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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Watkins Glen High School

other names/site number Watkins Glen Middle School

### 2. Location

street & number 900 North Decatur St

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

city or town Watkins Glen

state New York code NY county Schuyler code 097 zip code 14891

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Richard Ruppert DRHPO 12/17/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. 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:)

Mr. Edson H. Beall 2.12.15  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
 (Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Classical Revival  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: concrete, cast stone  
 walls: Brick, steel  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 roof: asphalt membrane  
 other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

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## Summary Paragraph

Built as the Watkins Glen High School and more recently used as the Watkins Glen Middle School, the school building occupies most of a nearly three-acre rectangular block between North Decatur, North Porter, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets in Watkins Glen, Schuyler County, New York. The site consists of a three-story school building constructed in 1929, with a two-story addition built in 1958. The school is in the western half of the block, and a parking lot and playground occupy the eastern half. The Watkins Glen High School is an excellent example of an early twentieth century three-story school building in the classical revival style with a compatible 1958 two-story addition. The school is of fireproof brick with a cast stone and concrete foundation and features an H-plan, with the facade facing west toward North Decatur Street. The most prominent exterior feature of the building is its broad pedimented portico, with full height Doric columns, on the northern wing of the façade. The portico provides entrance into the school's auditorium. The school features a cast stone water table that wraps around the entire building, and all the elevations except the east have even fenestration and a cast stone cornice. The 1958 addition is constructed of similar red brick with a cast stone water table but is stylistically of modern design with simplified, minimal detailing. The interior of the 1929 addition retains a number of its period features such as staircases and railings, built-in wood classroom cabinets with sliding wood covers and a highly intact auditorium, adding to its high degree of integrity.

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## Narrative Description

Built on the site of a previous school that was destroyed by fire in 1928, the Watkins Glen High School is part of a nearly three-acre block on the east side of North Decatur Street, one block east of State Route 14 that runs through the village north to Geneva and south to Elmira. Watkins Glen is an incorporated village on the south end of Seneca Lake in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The school and its 1958 addition occupy the western end of the block, with the eastern half containing a large asphalt-paved parking lot and non-historic playground. The school is part of a mostly residential neighborhood and is surrounded by single-family homes, except for the block immediately to the west, which contains town and county offices and a large Roman Catholic church and rectory. The oldest part of the school was constructed in 1929, and consists of a three-story H-plan design. It is of steel frame construction and clad with brick and stone. The 1958 northeast addition is of similar construction but is only two stories in height.

Facing North Decatur Street, the school is set back from the sidewalk, with a small lawn that features some mature trees, shrubs and bushes, and a curving driveway/bus drop-off. The building has a flat roof and features three wings in an H-plan, with the northern and southern wings branching perpendicularly off of the center wing. The building has a cast stone clad concrete foundation, and the first floor has five courses of running bond brick, each separated by one course of recessed headers. The top of the upper two floors has a cast stone cornice and brick parapet. Windows are evenly spaced and are generally in groups of four in the classroom spaces and single windows indicating stairwells. The windows are non-historic one-over-two glass and aluminum windows with fixed upper transoms and cast stone sills. All classrooms and administrative offices are located in the center and southern wings and the northern wing is taken up by public spaces, which includes a large auditorium and two gymnasiums. The ground level main entrance is nestled into the northeast corner of the central block and has banks of glass and metal doors set at an angle. The main entrance also has a flat

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roofed brick portico supported by brick piers that mimic the recessed brickwork seen in the main body of the school. Directly north of the main entrance is a newer entrance added to provide accessibility to an interior elevator and features one-over-three sliding glass and metal windows on the second and third floors. The southernmost end of the elevation has a secondary entrance with a non-historic metal and glass door set into a squared opening. The area above has four two-story pilasters interspersed with blind arcades and a center arcade with an inset one-over-two window. The third level has two brick roundels in the outer sections and another window set into a squared opening. An inscription is in the cast stone above the pilasters and states, *The Foundation of Every Nation is the Education of Its Youth.*

At the opposite end of the building, the northern wing's entrance is approached by a two-part concrete stair with brick piers and metal hand rails set into a rise. The entrance consists of a central, two-story portico with full-height Doric order columns and a projecting denticulated pediment. The portico is flanked by blank brick walls, with stone plaques at the second floor level adorned with swag and garland motifs. The tympanum portion of the pediment contains a centrally placed clock and the space between the columns and pediment is inscribed with the name *Watkins Glen High School*. The main entrance is through the portico and consists of three paired wood panel and glass doors that open into the auditorium foyer. The doors are set into large stone arches with fanlight transoms and keystones. The second floor has three large one-over-two windows set into stone surrounds with cast iron balconettes.

The north elevation faces 9<sup>th</sup> Street and has a ground floor with a centrally placed entrance set into a cast stone surround and triangular pediment. The pediment is inscribed with the words *Every Addition to True Knowledge is an Addition to Human Power*. The west end of the elevation is part of the 1929 building, with first floor windows, brick and cast stone work similar to the rest of the building. The auditorium end has decorative cast stone swags set into the upper portion. The upper part of the elevation contains six in-filled arcades that may have been windows at one time for the gymnasium. The east end of the elevation has the two-story 1958 addition, which contains a former girl's gymnasium. The four windows on the east end of the addition are either paired sliding windows or two-light windows with cast stone sills; similar fenestration continues on the remaining elevations of the addition. The northeast corner of the addition has decorative quoin brick work mimicking the brick work in the main body of the 1929 building. A cast stone course separates the upper and lower levels of the addition. The east side of the addition has similar windows to the north side and there is a metal and glass entrance in the ground level and a metal fire escape and upper door. The second floor of the addition has windows in groups of threes connected by a stone sill. The south end of the addition continues the window pattern as seen in the rest of the addition and a brick portico marks a ground level entrance. Visible between the addition and the 1929 building is a tall, square-sided brick chimney. Overall, the 1958 addition has less detailing than the other elevations, with a simple stone course where the rest of the building has a projecting stepped cornice, but maintains the slight projecting water table throughout.

