

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **APR - 7 1983**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic J. Sterling Morton High School East Auditorium  
and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number 2423 South Austin Boulevard N/A not for publication  
city, town Cicero N/A vicinity of  
state Illinois code 012 county Cook code 031

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name School District 201 of Cook County  
street & number 2423 S. Austin Boulevard  
city, town Cicero N/A vicinity of state Illinois

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of Cook County  
street & number 118 N. Clark  
city, town Chicago state Illinois

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Inventory of Architecture before W.W.II in Cicero, Cook County  
has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date October 1974  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Ill. Department of Conservation-Historic Sites Division  
city, town Springfield state Illinois

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

## Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### Exterior

#### Austin face

The Auditorium building faces on Austin Boulevard and 24th Street. The East wall and the South wall of the building are separate; however, they abut the high-school building exactly. The buildings were completely separate except for two corridor entrances until 1954, when the space between them was roofed over to form an indoor corridor at the North end of the high school building. The Austin Boulevard face is the front of the building. The exterior surface is face brick and limestone. There are five double entrance doors and two iron-grilled windows on the ground level.

Above this level elaborate ornamentation begins. From North to south there is a column, two stone-topped windows that light an interior stairwell and seven large arched windows with keystones, above which are stone panels embellished with carved garlands; the windows are separated by Greek columns. The extreme South end of the building, again, has two windows that light an interior stairwell.

At the top level of the building, at each end, which contains the first and last arched windows, are two arches with elaborately carved keystones that extend above the stone coping, which caps the entire perimeter of the building. The gutters and downspouts are decorative and made of copper.

#### 24th Street side face

The side face of the building is stone and face brick. The part of this side which extends West to East to the stage cube, but not including it, has one double door, opening into the lobby. Moving East there are three decorative panels that resemble doors, a below grade fire exist, another decorative door and another fire exist. The second level of the lobby and house cube exterior face, from West to East, has an arched window, three flat brick columns, a three level counter-balanced fire escape, and three more flat brick columns. The level above this is face brick with a stone coping.

The side face of the stage cube which connects to the house cube has two levels of windows, a fire escape door, and a double scenery door. Above these two levels of windows is face brick capped by the stone coping. Covering half the roof (North to South) of the stage cube is the fly house which is face brick. The fly house has a copper-roofed ventilation house on top of it.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

Interior

The Lobby cube

Entering the auditorium from Austin Boulevard one steps into a vestibule which is narrow but extends the width of all the entrance doors. From the vestibule one may use any of the five double doors which permit entry into the lobby. The lobby has birch panel-molded walls. Around the top of the walls is ornamental fretting; above the fretting and around the entire lobby is an ornamental plaster cornice decorated with silver metallic leafing. The lobby contains six pillars. At each end (north and south) of the lobby is an archway leading to a staircase which leads to the second and third levels. There are two ticket rooms with grilled windows on each side of the entrance doors.

In the center of the six double doors which open into the auditorium from the lobby is an ornamental plaster and marble fountain set into the wall: the fountain has a marble basin flanked by columns which support a broken arch pediment. Above the basin and between the columns but under the arch is a plaster sea shell which fills that space. The bubbler is polished brass with a valve.

The basic trim of all the walls is art marble and the floor is cream and maroon terrazzo.

The ornamental detail of the north and south wall of the auditorium is made of ornamental plaster; at the top of the wall but below a cove are "V" shaped sunken inscriptions (Columbus, Hawthorne, Washington, Longfellow, Lincoln, etc.); below these are three columns and four oil murals by C. M. Fox of American scenes which were painted at the Marshall Field galleries and affixed to the walls.

At the very top of the walls there is an elaborate cove which forms a juncture with the ceiling. The cove contains concealed bulbs. The bulbs are spaced on six inch centers; they indirectly light the ceiling. There is a hidden "cat" walk behind the cove and over the suspended ceiling.

The ceiling has elaborate fret worked, gold metallic leafed plaster beams about two feet thick. The beams form squares which have red and blue plaster panels.

The lower walls of the auditorium cube are red as are the seats (1500 on the main floor) and carpeting. The grand drape is red with wine fringe and the grand border (festoon) is red. The orchestra pit will hold 50 musicians and is entered from below.

The balcony of the auditorium seats 1,045 people. Its high-back wall has windows from the projection room. The front face of the balcony repeats the ceiling motif.

