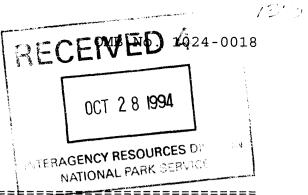
NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property		======================================
other name/site number	N/A	
2. Location		
city/town:	Hamden	not for publication: N/A vicinity: N/A
state: <u>CT</u> county:	New Haven	code: <u>009</u> zip code: <u>06518</u>
3. Classification	.======================================	
Category of Property:	building	
Number of Resources wit	thin Property:	
Contributing	Noncontributing	
1 	buildings sites structures objects 0 Total	
Number of contributing Register: 0	resources previously	y listed in the National
Name of related multipl	e property listing:	N/A

4. State/I	Federal Agency Certification			========
As the desof 1966, a request for standards Historic Forth does	signated authority under the as amended, I hereby certify or determination of eligibili for registering properties i Places and meets the procedur in 36 CFR Part 60. In my op not meet the National Regist of certifying official connecticut Historical Commission	Nation that that that the meeting the all and inion,	nal Historic Presenthis X nomination of the documentation of the National Register of the property X	rvation Act on on of airements meets
State or I	Federal agency and bureau			
	nion, the property meets criteria See continuati			National
Signature	of commenting or other offic	ial	Date	
State or I	Federal agency and bureau			
I, hereby enter deter Nati	al Park Service Certification	s: 	Savage	<u> 12/12/9</u>
		Si	gnature of Keeper	Date of Action
======================================	on or Use	=====		=======
======= Historic:	EDUCATION			
Current:	EDUCATION	Sub:	school	

7. Description	=========	========	========	========
Architectural Classificat		========	=========	========
Colonial Revival				
Other Description: N/A				
Materials: foundation <u>CO</u> walls <u>BR</u>	NCRETE RICK			estone
Describe present and hist sheet.	coric physical	appearance	. <u>X</u> See	e continuation
8. Statement of Significa	ince			
Certifying official has crelation to other propert	considered the	significan	ce of this p	
Applicable National Regis	ster Criteria:	<u>A,C</u>		
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) :			
_ A	ARCHITECTURE DUCATION ART COCIAL HISTORY			
Period(s) of Significance	e: <u>1935</u>			
Significant Dates:	1935			
Significant Person(s): N	I/A			
Cultural Affiliation: N	J/A			
Architect/Builder: Roy W Salva	. Foote, archi tore DeMaio, m			
State significance of proconsiderations, and areas				
X See continuation shee	et.			

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description

Hamden High School

Hamden, New Haven County, CT

The Hamden High School is a large three-story brick building built in 1935 in the Colonial Revival style. Set well back from Dixwell Avenue, a busy, highly commercialized thoroughfare, the hip-roofed main part of the original high school (Photograph 1) is more than 370 feet long. Modern additions (Photograph 2) obscure the rear center extension, which is also original, and have almost entirely enclosed the original rear wings, which together with the front part had formed an H-shaped plan (see accompanying Sketch Plan).

The center five bays of the front part project forward to form an elaborate pavilion, the shallow-pitched gable roof of which is treated as a pediment (Photograph 3). The lower first story, corners, and side walls are finished with an ashlar of limestone. The first story contains the school's main entrances, set deep within three round-arched openings below leaded fanlights. The second and third stories are set back behind four engaged columns with Tower of the Winds capitals. The frieze bears the school's name in deeply carved lettering, above which is a cornice with mutules and a band of small-scale Greek fret ornament (Photograph 4). The tympanum of the pediment bears an ocular window with a prominent keystone in its frame, from which descend festoons of carved flowers and leaves.

The five bays at each end recall some of the center part's detailing. The end bays are brought slightly forward and have brick pilasters with similar stone capitals on their second and third stories. The second stories of both the end bays and the center pavilion have shallow balconies with wrought-iron railings bearing four and eight-sided star motifs. Windows are mostly paired and are fitted with 10-over-10 wooden sash.

Above the roof of the center section rises a large tower. The first stage is a square brick base, the roof of which has a cornice that repeats the detailing of the main cornice and a low balustrade with urns at the corners. Above that is a belfry stage with round-arched louvered openings and paired pilasters, with four more urns at the corners of its roof. Next is an octagonal clock stage with clock faces on the four major sides, followed by a tall bell-shaped dome and a finial bearing a weathervane.

