

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Summit Hill High School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 124 West Hazard Street

not for publication N/A

city or town Summit Hill

vicinity N/A

state Pennsylvania

code PA

county Carbon

code 025 zip code 18250

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Brent D. Glass 12/22/00

December 22, 2000

Signature of certifying official

Date

Brent D. Glass, Exec. Dir., PA Historical & Museum Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: school: secondary school

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: multiple dwelling: apartment building

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and 20th CENTURY REVIVALS
Renaissance

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
roof BRICK
walls ASPHALT

other TERRA COTTA

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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)

- 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.
- 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 a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1911 – 1950

Significant Dates 1911

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1	<u>18 426235 4519625</u>	3 _____
2	_____	4 _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine Ussler, R.A.

organization Artefact, Inc.

date 8/25/00

street & number 26-28 E. Third St.

telephone 610-861-0235

city or town Bethlehem

state PA zip code 18015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Summit Hill High School
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The Summit Hill High School, built in 1911, is a symmetrical, three story, Renaissance Revival style school building. It is located on a residential side street running along the ridge of Pisgah Mountain on which Summit Hill is located. (Photos 1, 2) Hazard Street forms the southern boundary and School Avenue the northern boundary of the property. There is a one-story, modern U.S. Post Office located at the eastern end of the block and a small one-story, recently constructed, residence immediately adjacent to the property to the west. The building is surrounded by paved surfaces. The H-shaped plan of Summit Hill High School consists of a main central mass with two projecting, flanking wings, and the overall dimensions are approximately 122 feet wide by 82 feet at the deepest. The hipped roof is covered in fiberglass shingles. Exterior wall surfaces are of light tan brick in a running bond pattern with watertables, window surrounds, sills, parapet wall copings, elaborate pedimented door surrounds, and miscellaneous decorative elements constructed of limestone or terra cotta simulating limestone. The interior of the building is organized around a wide central hallway running east to west on the first floor or *piano nobile* and the partially below-grade basement level. Four grand entrances access the first floor main corridor. The former classrooms and bathrooms, located to the south and north of the corridors, are now converted into apartments. The second floor, originally consisting of an impressive auditorium space with a vaulted tin ceiling and stage area with a proscenium arch, has apartments organized around a narrow east-west corridor. Although there were never any additions to the building and it was altered only modestly between 1911 and the 1960s, it suffered from neglect and weather from the late 1960s to 1997. In 1997, the school was renovated in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* and converted into low and moderate income apartments. Although the second floor auditorium was severely damaged by the years of neglect and the new use of the building has altered the character of the classrooms and auditorium spaces, the exterior of the school and the main hallway on the first floor retain a high degree of historical integrity and are in good condition.

The primary facade of the Summit Hill High School faces south onto Hazard Street. (Photo 3) The central mass is divided into three bays. At either end of the middle bay there are paired windows over the entry portals which have smaller windows located to either side. In the center of the facade is a grouping of five windows on each of the three floors. The facades of the wings flanking the central mass of the school consist of groupings of three windows on each floor. The east and west facades are divided into three symmetrical bays. (Photos 4, 6) The projecting central bays are topped by shaped Flemish gables (common from 1895 to 1915) with spherical finials and decorative coping. Entry portals similar to the front dominate the central bays on the *piano nobile* level. On either side of the projecting central bays are groupings of four windows on each floor level. The rear façade is less embellished, and window and door openings are less symmetrically arranged in the central bay. (Photo 5) A stone platform (for unloading?), basement entrance, and chimney are positioned slightly off center in the façade. The chimney stack has been shortened and stuccoed because of structural deficiencies and deterioration.

Before the 1997 renovations, only a few of the original double hung wood window sash remained in the building. They were one I-over-1 in configuration. The remaining window openings were filled in with plywood panels, some with tiny aluminum windows, or with concrete block. The front façade had most windows filled in with plywood, and on the east and west facades they were blocked in with concrete masonry units. All of the front façade windows have been reopened except for four on the basement level. Four window openings per floor on the east and west facades remain closed in, and of the original 27 rear window openings (all closed in with concrete masonry units

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or plywood before the 1997 renovation), 15 remain closed in. Although the windows match the historic in type and profile, the material is now extruded aluminum instead of the original wood.

