

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

For NPS use only

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

received AUG 14 1985
date entered SEP 12 1985

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

1. Name

historic South School

and/or common South School Apartments

2. Location

street & number 1009 Summit Avenue not for publication

city, town Stoughton vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Dane code 025

3. 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"/> commercial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <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 |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| | | | <input checked="" 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 Sveum Brothers' Partnership

street & number P.O. Box 516

city, town Stoughton vicinity of state Wisconsin 53589

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dane County Register of Deeds

street & number 210 Monona Avenue

city, town Madison state Wisconsin

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date November 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

South School is a two-story building with full attic and full basement. The building contains 2,740 square feet of area per floor. The two stories are built of cream brick. The attic level is wood shingled. The stone basement extends 5' above grade.

The building's design is transitional and interesting. It is a Queen Anne Revival style, with many common forms and materials.

A notable feature of the building's design is its strongly "residential" character. The massing and the proportion is done in such a way as to mask the building's size and to make it conform to its surrounding residential neighborhood.

The building's exterior has a minimum of decoration. Several window types and sizes appear on the structure. Those on the first floor rear (east) and those on the second floor above the entry have transoms. The three tall, narrow windows on the second floor above the entry are prominent design elements.

The floor plan is similar on both stories. Much of the SW corner of the building is given over to hallways and the main staircase. Each floor has two large classrooms, one each at the NE and NW. Straight back from the staircase is a small kitchen area on the first floor, and a similarly sized storage room on the second. The SE corner of the building is occupied by stairs to the basement from the first floor and by a second storage room or office on the second.

Many of the original finishes remain. Among these are maple floors throughout, plaster walls, fir trim and wainscoting (some painted, some varnished), five-panel doors, and plaster walls. Ceilings on the first floor are pressed, decorated metal. Second floor ceilings are acoustic tile. The metal ceilings experienced some damage when hanging fluorescent light fixtures were installed in the classrooms.

While most of the interior is rather common, there are a few features which can be considered significant to the building's appearance. Most important is the main staircase area. The oak stairway itself is quite simple, with square balusters and newel posts. The afore-mentioned three tall windows over the entry introduce a great deal of sunlight to the staircase and to both halls. This space, therefore, is the focal point of the interior. Also worthy of mention is the 12' height of the ceilings. The metal ceilings of the first floor are an interesting period feature worthy of preservation.

The building has experienced remarkably little alteration. The exterior appears to have had no change from the original except for the handicap ramp required by code, and the infill of the south doorway. Interior renovation is limited to the 1954 addition of fluorescent light fixtures in the classrooms, acoustic ceilings on the second floor, and installation of a small lavatory off the second floor hall.

The site is a large rectangular lot which slopes down to the rear, giving a view to the river east of the property. The building is set on the NW corner of its lot. The sideyard to the south is paved for use as a playground and parking area. The rear yard is a broad lawn.

The site is located at the south edge of the city in an area of older residences, most of which appear to date between 1880 and 1910. As is mentioned above, the "residential" character of South School makes the building conform well to its surroundings.

The building is presently in excellent condition. The classrooms were recently split up and transformed into six apartments. All work was done according to the standards put forth by the Department of Interior.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input 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 1900¹⁰

Builder/Architect Allan D. Conover⁶

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

South School is significant as a well-preserved example of Stoughton School design and as a work of an important Wisconsin architect.

Allan Darst Conover¹ was born in Madison, Wisconsin in 1854 where his father was a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin. Allan Conover graduated from the same university with a degree in civil engineering in 1874. Soon thereafter he joined the faculty himself, serving first as lecturer and by 1879 as Professor of Civil Engineering. Conover remained at the university until 1891. During several of these years, Conover was Dean of the Engineering School.

While with the University, Conover was also engaged in private practice. In 1885, he entered into partnership with a former student, Lew F. Porter. The Conover and Porter firm soon won a number of important commissions, not only in south-central Wisconsin but in the north, as well. For some years Conover and Porter maintained a branch office in Ashland, where they built several commercial buildings. By 1899, when the partnership dissolved, it claimed credit for 3 jails, 6 churches, 3 hotels, 8 banks, 30 schools, 100 residences, as well as its commercial work.²

From 1899 on, Conover practiced alone. In these later years he served as a member of the State Board of Control of Wisconsin Reformatory, Charitable and Penal Institutions and as consulting engineer to the state's Railroad Commission. Conover died in 1929.

Several well-known buildings associated with Conover remain standing. Conover aided Milwaukee architect H. C. Koch on the design and execution of Science Hall (built 1888) on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Close by stands the University Armory and Gymnasium (built 1894), designed by Conover and Porter. Both buildings are pivotal structures in the Bascom Hill Historic District (National Register 9/12/74). Their Charles Edwin Buell House (built 1894) at 115 Ely Place, Madison, is a Madison Landmark, and is the oldest building within the University Heights Historic District (National Register 12/17/82).

