

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **MAR 21 1983**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Welch Training School

and/or common Welch School

2. Location

street & number 495 Congress Avenue n/a not for publication

city, town New Haven 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 type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name City of New Haven, Board of Education

street & number 200 Orange Street

city, town New Haven n/a vicinity of state Connecticut 06510

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City Clerk's Office

street & number 200 Orange Street

city, town New Haven state Connecticut 06510

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1982 federal state county local

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

city, town Hartford state Connecticut 06106

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Welch Training School, constructed in 1883, is situated on a prominent streetcorner location at Congress Avenue and Vernon Street, in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven. The property is bounded to the north and west by a late-nineteenth-century residential neighborhood of two and three-story brick and frame structures, and to the south and east by nineteenth and twentieth-century commercial and industrial buildings. The Yale New Haven Medical Center is located two blocks east of the nominated property. A playground at the rear of the building extends to the west end of the block.

The three-and-a-half-story brick structure measures ten-by-seven bays, and rests on a raised basement faced with East Haven stone (photograph #1). Brick is laid in common bond with Flemish variation. The slate-covered mansard roof is pierced by a cluster of three corbeled and pilastered interior chimneys, and two exterior-end chimneys on the north side. The front and rear of the building feature identical asymmetrical elevations; the side elevations are symmetrical. Extended walls east of the stair towers accentuate the asymmetry of the front and rear (east and west) elevations, and establish irregular massing, two rooflines, and two configurations of paired pedimented dormers. The south elevation features a central projecting stair tower flanked on each side by a single pedimented dormer; the north elevation is defined by the two exterior-end chimneys. The highly textural and polychromatic appearance of the four elevations is enhanced by sandstone stringcourses between window bays. First and second floors feature rectangular, double-hung sash surmounted by transoms and enframed by sandstone lintels and sills. Extended, pedimented stair towers on the east, west and south elevations feature narrower, tripartite window openings and finely detailed attic parapets. In addition, a denticulated metal roof cornice is enriched by a line of Greek Key decoration.,

A single-story gabled-roof addition (restrooms, ca.1920) is attached to the north elevation, and is visible only from the rear of the building. A two-run metal fire stair running from the first to the third floor is attached on the north side; and a three-run metal stair is attached on the west side (photograph #2). A single-story enclosed entrance porch projecting from the east and west stair towers provides interior access.

Though neglected and vandalized, the interior is largely intact. Monumental center halls on the first, second and third floors provide access to large, airy classrooms on the perimeter. (Ceilings are thirteen feet high on the first and second floors.) Hallways feature coffered, pressed-metal ceilings, paneled doors, and vertically-boarded tongue-in-groove wainscot (photograph #4). White pine millwork throughout the building is finely detailed, consisting of symmetrical architraves with corner blocks and bulls-eye molding. A neoclassical variation occurs on the third floor, where architraves feature molded backbands and keystones enframing the semicircular transoms of the lecture-room entry doors (photograph #3). The lecture-room, now partitioned, is located north of the third-floor center hall. Two classrooms south of the center hall are lit by intact skylights, with side walls distinguished by the sloping sides of the mansard roof.

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

New Haven Historic Sites Survey, 1981, local.
Survey filed at Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

a standardized comprehensive examination. A high school diploma was not required.

In addition to the teacher training program, the city's first kindergarten was established in 1885 at the Welch Training School under the direction of Miss Evendon.³ One year earlier a special kindergarten program for children from indigent families was instituted by the city, and classes were held at 64 Williams Street.⁴ The kindergarten established at the Welch Training School was designed to expose pupil teachers to methods of kindergarten instruction so that the city's new teachers would be able to conduct kindergarten classes in other city schools.

In 1892, three years after the death of Harmanus M. Welch, the New Haven Board of Education petitioned the state legislature to establish a Normal School in New Haven for teacher training, and to shift all related costs for Normal School operation from the School District to the state. The proposal was accepted by the legislature, and in 1893 the Skinner School was refitted to accommodate the State Normal School, while the Welch School was converted to elementary and kindergarten use. Thirty-one women represented the last graduating class of the teacher training program in 1892. During the nine-year period between 1883 and 1892, 262 women completed the program, and 178 women became employed in the city school system.⁵

In concert with a general decline of the surrounding neighborhood, the school's physical plant suffered neglect during the 1920s, a trend which persisted until the facility was finally closed in the middle 1970s. In a report prepared in 1947 by the Board of Education, the Welch School was designated on a comparison map of the city's schools as "very poor" (lowest rating). The survey rating was based upon the condition of classroom facilities, health and comfort of pupils, safety and structural soundness, and attractiveness.⁶ The school was recommended for immediate or early abandonment. In a later analysis of city schools prepared in 1965 by Help Our Public Education (HOPE), the Welch School remained on a list of schools proposed for abandonment; 436 pupils were registered in the school. (The original capacity of the Welch Training School was 700 pupils.)

