

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 an 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 Roosevelt Elementary School  
other names/site number n/a

### 2. Location

street & number 200 East Arlington Street not for publication n/a  
city or town Waterloo vicinity n/a  
state Iowa code IA county Black Hawk code 013 zip code 50703

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (    See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Howell J. Soike November 16, 2004  
Signature of certifying official date

#### STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property x 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 or bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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):   

Edson A. Beall 12/30/04  
Signature of Keeper date of action

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

private       x        
 public - local                       
 public - state                       
 public - federal                     

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)       x        
 district                       
 site                       
 structure                       
 object                     

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

	Contributing	Noncontributing
buildings	<u>      1      </u>	<u>      0      </u>
sites	<u>      0      </u>	<u>      0      </u>
structures	<u>      0      </u>	<u>      0      </u>
objects	<u>      0      </u>	<u>      0      </u>
Total	<u>      1      </u>	<u>      0      </u>

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

      n/a      

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

      n/a      

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school  
    
    
    
  

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school  
    
    
    
  

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:  
  

Late Gothic Revival  
    
    
  

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation       CONCRETE      

walls       BRICK      

roof       ASPHALT      

other       ALUMINUM WINDOWS AND DOORS      

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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### 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

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1922 - 1954

### Significant Dates

1922

1954

### Significant Person

n/a

### Cultural Affiliation

n/a

### Architect / Builder

Cleveland, Mortimer B.

Lauritzen Construction Company

Ralston & Ralston

Jens Oleson & Sons Construction Company

### Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property less than one**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

<u>13</u>	<u>515590</u>	<u>4553390</u>
zone	easting	northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on continuation sheet)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Clayton B. Fraser

organization FRASERdesign date 15 March 2004

street & number 420 South County Road 23E telephone 970.669.7969

city or town Loveland state Colorado zip code 80537

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**Additional Documentation**

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submit the following items with the completed form

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

- A USGS map (7½ 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)

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**Property Owner**

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name/title J&T Development

street & number 4608 Muirfield Drive telephone 913.909.3490

city or town Lawrence state Kansas zip code 66047

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 1

**ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** Black Hawk County, Iowa



The Roosevelt Elementary School is situated within the suburban setting of the north-central Iowa city of Waterloo. The building stands in an early 20<sup>th</sup> century residential neighborhood north of the city's central business district, two blocks east of Logan Avenue, one of Waterloo's major north-south arterials. The nearby buildings are primarily single-family dwellings, one or two stories in height, with modestly scaled architecture and conventional residential landscaping. Roosevelt School is located on the north side of East Arlington Street between Sherman and Hope avenues [see Figure 1]. Encompassing the entire city block, the property has frontage on all three streets, with Hanover Street and—beyond that—a railroad bounding the block on the north. The building faces south toward Arlington in Block 2 of the Gates Park Place Addition at the southern end of the block. It is set back a considerable distance from the concrete sidewalks on the south, east and west property edges, giving it a more imposing countenance and integrating it with the front-lawn setbacks of its residential neighbors [see Figure 2]. Access to the building's main entrance on the south façade is given by a wide sidewalk that joins with Arlington Street. This is abutted by two narrower sidewalks that curve around the building and extend to the property's east and west edges.

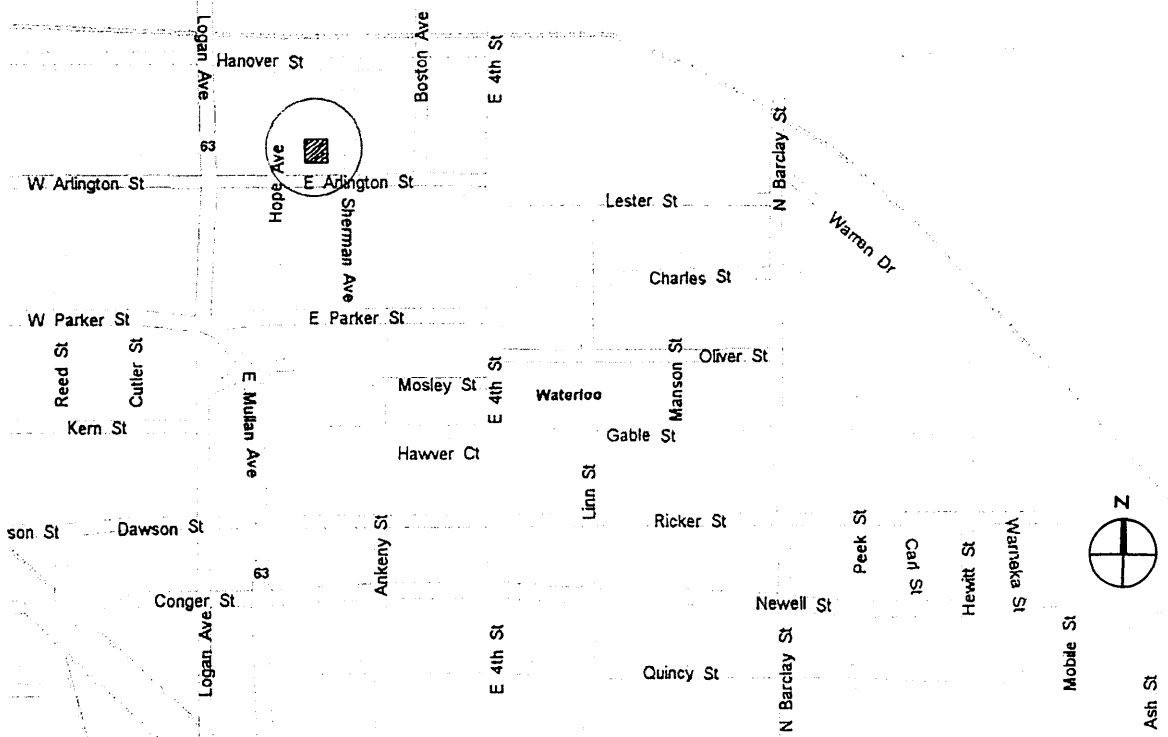


Figure 1. Location map of Roosevelt Elementary School, from Microsoft Streets and Trips, 2003.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 2

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

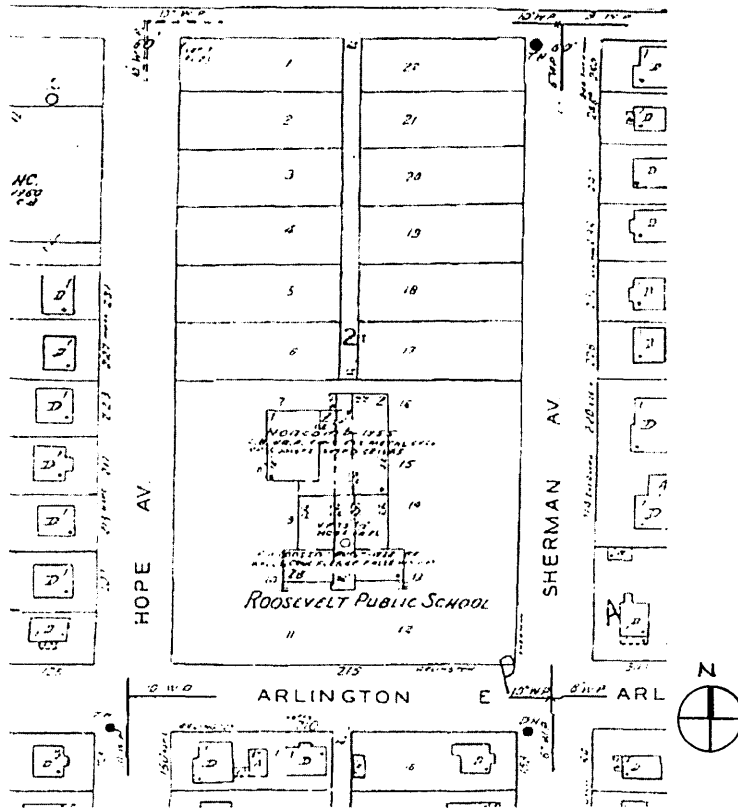


Figure 2. Site plan of Roosevelt School, from 1962 Sanborn Insurance Map

The front lawn is landscaped with four large wood-framed planter boxes and large spruce, maple and locust trees dispersed around a grassed lawn. Perimeter shrubs are planted around the school's southeast and southwest corners. Gravel- and asphalt-surfaced parking lots are situated on the school's east and west sides, with standard playground equipment aligned along the northern edge of the asphalt-paved lot. A small sand-covered area with playground equipment is located in the middle of the paved lot on the east. An open-sided auto canopy is located immediately north of the asphalt area, shielded from the school building visually by two large pine trees. To the north of the school is a large grassed playground area for baseball and soccer, separated from the adjacent sidewalks by chain-link fences. Grassed park ways dotted with deciduous trees separate the sidewalks from the streets. The requisite metal flagpole is situated in the front lawn, southeast of the school building.



Designed in 1920 by Waterloo architect Mortimer Cleveland for the East Waterloo Independent School District, Roosevelt School is configured as a three-story brick block, with a two-story addition that was built onto the rear in 1954. The building's original footprint was a cruciform shape, 94'-6" wide by 78'-1" deep. The 88'-0" x 90'-6" rear addition, with its asymmetrical plan, diminishes this statement somewhat, but the building's overall form remains largely intact. The defining elements of the original building are essentially intact today. The roof is flat, covered with composition roofing and lined with brick parapets all around. On these parapets, Cleveland eschewed crenelation, which is a typical feature of Late Gothic architecture, in favor of a simply detailed cast stone coping. The building employs reinforced con-

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 3

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

crete foundations, masonry bearing walls and wood interior framing. Exterior walls on the original section are sheathed with dark red, wire-brushed bricks laid in common bond. The bricks on the rear addition are similarly colored and textured but laid in running bond. The foundation walls are raised slightly above ground line, forming a low concrete water table. The only other horizontal banding, other than the parapet coping, is a cast stone beltcourse that forms a continuous lintel for the third-floor windows on the front section. The rear addition, built some 30 years after the original section, lacks any such horizontal banding.

The fenestration on all walls of the original section is evenly spaced and uniformly enframed with cast stone lintels and lug sills. Windows on the lower two levels feature corbeled labels with simply detailed label stops that are joined between the window openings, while the windows on the upper level are joined by the horizontal beltcourse. The sash are all brushed aluminum replacements, with three-light horizontal sliding sash topped by a single fixed panel in each opening. The windows in the rear addition all feature original brushed aluminum frames. The two large openings on the east side of the rear wing contain connected bands of nine hopper-sash windows topped by aluminum canopies and large glass block panels. The openings on the west side, which faces into the gymnasium, are placed high on the wall and infilled with glass blocks. There are no openings on the building's north side.

The original section of the Roosevelt School derives its architectural distinction from its symmetrical Collegiate Gothic façade. A centrally placed, three-story entrance bay projects from the adjacent plane of the south wall, forming the building's most prominent exterior feature. It contains a double-leaf (replacement) doorway with transom on the ground level, recessed slightly from the front wall plane and flanked by blind lancets. This doorway is capped by a heavy cast stone, arched hoodmold. Above the doorway is the word "ROOSEVELT" cast into the wall in Gothic-style letters; this is flanked with cast stone cartouches containing "19" and "21". This entrance bay is capped with another corbeled cast stone hood, which forms a label of sorts. Above this hood are the windows of the second and third floors, enframed by cast stone recesses. A cast stone decorative spandrel panel separates the two windows, and a molded segmental arch tops the upper opening. Above this is yet another cast stone recessed panel, containing three quatrefoils, flanked on both sides by similarly sized, foliated Gothic panels with bush-hammered recesses. The brick walls that flank the upper level windows are framed with cast stone quoins, forming a distinctively Gothic architectural statement.



oosevelt School was a point of pride for the city of Waterloo. As it was nearing completion in December 1921, the building was described by the *Waterloo Courier*:

In architecture and equipment (Roosevelt School) is of the most approved and modern design, bordering closely on high school standard of construction. The building is of modified Gothic type, contains 10 grade and several special rooms and is fireproof, as are all of the newer buildings in the district.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 4

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

A feature of this new building is a commodious gymnasium, with a balcony having a seating capacity of 200. The kindergarten is also of the new standard with built-in equipment, adopted with the building of the Francis Grout building. This gymnasium, 25 feet by 40 feet, is connected with the first grade room, and the two may be merged into one big assembly room.

Another distinctive feature of the new building is the community public library extension room on the first floor, especially designed for the purpose. It is the intention to have a library station established here which will remain open the year around for the benefit of the people of that section of the city."<sup>1</sup>

The 1954 addition onto the rear of the original building is a relatively plain-faced, two-story rectangular block, featuring a simple footprint, flat roof and exterior walls sheathed with wire-brushed red bricks laid in running bond. It is architecturally more prosaic than the 1922 section but is still a product of its time. The horizontal proportions, burnished aluminum sash and canopies for the hopper windows and large glass block transoms that form major wall panels all typify institutional architecture of the 1950s. Unlike the original section, the rear wing is simply detailed, without watertables, hoodmolds, brick band courses or articulated parapet copings.



hough there have been minor changes to the interior layout and finishes of Roosevelt School, the building's spatial organization has remained largely unchanged since completion of the 1954 addition. The main entrance on the building's south side leads into a small foyer, flanked on both sides by wood display cabinets [see Figure 3]. Beyond those are the central staircase with flights extending both upward to the upper levels and downward to the first floor corridor. This wide, double-loaded corridor extends south-north through the school, forming the building's center spine. The gymnasium, library, principal's office and classrooms are aligned linearly along the corridor. The second floor is configured similarly in both the 1922 and 1954 sections, with classrooms lining the center hallway [see Figure 4]. The third floor of the original section contains four classrooms and a recitation room clustered around an abbreviated hallway [see Figure 5].

Interior finishes consist primarily of carpet or tile (laid over the maple strip floors in the original section) and painted plaster ceilings. The walls of the original section are painted plaster; those in the rear addition are principally glazed or painted concrete blocks. Windows and doors in the original building are trimmed with molded oak, either stained or painted; the trim in the addition is minimal and institutional. Located in the original section, the library is finished like the adjacent classrooms, with carpeted floor and painted plaster walls. The ceiling is sheathed with Celotex tiles. The gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium is located in the 1954 addition

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<sup>1</sup>"1921 Improvements Cost \$2,201,286." *Waterloo Courier*, 31 December 1921.



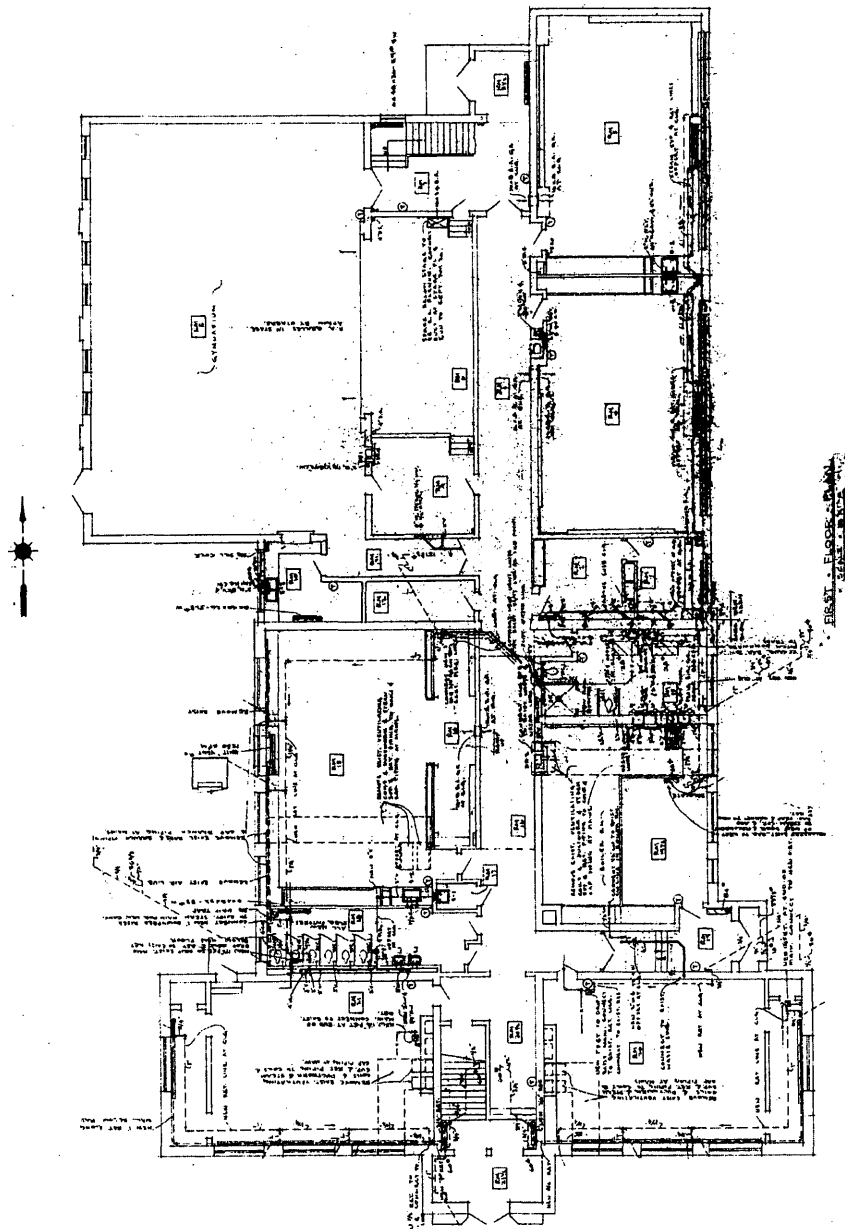
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 5

**ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Black Hawk County, Iowa



■ Figure 3. First floor plan, by Todd, Hedeem & Associates, Waterloo, Iowa, April 1954.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 6

**ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** Black Hawk County, Iowa

and features a vinyl-asbestos tile floor, concrete block walls (both glazed and painted) and a slab ceiling with painted beams. The raised stage is recessed on the east wall; moveable tables and chairs are aligned along the west wall.

Roosevelt School remains largely intact from its original construction, but there have been a number of alterations to the building, which have had varying degrees of impact. The most significant change occurred in 1954, with the construction of the rear wing onto the original 1922 building. This wing essentially doubled the building's footprint and necessitated some changes to the rear of the original building to accommodate the new construction. With the construction of the rear wing, the interior spaces were changed. The original gymnasium/auditorium, located in the stem of the tee of the original building, was moved to the 1954 addition, and the space converted to the library. The original library, situated across the hallway from the original gymnasium, was converted into a classroom and the principal's office. Other spaces in the original section remained largely unchanged. Although it did not mirror the Gothic architecture of the original section, the rear wing is compatible with the original building in its materials and scale. Moreover, the addition's 1954 construction date places it within the historic period for Roosevelt School. The other significant alteration to the original section, probably undertaken with the construction of the 1954 addition, involved replacement of the original entrance and the double-hung wood window sash with the present aluminum frames. The front windows now match those on the rear addition, further cementing the relationship between the two building sections.

Other changes have been comparatively minor. Some of the interior finishes have been changed or covered with later additions such as acoustic ceiling tiles. An exterior fire escape and egress doors have been added onto the west side of the original section. And security lights have more recently been installed on the parapets of both sections. These alterations have impacted the building's appearance, but this impact does not impinge too seriously on the school's overall architectural character. Roosevelt School today maintains a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, location, setting, materials, feeling and association. The building is an important landmark for the city, a visual anchor for the neighborhood in which it stands.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 7

**ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** Black Hawk County, Iowa

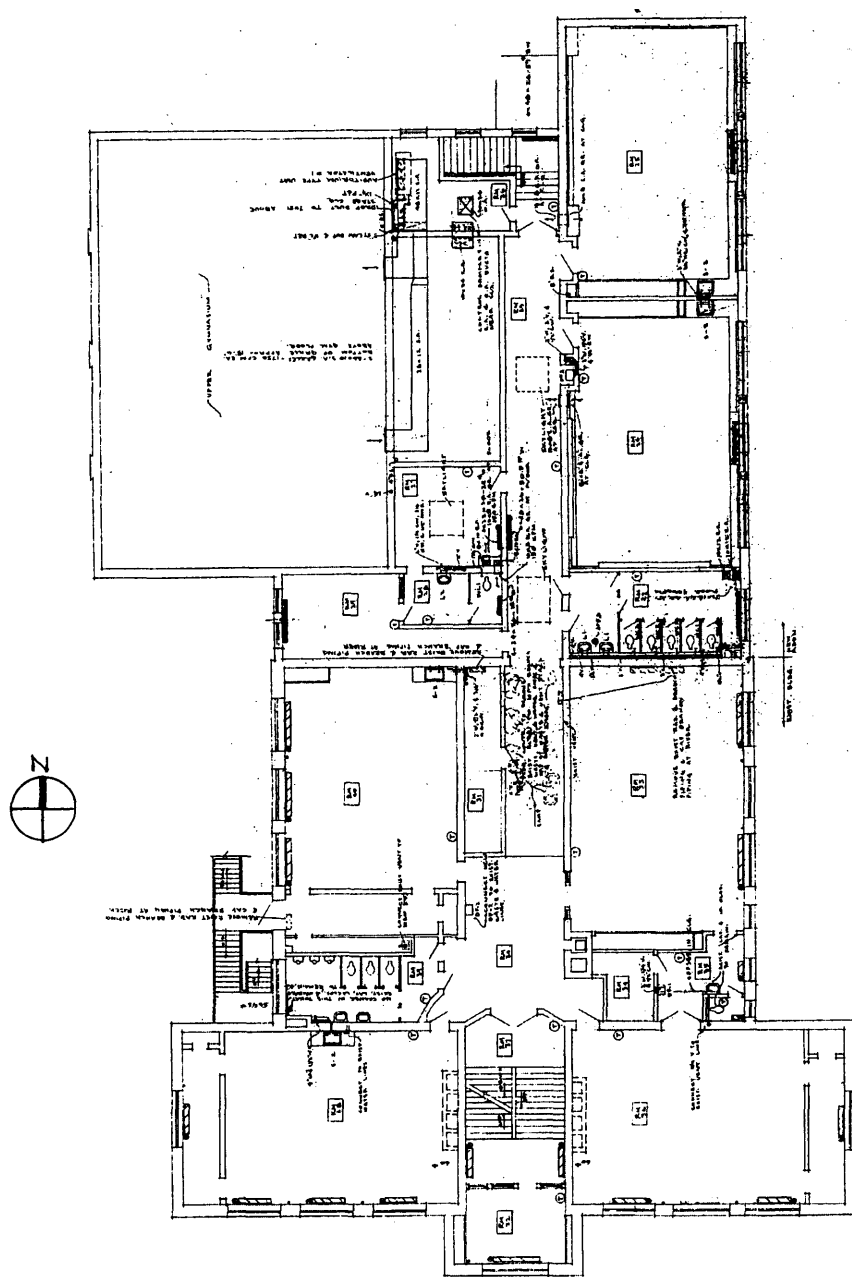


Figure 4. Second floor plan, by Todd, Hedeem & Associates, Waterloo, Iowa, April 1954.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

section number 7 page 8

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

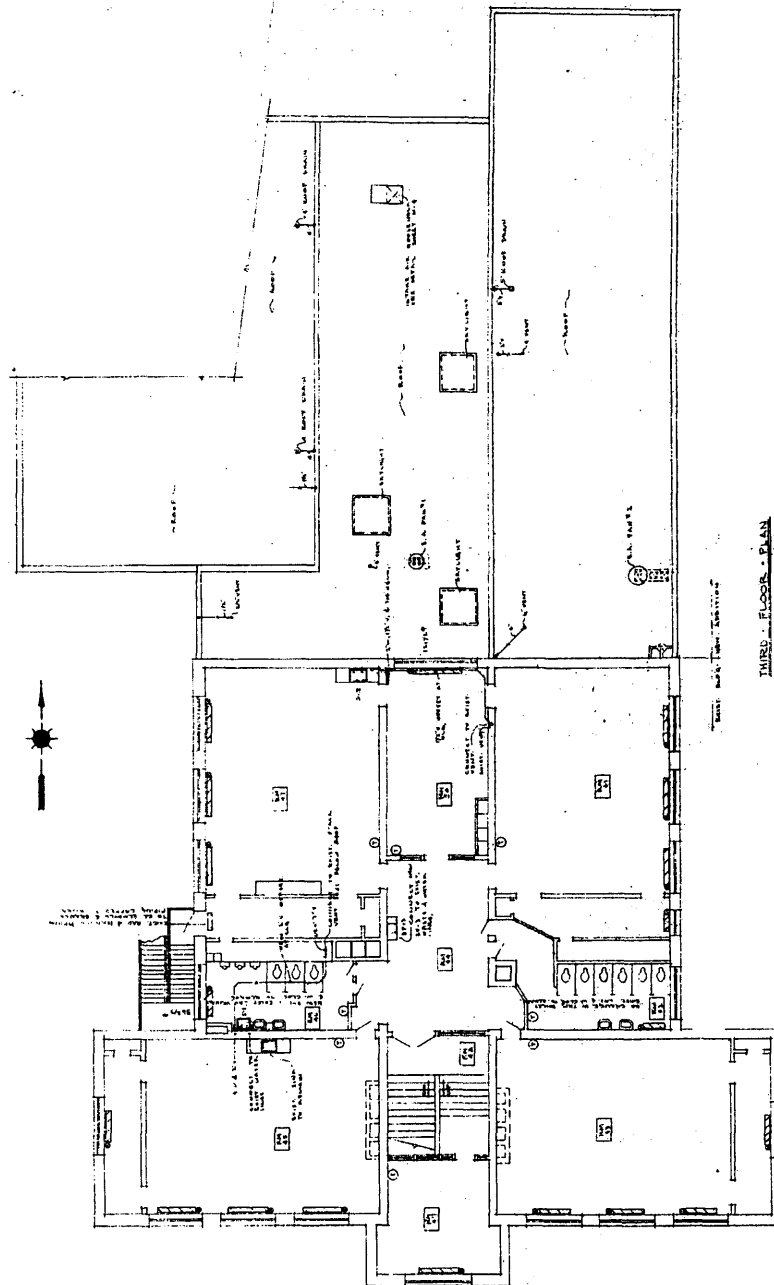


Figure 5. Third floor plan, by Todd, Hedeem & Associates, Waterloo, Iowa, April 1954.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 9

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa



uilt in 1921-1922, the Roosevelt Elementary School in Waterloo is a locally prominent landmark that derives its significance from two principal areas: education and architecture. The property is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for its integral role in the development of the Waterloo public school system. Intended to serve the working-class Gates Park neighborhood in east Waterloo, the school has functioned as a locally important educational facility for over eighty years. Its role as a community resource has been enhanced by the fact that its library served not only the school but the surrounding neighborhood as well. Construction of Roosevelt School did not represent the culmination of any building program by the city. Indeed it followed directly after construction of the Francis Grout Elementary School and was itself followed six years later by the Hawthorne Elementary School. Rather, the Roosevelt School has contributed to the continuum of public school construction in Waterloo as one of several substantial structures built between the two world wars by the city's east-side school district. It illustrates the unique two-district administration of Waterloo's schools and represents an important capital investment made by the district during the inter-war period—a carefully considered and artfully executed addition to the east side's network of public schools. Between the time it was opened early in 1922 until the present, and including the construction in 1954 of the expansion wing, the Roosevelt School has functioned as a cornerstone of Waterloo's educational system. It has developed a loyal following among its faculty and alumni and strong support among its neighbors.

Roosevelt School is also eligible under Criterion C for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a period and style of construction. The structure was designed by Mortimer B. Cleveland, one of Waterloo's most prominent architects. It was Cleveland's second commission for the east-side school district in which the architect employed the Collegiate Gothic style, an architectural idiom that was especially well-suited for educational structures. Cleveland's first Collegiate Gothic building, the U.S. Grant School, has recently been demolished, making the Roosevelt School the oldest example in the Waterloo public school system of this important architectural style. Waterloo's public schools have all been products of their time. This includes the first log building erected in 1853, the Second Empire and Italianate structures of the mid- and late-19th century, the Classical Revival schools of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and even the moderne brick boxes built in the 1950s and 1960s. With its well-proportioned façade, rich textures and Gothic detailing, Roosevelt School is imbued with a patina of Old World establishment appropriate for its educational function. In this it is distinguished among Waterloo's public schools. It thus forms an important part of the city's cultural fabric. As such Roosevelt School deserves to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 10

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa



In June 1846, some six months before Iowa was admitted into the union, Kentuckian James Virden staked a claim on land near what would become the original townsite of Waterloo. Three weeks later Charles Mullen brought his family into the region and claimed property not too far away. The two men located their claims on either side of the Cedar River, thus sowing the seeds for what would blossom into a longstanding schism between factions on the river's east and west sides.

Virden and Mullen were soon joined by other settlers. In spring 1852 George Hanna built a cabin on the west bank of the river, marking the first residence built on what would become Waterloo's original plat. The townsite itself was first surveyed in autumn 1853 on west-side land belonging to Mullen, Hanna and others. A similar survey of east-side property owned by Virden and others was made the following spring. In June 1854 a joint plat containing property on both sides of the river was filed for the town of Waterloo. Reportedly named by Mullen when filing the application for a post office, Waterloo was laid out in a traditional gridiron street pattern, with Commercial Street on the west side forming the community's center. By May 1854 some 17 buildings occupied the townsite. By the end of the year, Waterloo was home to a typical array of first-generation commercial ventures—the Sherman House hotel, Fancher's general store, Hosford and Miller's bank—on the west side. James Virden opened the first east-side general store, which was soon joined by Whitney & Martin's store and Sam Aldrich's Uncle Sam's Grocery. A ferry carried traffic across the river between the town's two sides, and a dam and several mills soon studded the riverbank.

Waterloo was from its inception a two-headed town, with the distinction made between east-side and west-side residences and businesses. As the town developed, the west side acquired the cachet of greater affluence, while the east side attracted more industrial development and working-class houses. As architect Charles Mulford Robinson would observe later in the century, Waterloo was a town not joined but divided by the Cedar River. "There seems to be only one danger that seriously threatens the advance of Waterloo in municipal aesthetics and effectiveness," he wrote. "That is the lack of complete union between the east side and the west, of the whole souled cooperation which forges itself in the greatness of a common task."<sup>2</sup>



One aspect of community-building that the nascent settlement undertook soon after its founding was the development of a public school system. In 1853, even before the town was platted, Waterloo's first permanent schoolhouse was constructed. Erected that spring on the west side, the 16x22 log building housed school children on weekdays and church on Sundays, with the Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians alternating their services. A year later the first school on the east side commenced. The children were first housed in Myron Smith's cabin, before moving to a small building behind C.O. Knepper's store, sharing it with the Know-Nothings, who used it as a meeting hall. In 1855 a grout-walled school

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<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Margaret Corwin and Helen Hoy, *Waterloo: A Pictorial History* (Rock Island, Illinois: Quest Publishing, 1983), 95.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 11

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

building was erected nearby. Located on the Church Donation Block, the one-room building functioned until 1864, when it was replaced by a four-room brick school.

In February 1859 the *Waterloo Courier* reported that school expenses for the previous three-month period amounted to \$700. "The whole number of pupils who have been in attendance at the schools in Waterloo this winter, with those who ought to have been, is about 400—enough for a good union school on each side of the river." Despite the fact that the city first bridged the Cedar later that year, children largely stayed on their own side of the river. An incident in 1858 in which two town girls had drowned while boating across the Cedar had entered into local lore, and parents cautioned their children against the dangers of the river. The location of neighborhood schools thus became an issue more politically charged than usual. In 1860 the school district erected the Central School, a large three-story brick structure, on the west side. Most of Waterloo's population growth was then occurring on the east side, where much of the city's industrial sector was developing. While the east side grew, the more affluent west side received the new facilities, it seemed. "The lower end of town [on the east side] has been accommodated with one room capable of seating comfortably not over 40 pupils," the *Courier* commented in 1862. "But the number crowded together there has varied from 50 to 110 scholars."<sup>3</sup> To address this overcrowding, the district built the Union School on the east side in 1864.

This discrepancy in population between the city's east and west sides prompted east-side citizens in March 1866 to petition for a school district of their own, independent from the existing, west-dominated district. West-side citizens opposed the split, but when the ballot was held on March 19, heavy rains and flooding on the Cedar prevented most of the west-siders from reaching the polling place on the east side. As a result the measure passed overwhelmingly, and the east side soon became the Independent District of East Waterloo; the west side became the Waterloo School District. The two districts would operate autonomously for some 76 years, before they were rejoined during World War II. During that time some 31 new school buildings were constructed in Waterloo.



ver the following years, the two districts continued to build new facilities in an effort to keep abreast of the city's growing population. The earliest schools were named simply east school, west school and central school. When the original Central School burned down in 1870, the west siders raised the \$20,000 in insurance shortfall (the building had cost \$30,000 but was insured for only \$10,000) and built another facility, also named Central School, the following year. In 1874 the east siders constructed their first high school, named simply East Side High School. The first buildings named in honor of famous personages were the Louisa May Alcott Elementary School, built on the east side in 1893, and the [Ralph Waldo] Emerson School built on the west side that same year. These were followed by grammar schools named after George Washington (east side, 1897); William McKinley (east side, 1903); Abraham Lincoln (east side, 1913); Washington Irving (west side, 1913); Thomas Edison (west side, 1914);, and Ulysses Grant (east side, 1915).

<sup>3</sup>"Waterloo School in Log Cabin in 1853." *Waterloo Courier*, 20 June 1954.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 12

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

The buildings varied in scale and architectural style in response to demographic composition of the neighborhoods they served and prevailing architectural trends of their time. The first structures tended to be small and architecturally unarticulated. The original Central School, built in 1860, was the first high-style structure—a Second Empire edifice with a prominent central tower dominating its facade. This was followed in 1874 by the East Side High School, another Second Empire building, the Italianate Central School (west side) and Union School (east side) and the Romanesque Fiske School (east side). Others, like the Emerson School and the Alcott School, were large hipped-roof brick boxes with no clear architectural expression.

The construction in 1909 of the Manual Training School on the east side marked the first time either school district would build a flat-roofed facility—a trend that would continue to the present. The Manual Training School was followed on the east side by the McFarland Elementary School (1909), Westfield School (1909), Lafayette Elementary School (1912), Lincoln Elementary School (1913), and the U.S. Grant Elementary School (1915). For the buildings' designs, the two school districts turned to a series of local architects. Wheelock & Thomas were responsible for the East Side High School; Josselyn & Taylor for the Emerson and Alcott schools; Murphy & Ralston for the Waterloo High School. The west-side district would later commission J.G. Ralston to design the John G. Whittier Elementary School (1906), the Washington Irving School, the Thomas Edison School and the Kingsley Elementary School (1919). The east-side district settled on Waterloo architect Mortimer Cleveland for the Lincoln School, Grant School, Grout School and the East High School.

**T**hese facilities were dispersed geographically to accommodate Waterloo's growing neighborhoods. By 1904 public school enrollment totalled almost 3,000 students. Five years later some seventeen schools had been built—nine on the west side and eight on the east—of which fourteen still functioned.<sup>4</sup> Reported the *Waterloo Courier*:

The school population of the east side is quite largely in excess of that of the west and the teaching force is proportionately larger, the number of teachers in East Waterloo district being 75 or upwards and in Waterloo, 55. There are eight school buildings in East Waterloo, six in west. The high school buildings are both comparatively new structures, the West Waterloo being newer by a few years, being completed only two years ago. Several of the grade buildings are comparatively new. The equipment is one of the best in the state with the new manual training building completed for the pupils of East Waterloo schools, one of the finest buildings of its kind in the west will be located in Waterloo.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>The first log cabin and the Central, Union and Washington schools had all been destroyed; the Central School was quickly rebuilt.

<sup>5</sup>"Waterloo Rich in Education Line." *Waterloo Courier*, 18 January 1909. The newspaper commented on the dual-district system then in effect, saying, "The increased expense incident to such an agreement was not considered by the founders of the town and the convenience of having the schools near to the homes of the pupils will probably lead to the continuance of the two systems for many years to come."



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 13

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

In 1909 the Manual Training School had recently been completed on the corner of Mulberry and Sixth, and the McFarland and Westfield schools were both underway, marking the beginning of an intensive capital improvement program by the east-side district. These were followed by the Lafayette, Lincoln and Grant schools. In 1920 the district completed the East High School, an immense Classical Revival edifice on the corner of High and Vine. That year the district also erected the Frances A. Grout Elementary School on the corner of Madison and Idaho.

Planning for the Roosevelt Elementary School—the district's twelfth school building—began as work on these last two buildings was underway. The building was named in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt, who had recently died in January 1919. The east-side district intended for the new facility to serve the newly developed Gates Park Addition to the city and relieve chronic overcrowding in the Fiske and Washington facilities. The proposed three-story school would house pupils from kindergarten through the seventh grade, as well as providing a manual training classroom. "The building is much needed to care for children of the north section of the city, which has been growing rapidly," the *Waterloo Courier* reported in June 1921. "In order to relieve crowding of other schools in the district, two grades have been taken to the east high building, necessitating a long walk for pupils."<sup>6</sup> The Roosevelt School would provide a badly needed facility for this working-class neighborhood. To design the proposed building, the district hired prominent Waterloo architect Mortimer B. Cleveland.



Cleveland was an obvious choice for the school board. Born in 1883, he was the son of a prominent Waterloo businessman. Cleveland received bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture from the University of Illinois—the only early Waterloo architect to have received college training. He was an early member of the Iowa Chapter of the AIA and was only the 20<sup>th</sup> registrant in the state when the Iowa Board of Architectural Examiners began registering architects in 1927. As one of Waterloo's most prominent designers, Cleveland's practice was largely residential. Between 1909 and 1926 he designed almost forty houses in the Highland District, east side's most prestigious residential development. Cleveland also designed commercial and public buildings, beginning with the First National Bank, which he produced in cooperation with Chicago architect Joseph C. Llewellyn in 1910. He also designed the Waterloo YMCA and several telephone exchange buildings. During the 1910s and 1920s Cleveland was commissioned by the Independent District of East Waterloo to delineate several neighborhood schools. These included the Lincoln School, Grant School, Grout School, the East High School and the Roosevelt School.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"Accept Bids for Roosevelt Bldg.; Cost Called Low." *Waterloo Courier*, 22 June 1921.

<sup>7</sup>Cleveland continued to design schools for the east-side district after completion of the Roosevelt building in 1922. He was responsible for the Hawthorne Elementary School (1927), the Longfellow Elementary School (1941), McKinstry Junior High School (1952), Jack M. Logan Junior High School (1953) and the West High School (1955). Cleveland was among Waterloo's most prolific architects, in active practice until the age of 86 in 1969.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 14

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

Cleveland was one of Waterloo's three most prominent architects of the time. Like Cleveland, the other two—Clinton Shockley and John Ralston—accepted a wide range of architectural commissions. Shockley delineated a number of distinctive residential, ecclesiastical and public buildings, particularly in the Lincoln Park area on the east side. One of his more noteworthy structures, the Elks Club, was praised by Cleveland as "as fine Renaissance [sic] as I know of."<sup>8</sup> Shockley designed churches throughout eastern Iowa, developing a practice that was cut short by his death in 1927 at the age of 47. John Ralston also undertook a variety of architectural commissions, first under the banner of Murphy & Ralston, then Ralston & Ralston. With a string of public, commercial, educational and residential structures, he was Waterloo's most prolific designers. By 1912 Ralston's firm had produced some 190 houses in and out of town and almost 80 commercial and public buildings. He was responsible for both of Waterloo's Carnegie libraries, the Masonic Temple, Memorial Hall and the Dairy Cattle Congress Hippodrome, as well as scores of courthouses, banks and commercial blocks in Iowa and South Dakota. Ralston was the architect of choice for Waterloo's west side school district, beginning with the Waterloo High School in 1901. During the 1910s he designed such facilities as the Washington Irving School (1913), the Thomas Edison School (1914) and the Kinsley School (1919).

Like most designers of the time, Shockley, Ralston and Cleveland worked in several architectural idioms. Cleveland's residential commissions typically featured Colonial Revival or Craftsman treatments. His early school buildings, exemplified by the East High School, were rectangular brick boxes with Classical Revival architectural detailing. On the Grant School, completed in 1915, he first used a modestly scaled iteration of the Collegiate Gothic style then popular around the country for academic structures. A symmetrical three-story brick block, it featured a projecting center bay and modestly scaled Gothic detailing. Cleveland used much the same architectural expression for the Roosevelt School as he had for Grant. As delineated by his office in 1920, the building was a tee-shaped structure with two classrooms on each floor on the front section, on either side of a central staircase.

The front section of the ground floor housed a general classroom and a manual training room, with a library, gymnasium/auditorium, boiler room and locker room situated along the hallway in the stem of the tee at the rear. The second floor housed the first and second grade classrooms in front, flanking the stairway and the principal's office, with kindergarten and third grade rooms and boys' and girls' toilets in the rear section. The front part of the second floor housed the fourth and fifth grade classrooms, with sixth and seventh grade rooms flanking a recitation room in the rear wing. "Roosevelt School is practically a duplicate of Grant school building," the *Courier* stated. "It will be of modern fireproof construction, brick, cut stone and concrete being materials. It will be three stories, including high basement, above ground, and will house all grades up to junior high, including kindergarten."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>As quoted in Michael S. Weichman, et al. "The Waterloo, Iowa, Flood Control Project: An Assessment & Inventory of Archaeological, Historical and Architectural Resources." Environmental Research Center Research Report Number 13, March 1975, 27.

<sup>9</sup>"Accept Bids for Roosevelt Bldg."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 15

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

Though not a high-style rendition of the Collegiate Gothic style, Cleveland's design for the Roosevelt School reflected the building's relatively late date and the modest means of its client. Collegiate Gothic was an offshoot of the Late Gothic Revival style, which had found widespread popularity for ecclesiastical, educational and some commercial buildings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Late Gothic Revival was itself an extension of the English Perpendicular style, reinterpreted by such influential architects as Walter Cope and John Stewardson. The two had first introduced this architectural idiom to America on the campus of Bryn Mawr in the 1890s. Collegiate Gothic soon found its voice at ivy league schools such as Yale and Princeton, where President Woodrow Wilson once commented, "Gothic architecture has added a thousand years to the history of the university, and has pointed every man's imagination to the earliest traditions of learning in the English-speaking race."

The ascendance of Collegiate Gothic coincided with a rapid expansion of college campuses that occurred after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, making it the style of choice among campus architects throughout the country. The style eventually filtered down through secondary and elementary schools and enjoyed long-standing popularity among American architects. Collegiate Gothic could be employed in either symmetrical or asymmetrical building forms, with the unifying feature being the emphasis on mass and the Gothic detailing on key building elements. For the Roosevelt School, Cleveland limited his stylistic references to the formal symmetry of the façade and the vertically proportioned entrance tower.

**I**n 1920 the city passed a bond issue of \$113,000 to build Roosevelt School. Cleveland completed the drawings for the building that year, and the district advertised for competitive bids for its construction. After rejecting bids as too high three separate times, the supervisors finally awarded the construction contract on June 21, 1921. Eight contractors had submitted competitive proposals for the project.<sup>10</sup> As low bidder, the Lauritzen Construction Company of Waterloo received the general contract for the building, Bruner & Salz the heating and plumbing contract, the Independent Electric Company the wiring and W.G. Ackles the painting. Aggregate cost: \$77,579. Work on the Roosevelt School began soon thereafter, and by the end of the year the *Courier* could report that "Roosevelt Grade school is rapidly nearing completion, workmen now being busy with the interior finish."<sup>11</sup> Late in February the school was complete and opened for business. In addition to providing much-needed grammar-school facilities for area children, the new school insinuated itself in the surrounding neighborhood by opening its library to everyone—children and adults alike. Roosevelt School quickly became a landmark in this northern Waterloo neighborhood.

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<sup>10</sup>These were, in addition to Lauritzen, Waterloo contractors John G. Miller (\$66,000), Charles Werner (\$72,717), and the Currie-Simpson Construction Company (\$63,470), Des Moines-based Schugarman Company (\$68,000) and W.F. Kucharo (\$71,700), and Hugo Evers (\$66,841) of Minneapolis.

<sup>11</sup>"Roosevelt Grade School Building Near Completion." *Waterloo Courier*, 31 December 1921.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 8 page 16

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

The school's name became an issue of controversy, sparking a dispute between the east-side and west-side factions. As this building was underway in the summer of 1921, the west-side district undertook construction of a new \$1 million high school building. The west-side district had wanted to name its new building Roosevelt High School, but the name had already been taken by the east side for this grade school. Moreover, many on the west side wanted to retain the name Waterloo High School. In August they staged a parade to protest the proposed change. Reported the *Courier*:

Now the west school board has taken it upon itself to attempt to change that name (Waterloo High School), now declared hoary with age and stoop shouldered with tradition. In its place they would substitute some such yell as "Teddy! Teddy! Rough and Ready!" At least so it is written. Living proof of this, however, is said to have been consumed in the burning wrath of the alumni, students, former students and others who are not but wish they were.<sup>12</sup>

Ultimately, the board gave in to the hue and cry from the alumni. The west-side building retained the Waterloo High School name, and the east-side elementary school retained the name Roosevelt. It functioned this way unaltered through the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, acting as a focal point for the Gates Park neighborhood.

**F**aced with chronic overcrowding of its facilities, the east side district continued building more schools until World War II: Hawthorne Elementary in 1927, Riverview Elementary in 1933 and Longfellow Elementary in 1940. In 1942 the two school districts merged to form the Independent School District of Waterloo, and the construction continued apace. In the early 1950s Waterloo experienced another boom in grade school enrollment, prompting construction of several new buildings and additions to several existing buildings. Roosevelt was one of the schools thus expanded. Even though Mortimer Cleveland was still actively designing buildings and had just completed the McKinstry Junior High School, the school district instead hired his competitors, Ralston and Ralston, to design the addition. Their design reflected prevailing 1950s streamlined aesthetics more than it did the original building but still managed to work architecturally.

Working from the Ralstons' plans, the Jens Oleson & Sons Construction Company built the rear addition in 1954. For fifty years after that, until its closure in May 2004, Roosevelt School functioned as an elementary facility for neighborhood children, with only minor changes to its interior spaces and finishes. It has been acquired by J&T Development of Lawrence, Kansas, which plans to adaptively reuse it to provide subsidized senior housing. Sensitively rehabilitated, the building will again offer an opportunity for preservation and interpretation of this important aspect of Waterloo history.

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<sup>12</sup>"Parade to Boost 'Waterloo High.'" *Waterloo Courier*, 26 August 1921. The newspaper continued:

Proof that the name "Theodore Roosevelt High School" is entirely distasteful to many will be given when a parade will start at the old west high building and march thru the downtown district, echoing and re-echoing the war cries of west high with the emphasis on west high. It will be a torchlight parade, led by those who have won W's and they will wear their letters. Banners will be carried announcing to the world that the 'Waterloo High School' is the name wanted, and not the title conferred by the school board, on the new building.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 9 page 17

ROOSEVELT SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 9 page 18

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 9 page 19

ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

section number 9 page 20

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

section number 10 page 21

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 ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Black Hawk County, Iowa

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 7-16, Block 2, Gates Park Place Addition to City of Waterloo, Iowa.

**Boundary Justification**


The boundaries of the nominated area coincide with the historical boundaries for the school building and its immediate environs.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

section number   photos   page   22

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 ROOSEVELT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL   Black Hawk County, Iowa

### Index to Photographs

Name of photographer: Clayton B. Fraser

Date of photographs: August 2003

Location of original neg: FRASERdesign, Loveland, Colorado

Description of views:

Photo number 1: General view of school building and grounds. View to northeast.

Photo number 2: South front of building. View to north.

Photo number 3: East side and south front of building. View to northwest.

Photo number 4: East side and north rear of building. View to southwest.

Photo number 5: North rear and west side of building. View to southeast.

Photo number 6: Interior view of gymnasium/auditorium/cafeteria in northwest corner of rear addition. View to south.

Photo number 7: Interior view of library in first floor of original section. View to northwest.

Photo number 8: Interior view of typical classroom in original section. View to east.

Photo number 9: Interior view of typical classroom in rear addition. View to south.

Photo number 10: Interior view of third-floor corridor in original section. View to south.