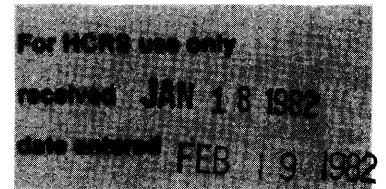


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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



1. Name

historic Washington Street School

and/or common Michael D. Fox Elementary School

2. Location

street & number 461 Washington Street _____ not for publication

city, town Hartford _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 1st

state Connecticut code 09 county Hartford code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name City of Hartford

street & number 550 Main Street

city, town Hartford _____ vicinity of _____ state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Municipal Building

street & number 550 Main Street

city, town Hartford _____ state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Hartford has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 _____ federal _____ state _____ county local

depository for survey records Stowe-Day Library

city, town Hartford _____ state Connecticut

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance.
General Description and Setting

Washington Street School is a group of two-story, turn-of-the-century, brick and brownstone buildings located south of the center of Hartford, Connecticut, on the northwest corner of Washington Street and New Britain Avenue. While the two streets, laid out in colonial times, long have been main arteries of city traffic, the neighborhood was not developed to its present density until the end of the 19th century. The school, several Queen Anne houses nearby, and the commercial and apartment buildings on adjacent blocks all are products of the same period of growth around the turn of the century.

The plan of the school is U shaped. The base of the U, about 140 feet wide, faces Washington Street, running north and south. The arms of the U, running east and west, are about 280 feet long. (Plan ..) The buildings consist of a basement plus two stories uniformly built of brick with brownstone foundations and trim. The ground-floor area is 30,500 square feet, and the school has a total volume of approximately one million cubic feet, with accommodations for 1549 pupils.

While there has been a schoolhouse on this site since 1842, and part of an 1874 structure may still be included in the complex, most of the construction was carried out in a series of sections built from 1890 to 1918, during the neighborhood's period of rapid growth. The school now is empty and unused.

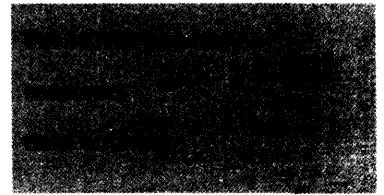
In general, the architectural style of the structure is a mixture of late Romanesque Revival and classic or Renaissance Revival. The quarry-faced brownstone foundations, lintels and sills, the round-arched entrances and the overall monumental quality of the design are in the Romanesque Revival style, while the big, rectangular windows with transoms and the molded cornices with dentil courses bespeak the Renaissance Revival mode. (Photograph 1.)

Exterior

Washington Street runs approximately due north and south but New Britain Avenue runs on the diagonal, southwest-northeast. The main entrance to the school is in a building that is parallel to and facing New Britain Avenue, near the corner, and that is therefore, on the diagonal with respect to other sections of the school. (Plan 3, Building A.) The entrance is in the center of the building, flanked on either side at both stories by four large, rectangular windows with transoms. Stone steps approach the round-arched, recessed entranceway. The brownstone arch, with keystone, is framed by

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State Register of Historic Places 1980

x state

Connecticut Historical Commission
Hartford

Connecticut

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panelled brownstone pilasters that support a lintel in which is incised WASHINGTON STREET SCHOOL, under a molded cornice. Above the cornice a second round arch carries the year date 1918 in its tympanum. This arch is set in a stepped gable with a finial at its apex. (Photograph 2.) The molded roof-line cornice with dentil course, covered with sheet metal, is surmounted by a parapet. The parapet has a central gable with rounded peak. The face of the gable has a horizontal panel that is embellished with a central, diamond-shaped rosette flanked by chevron brick work. The gable's rounded peak has a shell design on its surface. At the bases of the gable and at the corners of the building there are short brownstone, pyramidal finials. A section of the building set back against the southwest wall has a second entrance over which is the lettering GIRLS.

The next building to the west, like the entrance section building, has a facade with a high percentage of glazing. (Plan 3, Building B). The same big 1-over-1 windows with transoms are set in the same chiseled brownstone surrounds. The fully-finished character of the window surrounds in these two buildings contrasts with the quarry-finished stone in their foundations and in the lintels and sills of windows in other sections of the school. (Photograph 3.) In this section there are two banks of five windows at each floor. The stone between the windows approximates heavy mullions, creating an effect that is substantially a window wall. The cornice of this section is as elaborate as that of the main entrance section, but the parapet is simpler; the central gable is replaced by a simple, rounded decorative element, and there are no finials.

The next building to the west is set back slightly (Plan 3, Building C). The first section of its facade is an entrance for BOYS. The panel carrying this word, and the trim above and below it, are in finished brownstone (Photograph 4), in contrast to the quarry-faced lintels and sills of the rest of the building, suggesting that this entrance may have been an alteration. This facade has four 2-over-2 windows under divided transoms, separated by sections of brick wall.

The final section of the south stem of the U is a one-story boiler room (Plan 3, Building D) (Photograph 5).

Returning to the base of the U, the structure facing Washington Street has, at second floor level, ten of the tall 1-over-1 windows with transoms, in a 4-2-4 rhythm (Plan 4, Building E) (Photograph 6). Above them the cornice, much simpler than the others, is encased in sheet metal. At first-floor level in the angle between this building and the main entrance building there is a three-sided vestibule with sloping roof for the KINDERGARTEN DEPARTMENT (Photograph 7). The center of the facade is occupied by a substantial one-story bay that has three windows facing the street and one on

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each angled wall. The roof line of the bay's facade is in the shape of a low-pitched gable. Around the corner to the north the side elevation of this section faces School Street, repeating the window treatment, and with a central door.

A common feature of the facades of the main entrance section (A) and the buildings on either side of it (B and E) is the step backs in the brick in the planes of the wall. The wall is stepped back by the depth of one brick at the lintel and sill heights at each floor for a total of four step backs. The accumulated step back is balanced by the projection from the wall of the brownstone water table at the top of the foundations.

The northern stem of the U extends west along School Street, which was opened in 1904 as part of the general development activity of the school and the neighborhood. Grade falls off as School Street runs west, making this part of the school three stories high above grade. There is a section of four bays of 4-over-4 windows and a section of eight bays, alternating with dividing bays that have round-headed windows in the top story under shaped gables (Plan 3, Building F). This stem of the U terminates with a final building of five bays (Plan 3, Building G) (Photograph 8.)

As the building program continued over the years, a central court gradually was formed above the base of the U (Plan 3) (Photograph 9). Initially, the court was accessible under a segmental brick archway from the open space between the stems of the U, but this now has been filled in. The court now can be entered only through doors from the basements of the buildings.

Roof

The roof of the school, comprised of several disparate elements, presents a dramatic record of the segmented building program. (Plan 5.) There are two slate-covered, gable-roofed sections, the larger one being immediately south of the court. The west gable end of this roof is in the form of a pediment with a roundel window in the tympanum (Photograph 10). A second, smaller slate-covered, gable-roofed section is in the center of the main entrance building, left over from an earlier configuration. Its northwest gable end is hung with slate (Photograph 11). The base of the U and the end of the School Street wing, the newest roofs, have a gravel and tar covering while the west end of the south stem of the U and most of the School Street stem of the U have tin roofs. The standing seams and dormers of the roof of the School Street building present an imposing sight (Photograph 12). There are eight ventilating stacks, four with broad copper hoods (Photograph 13).

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Interior

The interior of the school is not elaborate. The hall inside the main entrance (Plan 3, Building A) is rather narrow, and the walls are painted brick (Photograph 14). There is a round arch at the end of this hall, where it joins the wider northeast/southwest corridor. The wood trim around this arch has been removed by vandals, and as it is the only trim that is missing it probably was the best. Oak doorway surrounds in the older sections of the school have reeded jambs with incised circles in the corners; other doorway surrounds are plain. The older doors have five horizontal, recessed panels (Photograph 14). Floors are narrow hardwood throughout. Ceilings are high, perhaps 14 feet, usually with the beams exposed.

The bay of the kindergarten room, facing Washington Street, which appears somewhat awkward from the exterior, makes a pleasant and successful space on the interior.

Most of the interior space of the school is devoted to classrooms. The general effect in the classrooms is that they are light and airy. Each room has an exterior wall that is filled with large windows. The natural light from the bank of windows and the height of the ceilings combine to give a sense of spaciousness. While the school desks have been removed, the blackboards are still in place, and almost every room has a built-in cupboard or set of shelves. (Photograph 15).

The School Street wing (Plan 3, Building F) is different from the other sections of the school in that each classroom has its own wardrobe, and in the main portion of this wing there are additional windows in the corridor walls, located high up between the blackboards and the ceilings. These large windows are hinged at the bottom with latches at the top, and presumably were provided for the purpose of improving air circulation. (Photograph 16.)

A gymnasium was provided in the basement of the west end of the School Street wing, and as it had a platform at one end may also have served as an assembly hall. (Plan 3, Building G.) An earlier third floor auditorium was removed, as will be recounted in the "History of the Buildings" section of Item 8, Significance.

Original wooden stairways have been replaced with steel or steel and concrete stairs. The stairway across the corridor from the main entrance hall has been removed. Plan 3 shows it to have been a wide flight of steps rising to a landing with second runs to left and right. The layout suggests that this stairway may have been one of the few elements of pleasing interior trim in the school.

Summary

The brick and brownstone building materials, uniformly used throughout the various sections of the Washington Street School, give the structure a

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sense of unity despite the number of times the school was enlarged. While attention was given to exterior architectural details such as entrance surrounds, cornices, and window lintels and sills, the interior was fitted out primarily in a utilitarian fashion. The school, vacant since 1976, appears to be structurally sound.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1874 - 1929

Builder/Architect Various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Criteria

The Washington Street School, with its several sections successfully unified by the brick and brownstone masonry, is an example of the Romanesque Revival/Renaissance Revival architectural styles in public school architecture (Criterion C). The physical growth of the school building reflects the broader development of the school district as a unit in Hartford's independently-controlled, neighborhood school system (Criterion A), while its controversial principal, Michael D. Fox, was a pioneer in the realm of political activism on the part of school staff (Criterion B).

History of the School District

The Washington School District was formed in 1841 when a need was felt to establish a school in the neighborhood, at the corner of Washington Street and New Britain Avenue. In 1842, \$1854. was voted to furnish a schoolhouse. When a man teacher was engaged in 1844, it was voted that he should "board around" in the district. The one-room schoolhouse in 1851 gave instruction to 47 children. The Washington District was School District Number 6. Like other districts in the city, it had a large degree of autonomy, electing its own Committee who employed the teachers and made most of the decisions, and levying a district tax that furnished a significant portion of the financial support. There was also a city-wide Board of School Visitors who made some of the rules, but whose chief function was to observe and comment, by means of its annual report, on the activities of the several districts.

In its 1849 report the Board of School Visitors analyzed the system, saying, "It is well known that our school society is divided into Districts, each District having its independent Committee, while the schools of the several Districts are under the supervision of one Board of Visitors. To the evils of this arrangement your attention is solicited."¹ In enumerating the evils, the Board noted that the duties of the Board and the District Committees were not well defined, leading to conflict and controversy between the two, that it was impossible to enact one code of regulations for all the schools, that vacations and holidays differed, that a sense of cohesion among the schools was "enfeebled," and that a difference in contiguous schools was sometimes found to exist.

None the less, the district system continued in force for another 86 years. As late as 1916, in a city-wide election, it was voted to continue the district system, and consolidation under a single Board of Education did not occur until 1934.² Two consequences of the district system relevant to the Washington School District are, first, the insight into the

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.5
 Quadrange name Hartford South

Quadrange scale: 1 : 24000

UMT References

A	1,8	6,926,000	4,624,140
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1,8	6,925,700	4,624,070
E	1,8	6,925,100	4,624,040
G	1,8	6,924,500	4,624,070

B	1,8	6,926,000	4,624,100
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	1,8	6,924,900	4,624,070
F	1,8	6,924,800	4,624,020
H	1,8	6,924,500	4,624,120

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the red line on the Neighborhood Map that is drawn to a scale of 1" = 200'. This is the lot on which the school has stood for some years.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

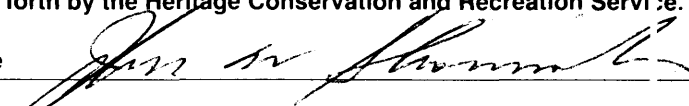
name/title David F. Ransom
 organization Architectural Historian date April 15, 1980
 street & number 33 Sunrise Hill Drive telephone 203 521-2518
 city or town West Hartford state Connecticut

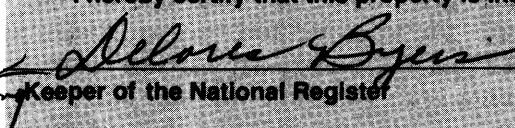
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

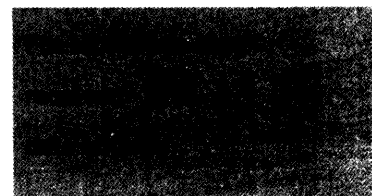
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 
 title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 8, 1982

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.
 Entered in the National Register date 2/9/82
 Keeper of the National Register 
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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school's problems and growth given by the Visitors' reports, and, second, the opportunity for political activity associated with the annual Committee elections that was grasped by Michael D. Fox, and that eventually led to his dismissal.

The Board of School Visitors in its 1860 report castigated School District Number 6 with the words, "The Washington District has not accomplished much during the past year, nor will it be prosperous until its inhabitants shall awake to their school interests, and foster them with an enlightened and liberal spirit. It should immediately provide accommodations for another department and put the school under the instruction of two teachers."³ But in 1861 the average attendance was 48, the single male teacher was paid \$48 per month, and the amount expended in the category of "new schoolhouse or repairs" was \$6.00. The damp basement of the building, used for instruction of the younger children, long was a matter of concern to the Visitors. In 1868 this problem was solved--by crowding all the students into the single room above. "The subject of rebuilding or adding to the present building," the Visitors reported, "has been a standing topic for school meetings in this district for a long time...."⁴ In 1869 there were two female teachers, at annual salaries of \$300 each, and total expenditures amounted to \$755.75. In comparison, the adjacent South School District that was closer to the center of the city and operated three larger schools had total expenditures of \$36,896.16. ⁵

Finally, in September 1874 the district opened two new schoolhouses, one on the Washington Street-New Britain Avenue corner and a second, smaller, frame school on Wilson Street. The district was commended by the Board of School Visitors who reported, "A good schoolhouse of brick has been built and just opened for use."⁶ During the years 1875-1883, under the principalship of Mrs. Lena G. Nevers, the teaching staff was increased to four. The record indicates that improvement in the pedagogical effort was overdue. In examinations for admittance to Hartford Public High School, students from the Washington Street School ranked last among all Hartford elementary school students. ⁷

In 1890, while Mrs. Sarah R. Banks headed the school, a south wing was added, and a kindergarten started. Further additions followed in rapid order, many of them under the 1896-1917 stewardship of Miss Elizabeth J. Cairns. By 1909 there were 27 teachers earning \$19,547.44 (about \$725. each), average attendance was 942, and the district had a debt of \$101,753. ⁸

The sudden change in the rate of growth in the Washington School District that occurred about 1890 was part of a wider change throughout the city. After the Civil War, industry in Hartford had started to grow, only to suffer a serious setback in the depression of the 1870s. Recovery from that slump gained momentum as the turn of the century ap-

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proached. The coincident availability of street car transportation facilitated development areas, theretofore thought to be too far out, beyond the ring of the central city area. Schools in the Washington School District and in the Northeast and Northwest school districts and in Parkville were built and added onto in rapid-fire sequence as part of the new development around and beyond the older, central area. The Northeast, Northwest and Parkville Schools have all been demolished. Washington Street School remains as a valuable and instructive artifact of Hartford's active, turn-of-the-century, school-building program.

In 1917 Michael D. Fox became principal and district superintendent, and continued in that position until 1932. In 1934 the Washington District, along with all others, was consolidated under a city-wide Board of Education. Control and ownership of the schools passed to the City of Hartford.

History of the Schoolhouse

The record shows that \$1854 was voted to cover the expense of furnishing a schoolhouse in 1842. Whether it is meant that a schoolhouse was provided for this sum, or just that the interior was fitted out, is uncertain, but probably the former was the case. The record is clear that the structure was a one-room school, with a damp basement. The 1874 Visitors' commendation of the district for a "good schoolhouse of brick" infers that the original was frame,

The 1873 vote for \$13,000 for a new schoolhouse on the present site was a clearer statement of intent, but in 1876 the school was carried on the books at \$7500 for the site and \$21,500 for the building, indicating a substantial cost overrun. How big this 1874 brick building was, and what it looked like, are not spelled out. It is tempting to think that the gable end still visible at the base of the U (Photograph 10) may be a remnant of the 1874 building. A contemporary structure for Northwest School did have such a gable end.

In 1890 a south wing was added. Again, size and appearance are not specified, but perhaps this was the section facing New Britain Avenue visible in the 1899 picture (see below) (Photograph 17.)

On August 19, 1895 the District Committee voted to spend \$12,000 for a further addition to consist of two rooms on the first floor and a single large room, an assembly hall, on the second floor, to the design of Hartford architect Brooks M. Lincoln (1853-1898). This may have been the section to the left in the 1899 picture.

The 1899 Visitors' report describes still another "attractive addition" facing Washington Street.⁹ This addition consisted of a first floor with two classrooms in the back and a suite of three rooms extending across the entire front of the building for use as the kindergarten. "The latter rooms are large and airy," the Visitors said, "and the morning sun entering the ample windows in the east make them exceptionally light and cheer-

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ful.¹⁰ The reference is to the existing first-floor bay facing Washington Street. The second floor of this \$24,000 building was divided into four classrooms, and an assembly hall occupied the entire third floor. This building (Plan 3, Building E) established the big 1-over-1 windows with transoms that dominate its facade and the facades of the main entrance building (Plan 3, Building A) and the next building to the west of it (Plan 3, Building B), constructed in 1918.

The first two floors of the 1898 building are intact today (Photograph 6, Plans 3 and 4, Building E). An 1899 picture of the building¹¹ (Photograph 17) shows a high gable roof over the third-floor assembly hall. The roof had a cross gable flanked by dormers. The shape and proportions of the triangular gable and the decorative finials at its apex and base resemble those of the prominent gable in the Masonic Building, 199-203 Ann Street, Hartford, the best-known building which Lincoln designed during his 15-year practice in the city from 1883 to 1898. The high roof and third-floor assembly room were still in place in 1934 as shown by the drawings of that year (Plans 5 and 6, Building E.) The design relationships and proportions of this facade were more successful with the third floor, high roof, gable and dormers in place; the first floor bay was a part of the larger scheme. Now, alone, it looks lost.

The 1899 picture also shows a two-story wing to the south-west, about where the main entrance section now is, but set further back from New Britain Avenue, possibly the 1890 work. This section also had a central cross gable and canted end gables of the typical Lincoln gable design. The southwestern end gable is still visible in the roof (Photograph 11, far left). The central entrance to this wing shown by the 1899 picture is the same as the present main entrance that has 1918 in its tympanum, indicating that either this entrance was moved forward, or replicated, when the present structure was built.

The third building in the 1899 picture is a two-story, gable-roofed wing to the west located about where the corridor is in Plan 3. A tent-roofed lantern rose above the center of this wing. This may have been the structure designed by Lincoln in 1895. The 1895 reference by the Visitors to Lincoln, and the similarity of the gables in the two front sections to those in Lincoln's Masonic Building make it tempting to attribute to Lincoln all three parts of the building visible in the 1899 picture.

The school at this stage (1898) was said to have 10 rooms plus kindergarten and assembly hall¹², implying some demolition of earlier work. Total number of students was 600, an average of more than 50 children per room.

In 1901 the visitors cryptically reported that the Washington Street School had recently enlarged its plant. This may have been the section of

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the south stem of the U just in front of the boiler house (Plan 3, Building C), where the BOYS entrance is executed in stone of finer finish than the stone used elsewhere in the structure.

The active building program continued apace with plans in 1906 to add 10 more classrooms and "to tear out the original building in time, to make a harmonious structure." 13 City Building Permit 402 of July 28, 1906 specifies a 65 x 124-foot building on the south side of School Street (Plan 3, Building F) to be built of "slow burning or mill construction" with a pitched roof covered by tin at a cost of \$50,000. A one-story 42 x 52-foot boiler house was also covered by the permit. (Plan 3, Building D.) The architects were Brocklesby and Smith, and the builder was E. W. Gustafson. William C. Brocklesby (1841-1910), the son of a Trinity College professor, served his apprenticeship in the Upjohn office, New York City, and carried on a distinguished practice in Hartford and surrounding towns for several decades that included the Webster School (1900) for the West Middle School District. Toward the end of his career he entered into partnership with H. Hilliard Smith (1871-1948). Brocklesby wrote the plan for restoration of the Old State House (Charles Bulfinch, 1796) that was published in the 1906 report of the Municipal Art Society. In the 1920s Smith, then a partner in the firm of Smith and Bassette, executed the plan.

The building permit⁴⁰² states that the front of the School Street building will be "hydraulic pressed stone," and if this plan was carried out, what appears to be brownstone in this building's facade is in fact an aggregate.

On December 20, 1917, Building Permit No. 1075 was issued, covering a \$70,000., 48 x 175-foot building of eight classrooms with slag-covered, pitch roof and galvanized iron cornice, Whiton and McMahon, architects, and Ahern and Walsh, builders. The number of rooms and roof and cornice descriptions fit with Plan 3, Buildings A and B, and the date is right for the incised numerals 1918 over the main entrance door, but the 175-foot measurement is difficult. Only by including the apparently earlier section further west in the south stem of the U (Plan A, Building C.) can this measurement be approximated. Perhaps it was included because alterations were carried out there, for instance, the stone work of the BOYS entrance which does resemble the finished brownstone of the window walls of the other two facades. Whiton and McMahon were the architects for the Alfred E. Burr School (1915) on Wethersfield Avenue.

The final new construction at the Washington School was carried out in 1929 when a 40 x 65-foot addition of four classrooms with a gymnasium in the basement was constructed at the west end of the School Street stem of the U at an estimated cost of \$84,125, Mylchreest and Reynolds, architects, James McAuliffe, contractor (Plan 3, Building G).

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One unifying element in the collection of buildings that make up the school is the masonry work of the brownstone foundations. The mortar is a reddish color, and has a raised rib. This effect may have been accomplished in 1937 when \$77,730 was expended to repoint the brick and stone work, repair the slate roof and copper flashing, and renovate the electrical system and plumbing.¹⁴

The metal stairs were installed in the building in 1937 and 1950. Two important architectural changes were made in these years: in 1937 the divided stairway at the southeast corner of the court, perhaps by Brooks M. Lincoln, was removed, and in 1950 Lincoln's high auditorium with its high gable roof was removed and a new flat roof built on the former auditorium floor. The auditorium shows in the 1934 drawings (Plan 5, Building E) and its profile shows in the section (Plan 6.) Architects for this work were the Architectural Bureau of the City of Hartford.

The final record in the building permits is dated December 31, 1958, providing for the expenditure of \$26,000 for a new boiler.

Michael D. Fox (1885-1946)¹⁵

Michael D. Fox was born in County Clare, Ireland. After being educated in Ireland he came to Hartford where he was a teacher in the public schools before being appointed principal of the Washington Street School and superintendent of the Washington School District in 1917. Fox took an active interest in the elections of the school committee, working for candidates of his preference. Moreover, he sometimes closed the schools on the afternoon of the elections, so teachers could work for the ticket. Fox had an organization: autos took voters to the polls; Democrat and Republican ward groups in the Washington District area drew some of their ablest political workers from the Fox organization. Fox's name never appeared on the ballot, but everyone knew that the vote was for or against him. His tenure in office was the principal issue.

Such political activity by the professional staff was then unusual, and was used as an argument against Fox when his slate lost in 1932. The new committee made a point of saying it did not look with favor upon any political activity on the part of the staff, for or against the incumbents. Teaching and politics don't mix, they said. In the depression year of 1932, there were also economic forces at work. Fox had been paid a salary of \$7,000.; his successor, Thomas J. Quirk, was paid \$4,300. In the last year of Fox's superintendency the School District's expenditures were \$223,971 ; in Quirk's first year they were \$158,374.¹⁶ Fox's effort to sustain teachers' salaries and educational services as the Great Depression intensified probably worked against him at the polls.

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While he was superintendent Fox introduced two pioneering educational programs, the appointment of a special teacher to give instruction at home to crippled and other shut-in children, and a course of instruction in safety education.

In 1936 the new Board of Education appointed Fox vice-principal of the Arsenal School. Their action was challenged in court on the grounds that Fox did not have the required college degree mandated by state regulations introduced in the 1920s, while Fox was in office in the Washington district. The Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in favor of the challenge. Fox thereafter enrolled at Westfield (Massachusetts) Teachers College and earned his bachelor's certificate, but he did not again work for the Hartford schools. He became proprietor of the Hartford Secretarial School on Woodland Street, and a probation officer for the Hartford Juvenile Court.

Michael D. Fox was awarded honorary degrees by Holy Cross and St. Bonaventure colleges. On May 28, 1958, with suitable ceremony at the school, the Washington Street School was officially renamed the Michael D. Fox Elementary School.

Summary

Three aspects of Hartford's history are expressed by the brick-and-brownstone school standing at the corner of Washington Street and New Britain Avenue. First, the buildings demonstrate the architectural history of school construction as designed by four of Hartford's leading architectural firms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Second, the buildings reflect the efforts of a district school committee working under the constraints of a local school district structure to meet the rapidly-growing educational needs of its area. Third, its controversial principal was a pioneer in the movement of teachers, through political activity and by organizing, to exert some measure of influence on their career environment. For these reasons, the Washington Street School is of considerable local significance.

First, in regard to the architecture and building history, it is apparent that the school district committee did not have a grasp on the growth potential of the school district population. Additions were put up within a few years of one another with no indication of a well-thought-out program. Perhaps the committee was surprised at the continued growth. If so, they probably were not alone, for the Northwest, Lawrence Street, and Parkville schools, like Washington Street School, all were built in a series of additions. At Northwest the additions did follow a common scheme that gave the final result a greater cohesion and unity than found at the others.

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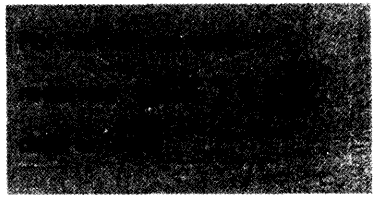
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The Lawrence Street School (now the parochial school for St. Anne's parish) exhibited even greater variations in architectural style than did Washington Street, and was built as three separate but connected buildings. At Washington Street the U-shaped plan and the consistent building materials of brownstone and red brick did give the final result a noticeable degree of unity and cohesion. The final style impression of the overall U is a blend of Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival and New England mill construction that has value as an artifact of the development era, but scarcely can be called a fine example of any style.

Second, the relationship of the school and the school committee to their community went through several stages. At first, it seemed as though no one wanted to be bothered with the school. The cramped quarters and damp basement persisted for decades. Then, at the turn of the century, the committee obviously paid attention to needs, as the size of the school and its budget increased in quantum jumps. Many of the new residents were immigrants, first the Irish, one of whom finally became principal, and, later, the Italians, who continue to dominate the south end of Hartford and the Barry Square Neighborhood that the school served. After the termination of the independent district system, the local people, of course, lost their direct control of the school but could influence the city's overall school policy through participation in the Board of Education elections.

Third, while the direct influence of the neighborhood citizens on school policy and practice was declining, the influence of teachers, through union organization, was increasing. One force diminished as the other grew. Principal Fox's political activities were the forerunner of teachers' unions which now play a strong part in the formulation of working conditions and school policies generally.

The fact is that the physical building program, the ethnic growth of the community, and the shift in power of control of the school system all can be traced by study of the well-preserved group of buildings that constitute the Washington Street School, and therein lies its architectural and historic significance for the city of Hartford.

1. Report of the Board of School Visitors to the First School Society of Hartford, October, 1849, p. 17.

2. Even then the vote, on November 7, 1933, was close -- yes, 14,266, no 11,186. There were two sides to the argument. The pros and cons had been stated in 1889: "The schools of Hartford, with the exception of the High School, are carried on by the districts in which they are situated. The disadvantage of this method is the likelihood that the smaller ones on the outskirts of the town (as Washington Street School was for its first half century - author) may not be supplied as bountifully or cared for as

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thoroughly as the others. The great advantages, on the other hand, lie in the sense of local responsibility felt in their own school by the members of each district; they elect their own officers, the work depends on their own public spirit...." (Hartford, Conn. as a Manufacturing, Business and Commercial Center, pp. 178, 179.)

3. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1860, p. 16.

4. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1868, quoted in the Hartford Times, June 30, 1934.

5. The Washington District may have had a special problem. According to one analysis there was "so much untaxable property in the district that the expense of maintaining the schools has been heavy on a small number of taxpayers." (Public Schools Of Hartford, p. 49.) This may have been a reference to the large non-taxable holdings of the Retreat for the Insane (now Institute of Living) on the east side of Washington Street and of Trinity College, near the Wilson Street schoolhouse.

6. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1874, p. 8.

7. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1876, p. 27.

8. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1909, p. 35. The school population in the district was 1420; 1036 pupils were registered. Total registration in the city was 14,300.

9. Report of the Board of School Visitors, in Municipal Register of the City of Hartford, 1899, p. 484.

10. Ibid.

11. Public Schools of Hartford, p. 47.

12. Op. cit., p. 48.

13. Report of the Board of School Visitors, 1906, p. 6.

14. Hartford City Building Permit 451 H.

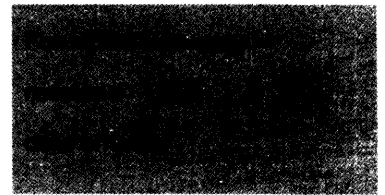
15. The account of Fox's career is taken from his Hartford Times obituary, November 26, 1946, 1:2 and 6:3.

16. Unidentified newspaper clippings dated July 26, 1932 and June 9, 1933 in the Hartford Public Library Reference Department's Scrap Book, v. 6, pp. 59, 78.

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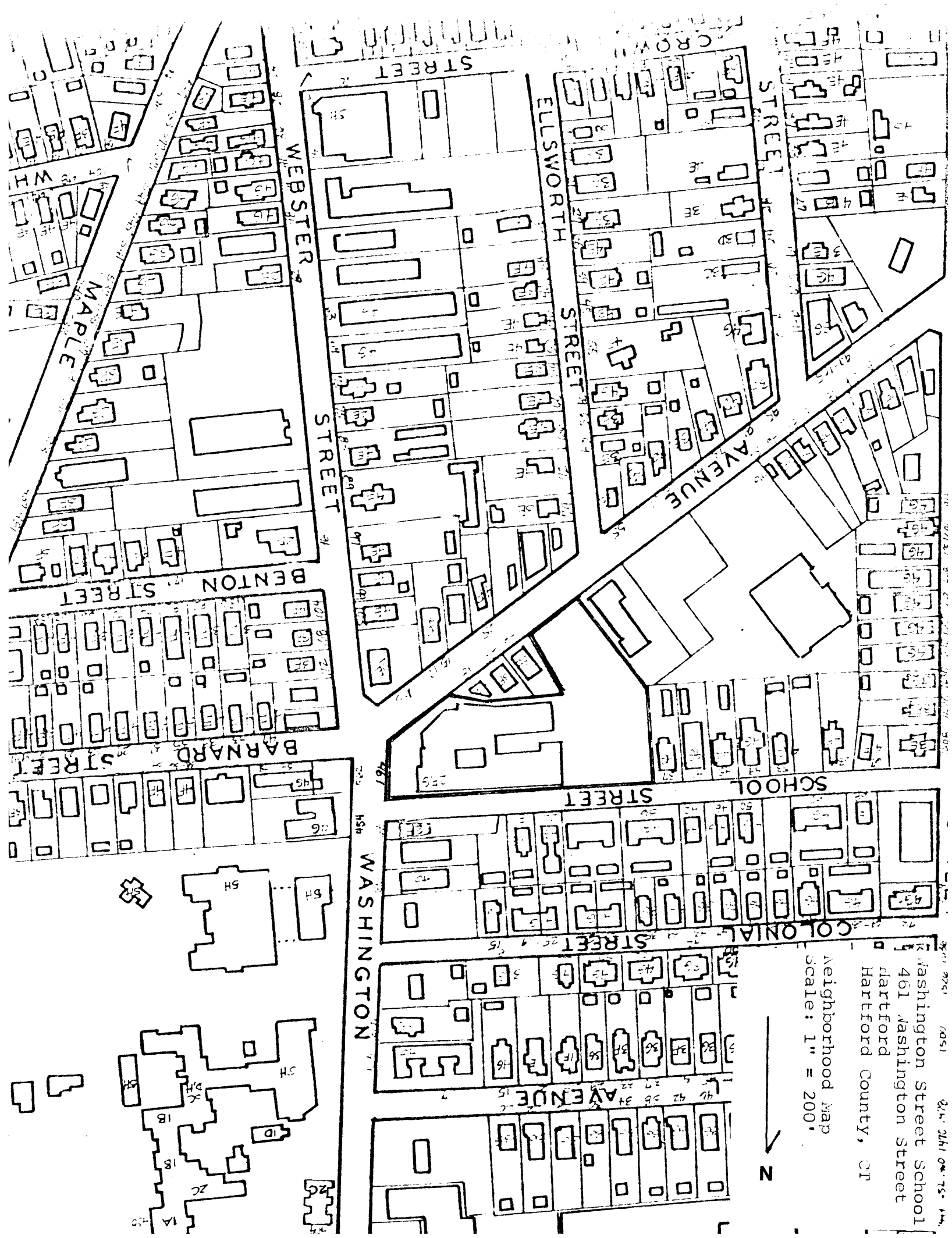
Hartford, Conn. as a Manufacturing, Business and Commercial Center,
Hartford: The Hartford Board of Trade, 1889.

Hartford Public Library Reference Department Scrap Book, v. 6.

Hartford Times, November 26, 1946.

Public Schools Of Hartford, Hartford: School Publishing Co., n. d.
(1899).

Report of the Board of School Visitors, Hartford, various years.



Washington Street School
 461 Washington Street
 Hartford
 Hartford County, CT

Neighborhood Map
 Scale: 1" = 200'



WASHINGTON STREET

SCHOOL STREET

COLONIAL STREET

AVENUE

WEBSTER STREET

ELLSWORTH STREET

STREET

MAPLE STREET

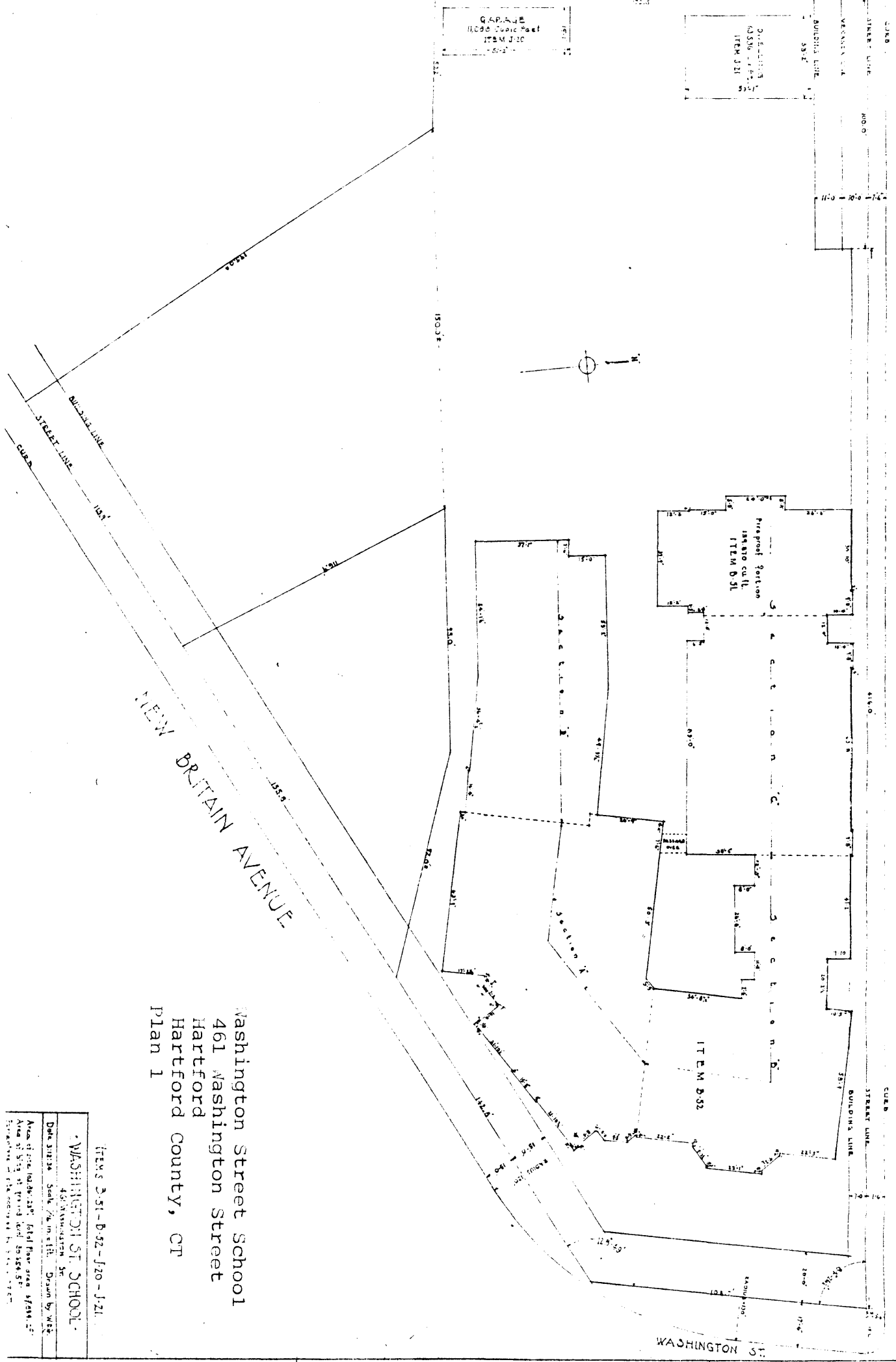
BENTON STREET

BARNARD STREET

WH

1A
 1B
 1C
 1D
 1E
 1F
 1G
 1H
 1I
 1J
 1K
 1L
 1M
 1N
 1O
 1P
 1Q
 1R
 1S
 1T
 1U
 1V
 1W
 1X
 1Y
 1Z

SCHOOL STREET



Washington Street School
 461 Washington Street
 Hartford
 Hartford County, CT
 Plan 1

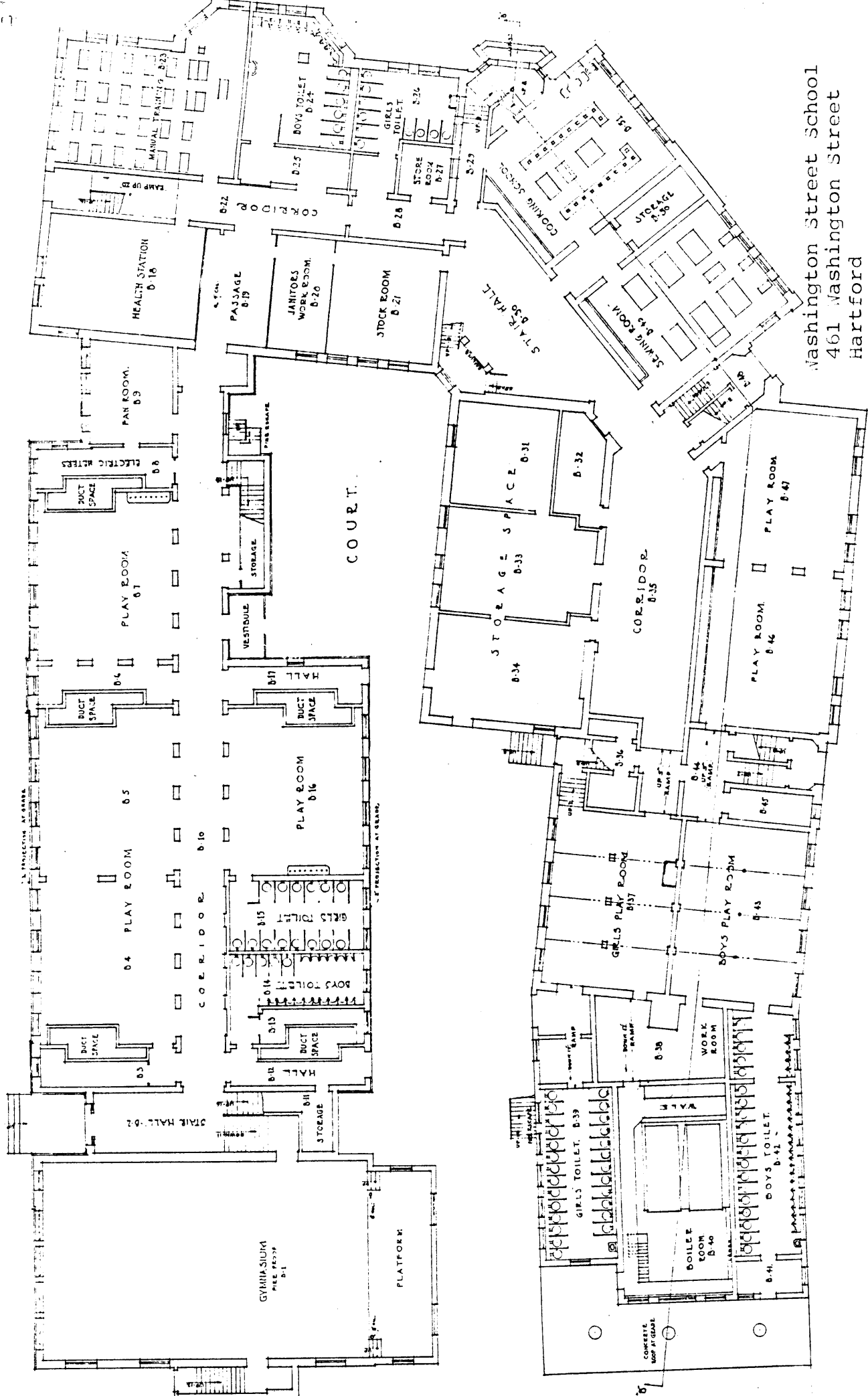
ITEMS D-51 - D-52 - J-20 - J-21

WASHINGTON ST. SCHOOL

Date: 1/25/34 Scale: 7/8" = 1 ft. Drawn by: W.E.K.

Area of site (including) first floor area 8,750 sq. ft.

Area of Site of ground level 10,524 sq. ft.



Washington Street School
 461 Washington Street
 Hartford
 Hartford County, CT
 Plan 2

BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

ITEMS B-51 & B-52
 WASHINGTON ST. SCHOOL
 461 WASHINGTON ST.

F

G



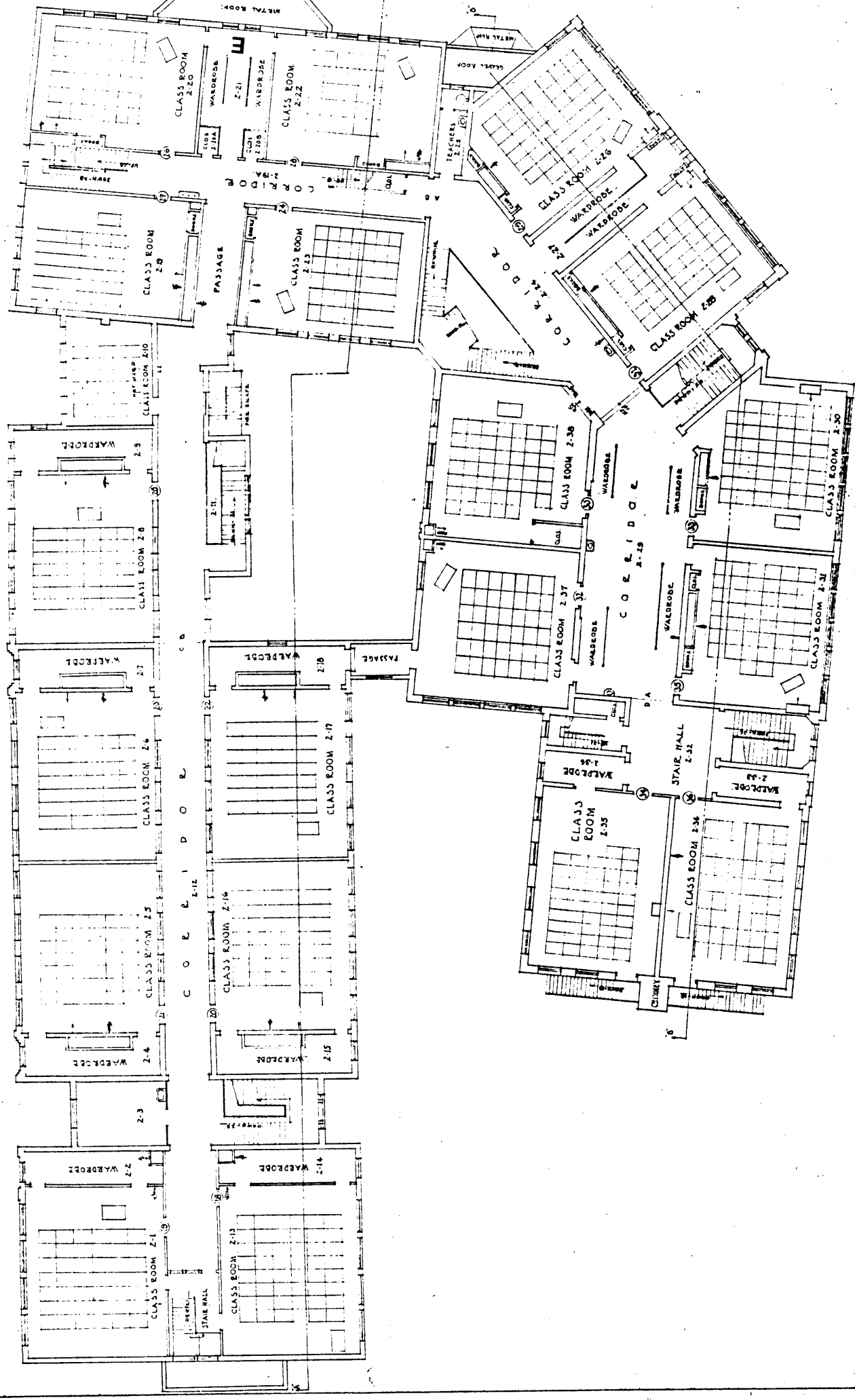
FIRST FLOOR PLAN B

Washington Street School, 461 Washington Street, Hartford County, Georgia
Plan 3 Building Key Photo Key

ITEMS D-51 & D-52

WASHINGTON ST. SCHOOL
461 WASHINGTON ST.
DALLAS, TEXAS

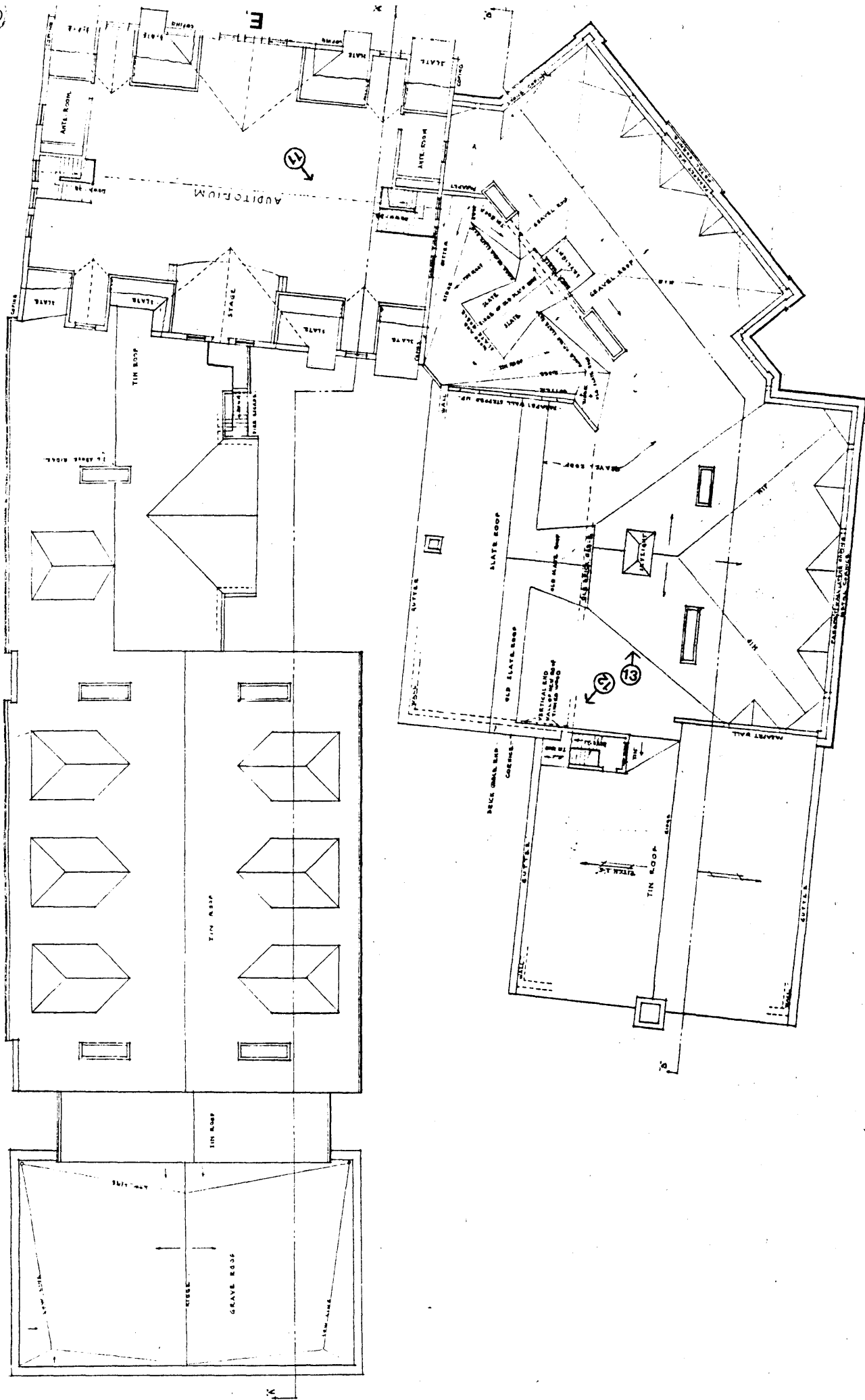
Date 3/13/34 Scale 3/8" = 1'-0" Drawn by



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Washington Street School, 461 Washington Street, Hartford, Hartford County, CT
 Plan 4 Building key

ITEMS B-31 & B-9
 WASHINGTON ST. SCHOOL
 461 WASHINGTON ST.
 Date 3-22-24 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0" Drawn by W.D.



THIRD FLOOR & ROOF PLAN

Washington Street School, 461 Washington Street, Hartford, Hartford County, CT

Plan 5. Building Key Photo Key

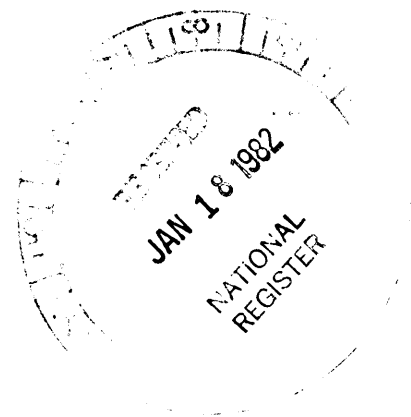
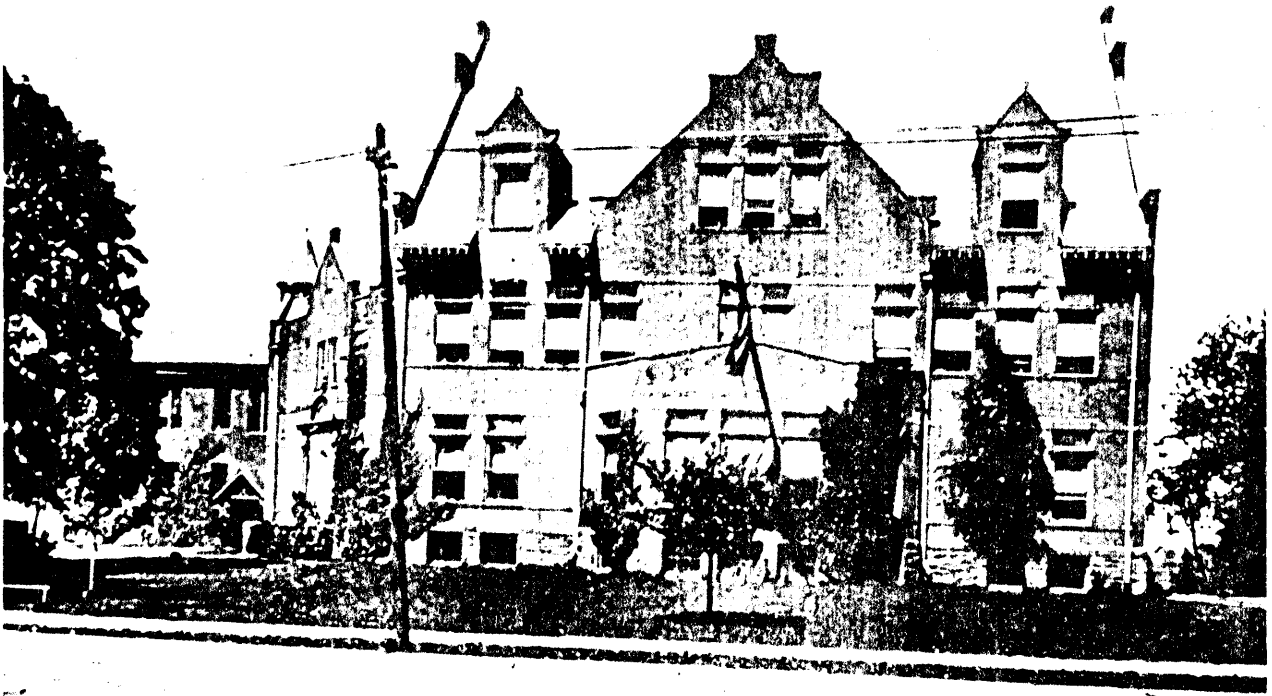
News 30115-52

WASHINGTON ST. SCHOOL

461 Washington St.

Date 3/22/34 Scale 1/8" = 1 ft. Drawn by W.P.C.

C



Washington Street School
461 Washington Street
Hartford
Hartford County, CT
Early 20th C Picture
BUILDING E, VIEW WEST
Photograph 17 of 17