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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

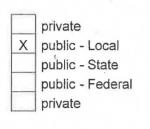
1. Name of Property	
Historic name Fremont High School	
Other names/site number	
2. Location	
street & number 204 East Main	not for publication
city of town Fremont	vicinity
State Michigan code MI county Newaygo	code <u>123</u> zip code <u>49412</u>
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, a I hereby certify that this <u>X</u> nomination <u>request</u> for determination of for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and m requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property <u>X</u> meets <u>does</u> not meet the National R	eligibility meets the documentation standards neets the procedural and professional
property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:	
nationalstatewideX_local <u>Butture of certifying official</u> <u>MI SHPO</u> Title	GITIS Date State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official	Date
Title 4. National Park Service Certification	State or Federal agency and bureau
4. National Park Service Certification	ppen Date of Action
ventered in the National Register	Beak 9.4.13
determined eligible for the National Register	
determined not eligible for the National Register	
removed from the National Register	
other (explain:)	

Fremont High School

Name of Property

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)



Х	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	building(s)
	object

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing Noncontributing

1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A	0	
6. Function or Use		
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
EDUCATION - School	VACANT/NOT IN USE	
	5	_
	-	_
7. Description		
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)	
LATE 19 TH AND EARLY 20 TH CENTURY	foundation: CONCRETE	
AMERICAN REVIVALS -	walls: BRICK	
Classical Revival	LIMESTONE	
	roof: ASPHALT	
	other: N/A	

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Located in downtown Fremont, Michigan, the former Fremont High School occupies most of two city blocks and is constructed in three distinct sections. These include the original 1926 high school, a two-story yellow and tan brick building whose exterior with its limestone trim and decorative brickwork combines Arts-and-Crafts-inspired Commercial Brick detailing with Classical Revival features. The other two sections include the 1961 International Style gymnasium and natatorium, a one- to two-story building constructed of red and tan brick that features the horizontal orientation and restrained detail characteristic of the era; and the 1988 connector between the two earlier buildings, a one- to two-story structure constructed of red and tan brick and containing the new main entry, offices, and assembly room.

Narrative Description

Fremont High School is prominently located in downtown Fremont, just east of the central business district at the southwest corner of the city's main intersection at E. Main Street and S. Stewart Street. Residential neighborhoods adjoin the school to the south and east, while the city's library, city hall, and a church are located to the north and west. The school occupies two blocks bounded by Main Street on the north, South Stewart Street on the east, East Maple Street on the south, and South Darling Avenue on the west (Sheridan Street, which originally bisected the block, was closed sometime prior to 1961 to create the double block). The 1926 portion of the school fronts on West Main Street while the gymnasium/natatorium complex faces East Maple Street. A surface parking lot is located on the east side of the school while areas of lawn bisected by sidewalks cover the remainder of the block. Scattered trees and foundation plantings surround the school.

The school consists of three main sections: the 1926 portion at the north end of the block, the 1961 gymnasium/natatorium at the south end of the block, and the 1988 section that connects the two. The 1926 building is a two-story, rectangular (originally U-shaped) structure built of yellow and tan brick with limestone detailing and a flat roof. This portion of the building sits on a slightly raised grade that drops off by several feet from the high point at the northwest corner of the block. The north and west elevations are the building's principal façades and are accented with decorative brickwork and limestone trim, including stone window sills, water table and stringcourse, and cornices. The central portion of the north façade projects forward and is flanked by two entry towers. A third projecting entry tower is located on the south end of the west elevation. The windows in this section and along the west elevation are separated by brick pilasters; originally these were nine-over-nine double-hung sets of three wood windows that have since been replaced with the current paired oneover-one aluminum double-hung windows. The original entry doors were likewise wood units with multi-paned transoms and sidelights which have been replaced with aluminum and glass entry doors and surrounds. Sloped concrete walks lead to wide limestone steps at the two north entries, while a flight of concrete steps leads to a concrete and stone stoop at the west entry. The east elevation is the only other wall still visible on the 1926 building. It is relatively plain in appearance because the gymnasium was located on this side of the building. It consists of brick with a limestone stringcourse, window sills, and cornice line. The irregularly patterned windows on this elevation are generally paired and, like those on the rest of the building, have been replaced with modern aluminum double-hung units.

