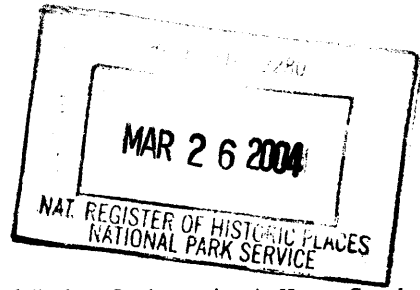


**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



**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 an 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 Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	8571 State Trunk Highway 57	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Town of Brussels	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Door	code 029
			zip code 54204

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Michael Stearns SHPO Date 3/23/04

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

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)

Edson A Beall

5/6/04

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

- X private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- X building(s)
district
structure
site
object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Table with 2 columns: contributing, noncontributing. Values: 1 contributing, 0 noncontributing, 0 total.

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

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions) EDUCATION/ school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions) DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions) Classical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions) Foundation STONE

walls CONCRETE

roof METAL

other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 1

Description

Located at 8571 State Trunk Highway (STH) 57 in the town of Brussels, Door County, and accessed by Tornado Road, the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 stands approximately 650 feet north of the highway. An open meadow is located between the school and STH 57. The 1910 two-room school, which is in good condition, is the only building on the property. The site contains several trees and two remnants of playground equipment, including a swing set, and a merry-go-round. These are not included in the count because of their insubstantial size and scale.

The one-story school displays a slightly above-grade basement, resting on a concrete and fieldstone foundation. The walls are composed of rock-faced concrete block decorated with two mid-level belt courses and a water table of smooth concrete. The rectangular structure supports a hipped roof of standing-seam metal with a centered gable pediment on the main facade. The metal roof has recently been replaced. Additional roof elements include a restored interior brick chimney at the rear of the building and a square belfry atop the ridge of the main facade pediment. The belfry has a steeply pitched, pyramidal roof with flared eaves and does not contain a bell.

Classical features displayed on the main (south) facade consist of a round-headed arched entrance centered below the pediment and flanked by symmetrically placed windows on either side. The wood double-entry doors contain five horizontal panels each, and have a large three-pane transom above. The arched entrance has a concrete keystone inscribed with "Joint Dist. No. 1." The two symmetrically placed, two-over-two, double-hung windows with two-pane transoms have single-pane basement windows aligned below. The uppermost belt course runs beneath the sills of the double-hung windows. The lower belt course is located at the lintel height of the basement windows, while the water table is at their sill height. A centered pediment with a raking cornice and a tympanum filled with wood shingles surmounts the cornice of the main facade. The pediment contains a boarded-over circular space in the center of the tympanum, and nine small curved brackets on the cornice below.

Windows dominate the east facade. The south of the east facade contains one, two-over-two, double-hung window with a two-pane transom and a pair of single-pane basement windows aligned underneath. The north end is pierced by six, two-over-two, double-hung windows with two-pane transoms. Two other basement windows are located near the center of the facade with one more toward the north end. At the far north end below the lower belt course is a set of wood cellar doors.

The north facade is comprised of six symmetrically placed windows. Two sets of three, two-over-two, double-hung windows with two-pane transoms are located to the east and west of the interior brick chimney. There are no basement windows on the north facade.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 7 Page 2

The west facade is distinguished from the other facades through the use of smaller windows. The south end of the west facade is identical to that of the east facade, with one, two-over-two, double-hung window and a two-pane transom. A pair of single-pane basement windows are also aligned below. Three small, narrow, one-over-one, double-hung windows are asymmetrically situated between the center of the facade and the northern end.

The interior of the school has been renovated by the current owner to accommodate residential living. It contains a main level and a basement. The front portion of the main level historically consisted of boys' and girls' coat rooms on either side of the entry vestibule. These spaces still remain, although the room to the east of the entry has been converted to a kitchen, while that to the west of the entry is now a bathroom. Entry into the living area is obtained through doorways in the north walls of the former coat rooms. The remainder of the main level is composed of one large room, which has been divided into three spaces by a T-shaped partition wall. This wall is not structural, nor does it connect with the ceiling or exterior walls. The largest of the three spaces is a great room on the north side of the partition, while a bedroom and dining room occupy the spaces to the west and east sides of the "T," respectively. The main level retains its original wood floors, which have been refinished. The openings are original but contain replacement windows. These replacements, however, exhibit the appearance of the original windows. While the ceiling has been replaced, the former ceiling was comprised of non-historic materials. Historic light fixtures were obtained from another school, and they now hang from the ceiling of the main level. The chalkboards could not be salvaged. Original wood cabinets still exist in the center of the rear wall of the entry vestibule. In the southeast corner of the west coat room, now kitchen, a doorway leads to a set of stairs that descend into the basement. A small storage space surrounds the stairwell. The basement has a poured-concrete floor and exterior foundation walls of concrete and fieldstone. Windows are aligned just above grade, and a small furnace room exists at the rear of the basement where coal heat was once generated for the school. In the northeast corner of the basement, a doorway leads to a set of stairs that exit the school through a pair of cellar doors. Located in the southeast corner of the basement are the original boys' and girls' bathrooms with intact fixtures.¹

¹ Information about the school, including renovations and historic appearance was obtained from the current owner, Marti Ziegelbauer, during a visit to the property by Mead & Hunt in October of 2002. Photographs of the property at the time she purchased it were also provided.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1910-1953

Significant Dates

1910

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or 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.

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

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.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Statement of Significance

The Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a fine local example of a two-room schoolhouse type containing elements of the Neo-Classical Revival style. Built in 1910, the school features such Neo-Classical elements as a center arched entry, recessed double-doors with a transom, a symmetrically balanced main facade of openings, and a main facade pediment. The strong belt courses and the rough rustication further show the influence of the Romanesque Revival style. The school is also locally significant under *Criterion A: Education* for its association with the initial era of graded school construction in Wisconsin. After 1901, it became advantageous for a community to have a graded school, or a school with more than one room. This allowed a district to divide large classes into separate rooms and receive special state aid to improve the quality of education. The exterior of the school exhibits good historic integrity, but the interior has been altered from its historic appearance to accommodate residential living. The interior does however retain its original wood floors and some woodwork and doors. The period of significance for the school is between 1910 and 1953, encompassing the time between the construction date and the end of the historic period. The later date is also the approximate period of consolidation in Wisconsin when most rural schools were closed.²

² Wyatt, ed., "Education," 3:2.9-2.20. The exact closing date of the school could not be found. Annual Clerks's Records from Door County do not indicate any closing date for the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1. It is most likely that the school closed sometime during the late 1950s or 60s, when most rural schools were closed due to consolidation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 2

Historic Context

History of Township³

The difficult economic situation in Belgium that followed the country's independence in 1830, combined with promotional activities by immigrant recruiting agents, resulted in an exodus of rural Walloon peasants seeking a better life in America. Wisconsin was advocated as a place to settle by recruiters who worked for Antwerp shipowners and were equipped with promotional guidebooks. The Belgians who emigrated to Wisconsin's Door Peninsula between 1853 and 1857 came primarily from the south-central provinces of Brabant, Hanaut, and Namur. Belgians from these southern provinces were Catholics and spoke Walloon, a French-Patois dialect. In 1857, however, emigration slowed due to restrictions by the Belgian government and discouraging letters from previous emigrants.

Most of the Belgian settlements in the Door Peninsula were concentrated in the towns of Gardner, Union, and Brussels in Door County; the communities of Red River and Lincoln in northern Kewaunee County; and the towns of Humboldt, Scott, and Green Bay in Brown County. The majority of the settlers were farmers, but a few were skilled laborers or factory workers who left these professions in their native country to farm their own land in America. The number of Belgians in the peninsula by 1860 was estimated to be 4,647.

Dense forests and scattered swamps physically isolated the Belgian enclave from other nearby settlements. Language and cultural misunderstandings also kept the Belgians apart from their German, Irish, and Scandinavian neighbors who lived in communities 10 to 15 miles away. This isolation, coupled with economic troubles, denied these Belgian settlers benefits that were enjoyed by other tax-supported populations in the area, including expanded county roads and schools. However, in 1858 the Belgians, as a group, finally decided to

³ Belgian settlement in northeast Wisconsin has been well studied, most recently by Professors William Laatsch of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and William H. Tishler of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This section was compiled from a number of secondary sources, including William G. Laatsch and Charles F. Calkins, "Belgians in Wisconsin," in *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*, ed. by Allen G. Noble (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); William H. Tishler, "Namur Belgian-American District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 6 November 1989; Allen G. Noble, *Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape*, Vol. 2, *Barns and Farm Structures* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, 3 Vols. (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986); Deborah B. Martin, *History of Brown County, Wisconsin: Past and Present*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913); Xavier Martin, *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, Vol. 13, *The Belgians of Northeast Wisconsin*, ed. by Reuben Gold Thwaites (Madison, Wisc.: Democrat Printing Co., 1895); William H. Tishler and Erik Brynildson, "The Architecture and Landscape Characteristics of Rural Belgian Settlement in Northeastern Wisconsin" (Madison, Wisc., July 1986); and Virginia C. Dell, "Bay Settlement: A Hamlet in Northeastern Wisconsin," Belgian-American Research Collection, Special Collections, Cofrin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc., 1974.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

exercise their right to vote and run for office. The result was a Belgian coup of local government through which they assumed the upper hand in the affairs of Bay Settlement – the nearest large community. The community of Belgians was thereafter recognized as an important faction in the county. Newly elected Belgians were instrumental in establishing school districts, obtaining teachers, and improving roads in their settlement. Upon application to the federal government, post offices were soon established at Bay Settlement and Robinsonville, also located in Brown County. By the 1860s large tracts of previously forested land were under cultivation and larger, more commodious houses and barns were being built.

The Walloon Belgian immigrants were largely of the Catholic faith and carried cultural affiliations of the Roman-Catholic Church with them from their homeland. Originally, 10 Belgian-American families had claims to settle land located to the south of Green Bay near Kaukauna. However, Father Edouard Daems, a Belgian immigrant who came to Wisconsin in 1852 and became the first priest of Bay Settlement, convinced the families to settle near his parish north of Green Bay in Door County.⁴ Father Daems' presence would attract many other Belgian immigrants to this part of northeast Wisconsin.

Congregations and shrines were quickly established following settlement. Constructed in 1858, the Chapel of the Holy Virgin in Robinsonville (Brown County) was the first church to be built in the area. In 1860 St. Mary's was built in the township of Union.⁵ By 1880 Bay Settlement was home to three institutions founded by Father Daems – the Holy Cross Church, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Cross convent, and the Holy Cross School.⁶

The Belgian Americans often constructed roadside chapels to participate in daily worship without traveling to the local church. These numerous chapels attest to the deep religious conviction of the Belgian Americans. Usually located on public roads, chapels were easily found, placed to facilitate use in religious processions, and by travelers. Traditionally, the function of wayside chapels is tied to the road and typically they were moved to keep their use viable. Owners of chapels encouraged their use by visitors. Chapels were often built for such reasons as to remember a loved one, or to honor a particular patron saint.⁷

⁴ Hjalmar R. Holand, *History of Door County, Wisconsin: The County Beautiful* (Chicago, Ill.: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917), 1:412.

⁵ Tishler and Brynildson, 60.

⁶ Wyatt, ed., "Religion," 3:3.4-3.7; Wyatt, ed., "Settlement," 1:4.5; and Sylvia Hall Holubetz, ed., *Farewell to the Homeland: European Immigration to N.E. Wisconsin 1840 to 1900* (Green Bay, Wisc.: Brown County Historical Society, 1984), 21.

⁷ Holubetz, ed., 25.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 4

Many Germans, Irish, Scandinavians, and Hollanders were also Roman Catholic and contributed to the development of the strong religious community in the Door Peninsula. Members of the Norbertine Order, for example, came from Holland in 1893 and became influential among Catholics in the area. The Norbertines advocated adherence to church rules by settlers who had fallen astray of their religion. They also established facilities for higher learning, including St. Norbert's College in De Pere.⁸ By 1898 Roman Catholics, the majority of whom were immigrants, numbered 125,000 in the Green Bay Diocese, which had jurisdiction over northeastern Wisconsin, and 121 churches had been established.⁹

History of Door County

Menominee, Winnebago, and Fox Indian tribes inhabited the shores of Green Bay when Jean Nicolet landed there in 1634. In the 1650s and 60s, French traders began fur trading and missionary activities and soon established Wisconsin's first community of European settlers. In 1835 Increase Chafin, a trapper and trader, settled at Little Sturgeon in Door County. Besides trapping and trading, other early settlers to the area fished the waters of Green Bay. The timber industry, namely the harvest of pine and cedar, began around 1850 with mills being built in Sturgeon Bay and other communities. The population of Door County reached 2,948 in 1860, rising to 4,919 by 1870.¹⁰

Beginning in the 1850s, a large number of Belgian immigrants settled in southern Door County, forming ethnic enclaves in Brussels and Union Townships. Belgian Ferdinand Debraux and his family and three other Belgian immigrant men first settled the town of Brussels in 1856. Within 2 years, 55 families had settled in Brussels, and by 1861 the first business – a tavern – was opened by Francois Pierre. The first Brussels post office was established in 1862. In 1870, 216 of the 406 residents were Belgian natives.¹¹ The County Board established a new township from a portion of Brussels Township in November of 1865. A town meeting was held shortly thereafter at the home of X. Braus, where the name "Union" was decided upon because its townspeople were thought to be unified in areas of public interest.¹²

Early settlement of townships typically involved the development of villages at major road intersections or near mills and general stores, as these areas were better able to support commercial activities. Rosiere and Brussels

⁸ For information about the Norbertines and their influence, see *The Haven of My Salvation . . . Dedication of St. Norbert Abbey* (West De Pere, Wisc., 1959); and *With the Grace of God . . . 100th Anniversary* (Green Bay, Wisc.: Alt Publishing Co., 1993).

⁹ Wyatt, ed., "Religion," 3:3.4-3.7; and Wyatt, ed., "Settlement," 1:4.5.

¹⁰ Holand, 1:83.

¹¹ Tishler and Brynildson, 25.

¹² Chas I. Martin, *History of Door County, Wisconsin* (Sturgeon Bay, Wis.: Expositor Job Print, 1881), 90.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 5

in Brussels Township, and Namur in Union Township, are communities that developed in the early history of southern Door County. Typically, these communities included a commercial center with a general store, mill, and other services, and houses surrounded them.

In the 1890s the village of Rosiere had the largest population in Brussels Township with 300 residents and supported three general stores. The Charles Rubens General Store in Rosiere was also a hotel and cheese factory, and it commanded a prominent location in the village on the main thoroughfare. Rosiere also sustained three blacksmiths, a carpenter, a mason, a shoemaker, and a notary public. At the same time, the village of Namur in Union Township supported three general stores, including Frank Everard's General Store. With a population of 100, Namur also boasted two physicians and a blacksmith. In contrast, by 1895 the smaller village of Brussels had only one business – the Pierre Virlee & Company General Store.¹³

By 1903 business in Rosiere and Namur had decreased. The population in Rosiere had dropped from 300 to 50. Rosiere possessed the Charles Rubens General Store, three blacksmiths, a carpenter, a shoemaker, a creamery, a cooper, a mason, a hay presser, and a sculptor; while just one general store continued to operate in Namur. At the same time, Brussels' population grew to 160 as the village gained many new businesses, including two saloons, two masons, a hotel, a tailor, a shoemaker, a carpenter, and a blacksmith. According to the *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory*, the Pierre Virlee & Company General Store added a flour mill on-site.¹⁴

Brussels continued to grow through 1912 to a population of 200, while the population of Rosiere and Namur remained static. Namur still supported one general store as did Rosiere, with only a few other surrounding businesses. Brussels, on the other hand, added three new stores, including the Gabe Pierre General Store and Agricultural Implements.¹⁵

By 1918 Brussels had doubled in population to 400, and besides having six general stores, added businesses such as the Rex Theater, a restaurant, newspaper, pharmacist, cement contractor, and two horse breeders. The Pierre Virlee & Company had disbanded, but Gabe Pierre and Jules Pierre, who may have been proprietors of this enterprise, operated separate businesses in Brussels.

¹³ *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1895-96). The Pierre Virlee & Company General Store is still extant and was determined to be eligible for the National Register in a report by Mead & Hunt, Inc., "State Trunk Highway 57 Reconstruction, Door County, Reconnaissance Survey of Potentially Significant Historic Properties," Madison, Wisc., April 1995.

¹⁴ *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1903-04).

¹⁵ *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (Chicago, Ill.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1911-12).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 6

Education in Wisconsin

Schooling of one form or another has existed in the area that is today Wisconsin since the mid-1600s. The first schools in the area were French missionary schools established for educating and converting Native Americans. In 1665 Father Claude Allouez established a missionary school near Ashland.

Jacques (James) Polier is credited as having been the first recognized schoolteacher in the region of present-day Wisconsin when he taught the children of Pierre Grignon in Green Bay in 1791. This is also considered to have been the first organized school in the region. In 1817 schools were established at military posts for the children of officers and soldiers at Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien, Fort Winnebago in Portage, and Fort Howard in Green Bay. Religious organizations and private funds generally supported other early schools.

From 1818 to 1836 Wisconsin was a part of the Michigan Territory. The legislation creating this territory stipulated that school funding was to be in part supported by tax money. The first known school building in the Wisconsin region of the territory was constructed in 1828 of log in Green Bay. The second school building was built in Mineral Point in 1830 for the children of lead miners in the region. Despite the Michigan legislation, those who attended paid for most schools in the years prior to Wisconsin's statehood. Such schools were called subscription-type schools. This lack of public funds led to opposition towards the Michigan provisions in that they were viewed as inadequate.¹⁶

From the time Wisconsin became a territory in 1836 to its statehood in 1848 there was much controversy surrounding the topic of free education and where the money was to come from. Although still not free, the first public school in the territory was established in Milwaukee in 1837. In 1839 the Wisconsin Territory enacted the first school laws allowing a real estate tax to support the building and operation of schools. Michael Frank is generally recognized as the most influential figure regarding the creation of a free public school system in Wisconsin. After moving to the territory from New York in 1839 he settled in Southport (present day Kenosha), where he made efforts to establish a free school system there and throughout the state.¹⁷

During the 1840s national education reformers such as Horace Mann were promoting the basic idea that a free primary education should be available to all white American children. Opposition to this idea was widespread in the Wisconsin Territory, forcing setbacks in school reform as numerous territorial laws to create schools

¹⁶ Carl E. Pray, "Early Education," in *Educational History of Wisconsin*, ed. by Charles McKenny (Chicago: The Delmont Company, 1912), 24-25; Jerry Apps, *One-Room Country Schools: History and Recollections from Wisconsin* (Amherst, Wis.: Amherst Press, 1996), 11; Reuben Gold Thwaites, "Early Schools in Wisconsin," in *The Columbian History of Education in Wisconsin*, ed. by John W. Stearns (Milwaukee: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1893), 80; William T. Anderson, "The Development of the Common Schools," in *The Wisconsin Blue Book* (Madison: State Printer, 1923), 105.

¹⁷ Wyatt, ed., "Education," 3:2.4-2.5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 7

from public taxes could not pass a public vote. The 1848 constitution and the education bill passed that year by the state legislature allowed for Wisconsin to create primary school districts, administer the public primary school system, and apportion a state school fund collected from public taxes.¹⁸

Kenosha is credited with establishing, in 1849, the first free public school supported by a tax levy. These early schools, called common schools, were ungraded with one teacher instructing children of all ages. They would typify Wisconsin's rural education of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1860 nearly 4,200 schoolhouses had been built in Wisconsin, with over half built of frame construction and one-third built of log. Log structures were crude, but fairly well lighted and ventilated. Due to their greater cost, examples of stone and brick accounted for only a small percentage of schools. By the 1870s a move was initiated to consolidate and grade schools. However, this move developed very slowly. The number of one-room schools in operation continued to grow until 1920 when there were approximately 6,475 one-room schools in the state.¹⁹

Despite having a locally available free education mandated by the state, many school districts in rural areas struggled to convince parents that education was more important than working on the farm. In 1879 the Wisconsin legislature passed the state's first compulsory attendance law requiring children to attend school for 12 weeks, exempting those who lived more than two miles away. This law was not widely enforced, and in 1889 a similar law, the "Bennett Law," which exempted no children of school age from attending, distributed fines for parents who did not conform and stated that all classes would be taught in English. Rural area residents and towns with large or nearly total ethnic populations pressured the state legislature to repeal the law, since it hurt local autonomy and the family farm or business. The law was brought down in 1891, and the 1879 law reinstated.

Nevertheless, most children came in contact with a school for some time during every year, though many attended only during the winter months to satisfy the state requirements. Even so, the number of children attending school was growing. "Graded schools," or those with more than one room, allowed districts to separate children into grades of learning ability, which provided a better learning environment. Because of their improved environment, graded schools were given special state aid by a 1901 act of the state legislature. A second act in 1905 established that a school with more than 65 students would be required to provide an additional classroom and teacher.²⁰

¹⁸ Wyatt, ed., "Education," 3:2.3-2.5.

¹⁹ Joseph Schafer, "Origins of Wisconsin's Free School System," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 9 (1), 32-33; and Anderson, 63.

²⁰ Wyatt, ed., "Education," 3:2.9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 8

The single-era that most profoundly affected primary schools, both the graded and one-room, was the era of consolidation, generally considered to be from 1945 to 1965, when many local township schools combined their resources into one school district. During this time period, the number of schools and school districts in Wisconsin saw a drastic decline. At the start of the 1937-38 school year, 7,777 separate administrative units existed in Wisconsin. By 1973 that number had fallen to 435, where it has remained rather steady since. While there had been 6,181 one-room schools in 1938, only 156 existed in 1962. The last one-room school in Wisconsin closed at the end of the 1969-70 school year.²¹

Education in Door County

The Belgian Americans of Door County never fully supported privatized education, because of the native tradition that supported all types of schools through state, town, and provincial funding. The Belgians believed that education, whether religiously affiliated or not, should not be paid for individually if it could be provided "free" collectively through public taxes.²²

The first school in Door County to receive public funding was organized in 1856. The school was located above a store in Sturgeon Bay, where students attended classes for 3 months of the year. Many students in rural districts attended during the winter months when farm work was negligible. In 1862 the first county superintendent was appointed and seven districts were created in Door County.²³

By 1868, due to the increased numbers of students, it became necessary to separate schools into upper and primary grades to make teaching easier. New curriculums for upper and primary grades sparked an interest in education, and a number of schools were built around this time. At the primary level, the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic were taught to classes of combined ages, while high school studies were taught to the upper grades.²⁴ In 1870, 1,654 out of 2,692 children of school age in the county regularly attended classes. Compared to the statistics for the rest of the nation, these attendance numbers were favorably higher.²⁵

²¹ Information synthesized from Wyatt, ed., Vol. 3, "Education."

²² Tishler and Brynildson, 33-34.

²³ Holand, 1:139-140.

²⁴ Holand, 1:141-144.

