

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NRHP  
12-6-84

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*.

Type all entries—complete applicable sections Submitted to DOI 10-29-84

## 1. Name

historic Oshkosh State Normal School Historic District

and or common N.A.

## Location

street & number 800, 842, 912 Algoma Boulevard, 845 Elmwood Avenue N.A. not for publication

city, town Oshkosh N/A vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Winnebago code 139

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name State of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin System

street & number 1930 Monroe Street

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53701

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Winnebago County Courthouse

city, town Oshkosh state Wisconsin

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

federal   state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

# 7. Description

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Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Oshkosh Normal School Historic District is a compact, interrelated group of university-owned buildings associated with the former State Normal School at Oshkosh. The small district includes three early twentieth-century educational facilities and a visually prominent, late nineteenth-century residential structure. Encompassing a well landscaped site, the district is located at the physical and historic heart of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus in eastern Winnebago county.

Bounded by Elmwood Street (formerly Elm Street) and Algoma Boulevard, the site is located on a relatively flat area of land about three blocks from the swiftly flowing Fox River. In general the neighborhood surrounding the university campus is better known for its distinctive residential building stock of fine, rather affluent late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century homes. The historic district itself features the 1917 Administration and Science Building, designed by architects Van Ryn and De Gelleke (Dempsey Hall); the 1912 Industrial Educational Building (Harrington Hall); the 1928, Arthur Peabody-designed Swart Training School (Swart Hall); and the 1884 Hooper-Oviatt residence (Chancellor's Home). The buildings within the district represented (Until the late 1950s and 1960s) the entire educational complex of the State Normal School and the State Teachers College at Oshkosh, which had officially established itself in 1871 as the state's third normal school facility.

## Building Descriptions

All of the structures in the district are owned and maintained by the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and each contributes to the cohesiveness and historical context of the entire district.

The three academic buildings that form the points of this triangular district are all of similar design. Constructed of local red brick, each building is three stories high and features a prominent projecting entrance pavillion that clearly dominates its rather long, flat facade. The buildings are designed in a form of the collegiate Gothic style typical of educational facilities constructed in the early twentieth-century in Wisconsin. Functional, efficient, and expressive of high educational ideals, the style was utilized in grade schools, high schools and other normal schools across the state. Dempsey Hall, the university's main administrative building, retains perhaps the best expression of the traditional English-based academic design in its stylized, yet well intergrated, detailing and ornamentation.

The limestone Oviatt house, on the other hand, is representative of Oshkosh's fine, late nineteenth-century residential building. Much less imposing in scale, although significant in its own right, the former dormitory building adds a visually distinctive note to the more formal academic areas of the district. The Oviatt house was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion	
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science	
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture	
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	military	social	
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian	
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation	
		invention		other (specify)	

Specific dates

Builder Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)      Period of Significance: 1913-1934

The Oshkosh Normal School Historic District is significant locally as the oldest remaining portion of the present University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh campus. It dates from the school's original status as the State Normal School at Oshkosh. Constituting the very heart of the normal school's early campus, the early twentieth-century educational facilities and dormitory building of the proposed district represent a significant period of dramatic growth and change within the Oshkosh school and within the larger state normal school system as well. The school's only remaining tie to its original status as one of the state's largest and most innovative normal school facilities, the historic district is a significant representation of the development of higher education, particularly teacher training, in Wisconsin during the 1910s and 1920s. Representing the community's finest examples of early twentieth-century collegiate Gothic design, the district's academic buildings are also locally significant in the area of architecture.

## Education

The State Normal School at Oshkosh was officially established by the State Legislature in 1871 as the third such institution in the state, (after Platteville in 1866 and Whitewater in 1868. Dedicated to the training of teachers for positions in local elementary, rural, and state graded schools, the Oshkosh Normal quickly established itself as an important educational facility within the local area. Under the direction of the school's first president, George S. Albee, the Oshkosh campus developed a fine reputation, particularly as an innovative institution of higher learning, and by 1900 enrollment at the Normal had reached over 701 students. Throughout most of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the school remained housed in a single building which had grown slowly over the years with the completion of an assortment of various wings and additions.

The period from 1900 to 1930 gave a new direction to the school, and for normal education in general, one that would chart a new course for the small school. Because of the enormous growth of public education, the demand for qualified teachers became considerable by the early 1900s. In an attempt to meet those growing demands, the curricula of many state normal schools began to see significant changes. In particular, the schools became the focus for increasingly specialized training for teachers, both in terms of subject matter and the level of teaching (e.g. rural schools, primary education, high schools). No longer were the normals simple training schools designed to offer the same broadbased education to all of their students. The progressive schools began to diversity their curricula, offering electives and specialized programs in hopes of attracting larger numbers of new students, and in hopes of producing graduates better trained to handle the growing sophistication of public school education.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Nine

Quadrangle name Oshkosh

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	3	7	5	5	6	0	4	9	7	5	9	8	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

1	6	3	7	5	8	1	0	4	8	7	5	9	2	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

1	6	3	7	5	7	2	0	4	8	7	5	7	1	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

E 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ code \_\_\_\_\_

## Form Prepared By

name/title Paul R. Lusignan/Acting Architectural Historian

organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date September 1984

street & number 816 State Street telephone (608) 262-4772

city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

## 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 [Signature]

title Director of Historic Preservation date October 25, 1984

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration