



# COL. WM. PRESCOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

145 Main Street Groton, MA 01450 978.448.0380

## Property Background

The property where Prescott currently stands has had an educational facility on it since 1871. Originally the Butler School served as the town's first High School, however, a fire destroyed part of the building in 1925. The building as we know it today was built in 1927 and has served high school, Jr. high school, elementary students and housed administrative offices over the past 79 years since it reopened in 1928. The current building houses a portion of the original Butler School within the new structure. Because of the history behind this facility and the fact that it is one of the limited numbers of historic Main Street schools remaining in the country, it has been added to the Massachusetts Register of Historic Places (MRHP). It is in the process of being included in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) with an estimated acceptance in early 2009.

The property is prominently located within Groton's historic district, is located across the street from another property listed on the NRHP (Stagecoach Inn), and abuts the newly established overlay district for the Station Avenue neighborhood (see Attachment A of section 14). A lease is currently in place between the town and the School District which expires on June 20, 2015. The property is deeded to the town with a restriction that it remain an educational facility and not for housing. The deed also has a reverter clause which means that the property would go back to the family if it was intended to be used for other purposes; it is not known if there is family remaining. Using the building as an Administrative office would most likely be within the scope of the clause. Because Board of Selectmen approval is required to obtain Town Counsel advice to further clarify this issue, it is still not known with certainty whether this restriction may be removed.

## Existing Conditions

Prescott is a three-floor building totaling 25,936 gross floor space and stands on a 2.81 acre parcel. Total assessed value for the land and building is \$1,685,100. Recommended enrollment is a maximum capacity of 220 students. It is a two-section school housing grades K – 4 (all full day except one Kindergarten section is a 2-1/2 day program). Enrollment for '06/'07 was 223, for '07/'08 is 227 students, and planned enrollment for budgeting purposes in the '08/'09 year has been set at 222. Class size ranges from 23 to 25 students per class. There are 40 full and part time staff members at Prescott.

There are ten classrooms, three rooms designated to the Special Education program, and one room each for reading recovery, art, music, library/computer lab, cafeteria (100 capacity) and a gymnasium. Other rooms include a Principal's office, main office, nurse's office, custodial office, boiler room, kitchen, bathroom facilities on each floor and several supply rooms/closets. Most rooms are used 100% of the time with the few remaining used for the majority of the time. Only three classrooms meet current recommended Massachusetts School Building Authority size requirements (#202-KL, #301-3G, and #309-4N); the remainder are moderately to extremely undersized.

Because the school is located in the center of town, students are able to walk to the library, local recreational fields, and to activities or assemblies at Florence Roche. This represents a significant costs savings since DEE bus rental services cost \$60 per bus for each direction it transports students. Access to its central location is also advantageous to residents in all parts of town.

All utilities are currently in place. Water is provided by municipal service and is tested on a regular basis to ensure its quality. The school was tied into municipal sewer in 1999, however, sewer capacity and its ability to accommodate additional population is unknown and would need to be investigated. Electricity is provided by Groton Electric Light Department. The school now uses oil heat, however, the possibility of converting to natural gas in the near future is under consideration. The underground oil tank is scheduled to be replaced in 2009 and the decision to convert to gas will coincide with this project. Existing and additional needs of telecommunication services is sufficient and no known issues are anticipated. Finally, there is some runoff erosion noted from the asphalt parking lot down the graded area of the playground. Drainage issues would need to be investigated for increased capacity. Special consideration would need to be made for runoff in light of the wetlands.

Traffic enters into the property from the left of the building, proceeds behind the building through the playground area and exits to the right of the building. There are 21 parking spaces (1 handicapped) located on the left side of the building, and another 13 spaces (1 handicapped) on the right side (total 34). Five 15-minute parking spaces are located in front of the school and additional on-street parking is available. Visitor parking is allowed at the Stagecoach Inn during drop-off and pick-up hours only. Vehicle entry into the parking area is restricted during school hours.

The playground consists of an asphalt area with various playground games stenciled on the pavement, as well as playing fields including a baseball diamond, soccer nets, and playground equipment. The fields and equipment may be utilized by town residents after hours. Approximately a .5 acre area at the rear of the property is deemed wetlands and/or within a flood zone and is fenced off. Also fenced off is an approximate .5 acre of usable land which is wooded but currently unused (see Attachments B and C).

Prescott is host to many school sponsored activities. It is also utilized by other Groton youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts or other groups participating in fundraising activities such as car washes or Christmas tree sales.

### **Areas of Concern**

Following are the most critical concerns found at Prescott; the list is in no particular priority order. It is important to note that a Facility Assessment was performed by Michael Rosenfeld Architects in 2001. A

Similar list of concerns was outlined in their report. Some of their recommendations have been addressed (i.e. new roof, new windows), however, many still remain unresolved to date.

### **1. *Student Capacity***

Prescott is consistently running at or above recommended capacity. With all rooms being used near or at full time, the school is maxed out and cannot accommodate many additional students if enrollment increases in the town. Should the District allow an increased student/teacher ratio, the maximum number of students within the school is bound by the core facilities.

### **2. *HVAC System***

In May, 2006, air quality testing was performed for the first time within the school. Initial reports showed elevated CO<sub>2</sub> levels throughout the school, with several rooms (primarily in the basement level) showing significantly higher than recommended levels for an elementary school. The test findings suggest poor ventilation which possibly is a result of the window and roof replacement, whereas the building became much more airtight.

Several measures have been taken by the District to remediate the problem. Univents have been repaired or replaced, fans and vents were installed, and windows were also installed in key basement level areas. Testing indicated that levels were lower; however, more testing is needed. Approximately \$30K in remediation costs have been incurred to date.

Additionally Prescott is a "one zone" building. The thermostat on the main floor controls the heat of the entire building. One floor may be below comfort levels and at the same time, another floor is well above comfort levels. The control system does not comply with current energy codes or support the ventilation requirement of the building.

A study was performed to review the status of the HVAC system by JSE in January, 2007. The report cited many areas requiring attention and noted that the entire equipment (with the exception of the boiler) has exceeded its useful expected life of 20 years, and that repair costs would continue to mount. In their report, they made many recommendations which would ensure the system would improve occupant comfort, provide energy conservation benefits, and comply with the most current codes. A conservative estimate (vs. actual bid amounts which would be significantly higher) is in the \$250K range. An Indoor Air Quality report was also completed by the Massachusetts Health and Human Services organization in March, 2007, which confirmed these findings and outlined many similar recommendations.

### **3. *Electrical System***

The existing electrical system is inadequate to support current technology and other basic electrical requirements. There are very few outlets within each classroom. Use of power strips and extension cords running across classroom floors is common. The system as is today would not support any major HVAC renovations. No official estimates have been received to determine the cost of renovations to the electrical system, however, an engineer had provided the school with an "unofficial guestimate" in 2006 of \$800K - \$1M for the electrical and HVAC combined.

### **4. *Code Compliance and Safety Issues***

In the report provided by JSE mentioned above, they cited multiple code compliance issues with the HVAC system. They also noted that some bathrooms were not vented properly since they were not ducted to the

exterior of the building as required. Further noted was that the kitchen was not code compliant since it had no exhaust system and the range tops did not have hood exhausts with fire suppression.

Although the school has a fire alarm system, it does not have any method of fire suppression such as a sprinkler system. A fire hydrant exists directly in front of the school. Radiators do not have covers and have caution signs on them to prevent possible burns. The second floor is not handicapped accessible. The lower level exits and interior stairs are non-code compliant. Finally, the rear stairs which provide a major egress from the building were temporarily closed off since they did not appear safe. Any changes would require code compliance and thus they would need to be built out of metal per the fire department. A quote of \$38K was provided and replacement was scheduled for summer, 2007. Since then, the stairs have been temporarily shored up and reopened.

#### **5. *Traffic and Parking***

Traffic during peak drop off and pick up times is difficult for commuters through town. Busses are entering and exiting the school via the primary route. Additional traffic is also generated by parents coming to drop off or pick up their children, although requests made by the school to do so only when necessary has reduced the amount of traffic somewhat. Finally, pedestrians crossing Main Street contribute to the congestion. Traffic backs up in both directions for approximately a half hour on each end of the day.

Parking is limited on the school grounds. There is sufficient parking for the staff, however, visitor parking is not only minimal, but difficult if not impossible to utilize since the parking lot cannot be accessed during school hours in order to prevent possible injuries to the children in the playground. At one point, Moisson Hardware allowed temporary parking for visitors at peak times, however, they have since asked that parking no longer be allowed on their property. In place of this, the Stagecoach Inn has since allowed parking in their lot. On street parking is also available.

#### **6. *Land Limitations***

The majority of the 2.81 acres is taken up by the building itself, parking, and a playground. A portion of this property is wetlands and/or lies within a FEMA Flood Zone. There is also a portion which currently is not being used. Although the traffic flow and parking issues mentioned above are sufficient, the situation is less than desirable. Increased parking and corrections to the traffic flow would be difficult if not impossible to overcome due to these limitations.

#### **7. *Interior Aesthetics***

This area of concern is low in priority, however, is important to point out. Peeling paint, warped floors and stairs, holes in walls, exposed pipes, and items affixed to the walls which are no longer functioning are some of the examples of the environment. Many parents who chose Prescott did so because of the small school atmosphere and historic feel. Additionally, staff members do a wonderful job making the school appealing to the children. Although none of these issues has impacted the students' performance or their positive opinion of the school, a fresher environment would be beneficial to both students and faculty alike.

### **Future Maintenance Plans**

Maintenance projects are typically outlined in two different plans. Routine and regularly scheduled maintenance projects are included in the 5-Year Building Improvement Plan. Projects currently in this plan

include: acoustical gym treatment, air balancing, asbestos removal, carpet replacement, electrical upgrade, security alarm, interior painting, lighting replacement, replacing rear exit stairs and replacing bubblers for a total of \$148,000 budgeted through 2012. The second report is the 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Currently, items in plan for Prescott are: a design study, and oil tank replacement or tank removal/gas conversion for a total amount of \$125K. Additionally, according to Mr. Sheehan, Director of Business and Finance, the School Committee has allocated another \$45K to \$50K in FY'07 for air quality remediation. Although these are all in plan today, budget constraints dictate whether these projects will remain in the plan.

## **Enrollment Trends**

For more information on Groton and Dunstable demographics and enrollment trends, please refer to the findings of the Enrollment and Demographics Study, in Section 2.

In summary, this Study has found that enrollment at the elementary level is expected to continue with the recent trend of declining enrollment for another five years. Following that timeframe, enrollment will level off and remain flat for a number of years. This trend is primarily due to declining birth rates within both towns and the decline in housing starts/housing market.

It is important to note that a significant delta between the predicted enrollment and the maximum development growth exists.

The District has indicated that a professional study would be conducted once the requested project is approved by the MSBA since this is a requirement in obtaining MSBA funds and that funds are provided by the MSBA for enrollment projections, facilities and maintenance assessments, and commissioning. However, in the MSBA's most recent presentation to school districts, a goal was included to develop an on-line tool for school districts to utilize in projecting enrollment trends through 2016. This tool would provide consistent methodology in projecting enrollment and eliminate the need for professional studies. No further information is available at this time as to its availability.

## **Space Considerations**

As discussed in the Existing Conditions section above, Prescott is in essence slightly above peak capacity. All space as the school is currently configured is being utilized.

Many considerations other than capacity levels must be taken into account when either renovating an existing building or building a new facility. The Facilities Task Force II compiled an excellent comprehensive list of "Things to Consider in the Design and Construction of a New Elementary School" (see Attachment D). This listing includes key high-level considerations, optimal learning environment aspects, health and safety considerations, exterior requirements, and efficiency and economic issues. Although this list was compiled for building a new school, many of the items may be applied to a renovation project as well, and would address all the Areas of Concerns outlined for Prescott and help determine how to best utilize the space. Reviewing the current student configuration to confirm the District's future plans is first and foremost on this list.

## Prescott as an Elementary School - Preliminary Cost Analysis

### **\$ 3,600,000 - \$ 4,400,000 Project Cost**

#### **Major Renovation Without An Addition (2 section grades 1-4; no K or PreK)**

New Windows and Roof

New Elevator

Gut-Rehab To Interior of Building (New Finishes)

Door and Hardware Replacement

ADA and MAAB Compliance

New Mechanical, Electrical, Technology and Fire Protection Systems

New Plumbing (Except at Existing Handicap Toilets)

Renovate Parking and Fields

### **\$ 5,500,000 - \$ 6,700,000 Project Cost**

#### **Major Renovation With An Addition (Full 2 section grades K-4; no PreK)**

Same as Above Plus ...

Approximately 9,000 – 10,000 sf Gym and Cafeteria Addition

Renovation of Existing Gym and Cafeteria Into Other Uses (Like Library/Media Center or Classrooms)

Costs are based on square footage unit prices and are rough estimates for comparative purposes only.



