

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 Academy Hall

other names/site number Austin Hall, Literary Hall, Commercial Hall, Music Hall

#### 2. Location

street & number On the campus of Edinboro University, on the southeast corner of the intersection of Highlander and Normal streets not for publication NA

city or town Edinboro vicinity NA

state Pennsylvania code PA county Erie code 049 zip code 16444

#### 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.)

*Anchee MacDonalof*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

September 21, 2006  
Date

Pennsylvania 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 official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register  
( See continuation sheet).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

determined eligible for the National Register  
( See continuation sheet).

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

other (explain):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Academy Hall  
Name of Property

Erie County, PA  
County and State

### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)		
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Non-contributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	0	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0	objects
		1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in  
the National Register  
NA

### 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Education/School—classroom building	vacant

### 7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
Italianate	foundation stone
	walls weatherboard
	roof asphalt
	other

### Narrative Description

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

Academy Hall  
Name of Property

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## 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 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.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1857-1955

### Significant Dates

1857; 1880

### Significant Person

NA

### Cultural Affiliation

NA

### Architect/Builder

Austin, Nathaniel C.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(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: \_\_\_\_\_

Edinboro University Archives

Academy Hall  
Name of Property

Erie County, PA  
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## 10. Geographical Data

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**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>17</u>	<u>572367</u>	<u>4635927</u>	3	_____	_____
2	__	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Dave Obringer/University Archivist  
organization Edinboro University of PA date December, 2005  
street & number: 200 Tartan Rd., Baron Forness Library Telephone: 814-732-2415  
city or town: Edinboro State: PA zip code: 16444

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## Additional Documentation

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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)

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## Property Owner

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

name Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
street & number Meadville Street telephone 814-732-2000  
city or town Edinboro State: PA zip code: 16444

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

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Academy Hall  
Erie County, PA

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Academy Hall is an 1857 two-story Italianate-style frame building designed by Nathaniel C. Austin, a prominent builder in the Edinboro area. Academy Hall was the first building of the 1861 Northwestern State Normal School, the second Normal School in Pennsylvania, which later became Edinboro University. In 1880 Academy Hall was moved approximately 200 yards northeast to its present location during expansion of the campus. It is on the northwestern edge of the campus, on the east corner of Normal and Highlander Streets, southeast of downtown Edinboro. Across Normal Street, on the northwest side of the building, is a residential neighborhood. On the northeast side of the building, across a 50-yard lawn, is Compton Hall (1940). To the west of Academy Hall, across Highlander Street, a clock tower surrounded by open space commemorates Normal Hall (1875 and 1890), which was destroyed by fire in 1969. Southeast of Academy Hall is Heather Hall (1951). A row of parking spaces runs along the west side of Highlander Street in front of Academy Hall. The building consists of a gable-front main core section with a wing on either side, forming a cross shape. Academy Hall retains its c.1880 appearance, which is very similar to its original 1857 design, with few changes affecting its architectural integrity. The building is currently vacant; Edinboro University is planning a rehabilitation of Academy Hall in 2006.

The main core of the building is 40 ft x 50 ft with a 10 ft x 24 ft wing on the north and south sides containing stairwells, together forming a cross-shaped footprint. The main core and the wings all have a low-pitched gable roof, covered in asphalt shingles. A cupola in the center of the building has a low-pitched pyramid roof covered in shingles. The cupola's arched windows are covered by plywood, which was done around 1965. Under the cupola's roof are paired brackets at each corner and a border of dentils above a band of Greek key fretwork. On each elevation of the building is a wide, plain cornice, with evenly spaced paired brackets and a row of dentils immediately below the roof. Early (1860 and 1882) images of the building show two interior chimneys, located at the juncture of the stairwell wings and main core, which have both been removed. The building is covered by its original weatherboard siding.

All elevations are similar in appearance and level of ornamentation. The main façade, on the west side of the building, is identifiable primarily by the placement of the building's two entrances, one in each stairwell wing. Each single-door entrance is topped by a projecting gable roof supported by wooden brackets and trimmed with a scalloped edge along the front. The west façade consists of the five-bay main building flanked by the recessed wings, which are a single bay wide and two bays deep. The east side of the

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building also consists of the five-bay main building. On the northeast wall of the north stairwell wing, the first-floor window was removed and covered with siding (c. 1920). On the south stairwell wall, the corresponding bay is covered by a small shed-roof lean-to addition that covers the stairway to the basement, accessible only from the south-side exterior. On the north and south sides of the buildings there are four bays total. The two center bays are in the stairwell wings, and on either side is a single bay belonging to the main core of the building.

