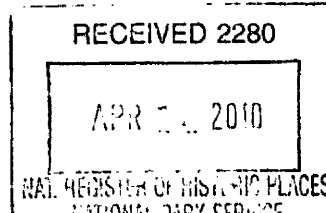


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in: How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional 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 Church Hill Grammar School (preferred)

other names/site number Edward J. Creamer Pawtucket School Administration Building

2. Location

street & number 81 Park Place N/A  not for publication

city or town Pawtucket N/A  vicinity

state Rhode Island code RI county Providence code 007 zip code 02860

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.)

Edward Henderson 4/8/2010  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
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 certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet  
 determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.  
 removed from the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
[Signature] 4/23/10

Church Hill Grammar School

Name of Property

Providence, Rhode Island

County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ buildings

\_\_\_\_\_ sites

\_\_\_\_\_ structures

\_\_\_\_\_ objects

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ total

**Name of related multiple property listings**

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION-School

EDUCATION--Education Related-(Administration)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN - Queen Anne

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation GRANITE

walls BRICK

roof SLATE

other

**Narrative Description**

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

Church Hill Grammar School  
Name of Property

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

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

**Criteria Considerations**

(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

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE  
EDUCATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1889-1949  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1889-90  
ca. 1949  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

William R. Walker & Son  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository

Church Hill Grammar School  
Name of Property

Providence, Rhode Island  
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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.40 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	9	3	0	1	8	1	4	4	6	3	8	5	3	0
Zone	Easting		Northing												
2															

3															
Zone	Easting		Northing												
4															

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

### Boundary Justification

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Porterfield, Architectural Historian

organization PAL date April 2008

street & number 210 Lonsdale Avenue telephone 401-728-8780

city or town Pawtucket state Rhode Island zip code 02860

### 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 Amaral Revite

street & number 148 West River Street, Suite 5 telephone 401-454-6867

city or town Providence state Rhode Island zip code 02904

**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 amend 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

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**DESCRIPTION**

**Summary Statement**

The Church Hill Grammar School is a former school building designed and erected in 1889–1890 by the prolific Providence architecture firm of William R. Walker and Son. The building is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Park Place and Church Street fronting Wilkinson Park in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Situated between several extant mill buildings comprising the Church Hill Industrial District to the west, Pawtucket's downtown commercial district to the north and east, and modern infill associated with the development of Interstate I-95 to the south, the former school building remains part of a small enclave of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential, institutional, and religious structures flanking a small urban park. The building is sited near the southeast corner of the property, immediately at the edge of the sidewalk on Church Street. A small grassed area is located in front of the school along Park Place, while the rear and north sides of the building are paved parking lots. Designed in the Queen Anne style, the brick building features a cross-gable slate roof, a large, square bell tower, two arched shed-roof entrance porches on either side of the projecting façade (east elevation), and a variety of paired and triple window openings that have for the most part been filled with mid-twentieth-century aluminum replacement sash. The interior circulation spaces remain basically intact, with original beadboard wainscoting, plaster walls, and original staircases. The former classroom spaces have been subdivided with modern partitions and walls, and acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting have been added throughout the interior. Many of these alterations appear to be removable, however, and cover largely intact original finishes. Despite the incorporation of these later materials, the building retains a high degree of historic and architectural integrity.

**Exterior**

The Church Hill Grammar School is a two-and-one-half-story, brick and granite-trimmed, Queen Anne style school building. It has a complex plan, with a primary T-shaped mass topped by a steeply pitched, cross-gable roof, and secondary masses filling the inner corners of the T: an end-gable pavilion on the north and a bell tower on the south. A broad projecting front-gable facade faces east onto Park Place. Original masonry work was provided by Robert Wilson of Pawtucket (SPS-1 1889h). The most prominent feature is the square-plan, four-story, pyramidal-roof bell tower on the south elevation. The symmetrical three-bay facade (east elevation) is flanked on either side by shed-roof arched entrance porches. The school features a slate roof with a central brick chimney and brick corbelling at the roofline. The brick exterior walls are accented with quarry-faced brownstone window lintels and sills, and a continuous projecting granite band along the east, north, and south elevations that serves as both a water table above the basement and sill for the first-floor windows. The building rests on a high brick foundation. Originally the coping of the front and side gables was embellished

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with decorative finials in the form of miniature cross gables at the roof peak and small end gables at the bottom of the rake above corbelled brackets. This roofline was removed and simplified in the 1970s and replaced with plain metal coping. The original chimney featured decorative recessed panels, both rectangular and arched, but this was replaced with a plain slab-form chimney during a 1970s reconstruction.

Fenestration includes large paired and triple windows in rectangular openings, as well as a number of small single rectangular window openings near the ground floor. On the gable ends and the tower, windows are grouped vertically in shallow recessed panels topped with brick segmental arches. The large windows lighting the former classrooms had fixed transoms over operable sash. Small arched windows are located along the north and south elevations near the entrances, and tall segmental arch windows on the rear (west) elevation. Most of the windows have quarry-faced brownstone sills and lintels. Nearly all of the original wooden sash have been removed and replaced with circa 1965 aluminum frame windows. The classroom windows generally follow the sash-and-transom arrangement of the original windows, and have two-light operable awnings in the lower part of the frame and two-light fixed transoms above. Only the original multi-light wood arched windows near the entrances and a small number of original wood basement windows remain in place, but most of the basement windows have been closed up with brick. Based on an 1890 photograph of the facade, fenestration originally consisted of one-over-one wood sash windows with single-light transoms on the first and second floors, and two-over-two wood sash windows with multi-light transoms on the third floor.

The bell tower features paired arched belfry openings with replacement louvers at the top floor; brick corbelling at the cornice; and a slate roof capped in copper. A weather vane initially crowned the tower. The tower originally housed a large bell cast in 1843 that was thought to have been in the cupola of a prior 1841 Church Hill Schoolhouse formerly on the site. The bell was removed in 1975 and placed inside the newly constructed Jenks Junior High School in Pawtucket (Murphy 1976:12). A terra-cotta plaque with wreath and foliage relief and the building name and construction date in decorative lettering is located on the east tower elevation above the entrance porch. All of the exterior doors have been replaced with modern metal or metal and glass doors.

**Interior**

An 1889 newspaper article about the proposed school building confirms that the original interior plan of the building is largely intact, despite the presence of many later additions. It consists of a central transverse (north-south) hallway on the first and second floors flanked by a staircase at each end and former classrooms on the east and west. Two staircases are located in the building: a large open-well, triple-run staircase with quarter landings at the north side of the building, and a differently configured staircase in the bell tower at the south side of the building, with triple runs and quarter landings between first and second and four runs and landings between second and third floor. Both the first and second floors contained a large east classroom 35 by 40 feet

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and two smaller west classrooms 30 by 34 feet, with twelve-foot ceilings. Each classroom appears to have originally had two entrances from the hallway separated by a closet/cloakroom (the 1889 article mentions "wardrobes"). The first floor also contained a "toilet room" for teachers and a small 10- by 15-foot teacher room. The classrooms were to "be lighted from the outside on one side only, and the seats will be so arranged that the desks will be lighted from the left." Interior finishes included "mahoganized" white wood trim, beadboard wainscoting up to the chalkboards, and 5-foot-high wainscoting in the hallways and staircases. The basement contained two 30-x-34-foot playrooms, one for girls and one for boys, as well as heating equipment, ventilation and heating ducts, and "sanitariums." The third floor was to be left unfinished for use as an assembly hall. Ceilings on the third floor were 9 feet high at the perimeter and fifteen feet high at the center, following the pitch of the roof. Original heating and ventilation was provided by a Smead-Northcott system (SPS-1 1889g). Because of ventilation problems, however, the school was converted to steam heating in the early twentieth century (Sanborn 1902 and SPS-2 1902a-b). The school initially utilized gas lighting, but by 1923, both gas and electric lighting were installed (Sanborn 1923).

The original spaces are still evident today, although the classrooms have been subdivided into offices, rooms, and closets with studded walls and partitions. Original interior carpentry work was provided by the Pawtucket firm of Willmarth and Mackillop (SPS-1 1889h). The hallways retain the original plaster walls and original beadboard wainscoting, which has been painted. Like the hallways, the staircases contain original wood beadboard wainscoting, newel posts, and flooring, although the treads have been covered with linoleum. Some of the original paneled interior doors and trim near the staircases remain in place on the first floor, and several storage closets throughout the building feature original beadboard wainscoting, built-in bookcases, paneled doors, and trim.

Church Hill Grammar School was remodeled in 1950-1954 after its conversion to a school administration building in 1949 (PSP 1997:7). Today, some of the interior spaces of the Church Hill Grammar School, most notably within the former classrooms, have been altered by the incorporation of modern materials. Most of the original classrooms have been subdivided into office spaces with prefabricated paneled and glass partitions and studded paneled walls. Most of the interior classroom wall surfaces have been clad in modern paneling. Modern dropped acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lighting have also been installed throughout the interior. Flooring consists of replacement linoleum and carpeting, possibly installed over original wood floors. Most of the interior classroom doors have been replaced with mid-twentieth century institutional wooden doors with single-light windows. Despite these modern materials, however, many original finishes such as plaster walls, ceilings, original floor surfaces, columns, and other surfaces remain intact behind the newer finish. Many of the modern materials appear to be removable.

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The first floor has been altered by the subdivision of classroom spaces into multiple offices with paneled studded walls. Interior columns have been boxed and paneled, but the original round metal columns and capitals are visible above the modern dropped acoustical tile ceiling. Also visible above the dropped ceiling are original plaster ceilings, a modest crown molding and possible asbestos tile ceiling in the east classroom, and picture molding near the ceiling in the two west classrooms. The dropped acoustical tile ceiling extends below the original window transoms. However, all of the windows on the first floor retain the original interior wood trim. Classroom doors have been replaced with modern institutional wood and glass doors, and the floors are covered in industrial carpeting. A modern glass partition wall with doors has been installed at either end of the central hall, and across the lobby at the southeast entrance, to close off the stairwells. Original interior paneled double doors with windows remain in place at the northeast and southeast entrance vestibules.

Like the first floor, the second floor classrooms have also been subdivided with paneled studded walls. Some of the paneled walls do not extend to the full ceiling height and are capped with glass partitions. The central hall has been enclosed at either end with the same glass partition wall and doors, to enclose the stairwells. The central hall and stair hall floors are covered with linoleum, while the office spaces have been carpeted. The acoustical tile ceilings obscure the original transom windows, but unlike the first floor, the second floor windows have been altered with modern interior trim. It is possible, however, that the original trim remains below the modern wall paneling. Original plaster ceilings and picture molding are visible above the dropped ceiling.

Although the third floor interior was reportedly completed at a later date than the lower floors, the central hallway features the same beadboard wainscoting. It appears to have been divided into two large classrooms. The west former classroom has subsequently been subdivided with paneled walls that do not extend to the ceiling, while the east classroom space has been divided with wood and glass partitions. Interior square, wooden columns on the third floor are enclosed with paneling below the acoustical tile ceiling. Above the dropped ceiling are original wooden framing elements and a plaster ceiling. Metal pendant lights with missing domes are suspended from the original plaster ceiling above the acoustical tile. An original three-light skylight is located in both classrooms, along the north and west roof slopes. Window openings have been partially obscured by the dropped ceiling, but the original window trim remains in place.

The basement features brick interior walls, wide round metal columns, and wood and concrete floors. The boiler room is located at the northwest corner. Original playrooms appear to have been located at the east side of the basement and include wood floors. Some small areas have been enclosed with concrete brick for use as offices or supply rooms. An original windowless store room with concrete walls, ceiling and floor is located near the north staircase. A bulkhead is located along the west elevation, and a modern metal conveyor belt extends into the basement from an exterior door on the south elevation.



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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary**

The Church Hill Grammar School was constructed in 1889–1890 and replaced an original two-story, wood-frame Church Hill schoolhouse built on the site in 1841. The notable Providence architects William R. Walker & Son designed the Queen Anne-style school, which was constructed of brick with a large square bell tower. The building was a grammar school until 1949, and then served as a school administration building until approximately 2006. The Church Hill Grammar School is significant at the local level under National Register of Historic Places eligibility Criteria A and C in the areas of education and architecture. Under Criterion A, the building possesses important historical associations with the history and development of the public school system of Pawtucket and the trends and changes in public school education that evolved during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under Criterion C, the building exemplifies the structure and design of a late-nineteenth-century public school building, as schoolhouses transitioned from smaller wood-framed structures to larger modern facilities with improved heating, ventilation, and lighting. It is one of the remaining works of the prolific Providence architecture firm of William R. Walker & Son, who designed civic, religious, educational, and institutional buildings throughout Rhode Island. The period of significance begins in 1889 when the building was constructed and ends in 1958, the current National Register eligibility cutoff date.

**Historical Significance**

**William R. Walker & Son**

The three-generation architectural firm of William R. Walker & Son played a prominent role in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century construction in Rhode Island. General William Russell Walker (1830–1905) began his architectural career as a contractor's apprentice and later studied architectural drawing for three years at Schofield's Commercial College. After serving in the Civil War, the Seekonk, Massachusetts native (born in the area later part of East Providence, Rhode Island) returned to New England and settled in the North Providence section of Pawtucket (Grieve 1897:464-65). Initially in a solo practice in Providence (1864–1876), he joined forces briefly with Thomas J. Gould (1876–1881), before partnering with his son Colonel William Howard Walker. In 1881, the firm of William R. Walker & Son was established. William Howard Walker (1856–1922) trained as a draftsman in his father's office before becoming a partner. His own son, William Russell Walker II (1884–1936) took over the practice in 1922 after studying architecture at Brown University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he graduated in 1910, and training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris (Jordy 1982:238–239).

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Early in his career, William R. Walker was involved in school building design, and schools remained an integral part of the practice under both son and grandson. Walker's incorporation of long banks of windows separated by piers, rather than single window openings, was thought to be the first of its kind in Providence school buildings and generally became the standard for school design by the 1870s (Jordy 1982:238). Other notable schools in Pawtucket designed by the firm included the Grove Street School\* in 1890-1891; an addition to the Garden Street School\* in 1892-1893; Pawtucket High School (at Broadway, Blackstone Avenue, and Fountain Street) in 1895-1897; the South Woodlawn School\* ca. 1903; and the Prospect Street School\* in 1908. Of these structures, only the Church Hill Grammar School and the High School remain standing today. Many school buildings were also designed by the firm in Providence and included the Manton Avenue School\* in 1888, the Asa Messer Elementary School on Messer Street ca. 1890, the Smith Street Primary School in 1885, the Vineyard Street School in 1882-83 with an additional wing in 1913, and the Henry Barnard School\* at the former Rhode Island Normal School complex in 1926-1928 (Adams 1994:11; Woodward 1986). William R. Walker II further expanded the firm's role in school building design, and was chosen by the United States Commissioner of Education in 1932 to serve on a school building committee (Jordy 1982: 238).

In addition to schools, the firm of William R. Walker & Son was also responsible for the design of several armories throughout Rhode Island, including both the Cranston Street Armory and North Main Street Armory for Mounted Commands in Providence, the Pawtucket Armory, and those in Westerly and Woonsocket (Jordy 1982: 238). Other civic structures designed by the firm include the East Providence<sup>+</sup>, Warwick, and Cumberland Town Halls, the old Fall River City Hall\*, a variety of courthouses, libraries, and fire stations throughout Rhode Island, the Narragansett Hotel\* in Providence, several Providence theaters, and numerous residences (Jordy 1982: 238). The Brown University Library (now Robinson Hall) was designed during Walker's partnership with Thomas J. Gould. Under William R. Walker II, such notable buildings as the State College of Pharmacy, several Masonic buildings, and various theaters including the Majestic in downtown Providence and the Toy (now Avon) on Thayer Street were constructed (Jordy 1982: 238; Withey 1970: 627).

\* Demolished  
+ Destroyed by fire

**Rhode Island Public Schools and Early Educational Reform**

Legislation regarding public schools in Rhode Island began with the school law of 1800. This law, however, was rescinded. Only Providence followed its provisions, and offered a free public school system. The rest of the state remained significantly behind in education. New legislation passed in 1828 allocated state funds to public education and empowered each town to collect taxes for schools and to create a school committee. Despite this

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legislation, public school education continued to flounder in Rhode Island over the next decade (Flaherty 1970: 1, 35, 50).

Henry Barnard (1811-1900) was an early advocate for public education and a pioneer in education reform in Rhode Island. Originally from Connecticut and the former Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Education, Barnard came to Rhode Island in 1843 to serve as an agent of the public schools (Flaherty 1970:55; Knight 1929:218-219). He undertook a survey of Rhode Island schools, based on questionnaires sent to teachers and school committees, to determine the current state of education. The results revealed poor conditions in most schools outside Providence and a much higher illiteracy rate for adults in Rhode Island than in Connecticut, whose population was five times greater (Flaherty 1970:52, 55). Specific concerns within schools included student eye strain from the glare of windows on three sides of a classroom, inadequate ventilation, uncomfortable furniture not suited for small children, and lack of equipment such as maps, globes, and chalkboards in many classrooms (Flaherty 1970: 64, 66, 68). A new law was passed in 1845 that established the office of the Commissioner of Public Schools, required an examination in order to teach, and gave school districts control of taxing for education, hiring teachers, and maintaining school buildings (Flaherty 1970:59-60, 64). The 1845 law also mandated the establishment of an institute for teacher training. Rhode Island was the first state to require this (Carbone 1971:409-410).

Barnard initiated a structured system of students assigned to classes according to age and ability (Flaherty 1970:74, 80). This was a departure from the standard practice of students of all ages and levels participating in the same class. He advocated for primary education (younger than 8 years) to include manners and language; grammar school education (8-12 years) to incorporate reading, writing, arithmetic, language skills, geography, history, and drawing; and a higher curriculum of advanced English, algebra, geometry, and sciences for students over 12 years of age (Flaherty 1970:82-83). In addition, he established guidelines for improved schoolhouse construction (Flaherty 1970:67). Concerned with child labor, he advocated for the education of mill children, especially at the grammar school level (Flaherty 1970:98).

Barnard also focused on improving the qualifications of teachers and established teacher training institutes in several towns, as prescribed by the 1845 law. Pawtucket held its first teacher training institute in 1847, with over 500 people in attendance (Flaherty 1970:91). In 1851, Brown University established a "Department of Didactics" for teacher training (Carbone 1971:412, Flaherty 1970:145). The Rhode Island Normal School was established in 1854 in Providence, providing a formal public education for teachers (Carbone 1971:412-413). The school was suspended in 1865, and from 1866-1870 the state provided a variety of academies for teacher training classes. The Normal School reopened in 1871 and established a model training school in 1893. The school continued to thrive after the turn of the century and became the Rhode Island College of Education in 1920 (Carbone 1971:414). Statistics revealed that from 1882 to 1900, approximately three fifths of Rhode

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Island teachers were college/university trained or had received professional or special training, while only about three percent of teachers had merely a common school education (RISR 1900:5).

Retiring from the position of Commissioner of Public Schools in 1849 due to illness, Barnard returned to Connecticut for four years before reentering the field of education reform. He established the American Association for the Advancement of Education in 1855, published the *American Journal of Education*, and in 1867, became the United States Commissioner of Education (Knight 1929:220).

**Pawtucket School Buildings in the Nineteenth Century**

The first schoolhouse in Pawtucket was erected in 1793 on the site of the present city hall. Although not a true public school, the "red schoolhouse" as it was known, was funded with money from North Providence, Rhode Island and Rehoboth, Massachusetts (later town of Seekonk, taken from Rehoboth in 1812), as the settlement at Pawtucket was divided between the two towns and states. In 1828, a portion of Seekonk separated to become the Town of Pawtucket, Massachusetts and established its first public school. This same year, following the 1828 Rhode Island educational legislation, the Town of North Providence (of which Pawtucket Village was a part) was divided into multiple school districts (Draper 1921:42). At this time, 11 private schoolhouses existed between North Providence and the Town of Pawtucket, but most were kept open only a portion of the year (Stockwell 1876:48). The first public school in North Providence was constructed in 1840. In 1841, the second public school was established in Pawtucket Village (North Providence, R.I.). The four-room, wood-frame schoolhouse was the original Church Hill School, constructed by carpenter Anthony Williams (Draper 1921:43 and SPS-1 1889f). The Town of Pawtucket, Massachusetts built a second schoolhouse on Grove Street in 1843 (Draper 1921:43).

The Town of Pawtucket, Massachusetts was annexed to Rhode Island in 1862, and in 1874, it and the Village of Pawtucket in North Providence were consolidated into the Town of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. At this time, Pawtucket had 10 public schoolhouses (one high school and nine grammar/elementary schools) (Draper 1921:43). School buildings were small, wood-frame structures, with more than one grade to each room. Students did not receive individual instruction, and classes generally involved memorization and recitation of lessons (Draper 1921:44). Average class size was approximately 65 students per room (Draper 1921:43). The schoolhouses had no plumbing, and the buildings were generally heated with wood stoves. By the 1870s, the original 1841 Church Hill School had been enlarged to six rooms. Town water was supplied to nine of the ten school buildings in 1879 (Draper 1921:44).

When the City of Pawtucket was incorporated in 1886 there were 19 schoolhouses and one high school in existence (Draper 1921:44). Only three of these, including the original 1841 Church Hill School, were six

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rooms in size, while the remaining 16 schoolhouses were smaller (Draper 1921:43). By this time, however, many of Pawtucket's school buildings from the earlier part of the nineteenth century were outdated, overcrowded, and in deplorable condition. As one newspaper article stated, "... High Street, Church Hill, and Grove Street... have gone to decay, are damp, dark, and dreary, and need to be torn down (SPS-1 1888), and in regard to the old Church Hill School, "the whole trap ought to be condemned. It is not fit for children to go into" (SPS-1 1889a). Overcrowding of public schools was a significant concern, as mill construction attracted large numbers of immigrants, and the population of Pawtucket more than tripled between 1875 and 1920 (RIHPC 1978:17, 26). Beginning in the mid-1870s, Pawtucket undertook significant efforts to improve and expand public services, and new school construction was no exception (RIHPC 1978:26).

In 1889-1890, when the extant Church Hill Grammar School was constructed, it was the sixth brick school building to be built within four years, as brick school buildings were gradually replacing the former wooden schoolhouses in an effort to modernize Pawtucket schools (SPS-1 1890c). The old Church Hill School closed in June 1889 and the building was sold at auction (SPS-1 1889f). The new Church Hill Grammar School was dedicated in September 1890 (SPS-1 1890c). In 1891, the former 1843 wooden Grove Street schoolhouse at Grove and Spring streets, was replaced with a brick school building by the same architectural firm that designed the new Church Hill School. The 1891 Grove Street School, by William R. Walker & Son, looked remarkably similar to the Church Hill School with a nearly identical bell tower and gabled facade. It has since been demolished.

**Pawtucket Educational Reform in the Nineteenth Century**

Changes in education and school building design had slowly begun to take place in Pawtucket in the nineteenth century with the passage of the Henry Barnard's school law of 1845 and the appointment of the Commissioner of Public Schools. The school day was shortened and restructured in 1884, and the truant officer was enlisted in 1885 (Draper 1921:44). Music was the only new area of study, aside from the one new subject required by law, Physiology (physical education) and Hygiene, which was just being introduced into the curriculum. All school supplies and books were still provided by parents (Draper 1921:44). The Rhode Island Institute of Instruction trained larger numbers of teachers and promoted improved teaching methods. Four evening schools were opened, beginning with an evening drawing class at the high school in 1881 (Draper 1921:45).

Greater attention was given to industrial education, and the 1881 Rhode Island Annual School Report noted that "...the great importance of the manufacturing industries of our State seems to demand that in our system of education we should aim to contribute to the future growth and success of those industries." Manual training was gradually introduced in the late nineteenth century. Sewing, cooking, Home Economics, and woodworking were included in the curriculum in the early twentieth century (Draper 1921:45-46). A city training school for

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teachers was established in Pawtucket in 1886, and the first city kindergarten opened in 1888. In 1890, the former map drawing curriculum was extended to include other types of drawing and design (Draper 1921:44). Health-education evolved over the course of the early twentieth century, including the introduction of a medical inspector, a free dental clinic, a school nurse, and tuberculosis health talks (Draper 1921:45). "Penny lunches" were first sold in one Pawtucket school in 1912 through equipment in a hallway and by the 1920s were available in several other schools (Draper 1921:45).

**Pawtucket Schools in the Twentieth Century**

By the early twentieth century, most school construction in the United States was prescribed by certain safety and health regulations including fire-proofing of stairs, specifics regarding placement and number of exits, the amount of floor space and cubic space allotted to each student, ceiling height, proper lighting, amount of outside window area, and heating, ventilation, and sanitation. Recommendations in a 1905 *Elementary School Teacher* article included the design of rectangular classrooms, 13-foot ceiling heights, natural light that "should unquestionably come from the left of the pupil," tall windows for maximum light, and the provision of separate boys and girls entrances near ground level to avoid steep outside steps. Recommended interior finishes included floors of narrow wood, smooth-tinted walls, and enameled brick wainscoting in cloak rooms, toilets, and hallways (Davis 1905:154-159).