Terra cotta entry portals that simulate limestone and are found on the south, east, and west facades are outstanding features of the Summit Hill High School. (Photos 7-9) They are composed of pairs of smooth columns with unique egg and dart capitals. The richly detailed entablatures and broken pediments encase scrolls dedicated to famous men of European history. The front portals are dedicated to Plato and Socrates on the west end and Beethoven and Chopin on the east end. There are half-level flights of limestone steps with brick side walls capped in limestone at each portal except for the east. The east stoop was lost prior to the 1997 renovations, and for that reason the required ramp for handicapped accessibility was constructed at this entrance. The ramp is constructed of wood and is positioned to extend from the entrance towards the back of the building. The entry doors are constructed of wood with half-lights and two horizontal raised panels below. A pair of doors remained intact on the west façade behind concrete masonry units used to close in the original opening. They were used as models for the other three pairs on the south and east, which were fabricated to match the historic doors when the building was renovated. Above the doors are wood and glass, multi-paned transoms. All of these transoms were found in place behind the various materials used to close in the original openings except for the east entrance. The east entrance lost its wood and glass transom prior to the 1997 renovations and remains covered over as it was prior to renovation.

Other decorative features of the exterior were fabricated in terra cotta detailed to simulate limestone. These features include window sills and lintels at the rear and complete surrounds and sills on the first and second floor windows on the east, south, and west. A terra cotta water table wraps around the entire building at the basement level creating the basement window heads. The top of the building's walls are also defined by a terra cotta course that rings the structure just above the second floor window lintels. On the front façade, the high school is identified with a large terra cotta sign panel located between the first and second floor center windows. The width of the sign panel aligns with the width of the central grouping of five windows. "Summit Hill High School" is incised into the sign panel. On the east and west façades, the entrance bays are embellished with terra cotta cartouches centered in the Flemish gables above the eave line of the main roof. (Photo 9)

The existing roof is covered with fiberglass shingles and punctuated with two, centrally located, hip-roofed ventilators, one on the front and one on the rear. (Photo 3, 10) An historic photograph depicts the original roofing material as terra cotta tile, which is consistent with the Renaissance Revival style. This photograph also indicates that there were originally five hip-roofed ventilators symmetrically spaced across the front roof areas. Only one ventilator remains along the south façade and one on the north façade. They were restored during the 1997 renovation. The eaves of the roof have not been altered and are open revealing decoratively cut roof rafters. There were copper gutters and down spouts originally, but they have been replaced with aluminum gutters and down spouts matching the size and profile of the historic features. They are finished with a verdi gris color. (Photo 11)

The interior plan of the school, organized by the east-west corridors, originally had six classrooms and two large tiled toilet rooms on the first floor. The basement level had two classrooms at the northeast and northwest corners, a boiler room and small toilet rooms in between, and what appears to have been shop and home economics rooms along the front of the building. The second floor of the high school was reserved for the auditorium and administrative offices. The offices were located at the east end while the stage and back stage spaces were located at

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the west end. The second floor spaces, however were in seriously deteriorated condition before renovations. Most of the stage and back stage partitions had been removed. A portion of the former proscenium arch (with cornucopia embellishments) had been left suspended above the former stage area and had caused structural damage to the roof trussing. The vaulted, pressed metal ceiling of the auditorium was rusted through in most areas.

The current layout of the high school accommodates 24 apartments, 6 on the basement level, 8 on the first floor, and 10 on the second floor. The apartments fit into the old classrooms (approximately) on the first and basement levels. Because of the deteriorated condition of the second floor auditorium, the space could not be restored. The second floor was divided into apartment units with a east-west corridor similar to the floors below, but narrower (Photo 26). The construction of these units, however, has been done to cause the least possible damage to the historic vaulted ceiling, which remains above a suspended acoustical ceiling in the apartments and main hall. The remnants of the proscenium arch, however, were removed in order to correct the structural damage already caused.

