

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Location

street & number 561 Portage Road [ ] not for publication

city or town Niagara Falls [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Niagara code 063 zip code 14301

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Richard Perpoint DSHPD*

*4/15/16*

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

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
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

*6-7-16*

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Niagara County, New York**

Name of Property

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)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
-	-	sites
-	-	structures
-	-	objects
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

N/A

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

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/

Neo-Classical Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof MEMBRANE

other

**Narrative Description**

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

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Niagara County, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**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 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

- 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 67) has been requested. **NPS No. 29,654**
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building 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 repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance:**

1922-23

**Significant Dates:**

1922-23

**Significant Person:**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect/Builder:**

Carlos Chipman Lacy

Norton H. Kirkpatrick

SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.31 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 659031 4772933  
Zone Easting Northing

3 17            
Zone Easting Northing

2 17          

4 17          

**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 Caitlin Moriarty, Ph.D., Architectural Historian; Kelsie Hoke, M.Arch; Matt Shoen (Contains sections from the Part 1 prepared by Jill Nowicki of the Clinton Brown Company in 2013) [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studios, LLC date 12/4/16

street & number 60 Hedley Place telephone 716-725-6410

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208

**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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Niagara Falls School Board

street & number 630 66<sup>th</sup> Street telephone     

city or town Niagara Falls state NY zip code 14304

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

Narrative Description of Property

South Junior High School is located on the east side of Portage Road in the Memorial Park neighborhood of the City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, New York. Surrounding the school to the east, west, and south, the neighborhood consists primarily of early twentieth century houses. To the north is the former Niagara Falls High School (NR 2001) and Schoellkopf Park, with the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center to the northwest. One block further north is the area's main commercial avenue. The school is the only building on the triangular-shaped, 4.31 acre lot bounded by Portage Road to the west, Walnut Avenue to the north, Tronolone Place to the east, and Ferry Avenue to the south. The school is set back on a wide, park-like lawn with a large parking lot to the north and a small playground in the southeast corner. The school building is oriented roughly north-to-south and its primary façade faces west onto Portage Road.

Built in 1922-23, the modest Neoclassical building is an intact example of standardized school design from the interwar period of the 1920s. It has a steel and reinforced-concrete structure with a brown brick and limestone exterior. The massing of the building is somewhat complex, comprising a rectangular footprint at the ground floor, and an E-shaped plan on the upper floors. The majority of the building is contained within a large, three-story, rectangular mass facing Portage Road and three, three-story wings extending east behind the building. The center wing of the "E" is longer and wider than the flanking wings. At the ground floor, one-story spaces lit by skylights fill in the area in between the wings and to the rear of the flanking wings. On the interior of the building, classrooms are arranged in a U-shape around the auditorium and gym spaces that occupy the large center wing.

The former South Junior High School retains the setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling that define historic integrity. A few cosmetic updates have been made to some of the interior finishes and, like many schools seeking to improve energy efficiency during the midcentury energy crisis, the original windows were replaced in the 1980s. Otherwise, the school is a remarkably intact example of public school design, inside and out, from the early twentieth century.

**Exterior**

The former South Junior High School is three stories in height and has a flat roof. It is seventeen bays wide by five bays deep. On each elevation, the brown brick is laid in a Flemish bond pattern and sits on a raised foundation. Capping the ground floor is a deep limestone belt course, while above, a limestone cornice and brick parapet wrap the top of the building. In the upper two floors, shallow, two-story, brick pilasters frame each of the bays. All of the window openings have a limestone sill and contain replacement aluminum windows with sliding sash in the lower half and blind panels in the upper half.

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

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West (primary) Elevation.

The wide front elevation features a seven-bay projecting pavilion at the center. To either side are four regular bays bookended by projecting, blank, single-bay pavilions. The central pavilion projects only eighteen inches from the main mass and its ground floor is faced in limestone. There is a contemporary metal, double-leaf entry door in the first and last bay with a flight of steps leading up to it. Each of the doorways is framed with an elaborate stone surround containing Doric pilasters and a deep strigilated lintel with a carved swag and cartouche. In between the doorways are five single window openings with a stone sill. In the second and third floors of the pavilion, the five central bays are faced in limestone and articulated with framing two-story, limestone pilasters. In the two outer bays, there are single window openings with a decorative wrought-iron balcony at the second floor. The central bays have wide window openings which once contained paired windows. In the slightly higher parapet, there are inset limestone balconies above the second, fourth, and sixth bays; above the first and last bays is a limestone rosette.

The four bays to either side of the central pavilion are identical to one another. Each of the large window openings is almost square and originally contained tripled windows. The blank, flanking pavilions at either end project forward eight feet from the face of the building. They are articulated with brick pilasters with limestone bases and capitals at the edges and feature a limestone plaque with the image of a little girl at the center of their third story.

South (side) Elevation.

The side elevation is composed of a five-bay, three-story block to the west and a three-bay, single-story wing extending to the east. The first, third, and fourth bays are very wide while the second and fifth bays are much narrower. In the wider bays, the openings originally contained four windows. The second bay contains single window openings at each level. The last bay has an original, wooden, double-leaf entry door with a stone surround at the ground floor. Above it are single window openings which correspond to the intermediate landings of an interior stair. Extending three bays to the east is the single-story rear wing. It has no architectural embellishments apart from a camel-backed clay tile coping and each of its bays contains a wide window matching the remainder of the elevation.

North (side) Elevation.

The north elevation is identical to the south elevation.

East (rear) Elevation.

The rear elevation is composed primarily of the projecting natatorium and the rear face of the large, three-story, center wing with the single-story rear wings extending in the same plane to either side. The central wing is seven bays wide. At the ground floor, all seven bays project out five bays in depth, forming a large, single-story natatorium which houses the school swimming pool. There are regularly spaced window openings on each face

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SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

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of this volume. In the second and third stories, the first and last bays are blank while the middle five project forward eight inches and feature regular window openings at each floor. All of the windows on the natatorium and the rear elevation of the center wing have been filled in with a pale beige brick.

To either side of the central wing, the single-story rear wings to the north and south each contain regularly spaced wide openings with aluminum windows similar to those on the other elevations. Above these wings, the upper floors of the north and south wings are visible. These are each three bays in width and have single window openings along the inside corner. Further beyond, the rear wall of the main rectangular block is faced in a common red brick and has an irregular window pattern.

### Interior

As mentioned previously, the plan consists of classrooms arranged in a U-shape around larger public spaces at the center. The ground floor contains a double-height auditorium space at the center. Behind this is the double-height boys' gymnasium and, further beyond, the natatorium. Abutting the auditorium to the north is the boys' locker room, the boys' bathroom, and a large, sky-lit classroom; abutting it to the south is the girls' locker room, girls' bathroom, and a second, large, sky-lit classroom. Flanking the gymnasium are storage and office spaces. The one-story rear wings contain the lunchroom on the south side and the machine and auto shop on the north. A U-shaped corridor accesses all of the interior spaces. There are two main double staircases, one located to either side of the auditorium, and additional secondary stairs in the northeast and southeast corners of the building.

The second floor has additional classrooms arranged around the second floor of the auditorium and the boys' gymnasium. The boys' and girls' bathrooms are stacked above their ground floor locations, but north and south light courts take the place of the ground-floor locker rooms and sky-lit classrooms. Flanking the gymnasium space are second floor mezzanines with locker/shower rooms and gym storage space. The mezzanines are accessed via their own interior staircases abutting the southwest and northwest corners of the gym.

On the third floor the layout is similar. Classrooms are again arranged around the perimeter of the building with a U-shaped corridor connecting all of the rooms and stairs. The space above the auditorium is occupied by classrooms and the space above the boys' gymnasium contains the girls' gymnasium. To either side of the gymnasium, a third floor mezzanine contains shower/locker rooms and storage space. A fourth floor mezzanine fits above this and contains additional storage space for the school.

All of the interior spaces of the school, including the auditorium, gymnasias, lunchroom, and pool, are intact and all walls and corridors are in their original locations. In fact, the interior of the school remains much as it was when built, apart from some cosmetic alterations made to some of the finishes in the late twentieth century. For

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

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the past two decades, the building has been unoccupied and there is currently evidence of moisture damage and deterioration throughout.

In the wide original corridors, vinyl flooring covers the original hardwood floors. Most of the walls are the original plaster and retain their original baseboard, picture rail, and door casings. Throughout the building, almost all of the original doors remain. These have two, solid, wood panels on the bottom half and a glazed, three-over-three panel in the upper half with a large three-over-three transom above. The main staircases at the north and south ends of the building are original and retain their decorative cast iron railings and wooden handrails.

A typical classroom in this building is thirty-two feet long by twenty-two feet wide and contains two banks of large, paired windows. Originally, each of the classrooms had hardwood floors with a wood baseboard and picture rail. Both the walls and ceilings were plastered and chalkboards ran along the non-window walls. Currently, some of the classrooms retain their original hardwood floors but many have been covered with vinyl tile or carpeting. Almost all of the classrooms retain their original plaster walls with the original baseboard and picture rail, though the ceilings have been covered with acoustic tiles. The original blackboards have been largely replaced but many still feature the original wood trim.

The double-height auditorium space is eighty feet wide by sixty feet deep and can seat seven hundred people. Its original curved wooden stage and proscenium are located at the eastern end of the space with three sets of double entry doors opposite on the western wall. Additionally, there are large doorways on the north and south walls near the stage. From these two entries, one can descend a short, rounded flight of steps to the main seating level below or walk up a staircases to the balcony seating above. The original wooden and cast iron seating is still present both on the main floor and in the balcony. Originally, the first story of the space featured Caen stone plastered walls on the ground floor with smooth plaster walls above a decorative plaster band in the second story. At the balcony level there were four large windows on both the north and south walls with decorative cast iron balconies. The auditorium also originally had a paneled plaster ceiling with decorative beams. Much of the original detail from this space has deteriorated or disappeared over the course of its long vacancy and the window openings were filled in with brick at an unknown later date. Some elements of grandeur do remain, however, such as the plaster band above the first floor, the decorative cast iron balconies in the window openings, and elaborate wooden casings surrounding the north and south entryways.

The boys' gymnasium, located behind the auditorium, is eighty feet wide and forty feet deep. It is also a double-height space. The original hardwood sports floor is present through it has buckled significantly. The walls have the original beige glazed ceramic tile on the lower half of the walls with the original smooth plaster in the upper half. The ceiling is plastered and has exposed metal trusses. The girls' gymnasium, located on the third floor above the boys' gymnasium, is the same size; however, the ceilings are only twenty feet high. Here the original

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hardwood sports floors also remain, albeit in better condition, and the walls have the same tile and plaster treatment as below. The ceiling is plastered and features the original exposed riveted steel beams. Along the length of the western wall, to either side of the stairs, is an original raised spectators' gallery, which retains the original wood and cast-iron bleacher seats.

The ground floor natatorium is eighty feet wide by thirty seven feet deep. There are doorways on either end of the western wall which communicate with the corridors and the boys' and girls' locker rooms located to the north and south. On the east wall, there were originally five paired windows lighting the space but these were filled in with brick at an unknown date. In the center of the room is the original sixty-foot by twenty-one foot swimming pool. The inside of the pool, as well as an eighteen-inch border around it, is tiled in the original blue and white, one-inch-by-one-inch, glazed ceramic tiles. These form simple but elegant patterns of Greek keys and bordered panels. The lower two-thirds of the walls are clad in the original blue glazed ceramic tile while the upper portion is plastered. The ceiling used to contain a large rectangular skylight centered over the pool; this has been covered over and the current ceiling is a suspended acoustic tile ceiling.

Though repairs and restoration will be required throughout the school, the building is remarkably intact and is an excellent example of large public high school design from the 1920s, as well as its associated craftsmanship.

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

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**Statement of Significance:**

South Junior High School is locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture as an example of school standardization in the early twentieth century, and more specifically, of the junior high school typology that emerged nationwide to serve intermediate grades and to promote student retention past elementary school. South Junior High School is one of two junior high schools constructed in Niagara Falls in 1922-1923, and the building reflects the specific needs of this intermediary age group with a variety of manual training rooms, uniform sized classrooms, and two gymnasiums.<sup>1</sup> It was designed by respected local architects Carlos Chipman Lacy and Norton H. Kirkpatrick of the Associated Architects in conjunction with William B. Ittner, a prior commissioner of school buildings for the St. Louis Board of Education and member of the National Education Association's Committee on Administration of Secondary Education.

By the time the Niagara Falls School District commissioned South Junior and North Junior High Schools in 1919, the school district had thirteen elementary schools and one high school. The rapid and continued growth of the city through the nineteenth and early twentieth century strained the school district's infrastructure. The addition of two junior high schools c.1922 not only provided additional instruction space but also represented a new trend in education, specifically serving intermediate ages. While constructed specifically to be a junior high school, South Junior High School housed high school students during its first year in service, after a fire leveled the existing high school in 1922. Returning to its original intention the following year, South Junior served as a junior high school from 1924 to 1985, when it closed due to low enrollment. It later housed the Community Education Center and has been vacant since ca. 2000.

The period of significance is 1922-23, the date of construction. The building was designed to reflect the new junior high school concept that developed in the early twentieth century. The combination of gymnasiums, laboratories, and uniform classrooms reflected the emerging junior high school curriculum, which promoted physical activity, hands-on learning, and a schedule in which uniform groups of students moved between classes. The Niagara Falls School District undertook an innovative task in building a junior high school while the concept of the junior high was first developing. While in need of repairs throughout, the building retains impressive integrity, maintaining its original layout and featuring only minor cosmetic alterations.

**Niagara Falls, New York<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> The other school, North Junior High School, was located at Cleveland Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street. It closed in 1982, was sold to MAC Associates in 1989, and was demolished in the early 1990s.

<sup>2</sup> This section about the history of Niagara Falls is edited and rearranged from portions of Jill Nowicki, "Part 1, Evaluation of Significance: Former South Junior High School," October 22, 2013, on record with the New York State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service.

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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The Niagara Frontier was first settled by the French, who established a fortress and trading post at Fort Niagara in 1678. The fort is the oldest building in the eastern interior of North America and gave the French control over the land route along Niagara Falls until 1759, when they surrendered the outpost to the British. Fort Niagara was the first building in Niagara Falls and was a key access point to Portage Road, one of the most important roadways in the coming community of Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls was considered part of the Mile Strip, encompassing a narrow belt of land one mile from the shores of the Niagara River, as well as Lakes Erie and Ontario. As part of the Jay Treaty in 1796 the British withdrew from Western New York and the land was thereafter purchased by the Holland Land Company, which proceeded to lay many of the communities, including Niagara Falls, in the following decades.

From its inception as the Village of Manchester, Niagara Falls has been intimately linked to the waterfall and water power. Early settlement primarily developed around Portage Road and another portage trail which would become 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The Portage Road site originally belonged to Judge Augustus Porter (1769-1849), one of the region's earliest settlers. Porter bought lots 39 through 44 of the Mile Strip Reserve. Portions of lots 40 and 41 were transferred to Porter's granddaughter, Jane Howell Robinson (1844-1918). Portions of this land were parceled off into a residential neighborhood where South Junior High School would be later erected.

After the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the establishment of railroad traffic in the 1840s, tourism became a key economic driver for the region with an average of 40,000 visitors to the falls annually.<sup>3</sup> This dependence on the falls was only magnified in 1877 when Jacob F. Schoellkopf purchased the hydraulic canal to generate hydraulic power for the first public distribution of electricity. Enlargement of the canal resulted in the influx of immigrant laborers, new industries relocating to the city, expansion of existing industries, and an explosion of the city's population.<sup>4</sup>

The original hamlet of Niagara Falls gradually expanded by the annexation of neighboring hamlets, beginning in the late nineteenth century with the incorporation of the village of Clarksville. After the official incorporation of the City of Niagara Falls in 1892, additional annexations occurred including the annexing of the Village of Suspension Bridge. The City of Niagara Falls reached its current area in 1927, when it annexed the Village of LaSalle. During the early twentieth century, the eastern edge and rural fringe of the city rapidly developed to meet the needs of the growing city. The prosperity of Niagara Falls continued well into the 1950s but abruptly ended in 1956 when a rockslide crushed the

<sup>3</sup> Clinton Brown Company Architecture pc, "Historic Resources Intensive Level Survey: Niagara Falls, NY," accessed December 1, 2015, [http://buffaloah.com/surveys/nf/nf\\_tc.html](http://buffaloah.com/surveys/nf/nf_tc.html).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3-27.

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Schoellkopf power plant. Without power, industries were forced to relocate, resulting in economic devastation. Over the next ten years, the city lost one third of its factory jobs.<sup>5</sup>

**Niagara Falls School District**

Prior to 1855, a group of private citizens served as trustees and commissioners for schools in the Niagara Falls area.<sup>6</sup> In 1855, the New York State legislature passed an act to establish the Union Free Schools across the state. The system involved taxing all property owners in order to provide free attendance for children in the district. Nathaniel L. Benham became the first superintendent of schools in 1889.<sup>7</sup> When the City of Niagara Falls was incorporated in 1892, it possessed four schools and a student enrollment of almost 1,600.

During the city's growth over the next forty years, the school district expanded its facilities, absorbing of three schools during the annexation of LaSalle in 1927, building sixteen new schools and numerous additions by 1930.<sup>8</sup> Four elementary schools were constructed between 1895 and 1900: three eight-room schoolhouses, including Sugar Street, Whitney Avenue, and Center Avenue, and a six-room schoolhouse on Third Street. Shortly thereafter, in 1903, two additional elementary schools and a high school were erected. The Ferry Avenue and Ashland Avenue Schools comprised eleven and ten rooms, respectively, and the high school represented a new mode of school design. It featured classrooms, recitation rooms, lecture rooms, and laboratories surrounding a central auditorium and gymnasium, and was a point of pride for the school district.<sup>9</sup> The district constructed an additional three schools in 1908-9: the Twenty-second Street School, Thirteenth Street School, and the Maple Avenue School. In 1914 and 1918, the Tenth Street School and Twenty-fourth Street School, respectively, added to the school district facilities.

Despite these efforts to keep pace with the rapidly growing city, the population of school children continued to overwhelm the school facilities. The school district reported steady growth, with 3,255 pupils in the 1900-1901 school year, 4,751 in the 1909-1910 school year, and 8,051 in the 1919-1920 school year.<sup>10</sup> While new schools and classroom additions accommodated 1,360 new pupils between 1910 and 1921, the increase in registration topped 3,036 students.<sup>11</sup> Taking stock in 1919 and recognizing the need for improvements, the school district initiated a study of its facilities and operations. At the time, the district operated thirteen elementary schools and

<sup>5</sup> *Buffalo Evening News*, August 12, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> "The Public Schools of Niagara Falls," unpublished manuscript, 1948, Local History, Niagara Falls Public Library, 11-12.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Saralinda Hooker, National Register of Historic Places, "Niagara Falls School Administration Building," Niagara County, New York, National Register #14001020.

<sup>9</sup> *The Niagara Falls School System: Report of A Survey By the State Department of Education*, (Albany: The University of the State of New York Press, 1921), 173.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 170-171.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

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one high school. In order to support its growing student body, the school district estimated it would need to construct a twenty-four room school every two years.<sup>12</sup> Yet it was not only classroom capacity, but also the quality and content of the curriculum, that the district wanted to improve: “the layman is impressed immediately with the excellent general appearance of the buildings and grounds,” but the buildings, “do not provide for the educational opportunities which should be offered boys and girls in a progressive industrial community of today.”<sup>13</sup>

Rather than continue the trend of small school buildings and additions that characterized the district’s growth to that time, the school board approved a massive building campaign in 1919. The plan included two junior high schools and the Maple Avenue Elementary School.

The junior high schools sought to ameliorate a particular concern for the oldest elementary students, who were housed in the oldest and most outdated school buildings. The 1919 report identified a “serious handicap under which the seventh and eighth grade pupils are working in the two oldest buildings of the city, congested as they are, poorly lighted, poorly ventilated, and with very limited equipment.”<sup>14</sup> South Junior and North Junior High Schools not only provided additional instruction space for the school district, but they also represented a burgeoning trend of specialized schooling for seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. Niagara Falls became one of the first cities in the county to build junior high schools tailored to a new curriculum of hands-on learning and departmental teaching. The buildings featured science labs, a library, gymnasiums, pools, and auditoriums.

In addition to the junior high schools and Maple Avenue elementary, the school district was forced to build a new high school in 1922, after a fire leveled the previous high school. During the heaviest phase of school building in the 1920s, Niagara Falls utilized a number of local architects, along with St. Louis based school architect William B. Ittner, a national leader in educational facility design and planning during the era, to erect modern school structures for the burgeoning population. In addition to school construction during this time, the Board of Education commissioned the Niagara Falls School District Administration Building (NR 2014), a uncommon building type for the era.

