United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property
historic name Theosophical Society in America Headquarters
other names/site number American Theosophical Society Headquarters, Olcott, L. W. Rogers Building
Name of Multiple Property Listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
2. Location
street & number 1926 North Main Street not for publication
city or town Wheaton vicinity
state Illinois county DuPage zip code 60187
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards f registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirement set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: national statewide local
Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date
Illinois Department of Natural Resources - SHPO State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official Date
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
4. 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 the Keeper Date of Action

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## Theosophical Society in America Headquarters Name of Property DuPage ,Illinois County and State

Name of Property	County and State			
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)	Category of Property (Check only one box.)	Number of Res (Do not include prev	ources within Propertionally listed resources in t	erty the count.)
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<b>X</b> private	X building(s)	2		_ _ buildings
public - Local	district	1		site
public - State	site	2	1	_ structure
public - Federal	structure		5	_ object
	object	5	6	_ Total
Number of contributing resou listed in the National Register				
N/A				
5. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)		Current Function (Enter categories from		
EDUCATION/library		EDUCATION/library		
EDUCATION/education-related		EDUCATION/education-related		
RELIGION/religious facility		RELIGION/religious facility		
DOMESTIC/institutional hous	sing	DOMESTIC/ins	stitutional housing	
_				
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)		Materials (Enter categories fro	om instructions.)	
LATE 19TH AND 20TH CEN	TURY			
REVIVALS/Late Gothic Reviv	/al	foundation: C	ONCRETE	_
		walls: BRICK		
		STONE	L/Limestone	
		roof: SYNTH	IETICS/Plastic	
		SYNTH	IETICS/Rubber	
		other: METAL	/Copper	

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#### Theosophical Society in America Headquarters

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#### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity).

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Theosophical Society in America Headquarters (TSA Headquarters) is located on a park-like campus at 1926 North Main Street in Wheaton, Illinois. As the National Headquarters of the of the Theosophical Society in America (TSA),¹ the building was constructed in 1926 to provide offices, educational, and residential facilities for staff and guests. The building's design reflects elements of the Gothic Revival Style, and its original construction included the contributing Pump House to provide water for the building. A Root Cellar, constructed soon after the building and adjacent to the Pump House, similarly contributes to the property's historic character. The building's immediate setting, bounded by the original ten-acre parcel on which the building stands, remains largely unchanged from the period of significance, presenting a broad lawn edged by groves of trees and gardens providing areas for recreation and reflection. As such, the building's site significantly contributes to the historic character of the property, as does an Entry Arch reflecting the design and materials of the TSA Headquarters. This arch of brick, stone, and metal was constructed at the Main Street drive in 1940, providing a formal gateway to the campus. The period of significance is from 1926 to 1940, the construction dates of the headquarters building and the Entry Arch respectively, the two structures most closely related in architectural design and significance.

The TSA Headquarters maintains significant integrity in its design, materials, and workmanship. Since its construction, the building's location and setting, including the contributing Entry Arch, Pump House, and Root Cellar, remain largely unchanged, and its continued service as National Headquarters for the Theosophical Society in America reflects considerable integrity of feeling and association with that organization. For these reasons, the TSA Headquarters conveys significance under Criterion C for architecture and Criterion Consideration A as a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural distinction.

#### **Narrative Description**

#### **SETTING**

The National Headquarters of the TSA is located on a campus of just over 40 acres, ten acres of which constitute the original property. The original parcel, acquired in 1925, measured 800 by 560 feet, with frontage on Main Street to the east and Wheaton Avenue to the west. Part of a recently subdivided large farm, the lot provided level topography and a nearly blank canvas for landscaping.<sup>2</sup> Surrounded in 1925 by largely undeveloped agrarian land, development around the parcel later included single-family homes to the south and eventually commercial development to the north, resulting in the current collection of shops, restaurants, stores, and other businesses lining Geneva Road to the north. Additional commercial

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The Theosophical Society in America is not a religious institution in the conventional sense, its purpose being to encourage free, open-minded inquiry into religion, philosophy, science, and art. The organization is classified as having a religious purpose solely to meet requirements as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation in the United States.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Olcott in Wheaton, Theosophy Forward and Janet Kerschner, comp. A Special Edition of *Theosophy Forward* (May 2012), p. 10. Downloaded from <a href="https://www.theosophyforward.com/pdf/Olcott.pdf">https://www.theosophyforward.com/pdf/Olcott.pdf</a> on January 31, 2024.

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development took place north along Main Street, which continues north of Geneva Road as Schmale Road. Commercial uses are prevalent along Schmale Road for about a mile north into the village of Carol Stream. The areas south, east, and west of the current campus include Northside Park and dense residential development. The flat, vacant farmland of the original parcel was bisected by a stream from the northwest to the southeast. This water feature was a focus for early landscaping designs which were not fully implemented. The 1926 TSA Headquarters was sited approximately 600 feet west of Main Street, and by the end of the period of significance efforts to maintain the stream and associated plantings were abandoned in favor of providing an uninterrupted lawn between the headquarters building's primary façade and Main Street.

The main drive, beginning at Main Street, is marked by an Entry Arch of stone, brick, and metal that provides access to a winding drive leading to the TSA Headquarters. The one-lane drive curves slightly and splits into two lanes: one that approaches the building, allowing passengers to conveniently disembark, and another providing access to a small parking lot. These two lanes join again, intersecting with a driveway that connects the rear entrance of the building to Wheaton Avenue. Formerly the western boundary of the parcel, Wheaton Avenue is now surrounded by TSA property and functions as a private drive providing access to the building and the south end of the campus. One section of the former roadway has been given over to a small parking lot. These changes took place sometime after the period of significance, along with the removal of the circular drives that originally provided access to the east and west building entrances, visible on the 1939 aerial. In the late 20th century, the entrance to the Main Street drive was relocated approximately 60 feet south to accommodate changes to that roadway, the Entry Arch being relocated at this time as well. A comparison of the 1939 aerial with recent views make clear that the current alignment of drives and parking facilities post-date the period of significance.

Over the years, additional acquisitions have resulted in a forty-acre campus, including over 20 buildings and structures, such as individual residences, outbuildings, gathering sites, and a publishing house and warehouse. In addition, various gardens, groves, memorials, sculptures, and shrines provide areas for contemplation, meditation, and reflection throughout the park-like campus. Within the original 10-acre boundary of the nominated property, six resources, including the site itself, date to within the period of significance, and five to the 1980s or later. The property's site includes two named groves of trees, Besant Grove and Sellon Grove, and the Garden of Remembrance, which contribute to the site's overall character and are described in more detail under "Contributing Resources" below.

#### **TSA HEADQUARTERS**

#### **Building Exterior**

The property is anchored by the TSA Headquarters, which includes a library, offices, auditorium, living and dining facilities, as well as multi-purpose spaces for classes, meetings, meditation, and other types of spiritual practice. Reflecting the Theosophical Society's non-sectarian focus, the building includes no formal worship space designed to accommodate specific rites and doctrine, distinguishing it from a typical sectarian religious facility. Constructed of red brick with limestone trim, the building's design incorporates many features common to the Gothic Revival Style as applied to educational facilities and public buildings, generally referred to as the Collegiate Gothic Style.

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#### East Façade, South End

The complex massing of the main façade reflects the varied uses of the headquarters building. The central section of the building is three stories and presents six bays, one of which accommodates a broad projecting pavilion that serves visually as a tower and was designed to accommodate a water tank on the uppermost floor. The red brick walls of the tower rise from a tall limestone base. A single recessed window bay presents a two-story arch accommodating three double-hung windows on each floor with a broad spandrel of limestone between them. The second story windows include a row of fixed windows with unusual tracery filling the arch; here the single broad curve of the window penetration is reversed and repeated in two segments of tracery that meet in the middle, suggesting the upper half of an ogee centered in the arch. This unusual treatment is repeated on the uppermost muntins of some windows and as decorative features in stone throughout the building. Above these windows, the red brick is interrupted first by two plain squares of limestone with a smaller square beneath each, then by two string courses of limestone that enclose two small double-hung windows near the parapet. The lower of these two courses include stone rectangles that appear to hang from the string course, suggesting crenelations. The parapet wall presents limestone coping and repeats on either side of the recessed bay the applied decoration of a large square with a smaller one beneath it. This "two-square motif" is repeated throughout the building. The coping at the center of the tower curves upward, repeating the shape formed by the curved tracery in the windows below. The primary features of the tower, including red brick, limestone panels and trim, double-hung windows, the two-square motif decorations, and unique upward curving tracery, are repeated throughout the building.

To the left of the tower stand five identically sized bays, the differences in the treatments on the lower floors reflecting various uses within the building. Each bay is recessed and filled with windows separated by limestone spandrels, visually suggesting a solid limestone wall interrupted by brick pilasters. Third floor window treatments are identical across all five bays, each presenting a pair of tall, four-over-six, double-hung windows separated by heavy stone mullions. A projecting limestone string course with three dependent rectangles of stone on each brick pilaster serves as sills for these windows, and a flat string course of stone as lintels. The recessed areas above the windows are filled with flat stone topped by three courses of brick beneath the stone coping of the parapet. Small rectangular stone features interrupt the brick, which, along with the heavy coping, suggest crenellations at the roofline. These windows light the auditorium, a large open room used for lectures, workshops, and similar gatherings.

Treatments of the five bays beneath the third-floor windows all include flat limestone panels framed by brick pilasters. The bay to the left of the tower houses the main entrance, which is marked by a projecting stone portico with two heavy limestone piers which rise above the structure. Three squares are evenly spaced above the entry, the center picturing the seal of the Society, composed of symbols including an ankh, Star of David, snake, and hooked cross, along with the inscription "There is no religion higher than the truth." The squares flanking the central symbols present complex foliate patterns. This entry frames the double doors providing access to the building, which are set in a broad arch. The arch is repeated above the roof of the stone portico, enclosing windows that include both curved stone tracery and curved muntins repeating the forms of the central tower window. To the left of the portico is a terrace extending across the remaining four bays, enclosed by a short limestone wall that visually serves as an extension of the foundation. The two window bays nearest the entrance present the same arched window

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penetrations, though here they extend to the floor of the terrace, allowing for doors at the ground level, with fixed windows in a four-over-six configuration above, topped by the arched windows with the distinctive curved tracery and muntins. These three bays accommodate the multi-story reception hall on the building's interior. The remaining two window bays present a pair of four-over-six double hung windows on the first two floors which accommodate offices.

The building's massing south of the terrace presents three, two-story pavilions of decreasing height. First, a two-story rectangular pavilion presents two bays, that on the right with a group of three, four-over-six double-hung windows on each floor, and that on the left recessed somewhat and presenting only two very small second-floor windows. Pointing on the second story has been done with mortar and tooling that does not match the original, lightening the color of the masonry around the windows and at the parapet. The limestone foundation and string courses at the height of the lintels on the second-floor windows are repeated here, as well as the stone coping with the pattern of rectangular stone elements suggesting crenelations. Set back from the parapet rises a pavilion which provides access to the third-floor auditorium, having a shallow hipped roof finished with gray thermal plastic membrane roofing with the appearance of asphalt shingles. Small rectangular windows are set within arched openings, the top of which are filled with stone.

The string course at the height of the second story lintels aligns with the coping on the adjacent pavilion, which appears to be a half-story shorter and, along with the last pavilion, houses the library. Two recessed window bays each present three pairs of windows, the lower two pairs having six panes each, and the upper two having four panes that include the distinctive curved muntins. Inappropriate pointing repairs have been made in the parapet and to the left of the windows on the second floor. A limestone string course curves upward at the center of each window, repeating the shape formed by the curved muntins in the windows below. This string course is at the same height of the coping on the southernmost pavilion. Also two stories tall, this section of the building repeats some of the features of the original, including recessed window bays with stone or cast stone spandrels and the repetition of the large and small decorative squares beneath the stone coping. The windows on the curved walls of this pavilion are fixed single-pane windows. The curved walls meet on the south side of the building, where a shallow flat projection presents a large window penetration with nine window units having heavy stone mullions. The bottom row presents three fixed panes, the second row, three shorter fixed panes above infill painted white, and the top row, three fixed windows, each with four panes fitted to the arched opening. The central window of the top row includes the characteristic curved muntins seen on the other arched windows.

#### East Façade, North End

As opposed to the variations in massing south of the tower, the wing north of the central tower is essentially a single large rectangular structure with minimal projecting bays. This regularity is consistent with the single use of this section of the building, which was designed as institutional housing for staff and guests. Three slight projections of various sizes are present on this wing. Nearest the central tower is a narrow projection, one window bay in width, that rises to the third floor and ends in a parapet wall. A second projection, two window bays wide, is located less than half-way along the length of this wing. These two projections define a portion of the building that includes a third floor, which has a flat roof

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above the first bay and a hipped roof over the two-bay projection. A third projection three bays wide is located almost at the end of the building, leaving one bay at the corner of the building. This portion of the building presents a flat roof with parapet. A projecting pavilion on the north side of the building rises above the flat roof, housing a staircase providing access to all levels of this wing and to the roof.

Several horizontal stone features extend across the entire façade of the north wing. First, a low stone foundation serves as sills for windows opening onto the basement, with a string course of stone running at the height of the lintels and another halfway between that course and the foundation. The use of a string course of stone for contrast is then repeated at the level of the second-floor windowsills across the entire wing. No other horizontal feature extends across the entire wing. In contrast, the treatments of the three projecting bays on this façade present strong vertical emphasis. Six-over-six double-hung windows are framed by narrow panels of limestone that rise from the string course of stone at the foundation level to the string course forming the sills of the second-floor windows. Each of these stone framed windows rest on a heavy stone sill; the two-square motif is centered above each window. This treatment is applied to the single projecting bay nearest the tower and repeated on the two-bay wide projection farther north. Although the third projection is three bays wide, only two bays are treated in this manner: the third bay nearest the corner of the building simply presents a small one-over-one double-hung window the lintel of which aligns with the neighboring windows. Between the projecting bays a fairly regular arrangement of windows including some larger for the living spaces and some smaller for baths and utility spaces. One pair of six-over-six windows between the projecting bays are set in a Roman arch with a stone key, the arched space over the rectangular window filled with stone. The second floor presents the same regularity in the arrangement of large and small windows with one exception: the six-over-six window in the bay closest to the tower shares the treatment of the arched windows on the first floor, whereas all other window penetrations are simple rectangles.

As noted earlier, the area between the first two projections includes a third floor, presenting a series of small double-hung windows, a string course at the roof line, and a hipped roof. Another string course serves as sills for these windows, but it ends at the corner of the second projection forming the corner of the third story pavilion. The stylized crenelations are repeated beneath the roofline. The remainder of the building has a flat roof, the coping of the parapet wall repeating the stylized crenelations seen elsewhere on the building. Though none of the windows in this wing include the distinctive curved muntins, the third projecting bay does include that familiar shape in the upturned coping at its center, flanked by instances of the two-square motif. This pattern is repeated in the parapet of the stair hall at the north end of the building.

#### North Façade

The north façade presents three sections, including a central tower of three stories that projects from the two-story structure. The tower includes an entry at ground level housing stairs providing access to the basement, two floors, and the roof. In addition to an entry at ground level, the tower includes a window between the first and second floors, and one between the second-floor level and roof. Both are six-over-one double hung windows, one surmounted by a stone or cast stone filled arch, like those on the east façade, and the other with simple string courses of stone at the level of the sill and lintel. The decorative stone features decorating the parapet of the tower repeat those found elsewhere on the building,

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specifically stone features suggesting crenelations and the frequently used two square motif. On either side of the tower, a pair of first floor windows float in the brick wall, whereas a string course of stone on the second floor serve visually as a single, continuous lintel for the pair of windows on that floor.

#### West Façade

The primary design features of the main façade are essentially repeated on the west side of the building. The treatment of the west façade of the north wing is essentially a mirror image of the east façade with one exception: the projection closest to the tower is not repeated on the west façade as that space is given over to a large projecting pavilion. Otherwise, the treatment of the north wing is identical, including the massing, arrangement of windows, and applied decoration.

The projecting pavilion roughly at the center of the building originally housed the garages, kitchen, dining room, and maids' quarters. A two-story pavilion with hipped roof originally provided space for the kitchen and staff quarters, and a one-story projection still serves as a garage, with two large vehicular doors filling the west elevation. In keeping with these uses and given its position at the rear of the building, applied decoration is minimal. A heavy string course of stone marks the foundation, with a second course of the same weight serving as coping for the garage parapet and as sills for the second-floor windows. The only other decorations include two instances of the two-square motif in the otherwise blank west wall of the second-floor pavilion.

The central portion of the west façade corresponds roughly to the area on the main façade including the entrance and five bays adjacent to the terrace. The treatment here is similar, but the northernmost bay instead includes a projecting pavilion three stories high that accommodates an elevator. The remaining four bays have consistent treatment at the third-floor level: pairs of four-over six windows with spandrels of limestone above and brick below are framed by brick pilasters. Each pair of windows is separated by a stone mullion. Stylized crenelations appear at the top of the parapet wall and in the string course beneath the third-story windows. Simple string courses of stone appear at the level of the lintels on the third floor. As in other sections of the building, one of the four bays at the lower levels is treated differently from the others. The northernmost bay appears to accommodate a stairway, and so presents windows between the first floor and basement and between the first and second floors. The remaining three bays at the second-floor level each present a pair of windows with stone mullions identical to those above; at the first floor, three arches define penetrations for the rear entrance and windows. The Entry Arch is flanked by heavy stone pilasters upon which a stone hood rests. The remaining two arches to the right, like that above the door, are shallower than those on the main façade. Each arch encloses two four-over-four double-hung windows separated by a stone mullion, and the windows filling the arches have simple muntins. Another departure from treatments on the main façade is that the spandrels between the arches and the second-floor windows are composed of two rectangular stone features with three columns of brick headers, two bricks wide, flanking and dividing the stone features. The center column of brick repeats the width of the stone mullion between the windows both above and below the spandrel. The first-floor windows appear to rest on the stone foundation, which continues south along the west façade. Similarly, the string courses at the sills and lintels on the second and third floors continue north across the first bay and around the projecting pavilion to the north.

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Moving south, a projecting pavilion with a single bay is similar in design to the corresponding bay on the main façade, though here a single recessed window bay presenting three windows on the first and second floors has minimal decoration. Stone coping and a string course at the level of the second-floor lintels present simple flat squares of stone centered on the brick panels on either side of the windows. These courses and the stone foundation wrap around this pavilion, which has pairs of windows separated by wide stone mullions centered in a recess on the south wall. The next window bay, with a pair of windows in the center, is treated almost identically, except that the windows lack heavy stone lintels on the first floor.

The remainder of the west façade is treated identically to the main façade: The string course at the height of the second story lintels aligns with the coping on the adjacent pavilion, the pattern repeated on the southernmost pavilion. The first of these pavilions present two recessed window bays presenting the distinctive windows and string course repeating the lines of the curved tracery and muntins on the main facade. However, here a chimney rises from between the windows, servicing the fireplace in the library. Also two stories, the southernmost pavilion is treated the same on this side as on the east, with simple recessed window bays of stone ending in a large window penetration facing south.

#### **Building Interior**

Most of the public rooms are spacious and well-lit by double-hung windows. Throughout the building, dark wood trim of cherry and red gum serves as simple decoration, the best example of which is the Reception Hall which conveys visitors from both entrances to the other sections of the building. This soaring two-story space includes wood paneling along the east and south walls, and extensive millwork framing the glass doorway, windows, and shelving in what serves as the information office. Other features in wood include the railing along the second-floor gallery overlooking the Reception Hall on three sides. Incorporated into the railing is a series of turned columns reaching to the barrel-vaulted ceiling. In the south wall at the second-floor level a distinctive oriel window allowed the president's secretary to maintain awareness of any visitors to the building. The walls of the Reception Hall serve as a canvas for a series of murals, the work of Richard Blossom Farley of Philadelphia completed in 1931. The murals reflect the "mystery and grandeur of evolving life." Pictured are ancient symbols; various figures, including the river of life, world motherhood, and the evolution of biological form; and figures interweaving matter, mind, and spirit. The murals together "trace, through the magic of form, symbol, and color, a journey through the ages in the evolution of consciousness and form." Farley himself noted that "Life is all one plan, one balance, with many manifestations, many things right in their place."

#### Interior—South Wing

From the Reception Hall, the first floor of the south wing includes offices and a large classroom. Arched doors provide access to the reading room of the library, which like the Reception Hall, is a two-story space. A large fireplace and mantel backed with wood paneling flanked by arched windows with tracery fills the west wall. On either side of the fireplace, stairs lead to a mezzanine with bookshelves lining the remaining three walls of the room, and which extend through an archway into a hall providing access to three rooms, two used to store rare books and a third providing meeting space. On the first floor, the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The Murals of Olcott.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.

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same arched opening in the south wall accommodates a reference desk and leads to an office, additional stacks, and an area furnished for use as a children's library. Portions of the second floor not given over to the library provide additional office space.

The footprint of the third floor of the south wing is about half the size of that of the lower floors, accommodating a large auditorium. A door in the south wall provides access to a short hall with restrooms and access to the south stairway.

The basement beneath the south wing includes facilities for storage, mechanical systems, and library stacks, storage, and workrooms.

#### Interior—North Wing

As previously noted, the north wing was designed as living space. On the first floor, the hallway leading north from the Reception Hall provides access to the family room on the east. To the west, the projecting wing including the garage now houses offices. The main hall continues north through the residential wing, which includes storage for linens and eight rooms, each having access to a bath.

On the second floor, the space above the family room is referred to as the Meditation Room or Shrine Room, which has low wooden wainscoting, arched alcoves in the walls, an inset ceiling, and large arched windows facing three directions. The transom above the door incorporates the distinctive upward-curved motif used prominently throughout the building's exterior. The second-floor section of the projecting wing to the west includes two sleeping rooms with baths and an office. The remainder of the north wing repeats the design on the first floor, with eight rooms with access to baths.

The third floor north of the central stair hall includes a small art gallery with skylight; storage spaces; and restrooms. The area above the Meditation Room is given over to an office, and the remaining third-floor section of the north wing is about half the size of the lower floors, providing for one larger suite with bath and three smaller sleeping rooms.

The basement of the north wing includes a contemporary commercial kitchen with associated storage and refrigeration facilities along with a large open space that can be used for dining or recreation.

#### TSA Headquarters Integrity

The TSA Headquarters has been associated with the Theosophical Society in America as its National Headquarters since its construction and in the nearly 100 years since has maintained its historic location, setting and design, and, for the most part, its materials and workmanship. The design of the building is largely unchanged, except for the two-story library addition to the south wing of the building in 1962. The eastern and western walls of the existing library were extended about twenty-eight feet with a semicircular wall connecting them at the south end. Views of the addition suggest that it meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, specifically Standard 9, which require additions to preserve "historic materials, features, and spatial relationships" and assure that the new work is distinguishable from the old, while being compatible with the character of the historic structure. materials,

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features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.<sup>5</sup>

As noted in the description, the use of a stone string course to define the height of the coping of an adjacent shorter pavilion was maintained in the design of the library addition. Window treatments on the curved walls, though clearly not historic, recall those of the historic structure, specifically the inclusion of shallow arches above rectangular window penetrations and the use of flat spandrels of stone or cast stone between the windows. In addition, the window and surrounding stonework from the building's original south wall were salvaged and fitted into the south end of the addition, and exterior materials were carefully matched. Construction included excavation and laying a new foundation beneath the existing building to provide basement storage areas extending beneath the addition. Not only does the newer construction clearly distinguish itself as an addition to the original building, but it also complements the historic design and materials, while having attained its own historic merit since its construction more than sixty years ago. Finally, in keeping with Standard 10 for rehabilitation,<sup>6</sup> it is conceivable that the addition could be removed, the original window again salvaged and used to restore the south wall to its original design.

A second addition, completed in 1998, included a pavilion on the west façade to provide for an elevator and associated equipment necessary for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The exterior of this addition, as noted in the description, carried over the string courses and other decorative features to allow the new construction to remain as unobtrusive as possible. Its placement on the secondary façade results in minimal visual changes to the exterior of the building. Interior changes to meet the requirements of the ADA required installation of a wheelchair lift in the Reception Hall. Interior finish work for the elevator and chair lift included custom millwork to match the original around the elevator and the fabrication of cherry paneling for the chairlift to match the paneling in the Reception Hall.

Other changes to the exterior of the building represent the addition of minor features or the replacement of historic features with contemporary versions. For example, the hipped roofs on portions of the third floor were originally of slate but have been replaced by roofing of thermal plastic membrane resembling asphalt shingles. White aluminum storm windows have been installed as well. These changes have minimal impact on the building's integrity of design and materials. Other changes, like the replacement of the vehicular doors on the garage or the reconstruction of the library chimney, do not at all affect the character defining features of the building's exterior: its asymmetrical massing, limestone and brick masonry, and distinctive arched windows with tracery and curved muntins. Pointing repairs visible on the south wing of the east façade do, however, negatively impact views of the building. Either the composition of the mortar or the tooling (perhaps both) do not match the original, calling attention to these inappropriate repairs. Similar work has been done on the west side of the building with the same results. It is likely the problem can be corrected by using appropriate materials and methods to restore the masonry, making this change potentially reversible.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Weeks, Kay D. and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service Technical Preservation Services, 2017), p. 76.

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On the interior, some office and residential spaces have been reconfigured, but the most significant changes have been made to the residential areas. For example, reconfiguration of the guest rooms has reduced their number, and the dining room and kitchen on the main floor were relocated to the basement. Some light fixtures and plumbing fixtures have been replaced or supplemented. Floor and window treatments have been replaced, and infrastructure has been upgraded periodically. However, the views of most of the offices and public rooms have changed little since the building's construction, including a recent restoration of the 1931 murals in the Reception Hall. Except for the kitchen and dining facilities in the basement of the north wing and the library addition, anyone familiar with the building during the period of significance would find the interiors little changed today.

The TSA Headquarters, then, maintains significant integrity in its design, materials, and workmanship. Since its construction, the building's location and setting are largely unchanged, and its continued service as National Headquarters for the Theosophical Society in America reflects considerable integrity of feeling and association with that organization.

#### **OTHER RESOURCES**

Although the entire property encompasses over 40 resources, this nomination includes only those which were a part of the TSA National Headquarters campus during the period of significance under Criterion C for the architecture of the TSA Headquarters, 1926-1940.

#### **Contributing Resources**

#### **Pump House**

Early plans for the facility showed a water tank on the third floor of the tower situated at the center of the east façade, and the Pump House was constructed along with the building in 1926 to shelter the equipment used to fill that tank. This round wooden structure, approximately 12 feet in diameter, stands less than 50 feet west of the south wing of the TSA Headquarters. The round frame structure is sheathed in vertical wood siding, with exposed rafters beneath a wood shingle roof. A cap of copper with a simple finial completes the roof. A wooden door with a large six-light window on the north side of the structure is framed with heavy timbers and protected by a corbeled gable end hood. The glass in the door is painted with designs including fruits and flowers. Wooden lattice panels attached to the walls support vines.

**Integrity:** The Pump House, a feature original to the construction of the TSA Headquarters, remains largely unchanged from the time of its construction. Although requiring maintenance of the shingled roof and lattice panels, the structure conveys its original appearance and contributes to the integrity of setting for the larger building.

#### Root Cellar

Constructed soon after the TSA Headquarters was completed in 1928, this storage facility lies in part beneath and to the west of the Pump House. Above ground features include only a low concrete abutment and two vents flanking the stairs leading to the door below grade. A contemporary door made of plywood and treated framing members has replaced the original door. The structure is completely utilitarian in design, and as it is sited within a planting of yew and other evergreen bushes, is virtually invisible.

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**Integrity:** The Root Cellar remains largely unchanged from the time of its construction. This unobtrusive below-ground structure retains its primary features, and its presence supports the historic character of the nearby Headquarters Building and Pump House. Modifications that have been made are consistent with its utilitarian nature.

#### **Entry Arch**

Claude Bragdon, a noted architect from Rochester, New York, designed the Entrance Arch, which was completed in 1940. Constructed by the J. R. Wheaton Company of limestone and brick to match the main building, the octagonal piers are thirty-seven inches wide and eighteen feet tall, located eighteen feet apart. The south pier is marked with a letter "T" in cut stone, while the north pier has an "S." Each is topped by a carved stone representation of a Platonic solid, an icosahedron on the south and a dodecahedron on the north. Bronze plaques mounted on the front of each pier identify the property and provide information about the society. A steel arch with a Greek key pattern is fitted between the piers, bearing the words "The Theosophical Society in America." The seal of the Society figures prominently in the middle of the arch. When first installed, the seal was illuminated from within, and an electric light was suspended beneath it. The design, materials, and workmanship complement views of the TSA Headquarters, which is framed by the arch as visitors enter the campus.

**Integrity:** The Entry Arch was moved approximately 60 feet south in 1989 when Main Street was widened to accommodate a turn lane. The suspended electric light had to be removed to accommodate emergency vehicles, and the seal is no longer illuminated from within, but otherwise the gateway structure maintains sufficient integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association to contribute to the historic character of the TSA Headquarters.

#### TSA Headquarters Campus

The ten-acre site of the TSA Headquarters as defined by the 1926 parcel boundaries is described in full under "Setting" above. Three significant resources which are part of the setting are noted here, along with a statement regarding the integrity of the setting as a whole.

**Besant Grove:** Although planting of trees on the campus commenced in 1925, prior to the construction of the TSA Headquarters, this stand of hardwood trees was named in honor of Annie Besant in 1932. It was at this spot that Besant, president of the international Theosophical Society based in Adyar, Chennai, India, from 1907-1933, stood to address the members on her last visit to the American Section in 1929.

**Sellon Grove:** This stand of mostly evergreen trees located to the south of the main drive was a gift from Captain Ernest M. Sellon in 1932.

**Garden of Remembrance:** These gardens are situated east of the north wing of the TSA Headquarters, about halfway between the building and the drive. The Garden of Remembrance, originally established in 1939, was refurbished in 2001. It includes an ellipsoidal limestone bench and a statue of Saint Francis of Assisi.

**Integrity:** Despite changes to the drives and installation of parking facilities after the period of significance, the experience of approaching the TSA Headquarters from Main Street is largely unchanged. The Entry Arch frames initial views of the stately building, and the curving drive provides views of groves of trees that frame the building and border the expansive lawn. Views from the main

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entrance towards Main Street likewise feature the broad lawn edged by groves of trees and gardens providing areas for rest and reflection. The area north of the building is wooded, being the location of the earliest plantings made after the property was acquired in 1925. The original ten-acre campus of the TSA Headquarters retains significant integrity of design, materials, feeling, and association, supporting the historic and architectural significance of the TSA Headquarters.

#### **Non-Contributing Resources**

The remaining resources dating from the period of significance and later have either lost significant integrity, are unremarkable in appearance, or have no relationship to the design or construction of the TSA Headquarters, which is nominated here under Criterion C for architecture. Resources are ordered by age.

#### **Tennis Courts**

Located northeast of the TSA Headquarters, the paved courts created in 1937 provided facilities for recreation and physical fitness. Although dating from the period of significance, the tennis courts are no longer used and have fallen into significant disrepair. Three smaller courts for quoit-tennis (also called deck tennis) were also constructed, but are no longer extant, further diminishing the integrity of this resource.

#### Main Street Sign

A low brick wall erected in 1981 along Main Street includes the words "The Theosophical Society and Library" and "Visitors Welcome." Dating from outside the period of significance, the sign is unremarkable in design.

#### Slant and Tantric Circle Sculptures

Two sculptures installed ca 1999 stand south of the main entrance to the TSA Headquarters. These contemporary works in concrete, stone, and metal date from the last 25 years.

#### Flagpole

Centered in front of the main entrance to the TSA Headquarters and standing nearly 70 feet east of the portico, this simple flagpole topped by a gold finial is unremarkable in appearance. The current pole was erected in 2007, replacing the original pole lost after a tornado. The replacement pole helps maintain the setting of the TSA Headquarters without directly contributing to the character-defining features of the historic building.

#### Peace Pole

Situated between the Garden of Remembrance and Main Street, the Peace Pole, installed in 2011, was fabricated from a section of the flagpole that was knocked down during a tornado in August 2007. The remnants of the historic flagpole were retained, and a section inscribed with "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in several languages. A small garden surrounds the Peace Pole and benches on the perimeter of the circular garden provide opportunities for contemplation.

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### Inventory

	Resource	Date	Status
A.	TSA Headquarters	1926	Contributing
В.	Pump House	1926	Contributing
C.	Root Cellar	1928	Contributing
D.	Entry Arch	1940	Contributing
Е	TSA Headquarters Campus	1926	Contributing
	i. Besant Grove	1932	Contributing
	ii. Sellon Grove	1932	Contributing
	iii. Garden of Remembrance	1939	Contributing
F.	Tennis Courts	1937	Non-Contributing
G.	Main Street Sign	1981	Non-Contributing
H.	Slant (sculpture)	ca 1999	Non-Contributing
I.	Tantric Circle (sculpture)	ca 1999	Non-Contributing
J.	Flagpole	2007	Non-Contributing
K.	Peace Pole	2011	Non-Contributing

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within the past 50 years.

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8. Statement of Significance **Applicable National Register Criteria** Areas of Significance (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property (Enter categories from instructions.) for National Register listing.) ARCHITECTURE Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high **Period of Significance** artistic values, or represents a significant 1926-1940 and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. **Significant Dates** 1926–1927; 1940 (construction dates) **Criteria Considerations** (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.) Significant Person Property is: (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.) Owned by a religious institution or used for religious X purposes. Cultural Affiliation (if applicable) removed from its original location. a birthplace or grave. D a cemetery. Architect/Builder a reconstructed building, object, or structure. Pond and Pond, Martin and Lloyd a commemorative property. less than 50 years old or achieving significance

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations).

The TSA Headquarters, the national headquarters of the Theosophical Society in America, is locally significant and eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Architecture and Criterion Consideration A, as a religious property deriving primary significance from its architectural distinction. The building is an exceptional local example of the Collegiate Gothic Revival Style in Wheaton. Furthermore, the features of that style are uniquely expressed by the chief architect, Irving Kane Pond, who uses basic features of the style, in this case elements from tracery windows or the use of crenelated parapets, in surprising ways. His elegant use of simplified upward curves in window tracery, repeated in stone and wood throughout the building, is a hallmark of similar multipurpose buildings designed by Pond and Pond, Martin and Lloyd, during the 1920s. The crenelated parapet, a common motif in the Collegiate Gothic Style, is creatively suggested throughout the building in the use of applied ornament incorporated not just into the coping at the top of the parapet walls, but also as string courses in other parts of the building. The period of significance is from 1926, the date of the construction of the building, to 1940, the date of the construction of the Entry Arch which was designed to complement the headquarters building and has become an integral part of the setting of the TSA Headquarters, which itself contributes significantly to the building's historic character.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

#### HISTORIC CONTEXT: THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA AND WHEATON

The Theosophical Society in America is a national "section" of the Theosophy Society, an international organization founded in 1897 and based in Adyar, a neighborhood of Chennai, India. "The Society imposes no belief on its members, who are united by a common search for Truth and desire to learn the meaning and purpose of existence through study, reflection, self-responsibility and loving service." To meet requirements for categorization as a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation in the United States, the Theosophical Society in America is regarded as having a religious purpose. However, the organization is not a religious institution in the conventional sense, since it has no clergy, no liturgy, no dogma, and no sanctified places of worship. The Society encourages free, open-minded inquiry into religion, philosophy, science, and art. Occasional religious observances sponsored by the organization are generally multifaith, nondenominational, multicultural events, such as the annual Meditation for World Peace.

During the early 1920s, the American Theosophical Society, as it was then known, occupied crowded quarters at 826 Oakdale Avenue in Chicago. The organization had grown significantly under the leadership of President L. W. Rogers, who led a campaign to establish a permanent headquarters for the Society. Rogers conducted a search throughout the central United States, ultimately selecting Wheaton, Illinois as the Society's new home. Since 1932, in honor of the American co-founder and first president of the international society, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, the campus and headquarters building are frequently designated "Olcott." Additionally, after 1998, Rogers' role in establishing the headquarters campus construction of the TSA Headquarters resulted in the practice of referring to the building as the "L.W. Rogers Building."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> "Our Story," The Theosophical Society https://www.ts-adyar.org/content/our-story-0, accessed March 3, 2024.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Olcott in Wheaton, pp. 9 ff.

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The development of Wheaton mirrors the development of many communities in the Midwest. Three New Englanders traveled westward in 1837 to take advantage of opportunities in Illinois. Erastus Gary, Jesse Wheaton, and Warren Wheaton claimed hundreds of acres in northeastern Illinois, and in 1848 attracted the Galena and Chicago Union Railroad by offering three miles of right-of-way. The railroad accepted, naming the depot "Wheaton." Soon after, ten blocks were platted, and the community was incorporated as a village in 1859 with Warren Wheaton as president. Named the county seat of DuPage County in 1867, Wheaton was incorporated as a city in 1890, the first mayor being the son of Erastus Gary, Judge Elbert Gary.

By the 1920s, railroad and interurban service provided superior accessibility to Chicago from Wheaton, as well as several trains directly to cities on the west coast, with mail trains arriving in Wheaton six times daily. The central location, excellent railroad and inter-urban transportation, its serene rural character, and the availability of attractive parcels of land for relatively low prices made Wheaton an obvious choice for the new national headquarters. Ten acres of farmland were purchased in 1925, and in May of that year, the first trees were planted, forming a grove that would stand just north of the new building. Architect Irving Kane Pond was offered the commission, and his firm, Pond & Pond, Martin & Lloyd developed plans for the building, later named for President Rogers. The cornerstone was laid on August 29, 1926, and the building put into service in June of 1927. The building's design is of a piece with that of similar multi-purpose buildings Pond and his firm designed, including the University of Michigan's Michigan Union (1916-1919), of which Pond himself noted was "designed in what may be characterized as a modernization of the English collegiate type," or the Collegiate Gothic Style.

#### **ARCHITECTURE OF THE TSA HEADQUARTERS**

Pond's unique application of the Collegiate Gothic Style as expressed in large public buildings is evident in much of his work, including the design of the TSA Headquarters. The main features of that revival style provide the basis for the design of the national headquarters.

#### The Collegiate Gothic Style

The initial Gothic Revival took place in the mid-eighteenth century in England and followed those migrating to the United States in the early 1800s. Along with the Italianate, the Early Gothic Revival Style became prominent in American architecture after the 1830s. This style made use of Gothic forms like the pointed arch, steeply pitched roofs, and the use of buttresses, usually on buildings with narrow, tall massing. In the United States, these vertical forms and pointed arches became regular features in wooden buildings, including the use of decorative wooden trim on eaves and porches. Sometimes referred to as "Carpenter Gothic" or "Rural Gothic," these designs in wood were popularized in pattern books. In the late 19th century, masonry buildings in this style frequently combined materials of differing colors and textures. Applied ornamentation eventually became more prevalent, often highlighting foliate and geometric patterns.<sup>14</sup>

In the early twentieth century, two prominent eastern schools—Yale and Boston College—constructed several new buildings that incorporated Gothic features in a new way. James Gamble Rogers' reconstruction of the campus of Yale University and Charles Donagh Maginnis' early buildings at Boston College helped establish a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "History of Wheaton," City of Wheaton <a href="https://www.wheaton.il.us/367/History-of-Wheaton">https://www.wheaton.il.us/367/History-of-Wheaton</a>, accessed January 29, 2024.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> DuPage Roots: Then and Now, Robert Pruter, ed. (Wheaton, IL: DuPage County Historical Society, 2022), p. 340.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> History of DuPage County, Illinois, DuPage County Board of Supervisors, comp. (Aurora, IL: Knickerbocker & Hodder, 1877), p. 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Olcott in Wheaton, pp 13-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Irving K. Pond, *Michigan Alumnus*, 21 (May 1915): 404.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> John J.G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (New York: Norton, 1981), p. 33.

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new variety of Gothic architecture on American university campuses. Buildings in the Collegiate Gothic Style often feature horizontal orientation in terms of massing while retaining strong vertical visual features, like the use of prominent buttresses, tall windows, or strong vertical division of windows. The tall, narrow pointed arch of the Gothic Revival Style, if present at all in the Collegiate Gothic Revival Style, usually exists as one of a series of narrow arches grouped within a broad pointed or segmented arch common during the Tudor period in England (1485-1630). Buildings of this style are of brick or stone with smooth limestone features, typically including the casing of wall penetrations, single-floor entry vestibules that project from the building (these often completely of limestone), quoins, watercourses or other narrow horizontal features, and caps for the buttresses and parapets, which were often crenellated.

#### **TSA Headquarters**

Pond's reliance on the Collegiate Gothic Style is clear in the major features of the national headquarters building. His reliance on brick with limestone trim and the complex massing of the building are typically expressed in large educational buildings exhibiting this style. The incorporation of a broad tower and the one-story projecting entry portico entirely of limestone recall similar features common to educational and ecclesiastical buildings. The broad arches used throughout the building, particularly for windows and doorways, are reminiscent of the Tudor arch, which features prominently in buildings of this style. Parapets before the flat rooflines include applied decorations suggesting crenelations, which are often a feature in the Gothic Revival and Collegiate Gothic Styles.

The style's reliance on a strong horizontal orientation interrupted by vertical features is clear in the design of the south wing, where the use of recessed window bays with flat limestone spandrels emphasizing the vertical brick projections between them. Similar contrasts are prominent in the treatment of the north wing, where the strong horizontal lines of multiple stone string courses and heavy coping are interrupted by the lines of the vertical projections, which are further emphasized by repeated vertical stone features. This play of contrasts in the massing and basic visual features are carried even further in the application of features not usually associated with the style or that make new and surprising use of traditional features. Some of these are borrowed from the Aarts & Crafts Style, including the application of simple geometric features, like the repeated use of plain square or rectangular stone bosses, or the application of shallow hipped roofs on the uppermost floors, originally in slate. The slightly broader arches on west façade with stone pilasters holding a hood over the entry are also reminiscent of Arts & Crafts features.

Some stylistic features of the building seem to be unique to work by Pond's firm, the most unusual of these perhaps being the repetition of the upturned curve. An upward curve is a common feature in Gothic window tracery when multiple lancet windows are combined within a larger arched window penetration. In these cases, the curve at the arch of the smaller windows, particularly those with a trefoil design in the arch, result in an upward curve reminiscent of an ogee arch. In the TSA Headquarters, as in some of Pond's student union buildings, a similar upward curve is applied as a standalone feature; rather than resulting from complex Gothic tracery, the curve itself is the decorative feature. These upward curving features are prominent in the window tracery on the tower, in the muntins on the arched windows above and adjacent to the front entry, and in the historic windows of the library, including the window reinstalled in the south end of the 1960s addition. The curve is further repeated in string courses and coping throughout the building and is a feature in some of the glazing of the doors at the main and rear entries. Similar curves used as standalone features are prominent in other commissions, such as the University of Michigan's Michigan Union and Michigan League, and the

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Purdue Memorial Union. Also common on this building, but not a typical feature of the Collegiate Gothic Style, is the marked variations in window treatments on a given façade, in this case reflecting the interior function. Fenestration of the third-floor auditorium on both the east and west façades differ from that on the lower floors, and on both façades, window treatments on the same floor differ depending on the uses of the space they light. The most obvious example of this is the two bays of decorative arched windows lighting the two-story Reception Hall as compared to the adjacent double-hung windows lighting first- and second-floor offices.

Interior treatments include the use of simple dark wood paneling and trim common in Collegiate Gothic buildings, though the signature upward curve is present in some of the doorways and also in the transom windows above the doorways to the rooms in the tower. Some interior features common to the Arts & Crafts Style are in evidence, for example, the simple rectangular panels above the fireplace in the library have very blunt rather than beveled edges, suggesting the Arts & Crafts reliance on simple tooling of wood features. The stone fireplace surround set in those panels is more formal, however, than what would commonly be found in an Arts & Crafts interior. The resulting blend of features throughout the interior relies on the harmony of the individual elements working together without the need for adherence to a single stylistic vocabulary.

#### **SETTING**

#### The TSA Headquarters Campus

The original ten-acre campus of the TSA Headquarters retains significant integrity of design, materials, feeling, and association, supporting the historic and architectural significance of the TSA Headquarters. In addition to the individually contributing Pump House, Root Cellar, and Entry Arch, all of which maintain significant integrity, the setting includes two named groves, Besant Grove and Sellon Grove, and the Garden of Remembrance, which contribute to the site's overall character. These three features resulted from landscaping efforts during the period of significance, intended to complement the character of the headquarters building. They additionally serve as memorials and provide places for reflection, in keeping with the goals of the organization.

#### The Pump House, Root Cellar, and Entry Arch

Unlike that of the main building, the design of the **Pump House** relies solidly on features of the Arts & Crafts Style, notably in its the simple design and materials as is suitable for a small outbuilding. The use of exposed rafters and wood shingles on the conical roof are features of the style, as are the heavy corbeled brackets supporting the awning above the entry, and the use of a simple paneled door. While not an exceptional feature of the style, the Pump House's relationship to the TSA Headquarters and its exceptional integrity allows it to serve as a contributing feature to the historic national headquarters.

The **Root Cellar**, in contrast, is completely utilitarian in design, including the fact that the structure, except for the stairway and ventilation louvers, is completely underground, its approach hidden by plantings of yews and other evergreens. However, it continues to contribute to the historical significance of the multipurpose Headquarters building, in that it allowed for long-term cold storage of vegetables and other foodstuffs needed to feed the residents, assuring the smooth operation of the facility. As such, like the Pump House, it contributes significantly to the building's historic character, representing historic problem-solving approaches to providing the basics of fresh food and water to the residents and guests of the national headquarters.

The **Entry Arch** was designed by Claude Fayette Bragdon, a member of the American Theosophical Society, who was a prolific and prominent architect in Rochester, New York. His 1931 design "consists of two great

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pillars capped with Platonic solids, the icosahedron and the dodecahedron, symbolizing spirit and matter. The pillars are spanned by a delicate filigree metal arch, incorporating the name and seal of the Society." The Entry Arch presents features of the Collegiate Gothic Style in its materials and basic design, the brick piers, massive limestone foundations, and heavy limestone caps with beveled corners, suggesting buttresses. While the broad metal arch is not emblematic of the style, its graceful design complements the TSA Headquarters while framing the initial view of the building as one enters the property by way of the Arch. Its reliance on Collegiate Gothic materials and design, along with its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship and its relationship to the TSA Headquarters, allow the Entry Arch to make a significant contribution to the historic

#### **ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN WHEATON**

Several churches and one school building in Wheaton exhibit features of the Gothic Revival Style. While most are churches, the primary features of these buildings are more common to the Collegiate Gothic Revival Style, as noted below.

#### **Gary United Methodist Church**

setting of the national headquarters.

This rusticated limestone building presents tall narrow windows incorporating Gothic tracery. As is usual with church buildings, the massing is simple, generally composed of a rectangular form with a steeply pitched roof. The Gary United Methodist Church presents common features of the style, including a slightly projecting first floor vestibule and prominent use of buttresses on the main façade, drawing attention to multiple projections that enclose the stained-glass window and paired entries below. As is common in ecclesiastic architecture of this style, the Tudor arch is less likely to be used than taller, more slender Gothic arches in evidence both for windows and entries here. Views of the secondary façade show features more common to educational facilities: a square tower with projecting entry vestibule at its base, with the six window bays in the portion of the building presenting lancet windows on the first floor and double-hung windows on the second floor.

#### St. Michael Parish School

Strong rectangular massing is in evidence on this three-story building, which incorporates features common to the style, including single-story projecting bays for side entries, and Tudor arches gracing the main entrance and upper floor windows on the secondary facade. Here, Gothic tracery is used as applied decoration on spandrels and to decorate stone lintels above the smaller windows. Complex tracery is present as well in the statue niches flanking the second story windows on the main façade. The third floor is surmounted by parapets suggesting a broad gable end on the main façade, with steps down to the flat parapet with simple coping on the secondary facades.

#### St. Paul Lutheran Church

Another simple church building similar to the Gary Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church presents a tall arched tracery window above the main entry. The steeply pitched roof is fronted by a masonry gable end. The walls on either side step back from the center and decrease in height, providing the stepped parapet walls similar to those present on St. Michael Parish School and other churches in Wheaton. Rusticated limestone features are randomly placed in the central bay, contrasting with the smooth stone of the casing around the window and entrance and with the yellow brick which is the primary material for the walls. An octagonal steeple sheathed in copper is an unusual feature for a building of this style.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "Famous Theosophists: Claude Bragdon," *The American Theosophist* 32, no. 3 (March 1944): 49-51.

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#### **Trinity Episcopal Church**

This church repeats the massing and stepped parapets of St. Paul's, though the entrance is located to one side, and the main window, framed in a Tudor arch, has simple rectangular panes rather than the complex tracery on the other churches described above. That window is set in a projecting bay of rusticated limestone, which contrasts strongly with the orange brick of the remainder of the building. The asymmetry of the main façade is unusual for a church in this style.

#### **Whittier Elementary School**

The only non-ecclesial building with features in this style, this simple rectangular structure presents a Tudor arched entry cased in smooth limestone, surmounted by three tall rectangular windows also cased in stone. Stepped parapets reduce the height of the parapets on the main façade as on the churches described above. However, this building's applied stone decoration (namely square rosettes, string courses, coping, and rectangular features decorating the window penetrations) have much in common with those of the TSA Headquarters.

While these five buildings all present features common to the Collegiate Gothic Revival Style, with the exception perhaps of the St. Michael School, none of them are exceptional examples of the style. Furthermore, none presents the unique combination of features that make the TSA Headquarters an exceptional and unique example of the style in Wheaton.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In addition to being an exceptional local example of the Collegiate Gothic Style, the TSA Headquarters includes features of the style as uniquely expressed by the chief architect, Irving Kane Pond. Pond's work has long been considered significant, including a series of multipurpose buildings like the TSA Headquarters. Among the most notable of these are the University of Michigan's Michigan Union and Michigan League, and the Purdue Memorial Union. Pond applied the basic features of the style in surprising ways, two examples prevalent in the design of TSA Headquarters being the basic elements of Gothic tracery windows and the suggestion of crenelated parapets. His elegant use of simplified upward curves in window tracery, repeated in stone and wood throughout the building, is present in other multipurpose buildings designed by Pond and Pond, Martin and Lloyd, during the 1920s. The crenelated parapet is creatively suggested in the use of applied ornament incorporated not just into the coping at the top of the parapet walls, but also as string courses in other parts of the building. These are only a few examples of the features which mark the TSA Headquarters as an exceptional example of the Collegiate Gothic Style. In addition to maintaining notable integrity in its location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, the building presents the elements of that style as uniquely expressed by Irving Pond and his associates, whose exceptional work graces several university campuses across the Midwest. The building's historic character is further supported by the exceptionally maintained setting of the original ten-acre campus, including the individually contributing Pump House, Root Cellar, and Entry Arch, all of which maintain significant integrity and contribute to the historic character of the Theosophical Society in America Headquarters.

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OMB No. 1024-0018

### Theosophical Society in America Headquarters

Name of Property

DuPage ,Illinois
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)previously listed in the National Registerpreviously determined eligible by the National Registerdesignated a National Historic Landmarkrecorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	X State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University X Other Name of repository: TSA Archives

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

organization

city or town Chicago

street & number 1826 West Morse Avenue

OMB No. 1024-0018

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10	. Geographical Data	a			
	creage of Property _ o not include previously list	10 red resource acreage; enter "Less the	han one" if the	e acreage is .99 or less	)
La	titude/Longitude Co	oordinates			
Da	atum if other than WG	S84:			
(er	iter coordinates to 6 decim	al places)			
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	Latitude	Longitude		Latitude	Longitude
Ve	erbal Boundary Desc	cription (Describe the boundaries	s of the prope	rty.)	
Τŀ	ne southern hounda	ry hegins at North Main S	treet on a	line approximat	ely 27 feet south of the southern
					of-way for Wheaton Avenue. From
th	at point, the bounda	ary extends north along the	e former ri	ight-of-way some	e 530 feet, where it turns east,
ex	tending to North Ma	ain Street, and then south	along tha	t road to the bou	ndary's point of origin.
Bo	oundary Justification	n (Explain why the boundaries were	e selected.)		
Th	_	ry includes the original ten		•	ers building was constructed in 1926. 1925 and includes all resources
11	. Form Prepared By				
na	me/title Nicholas	s Dorochoff			date June 20, 2024

state IL

telephone 847-942-4807

email <u>nick@dorochoff.com</u>

zip code 60626

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

#### Theosophical Society in America Headquarters

Name of Property

DuPage ,Illinois

County and State

#### **Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **GIS Location Map (Google Earth)**
- **Local Location Map**
- Site Plan
- Floor Plans (As Applicable)
- **Photo Location Map**

#### Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 pixels, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log				
Name of Property:	TSA Headquarters			
City or Vicinity:	Wheaton			
County:	DuPage	State:	Illinois	
Photographer:	Nicholas Dorochoff			
Date Photographed:	January 30, 2024, except	t as noted		

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

#### TSA Headquarters, Exterior Views

Photo 1 of 35: Main façade, facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 35: Entry Arch, facing northwest.

Photo 3 of 35: Central pavilion, facing northwest.

Photo 4 of 35: Main entrance, facing west.

Photo 5 of 35: Library wing, facing west.

Photo 6 of 35: South end of library wing facing northwest (4/15/2024).

Photo 7 of 35: North wing facing southwest (4/15/2024).

Photo 8 of 35: North wing, west facade facing east.

Photo 9 of 35: West wing facing northeast.

Photo 10 of 35: West façade facing east.

Photo 11 of 35: West façade facing northeast.

#### TSA Headquarters, Interior Views

Photo 12 of 35: Reception Hall, facing northeast (4/15/2024).

Photo 13 of 35: Reception Hall, facing southwest (4/15/2024).

Photo 14 of 35: Reception Hall, second floor gallery, facing southeast (4/15/2024).

Photo 15 of 35: South wing, first floor hallway, facing north (4/15/2024).

10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

#### Theosophical Society in America Headquarters

Name of Property

DuPage ,Illinois

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Photo 16 of 35: Library, facing northwest (4/15/2024).

Photo 17 of 35: South wing hallway, second floor facing north (4/15/2024).

**Photo 18 of 35:** South wing, Auditorium, facing southeast (4/15/2024).

**Photo 19 of 35:** North wing, second floor hall, facing north (4/15/2024).

Photo 20 of 35: North wing, second floor meditation room, facing southwest (4/15/2024).

**Photo 21 of 35:** North wing, art gallery, facing northeast (4/15/2024).

Photo 22 of 35: North Wing, Room 9, representative living space facing southwest (4/15/2024).

#### **Contributing Resources**

Photo 23 of 35: Pump House, facing south.

Photo 24 of 35: Root Cellar entry, facing east.

Photo 25 of 35: Entry Arch, facing southwest.

Photo 26 of 35: Setting, view of east lawn, facing southeast (4/15/2024).

Photo 27 of 35: Setting, Besant Grove, facing west (4/15/2024).

Photo 28 of 35: Setting, Sellon Grove, facing southeast.

Photo 29 of 35: Setting, Garden of Remembrance, facing north (4/15/2024).

#### **Non-Contributing Resources**

Photo 30 of 35: Tennis Courts, facing north (4/15/2024).

Photo 31 of 35: Main Street Sign, facing northwest.

Photo 32 of 35: Slant (sculpture), facing west.

Photo 33 of 35: Tantric Circle (sculpture), facing east.

Photo 34 of 35: Flagpole, facing east.

**Photo 35 of 35:** Peace Pole, facing north (4/15/2024).

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement**: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

NPS Form 10-900-a (Rev. 8/2002) OMB No. 1024-0018

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

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

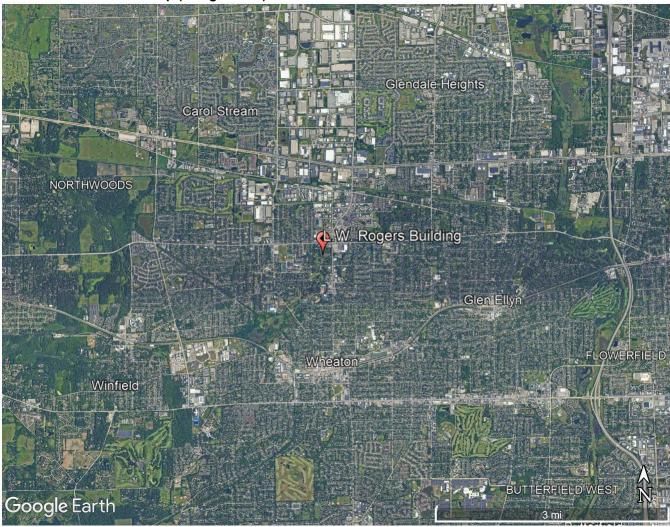
Section number	Additional Documentation	Page	28

The	osophical Society in America
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Nam	e of Property
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Nam	e of multiple listing (if applicable)

#### **List of Figures**

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page.

Figure 1: General Location Map (GoogleEarth)



NPS Form 10-900-a (Rev. 8/2002) OMB No. 1024-0018

### **United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

### **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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•
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Name of Property
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 2: GIS Location Map (Google Earth)



Page 1





L. W. Rogers Building, Property Boundary Coordinates: A: 41.886900, -88.109809; B: 41.886900, -88.106900; C: 41.885390, -88.106900; D: 41.885390, -88.109809.

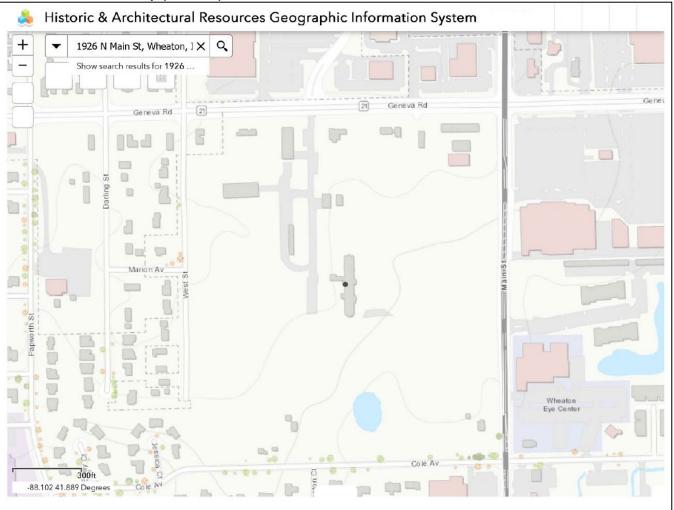
#### **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Figure 3: Local Location Map (HARGIS)



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

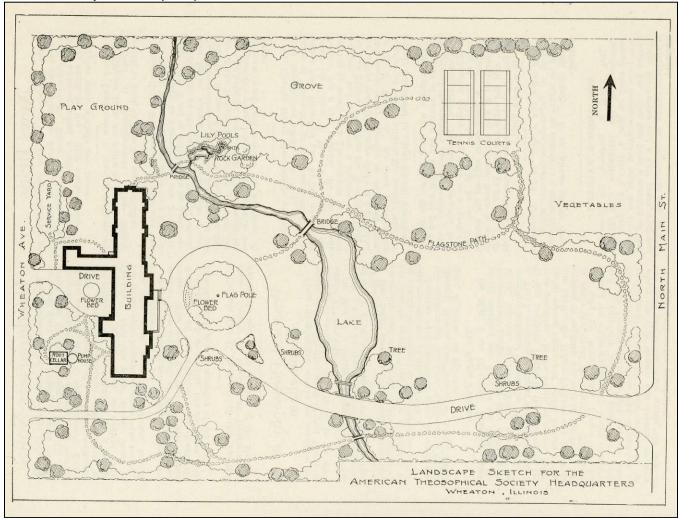
# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

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Name of Property
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Figure 4: Landscape Sketch (1929)



The Theosophical Messenger vol. 17 no. 4, Apr 1929, p 86.

### United States Department of the Interior

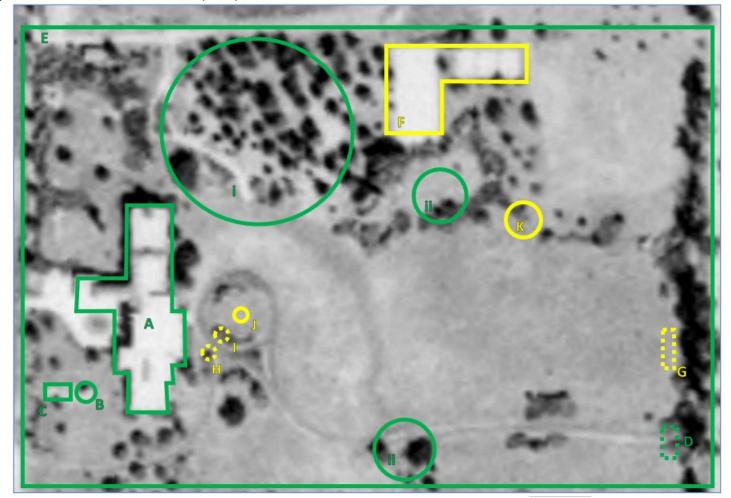
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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County and State
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Figure 5: Site Plan, Historic Aerial (1939)



32

Netronline Historic Aerials, 1939.

#### **Historic Boundary / Setting in Green**

#### **Contributing Resources in Green:**

(dotted lines indicate resources post-dating this aerial)

- A. TSA Headquarters (1926)
- B. Pump House (1926)
- C. Root Cellar (1928)
- D. Entry Arch (1940)
- E. TSA Headquarters Campus
  - i. Besant Grove (1932)
  - ii. Sellon Grove (1932)
  - iii. Garden of Remembrance (1939)

#### Non-Contributing Resources in Yellow:

(dotted lines indicate resources post-dating this aerial)

- F. Tennis Courts (1937)
- G. Main Street Sign (1981)
- H. Slant (ca 1999)
- I. Tantric Circle (ca 1999)
- J. Flagpole (1926, replaced 2007)
- K. Peace Pole (2011)

### United States Department of the Interior

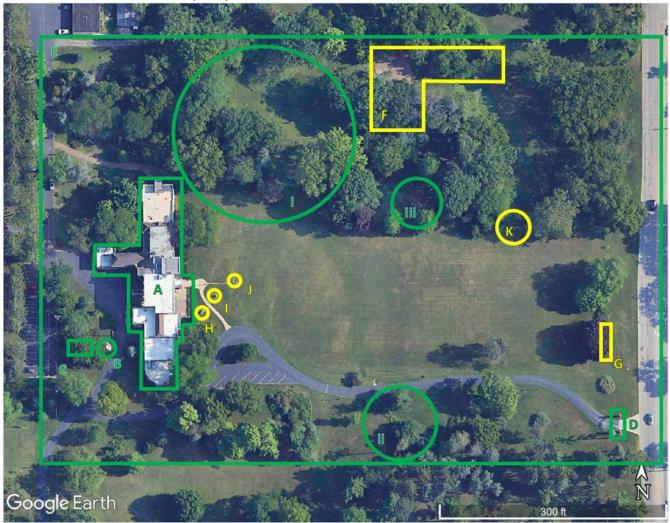
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Theosophical Society in America Headquarters
Name of Property DuPage County, Illinois
County and State
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 6: Site Plan, Current Aerial (2023)



#### **Historic Boundary / Setting in Green**

#### **Contributing Resources in Green:**

(dotted lines indicate resources post-dating this aerial)

- A. TSA Headquarters (1926)
- B. Pump House (1926)
- C. Root Cellar (1928)
- D. Entry Arch (1940)
- E. TSA Headquarters Campus
  - i. Besant Grove (1932)
  - ii. Sellon Grove (1932)
  - iii. Garden of Remembrance (1939)

#### GoogleEarth, 05/19/2023 imagery.

#### Non-Contributing Resources in Yellow:

(dotted lines indicate resources post-dating this aerial)

- F. Tennis Courts (1937)
- G. Main Street Sign (1981)
- H. Slant (ca 1999)
- I. Tantric Circle (ca 1999)
- J. Flagpole (1926, replaced 2007)
- K. Peace Pole (2011)

Property name: Theosophical Society in America Headquarters Illinois, County: DuPage

Figure 7: Aerial view, facing west (ca 1950).



Figure 8: Main façade during construction, facing southwest (1927).



Property name: Theosophical Society in America Headquarters Illinois, County: DuPage

Figure 9: Secondary façade during construction, facing southeast (1927).



Figure 10: Gary United Methodist Church, 224 N. Main St., Wheaton.



Property name: Theosophical Society in America Headquarters Illinois, County: DuPage

Figure 11: St. Michael Parish School, 314 S. Williow Ave. (historic building at 311 S. Wheaton Ave.) Wheaton.



Figure 12: St. Paul Lutheran Church, 515 S. Wheaton Ave., Wheaton.



Figure 13: Trinity Episcopal Church, 130 N. West St., Wheaton.



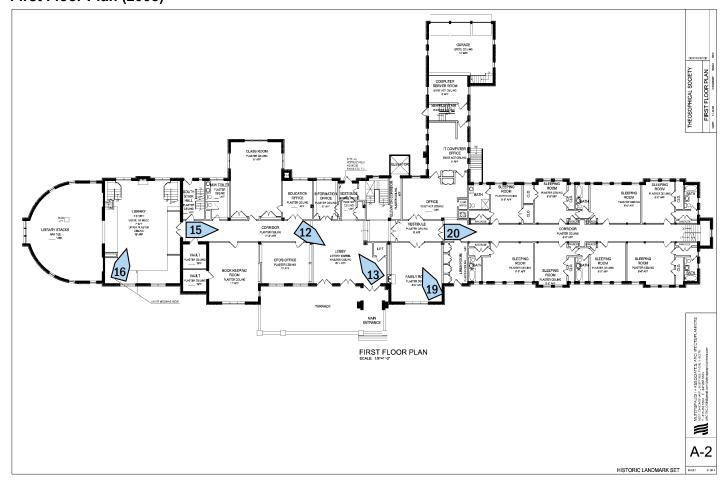
Figure 14: Whittier Elementary School, 218 W. Park Ave., Wheaton.



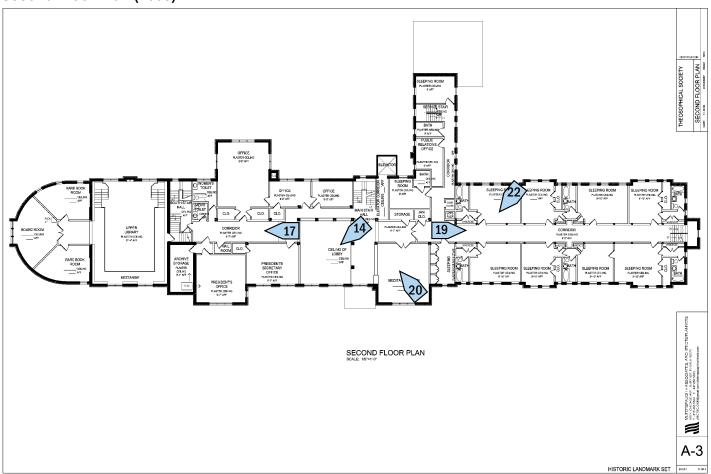
### **Exterior Photo Locations**



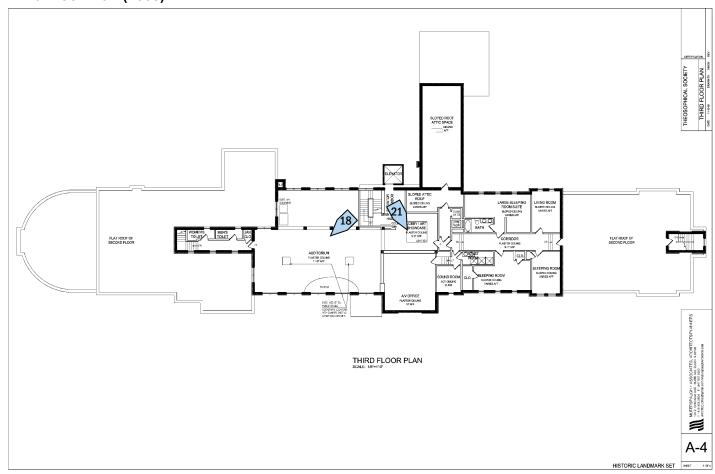
# **Interior Photo Locations** First Floor Plan (2008)



### Second Floor Plan (2008)



### Third Floor Plan (2008)



TSA Headquarters, Exterior Views

Photo 1 of 35: Main façade, facing northwest.



Photo 2 of 35: Entry Arch, facing northwest.



Photo 3 of 35: Central pavilion, facing northwest.



Photo 4 of 35: Main entrance, facing west.



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Photo 10 of 35: West façade facing east.



Photo 11 of 35: West façade facing northeast.



**TSA Headquarters, Interior Views** 

Photo 12 of 35: Reception Hall, facing northeast (4/15/2024).



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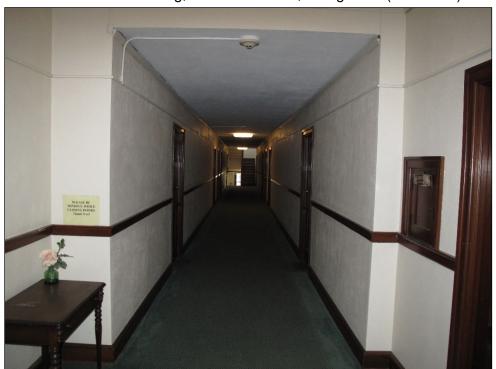


Photo 20 of 35: North wing, second floor meditation room, facing southwest (4/15/2024).



Photo 21 of 35: North wing, art gallery, facing northeast (4/15/2024).



Photo 22 of 35: North Wing, Room 9, representative living space facing southwest (4/15/2024).



## **Contributing Resources**

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**Photo 35 of 35:** Peace Pole, facing north (4/15/2024).