The original floor plan included three stair cases. The stair at the west end of the building extended from the basement to the second floor (Photos 22, 23). This stair was located just inside of the west entrance. The other stairs were located in the southeast entrance hall and the hall directly opposite, to the north. The north stair originally ran from the basement to the second floor auditorium and the south stair, only from the first floor to the second floor auditorium. These two stairs had been removed sometime prior to the 1997 renovation. The west stair remains intact except for the last section of the run to the second floor, which had to be widened to meet code. Originally this section of stair was very narrow and led only to the backstage. The wooden staircase has a heavy railing with square balusters and square newels. The section leading to the basement remains painted and the section leading to the second floor is a dark stained and varnished finish. There was another existing stair prior to the 1997 renovations which had been inserted in the 1960s and was located in the southeastern corner classroom. It was constructed of steel and connected the first and second floors. This non-original stair has been removed. Also, a new stair has been constructed in the east entrance bay symmetrically opposite to the original west stair. This new wood and carpeted stair leads from the basement to the second floor and is detailed with gypsum wall board "balustrades" capped with a metal handrail. (Photo 24)

Ceilings on the first floor were originally pressed metal. They were in deteriorated condition prior to renovation and could not be saved in the first floor main hall because of their condition and the requirement for fire ratings. The ceiling in the main hall is now a gypsum wallboard ceiling with a wood crown molding at the perimeter to recall the historic metal crown molding. (Photo 12) Old school light fixtures found in a few of the classrooms were repositioned in the first floor main hall approximately where they were historically located. The ceilings in the first floor classrooms were also in deteriorated condition. These ceilings still remain in situ above suspended, fire-rated ceilings. The new ceilings are raised at all window areas to leave the large historic window openings unobstructed from the exterior view. (Photos 27, 28) The original ceilings on the second floor, in the auditorium, were also pressed metal, and, as previously stated, in severely deteriorated condition. This metal ceiling still remains above the new suspended acoustical ceilings in the apartments. The basement had plastered ceilings and they still exist above the newly installed suspended acoustical ceiling shielding HVAC ducts from view. (Photo 25)

The original floors of the high school varied according to the use of the spaces. The classrooms, auditorium, and offices had strip maple flooring. The flooring on the second floor was severely deteriorated and buckled due to

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water leaks. On the first and basement levels it was in better condition. In the basement, other than in the two classrooms, the floors were plain concrete. The main halls and toilet rooms on the first floor were finished in terrazzo, which also formed the base molding in the main halls. The terrazzo flooring of the halls was in good condition and remains exposed. All other floors have been carpeted. The wood floors remain beneath the carpet on the first floor.

Details of the entrance vestibules and woodwork in the corridors are the richest remaining interior decorative features of the building. The floors and steps of the entrance vestibules are finished in Carrara marble, and the walls have tile wainscoting capped with a marble band. (Photos 18-20) There are dark-stained paneled doors and wide moldings remaining in the main first floor corridors. The paneled doors, originally accessing classrooms, still exist in opened or closed position; fire-rated apartment doors are recessed approximately two feet from the old doors held back in the open position. (Photos 14, 17) A wood and multi-paned glass partition at the east end of the first floor corridor remains in situ, but a new fire-rated partition stands behind it to create a fire-rated stair enclosure. (Photo 21) At the opposite end of the corridor, the wood and glass partition is located at the vestibule and is not now visible from the main hall because of the fire-rated partition required at the stair. (Photo 13) The partition is visible from the stair tower. The halls from the front two entrances and a hall that used to lead to a back stair are marked by floor to ceiling openings cased to look like classical piers topped with deep entablatures. (Photos 12, 15) The opening located at the former rear stair area is now filled by an apartment partition and entrance recessed to reflect the former passage.

Finishes on the basement level were very plain and did not rival the upper stories. The wood trim was modest and painted. The main hall of this level remains in its historic position and at its historic dimension. New doors and hollow metal frames replace the original, which were simple, painted, panel doors with flat, painted trim.

The exterior landscape of the school building is mostly paved surfaces, which was the condition prior to the 1997 renovation. These surfaces were most likely used, historically, for playgrounds. Currently they are used for parking. Small areas of grass remain on the west and north sides of the building. There are no known outbuildings associated with the property.

There were very few alterations to Summit Hill High School during its use as a school. There is physical and photographic evidence that the basement windows were lengthened and wells constructed to accommodate the new windows. The date of the alteration has not been pinpointed, but the need for additional light in the basement areas likely indicated a growing number of students at a time when day lighting was still relied upon. Presumably this would have been in the later teens or early 1920s.

Other alterations to the school building occurred in the 1960s and later after its use as a school. The terra cotta tile roof was replaced with asphalt and all but two of the dormer ventilators removed. The east entrance stoop was encased in concrete to form a loading dock, and most of the windows and doors removed. In the interior, two staircases were removed and a new metal stair case inserted in a former classroom. The stage, seating, and second floor partitions were also removed. Weathering and the lack of heat and use from the late 1970s through 1996 caused much damage to the interior materials and finishes.

The most recent alterations to Summit Hill High School Hill (1997) reversed many of the alterations that occurred during the last three decades. Most of the windows and doors have been restored and, although the windows are aluminum rather than wood, the visual impression is very close to the historic condition. The east entrance concrete loading dock has not been removed, but covered with a wooden access ramp that shields the damage from

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view. The interior steel stair from the 1960s has been removed, although the removed historic stairs have not been reinstalled.

Summit Hill High School in its presented renovated condition is still able to reflect the building's significance as an early twentieth century high school even though some of the interior spatial features have been compromised by its new use. The exterior retains most of the character defining features of the historic structure. The brick walls and terra cotta detailing remain intact and in good condition. Of particular note are the surviving classical portals and the Flemish gables on the east and west. The original limestone steps are restored and lead to replicated wood doors with multi-paned wood and glass transoms. All but a few windows on each façade have been reopened and fitted with new double hung windows that match the historic in profile and appearance, if not material. Although the terra cotta tile roof has been replaced, the open wooden eaves with cut rafter tails remain untouched. The exterior is in remarkably good condition and clearly still reflects its former history as a prominent high school in a community that valued education.

The character of the main interior public hall is still much as it was in the early twentieth century except for the required stair enclosures and the still missing main stairs to the former auditorium space. The stained wood work including door frames, doors, wood and glass partitions, and grand piers and entablatures still exist and, along with the terrazzo floor and historic hanging light fixtures, faithfully recall the historic hallway. Apartments now occupy the former classrooms and have further subdivided the spaces, but the historic classroom partitions have not been removed or greatly altered and ceiling finishes remain above new suspended ceilings. Although compromises were made with the former second floor auditorium space in order to make a viable project, most of the historic materials and details that survived decades of neglect and deterioration remain intact or protected behind the new finishes.

Summit Hill High School has been saved from demolition and given a new life. The building with its exquisite entrance portals remains a testament to and reflection of an era that venerated public education.

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The 1911 Summit Hill High School was a product of the coalfields population growth of Carbon County. Built in a time when education began to be considered paramount, the high school was the educational and cultural focus of Summit Hill. Summit Hill High School's significant contribution to education in Carbon County make it eligible for the National Register under criterion A. The school's period of significance begins with its construction in 1911, and ends in 1950, in accordance with the National Register's fifty-year guideline for historical significance. In addition, Summit Hill High School embodies distinctive characteristics of the early 20th-Century Neo-Classical Revival architectural style and is a building of high artistic value – particularly in the context of its location – making it also eligible under criterion C of the National Register.

The date of Summit Hill High School corresponds with the Pennsylvania Code of 1911, legislation which clarified and brought up to date matters concerning district organization, certification and salaries of teachers, length of school term, funding of high schools, and taxation schemes.¹ Clearly Summit Hill High School stands as a result of the Commonwealth's continuing enlightened approach to secondary education.

Summit Hill High School is the only remaining school building in the town of Summit Hill (pop.3332). In the life of Pennsylvania coalfield villages such as Summit Hill, only churches rivaled school buildings in importance to the town social and physical structure. Just as churches offered the coal miner relief in the next world from his backbreaking labor, so schools were regarded as paths to a better life in this world for the miner's children.

The history of the town of Summit Hill begins with Philip Ginter's discovery of coal on Sharpe Mountain in 1791. Prior to Ginter's discovery, Sharpe Mountain and the surrounding land was a hunting ground with only a few white inhabitants and scattered Indian villages. The land was part of a huge tract designated Penn Township. The next year, Charles Cist, Michael Hilegas and Col. Jacob Weiss formed the Lehigh Coal Mine Company, and very small-scale anthracite mining began at the "Old Mine" on "Coal Hill."²

During the War of 1812, American ports, including Philadelphia, were blockaded, so coal could not be imported from England or Virginia as had been the regular practice. In desperation, Philadelphia turned to the Pennsylvania coal fields; a small amount of anthracite coal from Sharpe Mountain found its way to the city, where it proved attractive not only because it was available but also because it was found to be superior fuel to the more familiar imported bituminous coal. In 1820, 365 tons of anthracite were shipped to Philadelphia, an event which, according to historian Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., marked the real beginning of the industrial revolution in America.³

Although coal extraction had begun in earnest, in the 1820's Summit Hill was still no more than a mining camp. By 1826, according to a local history written in the late 19th-century by the pastor of the Summit Hill Presbyterian Church, there were only five small log structures in the area, one in what could be called the town proper, the other four west of "town." But in the next decade Summit Hill began to grow into what would become, with the exception of Mauch Chunk, the most populous community in Carbon County's coalfields. A school was one of the first buildings erected in Summit Hill, the coal company constructing a log schoolhouse in 1830 on the west end of the village. By 1844, several "ungraded" schools were in existence.⁴

The first half of the 19th century was also marked by numerous statewide attempts to establish public

¹ Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction, *100 Years of Free Public Schools in Pennsylvania, 1834-1934*, Harrisburg, 1934, p. 82.

² F.C. Brenckman & J.J. Nungesser, *History of Carbon County*, Harrisburg, PA, 1913, p.362.

³ Alfred DuPont Chandler, Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*, Cambridge, MA, 1977, p.76.

⁴ Brenckman & Nungesser, p.368.

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education. Although two new school buildings went up in Mauch Chunk in the 1850s in response to the statewide mandate of free public education, it was not until after the Civil War that widespread construction of schools in the coalfields took place. Mauch Chunk added a third school building in 1870, a six-room stone structure, at the cost of \$17,500. Five years earlier, Weissport had built a two-story wood frame school. In 1868, Parryville built a one-story brick school for \$3000 and then added a second floor in 1871. And in 1873, Leighton expended the extraordinary sum of \$45,000 – a clear indication of the importance education held in the coalfields -- on a three-story brick, mansard-roofed school.

Reflecting the local commitment to education, the first large Summit Hill school was built similar to the Leighton building. The Summit Hill School, which would be known as the Lincoln Building (demolished), built by the contractor John F. Breslin, went up in 1875 at the corner of Market and Hazard Streets on the eastern end of the same block on which the later Summit Hill High School Building was built. The Lincoln Building was a three-story wood frame structure with the third floor encased in a mansard roof, all topped by a center monitor, an example of the Second Empire architectural style.

The 1870s, the decade of the construction of the Lincoln Building school in Summit Hill, was a difficult time in the coalfields. The Panic of 1873, the Long Strike of 1874-75, and the Great Strike of 1877 all hit hard. The Mollie Maguires and coal company goons brought violence to the region. Despite the troubles, Summit Hill continued to grow: the 1880 census reported a population of 1,763, second only to Mauch Chunk in Carbon County. Another school, the Washington Building, went up on the school grounds on Hazard Street (the exact date and location are uncertain), and was designated for “secondary education” while “later, elementary education was conducted at the Lincoln Building.”⁵

On January 14, 1889, the village of Summit Hill in Mauch Chunk Township was incorporated as the Borough of Summit Hill. In the next year, the town installed streetlights. By 1900, the population stood at approximately 2000. Although the fear of widespread social revolution abroad in the land in the 1870s faded, labor troubles continued in the coalfields. The National Guard was called into Summit Hill in 1902 to quell strikers. Amidst it all, in Summit Hill education remained a top priority, as the construction of additional school buildings demonstrated. The Summit Hill High School went up in 1911, and in 1927 the Philip Ginter High School (the Junior High School) was added to accommodate the increasing school population. Unfortunately, the name of the architect and builder of Summit Hill High School remain unknown; local newspapers, histories, and the Pennsylvania School Journal were researched without success. The Lincoln Building (demolished), the Summit Hill High School, and the Philip Ginter School (demolished) were all located on the Hazard Street block on which the 1911 building still stands today. The date of construction, the location, the size, and the demise of the Washington Building are all unclear. It no longer exists. But since it is mentioned that the Washington Building was on school grounds on Hazard Street, it might be assumed that it was located with the other Summit Hill schools. The Lincoln Building was razed in 1964 to make way for a new U.S. Post Office. The Ginter School burned in 1971, leaving the 1911 Summit Hill High School the only remaining school building in town.

In 1964, the same year the old Lincoln Building was razed, Summit Hill became part of the Panther Valley Joint School System, and Summit Hill High School ceased operation. Two years later, in 1966, the Summit Hill Borough School District Board of Directors declared that the Summit Hill High School, “has been for some time

⁵ Brenckman & Nungesser, P.370.

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unused” and that the land and buildings were “unnecessary” and authorized transfer of the property from the school district to the borough at the price of one dollar. Two years later, the property was sold to Panther Valley Industries, Inc. for \$5000. In 1995, the property was transferred to Summit Hill School Association, its present owners, for one dollar.

Although Summit Hill had a reputation as a town of churches –indeed, Ripley’s Believe It or Not listed Summit Hill for having an intersection with churches on all four corners – the Summit Hill High School is arguably the most architecturally and symbolically significant structure still standing in the town. The richly ornamented Neo-Classical Revival style building has remained nearly intact with very few alterations to the exterior since its construction. The early modification of lengthening the basement windows and constructing window wells around them, which likely occurred in the late 1910s or early 1920s, had little impact on the historic integrity of the structure. Later insensitive modifications, dating from the late 1960s or early 1970s, have mostly been reversed in the recent renovation. The \$90,000 cost of construction in 1911 is evidence of the importance placed on the school.

Similar school buildings, built in the same Neo-Classical Revival style, of approximately the same scale, and put up at approximately the same time as Summit Hill High School are important elements of nearby towns of Nesquehoning (pop. 3364) and Lansford (pop. 4583). In fact, the three towns of Nesquehoning, Lansford and Summit Hill had been identified as containing “the principal schools of [Mauch Chunk] township” as early as 1884 in Mathews’ and Hungerford’s History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.⁶ The high schools are tangible reminders of the importance of the three towns.