New schools continued to be constructed in Pawtucket into the early twentieth century. By the 1950s, however, the state of Pawtucket schools was again reevaluated and determined in need of improvement (Murphy 1976:12). The schools built during the ambitious period of new school construction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were by this time outdated and in poor condition. A campaign of new school construction in Pawtucket was initiated in the mid-1950s and continued into the late 1970s (Murphy 1976:12). Schools built during the mid-twentieth century were larger, consolidated, linear structures of one to two stories in height. Many of the nineteenth century schoolhouses such as the 1890-1891 Grove Street School and the 1892-1893 Garden Street School were demolished during this time. Others, including the Church Hill Grammar School, were converted to different use. The Church Hill School became a school administration building in 1949 and underwent remodeling in the 1950s (PSP 1997:7). As the administration building, school offices and a School Committee meeting room were established on the first floor, and the front classroom on the second floor was reserved as a public gathering room for school-related events (SRCL 1949).

**Architectural Significance**

The Church Hill Grammar School was constructed during a transitional period in Pawtucket public school education and school building design. The school was one of many educational buildings constructed in the late

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nineteenth century to replace earlier wood-frame structures that were outdated, overcrowded, and in very poor condition. The Church Hill Grammar School was a modern facility designed in response to the issues of overcrowding, legislative reform, and advancements in technology, sanitation, and ventilation. It exemplified the specific needs of public schools toward the end of the nineteenth century, as Pawtucket and the state of Rhode Island put into action the educational reforms initiated several decades earlier.

The exterior design and materials of the Church Hill Grammar School appear to have been typical of late-nineteenth-century school design. Heavy masonry, large banks of windows, arched entranceways, and robust, multi-story, irregularly massed plans were distinctive Queen Anne-style qualities widely utilized by William R. Walker & Son in school building design at that time. The Queen Anne style was popularized in Pawtucket in the early 1880s and was utilized in commercial, institutional, and residential design through the turn of the twentieth century (RIHPC 1978:31). Particularly significant Queen Anne features of the Church Hill Grammar School include the imposing bell tower on the south elevation, the asymmetrical cross-shaped plan, the irregular steeply pitched roof, and incorporated Classical references such as small arched windows and entrances. Similar characteristics were found in other types of civic and institutional structures by William R. Walker & Son such as town halls, libraries, and fire stations. The imposing presence of the Church Hill Grammar School clearly expresses the significance attributed to the role of public school buildings in the late nineteenth century.

Brick fireproof construction, well lit classrooms with light entering banks of windows from only one side of the room as recommended, a modern ventilation and heating system, and amenities such as gas lighting provided vast improvements over the earlier wood-frame 1841 schoolhouse that had fallen into disrepair. The original Smead-Northcott heating and ventilation system, however, proved to be problematic, and newspaper accounts of poor ventilation, foul odors, and improperly vented lavatories at both Church Hill School and Grove Street School drove school commissioners to install updated steam heating and ventilation systems at both schools in the early twentieth century (SPS-2:1902a-b). The building served as a school from 1890 until 1949, when it became an education administration building. Although extensive interior renovations were done in the 1950s, much of the original fabric remains intact. When the school building closed in approximately 2006, it had been in educational service for more than a century.

As the sixth brick schoolhouse built within four years in Pawtucket, Church Hill Grammar School was one of the earlier structures in a program of school building construction that continued into the early twentieth century. It also appears to have been one of the smaller facilities, as subsequent schools such as Grove Street boasted nine rooms, and the Garden Street School nearly doubled in size after a large addition. The initial six-room plan of the Church Hill Grammar School appears to have been enlarged soon after construction when the third floor was converted to two additional classroom spaces. Plans for a four-room addition to the school were discussed in 1904, but funding never materialized (SPS-2 1904).

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While architects William R. Walker & Son designed numerous schools throughout Rhode Island, it is unknown exactly how many remain today. Within Pawtucket, at least four other schools designed by the firm during this time are no longer standing. The Church Hill Grammar School is one of the two known extant William R. Walker & Son school buildings existing in Pawtucket, and despite conversion to an administration building and its current state of vacancy, retains a high degree of architectural integrity.



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Deposited in Spaulding Research Center Library (SRCL) at Pawtucket Public Library, Pawtucket, R.I.

n.d. Church Hill School. Photograph in Pawtucket Schools file.

n.d. Garden Street School. Postcard in Pawtucket Schools file.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the Church Hill Grammar School encompass Lot 164 on Tax Assessor's Plat Map 53b, which contains a total land area of 0.40.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries are the legally recorded lot lines of the property which has been the site of the Church Hill Grammar School since its construction.

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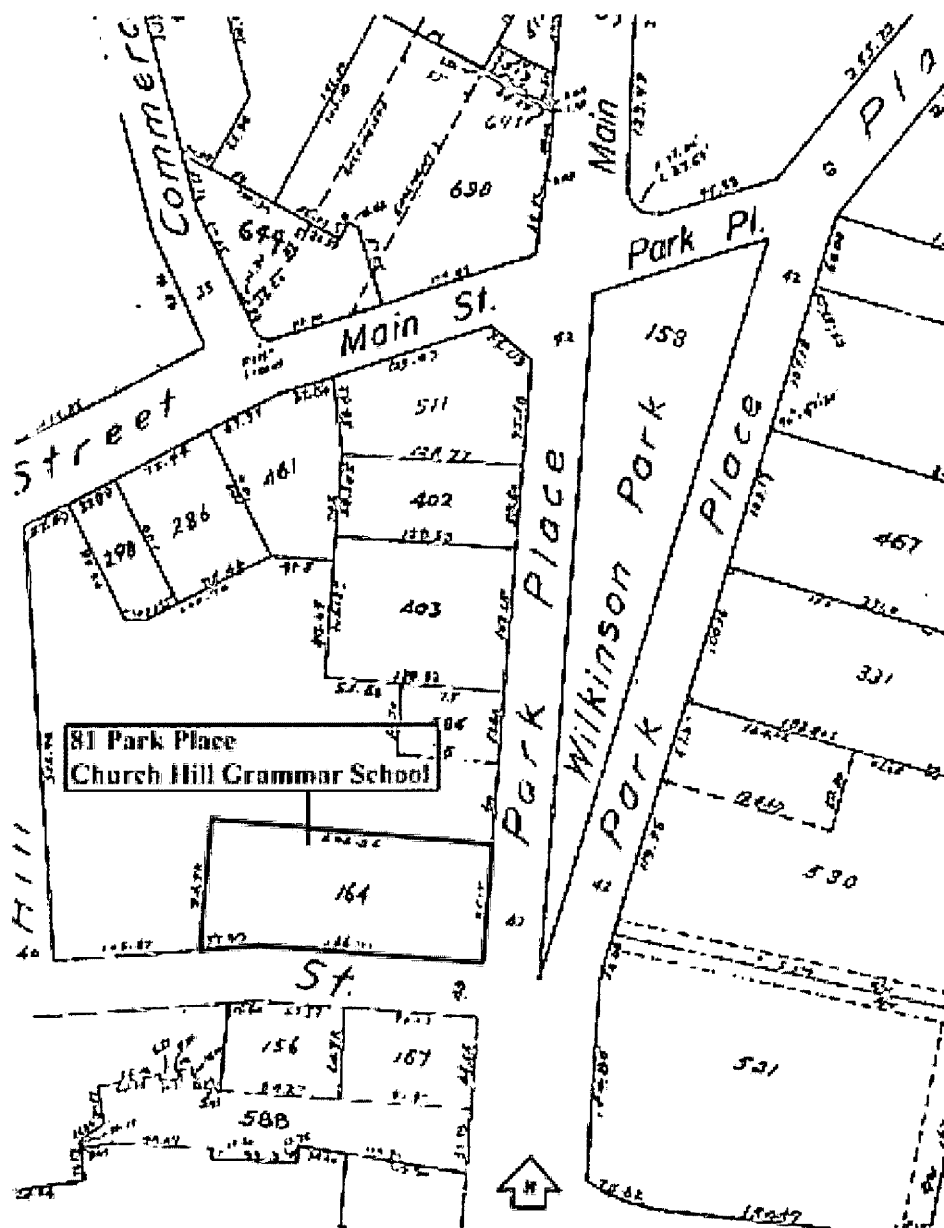
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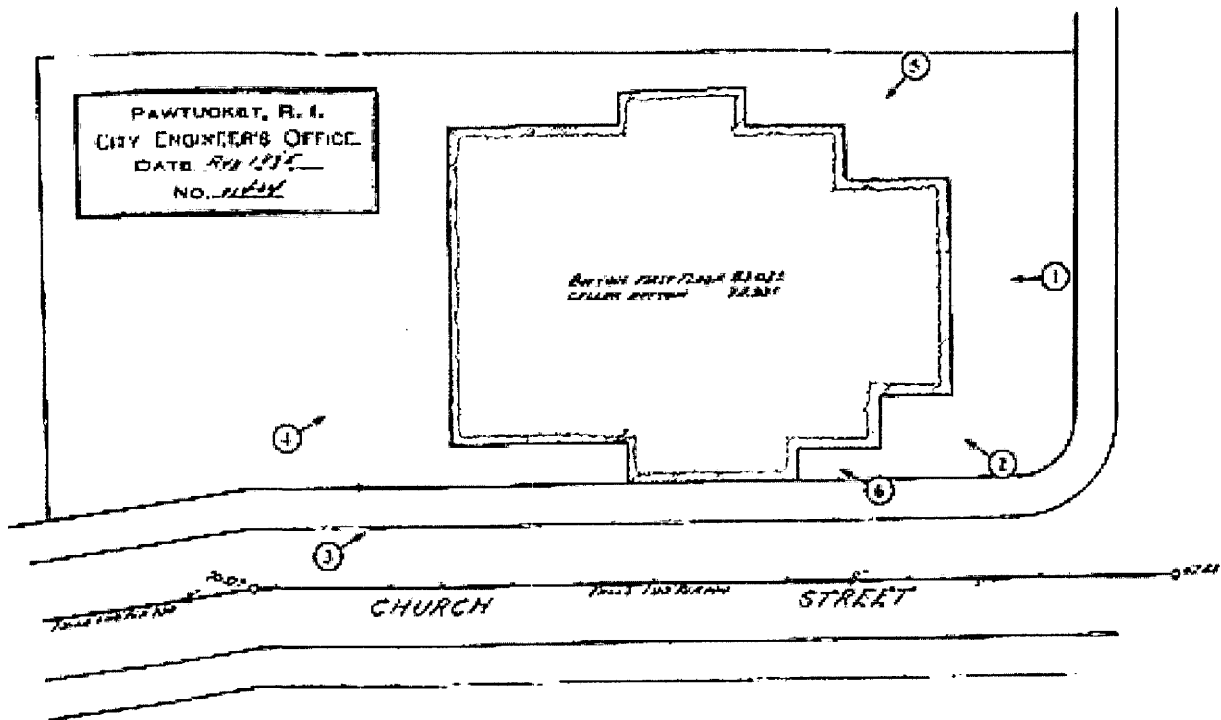
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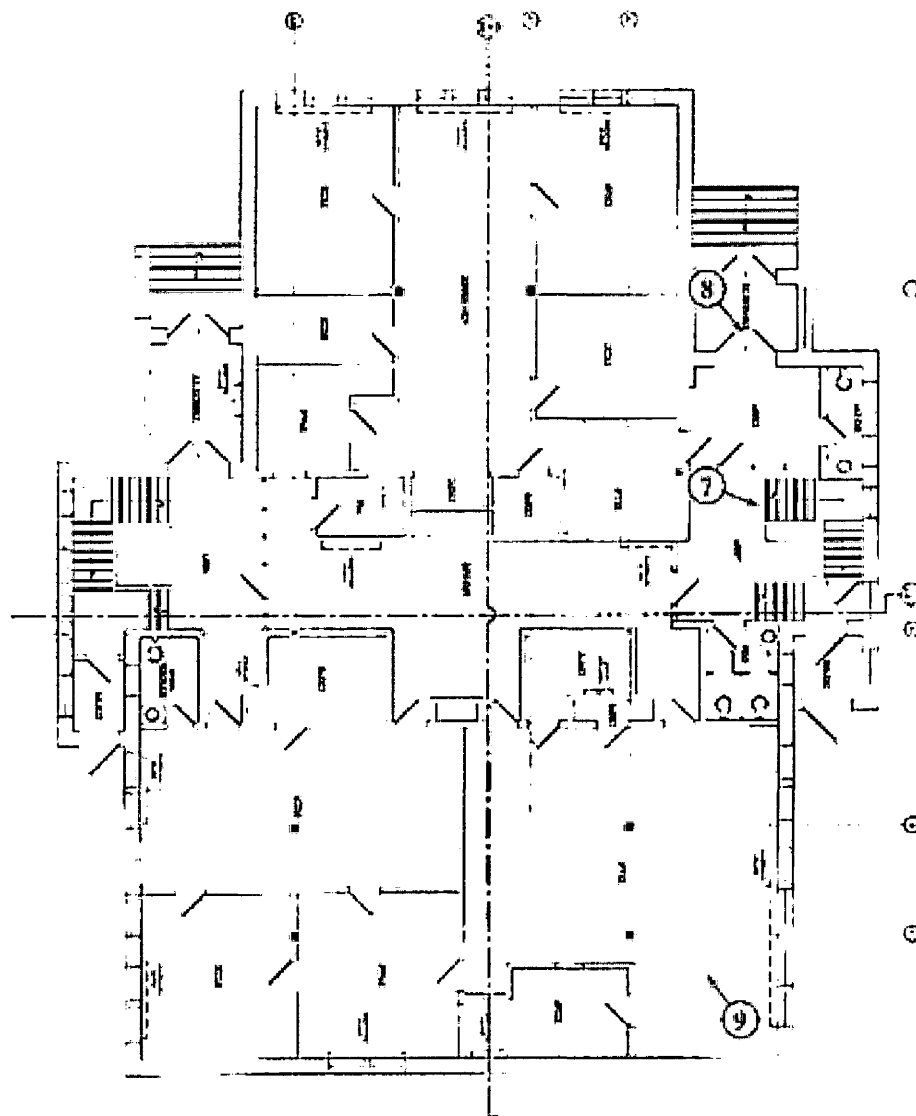
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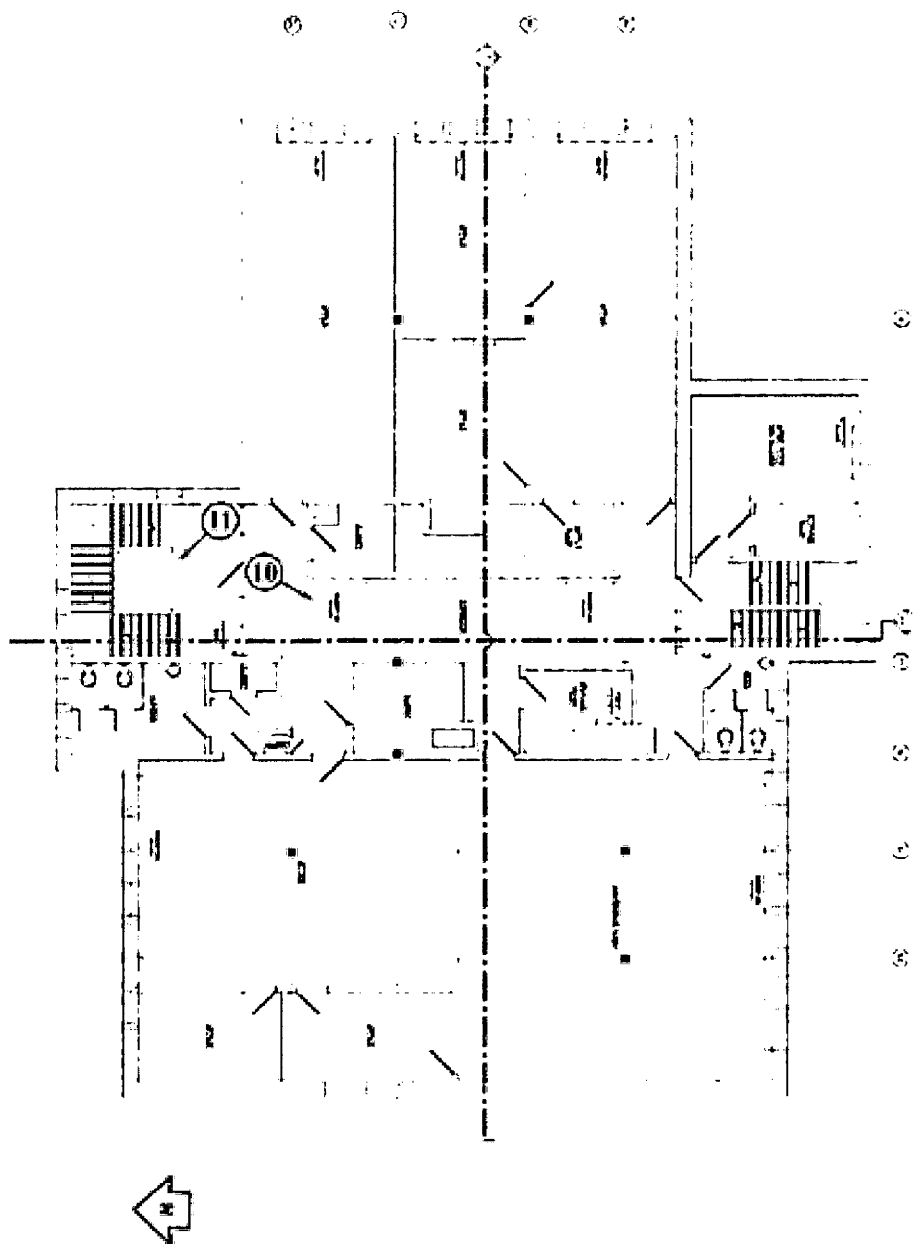
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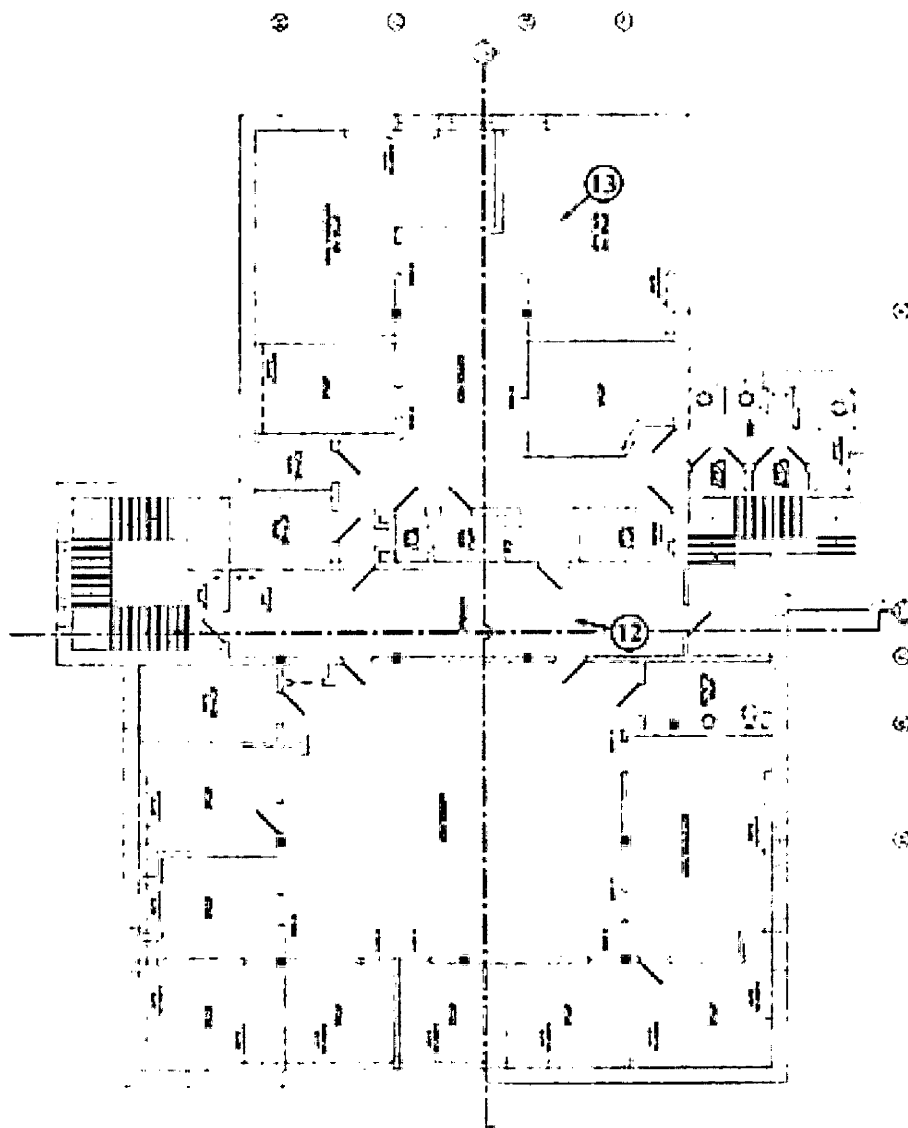
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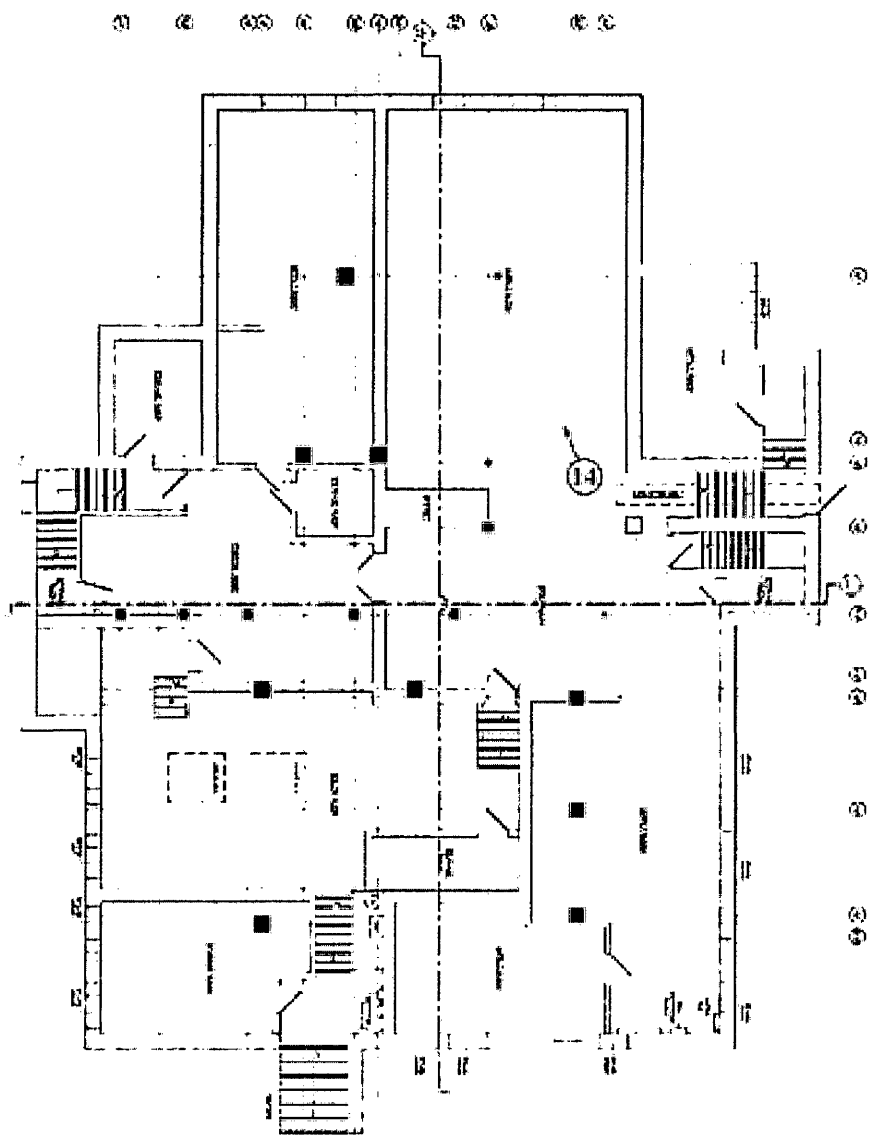
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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

Items number 1-5 are the same for all photographs, with the exception of item number 4 for Photo 14.

1. Church Hill Grammar School
2. Pawtucket, Providence County, Rhode Island
3. Matthew Kierstead
4. December 2007
5. PAL
  
6. Façade, looking west from Park Place
7. Photo 1 of 14
  
6. Southeast corner, looking northwest from Park Place
7. Photo 2 of 14
  
6. Southwest corner, looking northeast from Church Street
7. Photo 3 of 14
  
6. West (rear) elevation, looking northeast from Church Street
7. Photo 4 of 14
  
6. North side elevation, looking southwest from Park Place
7. Photo 5 of 14
  
6. Inscription on east elevation of bell tower over southeast entrance, looking northwesterly
7. Photo 6 of 14
  
6. South staircase at first floor, looking south
7. Photo 7 of 14
  
6. Southeast entrance vestibule, looking southwest
7. Photo 8 of 14
  
6. First floor southwest classroom, looking northeast
7. Photo 9 of 14

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6. Second floor hall, looking southwest

7. Photo 10 of 14

6. North staircase at second floor, looking northwest

7. Photo 11 of 14

6. Third floor hall, looking north

7. Photo 12 of 14

6. Third floor east classroom, looking northwest

7. Photo 13 of 14

4. April 2008

6. Basement southeast room, looking northeast

7. Photo 14 of 14