Groton-Dunstable Regional School District

Dunstable Public Hearing Meeting, November 13, 2001

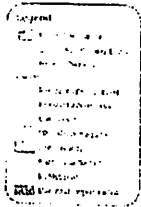
The Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc., Architects



# ATTACHMENT A

## Station Avenue Overlay District

Town of Groton  
MASSACHUSETTS

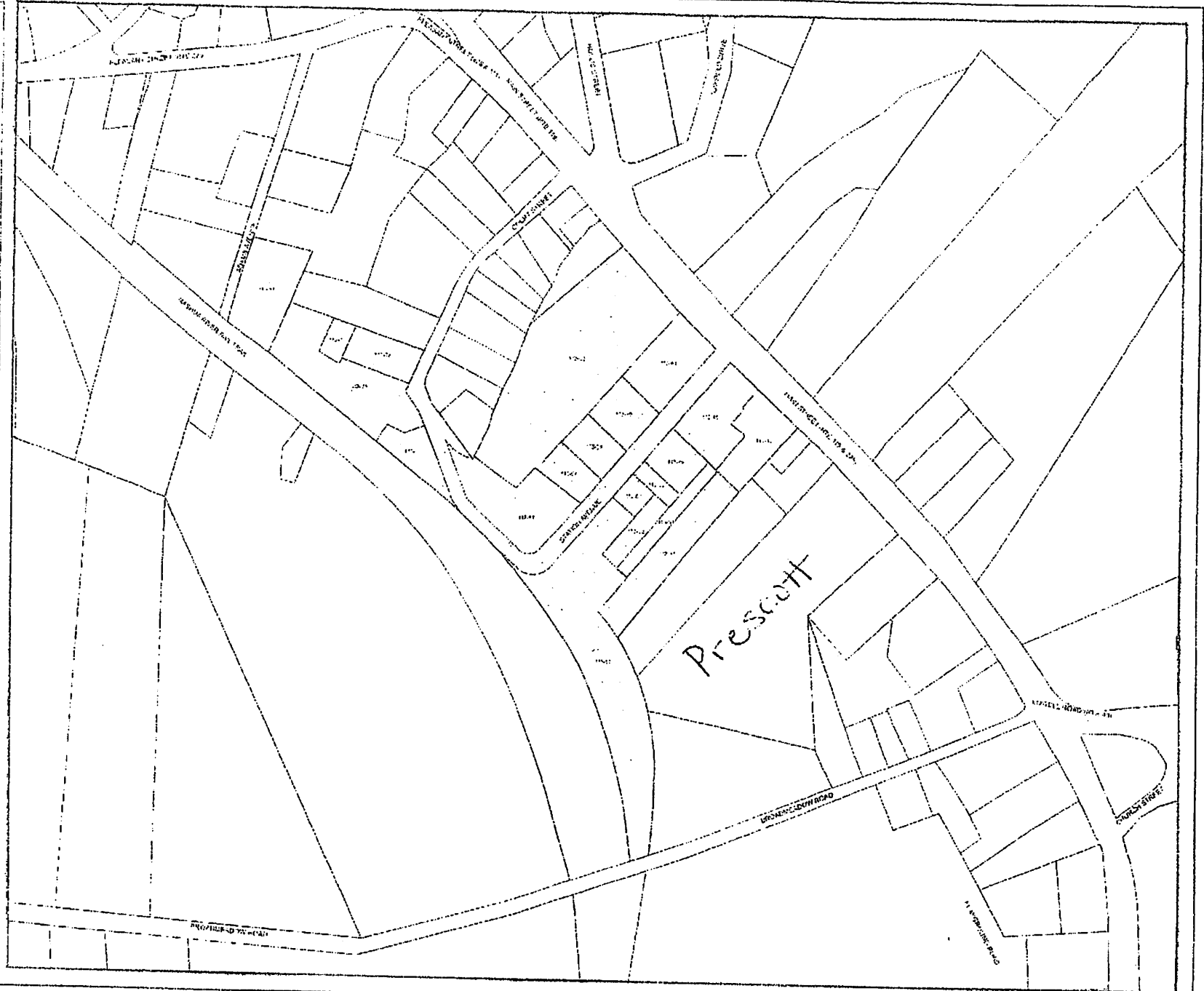


### Data Sources

Information was obtained from the  
Groton Planning Board, Groton, MA  
and the Groton Police Department.  
The Groton Police Department  
provided the data for this map.  
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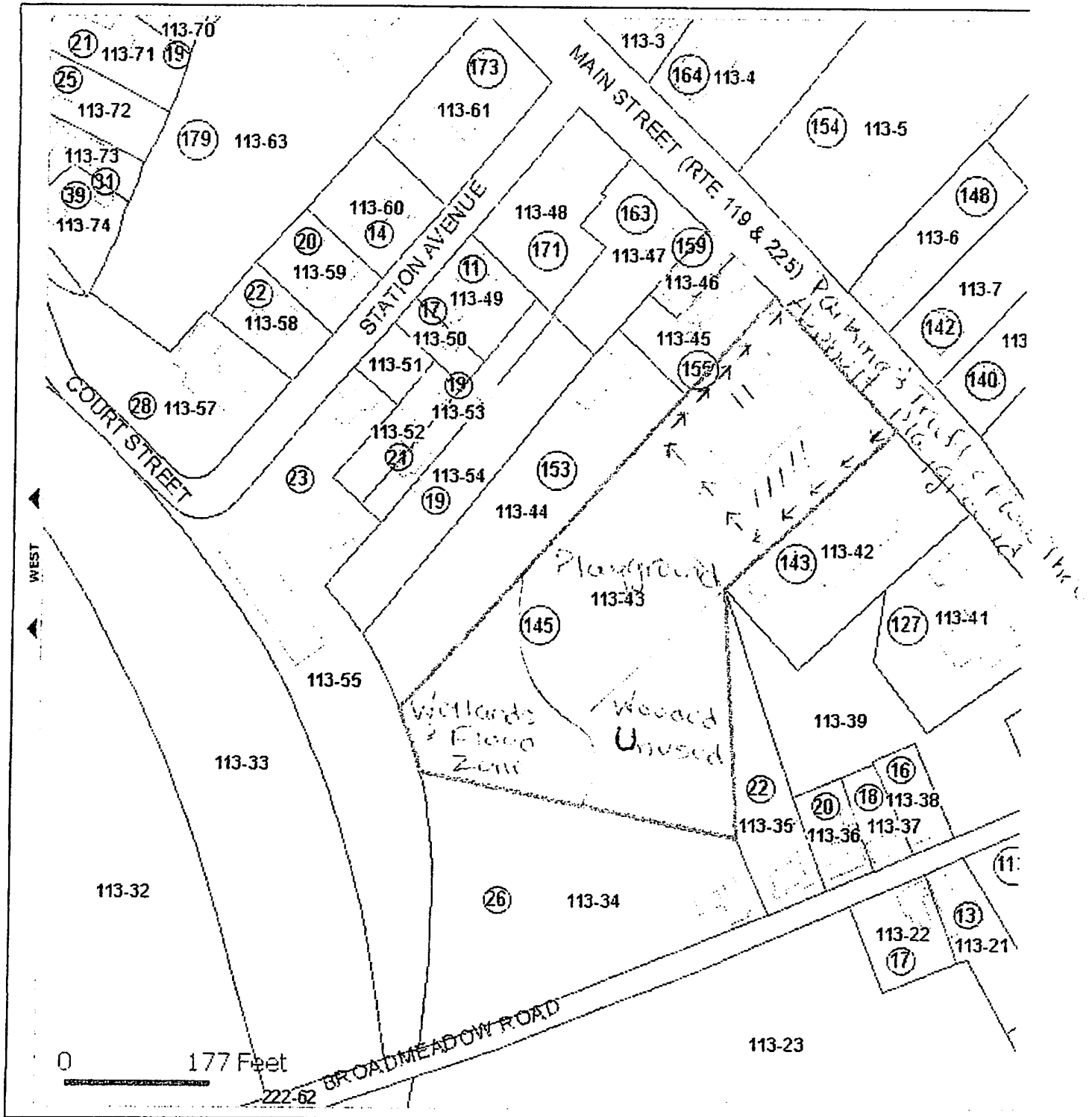
### Station Avenue Overlay District Properties Information as of January 1, 2007, Assessor's Records

Parcel ID	Owner	Address	Assessed Value
100-100-0000	JOHN J. BROWN	100 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0001	JOHN J. BROWN	101 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0002	JOHN J. BROWN	102 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0003	JOHN J. BROWN	103 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0004	JOHN J. BROWN	104 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0005	JOHN J. BROWN	105 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0006	JOHN J. BROWN	106 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0007	JOHN J. BROWN	107 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0008	JOHN J. BROWN	108 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0009	JOHN J. BROWN	109 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0010	JOHN