

26. (cont.)
fencing around the property.

Arsenal School is roughly C-shaped, with the arms of the "C" embracing a playing field. The field is at the school's basement level which is fully exposed in the projecting wings to each side. The wings have an additional two stories. The spine of the "C" is four stories, rising from a patio behind the top of the field's grandstands. The primary facade, has three-story fluted pilasters which define window bays above the first story. A central entry has a stone surround topped with an eagle. End bays have pedimented openings with decorative metalwork, and medallions with the seal of Pittsburgh above. Side wings have unfluted pilasters and adapted Classical detailing including oversize dentils and guttae.

The school's three main elements are joined by linkages which feature the school's primary entrances. Tall rounded arch openings have keystones with carved faces. The east opening is flanked by large urns and has reveals with Art Deco decorative panels. A metal and glass window wall has tulip and other floral motifs, and there is a large Deco lantern in the archway.

The Arsenal School interior has terrazzo floors and marble wainscoting. But all substantive decorative detailing is focused in the east entry hall and adjacent auditorium. This hall has a patterned terrazzo floor in three colors, green marble baseboards, and brown marble walls with pilasters and keystones over segmentally arched openings. Doorways have decorative woodwork surrounds and reveals. The auditorium has a tile floor, marble wainscoting with metal grilles, column-like projections which define wall bays, and a cornice with swags and dentils. An elaborate stage surround features marble panels, and urns, eagles, dramatic faces, and floral motifs. The balcony has medallions and a projection room framed in pilasters. There are six octagonal metalwork chandeliers.

27. (cont.)
The architect for the original building was the firm of Schwab, Palmgreen, & Merrick. Marion M. Steen officially designed the later west wing. This section, however, had been anticipated in the original plan, and Steen's work closely matched the existing building and is not typical of his manner. Thus, Schwab, Palmgreen, and Merrick can be credited with the building's overall conception and design. Unfortunately, virtually nothing is known about this firm.

Arsenal School's Classical styling, which gives way at some points to Art Deco motifs, encloses one of the Pittsburgh public schools' most ornate interiors in the auditorium and its forecourt hallway. Nevertheless, it is the playing field, with its light standards and grandstands, which somewhat ironically is the school's lasting image.

significance: architecture

Verbal boundary description and justification.

The nominated property consists of Allegheny County Block and Lot 49E-245 which encompasses the school building and its contiguous grounds.

EVALUATION

EVALUATOR(S)

Arsenal

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Washington Vocational School
Allegheny County

Zone 17
E587900 N4480170

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Lawrence School
Allegheny County

Zone 17
E587680 N4679890

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
Arsenal School
Allegheny County

Zone 17
E587940 N4679950

