



## HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY - BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism, One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford, CT 06103

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

### GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Hopkins School Old Gym  
 Building Name (Historic) Hopkins Grammar School Fieldhouse, Gymnasium, or "Cage"  
 Street Address or Location 986 Forest Road  
 Town/City New Haven Village Westville County New Haven  
 Owner(s) Hopkins School, Inc.  Public  Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Squash courts  
 Historic Use: Gymnasium, Adam Kreiger Adventure Program, Temporary Library (during renovation)  
**Accessibility to public:** Exterior visible from public road?  Yes  No  
 Interior accessible?  Yes  No If yes, explain during limited hours by appointment  
 Style of building Modernist Date of Construction 1938

**Material(s)** (Indicate use or location when appropriate):

- |  |   |   |                                       |  |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brick                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone            | <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten         | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Shiplap Wood</u> |                                       |  |

### Structural System

- Wood Frame  Post & Beam  Balloon  Load bearing masonry  Structural iron or steel  
 Other Reinforced cast-in-place concrete

### Roof (Type)

- Gable  Flat  Mansard  Monitor  Sawtooth  
 Gambrel  Shed  Hip  Round  Other \_\_\_\_\_

### (Material)

- Wood Shingle  Roll Asphalt  Tin  Slate  Asphalt Shingle  
 Built up  Tile  Other Membrane, skylights

**Number of Stories:** 1 **Approximate Dimensions** 75' x 115' x 53' height

**Structural Condition:**  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

**Exterior Condition:**  Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated

**Location Integrity:**  On original site  Moved When? \_\_\_\_\_

**Alterations?**  Yes  No If yes, explain: Replacement of overhead doors; conversion to squash courts 2010

**FOR OFFICE USE:** Town # \_\_\_\_\_ Site # \_\_\_\_\_ UTM \_\_\_\_\_  
 District:  S  NR If NR, Specify:  Actual  Potential

**PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)**

**Related outbuildings or landscape features:**

- Barn     Shed     Garage     Carriage House     Shop     Garden
- Other landscape features or buildings: Academic buildings, athletic fields, landscaped grounds, driveways

**Surrounding Environment:**

- Open land     Woodland     Residential     Commercial     Industrial     Rural
- High building density     Scattered buildings visible from site

- Interrelationship of building and surroundings: The building is located on the campus of Hopkins School, a hilltop site in the Westville neighborhood. Hopkins, originally a boys' college prep school, relocated to the site in 1925 and built the earliest campus buildings on the sloped part of the site, leaving the flatter top for athletic fields. The gym/fieldhouse was sited at the north end of the fields. Subsequently, additional buildings have been built, renovated, and demolished. Recent construction of a new science building, lower school building, and student center have formed a quadrangle with the "Old Gym" as the north side.
  - Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and/or Exterior*)
- See continuation sheet.

Architect Douglas Orr Builder Blakeslee Company / Dwight Building Company

- Historical or Architectural importance:
- See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Brown, Elizabeth Mills; *New Haven: A Guide to Architecture and Urban Design*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976, pp.58, 60.  
 Carley, Rachel D., *Tomorrow is Here: New Haven and the Modern Movement* (Privately printed by the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven CT) June, 2008.  
 New Haven Tax Assessor's Record: Map/Block/Parcel: 408/ 1244/ 00100, Building Department permit files.  
 See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/17/2010  
 View West, multiple views Negative on File NHPT  
 Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 11/04/2010  
 Organization The New Haven Preservation Trust  
 Address 934 State Street, P.O. Box 1671, New Haven, CT 06507

- Subsequent field evaluations:

**Threats to the building or site:**

- None known     Highways     Vandalism     Developers     Renewal     Private
- Deterioration     Zoning     Other \_\_\_\_\_     Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

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- Other notable features of building or site (*Interior and exterior*):

The building is a single space formed from a series of three parallel steel arches, oriented east-west and spaced 24 feet 8 inches on center, and a masonry south end wall, forming three bays. The semi-circular north face is in-filled with a vertical wall. The south wall, facing the campus, has a monumental plane of brick in Flemish bond articulated with a central panel projected slightly forward of the façade and terminated at the roof line in a rectangular parapet with a limestone coping. This contrasts with the polygonal sloped roofline of the flanking sections. An oculus window occupies the top of the central panel. At grade, glazed door assemblies fill three openings (originally closed with steel overhead doors). At the ground floor level, the flanking walls have three ornamental brick bands consisting of two recessed courses alternating with seven courses of Flemish bond, terminating in short seven-foot high wing walls at the west and east ends of the façade. The north (rear) wall is sheathed in horizontal lap siding. The roof is asphalt shingles on the steep sloping sides, terminating near the ground in flared lower pitched sections similar to a Dutch gambrel roof.

- Historical or Architectural importance:

Designed primarily as a functional space for athletics, the basic form takes inspiration from industrial structures such as railroad terminal sheds and factories of the Bauhaus and Art Deco periods. The minimalist ornamentation and abstraction of the forms suggests a simplified Classicism, and a Moderne or early Modernist sensibility, which characterized various projects of Douglas Orr's office during the 1920s and 1930s.

At the time of construction, the Hopkins Grammar School campus consisted of a series of Colonial Revival structures built in the mid-1920s when the school relocated from an in-town site to this semi-rural location in Westville Village. Suburban-style streets were being laid out and generous homes with garages were being constructed on former farmland below the Hopkins hill. Hopkins itself aspired for a time to be a boys' boarding school, then settled into its role as a college preparatory country day school.

After a decade at this location, the school felt a need for an indoor winter sports facility. A set of drawings for the proposed structure dates from 1937; an ink perspective rendering was published in local newspapers announcing the ground-breaking. Donations were made and several loans guaranteed by alumni to finance construction. Extant construction documents show that the steel arches, a patented system from the Arch Roof Construction Company of New York, were tied by tension cables running below floor level in concrete trenches. The three-bay structure was designed for extension by one or more additional bays, never built. The original floor was dirt and the space unheated. Dedication occurred in 1938 and within a year, solicitations were made for donations to install a heating system. In the mid-1950s, a flat-roofed building containing locker rooms was constructed adjacent to the west, also designed by Orr. This was demolished in 2010.

Douglas Orr (1892-1966), a prominent New Haven-based architect, practiced in various architectural styles throughout his career, always adapting himself to new design trends. He served as President of the American Institute of Architects (1947-1949), and "left a stronger architectural imprint on commercial, social, and religious New Haven than any man since Henry Austin." (Wiedersheim, p. 3) Trained in Beaux Arts architectural principles at Yale, Orr became known for his Colonial Revival designs in the 1920s and for his Art Deco work in the 1930s. By the 1950s much of his work was based on a Modernist philosophy although he continued to work in Colonial Revival styles throughout his career. Orr's firm worked with a number of out-of-state architects including Louis Kahn and Philip Johnson, functioning as the Architect of Record for prominent structures sponsored by Yale University and the New Haven Redevelopment Agency during the Redevelopment period of the 1960s. The drawings for the field house are initialed "R.H.M" for Robbins H. Miller, a senior associate in the Orr firm.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Wiedersheim, William A., *Journal of The New Haven Colony Historical Society: Douglas W. Orr, F.A.I.A., Exhibition Catalogue*, New Haven: New Haven Colony Historical Society, 1980.

Hopkins School Campus Map, 2010, <http://www.hopkins.edu/admissions/directions> accessed 10/21/2010.