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OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

7-2

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Hamden High School

Hamden, New Haven County, CT

The interior plan features a central lobby, from which long corridors lead north and south along the length of the front part of the school. Classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other work areas are ranged along the corridors. The center rear ell contains an auditorium with a balcony, sloping floor, and large stage; the school's original gymnasium; and a large boiler room connected to a tall chimney.

The high school's interior finishes are relatively plain, with plaster walls, linoleum floors, and modern ceilings. Reflecting the period's concern for fire safety, the stairways (Photograph 5) have plain brick or tile walls and steel stairs and handrails. Corridors are lined with modern lockers.

In contrast to the more utilitarian areas of the school, the lobby inside the main entrance is richly detailed with a paneled oak dado, oak doorway moldings, and elaborate plaster cornice and ceiling decoration (Photograph 6). In addition, the lobby is embellished with eleven murals depicting scenes from Hamden's history (Photographs 7 and 8). Painted by local artist Salvatore DeMaio, the murals reflect the Realism that dominated the public art of the 1930s. The murals are four feet high and approximately ten feet long; they completely encircle the lobby just below the cornice. The murals are entitled as follows:

Forging & Casting Metal Products
The Invention of the Cotton Gin
Producing Whitney Fire Arms
The Farming Industry
Building the First Town Truss Bridge
The Whitney Dam Under Construction
Making Carriage Parts at Mount Carmel
The Early Social Life
Moulding and Burning Brick
Cutting Ice on Lake Whitney
Completion of the High School

The areas in between the murals are painted with foliage, Hamden landscape features, the seals of the United States and Connecticut, and two young couples, one from the 18th century and the other from the 1930s.

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OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Hamden High School

Hamden, New Haven County, CT

Although it has been expanded several times, the Hamden High School maintains a high degree of integrity. The exterior of the high school's front part is virtually unchanged from its appearance on October 18, 1935, the day of its dedication. Similarly, the significant interior woodwork and murals in the lobby have been retained entirely intact. Modern additions have primarily occurred at the rear of the high school, leaving the original front part unchallenged as the visual focal point of the complex. Even the large gymnasium added at the south end is set back in a line with the rear wall of the front part, so that despite its bulk it does not detract from the original building.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT

8-1

Summary

The Hamden High School is significant because its completion in 1935 represented a watershed in the town's history of education (Criterion Prior to that time, Hamden students were sent to high school in New Haven on a tuition basis. In the 1920s, the rapid population growth in town, as well as a growing proportion of children continuing their education, made that arrangement increasingly undesirable. help from federal work-relief funds, Hamden was able to provide a modern comprehensive high school that would serve the needs of its children for decades to come. The high school is also significant architecturally: it is a large and elaborately detailed example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture (Criterion C). As was typical of that style, it draws upon early America's most formal architecture for elements -- such as the red-brick exterior, pedimented center bay, entry fanlights, and tower--to create a monumental effect. building was designed by Roy W. Foote, one of New Haven's leading architects in the years before World War II. Finally, the Hamden High School has significance for the history of American art: its murals exemplify the realistic paintings on historical themes that characterized New Deal public art projects (Criterion C).

<u>Historical Significance</u>

Hamden's high school building represents the culmination of years of effort by local civic leaders to provide the children of the town with a facility for secondary education. Bordering on the much larger city of New Haven, Hamden had characteristics of both a suburb and a small town in the early 1900s, when a high school was first proposed. At that time, the town's teen-aged students attended high school in New Haven, with Hamden paying tuition and providing transportation. This arrangement, while economical, did not give the community a decision-making role in their children's education, as was made especially clear in 1912, when New Haven refused to accommodate the Hamden students.

Although the relationship was mended, the situation became much more critical in the ensuing years, as the population of Hamden soared. In addition to continued growth as a result of the forces of suburbanization, Hamden's own industrial base expanded substantially as well. The town's population, numbering only 5,850 in 1910, grew to 8,611 by 1920 and reached 19,020 in 1930. The town struggled to keep up with the ever-growing hosts of school-aged children; several large

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT 8-2

elementary schools, built to relieve crowding, went to double sessions only a few years after opening. By the time planning began for the high school, it was clear that a large facility would be needed. In the end, the town spent a total of \$750,000 on the building, which enrolled more than 1,200 students when it opened in 1935.

Of the total amount, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration contributed \$165,000, making the high school not only the largest public building in Hamden, but the town's largest single work-relief project as well. Along with the murals in the lobby, the high school building has exceptional local historical significance because it recalls the Great Depression and the New Deal public-works programs that were devised to address the period's economic hardships.

