

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 18 1987

date entered

MAR 25 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pleasant Lawn School Historic District

and/or common Pleasant Lawn School

2. Location

street & number Off State Highway 218 not for publication

city, town Mt. Pleasant XXXvicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Henry code 087

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mt. Pleasant Community Schools

street & number c/o Mr. Richard H. Goodwin, Superintendent

city, town Mt. Pleasant vicinity of state Iowa 52641

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office

street & number Henry County Courthouse

city, town Mt. Pleasant state Iowa 52641

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Three buildings, a two story brick school, a two story frame house (teacherage) and a stable occupy a three and a half acre property, forming a rural school district complex. Located five miles northeast of Mt. Pleasant, the complex is a well preserved example of a pre-World War I consolidated rural school district with a full range of the resources then necessary for that type of function.

The School Building:

The "T" shaped plan is two stories with a raised basement. The stem of the plan points south. A high parapet wall, set above a flat roof, makes the building appear even taller. The building measures 64' x 49.5'. A single story gymnasium addition (42' x 47') on the rear of the plan, with barrel vault ceiling (sixty feet long, ceiling height of thirty-three feet). A large square chimney projects from the base of the stem. The coal bin lies outside of the southwest corner of the plan beneath a slab.

Double door entrances are located on the south fronts which flank the stem of the plan. Fenestration is both functional in terms of its location, and symmetrical as well. All windows are double hung sash (4/4), measuring eight by three feet, whether set in bands or individually. The west side wall differs from its eastern counterpart only in that an additional second floor window band is on the former. A corner exterior entrance has also been added at the northwest corner of the original building. Window bands, composed of four separated, or three grouped windows with flanking side windows, reflect the interior distribution of classrooms. Bare wall planes are found only on the first story sidewalls of the stem. Individual full length or half size windows trace the two stairwells above each door. The windows are vertically aligned.

The plan precludes any overwhelming presentation of style what with the lack of any dominant main facade. Four brick belt courses texture the raised basement beneath a broad water table formed by two brick courses which flank a panel of soldier bricks. The parapet is similarly enhanced by a raised diaperwork diamond pattern. Stone keystones are set above each entrance and one is centered on the front of the building. A stone panel below the latter is inscribed with the name of the school. The two double doors have pointed arches and multi-paned transoms. The prevalence of brick trim (soldier horizontal and stacked vertical courses frame window sets and rowlock courses form sills) in the building apparently reflects additional economy measures undertaken by the school board and the architects. A second version of the plan called for "Cut Stone sills, base course, and trim around the entrance doors..." These are not present. Belt courses frame the blank sections of wall where window bands are lacking. They also connect the sills of the upper windows on the main front. Two belt courses underscore the parapet face.

The building is load bearing hollow tile (interior eight inches) with red brick veneer. The gymnasium walls are of tile only. Steel beams support floors and wooden rafters the roof. The gym employs wood trusses and its vaulted roof runs east and west.

Inside, the front of the core is a hall and stairways are on either end. The sick room and teachers' workrooms originally filled the tops of each stairwell. The building core is evenly divided into two classrooms (24' x 20') on each level, including the basement. The upper two levels of the "stem" hold one large room on each level (30' x 18').

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
Criterion: A, Rural Consolidated School Movement		<input type="checkbox"/> invention	Contributing Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
Specific dates	1916-1936	Builder/Architect	H. W. Underhill Co., Kansas City (Arch Bldr)	
			Count:	3

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pleasant Lawn School complex, including school, teacherage, and bus barn, is a living example of a significant early Twentieth Century Iowa educational phenomena, the rural consolidated school district. At its peak, eighty-nine districts were established. The consolidated rural district movement, between the period 1920-1950 provided a larger tax base for the funding of the then modern needs of public education. Pleasant Lawn exemplifies this theme inasmuch as its complex retains its main building, its teacherage and its bus barn (relocated on site) in a relatively unchanged state. The continued use of the site as a school and the adaptation over time of its buildings, including the addition of a gymnasium, testifies to the continued viability of a locally valued educational facility.

Pleasant Lawn School is the only intact example of an Iowa "rural campus", which is defined as including the school building, a teacherage and stable or barn.

The school consolidation movement in Iowa was an attempt by people living in rural and small town area to improve the educational opportunities offered by the public schools. Public high schools in towns and cities had replaced the private academies by the early 1920's and were expanding course offerings to include vocational and normal training as well as the usual "basic courses." Because of limited funds small rural districts were unable to provide similar services with numerous parents sending their children to the larger schools. In the late 1800's a movement started in northern Iowa to "consolidate" or join a number of districts together to provide a larger tax base for increased funding. In the majority of consolidations, the rural districts surrounding a town, plus the town itself, "consolidated." This left some rural areas unable to improve their educational opportunities. As a result a "rural" consolidation movement arose within the total movement. Rural districts would join and later centralize students sometimes moving rural schools to a central location, but eventually constructing a building. According to the Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Iowa) for the Biennium ending June 30, 1930, "Eighty-nine wholly rural consolidated districts have built a central building and maintain a central school."

A problem which arose for some districts was housing the teaching staff. Transportation had not improved to the point teachers could commute or even stay in a nearby community, so a "teacherage" or dormitory was constructed. "The purely rural location brings the question of a teacherage to the front at once, and in some places fine homes for the superintendent and teachers are built in connection with these consolidated districts" stated the Department of Public Instruction Biennial Report of 1920.

Students were usually transported to the central school by horse drawn hacks and a barn was constructed to house the horses during the day. The rural consolidated school actually became a "campus" consisting of the school, the teacherage and the barn. In some cases a church was nearby.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3.5
Quadrangle name Winfield South

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	2	6	6	6	0	4	5	4	1	4	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	5	6	2	6	6	6	0	4	5	4	1	5	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	5	6	2	6	5	4	0	4	5	4	1	5	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	5	6	2	6	6	0	0	4	5	4	1	4	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

Refer to Continuation Sheet 10-2.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

State Historical Society of Iowa

organization Office of Historic Preservation date January 8, 1987

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state IA 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Carol L. Ulch

Carol L. Ulch

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 2-10-87

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

Beth Grosvenor date 3/25/87
Keeper of the National Register

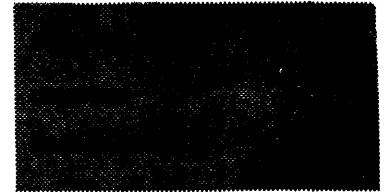
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 2

The Teacherage:

The frame two story teacherage is square on plan, with a steeply pitched hip/gable. The plan is augmented with identical single story front and rear porches, that on the east being built in, that on the west left open.

The basement foundation is composed of concrete blocks cast to resemble rough quarried stone. Narrow clapboard covers the exterior. A chimney projects from the north front of the plan. Fenestration is somewhat erratic, side windows are not vertically alligned, upper western windows are paired, a single diamond shaped window is set in the lower floor level of the south side wall. Windows are double hung wooden sash (4/4) which match those in the main school building.

The house originally was a single story country school (Wesley No. 8 School), apparently with the same square configuration. Metal covered cellar doors and a fuel tank stand southeast of the house. No information is available concerning the interior plan or appointments. The house was constructed at the same time as the school, 1916-17. The original site for the school house which formed the lower floor is not known.

The Barn:

The hack barn is a simple three bay rectangular plan, gabled roof, with a shed roof single bay addition along the west side. The building is balloon frame with vertical board siding. A stack projects from the north rear of the plan, indicating the presence of shops at the rear of the building. A concrete slab floor is beneath the building. This is not the original site for the barn, it was moved in 1940 from a point just east of the school and due east from the barn's present location.

The complex retains several other major structures. A storm shelter with slanted cellar door entrance just northwest of the school, between that building and the barn. The entrance is on the south side. Remnants of a windbreak stand north and northwest of the house. A playground area (concrete slab) is located just southeast from the school and several fuel tanks are due south and in front of the school.

Landscaping is minimal, restricted to the remnants of a windbreak north and west of the house. Originally a canopy of trees, in two rows, flanked the road which leads to the house alongside the west side of the school. The adjacent church (not included) property occupies the southwest quarter of of what would otherwise be a square parcel of land. A parking lot and road between the school and church and a road behind the church separates the two parcels.

The school site was selected because of its centrality within the district and because of the crossroads advantage. Flat farm fields surround the complex. A large playground area adjoins the buildings. A rural church, original to the crossroads, adjoins the school area on the west. The entire site totals ten acres (a third of which is to be included in this nomination).

Alterations:

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 3

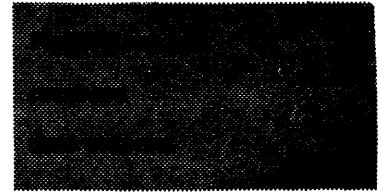
The following changes have impacted the school building:

- 1940, the hack barn was moved and several small sheds on that site demolished.
- 1941, the gymnasium was added.
- 1963, the original auditorium, second floor in the core, was subdivided into two classrooms. The stage which featured a drop curtain, was removed.
- 1965, a tornado removed the roof from the east half of the core of the building. Interior plasterwork was lost but no windows were broken.
- 1985, the gym was reroofed and "Gerkin" energy saving windows were installed.
- 1985, fifty-nine windows in the school building were replaced with Gerkin Weatherliner Replacement Windows. Twenty-four full-sized window openings were reduced half in size with a vertically divided fixed lower window and solid spandrel above. Ten windows, full dimension, were fully sealed with a solid 96" long spandrel. Sixteen 58" long window openings were half filled with a 29" spandrel and a vertically split lower window. Seven 58" long windows were solidly filled. Two 26" windows were similarly sealed. there is no indication as to whether interior ceilings were lowered, given the reduction of window size, but this is likely.

Despite this wholesale window replacement in the main school building, integrity is retained by virtue of the fact that the "complex" remains intact, and remains recognizable. The key fact in this instance is that of continuity, that this facility has retained its historic use and that recent alterations represent responses to needs that will preserve the facility in years to come. It is remarkable that the educational use continues, and the high state of preservation is directly attributable to the commitment of the local community and school district.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8

Page 2

The rural consolidated school was unique. By 1920 some forty-seven rural districts were in operation. They can be identified by address (usually only a township), by their having a different post office address than their location, and by their not being in association with a town (state district lists do not identify rural districts per se). By 1930 412 of a total of 4875 districts were consolidated. Of the eighty-nine rural consolidated districts, only forty-eight schools had teacherages and only twenty-nine had teacherages at that time.

The Pleasant Lawn School complex was the culmination of a series of meetings involving parents from four school districts (No. 4, Marion Twp., and Ebenezer, Wesley and Everett Schools, Canaan Twp.) in the spring of 1916. The very first meeting was reported in the local newspaper under the caption "County is Aroused -Parents in Rural Districts Demand Better Conditions" (Mt. Pleasant Daily News, 9 March 1916). The organization of district level Parents and Teachers Associations at that meeting was a first step towards improving those conditions by involving parents in school matters. A special election on May 9 would present the question of consolidation to the voters. The Mount Pleasant Daily News supported the consolidation:

"...The outcome of the election will have more to do with shaping of the destinies of the country schools of this county than any event which has happened in a generation...If the proposition is defeated, the consolidation of country schools will receive a serious set back in this county. If it carries at least three other sections will at once call elections for the same purpose. If the election carries there will be built and maintained as near the center of the district as possible a model of a building of enough rooms to provide a first class graded school including a High School. Also ample grounds and of vital importance an assembly room for all community interests, such as club gatherings ..."

Interest in Marion Township was credited by the same source as being based on a successful consolidation in nearby Olds (same county):

"The Old Consolidated School has proven a pronounced success that inquiries are pouring into the office of the county superintendent and meetings are being held all over the country, trying to meet the demand of the people for information.

The election proved to be a victory for consolidation, with a vote of 41 to 28. The Mt. Pleasant Weekly News took the victory in stride. "The News is not surprised at the result of the vote in Marion as this community has always been ahead of the rest of the country in these matters. The development of plans for consolidated schools will be watched with interest all over the country.

Four other consolidated districts, all with urban cores, Mt. Union (1918), New London (1920), Winfield (1920) and Wayland (1922) followed the Pleasant Lawn example in Henry County.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 8 -

Page 3

The early reference to the combined community-educational use potential for the new school was later echoed in a 1936 Department of Public Instruction report. The report noted the coincidence of community center development with consolidated school districts.

"The consolidated school is the logical place for this institution. Community interests and community activities are a regular part of the progress of these schools. They are doing much to foster and maintain a happy and prosperous rural life. Many of these schools are truly service stations for their tributary communities. Many of them maintain evening classes for adults and teachers of vocational subjects are giving helpful advice and household problems and are supervising home projects and group work."

A survey of operating school districts resulted in a list of only six rural consolidated districts still in existence. None of these six had the school, teacherage and barn/stable extant. Most never had the other buildings. A total of eighty-nine rural consolidated districts built new buildings and only twenty-nine raised teacherages. Pleasant Lawn School appears to be the only functioning rural consolidated complex with its buildings intact.

Construction of the School Complex:

The consolidated school district, named "Pleasant Lawn Consolidated School," commissioned H. W. Underhill & Company, Kansas City (Mo.) Architects and Engineers to design the new school building. The design was to be conservative. The plan as accepted by the board included its own sewage disposal plant and an acetylene gas light plant. The firm cooperated with the board in campaigning for the bond issue to fund the building. Public acceptance would lead to the submission of the plans to the county superintendent. The firm would finally only deal with the State Superintendent of Instruction.

As was often the case, the architect's plan was considered too expensive. A scaled-down version eliminated some stone trimwork, substituted hollow tile for brick inside load-bearing walls, and reduced the amount of interior millwork, finish hardware, and structural and ornamental ironwork. The floors were clear maple and the minimal key stonework was retained.

Construction was completed by May 1917. The other buildings were built at the same time. The teacherage, the former Wesley No. 8 School, was moved onto the site and remodeled, gaining a second floor. Horse drawn hacks, nearly identical to an omnibus plan, carried students to school until the 1930's when busses replaced them. The barn then housed the busses. Teachers resided in the teacherage but in recent years the school custodian has resided there. From the start the school offered a shop room, home economics, and an auditorium. A gymnasium was added 1941-42 following a successful bond issue vote on February 18, 1941. C. E. McKenzie constructed the gym with a low bid of \$4,567.20. The

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Significance

Item number 8 -

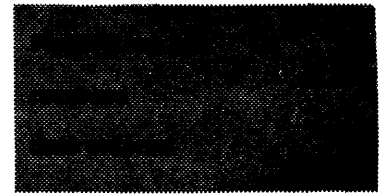
Page 4

hot lunch program was instituted in 1946. Community mothers canned yearly for the food program at the school.

Originally a graded school and high school, the high school had its final graduation class in 1948. The older students went to Mt. Pleasant High School. In 1959 the district was added to the Mt. Pleasant School District. Beginning that year, the school has served elementary grades. The sixth grade was removed to Mt. Pleasant in the fall of 1981. The school continues to serve rural students and as many as fifty town residents who volunteer to be brought to the complex. Enrollment totaled eighty-two in mid 1935 (fifty-six grade, sixty six high school) and seventy two two years later.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Significance

Item number 9 -

Page 2

Books:

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1919-20, State of Iowa, Des Moines.

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1929-30, State of Iowa, Des Moines.

Iowa Educational Directory, 1984-85 school year, Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines.

Letters:

Letters to Mr. E. T. Jackson, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, from H. W. Underhill & Co., Architects & Engineers, Bryant Building, Kansas City, Missouri, August 24, 1916 (This letter is part of the minutes of the Pleasant Lawn Board of Education minutes).

Documents, School Archives:

Secretary's Minutes, Board of Education, Pleasant Lawn Consolidated Schools, 1916-59.

Poll Books, Elections held in 1916, 1917, and 1918.

Manuscript:

Zickefoose, Marjorie, Pleasant Lawn School, 1974.

Pleasant Lawn Third Grade Class, "68 Years on the Prairie", privately printed, 1985.

Newspapers:

Mt. Pleasant Daily News, 9 March, 8, 27 April, 1, 3, 10 May, 1916.

Other:

The Gerkin Company, Sioux City, Iowa. Specifications Gerkin Weatherliner Commercial Replacement Window, 1985.

Survey of Rural Consolidated Schools in Iowa, 1984-85, by Donald E. Young. Consisted of a questionnaire to those rural consolidated districts which were operating in 1920 and which possessed a complex of similar buildings (teacherage, stable, school). A 100% response indicates that there are no comparable examples of Pleasant Lawn extant.

Interviews:

Ridenour, Irvin, custodian at Pleasant Lawn since 1945.

Riley, Neva, cook at Pleasant Lawn, also graduate of Pleasant Lawn High School.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Geographical Data

Item number 10

Page 2

Legal Description:

Beginning 200' north of the S.W. corner of the S.E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 24, Twp. 72N, Range 6W, thence north 300 feet, thence west 500 feet, thence south to county road 500 feet, thence west along same road 200 feet to driveway, thence north along same driveway 200 feet, thence west 200 feet to place of beginning.

Includes teacherage, hack barn, school/gym, and immediate surrounding area. Excludes church.

