NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

133

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

# 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.

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Watkins School
Other names/site number: _____
Name of related multiple property listing:
Educational Resources of Vermont
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

**2. Location**

Street & number: 26 Watkins Avenue
City or town: Rutland State: Vermont County: Rutland
Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A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**

Laurie Weschmann 2/18/2014

**Signature of certifying official/Title:** **Date**

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

**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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

4-7-2014
Date of Action

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Private: | X |
| Public – Local | |
| Public – State | |
| Public – Federal | |

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Building(s) | X |
| District | |
| Site | |
| Structure | |
| Object | |

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| | | structures |
| | | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register n/a

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
EDUCATION: school

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
WORK IN PROGRESS

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)
LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival
LATE 19th AND 20th CENTURY REVIVALS: French Renaissance
LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: Brick
Marble
Slate
Wood

**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.)

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**Summary Paragraph**

The Watkins School occupies a 1.61 acre lot on the east side of Watkins Avenue in the City of Rutland. The 1897 Colonial Revival style school is surrounded by a residential neighborhood of late 19th/early 20th-century single family homes. Built on the south slope of Pine Hill, the neighborhood is on the western outskirts of the city, north of the railroad tracks and west of East Brook. The two-story brick building with side entries on two facades has marble trim and a hipped slate roof. Designed by the Boston architectural firm, Stickney and Austin, it is rich with many classical features and incorporates French Renaissance-style features such as flared eaves and curving rafter tails, as well as Queen Anne-style slate-sided dormers. The Colonial Revival classical embellishments include the marble columns and entablature of the recessed entries on both the front and back elevations, the arcades of arch-topped windows on the side elevations, marble belt courses, keystones, and water table. The Watkins School retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

**Narrative Description**

Exterior
The 1897 brick, 2 ½-story, Watkins School combines the Colonial Revival, French Renaissance and Queen Anne styles. It has a complex hipped slate roof topped by a distinctive, marble trimmed, brick chimney. The building's rich decorative features are primarily executed in marble and include entrances with classical columns, entablature and steps, circular dados, arcading over the windows, splayed lintels with keystones, outlined arched lintels, a belt course and a water table. It also has curving exposed wooden rafter tails and slate-sided dormer. There are wood, one-over-one light sash windows. The two recessed entrances (east and west) have elaborate molded, paneled and glazed Colonial Revival surrounds incorporating transoms and sidelight.

The three by ten-bay Watkins School is nearly rectangular in plan but has slightly projecting one-bay pavilions at each entrance (east and west elevations in a side bay) and a four-bay projecting pavilion on the east half of the south elevation. The red brick building uses a variation of American bond with red-tinted mortar. The entire building has an asymmetrical hipped slate

roof with deep, flared eaves and exposed curving rafter tails. There is a brick chimney at the peak. The roof planes are articulated and project slightly above each entrance pavilion as well as above the south elevation pavilion. The brick building has marble trim throughout and a marble sill which divides the below-grade stone foundation walls from the above-grade brick basement walls.

The school's three-bay front (west) and rear (east) facades are nearly identical (though mirror images on one another) with grand recessed classical entries executed entirely in marble. The difference is that the west façade has a gable dormer and the east façade does not. On both elevations, the entry surrounds are embellished by a marble frame, two monumental Tuscan columns with full classical base and capital and topped by a deeply molded cornice. The entries are located in a slightly projecting pavilion defining the left bay of the elevation and articulated in the slate roof as well. A marble water table and marble beltcourse at the second floor level unify the elevations. Above the entry entablature a very tall arch topped window defines the stair hall and breaks the beltcourse. The window is recessed in the brick with a double tiered brick arch outlined in marble and a marble sill. There is a semi-circular transom above a pair of narrow sash windows. The window ensemble is flanked on the wall by round marble medallions near the eaves. The other two bays of each front and rear elevation have a window on each floor. On the first floor the square topped, double hung windows have flared marble lintels enriched with keystones and use the marble beltcourse as a sill. On the second floor the windows are shorter and are arch-topped with a marble trimmed brick arch detail that is a simpler version of the arch in the entry bay. The basement level in the projecting marble topped brick water course has two small windows (now boarded). The one differentiating characteristic of the front (west) façade is the slate sided and fronted gable dormer. The Queen Anne style dormer has flared eaves like the main roof, a molded cornice with cornice returns on the face of the dormer. The dormer has a pair of multi-paned windows with an elliptical arched four-light window centered above in the gable.

On the west façade, the recessed entry consists of a glazed, paneled double-leaf door surrounded by wide half-sidelights over panels matching those on the doors, and a set of three transom above that extend across the sidelights and door. The recessed entry has a marble floor and brick sidewalls and a plaster ceiling with molded wood cornice. The entry configuration and materials is nearly the same on the east except that one of the side lights and half of one transom panel are infilled with solid wood panels.

The south elevation is asymmetrical with five large windows plus a small closet window on the western side and a four-bay projecting pavilion on the eastern side. The marble water table and second floor stringcourse are continuous from the end elevations. Like the east and west elevations, the first floor windows have splayed marble lintels with keystone and marble sills and are arranged in banks of five on the west and four on the eastern pavilion. The second floor windows are likewise consistent in style to the second floor windows of the end elevations with marble outlined arched brick lintels and the stringcourse of a marble sill. However, like the first floor windows they are arranged in banks of five and four such that the arches form an arcade springing from common marble trimmed brick pilasters between the windows. These large banks of windows correspond to the classrooms. Near the center of the elevation there is one bay of

small, narrow windows on each floor corresponding to classroom closets. These windows have splayed marble lintels with no keystones and simple marble sills. The main window bays (five and four) are extended vertically in the basement level with smaller windows beneath the water table in line with those above. In the 4th window bay from the east on the projecting pavilion, a window opening has been cut into a doorway at loading dock height which contains an overhead folding garage-type door providing a delivery portal for the maintenance storage use of the former classroom.

The north elevation has no breaks or pavilions and continues the marble trim of the water table and stringcourse. There is a bank of four window bays roughly centered in the elevation. The windows on both the first and second floor levels matching the details of the south side pavilion with flat topped windows on the first floor and arcaded arch-topped windows on the second floor.

Interior

The four room school's original floor plan was comprised simply of a large hall extending between monumental front and rear staircases along the entire north side of the school and off of this to the south were two large classrooms on each floor. The classrooms were the same, nearly square size but turned 90 degrees in orientation from each other so that one projects south beyond the other in the pavilion. In the west classrooms the long side has the windows with a bank of five while in the east classrooms, the short wall has the windows with a bank of four. In both the east and west classrooms the other exterior wall has two windows. Between the east and west classrooms was a 5' section containing masonry chimneys and ventilation shafts as well as closets and built-in storage. Slate blackboards and banks of windows characterized the classroom walls. At present some modern partitions have been added that divide the main hall on both floors as well as create smaller rooms and offices in the first floor classrooms and adds a restroom in the first floor hall. The first floor office spaces have dropped ceilings and many of the blackboards have been removed along with their trim work. In addition, there is an added modern wooden staircase to the attic in the second floor hall. The interior has rich trim work and details including heavy moldings, elaborate wainscoting, picture railing, and blackboard trim and chalk rails. In addition there are original, built in drawers topped by a recessed glass fronted cupboard in three classrooms as well as a heavily trimmed ventilation grate built into the wall trim in one of the second floor classrooms. Originally there were also internal borrow lights between classrooms and closets, some of which remain under modern finishes. There are original tin ceilings exposed in full height two rooms that were formerly part of a single first floor classroom. In addition, original tin ceilings are extant above the dropped ceilings in most of the first floor spaces. The second floor ceilings are plaster as are the original walls of both floors above the wainscoting.

The first floor is a half level above ground floor level of the east and west entrances. Each entry has a vestibule from which stairs lead down to the basement and up to the first floor. The first floor level entry lobby is currently divided in half by a modern partition into front and rear halls. The north elevation's banks of four windows on each floor light this long hallway. There are presently two windows on either side of the modern partition on the first floor. At the second

floor level, the west stair is enclosed by a modern partition wall near the top landing. The four original windows are all in the remaining main second floor hall which is open to the east stair. Each set of monumental stairs returns on a full width landing halfway between floors. The stair landings are lit by very large paired windows topped by a semi-circular transom. Although these are framed by brick arches on the exterior, on the interior the arched windows are framed within square trim and have triangle inset panels around the arches.

The entry and stair hall wainscoting is about 5' high overall and is made up of a 6" high molded projecting baseboard, 3' high bead board with 2" wide vertical flat sections between a bead detail with three reeds, a 1' high flat horizontal frieze at the top with a deeply molded cap. The wainscoting follows the stairs and has an unusual acute angled return as it rises in the open stair hall. The window trim is deeply molded as well with an inside rounded bead and two tiers of flat frieze culminating in a 4" deep outer projecting molding. The window trim extends to the floor with a recessed beadboard panel below the windowsills. The tall original doorways have similarly deep, complex and wide trim with paneled 1' wide door jambs and heads. The original doors have matching paneling to the jams with five horizontal panels per door and jamb. The stairs have square newel posts that have a combination of moldings and recessed panels. The solid, bead board balustrade and railing at the center of the stair has a curved return at the landings. On the second floor of the stair the bead board railing is accented by the paneled newels and at the walls these are further embellished by urn finials. There is a corridor along the stair on the west side which is defined by a higher railing and paneled posts with metal screen instead of solid walls. This formed a cloakroom area between two of the doors into the west classroom. On the east side this space has been enclosed with modern framing into a small bathroom.

The wainscoting in the classrooms, where extant in one area of the first floor and in two rooms on the second floor, is made up of the baseboard and its molded cap topped by the vertical twin beaded board underneath the blackboards and slightly higher under the window sills. The blackboards are framed in deeply molded trim and have molded chalk rails where still extant and about 2' from the ceiling runs a simple picture railing. The hardwood strip floors have had linoleum tiles overlaid in a few places or are covered by carpeting in the offices.

There are three extant original built-in storage areas – one on the first floor and two on the second floor. These are recessed areas lined in bead board and trimmed by door trim at about door height. They are about 6' wide and each has a built-in paired set of three drawers at the bottom with open shelves above. In one unit on the second floor original glass sliding doors are still extant which enclose the shelves. The west classroom on each floor has a closet with a borrow-light window at the back facing the east classroom. There is also a small, pass-through closet/washroom at the south wall that connects the two classrooms on each floor and this small, wainscoted space has its own natural light from a small, high window. Each classroom had three original doors onto the hallway and some of these have been infilled with shelving and secured.

