

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 10 1978
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

Accompanying

CONTINUATION SHEET Documentation ITEM NUMBER PAGE 1

Asylum Avenue District

Location:

Asylum Avenue, north side, 784 thru 878
Asylum Avenue, south side, 805 thru 927

Niles Street, north side, 22 thru 44

Farmington Avenue, north side, 134 thru 180

Huntington Street, west side, 1

Sigourney Street, west side, 129 thru 149
Sigourney Street, east side, 120 thru 136

Property Owners: Those buildings considered not to contribute to the historic character of the district have been designated with the initials "NC" before the addresses.

Asylum Avenue north side	
784-786	Joseph Calafiore et al 784 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105
814	Asylum Hill Congregational Church 814 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
834	Hartford School of Music, Inc. 834 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
836	Hartford School of Music, Inc. 834 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
842 rear	Hartford School of Music, Inc. 834 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
846	Hartford School of Music, Inc. 834 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
852	George D. Sturman 141 Lawler Road, West Hartford, CT 06117
NC 862	Irving and Sylvia Haber 21 Rye Ridge Parkway, West Hartford, CT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 10 1978
DATE ENTERED	2 1 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

Accompanying

CONTINUATION SHEET Documentation **ITEM NUMBER** **PAGE 2**

- 868 Asylum Avenue Baptist Church
868 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
- 878-880 Society for Savings
31 Pratt St., Hartford, CT
- South side
- 805 St. Joseph Cathedral Corp.
140 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT
- 839 James L. Corthouts
740 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
- 841 William A. Wilson
841 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
- 847 Florence Savoy
847 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
- NC 855-863 The Salvation Army, Inc.
855 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT
- NC 887 Society for Savings
31 Pratt St., Hartford, CT
- 903-905 Harold G. Holcombe, Jr., Holtz Realty Co.
89 Brewster Road, West Hartford, CT
- NC 911 Ethyl K. Beatman et al, c/o Belle B. Cutler
22 Rundelane, Bloomfield, CT 06002
- 915 Sylvia R. Schwartz
329 Cumberland Road, West Hartford, CT
- 927 City of Hartford, Board of Education
249 High St., Hartford, CT
- Niles Street
- north side
- 22 City of Hartford, Board of Education
249 High St., Hartford, CT
- 44 City of Hartford, Board of Education
249 High St., Hartford, CT
- Farmington Avenue
- north side
- 134 Hartford Roman Catholic Diocesan Corp.
134 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT
- 140-150 St. Joseph Cathedral Corp.
140 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 23 1977
DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET	Accompanying Documentation	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE 3
---------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------	--------

- 180 Ahern Funeral Home, Inc.
180 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT
Huntington Street
west side
- 1' Richard Schwolsky et al, c/o L. P. Rubinow
P. O. Box 707, Manchester, CT
Sigourney Street
west side
- 129 City of Hartford
555 Main St., Hartford, CT 06103
- 131-149 Aetna Life & Casualty
151 Farmington Ave., Hartford, CT 06115
east side
- 120-134 Trinity Episcopal Church
120 Sigourney St., Hartford, CT
- 136 The Salvation Army, Inc.
855 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT

Description:

The Asylum Avenue District is geographically the heart of Asylum Hill. It includes the Hill's churches and school and the 19th century houses that survive between and around them. The churches are the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Asylum Avenue Baptist Church, St. Joseph's Cathedral, and Trinity Episcopal Church. The school is West Middle School.

Asylum Hill Congregational Church on the northeast corner of Asylum Avenue and Huntington Street was constructed in 1865 of Portland brownstone in the Gothic style of an English parish church. Its tall spire, 227 feet high, and elaborate door and window moldings add much to its character. Stained glass windows by Charles J. Connick enhance the interior. A later chapel addition to the east is in the same style.

One block west, on the northwest corner of Sigourney Street, is the Asylum Hill Baptist Church. Originally built in 1872, the church was altered and enlarged in 1869, and in 1931 was severely damaged by fire and rebuilt in a Collegiate Gothic idiom that does not resemble the original.

