

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

JAN 11 1993

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

**RECEIVED
REGISTER**

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 Read School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

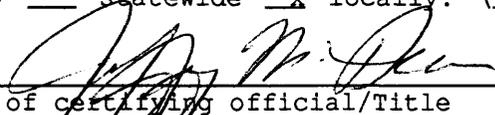
street & number 1120 Algoma Boulevard N/A not for publication

city or town Oshkosh N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Winnebago code 139 zip code 54901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of certifying official/Title 10/21/92 Date

State Historic Preservation Officer-WI
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

Read School
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin
County and State

Entered in the
National Register

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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Delores Byer 2/11/93

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 include listed resources within the count)

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

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

EDUCATION: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
walls BRICK
roof ASPHALT
other WOOD

Narrative Description

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

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Introduction

Read School is located on the northeast side of Algoma Boulevard between Vine and New York Avenues. The school complex is composed of an original 1879 section and five additions. The historic sections of Read School are two stories in height with a rock-faced coursed limestone ashlar foundation and cream brick walls in common bond. The front portion of the 1879 section has a gable roof, the ridge parallel to Algoma Boulevard. The 1893 and 1907 additions, as well as the rear portion of the 1879 section, are hip roofed. All three roofs are clad with asphalt shingles. The 1953 and 1959 additions are one story of steel frame and concrete block construction with red brick veneer in common bond. The 1978 addition, which houses the library, is steel frame construction clad in corrugated sheet metal. All three noncontributing additions have poured concrete slab foundations. The front portion of the 1953 addition, and the 1959 addition, both have flat, built-up roofs. The rear portion of the 1953 addition, the gymnasium, has an asphalt shingled gable roof. The 1978 addition has a built-up low-pitched shed roof. Throughout Read School, the interior spaces consist of a series of classrooms, restrooms, teachers' lounges, gymnasium and library arranged along a central corridor. Read School is in good condition and shows good integrity. Alterations to the historic sections are minimal. Replacement windows have been installed on the front facade, but the original openings have been retained. Two of the classrooms have been remodeled. Otherwise, the historic sections of Read School are little changed.

Description

Read School is located on the northeast side of Algoma Boulevard between Vine and New York Avenues. This unusual orientation is due

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to the fact that the Fox River runs from the northwest to the southeast through the City of Oshkosh. Algoma Boulevard runs parallel to, and two blocks northeast of, the river. The school complex is composed of an original 1879 section and five additions. The original block and two contributing additions, built to the rear in 1893 and 1907, were all designed by prominent local architect William Waters in the High Victorian Italianate style with Romanesque Revival ornamental brickwork.¹ Three non-contributing additions, dating from 1953, 1959 and 1978,² are recessed and to the northwest side of the historic sections, making a minimal impact on the architectural character of the original school building.

The original 1879 section measures approximately 80 feet by 40 feet and is T-shaped, with the top of the T parallel to Algoma Boulevard. The 1893 addition is rectangular, measuring approximately 80 feet by 30 feet, and set perpendicular to the base of the T. Together, these two sections form an H. The 1907 section measures approximately 50 feet by 55 feet and is T-shaped, with the base of the T perpendicular to and bisecting the H (see sketch). The 1893 addition is identical in materials and appearance to the 1879 section, and the 1907 addition closely matches. These three sections make up the historic portion of Read School. All three contribute to the school's architectural significance.

The three historic sections of Read School are two stories tall and

¹Oshkosh Weekly Northwestern, January 8, 1880, page 14; Commemorative Biographical Record of the Fox River Valley Counties of Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago, (Chicago: J.H. Beers and Company, 1895), page 1172; Interview with Eileen Weigert, July 21, 1992; Read School Souvenir, (Oshkosh: Globe Printing Company, 1918), page 11; and blueprints on file at Oshkosh City Hall, approved December 16, 1977.

²"Addition to School Nearing Completion," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, August 8, 1953; "Nearly 90 and Still Going," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, October 3, 1969; and Intensive Survey Card for Read School, Oshkosh Intensive Historic Resource Survey, 1981.

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built of cream brick in common bond in the High Victorian Italianate style. The foundation is rock-faced coursed limestone ashlar. Multipaned hopper windows pierce the foundation at regular intervals, although the openings in the foundation of the 1907 addition have been bricked up. The walls are enriched with brick belt courses consisting of a series of rowlocks projecting at a 45 degree angle with a row of headers above and below. One of these belt courses appears at the level of the sills on the first floor, and just below the lintels on both the first and second floors. A belt course of rock-faced limestone divides the first and second floors and forms a continuous sill for the second story windows. A heavy Romanesque-derived brick corbel table, surmounted by a plain copper cornice, is set just below the roof. In the 1879 and 1893 sections, the windows have rock-faced limestone sills and segmentally arched brick lintels of rowlocks, again projecting at a 45 degree angle, accented with rock-faced limestone keystones and stops. The lintels in the 1907 addition are simpler, consisting of segmental arches of three rows of brick headers. In all three historic sections, flat-headed sash windows are set within wooden frames that are segmentally arched to fit the window openings.

The main facade of the 1879 section is seven bays wide. It is symmetrical about a central projecting gabled pavilion, that terminates with a hip roofed belfry. The belfry originally had a tall tent roof with a weathervane. The 1879 section is five bays deep. The three southwesternmost bays are surmounted by a steeply pitched gable roof clad with asphalt shingles. The original standing seam metal roof was replaced with asphalt, probably when the 1953 addition was built.³ The two northeasternmost bays are recessed on both the southeast and northwest sides of the building. This part of the 1879 section, as well as the 1893 and 1907 additions, are all hip roofed, with asphalt shingles.

The main entrance to Read School is at the base of the projecting pavilion. There is a single wood panic door with a metal kick plate, framed by a fixed sidelight to the southeast, and a fixed two-paned transom above. Originally, there was a pair of paneled

³"Plans Approved for Read School Project," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, October 15, 1952.

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wood double doors in the entrance. Above the door is a blind tramson within an eared gabled brick hood. The hood rests on brick corbelling and is inset with a pointed brick arch with rock-faced limestone keystone and stops. On either side of the entry is a narrow one-over-one aluminum sash window with rock-faced limestone lintel and sill. At the second floor, the pavilion narrows slightly. At each corner, a rock-faced limestone block with a concave outer edge marks this transition. A pair of flat-headed single hung one-over-one aluminum sash windows in a pointed arched aluminum frame is set under a brick pointed arch with rock-faced limestone keystone and stops. On either side of the pair of windows are narrow aluminum sash one-over-one windows. Above the narrow windows, the pavilion flares out again above a pair of limestone blocks with concave outer edges. The pavilion terminates in an eared gable, trimmed with copper, topped by the belfry. The belfry is supported by a pair of hanging buttresses, corbelled out from the front of the projecting pavilion. Between the buttresses is set a rectangular limestone panel inscribed, "Read School." Above is a pointed arched limestone panel dated, "1879." This panel is surmounted by brick corbelling, and a pent roof. Above, each of the belfry's faces has a pointed arched opening, framed with a brick rowlock lintel and rock-faced limestone keystone and stops, and a continuous limestone sill. Above the openings is a limestone belt course, surmounted by heavy corbelling and a hip roof. The original bell still hangs in the belfry, and is still occasionally used.

On the northwest facade of the 1879 section, projecting from the two recessed (northeasternmost) bays, is a small shed roofed entrance porch. The noncontributing 1953 addition is joined to the historic sections of Read School at this point by means of a narrow flat-roofed corridor. A complete description of the noncontributing additions follows the description of the historic interiors below.

On the main facade of the 1879 section, the fenestration pattern consists of paired flat-headed aluminum sash windows in a one-over-one configuration set in segmentally arched aluminum frames. Originally, these openings held wood flat-headed four-over-four double-hung sash in segmentally arched wood frames. Although these are replacement windows, they do maintain the original opening.

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Read School
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Most of the remaining windows on all three historic sections are the original wood six-over-six sash. There are five aluminum one-over-one sash windows on the southeastern facade of the 1907 addition. Sliding aluminum windows have been placed in altered window openings on the southeast facade of the 1893 section at the second story level. On the northwest facade of the 1879 section at the second story, the window openings have been reduced, and the openings blocked with wood panels.

In each of the gable ends of the 1879 section, there is an eared parapet trimmed with copper. The gable field is ornamented with a belt course and raking cornice of brick rowlocks set at a 45 degree angle. There is a wide brick exterior chimney ending below the ridge of the roof in each gable end. The chimneys are enriched with rowlock belt courses carried across the wall, and brick corbelling in a stepped pattern. Originally, the chimney stacks rose above the roof, ventilating the two coal-burning hot air furnaces that provided the 1879 section with central heating. A third chimney stack, ornamented with wrought iron cresting, rose above the ridge of the roof behind the belfry. The remains of these chimneys, and flues, can be found in the attic.

There is a hip roofed closed rail entrance porch with brick piers on the southeast facade of the 1907 addition. This corresponds with a stair hall on the interior. Two round metal vent stacks are perched on the ridge of the hip roof.

On the interior of the historic sections of Read School, there are six classrooms and two restrooms on each floor, arranged about a wide central corridor. The corridor is reached through the main entrance, up a short flight of stairs and through a pair of dark paneled wood doors. Each door has a large pane of glass in the upper panel. One classroom, followed by a narrow coat room, a second classroom and one restroom flank either side of the corridor as it passes through the 1879 and 1893 sections. The corridor narrows to enter the 1907 addition. A stair hall is located southeast of the corridor and two classroom are placed at the end. A second stair hall stands at the northwest corner of the 1879 section, corresponding with the shed roofed entrance porch on the exterior, and giving access to the 1953 addition. The first and second story floor plans are identical, except that on the second

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floor, there is a teacher's lounge in the projecting pavilion, and one classroom in each of the 1893 and 1907 additions has been remodeled. The attic, reached by the stair hall in the 1879 section, is mostly unfinished. In 1911, the students and principal Henry E. Polley constructed a small gymnasium, measuring approximately 30 feet by 30 feet, in the northwest end of the attic. The gymnasium was "as large as flues and chimneys would permit."⁴ The basement floor plan consists of a series of small rooms for mechanical equipment and storage along a wide central corridor.

On the first and second stories in the historic sections, the floors are finished with varnished narrow wood boards. The rest rooms are finished with white hexagonal tiles and white square tile baseboards. Dark narrow wood wainscot, with a continuous wainscot cap, runs approximately five-and-one-half feet up the wall throughout the corridors, coat rooms and stair halls. There are two rows of metal coat hooks set in the wainscot in the coat rooms and in the corridors of the 1893 and 1907 sections. On the northwest side of the hall in the 1893 addition there are six large built-in wooden lockers. In the classrooms, the wainscot runs below the blackboards and window sills, about two feet high, and has been painted white. Above the wainscot, the walls are plaster. The restroom walls are entirely plaster. In the two remodeled classrooms, the teacher's lounge and in some parts of the corridors, wide wood paneling of recent origin has replaced the original wainscot. There are several old wooden bookcase cabinets in the teacher's lounge, but they are not built-in and may not be original to the school. The classroom doors are dark paneled wood, with a large glass pane. Above each door is a three-paned transom. The twelve-foot high plaster ceilings are visible only in the stair halls and in one closet. Elsewhere, they are obscured by dropped ceilings with acoustical tiles. Fluorescent lights hang from the ceiling. One of the restrooms on the second floor has retained its original short paneled wood stall doors. One stall, probably for the teachers, has a door which reaches to the floor. The stair halls have wooden staircases with wooden handrails, turned balusters and a paneled wood string. The 1879 stair hall has a

⁴Read School Souvenir, pages 23-24.

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heavy newel post at the first floor, and an old globe-shaped suspended light fixture of opaque glass. The gymnasium has varnished wood floor boards, narrow vertical boards on the wall, and horizontal boards on the ceiling. The ceiling cuts in on one side to conform with the pitch of the gable roof. A large multipaned window looks into the unfinished attic. A wooden ladder in the attic provides access to the belfry. The basement has exposed walls of stone and brick, painted over. The low ceiling has been plastered. The poured concrete floor is probably not original; the original floor was probably compressed earth.

The noncontributing 1953 addition to Read School is attached to the 1879 section by means of a one-story flat roofed corridor joined to the small shed roofed entrance porch on the northwest facade. The corridor is approximately 10 feet wide and 20 feet long. Exclusive of this corridor, the 1953 addition is T-shaped, measuring approximately 160 feet by 70 feet. This addition was intended to inaugurate a new phase of building at Read School, which, it was planned, would eventually result in the demolition of the historic sections of the school.⁵ It is probably for this reason that the 1953 addition attaches to the historic section as unobtrusively as it does. The 1953 addition was designed by Perkins and Will, an architectural firm from Chicago, in cooperation with the Oshkosh firm of Auler, Dreger, Wiley and Wertsch.⁶ Northwest of the 1953 addition is the 1959 addition, which is also T-shaped in plan. The 1959 addition is approximately 80 feet by 120 feet. The L-shaped 1978 addition, housing the library and media center, is located north of the 1953 addition, and measures about 55 feet by 60 feet.

The 1953 and 1959 additions are one story, constructed of concrete block with steel frame and a red brick veneer in common bond. The 1978 addition is steel frame sheathed in corrugated metal, one story in height. All three additions have poured concrete slab foundations. The rear of the 1953 addition, which houses a

⁵"Approve Drawings for Read Addition," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, July 30, 1952; and "Plans Approved for Read School Project," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, October 15, 1952.

⁶Ibid.

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Read School
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gymnasium, has an asphalt-shingled gable roof. The front of the 1953 addition, and the 1959 addition, both have flat built-up roofs. The roof on the 1953 addition has a slight overhang, and a tall fascia. The 1978 addition has a built-up low-pitched shed roof.

The 1953 addition has a regular fenestration pattern. The front section of this addition contains a series of paired and single aluminum windows with a fixed upper pane and a hopper below. The windows alternate with yellow plastic-coated styrofoam panels in wood frames. A band of these wood framed panels runs along the top of the wall, and is carried through on the corridors leading to the 1879 section and in the 1959 addition. There is one pair of wood panic doors, each with a narrow vertical pane of glass and a metal kick plate, in the corridor to the 1879 section, and two pairs in the corridor to the 1959 section. The rear of the 1953 addition, the gymnasium, presents a brick exterior unrelieved by windows. According to an article which appeared in the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern just before the this addition opened, the gymnasium had "benches built in on both of the long sides of the room, beneath long, wide expanses of windows."⁷ The benches remain, but the walls currently show no evidence of windows. Those on the southwest facade would look in on the library addition. At the rear (northeast end) of the gymnasium is a one-story featureless storage room. The flat roof extends beyond the wall to shelter a pair of windowless metal panic doors on either side. There are two round metal vent stacks on the roof. On the southwest gable end of the gymnasium, a wide unornamented brick chimney rises above the roof lines.

On both the southwest and northeast facades, the 1959 section has three groups of window openings with concrete sills. There are three small fixed aluminum windows in the center, flanked by plastic-coated styrofoam panels. On the northwest end of the 1959 addition is a small flat-roofed entrance porch with a pair of wood panic doors.

⁷"Addition to School Nearing Completion," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, August 8, 1953.

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Read School
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The 1978 addition is windowless. There is a single metal door on the east corner of this addition, and a metal vent stack on the roof.