²⁵ M. Marvin Lotz, *Discovering Door County's Past*, Vol. 1, *From the Beginning to 1930*, (Fish Creek, Wisc.: Holly House Press, 1994), 235.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 9

In 1871, it was noted that the conditions in Door County's schools had improved in all areas. While attendance was on the rise, the condition and availability of educational supplies, furniture, and overall facilities had also advanced.²⁶ Elementary education in the rural areas, though often of lower quality, was available to children throughout Door County. One-room schools were the norm, though they were for the most part only attended when farm work was less demanding. By 1900 more than 50 schoolhouses existed in Door County with six in Brussels Township.²⁷ During this time legislation was passed encouraging the construction of schools with more than one room. In response to this legislation, the Joint Brussels and Gardner School No. 1 District, which has two-rooms, was constructed in Brussels in 1910.

Throughout the early to mid-1900s, many rural districts were forced to consolidate into larger districts representing a greater geographic area. This trend resulted in the assimilation of different ethnicities into the American mainstream culture rather than to isolate them as the smaller districts had done.²⁸ During this era many rural schools were closed throughout Wisconsin.

Architecture

Schools

Early rural school buildings were constructed using available materials and resources, including the skill of area builders. Local farmers had always been interested in the rural schools' construction because it was their taxes that were paying for the building. Sometimes local farmers and residents drew their own building plans, but often they sought the advice of the county superintendent or neighboring school districts.²⁹

The majority of nineteenth century schools in rural areas had one room and were constructed with a rectangular plan, although square plans were also used. The size of the school was often determined by the spatial relationship between the students and the teacher. A series of three or four windows was found on the long sides of the building for light and ventilation. A central front door was most common on one-room schools and often faced south or east. The entry was located on the short side of the building. Sometimes two entrances were seen on the school building as a means of separating the girls from the boys. Simple gabled roofs and later

²⁶ Holand, 1:142-143.

²⁷ *Wisconsin Blue Book* (Madison, Wisc.: published by the State, 1900); and Town of Brussels, Wisconsin, *Town Clerks' Records, 1870-1941*, Special Collections, Cofrin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc.

²⁸ Tishler and Brynildson, 34-35.

²⁹ Wayne E. Fuller, *One-Room Schools of the Middle West* (Lawrence, Kans.: The University Press of Kansas, 1994), 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 10

hipped roofs were often recommended in plan books for rural schools. Sanitation and design issues were addressed in school plan books of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Plans for these schools were often simple and easy to construct, not necessarily because the rural farmers had no pride in their children's education, but because more often than not they could ill-afford to hire an architect for the job. As a result, early rural schools had few amenities, although improvements were generally made later. By 1900 privies or outhouses became a standard part of school design. Indoor plumbing was generally not incorporated in rural school design, but the addition of an outdoor water pump was considered an improvement.³⁰

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century rural school design reflected the ideas advocated by school reformers. Early improvements in school design often included the addition of a porch and extra utility rooms. Utility rooms, or cloakrooms, protected the classroom from winter wind and provided a place for children to remove their outerwear. Most commonly, two cloakrooms were found upon entering a one-room school – one for girls and one for boys. Improvements also included the incorporation of a bell or belfry. Although not necessarily a practical addition, the bell or belfry came to symbolize the one-room school.³¹

In "The Architecture and Landscape Characteristics of Rural Belgian Settlement in Northeastern Wisconsin," Tishler and Brynildson document results of their 1985-86 survey of Belgian architecture in northeastern Wisconsin. The survey documented 16 brick schools in the area of Brown, Kewaunee, and Door Counties along the coast of Green Bay, constituting 70 percent of all schools inventoried. Seven Door County schools are recorded in the survey, including four of frame construction, two of stucco, and one of stone.³² Due to the fact that it does not display any typical Belgian architectural characteristics, the concrete-block Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 was not identified by this study.

Neoclassical Revival

The Neoclassical Revival style was popularized in America as a result of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. This movement sought to reestablish the classical ideals of Ancient Greek and Roman architecture. The "White City" of the 1893 Exposition was a formal grouping of classical buildings that effectively demonstrated this classicism in an age that had been dominated by the abundant ornamentation and romantic ideas of the Victorian style. As a result of the Exposition, American architecture witnessed a proliferation in the construction of Neoclassical buildings or those that adopted classical elements of decoration or proportion. This style was most popular for large-scale buildings of commercial, public or institutional

³⁰ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), 172.

³¹ Fuller, 19, 21, 40.

³² Tishler and Brynildson, 35.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 11

significance, such as banks, courthouses, and schools. Typical elements of the style include smooth ashlar masonry, large central porticos, symmetrical spatial characteristics, and pediments. The Neoclassical Revival saw its greatest popularity in Wisconsin between 1895 and 1935.³³ Elements of the Neoclassical style seen in the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 include a symmetrical main facade, including a centered pediment at the cornice level and a central arched entrance.

Concrete Block

Concrete has been a widely accepted building material in the U.S. since the beginning of the twentieth century. While poured concrete was often used in the construction of bridges and other structures, buildings and houses were typically constructed of precast concrete blocks. They were manufactured by casting concrete in forms and then removing the forms upon hardening. Concrete blocks were laid in courses and bonded together with mortar, similar to other forms of masonry construction. United States patents using the term "cement block" first appeared around the mid-1830s. In Wisconsin, the first patent for concrete blocks was given to John A. Messinger of Milwaukee and A. Foster of Portland (Dodge County) on January 16, 1855.³⁴ This patent was for an "improved building block composed of 12 parts sand to one part lime and pressed in moulds."³⁵

Concrete blocks first began to be commercially produced in 1868 by the Fear Stone Manufacturing Company of Chicago. Such blocks were created in metal presses with hollow cores. Not only were these blocks lightweight and weather-resistant, but they were also less expensive and stronger than other building materials such as brick and stone. In addition to their structural purposes, concrete blocks could take on a variety of shapes, sizes, colors, and textures, allowing them to be used for such decorative elements as rustication, and window and door surrounds. Concrete-block presses were being marketed by the beginning of the twentieth century, which allowed builders to cast their own blocks in small batches on the construction site. By c. 1910 concrete blocks were being used extensively in construction and continued to be popular until the 1930s.³⁶ The Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 is an example of a concrete-block building that was built in 1910.

³³ Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:2-18.

³⁴ Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:4.8.

