

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

For NPS use only

**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

1. Name

historic Stevens School

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number 606 W. Philadelphia Street N/A/not for publication

city, town York N/A vicinity of

state PA code 69 county York code 133

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name The Aquarian Church of the Universal Service

street & number 1257 West Market Street

city, town York N/A vicinity of state PA

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. York County Courthouse

street & number 28 East Market Street

city, town York state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date N/A federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Stevens School is a two and one half story, common bond red-orange brick, six classroom building constructed in a Latin cross plan. The roof is hipped, slated, has terra-cotta ridge and hip cresting, and has three central chimneys. The structure is set back from the sidewalk, is free-standing, and dominates a streetscape of 2½ to 3 story brick and frame, gable and mansard-roofed rowhouses. The integrity of the building is excellent.

The architectural composition rises from a randomly coursed, native limestone foundation, pointed with dark, reddish-brown mortar. The foundation along with several courses of brick, forms a water table for the structure, adding a sense of horizontal solidity. This horizontality is reinforced by the string courses between the first and second floors and just above the second floor windows, the dentiled brick cornice, and the numerous brownstone sill and lintel courses.

The various functions of the interior spaces of the structure, i.e. classrooms vs. auxilliary areas, are expressed candidly on the exterior by differences in the massing and ornamentation. The classroom areas are handled in a fairly straightforward manner. These measure four bays by four bays and have 6/6 windows topped by segmental arches. For added visual interest the bays are subtly grouped.

The gable-roofed, parapetted wall dormers are the only distinguishably Richardsonian elements on the classroom wings. They feature Palladian window motifs and blocky, mostly brownstone, bartizan-like corner supports, which are centered over the wider piers beneath. The supports emphasize the vertical and repeat the massive central chimneys in their proportions and horizontal banding. In addition, their knob-like caps, as well as the wedge-like "finials" at the peaks of the gable parapets repeat the terra cotta caps on the hip peaks, a subtle, but effective device.

The auxilliary areas of the structure are set apart from the classroom wings by their comparative eccentricity. The facade pavillion, which houses cloakrooms and the front half of the second floor library, is the most distinctive part of the building. Here the cornice is at a higher level than on the classroom wings, and the dormer is somewhat larger. Windows vary from the standard form used in ^{the} classrooms. Brownstone is much more evident than in other areas of the building, including the use of brownstone sill and lintel courses. The focal points of the facade are the gaping Syrian-arched portal and the front wall dormer, whose lunette is surrounded by a larger sunrise motif of radiating stretchers echoing the entry way.

The rear stair hall is also expressed on the exterior of the building. Here the dentiled cornice is at a lower level than on the classroom wings and the only windows are small, 4/4, round-arched, and paired. The rear Queen Anne/Eastlake porches, with their turned columns and decorative frieze-boards, make up the only wooden decorative features on the exterior of the structure.

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The building was constructed with masonry load-bearing walls separating classrooms from hallways. Although wooden joists span the classroom ceilings and form the attic rafter system, the hallways are fire proof. The construction of the slate-covered masonry first floor hall can be seen from below as brick barrel vaults supported with large metal I beams. The concrete floored basement with its approximately ten foot high ceilings was used for storage, the boiler, and boys' and girls' restrooms.

The interior of the building is nearly as intact as the exterior. The focal point of the floor plan is a central stair hall. Here, two, three-run, open-welled iron staircases, which replaced the original wooden stairs, lead to the second floor. This hall, while fairly large in scale, is intimate in feeling, due in large measure to the small scale of the round-arched windows and the low ceilings on the first floor landings. Other interesting features on the interior include an angled teachers' alcove in the rear first floor classroom, the library at the front of the second floor, and the numerous cloakrooms, some of which still contain their original coathooks. The varnished woodwork throughout the building, including wainscoting, chair rails, multipaned transoms, paneled doors and door surrounds is as original and has never been painted.

Changes to the building are limited to the white paint of the exterior woodwork (originally dark brown), the black & white paint scheme of the exterior doors, the installation of plumbing in the basement with classroom sinks above, the replacement of the stairs in metal, the modernization of the heating system, and the covering of exterior grassy areas with macadam. The structure's integrity is excellent; even some of the copper gutters and enamel door numbers remain in place.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1889-90 Builder/Architect John A. & Reinhardt Dempwolf

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Stevens School is an architecturally successful example of a building erected to meet the specific educational needs of its era of construction. The architects, John A. and Reinhardt Dempwolf managed to make a basic, functional building into a strong statement of the Richardsonian style through the employment of comparatively few Richardsonian elements and put their own mark on the building through the unusual, even eccentric massing. The structure was modern and up-to-date when constructed, but the period since then has seen public school budgets, debits, state appropriations and costs per pupil spiral upward, and at the same time, has witnessed a radical shift of the roles of public schools in society, and how the individual school building reflects these roles.

