

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

For NPS use only  
received DEC 19 1983  
date entered

1. Name

historic BROAD STREET SCHOOL  
and/or common Broad Street School

2. Location

street & number 100 Broad Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Norwich N/A vicinity of  
state Connecticut code 09 county New London code 011

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Broad Street School Associates Limited Partnership  
street & number 790 Farmington Avenue, 2-E Farmington Commons  
city, town Farmington N/A vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Norwich City and Town Clerk  
street & number City Hall, Room 214  
city, town Norwich state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1983  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission  
city, town 59 South Prospect Street 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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

Broad Street School is situated on a knoll on the north side of Broad Street, in a neighborhood of stylish 19th-century Victorian residences. Built in 1897, the Romanesque Revival school is a two-story, yellow-brick structure with a high granite foundation and a slate-covered hip roof. The elaborate and eclectic decorative scheme includes granite trim, contrasting brown- and molded-brick stringcourses, and Classical moldings, such as egg-and-dart, bead-and-reel, and dentils. The side elevations carry out detailing similar to that on the facade, while the rear elevation uses simple yellow brick for both the walls and detailing. Broad Street School was designed by Wilson Potter (1868-1936), a prominent school architect from New York City.

The present appearance of the school is close to the original design. The school has two wings, a main one set with its long axis parallel to the street and a rear one set perpendicular. The foundation is made of rough-surfaced Monson granite laid in random ashlar. It rises above grade, terminating in a water table of similar granite, and has openings cut into it for the basement windows. The principal wall material is yellow brick laid in common bond. The facade is symmetrical, with shallow end pavilions and a recessed center portion fronted by an ornate entry pavilion. The entry pavilion has five round-arched openings, the center one fronting the library and the end pairs opening to the porch contained by the pavilion (Photos 1 and 5). The archways are outlined in curved brick with egg-and-dart molding. The drip moldings have floral-carved granite imposts. A stringcourse of molded brick over dentils extends across the pavilion and around its sides, at a level above the openings. In the pavilion's sides, similarly detailed round-arched openings provide access to the two entries, also in round-arched openings with molded brick surrounds (Photo 6). The pavilion's cornice features egg-and-dart molding, a course of triglyphs, and copper coping. Atop the pavilion's roof is a balustrade of rectangular-section piers supporting a granite rail.

To the sides of the pavilion there is a group of three windows on each floor. First-floor windows are flat-arched with granite sills and splayed-brick lintels; granite stringcourses set off the fixed transoms from the main openings (Photo 4). Encompassing each triplet of first-floor windows is a brick label molding with pearl detailing. Second-story windows are round-arched with granite sills and brick lintels, the latter featuring an upper course with molded floral designs; granite stringcourses divide the main openings from the round-arched transoms. The corners of the facade are accentuated with courses of molded brick with cylindrical shapes alternating with plain courses to create a quoin effect (Photo 3). The main wing's side elevations have fenestration similar to the facade: flat-arched first-story openings and round-arched second-story openings, four per floor. Also

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Description (continued):

continuing from the front to the sides are stringcourses of brown brick at the heights of the first-story transoms and lintels and of the second-story sills. The rear elevation of the main wing has three window openings, with segmental-arched openings and granite sills (Photo 2). The rear wing, five bays wide and four bays deep, has window openings similar to those of the main wing's rear elevation. The molded- and brown-brick stringcourses of the facade and side elevations continue across the rear elevation and rear wing with raised courses of simple yellow brick. The cornice of the main roof has, from bottom to top: a row of pearl moldings; a row of molded-brick modillions; a stringcourse of molded brick; a band of bead-and-reel molding; and a copper gutter. The hip roof is covered with grey slate with copper flashing on the ridges and peaked copper finials. A shallow dormer, with two small lights, appears in the center of the front roof.

The interior layout continues the symmetry expressed on the exterior. All the floors have a balanced plan, centered around an axis perpendicular to the facade. In the basement, lavatories and the boiler room are between two larger rooms that served as recreation areas. The first floor held the library centered behind the facade, a classroom in each end pavilion, and a large assembly room in the rear wing. The second-floor plan resembles the first-floor's, with classrooms in the ends and an assembly room to the rear; the central space behind the facade was occupied by the school office and teachers' room.

A substantial amount of the interior finish materials remain in place. Walls are of plaster and floors are of narrow oak-board except in several of the classrooms, where linoleum has been installed. The classrooms also feature oak chair rails, and moldings at the blackboard level. Interior window and door surrounds are also of oak, as are the interior, horizontal-paneled doors. Modern dropped ceilings obscure the original ceilings, which are wood throughout except in the side classrooms on the second floor, where pressed-metal is found (Photos 7 and 8). The entry vestibule and stairway are lined with brick, and the stairs are of iron, with an oak rail on iron balusters and newels (Photo 9).

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Description (continued):

Although it has stood vacant for several years, Broad Street School remains in generally good condition. The roof appears to be sound, as there is no evidence of substantial moisture penetration. Some of the interior paint is peeling, but this condition may well derive from the normal life cycle of the paint system rather than from environmental factors. Except for the dropped ceilings and some linoleum floors, the interior remains substantially unaltered. The exterior, as well, has suffered no modern alterations. The major loss from the school's historical appearance comes in the form of the plywood that now fills the window openings. But this change is reversible: the installation of the plywood left the oak, one-over-one sash in place, albeit obscured. In summary, Broad Street School continues to present an accurate portrayal of its original appearance.

# 8. Significance

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

Criteria A, C

**Specific dates** 1897 **Builder/Architect** Wilson Potter, architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Broad Street School is architecturally significant as a richly decorated example of the Romanesque Revival style, designed by a noted school architect, Wilson Potter of New York City, and executed with meticulous attention to detail and the use of quality materials (Criterion C). Although the basic hip roof and H-shaped plan prefigure the standard public school of the early 20th century, the extent, variety, and quality of architectural details sets Broad Street School apart as a special historic resource. The school is also significant because it reflects the historical development of Norwich, a thriving mercantile and industrial center in the 19th century, and because it exemplifies turn-of-the-century educational philosophy (Criterion A). The school was the largest and most ornate school built by the Norwich Central School District in a major rebuilding program in the 1890s, and it attracted enough attention to be included as one of the up-to-date school buildings featured in a special section of the State Board of Education's Annual Report of 1902.

Stylistically, the school owes much of its inspiration to the revival of Romanesque forms popular at the end of the 19th century. The basement story's rough-surfaced stone, several series of arched openings, the medieval dripmolds, the floral carvings, and the overall massiveness of the design are all typical features of the Romanesque Revival. Nevertheless, the school also incorporates many decorative details found in the more modern Second Renaissance Revival architecture which took hold around the turn of the century. Among these are the Classical cornice moldings and the suggestion of quoins in the brickwork. With this eclectic approach, the architect embellished the exterior to a degree not commonly seen in public schools. At the same time, he created a sense of order and even monumentality with the symmetrical facade, the rather formal use of end pavilions, and the deep front porch.

The Norwich Central School District commissioned the prestigious architect Wilson Potter to design its new elementary school. Potter made a specialty of school architecture and his works include New York City's Fulton High School, Bristol (Connecticut) High School, and another Norwich school, Laurel Hill. The fact that a renowned architect was hired to design Broad Street School indicates the character of the neighborhood in which it was located: the Broadway, Broad Street and Washington Avenue area was inhabited by Norwich's social and economic elite. Norwich was an important port city, strategically located on the Thames River, and an industrial center in eastern Connecticut throughout the 19th century. The affluent citizens of the

(continued)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Connecticut Board of Education. Report, 1902. Pp. 151ff.  
 Norwich Evening Record, September 18, 1897.  
 Norwich Central School District. Annual Report of the Superintendent, 1897, p. 15.  
 Withey, Henry. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles, 1956.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .8

Quadrangle name Norwich

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	1 8	7 4 3 9 0 0	4 6 0 2 0 5 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property includes the school and small adjacent playground area, as shown in the Norwich Assessor Records, Map 85, Block 69, Lot 11.

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Matthew Roth and Bruce Clouette, Partners - edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator		
organization	Historic Resource Consultants	date	September 28, 1983
street & number	The Colt Armory 55 Van Dyke Avenue	telephone	(203) 547-0268
city or town	Hartford	state	Connecticut

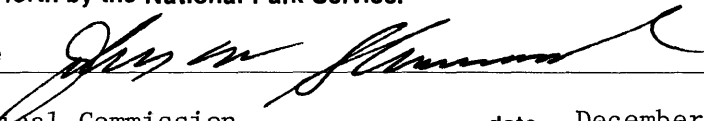
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 December 13, 1983

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

*for Melares Byer*  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 1/19/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Statement of Significance (continued):

Broad Street School district wanted a handsome school which would reflect the progressive and proper image of the community which it served, and thus the school board hired a notable architect. As a point of comparison, the Laurel Hill School, also designed by Wilson Potter, is nearly identical in form but lacks most of the ornamentation found in Broad Street School.

The design of Broad Street School embodies not only the aesthetic expression of restrained and ordered progress, but also the functional expression of late 19th-century educational philosophy. Architects and educators took very seriously the potential for a building to influence and inspire the didactic function. In the late 19th century American education was still adjusting to the transition from its simple origins of small, multi-aged classes, with classrooms housed in small vernacular buildings. In the 19th century many crucial changes occurred. Population centers grew and education was viewed as not only instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, but also socialization into and affirmation of American values. Thus, late 19th-century school architecture attempted to communicate such values as order and ambition, the latter by emulating a concept of grandeur seen in both Classical and Renaissance aesthetics. Broad Street School exemplifies the new educational philosophy of the turn-of-the-century in its architecture. Wilson Potter created symmetrical facades which in turn mirrored symmetrical interiors. Symmetry expressed not only order, but allowed the separation by sex of student entries and recreation areas (a common 19th-century practice) while providing identical facilities for each sex. Other practical values associated with the new school included: the simple provision of more space than was afforded by the old frame school; well-lit classrooms, resulting from high ceilings and many large windows; and hygiene, as exemplified by indoor plumbing in the lavatory areas. Upon its dedication in September, 1897, the school was extolled in the newspaper as a "... seat of learning, a new and thoroughly up-to-date schoolhouse for the present and future youths and maidens. ... Its simple yet ornate architecture ... is a credit to the city." In its long years of service to Norwich citizens and its continuing well-preserved state, the intentions of the city, the neighborhood, and the architect were well-fulfilled.