All first and second floor windows are the same, double-hung with six-over-six sash and prominent flat lintels. A pre-1880 photograph suggests that these are the original windows. The building rests on a raised foundation of fieldstone, with three-pane window lights on the east and west sides and six-pane windows on the north and south sides. Access to the basement is via the outside stairway on the southwest corner of the building. The basement and foundation dates to the building's relocation in 1880. It has stone walls and a concrete floor. In its original location, Academy Hall had a foundation supporting a four foot crawl space. Part of the incentive of moving the building was to be able to have a full basement. Currently the basement is used for storage.

The two building entrances each open into a vestibule area at the foot of the interior staircases. A bathroom was added to the first floor of both stairwells, probably in the early 1900s. The bathrooms were placed unobtrusively under the stairs. The earliest description of Academy Hall describes three rooms on each floor to be used as classrooms and a library/apparatus room. The library/apparatus room was on the first floor, with two larger classrooms. On the first floor, the classroom on the east side was divided into five small rooms. This probably occurred in the early 1900s. These have been used most recently as offices and earlier were music instruction rooms. The north entrance leads into the first floor hallway, which accesses the offices, while the south entrance leads directly into the model classroom.

At the top of each staircase is a hallway accessing the second-floor classrooms. On the second floor, the original large east classroom, later a literary society room, is intact. The west side had two classrooms, one larger than the other. The smaller room was divided at an unknown date, possibly the 1930s. The large east classroom on the second floor can be reached by a doorway in either hall. A second door in each hallway leads to the other classrooms.

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The vestibules, hallways, and model classrooms retain the pendant light fixtures that were installed in 1904 when electricity was added to the building. Low wainscoting and a chair rail either meeting the window sills or falling just below remains throughout the building. Window and door trim as well as the original doors are also present and in good condition. The staircases and closed balustrades with their square newel posts also remain intact. Some of the offices and small classrooms now have drop ceilings, and some of the walls are in deteriorating condition, but overall the interior retains its integrity.

Academy Hall is situated on the northern edge of the Edinboro University Campus. Its closest neighboring buildings on campus are Compton Hall (1940), Memorial Hall (1941) and Heather Hall (1951). Across the street is a residential neighborhood with homes built over a wide time period. There was once a playground situated on the east side of Academy Hall, between it and Compton Hall, for the use of the model school students. It was removed in the 1950s. There is open lawn separating Academy Hall from its neighboring buildings, and mature trees lining the adjacent sidewalks. Academy Hall remains a highly visible presence on the campus.

Academy Hall possesses important features, including a low-pitched roof with wide, overhanging eaves; paired eave brackets; relatively tall, narrow windows; and a cupola, which are characteristic of the Italianate style. Other than the loss of one rear window and the temporary covering of the cupola windows, the exterior of Academy Hall is essentially unaltered from its original 1857 and relocated 1880 appearances. The room arrangement of the interior, including the remaining Model School Room and Literary Society Room, reflects the early use of the building. Much of the original or early interior trim and finishes—including window and door trim, wainscoting, blackboards, stairs, balustrade, and light fixtures—remains intact. Academy Hall has retained its interior and exterior integrity. Changes to the exterior have been minimal and do not detract from the original design. Changes to the interior do not diminish the building's ability to convey its former prominent role as classroom space for the Model School, Literary Society, and music department.

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Academy Hall meets National Register Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the founding and growth of the institution now known as Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. In a broader perspective, Academy Hall represents some of Pennsylvania's earliest initiatives in education, particularly teacher education, as the oldest remaining Normal School building in the Commonwealth. It also meets Criterion C for Architecture as a locally prominent building in the Italianate style, designed and constructed by locally renowned builder Nathaniel C. Austin. In contrast to the few buildings of Italianate style still remaining in Edinboro, Academy Hall has retained nearly all its original features. The period of significance for Academy Hall begins with its construction in 1857 and continues through 1955.

**Overview**

In 1855, in response to the Edinboro community's desire to provide education beyond the elementary level in the area, local residents began an effort to raise funds to establish an academy. Until then, the only education available in Edinboro was a common school education at the grammar school level. It was hoped the academy would provide a secondary level of schooling and the opportunity for students to apply for college.

The community's fundraising efforts resulted in construction beginning on Academy Hall in 1857. The school was situated on one acre at the edge of town (using the 1857 town boundaries). During construction, Pennsylvania's Normal School Act was passed. The trustees immediately began expanding their plan from a single-building Academy to meet the requirements for a State Normal School. This included a full campus complete with dormitories, a library, dining hall, and assembly hall in addition to classrooms. Academy Hall would become part of Northwestern State Normal School, the second State Normal School chartered in Pennsylvania.

