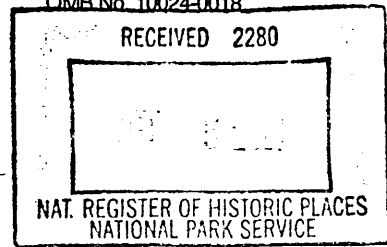


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1237

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Whitney, Cora B., School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 814 Gage Street a not for publication

city or town Bennington a vicinity

state Vermont code VT county Bennington code 003 zip code 05201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Suzanne C. Jamelle National Register Specialist 9-28-01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Vermont State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Entered in the National Register

11-19-01

Whitney, Cora B., School
Name of Property

Bennington County, VT
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>1</u>		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Educational Resources of Vermont

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Education/School

Current Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter Categories from instructions)

foundation Marble

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other stone: marble

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark " x " in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark " x " in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Education
- Architecture
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1897-1950

Significant Dates

1897

Significant Person

(Complete If Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other .

Name of repository:

Bennington RAHC, Union St, Bennington, VT

Whitney, Cora B., School
Name of Property

Bennington County, VT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.8

UTM references

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	8	6	4	8	3	8	0	4	7	4	9	0	4	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

2

Zone				Easting				Northing						

3

Zone				Easting				Northing						

4

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name / title Jack Anderson

organization HeritageLink Historic Preservation date July, 2000

street & number 2812 Westerdale Cut Off Rd. telephone 802 457-2398

city or town Woodstock state Vermont zip code 05091

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Cora B. Whitney Housing Limited Partnership

street & number P.O. Box 1247 telephone 802 442 8139

city or town Bennington state Vermont zip code 05201

Paper Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Whitney, Cora B., School
Bennington, Bennington County, Vermont

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Narrative Description

The Cora B. Whitney School is located in a predominantly residential neighborhood just northeast of the downtown core of the Town of Bennington, Vermont. It sits on the north side of the easternmost block of Gage Street, between Bradford Street and Branch Street, among late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century single family homes. This large, two-story, symmetrical brick and stone Colonial Revival-style former school is set back from the street in the middle of a large, open, flat lawn. Recently-planted maple saplings line the front walk that leads from the entrance to the street. East of the school and set back from the street is a parking lot. The building served as a primary school from 1897 until 1994. In 1999, the school was rehabilitated by the Bennington Regional Affordable Housing Corporation for use as an independent living facility for seniors. It retains all of its original exterior fabric and a much of its original interior fabric, although partitions have been added to some of the interior spaces. The former school is in excellent condition and retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

The Cora B. Whitney School is a two-story, 5 bay x 2 bay masonry structure with a raised basement and hipped overhanging roof. It has a rectangular footprint oriented parallel to the street, a two-story, 1 bay entrance pavilion, and a two-story, 3 bay x 1 bay rear wing. The raised basement is demarcated by rough-faced, irregularly-coursed marble walls, which terminate at the first story window sills. Above this base are Flemish-bond brick walls with red-tinted mortar, encircled with narrow marble stringcourses. The stringcourses form continuous window lintels and link the second-story stepped-out window sills. The asphalt-shingle roof has a deep overhang encircled with a beaded-board soffit and tightly-spaced, exposed, rounded rafter tails. The four widths of brick below the eaves are painted white to simulate a fascia board. Centered on the ridgeline of the main block are twin chimneys. They are rectangular in plan and parallel to each other, and have brick bases with molded limestone copings, and raised, low-sloped, standing-seam metal hipped-roof caps.

The entrance pavilion projects from the center bay of the front (south) facade. It has a hipped roof and the same facade and eaveline features as the main block. It contains the entranceway at the first story and a triplet of slender one-over-one windows at the second story. The entranceway consists of a double-leaf paneled wood door with large toplights; half-length sidelights over recessed, horizontal, molded panels; a double-pane transom window over the doorway; and a large three-pane transom window spanning this ensemble. The top of the upper transom meets a splayed lintel with keystone, which links the marble stringcourse at the first story window lintels. Above the keystone is a marble panel that reads, "Cora B. Whitney School, MDCCCCXX." To the right of the doorway is another panel that reads, "Primary School No. 2 - 1897." The entranceway is accessed by radiating rectangular marble steps.

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Each bay of the front (south) and side facades has a regularly-spaced, paired, one-over-one, wood double-hung window with a marble mullion. The windows at the basement level are three-quarter size and their marble sills are at grade. All of the windows have one-over-one aluminum storm sash painted to match the window sash. Each story of the rear wing has a centered triplet of one-over-one windows. A semi-circular bow window is centered on the rear wall of the wing at grade. This window has two wood-framed curved sash separated by a marble mullion, and a conical sheet-metal roof with a molded wood cornice. The side walls of the wing and the exposed rear facade of the main block contain an individual window in each bay. The east (side) wall of the wing also contains a rear entranceway, with a modern, shallow, shed-roofed porch with wood steps leading to a double-leaf wood paneled door. Below the porch are the original marble steps.

Attached to the rear of the school are two additions. The 1957 addition projects west from the northwest rear corner of the main block and has a rectangular footprint oriented parallel to the school. This 1-1/2 story side-gabled structure has a concrete foundation and brick walls, except at the wood-framed gables. The west gable is infilled with clapboard siding and the east gable is concealed by the other addition. Encircling the top of the brick walls is a wide wood entablature interrupted at the front (south) and rear facades by a full-height stucco panel. The panels each contain a bank of five, one-over-one windows at each story, and are topped with a shed roof supported by wood knee braces. Vertical wood mullions extend from grade to the shed roof between each window. This addition originally had a flat roof at the top of the brick walls and provided additional classroom space. The gabled roof and fenestration were added in 1999, when the addition was converted for residential living.

The second addition is a two-story wood-framed residential facility constructed in 1999. It is centered about 25' behind the school and has a 7 bay x 4 bay rectangular footprint oriented parallel to the street. The overhanging asphalt-shingle hipped roof has a double slope with a flattened perimeter, and exposed rounded rafter tails. The clapboard walls have plain cornerboards and regularly-spaced one-over-one windows. A two-story connector attaches it to the school and the 1957 addition. The east wall of the connector has an overhanging roof with knee braces, and like the other addition has a stucco panel with a bank of windows at each story. This panel is flanked by clapboard siding. Projecting from the east wall of the connector is a long wood-frame arcade. These additions do not detract from the historic integrity of the school. Because the additions are located to the rear of the school, they are not intrusive to the historic appearance of the school.

Extant original interior features of the Cora B. Whitney School include oak strip flooring on the staircases and in the stairhall, beaded-board wainscoting, molded window and

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door trim with bull's eye corner blocks, paneled classroom and basement doors, paneled inset door jambs, glazed bookcases, and the open, ornamental staircase in the rear wing. This staircase features wood railings with turned balusters, molded handrails, paneled newel posts with ball finials, drop finials, and paneled stringers. The original principal's office in the second story of the entrance pavilion has been preserved, and contains a tall, glazed bookcase and a blackboard. The interior of the front entrance vestibule has also been preserved, including the original "schoolhouse" light fixture. The original interior floor plan of the first and second stories of the school included a central hallway flanked by a pair of classrooms. In 1957, closets and restrooms were added to the central hallways, and the floors in the classrooms and central hallways were covered with linoleum. The 1999 rehabilitation preserved all of the remaining original features, and partitions were added within the classroom spaces to create apartments. The interior changes to the school do not detract from the historic integrity of the building.

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Statement of Significance

The 1897 Cora B. Whitney School is significant for its importance to Vermont's educational history. It is an intact example of the "modern" urban schools built in Vermont during the 1890s. It is also significant as a high-style and early example of the Colonial Revival style. It is being nominated under the Multiple Property Listing for "Education Resources of Vermont," and meets the registration requirements for the school property type. From 1897 to 1994, the Cora B. Whitney School functioned as a primary school, and most of its original features are intact. The school meets National Register Criterion A for its depiction of progressive educational trends in late nineteenth-century Vermont. It also meets National Register Criterion C as an intact Colonial Revival, late nineteenth-century high-style Vermont school. The period of significance of the Cora B. Whitney School is 1897-1950, which spans the years between its construction and the fifty-year limit for National Register eligibility.

The Cora B. Whitney School is located in Bennington, the regional center of southwestern Vermont. Bennington is located on the Walloomsac River and at the crossroads of Vermont Route 7 (western Vermont's major north-south route) and Vermont Route 9 (southern Vermont's major east-west route). It was chartered in 1749, and settled in 1761. By the mid nineteenth-century, Bennington had numerous industrial and commercial concerns, and by the turn of the twentieth-century, had become a major economic center with a population of over 6,500.

In 1870, the Town of Bennington consolidated its twenty school districts, creating the Bennington Graded School District. This made it the third town in the state to do so; Montpelier was the first in 1858 and Middlebury was the second in 1864. In 1874, the Bennington Graded School was constructed near downtown (demolished in 1955) and functioned as a school for all ages, including high school. District consolidation, which made the town rather than the school district the unit of control, was made a state law in 1892. Its purpose was primarily to lessen the number of poorly run, substandard rural district schools. Because of this law and continued local growth, a new multi-classroom village school in addition to the Bennington Graded School was needed. Many multi-classroom school buildings such as the Cora B. Whitney School were constructed around the state in the 1890s as a result of the 1892 law and population growth.

In July of 1897, the Town of Bennington purchased one acre of land from William Morgan for the construction of the Cora B. Whitney School. Morgan owned a large estate bounded by Main, County, Division and North Branch Streets. In 1897, the Cora B. Whitney School, originally called the Seventh Ward School, was completed at a cost

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of \$20,000. Classes reportedly did not begin until September of 1898. The school served the first through the fourth grades with one grade in each of the four classrooms. While the school was under construction, Gage Street did not yet pass in front of it and only reached as far east as Bradford Street. This street was extended easterly in front of the school in February of 1898, and the neighborhood around the school quickly developed. Because this neighborhood is comprised mostly of modest-scaled single-family homes, the school dominates the landscape.

The Cora B. Whitney School is an early example of the “modern” high-style schools constructed in Vermont in the very late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. Most multiple-classroom schools built at this time were symmetrical, rectangular in plan, two stories in height, and had large, airy classrooms with ample fenestration for natural light and ventilation. Typical to these schools are the high-style design and detailing found at the Cora B. Whitney School: prominent, central entrances with sidelights and transom windows placed in an engaged tower; ample fenestration; molded interior architectural trim; beaded-board wainscoting; ornamental open staircases; and tongue-and-groove wood floors. Like the Cora B. Whitney School, many of these schools were of brick masonry construction and designed in the Colonial Revival style. These high-style design features were promoted in educational journals and state and federal publications during the 1890s. Because of its ample fenestration and high ceilings, the school did not need to be updated in the early twentieth century to comply with new lighting and ventilation standards.

Significant Colonial Revival features of the school include the symmetry; rectangular form; raised basement; stone stringcourses; hipped overhanging roof; projecting centered entrance pavilion; dominant entryway with double doors, sidelights, splayed lintel with keystone, and transom windows; regularly-spaced paired one-over-one windows; bow window with curved sash; and axial floor plan. The Colonial Revival Cora B. Whitney School is unusual in that it was constructed at a time when Victorian styles were still popular in multi-classroom construction, such as the contemporaneous Richardsonian Romanesque Bellows Falls High School and the High Victorian Gothic Springfield High School. It is unknown why the Town of Bennington chose this “modern” design, which includes an architectural feature found mostly in twentieth-century buildings, exposed rafter tails. Town annual reports, state department of education annual reports, and newspaper articles published in the years surrounding the construction of the school hardly acknowledge the Cora B. Whitney School.

Cora Belle Whitney (1866-1918) had a thirty-year career as a teacher and principal of the Seventh Ward School and was probably one of its first teachers. Her obituary

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describes her as “one of the most loved and respected teachers of the Bennington public schools.” In June of 1919, the Bennington School District voted to change the name of the Seventh Ward School to the Cora B. Whitney School, and a new plaque was installed over the front door commemorating Ms. Whitney.

The original school property was about half the size as it is today and was flanked by two houses. In 1957, the parcel west of the school was purchased by the Bennington School District, probably to make room for the 1957 addition to the school, and the house on this property was torn down. The modern, flat-roofed 1957 addition provided two additional classrooms to the school. Also in 1957, the interior of the school was renovated: closets and restrooms were added along the walls of the central hallways, reducing the number of doorways to each classroom from two to one, and linoleum flooring was installed. An exterior fire escape was constructed on the west wall of the school; this was later removed. In 1978, the parcel east of the school was purchased by the school district, and the house on this property was torn down. A playground was constructed on this parcel, probably where the parking lot is now located.

In 1994, after serving as an elementary school for almost one hundred years, the Cora B. Whitney School was closed. This was due to the prohibitive cost of the upgrades needed in order to comply with school standards. The only remaining historic elementary schools in Bennington are the Catamount School on North Street, which originally served as the Saint Francis Academy, and the Sacred Heart School on School Street. After standing empty for a few years, the Cora B. Whitney School was rescued by the Bennington Regional Affordable Housing Corporation, which rehabilitated it for independent senior living in 1999. This work preserved all of the remaining original features of the school and qualified for rehabilitation investment tax credits. The Cora B. Whitney School has no potential threats to its integrity and should remain a significant Bennington landmark into the distant future.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is 1.8 acres in size and consists of three deeds conveyed to the Bennington Graded School District. The deeds are found in the Land Records of the Town of Bennington in Book 64 Page 163, Book 0-225 Page 86, and in Book 0-147 Page 13. The tax parcel ID # is 51-55-74-00.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the original lot purchased for the construction of the school in 1897, plus the flanking properties added to the school property in 1957 and 1978, respectively. These three lots have been incorporated into the 1.8 acre parcel and encompass the significant land and resources which make up the property.