

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MABEL MCDOWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: MCDOWELL, MABEL, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Other Name/Site Number: Mabel McDowell Adult Education Center

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 2700 McKinley Avenue

Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Columbus

Vicinity: N/A

State: IN

County: Bartholomew

Code: 005

Zip Code: 47201

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Category of Property

Private: \_\_\_\_\_

Building(s): X

Public-Local: X

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Public-State: \_\_\_\_\_

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_\_\_\_

Structure: \_\_\_\_\_

Object: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

0 buildings

0

0 sites

0

0 structures

0

0 objects

1

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

Modernism in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Design, and Art in Bartholomew County, Indiana, 1942-1999

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**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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and 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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic: EDUCATION

Sub: school

Current: EDUCATION

Sub: school

**7. DESCRIPTION**

Architectural Classification: MODERN

Materials:

Foundation: CONCRETE

Walls: BRICK

GLASS

Roof: ASPHALT

Other: PORCELAIN-ENAMEL

STEEL

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.**

Mabel McDowell Elementary School is a complex made up of five separate one-story buildings that are linked by landscaped courtyards and covered and trellised walkways (see Site Plan). The buildings have multiple pyramidal roofs that mark each classroom and other major spaces. The plan is biaxially symmetrical, with four classroom buildings arranged around a central building that contains common areas. The principal façade of the central structure faces south.

The complex is located in the center of a flat site (photo 1). There are play areas on either side of the complex surrounded by mature plane trees. On three sides, the property is bounded by city streets (McClure on the east, McKinley on the south, and Gladstone on the west). The neighborhood is mostly small houses of mixed age, dating from the nineteenth century through the 1960s. The north side of the property adjoins Garland Brook Cemetery.

The buildings have exposed steel frames with roof decks of exposed Tectum decking. They are built on concrete slabs. The steel frame is almost entirely welded with ground welds. Windows are steel sash with large single-glazed panes (photos 4 and 6). The bottom 18 inches of the sash are in-filled with white porcelain-enamel panels (photos 2 and 4). Most of the window area is fixed glass, though typically in each structural bay there is a tall, narrow outward-operating casement unit. Most of the exterior walls in the classroom buildings are glass. Classroom building walls facing the courtyards are pressed red brick with a sanded surface. In the auditorium and cafeteria, most of the walls are brick. The south wall of the cafeteria that faces the inner courtyard is glass (photo 4). The pitched roofs are covered with asphalt shingles, as they were originally, though these are replacements. Existing shingles are a pinkish-brown. Color of the originals is not known.

The four clusters of one-story classroom buildings are arranged off the corners of the common building. In plan, the common building is a cross with a courtyard in the center (see Floor Plan). The dominant part of the cross are the two pyramidal-roofed structures containing the multi-purpose room (south; right in photo 1) and the cafeteria/kitchen (north; right in photo 4). A kindergarten on the east and office wing on the west (left in photo 4) are smaller, flat-roofed parts of the cross. The courtyard (photo 4) that links these four areas is a paved and landscaped rectangle measuring approximately 56 by 70 feet. Courtyard paving is concrete and brick; the landscape material consists of perennial and annual flowers in two raised beds. In its original form, it appears that the concrete was the only paving, and the beds and brick-paved areas were planted with ornamental trees.

The multi-purpose room and cafeteria are ringed by wide circulation zones, delineated by the structural system of exposed wide-flange steel columns and beams (see Floor Plan). On the sides facing the courtyard, glass is used as an infill to form corridors. On the outside of these rooms, the glass is omitted, and loggias are formed. An outer loop of loggias extends from these loggias surrounding the cafeteria and multi-purpose room to connect with the classroom buildings at their vestibules.

The multi-purpose room structure is square in plan and capped with a pyramidal roof (right in photo 1). The upper portion of the roof is a skylight with a needle-like steel finial about six feet high. Walls enclosing this room are load-bearing brick. Windows with steel sash extend from

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the floor to the ceiling on the east and west sides. There are no openings on the south, or front of the building. Access to the room is from the circulation area on the north, off the courtyard. The multi-purpose room has been adapted to serve as a cosmetology instructional area. It has been divided into several rooms, and a suspended ceiling has been installed. The skylight that caps the pyramid is still in place, but is no longer visible from the inside.