The Welch Training School is New Haven's most significant and architecturally intact example of a Queen Anne style institutional building (Criterion C). An imposing and highly stylized structure from all directions, the structure outscapes the residential neighborhood to the

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 1883 **Builder/Architect** Leoni W. Robinson, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Welch Training School, constructed in 1883, is an important symbol of a progressive municipal philosophy toward public education, and represents the professionalization of women during the nineteenth century (Criterion A). Designed by local architect Leoni W. Robinson, the school is a fine example of the popular Queen Anne style of architecture as applied to an institutional building (Criterion C). The school was named in honor of Harmanus M. Welch, who served the city of New Haven in the public and private sectors during the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite abandonment during the middle 1970s, the school retains a remarkable degree of architectural integrity on the exterior and interior.

The Honorable Harmanus M. Welch (1813-1889) was appointed president of the city's newly comprised Board of Education in 1856, and he held that position for over twenty-five years. At the formal dedication ceremony for the Welch Training School, held on February 4, 1884, attorney Francis Harrison stated: "For over a quarter century the educational interests of New Haven have received earnest and hearty service from one of its busiest citizens."¹ Harrison's address continued in praise of Welch's financial skills and good judgement, and he stated that the school would be a fitting memorial to his long and faithful service to the city of New Haven.

Welch also served on the city's Boards of Finance and Health. In 1860 he was elected the sixteenth mayor of the city, and served in that capacity until 1863. Under his administration as mayor, the city's first regular police department and garbage collection system were instituted. Welch was also co-founder and president of the First National Bank of New Haven.

A lack of qualified teachers within the city prompted the organization of the Welch Training School. The school was conceived as a way to provide both local elementary education and to train new teachers to fill the local demand. Prior to 1883, ten to fifteen female "pupil teachers" received teacher training at the Cedar Street and Fair Street schools. In his annual report for the year 1882 to the Board of Education, school superintendent Samuel T. Dutton stated that the growing number of students within the city mandated opening of a new teacher training school able to accommodate fifty to one hundred candidates. The school would be devoted to the "study of education as a science, to the treatment of all common branches with reference to how they should be taught, and to constant practice in the different schools of the city."² A one-year program was devised whereby pupil teachers observed teaching methods and studied curriculum development in the areas of arithmetic, geography, language, science, writing, history and foreign languages. During the second half of the program, pupil teachers were placed as practice teachers in city schools. Entrance into the training program was contingent upon a passing grade on

9. Major Bibliographical References

Annual Report of the Board of Education. New Haven City School District,
1882-1892.

City of New Haven Annual Report. 1882-1887.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.93
Quadrangle name New Haven

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	8	6	7	2	6	8	0	4	5	7	4	0	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

As recorded in New Haven Land Records: Map 278, Block 0133, Parcel 01200.

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

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jack A. Gold Historic Preservation Consultant, edited by
John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

organization same date September 1982

street & number 50 Hubinger Street telephone 203/389 4590

city or town New Haven state Connecticut 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 March 4, 1983

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

4/21/83


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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north and west, as well as commercial and industrial buildings south and east. Architecturally, the school typifies late-nineteenth-century concern for picturesque and highly textural elevations, inspired primarily by English architect Richard Norman Shaw.⁷ Though lacking traditionally employed materials such as tile and extensive wood trim for added polychromatic effect, architect Leoni Robinson incorporated a number of distinctive decorative elements to the exterior elevations. These include varying window sizes and massing of dormers, use of both sandstone banding and coursed masonry, asymmetrical elevations, and prominent streetcorner siting. Further, projecting cornices and stair towers add shadow to wall surfaces, enhancing the building's textural interest and increasing its monumental appearance.

The total cost for land acquisition, construction and equipment for the school was \$60,000.⁸ Architect Robinson incorporated a number of advanced design features in the building. His plan showed a concern for upgrading classroom comfort and lighting through use of elongated rectangular windows with movable transoms, larger classroom volume, and an improved heating system. In addition, use of skylights in the two third-floor classrooms greatly improved the lighting, ventilation and appearance of these spaces. While interior millwork on the first and second floors is typical of the period, Robinson embellished the third-floor lecture-room entry with neoclassical detail more commonly associated with the early twentieth-century Colonial Revival period. Many of these same design features were incorporated into Robinson's later commission for the Lovell School (corner of Lawrence and Nash Street), constructed in 1884. The Lovell School, however, lacks the bold exterior massing and richness of detail which characterizes the Welch Training School. Leoni W. Robinson (1852-1923) opened his office in New Haven in 1880. Two of his other notable design commissions were the New Haven Water Company building (1902), and the Winchester Repeating Arms Company factory complex (1892-1920).

NOTES

¹Annual Report of the Board of Education, 1884, p.53.

²Annual Report, 1882, p.37.

³Annual Report, 1890, p.45.

⁴Annual Report, 1884, p.32.

⁵Annual Report, 1892, p.48.

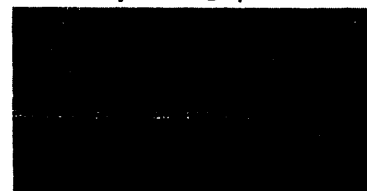
⁶New Haven's Schools, New Haven Board of Education, 1947, p.245.

⁷Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780 (Cambridge: The M.I.T Press, 1969), p.115.

⁸Annual Report, 1883, p.4.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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