

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Bristol High School
Other names/site number: Central High School, Memorial Boulevard School
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 70 Memorial Boulevard
City or town: Bristol State: CT County: Hartford
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,


I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

	4/10/18
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>CT State Historic Preservation Office</u>	
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	Date
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

6/9/18

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Classical Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: brick, other (cast stone)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The former Bristol High School is situated on a knoll on the west side of Memorial Boulevard, south of the downtown commercial district of Bristol. The school is a three-story Classical Revival-style building constructed of load-bearing brick with a flat roof, a symmetrical H-shaped plan, and an exposed basement level. It is located at the far western side of a 7.4-acre lot bounded by Memorial Boulevard to the north, Mellen Street to the east, South Street to the south and Willis Street to the west. Parking lots are located north and south of the building and terraced grounds east of the building lead to athletic fields, including a track and baseball diamond (Figure 1). The South End Historic District (listed in 2001), a large, residential neighborhood constructed prior to 1930, is located southwest of the school and there are several light industrial buildings located to the west and across the Pequabuck River to the north. Memorial Park is located east of the athletic fields.

The central, main block of the building is arranged parallel to Willis Street and the north and south wings are arranged perpendicular to the main block. The building was designed by noted school architect Wilson Potter and was constructed over a period of two years between 1921 and

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

1923, beginning with the south wing and central lateral section. The north wing, containing the auditorium and gymnasium, was the last portion to be completed.

The school remains relatively unchanged from its original appearance. The entire structure is clad in buff brick set in a common bond and is decorated by various cast-stone embellishments such as plaques, rondels, tablets, and keystones. Potter utilized several recurring decorative features throughout the building's exterior. Repeating geometric patterns are found along the parapet walls, blind walls, and spandrel panels separating the windows of the second and third stories of the north elevation. The tar-and-gravel roof is surrounded by a cast-stone-capped parapet wall that is stepped at the center of each elevation (the east and west elevations of the central wing are topped by arched projections above the seal of the City of Bristol). The roofline is also ornamented with a cast-stone entablature featuring a molded cornice set atop a line of dentils. Cast-stone belt courses line the tops of the first and third stories, and intermittent banding is found along the top of the second story. The first story features nine bands of rusticated brick topped by a projecting belt course. The exposed basement sections are clad in cast-stone blocks and feature square openings set with pairs of windows. Most of the original windows were replaced in 1996 with aluminum replacements, but the original 6/6 light configuration was maintained.

Narrative Description

East Elevation (Façade)

The east elevation served as the main entrance to the school as well as the focal point for the western approach of Memorial Boulevard as it entered downtown Bristol (Photograph 1). As a result, it is the most highly ornamented of the elevations. The central block is recessed between two symmetrical wings at the north and south. Along the parapet wall, which is lined by a band of cast-stone coping, there are a series of cast-stone panels flanking a bronze seal of Bristol that protrudes above the parapet wall. Located centrally beneath the cornice trim is a large plaque that reads "BRISTOL HIGH SCHOOL" (Photograph 2). Windows are arranged in pairs on all stories with the exception of a single windows found near the intersection of the main block and each wing. Openings on the third story are topped by a continuous cast stone band and are separated from the second story openings by a spandrel panel set with a stone tablet. From south to north, they read "MUSIC", "ART", "SCIENCE", "BUSINESS", "HISTORY", and "LANGUAGE" (Photograph 3). The windows on the second story are topped by wide individual lintels and are linked by a continuous molded stringcourse. The first story features a central entryway, consisting of three modern glass doors topped by a fixed tripartite transom. Two paneled Doric pilasters flank the doorway and support a tall entablature featuring metopes and triglyphs arranged beneath a line of modillions. A plaque at the center of the fascia features the date of construction "1921". The projecting cornice supports a balustrade set beneath a run of four tall, narrow windows topped by transoms. The doors are modern metal and glass units, above which are paneled spandrels that are, in turn, topped by a tripartite, multi-light transom

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

window. The entrance is accessed by a short set of stone steps. The basement-level windows are in line with the bays of the upper stories and are set within slightly recessed square openings.

The facades of the north and south wings are similar - both have projecting central pavilions set above cast-stone porticos (Photograph 4). Arched openings are found on each portico elevation and each arch is topped by an archivolt molding that springs from the impost blocks formed by the capitals of short Doric pilasters. The entire assembly is surmounted by a scrolled central vousoir. These arched openings are flanked by tall, paneled Doric pilasters supporting an entablature upon which rests a paneled balconet wall. On both wings the doors are modern metal and glass units topped by arched transoms. The window pattern above the porticos mirrors that found above the main entrance.

On the north wing, a large tablet is located centrally beneath the cornice trim and reads "RECREATION." Paired windows, like those found on the main block, flank the central pavilion, with spandrel panels between the second and third stories. The tablets within the panels read "ATHLETICS" and "CONCERT" respectively (Photograph 5). On the south elevation of the north wing, windows are arranged in pairs with a single window at the western corner. On the south wing, the windows of the second and third stories are replaced by blind walls decorated with a geometric pattern that replicates the openings of the north wing. The north elevation of the south wing features a run of six windows with a single window near the intersection of the main block.

The original landscape in front of the façade can be seen in a photograph dating from ca. 1930 (Figure 8). It shows that the original plan had three stairways arranged in line with the three entrances of the east elevation leading from the building level to the athletic fields. Today there are two concrete storage sheds on the south side of the area leading to the fields. These are topped by concrete pads that serve as viewing stands and are lined by pipe railings. In addition to the baseball and football fields, there is a quarter-mile track.

West Elevation

Like the east elevation, the center of the main block features the Bristol city seal along the parapet wall, set above a rectangular cast-stone plaque that reads "BRISTOL HIGH SCHOOL." Each story of this section contains a central run of six windows (these are short square windows on the third story) flanked by three pairs of windows (Photograph 6). The plaques that separate the openings of the second and third stories remain blank. The central entrance into the main block and the portico on the north wing were not included on this elevation. The north and south wings feature the same brick pilasters found on the east elevation, but without the decorative Ionic capitals. The space between the two wings is filled by a low concrete utility pad covered in mechanical equipment and lined by a metal fence (Photograph 7).

The south wing contains a set of three windows at the center of each floor to provide light for the stairwells. These are flanked by pilasters that are, in turn, flanked by blind walls that are decorated with geometric brick patterns set off by cast-stone end blocks. The arched openings of

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

the portico on this wing have been partially enclosed, the door replaced by tall windows, and an entrance ramp installed on the south side leading to the basement level. The north wing has a central tripartite window on each story instead of a portico. Window placement mirrors those found on the façade. There is a run of six windows on each story of the north elevation of this wing, with a single detached window at the far east. On the south side of the north wing there are five separate windows on the first and second stories and four on the third story.

North Elevation

At the roofline, the parapet wall is stepped to include a central stylized plaque featuring an etched diamond design (this is repeated on the south elevation and the wings of the east and west elevations). The central pavilion of this elevation extends several feet beyond the flanking sections with a single bay on the east and west sides (Photograph 8). The second story of this section contains five double-height openings with arched windows. The central pavilion extends several feet from the wall of the north elevation. The central portion of the first-story contains an enclosed portico, similar in design to the others, but with two doors and an arched window on the exterior. On each side of the portico there are two sets of double windows. These windows serve the school's theater. On the east and west side of the protruding section is a single window on both the first and second stories.

South Elevation

The south elevation is similar to the north elevation (Photograph 9). The central pavilion extends a single bay beyond the wall of the wing with a single opening on each story of the east and west sides. The openings are filled with pairs of windows. The central portion does not have a portico or a door. Instead it contains three sets of windows on each of its three stories. The three stories of the eastern and western sections of this façade each contain a set of six windows, with a single window nearest the central portion.