The building was a completely up-to-date facility for its day. It was of fireproof construction and its large windows supplied good light and ventilation. The building's large size allowed it to provide numerous specialized areas, such as an auditorium, gymnasium, laboratories, study halls, library, home economics area, and shops. These were important for two reasons: the school was a comprehensive high school, intended to meet the needs of both the college-bound and those whose education would be completed upon graduation, and its proponents were committed to addressing each student's individual needs by providing a wide variety of options -- "artistic, social, mechanical, [and] economic, as well as academic." Reacting to the rigid curriculum and excessive "tracking" then prevalent, the school offered a wide variety of electives to all students, including drama, arts and crafts, music, radio, nature study, creative writing, and athletics. The idealism of its proponents was further underscored by the original furnishing scheme, which provided group work tables in the classrooms rather than rows of individual seats. In dedicating this facility, Hamden citizens were conscious of "creating, de novo, a complete modern high school . . . an event that may be looked back upon by succeeding generations as one of outstanding importance in the Town's history."1

¹Hamden High School (Hamden: Hamden Chamber of Commerce, 1935), 3, 10.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT 8-3

Architectural Significance

Hamden High School embodies many of the defining characteristics of the Colonial Revival style, especially as it was carried out in large public buildings. As was typical for city halls, libraries, and post offices of the period, the high school drew upon the most architecturally elaborate buildings of early America for its inspiration. For example, the tower with a belfry and dome and the pedimented pavilion over a stone-faced arcade are two elements found on numerous early American courthouses. In combining the Georgian Classicism of these precedents with Federal-period fanlights and cornice detailing, the high school exhibits the somewhat anachronistic tendencies of the style, which typically sacrificed academic correctness in order to take advantage of more ornate detail. alluding to the colonial period, and America's accomplishments in those years, the building conveyed connotations of patriotism, tradition, and high moral and aesthetic values, all appropriate to its function as a high school.

The architect for the high school was Roy W. Foote (1879-1947), one of New Haven's preeminent architects of the pre-World War II period. After taking a correspondence course in architecture, Foote served for several years in the office of Leoni Robinson, at that time the city's foremost practitioner, and then set off on his own in 1912. Foote designed the Powell Building (1921), one of New Haven's earliest tall office buildings, the Neo-Classical Masonic Temple (1926), numerous large homes, and several public schools, among which the Hamden High School was the largest. Following the high school project, he undertook (with Douglas Orr) the Art Deco Southern New England Telephone building (1937) in New Haven and, also with Orr, New Haven's first three public housing projects, completed in 1939 and 1940.

Artistic Significance

The eleven murals in the lobby of the Hamden High School exemplify the public-arts projects undertaken as part of Depression-era federal work-relief programs. All across the country, post offices, courthouses, and other buildings were embellished with paintings intended to bring art to the masses, as well as give work to unemployed artists. Primarily depicting localistic themes, especially local history, in a

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT 8-4

realistic style, these murals were enthusiastically received by the public.²

In their content, style, and ideological overtones, the Hamden murals are typical of New Deal art projects. In addition to using local history as their subject matter, the murals appeal to the public by including local landmarks as their scenery, such as the East Rock promontory and Lake Whitney, and by employing a realistic style. Although the murals are far from polemical in tone, they reflect the progressive liberalism underlying the New Deal. The subject matter, for example, is heavily weighted toward economic and technological history. In every scene, ordinary people are shown hard at work, although the historical role of "Great Men" is acknowledged as well (Eli Whitney appears in at least three scenes). The greater inclusiveness of New Deal social ideology is also evident. Women are shown driving cattle as well as performing domestic tasks, and at least one worker is clearly intended to represent an African-American. Finally, by showing the high school as the culmination of Hamden history (through 1935), and juxtaposing male and female students with a colonial couple, the murals proclaim that people are active participants in history and shape their own destiny.

The Hamden High School murals were the state's single largest publicly funded art activity in 1935, when the Federal Emergency Relief Administration transferred its projects to the Works Progress Administration; it is likely that they cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000, based upon the average of \$7.24 a square foot that was spent on murals in Connecticut. Although small in comparison with Depression-era road and park projects, which employed hundreds of people, the federal arts program in Connecticut was substantial: at any one time, between 70 and 80 unemployed artists were given work by the program, creating murals for public buildings, working on individual paintings, sculptures, and ceramics, and compiling the Index of American Design. Murals were the largest component; by the time the projects were closed out around 1940, a total of 15,768 square feet had been completed in Connecticut.

²In fact, in Connecticut, administrators worried that they were <u>too</u> popular and detracted from the program's other components, such as ceramics and individual oil paintings.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT

The Hamden High School murals were painted by Salvatore DeMaio (1908-1960), assisted by F. Rutkoski and J. Schorck. DeMaio, a native of New Haven, was an artistic and musical prodigy who finished Yale in three years (B.F.A., 1930), winning the prestigious Prix de Rome along with \$8,000 that enabled him to study and travel in Europe for an extended By the time he returned home, the Depression was at its worst. Like dozens of other Connecticut artists, DeMaio found employment with the federally funded public works program then underway. In addition to the high school paintings, completed in 1936, he produced two other mural projects in that period, the lounge of the Governors Footquard Armory in Hartford and the New Haven Public Library children's room. He also undertook some interior decoration work for Yale University's Saybrook College at about the same time. Although DeMaio continued to be identified as an artist in city directory listings throughout the 1930s, his attention was turned ever more to the restaurant he operated with his wife in Hamden and the Italian-foods business his family ran in New Haven. He eventually became a prominent Hamden businessman and was respected in the community for his efforts on behalf of mentally retarded citizens and persons with muscular dystrophy. His death in 1960 made the front page of the New Haven Register and, although 25 years had passed, his accomplishments as a muralist were foremost among the many aspects of his life cited by the paper.

======================================
X See continuation sheet.
Previous documentation on file (NPS):
_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. _ previously listed in the National Register
_ previously determined eligible by the National Register _ designated a National Historic Landmark _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
Primary Location of Additional Data:
X State historic preservation office Other state agency Federal agency Local government University Other Specify Repository: Connecticut Historical Commission 59 South Prospect Street Hartford, Connecticut 06106 Hartford, Connecticut 06106
======================================
and the second s
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1 <u>18 673800 4581420</u> 2
X See continuation sheet.
Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.
Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.
======================================
Name/Title: Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, reviewed by John Herzan,
Conn. Hist. Commission Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u> Date: <u>April 23, 1993</u>
Street & Number: <u>55 Van Dyke Avenue</u> Telephone: <u>203-547-0268</u>
City or Town: <u>Hartford</u> State: <u>CT</u> Zip: <u>06106</u>

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography Hamden High School

Hamden, New Haven County, CT

Brown, Elizabeth Mills. <u>New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design</u>. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

DeMaio, Salvatore. Obituary. New Haven Register, February 10, 1960.

Foote, Roy W. Obituary. New Haven Register, September 20, 1947.

Hamden High School. Hamden: Hamden Chamber of Commerce, 1935.

Hartley, Rachel M. <u>History of Hamden</u>. Hamden: Town of Hamden, 1943.

New Haven City Directory, 1935-1950.

U. S. Works Progress Administration. Records, 1935-1937. Record Group 33, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Geographical Data Hamden High School Hamden, New Haven County, CT

10-1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary includes a rectangular area surrounding the contiguous portions of the main high school building, drawn so as to be 25' from the nearest wall on the north, west, and south sides, with Dixwell Avenue as the east boundary (see accompanying sketch map). This is a portion of the property known as 2040 Dixwell Avenue (Parcel 2527-17), recorded in the Hamden Land Records, Vol. 555, p. 269.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all the original portions of the high school, while excluding modern parts of the property such as the parking lot to the north, the stadium to the west, and small freestanding buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s. Although the nominated property includes modern additions, these are all attached to the original portions of the high school at one or more points and so could not be meaningfully excluded from the nominated property.

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs Hamden High School

Photos-1

Hamden, New Haven County, CT

All Photographs:

- 1. Hamden High School
- 2. Hamden, New Haven County, CT
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. March, 1994
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission Hartford, CT

Captions:

East elevation, camera facing northwest Photograph 1 of 8

Modern additions at rear of school, north elevation, camera facing southeast Photograph 2 of 8

Center bay of east elevation, camera facing west Photograph 3 of 8

Detail of cornice and tympanum ornament, center of east elevation, camera facing west
Photograph 4 of 8

Typical interior stairway, south corridor, west side, camera facing northwest
Photograph 5 of 8

Interior, main lobby, camera facing west toward auditorium Photograph 6 of 8

Detail of lobby mural, south wall, camera facing southwest Photograph 7 of 8

Detail of lobby mural, north wall, camera facing northeast Photograph 8 of 8 $\,$

DIXWELL AVENUE

DIXWELL AVENUE