

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JUN 11 1980

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Maeser School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 150 South 500 East not for publication

city, town Provo vicinity of congressional district

state Utah code 049 county Utah code 049

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A <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
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Provo Board of Education

street & number 280 West 940 North

city, town Provo vicinity of state Utah

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Utah County Courthouse

street & number University and Center Street

city, town Provo state Utah 84601

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Utah Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Utah State Historical Society

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Maeser School is a handsome example of the civic style of the late nineteenth century with its classical, symmetrical massing and Romanesque detailing. A hip roof with boxed cornice, brackets supporting wide eaves, and a corbeled brick frieze with architrave, caps the building. Corbeled horizontal coursing and dentiled and plain stringcourses accent the wall surfaces.

Distinguishing the south facade is a central three-story engaged tower with parapet roof. Triple sequences of long, double-hung, sash windows with transoms pierce the top two stories of the tower. The entrance is typically Romanesque with its large masonry arch, fanlight transom over double doors, and engaged columns of rusticated brick and masonry bands with beehive caps. Distinguishing the east facade is a central engaged tower with a gable reminiscent of the Mission style which is part of a 1912 addition. The fenestration is similar to that of the south tower, but it is without the coursing, and in addition has an arched semicircular window with keystone and imposts. Two rondels flank the entrance arch which is of rusticated brick and masonry voussoirs resting on battered piers with masonry imposts and coursing. A fanlight transom is located over the double door. The north elevation also has a central tower with a bracketed pediment, two semicircular arched transoms, and a modern three panel window.

Side entrances on the west and east elevations each consist of an arch over a fanlight transom and double door, stepped imposts and battered, rusticated brick piers. A parapet roof with wooden cornice, stepped brick frieze and dentiled architrave caps the main east entrance. Above the parapet is an arch over a semicircular transom and three double-hung sash windows.

Fenestration on the building is symmetrical and consists of paired, arched, double-hung sash windows with transoms on the second story, and paired segmental windows on the first. There have been several window alterations: a band of six windows with transoms painted to correspond to the arch and square theme of the facade replace the original arched windows of the side elevations. On the south wall two first-story windows have been replaced by a bay of three windows with a mansard roof. The second-story windows of the north elevation have been bricked in and the windows of the side entrances on the west elevation seem altered. Only one of the original paired corbeled chimneys is intact. Despite these alterations Maeser School retains its original architectural character. The 1912 addition, designed to duplicate the original building and its brickwork, is so compatible that it is difficult to detect that an alteration was made. A low, one-story, 1957 addition of red brick contrasts with the yellow brick of the older section; but, having been attached to the end of the 1912 addition with a narrow hall separating the two buildings, it does not interfere with the school's original appearance and at first impression seems a separate entity.

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		

Specific dates 1898 **Builder/Architect** Richard C. Watkins

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Maeser School is a significant example of civic architecture with applied Romanesque ornament. This style was popular in Utah from 1880–1900, but few examples remain. Constructed in 1898, it is the oldest public school in Provo, Utah, still in use, and is one of the best-preserved examples of the work of Utah architect Richard Watkins. It is a monument to the community's endeavors to advance education and a token of their respect to Karl G. Maeser, a prominent educator, after whom the school was named.

The Romanesque Revival style, popularized in America by Henry Hobson Richardson in the 1880's, is characterized by heavy, solid, rugged buildings with massive, low, semicircular arches and imaginative use of towers. Richardsonian-Romanesque facades are punctuated with transomed windows, arranged in groups, set deeply into the wall. Variation in surface texture and color (polychromy) add visual interest, along with short towers that do not distract from the solid shape of the building.¹ The historical associations of Romanesque were not so rigidly fixed as with other styles such as Gothic, which was associated with religion and Christianity, thus Romanesque design and ornamentation were often used on new building types whose functions suggested no clear associations.² These included civic and commercial buildings.

In Utah, Romanesque design features were widely used on commercial buildings, particularly in city centers where arches repeatedly decorated facades. Numerous public school buildings also used Romanesque ornament, largely due to the influence of the architect Richard C. Watkins who designed many of them in that particular style. One of his designs, the Maeser School, demonstrates the application of Romanesque detail to a typical, symmetrical, civic structure of classical-box design with a hip roof. The Romanesque features of the two-story brick Maeser School include its heaviness and solidity, using semi-circular arched windows to lighten and ornament the wall surfaces. These arches are repeated by the massive entrance arches. The transomed windows are deeply set and arranged in groupings of three or four. The towers are a modest three stories high, and the original south tower appears short and compact in proportion with the building due to the flat parapet roof. Polychrome coloring is achieved through light and dark shades of brick and different types of building materials, which also add variation to the surface texture. The school is one of the few remaining from the Victorian era in Utah, and is one of the best-preserved examples of Watkins' work. This evaluation was made on the basis of an extensive architectural and historical survey conducted in Provo, Utah, during the summer of 1980.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Brigham Young University. Dedication and Naming of 22 Buildings. Provo: Brigham Young University, May 26, 1954.
Grant, Heber J., address. "Honoring Dr. Karl G. Maeser," Brigham Young University Quarterly 31:2, November 1, 1934.

See continuation sheet 3

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 4 acres

Quadrangle name Provo

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2	4	4	4	7	8	0	4	4	5	3	4	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Block 10, Plat C, Provo City Survey

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Deborah R. Temme, Arch. Hist./Ken Cannon, Hist./Cheryl Hartman, Researcher

organization Utah State Historical Society

date May 20, 1982

street & number 300 Rio Grande

telephone (801) 533-6017

city or town Salt Lake City

state Utah 84101

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

Melvin T. Smith

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 26, 1982

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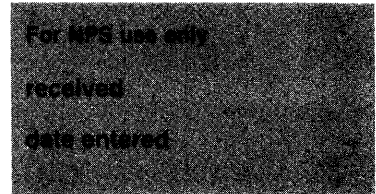
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Kevin A. Smith
for Keeper of the National Register

date 7-26-82

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 8

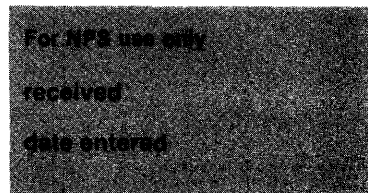
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The architect Richard C. Watkins (1858-1941) was born in Bristol England and emigrated to Utah in 1872. From 1890-92 he worked in Salt Lake City as a draftsman for Richard K. A. Kletting who was Utah's most important architect for more than a generation. Watkins began his own firm in 1892 and, in association with various other architects over his fifty-year career span, was perhaps the most prolific architect in central Utah. From 1912 to 1920 Watkins was appointed State Architect. His firm office designed about 240 schools and about 140 other buildings. Besides the Maeser School of 1898, the Franklin School in Provo was designed by Watkins who resided there until 1908 when he moved back to Salt Lake City. (For other schools by Watkins, see the Spring City School, National Register.)

The present site of Provo was settled by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) in 1849 when Fort Utah was built near the Provo River³. The Mormons, fleeing from Nauvoo, Illinois, due to persecution, headed west and established themselves in Utah near the Great Salt Lake in 1847. Soon after the settlement of Salt Lake City had begun, exploreres were sent to survey the surrounding lands. Provo, the first settlement in Utah Valley, was part of a plan for a chain of communities to extend outward from Salt Lake City. The Mormon communities were planned according to a grid system set forth by their leaders, and were compact and well organized. One of the first orders of business after settlement was the establishment of a school, and soon after the completion of Fort Utah school was being taught in one of the local log houses. Early schools were sometimes held in public buildings, but often were in private residences. As soon as 1851, Territorial law made provisions giving the Provo City Council power to establish, support, and regulate common schools. In 1853 property taxes were approved for building schools. Before the 1870's in Provo, school buildings were small adobe structures. Then in 1875 one united school district was formed and an era of better buildings and schools began. Local commitment to education brought about significant changes that led to the demand for better educational facilities. For example, in 1888 George H. Brimhall introduced the policy of employing male teachers who made teaching their life's work. In 1890 the free school law was passed statewide, and locally a City Board of Education was elected. Larger buildings, needed to accomodate the increased attendance, replaced the adobe schoolhouses. They were payed for through taxation voted directly by the tax payers. In 1898 the Board of Education approved plans, not to exceed \$8,000, for the construction of a new, two-story, brick building with four classrooms on each floor (the south of the present Maeser School). The first two classrooms of the school were completed that year and the remainder in 1900. The Maeser School, replacing the Webster School which had become too small, was dedicated November 9, 1898 with Karl G. Maeser as guest of honor. In 1912 the school was enlarged by the addition of a compatible extension to the north of the original building. Another addition was made in 1957.

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Continuation sheet 2

Item number 8

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Under the consolidated city school district, the Provo elementary school children attended four different schools: the Central, later the Parker; the Webster, replaced by the Maeser School; and two West schools, one the Franklin, and the other replaced by the Timpanogos school. In 1938 the Parker and Timpanogos schools were demolished. The Franklin school is now used as a social hall, and the well-preserved Maeser School still functions as an elementary school.

Karl Gottfried Maeser, the man after whom the school was named, was born in Germany. He was a brilliant student and was appointed vice-director to Herr Meith, later his father-in-law, at the prestigious Budich Institute in Dresden. In 1855 he and his wife Anna Therese Meith were baptized into the Mormon church, and left the following year for Utah. Detained enroute to serve various missions, the Maesers arrived in Utah in 1860. Karl operated various schools and served other missions before he was called in 1876 to establish an academy in Provo in the name of the church. It was called Brigham Young Academy, later to become Brigham Young University, and Maeser served as director, principal, and instructor. His career as an educator extended its influence to the lives of many due to Maeser's concern and interest and desire to give each person something that would be of lasting value in the way of instruction or encouragement. Heber J. Grant, a president of the church, saluted Maeser in a discourse, saying, "Some of our outstanding men . . . attribute largely to the force of character of Brother Maeser and the impression made upon them while under his influence their successes in life."⁴

Notes

¹For information on the Romanesque style see, Leland M. Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture (New York: Harper & Row, 1979); also Carole Rifkind, A Field Guide to American Architecture (New York: New American Library, 1980).

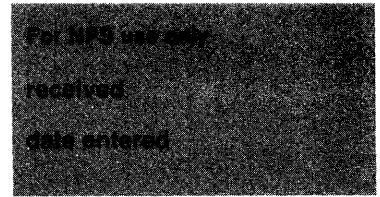
²Roth, A Concise History of American Architecture, p. 116.

³For more information on the history of Provo see, Wayne L. Wahlquist, "Settlement Processes in the Mormon Core Area 1847-1890," dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1974; J. Marinus Jensen, A.M., History of Provo (Provo: New Century Printing Company, 1924); and John Clifton Moffit, The Story of Provo, Utah (Provo: Press Publishing Company, 1975).

⁴Address of President Heber J. Grant, "Honoring Dr. Karl G. Maeser," Brigham Young University Quarterly 31:2, November 1, 1934. For more information on Karl Maeser see, Dedication and Naming of 22 Buildings (Provo: Brigham Young University, May 26, 1954), pp. 38-39.

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Continuation sheet 3

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Jensen, J. Marinus, A.M. History of Provo. Provo: New Century Printing Company, 1924.

Moffitt, John Clifton. The Story of Provo, Utah. Provo: Press Publishing, 1975.

Sanborn Maps, 1900, 1925.

Utah Historic Sites Inventory (State Register).

Wahlquist, Wayne L. "Settlement Processes in the Mormon Core Area 1847-1890,"
Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1974.