Academy Hall was moved from its original location in 1880 as part of a campus expansion. The building continued to house the model school for teacher training on the first floor, but beginning in 1880 it became known as Literary Hall, as two large rooms on the second floor were used by the campus literary societies. Academy Hall continued to serve various departments (with corresponding name changes) as classroom space until 1965. At that time, the College's Alumni Office used the building, and the name reverted to Academy Hall. The building has been vacant since 1996, when the Alumni Office



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moved out. A capital campaign is currently underway to rehabilitate Academy Hall, with hopes that renovations will be complete during the University's Sesquicentennial in 2007.

**Criteria A, Education**

Academy Hall is representative of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's early efforts to not only address the educational needs of the citizenry, but also to improve the quality of education, specifically, teacher education. Prior to the passing of the 1857 Normal School Act, Pennsylvania did not have guidelines for the educational preparation of teachers. The Common School Act of 1834 improved the educational situation in Pennsylvania, but it did nothing to improve the quality of teachers. At this time, many teachers were recruited from among eighth grade graduates. In 1840, the Common School Act was amended to allow schools to examine prospective teachers. Nine years later, the schools were authorized to renew a teacher's license annually. The 1849 Act also required teachers to hold a certificate that listed the subjects they were qualified to teach.

Unlike earlier legislation, the 1857 Normal School Act was aimed at directly addressing teacher training in the Commonwealth. In fact, the name of the Act leaves no question as to its purpose: "To Provide for the Training of Teachers for the Common Schools of the State." Impetus for this came in 1856 when Andrew Curtin, the State Superintendent (the equivalent of today's State Secretary of Education), reported that a mere two percent of teachers outside Philadelphia were graduates of Normal Schools or colleges.

When Edinboro began its efforts to open an academy, there were four other academies in Erie County. The nearest was in Waterford, about 10 miles away, where leaders of the effort to open an academy in Edinboro, James Reeder, Isaac R. Taylor and Andrew Proudfit, all had children enrolled in the Waterford Academy. Given the transportation of the times, this distance required students from Edinboro to board away from home. If Edinboro students were unable to board in Waterford or other towns with Academies, their education would end with eighth grade.

In 1855, a subscription was attempted to raise \$3,000 from the local Edinboro citizenry. They succeeded in raising \$2,800. In March 1856, Isaac R. Taylor and other prominent citizens in the town made an application to the court to charter the Edinboro Academy Association. The charter was granted in May of that year. In the fall of 1856, another

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effort to fulfill the subscription amount was made and it succeeded. Immediately thereafter, the stockholders (i.e. those who subscribed) held an election for the Board of Trustees. These Board members were chosen from among the stockholders.

Initially conceived to meet the educational needs of the community, the school changed purpose before it even opened. As Academy Hall was being built, Pennsylvania's Normal School Act of 1857 was passed. Although the requirements for Normal School Certification exceeded the original plans, Edinboro Trustees immediately decided to pursue certification. Some of the criteria for certification not included in the original plan were: a ten-acre campus, an assembly hall (with seating for one thousand), classrooms, a model school, lodging facilities for 300 students, a library, and a dining area.

Isaac R. Taylor, speaking at the celebration of Edinboro's recognition as a Normal School in 1860, said, "seeing the great deficiency of the common school teacher, and the great need of a school for the more thorough training of teachers, [we] were led to consider the possibility of so enlarging our building and increasing the area of our ground, as fully to come up to the requirement of the Normal Act of 1857, and thus to secure the Normal School at Edinboro. . . . Accordingly a subscription paper was drawn up for that purpose, late in the fall of 1857."

With the money raised, nine more acres of land were purchased and three additional buildings were erected, Assembly Hall and two dormitories, North and South Hall. None of these remain standing today, leaving Academy Hall as the only building from the original effort.

On January 23, 1861, Edinboro Academy officially became Northwestern State Normal School. It was the second State Normal School chartered in Pennsylvania. Millersville had become Pennsylvania's first State Normal School in 1859. Millersville's original classroom building has been razed, thus making Academy Hall the oldest surviving State Normal School building in Pennsylvania. Like Millersville and Edinboro, the next three State Normal Schools to be certified were founded with community funds. Mansfield was certified in 1862, Kutztown in 1866, and Bloomsburg in 1869.

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To speed the creation of more teacher training schools, Pennsylvania began to provide financial assistance to other fledgling State Normal Schools such as West Chester in 1871, it gave \$15,000 for the purchase of land and erection of buildings. In 1873, it gave Shippensburg \$35,000. Regardless of the source of their funding, these schools, like the first five, were operated as private schools. The final six schools to achieve State Normal School status were California in 1874, Indiana in 1875, Lock Haven in 1877, Clarion in 1886, Slippery Rock in 1889 and East Stroudsburg in 1893. Before endeavoring to meet Normal School criteria, these schools obtained an agreement with the state guaranteeing that they would become Normal Schools once the requirements were met. Thus, they obviated some of the financial risk. All 13 of these schools were purchased by the state under authority of Article XX section 2032 of "An Act to establish a public school system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," passed May 18, 1911. The effective purchase date of Edinboro was April 17, 1914.

Three more changes occurred for Edinboro and Pennsylvania's other State Normal Schools. In 1927, Edinboro became a State Teachers College and, in 1960, it became a State College denoting the expansion of its academic offerings beyond teacher training. Finally, Pennsylvania created the State System of Higher Education (SSHE) through Act 188 of 1982. These original 13 Normal Schools, along with Cheney (a historically black college), became the state universities comprising that system.

Before the state purchased the State Normal Schools and developed them into universities, Pennsylvania was financially supportive of them. In 1878, legislation was passed giving money to the State Normal Schools. With this money, Edinboro made substantial plans for campus improvements, including Academy's renovation. Those plans evolved into moving Academy Hall in order to make room for a new building. In his book, *A Portrait of Edinboro*, Russell Vance (retired professor of Edinboro's History Department) describes the move this way:

During the spring of 1880, wide-eyed youngsters watched with baited breath and adult sidewalk superintendents offered advice as old Academy was raised by crude jack and huge hand-cut logs were placed carefully and accurately under the structure. Strong rope cables were attached to the building and the strange cargo was then harnessed to teams of astonished draught horses. One can imagine that the still spring air was rent with loud commands of gee and haw, along with other

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well-chosen words. Slowly and cautiously the men urged the teams on, pulling the structure around Normal Hall to rest on the newly-built foundation...

In its 1880 location, Academy Hall became known as Literary Hall. It continued to house a model school on the first floor, but the two large rooms on the second floor were now used by the literary societies (hence the name change). These societies served as student social clubs. They would meet to discuss current literature, debate, listen to music and hear poetry readings. Common on college campuses around the turn of the century, literary societies hold a prominent place in the history of higher education. As these societies disbanded in the early 1910s, their book collections, often sizable, were typically donated to their schools. Edinboro benefited from the disbanding of its societies by acquiring over 1,000 volumes for the library.

Name changes for the building originally named for its builder, Nathaniel Austin, followed its function. From 1912 to 1917, it was used as classroom space for the commercial program that included business courses and secretarial skills programs. Thus it became Commercial Hall. In 1917, the building provided classrooms for music students and was named Music Hall. It remained as such until 1965 when it was occupied by the College's Alumni Office whose staff preferred to refer back to an earlier name. The full range of name changes is listed below.

Austin Hall, 1857-58  
Academy Hall, 1858-80  
Literary Hall, 1880-1912  
Commercial Hall, 1912-17  
Music Hall, 1917-65  
Academy Hall, 1965-Present

The building has been vacant since 1996, but has remained a prominent landmark on the campus as a reminder of the University's origins.

**Criteria C, Architecture**

Academy Hall is an Italianate style building retaining much of its original interior and exterior character and appearance. Except for key scroll arched windows in the cupola, which were boarded over sometime after 1965, chimneys removed circa 1885, and

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canopies added to the doors c.1900, the building retains the same outward appearance it had in 1857. Changes to the interior, including the addition of first-floor bathrooms and the subdivision of some classrooms, do not detract from the building's original function and history.

Academy Hall retains essential characteristics that define the Italianate style, including a low-pitched roof with wide, overhanging eaves; paired eave brackets; relatively tall, narrow windows; and a cupola. Academy Hall is the only Italianate building on campus and one of only a few, including the Biggers House, a former hotel (1850-55), and the Old Robinson House, also a hotel (1843), in Edinboro. The Biggers House is still standing, with many renovations, while the Robinson House has been torn down. Academy Hall remains the most intact and original of any Italianate-influenced buildings in Edinboro, retaining more original features.

Academy Hall was built by a regionally prominent master carpenter, Nathaniel C. Austin, using a carpenters' planning book (possibly Samuel Sloan's *Model Architect*, which features a very similar design), for a cost of \$3,200. From 1857 to 1858, the building was named Austin Hall in honor of the builder. Austin had been active in the area for several decades before designing and constructing Academy Hall. In 1833, Austin built the first church in Edinboro, a Baptist Church, and he later built the Presbyterian Church in 1854. In 1843, he built the Cutler House, a large hotel with stables, and the Robinson House. None of these are still standing, although photos and drawings remain. The Biggers House, 1850-55, was also built by Austin, as were many other finer homes in Edinboro. The Biggers House is located on the extreme western edge of the campus, not far from Academy Hall. The house retains some Italianate influence, but the former residence and later hotel was extensively remodeled (inside and out) in 1989 when purchased by the University. It is now the site of the Admissions Office. The Italianate style Austin used for Academy Hall became popular around 1830 and rose in popularity through the mid-19th Century. Its use declined with the economic panic of 1873.

The 1878 act giving money to the State Normal Schools gave rise to plans for renovation, but none that altered Academy Hall's Italianate style. Edinboro's Board of Trustees' first plan, approved in January of 1880, was to make some repairs to Academy Hall. According to the minutes of the Board of Trustees, these included "a cellar to be dug out

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and a good strong wall laid seven feet high. The building [is] to be thoroughly repaired and covered with a metal roof. A large furnace [is] to be placed in the cellar.”

This was rescinded at the February 6 Trustees meeting. In its place, they voted, “that we move the old Academy [sic] building on the Skiff lot to be arranged for primary pupils and other purposes, and to build [a] new building on the site of the old Academy [sic] building.” It was also decided to dig a cellar ten feet deep rather than the seven feet originally proposed. Once at its new location (the current location), about 200 yards to the west/northwest of the original site, Academy Hall was renamed Literary Hall in 1880 to reflect its use by the literary societies. The second floor dedicated two large rooms for the primary use of the student literary societies. The first floor which had previously housed the model school, continued to do so, as documented in the 1883 school catalog, which states “The Primary Grade occupies the first floor of Literary Hall.”

At this new site an enclosed set of steps was built outside to provide access to the basement. It was unobtrusively located behind the southern wing, thus leaving the interior unchanged. That same year (1880) the Trustees voted to investigate the use of steam heat for Academy Hall along with a new building (then being built on the site where Academy originally had stood). The contract for this was signed in 1881. Prior to this, heat was furnished by burning wood. It is believed that it was during this time the chimneys were removed from Academy Hall.

The interior of the building has changed only marginally from its 1880 arrangement. In the front of the building, the first floor retains one large room (22 ft x 24 ft) that was used as a model school classroom in 1880. This is where Normal School students would conduct their student teaching. It still has a large blackboard on the wall. A somewhat smaller room, 15 ft x 15 ft, consumes the remainder of the front (west) of the building. It is believed that this room was the original library and apparatus room containing books, a globe, a telescope, a microscope, a skeleton, and other materials. The back half of the first floor was partitioned into five smaller rooms. These rooms were used as music instruction or practice rooms, then later became offices.

The exterior has had very little alteration since 1880. The distinguishing characteristics that define the Italianate style are clearly intact. Austin’s initial design and workmanship

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are easily recognizable, and both the appearance and function of the building have changed little in the past 148 years. The second floor literary society rooms and first floor model classroom exist today as they did in 1880, complete with blackboards. Academy Hall is one of the few remaining Italianate style buildings in the area, and the one that retains the most original features. It is also the one building that both witnessed and accommodated the genesis of Pennsylvania's efforts to improve teacher education in the late 1800s, as it is the oldest remaining building constructed for the State Normal School system.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the intersection of Highlander and Normal Streets on the campus of Edinboro University, follow the curbline of Highlander Street south 150 feet. The boundary then continues east along a sidewalk for 66 feet, turns north traveling across the lawn for 150 feet, and turns west continuing along the edge of Normal Street for 66 feet returning to the intersection of Highlander and Normal Streets.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The Edinboro University campus occupies 585 acres and includes 45 buildings. The Academy Hall property boundary includes the entire building and associated sidewalks. Nearby buildings post-date Academy Hall and are not historically associated with the building.

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Section Photo List

Academy Hall  
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Academy Hall, Erie County, PA  
Photographer: Dave Obringer  
Date: April, 2005  
Negative located at the Edinboro University Archives

Exterior

1. Southwest corner, camera facing northeast
2. Northeast corner, camera facing southwest
3. East face, camera facing west
4. Northwest corner, camera facing southeast
5. West face, front of building, camera facing east

Interior

6. First floor, room 101, camera facing northeast
7. First floor, looking into room 114, camera facing east
8. First floor, room 102 camera facing west
9. First floor, standing in room 105, camera facing south
10. Second floor, top of north stairway, camera facing east
11. Second floor, room 201, camera facing southeast
12. Second floor, room 202, camera facing northwest