The original brownstone St. Joseph's Cathedral on Farmington Avenue, built in 1892, was destroyed by fire in 1956 and rebuilt. The cornerstone for the new church was laid in 1960. The present modern complex is unique among churches on Asylum Hill, but as

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

Accompanying

CONTINUATION SHEET

Documentation

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 4

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 10 1977
DATE ENTERED

an institution does have its roots in the 19th century. The cathedral is constructed in smooth planes of light gray coursed granite ashlar in an International Style adaptation of the Gothic. In contrast to the smooth planes elsewhere, the blocks of stone used in the tall steeple are cut in a pattern of voids that causes a constant play of light and shadow. Tall windows along the sides of the nave are deeply recessed between buttress-like divisions. The entrance to the church is highly decorative, consisting of tall bronze doors covered with figures from biblical scenes under a massive stone sculpture. Adjoining diocese buildings are starkly modern.

Trinity Episcopal Church, 128 Sigourney Street, adjoins St. Joseph's Cathedral to the west. It was built in 1892 in the English Gothic style with a square tower 138 feet high. Principal building material for the church is red brick, with brownstone used for the corners of the tower, the buttresses, and for the window and doorway surrounds. The contemporary rectory remains in place, now used as offices. It, too, is built of red brick, with a slate roof, shingled gable ends, a two-story shingled bay, tall molded chimneys, and a wooden porch with turned posts.

West Middle School is on the south side of Asylum Avenue west of Sigourney Street. The present Georgian Revival building of 1930 replaces an earlier building on the same site that was executed in High Victorian Gothic style. Still present on the site at 44 Niles Street is an Italianate-Romanesque brick school building from the turn of the century that has a round arch entrance, round-headed windows, and broad roof overhang, and a 1909 building is at 22 Niles Street.

On the block between the Asylum Hill Congregational Church and the Asylum Hill Baptist Church was a row of substantial houses. Three of them remain. One of these is 834 Asylum Avenue on the northwest corner of Huntington Street. It is a basic Italianate block with elements of the Colonial Revival appended. On the one hand, there are elegant brownstone molded window surrounds worthy of a doge's palace in the best Italianate manner. On the other hand, there is a shallow central pavilion under dentilled pediment reminiscent of Palladio's influence in the American colonies. At 846 Asylum Avenue the same interplay is present between a broad roof overhang with shallow brackets and a classic wreath flanked by puttae over the front porch, all in the same house. There is an unfortunate gap between 834 and 846 Asylum Avenue, the empty lot that formerly was the site of the Gross House.

Across the street are two older houses, both solidly Italianate. 837-839, a double house, has heavy dripstones over the short, round-headed windows of the third floor, close under the roof overhang. 847 Asylum Avenue is a glorious red brick Italianate with two towers, one octagonal, one square, each with a roof rising to a point on which rests a copper finial. The house has handsome brownstone window arches and brownstone for

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 29 1979
DATE ENTERED	

CONTINUATION SHEET Accompanying Documentation ITEM NUMBER PAGE 5

the wall of the first floor of the octagonal tower. A long porch of turned and sawn wood stretches across its front.

Around the corner to the north, at 1 Huntington Street, is an imaginative early 20th century apartment house. It is built of brick with stucco panels and has four half-timbered gables across the front, steeply pitched. It has a red and gray slate roof and large diamond pattern glazing. With at least one other similar apartment house and several one-family houses, it represents the Tudor Revival on Asylum Hill.

Significance

The architects for the five institutional buildings were all well-known men. Patrick C. Keely (1816-1896) designed the Asylum Hill Congregational Church and the first St. Joseph's Cathedral. From his office in Brooklyn, Keely is known to have designed hundreds of Catholic churches, but only a handful of Protestant churches. How he happened to accept the Asylum Hill Congregational commission is not known. He executed this unusual Protestant commission prior to designing the Catholic cathedral, doing both in brownstone in the Gothic style. Eggers and Higgins were architects for the second cathedral.

In 1939 the Gross Memorial Chapel was constructed on the eastern side of the Congregational Church to plans drawn by Charles Collens (1873-1956), architect of Riverside Church, New York City. For this chapel Collens put aside his usual gray granite Collegiate Gothic and did a design in brownstone sympathetic to Keely's church. Collens had redone the interior of the church in 1912 and was also known locally as the architect of the Hartford Seminary Foundation. The membership of Asylum Hill Congregational Church now reside with few exceptions elsewhere than in Asylum Hill. Nevertheless, the church has maintained its vitality and strength in the Hartford scene.

