

SRHD,NRHD,LHD,
CT Trust Resource ID: 3216

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY – BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

State Historic Preservation Office, DECD, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

*Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

Inventory form modified for the Creative Places - Arts & Letters Project

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common): Miss Porters School Main; Union Hotel

Other Name(s) (Historic): Miss Porters School Main/ Union Hotel

Street Address or Location: 60 Main Street, Farmington

Town/City: Farmington

Village:

County: Hartford

Designation(s): SRHD,NRHD,LHD,

Owner(s): Miss Porter's School, Inc.

Public/Private: Non-Profit

Latitude: 41.7224 Longitude: -72.8292

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Education: school

Historic Use: Education: school

Accessibility to public: No Exterior visible from public road? Yes

Interior accessible? If yes, explain: NA

Style of building: Greek Revival Date of Construction: c. 1830

Material(s) (Indicate use or location when appropriate) Brick

Structural Systems(s): Load bearing masonry

Roof(Type): Hip (Material): Built up

Number of Stories: 3 Approximate Dimensions: 50' x 60' plus additions

Structural Condition: Excellent

Exterior Condition: Excellent

Locational Integrity: On original site Moved, When: NA

Alterations?: Yes If yes, explain: Modernization and additions

Related outbuildings or landscape features: Multiple buildings. Barn

Surrounding Environment: High building density

Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The building is the symbolic center and entrance to Miss Porter's School and is located on the west side of Main Street at the corner of Mountain Road on the school's 12-acre campus. It is a contributing resource in the Farmington Local and National Register Historic District. Main Street is lined with historic buildings, many residential and others converted to use by Miss Porter's School and other institutions. Miss Porter's School is significant in 20th-century art and literature for several of its alumnae and teachers.

Other notable features of building or site:

The old hotel is a striking brick building standing near the road. Its porch contains a frieze and dentils, and white columns in Greek Doric style. The front entry is unmistakably Greek, its door set off by four-pane sidelights and a four-pane over-door light. The windows have stone sills and lintels and proper six over six sash. The building is square with a low-hipped roof and four corner chimneys. The cupola rising from the center of the roof has Greek details; beneath the turned balusters is a frieze of tryglyphs and metopes with modillions above. Corner pilasters matching those at front porch complete the detail here (excerpt from Farmington Village Historic District nomination, 1972). Additions to the side and rear include dining and kitchen facilities for the school.

Architect: Unknown Builder/Maker: Unknown

Historical or Architectural importance:

The Union Hotel, c. 1830, once served the passengers of the Farmington Canal ... The Canal was begun in 1825 and ran from New Haven to Northampton, Massachusetts, planned eventually to be extended to Canada. The first boat was launched in 1828 amid much fanfare, but by 1848 the canal was no longer in use. The Union Hotel became part of Miss Porter's School, now serving as the administration building (excerpt from Farmington Village Historic District nomination, 1972). Sarah Porter came from an illustrious Farmington family. Her father was the minister of the Congregational Church for 60 years, and one of her brothers was the president of Yale University. She received the most advanced education available to a young woman of her time, including tutoring by Yale professors.

In 1843, Sarah Porter founded Miss Porter's School. By the 1880s, the school had risen to national prominence. Sarah Porter emphasized traditional values and the importance of educating women. (Miss Porter's School web site).

Notable alumnae of the late 1800s included the writer and classicist Edith Hamilton (1886) and doctor Alice Hamilton (1888). In the twentieth century Miss Porter's School had a reputation for arts education, with teachers including notable Connecticut artists Robert Bolling Brandegee (1849-1922) and Rebecca Field Jones (1905-2002).

Writer and teacher Edith Hamilton (1867-1963) was born in Dresden, Germany, raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and learned Latin, French, German, and Greek from her father as a child. She attended Miss Porter's School in the 1880s, as did her sister Alice Hamilton (1869-1970). Edith graduated from Bryn Mawr College with BA and MA degrees, then went to Germany to study along with Alice, who studied medicine (pathology). Edith Hamilton returned to the United States in 1896 as headmistress at the Bryn Mawr Preparatory School for Girls in Baltimore. She retired in 1922 and after living in New York City for a time, moved to Hadlyme, Connecticut where she lived with Alice. Following her retirement from teaching and administration, Edith Hamilton published her first book, *The Greek Way*, in 1930, followed by *The Roman Way* in 1932, and *Mythology* in 1942. Her books helped to incorporate the study of Greek life and history into 20th-century education.

Sources:

Exhibits at the East Haddam Historical Society. Accessed 6/14/2015.

Hamilton, Edith, biography. Accessed at The Pennsylvania Center for the Book, http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/bios/Hamilton__Edith.html.

Hamilton, Alice, biography. Accessed 3/2/2016 at <http://www.biography.com/people/alice-hamilton-9326498>.

Photographer: Charlotte Hitchcock **Date:** 11/11/2015

View: East view

Form completed by: Charlotte Hitchcock **Printed On:** March 2, 2016

Organization: Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address: 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517-4002

Threats: None known

Subsequent field evaluations:



NE view - 60 Main Street, Farmington

FOR OFFICE USE:

Town # _____ **Site#** _____ **UTM** _____
District ☐ S ☐ NR **If NR, specify:** ☐ Actual ☐ Potential