

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	SEP 17 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 12 1976

**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

Washington State Normal School Building

AND/OR COMMON

Barge Hall

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Eighth Avenue

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ellensburg

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

#4 - The Honorable Mike McCormack

STATE

Washington

CODE

53

COUNTY

Kittitas

CODE

037

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

\_\_ DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_ SITE

\_\_ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

PUBLIC

\_\_ PRIVATE

\_\_ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

OCCUPIED

\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_ NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_ COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_ PARK

\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_ OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of Washington, Central Washington State College

STREET & NUMBER

Eighth Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Ellensburg

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Auditors Office, Kittitas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

500 North Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Ellensburg

STATE

Washington

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

September, 1974

\_\_ FEDERAL  STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

## 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		

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

Located in the town of Ellensburg on the campus of Central Washington State College, the Washington State Normal School Building is an imposing, four-story brick structure which currently houses both academic and administrative activities. Now known as Barge Hall, the building was designed by the local architect E. C. Price in 1893 to serve as the first permanent edifice of the newly-founded Normal School. Barge Hall faces south on Eighth Avenue between "D" Street and Walnut Street. Although it was originally situated on an undeveloped block at the edge of town, the structure is now flanked by McConnell Auditorium (1935) to the east, and Shaw-Symser Hall (1925-1929) to the west. The block is shady and well-landscaped, with tall trees on Eighth Avenue partially obscuring the facade of the Hall during the summer months.

Architecturally, the building represents an interesting variation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Although the rakish domical vault which once crowned its major, five-story tower has been removed, Barge Hall remains the architectural as well as historical focal point of the campus. It provides an important link between the late 19th century central business district of Ellensburg located several blocks to the southwest, and the more modern environment of the College campus.

Barge Hall is approximately 120 feet by 150 feet in plan, and is characterized by its complex, asymmetrical massing and proliferation of gables and towers. It is of simple brick masonry construction, with interior and exterior bearing walls supporting wooden floor joists. Each elevation is generously trimmed with elements of sandstone and moulded sheet metal copings and finials.

In general, the architectural treatment on every wall surface tends to define the many projections and the changing roof lines of each facade, and to emphasize the unusual variety of structural openings. Although the original plans called for the daylight basement, or ground-floor level, to be entirely faced with rusticated sandstone, this design was never executed, perhaps for financial reasons. Instead, rock-faced sandstone waterables occur at grade and first-floor levels. Similar belt courses of sandstone were employed at the base of all window openings on each story. The brickwork of the exterior wall surfaces achieves a great deal of interest through the use of jack-arches, moulded colonettes, and intricate decorative corbelling.

The main entrance to Barge Hall on the Eighth Avenue elevation is monumental in character. This entrance is situated off-center on the facade, and provides access to the major staircase within the five-story tower above. On the exterior, the entrance is defined by a composition of rusticated and smooth-faced sandstone elements. These form a broad Romanesque archway with flanking decorative "columns". The doors themselves are recessed within the tower, creating a covered portico. A large fanlight which echoes the Romanesque archway is original, but the doors have been replaced in recent years.

Two rear entrances to Barge Hall were modified as a result of a structural investigation undertaken by the architect John Maloney in 1954. The large brick archways which framed these openings were found to be suffering from structural faults. As a result, steel lintels were inserted and the archs themselves were bricked in. In addition, exterior breezeways or vestibules, essentially incompatible in design, were constructed at these entrances.

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The fenestration of Barge Hall includes an unusual variety of window types. That which occurs most frequently consists of an elongated rectangular opening with jack-arch, grouped in bay units of twos, threes, and fours. One-over-one double-hung sash are placed below single hinged sash, now largely replaced by opaque panels. Similar windows with round and segmental-arched heads appear on all elevations. On the south or main facade, within the asymmetrical gabled bay which adjoins the main tower, a third variation occurs. Here, segmental and round-arched windows divided vertically by brick mullions are set within masonry structural openings of corresponding shape. Finally, a series of round, quarter-round, and arched windows are featured within the various gables and bays, particularly on the south elevation.

The roof configuration of Barge Hall is basically Mansard in form, obscured by numerous gables, gablets, and towers. Following the structural inspection of 1954 in which it was found to be improperly anchored, the four-sided domical vault of the main tower was removed. This was an unfortunate event, because with its four ornate dormers, its crowning lantern and flagpole, the vault was an extremely distinctive feature of Barge Hall. The domes and domical vaults of the three remaining towers are still roofed with metallic shingles and capped with finials, clearly suggesting the exuberance of the building's original roof design. On all major surfaces of the roof, metal shingles have been removed and replaced with asbestos shingles. Original drawings for the building indicate quantities of ornamental cresting to be placed along various ridges. Whether this ironwork was ever applied is uncertain.

One major alteration to the exterior of Barge Hall not yet mentioned is the addition of a small brick extension at the northwest corner of the building. Although this addition is incompatible in design, it is virtually anonymous and is well-hidden from general view by the close proximity of adjacent buildings.

The interior of Barge Hall has undergone a certain amount of alteration in the course of changing usage. The original floor plans included a gymnasium, and boys' and girls' playrooms on the ground floor or basement level; an auditorium and model school rooms on the first floor; class rooms, laboratory reading room, and second assembly hall on the second floor; and "society rooms" or lounges on the third or uppermost floor. Fortunately, a great deal of interior woodwork remains intact throughout the building. Grooved window and door frames with transom lights and entablatures, distinctive wooden wainscotting, five-panel moulded doors, and elaborately turned newel posts and staircase balusters are still found on each floor level. Although ceilings have been dropped in some locations and doorways lowered with a resulting loss in proportion, the original character of Barge Hall is clearly recognizable on the interior.