When viewed from the parking lot, the east elevation of the 1929 building displays the same fenestration and detailing as seen in the rest of the building. One exception is a secondary entrance in the lower level near the 1958 addition. The south end of the elevation has a centrally located entrance with windows on the upper levels to admit light for an interior staircase. The upper portion of the south end is separated from the ground level by a plain cast stone cornice. The space on either side of the windows in the upper level has decorative stone swags set into recessed brick with cast stone blocks

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at the corners. The south elevation of the three-story 1929 building faces 10<sup>th</sup> Street and displays the same cornice and water table as seen in the other elevations. The center portion of the elevation is divided into five bays on each floor and the center bay on the first floor contains an entry with stone surround and pediment. This pediment is also inscribed, stating *The Intelligence of the People is the Security of the Nation*. Above it are two large one-over-one windows with fixed transoms that provide natural lighting for a central staircase. The fenestration is the same as in the rest of the 1929 building and the foundation has a stepped effect as the grade changes from west to east.

The interior plan of the school is relatively simple and reflects a simple H-plan with a central north-south hallway linking to the north and south wings, which run east-west. Classrooms and offices flank the corridors in the center and south wings, with a large auditorium, two gymnasiums, a library and workshops occupying the north wing. The main entrance off the west elevation has four metal doors with an inner foyer with paired inner metal doors, a non-historic lobby with linoleum flooring, drywall partitions with glass windows, and a series of interconnected front offices, as well as access to the elevator. The lobby is connected to the center wing's hallway, which leads past administrative and janitorial offices, classrooms, bathrooms to the south, and slopes downward to the cafeteria under the auditorium and gym to the north. The south wing has four classrooms and a nurse's office, with two classrooms east of a central staircase. A large cooking and home economics classroom is to the west and there are stairwells on the eastern and western ends. Most of the stairwells contain the original large turned wood hand rails affixed to both sides of the staircase. The second and third floors of the center wing have eight classrooms, four on each side, all roughly the same size with four large windows on the exterior wall, two interior walls for blackboards and marker boards, and one wall with wooden built-in storage units with sliding doors that drop from above. Some rooms contain the original double wood paneled doors with multi-light transoms. Lavatories on each floor contain recessed arches by the entrances that contain updated water fountains.

Classrooms in the south wing vary in size and shape according to use. On the second floor, a science room contains eight updated work stations and storage closets. Two art rooms have shelving around the walls, and there are two computer labs on the western end of the hall. The third floor contains an original library that occupies much of the northern portion of the wing, a music room and another science room. Most classrooms have newer hardwood flooring installed, though many still feature carpeting or linoleum flooring. Although some rooms have changed functions, many of the original 1929 features and configurations of these rooms are intact. Nearly all classrooms still retain their built in shelving units with sliding doors, original wall configuration with a full bay of windows, and many feature transoms above the doors. The original music room on the second floor still contains a small stage on the western end, and the nurse's office is located in the old principal's office on the second floor of the south wing.

The north wing of the 1929 building is occupied almost entirely by the school's auditorium and two gymnasiums, with lower level classrooms and offices. The ground floor in this section is lower than the rest of the building and contains a large cafeteria and two locker rooms that lead up to the original gymnasium and the building's boiler room. The north wing connects with the 1958 addition, which houses two shop rooms with original wood floors, one being adapted for use as the school library. The upper floors of the north wing are composed entirely of the school's auditorium and two gymnasiums, one that is adjacent to the stage and the other being closed off by the original end wall of the 1929 building. This end wall contains a double-door exit that leads to the girl's gym, as well as two doors that lead into the ground-floor locker rooms.

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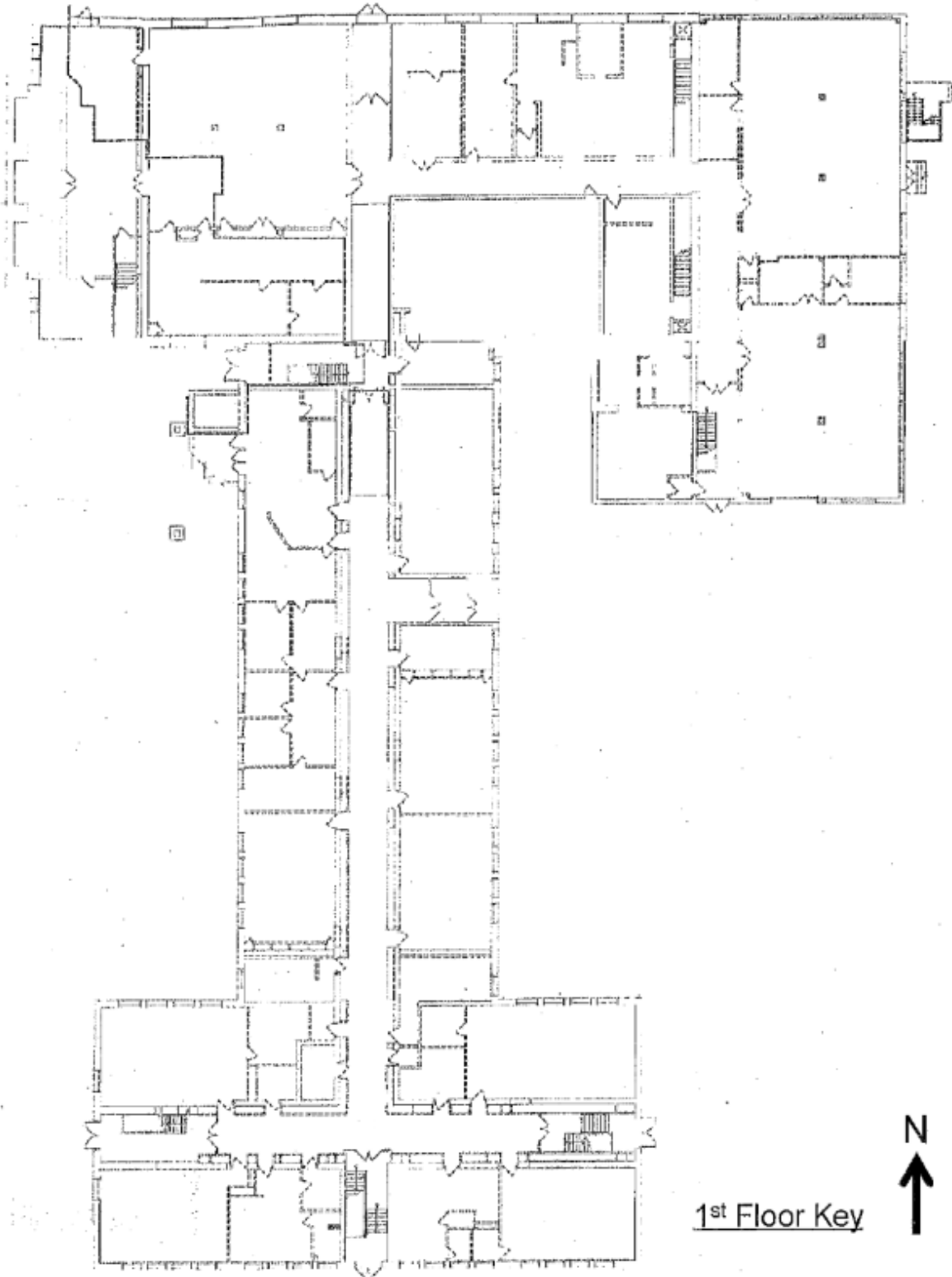
The girl's gymnasium has its original 1958 wood floors, CMU walls, exposed rafters, and utilities, and three large windows in the eastern wall.

