

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

DEPARTMENT OF
DEVELOPMENT

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

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

1. Name of Property

Historic name West High School

Other name Starling Junior High School, Starling Middle School

2. Location

Address 120 S. Central Avenue Zip Code 43222

3. Historic Preservation Officer Certification

As the designated authority under the Columbus City Code Chapter 3116 and 3117, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Columbus Register of Historic Properties and meets the procedural requirements set forth in Columbus City Code Chapter 3117. In my opinion, the property or properties ☒ meet(s)

☐ does not meet the Columbus Register criteria. I recommend that this property or properties be considered significant

☒ locally ☐ nationally ☐ statewide.

Historic Preservation Officer  Date 1/25/22

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

Historic Resources Commission Chair  Date 1/25/22

4. Columbus City Council Certification

I hereby certify that this property or properties is/are:

☐ entered in the Columbus Register.

☐ determined not eligible for the Columbus Register.

☐ removed from the Columbus Register

☐ other, (explain) _____

Signature of the City Clerk _____ Date _____

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

Historic Preservation Officer _____ Date _____

Name of property West High School

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check all boxes that apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public – local
- ☐ public – State
- ☐ public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

<i>Contributing</i>	<i>Non-contributing</i>	
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	<i>Total</i>

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the Columbus Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

EDUCATION:School

Current Functions

VACANT/ NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:Neoclassical

Materials

Stone

foundation

Brick

walls

Asphalt Shingle/EDPM

walls

roof

other

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Columbus Register Criteria

- ☐ A. The design or style of the property's exterior and/or interior is of significance to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state or nation.
- ☐ B. The property is closely and publicly identified with a person who has significantly contributed to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.
- ☒ C. The property is identified as a significant work of an architect, artisan, engineer, landscape architect or builder whose individual work has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.
- ☐ D. The property demonstrates significant craftsmanship in architectural design, detail, or use of materials.
- ☐ E. The property is closely and publicly identified with an event, or series of events, which has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

Period or Periods of Significance

1908-1929

Significant Date or Dates

Significant Person or Persons

(Complete if Criterion 2 is marked)

Architect/Builder

David Riebel

Howard Dwight Smith

Criteria Considerations

(select box if applicable.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See Continuation Sheets

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

See Continuation Sheets

Primary location of additional data

- ☐ Columbus Historic Preservation Office ☐ University
- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office ☒ Other

Name of repository Columbus Metropolitan Library

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 1.824

Verbal Boundary Description

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

See Continuation Sheets

Boundary Justification

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

*See Continuation Sheets***11. Form Prepared By:**Name/Title Wendy Hoge Naylor & Diana WellmanOrganization Naylor Wellman, LLCStreet Address 92 E. Washington StreetTelephone 440-247-8319E-mail address naylor@naylorwellman.comDate 1/25/22City Chagrin Falls Zip Code: 44022 (form zip code tied to page 1)State _____ Zip Code 43222**12. Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

Photographs (Representative digital and 4" x 6", black and white or color prints of the property, or properties, or historic district.)

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

13. Property Owner

(Use Continuation Sheets to list additional property owners.)

Name/Title Anne Little, Woda Cooper Companies, Inc., VP of Development & Associate General CounselStreet Address 500 N. Front StreetTelephone 614-396-0027City ColumbusState OHZip Code 43215E-mail address alittle@wodagroup.comDate 12/17/22

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

Summary Paragraph

West High School is located at 120 S. Central Avenue on the west side of the city of Columbus, on Franklin County Parcel #010-066699-00 with a lot size of 1.824 acres. The 1908 Neoclassical style public high school with 1926 rear addition is located on the east side of S. Central Avenue. The school building is nestled within a residential neighborhood between W. State Street to the north and W. Town Street to the south, with Brehl Avenue to the rear east. West High School was converted to Starling Junior High School in 1929, when a new West High was constructed at 179 S. Powell Avenue. A 1955 International style Starling Junior High School south gymnasium and auditorium annex was added after acquisition of a separate parcel and demolition of row houses to the south of the historic West High School building parcel.¹ (Historic Images, Figures 1-3) The 1955 south annex is attached to the 1908/26 high school by a one-story hyphen connector at the south entry and is not included within the historic boundary of this West High School nomination. Starling Junior High School was later converted to Starling Elementary School which closed when the 2012 Starling Elementary School, 145 S. Central Avenue was constructed across the street. West High School has grass lawns with several trees at the façade west side and is surrounded by city sidewalk on the north, east and west elevations. A concrete sidewalk and stone steps with stone rail lead to the facade central entry. The north and east portions of the lot have asphalt paved parking and play areas which are partially enclosed by chain link fence. The school has been vacant since at least 2014.

Narrative Description

EXTERIOR (Photos 1-13) (Historic Images, Figures 1,3,6,7,9-15-19,20-22)

The 1908 Neoclassical T-plan public high school was designed by first City of Columbus Public School architect David Riebel.² (Photo 1) The 1926 rear addition added a cafeteria, sewing and mechanical drawings rooms, five classrooms and two locker rooms, designed by City of Columbus Public School

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1921-22, 1951; *Plot Plan. An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools.

² *Columbus Dispatch*, 25 March 1906, 23 June 1908.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

architect Howard Dwight Smith.³ (Photo 12) A 1955 International style auditorium and gym annex is connected to the south side by a one-story hyphen connector.

The three-story Neoclassical blond brick West High School is a tripartite and bilateral symmetrical design with slighting projecting central and end bays at the façade and rear elevations. The 1908 portion of the building rests on a raised rusticated limestone basement with water table lined with symmetrically placed multi-paned windows. Segmental, flat and pointed arch multi-paned windows compose first and second floor bays. (Photos 1-6; Historic Images, Figures, 6,9-11, 12,15,17) An elaborate painted galvanized metal cornice extends into wide roof eaves consisting of classic detailing including triglyphs, dentils, and paterae. (Photos 4,9,10) The 1908 (West) façade prominent central projecting front gabled three-bay portion of the building is composed of central entry below spandrel panels and transom with cut stone surround and flanking paired multi-pane windows with simple stone sill brackets. (Photos 3,5) Historic Images show that the paired wood panel double door entry and glass transom have been replaced. (Historic Images, Figures 7,13,16) A contemporary metal letter cut “STARLING MIDDLE SCHOOL” sign is mounted above the entry. Segmental arch window openings with sidelights, infilled arch transoms and stone surround with keystone are connected by a stone stringcourse to the second floor. The cornice pattern is carried into the gable end above, with central louvred vent. Eight bay wings with projecting end bays and hipped roof bookend the central portion of the building. (Photos 2,5) The 1908 north side elevation mirrors the façade with central entry with cut stone surround flanked by three jack arch windows. A paired window opening resides at the second floor above the central entry with infilled transom and stone segmental with keystone arch resting on plinths. (Photo 13) The 1908 south elevation mimics the north elevation except for a one-story 1955 blond brick hyphen connector which replaces the central entry and connects to the 1955 annex. (Photos 7,8) Slender brick rectangular chimneys with stone and metal caps are situated with two on each 1908 wing roof. Historic images show 1908 segmental roof dormers on the façade and side elevations which have been removed. (Historic Images, Figures 6,9,10,11) Windows have stone sills and lintels at the first floor. Second floor window headers align with the cornice.

The three-story 1926 rear east addition is rectangular in plan and simpler in design repeating the classical tripartite composition with low pitch hipped roof. (Historic Images, Figure 18) The raised basement is composed of blond brick with rusticated limestone water table delineated by a soldier course brick and

³ *Ground, First, Second Floor Plans. An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools; *Columbus Dispatch* 20 June 1925.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

limestone string course. The first and second floors are composed of symmetrical window bays with a simple blind panel cornice pattern. (Photo 12) The 1926 addition has three primary entries, each with cut stone surround and entablature supported by scrolled brackets. The south entry entablature is inscribed with “EXPERIENCE IS THE ONLY GENUINE KNOWLEDGE.” (Photo 11) Masonry stairs lead to a 1926 rear east entry with entablature inscribed with “HAPPY IS THE MAN THAT FINDETH WISDOM.” (Historic Images, Figure 19) The 1926 north entry entablature is inscribed with “KNOWLEDGE COMES BUT WISDOM LINGERS.” Two slender brick rectangular chimneys with stone and metal caps mimicking the 1908 addition are situated on the east portion of the roof. Windows have stone sills. Second floor window headers are aligned with the cornice.

All windows on the 1908 and 1926 portions of the building are vinyl replacement. First floor windows are covered with chain link security screens. Two free-standing one-story pre-fab CMU and aggregate stone utility buildings with metal man door and flat roof are situated just to the south of the 1926 south elevation. (Photo 8) Two blond brick one-story mechanical rooms are adjacent to the north elevation of the 1926 and west elevation of the 1908 portions of the building.

The one-story 1955 International style Starling Junior High School blond brick gymnasium and auditorium annex is connected to the south elevation of the 1908 West High School portion of the building by a one-story blond brick hyphen. The International style addition does not demonstrate the significance of the West High School which is being nominated as an excellent example of Neoclassical style public school architecture designed by David Riebel, the first architect for Columbus City School District Board of Education and as one of four high schools constructed during first Columbus Public Schools building campaign. The 1955 Starling Junior High School addition is not included within the historic West High School parcel and boundary of this nomination. The parcel was acquired in the 1950s and is not a part of the historic boundary of West High School. (See Boundary Map; Historic Images, Figures 1-3)

INTERIOR (Photos 14-28) (Historic Images, Figure 14,20-22)

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

The 1908 original T-plan portion of the building was designed with a north-south corridor and central first floor auditorium-gymnasium, which was altered in 1955.⁴ (Historic Images, Figure 21). The extant north-south corridor runs the length of the building with open paired switch back stairs at the north, south and west façade entries to the building. The corridor has vinyl flooring, plaster walls with contemporary lockers and acoustic dropped ceiling, concealing the pressed tin ceiling above. (Photos 16,17, 24,25). Tall wood panel classroom entry doors with painted over glass transom and contemporary school lockers line the corridor. (Photo 14,15,26) Classrooms are composed of hard wood plank and linoleum flooring, wood wainscoting, coat and storage closets, and pressed tin ceilings some of which has been replaced or covered over with suspended or applied acoustical tile ceiling. (18-20, 27) The 1908 auditorium (Historic Images, Figure 14) and gymnasium were repurposed in 1955 for specialized classroom use with completion of the 1955 auditorium-gymnasium south addition.

The 1926 rear addition to the school was designed by architect Howard Dwight Smith and included a mechanical and electrical system update, a cafeteria, sewing and mechanical drawing rooms, and two locker rooms, five classrooms on each of the first and second floor.⁵ (Historic Images, Figures 20-22). The 1926 north-south corridor runs parallel to the 1908 corridor with open switch back stairs with solid reinforced concrete rail at each end and vinyl floors. (Photos 21,23,28) Multipaned glass and wood panel classroom entry doors and contemporary school lockers line the east side of the corridor. (Photos 21,28) Classrooms exhibit vinyl tile, finished plaster walls and ceilings and blackboards. (Photo 22) The 1926 kitchen and cafeteria areas exhibit vinyl floors, plaster walls and ceiling, and square plaster finished columns. The auditorium was remodeled in 1955 to house classrooms at the first and second floor and a central east-west corridor connecting the 1908 and 1926 portions of the building.

The building operated as a public school until closing in 2012 and remains in good condition. Peeling paint and plaster deterioration are noted throughout. Historic wood framed blackboards have largely been replaced, painted over or removed but are noted in corner classrooms. Contemporary surface mounted

⁴ *First Floor Plan, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925.

⁵ *Ground Floor, First Floor Plan, Second Floor Plan. An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

light fixtures and dropped acoustic tile ceiling tiles exist. Radiators and mechanical systems remain in portions of the building.

INTEGRITY

West High School retains a high degree of historic integrity as a Neoclassical style school designed by David Reibel. The school exhibits **integrity of design** in both exterior and interior architectural elements through classic ornamentation and detailing. The 1926 rear east addition designed by Howard Dwight Smith retaining Neoclassical elements. The 1926 addition is simpler in design exhibiting smaller massing, scale and profile in relationship to the 1908 portion of the building. It maintains a clear visual setback from the street and the original 1908 school façade with minimal alteration to the form of the 1908 building. Although Howard Dwight Smith made significant contributions to the architecture of Columbus schools, his 1926 rear addition West High School design is secondary to his other accomplishments during his term as second Columbus Public Schools architect. The International style 1955 gymnasium and auditorium annex with hyphen connector was designed by Columbus School architect Edward Kromer and represents a later 1950s Columbus City Schools building campaign. Although the hyphen provides a clear delineation, it does not exhibit the classical details found in the Reibel and Smith design. The 1950s campaign is best expressed by the design and construction of six elementary schools to meet the demand of the post-World War baby boom. These buildings include: the 1950 Fairmoor Elementary School, 3281 Mayfair Park Place (demolished); 1950 Indian Springs Elementary School, 50 E. Henderson Rd.; 1950 North Linden Elementary School, 1718 E. Cooke Rd.; 1951 Weinland Park Elementary School, 211 7th Avenue; 1951-1953 Glenmont Deshler Elementary School, 470 Glenmont Avenue; and, 1952-1954 Franklinton Beatty Park Elementary School, 519 Trevitt Street (demolished).⁶

The retention of **historic fabric, materials, and craftsmanship** of West High School is evident in the Neoclassical exterior features, stonework, entrances, elaborate decorative roof eaves, cornice and window limestone surrounds. Although the windows are not original, they retain the historic fenestration pattern and stone details conveying the historic design. Interior elements demonstrate the retention of **historic fabric, materials, and craftsmanship** with school design elements such as circulation pattern, stairs, classroom layout and materials, hardwood floors, plaster walls, plaster and pressed tin ceilings, historic

⁶ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, *Historic Schools in the Columbus Public Schools District*. Columbus: Columbus Landmarks Foundation, April 2002, 14,16,17.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 7

Zip Code 43222

window and door trim, wood wainscot, and coat and storage closets. Although classroom and auxiliary room use changed overtime to reflect contemporary educational practices, the historic architectural school features remain. The school remains in its historic **location** and original **setting** within the residential neighborhood. The Neoclassical architectural language retains the historic **Feeling** and **Association** as noted in historic drawings and photographs of both exterior and interior architectural elements.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The 1908 West High School is significant at a local level under **Criterion C** in the area of **Architecture** as an excellent example of Neoclassical style public-school architecture representing the work of David Riebel, the first architect for Columbus City School District Board of Education from 1893 to 1922. West High School was constructed during the first Columbus Public Schools building campaign which was launched to meet increased demand for school facilities due to mandatory school attendance laws and population growth. West High was the final of four high schools at the north, south, east and west quadrants of the city constructed during the campaign. It is an excellent and only example of a Neoclassical style high school designed by renowned school architect David Riebel. A compatible 1926 rear addition was designed by Howard Dwight Smith, Columbus Public School second architect from 1922-1929, however the building derives its significance from its original Neoclassical style architectural design by David Riebel. The 1955 International style gymnasium and auditorium annex with hyphen connector was designed by Columbus School architect Edward Kromer representing a later 1950s Columbus City Schools building campaign and is not included within the boundary of this nomination.

