United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

439

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

RECEIVED 2280
MAY 10 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: St. Hyacinth School and Convent
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 2 Walker Street
City or town: Westbrook State: Maine County: Cumberland
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets _____does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

_____ **national** _____ **statewide** **x local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A _____ **B** **x C** _____ **D**

Earle G. Shettleworth Jr. SHPO 5/7/13
Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ✓ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall — 6.25.13

Signature of the Keeper — **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private	☒
Public – Local	☐
Public – State	☐
Public – Federal	☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	☒
District	☐
Site	☐
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
RELIGION/church school
RELIGION/church-related residence

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)
VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Late Gothic Revival
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: granite; Walls: brick, fiber cement siding; Roof: slate, rubber

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The property at 2 Walker Street in Westbrook, Cumberland County, Maine, historically known as the St. Hyacinth School and Convent, is comprised of two neighboring buildings; the 1894 three-and-a-half story brick school constructed in the Second Empire style with a mansard roof, and the 1922 two-and-a-half story flat roof brick convent building, with a late Gothic Revival design front entrance. The property is located in an urban neighborhood known locally as French Town comprised of single and multi-family units and the Dana Warp Mill, a renovated cotton mill complex that houses more than 40 businesses. Both buildings are located on the west side of Walker Street with their primary façades facing east. The convent is located on the uphill (north) side of the school building on a terraced level above the school. The property is bound on the south by Brown Street, on the north by Pike Street and on the west by a driveway connecting Brown and Pike Streets. An asphalt sidewalk with a mix of asphalt and granite curbing runs along the Brown and Walker Street sides of the property. A low stone retaining wall extends from a granite post at the corner of Brown Street up Walker Street gradually diminishing until it is flush with the sidewalk at the northeast corner of the school building. A broad terraced lawn runs uphill from Brown Street to the south side of the school. Mature trees line the southern edge of the lawn along Brown Street. The western edge of the uppermost terrace at the school building is held in place by a granite block retaining wall. The upper terrace level also has mature deciduous trees that seasonally obscure this elevation

of the building. The east and north sides of the school and convent are grass up to the buildings interrupted by walkways leading to doors. There is also a walkway from the Walker Street sidewalk between the school and the convent. The west side of the convent is grass interrupted by walkways leading to doors. The west side of the school is a paved driveway. The northern boundary along Pike Street has no sidewalk.

The school and convent building were part of a larger complex which included a church, rectory, and garage. The garage was demolished in 2012. The church and rectory are now under separate ownership and no longer associated with the property at 2 Walker Street.

Narrative Description

St. Hyacinth School and Convent, 1894

Exterior

Built in 1894 to plans drawn by Coburn and Son, architects, the Saint Hyacinth School and Convent is a Second Empire STYLE building which originally housed both classrooms and residential quarters for the nuns who taught the school. The footprint of the building is a rectangle oriented north-south bisected by projecting east and west stairway pavilions. The building is red brick with granite used for foundation, water table and window sills, keystone and springers in the segmental arched and round top window openings, and for the carved date and ornamental coping stones prominently featured on the entrance pavilion. The slate shingled mansard roof has a flare at its base and is punctuated with full height gabled dormers on all sides. The upper roof has snow guard rails above the dormers. Carved wood brackets are intact along the eaves of the building. A wood octagonal cupola with bell shaped roof rises above the projecting gabled brick pavilion above the main entrance on Walker Street. The cupola roof is clad in slate tile with copper cap above the square wood columns and short wood balustrade. The façade faces west on Walker Street with seven bays (six symmetrical bays flanking the central projecting stair tower). The south elevation features a central projecting bay flanked by single bays with paired windows; the west elevation has the same pattern as the front façade; the north elevation features four bays with the central two bays having paired window openings.

The west entrance is sheltered by a slightly projecting, gabled, one-story corbel arched entry accessed via concrete steps, flanked by granite cheek walls, and walkway from the sidewalk. The entrance at the base of the west pavilion is recessed under a segmental arched opening. Flanking chimneys rise from the north and south sides of the west pavilion. A basement level entrance is located on the west elevation at the south end of the building. The south elevation of the school building was the original entrance for the convent. A gabled center bay projects to the edge of the cornice line and contains paired one-over-one windows at the basement level through the second floor and a single one-over-one window flanked by two narrower one-over-one sash on the third floor.

Windows throughout the main block of the building at the basement, first, second and mansard roof levels are all two-over-two double-hung sash, with double double-hung sash on

the first and second floors which contain four sash in each opening. The first floor segmental arched windows have a two light rectangular fixed transom and the second floor round top windows have a two light half round transom. These transoms are varied on the south elevation, which had originally been the façade of the convent. On the south elevation, they are divided into three lights in the first floor rectangular transoms and four radial lights in the second floor arched transoms. The windows in the east and west pavilions are a mixture of one-over-one, two-over-one, multi-light over one and on the north and south elevations, small round top and oculus windows. The majority of the windows in the basement through second floor are the original wood double-double hung sash with wood infill and ventilation units in some of the openings in the basement. The dormer windows are the original wood double hung sash with exterior combination aluminum storm windows. The dormers themselves are gabled with decorative wood appliqué set within the gable front. All the exterior doors have also been replaced with modern units.

Interior

Much of the original convent and school floor plan is still evident throughout the building. The basement, first floor and second floor rooms on the south side of the corridor that connects the east and west pavilions served as the convent space for the Sisters, and the rooms on the north side of the corridor served as the school. The north side of the basement is divided into four spaces: (from west to east) a boiler room, two bathrooms, and finally a large open room. On the north side of the east-west corridor on the first, second and third floors are two large adjoining rooms with large multi-paneled pocket doors that can be opened to combine the spaces into one large room. The south side of the basement and first floors has a secondary corridor bisecting the space with two large rooms on either side. The south side of the second floor has one large room on one side of the corridor and one medium room with three small rooms behind it on the other side of the corridor. The third floor features two large rooms with no corridor.

The interior finishes are predominantly original late nineteenth and early twentieth century plaster walls and carpeted floors, detailed trim, wainscot, built-in cabinetry, and pressed metal ceilings (which were installed between 1922-1932). Some rooms have just plaster ceilings or later twentieth century celotex tiles. A small number of early twentieth century school house type light fixtures remain. Generally, the woodwork is finished with a dark stain; however in some cases it has been painted. Wood window and door trim has moulded corner blocks and the moulding of the round-top windows are ornamented at center with wooden keystones. Original nine-panel doors are still present in nearly all of the openings. Transoms above the doors have been infilled with wood, though they still retain original trim. On the third floor, chalkboards line most of the walls in the former classroom spaces, even on the angled walls created by the mansard roof. The original interior staircases are intact and retain their original detailing of wood handrails atop solid wood banisters with turned, wood newel posts. A suspended staircase from the third floor rises along the wall of the east stair tower to access a hatch to the unfinished attic space which includes a wood ladder to the roof-top access.

Changes to the building

The original layout of the convent included a front entranceway located in the center of the south façade. The original entrance porch for the convent on the south elevation had columns and balustrade, but it was removed in the mid--twentieth century. A chapel was on the west side of the entrance and a double parlor on the east side of the entrance. A stairway that ran from the basement to the second floor was located in the hallway beyond the south entrance, on the south side of the east-west corridor. The kitchen, pantry and staff rooms were in the basement and the personal quarters were on the second floor. The third floor was originally constructed as a single open hall but it was divided into classroom space by 1896.

St. Hyacinth Convent, 1922

Exterior

The footprint of the convent is an H oriented north-south, with wings projecting one bay east and west at the north and south ends of the building. The building is red brick with cast stone used for the molded water table, decorative front door surround, first floor sill course, basement and second floor window sills, decorative niche and statue, and crenellated belt course below the parapet. The front façade faces east onto Walker Street and is centered in the five-bay recessed portion of the building. The wings have projecting bays at the basement and first floor levels with flat roofs. The third floor of the recessed section features six bays. The north and south elevations feature five bays in the wings. The west elevation of the wings has no fenestration. The central five bay portion of the west elevation is slightly recessed from the first floor level to the eave due to a former porch and is clad with clapboard-style white fiber cement board siding. The flat roof is not visible behind the high brick parapet, which is topped with metal coping. The east elevations of the north and south wings feature three sided bay windows at the basement and first floor levels.

The main entrance on the façade is notable for the late Gothic Revival style pointed arch decorative cast stone tympanum set in a deeply molded cast stone surround. The tympanum ornament depicts two angels holding the shield of the Blessed Virgin Mary symbolized by the stylized lily with a crown above which symbolizes that she is the Queen of Heaven. Below the tympanum are the original double wood doors with multi-light glazing over a single bottom panel. The entrance is accessed by cast concrete steps with concrete wing walls. Above the entrance is a richly ornamented, recessed, hooded niche sheltering a statue of the Holy Mother with lily flowers standing reflectively with hands crossed and eyes cast down. The statue was given to the convent by the Ladies of Saint Anne in 1922. There are three entrances on the west elevation, one at each end of the recessed portion, which access the base of the stairways and one accessed by a set of wood steps that is the entrance to the vestry of the (former) chapel located in the first floor of the north wing. Windows throughout the building are primarily the original two-over-one wood double hung sash with single fixed sash with opaque glass in the former chapel as well as a few aluminum and vinyl replacement sash

on the rear elevation. The sun porch has single light aluminum clad wood casement windows. Most of the remaining original wood windows have exterior aluminum combination storm windows. All of the exterior wood paneled multi-light doors appear to be original.

Interior

The first and second floors each have a double loaded corridor that terminates with the north and south wings on the first floor with a short transverse corridor in the second floor south wing. The east side of the corridor on the first floor has the centrally located main entrance vestibule with two small rooms on either side of it. Directly across from the main entrance is a somewhat altered sun porch with modern vinyl single light casement windows. A similar space is located on the second floor. Interior six-over-six double hung windows on the first and second floors are located in the main corridor permitting light from the sun porch to access the corridor on each floor. The north and south stairways flank the sun porch. The south wing is divided on the first floor into a large meeting room on the east side with bathroom, closet spaces, and office on the west. The first floor level of the north wing is the (former) chapel space with a raised floor level at the west end with vestry behind. With the exception of the sun porch, the second floor appears to have been originally comprised of many small rooms which have since been combined to create larger rooms. The east side of the corridor on the second floor is divided into three spaces, while the wings are divided into offices and medium-sized rooms. The basement is a mix of finished and unfinished spaces with the kitchen in the southwest corner.

The interior finishes are predominantly original early twentieth century plaster walls and wooden floors (under carpet), trim, built-in cabinetry in the basement, four-panel doors and pressed metal ceilings in the large meeting spaces. Lighting fixtures appear to date from the later twentieth century. Most of the interior woodwork has a shellacked finish. Both original interior staircases are intact and retain their original detailing of wood handrails atop turned wood balusters with square, wood newel posts.

Changes to the building

The original floor plan of the convent has received an indeterminate number of alterations, although it appears to have been limited to the secondary spaces with removal and addition of various interior partition walls as needs required. The first story sun porch originally had an exterior door on axis with the main entrance and large multi-light steel casement windows that have been replaced with modern vinyl single light casement windows. Original closets for the cells are still present and indicate where spaces were once divided. An original cell would include one closet adjacent to the door to the corridor.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

☒ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

☐ B. Removed from its original location

☐ C. A birthplace or grave

☐ D. A cemetery

☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure

☐ F. A commemorative property

☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.)
EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE
ETHNIC HERITAGE

Period of Significance
1894-1963

Significant Dates
1894
1921-2

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation
OTHER: FRENCH CANADIAN
OTHER: FRANCO-AMERICAN

Architect/Builder
Coburn & Son, architect, Lewiston, ME (School)
Etienne R. Desjardins, contractor, Lewiston, ME (School)
O'Connell & Shaw, architect, Boston, MA (Convent)
F. W. Cunningham & Sons, contractor, Portland, ME (Convent)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.) (Refer to photographs)

The 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent and 1922 Convent located at 2 Walker Street in Westbrook, Maine, are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A, Ethnic Heritage for their cultural role in the French Town neighborhood of Westbrook. They are also eligible under Criterion A in the area of Education for their role in meeting the educational needs of the growing immigrant community of French Canadians and Franco-Americans in Westbrook. The 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent is eligible under Criterion C, Architecture, at the local level of significance as a noteworthy example of a purpose-built combined educational and residential facility. The period of significance starts in 1894 when the school and convent opened and ends in 1963, the fifty-year cut-off set by the National Register program. Within that span, significant dates include the construction of the school and convent building in 1894, and the construction of the convent building in 1922. Both buildings and their settings have had minimal alterations and retain integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The buildings also meet Criteria Consideration A for religious properties. Although originally associated with an adjacent parish church and rectory, these properties derive primary significance for the role the school and convent played in meeting the educational and cultural needs of a growing immigrant community of French Canadians and Franco-Americans in Westbrook and for the 1894 School and Convent building as an example of institutional architecture designed and constructed specifically to support the educational needs of the children of the St. Hyacinth Parish.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage.

The 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent and 1922 Convent buildings are significant for the manner in which they represent an approach to maintaining French Canadian ethnicity and culture by the St. Hyacinth Parish of Westbrook from the late nineteenth century through the 1970s.

From the mid-nineteenth century when the first French Canadian families settled in Westbrook looking for work in the mills to the mid-twentieth century, the power of the Presumpscot River transformed the community into a city of substantial industry. With manufacturing centers burgeoning throughout New England during this time, French Canadian immigrant communities were likewise growing in these locations. As these communities developed they were preserving their French Canadian heritage, also known as the ideal of

survivance[1], by replicating the traditional French Canadian parish in the construction of their churches, schools and charitable and social organizations including theater and literary clubs, music and marching groups as well as financial institutions such as credit unions. In *The Franco-Americans of New England,* scholar Armand Chartier explains that the Canadian parish was "firmly rooted in the Canadian collective psyche" as it was an "organic whole, the mainstay of social organization," and that this "traditional notion of the parish also included a body of cultural practices that would only gradually disappear."[2] Chartier further states:

> The pastor of a newly created parish had to devote his energies to three tasks: building a church, founding a parochial school, and establishing religious organizations for all the parishioners. . . From the end of the nineteenth century up to about 1960, the most widespread religious organizations were the Sacred Heart League for men, the Guild of Saint Anne for married women, and the Children of Mary for young women.[3]

The growth and development of the St. Hyacinth parish in Westbrook followed the traditional pattern of French Canadian parish settlement and ethnic institutional development. By the late 1870s the French Canadian Catholic population of Westbrook had grown sufficiently to allow them to purchase land on Brown Street for the construction of a parish church. This was shortly followed by the construction of a parish school, a rectory, sizable enlargement to the parish church and in 1893-94 replacement of the original school building with a substantial brick school and convent building constructed on Walker Street at the intersection of Brown Street. By the late nineteenth century, Brown Street, extending from Bridge Street to High Street, was known locally as French Town. The French speaking community of French Town was "a town within a town" with grocery, furniture, shoe, general and variety stores, barber and beauty shops, and a doctor's office in the neighborhood "all owned by local Frenchmen."[4] Numerous social organizations are also referenced in the annual St. Hyacinth Parish Reports including: Society of St. John-Baptist (founded 1887), Catholic Total Abstinence Society and Ladies' Auxiliary, Sewing Circle, Assumption Society, Sacred Heart League, Ladies of Saint Anne (founded 1922), Holy Name of Jesus Society (founded 1924),and Help the Poor Society (a forerunner of the Saint-Vincent De Paul Society).[5]

The establishment of Catholic parish schools in this country was a requirement of the Catholic Church, but the establishment of *ethnic* parish schools was an outgrowth of immigrant cultural heritage. In *The Academic Melting Pot*, Steven Steinberg observes in his chapter entitled "American Catholicism and the School Question" that "to a very large extent parochial schools were the creation of immigrant communities concerned with their survival. To support his assertion Steinbergs the quotes from Philip Gleasons' article entitled *Immigration and American Catholic Intellectual Life* from 1964:

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[1] "La Survivance connotes the preservation in North America of the ancestral heritage composed of the Catholic religion, the French language, and a certain number of French-Canadian traditions." Chartier, Armand. *The Franco-Americans of New England.* Manchester, New Hampshire: ACA Assurance, 1999, 64-65.
[2] Chartier, 17-18.
[3] Chartier, 106.
[4] Westbrook Historical Society, Westbrook, Maine." French Town – Brown Street."
[5] Westbrook Historical Society, Westbrook, Maine. *St. Hyacinth Collection.*

> For the Catholic ethnic groups, religion was an essential part of the cultural heritage they wished to pass on to their children, but it was not the whole of the heritage. The schools they set up performed the functions, in addition to intellectual and religious training, of transmitting the ancestral language, orienting the young to the national symbols of the group, and preserving the identity and continuity of the group through successive generations.[6]

This is reiterated by Chartier, who illustrates ethnic preservation through parochial education with the following observation:

> As soon as a parish was established, the first priority was to find a building in which to worship. . . . the second task was to establish a bilingual parochial school, so as to avoid at all costs attendance at public or even Irish parochial schools.[7]

The French Canadian immigrant population in the United States in general, and New England in particular, was not the dominant Catholic ethnicity, nor were they the earliest established. Consequently throughout what has variously been termed by scholars as the migration period(s) (roughly 1850s – 1930s), there were widespread tensions and conflicts within the Church as multiple ethnic groups petitioned for their own parishes and parochial schools. French Canadian immigrants "repeated and insistent requests for Canadian priests and bilingual parochial schools" in the 1890's, "provoked new conflicts between Canadian parishioners and Irish bishops in several New England areas."[8] However, unlike many industrialized communities in the northeast, Westbrook did not have a large established Catholic population prior to the immigration of French Canadian families, who came predominantly from Quebec Province in Canada. As a result, the French Canadian parish of St. Hyacinth, which was named in honor of the first full time pastor's hometown of St. Hyacinth, Quebec Province in Canada, was unencumbered by substantial discord with other Catholic ethnic communities in Westbrook.

The construction of the St. Hyacinth School and Convent in 1894 was an achievement of social and cultural significance for the parish on multiple levels. Within the parish, the coming of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary from St. Hyacinth, Quebec to live and teach in the new building ensured the bilingual education of the parish children. Likewise, the substantial school and convent building was, with good reason, a source of community pride. The construction of the St. Hyacinth School was noteworthy at the time as "a very handsome addition to the city."[9] The 1907 Board of Trade Journal included an article by the Superintendent of Schools promoting the public schools of Westbrook including the St.

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[6] Steinberg, Stephen. *The Academic Melting Pot*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974, 37.
[7] Chartier, 21.
[8] Ibid, 47. Additional footnote: The Bishop of the Diocese of Portland from 1875-1900, made up of Maine and until the late 1880s New Hampshire, was the son of an Irish immigrant. However, Bishop James Augustine Healy attended seminary in Montreal, Canada and Paris, France because his mother was legally a black slave so he could not attend the American Seminary in Maryland which was a slave state (Canton, 61-A). His French Canadian seminary education resulted in him having an atypical understanding and appreciation for the needs of the growing French Canadian parishes in Maine and New Hampshire (Price, 162).
[9] DesJardins, Rev. Monsignor Philippe. *The Historical Diary of Rev. P. DesJardins, St. Hyacinth Church.*(Collection of the Westbrook Historical Society), 93.

Hyacinth School as follows: "There are ten public school buildings in the city and one large and beautiful private school building in which is located the Parochial school."[10] The construction of the separate convent building in 1922 also exemplified the continued growth of the school in the early twentieth century and the increased population of bilingual teaching sisters living at the parish to serve the growing school. Beyond the immediate parish, Armand Chartier explains: "To Quebecers, Franco-American schools were proof of Franco-American loyalty to *la survivance*; they were also meant to demonstrate to Anglo-Americans the importance that Franco-Americans attached to education."[11]

Education

The 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent and 1922 Convent buildings are significant for their role in meeting the educational needs of the growing immigrant community of French Canadians and Franco-Americans in Westbrook.

As explained in *The American Catholic Quarterly Review in July 1891*, "The Catholic Church in the United States, finding herself unable to accept as satisfactory the prevailing system of State education, has adopted the policy of instituting and supporting a distinct educational system of her own."[12] And that "the Catholic schools should, in teaching methods and results come up to the standard of the public schools."[13] This policy evolved out of the three Plenery Councils of Baltimore that were held in 1852, 1866 and 1884, whereby every parish was to establish a parish school staffed by "teachers belonging to religious congregations" and "all parents must send their children to such schools."[14]

The parish of St. Hyacinth constructed their school and convent building in 1894 to meet the directives of the Plenery Councils of Baltimore and in response to the growing number of elementary school aged members of parish families. The original parochial school established by the St. Hyacinth parish was a modest wooden structure called Ecole du Bon Pasteur which employed lay teachers. In 1887 this school had 135 students. It was replaced in 1894 by the St. Hyacinth convent school, a substantial brick building with a "French" (mansard) roof. Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, a teaching order, came from St. Hyacinth in Canada to provide elementary school instruction for students through the eighth grade. Taking up residence there in August of 1894, the newly constructed school opened in September 1894 with 312 students divided in four classes. The parish report for 1894 recorded that a fifth classroom was opened in November, conducted by a lay teacher, and the following January 380 students were registered. The parish report for the following year indicates a sixth religious sister arrived in February and that two new classrooms on the third floor had been arranged.

[10] Benson, Fred. "The Public Schools of Westbrook." *Board of Trade Journal*, Volume XIX, No. 12. Portland, Maine: Portland Board of Trade, 1907, 694.

[11] Chartier, 121.
[12] "The Idea of a Parochial School." *The American Catholic Quarterly Review*, Volume XVI, No. 63. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Hardy & Mahony, 1891, 449.
[13] Ibid, 450.
[14] Fanning, William. "Plenary Councils of Baltimore." *The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 2*. New York, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02235a.htm

A reporter from the Portland newspaper *Eastern Argus* provided an assessment of the quality of the building, and an accounting of the curriculum and students in an article dated October 1894 and entitled "VISIT TO PAROCHIAL SCHOOL:"

> The school building is situated on the most prominent site in this city . . . There are about 400 pupils in the school, a large part boys. This 400 contains a comparative small number of pupils not of the French Canadian nationality. Perhaps about 50 are Irish. The school is managed by six sisters. The different classes are graded in about the same position as the scholars in the American schools. In the forenoon the French language is used, except in teaching geography and United States history, and English in the afternoon. The pupils look most contented in the large, airy and well furnished rooms, which are as pleasant as any of those in the new Forest street grammar school.[15]

The opening of the Saint Hyacinth School had a broad effect on education in Westbrook in 1894 as a result of students transferring from the public elementary schools to the parish school. The City of Westbrook School Superintendent's report in 1894 noted the reduction in student enrollment from 1294 in the Spring term to 1095 in the fall term, and the cause of the reduction:

> This falling off was due to the opening of the new Parochial School, and it affected chiefly the Bridge St., Brown St. and Saco St. Schools. The registration in the Bridge St. School decreased from 358 to 274, in the Brown St. School from 151 to 70, and in the Saco St. School from 89 to 52. Owing to the falling off in numbers it was thought that the pupils of the Brown St. School might be cared for by two teachers instead of three. Miss Trickey of that school was transferred to fill a vacancy in the Saco St. School. So far it has not been thought advisable to make any other consolidation of grades.[16]

As the number of Franco-Americans families in St. Hyacinth parish continued to grow in size through the first half of the twentieth century, there naturally was a cumulative effect on the public schools in Westbrook whereby the city did not have to provide elementary school educational facilities and resources for the students who attended the St. Hyacinth School instead of the public schools. During the 1920s, when enrollment at St. Hyacinth School reached its peak of 600 – 900 students, the corresponding enrollment for elementary schools in Westbrook ranged from 1187 – 1338. As such, the St. Hyacinth School student body made up roughly 30-40% of the elementary school enrollment in Westbrook. It is likely this presented a significant cost savings to the Westbrook school department, which otherwise would have had to have accommodated these students at its elementary schools.

Within ten years of opening, enrollment at the St. Hyacinth School had increased to 450 students under the tutelage of nine Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. By 1919 it had exceeded 550 with 14 teaching Sisters. As a result the "crowded conditions in the school made it imperative that a home be provided for the Sisters, so that the part of the building which had

[15] DesJardins, 93.
[16] *Annual Report of the City of Westbrook, 1894-5.* Westbrook, Maine: Frank E. Hill, 1895, 22.

been occupied by them as a residence might be transformed into class rooms."[17] With the need for more classrooms pressing, the parish purchased the club house of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society on nearby North Street and transformed it into a four classroom school that became known as La Petite Ecole.[18] The St. Hyacinth Parish Report from 1920 notes "the Bishop declared that all parochial schools will be free. The parish will pay all expenses. Up to now, parents paid 50 cents per month per student. In order to cover students' expenses, a system of monthly special collection in church is introduced, using special paper envelopes."[19] Within several years the number of students attending the parish school increased significantly. The 1923 school year had an enrollment of 611 students with 17 teaching Sisters, but two years later there was a peak enrollment of 900, with 24 teaching Sisters.[20]

No records have been located at this time to document why a new convent building was constructed in 1922 rather than a new school building with the modern educational features being promoted by the State of Maine Educational Department such as gymnasiums, laboratories and manual arts facilities. The construction of the new convent was, however, a sizable investment that represents how the parish prioritized its capital expenditures and in fact follows the same pattern of French Canadian parish development seen throughout the northeast whereby the parish school and convent were separate but functionally related buildings.

Enrollment at the St. Hyacinth School remained around 500 or more from the 1930s into the 1950s even as the process of assimilation was moving forward. The end of immigration in 1930 reduced the number of new French Canadian people joining the parish.[21] While regionally, "an important demographic shift occurred around 1950-1955, as many people who had previously belonged to large urban parishes moved to the suburbs,"[22] the St. Hyacinth School appears to still have been playing a significant role in the education of the Franco-American community of Westbrook. Published in 1952 by the Westbrook Woman's Club, *Highlights of Westbrook History* provides a brief history of the St. Hyacinth School and notes that "the school accommodates five hundred pupils who are under the direction of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary." It also gives a contemporary update on the status of the school stating that the:

> school building was recently completely renovated and modernized at considerable expense so that it now boasts all modern school facilities. The curriculum is that prescribed by the provisions for State Elementary Schools and further instruction is given, for those desiring it, in the French language. Religious education is given to all pupils. Like all Catholic parochial schools this school is under the direct and personal

[17] DePrez, Raphael P. *History of St. Hyacinth Parish (Westbrook).* Society of North American French, June 14, 1973. (Unpublished manuscript, Collection of USM Franco-American Study Center, Lewiston, Maine), 15.

[18] DesJardins, 155-C.
[19] DesJardins, 156A.
[20] *Transcript of Interview with Sister Evelyn of St. Hyacinthe's Chuch.* Property of Walker Memorial Library, Westbrook, Maine. Audio cassette. Tape #77-08, Side I, March 9, 1977.
[21] Chartier, 253.
[22] Chartier, 281.

> supervision of the Superintendent of Schools for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland, Maine.[23]

However, by the mid-late 1950s assimilation had progressed sufficiently for one parent of children attending the St. Hyacinth School to make the following observation,

> This parish is no longer French in language. It is French in background and heritage, and we are all proud of it. . . But now, since the War, the parishioners are all inter-married with other background nationalities.[24]

Shifting demographics following the close of world War II resulting from mixed (Catholic-Protestant) marriages as well as outmigration of the baby boom generation from the parish to the suburbs was the likely cause of declining enrollment through the 1960s and 1970s. By 1974, enrollment at the St. Hyacinth School had retracted to about 200 children. That same year, the Provincial of the Sisters of the Presentation informed the parish of St. Hyacinth that they would no longer be able to staff the parochial school and the school closed.[25] After that it became a Center for Religious Education and the former convent was converted into a House of Prayer. After ten years in these uses the two buildings were used variously for a retreat center and parish center. Most recently the school has been used for storage and the former convent for offices and meeting space. Currently both buildings are vacant and are in the process of being rehabilitated for use as family housing.

Criterion C: Architecture
1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent

The 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent is a noteworthy example of a Franco-American parish school designed and built with both rooms for educational instruction and residential spaces for the French Canadian teachers originating from St. Hyacinthe in Quebec. Prominently sited on an elevated plateau at the corner of Brown and Walkers Streets in the French Town section of Westbrook, the 1894 St. Hyacinth School and Convent retains a high level of integrity of location, design, setting, material, workmanship, feeling and association.

As originally constructed, the entrance façade for the convent portion of the building was oriented south, facing Brown Street, as was the adjacent original parish church (not extant) and the rectory (extant). The original parish church was accessible via a double stair leading up from the sidewalk along Brown Street. The residential structures, the rectory and convent, were set far back from the sidewalk on elevated plateaus.[26] The school had separate entrances for boys and girls, with the boys' entrance oriented east facing the rear of the

[23] Rowe, Ernest and others. *Highlights of Westbrook History*. Edited by Marion B. Rowe. Portland, Maine: Bowker Printing Co., 1952, 113.
[24] Westbrook Historical Society, Westbrook, Maine. *St. Hyacinth Collection*.
[25] It is also possible or even likely that the Quiet Revolution was at least in part the cause of the Sisters of the Presentation no longer being able to staff the St. Hyacinth School due to the number of Sisters who left the convent and dramatic decreases in the number of young Quebec women entering the convent after 1960.
[26] The original parish church was deconstructed upon completion of the new, substantially larger parish church on the opposite side of Brown Street constructed between 1941-1950.

original parish church and the girls' entrance oriented west, toward Walker Street. In the second decade of the twentieth century, at the highest point of school enrollment, a separate convent building was constructed on the north side of the school in order to allow for the original building to be used in its entirety for the school. Minimal modifications were made to the original floor plan of the convent for its new use by the school.

The St. Hyacinth School and Convent was designed by Coburn & Son, architects of Lewiston. Overlapping with the construction of the St. Hyacinth School and Convent was the construction of the Healy Asylum (also designed by Coburn & Son, and built in 1892-93) in Lewiston (NR # 79000128). The Healy Asylum was a collaboration of the French speaking Dominican Parish of St. Peter's Church and the Grey Sisters of Charity of St. Hyacinthe. The Healy Asylum is comparable to the St. Hyacinth School and Convent, albeit on a larger scale, with regard to its function and style but not in plan.

The Healy Asylum was constructed to serve as a kindergarten and day nursery for at least 300 babies of parents living in Lewiston and Auburn, and as an orphanage for about 125 young boys from different parts of the state. In addition to classroom and residential spaces, both the St. Hyacinth School and Convent and the Healy Asylum also had a playroom and chapel, and for the resident teaching Sisters, a double parlor. While the two buildings were designed utilizing the same architectural vocabulary and some of the same exact details (cupola, eave brackets and interior trim) their plans were customized to their respective functions and locations.

The architectural vocabulary of a two or three story building set on a raised basement constructed of brick masonry, with granite trim, individual or paired windows, and a monumental entrance are all typical elements for late nineteenth century school and institutional construction in Maine. Coburn's use of a mansard roof with projecting dormers (known as a French Roof in the nineteenth century) for both the St. Hyacinth School and the Healy Asylum was, however, more typical of architecture from the 1860s and 1870s.To date no written records discussing the architectural design have be located, leaving one to assume the choice was either a cultural preference for an earlier architectural style well established both in New England as well as French Canada and / or for the practical purpose of a habitable top floor housed by the mansard roof. This in fact proved to be necessary for the St. Hyacinth School by the second year it was open.

Coburn organized the combination school and convent building such that on the school side each of the floors above the basement had two large class rooms on the north side of the central hallway. The large class rooms could be combined into one large room by opening two large pocket doors. Having two or four classrooms per floor, depending on the width of the building, was the typical turn of the twentieth century arrangement utilized to provide sufficient light and ventilation for classes of 40 – 60 students. Both the Bridge Street and Forest Street Grammer Schools in Westbrook utilized this arrangement.[27]

[27] Benson, Fred. "The Public Schools of Westbrook." *Board of Trade Journal*, Volume XIX, No. 12. Portland, Maine: Portland Board of Trade, 1907, 695.

Similar to the Healy Asylum, the Sister's residential quarters in the St. Hyacinth School were comprised of public spaces such as the chapel and double parlor and private spaces such as rooms for sleeping and eating. The Brown Street entrance to the convent was distinguished by a wooden porch, distinctly residential in character, with a second floor balcony. The convent entrance porch was removed from the building after 1928. The chapel was located on the west side of the entrance and a double parlor for the Sisters was located on the east side. A stair hall was located behind the south entrance providing access to the other floors. After the Sisters moved to the new convent in 1922 alterations were made to the south side of the building such that the spaces could be used by the school. These alterations appear to be generally limited to the removal of the south side staircase, chapel and kitchen casework because the convent floor plan is still clearly visible in the remaining walls. The installation of pressed decorative metal ceilings in nearly all the spaces appears to have been undertaken either in 1922 or in 1932 following a fire in the southeast corner of the building.

It appears that in 1894, the St. Hyacinth Parish in Westbrook was not large enough to fund the construction of separate convent and school buildings, as were commonly seen in larger parishes. Consequently a combined school and convent building was designed and constructed that served the needs of the parochial school until the parish had grown sufficiently to fund the construction of a separate convent building. The resulting purpose built structure is a noteworthy example of a combined school and convent building designed by the architect Jefferson Lake Coburn and Son of Lewiston, Maine.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (If appropriate.)

