



Parkesburg Sch
 Chester County PA
 Parkesburg Quad
 Zone 18
 E 421830
 N 4423630

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuations sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Parkesburg School other name/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number 360 Strasburg Ave. city, town Parkesburg state Pennsylvania code PA county Chester code 029 zip code 19365

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private public-local public-State public-Federal

Category of Property

- building (s) district site structure object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. DR. BRENT D. GLASS PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION 3/16/95

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. determined eligible for the National Register. determined not eligible for the National Register. removed from the National Register. other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Italian Renaissance Revival

Colonial Revival (addition)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brickwalls Brickroof Synthetic: fiber glassother n/a

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Constructed in 1899-1900, the Parkesburg School is a rectangular two story nine by four bay brick Italian Renaissance Revival style school building with a dual pitched hip roof. A rectangular two story Colonial Revival style rear addition was constructed in 1916 and a modern one story brick addition was added to the east in 1958-1959. The building is located prominently on a hill overlooking much of the Borough of Parkesburg within a substantially residential neighborhood. The Parkesburg School retains good overall integrity, with changes occurring principally on the interior to accomodate changing technical and use requirements for classroom and public spaces.

The topography of the site is uneven, with the school located near the center and on the highest point of an irregularly shaped lot that slopes steeply southward to Main Street and gently northward to Strasburg Avenue. A concrete staircase with seventy-two steps and pipework railings extends from Main Street to a sidewalk at the south side of the building. Lawns surround the school except for a circular drive and small asphalt parking area at the southwest end of the site.

The Parkesburg School was constructed in three principal phases. The largest section, built in 1899-1900, is a nine bay wide and four bay deep two story brick building with a raised brick basement on a limestone foundation. The dual pitched hip roof has single oversized hipped dormers on its south, east and west slopes. The dormers have simple boxed cornices and wooden infill at their faces replacing windows and louvers shown in historic photographs. Two large brick chimneys with corbelled caps project through the center portion of the roof.

The nine bay south elevation, facing Main Street, is the building's principal historic facade. A simple corbelled cornice is visually supported by a series of low-relief pilasters, with corbelled caps, that rise from a water table atop the raised basement level. The pilasters separate each bay and articulate the building's corners. Single wooden one-over-one light double hung sash windows, set within segmental arched openings with decorative brick hoods and brownstone sills, are located at the first and second levels of the first, fourth, sixth, and ninth bays. Double one-over-one light windows of similar design are located in all remaining bays. At the ground level, single leaf pedestrian doors are located at the third and seventh bays and a double leaf door is located at the fourth bay. The second and eighth bays of the ground floor level contain double twelve light fixed sash windows, set within plain rectangular openings, and the first and ninth bays contain single windows, now concealed behind plywood infill.

x

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Parquesburg School
Chester County, PA

The west elevation of the original building is four bays wide. The cornice detail found on the facade is repeated, as is the articulation of the corners by low-relief pilasters rising from a high water table. One intermediate pilaster visually divides the elevation into two sections. At the first and second levels, the southern section contains three bays of windows, two single windows flanking a double window, and the northern section has single bay of five grouped windows. Windows to the south are similar to those of the facade. The grouped windows are set within a rectangular opening with a simple flat continuous brownstone sill. All but one unit of the grouped window at the first floor level have been infilled. The pattern of windows in the three southern bays are repeated at the ground floor level. A former double window and a single window, both now infilled, are located below the grouped windows.

The 1916 addition obscures all but the four outer two bays of the north elevation of the original building. At either side, a paired window and a single window, with one-over-one light sash, are located on each level. The east elevation is similar to the west elevation except that the first floor grouped windows remain intact.

1916 Addition: A five by four bay two story brick addition was constructed in 1916 to the north of the 1899-1900 section forming a T- shaped building. The addition has a rusticated brownstone foundation and a flat roof.

