



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Reeb Avenue School

Other names Reeb Elementary School

2. Location

Address 280 Reeb Avenue Zip Code 43207

3. Historic Preservation Officer Certification

As the designated authority under the Columbus City Code Chapter 3116 and 3117, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Columbus Register of Historic Properties and meets the procedural requirements set forth in Columbus City Code Chapter 3117. In my opinion, the property or properties meet(s) does not meet the Columbus Register criteria. I recommend that this property or properties be considered significant locally nationally statewide.

Dandy A. Clark
Historic Preservation Officer

6/20/13
Date

In our opinion, the property or properties meet(s) does not meet the Columbus Register criteria.

STEWART GIBBNEY
Historic Resources Commission Chair

6/20/13
Date

4. Columbus City Council Certification

I hereby certify that this property or properties is/are:
 entered in the Columbus Register.
 determined not eligible for the Columbus Register.
 removed from the Columbus Register
 other, (explain) _____

Signature of the City Clerk

Date

I hereby certify that the Franklin County Recorder has been notified that this property or properties has/have been entered into the Columbus Register.

Historic Preservation Officer

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check all boxes that apply)

- private
- public – local
- public – State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		buildings
		site
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the Columbus Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Elementary School

Current Functions

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Neo-Classical Revival

Materials

foundation: Limestone

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt shingles

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

See Continuation Sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Columbus Register Criteria

Period or Periods of Significance

A. The design or style of the property's exterior and/or interior is of significance to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state or nation.

1907, c. 1910, c. 1924

B. The property is closely and publicly identified with a person who has significantly contributed to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

C. The property is identified as a significant work of an architect, artisan, engineer, landscape architect or builder whose individual work has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

Significant Person or Persons
(Complete if Criterion 2 is marked)

D. The property demonstrates significant craftsmanship in architectural design, detail, or use of materials.

Architect/Builder

E. The property is closely and publicly identified with an event, or series of events, which has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

David Riebel

Howard Dwight Smith

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in the box if applicable.)

Property is:

less than 40 years of age or achieved significance within past 40 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

Primary location of additional data

Columbus Historic Preservation Office
 State Historic Preservation Office

University
 Other

Name of repository

10. Geographical Data**Acreege of Property** 2.2 acres**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property, or properties or district on a continuation sheet.)

Starting at the intersection of Reeb Avenue and Washington Avenue, go north to the intersection with Innis Avenue; turn west to the first alley; go south along this alley to the first alley north of Reeb Avenue; turn west along this alley to the next alley; go south on this alley to the intersection with Reeb Avenue; turn east on Reeb Avenue to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundaries are determined by the Franklin County Auditor's site map, attached.

*See Continuation Sheets***11. Form Prepared By:**Judy Williams and Nathalie Wright

Name/Title

Historic Preservation Consultants

Organization

2237 Cambridge Blvd.

Street Address

Columbus

City

614/736-3540

Telephone

Ohio

State

43221

Zip Code

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Map (A to scale sketch map for individually listed property, or properties or historic district.)

Photographs (Representative black and white photographs of the property, or properties or historic district.)

Additional items (check with the Columbus Historic Preservation Officer for any additional items.)

13. Property Owner

(Use Continuation Sheets to list additional property owners.)

City of Columbus - Attn: Paul Rakosky, Director of the Department of Finance and Management

Name/Title

90 West Broad Street

Street Address

Columbus

City

614/645-8200

Telephone

Ohio

State

43215

Zip Code

City of Columbus, Department of Development
Neighborhood Services Division, Historic Preservation Office

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number _____

Zip Code _____

Narrative Description

Reeb Avenue School (known more recently as Reeb Elementary School) is a two-story masonry school building located on the south side of Columbus. The building sits on an L-shaped 2.2 acre site in a residential neighborhood close to Parsons Avenue, bounded by Reeb Avenue, Washington Avenue, Innis Avenue and two alleys. The school fronts directly on Reeb Avenue. The site is currently paved with concrete, with a grassy children's play area at the corner of Innis and Washington Avenues.

The original building was built from 1905 to 1907, and is attributed to Columbus Public Schools' first architect, David Reibel. The school is an example of the Neo-Classical Revival style, a popular choice for school buildings in the early decades of the 20th century. Reeb exhibits characteristic features of the style including a symmetrical façade, dentils at cornices, roofline pediments and entrances with classical features. The use of red brick with limestone foundation and limestone detailing reinforces the style. The composition includes a rectangular center section (the original 1905-1907 construction) that is bookended by perpendicular wings added c. 1910 at east and west ends. (Photos 01, 02) The composition reflects the school's cross-shaped interior plan, with entry/exit stairs at the center section (north and south) and at each wing (east and west). The school has a hipped roof that is distinguished by large brick chimneys dominating the roofline. (Photo 01)

Reeb Avenue School's architectural style is expressed on all sides of the building, creating a unified composition. Extending around the perimeter of the building are a decorative cornice with brackets, egg and dart moldings, and dentils; a beltcourse located below the cornice with delicate beading; and a raised limestone foundation with water table. Projecting pavilions with pedimented gables are located at the center of each façade and at the ends of the east and west wings. The center gables at front and rear also have a fanlight within the pediment. (Photos 03, 07)

Entrances are located in the pedimented pavilions. The center pavilion on Reeb Avenue contains the school's main entrance, with heavy limestone entablature supported by a pair of lion head consoles. (Photos 03, 04) "Reeb Ave School" is inscribed in stone letters above the door. Surmounted above the entry is a tri-partite window at the second floor level, with limestone surround at the segmental arch. Secondary entrances located in projecting pavilions in the east and west wings are simpler, with modest limestone entry entablatures and segmental arched windows at the second floor. (Photo 5) A pair of utilitarian doors are located at the center pavilion at the rear. (Photo 07)

The main rectangular block has seven bays to either side of the central projecting pavilion at basement, first floor and second floor levels. This is repeated on the rear elevation. Windows have splayed stone lintels on these facades. At the east and west wings, a bank of three paired windows exists to either side of the entrance at basement, first floor and second floors. These windows have a unified lintel and sill. All windows in the building have been replaced. The wings do not have windows on the north and south-facing ends, which are blank.

Interior features of Reeb recall the history of the school and include wide hallways with wood wainscoting and tin ceilings (Photo 11); stairs with both metal and wood railings (Photos 12, 13); large classrooms (Photo 14), and cloakrooms with beadboard wainscoting (Photo 14). Connected to the east side of the historic school is a non-contributing c. 1967-68 one-story addition containing a combination gym/cafeteria and auditorium. (Photos 08, 09) A low rise connector/entrance was used to link the old and the new, with glazed entry doors off of Reeb Avenue (Photo 10). Connection is made via the former door at the school's east wing. The addition has a flat roof and minimal fenestration. The gymnasium sits toward the front of the site, and is taller than the rest of the addition.

Statement of Significance

Reeb Avenue School is significant under Columbus Register Criteria A, C, D and E. The building is one of the significant designs of Columbus Public Schools' (now known as Columbus City Schools) first in-house architect, David Riebel, who designed nearly 40 school facilities during his tenure from 1893 to 1922. Architecturally, the building is a finely detailed example of the classical influence that was sweeping the country during the early 20th century, influenced in part by the architecture showcased by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. In addition to its distinctive architectural style, Reeb is important for its role in the growth and development of both the Columbus public school system and the south side of Columbus during the early 1900s.

Under construction by 1905 and opened for the new school year in September 1907,¹ Reeb Avenue School was built for students in first through fifth grades. Land for the school was purchased in 1904 at a cost of \$2,800, with construction of the initial building costing \$38,169.² In 1907, Reeb was one of several new schools under construction or ready for occupancy, including Eastwood Avenue, West High School, and Bellows Avenue School, plus additions to four existing schools. The 1907 school board report noted that Eastwood and Reeb schools "are well located and will relieve the overflow at Fair Avenue and Twenty-third Street buildings and will allow the Annex at Twenty-third Street to be abandoned."³

The need for a new school in the vicinity of Reeb Avenue grew out of a rapidly expanding industrial node at Columbus' southern boundary. In the decades following the Civil War and leading into the 20th century, Columbus was a steadily growing city. Between 1900 and 1910,

¹ *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Columbus for the School Year Ending August 31st, 1907*, p.38

² Board of Education. *Report of the public schools of Columbus, Ohio : for the years 1918-1919, 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, 1922-1923*, p.153.

³ *Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Columbus for the School Year Ending August 31st, 1907*, p.38.

the city's population grew from 125,000 to 181,000. Accordingly, the school system was pressed to accommodate the resulting steady stream of pupils. "By the close of the school year 1910-1911...little if any unused space could be found in any school building in the city."⁴ An addition costing \$43,087 was added to Reeb Avenue School in 1910 to meet the demand for classroom space.⁵

Like many of Columbus' neighborhood schools, Reeb Avenue School was a focal point within its residential setting. The school served the children of working-class families that predominantly worked in nearby factories. At the beginning of the 20th century a cluster of factories, known collectively as Steelton, formed the South Side's southern boundary at the intersection of Parsons Avenue and the railroad tracks. The South Side contained three substantial steel companies by the early 1900s: Columbus Iron and Steel, the Columbus works of Carnegie Steel, and Buckeye Steel Castings. Buckeye Steel Castings is an example of a company wanting to expand that chose to locate on the South Side, taking advantage of cheap land for larger facilities and lower taxes, due to being just outside the city's corporation line. When the new factory opened in 1904, Buckeye Steel employed 400 people, with the number increasing to 2,000 within a dozen years.⁶

The South Side, up until the early 20th century, was nearly exclusively associated with Germans and did not extend further south than Thurman Avenue. As the southern portion of the city grew in association with industrial development, other ethnicities arrived, taking advantage of employment opportunities. A 1987 history asserted that "the South Side assumed a role that has remained unchanged for over a century: the Port of Entry of industrial workers and their families. These newcomers may have hailed from Germany in the middle years of the nineteenth century or from Hungary in the early years of the twentieth. They may have called the hills of Appalachia home or they may have been escaping the Jim Crow laws of the South. Regardless of origin they found in the South Side a place to set up a new home and to search for a livelihood."⁷

Parsons Avenue was the primary commercial thoroughfare in the South Side, with residential neighborhoods spreading away from it to the east and west. The electric streetcar line traveled the length of Parsons, stopped at Steelton, and looped its way through the South Side neighborhood. As the residential streets filled up with factory workers and their families, institutional amenities naturally followed. Many churches, typically associated with specific ethnicities, were established as populations grew. One such church is St. Ladislav, which was organized in 1908 and located on Reeb Avenue. The church served the Hungarian population, and in 1916, an associated parish school was opened across the street from Reeb Avenue School.

In 1919, the Columbus Board of Education created an Americanization Department. Designed to teach English to foreign-born adults and American history and government to those seeking citizenship exams, the program also served incoming southern African Americans, who did not previously have education opportunities. The Americanization programs were "based primarily

⁴ Board of Education. *Report of the public schools of Columbus, Ohio : for the years 1918-1919, 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, 1922-1923*, p.128.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.153.

⁶ Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center. *The South Side. A History*, p.Overview.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.Overview.

upon the ease of access to the people who wish to attend.”⁸ Situated within the heavily Hungarian and Italian sections of south Columbus, Reeb Avenue School was a logical location for the Americanization program and in 1923, was the only south side school to host it. Two teachers dedicated to teaching the foreign-born portion of the program offered instruction three nights a week at Reeb Avenue School.

In the 1921-22 school year, Reeb Avenue School had 690 students. Of the more than four dozen Columbus elementary schools in that year, Reeb was fourth in enrollment numbers, with its neighboring Southwood School being first with 738 pupils. Just as with the first decade of 1900, enrollment Columbus Public Schools continued to expand. The 1923 Board of Education report noted that the city’s population increased by 30% from 1911 to 1921 and during those same years the student enrollment increased by 41%.⁹ As a result, a \$10 million building campaign was initiated, creating sixteen new buildings.

During this campaign, many schools were rehabilitated and received upgrades, such as electricity, indoor toilet facilities, and improved landscaping. The newly appointed in-house school architect, Howard Dwight Smith, designed upgrades for Reeb Avenue School in 1924. The upgrades included new cloakrooms in the rooms of the end wings, replacement of lighting fixtures and new outlets, new suspended plaster ceiling on the first floor, and remodeling of the teacher’s lounge on the first floor stair landing.

During the 1920s, Reeb Avenue School featured special programming. It was one of 12 city schools to have separate rooms dedicated to developmentally disabled children. In 1923, Reeb had two rooms, serving 35 such students.

Following the austere years of the 1930s and 1940s, Columbus’ economic health recovered and population growth resumed. Investment in the public schools resumed. In 1953, the architectural firm of Tully & Hobbs was responsible for alterations at Reeb Avenue School. Alterations were minor, including relocation of partition walls, mechanical upgrades, and repair of plaster, wood floors, and window sills. Enrollment increases after World War II necessitated an addition for Reeb Avenue School, which was completed in 1968.¹⁰ Architectural plans from the father and son firm of Eiselt & Eiselt, (Henry Edward and Richard Henry) show the one-story addition on the east end of the building. Richard Eiselt was a founding member of the German Village Commission.

By the beginning of the 21st century, student enrollment in the broader South Side was in decline. In the 2006-07 school year, Reeb Avenue School and Southwood Elementary merged, forming one school district. The merged student population attended classes at Reeb Avenue, while Southwood Elementary was under renovation. The Reeb Avenue School building has been vacant since 2009, when students relocated to the reopened Southwood School. Columbus City Schools has given the Reeb Avenue building to the city as part of a land swap. Current plans are for the building to be rehabilitated and converted to a community center. It will house multiple

⁸ Ibid., p.113.

⁹ Board of Education. *Report of the public schools of Columbus, Ohio for the years 1918-1919, 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, 1922-1923*, p.12.

¹⁰ <http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/reeb/history.htm> - The Columbus City School website indicates that the addition was constructed in 1957.

social services for the neighborhood, including the South Side Learning and Development Center.

Architect

Reeb is a significant example of David Riebel's public school architecture. Riebel began practicing architecture in 1876. Although best known for his school designs, he also designed houses, churches, commercial buildings, libraries, hotels, fraternal buildings, and factories. Nearly all of his projects were in Columbus or in close proximity, such as Lancaster. In 1904, his sons joined him, forming D. Riebel & Sons, Architects. Among D. Riebel & Sons non-educational designs in Columbus were the Southern Hotel and Theatre, the Hotel Columbus, and the Stoddard Building at 4th and Cherry streets.

Reeb Avenue School exemplifies the design aesthetic of a local master architect. David Riebel's earlier schools from the late 19th century schools tended to be of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Reeb Avenue School is part of the grouping of schools that were constructed in a Classical Revival style, beginning about 1900. A report by the Columbus Landmarks Foundation states that "Riebel's schools rank among our city's most significant architectural landmarks."¹¹ Indeed, contemporary publications also considered David Riebel to be a significant Columbus architect. The May 1915 issue of *The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder* noted that D. Riebel & Son's "work stands out as among the best in an architecturally beautifully city."¹²

¹¹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation. *Historic Schools in the Columbus Public Schools District*, p.5.

¹² *The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder*, p.13. This issue of the trade journal features a profile of D. Riebel & Sons, Architects.

Reeb Avenue School
Columbus Register of Historic Properties

Bibliography

Books

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- Columbus Public School System, *A Dynamic Decade in Your Schools: superintendent's Report on Progress in the Columbus Public Schools, 1950-1960*, Columbus, Ohio, 1960.
- Darbee, Jeffrey T. and Nancy Recchie. *German Columbus*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2005.
- Dunham, Tom. *Columbus's Industrial Communities: Olentangy, Milo-Grogan, Steelton*, Authorhouse, Bloomington, IN, 2010.
- Hunker, Henry L. *Columbus, Ohio: A Personal Geography*, Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 2000.
- Lentz, Ed. *Columbus: The Story of A City*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2003.
- Seifert, Myron T., *The Columbus Public School System Has a Singular Heritage*, Self-published, Columbus, Ohio, c.1970.

Reports, Trade Journals, and Magazines

- Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Columbus for the School Year Ending August 31st, 1907*, Columbus, Ohio, 1908.
- Columbus Landmarks Foundation. *Historic Schools in the Columbus Public Schools District*, Columbus, Ohio, April 2002.
- Holy, T.C., Director, Earl W. Anderson, and H.H. Davis. *A School Building Survey of Columbus, Ohio*, Bureau of Educational Research - Ohio State University, Columbus, 1939.
- Board of Education. *Report of the public schools of Columbus, Ohio : for the years 1918-1919, 1919-1920, 1920-1921, 1921-1922, 1922-1923*, Columbus, Ohio, 1923.
- The Ohio Architect and Builder*, Volume 3, Number 3, Cleveland, Ohio, March 1904.
- The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder*, Volume 25, Number 5, Ohio News Bureau, Cleveland, Ohio, May 1915.
- The American Contractor*, Volume 36, Number 1, Chicago and New York, January 2, 1915.

Newspaper Articles

Ferenchik, Mark. 'Ex-school to house charity,' *The Columbus Dispatch*, July 11, 2012.

Richards, Jennifer Smith. 'Closing schools a 'painful thing' for communities,' *The Columbus Dispatch*, October 22, 2011.

Archives

Columbus City Schools: Blueprints dated 1924, 1953, 1968, and one undated basement floor plan that does not depict the end wings of the building, likely from 1905.

Websites

http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/website.nsf/%28CCS_Documents%29/eNews%2006.25.2009:?opendocument

<http://www.columbus.k12.oh.us/reeb/history.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbus_Public_Schools

<http://www.bexleyalumni.org/FeaturesArticles/RichardEiselt.htm>

Reeb Avenue School
280 East Reeb Avenue, Columbus, OH

Photo 01 – South elevation

