

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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

For HCRS use only  
received  
date entered

10/31/80

**1. Name**

historic Akron YMCA Building  
and/or common Akron Area YMCA Central Branch

**2. Location**

street & number 80 W. Center Street \_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Akron \_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 14 (John Seiberling)  
state Ohio code 039 county Summit code 153

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
___ district	___ public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
___ site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
		___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			___ private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Social

**4. Owner of Property**

name Summit County Young Men's Christian Association  
street & number 80 W. Center Street  
city, town Akron \_\_\_ vicinity of state Ohio 44308

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Summit County Recorder's Office  
street & number 175 S. Main Street  
city, town Akron state Ohio

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Akron Historic Landmark Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no  
date 1978 \_\_\_ federal \_\_\_ state \_\_\_ county  local  
depository for survey records Dept. of Planning, City of Akron 166 S. High Street  
city, town Akron state Ohio

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	(addition)	

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

This massive 16-story Art Deco building occupies nearly all of a central city block and is one of the most distinctive features of Akron's skyline.

Erected in 1930-31, it has a steel frame, poured-in-place concrete floors and an exterior of buff colored brick that is trimmed with terra cotta and limestone.

The tower exemplifies setback skyscraper design; the successively lower terraced wings are decorated with terra-cotta coping and string courses. Bracketed terra-cotta balconies project at the thirteenth floor on all four sides of the tower. Upper parapets have geometric ornaments of glazed tile in contrasting colors. The central pavilion has a ribbed pyramidal roof of tin-plated steel that is surmounted by a stack with chevron embellishments and neon "Y" emblems. The vertical lines of the tower's facade are emphasized by central tiers of steel sash windows that are slightly recessed and interspersed with decorative brickwork.

Spanning the facade between projecting five-story bays is a monumental entry. Faced with limestone, it has a string course of stylized shields and angular lines. The three large second story windows are arched in the Art Deco style and combine with the openings below to suggest an entry of three great arches. Carved panels under each of the second floor windows display the YMCA's triangular emblem, the Western Hemisphere and the Eastern Hemisphere.

Projecting wings to left and right of the main block are gymnasiums and have arched windows like those of the entry. The only exterior alteration is a six-story windowless addition to the southwest corner of the main block. Erected in 1957, it contains handball courts.

Interior design features of the building are unusual for one of its class and often reflect its Art Deco exterior. The Presidents' Room, a large first floor space, has leaded glass windows at both ends and a black marble fireplace framed by oak veneer paneling. Art Deco touches include the original overhead light fixtures, the ceiling's crazyquilt of plaster inlays and the terrazzo floor's bold geometric border. In the swimming pool area, walls are brightened and windows outlined with multicolored glazed tiles set in geometric patterns.

The building's most surprising feature is its northwest light court. Entered from the Presidents' Room, it is executed in Tudor style to the second story. Stepping into the space, a visitor finds himself in the enclosed courtyard of an English house with half-timbered upper story and leaded glass oriel window. Soaring above the shingled gables are the sharply contrasting brick walls of a modern skyscraper.

# 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 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 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 1930-31 Builder/Architect Clemmer-Noah Construction Co.  
Good & Wagner, architects

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

From its opening in 1931, the YMCA has been one of Akron's great landmarks. It is one of two downtown buildings that give Akron's skyline individuality and character. Together with the First National Tower, it sets the city clearly apart from others its size elsewhere in Ohio and the Midwest. Architects and architectural historians regard the YMCA as an outstanding example of the Art Deco style.

The YMCA was designed by John R. Luxmore, chief draftsman for Good & Wagner, Akron's foremost architectural firm in the 1920s. Other buildings by G&W include Akron's Municipal Building, Portage Country Club, and "The Anchorage," a residence that is second only to Stan Hywet Hall among local houses done in the Tudor style.

Planned as the finest YMCA in Ohio, the Akron building was completed at a cost of \$1,260,000. It opened on March 10, 1931 but was not officially dedicated until August 4th, when a world conference of YMCA leaders was being held in Cleveland. Two thousand delegates to the conference came to Akron for the dedication ceremonies.

The Akron YMCA was organized in 1870. The association's program consisted initially of religious meetings and lecture courses that were held in rented rooms. A night school, Akron's first, began about 1881. An expansion of programs in 1886 resulted in the opening of a gymnasium on the third floor of a downtown office building. Not until 1904 did the YMCA move into a building expressly designed for its use. That structure, at the southeast corner of Main and State streets, was fully equipped (gymnasium, swimming pool, residence rooms) and served the organization until outgrown in the late 1920s. It was demolished so that a hotel could be erected on the site.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Karl H. Grismer, Akron and Summit County  
(Akron, Ohio 1952), 433-434, 618

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property one

Quadrangle name Akron West

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	7	4	5	6	0	5	0	4	5	4	7	5	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Occupying an entire city block, the nominated property is bounded on the north by Center Street, on the west by Bowery Street, on the south by State Street, and on the east by Water Street.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title William V. Wallace, Jr., Consultant

organization date February 1980

street & number 282 Somerset Road telephone 216/867-5037

city or town Akron state Ohio 44313

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

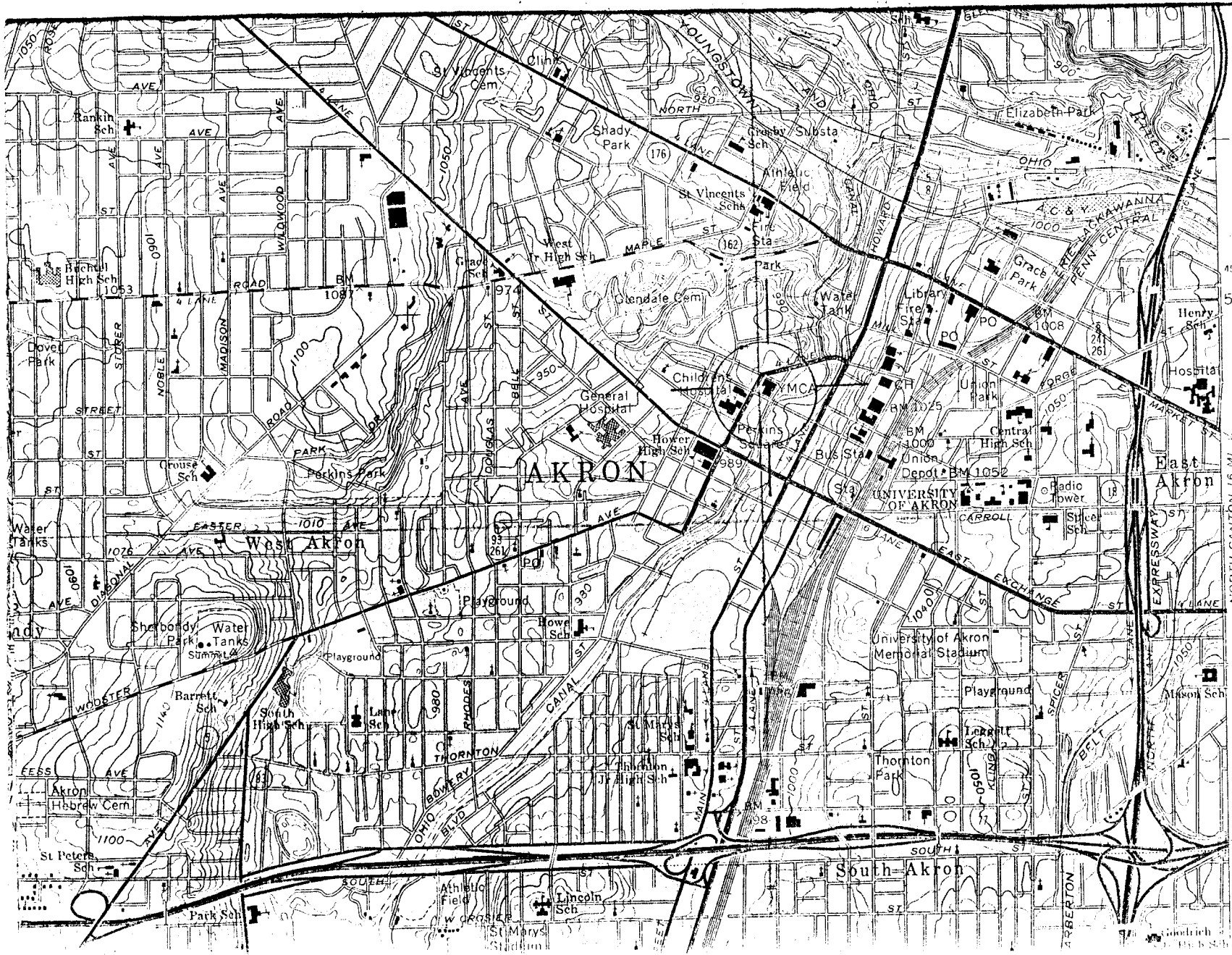
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*David L. Reed*

title SHPO date 7/1/80

For HCRS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
date  
Keeper of the National Register  
Attest: date  
Chief of Registration



Akron YMCA  
 Building  
 Akron, Summit Cou  
 17 456/050 East  
 4547/590 North

4546  
 (AKRON EAST) T  
 4766 III SW N Z  
 897  
 18

# Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board

November 19, 1980

Summit County Young Men's  
Christian Association  
80 West Center Street  
Akron, Ohio 44308

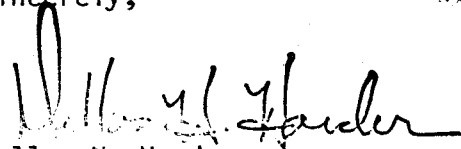
Dear Sirs:

I am pleased to inform you that the Akron YMCA Building, 80 West Center Street, Akron, has been entered in the National Register of Historic Places by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior.

The nomination was made in connection with a state plan to identify and document prehistoric and historic places in Ohio which qualify for National Register status under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. All nominations are approved by the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

Enclosed is information explaining the purposes and goals of the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,



Dallas H. Harder  
State Historic Preservation  
Officer

DHH:DAS:djd  
enclosures  
xc: Mayor of Akron  
NEFCO  
Eric Johannesen, RPO

**Ohio Historic Preservation Office**  
**Ohio Historical Center I-71 & 17th Avenue Columbus, Ohio 43211 (614) 466-8727**

# Ohio Historic Preservation Office

## National Register of Historic Places File Checklist

The following materials are contained in this file of the National Register form for:

Name: Akron YMCA Building

County: Summit

Original National Register of Historic Places nomination form

Multiple Property Nomination form

Photograph(s)

Photograph(s) (copies)

USGS map(s)

USGS map(s) (copies)

Sketch map(s)/figure(s)/exhibit(s)

Correspondence

Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_