The interior of the 1926 building was, and remains, relatively simple. The interior is arranged around a rectangular doubleloaded corridor on each floor with short halls leading to the two north entries. The corridors have carpeted floors, plaster walls with a glazed brick wainscot, and dropped ceilings. The classrooms are likewise carpeted with plaster walls and dropped ceilings. The original wood picture rail is present in some areas of the corridors and classrooms above the dropped ceilings. Most of the original wood interior doors are gone, with a few scattered survivals on some closet doors. Built-in wood bookshelves with lower cabinets remain in some classrooms. The windows at the interior have projecting brick sills and wood trim. The lockers are a mixture of original and new units. No historic heating or lighting systems remain. The building originally had a central courtyard. The courtyard was infilled during the 1988 renovations/addition to create a library at the first floor and classrooms on the second floor. The original gym on the east side of the building was renovated in 1961 to create classroom spaces on both floors.

Newaygo County, MI County and State

The 1961 gymnasium/natatorium is a roughly rectangular structure. The gymnasium and natatorium are both two stories in height, while the rest of the building is one story. It is a typical International Style building with a long, low flat roof emphasizing the horizontality of the one-story portion. It is constructed of red and tan brick designed to harmonize with the 1926 building. The building is generally devoid of windows and ornamentation, aside from plain brick pilasters on the south side of the gymnasium wall. At the south elevation of the one-story portion, a bank of aluminum and glass floor-to-ceiling windows define the entry and the multi-purpose space inside. A recessed outdoor space to the east of the multipurpose room is incorporated under the main roofline. Low concrete steps lead to the main entry. Recessed utilitarian entry doors lead into the gymnasium on the west elevation and the natatorium on the east elevation.

The interior of the 1961 building consists of the two-story gymnasium on the west side, the two-story natatorium on the east side, and the one-story multipurpose area on the south side. The gymnasium is a large, two-story space with a wood floor, plaster walls, and an exposed truss ceiling, The north and south walls have tile wainscoting. Bleachers line the east and west sides, while a small stage is located on the north wall. The natatorium is a one-story, rectangular space enclosing a large pool. The floors around the pool are tiled, as are the walls. The ceiling has square acoustical tiles. Low bleachers line the east wall. The one-story multipurpose area on the south side of the building has linoleum floors, brick walls, and an acoustical tile ceiling. A corridor flanked by locker rooms runs between the gymnasium and natatorium and leads to the rest of the school. It has similar finishes to the multipurpose area.

The 1988 portion of the building stretches from the back (south side) of the 1927 building to the back (north side) of the 1961 building, connecting the two. It has both one-story and two-story sections, and is constructed of tan and red brick designed to harmonize with the earlier portions of the school. The roof is flat with the exception of steeply sloped sections on the west side which are covered in red standing seam metal roofing. The west elevation is the building's main entry and has a covered entryway. The windows on this elevation are paired tall, narrow aluminum and glass units. The doors are utilitarian glass and steel entry doors. The east elevation faces the surface parking lot and is in general utilitarian in character, containing the school's loading dock and secondary entrances as well as a greenhouse addition.

The 1988 building interior contains a large entry/circulation space, a multipurpose room/auditorium, shop rooms, and the administrative offices. The floors are vinyl and ceramic tile, the walls are exposed brick and concrete block, and the ceilings are dropped.

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)

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В

D

Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

С

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.

Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

A	owed by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
В	removed from its original location.
С	a birthplace or grave.
D	a cemetery.
 E	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F	a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education

Period of Significance

1926-1961

Significant Dates

1926-27, 1961

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Judson N. Churchill (1926)

Warren S. Holmes Company (1961)

MHB Design Group (1988)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance encompasses the initial construction of the main high school building in 1926-27 and extends to the completion of the gymnasium/natatorium complex in 1961.

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Fremont High School is significant under Criterion A at the local level as Fremont's high school and as an important local community center. Constructed in 1926-27, the new high school, designed by Lansing architect Judson N. Churchill, was designed to address perennial overcrowding in Fremont's schools due to a growing population and the expansion of the high school curriculum in the early part of the twentieth century. The new high school also provided room for Newaygo County's normal school, a program that provided teachers for the county's rural one and two room schools in the face of chronic teacher shortages throughout rural Michigan. The school today incorporates two major additions. In 1961 a gymnasium/natatorium complex, designed by prolific school architects the Warren S. Holmes Company, was constructed as a stand-alone building facing in the opposite direction from the main school. In 1988, an addition connected the two buildings and provided additional classroom, office, and support space. The 1988 addition, while it is outside the period of significance, is compatible with the earlier two buildings and, due to its placement, does not detract from the integrity of the public-facing portions of the 1927 and 1961 buildings.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

Constructed in 1926-27 to serve as the community's secondary school, Fremont High School reflects the keen interest taken in modern educational methods and environments by Fremont's community as well as the State of Michigan in the early decades of the twentieth century. The school is significant under Criterion A at the local level as Fremont's High School and an important local community center from its construction in 1926 through 1961, when a new gymnasium and natatorium were constructed.

Education was important to Fremont from its beginnings as a Euro-American settlement. Settlers began arriving in what is now Newaygo County in the late 1830s, after local Native American tribes gave up title to their lands. The earliest arrivals were attracted to the area by the vast stands of timber, and settlement within the county typically followed the lumbering industry as it cleared tracts of native forest. In 1854-55, two communities were established in the area now known as Fremont: Weaverville, in Fremont's present-day downtown, and Elm Corners, about one mile east. In addition to the Euro-American settlers, a number of Native Americans also purchased land from the government, continuing to farm and live in the area through at least the 1890s. Within two years, both Elm Corners and Weaverville had constructed schools; Elm Corners built a log school, while Weaverville erected a plank school on the site of the current Fremont City Park. In these earliest schools, Euro-American and Native American children were taught together.

In 1865, the two settlements (Weaverville was by this time renamed Fremont in honor of explorer and Presidential candidate John C. Fremont) came to an agreement and reconciled the two school districts, building a frame school halfway between them and converting the original Weaverville schoolhouse into a residence. In a theme that would repeat itself for many decades, this school school nadequate, and in 1876 the community built a four room brick school in Fremont, on the site of the present school. Two years later, Fremont instituted a grade system and inaugurated its first high school. The establishment of Fremont's high school came within a decade of the founding of the first separate high schools in the state, and merely four years after a court case established the legitimacy of high schools as part of the public school system in Michigan. By this time, high schools were seen as a symbol of a town's success, and the first graduating class in 1879 would have been a significant milestone for Fremont.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as the timber stands in the area were depleted, Fremont's non-farming economy was transitioning from lumber-based to industrial. In the 1870s, the Gerber family established a tannery in Fremont and quickly became prominent in the community. Joseph Gerber was serving on the school board when Fremont graduated its first class of high school students, and his son, Frank Gerber, graduated from Fremont High School in 1887. The family closed the tannery in the early 1900s after raw materials, which came from the lumber industry, ran out. In its place, they founded the Fremont Canning Company to can produce from area farms. Although the business was very successful, its fame came in the late 1920s when Frank Gerber, prompted by a request from his daughter-in-law, whose baby was sickly, began experimenting with canning strained baby food. Production of canned baby food, previously available only through an expensive prescription, grew so fast that it quickly became the focus of the business, now known as Gerber Products Company. Still headquartered in Fremont today, the Gerber Company was a significant industry in Fremont throughout the twentieth century, infusing the town with jobs and money.

As Fremont's population expanded, the school system continued to outgrow its quarters. In 1882, six years after the four room brick school was constructed, the primary grades had to be moved to a different building due to overcrowding. A second four-room unit was added to the original school in 1888.

By the early 1900s, progressives in the state of Michigan were proposing a number of reforms to improve the quality of the public school system. The quality of rural schools was a particular area of interest, and the late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the consolidation of many rural districts and the establishment of new high schools to cater to the increasing number of students who wanted to continue their education beyond elementary school. This trend continued throughout the twentieth century. Curriculum offerings expanded beyond the basics to include early childhood education (kindergarten), science, and practical subjects like manual training and agricultural education.

The expansion of schools and curriculum required more and more teachers. Michigan had begun providing teacher training in 1849, with the establishment of the normal school at Ypsilanti (now Eastern Michigan University). This remained the state's only public normal school until the 1890s. Three additional schools were then established in quick succession: Central Normal School (now Central Michigan University) in 1892, Northern Normal School (now Northern Michigan University) in 1899, and Western Normal School (now Western Michigan University) in 1899.

Even with four state normal schools, there was still a gap in teacher availability, particularly in rural one-room schools, since normal school-trained teachers generally preferred teaching in larger, graded schools. To close this gap, in 1903 Michigan established a system of county-based normal schools. The state would provide \$3,000 to any county (except for those in which a state normal school was already located) that started its own normal school, with the remainder of the operating funds to be shared by the county and the local school district. The county normal school was a one-year program and typically certified graduates to teach for three years in a one or two room school within that county. The county normal school system proved very popular; at one time Michigan had fifty county normals, and between 1924 and 1934, an average of 1,000 students graduated from county normals each year. The program's popularity stemmed in part from its affordability; county normals were much cheaper than attending one of the state normal schools, and students could often stay in their home communities at relatively little expense. Students also benefited from learning their trade in schools very similar to those in which they would be teaching.

The county normal school phenomenon appeared to be limited to a few states in the Midwest. A 1910 listing of educational institutions by state distributed by the United States Department of Agriculture showed Michigan with about forty-two county normal schools, Wisconsin with fifteen, and a few scattered in other states. A similar listing by the Department of Education in 1922 showed the county normal system as widespread in Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, but again with only a few institutions in other states. Although county normal schools were designed as a temporary measure, they persisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century, albeit in gradually diminishing numbers. By 1934, Michigan had dropped to thirty county normals, and the Barry County Normal School, apparently one of the last of its kind, closed in 1957.

The Newaygo County Normal School was housed in Fremont, typically as a department within the high school building. Its location here, rather than in the county seat, may be due to the early quality of Fremont's school system, which was apparently quite high. Fremont was on the University of Michigan's certified schools list, which meant that graduates of Fremont High School could be admitted to the University without an examination.

Perhaps due to the expansion of curriculum and growing industry in Fremont, the high school again faced overcrowding in the beginning of the 1900s. In 1908, the district passed a bond issue of \$15,000 to build another annex to the existing school, increased the following year by \$5,000. A small frame building, used as a chemistry lab, was moved and a brick toilet torn down when the annex was constructed in 1909-10. A powerhouse and heating system may also have been constructed around this time, as they are later noted as having brick matching the 1909 annex.

Michigan continued to add to the required curriculum throughout the first several decades of the twentieth century. The first junior high schools were established around 1912; manual training schools, which had originally been private, were added to the public school system in 1918; and the 1919 Millen Law required physical education programs in larger districts, necessitating the addition of gymnasiums and athletic fields to the already crowded schools. Fremont High School felt the pinch of added programs and students; by 1920 the county normal school program had to be suspended because there was no room to house it. Even then numbers continued to grow: the student body increased by 50% between 1920 and 1925 (from 154 in 1920 to 242 in 1925).

Adding to the sense of urgency was pressure by the state government to provide better facilities. Along with curriculum expansion and reforms in the early part of the twentieth century, the state also concerned itself with the health and safety of educational facilities. The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended a number of measures to improve the

Newaygo County, MI County and State

safety of schools, such as straight corridors and stairways located on building perimeters for fire safety, as well as design strategies for better learning environments, like windows on one wall only to ensure that light entered the building at the best angle for students' vision. A 1915 law gave the Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to review all plans and specifications for new school buildings and additions over \$300 to ensure that health and safety mandates were followed, and the state had the power to inspect schools for violations. By 1925, the local newspaper reported that the state was demanding the correction of heating, lighting, sanitation, and ventilation issues in the existing Fremont High School building.

Adding on to the existing school, already a conglomeration of parts from three different eras, did not seem a viable alternative. A state inspector estimated that the cost to remodel the front two portions of the building (the 1909 addition was only fifteen years old at this point) to bring them up to current safety standards would be in the range of twenty to twenty-five thousand dollars, which would not even address the issue of overcrowding. A further addition would cost at least fifty thousand dollars, while the estimated cost of an entirely new building was around two hundred thousand dollars.

A campaign to pass a bond issue for a new school was inaugurated. The school invited parents and community members to attend a "night school" which seemed a thinly veiled excuse to get them to see the poor conditions in the building. The local newspaper reported that "...due to the lack of corridors and the present poor arrangement in the front units, it was difficult for parents to find their way around. Many of the men and women inspected all parts of the old building and were convinced of its inadequacy, not only from ventilating, heating, lighting, and sanitation standpoints, but also how crowded the conditions were..." The city's Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution calling for a bond issue to construct a new school, supported later by a petition signed by 200 of the district's taxpayers. A veiled threat from a representative of the state Department of Public Instruction commended citizens for taking action "before the state has to condemn the school, as has happened in other districts." Whether circumstances were really that dire or not, voters in the district approved the bond measure in December of 1925.

With \$200,000 in funds available, the district moved quickly to secure an architect and begin construction. The choice of architect fell to Judson N. Churchill, a Lansing architect who was known for his school designs. Churchill, who had begun his professional practice in 1903, had a background as an educator, having taught for eight years after graduating from Capac High School in his native St. Clair County, Michigan. His early commissions included a number of schools in the Lansing area, including the Moores Park School (1906, demolished 1957), the Allen Street School (1913) and the Christiancy School (1914), as well as additions to the Lansing (later Central) High School (1917, demolished), Eastern (later Pattengill) Junior High (1922, demolished), and West Junior High (two expansions, 1922, extant). His practice was not limited solely to educational facilities, as he also designed a number of private residences, commercial buildings, and churches. By the 1920s, Churchill had school commissions all over the state. In 1924-25, he constructed the large Walter H. French Junior High School in Lansing, still extant and under private ownership. At around the same time as he was given the commission for Fremont High School, Churchill was also working on a high school for Cass City (1927, demolished 1997) and a rural agricultural school for Milford (later Milford High School, 1926, demolished after 1992). The latter building closely resembled Fremont High School, suggesting that Churchill was not averse to reusing his own previous design solutions.

The 1920s were a fertile period for school architecture. The *Cass City Chronicle*, in reviewing Churchill's plans for their new high school in 1926, observed that "two-thirds of the cities of Michigan have built new school buildings within the past eight years." That boom reflected several trends in the state. One was simply pent-up demand: during World War I, there was a ban on construction to reserve materials and the labor force for the war effort. Another factor was the aforementioned state interest in mandating schools that were safe and that facilitated learning. Architectural and educational publications throughout the first decades of the century debated the best elements of school design and recommended model plans. The state Superintendent's annual reports featured recently constructed examples containing features the office viewed as exemplary. The typical school layouts for larger secondary schools were two or three-story buildings with central lateral corridors and symmetrical footprints reflecting various "alphabet plans" – the most common were H, I, T, or C-footprint plans. The architectural styles for schools during this period usually reflected the most popular established styles, Classical or Georgian Revival, Collegiate Gothic, sometimes Arts-and-Crafts or Prairie-influenced, and later Art Deco and Moderne.

Churchill's design for Fremont High School reflected these trends. The building plan was roughly U-shaped with an open courtyard facing south. Two short corridors connected the double-loaded main corridors to the two main entrances on the north elevation. The building was not entirely symmetrical, as the gymnasium, located on the building's east side, took up a larger space than the classrooms on the west side, and the original building's 1909 addition remained in place on the south side of the east wing. Stylistically, the brick and limestone exterior reflected a combination of simplified Classical Revival features with Arts-and-Crafts-influenced Commercial Brick details such as the lozenge detailing and brick in contrasting colors. The local newspaper extolled the design with the standard claim that it would be "one of the most beautiful

Newaygo County, MI County and State

buildings in the state," and highlighted the unusually light brickwork contrasted with dark mortar and the trim of "Indian" (sic) limestone. Although the building may well have been, as the newspaper claimed, the first in "this part of the state built in this manner," overall, the design was relatively restrained, befitting a mid-sized town in the middle of rural Michigan.

The majority of construction took place in the second half of 1926 with completion scheduled for early 1927. The local Masonic Lodge led the cornerstone-laying ceremony in June, including the placement of a "time capsule" in the cornerstone. By early September, the exterior was largely completed and inside work had begun. The gymnasium, which was again extolled as "one of the finest in the state," was dedicated before the rest of the building was completed. Unfortunately, its construction was marred by a fatal accident: local resident John McIntyre was killed and four others wounded when a scaffold collapsed while they were plastering the ceiling of the gym. Despite the tragedy, local residents looked forward to using the new gym, which would be available for general community use as well as by the school.

Although the building was not completely finished, the areas necessary for teaching were ready by early February of 1927 and the school began moving into the new building. The building was praised for being "modern in every detail and of fireproof construction." All the new departments instituted in the previous decades were accommodated, including the county normal school, manual training, agriculture, commercial work, household arts and home economics, music, art, and athletics. Both the library and gymnasium were intended as community resources, and the school's alumni undertook to furnish the library.

The interior walls and ceilings were plaster with metal lath; decorative features were generally restricted to glazed brick wainscoting and simple wood picture rails in the corridors. The classrooms were plain, with wood trim at the picture rail and outlining the slate blackboards and cork bulletin boards. The floors had concreted bases with terrazzo and linoleum coverings, although the assembly rooms, gym, and rooms where seats had to be fastened to the floors had maple flooring. The interior doors were generally five-paneled wood, and there were more elaborate door surrounds at the interior vestibule doors.

Although the building was nominally two stories, the slightly raised first floor gave the building a fully functional basement, which contained the agriculture room, growing room, and manual training department, as well as store rooms and mechanical equipment rooms. The first floor housed the county normal school, chemistry and physics labs, and the school offices and clinics on the west and north sides, while the east wing contained the two-story gymnasium featuring basketball courts, shower and locker rooms, and a large stage for community functions. Domestic science and art rooms across from the gym could serve double duty as cooking and staging space for banquets held in the gym. The graded classrooms, all twenty-two by thirty feet, were located chiefly on the second floor, as well as the commercial department and two assembly rooms connected by the principal's office. The 1909 south wing, the only portion of the original building retained in the new construction, was also remodeled as part of the construction project.

