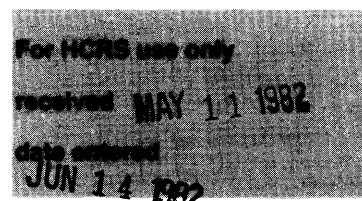


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Webster School

and/or common Webster School Apartments

2. Location

street & number Easton Avenue at Aetna Street N/A not for publication

city, town Waterbury N/A vicinity of congressional district fifth

state Connecticut 06702 code 09 county New Haven code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: N/A

4. Owner of Property

name Connecticut Associates II Limited Partnership Arthur M. Winn
General Partner

street & number Four Fanueil Hall Marketplace

city, town Boston N/A vicinity of state Massachusetts 02109

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk's Office - Waterbury City Hall

street & number 235 Grand Street

city, town Waterbury state CT 06702

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town Hartford state Connecticut 06106

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Webster School is a Neo-Classical style, former elementary school located between Easton Avenue and Platt Street west of Aetna Street, in a neighborhood area of Waterbury, Connecticut known as the North End. (photo #1) The dense residential neighborhood about the building is composed of older two and three story dwellings of low and moderate income families. Topographically, Easton Avenue traverses a terrace, the site of Webster School being steeply sloped with two terraces within the perimeter of the property. (photo #2) Platt Street and Easton Avenue, which flank the property on the northwest and southeast respectively, constitute widely differential changes in elevation, thus creating a conscious "stepped" effect in the landscape plan. The upper terrace, along Platt Street is graded flat for use as an athletic field, while the lower terrace, upon which the school building is situated, is paved with concrete for use as an all-weather playground. (photo #3) The upper portion of the site is now partially overgrown with unmanaged vegetation. Landscape appurtenances include a long, low retaining wall along Easton Avenue trimmed in coursed rock-faced granite. Twin stairways with stone side-walls of the same material address the paired front entrances from Easton Avenue.

Webster School is a two and one-half story, red brick, load-bearing masonry building constructed on an "L" plan. (see original floor plans on Continuation Sheet) Stylistically, the building is of Neo-Classical origin, with specific references from the Second Renaissance Revival which occur, principally, about the facade. Shallow twin central entrances with pediments which project slightly from the facade characterize the long, horizontal form of the structure. The roofline is articulated by a heavily projecting wooden cornice which is carried around the entire building. The walls of the structure are composed of red sand-cast brick laid in red tinted mortar in the common bond pattern. The projecting entrances on the facade are finished similarly, but with glazed red brick. The building is trimmed with Indiana limestone details.

The building was constructed in three segments (1898, 1906, 1917). The main block and 1906 addition to the southwest are 17 bays wide by 5 bays deep with a half-basement visible along Easton Avenue. (photo #1) This structure is 220' long by 65' 2" in depth. The basement level is finished with banded rustication with window heads having splayed arches and projecting keystones. Details are carried around to the north and south elevations where the stepped granite foundation with rock-faced finish is visible.

A heavy, bevelled white marble water table divides the lower level from the principal floors of the building. The facade is divided into three major elements, each segment bearing groups of five window bays. Window apertures are further divided into groups of triple sash, set in recessed wall panels with segmental arched heads with projecting keystones. The recessed panels are two stories in height and are adorned with rectangular brick, relieved panels within the spandrels. Plain marble sills unify the triple-unit sash. Window sash are double hung in a one over one

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

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

configuration with multi-paned transoms above each window. Above the second floor windows, the lintels are steel I-beams with decorative relief applied to the web.

An original description, excerpted below, illustrates the plan and feeling of the original (1898) building:

"This building is 139 feet 8 inches on the front by 65 feet 2 inches in depth, with a court at rear of 25 feet 10 inches by 51 feet. Owing to the grade of the lot, the basement, which is 10 feet high, is above the ground, and this, with the two twelve-foot stories above, will give the appearance from the front of a three-story building.

There are twelve classrooms, each 24 feet 6 inches by 28 feet, and with ceilings 12 feet high in the clear. Each classroom has a separate wardrobe...(and) a closet for the teacher, with shelves and hooks.

In the second story is provided a principal's room 10 feet by 16 feet, with private toilet room adjoining for the use of teachers.

Special attention has been given in the construction of this building to secure thoroughly sound and strong construction and at the same time at an economical cost. All floors and the roof are supported entirely either on brick walls or on steel beams, thus insuring that the inevitable shrinkage of floor beams shall produce an even settlement throughout the building. As a safeguard against the spread of fire, the brick in all walls is projected 2 inches between the floor joints at each floor level, thus preventing the possible carrying of fire from one story to another through the space between plaster and brick walls.

