the watertable and at the cornice that unifies and accentuates the horizontality of the building. The main facade's projecting central pavilion has three elements, a center section with four raised basement windows, four large twelve-over-one sash at the first story level and four six-over-one second story windows that are slightly recessed. A wood cornice molding with decorative brackets lines the top of the first story windows accentuating the recess of the second story windows. A sign, naming the Arts Center, has been added to the wide brick band between the basement and first story windows that is framed by the watertable and first story concrete belt course. Flanking the centered windows are the entrance bays with paired paneled doors at the raised basement level topped by segmental arched multi-light transoms and a decorative segmental arched bracketed doorhood. Over each entrance is a pair of long nine-over-one sash with six-light transoms. These stairhall window bays stretch between the first and second story windows. This facade's wall surfaces on each side of the projecting centered pavilion have decorative brick paneling with square cast inlay articulating the rectangular paneled surfaces. On each end of the building there are strings of five first and second story windows with decorative square panels between to two levels. Windows have nine-over-one sash and the second story windows stretch up into the cornice band and are framed by the projecting element of the parapet wall. The flat roof is topped with two large rectangular brick chimneys.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

☒ see continuation sheet

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.

The South Union School was constructed in 1912 as a consolidation of three schools; one grammar and two primary schools in the two villages of Southville and Cordaville. From the 1860s there were seven ward schools and the Peters High School in Southborough. Two of the wards were Cordaville and Southville. In 1860 when all of the outlying grammar schools were repaired or built, Cordaville's was newly built and Southville's was repaired. The 1910 School Committee Report recommended the consolidation of and new construction for Southville and Cordaville due to the poor condition of the old village schools that lacked sanitation and had inadequate water supplies. The recommendation was the result of the findings of a Special Committee appointed by the 1909 Town Meeting. The schools to be replaced included the **Southville Grammar** at 28 Highland Street and the **Southville Primary School** at 236 Parkerville Road, both of which were converted to residences and the **Cordaville School** at the site of 193 Woodland Road. The planning process included receipt of sketches and plans from H.G. Ripley, Warren & Gerrish, and James F. Bigelow. The 1911 Town Meeting appropriated

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEETTown
SOUTHBOROUGHProperty Address
21-31 HIGHLAND STREET**MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125**

Area(s) Form No.

164

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (Continued)

\$17,000 for the construction of the new school. Expenditures showed payments to Cooper & Bailey, Architects. This architectural firm is known to have designed at least fourteen other public schools in eastern Massachusetts and plans for the South Union School are on file at the State Archives. The school lot came from the Cordaville Woolen Company and was ideal due to the location between the two villages and opposite the Southville Grammar School. Thomas P. Hurley of Marlborough was the general contractor. The name articulated the union of the two industrial villages under one school roof. South Union School from its opening in December 1912 to its closing in 1980 housed Grades 1 through 8. The plan included three large class rooms, a special 'Domestic Science' room, a public hall seating 265, and a public library space to hold 2,000 volumes. During World War II there was an Aircraft Warning Observatory constructed on the school roof which was manned by the Southborough's Ground Observer Corps. When the public school classes were disbanded in the South Union School it was taken over by the Southborough Cultural Arts Center in 1982. This was an outgrowth of the Southborough Arts Council established in 1978 in response to the Massachusetts Megabucks lottery program.

The South Union School and **St. Matthew's Church** at 105 Southville Road are located in between the two villages of Cordaville and Southville and were built to serve both communities. However, previous survey projects listed both properties in the Southville area form, thus for consistency of MHC numbering they will be included in the Southville Area Form. It is important to recognize the relevance of the property to both Cordaville and Southville.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES☐ *see continuation sheet*

Maker Index, MACRIS. Massachusetts Historical Commission

Noble, Richard. Fences of Stone, 1990.

School Committee Reports. 1860, 1910, 1911, 1912.

Public Buildings Safety Inspection File. Plan Record, 9/20/1911. State Archives

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

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

Community Property Address
SOUTHBOROUGH 21 HIGHLAND STREET

Area(s) Form No.

B	164
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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 Schuler/Forbes, Consultants
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

The South Union School is eligible for listing on the National Register individually and as part of the Southville and/or Cordaville Historic District for its association with the development of the school system in Southborough, its position between the two named villages, figuratively and physically, and for its architecture as the only brick Classical Revival buildings in the southern part of Southborough. The School retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.



Pl. 5ville 164
 B
 Southborough
 Address Highland St.
 South Union School
 Original & present School
 Owner Town
 Public Yes
 Style

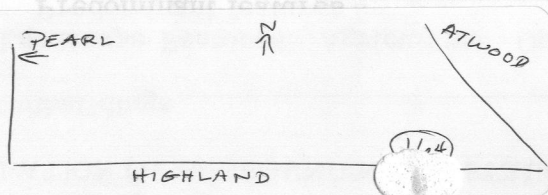
Literature Indians Source of date
 Music Other
 Development of town/city Architect
 Architectural reason for inventorying:
 South Union School OR part of Area #
 3. CONDITION Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Moved Altered Added

4. DESCRIPTION

FOUNDATION/BASEMENT: High Regular Low Material
 WALL COVER: Wood 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: double
 Windows: Spacing: Regular/Irregular Identical/Varied
 Corners: Plain Pilasters Quoins Cornerboards

5. Indicate location of building in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings
 6. Footage of structure from street
 Property has feet frontage on street

Recorder
 For
 Photo # 8-16 Date 1971



SEE REVERSE SIDE

SBR, #164

BUILDING INSPECTION DEPARTMENT—DISTRICT POLICE
PLAN RECORD

CASE B RACK 4 APART. 14 NO. 9294
BUILDING Cordaville School STORIES 2B
CITY OR TOWN Southboro STREET
TO BE USED FOR Public School CLASS School
OWNER Town of Southboro Brick
ARCHITECT Cooper & Bailey
CERTIFICATE APPROVAL—SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS—REFERRED
DATE Sept 20, 1911
INSPECTOR Penniman
FORM 41. 5,000. 2-25-11

Original yellow form: Eligibility file _____
Copies: Inventory form _____
Town file(w/corresp.) _____
Macris _____
NR director _____

Community: Southborough

MHC OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER

Date Received: 5 September 2007 Date Due: Date Reviewed: 3 October 2007

Type: ☒ Individual _____ District (Attach map indicating boundaries)

Name: South Union School Inventory Form: SBR.164

Address: 21 Highland Street

Requested by: Southborough Historical Commission

Action: _____Honor _____ITC _____Grant _____R & C _____Other:

Agency: _____ Staff in charge of Review: _____

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES

☒ Eligible
☒ Eligible, also in district
☐ Eligible only in district
☐ Ineligible
☐ More information needed

DISTRICTS

☐ Eligible
☐ Ineligible
☐ More information needed

CRITERIA: _____x A _____B _____x C _____D

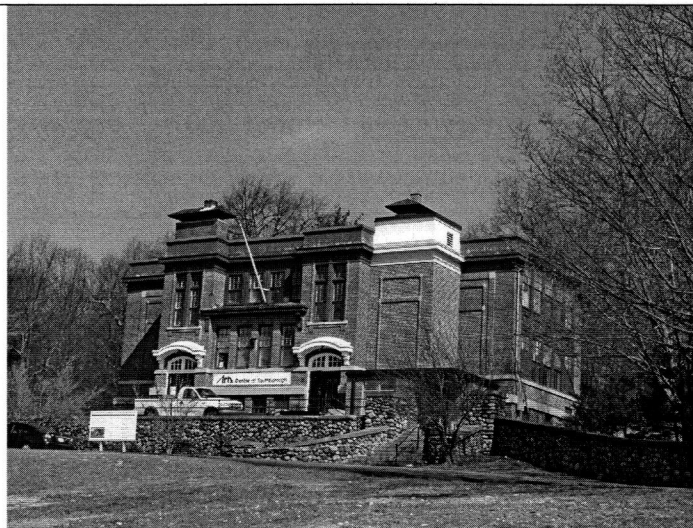
LEVEL: _____x Local _____State _____National

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by Peter Stott _____

The South Union School is a 2-story brick school building constructed in 1912 to the designs of Cooper and Bailey, Architects. Centrally located between the mill villages of Southville and Cordaville, it represents the union of the two school districts. In use as a school building until 1980, it has more recently housed Southborough Cultural Arts Center.

The South Union School meets criteria A and C at the local level, both individually and as a contributing element in a potential Cordaville and/or Southville historic district. The brick Classical Revival structure reflects the evolution of Southborough's school system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries from a network of ungraded wood-frame district schoolhouses to a modern school system of graded regional elementary schools housed in substantial masonry buildings and providing education according to a uniform community-wide curriculum. Architecturally, the school is the only brick Classical Revival building in the southern part of Southborough. Frank Irving Cooper (1867-1933) was widely known in New England as a school architect, and 17 buildings are credited to his work in the MACRIS database. The school retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, association and setting. The one significant change to the building, the introduction in 2003 of an elevator tower on the east corner of the principal facade was not found unduly intrusive.

Both Cordaville (SBR.C) and Southville (SBR.B.) were evaluated in 1996 by MHC and determined eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C at the local level.



David Hart photo, 2007, showing 2003 elevator tower



Inventory photo, 2000.