

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000035

Date Listed: 2/24/92

Washington School
Property Name

Grand Forks
County

ND
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

2/24/92
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 6, Materials:

Since the trim of the building is cast stone, that should have been listed as an "other" material rather than a "wall" material.

This information was verified by Lauren McCroskey of the ND SHPO staff.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Washington School

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 422 N. Sixth Street N/A not for publication

city, town Grand Forks N/A vicinity

state North Dakota code ND county Grand Forks code 035 zip code 58201

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

12-12-91

Signature of certifying official

Date

James E. Sperry, Historic Preservation Officer, North Dakota

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Beth Boland

2/24/92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant: not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

cast stone

roof Composition

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheets.

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Description:

The Washington School faces west on N. Sixth Street. It sits on the southeast corner of N. Sixth Street and Fifth Avenue N. The building is located on the northwest corner of Block 5 with four empty lots south to the corner of Fourth Avenue. These lots are occupied by the school play ground and a small city park. To the north of Washington School across Fifth Avenue is the St. Michael's Church and parochial school. This is a single building nomination.

The school is two stories above a raised basement. It was designed in Classical Revival style and is 69 feet wide by 86 feet 6 inches deep. Exterior walls are brick and trim is cast stone. The basement (first floor) has a rusticated limestone sill course at the basement window sills. This is the only true stone used on the building. Horizontal cast stone sill courses separate two stories. An additional molded cast stone course separates the basement above the window lintels from the top two floors. There is a similar molded course above the third story windows below the frieze. The frieze is brick under an elaborate projecting classical metal cornice with block modillions and molded courses. The parapet is brick on the north and south facades and capped with stone coping. The west parapet is balustraded between brick piers with a central stone cartouche incised "1907."

Aside from the horizontal cast stone courses and elaborate cornice, the major design element on the building is the jack arched lintels on all three stories over the window openings. On the basement level, the lintels are brick between stone keystones and corner stones. On the second and third floors, the lintels are all stone with raised keystone and corner stones.

The main facade faces west where additional decorative elements were concentrated on the central entrance bay. There is a slightly projecting two story entrance porch topped with a brick and stone balustrade surrounding the flat roof. The cast stone cornice with bracketed and molded elements is similar to the cornice atop the third story. The frieze above the third story windows is stone into which is carved "Washington School." Second story windows are arranged in a set of three with fan lights and round arches trimmed in stone with keystones. Below the second story windows is another stone panel cut with "Fifth Ward." The front entrance is replacement metal with metal double doors and side lights. Original doors were wood and mostly glass and not dissimilar to the replacement doors there now.

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The rear of the building is the east facade facing an alley which runs north-south on the east property line. This facade does not have the decorative cornice or brick parapet. Some wide and intrusive flashing was added when the roof was put on 15 or so years ago. This facade has a "back door" in the shape of a one story entrance porch of brick. It is one story with a wide wooden frieze and wooden eaves. The metal door and side lights are not original. Where the glass in the doors and the sidelights has been broken, plywood panels have been installed to secure the building.

Windows in the building are one-over-one wood double-hung and are originals in good condition, although they leak cold air. A 1930 article and photograph shows the one-over-one windows without the four-over-four storm windows which were added later. The only variation to the window pattern is in the top three windows above the entrance porch on the west facade. An old photograph indicates that these windows were nine-over-one in that location only. Most of the windows are original, except where smaller windows or casements were installed. All windows have been boarded up with plywood panels and insulation in the upper lights. This was probably done as part of the energy retrofitting in the 1970s. But the windows underneath are intact. The 1930 photograph shows no fire escape on the north facade in 1930. The north side fire escape was made by taking the two windows in the central bay on each of the upper floors and converting them to doors, then infilling the upper portions of the windows with glass blocks.

The overall exterior integrity is excellent. The building is in excellent structural condition. Apparently the northeast quadrant of the roof was leaking because the room below on the third floor shows some plaster damage. Of the 24 windows on the west facade, only five are not original. This ratio holds true, in general, for the other three facades. On the top floor, northeast half of the south elevation, three window openings have been fitted with new casements; there are four replacement windows and some brick infill in the center window openings of the east elevation. The latter is the former location of the third grade class room. When this space became apartments about ten years ago, ceilings were lowered, windows replaced and new walls studded-in.

The interior has very good integrity despite the fact that the building ceased to be used as a public school in the mid-1970s and has stood empty for several years. The original layout is virtually intact and all interior finishes are either exposed and in good condition or

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hidden behind later applied materials. There is an open staircase and balustrade of oak. Lower walls are covered in beadboard and upper walls and ceilings are plaster, although some of the plaster was water-soaked and has cracked and fallen down. Some of the rooms have adhesive and wallboard covering the walls. Nearly all the floors are carpeted.

The school was built as an elementary school. The original plans are missing, but the layout seems to have been four class rooms on the second and third floors with a central hallway dividing sets of rooms on each side. The classrooms on the north and south sides of the center hall were divided from each other by coat rooms. If this was the original arrangement, then the school housed grades one through eight. By 1960, the second floor had grades one and two on the south side of the hall and one large room with a stage at the west end on the north side of the hall. This one large room was used as a playroom, probably because the school had no play yard of any size. The kindergarten was in the southwest room in the basement. On the top or third floor, there were classrooms in 1960 for the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades. By 1960, Grand Forks had junior high schools for the seventh and eighth grades, and the school was used after 1960 to house kindergarten through sixth grades.

Blueprints by Wells and Denbrook of Grand Forks dated June, 1960 indicate the work which was done at that time. The exterior metal fire escapes and glass blocks in the door headers date from the 1960 renovations. At that time interior alterations included: all new wiring and removal of old wires and electrical conduit; the installation of florescent lighting in the ceilings and some of the acoustical tile and dropped ceilings. A new serving kitchen was installed in the northwest corner room of the basement which functioned as a lunch room; a new heating system installed; plumbing was upgraded along with new sinks in the coat rooms on each floor, new boys and girls lavatories were installed in the basement, and the school received a new sprinkling system.¹

In 1978, the original yellow brick on the Washington School was painted red and carpeting and repainting was done on the interior, under the direction of contractor Wells and Denbrook.² After repainting, the building was repointed. The original joints were recessed and concave. Since the repointing, they are only slightly concave.

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At this time, the Washington School property is being redeveloped into multiple housing units, however, the conversion has not altered any of the exterior or interior features which contribute to the building's architectural significance. Exterior alterations will be confined to the installation of replacement sash of identical configuration at the raised basement level, and interior drywalling of deteriorated flat plaster walls. To date, a Parts I and II of the Tax Act application have been submitted and received approval from the Regional Office of the National Park Service in Denver.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1907

Significant Dates

1907

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

William J. Edwards, architect
Melby and Standahl, contractor

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

State Historical Society of North Dakota

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx one acre

UTM References

A

1	4
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6	4	6	4	9	0
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5	3	0	9	7	5	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

B

1	4
---	---

6	4	6	5	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	0	9	7	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

 Zone Easting Northing

C

1	4
---	---

6	4	6	5	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	0	9	7	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	4
---	---

6	4	6	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	0	9	7	1	0
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 2, 4, 6, and 8, Block 5, Original Townsite, City of Grand Forks.

N/A See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lots which have been associated historically with the property.

N/A See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Norene Roberts
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The Washington School is nominated under Criterion C as a highly intact representation of the Classical Revival style as applied to elementary school architecture in Grand Forks. As a municipal school property type, the building retains the best integrity of three remaining elementary schools built during the Second Dakota Boom (1895-1917). Although he is not recognized as a master architect, the school's designer, William J. Edwards, was also responsible for the now demolished Winship Elementary School of 1903.

Though undistinguished within the context of the Second Dakota Boom, the Washington School was a product of the period in Grand Forks when unprecedented increases in the student population necessitated the construction of several new schools. Other construction responses during this period included the extant Roosevelt Elementary School, sited on the city's south side on Chestnut Street in 1910. The Roosevelt School bears minimal classical influences with incipient Craftsman features such as exposed eaves. Roosevelt is architecturally less pristine than Washington due to a south addition attached by a small corridor. Located on South Fourth Avenue, the Belmont Elementary School of 1904 was also a Classical Revival composition, but its later additions have enveloped much of the original core of the building.

At the close of the First Dakota Boom, Grand Forks had three public school buildings: the Central School (1880) with two 1890 wings; the Belmont elementary school (1883); and Wilder elementary school, built in 1891, burned and rebuilt in 1894.¹ These schools were associated with the first settlement of the city and none survive today. It was the Second Dakota Boom lasting from 1895 to 1917 and its accompanying increase in population which was responsible for the school buildings in Grand Forks which old-timers remember today.

The school buildings erected or enlarged in Grand Forks during the Second Dakota Boom include: the Winship School (1903), an eight classroom addition to the Belmont School (1904), the Washington School (1907), the Roosevelt School (1910) and the new Central High School (1917). In the years 1900-1910, the population of Grand Forks jumped an astonishing 63 per cent from 7,652 to 12,478. Of the elementary schools built during the first decade, the Winship School is gone. It was designed by William J. Edwards.⁴ The 1904 addition to the Belmont School, designed by Joseph Bell DeRemer remains,⁵ but with the earliest portions of the Belmont School long ago razed. The

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Washington School (1907) was designed by William J. Edwards on the north side and has been closed for several years. The Roosevelt School (1910) is a special school today and has a large modern one story addition attached to its south wall. It was designed by John W. Ross.⁶ Finally, Central High School replaced the earlier Central School building and the main portion of Central High, which had several subsequent additions, was built in 1917 from plans by William J. Edwards.

Of the elementary schools from the Second Boom, there are three remaining examples in Grand Forks and each is by one of the city's leading architects: DeRemer's Belmont School addition, Edward's Washington School, and Ross' Roosevelt School. Together, these extant school buildings do not adequately reflect the strain put on the school board in the years 1900-1910 to accommodate the growing demand for classroom space in the city. Other schools since razed were also part of this period and were either built then or had additions put on. For example, the 1903 Winship School had barely been completed from plans and specifications by William J. Edwards, when the city of⁷ Grand Forks had to look to expanding its physical plant in other ways. A 1904 addition on the Belmont School provided eight classrooms to the overcrowded earlier structure. According to School Superintendent Nelson Kelly, enrollment in the city in 1904 was 1,964 and the entire system was strained.⁸ The new 1904 addition to Belmont increased its capacity from somewhere between 528-636 pupils in April, 1904, to 898 by the December, 1906, estimate.

By November, 1906, the School Board was once again decrying the crowded conditions of the public schools and the need for more room to accommodate increasing attendance. Public sentiment demanded yet another new school and the School Board's Committee on Buildings and Grounds¹⁰ was charged to look into possible sites for a new elementary school. In December 1906, the Board noted that enrollment was the largest in the history of the city, a total of 2,276 pupils were attending public school, a 300 increase over the previous year. ¹¹This included some 224 pupils being served by the new Winship School. The city treasury was feeling a strain as well. To save money, Central School had had two classrooms added to the basement in 1903.¹² Winship School was built as an eight room school house, but with only four rooms completed at first to stay within the School Board budget.¹³

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Although the Board agreed in late 1906 that a new school was desirable, they discussed seriously the feasibility of adding an additional story to Central School. William J. Edwards felt that it could be done, but questioned to wisdom of doing it.¹⁴ To save the cost of acquiring a new piece of land, the Committee on Buildings and Grounds next proposed that a 12 room school building be built on the southwest corner of the Central School grounds at Fifth and International and decided to postpone the discussion of a new building site. At the last meeting in 1906, they passed a resolution to that effect. Waffling ever so slightly, they then agreed to hire William J. Edwards to draw up plans for a proposed new building "providing a new building is definitely determined upon."¹⁵

The issue of a new building and a new site was not resolved until there was a change in the composition of the Grand Forks School Board. Meeting on January 2, 1906, the School Board reconsidered the new addition they had proposed to Central School. It began with the resignation of Dr. Westeen, a long time member of the board, who wished to take a trip to Europe for a year. Board Member Mr. Norman, who owned the Glass Block housing his furniture store and undertaking business on North Third, entered the name of James A. Dinnie into consideration. It was seconded and Mr. Dinnie, well-known contractor and brick mason and resident¹⁶ of the Fifth Ward north of downtown was made a member of the Board. Up to this point, the Wilder School up on Skidmore Avenue had been sited on the north end of town in 1891. The new 1903 Winship School had been put up two blocks north of University, but on the west side. Belmont had seen a recent addition to its facility on the southside after a petition by citizens of the Second Ward. And Central School downtown had been upgraded as well. It seemed time once again to give the north side a plum. And now the new school Board member was James Dinnie the influential north side businessman

In what may have been a series of carefully orchestrated moves between January and April, 1907, the following occurred to make the new Washington School in the fifth ward a reality: at the January 2 meeting which reconsidered the previous decision to locate a new school on the grounds of Central School downtown, Westeen resigned and Dinnie was elected the new Board member. At the same meeting, the city's having created a new seventh ward on the west side meant that the School Board had to acquire another new Board member. It chose Mr. F. M. Wilder, namesake of the Wilder School. Mr. Tracy Bangs, attorney, was a member-at-large on the Board and an influential downtown

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businessman. Bangs nominated Wilder, who won, and Bangs then retired, but not before he announced himself as opposed to erecting another school building on the Central School site. Then appeared two directors of the Grand Forks Commercial Club: George B. Clifford and William Spriggs who formally protested against the selection of the Central School site for a new building. Diplomatically, it was suggested that the plans or sketches of a new building could be procured without waiting to settle the question of a site "and thus save time." The Board decided on an eight room building to be erected on a site to be chosen later. Board member Sorley then moved that the President (Mr. Bacon) and two members be named to select a site and to report at the next meeting. President of the Board Bacon chose the two new Board members, Dinnie and Wilder to serve on this committee.¹⁷ Sometimes new faces can loosen a log jam.

