

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **SEP 25 1986**

date entered **OCT 23 1986**

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

**1. Name** P. S. DUPONT HIGH SCHOOL

historic P. S. DUPONT SCHOOL

and or common

**2. Location**

street & number 34th St. between N. Monroe & N. Franklin St. not for publication

city, town Wilmington vicinity of

state Delaware code 10 county NEW CASTLE code 03

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

street & number PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE

city, town CLAYMONT vicinity of state DELAWARE

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. RECORDER OF DEEDS, CITY/COUNTY BLDG., 4TH FLOOR

street & number 800 N. FRENCH STREET

city, town WILMINGTON state DELAWARE

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Cultural Resource Survey of Delaware has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

N-1454

date 8/1979 federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Bureau of Archaeology & Historic Preservation

city, town DOVER state DELAWARE

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

P. S. duPont School, located on the northern side of 34th Street between Franklin and Monroe Streets, is a four-story structure with a footprint resembling a stylized "E". The building is constructed of red brick laid in flemish bond and is a 20th century interpretation of Georgian architecture immediately recognizable by the symmetry of design and detail. Last in the line of schools constructed over a 14-year period of educational modernization, P. S. duPont School is the most elaborate product of the architectural renaissance that mirrored the updating of the Delaware educational system between 1920 and 1935.

The school's symmetrical Georgian bulk dominates the southern half of the original 21 $\frac{1}{4}$  acres, (the rear section having the athletic fields and two new, non-contributing buildings) and rises above the surrounding two-and-a-half story homes of the City's Ninth Ward. The structure's red brick mass and white cupola can be seen at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile away from any direction at street level and serves as a visual landmark to travelers on both I-95 and I-495. The landscaping around the school has been kept to an absolute minimum--the trees and shrubbery that grace the sprawled lawn and driveway have been gifts of various graduating classes.

The building's main facade faces the southwest and is executed in a gentle curve that architecturally embraces the approaching driveway's arc. The main triple-doored entryway is at the very center of the curve and faces North Van Buren Street. The three sets of metal entry doors have been painted a brick red and limestone tan to harmonize with the rest of the main facade. They are surrounded by limestone molding executed with a quoin and keystone design. The main entry rises to the second floors; at the second and third floor levels four colossal Ionic capital columns embrace three banks of multiple light, double-hung, wood sash windows, ornamented by the ubiquitous keystone design in limestone. The columns are surmounted by a denticulated triangular pediment in which is centered a multiple light, porthole like window. The window is surrounded by carving in the fashion of an Adamesque swag.

Behind this grand entry rises the hipped roof covered with dark reddish-brown shingles. From the hipped roof rises a wood, three-level tower and cupola that ends in a multiple sided, bell-like copper roof and weathervane. This middle roof is flanked by a three section chimney at north and south ends.

From the center entry, the southeast and northwest halls extend outward and then curve outward about halfway down the hall. At the "elbow" points, in a niche near the roofline are found simple, concrete, Grecian-inspired urns. The middle hall sections are less adorned than the entryways, and contain banks of three and four groups of 15 over 15 light double-hung wooden sash.

The west and south ends of these extensions repeat a similar design to that found at the main entry way. The direct ends have identical placement of details, but triple doorways shrink to become single sets of double doors,

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

**Specific dates** 1934 **Builder/Architect** KARNO SMITH, BUILDER  
E. WILLIAM MARTIN, AIA

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

**INTRODUCTION** The P.S. duPont School at 34th and Van Buren Streets was constructed in 1934 and opened in 1935. Although the last school to be constructed in a 14 year wave of building that embodied the philosophical overhaul of the Delaware educational system, P.S. duPont High School immediately achieved position of "flagship of the fleet" due to its name and its high stylistic interpretation of neo-Colonial architecture. It is due to the association with the development of an enlightened Delaware educational system that P.S. duPont School is being nominated under criterion A. The association with Pierre Samuel duPont II merits nomination under criterion B. Finally, it is the choice of gradiose scale, neo-georgian design that warrants nomination under Criterion C.