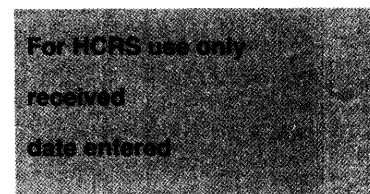
The building is to be heated by low pressure steam by direct radiation...ventilation will be furnished by a positive plenum system, using a fan run by electric motor...The general pressure maintained in all parts of the building by the plenum system insures that all currents of air shall lead to the toilet rooms and wardrobes and not from them.

No wash basins are provided in the wardrobes...This reduces the possibility of contagion from defective plumbing to a minimum.

The inside finish has been planned for with the intention of making it as sanitary as possible at any reasonable cost... There are no sheathed wainscots with their numerous cracks to harbor vermin or germs of disease. All side walls and ceilings are plastered with patent hard plaster and in case of exposure from a contagious disease the rooms could be easily and surely disinfected." 1/

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 3

The major decorative elements are the twin front entrances faced with glazed brick. (photo #4) At the first floor the principal entrances consist of monumental round arched openings with recessed doorways. The wall planes of the shallow, relieved entrance elements are treated with banded rustication full height but are divided mid-height by a massive architrave of white limestone, each bearing the title of the building, "The Webster School." A segmental arched opening with triple sash and keystone appoint the center of both elements on the upper level.

The roofline is defined with corbelling resembling closely spaced brackets which is uniform in detail and bears a dentil course directly above. The eaveline is articulated with a heavily projecting wooden cornice which carries a partial entablature. The surface beneath the cornice bears the outline of modillions which were removed by the school department because of the hazard to pedestrians below. The relieved entrance elements are capped with classical pediments which interrupt the stark linearity of the roof plane. (photo #5) The original configuration of the roofline included a low balustrade which circumscribed the roof perimeter, and a flagpole, which surmounted the entrance pediment on the northeast end. It is not known when the balustrade and other elements were removed from the building.

Facade details are generally returned about the side and rear elevations of the building, with the exception of the pedimented entrance elements. Because of the steeply sloping site, only two stories are visible from the rear (northwest) elevation. (photo #3) There are fourteen bays, which include grouped triple sash as well as individual window units, and the fenestration is regular. There are two doorways at the ground level in the center of the elevation bearing splayed lintels and keystones. The center of the wall plane is recessed, giving the impression of projecting end pavilions. The more northerly of these elements contains the final four classrooms added in 1917, along with the gymnasium which is adjacent and appended perpendicularly to the main block. Windows in the former are grouped by four, the sash being steel, triple-hung type. The four wall openings are carried on steel I-beam lintels, bearing decorative floral applique in the webs. The roof is a valley-type and was composed of an asphalt-gravel composition surface. A single, massive square brick furnace chimney is situated in the center position near the northerly end of the roof plane. The roof surface, several sheet metal ventilators and part of the wooden cornice were destroyed in a May, 1981 fire. The roof and cornice are being accurately restored by the present owner of the structure, based upon undamaged portions, to retain the building's visual integrity.

The 1906 addition was appended to the southwestern elevation of the main block, duplicating the architectural vocabulary of the original structure. An excerpt from the 1907 Annual Report of the Waterbury Board of Education reveals the design and original plan of this appendage, still largely unmodified in 1981:

"The addition is designed and planned so as not to mar the

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

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 4

excellent arrangement of classrooms and beauty of design of (the) original structure...

The addition contains seven classroom, kindergarten and assembly hall. viz.:

Basement-Assembly hall. 36' x 60'; heaters, aerials and fan room 26' x 36'; fuel room 26' x 30' and three store rooms, 4'3" x 25'; the assembly hall has three exits.

First Floor-Three classrooms. 24'10" x 28'3"; kindergarten 26'5" x 35' and six wardrobes. First floor has two exits.

Second Floor-Three classrooms. 24'10" x 23'3"; one classroom 26'5" x 35'0"; teachers' room and toilets, 12' x 24' 10" and six wardrobes. The corridors are 11 feet wide and run entire length of building.

The finish of corridors and rooms the same as in original structure. viz.:

Corridors-Walls of red brick laid in red mortar, ceilings of hard plaster on expanded metal, cloak rooms of the open order.

Classrooms-Ceilings and sidewalls of hard plaster, tinted, painted dado, woodwork of N.C. pine, natural finish, natural slate blackboards, each classroom also contains teachers' closet and bookcase. All rooms are wired for clocks, telephones and lights, all corridors for lights and gongs." 2/

The gymnasium addition (1917) is of brick, two stories in height and forty-four feet by ninety-two feet in dimension, and is appended to the main block at the northwesterly corner, extending deeply into the steeply sloped site. (photo #6) This element is rectangular in plan, bears detailing reflecting the parent structure and also has a valley roof. The roofline is corbelled but has no projecting cornice; only a low, flush parapet wall. This structure is six bays in length and has no openings on the rear (northwest) wall, and appears as only one story in height from grade. An access tunnel for service and emergency vehicles separates the gymnasium block from the main structure and is visible from Easton Avenue on the eastern corner along Aetna Street. (photo #7)

On the interior, the building consists of full-length corridors on the three levels, with painted interior brick bearing walls. (photo #8) Significant details in the corridors are the decorative pressed metal ceilings. Classrooms and utility space flank the corridors on the northwest and southeast elevations. The tall, narrow door openings off the corridors have segmental arches and transom lights, which serve to circulate light and air into the long, interior space.

