

Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)



United States Department of 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 marking "x" in 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 Grand Avenue Elementary School
other names/site number Wisconsin Avenue School

2. Location

street & number 2708 West Wisconsin Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Milwaukee N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Milwaukee code 079 zip code 53217

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

Date 2/1/18

State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin
State or 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 commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Grand Avenue Elementary School

Milwaukee

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

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.
See continuation sheet.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain):

Barbara Wyatt
Signature of the Keeper

3-23-18
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1 buildings	2 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	sites	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	structures	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> site	1 objects	2 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	2 total	2 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property 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
EDUCATION: School

Current Functions
WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:
Late Gothic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation - Concrete
Walls - Brick with ceramic tile accents
Walls - Indiana Limestone trim and accents
Roof - Rubber and standing seam metal
other

Narrative Description

See attached continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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

(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)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1921

Significant Dates

1921

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Van Ryn, Henry J.

De Gelleke, Gerrit J.

Narrative Statement of Significance

See attached continuation sheet.

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Name of Property

Milwaukee
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Park Service
- 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:
Milwaukee County Historical Society
Milwaukee Public School Dept. of Facilities

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.89 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 T 422758 4765596
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification

See attached continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Donna Weiss, Founder and Kate Bissen, Preservation Associate	date	July 19, 2017
organization	Preserve, LLC	telephone	262-617-1408
street & number	5027 North Berkeley Boulevard	zip code	53217-5502
city or town	Whitefish Bay	state	WI

Name of Property

County and State

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/title	Rick Wiegand	date	October 24, 2017
organization	Ambassador Enterprise LLC	telephone	414-345-5900
street & number	2308 West Wisconsin Avenue	zip code	53223-3182
city or town	Milwaukee	state	WI

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 7 Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Summary

The Grand Avenue Elementary School, designed in the Collegiate Gothic style, was constructed in 1921. The building is of brick masonry, with a steel frame and consisting of four floors (lower level and first through third floors) equaling 92,600 square feet and having a flat roof. It was completed at a cost of \$430,000.¹ The building is centered between the east and west property lines, with 37'-9³/₄" side lots, and positioned on the south end of the site along Wisconsin Avenue. The building plan is symmetrical with the exception of a small boiler house and fuel room projecting at the northeast corner of the basement and first floor levels. The basement level is partially above grade (approximately 3'-6") to allow generous natural light.

The Grand Avenue Elementary School is executed in the Collegiate Gothic style as applied to early education buildings of the 1910s through 1930s. The Collegiate Gothic style is an early twentieth century adaptation of the nineteenth century Gothic Revival to serve the specific function of educational buildings. The Gothic Revival style, which flourished from the period of 1830 through 1890 in the United States, and between 1850 and 1880 in Wisconsin, was often chosen for churches and institutional buildings due to its impressive, medieval-inspired forms and design motifs. In the early-twentieth century, the Collegiate Gothic style, a restrained version of the Gothic Revival, was a popular choice for elementary, secondary, and university school buildings and was often executed in brick masonry with contrasting limestone or terra cotta decorative details. This was especially the case in Milwaukee where it was favored by Van Ryn and DeGelleke, architects for the Milwaukee Public School system. More on Collegiate Gothic is included in Section 8.

In the 1920s and 30s, many new public schools were built in Milwaukee as a result of educational policy changes and increasing population. These new larger and more complex school buildings incorporated new features such as gymnasiums and auditoriums and were often executed in the Collegiate Gothic style. In contrast to their university counterparts, Collegiate Gothic public schools often took a simplified approach to the more ornate examples in Gothic Revival, while still harkening to the sense of permanence and enlightenment the Gothic style offered. The interpretation of the Collegiate Gothic at elementary schools like the Grand Avenue School consisted of a pared down versions of the style, in part to defer costs away from ornament and toward the ever-growing list of facilities and amenities a school was expected to provide. The relatively few decorative details include arched and recessed entryways and decorative panels. Despite their restraint, these school buildings are clearly part of the Gothic Revival tradition.

The Collegiate Gothic style, as expressed in the Grand Avenue Elementary School, exhibits

¹ William M. Lamers, *Our Roots Grow Deep*, Second Ed., 1836-1967, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1974), 15.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

quintessential elements of the style on the interior and exterior, located where they would be the most impactful to economize the design.

Site and Setting

The Grand Avenue Elementary School served Milwaukee's 16th Ward, situated in the north central part of the school district which extended from North 23rd Street west to North 37th Street and from West State Street south to the Menomonee River. This neighborhood is west of Milwaukee's downtown and became one of the earliest commercial corridors to develop outside the central business and entertainment district as streetcars and industrialization allowed middle-income and working class individuals to relocate outside the urban center. North 27th Street, on the east side of the school, is one of the most important and continuous north-south roads in the city. Near the Grand Avenue School, it is a mixed-use commercial corridor composed predominantly of mid-sized, Period Revival style apartment blocks with retail/commercial on the lower floors. The southern end of the area bordering the school property comprises the 27th and Wells Commercial Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places, NRIS #16000767). Wisconsin Avenue (formerly Grand Avenue) on the south border of the school grounds is one of the main east-west thoroughfares of the city. This street connects the Milwaukee Art Museum and lakefront at the east end (via pedestrian bridge) to Wauwatosa at the west end. On the west side of the school is a residential neighborhood with mid-sized homes and apartment buildings. The school sits on its original grounds, comprising over half a city block, equating to 82,662 square feet of property. A bus stop on the southeast corner is the only alteration to the original site boundary. The school historically had a perimeter fence of metal panels interspersed with brick piers; the brick piers were capped with limestone. This fence surrounded the entire school yard in its original configuration. The masonry fence piers have been repaired with new brick although the limestone caps appear to be original as they match those detailed in drawings and depicted in historic images. Currently, the piers are located only along the south and west property lines. On the west edge of the property, the piers terminate at the rear of the building; the fencing then transitions into chain link. The entire north and east fence runs are chain link. The metal and brick fence is considered to be a contributing element. Limited trees and grass are located on the south side of the site. The entire north side is paved right up to the building and demarcated with painted play areas for games such as hopscotch, four square, and basketball, all modern era. The immediate east and west side areas are paved for use as angled parking lots. A small playground with play equipment is located within a fenced area on the south side of the site, adjacent to the kindergarten rooms.

Non-Contributing Objects

The modern chain link fence described above is non-contributing. Additionally, a modern-era sign was installed at the southwest corner of the property. It is a freestanding, internally illuminated painted aluminum and plastic box sign on a short red brick plinth. The top of the sign is arched and displays the name of the school, "Wisconsin Avenue." Below the name is an analog reader board for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

announcements meant to receive acrylic letters. This sign is a non-contributing object; it was added to the site well after the period of significance, is stylistically modern-era, and does not replace or replicate any known original features.

Exterior

The exterior walls are composed of an extruded wire-cut face brick with a raked face in a color range of terra cottas to dark browns laid in a Flemish bond pattern. The structure is articulated on the exterior façade with slightly projecting masonry pilasters. While this articulation is consistently utilized on the building, it is not evenly spaced resulting in a rhythm of masonry solids (blank masonry walls or with small single window openings) and window voids throughout the façade. The four main entry locations project from the main façades and contain full height interior stairs.

Floor levels are expressed on the east, south, and west elevations with Indiana limestone belt courses at the first floor sill line and just above the second and third floor window header levels. The third floor header belt course wrapping the building features a rounded cornice with evenly spaced human figure heads of stone that are located directly above pilaster locations on all facades. These heads represent typical Gothic-inspired grotesques with open mouths and stern expressions. Four different heads are represented with placement altering around the building. No inspiration for these figures has been discovered.

The parapet consists of a simple brick field topped with a shallow crenellated band capped in Indiana limestone. Between crenellations, evenly spaced short projecting rectangular accents further ornament the coping. Just below the parapet coping are bas-relief panels consisting of banded half-circle scrolls with an oval at the center.

The flat roof of the main school building is separated with projecting fire walls from the auditorium section. The roof has positive slope to internal leader drains. Steel and glass, end-gabled skylights cover the auditorium skylight and the skylight at the base of the two light courts. None of the roof structure or the skylights is visible from the public-right-of way. The skylights are intact.

Primary Façade (South)

The south facade is arranged symmetrically about the center bay of windows, the lowest of which project in a box bay at the first floor kindergarten room. No two bays are the same on each half of the building, such that the overall pattern of articulation is A, B, C, D, C, B, A. The "A" segment is windowless, with flush decorative masonry panels composed of a basket weave pattern of stacked and soldier bond brick grids with inset robin's egg blue ceramic tiles. These basket weave panels are arranged with a border of Flemish bond brick on all sides, including locations where the limestone belt courses intersect with the "A" segment.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

The main entrance/stair towers comprise the "B" segments. These project 10' from the main wall face and represent the most highly decorative segments of the building. Each entrance is approached by five steps divided at the second step by a long landing. The steps are framed on either side by concrete cheek walls. The masonry entrance surrounds project still further and are topped with a stone arch door head. The segment above the entrance consists of a bas-relief Indiana limestone panel featuring a central acanthus leaf panel with an open book at its center. This panel is flanked by elegant scroll brackets with a single cusp at each base. The shallow projecting entablature is composed of six tiny pilasters separated by crescents; a single oval bullseye twice the height of the parapet is at the center. Flanking entry pilasters are topped with the building's typical limestone belt course detail with the added feature of a large scroll bracket faced with a single large acanthus leaf. The window directly above the entry is recessed and trimmed in Indiana limestone with projecting quoins at each side. Flanking the window hoodmold are two label stops in the form of two carved heads of children; a girl on the right and a boy on the left. Each entry projection window features the same replicated heads. The windows at these locations feature three, lower double-hung windows with arched transoms above, each separated by stone mullions. The same window detail is repeated at the landing at the third floor; the only detail absent from the stone window trim is the flanking figural heads. The third floor landing windows at the tower entry projections are topped above the belt course with a bas-relief applied pediment composed of intertwining scroll brackets with a central oculus window. All windows and both pairs of entry doors have been replaced with modern-era aluminum units. The parapet of each "B" segment tower continues past the main building parapet and terminates in a crenelated Indiana limestone coping. An Indiana limestone belt course carries the line of the main parapet around the tower.

The "C" segments are composed of a wide central band of five double-hung windows flanked on either side by a vertical expression of pilasters surrounding a narrow, arched, double-hung window on each floor. All windows in this segment feature honed Indiana limestone sills. The wide center bank of windows also features a honed Indiana limestone header at the second and third floor. Basement and first floor window units have a steel lintel, with no masonry header expressed. The narrow window between flanking pilasters is topped with a jack arch header. All windows have been replaced with modern aluminum units. The pilasters are paired around the narrow window and continue up to the second floor header belt course. Below the belt course, to top of each brick pilaster features a robin's egg blue square tile turned 45 degrees and framed with pale cream-colored tiles. Above the belt course, the pilasters terminate with a pointed Indiana limestone finial supported by scrolling brackets on either side. A grotesque interrupts the third floor header belt course directly above each pointed pilaster. Parapet crenellations occur above the narrow window on either side of the "C" segment. These are the only crenellations on the south facade except for those at the entrance/"B" segments.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

The “D” segment, which marks the center of the building, is characterized by a projecting box bay housing the first floor kindergarten room. This bay projects 10’ out from the wall plane and creates an appearance reminiscent of a conservatory. This bay is adorned with two short pilasters flanking the south wall topped with the typical limestone cap detail with the added feature of a large scroll bracket faced with a single large acanthus leaf. The built-in gutter on the standing seam roof is trimmed in painted sheet metal crests. The return east and west parapets are composed of matching paired bas-relief panels separated by mullions. Above the kindergarten bay, the windows echo the center bank of windows at the “C” segment on either side, with five double-hung units supported by a honed Indiana limestone sill and topped with a honed Indiana limestone header.

At the parapet, just below the coping, previously described bas-relief panels adorn the center of the “A,” “C,” and “D” segments.

Side Facades (East and West)

The west and east facades are mirror images of one another composed of an entry bay toward the rear of each side, and an A-B-A pattern comprising the rest of each wall. The “A” segment is a variation of the “C” segment on the south facade, featuring a group of five double-hung windows flanked by pilasters terminating at the second floor header belt course and ornamented with finials and decorative tile. These pilasters are identical to those described in the “C” segment of the main façade. All windows are supported by honed Indiana limestone sills. The basement and first floor units have steel lintels; second and third floor units have honed Indiana limestone headers. Between the “A” segments, the “B” segment is characterized by a flat wall face with two punched openings per floor with double-hung window units. On the basement and first floor, these top of these windows are flat with a steel lintel. On the second and third floor, the windows are arched with masonry jack arch lintels above. All windows have been replaced with modern aluminum units. A small panel of basket weave masonry with inset blue tile is located in the spandrel area between the first and second floor windows. This pattern mimics on a smaller scale that described on the “A” segment of the main elevation.

The side entrances serve as secondary entrances. On the first and second floors they are identical to the “B” entrance bays on the front façade; however, they do not project as far from the wall face and require fewer steps due to a rise in grade. Above the second floor, the third floor windows are inset into a stepped parapet and flush with the remainder of the wall face. The third floor windows in the entrance bay are articulated with honed Indiana limestone surrounds as described for the main entrances on the south elevation. Unlike the front entrances, the secondary entrances do not have the additional applied, carved pediment or projecting tower.

Crenellations at the side parapets align with the pilasters below, including the pilasters on either side of the side entrance doors. Below the parapet coping, the carved bas-relief panel occurs at the center of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

each "A" segment.

Rear Façade (North)

The north facade facing the play lot is predominantly symmetrical, composed of a center projection housing the auditorium and gymnasium spaces flanked by modest, largely flat, side bays. The only exception to the symmetrical expression is the link between the school and the boiler house on the northeast corner of the building. The overall expression of the elevation is A-B-B-C-B-B-A, where "C" represents the entire gym/auditorium projection. The east and west sides of the facade are divided into bays by shallow pilasters. Each pilaster terminates at the second floor header belt course and features a square blue tile rotated 45 degrees and surrounded by pale cream tile (this same tile decoration was described and featured on the front and side elevation pilasters). The parapet is crenellated at each pilaster. The east and west side wall faces are otherwise unadorned except for the previously described belt courses. The "A" segment has a flat masonry wall with no additional adornment other than the belt courses. The "B" segments are characterized by groups of three double-hung window units. At the inner-most "B" segment on each side, the second floor windows vary with two separated double-hung units instead of three (the two units align with the outside windows in the grouping of three on the other floors). All units have honed Indiana limestone sills. As on the other facades, the first and second floor windows feature steel lintels while the second and third floor units feature honed Indiana limestone headers.

The projecting gymnasium/auditorium is articulated with simple flat pilasters matching those previously described above separating the other segments of the rear facade, with flat coping aligning with the second floor header belt course and decorative tile as the only ornament. The projecting gymnasium/auditorium is characterized by large, simple, six light fixed units with narrower, three light units at the return walls near the inside corners and at the center of gymnasium floors (basement and first floor). The windows, which infill the area between pilasters on all sides, correspond with the double-height spaces inside and are approximately twice as tall as the other units on the building. These windows have also been replaced with modern aluminum units. The second floor auditorium projection room projects out from the wall face as a stucco box bay with a heavy metal cornice and standing seam metal roof. The box bay base is terminated with multiple runs of curved and flat sheet metal trim tapering into a small drop finial at the bottom. Six attic windows located at the north elevation parapet have simple stone sills and steel lintels.

Rear Boiler House

The one-story boiler house at the northeast corner of the building is a double-height space encompassing the lower level and first floor. The adjacent fuel room is located on the lower level beneath the parking area. The boiler house is connected to the main building by an 18'-6" wide connector piece nearly aligning with the east face of the boiler house volume. The entire connector and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

boiler house are set back from the main east façade. Located within this connector are a roof access stair, corridor stepping down into the boiler room, and janitor's room. This narrow connector form results in an open courtyard between the west wall of the connector and the east elevation of the gymnasium bump out. The articulation of this smaller form mimics that of the larger building mass with Flemish bond masonry walls, a soldier course at grade, Indiana limestone belt course four courses above the window heads, and a crenelated parapet with Indiana limestone coping and shallow rectangular finial accents. The east elevation of the boiler house and connector are the most decorative. It features a stone header above the central projection windows with corner rosettes and three evenly spaced inset robin's egg blue square tile turned forty-five degrees and trimmed in a cream tile border. The boiler house chimney is located outside the boiler house form abutting the south elevation near the west corner. At 35' in height, the chimney has steps and stone belt courses matching the main building exterior with a simple stone limestone cap. The chimney once extended approximately 15' higher than the top of the main school parapets.

Interior

The building is constructed of reinforced concrete footings, poured concrete foundation, and steel frame encapsulated in concrete. Steel trusses and purlins support the flat roof. This structural system is primarily concealed on the interior within walls and above ceilings apart from the utilitarian lower level areas and the boy's and girl's gymnasiums. Pyrobar gypsum tile manufactured by the United States Gypsum Company is evident in several areas as steel fire protection and interior wall partitions. All walls and ceilings are flat plaster.

The original floor plan is intact. Twenty-five total classrooms are present and distributed among all floors opposite secondary and support spaces. Classroom locations are stacked throughout the floor levels with the library and playroom utilizing some of these volumes in the lower level. The plan consists of a central U-shaped corridor with classrooms off one side. The top (north) ends of the U are terminated by full height stair towers. Two other matching full height stairs flank the bottom (south) sides of the U-shaped plan, inset from the south outside corners. This U-shape corridor wraps around the central north volume of the girl's and boy's gymnasiums topped with the auditorium. Two light courts flank the southeast and southwest edges of the gymnasiums and auditorium to provide daylighting.

The entries into the building (two at south, one at east, and one west) are identical with Arts and Crafts inspired glazed ceramic tile foyer floors and walls in a buff field color with bold black, blue, green, and maroon accents. A buff-colored marble base transitions the floor and wall tile. A vestibule partition consists of honey-colored oak trim, heavy oak crown, and true divided light sidelights and transoms. Two doors are separated by a thick parting stop and consist of oak six-light panels. The stair towers consist of gray terrazzo flooring with a matching terrazzo base, inset white marble mosaic

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

accents, honey-colored oak wainscot at each landing of the center solid railing walls, and honey-colored oak top rails and handrails.

The flooring material in the corridors on floors one through three consists of white, gray, and black, marble chip terrazzo; the resulting field color reads gray. A matching terrazzo base is located wherever the terrazzo is used. Inset white marble mosaic accents delineate borders and define large diamond-shaped corridor intersection markers. Honey-colored oak trim is used throughout the first through third floors. Lower level corridor floors are poured concrete. Lower level doors consist of painted three panel units with a single upper light. Primarily lower level trim is painted white. First through third floor interior doors are flat panel honey-colored wood veneer with a single upper light. The primary door light style has a clear glass border with a textured glass panel that appears similar to frost fingers on a window. Tongue and groove honey-colored maple floors are located in classrooms; however, a few have modern overlays. Ceilings are flat plaster with 8" x 8" acoustic tile overlay applied with adhesive in many locations.

Lower Level

The lower level floor plan is divided approximately down the middle into dedicated spaces for boys and girls, in accordance with educational philosophy of the period. The boy's gym, locker room, toilet room, and manual training room are on the east side of the building, while the girl's gym, locker room, toilet room, and domestic science room are on the west side of the building. The library and playroom on the south side of the lower level are the only deviations from this division. The mirror-image girl's and boy's toilet rooms are finished in gray 3" x 3" ceramic tile floors with a white square accent turned 45 degrees at each gray tile intersection. Walls are warm ochre toned glazed brick. Toilet partitions are composed of pink Tennessee marble with short two-panel painted wood doors. All porcelain toilets are child height fixtures. Porcelain pedestal sinks have elegant tapered bases and most have their original faucets. The boy's toilet room contains a Tennessee marble projection to house white porcelain urinals, extant. Across the corridor from each toilet room are boy's and girl's locker rooms consisting of the same finishes as those on the toilet rooms, with the addition of pink Tennessee marble shower partitions. The shower and toilet areas of the locker rooms sit at the base of the light courts and thus have wood framed skylights located in each ceiling.

The U-shape corridor is divided only on the lower level at the fan room located at the base (south end) of the U. The library and play room are located off of the ends of the main corridor, immediately east and west of the fan room, respectively. Flanking these spaces at the southeast and southwest building corners are the manual training class room and domestic science classroom respectively. Annex spaces (foyers) off the north U-legs of the plan lead to the adjoining boy's and girl's gymnasiums. The gymnasium spaces are double height extending from the lower level up through the first floor. The flooring consists of narrow tongue and groove oak. Walls are warm ochre toned glazed brick up to the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

first floor level and cream brick and plaster above. Wood trim is minimal and consists of honey-colored oak window and door trim. Honey-colored oak wood overhead doors separate the two gymnasiums on the lower level, each door separated by thick wood mullions. The large volumes of space are articulated only by boxed structural beams on the ceiling transitioning into rounded columns at the walls with simple box capitals. Ceilings are flat throughout the lower level. The only floor level change is at the boiler room, which is eight steps down from the main lower level floor, and at the fan room, two steps down below the boiler room. The underside of each stair tower houses either janitors or storage rooms. Wall and ceiling mounted radiators are located through the lower level.

First Floor

The first floor corridor plan is also a U-shaped corridor around the north girl's and boy's gymnasiums. The plan is symmetrical with classrooms lining the outside of the U-shaped plan. The terrazzo corridor floor with white marble mosaic trim is separate from the classroom tongue and groove maple flooring with a pink Tennessee marble threshold. Between each of the classrooms on the east and west side of the building are matching wardrobe rooms, one for each classroom. Wardrobe rooms consist of narrow corridor-like spaces with a window at one end and door leading to the corridor at the other. The primary entrance to each wardrobe is through two doors at the back of each classroom. Two, wide, wood trim rails (one approximately 9" above the other) starting approximately 36" above the floor, support coat hooks.

Off of the south corridor (east to west) is a doctor's room (with original built-in glass front oak cabinets on the east wall), kindergarten annex, wardrobe room with small toilet room at its end, kindergarten room, another wardrobe room with small toilet room at its end, and a classroom. Classroom spaces feature original maple tongue and groove floors (some covered) slate chalkboards, cork boards, oak standing and running trim, built-in storage cabinets with drawers, teacher's wardrobes with overhead doors and ventilated hanging space, and bookshelves. Even the chalk rails are intact. Large double-hung windows allow these spaces to fill with light. These rooms are a time capsule of early-twentieth century classroom design in excellent condition.

The kindergarten room detailing varies from the typical classroom treatments. A south-facing bump out in the floor plan provides a box bay with windows on all sides and low storage cabinets with recessed panel doors beneath the windows with a window seat on top. Along the east wall is an original row of low rectangular cubbies with cork board (now half whiteboard) above. At the north end of the room, a wood burning brick fireplace with wood mantel is centered on the wall flanked by low cork board below chair rail height. The fireplace hearth is raised brick and the firebox has evidence of extensive use. Fireplace brick is a palette of warm brown tones laid in a header bond pattern with inset art tile located in each upper corner. Consisting of four tiles each, the right image depicts a female mouse while on the left a male toad. Other Milwaukee Public School kindergarten rooms of this era

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

often had built-in sandboxes. The floor has been overlaid with a laminate wood-look product, concealing any such features that might exist.

The two wardrobe rooms separating the south facing kindergarten and kindergarten annex are unique to the building in that they provided special amenities to the students. The wardrobe rooms consist of three chair rails located approximately 9" one above the other with coat hooks. At the south end of the rooms is the original porcelain pedestal sink next to a wood door with two, six-light transoms above that span the wardrobe room width. Behind that door is a small toilet room with the building's typical gray with white mosaic accent floor and pink Tennessee marble wall finish. These toilet rooms originally housed special toilets to accommodate the youngest students.

The inside of the U-shape plan houses support spaces. At the bottom of the U-plan across from the kindergarten room is the original gallery space that once overlooked the gymnasium. The spaces are intact, but a wall has been constructed in the opening between the gallery and the gymnasium. Built-in concrete risers still have their seat numbers stenciled on them. Flanking the galleries are the two light courts extending up to the roof. A janitor's closet, office waiting room, and the principals' office complete the west side of the plan. The principal's office houses the original vault room, key cabinet, school bell timer, and a small wash room with built-in shelves and a small sink. At the opposite east side of the U-plan is the teacher's kitchen and teacher's room.

Second Floor

The second floor plan is nearly identical to the first floor in all finish applications and room locations with the exceptions outlined in the following text. At the south side of the U-shaped corridor above the kindergarten room are located three standard classrooms divided by three typical wardrobe rooms.

The auditorium is located above the gymnasiums, which is a double-height space. This is the most ornate space in the building. Two flanking east and west foyers are the main access points for the auditorium located at the top points of the U-plan. These foyers are composed of the building's standard terrazzo floors and plaster walls with typical chair rail and window trim and two sets of honey-colored oak, single-light, French doors with bronze hardware. The arch top transoms consist of leaded stippled glass bordered with milk glass accented with green glass at each corner. On the auditorium side of the flanking entries, deep recessed plaster arches (one per door opening) terminate with plaster heads. Entry openings are topped with plaster bas-relief panels (one per door pair) featuring a central shield, topped with an eagle in the center panel, and flanked by two acanthus leaf panels, one on each side. These are each terminated with a plaster cornice.

The main auditorium space consists of a concrete floor which is level between the side entrances. It slopes upward to the operator's room at the north and down to the stage at the south from this level

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 11

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

walkway. Concrete risers are located at the seating segments at the north half of the space. The original fixed steel base and wood seats are arranged to mimic the curved stage apron. A raised stage is located at the south side of the room with a honey-colored tongue and groove maple floor. The stage apron is a gently curving ellipse faced with recessed panels that have a curved bump out at each end to conceal steps accessing the stage. Trimmed panels at the flat face of the stage apron have flush storage doors concealing shelving under the stage. The proscenium consists of a deep plaster cove trimmed with plaster rope molding at the bottom and rose molding at the top. A plaster shield and plaque with decorative scrollwork are centered in the proscenium. At the upper corners, the proscenium transitions into a gentle curve, tuning 90 degrees to meet a chamfered pilaster-like capital topped with shallow crenellations and supported with two dropped floral finials. The pilaster extends down to the floor terminating into a tall oak baseboard. The top two upper corners of the proscenium have a triangular panel inset with plaster cast leads and a shield.

The north wall is composed of a central operator booth that projects into the auditorium space. Flanking each side of this operator room on the north wall are large double-hung windows with fixed transoms grouped in pairs. There are four paired groupings total on both walls. The east and west return wall are composed of two more matching window groups. The oak chair rail, window trim, stage apron, and baseboard are all finished in the building's typical honey-oak color. Generally, standing and running trim in the space is grander with larger proportions.

The ceiling is composed of plaster box beams articulating the auditorium structure. The space is four bays long by three bays wide, with the center bay being essentially a double width resulting in large simple coffers. Decorative plaster molding trims each coffer within the ceiling plane and along its wall transition with a deep articulating cornice alternating from convex to flat forms and one rope molding. East and west beam end terminations into the wall drop down into a floral console bracket. A skylight is in the second ceiling structural bay from the stage. The length of the skylight (east to west) fills the entire center bay. The auditorium skylight consists of six individual panels separated by deep plaster trim. The two outermost panels are composed of thirty-three true divided light panes. The four central panels are separated by deep plaster trim into three smaller panels each with twelve true divided light glass panes. Glass is painted white (the date of this change is unknown). The remaining wall and ceiling surfaces are flat plaster covered in mid-century 9" x 9" acoustic tile.

At the top of the U-plan just south of the auditorium foyers, a teacher's room is located on the west side and a supply room on the east. Both of these spaces echo the finishes and level of detail in the classrooms.

Third Floor

The third floor plan is nearly identical to the second floor in all finish applications and room locations

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 12

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

with a few exceptions. The auditorium space and related stage/backstage areas are double height and therefore consume the same space on the third floor as they did on the second. At the top of the U-shape plan, east and west unassigned storage rooms and boy's and girl's toilet rooms abut the auditorium walls.

Modifications after 1921

Modest modifications have been made to the Grand Avenue Elementary School since its completion. The first change was its name; the school name was changed to Wisconsin Avenue School in 1927.

No significant changes to its floor plan or additions have occurred to the building. In 1930, the school began offering lunches; however, the actual details of the program are not known. Cafeterias were not considered essential components of school buildings in 1920 when the school was built, thus there was no cafeteria included in the original plan. The girl's gym was used for dining until the school closed; however, no physical changes to the building specifically addressing food service purposes are documented until 1971 when the lower level girl's locker room was converted into a kitchen. Wall and floor finishes for the original room are still intact. This kitchen was updated periodically in the following years. A stainless steel pass-through window with overhead rolling door was installed at the north wall of the girl's locker room for ease of access into the gymnasium for serving. A second smaller stainless steel pass through window with overhead rolling door was installed at the north wall under the light well as a tray return. The girl's gym was eventually reclassified as a cafeteria reflecting its use. No other changes were made to the gymnasium space itself. The gallery seating overlooking the gymnasiums was closed off and turned into individual instruction rooms (date unknown); the concrete risers remain.

In 1934, the grass play lot was partially resurfaced with "Kyrock," an early type of asphalt. A retaining wall was built on the west side of the play yard in 1936.²

The other changes are as follows. In 1935, adhesive applied acoustical ceiling tiles were installed in most classrooms, corridors, gyms, and the auditorium. It is presumed that all painted finishes were non-decorative given the building's use; no decorative finishes are visible in historic images. Sheet linoleum and carpet were added to a few classroom floors covering the original oak. In the 1990s most of the remaining grass on the site was paved (north play lot and east and west side lot parking areas) and a school sign was installed outside the fencing at the southwest corner of the property (non-contributing object). In 1998, all the school's wood windows (of various configurations) were replaced with aluminum. All six-light wood panel exterior doors were replaced with dark brown aluminum composed of flat panels with one small rectangular light each. The auditorium skylight glass was

² Board of School Directors Architectural Division, "Wisconsin Ave. Site Plan for Perimeter Retaining Wall," Feb. 1936.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 13

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

painted to match the ceiling.

In 2001, the parapet masonry was repointed. The mortar color does not match the original. The original raked tooling profile was not replicated. The result is that repairs stand out from the wall faces below. Other modern era undated changes include the following. Vinyl plank wood-like flooring was installed over the first floor kindergarten oak flooring. Privacy partitions were added to the lower level toilet rooms to conceal the urinals near doors. 2' x 4' box style florescent light fixtures were added throughout the building, date unknown. A modern gypsum board partition wall with vinyl baseboard was installed at the lower annex to the east of the boy's gymnasium to create a hall from the gym to the main corridor, date unknown.

Integrity

The Grand Avenue Elementary School maintains a high degree of historic integrity. It is situated on its original site with no spatial changes to the lot such as subdivisions or encroaching structures. Its presence on the streetscape remains unchanged. Modifications to the building are minimal and are described above. The only significant changes to the exterior are the replacement of the wood windows and the height reduction of the boiler chimney. A walk through the Grand Avenue Elementary School's interior today feels much like it would have after the buildings completion. Character defining features such as flooring (terrazzo and wood), wall locations, stairs (with original railings), decorative tile, plaster ornament, interior volumes, wood trim, and doors are intact throughout the building. Original ancillary features such as plumbing fixtures, faucets, toilet partitions, chalkboard, chalk rails, and cabinetry are also intact. The only changes to uses of interior spaces, such as the conversion of the girl's lower level locker room into a kitchen, were executed in secondary spaces that have minimal impact on the overall character of the building. The continuous use of the building as a school well into the modern era, stagnant growth in the surrounding neighborhood after World War II, and Milwaukee Public School District budget restrictions resulted in minimal changes to the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Summary

The Grand Avenue Elementary School (later renamed Wisconsin Avenue School) is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a highly intact school property type, the school design reflecting the educational trends of the period between World War I and World War II. The school is also a highly intact example of the Collegiate Gothic style as applied to an early education building in the 1920s. Designed by the architecture firm of Van Ryn and De Gelleke and completed in 1921, the Grand Avenue Elementary School was the primary grade school for Milwaukee's 16th Ward. As official school architects reporting to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, Henry J. Van Ryn and Gerrit J. De Gelleke were instrumental in establishing the Collegiate Gothic style as the primary style used in school architecture in Milwaukee in the 1910s and 1920s. They were experts in the field of school design, keeping up with the latest trends and incorporating them in their projects. The interior arrangement of classrooms and support spaces at Grand Avenue School is derived from education philosophy of the era and serves as an excellent example of the way these philosophies are manifested in the built environment.

The Grand Avenue Elementary School was commissioned in June 1918. The previous building on the site, a Ferry and Clas structure, was damaged by fire in April 1918. The Milwaukee Board of School Directors, under pressure from neighborhood families, determined that funds previously allocated for the upgrades to the Ferry and Clas structure could be better used for a new facility. In addition to state-of-the-art building systems and restroom facilities, the new building would include a girls and boys gymnasium, classrooms dedicated to domestic sciences and manual training, auditorium, library, indoor playroom (for use during inclement weather), modern toilet facilities, dedicated Kindergarten rooms, and an enlarged surrounding play lot (made possible by acquiring adjacent properties on 27th Street). The public petitioned the school to include a public natatorium in its design plans. This proposal was referred to the Committee on Buildings in an April 1920 school board meeting, but the committee determined it was not feasible.³

The school, which held its first classes in 1921, was used continuously as a Milwaukee Public School until it closed in 2007. With no additions, few modifications, single ownership, and single use the school retains a high degree of integrity as an example of a Collegiate Gothic elementary education facility built between World War I and World War II.

Period of Significance

The period of significance is 1921, the year of construction and first use of the new school. There are no additions to the building and most of the original features are extant. The building is in good

³ *Proceedings of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors*, 6 April 1920, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1920), 288.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

condition, is well-maintained, and looks much as it did in 1921, apart from the door, window and site alterations.

This nomination explores the historical context of the Grand Avenue School from the start of public education in Wisconsin, near the middle of the nineteenth century, to the start of World War II. The character of the school, the neighborhood around it, management and construction of school building projects, and Milwaukee Public Schools in general changed significantly after the war. The growing importance of the automobile, the flight of middle- and working-class individuals to the suburbs, the baby boom, racial tensions, and changes in education and cultural landscapes after the war – these are all social and cultural pressures that occurred well outside the period of significance. For this reason, discussion of those post war influences falls outside the scope of this nomination.

Historical Context – Milwaukee

The City of Milwaukee is located along Lake Michigan at the confluence of the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic rivers. The first mention of a community at this location was during the visit of Father Zenobius Membre to Fox and Mascouten Indians at what is now Jones Island near the mouth of the Milwaukee River. The native population of the area grew in subsequent years, including Potawatomi, Sauk, Ottawa, Chippewa, and Menominee groups.⁴ Settlers of European descent initially used the area as a seasonal trading post during winter months when conditions further north were too harsh. As early settlement pushed west, land was forcibly taken from Natives, many of whom were relocated to Iowa and Kansas. The early settlements that became Milwaukee were founded in the 1830s by Solomon Juneau (Juneautown, with business partner Morgan Martin), Byron Kilbourn (Kilbourntown), and George Walker (Walker's Point). Each claimed a piece of the land and began settlements around the rivers, drawn by the large bay and deep mouth of the Milwaukee River, the deepest on the western shore of Lake Michigan. Although the settlement's growth was driven by commerce, political, religious, and cultural institutions quickly followed. The Town of Milwaukee was officially established in 1839 when Juneautown and Kilbourntown combined; Walker's Point was incorporated in 1845.⁵

Boosted by an influx of European emigrants, Milwaukee's population more than doubled in the four years following incorporation. By 1860, it had doubled again. After the Civil War, the trend continued. The economy grew at an astounding rate. In the twenty years following incorporation, Milwaukee became Wisconsin's center of commerce. The railroad, new regional roads, and the harbor made Milwaukee a trade hub. It was the greatest shipper of wheat on earth and one of the top twenty cities in America in the trade of a wide range of other products.⁶ In the years after the Civil War, wheat began

⁴ John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee*, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999), 7.

⁵ Gurda, 49.

⁶ Gurda, 103.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

to wear out the Wisconsin soil so many farmers shifted to dairy production. As market forces caused wheat to decline, manufacturing rose to take its place, driven in part by steam railroads, a national rail network, readily available raw materials, immigration, and an abundance of enterprising personalities. Tanning, milling, meat-packing, iron production, and brewing rose in prominence. By 1880, industrial workers made up 44.6 percent of the local labor force.

West Wisconsin Avenue, on which the school is situated, was previously named Grand Avenue and originally named Spring Street. It is one of the earliest Milwaukee thoroughfares. It was paved with wooden planks in 1854. Grand Avenue's easy access to downtown attracted affluent families, who built extravagant mansions on large lots. The Grand Avenue Viaduct over the Menomonee River was completed in 1911, transforming Grand Avenue into an east-west thoroughfare and making land along the avenue too valuable for large single-family homes with landscaped lawns. A slow trickle of wealthy citizens moving from Milwaukee's west side to nearby suburbs, such as Shorewood and Wauwatosa, grew steadier over the next decade.⁷

By 1920, Milwaukee had benefited from the industrial boom in the years following World War I. During that time, the city grew economically and geographically. As manufacturing outgrew its current quarters, the Menomonee River valley, with its access to water and rail transportation, offered an ideal location for industry to expand.⁸ Residential communities grew in density north and south of the Menomonee Valley as workers, drawn by many prospective employers within walking distance and more reliable streetcar networks, filled in areas previously occupied by wealthy estates. Developers maximized on the exodus of wealthy individuals from the near west side, subdividing vacant mansions or converting them to rooming houses along Grand Avenue. Many others were demolished entirely to make way for new apartment blocks, typically styled after one of several popular Period Revival trends that peaked in the 1920s. Population grew at a rapid pace, filling these new buildings. Between 1920 and 1930, Milwaukee saw the greatest increase in population for a ten-year period in the city's history. In 1920, Milwaukee's population density per square mile was exceeded only by New York City.⁹ Grand Avenue was renamed Wisconsin Avenue in 1926, reflecting its shift from a leisurely residential lane to a dense, busy thoroughfare. Although slowed by the Great Depression, population growth continued up until World War II along with the ever-increasing demand for housing, cultural institutions, and services in the new metropolis.

Historical Context – Education in Wisconsin and Milwaukee

The public school system that built the Grand Avenue Elementary School in 1921 was shaped by a convergence of forces. As described in the previous section, population was growing faster than the

⁷ Katie Kaliszewski (Mead & Hunt, Inc.), "Grand Avenue Elementary School Determination of Eligibility," Jan. 6, 2015.

⁸ Gurda, 117-128.