The west elevation of the 1916 addition is capped by a simple flat parapet. The southern bay is slightly recessed from the others and forms a visual hyphen between the original 1899-1900 building and the addition. The first and second levels are separated by a masonry belt course and the high foundation level is rusticated stone. Openings at the second level contain four grouped windows, a single window, a triple window, a single window. Each have wooden six-over-two light sash set within plain rectangular openings. Four double windows are located at the first level. The three northern windows have wooden six-over-six sash under a continuous fourteen light transom. The southern window has a double one-over one window with a simple flat sill. A double-leaf entrance with metal doors and a single light transom has been added between the southern window and the original portion of the building.

The five bay wide north elevation of the 1916 addition is capped by a low stepped parapet. A blank rectangular sign panel is centered within the parapet which is highlighted with a cast keystone and decorative scrolls. The three central bays project slightly and the first and second levels are separated by a masonry belt course. Openings at the second level include a triple central window flanked by a single and a double window, all with six-over-two light wooden double hung sash. A central entrance at the first floor level, with paired panelled doors, is flanked by arched tripartite windows with segmental transoms and single windows set in rectangular openings. The arched windows are highlighted by masonry keystones and simple brick decorative panels are set above the outer windows. The east elevation is similar to the west elevation except that the central bays of the first level are obscured by the 1958-1959 addition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Parkesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 7 Page 2

1958-1959 Addition: A low-profile one story addition with a flat built-up roof was constructed to the east of the 1916 section in 1958-1959. The sixty by sixty-four foot rectangular addition is attached to the historic building by a narrow ell-shaped connecting wing. Double paired entrances are centered at the north elevation of the connecting wing and a paired entrance is centered at the addition's east elevation. The north elevation of the addition is visually divided into three irregular bays: the connecting wing to the west and central and western window wall systems separated by a blank brick curtain wall. The window/entrance wall system of the western bay and the window wall systems of the two eastern bays are recessed slightly into the facade under simple wide flat soffits. The east elevation has a central entrance/window wall system flanked by blank brick endwalls. The south elevation of the addition is also visually divided into three sections: the connecting wing is represented by a blank brick wall that is recessed back forty feet from the two eastern bays. The eastern bays each have window wall systems that are slightly recessed into the facade under a simple wide flat soffit that is broken by a central brick firewall. All window walls are now concealed beneath plywood.

Interior: The interior plan of the original 1899-1900 building consists of four large classroom spaces on the first and second levels separated by a wide central corridor, with service spaces, running from north to south. A modern stairhall is located at the southern end of the corridor and has metal pan stairs and a wire-glass enclosure. Service spaces at the east side of the corridor are narrow and reflect former closet and storage spaces for the classrooms. Service spaces along the west side of the corridors are wider and include bathroom facilities and storage spaces. The northwest classroom on the first floor has been subdivided into three smaller rooms.

Classroom spaces typically retain much of their historic appearance and spatial character. Ceiling heights have generally been preserved, with finishes including flat plaster and sheetrock or acoustical tile applied directly over flat plaster. Simple hanging lighting fixtures appear to date from the 1960s. Heavily molded chair-rails separate plaster walls from beaded wainscoting. Evidence remains of former chalk boards that extended along interior walls just above the chair-rails. Hardwood floors remain in most classrooms but appear to be recent overlays.

Hallways have smooth sheetrock or plaster ceiling and wall finishes with no trim other than vinyl baseboards and plain door surrounds. Lighting in the hallways generally consists of simple rectangular downlighting. Flooring is typically covered with vinyl tile.

The interior plan of the original 1916 addition includes a corridors along the north wall of the original building at the first and second levels, with an open assembly space to the north at the first floor and two classrooms to the north at the second floor. Walls, ceilings, and floors in the hallways are finished similar to those in the 1899-1900 building. The assembly space retains its original proscenium arch and coffered ceiling. Walls are flat plaster and the floor has an applied vinyl covering. The second floor classrooms are similar to those in the original building.

The ground floor level under both the original building and the 1916 addition consists of several classrooms dating from post-1945 and mechanical and service rooms. The interior of the 1958-1959

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Parkesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 7 Page 3

addition is divided into a series of small classrooms. Dropped acoustical ceilings are typical throughout as are sheetrock and painted concrete block wall finishes. Vinyl tile flooring is used throughout the addition.

Integrity: While changes have occurred to the exterior of the Parkesburg School, they have generally been limited and the building retains a good degree of architectural integrity. The 1916 addition is compatible with the design of the 1899-1900 building and contributes to the character and significance of the site. The 1958-1959 addition, while architecturally incompatible with the historic building, does not greatly affect the historic character of the Parkesburg School due to its low profile, its connection to the historic building by a narrow hyphen, and its secondary location.

The principal entrance to the school was relocated from the Main Street facade to the north elevation in 1958-1959. As originally constructed, the principal entrance was accessed from a small central one-bay wide hipped porch at the first level of the south elevation. The porch was removed during the remodeling and the former entrance was replaced with a double window matching the adjacent historic windows. An original projecting entrance enclosure at the center bay of the north elevation of the annex was also removed at that time and all remaining entrance doors were replaced.

The impact on the overall historic character of the facade of the relocation of the south entrance is mitigated by the setting of the building. The character of the facade is largely defined by its prominent location atop a steep hillside. Because of the slope of the hill, the upper levels of the facade are more visually prominent from the street than are the lower levels. The function of the south facade as the principal elevation remains in evidence through the staircase that extends up the hill. The removal of the entrance enclosure at the north elevation of the 1916 addition had minimal visual impact on the historic character of the building.

The only other significant exterior alteration to occur during the 1958-1959 remodeling was the painting of the originally exposed red brick exterior wall surfaces and brownstone trim and foundations. This is a reversible alteration.

The interior of the original 1899-1900 building and the 1916 addition, while altered to meet changing use requirements, continue to reflect their historic character appearance. The interior corridor/service spaces were modified during the 1958-1959 renovation when the original entrance was relocated to the 1958-1959 addition and a new fire stair created where it had previously been located. Partitioning in the corridor/service space was also altered to provide narrower corridor widths, bathrooms, and different service space layout. While these changes resulted in the installation of new finishes and the reconfiguration of spaces, the significant principal plan of a central hallway flanked by service spaces and classroom was retained. The four principal classrooms on each level were not altered with the exception of the installation of modern hanging light fixtures.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Parquesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 7 Page 4

The assembly space in the 1916 addition, the most elaborately detailed space within the building, retains excellent integrity, although finishes have deteriorated in recent years due to moisture penetration through the roof. This appears to have been a recurring problem, as serious damage due to roof leakage by 1947 resulted in the renovation of the room between 1948 and 1949. The room was extensively replastered, matching its original design, and desks were replaced by theatre type seating. At the same time, a new roof was also installed and repairs were made to the exterior brickwork.

While the building has suffered from considerable deferred maintenance in recent years and vandals have destroyed much of the window glass, the Parkesburg School remains in good overall condition. At present, damage has largely been confined to finishes and the building remains an excellent candidate for rehabilitation.

The nomination includes one contributing structure, the 72 step concrete stair case leading from Main Street to the school at the south side of the building.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

1900-1943

1900

EDUCATION

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

Shoemaker, R. Preston (Builder)

Adams, Clyde (Architect of 1916 addition)

Elliott, W. J. (Builder of 1916 addition)

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Parkesburg School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its role in the educational development of Parkesburg Borough. Opened in 1900, and expanded in 1916, the Parkesburg School served as the community's school for all grade levels from 1912 until the 1950s when it ceased to function as a high school and it was converted for use as an elementary school. As the only public school in Parkesburg from 1900 until the opening of a new high school in 1956, the Parkesburg School was the primary educational facility in the community. Prior to the Great Depression, the school served as a regional high school, with students attending from outside the borough. The siting of the Parkesburg School atop a hill overlooking much of the borough makes it a visually prominent landmark in the community. The exterior of the building retains very good overall architectural integrity and the interior, although altered to accommodate periodic programmatic changes that have occurred throughout its history, continues to reflect much of its historic appearance, detailing, and spatial arrangement. The Parkesburg School remains as the only public school building remaining in the borough from the period before the creation of the Octorara Area School District in the 1950s. The site includes two contributing resources, the Parkesburg School and a long concrete staircase that ascends the hill from the community to the school.

Parkesburg, located in western Chester County, is a small industrial community that prospered during the nineteenth-century from the railroad and iron industries. The repair shops for the Columbia to Philadelphia railroad were built in Parkesburg in the 1830s and remained here until they were relocated west to Harrisburg in 1861. The Borough of Parkesburg was incorporated on March 1, 1872 and was named for the Parkes family, prominent residents of the area. The railroad still divides the community with a principal commercial core and residential areas to its south and residential and a secondary commercial area located on the side of a steep hill to its north. The Parkesburg School is located on the hill and is a prominent visual landmark in the borough.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographic References

Alumni Association of Parkesburg High School. "Over the Top' Bulletin." Parkesburg, PA: Parkesburg High School, 1918.

Breou's Official Series of Farm Maps, Chester County. Philadelphia: W. H. Kirk & Co., 1883.

Chester County Historical Society. Vertical Files, "Parkesburg-Public Schools," "Parkesburg Academy," Parkesburg High School." West Chester, PA

Chester County (PA) Recorder of Deeds, Deed Book, G-8, p. 329; Deed Book, V-57, p. 87.

Coatesville Record, 17 January 1900; 27 April 1909; 8 September 1909; 29 August 1961.

Daily Local News, 13 October 1888; 15 October 1900; 26 October 1900; 6 September 1907; 21 January 1946; 7 October 1957.

Letter, H. Wilson to H. F. C. Heagley, M. D., 14 March 1936 (held by the Chester County Historical Society).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by the Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

Specify repository _____

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of property 2.2

UTM References

A 1 8 | 4 2 1 3 8 0 | 4 4 2 3 6 3 0
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

B _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____ | _____ | _____
 Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property includes the entire parcel numbered 8-3-132 1321.1 in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, Chester County, Pennsylvania.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire current tax parcel only, which represents the size of the site throughout the subject's period of significance. Much of the acreage is represented by the hill stretching from Main Street to the building. This area is a character-defining element of the site itself and includes a historic concrete staircase providing access to the property from the borough below.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David B. Schneider
 organization _____ date 11/7/94
 street & number 240 North Mary Street telephone (717) 397-5757
 city or town Lancaster state Pennsylvania zip code 17603

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Parkesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 8 Page 1

The establishment of the first public school in Parkesburg has not been documented. Permanent school facilities in Parkesburg in the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries included the Parkesburg Academy, the Parkesburg Public School, the Elm Street School, a one-room school, a small facility in a Quaker meeting house, and an African-American school that was held in the Bethany A. M. E. Church on Green Street. The Parkesburg Academy was chartered on 9 August 1858 and a substantial stone building was constructed shortly thereafter atop the hill overlooking Parkesburg. A private academy, the school closed in 1879 and was sold to William M. Simson, a merchant. Simson rented the property, first as a school that closed in 1885, then to a variety of commercial tenants.¹ The Parkesburg Public School, a frame building with novelty siding, was constructed between 1873 and 1875 by the Parkesburg School District on the northeast corner of the present site of the Parkesburg School. Opened on 13 October 1888, the Elm Street School operated until 1900 when it was sold to Joseph Worell who converted it into two dwelling units.²

The previous Parkesburg Public School was destroyed by fire on 23 June 1898. Temporary classroom space was leased by the school board in the Moses Building, the J. Wilson Wright carriage shop, and the former Elm Street School. The School Board chose not to purchase the former Parkesburg Academy as a replacement and the majority of voters approved a twenty thousand dollar bond issue for the construction of a new school on 8 November 1898. The present site was acquired for eighteen hundred dollars and a contract was awarded to R. Preston Shoemaker in the amount of seventeen thousand one hundred seventy dollars to construct the building. Subcontractors for the project included Joseph Keft, grading; H. M. Windle, construction of the concrete stairs leading to the site from Main Street; and I. W. Guest, paving.³

The Parkesburg School began operation in January or February 1900 and enrollment topped four hundred in 1907.⁴ In 1909, the school became so overcrowded that children in primary grades were scheduled for half days and some classes were moved to the old Bazaar building on east Main Street.⁵ The school board also began considering adding a high school in 1909 but a bond issue for construction was voted down by local residents.⁶ In 1914 the board rejected the purchase of the former Parkesburg Academy, or Seltzer's Hall, and a proposal from William B. Smith for a building site on the south side of town, in favor of expanding the Parkesburg School. On 3 May 1915, voters approved a seventeen thousand-five hundred dollar bond issue to build a high school annex. Clyde Adams was chosen as architect and W. J. Elliot as general contractor.⁷

High School enrollment declined in the years preceding World War Two as budgetary limits and physical constraints of the building resulted in the discontinuance of several courses of study. Students from the surrounding areas, who had previously attended the Parkesburg School for high school, began to attend Scott High School in Coatesville. The Parkesburg School began to lose state funding due to the declining attendance of out-of-town students. Plans to again remodel the Parkesburg School as an elementary school began prior to the war but were delayed. The school board at first proposed building a new elementary school and extensively altering the Parkesburg School by installing a domestic science room, a shop, a library, and a gymnasium. The proposal was revised to include construction of a new high school and conversion of the Parkesburg School into an elementary school.⁸

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Parkesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 8 Page 2

With the creation of the Octorara Area School District and the opening of a new Octorara Area High School, the Class of 1956 was the last high school class to graduate from Parkesburg School.⁷ The school was heavily damaged by fire in October 1957. Classes were relocated to temporary facilities and the school was not reopened until 1959.⁹ The Octorara Area School District closed the Parkesburg School in 1980. The building has remained vacant since that time and has suffered occasional vandalism. A 1986 proposal to rehabilitate the building as luxury apartments was unsuccessful and a new owner is now planning an adaptive use project which will convert the school into apartments for the elderly. This project will seek to use historic preservation tax incentives and is being designed to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation Projects. Construction is expected to begin in mid-1995.

Architecturally, the Parkesburg School is representative of the Italian Renaissance Revival and Colonial Revival styles. While relatively restrained in ornamentation, the building has a strong visual presence in the community due to its location high on a hill overlooking the borough. The Parkesburg School is also the largest and most elaborate public school building constructed in the borough prior to 1956. With the exception of the now demolished stone Parkesburg Academy, other school buildings built in the community prior to the Parkesburg School were small and simply detailed. The long concrete staircase that ascends from the town to the building is a contributing resource.

Notes: _____

¹Letter, H. Wilson to H. F. C. Heagley, M. D., 14 March 1936 (held by the Chester County Historical Society).

²Daily Local News, 13 October 1888; 15 October 1900; 26 October 1900.

³Parkesburg High School Senior Class of 1955, Venture, (Parkesburg, PA: Parkesburg High School, Vol. 10), n.p.

⁴Ibid.; Coatesville Record, 17 January 1900; Daily Local News, 6 September 1907.

⁵Coatesville Record, 8 September 1909.

⁶Coatesville Record, 27 April 1909.

⁷Daily Local News, 21 January 1946.

⁸Daily Local News, 7 October 1957; Parkesburg Post, 10 October 1957; 13 February 1958; 3 September 1959.

⁹Venture, n.p.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Parkesburg School
Chester County, PA

Section number 9 Page 1

Parkesburg High School Senior Class of 1955. Venture. Parkesburg, PA: Parkesburg High School, Vol. 3, 1948; Vol. 7, 1952; Vol. 9, 1954; Vol. 10, 1955.

Parkesburg Post, 10 October 1957; 13 February 1958; 11 December 1958; 20 August 1958; 3 September 1959.

Zagorski, Joe. "Vacant But Not Forgotten." Village News, 4 April 1990.