The interior finish of the twenty-four classrooms is strictly utilitarian

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

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

For HCRRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

and designed for durability. (photo #9) Floors are maple and where water has penetrated the roof, are now buckled in selected locations. A plain wainscoting with chair rail and baseboard circumscribe some of the rooms. Doors are, for the most part, a common five-panel, stock hardwood or hard pine model, circa 1910. Window and door casings are painted, round-edged hard pine, well abused and of a common design. Shelves, blackboards and a mixture of fluorescent and older incandescent globe-style lighting fixtures supplement the utilitarian decor of the now-vandalized classrooms. The two stairways in the building are of steel, fireproof construction with stone treads and bear panel and molding details. (photo #10) The stairs were installed in 1917. 3/

The interior of the gymnasium/library addition is finished with maple flooring and hard pine trim. (photo #11) Walls of the gymnasium are wainscotted with salt-glazed brick up to the window sills, which are nine feet above the floor. A stage with dressing rooms in the wings is located at the northwest end of the structure.

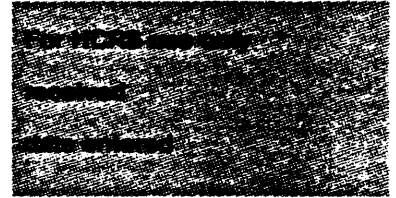
A gallery with folding wooden seats and an iron railing exists at the opposite end of this space. Roof truss members are exposed in the open gymnasium ceiling. Several other utility rooms, including the 1917 library and a small bathroom, are enclosed within this addition and are finished similarly to interior spaces previously noted. (see floor plan of 1917 addition on Continuation Sheet).

Footnotes

- 1/ Annual Reports of the Board of Education and the District Committee of the Center School District of Waterbury 1898. Waterbury: A.C. Northrup & Co. 1898. pp. 73-76.
- 2/ Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Waterbury 1907. Waterbury: The Mattatuck Press. 1907. pp.82,83.
- 3/ Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Waterbury 1918. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1918. p.104.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

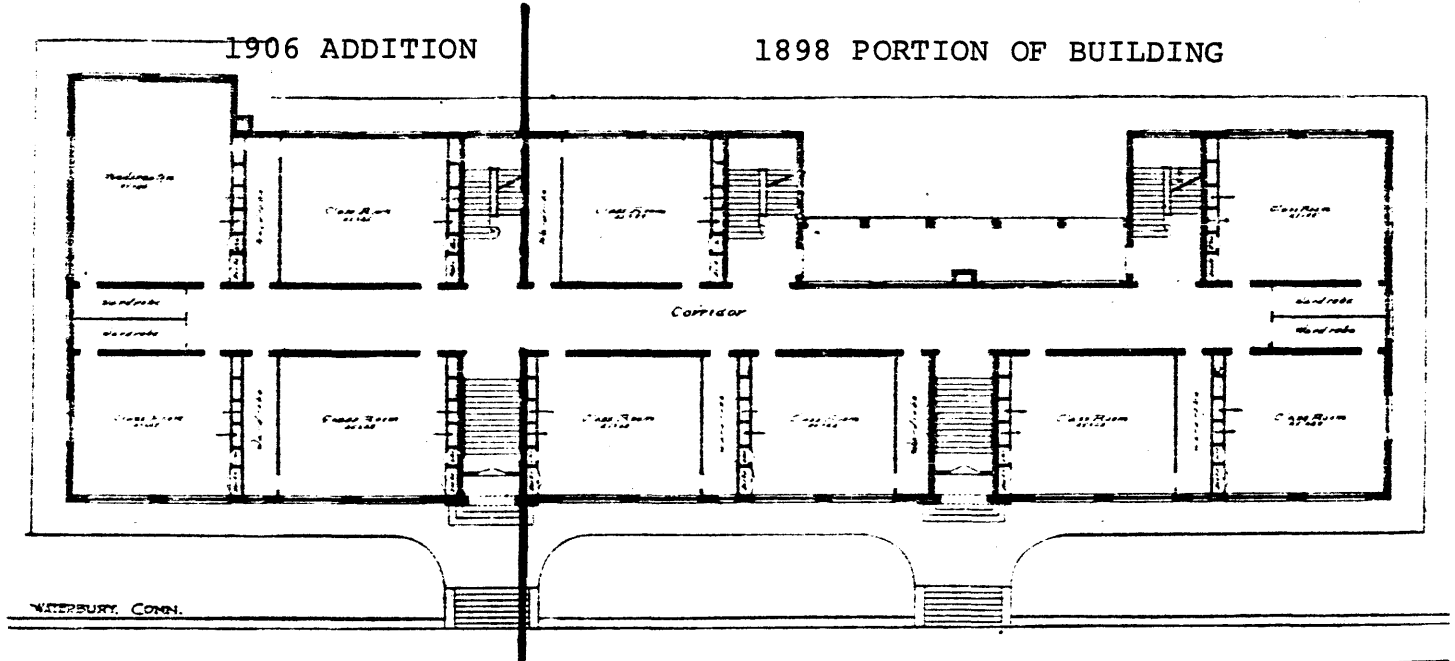


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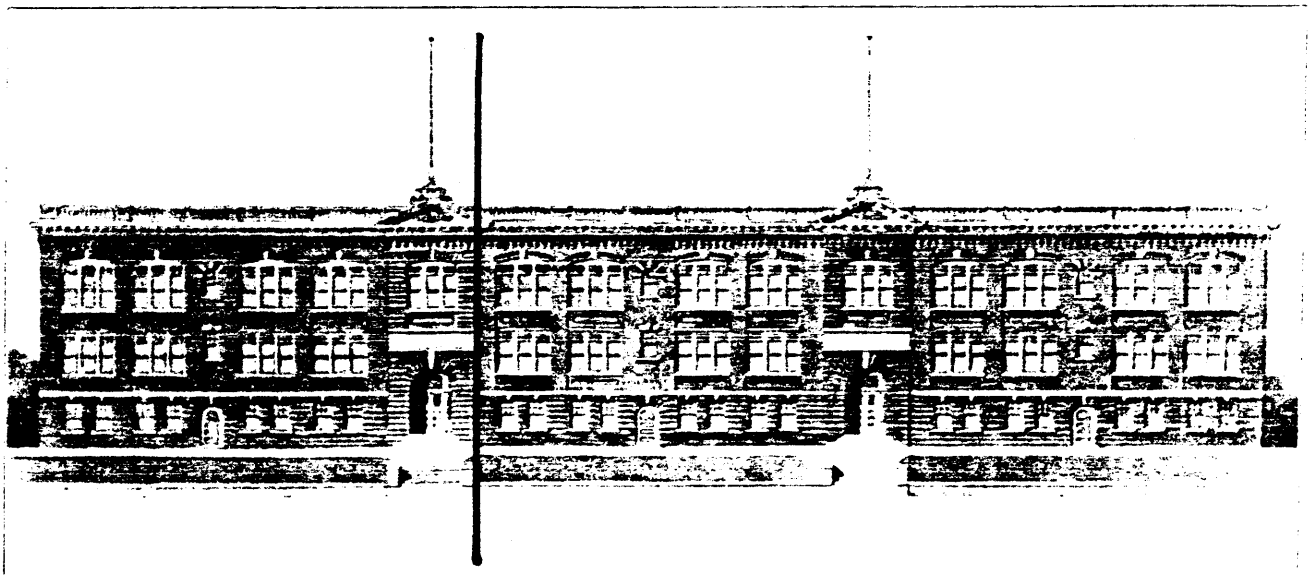
Item number 7

Page 6

Source: Annual Report of the Board of Education
of the City of Waterbury 1918. Waterbury:
The Heminway Press. 1918 p. 104 (above)
frontispiece (below)



WEBSTER SCHOOL—FIRST FLOOR PLAN



WEBSTER SCHOOL.

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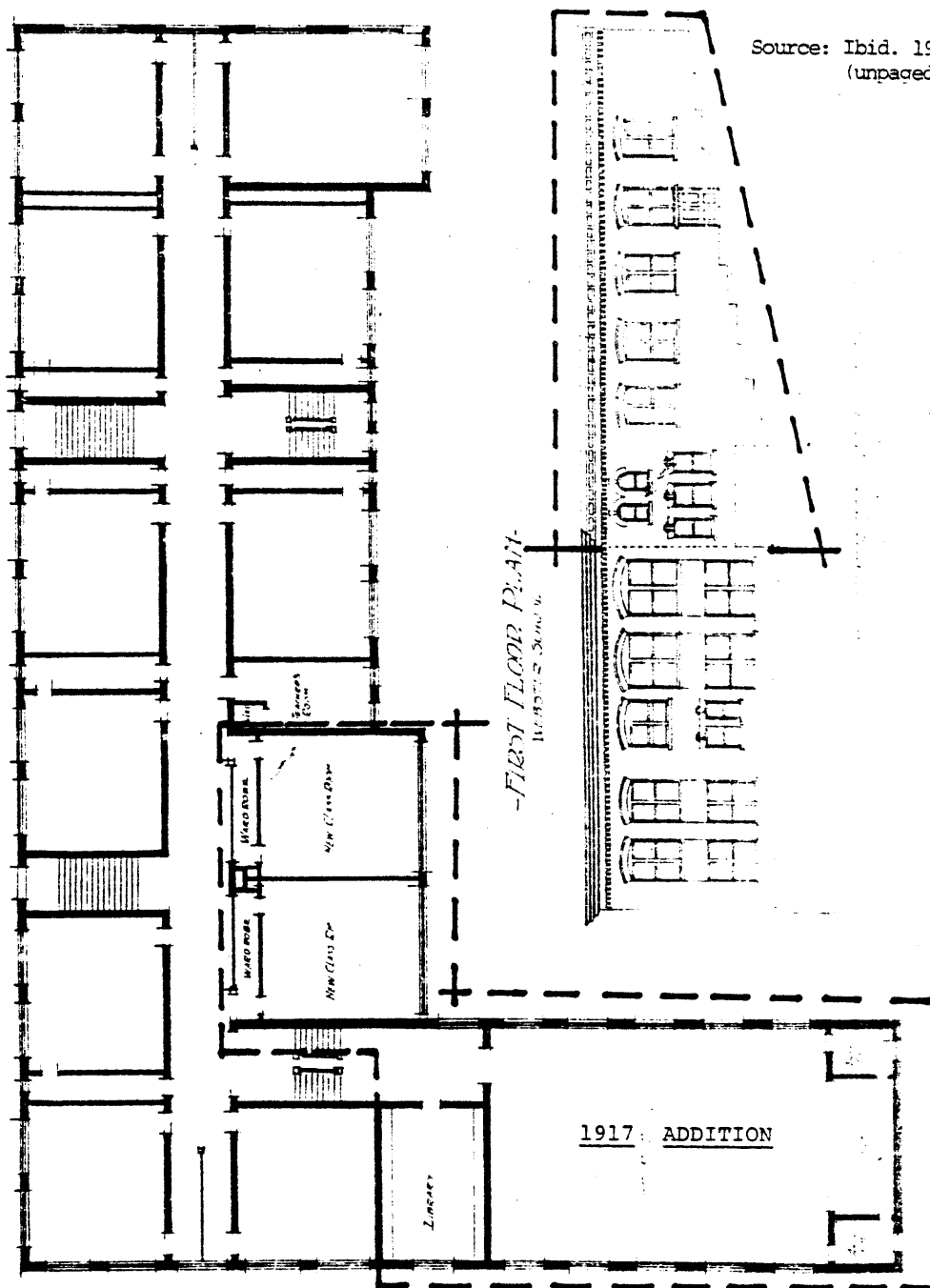
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 7



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 checked="" 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 1898, 1906, 1917 **Builder/Architect** Wilfred E. Griggs, Leonard Asheim, Louis A. Walsh

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Webster School is significant in the development of the neighborhood elementary educational system of Waterbury, Connecticut during the first two decades of the twentieth century and is reflective of events related to the consolidation of the city's Center School District in 1901.^{1/} The school was erected in 1898, midway in the period between 1880 and 1920 when Waterbury experienced its most rapid development and established the reputation as having one of the fastest growing school age populations in New England.^{2/} The process of consolidation of independent school governments and the gradual replacement of the one-room schoolhouse with larger, more sophisticated elementary teaching institutions was a national trend during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was reflective of several social forces associated with urbanization; the shift of population away from the farms, industrialization and immigration. Consolidation was also viewed by educational theorists of the period as a means of establishing continuing education programs for adults by centralizing facilities and teaching staffs. The movement paralleled the growing rise of popularity in secondary education and specialized learning programs, such as vocational education, especially in cities with large immigrant populations.^{3/} In 1891 there were 78 schools in Waterbury's town and city school system.^{4/} In 1901, by a special act of the Connecticut State Legislature, the Center School District was abolished and the Waterbury Board of Education was formed, bringing for the first time, the city's school system under the auspices of a single entity of municipal government. The policy of school consolidation was directly manifested in the architecture of Waterbury's public schools in larger, centrally located multi-story buildings, larger teaching staffs and centralized administration. With twenty four classrooms, Webster School was one of the four largest elementary institutions in the system, of the thirty one buildings constructed by 1945.^{5/} Webster School was named after John W. Webster, chairman of the Center School District in 1895. The opening of the school in 1898 was planned to permit the abandonment of an unsanitary annex at Bishop Street and relieve students from the temporary and crowded conditions in a tenement house on Locust Street. Webster School was twice enlarged (1906, 1917) to accommodate the burgeoning immigrant population rapidly filling the city's North End. The period between 1895 and 1918 was one of both extraordinary growth and broad innovation within the local school system and in the design of school buildings. The education program was expanded to include kindergarten, which was actually introduced earlier in the mid-1880s on an experimental basis but which was institutionalized by the time the 1906 addition was planned; free textbooks (1895); physical training (1896); the opening of the first public playground (at Hamilton Park, 1908); and the Open Air School and the Continuation School, both in 1912.^{6/} The Webster School embodied architectural innovations throughout its development, including improvements in fireproofing, ventilation,

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see Continuation Sheet)