From North Decatur Street, an entry opens into a decorated auditorium foyer. Three double-doors with large wood arches and wood simulated keystones mimic the stone arch and keystones of the exterior, and three interior arches are on the opposite wall. Each of these has a pair of wood and glass auditorium entry doors with curtains and the arches above have plaster garland and urn motifs. The foyer has its original brown and tan early twentieth century tile floor, travertine baseboard, cast iron radiators and decorative radiator covers. The north end has restrooms and an original storage closet and the south end has an original staircase and water fountain. The stair curves upward to the second floor to access the balcony area. The auditorium is split into three seating sections and features ornate metal chandeliers with intricate plaster ceiling medallions and stage with its original flooring, apron and proscenium with a simple border. The stage completely opens into the 1929 gymnasium, which also has its original flooring. The auditorium and foyer retains a high degree of fabric, layout and features from 1929 and is the most historically intact interior space of the Watkins Glen High School.

Hallways in the school reflect most of the changes made to the school since its construction to meet code and state guidelines through the years. The hall width remains unaltered. Light colored 3-by-5 inch tiles have been affixed to the lower half of the walls but only in the 1929 building. Linoleum tiling is laid throughout the hallways, including the addition, and may be contemporary with the addition. The building retains the original floor plan with staircases at each end of most hallways. The stairwells feature original wrought-iron spindles with wood hand-rails, and the staircase in the auditorium foyer is the most ornate, curving upwards with twisted wrought-iron railings interspaced with the plain railings. The hallways that connect the 1929 building to the 1958 addition were graded in the late twentieth century to accommodate accessibility requirements.

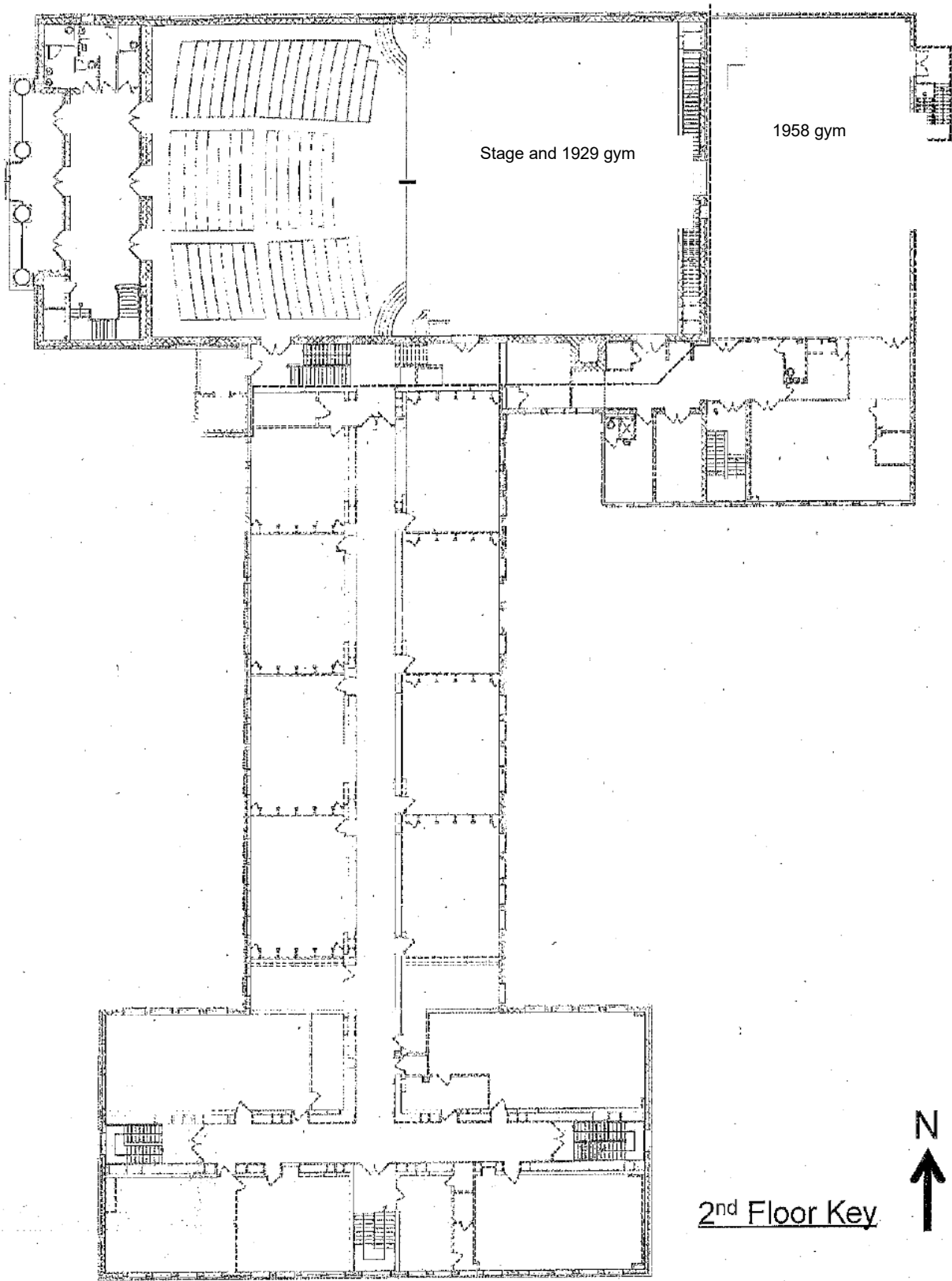
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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

#### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Education \_\_\_\_\_

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Period of Significance

1929-1964 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Significant Dates

1929, 1958, 1964 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Architect/Builder

Carl Ade (architect) \_\_\_\_\_

Rankin Construction Company (builder) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Period of Significance (justification)

The period begins with the construction of the school in 1929 and the end date reflects the continued through the historic period until it was closed in 2013.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Constructed in 1929, the Watkins Glen High school is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of education as it reflects the ongoing progressive approach that the community and the school board took towards educating its youth, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century with the formation of the school district and continuing through the twentieth century. As administrators all over the country were adjusting to growing school populations that resulted from compulsory education laws, educators were also challenged on how to encourage a love of learning with students while maintaining continued support for the school in the community. Two of its early principals helped guide the Watkins Glens schools into the modern age, and its programs became an example of progressive education, showcased in 1904 at the World's Fair in St. Louis. The school is also significant under Criterion C in architecture as an excellent example of a neoclassic school designed by Rochester architect Carl Ade, who designed a number of schools in that genre throughout New York State during his long career (1912-1962). Ade's designs also responded to standards for school design developed in New York State during the first half of the twentieth century. The Watkins Glen High School exemplifies the philosophy of inspiring a new generation with a love of learning and democracy through its architecture, while responding to stringent building guidelines that resulted in the development of an entire typology related to school design. Schools varied in style and appearance after these laws; however, all began to feature similar features, such as decentralized stairwells, concrete-reinforced walls, and classrooms built to maximize exposure to natural light. These requirements often resulted in banks of windows and "H" and "E" building plans that maximized exterior wall space.<sup>1</sup> The Watkins Glen High School, designed after this typology developed, fully epitomizes the standardization of school design at the beginning of the twentieth century and exemplifies Ade's mastery of the type. It retains a high level of integrity inside and out and features a compatible wing from 1958.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

Settlement in Watkins Glen began around the turn-on-the-nineteenth century, but the village itself languished until the arrival of Dr. Samuel Watkins in the late 1820s. Watkins came into possession of his brother's extensive land holdings around Seneca Lake and revived stalled plans for surveying and mapping out the village. He had the swampland to the east drained and in 1841, laid out a series of streets named after U.S. Naval heroes, one of them being Stephen Decatur. Once Watkins built a grand residence at the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Decatur Avenue, residential development of that section of the village accelerated. After Dr. Watkins's death in 1851, the village was officially renamed Watkins in his honor. The village was renamed again in 1926 as Watkins Glen, recognizing the importance of the gorge and state park at its southwest end.

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<sup>1</sup> Claire Ross (2001), *National Register of Historic Places Registration: Former Niagara Falls High School, Niagara County, NY* (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation), Section 8, page 3.

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The completion of the Chemung Canal in 1833 also had an effect on the early development of the village. The canal connected Seneca Lake to the Chemung River, resulting in the establishing of milling and shipping of goods via the lake and canal to various markets in the region. This growth prompted the creation of Schuyler County in 1854, formed from portions of Chemung, Steuben, and Tompkins Counties. The village of Watkins boasted a population of over 1,000 by 1860, which prompted it to challenge neighboring Havana (today know as Montour Falls) as the seat of the county. Watkins secured the title of county seat in 1866, and the growth over the following decades resulted in a small bustling village with five churches, a new county courthouse, a newspaper office, and several mills. The village's location as a hub of several transportation networks (the Chemung Canal, Seneca Lake, and eventually a line of the Reading Railroad) encouraged growth during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century.<sup>2</sup>

Also important to the growth of the village was the discovery of salt deposits in the late nineteenth century. Around 1882, the Watkins Oil Well Company organized with plans to mine salt and drill for oil and gas. The salt deposits in Watkins were rich. As recorded in 1896, three mines reached nearly 2,000 feet down, one of which uncovered over 100 feet of solid salt.<sup>3</sup> By 1900, the town's small population swelled to 2,943, largely due to the salt industry. In addition to salt, Watkins Glen also developed a seasonal tourism industry in the late nineteenth century that drew tourists to the region known for several waterfalls, gorges, and glens. In 1906, the State of New York purchased the glen in Watkins and its immediate surroundings, which eventually became Watkins Glen State Park. In 1907, an estimated 45,000 tourists visited Watkins Glen and as visitation increased, the village officially added "Glen" to its name in 1926.<sup>4</sup>

## Watkins Glen Schools

Education in the area paralleled activities in other towns and villages as the region developed. The first schools in the county were in the villages of Montour Falls and Watkins. School districts were formed around 1820, following a series of education acts passed by the state legislature, which set the groundwork for the public education system in the early nineteenth century. By 1826, New York State instituted one of the most comprehensive common school systems in the country, requiring that towns elect at least three school commissioners, who would divide the town into districts. School funds collected by the state would be distributed to local districts based on the number of school age children aged five to fifteen living in the district.<sup>5</sup> In 1814, the legislature approved a bill that would allow districts to issue local rate bills to supplement the costs of education. The acts passed by the state also required towns to set aside land for schools and to provide a building. Unfortunately, little was recorded about the first schools in Watkins and Schuyler County, but in the 1840s, several communities established "union free schools" in response to the Free School Act passed by the state. The Watkins Union School District was organized in 1863. Previous to the district, a private academy was established in

<sup>2</sup> Nancy L. Todd (March 2001), "Nation Register of Historic Places Registration: First Baptist Church of Watkins Glen," New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 5

<sup>3</sup> "US Salt: Watkins Glen, NY," US Salt LLC, 2005, online at [www.ussaltllc.com](http://www.ussaltllc.com).

