

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

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

For HCRS use only

received DEC 8 1981

date entered JAN 1 1982

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

**1. Name**

historic SEARLES SCHOOL <sup>and</sup> CHAPEL

and/or common SEARLES SCHOOL & CHAPEL

**2. Location**

street & number Intersection of Range Road (Route #111) and Searles Road (main entrance to Castle Jr. College). not for publication

city, town Windham vicinity of congressional district First

state New Hampshire code 33 county Rockingham code 015

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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 checked="" 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
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Town of Windham

street & number

city, town Windham vicinity of state New Hampshire

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rockingham County Courthouse  
Rockingham County Registry of Deeds

street & number Hampton Road

city, town Exeter state New Hampshire

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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

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

The Searles School and Chapel building is an L-shaped structure which originally housed both an elementary schoolroom and a small chapel. At the juncture of the two main wings rises a tall stone tower which provides access to both east and west rooms and contains a chime of twelve bells. The structure is substantially built, combining stonemasonry and half-timbering.

The building has a full basement and lower walls built of random-range ashlar of variegated color, quarried locally on land owned by the donor of the structure. These masonry walls rise to the level of the sills of the building's windows. The upper walls of the two main elements of the structure are constructed of simulated half-timbering in which the studding and girts form square and rectangular panels occasionally broken by curved corner bracing. A series of square panels in the north gable end of the school wing are filled with quatrefoil ornaments. Both wings of the building have a range of unleaded window sashes separated by mullions on one wall; that on the school faces west, while that on the chapel faces south. Both wings also have gables with leaded luthern windows which extend downward either to the tops of the unleaded sashes or fully down to the top of the wall masonry. Other leaded windows are interspersed at irregular intervals, as required by internal arrangements, on each elevation of the building. Both wings have steep roofs with a covering of red slate, slightly flaring eaves, and copper trim. Each of the building's gables is trimmed with a wide but unornamented barge board, and the peak of each gable is ornamented with a turned wooden pinnacle and pendant.

At the juncture of the two main wings of the building rises a tall crenellated tower built of solid random-range ashlar. This tower is pierced by a pointed-arched doorway on both the north and south elevations. The north (front) elevation of the tower is ornamented with a stepped buttress which rises to the level of the belfry floor. Both the north and south elevations of the tower have a pair of narrow windows with splayed reveals on the second floor. Above these is a belt course marking the base of the belfry. All four elevations of the belfry stage of the tower are pierced by a rectangular opening spanned by a massive stone lintel and filled by mullions which support louvers and rise to form arches of a simple Decorated style. The roof above the belfry is marked by a coved granite cornice, above which rises a crenellated parapet.

The interior of the building is largely finished in cypress, with floors of beech. The rooms have barrel-vaulted ceilings sheathed in cypress, and the chapel has a choir loft. The vaulting is presently hidden above modern dropped ceilings installed for heat retention. The vestry, at the base of the tower, gives access to a narrow winding stairway leading to the bell loft, as well as to a trap door leading to the basement.

Original appearance: The main school and chapel building is little changed from its appearance at its completion in 1909. The only major alterations to the principal structure have been the installation of dropped ceilings in the main rooms for heating economy; these caused little structural damage and are slated for eventual removal under the auspices of the Windham Historical Commission.

The years subsequent to 1909 have seen the removal of several appendages to the main building. These included a masonry and half-timber extension which originally ran southward from the southeast corner of the chapel and took the form of a cloister connecting the chapel to a small outbuilding. Two of the four original gateposts on Range Road have also been removed.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1907–1909 **Builder/Architect** Henry Vaughan

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE, Architecture:

