1978

National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for Bryn Mawr College Historic District

Bryn Mawr College

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NAME
HISTORIC
BRYN MAWR COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER
Gulph Roads
bounded by Morris, Yarrow, Wyndon and New
CITY, TOWN
Bryn Mawr
STATE
Pennsylvania

CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY
DISTRICT
BUILDING(S)
STRUCTURE
SITE
OBJECT
OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC
PRIVATE
BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS
OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRIAL
MILITARY
MUSEUM
PARK
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
RECREATIONAL
SCIENTIFIC
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME
Bryn Mawr College c/o Harris L. Wofford, Jr.

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Montgomery County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Airy and Swede Street
CITY, TOWN
Norristown
STATE
Pennsylvania

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places
DATE
9/21/78
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
CITY, TOWN
Harrisburg
STATE
Pennsylvania
The Bryn Mawr College campus is comprised of three distinct styles of architecture that combine to form a harmonious "academic village" atmosphere. From the earliest high Victorian Gothic of Addison Hutton which projects an austere yet majestic interpretation of the mission of the newly founded college; through the many Gothic revival buildings of Cope and Stewardson that are adapted from the English academic architecture and emphasize the intellectual tradition of the college; to the most recent interpretation of the college's traditional style in a modern dormitory by Louis Kahn, both the architecture and the building sites serve to complement the basic harmony of the district. Rockefeller Arch, finely carved with an owl motif and originally the main footpath entrance to the college, frames the side entrance of the library, while Pembroke Arch is a frame of the path which runs past Taylor Hall, toward a pastoral area. The Pembroke Arch view is countered by the cross-axis of Taylor's asymmetrically placed tower and the central door of the library. This grand spatial gesture is completed by Louis Kahn's later addition of Erdman at the end of the path extending outward from Pembroke.

The earliest style is the work of Addison Hutton, a prominent Quaker architect, who designed the main administrative and classroom building, Taylor; a dormitory, Merion Hall; and a red brick gymnasium. Hutton's work is characterized by its Victorian rigidity and lack of the usual polychromy in the use of the grey cut stones, a style reminiscent, according to trustee Francis King, of the richness and simplicity of the "Quaker lady" style of dress. Taylor exhibits the finest aspects of high Victorian Gothic architecture with its asymmetric tower and rich silhouetting, as does Merion which is adorned by a Minton tile entrance porch.

The second generation of architects was Walter Cope and John Stewardson who adapted the academic architecture of England for the Bryn Mawr campus. Their first building, Radnor, was essentially Victorian but indications of their later work are present in the turrets and crenelation. With Denbigh and especially Pembroke, Cope and Stewardson achieved a distinctive style of "collegiate Gothic" architecture that displays a maturation of their work in the fine irregular stonework, turreting, crenelation and a richly detailed arch. According to George B. Tatum in Penn's Great Town: "There is Denbigh Hall . . ., Pembroke Hall . . ., Rockefeller Hall . . ., and the (Thomas) Library . . . may be traced the evolution of the Collegiate Gothic style for which (Cope and Stewardson) are best known. In turning to the late English Gothic for the design of American colleges and universities, Cope and Stewardson had in mind Oxford and Cambridge for which the tradition of higher education in the United States was thought of as having been derived. Especially to those familiar with the great English universities, the appeal of ivy-covered cloisters, battlemented towers and oriel windows
was understandably great. . ."

Montgomery Schuyler, a famed critic of the era, thought their designs "among the most successful in the country" and their Bryn Mawr work their best. In Schuyler's article on Philadelphia's collegiate architecture, he reserved the Bryn Mawr campus for last, "according to the order of the wedding feast of Cana of Galilee." Cope and Stewardson did other work at Bryn Mawr, including altering the now demolished Deanery, Miss Thomas' residence, on the site of which now stands Canaday Library, and Dalton Hall, the original science building codesigned with Professor Francis Osborne of the Engineering Department of Cornell. After Cope and Stewardson, Lockwood de Forest became the college architect. He and Winson Soule designed the new gym on the site of Hutton's red brick gymnasium and also rebuilt and enlarged the infirmary in accord with the collegiate Gothic style.

Cope and Stewardson's collegiate Gothic remained the dominant style of the campus throughout the first half of this century, serving as the inspiration for Goodhart Hall, the auditorium designed by Mellor, Meigs and Howe, and Rhoads Hall, designed by Thomas and Martin. Goodhart is notable for its molded concrete skeleton supporting a finely detailed Gothic cathedral exterior and the ornate ironwork of Sam Yellin.

The third major style of architecture is represented by a single building. Louis Kahn's Erdman dormitory, which stands at the end of a path extending outward from Pembroke Hall. Erdman is a modern equivalent of the earlier collegiate Gothic, reversing the grey and white of Pembroke's outer color scheme in a similarly colored concrete structure with grey slate sheathing and reflecting Cope and Stewardson's towers and crennelation in its broken skyline. According to the Architectural Forum: "Seen from a distance, at the end of an alley of maples, the dormitory buildings that Louis Kahn has just completed at Bryn Mawr College presents a calmly symmetrical facade. The walls seem quietly at home with the stone of the surrounding campus buildings. It is only as one moves closer that the dormitory's remarkable geometry asserts itself . . ."
HISTORICAL DISTRICT

1. **Taylor Hall** (1879): Addison Hutton; high Victorian Gothic of Fairmont Stone; the original classroom and administrative building; interior alterations in 1892-3, 1927-8, 1929

2. **Merion Hall** (1879): Addison Hutton; high Victorian Gothic dormitory; interior alterations in 1930

3. **Radnor Hall** (1886): Cope and Stewardson; transitional Gothic dormitory of cut stone; interior alterations in 1928-9, 1930, 1959

4. **Denbigh Hall** (1889): Cope and Stewardson; collegiate Gothic dormitory of cut stone; gutted by fire in 1902 and rebuilt; interior alterations in 1945-6, 1960

5. **Dalton Hall** (1891): Cope and Stewardson with Professor Francis Osborne of Cornell; collegiate Gothic of cut stone; the original science hall now housing psychology, education and anthropology departments; interior alterations in 1900-05, 1914, 1938, 1959-60, 1960-61, 1964-65

6. **Pembroke Hall** (1892): Cope and Stewardson; collegiate Gothic dormitory with irregular stonework and a central arch; interior alterations in 1914, 1930

7. **Rockefeller Hall** (1899): Cope and Stewardson; collegiate Gothic dormitory with irregular stonework that adjoins Pembroke to form a continuous interface between street and campus; gift of John D. Rockefeller; interior alterations in 1965-66

8. **Thomas Library** (1904): Cope and Stewardson; collegiate Gothic with irregular stonework and bounding a cloisters adorned with gargoyles by Alec Miller of Chipping Campden; fourth side not completed until 1940 due to financial difficulties by Sidney Martin; the original library now used for classroom and office space

9. **Gymnasium** (1907): Winsor Soule and Lockwood deForest; adaptation of collegiate Gothic on site of Addison Hutton's original red brick gymnasium
10. Goodhart Hall (1924): Mellor, Meigs and Howe; adaptation of collegiate Gothic with molded reinforced concrete skeleton and ironwork by Sam Yellin; main auditorium for campus

ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS IN DISTRICT

11. Ely House (1776): 2 story stucco building; originally a stable but converted to a residence in 1926; now the Dean's house

12. Wyndham (1796): 2 story stone colonial; originally a residence but altered in 1968 by Pederson and Lombardini for Alumnae House

13. College Inn (19th cent): 2 story multiple style building including stonework and a shingle addition plus a porch; originally a residence, later a restaurant and now a students' inn and apartments; altered in 1912-13 by Lockwood deForrest for college use; extension built in 1916-17; interior alterations in 1975

14. Dolgelly (1884): Addison Hutton; 2 story stone and brick building with elements of Victorian and Queen Anne styles plus porch; interior alterations in 1931; originally a residence used as a dormitory, classroom space and now faculty apartments.

15. Cartref (1885): Addison Hutton; 2 story stone building with elements of Victorian and Queen Anne styles; interior alterations in 1931, 1935; originally built as residence of first president of college, James E. Rhoads, then used as faculty housing, dormitory and presently as administrative offices and apartments.

16. The Owl (late 19th cent): 2 story Queen Anne with elements of stick and shingle styles; originally a residence, now a bookstore

17. Pen-Y-Groes (1908): F. H. Gable (contractor); 2 story grey clapboard colonial revival building; addition of garage in 1916; rebuilt and enlarged in 1922-23; renovated in 1970; a residence now serving as college presidents house

19. **Pagoda** (1913): 1 story grey clapboard pagoda-like building; interior alterations in 1931; one of three such structures originally built as a classroom for the Phebe Anna Thorne Open Air Model School, presently used for administrative space.

20. **Rhoads Hall** (1938): Thomas and Martin; adaptation of collegiate Gothic in cut stone; dormitory.

21. **Ty-Bach** (1941): Thomas and Martin; 2 story white painted brick building; built as residence for Director of Halls.


SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

- PREHISTORIC
- 1400-1499
- 1500-1599
- 1600-1699
- 1700-1799
- 1800-1899
- 1900-

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

- ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ART
- COMMERCIAL
- COMMUNICATIONS
- COMMUNITY PLANNING
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SCULPTURE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- THEATER
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARCHITECTURE

Bryn Mawr, located on Philadelphia's picturesque Main Line, is one of the "area's handsomest architectural ensembles." Three major architectural styles are represented in the buildings: the early high Victorian Gothic edifices of Addison Hutton, a prominent Philadelphia architect, best exemplified in a fine period piece, Taylor Hall; the more numerous collegiate Gothic buildings first adapted from the English prototypes for the Bryn Mawr campus by Cope and Stewardson; and the latest style represented by a single building, Erkman Hall, which is a bold interpretation of the campus' earlier styles, by the prominent architect, Louis Kahn.

A well-known Quaker architect, Addison Hutton, was retained to design the first buildings: a main administrative and classroom building, a dormitory and a gymnasium. Taylor Hall (named after the college's founder) was completed in 1885 and flanked to the north by the dormitory, Merion Hall, and the red brick gymnasium, both completed in 1885, as well. Hutton's buildings reflected the finest aspects of the Ruskin-inspired architecture of the era: the asymmetric tower, original detailing and buttressing. Instead of the usual polychromy, Taylor exhibits monochromatic restraint due to the Quaker influence of both Hutton and the college.

Soon after the college's opening in 1885, plans for a new dormitory were drawn up by Walter Cope and John Stewardson, earlier associated with Addison Hutton and Frank Furness, respectively. Radnor Hall, named after a Welsh county (as was Merion Hall), was completed in 1887. Cope and Stewardson's next building, Denbigh Hall, was completed in 1891 and placed in line with Merion and the gymnasium, so that a design of framing the campus' perimeter was initiated. Radnor and Denbigh served as transitional pieces in adaptation of English Medieval academic architecture was achieved. In addition to their work at Bryn Mawr, Cope and Stewardson also designed buildings for such schools as Princeton University, Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Pennsylvania. It was at Bryn Mawr, though, that "collegiate Gothic" was first introduced and gained prominence. (See Whiffen's American Architecture Since 1780, p. 174)
In 1924, the architect Ralph Adams Cram was appointed as Bryn Mawr's supervising architect. He chose the site and sat upon the committee accepting plans for the auditorium, Goodhart Hall, but recommended the firm of Mellor, Meigs and Howe to do the actual plans. Goodhart, completed in 1928, is exceptional in that a molded concrete skeleton was used to achieve the collegiate Gothic style of the rest of the campus.

Goodhart also displays a large body of the ironwork of Sam Yellin.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

In 1884, an overall design for the grounds themselves and the placement of the buildings was made by Calvert Vaux, an associate of Frederick Law Olmsted from 1857 to 1872 and co-designer with Olmsted of New York's Central Park, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, the Chicago South Parks and the first segment of the park system of Buffalo.

Vaux's plan consisted of a single quadrangle of buildings surrounded by a heavy belt of trees on the campus' outer boundaries.

Soon after the Pembrokes were completed, the college asked the well-known landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, to visit the campus. In 1895, he and his stepson and nephew John C. Olmsted did come and presented a plan for a sports area, skating pond and college square (none of which were carried out) and also consulted with Cope and Stewardson to site all buildings, present and future, except the power house. Olmsted's plan consisted of framing the campus' boundaries with an irregular belt of plantings and buildings, so reinforcing Cope and Stewardson's site plans initiated with Denbigh Hall. This was most probably Frederick Law Olmsted's final site visit of his career, the plans for which were followed until Goodhart Hall's construction in 1924.

EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Bryn Mawr College was founded by a successful Quaker businessman, Dr. Joseph Taylor (1810-1880), who saw the need for an institution to duplicate the education received at other Quaker colleges in the area, Swarthmore and Haverford, but solely for "our young female Friends." The site in Bryn Mawr, meaning "high hill" in Welsh, was chosen by an early trustee of the college, Francis King,
due to its proximity both to the Bryn Mawr station of the Pennsylvania Railroad and to Haverford College, of which Dr. Taylor was a trustee. By 1880, at the time of his death, Dr. Taylor had purchased 13 lots, 11 of which belonged to the Pennsylvania Railroad. This original campus, 32 acres between Merion, Roberts, Gulph and Yarrow Roads, was a small piece of what was called in 1850 the Thomas Humphries tract - part of the 2500 acres originally deeded in 1682 by William Penn to Edward Pritchard & Company of Herefordshire. The college was granted a charter by Pennsylvania in May, 1880, but did not open until September, 1885.

In keeping with the Quaker concern for quality women's education, the trustees of the college appointed James E. Rhoads, M.D., as president and M. Carey Thomas, the first woman to receive a Doctor of Philosophy, summa cum laude, from the University of Zurich in 1882, as dean. Miss Thomas sought to achieve the educational excellence of the foremost men's institutions and through her efforts, Bryn Mawr became the first independent women's college with entrance exams of equal rigor as Harvard's, resulting in higher standards for both men's and women's education in general. Bryn Mawr was the first women's college to offer both undergraduate instruction for the AB and graduate instruction for MA and PhD degrees in all departments and, in 1892, this was extended so that Bryn Mawr was the first American college to offer residential scholarships for foreign students. Also, in 1898, Bryn Mawr was the first to build a facility for female faculty members.

The first student self-government system in the United States was instituted at the college in 1892 and one of the earliest, if not the first, English survey courses in America was given by M. Carey Thomas from the college's opening. In 1913, the Phebe Anna Thorne Open Air Model School opened as one of the first important experimental secondary schools using Dewey's progressive models for education and, in 1915, the Carola Woerishoffer Graduate School of Social Research became the first school of advanced teaching of social work established as an affiliate of any American college or university. In addition, the first joint undertaking of labor and academia in a course of study for women unable to take advantage of existing educational opportunities was initiated in 1921 as the Summer School for Women Workers in Industry.
Shortly after Dr. Rhoads' retirement from the college's presidency, M. Carey Thomas was selected for the office and served from 1893 to 1922. Throughout her tenure, she remained a dynamic force in women's higher education and political rights, and was the first president of the National College Suffrage League, founded in 1908. The students and faculty have been no less notable. Woodrow Wilson was a member of the original faculty as an associate in history and political science until 1888, and the first Dean of the Graduate School in 1929, Eunice Schenck, received the Cross of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor from the French government for her work in bringing an understanding of France to the United States. Among the students have been Emily Balch '89, who received a Nobel Prize in 1946; the noted actress Katherine Hepburn; Elizabeth Gray Vining, who served as tutor to the Japanese Crown Prince; and Alice Gould '89, who was decorated by the Spanish government for her research on the voyages of Columbus.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 49
QUADRANGLE NAME Norristown, Pa.
QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
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C 1.8 417314.0 413012.6
D 1.8 417316.0 413014.0
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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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FORM PREPARED BY
NAME / TITLE
Leslie A. Webb

ORGANIZATION
DATE 703-347-0884

STREET & NUMBER
Route 3, Box 109

CITY OR TOWN Warrenton
STATE Virginia

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION
THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL __ STATE X LOCAL __

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE
TITLE ED WEINTRAUB, Director
Office of Historic Preservation DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION DATE
**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 49

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ORGANIZATION  Office of Historic Preservation

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Office of Historic Preservation

DATE  703-347-0884

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  

ATTEST:  

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION


Osborn, Michelle. "The Making of the Bryn Mawr Campus": Bryn Mawr Now, September, 1974


Thomas, George. "The Making of the Early Bryn Mawr Campus, 1879-1908"
Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at a point on the southwest side of New Gulph Road moving southeast along southside of road for 2000 feet then southwest along north side of Morris Avenue for 1500 feet then northwest along north side of Yarrow Street for 500 feet to Merion Avenue then Northwest along Northside of Wyndon Avenue for 1000 feet then northeast cutting across campus for 1500 feet to starting point.