Interior Description

The interior of the school mirrors the symmetry of the exterior and is arranged on three levels above ground, the ground level or upper basement, and the lower basement. The H-shaped plan includes approximately 100,000 square feet consisting of the north wing, which houses the auditorium, pool, gymnasium, and ancillary spaces; the central wing which includes office space on the first floor in addition to classroom space; and the south wing, which includes the library and classrooms. There are twenty-seven classrooms of various sizes on the upper three floors of the building.

The central wing of the first story is accessed by three modern glass and metal doors leading into a vestibule/stair hall on the east elevation. A wide, central stair leads to a landing where there are three additional modern metal doors leading to the main corridor. This stairwell, like the others found throughout the school, is well-lit by double-height windows. The stairs are constructed of steel with asphalt tile-covered steps – often with paneled, pressed-steel risers

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

(Photograph 10). Modern rubber safety treads are found throughout. On the main stairwell, the balustrades are further embellished with a recurring oval pattern set between each of the simple, straight balusters and are topped by a wooded rail (Photograph 11). On the remainder of the stairways throughout the building the ovals are absent from the design. The end posts are also steel, capped and feature a vertical paneled design.

The main lateral corridor of the school runs in a north-south direction through the central wing. The corridor walls are clad in buff-colored brick to a height of approximately eight feet and are topped by a bull-nosed cornice trim of the same buff brick. The corners of many of the walls and piers are embellished by narrow, engaged columns and in some areas the walls are decorated by bricks set in a geometric pattern with cast-stone accents (Photograph 12). Office spaces for the administration are found on the east side of the corridor, with classroom spaces on the west. The office spaces have been altered by the addition of modern cabinetry, counters and flooring.

Most of the doors leading to the classrooms are the original oak units with a single square light in the upper half. They are decorated with an inlaid rectangular design (Photograph 13). Handles have been changed and the transoms above each doorway have been covered. Lavatories are located at the far southern end of the corridor on the east and west sides of the hall and retain the original tiled floors and walls and many of the original fixtures (Photograph 14). An elevator shaft is located at the southwest corner of the corridor.

Throughout the corridors and classrooms, the original flooring has been covered with composite tile and the ceilings have been lowered and covered by acoustic tile set in a metal grid. Fluorescent lighting has been installed throughout. Openings from the main hall into the classrooms have been enclosed and transoms have been covered or removed to accommodate the dropped ceiling. Despite these changes, the classrooms almost uniformly retain the original slate blackboards and oak blackboard trim as well as oak picture rails, chair rails, window and door trim, and baseboards (Photograph 15).

The main corridor intersects with a perpendicular hall that serves the south wing. On the east and west ends of this hall there are each two classrooms separated by a stair at the middle. Cloak rooms (more like short hallways) line the walls closest to the main block – these are accessed by arched openings from the hall and provide a second means of egress from each of the classrooms (Photograph 16). The central portion of the wing includes a large, open space that was used as the library.

The north wing contains the auditorium, which is accessed by separate entrances on the north and east sides of the building, as well as from the main hall of the school. A lobby space at the east entry provided a public waiting space and also contains two small offices/classrooms on the north and south sides of the central stairwell. The 947-seat auditorium is the centerpiece of the building (Photograph 17). The groin-vaulted ceiling is surmounted by a quatrefoil-shaped, stained glass light that is outlined with metal tracery (Photograph 18). This provides natural light from a skylight above as well as incandescent light. The arched windows on the north wall are decorated with hood moldings and spandrel panels matching those found on the exterior. On the

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

south wall, the openings are blind but follow the same decorative scheme to produce a feeling of symmetry within the space (Photograph 19). The balcony is supported by simple piers topped with Tuscan capitals. The balcony wall is decorated with panels and is lined by a simple railing. The theater seats throughout appear to have been replaced at an unknown date. The stage is located on the west side of the space and the stage front is decorated with a paneled design. The proscenium arch features a repeating quatrefoil and foliate pattern. A series of graduated panels form the outer portion of the proscenium arch and meet above the stage with a lit clock at the apex (Photograph 20). The clock face has "The City of Bristol" encircling the dial. The backstage area includes dressing rooms and storage on the first and second stories.

The second and third stories of the central block and south wing repeat the plan of the first story, except that there are classrooms above the library and office space. The third story was originally dedicated to the study of sciences and many of the original cabinets, laboratory tables, soapstone sinks and hood assemblies remain intact (Photograph 21). In Room 311 a crane arm remains in place – presumably used in the study of physics (Photograph 22). The original tiered science lecture hall also remains intact, across from the central stairway, with movable blackboard panels and a space to perform experiments at the front. It was repurposed as a choral room, presumably when the school was made into a middle school in the late 1960s (Photograph 23).

The ground level of the basement consists of the gymnasium balcony/track and upper pool area in the north wing, the cafeteria and kitchen in the central area, and the former workshop and industrial-arts classrooms. The ground level also contains various mechanical equipment and the boiler room. The hallways and classrooms walls on the ground level are painted brick with arched openings, with buff brick used along the hallways near the cafeteria. The lower basement level contains the gymnasium, pool, and locker areas in the north wing. The gymnasium includes a basketball court with tiled walls (Photograph 24). The space is accessed by stairwells on the north and east sides and is surrounded by an elevated running track with partial paneled walls and a metal balustrade topped by a wooden rail. Locker rooms for the school are located east of the gym and include large lavatories and showers for girls and boys. The floors in these areas are covered in mosaic tile and the walls are clad in ceramic "subway" tile. The partitions for the showers and toilet areas consist of large marble slabs and most of the fixtures are original (Photograph 25). The ceilings in these spaces are of a perforated metal with round vault lights which allow light to filter into the spaces from above (Photograph 26). Additional changing areas, which are similarly outfitted, are located south of the gym for visiting teams. The pool is accessed by two doors leading west from the gym. They open onto a mosaic-tiled deck which remains visible in some places beneath the modern carpeted floor (Photograph 27). From the deck, three steps lead down to the pool, which has been capped, but remains intact beneath the floor. The walls in this space are tiled and light is provided by square openings filled with glass blocks on the north and west walls (Photograph 28). A shower area is located south of the pool and a third entrance leads from the pool to the gym at the southwest corner.

Integrity/Alterations

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

The building is located on the original site, and apart from the minor landscape changes mentioned above, retains the original setting. The interior of the building was renovated in the 1960s when it was converted into a middle school, and then again in the 1970s, but is still expressive of the historic design and workmanship. It retains a majority of the original materials and the overall feeling and association of an early 20th century high school. The floor plan appears to have been only minimally altered to accommodate the conversion to a middle school, but it is difficult to tell if any changes took place prior to this since the earliest plans available date from 1955. The major changes to the interior are the covering of the wooden floors with composite tile, the addition of dropped ceilings throughout, the enclosure of transoms and windows between the classrooms and the hallways, and the addition of modern fluorescent lighting fixtures.

The condition of the building is very good. There has been some moisture damage to the plaster walls of the theater due to several leaks in the roof. These leaks have been addressed, and what damage remains appears to be only cosmetic in nature.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1923-1967

Significant Dates

1923

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Potter, Wilson (1868-1936)

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The former Bristol High School, later known as Memorial Boulevard Middle School, is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A in the area of Education and at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance extends from 1923, when construction of the building finished, to 1967, the last year that it served as a high school. At the time of its construction, the building exemplified the latest in high school design – beautiful, modern, and built to provide the youth of Bristol with ample access to the educational, physical and recreational opportunities deemed crucial to the didactic process of the period. Modern studies such as drafting, economics, domestic arts and science were prioritized and the school was designed to provide the requisite practical training spaces for vocational arts. Physical study, newly recognized as an important element of the educational process, was also represented by the state of the art swimming pool, gymnasium and athletic fields. Sanitary, well-ventilated and well-lit, the former Bristol High School is an example of the culmination of many years of study on the architecture of school buildings. It also represented the prominent standing and growth of Bristol as an industrial city. Thanks in large part to industrialist and philanthropist Albert F. Rockwell (1862-1925), the building was a symbol of that success and was an anchor in Rockwell's grand entranceway and park known as Memorial Boulevard. Finally, Bristol High School and Memorial Boulevard were local examples of the City Beautiful Movement, a reform movement based on the idea that a combination of architecture and landscape architecture could be used to encourage a sense of public engagement and civic pride through the creation of aesthetically pleasing public spaces.

Under Criterion C the building is significant at the state level as one of the most important works of noted school architect George Wilson Potter (1868-1936). Potter was known for his schools and libraries throughout New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Prior to this commission, he was responsible for the completion of the Bristol Public Library (1906, listed on the National Register as part of the Federal Hill Historic District) and Bingham Elementary School (1916) in Bristol.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A – Education

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

The construction of Bristol High School marked Bristol's transformation from a rural farming town to an internationally recognized industrial city. This monumental high school building served the practical needs of a rapidly expanding population while also serving as a symbol of the city's success as a major manufacturing center. It also represented years of national study and theory in the development and evolution of high school education and building design.

The Development of the High School in Bristol

As Bristol was transformed from a small farming town to a center of manufacturing over the course of the 19th century, eleven district schools were formed to serve the expanding population. The town's earliest schools fell under the direction of the Ecclesiastical Society, which oversaw their creation and operation throughout the 18th century. The Society had constructed five district schools by 1764.¹ These wood-framed buildings were the archetypal one or two-roomed schoolhouses found throughout New England.² When the town was incorporated in 1785 there were ten districts which remained under control of the Ecclesiastical Society. Students were charged a supplemental fee to cover operating costs³. In 1795, the foundation of the Connecticut School Fund, created from the proceeds of the state's sale of land holdings in the Western Reserve, allowed the town the financial security to take control of the schools the following year.⁴

The industrial development of the town centered around the clock industry, which began in the 1820s and 1830s. The shops of E. Ingraham, E. N. Welch (later Sessions Clock Company), and E. C. Brewster had all formed by 1835. By 1850, the population began to increase at a rapid pace as workers sought employment and school enrollment followed pace. Continued growth and expansion of residential development over the next two decades resulted in the formation of a committee, appointed in 1871, to investigate the possibility of opening a new central high school.⁵

The concept of the modern high school in Connecticut derived largely from the theories of Henry Barnard (1811-1900), one of the best-known education reformers of the mid-19th century. Barnard, a native of Hartford, was interested in the creation of public high schools for all students. While private, paid academies were found throughout Connecticut and provided excellent preparation for college studies, there were no public high schools prior to 1840.⁶ As Secretary of Connecticut's Board of Commission of Common Schools, Barnard championed universal education and the concept of organizing children into primary, secondary and high

¹ Smith, Eddy N. Smith, George Benton Smith and Allena J. Dates, comps. *Bristol, Connecticut (In the Olden Time "New Cambridge")* (Hartford, CT: City Printing Company, 1907), p 36.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Judith S. Lohman "Development of the Right to an Education in Connecticut" OLR Research Report, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/PS98/rpt%5Colr%5Chtm/98-R-1361.htm>. Accessed March 28, 2016.

⁵ "High School Committee Appointed" *Bristol Press*, October 20, 1871.

⁶ Clifford J. Dudley, "The History of Public Education in Connecticut," *Yale New Haven Teacher's Institute*, <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1981/cthistory/81.ch.02.x.html#c>. Accessed March 3, 2016.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

schools.⁷ The first public high school for children ages nine through sixteen was formed in Middletown in 1841. Hartford followed in 1847 and became the model school in terms of curriculum. There were three courses of study including a college preparatory course, an “English” course (which was a traditional four-year program) and a partial course which finished in two years with an aim toward immediate employment. After 1872, all public high schools in Connecticut were free of charge, but remained without standards in terms of teacher qualifications, curriculum and condition of the school buildings. Barnard felt that standardization of these elements was crucial for successful education. He went on to become the country’s first U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1867, a position that allowed him to have a crucial impact on America’s educational system. He returned to Hartford where he published many articles for the *American Journal of Education* until his death in 1900.⁸ It is safe to assume that Barnard’s influence and local roots would have made his theories of providing universal education, building design and standardized training of teachers familiar to Bristol’s School Board members.

High school courses were established for Bristol students in 1883, with the first class graduated in 1886.⁹ High school departments were kept in the District 3 school house with additional classes held in the school houses of Districts 1 and 13.¹⁰ By 1886, planning for a new, central high school building began when a committee was appointed to investigate alternatives.¹¹ The site chosen was in District 1 on Federal Hill, a neighborhood that included residences of the town’s wealthiest members as well as a majority of the municipal structures. By 1891, the new high school at the corner of Summer and Center Streets (now 98 Summer Street and home to the Bristol Historical Society) was opened for inspection.¹² The building, designed by Theodore Peck of Waterbury in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, included a large hall on the second floor for lectures, civic events, and entertainments.

The original high school had been built to serve a population of around 7,000, but by 1900, Bristol’s population had increased thirty percent from the previous decade to include nearly 10,000 residents. A third of these residents were employed in some aspect of manufacturing by the Bristol’s largest companies including Bristol Brass, J. J. Sessions and Sons, Marlin-Rockwell Firearms and New Departure.¹³ By 1906, it was reported of the high school that “the attendance is so large that the building is entirely inadequate.” To accommodate the increase, the auditorium space was converted to classrooms and enlargements were deemed “imperative.”¹⁴

Bristol’s continued success and growth put incredible stress on the existing school infrastructure. In 1911, Bristol became a city and was dealing with increased enrollment in all its schools,

⁷ Jessica Jenkins, “Henry Barnard Advances State and National Education Initiative,” Connecticut History.org <http://connecticuthistory.org/henry-barnard-advances-state-and-national-education-initiatives/>. Accessed March 23, 2016.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Smith et al., pp. 525-526.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 526.

¹¹ “Committee Appointed to Establish a High School,” *Bristol Press*, October 14, 1886.

¹² “New High School Opened for Inspection,” *Bristol Press*, September 10, 1891.

¹³ David Reisner and Kate Ohno, *Endee Manor National Register District, Bristol, Hartford County, CT, Connecticut Historical Commission and National Park Service, Washington, D. C., 1996.*

¹⁴ “Bristol Now Needs Larger School,” *Hartford Courant*, October 6, 1906.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

particularly in the districts of the north and south ends. A continued increase in Bristol's population stemmed in part from efforts of industrialists to attract and retain their work forces by building housing developments. New Departure constructed over 100 housing units at Endee Manor in the northwest part of the city by 1917. This was one of four developments built around the same time that included others built by the Bristol Brass Company (1916), the National Marine Lamp Company (1916), and the Bristol Realty Company (1907-1922). These new neighborhoods put tremendous pressure on the school districts, particularly those serving the north and south ends of the City.¹⁵ By the end of the First World War, the population had doubled from 1900 to reach just over 20,000 people.

In response, several modern brick district schools were built to serve the growing population of the primary school students. They included: the Park Street School, built in 1914 (the Clara T. O'Connell School); the North Side School, built 1916 (Clarence A. Bingham School); the Federal Hill School, built in 1915 (Thomas H. Patterson School); Burlington Avenue School, built in 1920 (John J. Jennings School); and Pine Street School, built in 1921 (Mary A. Callen School). This building program demonstrated the City's commitment to education. The new buildings were all designed by notable architects (including Potter who designed the North Side School) to serve as anchors in the neighborhoods in which they were built. By 1915, the city was forced to prioritize construction of a new high school building when in that year the graduating class had grown to 57, the largest yet on record.¹⁶

The high school was in need of immediate expansion both in terms of space to simply house students and to accommodate new facilities so as to meet the needs of an expanding curriculum. Superintendent Karl A. Reiche, in the Report of the Board of Education for the School Year ending in 1917 read off a detailed list of the requirements for a new school:

... the accommodations are becoming so limited and inadequate that a new building should be erected as soon as national and municipal conditions will warrant. The immediate needs are an assembly hall, a gymnasium, an up to date Science Department, equipped for stereopticon, as well as Physics and Chemistry laboratories, rooms for Household Economics work now starting, rooms for the Free Hand and Mechanical Drawing and a modern Business department with appliances and equipment commensurate with the splendid work the department is now doing for the business offices of Bristol. There should also be proper lunch rooms and recreation rooms, a large reference library and administrative offices suited to an increasing work of a rapidly growing school. It seems to me that plans should be made to accommodate ultimately a school of one thousand. At the present rate of growth, almost 8% annually, the school will, under normal conditions, number five hundred in four years and that number would probably double in ten years more, if the city continues to grow as it has in the last ten years. It would seem to me highly uneconomical to plan for less than fifteen years' growth. Of course these are

¹⁵ Reisner and Ohno.

¹⁶ "The Graduating Class of Bristol High School, the Largest in the History of the School," *Hartford Courant*, May 30, 1915.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

estimates and any plans that are made may have to be changed radically because of conditions resulting from the great war.¹⁷

The first formal discussion related to the construction of a new high school began in October 1916 when the Board of Education met to discuss possible expansion. The following October, the High School Investigation Committee was appointed by then-Mayor Joseph F. Dutton. In December of that same year Wilson Potter presented plans for three units to be added to the existing high school building on Summer Street, yet owing to the conditions of the World War they were tabled.¹⁸

On July 14, 1919 the Board of Education again deferred all activities related to the creation of a new school, but noted that Potter's plans "should receive continued attention...from school officials so that no time will be lost as the opportunity to accept the final plans of construction."¹⁹ On September 15 of that year, the High School Investigation Committee made five recommendations: 1) acquire land immediately adjacent to the property on Main Street, 2) approve Potter's plans, 3) immediate erection of the first school unit, 4) recommendation to erect second unit as soon as first completed, 5) erect third unit when in opinion of Board of Education deems it is necessary.²⁰ It was at this same meeting that Albert F. Rockwell offered a free site to erect the new building and set the course for one of the greatest civic improvements in Bristol's history.

Nearly a decade prior to Rockwell's offer to the City, he had purchased the town's former circus lot, known as Dunbar Meadows, in Bristol's South Side, to build additional housing for New Departure employees.²¹ After his retirement from the company, the twelve acres of land remained undeveloped. Rockwell quit-claimed it to the City for one dollar on the condition that a bridge be built across the Pequabuck River at Mellen Street and connect to a 100-foot boulevard that would link Main Street to the south side of town. He also stipulated that a high school be built on the property to be completed within two years. In exchange for the city's contribution, Rockwell offered to develop a park on the land east of the new roadway at his own expense²². Rockwell stated that these improvements to traffic going in and out of the city would benefit the downtown area. The plan would also require that the city purchase and remove several derelict buildings at the corner of Main and Pearl Streets.²³ The *Hartford Courant* reported that many citizens retained the belief that Federal Hill was the only proper place for public buildings. Others noted that businesses were moving in along the southern end of Main Street and that voters would eventually have to "overcome their prejudice against the flat land near the center of the city."²⁴

¹⁷ Report of the Board of Education, Bristol Connecticut, for the School Year Ending July 14, 1917, p. 20.

¹⁸ Report of the City of Bristol, Report of the High School Building Committee, March 23, 1923, pp. 101-102.

¹⁹ Report of the Board of Education, Bristol Connecticut, for the School Year Ending July 15, 1919, p. 10.

²⁰ Report of the City of Bristol, Report of the High School Building Committee, March 23, 1923, pp. 101-102.

²¹ "Old Circus Lot in Bristol Sold: A. F. Rockwell Buys Dunbar Property," *Hartford Courant*, February 5, 1910.

²² "Albert Rockwell Makes Definite Offer on Site," *Bristol Press*, September 27, 1919.

²³ "Rockwell Offers Land for Bristol High School Site," *Hartford Courant*, September 12, 1919.

²⁴ "Where Will High School Be Built?" *Hartford Courant*, September 13, 1919.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Bristol was ready for a transformation. The burgeoning City Beautiful Movement had prompted the City to hire planner, John Nolen of Boston. One of Nolen's chief goals was the creation of a central gathering place – since Bristol had no traditional town green or thoroughfare. Nolen presented a plan to the City in 1920, but did not engage him to complete any work.²⁵ Rockwell's plan, however, appeared to solve several issues at once by creating a monumental thoroughfare, a public gathering place in the form of an attached park, and a public high school. The Joint Committee for the High School was formed on August 23, 1919 and on October 6th of that year, eighty percent of the public voted to accept Rockwell's offer of the new school site.²⁶

Conditions at the existing high school continued to deteriorate as overcrowding became the chief issue facing the Joint Board who instructed an investigating committee to engage an architect to prepare plans for the new building on the Rockwell site.²⁷ The following month, architects Wilson Potter and Harold Hayden, submitted final proposals for the high school.²⁸ Potter's plans were chosen in May 1920. The school would be composed of three units, a central section flanked by north and south wings. Twenty-seven classrooms, including four rooms for science and commercial courses, would be housed in the south and central wings. The north wing would contain a gymnasium, auditorium, and pool.²⁹

By March 2, 1921, the City had not yet acted on construction of the Boulevard. On that date, Rockwell, ever a man of action, announced that he had taken bids in order to complete the project and would coordinate with the Superintendent of Public Works and the city streets department to begin construction, effectively making himself the general contractor.³⁰

On April 23, 1920 preliminary plans for the school were submitted and accepted by the Joint Board, who instructed architect Potter to prepare working drawings and specifications for the whole building. Mayor Dutton then appointed a High School Building Committee, consisting of Noble E. Pierce, Council-member John Donnelly, and Superintendent Karl Reiche, to coordinate with Potter and focus on the immediate construction of the central portion and south wing³¹. These two units would cost approximately \$500,000. Bids were sought for these portions of the building in July, but came in over \$800,000 and although accepted by the public, they were rejected the following month by the Joint Committee. Rockwell agreed with the board's decision, but it would set back the process close to a full year.³²

In May 1921 the Building Committee was called to order and Rockwell was asked to attend. The Board noted that the cost of materials and labor had gone down since the former bids were rejected. Conditions at the high school were becoming more and more crowded, with the school

²⁵ "Overcrowding Necessitated Immediate Building," *The Hartford Courant*, October 21, 1919.

²⁶ "Voters Accept Rockwell High School Site," *Bristol Press*, October 7, 1919.

²⁷ "Plans for New School Approved by Joint Committee," *Bristol Press*, December 2, 1919.

²⁸ "Architects Chosen for New Bristol High School," *Hartford Courant*, November 21, 1919.

²⁹ "Bristol High School Plans," *Hartford Courant*, May 3, 1920.

³⁰ "Rockwell Accepts Bids," *Bristol Press*, March 2, 1921.

³¹ Report of the High School Building Committee, *Reports of the City of Bristol*, March 8, 1923, p 101-102

³² *Ibid.*

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

then being run on the “platoon system.”³³ At that meeting Donnelly asked Rockwell if he would be willing “to undertake to construct the new high school on the same plan as [the] boulevard.”³⁴ Again, Rockwell was to serve as general contractor. The remaining members of the Committee endorsed Donnelly’s suggestion and urged Rockwell to accept the job.

At the next meeting in June of the Joint Board, Rockwell offered to accept the “constructorship” of the building provided he “be furnished with the necessary facilities and an efficient organization.”³⁵ On the 6th of August of that same year, ground was broken and work begun on the building. By September of that year the bridges crossing the Pequabuck and the Boulevard were nearly complete and at \$40,000 under the proposed budget.³⁶ As construction began to move ahead a tragic setback took place in October 1921, when Arthur O’Hara and James Murphy were killed by a collapsed wooden derrick at the site.³⁷

On January 25, 1922, the City Council, Board of Education, Building Committee and Rockwell met to discuss equipment for the building. Superintendent Reiche prepared a list of equipment “cut down to the bone for the sake of economy.”³⁸ The gymnasium and pool were areas of concern and Mayor Wade stated that they may yet omit the north wing since it had not yet been constructed. Rockwell stepped in to explain that the north wing would cost a total of \$200,000 which were bonded funds. He pointed out that it hardly made sense to let a building sit idle when it could be opened for the cost of interest on the bond, which totaled \$350.³⁹ The joint boards voted to continue with the full construction.

Charges of waste and inferior workmanship were raised in May 1922. A petition had been brought to the City Council stating that unskilled workers were present on site. It seems to have been brought about by the walkout of carpenters when a reduction in the wage scale was announced.⁴⁰ The situation remained strained for months. The City Council announced in May 1922 that the building would not be ready for the senior class to hold its graduation exercises in the auditorium citing “labor troubles” as the reason for the slowdown.⁴¹

A few days later, Rockwell held a conference with William Sullivan, the New Haven representative of Connecticut’s Carpenters Union, at Brightwood Hall, Rockwell’s home in Bristol. The carpenters were the first of several unions to walk out, followed by bricklayers, plasterers, and plumbers, and unless Rockwell could come to a settlement, the structural iron workers would also strike.⁴² Rockwell managed to appease the workforce and construction continued.

³³ Schools using the platoon system cycled students through the classrooms and various other areas of the school at different times of the day.

³⁴ Report of the High School Building Committee, *Reports of the City of Bristol*, March 8, 1923, pp. 101-102

³⁵ Report of the High School Building Committee, *Reports of the City of Bristol*, March 8, 1923 pp. 101-102

³⁶ “Boulevard Nearly Complete,” *Bristol Press*, September 7, 1921.

³⁷ “Both Workers Die at St. Francis’s Hospital,” *Hartford Courant*, October 28, 1921.

³⁸ “City Officials Consider High School Furnishings at Informal Meeting,” *Bristol Press*, January 25, 1922.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “Will Investigate Charge of Waste,” *Hartford Courant* March 29, 1922.

⁴¹ “Building Won’t Be Ready for Seniors,” *Hartford Courant*, May 19, 1922.

⁴² “Ready to Settle Labor Dispute: AF Rockwell Holds Conference with Union Leader,” *Hartford Courant*, May 25, 1922.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

In November 1922 the *Bristol Press* published an extensive description of what it called the high school's "ideal plan," noting that it would not be completed until January.⁴³ The original cost of the school was meant to be \$325,000 and the total cost on January 25, 1923 was just over \$750,000.

At the opening ceremonies in February 1923, thousands toured the school, the New Departure Brass Band offered music for dancing past midnight, and exercises were held in the swimming pool for public entertainment. The Honorable Noble E. Pierce, Chairman of the Board of Education, summed up the sense of pride felt by the community,

The honor of the city will dwell here, the building will give fame and glory to the city. It will hold here, and attract here citizens of the very best class. It adds strength to all business and value to all property, every farm is richer, every piece of real estate in the city is worth more, the business of every merchant will be better, relations between labor and capital in our manufactories will be more harmonious, the churches will appear stronger, and life in the city richer and better because of the building. Welcome to this temple of learning.⁴⁴

Rockwell's statement at the opening ceremony alluded to the challenges he faced during construction: "I had reckoned without proper allowances for the labor workers, the politicians, the knockers, some of the newspapers and a few things like that."⁴⁵ The total cost of the project was reported at \$816,216.00, including Potter's six percent commission. It was estimated that if the City had contracted out the work instead of working under Rockwell's oversight the cost could have been closer to \$1,040,000.⁴⁶ On April 7, 1923 the *Hartford Courant* reported that all work was complete except for two carpenters – and the exterior grading. The high school was finished by the end of summer in 1923, opening for its first class that fall.⁴⁷

The first report of the Board of Education following a full school year stated that despite some anticipated and understandable adjustments as students and teachers learned to use the new equipment, the "school is enjoying unusually splendid and happy working conditions which are not excelled by any high school in the state."⁴⁸ The building served as the town's principal high school for nearly forty years. The pool, gymnasium, and auditorium spaces were used for school events, as well as for public performances and lectures. Of note were the "career fairs" hosted by Bristol's business and industrial leaders in the gymnasium. These events offered children the opportunity to learn about potential occupations in the city, while allowing business owners the chance to recruit young, local talent.⁴⁹

⁴³ "Description of High School," *Bristol Press*, November 4, 1922.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ "High School Dedication," *Bristol Press*, January 26, 1923.

⁴⁶ "Formal Opening," *Bristol Press*, February 1, 1923.

⁴⁷ "Work on High School Now Nearly Complete," *Hartford Courant*, April 7, 1923.

⁴⁸ Board of Education Minutes, July 15, 1923, p. 4.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

As trends in education continued to change and suburban development continued to expand the population away from the center of the City, Bristol decided to build new high schools. In 1959, Bristol Eastern High School was constructed and Bristol High School became known as Bristol Central High. Less than a decade later, the school was remodeled to accommodate middle school students and the first class of Memorial Boulevard Middle School graduated in 1968. The school was closed in 2012.

Criterion C - Architecture

The former Bristol High School is one of the finest and best-preserved examples of the work of George Wilson Potter, Sr. (1868-1939) of New York City. The building exhibits a number of the defining characteristics of the Classical Revival style, including the overall symmetry of the H-shaped plan. On the façade, the central block is perfectly framed by the flanking wings. Window openings, entrances, and decorative elements all express a sense of solidity and order. Even when elements differ, such as on the south wing, a geometric pattern is employed in decorative brickwork on the blind walls to replicate a symmetrical appearance with the openings of the north wing. The rusticated basement level, heavy Tuscan columns and massive Ionic pilasters along the projecting cornice with dentils all convey a monumental quality drawn from classical precedents.

Influence of Education Reform on High School Design

Potter's design for Bristol High School was the result of decades of school theory and design. Modern lighting, sanitary surfaces and fireproof construction with wide halls and ample egress all were common features in school design by the time this building was built. Potter was an accomplished school architect and therefore well-versed in these theories, but it is clear from the Board of Education and High School Building Committee minutes that the local boards also had a great influence on the use of the space in the new building based on current curriculum. The School Board insisted on purpose-built spaces for domestic arts and commercial development (stenography and typing), as well as spaces for the study of sciences and drafting. All of these spaces were incorporated into Potter's final design and show that Bristol's curriculum was an inclusive one, meant to serve children who would move on to the trades or to college. At the same time the rigors of World War I brought to light the need for physical education in schools. This was reflected in Bristol's state-of-the-art gymnasium, pool, and adjacent athletic fields and track. These spaces, along with the impressive auditorium, were opened to the public, making the high school a place of civic pride for all citizens.

In the 19th century, Horace Mann and Henry Barnard were leaders in the development of standardized plans for school buildings. One of Barnard's best-known texts on the subject of school design was *School Architecture* (1850). Barnard believed that architecture served as an emblem of ethical and rational standards and together with other school reformers set the stage for an evolution of the school building from a single room intended to simply fit as many pupils as possible into an organized center of learning.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several influences at the state and national level took place at once; curriculum expansion, health and safety reforms, and in some cases, legislative reforms impacted the design of modern schools.⁵⁰ Architectural publications and educational journals, such as those produced by the Teacher's College of Columbia University, the National Education Association, and the U.S. Bureau of Education, were popular resources consulted by school boards prior to the construction of buildings. These stressed the importance of proper hygiene, ventilation, lighting and the use of modern construction materials.⁵¹ *Modern American School Buildings* (1909) and *American School Houses* (1910) established standards of light, sanitation and health.⁵²

The plans and materials used in Bristol's High School reflected extensive knowledge of these texts. Potter, who had been designing schools for over twenty years prior to this commission, obviously knew the standards well. Classroom lighting was designed using blind walls to be on the unilateral plan – which meant that light was received from one side only (preferably over the left shoulder) to prevent eye strain. On an early tour of the building the lighting was deemed to be in “perfect” accordance with this theory.⁵³ Ventilation, heating and air quality were important aspects of the standards, which called for “30 cubic feet of fresh air per minute for each pupil...while the heating plant should be adequate to raise the temperature to 70 degrees Fahrenheit in zero weather.”⁵⁴ The Board of Education took a keen interest in investigating the proper systems for the school. In September 1922, members of the Board visited other schools in Bristol, New Haven, and Stratford to investigate the “Wheeler” system of ventilation and report back.⁵⁵

The long, straight corridors of Potter's plans and multiple stairways placed along the perimeter of the building allowed for quick exiting in case of fire⁵⁶ This was a change from common 19th century practice when stairs were often located centrally. The composite material used on the corridor floors was an example of innovative materials that proved to be an investment. Soundproof “Stedman” composite flooring cost \$10,000 (\$3,000 more than the window glass), but was meant to “deaden the noise of treading feet even when classroom doors were open.”⁵⁷

The “Standard School” program brought about a uniformity of school layouts in the 1920s. The National Council on Schoolhouse Construction, formed in 1921, produced a series of standards on building and lot size – as a result, public high schools were recognizable as a building type by

⁵⁰ Jonathan Lane and Rita Walsh, *An Honor and an Ornament: Public School Buildings in Michigan* (Detroit: State Historic Preservation Office and Island Press, 2003), p. 5.

⁵¹ Lane and Walsh, p. 6.

⁵² Flora Ida Ortiz, *Schoolhousing: Planning and Designing Educational Facilities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1994), p. 27.

⁵³ “Description of High School,” *Bristol Press*, November 4, 1922.

⁵⁴ A. D. F. Hamlin (ed.), *Modern School Houses: Being a Series of Authoritative Articles on Planning Sanitation, Heating, and Ventilation, Vol. 1* (New York, NY: The Sweetland Publishing Company, 1910), p. 6.

⁵⁵ “Education Board to Visit Schools,” *Hartford Courant*, September 14, 1922. No subsequent report was found in the records.

⁵⁶ Lane and Walsh, p. 5.

⁵⁷ “Description of High School,” *Bristol Press*, November 4, 1922.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

the end of the 1920s.⁵⁸ Rather than being a wing or section of a local school, high schools were built as monumental structures that represented a symbol of a city or town's success. They were most often Beaux-Arts or Classical in style – both styles were founded on symmetry and referenced Art, Philosophy and mathematic proportion.⁵⁹ Again, Bristol's High School exemplified these ideals. In his opening remarks at the school dedication, Principle Henry E. Cottle spoke of the building's conformity to "generally accepted principles of high school education."⁶⁰

George Wilson Potter

Potter was born in Litchfield, Connecticut and received his education in Boston where he studied under Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) and later worked alongside Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895). Potter served as manager in the office of Van Brunt & Howe prior to opening his own firm at 3 Union Square in New York City. While his primary residence was in New York City, Potter maintained a summer residence on Broad Street in the Forestville section of Bristol, making his connection a personal one⁶¹. Potter's career focused on the design of school buildings, the majority of which were located in Connecticut, New York and Pennsylvania. His obituary in the *New York Times* mentioned several high schools in Peekskill, Poughkeepsie, and Geneva, New York, Ardmore High School in Pennsylvania, and Bristol High School in Connecticut.⁶² He was prolific, having completed dozens of other commissions including libraries, banks and over 63 schools by 1921.⁶³

During the early part of his career Potter designed several important buildings in Connecticut which have since been listed on the National Register: the Italianate-style Laurel Hill School in Norwich (remodeled in 1896, listed in 1987), the Richardsonian Romanesque-style Broad Street School (1897, listed in 1984) in Norwich, the Neo-Classical Southington Public Library (1902, listed in 1989), the United Bank Building in New Milford (1904, listed in 1982), the Classical Revival-style Greenwich High School at 27 Havemeyer Place (1906, listed as part of the Greenwich Municipal Center Historic District in 1998), and the Renaissance Revival-style Uncasville School in Montville (1918, listed in 2000).

Potter's designs for the South Street School in Torrington (1915) and the Bingham School in Bristol (1916) share many of the same Classical Revival-style elements employed in the Bristol's High School design, including projecting pavilions, decorative brickwork on the blind walls, a raised basement, and a flat roof. Potter appeared to be most comfortable working within variations of the Classical Revival style, as demonstrated by his two other noteworthy

⁵⁸ Lane and Walsh, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ "High School Dedication," *Bristol Press*, January 26, 1923.

⁶¹ Federal Census of Hartford County, Connecticut, June 15, 1900. District 119.

⁶² "Wilson Potter Dies," *New York Times*, January 1, 1937.

⁶³ This information was gleaned from an advertisement for the Natural Slate Blackboard Company in which Potter states that he had used the product in all but three of the 63 schools he had completed by that time, *American School Board Journal*, Volume 63 (1921).r

Bristol High School

Name of Property

Hartford County, CT

County and State

commissions in Bristol; the Bingham Elementary School (1916, listed in 2017) and the Bristol Public Library (1906, listed as part of the Federal Hill Historic District in 1986).

Despite similarities to his other Connecticut work such as rusticated basement levels, arched entries and symmetrical, classical proportions, the Bristol High School is the most ambitious of Potter's Connecticut designs. Undertaken at the culmination of his career, the Bristol school is a unique example of Potter's utilization of the Classical Revival style to create a monumental structure that is the focus of Memorial Boulevard, the gateway to downtown Bristol. Greenwich High School served a similar function as an anchor building in downtown Greenwich, but it was decidedly smaller in scale and was later expanded by the addition of a gymnasium. Potter's other school designs tended to be "neighborhood schools", smaller in scale and much less stylistically elaborate. In the Bristol High School, Potter created a design that was unmatched in Connecticut in terms of size and prominence within the community it served.

While still practicing at the time of his death in 1936, Potter's most active years were the first two decades of the 20th century. The completion of Bristol High School appears to have come toward the end of Potter's career in Connecticut; fittingly, it is one of the most important commissions completed for a city that held great significance for the architect.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Books and Articles

“Architects Agree That All Schools Should Be Equipped with Natural Slate Blackboards,”
American School Board Journal (July 1921): 1.

Baker, Lindsay. *History of School Design and its Indoor Environmental Standards, 1900 to Today*. Washington, D. C: National Institute of Building Sciences/National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, 2012.

Bruce, William George. *School Architecture, A Handy Manual for the Use of Architects and School Authorities*, Johnson Service Company Milwaukee WI, 1906.

Clouette, Bruce and Matthew Roth. *Bristol, Connecticut: A Bicentennial History, 1785-1985*. Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Publishing, 1984.

_____. “Federal Hill Historic District, Bristol, CT,” National Register of Historic Places form, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office/National Park Service. Washington, DC, 1986.

Dudley, Clifford. “The History of Public Education in Connecticut.” Yale New Haven Teacher’s Institute. Online at www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1981/cthistory/81.ch.01.x.html#m. Accessed online on 3/24/16.

Forino, Michael. State Register Nomination for the “Memorial Boulevard Middle School, Bristol, CT,” Hartford, CT: Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, 2014.

Hamlin, A. D. F. (ed.). *Modern School Houses: Being a Series of Authoritative Articles on Planning Sanitation, Heating, and Ventilation* (Vol. 1) New York, NY: Sweetland Publishing Company, 1910.

Jenkins, Jessica “Henry Barnard Advances State and National Education Initiatives” *ConnecticutHistory.org* . Online at <http://connecticuthistory.org/henry-barnard-advances-state-and-national-education-initiatives/>. Accessed on March 17, 2016.

Karmazinas, Lucas. “Clara T. O’Connell School, Bristol, CT,” National Register of Historic Places form, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office/National Park Service. Washington, DC, 2015.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

_____. "Clarence A. Bingham School, Bristol, CT," National Register of Historic Places form, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office/National Park Service. Washington, DC, 2015.

Lane, Jonathon and Rita Walsh. *An Honor and an Ornament: Public School Buildings in Michigan*. Detroit, MI: Island Press, 2003.

Lohman, Judith S. "Development of the Right to an Education in Connecticut" OLR Research Report. Online at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/PS98/rpt%5Colr%5Chtm/98-R-1361.htm>. Accessed March 28, 2016.

Ohno, Kate and Cheryl Barb. "South End Historic District, Bristol, CT," National Register of Historic Places form, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office/National Park Service. Washington, DC, 2001.

Ortiz, Flora Ida. *School Housing: Planning and Designing Educational Facilities*. Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1994.

Peck, Epaphroditus. *A History of Bristol, Connecticut*. Hartford, CT: Lewis Street Bookshop, 1932.

Reisner, David and Kate Ohno. "Endee Manor Historic District, Bristol, CT," National Register of Historic Places form, Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office/National Park Service. Washington, DC, 1996.

Smith, Eddy N., George B. Smith, and Allena J. Dates (compilers). *Bristol, Connecticut (In the Olden Time "New Cambridge")*. Hartford: City Printing Company, 1907.

Government Documents

Bristol Board of Education. Reports, 1919-1922, Bristol History Room, Bristol Public Library.

City of Bristol. Report, 1922-1923. High School Building Committee March 8, 1923, Bristol History Room, Bristol Public Library

_____. "Space Needs Analysis Bristol Municipal Buildings."
<http://www.ci.bristol.ct.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/276>. Accessed on February 20, 2016.

U. S. Census Office. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Hartford County, Connecticut. Microfilm, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Newspapers

Bristol Press

- “Albert F. Rockwell Makes Definite Offer on Site,” September 27, 1919.
- “Assembly for the First Time in the Auditorium,” December 19, 1922.
- “Bids for New High School Building,” August 6, 1920.
- “Boulevard Nearly Complete,” September 7, 1921.
- “Boulevard School Has Fulfilled Role Well Serves 7th and 8th Grades,” March 6, 1968.
- “City Officials Consider High School Furnishings at Informal Meeting,” January 25, 1922.
- “Committee Appointed to Establish a High School,” October 14, 1886.
- “Description of High School,” November 4, 1922.
- “Formal Opening of High School,” February 1, 1923.
- “High School Committee Appointed,” Bristol Press, October 20, 1871.
- “High School Dedication,” January 26, 1923.
- “High School Plan Plans Being Considered,” November 14, 1919.
- “High School to Hold Open House,” November 26, 1967.
- “Joint Board Receive Offer from A. F. Rockwell,” September 16, 1919.
- “New High School Opened for Inspection,” September 10, 1891.
- “Plans for New School Approved by Joint Committee” December 2, 1919.
- “Rockwell Accepts Bids,” March 2, 1921.
- “Voters Accept Rockwell School Site,” October 7, 1919.
- “Wilson Potter Selected as Architect for New School,” November 21, 1919.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Hartford Courant

“A. F. Rockwell of Bristol Cut Corn with Fatal Result: Manufacturer Dies After Amputation,” February 17, 1925.

“Architect Presents Plans for High School Addition,” Nov 9, 1955.

“Architects Chosen for New Bristol High School,” November 21, 1919.

“Both Workers Die at St. Francis’ Hospital,” October 28, 1921.

“Bristol High School Plans,” May 3, 1920.

“Bristol Now Needs Larger School,” October 6, 1906.

“Building Won’t Be Ready for Seniors,” May 19, 1922.

“Education Board to Visit Schools,” September 14, 1922.

“Old Circus Lot in Bristol Sold: A. F. Rockwell Buys Dunbar Property,” February 5, 1910.

“Overcrowding Necessitated Immediate Building” October 21, 1919.

“Ready to Settle Labor Dispute: AF Rockwell Holds Conference with Union Leader,” May 25, 1922.

“Rockwell Offers Land for Bristol High School Site,” September 12, 1919.

“Where Will the High School Be Built?,” September 13, 1919.

“Will Investigate Charge of Waste,” March 29, 1922.

“Work on High School Now Nearly Complete,” April 7, 1923.

New York Times

“Wilson Potter Dies; Architect was 68,” January 1, 1937.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office (State Register Form completed 2014)
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.4 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.669879 | Longitude: -72.939326 |
| 2. Latitude: 41.669511 | Longitude: -72.936794 |
| 3. Latitude: 41.668457 | Longitude: -72.939331 |
| 4. Latitude: 41.668765 | Longitude: -72.936453 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The boundary of the property corresponds to the parcel identified as Lot 30 on Tax map 114 on file with the City of Bristol, Connecticut Assessor's Office.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary encompasses the full extent of the historic resource identified in this nomination. It is consistent with the historic parcel boundary in 1921, when the school was constructed. Although a related property that may be eligible for inclusion in the National Register, Memorial Boulevard and its associated park are excluded from this nomination since the significance of this property is related to school design and education history.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Stacey Vairo, Architectural Historian
organization: Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc.
street & number: 569 Middle Turnpike
city or town: Storrs state: CT zip code: 06268
e-mail: svairo@ahs-inc.biz
telephone: (860) 429-2142
date: July 2016

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Photo Log

Name of Property: Bristol High School (Memorial Boulevard School)
City or Vicinity: Bristol
County: Hartford
State: Connecticut
Name of Photographer: Stacey Vairo
Date of Photographs: December 2015 (unless otherwise noted)
Number of Photographs: 28

Descriptions of photographs:

Photo 1 of 28.

East elevation of Bristol High School viewed from Memorial Boulevard, camera facing southwest (March 2016).

Photo 2 of 28.

East elevation, showing entrance, camera facing west.

Photo 3 of 28.

Detail of plaques on east elevation, camera facing southwest.

Photo 4 of 28.

Porticos on east elevation, camera facing south.

Photo 5 of 28.

North wing of east elevation, showing plaques on upper stories, camera facing northwest.

Photo 6 of 28.

Central portion of the west elevation, camera facing northeast.

Photo 7 of 28.

West elevation, showing utility pad, camera facing northeast.

Photo 8 of 28.

North elevation of Bristol High School, camera facing southwest.

Photo 9 of 28.

South elevation of Bristol High School, camera facing northwest (March 2016).

Photo 10 of 28.

Stairwell in north wing, camera facing east (March 2016).

Bristol High School

Name of Property

Hartford County, CT

County and State

Photo 11 of 28.

Balustrade of main staircase, camera facing northwest.

Photo 12 of 28.

Geometric brickwork in main corridor, camera facing south

Photo 13 of 28.

Typical oak doors found throughout the school, camera facing west

Photo 14 of 28.

Lavatories on first floor, camera facing northeast.

Photo 15 of 28.

Typical classroom showing remaining trim at windows, doors and blackboards, camera facing northwest.

Photo 16 of 28.

Cloak room entrance, camera facing south.

Photo 17 of 28.

View of the theatre taken from the stage, camera facing east.

Photo 18 of 28.

Ceiling of the theatre, camera facing east.

Photo 19 of 28.

Blind openings on south wall of theatre, camera facing southeast.

Photo 20 of 28.

Proscenium arch and clock, camera facing west.

Photo 21 of 28.

Cabinet in laboratory room on the third floor, camera facing north.

Photo 22 of 28.

Crane arm in Room 304, camera facing north.

Photo 23 of 28.

Choral room that was originally a science lecture hall, camera facing southwest.

Photo 24 of 28.

Gymnasium, camera facing west.

Bristol High School
Name of Property

Hartford County, CT
County and State

Photo 25 of 28.
Showers in women's locker room, camera facing north.

Photo 26 of 28.
Ceiling panels in shower area of lockers rooms near pool, camera facing south.

Photo 27 of 28.
Mosaic tiles found on pool deck, camera facing north.

Photo 28 of 28.
Former pool area, camera facing north.

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



NO STANDING
OR STOPPING
Vehicles
Except in
Emergency



BRISTOL HIGH SCHOOL

ART

SCIENCE

HISTORY

LANGUAGE



MUSIC



ART



SCIENCE







RECREATION

ATHLETICS

CONCERT



BRISTOL HIGH SCHOOL

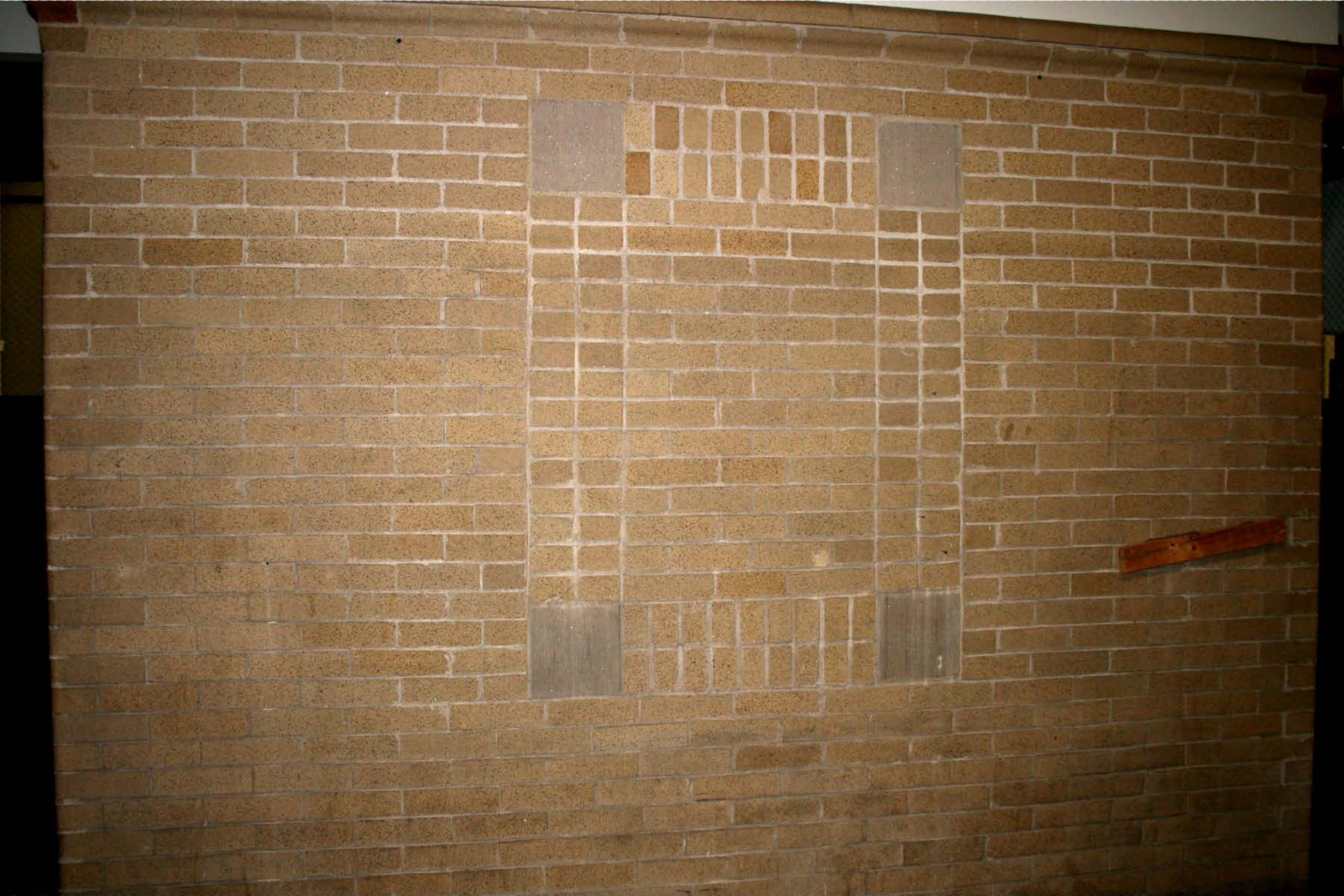
















MEN



I WAS HERE
SEPT 2013
123456789
MR
857
85
9
9
10
MR
HAR
SASSU
MS HERE
CUP
2013
ZACK
SASSU
HAR
HERE
MARGARET
BAND
HIL
JORDAN
ALYSON

Gorgeous!
5141-
LM
A Sp









MEMORIAL BOULEVARD MIDDLE SCHOOL
"Find Place to Learn"







EYE
WASH



• Listen to
• Create

Listen to

Create











ABSOLUTELY
NO ADMITTANCE
OR STORAGE ON
UPPER LEVEL



Evaluation/Return Sheet For Single/Multi Nomination

1 of 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 4/18/2018 Date of Pending List: 5/4/2018 Date of 16th Day: 5/21/2018 Date of 45th Day: 6/4/2018 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 6/4/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Roger Reed Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2278 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Back



Department of Economic and
Community Development

State Historic Preservation Office

April 11, 2018

Mr. Roger Reed
National Park Service
National Register and National Historic Landmarks Programs
1849 C St., NW
Mail Stop 7228
Washington, D.C. 20240



Subject: Bristol High School, Hartford County, Connecticut, National Register Nomination

Dear Mr. Reed:

The following National Register nomination materials are submitted for your review:

- Printed cover sheet
- CD of National Register text. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Bristol High School to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1 CD of Digital Photographs

This National Register nomination was approved by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Review Board (SRB) on June 23, 2017. The City of Bristol is the owner of the property and initiated the nomination. Notice of the SRB meeting was sent to the mayor's office, city legal counsel, city building department, and local historical society. No letters of support or objection were received. The City of Bristol is not a CLG.

If you have any questions, or if this office can be of assistance, please call Jenny Scofield at 860-500-2343.

Sincerely,

Jenny F. Scofield,
National Register Coordinator

Enclosures

State Historic Preservation Office

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5 | Hartford, CT 06103 | Cultureandtourism.org

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer An Equal Opportunity Lender