A Special Meeting of the Board was held three weeks later on January 24, 1907. Its purpose was to listen to a report by the site committee and come to a decision. The committee recommended lots in Block 14 just south of University Avenue immediately north of downtown. Mr. Norman wisely moved that a new committee of three members be convened to look at and report on desirable sites at the south end of the city as well.¹⁸ Dinnie diplomatically seconded the motion and it carried. On March 5, 1907, architect Edwards presented new plans for the building, they were examined and adopted. These later proved too costly, as James A. Dinnie, a contractor used to doing bids and estimating new construction, pointed out. Changes were proposed. In April, with changes amounting to a savings of some \$8-10,000 from Edward's original design, the Board adopted the cheaper plans "without affecting the appearance or efficiency of the building."¹⁹ During this time of deliberation, a final choice was made for a site for the new school: Block 5, now located just south of St. Michael's Church and school. The site was 100 by 140 feet, very small for both the school and a playground, but the two lots only cost \$2,000.²⁰ The location of Washington School was a done deal.

The only two wholly new remaining elementary school buildings in Grand Forks erected during the Second Dakota Boom are the Washington and Roosevelt Schools. Erection of the Washington School on the city's north side presaged the inevitable location on the south side of town of the next elementary school. It is apparent that the School Board attempted to be even-handed geographically when deciding on new school sites. And so, the Roosevelt School was built on Chestnut Street in 1910. For Roosevelt School, the School Board hired John W. Ross as its architect a scant four years before he died.²¹ Plagued with money considerations again, cost cutting measures had to be taken.

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The School Board went public on April 26, 1907 with a page eight article in the Grand Forks Daily Herald entitled, "Will Build New School." The general contractors were to be Melby and Standahl, the low bidder. The plumbing contract went to Spriggs Brothers and the heating contract to F. L. Dixon. The article noted,

The Board had the original plans changed so as to cut the cost of the building about \$10,000. It will be a plain brick structure. The handsome stone trimmings were cut out of the specifications and the building will not be nearly so elaborate as at first planned.

Finally, in 1917, Grand Forks razed the old Central School downtown and put up the new Central High School in 1917, the oldest portion of which still remains. For that job, they again hired William J. Edwards.²²

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Footnotes to Section 8:

- 1 Wells and Denbrook blueprints, June, 1960.
- 2 "63-Year-Old Washington School Gets Face Lift." Grand Forks Herald, October 13, 1978.
- 3 "Grand Forks, The Gate City." The Record, Fargo. (October 1896) 2: 4: 5.
- 4 Grand Forks Public School District, Minutes, July 7, 1903, p. 89; D. Jerome Tweton, Grand Forks A Pictorial History, p. 58.
- 5 Grand Forks Public School District, Minutes, June 7, 1904, p. 131; March 12, 1904, p. 119.
- 6 Minutes, July 25, 1910, p. 368.
- 7 Minutes, July 7, 1903, p. 89.
- 8 Minutes, June 7, 1904, p. 131; April 5, 1904, pp. 122-123.
- 9 Minutes, December 4, 1906, p. 240; April 5, 1904, p. 123.
- 10 Minutes, November 15, 1906, p. 237.
- 11 Minutes, December 4, 1906, p. 240.
- 12 Minutes, July 29, 1903, p. 98.
- 13 Minutes, May 26, 1903, p. 85.
- 14 Minutes, December 4, 1906, p. 240.
- 15 Minutes, December 8, 1906, p. 242; December 17, 1906, p. 243.
- 16 Minutes, January 2, 1907, p. 245.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Minutes, January 24, 1907, pp. 246, 247.
- 19 Minutes, April 8, 1907, p. 254; April 2, 1907, p. 253; and March 5, 1907, p. 254.

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20 Minutes, April 2, 1907, pp. 252, 253; April 8, 1907, p. 254.

21 Minutes, May 2, 1910, p. 354-357; John W. Ross obituary,
Grand Forks Daily Herald, December 12, 1914.

22 "Souvenir of new Grand Forks High School," Pamphlet in Orin
G. Libby # 411, Grand Forks History. Special Collections, Chester
Fritz Library, University of North Dakota

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"Grand Forks, The Gate City." The Record (October 1896) Fargo, 2: 4: 5, 6.

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"Great Year in Building Line." Grand Forks Daily Herald, October 2, 1907, p. 5.

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"Remodelling Washington School," by Wells and Denbrook Architects, Grand Forks, June 1960.

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Sanborn Insurance Map of Grand Forks, 1912, Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

"63-Year-Old Washington School Gets Face Lift." Grand Forks Herald, October 13, 1978.

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"Souvenir of new Grand Forks High School." in Grand Forks History, Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection # 411, Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks.

Tweton, D. Jerome. Grand Forks A Pictorial History. Norfolk, Virginia: The Donning Company, 1983.

"Washington Grade School, With Small Playground, Teaches Traffic Safety." Grand Forks Daily Herald, March 2, 1930.

"Will Build New School." Grand Forks Daily Herald, April 26, 1907, p. 8.