

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97000324

Date Listed: 4/14/97

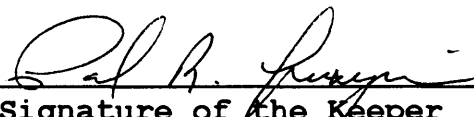
Dieringer School  
Property Name

Pierce  
County

WA  
State

Rural Public Schools in Washington MPS  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

4/14/97  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Historic Name:

The correct spelling of the historic name is: Dieringer School

Location:

The correct county is Pierce County. [Only the code number was provided]

Significance:

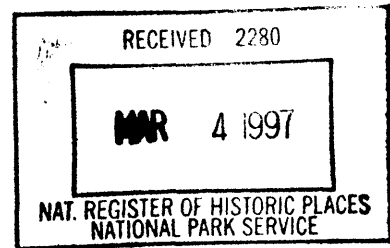
Architecture is added as an area of significance under Criterion C. Exploration/Settlement is removed as an area of significance in keeping with the format established by the Rural Public School MPS context document.

This information was confirmed with the Lauren McCroskey of the Washington SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

# United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name DIERENGER SCHOOL  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 1808 East Valley \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Sumner \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Washington code WA county \_\_\_\_\_ code 053 zip code 98390

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*David Hansen* \_\_\_\_\_ 2.18.97  
Signature of certifying official Date  
David Hansen, Acting State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet
- \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_ See continuation sheet
- \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- \_\_\_ removed from the National Register.
- \_\_\_ other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

*Carl R. Guy* \_\_\_\_\_ 5/14/97  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Carl R. Guy* \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action



USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Property Name DIERENGER SCHOOL

County and State PIERCE CO., WA

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**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1921-1945

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1921

1928

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Emanuel J. Bresemann, architect -- classroom

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Property Name DIERENGER SCHOOL

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

included in Pierce County Survey

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property less than one

UTM References

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1 1/0	5/5/8/6/0/0	5/2/3/2/0/2/0	3 /	///	///
2 /	///	///	4 /	///	///

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Gene Grulich and Caroline Gallacci

organization Grulich Architecture and Planning Services

date September 26, 1996

street & number 707 Court A

telephone (206) 272-0007

city or town Tacoma

state WA zip code 98402

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)**

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_

zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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The Dieringer School is located on the west side of East Valley north of Sumner, Washington, and faces a wooded bluff bordering the valley floor formed by the Stuck (White) River. Beyond the commercial and residential uses immediately surrounding the school property is farm land intersected by the main Burlington Northern Railroad line. The front (east) school yard is enclosed by a cyclone fence. This yard is paved to originally accommodate parking and school buses. The north and south edges of the property are also marked by a fence with uses on both sides residential in character. The western boundary is situated approximately midway between the school classroom and gymnasium buildings and the Burlington Northern tracks and is marked by a combination roadway and asphalt play area. The land between the school property and the railroad on the west side is presently used for commercial purposes.

The Dieringer School is a clustered campus of three masonry buildings exhibiting Georgian Revival influences. The classroom building was constructed in 1928 and is a one story masonry building which is symmetrical in design with cross gables at each end. The building's central entry was originally sheltered by a small covered portico with gabled roof and elliptical arched ceiling. This roof structure was supported by slender, paired columns with simple capital and base components. A flat-roofed canopy supported by steel pipe columns has replaced the original portico. The exterior walls of the classroom building are masonry set in a running bond pattern. The design has alternating rows of brick and large structural clay tile units. The base of the building is concrete finished to approximately two feet above grade.

Five large, fixed-plate double-hung, wood sash windows flank the entry. The rear of the classroom building has a design similar to the front elevation. The sides also have groups of five windows on each side of an entry with projecting porticos. Two small dormers are symmetrical and located above the center window bay. The dormers have bevel siding, each with a small window having a semicircular head. The dormer roofs are gables. An addition to the classroom changed the simple rectangular building into a "U"-shape plan. Based on old photographs, a decorative brick, arched niche was located where the addition joins the original building and above the niche was a circular window set high in the gable end. The roof is composition shingles with a gable configuration. The soffits are boxed with returns at the gable ends. The classroom addition is also of brick laid in a simple running bond pattern.

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The second building, the gymnasium, was constructed in 1921 and is a one-story, masonry building with a truncated hipped roof. It is rectangular in form and its brick and tile masonry exterior is similar to the classroom building. The north end of the building has a central gable roof projection with flanking flat roof sections on each side. The building has a central roofed portico projecting from the building facade with paired slender columns supporting the gabled roof. The portico is raised above the adjacent grade approximately two feet. The exterior walls are of alternating courses of brick and structural clay tile set in a running bond pattern. The base of the building has a concrete finish two feet above grade.

A series of four arched windows flank the entry portico. The windows, now missing, were double hung, wood window units in an eleven-over-six configuration. All windows have been replaced with plywood panels. The roof has composition shingles with a membrane roof over the central portion. The shallow eaves are boxed with no decorative moldings. Three small dormers with arch windows and gable roofs are symmetrically placed on the roof. The dormers match the dormers in the classroom building. The interior of the gymnasium building contains a gym floor with basketball court, a small stage opposite elevated bleachers, and a small interior swimming pool. Additional spaces include a corridor, a men's and women's toilets and dressing areas.

The third building of the Dieringer School campus, the boiler plant, is a small, one story masonry building located between the classroom building and the gymnasium and was constructed at the same time as the gymnasium. The building is similar in design to the other buildings with a hipped, composition shingle roof with boxed eaves. The main entry of the boiler plant consists of a large wooden paneled door. Also in this south facade is an eight-over-eight double hung wood window unit. In the corner of the boiler plant, adjacent to the gymnasium, is a brick smoke stack approximately 65 feet in height. The smoke stack is constructed of brick set in a common pattern, with every seventh course being a header course. The smoke stack is crowned with a decorative cap of corbelled brick.

The Dieringer School is an excellent example of a rural public school in Washington state. Simple geometric forms, simple roof lines, brick exterior walls with large classroom windows, and pediment-covered entry porches, make the buildings a fine example of an early twentieth century rural public school complex. Located on the original site along Valley Highway East, the school campus is all that remains in the way of the buildings that once constituted the small rural community of Dieringer.

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The Dieringer School campus is significant as the last remaining group of buildings that can be associated with the historical development of the Dieringer community. Constructed in 1921 and 1928, and designed in part by Tacoma architect Emanuel J. Bresemann, the property illustrates the role which schools played in the development of Pierce County's rural communities and the use that could be made of them for both educating the young, and for providing recreation to the citizens-at-large.

The community of Norwood was formally recognized on May 5, 1888, when Joseph C. Dieringer became its first postmaster. Dieringer, who first operated a restaurant in Tacoma, moved to the Stuck River valley in the 1880s and joined other farmers in the locality to form the settlement. One neighbor was Dr. Charles H. Spinning, who during the 1860s served as physician at the Cushman Indian Agency on the Puyallup Reservation, and who ultimately provided land for the Dieringer School. In 1892, the post office name was changed from Norwood to Dieringer to honor its first postmaster.

There are two general phases to the development of Dieringer as a settlement. The first, which lasted until approximately 1907, centered around the agricultural pursuits of the surrounding farmers. This era ended following the 1906 floods which diverted the White River into the Stuck, and destroyed much of the community situated near the Northern Pacific (now Burlington Northern) Railroad line. The second phase commenced with the construction of the Pacific Coast Power Company (now the Puget Sound Power and Light Company) hydroelectric power plant which was completed in 1912. The power company established its main camp at Dieringer during the construction of the White River system. Over time a general store, hotel, and gas station joined power company employees' residences and surrounding farms to form the nucleus of a small village.

Community life centered around the school. The district was formed on December 6, 1890, in the home of Bruce Wolverton. In 1892, the district purchased a storage shed and the surrounding land encompassing the present school site from Dr. Spinning. School construction was an evolving process beginning around 1910 when a two-room structure and teacher's cottage were built. From this time until 1918 this school building experienced various additions to accommodate a curriculum that included both domestic science and manual training. Land surrounding the school was made into a children's garden. The school district also allowed other Dieringer residents to cultivate gardens on the public lands not used for educational purposes. (The teacher's cottage, later used as the home for the principal, was originally located in front of the classroom building. It was moved [date unknown] to



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the south of the school complex and is presently located outside the southern boundary of the school campus.)

In July 1918, the school board decided, and voters approved, the construction of a gymnasium, swimming pool, and auditorium. Dedicated in September 1921, this structure, whose architect is unidentified, was designed for community use. The district purchased a movie projector and the gymnasium became the village theater. "Gym Nights" were introduced in the 1920s to provide recreational facilities for the public-at-large, as were night courses in math, grammar, and manual training.

