

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

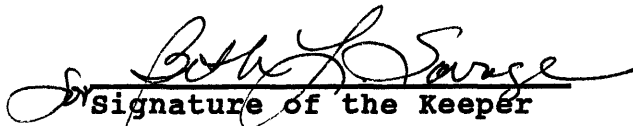
### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001100 Date Listed: 08/02/90

Byram School Fairfield CT  
Property Name County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

8/2/90  
Date of Action

=====  
=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

#### 8. Statement of Significance: Period of Significance

The significant dates, 1925 and 1936, are intended as the period of significance as well.

This information was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO by telephone.

#### DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED JUN 20 1990

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

1. Name of Property

historic name Byram School other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Between Sherman Avenue and Western Junior Highway city, town Greenwich (Byram) state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code 06830

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date 6/14/90

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is: entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:). Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/

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Colonial Revival

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

---

walls brick

---

roof slate

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other 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Byram School is a load-bearing masonry and steel building constructed in 1925-26 in the Colonial Revival style. An addition of the same style was added to the south end in 1936, forming an L-shaped building (Photographs #s 1, 2). The school was converted to elderly housing in 1987-89. It is located on an elevated site between Sherman Avenue and Western Junior Highway on the western edge of the Town of Greenwich. The area there is called Byram, for the river of the same name to the west which partially forms the Connecticut border with the State of New York. To the immediate northwest and below the school site is West Putnam Avenue, also known as the Boston Post Road, or U.S. Route 1.

The school is located on the western side of a large open six-acre site which drops off sharply to the Byram River 100 feet below. An elevated knoll with outcroppings of granite ledge is found to the northeast of the school. Further to the east is a 17-acre area with playing fields, a skating rink, and playground. Thirteen acres of this latter section were set aside as open space in 1979. Included in this dedicated open space is the gradually sloping area to the immediate south of the school. It contains mature memorial trees planted to commemorate the war dead of the community (Photograph #3). To the north of the school are modern brick attached houses, built as family housing in 1988-89 when the school was converted to elderly housing. Asphalt parking areas are located at some distance below the southern approach to the building and to the immediate east (Photograph #4).

Structurally the school utilizes a combination of load-bearing brick exterior walls with steel and concrete interiors. The addition has concrete floors with steel reinforcing and steel trusses to support the slate roof. The slate roof of the main block is supported by heavy wood trusses.

The original main block has a hip roof and a pedimented projecting pavilion on the west elevation, where the original main entrance was located. The original doors were replaced with windows when the main entrance was relocated to the east side of the building. There is a gable-roofed pedimented section at the south end. The Flemish bond walls with a brick watertable are accented with brick quoining at the outside corners and flat-arched gauged brick lintels with limestone keystones.

Other limestone detailing is employed at the original main entrance: engaged columns surmounted by a open scroll pediment (Photograph #5). Heavy modillions of wood under the eaves and cornice and an oval wheel window in the tympanum of the pediment with a limestone swag complete the Georgian Revival-style design of this section.

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The south wing has a gable roof with a stepped parapet with integral brick chimneys. Its south elevation is distinguished by a series of tall round-arched windows with limestone keystones and intersecting tracery in the arches.

The building has been remodeled several times. In addition to the 1987-89 conversion to elderly housing, it was renovated for code compliance in 1960. At that time the original wooden sash were replaced throughout. Several classrooms in the addition were converted to a cafeteria and a second-floor passageway overlooking the auditorium, which connected the classroom wings of the old and new sections, became an enclosed hallway. A full-height wall was installed between the auditorium and the hallway at this time. In 1987-89 two new entrances were added. They are enclosed in one-story flat-roofed additions and located at the rear southeast corner on the inside of the ell and at the north end of the 1925 section. In addition, the 1960 replacement windows were retrofitted with modern units with snap-in muntins.

Several interior architectural features were retained in the successive renovations of the building. The original lobby remains with pedimented doorways and reeded pilasters (Photograph #6). Two of the original classrooms of the older section had fireplaces set within a recessed basket-arched opening (Photograph #7). One is now incorporated in an apartment, the other (depicted) is in the community room. There is no other architectural detail remaining on the interior (Photograph #8).

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of the original building. Despite its prominent and strikingly different roofline, it is integrated with the original design by the use of similar detailing and the reduced scale of the sections at either end. The one at the west end echoes the detailing of the original pedimented pavilion further unifying the structure.

The school site and the building's relationship to the terrain are most unusual. Unlike many schools of this period which were built on level sites facing public streets, the school was oriented to take advantage of the view afforded by the elevation. Rather than displaying its public face, the principal elevation is almost hidden from the roads below. In fact, because of the steepness of the slope there and its proximity to the building, a full appreciation of the classical Georgian facade of the main block is impossible from anywhere on the site itself. With the building of the south wing, the original building is no longer visible from this side, but the well-designed south elevation is enhanced by the broad sweep of the south lawn and its grove of trees.

The conversion of the building to elderly housing was accomplished with little change to the exterior. Especially noteworthy was the retention of most of the architectural detail. It is evident that much of the interior architectural detail that might be expected in a school with this high level of architectural style was lost during the 1960 renovation for code compliance. The preservation of remaining interior features in 1987-89, such as the original lobby, during the conversion to housing is commendable and provides a glimpse of the original quality of the interior.

## End Notes:

1. For this and the following see the Greenwich News and Graphic. July 7, 1924, October 10, 1924, and September 13, 1926.
2. A high school designed by Coffin in Hicksville, Long Island, is shown in The Architect, vol. 5 (1925-26): plate 140-142. Additional school buildings are found in the Architectural Record, vol. 76 (August 1934): 88-112. Little else is known about Coffin except that he designed a house in Stockbridge, Massachusetts for Charles R. Smith in 1926 and religious buildings as late as 1947. For the former, see the American Architect, vol. 129 (February 1926): 2491, pp. 297-299. For the latter see the Architectural Record, vol. 1022 (September 1947): 111.

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List of Photographs

Property: Byram School, Greenwich, Connecticut

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 1/89

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. 1925 school (L)/ 1936 addition (R)<br>Facing: NE | 2. 1936 addition<br>Facing: NW     |
| 3. 1936 addition southern approach<br>Facing: N     | 4. Rear 1925 building<br>Facing: W |
| 5. Original main entrance<br>Facing: E              | 6. Original lobby<br>Facing: SW    |
| 7. Community room<br>Facing: E                      | 8. Typical hallway<br>Facing: S    |

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1925; 1936  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Errol Coffin (architect)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Byram School is architecturally significant as a well-preserved superior example of institutional Colonial Revival-style architecture. Enhanced by the quality of its architectural detailing and its exceptional park-like setting, it is one of the best of the several early twentieth-century schools of this style in Greenwich.

Historical Background

The Byram School, a neighborhood elementary school, was built in 1925-26 to serve the then primarily Polish-American community of Byram. It was a replacement for an earlier wooden structure, also a neighborhood school, which was located nearby on the north side of the Boston Post Road. The community was established because of the nearby granite quarries which flourished in the late nineteenth century, attracting Polish immigrants to the area.

Ten architects entered an architectural competition to design the Byram School. A local architect, Errol Coffin, of the firm of Coffin and Coffin, was selected.<sup>1</sup> He was known for his designs for school buildings throughout the Northeast. Several of his schools, built between 1925 and 1934, were featured in architectural journals of the period.<sup>2</sup>

Excavation began in October of 1924 and the original building was completed by September of 1926. It contained 15 rooms serving kindergarten through the eighth grade. An auditorium and gymnasium wing was added in 1936, but the architect for the addition is not known. In September of 1926, the old Byram School on the Post Road was sold at auction.

Architectural Significance

Distinguished by the exceptional level of its architectural design, the Byram School is an imposing building, occupying a commanding position on its prominent site. The main block and its large south wing are architecturally compatible and exhibit a wealth of architectural detail and ornamentation. The south wing was added without sacrificing the original proportions and detailing of the main block and complements the form and massing

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Greenwich, Connecticut. Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, Inc. archives.  
Thompson, Hughes. Personal communication, 2/89.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 4

UTM References

A 

1	8
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6	1	3	2	2	0
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4	5	4	0	8	5	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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B 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries are drawn to include the building and its addition with its surrounding site, including the area to the immediate south planted with memorial trees. Excluded are the two acres at the north end of the site where modern housing has been constructed.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

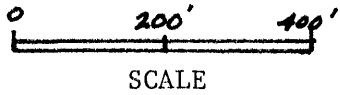
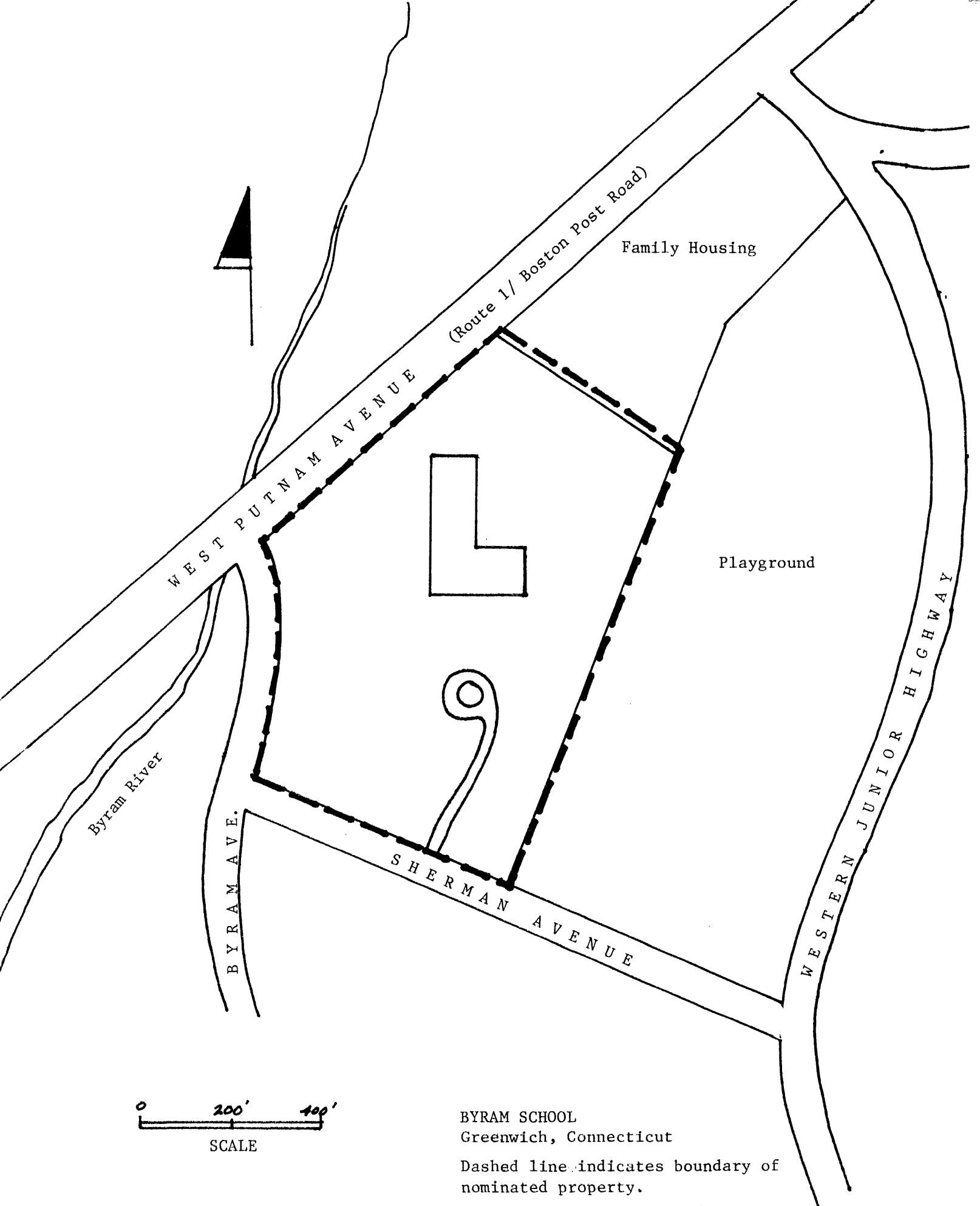
The boundaries were selected to include the maximum amount of the original six-acre school site. The two acres with the modern housing were excluded without affecting the integrity of the historic site.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant, Reviewed by John Herzan, National  
 organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 6/30/89 Register Coordinator  
 street & number 7231 Town Place telephone (203) 347 4072  
 city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457





SCALE

BYRAM SCHOOL  
Greenwich, Connecticut

Dashed line indicates boundary of  
nominated property.

Cunningham Associates Ltd.