

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 17- 19 Nelson Street

Not for publication:___

City/Town: City of Auburn

Vicinity:___

State: New York

County: Cayuga

Code: 011

Zip Code: 13021

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: ___

Category of Property

Building(s): X

District: ___

Site: ___

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

___ buildings

___ sites

___ structures

___ objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

APR 05 2005

by the Secretary of the Interior

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 2
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official_____
Date_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau**5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ Entered in the National Register
☐ Determined eligible for the National Register
☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ Removed from the National Register
☐ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper_____
Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Religion Education	Sub:	Religious facility College
Current:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian: Richardsonian Romanesque

MATERIALS:

Foundation:	Stone
Walls:	Stone
Roof:	Slate
Other:	Wood, Copper, Glass

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 4**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**Overview**

The Willard Memorial Chapel- Welch Memorial Hall building is located in the City of Auburn, Cayuga County, which rests at the northern end of Owasco Lake in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The complex sits in the city's northeast section, north of Interstate 20 and west of New York Route 5, on a flat and relatively open parcel comprised of approximately one and one-half acres of land. The nominated parcel is historically associated with the former Auburn Theological Seminary, a ten-acre campus originally bounded to the east by Nelson Street, to the south by Seminary Street, to the north by East Seymour Street, and on the west side by residential properties. The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Building is one of a small number of extant architectural components of the former Seminary campus, along with the nearby Reverend Ezra Huntington house, as most of the other historic buildings were razed by the mid-twentieth century. The building is bounded to the west by a residential tower and associated parking, to the east by an open lawn fronting Nelson Street, to the northeast by a health care facility and playground, and to the south by a shopping complex fronting Seminary Street.

The handsome two-part building, constructed between 1892 and 1894, displays the characteristic features of Romanesque Revival style architecture as interpreted by Henry Hobson Richardson (1838-1886) and his followers. Designed by Andrew Jackson Warner (1833-1910) of the firm of Warner and Brockett (1882-93), the Willard-Welch Memorial building is being nominated for National Historic Landmark designation for its association with Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) and the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, the firm responsible for the execution of the Willard Chapel interior. The Willard Chapel interior, which ranks among the most intact ecclesiastical spaces in America designed by the Tiffany Company,¹ is an outstanding example of the philosophies integrating the decorative arts and architecture. The exterior of the building displays the roughly textured polychrome stonework that is a trademark of the Richardsonian Romanesque aesthetic, while the chapel interior, richly embellished with glass mosaic tiles, leaded glass, and oak furniture, recalls the extremely high level of craftsmanship and artistry that characterized Tiffany's distinctive approach to interior design. Relatively few alterations have been made to the chapel interior since the completion of the building in 1894.

Location and Setting

The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building is situated on a flat, grassy parcel interspersed with a small number of coniferous and deciduous trees, particularly to the west of the edifice. The building, oriented with its façade facing south, is located near the center of an L-shaped lot measuring approximately four hundred and fifty feet along its southern boundary and two hundred and thirty-five feet along the western boundary. A long asphalt drive leads westward from Nelson Street to a parking area fronting all of the south elevation of Welch Memorial Hall. There is

¹ Other known churches with Tiffany designed interior elements are: St. Paul's Church, Troy, New York; St. Michael's Church, New York City; Unity Church, North Adams, Massachusetts; St. Andrew's Dune by the Sea, Southampton, New York; and St. Peter's Chapel, Mare, California.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 5**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

likewise a parking area fronting the north elevation of the complex, accessed from Seymour Street. Grass covers the remainder of the parcel.

The character of the surrounding area has been denatured by urban renewal and modern development, leaving the nominated building isolated on a small parcel without the corresponding architectural units that once combined to physically define the Seminary campus (these no-longer extant elements will be discussed in the significance section). This has left the building all the more conspicuous, existing as it does on a largely open parcel, without the benefit of its former surrounding seminary buildings or considerable natural screening in the form of dense plantings of trees and shrubbery. Modern commercial and municipal development combined to transform this area of Auburn, once characterized by the campus and middle-class nineteenth century residences, to its current physical condition, which includes a high-rise apartment building, a municipal garage, a city playground, and a shopping plaza. Some of the surrounding nineteenth century residences have likewise been compromised by insensitive alterations and development. Fortunately the Willard-Welch building has survived on a fairly large parcel by urban standards, complete with grassy lawns and some trees, conveying a sense, albeit limited, of the former campus.

Exterior

The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building is constructed primarily of load-bearing masonry built above a poured concrete foundation, and is formed by two distinctly separate yet cohesive components linked by a small hyphen. Considered as a single entity, the building is an asymmetrically composed unit unified by materials, construction technique, and style. Both the Willard Memorial Chapel and Welch Memorial Hall were built of rock-faced gray limestone with red sandstone trim. A portion of the limestone was salvaged from an early seminary building, the Main Hall, an 1820 Federal style building dismantled in 1892. Gray slate shingles cover the roofs of both units and the hyphen. Irregular in form and profile, the building rests on a raised limestone basement articulated from the primary story by a wide sandstone water table; continuous stringcourses and sills, further accent the horizontal effect of the water table. The textural richness and polychrome treatment of the exterior lends the building its distinctly Richardsonian effect, as does the fenestration, in particular the emphasis of the entrance to Welch Memorial Hall, with its deeply recessed and heavily articulated rounded arch.

The west block, the Willard Memorial Chapel, is oriented with its axis perpendicular to the adjacent Welch Memorial Hall. Rectangular in shape, the one-story chapel faces south and is covered by steeply pitched front-facing gable roof, sheathed in monochrome slate with copper cresting and copping. The façade is punctuated by six windows, highlighted by a large Palladian-inspired window, and terminated at its corners by polychrome buttresses with beveled edges and conical roofs surmounted by crockets. The vertical effect of the steeply pitched roof of the primary elevation is countered by the horizontal emphasis of the water table and sandstone stringcourses that, contrasted with the gray limestone, provide for the distinctive polychrome effect of the building's masonry work. Fenestration on the primary elevation includes two windows below the water-table that light the raised basement, divided into six-square units by limestone mullions and transom bars, and two-lancet-like windows with sandstone quoins and rounded arch heads, corresponding with the bays

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 6**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

below. The latter two windows rest on a sandstone stringcourse forming a continuous sill. The focal point of the façade is a large Palladian window centered within a round-headed arch, which is situated above a rectangular stone panel with a carved inscription reading "WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL." This large window rests on a sandstone sill and is enframed by the massive sandstone arch and quoins, and is met at the impost level of the arch by a sandstone stringcourse. Five roundels surmount the tripartite window arrangement, which is divided by two stout, unfluted columns of medieval precedent. Between this window and the crest of the gable are two additional sandstone stringcourses, the top one forming the impost for the arch of a slender lancet-like window. The overall form of the chapel recalls the medieval English parish church type, a simple rectangular block covered by a steeply pitched roof with corner buttresses and a side entrance, with details medieval and Renaissance in origin instead of the Gothic of the English example.

The west-facing elevation of the chapel is pierced by six tall lancet-like windows, articulated by round-arched heads and quoins executed in sandstone. An offset entrance is situated near the southwest corner of this elevation, set within a projecting gable-roofed vestibule. The entrance consists of a round-headed sandstone arch within which is set a double-leaf door with strap hinges. The edges of the gable field of the vestibule are articulated by a stepped pattern, repeated from the primary façade, following the ridge of the roof upwards beneath the raking cornice. Executed in sandstone in contrast with the gray limestone walls, this treatment is repeated on the front and side gables of Welch Memorial Hall. Two slender windows with rounded heads light the vestibule. The east elevation consists of a similar fenestration pattern, with the corresponding bay opposite the vestibule given over to the hyphen connecting the two buildings.

The north elevation follows the profile of the façade, and is abutted by a small three-sided apse with a pyramidal roof. A roundel lights the interior, as do two round-headed lancet windows, emphasized by sandstone surrounds. Rising from the west side of the elevation is a tall chimney, engaged with both the apse and north wall, also accented by sandstone trim, like the corners of the apse.

Welch Memorial Hall is a one and one-half story gable-ended building with an intersecting, front-facing gable and one-story projections abutting the east and north elevations. The south-facing façade is highlighted by the front-facing entrance pavilion, within which is set a massive sandstone-trimmed arch framing a deeply recessed entrance. The arch, comprised of narrow rectangular-shaped voussoirs capped by an archivolt, springs from a foliated base. A flight of eight limestone steps set between pedestals of coursed limestone ashlar access the entrance, which consists of paired paneled oak doors flanked by leaded glass sidelights and surmounted by a leaded glass transom. The jambs and ceiling of the deeply recessed entrance are also paneled. Flanking either side of the entrance are generous window bands that rise from a continuous sill-- even with the height of the entrance arches foliated base-- nearly to the height of the slightly projecting eaves. Each band is separated into three units with double-hung one-over-one wood sash with a transom above. The transoms are currently boarded to correspond with the dropped ceilings within. Two jerkin-head dormers pierce the pitched roof, hung with paired one-over-one wood sash, the top sash embellished with a diamond pane pattern. Between the two dormers rises the gable of the entrance pavilion, embellished with a round-arched eight-paned window with heavy stone muntins. The apex of the pavilion's gable field is

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 7**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

highlighted by a checkerboard pattern of small square limestone and sandstone blocks, the slate roof accentuated by copper coping. Small octagonal projections abut the southeast and southwest corners of the façade, lit by narrow windows with heavy quoined sandstone surrounds. The block is unified by the water table and a continuous sill that divides the primary story from the half-story above, and continues from the façade to the side elevations. Above the entrance arch is a sandstone stringcourse that carried the building's name. Some of the carved letters have fallen away, leaving only "EMORIAL B."

The east and west gable-ended elevations are similar to one another, the east elevation abutted by a classroom wing, the west elevation by the hyphen connecting the Welch building with Willard Chapel. Both elevations are broad in proportion and pierced by square-headed windows corresponding with the primary story and round-headed windows lighting the half-story. Sandstone chimneys with coursed ashlar bases and squared pots rise from either side of the gable peaks on both elevations. Copper coping accents the gable ends and ridge of the roof. The north elevation is abutted at its center by the projecting classroom block, and lit by window bands matching those of the opposite elevation situated on either side of the wing.

Single-story classroom wings, both clad by pitched roofs and terminated by semi-octagonal ends, extend from the center of the east and north elevations. Each block is lit by two pairs of window bands like those on the façade and north elevations, and single square-headed windows with double-hung one-over-one sash, framed by sandstone quoining.

The Willard Memorial Chapel and Welch Memorial Hall are joined by means of a small, rectangular-shaped hyphen. Fenestration on the south elevation consists of two small lancet-like windows which flank a double-leaf door comprised of narrow vertical oak boards, hung with strap hinges and encased by a sandstone arch and quoining. Two smaller arches spring from the impost level of the entrance arch, and, with sandstone quoins, frame the windows and form a three-part treatment. Below the water table, windows with limestone mullions and transom bars light the raised basement. The entrance to the hyphen is reached by a flight of limestone steps set between projecting pedestals. Surmounting the center of the hyphen is a copper cupola set on a square base, with louvered openings and a bell-cast four sided roof; the original bell remains within.

Interior

The deeply recessed entrance on the south elevation of Welch Memorial Hall serves as the primary access to the interior of both the Welch block and the chapel. The double-leaf doors lead into a square-shaped vestibule, with a second set of doors with an identical sidelight and transom treatment between the vestibule and the hallway. The floor of the vestibule is laid with a polychrome ceramic tile treatment; walls are finished with plaster above oak wainscot, and the ceiling is paneled with wood. The first floor of Welch Memorial Hall is laid out on a compact cruciform plan with six classrooms, four in the main block and one in each projecting wing. Two hallways, one on a north-south axis and the other on an east-west axis, connect the various parts of the Welch building and link it with the chapel. From the entrance, the north-south hallway crosses the east-west axis to connect with the north classroom block, which contains a classroom and bathrooms. The east-west

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 8**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

axis connects the east classroom block with the hyphen and the chapel. Four classrooms set around the arms of the cross comprise the remainder of the first floor plan. The halls retain period hardwood floors, covered in carpet, oak wainscot and five-paneled oak doors that access the classrooms. Acoustic tile dropped ceilings mask the original ceilings in the hall and classrooms, which rise another six feet above the current treatment. Each of the six classrooms contains a fireplace, original oak floors and wainscot, and period blackboards, now painted over. These former classrooms now function as office and meeting space.

The Willard Memorial Chapel, accessed from the Welch Memorial Building by the hyphen and from the exterior by the entrance directly opposite the hyphen on the west wall, is oriented on a north-south axis. Both entrances are formed of broad round arches with double-leaf paneled wood doors, the impost level of the entrance arches formed by the cornice level of the oak wainscot. The rectangular-shaped chapel measures seventy feet in length by forty-five feet in width, the tall ceiling rising to a height of sixty-one feet. Pews are arranged on a Latin cross plan, the long arm running south to north and forming the center aisle between four groupings of pews, the short arm running east to west between the two entrances. Side aisles flank the pew groupings on the east, south, and west walls. The walls of the chapel are finished with smooth plaster from the level of the wainscot to the height of the cornice. The wainscot, handsomely crafted with carved quatrefoil motifs set within bands of recessed square and rectangular panels, rises to window-height and encircles the chapel interior. The aisles are laid with an intricate pattern of small marble mosaic tesserae, composed of an ochre-hued center with a border formed by patterned bands of red, yellow and green tiles; the remainder of the chapel floor is laid in narrow oak board, slightly raised above the level of the tile.

Articulating the high-ceilinged space is a series of eight wood hammer-beam trusses, each of which rises from corbels alternating with the window bays. The trusses are pierced by stylized trefoil motifs and large circular openings at their peak in which are fitted Greek crosses. Springing from the hammer beam between each truss and corresponding with the window bays are panels set perpendicular to the trusses themselves, pierced by large trefoil-headed arches. The capitals and consoles of the plaster corbels carrying the trusses are embellished with interlaced Byzantine motifs. The area above the cornice level is enriched by stenciled religious iconography, set within round arched recessions in a continuous wood band. Above this band is a second horizontal range of stenciled motifs, foliate in character, and vertical ranges which follow the rafters to the crest of the ceiling.

The chapel is lighted on east and west walls by twelve symmetrically arranged lancet windows, six on either side, with two more lancets piercing the south wall below the central Palladian window. Each of the lancet windows is formed of leaded opalescent glass and measures approximately 14 feet in height by 30 inches in width, divided to consist of a tall rectangular unit with a separate quatrefoil head. They are set within rounded arches topped by plaster archivolts. Six windows incorporate two pairs of square medallions centering a circular one; six incorporate five alternating square and circular medallions, while two are designed with a cross. The medallions frame abstracted suggestions of landscape and floral motifs. The highlight of the glass is the memorial window

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 9**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

entitled "Christ Sustaining Peter on the Waters," set within the Palladian window. It consists of a triptych composition with a multi-layered glass center panel in which Christ and Peter are represented, topped by a scallop-shell motif and flanked by stained glass outer panels with intricate foliate decoration. Five roundels are set within the arch above the treatment. The window is enframed in stone, contrasted with the smooth plaster walls surrounding it, with quoining and an archivolt.

Below this treatment and between the two flanking lancet windows is a ten-foot high by seventeen-foot wide Memorial Tablet composed of glass mosaic tile and gilded plaster bas-relief executed by Jacob Adolphus Holzer, a skilled Tiffany craftsman who oversaw many of the details of the interior scheme.² The tablet, dedicated to the memory of Dr. Sylvester Willard and his wife Jane Willard, is highlighted by a centrally placed angel with spread wings holding a banner inscribed in Greek, flanked by smaller figures to either side. Above the figures is the following inscription:

IN LOVING MEMORY OF SYLVESTER WILLARD 1799-1886. FORTY YEARS
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THIS SEMINARY AND HIS
WIFE JANE FRANCES CASE 1813-1890. REMEMBERING WITHOUT CEASING
YOUR WORK OF FAITH AND LABOR OF LOVE AND PATIENCE, OF HOPE IN
OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. I. THESS. 1:3

Opposite the triptych and tablet on the far wall of the apse is a rose window designed by Holzer comprised of a central panel depicting the seal of the Presbyterian Church, with eight surrounding circular panels consisting of "Canterbury Cross," "St. Luke," "Holy Trinity- Star of David," "St. John," "Gifts of the Spirit," "St. Matthew," "Crown of Thorns," and "St. Mark." Hanging from the ceiling are nine Moresque-styled chandeliers, attributed by Duncan to Tiffany himself,³ crafted from jeweled and leaded glass with brass mounts. Hidden behind the organ pipes, below the level of the rose window, are two additional lancet windows.

All the furniture comprising the remainder of the chapel's contents is handsomely crafted and integrated with the overall decorative program. There are a total of 32 pews, sixteen to either side of the center aisle. They are rectilinear in shape and constructed of oak with red velvet cushions, their ends highlighted by bead-and-reel moldings and recessed panels. The liturgical center is situated on a dais centered against the north wall before the apse, highlighted by an octagonal pulpit, and also includes an altar table, a sedile (a seat for the clergy to the right of the altar), and two armchairs, all constructed from oak. A round arched opening articulates the recessed apse, into which is set a tracker organ believed to be original to the chapel. The pulpit is richly appointed and displays the highest level of craftsmanship, and is composed of an octagonal base with an octagonal body, terminated by an elaborate cornice finished with courses of egg-and-dart and bead-and-reel

² According to the documentation compiled by Alastair Duncan following a visit to appraise the contents of the Willard Memorial Chapel, Holzer designed the triptych window, the rose window, and the lancet windows, in addition to the memorial tablet. Letter and appraisal, Duncan to Larry Liberatore, 15 March 1989, courtesy of Mike Long, Planning Department, City of Auburn, New York.

³ Ibid.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 10**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

moldings. Each facet of the octagonal body of the pulpit has a recessed center panel, rectangular in shape, embellished with three interwoven circular motifs of Romanesque-Byzantine inspiration set on top of one another. The panels have a white tile mosaic background with gold leaf forming the circular motifs, bordered by green jewel-like glass ornament and a bead-and-reel molding. The sedile is gently curved and located between the pulpit and the organ, and consists of seven seats, each with red cushions and backs with stenciled Romanesque-Byzantine motifs. It is unified by a molded cornice that rises to a pedimented center above the center seat. Behind the sedile rises the organ, designed and built by the firm of Steere and Turner of Methuen, Massachusetts.

There is a full basement with a poured concrete floor beneath both the Willard Chapel and Welch Memorial Hall. It is accessed by a flight of stairs near the east classroom block of the Welch building. Beneath the Welch hall, steel columns carry steel I-beams which in turn support the floor joists, while the floor of the chapel is carried by steel columns that support wood beams. A section of basement beneath Welch Hall was originally finished and included a bathroom, and retains period architraves wainscot and ceramic flooring.

Relatively few changes have been made to either the Willard Memorial Chapel or Welch Memorial Hall since their completion. The original ceiling in the hall and classrooms of the Welch building has been concealed by the current dropped ceiling, at which time the transom lights of the exterior window bands were boarded. Otherwise Welch Hall retains a relatively high level of integrity and most of its historic finishes. In 1957 Auburn's Seventh Day Adventist Church purchased the Willard Memorial Chapel, during which time minor cosmetic changes were made to its interior. These included painting over stenciled motifs on the organ pipes, above the wainscot, around the windows, and in the apse. At this time the plaster walls were also repainted, from their original deep rose-burgundy hue, to its current cream color.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 11**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: Locally:

Applicable National

Register Criteria:

A X B C X D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions):

A X B C D E F G

NHL Criteria:

4

NHL Exception:

1

NHL Theme(s):

III. Expressing Cultural Values

5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design.

Areas of Significance:

Architecture

Art

Period(s) of Significance:

1892-94

Significant Dates:

1892, 1894

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Interior: Tiffany, Louis Comfort; Holzer, Jacob Adolphus

Architect: Warner, Andrew Jackson

Builder: Barnes and Stout

Historic Contexts:

XXVI. Decorative and Folk Art

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 12**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Overview**

The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building is a distinctive and highly intact representation of the work of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company and its innovative founder, Louis Comfort Tiffany. Completed in 1894, the Richardsonian Romanesque style building, designed by well-known regional architect Andrew Jackson Warner, features an extremely rare chapel with a decorative program conceived entirely by the Tiffany Company that includes windows, furnishings and fixtures all displaying an extremely high level of craftsmanship. Overseen primarily by Jacob Adolphus Holzer (1858-1938), the Willard Chapel interior is a remarkable expression of the Tiffany aesthetic, the overall effect displaying a harmony and cohesiveness indebted to the compositional skill of its designers. The Chapel was commissioned and funded by Caroline and Georgianne Willard in memory of their parents, Dr. Sylvester Willard, a locally renowned physician, businessman and philanthropist, and his wife Jane Frances Case Willard. Welch Memorial Hall was funded by an endowment established by the Reverend Dr. Ransom Bethune Welch, a professor at the seminary from 1876 until his death in 1891.

Louis Comfort Tiffany ranks among the most influential American tastemakers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Son of Charles Lewis Tiffany, a noted New York City jeweler, Tiffany received formal art training first under the tutelage of painter George Inness and later in Paris before embarking upon a career in interior design and the decorative arts. Traveling widely while abroad, Tiffany was exposed to a broad range of stylistic influences that helped shape his approach to design. Following his early work as a designer of interiors-- exemplified in the company's work on the Willard Memorial Chapel-- Tiffany devoted himself almost exclusively to the creation of windows, glass lamps, and other objects and to the refinement of the glass making process itself. The interior of the Willard Memorial Chapel highlights the first phase of Louis Comfort Tiffany's career and illustrates the distinctive approach to interior design that he and his associates developed during the preceding decade, and the high level of artistry his studio maintained. It is generally considered by historians and decorative arts specialists to represent the last completely intact Tiffany-designed ecclesiastical interior in its original location in the United States.

Development of the Auburn Theological Seminary; Dr. Sylvester Willard and the Willard Memorial Chapel

The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building is one of the last remaining historic components of the Auburn Theological Seminary, a campus that at its peak consisted of numerous buildings and approximately ten acres of land. Established in 1818 by the Synod of Geneva, the Auburn seminary ranked as the second Presbyterian seminary established in the North, enrolling its first students in 1821. The campus once included other distinguished educational buildings, among them the 1870 Dodge-Morgan Library by Archimedes Russell and the 1875 Morgan Hall Dormitory by Russell Sturgis, in addition to Warner's building and two buildings by Samuel Hilger, all of which, excepting Warner's work, were razed in the 1950s. The Auburn Theological Seminary was founded in response to the increasing needs of the Presbyterian Church, in order to provide training for ministers to lead churches in burgeoning eastern cities and along the expanding frontier.⁴ Following

⁴ Information on the history of the Seminary has been compiled from various sources, including the National Register of Historic Places nomination prepared in 1989 by Nancy Todd, Field Services Bureau, New York State Historic Preservation Office, Martha J.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 13**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

an appeal made to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1805 by Dr. Ashbel Green, the nation's presbyteries began to recognize the need to establish such an educational system. At the 1809 General Assembly meeting, three plans were proposed to address this situation, those being the establishment of one central institution, the establishment of one each in the North and South, or the establishment of one for each synod-- members of the various presbyteries were to consider these alternatives before a vote the following year. At the General Assembly meeting of 1810, plans to establish a single institution were forwarded, and not two years later the first Presbyterian seminary was opened at Princeton, New Jersey. The establishment of the Princeton seminary, however, failed to reflect the original desire of the Central and Western Synods to adopt one of the other proposals, their primary fear being that a central institution would create a disparity of qualified graduates in areas removed from that institution. Thus in 1812 a plan was forwarded to the Presbytery of Cayuga for the establishment of an institution in Onondaga County, which was adopted but not acted on. Again in 1818 a second try was made to establish a regional seminary within the bounds of the Synod of Geneva. The Synod again accepted the proposal and chose Auburn as the site of the new school, given that \$35,000 and ten acres of land could be obtained in advance of the next Synod meeting in the winter of 1819. These conditions were successfully met with the aid of the Hardenburgh and Cuyler families, both prominent names in Auburn, who donated the necessary acreage.

