

PROPERTY NAME

East Windsor Academy, East Windsor, CT

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United States Department of the Interior

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: East Windsor Academy

Other Name/Site Number: Scantic Academy-East Windsor Historical Society Museum

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 115 Scantic Road Not for publication: NA

City/Town: East Windsor Vicinity: Scantic

State: CT County: Hartford Code: 003 Zip Code: 06088

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

 4 buildings
 sites
 structures
 objects
 4 Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: NA



6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: EDUCATION Sub: school

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: museum
SOCIAL meeting hall

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification:
EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

Materials:
Foundation: STONE
Walls: BRICK

Roof: ASPHALT
Other Description: _____

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

East Windsor (Scantic) Academy, a two-story gable-roofed brick building in the Federal style, was built in 1817 (Bartlett). A simple 39' x 25' rectangle in plan and oriented north-south in direction, it is sited 30 feet back from Scantic Road on the east side of the highway, about one tenth of a mile north of the First Congregational Church of East Windsor. The church is located at a principal crossroads in the rural neighborhood which is the Scantic section of the Town of East Windsor.

The foundation of the academy is brownstone ashlar. The front wall is laid up in Flemish bond of alternating headers and stretchers in all courses. Steps and sills are brownstone, while lintels are splayed soldiercourse brick. The front elevation at first-floor level has five 6-over-6 windows flanked at each end by a door, although the north door has been bricked up. A row of seven such windows occupies the second floor under molded eaves of modest overhang. The roof, which is covered with asphalt shingles, has two chimneys set in a few feet from the gable ends. Both chimneys are corbelled but are not identical. The north chimney is square, closer to the gable end than the south chimney, and thought to be original; the south chimney is rectangular, oriented front to back, and thought to have been altered (Photograph 1). The roof originally had a cupola with school bell.

The south side elevation has two windows at each floor. Above, the gable end is treated as a pediment formed by horizontal and raking cornices of strong projection and moldings. The central feature in the brick tympanum is a semi-circular louvered opening. (Photograph 2) The north side elevation is similar, except that the east

second-floor window has been replaced by a door for a steel fire escape. The rear (east) elevation has one-story frame shed at the south, then a door and four windows. Second-floor fenestration is a band of five windows, centered. The rear roof slope is covered with overlapping asphalt shingles. (Photograph 3)

At the top of brownstone steps the south front door-- old, with raised panels on both sides, but not original--opens to a stairhall with an enclosed straight run to the second floor. The treads, risers, plaster walls of the enclosure, window trim to the south, and beaded trim of the door to the north all appear to be original. The south halves of the first three risers are removable, giving access to a small cellar area, the building's only basement. This access feature and the cellar appear to be original and are in use today, providing space for mechanical systems. (Photograph 4) The balance of the first floor, originally a single open space, was converted to residential use, now vacant, ca.1946; most finishes are contemporary except for splayed window reveals which appear to be original. The windows, which have no sash weights, also are old if not original. An original chair rail runs around most of the first floor. Museum use is contemplated for this space.

The second floor, also originally a single open space, was also converted ca.1946 to residential use, but since ca.1967 has housed the East Windsor Historical Society museum. More original finishes remain in view on this floor than on the first floor. Window and door surrounds are flat stock. Doors are seven-panel. A fireplace at the south end, one of four thought to be in the building but the only one now exposed, displays brick firebox, simply molded architrave and frieze, and molded mantel shelf. An original chair rail runs around most of the second floor. (Photographs 5, 6, 7)

The second floor has a dropped ceiling, above which the original plaster coved ceiling is still in place, in good condition (Photograph 8). Above the coved ceiling the roof frame is visible. It consists of center posts, diagonal braces, common rafters, and wide roof boards, apparently all original (Photograph 9). At the north end of the attic the chimney is seen to corbel to the south, apparently for the cosmetic purpose of bringing its point of emergence from the ridge closer to the gable end (Photograph 10). Whether the north chimney is treated in similar manner is not known because the corresponding area is not accessible.

The barn to the rear of the academy was built in the late 1940s. It is a frame hip-roofed structure covered with novelty siding. Fenestration is irregularly spaced four-pane and multi-pane windows. A prominent pent roof runs the length of the building above the first floor. The ground level is used for storage, while the second floor is an apartment. (Photograph 11) The barn is considered to be non-contributing to the historical and architectural significance of the resource.

Three small 19th-century gable-roofed frame buildings were moved from elsewhere in East Windsor to the rear of the site in 1967, 1980, and 1984 by L. Ellsworth Stoughton, where they are ranged across the back of the parcel (Photograph 12). The three are representative of periods of East Windsor history and now are part of the East Windsor Historical Society's interpretation of the site as a whole; nevertheless each of the group of three is classified as Non Contributing because the group has not yet achieved significance since the time of its assemblage.

The first of the three, to the north is a farm tool museum rebuilt in 1980 from Stephen Potwin's 1831 barn and tobacco shed, according to a sign on the building. It has wide-board vertical siding painted red. On the front, to the south, a sliding door large enough for equipment is set into the wall. A second smaller door for people is to the north under a pent hood. Rafter tails are visible under the roof overhangs on the side elevations. On the south side elevation tobacco shed hinges are in place to permit opening the siding for ventilation of the crop as it dries. Also affixed to this elevation is a signboard of the East Windsor Grange No. 94 which hung on the academy during the years the building served as the grange. The only window in the building is a six-pane sash in the rear gable peak. Among the exhibits inside the building are a horse-drawn meat wagon from the early 1900s, a wooden winch used to hold animals for slaughtering, a horse-drawn ice plow, and tobacco harvesting equipment, all with East Windsor provenance,

The central building of the three, brought to the site in 1967, is the clapboarded Broad Brook Barber Shop whose origin is recounted by a sign on the front door with the words, "This barbershop / built for / Max Ertel / by the Broad Brook Co. / 1891." The Broad Brook Company, long the community's largest employer, was a large woolen mill in the nearby Broad Brook section of East Windsor. The barbershop's front porch is supported by four posts of unusual design. Each post stands on a square pedestal from which rises a tapered-chamfered shaft. The chamfer starts at a point at each bottom corner, then gradually increases in breadth in inverse taper as it progresses upward to full width of the face at the top, effectively giving the faces of the post a one-eighth turn. Lamb's tongue stops then accomplish the transition back to original orientation for the top section of the post below the brackets. In the front wall protected by the porch a central glazed-and-paneled door is flanked by two tall 6-over-6 windows. There are no windows in the north side elevation but two small 6-over-6 sash are on the south. A small shed-roofed novelty-siding section has been added at the rear with a window of single six-pane glazing in its east wall.

Two antique barber chairs and an iron stove are displayed on the interior, which has high beadboard wainscoting in a dark finish. Door and window trim is flat stock. Photos of the shop taken in the days when it was operative are mounted on the walls.

The 12' x 18' tetrastyle Greek Revival probate court and doctor's office is to the south. Also clapboarded, it was moved from 108 Main Street in the Warehouse Point section of East Windsor on the Connecticut River in 1984 by John Burnham, contractor. Behind the flat-roofed portico the central door of four panes over three panels has 6-over-6 windows left and right. There is a single 6-over-6 window on each of the side elevations and on the rear. The clapboards appear to be replacements in contrast to the clapboards of the barbershop, a newer building, which appear to be original. The interior is divided into two rooms, front and back, which are plain and empty.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:___ Statewide: x Locally:___

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A x B___ C x D___

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

Areas of Significance: Period(s) of Significance Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE 19C _____

SOCIAL HISTORY 1817 Early 20C _____

Significant Person(s): NA

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: NA

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

Summary

Scantic Academy is significant architecturally because it is a well-preserved example of a brick Federal-style schoolhouse. The building exhibits several character-defining features of the Federal style, including even symmetrical fenestration, refined proportions, classical trim such as splayed lintels, and semi-elliptical attic openings. The academy has played an important role in the social history of Scantic for 180 years; much of that role is outlined in an unusually informative summary of activities prepared in 1901. The resource has served at various times as academy, parish house, exhibition and meeting space, grange, site of public debates, lectures, and receptions, and district school.

