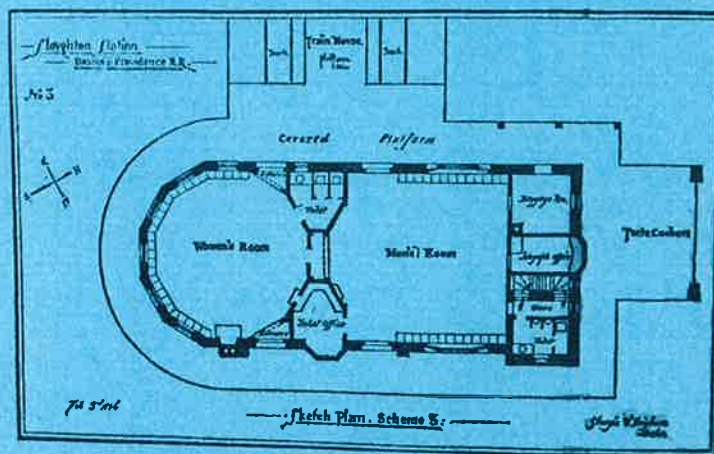


Stoughton

GROUND PLAN OF THE HEAD HOUSE.



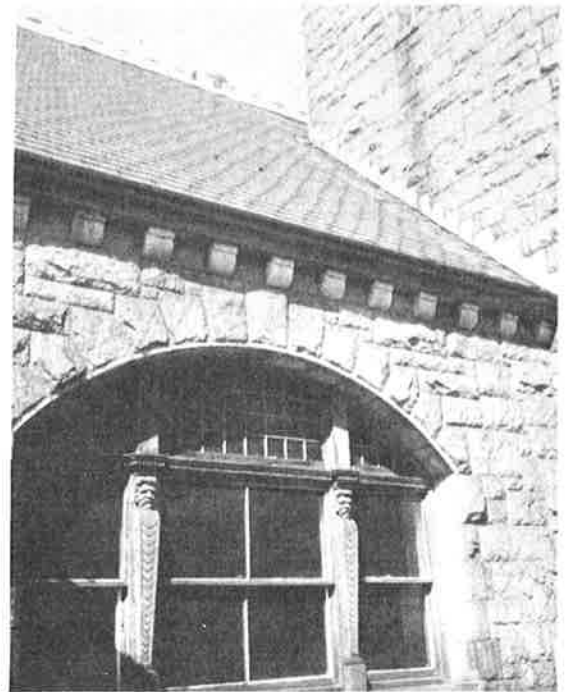
BOSTON & PROVIDENCE RAILROAD STATION
STOUGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Charles Brigham - 1888

Architectural Heritage, Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts
October 16, 1967
by
M.H. Floyd



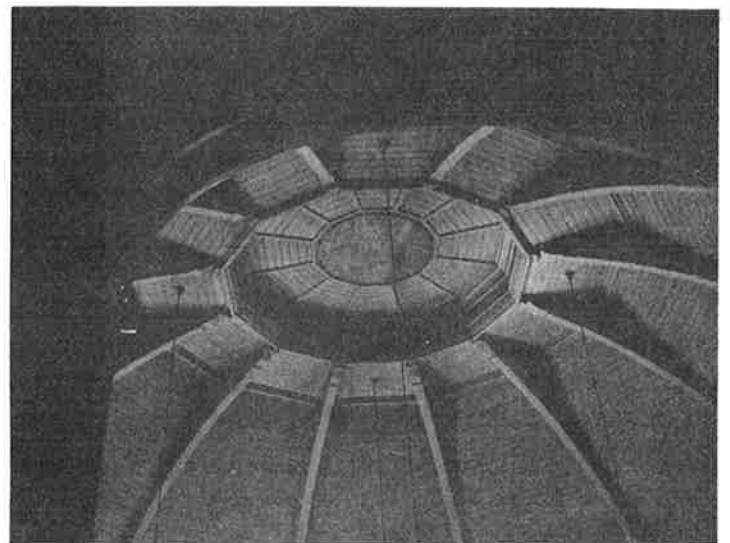
Detail: Tower & Entrance Porch



Detail: Triple Window



Interior View: Ticket Window and
Arched Passway to West Room



Interior Detail: Roof Timbering
Women's Waiting Room on West End

FIGURE 1. Stoughton Railroad Station
by Charles Brigham 1888

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE STOUGHTON RAILROAD STATION

To: Miss Bertha K. Reynolds, Secretary
Stoughton Historical Society
Stoughton, Massachusetts

From: Architectural Heritage, Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts
October 16, 1967

In our opinion the Boston & Providence Railroad Station has local importance as the most significant public building in Stoughton. It is well located, essentially unaltered, in excellent condition, and is historically linked closely to the development of local industry.

The building has state-wide historic importance because of its pivotal involvement with the early extension of the railroad in southeastern Massachusetts. It is currently unique for both its distinction of design and as the only remaining example in its area of the towered terminals built in Massachusetts towns by the railroads in the late Nineteenth Century.

Additionally, as the first independent and possibly most significant public building by Charles Brigham, whose stature for his crucial role in the development of the Classical Revival of the 1890's is bound to grow, the station holds potential for national architectural significance.

We recommend that steps be taken to list the building with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Historic American Buildings Survey and the newly established National Register. For its protection we suggest that every effort be made to establish an adaptive use for the station as soon as possible.

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LOCAL IMPORTANCE OF THE STATION TO STOUGHTON

Historically important as a thoroughfare, Stoughton is located on the high watershed which forms the only convenient route of travel south from Boston, avoiding swamps and low ground. From this area rivers are deflected toward Massachusetts Bay to the east and Narragansett Bay to the west. The Bay Road, which now forms the boundary between Stoughton and Sharon, has been used for centuries by Indians and others travelling south toward Rhode Island, while the Boston-Taunton Turnpike to the east ran down to New Bedford and Fall River as early as 1806. (Figures 1 & 2.)

In 1726, with pressure of immigration from Dorchester south to the Plymouth Colony, Stoughtonham became one of the New Grants and was named after William Stoughton, first Lt. Governor under the Charter of William and Mary. During the course of the 18th and early 19th Centuries portions of Dedham, Foxborough, Brockton, Norton, Wrentham, and Sharon were separated from Stoughton. Finally in 1888 when Avon separated to the north, the present boundaries were established.

The topographical aspect of Stoughton lent itself easily to the use of skilled labor for manufacture on the many small streams. A steady increase in the population took place in the Nineteenth Century moving from 1,020 in 1800 to 7,724 by 1908[#] although the land area decreased markedly. The greatest single population increase was just after 1900. The advent of early thread mills, followed by "Boot & Shoe" and other manufacture increased steadily along with the excellent railroad service to carry raw materials and the finished products both north to Boston and south to Providence.

The present railroad station, constructed of native granite from Myron Gilbert's quarry, was built on Wyman Street by the Boston and Providence in 1888, while a roundhouse and turntable were built on the site of the original wooden station on Railroad Avenue. Although the roundhouse is now gone, the station stands today with its 62' tower, centrally located on a large open area and is unquestionably the most significant public building in Stoughton.

Eight additional buildings qualify as noteworthy or excellent and more may be listed when an inventory of Stoughton is complete. However, no one of these individually associates with as many historic themes, local, state-wide, or national, as the railroad station. None qualifies for greater architectural distinction.

[#]NOTE: This population figure was issued in 1908 for the Souvenir Program for Old Home Week. It differs slightly from the other official figures.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STOUGHTON STATION TO MASSACHUSETTS

In 1825 the "Granite Railway," first in the nation, was constructed at Quincy, Massachusetts. The years following saw the establishment of a series of small independent railroads which gradually consolidated as the century progressed. As a terminal, Stoughton played a pivotal role in the development of early railroads in southeastern Massachusetts.

The Boston & Providence Railroad was formed and service organized in the summer of 1831. The branch from Readville to Dedham opened in 1835 while the main line, opened to Readville in 1834, was through to Canton Junction in August of 1835. The Boston & Worcester was the earliest through line (1841), while the Boston & Maine boasted the longest line by 1842.

On March 16, 1844 the Stoughton Branch Railway was organized and opened on April 7, 1845 amid much fanfare. The line was mortgaged to the Boston & Providence Railroad Corporation in 1845 and operated from Canton Junction on the main line to Stoughton for ten years. Baldwin No. 1 & 2 provided commuter service regularly to the Stoughton Terminal. In 1855 the line was extended 3.8 miles to North Easton but this section was operated for only eleven years until 1866 when it transferred to the Old Colony Line and Stoughton was again the terminal for the Boston & Providence.

