

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

For NPS use only

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

received JAN 20 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Woodstock Academy Classroom Building

and/or common Woodstock Academy Classroom Building

**2. Location**

street & number Academy Road, n/a not for publication

city, town Woodstock n/a vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                   | Status  | Present Use                                     |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture            | <input type="checkbox"/> museum            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Woodstock Academy Inc., attn. Elizabeth S. Hyde, President, Board of Trustees

street & number Academy Road

city, town Woodstock n/a vicinity of state Connecticut

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk

street & number Town Office Building, Route 169

city, town Woodstock state Connecticut

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

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

date 1975  federal  state  county  local

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

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

## 7. Description

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <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    |   |   |

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

The Woodstock Academy Classroom Building, constructed in 1873, is impressively sited on a rise at the north end of the Woodstock town green, approximately 400 feet east of Route 169. Roseland Cottage (1846), an outstanding Gothic Revival cottage now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, is located on the west side of the green and Route 169. Other important sites near the Academy include the Woodstock Congregational Church (1821) at the south end of the green, the Harriet Sampson Pitt House (1810) on the east side, and the Hill Cemetery also to the east. The Woodstock Academy campus consists of seven buildings including the nominated Classroom Building. The other six structures are the Bracken Library (1924), Hall Gymnasium (1928), Administration Building (1939), Science Building (1957), Bowen Building (1965), and Field House (1971). As the only extant nineteenth-century structure on the campus, nomination of the Classroom Building alone is justified on the basis of its architectural significance and its association with the pre-1900 development of the Academy.

The three-story Classroom Building measures nine bays on the (south) facade and four bays on the side (east and west) elevations (photograph #s 1-3). The hipped-roof structure is distinguished by a projecting pavilion with a gabled midsection (photograph #s 1,2). The central axis of the building is further defined by a picturesque two-stage bell tower. The base of the tower features a circular clock face on each of its four boarded side, and is surmounted by a balustraded open cupola with bracketed gable ends and a two-part metal roof sheltering the bell. The asphalt-shingled hipped roof (probably originally a slate roof) of the main block is punctuated by four interior chimneys.

The clapboarded exterior walls are embellished with a variety of sawn millwork trim and incised details. Window bays are divided by simple boarded pilasters which connect at the roofline with large scrolled brackets. The extended roof cornice features smaller brackets set within each window bay. The wide, bracketed soffit is accentuated by a fascia panel with sawn, triangulated drops set below the cornice within each bay. Fenestration on the side wings consists of simple two-over-two-light rectangular sash of decreasing size from first to third floors. The pavilion features paired, elongated sash on the side bays and a tripartite composition on the first and second floors on the central bay. The second-story pavilion windows rise two floor levels and light the second-floor auditorium. Each pavilion window is finished with a bracketed, pedimented cornice, with the exception of the second-floor side windows which have flat cornices. The pavilion is divided in the middle by a bracketed cornice which is applied at the base of the second-floor auditorium windows. The small bracketed gable end centered on the mansard roof has a circular attic window centered in the tympanum. Side entrances (originally girls entrance left and boys entrance right) on the side wings consist of paired four-paneled wood doors surmounted by a transom and gabled hood (photograph #4). The hoods are supported by heavy scrolled brackets, and feature gable ends with incised consoles.

The plan of the Classroom Building consists of three main rooms on the first and second floors, with access provided from the side elevations

(continued on page 1)



## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |                              |                       |
|---|--|---|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ..... prehistoric                             | ..... archeology-prehistoric                     | ..... community planning                      | ..... landscape architecture | ..... religion        |
| ..... 1400-1499                               | ..... archeology-historic                        | ..... conservation                            | ..... law                    | ..... science         |
| ..... 1500-1599                               | ..... agriculture                                | ..... economics                               | ..... literature             | ..... sculpture       |
| ..... 1600-1699                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | ..... military               | ..... social/         |
| ..... 1700-1799                               | ..... art  | ..... engineering                             | ..... music                  | ..... humanitarian    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | ..... commerce                                   | ..... exploration/settlement                  | ..... philosophy             | ..... theater         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-     | ..... communications                             | ..... industry                                | ..... politics/government    | ..... transportation  |
| Criteria A, C                                 |  | ..... invention                               |                              | ..... other (specify) |

**Specific dates**                      1873                      **Builder/Architect** A.G. Cutler, Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Woodstock Academy Classroom Building is an institutional structure with historical and architectural merit for the town of Woodstock. One of the earliest academies established in Connecticut (1802), the historical development of Woodstock Academy exemplifies the proliferation in New England during the nineteenth century of private educational institutions designed for secondary education (Criterion A). Architecturally, the building characterizes the Italianate mode popularized in architects' and builders' pattern books during the 1860s and 1870s (Criterion C). Incorporating large, well-ventilated classrooms, and intricately detailed exterior elevations typical of the period, the structure reflects the growing standardization in design and construction of school buildings in the U.S. after 1860.

### Historical Development

The history of Woodstock Academy, a private educational institution, parallels the proliferation of other private academies (also known as boarding schools) in Connecticut after the American Revolution. Called the dark ages of Connecticut public school history, the late eighteenth and first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of numerous private academies in order to provide boys and girls with advanced academic background beyond the level of the small public grammar school.<sup>1</sup> The earliest academies established in Connecticut include Staples Academy (N. Fairfield, 1781, disbanded), Greenfield Hill (1783), Plainfield Academy (1784, disbanded), Berlin Academy (Colchester, 1803, later sold to the town).

The purpose of the private academy was to provide formal, classical education above the level of the small public grammar school. As endowed institutions of learning supported by income gained from tuition fees and local endowments, private academies generally attracted college-bound students from wealthy families. In Connecticut, most academies established in small towns before 1860 boasted large regional enrollments since a minority of local residents could afford the tuition fees. Institutions such as Woodstock Academy also attracted many out-of-state students. The emphasis on classical subjects such as philosophy and Latin, and rigid academic standards made the Academy suitable for only a small portion of Woodstock's student age population, a situation which was not addressed by the town or the Academy's trustees until 1911.

Private academies flourished in Connecticut from the close of the American Revolution to about 1880. As communities recognized the need for public secondary education which included vocational subjects such as business and home economics, free high schools were established in order to give all young people the opportunity for educational advancement. The

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bayles, Richard M. History of Windham County. New York: W.W. Preston and Company, 1889.

Bicknell, A.J. Bicknell's Village Builder. New York: A.J. Bicknell and Company, 1872.

(continued on p.5)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Putnam

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 9 | 2 | 5       | 3 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 4        | 6 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

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|------|--|--|---------|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |  |         |  |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

As described in Woodstock Land Records, vol.29, p.254.

### 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 Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian - edited by John Herzan,

Jack A. Gold National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date August 1983

street & number 87 Olive Street telephone 203/624-4673

city or town New Haven state Connecticut

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 13, 1984

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 2/16/84

  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

was built in 1844-1846 as a student dormitory and was used as a hotel in summer. The facility burned to the ground in 1907. The close relationship between the town and the Proprietors of the Academy (later Board of Trustees) was typical of private educational institutions established in New England towns. In order to raise funds from the community, the Proprietors issued one-dollar shares for the general public. Those families who purchased four or more shares could attend lectures for one year in "Natural Philosophy" and "Practical Chemistry." In 1843 \$100 was raised by selling shares for this purpose.<sup>4</sup> In 1867 Bowen initiated a campaign to raise the endowment of the Academy. He pledged \$5,000 provided that the town would match the amount. After the funds were raised, Bowen gave an additional \$5,000 for the purpose of constructing a new classroom building. Concerts were given at nearby Roseland Park to raise funds. The Academy purchased in 1867 a parcel of land south of the existing academy building for construction of a new building. Abel Child, President of the Board of Trustees of the Academy, proposed in June 1871 that the town be canvassed in order to raise additional funds for the new building.

In January 1872 the Board voted to build a brick building, and summoned Alexander S. Cutler, an architect in Norwich, to discuss design plans for the new building. A building committee was appointed to work with the architect. After considerable debate, wood was chosen over brick as the building material.<sup>5</sup> The new building was dedicated in October 1873; the original frame structure (1802) was relocated to the south side of the green and converted for residential use.

The Academy flourished and expanded during the period 1880 to 1930. Ely Ransome Hall (Yale '72) served as principal from 1888 to 1914. During his tenure, football, basketball and other athletic activities were promoted. Standards of scholarship increased as did enrollment, up from 120 students in 1844 to over 150 by 1890. An Alumni Association was formed in 1892. Notable graduates of the Academy during the nineteenth century included Louise Chandler Moulton, author; Gov. William Larned Marcy of New York (also U.S. Senator); Gov. Everett Lake of Connecticut; William T. Harris, former U.S. Commissioner of Education; and Ebenezer Stoddard, member of Congress and Connecticut lieutenant governor from 1833-1834. As early as 1911 the Board of Trustees discussed the possibility of converting the Academy to a public high school. Free tuition was offered to town residents in 1913. Currently, the towns of Woodstock and Eastford pay tuition for all students attending the Academy. Although the Academy now provides public education for the town of Woodstock, the Board of Trustees continues to administer the facility instead of a school board. Any town in the region (such as Eastford and Pomfret) that sends ten or more students may have two individuals serve on the Academy's Board. The Academy's current enrollment is approximately 370 day students. Construction in recent years of a new library, gymnasium, administrative building, field house and other structures has allowed the institution to continue to provide educational opportunities in step with other schools in the region.

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Architectural Significance

The Woodstock Academy Classroom Building is an outstanding local example of an Italianate-style institutional building. Retaining all of its original, intricate exterior and interior moldings and detail, the frame building stands in a remarkable state of architectural integrity. Designed by architect Alexander S. Cutler of Norwich, its elevations are typical of the picturesque, romanticizing trends in residential and institutional design popular in the U.S. after 1860.

Minimal information exists on A.G. Cutler's architectural practice in Norwich. According to local directories, Cutler practiced in Norwich between the years 1868 and 1880.<sup>6</sup> No other information concerning Cutler exists in local obituaries, architectural surveys or biographical dictionaries. His design for the Classroom Building closely paralleled designs in widely published pattern books, popular desk-side references for architects and builders. Prefabricated ornament, machine produced trim, and mechanical systems helped popularize pattern books during the nineteenth century. The books consisted of assemblages of floor plans and elevations for residential, commercial and civic buildings. Bicknell's Village Builder (1872), a compendium of elevations and plans in the Italianate style, complete with specifications for each design, was a likely reference for Cutler.<sup>7</sup> In his new introduction and commentary to the Victorian Village Builder, Paul Goeldner discusses the availability of large sizes of glass, new patented ventilation systems, and the incorporation of large multipurpose rooms as the most typical advancements in the design of civic buildings during the 1870s.<sup>8</sup> All of these features were incorporated into Cutler's design for the Woodstock Academy Classroom Building.

The Classroom Building is the only extant frame academy building in Connecticut which incorporates and retains its Italianate design features.<sup>9</sup> The formal balance established between the central pavilion and side wings is a typical Italianate motif seen especially in schools and courthouses of the period. In addition to the symmetrical massing, other Italianate motifs include the two-stage cupola with its semicircular arch and pedimented forms, the low-pitched hipped roofs, the single-bay porches, and the pronounced window and roof-cornice moldings. Elongated rectangular sash (showing a Victorian Gothic influence) and the central roof pediment heighten the axial relationship between the pavilion and side wings, and give the building a stylized, romantic appearance from the street. In terms of its contextual significance, the Classroom Building serves as an anchor between the staid ensemble of Federal-period houses flanking the green to the east, and the picturesque Gothic Revival Roseland Cottage to the west. The Classroom Building represents the 180-year presence of Woodstock Academy in the town, and serves as a strong historical link between the goals of its builders and the institution's current educational mission.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>Norris Galpin Osborn, ed. History of Connecticut. Mrs. Sidney K. Mitchell, "Social Life and Customs." New York: The States History Company, 1925, p.330.

<sup>2</sup>Clarence Winthrop Bowen, History of Woodstock. Norwood, Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1926, p.370.

<sup>3</sup>Margaret T. McClellan, Winds of Change. Putnam: The Observer Company, 1950, p.80.

<sup>4</sup>Bowen, op. cit., p.396.

<sup>5</sup>The decision of the Academy's Board of Trustees to construct the building of wood instead of brick was probably related to regional economic factors as well as lower cost. After 1860 a number of lumber companies operated in Windham County, supplying at least 2 million feet of sawn lumber a year by 1900. See Allen B. Lincoln, ed. A Modern History of Windham County. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1920, p.57.

<sup>6</sup>Stedman's Norwich Directory. Norwich: Price and Lee Company, 1868-1880.

<sup>7</sup>A.J. Bicknell, Bicknell's Village Builder. New York: A.J. Bicknell and Company, 1872, plates 1-53.

<sup>8</sup>Paul Goeldner, "New Introduction and Commentary," Victorian Village Builder. Watkins Glen: The American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1976, np.

<sup>9</sup>This claim is based upon existing academy buildings in the state which have been identified in the Cultural Resources Survey, Connecticut Historical Commission.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bowen, Clarence Winthrop. History of Woodstock. Norwood Mass.: The Plimpton Press, 1926.

Eveleth, Samuel F. School House Architecture. New York: George W. Woodward, 1870.

Goeldner, Paul. Victorian Village Builder. Watkins Glen: The American Life Foundation and Study Institute, 1976.

Lincoln, Allen B., ed. A Modern History of Windham County. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1920.



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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McClellan, Margaret T. Winds of Change. Putnam: The Observer Company, 1950.

Osborn, Norris Galpin, ed. History of Connecticut. New York: The States Publishing Company, 1925.

Stedman's Norwich Directory. Norwich: Price and Lee Company, 1868-1880. Filed at Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

Woodstock Academy Board of Trustees. Minutes. Filed at Woodstock Academy Administration Building.