Jonathan S. Niles, then newly resident on Farmington Avenue, was the benefactor who made possible the construction of the Asylum Avenue Baptist Church in 1872, one block west of the Congregationalists, on the condition that his design notions be accepted, as they were. George Keller (1842-1935) drew plans based on a Jacob Wray Mould church on 42nd Street in New York City that Niles admired. Fabric from Keller's work is thought to constitute the center section of the present building. Like others, Niles felt that a church was an essential part of a residential neighborhood and he gave his financial support toward its construction. As the character of the residential neighborhood changed, however, the Baptists have not been as fortunate as their neighbor Congregationalists in maintaining an ongoing organization, and the church is now little used.

The history of Trinity Episcopal Church is entwined with the Rev. Francis Goodwin, scion of the Goodwin family who were important in several ways to Asylum Hill. The

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 10 1978
DATE ENTERED	20 9/8

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

CONTINUATION SHEET Accompanying
Documentation ITEM NUMBER PAGE 6

Goodwins owned much land in Asylum Hill as indicated by the repeated appearance of their family name on the atlas maps. The site for St. Joseph's Cathedral was purchased from the Goodwins. Trinity Episcopal Church was founded in 1859 by Hezekiah Huntington, a colleague of James Goodwin, father of the Rev. Francis, in establishing the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co., which has its home office in Asylum Hill to this day. The Rev. Francis Goodwin was rector of Trinity Church from 1865 to 1871. He was also an amateur architect and in 1871, with Frederick C. Withers (1828-1901) designed an unusually large and expensive house for his father on Woodland Street, the western edge of Asylum Hill (demolished). The Rev. Francis Goodwin's interest in Trinity Church and association with Withers came together in the 1890's in the form of a commission for Withers to do a new church building. The present church, parish house, and rectory are a distinguished group of ecclesiastical buildings that reflect great credit on Withers.

The present West Middle School building, like St. Joseph's Cathedral, is not part of 19th century Asylum Hill, but its predecessor of 1874 on the same site was. The original building was an exercise in High Victorian Gothic by Richard M. Upjohn (1827-1903). The present structure is a graceful example of the Georgian Revival built to the design of Adams, Malmfeldt and Prentice in 1930. The 1909 building on the site is the work of architects Davis and Brooks, while architects for the earlier Italian-Romanesque building are unknown. This structure does have a decided resemblance to the Northwest-Jones School of the same era that was designed by Hapgood and Hapgood.

The churches and school, situated close together, provided the institutional core of Asylum Hill. All well-designed and substantially built, they satisfied the neighborhood's need for a sense of institutional strength.

Geographical Data

- Acreege of nominated property: 25
Quadrangle name: Hartford North
UTM References: A. 18/691980/4626610
B. 18/691970/4626390
C. 18/691680/4626380
D. 18/691670/4626510
E. 18/691430/4626560
F. 18/691470/4626690
G. 18/691620/4626650
H. 18/691660/4626710
I. 18/691840/4626690
J. 18/691920/4626690

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 10 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 29 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Historic Resources of Asylum Hill
Hartford, Connecticut

CONTINUATION SHEET Accompanying Documentation ITEM NUMBER PAGE 6 A

Verbal Boundary Description:

Starting at the northeast corner of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church property (814 Asylum Avenue) the line runs south on Sumner Street to Asylum Avenue, and west on Asylum Avenue to the eastern boundary of the St. Joseph's Cathedral property, (905 Asylum, 134-150 Farmington). From this point it runs south, east and south along the property line to Farmington Avenue, west on Farmington Avenue to Sigourney Street, north on Sigourney Street to Niles Street, west on Niles Street to the southwest corner of 129 Sigourney Street, north along its west border to the property line of 887 Asylum Avenue, thence west, south and west along the rear borders of properties fronting on Niles Street to the east line of the West Middle School property (22-44 Niles Street and 927 Asylum Avenue), south along its border to Niles Street, west on Niles Street to its west border, north, east and north on the school borders to Asylum Avenue, east on Asylum Avenue to the west border of 878 Asylum Avenue, north along its west border, and easterly along the rear borders of properties fronting on Asylum Avenue to point of beginning.