On the interior, the noncontributing additions contain seven classrooms, four restrooms, the principal's office, the library, a gymnasium and a teacher's lounge spaced out along a wide central corridor. The corridor in the 1959 section is slightly off-axis from that of the 1953 section. Moving northwest along the corridor into the 1953 section, there is a small teacher's lounge southwest, and restrooms to the northeast. Next on the southwest are two classrooms, one designed specifically for kindergarten, the other for first grade. Opposite is the gymnasium. Through the corridor into the 1959 section, there are restrooms on the northeast side, followed by the principal's office, made by remodeling a classroom, the library behind the office, and two classrooms beyond. There are three classrooms on the opposite side.

The flooring in the 1953 and 1959 additions is all asphalt tile with brick baseboards, except for in the gymnasium, where the floors are varnished wood. The 1978 library is carpeted. The walls are painted exposed concrete block, except in the library, where the walls are drywall. The walls in the corridor to the 1879 section are exposed brick. The ceilings are acoustical tile, inset with fluorescent lights, except for in the gymnasium, where the laminated wood trusses are visible. The doors are of light colored wood, and are windowless. The teacher's lounge has a kitchen and built-in oak cabinets treated. The first grade classroom has a plastic bubble skylight, a work counter with a sink, a drinking fountain and a private bathroom. The kindergarten room has a separate entrance from the outside, its own bathroom, lockers and special child's-eye-level display boards. The larger bathrooms in the 1953 addition have floors of small tiles set in a geometric pattern. The walls are glazed tile from floor to ceiling. In the 1959 addition, there are five classrooms. Along the corridor the walls are concrete block up to about five feet. Above are glass panels. The baseboards are tile. A bench, and a wood shelf above, run along the concrete block walls. The classroom doors in this section are recessed and set in wood panels. The bathrooms in the 1959 addition feature clay tile flooring, brick baseboards, and glazed tile half way up the walls. Above are painted exposed

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Read School
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concrete blocks.

Read School is located on the northeast side of Algoma Boulevard between Vine and New York Avenues. On school property, there is a parking lot southeast of the school, and a large playground northeast (to the rear) which includes an asphalted area and a grassy area with a baseball diamond. There is a small play area southwest (in front) of the noncontributing additions. The playgrounds have standard recreational equipment such as a swingset and climbing apparatus. There is a formal lawn southwest of the 1879 section. Elegant and well-kept residences dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries stand behind, to the southeast and across the street from, the school property. The 1890 Algoma Boulevard Methodist Church (NRHP 1974), designed by William Waters, lies to the northwest. The Final Report of the Intensive Historic Resource Survey for the City of Oshkosh identifies this area, including Read School, as the potential "Algoma Boulevard Historic District." According to the report, this potential historic district has traditionally been known as Oshkosh's "Gold Coast." Prominent local business and professional people built their homes here. Most of the buildings in the district were erected between 1880 and 1930. The potential Algoma Boulevard Historic District is significant for its concentration of excellent examples of Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Shingle and Prairie style residential and institutional architecture.⁸

⁸Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, Final Report of the Intensive Historic Resource Survey for the City of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, September, 1981, pages 200-202.

Read School
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin
County and State

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.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)
Architecture

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.

Period of Significance

1879-1907

Significant Dates

1879-1880

1893

1907

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

N/A

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

A owned by a religious institution or
used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Waters, William, architect
Stevens, Ephraim E., builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

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Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Summary

The Read School complex is architecturally significant at the local level under National Register criterion C. It is an outstanding example of the High Victorian Italianate style. The ornamental brickwork shows Romanesque Revival influence. The combination of these two styles makes Read School unlike any other structure in Oshkosh. The original section of Read School was built in 1879. Two contributing additions, built to the rear in 1893 and 1907, closely match the original. All three historic sections have retained good integrity. Three non-contributing additions, dating from 1953, 1959 and 1978, are recessed and to the side of the historic sections, minimally impacting the architectural character of the original school. Read School is the second oldest elementary school building in Oshkosh, and the oldest still in use as a school. It was the first school in Oshkosh to be built with central heating. In 1911, it became the first elementary school in Oshkosh to have a gymnasium, a project undertaken by the students. Read School, and its two historic additions, were all designed by William Waters, a locally prominent architect.

Historical Context

Although the fur trade brought a handful of pioneers of European descent to Winnebago County as early as 1818, it was not until the Treaty of the Cedars was signed that the area that is present day Oshkosh was truly opened up for settlement. With this treaty, the Menominee ceded to the United States government all the land north of Lake Butte des Morts and the Fox River between the Wolf River and Lake Winnebago. Settlers were quick to arrive and begin farming. Within 15 years all traces of the fur traders disappeared.⁹

The first settler of European descent to build a permanent home on

⁹Dr. Charles D. Goff, "Oshkosh, the Real Beginning," Chapter XVII in James I. Metz, ed., Prairie, Pines and People: Winnebago County, A New Perspective, Oshkosh: Oshkosh Northwestern Company, 1976, pages 131-135.

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Read School
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the north side of the Fox in what is now Oshkosh was George Johnston. The United States Army had established a mail trail between Fort Howard (Green Bay), Fort Winnebago (Portage) and Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) which crossed the Fox River at the foot of Lake Butte des Mort. In 1830 or 1831, apparently viewing the crossing as a good opportunity for a business venture, Johnston built cabins to house his family, a tavern, and a ferry to serve those who might need ferrying across. Johnston's homestead was located at what is now the southern end of Riverside Cemetery. The tiny settlement of Algoma, which would be annexed by Oshkosh in 1856, grew up around the ferry landing on the south side of the Fox River. The land south of the Fox had been ceded by the Winnebago in 1832.¹⁰

Perhaps disappointed by a lack of profit, Johnston sold the business around 1833 to Robert Grignon. Grignon was the nephew of the first fur trader in Winnebago County, Augustin Grignon. In 1835, Grignon sold the business to James Knaggs, a Pottawattomie metis whose name is most closely associated with the ferry. Knaggs appears to have been defrauded of his ownership of the ferry in 1836 by Webster Stanley, whom local tradition claims as the first white settler in Oshkosh. Stanley worked briefly for Knaggs as a ferryman before taking the ferry downstream to the site of the present Wisconsin-Ohio Street Bridge. This would later be the site of the settlement of native born Americans (Yankees) that would become Oshkosh. Webster Stanley did put up a cabin on the north side of the Fox River at the mouth of Lake Winnebago in the fall of 1836, as tradition holds, but he was not alone. His relatives, the Chester Gallup family, settled at the same spot at the same time.¹¹

A small settlement of Yankees, primarily from Ohio, sprang up around the Stanley and Gallup cabins. By 1837, the settlement had become known, informally, as "Athens." In 1839, when the time had come to establish a post office, an election was held to select the official name for the settlement. All the adult males living in the area were permitted to vote. A faction of French-Canadian

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

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Read School
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traders, metis, and Indians from the Algoma area, under the leadership of Robert Grignon, campaigned to name the settlement in honor of Menominee Chief Oshkosh. The Yankees split between "Athens," "Stanford" and "Osceola," and lost the vote.¹²

Oshkosh grew slowly during the late 1830s and early 1840s. In 1846, settlers began arriving in earnest to take advantage of Oshkosh's location on the navigable Fox River and near the pine forests to the north and west. In 1847, two steam lumber mills were established, and the industry that would spur Oshkosh's phenomenal growth was born. In early 1849, the population of the village reached 500. By 1850, Oshkosh had become the county seat, and its population had nearly tripled, standing at 1,392. In 1853, Oshkosh incorporated as a city.¹³

The city grew rapidly during the 1850s, but it was not until the arrival of the railroad in 1859, vastly improving the transportation network for delivering lumber products, that Oshkosh really began to expand. As a result of improved transportation and an increased need for lumber products brought about by the Civil War, Oshkosh boomed during the 1860s. In 1860, the city's population was 6,086. By 1870, the population had more than doubled, reaching 12,663. Despite a nationwide recession, Oshkosh continued to boom during the 1870s. In 1875, the population was 17,000.¹⁴

By the end of the 1870s, the growth of the lumber industry in Oshkosh began to slow. The clearing of the forests closest to the City meant that raw materials were further and further away from the mills in Oshkosh. The sawmill industry followed. As the importance of the lumber industry declined in Oshkosh, other industries began to appear. For example, the Paine Lumber Company became the city's largest employer and the world's largest sash and door factory. As Oshkosh's industrial base changed, the

¹²Ibid., pages 142-147.

¹³Ibid.; and Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, pages 4-6.

¹⁴Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, pages 4-6 and 16.

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demographics of the population changed as well. The early settlers were primarily Yankees. Following the Civil War, German and Irish immigrants arrived to work in the city's factories. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, many Poles, Scandinavians and ethnic Germans from the Volga River region of Russia settled in Oshkosh. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Oshkosh was second only to Milwaukee in population in the state.¹⁵

The first public school in Oshkosh was built in 1847. In 1855, a second school was built. At the time, there were 783 school age children in the city. Only 474 were in school, and there were only five teachers. In 1856, at the first recorded meeting of the Board of Education, it was resolved that a school house be built in each of the city's five wards. This goal was accomplished within ten years. In 1863, the "graded system" was introduced into Oshkosh schools. This system was organized much along the same lines as the kindergarten through twelfth grade system of today.¹⁶

On May 19, 1879, the Board of Education passed a resolution requesting that the Oshkosh Common Council purchase lots 5 and 6 in Block A, Kelloggs Addition, on which to build a new school for the Fifth Ward.¹⁷ The Common Council agreed, and the Board of Education hired William Waters to design the new school, and Ephraim E. Stevens to build it.¹⁸

The new school was named after George H. Read, who was Oshkosh Superintendent of Schools at the time. Read had been the editor of the first daily newspaper, the Oshkosh Courier, founded in 1853. He served on the Common Council prior to his appointment as school

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Clinton F. Karstaedt, editor, Oshkosh, One Hundred Years a City, 1853-1953, (Oshkosh: Oshkosh Centennial, Incorporated, 1953), page 61.

¹⁷Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, May 30, 1879.

¹⁸Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, June 30, 1879.

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Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

superintendent.¹⁹

Read School opened February 11, 1880.²⁰ The school had a seating capacity of about 320 pupils. The school age population of the Fifth Ward at the time numbered 616. The Fifth Ward was primarily made up of Yankees. Henry Barber was appointed the first principal. There were five teachers and four classrooms. The teachers and students were transferred from the earlier Fifth Ward School, which stood on the southeast corner of Vine and Elm Streets. The entire cost of construction, including furniture and equipment as well as the cost of the land, was about \$10,000.²¹

Read School reflected the most advanced thinking on school building design of its time. The focus of "scientific" school building design was on sanitary and health concerns through improved lighting, ventilation and heating systems. An influential paper prepared in 1878 by Thomas W. Chittenden, Superintendent of Schools for Grand Rapids, Michigan, was widely published and discussed in Wisconsin. Chittenden made several recommendations for improving sanitary and health conditions in school buildings, many of which were incorporated into the design of Read School, although it is not known whether William Waters was specifically guided by Chittenden's paper. Chittenden stressed the need for an elevated, well drained site. He asserted that all school buildings should have a cellar for air circulation and drainage. Chittenden stated that school buildings should be of fire-proof (masonry) construction, and should not exceed two stories in height. It was believed that the exertion of climbing stairs would stunt children's growth. Chittenden recommended that all classrooms and entries have plenty of windows to allow sunshine in, and that all windows should open directly into the outer air. He also stated

¹⁹Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, March 8, 1979, page 27; and Richard J. Harney, History of Winnebago County, Wisconsin, and Early History of the Northwest, (Oshkosh: Allen and Hicks, 1880), page 1884.

²⁰Oshkosh Weekly Northwestern, February 12, 1880.

²¹Oshkosh Weekly Northwestern, January 8, 1880.

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Read School
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that school buildings should have central heating, provided by hot-air furnaces, so that a constant temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit could be maintained in the halls and entries as well as in the classrooms. Cold air was believed to cause ill health. Chittenden asserted that all staircases rising above ten feet should be broken up by a broad landing midway between the bottom and the top, and that stairs should be at least six feet wide. He maintained that all rooms should have an operable window above the door and that the walls of all the rooms should be hard-finished and non-absorbent. Chittenden recommended that blackboards be placed opposite the windows for improved visibility, and that separate restrooms be provided for boys and girls, preferably inside the school building. Chittenden also suggested that cloak rooms should be attached to all classrooms and provided with pegs or hooks that could be easily reached by children.²² Read School incorporated all these recommendations.

In 1893, the first addition to Read School was built, in conformance with William Waters' earlier design. Four more classrooms were added, and a total of ten teachers employed.²³

By 1898, it was evident that another addition was needed. According to an unpublished Public School Exhibit Program dated June, 1898, Read School was "third in size among the Wards, with 409 pupils. It is crowded beyond capacity, the halls being used as recitation rooms. There are seven grades in the building, including the kindergarten, taught by nine teachers and two kindergarten assistants." Unfortunately, the Board of Education was unable to erect a second addition until 1907. In that year, William Waters designed an addition to Read School with four new classrooms. This brought the number of classrooms to twelve; there

²²Thomas W. Chittenden, "School Buildings," Wisconsin Journal of Education, vol IX:VII, July 1879, pages 293-299 and vol IX:IX, September, 1879, pages 375-380.

²³Read School Souvenir, page 11; Wright's Oshkosh Directory, (Oshkosh: A.G. Wright, 1893); and Bunn's Oshkosh Directory, (Oshkosh: Global Printing Company, 1898).

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Read School
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were also twelve teachers.²⁴

In November, 1911, the students and principal Henry E. Polley worked together to build a gymnasium in the attic under the gable roof of the 1879 section of the school. After three months of work, undertaken with donated materials, the gymnasium was completed. It had only 1,000 square feet of floor space, a fourteen foot high ceiling and had ten corners, but it was the first elementary school gymnasium built in Oshkosh.²⁵

No new additions were made to Read School during World War I, the Depression or World War II. In 1952, the Board of Education unveiled a long-range plan to enlarge and renovate Oshkosh's school buildings. This plan called for the eventual demolition of the historic sections of Read School. In keeping with the first phase of the plan, a new addition was erected in 1953. Designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Perkins and Will, the new addition had a completely different character from the old school. Reflecting changes in thought regarding the composition of elementary schools, this addition was one story in height with specialized facilities for kindergartners and first graders and included a gymnasium. In 1959, the second phase of the long-range plan was carried out with the erection of six new classrooms northwest of the 1953 addition. The planned demolition of the historic sections of Read School, intended for "next year" throughout the 1960s, was delayed every year until such time as there would be "sufficient elementary classrooms in the balance of the district."²⁶

During the 1970s, the plan to demolish the historic sections of Read School was put on hold. In 1978, a one story addition was erected north of the 1953 addition. This addition provided space

²⁴Read School Souvenir, page 11.

²⁵Ibid., pages 23-24.

²⁶"Nearly 90 and Still Going," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, October 3, 1969, page 21.

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for the library, which had previously been housed in the basement.²⁷

In 1992, the Board of Education is again considering demolishing the historic sections of Read School. The final decision has not yet been made.

Architectural Significance

Read School is architecturally significant at the local level under Criterion C, as an outstanding and unusual local example of High Victorian Italianate design. The use of Romanesque Revival ornamental brickwork lends the school an architectural character unique in Oshkosh. Read School shows good integrity. The original 1879 section of Read School, and its 1893 and 1907 additions, were all designed by William Waters, a prominent local architect. Read School represented the most advanced thinking of its time in school building design. Most notably, Read School was the first in Oshkosh to have central heating. It was also the first elementary school in the city to have a gymnasium. The period of significance, 1879 to 1907, corresponds with the dates of construction of the first and last contributing sections of Read School.

The State Historic Preservation Office's document, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (CRMP), makes little mention of the High Victorian Italianate style. In A Field Guide to American Houses, authors Virginia and Lee McAlester describe the High Victorian Italianate as a more highly decorated phase of the Italianate style, dating primarily from the 1860s and 1870s.²⁸ The book, Built in Milwaukee: An Architectural View of the City, distinguishes High Victorian Italianate from the earlier Italianate style by the more ornate treatment of windows and elevations. Built in Wisconsin during the 1870s and 1880s, High Victorian Italianate is characterized by gable and hip roofs; the use of round and segmental arches decorated with highly articulated

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), page 214.

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moldings; and pilasters, belt courses and corbel tables.²⁹ Read School has many of these features.

William Waters designed two other elementary school buildings around the time Read School was built. The first was Dale School, at 207 East Irving Street. Built in 1874-75, Dale School has been rehabilitated into condominiums. The second is Jefferson School, at 110 Algoma Boulevard. Built in 1885, it is still in use as a school. Neither was executed in the High Victorian Italianate style. Dale School is Italianate, with simple elegant lines and little ornamentation. Jefferson School shows Romanesque Revival influence, and has been altered. Three of Waters' commercial and civic buildings show some similarities to Read School, but none combine High Victorian Italianate and Romanesque Revival. The Beckwith House Hotel, at 401-407 North Main Street, is an Italianate design built in 1876 with an 1881 addition. It has window heads decorated in a manner similar to Read School's. Oshkosh Grand Opera House at 100 High Avenue (1883) and the Henry Schmidt Store at 101 High Avenue (1884) have heavy brick corbel tables as has Read School, but both are purely Romanesque Revival in style.

The CRMP lists William Waters as someone who meets National Register criterion C as a "master" architect.³⁰ Waters was born in 1843 in Delaware County, New York. He studied architecture at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, graduating in 1867. Waters promptly relocated to Oshkosh and opened his own architectural firm. He was a resident of Oshkosh for fifty years. Many newspaper articles and biographies of the time attribute sizable importance to Waters' influence on architecture throughout the Fox River region.³¹

²⁹Landscape Research, Built in Milwaukee: An Architectural View of the City, (Milwaukee: City of Milwaukee, 1980), pages 40 and 78.

³⁰Wyatt, volume 2, section 6, page 2.

³¹"Architect No More," Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, December 15, 1917, page 3.

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Waters designed many residential, commercial and civic buildings in a variety of styles. Many of the commercial buildings along North Main Street, the traditional downtown business district in Oshkosh, were designed by Waters early in his career. Most of these are in Italianate, High Victorian Italianate or Romanesque Revival style. From 1867 until at least 1895, and probably until 1916, Waters was the architect for the Oshkosh Board of Education.³² His first and last commissions in Oshkosh both involved designs for the city's high school. His schools were designed in the Italianate, Romanesque Revival and Collegiate Gothic styles. His residential designs, many of which are located in the potential Algoma Boulevard Historic District, are primarily Queen Anne, Shingle style, or Richardsonian Romanesque. Some show the influence of the Eastlake and Stick styles. Waters designed church buildings in the NeoClassical and NeoGothic styles. He is probably best noted for designing the Wisconsin State Building at the Chicago World Columbian Exhibition in 1893. After the turn of the century, Waters' designs moved toward the NeoClassical and Colonial Revival styles. Waters served as president of the Wisconsin Chapter of Architects. He executed his last commission, an addition to the high school with Henry Auler, in 1916. Waters died December 14, 1917 at the age of 74.³³

Of 45 properties in Oshkosh known to have been designed by Waters, nine have been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Another twelve are listed individually or in historic districts outside of Oshkosh.

³²Commemorative Biographical Record of the Fox River Valley Counties of Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago, page 1172.

³³Ibid.; "Architect No More"; and Howard, Needles, Tammen and Bergendoff, pages 63 and 153.

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NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 3/87)

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Read School _____
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin _____
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository:
WI Inventory of Historic Places

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 4 acres

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

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/7/5/4/3/8</u>	<u>4/8/7/6/2/8/0</u>	3	<u>/</u>						
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting		Northing			
2	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>	<u>/</u>
	Zone	Easting		Northing	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 Elizabeth L. Miller, Consultant (608-233-5942) for
organization Oshkosh Volunteers for Preservation date 8-03-1992
street & number P.O. Box 2034 telephone 414-233-0476
city or town Oshkosh state WI zip code 54903-2034

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 Representitive black and white photographs of the property.

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

NPS Form 10-900-a
(Rev. 8-86)
Wisconsin Word Processing Format
(Approved 3/87)

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Verbal Boundary Description

Northeasterly 11 feet of Lot 2 and northeasterly 11 feet of the northerly 13.3 feet of Lot 3 and also the southeasterly 86.67 feet of Lot 3 and all of Lots 4, 5 and 6, Block A, Kelloggs Addition to Oshkosh.

Verbal Boundary Justification

This property includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with Read School.

Read School
Name of Property

Winnebago County, Wisconsin
County and State

Property Owner

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

name Board of Education, Oshkosh Area School District
street & number 1600 Southland Avenue telephone (414)424-0120
city or town Oshkosh state WI zip code 54901

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.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

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Photo 1 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing the southwest facade of the 1879 section

Photo 2 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing closeup of the southwest facade of the 1879 section

Photo 3 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing the southeast facades of the contributing sections

Photo 4 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing northeast facades of contributing and 1953 sections

Photo 5 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing northeast facades of all sections

Photo 6 of 16

Read School

Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992

Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin

View showing northeast and southeast facades (contributing sections)

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Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI

Photo 7 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing northwest facades of contributing sections

Photo 8 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing connection between 1879 and 1953 sections (southwest facade)

Photo 9 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing southwest facades of all sections

Photo 10 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing closeup of window surround, 1879 section

Photo 11 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing hallway in contributing sections

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Photo 12 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing classroom in 1879 section

Photo 13 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing coatroom in 1879 section

Photo 14 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing restroom in 1879 section, with original stall doors

Photo 15 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing small gymnasium, 1879 section

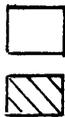
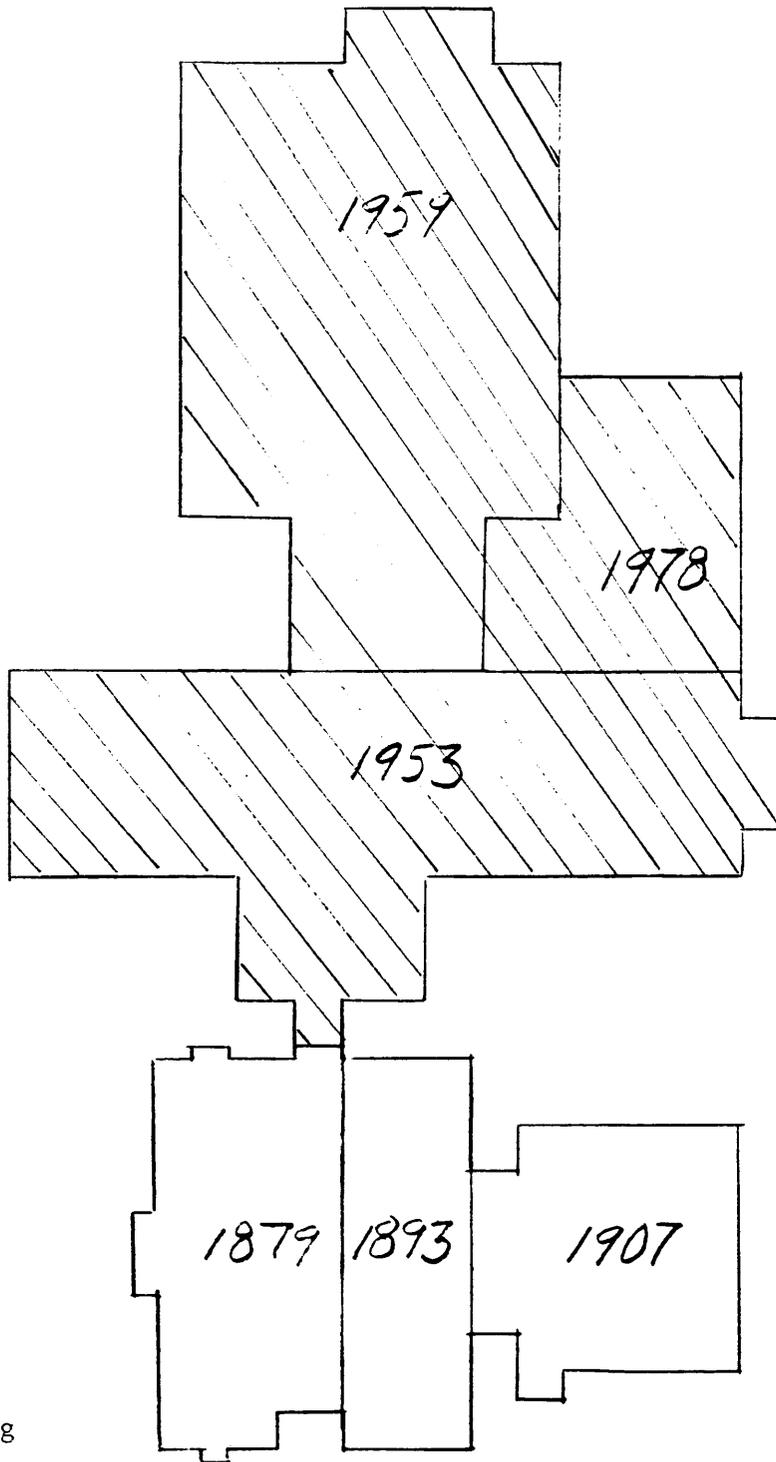
Photo 16 of 16
Read School
Oshkosh, Winnebago County, WI
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, July 1992
Negative on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin
View showing hallway in 1959 section

READ SCHOOL OSHKOSH, WINNEBAGO CO., WISC

402.6'

ALGOMA
BLVD

384.5'



Contributing

Non-contributing

SCALE 1" = 40'
LOT LINES NOT TO SCALE

402.6'