The six classroom Stevens School building was erected in 1889-90 at a contracted cost of \$15,985, or approximately \$2665 per classroom. This makes Stevens the second most expensive primary school (per room) to be erected in York before the turn of the century, the most expensive being the Central School of 1896 at \$2962 per room. Even these budgets, however, were not liberal. Stevens was erected in the beginning stage of a school building binge in York that lasted until the 1920's. Between 1888 and 1920, due to a 140% increase in population, sixteen elementary schools were erected in York, in addition to the twenty-five room high school, which included a sizeable auditorium. Elementary schools such as Stevens were generally without facilities for public gatherings and for specialized classes. The structures were meant, above all, to provide shelter for the instruction of reading, writing, arithmetic and a few other basic subjects for six hours per day. Above instruction in the obvious basic skills and moral values, the schools had no social "mission" - social life still centered around the church.

Stevens School closed its doors to public education in December of 1960. Considering the extent of change in the official position concerning what role the public schools were to play in society, it is remarkable that the school remained open as long as it did. A 1946 school building survey prepared for the York City School District by William E. Arnold and Theodore L. Keller of the University of Pennsylvania gives some indication of the pronounced shift in values regarding public schools:

When the majority of the elementary schools in York were erected, a concept of education very different from that accepted today prevailed. Then, if there were one hundred and twenty children to be housed...a three room building was erected. It was assumed with very little if any discussion that there should be a classroom for each group. Beyond that there were no essential provisions. Education was then thought of as the development of certain knowledges, skills and attitudes taught by the teachers through the use of a book in each subject at each grade level. (p 5)

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The buildings were also criticized for not being "conducive to the development of a modern educational program", (p 6) which was to place more emphasis on social intercourse and the "art of living", and less on traditional course work. "In many instances it appears that the buildings are determining what is done educationally - rather than as should be the case - the buildings being an expression of educational needs." (p. 6) Further consolidation was encouraged to show the rate of growth in cost per pupil while providing more complete facilities, and much was made over the new social role of the schools as community centers after school hours, and as centers for adult education. All these factors combined caused buildings such as Stevens School to be deemed archaic and wholly inadequate for post World War II educational purposes.

The obsolescence of the Stevens School for educational purposes does not, however, detract from the architectural merits of the structure. The building was designed by the York architectural firm of John A. and Reinhardt Dempwolf, and is probably the finest remaining Richardsonian Romanesque school building in York County. John Dempwolf started his architectural practice in York in 1874, and was joined by his brother Reinhardt about ten years later. As a team, they designed hundreds of buildings, most of them within a fifty mile radius of York, and are responsible for many of the most architecturally significant buildings in York City and County. Their ideas received additional exposure and longevity through their seven students, all of whom went on to start practices of their own in the York area, and some of whom also became successful in a regional sense.

In the Stevens School, the Dempwolfs used the standard Richardsonian vocabulary in an individualistic and budget-conscious way. The classroom wings of the structure, aside from the subtle grouping of the windows, are hardly Richardsonian at all. Richardsonian elements are concentrated in the central facade pavillion, in the stair hall block, on the wall dormers, and on the roof and chimneys. In spite of the dearth of the Richardsonian elements on the classroom areas, and despite the eccentric, some might say unresolved, massing of the structure, particularly in the rear, the Stevens School manages to be a cohesive, shorthand statement of Richardson's major tenets, and a successful compromise between budget and style.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .6 acre

Quadrangle name York

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 18 414,450.0 4,454,900
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jay Barshinger, Sites Surveyor

organization Historic York, Inc. date 15 September 1983

street & number P.O. Box 2312 telephone (717) 843-0320

city or town York state PA

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Larry E. Tise, State Historical
title Preservation Officer date 11/23/83

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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Books

Prowell, George R. History of York County, Pennsylvania. Chicago:
J.H. Beers and Co., 1907. VII pp 332, 353, 808.

Wickersham, James Pyle, LL.D. A History of Education in Pennsylvania.
Lancaster, PA: Inquirer Publishing Co., 1886. pp 553, 558.

Booklets

Arnold, William E. and Theodore L. Keller. School Building Survey, York,
PA 1946. University of Pennsylvania. pp. 5-7, 11.
HSYC* file #65329

Shermeyer, Mark David. The Dempwolf Public Schools. York, PA: 1982.
pp. 7, 33-41. (available at HSYC and HYI+)

Newspaper Articles

"Stevens School Closed". Gazette and Daily. York, PA. 23 December 1960.
HSYC file #13337

Annual Reports, York Public Schools

Year ending June 30, 1874. p. 9. HSYC file #959.

1876-1877. pp. 11, 15. HSYC file #959.

1893-1894. p. 7. HSYC file #959.

1898-1899. pp. 8-10. HSYC file #959.

1907-1908. pp. 20-21, 32. HSYC file #959.

1912-1913. pp. 20-21, 32, 125-131. HSYC file #959.

1960-1961. p. 62. HSYC file #959.

Maps

Roe, Frederick B. Atlas of the City of York. Philadelphia: 1903. Plate 3.

*Historical Society of York County

+Historic York, Inc.

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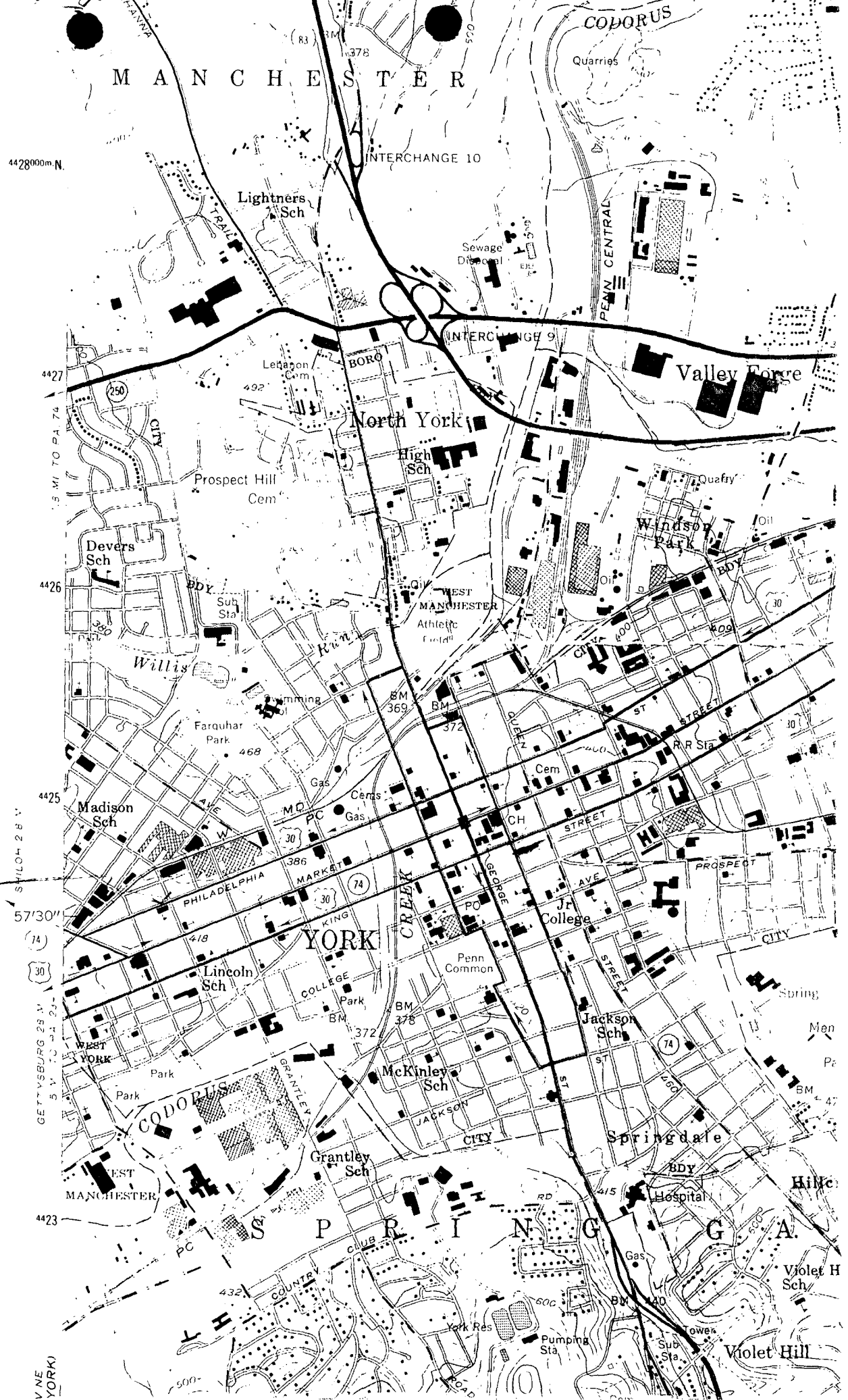
Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description

Bounded on the North by West Philadelphia Street; on the West by Property now or formerly of Mildred H.N. King, known as 620 West Philadelphia Street; on the South by Clarke Alley; and on the East by Property now or formerly of Eugene K. and Evaline Cousler, known as 604 West Philadelphia Street, and by Properties now or formerly of Charles A. and Iva B. Hess, Merle O. and Dawn D. Stare, Ralph B. and Bertha R. Lehman, John P. Mann, Jr. and Treva R. Mann, said properties being known as Nos. 32, 34, 36, 40, and 46 North West Street. Containing in front on West Philadelphia Street one hundred six (106) feet, ten (10) inches, more or less, and extending southwardly of equal width throughout to Clarke Alley, two hundred forty-nine (249) feet, more or less.

STEVENS SCHOOL
YORK COUNTY
YORK QUADRANGLE



VINE
YORK