⁹ Gurda, 246.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

city could keep up. Prior to the Great Depression and World War II, the Milwaukee Public Schools, like many city agencies, anticipated growth would continue to put strain on the system's buildings and facilities unless new school buildings were properly designed for decades of anticipated upward-trending enrollment. Additionally, there was broad voter support for local governments to provide high quality, free, public education in state-of-the-art buildings, recognizing the role well-educated children played in the city's future. Funding for new school buildings and improvements were repeatedly approved by voters. In the early years of the twentieth century, education theorists had established the importance of music, arts, manual training, recreation, and other special focuses as part of the school day, expanding the curriculum and creating a need for specialized design responses within the school plant. Finally, adult education and recreation programs that started before World War I came into full force through the "Lighted Schoolhouse" initiatives of the 1910s and 20s, providing evening classes and activities to working older children and adults, and to help immigrants assimilate. Social and educational programs wove schools more tightly into the life of the community, reinforcing the desire for quality buildings with specialized spaces such as gymnasiums, auditoriums, libraries, and manual training centers.

Cultural Resource Management of Wisconsin reports that the beginning of public education in the region was the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787, which allocated a sixteenth section of every township to be held for the purpose of leasing to fund education. Once a territory became a state, the land would be sold to create a state fund for school support. As the country grew and settlers expanded west, available cheap land was so plentiful this provision never provided the intended continuous school funding source.¹⁰ While support for public education grew throughout the 1800s, the problem of funding education continued to affect legislative policy and strain public discourse.

When children of the earliest settlers in Wisconsin attended schools, these were typically private, organized by a single teacher in rented space or in someone's home, and funded by parents who paid a subscription to the teacher either monetarily or by purchasing fuel, food, or other needs.¹¹ Wealthier families might hire a private tutor for their children or send them to boarding schools in other cities or states.¹²

The first public effort, though far from an organized public school system, occurred in Green Bay in 1817. Nine families contracted an educator to teach twenty-four students for nine months. While parents paid for the school on a subscription basis per quarter per pupil, by 1821, citizens of Green Bay and soldiers at Fort Howard underwent a joint effort to build a schoolhouse and provide textbooks

¹⁰ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol 1-3, (Madison, Wis.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Public Primary Education Unit

¹¹ Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit

¹² Gurda, 17

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

for the school. By 1836, Mineral Point, Platteville, Milwaukee, Kenosha (Southport), Sheboygan, Waukesha (Prairieville), Janesville, and Racine were maintaining consistently-operating community-sponsored schools with varying subscription and funding solutions. In all communities, schooling, public or private, was largely at the behest of settlers from eastern regions with teachers educated in New England, New York, Ohio, or Philadelphia and following Yankee educational traditions.¹³

In 1839, the legislative assembly enacted the first laws regarding elementary education in the Wisconsin Territory, although in fact they carried over most of the territorial school laws of Michigan when Wisconsin was part of the Michigan Territory. Town commissioners were given oversight of teachers and curriculum, a responsibility that was later passed to an appointed and then an elected board of school directors. Laws would be refined or rewritten periodically throughout the subsequent decades to address control of school facilities, management, curriculum, finances, teacher qualifications, and education standards relative to state, county, and local jurisdictions.¹⁴

After 1840, momentum picked up for public elementary education as advocates across the country made the case for free public education in the wake of changing societal and cultural conditions. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin* describes their goal: "To make available to all white American children an adequate, relatively standardized, free primary education that would fit them for their roles as responsible citizens and workers."¹⁵ Secondary and higher education were sometimes included in proposed plans, but primary education, or "common school," was considered the most critical need.

Standardization of and access to education became the means for addressing many societal shifts. Where immigration caused populations to explode with diverse cultures and languages, free public education would be a gentle force of assimilation. In a diversifying economy, education would ensure child literacy, the most crucial prerequisite to participation in new economic activities. As growth moved available jobs into new areas of the country, education standards would ensure an individual's ability to take a job anywhere in the country, furthering that individual's prospects. As growing urban communities heightened and reinforced economic and social classes, education would create a level playing field for class mobility. For a nation healing from the Civil War, education would provide freed slaves an opportunity to gain a foothold, albeit an often insufficient one.

One of Wisconsin's loudest voices for public education was Michael Frank who settled in Kenosha from New York in 1839. He used his paper, the *South Telegraph*, to advocate for free public education and to report legislative activities regarding public education in Wisconsin. His efforts helped make

¹³ Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit

¹⁴ Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit

¹⁵ Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

public education an article of the 1848 state constitution. When the state constitution was ratified, it guaranteed free, universal education, established a state school fund, and enabled the levying of local taxes to finance schools.¹⁶ The practice of community-sponsored school building, which resulted in the Grand Avenue Elementary School and thousands like it across the state, is directly attributed to Frank's efforts.

Two tenets of the 1848 constitution and subsequent school law impacted the development of the Milwaukee Public School system and subsequent school building campaigns. First, municipalities were granted the power to unify many districts under a centralized school system. Unlike rural schools, which continued to vary widely in curriculum and management, Milwaukee schools unified under a single system which began to standardize education practices, teacher education and hiring, and eventually oversaw school building. Milwaukee's was the first municipal school system in the State of Wisconsin.¹⁷ The law also required districts to build or acquire a schoolhouse and allowed districts to levy a special tax to this end. In districts with over fifty children, there was no limit to the amount a jurisdiction could levy for a new schoolhouse building.

In Milwaukee, the first two public schools were established in the fall of 1836, in Juneautown under the direction of David Worthington and at Kilbourntown under the direction of Edward West.¹⁸ These schools were public in the sense that West and Worthington were afforded a salary by the district rather than charging per pupil and that children could freely attend. During the 1840s, another newspaper man, Milwaukee *Sentinel* editor Rufus King, was relentless in calling for school expansion. By 1846, a school board was formed with King as president. The early school system sponsored five schools, one operating in the basement of the Catholic Cathedral, two operating in old privately-funded schoolhouses, and two operating in rented homes.¹⁹

The first of the schoolhouses erected by the Milwaukee Public School system were erected in 1852, when five brick buildings designed to house 350 pupils each were constructed, one in each of the five school districts. Each building cost approximately \$3,000 and was divided into three grades – primary, intermediate, and principal (later changed to grammar). During this period grades were loosely correlated with age but a student might remain in a grade for multiple years. Growth stalled during a nationwide depression following the Panic of 1857, halting Milwaukee's growth and development of the public school system for a brief period. By 1877, there were twenty-one public schools in the city. At least twenty-five more schools were constructed between 1883 and 1892 under the direction of

¹⁶ Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit

¹⁷ Leonard A. Novotny, "The Beginnings of the Milwaukee Public School, 1846-1855," (Master of Arts Thesis, St. Francis Seminary, St. Francis, Wis., 1943), 4.

¹⁸ A. T. Andreas, *History of Milwaukee, Wisconsin*, (Chicago: The Western Historical Company, 1881), 10.

¹⁹ Robert Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2012), 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Milwaukee Public Schools superintendent William E. Anderson. The importance placed on school buildings during this period is clear in the selection of respected, high-profile architects to complete school designs, including Henry C. Koch (Milwaukee City Hall, Pfister Hotel, Turner Hall), Ferry and Clas (Milwaukee Public Library, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Pabst Mansion), and Eugene Liebert and Herman Schnetzky (Germania Building).²⁰

In 1879, a new state law required all children ages seven to fifteen to attend school for at least twelve weeks a year. In 1889, another law added teeth to this requirement, fining parents who did not comply. By 1900, almost all Wisconsin children attended school at least part of the year.²¹ In Milwaukee, enrollment ballooned to such an extent that new schools on Ring Street and Brown Street were constructed in the 1880s with six full classrooms (as many as 300 seats) between them vacant in anticipation of future enrollment.²² By 1891, class sizes in early grades had grown to an average of sixty-six students per teacher in primary grades.²³

In Milwaukee, growth in school enrollment, acquisition of physical property, and construction and alterations of buildings continued with few slowdowns into the 1940s. An official teacher training program developed in 1860, first offering classes at the Milwaukee High School and later at the Milwaukee Normal School (this would become the Milwaukee Teachers' College and then the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). During the 1870s, Milwaukee Public Schools added positions for system-wide supervisors in special fields, such as music, drawing, and physical education. These positions were expanded over the next decades and by the 1920s resulted in robust programs during the school day and after school and adult recreational activities.²⁴

Milwaukee's world renowned program of municipal recreation and adult education began with an act of the Wisconsin Legislature in 1907 authorizing the use of school buildings for recreation purposes. The recreation department was founded in 1911 and remained under the jurisdiction of Milwaukee Public School's board and superintendent.²⁵ Among the adult-focused evening classes were English language and American civics classes that catered to new immigrants, providing a significant, affordable asset to immigrant families.²⁶ This merger of community events, recreation, and education opened schoolhouses to their surrounding neighborhoods and integrated them into the lives of the community beyond the attending children and their families. This integration was deeply felt during World War I as children became intimately involved with the war effort. School children delivered

²⁰ Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 24-26.

²¹ Wyatt, ed., *Public Primary Education Unit*

²² Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 28.

²³ William M. Lamers, *Our Roots Grow Deep*, Second Ed., 1836-1967, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1974), 9.

²⁴ Lamers, 7-9.

²⁵ Lamers, 13.

²⁶ Gurda, 234.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

talks on rationing, organized a gardening army, made flagpoles and sewed flags in manual training classes, and invested their own pennies and nickels in war savings. Teachers assisted in the draft.²⁷ These activities demanded that gymnasiums, auditoriums, cafeterias, manual training rooms, and other specialized spaces be designed to accommodate not just elementary students, but the events and activities of the neighborhoods surrounding the school.

The 1920s was an important decade for education in Milwaukee. In education, these changes resulted in a questioning of long-established practices and a renewed interest in educational science and research. Teacher education placed more emphasis on evaluation of individual pupils and adjustment of teaching and curriculum to appeal to that pupil's needs and abilities. Educators of the 1920s also placed an emphasis on special fields such as music and art. Specialized teaching programs prepared teachers for focuses in these fields. Between 1920 and 1930, the Milwaukee Public School music supervisor's office grew from two full-time staff to ten. Also during the 1920s, emphasis shifted toward reading as the key indicator of elementary school success. Libraries in schools were made a priority, and the Milwaukee Public School Board allocated a substantial increase in funds to stock them with books.²⁸

The 1920s saw the largest increase in building for a school system that had been steadily building schools for seventy years. In his annual report of 1912, Superintendent Carroll G. Pearse refocused the school building effort toward "larger and better equipped school grounds, larger school buildings, rather than an increased number of smaller buildings, and new types of school buildings with modern facilities and large assembly halls."²⁹ By 1920, projects were incorporating these philosophies. Lincoln High School, Peckham Junior High, Roosevelt Junior High, Kilbourn Junior High, Kosciuszko Junior Trade, Fernwood, Franklin, Greenfield, Lapham Park Social Center, Riley, Sherman, Townsend, Grand Avenue School, and South Stadium were all built during this ten-year period. Seven other schools received substantial renovations or additions. The price tag for 1920s building projects totaled nearly seven million dollars, equivalent to hundreds of millions of dollars in today's terms. The plans and amenities of new buildings were affected by the increasing popularity of recreation and adult education programs that wove communities through local schools. As described in *Our Roots Grow Deep*, a history of the Milwaukee Public Schools: "During the twenties, whether in school site or play area acquisition, whether in new or in building additions or modernizations, consideration was given to the concept that facilities provided out of public funds should be available for full-time community use rather than be sequestered for the exclusive part-time use as school housing for the young. Many older schools had been built on small sites – 'quarter squares' – and a program to provide adequate

²⁷ Lamers, 14.

²⁸ Lamers, 14-16.

²⁹ Lamers, 13

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

playgrounds for them in the 1920s and for decades thereafter demanded the purchase and demolition of groups of houses.”³⁰

By the start of World War II, Milwaukee’s school system was a source of pride and recognized nationally for leadership in education. The National Education Association, American Childhood Education Association, International Council for Exceptional Children, and the Music Educators National Conference all convened in Milwaukee for national conferences in the early 1940s. However, the war took its toll, with falling enrollments and a twelve-year stall in school building efforts. A few vacant schools were even closed or sold. In the 50s and 60s, spurred by the baby boom, Milwaukee Public Schools picked up steam again. Issues of racial equality, changing demographics, urban poverty, and aging buildings have dramatically altered the system’s goals and building practices. Today Milwaukee Public Schools oversees the largest school district in Wisconsin and one of the largest in the United States by enrollment.

Historical Context - School Architecture

From the first days of public education to the start of World War II, classroom design remained firmly rooted in the original one room schoolhouse that was its initial manifestation: a single teacher presiding over a room of students of different ages and at different stages of educational progress. Larger schools simply arranged the one room schoolhouse plan along corridors or stacked on multiple floors and renamed them classrooms. Classrooms, in contrast, were composed of children separated by age. As school architecture evolved, however, gymnasiums, auditoriums, music rooms, manual training centers, and other specialized functions expanded the definition of a school, redefined the purpose of education, and wove schools more tightly into the community. From the beginning, community-funded or public school architecture has always been shaped by three important questions: 1) What type of site and building best serves the needs of the pupils, 2) Where should it be located, and 3) How does a community pay for it? As a building type, schools have been more sensitive than any other to changing trends, educational or architectural philosophies, and fads.³¹

The earliest public buildings dedicated solely to education were one room schoolhouses, vernacular in design, of log or wood frame construction, featured a simple gable, were heated by wood stoves, had relatively small windows above eye-height, and had wood floors. Benches on the perimeter were intended for smaller children who were not yet writing. Older children sat at tables in the center of the room. A single teacher presided over the school, working with two or three students at a time. Boys and girls were separated to each half of the room, but no grade divisions existed. Curriculum was largely determined by available books, often brought from the child’s own home, and concentrated on reading, writing, and arithmetic, with geography if a map was available. *Cultural Resource*

³⁰ Lamers, 15

³¹ Ben E. Graves, *School Ways, The Planning and Design of America’s Schools*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 21.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Management in Wisconsin describes the measure of satisfactory public education as follows: “Children were expected to learn at least enough to read a newspaper, compose a clear, legible paragraph, figure simple accounts, know enough about their country and neighborhood to be proud of them, and act according to sound moral principles.”³²

The first divergence from a one room schoolhouse was a two room schoolhouse, which was essentially the one room schoolhouse in duplicate. Like the one room schoolhouse, the two room schoolhouse was typically gabled with a bell tower on larger buildings and a pediment or other façade adornment in the Greek Revival, Queen Anne, or other Period Revival styles. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that schools began to divide students by age in the separate rooms, a system that became known as graded schools. The first schools were separated into two or three grades, depending on the number of rooms. The early graded schools still resulted in students of multiple ages in a single room, because students were grouped with others of a similar skill level, allowing teachers to more appropriately tailor lessons.³³

By the mid-1800s, urban development resulted in a more sophisticated education system. Development of textbooks split curriculum into units and more carefully tailored subjects to learning abilities. The school year lengthened and attendance became more regular as more students came from urban and industrial communities rather than farms. These factors combined to create smaller classes (and more classrooms) with more elementary grades, ballooning up to ten and settling at about six as junior high schools and high schools became more common. Schools and school districts developed benchmarks for advancing from one grade to the next, as these standards had not been established across larger regions.³⁴

Boston’s Quincy Grammar School, built in 1848, is considered the first graded elementary school. It is divided into four floors with a basement and attic and housed 660 students. Rooms were arranged four per floor and sized to accommodate fifty-five students each with a separate connected cloakroom/closet. Individual desks bolted to the floor replaced the long tables and benches of older schoolhouses. The top floor was a large assembly hall.³⁵ Kindergartens were included in public elementary schools as early as 1872 and required by Wisconsin law in 1887. The first public kindergartens in Milwaukee Public Schools were opened in 1881.³⁶ By the 1890s, educational theorists such as John Dewey and William James questioned the long-held recitation method of education, placing greater emphasis on creative thinking, problem solving, self-expression, discussion and

³² Wyatt, ed., Public Primary Education Unit.

³³ Graves, 22-24.

³⁴ Lamers, 6.

³⁵ Graves, 24.

³⁶ Lamers, 7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

evaluation, group participation, and learning by doing. Development of the sciences emphasized application of knowledge and collaboration with peers. These factors converged and resulted in dramatic changes to the interior programming of the school building. The design response prioritized flexible seating (unbolted desks), more space to move around and break into groups, storage for additional project materials and resources, and specialized classrooms devoted to sciences and manual training courses in woodworking, metal working, home arts, music, and physical activities.³⁷

As school districts grew, legislative bias trended toward graded schools. In 1901, the legislature provided special state aid to graded schools (determined as those having two or more rooms). In 1905, another law stipulated that schools with more than sixty-five students were required to provide at minimum a second room and a second teacher. To assist with the resultant building and remodeling efforts, the state published sample schoolhouse plans illustrating ideal configurations of two, three, and four room school houses and multiple-storied school buildings.³⁸ Public pressure grew to ensure state-of-the-art health and safety measures in schools, including adequate heating, improved lighting, modern integrated toilet facilities (many schools still used detached outhouse buildings), physicians or nurses on staff with dedicated offices, eating facilities, more space per pupil inside and out, and fire safety measures.

From the mid- to late-nineteenth century, education theorists and school design specialists were well connected across the country. Milwaukee school board member William George Bruce launched the *American School Board Journal* in 1891 to share progressive curriculum advances and design responses with school districts across the nation. He published a manual of school design condensing the programmatic requirements and construction of a modern school into a few hundred pages including illustrations and precedents from across the country. Plans were often shared in publications geared to architects and school authorities. Bruce's manual encourages school boards to select architects with "expert knowledge in the erection of school buildings" and to "permanently employ an agent and representative of the board of education to prepare, plan and superintend the construction of all school buildings," practices which resulted in a great deal of similarity among schools in cities like Milwaukee where a single board and architect oversaw school planning and construction.³⁹

In Milwaukee, school design and location was originally under the jurisdiction of City Hall. In 1907, the school board became a body elected at large, rather than representatives of individual districts, and was given greater authority to select school sites and determine the style, design, and appropriations of

³⁷ Graves, 25.

³⁸ Oliver E. Wells, *Architecture, Ventilation, and Furnishing of School Houses*, (Madison, Wis.: Democrat Printing Co. State Printers, 1892), 19-106.

³⁹ Wm. Geo. Bruce, *School Architecture, A Handy Manual for the Use of Architects and School Authorities*, 4th ed., (Milwaukee: American School Board Journal, 1910), 7-9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

school buildings (the end of a nearly forty-year struggle to gain jurisdiction in this area). Superintendent Milton Potter established the Architectural Division with the purpose of developing and guiding school building programs. From 1907 to 1912, the board appointed D. C. Otteson, who had managed the construction of the Milwaukee Public Library, to oversee design and construction of schools. In 1912, the board appointed the architecture firm of Van Ryn and De Gelleke as official architects to assist Otteson on a part-time basis, directing design, oversight of construction, and advisement to the board on matters of school sites and building. (More on Van Ryn and De Gelleke is included in a later section.) In 1924, the Board reorganized the Architectural Division to establish the Bureau of Buildings and Grounds under the full-time direction of Guy E. Wiley, who would serve as architect and overseer of construction. Wiley's office would execute the majority of design and project management tasks; however, they continued to involve Van Ryn and De Gelleke, whose salary was exchanged for a 4% commission, through the 1930s. After the slowdown of the 1940s, the architectural department was reduced. When school building picked up again in the 50s and 60s, outside architectural firms were contracted to design Milwaukee schools. The Construction division would continue in the capacity of preliminary planning, specifications, and vetting architectural firms for individual assignments, a role it continues today.⁴⁰

As the school system grew, the importance placed on the school building itself grew as well. In his introduction to Wilbur T. Mills' 1915 book *American School Building Standards*, W. O. Thompson states, "The recent movements in education as effected by legislation have emphasized the physical plant as the basis of successful school practice... School architecture – including all the problems of safety, sanitation, heating, lighting, ventilation and others, having the physical well-being of the pupil in mind – has been the earnest study of many of the leading architects in the country." Thompson went on to state that "the proper housing of the children during school hours, and adequate provision for play are vital to their future citizenship. Every effort looking toward the perfecting of school buildings should have cordial support."⁴¹

At the opening of the twentieth century, communities demanded more from school buildings but allocated tighter budgets to accomplish their expectations. The most ornate and elaborate schemes were reserved for high schools, while elementary school designs might start from an existing plan and utilize less ornate or architecturally elaborate schemes. The *Milwaukee Sentinel* reported of one school during this era, "The new structure was designed with the main object of producing a building which shall be stable, sanitary and convenient in all its departments rather than one upon which money has been expended for the attainment of artistic results by means of architectural ornamentation. It was designed to be a straightforward and honest representation of building which is practical in all its

⁴⁰ Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 30-35.

⁴¹ Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 21.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

details. To this end the exterior is absolutely devoid of ornamentation and is impressive merely by its simplicity and straightforward expression of structural details.”⁴²

A study and ten-year building program published by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors in 1916 provides context to the priorities and challenges for the next wave of school buildings, which would include the Grand Avenue School. The average number of students in a room was forty-five, with the goal of reducing this to forty. Enrollment was expected to increase seventeen percent district-wide by 1926. The survey also emphasized playgrounds which were inadequately sized for “romping games which build up health and strength.” Manual training rooms, indoor playrooms, gymnasiums, and larger classrooms were to be included as standard practice.⁴³

Apart from occasional regional preferences toward a particular architectural style, schools are among the least-varying building type geographically. The result is that a school built in 1920 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was strikingly similar in program and aesthetics to a school built in 1920 in Boston, Massachusetts, or Omaha, Nebraska. Schools are also unique in that the philosophies that shape them evolve rapidly compared with other cultural institutions such as churches. As a result, a school built in 1890 in Milwaukee varies considerably from one built in 1920 or one built in 1980. For this same reason, schools that are just thirty years old are often subjected to insensitive modifications and additions to accommodate changing education populations and philosophies. This makes the Grand Avenue School unusual for its relatively few modifications, a unique time capsule of the design response to education philosophy in the 1920s.

History of the Grand Avenue Elementary School

The first school on the property was known as the Palmer School, occupying the site as early as 1859. The subject Grand Avenue Elementary School was constructed in 1920 to replace a thirteen-room Ferry and Clas schoolhouse fronting 28th Street and set back from Grand Avenue (the west half of the existing plot), originally called the Sixteenth District No. 2 School. That schoolhouse, the first to be referred to as the Grand Avenue School, was a three-story, thirteen room Romanesque Revival structure with an assembly hall on the top floor. It was badly damaged by a suspicious fire in the early morning hours of April 24, 1918, destroying “one of the finest library collections of the school system.”⁴⁴

Prior to the fire, the original Grand Avenue district’s enrollment was projected to increase thirteen students per year, placing it near the middle in terms of growth rate when compared to other

⁴² Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 30.

⁴³ Frank M. Harbach and Hornell Hart, *A Constructive Study of Milwaukee School Buildings and Sites With a Ten Year Building Program*, (Milwaukee: Board of School Directors/City Club, 1916), 11.

⁴⁴ “School Burns – Children Get a Vacation,” *Milwaukee Journal*, April 24, 1918.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Milwaukee public elementary schools. However, Grand Avenue's projected growth rate far exceeded that of other schools in the neighborhoods just outside the central business district. The district projected that schools on the western edge of the city (37th Street, 27th Street, Grand Avenue, and 18th Street) would need to provide seventeen additional rooms between them to accommodate growth, which far exceeded that of neighborhoods north and south of the central business district.⁴⁵

In a survey of Milwaukee's public school buildings, *Constructive Survey of Milwaukee School Buildings and Sites With a Ten Year Building Program*, the school system classified the Ferry and Clas structure as below current standards with respect to crowding, restroom facilities, heating and ventilating, and playground square footage. The survey reported that approximately \$30,000 in upgrades was required and that adjacent property should be purchased to expand the play lot. Although the Ferry and Clas schoolhouse was salvageable, the Board felt the funding efforts required to address the fire damage and complete the upgrades were ill-advised given that the building was too small to satisfy the projected increase in attendance.⁴⁶ The surrounding district also pressured the board for a new building. In a June 1918 meeting, the Board of School Directors voted to construct a new school after the war, permitting sale of bonds for this purpose.⁴⁷ Bonds in the amount of \$400,000 were proposed in the April 1920 election and approved by voters.⁴⁸ The board also voted to purchase five lots on 27th Street to square the grounds and provide ample play space for the new school, resulting in the present parcel boundary.⁴⁹ In the meantime, students would attend school at temporary barracks placed on the Grand Avenue School site and at the 27th Street School Site further north on 27th Street.⁵⁰

Milwaukee Public School architects Van Ryn and De Gelleke were commissioned to design the new building, with the Board of School Director's Committee on Sites and Plans approving the design in February of 1919. Throughout 1919, contracts were awarded to Walter Buchholz for masonry, H. G. Weden & Sons Company for painting and glazing, Andrews Stone & Marble Co. for cut stone work, Ernst Jahn for lathing and plastering, Milwaukee Tile & Mosaic Co. for tile work, and Henry Jahns for carpentry. The total cost of the contracts totaled \$240,000. A railroad strike created issues procuring materials for several weeks, causing many contractors to request to be released from their contracts and rebid the job at higher fees.^{51 52}

⁴⁵ Harbach and Hart, 11-27.

⁴⁶ Milwaukee Public Schools, *Annual Report of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, 1917-1918*, (Milwaukee: Radtke Bros & Kortsch Company, 1918).

⁴⁷ "State News", *The Daily Northwestern*, June 26, 1918.

⁴⁸ *Proceedings of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors*, 3 February 1920, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1921), 240 (hereafter referred to as *Proceedings*).

⁴⁹ *Proceedings*, 4 February 1919, 6 May 1919 and 30 June 1919, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1919), 248, 350, 417.

⁵⁰ *Annual Report of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors*, (Milwaukee: Radtke Bros & Kortsch Company, 1918), 144 (hereafter referred to as *Annual Report*).

⁵¹ *Proceedings*, 30 June 1919, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1919), 416.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

The current Grand Avenue Elementary School building, completed in 1921, is a prime example of contemporary school construction of that era. In his manual for school architects and authorities, William Bruce practically describes the Grand Avenue School while describing the ideal building: located near the center of the district on a rectangular lot with at least one corner on a high, well-drained site; at least 30 square feet. of playground per pupil surrounded by an open iron fence to permit air circulation and sunlight; playroom, manual training, and domestic sciences in the basement; basement gymnasiums with separate areas for boys and girls with ample light and adjacent locker/shower rooms; principal's office with adjoining waiting room and teacher's room on the first floor; kindergarten on the first floor separated and projecting such that games will not disturb other classes; staircases adjoining an outer wall; entrances with vestibules leading directly to stairs and corridors; stone or brick construction with concrete floors; a separate boiler room structure attached to the building; and toilets on the basement and third floor.

Even the smallest interior details seem to correspond with Bruce's manual, including corridors with classrooms on one side; classrooms positioned on the east, west, and south walls to provide sunlight at least part of the day; separate cloakrooms to keep children's personal items close, but separate the associated clutter and distractions; specially-designed lavatory for the kindergarten rooms; maple floors; simple woodwork with a natural wood finish to prevent dust build-up; windows on one wall; blackboards on the front wall and opposite the windows on the side wall; oak doors with frosted glass in the upper panel; separate wardrobes/cloakrooms for teachers and students; and a bookcase in every room. Indeed, only the auditorium varies from Bruce's recommendations in that it is positioned on the second floor rather than the first floor to provide for the high-ceilinged gyms below. Still, the auditorium follows Bruce's instructions with two exits leading directly to main staircases.⁵³

Van Ryn and De Gelleke incorporated the Collegiate Gothic style they had been using throughout the city, but in keeping with the direction of the Superintendent of schools, kept the stylistic expressions restrained such that money could be allocated toward providing high quality programmatic spaces.⁵⁴ In 1927, the school was renamed the Wisconsin Avenue School a short time after its primary street frontage, Grand Avenue, was renamed Wisconsin Avenue. The school board preferred schools, especially elementary schools, retain the names of their street frontage during this era.

When the school opened in September 1921, it was valued at over \$200,000, including building, grounds, furniture, equipment, books, and supplies, and described as a "splendid piece of architecture."⁵⁵ The July 1921 *Builders Bulletin* proclaimed that the school "undoubtedly expresses the

⁵² *Proceedings*, 4 November 1919 and 2 March 1920, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1920), 133-134, 270.

⁵³ Bruce, 25-131

⁵⁴ *Annual Report*, (Milwaukee: Radtke Bros & Kortsch Company, 1922), 8.

⁵⁵ "F.M.S., "Milwaukee's \$5,000,000 Business and Its \$10,000,000 Plant Earning Present Profits and Future Dividends for the People,"

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

latest word in schoolhouse architecture, arrangement, and equipment.”⁵⁶ Five classrooms were vacant, anticipated future growth. The principal was William F. Simmons, who served until 1929. He was succeeded by Walter Nichols, who served in the post until 1947. Twenty-one teachers presided over as many as 1,236 students. Similar to other Milwaukee public schools in the 1920s, kindergarteners, first graders, and second graders made up the greatest percentage of total students.⁵⁷

The Grand Avenue School played an important role in the community as one of Milwaukee’s recreation and adult education facilities called Social Centers. The Grand Avenue Parent-Teacher Association petitioned the school board to establish a social center on the west side at the school in 1922 “to give the adult community the benefit of the splendidly equipped, much discussed Grand Avenue School.”⁵⁸ Eastern European immigrants who settled throughout the near west side took advantage of civics and English classes. After World War I, adult manual training classes also grew in popularity as returning soldiers reentered the civilian workforce. By the late 1920s, the Grand Avenue School’s facilities were used regularly for events, music practice, and meetings of local organizations. The playground became a practice ground for the Veterans of Foreign Wars band and site of a neighborhood dance benefiting the 16th Ward Business Men’s Association. The American Legion housed Legionnaires at the school during the 1941 national convention. The Veterans of Foreign Wars held an annual Christmas party for member children in the auditorium, renting the space for \$15. The American Red Cross used the facility as a membership campaign office. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts held their district ceremonies and training sessions in the gyms and auditorium. The Falk Corporation’s Employee’s mixed chorus and the American Legion Girls Band held rehearsals in the classrooms. Milwaukee County Apprentices, Milwaukee School Secretaries’ Association, American Youth Congress Northwest and West Side Councils, Townsend Club, Townsend Old Age Pension Plan Organization, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2874 all held regular meetings for a \$1 rental fee per meeting. The Selective Service Board Number 16 operated out of the Medical Room and another classroom, running basic operations and registering men for the draft. The large auditorium and central location made the school a prime location for school system-wide gatherings, including teacher meetings and parties, industrial arts demonstrations, city-wide Parent-Teacher Association gatherings, and meetings of the Milwaukee Public School Teachers Union. The auditorium also offered events to benefit the school, including performances of the school glee clubs, orchestra, and dramatic groups, films, and patriotic entertainment for the community in the years leading up to World War II.⁵⁹

Milwaukee Journal, September 11, 1921.

⁵⁶ “The New Grand Avenue Grade School: A Model Structure.” *Builder’s Bulletin of the Master Builder’s Association of Wisconsin*, 9th Year No. 7 (n.d.), 12.

⁵⁷ *Annual Report*, (Milwaukee: Radtke Bros & Kortsch Company, 1922), 107.

⁵⁸ *Proceedings*, 5 September 1922 (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1923), 67.

⁵⁹ Letters, Wisconsin Avenue School, 1924-1943 Correspondence Folder, Milwaukee Public School Collection #MS1953, Milwaukee County Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

At peak enrollment during the 1920s, Grand Avenue annexed the Mary Hill School two blocks south on 27th Street between Clybourn and Michigan streets. This building was officially vacated in 1939 and eventually sold.⁶⁰

The Grand Avenue School operated as a Milwaukee Public School until 2007, when it was closed. In January of 2015, the School Board voted to declare the building as surplus, switching management to the Department of City Development.⁶¹ After closing the school, the school district continued to use the facility for custodial training and storage while continuing critical maintenance. It was purchased in 2017 by a private owner.

Collegiate Gothic Style Architecture

Cultural Resource Management of Wisconsin classifies the Collegiate Gothic style as a subset of the Neo-Gothic Revival style, itself a subdued form of Gothic Revival. Compared to high Victorian Gothic, the style is typically quieter and smoother with simpler silhouettes and limited to one or two colors or materials. Collegiate Gothic derives its name from the colleges and universities that revived the style of the great medieval English universities like Oxford and Cambridge. Prominent universities employed the Collegiate Gothic Revival style during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries to create an atmosphere of perceived history. Ralph Adams Cram, a Gothic Revival architect and theorist in the early twentieth century, stated this appeal in his book *Gothic Quest* as, "Through architecture and its allied arts we have the power to bend men and sway them as few have who depended on the spoken word. It is for us, as part of our duty as our highest privilege to act . . . for spreading what is true."⁶²

Collegiate Gothic is popular in college campus buildings, high schools and elementary schools throughout the early-twentieth century. At elementary and secondary schools, the interpretation was looser than at university precedents, including "keep-like entrances, battlements, finials, and other ornaments appropriate to the period." Other features included Gothic and Tudor arches, crenellated parapets, and heavily mullioned windows.⁶³ Ornamentation was typically the most restrained with elementary schools, applied at key locations such as entries and parapets on otherwise unadorned brick facades.

⁶⁰ Letters, Wisconsin Avenue School, 1924-1943 Correspondence Folder, Milwaukee Public School Collection #MS1953, Milwaukee County Historical Society.

⁶¹ Bobby Tanzilo, "Urban Spelunking: The recently surplused Wisconsin Avenue School," *On.Milwaukee.com*, published February 17, 2015, <http://onmilwaukee.com/history/articles/spelunkingwisaveschool.html> accessed August 10, 2016.

⁶² Edwin J. Slipek, Jr. and Ralph Adams Cram, *The University of Richmond and the Gothic Style Today* (Marsh Art Gallery, University of Richmond, 1997), 19.

⁶³ Wyatt, ed. *Period Revival Styles Unit*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 18

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Gothic revival styles of the early-twentieth century, including Collegiate Gothic, trace back to the church of All Saints, Ashmont, outside Boston, and the work of Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. At All Saints, Cram's working theory was that Gothic architecture had been shut out by the Classical Renaissance and Protestant Revolution and that the revival should take up Gothic where it had left off in England and adjust it to the needs and shifts of the modern era. This divergence from strict rules was the single biggest innovation of the Gothic revivals, resulting in greater variety and local influence. The style initially flourished in church architecture, but once Princeton made it their signature architectural style under architects Cope and Stewardson, the Collegiate Gothic style spread rapidly to educational institutions around the country. Cram oversaw Princeton's architectural department from 1909 until 1931. Other colleges featuring heavy Collegiate Gothic influences were Duke University, Yale University, the University of Pittsburgh, and the University of Chicago (including one of Goodhue's last commissions).⁶⁴

Collegiate Gothic was the primary style for schools in Milwaukee during the 1920s and 1930s under the influence of Van Ryn and DeGelleke and in keeping with standards for school design of the era. Of the fourteen schools constructed between 1920 and 1930 in Milwaukee, all but one was built in the Collegiate Gothic style. Collegiate Gothic elementary schools in Milwaukee were primarily masonry with limestone accents to convey the Gothic Revival's sense of perceived history, strength, and longevity into the future. Characteristic features of the Collegiate Gothic style present at Milwaukee schools include towers, crenelated parapets, Gothic or pointed arch windows, tracery windows, recessed entryways, crenellations, finials, carved heads (grotesques), bas-relief decorative panels, tile work, and wood interior accents such as recessed or raised rectangular wainscot. Decorative features were incorporated minimally as accents and reserved for primary entrances, focal points, and specialized interior spaces such as auditoriums, libraries, etc.

Architects Van Ryn and De Gelleke

Henry J. Van Ryn opened an office at the Val. Blatz Block at Lake and Read in Milwaukee in 1885.⁶⁵ He worked as an architect in Milwaukee for the next sixty years. His most prolific years were 1897-1936 during his partnership with Gerrit De Gelleke. Van Ryn operated as the administrative partner while De Gelleke served as chief designer.⁶⁶ The firm worked in a number of architectural styles, but specialized in Collegiate Gothic as applied to grade, junior, high schools, and universities around the state. Their other commissions were typically residential and small stores with upper flats.⁶⁷ In 1912, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors hired the firm to design and oversee construction of all

⁶⁴ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780, A Guide to the Styles*, Rev. Ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 173-177.

⁶⁵ "A Day in the City," *Sentinel*, 20 August 1885

⁶⁶ Donald M. Aucutt, *Van Ryn: Architect in Central Wisconsin at Century's Turn* (Antigo, Wis.: Central/Northwoods Wisconsin Architectural Museum, 1992), 21-25.

⁶⁷ "A Building Boom: Operations begin on a very large scale," *Sentinel* (Milwaukee, Wis.), 28 April 1889.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 19

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Milwaukee Public Schools. The school board hired several draftsmen to assist the firm in their school commissions. As the need for improvements and new buildings grew in the 1920s, this position was made full time and draftsmen were housed at the School Administration Building.⁶⁸ Their relationship to the school board was adjusted in 1924; Van Ryn and De Gelleke were retained and paid a 4% fee into the 1930s until World War II halted new building projects. For their part, Van Ryn and De Gelleke resisted the shift toward a commission based fee rather than full salaried positions reporting to the Board of School Directors.⁶⁹ The pair quarreled in the 1930s and eventually dissolved the firm in 1937. By the time building operations resumed in the 1950s, Van Ryn had passed away and the Milwaukee school board hired architects under separate contracts depending on the size and scope of individual school projects.

Both architects grew up in Milwaukee with Dutch immigrant parents. Henry Van Ryn was born in June 1864 to Henry Van Ryn, Sr. from Utrecht, Netherlands. He began studying architecture at age 17 under C. A. Gombert and later worked as a draftsman for James Douglas and renowned Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix. During the late 1880s, he partnered with Robert G. Kirsch. In 1889, he formed a partnership with Charles L. Lesser and Frank W. Andree. That same year, Van Ryn was elected as a Republican supervisor from the 4th ward of Milwaukee, serving until 1891. In 1893 he became 4th ward alderman and served on the common council for the following year. He died on January 2, 1951, at age eighty-six.⁷⁰

Gerrit De Gelleke was born in Milwaukee on August 19, 1872, to Dutch immigrants Peter and Anna De Gelleke. He attended the 9th Ward School and the old East Side High School in Milwaukee. He married and raised five children with Sylvia DeHeus. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1897 and returned to Milwaukee to join Van Ryn. After his partnership with Van Ryn, he went on to serve as the architect of the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Extension Division from 1935-1953. He served as chairman of the architects' division of the state registration board of architects and professional engineers for more than twenty-eight years, retiring in September 1958. He was also an AIA Fellow and a member of its Jury of Fellows, chairman of the Lake Front Committee, director of the Wisconsin Home and Farm School, and director of the Milwaukee WMCA. He was awarded the Edward C. Kempner medal by the AIA for outstanding service to the institute while chairman of the institute's finance committee from 1941-1950. He died February 22, 1960, at age 87.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Proceedings*, 6 May 1919, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Schools, 1919), 350.

⁶⁹ Letters, Milwaukee Board of School Directors Secretary to Messrs. Van Ryn and De Gelleke and return correspondence, December 1924, Wisconsin Avenue School, 1924-1943 Correspondence Folder, Milwaukee Public School Collection #MS1953, Milwaukee County Historical Society.

⁷⁰ Bill Hart, "Henry Van Ryn," *Marathon County Historical Society Biography Database*, accessed 10 August 2016, <http://www.marathoncountyhistory.org/our-history-online/biography-view?IndividualsId=117726>.

⁷¹ Bill Hart, "Gerrit deGelleke," *Marathon County Historical Society Biography Database*, accessed 10 August 2016, <http://www.marathoncountyhistory.org/our-history-online/biography-view?IndividualsId=116868>.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 20

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Together and individually, Van Ryn and De Gelleke designed countless schools and university buildings throughout the state. Their works include Bay View High School, Milwaukee; Grant Elementary School, Wausau; Irving School, Wausau; Longfellow School, Wausau; Milwaukee University School; Milwaukee Vocational School; Milwaukee-Downer College main building and Sabin Hall (future University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee); St. John's Grade School, Marshfield (demolished); Washington High School, Milwaukee; Wausau High School (demolished); and several buildings at Eau Claire, Whitewater, Englemann Hall, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and Superior in the University of Wisconsin system. They have designed several school buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Boscobel High School, Boscobel (NRIS 86003518); Central School, Iron River, MI (NRIS 05000621); Janesville High School, Janesville; Main Hall (NRIS 99000760), La Crosse State Normal School, La Crosse (NRIS 85000579); Oshkosh State Normal School (historic district; NRIS 84000722); Agriculture and Manual Arts Building, Platteville Normal School, Platteville (NRIS 85000578); and Schofield Hall, Eau Claire (NRIS 83003373).

Cultural Resource Management of Wisconsin does not classify Van Ryn or De Gelleke as master architects; however, their specialization in and significant impact on school architecture in Wisconsin merits consideration as master architects of the schoolhouse type. Over the course of their partnership, they designed at least thirty-eight schools and eight additions, many of them in Milwaukee. In their capacity as official architects reporting to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, they were the chief decision-makers for alterations and upgrades to schools designed by other architects prior to their tenure. Their years of service coincided with a period of modernization and rapid growth of the school system's physical resources, empowering them to make decisions that impacted nearly every building in the system. Van Ryn and De Gelleke thus had a significant influence and impact on school-related architecture in the metropolitan Milwaukee area; the development of which impacted districts throughout the country as Milwaukee served as a national leader in public education.

Conclusion

The Grand Avenue Elementary School is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, locally significant under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as a rare, intact example of a school house type, highly representative of the most progressive trends in school building in the 1920s. Because many Milwaukee schools were altered, including having additions constructed to the side or rear of buildings, this building is exceptional as an unaltered example of a graded school type from the early twentieth century. Architects Van Ryn and De Gelleke incorporated the Collegiate Gothic style on a grand scale for several of Milwaukee's high schools and in a more restrained form in elementary and junior high schools. The Grand Avenue Elementary School is a fine example of the Collegiate Gothic style as applied to a neighborhood grade school, with intact interior and exterior details representative of the style.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 21

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

The closure of the school in 2007 reflected a change in demographics more than an inadequacy of facilities. There were simply not enough elementary-aged children in the neighborhood who could not be easily absorbed in nearby schools.⁷² The longevity of the school building for its original purpose is a testament to its quality of construction, inherent practicality of its design, proper consideration of the growing neighborhood in which it was built, and the flexibility of its spacious rooms to adapt to changing educational trends. In fact, the Grand Avenue School would still make an excellent school building today, meeting many of the essential requirements in modern public education facilities.

The changing demographics of the neighborhood and financial pressures on Milwaukee Public Schools largely protected the school from invasive remodels and alterations. Thus, the school appears much as it did when it opened in 1921. The Grand Avenue School is remarkable for its integrity. It remains one of the best-preserved examples of an original work by master school architects who had a huge impact on Milwaukee's public schoolhouses. In fact, the only alteration from the original floor plan is the 1971 conversion of a lower level locker room into a small kitchen. Numerous interior details are extant such as the auditorium seating, decorative plaster detailing, terrazzo and maple flooring, built-in casework (such as shelving, storage units, display cases, glass fronted bookshelves, slate chalkboards, etc.), interior windows and doors, decorative tile, plumbing fixtures (sink, toilets, and faucets), Tennessee marble toilet partitions, standing and running trim, the kindergarten room fireplace, and even the principal's safe. Today in Milwaukee, over 40 percent of the public school building stock dates to before 1930.⁷³ Most Milwaukee elementary schools of the same era have large additions reflecting the changing education philosophies of their time, but muddling key features of a 1920s elementary school. In contrast, the Grand Avenue School retains the design responses to cultural, political, and social factors affecting education and school architecture in 1921. It is representative of the period in which it was constructed and the vision of the architects who shaped so much of Milwaukee schoolhouse architecture.

Preservation Activity and Archeological Potential

Following its closure, the Grand Avenue Elementary School building was surplused, with management of the property shifting to the Department of City Development. Milwaukee Public Schools continued to execute critical maintenance but many repairs were deferred. The sale of the property to Ambassador Enterprise LLC was completed in the summer of 2017 and approved by the Milwaukee Common Council. The property is set to be redeveloped as an extended-stay hotel, preserving the intact original features, restoring and repairing damaged elements, and executing long-deferred maintenance. A parapet rebuilding campaign in 2001 is the last significant physical preservation measure to occur on the school grounds. While Native Americans have a long history

⁷² Tanzilo, "Urban Spelunking: The recently surplused Wisconsin Avenue School."

⁷³ Tanzilo, *History of Milwaukee Public Schoolhouses*, 37.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 22

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

associated with the area that is now known as the city of Milwaukee, an archaeological investigation at this site was outside the scope of the nomination project; archeological potential has not been assessed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 3

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description:

The historic boundary for the Grand Avenue Elementary School (Grand Avenue School) is a rectangle with a long center axis that runs perpendicular to West Wisconsin Avenue (see the Figures section for a site map). The only variance of the modern boundary from the historic boundary is an easement for a bus shelter at the southeast corner of the lot. Beginning with a point that corresponds to the southwest corner of the property, the boundary runs north with the legal parcel line along a metal fence with masonry stanchions, transitioning to a masonry retaining wall topped with a chain link fence. It then turns east and runs for approximately 279 feet, following the parcel line, which corresponds to a chain-link fence. The boundary then turns south and runs for approximately 300 feet, following the back edge of sidewalk along North 27th Street, which corresponds with the legal parcel line and a chain-link fence. It jogs approximately 3 feet west and eight feet south around the bus shelter, then turns west again for approximately 276 feet following the back edge of the sidewalk and returns to the point of origin. The south border also corresponds with a metal fence between masonry stanchions, open at each primary south entrance.

Boundary Justification:

The described boundary corresponds to the historic boundary and includes the original play yard. The property included in this boundary was purchased in the planning for the new Grand Avenue Elementary School building in 1918 and 1919 and was conceived as an extension of the educational, play, and community space in the form of the play yard. The boundary encompasses all contributing and noncontributing elements and provides the appropriate setting and context of a 1920s schoolhouse, which was traditionally surrounded by landscaped and open play yards. The boundary description retains the original size of the play lot as well as the current parcel boundary.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Photographs

RESOURCE:

Grand Avenue Elementary School
2708 West Wisconsin Avenue
City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Donna Weiss Solberg and Kate Bissen, October 2016

LOCATION OF ORIGINAL DIGITAL FILES:

Wisconsin Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office
816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706

PHOTO DESCRIPTIONS:

Photograph 01 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0001)
South elevation looking north.

Photograph 02 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0002)
South and east elevations looking northwest.

Photograph 03 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0003)
South and west elevations looking northeast.

Photograph 04 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0004)
Typical entry. Photo is of west entry at south elevation looking north.

Photograph 05 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0005)
Detail of window and carved stone above west entry at south elevation looking north.

Photograph 06 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0006)
Detail of carved stone details and grotesques at south elevation looking northwest.

Photograph 07 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0007)
Detail of projecting kindergarten room box bay, south elevation looking northeast.

Photograph 08 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0008)
Detail of sign and basket weave brick pattern at ends of south elevation, looking north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 2

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Photograph 09 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0009)
Detail of perimeter fence at south elevation.

Photograph 10 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0010)
East and north elevations looking southwest.

Photograph 11 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0011)
North elevation looking southeast across play yard.

Photograph 12 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0012)
Detail at north elevation auditorium operator's room box bay projecting from main brick wall face.

Photograph 13 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0013)
Looking west across play yard from center dividing fence.

Photograph 14 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0014)
West elevation of boiler room looking east.

Photograph 15 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0015)
Detail of stone lintel and brick pattern at boiler room passage, east elevation.

Photograph 16 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0016)
Detail northeast vestibule wall tile, typical of all four vestibules.

Photograph 17 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0017)
Southwest entrance looking through intact historic vestibule doors. Doors and decorative tile are intact at all four entrances.

Photograph 18 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0018)
Typical interior stair tower at entrances; photo taken from second floor.

Photograph 19 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0019)
Typical interior corridor.

Photograph 20 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0020)
Typical classroom looking from wardrobe door.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 3

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Photograph 21 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0021)
Typical classroom looking toward wardrobe from front of room.

Photograph 22 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0022)
Typical classroom with special built-in storage between wardrobe doors; specialized storage cabinets were often added to classrooms for higher grade levels.

Photograph 23 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0023)
Detail of teacher's wardrobe typical in every classroom.

Photograph 24 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0024)
Typical coat room connected to classroom.

Photograph 25 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0025)
Detail of fireplace in kindergarten room.

Photograph 26 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0026)
Typical wardrobe adjacent to kindergarten room with dedicated toilet room and intact ventilation transoms at the end.

Photograph 27 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0027)
Detail of doctor's room built-in cabinets.

Photograph 28 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0028)
Lower level boys toilet with original marble stalls. Girls toilet has similar finishes.

Photograph 29 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0029)
Sinks in the lower level girls toilet room. Sinks are typical throughout the building.

Photograph 30 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0030)
Boys gym looking north.

Photograph 31 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0031)
Girls gym looking north.

Photograph 32 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0032)
Auditorium entrance from second floor, northwest stair.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Photos Page 4

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Photograph 33 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0033)
Auditorium looking north from stage.

Photograph 34 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0034)
Auditorium looking south toward stage.

Photograph 35 of 35 (WI_Milwaukee County_Grand Avenue Elementary School_0035)
Detail of auditorium seating.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 1

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

List of Figures

- Figure 1 USGS Map with UTM Coordinates
- Figure 2 Sketch map of property
- Figure 3 Photo at the start of construction, c. 1919
- Figure 4 Photo during construction, c. 1920
- Figure 5 Photo looking northwest on opening day, September 1921
- Figure 6 Photo looking northeast, c. 1926
- Figure 7 Photo of a Grand Avenue School classroom, 1927
- Figure 8 Aerial photo showing the school in its neighborhood context, 1968
- Figure 9 Historic drawing, site plan, June 1919
- Figure 10 Historic drawing, basement plan, June 1919
- Figure 11 Historic drawing, first floor plan, June 1919
- Figure 12 Historic drawing, second floor plan, June 1919
- Figure 13 Historic drawing, third floor plan, June 1919
- Figure 14 Historic drawing, roof plan, June 1919
- Figure 15 Historic drawing, east and south elevations, June 1919
- Figure 16 Historic drawing, west and north elevations, June 1919
- Figure 17 Historic drawing, sections, June 1919
- Figure 18 As-built drawing, site plan, August 2008
- Figure 19 As-built drawing, ground floor plan (basement), August 2008
- Figure 20 As-built drawing, first floor plan, August 2008
- Figure 21 As-built drawing, second floor plan, August 2008
- Figure 22 As-built drawing, third floor plan, August 2008
- Figure 23 As-built drawing, roof plan, February 1999

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

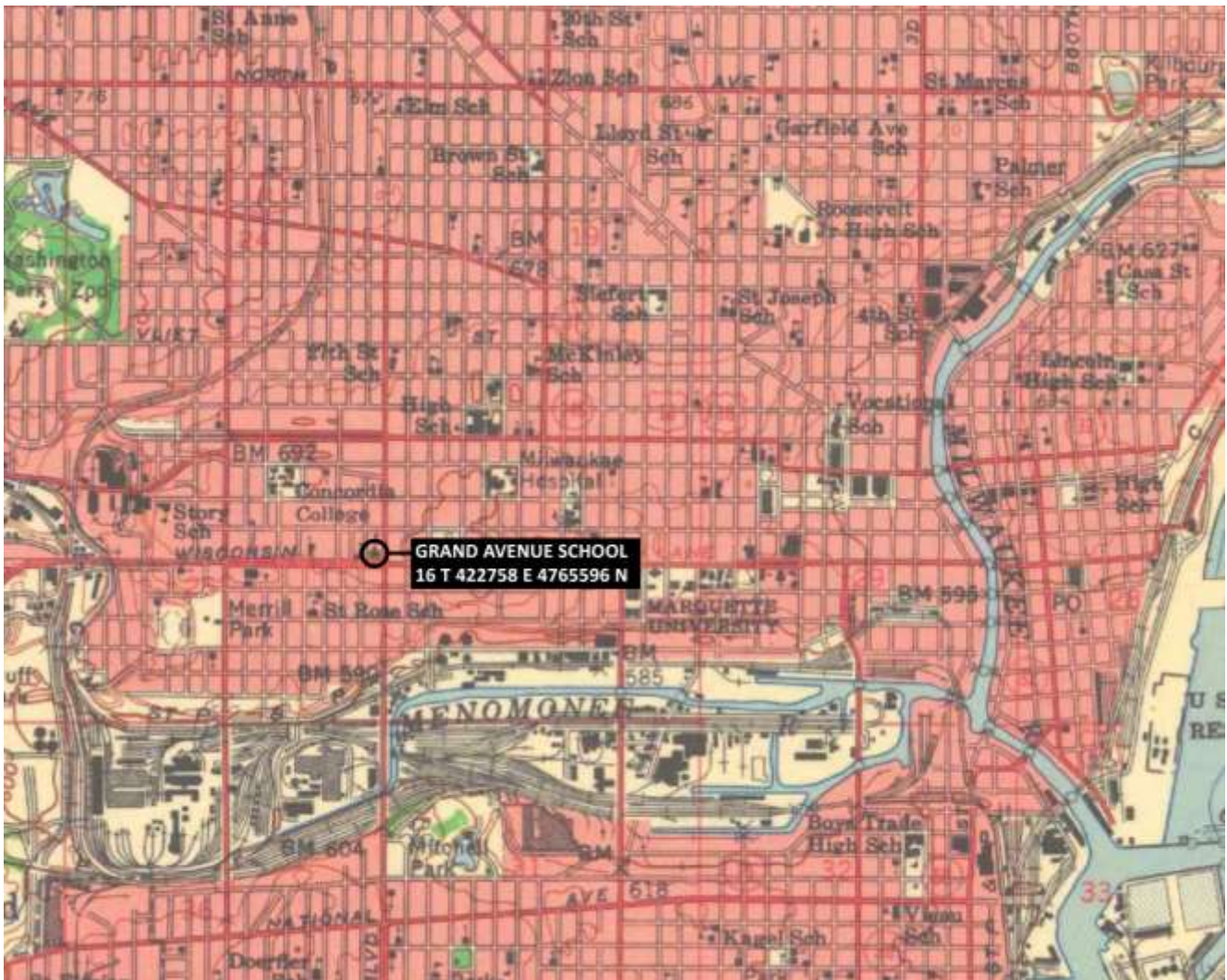
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 2

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figures

Figure 1
USGS Map with UTM Coordinates



Grand Avenue School
2708 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53208 (Milwaukee County)
Zone 16
Easting: 422758
Northing: 4765596

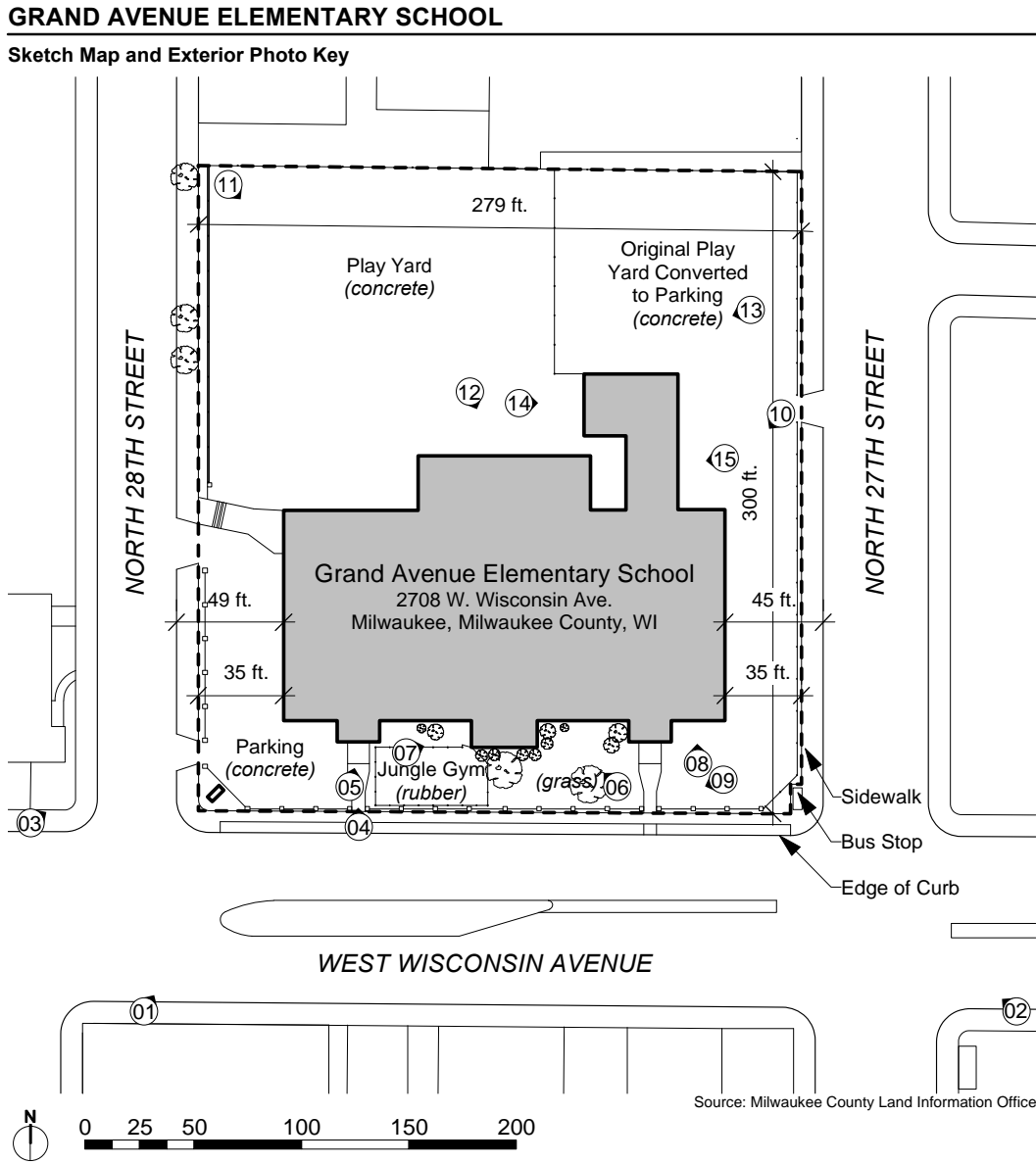
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 3