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 49,877 square feet

Quadrangle name Waterbury

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u>	<u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

B	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u>	<u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>	<u>2</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

C	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u>	<u>0</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

D	<u>1</u> <u>8</u>	<u>6</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u>	<u>1</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u> <u>3</u>	<u>3</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see Continuation Sheet)

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
-------	-----	------	-----	--------	-----	------	-----

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
-------	-----	------	-----	--------	-----	------	-----

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christopher W. Closs, mnrp
Community and Preservation

organization Planning Consultant

date June 15, 1981

street & number 4 Bicentennial Sq/3rd Flr

telephone (603) 224-6714

city or town Concord

state New Hampshire 03301

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

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date May 4, 1982

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date

6/14/82

Keeper of the National Register

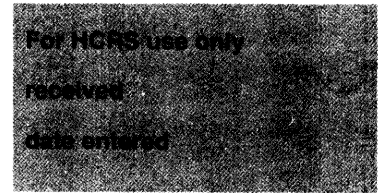
Attest:

date

Chief of Register

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

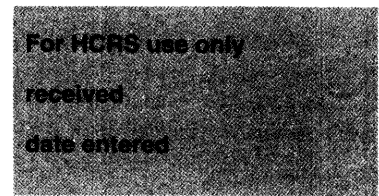
Page 2

sanitation, heating and natural illumination (see Item 7 - Description). Webster School was also the location of the nucleus of the city's agricultural education program which was initiated in 1905.^{7/} Agricultural education, whose origins extend to the agricultural societies of eighteenth century Europe, and principally, the school and teachings of Switzerland's Emmanuel von Fellenberg (1806-1844)^{8/}, gained popularity in the United States through the Lyceum movement. In 1824 the first agricultural school in Connecticut was established in Derby by Joshua Holbrook.^{9/} Until passage of the Morrill Act in 1862 and the establishment of land grant colleges nationwide, agricultural education was taught widely in elementary and secondary schools, private academies and lyceums. For the most part, agriculture was removed from secondary school curricula after this time for a period of about 20 years, ostensibly because the land grant colleges had assumed this educational function. However, by the 1880s it became evident that registration in land grant college educational programs for adult students was far below expectations. This resulted in the reintroduction of agricultural education in the secondary school systems of the nation. This movement was paralleled during the period 1880-1917 by a host of federal acts and funding for vocational education programs, many of which included agriculture and industrial arts.^{10/} The following excerpt recounts the significance of this program at Webster School:

"In 1905 the Board of Education established a school garden at the Webster School feeling that gardening is an extensively practical thing, a healthful exercise and develops individuality, care, responsibility, the habit of regularity, perseverance and thrift and in addition furnishes a common ground on which teacher and pupil can meet for the discussion of many school subjects. This work was successful from the start and afforded the children great pleasure and profit, gave them an opportunity for spontaneous activity in the open air with the possibility for acquiring a fund of interesting and useful information. The garden work has been used to supplement the literature work of the classroom and to inculcate a love of natural objects, trees, flowers, insects and birds, as well as to demonstrate the best methods of successful gardening. Later the work was carried on in additional schools and eventually in 1918 a teacher of agriculture was engaged whose duty it is to present the subject of gardening and related subjects to all of the pupils of the city. At the last agricultural fair which was held in September 1925, 1,250 pupils were registered as having gardens and an inspection of what the pupils raised or made consisted of thousands of jars of canned goods and samples of vegetables of all descriptions."^{11/}

The Webster School, executed in the Second Renaissance Revival style, is also architecturally significant because of its association with the noted Waterbury commercial architect, Wilfred E. Griggs (Griggs & Hunt), termed one of "the (two) deans of the architectural profession in Waterbury."^{12/} The 1917 addition to the structure was designed by Louis A. Walsh, a noted architect of Waterbury's schools during the first decades of the twentieth century. It is significant that the three architects who contributed to the assembly of the present structure retained the same architectural

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

vocabulary for the exterior design, even while the evolution of the building spanned a period of nearly twenty years. It is likely that the National Education Association which, after 1900, espoused high aesthetic standards in the appearance of public school buildings, influenced the board of education and its designers.^{13/} (Criteria A and C)

The extraordinary population growth of Waterbury, Connecticut during the decades between 1880-1920 is attributed to the development of the brass industry, for which the city developed a national reputation in production and manufacturing of durable goods. Plentiful opportunities for employment and a relatively higher wage scale attracted substantial numbers of European immigrants to the city, resulting in significant increases in the school age population. Much of the Irish immigrant population settled in the city's rapidly developing North End, where Catholic parishes had been established to serve the needs of growing numbers of new parishioners. St. Thomas's Parish, an outgrowth of Immaculate Conception Parish (1855), which had formerly served the entire core area of the city, was established in 1898 to serve the North End.

During the 1880s and 1890s, Bishop School (1879), located several blocks west of the site of Webster School, was the principal elementary school serving the North End. By 1895, even with construction of an addition to Bishop School (1886) and the use of temporary schoolroom space in a tenement on Locust Street, classroom conditions were so congested that planning was begun for a new elementary school in the North End. The exhibit below depicts the growth of schoolhouses and classroom space in Waterbury's school system between 1896 and 1925:

		Schoolhouses
1896	-----	25
1925	-----	36

		Schoolrooms
1896	-----	139
1925	-----	560 ^{14/}

By 1904, school registration in Waterbury set a state record.^{15/}

The construction of Webster School occurred during the final process of consolidation of Waterbury's public school system. This movement is briefly described below:

"Previous to 1900 the schools of Waterbury were divided into eleven districts. The Center School District whose boundaries were practically coincident with those of the City of Waterbury was under the control of a Board of Education of seven members and a District Committee of five members. The ten suburban districts were under the control of a Town Board of Education, each of the ten districts having its own District Committeemen. All of these districts had its own Treasurer, Tax Collector and other minor officers and were independent of each other, the total number of administrative officers being fifty-four. Each district raised by taxation the funds necessary for all school purposes.

In 1899 the territorial limits of the City of Waterbury and the Center School District were made the same and the schools of the City of Waterbury were placed in charge of a Board of Education consisting of seven

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

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

For HCPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

members all elected at large for a term of two years, having the Mayor of the City as Chairman of the Board. Funds for carrying on the schools of the city were recommended by the Board of Education and approved by the Board of Finance and Board of Aldermen.

In 1901 the City of Waterbury was divided into two parts called the First and Second Districts and the Town Board of Education was abolished and its powers and duties turned over to the Board of Education of the City of Waterbury.

Since 1899 five of the suburban districts have been consolidated with the City Schools. At present there remain only five suburban districts that have schools in session. Under this process of consolidation the number of school administrative officials has been cut from fifty-four to twenty-one."16/

While this reorganization resulted in improved administration of the system and a more efficient building program, it is clear that school age population growth continued to outpace the development of grammar and high school facilities through the 1920s. Berlin W. Tinker, Superintendent of Waterbury Schools, noted the effect of this on the secondary school system in 1914: "It is apparent that Waterbury has never caught up with its high school population, that its secondary work has for years been carried on under serious disadvantages..."17/

To the extent that the high school was crowded, so also were the elementary schools. In 1906, the Board of Education engaged Waterbury architect Leonard Asheim to design an eight room addition to the southern elevation, which included seven classrooms, a kindergarten and assembly hall. While substantially lengthening the building, Asheim duplicated the Second Renaissance Revival styling and materials used in the original structure to create a facility monumental in size but which retained a sympathetic neighborhood scale. Responding to additional need for space, the building was expanded again in 1917 under the direction of noted Waterbury school architect, Louis A. Walsh (Clark School, Wilby High School). Webster School, along with Walsh, Slocum and Driggs Schools, which had 24-25 classrooms, were the largest elementary institutions within the Waterbury public school system until the introduction of the middle school concept and the building programs begun in the 1960s.

Improvement in the architectural design of school buildings was also reflected in the Webster School. The original wooden stairs, considered a fire hazard, were removed and replaced with the present steel stairs. After 1915, following fires at the Croft and Mulcahy Schools, all buildings were sprinklered, as budgets would allow.18/ Architect Walsh's four additional classrooms added in 1917 were considered innovative with respect to the natural lighting and heating system:

"The new class rooms are of the regulation size and are finished up according to present day practice, an innovation, however, being the use of steel sash occupying the entire outside wall. This was required because of the fact that the space into which the rooms had to be fitted was not long enough to permit of the rooms being laid out with

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

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

the long side to the light. The result is very satisfactory as far as the lighting of the rooms is concerned.

Another innovation in the class rooms is the use of the 'unit' system of heating and ventilation, the fresh air being taken in through an opening under the window sill into a cabinet, heated, humidified and then discharged into the rooms." 19/

In architectural form particularly, the use of the flat roof was considered both an economy and an institutional design pace setter.

Webster School, along with several other neighborhood elementary schools, was closed in 1977 and replaced by the Laurel Hill Middle School complex. The predominantly Irish character of the original neighborhood has changed substantially and has now become a black ethnic community. Even in its present vacant state, Webster School continues to exert a positive influence on the visual integrity of the street and area, and clearly, by its mass and formal design, establishes the physical center of this primarily residential North End neighborhood.

Footnotes

- 1/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1922. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1922. pp. 6,7.
- 2/ Public Schools. Department of Education. Waterbury, Conn. 1925. p.16.
- 3/ for further discussion see:
Draper, Andrew S. American Education. Cambridge: Riverside Press. 1909.
Good, Harry C. History of American Education. New York: MacMillan Co. 1962.
- 4/ Anderson, Joseph. The Town and City of Waterbury, Connecticut, From the Aboriginal Period to the Year 1895. New Haven: The Price and Lee Co. 1896. p. 506.
- 5/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1945. Waterbury: Department of Education. 1945. p. 47.
- 6/ Pape, William J. History of Waterbury and the Naugatuck Valley. New York: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Co. 1908 pp. 64-78.
- 7/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1911. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1911 (unpaged).