After this wave of construction, the Niagara Falls School District did not initiate another building campaign until the 1950s, when it focused on modernizing older schools and later on consolidating facilities to serve a decreasing student body.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 188.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 185.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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Enrollment in the city schools peaked at nearly 20,000 in the 1960s and declined over the next thirty years to roughly 9,000 students.<sup>16</sup> Due to this extreme enrollment loss, the Niagara Falls School Board was forced into closing nineteen schools, including South Junior High School, which was closed in 1985. North Junior High School, which was constructed the same year as North Junior High School, closed in 1982 and was subsequently demolished.<sup>17</sup>

**South Junior High School<sup>18</sup>**

Between 1900 and 1920, the population of Niagara Falls more than doubled from 19,457 to 50,760 citizens, and the concurrent increase in school enrollment led to a shortage of adequate facilities.<sup>19</sup> “In 1919, the Board of Education proposed constructing two junior high schools in the district to serve children living north and south of Pine Street. The Building and Grounds Committee proceeded with plans for South Junior High School on a site located one block south of the Niagara Falls High School (1903) on Portage Road.”<sup>20</sup> It commissioned Associated Architects of Niagara Falls to design the school with William B. Ittner, a former Commissioner of School Buildings for the St. Louis Board of Education, as a consultant. Carlos Chipman Lacy (1886-1946) and Norton H. Kirkpatrick (1889-1934) of Associated Architects of Niagara Falls became the supervising architects.

Lacy and Kirkpatrick’s design for South Junior High School reflected the national discourse of school standardization in general and the burgeoning establishment of junior high schools more specifically. While publications such as *The American School Board Journal* circulated articles to promote the junior high school as distinct from elementary schools and high schools, there was a foundation of common elements to each school type.<sup>21</sup> For instance, neoclassical styles conveyed the civic importance of school buildings and fireproofing measures became standard practice nationwide by the 1920s. South Junior High School features both of these elements. The three-story building was constructed with reinforced concrete and steel trusses, fire-resistant materials. The symmetrical neoclassical design consists of projecting end bays, repetitive fenestration, stone cornices, brick and stone pilasters, and an articulated parapet. The interior of South Junior High School reflects the specific program of junior high schools, which combined elements of elementary schools and high schools into a new typology.

In 1922, the Board of Education awarded Laur & Mack the general contract for constructing South

<sup>16</sup> Peter Simon, "Falls District Suffering from an Empty-School Syndrome," *The Buffalo News*, June 7, 1987.

<sup>17</sup> This paragraph is edited from Nowicki, “Part 1, Former South Junior High School,” Section 9, 17.

<sup>18</sup> The last five paragraphs of this section are rearranged and edited from Nowicki, “Part 1, Former South Junior High School.”

<sup>19</sup> *The Niagara Falls School System: Report of A Survey By the State Department of Education*, (Albany: The University of the State of New York Press, 1921), 9.

<sup>20</sup> Rearranged from Nowicki, “Part 1: Former South Junior High School,” Section 9, 13.

<sup>21</sup> Harle R. Douglas, "Housing the Junior High School," *The American School Board Journal* LXII, no. 1 (1921): 33-38.

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Junior for the sum of \$433,972.00.<sup>22</sup> Separate contracts were awarded for heating and ventilation to the Power Efficiency Corporation for the sum of \$72,500.00, plumbing to Gormley Heating and Plumbing Company for \$25,000.00 and electrical to Volker Bros for \$17,590.00.<sup>23</sup> Shortly after construction commenced, a decision was reached to eliminate the boiler plant at the South Junior site and alternatively convey heat across Walnut Avenue via an underground tunnel from a centralized high pressure plant in the newly constructed high school addition.<sup>24</sup>

South Junior High School opened for the 1923-1924 school year under the leadership of Principal Walter Fraser and, at first, housed students displaced from the neighboring high school due to a fire that devastated that building.<sup>25</sup> The 1924 school year returned the building to its intended function under the leadership of Principal Elmer A. Knowles. Knowles, former principal of the Cleveland Avenue School, served as principal until his resignation in 1941.<sup>26</sup>

Even with the addition of two new intermediate schools, the Niagara Falls District continued to face overcrowding in its schools with an enrollment that roughly doubled, from 5,790 pupils in 1914 to 11,183 pupils in 1925. South Junior was designed for 1,000 students, but it housed 1,125 pupils when it opened in 1924.<sup>27</sup> By 1927, South Junior was over its intended capacity and the district was forced to run overlapping sessions from 8:00am-2:45pm and from 10:15am-5:00pm.<sup>28</sup> A one-story building was moved from lot No. 309 on Niagara Street to the rear of the school to house two temporary classrooms in 1928.<sup>29</sup> A year later, Superintendent Taylor pushed for the addition of a partition across the north end of the cafeteria for use as a study room, as well as alterations to the administration building at the northwest corner of the site, to accommodate three overflow classrooms.<sup>30</sup>

The district again experienced overcrowding in the 1940s, when the junior high schools were utilized for seventh through tenth grades to help alleviate overcrowding at the high school levels.<sup>31</sup> In 1946, the City Council resolved to convey title of multiple land parcels that encompass South Junior High School, along with additional properties throughout the city used for school purposes, to the Niagara Falls Board

<sup>22</sup> "Official Record March 28, 1922," *Proceedings of the Department of Education of Niagara Falls 1919-1926* (1926): 791-792.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 791-792.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 772.

<sup>25</sup> Patricia Wilson Rice, *School Bells Ring* (Niagara Falls: Niagara Falls City School District, 1992), 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Annie F. MacKenzie, "South Junior: Niagara Falls' First Junior High School, History of South Junior High School," unpublished manuscript, 1964, Local History, Niagara Falls Public Library, 4.

<sup>28</sup> "Pupils to Take Up Studies in Schools Here Next Thursday," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, September 2, 1927.

<sup>29</sup> "Corporation Proceedings In Council," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, July 21, 1928.

<sup>30</sup> "Board of Education," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 14, 1928.

<sup>31</sup> "Board of Education Raises Minimum Age for Kindergarten Pupils Here," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, May 2, 1947.

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of Education in the best interest of both parties.<sup>32</sup>

South Junior High School closed in 1985, as the population of Niagara Falls had declined to the point that the city had a vast surplus of school buildings. During the 1986-1987 school year, the South Junior building housed students displaced from Niagara Street School during its renovation project.<sup>33</sup> It was then home for many years to the Community Education Center, which focused on adult education. The last school use ended ca. 2000 and the building has been vacant since. The building remains centrally located within a residential district and within a walkable distance for many school aged children. Due to this fact, in 2010 a new playground was dedicated on the south end of the property through the joint efforts of the City of Niagara Falls, the Niagara Falls School Board and local neighborhood groups. The playground also serves as a distribution point for Niagara County's Summer Meals Program, which serves nutritious meals to children during summer vacation.<sup>34</sup>

### School Standardization and Junior High Schools

When the Department of Education of Niagara Falls engaged the Associated Architects to design South Junior High School in 1919, it joined the vanguard of a new educational structure developing across the country. In addition to a broad movement to standardize school design with health and safety guidelines, the concept of the junior high school was formalized between 1910 and 1920. Drawing grades from elementary and high schools to create a third school, the junior high school building and curriculum catered specifically to the needs of this intermediary age group in an attempt to retain a higher percentage of students beyond elementary school.

School design in general was a relatively new field; prior to 1900, schools were treated as extensions of the domestic sphere, an association conveyed in the term *schoolhouse*, which was replaced by *school building* in the literature as education became increasingly affiliated with civic life.<sup>35</sup> A variety of factors, including health and safety concerns and the changing role of schools in local communities, spurred the formalization of standard practices into prescriptive legal regulations during the first three decades of the twentieth century. In 1904, New York State became the first state in the country to require the review of all new school building plans.<sup>36</sup> At the national level, the National Education Association established a Committee on Standardization of Schoolhouse Planning in 1917, advocating for a uniform standard and regulation of school buildings.

<sup>32</sup> Deed of Sale from City of Niagara Falls; "Official Record," *Proceedings of the City Council of the City of Niagara Falls for the Municipal Year 1946* (1946): 59-61; "Official Record February 7, 1946," *Proceedings of the Department of Education of Niagara Falls 1946* (1946): 24-27.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> These paragraphs are edited and rearranged from Nowicki, "Part 1: Former South Junior High School," Section 9, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Suzanne Lichtenstein Warren, "The American School Building: 1890-1920" (master's thesis, Cornell University, 1985), 192.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 104.

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The progression of school design and standardization in the United States followed both scientific theories and lessons from experience. Over the course of the early twentieth century, guidelines first targeted student health and then promoted more rigorous fire safety and a diversifying curriculum. Concurrently, schools increasingly came to be considered public institutions that served their community by creating democratic citizens and providing public meeting space. All of these concepts impacted the shape, layout, and aesthetic of school buildings through such decisions as the placement and size of windows, access, circulation patterns, and architectural style.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, school advocates promoted measures of sanitation with light and ventilation guidelines. Design standards included formulas for air exchange, classroom size, and ideal ratios for lighting based on the size of windows compared to floor area. For instance, the New York State law of 1904 required that school buildings provide thirty cubic feet of air per student per minute.<sup>37</sup> Such formulaic drivers of design resulted from scientific beliefs such as the Carbon Dioxide Theory, which attributed the spread of disease to an overabundance of expired air. The legacy of such late-Victorian theories persisted in school guidelines into the 1920s, even after their underpinning was debunked by understandings of contact contamination. Additionally, the theme of sanitation extended beyond air circulation to building materials and interior finishes. Architects promoted materials that were “durable and easy to clean.”<sup>38</sup> This included wood or tile floors and smooth, painted walls with simple detailing that would not collect superfluous dust.

Another key development in this phase of school design was the reorientation of school buildings in the public imagination as civic institutions. As public bodies gained more oversight of school construction and school buildings were used for night classes and community gathering, the buildings developed into more than contained settings of classroom education; they became assets to their local communities. This sentiment was embedded in school floor plans and architectural styles. High schools had a variety of room sizes to accommodate diversifying curriculums and night classes. Large auditoriums, mandated in New York State by 1916 for schools containing over eight classrooms, served as grand public places.<sup>39</sup> Architects increasingly employed the same neoclassical aesthetics for school buildings that they used for town halls, libraries, and other civic buildings, marking the school as a “full-fledged public entity.”<sup>40</sup> Prior to 1900, architects designed schools with asymmetrical plans and pitched roofs, but by 1910, they employed flat roofs and symmetrical plans common to neoclassical designs.

While core tenets for a healthy environment and public function continued to inform school design, efficiency became a driving factor in the second decade of the twentieth century. The National Education Association

<sup>37</sup> Warren, “The American School Building: 1890-1920,” 119.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 190.

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(N.E.A.) likened the school building to an industrial plant that should be strategically planned to eliminate wasted space.<sup>41</sup> Extending beyond the existing dimensions suggested for physical elements such as windows, the N.E.A. sponsored studies to determine “optimum proportions” for the area devoted to particular uses within a school.<sup>42</sup> Subsequent reports suggested that no more than 12 percent of a school be devoted to administration, 50 percent to instruction, and 20 percent to stairs and corridors. While the N.E.A. published formal reports to promulgate such findings, these additional guidelines and ratios did not significantly impact school design practices, in part because the studies analyzed existing buildings and therefore served to reinforce existing conditions rather than suggest alternatives.<sup>43</sup>

The most significant change in school design between 1910 and 1920 concerned public spaces; formerly treated as sites of lingering, they came to be seen primarily for their use in emergency situations. This transition occurred alongside a heightened attention to fire safety, which despite being a topic of concern for some time, had been overshadowed in practice by sanitation concerns.<sup>44</sup> Two tragic fires, in Collingswood, Ohio, in 1908 and Peabody, Massachusetts, in 1915, prompted more direct attention to fire safety regulations.<sup>45</sup> Advocates promoted well-defined corridors and easy exit strategies, re-envisioning school corridors and auditoriums in the process. Because of their openness, atriums, wide corridors, and third floor auditoriums were commonplace in the waning era of privileging light and air circulation. In the new zeitgeist of fire safety, the same characteristic was deemed hazardous, associated with the chimney effect and a confusing and perilous exit down multiple stories. Ground level auditoriums replaced upper floor assembly spaces, and open hallways were enclosed.

South Junior High School reflects this development of school design based on health and fire safety considerations. It features ample light and ventilation, defined corridors, decentralized stairways, and a first floor auditorium. The neoclassical style and massing convey the civic importance of the school. In addition to these common components of all schools designed at this time, South Junior represents the new junior high school typology that merged elements of elementary and high school design.

Prior to the junior high school, school districts consisted of elementary and high school education, but retention rates after elementary grades were low. A 1921 report in Niagara Falls showed the number of pupils fell 32 percent between seventh and eighth grades.<sup>46</sup> As the value of education increased, school administrators across the country developed the junior high school as an intermediary that would cater specifically to the needs of the oldest elementary students and the youngest high school students. They redefined school categories and created

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>46</sup> *The Niagara Falls School System: Report of A Survey By the State Department of Education*, (Albany: The University of the State of New York Press, 1921), 5.

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a new cohort from this middle group. The junior high school intended to appeal to students with a more engaged curriculum and hands on learning. As the Niagara Falls report articulated:

[The intermediate school's] purpose is to offer in these years of school life such a differentiated course that the boy or girl may begin to learn something of the arts which play such a large part in the daily life. These slightly differentiated courses in the intermediate school help the pupil to find himself, and thus fit him better to attack more definitely the work in the high school or to take his place more intelligently in the community life about him.<sup>47</sup>

In 1910, the school districts in Columbus, Ohio, and Berkeley, California, led the nation in constructing junior high schools, and while efforts to standardize junior high school design began in 1916, only the most "ambitious superintendents" pursued building campaigns for new facilities specifically directed at junior high schools.<sup>48</sup> National experts recommended that districts build new facilities rather than remodel old ones, but in cases where a new building was infeasible, suggested that it was better to convert a high school rather than an elementary school.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, it was more appropriate to house a junior high school in a senior high school rather than an elementary, if it was necessary to combine schools within a single building.

Hands-on learning was a hallmark of the junior high school curriculum, both to enrich the experience of students who would continue to high school and to provide tangible skills to those who would enter vocations.<sup>50</sup> As a result, junior high school buildings contained a variety of manual training and domestic science laboratories. For instance, a 1922 book asserted the following minimum requirements:

1. Auditorium seating not less than enrollment of school.
2. Gymnasium not less than thirty feet by fifty feet.
3. At least one science laboratory with running water and electricity.
4. At least one adequately furnished and equipped room for household art or science.
5. At least one shop adequately furnished and equipped for vocational or prevocational work.
6. Adequate housing and shelving for the library, either in the study hall or in an adjacent room.<sup>51</sup>

South Junior High School reflects the junior high school emphasis on manual training, exceeding the minimum of one room devoted to science, household, and vocational work. The school contained multiple cooking rooms, sewing rooms, labs, and machine shops.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 186.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 237; H.R. Douglass and F.L. Stetson, *The Junior High School: A Manual of Suggestions and Standards for Junior High Schools in Oregon*, (Salem: State Printing Department, 1922), 7-8.

<sup>49</sup> Douglass and Stetson, *The Junior High School*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.; Warren, "The American School Building: 1890-1920," 235-236.

<sup>51</sup> Douglass and Stetson, *The Junior High School*, 16.

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In 1916, New York State enacted legislation mandating that students over eight years old complete at least twenty minutes of physical education daily.<sup>52</sup> South Junior High School catered to the physical education requirements with two gymnasiums, one for girls and one for boys, and a pool. In addition to serving the intermediate students, the double gymnasiums and pools in the two junior high schools were intended to relieve crowded conditions and lacking recreational facilities in the elementary schools.<sup>53</sup>

Other classrooms in the school were uniform in size and, compared to senior high schools, there were fewer large study halls for supervised work time. Unlike the schedule of senior high schools, it was common for junior high students to move in groups from one class to another. Since class sizes remained the same, classrooms did not need to vary.<sup>54</sup> The lack of large study halls also reflected the belief that junior high school students needed more supervision in smaller groups than high school students.

### Architects<sup>55</sup>

South Junior High School was a joint effort between William B. Ittner, a nationally renowned advisor of school design, and local architects Carlos Chipman Lacy and Norton H. Kirkpatrick, who worked with the Associated Architects of Niagara Falls. The Associated Architects of Niagara Falls (AANF), a collection of local firms, formed in 1920 to help the Niagara Falls School District undertake its ambitious building campaign. Reports explained, "In order to handle the work of constructing the \$3,500,000 block of schools in Niagara Falls...the board of education met with the leading architects of the city and agreed upon this plan."<sup>56</sup> Most likely, the arrangement between the AANF, Ittner, and the school district mirrored the relationship between the Associated Architects of Buffalo, Ittner, and the Buffalo public school district. The Associated Architects of Buffalo formed in 1919 for the same reason as the AANF, to be an "effective vehicle of service in a notable public [school building] project."<sup>57</sup> In order to provide the school district with the most economical and efficient construction campaign, the Associated Architects tweaked standardized plans, provided by Ittner, for the particular needs of each site. Under this arrangement, members of the Associated Architects of Niagara Falls designed many prominent school buildings throughout the city, including Niagara Falls High School (1923, NR 2001), Niagara Falls North Junior High School (1922, demolished), Cleveland

<sup>52</sup> Warren, "The American School Building: 1890-1920," 222.

<sup>53</sup> *The Niagara Falls School System*, 163.

<sup>54</sup> Warren, "The American School Building: 1890-1920," 236.

<sup>55</sup> Most of the Ittner, Lacy and Kirkpatrick paragraphs are from Nowicki, "Part 1: South Junior High School," Section 9, 14-15.

<sup>56</sup> "This End of the State," *The Daily News Batavia, N.Y.*, August 9, 1920, 3.

<sup>57</sup> "Contract Signed, To Proceed with New School Plan, *The Buffalo Courier*, August 13, 1919.

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Avenue School (ca. 1920), and Maple Avenue School (ca. 1920, NRE).<sup>58</sup>

Architect Carlos Chipman Lacy (1886-1946), a Niagara Falls native, worked out of an office in the Bellevue Theatre Building (1921). He was a distinguished artist and citizen, later serving as the director of social welfare for the City of Niagara Falls in the 1930s and 1940s, president of the Niagara Falls Society of Artists, and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Arts Committee, presumably after the Great Depression shut out architectural commissions.<sup>59</sup> Lacy is responsible for the design of several prominent buildings in Niagara Falls, including the First Church of Christ Scientist (1927) and Hyde Park Stadium (1939, demolished), along with several homes.

Norton H. Kirkpatrick, a Toronto native, earned his bachelor's degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1911 and continued his training at the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1914. Kirkpatrick opened his Niagara Falls architectural office in 1915 and in 1921 partnered with Niagara Falls-native Will Alban Cannon (1891-1965), a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>60</sup> The firm of Kirkpatrick and Cannon designed many prominent buildings throughout Niagara Falls, including the Niagara Falls City Hall (1924, NR 2001), First Unitarian Universalist Church of Niagara (1921-22, NR 2006), the Carborundum Company Office Building on Buffalo Street (NRE), and LaSalle Junior High School (1931, demolished). The firm also acted as supervising architects for the Esenwein and Johnson-designed Niagara Hotel (1927, NR 2008).<sup>61</sup> After Kirkpatrick's death in 1934, Cannon went on to form Cannon Partnership, a significant international architectural firm which is still in existence as Cannon Design.

William B. Ittner, FAIA (1864-1936), a St. Louis native, received his degree in architecture from Cornell University in 1887. In the 1890s, Ittner served as president of the St. Louis Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. From 1897-1910, he served as commissioner of school buildings for the St. Louis Board of Education.<sup>62</sup> In 1922, he became a member of the National Education Association's Committee on Administration of Secondary Education. He is recognized for his contribution to progressive school architecture of the early twentieth century that blended aesthetics with the new standardization policies for increased safety and hygiene. Notable features of his school designs

<sup>58</sup> Nowicki, "Part 1: Former South Junior High School," Section 9, 14 notes: "The Contract between the Board of Education and Associated Architects stated that South Junior High School and Cleveland Avenue School were intended as duplicates of North Junior High School and the Maple Avenue School."

<sup>59</sup> "Lacy Memorial Art Exhibit to Open on Sunday," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, December 4, 1947.

<sup>60</sup> Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company, 1956), 349.

<sup>61</sup> Clinton Brown Company Architecture pc, "Historic Resources Intensive Level Survey: Niagara Falls, NY."

<sup>62</sup> Carolyn Hewes Toft, "William B. Ittner, FAIA (1864-1936)," Landmarks Association of St. Louis, accessed August 13, 2013, [http://www.landmakrs-stl.org/architects/bio/william\\_b\\_ittner\\_faia\\_1864\\_1936/](http://www.landmakrs-stl.org/architects/bio/william_b_ittner_faia_1864_1936/).

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include spacious park-like settings, H-,U-,and E-shaped classroom layouts, multi-use rooms, window walls at classrooms for natural light and ventilations, unique exterior brick patterns and details, and skylights.<sup>63</sup> His practice is responsible for the design of hundreds of prominent buildings throughout the nation, including Harris Teachers College (1906, NR 2004), Soldan High School (1909), Park City Junior High (1925, NR 1983), and Continental Life Building (1929, NR 1979), an Art Deco skyscraper that defines Midtown St. Louis. He served as the consulting architect on Niagara Falls High School (1923, NR 2001), Niagara Falls North Junior High School (1922, demolished), and Maple Avenue School (ca. 1920, NRE). The legacy of his name and work are continued through the present architectural firms of William B. Ittner Inc. and Ittner & Bowersox, Inc.<sup>64</sup>

**Conclusion**

When it constructed South Junior High School, the Niagara Falls school district became one of the first in the nation to build new schools expressly designed for the education of intermediate age children. As the school age population in Niagara Falls increased, the district faced a shortage of adequate facilities. Not only did the district embark on a building campaign that included two junior high schools, but it also hired renowned consultant William Ittner, showing a dedication to establishing premier junior high schools. The school was in service until 1985 and was used subsequently for a Community Education Center. It has been vacant since 2000 and today there are plans to renovate the building into apartments.

The school is locally significant as an example of twentieth century school standardization and of the junior high school typology that emerged nationwide to serve intermediate grades and to promote student retention past elementary school. It retains significant integrity from its construction in 1922-23, reflecting the specific needs of this intermediary age group with a variety of manual training rooms, uniform sized classrooms, and two gymnasiums. It was designed by respected local architects Carlos Chipman Lacy and Norton H. Kirkpatrick of the Associated Architects in conjunction with William B. Ittner, a prior Commissioner of School Buildings for the St. Louis Board of Education who designed and consulted with school districts across the country.

<sup>63</sup> William B. Ittner's extensive knowledge and use of brick is attributed to his father Anthony Ittner, a bricklayer, who formed Ittner Bros. Brick Company in 1859. Anthony Ittner was a supporter of the formation of trade schools through his work as a Congressman. William B. Ittner was a member of the first graduating class from Washington University's Manual Training school in 1884.

<sup>64</sup> Toft, "William B. Ittner."

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 2

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by the heavy line on the attached map with scale. SBL 159.06-1-4. See attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to encompass all property historically and currently associated with South Junior High School.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 2

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

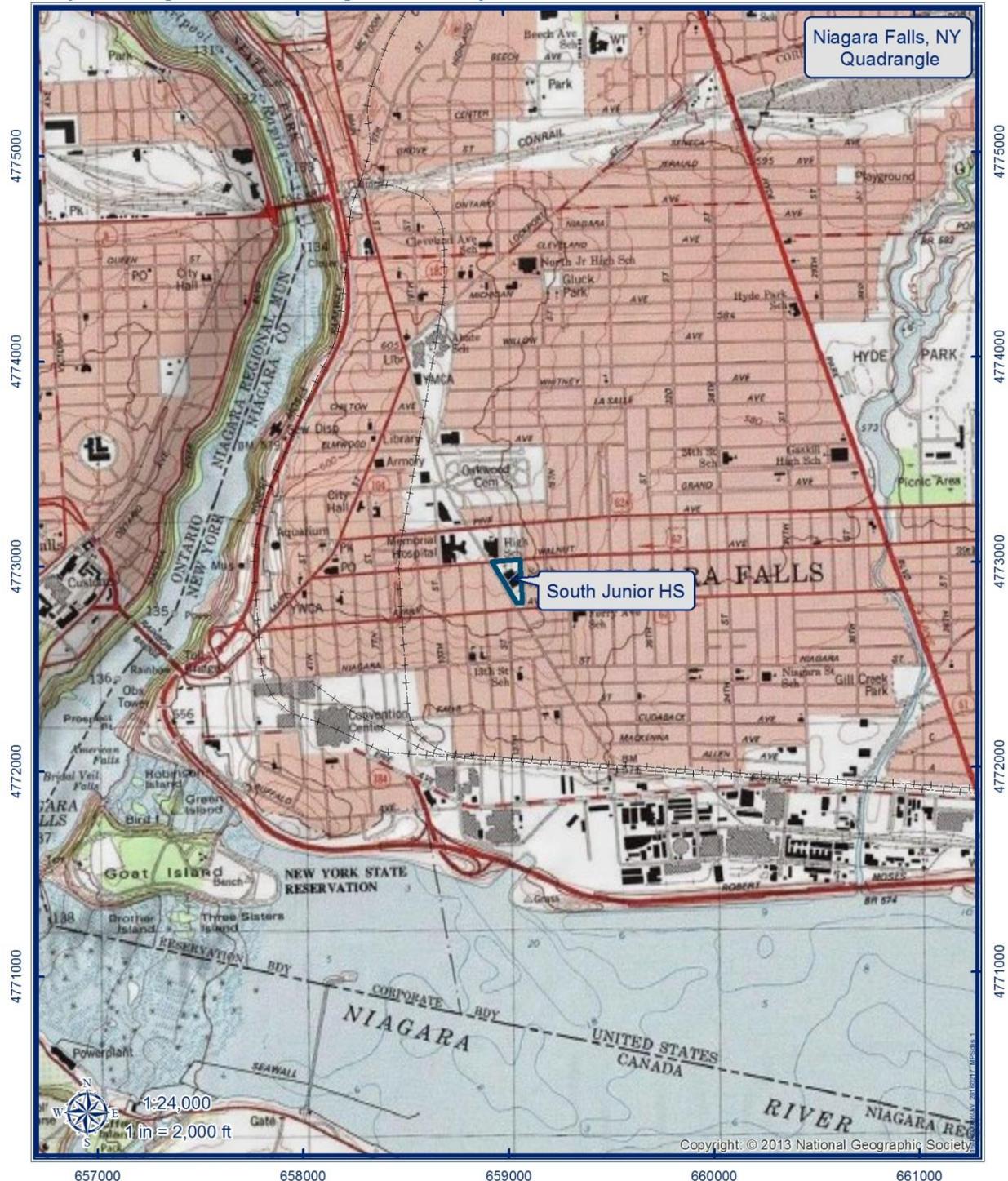
Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

South Junior High School  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

561 Portage Road  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



S Junior HS



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY  
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 3

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

South Junior High School  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

561 Portage Road  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



 S Junior HS



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 4

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 5

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**  
**Niagara County, New York**  
**County and State**

South Junior High School  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

561 Portage Road  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



S Junior HS



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY  
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 6

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

South Junior High School  
City of Niagara Falls, Niagara County, NY

561 Portage Road  
Niagara Falls, NY 14301



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



S Junior HS



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY  
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 1

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

**List of Photographs**

Name of Property: South Junior High School  
City or Vicinity: Niagara Falls  
County: Niagara  
State: NY  
Name of Photographer: Mike Puma  
Date of Photographs: 10/20/2015  
Number of Photographs: 13

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0001  
Primary Façade (left) and South Elevation (right), camera facing NE

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0002  
Primary Façade, camera facing SE

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0003  
Primary Façade, Detail, camera facing E

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0004  
East Elevation, camera facing W

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0005  
North Elevation, camera facing W

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0006  
Ground floor, Office, camera facing S

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0007  
Ground floor, Auditorium, camera facing E

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0008  
Ground floor, Natatorium, camera facing S

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0009  
Second floor, Staircase, camera facing NE

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0010  
Second floor, Upper part of auditorium, camera facing S

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0011  
Third floor, Hallway, camera facing S

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
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**Section 11 Page 2**

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**Name of Property**

**Niagara County, New York**

**County and State**

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0012  
Third floor, Classroom, camera facing S

NY\_Niagara County\_South Junior High School\_0013  
Third floor, Classroom, camera facing S

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

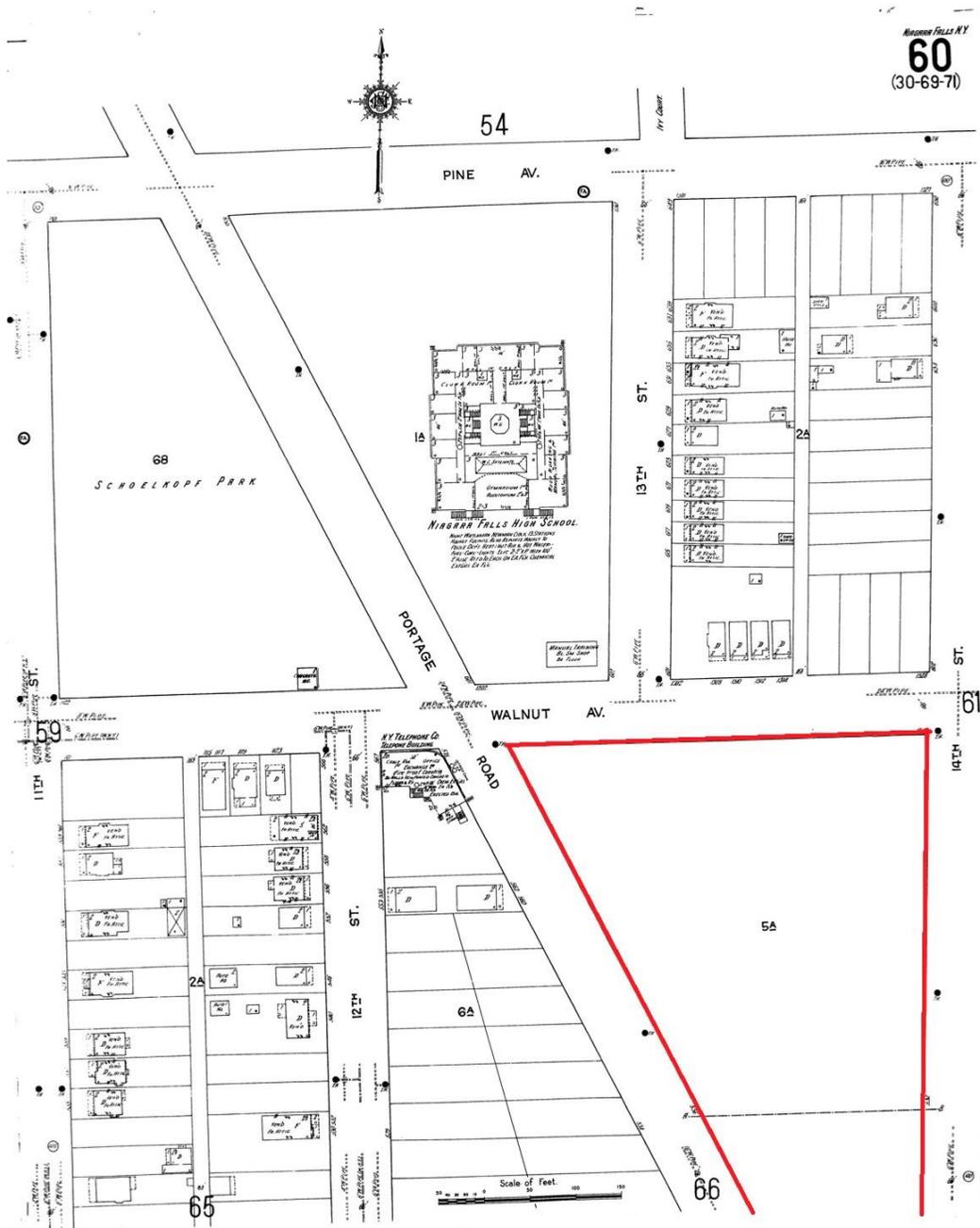
**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

Sanborn Maps



Site of the South Junior High School (1914)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

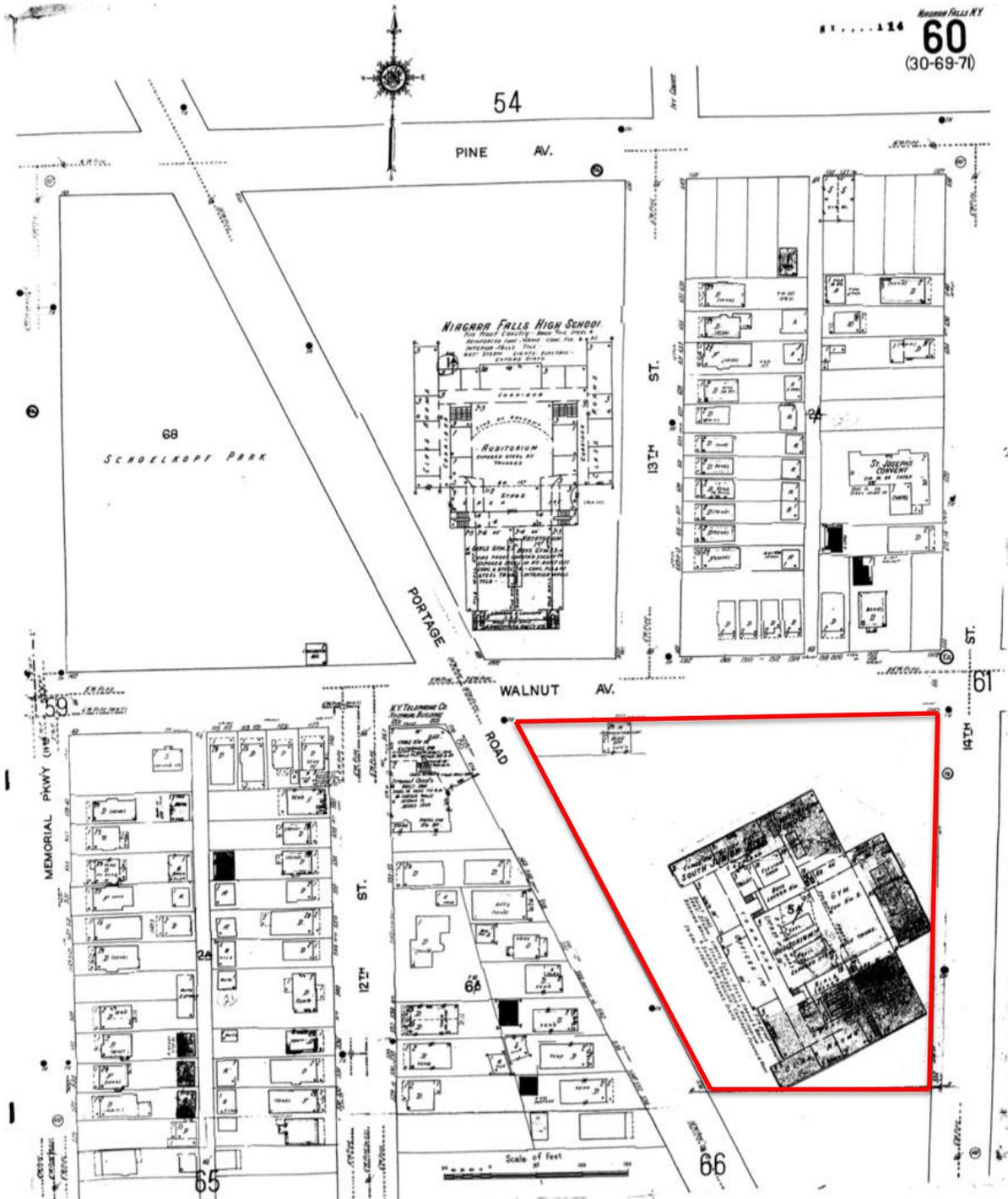
Section 11 Page 4

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State



South Junior High School, 1950

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 5

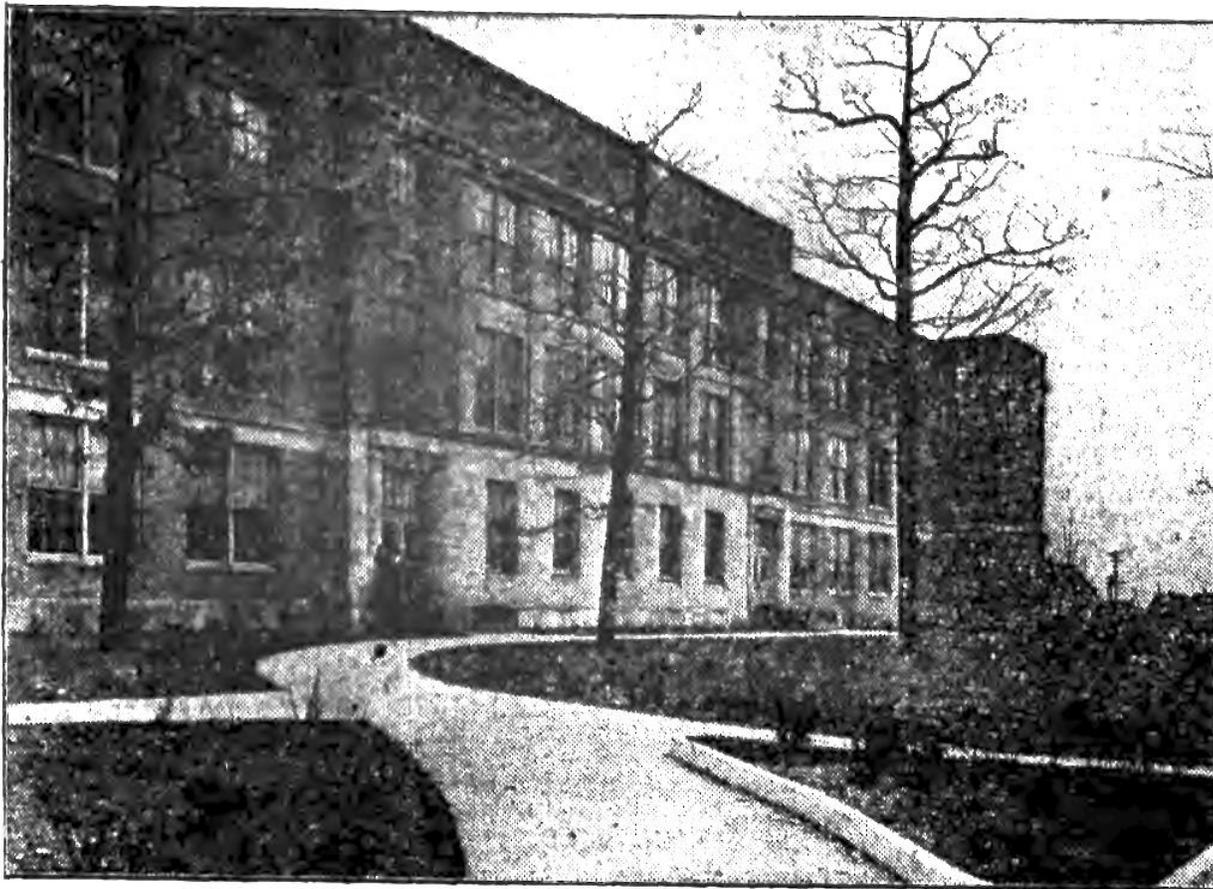
**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property  
**Niagara County, New York**  
County and State

Image of South Junior High School in the *Lockport Union-Sun and Journal*, December 24, 1923, p5.

LOCKPORT UNION-SUN AND JOURNAL— MONDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 24, 1923.

*South Junior High School At Falls,  
One Of Three To Be Erected To Meet  
Congested Conditions In That City*



**New South Junior High School, Niagara Falls.**

Besides replacing the old high school building, which was destroyed by fire, and erecting the new Junior High, the latter to cost \$615,000, another new high school building to be erected at Niagara Falls will be the new South Junior High to cost \$570,000. Like the North Junior this structure will have a seating capacity of 1,000.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 6

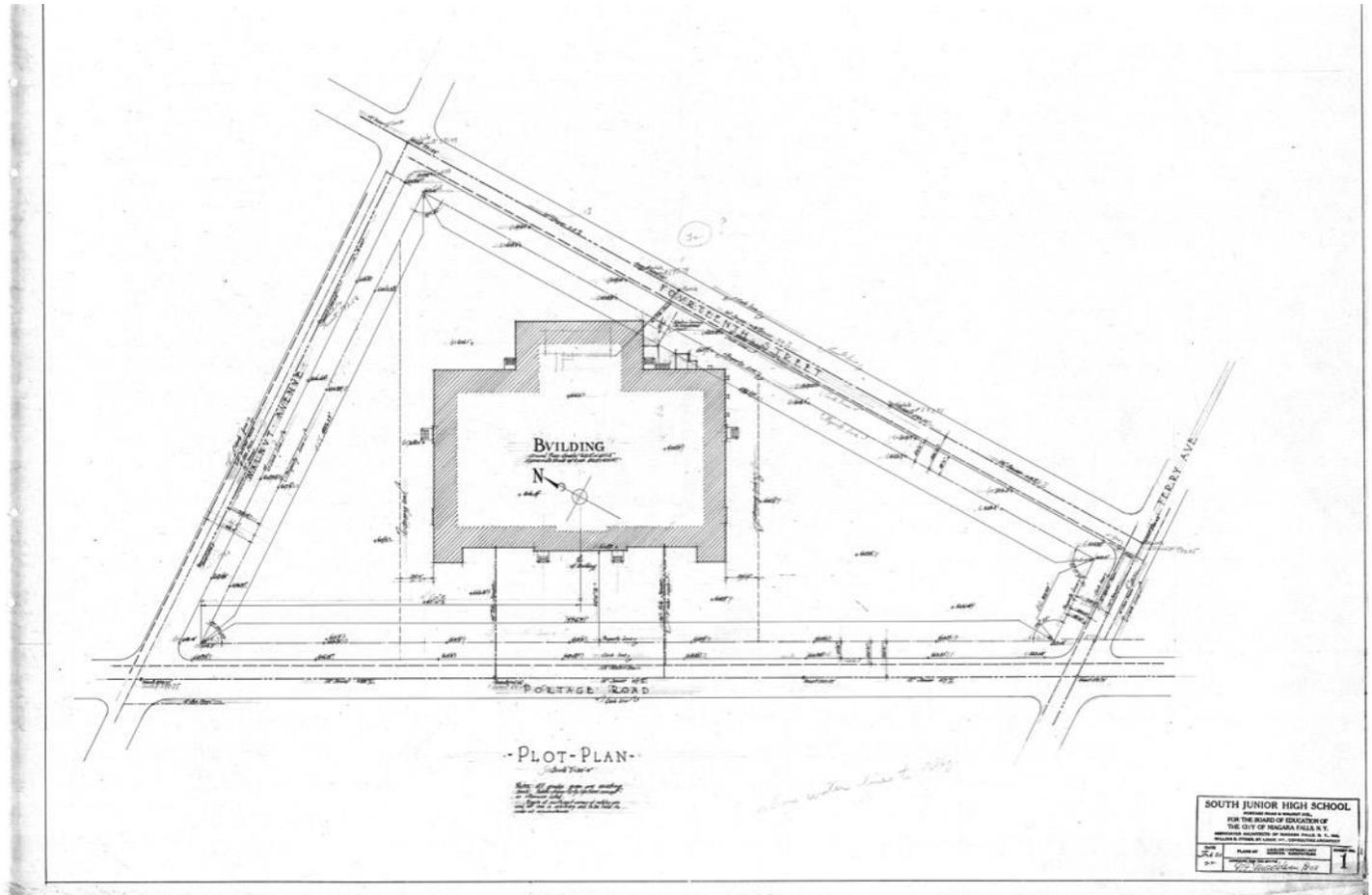
**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

Original Drawings



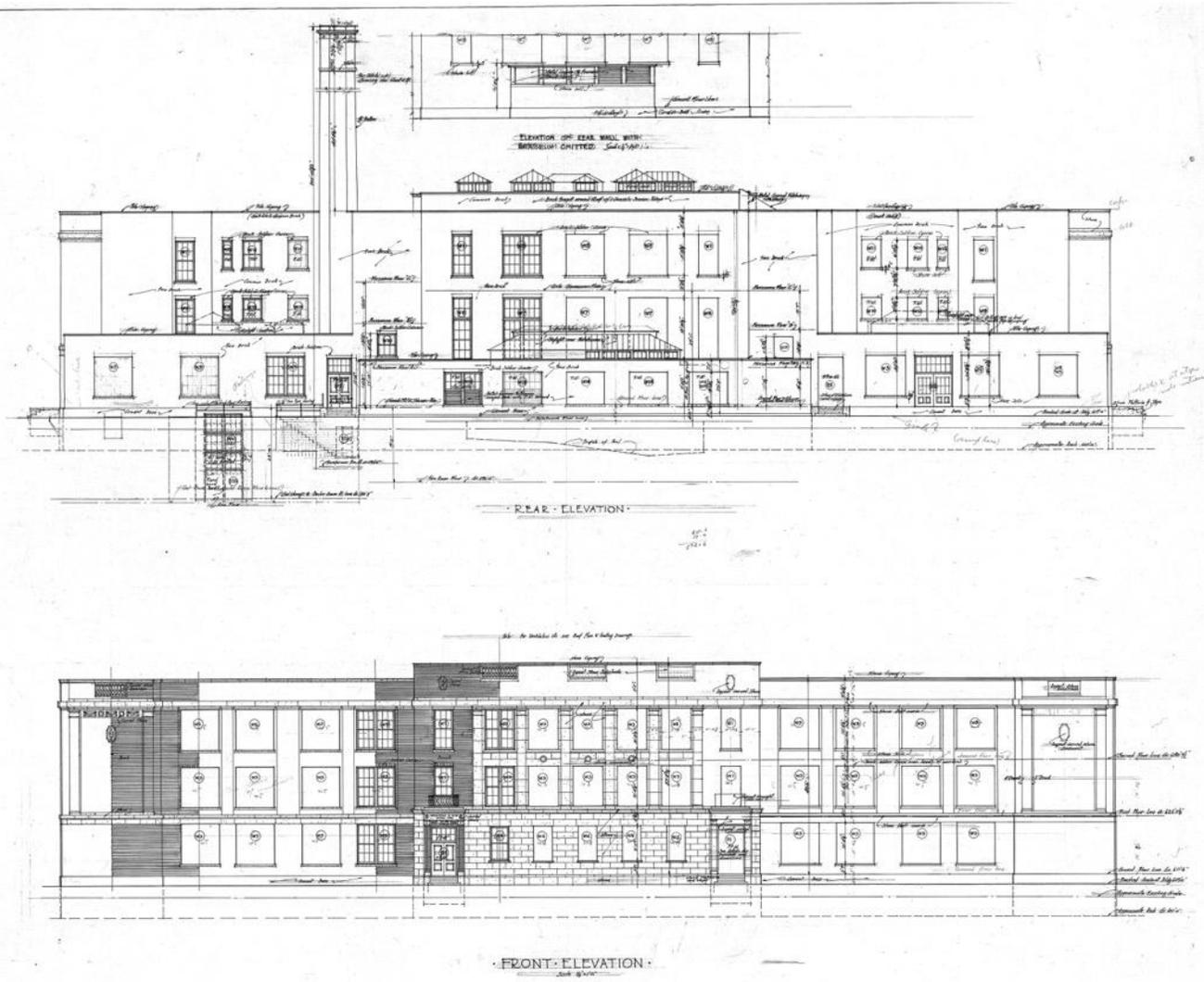
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 7

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property  
**Niagara County, New York**  
County and State



SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL  
FOR THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF  
THE CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.  
PLANNED BY: [Signature]  
DATE: [Date]

7

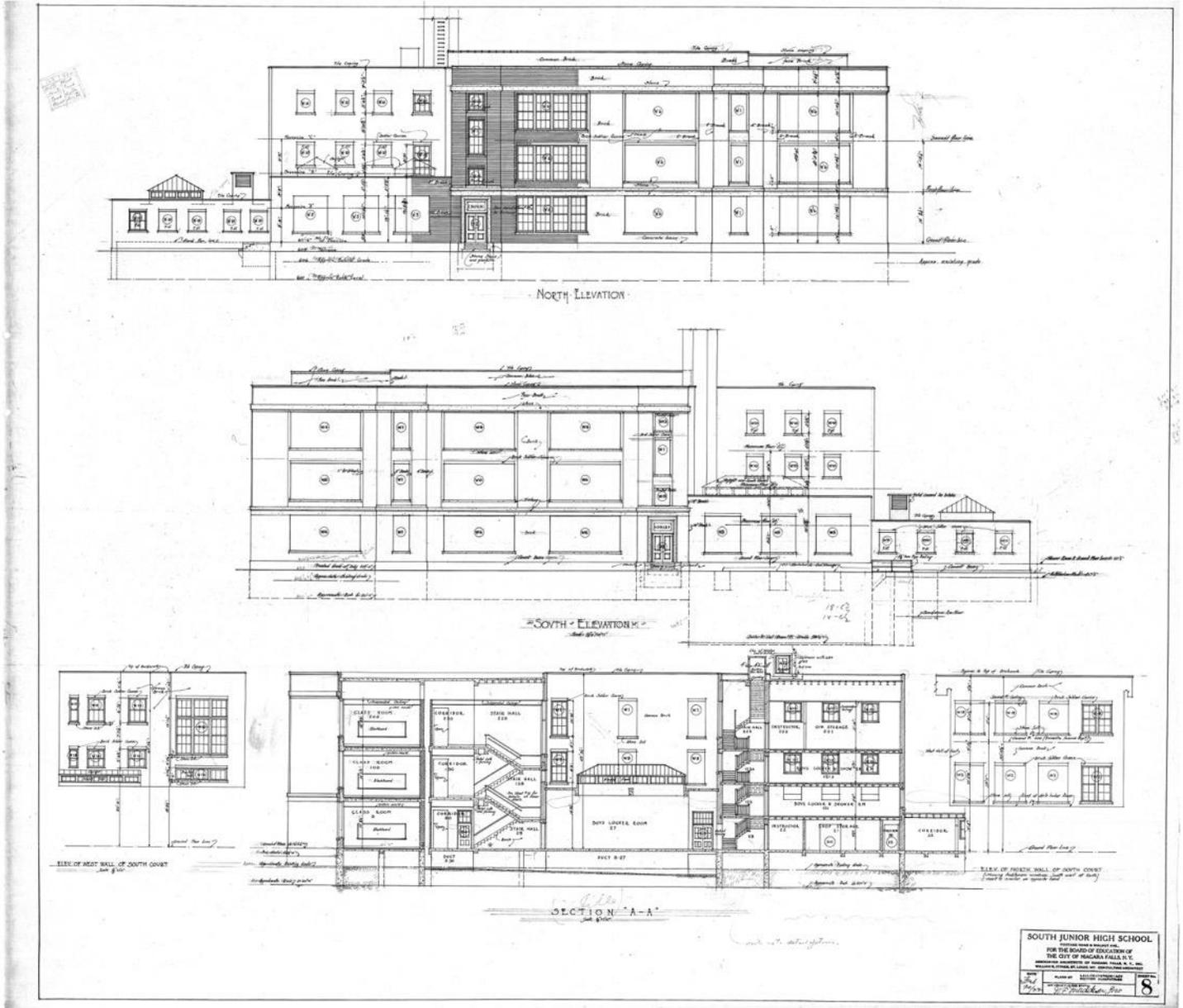
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property  
**Niagara County, New York**  
County and State