The cafeteria structure is similar in form to the multi-purpose room (right in photo 4). It lacks a skylight, but does have a finial like that noted above. The structure is divided in half, and the south side is the cafeteria, facing the courtyard. Half of the north side originally served as the kitchen, and the other half as a classroom. Partitions have been added in the cafeteria and a commercial kitchen fills part of the space.

Each of the classroom buildings (photo 2) is a separate building that is linked to the common areas by covered and trellised walkways. The buildings each contain three classrooms arranged in an "L", and a pyramidal roof covers every classroom. The classrooms are treated as pavilions linked by low, flat-roofed, brick-clad service areas containing restrooms and storage rooms. Entry to the classrooms is through the service area for each building, through a glazed, L-shaped vestibule that links directly to the covered walkways.

In the classrooms, as in the main group areas, space and structure are highly integrated, and structure is expressed throughout. As in the main group areas, where a wall is glazed, the glass is treated as an infill between wide-flange steel columns. The columns support a perimeter wide flange beam that in turn supports the steel members of the open, pyramidal roof (photo 6). The ceiling is painted Tectum decking, and rises from about 9 feet at the perimeter to about 15 feet at the center. Eight original pendant incandescent light fixtures are suspended from the Tectum decking. Two entire walls are glazed and the glazing wraps around onto the adjacent walls. The remaining wall area is painted concrete block with green chalkboards. Because the columns are held in from the corners about four feet, the rooms have three glazed corners, giving the classroom a remarkable openness.

All classrooms, the administration block, and the kindergarten block are sheltered by painted wood trellis brise-soleils (photo 3). The trellises are supported by steel angles that cantilever off the steel frame of the roof. All trellises are intact, but the wood is weathered and exhibits signs of rot in places.

The classroom building vestibule intrudes into one corner of the classroom as a wood and glass bay with a door in one side. In the primary grades, restrooms are accessed from the classroom. In the upper grades, they are accessed from the vestibule. Over each chalkboard in the classrooms is an indirect strip fluorescent light fixture that appears to be original. Fin-tube radiant heat enclosures run beneath all the windows. There is a fan-coil unit for cooling that is more recent. Floors are carpeted, but were asphalt tile originally.

Because of the amount of glass in the building, the white roll-down blinds are especially dominant elements, both from the inside and out (photos 2 and 6). The blinds replaced the original draperies, which were boldly geometric on the interior, but lined in white fabric on the side facing the exterior.

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The walkways that link the classroom buildings to the common area have concrete sidewalks, and steel columns and beams (photo 5). The east-west walkways have flat roofs with wood fascias. The north-south walkways have unpainted boards laid flat on the original beams. These boards replaced the original trelliswork.

McDowell school is generally in good condition. It has been kept well painted, and very little rust was noted on the steel frame and windows. Deterioration was not noted, as might be expected, where columns die into the concrete slabs. The masonry is in good condition. Some concrete slabs in the courtyards have lifted and cracked but floor slabs, even where exposed to weather, are in good condition. The shingle roof is in good condition, except on one of the classroom buildings where it is in poor condition. The steel portions of the trellises are in good condition, but the wood is in poor condition. The original interior finishes were durable, and are in good condition, as are the doors, windows, and hardware.

McDowell retains a high degree of integrity, though there have been some relatively minor interior alterations to adapt the building for the current use. The exterior of the building is unaltered, except for the replacement of walkway trellises with boards. Inside the building, air conditioning has been added. As noted previously, partitions have been added and the ceiling lowered in the multi-purpose room. Partitions have also been added in part of the cafeteria/kitchen area. These interior changes are reversible. Otherwise, inside the building, the historic configuration and materials remain intact.

The arrangement of classroom structures and the common building form five outdoor courtyards. The plan is similar in form to the basic cross-axial plan of an Islamic paradise garden. The side is bounded by plane trees that date from the time of construction. There is little other landscape material remaining, save a few ornamental trees in some of the courtyards. The courtyards consist of geometric concrete pads, benches (concrete with wood slats), and some plantings. The original pavement exists in the courtyards (photos 4 and 5), although it is in poor condition. The center courtyard has been changed (photo 4), and no original plantings appear to remain.

The original landscape plan shows some elements that were not fully developed (see Site Plan). Earthberms were to enclose playground spaces to the east and west of the school but were apparently never built. There is some massing of trees at the perimeter of the property, which partially accomplishes the intended effect of enclosed outdoor space. Parking and drives on site bear little resemblance to those proposed in the original site plan. They are, however, not intrusive, and match the informal aesthetic of the rest of the site. Original asphalt playground areas on the east and west sides are now used for parking.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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

Nationally:  X  Statewide:      Locally:     Applicable National  
Register Criteria:            A      B      C  X  D     Criteria Considerations  
(Exception):                A      B      C      D      E      F      G  X 

NHL Criteria:                4

NHL Criteria Exception:    8

NHL Theme(s):             III. Expressing Cultural Values  
                                      V. Architecture

Area(s) of Significance:    Architecture

Period(s) of Significance:  1960

Significant Dates:         1960

Significant Person(s):     N/A

Cultural Affiliation:        N/A

Architect/Builder:         Warnecke, John Carl (Architect)  
                                      Repp and Mundt (Contractor)  
                                      Gilbert, William B. & Associates (Structural Engineer)  
                                      Kasin, Guttman & Malayan (Mechanical and Electrical Engineer)Historic Contexts:         XVI. Architecture  
                                      Z. Modern

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**

Mabel McDowell Elementary School is nationally significant under Criterion 4 in the area of Architecture. Though the property is less than 50 years old, it qualifies for listing under Criteria Exception 8 for its exceptional importance. The building relates to the Multiple Property Listing, "Modernism in Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Design, and Art in Bartholomew County, 1942-1999," and to the Historic Contexts: "Patronage in Public Architecture in Bartholomew County, 1957-1965," and "Modern Architecture and Landscape Architecture in Bartholomew County, 1942-1965." The school was the second to be built with the support of Cummins Engine Foundation's architectural program. It is an excellent representation of the effort in Columbus to improve the quality of life through outstanding design. The building is also significant as an early example of Modern architecture in Columbus, and as an important example of the contextual work of John Carl Warnecke (1919- ), a leading architect of the twentieth century.

McDowell is the work of a living, yet not practicing, architect. It is appropriate to evaluate the building because the career of the architect, now 80 years old, is behind him. In particular, the period of his work that includes McDowell Elementary School was early in his career, when his practice was largely regional. After McDowell and other projects gave Warnecke national attention, the nature and scale of his commissions changed. By the early 1970s, Warnecke's firm had become one of the largest architectural firms in the nation. Since reaching that peak, Warnecke gradually wound down the size of his practice. Retired from practice, his office is now closed. He is currently writing his memoirs and working on establishing a think tank devoted to the theory and practice of architecture.<sup>1</sup>

After Cummins Engine Foundation paid the architect's fee for Lillian Schmitt Elementary School (1957), designed by Harry Weese, the school board asked for the foundation's support for its next school. The foundation agreed, and supplied the board with a list of recommended architects, compiled by an independent panel that included the famous architect Eero Saarinen (1910-1961). After interviewing the architects on the list, the board selected Warnecke. Prior to his interview, Saarinen had written to the younger architect, warning him not to be surprised if he was contacted by a school board in a small city of which he had never heard.

Saarinen remained interested in the project after Warnecke was hired, as evidenced by the following excerpt from a letter he wrote to the architect: "I saw a photo of the model you submitted to the Columbus Indiana School Board, and I liked the initial thinking very much. I look forward to seeing the development with great interest."<sup>2</sup>

In developing his design for the building, Warnecke worked with a committee of two teachers, two principals, the director of elementary education, the director of curriculum, the director of buildings and grounds, and the superintendent of schools. The following statement was given to the architect to guide him in his design. "The elementary school has a unique service to perform. . . . It is the child's first contact, outside the home, with the people and institutions with which he must learn to live. The building, therefore, must express the character and philosophy of the

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<sup>1</sup> John Carl Warnecke, Interview with Louis Joyner, 19 January 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Eero Saarinen, Letter to John Carl Warnecke, 3 February 1959 (in Cleo Rogers Memorial Library Architectural Archive).



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community that the child will enter. Furthermore, the atmosphere must be warm and friendly, the scale should be small and intimate, and the child must be able to develop a feeling of his identity and importance. The school must be a stimulating place, where teaching and learning could be a pleasure.”<sup>3</sup>

The building that resulted from the collaboration between the architect and the committee did indeed follow this directive, and was well related to the educational needs of the time. Among important features of the design were four clusters of three classrooms each. Each classroom had its own roof, giving it a separate identity. The grouping of classrooms addressed a problem in the era of a rapidly growing school population—a shortage of well-trained teachers. The idea was to group veteran and novice teachers together so that the more experienced educators could provide leadership.

The scale of the new facility was small, though it contained 36,200 square feet and had a capacity for 420 pupils. Classrooms resembled houses, and each cluster had its own courtyard. The overall impression was that of several brick and glass pavilions grouped in a series of connected gardens.

The building was well received by the neighborhood and by the community as a whole. After it had been opened for a few years, it was apparent to many that McDowell had had a positive impact on its surroundings. Clarence Robbins, superintendent of schools stated, “There has been an uplift in property pride in the area. Residents love to sit around the school gardens in the evening. They respect the building and see it as a challenge to their lives. Lawns are neater. Houses are painted. What is more, vandalism against this unit has been lowest in the school system.”<sup>4</sup>

The city’s comprehensive plan prepared in 1967 included the following observation: “It is interesting to note that in area #3 [Urban Blight Area] considerable upgrading has occurred since the opening of McDowell School in 1961. This example of private rehabilitation should not go unnoticed. It represents the inestimable aftermath of a public improvement and should provide food for thought to physical and social planners alike.”<sup>5</sup>

The long-term benefits of McDowell, and Columbus’ other Modern schools, was suggested in several national publications. A 1969 article in the *St. Louis Globe Democrat* reported the Mayor’s conviction that more companies were attracted to Columbus because of the schools.<sup>6</sup> The city’s ability to attract high quality teachers and its significant percentage of college-bound students – 43 percent, twice the national average – was documented in a *House and Garden Magazine* article of 1976.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Excellence in Design.” *Architectural Forum* (August 1962), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Walt McCaslin. “Athens of the Prairie.” *Saturday Evening Post* (21 March 1964), p. 64-65.

<sup>5</sup> Columbus Plan Commission. *1985 Comprehensive Plan* (1967).

<sup>6</sup> “How Columbus Discovered Architecture.” *St. Louis Globe Democrat* (19 October 1969).

<sup>7</sup> Beverly Russell. “America Discovers Columbus.” *House and Garden* (July 1976).

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McDowell was built at a time when the school population of Columbus was growing rapidly and many new educational buildings were needed. It was the first school to be built since the 1920s in an area that had been a separate town and had recently been annexed by Columbus. It was the first property in Columbus to be developed as a “park-school,” a concept of the post World War II era that combined school playgrounds with neighborhood parks in an effort to increase both types of facilities in an efficient manner. Because of changes in educational needs, McDowell was converted to an adult education facility in 1982. The school was named for Mabel McDowell (1880-1961), who was an elementary school teacher in Columbus for 25 years.

The architect for McDowell, John Carl Warnecke, was graduated in 1942 with a Master’s degree of Architecture from Harvard where he studied under the Modernist master, Walter Gropius (1883-1969). Warnecke apprenticed with his father Carl I. Warnecke of San Francisco, who had been trained in the Beaux Arts tradition. He was also influenced by architects of the Bay Area school including Bernard Maybeck and William Wurster. With a background of divergent influences, he opened his own office in 1946 and proceeded to develop his “contextual” approach to design, which emphasized the distinctiveness of the building’s environment.

During the early years of his practice, Warnecke worked to build a firm that was capable of addressing a wide range of building types. He set as his goal, which he achieved by the age of 40, to design at least one structure of all common building types. As part of this goal, he sought to understand how the precepts and theories of Modernism were applicable to each building type.<sup>8</sup>

Warnecke was first recognized nationally for Mira Vista Elementary School (1951), a building that appeared to grow out of the hills of El Cerrito, across the bay from the Golden Gate Bridge. His project for a U.S. embassy in Bangkok in 1956 was an unbuilt work that made his reputation. The proposed building drew on mainstream Western Modernist forms, melding them with historic design precedents observed by Warnecke in Bangkok. The result was an exotic mix that drew favorable reviews. The design consisted of several floors of cantilevered balconies with lacy pre-cast concrete railings around the main office core and central courtyard. The composition floated on thin white columns over a reflecting pond.<sup>9</sup> Warnecke received a letter from Eero Saarinen praising the design for the embassy. Saarinen's regard for Warnecke's work may have led to Warnecke being interviewed for McDowell Elementary School.<sup>10</sup>

In the years that followed McDowell, Warnecke's practice grew rapidly, and the architect moved into the second phase of his career. There were fewer small projects with modest budgets, like those that had characterized the first phase. Instead, he worked on a series of highly visible, monumental projects, with large budgets. Warnecke had made the transition from respected, regional architect to one of the country's leading practitioners for major governmental, institutional, and corporate projects. Among significant works of this period by Warnecke's office were the John F. Kennedy Gravesite in Arlington National Cemetery (1966); the Hawaii State Capitol (1969) in Honolulu; Logan Airport South Terminal in Boston (1977), Lafayette Square in Washington DC (1962-72), the Soviet Embassy in Washington DC (1975); the Hart Senate Office Building in Washington DC (1982), and a Sports Arena at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas (1984).

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<sup>8</sup> John Carl Warnecke, Interview with Louis Joyner, 19 January 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Heyer. *Architects on Architecture* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966).

<sup>10</sup> John Carl Warnecke, Interview with Louis Joyner, 19 January 2000.

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Warnecke's firm won over 100 awards for design excellence including the Arnold Brunner Prize, National Institute of Arts and Letters (1957), the Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence in Architecture (1989), and the Hawaii Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, 25 Year Award for the Hawaii State Capitol (1995). Warnecke was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1962.

Warnecke may now be said to be in the third phase of his career, in which he is writing about architecture and about his own role in American Modernism. He gradually reduced the size of his practice from its peak size in 1977, eventually closing his office. Warnecke purposely downsized his firm as he approached retirement, not wishing for his firm to continue after his death.<sup>11</sup>

McDowell was an example of Warnecke's "early comprehensive diverse approach" to architecture. The building combined the functionality of a neighborhood elementary school, and the treatment of open space within the context of the Indiana farm landscape. Warnecke described his concept for McDowell in the following statement: "A dominant characteristic of southern Indiana is the flat terrain, a horizontal theme accentuated by tall Victorian houses, barns, and silos, with picturesque groves of trees. The school design is based on the creation of similar grouping of masses and spaces in a scheme which focuses the school group into its own controlled environment, yet extends it outward to the community."<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that the contextual response that Warnecke referred to was contextualism as it was developing in the late 1950s. At that time, the architectural profession did not generally acknowledge the neighboring built environment. A response to the surroundings of a proposed building was often unusual. Warnecke accurately characterized southern Indiana, but, as critics have pointed out, McDowell does not particularly reflect the tradition of the Victorian farmhouse. The building is, however, in keeping with the immediate neighborhood in scale. The residential qualities of the property and linkages to the surrounding houses through landscape design illustrate Warnecke's concern with context.

Architectural critic Peter Blake made the following observation in a 1975 article: "The very nature of a big architectural office encourages a certain standardization in approach and detail, and the work of even the best of them is usually predictable. Warnecke's work is not. His buildings on the West Coast are closely attuned to the vernacular where he was born. His capitol building for the new State of Hawaii, which was dedicated in 1969, is an attempt to pay homage to the distinctive cultural heritage of those islands. And his elementary school in Columbus, Indiana, was a conscious attempt to relate to the Midwestern landscape. Not many large architectural firms in the United States would spend time worrying about the special qualities of the San Francisco Bay region, the cultural heritage of the Hawaiian Islands, or the landscape of southern Indiana. Warnecke's firm did."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> John Carl Warnecke, Interview with Louis Joyner, 19 January 2000.

<sup>12</sup> John Carl Warnecke. Letter to Louis Joyner (15 July 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Peter Blake. "John Carl Warnecke Architect." *Amerika Magazine* (Moscow, USSR, 1975).

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In the years after its construction, McDowell was sometimes criticized locally because of its separate components that forced children outside in inclement weather. This issue had been discussed publicly at the time the building was being planned, but hadn't been perceived as a major problem. (The fire marshal was actually pleased; each classroom was immediately adjacent to an exit.) The "campus" arrangement works well for the adult education center that occupies McDowell today.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, a number of improvements were made in public school buildings in the United States – especially urban schools – including improved lighting, ventilation, and circulation. These early twentieth century schools typically had Neoclassical ornamentation and symmetrical facades that suggested monumentality and an important public purpose. Standardized classrooms were arranged along corridors.

The Great Depression of the 1930s slowed construction of school buildings. World War II created a shortage in labor and materials that made any type of construction not related to the war effort difficult. As governments regrouped after the war, outdated schools were only one of the many problems they faced and was often put on hold. By the early 1950s, however, this problem demanded attention as the post-war baby boom created a larger school population. In Columbus, no new school buildings had been constructed since the 1920s. Most of the city's schools had been built in the late nineteenth century and were inadequate in many ways, not only in capacity.

Cities and towns nationwide were facing the same challenge as Columbus. Schools were outdated and inadequate. There was an opportunity to build new innovative schools that would respond to needs built up over a 20-year period. Because of the near hiatus on school construction, few models were available. The most progressive school building in the nation may have been Crow Island School (NHL, 1990), completed in 1939 and designed by Saarinen and Saarinen. This building was one of the most influential school designs of the twentieth century. It emphasized the individuality of each classroom, while at the same time relating it to the larger community of the school. It was also distinctive for its small scale.

The innovations of Crow Island were lost in many new school buildings that imitated its unpretentious, Modern appearance but ignored its spatial organization. In Columbus, several of the early Modern schools reflected the principles of the Saarinens. Schmitt (Harry Weese, 1957), for example, was a child-scaled building that distinguished individual classrooms through roof form, but related these individual classrooms to central community functions. In McDowell, Warnecke varied this type of organization by defining classrooms individually while grouping them, and relating each group of classrooms to central, community areas through walkways and landscape.

McDowell was one of the early Modern buildings in a city that would become known for its Modern architecture. Earlier Modern buildings included First Christian Church (1942), designed by Eliel Saarinen; Irwin Union Bank and Trust (1954), designed by Eero Saarinen; and Schmitt Elementary School (1957) and the Lincoln Center (1958), designed by Harry Weese. McDowell was the second school building of a group that would total 13 by 1989. It is one of the most intact of the school buildings, and the only one of the first five schools that does not have an addition. There are no known plans to alter the building or to change its current use as an adult education center.

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. *A Look at Architecture: Columbus, Indiana*. 7th ed.  
Columbus: Visitors Center, 1998.

Emmanuel, Muriel, ed. *Contemporary Architects*. New York: St. James Press, 1994.

“Excellence in Design.” *Architectural Forum* (August 1962).

“The Small Scale Cluster Type Approach.” *School Board Journal* (May 1961).

Warnecke, John Carl. Letter to Louis Joyner (15 July 1999).

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.

Previously Listed in the National Register.

Designated a National Historic Landmark.

Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #

Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other (Specify Repository): Cleo Rogers Memorial Library Architectural Archive

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Acreage of Property: 15 acres

UTM References: **Zone Easting Northing**

A	16	595460	4339660
B	16	595860	4339660
C	16	595870	4339510
D	16	595460	4339500

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property is bounded on the east by McClure Road, on the south by McKinley Avenue, on the west by Gladstone Avenue, and on the north by Garland Brook Cemetery.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the building that has historically been known as the Mabel McDowell Elementary School which maintains historic integrity.

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

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**MABEL MCDOWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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