Pride in the new building was evident. The local newspaper recorded the observations of B. A. Walpole, a member of the Education Department at Michigan State College (now Michigan State University), who had visited Fremont to inspect the new agriculture department. "In his opinion it is one of the best constructed buildings in the state and a fine tribute to the vision and community spirit of Fremont. These men are in close contact with schools all over the state and their opinion is based on the facts as they see them every day." Satisfaction with the architect was also high: "The Board engaged J. N. Churchill of Lansing as the architect and there have been no regrets as a result of this choice. Mr. Churchill is one of the leading architects of the state and has given the district splendid service."

One of the consequences of the new space was the re-establishment of the Newaygo County Normal School. The county was again experiencing a shortage of teachers, with thirty-five districts lacking teachers. The twenty-eight students who enrolled in the county normal school for the 1926-1927 school year would help close that gap.

During this period, the academics and reputation of Fremont High School benefitted from the influence of its superintendent, Stephen S. Nisbet (1895-1986). Initially hired in 1920 as Fremont's principal, he became superintendent three years later and oversaw the construction of the new high school. Fremont was already a well-respected school, being listed on the University of Michigan's list of schools whose graduates could be admitted without examinations. Under Nisbet, Fremont was a member of the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, an organization founded in 1895 to provide educational standards and accreditation. In 1936, the University of Michigan began offering a supervised correspondence study center in the high school, making freshman college courses available to high school graduates in Fremont. While still at Fremont, Nisbet began serving on the Michigan State Board of Education (1943-1961) and later served on the Michigan State University (1964-1970) and Alma College (1944-1986) Boards of Trustees; both institutions named buildings after him. Nisbet left the superintendent's position in 1947 to become a vice president at the Gerber Company. He is perhaps best known on the statewide level as the president of Michigan's 1961 Constitutional Convention – a position he secured over future Governor George Romney.

Newaygo County, MI County and State

The construction of the new school in 1926-27 was fortuitous, as two years later the country plunged into the Great Depression; this and the subsequent World War II would make any additions or remodeling of the school unlikely for the time being. One early addition to the school was an athletic field, purchased by the Board of Education in the 1920s and fenced through the fundraising activities of the students. This was probably located to the south of the school across Sheridan Street. In 1931, the schools chose the name "Packers" as the nickname for their athletic teams, a reference to the packing industry as Fremont's largest business. However, athletics and many other activities had to be dropped for the duration of the Depression and World War II, although clubs which required no or little funds remained popular. The school board drastically cut teacher and staff salaries in the early 1930s, and only one yearbook was published during the entire decade. Many of Fremont High School's young men left before or shortly after graduation to join the military during World War II, and the war effort further curtailed activities and improvements at the school.

The post war economic and population expansion hit Fremont as it did across America; Gerber Baby Foods naturally grew as a result of the "Baby Boom" and many new workers were attracted to the area. In 1946, the school constructed a new concrete block addition on the south side of the west wing to accommodate a new manual arts building as well as a bus garage, which hinted at the growing population and increasing suburbanization of Fremont. In 1955, another addition housed new shop and music facilities, and the old coal-fired heating system was converted to oil. The powerhouse, which probably dated to around 1909, was replaced with a new boiler room and smokestack. All of these structures were removed prior to or during the construction of the 1988 connector addition.

The most significant change to the school since its completion in 1927 was the 1961 construction of a new athletic building. Rather than trying to attach this to the original building, with its patchwork of additions on the south side, the new facility was constructed as a freestanding building one block to the south, facing Maple Street and with its "back" to the school. The intention, indicated by the drawings, was that the space between could be infilled in the future with additional classrooms or shop space. The new building would house a cafeteria, gym, and natatorium (the funds for the natatorium were contributed by the Gerber family).

As they had with the choice of J.N. Churchill in 1926, Fremont turned to another well-known architect of schools, this time the Warren S. Holmes Company of Lansing. Founded in 1920, the company focused primarily on educational buildings and designed dozens of elementary, middle, high school and university buildings throughout Michigan and the Midwest. The company retained educational consultants to advise their clients on the best program for their schools. The commission for a gymnasium and natatorium building for Fremont accorded well with the company's design philosophy for secondary schools, which emphasized free movement, varied activities, and a sense of community life housed in flexible, stimulating environments. Well-known in Michigan as one of the state's prominent designers of Modern architecture, Warren S. Holmes Company featured Fremont's gym and natatorium addition on the first page of its "Secondary School" section in their catalog of company projects.