The site secured for the new seminary, an elevated location north of the developing village, set the campus off from its immediate surroundings. In late November 1819 groundbreaking ceremonies were held, with remarks by Reverend William Johnson of Scipio and Reverend Dirck Cornelius Lansing, pastor of Auburn's First Presbyterian Church and a major force in plans for the new seminary. An account in the *Cayuga Republican* described the events:

... the ground was broken by the Reverend Mr. Johnson driving the team and Mr. Lansing holding the plow-- now commenced a scene of most active and joyful industry—Every heart appeared glad, and every hand was willing to labor.⁵

The following spring, in May 1820, the cornerstone of the first building was laid. This Federal style building, as it appears in the 1875 *Atlas of Cayuga County*,⁶ consisted of a late-Georgian plan, with a hip-roofed center block flanked by gable-ended wings; it was constructed of locally quarried Cayuga County limestone and designed by an unknown builder. A subsequent dormitory addition, known as Douglass Hall, was added to the west end of the west gable-ended flanker in 1836, though its companion wing on the opposite side was never erected; it was built by Isaac Selover. The dormitory addition was dismantled in 1874 and the stone used in the erection of St. Luke's Church; the remainder of the building was taken down in 1892 and the stone reused in building the Willard Memorial Chapel and Welch Memorial Hall. The first students at the seminary enrolled in 1821; early instructors included Reverend Lansing, Reverend Matthew La Rue Perrine, and Reverend Henry Mills.

The next significant building campaign occurred during the 1870s, reflecting a time of expansion by the Presbyterians coinciding with a period of reconciliation between the Old and New school sects.

Shosa, "Auburn Theological Seminary," in *Auburn, New York: Two Hundred Years of History* (Auburn: Lakeside Printing, 1992), and Mark Reinberger, Jeffrey Stoller, and Henry Tepper, *Auburn Illustrated: A History in Architecture* (Auburn: Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center, 1983).

⁵ *Cayuga Republican*, 8 December 1819, quoted in Shosa, "Seminary," 40.

⁶ F. W. Beers, *County Atlas of Cayuga County, New York* (New York: Walker and Jewett, 1875). The Seminary, including additions to that time, is depicted on page 33.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 14**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

The Old School Presbyterians represented a traditional, liturgically oriented focus while the New School Presbyterians were influenced by the tremendous evangelical spirit of the period, particularly strong in the Burned-over District of central New York state. These theological differences had led to a schism among the Presbyterians between 1837 and 1868, during which time western New York and Ohio were excluded from the General Assembly. The Seminary had early on become associated with the New School sect, particularly under the influence of Reverend Perrine. In an effort to encourage cooperation between the two sects, a fundraising campaign was initiated which raised upwards of five million dollars for the various institutions of the church. As a prelude to this effort two prominent benefactors, the Honorable William E. Dodge and Colonel Edwin Barber Morgan, agreed to bear the cost of erecting a library building for the Auburn Theological Seminary. Dodge had prospered as a New York City merchant while Morgan gained note in association with *The New York Times* and as a founder of the Wells Fargo Company.⁷ The cornerstone of the Dodge-Morgan Library, among the earliest commissions gained by prominent regional architect Archimedes Russell (1840-1914),⁸ was laid in May 1870 and completed shortly thereafter. Russell's building, which reflected the current taste for the High Victorian Gothic style, was designed to accommodate 60,000 volumes and erected at a total cost of \$40,000 of locally quarried blue limestone and Medina sandstone.

Financial difficulties, however, were a major concern for the seminary during this period. In May 1872, the governing board met and concluded that the current financial situation would not allow plans for expansion to be realized. Although five million dollars had been raised as part of the reconciliation, very little of it had been distributed to the seminary. During 1872 and 1873, the search for additional funds continued. In December 1872, Alonzo D. Morgan, son of the library benefactor Colonel Edwin Morgan, died, which led Morgan to propose either an endowment or memorial in his son's honor. To fulfill this commitment, Morgan proposed two plans, one of which included the relocation of the seminary in his home town of Aurora where he would provide a site and an endowment of \$400,000, and the other which would allow the seminary to remain in Auburn and include the construction of a new dormitory building. The second plan required that \$300,000 be raised within sixty days; if this was done, Morgan would absorb one-fourth of the sum needed to erect the new building. The second plan was adopted and with the financial requirements fulfilled, construction of Morgan Hall began in May 1874. Designed by New York City architect Russell Sturgis (1838-1909), the new dormitory was also built in the prevailing High Victorian taste. Five stories in height, the quarry-faced bluestone and sandstone building was situated west of the new library and measured 216 feet in length by 45 feet in width. The building was comprised of a projecting center pavilion with a steeply pitched pyramidal roof, flanked by five bay blocks terminated by pyramidal-roofed projections.

In 1876 the Reverend Doctor Ransom Bethune Welch became a professor at the Auburn Seminary, serving in the institution until his death in 1891. In his will, Welch bequeathed money to the Seminary stating that it be used toward the construction of a new classroom wing; classes had continued to be conducted in the original 1820s building up to this time. A similar proposal was put forth for the erection of a new chapel at the same time, and after considerable debate, it was decided to unite these two needs as a single building project. The new classroom building would be funded through Welch's legacy; the cost of erecting the chapel was to be borne by Caroline and Georgianna Willard in memory of their parents. In October 1892, the cornerstone of the Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building was laid by the widow of Dr. Welch, the daughters of Dr.

⁷ Shosa, "Seminary," 43.

⁸ Paul Malo, *Three Syracuse Architects: Horatio Nelson White, Archimedes Russell, Joseph Lyman Silsbee*, n.p.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 15**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Willard, and Henry A. Morgan.

Dr. Sylvester Willard came to Auburn in 1843 and settled with his family on Genesee Street. Willard, a practicing physician, was a major philanthropist who had prospered by investing in joint stock companies associated with large manufacturing firms and railroads. Willard was one of the organizers of the Oswego Starch Company, incorporated in 1848, serving as its president from its beginning until his death in 1886. Willard likewise was one of the original Trustees of the Auburn Savings Bank, which opened in May 1848, and served as president of the bank from January 1860 until his death. Other professional affiliations included the Young Ladies Institute and the Elmira Female College. An elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Auburn, Willard served as secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Auburn Theological Seminary for forty years and as president of the Cayuga County Bible Society for twenty years. Though a prominent and well-respected citizen, Willard, a Whig and later a Republican, did not pursue a career in politics. Dr. Sylvester Willard died in February 1886, followed by his wife Jane in July 1890.

The Willard's were survived by their daughters, Caroline and Georgianna, who continued the family's generous and longstanding tradition of philanthropy. After the death of their parents, the Willard sisters made many sizable charitable contributions to Auburn groups and institutions, including the Young Men's Christian Academy, the First Presbyterian Church, and the Seminary, all of which had been a part of their father's associations. At one point the YMCA had been experiencing considerable financial reverses, and it was a contribution from the Willard family that rescued the association from dissolution and allowed them to keep their building from creditors. They likewise financed an athletic field and field house adjacent to the YMCA and adjacent Tagahjuta Park. As a memorial to their parents, Caroline and Georgianna Willard financed the construction of the Willard Memorial Chapel on the campus of the Seminary, constructed between 1892 and 1894, designed to adjoin the Welch Memorial Building.

The Aesthetic Movement and Louis Comfort Tiffany

By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, advocates of the Queen Anne style, and slightly later the Aesthetic and Arts and Crafts movements in England, were expressing lament for the decline of quality and craftsmanship in the fields of art, architecture and the decorative arts.⁹ Inspired by the writings of mid-nineteenth century critics Augustus W. N. Pugin and John Ruskin, and fueled by growing discontent with industrialization and its impact on these fields, designers sought to revive interest in the craftsmanship of the pre-industrial past. Advocates of these movements sought renewed standards of beauty in materials, quality and workmanship which they applied to the production of high-quality, often hand-manufactured products including furniture, wallpaper, books, architectural ornament and functional household items. Popularized by the work and writing of William Morris in England, the influence of aestheticism spread to the United States where it gained expression in the style broadly defined as the Aesthetic Movement.¹⁰ Louis Comfort Tiffany's interior designs, comprised of complex schemes integrating a wide range of creative and eclectic impulses requiring the highest level of artistry and hand-finishing, expressed the integration of decorative arts and architecture that characterized the Aesthetic Movement. Drawing from Far Eastern, Moorish, and Byzantine sources, among others, Tiffany produced interiors arresting in effect driven by high artistic standards and his own search for personal expression and success.

⁹ Background on the Aesthetic Movement has been paraphrased from the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Building, authored by Nancy Todd in March 1989.

¹⁰ Alastair Duncan, *Louis Comfort Tiffany* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1992), 33.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 16**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Louis Comfort Tiffany emerged from a privileged background and formal training as a painter to gain recognition first as an interior designer, and later as an innovator in the production of art glass. "It is doubtful," wrote a critic of Tiffany's in 1910, "if another can be mentioned who has contributed more substance to art in all its phases and embraced a wider range of expression in the interpretation of all things beautiful."¹¹ According to Tiffany historian Alastair Duncan:

... [Tiffany] was, at his height, a decorative artist of unparalleled ability, vision, and accomplishment, one whose achievement will probably never be surpassed; one who through a felicitous blend of intelligence, ambition, wealth, creativity, and boundless energy seized the unique opportunities afforded him by the extraordinary expansion and prosperity which America enjoyed at the turn of the century.¹²

In 1879 in New York City, Tiffany, along with Samuel Colman, Candace Wheeler, and Lockwood De Forest, helped form L. C. Tiffany and Associated Artists, a firm devoted to interior design. Beginning around 1880, the office began developing designs employing a rich vocabulary of stenciling, ornate lighting fixtures, furnishings, leaded glass, and glass mosaic tile work-- including George Kemp's salon on Fifth Avenue and two rooms in the Seventh Regimental Armory (NHL, 1986) on Park Avenue--opening the way for more ambitious schemes commissioned by prominent clients. According to Alastair Duncan, Tiffany's distinctive approach to interior design, drawn from a wide-range of stylistic sources, evolved in response to the entrenched popularity of other firms; in order to find a niche within the field, he was forced to "promote an entirely novel look."¹³ Aided by Tiffany's advanced social standing, the firm gained other significant high-profile commissions, which included renovations to the White House at the request of Chester Alan Arthur and Mark Twain's residence (NHL, 1962) in Hartford, Connecticut. Tiffany and Associated Artists continued until 1883, at which time the studio disbanded.

Also during this period Tiffany, with John La Farge, emerged as one of the leaders in the development of the production of colored decorative glass manufacturing in the United States. Along with La Farge, who would soon become his chief professional rival in this area, Tiffany formed the American School of Stained Glass, a loose professional organization committed to advancing the production of high quality opalescent glass in America.¹⁴ In 1885, two years after the dissolution of L. C. Tiffany and Associated Artists, Tiffany formed a new firm, the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, which signaled his increasing commitment to perfecting glass production techniques. Buoyed by a period of substantial church construction, the Tiffany studio would soon field hundreds of ecclesiastical glass commissions throughout the country, as well as domestic and civic commissions. By the conclusion of the decade, the Tiffany studio had established itself as the leading stained-glass manufacturer in the United States,¹⁵ all but eclipsing La Farge in the process. In addition to memorial and traditional window designs, the firm also provided designs for liturgical furnishings and other decorative items to provide for integrated interior schemes. To meet the demands of the popularity of his windows, Tiffany's studio rapidly expanded and soon included a number of high-profile artisans

¹¹ *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 19 October 1910, quoted in Alastair Duncan, Martin Eidelberg, Neil Harris, *Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1989), 7.

¹² Duncan, "Introduction," in *Masterworks*, 8.

¹³ Duncan, *Tiffany*, 37.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 17**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

and scores of craftsmen. The Willard Memorial Chapel, among the finest extant examples of a Tiffany-designed interior, was executed during a time of transition for the designer, from his earlier work as an interior designer, to his later interest in the creation of *objets d'art*, and his continuing interest in advancing glass-making technology.

Tiffany, Jacob Adolphus Holzer and the Willard Memorial Chapel

The Willard Memorial Chapel is an outstanding example of the work of the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company that succinctly illustrates the Tiffany studios distinctive approach to interior design. Conceived during a period in which Tiffany successfully established, in the words of art historian Neil Harris, "a personal and professional reputation by providing arresting and integrated interiors for both individuals and institutions,"¹⁶ Willard Chapel ranks among the most complete Tiffany-designed ecclesiastical space in the United States. The interior scheme combines a variety of elements produced by the Tiffany studio including leaded-glass windows, marble and glass mosaic-work, and liturgical furnishings and lighting fixtures, all designed by Tiffany and Jacob Holzer and termed by Tiffany specialist Harold Jaffe "extraordinary in quality and execution."¹⁷ Drawn from a diverse field of sources, among them Moorish and Byzantine, and executed with the exacting craftsmanship and artistic sensitivity typical of the Tiffany studio, the Willard Memorial Chapel represents an exceptional manifestation of Tiffany interior design and the Aesthetic Movement.

The design of the Willard Chapel interior scheme was contemporary with two significant events for Tiffany during the early 1890s, both of which exerted a tremendous impact on the fortunes of his professional career. In 1892 Tiffany established his own glass furnaces in Corona, New York, subsequently renaming his studio the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, which signaled his increasing commitment to the production of art glass and his attempts to perfect the technical aspects of the glass-making process. Around this time Tiffany also began developing a design for an elaborately decorated Neo-Byzantine Chapel to be displayed as part of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. The Tiffany Chapel, conceived by the designer and his associate J. A. Holzer as a promotional piece, was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by visitors to the Columbian Exposition and helped secure Tiffany's reputation as a designer. Situated in the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, the non-denominational Christian chapel, richly embellished with glass mosaic work, leaded glass with traditional religious iconography, and liturgical furnishings and objects, gained widespread critical acclaim. It was subsequently purchased for installation in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, where it was altered to fit into a crypt in the basement, and later moved by Tiffany to his home on Long Island where he engaged in a partial restoration of its elements. Some of its elements have been acquired and reassembled, and the chapel is currently installed at the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum in Winter Park, Florida.

Following his successful showing at the Exposition, where his work gained an international audience, and designs for a number of well received interiors, Tiffany would turn to melding his aesthetic values with the mass-production of high quality glass objects. At the height of his popularity his studio employed hundreds of employees and produced a wide variety of decorative objects, buoyed by the success of his Favrite glass, which gained widespread acclaim in the United States and abroad. Aiding Tiffany in his studio were a number of gifted designers, some of European descent, who helped carry the burden of numerous high-profile commissions beginning in the late 1880s. Among these were the German born designer Joseph Lauber, who formerly worked with Tiffany's chief professional rival John La Farge, Will Low and Jacob Holzer.¹⁸

¹⁶ Neil Harris, "Louis Comfort Tiffany: The Search for Influence," in *Masterworks*, 14.

¹⁷ Harold Jaffe, American Society of Appraisers, to Mike Long, 22 May 1989.

¹⁸ Duncan, *Tiffany*, 57.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 18**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Jacob Adolphus Holzer, a Swiss-born artisan proficient in numerous areas of design, had previously collaborated with both La Farge and noted sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, before joining professionally with Tiffany. Holzer, like Tiffany's other principal designers, brought considerable expertise to the Tiffany studio in the area of ecclesiastical design and proved a versatile artist, skilled as a muralist, sculptor, and mosaicist. Tiffany, according to Duncan, lacked an affinity for traditional ecclesiastical art and skill in the delineation of the human figure, the latter a major component of the biblical iconography popular with the American Protestant congregations that formed a major part of his clientele. Thus, Tiffany would assemble men like Holzer who were proficient in this area of design and versed in Old and New Testament iconography,¹⁹ allowing Tiffany to focus to an increasing degree on the production and marketing of glass lamps and objects. The interior scheme of the Willard Chapel allowed Holzer the opportunity to develop a broad array of decorative elements reflecting his wide-ranging artistic skill and technical aptitude. Duncan's appraisal of the chapel's contents indicates that Holzer took the lead for most of the design scheme, including the finely crafted bas-relief memorial plaque that is the highlight of the interior, though Tiffany himself is thought to have designed the Moresque chandeliers. Tiffany, as was his practice, likely reviewed and modified the design of the chapel's windows and the final decorative program.²⁰ Therefore, the overall cohesiveness and continuity of decorative elements probably reflects Tiffany's personal involvement with the design.

Unlike a majority of the window commissions gained by the Tiffany studio for ecclesiastical buildings, all but two of the lancet windows utilized in concert with the traditional rose window and the triptych deviated from the conventional religious formula that Tiffany continually challenged as his career progressed.²¹ The lancets would have held particular interest for Tiffany, and may likewise owe a certain debt to him, their abstracted geometric and naturalistic forms more in keeping with his tastes as an artist. It was in the studio's traditionally oriented religious imagery that his critics sometimes found fault in the Tiffany Company's window designs, since they "served ideas or sentiments" rather than letting "the magic of his materials speak in [their] own right."²² The Willard Chapel lancet windows, with their rich yellow and gold hues, geometric patterning and abstract subject matter, seemingly fulfill Tiffany's desire to break from the conventional representations preferred by ecclesiastical clients. The overall interior scheme of the chapel combined conventional Victorian decorative features like paneled wainscoting and traditional Protestant imagery with the distinctive vocabulary of the Tiffany studio -- layered stained and opalescent glass, rich applications of glass and marble tesserae, jeweled glass and gilt bronze, ornate lighting fixtures, and elaborate stenciling. Drawing from Romanesque, Byzantine and Moorish sources, the Tiffany studio's Willard Chapel decorative program was eclectic in derivation and driven by high standards of craftsmanship akin in spirit to the English Aesthetic Movement. It remains a rare and distinctive example of an interior conceived entirely by the Tiffany Company, in its original location, and displays the studio's characteristic emphasis on intricate surface enrichment, workmanship, and striking effect, cohesively composed in a unified manner. It is one of the few extant, highly readable Tiffany interiors that survive with an extremely high level of integrity. "The Willard Memorial Chapel," according to Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of

¹⁹ Duncan, *Masterworks*, 124.

²⁰ Duncan, *Tiffany*, 56.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

²² Herwin Schaefer, quoted in *Tiffany*, 65.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 19**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Art in New York, “is one of the most important, intact interiors by Tiffany.”²³

Although the Willard Chapel is recognized as one of the preeminent examples of an integrated Tiffany-designed ecclesiastical space—appraiser Harold Jaffe referred to it as “the only complete religious building extant in the United States designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany”²⁴ -- it is not the only extant example of the company’s work in this area of design. In Troy, New York, the worship space of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, an early Gothic Revival building constructed in the late 1820s, was remodeled and retrofitted with elements designed by the Tiffany Company and subsequently by Holzer following his association with Tiffany. The effect of St. Paul’s interior is, like Willard Chapel, quite striking, with a fully evolved decorative program highlighted by a richly treated chancel area. In New York City, St. Michael’s Church received an integrated interior treatment developed by the Tiffany Company for the chapel and chancel, yet a similar program was never developed or implemented for the nave. Other examples include Unity Church in North Adams, Massachusetts, St. Andrew’s Dune by the Sea in Southampton, New York, and St. Peter’s Chapel in Mare Island, California.

Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall: Architectural Design

The Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall building was designed by the Rochester-based architectural firm of Warner and Brockett, the office of regionally prominent architect Andrew Jackson Warner. Warner, a native of New Haven, Connecticut, was a nephew of two practicing architects, Henry Austin (1804-1891) and Merwin Austin. The former practiced in New England during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century after gaining professional experience as a protégé of Ithiel Town, senior partner in the New York City architectural office of Town and Davis. Merwin Austin came to Rochester in 1845 and it was there while under his uncle’s guidance, that A. J. Warner gained his first professional training.²⁵ After leaving his uncle’s office in 1857, Warner practiced both independently and in association with other designers before the formation of the Warner and Brockett office. The firm, headed by Warner, included two nephews, Frederick A. Brockett and William J. Brockett, who entered practice with their uncle in 1872 and 1873 respectively, continuing the tradition of family apprenticeship. Andrew Jackson Warner was the father of a prominent architect, John Foster Warner (1859-1937), likewise credited with the design of several prominent buildings in Rochester and western New York.

Though no correspondence regarding the planning and construction of the Willard-Welch building is known to survive, the Community Preservation Committee in Auburn maintains one working drawing of the north elevation by the firm of Warner and Brockett,²⁶ discovered in the attic of the Welch Memorial Building in 1989. Like many of his contemporaries practicing in the period between the conclusion of the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century, Warner was an eclectic designer who worked effectively with the numerous architectural idioms then popular, among them the Venetian Gothic, Queen Anne, and Romanesque Revival styles. In designing the new structure for the seminary, Warner was faced with the challenge of composing two distinctly separate but unified buildings accommodating different functions, visually integrated on the exterior by the use of related

²³ Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen to Bernadette Castro, 12 August 1999.

²⁴ Jaffe to Long, 22 May 1989.

²⁵ Betsy Brayer, *The Warner Legacy in Western New York* (Rochester: The Landmark Society of Western New York, 1984), n.p.

²⁶ “Theological Seminary, Auburn, New York. Warner and Brockett, Architects, Rochester, NY, 1892.” Collection of the Community Preservation Committee, Welch Memorial Building, Auburn, New York.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 20**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

materials and stylistic references. For the design of the Willard Memorial Chapel Warner chose as his model the small English parish church popularized in America by adherents of the Ecclesiological Movement and exemplified with the design of St. James the Less in Philadelphia (NHL, 1985) by John Notman, 1846-49. Warner had used this same form in his design of the Holy Sepulchre Chapel in Rochester (1875), modified in the Willard Memorial Chapel design by moving the entrance porch from the gabled to the side elevation, an accommodation to match the hyphen from the adjacent classroom wing located directly opposite. The steeply pitched roof, the heavily buttressed exterior and the open truss ceiling all recall the parish church type.

Unlike the Gothic of Holy Sepulchre, however, Willard Chapel was cast in the Romanesque Revival style espoused by Henry Hobson Richardson, with its roughly textured, polychrome masonry work and emphasis on heavy arched openings. The adjacent Welch Memorial Hall, with its deeply recessed center entrance with a massive Romanesque arch and front-facing gable with polychrome checkerboard pattern is similarly Richardsonian in spirit. Richardson's influence profoundly affected American design in the 1890s, and Warner, then nearing the end of a prolific career, employed Richardsonian devices on other nearly contemporary designs, among them the Wilder Building, Rochester (Warner and Brocket, 1887) and Corning City Hall (1893).

No evidence has yet to surface regarding the collaboration between Warner and the Tiffany Company in regard to the interior of the Willard Memorial Chapel. It is likely that the two firms maintained some level of professional interaction while the chapel's design was being developed.

The cornerstone for the new building was laid in October 1892, with ceremonies opened by Reverend Samuel Miles Hopkins followed by an address by Reverend Willis J. Beecher. Two women who had witnessed the laying of the original building's cornerstone in 1820, Mrs. Malcolm MacLaren and Lucinda Pease, were also on hand, Pease viewing the ceremony from the window of her Seymour Street home.²⁷ An account in the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* chronicled the laying of the cornerstone:

The real work of laying the cornerstone was then commenced amidst a hush of interested expectancy. Miss Willard, with a small silver trowel, spread the cement which was to bind this stone to the other which surrounded it, making them one common mass. The stone was then lowered and properly placed by Mr. Henry A. Morgan, of Aurora, and was firmly fixed in place by Mrs. Welch, who struck it three resounding blows with a setting maul.²⁸

Conclusion

In the late 1980s a significant grassroots effort was mounted by local citizens to preserve the Willard Chapel, in direct response to plans to sell the building's contents at auction. These efforts succeeded and the Chapel remains, complete with its original contents as an outstanding and irreplaceable example of the Tiffany aesthetic, the work of regionally prominent architect Andrew Jackson Warner, and the last architectural vestige of the Auburn Theological Seminary. The survival of so few intact original Tiffany interiors marks the Willard Chapel as a particularly distinguished and significant resource with the ability to provide a highly readable example of the aesthetic philosophies of a major figure in American design. It is likewise generally considered by historians and decorative arts

²⁷ Shosa, "Seminary," 44.

²⁸ *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, quoted in Shosa, "Seminary," 44.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL

Page 21

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

specialists to represent the last completely intact Tiffany-designed ecclesiastical interior in its original location in the United States.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 22**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Auburn, New York: Two Hundred Years of History. Auburn, New York: Lakeside Printing, 1992.

Beers, F. W. *County Atlas of Cayuga County, New York.* New York: Walker and Jewett, 1875.

Brayer, Betsy. *The Warner Legacy in Western New York.* Rochester, New York: The Landmark Society of Western New York, 1984.

Duncan, Alastair. *Louis Comfort Tiffany.* New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1992.

Duncan, Alastair, Martin Eidelberg and Neil Harris. *Masterworks of Louis Comfort Tiffany.* New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1989.

Malo, Paul. *Three Syracuse Architects: Horatio Nelson White, Archimedes Russell, Joseph Lyman Silsbee.* n.d.

Reinberger, Mark, Jeffrey Stoller and Henry Tepper. *Auburn Illustrated: A History in Architecture.* Auburn, New York: Schweinfurth Memorial Art Center, 1983.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☒ Previously Listed in the National Register. Listed on the NRHP 1989.

☐ 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: NYS OPRHP, Field Services Bureau, Peebles Island, New York.

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other (Specify Repository):

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL**Page 23**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 1.4 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	18	372430	4754800

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is drawn as a solid black outline on the enclosed tax map entitled "Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall." The boundary coincides with the current legal lot lines for the parcel, and coincides with the boundary originally established for the National Register of Historic Places.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the building historically known as the Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Building and which retains its historical integrity.

WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 24
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: William E. Krattinger, Historic Preservation Specialist, NYS OPRHP.

Address: Post Office Box 189
Peebles Island State Park
Waterford, New York 12188.

Telephone: 518-237-8643 ext. 3265

Date: December 2003

Edited by: Carolyn Pitts and Patty Henry
National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Survey
1849 C St., N.W. (2280)
Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: (215) 597-8875 and (202) 354-2216

DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
April 05, 2005

Willard Memorial Chapel- Welch Memorial Hall, Auburn, Cayuga County, New York

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

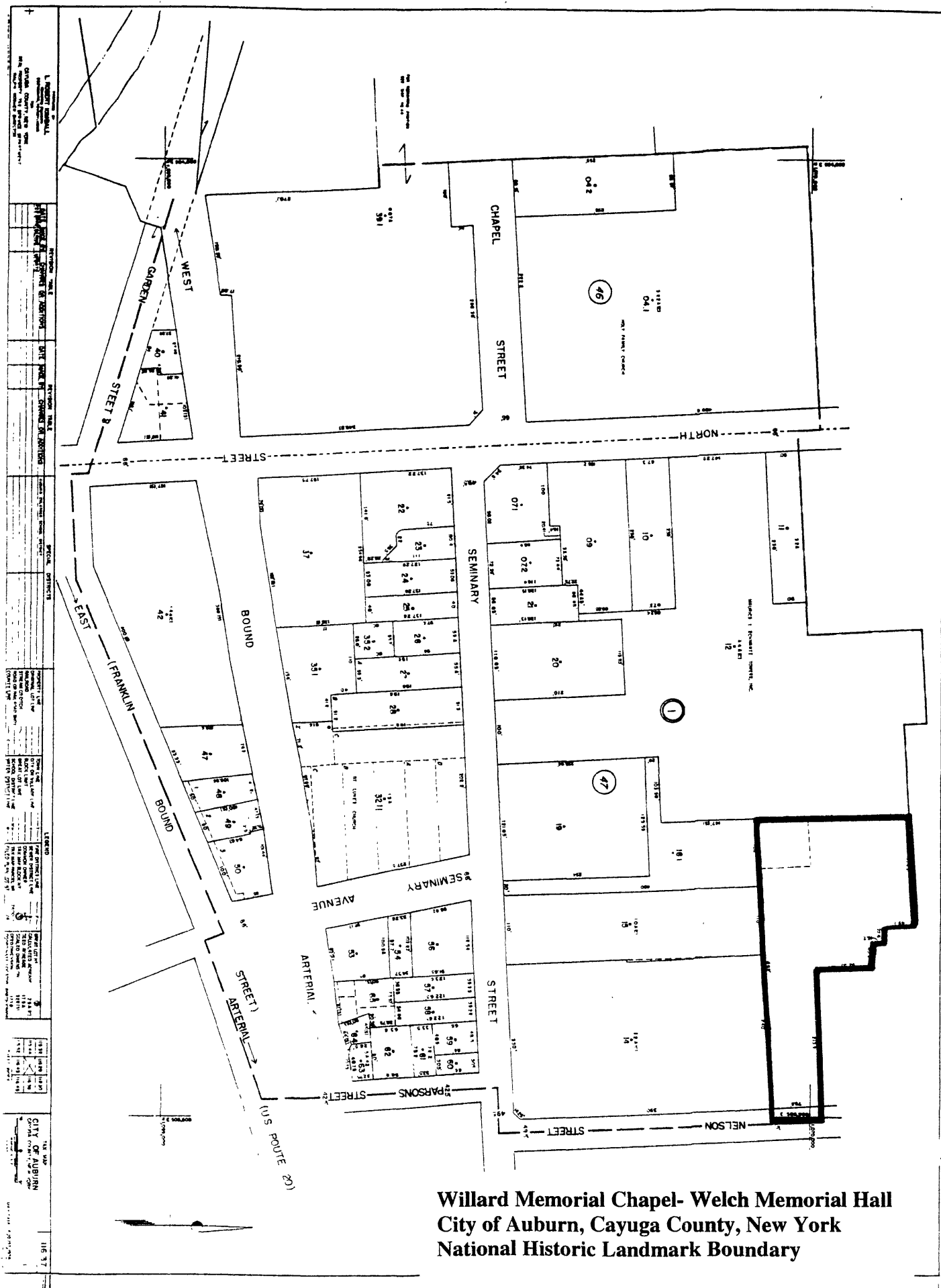
Photograph Key

Negatives at FSB, NY SHPO. Photographs by William E. Krattinger, March 2002

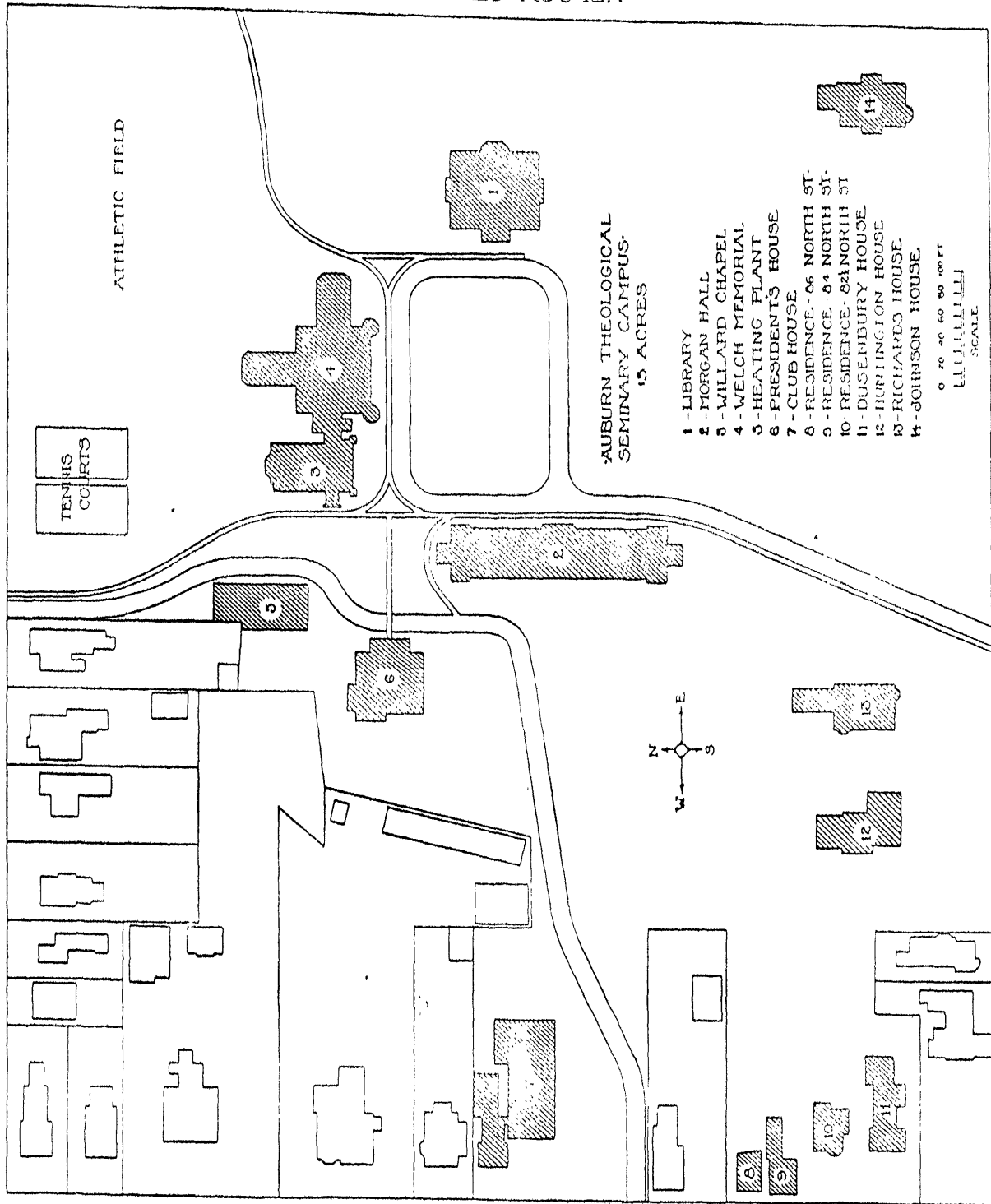
1. South-facing façade, Willard Memorial Chapel, view showing hyphen and west side of Welch Memorial Hall to right
2. South-facing façade, Welch Memorial Hall, hyphen to Willard Memorial Chapel on left
3. Façade, Willard Memorial Chapel
4. East elevation, Welch Memorial Hall, view looking roughly west
5. North elevation, Welch Memorial Hall to left, Willard Memorial Chapel to right
6. West elevation, Willard Memorial Chapel
7. Interior, Willard Memorial Chapel, view looking towards pulpit
8. View looking toward south wall, Willard Memorial Chapel
9. North end, Willard Memorial Chapel
10. Pulpit, Willard Memorial Chapel
11. Memorial Plaque, south wall, Willard Memorial Chapel
12. Window detail, Willard Memorial Chapel
13. Window detail, Willard Memorial Chapel
14. Chandelier, Willard Memorial Chapel
15. Welch Memorial Hall, central hall
16. Classroom, Welch Memorial Hall

Other images

1. Historic Aerial view, Willard Memorial Chapel-Welch Memorial Hall at top center, depicting historic interrelationship of seminary campus buildings
2. Historic campus plan
3. First floor plan of building



SEYMOUR ST.



NELSON ST.

AUBURN THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY CAMPUS
15 ACRES

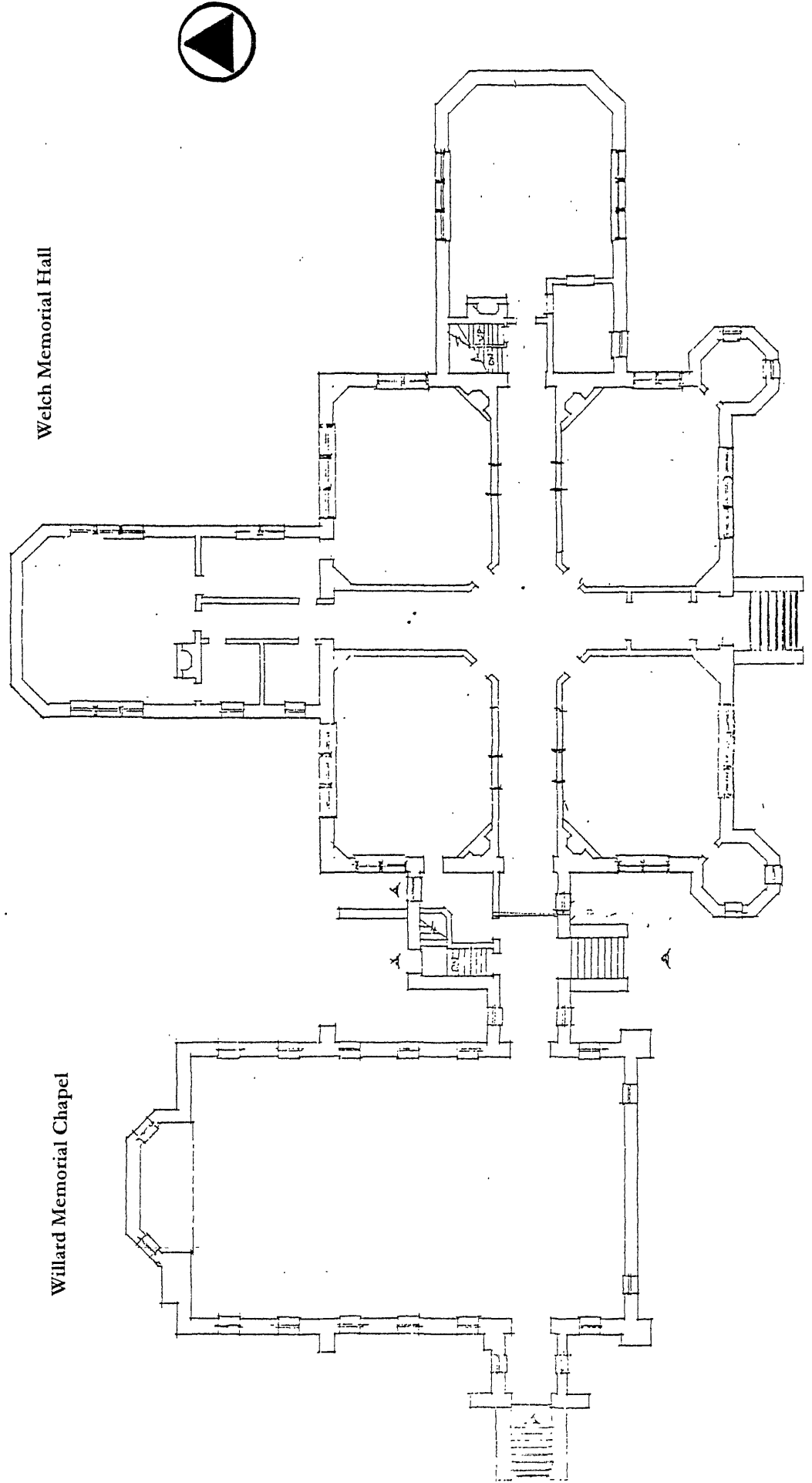
- 1 - LIBRARY
- 2 - MORGAN HALL
- 3 - WILLARD CHAPEL
- 4 - WELCH MEMORIAL
- 5 - HEATING PLANT
- 6 - PRESIDENT'S HOUSE
- 7 - CLUB HOUSE
- 8 - RESIDENCE - 66 NORTH ST.
- 9 - RESIDENCE - 84 NORTH ST.
- 10 - RESIDENCE - 82 NORTH ST.
- 11 - DUSENBURY HOUSE
- 12 - HURTINGTON HOUSE
- 13 - RICHARDS HOUSE
- 14 - JOHNSON HOUSE

0 20 40 60 80 FT
SCALE

SEMINARY ST.

NORTH ST.

Willard Memorial Chapel- Welch Memorial Hall
City of Auburn, Cayuga County, New York
Floor plan





WILLARD MEMORIAL CHAPEL-WELCH MEMORIAL HALL
Auburn, New York
UTM Coordinate
Zone 18
372430 4754800