<sup>4</sup> Gordon D. Cooper, *Watkins Glen Tour Guide*, (, Los Gatos, CA: Preston Woods Publishing, 2009), 65-69.

<sup>5</sup> Susanne R. Warren, *Context Study: The Schools of New York State—Development of the School as a Building Type* (Ithaca, NY: NYS OPRHP, 1990), 16.

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Watkins in 1859, operating out of the courthouse until it merged with the district schools. By 1878, Watkins had a primary school, a grammar school and a two-story academy for upper grades located at the corner of Decatur and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets.

In the 1870s, Samuel S. Johnson was the principal of the academy, as well as being the secretary for the school board. Johnson made dramatic changes to the schools, beginning in 1874. For the first ten years of the district's existence, the school district utilized a program of six two-year grades focusing on primary education. Johnson switched to a progressive program of thirteen one-year grades, condensing the previous primary level education into the first eight years. At first, his reforms met with public outcry due to the rigors of the new program, but a surge in enrollment and graduation rates quieted local critics. His success prompted the New York State Board of Regents to ask Johnson to present the school's transformation at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition in St. Louis.<sup>6</sup> New York State sent an education delegation to the exposition, highlighting twelve different areas of the state's education system in its New York Building that displayed exhibits on "Administration," "High Schools," and a rural education in the state."<sup>7</sup> Johnson displayed photographs, pupils' work and other materials in the "Public Schools" section of the exposition.<sup>8</sup>

In 1909, John A. Beers succeeded Johnson as superintendent. Teaching in Watkins since 1901, Beers helped establish an athletics program in the district even before he was superintendent. Following Johnson's lead in developing national education models, Beers intended to set the pattern of a more inclusive education by broadening the academic departments to include agriculture, music, homemaking, art, commercial and industrial arts, all with separate departments within the district. As superintendent, he expanded extracurricular activities, forming a team for the state's Girls Basketball League, and started the tradition of a senior trip in the high school.<sup>9</sup> His success was evident with the district's graduation rates: between 1900 and 1911 (even with compulsory education laws in effect) the district averaged eleven graduates, but, by 1936, Watkins Glen graduated 84 students under Beers's expanded educational program.<sup>10</sup>

Increased graduation rates also reflected a dramatic increase in student population and the need to meet the special needs of previously overlooked students (the indigent, immigrants, mobility impaired, etc.). Schools considered ways to accommodate a variety of students and began to incorporate such features such as bathing facilities for children who did not have running water, as well as lunchrooms for children to purchase food.<sup>11</sup> As mandatory attendance laws developed, schools catered to a wider range of student needs, prompting a diversification of the types of spaces found in school buildings. Along with meeting physical needs, academics were also broadened beyond the typical Latin and English courses and were grouped into college preparatory, commercial, general and science paths as a way to better respond to the growing student populations.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Watkins Glen Central School District*, 8

<sup>7</sup> Franklin Mathews, "New York—The Empire State," *Harper's Weekly*, 1 October 1904, Vol. 48, (Harper & Brothers, New York; 1904), 1513. Online at [www.googlebooks.com](http://www.googlebooks.com).

<sup>8</sup> "Official Catalogue of Exhibitors for the Universal Exposition," (Louisiana Purchase Exposition Company, St. Louis; 1904), 51. Online at [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

<sup>9</sup> *Watkins Glen Central School District*, 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> Warren, 113

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On January 14, 1929, the old two-story academy building was destroyed by a fire that was suspected to have been caused by a boiler malfunction. With the school located in a residential section of the village, the fire department had to summon neighboring fire companies to fight the fire and prevent its spreading to nearby buildings. Although they successfully saved nearby structures, by the time the fire was subdued at one o'clock the next morning, the school was completely destroyed.<sup>13</sup> The community made emergency accommodations for students while they planned for the new school construction. During the planning, the new Watkins Glen High School was intended to accommodate the reforms of Beers and Johnson's curriculum and to reflect state laws and national trends. The new school was to have space for arts, performances and sports as well as provide public space for the community. It also planned to have an entire wing for home economics, a music room with a small stage, and science rooms.

### **CRITERION C: ARCHITECTURE**

The 1929 Watkins Glen High School reflected school design standards that were regularly adopted by the state, beginning in 1904 and amended in 1910. The first changes to school design began with the passing of compulsory education laws, which impacted education in three ways; first, it obligated municipalities to provide space in both elementary and secondary schools for all school age children; second, it expanded the age-range of students attending school; and third, it placed the burden on school districts to provide safe and sanitary conditions for students attending schools.<sup>14</sup> The laws contributed to an explosive growth in school construction at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century. In New York State, the number of high schools doubled from 314 in 1894 to 636 in 1904.<sup>15</sup> As the construction of schools increased, regulations emerged relating to a variety of safety and hygiene concerns, including ventilation, plumbing, heating, illumination, seating arrangements, general building cleanliness, and, lastly, fire safety.<sup>16</sup> In order to enforce the new standards, the National Education Association advocated for increased inspection and government control over school hygiene and design.<sup>17</sup> New York State passed an act in 1904 calling for all plans for new school construction to be approved by the state's Education Department as a reaction to the calls for stricter regulation of school design.<sup>18</sup>

In order to accommodate these lighting standards, schools began to assume more symmetrical designs than in previous decades, often adopting H-, I- or E-shaped plans in order to create longer elevations to support multiple unilaterally arranged classrooms. As a result, corner classrooms resulted in the creation of blank elevations in order to ensure lighting through only one wall into the room. It also resulted in multiple decentralized stairwells, which were moved to ends of hallways to maximize classroom space across the long elevations and it had the effect of increasing fire safety in school designs.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Watkins Glen High School is Destroyed by \$250,000 Fire," *Elmira Star-Gazette*, 15 January 1929, page 7, columns 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> Warren, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 115

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 117.

Watkins Glen High School

Name of Property

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Although it was fully equipped with electric lights, the Watkins Glen High School was designed to utilize natural lighting, with most classrooms containing an entire bay of four tall windows. Lighting was a concern since eyestrain was often attributed to poor lighting in classrooms. Reformers advocated for better lighting and standards resulted in a classroom size around thirty feet wide and 12.5 to 13.5 feet tall to maximize light exposure.<sup>19</sup> Classroom sizes adhered to these standards well into the twentieth century, even after electric lighting was in common use.<sup>20</sup> Watkins Glen High School followed the standards, with high ceilings, groups of four full-height windows in rectangular rooms. Two walls were used for blackboards, and shelving units at the end of the classroom allowed the seating to be arranged with the students oriented with their left shoulders toward the windows.

In order to maximize exterior surface area, the school was designed in an H- plan that allowed smaller groups of windows to naturally illumine stairwells and offices. With the experience of the devastating fire in mind, the planners directed that many of the school's features adhere to standards developed over the previous decades concerning lighting, air quality, heating, and fire safety. These needs and standards led to the rise of an entire branch of architecture dedicated to designing schools by the turn-of-the-twentieth century. Following the guidelines, the new Watkins Glen school featured a decentralized stair system for fire safety, with multiple staircases in both wings of the building, which ran perpendicular to a long corridor. The previous fire clearly was a great concern as the new school was constructed with completely fireproof materials, utilizing steel joists and framing, with concrete floors, brick curtain walls, and metal lath and plaster ceilings. The Watkins Glen High School had all stairwells located at the ends of the north and south wings, all with separate egresses.

In the years following World War I, schools adapted to new demands to improve the fitness level of students. Many school designs regularly incorporated gymnasiums, often following state and local requirements, such as New York State's physical education legislation of 1916 requiring that any school building with eight or more rooms provide an auditorium or other assembly space.<sup>21</sup> Many of these spaces doubled as public meeting spaces, and the Watkins Glen High School new building included an auditorium with a separate foyer and entrance to satisfy the requirement. Attached to the back of the room was a large gymnasium, allowing the school to meet state expectations regarding student fitness.

Designed by Carl Ade (1892-1962) in 1929, the function of the Watkins Glen High School as a temple of learning was clearly evident through its neoclassic design and detailing, which included pillars, pilasters, pediments and inspirational inscriptions. Early twentieth century American neoclassic architecture had its roots in the City Beautiful Movement, which sought to reinforce the principles of democracy in its citizens through city planning and architecture. By the time Ade designed the school in Watkins Glen, neoclassicism was recognized as "a reassuring symbol of stability," especially after the upheaval of World War I, and its hearkening back to the architecture of Thomas Jefferson further underscored America as a democracy.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid, 126

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, 128.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 223.

<sup>22</sup> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: The New American Library, 1980), 218.

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Throughout his career, Ade rarely digressed from the neoclassic for his schools and became a specialist in school design, having designed roughly 350 according to one account, and several of the buildings at Alfred University. Ade was born in Rochester, New York, in 1892, and studied architecture at the Mechanics Institute, one of two colleges that merged to form the Rochester Institute of Technology. After completing his education, he worked with architect Joseph Oberlies and eventually began his own firm in 1912.<sup>23</sup> During World War I, he served in the Army in the Engineering Corps and was commissioned as second lieutenant responsible for army hospital and warehouse construction. In 1918, he traveled to Puerto Rico to design an army cantonment for 40,000 Puerto Rican soldiers, after which he returned to designing hospitals and warehouses in Texas for the duration of the war.<sup>24</sup> This background in industrial spaces uniquely equipped him for the challenges associated with modern school design once he returned to Rochester in 1919. Already familiar with the complex construction, hygiene, and safety requirements for hospitals and military warehouses, Ade applied those practices to the stringent standards expected of twentieth-century school construction, and, by 1925, he had designed between 25 and 30 schools in Central New York.<sup>25</sup> According to one account:

“His work is the expression of a high and enduring art, manifesting splendid adaptation to specific needs, combined with beauty in form and design, and has won for him the favorable attention of the general public as well as the appreciation of others able to judge from technical and artistic standpoints.”<sup>26</sup>

Though Ade rose to prominence throughout central New York for his numerous school designs, he was also a consulting architect on the Genesee Valley Trust Building (NR listed 1976), designed by Ralph Thomas Walker of Voorhees, Gmelin, and Walker. Built in downtown Rochester, the building became an icon of Art Deco styling, with wings that adorned the top of the trust building against the Rochester skyline. In spite of this association, Ade kept to the neoclassic for school design, even with the advent of post-World War II modernism. One of his late commissions was the high school in Irondequoit (1950), a suburb of Rochester, which displayed the same cast stone cornice and monumental pilasters as seen in the Watkins Glen High School.

Other schools designed by Ade included his 1931 design for the Holley High School in Orleans County, praised for being “the latest type of modern school construction,” implementing a variety of fireproofing techniques of the time.<sup>27</sup> In 1938, he was commissioned by the village of East Bloomfield to design their PWA-funded two-story Art Deco Central School, one of his rare departures from the neoclassic.<sup>28</sup> He was also part of a PWA-project the following year, helping to design a new junior-senior high school in Newark (New York) in 1939.<sup>29</sup> He also designed the Cato-Meridian Central School in 1939, and the Port Byron’s middle school (1939) and a new Port Byron school in 1957.<sup>30</sup> In 1955 he designed two dormitories for Alfred University, where he was kept on as the school’s architect.<sup>31</sup> He also designed the eight-story, T-shaped new Rochester General Hospital building (1954).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *The History of the Genesee Country, Vol. IV*, (Chicago, IL: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company; 1925), 740

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 743

<sup>27</sup> “Five to Revive—Holley High School,” Landmark Society of Western New York, online at [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org).

<sup>28</sup> “School Site Work Begun,” *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, Thursday, 27 October 1938.

<sup>29</sup> “Newark to Lay Cornerstone of \$650,000 School Tonight,” in *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*, 25 August 1939.

<sup>30</sup> “Board gets plan for Intermediate Grade School,” in *The Cayuga Chief*, 26 September 1957.

<sup>31</sup> Howard Mendes, “First of Two New Dorms Ready for Inspection,” *The Fiat Lux*, Tuesday, 10 May 1955.

<sup>32</sup> “Hospital Celebrates Fifty Years on Portland Ave,” *Baker-Cederberg Notebook* Vol 19, No 1, (Health Archives Consortium, Spring 2007), 5.

Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

As one of his early schools, the Watkins Glen High School exemplified many of the neoclassical buildings found throughout his work. Many of the features responded to building standards and included a simplified building plan, groups of windows, and multiple stairways. The school also reflected the latest in education trends, including spaces for science and home economics, an ornately styled auditorium, and a large gymnasium. The building was expanded in 1958 to accommodate more students, but, ten years later, the district completed a new senior high school and used this building as a middle school until its closing in 2013. In 2013, the district sold the building to be developed into senior housing, using the gymnasium and auditorium as community space. The building still retains a great deal of its original Carl Ade design, including its original circulation, boy's gymnasium, original auditorium with tiling and staircase in foyer, classroom configuration with original built-in shelving units, and exterior fenestration and materials. The windows were altered after the 1958 addition was constructed, and current plans are to return to a six-over-six sash similar to what was original in the 1929 building.



Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

- "Board gets plan for Intermediate Grade School." *The Cayuga Chief*, 26 September 1957.
- "Commencement Week Activities Draw to Close with Alumni Banquet, Dance." *The Port Byron Chronicle*. 30 June, 1939.
- Cooper, Gordon D. *Watkins Glen Tour Guide*. Los Gatos, CA: Preston Woods Publishing; 2009.
- "Five to Revive—Holley High School." Landmark Society of Western New York. Online at [www.landmarksociety.org](http://www.landmarksociety.org).
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- The History of the Genesee Country*. Vol. IV. Chicago, IL: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1925.
- Mendes, Howard. "First of Two New Dorms Ready for Inspection." *The Fiat Lux*, Tuesday, 10 May, 1955.
- "Newark to Lay Cornerstone of \$650,000 School Tonight." *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. 25 August, 1939.
- Ross, Claire. *National Register of Historic Places Registration: Former Niagara Falls High School, Niagara County, NY*. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation; 2001.
- Shilling, Donovan A. *Rochester's Downtown*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing; 2001.
- "School Site Work Begun." *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*. Thursday, 27 October, 1938.
- Todd, Nancy L. "Nation Register of Historic Places Registration: First Baptist Church of Watkins Glen," New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. 2001.
- "US Salt: Watkins Glen, NY." US Salt LLC, 2005. Online at [www.ussaltllc.com](http://www.ussaltllc.com).
- Warren, Susanne R. *Context Study: The Schools of New York State, Development of The School as a Building Type*. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Albany, New York; 1990.
- Watkins Glen Central School District, 1883-1982, 100 Years and Graduates*." Watkins Glen, NY: Watkins Glen Board of Education, 1982.
- "Watkins Glen High School is Destroyed by \$250,000 Fire." *Elmira Star-Gazette*. 15 January, 1929, 7.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: Preservation Studios/Buffalo NY

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Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** ±2.77 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>346156</u> Easting	<u>4693393</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing	4	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing

#### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

#### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the same as for the period of significance.

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Derek King II (edited by Virginia L. Bartos, Ph.D., NYS OPRHP)  
organization Preservation Studios date 4 December 2014  
street & number 60 Hedley Place telephone 716-725-6410  
city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208  
e-mail [dereking@preservationstudios.com](mailto:dereking@preservationstudios.com); [virginia.bartos@parks.ny.gov](mailto:virginia.bartos@parks.ny.gov)

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs:

Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Watkins Glen High School

City or Vicinity: Watkins Glen

County: Schuyler State: New York

Photographer: Virginia L. Bartos

Date Photographed: 1 October 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001 of 0019: Auditorium entrance/west elevation viewed looking east from Decatur and 9<sup>th</sup> Sts.
- 0002 of 0019: North elevation of school along 9th Street, looking southeast.
- 0003 of 0019: West end of west elevation looking southeast from North Decatur and 9th Sts.
- 0004 of 0019: South elevation of school, looking northwest from 10<sup>th</sup> St.
- 0005 of 0019: Detail view of door in west elevation, showing inscription.
- 0006 of 0019: East elevation of school, looking west from Porter Street.
- 0007 of 0019: Detail view of 1958 addition and north elevation, view looking west from 9<sup>th</sup> St.
- 0008 of 0019: Detail view of west end of west elevation showing inscription.
- 0009 of 0019: First floor classroom, showing original fireplace.
- 0010 of 0019: Representative classroom showing historic wood shelving.
- 0011 of 0019: Second floor hallway.
- 0012 of 0019: Staircase in west end of building.
- 0013 of 0019: View of Auditorium lobby in northwest end of building.
- 0014 of 0019: Detail view of Auditorium entrance doors.
- 0015 of 0019: Detail view of staircase to second floor in Auditorium lobby.
- 0016 of 0019: Detail view of radiator cover in Auditorium lobby.
- 0017 of 0019: Interior view of auditorium, view looking southwest.
- 0018 of 0019: Detail view of auditorium light fixture.
- 0019 of 0019: Detail view showing stage curtain and 1929 gymnasium.

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

---

name Two Plus Four Construction  
street & number 6320 Fly Road telephone 315-437-1808  
city or town Syracuse state NY zip code 13507

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

Watkins Glen High School  
Watkins Glen, Schuyler Co., NY

900 North Decatur St.  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



345000 346000 347000  
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter  
0 325 650 1,300 Feet

- Watkins Glen HS
- USGS quad index

Tax Parcel Data:  
Schuyler Co. RPS  
schuyler.sdgny.com



Watkins Glen High School  
Name of Property

Schuyler County, NY  
County and State

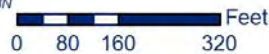
Watkins Glen High School  
Watkins Glen, Schuyler Co., NY

900 North Decatur St.  
Watkins Glen, NY 14891



346000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



 Watkins Glen HS

Tax Parcel Data:  
Schuyler Co. RPS  
schuyler.sdgny.com





WATKINS GLEN HIGH SCHOOL



ART  
NANCY'S  
PIZZA SUBS



A large, multi-story brick building with a prominent corner. The facade features several arched windows on the upper floors and a series of smaller, rectangular windows on the ground floor. The building is constructed of reddish-brown bricks and has a white decorative cornice. A utility pole stands in front of the building.

A large, mature tree with dense foliage, showing signs of autumn with some yellow and orange leaves. It is located on the left side of the street, partially obscuring the view of the building.