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 2
Sketch map of Property



LEGEND

— Chain Link Fence (Modern)	■ Contributing Resource (school)
○—○ Brick and Metal Fence (Replicates Historic)	□ Non-Contributing Resource (sign)
- - - Historic Boundary and Modern Parcel Line	① Photo Location Tag

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 4

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 3

Photo of the school grounds at the beginning of construction looking west from North 27th Street c. 1919. The church in the background is St. Paul's Lutheran Church at North 28th Street and West Wisconsin Avenue, extant. (MPS Division of Facilities and Maintenance School File)



Figure 4

Photo during construction looking northwest c. 1920. (MPS Division of Facilities and Maintenance School File)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 5

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

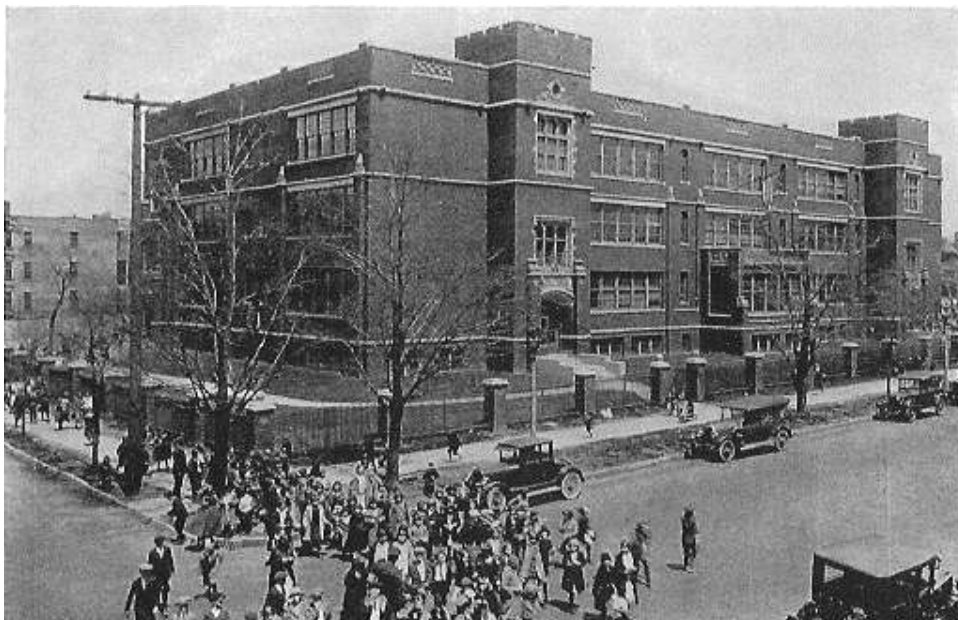
Figure 5

Photo looking northwest on opening day, September 1921. (MPS Division of Facilities and Maintenance School File)



Figure 6

Photo looking northwest c. 1926. (*Where We Go To School: Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 1927*)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 6

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 7

Photo of a Grand Avenue School Classroom (*Where We Go To School: Sixty-Eighth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 1927*)

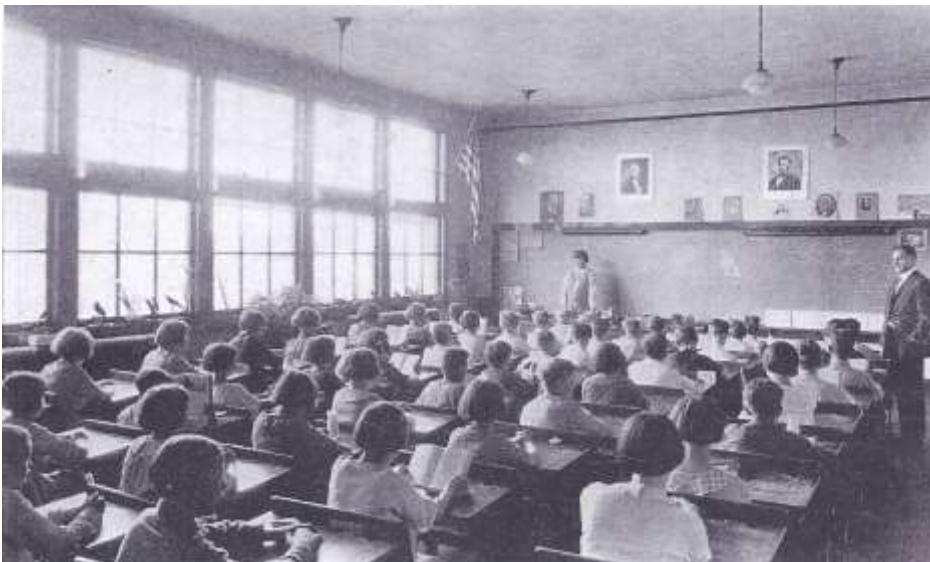


Figure 8

Aerial photo showing the school in its neighborhood context, 1968. (*MPS Division of Facilities and Maintenance School File*)



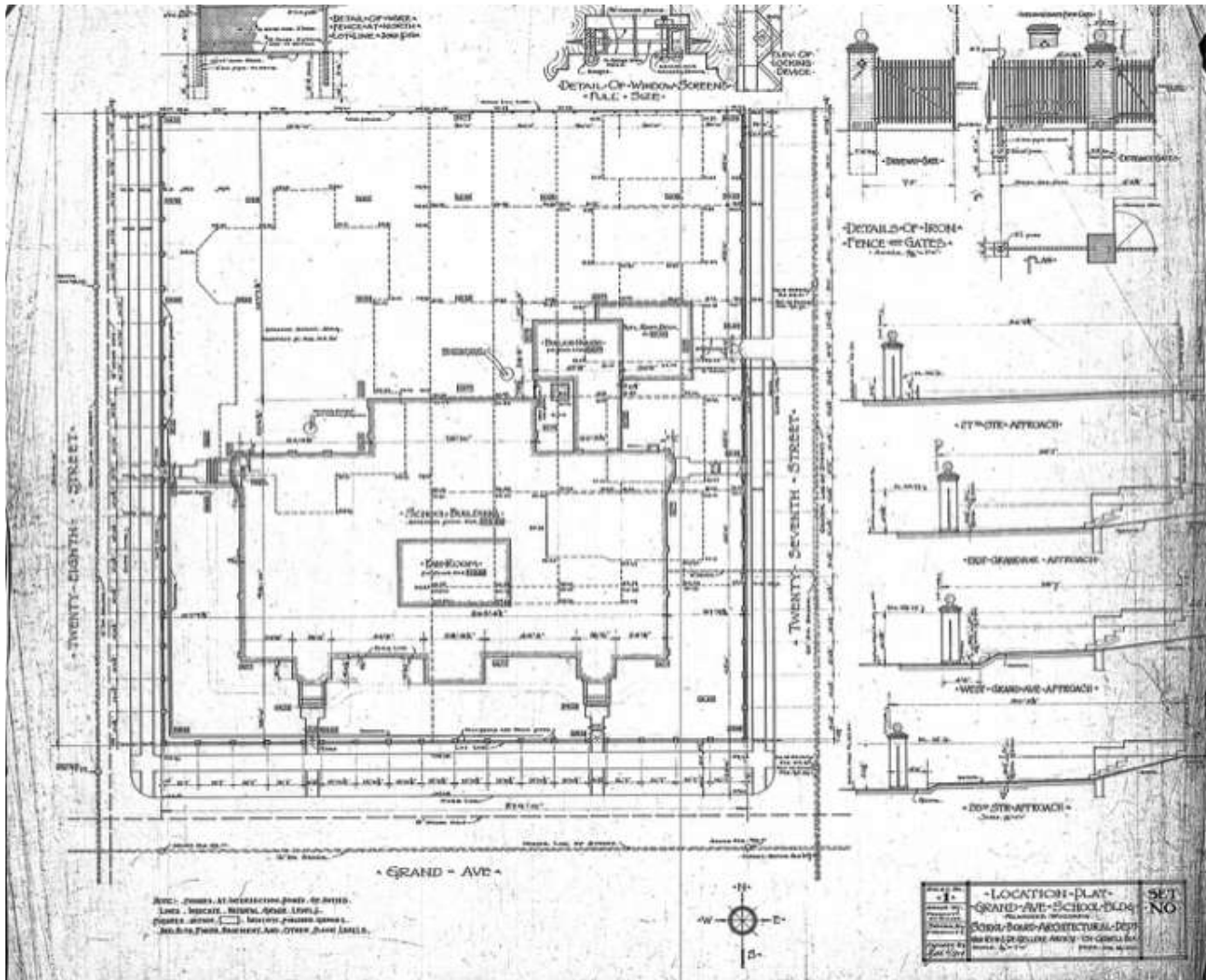
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 7

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 9
Historic drawing, site plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



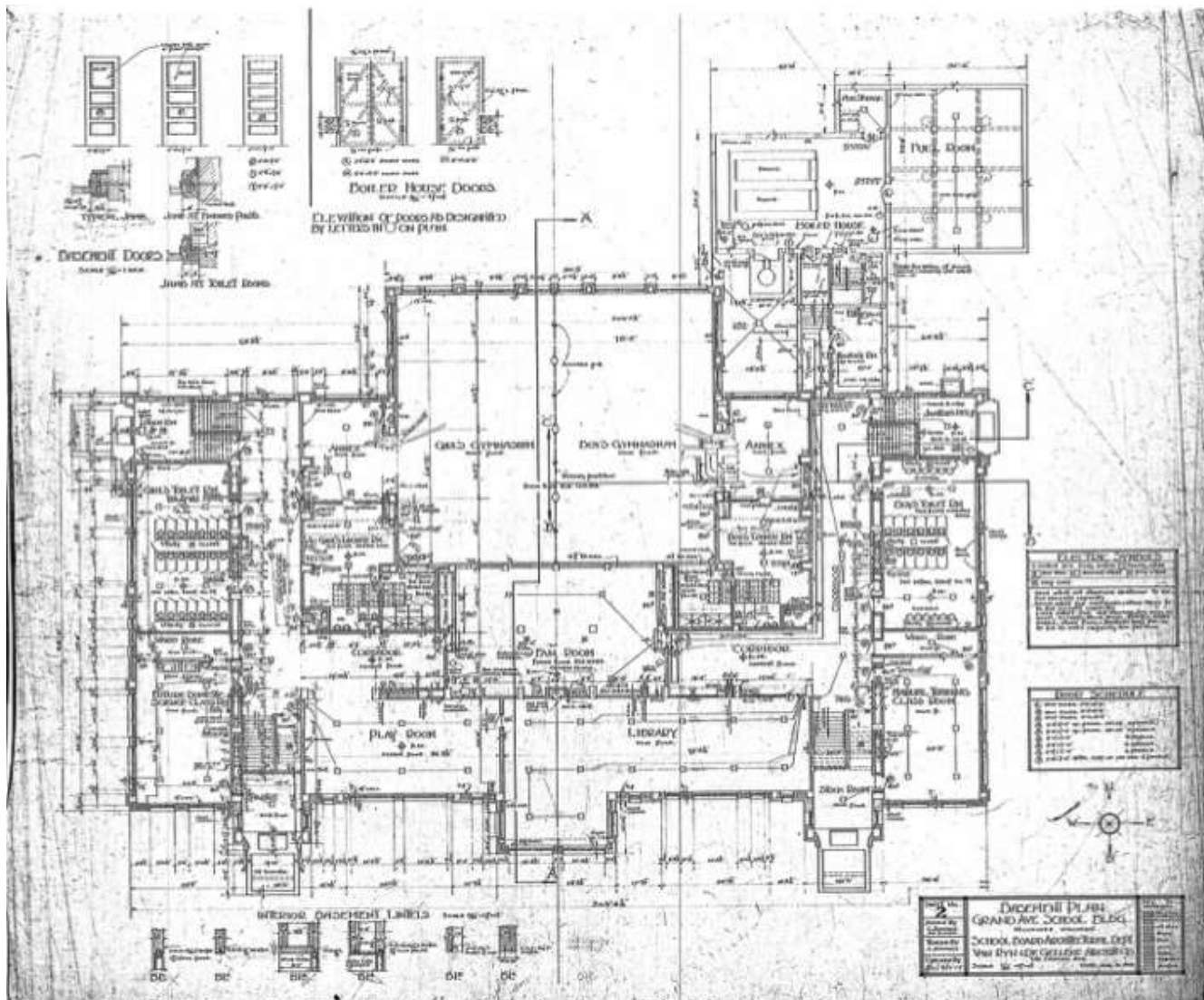
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 8

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 10
Historic drawing, basement plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



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

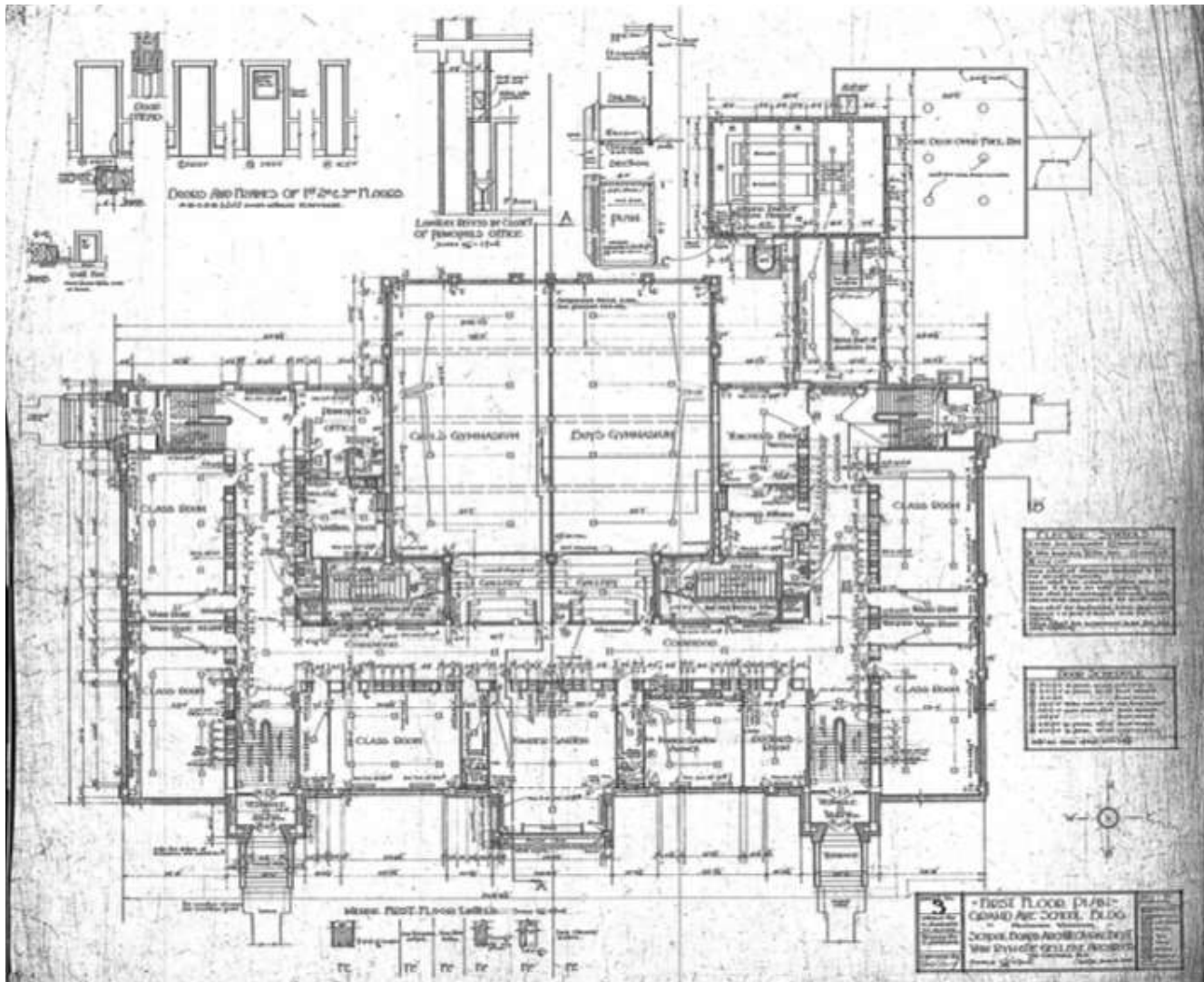
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 9

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 11

Historic drawing, first floor plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



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

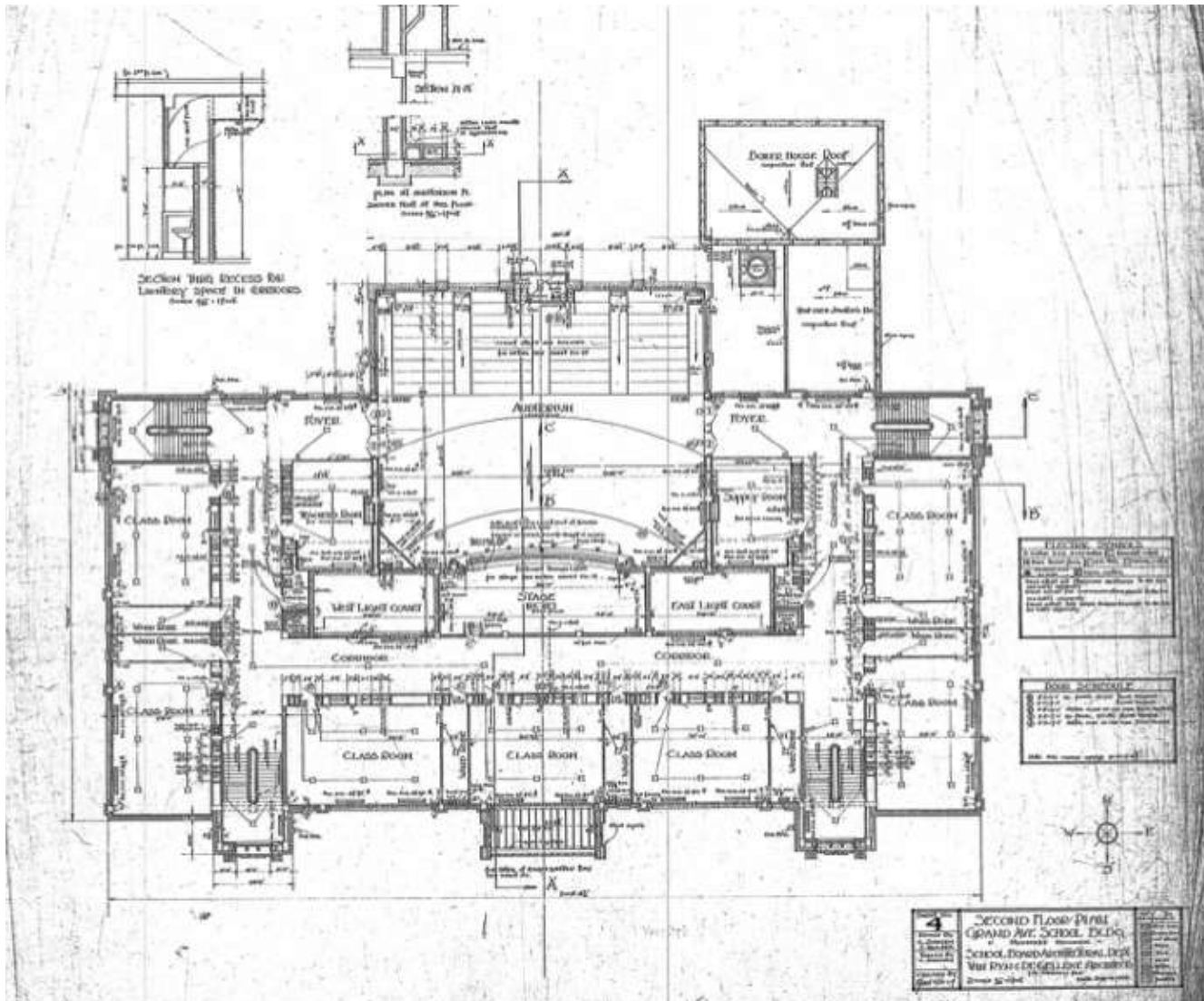
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 10

