

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received AUG 12 1985

date entered SEP 12 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. George's School and Convent

and/or common (same as above)

2. Location

street & number 12 Orange Street n/a not for publication

city, town Manchester n/a vicinity of

state New Hampshire code 33 county Hillsborough code 011

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <i>conversion</i>

4. Owner of Property

to housing units

name M + D Realty

street & number 124 Orange Street

city, town Manchester n/a vicinity of state New Hampshire

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds

street & number Temple Street

city, town Nashua state New Hampshire 03060

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

7. Description *St. George's School* *Manchester, N.H.*

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u> n/a </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. George's School consists of two connected late nineteenth century brick institutional buildings, a school and a convent, both Romanesque Revival in style, located at the northeast corner of Pine and Orange Streets in Manchester, New Hampshire, approximately one-half mile from the central business district. The property is bounded by a service alley on the north, late nineteenth century houses and tenements on the east, Orange Street on the south, and Pine Street on the west. The property includes a paved lot east of the building complex. Diagonally across Pine Street from the property is the parish church, a 1950s replacement of the original 1890 structure. The surrounding neighborhood is mid-to-late nineteenth century residential, with small stores at occasional intersections.

The main school building, which sits at the west end of the lot, is a three-story brick structure built in 1898. It has a square floor plan and terminates in a high hipped roof clad with gray slate and capped in copper; square chimneys with terracotta panels punctuate the north and south slopes. The walls are organized into three horizontal sections, divided by a band of brownstone and brick dentils found above the basement level and between the second and third stories.

Fenestration lends significant visual and stylistic interest to the building. At the sidewalk level, 3/3 sash light the raised basement. Romanesque-arched heads serve to group two-stage recessed window bays comprising the first and second stories. Sash units within these bays are 8/2, with rectangular transoms on the first level and arched transoms with radiating muntins above. Third story windows contain 6/1 sash, arranged in the same rhythmic grouping. All sash is original; each window has been fitted with aluminum storms.

On the primary (west) facade there is a projecting central bay, flanked by recessed bays containing the main entrances. Each entrance is highlighted by a broad arch edged in terracotta. The original glass and wooden double doors have been replaced with glass and aluminum inserts, and the fanlights have been blocked in. Above each entrance is a brownstone panel set within a large brick tablet edged in terracotta. The right panel contains the building's name and the left panel its date of construction.

Forty feet to the east of the school building is the three-story brick convent built in 1899 and converted to school use c.1915. The two buildings share setback, massing, material and stylistic features. The convent has a T-shaped plan and terminates in a hipped roof clad with gray slate and capped with copper; gabled dormers containing paired windows with arched lights in the upper sash punctuate each slope. A single brick chimney rises from the center of the roof toward the rear. The building sits on a granite watertable, where 3/3 sash illuminate the semi-raised basement. The walls of the convent are divided into horizontal units by a band of brownstone and brick dentils. The first story is defined by its extra height, by brick stringcourses which simulate a rusticated wall surface, and by brick voussoirs over the arched windows. The upper stories have a plain brick wall surface; window openings are segmentally arched on the second story, and rectangular on the third. With the exception of four windows on the second story, all sash is original, and includes 1/1, 2/2 and, in the dormers, 3/1 and 4/1 with arched upper lights; aluminum storm windows have been installed on most windows.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 1 *St. George's School*

Item number 7

Page 2

7. *Description, contd.*

The primary (south) facade is marked by a projecting three-bay pavilion containing the main entrance with a monumental brownstone portal. The original wood paneled doors and fanlight have been replaced with aluminum and glass. Flanking windows are paired and, on the lower two stories, recessed within arched window bays.

The east elevation contains arched entrances (boarded up on the exterior) on the first and second stories, facing the rear alley, and a third entrance with a fanlight at the northeast corner. The north (rear) entrance elevation is punctuated by only two windows on each story, grouped in the center of the wall. The west elevation windows are grouped into two units containing four windows. The southern group above the brownstone band illuminates the chapel; masonry openings are elongated and span the two stories. The opening has louvers in the lower section and is blocked in above.

The school and convent are joined at the north end by a one-story brick connector built c.1915 when the convent was converted to school use. The connector has paired rectangular windows with 2/2 sash and a gabled slate roof. Its rear windows are covered with plywood on the exterior, but the sash is intact.

The interiors of both the school and convent are functionally designed and typical of late-nineteenth century institutional finish. The floor plan of the school is based on a U-shaped corridor with large classrooms found along the north, east and south walls. Twin stairways with square, chamfered newels and square balusters are located at the southwest and northwest corners. Tongue and groove wainscoting, reeded door and window casings with corner blocks, and six-paneled doors are primary interior features and survive intact. The third floor, used as an auditorium, contains a curved stage set behind an arch, and panelled beams on the 21' ceiling.

The interior of the convent is based on a straight central corridor with tongue and groove wainscoting and a primary stairway with ornamental newels at the south end near the main entrance. Architectural trim is intact and includes molded door and window casings with corner blocks, five-panelled doors, and a flat baseboard with molded cap. The lower two floors contain large classrooms, and the third floor is divided into small bedrooms. The only major alteration to the interior is in the second floor chapel, where a dropped ceiling, plywood wall paneling and louvered sash, installed c.1960, conceal the original rib-vaulted plaster ceiling and arched window openings.

8. Significance

St. George's School

Manchester, N.H.

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1898–99

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. George's School possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The school is significant historically for its strong associations with the French-Canadian community in Manchester, particularly as an index of the growth, maturation and achievements of that cultural group. Its architectural significance derives from its representation of the type of late-nineteenth century school buildings typical of the period in New England; it is Manchester's best example of Romanesque-Revival architecture, and the only intact parochial complex on the east side of the river where the bulk of the city lies.

Settlement

When St. George's School was built, Manchester had one of the largest urban French populations outside Paris, as the result of relocation of Canadian French who were attracted to the city by the opportunity to work in the Amoskeag mills. By the middle of the nineteenth century—at the time when industrial development was altering the old agrarian landscape and economy of New England, and the Amoskeag Corporation was framing the east side of the Merrimack at Manchester with what was to become the largest textile manufacturing center in the world—conditions in rural Quebec were extremely bleak. Good land was unavailable, crops were poor, employment was short, and opportunities for advancement were severely limited. Habitants were ready to be wooed by agents from New England mills sent to Canada to recruit them; many were encouraged in their decision by family ties with kin who had preceded them south. It is thought that some French-Canadians arrived in Manchester as early as the 1830s (when Amoskeag itself was just getting a start), but it was not until 1850 that the influx of French-Canadians became significant. From 1866 to 1875, some 50,000 habitants left Quebec annually for New England, where they settled in cities like Manchester where the great mills were located. By 1890 French-Canadians represented one-third of Manchester's population; most were employed by Amoskeag.

Beyond the importance attached to the numbers of French-Canadians who provided a workforce for the mills, a greater cultural significance may attach to the urban parishes they established. In the brief period of some forty years (1850–90) rural Quebecois, who came to Manchester and other industrial cities in New England, transferred the concept of the parish to the city, and then developed in it an operative structure that served to preserve their culture at the same time that it facilitated their engagement with and commitment to the city. It is not coincidental that St. George's parish—with the church on one corner, the school on another, the convent adjoining, the rectory across the street, a grocery store and a mix of tenements and mid-century villas surrounding—replicates to a great degree the layout of the village centers of rural Quebec. The structuring of urban neighborhoods around l'église et l'école eased the transition from rural life to city, and enabled transplanted habitants to take hold from the start in what would otherwise have been an alien environment. The parish served them as an effective incubus. As they took employment at the mills, the Amoskeag owners expressed a paternalistic role toward them, and encouraged the bonding of

9. Major Bibliographical References

see Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Manchester South

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	9	3	9	9	4	8	0	4	7	6	3	2	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

see Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Durfee Hengen, Preservation Consultant

organization with Mary Lyn Ray

date

street & number 39 Auburn Street

telephone (603) 225-7977

city or town Concord

state New Hampshire 03301

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Officer

date

7/29/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

1005 8001 101-5870
2005 1007 7001-01001

date

9-12-85

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 2 *St. George's School*

Item number 8

Page 2

Significance, contd.

ethnic and family units, so that kin and neighbors tended to work side by side. The paternalism that French-Canadians experienced at work was thus very like the paternalism that structured their parish life, so that school, church and mill evolved an ethos that gave exceptional stability and identity to the Franco community.

Within the larger history of Franco settlement in the Northeast, the construction of St. George's School in 1898 demarcated an important phase of growth and acculturation in the city of Manchester. By 1850 the numbers of French-Canadians arriving in Manchester were demographically significant, but until 1871 Franco parishes were not formally recognized within the Irish-dominated diocese of the city. In 1871 Manchester's first French parish (St. Augustine) was established. Within a decade (1880) a second French parish, Ste. Marie, was laid out on the west side of the Merrimack. French Canadian Catholics living on the east side of the river crossed Bridge Street to attend services at Ste. Marie's. Because these communicants worked at the mills on the other side of the river, they were not, however, disposed to resettle in the new parish. With the subsequent decision within the diocese that parishioners should be facilitated in "la tache pour frequenter leur eglise," St. George's was established in 1890 and became the city's third French parish. It had been anticipated that Ste. Marie's would become the French quarter of Manchester. The designation of St. George's parish in 1890 demonstrated that, while Ste. Marie's would become the focal French quarter, it could not by itself accommodate the continuing tremendous growth of the city's French population.

The history of St. George's School indexes the parish's growth, and the general growth of the French-Canadian population in the city. Opened in 1898-99, within a decade the school was already crowded. Enrollment was 930 students, representing 1300 families in the parish. Within a few years more the parish numbered 1600 families, with a corresponding increase in students. It was decided to annex to the school the structure which had been built in 1899 for a convent. A brick connector was built to join the two buildings, and the brownstone portico framing the Orange Street entrance of the former convent was inscribed "St. George School." From c.1915 to 1970 the two buildings served the parish as neighborhood school and community center. Outside of school hours at St. George's the gymnasium-auditorium was utilized for various weekly entertainments that brought parishioners together. In the same tradition, since the closing of the school in 1970, the building has been used as a day care facility, mental health center and meeting place for "Le Club," a neighborhood social-activity program.

Architecture

St. George's School and Convent are significant as the most impressive example of Romanesque Revival architecture in Manchester, a city noted for its fine late nineteenth century architecture. In addition, the property represents the most intact parochial complex on the east bank of the Merrimack River; and in its scale and function, it preserves a sense of neighborhood that is central to the history of the parish and, by extension, of much of the French-Canadian population in New England.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet 3 *St. George's School*

Item number 8

Page 3

Significance, contd.

The school and convent today remain well-integrated within their neighborhood, a mix of fashionable Civil War era residences, three-story tenements and modest single-family houses. It is the least altered parochial complex in Manchester, retaining an historical scale and relationship between the complex and residential streets. It is the only parish to have escaped commercial intrusions in its midst. Since the school closed in 1970 from lack of financial support and a diminishing school population, the building has continued to serve the community as a day care facility, mental health center and meeting place for a neighborhood club.

Architecturally, the school and convent, though not as monumental as the buildings within the Ste. Marie complex, are imaginatively designed, displaying distinctive masonry treatments absent in the plainer structures of the other parochial complexes. The lack of alterations to either building is particularly significant in a city where most school buildings, both public and parochial, have replacement sash or incompatible additions.

Education

In the urban parishes of the Franco community in the Northeast, the church has usually been the focal architectural structure of each parish, but the school has been regarded as the more profound symbol of religious and cultural identity. Embodying what is perhaps their proudest achievement, the schools represent to parishioners the granting of ethnic recognition to French communicants by the generally Irish-dominated hierarchy of the church; the success of French parishioners in establishing and supporting an educational system that was not available to habitants in rural Quebec; and, overall, the preservation of Franco culture against forces pressing assimilation.

Between the years 1923-29 St. George's School received national significance in a conflict over educational policy, on both church and federal levels. The conflict (which had first come to a head in Rhode Island but spread to all Catholic parishes) was prompted by a directive to discontinue bilingual instruction in parochial schools; but larger issues were Americanization and cultural assimilation. From the end of the nineteenth century, an Americanization movement had been swelling in many parts of the country; after "the German threat" of World War I, nationalistic sentiments were running even higher. By the early 1920s, a federal policy was evolving to discontinue bilingual instruction. This policy was endorsed by the higher (generally Irish) councils of the Catholic church but was opposed by many Franco parents. It appears that most schools in the Northeast agreed to follow the directive to teach in English, but St. George's received national attention for its stance in continuing to teach in French. For over a year, editorials against St. George's appeared in national Catholic newspapers and, through the period, the school was used as an example in discussions of federal policy. (Beyond the fact that the conflict touched a sensitive cultural issue, it was rendered more complex because of a concurrent transfer of authority within the Catholic church and its dioceses. The authority previously vested in local councils was to be restricted to higher administrators, so that parishioners would lose their accustomed voice in parish matters. Because it was widely

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet ⁴St. George's School

Item number 8

Page 4

Significance, contd.

felt that the Irish hierarchy was prejudiced against Franco districts, a longstanding cultural friction between French and Irish added ethnic emotions to the conflict.) At length it was resolved that French could continue to be taught in parochial schools, so long as basics--such as American history--were taught in English, and instruction in French was limited to a halfday. Within the Manchester diocese the controversy, and its association with St. George's, has continued to carry charged feelings for over fifty years. Parties on either side are reluctant to discuss it, and many papers relating to the conflict have been purposefully destroyed. In the interim time has tended to prove the question. By the 1950s, a majority of Franco-Americans--in Manchester and elsewhere--were advocates of assimilation. When St. George's closed in 1970, all instruction was in English, and French was being taught as a foreign language.

Religion

In the French Catholic neighborhoods of Manchester and other New England mill cities, the parochial school has been the second most important institution after the church, and has carried a possibly equal role in investing the parish with a religious base. Just as St. George's is an integral architectural unit in a grouping comprising church, rectory, convent and school in the milieu of the neighborhood where the church's congregation lives, so the school serves to signify the totality with which a religious identity has infused the Franco community.

Manchester was designated a mission of the Catholic church in 1839, but by the time French Canadians began arriving in the 1850s, it was largely Irish. As a consequence, French Canadians were obliged to participate in Irish services; Franco parents had to send their children to public schools or Irish Catholic schools, both threatening assimilation of cultural/religious values. (Although the earliest Catholic presence in New England was established by missionaries from French Canada in the seventeenth century, by the time of the Civil War leadership of the church had passed to Irish Catholics who, as a result of famine in Ireland, had come to New England in great numbers in the 1840s and, like the French Canadians after them, had settled in the cities where textile mills offered employment.) The granting of the city's first French parish in 1871 (St. Augustine) indicated recognition of French practitioners within the church, and enabled Franco neighborhoods to assume more authority for what church and school would teach. Through the schools the idea of Franco culture became virtually inseparable from Franco religion. The schools, as an extension of the church, taught religion alongside other basics. Instruction was in French, and teachers were nuns brought from France or French Canada. At St. George's students also took their meals in the basement of the church; and parishioners, reciprocally, had use of the school's gymnasium-auditorium for weekly entertainments and lectures. Most broadly, the school embodied the church's involvement in the whole life of its parishioners. Through direct and indirect models, it symbolized to the neighborhood, as well as to young students, that to be Catholic was not necessarily to be French; but to be French was to be Catholic.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 5 *St. George's School*

Item number 9, 10

Page 2

9. Major Bibliographical References

Adrian Verrette, Paroisse Saint-Georges (Manchester, 1966).

Robert B. Perreault, "One Piece in the Great American Mosaic: The Franco-Americans of New England," in Le Canado-Americain (Vol. 2, No. 2; 1976).

Robert B. Perreault, Elphege-J. Daignault et Le Mouvement Sentinelliste a Manchester, N.H. (Bedford, N.H.: National Materials Development Center, 1981).

Thaddeus M. Piotrowski, "The Franco-American Heritage in Manchester, N.H.," typescript at the Manchester Historic Association (1974).

Tamara K. Haraven and Randolph Langenback, Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City (New York: Pantheon, 1979).

L'Avenir National, a Franco-American newspaper published at Manchester, 1910-30.

Archives, Association Canado-Americain, Manchester.

10. Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The boundaries for St. George's School and Convent extend to the perimeters of the entire city parcel associated with the buildings, being Lots 1173, 1172, 1225 and 1239 on Map 47 in the Assessor's Office for the City of Manchester. These boundaries are marked in red on the accompanying map. The warranty deed is registered at the Hillsborough County (N.H.) Registry of Deeds, Vol. 2351, p. 605 (school and convent) and Vol. 2371, p. 294 (parking lot).

The nominated property includes all significant portions of a larger parish complex. Excluded are the existing church (which dates only from 1955, as it replaces an earlier structure built in 1890 that burned in 1952) and the Second Empire rectory (which has lost its architectural integrity).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

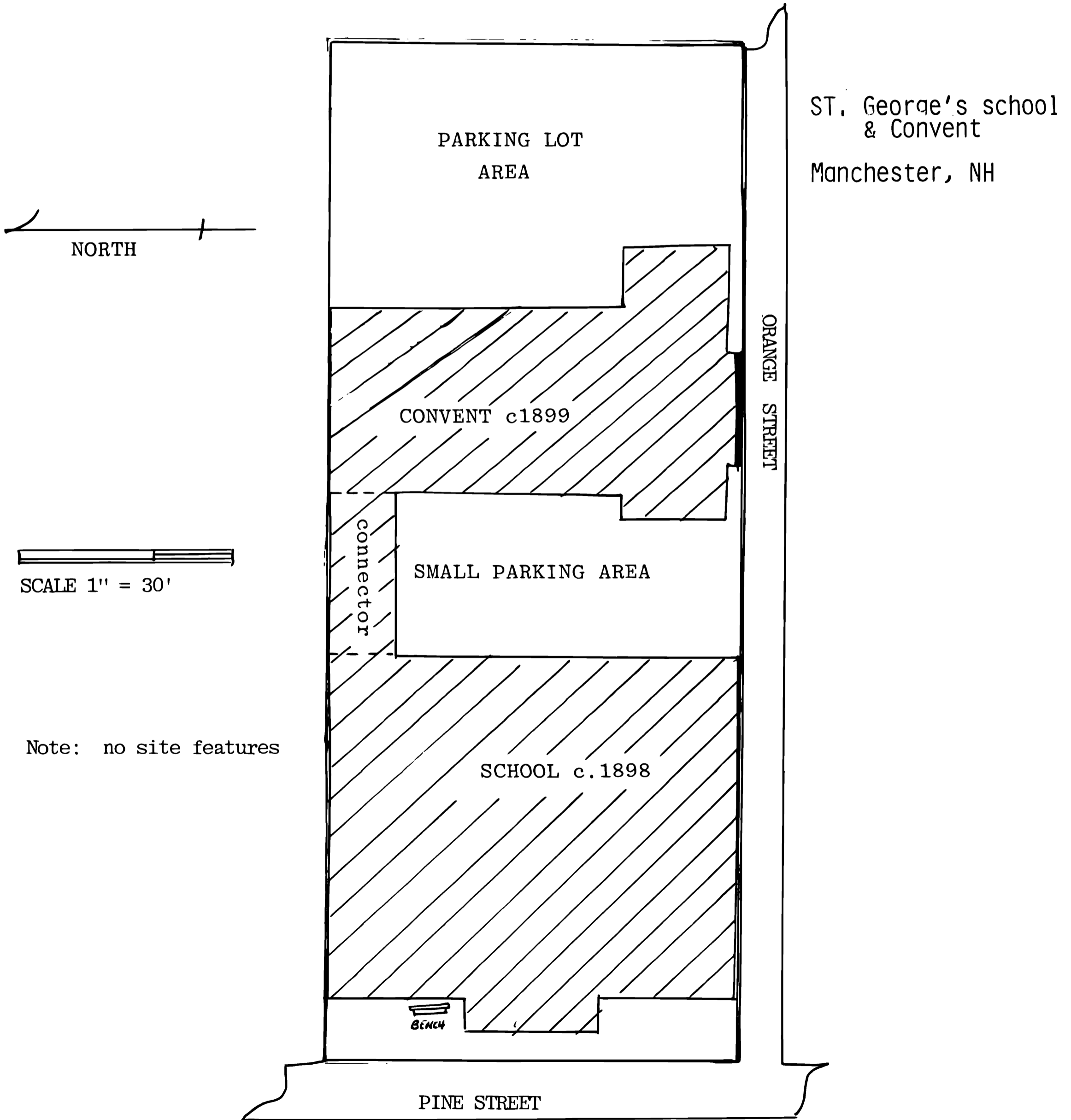
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet 6

Item number 10

Page 3



Note: no site features