

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

For NPS use only

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

received **OCT 4 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Salem School

and/or common Salem School

2. Location

street & number 124 Meadow Street n/a not for publication

city, town Naugatuck n/a vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" 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
	n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Naugatuck, Board of Education

street & number 380 Church Street

city, town Naugatuck n/a vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office

street & number Main Street

city, town Naugatuck state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 S. Prospect St.

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Salem School (constructed in 1893) is prominently sited facing east on the west side of the Naugatuck Green. The school and several other buildings surrounding the Green were designed during the period 1890-1905 by the world-renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White of New York City. The 2½-story brick school, constructed in the Second Renaissance Revival style, is centered on an axis which runs through the center of the Green to the Naugatuck River. Other buildings designed by McKim, Mead and White around the Green include the public library (1891) on the northeast corner, First Congregational Church (1902) on the north side, and Hillside School (1901-1905) overlooking the Green and Salem School from the northwest. The Victorian Gothic-style Town Hall, which formerly faced Salem School on the opposite side of the Green, was demolished during the early 1970s and was replaced with a multistory contemporary structure. The school property is separated from Meadow Street by a low, cut brownstone wall. A paved, circular drive accesses the recessed entrance court on the facade. A paved parking area and playground are situated on the south side of the building. A steep hillside rises immediately to the rear of the school.

The highly symmetrical elevations of the masonry building consist of a 2-story flanking-gable rectangular block, bisected by two 3-story hipped-roof pavilions (photograph #1). Side elevations (north and south) are further extended by flat-roofed 2-by-3-bay extended wings (photograph #s 2,3). Use of bisecting pavilions and extended blocks establishes the strongly horizontal appearance of the structure, and resolves problems of interior lighting, ventilation, and circulation.

The building rests on a high raised basement of coursed, rock-faced brownstone. Basement window openings consist of paired double-hung sash (single windows only on the rear (west) elevation). The two main floors feature identical rectangular window openings with paired double-hung sash surmounted by glass transoms and flat arches. The attic level of the pavilions have round-arched sash framed by raised brick panels. The gable ends on the north and south (side) elevations have a circular window with radiating muntins centered in the tympanum; an identical window is centered above secondary entrances on the north and south ends of the facade.

Brick walls are embellished with wide brownstone bands beneath first-and-second-floor windows. A section of raised brick beneath the attic level is framed by brick dentils, and features corbeling in the fashion of a round-arched blind arcade. This horizontal band creates a strong horizontal emphasis on the facade. The pavilions north and south of the central entrance form a pleasing entrance court. The recessed space forms a backdrop for the round-arched brownstone entry, which is articulated by flat piers supporting impostes, voussoirs with archivolt trim and a keystone. The original wooden double-leaf entry doors are intact, and are surmounted by a glass transom with radiating muntins. A bracketed-stone balcony is situated above the entrance, and reinforces the axial symmetry of the building. A stone nameplate is centered above the balcony and French doors. Double-leaf side entrances are located at the north and south corners of the rectangular block on the facade. Side entrances are framed with brownstone and sheltered by round-arched hoods resting on consoles.

8. Significance

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 type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
			<input type="checkbox"/> science
			<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
			<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
			<input type="checkbox"/> theater
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Criteria A.C

Specific dates 1893 **Builder/Architect** McKim, Mead and White Architects
H. Wales Lines Company, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Salem School, a symbol of local philanthropy, is an important landmark for the town of Naugatuck, reflecting the highly visible presence of the public school in the center of town from the eighteenth century to the present day (Criterion A). The existing building is the third schoolhouse to occupy the approximate site, the other frame schools having been constructed and demolished directly across the street on the town Green between the years 1773 and 1894. Designed by the world-renowned architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, Salem School is a highly significant and early example in Connecticut of the Second Renaissance Revival style applied to an institutional building (Criterion C). In reaction against the picturesque, romantic and highly vertical elevations of institutional buildings constructed in the Victorian Gothic style during the late nineteenth century, Salem School projects an ordered and symmetrical appearance which relates in appearance and siting to the adjacent Green and surrounding buildings.

Historical Background

Salem School has a long association with the town of Naugatuck, the present structure being its third incarnation on the town Green. A one-room frame schoolhouse, constructed in 1773 on the site of the present Green, served approximately 40 pupils of the small settlement of Salem (or Salem Bridge). Salem, originally part of the city of Waterbury, was incorporated in 1844 as the town of Naugatuck. In 1852 the Union School district was established. During the same year, the town voted to construct the Union Center District School on the site of the single-room schoolhouse. The two-story gabled-roof frame structure featured Italianate-style bracketed trim and a prominent cupola. The school served as both elementary and high school for about 100 pupils. Following construction of a new brick sanctuary by St. Michael's Church on the Green, the town purchased in 1872 the church's old frame sanctuary, moved it next to the school, and renovated it for classroom use. The land comprising the present location of Salem School was donated to the Union School district in 1875 by George A. Lewis.¹ Following construction in 1893 of the new school on the opposite side of Meadow Street facing the Green, the frame school and addition were demolished.

During the 1880s the town witnessed economic development and population increase which brought with it important new industry and prominent personalities responsible for the town's continuing development. John Howard Whittemore (1837-1910), local industrialist and philanthropist, was directly responsible for commissioning the design and financing construction of Salem School. Whittemore, who amassed a considerable fortune in the business of producing malleable-iron parts, was committed to providing high-quality educational, cultural and urban-like amenities for the small industrial town of Naugatuck.² During the period 1887-1905 Whittemore commissioned the architectural firm of McKim, Mead White to undertake eleven different projects for the Green in 1894 following demolition of the old school.³ Salem School was

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blom, Benjamin. A Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead and White: 1879-1915. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3

Quadrangle name Naugatuck

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8
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Verbal boundary description and justification

As described in Naugatuck Land Records, vol.13, p.351, containing 3 acres.

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

state n/a coden/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian - edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization Jack A. Gold Historic Preservation Consultants date May 1983

street & number 50 Hubinger Street telephone 203 389 4590

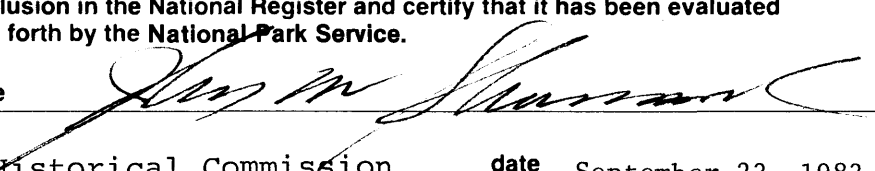
city or town New Haven state CT 06511

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

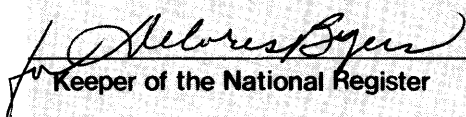
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date September 23, 1983

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 11/3/83

Attest:
Chief of Registration date

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

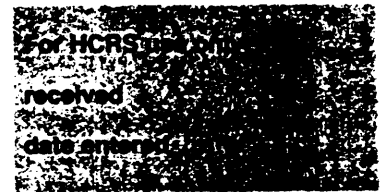
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

SALEM SCHOOL, Naugatuck, CT

Continuation sheet

Item number 7, 8

Page 1



7. DESCRIPTION

Hipped, metal-framed skylights are located above both pavilions. The slate roof of the main rectangular block is punctuated by four paired rectangular chimneys, three of which have been lowered and capped. A wooden cupola rises from a slate-covered base and clapboarded pedestal. The louvered, round-arched openings are embellished with keystones and archivolt trim, and are framed by wood panels in the fashion of piers and imposts. The cupola is finished with a slate, hipped roof and a metal knob which formerly held a circular-metal pole.

The west (rear) elevation is similar to the facade, with metal fire escapes (added in 1953) leading from the attic level of both pavilions to the ground (photograph #4). A prominent three-part round-arched window centered on the elevation is situated between first and second floors and reflects the open, center-hall plan. A row of three windows is located beneath the roof cornice at the center of the building; a three-part window ventilates the base of the cupola. Shed-roofed ground-floor porches (added ca.1940) are set within the recessed center court, and on the southwest corner of the rectangular block (photograph #s 3,4).

The building features an H plan, with the midsection extended to the north and south. The center of the building consists of a large open hallway leading to a wide, open stair which divides for two additional runs up to the second floor (photograph #5). A pair of attenuated circular wooden columns with modified Doric caps support the wood-coffered center-hall ceiling and flank the stair on the first floor; the wall facing the stair on the second floor is open, and forms a spacious balustraded balcony which overlooks the open staircase and round-arched window. Original handrails, milled balusters, and paneled newels are intact. Hallways lead down the center of the north and south sides of the building. Original wood floors; vertical, beaded-board wainscot; paneled doors; workable transoms and timbered ceilings are intact throughout the hallways and each of the twelve classrooms (photograph #6). Classrooms are well-lit by exterior lighting from two outside exposures. The third-floor level contains assembly and exhibition rooms. The basement contains smaller, multipurpose rooms including a library and cafeteria.

The interior plan and finish of the school are remarkably well preserved. The only noticeable alterations occurred in 1953, with replacement of the wooden stairways with fireproof metal stairways on the north and south sides of the building, renovation of lavatories, and installation of new lighting, sprinkler and wiring systems. A steam heating plant replaced the original system of nine coal furnaces (three furnaces served each floor).

8. SIGNIFICANCE

built by the H. Wales Lines Company at a cost of \$71,290.

Architecture

During the period 1885-1910 the firm of McKim, Mead and White received over 800 major commissioned projects, and was considered the leading

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

SALEM SCHOOL, Naugatuck, CT

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

For HCERS use only

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

architectural firm in the nation.⁴ The departure of the firm from the romantic picturesque, and the exuberance of the Victorian Gothic period in America was eventually embraced by the entire American architectural profession after 1900. The firm's brilliant adaptation of formal, Italian Renaissance classicism to contemporary building is evidenced in its more well-known works such as the Boston Public Library (1887-1895), and the Pennsylvania Railroad Station (New York, 1906-1910).⁵ Anchored by the Green and the perpendicular axis formed by Salem School west of the Green and First Congregational Church to the north, Naugatuck's center was developed during the late nineteenth century in an ordered and highly sophisticated fashion characteristic of the City Beautiful Movement.

Constructed of brick instead of the usual limestone and/or granite, Salem School incorporates a number of design elements characteristic of the major works of the firm.⁶ Although classical elements were used in the design of the school and in other works of the firm during the period 1890-1910, McKim, Mead and White developed an American design idiom by reinterpreting the underlying horizontality of Renaissance classicism.⁷ The formidable grounded quality of their works during this period was achieved through the incorporation of broad blank surfaces of brick or stone (the side elevations of Salem School express this technique), and the emphasis on the building's central axis through use of a center court or loggia, and flanking wings. The firm designed side wings and monumental entrance loggias on a grander scale in works such as the Walker Art Gallery (1891) in Brunswick, Maine; and the New York State Building (1892) at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The design of the school has been attributed to William Rutherford Mead (born in 1846 at Brattleboro, Vermont), eldest of the three partners. The exterior elevations exhibit sophisticated, urban-like qualities reminiscent of the Italian palazzo, an urban residence constructed close to the street.⁸ Forgoing the usual Gothic embellishments such as projecting towers and recessed wall surfaces, the architect chose instead to develop a disciplined, highly symmetrical building form whose primary architectural significance is derived from its horizontality and carefully proportioned elevations. Architectural features incorporated into the elevations which can be termed Second Renaissance Revival include the ashlar raised-basement wall, use of balustrades, round-arched entries, intersecting hipped and gabled roofs, and an alternating row of rectangular and round-arched sash.⁷ The general appearance of the school, with its projecting hipped-roof pavilions and alternating window forms, is reminiscent of the firm's design for the Villard houses in New York (constructed in 1885). The imposing three-part central section of the school, with wings set back on the sides, establishes a five-part composition typical of the period of Renaissance classicism. Overall, Salem School displays a high degree of architectural integrity on both its exterior elevations and interior plan. Although interior alterations were required in order to meet the fire code, the major elements of the building's plan and decorative fabric are intact. Thanks to the patronage of John Whittemore, the town of Naugatuck contains the only two school buildings in Connecticut designed by the firm of McKim, Mead and White.

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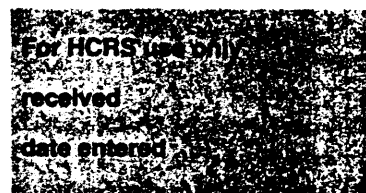
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

SALEM SCHOOL, Naugatuck, CT

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3



8. SIGNIFICANCE

NOTES

¹Naugatuck Land Records, Naugatuck, Connecticut, Vol.13, p.351.

²Whittemore formed a partnership with Bronson Tuttle in 1858 to produce malleable-iron parts. The business was reorganized in 1871 as Tuttle and Whittemore Company, and again in 1886 as Naugatuck Malleable Iron Works.

³Whittemore's commitment to urban amenities paralleled his interest in conserving the rural environment surrounding the town of Naugatuck. He assembled large land tracts in the nearby town of Middlebury for use as forest preserves as well as commercial woodlands. In 1894 he commissioned McKim, Mead and White to design his summer home on a ridge overlooking Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury (one of three residences in or around Naugatuck designed by the firm for Whittemore).

⁴Leland Roth, "McKim, Mead and White Reappraised," (introduction to second edition of Benjamin Blom, A Monograph of the Works of McKim, Mead and White: 1879-1915. New York: Arno Press, 1977.

⁵As architects of the Agricultural building at the World's Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1891, McKim, Mead and White helped stimulate the City Beautiful Movement of the early twentieth century. The movement was concerned with providing park-like settings in cities, promoting more organic and homogeneous design, and establishing a sense of place in the nation's poorly planned urban centers. Architects began to take environmental setting into consideration, and incorporated parks and other amenities into design plans. This concern is evident in Naugatuck with McKim, Mead and White's landscape design for the Green one year after construction of Salem School. Also evident here is the axial relationship between the school and the Green.

⁶It has been suggested that brick was chosen as the building material so that the school would harmonize with the Victorian Gothic Town Hall facing the Green on the east side (now demolished).

⁷Roth, op. cit., p.46.

⁸The Villa Medici (1544, Annibale Lippi, architect) is typical of this period, with an entrance loggia and side wings.

⁹Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1974, pp.154-158.

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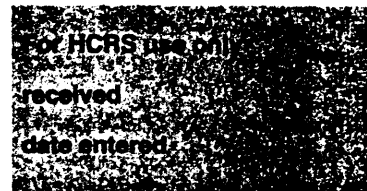
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

SALEM SCHOOL, Naugatuck, CT

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 4



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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- Lines, Rev. Edwin Stevens. Personal Recollections of Naugatuck (pamphlet). Naugatuck: St. Michael's Church, 1926. Filed at New Haven Colony Historical Society, 114 Whitney Ave., New Haven.
- Roth, Leland. The Urban Architecture of McKim, Mead and White: 1870-1910. A Dissertation presented to the Faculty of the graduate school of Yale University in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1973. Filed at Yale Art and Architecture Library.
- Roth, Leland. "Three Industrial Towns by McKim, Mead and White." Journal of the Society for Architectural Historians, December, 1979, Vol.38, No.4.
- Tunnard, Christopher; and Henry Hope Reed. American Skyline. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955.
- Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1974.