Social History

According to the paper written in 1901 by Elizabeth M. Bartlett, the academy was built in 1817 by a company of stockholders, Stephen Potwin, Israel Allen, and Samuel Bartlett constituting the building committee. The lower floor was at once fitted up

and used as a schoolroom. Ezra Stiles, later of Yale College, was one of the early teachers.¹ Junius Morgan, father of J. Pierpont Morgan, was one of the early scholars; he boarded in the family of the pastor of the church, the Reverend Shubael Bartlett.

In 1847 the schoolroom was painted and refurnished with modern student desks. The Chinese educator Yung Wing was a pupil for a short period at this time before becoming the first Chinese graduate of Yale. He later helped establish the Chinese Educational Mission which brought Chinese students to Hartford, 1872-1881. John W. Stoughton was in the rapidly changing sequence of teachers, serving two terms. Other teachers came from Yale or Williams Colleges. Elizabeth M. Bartlett's candid evaluation of the school's pedagogical achievements is revealing:

As far as I can learn, the school was never one of excellence, certainly not in my time, owing not so much to inferiority of the teachers as to the restlessness and indifference of the pupils.

For reasons unknown, in 1871 the Academy Company gave the school to the First Ecclesiastical Society/First Congregational Church, possibly because the public school system was improving. The deed was signed for the company by 17 stockholders, two of whom were E.L. Potwin and Lemuel Stoughton. The church altered the first-floor room for use for prayer and social meetings, typical functions of a parish house. But in 1896 the building was returned to educational service, although the agency that administered the program is not known. The building may have been a public school.

The sequence of events in the upper room is not as clearly detailed. Originally, the space was in a rude unfinished state; the seats had no backs. Among other purposes, it was used for school exhibitions, caucuses (not otherwise defined by Bartlett), revival meetings, and singing schools. The Lyceum met there, scheduling debates among such men as Lemuel and John Stoughton among others, "causing much merriment." Professor Lawrence of East Windsor Hill delivered lectures on Palestine one winter.

Women gathered on the upper floor for sewing societies from 1856 to the Civil War. "Every lady in the parish attended." They were joined at times by gentlemen, who came to tea. Many barrels of clothing were provided for the poor and much money was raised for the church. When the 25th Regiment returned from the Civil War in 1863, a reception in its honor was tendered in the upper room.

The East Windsor Grange No. 94 took over the room in 1889 for its exclusive use, continuing at least until 1901. The grange sign which was exhibited on the building is now on view on the Potwin building in the back yard.

The Town of East Windsor used the building as District 1 school until 1938 when it was closed and consolidated with another school. Georgiana Morse was among the last teachers. After standing vacant, the building was purchased by L. Ellsworth Stoughton (d. 1991), who converted it to two apartments and moved to the property the three historical buildings at the rear. Stoughton devoted a lifetime to the study of East Windsor history. In 1968 he made the upper floor of the academy available for use by the museum of the East Windsor Historical Society; he conveyed the entire property to the society by testamentary gift. Probate distribution to the society occurred on July 26, 1995.

East Windsor family names have been associated with the academy over the years. For example, the Potwin name was among the original incorporators and was one of the names signatory to the deed to the church. The Potwin farm at 84 Scantic Road was the source of one of the three buildings moved to the property in the 1940s. The Stoughton family provided one of the names in the list of 1871 signers, a teacher at the school, and the donor who ensured a future for the building as a property of the East Windsor Historical Society. Bartlett was an incorporator, lived on a farm on Scantic Road, and was a forebear of the academy's 1901 historian.

A new chapter in the evolution of the site opened ca.1980 when a group of three small 19th-century buildings was moved to the rear lot line. Although the buildings are potentially significant historically and architecturally, they are designated Non Contributing because the group of three has not yet achieved significance since the time of its assemblage. The three small buildings have become part of what has evolved into dedication of the entire site to interpretation of East Windsor history. The group strengthens the academy's continuing role in this educational function.

The barn not only has the Potwin family association but also relates by its ventilating structural devices and equipment exhibits directly to the town's economically important cultivation of tobacco.

The barbershop's involvement in town history goes back at least to 1881. According to an account published by East Windsor's long-time historian Michael C. DeVito, the shop at one time was the kitchen to Louis Goettler's house in Broad Brook before being moved to the north side of the present Masonic Temple in 1881 to become a barbershop. The building was moved again in 1892 to the east side of Main Street. Max Ertel operated the shop for 25 years until he sold it in 1910 to Rudolph C. Geissler, the proprietor for 43 years, who also was Judge of East Windsor's Justice Court. Court was held in the barbershop. The building is now an artifact of significant small-town Connecticut social history.

The doctor's office gives the historic setting for conduct of a medical practice in a manner that has dropped from sight, giving insight into how society met its problems in an earlier era. In this function the three small buildings are adding to the academy's narrative of 19th-century cultural practices, reinforcing its continuing educational role as an interpreter of the past.

Architecture

The unknown designer/builder of East Windsor Academy constructed a building in the Federal style with restraint. The fine proportions, even fenestration, splayed lintels, and semi-elliptical openings are used but without the Adamesque elaboration and attenuation often found in Federal buildings in the first decade of the 19th century. Perhaps the explanation lies in the country location and the tendency of country builders, while being in step with the times, not to engage in intricate practice. Budget considerations may have played a role as well. The relative plainness of the building combines with the clear articulation of the style to produce an architecturally significant statement.

The brownstone ashlar foundation and Flemish bond of the front wall are among the fine features of the academy. Placement and proportions of the windows and doors,

regularly spaced with modest surrounds, well fit the parameters of the Federal style. Twin chimneys are appropriate for the design. The fact that Flemish bond was used only on the front, with common bond elsewhere, reinforces a sense of stylistic awareness within the bounds of budget constraints.

A further consideration lending distinction to the academy is the small number of Federal buildings recorded in the 1992 Historic and Architectural Survey of East Windsor. Greek Revival houses abound, but Federal examples are few in number. The Greek Revival detail of the fireplace mantel in the academy is a forerunner of much East Windsor work in that style. The boldness and simplicity of the academy's gable-end pediments also presage the oncoming Greek Revival style.

The coved ceiling of the second-floor room, pristine in its undisturbed presence in the building, is an important feature. Such a ceiling in a Connecticut early-19th-century schoolhouse is not unknown elsewhere. The profile shadow of a similar ceiling is apparent in the Muddy River Schoolhouse, Wallingford, but the ceiling itself has been removed. A similar ceiling is also found in a Farmington schoolhouse, giving the number and frequency of such ceilings enough weight to fuel the speculation that there may have been an as yet unidentified pattern book or other standard source of schoolhouse design favoring the feature.

Idiosyncratic details of the academy include the movable treads and risers of the stair, giving access to the small cellar. Under a tight budget and with limited space to work with, the builder resorted to an ingenious solution which has been useful over the years. Similarly, the corbeling of the south chimney, while not unique, indicates resourcefulness to accommodate the location of the stair just inside the south elevation with the design need to have the chimney emerge from the ridge close to the south gable end.

The academy continues to be sited as it was originally, close to the road. The size of the parcel conveyed by the company to the society in 1871 was a fraction of an acre and the parcel today is a fraction of an acre, although a somewhat larger fraction (see boundary justification). The academy has been an important architectural presence near a principal Scantic intersection for 180 years and is destined to continue so.

