

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 8 1977

DATE ENTERED SEP 13 1977

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

**Wheeler Hall, Northland College**

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

**1411 Ellis Avenue**

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

**Ashland**

VICINITY OF

**7th**

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

**Wisconsin 54806**

**55**

**Ashland**

**003**

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

**Northland College, c/o Douglas Mingus, Business Manager**

STREET & NUMBER

**1411 Ellis Avenue**

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**Ashland**

VICINITY OF

**Wisconsin 54806**

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

**Ashland County Courthouse**

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**Ashland**

**Wisconsin 54806**

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

**Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places**

DATE

**1972**

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

**State Historical Society of Wisconsin**

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**Madison**

**Wisconsin 53706**

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Wheeler Hall, built in 1893, is a large, 3½-story, dark red brick structure with a high basement. It is eclectic in style but has a distinct Richardsonian entrance on the north (main) facade. This is included in a central pavilion and consists of an arcade of three heavy round arches with short, round, engaged stone columns at the spring points. The central opening is the main entryway and those on either side contain windows. A broad stair with cut stone steps and wide, solid rails of stone blocks covered by coping rises from grade level to the first floor. Above the central arch, on the second and third stories, is a shallow bay window, and at the top, extending the width of the pavilion, is a pedimented dormer with a large triple window in the tympanum. There is also a central pavilion on the south facade, but entrance is at grade level and the opening is rectangular with a large stone lintel. At the top of this pavilion is also a dormer which replicates that of the north facade, and similar dormers are found at the east and west ends of the roof. The foundation, belt courses and other ornamentation are all of local brownstone.

Exterior alterations consist mostly of modifications of original windows, particularly the shortening of once tall windows on the first and second stories by bricking in approximately the upper thirds of the original openings. Fenestration varies considerably from floor to floor.

Plans for the future of the building include extensive interior remodeling and modernization, but the exterior will be restored as nearly as possible to its original character.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1893, 1906, 1907      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      H. P. Padley

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wheeler Hall is the original building of Northland College. Initially organized as North Wisconsin Academy, the school was conceived and constructed as a result of efforts of philanthropists and educators of Congregational persuasion from Wisconsin and Minnesota. The idea was first proposed at a conference at Pratt (now Grandview) in 1891. Subsequently, on May 9, 1892, the bid of Ashland, which included twenty acres "in the most eligible and picturesque part of the city" and a subscription of \$30,000, was accepted.<sup>1,2</sup>

The building, which was dedicated in June of 1893 and completed in time for the opening of the fall term that year, was in many respects a copy of Scoville Hall of Beloit College. In addition to this architectural borrowing, the new academy received Beloit's assistance in various other ways. Indeed, a Beloit professor, A. W. Burr, was invited to be the first president of North Wisconsin Academy, but he excused himself, indicating that the climate might prove too much for Mrs. Burr. Thus that responsibility fell to the Reverend Edward P. Wheeler, one of the founders of the institution and minister of the local Congregational church.<sup>3</sup> The building was named for Mr. Wheeler in 1907, one year after the academy had become a college.<sup>4</sup>

Wheeler Hall is not only the Old Main of Northland College; it is also the recognized landmark of higher education throughout a large portion of the North Country. Important among the responsibilities of the Academy as recognized by its founders was its area of service, which was to include "northern Wisconsin and Michigan and North Eastern Minnesota...in which there is not a single high grade high school."<sup>5</sup> This regional mission has continued to be emphasized. As Northland's President M. J. Fenenga observed more than seventy years ago, "It is significant that this school was not named for a denomination or a man or a city, but for a region."<sup>6</sup>

1. Ashland Daily News, May 10, 20, 28, June 28, 1892
2. Ashland Daily Press, Annual Edition, May, 1893
3. Ashland Daily News, June 22, 1892
4. Dexter, Northland College, pp. 34-35
5. Ibid., p. 35
6. Dexter, "Meet the Greater Northland," p. 4

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashland Daily News, May 10, 20, 28, and June 22, 28, 1892

Ashland Daily Press, Annual Edition, May, 1893

Dexter, Nathaniel B., History of Northland College (Ashland, 1944), 34-35; "Meet the Greater Northland," Northern Light, 35(5):4, May-June, 1945

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.0

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 662880 5160530  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

D [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION

DATE

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

5 August 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

816 State Street

608/262-0746

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

## 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

*Richard M. Heaney*

TITLE Acting Director  
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 2/3/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Wm. H. ...*  
*Charles ...*

DATE

9/13/77

DATE

7-2-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

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Charles E. Twining, Professor of History

Northland College

21 January 1977

1411 Ellis Avenue

715/682-4531

Ashland

Wisconsin 54806