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 12

Historic drawing, second floor plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

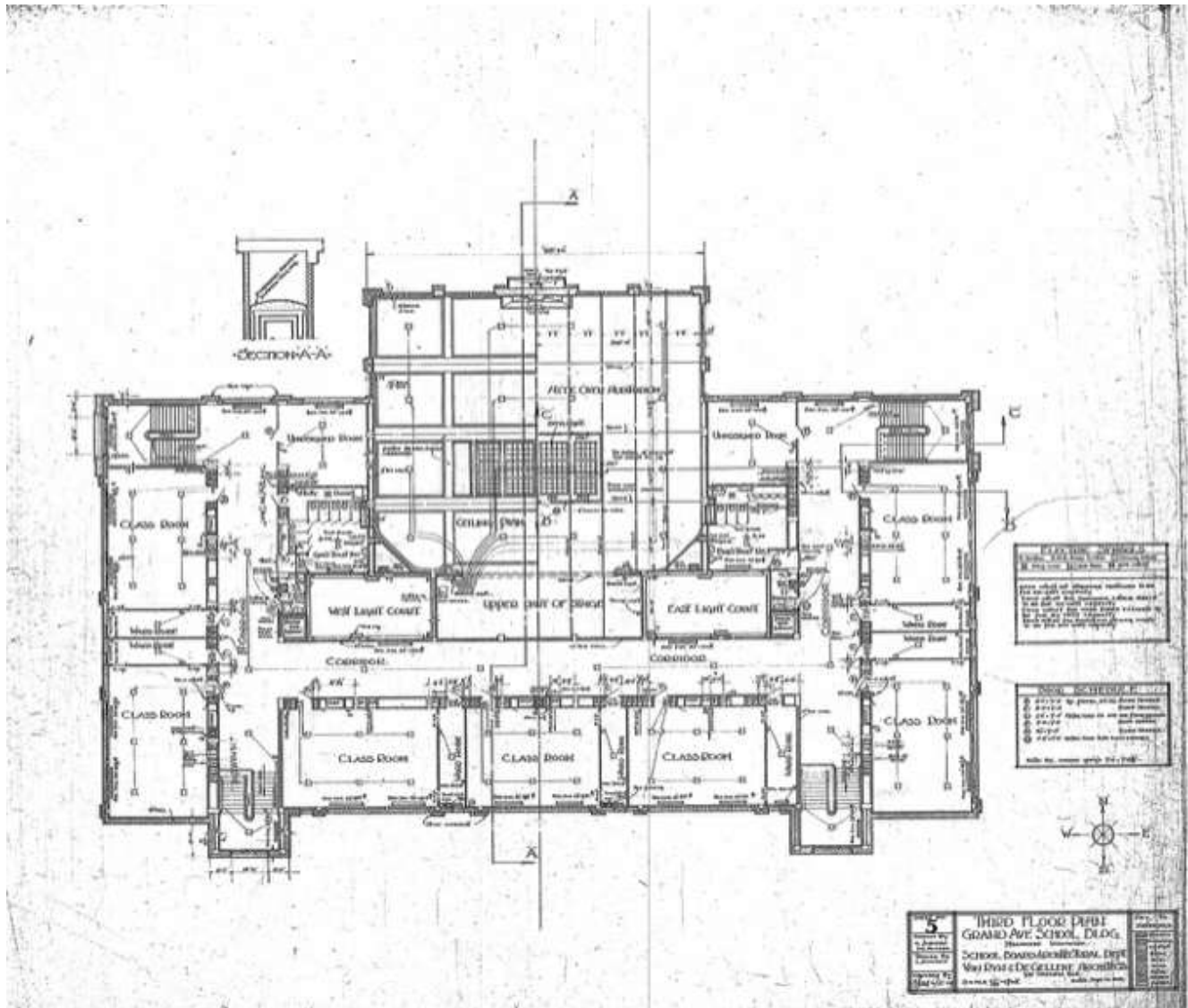
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 11

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 13

Historic drawing, third floor plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



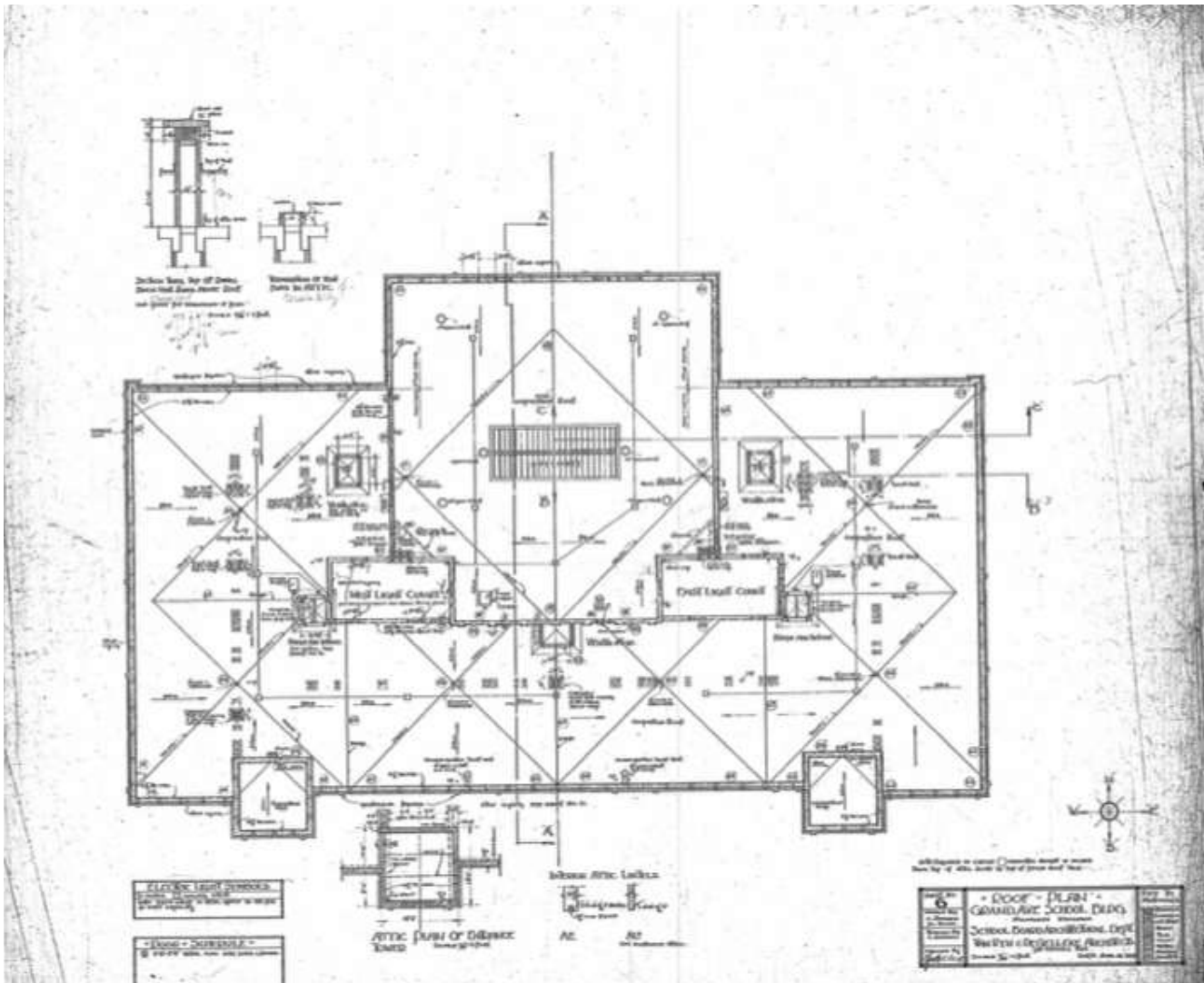
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 12

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 14
Historic drawing, roof plan, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



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

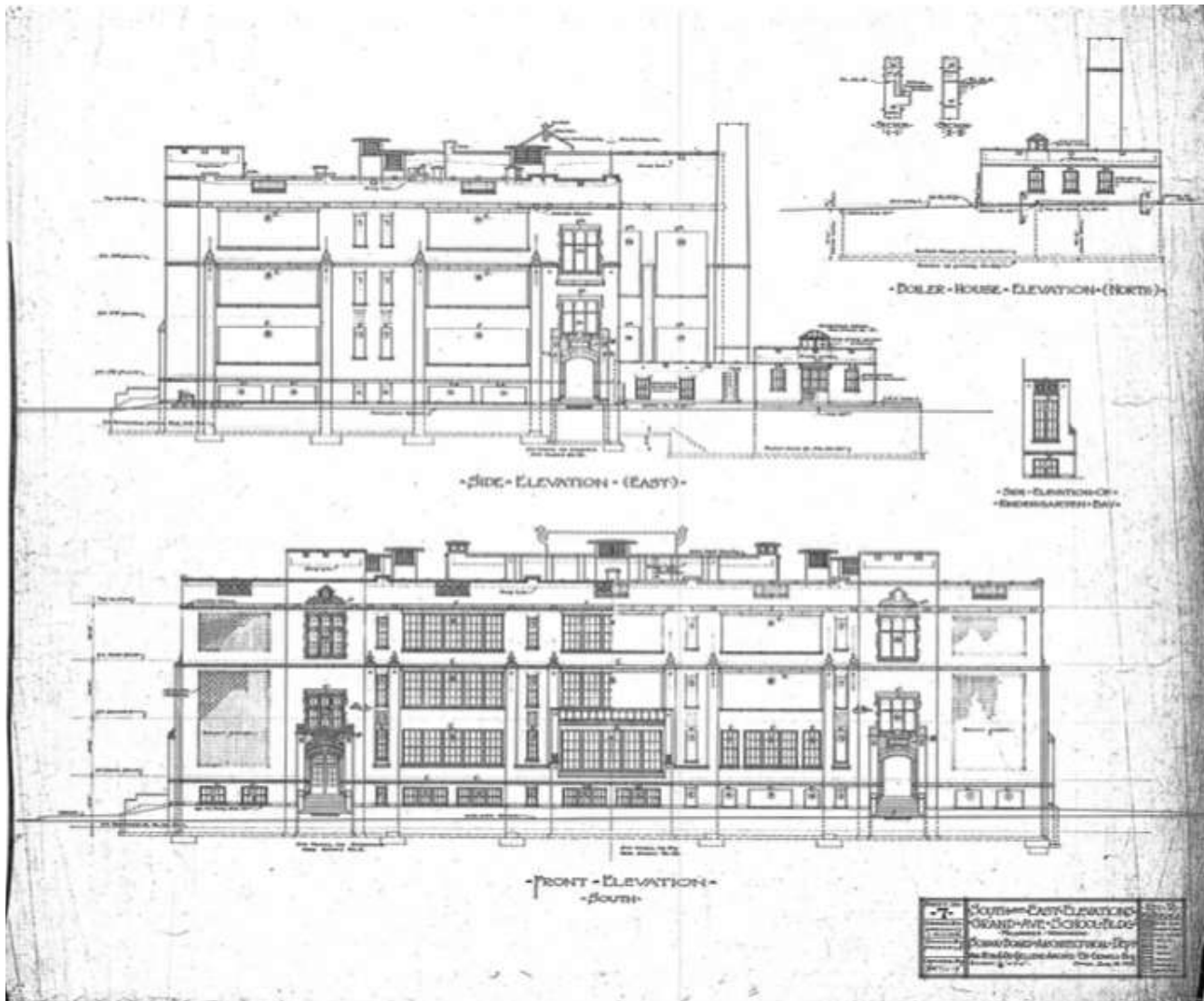
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 13

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 15

Historic drawing, east and south elevations, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



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

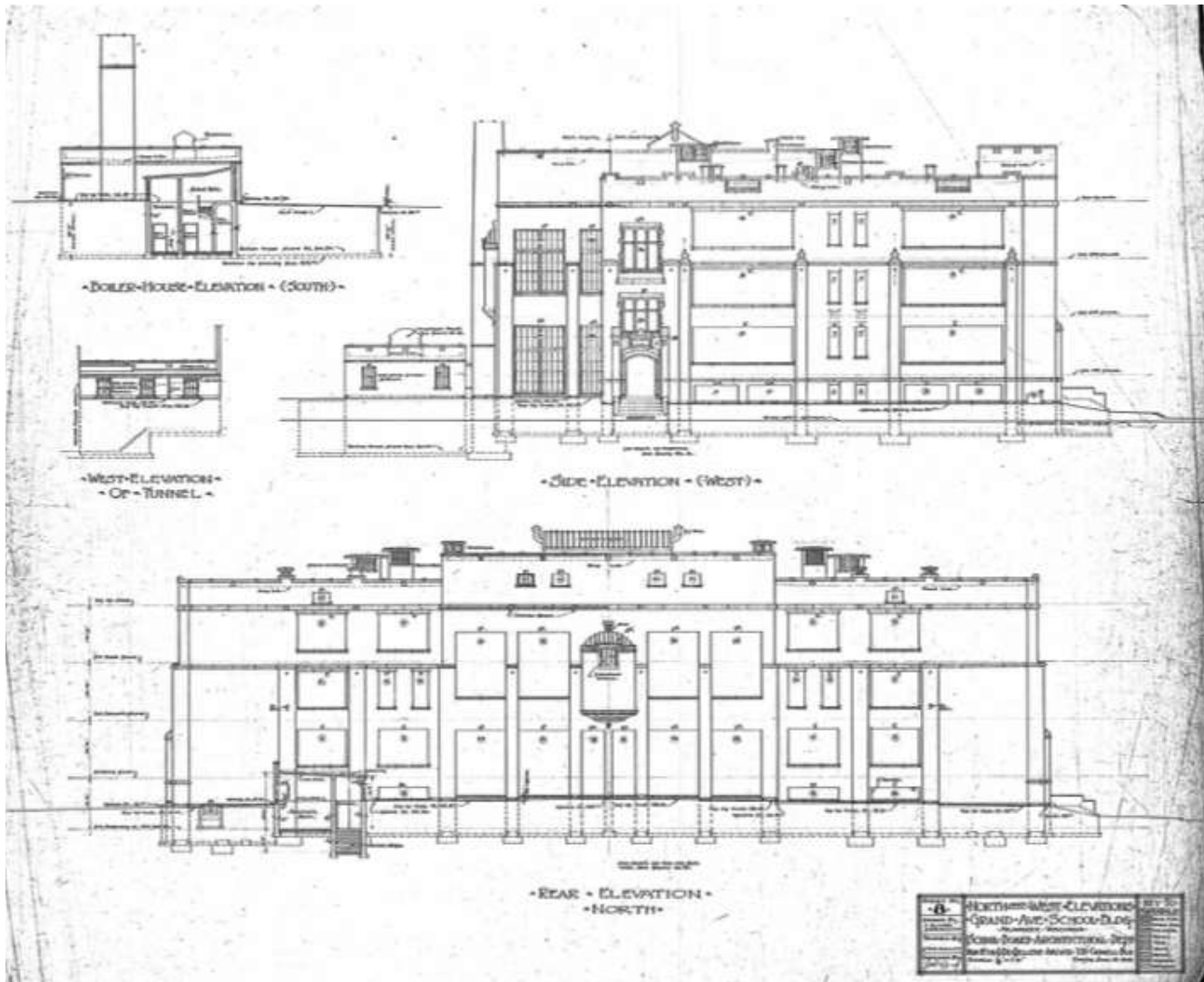
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 14

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 16

Historic drawing, west and north elevations, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



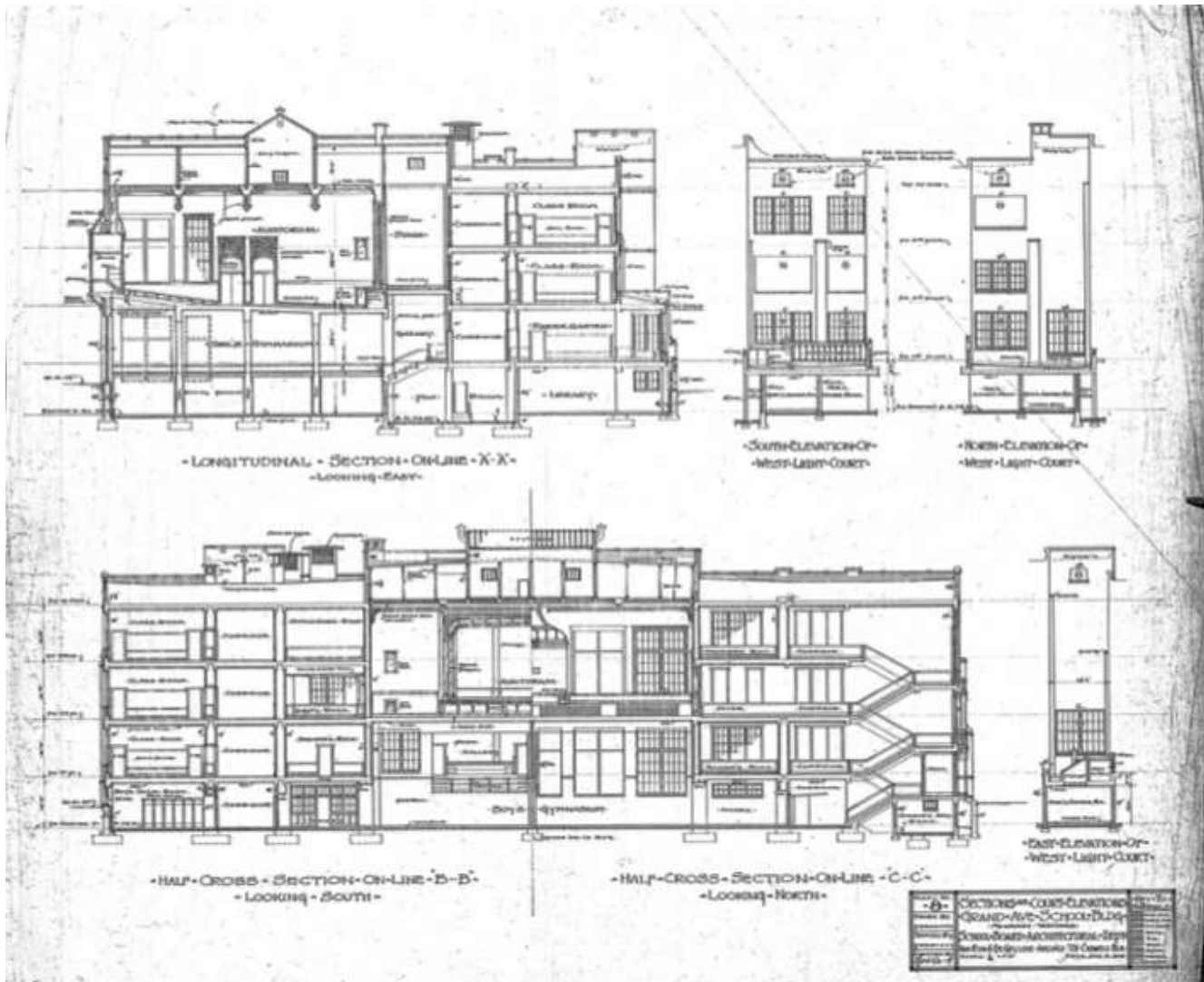
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 15

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 17
Historic drawing, sections, June 1919. (Wisconsin Architectural Archive)



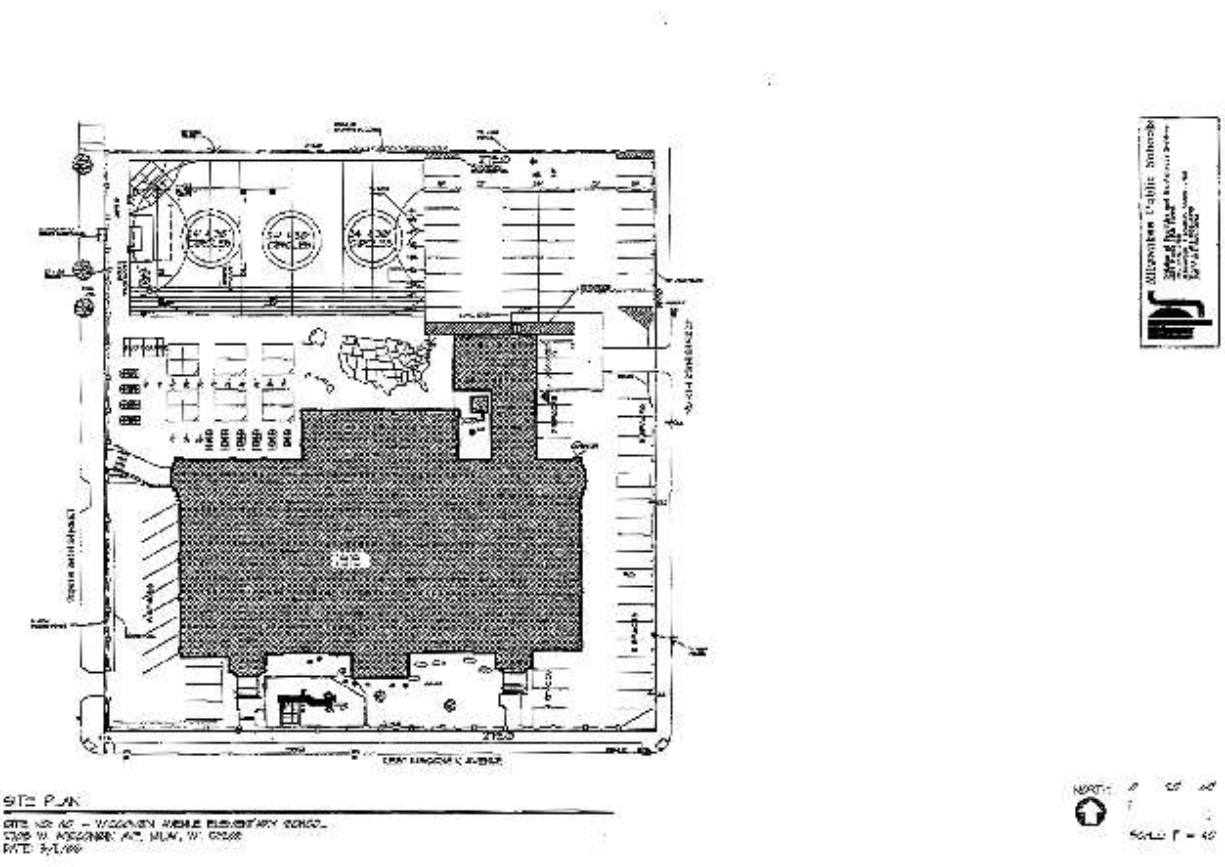
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 16

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 18
As-built drawing, site plan, August 2008. (Milwaukee Department of City Development)



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

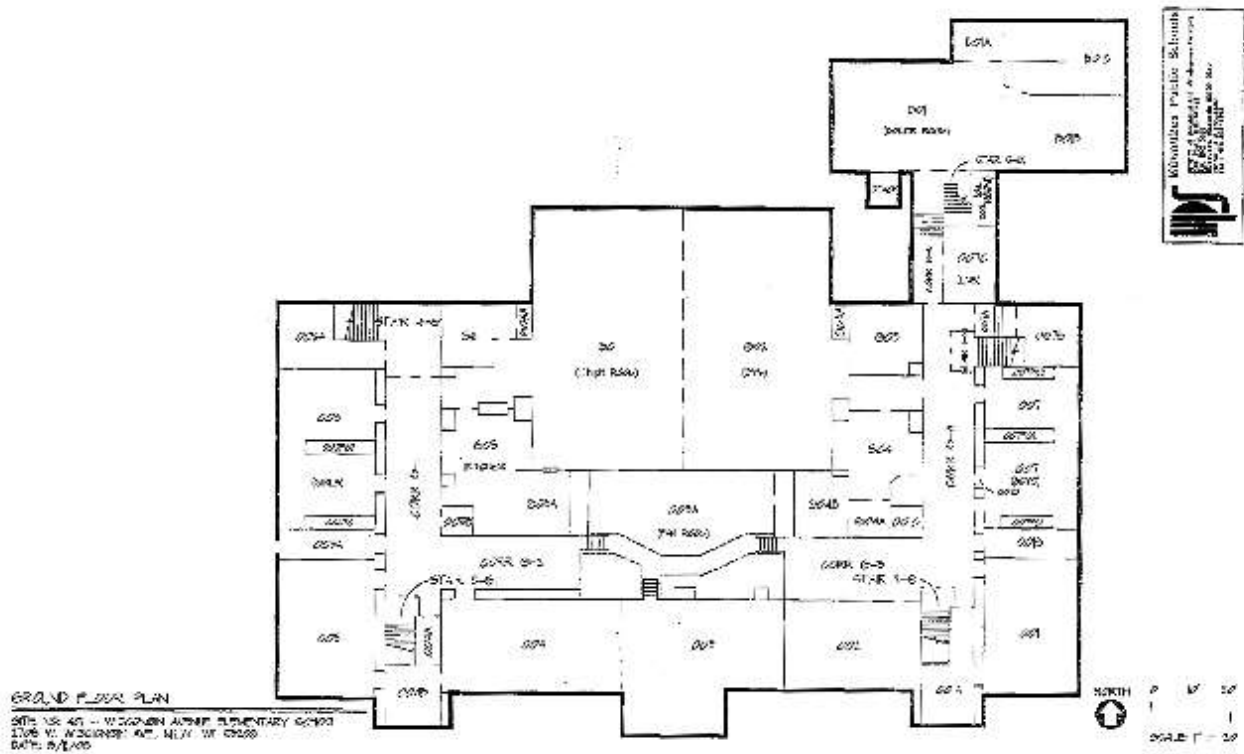
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 17

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 19

As-built drawing, ground floor plan (basement), August 2008. (Milwaukee Department of City Development)



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

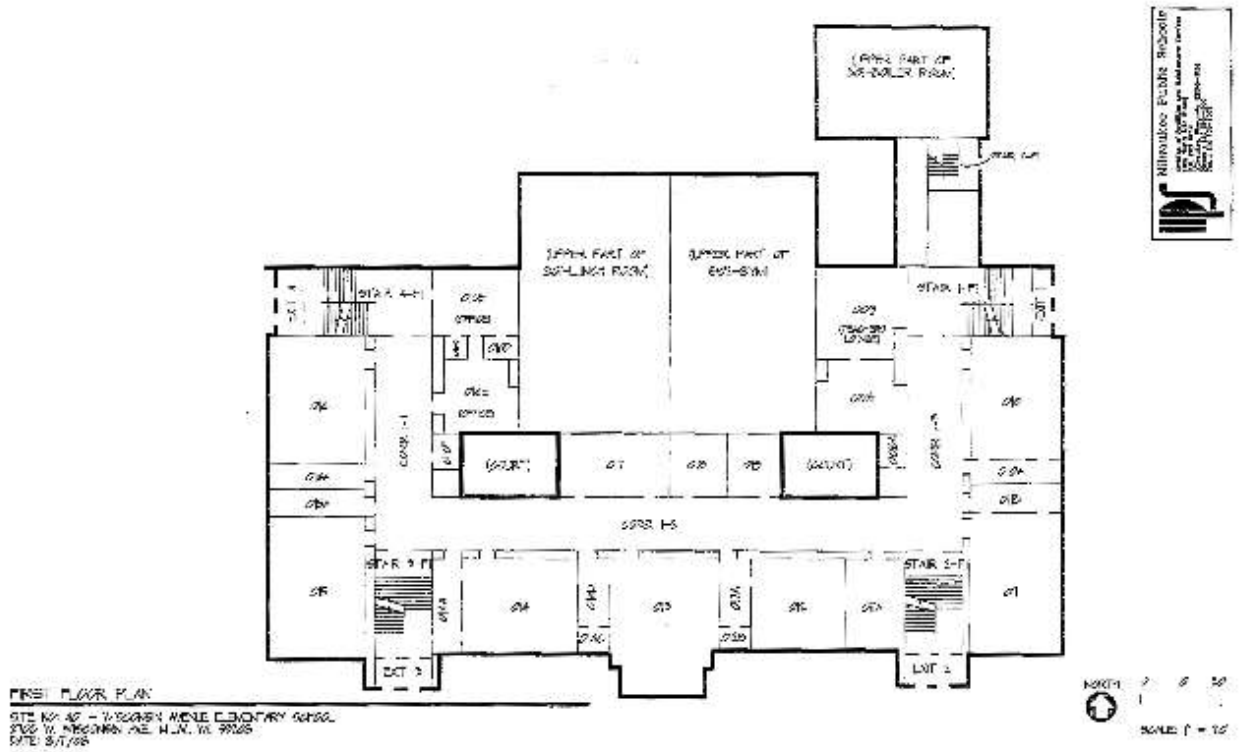
**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section Figures Page 18

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 20

As-built drawing, first floor plan, August 2008. (Milwaukee Department of City Development)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

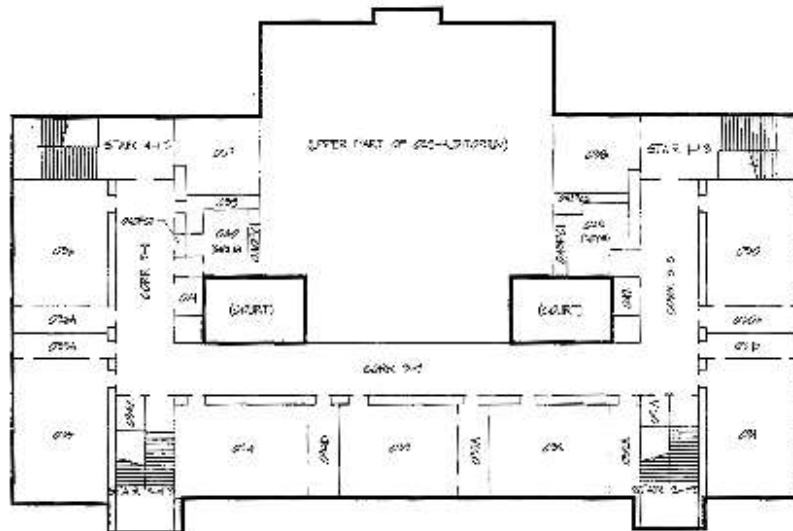
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Section Figures Page 20

Figure 22

As-built drawing, third floor plan, August 2008. (Milwaukee Department of City Development)



THIRD FLOOR PLAN
 SITE NO. 431 - GRAND AVENUE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 1520 N. WISCONSIN AVE., MILWAUKEE, WIS. 53222
 DATE 8/1/08

0 10 20
 1
 REAL 7 - 20



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

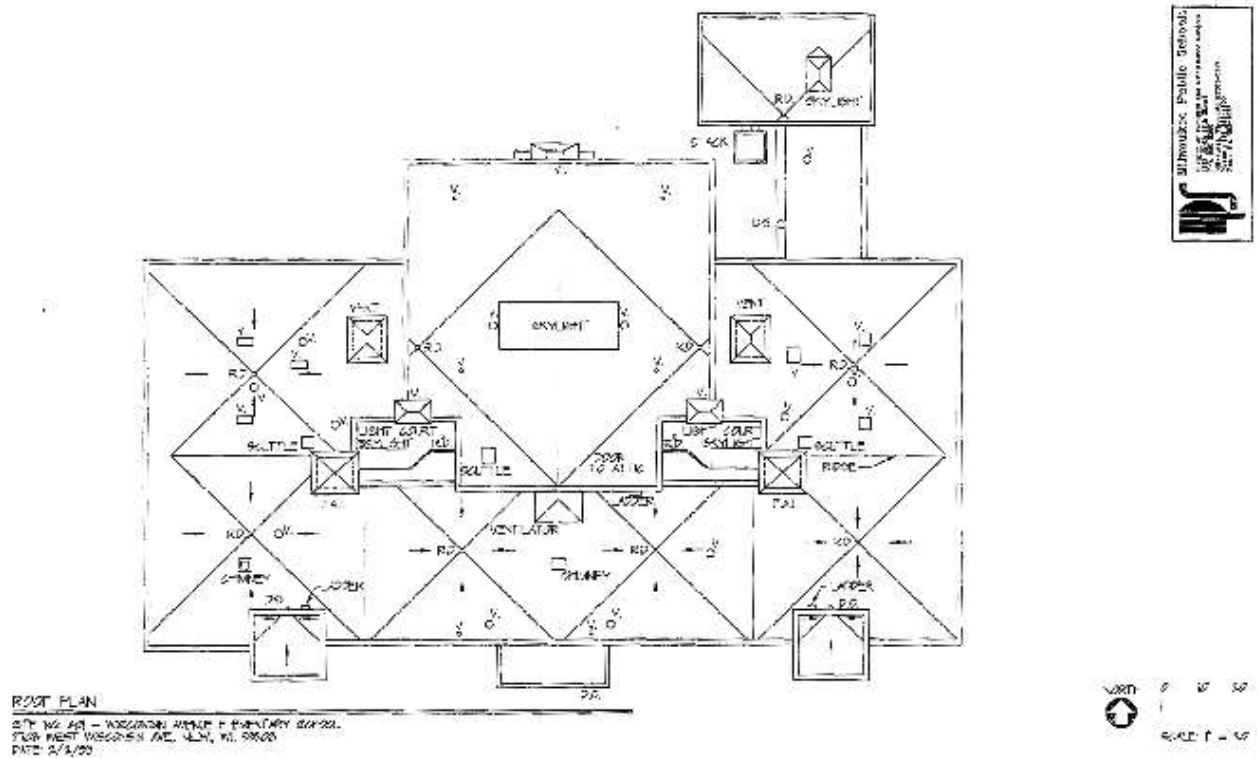
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figures Page 21

Grand Avenue Elementary School
Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Figure 23

As-built drawing, roof plan, February 1999. (Milwaukee Department of City Development)







27th

Wisconsin

WISCONSIN AVENUE

27th

NO
TURN
ON RED

STOP
HERE
ON RED



27th

STOP











A low-angle photograph of a brick building facade. The building features a decorative pattern of bricks in shades of red, brown, and blue. The text "WISCONSIN AVENUE SCHOOL" is mounted on the wall in white, capital letters. Above the text, there is a decorative horizontal band with a central floral motif. The building has a corner on the left side, and the sky is visible in the upper right corner.

WISCONSIN AVENUE SCHOOL















NO PA
ON PR
WIT
PE



FIRE EXIT

3

EXIT

EXIT

























NO SMOKING
IN THIS BUILDING
CITY ORDINANCE







EXIT



AUDITORIUM







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Appeal

PDIL

Text/Data Issue

SHPO Request

Landscape

Photo

Waiver

National

Map/Boundary

Resubmission

Mobile Resource

Period

Other

TCP

Less than 50 years

CLG

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary
Comments:

Recommendation/
Criteria

Reviewer Barbara Wyatt Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2252 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
18th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



November 3, 2017

Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board
c/o Peggy Veregin
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53706



Dear Members of the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board:

I am writing to express my support for the nomination of the Grand Avenue Elementary School in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin to the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places.

I currently live in the Historic Concordia Neighborhood and own a historically-designated home not far from Grand Avenue Elementary School. I understand the importance of such a designation and the value it brings to a community and specific properties. Our rich history is a major draw for home owners and visitors. As a fellow community member, historic property owner, and elected representative, I understand this district is being considered at your December 1, 2017 meeting and I am respectfully requesting the Board's approval of this nomination.

The Grand Avenue Elementary School at one time was an anchor institution of learning for Milwaukee's children. This beautiful brick building now sits vacant along one of Milwaukee's major roadways and busiest intersections. The need for commercial and economic development along this corridor cannot be overstated and the historic designation of this building will only encourage individuals to look at its significance to our community and the need to preserve its place in our shared history.

Again, I believe the Grand Avenue Elementary School in the City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin is worthy of being designated as a part of the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Goyke", written over a horizontal line.

State Representative Evan Goyke
18th Assembly District



Office of the City Clerk



Jim Owczarski
City Clerk

Rebecca N. Grill
Deputy City Clerk

November 7, 2017

Ms. Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator
Wisconsin Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53706-1488

Dear Ms. Veregin:

RE: CLG Review of the National Register Nomination
of the Grand Avenue Elementary School

In accordance with the provisions of the Certified Local Government Agreement between the City of Milwaukee and Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office, the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the National Register nomination of the Grand Avenue Elementary School / Wisconsin Avenue School located at 2708 West Wisconsin Avenue. In voting to support the nomination on November 6, 2017, the Commission determined that the property is an excellent example of the Collegiate Gothic Style as applied to a Milwaukee elementary school building. Architects Van Ryn and DeGellecke were masters of the style and put their imprint on all Milwaukee public school building for two decades as well as school and academic buildings throughout the state. Their floorplans reflected all that was progressive in school design theory at the time. Commissioners were impressed that the school has remained virtually in its original condition through the time the school closed in 2007. The commission is encouraged that the building will be adaptively re-used as an extended stay hotel.

If you need additional information or have any questions, please feel free to contact Carlen Hatala of the Historic Preservation Commission staff at (414) 286-5722.

Sincerely,

Matt Jaresz, Chair
Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission





WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



TO: Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination

The following materials are submitted on this Second day of February 2018, for the nomination of the Grand Avenue Elementary School to the National Register of Historic Places:

<u>1</u>	Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
<u>1</u>	CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
<u> </u>	Multiple Property Nomination form
<u>35</u>	Photograph(s)
<u>1</u>	CD with image files
<u> </u>	Map(s)
<u>23</u>	Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
<u>2</u>	Piece(s) of correspondence
<u> </u>	Other:

COMMENTS:

<u> </u>	Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
<u>X</u>	This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
<u> </u>	The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
<u> </u>	Other: