

Wisconsin Historical Society: Sparta high school listed on the state register of historic places

Posted on Thursday, Apr 1, 2021

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Sparta, WI. – The Wisconsin Historical Society placed the Sparta High School (Sparta, Monroe County) on the State Register of Historic Places in February of 2021.

Sparta High School, designed by prominent Wisconsin architects Parkinson & Dockendorff, was built in 1924 with rear additions designed by others added in 1967 and 1977. The school is an excellent example of Collegiate Gothic architecture, a style so popular it has become practically synonymous with school design of the early 20th century. Built of red and brown brick, the building is ornamented with cut limestone which is seen at the belt courses, window sills, and the parapet. It frames the entrances, with a particularly elaborate door surround at the main entrance pavilion. Decorative devices that reference the Gothic Revival include octagonal pilasters, trefoil panels, mullions, carved panels, spires, and blind shields, all of limestone.

A high school building was demolished to make way for the subject building, which is larger than its predecessor with specialized classrooms and a large gymnasium. The school was designed in the “combination plan” which organized junior and senior-level classes in separate wings with shared facilities, such as the gymnasium, in the center of the building. It reflected the rising importance placed upon secondary-level education as an essential component in the preparation of youth for adulthood, incorporating physical education and vocational training along with traditional academic subjects. Today this building represents the history of educational trends and school expansion in Sparta.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.