#### The stage cube

The stage was designed to hold large spectacles and basketball tournaments. The floor space is larger than a basket ball court. There is 200,000 watt light control equipment. There are forty counter weighted pipes. The fly-rail is off the stage floor on a pin-rail balcony.

On the main floor of the stage there is a large double door for scenery entrance and removal, a paint room, a small-tools room, a large-tools room, a rest room with shower, a dressing room, an elevator and stairways on each side leading below and above the stage.

The stairways leading down join a corridor which runs the full width of the stage. There are two large dressing rooms off the corridor to the East and a door (West) which opens into the orchestra pit.

The stairway that leads to the second level (North) reaches two costume rooms, the fly rail, and continues up another level to a small storage room. The stairway that leads to the second level (South) reaches two dressing rooms and a rest room. From this level a stairway constructed like a fire escape leads up to the grid and from the grid through a door out onto the cat-walks over the suspended ceiling and around the cove.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1925-28 **Builder/Architect** Ashby, Ashby, and Schultz

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The J. Sterling Morton East High School (Chodl) Auditorium was erected in the years 1925-1928 at the urging of the community which was then ninety percent immigrant, mostly middle European. They had come to America with a dream and they wanted that dream expressed in this auditorium which was to be paid for with their tax money. Their belief in democracy and the American system is expressed in the eight oil murals by C. M. Fox which depict the Pilgrims landing, Bunker Hill, Washington leading the army, Fort Dearborn, Columbus discovering America, The Battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln giving the Gettysburg address, and the battle of Argonne.

Their respect for education and ideas as expressed by American scholars, leaders, and artists is exemplified in the names they had engraved in giant letters above the murals: Emerson, Hawthorne, Marshall, Audubon, Mann, Washington, Lincoln, Hopkins, Agassiz, Brooks, Longfellow and Lowell.

Because the immigrants were fine-arts oriented, they wanted a magnificent auditorium of great beauty and superior acoustical qualities. Ashby, Ashby, and Schultz was hired to create their ideal building in the Beaux Arts Style for a cost in excess of one million dollars.

The community used and still uses the auditorium. It has become a focal point of cultural enrichment and community pride and spirit as well as serving as the school's theatre and gymnasium.

A partial list of groups and celebrities who have performed in the auditorium is given below:

- The Czech Lyra Singing Society--1938-1972, annually
- The International Boy Scout Gang Show--1950's-1960's, annually
- Ceco Steel--Children's Christmas parties--1950's-1960's
- Western Electric--Community Presentation--1940's-1950's
- The Air Force Band--1946, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1955
- The Parent-Teacher Organization Fashion Show--1940's-1970's, annually
- Rudolf Firkusny--famous Czechoslovakian pianist--1954
- Jesse Owens--Olympic track star--1940
- Don McNeill's Breakfast Club--1952
- Gladys Swarthout, mezzo soprano--1950, 1952, 1955
- Sigmund Romberg, Composer--1938
- Jan Peerce--Opera tenor--1959
- Bidu Sayso-Brozihai--Metropolitan Opera Star--1956
- Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos--1949
- The Glen Miller Band--1947
- The Preservation Hall Dixieland Jazz Band--1952
- The Charlie Spevak Band--1953
- Neil Diamond--Pop/Rock Singer--1976
- Geoffrey Holder--Dancer--1978

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Chicago Tribune; 1928, 1929, 1959, 1960, 1961.  
Chicago Sun Times; 1968.  
J. Sterling Morton High School East Yearbook; 1927.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property LESS THAN One Acre  
Quadrangle name BERWYN, IL - COOK Co. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>435820</u>	<u>4632800</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The property is bounded on the West by Austin Blvd. on the North by 24th Street on the East by 59th Court on the South by the Morton East High School and courtyard. (see attached map)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>NA</u>	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John L. Leckel, Head of the Division of Language Arts  
 organization J. Sterling Morton High School East date January 5, 1983  
 street & number 2423 S. Austin Boulevard telephone 312-656-2300 Ext. 292  
 city or town Cicero state Illinois

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title Director date 3/21/83

**For NPS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
 for [Signature] Entered in the National Register date 5/9/83  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

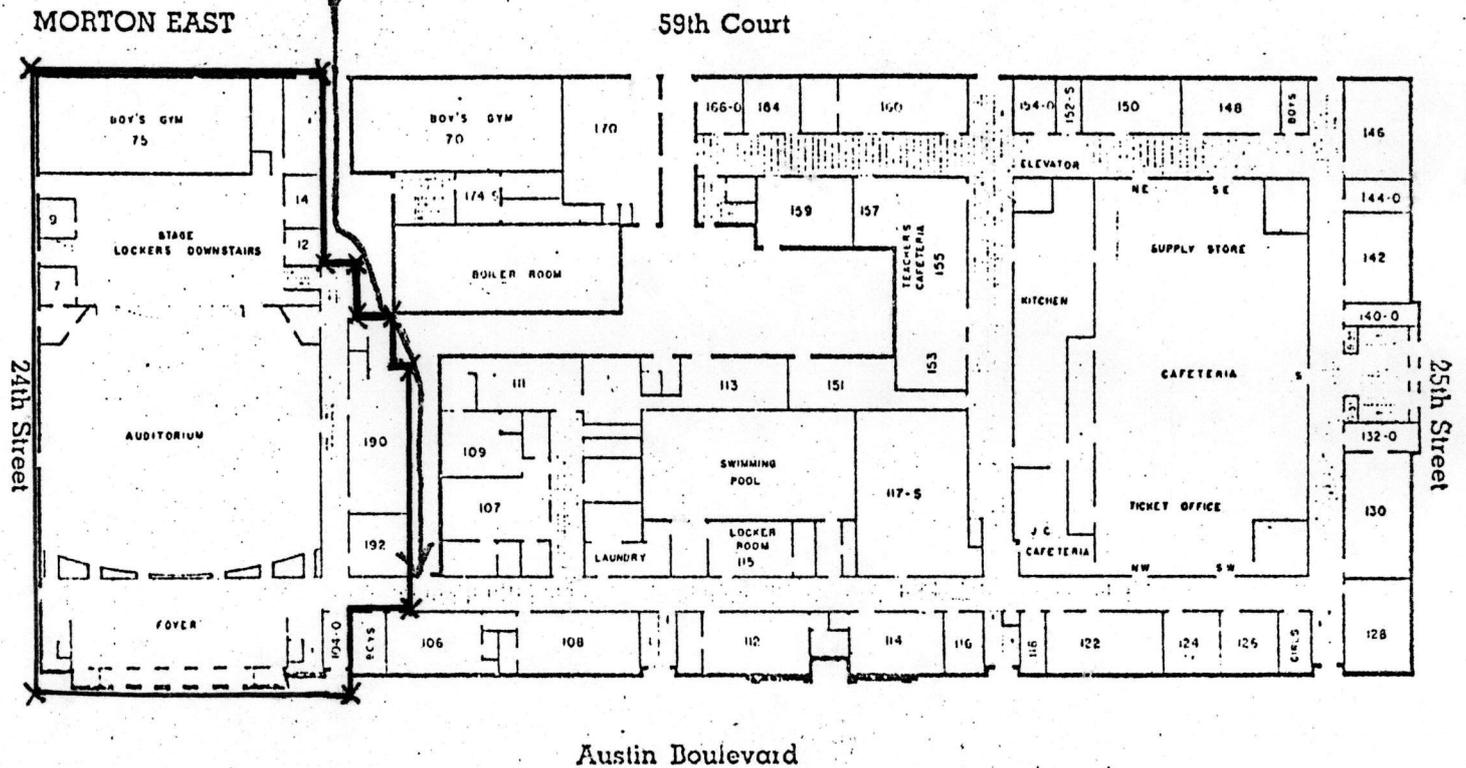
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

The auditorium is a palpable link with the community's past growth and development and to those immigrants to the United States who make up the community and to their belief in the American dream as expressed by one of their adopted heroes, Thomas Jefferson: "Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of both mind and body will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of day." The Chodl Auditorium stands as a testament to the validity of the words on the Statue of Liberty: "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses" and as a monument to these Middle European immigrants and their ability to rise above their backgrounds and create great beauty which to this day continues the great tradition which they established.

The auditorium is not connected to the main building except by the foyer corridor which was added after the construction of the auditorium.





## 8. Significance

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Area of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- \_\_\_\_\_ summary paragraph
- \_\_\_\_\_ completeness
- \_\_\_\_\_ clarity
- \_\_\_\_\_ applicable criteria
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of areas checked
- \_\_\_\_\_ relating significance to the resource
- \_\_\_\_\_ context
- \_\_\_\_\_ relationship of integrity to significance
- \_\_\_\_\_ justification of exception
- \_\_\_\_\_ other

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UNIT references \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

## 11. Form Prepared By

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:  
\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Other

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maps
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



#2

31A-3

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Birds Eye of Exterior Facing  
on Austin Boulevard. 1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981

#1 of 13



#3

31A-7

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Exterior Facing on Austin  
Boulevard

April 1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#2d13



#4

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Exterior Facing on 24th St.,  
Part of House and All of  
Stage Cube. 1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#3013

3625

HALL

AUDUBON



FIRE ESC



31B-1

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
North Auditorium Wall with  
C.M. Fox Mural  
1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#4/13

#5



#6

31C-9

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Ceiling Meeting North Wall and  
Plaster/Grill Facades  
1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#513



31C-8

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
North Wall. 4 Murals by C.  
M. Fox  
1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

# 6 of 13

8#

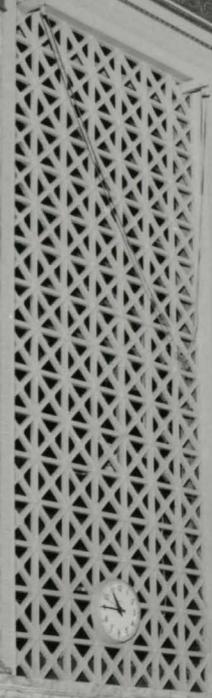


AGASSIZ

BROOKS

LONGFELLOW

LOWELL



#9

31C-G

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
South Wall. 4 Murals by  
C.M. Fox

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

# 7 of 13



#10

310-3

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
South Wall, Proscenium,  
Balcony, Ceiling, Grills,  
Plaster/Grill Facades . 1981

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

# 8 of 13

DEDICATED  
IN HONOR OF THOSE MEN & WOMEN OF  
STERLING MORTON HIGH SCHOOL  
WHY NOT REMEMBER  
THEIR SACRIFICE FOR  
WORLD WAR II  
AND IN MEMORY OF THOSE  
WHOSE NAMES ARE UNKNOWN

WHAT I WILL I CAN

In Affectionate Memory  
OF OUR BELLOVED HERO DEAD IN WORLD WAR I

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

3/B-3

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Lobby Fountain

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#9 d13

# 11



J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Lobby Vestibule

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#10 of 13

#12

318-8



#13

31B-7

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Lobby

John Leckel, Photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

#11 of 13



# 14

31B-J

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
Lobby-Ticket Window Grill  
and Radiator Grill (Detail)

John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

# 12 of 13



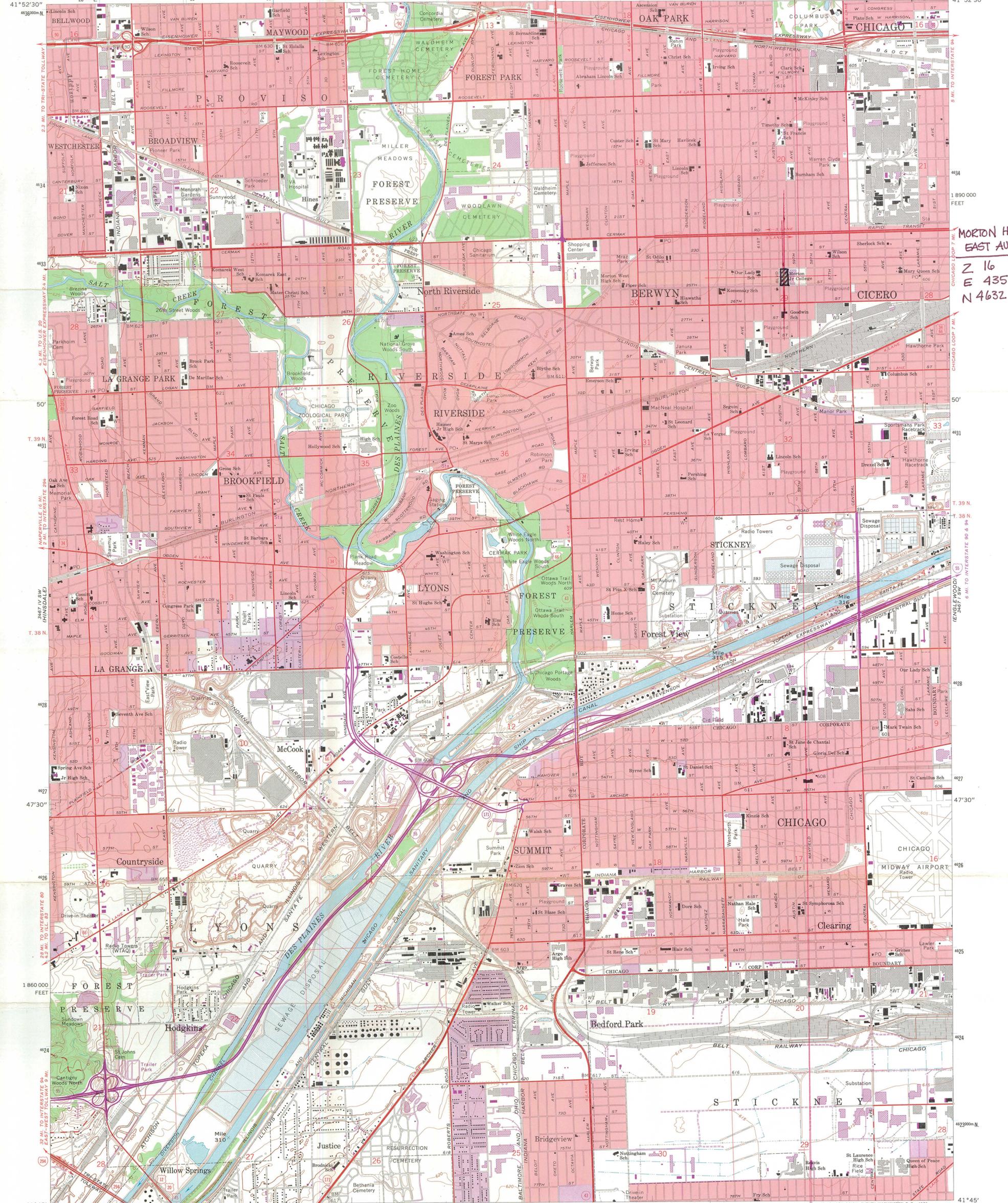
31C-10

#7

J. Sterling Morton High  
School East Auditorium  
From North East to South West

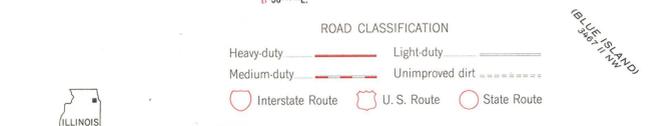
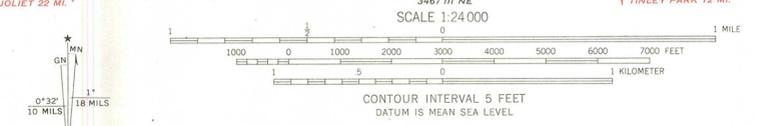
John Leckel, photographer  
negative with photographer  
November 1981  
Cicero, Illinois

# 13 of 13



MORTON HIGH SCHOOL  
 EAST AUDITORIUM  
 Z 16  
 E 435 820  
 N 4632 800

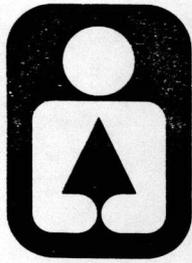
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with State of Illinois Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS, USC&GS, Cook County Highway Department and City of Chicago  
 Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962-63. Topography by planetable surveys 1925. Revised 1963  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Illinois coordinate system, east zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1972. This information not field checked  
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242 AND BY THE STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

BERWYN, ILL.  
 N4145-W8745/7.5  
 1963  
 PHOTOREVISED 1972  
 AMS 3467 IV SE-SERIES V863

Illinois



Department of Conservation

life and land together

LINCOLN TOWER PLAZA • 524 SOUTH SECOND STREET • SPRINGFIELD 62706  
CHICAGO OFFICE - ROOM 100, 160 NC. LASALLE 60601  
David Kenney, Director • James C. Helfrich, Assistant Director

March 29, 1983

Mr. Jerry Rogers  
National Register of Historic Places  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
W434  
Washington, D. C. 20243

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed are the following National Register nominations:

St. Louis Street Historic District (Edwardsville)  
Shriver House (Flora)  
Knobeloch-Seibert Farmstead (St. Clair County)  
Vriner's Confectionary (Champaign)  
John Weir House (Edwardsville)  
Lewis Thomas House (Montgomery County)  
✓ Morton East High School Auditorium (Cicero)  
Greenwood Cottage (Princeton)  
Commercial House (Keithsburg)  
Elgin Historic District

Your prompt attention to these forms is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Michael Ward  
National Register Assistant

MW:nr  
Enclosures