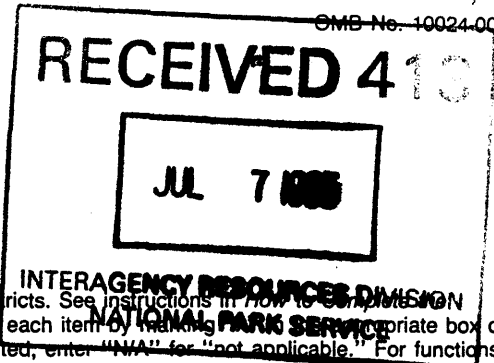


1003

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by entering the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Court Street School

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Court Street at Holmes Terrace NA not for publication

city or town Freehold Borough vicinity

state New Jersey code 034 county Monmouth code 025 zip code 07728

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 for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title [Signature] Date 6/15/95
Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/ DSHPO
State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper [Signature] Entered in the National Register 6.4.95 Date of Action _____

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as 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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

concrete

roof slate

other wood

copper

Narrative Description

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

Court Street School
Name of Property

Monmouth Co., NJ
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE African American

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1921 - 1945

Significant Dates

1921

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Conover, Warren H. (architect)

Soden, H.F. & Brother (builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

State Historic Preservation Office

Court Street School

Monmouth Co., NJ

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 2.3

Freehold, NJ Quad

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

UTM grid 1: Zone 18, Easting 560920, Northing 4457340

UTM grid 3 and 4: Empty grid boxes for Zone, Easting, Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas C. McVarish, Project Architectural Historian

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date January 1995

street & number 1216 Arch Street, 5th Floor telephone (215) 561-7637

city or town Philadelphia state PA zip code 19107

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name County of Monmouth, Department of Buildings and Grounds

street & number Hall of Records, Court Street telephone (908) 431-7360

city or town Freehold state NJ zip code 07728

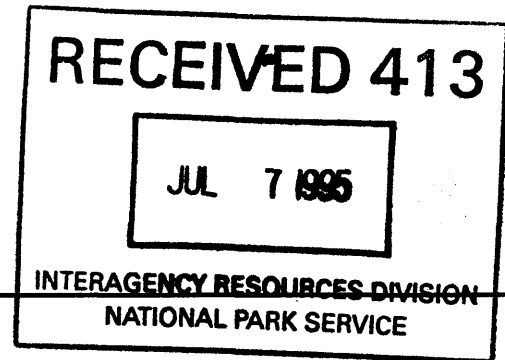
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

Narrative Description

The Court Street School is a one story, brick, hipped roof, rectangular, Colonial Revival building. Its facade is punctuated by projecting pavilions located in the center and at either end of the south wall. The north, east and west walls are flat. The walls of the school are constructed of brick with rusticated concrete block trim, and the roof is partially sheathed in slate and partially sheathed in asphalt rolled roofing. Octagonal cupolas project from the central section of the roofs of the end pavilions. The school, the only building on a two acre site, is located on the west side of Court Street at its intersection with Holmes Terrace in the northern section of Freehold Borough, Monmouth County, New Jersey. Although the property has deteriorated somewhat due to lack of use, it retains its historic integrity.

The school was constructed in two phases. The first portion, completed in 1921, consisted of the central section of the present building. This section contained two classrooms, flanking cloakrooms, and entry doors at either side of a projecting entrance bay. The original concrete entry steps are still in place in the crawl space of the present building. The two, hipped roof, end pavilions containing classrooms and cloakrooms were added during 1927-28 enlargements. The building contract for the additions specified that components removed during the enlargement of the building were to be reused. These included old doors taken from classroom entrances, windows, roofing slate, and hardware of the outside cellar doors. Specifications indicated that the old doors could be used in new closets.

The E-shaped school is approximately 128 feet long and 40 feet wide. It is constructed of red brick laid in five course American bond. The mortar is tinted red to blend with the bricks. Rusticated concrete blocks form quoins and a water table. The south facade is marked by symmetrical fenestration. The end pavilions are fenestrated with 9 over 9, double-hung sash windows flanked by 3 over 3, double-hung windows. The central pavilion is fenestrated with two, 9 over 9, double-hung sash windows, while the flanking, recessed bays are fenestrated with paired 9 over 9, double-hung windows. The rear wall of the building is fenestrated with two sets of five, 12 over 12, double-hung windows. These rear windows were designed to provide ample natural light for the classrooms. The central windows on the rear of the building are flanked by single, nine over nine, double-hung windows. The end walls of the building are fenestrated with five 12 over 12, double-hung windows. All of the windows are wood-framed and are presently protected by wood and chain link security screens. Window sills are formed from smooth-finished concrete, and lintels are formed from rusticated concrete. Originally, the basement was fenestrated with two-light, steel frame windows with frosted wire glass. The basement window openings are set in concrete lined window wells and are now enclosed with concrete block or wood panels or are filled with metal louvered vents.

Two entrances flank the central pavilion on the south wall of the school. Each entrance is set within a deep reveal. The side walls of the reveals are constructed of brick and concrete block. The ceilings are constructed of narrow tongue and groove wood sheathing. The platforms of each entry bay are formed from poured concrete extending into concrete steps. Each entrance contains paired 12-light, two panel, wood-framed doors. The exterior sides of the windows are presently covered by plywood panels to prevent vandalism. A transom surmounts each set of doors. One transom contains three light, the other seven. Both transoms have also been boarded over. Two-leaf, wood, bulkhead doors provide access to the basement from the center of the north wall of the building. The walls of the bulkhead are brick, and seven concrete steps extend to the floor of the basement.

The quoins, water table, sills and lintels were originally coated with a white wash made from white Portland cement, fine white sand and Anti-Hydro (Monmouth County Building Contracts). The quoins and water table were later painted white.

Scroll rafter ends mark the eaves of the building. The end pavilions have open eaves, while the central section has a molded wood cornice, portions of which are missing. Originally, the school's intersecting hipped roof had portions sheathed in gray slate. The building specifications for the addition indicated that the roofs over "the halls & c" were to be constructed of wood subsurface sheathed in tin. This portion of the roof was sheathed in painted tin sheets, a maximum of 14 by 20 inches in size, lock jointed and nailed (Monmouth County Building Contracts). The central portion of the roof is now sheathed in rolled, asphalt roofing, while the end pavilions retain their slate roofs. The building originally had a half-round copper gutter, but this gutter is missing and only its hangers remain. Octagonal wood cupolas surmount the roofs of the two end pavilions. These cupolas, which function as ventilators for the attic, have square bases with molded cornices, copper flashing, arched-topped slatted wood louvers and an octagonal molded wood cornice.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Description continued)

The hemispherical roofs of the cupolas are sheathed in segmental copper sheets. A rectangular brick chimney with a concrete cap projects from the center of the north roof slope.

The interior of the building consists of a partial basement and a full first story. The central basement block contains mechanical rooms and an exit corridor along the north wall, as well as a second corridor along the south wall. The end pavilions contain toilet facilities, as well as larger rooms. The toilet rooms still contain the original toilets, sinks, and urinals. Stairwells extend from the inner walls of the end pavilions along the south wall of the central block. Stairs are constructed of concrete and have metal pipe railings. The brick foundation walls form many of the interior walls of the basement. Other interior walls are sheathed in narrow, tongue and groove wood sheathing, as are the ceilings of several of the rooms. Tongue and groove toilet partitions remain, as do wood-paneled stall doors. Some original interior doors remain, while at least one has been replaced by a hollow core wood door. The original wood interior doors are of the five panel and four-light, three panel types. The original concrete floor slab has been covered in resilient tile.

The main building doors open into a single loaded corridor that extends the length of the south wall of the central block and terminates at the doors of the end pavilion classrooms. Each end pavilion originally contained a classroom with a cloakroom extending the length of its south wall. The west cloakroom has been converted to toilet facilities. Additional cloakrooms were situated on the end walls of the two central classrooms. Two of the classrooms have been partly divided by low "bullpen" partitions.

Some of the interior first floor spaces, primarily the corridor and cloakrooms, retain their original tongue and groove wall and ceiling sheathing. Originally, each of the classrooms had tongue and groove wainscoting with a cap formed by a nosing with a cove, as well as wood-framed blackboards. The wall sheathing and wainscoting in the classrooms have largely been covered by wood paneling, and the blackboards have been removed. Each of the classrooms has a simple four inch crown molding. Three of the four classrooms retain their original tongue and groove wood ceilings. The ceiling in the east classroom remains exposed, while the remaining classrooms have dropped acoustic tile ceilings with flush fluorescent light fixtures.

All of the classroom entry doors remain in place. These doors consist of large wire-glass windows in the upper section with two molded panels below. Each of these doors is surmounted by a two-light transom. Most interior cloakroom doors are also in place. These doors, which are set in plain surrounds with corner blocks, have metal grilles surmounted by four molded wood panels. Several original supply closets remain. These closets are fitted with shelves, coat and hat hooks, and paneled wood doors. One of the original light fixtures, a frosted ovoid globe hanging from a metal chain, remains in place in the first floor hallway. Original cast-iron steam radiators are in place throughout the building. The original 7/8 inch clear dry seasoned maple floor boards have been covered with resilient tile.

A hatchway in the first floor hallway provides access to the unfinished attic. The attic is divided into sections by walls constructed of flush horizontal boards nailed to dimensioned lumber studs. Dimensioned lumber is also used for the rafters and joists. The roof truss is constructed of 2 inch by 10 inch timbers (Monmouth County Building Contracts).

The school is located on a hilltop site near the junction of Court and Rhea streets. A concrete sidewalk extends along the south side of the building. Steps connect this walk with a sidewalk on the west side of Court Street. A driveway extends from Avenue A to an unpaved parking area west and south of the school. The two acre tract slopes downward on its east, west, and north edges. The edges of the property are lined by deciduous and evergreen trees, and single large evergreen and deciduous trees located immediately north of the school. A small tract of land at the junction of Court and Rhea streets, north of the school, is the site of a Borough of Freehold pumping station. Surrounding land uses include single family residences to the south and west, single family residences and a religious building to the east, and industrial and institutional buildings, including offices of Jersey Central Power and Light and the Monmouth County correctional facility, across Rhea Street north of the school.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Court Street School is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its strong association with the history of early twentieth century African American education in Freehold and as an historic focal point of the borough's African American community. From 1921 until 1948, it was the only public elementary school within the borough of Freehold open to African American students. It is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as a finely executed local example of Colonial Revival architecture and as the design of Warren H. Conover, a locally prominent architect. The period of significance of the school extends from 1921, the date of initial construction, to 1948, the conclusion of its period of use as a segregated school.

Historical Background and Significance

The Court Street School is significant as a twentieth century example of a New Jersey public school building constructed to provide separate educational facilities for African American students. Every city and town in the southern portion of the state with an appreciable black population supported a dual system of public elementary education during the early twentieth century. Among these communities was Freehold.

The practice of educating African American children separately from white children began during the era of slavery. The first attempts to educate the children of slaves were made in the eighteenth century by the Society of Friends. Because of Quaker influence, the provincial legislature decreed in 1759 that dependent children be taught to read and write. In 1788, the legislature ruled that all servants and slaves under 21 years of age should be taught to read (Wright 1941:195-196).

Efforts by religious groups to educate African Americans continued during the nineteenth century. In addition, the Presbyterian Church, convinced of the impossibility of a satisfactory social adjustment of African Americans as freemen in the United States, founded the African Colonization Society to aid in the colonizing of free blacks in Africa. In response, African American leaders formed anti-slavery and anti-colonization societies to provide for schooling of children where such opportunities were lacking (Wright 1941:196-197).

In 1844, the newly adopted state constitution provided for annual appropriations for "the support of public schools, for the equal benefit of all the people of the state." African American children began to share in state funds for education in both mixed and separate schools. The status of separate schools was confirmed in 1850 when the legislature authorized the setting aside of a special school district in the township of Morris for the exclusive use of African American children (Wright 1941:197).

As the public school system developed after 1871, cities in the northern counties of New Jersey began to eliminate their racially separate schools. Schools in the southern portion of the state, including Monmouth County, remained segregated (Wright 1988:50).

Monmouth County became a test case for segregated schools. In January 1881, Zumella Johnson, teacher of the black school in Fair Haven, Monmouth county resigned. The school remained closed during the entire month of January because of the inability of school officials to find another teacher. Finally, several African American children applied for admission to the white school where they were assigned seats. After additional students indicated their intention to enter the school, the school board decided to close the white school if the African American children presented themselves there. African American children continued to try to attend the school and it was then closed.

The trustees of the school district then secured a "competent" teacher for the black school, but parents of African American children expressed indignation concerning their children's exclusion from white schools. At the same time, the black school was destroyed by fire under mysterious circumstances.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

A meeting was held of the Fair Haven African American community at which General Clinton W. Fisk recommended the establishment of a new separate school for African American students. Those present unanimously decided to accept a separate school and the County appropriated funds for that purpose (Wright 1941:169-170).

In response to the situation in Fair Haven, on March 7, 1881, Senator James Youngblood of Morris County introduced a bill in the New Jersey Senate providing:

That no child between the ages of five and eighteen years of age, shall be excluded from any public school in this state on account of his or her religion, nationality or color (Wright 1941:167).

The bill passed the New Jersey legislature and was enacted without the signature of then Governor Ludlow.

Monmouth County along with the southern New Jersey counties of Burlington, Ocean, Camden, Gloucester, Atlantic, Cumberland, and Cape May, refused to adhere to the letter of the law. Although the Monmouth Democrat opined that the measure practically compelled the admission of African American children into the same schools with white children, whether separate schools were available or not, separate schools continued to be operated in Monmouth and the rest of the southern portion of New Jersey.

In the 1880-1881 school year, Fair Haven opened an "elegant and commodious school house" for African American children to replace that which had burned. In 1882, the Asbury Park School District voted to build a school for African American children, and the school was completed in 1884 (Wright 1941:171-172). By the end of the decade the County Superintendent of Public Instruction reported that there were six separate schools for African American children in Monmouth County, "each taught by a teacher of their own preference" (Wright 1941:172).

Established black schools continued in Monmouth County and elsewhere in the southern counties and new ones were built. Opponents of these schools charged that they were inferior to white schools in physical facilities and quality of education. Black supporters, however, considered them compatible with the advancement of the race because they provided a measure of autonomy and self-determination. Segregated schools, they noted, not only offered blacks teaching and administrative opportunities, but also spared black pupils the racial indignities often encountered in integrated classrooms (Wright 1988:52).

The number of separate black schools in New Jersey continued to increase in the first decades of the twentieth century. From 1919 to 1930 the number of such schools increased from 52 to 66, and to 70 by 1935 as southern New Jersey communities continued to support a dual system of elementary schools.

Freehold was among the communities that maintained a segregated school system. The town opened its first graded school on February 4, 1878 (Ellis 1885:443). This facility, later known as the Hudson Street School, was limited to white children.

Available evidence suggests that Freehold did not provide public schooling for African American children until the second decade of the twentieth century. Prior to this time, African American children may have been taught in some of the community's African American churches (Russell 1994). About 1912 Ferdinand G. Fenderson became principal and teacher of a one room school for African American children in Freehold. The following year, three students graduated from the eighth grade of the school and began to attend Freehold High School. Geraldine Neal Bledsoe, writing about Fenderson's career, noted, "Mr. Fenderson thus broke the "logjam" in the school for Negroes and lived to see the normal flow of Negro students into college and into productive careers" (Bledsoe 1976).

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

The dual system of segregated schools was deplored in a report submitted to the state legislature in 1939. Generally white pupils were taught in larger and more modern facilities than black students, and in some cases blacks were not even given the minimum essentials for adequate instruction--books, maps, gymnasium facilities, shop equipment (Wright 1988:68).

Segregation in the public schools of New Jersey was officially outlawed in the state's third constitution, adopted in 1947. As a result, for the first time black pupils and teachers in the southern counties were placed in schools and classes on a nonracial basis (Wright 1988:70).

History of the Court Street School

The African American population of Freehold was concentrated in several neighborhoods during the pre-World War II period. One such neighborhood, known as Peach Orchard, surrounded the site of the school. Another small community, known as Rooville, was located along Lockwood Avenue; a third, Ramcat Alley, was located along Clinton Street; while a fourth, known as Texas, was located in the east end of the borough along Center Street. These neighborhoods were rivals, and these rivalries came to the fore in high school sports. All of the African American children from these neighborhoods attended kindergarten through eighth grade at Court Street School. In many cases, they passed one or more white schools on the way to Court Street (Ham 1994).

The Court Street School was the second school to occupy its site. The earlier building was located west of the present building and remained standing for several years after the erection of the new school. The land for this earlier school was acquired by the Freehold Township Board of Education from William M. and Sarah Hepburn for \$350 (Monmouth County Deed Book 910:203-205, September 6, 1911). By 1915, a one room school had been erected on this parcel (Hunton 1980). This school, a single story L-shaped wood-framed, one room building, heated by a stove, was shown on a 1916 Sanborn map of Freehold (Sanborn 1916).

This school, described by older alumni as a long building that looked like a house, was taught by Ferdinand G. Fenderson. In 1913, the school graduated three students who subsequently attended Freehold High School. In recognition of this milestone, the famous African American leader W.E.B. Dubois was invited to speak at the graduation ceremony. (Bledsoe 1976)

The borough of Freehold was incorporated in 1919, and by the autumn of the following year, its enlarged boundaries contained the site of the Court Street School. With the opening of the 1920-21 school year, this school was one of three included in the borough district. The school included grades one through eight. Morgan W. F. Dickerson, a teacher with 25 years of experience, was principal and taught grades four through eight, and Carolyn G. Laws, a recent graduate of Montclair State Teachers College, taught grades one through four (*Freehold [News] Transcript*, September 3, 1920).

The original block of the school was completed in 1921. The building had only two classrooms, one for grades one through four and the other for grades five through eight. A total of 100 students, 49 boys and 51 girls, were enrolled in the school during its first year (Hendry 1994). Two additional classrooms were added when the end pavilions of the school were constructed in 1927-28.

The original portion of the building lacked both electricity and plumbing. Oil lamps provided illumination. Two outhouses were located on the school grounds. Water was obtained from Mrs. Valentine, an adjacent property owner, and was brought uphill to the school in buckets. These buckets were placed in each cloak room. The two original classrooms were separated by a folding wall. At the beginning of each school day, the wall was open and all the students gathered together for a morning prayer (Brown 1994).

The enlarged building was designed by architect Warren H. Conover who also designed the original building. Contracts for the enlargement were awarded on September 6, 1927. The general construction contract was awarded to H.F. Soden & Brother of Freehold

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

in the amount of \$16,550. A \$1,569.18 contract for plumbing and drainage work was awarded to Frederick A. White of Freehold. John V. Denise of Freehold received a \$3,373.85 contract for heating and ventilating equipment, and Marcel Krater of Freehold received a \$440 contract for electrical work. Each contract specified that the work was to be completed by January 1, 1928 (Monmouth County Building Contracts). The completion of the addition was delayed beyond the target date. On March 1, 1928, the Freehold School Board met, and its minutes indicated that the third room had been completed and was in good condition.

For the first two years of the new school, only three of the four classrooms were in use. Students were divided with kindergarten, first and second grade in one classroom; third, fourth and fifth grade in a second classroom; and six, seventh and eight grades in the third classroom. All four classrooms were first used in the 1930-31 academic year. The expanded school was equipped with electricity and indoor plumbing. Bathrooms were placed in the basement of the school. Other portions of the basement were used for exercise during inclement weather (Ham 1994).

Additional land was purchased to accommodate the enlarged school. In the summer of 1927, the Freehold Borough Board of Education purchased a tract of land north of the original parcel for \$250 from D.B. Perrine (Freehold Borough Board of Education 1927). In July of the following year, the Board purchased land south of the original parcel from Mary A. Daley of Freehold for \$750 (Monmouth County Deed Book 1445:405-407, July 3, 1928; Freehold Borough Board of Education 1928).

In 1927, George I. Read was appointed principal of the Court Street School and teacher of grades 5 through 8 (*Freehold [News] Transcript*, September 2, 1927). He retained that position until 1948. Read, a science graduate of Lincoln University, began his teaching career in Wilmington, Delaware. He was among the school's most respected teachers. According to alumna Nicy Russell, "He was the father, the principal, anything you can think of. Besides reading, writing, and arithmetic, and black history, Read also taught music, drawing, and games." Another student, Donald Ruffin discussed Read's teaching of black history: "He was really before his time. He not only taught black history; he taught black pride" (Prince 1984:47).

Jane Morris, a Court Street School alumna, described her education:

The white kids lost a treat because they didn't have our teachers. The education was dedicated. We were taught black education at the time. If it weren't for their [our teachers'] dedication, we probably would not have done so well.

We got hand-me-down books, but our teachers bought the newest books out of their own pockets and passed them around. They taught us to respect our books.

When I got to high school, I always felt I was playing catch up. Those [white] kids had the jump on us, because the books we had at Court Street didn't bring us up to where they were.

The school was a continuation of home. They taught you respect, pride and decency. When you went into the room, you knew it was time to learn. They made you want to learn. They told you that you could be what you wanted to be. Those years are some of the greatest of my life.

One of her teachers, Marcelina Jane Frisbee, took a train from her home in Asbury Park to the Freehold Station and then walked the half-mile from the station to the school, every school day in every sort of weather (Prince 1984:86). If the weather turned bad, she

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

would either stay with a family in the community or sleep in the school on what she referred to as her "pallet." Most of the other teachers lived in Freehold.

The Freehold school board provided no funds to hire a substitute when a teacher was absent. Instead, an older student was assigned to teacher younger students during the teacher's absence. Unlike other borough schools, Court Street School was not assigned resource teachers to teach special subjects, such as physical education and music. Until the last years of the school, these subjects were also taught by the classroom teachers (Russell 1994).

After completing the curriculum of Court Street School, its students could sit for an examination for admission to Freehold High School. Freehold High School was integrated, but that school also posed difficulties for African American students. Mrs. Russell recalled that in 1927, when she entered the all-white college preparatory program:

They didn't give me a seat in the classroom. I spent the first few days walking in the halls. I'd go to my class and the teacher would say I didn't belong in that class, so I went to my next class.

She finally went to the office and was told that she should be going to the classes from which she had been ejected. This was not the end of her problems. In one class, the teacher gave her a seat in the front of the room, but no books and no desk (Prince 1984:47). This adjustment problem may have been more acute for teenage girls rather than boys, because boys were more apt to come in contact with their white classmates through sports and organizations such as Boy Scouts (Russell 1994).

Court Street School functioned as both an educational center and a community center. African American community organizations used its facilities at night, and athletic events were held on its playground on weekends. Parents were invited to the school on special occasions, such as the spring exhibit time during which student work was displayed. Older alumni indicate that the school and its teachers, along with the churches, played a critical role in the African American community (Hendry 1994).

The Court Street School was both a gathering place for the community at large and a place in which values were instilled in the children of the community.

During World War II, the school was used as an air raid shelter and ration station and continued to remain open as a segregated school. In its last year as a segregated school, the Court Street School had an enrollment of 63 boys and 73 girls (Freehold Borough School Board Minutes).

The Freehold grammar schools were integrated in 1948 (Schroft 1980). According to Russell, a major impetus for immigration was protests by African American veterans who objected to having their children walk past white schools to attend Court Street (Russell 1994). When the decision to integrate was made, the school was temporarily closed and its students attended either the Bennett Street or Broad Street School. The Court Street School reopened two years later as an integrated neighborhood school for students in kindergarten through third grade. Because of the racial makeup of the surrounding area, its students remained predominantly black in the first years following integration (Russell 1994).

In 1969, the school was used for grades one through four. In that year, 72 students were taught in the school's four classrooms. Its principal was Frederick Ball, who also served as principal of the Broad Street School (Borough of Freehold 1969:n.p.)

The Freehold Borough Board of Education closed the Court Street School in 1974. The school, as well as the Hudson Street and Bennett Street schools, was replaced by a newly constructed, consolidated, 500 student school designed with an open classroom plan. The Board of Education initially retained the Court Street School in case of unanticipated local growth. Monmouth County

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Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

subsequently purchased the building and used it for a juvenile probation center until 1981. In 1981, the county leased the building for one dollar to a civic group, the United Taxpayers Association of Freehold, for use as a community center (Prince 1984:46). The building became vacant in about 1986. Another group, the Court Street School Education Community Center, Inc., is planning to rehabilitate the building for community use.

Warren H. Conover and Colonial Revival Architecture

The Court Street School is also significant under National Register Criterion C as a well executed and preserved local example of Colonial Revival architecture and as the design of Warren H. Conover, a locally prominent architect. Significant architectural details include its symmetrical massing and appearance, including paired entrances and center and end pavilions; its decorative concrete work, including quoins and water tables; and its additional exterior detailing, including slate roof and octagonal, wood-framed cupolas with hemispherical copper roofs.

The roots of the Colonial Revival are found in the nineteenth century effort to preserve and restore landmarks because of their association with the United States' early political and military heroes. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, prominent American architectural firms, such as Peabody and Stearns and McKim, Mead, and White, drew on both Colonial monuments, including Mount Vernon and the John Hancock House, and less well-known Georgian and Federal style buildings for inspiration. The large majority of Colonial Revival buildings were not intended to recall specific patriotic landmarks. Yet even these buildings were inspired by nationalistic feeling, the desire to have in the United States an *American* style distinct from European modes of architectural expression (Rhoads 1976:241-242).

By the early twentieth century, the Colonial Revival had become the accepted style for public buildings in the United States. The periodical *Architecture* held that the Colonial Revival "should be the accepted type of design for public or semi-public buildings in our small American towns, especially in the East, where Colonial traditions still survive with some strength." The author argued that this style was "more nearly real and genuine architecture than any copying of English, French or Italian motives can ever be."¹

Colonial Revival architecture was spread throughout the eastern United States by now generally little-known architects who used its vocabulary for civic buildings such as town and city halls and schools, as well as houses and other private buildings. Among these architects was Warren H. Conover.

Conover was a Freehold resident who also maintained an office in New York City. A native of Freehold, he was a descendant of Wolphert Gerretze von Couwenhoven, a prominent early Dutch settler of Monmouth County. After studying architecture at New York's Cooper Union (*Freehold [News] Transcript*, January 27, 1955), Conover helped to shape the appearance of Monmouth County and central New Jersey by designing many of its late nineteenth and early twentieth century public and private buildings. A partial list of Conover commissions lists 153 buildings in Monmouth County (Monmouth County Building Contracts Index). Most of Conover's buildings were designed in the Colonial Revival style and included new houses, renovations to older Monmouth County farmhouses (Hunton and McCabe 1984:100), and governmental, religious, institutional and commercial buildings.

¹*Architecture*, XXV (March 15, 1912), 33 as cited in Rhoads 1976, 244-245.

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Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

(Narrative Statement of Significance continued)

Conover designed many other Monmouth County schools in addition to the Court Street School. Among these were the Crawford's Corner School in Holmdel (1914); a school at Lafayette, Manalapan Township (1914); a three room brick schoolhouse in Morganville (1915); a two room brick schoolhouse in Union, Raritan Township (1915); a school at Oak Grove, Holmdel Township (1917); the Atlantic Elementary School in Colt's Neck Township (1922); two school buildings in Perrineville and Clarksburg, Millstone Township (1925); and a school at Hurleytown, Wall Township (1931). In Freehold, Conover also designed the Broad Street School (1928), as well as an addition to the Hudson Street School. Although not conclusively attributed to him, the West Freehold school opened in 1933, also appears to have been his design (Anonymous 1933).

Conover's municipal commissions included a bathing pavilion in North Spring Lake (1913); a new municipal building for Freehold (1917); the County Clerk's Office in Freehold (1917); and a new main building for the Monmouth County Tuberculosis Hospital in Allenwood (1919). Other major commissions include the Perrine Building (1895) at 12 - 16 West Main Street in Freehold; the 1900 Chateausque Freehold Passenger Depot located at Jackson and Mechanic streets; his own Shingle/Colonial Revival house (1897), located at 2 Yard Avenue in Freehold; the Georgian Revival Monmouth County Historic Association on Court Street in Freehold; the Monmouth County's early twentieth century schools were designed almost exclusively in the Georgian or Colonial Revival style. The schools vary in size, plan, and detail but are similar in their use of red or yellow brick, hipped roofed, classical wood trim, and large multi-light sash windows (Hunton and McCabe 1984:151). The Court Street School is typical of such Monmouth County schools of the period. In the years since the construction of the addition in 1927, the school has undergone relatively few changes. The historic exterior of the building is largely intact with the most noticeable changes being the enclosure of the original basement windows. The interior has undergone more substantial alterations. These include the sheathing of many interior walls in wood paneling, and the installation of dropped acoustic tile ceilings and recessed fluorescent light fixtures. The school, although vacant, remains in relatively good condition and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

Verbal Boundary Description

Freehold Borough Block 5, Lots 1, 2, and 3.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the school with the exception of a small parcel now used as the site of a Freehold Borough pumping station.

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Additional Documentation Page 1

Court Street School
Monmouth, New Jersey

Maps

A USGS map is attached.

Photographs

[Items 1, 2, and 7 are labeled on the rear of each photograph. Items 3 through 5 are the same for each photograph.]

Photo 1:

3. Douglas C. McVarish
4. November 1994
5. New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, Trenton.
6. South facade and portion of west end, looking northeast.

Photo 2:

6. West end, looking northeast.

Photo 3:

6. East end and north side, looking southwest.

Photo 4:

6. Detail of west cupola, looking northeast.

Photo 5:

6. Detail of east entrance, south facade, looking northwest.

Photo 6:

6. Ground floor hallway, looking southwest.

Photo 7:

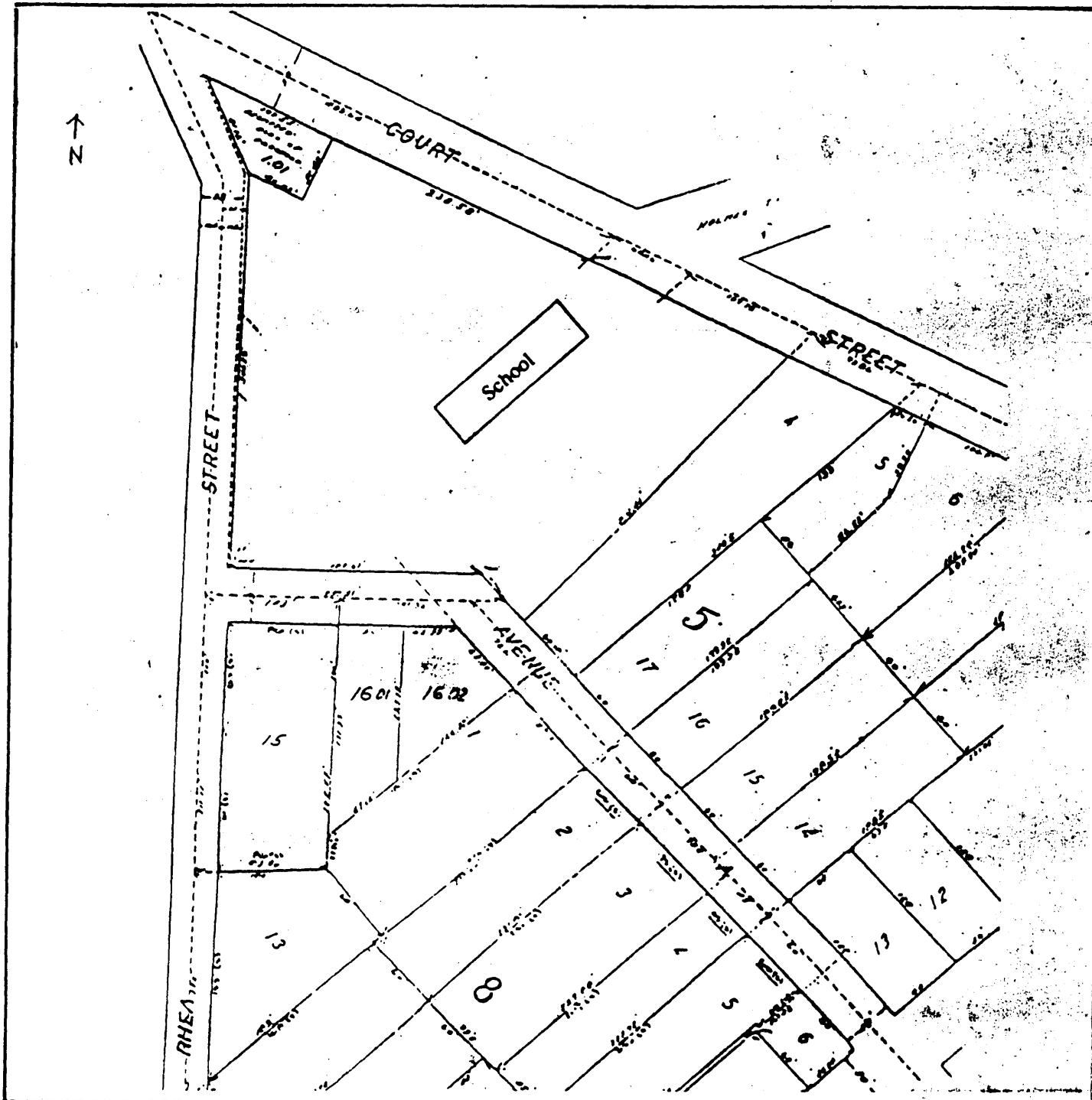
6. East coatroom and supply closet, looking northeast.

Photo 8:

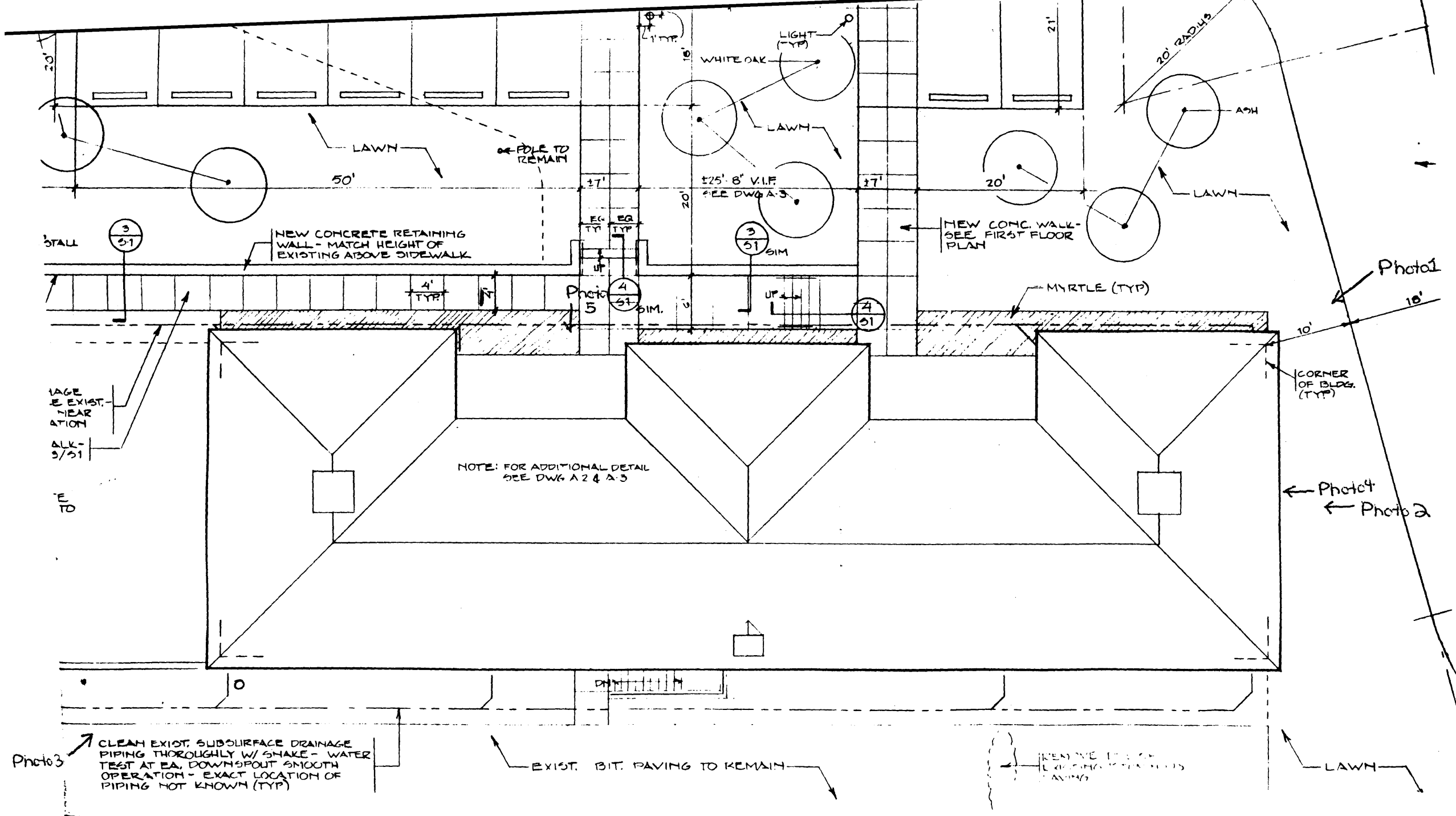
6. West classroom, central block, looking northwest.

Photo 9:

6. Light fixture, ground floor hallway, looking northeast.

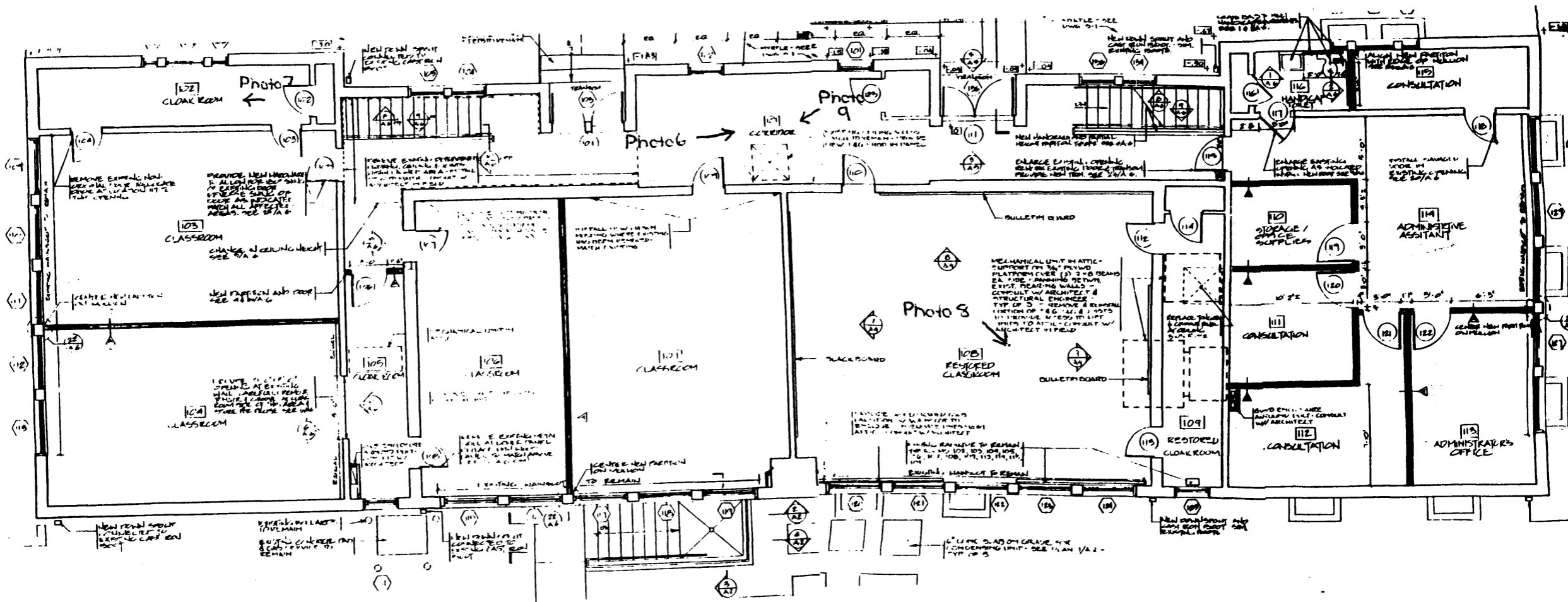


Site Map: Court Street School
 Freehold Borough, Monmouth County, New Jersey

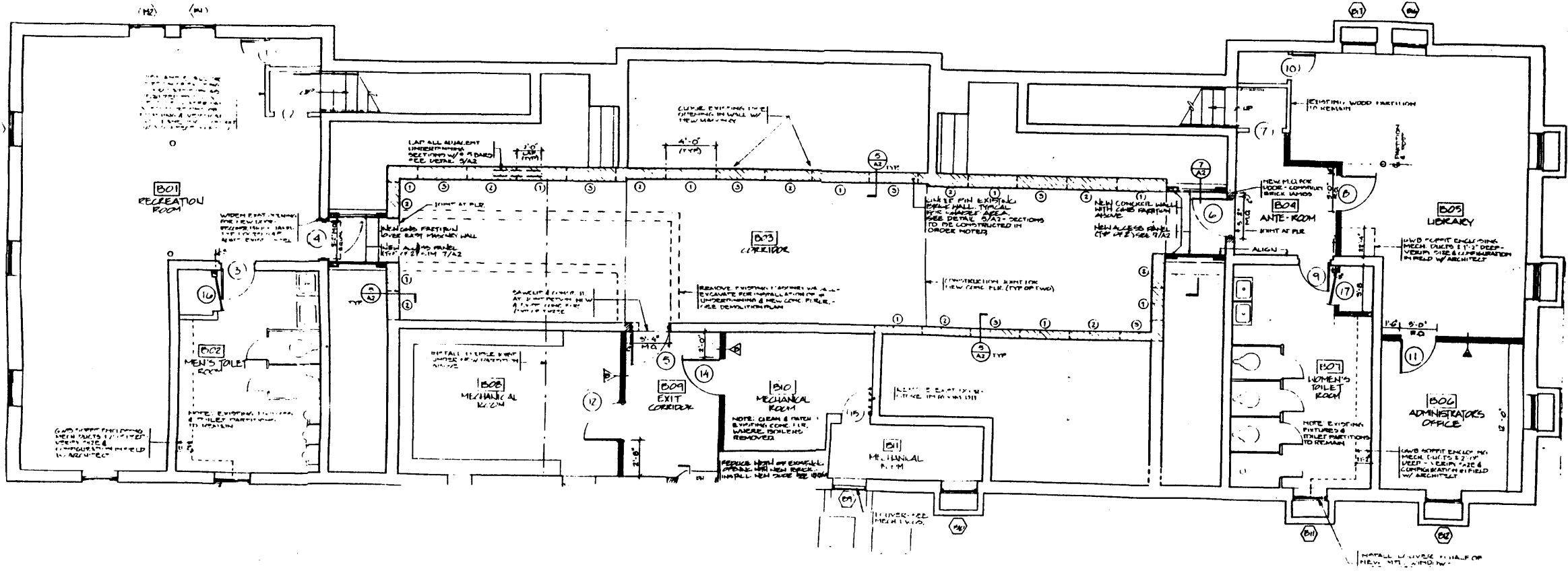


COURT STREET SCHOOL: SITE PLAN
 Freehold Borough
 Monmouth County, NJ





COURT STREET SCHOOL: FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 Freehold Borough
 Monmouth County, NJ



COURT STREET SCHOOL: BASEMENT PLAN
 Freehold Borough
 Monmouth County, NJ