

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 determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 Whittier School

other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 410 West Second Avenue [] not for publication

city or town Mitchell [] vicinity

state South Dakota code SD county Davison code 035 zip code 57301

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.)

Jay D. Vogt State Historic Preservation Officer 12-18-2006
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office
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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
- removed from the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain
 See continuation sheet.

Edson M. Beall Signature of the Keeper 1-25-07 Date of Action

Whittier School
Name of Property

Davison County, South Dakota
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Concrete
walls	Brick
roof	Red Tile
other	

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1935

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Architect Kings/Dixon

Builder P.W. Kuipers Construction

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Whittier School
Name of Property

Davison, County, South Dakota
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 14 578114 4840223
 Zone Easting Northing

2.
 Zone Easting Northing

3.
 Zone Easting Northing

4.
 Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mike Vogel

organization South Dakota State Historical Society date November 15, 2006

street & number 900 Governors Drive telephone 605-773-6056

city or town Pierre state SD zip code 57501

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 Boyd Reimnitz

street & number 500 North Main Street telephone 605-996-3320

city or town Mitchell state SD zip code 57301

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.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**Section number 7 Page 1Whittier School
Davison County, South Dakota**DESCRIPTION**

Whittier School is located in the City of Mitchell at 410 West Second Avenue. Only the school building itself, not any of the playground or playground apparatus (which is not historic) is included in this nomination.

The irregular rectangular building is a vernacular version of many WPA type projects that were constructed during the 1930's. The exterior walls are brick and a stone belt course exists on all elevations along with modillion blocks near the roofline. A soldier brick course is featured between the top of the second story windows and the modillion blocks. The building has a red clay tile hipped roof. Stone sills and lintels are featured on all the windows. All the windows are original with the exception of five windows on the south elevation that have been in-filled on the top and replaced on the bottom with smaller sliding metal windows. All of the windows are nine over one double hung windows unless otherwise specified.

The façade (south elevation) has 5 separate sections. From left to right, the far west section has no openings on the first floor. The second floor features six long nine over one double hung windows. Two decorative rock buttresses exist on the east end of this section. The second section on this façade is recessed seven feet. Three small three over one double hung windows are centered near the foundation level. The first floor features the five replacement windows mentioned earlier and the second floor has five windows the same as the first section second floor. The middle section hosts the main entrance to the school. Decorative stone exists over the two front doors. Above the front doors is a 6 pane fanlight. Each door also features a sidelight. The front entrance, with two concrete steps, has a brick landing and brick railings topped with stone on both sides. Two decorative stone buttresses are located on the west and east ends of this section. Right of the front entrance are two small windows located near the foundation similar to those in section two. On the first floor to the right of the front entrance are two larger windows similar to the second floor windows in section two. The second floor of this section features five larger windows similar to those on the second story of section one and two. On this third section, the first floor near the east end has a 5 sided bay with three small windows near the foundation and 4 larger windows, similar to the larger windows on the second story. Section four is recessed similar to section two. A brick chimney is located on the far west end of this section where the junction of sections three and four adjoin. Two smaller windows similar to the other smaller foundation windows exist on this section. The first floor and second floor both have similar window patterns. This section has the windows tripled or grouped in banks of three. On the east end of the fourth section once again two decorative stone buttresses separate this section from section five. The far east section, or the fifth section on this elevation is devoid of any windows except two smaller ones located near the foundation. The only other opening in this section is a door located at the foundation level near the west end. Metal railings are featured on the side of this entry which has concrete walls and 3 concrete steps leading to a concrete landing in front of the door. The east end of this elevation has two rock buttresses on a brick column extending some two feet out from the side of the building. A geometrical brick motif is centered on the outer edges of this section providing a degree of architectural sophistication on an otherwise rather plain wall.

The east elevation of the building has seven spaced smaller foundation windows. There are ten, nine over one, double hung windows on each floor.

The north elevation is also divided into five separate sections. The first section on the east end has only three small window openings at the foundation level. Two metal door fire exits and stairs are located on the first and second floors toward the west end of this section. On the very west end of the section are two decorative stone buttresses. The second section is recessed with four smaller foundation windows, five larger windows and one smaller window on the first floor, five larger windows and 4 smaller windows on the second floor. On the first floor, west end of this section is a one story major entry area for the north side of the building. The entry opening

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National Park Service**Section number 7 Page 2Whittier School
Davison County, South Dakota

on the east side of the entrance is adorned with a decorative stone archway. Beneath the archway are two metal doors each having a sidelight the height of the door. Above the entrance doors is a six paned fanlight. There is one small window opening on the north side of this entrance area. The third section of the north elevation is a two story wing connected to the main building with another entry on the west side of the wing. On both the north and south sides of this entry the building is recessed some ten feet. The metal entry door has a long narrow window in it along with one sidelight and a transom window. On the second floor of this wing there are two large windows. On the west side of this wing is featured beveled edges utilizing corbelled brick on both the north and south ends. The fourth section on the north elevation is a recessed section with three small foundation windows, three large windows on the first floor and five larger windows on the second floor. The fifth section of this elevation mirrors the first section on the south elevation with windows only on the second floor.

The west elevation has seven large windows spaced along the first floor. The second floor has only three large centered windows. Two metal fire exit doors are located on this elevation, one on the first floor and one on the second floor. A metal staircase and landings connect the two. A third metal entry door is located at the foundation level nearer the south end. A concrete step and landing lead to the door.

The interior of the school building consists of a basement area and two stories. The basement runs the length of the building except under the far west section where a lowered gymnasium floor exists. The remainder of the basement area consists of a long central hallway, two bathroom and shower rooms, and two large classrooms. A furnace room with the original coal bins are still intact.