**HISTORY** In Delaware prior to the 1920's the educational system had been allowed to deteriorate. Attitudes toward public education were somewhat apathetic; this was reflected in the less-than-generous public funding for educational facilities, and education in general. The economic changes brought about by World War I focused for the public the necessity of having an educational system that was in step with the times and one that could be used as a tool to attract new business and industry to Delaware. The war related expansion at the duPont Company and at Wilmington's heavy industrial plants had shown the need for a skilled and educated population that could be employed at those plants. A survey of the Wilmington Public Schools, completed in 1921 by the United States Bureau of Education, revealed inadequacies of the City's educational facilities. It was from this information that many drew the corollary blame for the high level of illiteracy and drop-outs from the education system - many youngsters simply left the dreadful school conditions as soon as either circumstances or legislation would allow.

Pierre Samuel duPont II and his cousin, Alfred, were two of the man appalled by the fact that Delaware's education system ranked only 36th in the nation at the beginning of the 1920's. The duPont family had historically valued education (it was duPont who had written an early 19th century treatise that described what Delaware's educational system should be), but it was in these early decades of the 20th Century when the necessity of quality education became of paramount import to the duPonts as they tried to attract talented executives and engineers to the duPont Company's headquarters in Wilmington. Their concern was two-fold - if the local schools were of marginal caliber, they would not produce a local pool of talent for potential employees desired by the duPont Company, and secondly, if talent has to be "imported", would individuals with children wish to come to what could be considered an educational wasteland?

Pierre, challenged by his cousin Alfred, moved to produce change in the system. After being appointed to the State Board of Education, he personally contributed over \$4 million dollars to a Statewide program of renovation, as well as establishing a matching or challenge grant whereby he would match half the construction cost of new schools.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 9.97 acres

Quadrangle name Wilmington North

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	8	4	5	4	3	2	0	4	4	0	1	5	2	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H 

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title STEPHEN G. DELSORDO, HISTORIAN with research done by PATRICIA A. MALEY, Wilmington City Planner

organization Bureau of Archaeology and Historic Preservation date June 1986

street & number Old State House, The Green

telephone 302-736-5685

city or town Dover

state DE 19903-1401

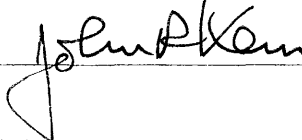
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



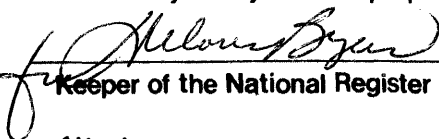
title

date 9-24-86

*Date of incoming letter*

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



Keeper of the National Register

date 10-23-86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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columns become limestone pilasters limestone quoins are translated into brick. The triangle pediment is still denticulated but lacks the central window. The hipped roof rises behind the triangular pediment but the tower element of the center design is altered to be a three-sectioned chimney at these ends. Another variation in the pattern is the replacement of the keystone by an arch-shaped stone window hood located over the 20 over 20 light windows between the four pilasters.

The sides of the south and west ends repeat the Ionic columns found at the main entryway, giving the design a wrap-around quality. The wings of the school continue to display variations in decoration, with changing fenestration patterns, keystones, and doorways. Most windows becoming 12 over 12 lights on the side and keystones vary in size and materials are replaced. The building graduates downward to having a one and one-half story gymnasium on either side. The middle wing of the building also recedes from the extensive multi-story auditorium/theater to the single story cafeteria.

The gymnasiums have arched roofs. The eastern facing end of the men's gymnasium (nearest to Monroe street) has a more elaborate entry than the ladies' gym. Its entry features the symmetry of triple doorways. Above the center doorway is the legend "Mens Sana In Corpore Sano."

The regimented symmetry continues on the interior of the school. Entry through the main doors of the front facade provides view of the Georgian fanlights over double doors and heavily beamed ceilings underscored by Corinthian scrolled brackets. In either end of the entry vestibule is a niche with classical stone surrounds containing a bronze plaque. On the west side, the plaque bears the inscription:

P.S. DUPONT HIGH SCHOOL  
ERECTED 1934  
BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
HARRY B. EATON, PRESIDENT  
HOWARD F. MC CALL, VICE PRESIDENT  
ELLA C. MODE  
THOMAS M. MONAGHAN  
HARVEY A. MURRAY, M.D.  
T. CARSEN TAYLOR  
S.M. STOUFFER, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS  
E. WILLIAM MARTIN, AIA ARCHITECT  
KARNO SMITH COMPANY, BUILDERS

On the east side, the plaque honors Pierre S. duPont, II.

Other materials found in the entryway are cut blocks of stone with wooden crown molding, brownstone or sandstone decorative elements at ceiling level, and base-board molding consisting of green and cream colored marble.

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The auditorium, directly across the 12-foot wide linoleum block corridor from the main entry vestibule, exhibits practically all the original materials of the 1935 school. These include its double wooden entry doors, wooden seats bolted to yellow pine graduated floors, bronze lights, balcony, center aisle, orchestra pit and classical detailing along the walls.

The classical detailing includes groupings of two Ionic pilasters at regular intervals around the two-story walls, heavy dentil crown molding, heavy molding around the stage, and a wooden plaque mounted over the center of the stage bearing the inscription, "P.S. duP. High School" and surrounded by wooden brackets that hold stylized broken pediment. Two sections on either side of the stage that we used to cover a public address system have intricate metal detailing with classical figures and floral motif molding. 12 over 12 window banks also appear in the auditorium walls, although they are not operational.

The auditorium has a balcony section with about one-third the seating of the first floor level. There is also a projection and lighting booth that opens above the balcony and to which access is obtained from the second story hallway directly across from the library. The auditorium has a lower level wainscot effect executed in cinder block with a stone belt course separating it from the plastered upper section. Entry doors to the auditorium have classical surrounds in stone. At the main rear entry way to the auditorium are large square columns that uphold the balcony section. These are separated from the walkway at the rear of the auditorium by a partition of wood that rises to waist level. Lighting under the balcony is achieved by squat brass fixtures fixed to the balcony's underside rather than the brass chandeliers found in the main section.

The auditorium is the most decorative room on the first floor. In the hallways one can see the hallmarks of any high school -- row upon row of lockers punctuated by classroom doors of highly polished wood. Above the doors are multiple light tip-out transoms to allow cross-ventilation. Classrooms are well lit by natural light. Most are of standard rectangular design with the ever-present blackboards of either end. Eight stairwells allow easy passage between floors. Stairwells are of utilitarian design with metal handrails and unadorned treads and risers. Again, large 20 over 20 double-hung wooden sashes provide ample natural light.

Architect E. William Martin chose to have one area of particular beauty on each floor. The first floor had the entryway and auditorium; the second floor had the library. The library combined the rich beauty of highly polished wood with the classical elements found on the structure's exterior, particularly the columns, pilasters and triangular pediments over doorways. The library also introduced sound-deadened, glass-enclosed rooms as study areas adjacent to the main reading section. This space was balanced on the eastern side by "the stacks" of books.

The area of beauty on the third floor is again directly over the main entryway. Serving as the entrance area to the Art Department, this section is most easily

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described as an interior portico with dome-like ceiling featuring Ionic columns, recessed niches, and doorway with triangular pediment. The dome features brass lanterns like the one found below the balcony in the auditorium. Skylights are found on either side of the dome in the regular hallway; student targe decorates the halls.

Most of the original woodwork remains in the special suites. The home economics suite still has the floor-to-ceiling drawers and glass closets. Original legends still remain painted on many doors--including on the wooden-doored, built-in telephone booth on the second floor. Many smaller, not immediately observable touches served to make the school a pioneer innovation. These included an intercom system, laundry room, freight elevator, and a built-in system.

A special tribute was given in memory of P. S. duPont at the 50th anniversary of the school. At that celebration (May 1985), a courtyard was entitled, the "Pierre S. duPont, II Memorial Courtyard" and graced with a bronze statue of a kneeling child entitled, "The Miracle". The statue is the work of Charles C. Parks, renowned sculptor and alumnus of the school.

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The initial program of facility modernization just in Wilmington produced the Bancroft, Baynard, Gray, Howard, Palmer and Warner Schools at a cost of \$3.7 million dollars. A comprehensive City wide building program designed in 1929 through 1930 provide for additions to the Palmer School and the new Lore, Williams, Elbert and Harlan Elementary Schools, the Howard Pre-Vocational Annex and the Pierre S. duPont High School. The cost of the P. S. duPont School was \$2 million dollars of the total post World War I modernization programs, overall cost of \$7.9 million dollars. duPont also funded a system of new school buildings for the black population of Delaware.

PIERRE S. DUPONT HIGH SCHOOL A November 3, 1935 News-Journal article quoted Superintendent of Wilmington's Schools, S.M. Stouffer, as saying Pierre S. duPont School "represents the modern educator's ideal." Mr. Stouffer described the school as "teacher designed to produce an educational program aimed at meeting the needs of modern youth."

The school was constructed on a 22-acre site overlooking downtown Wilmington. Its 32 classrooms "some arranged as suites" were designed to accommodate 2,000 students. The facility also included gymnasiums, home economic and shop skills suites, a cafeteria, and a large auditorium with balcony, projection booth, stage, dressing rooms, green room and orchestra pit. All classrooms have multiple banks of 15 over 15 double-hung, wooden sash that would allow ample light on even the most gray of days. Hallways are wide (12 feet) and airy, stairways are visually opened to interior and exterior, again allowing advantageous use of natural light.

The entire building is a study in symmetry. Stairwells exit at east and west facade ends, and at a point equidistant from the south-facing center entry doors and foyer. The classically-detailed library with its sound-deadening rooms is placed exactly above the main entry foyer. In turn, the art department with its entry way announced by the colonnaded dome and recessed skylight, is placed directly above the library.

Wood wainscoting and cabinets were used extensively in the library and home economic suites. Wood detailing and doorways are found throughout the structure. Georgian inspired fan lights are found in the entrance foyer and in the stairwells.

The exterior of the structure is executed in red brick laid in flemish bond with limestone pilaster detailing. A cupola over a denticulated, triangular pediment mounted on four Ionic columns announces the triple-doored main, southern-facing entry way into the foyer. The structure's imposing design is the work of Wilmington architect, E. William Martin. Martin designed the nearby David W. Harlan Elementary School which opened in 1932, and Legislative Hall in Dover, a fact which may help to explain his stylistic choice for the school. The choice of a colonial-revival design was also influenced by duPont and by a prevailing public enthusiasm for "Colonial Architecture." During the 1920's, Dover's Green or Central Square was made more "colonial" and the Legislative Green was being



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created with "colonial" style buildings during the 1930's. The colonial-revival style was also being used by local and non-Delaware Architects as they designed large dwellings for members of the duPont family and for the executives of that company and a number of the other large industrial company that were locating in northern Delaware.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION The boundary chosen is the school property line along the curb lines of 34th Street on the South, Monroe Street on the East, and Franklin Street on the West. The northern boundary line is a line running perpendicular to Franklin and Monroe Streets and crossing ten feet north of the cafeteria. This was chosen since a newer building containing a community swimming pool was constructed northeast of the school (approximately 100 feet from the men's gymnasium entrance) in the 1970's and a middle school was constructed in the early 1970's at the northwestern corner of the original 22 acres. Please see attached Sanborn map for clarification.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE The significance is deemed to be local level due to the structure's place in the evolution in Delaware's educational system and architecture as displayed in New Castle County, and particularly Wilmington, and the association with state business and educational leader Pierre Samuel duPont II.

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May 1985