The group of three small buildings reinforces and enhances the present function of the academy site, which is to document and interpret the history of East Windsor. The barn is a vernacular building representing the importance of the tobacco-growing industry which chronologically paralleled the function of the academy in the community. The barbershop has idiosyncratic porch post details telling of the ingenuity and inventiveness of provincial craftspeople, while the doctor's office is an example of the standard Greek Revival work widespread in small Connecticut towns in the first half of the 19th century. Together they augment the documentation of community development of which the academy is an earlier example.

¹Ezra Stiles' father, Isaac, was born on a farm in East Windsor (Morgan, p. 3), establishing a family connection that may have carried over to the next generation. In the *Extracts* Stiles makes reference to a controversy in the East Windsor Church (p. 309), and gives some agricultural statistics for the town (p. 408).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Atlas of Hartford City and County. Hartford, Connecticut: Baker & Tilden, 1869, Plate No. 12.

Bartlett, Elizabeth M. "East Windsor Academy." Article in *East Hartford Gazette*, ca. 1901.

Dexter, Franklin Bowditch, ed. *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755--1795.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916.

DeVito, Michael C. *East Windsor, Through the Years.* Warehouse Point, Connecticut: East Windsor Historical Society, Inc., 1969.

"East Windsor Gleanings." *Northern Conn. Bazaar*, August 12, 1937, p. 185.

East Windsor Land Records:

Volume 35, pages 198, 199, October 14, 1871, Academy Co. [*sic*] to First Ecclesiastical Society;
59/129, June 6, 1946, First Ecclesiastical Society to Stoughton;
60/142, November 16, 1949, Otka to Stoughton;
79/208, May 20, 1961, Barber to Stoughton;
185/006, July 26, 1995, probate distribution, Stoughton to East Windsor Historical Society.

Morgan, Edmund S. *The Gentle Puritan, A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

Ransom, David F. *Historic and Architectural Survey of East Windsor, Connecticut, Statewide Historic Resource Inventory, Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, 1992, Form #188.*

Stoughton, L. Ellsworth. "Notable Memorabilia." *East Windsor, Connecticut: First Congregational Church*, 1979, revised 1984, p. 2.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: # _____
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Specify Repository: _____

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: .62

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A	18	<u>4641360</u>	<u>700710</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____
E	_____	_____	_____	F	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary is the perimeter of the parcel that now goes with the academy.

Boundary Justification:

No information is at hand regarding the size of the parcel in 1817. In the 1871 deed the land is referenced as 20 rods, perhaps an eighth to a quarter of an acre. The issue is clouded somewhat by the fact that the parcel next south was the Parsonage Lot, also owned by the ecclesiastical society. The 1946 conveyance was an unspecified "portion" of the 1871 bounds, confusing. Stoughton added marginally to the 1946 parcel, perhaps to provide room for the three removals. In any event, the academy, barn, and three moved structures now occupy about the full size of the present .62 acres. The perimeter of the present .62 acres appears to be the only clear boundary to use.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: David F. Ransom, Consultant, reviewed by John F.A. Herzan, National Register Coordinator

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Photographs

Photographs were taken by David F. Ransom on August 14, 1997. Negatives are on file at Connecticut Historical Commission.

Photograph 1

Front and south
elevations
View northeast

Photograph 2

South gable
View northwest

Photograph 3

East and north
elevations
View southwest

Photograph 4

Detail of stair
View southeast

Photograph 5

Second floor, southwest
corner
View southwest

Photograph 6

Second floor, door
to stair
View southeast

Photograph 7

Second floor, mantel
View south

Photograph 8

Second floor, coved
ceiling
View northwest

Photograph 9

Attic
View north

Photograph 10

Attic, south louver
and corbeled chimney
View southwest

Photograph 11

Barn and two of the
moved buildings
View northeast

Photograph 12

The three moved buildings
View southeast