Searles School and Chapel is an important and unusual commission by Henry Vaughan (1845–1917), an English-born and -trained architect who practiced in Boston between 1881 and his death. Vaughan was responsible for many major American buildings in the Gothic style, and did much "to initiate an architectural movement that became almost a second Gothic Revival, extending the Gothic style into the 20th century" and exerting a powerful influence on such American Gothicists as Ralph Adams Cram, Bertram Goodhue, and Charles Klauder.<sup>1</sup> Among Vaughan's major works were the National Cathedral in Washington (in collaboration with George Frederick Bodley), St. Paul's School Chapel in Concord, N.H. (the first true collegiate chapel in the United States), two other chapels at the Groton School in Massachusetts, the Upper and Lower Schools at St. Paul's, Hubbard Library and Searles Science Building at Bowdoin College, St. Thomas' Episcopal Church in Dover, N.H., and several structures in the shingle style, including a private dwelling in Dublin, N.H., and St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Penacook, N.H.<sup>2</sup>

Searles School and Chapel is one of a set of remarkable commissions designed by Vaughan for millionaire Edward F. Searles (1841–1920), who had developed a taste for mediaeval architecture during his early employment as an interior designer in New York City. Searles employed Vaughan to remodel the millionaire's birthplace in Methuen, Massachusetts, into a 50-room castle and to design two high schools as gifts to Massachusetts towns. Searles came to Windham, N.H., about 1900 and eventually acquired some 1,300 acres upon which he built another castellated home, "Stanton Harcourt", after designs by Vaughan. Desiring to acquire a tract of town-owned land upon which stood a rural district schoolhouse, Searles offered to exchange this land and building for a nearby piece of property upon which he proposed to construct a school and chapel for the town. This was the origin of Searles School and Chapel, completed in 1909 for an undisclosed sum which was rumored to have exceeded \$40,000.<sup>3</sup> Upon its completion, the structure was described as "the handsomest and finest building in the state intended for the use of a small common school. . . .the appearance is that of a church rather than a schoolhouse."<sup>4</sup> Combining as it does the functions of a church and school, the two architectural forms with which Henry Vaughan enjoyed the greatest success and made the most noteworthy advances, the Searles School and Chapel is a major design and an important document in the stories of both its donor and its architect.

<sup>1</sup> William D. Morgan, "Henry Vaughan: An English Architect in New Hampshire," Historical New Hampshire, XXVIII, 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 120–122, 137–138.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., passim, and William D. Morgan, "Addenda to Henry Vaughan: St. Mary's Church, Penacook," Historical New Hampshire, XXIX, 3 (Fall, 1974), pp. 187–189.

<sup>3</sup> The Exeter (N.H.) News-Letter, February 5, 1909.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Lawrence Tribune - Daily Newspaper - Various news items concerning Edward Searles  
 Methuen Public Library - The Searles Saga - by Sister Martina Flinton  
 Windham Public Library - Articles written by Virginia McGowan - Wm. Morgan - Newark Delaware  
 The News Letter - Exeter, N.H. - News items from Windham - W.S. Harris, writer

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 4.67

Quadrangle name Manchester, N.H.

ADDRESS NOT VERIFIED  
 ADDRESS NOT VERIFIED

UTM NOT VERIFIED  
 Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

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1	9
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3	1	5	4	1	5
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4	7	4	1	8	1	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Tax map #18, parcel #35.

### 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 Elisabeth Marshall

organization Windham Historic Commission date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 3 Goldenbrook Road, RFD #3 telephone 898-9409

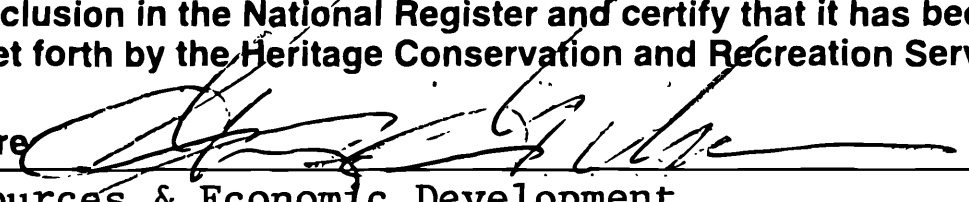
city or town Windham state New Hampshire 03087

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature   
 Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development  
 title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date December 2, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

 date 1/11/82  
 for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	DEC 6 1981
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1982

CONTINUATION SHEET #1-SKETCH MAP

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 1