The Summit Hill High School was clearly the focus of community activities and a source of great pride. The Summit Hill Borough Centennial 1889-1989 explains that “it was probably about the year 1920 when extracurricular activities began to take on a place of special importance within the schools,” explaining, “the schools in Summit Hill as well as in many other communities became the rallying point, a sense of pride so to speak, for the people of the community. People took great pride in following their schools’ activities, not just in sports, but in any activity in which the school participated. From sports to debate, from oratory to band, the schools in Summit Hill became a bond that brought the community together.”⁷

Elmer T. McCready gave the new high school words to an alma mater, written to the tune of the University of Pennsylvania’s alma mater. Both the boys and girls basketball teams were established in the ‘teens, with the school winning its first Carbon-Luzerne County League championship in 1916-17. Numerous basketball, football, and track championships followed, with the boys basketball team making a trip to state finals in the 1920s, and the 1939 football team defeating the eventual state champion Blythe Township. In 1959, Summit Hill broke a 21-year football losing streak to Coaldale, and “the town went wild as the victorious Hillers arrived back in town. It was a day to remember.”⁸

The debate team at Summit Hill High School also dates from the school’s first years, with the team winning championships in 1916-1917 and 1933-34. In 1942, Robert Caldwell was the Eastern District Oratory Champion. The school’s first band was organized in 1928.

⁶ Alfred Mathews and Austin H. Hungerford, History of the Counties of Lehigh and Carbon, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1884, p.789.

⁷ Centennial Book Committee, Summit Hill Borough Centennial 1889-1989, Jim Thorpe, 1989, p.45.

⁸ Centennial Book Committee, p.59.

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Summit Hill High School
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As in so many towns of similar size and situation, Summit Hill cultural life centered on the high school building. Beginning in 1919, one of the town's proudest cultural events was the annual week-long visit by the traveling contingent from Chautauqua, New York. Summit Hill's yearly Chautauqua, presented from Summit Hill High School auditorium, "presented a variety of illustrated lectures, magicians, and dramatic monologues."⁹

The Summit Hill High School is the only remaining school building in town. As such, it is the reservoir of a special historical memory shaped by the hard life of the 19th-century coalfields and the hope which education held in such conditions. The building has been recently converted to apartments, but remains, in terms of scale, architectural style, and social and historical significance, one of Summit Hill's most important buildings.

⁹ Centennial Book Committee, p.10.

United States Department of the Interior
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Summit Hill High School
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Section 10 Page 1

Summit Hill High School
Name of property
Carbon County, PA
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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point, said point being North 81 degrees 35 minutes East, 52 feet from the intersection of the North line of Hazard St and the East line of Walnut St; thence along the North line of Hazard St. 81 degrees 35 minutes East, 209 feet to a point; thence by land of Michael Leonzi North 8 degrees 25 minutes West, 122 feet to a point; thence along the south line of School Ave. South 81 degrees 35 minutes West, 209 feet to a point; thence by other land of Michael Leonzi South 8 degrees 25 minutes East, 122 feet to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The current property boundary for Summit Hill High School is only a part of the historic boundary for the high school. Summit Hill Borough School District owned the entire block bounded by Market St. on the east, Hazard St. on the south, Walnut St. on the west, and School Ave. on the north at the time of the construction of Summit Hill High School. When the town of Summit Hill was planned this block consisted of 15 lots, each measuring 30' along Hazard St. and extending 125' to School Ave. at the north. In 1874 the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company conveyed the six eastern lots (#1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) to the School District of Mauch Chunk Township. The Lincoln Building school was constructed on this 180' x 125' lot in 1875. In 1889, the year that Summit Hill was incorporated as a borough and the school district name changed to the Summit Hill Borough School District, the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co. conveyed an additional two lots to the school district (lots 13 and 15.) The school district acquired the remaining lots on the block (lots 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, and 29) in 1909 from private owners. The new school building, Summit Hill High School was constructed on lots 15, 17, 19, 21, and 23 in 1911.

The property associated with the high school building in the transfer of the building and grounds back to the borough in June of 1966 included a 6' portion of lot 7 and the remaining 10 odd numbered lots 9 through 29 to the west. This 336' x 122' (reflecting the widening of School Ave. along the north) parcel was later subdivided into three tracts, a 52' x 122' lot on Walnut St. now including a house and owned by Michael Leonzi, the 209' x 122' lot with the high school building, and a 75' x 122' lot with no structures also owned by Michael Leonzi.

SUMMIT HILL
HIGH SCHOOL
CARBON COUNTY
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