

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

OCT 26 1988

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name West Street School
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1432 West Street NA not for publication
city, town Southington NA vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Hartford code 003 zip code 06489

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

[Signature] October 17, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

[Signature] 12/1/88
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/schoolhouse

EDUCATION/secondary structures

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brownstone

walls weatherboard

roof wood shingle

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The West Street School is located in the northwestern section of the Town of Southington. It sits on a rise facing east above West street just south of the intersection with Spring Street. The property contains three contributing buildings: an eighteenth-century schoolhouse and its associated outbuildings, a woodshed, and a privy (Photographs #1, 2).

The only major change to the historic appearance of the site occurred in 1977 when West Street was widened and lowered in front of the school. The school originally sat just slightly above the roadway; it is now at least 12 feet above the present roadbed, with a steep, grassed slope at the front of the property. The rest of the site is open with a large maple tree at the northwest corner of the school. The privy sits at the rear of the lot, which is bordered by trees and light undergrowth. The surrounding neighborhood is residential, with houses dating from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Diagonally across the street to the northeast is a house which is contemporary with the school.

The schoolhouse is a small wood-framed building (20' x 24') with its gable end facing the street (Photographs # 3, 4, 5). It has a wood-shingled roof and a rough-cut brownstone foundation. The clapboarded walls have small equally spaced windows, two in each elevation. They contain double-hung wood sash with six-over-six lights, probably nineteenth-century replacements as evidenced by the narrowness of the muntins and the spring pins in the jambs, typical of nineteenth-century hardware. The windows have exterior solid shutters, added in the twentieth century as a security measure. A brick chimney extends from the rear of the ridge. The entrance to the building is at the southwest corner. It is enclosed in an entranceway that has a gabled roof and vertical beaded siding, a circa 1900 addition. Both of the outbuildings are sheathed in vertical boards. The woodshed at the southwest corner of the school rests on a dry-laid rubble foundation; the privy has a concrete foundation with an opening at the rear for a cleanout. The latter foundation may be a replacement for an earlier stonework, or the building itself may have been relocated as needed at the rear of the lot and never had a permanent foundation until the twentieth century. Both outbuildings are estimated to date from the nineteenth century; a more precise date cannot be determined from the construction methods or materials.

The one-room interior is very simple, with most of the interior finish dating from the nineteenth century, including the matched wood flooring and the beaded wainscot which extends to window sill height (Photographs #6, 7). The ceiling also is

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Street School, Southington, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

sheathed with wood: narrow bead-and-bevel boards run across the rafters up to the height of the collar beams or braces, then across the framing to form a flat ceiling below the peak. Between the windows are green chalkboards in wood frames. The remaining exposed walls between and above the windows are plastered. A pot-bellied wood stove, the only heat source for the building, sits in the northwest corner; its metal flue runs to the center of the rear wall, indicating that the stove was probably located there when the school was in operation. The school was originally furnished with rows of double desks but none of these remain on the premises. A long wooden table against the east wall is reported to be the work of students in the early twentieth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

West Street School, Southington, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 2

male and female, were employed and boarded at homes in the neighborhood. In the nineteenth century, the records indicate that 28 pupils attended primary school there, a number never exceeded even in the twentieth century.

Recorded reminiscences of former pupils in this century give a more detailed account of the daily life of the school between about 1900 and 1930.² With very little change these stories could have originated in the eighteenth century. The room was arranged with a teacher's table on a raised platform at one end of the room. Students in grades one through eight sat at double desks set in two rows facing the teacher. Teachers at this time still boarded in the neighborhood, as they had since the founding of the school. The daily routine included the morning trip to a neighbor's spring to get a pail of drinking water for the day. A communal dipper served all the pupils, a practice still in use until 1944 when the Board of Education recommended the use of paper cups. The school spring still exists about 600 feet back from the east side of West Street. Regular visits from a music teacher and the school nurse were events noted by many of the alumni. Up through the 1920s they still arrived in horsedrawn vehicles and students vied for the privilege of tying up the horses. The woodshed was kept filled by the school janitor but students, the "best boys," kept the fire replenished in the stove. All students participated in keeping the building clean, including the washing of the windows and the chalkboards. An annual event was the sleigh or wagon ride to get the school Christmas tree from a farmer's woodlot.

In 1933 the West Street School Alumni Association was formed, which later evolved into a group dedicated to the preservation of the school and its history. In 1947, the year after the school closed permanently, this organization, then known as the West Street School and Community Association, obtained a 99-year lease on the building from the Town of Southington. The group maintains the building and continues to have an annual reunion of the alumni in the summer or early fall, a custom that began in 1933. Governor Wilbur Cross delivered an address at the 1936 reunion. All the officers of the present group attended the West Street School and are current residents of the town.³

Architectural Significance

The West Street School, the only remaining eighteenth-century schoolhouse in the Town of Southington, is an exceptional example of a once common type. The only other school in Southington that approaches this age is a Greek Revival-style building in the southeast quarter, a replacement for the earlier school there that was destroyed by fire. With few exceptions, the first Connecticut schoolhouses were usually gable-fronted buildings, one-story in height, and modestly scaled. The only difference between the West Street School and the many schools erected in this form is the single side entrance. Separate entrances for boys and girls were more common,

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Street School. Southington, Connecticut

Section number 8 **Page** 3

especially in one-room schools built in the early nineteenth century.

The school's state of preservation is most remarkable, reflecting not only its eighteenth-century origins, but its nineteenth-century changes. This integrity is primarily due to the fact that the building remained in use for such a long period and was maintained by the town, a function inherited by the the West Street School Association. Modern conveniences such as running water or indoor plumbing have never been installed; interior changes to the building only reflect its long architectural history. The historic character and integrity of the site are enhanced by the two remaining associated outbuildings.

Notes:

1. Nineteenth-century school records are in the possession of the West Street School and Community Association.
2. Between 1978 and 1980, former pupils were contacted by the school association. Their responses to a one-page questionnaire were used here for the twentieth-century history.
3. Interview with Francis and Netta Ashworth, members of the association who live across the street from the school, and Richard Wood, also a member. The school spring is on the Ashworth property.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1760 - 1938

Significant Dates

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The primary significance of the West Street School derives from its exceptional integrity and its contribution to education in the Town of Southington. Erected about 1760, the West Street school functioned as a one-room grammar school for the northwest quarter until 1946. An exceptionally well-preserved example of an eighteenth-century schoolhouse with associated outbuildings, it has retained its eighteenth-century exterior features and nineteenth-century interior.

Historical Significance

The one-room schoolhouse was an educational tradition which persisted in New England through the nineteenth century, and in the more rural towns until well into the twentieth century. The West Street School is distinguished by its continuous use as a neighborhood school in the Town of Southington for over 180 years, a period which embraced much of the history of primary education in Connecticut. The school was run by a series of religious and political institutions beginning with the Congregational Church and ending with the town's Board of Education. This long history is even more exceptional because the school functioned in its original eighteenth-century building for this extensive period without any substantial physical change to the building and virtually no change in its daily operation.

The West Street School predates the formation of the Town of Southington which was incorporated in 1779. Built just prior to the Revolution, in what was then the south parish of Farmington, it was one of four schools erected by the parish as required by the General Court of Connecticut in 1750. By custom and law, it was supported and taxed by the ecclesiastical society of the Congregational Church until 1798, the year "school societies" became separate entities, no longer under the direct control of the local church society.

Since the surviving school records only date from the last half of the nineteenth century, little is known about the early history of the school. It can be assumed, however, that it operated in a customary fashion, open for only a few months in the fall and winter and closed during the long summer and harvest season. Teachers, both

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Ashworth, Netta and Francis. Personal communication, May 5, 1988
Atlas of Hartford City and County. Hartford: Baker and Tilden, 1869.
Timlow, Heman K. Ecclesiastical and Other Sketches of Southington, Conn. Hartford: Case Lockwood and Brainard Company, 1875 (reprinted 1976).
West Street School and Community Association archives. Southington, Connecticut.

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

West Street School and Community Assoc.,
Southington, Connecticut.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 0.33

UTM References

A

1	18	6	7	14	8	17	10	4	16	1	10	3	14	10
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property encompass the same area as Parcel 11, Map 157 of the Tax Assessor's Records of Southington, Connecticut.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the buildings and remaining land associated with the West Street School.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 5/7/88

street & number 98 Washington Street telephone (203) 347 4072

city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Street School, Southington, Connecticut

Section number Photos Page 7:3

List of Photographs of the West Street School, Southington, Connecticut

All photographs were taken 5/88 by Cunningham Associates Ltd. and the negatives are all on file at the Connecticut Historical Commission, Hartford, Connecticut.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. View: South elevation with
woodshed
Facing: NW | 2. View: Facade/north elevation
privy in background
Facing: SW |
| 3. View: Facade/north elevation
from below
Facing: W | 4. View: Rear/south elevations
from rear of lot
Facing: NE |
| 5. View: Rear/south elevations
Facing: NE | 6. View: Interior
Facing: NE |
| 7. View: Interior
Facing: SW | |