The first floor consists of two intersecting hallways, five classrooms, an office and a Janitors room.

The second floor also has two intersecting hallways with four classrooms and a large library.

The Whittier School Building still retains a high percentage of original materials including the parquet wood flooring in the classrooms, the woodwork trim in the entire interior of the building, the terrazzo floors in the hallways, the plaster walls and ceilings and the original hard wood shelving in the library.

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National Park Service**Section number 8 Page 3Whittier School
Davison County, South Dakota**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Whittier School is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for architecture. Its vernacular architecture is common for structures in South Dakota built during the 1930's. Many WPA designed buildings in the state are constructed in a similar fashion.

Historical Background and Significance

Davison County was a late bloomer. In 1803 the French, who had explored the Dakota Territory, sold what is called the Louisiana Purchase to the United States for under three cents per acre. The county was part of Louisiana from 1805-1812, then of Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, a nameless territory including North and South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and some of Nebraska. In 1861 it was part of Dakota Territory. In 1873 the Dakota legislature established twenty three counties. Early Davison County was named for Henry C. Davison of Bon Homme County, a native of Maine who homesteaded at Riverside and ran cattle in the Firesteel area several years before people moved in.¹

In 1874 Davison County was officially organized, with Firesteel as the county seat, although there were scarcely enough adult male residents to vote and to fill the various governmental positions. Women, sad to say, were denied the ballot in those days.²

This was the era that being in the vanguard of railroad expansion had the potential for sudden wealth at the same time it was a giant guessing game to future track locations and the creation of new towns. By 1879 the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Company had reached Canton. The next hurdle on the route to the Missouri was the Jim River, and the citizens of Firesteel and rival Rockport, some 11 miles to the south, were equally hopeful that they would be the beneficiaries of the crossing. They were both wrong.³

At Firesteel a railroad surveyor supposedly saw a piece of driftwood either lodged in a tree or lying on high ground along the creek. According to local legend, that was indication to him that the village was in a flood plain and therefore not suitable for permanent development. However, evidence of the railway company's plans should have become obvious on May 5, 1879, when John D. Lawler, son of a wealthy bridge builder and Milwaukee Road stockholder, bought approximately 75 acres some two miles west of Firesteel. Undoubtedly he had "inside information" because his land just happened to encompass much of the site of a new town to be named in honor of Alexander Mitchell, Scotland born president of the C.,M.& St. Paul and business associate of the younger Lawler's father.⁴ Mitchell opened for settlement in September, 1879, and Firesteel residents move in—buildings and all.⁵

¹ Mitchell Centennial Executive Committee, *Mitchell Rediscovered July 15 – 19, 1981 p.1*

² Bob Karolevitz, *An Historic Sampler of Davison County*, The Donning Company/Publishers
Virginia Beach, Virginia 1993 p.19

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Donn P. Sundby, *The Background, Growth and Principal Institutions of Mitchell, South Dakota*,
Department of History, University of South Dakota, July 1977 p.28

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Whittier School
Davison County, South Dakota

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As pioneers moved into the business district and residential area adjacent to the proposed railroad line, Mitchell promoters proposed acquisition of the county seat from Firesteel. An election was held on November 4, 1879, decided the issue. Votes totaled 142; Mitchell received 112 and Firesteel 30. Mitchell's victory became official when Davison County commissioners moved all records to the new railroad town.⁶

The location of the railroad line and subsequent placement of the county seat, assisted the city of Mitchell in becoming one of the largest trade centers in the state of South Dakota during the early 1900's. Population expansion necessitated the replacement of smaller inefficient school houses as well as the construction of new school buildings to address, in total, the education needs of the community. School buildings that were constructed in the 1920's and 30's, that generally replaced original school houses in the community, had different floor plans and usually included rooms or space that had not been contained in the earlier smaller school houses. Gymnasiums, libraries, and specialized larger classrooms oftentimes were included in the replacements schools that went up at this time. The Whittier School is certainly a good example of these types of school changes that occurred around the state during this period of school development.

The Whittier School is eligible under Criterion C as it is representative of the types of vernacular architecture that were utilized during the 1930's in South Dakota. Occasionally, WPA designs employed architectural styles which departed significantly from the familiar appearance of the village school. Often, the designs of local artists were implemented, resulting in a familiar, if non-distinctive, building.⁷ The Whittier School still retains historical and architectural integrity.

⁶ Anastasia Tuttle, *Mitchell, Davison County* (Vermillion: Richardson Archives, I.D. Weeks Library, University of South Dakota, n.d.)

⁷ Mark Elliot & Melissa Dirr, *Schools in South Dakota: An Educational Development*, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, South Dakota. p.30

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University of South Dakota, n.d.)

Mark and Melissa Dirr, *Schools in South Dakota: An Educational Development*, South Dakota
State Historic Preservation Office, Pierre, SD 57501 p. 30

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National Park Service**Section number 10 Page 6County, South Dakota

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Whittier School is located on west second avenue in Mitchell between Sanborn Boulevard and Edmunds Street and between second and third avenues. The boundary is an imaginary line encompassing only the main school building. The line starts at a point 30 feet northwest of the northwest corner of the school building and runs east to a point 30 feet northeast of the northeast corner of the school building. The line then runs south to a point 30 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the building and then runs west to a point 30 feet southwest of the southwest corner of the school building. The line then runs north to the original starting point.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes only the imaginary line encompassing Whittier School which has maintained its historic integrity. None of the playground outside the imaginary line or playground equipment is included with this nomination.

