

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAR 26 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

APR 30 1986

1. Name

historic Wyandotte High School

and or common same

2. Location

street & number 2500 Minnesota

not for publication

city, town Kansas City

vicinity of

state Kansas

code 020

county Wyandotte

code 209

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, c/o Dr. O. L. Plucker, Superintendent of School

street & number Library Building, 625 Minnesota Avenue

city, town Kansas City

vicinity of

state Kansas 66101

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk

street & number Wyandotte County Courthouse, 700 North 7th Street

city, town Kansas City

state Kansas 66101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas City, KS Historic Landmark has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date March 28, 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records City Planning Division, City of Kansas City, Kansas

city, town Kansas City

state Kansas 66101

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Wyandotte High School (ca. 1935-1937) is located in Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas (pop. 161,148). The large, three-story brick structure occupies the northwest corner of a 24-acre tract that is situated directly south of the Westheight Manor Neighborhood (ca. 1915-1925; NR 1975). Conceived by the Chicago architectural firm of Hamilton, Fellows, and Nedved, the school exhibits a thoughtful, modern, and artistic plan and design. Wyandotte High School is an excellent example of academic eclecticism, displaying design characteristics and motifs derived from Gothic, Romanesque, and Central American sources. The horizontal massing and vertical design treatment of the building strongly reflect the Art Deco and Art Moderne approaches to styling, developed by Eliel Saarinen.

In plan, the core of the building is an "H" shape with "L" shaped wings radiating off the open ends, creating two enclosed courtyards that are separated by the crossbar of the "H." The academic departments and classrooms are housed in the "H" shaped core; the western wing houses the gymnasiums and the swimming pool; the eastern wing houses the auditorium, recital hall, music department, and vocational educational department. The administrative offices, the library, and the main hall are located in the pavilion and two flanking towers which mark the northern facade of the projecting crossbar. The cafeteria is located at the southern end of the crossbar.

The building rests on a coursed limestone foundation. Its mottled red brick mass is broken by limestone belt courses which run above the third floor windows and below the first and second floor windows. The many window groupings are also delineated by limestone and brick piers and columnettes and brick panels. Three-over-three double hung wooden windows are employed in the classrooms while metal casement and stationary windows of varying sizes are used in the projecting wings and pavilions. A projecting arched stringcourse runs above all of the third floor windows. The building is capped with a flush, very simple variation on a dentilled cornice.

The focal points of the Hamilton, Fellows, and Nedved design are the three pavilions which project from the main facade. These components are highly decorated, exhibiting all of the principal design elements which define the eclectic character of the building.

The center pavilion, formed by the north projection of the crossbar, is a three-story, flat-roofed component, flanked by a four-story tower on each side. The pavilion's facade is marked by seven, two-story metal windows which light the great room of the second floor library. Alternating limestone columnettes with carved capitals and brick piers with undecorated limestone capitals separate the windows. The capitals which decorate the columnettes exhibit floral and figurine forms derived from medieval and Central American sources. Metal letters spelling "Wyandotte High School" fill the frieze area between the third floor and the cornice.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

(Public Work Relief Program)

Specific dates ca. 1935–1937 **Builder/Architect** John L. Hamilton, William K. Fellows, and
(?) Nedved-Architects; Joseph W. Radotinsky-Associate
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Architect; Emil R. Zettler-Sculptor; Sidney J. Hare
and S. Herbert Hare-Landscape Architects

The Wyandotte High School (ca. 1935–1937) in Kansas City, Kansas is being nominated to the National Register under criteria A and C for its historical association with the Depression-era public work relief programs and for its architectural significance and integrity. Conceived by the Chicago architectural firm of Hamilton, Fellows, and Nedved, the building exhibits the qualities which earned the firm its reputation for modern, artistic, and thoughtfully planned school design. Eclectic in style, Wyandotte High School retains a very high level of architectural integrity. It is an excellent example of a public building financed in part with Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) funds and constructed in part by workers employed under the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.).

Wyandotte High School is a later example of the school designs pioneered by Dwight H. Perkins (1867–1941) and John L. Hamilton (n.d.) for the Chicago Board of Education between 1908 and 1910. This interest in school design was continued by the successor firms of Perkins, Fellows (William K., 1870–1948), and Hamilton (est. 1911–1927) and Hamilton Fellows, and Nedved (est. 1927–?). These designs are noted for their attention to layout and traffic flow, representing a new or modern approach to school design. Conceived as a full service facility, this kind of special planning has allowed Wyandotte High School to function concurrently on a variety of levels, providing many special use areas in addition to the normal classroom spaces.

Stylistically, Wyandotte High School is an excellent example of academic eclecticism. Architect John L. Hamilton and sculptor Emil R. Zettler (1878–1945) are credited with the terra cotta, brick, and limestone sculpture and decorations which define the eclectic character of the building. Zettler's most notable and perhaps only other work in Kansas was the sculpture on George C. Elmslie's Capitol Federal Building (ca. 1918–1922, demolished) in Topeka.

Plans to construct Wyandotte High School began soon after the March 1934 fire which destroyed William Warren Rose's 1899 Kansas City High School. Former State of Kansas architect Joseph W. Radotinsky (1902–1983) drafted the plans for the new high school, serving as the local coordinator and job supervisor for Hamilton, Fellows, and Nedved. Wyandotte High School represented Radotinsky's initial association in a prolific work relationship with the Kansas City Board of Education. Radotinsky's later work includes Sumner High School (ca. 1939), also a P.W.A. project, which was the first high school in Kansas City devoted entirely to the secondary education of black students.

The Kansas City Board of Education initiated plans for a new facility in 1927, purchasing a 28-acre tract directly south of the Westheight Manor Neighborhood (ca. 1915–1925, NR 1975). The Kansas City, Missouri landscape architectural firm of Hare (Sidney J.) and Hare (S. Herbert) developed a site plan for the tract in 1927 or 1928, locating a large high school building and athletic facilities on the tract. A new stadium and athletic field were constructed at the site and dedicated in October 1929 but plans for a new high school were postponed when the extent of the financial crash became clear.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 24 acres

Quadrangle name Shawnee

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	3	5	6	6	9	0	4	3	3	0	3	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	5	3	5	7	0	0	0	4	3	3	0	3	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	5	3	5	7	0	0	0	4	3	3	0	7	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	5	3	5	6	6	4	0	4	3	3	0	7	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property includes 24 acres in a roughly rectangular tract bounded on the north by Minnesota Avenue, on the south by Tauromee Street, on the east by 22nd street, and on the west by Washington Boulevard. The high school sits in the northwest corner of this tract.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Gray Hagedorn, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical Society date 1/7/86

street & number 120 West Tenth telephone (913) 296-5264

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Executive Director

title Kansas State Historical Society

date Jan. 10, 1986

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Grovono
Keeper of the National Register

date 1/30/86

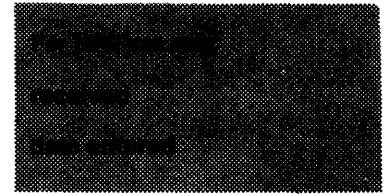
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

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The flanking towers, which stand slightly back from the projecting central pavilion but not flush with the main body of the school, exhibit three significant design components: the double arched doors on the first floor, the second and third floor window bands, and the fourth story belfry. The double arched doorways provide the major entrances into the building. Their carved limestone surrounds are accentuated by checkered limestone and brick spandrels. Columnettes flank the portals, their carved limestone capitals exhibiting floral and figurine forms derived from medieval and Central American sources. The doors are flanked with wrought iron sconces. The metal casement windows on the second and third floors are separated by undecorated, angular limestone piers and decorated brick panels. The simple cornice which decorates the rest of the building is replaced on the towers by a line of circular limestone projections. The ornate belfry is a square, composed of alternating vertical and horizontal limestone and brick bands and has the same design on all four sides. The belfry's design is composed of three major parts: three attached arched openings on the lower level; brick and limestone projecting panels on the second level; and a brick, terra cotta, and limestone floral frieze on the entablature level.

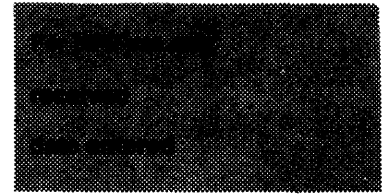
The west and east pavilions, angled and projecting to serve as end pieces for the main facade, are gable roofed, standing two and three stories respectively. Both pavilions are composed of a recessed major section flanked by two minor projections.

Brick sculpting depicting a basketball game decorates the frieze area above the three arched doorways on the western wing. Brick piers project from the facade, separating the doorways and their corresponding frieze panels into three divisions. The doorways are defined by limestone surrounds with decorative brick voussoirs. The pavilion's pediment is defined by alternating bands of brick and limestone. Wrought iron sconces, identical to those on the central pavilion towers, flank the center door.

The eastern wing is defined by three large, contiguous arched windows in the center of the pavilion, which rise from the second floor. These are outlined by highly decorated brick and limestone surrounds. A three-sided brick panel with terra cotta emblems projects below each window. On the first floor, a sequence of five, transomed double doors, outlined in limestone with brick banding, supports the ornate fenestration. Four wrought iron sconces, identical to those on the western pavilion and towers, flank the doors. A reeded, brick stringcourse breaks the facade at the third story level. An arched pattern projects from the cornice line of the gable, mimicking the motif used above the third story windows in the rest of the building.

