

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 28 1986

date entered DEC 30 1986

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

1. Name

historic Boscobel High School

and/or common The Old Rock High School

2. Location

street & number 207 Buchanan Street

not for publication

city, town Boscobel

vicinity of

state Wisconsin

code 55

county Grant

code 043

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N.A.	<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 Boscobel Area Public Schools, Joint District #6 -City of Boscobel

street & number 208 East Bluff Street

city, town Boscobel

vicinity of

state Wisconsin 53805

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grant County Register of Deeds / Grant County Courthouse

street & number 120 West Maple Street

city, town Lancaster

state Wisconsin 53813

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1976, 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison

state Wisconsin 53706

# 7. Description

<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Architecturally Boscobel's Old Rock High School building is an imposing 3+ story example of Romanesque Revival Design. Its physical appearance has not been changed significantly since its construction in 1898. The construction is of load bearing native limestone walls with floor and roof supports of heavy timber. Stone foundation walls, two feet thick, ten courses high, with three foot footings of concrete form the base of the building. The floor is an average of 4" of concrete. Exterior walls are 8" two course stone block, totaling 16" with a total height of 32'. The building also includes a four story tower approximately 50' in height. The roof features slate roofing on wood rafters beams and posts, with galvanized rain gutters and downspouts. It is supported by wood joists on load bearing exterior and center walls. Insulation is not provided. The roofing is original and in good condition. Wall stone copings and decorative metal cappings are in good condition.<sup>#1</sup> A stone inset enscribed "High School" is above the main entry.

This was the first building in Boscobel to employ rock-faced stone as a major design element. The material was fully exploited to create a feeling of mass and solidity. The carefully balanced composition (H shaped in plan) is anchored by a central four story tower. The vertical progression of the tower, with arched entrance, frame oriel, vertical windows, culminates in an open belfry beneath a pyramidal roof. The corner piers are carried upward to create bartizan-like elements capped by finials. Flanking the tower are gable roofed blocks, rising a full two stories and attic above the raised basement. Three rows of vertically aligned windows light the facade. All windows feature heavy stone lintels (rectangular) and slender sills. Major window openings on all but the third floor are paired. The arched entrances feature finely dressed stone voussoirs sheltering large recessed entries.

On the interior there are 8 large (approximately averaging 31' x 22') classrooms, 5 on the 1st floor and 3 on the 2nd floor, as well as several smaller office & storage type rooms. In addition the library & study hall room spans the entire east end of the 2nd floor covering 32' x 61' with a 12 foot ceiling which still features the original tin stamp ceiling in excellent condition. The gross area on the 1st floor is 6,564 sq. ft and the 2nd floor is 6,514 sq. ft. A tower area 3rd floor room is 361 sq. ft. The finished walls are mainly of painted plaster and pine tonge-in-groove wainscoting. Windows are wood sashed single glazing, double hung. Doors are commerical grade solid core wood panel doors. There are commercial heavy duty class room doors. The interior finish of the building's classrooms is with a good grade of plaster and pine panelling. The ceilings are acoustical tiles over the original plaster with the exception of 2 rooms which still have the tin stamp ceilings. The floors are vinyl tile and hardwood maple. Work areas are unfinished. The attic or 3rd floor and tower area is floored but provides minimally useable space.

The lower level including the boiler room is 8,160 sq. ft. The restrooms are in the lower level and feature ceramic floors, sinks, stools and urinals. There is one hot water heater in the building. Heating is distributed by steam radiators in each classroom. Heat is provided by oil and gas fired boilers (Kewaunee) in a separate boiler room with old coal bins at the rear of the building. The electrical plant is variable. Some wiring has been upgraded over time. Some has not been replaced since installation. Lighting is done by incandescent fixtures in the classrooms and hallways.<sup>#3</sup> There are two large brick chimneys.

The structure covers 7,072 sq. ft. of ground area providing a total of 21,599 sq. ft. of floor space of which 13,439 sq. ft. is above grade.<sup>#4</sup> The building occupies lots 9 & 10 of Block 17 of the Brindley Addition to the Village (now City) of Boscobel.<sup>#5</sup> The main front entrance faces south toward new construction on lots 3, 4, 5, & 6 of Block 16 which is a new grade school building completed and occupied in 1984 by the Boscobel Area Public Schools. On the west side there are empty lots serving as playground on which a 73 year old red brick school building stood until its razing in 1984. On the east side stands another vacated building refered to as the brick grade school annex which has been abandoned and is scheduled to be razed so the area can be used for playground space.

(continued)

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Construction 1898 Architect: Milwaukee Firm Van Ryn & de Gelleke<sup>1</sup>  
**Specific dates** Significance 1898 -1936 **Builder/Architect** Builder: F Prugger, Contractor

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Rock High School Building in Boscobel is notable for its fine stone construction and its interesting design. It is prominently located in the community and is believed to be among the finest nineteenth century public school building in the State of Wisconsin.<sup>#1</sup> The Old Rock High School is also significant for its broad contributions to the education system of the community and surrounding rural area having served its students for 86 consecutive years, clearly presenting the progressive civic attitudes of local residents of this small community at the end of the last century.

#### Architectural Significance:

The Old Rock High School was completed in 1898 at a cost of \$17,000.<sup>#2</sup> It was designed by the notable Milwaukee Architectural Firm of Van Ryn & de Gelleke, a partnership formed in 1897 that became quite active in school design throughout the State of Wisconsin. Since the Boscobel area was not glaciated, precipitous bluffs remain to the east and south of the city. These areas of primarily exposed limestone were quarried to provide stone for building in the city. Documentation of the quarries is slim, however quarries that appear on maps of the area include the Salzgaber quarry just south of the city which was apparently active in the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century. The "Parker Building" was one of the earliest of the stone buildings and was erected in 1869. It set the tone for the majority of the buildings erected in the 1870's. Rubble stone was employed for all but the facade which was composed of dressed blocks. Other later buildings, including the "Ruka Block" and adjoining structures essentially followed the same theme. But by the end of the nineteenth century, stone was dressed in a different manner and projected a rugged, massive appearance. The Old Rock High School was the first building to employ rock faced stone as a major design element.<sup>#3</sup>

The 3+ story building of Romanesque Revival Design is visually prominent in the city because of its distinctive stonework, impressive siting, imposing scale, dramatic use of materials and massing.

#### Educational Significance:

The original and earliest seat of education in the Boscobel Area was a log building which formed a saw mill annex and served as a schoolroom during the day and a lodging place at night. This was abandoned as early as 1851 for a small frame building originally intended for a dwelling-house and then moved again to an old log structure which was used both as the school and and for a church. The first building erected for the sole purpose of school-house was a log structure put up in 1852 or 1853 near the present cemetery gates within the outer limits of what were the fairgrounds. This log structure takes rank as "the first regularly built schoolhouse in this section". The "Belfry School," which was put up in 1858 or 1859 was the first to be located on lands still occupied by the Boscobel Public Schools and on the lots beside the Old Rock High School. A few years later the first building called a "High School" was erected and in 1867 the old Methodist Church was purchased to be the primary schoolhouse, and in 1876 and 1877 other additions were made to the high school building extending it to double its original length and erecting another frame structure making, by 1881 a total of 4 school buildings all adjacent to the property the Old Rock High School is constructed on in 1898. The 1881 History of Grant County indicates that "The number of pupils in attendance in all departments was, a few years ago, as high 700, but, from

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Boscobel Dial, Vol. 112, #15, Thursday July 17, 1986. "Historical Society Wants Rock School Preserved" by Jeff Dean, State Historic Preservation Officer, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

(continued)

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Boscobel, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 9 and Lot 10 of Block 17 of the Brindley Addition to the Village (Now City) of Boscobel, Grant County, Wisconsin According to the Recorded Plat Thereof.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan J Glasbrenner, Secretary-Treasurer

organization Boscobel Area Heritage Museum, Inc.

date July 22, 1986

street & number 1216 Wisconsin Avenue

telephone 608-375-4800

city or town Boscobel

state Wisconsin 53805

# 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 

title

date Nov. 24, 1986

For NPS use only

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

*jk* Beth Grosvenor  
Keeper of the National Register

date 12/30/86

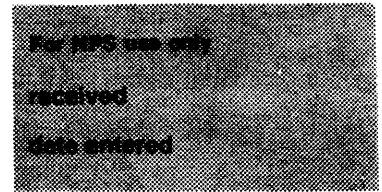
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



OLD ROCK HIGH SCHOOL, BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN  
Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

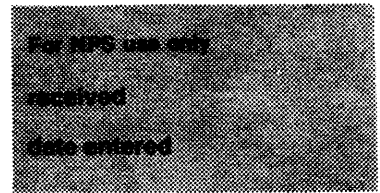
It is met on its north side (the rear of the building) with an alley across which there is a residential district. Within view when looking at the rock building from its west side are the Congregational Church Building constructed in 1853 , an attractive well-maintained red brick structure with stained glass windows, and also the Trinity Lutheran Church built in 1908, a white wooden structure also attractive and well-maintained. #

One Contributing Building

- 1 Certified Appraisal, American Appraisal and Feasibility Corporation, August 8, 1983, authorized by the Boscobel Area Public Schools and on file in its office. Written by Lawrence J. Golicz, AAFCORP, 6510 Schroeder Road, Madison, Wis. 53711.
- 2 Intensive Survey, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981 Study by Dorothy Steele, U W-Environmental Awareness Center, Madison, Wis.
- 3 op. cit. #1 of Item number 7
- 4 ibid.
- 5 Title Search for Barnett & Barnett, Attorneys at Law, Boscobel, Wisconsin, January 10, 1969 by the Grant County Abstract Company, Lancaster, Wis. 53813, and confirmed by them to be still accurate on this date. Opinion on file at Boscobel Area Public School Office, Boscobel, Wis. 53805.
- 6 op. cit. #2 of Item number 7

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OLD ROCK HIGH SCHOOL, BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN  
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Item number 8

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various causes, this number has been greatly scaled down since that time.<sup>#4</sup>

Boscobel, first settled in 1846, became a prosperous center of trade and industry with the coming of the railroad line thru the community connecting points along the Wisconsin River in 1856. By 1864 when the village charter was obtained there were already 1200 residents. The school system expanded responding to the quickly growing population. In 1875 the State of Wisconsin adopted a law regarding "free high schools", and Boscobel responded by implementing its 3 year high school course in September of 1875, and in June of 1876 graduated it's first class of eight students.<sup>#4</sup>

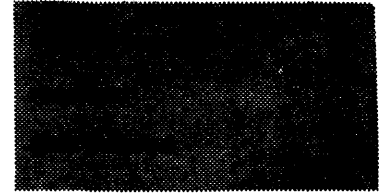
This history documents for us the progressive attitudes that were held by the early residents of the small community which today still only numbers slightly over 2,300 people. The Old Rock High School stands as the Monument symbolizing the culmination of ambition -- the pride of a people -- and a dedication to the equal education of its rural inhabitants.

The Old Rock School is the only remaining 19th century public (or private) school facility in the city of Boscobel, representing this earliest era of educational development and growth in the community. The largest, historic school building constructed in the city, the building clearly marked the culmination of 19th century educational endeavors in the community and would continue to serve its residents until officially closed in 1984.

- 1 The Boscobel Dial, Vol. 112, #15, Thursday July 17, 1986. "Historical Society Wants Rock School Preserved" by Jeff Dean, State Historic Preservation Officer, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.
- 2 Boscobel High School First School Annual, B.H.S. 1904 SPARKS, copy on file at the private library of Arthur Ulve, Boscobel, and Boscobel Public School, Boscobel, Wisconsin.
- 3 Intensive Survey, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981 by Dorothy Steele, U W -Environmental Awareness Center, Madison, Wisconsin.
- 4 Butterfield, C. W. History of Grant Co. 1881.

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Old Rock High School,  
Boscobel, Wisconsin

Continuation sheet

Item number

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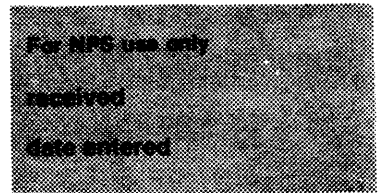
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2

Among Wisconsin's preeminent firms involved with the design of educational facilities during the last decade of the 19th century and the early years of the twentieth, Van Ryn and De Gelleke were responsible for an enormous amount of the school construction carried out throughout the state. The firm's designs for the State Normal Schools at Platteville, La Crosse, River Falls and Eau Claire, as well as the majority of the public grade schools in Milwaukee from 1912-1925, represent a highly significant contribution to the state's built environment. The 1898 Boscobel High School was one of the firm's earliest acknowledged commissions and obviously set firmly the pair's future direction in terms of creating sizable, architecturally dramatic edifices of lasting visual importance.

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OLD ROCK HIGH SCHOOL, BOSCOBEL, WISCONSIN  
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Boscobel High School First School Annual, B.H.S. 1903 SPARKS, copy on file at the private library of Mr. Arthur Ulve, Boscobel, and the Boscobel Public School Library, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

Butterfield, C. W. History of Grant Co. 1881. Western Historical Society, Chicago.

Certified Appraisal, American Appraisal and Feasibility Corporation, August 8, 1983, authorized by the Boscobel Area Public Schools and on file in its office. Written by Lawrence J. Golicz, AAFCORP, 6510 Schroeder Road, Madison, Wis. 53711.

Heritage Album, Boscobel Centennial 1873-1973, Boscobel Dial, Boscobel, Wisconsin.

Holford, Castello, History of Grant County, 1900, Lancaster, Wisconsin.

Intensive Survey, Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981 Study by Dorothy Steele, U W-Environmental Awareness Center, Madison, Wis.