The period of significance dates to construction of West High School in **1908 and continues to 1929** when the building was converted for use as Starling Junior High School when a new West High School, 179 S. Powell Avenue, was constructed.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Taxation beginning in 1825 allowed for ownership of public-school buildings by a centralized school board, instead of placing the burden upon early struggling and privately owned schools. Mandatory attendance laws and population growth in the City of Columbus between 1880 and 1920 necessitated an organized public school system and building program. At first, the school board hired individual architects to design each school building, which included local architect David Riebel. Appointment of Riebel as the first City of Columbus public school architect in 1893 allowed the school board to not only manage design and construction of new public-school buildings, but to increase construction efficiencies and reduce costs. David Riebel's school designs "define one of the golden ages in the history of Columbus Public School buildings: large, impressive, three-story masonry buildings often punctuate[d] with central towers, and rich use of

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

materials creating color, texture, and variety in the buildings.”¹ Riebel designed almost 40 Columbus School buildings during his tenure, of which 13 are extant.² West High School was built during the first Columbus Public Schools building campaign and is the only Neoclassical high school designed by David Riebel.

History of Columbus Public School Buildings

The first Columbus schools were privately owned and operated with the first log cabin school opening in 1814 on the east side of the Scioto River. Between 1814 and 1816, several other local schools opened on a voluntary basis but quickly closed. A group of 20 community members organized in 1820 to try again and built a school near Third and State Streets, but failed to draw attendance.³ In 1821, the Ohio General Assembly passed legislation requiring the establishment of school districts, encouraged election of a school committee and urged taxation for the construction of school facilities. While public schools continued to struggle, private schools provided opportunities for education on a small scale. A new law in 1825 encouraged taxation of property owners thereby assuming the financial burden of establishing and maintaining schools. In 1826, the first public schools opened in Columbus and Franklinton. Over the following decade, public and private schools alike would open and fail as enthusiasm for education was lacking. Many parents were illiterate and did not see a benefit of education, instead seeking value in a working life.⁴ After a convention of teachers expressed the need for universal education, a state superintendent of schools was hired in 1838 and a public school district was formally established, although exceedingly limited in resources. While this was a major advancement in education advocacy, the state did not require attendance and teachers were inadequately compensated and trained.⁵ The Columbus and Franklinton school districts merged into a single district in 1838 despite continued challenges. Within five years, a total of 15 public schools were operating in the

¹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, *Historic Schools in the Columbus Public Schools District*. Columbus: Columbus Landmarks Foundation, April 2002, 5. The Working Group included representatives from Columbus Landmarks Foundation, SHPO, the City of Columbus, historic preservation consultant Kathy Mast Kane, architect Tom Matheny AIA, and *Educational Architecture in Ohio* author Dr. Virginia McCormick.

² Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 12-19; Heyl School, 760 Reinhard Avenue was demolished in ca. 2015, Champion School, 1270 Hawthorne Ave., was demolished in 2018.

³ Sauer, Doreen Uhas, “A History of Columbus Schools: 1806-1912,” *Teaching Columbus*, 2. Available at , <http://www.teachingcolumbus.org/a-history-of-columbus-schools-1812-1912.html>. Accessed 12/9/21.

⁴ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 3.

⁵ Sauer, 2.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

city, serving approximately 700 students. Attendance was mandated by this time but not enforced with an estimated 900 students remaining truant.

The first Columbus school board was established by legislation in 1845, allowing the district to develop a system of schools with consistent regulations and directives. In 1847, Dr. Asa D. Lord was hired as the first superintendent of schools, reportedly becoming the first superintendent west of the Allegheny Mountains and the second in the United States. During his nine years of employment he organized the first public high school in Columbus, assisted in the creation of the Ohio State Teachers Association, adopted the graded system, and expanded class level offerings to include primary through high school.⁶ The district adopted a graded system with Union schools offering two, three or five classes of primary, secondary, intermediate, grammar and high school residing in three buildings. These earliest public buildings were the North Building at Third and Long Streets, the Middle Building (High School) at Third and Rich Streets and the South Building at Third and Mound Streets. In 1852, the Sullivant School, 270 E. State Street, was built to serve as a centralized school. Almost ten years later, the first Central High School was built at the corner of Sixth and Broad Street. All of these buildings have been demolished ⁷

German and Irish immigration, along with a growing African American population mixed throughout the city, created an increased need for additional school and school buildings. With the advent of the Civil War in 1861, the first 1862 Central High School (demolished) opened in a new building at Sixth and East Broad, where it would stand as the only high school in Columbus for the next 20 years.⁸ Following the Civil War the Ohio General Assembly passed the first state law making school attendance compulsory for children between 8 and 14 years of age for at least 12 weeks.

By 1887, Ohio Legislature repealed all laws establishing separate schools for black students, although Columbus Public Schools had been desegregated since 1882. Columbus was progressive in this issue as the city felt it would have been more costly to operate and maintain separate schools for each race prior to this point. The greatest driving factor was the increasing population of African Americans throughout the city, which distributed the population out amongst varying schools. Local educational initiatives in 1890s in Columbus often mirrored the

⁶ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 3.

⁷ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 3.

⁸ Sauer, 7; Central High School, Columbus Memory. Demolished in 1928.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

Progressive era reforms at the state and national levels. These changes included an increasing professionalism in education, higher standards in curriculum and course offerings.⁹

The last decade of the nineteenth century brought dramatic growth and change to Columbus Public Schools, in part reflecting Progressive era initiatives and reforms in education. The population more than doubled from 51,647 in 1880 to 125,560 people by 1900.¹⁰ The period saw a growing professionalism in education, increasing standardization in curriculum and testing, changes in courses taught and new school designs. Columbus's longest serving superintendent, Dr. Jacob A. Shawan, was hired in 1889. During his 27 years as superintendent, enrollment grew from about 13,500 to 28,590 students. Contributing to this increase in student population was the 1889 compulsory school attendance law requiring all 8-14 years old children to attend at least 16 weeks of school and that illiterate children ages 14-16 attend half day or evening classes.¹¹ As both black and white population grew by a combined 60% by the time of desegregation, matched with stricter attendance laws, the number of students in schools grew exponentially. Another key reflection of education reform was school design and construction, and the need to manage an ambitious building program.

First Columbus Public School Architect David Riebel

As a result of this increase in students, Columbus's first major public school building campaign was undertaken. To address the large number of construction projects, David Riebel was hired as the first Columbus Public Schools architect in 1893. Since 1884, the district had in place a Superintendent of Buildings, but this appears to be the first reference to a position of architect. For the previous decade, local architects had been hired on a project basis when school facilities were to be constructed. This resulted in high commission costs which proved to be unsustainable with a rapidly growing student body.¹²

David Riebel (1855-1935) was born in Ontario, Canada to German parents. He became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1888 when he moved to Columbus, where he lived until his death at the age of 79 in 1935. He formed the architecture firm of Riebel & Sons with his sons

⁹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Group, 4.

¹⁰ U.S. Federal Population Census, 1880,1900.

¹¹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 4.

¹² Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 4

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

Elroy C. and Frederick with a business address at 33 North High Street.¹³ Riebel was experienced in many sectors of design work, including residences, churches, libraries, hotels, and factories in addition to his school commissions. He continued in private practice while also serving as school architect from 1893 to 1922. Notable non-education projects in Columbus include the Southern Hotel (NR# 82001458), the Seneca designed with architect Frank Packard (NR# 83004300), the Stoddard Block (NR#94000237, the Schlee-Kemmler Building (NR# 82001461) in addition to residences for D. Kelly, E.B. Gerlach, and W.A. Miller. In 1915, *The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder* considered the architectural firm of David Riebel & Sons to be the oldest and among the best architects in Columbus.¹⁴ Riebel had done work for the school district since 1891, and his appointment would enable the school system to manage design and construction increasing efficiency and reducing costs. He designed nearly 40 schools to meet demand with the population of Columbus growing almost three times in size from 88,150 in 1890 to 237,031 people in 1920 during his tenure.¹⁵

His public-school designs often reflected the influence of Greek and Roman classical styles mixed with current trends of Richardsonian Romanesque and Second Renaissance Revival design. These school buildings became focal points for their neighborhoods with a commanding presence, rising above the surrounding houses. This architectural presence reflected the growing importance of education and the school in the lives of children and parents at the time they were built. Likewise, it reflected the growing professionalism in the field of education. For the first time teachers could receive state certificates to validate their credentials. In 1907 the School of Education at The Ohio State University was formed, a college program to train teachers and administrators in education. The relationship that developed between OSU education faculty and Columbus Public Schools personnel would bring about important educational advances.¹⁶

The first Columbus Public School Board building campaign committed to four high school buildings covering the four quadrants of the city between 1897 and 1908. The 1897 Second Renaissance Revival East High School, 1400 Franklin Avenue (demolished) was designed by architect David Riebel. The 1898 Second Renaissance Revival South High School, 345 E.

¹³ *Columbus Dispatch*, 29 July 1935; Green Lawn, Columbus OH, Cemetery Records. Available at *Ancestry.com*; U.S. Federal Population Census, 1930.

¹⁴ "Architectural Work of D. Riebel," *The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder*, vol. 25, no. 4, April 1915, 13.

¹⁵ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 4; U.S. Federal Population Census 1890, 1920.

¹⁶ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 5.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

Deshler Ave. (NR #15000561) was designed by Riebel followed the next year. In 1901-02, David Riebel designed a 1901-02 25 room Second Renaissance Revival addition to North High School, 100 West 4th Street, which included an assembly hall and laboratories (Near Northside HD, NR #80003001) which remains with the earlier 1892-93 Romanesque Revival portion designed by architect Frank Packard (demolished).¹⁷ The following year in 1903, the Columbus School Board purchased the site for a new West High School, the subject of this nomination. In 1905, the school board resolved that during the next two years, construction of the Neoclassical West High School was a main objective with plans for the school designed by Riebel approved in 1906.¹⁸ The West High School building was completed in 1908 which the *Columbus Dispatch* announced on September 7, 1908 with the headline “Columbus’s Fourth High School to Go Into Commission for the First Time Tuesday” completing the building campaign goal of four schools in the north, south, east and west quadrants of the city. (Historic Images, Figures 4,5)

The first two decades of the twentieth century saw a continuation of Progressive era reforms and education theory that was reflected in Columbus Public Schools. Most noteworthy was the development of the first junior high school program, specially designed to offer a transition between elementary and high school. In 1910, the six-three-three system was adopted district wide - six years of elementary, three years of junior high and three years of high school. In 1908, Columbus Public schools opened the first junior high school in the United States, the new Indianola Junior High School, 140 E. 16th Street. The 1908 Indianola Junior High was designed by David Riebel.¹⁹ The early twentieth century brought a number of curriculum changes to public schools including the introduction of domestic science, manual training and physical education classes and innovations including electric lighting and built-in vacuum systems which affected school building design.²⁰

The creation of Junior Highs was also prompted in part to relieve severe overcrowding at the city’s high schools.²¹ As part of a second 1920s Columbus building campaign, four new North, South,

¹⁷ North High School, Columbus Memory.

¹⁸ “West High School is Observing 40th Anniversary.” *The Hilltop Record*, 1 November 1948. Vertical File, Columbus Schools, Columbus Public Library, 1.

¹⁹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 6.

²⁰ Columbus Landmarks Foundation, 6. McCormick, Virginia E. *Educational Architecture in Ohio*. Kent: The Kent State University Press.

²¹ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 5.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

East and West High Schools were constructed. The former high school buildings were converted to junior high schools. A new 1924 Jacobethan Revival North High School was designed by Columbus architect Frank L. Packard and the former 1892-93 North High School converted for use as Everett Junior High. A new 1923 Neoclassical style South High School was designed by Richards, McCarty & Bulford and the former 1898 South High School converted to Barrett Junior High. A new 1922 Neoclassical style East High School designed by Cleveland architects Howell & Thomas was completed and the former 1897 East High School converted to Franklin Junior High, which was later demolished. Finally, the 1929 Georgian Revival style West High School was designed by Columbus Public School architect Howard Dwight Smith and the former 1908 West High School, the subject of this nomination, was converted to Starling Junior High School. In addition, a fifth 1924 Neoclassical style Central High School, 75 S. Washington Blvd. (NR # 85000484) (demolished) was constructed designed by St. Louis architect William B Ittner

West High School and Neoclassical School Architecture by David Riebel

West High School is an excellent intact example of a Riebel designed Neoclassical style school, retaining key character defining features, predominately on the exterior, which convey its significance under Criterion C: Architecture. Although Howard Dwight Smith made significant contributions to the architecture of Columbus schools, his 1926 rear addition West High School design is secondary to his other accomplishments during his term as second Columbus Public Schools architect. After assuming Riebel's role as School Architect, Smith oversaw the second Columbus Public Schools Building campaign of the 1920s with construction of 16 new buildings between 1922 and 1929, including his designs of the 1929 West High School, 1924 Lincoln Park Elementary School, 1927 Neil Avenue School, 1929 Indianola Junior High School (NR# 80003000) and 1924 Fairwood Elementary School, all of which are far more representative of his work than his 1926 addition to the 1908 West High School.²²

West High School rests in the heart of the Franklinton neighborhood as a prominent and impressive three-story Neoclassical style masonry school building. The blond brick building reflects the sun highlighting the rich detail and classical tripartite design. According to a 2002 Columbus Landmarks Foundation survey, 13 Riebel designed schools remain standing in Columbus today. Riebel school architectural designs demonstrate a wide knowledge of early twentieth century styles including Romanesque Revival, Italianate, Second Renaissance Revival,

²² Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 12-16.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

Neoclassical and Richardson Romanesque.²³ West High School is the only Neoclassical high school remaining from his body of work.

West High School was completed in the same year as the Lakewood School fire in the Collinwood neighborhood of Cleveland on March 4, 1908 killing 172 children and two teachers who became trapped in the building.²⁴ Rieble responded the day after the Collinwood tragedy, stating that for any of the Columbus school buildings which have been erected under his supervision, he saw catastrophe as impossible,

*Not a door in these buildings opens inward...Some few of the inside doors, leading into rooms, in the older buildings may open inward but I know positively that not an outside door opens inward. The furnaces are arched over to make them fireproof, the hot air flues are lined with brick, the halls are plenty wide enough, every inside partition is brick, the ceilings are of steel. Even if a fire should start it should not burn rapidly enough the way the floors and walls are constructed to cut the children off. The Cleveland building was a brick shell filled with wood. I know none of the buildings I named [including West High School] are built that way.*²⁵

Reibel Neoclassical school designs changed to incorporate fireproof measures retaining the tripartite design and masonry construction, but implementing a strict rectangular plan, reinforced concrete flat roof and enclosed stairwells which appear in his post-1908 designs. The three-story red brick 1910 Heyl School, 760 Reinhard Avenue (demolished), exhibited the fireproof Neoclassical design retaining the tripartite design as a strict rectangular plan with flat roof, brick raised basement with stone quoining, stone cornice supported by brackets, flat roof and prominent stone colonnaded central entry. The only extant example of his post 1908 Neoclassical style designs is the 1912 Dana Avenue Elementary School, 309 Dana Avenue. The rectangular plan exhibits slighting projecting central and end bays reminiscent of his earlier school buildings. The Neoclassical style three story red brick school demonstrates a tripartite design with raised brick basement with stone quoining and water table and dentiled cornice below a flat roof. A raised segmental arch parapet inscribed with "Dana Ave. School" marks the entry, with matching raised parapets at end bays.

²³ Columbus Landmarks Foundation Working Group, 12-16.

²⁴ McCormick, 74.

²⁵ *Columbus Dispatch*, 5 March 1908.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

His extant pre-1908 Neoclassical school designs are more expressive exhibiting elaborate gable end designs with low pitched hipped roof, including the 1904 Reeb Elementary School, 280 Reeb Avenue. The three-story red brick Reeb Elementary School is rectangular in plan exhibiting characteristic slighting projecting central and end bays at the façade and rear elevations. The tripartite design is defined by the raised stone basement with water table and metal cornice resting on a stone stringcourse below wide roof eaves finished with dentils and scrolled brackets which continue into the center gable end with lunette window. A central entry with stone surround and elaborate scrolled brackets with bison heads support the entablature and segmental arch tripartite window. The 1908 Indianola Junior High School, 140 E. 16th Avenue, is another example. The three-story red brick building is rectangular in plan exhibiting characteristic slighting projecting central and end bays all finished with elaborate bracketed and dentiled cornice continuing into gable ends with red tile low pitched hipped roof. The tripartite design is defined by the raised brick basement with water table and cornice composed of stone stringcourse below wide roof eaves finished with dentils and scrolled brackets. An elaborate central tripartite two-story entry with classical stone columns and arched second floor window and balcony exhibit Romanesque Revival style with Neoclassical influences.

West High School is the only remaining and excellent example of Neoclassical style public high school design as interpreted by David Riebel. His design is reflected in his divergence to the original T-shaped plan accommodating the auditorium-gymnasium for high school use, with slighting projecting central and end bays at the façade and rear elevations characteristic of his Neoclassical designs. The blond brick building with tripartite design is defined by the raised limestone basement with water table along with cornice and wide roof eaves with elaborate dentiled and classical finishes extending into the central gable end above the main entry. Interior classrooms retain hard wood floors, wood wainscot and pressed tin ceilings. The 1926 rear addition designed by Howard Dwight Smith modernized the school.

Conclusion

West High School was converted to Starling Junior High School in 1929, when a new West High was constructed at 179 S. Powell Avenue. A 1955 International style Starling Junior High School south annex was added after acquisition of a separate parcel and demolition of row houses to the

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 8

Zip Code 43222

south of the historic West High School building parcel.²⁶ (Historic Images, Figures 1-3) The 1955 south annex is not included within the historic boundary of this West High School nomination. Starling Junior High School was later converted to Starling Elementary School which closed when the 2012 Starling Elementary School, 145 S. Central Avenue was constructed across the street.

West High School is an excellent example of public high school architecture designed by David Reibel for the Columbus Public Schools and is the only Neoclassical style high school remaining from Reibel's work for the school district under Criterion C. It represents the first building campaign era of the Columbus public schools as they evolved to address the growing demand for school buildings to address mandatory school attendance laws and the growing population. As one of four high schools, West High School, of the first public school building campaign, it is the only Neoclassical design.

²⁶ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1921-22, 1951; *Plot Plan. An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools.

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 9 Bibliography

Zip Code 43222

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Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 9 Bibliography

Zip Code 43222

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National Register

Central High School, 75 South Washington Boulevard, Columbus (NR #85000484)

East High School, 1500 East Broad Street, East Broad Street Historic District (NR #86003393)

Great Southern Hotel, 310 S. High Street, Columbus (NR# 82001458)

Indianola Junior High School, 420 E. 19th Street, Columbus (NR #80003000)

Near Northside HD (NR#80003001) North High School, (Everett Elementary) 100 W. 4th Street at Dennison Ave., Columbus

North High School, 100 Arcadia Avenue, Columbus (NR#87000984)

Schlee-Kemmler Building, 328 High Street, Columbus (NR# 82001461)

Seneca, The, 367 E. Broad Street, Columbus (NR# 83004300)

South High (Barrett School), 345 E. Deshler Ave., Columbus (NR#15000561)

Stoddard Block, 260 S. 4th Street, Columbus (NR#94000237)

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form



Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office
Name of Property West High School

Section Number: Section 10 Geographical Data

Zip Code 43222

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is situated on the north portion of Franklin County Parcel 010-066699-00 in the city of Columbus and state of Ohio. The boundary of the West High School historic resource follows the boundary of the historic West High School lot as defined by the 1922-11 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map and 1926 Plot Plan by Howard Dwight Smith and includes lots 78-86, 94-102 and lots 95 and 103 north of vacated alley, City of Columbus Ord. 346.53. (Historic Images, Figures 1,2) The historic lot is bound to the west by S. Central Avenue, to the north by W. State Street and to the east by Brehl Avenue. The south boundary terminates at the north side of the unnamed 15' vacated alley as delineated in the ALTA/NSPS Land Title Survey dated 10/28/21 (Historic Images, Figure 23).

Boundary Justification

The nominated boundary includes the property historically associated with the 1908/1926 West High School historic resource. The 1955 International style Starling Junior High School gymnasium and auditorium south annex is connected to the south elevation of the 1908 West High School portion of the building by a one-story hyphen. The 1955 addition was constructed outside the period of significance after acquisition of a separate parcel and demolition of row houses to the south of the historic West High School building parcel. The International style annex does not demonstrate the significance of the West High School which is being nominated as an excellent example of Neoclassical high school architecture designed by David Riebel, the first architect for Columbus City School District Board of Education and as one of four high schools constructed during first Columbus Public Schools building campaign. The 1955 Starling Junior High School annex is not included within the historic West High School lot and boundary of this nomination.

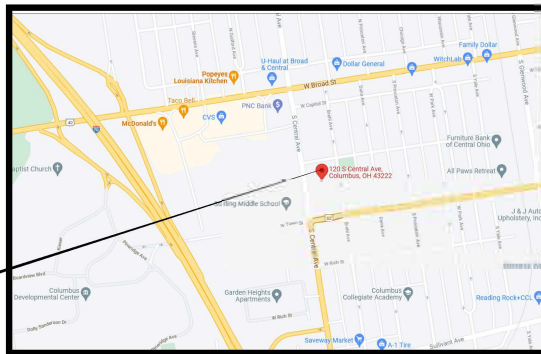
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

West High School
Franklin County, Ohio

Section number Additional Documentation - Location Map & Photo Key Page 2



LOCATION MAP



LEGEND

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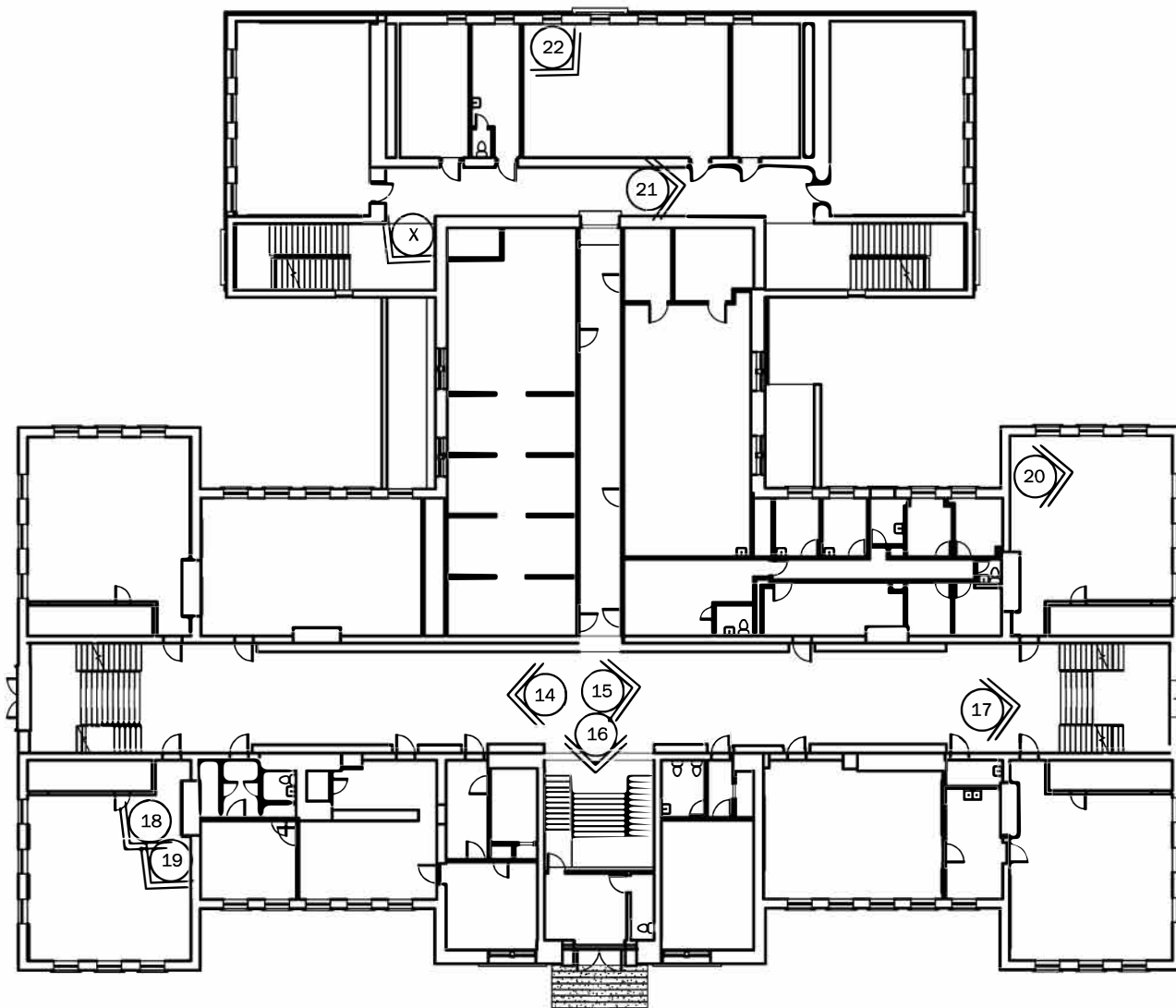
NRN BOUNDARY

010-066699-000 PARCEL NUMBER

PHOTO-KEY ARROW

December 2021

FIRST FLOOR PLAN



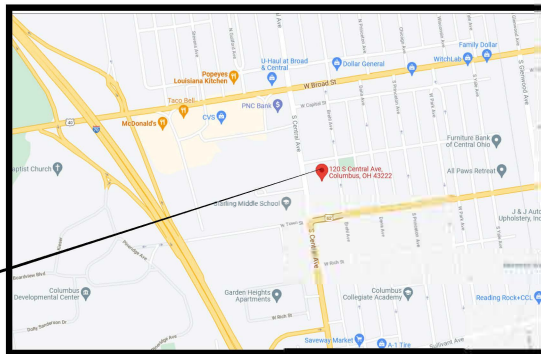
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

West High School
Franklin County, Ohio

Section number Additional Documentation - Location Map & Photo Key Page 3



LOCATION MAP



LEGEND



Not to Scale



NRN BOUNDARY

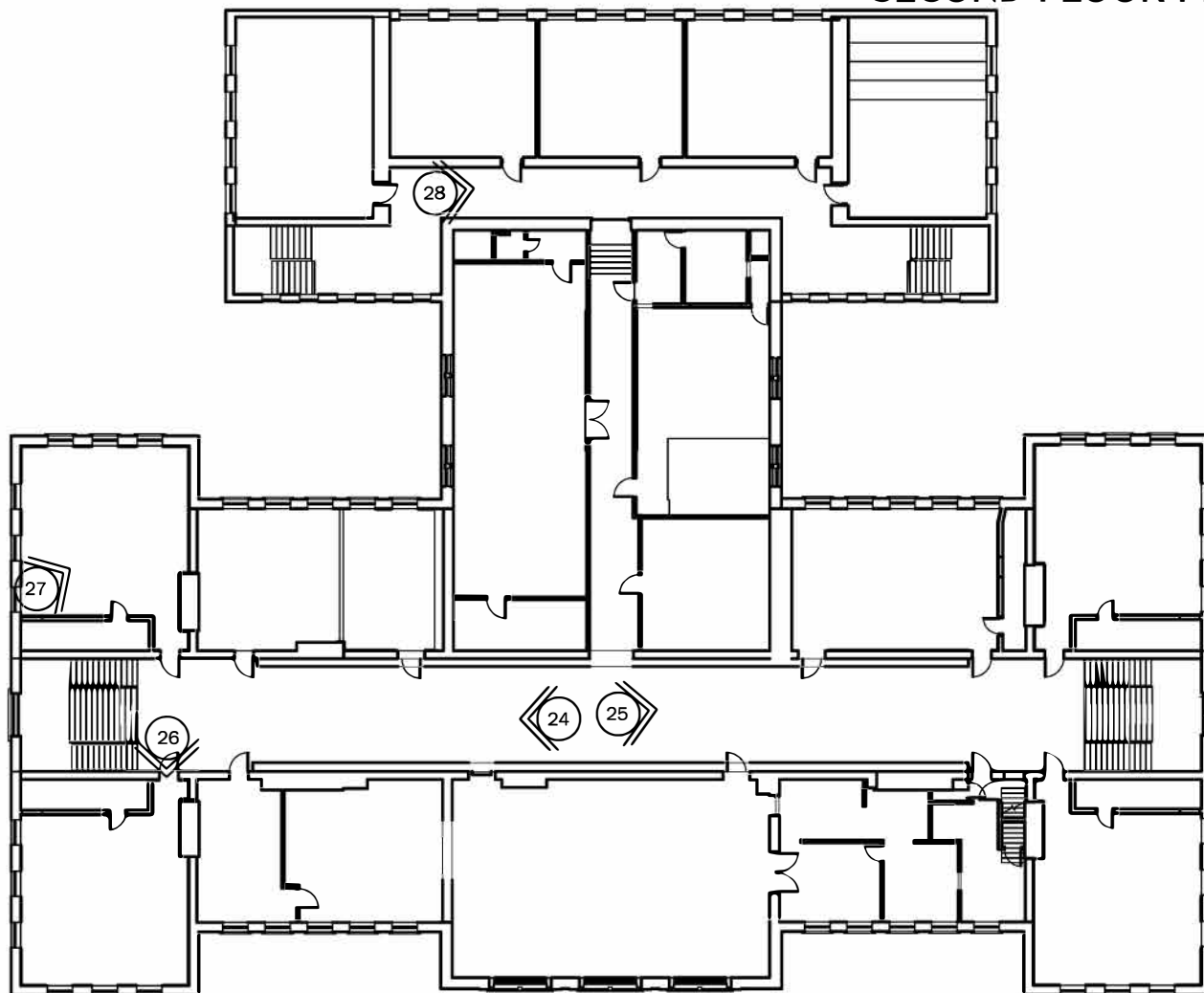
010-066699-000 PARCEL NUMBER



PHOTO-KEY ARROW

December 2021

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

West High School
Franklin County, Ohio

Section number Additional Documentation - Boundary

Page 4

LEGEND

Scale 1"=100'

1908-1926
NRN BOUNDARY

1955 ADDITION

010-066699-000 PARCEL NUMBER
(LOTS 78-109)

December 2021

SITE PLAN



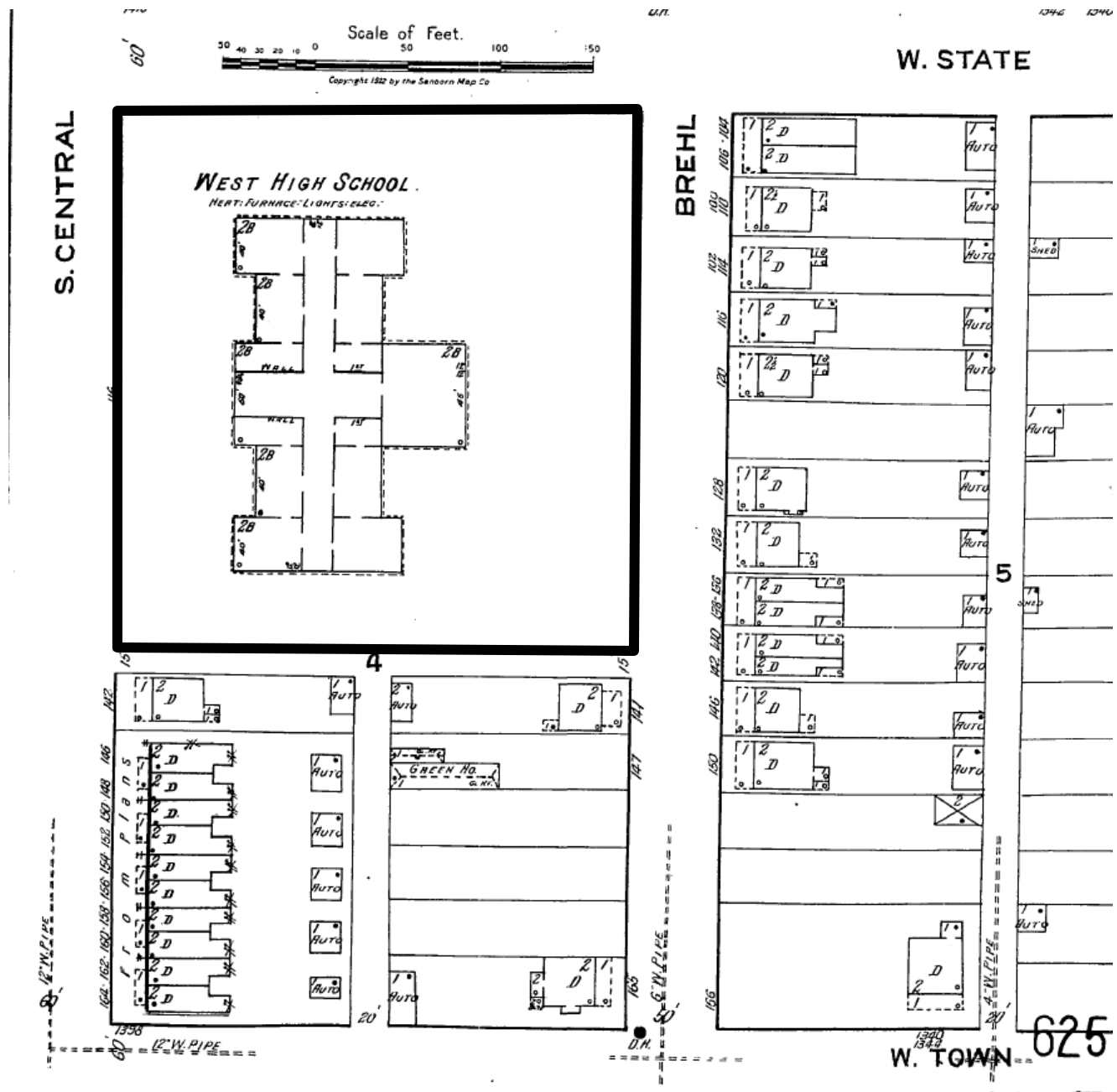
Columbus Register of Historic Properties
Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 1

Figure 1. West High School, 1921-22

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1921-22



Columbus Register of Historic Properties

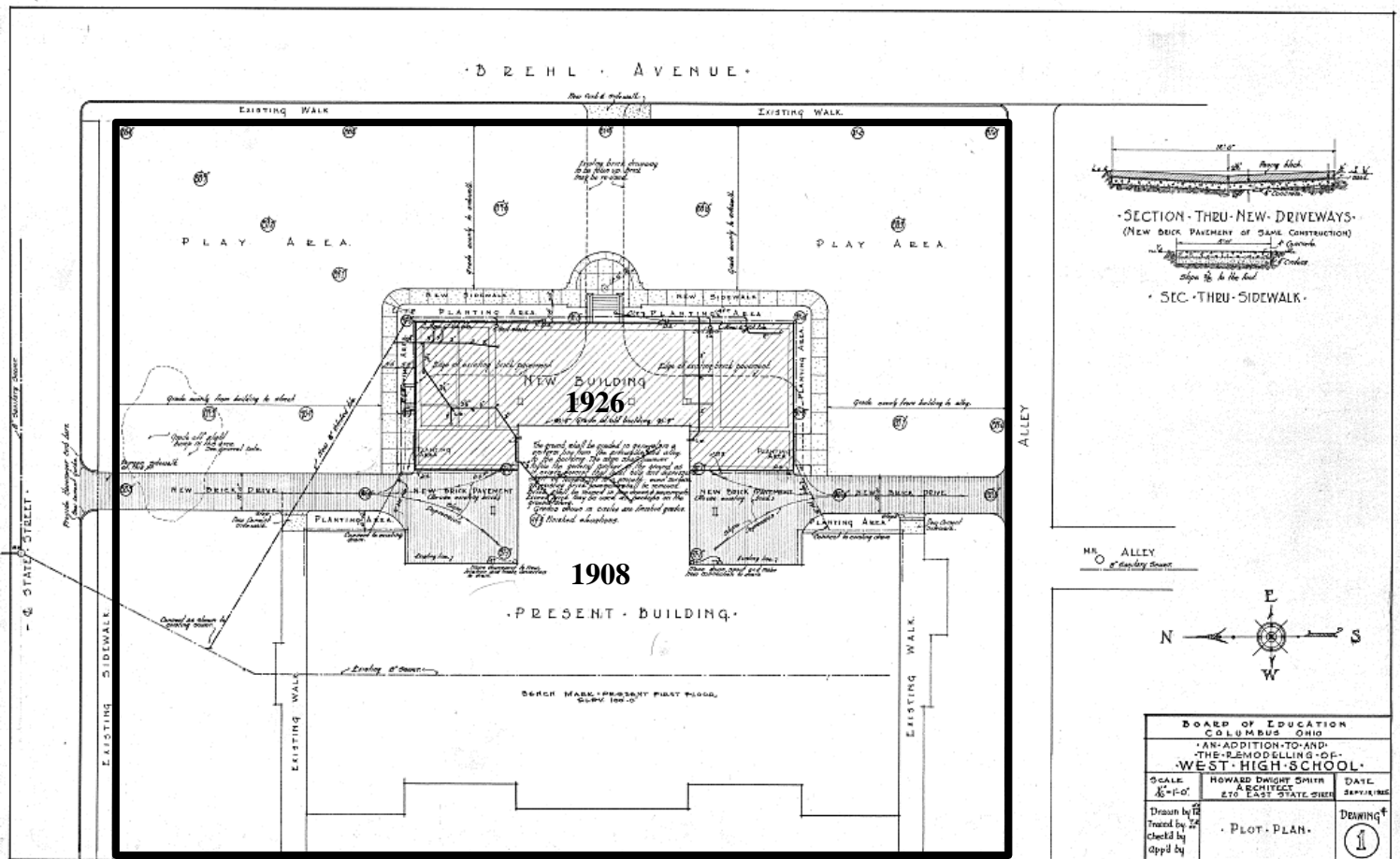
Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 2

Figure 2. West High School Plot Plan, 1925

Source: *Plot Plan, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools



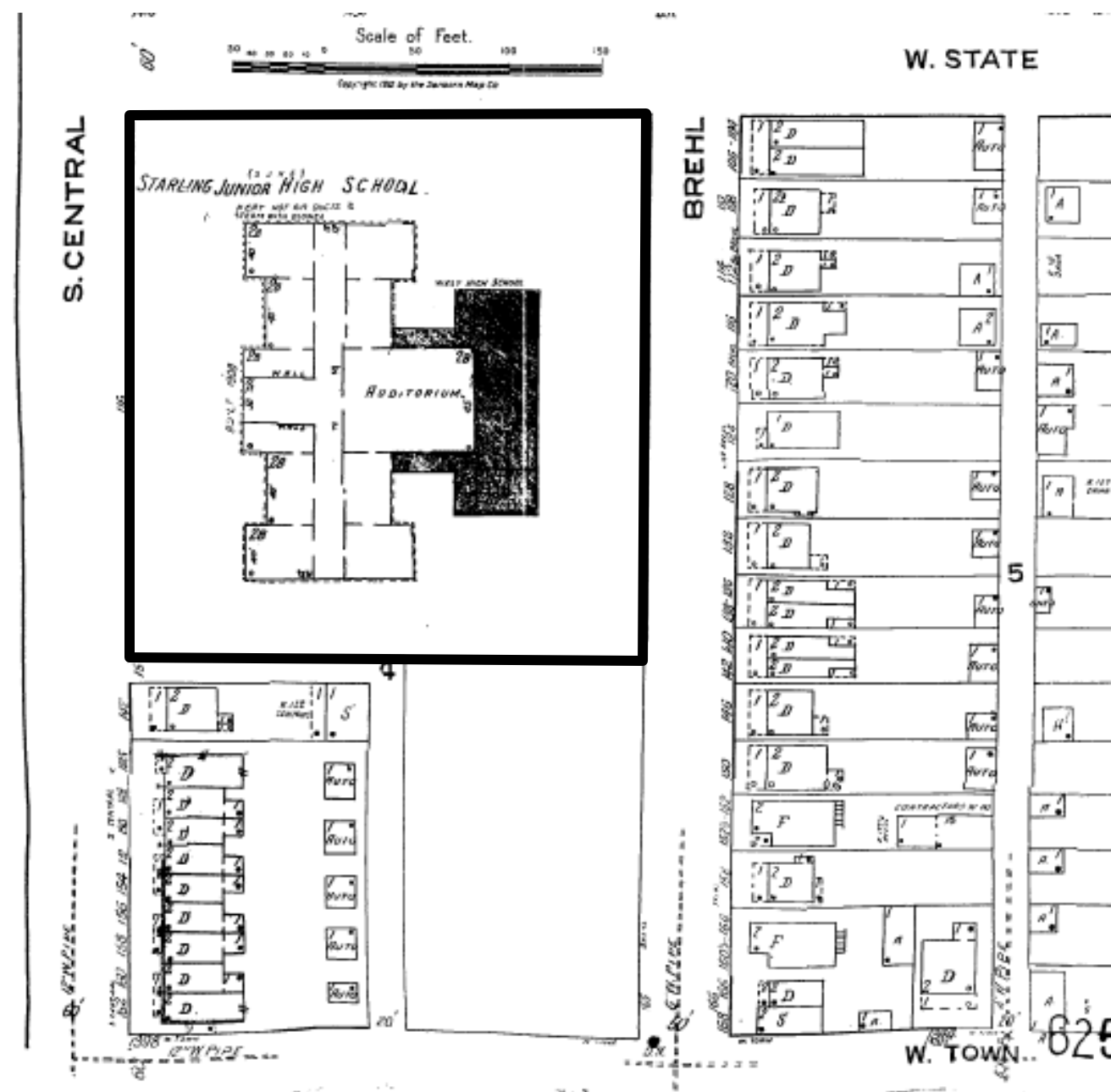
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 3

Figure 3. West High School /Starling Junior High, 1951

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1951



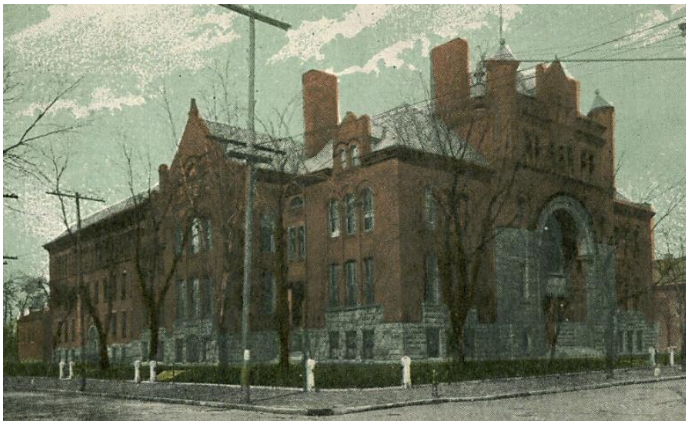
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

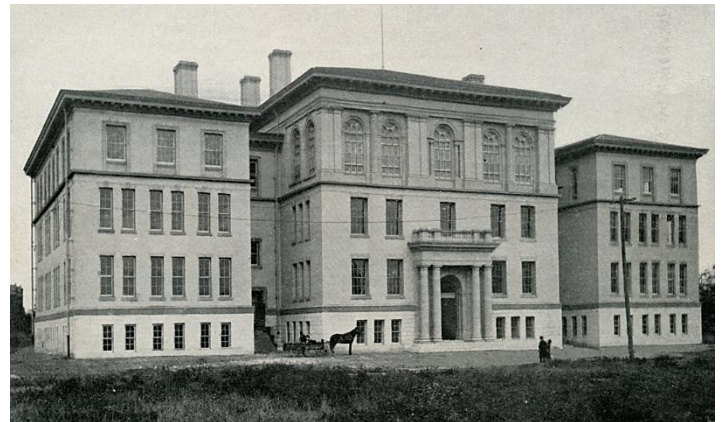
Page 4

**Figure 4. First Columbus Public Schools Building Campaign - High Schools
Designed by First Columbus Public School Architect David Riebel**

Source: Columbus Metropolitan Library



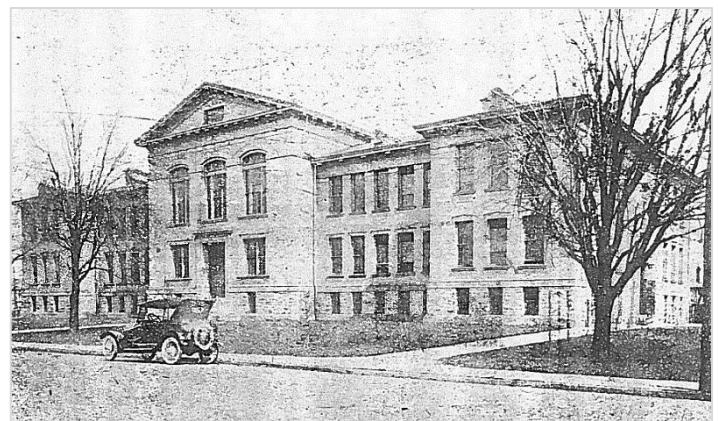
1892-93 Romanesque Revival **North High School**
designed by architect Frank L. Packard (demolished)
1901-1902 Second Renaissance Revival extant addition by
architect David Riebel
100 W. 4th Street (Near Northside HD, NR #80003001)



1897 Second Renaissance Revival **East High School**
1400 Franklin Ave. (demolished)
Designed by architect David Riebel



1898 Second Renaissance Revival **South High School**
345 E. Deshler Avenue (NR# 15000561)
Designed by architect David Riebel



1908 Neoclassical Revival **West High School**
120 S. Central Ave. 1400 Franklin Ave.
Designed by architect David Riebel
(subject of this nomination)

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

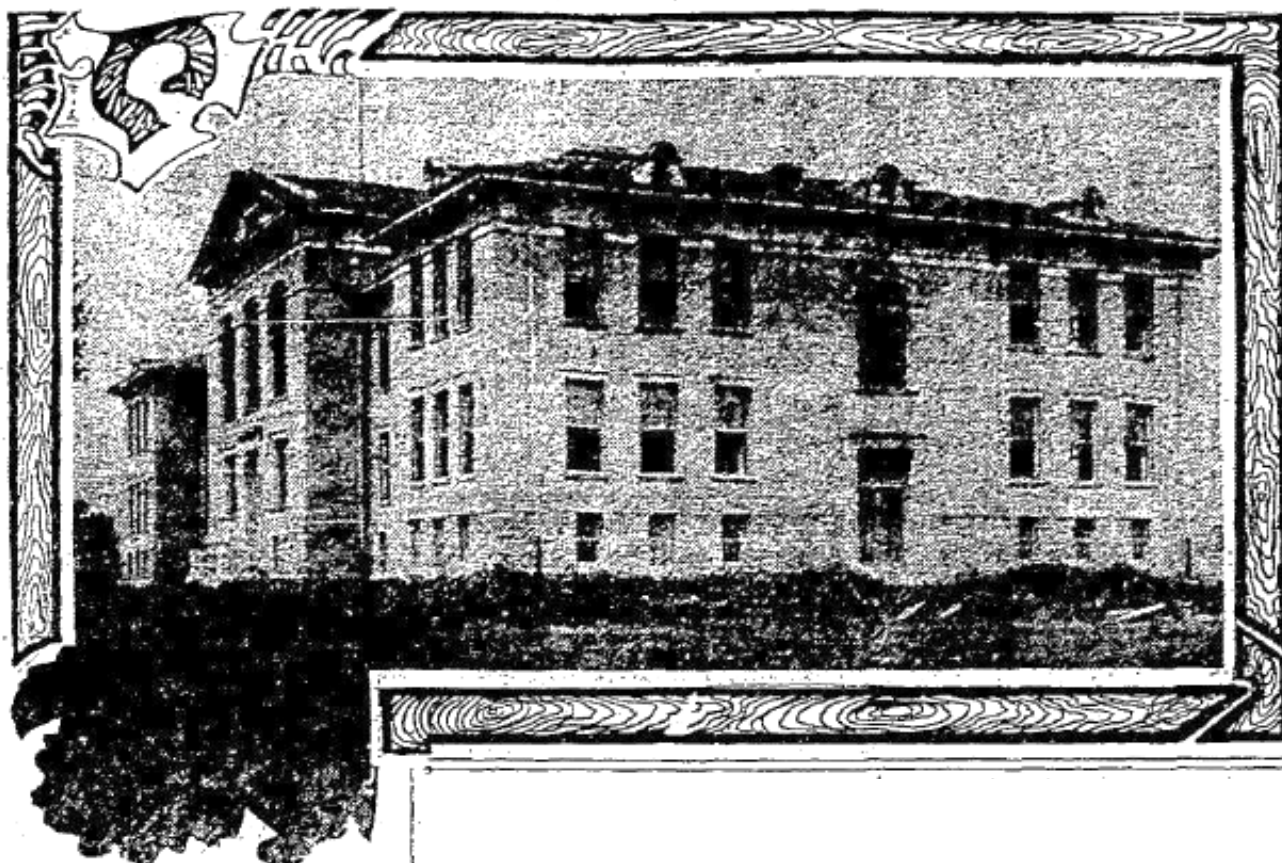
Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 5

Figure 5. West High School, Photo 1908

Source: *Columbus Dispatch*, 7 September 1908.

Columbus's Fourth High School to Go Into Commission For First Time Tuesday



WEST SIDE HIGH SCHOOL.
Located on Central avenue at West
State street. Otto H. Magley, former-
ly an instructor at East High school,
will be the first principal.

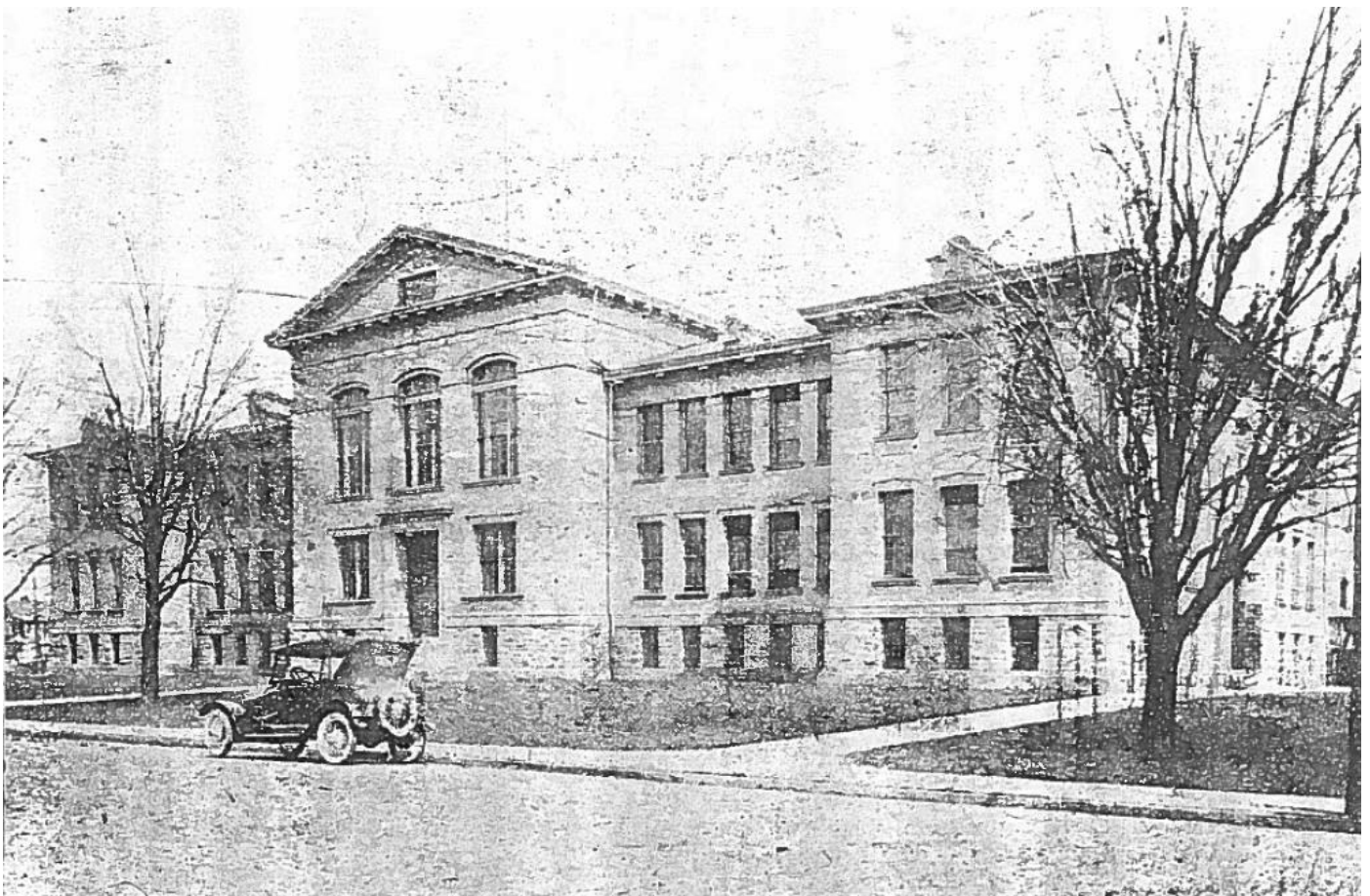
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 6

Figure 6. West High School, Photo 1912

Source: “West High School is Observing 40th Anniversary.” *The Hilltop Record*, 1
November 1948. Vertical File, Columbus Schools, Columbus Public Library.



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 7

Figure 7. West High School, Front Entry with Staff, Photo 1912

Source: *West High School Occident Yearbook, 1912*. Columbus Metropolitan Library, 38.



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 8

Figure 8. West High School, Rear East Elevation, Photo 1913 Flood

Source: Columbus Metropolitan Library



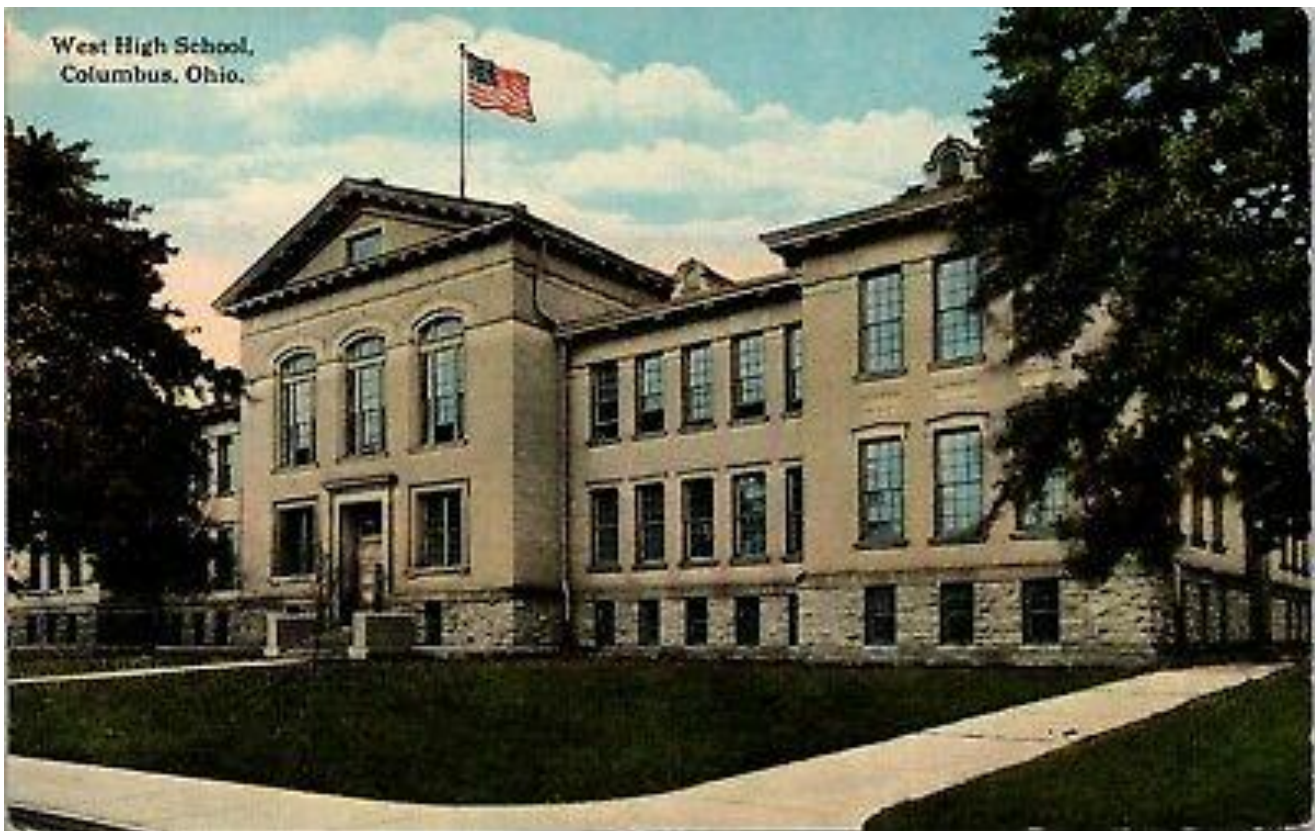
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 9

Figure 9. West High School Postcard, ca. 1915

Source: Columbus Memory. Columbus Metropolitan Library



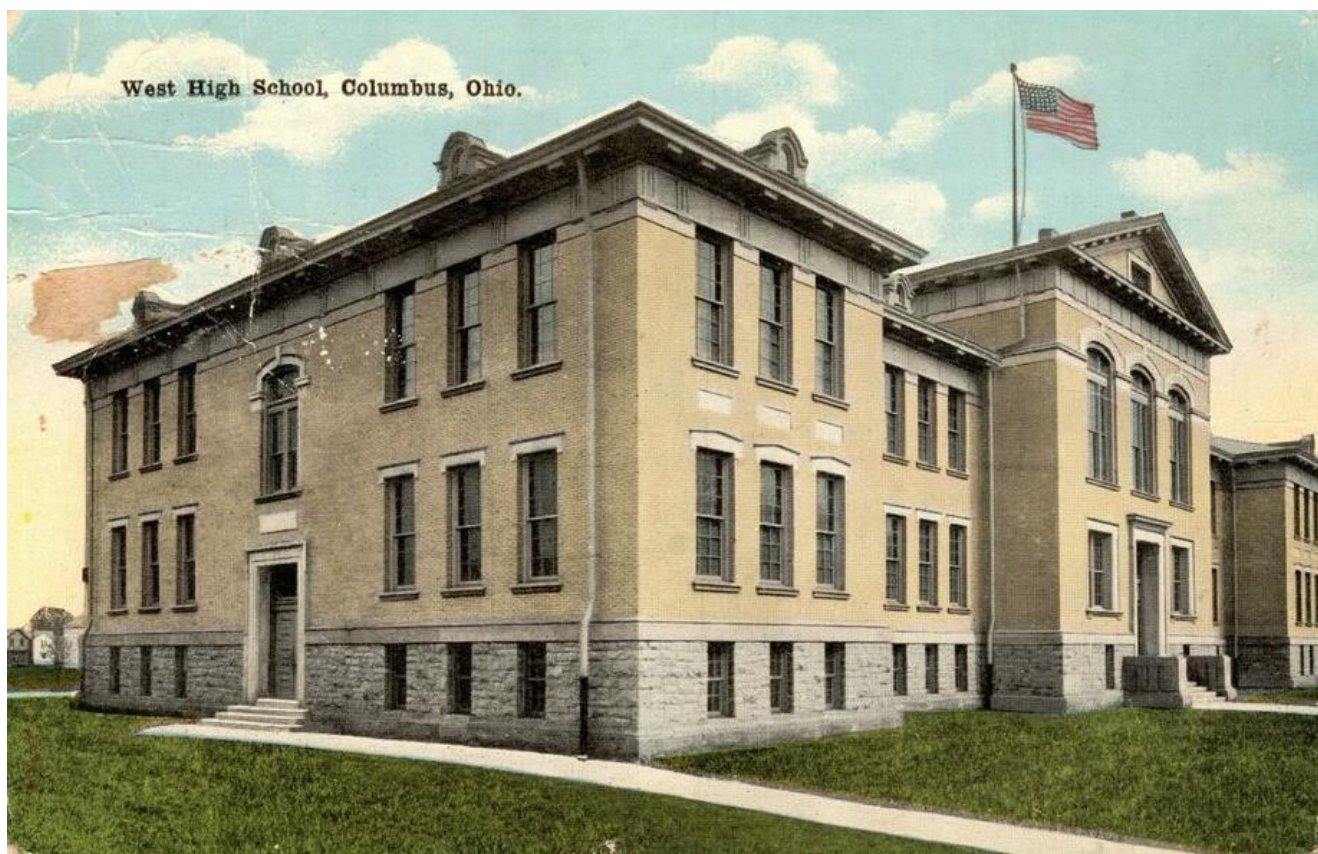
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 10

Figure 10. West High School Postcard, ca. 1915

Source: Columbus Memory. Columbus Metropolitan Library



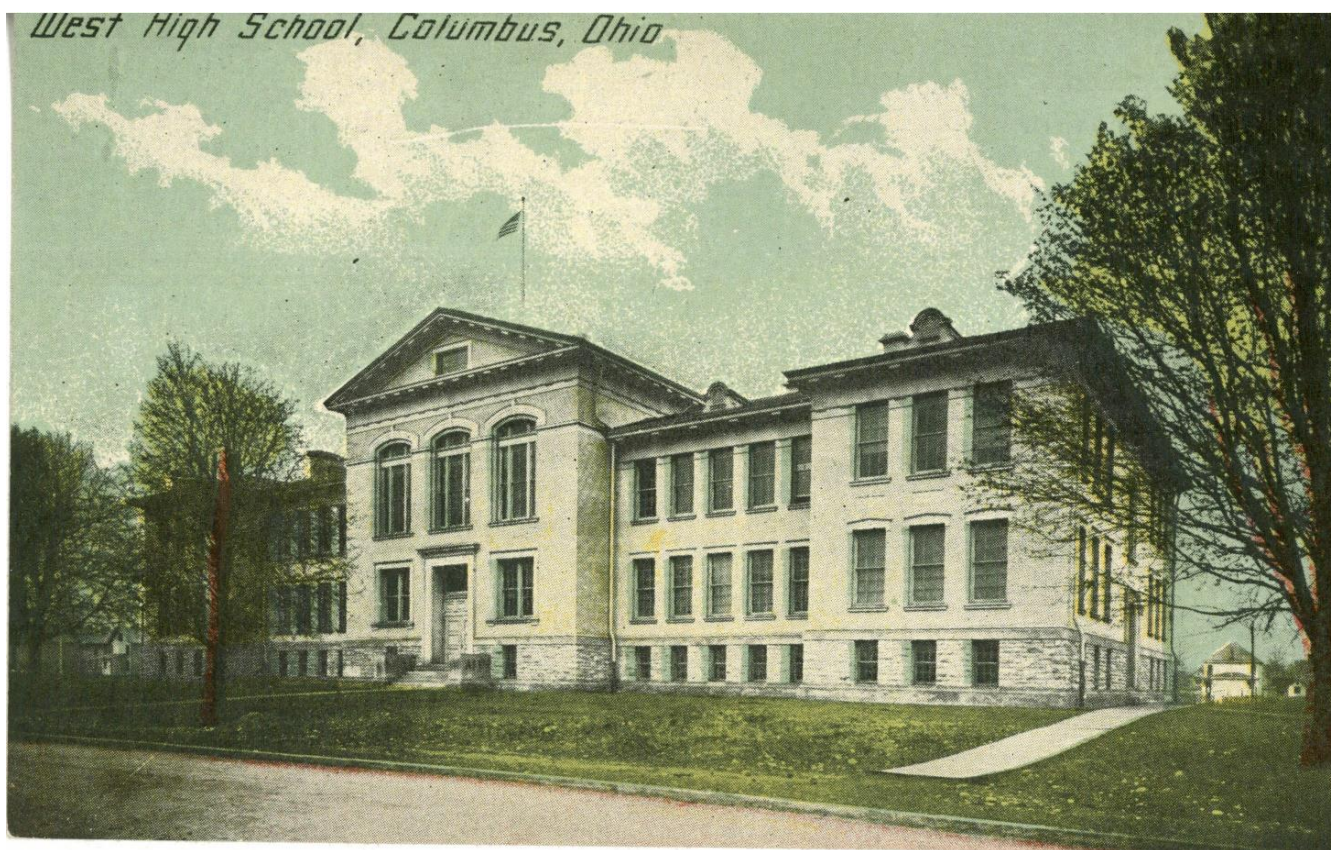
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 11

Figure 11. West High School Postcard, ca. 1915

Source: Columbus Memory. Columbus Metropolitan Library



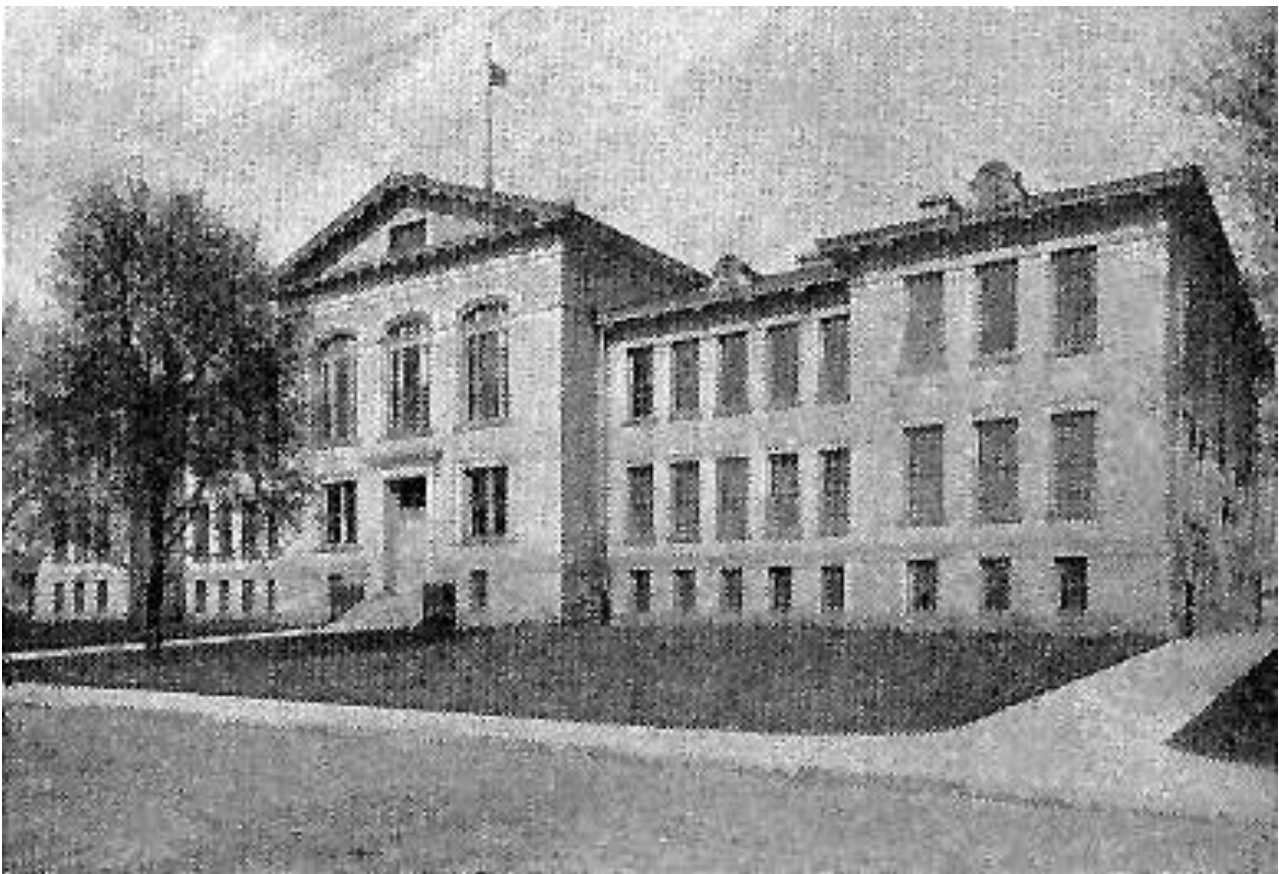
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 12

Figure 12. West High School, Photo 1916

Source: Columbus Metropolitan Library



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 13

Figure 13. West High School, Front Entry, Photo 1916

Source: *West High School Occident Yearbook, 1916*. Columbus Metropolitan Library, 34.



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 14

**Figure 14. West High School, The Taming of the Shrew Production, Auditorium (demolished)
Photo 1916**

Source: *West High School Occident Yearbook, 1916*. Columbus Metropolitan Library, 26.



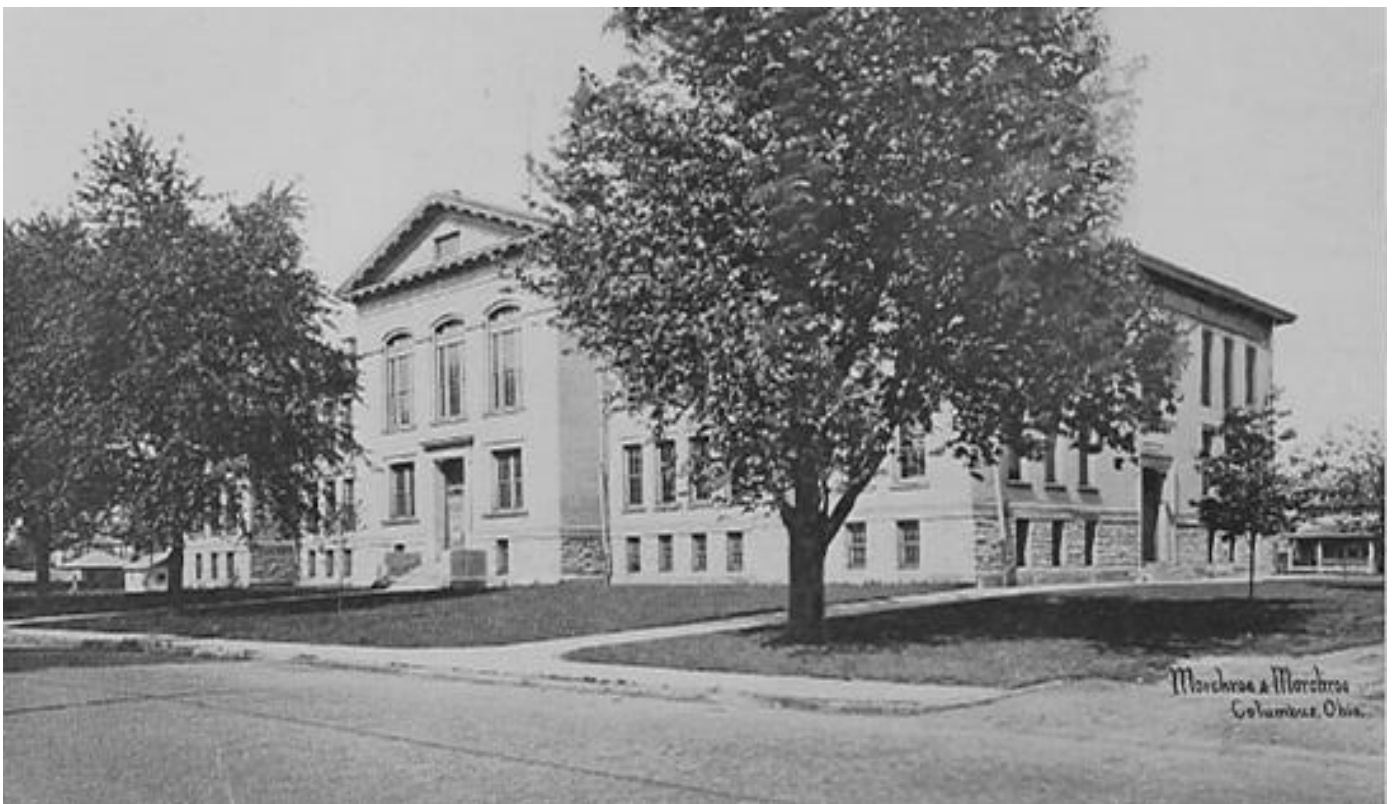
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 15

Figure 15. West High School, Photo 1921

Source: *West High School Occident Yearbook, 1921*. Columbus Metropolitan Library, 7.



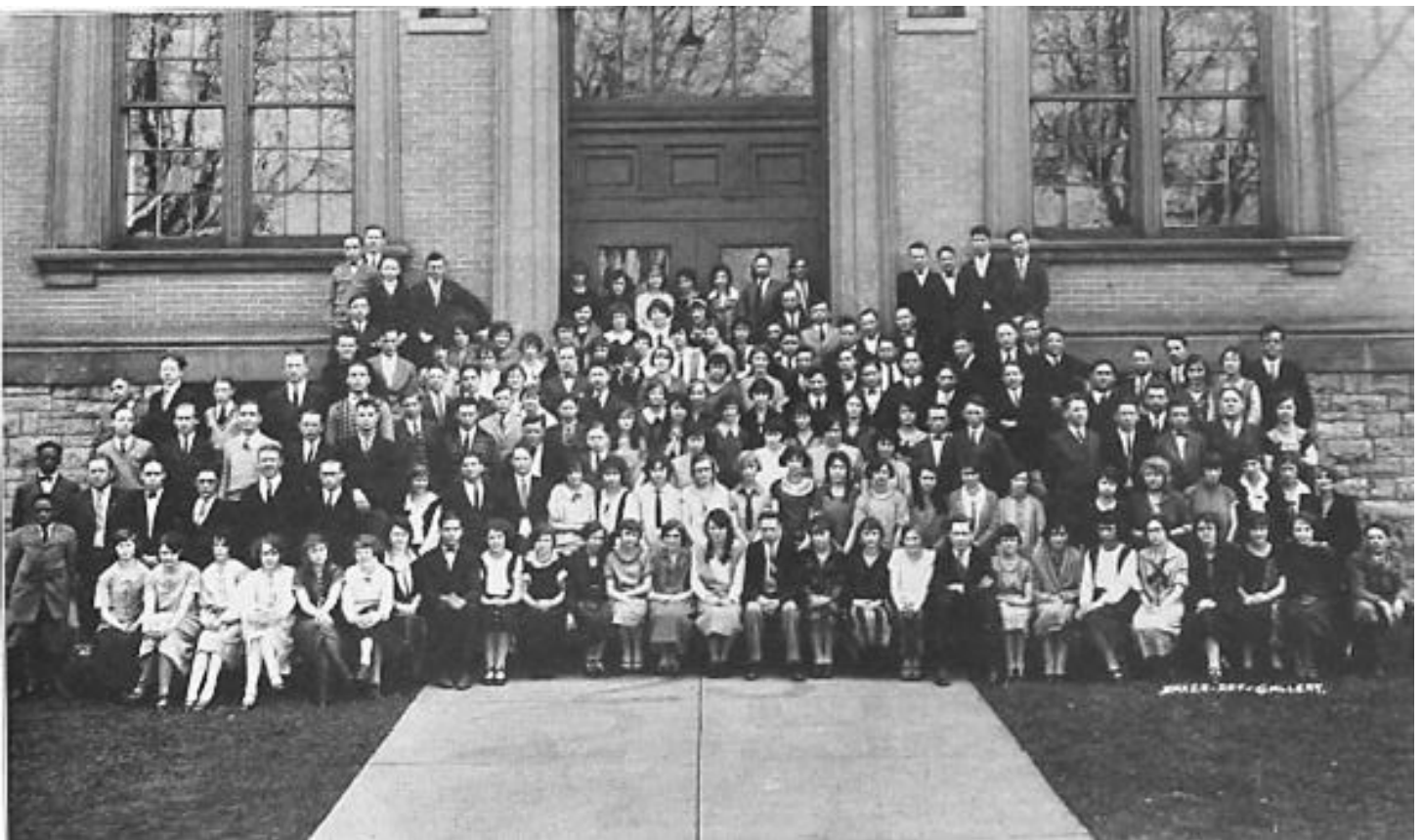
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 16

Figure 16. West High School, Front Entry Photo 1925

Source: *West High School Occident Yearbook, 1925*. Columbus Metropolitan Library, 36.



Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps &
Images

Page 17

Figure 17. Staring Junior High School, Photo undated

Source: Columbus Memory, Columbus Metropolitan Library.



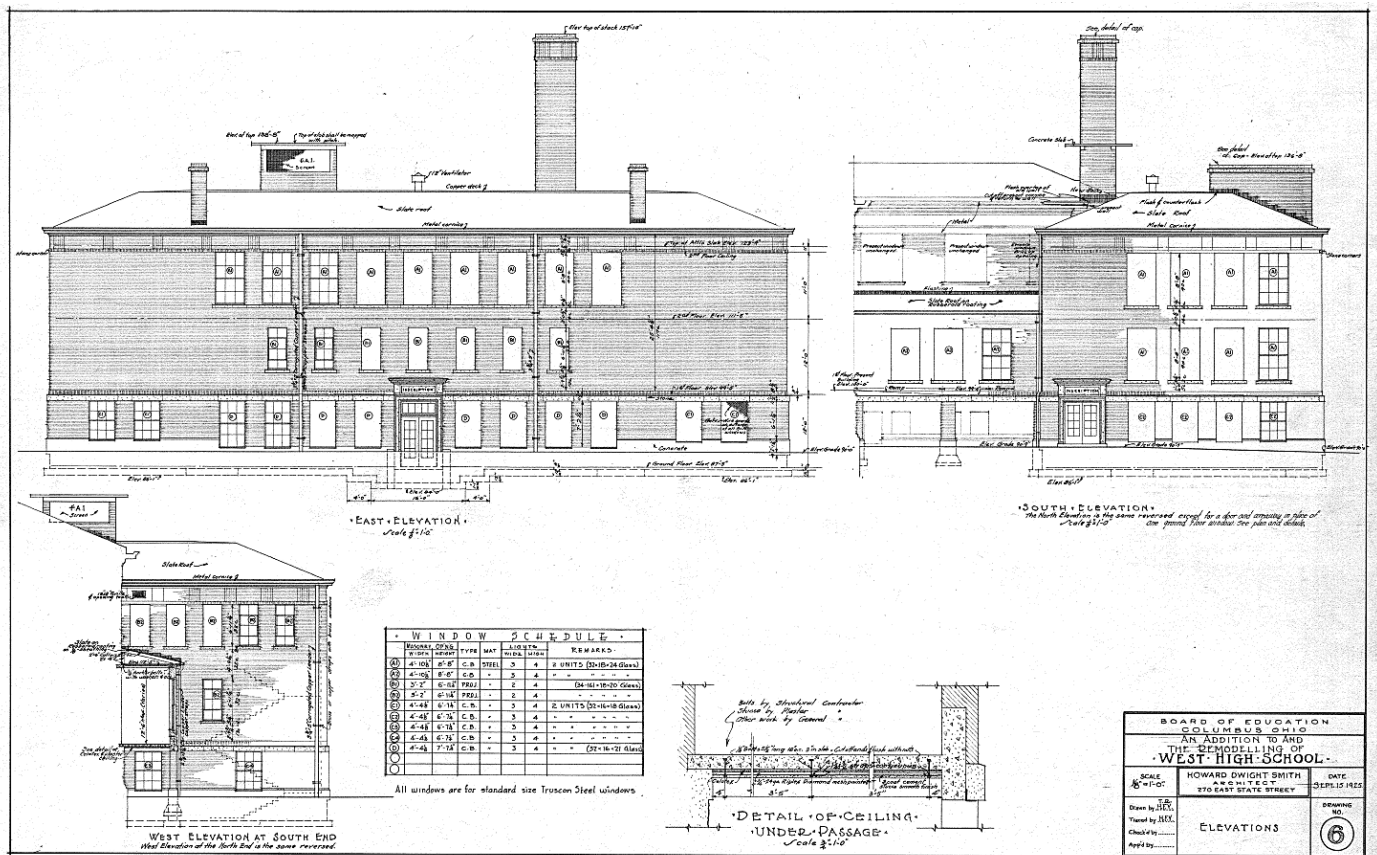
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 18

Figure 18. West High School Elevations

Source: *Elevations, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings,* Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools



Columbus Register of Historic Properties

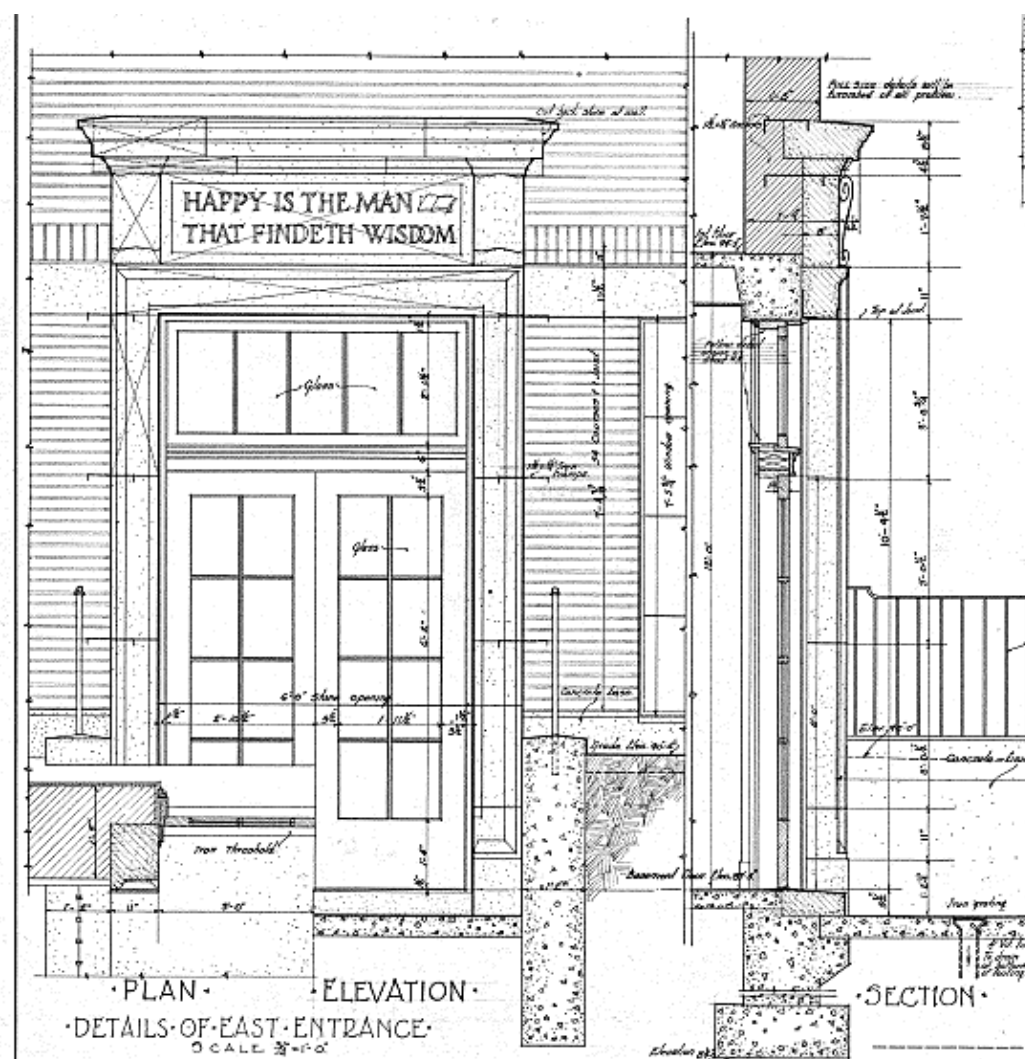
Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 19

Figure 19. West High School East Entrance

Source: *Entrance, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools



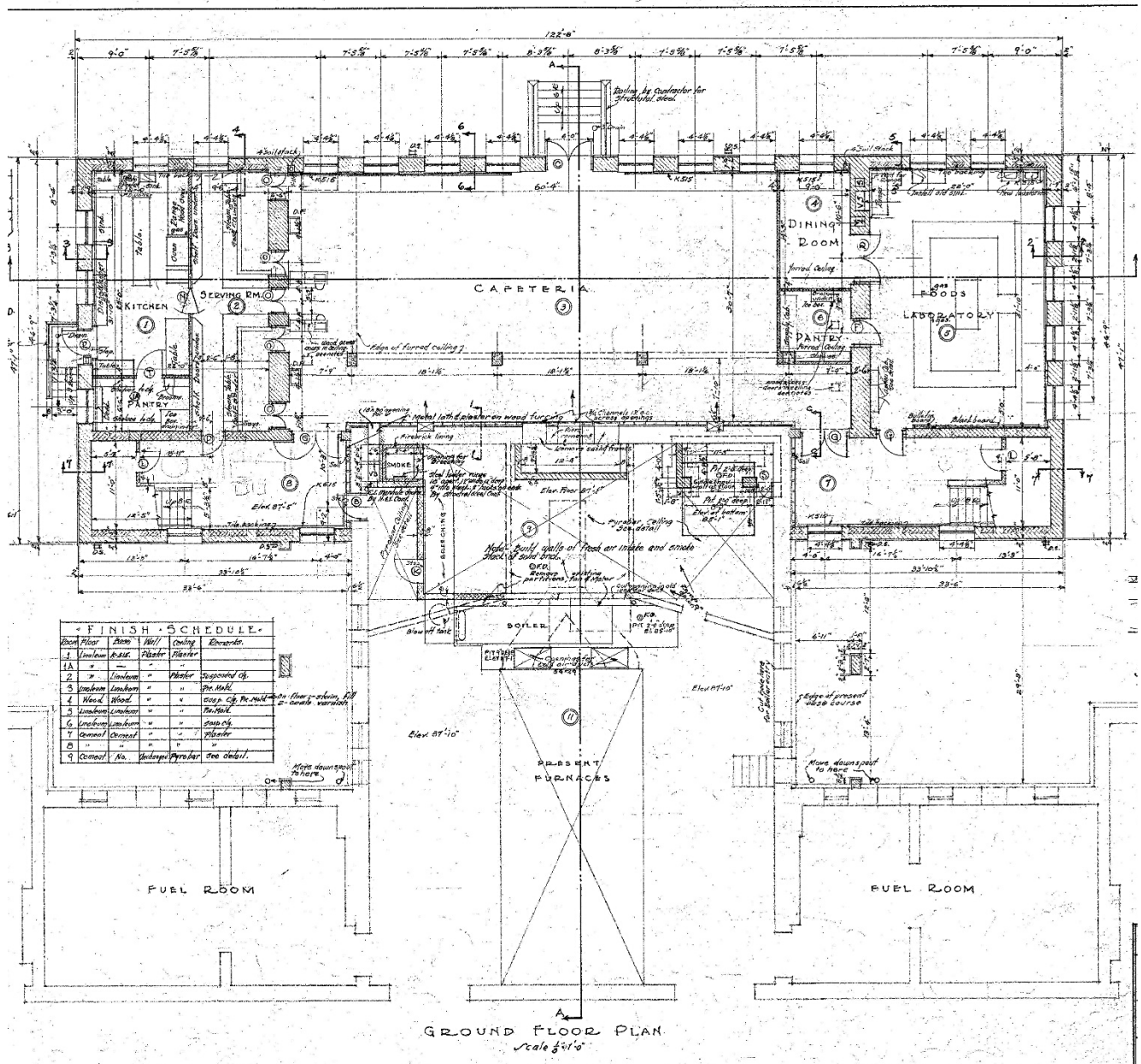
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 20

Figure 20. West High School First Floor Plan

Source: *Ground Floor Plan, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School*, Architectural Drawings, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Source: Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools



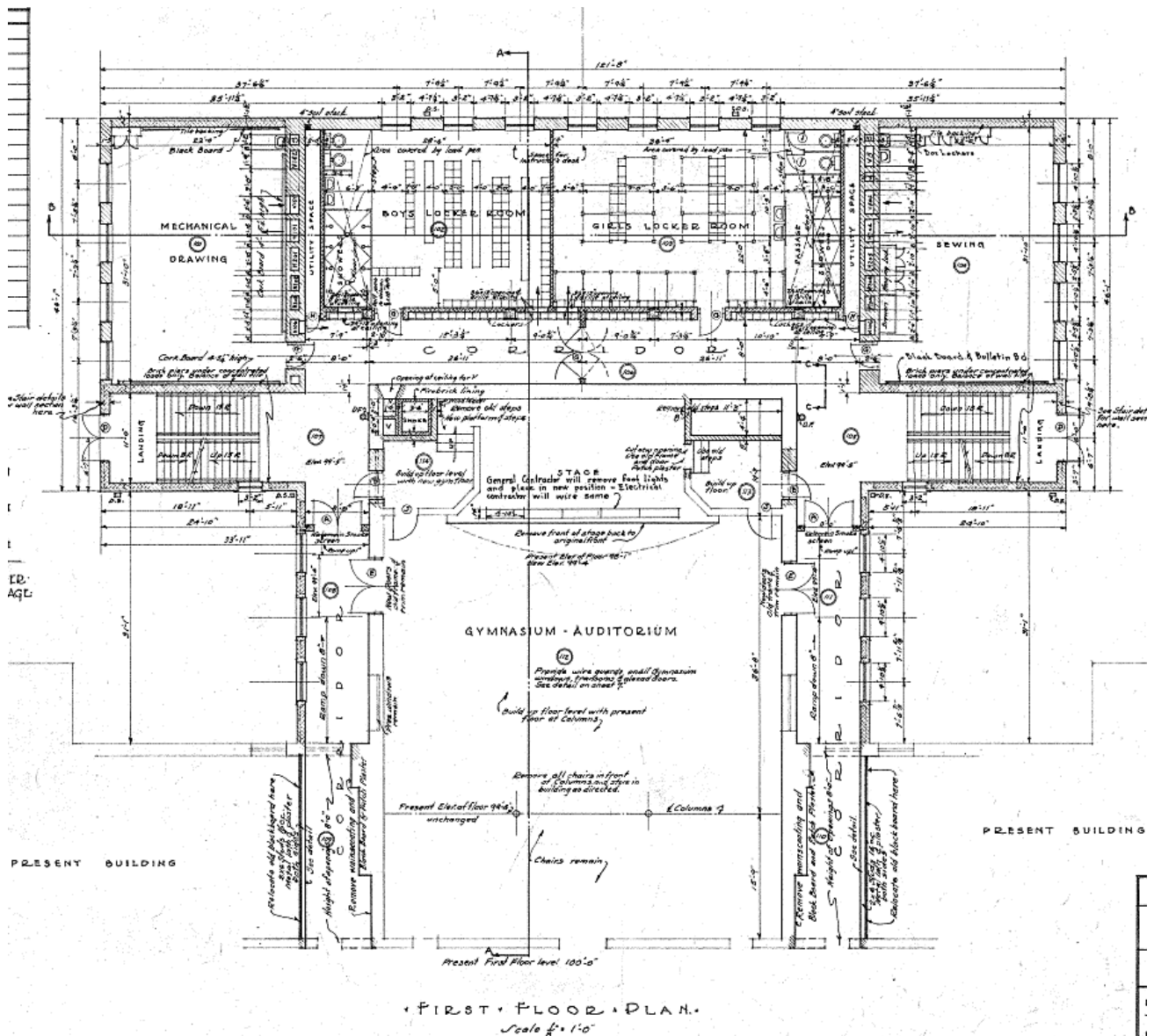
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 21

Figure 21. West High School First Floor Plan

Source: *First Floor Plan, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Source: Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools



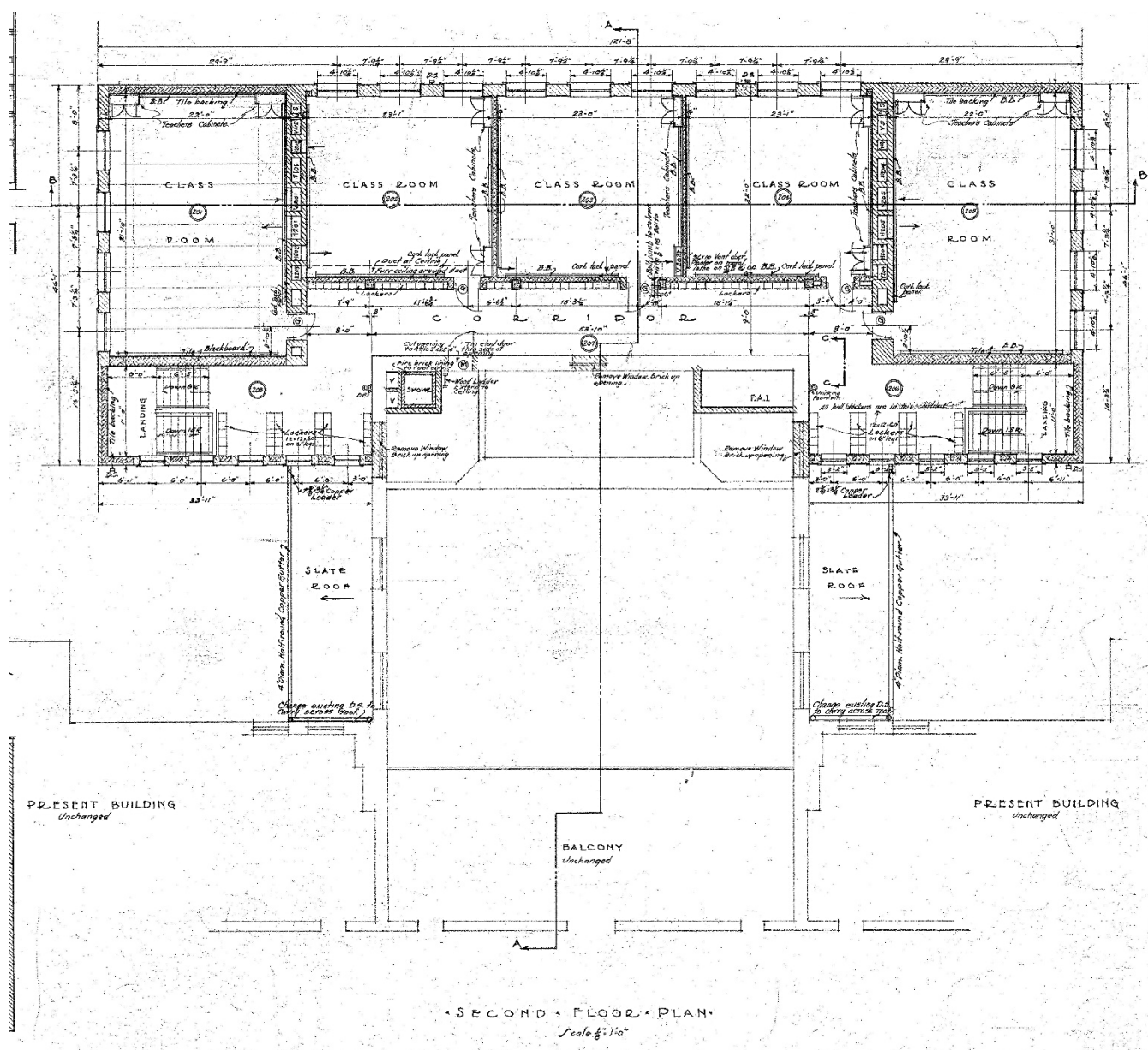
Columbus Register of Historic Properties Continuation Sheet

Section Number: Additional Documentation – Historic Maps & Images

Page 22

Figure 22. West High School Second Floor Plan

Source: *Second Floor Plan, An Addition to and the Remodeling of West High School, Architectural Drawings*, Architect Howard Dwight Smith, 15 September 1925. Board of Education, Columbus Public Schools

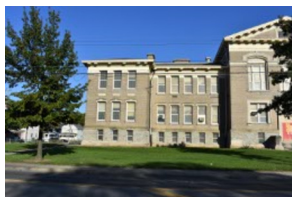


Page 23

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OH_Franklin_WestHigh_002



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_003



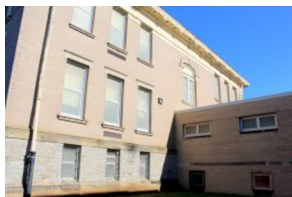
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OH_Franklin_WestHigh_012



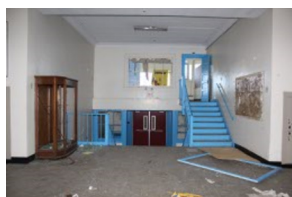
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OH_Franklin_WestHigh_014



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_015



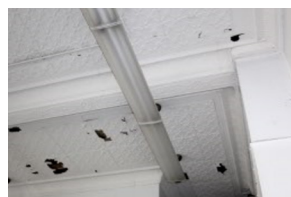
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OH_Franklin_WestHigh_017



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_018



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_019



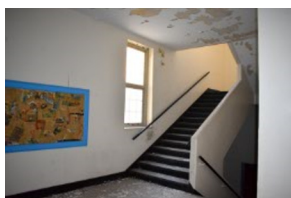
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OH_Franklin_WestHigh_021



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_022



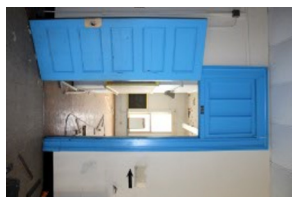
OH_Franklin_WestHigh_023



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_024



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_025



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_026



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_027



OH_Franklin_WestHigh_028