

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Central School
Wendell L. Willkie School

AND/OR COMMON

095-144-16040

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1630 Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Elwood

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

5th

STATE

Indiana

CODE

18

COUNTY

Madison

CODE

095

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Elwood School Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

1630 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Elwood

VICINITY OF

Indiana

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Elwood School Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

1630 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Elwood

STATE

Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Space Use and Feasibility Study

DATE

April 1974

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mr. Wm. Kinst

14 Berwyn Road

CITY, TOWN

Muncie

STATE

Indiana

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 Wendell L. Willkie School in Elwood was originally known as the Central School and was built between 1893 and 1895. It opened in September of 1895 and functioned as an elementary school and High School until the present High School was completed in the fall of 1915. It continued to serve as a school in the Elwood educational system until 1973.

The building is an excellent expression of the Richardsonian Style; two stories with a high base basement and an extremely spacious attic. It is a symmetrically organized rectangular plan about the east-west or central axis which is defined by an entrance on the east connecting to an east-west corridor on the first floor. The main corridor however is the north-south hall with a sequence of classrooms and flanking ancillary spaces. Open stairways running the entire height of the building are located near the northeast and southeast corners of the building. Secondary open stairs at the north end of the main hallway and the east end of the east-west corridor give additional means of access to the basement from the first floor.

The numerous classrooms, primarily on the first and second floor, have been well maintained and have had only minor alterations such as new flooring and fluorescent lighting. All of the classrooms still have their original 30 inch car siding wainscoting, chalk boards and rails and most of their original trimwork and other fittings.

The most imposing space in the building is the large auditorium on the second floor. It was originally two stories in height with an extensive balcony at the third floor level. The upper walls were terminated by a deep plaster band most of which is still intact. Access to the balcony was achieved by a pair of open stairways from the second level. This must have been one of the most impressive spaces in the community. Unfortunately a lower ceiling was installed, precisely when is uncertain, and the spatial volume of the auditorium has been greatly diminished.

The exterior of the building is a vigorous expression of the Richardsonian Style. The massive masonry bearing walls (24" thick) are of stone and brick. A high base of large rusticated stone defines the high basement and forms the sill line of the punched double hung windows at the first register or main floor of the building. The upper floors are defined by red brick surfaces with stone lintels and/or stone arches at the windows and horizontal stone banding and detailing.

The east elevation reflects the symmetry of the parts and is expressed as a Palladian five port scheme, a central pavilion with flanking and slightly set back elements and boldly projecting semi-circular towers at the north and south corners terminate the almost block long elevation. The north tower is crowned with a steep conical roof and the south tower is battlemented. The result is a solid composition.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The south elevation is the facade and major approach to the building. It is an asymmetrical composition with the main entrance shifted slightly to the left or west of the center of the composition. The main entrance is defined by a projecting blocky rectangular rusticated stone unit and penetrated by a large semi-circular arched opening with "Wendell L. Willkie" inscribed on the face of the arch. A horizontal stone band above the arched opening has the inscription "The Hope of Our Country". The style of lettering is a variant of the Art Nouveau and is an interesting composition. Moldings, impost, and rinceau are finely carved. The top of the projecting stone unit is capped by a simple stone balustrade.

Originally the three bay unit behind the main entrance was terminated by a fine, tall square brick tower capped with a steep pyramidal slate roof. The four faces of the tower were penetrated by arched openings of stone, and the corners of the tower were defined by slender tourelles. Unfortunately, the tower has been removed and the present dwarf unit leaves much to be desired. It is imperative that the tower be rebuilt to its original silhouette if the building is to again be an authentic focal point in the area.

The building's structure and enclosure originally provided for additional space in a third floor over most of the east side with only the single access in the south stairs. State ordinances concerning exits and fire safety in schools have prevented this space from being finished. The third floor, therefore, was not included in the existing floor area analysis. The total gross (exterior dimensions) area is 44,542 square feet approximately evenly divided between the basement and the two floors above. The thick exterior walls, large interior flues and chases, large toilet rooms, boiler rooms, halls and stairs reduce this to 24,197 usable square feet.

The building's overall maintenance has been typical of many old educational plants in Indiana. Certain exposed materials such as wood windows, roofs, flashings, and gutters are in serious need of replacement, not just repair. Generally, however, the building, particularly its interior, is in an excellent state of health.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1893 - 95

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wendell L. Willkie was born in Elwood on February 18, 1892, just three years prior to the completion of the school. Willkie attended the school from about 1898 until 1910, prior to studying law at Indiana University. The school, as previously stated, functioned as an Elementary and High School until September 1915 when the new adjacent building to the west and known as the High School was opened. Thus, for about twelve years Wendell L. Willkie was constantly exposed to the rich environment of this building while he received his basic education.

The handsomely cut stone lintel above the main arched entrance of the south elevation inscribed with the phrase "The Hope of Our Country" possibly summed up the thoughts of many Hoosiers when Wendell L. Willkie returned to the school in 1940 to give his acceptance speech as the Republican nominee for President of the United States. The school was appropriately named after Wendell L. Willkie in 1944 and his name was inscribed in the stone arch of the main entrance.

Thus the building has a dual historical significance. It is an important architectural statement of the Richardsonian Style and the Presidential nominee for the Republican Party of 1940 had attended the school for about twelve (12) years.

Furthermore, the building is the most dynamic symbol of the city.