J. BROWN	110 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0011	JOHN J. BROWN	111 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0012	JOHN J. BROWN	112 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0013	JOHN J. BROWN	113 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0014	JOHN J. BROWN	114 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0015	JOHN J. BROWN	115 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0016	JOHN J. BROWN	116 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0017	JOHN J. BROWN	117 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0018	JOHN J. BROWN	118 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0019	JOHN J. BROWN	119 STATION AVENUE	100,000
100-100-0020	JOHN J. BROWN	120 STATION AVENUE	100,000





# ATTACHMENT B





**Station Avenue Wetland Delineation**

**Town of Groton**  
**MASSACHUSETTS**

1 inch equals 100 feet

0 50 100 Feet

**Legend**

- Wetland (Shaded Area)
- Water (Blue Area)
- Field (Unshaded Area)
- Wetland (Stippled Area)
- Wetland (Dotted Area)
- Wetland (Cross-hatched Area)
- Wetland (Diagonal Lines)
- Wetland (Horizontal Lines)
- Wetland (Vertical Lines)
- Wetland (Wavy Lines)
- Wetland (Other Patterns)

**Map Notes:**

This map was prepared by the Town of Groton, Massachusetts, for the purpose of delineating wetlands along Station Avenue. The map is based on aerial photography and field data collected by the Town of Groton. The map is not to be used for any other purpose without the written consent of the Town of Groton.

