Winchell School

The Winchell School was named after the Reverend James M. Winchell, a member of the Primary School Board and the First Baptist Church. A public primary school, the Winchell was built in 1885 on 24 Blossom Street. The building was designed by Arthur H. Vinal. Known for his Romanesque Revival style, Vinal was Boston’s City Architect (1884-88) and architect of the first Institute of Contemporary Art building on Boylston Street and the Waterworks Museum at the Cleveland Circle reservoir. The 15,000 square foot school was originally two stories on a raised basement with a pitched roof. Decorations included raised brick panels between the first and second story fenestration and recessed arched entries. It had twelve school rooms: ten for primary classes, one for ungraded grammar, and one for kindergarten. In 1907 the school was expanded, a third story was added and the pitched roof was replaced with a flat roof.

The school is recorded as educating boys and girls grades one through four in 1911 and was closed in 1960 because of West End redevelopment (Urban Renewal). The building was one of roughly a dozen which survived the leveling of the West End. It was purchased in 1963 by Massachusetts General Hospital to be used as a school for nursing, but was eventually used for various other hospital functions as well. In 2005 the building was listed as eligible for listing on the national register by the Massachusetts Historical commission.