

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 4 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Seymour High School and School Annex

and/or common Center School and Annex

2. Location

street & number 100 Bank Street n/a not for publication

city, town Seymour n/a vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county New Haven code 009

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" 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: Senior Citizens Center

4. Owner of Property

name Town of Seymour

street & number 1 First Street

city, town Seymour n/a vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number 1 First Street

city, town Seymour 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, 59 S. Prospect St.

city, town Hartford state Connecticut

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 Seymour High School and School Annex are prominently sited on a hill on Bank Street, overlooking the Naugatuck River and Downtown Seymour. The 2½-story Victorian Eclectic-style brick school (constructed in 1885) has a single-story restroom addition (ca.1910) attached to the north (rear) elevation. The 2-story Second Renaissance Revival-style brick School Annex (constructed in 1905) is situated approximately twenty feet east of the school, and its facade line is set back about twenty feet further from the street than the facade line of the school. The east and west sides of the property have driveways leading to asphalt-paved parking lots at the rear of the two buildings. Rolling lawns facing Bank Street were formerly cultivated with flower beds. A chain-link fence now separates the property from the street .

High School Exterior

Brick walls of the Victorian Eclectic structure are set in common bond, and rise from a rough-faced cut-stone raised basement (photograph #s 1-3). A pyramidal-roof bell tower centered on the facade, projecting slightly from the main wall of the building, forms a central axis and reflects the center-hall plan. The intricately detailed bell tower, porch, roof dormers and chimneys form the major decorative elements of the otherwise utilitarian exterior elevations. The four-stage tower is distinguished by an open granite stair which leads to a projecting, enclosed entrance porch. The porch has a double-leaf glass-paneled entry door surmounted by a transom. A single window and transom are situated on each side of the porch as well as in the wall of the raised basement. The porch is further embellished by two stone bands and by a simple corbeled cornice. The tower's second stage consists of three pairs of double-hung rectangular sash. This triple series of windows light the front stair hall to the second floor. The third stage (attic level) has another triple series of paired, fixed sash with each opening containing six window lights. Brick bands and corbeling add textural interest to this stage. The top stage of the tower features an open, round-arched arcade with horizontal stone pieces connecting the imposts of each arch. The composition is surmounted by corbeled brick sections. The original bell, cast in Baltimore in 1885 at the Henry McShane Foundry, remains intact and in working order on this level. The tower is finished by a corbeled brick cornice surmounted by an imbricated-slate pyramidal roof with iron cresting. Four rectangular chimneys project from the top of the hipped roof, finely detailed with blind, round arches in the fashion of the bell tower arcade. Each chimney is surmounted by a stone band and a cap with side openings for the flue.

Side walls (east and west) of the school feature segmentally-arched fenestration above the rectangular sash of the raised basement. Window openings have stone sills and double layers of archivolt trim. A band of terra cotta trim, with alternating blocks of pellet and trefoil molding, joins the second-floor window sills around the entire structure. Narrow lines of brick corbeling between the roof cornice and the second-floor sash add height, shadow and textural interest to the elevations. A pair of gabled wooden dormers set in the attic level of each elevation are intricately detailed with paired rectangular sash surmounted by fixed transoms (each with nine lights). The tympanum of each has wooden, louvered trim and is framed by a full cornice. Metal fire stairs with diagonal bracing lead from second-floor fire

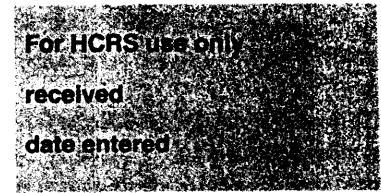
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7. DESCRIPTION

doors to the ground level on the side elevations. A projecting central-stair tower on the north (rear) elevation features a gabled upper section on the attic level, articulated by corbeling and stone banding (photograph #3). The single-story restroom addition (ca.1910) extends along the ground level of the rear of the school, barely visible from Bank Street. The brick addition features a layer of corbeled brick near the roof cornice, and a single layer of vertically laid brick for added textural interest.

High School Interior

The interior of the school remains remarkably well preserved, with the addition of linoleum over original wood floors, glass-and-metal fire-door partitions in the center hall on the first floor, and paint over the originally varnished wood trim. Front and rear stairwells access the basement and two main floors. A separate enclosed stair leads from the second floor to the attic. The unfinished attic, well lit by the roof dormers, is completely open in plan. First and second-floor plans are identical. The eight classrooms on the two main floors, together with multipurpose rooms in the basement, were originally designed to accommodate 380 pupils. The large center hall on both main floors forms a cross and accesses four classrooms (two on each side). The basement is finished with several smaller rooms, as well as a boiler room. (The furnace was removed ca.1970, and the building is now heated by the furnace in the Annex.)

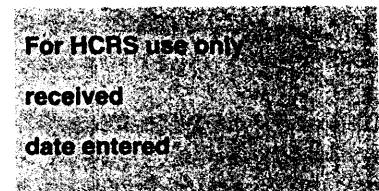
Interior millwork consists of flat architraves with bullseye corner blocks around windows and doors (photograph #4). Classrooms have tongue-and-groove wainscotting. Window sills are extended by bracketed shelf pieces. Nine-paneled wooden classroom doors are surmounted by moveable glass transoms. Wide door jambs have wood-paneled inserts.

School Annex Exterior

The eleven-by-six-bay slate-roofed Annex is an excellently proportioned two-story hipped-roof structure featuring a three-bay extended, hipped-roof pavilion on the facade. The structure adapts elements of the Second Renaissance Revival style to create a formal appearance in contrast with the picturesque Victorian Eclectic High School (photograph#5). Although smaller in scale and finished in a more restrained and sophisticated fashion, the elevations and plan of the structure are similar to those of the High School. The bell tower is replaced by a projecting pavilion featuring brick quoining. The pavilion's central bay consists of a recessed round-arched window opening on the second floor. The arch is highlighted by brick voussoirs extending to impostes. The round-arched window has wide radiating muntins shaped in the fashion of voussoirs. On the first floor, the central bay of the pavilion consists of an inset entrance with double-leaf glass-paneled doors surmounted by a glass transom similar to the high school entrance. The entrance and second-floor window are divided by a paneled spandrel and a denticulated panel beneath the window. Two smaller rectangular windows with flat arches, which flank the central bay, form a vaguely Palladian motif on the second floor. The smooth appearance of the exterior of the Annex is achieved

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7. DESCRIPTION

through use of closely spaced rectangular sash surmounted by flat brick arches. In contrast with the coursed stone foundation of the High School, the Annex features a continuous brick basement wall above a granite foundation (not visible from the street). The basement level is distinguished from the main floors by a stone water table and the lack of quoining. A row of stone banding beneath the second-floor windows adds definition to the two main levels, and serves to emphasize the wide, flat spandrel between first and second floors. Each of two rectangular chimneys closest to the facade features three round arches with louvered openings, quite similar in form to the less visible chimneys of the high school. The chimneys are intricately detailed with stone banding and denticulated, corbeled cornices. Two simple, square chimneys rise on the northeast corner of the building. An extended hipped-roof section with a hipped dormer projects from the northeast corner of the north (rear) elevation of the Annex (photograph #6). A single-story addition on the northwest side adjoins the single-story restroom addition of the High School.