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Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

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The interior of Wyandotte High School is composed of long corridors which connect the five major common areas: the main hall, the library, the auditorium, the gymnasiums, and the cafeteria. Three thousand and ten metal lockers line the corridor walls. Forty-two classrooms open off both sides of the corridor through arched doorways. Alternating light and dark linoleum tiles are used for the flooring. A continuous line of fluorescent ceiling lighting illuminates the hallways.

The most elaborate and extensive decorative treatments are reserved for the main hall, the auditorium, and the library. However, the vestibule and foyer spaces exhibit glazed and moulded brick arched door surrounds and cornices as well as mediievally inspired hanging wrought iron and bronze light fixtures. Carved limestone rondelles decorate the walls of the gymnasium foyer. Recessed Art Deco ceramic surrounds accentuate the water fountain niches in the hallways and common areas.

The main hall recalls a medieval hall with its richly painted wooden beamed ceiling and large fireplaces. Traffic flow from the main entries and the three corridors converges here. Its walls are made of large, glazed beige bricks. The fireplaces employ moulded decorative brick forms derived from Gothic and Romanesque sources. Triple arched windows illuminate the space, overlooking the two courtyards. Mediievally inspired wrought iron and bronze light fixtures hang from the beamed ceilings.

Above each of the five double doors leading into the auditorium rests a limestone bas-relief depicting a scene from Greek mythology. The wall which surrounds the doors is comprised of massive, coursed limestone blocks. The auditorium is a large, balconied space with a gently arching roof. Indirect lighting is provided by a clerestory. Brick sculptings depicting repeating geometric designs such as men, geese, seahorses, cats, and reindeer decorate the frieze panels of the east and west walls. Recessed, one-story niches rise along the orchestra walls, containing landscape scenes sculpted from brick. Large vases, with Navajo inspired decorations, stand in the base of the niches. A classical entablature concludes the decorative treatment of this space.

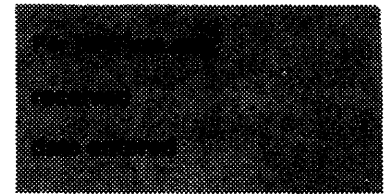
The library is a large, two story space flanked by two, one-story reading rooms. It exhibits a fully developed Georgian Revival wall and entablature treatment. Wrought iron and bronze light fixtures similar to those used elsewhere in the building hang from the ceiling.

The large gymnasiums with exposed steel trussed roof supports, the 28 ft. x 60 ft. swimming pool, and the one thousand person capacity cafeteria also represent extremely significant components of the high school although these spaces do not display a high degree of decorative treatment.

Wyandotte High School retains an exceptionally high level of interior and exterior architectural integrity. But for a loss of four acres, the original landscaping has been well maintained, with board walks, steps, stone and brick retaining walls, balustrades, and lighting fixtures accentuating the campus setting.

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Continuation sheet 3

Item number 8

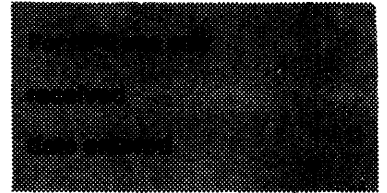
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A 1934 P.W.A. grant of \$557,000.00, combined with monies from a \$275,000.00 insurance settlement, \$700,000.00 from the Kansas City Board of Education reserve fund, and a \$1,075.00 public bond issue, made it possible to construct a building that functioned well as a high school and attained a high degree of architectural merit. The Wyandotte High School project also benefited from a labor force employed largely under the auspices of the W.P.A., a program which provided public service jobs for millions of unemployed Americans from 1935 until 1945.

Wyandotte High School opened its doors to 2,650 students and 100 faculty members in the fall of 1937. It was described in a contemporary newspaper account as "the largest building enterprise ever undertaken in Kansas City, Kansas" and "the best equipped school in the nation." The Wyandotte High School project provided many jobs for the Kansas City community during the Depression and became a focus of great civic pride. It retains a very high level of interior and exterior architectural integrity and continues in use as a four year high school.

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Continuation sheet 4

Item number 9

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Bibliography: Wyandotte High School

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Hancks, Larry K. "Wyandotte High School." (National Register nomination draft, 1985).

Harrington, Grant W. Historic Spots or Mile-Stones in the Progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas. (Merriam, Kansas: Mission Press, 1935).

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Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, "Journal of Proceedings, 1932-1936," 4 March 1934, 5 March 1934, 6 March 1934, 12 March 1934, 15 March 1934, 16 March 1934, 19 March 1934, 22 March 1934, 30 March 1934, 2 April 1934, 5 April 1934.

Kansas Teacher and Western School Journal, V. XLV, N.4 (September, 1937), pp. 6, 34.

Kansas Teacher and Western School Journal, V. 48, N.8 (February, 1940), P. 12.