

PROPOSED  
SUDBURY TOWN HALL

## TOWN HALL REPORT

To the Citizens of Sudbury:

Your committee which was appointed at the last annual Town Meeting, to consider the matter of location, design, construction, and the cost of a municipal building beg to submit certain definite recommendations.

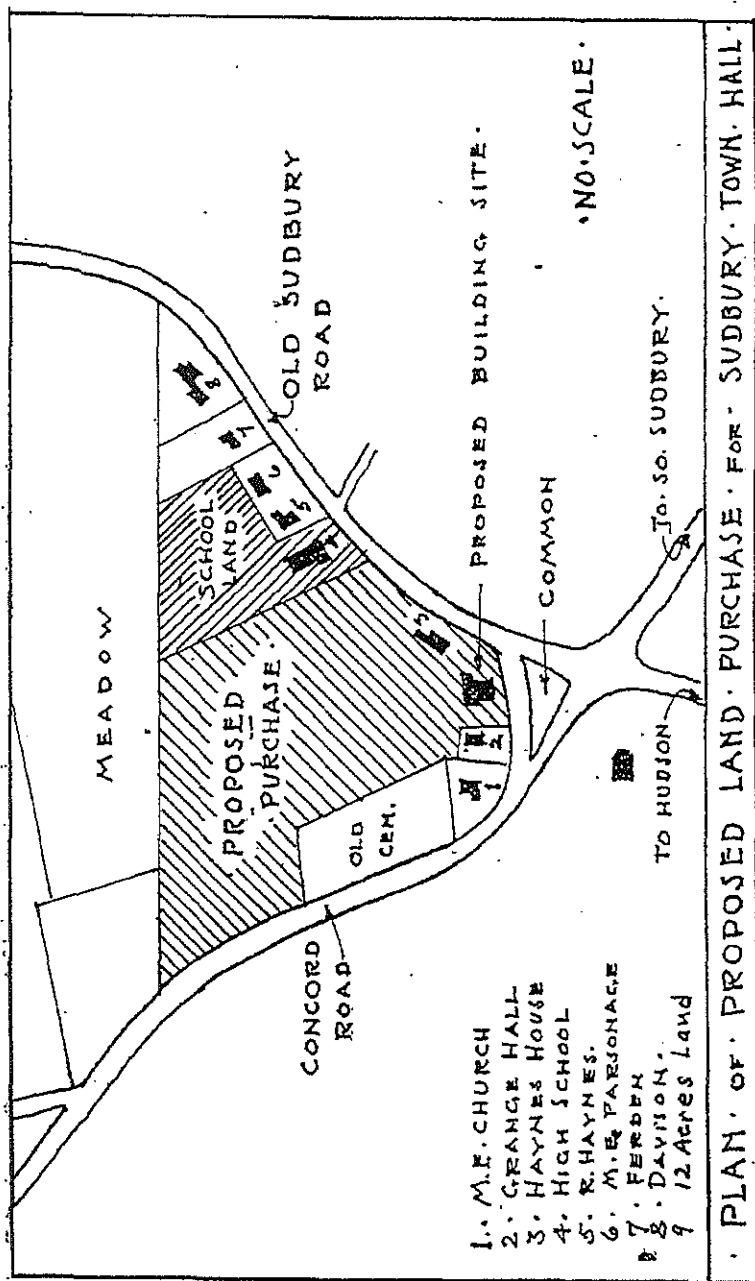
We recommend that the Town purchase from Mr. Joel Haynes approximately twelve acres of land, with buildings thereon, situated in Sudbury Center adjacent to the Common on one side and the school property on the other as shown on an accompanying diagram; that the new Town Hall be erected on or near the site of the old barn on the corner of this property; that in design it be as near a reproduction of the old hall as is practicable and becoming; that the building provide an upper hall seating capacity of five hundred, together with a stage, offices for town officers, suitable vaults, fire engine room, a branch library room, a banquet hall to seat two hundred sixty people adaptable to certain school activities not provided in their present building; and other accommodations shown on plan; that the construction of the building be of dark red brick except that the portico, front wall, cornices and gables be of wood painted white, and that the cost of the entire project be approximately \$85,000,000."

That we might substantiate these recommendations we beg to submit herewith our sources of information, course of reasoning and process of arriving at them.

Regarding location, the committee felt that the selection of the proper site for this building was of the greatest importance. The first question to decide here was a more or less general one and that was whether it should be placed in the village at South Sudbury or at the Center. After due consideration it was decided that in all fairness to everyone concerned the hall should be placed at Sudbury Center, in the vicinity of the Common. Arguments were presented in the favor of the Rice property at South Sudbury.

We realize that this section of the town is more thickly populated at this time, yet it was felt that this new Town Hall should be placed in the old Colonial Center established by our forefathers near the geographical center, if it could be done without too great an inconvenience, sacrifice or cost.

One of the first propositions considered by the committee was that of transforming the old Unitarian Church into a Town House. It had been suggested that this property could be purchased for this purpose, but upon consultation with the Trustees of the parish it was learned they did not wish to sell. Further consideration of this project was abandoned.



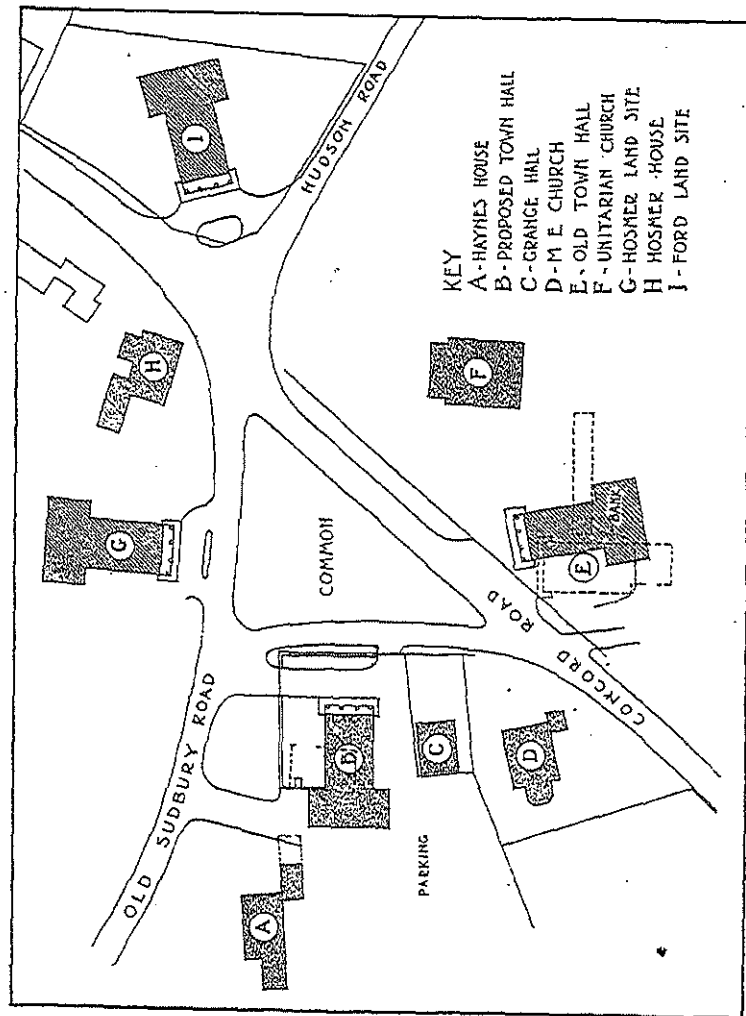
With this location eliminated there were presented four possible spots about the square upon which to build, as follows: the old site, the Joel Haynes corner, the Hosmer lot and the Parmenter store lot on the corner recently sold to Mr. Henry Ford. These different locations were considered and studied from every angle by the committee, and that its members, as well as the entire citizens of the town, might be advised and guided by men well skilled in art and architecture, all of the resident architects of the town were called into consultation, thereby assisting the committee in formulating their decision.

The first site to be considered, naturally, was the old original one. Of course it is generally known the ownership of the land upon which the old town hall rested was vested with the Trustees of the First Parish Church. The Parish was approached regarding the building of a new hall to replace the old one and was very gracious in its offer to allow such a building to be placed on or near the former site with the following provisions: first, the external design with exact location and provisions for parking must be presented to the parish for approval; and second, the ownership of the land must continue with the parish.

The committee realizes that sentiment carries a great deal of weight in influencing the desires of many of our citizens to reproduce the old hall on the original site, especially the older citizens who have lived here many years and find it difficult to picture the hall in any other position. We must, however, with due respect to this feeling, recognize the fact that the elements which were responsible for the choice of this particular location nearly one hundred years ago are not as manifest at the present time and should not be considered so seriously. At that time the Center of the town presented a very different appearance. There was no Methodist Church, no Grange hall, and no roadway passing these buildings as there is at the present time. The property upon which these buildings were later built, no doubt, was part of a flourishing homestead and not available for town purposes.

Probably another point in favor of the original site was its proximity to the parish horse sheds which furnished convenient shelter for horse and carriage.

The ones who designed and planned the original hall no doubt were men of vision and good judgment and had a desire to give the town a hall that would adequately supply the requirements of the town for at least seventy-five to one hundred years. It served its purpose well and was the admiration of a great many people for years, both within our own town and those more distant, and no doubt could have been made to take care of our present day needs had it not been destroyed. With its destruction we believe it is our duty to replace it with one that will furnish us with the conveniences and facilities that will suffice for at least as long a period as its predecessor. If a hall which would fulfill these requirements were to be erected on approximately the old site it would necessitate a tremendous amount of excavation in the rear, the building of a high retaining wall, the removal of the old horsesheds to the rear and west of the parish church, besides many other modern-



istic alterations, all of which would destroy the old colonial atmosphere about that section of the center of the town.

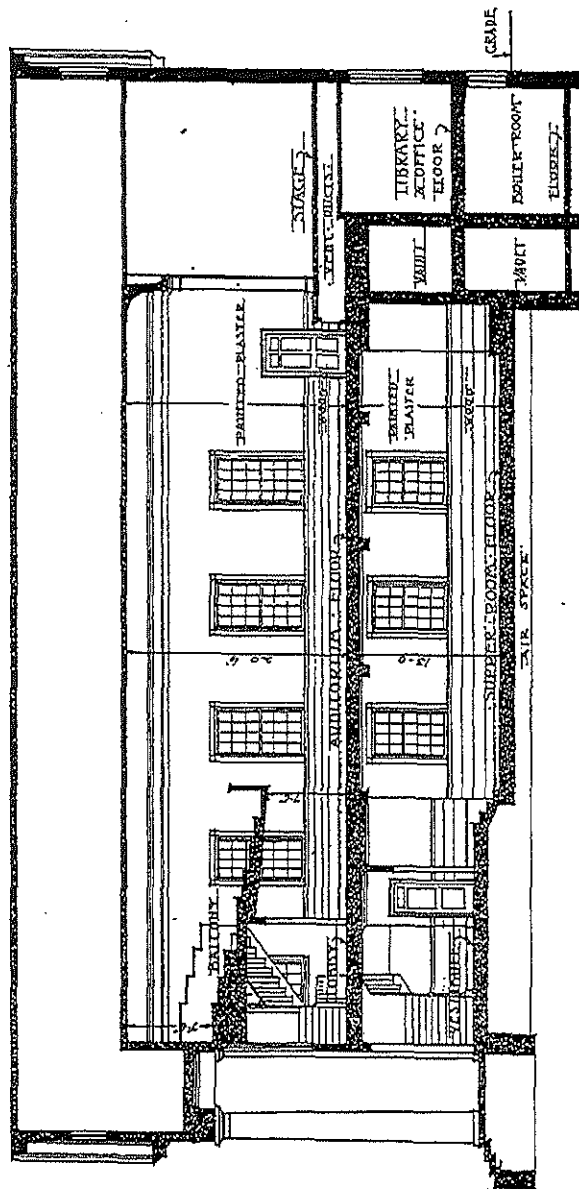
Estimates of the cost of such an undertaking by qualified and capable architects of the town were in the neighborhood of \$20,000.00. This cost would cover every item of excavation, retaining walls, moving sheds, parking areas and the proper setting of trees, and so forth, to make the work very high class about the hall. With this plan or any other plan whereby a hall were to be placed on the old site there would be a high retaining wall all around the rear of the building or else the lower floor of this building would be built into the bank, thus making inadequate the supply of light in the rear of the first floor and basement of the building, with the second floor built out over it toward the cemetery. It seemed to the committee that the cost of putting this lot into shape, its lack of adaptability and the probability of destroying the old colonial atmosphere about the entire property were sufficient to justify them in looking further for a site.

The only other piece of property available without initial cost to the town was the parcel of land upon which the old Parmenter store stood and at the present time owned by Mr. Ford. This land was offered very generously by him through his local representative, Mr. Boyer, to the town as a location for a town hall, being held in abeyance for that explicit purpose and no other.

The committee were very grateful for the offer and proceeded to study the lot with its possibilities. Consider first its size, shape and topography. It contains approximately six-tenths of an acre, very much greater in length than depth, as shown on an accompanying plan, with a very serious slope or falling away to the rear. These particular characteristics did not upon first thought present as serious a problem as did the actual survey of the lot by skilled workmen. It then became apparent that more land should be added to the rear of the lot if a building were to have a proper setting with adequate parking space. Furthermore, it did not appear that the grade here presented a serious problem, but from actual figures it developed that the filling and adequate grading to give the building a proper setting and provide for the necessary outside areas, such as we feel are needed, would be very expensive. In round figures these two items alone are estimated to be \$15,000.00. To the layman this figure appears extravagant, but from actual calculations, taking the approximate number of yards of work at a reasonable price used by contractors to estimate such costs, the above figure was established. Added to this expense it developed that the falling away of the lot in the rear would require more height in the foundation walls to the extent of \$5,000.00, and this extra height would not increase the height of the building.

Consider a building on this lot in relation to those about the Common. It seems to be removed too far to be considered an intimate part of this group as the committee desire to have it.

The element of danger attached to this location should be given serious thought. Traffic through the center of this town is quite heavy at the present time and no doubt will increase in years



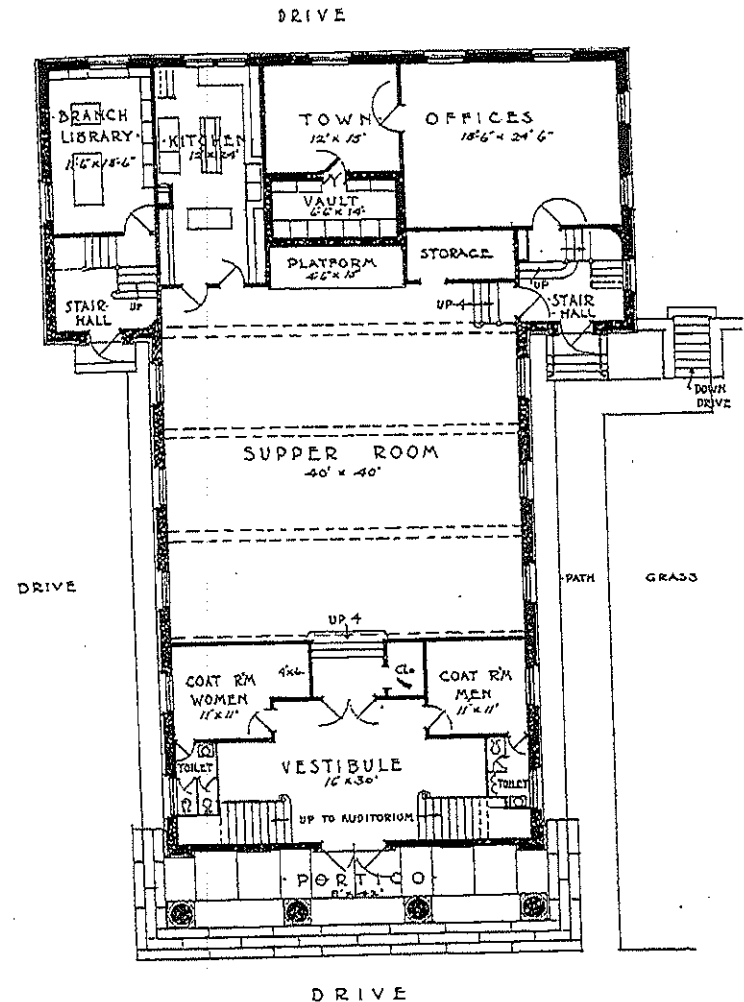
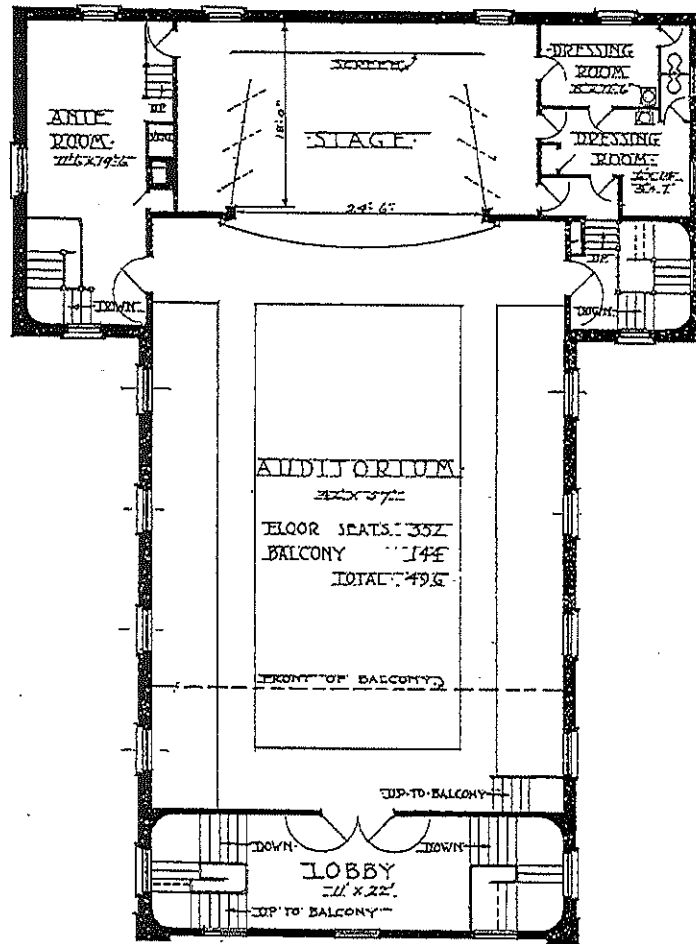
to come because of the fact that automobile route number 126 passes directly through here as well as the route from the Post road at Wayland to Hudson and other towns to the west. This danger becomes all the more serious when we realize that the children from the school at the Center would frequently have occasion to make use of the hall for many of their activities and in their travels back and forth always on foot, would be laying themselves liable to personal injury by this traffic while crossing the street at the square.

The site of the Hosmer barn across the road on the south side of the Common was also considered a possibility. After communicating with the owners of the property and finding no disposition to sell, and realizing that the same arguments which applied against the Ford lot were applicable to this one, the committee did not go into the matter further.

With these three lots out of the four in the Center considered in detail there remains but one, the Joel Haynes lot. Before going into the qualifications of this property it would be well to state that the four lots which were selected as possibilities in Sudbury Center were placed before the committee for choice with the element of cost eliminated as one of the first steps in their efforts to locate the proper place for a new municipal building. The committee were almost unanimous in their decision that if the same building could be built on each of the four lots for the same amount of money, the site of the old barn on the Haynes property would be their choice. The same proposition was placed before the local architects, Mr. Joseph E. Chandler, Mr. Ralph Adams Cram, and Mr. Charles H. Way, who have so kindly lent their assistance to this committee, and with but one exception their preferences were the same, as those of the building committee.

With so many of us, including well skilled architects of the same opinion regarding the desirability of this site from the standpoint of beauty, proper setting and balance about the Common, we began a study of the location in an effort to justify the initial cost of the property. The price of this property, which comprises about twelve acres of land with buildings is \$15,000.00. This price appeared prohibitive to the committee so the idea of purchasing merely a lot large enough for the town hall was considered. The owner of the property was approached and it was found he was unwilling to break up the parcel, leaving the committee with two alternatives; the purchase of the entire property or the taking by eminent domain of sufficient land for our purpose. The latter course did not meet the approval of the committee under the existing circumstances.