By the end of the 1920s decade, the Dieringer community was out-growing its classroom building. In 1927, the district asked Tacoma architect Emanuel J. Bresemann to design the existing classroom structure, and following the passage of the needed bond issue, the building was completed in 1928. According to the surviving plans (in possession of the present owners) the school contained three classrooms, a playroom, library, and rooms for both domestic science and manual training.

Bresemann was a logical choice as a school architect. Prior to the Dieringer commission he had designed Steilacoom's Pioneer Middle School, Tacoma's Grey Intermediate School, and the Weyerhaeuser School located near Eatonville. Before retiring he designed an additional twenty known school-related structures throughout the Puget Sound region including the Pacific Lutheran Library (Xavier Hall), Orting Grade School, the Carbonado gymnasium, and Waller Road Elementary School in Pierce County.

Emanuel J. Bresemann was born in 1881 to Pierce County pioneers who had settled at Spanaway Lake. Following his 1908 graduation from Humboldt Technical School in San Francisco, he formed a partnership with M.E. Durfee in Seattle. He returned to Tacoma in 1916, after eight years of practice in Seattle as well as in British Columbia cities. Besides his school designs, his architectural commissions were many, with Tacoma and Pierce County examples including the original Nalley's Fine Food main building on Puyallup Avenue in Tacoma, the Washington State Soldiers Home campus near Orting, and the Steilacoom Town Hall. He also designed a number of residences including his own, located on Military Road in Spanaway, where he died in May 1971, at the age of 90.

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In June 1936, residents of both Dieringer and Lake Tapps school districts voted to consolidate as the Dieringer School District, a status it still retains. In January, 1995, the Dieringer School campus was put up for sale and purchased by the present owners. They intend to restore the classroom building and gymnasium buildings for both office and recreational uses.

The Dieringer School 1936 consolidation documents the beginning of changes taking place in the small communities located throughout Pierce County as urbanization, the automobile, and improved roads lured rural residents into larger towns and cities. In 1957, the Dieringer post office was discontinued and the community was incorporated into Sumner's hinterland. Even so, the Dieringer School survives as the only symbol of both community and pride of place.

It also documents a unique approach to both education in a rural setting, and the use of school property for public purposes beyond the instruction of the young. Dieringer is the only known rural school district in Pierce County that emphasized domestic science and manual training, curriculum components commonly associated with urban schools. The use of both the school grounds and buildings for community recreation and adult education represents the application of the urban concept of the neighborhood school in a rural setting.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bonney, William Pierce. History of Pierce County, Washington. Chicago, 1927.

"Bresemann's Brochure: Selections From the Work of E.J. Bresemann, Architect." Tacoma, n.d. (Located in the clipping files of the Tacoma Public Library, 1102 Tacoma Avenue South, Tacoma, WA 98402.)

"History of Dieringer District 68 and Lake Tapps District 29, 1890 to 1936, From the Time Each District Was Formed to the Time They Consolidated to Form the Dieringer School District No. 343." n.p., n.d. (Typescript chronology drawn from school board minutes located at North Tapps Middle School, 20029-12th Street East, Sumner, WA 98390.)

Ramsey, Guy Reed. Postmarked Washington: Pierce County. Tacoma, 1981.

"White River Development in the Puget Sound District of the State of Washington." Boston, 1912.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Verbal boundary description: The Dieringer School campus is located in the NW quarter of the NW quarter of Section 7, Township 20 North, Range 5 East of the Willamette Meridian, in tracts 10 and 11 of White River Garden Tracts (parcel number 952000-015-2). The property is presently owned by Gary and Arlene Petersen (2008 East Valley Highway, Sumner, WA 98390).

Boundary justification: The boundary includes the classroom building, gymnasium, and heating plant historically associated with the Dieringer School, but excludes those portions of the school grounds now used for non-related commercial purposes.

**DIERINGER SCHOOL,  
PIERCE COUNTY, WASHINGTON  
1808 East Valley Highway, Sumner, Washington**

**August Gene Grulich, A.I.A.  
29 August, 1996**

**Grulich Architecture + Planning Services  
707 Court A, Tacoma, Washington 98402**

**Photograph #1**

**View of east elevation of classroom and gymnasium buildings.**

**Photograph #2**

**View of east elevation of classroom building from within courtyard.**

**Photograph #3**

**View of southwest corner of classroom building.**

**Photograph #4**

**View of west elevation of classroom building at central entry.**

**Photograph #5**

**View of north elevation and side entry to classroom building.**

**Photograph #6**

**View of east elevation of gymnasium building and north elevation of classroom building.**

**Photograph #7.**

**View of east elevation of boiler plant and gymnasium building.**