**Map Scale:** 1 inch equals 100 feet

**Map Date:** 1998

**Map Author:** Town of Groton, Massachusetts

**Map Title:** Station Avenue Wetland Delineation

**Map Location:** Town of Groton, Massachusetts

**Map Coordinates:** 42° 15' N, 71° 30' W

**Map Projection:** NAD 83

**Map Units:** Feet

**Map Legend:**

- Wetland (Shaded Area)
- Water (Blue Area)
- Field (Unshaded Area)
- Wetland (Stippled Area)
- Wetland (Dotted Area)
- Wetland (Cross-hatched Area)
- Wetland (Diagonal Lines)
- Wetland (Horizontal Lines)
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**Date Received**

**Reference to Official Communication Containing  
This Document**

**Where and How Document Was Located**

**Where and How Document Was Acquired**

**Notes Pertaining to Document**



Town of Groton  
MASSACHUSETTS



1 inch equals 100 feet

100 50 0 100

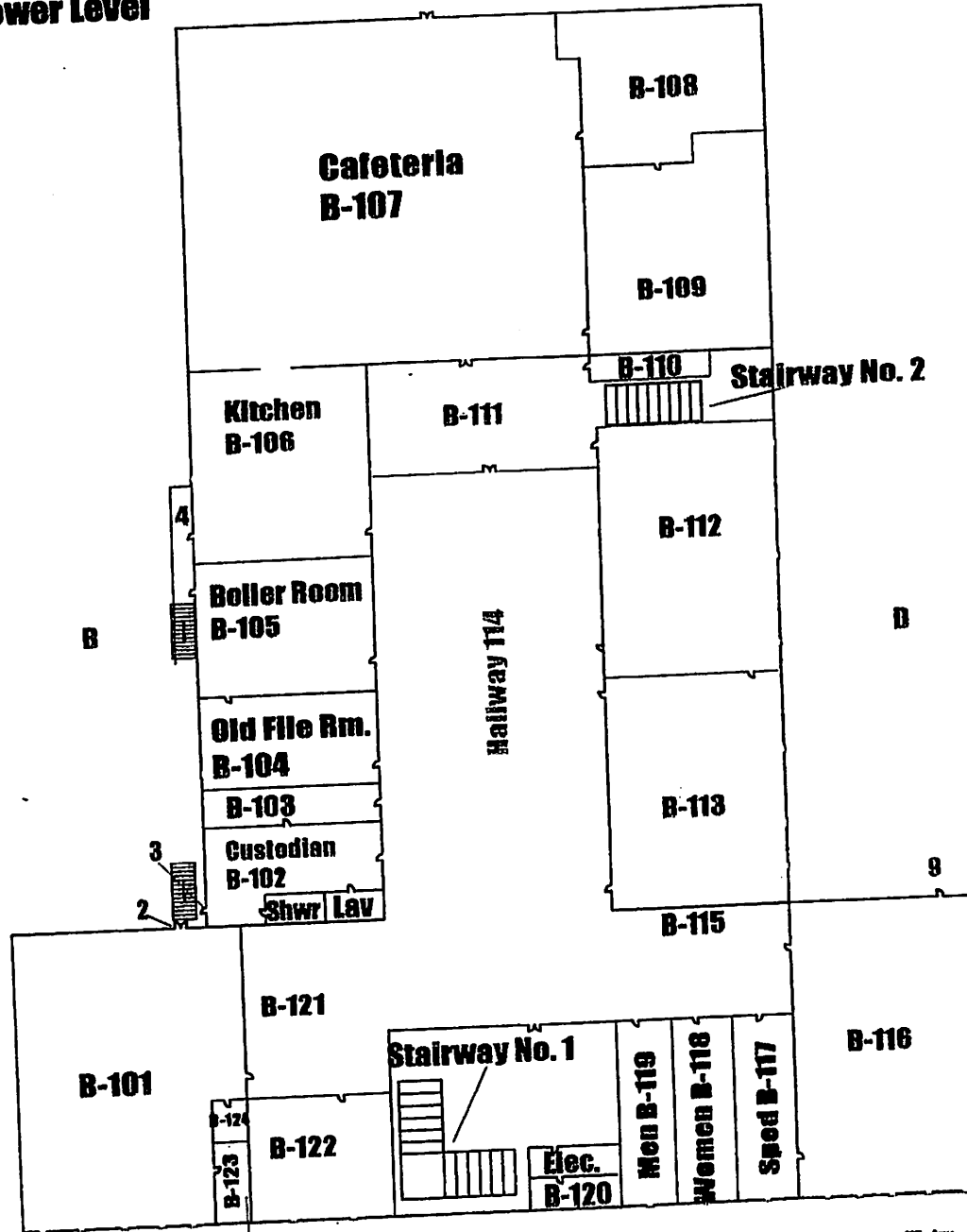
Feet

- Legend**
- *Journal of Environmental Health*
  - *Water, Sept. 1982*
  - *First Conference of the 20th*
  - *Waterworks (DEP)*
  - *PHR (Water, Zurich)*
  - *EPH (Food, Zurich)*
  - *Journal*
  - *Public Health*
  - *Public Health*

Math. Res. Lett. 2: 107-116, 1995.

# Groton Prescott Elementary School

## Lower Level

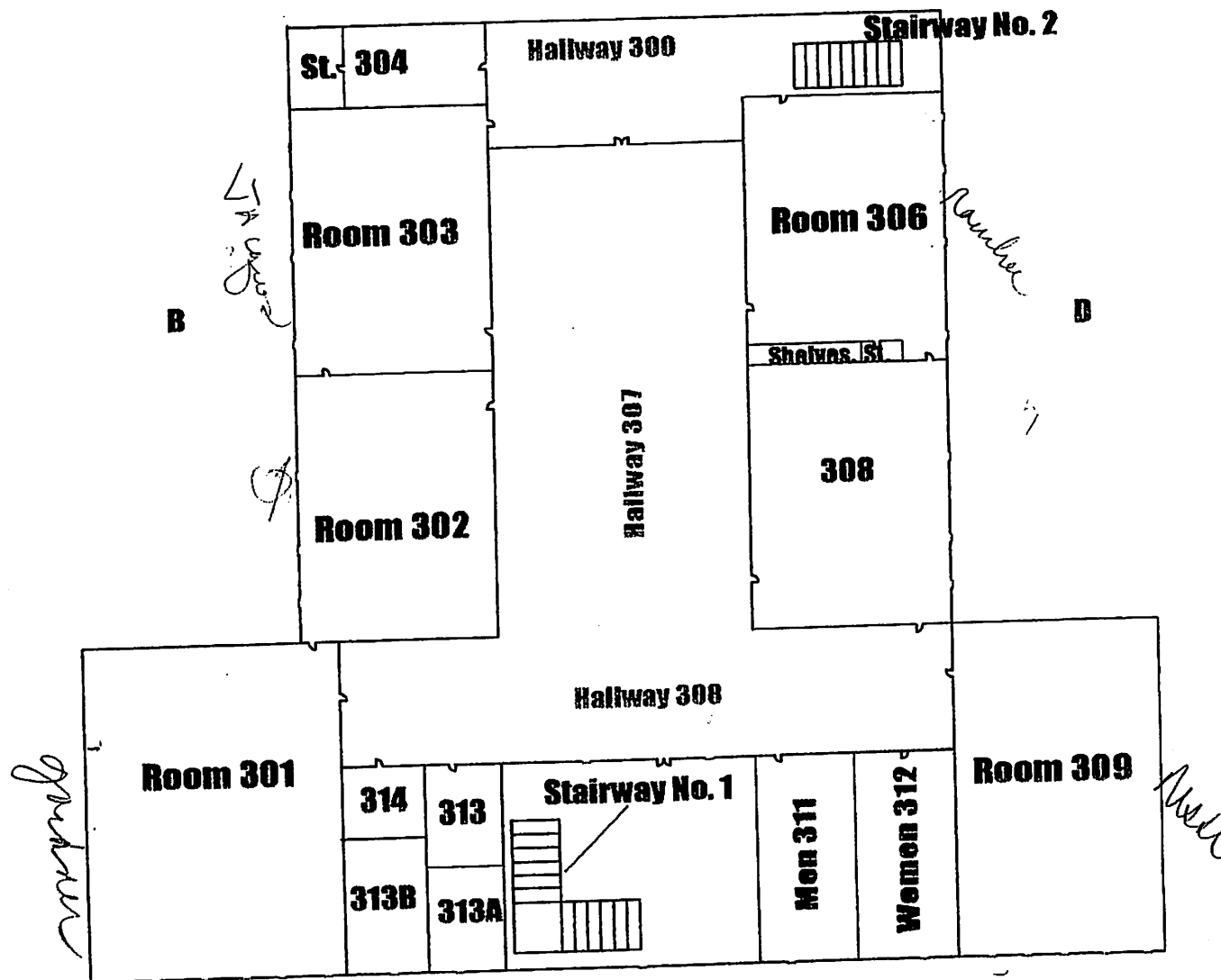


Window  
Double Door  
Single Door

10/1/00

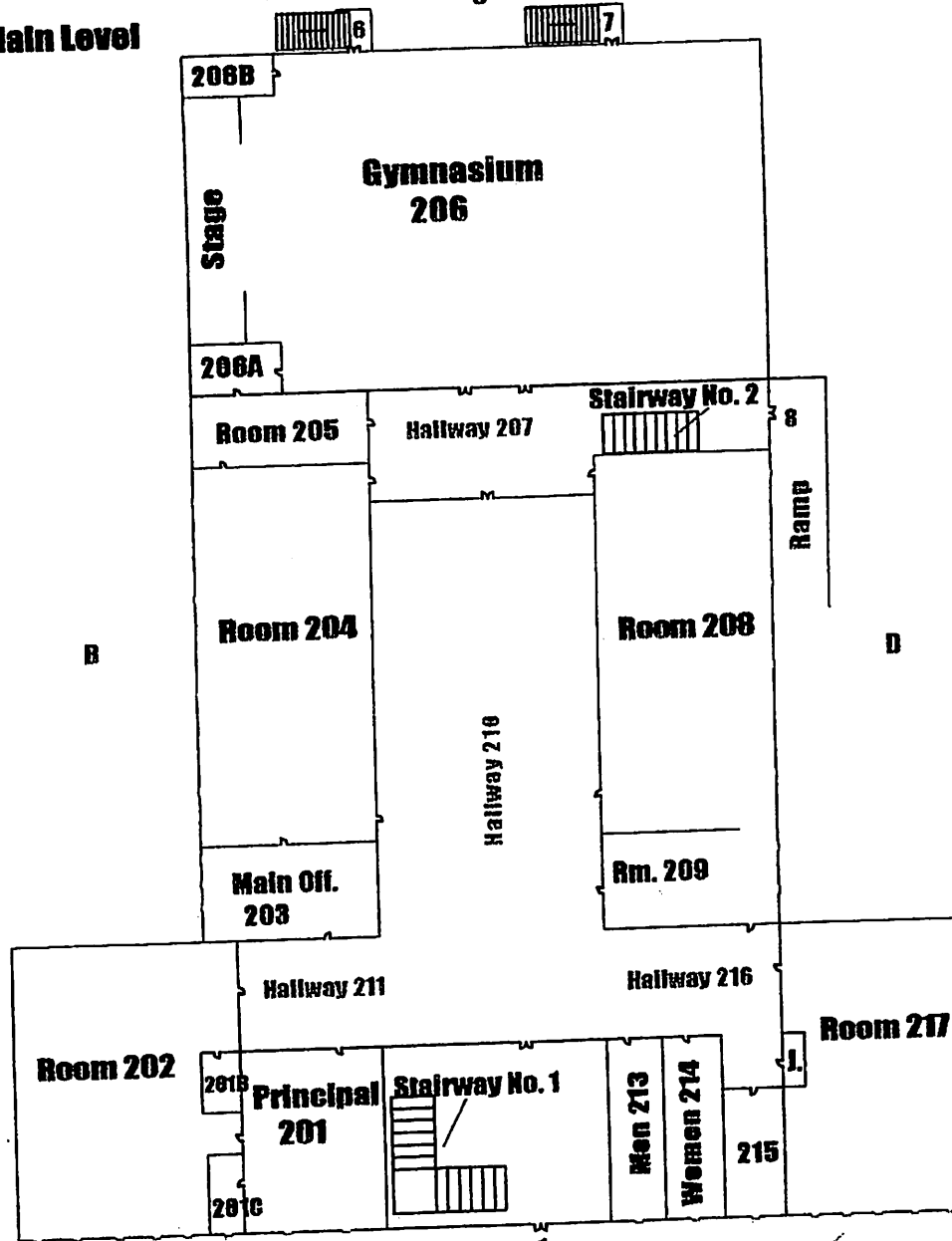
# Groton Prescott Elementary School

## Upper Level



# Groton Prescott Elementary School

Main Level



145 Main Street

W Window  
M Double Door  
A Single Door