In the first place let us consider the cost of putting the lot, upon which it is proposed to build the hall, in readiness for the builders. The same architects, Messrs. Rice and Way, who surveyed the other lots, worked on this one and the results of their efforts showed an estimated cost for excavation and grading of \$5,000.00, which compares with \$20,000.00 for similar work on the old site and \$15,000.00 on the Ford lot. It will be recalled that it was estimated if the same building were to be erected on all



three lots \$5,000.00 more of construction would have to go into one on the Ford lot.

Thus it will be seen that the cost of furnishing and preparing all three of these pieces of property are approximately the same, namely \$20,000.00

We believe these figures are unbiased and as accurate as could be obtained without placing the work out to competitive bid, and furnish an absolutely fair basis of comparison. It might develop that these figures were to a degree extravagant, but if such is the case it would apply to each proportionately. We believe the town

would be justified in paying \$20,000 for grading and purchasing the Haynes property because, aside from furnishing a lot upon which to build our town hall, we would be purchasing twelve acres of land with buildings, while in the other locations this money would cover only the cost of grading, excavating, and a plot of land large enough for a hall.

Possibly it was not within the scope of the specific duties of the committee to consider the requirements of our public schools in connection with a town hall. However, we felt that if we could incorporate in this new town hall some of the accommodations that are lacking in the high school, such as an assembly hall, a

stage for theatricals, banquet hall for socials, and recreation hall where possibly basket ball and gymnasium work might be had without serious injury to the building, we would be doing a justifiable service for the town. If we are to provide these things for the school pupils it is imperative that we place this hall, so far as is practicable with respect to other requirements, where it will be the most easily accessible with the least possible danger to the scholars.

Furthermore, this property which is adjacent to the school and extends the entire length of that property from front to rear, would provide adequate room for expansion of the school buildings and furnish ample space for playgrounds and athletic field.

The entire value of this property cannot be attributed to its contiguity to the school. We believe that the town should own land enough here in the Center to take care of whatever buildings might be needed at present as well as in the future, such as a town hall, a building for fire apparatus, if it is not housed in the town hall, and a suitable building to house the machinery of the road department.

We do not feel that the present arrangement whereby the road department stores its equipment both in and about the old Haynes barn lends beauty to the surroundings of the Town Square and should be done away with. Should this property be sold to any one but the town it would mean providing elsewhere for this machinery. The proper place to house all this equipment would be a building placed on the property in the vicinity of the old hearse house which burned. This building could possibly be built from materials salvaged from the Haynes barn.

The value of the old Colonial house on this property is hard to estimate. It may be salvaged or it may be retained as living quarters for a janitor for the hall and school, or a man to take care of the fire apparatus. While it may present a problem we feel this house at least would not be a liability to the town.

Another source of value in this property to the town would lie in the fact that land could be taken to widen and make safe for travel the corner and curve going from Concord road to the road to Wayland.

The safety of this location adds value to it for building purposes. The road leading by the Grange hall cannot be called any part of a thoroughfare, but as more of a side street which would allow safe travel to and from the parking area to be provided in the rear of a hall located on this corner.

We believe that further value, while not in a material way, lies in the possibilities of beautifying this corner. A hall properly placed and built according to an appropriate design would do away with the old barn and in our estimation serve as a balance to the fine old church across the Common and greatly improve the appearance of the entire square.

After studying the valuable assets of this property the committee is convinced, even more than at first, that for value received the town would be justified in buying this property for the price of \$15,000.00, especially so when it is remembered that the

estimated cost of preparing the old site, the Hosmer lot and the Ford property for a hall would be equivalent to the price of this entire property.

After having convinced ourselves that the proper site had been chosen the matter of the design and construction of the building was considered. Your committee had first in mind the excellence of the design of the old building and its appropriateness to the Town of Sudbury, but in plan its limited capacity and lack of conformity to the present state laws as to exits, toilet accommodations and so forth, made its exact reproduction impossible as well as impracticable.

It was felt that the new building should be large enough to seat five hundred divided between the main floor and the balcony, that there should be better office, supper room and kitchen accommodations, and that if possible there should be room to house our new fire apparatus. The housing in this building, of the fire apparatus has many advantages, not the least of which is the saving in cost over the erection of a separate building, a matter of five or six thousand dollars.

After consultation with Messrs. Cram, Chandler and Way, the architects residing in town, the committee asked Mr. Way to assist them. The accompanying drawings are the results, a building, the main part of which is of the same proportions as the old hall and follows it closely in design, although necessarily larger, with the wings placed at the rear and subordinated in design.

The portico, front wall, cornices, and gables are of wood, painted white. The side and rear walls of dark red brick on a split granite base course similar to that of the old building. Constructing the entire building of wood did not seem wise.

The building has three entrances, one for use with the main hall and supper room, one for use with the office section, and one for the branch library room. There is also a back door for the use of the kitchen and boiler room. Separating the entrances in this way makes use of the building more flexible and also provides the widely separated exits required by the state laws.

The basement at the rear of the building contains a fire station large enough to house three pieces of apparatus, with a hose drying shaft thirty feet high, adequate space for boilers and fuel storage, and a vault for dead storage of records and so forth. The balance of the area under the buildings is only high enough for circulation of air under the supper room floor. This basement development is possible on the proposed site with very little additional building cost.

On the ground floor the main entrance opens into a vestibule large enough to hold forty or fifty people without crowding with coat rooms and toilets for men and women, two staircases to the upper floor and an entrance to the supper room.

The supper room is about the size and height of the old upper hall, has a small platform, storage closets for tables and so forth, and an adequate kitchen. This room will seat 260 people and is adaptable to various school activities not provided in the present school house.

The office section contains a public office or hearing room which will seat comfortably fifty people and a small office with a large vault for town officers' use. From the public office a stair leads directly to the fire station. With its own entrance, no other part of the building need be opened or heated when only this part is being used.

The same thing is true of the branch library room. On the second floor at the head of the stairs is a large lobby with a stair leading from it to the balcony.

The auditorium seats 352, the balcony 140. This division of seats will permit the reserving of the main floor, at Town Meetings, for voters, non-voters sitting in the balcony, thereby making easier the taking of votes.

The stage is eighteen feet deep with a proscenium opening twenty-four feet six inches wide, about one-third wider and deeper than the one in the old hall and as large as the law permits without the use of an asbestos curtain. The entire design is simple and intended to follow closely that of the original building.

An ante room at the left of the stage, on the same level as the auditorium floor, provides storage space for chairs and so forth at such times as they are not in use. On the right two small dressing rooms with toilets provide for the cast when plays are being given.

Another feature that we believe should be incorporated in this building is a permanent heating system. It will be remembered by most of us that the heating arrangement in the old hall was very unsatisfactory and the cause of much discomfort and criticism during the winter months.

We believe the present quarters of the branch library are inadequate and that space be provided in the new hall.

The question of a new war memorial has never been satisfactorily settled. It is possible and without a doubt it would be highly appropriate that a suitable tablet containing the records of all Sudbury boys who served this country during the World War be placed in the front lobby of this building.

Ample space for the records of the town for many years to come must be provided. It is also important that such vaults be absolutely fireproof so that the valuable records of the town which came through the fire in such fine shape, as well as future records, will not be destroyed.

From this description of the building together with the details of the plan it will be seen that the accommodations and conveniences which a town should have in a hall of this kind are being furnished.

This building complete as we have planned it, including all the features mentioned above, has been estimated to cost in round figures about \$65,000.00. This figure is quite accurate, because it was an estimate by a contractor on a building similar in type, construction and capacity. To this cost must be added the cost of the Haynes property, which was \$15,000.00, and the cost of grading estimated at \$5,000.00, making a total of \$80,000.00.

The plans of the building have been submitted to the planning

board for their consideration in accordance with the town's by-laws and their report is herewith attached.

Following this report will be found the plans of the building and a sketch of the Haynes property in its relationship to the school property. These drawings have keys accompanying them, which, with the descriptions in this report, should explain them.

The members of this committee are very grateful to the men mentioned in this report and others who have in any way assisted and advised them in this undertaking without compensation. We sincerely thank them.

We beg to say that the above recommendations, descriptions and arguments are the results of an exhaustive study of the work assigned us and that we have worked with a keen appreciation of your demand for the scrutiny of every item in the cost of this project.

We solicit your serious consideration of this report and shall accept your action thereon as the reward for our efforts.

(Signed)

HARVEY N. FAIRBANK,  
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THOMAS STEVENSON BRADLEE.