

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 John Greenleaf Whittier School, No. 33

and/or common School 33

2. Location

street & number 1119 N. Sterling ^{St.} Corner of E. 12th not for publication

city, town Indianapolis vicinity of _____ congressional district 11th

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Indianapolis Public Schools

street & number 120 E. Walnut Street

city, town Indianapolis vicinity of _____ state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Recorder

street & number Marion County Courthouse

city, town Indianapolis, state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indianapolis-Marion County Survey Historical Resources has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

city, town Indianapolis, state Indiana

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

The John Greenleaf Whittier School, more commonly known as School 33, occupies an entire half-block in a central city residential neighborhood. The school grounds, including a small front yard and paved playground, are bounded by streets on three sides, and an alley to the south. The school is completely surrounded by moderate housing dating from the same approximate time as the school.

The original School 33 building was constructed under contract to T. J. Morse in April of 1890. The two story building consisted of eight rooms and an office, and was considered large and ornate for its time. The rooms were heated by stoves whose damper controls still remain visible in each of the rooms. The hallways contained fireplaces with large mantles, which have since disappeared.

In 1902 an addition was made to the east side (rear) of the building. Plumbing, electricity and central heating came with this addition, along with eight additional rooms. The second floor contained an auditorium, in which was located a plaster cast frieze, copied from Della Robbia's "Singing Children."

Another addition was made in 1927, this time to the north side of the building. This last addition contained a gym and auditorium, a stage, and three classrooms.

The original building still appears very much as it did when constructed. The two story red brick building is trimmed in limestone, and is topped by a decked hipped roof, with a gabled wall dormer over the main (west) entrance, flanked by smaller dormers with conical roofs on either side. (See photo #1).

The foundation is of rock-faced limestone, which extends upward at the center of the building to enframe the round-arched entrance. The center bay that contains the entrance projects slightly from the plane of the main facade. The keystone of the arch is embellished by carved twigs forming the numerals "1890." Inside the arch is a stairway leading up to the recessed front doors.

Flanking the stone entry are narrow doublehung windows, each sash containing a single large pane resting on three small panes. Above the one story stone arch is a rock-faced string course, and above this are two windows like those just described, and a similar, wider window over the entrance. Sills and lintels of these windows are rock-faced. Above them is a stone frieze, with the inscription "Public School No. 33" in the center and flanked by brackets. The cornice is broken above the inscription, and the wall surface continues up to form the front of the central dormer. This large, gabled dormer has three windows, with a stone arch over the center one.

On either side of the projecting central bay are six windows at each level, divided by brick piers into groups of three. Each doublehung sash is two-over-two, with a two-light transom. Sills and lintels here are dressed, as are the mullions. The stone entablature of the center bay is continued on the rest of the facade.

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Continuation sheet

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Windows on the south side of the original building also have stone sills and lintels. Small gabled dormers pierce the roof. The east and north sides of the building were originally identical to the west and south sides, respectively. The stone arch of the east side is still in place between the original building and its 1902 addition.

On the south side the original building and the 1902 addition have a continuous red brick wall, although from the north it is apparent that the connecting passage does not extend across the entire rear of the building. The addition has segmentally arched windows on the first floor, and stone sills and lintels on the second floor. The roof of this section is a flat parapet. A round chimney, constructed of large-scale headers, stands on the south side, only slightly taller than the building.

The 1927 addition, also of red brick, is attached to the north side of the building, and extends beyond the main facade on the west. This two story building has a decked hipped roof with hipped dormers. Its one story entrance has a parapet roof, and a stone cartouche is centered over the door. The foundation of this addition is concrete.

The original building still retains many of its original features. These include the wide hallways, off-room cloak halls, wainscoting, and the tall metal pan ceilings, with embossed garlands and rosettes. The original doors and frames are in place, with the "pinch-controlled" transoms, and patterned brass latches and strike plates. The plaster frieze mentioned earlier was moved from the 1902 auditorium to the 1927 gym/auditorium, and is mounted in four sections totalling approximately thirty feet. It is in excellent condition, particularly considering its location.

Several large oil paintings given to the school over the years remain on display.

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/ 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 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 1890, 1902, 1927 **Builder/Architect** T. J. Morse, Builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Greenleaf Whittier School is architecturally significant as one of the few remaining Victorian schools in Indianapolis, and is particularly notable for the high degree of integrity that it still possesses. It is also culturally significant as the oldest educational presence in this large eastside neighborhood, one that has historically had close associations with two nearby National Register Historic Districts.

Whittier School was one of the first public schools built in the new residential additions developed northeast of Indianapolis in the late nineteenth century, and as such pre-dates much of the residential area surrounding it. From its construction in 1890, it enjoyed a close relationship with the noted high grade suburb immediately to its south, Woodruff Place (National Register, 1972). The town of Woodruff Place was a suburban community without its own school system, and residents paid tuition for their children to attend Whittier School. Later, working class arrivals in the surrounding neighborhood joined them. Thus, Whittier School has served as a key neighborhood landmark for over ninety years, since the neighborhood's beginnings.

Also nearby is the U. S. Arsenal (National Register, 1976). According to the Historical Sketch of Whittier School, the parents of Whittier School were "in the vanguard of those working to save the old Arsenal grounds for a city high school," early in this century. The Arsenal is now the largest high school in the city.

Whittier School is undoubtedly the most substantial Victorian building remaining in the neighborhood. It combines elements of the Romanesque and Queen Anne styles in an adroit manner. Victorian construction characteristics include load-bearing brick walls, a high limestone watertable, and a high, hipped roof of slate. Inside, unpainted woodwork, hardwood floors, high pressed tin ceilings, slate blackboards, off-room coat rooms, door-plates, and stairways all remain in their original 1890s and early 20th century condition.

Even the fragile plaster frieze located in the gymnasium is in near perfect condition. The combination of so many original elements offers the visitor the rare experience of being interjected into another age of education.

9. Major Bibliographical References

McDougall, Effie B. Historic Sketch of Whittier School (or #33) published by Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis, 1953.

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property Approx. one acre
Quadrangle name Indianapolis West, Indiana

UTM NOT VERIFIED
Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 6	5 7 4 6 5 0	4 4 0 3 8 0 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Bounded on the north by 12th St., on the east by Larch Street, on the south by an alley, and on the west by Sterling Street.

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 Doris W. Stewart, Teacher

organization _____ date 3-80

street & number 514 E. Dr. Woodruff Place telephone 637-6665

city or town Indianapolis, state Indiana 46201

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

T. Coates

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-23-81

For HCRS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date 5-28-81

J. Selores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration