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United States Departmen National Park Service	nt of the Interior	•	SEP 03 1997		1 98
National Register Registration Form		aces HIS	TORIC PRESERVATION OFF	ICE	STOPIC PLACES
This form is for use in nomination National Register of Historic Place by entering the information reques architectural classification, mate contries and narrative items on c	ces Registration Form (Na lested. If an item does n rials, and areas of signifi	tional Register Bulletin 16A apply to the property beil cance, enter only categorie	A). Complete each item by ma ng documented, enter "N/A" s and subcategories from the	tions in now to Complete the rking "x" in the appropriate for "not applicable." For fun instructions. Place additiona	box or Re
1. Name of Property					
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other names/site_number_	Ridgewood Educa	tion Center			-
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ate <u>New Jersey</u>	code <u>NJ</u>	county <u>Bergen</u>	code <u>00</u>	3_ zip code	
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Beech Street School Name of Property

Bergen, NJ County and State

5. Classification								
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)							
🗆 private	vate 🛛 🕱 building(s)		Contributing Noncontributing					
Dispublic-local		1	-	0	buildings			
public-State public-Federal	☐ site □ structure	0		0	sites			
F · · · · · · · · ·	object	0		0	structure			
	- -	0		0	objects			
		1		0	Total			
Name of related multiple pr (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of	Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register							
N/A								
		0						
6. Function or Use				÷				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Fun (Enter categorie	ACTIONS es from instruction	ons)					
Education/School	Educatio	Education/education-related						
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7. Description -				· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
Architectural Classification Enter categories from instructions)	.	Materials (Enter categories	s from instructio	ns)				
Romanesque Revival	-	foundation	Brownsto	-				
			Brick/Bro					
<u> </u>		walls			-			
			01-1-					
-		roof	Slate		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·			
	-	other						
-								
larrative Description	dition of the property on one or more			**				

8. Statement of Significance Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.) $^{N/\mathrm{A}}$

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 sheet	Explain the sig	inificance of	the p	property	on o	ne or	more	continuation	sheet
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibilography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 # _____

Bergen, NJ County and State

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance 1894-1931

Significant Dates October 1, 1895

Significant Person _____ (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Joseph H. Christopher, Builder

J. Warner Allen, Arthitect

Primary location of additional data:

- □ State Historic Preservation Office
- □ Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- X Other

Name of repository:

Village of Ridgewood

Bergen County

Beech Street School	Bergen, NJ
Name of Property	County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property73	Hackensack Quad
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	· · · · ·
1 1 1 5 7 4 5 2 0 Zone Easting Northing 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3 Zone Easting Northing 4 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 Arthur Wrubel, Chairman	
Village of Ridgewood organization <u>Historic Preservation Commission</u>	a date9/96
street & number 131 North Maple Avenue	telephone5517
city or town Ridgewood	
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	
	he cronet.
Representative black and white photographs of the	ne 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.)	Education
Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.) name Village of Ridgewood, Board of	Education

Paperwork 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.

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 7 Page 1

Narrative Description

The Ridgewood Education Center, historically known as the Beech Street School, is located in the Village of Ridgewood's central business district. When the school was built in 1894, it was on a cornfield on the outskirts of town. Ridgewood's growth, and hence, the need for a larger school, was accelerated by the nearby railroad station of the Erie Railroad. The Education Center is now surrounded by commercial, religious buildings, and a parking lot. The site is flat, and because of the building's height and bulk, it dominates the immediate area.

The building is within the downtown Ridgewood Historic District. The district was created by a Council ordinance on May 9, 1993 (see attached map). The Historic Preservation Commission administers the district. The building anchors the eastern edge of the district and is designated as a Historic Preservation Site.

This is a three-story masonry building with a high basement with windows. Its foundation, which is exposed, is rough-faced sandstone ashlar. Exterior walls are buff brick with a red brick trim. There are arched or straight brick lintels over the windows. The windows are recessed about six inches from the brick facade which produces strong shadows and darkens the windows creating a strong design element in the facade. (See Photos 2, 4)

There are nine bays in the fenestration with 2/2/2 sash windows. The top section of the window opening is now unglazed and were double-hung windows in the original design. There is a hipped roof and hipped dormers. A cornice composed of a frieze and dentil molding provides an architectural transition between roof dormers and facade. The roof is slate and copper trim at the valleys and tin on the peaks. It appears that most of the roof is original material.

The basic form of the building is rectangular giving it the massive effect no doubt sought by the architect for a Romanesque building. It is set back 35 feet from Cottage Place. The projecting bays of the facades, form turrets (rectangular on the west side, half cylindrical on the north and south) which intersect with the main mass and rise with hipped roofs to the level of the central roof. These turrets give the facade a sculptural quality which contributes to its architectural style of building. (See Photo 3)

The west facade is the most prominent and is also the main entrance. It is a tower which projects about seven feet from the main facade. This tower has a Romanesque ornament carved into the soft stone (rinceaux and foliage) on impost blocks, the keystone above the main doorway and an entablature band over the entrance. Carved into the ornament in the entablature are the words "Public School," and 1894 is carved into an arch-shaped piece over the second floor windows. (See Photos 5, 6)There are three sets of windows on each of the three floors of the tower establishing a rhythm that does not appear elsewhere in the building. (See Photo 1)

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 7 Page 2

Narrative Description (Continued)

The interior has three full floors and a basement. Each floor has a hall, approximately 22' x 40', with classrooms (now offices) with access from that hall. On the third floor there is the Board Room (the school's assembly space) which covers the eastern third of the floor. It is spanned by a wood truss with iron tie rods. The truss span is approximately 28'. There were also wood trusses on the western third of the building on the third floor. It appears that they created a large open area on the second floor (see photo 8). Stairwells are on the north and south sides.

The building was completely renovated in 1979 by Pipines, Tromeau and Associates and the contractor was Joseph DeVita. The cost was \$900,000. Extensive changes were made to the interior with a dropped ceiling for air-conditioning and heating systems. Interior partitions were added to create office spaces. The wood windows were replaced with brown anodized aluminum with a panel. The panel in each window changed the original window proportions shortening the center muntin and the side jamb. However, the original masonry and stone facade and slate roof remain, retaining the basic character of the building.

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 8 Page 1

Significance

The Beech Street School, when completed in 1895, was an impressive building, centrally located in the newly incorporated Village of Ridgewood. The architect, J. Warner Allen was not well known but the builder. Joseph H. Christopher, was a prominent local contractor for many beautiful home in Ridgewood. There was no other school building equal to it in Bergen County and few in the state rivaled it. The facilities, then described as elegant, spacious, and commodious, accommodated an enrollment of 397 but had a capacity of 500. To this day it remains an impressive structure in the downtown district where it accommodates the administrative offices for the Ridgewood Public Schools. This school, built in the Romanesque Revival style, is very well preserved and meets Criterion A for the important role it had in the evolution of public education and Criterion C for its architectural significance.

During the years 1890-1892, the Board of Trustees was faced with several problems related to educating the youth of the village. The district was growing geographically, the town's population was increasing rapidly, and there was a trend for students to stay in school longer. The centrally located Union Street School was so overcrowded that a small 13 by 15 foot janitor's room was used as a classroom for 34 pupils. At the annual meeting in March 1893, the Trustee appointed a threeman advisory committee to study the problem and report their findings to the voters. At the next annual meeting in March 1894, they recommended that a new building be erected on a more centrally located site. The Trustees were then asked to call a special meeting of the voters to request an appropriation for a new school. A month later, the special meeting was held and the Trustees were authorized by a vote of 74 to 28 to purchase a cornfield on the corner of Franklin Avenue and Beech Street as a site for the new school. A three-story brick schoolhouse containing four classrooms and a recitation room on each of the first two floors, an assembly hall plus storage space on the third floor, and playrooms, bathrooms, and coatrooms in the basement would cost about \$47,000, including the plot. A wooden structure of the same size would be about \$35,000. Because of the difference in price, the proposal presented to the voters was for the frame building. Dr. E. F. Hanks, who was attending the meeting proposed an amendment to increase the amount to \$47,000 but it was voted down. The frame building had passed 66 to 32. Although the matter appeared to be settled, a week later it was decided to spend the additional \$12,000. Apparently, the women of the village were outraged that their husbands were willing to risk the safety of their children in order to save money. A petition with 140 signatures was circulated asking that the new schoolhouse be brick instead of frame. Since women did not have the vote the signers were, of course, all men.

By the end of June 1894, the Trustees hired J. Warner Allen as architect, sold bonds at 3.8%, bought the lot for \$3,450, and awarded contracts for a heating system, for excavation and grading, and for digging a well. According to Picturesque Ridgewood published in 1898, "one of the ablest school architects in the country designed the building." The Bergen County Historic Sites Survey from 1984, however, states that little is known about Allen. The builder, Joseph H. Christopher, is

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 8 Page 2

Significance (continued)

described as the preeminent building contractor of the 1890's, having constructed grand houses on both sides of town. Christopher's final cost for the school was \$49,313.10. It had been 17 months from the time the voters gave their approval to the opening of the Beech Street School.

According to an article in the *Ridgewood News* on Friday, September 27, 1895, many villagers attended the inauguration ceremonies for the opening of "Ridgewood's new school," held in the auditorium on the upper floor. In describing the building the reporter stated only that "it was perfect in every detail." The article ends with an apology that the school would not be open on Saturday evening as hoped, because the painters were still doing the woodwork. It was a proud moment in Village history. Prior to the opening of the Beech Street School, overcrowding had been a reoccurring problem. With eight good-sized classrooms, seven small rooms, as well as rooms in the basement and attic, it was indeed a welcome relief for a town with a rapidly growing population. When it opened on October 1, 1895, it had a professional staff of nine, with a tenth teacher being added in December. Benjamin C. Wooster, the principal, earned an annual salary of \$1,400. The other eight teachers were all unmarried women with salaries ranging from \$400-650. A tenth staff member assisted the kindergarten teacher but did not received a salary, a practice that continued for two more years. Initial enrollment from kindergarten through high school was 387 pupils increasing to 420 within a month.

The progressiveness of the school was shown not only by its outstanding faculty, but by the fact that it had a kindergarten class taught by Miss Ivy W. Green – one of the first public kindergartens in the State of New Jersey. During this opening year, the nine years' elementary program was changed to an eight-year elementary course followed by three years of high school course. This school was quickly placed on the list of New Jersey high schools approved by the State Department of Education permitting graduates to skip the first year of Normal School and enter their second year without an examination. Classes such as Sewing, Manual Training, Advanced Art, and Mechanical Drawing were part of the school curriculum. This introduction of handwork in the public schools, under the leadership of Principal Wooster, made the school a pioneer in industrial education. Because most towns in the area did not have their own high school, it was only a few years before Ridgewood had a growing population of non-resident students. In June of 1896, the high school had its first two graduates, Laura Jessalene Taft and Robert Leroy Hutton. There were two graduates the following year, and by 1899, the number was up to seven.

Increasing enrollment in the early part of the century was again a problem, and by 1905, it became necessary to build three primary schools to relieve overcrowding at Beech Street. As new schools and additions were completed, the number of grades at Beech Street was reduced until by September 1912, only high school pupils and those 7th and 8th grade students who lived between Maple Avenue and the railroad attend. The high school population was increasing dramatically, there were 15 teachers on the staff, and the program had expanded to give students greater options. The 365 high school students enrolled in 1915, had five different programs from which to choose:

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 8 Page 3

Significance (continued)

- The Academic Course preparation for Normal School
- The Household Art Course emphasized art and the home-making sciences
- The Business Course preparation for a commercial career or clerical position
- The Classical or Science Course both were for students who planned to continue their education

In 1913, the high school students occupied all of the Beech Street building except one room. For the sum of \$6,600 three portable schoolhouses were purchased and placed on the Beech Street property, initially to house the grammar school population, and two years later as a high school cooking room, a chemical-laboratory and recitation room, and a grammar school classroom. Various solutions to the overcrowded and now inadequate high school facility, were to go on split sessions, divide up the assembly hall into classrooms, or send the rest of the grammar school students to other overcrowded schools in the village. The solution chosen by the citizens of Ridgewood in 1913, was to purchase a nine acre site on East Ridgewood Avenue and build a new high school. When the new high school opened on March 7, 1919, Beech Street became a grammar school. In 1920, the name of Beech Street was changed to Cottage Place and the school became Central Grammar School. Nine years-later, the name was changed again when it became Benjamin Franklin Junior High School. When an addition to the new high school was open in 1931 to accommodate the junior high students, the Beech Street building was closed. It had served as a public school in the village for 37 years. When it reopened it was called the Ridgewood Education Center and housed the offices of the Board of Education, the Superintendent of Schools and his administrative staff, as well as other special services.