Parallel extension had been taking place to the east, for the rival Old Colony Line opened Boston to Plymouth via Quincy and Abington in 1845. The Dighton and Somerset Railroad, extending up from the south, was finally authorized to merge with the Old Colony in September 1866. It was operating from Mayflower Park (Braintree Highlands) through North and South Stoughtons and from North Easton to Somerset Junction, a total of 32.8 miles. It was at this time that the Old Colony took over the North Easton extension leaving Stoughton again the terminal of the Boston & Providence Line.

Tremendous commercial prosperity in the 1880's brought increasing demand for replacement of the Stoughton station on Railroad Avenue. Not only was the station old, but the Old Colony had built a modern stone station in nearby North Easton, engaging the renowned architect H.H. Richardson through the influence of the Ames family.

An initial plan to combine the station and town offices failed when the station burned. Eventually, after several years of negotiation, H.A. Whitney, President of the Boston and Providence Corporation, obtained land on Wyman Street. The land on Railroad Avenue was used for a turntable and roundhouse while the new station was to be the finest in the region, complete with a tower. To this end Mr. Whitney commissioned Charles Brigham, architect of his own mansion on Marlboro Street in Boston to create the design.

The roundhouse is gone but the station, with tower, is today still used for daily commuting (except Sundays) by the New Haven Railroad. Freight service is considerable but the future use of the station by the railroad is most uncertain.

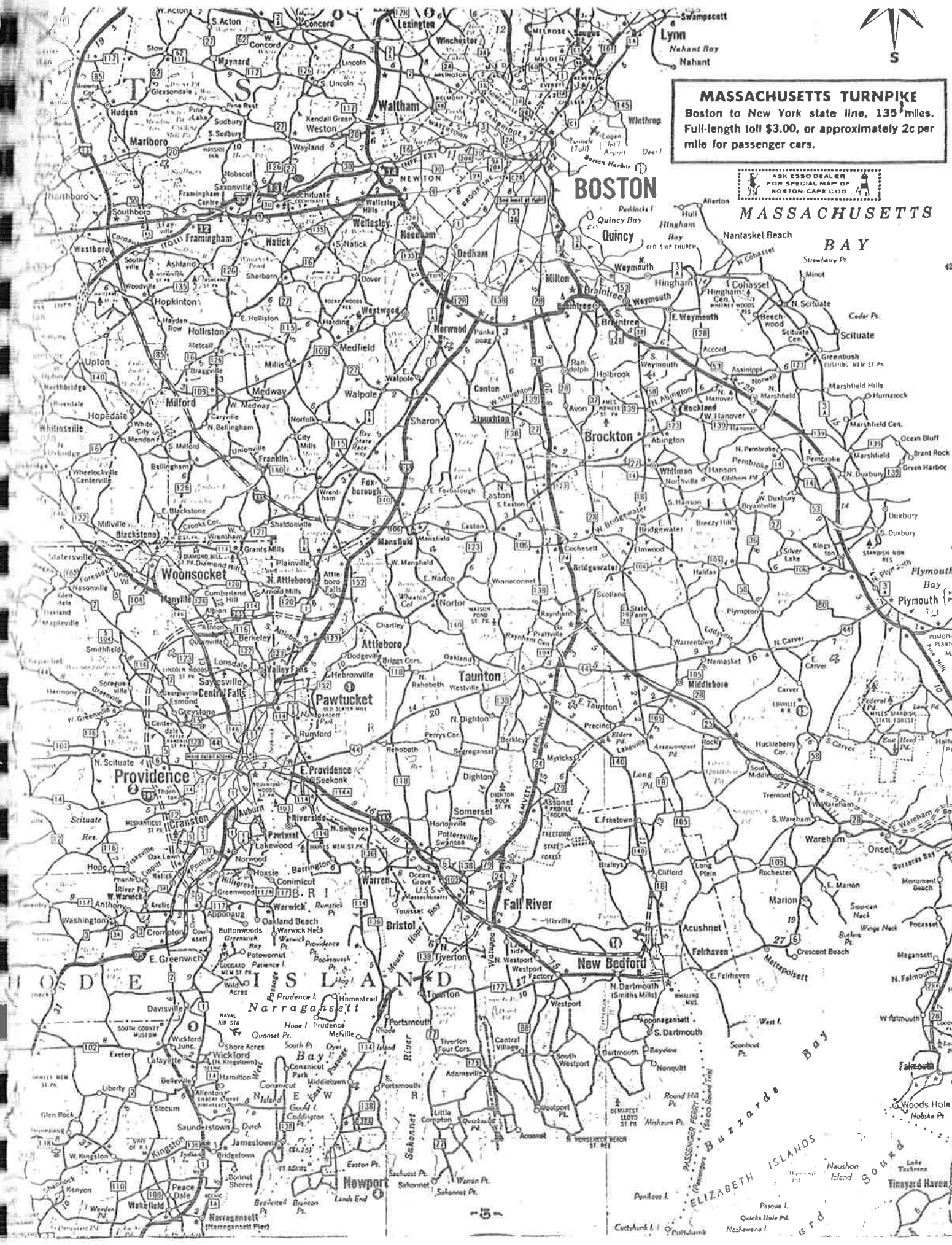


MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE
Boston to New York state line, 135 miles.
Full-length toll \$3.00, or approximately 2c per
mile for passenger cars.



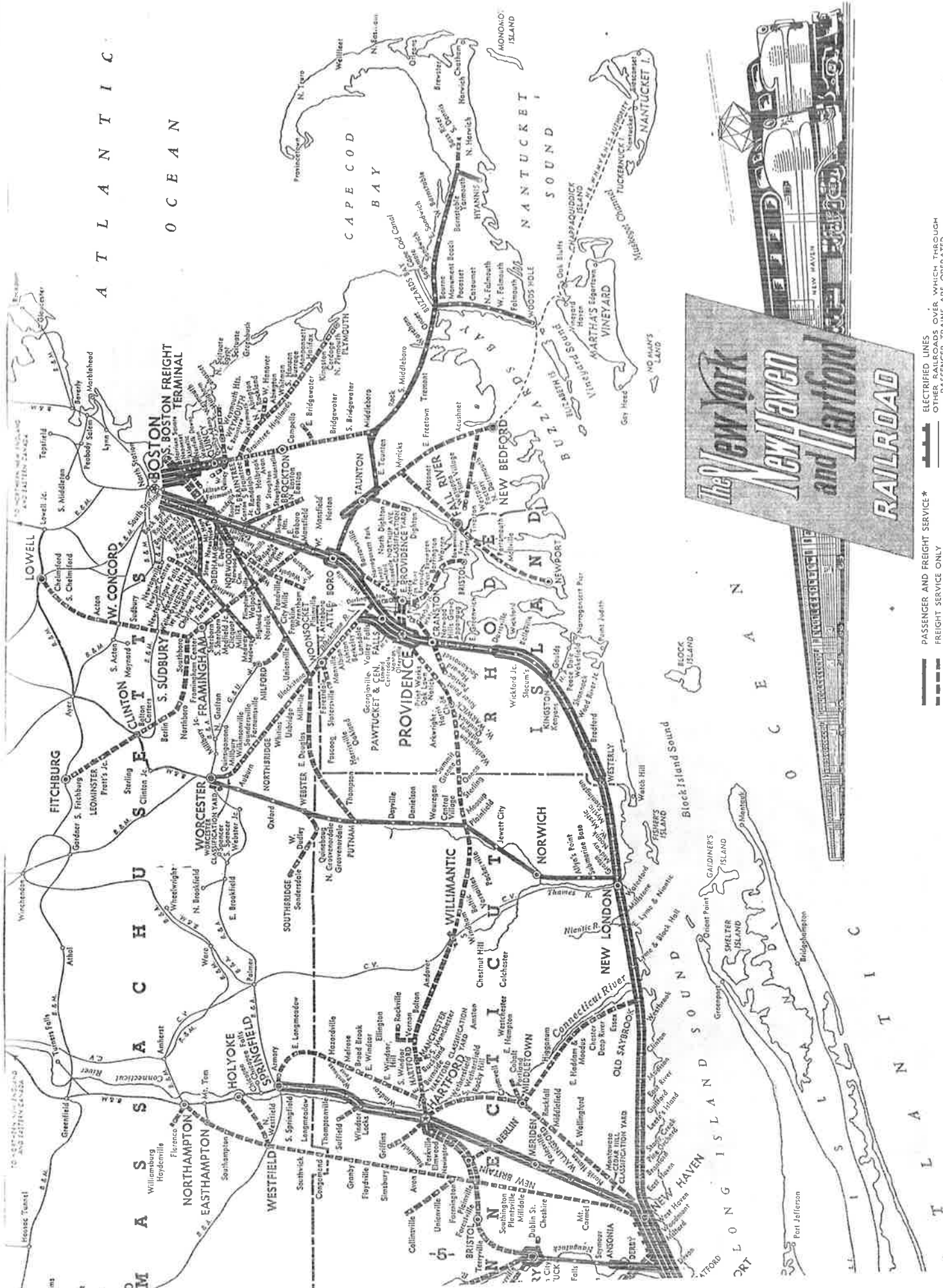
MASSACHUSETTS

BAY





TOWN of STOUGHTON
OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER
1929 - REVISED 1959- 1:1000
[DETAIL]



A T L A N T I C
O C E A N

C A P E C O D
B A Y

N A N T U C K E T
S O U N D



PASSENGER AND FREIGHT SERVICE *
FREIGHT SERVICE ONLY
NUMBER OF LINES INDICATE
NUMBER OF MAIN TRACKS
* NO FREIGHT SERVICE WOODLAWN - GRAND CENTRAL OR HELL GATE - PENN STA



III. ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

1. Architectural Background and Uniqueness

As a generic type, the railroad station must be seen against the larger background of public architecture of the 19th Century. Although stations had no historic precedents and involved many new functional and engineering problems for architects, their designs were conceived like those of libraries, town halls and other monumental structures in terms of style.

This approach of the Nineteenth Century architect to all monumental architecture is clear in Henry Van Brundt's drawing of The Park Square Station, Boston, by Peabody and Stearns, adapted as a public library. The ornate Providence Terminal and Van Brundt's Union Station at Worcester, Massachusetts all sport the lavish towered facades and multi-colored exteriors typical of the 1870's.

Because the requirements of railroad stations were more stringent, they are an excellent vehicle for study of changing architectural design. The station of the 1870's differed vastly from that of the 1880's where the bristling silhouette of the cresting is smoother and a new coherence of parts comes into play. Between 1870 and 1890 the tower was one of the most vital elements in building design, and in stations its use was reserved for more important terminal locations. Towers added not only impressiveness, but aided in the attainment of asymmetry through formation of a strong vertical accent off center.

Time and circumstance have given the Stoughton Railroad Station a unique role in the area, for it is the sole towered survivor. All other stone stations of any pretense on the line have been destroyed, like Henry Holly's Taunton Station, 1865, and both great terminal stations at Boston and Providence, from the 1870's. The Dedham Station constructed in 1883 was the only architectural rival of Stoughton although its design was less integrated. It was torn down, including the clock tower, before 1950.

Charles Brigham's other work in this field is virtually non-existent, for all three of his subway stations in Scollay Square and Adams Square in Boston are destroyed. Although his station at Roxbury Crossing from the 1880's remains, it is at least partially torn down, engulfed in other buildings and greatly altered.

Currently three stone stations remain standing. The Canton Junction Station, which is still in use, is a low lying, modest building from the 1880's with little architectural distinction. On the other hand, the North Easton Station, built by the architect H.H. Richardson in 1881, is important as a part of that architect's work in North Easton and is additionally one of the finest way stations around Boston. However, it is not a terminal station with a tower, as is Stoughton, nor has it played an equal historic role in the development of railroads and commerce.

2. Design Analysis

The Stoughton Railroad Station achieves qualities of excellence through a skillful combination of simply shaped spaces and masses with beautifully restrained detailing. Perhaps its most appealing characteristic is its deceptive simplicity, for the size and use of ornamentation in relation to the scale of the building is remarkably sophisticated and the execution of both is deft.

In plan, the use of a primary rectangular block with tower and a rounded element on one end balanced with a porch or other columnar device obscuring the other is used extensively in the 1880's. In actuality the plan differs little from that used some years earlier by H.H. Richardson in the Woburn Library. The essential difference here is the smooth coherence of blended parts in the station in contrast to the individually articulated details of the library.

Constructed of rough cut granite, the station is a magnificent piece of workmanship. The modillions of the cut stone cornice and the capping of the massive tower accent the subtle planes of the slate roof and the half timbered entrance porch. Each part of the building is interdependent, placed with reason and subtly balanced.

The windows are designed with care, for the varied arched openings on the tower and east end balance the square ones on the rounded west end. The carved gables which divide the triple arched window, the Romanesque columns of iron and the hand-cut voussoirs of the arches all add to the aspect of understated richness.

On the interior a similar assurance and subtlety is evident in the combination of the spaces. Functionally, the balanced ticket window and rest room utilize the arched connecting passage cleverly.

The size of decorative elements and their amount of ornamentation is again knowingly controlled. The woodwork is very simple to contrast with the ticket window and fountain shaped like niches, a favorite device of the 1880's. In the Women's Room to the west the twelve-sided timbering of the roof is simple and sure with the ribs curving up to the oculus. These curves echo the "Romanesque" arch of the fireplace (now slightly altered) and the passway.

The excellence of the design has its basis in quality workmanship and a wonderfully restrained combination of interrelated parts. It is easy to see how the station carries its massive 62' tower with such grace.

3. Structural Analysis

BASEMENT: Full-sized under main building, crawl space (under Women's Room).
No signs of seepage or dampness.
Concrete full floor; stone foundation walls.
Joists and flooring in excellent condition, no sub-floor east end.
Base of tower: 15' square, generously canted.
No deterioration or weakness evident in mortar, or foundation.

HEATING: 1952 oil burner, good condition; steam heating system.

PLUMBING: Fixtures need replacing and modernizing.
No evidence of leakage below.

ROOF: Original slate roof on building and tower.
Patented folsom snow guards all over roof.
Original copper cresting intact.
Only leakage to left of fireplace at chimney in Women's Waiting Room.
Individual slates may need redrilling on north side.
Re-roofing seemingly unnecessary, slate intrinsic to the design.

EXTERIOR: Rough-cut Stoughton granite in excellent condition.
No obvious alterations.
Iron columns need scraping, priming and painting.
Half timbering in entry needs repainting of plastering.

ALTERATIONS: Interior baggage room on north wall should be removed.
Fireplace in Women's Room is altered in design.
Chimney to left side of south facade does not have original chimney pots and has been rebuilt. Its design is good.
Alterations are very minor.

INTERIOR: Good condition and not markedly defaced.
Basic design would be suitable for many adaptive uses.
Architectural elaboration is unusual for this type of structure, and the oculus motif in the roofing of the Women's Room is particularly outstanding, as well as the arched entry dividing the two rooms.

TOWER: Excellent condition, no evidence of leakage or weakness.
Bonded brick lining, hand cut voussoirs over lancet windows.
Four-face clock intact, may need repair of movement.

DIMENSIONS: 88' Length x 35.5' width.
14' Wall height.
32' to ridge of roof.
62' Tower, 15' square base.

4. The Architect - Charles Brigham 1841-1925

The works of Charles Brigham fall into three major phases, each of which is closely associated with the most impressive buildings being designed in Boston. He worked extensively in all types of monumental public building, his many domestic designs being in the Back Bay area which experienced its largest growth during his most productive years.

Brigham's early work, until 1886, was clearly influenced by the European education of his partner John Sturgis. The firm was generally considered to be one of the most sophisticated and is generally credited with the introduction of Ruskin-Gothic influence to Boston public building of the 1870's.

He emerged on his own just as the Classical Revival was coming to prominence. As the author of the huge addition to the Massachusetts State House and the Christian Science Mother Church, he was responsible for establishing architectural Boston in a Classical mold.

The Stoughton Railroad Station, built in 1888, though not the largest is certainly one of the best of his designs and indicates a deep understanding of the Richardsonian motifs of the 1880's. He utilizes materials sensitively and honestly, considers function freely, and combines a robust assurance and clarity of form with beauty of detail.

APPENDIX

TRAINING

Charles Brigham first entered the architectural office of Calvin Ryder in 1858 as a draughtsman following his graduation from Watertown High School. In 1860 he moved on to the larger office of Gridley J.F. Bryant at just the time when the Boston City Hall was being designed by that architect in collaboration with Arthur Gilman. This building, in addition to being large and important, was to serve as the "official" monument which heralded in the French Academic influences which were to dominate American architecture through the 1860's.

