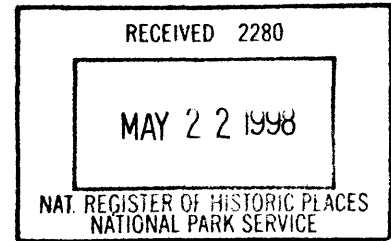


00 708

NPS Form 10-900  
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of 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 Cambridge Public School and High School  
other names/site number Cambridge Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 103 South Street N/A not for publication  
city or town Village of Cambridge N/A vicinity  
state Wisconsin code WI county Dane code 025 zip code 53523

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 for additional comments.)

[Signature] 4/28/98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**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.  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ removed from the National  
Register.  
\_\_\_ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action  
Beth Roland                      6/23/98

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)  
Category of Property (Check only one box)

\_\_\_ private                       building(s)  
 public-local                  \_\_\_ district  
\_\_\_ public-state                \_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_ public-federal              \_\_\_ structure  
   \_\_\_ object

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

		Contributing	Noncontributing	
___	private	1	0	buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-local	0	0	sites
___	public-state	0	0	structures
___	public-federal	0	0	objects
		1	0	Total

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)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

EDUCATION: School

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Colonial Revival  
Romanesque

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation STONE  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other STONE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on continuation sheet(s).)

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)

Architecture

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.

Period of Significance

1905-1939

Significant Dates

1905-06

1938-39

Significant Person  
(Complete if Criterion B is  
marked above)

N/A

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 grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or  
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved  
significance within the past 50 years.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Parsons, (William R.) and Son  
Siewert, Alfred H.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

(Cite the sources used in preparing this form on continuation sheet(s).)

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):      Primary location of additional data:  
  x   preliminary determination of                 State Historic Preservation Office  
         individual listing (36 CFR 67) has         Other State Agency  
         been requested                                 Federal Agency  
   previously listed in the National             Local government  
         Register                                         University  
   previously determined eligible by            X   Other  
         the National Register                      Name of repository:  
   designated a National Historic              State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
         Landmark  
   recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
   recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property   2.7 acres  

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>  1/6  </u>	<u>  3/3/5/7/6/0  </u>	<u>  4/7/6/2/7/6/0  </u>	3	<u>  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>	4	<u>  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>	<u>  /  /  /  /  /  /  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
					<u>  </u> see continuation sheet		

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

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

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Name of Property

Dane County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization Save Our School Committee (Linda Korth) date 3-15-97  
street & number 101 East Main Street telephone 608-423-4751  
city or town Cambridge state WI zip code 53523

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

**Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name School District of Cambridge  
street & number 403 Church Street telephone 608-423-4345  
city or town Cambridge state Wisconsin zip code 53523

**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 7 Page 1

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

INTRODUCTION

The Cambridge Public School and High School (hereafter, Cambridge School) was built in five sections. The original (northeast) section was designed by the Des Moines, Iowa firm of (William R.) Parsons and Son and built in 1905-06.<sup>1</sup> The original section is two-stories tall and is Georgian Revival in style, with Romanesque Revival accents. The southeast section is a one-story, utilitarian addition containing a gymnasium and auditorium. It was constructed in 1938-39 according to plans prepared by Milwaukee architect Alfred H. Siewert.<sup>2</sup> The original section of the Cambridge School is of load-bearing masonry construction with a red brick exterior finish and is set on a raised brick foundation veneered with rock-faced sandstone. The original section has a hip-with-deck roof. The gymnasium addition is of glued laminated timber arch and structural clay tile construction finished with brick, and has a smooth-faced, poured concrete foundation. The gymnasium has a bow roof. The original section and gymnasium addition constitute the historic fabric of the Cambridge School. West of these sections are three noncontributing additions, constructed in 1956-57, 1962-63, and 1990. These noncontributing additions are set to the side of the contributing sections, and are built into the hill that slopes downward from South Street, minimizing their impact and not compromising the integrity of the Cambridge School.

DESCRIPTION

---

<sup>1</sup>The Cambridge News (hereafter, News), January 19, 1906, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Alfred H. Siewert, "Additions and Alterations: Cambridge Public School," plans dated 5 November 1938.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 2

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

The Cambridge School (see photo 1) is located on a hilltop at the south edge of a single-family residential area slightly south and west of downtown Cambridge. The hill slopes downward south and east of the contributing sections of the school. The noncontributing sections stretch west and then south, down the hillside. Playing fields lie southeast of the school. South of the noncontributing sections, there is a small, circa 1990 temporary building: the boundaries of the school have been drawn to exclude this temporary building from listing on the National Register. There is a black-topped parking area southwest of the school, and a lawn with a sidewalk to the northwest and the north. A semi-circular black-topped driveway runs from South Street to the main entrance (on the north facade, where the contributing and noncontributing sections join) and back. There is a lawn with tall trees west of the original section. West of gymnasium addition, there is a black-topped basketball court. The residences adjacent to the school range from about 50 to more than 100 years old.

The Cambridge School was built in five sections (see site map attached). The original section was designed by William R. Parsons and Son (Cyrus Howard Parsons) in the Georgian Revival style, with Romanesque Revival accents. It was built by the Chippewa Falls Construction Company. The gymnasium addition was built by local contractor Henry Simdon in 1938-39. It was designed by Alfred H. Siewert of Milwaukee. The noncontributing additions were constructed in 1956-57, 1962-63 and 1990.

The original section of the Cambridge School is rectilinear in plan and measures 94 (east-west) by 76 feet. It is of load-bearing masonry construction. On three sides it is finished with red pressed brick in running stretcher bond. The south-facing (rear) facade is of common brick. The raised brick foundation is veneered with rock-faced sandstone, except on the south-facing facade. The

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

original section is enriched with brick quoining, and a belt course above the second-story windows composed of four corbelled courses of projecting bricks. The hip-with-deck roof is clad with asphalt shingles. There is a polygonal, open, bell cupola on the deck, as well as two broad, plain brick chimneys and an eyebrow dormer on the north slope of the roof. Most of the windows in the original section are wood, 4/1, double-hung sash, with stone lintels and sills.

The three-part front facade of the original section of the Cambridge School faces north (see photos 1 and 2). It has a central, slightly-projecting pavilion with a pair of double doors in the raised basement at either end of the pavilion. There is a broad, round-arch of brick with a pronounced keystone above each pair of doors. There was a glass transom within each arch originally; these openings are now filled with brick. Above each arch are two small, fixed flat-arched windows, surmounted by two round-arched windows. These windows light the stair halls. There are two windows in the basement story of the projecting pavilion's central bay; one small 1/1 window flanked by two full-size 4/1 windows at the first story; and a small blind window opening flanked by two full-size windows at the second story. On either side of the projecting pavilion, there are two windows in the basement, and three blind window openings at each of the first and second stories. Each trio of these flat-arched openings is composed of one small blind window opening flanked by two full-size blind window openings.

The south-facing facade of the original section of the Cambridge School (see photo 6) is now obscured by the gymnasium addition (described below), except at the second story. It also has a central, slightly-projecting pavilion, which has seven openings at the second story. All seven were originally windows. In 1938-39,



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 4

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

one opening at either end was made into a door, with glass block above, to provide access to fire escapes installed above the roof of the gymnasium addition.<sup>3</sup> West and east of the central pavilion, there are trios of blind window openings at the second story. These are identical to those on the front facade. Because this is the rear of the building, it is of common brick.

The east- and west-facing facades of the original section of the Cambridge School are nearly identical (see photos 3 and 7). Each is composed of a narrow, central, slightly-projecting pavilion with two windows at each story. On the east-facing facade, the south first-story window has been made into a door, leading onto a metal fire escape. On the west-facing facade, the north first-story window has been converted into a door, which opens onto a metal fire escape. On each facade there are three flat-arched openings in the basement and five at each of the first and second stories on either side of the central pavilion. On the east-facing facade, there are windows in all the openings. On the west-facing facade, the gymnasium addition blocks the southwest corner of the original building, and there is a door into the basement just north of the addition.

The one-story gymnasium addition is of glued laminated arch and structural tile construction, finished with red brick in common bond. It has a smooth-faced, poured concrete foundation, and a bow roof, finished with asphalt shingles. The gymnasium addition is rectilinear in plan and measures 61 feet (north-south) by 102 feet. At the northwest corner of the gymnasium addition, there is a one-story, flat-roofed, enclosed entrance vestibule (see photo 4). The central, recessed entrance is framed with smooth stone, and flanked

---

<sup>3</sup>Siewert.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

by pilasters veneered with rock-faced, random-coursed limestone. Originally, the entrance consisted of a pair of doors, surmounted by a stone panel carved in a floral motif, and a large two-part, multi-paned transom surmounted by a similar carved stone panel. The doors and the transom have been removed and the openings filled with brick, but the Save Our School committee plans to install doors and a transom similar to the originals. Above the entrance, the smooth stone is carved to read: "CAMBRIDGE AUDITORIUM." East of the entrance porch, there is a small, one-story section that connects with the original building, and carries the line of the roof from the entrance porch to the original building as a wing wall. This section had a glass block window, surmounted by a stone panel carved in a floral motif, and a round-arched opening in the wing wall above. The glass block window has now been replaced and the opening filled with brick.

The south-facing facade of the gymnasium addition is composed of the central gymnasium section, flanked by small, flat-roofed sections (see photo 6). There are no openings in the west flanking section. Originally, there were four groups of four steel, multi-paned awning windows lighting the gymnasium. Each opening has now been reduced with brick, and contains a single, narrow window. The east flanking section had a small window in the basement and two small multi-paned windows above. One of these has been bricked in.

On the east-facing facade of the gymnasium addition, there was a pair of double doors at either end (see photo 7). These are still in place. There were also two groups of three steel, multi-paned awning windows in the middle of this facade, lighting the stage. North of these windows, there was one small, steel, 1/1 double-hung sash window. All three window openings have been filled with brick.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 6

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

The west-facing facade of the gymnasium addition had a centrally-placed pair of double doors, flanked by two pairs of steel, multi-paned awning windows (see photo 3). The doors remain: these lead into the connection between the 1938-39 and 1956-57 sections. The windows have been bricked in.

On the interior, the plan of the 1905-06 section of the Cambridge School varies from floor to floor. In the basement and on the second floor, the plan consists of a U-shaped hall with the ends of the U pointing north (see sketch attached). There is a dog-leg staircase at each of the two north-pointing ends. On the first floor, the south end of the U forms a large lobby, and there is one hall running east from the lobby and another running west from it (these were originally coat rooms). On each floor, including in the basement, there is a small room between the two staircases on each floor (north central), and a larger room in each of the northeast and northwest corners of the plan. Originally, the gymnasium occupied the south half of the basement. That part of the basement was excavated more deeply, and a flight of three steps lead down to the gymnasium floor. On the first floor, there were three classrooms along the south side of the building. The first floor primarily housed the elementary school students. In 1935, for example, the northeast classroom was for the seventh and eighth graders, the fifth and sixth graders were in the northwest classroom, the first and second graders were in the southeast classroom, and the third and fourth graders were in the southwest classroom. Home economics, which had previously been taught in the basement north central room, was taught in the south central room in 1935.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Eunice Neupert, former teacher, Cambridge Public School, interview, 7 March 1997.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 7

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

The second story of the 1905-06 section was dedicated to the high school students. On the south half of the floor, there was an assembly room in the center, with four small rooms for specialized subjects opening off the assembly room (one of these classrooms is shown in photo 8). In 1935, history, English, and commercial courses (shorthand, typing and bookkeeping) were taught in these small rooms.<sup>5</sup> The principal's office was located in the north central room, and the stair halls were used as coat rooms. A partition, made up of narrow boards, was hung with coat hooks (see photo 9).

The interior plan of the 1905-06 section of the Cambridge School has been altered over time. In the basement, the west two-thirds of the gymnasium was made into two rooms, one for the furnace and one for coal storage, sometime before 1938. It seems likely this change occurred when the northeast and northwest basement rooms were converted into bathrooms, circa 1918. Currently, there is a corridor through the south end of the furnace and former coal storage rooms that connects with the entrance into the gymnasium addition (see floor plan attached). This change probably occurred in the late 1940s.<sup>6</sup> The east one-third of the original basement gymnasium was remodeled into a home economics room (east), hallway (central) and two small storage rooms (west) in 1938.<sup>7</sup> The home economics room was converted into a music room circa 1990. On the first floor, a small room was constructed in front of the west coat room, creating a receptionist's office, during the late 1940s. One window at each of the east and west coat rooms was made into a

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Siewert.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

door, leading onto a fire escape, probably during the 1950s or 1960s. The west stair hall was later closed off, and used as a closet. On the second floor, walls were built inside the assembly hall, creating a narrow hall on either side of the assembly hall, between the assembly room and the flanking rooms. This was probably done during the late 1940s, and the reason for this change is unclear.<sup>8</sup>

The floor plan of the gymnasium and auditorium addition consisted of a long hall running north-south from the vestibule (north end), and the gymnasium and auditorium running east-west to the east of the long hall. At the south end of the long hall was a store room. Mid-way down the hall, there was a pair of double doors in the west wall. Just east of the entrance, at the north end of the hall, was an ante room, used as a ticket office. The gymnasium had a stage at the south end (see photo 10). Shower rooms, toilets and locker rooms, and the coach's office were placed under the stage, reached by a straight staircase on either side of the stage. This floor plan is intact, except that the ante room east of the main entrance is now a short corridor into the basement of the original section. The double doors in the west wall of the hall now open into the connection with the 1956-57 addition.

Floor finishes in the 1905-06 section include narrow boards (second story), carpet (first story), linoleum (stairs) and poured concrete (basement). There are plaster-finished walls and pressed tin ceilings throughout this section, except that there are some exposed brick, and some concrete block walls in the basement. The hanging incandescent lights with opaque globes, found on both the first and second floors, were installed in 1938. There are wood,

---

<sup>8</sup>Neupert.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 9

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

four-panel doors with plain hardware, and simple classical wood surrounds and baseboards on the first and second floors. In the gymnasium and auditorium addition, there is asphalt tile flooring in the hall, the store room, and the former ante room. The vestibule has clay tile flooring. The flooring in the gymnasium and on the stage is wood. The walls are mostly exposed concrete block, although there is glazed tile framing the stage. In the shower rooms, toilets, locker rooms and coach's office, the floor is concrete and the walls and ceilings are finished with plaster. There is glazed tile wainscoting in the locker rooms and in the stair halls.

**INTEGRITY**

The contributing 1905-06 original section and the 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition of the Cambridge School retain very good integrity. On the exterior, alterations to the original section are limited to the brick-filled transoms over the front doors on the front facade, and the conversion of one window into a door on each of the east- and west-facing facades, and two windows into doors on the south-facing (rear) facade. On the exterior of the gymnasium and auditorium addition, many of the windows have been reduced or filled with brick. Most of these windows are not visible from the street. Further, the addition does not possess much architectural character, and its utilitarian appearance is not compromised by brick-filled windows. The noncontributing additions, which date from 1956-57, 1962-63, and 1990, are connected to the gymnasium addition by means of a small, one-story connection that gently abuts the west wall of that addition, with very little disruption to the historic fabric. The noncontributing additions themselves are built to the west of the contributing sections, and then down the hill to south. Very little of the noncontributing additions can be seen from South Street, and the

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 10

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

impact of these additions on the contributing sections is very small. On the interior, the basement gymnasium has been lost, a small room has been built into the first floor lobby area, and walls have been built within the second floor assembly room. However, the overall floor plans are intact, giving the visitor a very good understanding of how the 1905-06 section was originally laid out. The original floor plan of the gymnasium and auditorium addition is intact, except that the small ante room has been made into a corridor. Taken together, these changes are minimal, and do not compromise the integrity of the contributing portions of the Cambridge School.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY

The Cambridge Public School and High School (hereafter, Cambridge School) is architecturally significant at the local level under Criterion C, as a school building type. The School's original 1905-06 section, as well as its 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition, were state-of-the-art school building plans for their time. They reflect the changes in education, and in school design to accommodate those changes, that took place in Wisconsin in the early twentieth century. The 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium is also significant because it is an early example of the use of glued laminated timber arch construction. This technique was viewed as experimental in the United States at the time, and examples were built primarily in Wisconsin prior to World War II. The period of significance of the Cambridge School extends from 1905 until 1939.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Cambridge is located on the banks of the Koshkonong Creek at the eastern edge of Dane County. In June 1847, Abel Keyes purchased a 69-acre parcel in Christiana Township for \$555, with the specific right to build and maintain a dam on Koshkonong Creek.<sup>9</sup> Keyes intended to build a saw mill and a grist mill on the creek, in partnership with his father, Joseph Keyes, and Alvin B. Carpenter. On behalf of these three men, Levi P. Drake surveyed and platted part of Keyes' property as "Cambridge" in August 1847. Carpenter

---

<sup>9</sup>Dane County Deeds, 7:59.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 2

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

is said to have chosen the name in honor of his former sweetheart, who lived in Cambridge, New York.<sup>10</sup>

Joseph Keyes had operated grist and saw mills since at least 1843, first in Lake Mills and later in Keyesville. Officials of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad (predecessor of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul line) had apparently assured Keyes and Carpenter that the railroad would pass through Cambridge, and this may have been the reason Keyes relocated his milling operations, and had Cambridge platted.<sup>11</sup>

The first house in Cambridge was constructed for Abel Keyes in 1847, probably on the site of the saw mill. Keyes then built a dam on Koshkonong Creek, dug the mill race, and constructed the saw mill. The mill began operating in December 1847. Later in the month, Alvin Carpenter moved his family to Cambridge from Beloit. Carpenter constructed a two-story building at Main and Mill Streets and opened a general store on the ground floor. This was the first store in the village. Carpenter's family lived upstairs.<sup>12</sup>

Other settlers soon followed, and by the summer of 1848, the grist mill had been completed, as had several more stores and two hotels. The Cambridge post office also had been established. George Dow,

---

<sup>10</sup>Dane County Deeds, 7:238-39; and Douglas Richardson, "Cambridge, Wisconsin," paper prepared for History 102, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1977, pp. 12-13.

<sup>11</sup>George Dow and A. B. Carpenter, "Cambridge," Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns, (Madison: W. J. Park and Company, 1877) p. 368.

<sup>12</sup>Richardson, p. 13.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 3

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

who had built one of the hotels, was named postmaster. The mills drew farmers within a 20-30 mile radius, and flour ground at the mills was sold as far away as Madison. At first the grist mill was successful, but the failure of the wheat crop two years in a row led Keyes to sell out to Carpenter in September 1849.<sup>13</sup>

When the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad was extended to Madison in 1854, the route by-passed Cambridge in favor of Milton, Edgerton, and Stoughton, despite the railroad's earlier promise. As a result, Cambridge struggled to retain its position as a trading center for the surrounding area.<sup>14</sup> All but one of the known original investors who had bought property in Cambridge by July 1848, had sold out by 1856. Only George Dow remained, and it was his effort that maintained the village. In 1855, Dow purchased the mills from Carpenter, and improved them. The grist mill was profit-making, but the saw mill was soon abandoned. In 1856, Dow set up a wool-carding machine, which was quite successful. Dow erected a wool factory adjacent to the grist mill in 1864.<sup>15</sup> In 1865, Cambridge had a population of about 250, with 50 homes, and blacksmith, hardware, dry-goods and grocery shops.<sup>16</sup>

Local farmers began shifting from sheep-raising to dairying around 1870. Dow converted the wool factory into a hotel shortly

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-15; and Dane County Deeds, 9:582.

<sup>14</sup>Richardson, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup>Dow and Carpenter, p. 367.

<sup>16</sup>Berenice Scott, "The Settlement and Development of Cambridge," B. A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1924, p. 18.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

thereafter, and in 1874, opened a cheese factory.<sup>17</sup> The Chicago and North Western Railroad extended a line through the area in 1881. Cambridge was again by-passed, this time in favor of Lake Mills and London. Despite this, C. C. May opened the first local bank in the 1880s. Around 1890, the cheese factory was converted to butter-making.<sup>18</sup> Cambridge was incorporated as a village on June 30, 1891, with about 500 inhabitants, a figure that would remain fairly steady into the 1950s.

In 1895, a three-mile spur line was built connecting Cambridge with the Chicago and North Western railroad at London. Trains traveled to London and back several times a day. The development of tobacco-raising in the surrounding countryside broadened Cambridge's economy. In the fall of 1898, a tobacco warehouse was built in the village. Tobacco was sorted and packed there, and from there shipped to manufacturers, for many years.<sup>19</sup> Today, Cambridge continues to serve as an agricultural support community for the surrounding farms, on most of which, either dairy cattle or tobacco is raised. The population of the village has increased gradually since 1960. In 1990, there were 883 inhabitants.

Many of the early residents of Cambridge were "Yankees," from New England and New York. They were firm believers in public education, and by December 7, 1849, Joint School District Number 5 (the Cambridge School District) had been established. Part of Oakland Township in Jefferson County was included in the district. The first school building in Cambridge was built in 1848. It was a

---

<sup>17</sup>Richardson, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup>Scott, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-22.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

one-story frame structure, whose original location has not been determined. It was moved not long after it was built, probably to the current school site, as that property was owned by George Dow, who was then treasurer of the Cambridge School District. The 1848 school was replaced by a two-story frame structure in 1869, which was located on the current site.<sup>20</sup>

In September 1873, the Cambridge School District purchased lots 1 and 2 in Block 13 of the Original Plat of Cambridge from George and Janet Dow, Horace and Louisa Potter, and Henry and Minnie Ford,<sup>21</sup> upon which the 1869 school structure was located. That structure was enlarged several times over the years.<sup>22</sup> In 1888, the Wisconsin State Superintendent of Schools certified the Cambridge School District as a three-year "free high school."<sup>23</sup> Cambridge's first public high school class graduated in 1889.<sup>24</sup> Up until the time the high school was established, there were only three teachers at the school. At the 1898 annual school meeting, voters approved a resolution adopting a four-year high school course, as prescribed by the state. It was immediately accredited.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>Richardson, pp. 17-18; and Scott, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup>Dane County Deeds, 96:387.

<sup>22</sup>Scott, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup>Superintendent of Schools J. B. Thayer to the Cambridge School District, 17 November 1888.

<sup>24</sup>Richardson, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup>Scott, p. 24.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 6

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

In 1900, the School District bought part of Outlot 32, to the rear of the school building.<sup>26</sup> It served as school grounds. In May 1905, the 1869 school building "with its fine library" burned down.<sup>27</sup> The Cambridge School Board selected the Des Moines architectural firm of W. R. Parsons and Son to design a new school building. Within three weeks following the fire, the plans were put out for bid. At the annual school meeting held in July 1905, voters approved a resolution to borrow \$18,000 for the erection of the school. The Chippewa Falls Construction Company was awarded the contract to build the structure at that meeting.<sup>28</sup> Construction began in August 1905, and was completed in January 1906.<sup>29</sup>

The Cambridge News heralded the new school as "a modern building with all the very latest equipments (sic)."<sup>30</sup> The basement housed a large gymnasium, storage rooms, and a coal-fired forced-air furnace. There were five rooms on the first floor, and seven rooms and a small assembly hall on the second floor. The total cost of the new school was estimated at about \$24,000. No mention was made of indoor plumbing.<sup>31</sup> The basement bathrooms and first- and second-floor water fountains were likely added later. The appearance of

---

<sup>26</sup>Dane County Deeds, 180:91-92.

<sup>27</sup>"Fire Destroys the School House," News, 26 May 1905.

<sup>28</sup>News, 7 July 1905.

<sup>29</sup>News, 15 September 1905; and "Our New High School Building," News, 19 January 1906.

<sup>30</sup>"Our New High School Building."

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 7

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

the paneled wood half-height stall doors suggests a circa 1918 date. This would be in keeping with the Superintendent of Schools recommendations. The biennial reports of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, which make many recommendations over time, do not directly address plumbing until the 1916-18 issue. In that issue, the Superintendent of Schools urged that indoor toilets and water fountains with a safe, sanitary water source be provided in all new school buildings.<sup>32</sup>

The first floor of the Cambridge School was intended for the elementary school pupils, while the high school students were taught upstairs. Each elementary class room had its own small library, while the high school library probably was located in one of the small rooms off of the second floor assembly room.<sup>33</sup> The principal's office was located in the small room between the staircases on the second floor (where it is shown on the plan for the 1938 addition). When the Cambridge School opened, it was not wired for electricity and it would not be electrified until after 1909.<sup>34</sup>

Enrollment figures, which are available for grades 9-12, show that there were 37 students and two teachers at Cambridge High School in the 1905-06 school year. In the 1910-11 school year, there were 65 high school students and three teachers. In 1915-16, these figures increased to 75 high school students and five teachers. The number

---

<sup>32</sup>Biennial Report: for the Years 1916-1918, (Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1919), p. 11.

<sup>33</sup>Neupert.

<sup>34</sup>Map of Cambridge, Wisconsin, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1909).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 8

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

of teachers remained steady over the next 25 years, while enrollment rose above 100 by 1920, stayed above 100 through 1920s, and dipped slightly below it during the 1930s.<sup>35</sup>

The impetus for the 1938-39 addition appears to have been a need for better gymnasium and auditorium facilities. The gymnasium in the original section, which occupied the south half of the basement, had been used for basketball practice by teams from all over the area, although the ceiling height was somewhat short.<sup>36</sup> The second floor assembly space was not large enough for many public programs. School plays, graduation ceremonies and so on were consistently held at the Park Opera House in nearby Madison. While this need may have been felt for some years, the establishment of the Public Works Administration (PWA) grants program during the late 1930s encouraged the Cambridge School District to pursue a building program. At a special meeting of the School Board held in September 1938, electors voted in favor of building a combination auditorium and gymnasium as an addition to the existing school, if PWA funds were granted.<sup>37</sup> Later that month, it was reported that a PWA grant had been awarded to the Cambridge School District in the amount of \$18,818.<sup>38</sup> The School Board explored borrowing money from the State to provide the matching share needed

---

<sup>35</sup>Biennial Report, (Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1907, 1913, 1917, 1923, 1927, 1933, 1937), statistical tables.

<sup>36</sup>Neupert.

<sup>37</sup>"School Voters Put O.K. on Plan for Auditorium," News, 9 September 1938.

<sup>38</sup>"PWA Grant Made for School Gym Addition," News, 30 September 1938.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 9

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

for the PWA grant, but decided to issue bonds instead.<sup>39</sup> On November 7, 1938, voters approved the bond issue.<sup>40</sup>

Alfred H. Siewert's plans are dated November 5, 1938, and feature what The Cambridge News referred to as "Peshtigo Arch" construction. The glued laminated timber arches were produced by Unit Structures of Peshtigo. The main entrance was located at the northwest corner of the addition. Inside the main entrance was a vestibule, which opened into a north-south hallway. There was an anteroom (used as a ticket office, now a passage) just east of the vestibule. There was a storage room at the south end of the hallway. The gymnasium was east of the hallway and had a stage at the south end. Shower rooms, toilets and locker rooms, and the coach's office were located under the stage.<sup>41</sup> The original layout is very little changed. Siewert's plans also involved remodeling the original basement gymnasium into a home economics class room (now the music room), a corridor leading to the new gymnasium, and additional storage rooms. Prior to this remodeling, home economics classes had been taught in the small basement room between the staircases, which had kitchen facilities.<sup>42</sup> In 1938, Siewert also created a narrow room on the first floor by enclosing the west

---

<sup>39</sup>"Auditorium Construction Starts in About 30 Days," News, 28 October 1938.

<sup>40</sup>"Voters Favor Bond Issue for School Addition Fund," News, 11 November 1938.

<sup>41</sup>"School PWA Project Making Progress," News, 27 January 1939.

<sup>42</sup>Neupert.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 10

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

hallway.<sup>43</sup> Although Siewert was a Milwaukee architect, the contractors were Cambridge firms. The general contractor was Henry Simdon, the concrete contractor was Ole Jarlsberg and the electrical contractor was Garvin Wallace.<sup>44</sup>

By 1940, high school enrollment at Cambridge School had again topped the 100 mark. Enrollment would continue to rise through the 1940s as the school consolidation movement, in which rural one-room schools were closed and their students transferred to large, town or city schools such as the Cambridge School, picked up steam. By the 1950-51 school year, high school enrollment exceeded 150 annually.<sup>45</sup> Grade school enrollment was likely even higher, as the impact of the post-war baby boom was beginning to be felt. It was apparent that school enrollments would continue to increase for the foreseeable future, so the Cambridge School District commissioned a new high school building in 1956-57. Fort Atkinson architects Waterman-Fuge designed the new building, located just west of the original Cambridge School, and connected to it. The new building had six classrooms, an all-purpose room, and band and music practice rooms.<sup>46</sup> It was probably during the late 1940s that the basement of the 1905-06 building was remodeled to create a north-

---

<sup>43</sup>Siewert.

<sup>44</sup>"Work Has Begun on School Auditorium Addition," News, 23 December 1938.

<sup>45</sup>"School Directory, First District, Dane County," unpublished list of school district enrollments: 1936-37, 1937-38, 1941-42, 1942-43, 1945-46, 1948-49, 1951-52, 1957-58, and 1958-59.

<sup>46</sup>"Dedication Program: Cambridge Community High School," 20 October 1957.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 11

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

south hall parallel to the 1938-39 gymnasium, the second floor assembly hall was enclosed, and partitions were added in front of the first-floor enclosed west hallway making a small room for the principal's receptionist.<sup>47</sup>

Student enrollments continued to rise through the late 1950s, and the Cambridge School was soon overcrowded. A large three-story addition was constructed to the rear of the high school section in 1962-63. By the 1965-66 school year, there were about 300 high school students and more than 600 grade school students attending the Cambridge School, and conditions were again overcrowded. In 1970, a new high school building was constructed at 403 Church Street. The elementary students were then taught in the 1956/63 high school sections, while the middle school students attended classes in the 1906/39 sections of the Cambridge School.<sup>48</sup>

Enrollment in the Cambridge School District dropped slightly from the mid-1970s into the mid-1980s. Enrollment began to climb again thereafter, and in 1988-89, the total enrollment in the Cambridge School District stood at 834 students. The Cambridge Elementary and Middle School was again overcrowded, and in 1990 a middle school was built onto the high school on Church Street. At the same time, two classrooms were added to the 1956 section of the Cambridge Elementary School. The 1905-06 original section, which had been evaluated by the Wisconsin Department of Industrial, Labor and Human Relations (DIHLR) and found unsafe for educational use, was closed off at that time, except for the basement music room

---

<sup>47</sup>Neupert.

<sup>48</sup>School District of Cambridge, "Fall 1996 School District of Cambridge Annual Report," Cambridge, 1996.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 12

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

(which had been the home economics rooms until that time) and the bathrooms.<sup>49</sup>

Between 1988 and 1996, enrollment in the Cambridge School District rose 28 percent, much faster than had been anticipated. In the fall of 1996, Cambridge voters approved a referendum to purchase land and build a new elementary school; to renovate the existing elementary school for use as a middle school; and to renovate the existing middle school/high school for use as a high school. Another question on the ballot, which would have provided funds for demolishing the 1905-06 original section of the Cambridge School if no viable use was found for it, failed. Since that time, a citizens committee, called Save Our School (S.O.S.), has been searching for funds to rehabilitate the 1905-06 original section of the building and working to pull together several non-profit public and community organizations (such as the public library, and the East Koshkonong Historical Society) to lease space in the building.

**ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The Cambridge School is significant as a school building type because the plan and the intended uses of the various rooms in both the 1905-06 original section and the 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition were state-of-the-art for their time, reflecting the development of education in Wisconsin in the early twentieth century. The 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition is also significant for its early use of glued laminated timber arch construction, which was still viewed as an experimental building technique in the United States at that time.