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

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

For HCPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 6

- 8/ True, Alfred Charles. History of Agricultural Education in the United States 1785 - 1925. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times. 1969. p. 3
- 9/ Ibid. p. 14.
- 10/ for further discussion see:
Leake, Albert H. Means and Methods of Agricultural Education. Boston: Riverside Press, Cambridge. 1915
Hummel, William Granville. Material and Methods of High School Agriculture. New York: MacMillan Co. 1913
- 11/ Public Schools. Department of Education. Waterbury, Conn. 1925. p.29.
- 12/ Pape. p. 137
- 13/ for further discussion see:
Challman, S.A. Journal of Education. Vol. LXXIV, No. 14. "School-house Architecture." October 19, 1916. National Educational Association.
- 14/ Public Schools. Department of Education. Waterbury, Conn. 1925. p.4.
- 15/ Pape. p. 66.
- 16/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1922. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1922. pp. 6,7.
- 17/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1919. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1919. p. 21.
- 18/ Pape. p. 71.
- 19/ Annual Report of the Board of Education City of Waterbury 1918. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1918. p. 105.

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

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

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2. Annual Reports of the Board of Education City of Waterbury. Waterbury: The Heminway Press. 1911, 1918, 1919, 1922.
3. Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Waterbury 1907. Waterbury: The Mattatuck Press. 1907.
4. Annual Reports of the Board of Education and the District Committee of the Center School District of Waterbury 1898. Waterbury: A.C. Northrup & Co. 1898.
5. Challman, S.A. Journal of Education. Vol. LXXIV, No. 14. "Schoolhouse Architecture." October 19, 1916. National Educational Association.
6. Draper, Andrew S. American Education. Cambridge: Riverside Press. 1909.
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**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

Legal Boundary Description and Justification

The legal boundary description of the Webster School Apartments is described as follows: "That certain piece or parcel of land situated on the northwesterly side of Easton Avenue, the southeasterly side of Platt Street and the southwesterly side of Aetna Street in the City of Waterbury, Conn. bounded and described as follows: Beginning at a point marking the intersection of the southwesterly line of Aetna Street with the northwesterly line of Easton Avenue, thence running southwesterly in the northwesterly line of Aetna Street 250.00 feet to land now or formerly of Hughes Petteway et al., Antonio Valletta et al., Victor A. Digliani et al., William L. Sasso et al., and Benjamin Harrison Scott et al., each in part 299.51 feet to Platt Street, thence running northeasterly in the southeasterly line of Platt Street and at right angles to the last described line 250.00 feet to Aetna Street, thence running southeasterly in the southwesterly line of Aetna Street and at right angles to the last described line 299.51 feet to Easton Avenue and the point of beginning, the last described line being at right angles to the first described line."

This property description refers to the sketch map (see Attachment 1-Item Number 10) and is derived from the title map recorded in the Waterbury Land Records, Book 1494, Page 137.

The boundary of the property is justified by the record of historical expansion of the school facility; the use of the so-called upper terrace area of the site for agricultural education purposes; and the man-made visual termini established by the public streets and tenement structures flanking the property.

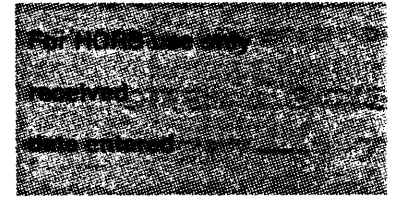
The lot was enlarged to its present dimensions in 1906 to accommodate the first addition to the southern end of the original structure. This created the present lot configuration, roughly square in shape. The school district continued to develop and landscape the open-space portions of the lot for improvement of drainage, recreation and agricultural use.

In 1905 the upper terrace was developed for general gardening and row crops on a small scale. This program was quickly incorporated into the curriculum because of the Center District's progressive educational philosophy and the popularity of the program. The experience at this site formed the nucleus for the Waterbury school system's agricultural education curriculum, and was quickly adopted by other institutions in the system.

The site is bounded on the north, east and west by public streets whose asphalt surfaces and curbs create a visual transition from the formally landscaped institution and the residential multi-family dwellings and triple deckers in the immediate neighborhood. To the south, the Webster School site is bounded by the rear yards of similar structures and is demarcated by a chain link fence.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 3

PLATT STREET

UTM POINT "C"

UTM POINT "D"

SCHOOL GARDEN SITE

WEBSTER SCHOOL

AFTNA STREET

1917

1917

1906
ADDITION

1898 PORTION OF BUILDING

UTM POINT "B"

UTM POINT "A"

EASTON AVENUE

SKETCH PLAN
(not to scale)