STURGIS & BRIGHAM 1866-1886

Seven years older than Brigham, John Hubbard Sturgis had been educated in England and had travelled widely on the Continent prior to his arrival in Boston in the mid 1850's when he joined Gridley Bryant. The firm of Sturgis and Brigham, formed in 1866, gave to Brigham a breadth of architectural sophistication which would not otherwise have been available. Sturgis and Brigham designed many of Boston's early public buildings of the 1870's and their designs were noted for the knowledgeable ease with which a broad range of archaeologically based ornamental motifs were incorporated on both the interior and the exterior.

Although he had not been an original member of the Boston Society of Architects, Brigham is noted as a member of the admissions committee in the 1870's; he was chairman of this committee during the 1880's.

His work of the period is generally characterized by the coloristic influence of Ruskin-Gothic design, notably the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1871-79, which was torn down shortly after 1900. It is not clear whether the use of imported ceramic tile on the exterior was the result of Sturgis' recollection of the South Kensington Museum in England or of the need for economy during depression years, since its use presumably saved \$41,000 on the cost of the building (\$375,000).

Notwithstanding, the museum created comment as one of the most influential designs of the day and was followed by numerous public buildings and the Church of the Advent in 1879. By the 1880's a large number of houses were designed by Brigham and Sturgis in the Back Bay and these seem to be consistently the more expensive ones: Nathaniel Thayer House, 239 Commonwealth Avenue (\$125,000); E.V.R. Thayer House, 17 Gloucester (\$120,000); and the palatial remodelling of the F.K. Ames House, 306 Dartmouth Street in 1882.

So well known were Sturgis & Brigham that they were called to New York City to design the mansion of H.H. Rogers, millionaire Vice President of Standard Oil and a native of Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

BRIGHAM 1886-1888

The Stoughton Railroad Station and the mansion of H.A. Whitney, 201

Marlboro Street, were among the first commissions completed by Brigham following the return of John Sturgis to England in 1886 upon the death of his father, Russell Sturgis.

By this time the style of the architect has evolved from the surface eclecticism of the 1870's into a solid handling of mass and components with strength and clarity. The ease and assurance with which Brigham incorporates the ornamental details of the half timbered entrance, the three-part arched window and the 62' tower into the single design with such simplicity of feeling is exceptional.

BRIGHAM & SPOFFORD 1888-1905

As the commissions continued to pour in, Brigham took into partnership John Spofford who had worked with him as draughtsman from 1881 to 1886. Spofford, born in 1854 in Webster, Maine, had worked as both a carpenter and a mason as well as a teacher. He was a man of tremendous energy and ability and it was doubtless through him that the firm won a series of excellent commissions in Maine, including the addition to the Maine State House in Augusta.

In Massachusetts the firm entered upon a period of tremendous productivity tending more and more to larger public building. As the 1890's began Brigham was designing both the \$3,000,000 addition and renovation of the Massachusetts State House, and the Town Hall and Library in Fairhaven which had been commissioned by H.H. Rogers. While Spofford seems to have carried on much of the work of the firm after 1892, Brigham is increasingly involved with large and erudite commissions, such as the Massachusetts State House. The ambivalence between the classicism of this design and the rugged assurance of his contemporary work in Fairhaven is intriguing.

BRIGHAM (Coveney & Bisbee) 1892-1909

Following the completion of the Massachusetts State House, Brigham continued with large single commissions, assisted by Coveney and Bisbee. Subway stations at Scollay Square and Adams Square were followed by the Albert Burrage Mansion, 314 Commonwealth Avenue of 1899, the only house in the Back Bay which attempted the impressiveness of the chateau manner of R.M. Hunt on Fifth Avenue.

The delicate Unitarian Church in Fairhaven, completed in 1903 for H.H. Rogers, is a distinct echo of the English perpendicular gothic with "English" Parish House to match, and the Watertown High School recalls similar motifs more like Brigham's work of the 1870's, so strongly influenced by Sturgis' English training.

During these years the architect was active in his native Watertown where he served as selectman for several years and was on the board of the Watertown Library. He built his own home there, donated the plans for the High School, and designed the seal of the town which is used today.

Brigham's largest, and perhaps best known commission was the huge Second Church of Christ Scientist in Boston. It was completed between 1905 and 1909 in association with Coveny and Bisbee. Technologically a triumph, the design features great scale and a huge dome. The extensive use of classical forms here recalls many elements from the architect's Massachusetts State House addition and places the church as a product of the revival styles which were to dominate the twentieth century.

The mature designs of Brigham span the crucial years. Classical after 1893, the architect had produced in 1888 in Stoughton a railroad station which is a superb statement from the age of Richardson.

CHARLES BRIGHAM 1841-1925

- 1841 Born Watertown, Massachusetts
1858 Graduated Watertown High School, entered office of Calvin
Ryder, Arch.
1860-61 In office of Gridley J.F. Bryant (Boston City Hall) with
Sturgis.
1862-65 Civil War - 2nd Sergeant, Company K, Massachusetts
1865 Office of Gridley Bryant
1866-1886 STURGIS & BRIGHAM
Bureau of Charities, Chardon Street, Boston
'72 86 Marlboro Street, Boston (Charles Joy House)
'71-79 Boston Museum of Fine Arts
'76 82 Marlboro Street, Boston (James Lawrence House)
'78 Church of the Advent, Boston
'78 8 & 10 Fairfield Street, Boston (H.L. Higginson)
'80 342 Beacon Street, Boston (Boardman House)
'80 167 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston (E.R. Morse House)
'81 190 Marlboro Street, Boston (Sturgis)
'82 17 Brimmer Street, Boston (Robert Codman House)
'82 306 Dartmouth Street, Boston (Frederic K. Ames House)
Remodelling (Sturgis)
'82 Boston Y.M.C.A. Building, SW Berkeley & Boylston Streets
'82 244 Beacon Street, Boston (T.D. Boardman)
'82 451 Beacon Street, Boston (C.A. Dow House)
'82 239 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston (Nathaniel Thayer
House-\$125 K)
'83 301 Beacon Street, Boston (G.E. Niles)
'84 188 Marlboro Street, Boston (James Minot)
'81-86 Mass. Hospital Life Ins. Co., State Street, Boston
'86 17 Gloucester Street, Boston (E.V.R. Thayer-\$120 K/Bldr.,
David Connery)
'86* Charles Brigham House, Watertown, Massachusetts
'86 H.H. Rogers Mansion, New York City
1886-1888 BRIGHAM (Spofford Draughting)
'86* 261 Marlboro Street, Boston (H.A. Whitney) President,
Boston Providence
'88* Stoughton Railroad Station (H.A. Whitney), President
1888-1892 BRIGHAM & SPOFFORD
'88-89 Roxbury Crossing Railroad Station, Roxbury, Massachusetts
'88-89 Presbyterian Church, Roxbury, Massachusetts
'88 Memorial Hall, Belfast, Maine
'88 City Hall, Lewiston, Maine
'88 J. Manchester Haynes House, Augusta, Maine

* Individual work of Brigham

CHARLES BRIGHAM (Cont.)

- '88 Maine State Capital Addition, Augusta, Maine
- '88 B.D. Whitcomb Residence, Roxbury, Massachusetts
- '88 C.H. Souther Residence, Jamaica Plain, W. Roxbury, Massachusetts
- '88 462 Beacon Street, Boston (W.J. Appleton House)
- '88 Inebriates Hospital, Foxborough, Massachusetts
- *'89-94 Massachusetts State House Addition, Boston
- *'90-94 Fairhaven Town Hall, Fairhaven, Massachusetts
- *'94 Millicent Library, Fairhaven, Massachusetts

1896-1909 BRIGHAM (Coveny & Bisbee)

- * Watertown High School
- *1896-1903 Unitarian Church, Fairhaven, Massachusetts
- *1897-1899 Scollay Square Subway Station-Central, Boston
- *1897-1899 Scollay Square Subway Station-North, Boston
- *1897-1899 Adams Square Subway Station, Boston
- *1899 314 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston (Albert Burrage Mansion)
- 1903 Unitarian Church Parish House, Fairhaven, Massachusetts
- *1905-1909 Second Church of Christ Scientist, Boston

* Individual work of Brigham

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NOTE: Architectural Heritage, Inc. wishes to thank members of the Stoughton Historical Society for their help: Miss Bertha E. Reynolds for sources and comments on Stoughton History; Mr. Carl L. Smith for his materials, photographs and notes on railroad development in the area; and Mr. Harold M. Drown for newspaper articles relative to the station.