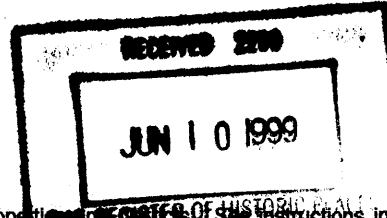


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



796

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See the instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item only if it applies 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 Fort Myers Beach School

other names/site number Fort Myers Beach Elementary School, Beach Elementary School/LL1975

2. Location

street & number 2751 Oak Street n/a not for publication

city or town Fort Myers Beach n/a vicinity

state FLORIDA code FL county Lee code 071 zip code 33931

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.)

George W. Perry 5/25/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida State Historic Preservation Officer, Division of Historical Resources
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.
- other, (explain) _____

Edson H. Beall _____
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 7-8-99

Fort Myers Beach School
Name of Property

Lee Co., FL
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	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Masonry Vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stucco
walls Stucco
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

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)

Education _____

Architecture _____

Period of Significance

1947-1949 _____

Significant Dates

1947 _____

Significant Person

n/a _____

Cultural Affiliation

n/a _____

Architect/Builder

Architect: Stripling, James A, Jessen and Associates _____

Builder: McDonald, J.C. _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of Repository _____

Fort Myers Beach School
Name of Property

Lee Co., FL
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	4	0	6	3	9	0	2	9	2	5	5	1	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 Stephen Olausen/Consultant & Barbara E. Mattick/Historic Preservationist Supervisor

oanization Bureau of Historic Preservation date May 1999

street & number R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street telephone (850) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

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 Lee County District School Board, Facilities (Stephanie Keys)

street & number 2055 Central Avenue telephone (941) 479-4204

city or town Ft. Myers state Florida zip code 33901

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.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

SUMMARY

Fort Myers Beach School located at the northeast corner of Oak and Second Streets in Ft. Myers Beach, Lee County, Florida, is a masonry vernacular building with some decorative features at the main entrance. The school, constructed in 1947, has a concrete block structural system and a central block with wings plan

Setting

Fort Myers Beach is a newly incorporated community on Estero Island, about fifteen miles southwest of Fort Myers. The island is densely developed with beach houses, modern high-rise retirement condominiums, and apartment buildings. The Fort Myers Beach School is located on Oak Street, between Bay and Second streets. Estero Boulevard, the main thoroughfare in the community, is one block to the South. The school property is surrounded on the north by undeveloped land, on the east by a residential development, on the south by the property of the Fort Myers Beach Methodist Church, and on the west by the Fort Myers Beach Recreational Facility. The school is situated on the southwest corner of the property (photos 1-2). The campus contains a number of non-contributing buildings to the north and west of the historic school. A few palm trees dot an otherwise open lawn that surrounds the school.

Exterior

Fort Myers Beach Elementary School is a one-story, concrete block building with a flat, built-up roof. It has a symmetrical central block with wings plan. The exterior walls are covered with smooth stucco.

Facade (south elevation)

The facade or south elevation is divided into five parts (photo 3). The central block of the building extends slightly from the one-room deep connectors that join it to the classroom wings on either side. The main entrance is recessed within an arched opening (photo 4). The smooth stucco is scored above the arch in a vague reference to a sunburst design. The otherwise flat parapet that surrounds the building is broken by a stepped riser with molded masonry coping, which drops to flank the upper portion of the entrance opening. Two smaller stepped risers are located at the corners of the masonry coping. A raised rectangular panel is located in the parapet, above a scored rectangle inscribed with the words "Beach Elementary School." The connectors between the main block and the wings contain two sets of triple windows. The wings extend to the south and also have two sets of triple windows.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

West and East elevations

The west and east elevations of the building are similar in design (photos 5 and 8). The main feature is a pair of triple windows located in rectangular openings near the northern corners. A small rectangular window is located near the center. A door and small rectangular window have been added to the west side.

Rear elevation

The rear of the building consists of the north walls of the connectors and wings and three sides of a flat roof auditorium (photos 6 and 7). Paired metal door entrances are located at the interior corners of the wings. The connectors contain that same window configuration found on the main facade. The auditorium has a raised entrance that is accessed by a cement staircase on the west side and is pierced by several paired and single window openings.

Interior

Most of the original interior spaces are intact. The main entrance opens into a foyer that is flanked by two small offices. The foyer leads to the main hall, which runs east-west and connects to halls that run north-south to the rear doorways (photos 9 and 10). The building presently contains three classrooms, a media center, resources room, computer room, three offices, and several storage areas. All of the classrooms are in their original configuration. They have concrete block walls and their original baseboards and door casings (photo 11). The original auditorium has been partitioned to create space for the media center, offices, and storage areas (photo 12).

Alterations

With the exception of the replacement of the original window and doors, the exterior of the building retains its architectural integrity to a high degree. The interior has undergone more significant changes, including the partitioning of the auditorium in 1970 and the creation of a hallway that leads to a doorway located on the west wall of the west wing in 1994. At about the same time of the auditorium renovation, all of the interior ceilings were lowered to create space for electrical and air conditioning conduits. The walls of the hallways are covered with fiberboard. The bathrooms were subdivided 1991 to create access for handicapped students.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 1 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

SUMMARY

Fort Myers Beach School is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C at the local level in the areas of education and architecture. Constructed in 1947, it was the first substantial education building constructed in Lee County since the Depression. It is the largest historic building in Fort Myers Beach and continues to serve as a school. The Fort Myers Beach School is also significant as the work of James A. Stripling, a major architect of schools in Florida. It contributes to the *Historic Resources of Lee County, Florida* multiple property group under historic context V, **Historic Development of the Lee County School System, 1887-1950**. property type F.3 **Education Buildings**.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL

Located on Estero Island in southwestern Lee County, the community of Fort Myers Beach was initially settled in the late nineteenth century, when a small number of homesteads were established. Early settlers depended on farming and fishing for their subsistence. The first residential subdivisions on the island were created in the 1910s, but little development occurred until the Florida land boom. In 1921 a bridge connecting the island with the mainland was constructed and sparked a rush for beachfront property. The beach became a popular destination for visitors and residents of Fort Myers. Hotels, restaurants, a casino, and bath house were built to cater to the visitors. Most of the earliest buildings on the island were destroyed by hurricanes in the 1920s and 1930s. Fort Myers Beach was one of the few places in the county to experience significant development during the Great Depression. Most of the existing historic resources in the community date from that decade. During the years of World War II, the beach was a popular stop for servicemen who trained at Lee County's military bases at Buckingham and Page Field.¹

The first school was established on Estero Island in 1890. It operated for two years and then closed. An effort to reopen the school was made in 1897, but low attendance caused it to fail. During the first three decades of the twentieth century school age children on the island were transported to the Iona School on the mainland.²

In 1937 representatives of the Fort Myers Beach Improvement Society appeared before the Lee County Board of Public Instruction to ask that a school be established on the island. The board responded by offering to

¹Florida Preservation Services, "Lee County Historic Sites Survey," (Report prepared for the Lee County Planning Department, December, 1986) 61.

²Donald O. Stone and Beth W. Carter, *The First 100 Years: Lee County Public Schools, 1887-1987* (Fort Myers, Florida: Department of Printing, The School Board of Lee County, 1987) 46.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 2 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

staff a school if the residents could provide a building. The group in turn rented a small cottage to temporarily house the school while a more suitable building was constructed. In 1938, a wood frame schoolhouse was constructed. Located at 125 Sterling Avenue, the building now serves as a clubhouse for the Fort Myers Beach Woman's Club. It remained in operation as a school until 1947, when the present Fort Myers Beach Elementary School building was erected.³

The 1938 Fort Myers Beach School, which consisted of two classrooms, was not large enough to handle the influx of new children who moved with their parents to the area in the immediate post-World War II era. Other areas of the county were also experiencing severe overcrowding in their schools, and it became apparent that another significant school development program like that undertaken in the 1920s would have to be initiated. In 1946 the board sent a delegation, which included school superintendent E.P. Greene, to Tallahassee to confer with J. Colin English, who was then serving as state superintendent of schools. English agreed with the delegation's assessment on the state of the school system and granted permission for a \$1,000,000 bond issue, which was to be used to improve several existing facilities and construct two new schools. Fort Myers Beach was the area targeted for the first permanent school facility constructed in the county since 1929. It was designed by the Tampa and Fort Myers architectural firm of James A. Stripling, Jessen and Associates, which was hired by the board to draw plans for all school improvements under the bond issue.

James Aaron Stripling was born December 8, 1902, in Gordon, Alabama. Soon after his father's death in 1916, Stripling and his family moved to Montgomery, Alabama. Upon graduation from high school, he entered Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University), where he received the baccalaureate degree in architecture in 1925. In 1930, after working with architectural firms in Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama, Stripling accepted a position as school architect with the Division of School Plant Design and Construction in the Georgia Department of Education. In 1934, Stripling accepted a similar post with the Florida Department of Education, becoming Florida's first State School Architect. During the next several years in Florida, Stripling personally designed and supervised the construction of school buildings in many parts of the state. Later, when Florida started a massive school building program, he became a consultant in school building design and construction. In 1945 Stripling retired from the Florida Department of Education and established his own architectural firm. His firm designed and supervised the construction of many public buildings and large private homes throughout Florida, especially in Tallahassee, West Florida, and in Lee and Collier Counties. Other buildings in Southwest Florida designed by Stripling include: the Ft. Myers High School (1948), the Pine Island Elementary School (1950), the Immokalee High School (1952), and the Tommie Barfield Elementary School on Marco Island. From 1943 through 1946, Stripling was president of the Florida Association of Architects. Under his leadership the Florida Association united with the American Institute of

³Stone and Carter, *The First 100 Years*, 180.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

Architects. For many years he was the national consulting architect for his college social fraternity, Pi Kappa Phi. Stripling died in Montgomery, Alabama on May 3, 1978.

The property for the Fort Myers Beach school had been purchased by the board from Lillian Winkler in 1944. J.C. McDonald, a local builder, was awarded the contract for the school after submitting a bid of \$50,165. An additional \$17,000 was spent on furnishing and equipment.⁴ The school was completed in late 1947, and students from the old 1938 school began attending classes there in February, 1948. It contained six classrooms and an auditorium. In 1952 a lunch room was added to the property. Since that time, seven additional buildings have been added to the campus, including two two-room classroom buildings in 1955 and 1967, a library and administration building in 1962, and a larger cafeteria in 1970. During the latter year, the auditorium of the original school building was subdivided to provide space for a media center and administrative offices.⁵

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

Criterion A

Fort Myers Beach Elementary School is eligible for listing the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of education. Constructed in 1947, the building was the first permanent school building erected in the county since the 1920s, before the Great Depression. It is the only historic school building in Fort Myers Beach and, in the context of Florida's history, is a relatively rare example of a historic school that continues to serve an educational purpose.

Criterion C

The school has additional significance under Criterion C as the first school designed in the county by the prominent architectural firm of James A. Stripling, James A. Stripling, Jessen and Associates. The simple facade of the school contrasts sharply with the ornate schools constructed in the county during the years of the Florida land boom in the 1920s. It was the first of the county's modern schools and served as a model for subsequent school construction undertaken during the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴Ibid., 200-201.

⁵Ibid., 201; The School District of Lee County, Florida, Facilities Department, "List of Construction Projects," n.d.

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National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9 Page 1 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Florida Preservation Services. "Lee County Historic Sites Survey." Report prepared for the Lee County Planning Department, December, 1986.

Lee County School Board. Minutes, 1944-1950.

School District of Lee County, Florida, Facilities Department. "List of Construction Projects." n.d.

Stone, Donald O. and Beth W. Carter. *The First 100 Years: Lee County Public Schools, 1887-1987*. Fort Myers, Florida: Department of Printing, The School Board of Lee County, 1987.

Stripling, Robert O., "James Aaron Stripling, 1902-1978," unpublished manuscript, on file at Bureau of Historic Preservation

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 1 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the historic Fort Myers Beach School are that part of Block D, Winkler Subdivision of Fort Myers Beach that is enclosed by the boundary line shown on the attached site plan of the property .

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses all of the significant historic resources and the area immediately around them that were associated with the school during the period of significance, 1947-1949.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number Photos Page 1 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

INVENTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. FORT MYERS BEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2. LEE COUNTY, FLORIDA
3. STEPHEN OLAUSEN
4. NOVEMBER 1996
5. HISTORIC PROPERTY ASSOCIATES
6. STREETScape VIEW OF PROPERTY, FACING NORTH
7. PHOTO NO. 1 OF 12

Numbers 1-5 are the same for the remaining photographs.

6. STREETScape VIEW OF PROPERTY, FACING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 2 OF 12

6. VIEW OF FACADE (SOUTH ELEVATION), FACING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 3 OF 12

6. DETAIL VIEW OF CENTRAL ENTRANCE BAY OF THE FACADE, FACING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 4 OF 12

6. VIEW OF WEST SIDE, FACING NORTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 5 OF 12

6. VIEW OF WESTERN PORTION OF REAR ELEVATION AND WEST SIDE OF THE
AUDITORIUM, FACING SOUTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 6 OF 12

6. VIEW OF REAR ELEVATION OF THE AUDITORIUM AND EASTERN PORTION OF THE REAR
ELEVATION, FACING SOUTHEAST
7. PHOTO NO. 7 OF 12

6. VIEW OF EAST SIDE, FACING NORTHWEST
7. PHOTO NO. 8 OF 12

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

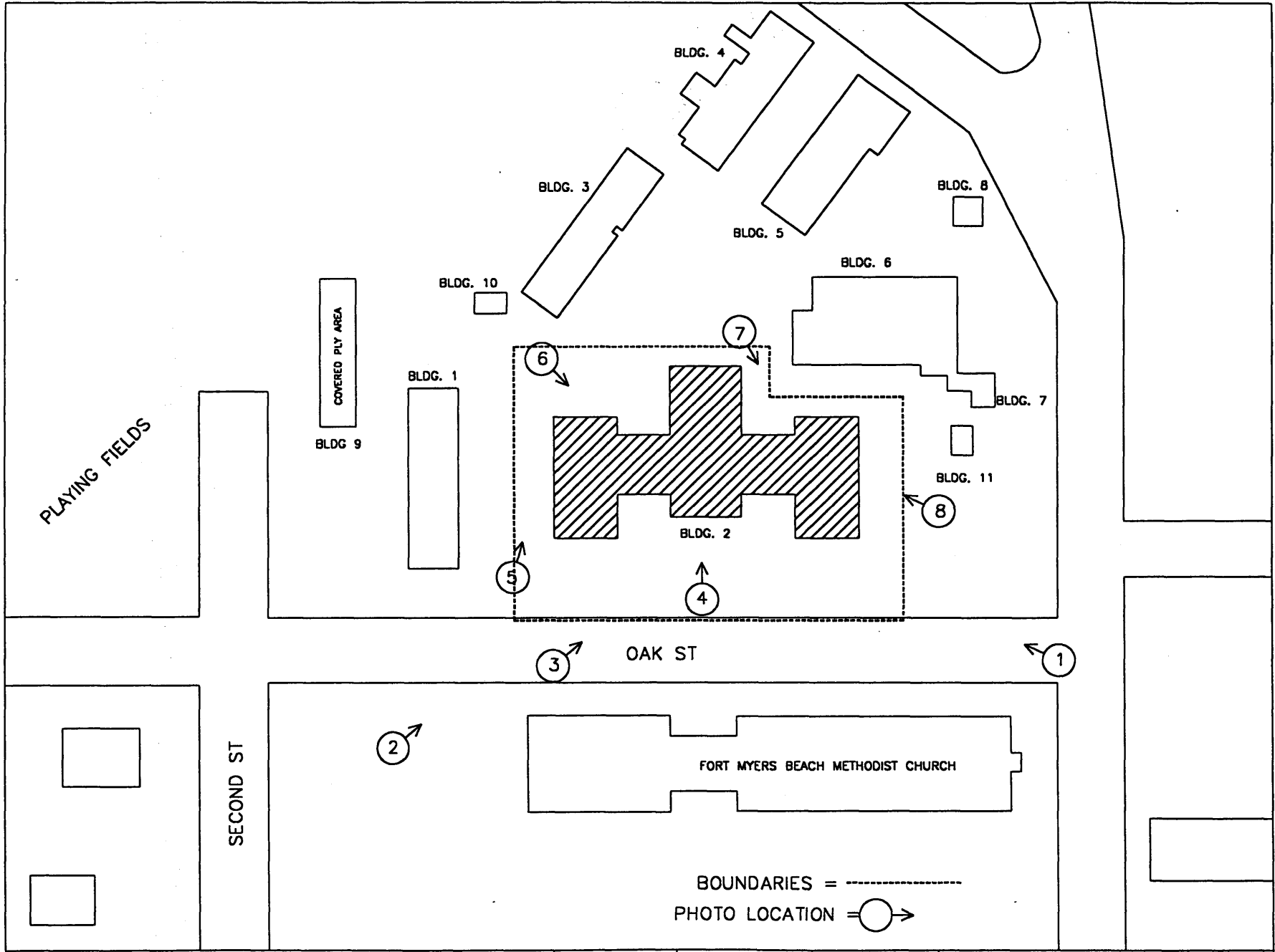
Section number _____ Photos _____ Page 2 **FORT MYERS BEACH SCHOOL**
Fort Myers Beach, Lee Co., FL

6. INTERIOR VIEW OF MAIN HALL, FACING WEST
7. PHOTO NO. 9 OF 12

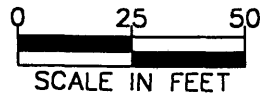
6. INTERIOR VIEW OF WEST HALL, FACING NORTH
7. PHOTO NO. 10 OF 12

6. INTERIOR VIEW OF A TYPICAL CLASSROOM, FACING SOUTHWEST
7. PHOTO NO. 11 OF 12

6. INTERIOR VIEW OF STORAGE AREA IN THE FORMER AUDITORIUM, FACING SOUTHWEST
7. PHOTO NO. 12 OF 12



SITE PLAN: FORT MYERS BEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 OAK STREET, FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA



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 NOVEMBER 1996

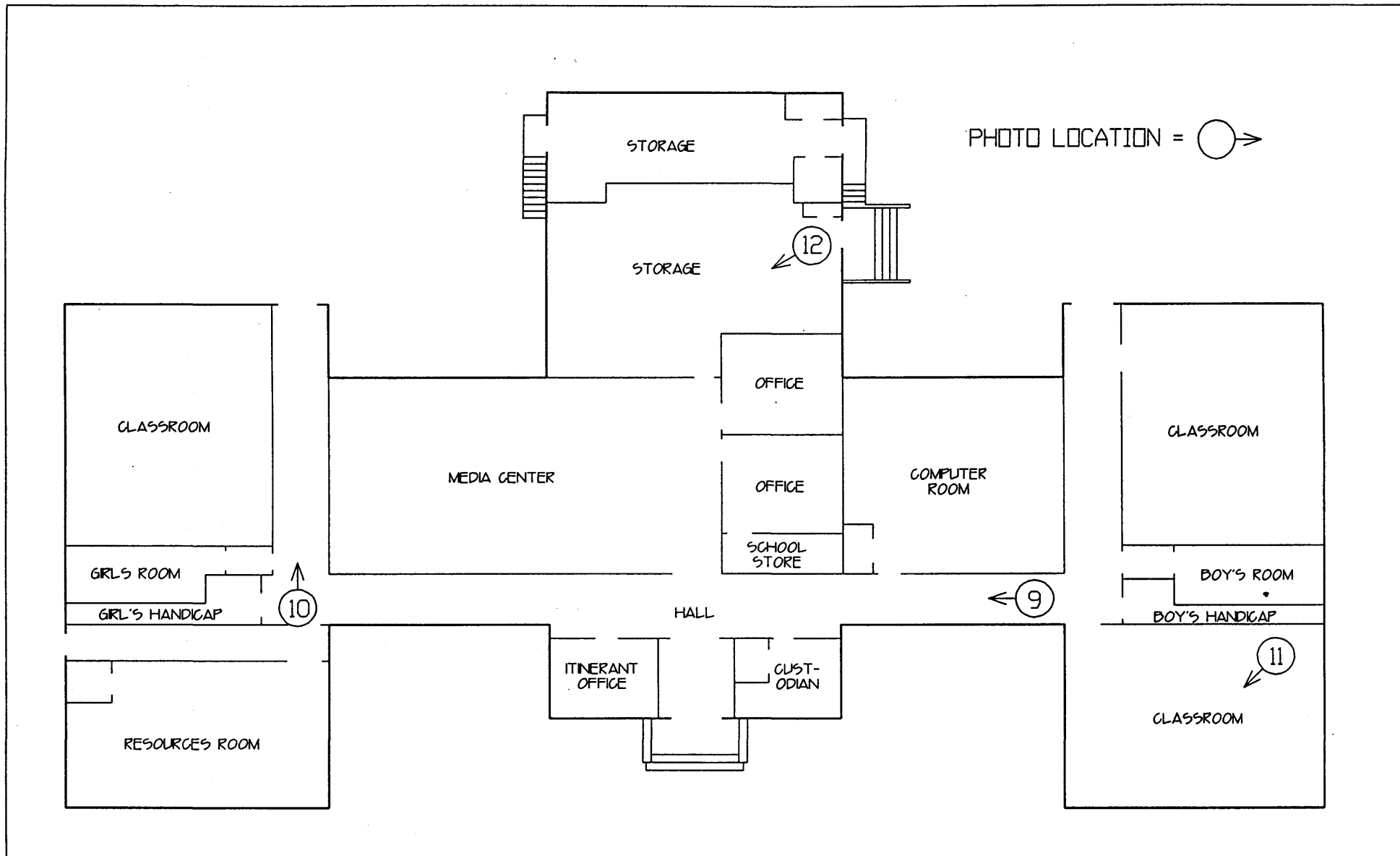
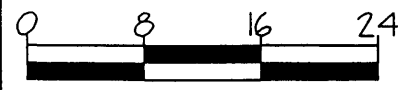
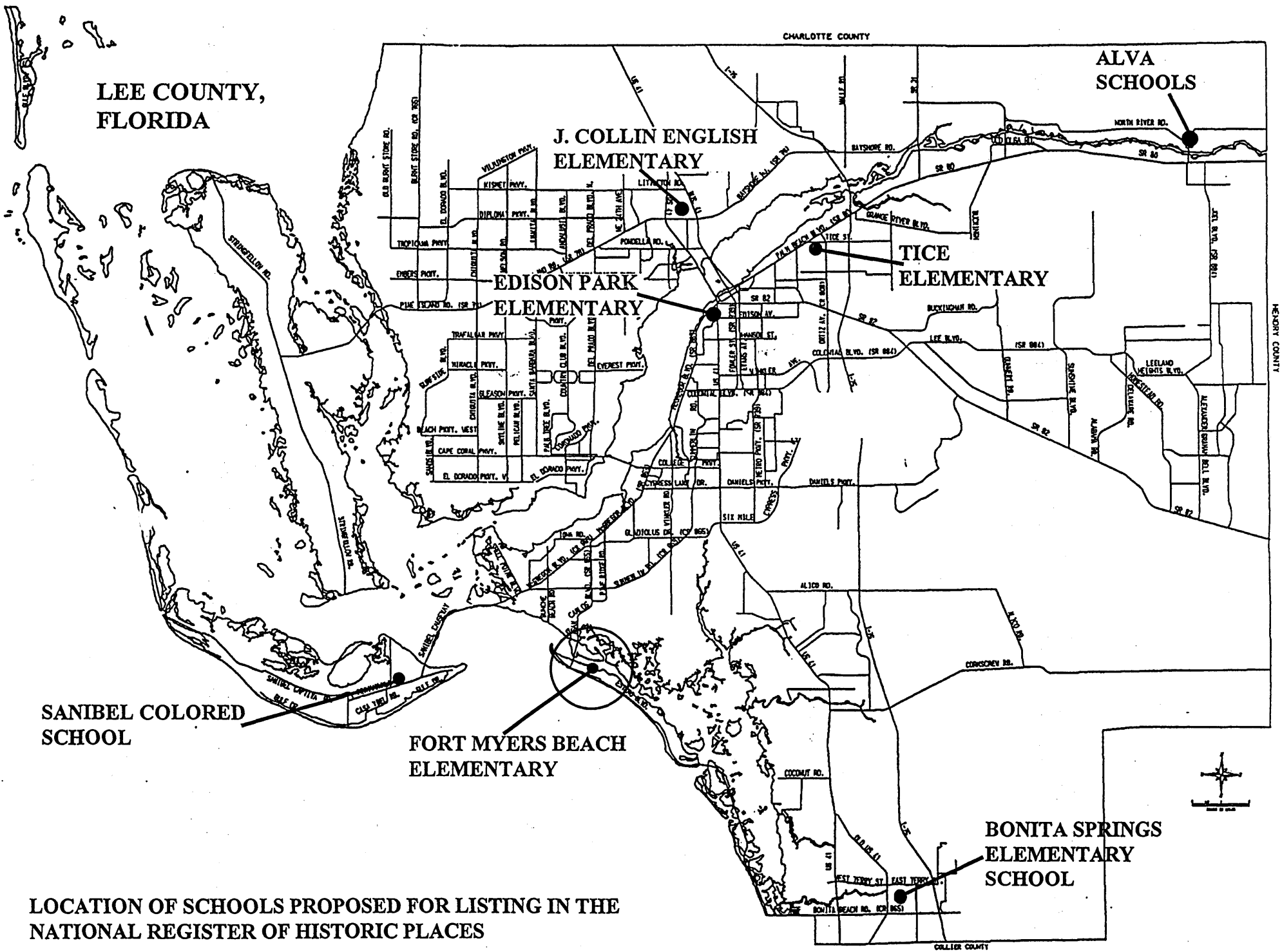


PHOTO LOCATION = ○ →

FLOOR PLANS: FORT MYERS BEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 OAK STREET, FORT MYERS BEACH, FLORIDA



PREPARED BY
 HISTORIC PROPERTY ASSOCIATES, INC.
 NOVEMBER 1996



LEE COUNTY,
FLORIDA

CHARLOTTE COUNTY

ALVA
SCHOOLS

J. COLLIN ENGLISH
ELEMENTARY

EDISON PARK
ELEMENTARY

TICE
ELEMENTARY

SANIBEL COLORED
SCHOOL

FORT MYERS BEACH
ELEMENTARY

BONITA SPRINGS
ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL

LOCATION OF SCHOOLS PROPOSED FOR LISTING IN THE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

COLLIER COUNTY