The basement level is partially finished and there is one paneled room on the east using fairly modern wood vertical paneling as well as two former restrooms and a furnace room. The walls in the halls, bathrooms, and furnace room are painted or unpainted brick and rubble stone below. Of

the restrooms, only three urinals remain for fixtures. The doorways throughout the basement are topped by brick arches with wood panel infill above the five-panel doors which match those on the floors above. Simple, Tuscan cast iron columns support the bottom of the stairs on either end.

The attic level has been used in recent years for storage. It is open to the rafters with a wood floor and a large plastered brick shaft for chimney and ventilation running up the center. It is lit by the west dormer, although this is presently boarded on the interior. The rafters are supported by a hipped roof truss system that combines heavy timber top chords, lighter wood braces and vertical steel rods. These trusses across the east and west elevations support longer heavy timber beams which are braced underneath by bow string trusses made of an iron casting and steel rods with turnbuckles.

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## 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.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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_____
__Community Planning & Development

**Period of Significance**
__1897 - c. 1959_____

**Significant Dates**
___1897_____

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

**Cultural Affiliation**
_____
_____
_____

**Architect/Builder**
Stickney & Austin of Boston MA, architects
C.E. Paige, general contractor
Smith & Anthony, heating-ventilating contractor

**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.)

Constructed in 1897, the Watkins School is an outstanding example of an urban graded public school in Vermont. It is a fine example of a Colonial Revival-style school built in the modern fashion of the 1890s and is consistent with many of the public schools built throughout Vermont during this era. It incorporates the many windows, multiple, high-ceilinged classrooms, and ventilation systems advocated for model schools by educational reformers and the State Department of Education. The high style and quality of its architecture, designed by the Boston firm of Stickney and Austin, reflects the importance of educational reform in Rutland, as well as the municipal efforts of this emerging city in which a number of architects held public office and had influence over the public and institutional buildings built there. The construction of this school in 1897 was part of a decade-long campaign by the Knights of Labor movement, which held political sway over the town and city government, to invest in and upgrade the educational system of Rutland. Their efforts between 1887 and 1897 resulted in a total of five new, architect-designed, brick schools in the city, including Watkins. The Watkins School is also significant in the area of community development as one of the first buildings built on a newly laid street in a

developing residential neighborhood. The modest but stylish homes in the neighborhood housed the growing manager and merchant middle class of the robust local economy. The school's period of significance is 1897 – c. 1959, reflecting the importance of its type, model school features, and architecture; its place in a movement of school reform and improvement; and the period during which it was in active use as a public school serving the surrounding community. This well-preserved school building easily meets the registration requirements of the *Educational Resources of Vermont* Multiple Property Listing. The building is locally significant and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria "A" and "C."

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

Educational System Significance

The 1897 Colonial Revival/French Renaissance style Watkins School was built in the context of an expanding village at the point of becoming a city and efforts by the local Knights of Labor to dramatically improve and expand Rutland's educational system. The school's construction along with four other substantial brick schools built within a few years of each other, coincided with statewide educational reform and new state laws abolishing the district school system and encouraging the development of high-quality graded schools with multiple classrooms and more natural light and ventilation.

The building of this school in 1897 was part of a long campaign by the Knights of Labor movement to invest in and upgrade the educational system of Rutland. Between 1887, when Rutland abolished the district school system[1], and 1897, the labor movement held political sway over the town and subsequent city government. They were strong supporters of educational reform, which was being advocated statewide in the 1880s. Under Labor Union political rule, Rutland was in the vanguard in Vermont by voting to abolish the district system voluntarily in 1887; most towns resisted until the state mandated it in 1892. Once the district system was abolished, the town became one district unit responsible for the education of all children in the town. In Rutland, this was the beginning of educational reform put into practice. This effort resulted in the construction of five new brick schools. The Watkins School designed by Stickney and Austin in 1897 was the last of these constructed. It was preceded by the Kingsley School (1888) designed by F. W. Stickney; the National Register-listed Longfellow School (1890), the Lincoln School (1895) designed by Chappell and Burke, and the Park Street School (1896) designed by Stickney and Austin. According to the *Historic Architecture of Rutland County*, edited by Curtis Johnson in 1988:

*"The new school superintendent, George Merrill, and the board then proceeded to create perhaps the most enduring legacy of the labor 'revolution' in Rutland; they reinstituted the graded school system with a teacher for each of thirteen grades and began an aggressive*

[1] The School Commissioners of the newly formed City of Rutland, as recorded in their meeting minutes, formally abolished the districts in 1893 and received all district property and debts.

*program of constructing new brick school buildings to provide classrooms for each grade. The Queen Anne style Kingsley School at 30 Pine Street, completed in 1888 at a cost of $12,285, was the first of the new schools. With two large classrooms on each floor, the building was meant to accommodate the first four grades. In keeping with the most enlightened school theories of the time, the building design included high ceilings and abundant windows, to provide good ventilation and light, and a raised basement story, lit by numerous large windows, with modern heating and plumbing systems and bathrooms. The Queen Anne style Longfellow School, constructed in 1890 at 4 Church Street by contractor Bela Dexter[2] for the sum of $25,000, provided separate classrooms for seven grades arranged around a large central hall and included all the progressive features of the Kingsley School. … Within ten years of the labor 'revolution' of 1886-87, Rutland had five modern schools, a lasting testament to the commitment to self-improvement of the labor movement in Rutland." (p.288)*

There had been considerable effort by state officials and statewide educational reformers to disseminate information on model schools and advocate for standards of operation, construction, and teacher training. The Watkins School, like the Kingsley School described above designed by one of the same architects, incorporated banks of windows, high ceilings, a ventilation system, indoor plumbing, and four classrooms to serve the first four graded classes of neighborhood elementary children. These elements of the "model school" were incorporated into new school design in Rutland years before they were eventually mandated by the State Health Department in 1904. Each of the three schools built by the City of Rutland School Commissioners after 1892 had so-called "sanitary" heating systems that were advocated to provide adequate and clean fresh air while exhausting the stale air.[3]
The Watkins School, with its modern features and architectural style, is an outstanding example of the schools that resulted from the late 19th century educational reforms and state requirements. According to the Educational Properties of Vermont Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF):

*"The 1892 consolidation effort led to a large number of "modern" schools built throughout the state. They often were high style buildings, particularly in the larger towns and cities, reflecting popular architectural tastes of the day with their use of Queen Anne, Romanesque, and later Colonial Revival styles. They were usually larger than the old district schools as they served more students. …"*

**"…***Many of these new schools were Colonial Revival in style, symmetrical, with a dominant entrance often recessed within an archway or between pilasters or were sheltered by a portico. These buildings were often brick with wooden, cast concrete or stone classical embellishments, such as quoins, stringcourses, or cornices. Roof types varied: often these large buildings had hipped or gable roofs and later some had parapets with flat, rolled tar and pebble roofs.*

[2] Dexter and his crew are identified in a construction photograph. However Dexter may have been a subcontractor to the builder of record: George Russell according to school board records.
[3] Per the minutes of the School Commissioners in the collection of the Rutland Historical Society

*These schools often had eight to ten classrooms, perhaps an auditorium and a library, and a raised basement, which housed mechanical systems, restrooms, other rooms, and perhaps a gymnasium. They had ample windows so each classroom received plenty of sunlight to supplement either gas lights or electric lights. Many of these schools also had air ducts that allowed for the circulation of fresh air through the classrooms and steam heat that provided a clean dust-free environment in the winter. Advances in plumbing and sanitation can be seen in the modern bathrooms…"*

Architectural Significance

The high style and quality of the Watkins School's design, along with that of several other schools and municipal buildings in the city, is emblematic of the municipal efforts of this emerging city in which a number of architects held public office and had influence over the public and institutional buildings built there. Local architect Jean Jacques Rousseau Randall was an officer in the school governance system and eventually superintendent and president of the union school district from 1858 through 1886. Another local architect, Charles E. Paige, who designed a number of municipal projects including the Colonial Revival style town hall of 1901-1902, became one of the early mayors in 1906 of the newly established City of Rutland. The five substantial school buildings built by the Town and then City of Rutland starting in 1888 were professionally designed by architects. The Watkins Avenue School was designed by the firm of Stickney and Austin of Boston who had just designed the Park Street School. The firm consisted of Frederick W. Stickney, of Lowell MA who had been the architect for the 1888 Kingsley School and William D. Austin, an Ecole de Beaux arts-trained architect of Boston. Both architects had trained at MIT and formed a partnership in 1892. They were responsible for many notable buildings in Boston (several at Revere Beach) and Lowell (Normal School) in the cNew-Classical, Colonial Revival, and Italian Renaissance Revival styles. The original plans for the Watkins School have not been found but the City Reports and School Commissioner records confirm the architect and also identify C.E. Paige as the contractor along with Smith and Anthony as the heating/ventilating contractor. Charles E. Paige (of Paige and Heath) was master builder who also had submitted a plan to be considered for the Lincoln Avenue School (not selected.) Paige and Heath was the contractor for the Park Street School as well.

The 1909 Champlain School in Burlington designed by Frank Lyman Austin has very similar massing to both the Longfellow and Watkins Schools and shares details with them such as the exposed curving rafter tails, slate-sided dormers, and a Syrian arch. Other architect-designed graded schools of the 1890s though 1910 era, such as the 1892 schools in South Royalton and Bradford by George Guernsey, often include a prominent entry such as the Syrian arch of the Longfellow School and the Classical portico of the Watkins School. That these schools bear such strong similarity to each other is testament to the influence of model school plans and design recommendations disseminated by the state board of education throughout this time to which the architectural fashions of the day were applied. In addition, the strong similarity among schools of this period suggests that the architect/designers – most of whom were bidding for many such contracts throughout New England and Vermont – adapted earlier plans to save money and thus

meet the tight and bond-fixed budgets of towns like Rutland which had to build three new schools in only three years[4].

The architect-designed Watkins School, with its French Renaissance flavor in the prominent flared eaves, also adds many highly classical features like the formal, marble columned entries with full entablature to create an overall Colonial Revival effect. The level of detail is quite rich and the moldings and other embellishments are finely made and complex rather than the simpler trim and wainscoting more typical of Vermont schools of the 1890s. Marble and brick is a common combination in Rutland with its active marble industry and here it is used extensively. The identical front and rear entries, executed entirely in marble, are outstanding examples of classical detail with Tuscan columns, a full entablature and steps.

Community Development Significance

Starting in 1894, the School Commissioners had to build new schools in three new outlying wards (9, 10, & 11) added after the 1892 incorporation of the city. At the time of its construction, the Watkins School, in Ward 10, was a state-of-the-art school facility built on the western outskirts of town. It was one of the early anchors of the new neighborhood that would develop around it. It is significant in the area of community development as part of an effort by the city to support and encourage an emerging residential neighborhood of modest but stylish homes for the growing manager and merchant middle class of the robust local economy. The city, incorporated in 1892, laid a small portion of Watkins Avenue and later built the school, after which many of the homes and other streets followed. Watkins Avenue was extended later and the houses in the surrounding neighborhood on the shoulders of Pine Hill reflect the 1890-1910 Queen Anne and Colonial Revival period in style. The growth in the town and city at that time was fueled by the post-civil war expansion of railroads, the marble industry, and the Howe Scale Company which arrived in Rutland in 1877. The *Historic Architecture of Rutland County* describes the development between 1880 and 1900:

"*The housing boom that picked up speed in the 1880s continued largely unabated through the 1890s. New residential construction expanded the city in all directions, particularly to the west and north. Areas in the south and southwest near industries along the rail lines remained primarily working-class residential neighborhoods. The areas immediately west of Grove Street and west of East Creek became two neighborhoods filled with housing for upwardly mobile artisans and others. Far Grove Street continued to attract wealthy residents. The older sections of the middle class neighborhood between Grove and North Main Streets underwent some*

[4] 1895 Rutland School Commissioner minutes record the challenge of meeting the bond-voted allocation. For Watkins School (Ward 10), the original architects chosen were Chappell and Smith (Chappell was part of the firm that designed the Lincoln School). However, the plans developed, even after modifications, were bid out at $17,500 – more than the $15,000 the commissioners had to spend. The Commissioners then turned to Stickney and Austin, the firm they were working with on the Park Street School and on additions to the high school at the time and asked them to draw up plans for a building not to exceed the $15,000. The commissioners' building committee had traveled to Burlington in 1894 to look at a new school there. It seems possible that they ended up adapting the plans of another school to meet the Ward 10 building budget.

*transformation, while to the north, in the area served by the trolley along Crescent Street, many stylish new homes were constructed for various professionals, merchants, and office workers….*

*…West of East Creek, a new middle income neighborhood began developing, in part thanks to the service of the trolley, which ran along Columbian Avenue beginning in 1885. The first homes appeared on State Street across from the House of Corrections. Richard Ryan, a clerk at Kingsley's hardware, president of the Central Trades and Labor Council during the 1890s and later a speculator in land in the neighborhood, lived at 184 State in a c.1888 Queen Anne style house. Next door the M.O. Stoddard family of the Mosley & Stoddard manufactory at the corner of West and Forest Streets occupied a large home (1890) at 188 State. Around the corner, criminal attorney and prominent Democrat Thomas Moloney had a handsome, brick Queen Anne style home built in 1890 at 194 Columbian Avenue with a fashionable Colonial Revival Style porch set on a rusticated marble foundation.*

*After the construction in 1892* [sic – should be 1897] *of the Watkins School on Watkins Avenue west of Columbian Avenue, State Street was extended and Evergreen Avenue and Hazel Street were laid out nearby. A number of modest houses were then constructed on Hazel Street, such as the sidehall plan with Queen Anne style porch homes of carpenter Levi Matthews at 42 Hazel (1892) and grocer Leonard Leavett at 50 Hazel (1898). Large Queen Anne style houses were built on Evergreen Avenue, including the homes at 45 and 49 Evergreen, probably built in 1894 and 1898 respectively, for Howe Scale machinists John and Frank Thompson. Both houses are distinguished by shingle work, decorative windows, and ornate porches."* [pp. 292-293]

Building History

The Watkins School was built in 1896 – 1897, opening for the first time in the fall of 1897. The bond vote for construction of the school was in March of 1895. After this, the building committee for Ward 10 (of the Watkins School) initially chose the firm Chappell and Smith to design a school. After these plans bid out too high and modifications did not help contain the cost, the commissioners set these plans aside and instead hired the firm of Stickney and Austin to design a school that would cost no more than $15,000 to build. They were already working with both firms on other schools. The school was constructed by Charles E. Paige of Paige and Heath which also constructed Park Street School under the same architects. The school's period of significance is 1897 – c. 1959, reflecting the importance of its type, model school features, and outstanding architecture; its place in a movement of school reform and improvement; and the period during which it was in active use as a public school serving the surrounding community.

The school most likely contained four grades, which could be accommodated in its four original classrooms. One long-time employee of the Rutland Public School System recalls that it later served as a kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school[5]. It stayed open as a public school until about 1959, according to the local history "Rutland in Retrospect" when the Northwest School was built. During the 1960s, it served as the private Havenwood School for

[5] The information on the use of the school is based on a telephone interview with Bob Recoulet, Maintenance Supervisor, Rutland City Schools for 39 years, by L. Papazian on 11/13/13.

special education though it remained in public ownership.[6] In the early 1970s, it went back into use as a public school and still had its four large classrooms[7]. It appears that very few permanent changes were made to the building while it was a school. The exterior is well-preserved with only the addition of storm windows and electrical connections. In about 1973, the building became the school system's maintenance department. On the interior, linoleum tiles were laid in a few areas, additional toilets and closets were added, and on the first floor a more modern system of offices and smaller classrooms was created out of the two large classrooms. This renovation likely occurred in the later 1970s based on the materials used and may have been done to provide additional offices for the maintenance department. These renovations included carpeting, dropped ceilings, and sheet rock partitions. The tall first floor windows were boxed out on the interior and not impacted by the dropped ceilings, and the tin ceilings were also left in place above the dropped ceilings. Other changes to the building which occurred during this period include the change of a window into an overhead delivery door on the south elevation, the construction of shelving in various locations, as well as the construction of a crude wooden staircase to the attic in the second floor hall.

In 1977, gas pumps were installed at the large site and it served as a school bus parking lot. At some point in the 1980s, a detached garage building was constructed on the site. The maintenance department's use of the building ceased in 2009 and the detached garage building was demolished in 2012. The city is preparing to transfer the school property to the Housing Trust of Rutland, which plans to adaptively re-use the building for affordable housing apartments.

[6] West, Robert Edward. *Rutland in Retrospect*. Rutland, VT: Rutland Historical Society, 1978, p 99.

[7] According to a January 29, 2014 interview with Angela Hinchey by the author. Hinchey taught at Watkins in the 1970s.

Historic Views of Watkins School

**c. 1900 photograph printed in *Rutland in Retrospect,* page 99. View looking northeast (*courtesy Rutland Historical Society)***

**1952 view of east classroom on first floor looking northwest. Photo taken as a "before" shot for a publication on modern lighting in Rutland Schools. (C*ourtesy Rutland Historical Society)***

**Top and Bottom: 1952 views of east classroom on first floor looking northeast (top) and west classroom on first floor looking northeast (bottom). Photos taken as a "before" shot for a publication on modern lighting in Rutland Schools . (*courtesy Rutland Historical Society)***

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Smith, L.B. and W.S. Rann, eds. *History of Rutland County, Vermont.* Syracuse, NY:D. Mason & Co., 1886

Interviews by L. Papazian: Rob Recoulet, Maintenance Supervisor, Rutland City Public Schools (11/13/13), Cherie F. Bizzarro, Rutland City Public Schools Administrative Offices (11/20/13); Margaret E. Clifford, Rutland City Public Schools Maintenance Department (11/13/13); and Angela Hinchey, former teacher at Watkins School (1/29/14)

Rutland City and Town School Commission minutes, school directories, annual School Reports, and annual Town reports, in the collection of the Rutland Historical Society

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. *The Historic Architecture of Rutland County.* Curtis B. Johnson, Editor and Elsa Gilbertson, Assistant Editor. Montpelier, VT: Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, 1988.

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation & University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program. *Educational Resources of Vermont National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form.* Montpelier, VT: VDHP, 1993.

West, Robert Edward. *Rutland in Retrospect*. Rutland, VT: Rutland Historical Society, 1978.

**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:**

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
__X__ Other

Name of repository: __ Rutland Historical Society _____

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____**

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** _1.61 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: 43.607239 Longitude: -72.995483
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

**Or**
**UTM References**
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:
2. Zone: Easting: Northing:
3. Zone: Easting: Northing:
4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

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

The 1.61 acre property is located on the east side of Watkins Avenue in Rutland, Vermont. It is currently known as 26 Watkins Avenue and formerly known as 24 Watkins Avenue.

Its specific boundaries are as follows: beginning at a point on the east side of Watkins Avenue at the southwest corner of the property and at the northwest corner of the property known as 16 Watkins Avenue; thence extending northerly 246' along the east side of Watkins Avenue to the northwest corner of the property also the southwest corner of the property of 238 State Street; thence easterly 235.11' along the rear property lines of 238 State Street, 234 State Street, and 232 State Street to a point at the northeast corner of the property and at the western side of Hazel Street; thence southerly along the western side of Hazel Street 143.93' and continuing beyond the end of the street in the same southerly line another 168.64' to a point at the southeast corner of the property and also the northeast corner of the property of 363 West Street; thence westerly along the rear property line of 363 West Street 115.62' and continuing in the same westerly line another 34.51' along one of the boundary lines of the property at 16 Watkins Avenue; thence northerly following one of the boundary lines of the property at 16 Watkins Avenue 50.63; thence westerly along the northern boundary line of the property at 16 Watkins Avenue 79.37' to the place of beginning.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary describes the original 1897 boundary of the school property.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Lyssa Papazian, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization: _____
street & number: 13 Dusty Ridge Road
city or town: Putney_____ state: Vermont_____ zip code:05346____
e-mail___papazian@gaw.com_____
telephone:__(802)387-2878_____
date:____January 30, 2014_____

## 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: Watkins School
City or Vicinity: Rutland
County: Rutland State: Vermont
Photographer: Lyssa Papazian
Date Photographed: 10/21/2013

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

1 of 20. Watkins Avenue with Watkins School on right, view looking north

2 of 20. State Street, view looking southwest towards intersection with Hazel Street with Watkins School in center distance

3 of 20. Watkins School, front (west) façade and south elevation, view looking northeast

4 of 20. Watkins School, rear (east) and north elevations, view looking southwest

5 of 20. Detail of east elevation entrance bay, view looking northwest

6 of 20. Detail of west facade recessed entry and classical surround, view looking east

7 of 20. Detail of north elevation with banks of windows, view looking south

8 of 20. Detail of west roof elevation with flared eave, slate sided dormer, view looking east

9 of 20. Detail of flared eaves, curving rafter tails, roofline and chimney, view looking southwest

10 of 20. Watkins School interior first floor hallway and east stair with acute angled wainscot trim, view looking east

11 of 20. Interior, west stair landing, view looking southeast to second floor

12 of 20. Interior west second floor landing with coat room area, view looking northwest

13 of 20. Interior detail, west stair landing newel and railing return

14 of 20. Inferior detail west second floor engaged newel and urn finial

15 of 20. Interior, second floor hall, view looking east

16 of 20. Interior, second floor west classroom, view looking southeast

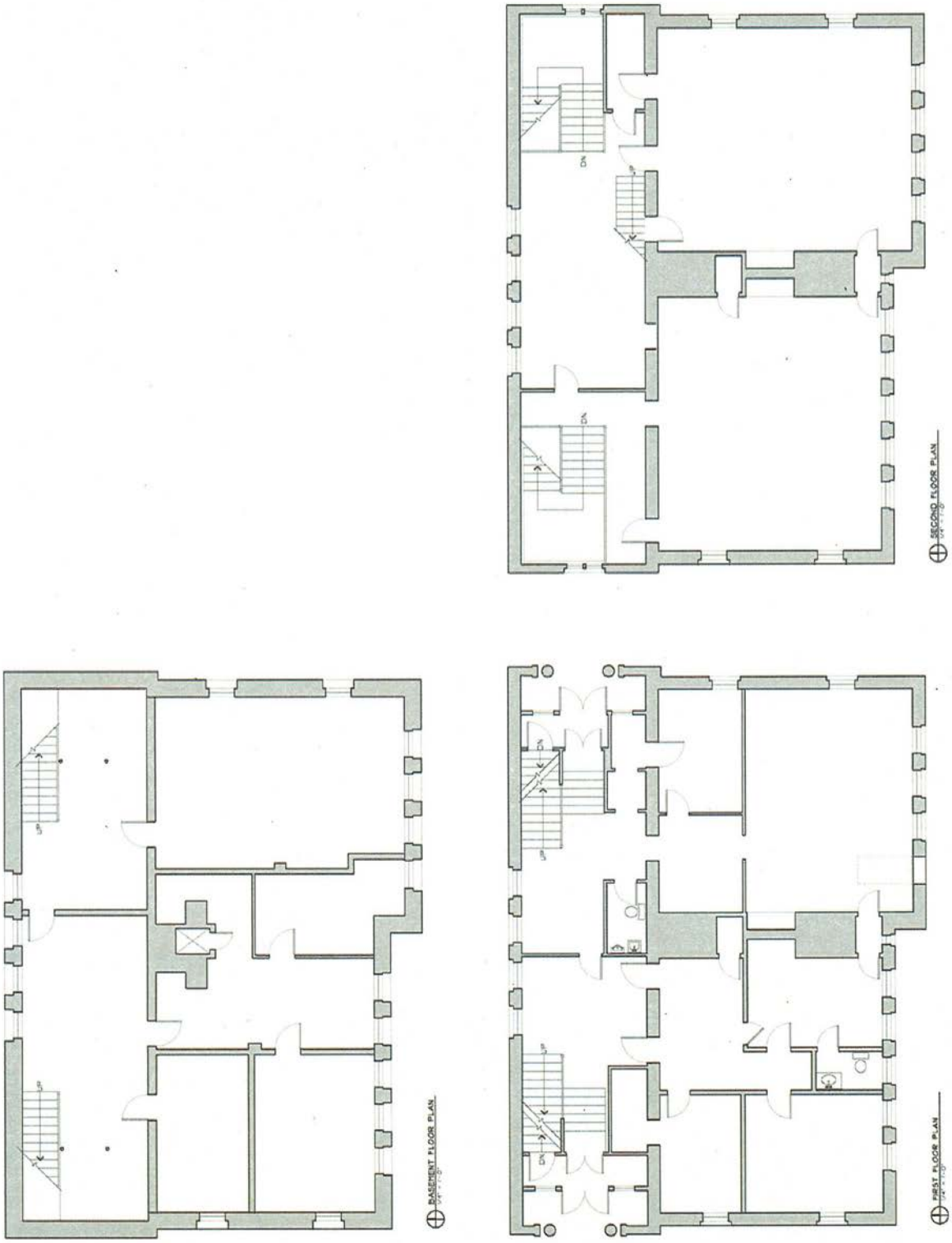
17 of 20. Interior detail, first floor door and doorway, typical

18 of 20 Interior detail, built-in storage drawers and shelves, second floor east classroom

19 of 20 Interior detail, former ventilation grate opening and chalk rail in second floor east classroom, and typical of trim details throughout,

20 of 20 Interior detail, window trim in hallway on north elevation, typical of trim on arched windows throughout

**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.



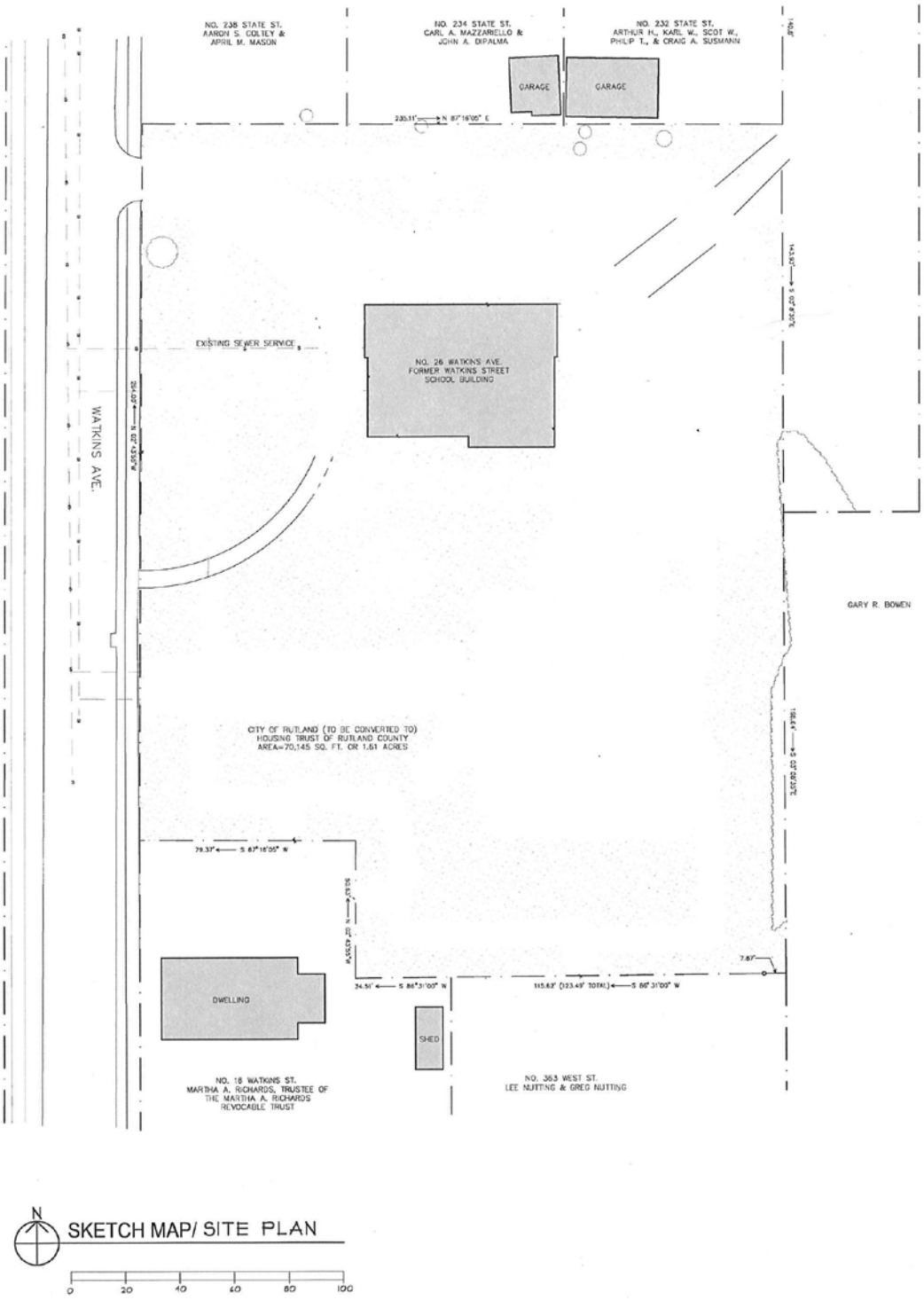

**Watkins School, 26 Watkins Avenue, Rutland, Rutland County, Vermont**
**Floor Plans, Not to scale** *(Courtesy Arnold & Scangas Architects)*

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

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

| |
|---|
| Watkins School |
| Name of Property |
| Rutland, Vermont |
| County and State |
| Educational Resources of Vermont |
| Name of multiple listing (if applicable) |

Section number Site Plan Page 1







**Watkins School, 26 Watkins Avenue, Rutland, Rutland County, Vermont**
*(courtesy Arnold & scangas Architects)*

Watkins School, 26 Watkins Avenue
City of Rutland, Rutland County, VT

Latitude: 43.607239°
Longitude: -72.995483°

Watkins School, 26 Watkins Avenue
City of Rutland, Rutland County, VT

Latitude: 43.607239°
Longitude: -72.995483°

HITS SMOKING
TIME ON ANY
S OR PROPERTY.
TED TO ENFORCE
LAW.

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