A large, mature tree with dense foliage, showing signs of autumn with some yellow and orange leaves. It is located on the right side of the street, partially obscuring the view of the building.

A white octagonal stop sign on a black post, located at the intersection of the street.

MECAUR

A white octagonal stop sign on a black post, located at the intersection of the street.

Blue informational sign with white text, located on the sidewalk near the building.

Concrete stairs with metal railings, leading up to a building entrance.

A dark-colored SUV parked on the street near the intersection.

White painted crosswalk markings on the asphalt road.







THE INTELLIGENCE OF THE PEOPLE  
IS THE SECURITY OF THE NATION

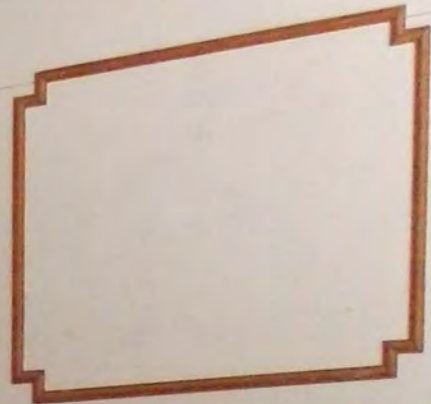
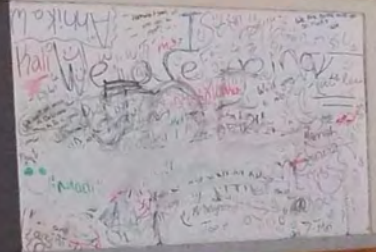








THE FOUNDATION OF EVERY YOUTH  
IS THE EDUCATION OF HIS YOUTH







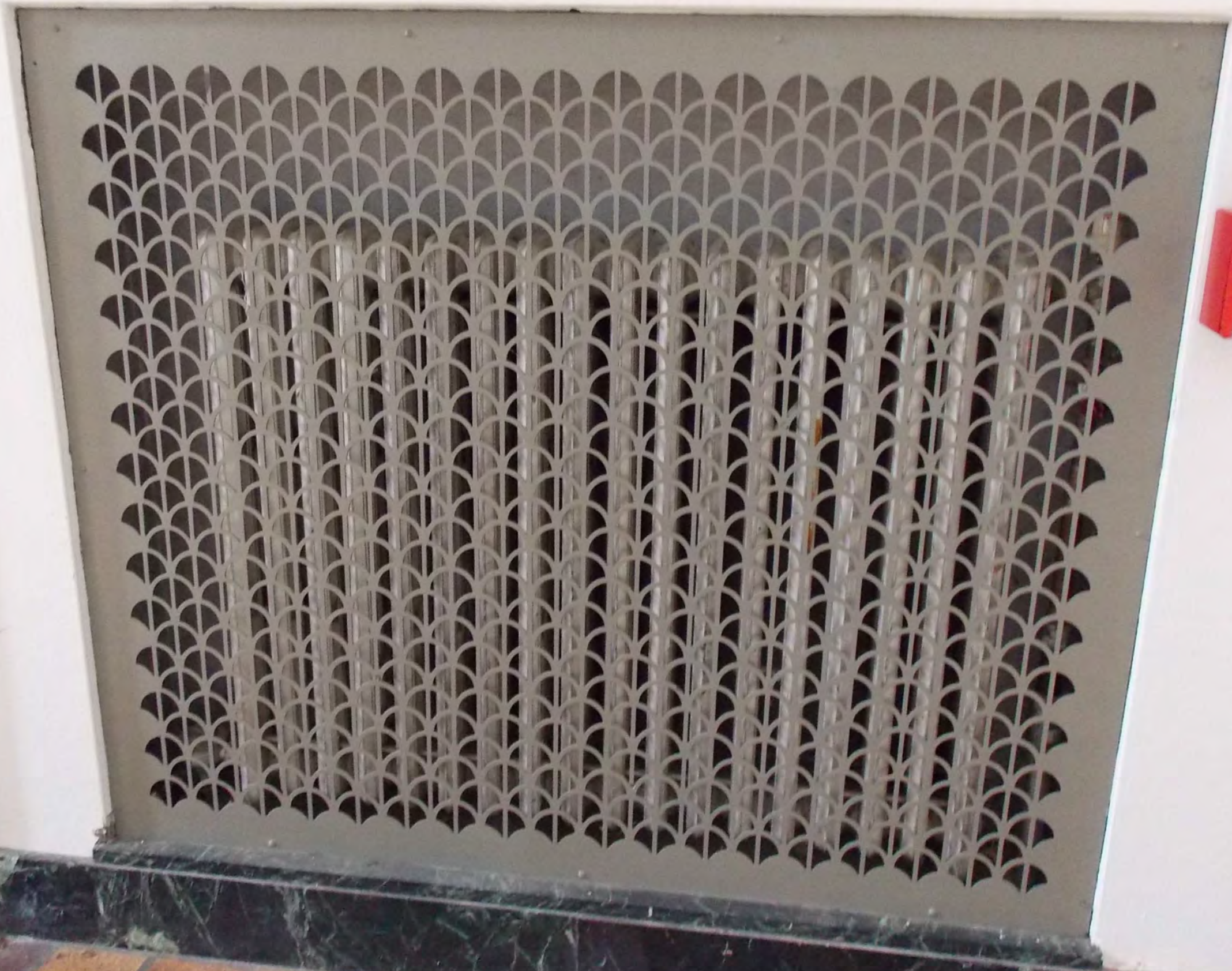












**FIRE**  
PUSH HERE  
TO OPEN  
PULL DOWN









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Watkins Glen High School

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Schuyler

DATE RECEIVED: 1/02/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/21/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/05/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/17/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000008

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      2.12.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189  
518-237-8643



**Andrew M. Cuomo**  
Governor

**Rose Harvey**  
Commissioner

19 December 2014

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to enclose the following five nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Broadway Historic District, Erie County  
Cuba Cemetery, Allegany County  
Grace Methodist Church Complex, Hamilton County  
Cox-Budlong House, Monroe County  
Watkins Gel High School, Schuyler County

Please feel free to call me 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office