---

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 13

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

Architectural Significance as an Example of the School Building  
Type

In 1875, the Wisconsin state legislature passed the Free High School Law, providing state aid to high schools. The state offered to pay one-half the cost of educational instruction in any high school, up to \$500 per school. State Superintendent of Schools, Edward Searing, worked with several professors at the University of Wisconsin to devise three different curricula. One curriculum was a three-year course, intended for communities of less than 6,000. The other two were four-year courses, intended for larger communities. One of these four-year courses was nearly identical to the three-year course and was aimed at developing well-rounded individuals who would be good citizens and workers, but were not necessarily college-bound, while the other emphasized the classics (Latin, Greek and ancient history). Eighteen high schools took advantage of the new law within the first year after its enactment; 24 more followed in 1876.<sup>50</sup> The Cambridge School District was officially named a three-year "free high school" in 1888. The curriculum was expanded to the standard four-year course in 1898.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most of Wisconsin's free high schools were located in the same building as the elementary school. In the 1913-14 school year, for example, there were 219 buildings in the state in which both elementary and high school students were taught, and only 24 buildings dedicated to high school students. This changed during the 1920s, as the

---

<sup>50</sup>Barbara Wyatt, editor, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), III:3-4 through 3-5.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 14

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

high school curriculum diversified, requiring more complex buildings with libraries, large gymnasiums and specialized classrooms for science, manual training, and so on.<sup>51</sup>

The state-of-the-art combination grade school and high school of the early twentieth century was spacious, light, with good ventilation and heating, and with several classrooms. The elementary school children were divided up into "grades" by age, with one teacher and two grades to each classroom. The high school classrooms were assigned by subject, with teachers who specialized in one or more subjects. Typical subjects taught in the four-year high school course circa 1910, as recommended by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, included English literature, United States history, geography, geometry, algebra, chemistry, physics, botany, biology, zoology, civics, manual training (later known as industrial arts), domestic science (home economics), typing, shorthand, bookkeeping, art and music.<sup>52</sup> In the early twentieth century, school designers began to include a gymnasium and a library in the building. The early gymnasium was located typically in either the attic or the basement, and was often not very functional. The Cambridge School had up-to-date heating, eleven class rooms, a library, an office, a high school assembly room, and a basement gymnasium.

The changes made to the Cambridge School over time reflect changing ideas in education. The installation of indoor plumbing and electrical wiring, which probably occurred in the late 1910s, followed the expanding definition of "sanitary" conditions, beyond

---

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>See any issue of the Wisconsin Journal of Education, 1910.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 15

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

spacious, well-ventilated, comfortably-heated class rooms with an abundance of natural light. In 1919, the Superintendent of Schools began recommending the installation of indoor plumbing and water fountains with a safe water source.<sup>53</sup>

The addition of a gymnasium and auditorium in 1938-39, along with the remodeling of the 1905-06 original section of the Cambridge School, also reflected evolving educational philosophy. In 1923, the state legislature enacted a law requiring that all public school provide at least 2-1/2 hours of physical education instruction weekly, exclusive of recess.<sup>54</sup> Other ideas promoted in the biennial reports of the Department of Public Instruction and in the Wisconsin Journal of Education during the 1920s included dedicating class rooms to specialized uses, by installing in them built-in equipment and facilities for the sciences, home economics and industrial arts; and encouraging the school to play a larger role in its community by providing lectures for the general public at the school. This would promote the Americanization of immigrants and the development of better-educated citizens. The 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition to the Cambridge School, and the remodeling of part of the original basement gymnasium as a home economics room reflected all these ideas.

While the firm of W. R. Parsons and Son is not likely to be recognized as "master architect" for the purpose of National Register evaluation, the firm was very active in school and courthouse construction in the Midwest during the late nineteenth

---

<sup>53</sup>Biennial Report: for the Years 1916-1918.

<sup>54</sup>Guiding Wisconsin's Growing Generations, (Madison: Wisconsin Teachers Association, 1933), p. 95.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 16

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

and early twentieth centuries. William R. Parsons (?-circa 1904) was founder and principal designer of the firm. Parsons moved frequently. He is known to have worked out of Quincy and then Peoria, Illinois; out of Fredonia and then Topeka, Kansas; and then Lincoln, Nebraska. By 1891, he had relocated to Des Moines, Iowa. By that time, his son, Cyrus Howard, had joined the firm as vice-president. William's wife, Harriet, served as secretary of the firm from at least 1896 until at least 1903, when she succeeded her husband as president of the firm. Another family member, Anna Parsons, served as secretary from 1904 until at least 1905.<sup>55</sup> Parsons and Son appears to have gone out of business around 1909.<sup>56</sup> Parsons and Son designed the Bond County Courthouse in Greenville, Illinois (1884); the Barton County Courthouse in Lamar, Missouri (1888); and the Wright County Courthouse in Clarion, Iowa in 1891.<sup>57</sup> School buildings the firm designed in Iowa prior to 1901 were located in Libertyville (two-room), Moorhead (four-room), Harris (two-room), North Liberty (two-room), Des Moines Township (one-room), Eureka Township (one-room), New Providence (three-room), Denison (eight-room plus high school rooms), Wilson Township (one-room), Harrison Township (one-room), Fayette (two-room plus high school rooms), and Seymour (four-room).<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup>Polk's Directory of Des Moines, Iowa, (Des Moines: R. L. Polk and Company, 1892, 1896, 1903, 1904, 1905).

<sup>56</sup>Michael Bedeau, Architectural Historian, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, interview, 21 February 1997.

<sup>57</sup>Architects File, Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, Iowa.

<sup>58</sup>Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, (Des Moines: Iowa Department of Public Instruction, 1901), pp. 142-157.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 17

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

The design for the Cambridge School is not identical to any of the Parsons and Son's school plans published in the 1901 Report of the (Iowa) Superintendent of Public Instruction. However, it is similar to most of the published Parsons designs in styling. These are brick with stone accents, boxy in form with projecting pavilions and a hip-with-deck roof, large chimneys protruding through the roof, and a round or polygonal bell cupola. Many of the published designs feature Romanesque Revival detailing as the Cambridge School does, including deeply-set round-arched windows, eye-brow dormers, and rock-faced stone. The Denison School is not only similar to the Cambridge School in style, but also in layout. Each floor has a corridor, into which cloak rooms project; and the narrow halls on either side of the main staircase are also cloak rooms, just as in the Cambridge School. Small rooms open off the large "High School" room, for subjects such as chemistry, science, physics, and commerce, and the library, although no special built-in facilities are indicated.<sup>59</sup> The Cambridge School appears to be representative of the work of Parsons and Son.

Significance for Glued Laminated Timber Method of Construction

Glued laminated timber construction, although in use throughout Europe by 1922, was considered experimental in the United States until after World War II.

Structural glued laminated timber is an assembly of wood boards, called laminations, with the grain of each ply essentially parallel. . . The laminations are bonded with adhesive under considerable pressure to form a single structural member of the required size, shape and load

---

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 18

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

carrying capacity. No nails, bolts or other mechanical fasteners are utilized. Finished members can be straight, cambered or curved to form shaped beams or arches.<sup>60</sup>

Otto Karl Friedrich Hetzer (1846-1911) received the first known patent for glued laminated timber construction, in Switzerland in 1901. Hetzer, a German, had apparently used the technique in building construction as early as 1890 (in the Reichstag, in Berlin). In 1901, "Otto Hetzer A.-G." incorporated to design and produce "Hetzer" beams and arches. Hetzer was granted a patent in Germany for his glued laminated timber arch in 1906. The Swiss were quick to accept glued laminated timber. By 1920, more than 200 buildings using "Hetzer" beams and arches had been erected in Switzerland. Glued laminated timber was used across Europe in the late 1910s and early 1920s for buildings, and as a replacement for steel in railroad construction, which was in short supply as a result of World War I. The market for glued laminated timber shrank when steel production resumed in the mid-1920s, but several companies, notably in Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, continued to operate.<sup>61</sup>

Max Hanisch (1882-1950) brought glued laminated timber technology to the United States in 1923. Hanisch had earned degrees in both architecture and civil engineering in his native Germany. Hanisch worked for the Hetzer company in Weimar beginning around 1906.

---

<sup>60</sup>Andreas Rhude, "Structural Glued Laminated Timber: History of Its Origins and Development," (B. A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1995), pp. 2-3.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-5.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 19

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

Hanisch established his own architecture and engineering firm in 1911, but was drafted to design factories for the German War Department during World War I. After briefly resuming private practice in Germany, Hanisch immigrated to the United States in 1923, intending to promote and market glued laminated timber construction in America in cooperation with the Hetzer company. Hanisch settled in Racine in 1924, but was not able to secure financing to produce Hetzer beams and arches. Hanisch practiced architecture and engineering in Racine for the next ten years, looking for an opportunity in which he could introduce glued laminated timber construction.<sup>62</sup>

In 1931, Hanisch began working with the Lakeside Bridge and Engineering Company of Milwaukee, designing "Interlocking" arch roofs. Hanisch had invented the Interlocking arch. It was similar to the wood "Lamella" roof developed by Zollinger in Germany circa 1908. Hanisch used the Interlocking arch in several churches and a couple of dance halls during the early 1930s. The hockey arena at Eagle River, which Hanisch designed in 1932-33 and which is listed on the National Register, has a wood Interlocking arch roof that was "the largest of its kind in America at the time of its completion."<sup>63</sup>

Hanisch was hired to design a gymnasium and auditorium for the Peshtigo High School in January 1934, following his presentation to the Peshtigo School Board outlining the cost savings the Interlocking arch system would provide. At some point during the design process, Hanisch substituted glued laminated arch construction for

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-7.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 20

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

the Interlocking system. No one in the United States was manufacturing glued laminated timber at that time. Hanisch solved this problem by working with Peter and Christ Thompson, whose Thompson Brothers Boat Manufacturing Company in Peshtigo was nationally-known. As a result of the poor economy of the Depression, the Thompsons were looking for another product to supplement their boat-building. In July 1934, the Thompsons, Max Hanisch, Hanisch's sons Max Junior and Herbert, formed Unit Structures, Incorporated. Unit Structures planned to manufacture four structural glued laminated timber arches for the Peshtigo gymnasium and auditorium at the Thompson Brother factory. Each arch would provide a clear span of 64 feet. However, the Wisconsin Industrial Commission (Commission), which was responsible for the approval of the plans for all public buildings in the state, rejected the arches as untested, and therefore unsafe. Hanisch was unable to convince the Commission that the arches were safe, even after enlisting the support of the United States Forest Products Laboratory, located in Madison, Wisconsin. Hanisch and the Commission eventually reached a compromise, and the Peshtigo gymnasium and auditorium (extant) was erected in 1934-35. Each arch was reinforced with metal bolts, lags, strapping and angles.<sup>64</sup>

Soon after, Unit Structures and the Forest Products Laboratory began a joint experiment in glued laminated timber arch construction. Unit Structures manufactured arches for a demonstration building at the Forest Products Laboratory, which was completed in 1935. The demonstration building was subjected to a variety of load tests; the arches passed with flying colors. The results

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-9.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 21

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

were published in USDA Technical Bulletin Number 691, "The Glued Laminated Wooden Arch" published in 1939.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the endorsement of the Forest Products Laboratory, glued laminated timber construction was slow to gain acceptance. This probably was due to the fact that glued laminated timber was competing with steel, an industry that was large, well-financed and well-established in the United States. Further, Hanisch was foreign-born, and not fluent in English.<sup>66</sup> Many of the first glued laminated timber buildings were gymnasiums and/or auditoriums for school buildings, were funded by the Public Works Administration or by the Works Progress Administration, and most were built in Wisconsin. Although the exact number of glued laminated timber buildings erected prior to World War II is unknown, the figure was certainly less than 100. Only one glued laminated timber building (for Peshtigo High School) was built in 1934. At least two were built in 1935, at least 26 in 1936 (including the first church), and at least 15 in 1937.<sup>67</sup> The Cambridge School gymnasium and auditorium was built in 1938-39.

The use of glued laminated timber proliferated during World War II, because of its versatility and because it was an excellent substitute for steel.<sup>68</sup> As a result, the market for glued laminated timber expanded quickly after the war's end. Unit Structures built three new plants between 1952 and 1969. During the 1950s,

---

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-11.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>67</sup>Rhude, interview, 17 February 1997.

<sup>68</sup>Rhude, p. 22.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 22

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

structural members for church sanctuaries became the company's leading product, although Unit Structures continued to manufacture arches, beams, columns and trusses for gymnasiums, theaters, factories and airplane hangers.<sup>69</sup> Today the Peshtigo factory operates under the name of Sentinel Structures.

Alfred H. Siewert (1899-1981) was a friend of Max Hanisch, and was one of the first architects in the United States to use glued laminated timber construction. He used laminated timbers in at least 14 projects, designed between 1935 and 1976.<sup>70</sup> Siewert was born in Newburg, Wisconsin, and raised in Milwaukee. He designed many schools and churches, including Mount Carmel Lutheran Church, Jackson Park Evangelical Lutheran Church, Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Milwaukee, and Butler Elementary School in Butler, Lutheran High School in Racine.<sup>71</sup> Siewert's work has not been studied enough to determine whether he would qualify as a "master architect."

CONCLUSION

The Cambridge School is thus of local significance as a fine example of the evolution of the school building type. Both the arrangement and also the intended uses of the various rooms in both the original 1905-06 section and in the 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition of this school represented state-of-the-art design for their times and reflect the evolution of educational

---

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>70</sup>Rhude, interview.

<sup>71</sup>"Alfred H. Siewert, Architect, Dead at 81," Milwaukee Journal, 9 February 1981.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 23

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

theory and practice in Wisconsin in the early twentieth century. Combining separate high school and elementary school classrooms in a single building designed for this purpose was a new approach to education in Wisconsin's smaller cities in the first decade of this century and the original 1905-1906 portion of the Cambridge School is a fine example of this trend. In addition, this portion is also a good example of a school building that was purposefully designed to take advantage of the latest thinking of the day in regard to the importance of better utility services, better heating and ventilation, and greater amounts of light and fresh or "purified" air. The 1938-39 gymnasium and auditorium addition to the school is also of significance for its use of glued, laminated timber arch construction, which was viewed as an experimental building technique in the United States at that time. Glued, laminated timber construction did not gain nationwide acceptance until after World War II and fewer than 100 examples of these buildings are thought to have been built in this country prior to World War II. Most of these early glued laminated timber buildings were built in Wisconsin and the gymnasium and auditorium addition to the Cambridge School is one of them. The significance of this addition is further enhanced by the largely intact state of its interior.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Anderson, William T. "The Development of the Common Schools," in Wisconsin Blue Book: 1923. Madison: State Printing Board, 1923.

Bedeau, Michael. Architectural Historian, Idaho Historic Preservation Office. Interview, 21 February 1997.

The Cambridge News. 1905, 1906, 1938, 1939.

"Dedication Program: Cambridge Community High School." 20 October 1957.

Dow, George and A. B. Carpenter. "Cambridge." Madison, Dane County and Surrounding Towns. Madison: W. J. Park and Company, 1877.

The First Homecoming: Cambridge. Cambridge: June 1908.

Guiding Wisconsin's Growing Generations. Madison: Wisconsin Teachers Association, 1933.

Map of Cambridge, Wisconsin. Pelham, New York: Sanborn Publishing Company, 1909 and 1932.

Milwaukee Journal. 1981.

Neupert, Eunice. Former teacher, Cambridge Public School. Interview, 7 March 1997.

Polk's Directory of Des Moines, Iowa. Des Moines: R. L. Polk and Company, 1892, 1896, 1903, 1904 and 1905.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Des Moines:  
Iowa Department of Public Instruction, 1901.

Rhude, Andreas J. Interview, 17 February 1997.

Rhude, Andreas J. "Structural Glued Laminated Timber: History of  
its Origins and Development." B. A. Thesis, University of  
Minnesota, 1995.

Richardson, Douglas. "Cambridge, Wisconsin." Paper prepared for  
History 102, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977.

"School Directory, First District, Dane County." Unpublished list  
of school district enrollments: 1936-37, 1937-38, 1941-42, 1942-43,  
1945-46, 1948-49, 1951-52, 1957-58, and 1958-59.

School District of Cambridge. "Fall 1996 School District of  
Cambridge Annual Report." Cambridge, 1996.

School Officers of Wisconsin. Madison: State Printing Board, 1901;  
1906 and 1915.

Scott, Bernice M. "Settlement and Development of Cambridge." B.  
A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1924.

Siewert, Alfred H. "Additions and Alterations, Cambridge Public  
School." Plans dated 5 November 1938.

Thayer, J. B., Wisconsin Superintendent of Schools. Letter to  
Cambridge School District, 17 November 1888.



NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 3

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Education in Wisconsin: Biennial Report, 1920-22. Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1922.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report: for the Years 1930-32. Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1932.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The Thirtieth Biennial Report: for the Years 1940-42. Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1942.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The Thirty-Fourth Biennial Report: for the Years 1949-51. Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1951.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The Thirty-Ninth Biennial Report: for the Years 1959-61. Madison: Department of Public Instruction, 1961.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Wisconsin Official School Directory: 1921-22. Eau Claire: Eau Claire Book and Stationery Company, 1921.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Wisconsin Official School Directory: 1940-41. Eau Claire: Eau Claire Book and Stationery Company, 1940.

Wisconsin Journal of Education. 1910.

Barbara Wyatt, editor. Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. Three volumes.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Cambridge Public School and High School is located on a parcel in the SE 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Section 12, Township 6 North, Range 12 East, in the Village of Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin, more particularly described as follows:

Lots 2-4, Block 12 and Lots 1-2, Block 13, Original Plat of Cambridge; and

Part of Outlot 32 of the Revised and Consolidated Assessor's Plat of Cambridge, described as follows: Commencing at the SW corner of Lot 1, Block 13 of the Original Plat of Cambridge, thence southerly on a line of Lot 1 extended 4.0 rods (66.0 feet), thence easterly on a line parallel to the S line of the said village plat 8.0 rods (132.0 feet), thence northerly parallel to the first described line 4.0 rods (66.0 feet) to the SE corner of Lot 2, Block 13 of the Original Plat of Cambridge, thence westerly on S line of said plat 8.0 rods (132.0 feet) to the place of beginning; and

Part of Outlot 33 of the Revised and Consolidated Assessor's Plat of Cambridge, described as follows: Commencing at the SW corner of Lot 1, Block 13 of the Original Plat of Cambridge, thence southerly on a line of Lot 1 extended 235.0 feet, thence westerly on a line parallel to the S line of the said village plat 264.0 feet, thence northerly parallel to the first described line to the S line of the said village plat 235.0 feet, thence easterly on S line of village plat 264.0 feet to the place of beginning.

The parcel contains approximately 2.7 acres.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 2

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

---

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Cambridge Public School and High School are lines of convenience within the larger legal parcel that is associated with this property. These boundaries enclose all the historic resources associated with the Cambridge Public School and High School as well as some of the grounds, but excludes the ca. 1990 temporary building, the large playing fields and the parking lots (mostly south of the building) added after the historic period.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

Section Photos Page 1

---

Photo 1 of 10  
Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin  
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, January 1997  
Negative on file in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
View of the north- and east-facing facades of the Cambridge School,  
looking southwest.

The information for the following photographs is the same as the  
above, except as noted.

Photo 2 of 10  
View of north- and east-facing facades, looking southeast.

Photo 3 of 10  
View of west-facing facades, looking east.

Photo 4 of 10  
View of north-facing facades, showing 1990 connection between 1939  
and 1956 sections, looking southwest.

Photo 5 of 10  
View of south-facing facades, looking northwest.

Photo 6 of 10  
View of south-facing facades 1906 and 1939 sections, looking  
northwest.

Photo 7 of 10  
View of east-facing facades, looking northwest.

Photo 8 of 10  
Second-floor classroom.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Cambridge Public School and High School  
Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

Section Photos Page 2

---

Second-floor classroom.

Photo 9 of 10

Second-floor hall showing where coat hooks were located.

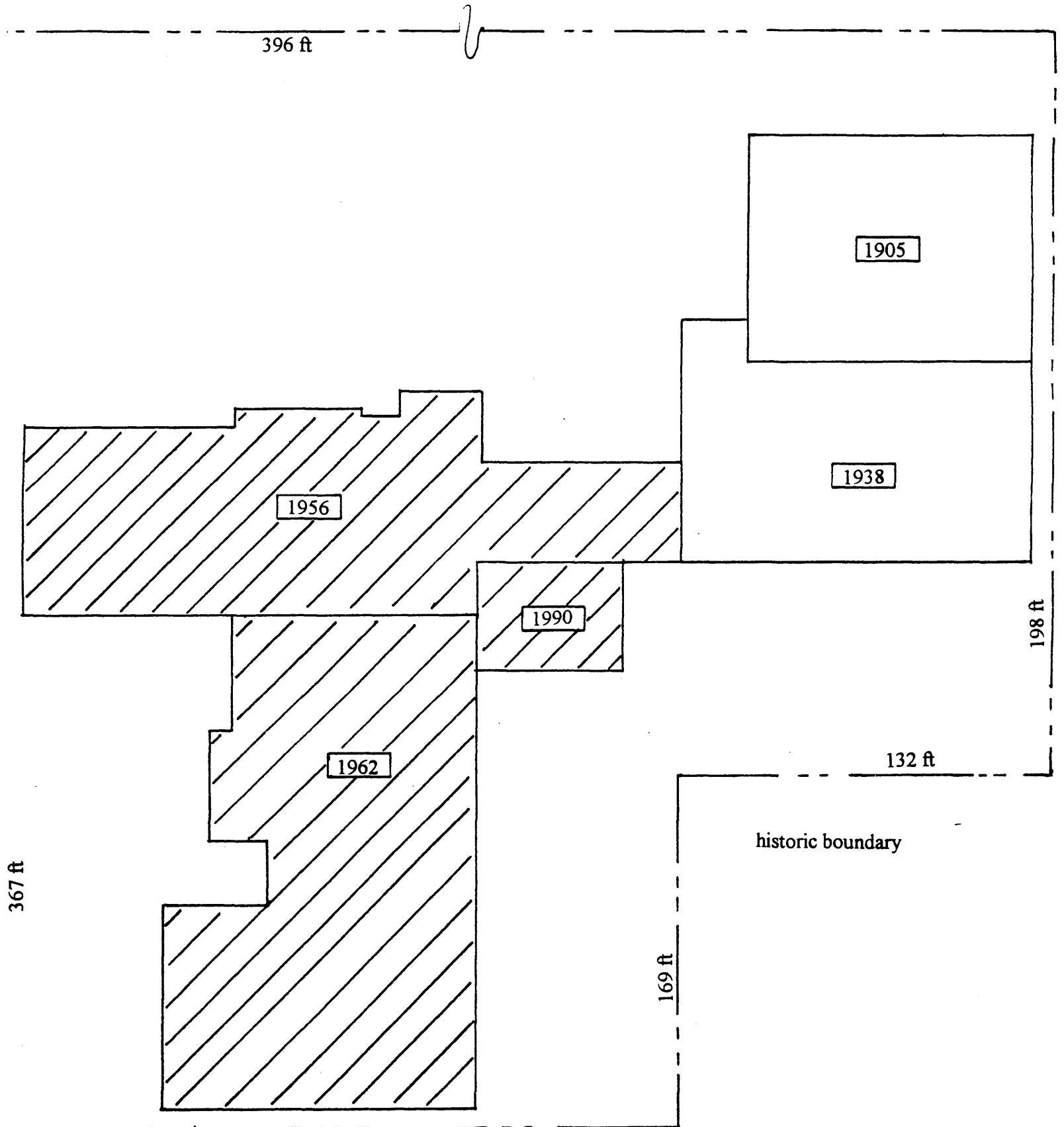
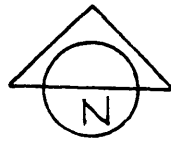
Photo 10 of 10

View of 1939 gymnasium, looking toward stage, showing glue-laminated timber arches.

# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL: SITE PLAN

Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin  
□ Contributing

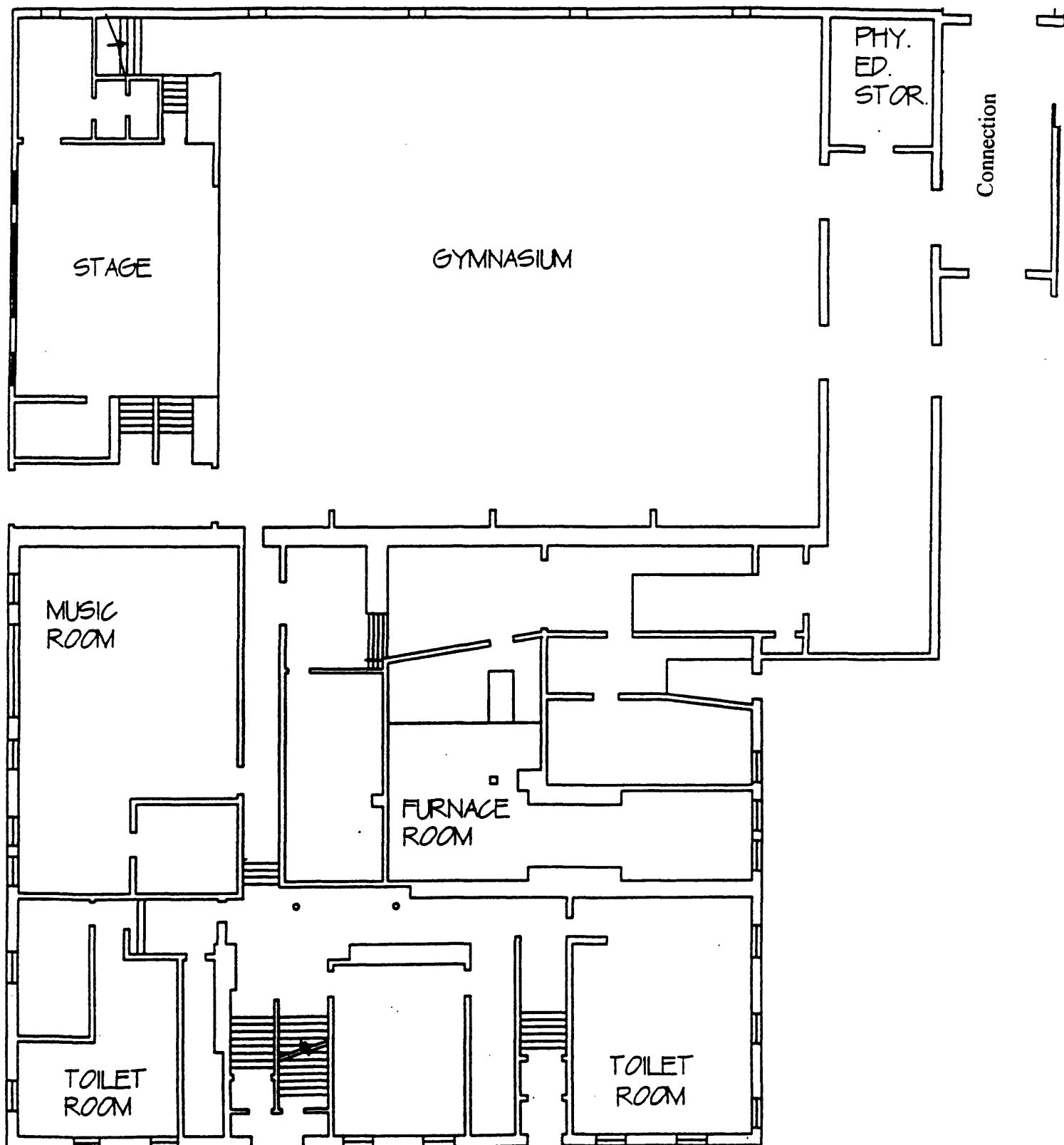
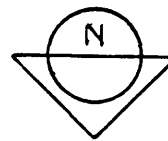
1" = 40'  
▨ Noncontributing



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL: BASEMENT

Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

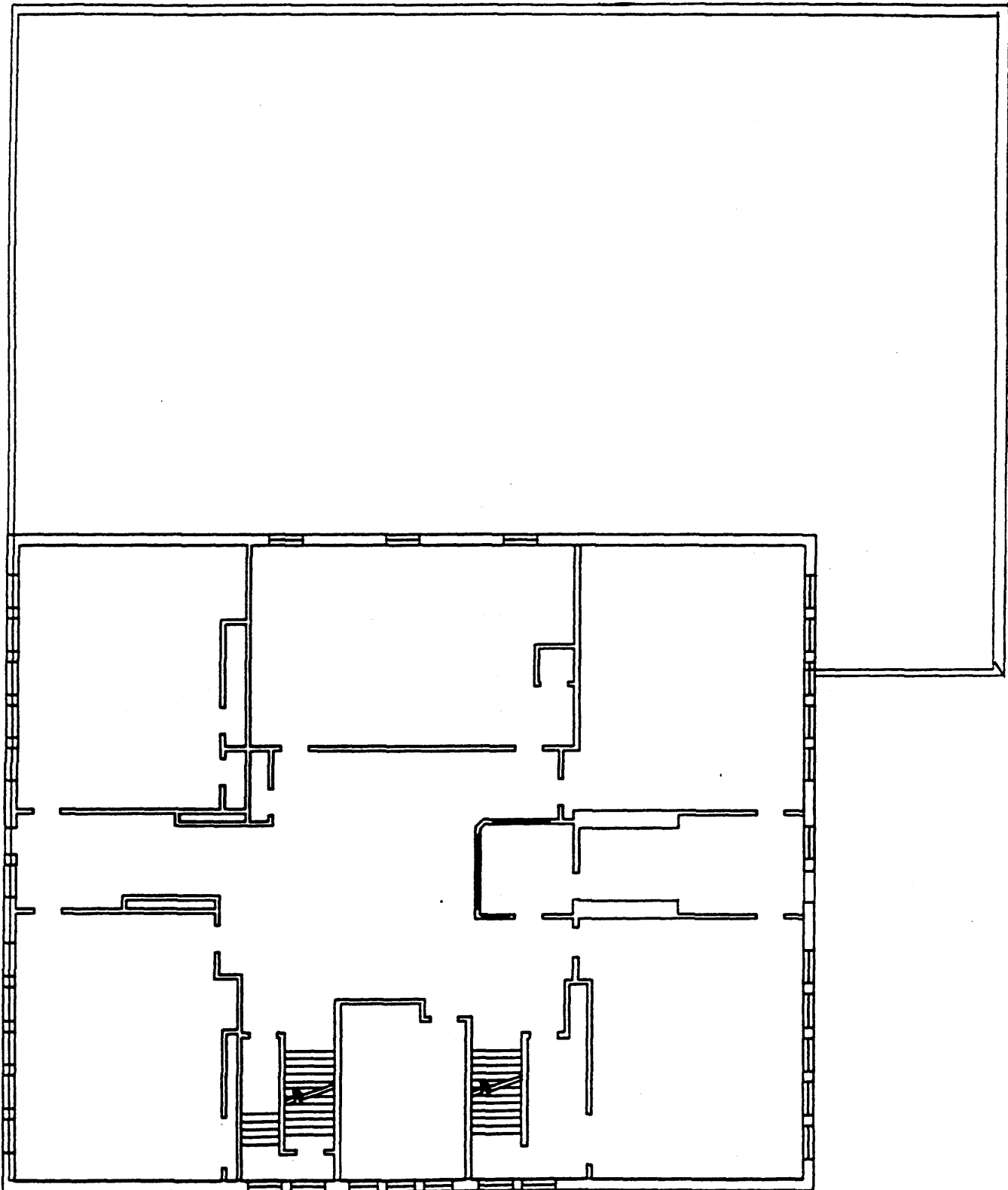
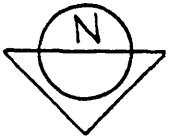
No Scale



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL: FIRST FLOOR

Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

No Scale





CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL: SECOND FLOOR

Cambridge, Dane County, Wisconsin

No Scale