The International Style building was constructed in 1961. The contractors included general contractor C. D. Barnes Associates (Grand Rapids), mechanical contractors Vander Walls-Troske Co., and electrical contractor Jones Electric Company (Muskegon). The building featured the gymnasium on the west side and the natatorium to the east, with a central corridor between flanked by locker rooms and restrooms. On the south side was the main building entrance with foyer, multi-use area (which became the cafeteria) and a sun and games court. Students from that period remember walking between the main school and the new building via a covered walkway, even in the winter when their hair, wet from swimming, froze along the way.

With the new athletic facilities in place, the original gymnasium was no longer needed. A new floor structure converted it from an open gym to two floors. At the first floor, the stage remained in place on the south side with an adjacent study hall. Across a short cross corridor to the north were science classrooms, storage, and work rooms. On the second floor, a double loaded corridor in a backward "C" shape opened into classrooms on the east side and larger rooms for the commercial department on the west. The original lockers were relocated throughout the wing.

The last piece of remodeling work took place the following year, in 1962, when the original multi-paned windows and exterior doors were replaced with aluminum units. Although the new windows did not have multi-paned sash, they did retain the general rhythm of the original tripled window fenestration pattern. The sash were one over one units with obscured transoms at the top that still read as window panes. Similarly, the pattern of double doors with sidelights and transom was retained at the entries, but with single-paned aluminum replacements.

Physically, little changed at Fremont High School for the next several decades. The 1960s saw the largest school consolidation of its kind to take place in the state, when nineteen schools merged with Fremont in 1964. However, this did not prompt any large-scale expansion or remodeling to the high school.

Fremont High School's final expansion occurred in the 1980s. In 1984, the nearly seventy-five year old remaining portion of Fremont's original high school, the 1909 addition, was removed from the south elevation of the building. Four years later, the 1926 and 1961 buildings were connected with an addition that also infilled the 1926 building's courtyard to create a new media room and art classrooms. The new construction moved the main entrance to the west side of the addition and created a multipurpose room with kitchen and storage, new offices and toilets, shop facilities, and a boiler room on the first floor and classrooms and a music department on the second floor. In addition to infilling the courtyard, the entrance at the southeast corner of the building was removed and a new stair and elevator added, while a teacher's lounge was inserted onto the original stage. The 1962 windows on the original building were replaced with the current window system. The architects for this addition were MHB Design Group (Grand Rapids), with True Management serving as the contract manager.

In the fall of 2012, Fremont High School moved to a newly built facility just south of the downtown. After eighty-five years of service as Fremont's center of secondary education, the high school building now faces a new future.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (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

Name of repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):_

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Council of Teachers College Presidents. "The Michigan State Teachers Colleges" (1934). Books and Monographs. Book 3. <u>http://commons.emich.edu/books/3</u>).

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Drawings

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-----, "Gymnasium and Natatorium." Construction Drawings, 1959.

------. "Alterations to High Schoo." Construction Drawings, 1960

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Newspaper Clippings, Fremont Public Library

"County Normal School to Close in Michigan." Toledo Blade, February 14, 1957, p. 26.

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"John McIntyre, Victim." Fremont Times-Indicator, undated.

"Lay Cornerstone of Public School." Fremont Times-Indicator, 24 June 1926.

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"Public School Soon to Occupy New Building." Fremont Times-Indicator, January 27, 1927.

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"Will Dedicate Gym Tomorrow." Fremont *Times-Indicator*, undated.

Secondary Sources

"100 Years of Changing." Fremont High School Centennial, ca. 1979, pages 66-78.

"100 Years and Still Growing." Unattributed article, ca. 1974.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.16 acres (do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	16	585670	4813126	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zo	ne Easting	Northing	
2				4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zo	ne Easting	Northing	

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The property is bounded by East Main Street (M-82) on the north, South Stewart Avenue (also M-82) on the East, East Maple Street on the south, and South Darling Avenue on the west.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary encompasses the entire block on which the school is located and the school is the only resource on this block.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ruth E. Mills, Historian/Architectural Historian	
organization Quinn Evans Architects	date November 2012
street & number 219 ½ North Main Street	telephone 734-663-5888
city or town Ann Arbor	state MI zip code 4810
e-mail <u>rmills@quinnevans.com</u>	i

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

• 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. Key all photographs to this map.