French Canadian and Franco-American settlement in Maine and Westbrook

In *Franco-Americans in Maine: A Geographical Perspective,* James P. Allen examines the historical development of Franco-American settlement in Maine. He identifies four major phases of settlement, two of which, the concentration of immigrants in cotton textile manufacturing towns and later concentrations of both immigrants and Franco-Americans in certain pulp and paper manufacturing towns, were directly experienced in Westbrook's development. The earliest of these industries was the Portland Manufacturing Company, later reorganized and incorporated as the Westbrook Manufacturing Company, which was built in the 1830's upon the production of duck, a heavy cotton cloth used for sails, tents, and other purposes, as well as the sail twine used for sewing the duck together. Another was the Cumberland Mills, later incorporated as the S.D. Warren Company, which was described in 1880 as the largest paper mill in the world.

Allen demonstrates that "by 1873, the cotton mill cities of Biddeford and Lewiston were receiving the largest numbers of French Canadians. Other cotton mill centers – Brunswick, Westbrook, and Augusta – had fewer French, but only the smallest mills, in such places as Hallowell, Kennebunk, Richmond and Yarmouth, failed to become foci of major Franco-American communities"[28].

[28] Allen, James P. "Franco-Americans in Maine: A Geographical Perspective," *Acadiensis, vol.* IV, no. 1 (autumn 1974), 40.

The growth of the French Canadian population in Westbrook through the 1870s was the impetus for the purchase of a house and land on Brown Street large enough to accommodate the construction of a Catholic church. In 1873 the 35 families of the Saccarappa Catholic Mission purchased a parcel of land to build a church.[29] By 1879 when the church was completed there were 175 families in the parish.

A neighboring parcel of land on Walker Street was purchased from the Westbrook Manufacturing Co. in 1881 for the construction of a school. Two years later a small school called "Ecole du Bon Pasteur" was constructed and lay teachers were employed to teach the children. That same year plans were prepared by Lewiston architect George M. Coombs for Father DeCelles for a new rectory (extant, on Brown Street). Alterations to the St. Hyacinth church were completed in 1887, following plans also drawn up by George M. Coombs.

Assimilation, Discrimination and Parochial Schools

The local, state and national social and political environment in which the new St. Hyacinth School was constructed and opened is well illustrated by a series of articles on the "Parochial School Question in Maine" run by the *Lewiston Saturday Journal* in December of 1892.[30] After first reporting on the formation of the State League for the Protection of American Institutions, whose purpose included opposition to the parochial school which it alleged "is a distinct menace to the perpetuation of true American manhood and the institutions of this country," the *Journal* interviewed the Bishop Healy from the Portland Diocese with regard to this issue. The following is a small excerpt of his response:

> The Catholics do not impeach the quality of instruction that is furnished in the common schools but they claim that the State will not supply a suitable religious education. America, so styled, should understand that the Catholics entertain no animosity toward the public schools. Nevertheless, we do feel that we are bearing a double burden of taxation in order to supply to our children what the needs of our religion demands. . . I am certain that in none of the public schools will the pupils be found better versed in the history of our country than in our parochial schools. The principles of government are carefully instilled and yet there are those who savagely assert that we are un-American. Unless to be American is to be an infidel, I am at a loss to understand their distinction and the motive for their assaults.[31]

Caught between the opposing pressures of assimilation and discrimination, Bishop Healy's response addresses a multi-faceted issue that had its roots in the founding of this country and the public school system, and continues to be in the realm of national discourse today.

[29] DesJardins, 47.
[30] For an in depth examination of this complex issue from the founding of the United States to the present, see *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution* by Steven K. Green, Oxford University Press, 2012.
[31] "What Bishop Healy Says." *Lewiston Evening Journal*, (Lewiston, Maine: December 17, 1892).

Sisters of the Presentation of Mary

In both Westbrook and Augusta, the Franco-American parochial school was run under the supervision of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. This order was founded in 1796 in France with the mission of Christian education of the young. The order first arrived in Canada in 1853, settling in the Province of Quebec at the same time that entire families were leaving their farms to pursue new opportunities in the growing industrial centers of New England. Five years later the group moved within the Province to St. Hyacinthe, which became the center of the order. In the 1870s the order began to serve the educational needs of the increasing French Canadian population by coming to the United States to teach in parish schools. The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary who came to Westbrook in 1894 were the first sisters of this order in the diocese.

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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 # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.3 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: Longitude:
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☒ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:19	Easting:	389896	Northing: 4837083
2. Zone:	Easting:		Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:		Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting:		Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the St. Hyacinth School and Convent begins at the southwest corner of Walker and Brown Streets and continues north on Walker Street until reaching Pike Street. The property line then proceeds west on Pike Street to a dirt driveway, where it continues south to Brown Street. The boundary then continues east, returning to the point of origin. This corresponds to Westbrook Tax Map 32, Lot 185.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary for the St. Hyacinth School and Convent includes the lot on which the buildings sit. Westbrook Tax Map 32, Lot 185.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Amy Cole Ives & Matthew Corbett
organization: Sutherland Conservation & Consulting
street & number: 295 Water Street, Suite 209
city or town: Augusta state: Maine zip code: 04330
e-mail: amycoleives@sutherlandcc.net
telephone: 207-620-0618
date: January 25, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: St. Hyacinth School and Convent

City or Vicinity: Westbrook

County: Cumberland State: Maine

Photographer: Scott Hanson & Matthew Corbett

Date Photographed: September 24 and 27, 2012; November 16, 2012

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0001.tif* September 27, 2012
View northwest of the Walker Street façade of the school and convent building.

2 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0002.tif* November 16, 2012
View north of the south elevation and former façade of the convent facing Brown Street.

3 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0003.tif* November 16, 2012
View southeast from the rear driveway of the school and convent building. The garage has been demolished since the photograph was taken.

4 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0004.tif* November 16, 2012
View east of the rear elevations of the 1894 school and convent building (at right) and 1921 convent (at left).

5 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0005.tif* November 16, 2012
View south from the intersection of Walker and Pike Streets with the 1894 St. Hyacinth school and convent on left and the 1921 convent on right.

6 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0006.tif* September 27, 2012
View west of the front façade of the 1921 convent building facing Walker Street.

7 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0007.tif* September 24, 2012
Detail view west of the Mansard roof of the 1894 school and convent building.

8 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0008.tif* September 24, 2012
Detail view northeast of the cupola atop the east projection on the 1894 school and convent building.

9 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0009.tif* September 24, 2012
Detail view west of the primary entry to the 1921 convent.

10 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0010.tif* September 24, 2012
View west in a typical central corridor of the 1894 school and convent building.

11 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0011.tif* September 24, 2012
View west in a typical classroom space on the second floor of the 1894 school and convent building.

12 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0012.tif* September 24, 2012
View east from the third floor landing of the stair in the 1894 school and convent building.

13 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0013.tif* September 24, 2012
View east up the stair to the third floor of the 1894 school and convent building.

14 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0014.tif* September 24, 2012
View northwest in a typical classroom space on the third floor of the 1894 school and convent building.

15 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0015.tif* September 24, 2012
Detail view west of the double entry doors to the 1921 convent.

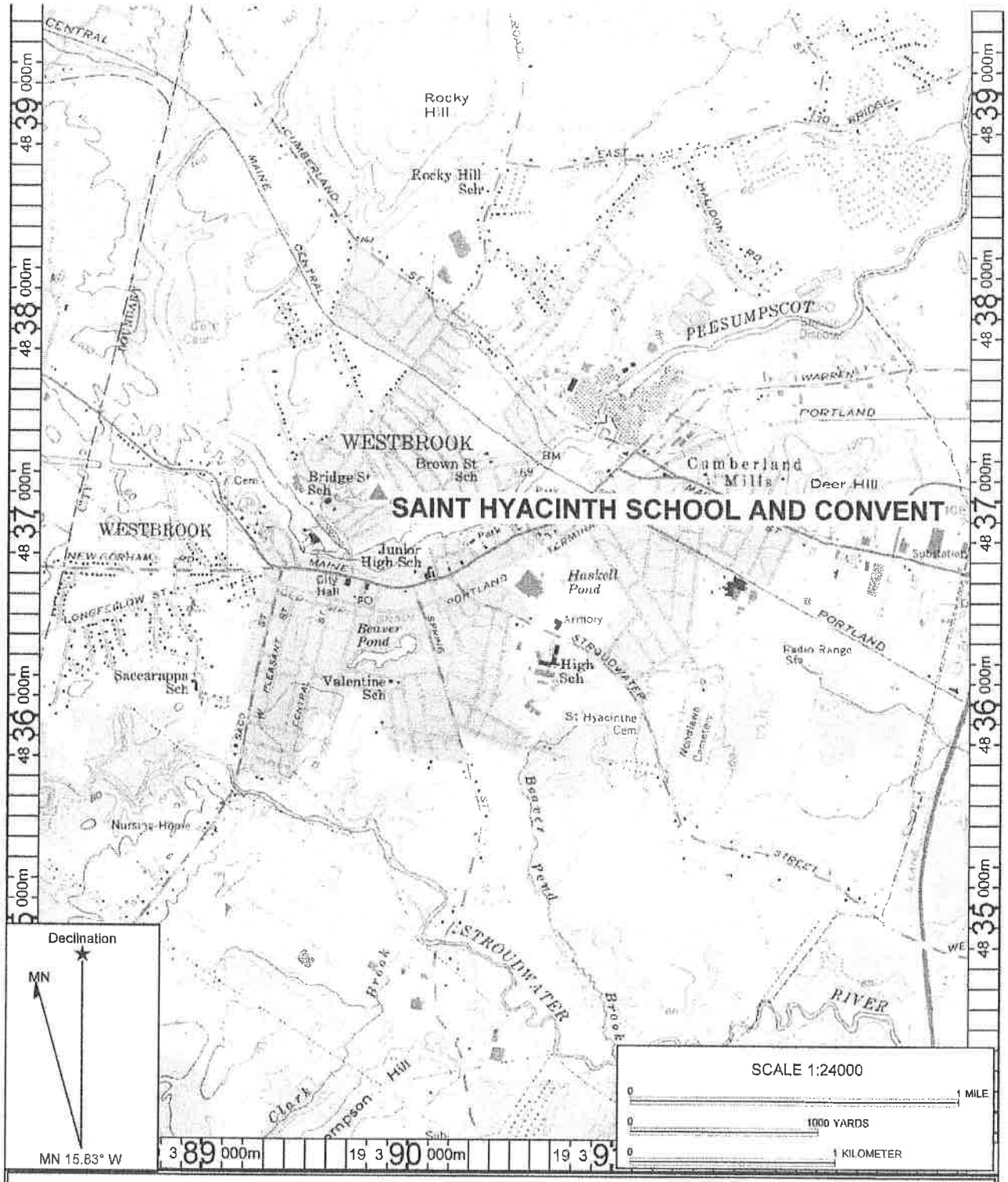
16 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0016.tif* September 24, 2012
View north in the central corridor of the 1921 convent building.

17 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0017.tif* September 24, 2012
View northwest in a typical cell in the 1921 convent.

18 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0018.tif* September 27, 2012
View west of the stair to the second floor of the1921 convent.

19 of 19 *ME_CumberlandCounty_StHyacinth_0019.tif* September 24, 2012
Detail view of built-in cabinetry in the basement of the 1921 convent.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



ST. HYACINTH SCHOOL AND CONVENT
CUMBERLAND COUNTY, ME

Name: PORTLAND WEST
Date: 03/12/13
Scale: 1 inch = 2,000 ft.

UTM: 19/ 389896 / 4837083
NAD 27

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PIKE ST

ALL DOORS
MUST BE
KEPT CLOSED
AT ALL TIMES!

EXIT