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tions and devising an optional three-year curriculum.

The Trustees had hoped for an appropriation from the state legislature for the construction of a new building. When this was not forthcoming, they arranged with the City of Ellensburg for the temporary use of four second-story classrooms in a newly erected public school building. During the first year of operation, 1891-1892, the Washington State Normal School attracted a total of 86 students from 24 counties. Room and board were provided largely by residents of Ellensburg.

It was not until the legislative session of 1893 that the Normal School was awarded an appropriation of \$60,000 for the construction of a new building. Senator C. I. Helm of Kittitas County introduced the bill. Its passage at that particular time was guaranteed to arouse the interest of the local citizenry, as the prevailing economic recession made the prospect of a major construction project one of considerable importance to Ellensburg.

The Trustees of the Normal School initiated an open competition among regional architects for the job of designing the new facility. Although ten or more firms entered the contest, the project was awarded to two local men. E. C. Price was contracted as chief architect, and John Nash was employed as superintendent of construction. Out-of-town newspapers openly protested what appeared to be a fixed competition, but the Trustees remained committed to their decision. Bids for construction of the building were accepted on June 20, 1893. General guidelines issued to competing contractors had stipulated a structure of "stone, brick, iron, and timber", 152 x 120 feet, to be composed of three stories and a basement. 300,000 clinker bricks previously acquired by the Trustees from a local brickyard were to be utilized. The contract was ultimately awarded to H. A. Van Fossen and Company of Tacoma.

The Trustees fully intended to build on the originally-donated plot of land on the outskirts of town, Block 23 of the Grandview Addition. The faltering of Ellensburg's boom-time economy, however, had brought the community to the realization that the surrounding neighborhood was not likely to be settled for some time to come, and that the extension of the trolley system into that vicinity would most certainly be delayed. The citizens of Ellensburg thus began an active campaign to relocate the site of the Normal School nearer to town. The controversy was finally resolved in favor of the town in a last-minute conference between the Trustees and state officials. The Ellensburg Capital shortly thereafter announced that work had commenced on the new site:

"Quite a change has taken place in the appearance of block No. 8, First Railroad Addition since it was selected as the site. ... The sagebrush has all been cleared off and the size of the block is easily discernible. It extends east and west 400 feet and runs back from Eighth to Ninth Street a depth of 300 feet. The survey has been made, the grade stakes are driven and the grading is under way. Over 50,000 bricks are piled on the ground and everything about the site presents a business-like appearance." (August 24, 1893)

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Once begun, construction work on Barge Hall proceeded rapidly. Almost all materials were obtained in immediate environs: foundation rock from local basalt formations, brick from the A. O. Fowler yard in Ellensburg, and sandstone trim from quarries in Tenino. By late October of 1893, the second story of Barge Hall was well underway. In spite of early winter, the tower itself was roofed and completed in January of 1894.

During the course of construction, various scandals common to large scale public projects continually plagued the Trustees. It became apparent at an early date that the contractors could not be trusted on a day to day basis. Despite their frequent, personal inspections of the site, the Trustees were not held blameless, and were in fact accused by the press of personal gain. Creditors and laborers became increasingly unable to collect from the Van Fossen Company. The architects themselves claimed fees well above the originally agreed-upon percentage. Finally, the Trustees allowed virtually all of the \$60,000 appropriation to be spent in actual construction, so that they were compelled to request an additional \$5,000 for furnishings and supplies. A legislative investigating committee was brought to Ellensburg as a result of these scandals but the Trustees of the Normal School were eventually cleared of responsibility for any wrong-doings.

Even as the Normal School Building neared final completion in the spring of 1894, the Trustee moved to relieve Benjamin Barge of his position, for reasons which remain uncertain. P. A. Getz, an energetic and controversial figure, held the post for the following four years. From 1898-1916, however, the Normal School was quietly and capably headed by William E. Wilson of Providence, Rhode Island. During that period the school tenaciously adhered to its slow program of expansion, as well as to its very existence. Along with the normal schools at Cheney and Bellingham, the Ellensburg institution was forced to wage a constant defensive battle against the capriciousness of governors and legislators. The threat of withholding biennial appropriations was frequently very real.

From 1915-1933, the legislature repeatedly entertained proposals to authorize the state normal schools to issue the Bachelor of Arts degree. Success in this effort was finally achieved in 1933, under Governor Clarence Martin. In the meanwhile, the certificate program at Ellensburg had been steadily expanding, so that the minimum curricula was approaching a four-year duration. By 1937, the legislature determined that the Normal School at Ellensburg would be more properly termed a College. Washington State Normal School was duly changed to Central Washington College of Education, and in later years to Central Washington State College.

Because it has remained in uninterrupted service over the years, Barge Hall has figured prominently in the changing campus. As the institution's original structure, the Hall has participated in an historical sense in the conversion from a Normal School to a full-fledged College, offering advanced degrees in the liberal arts and sciences. Barge Hall remains

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the oldest state-operated edifice in the town of Ellensburg. Its architectural treatment in terms of style, manipulation of massing and materials, and careful execution of detail is one which entirely befits the monumentality of the structure. Although it is not an uncommon version of the Richardsonian Romanesque style within the state, it is the only extant example of such proportions in the town of Ellensburg. As such it represents a key element in the community's architectural heritage.