- Continuation Sheets
- Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Fremont High School City or Vicinity: Fremont County: Newaygo Sta

State: Michigan

List of Photographs:

Photographer: Unknown Date Photographed: Circa 1910s Description of Photograph: Fremont's original high school with additions (1909 addition at far right), looking southeast. 1 of 35.

Photographer: Unknown Date Photographed: 1937 Description of Photograph: 1926 High School, looking southeast (1909 section visible at right) 2 of 35.

Photographer: Unknown Date Photographed: Circa 1930s Description of Photograph: 1926 High School, north elevation, looking southeast. 3 of 35.

Photographer: Unknown Date Photographed: Circa 1960s Description of Photograph: 1926 High School, showing ca. 1962 window replacement 4 of 35.

Photographer: [Warren S. Holmes Company] Date Photographed: Circa 1960 Description of Photograph: Rendering of 1961 gymnasium/natatorium building 5 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, north and west elevations, looking southeast 6 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, north elevation looking southeast 7 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: December 2011 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, north and east elevations looking southwest 8 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1988 infill building/loading dock, looking west 9 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, looking northwest 10 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, looking northeast 11 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building looking northeast 12 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1988 infill building, looking northeast 13 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, main entry, looking north 14 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, main entry and stairs, looking south

Newaygo County, MI County and State

15 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, west corridor, looking south 16 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, east corridor, looking north 17 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, secondary entry on north elevation, looking north 18 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, corridor in former gym area, looking east 19 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, south corridor at courtyard infill, looking east 20 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, typical classroom space, looking north 21 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, typical classroom, looking northeast 22 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, first floor interior, media center (in former courtyard) looking east) 23 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, west corridor, looking south 24 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, north corridor, looking west 25 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, east corridor, looking north 26 of 35.

Newaygo County, MI County and State

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, corridor in former gym area, looking south 27 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, typical classroom, looking southwest 28 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1926 building, second floor interior, typical classroom, looking northwest 29 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1988 building, first floor corridor looking south 30 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1988 building, first floor foyer, looking west 31 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, corridor between gym and natatorium, looking south 32 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, multipurpose area looking west 33 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, gymnasium looking northeast. 34 of 35.

Photographer: Quinn Evans Architects Date Photographed: May 2012 Description of Photograph: 1961 building, natatorium looking southeast. 35 of 35.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief; Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



ADJOINING 7.5' QUADRANGLES





High School - Fremont Mich.

The School Sattended .

































































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION PROPERTY Fremont High School NAME : MULTIPLE NAME : STATE & COUNTY: MICHIGAN, Newaygo 7/19/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/19/13 DATE RECEIVED: 9/03/13 9/04/13 DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000669 REASONS FOR REVIEW: APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N PDIL: Ν OTHER: REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N COMMENT WAIVER: N 9.4.1 REJECT RETURN ACCEPT

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in The National Register of Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA		
REVIEWER	DISCIPLINE	
TELEPHONE	DATE	

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Christensen, Bob (MSHDA)

From: Sent: To: Cc: Subject: Michele Ribant <mribant@cityoffremont.net> Thursday, April 11, 2013 4:30 PM Christensen, Bob (MSHDA); Christensen, Bob (MSHDA) Todd Blake National Register - Former Fremont High School

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Hello Bob,

Mayor Rynberg of Fremont received a letter dated April 3, 2013 from Brian D. Conway of the State Historic Preservation Office letting the City know that the former Fremont High School located at 204 E. Main Street is being considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Please note that the Mayor supports the nomination and encourages the State Historic Preservation Office to approve it.

1

Michele

Michele M. Ribant Director, Neighborhood & Economic Development Fremont Zoning Administrator City of Fremont 101 East Main Street Fremont, MI 49412 Phone: 231-924-2101 ext. 118 Fax: 231-924-2888 E-mail: mribant@cityoffremont.net



RICK SNYDER GOVERNOR STATE OF MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN STATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AUTHORIT STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

SCOTT WOOSLEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JUL 19 2013 NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

June 10, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull, Interim Keeper National Register of Historic Places National Park Service 1201 Eye Street, NW, 8th Floor Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed is a national register nomination form for the Fremont High School in Newaygo County, Michigan. This property is being submitted for listing in the national register. No written comments concerning this nomination were submitted to us prior to the submission of the nomination to you.

Questions concerning this nomination should be addressed to Robert O. Christensen, national register coordinator, by phone at 517/335-2719 or email at <u>christensenr@michigan.gov</u>.

Sincerely yours.

Brian D. Conway State Historic Preservation Officer