³⁵ *Report of the Commissioner of Patents*, Vol. 2 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1855), 88, cited by Wyatt, ed., "Architecture," 2:4.8.

³⁶ Wyatt, ed., "Architecture, 2:4.8-4.9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section 8 Page 12

*History of the Property*³⁷

The Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 was built in 1910 in the NW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 2, Township 26 North, Range 24 East, Union Township, Door County. Historical research shows the possibility of a previous school existing at this site. According to the *Town Clerk's Record* for the town of Brussels, 25 students attended classes at the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 in 1881, while 58 students attended school in 1884. The 1899 atlas of Door County shows a school building located on the site that the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 now occupies. The present schoolhouse was constructed for \$2,825, including seating, furniture, and the furnace. In the first school year, 95 students attended classes. It is likely the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 was closed in the 1950s or 60s during the era of school consolidation in Wisconsin, when many schools throughout the state were also closed. The school is currently owned by Marti Ziegelbauer and has been remodeled for use as a residence.

Conclusion

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1 is historically and architecturally significant in the educational history of Door County. The School is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion C: Architecture*, as a fine example of a two-room schoolhouse type with elements of the Neoclassical Revival style. The concrete-block school is also significant under *Criterion A: Education*, for its association with the initial era of graded-school construction in Wisconsin.

Built in 1910, it is the direct outcome of a period of progressive educational reform in Wisconsin, which began with state funding for graded schools in 1901. Its two room arrangement follows a state mandate passed in 1905 requiring rural areas to provide graded schools to student populations greater than 65. The state also intended that this initiative would promote the consolidation of the many smaller one-room school houses, a trend which continued past the mid-twentieth century. Graded school reform was aimed at improving instruction by grouping students of similar ages and abilities and followed the establishment of graded schools in urban areas.

³⁷ Property information was obtained from the town of Brussels, Wisconsin, *Town Clerks' Records, 1870-1941*, Special Collections, Cofrin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc.; Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1, Brussels and Gardner, Wisconsin, *Clerks' General Records, 1911-1959*, Special Collections, Cofrin Library, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisc.; *Illustrated Atlas of Door County, Wisconsin* (Oshkosh, Wisc.; Randall & Williams, 1899).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2

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Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Maps

Atlas of Door County, Wisconsin. Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.: Otto Nelson, 1914.

Illustrated Atlas of Door County, Wisconsin. Oshkosh, Wisc.: Randall & Williams, 1899.

Plat Book of Door County, Wisconsin. Rockford, Ill.: W.W. Hixson & Co., c. 1930.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is described as follows: Beginning at a point on the east edge of Tornado Road approximately 60 feet from the northwest corner of the school building, proceed east 115 feet, turn south for 142 feet, turn west for 115 feet, and then turn north for 142 feet to the beginning point. The western boundary line is concurrent with the western edge of Tornado Road. The map is to scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the building and related grounds that were historically associated with the Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1.

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Name of Property

Door County
County and State

Wisconsin

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Marti Ziegelbauer	date	1/2004
organization		telephone	929 496-3483
street&number	2675 Good Shepard Lane	zip code	54313
city or town	Green Bay	state	WI

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 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 Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Joint Brussels and Gardner District School Number One
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin

Section photos Page 1

The following information pertains to all photographs:

*Joint Brussels and Gardner District School No. 1
Town of Brussels, Door County, Wisconsin
Date: November 2002
Photographer: Matt Becker, Mead & Hunt, Inc.
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society*

*Photograph 1 of 7
General view of school property
View facing northeast*

*Photograph 2 of 7
School, south and west facades
View facing northeast*

*Photograph 3 of 7
School, south and west facades
View facing northeast*

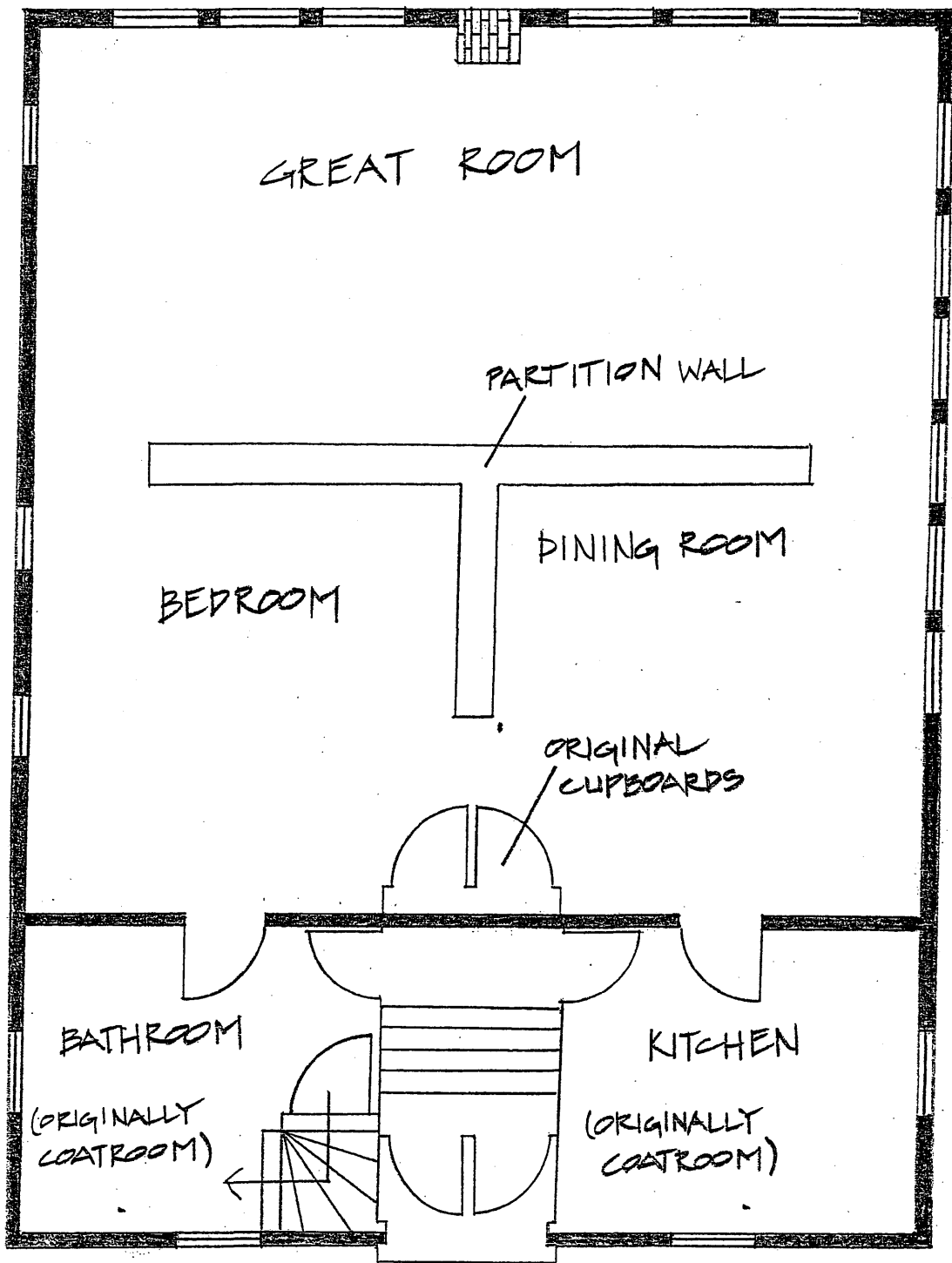
*Photograph 4 of 7
School, north and west facades
View facing southeast*

*Photograph 5 of 7
School, north and east facades
View facing southwest*

*Photograph 6 of 7
School, detail of main entrance
View facing north*

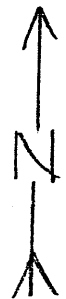
*Photograph 7 of 7
Playground equipment
View facing southwest*

FIRST LEVEL FLOOR PLAN



FLOOR PLAN

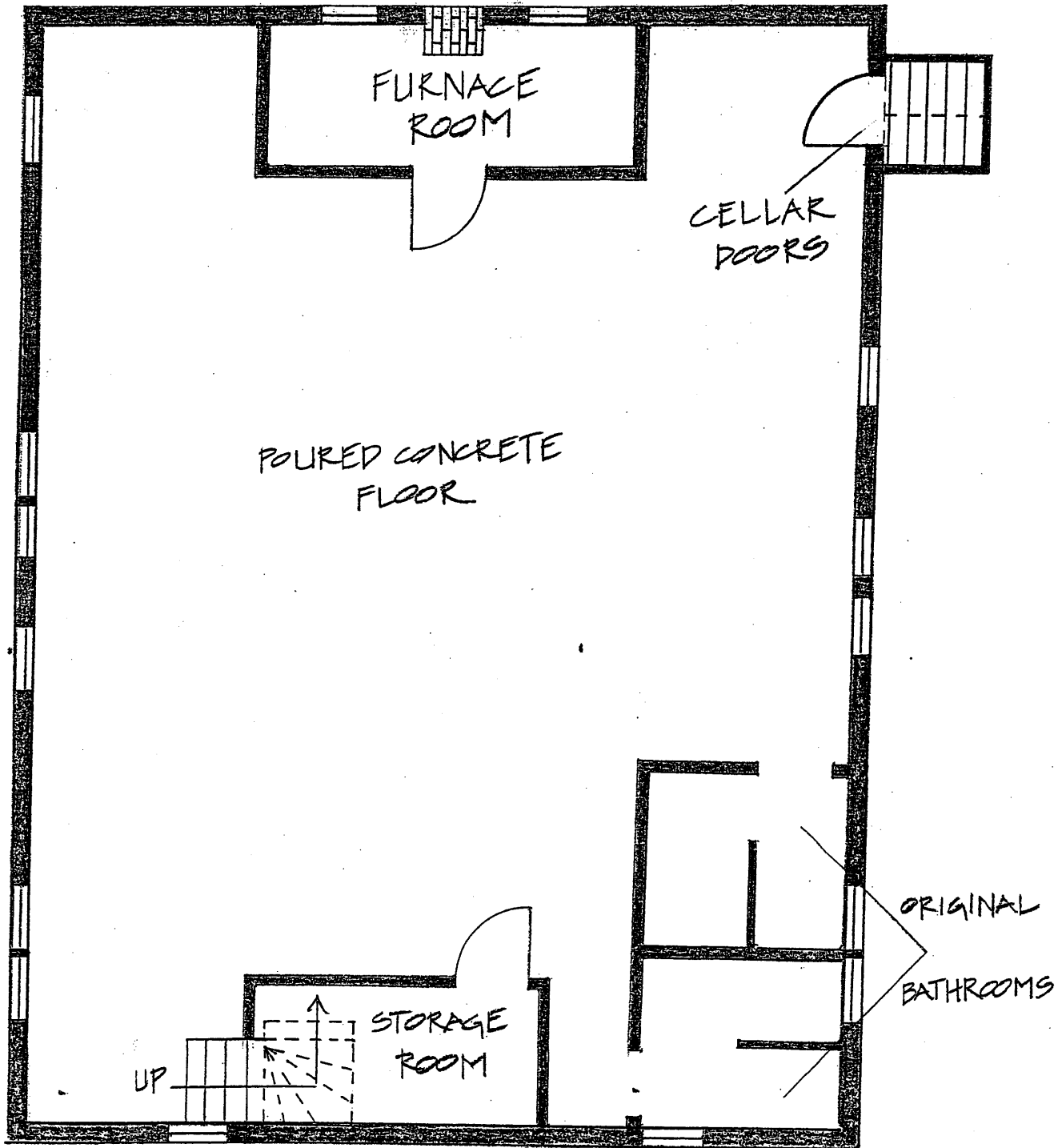
JOINT BRUSSELS AND GARDNER
DISTRICT SCHOOL NO. 1
8571 ST H 57
TOWN OF BRUSSELS,
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN



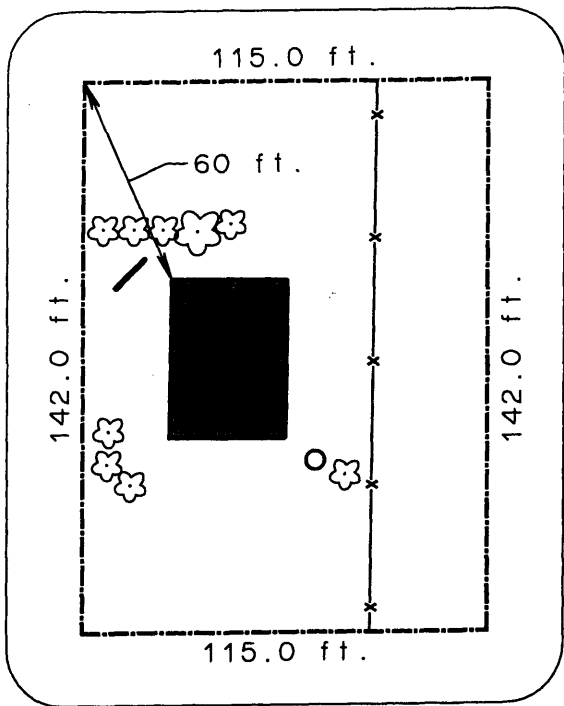
NOT TO SCALE

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

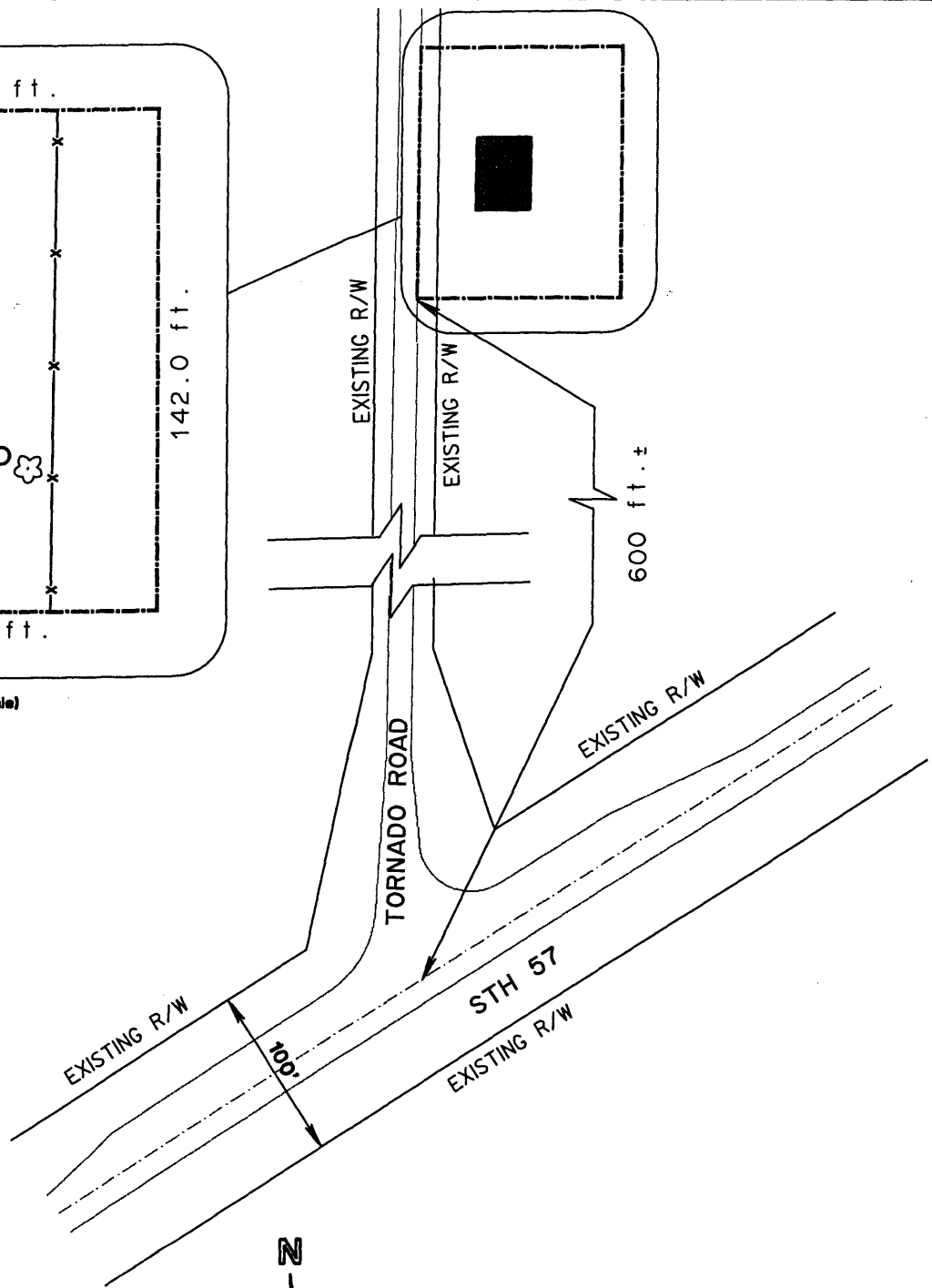
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N SCALE
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JOINT BRUSSELS AND GARDNER
DISTRICT SCHOOL NO. 1
8571 STH 57
TOWN OF BRUSSELS
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN



(not to scale)



BUILDINGS:

Ⓐ SCHOOL HOUSE

OTHER FEATURES:

○ MERRY-GO-ROUND

— SWING SET

LEGEND:

- CONTRIBUTING
- HISTORIC BOUNDARY
- x BARBED-WIRE FENCE

JOINT BRUSSELS & GARDNER DISTRICT SCHOOL No. 1

**8571 STH 57
TOWN OF BRUSSELS
DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN**