Annex Interior

Now used as headquarters for the Seymour Senior Citizens Center (basement and first floor), and the Seymour Board of Education (second floor), the interior of the Annex is remarkably well-preserved, featuring its original plan and varnished wood trim. A wide center hall provides access to two classrooms east and west; the rear, extended section of the building is a stair hall to the second floor (photograph #7). Door and window trim are flat-faced with architrave trim in the Neo-classical style. Classrooms have built-in cabinets with glass-paneled doors. The second floor is similar in plan to the first floor. The basement contains a large kitchen, furnace room, and several multipurpose rooms.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

In 1920 a new high school was built on Pine Street. Seymour High School was renamed Center School, and the two buildings were used as an elementary school until their closing in 1975. In 1978 the town utilized the first floor of the Annex as the Seymour Senior Citizens Center, and the second floor as offices for the Seymour Board of Education. Currently underutilized, Center School is used for town meetings and headquarters for the Seymour Historical Society and Museum.

Architecture

The Seymour High School and Annex, displaying a high degree of architectural integrity, are the most significant examples of intact late nineteenth-century institutional architecture in the town of Seymour. A typical example of High Victorian Eclectic design, the architectural significance of the High School was greatly enhanced after construction of the more restrained yet totally compatible School Annex. Both structures were designed by New Haven architect Leoni W. Robinson.

Architect Leoni W. Robinson (1852-1923) was noted for his stylized

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
Criteria A, C		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		
Specific dates	1885, 1905		Builder/Architect	Leoni W. Robinson, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Seymour High School (1885) and School Annex (1905) are highly significant examples of late nineteenth-and early twentieth-century-institutional architecture in the town of Seymour (Criterion C). Designed by the prolific New Haven architect Leoni W. Robinson, the two buildings reflect changing architectural tastes during the period 1880–1910. While Robinson's plans and elevations for the two structures are remarkably similar, the buildings each assume unique and distinctive profiles through differences in scale, fenestration, roof shape and decorative finish. Constructed at the zenith of the town's industrial development period, these buildings evidence a municipal commitment of providing high-quality public education within a healthful and comfortable school environment (Criterion A).

Historical Background

The history of Seymour High School may be traced to the founding in 1849 of the Humphreysville Academy, Seymour's first institution for "higher education."¹ The Academy (with a limited enrollment of 47 students) was housed in temporary leased quarters, and struggled to received local support and recognition. In 1851 a group of residents formed the Humphreysville High School Association for the purpose of promoting higher education in the town. During the following years considerable debate focused on municipal support for high school education. The Academy, with its limited enrollment and lack of physical plant, clearly did not meet local needs. Finally, in 1864 the Union High School was established, and classes were conducted in several leased buildings around the town.² At a town meeting held in 1866, a proposal was made to construct a new town hall with a separate "high school room." Action on the proposal was indefinitely postponed. Progress was made in 1868 with the establishment of the Seymour School Dirstrict (Consolidated School District) for the purpose of consolidating and administering the town's schools. Eleven years later the town voted (104–20) to appropriate \$8000 to build a new high school. In January 1884, the town purchased for \$3000 a two-acre lot from Martha G. Devine.³ In February, \$25,000 was appropriated for the erection of a new high school (sum later increased to \$39,500). Ground was broken in June 1884 by the Building Committee, which consisted of James Swan, Edmund Day, W.H.H. Wooster, Thomas James and F.H. Beecher (secretary). The Annual Report of 1885 stated: "A long needed want has been filled." The two main floors were ready for occupancy in Fall, 1886; W.H. Angleston was installed as first principal.⁴ The eight classrooms on the two main floors were used for both elementary and high-school instruction.

In response to growing enrollment, the town voted in 1905 to appropriate \$20,000 for the erection of a School Annex on the property of Center School. The Annex was constructed for use as an elementary school. In 1906 the four first-floor classrooms were finished and ready for use. The basement and second floor were finished in 1907. In 1908 the School Board recommended removal of the "unsightly and unsanitary (wood) outbuildings" (toilets) which were situated directly in back of the high school. The single-story brick addition, which contained separate restrooms for boys and girls, was constructed ca.1910.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Illustrated Review of the Naugatuck Valley. New York: Sovereign Publishing and Engraving Company, 1890.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2

Quadrangle name Naugatuck

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	6	0	7	8	0	4	5	8	4	4	7	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

As described in Seymour Land Records as Lot 128, containing 2 acres.

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

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

state n/a code n/a county n/a code n/a

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jack A. Gold, Architectural Historian - edited by John Herzan,

Jack A. Gold National Register Coordinator

organization Historic Preservation Consultant date May 1983

street & number 50 Hubinger St. telephone 203 389 4590

city or town New Haven state CT 06511

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

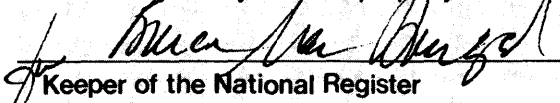
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date September 23, 1983

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

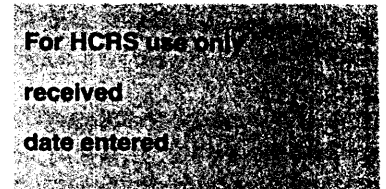
 date 11/17/83
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

institutional designs--monumental, richly ornamented, and prominently sited structures incorporating Queen Anne, Victorian Gothic, Second Renaissance and/or Neo-classical stylistic elements. Robinson's well-known New Haven buildings include the Welch School (1883), Lovell School (1884), New Haven Water Company Building (1902), Jane Ellen Hope Building (at Yale Medical School, 1902), and Winchester Repeating Arms Company factory complex (1892-1920).

In contrast with the highly textural and asymmetrical elevations of the Queen Anne-style Welch School (listed in the National Register in 1983), Seymour High School incorporates fairly austere, symmetrical elevations. The bulk of the structure's decorative features are on the attic level and applied to the bell tower and chimneys. Use of milled and gabled dormers, projecting stair or bell towers, and low-hipped roof shapes are hallmarks of Robinson's school designs during this period. The School Annex exhibits a more formal, restrained, and horizontal appearance which approximates the Second Renaissance style. This later style is typical of Robinson's later works such as the New Haven Water Company and the Jane Ellen Hope Building. These buildings feature planar wall surfaces, strong horizontal lines, use of quoining, and smoothly finished brick similar to the Annex. The Annex appears strongly horizontal through the use of stone banding and larger, closely spaced windows with flat arches. In addition, the hipped, three-bay projecting pavilion imparts a Palladian motif, providing the most salient stylistic differentiation between the two structures. The Neo-classical influence is also evident in the interior millwork which incorporates architraves with molded backbands.

Both structures were considered model school buildings at the time of construction. In a survey published in 1890 on industrial and mercantile activity in the Naugatuck Valley, the Seymour High School was described as "an architectural model."⁵ Indeed, architect Robinson incorporated wide hallways, high-ceilinged classrooms and adequate ventilation into the plans for both buildings. Consideration for classroom comfort through increased lighting, large classroom volume, adequate ventilation, and central heating, were nineteenth-century physical improvements which became standard specifications in school designs during the twentieth century.

NOTES

¹Seymour Centennial. Seymour: The Bayliss Press, 1950, p.10.

²J.L. Rockey, History of New Haven County. New York: Preston and Company, 1892, vol.2, p.580.

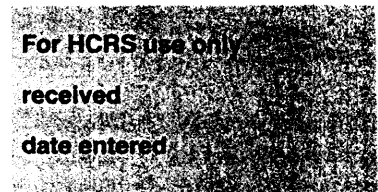
³Town of Seymour, Annual Report, 1884, p.15.

⁴The basement interior was finished in 1887.

⁵Illustrated Review of the Naugatuck Valley. New York: Sovereign Publishing and Engraving Company, 1890.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Malloy, Leo T. Tercentenary Pictorial and History of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. Ansonia: Emerson Brothers, 1935.

Seymour Centennial. Seymour: The Bayliss Press, 1950. Filed at Seymour Town Clerk's Office.

Town of Seymour, Annual Reports (1868-1910). Filed at Seymour Town Clerk's Office.