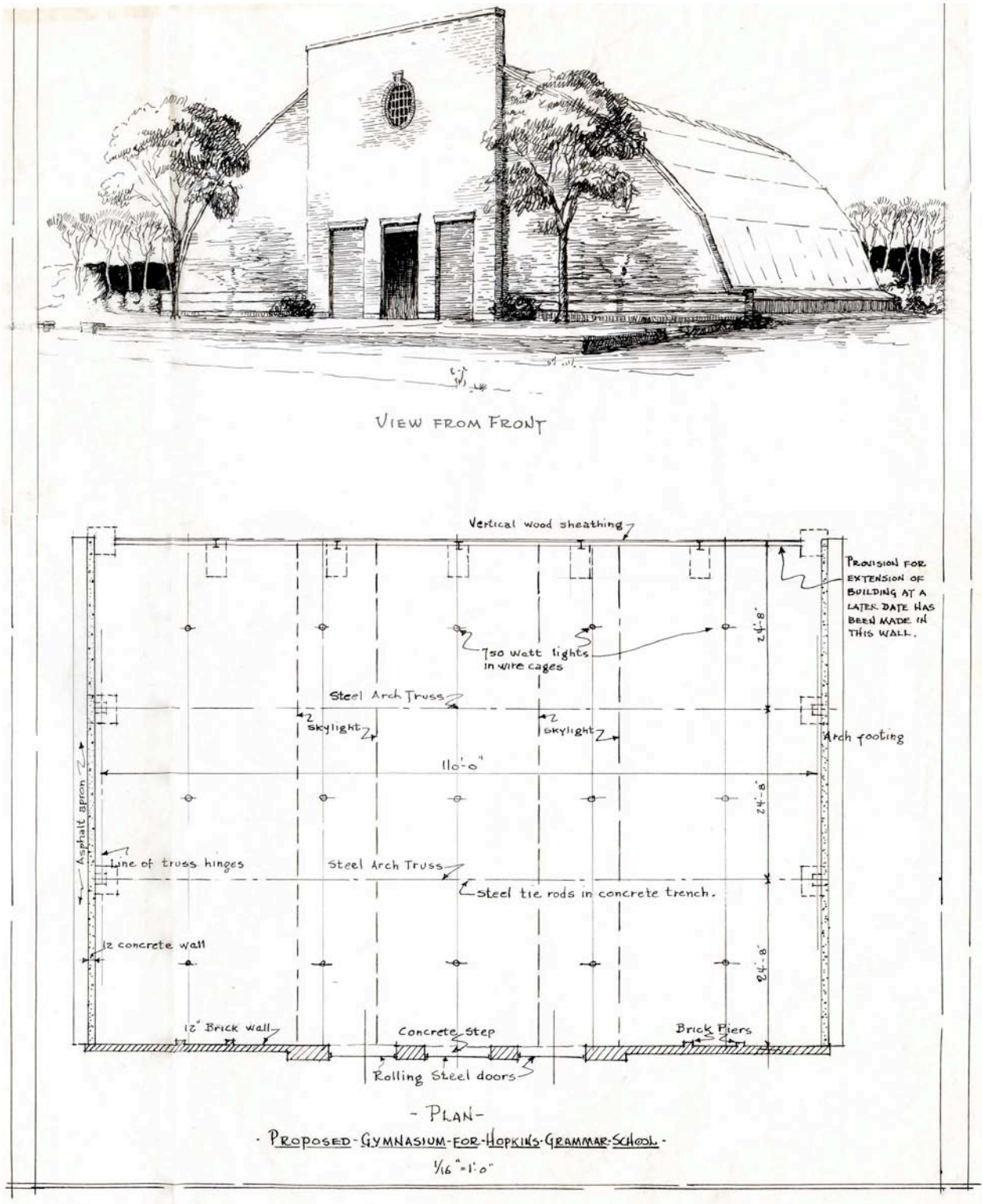
Hopkins School Archives: Original architectural plans, details, and perspective rendering; scrapbooks for years 1936-1939 – newspaper articles from *New Haven Register* and *New Haven Journal-Courier*; photographs of construction.



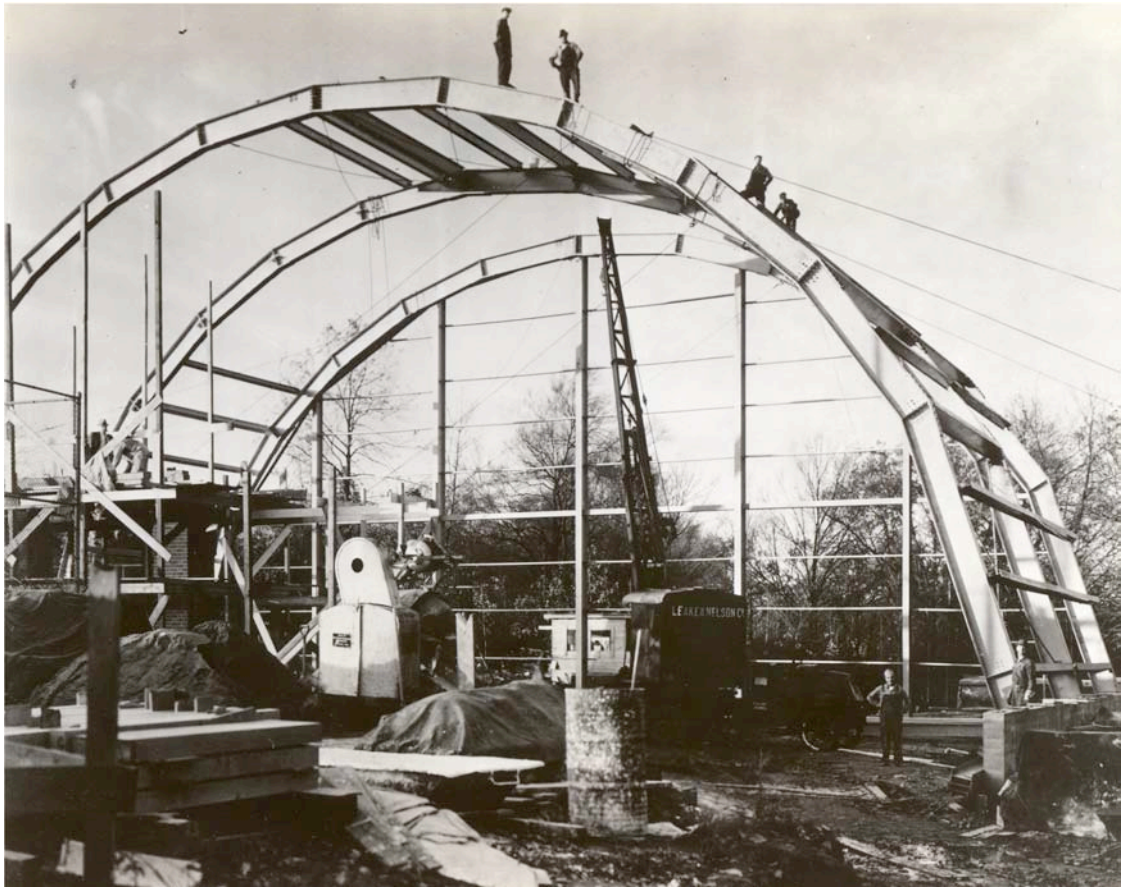
1. South view from athletic fields, camera facing north.



2. Southeast view of south facade, camera facing northwest



3. Architectural perspective drawing and building plan, ink on tracing paper: Proposed Gymnasium, 1937.



4. Photograph during construction, 1938, camera facing north.



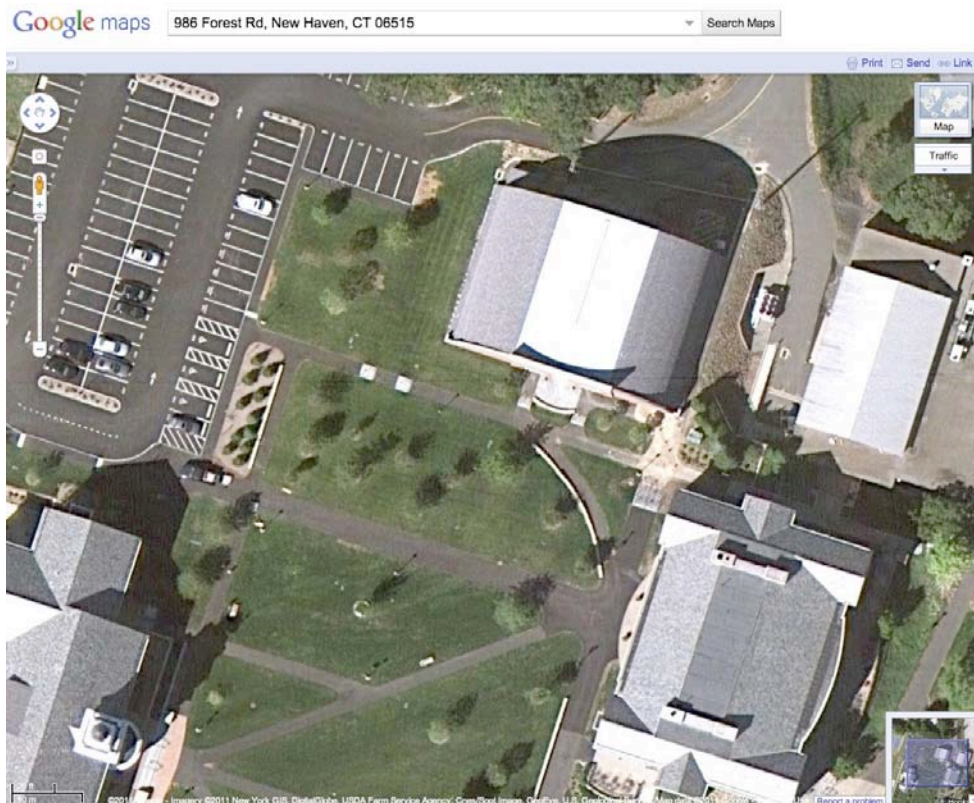
5. View – detail of façade and roof at southeast corner, camera facing north



6. North (rear) elevation, camera facing south



7. Aerial view from Google Maps, accessed 10/24/2010. Note: building shown to left of the fieldhouse is the 1950s building now demolished.



8. Aerial view from Google Maps, accessed 5/14/2011.