Conover's legacy extends beyond the buildings he designed. He influenced many younger people who would become important architects in their own right, both through his University teaching and through the training provided to the young men who became draftsmen and associates with the Conover and Porter firm. These included Frank Lloyd Wright, Alvan Small, Louis W. Claude, and John Flad.³

9. Major Bibliographical References

Proceedings, Wisconsin Joint School District No. 3, Town of Dunkirk and City of Stoughton, Volume for 1878-1915.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Stoughton

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

B

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

C

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

D

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

E

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

F

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

G

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

H

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---------|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | Easting | | | Northing | | | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEC 8-5-11 PRT NW1/4SE1/4 COR SEC S1/4 COR TH N89DEG26.1N51SECE 345.43 FT TH NODEG19 MIN43SECE 2237.37 FT TO POB ON E R/W LN SUMMIT AVE TH CON ALG SD LN NODEG19MIN43SECE 146.2 FT TH N89DEG58MIN5SECE 66 FT TH NODEG19MIN43SECE 2.9 FT TH N89DEG58 MIN5SECE

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 Jodi Rubin/President

organization Preservation Concepts

date June 1985

street & number 123 N. 7th St.

telephone (608) 246-4059

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin

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 [Signature]

title DIRECTOR OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

date August 6, 1985

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 9/12/85

for [Signature]
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet South School, Stoughton, WI Item number 8

Page 1

As a late-nineteenth-century architect, Conover was familiar with and worked in the several styles then current, including Romanesque Revival, Shingle Style, and Queen Anne. Conover's most memorable designs tended toward the Romanesque. By the turn of the century, the younger men from his office were beginning to experiment with what would eventually become known as the Prairie Style. This insight helps explain the composite or transitional design of South School as outlined in the above Description of Physical Appearance.

South School is one of five older school buildings extant in the city of Stoughton. All five date from 1886 to 1916, the years when the small town became a burgeoning city with the influx of Norwegian immigrants. These years witnessed regular urgings for the expansion of school facilities to meet ever-increasing school populations.⁴

The city's school board attempted to relieve overcrowding of its sole building (a three-story brick structure built in 1862 and demolished c.1920) with the construction of West School (1886), a separate high school (1892), and East School (also southern part of the city where T.G. Mandt's Stoughton Wagon Works had become a major employment center.

In July 1899, therefore, the school board received voter authorization for an expansion of West School and adoption of a resolution "declaring it to be the sense of the meeting that a two-room school building be erected on the south side known as Mandtville."⁵ At its meeting of July 17, the school board invited Conover to submit plans for the building.⁶ Conover completed the design by October, but his plans now called for a building to contain four classrooms. Faced with a probable budget overrun, the board then decided to postpone the project until the following year.⁷

By the spring of 1900, the school board had all in readiness pending budget authorization. The contract "for the erection of Mandtville ward school as per plans of Allan D. Conover..." was tentatively let to local contractor Bennet Mitchie and Co.⁸

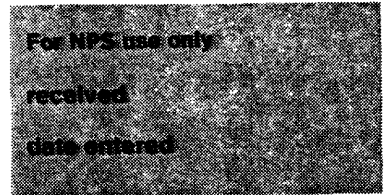
After heated debate, a special school district meeting of voters in July 1900 authorized construction of a four-room building with a budget of \$5,000.⁹ The school board then confirmed its construction contract in August.¹⁰ Construction moved ahead rapidly. The new building opened to accept first-through-fourth-grade pupils in January 1901.¹¹

South School continued in service until January 1983. It had, however, two periods of vacancy. During the 1911-1912 school year the building was unused for undetermined reasons. In 1943, the school was closed due to wartime budget hardships. It was not reopened until 1954, at which time the school received its only "updating" with the addition of a new heating plant, lighting, and acoustic ceilings for the second story rooms.¹²

Comparison of South School to Stoughton's other older school buildings shows it to be the least-altered of the five built before 1920. West School (built 1886) had two additions (1899 and 1905), the second of which appears to have altered the roofline. East School (built 1892) was doubled in size in 1908 and recently had a third story added and a broad porch removed. The 1892 high school, the design of which is somewhat similar to South School, has had many of its windows covered and much of the interior has been partitioned for use as school administration offices. The second high school, an imposing classical revival building designed by Claude

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet South School, Stoughton, WI Item number 8

Page 2

and Starck and built 1906-1908, has had two substantial additions; a three-story addition to the west dates from 1955, and a long one-story addition to the east dates from 1983. Central School (built 1916) has many of its windows covered over.

South School is less grand than many of the buildings associated with Allan Conover. But South School remains a good example of the smaller projects that composed the bulk of Conover's output. It can reasonably be compared, for example, to Conover and Porter's Sixth Ward School in Madison. This 1893 building (demolished 1953), while larger than South School, shared with South its mix of Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival elements and its strongly defined arched entry.¹³

Comparison of South School to the designs of other contemporary school architects reveals that Conover incorporated well-accepted design standards of the time. Notably, these elements are: 1) loading of classrooms off large central halls; 2) prominent entrances; and 3) the use of tall windows in open stair towers to maximize light.¹⁴

By virtue of its function and scale, it is unlikely that South School can be considered a masterpiece. But the community recognized that it was getting a functional, well-designed structure. As was commented upon South's opening in 1901: "The schoolhouse is, perhaps, the best-planned building in the city and is a model for convenience and comfort."¹⁵ The small city of Stoughton was fortunate in having been able to tap the expertise of an important architect for the design of South School. In its excellent state of preservation, South School remains an historic resource the community can be proud of.

¹Biographical material on Conover is drawn from: Milo M. Quaife, Wisconsin: Its History and Its People (4 vols.; Chicago, 1924), IV, pp. 570-571; Andrew J. Aiken and Lewis A. Proctor, eds., Wisconsin Men of Progress (Milwaukee, 1897), pp. 578-579; and from an obituary in The Wisconsin State Journal, May 24, 1929.

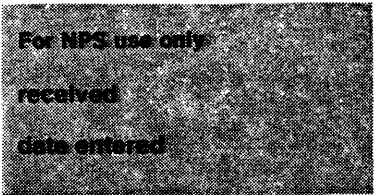
²On the output of the Conover and Porter firm see Martha Kilgour, "Lew F. Porter, Architect," The Journal of Historic Madison, Inc., II (1976), pp. 24-35, and the biographical sketch of Conover in Wisconsin State Journal, Madison Past and Present, 1852-1902 (Madison, 1902), p. 139. Valuable assistance in identifying the firm's Ashland projects has been given by R. Steven Sennott.

³On the Conover and Porter firm as a training ground see Kilgour, pp. 29, 34.

⁴Valuable material on Stoughton's educational history is contained in a series of articles by Kathleen Soderbloom published in The Stoughton Courier on the following dates: March 5, March 12, March 19, March 23, March 30, and April 2, 1970.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet South School, Stoughton, WI Item number 8

Page 3

⁵Minutes of the annual school district meeting of July 11, 1899 contained in Wisconsin Joint School District No. 3, Town of Dunkirk and City of Stoughton, Proceedings, manuscript volume for the period 1878-1915 held by Stoughton School Administration, p. 112. This collection of annual district meeting minutes and several records of monthly school board meeting minutes was made available by Superintendent of Schools James Fricks and by Jeanne Sleaziz.

⁶Proceedings, p. 484. Apparently Conover alone was invited—he faced no competition for the commission.

⁷No minutes of this meeting have been found. A report of Conover's presentation and the board's decision to defer is in The Stoughton Hub, October 6, 1899. The formal decision to defer was taken in November. See The Stoughton Courier, November 3, 1899.

⁸Minutes of the school board meeting of May 25, 1900 in Proceedings, p. 488.

⁹Minutes of the regular and special meetings of July 2 and July 16, 1900 in Proceedings, pp. 120, 122.

¹⁰Minutes of School board meeting August 11, 1900 in Proceedings, p. 591.

¹¹Despite the delays and the debate about the costs prior to construction, the completed building came in far over budget. Total construction cost was \$8,023.73. See report in The Stoughton Hub, July 5, 1901. This was in addition to \$450.00 paid for the land and Conover's \$100.00 fee paid in 1900. See the 1900 annual report in The Stoughton Hub, July 6, 1900.

¹²Kathleen Soderbloom, "South School has Been Closed Twice," The Stoughton Hub, March 23, 1970.

¹³A photo and description of Madison's Sixth Ward School appears in David V. Hollenhoff, Madison: A History of the Formative Years (Dubuque, 1982), p. 229.

¹⁴These conclusions are drawn from a review of school illustrations in the journal The Inland Architect for the period 1895-1902.

¹⁵The Stoughton Hub, January 11, 1901.

(Description and significance text prepared by John Rolling)

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet South School, Stoughton, WI Item number 10

Page 1

233.14 FT TH ALG W R/W LN S 4TH ST S0DEG30MIN35SECV 4.22 FT, S13DEG3MIN6SECV 145.57
FT & S20DEG1MIN4SECV 3.19 FT TH S89 DEG56MIN56SECV 265.99 FT TO POB EXC WLY .572
ACRE THF DESCR IN R480/34