In 1977, when the building was 85 years old, the interior underwent a complete renovation. The restoration was planned by Pipines, Tromeur, and Associates, architects and carried out by Joseph DeVita, Inc., general contractors. It was at a cost of \$900,000 but was done with meticulous attention to detail. To this day, the building is considered to be in excellent condition. Today, as in the past, this building is an integral part of education in the community that places great value on provide an excellent education for all its students. It is in this 1895 Public School that regular Board of Education meetings are held, that the Community School has its offices, and where the computer services for the district are located to name just a few important functions. For just over 100 years, this building has been an important landmark in the Village of Ridgewood.

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

<u>Celebrating a Centennial - A History of Ridgewood, New Jersey</u>, Ridgewood Centennial Celebration Committee, Village of Ridgewood, 1994.

<u>The History of a Village, Ridgewood, New Jersey</u>, The History Committee of the Village of Ridgewood state Tercentenary Committee, Ridgewood, NJ, 1964.

<u>Picturesque Ridgewood</u>, C. H. Dunn, 1898, an illustrated brochure (archives in Ridgewood Public Library).

<u>Ridgewood, Bergen County, New Jersey - Past and Present</u>, Citizens Semi-Centennial Association, Ridgewood, NJ, December 31, 1916.

Year Book of the School, Ridgewood, New Jersey, published by the Board of Education, Ridgewood, NJ., November 1915 (first year book published and located at the Education Center).

Bergen County Historical Sites Survey - Village of Ridgewood published by Historical Sites Advisory Board, County of Bergen, 1985.

"The New School House," The Ridgewood News, September 27, 1895.

"Bays, Gables, and Charm," The Record Newspaper, October 26, 1982.

<u>History of Early Ridgewood Schools</u>, Mrs. Ralph Ilowite, published in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the organization of the Kenilworth P.T.A., February 12, 1962 (archives in Ridgewood Public Library).

New Jersey, Bergen County Beech Street School

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is known as the Education Center, 49 Cottage Place, Ridgewood, New Jersey, Bergen County. It is designated on the Village of Ridgewood tax map as Block 3703, Lot 1. It is surrounded on the west and north respectively; Cottage Place and Franklin Avenue, and a municipal parking lot on the South and a funeral home on the east.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Since acquisition, the parcel has been owned by the Ridgewood Board of Education, Village of Ridgewood. It has been used exclusively for education purposes.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page __1

NEW JERSEY, BERGEN COUNTY

BEECH STREET SCHOOL

Photo's by Arthur Wrubel, AICP - July 15, 1997

Negatives on File: Barbara Carleton, Member and Secretary Historic Preservation Commission Village of Ridgewood 131 North Maple Avenue Ridgewood, NJ 07451

List of Photographs:

- 1. West facade (front entrance)
- 2. South and east facade
- 3. North facade (detail of 3 ½ story bay)
- 4. South and west facade
- 5. West facade (detail, front entrance with elliptical brick arch, carved stone and stained glass)
- 6. West facade (detail of the spring of brick arch)
- 7. Interior third floor, assembly room (wood trusses with steel tie rods create clear span)
- 8. Interior third floor, offices (wood truss with steel tie rods)
- 9. Interior third floor assembly hall (sky light with wood wainscoting)
- 10. Interior third floor, superintendent's office (set into the bay on the south facade)
- 11. Interior stairwell, second floor (stained glass window with original window proportions)
- 12. Interior basement (brick bearing walls with penetrations spanned by arches)
- 13. Interior First Floor Hall
- 14. Interior Second Floor Hall
- 15. Interior Second Floor Office in Bay Window
- 16. Interior First Floor Office in Bay Window





Ridgewood High School.

RIDGE WOOD ED VLATION CENTER BEECH ST. SCHOOL / 1898 Bergen County, NJ



















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