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

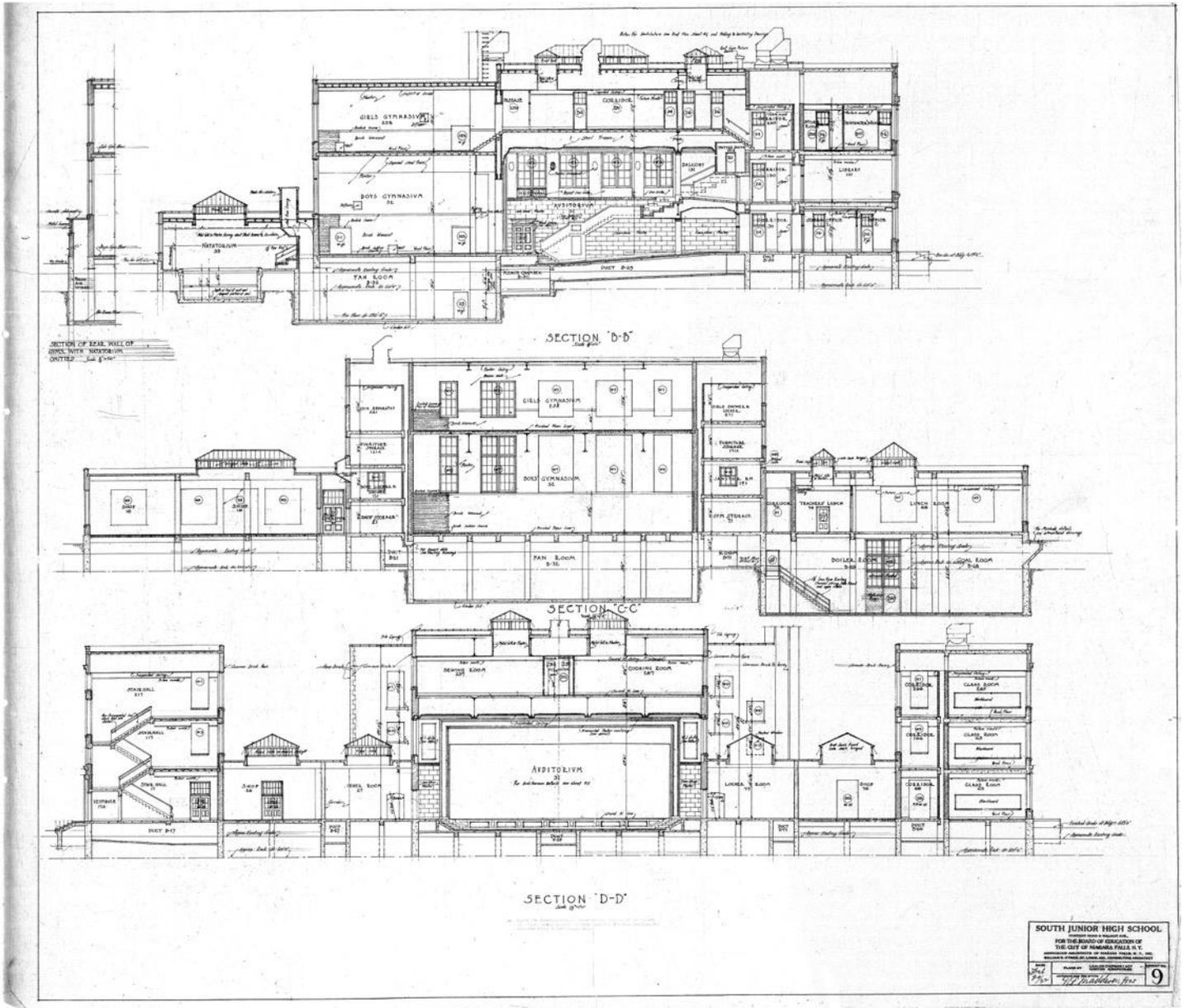
Section 11 Page 9

**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

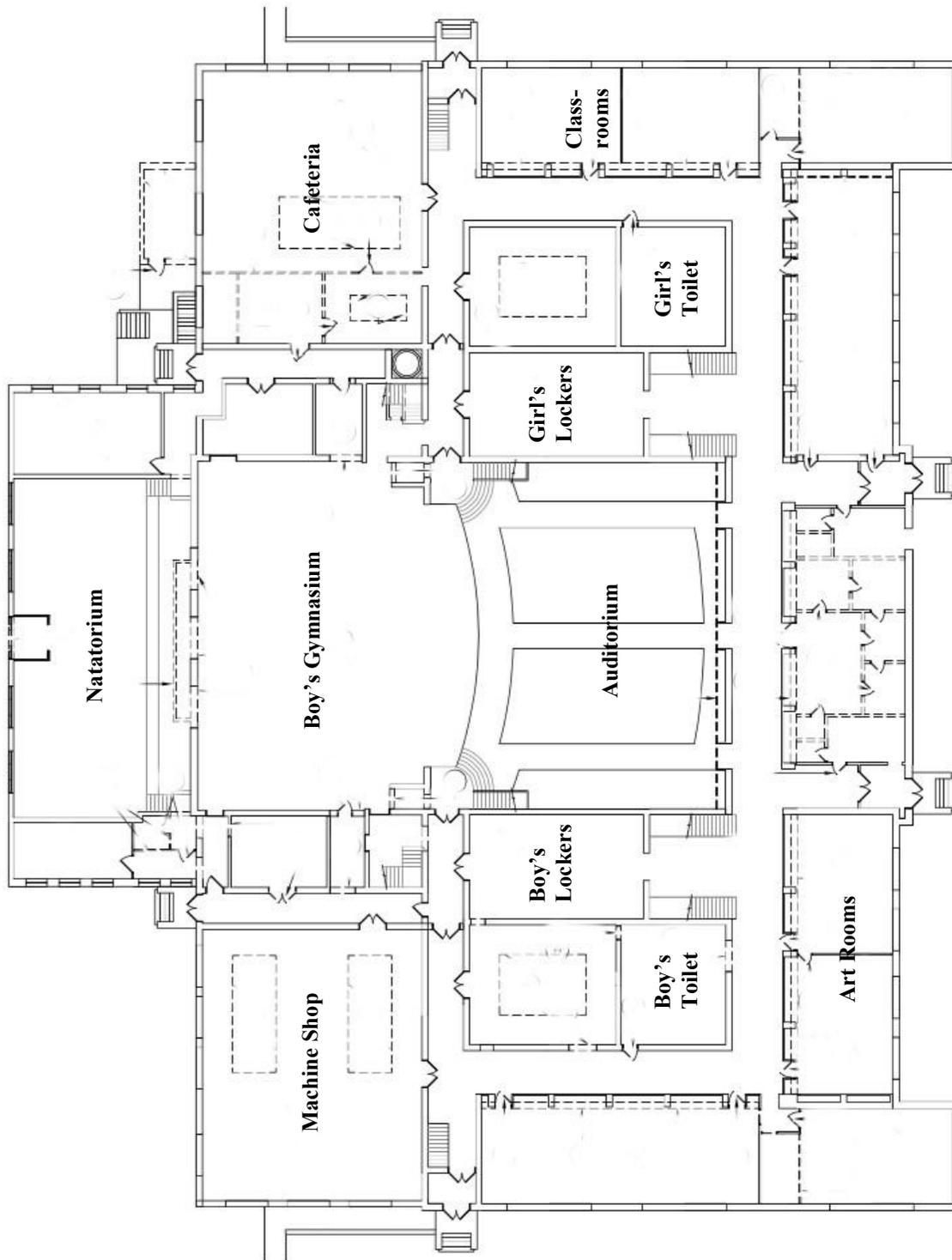
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

County and State

**Plans, Existing Conditions**

South Junior High School, ground floor plan.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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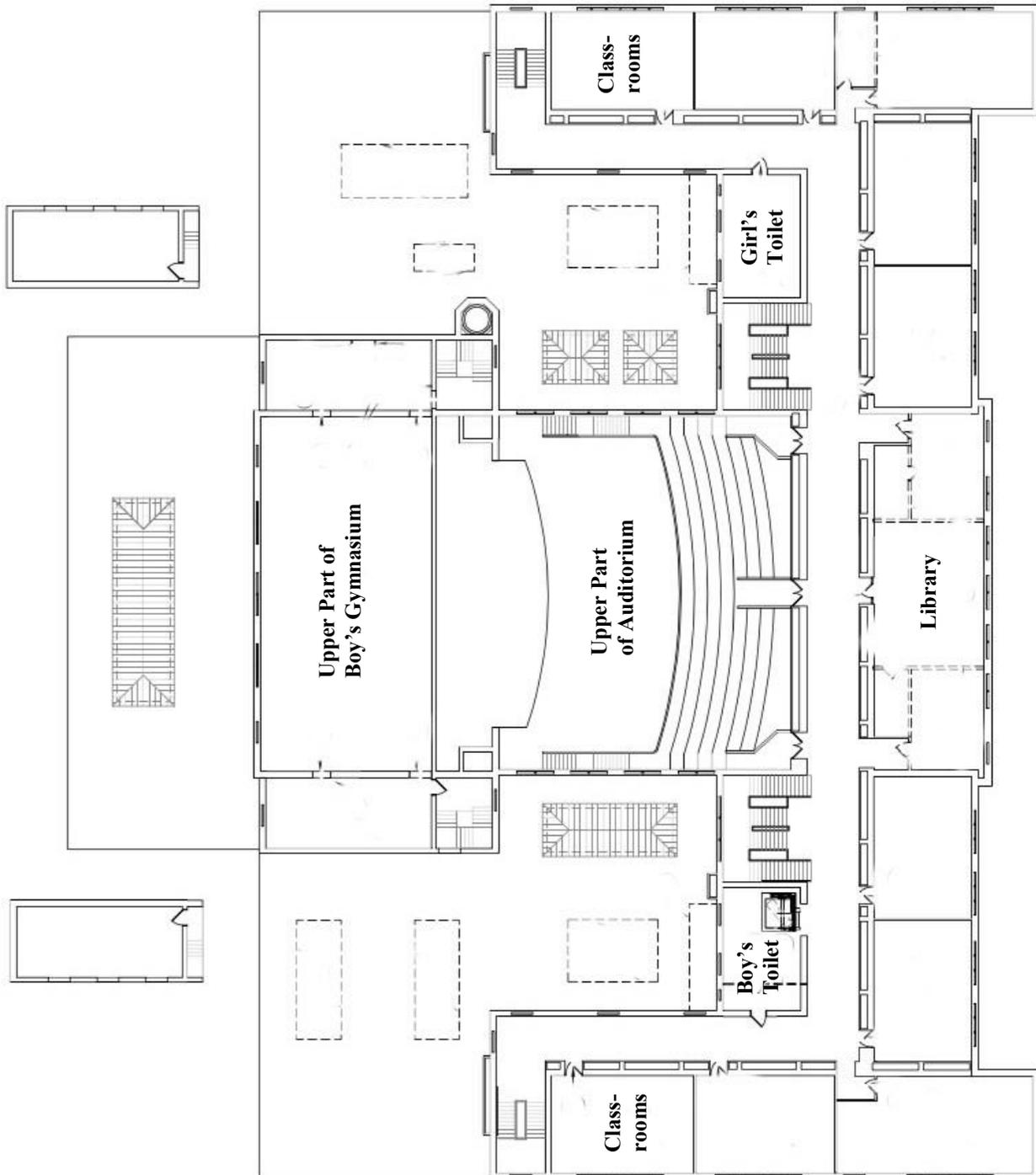
**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

South Junior High School, second floor plan.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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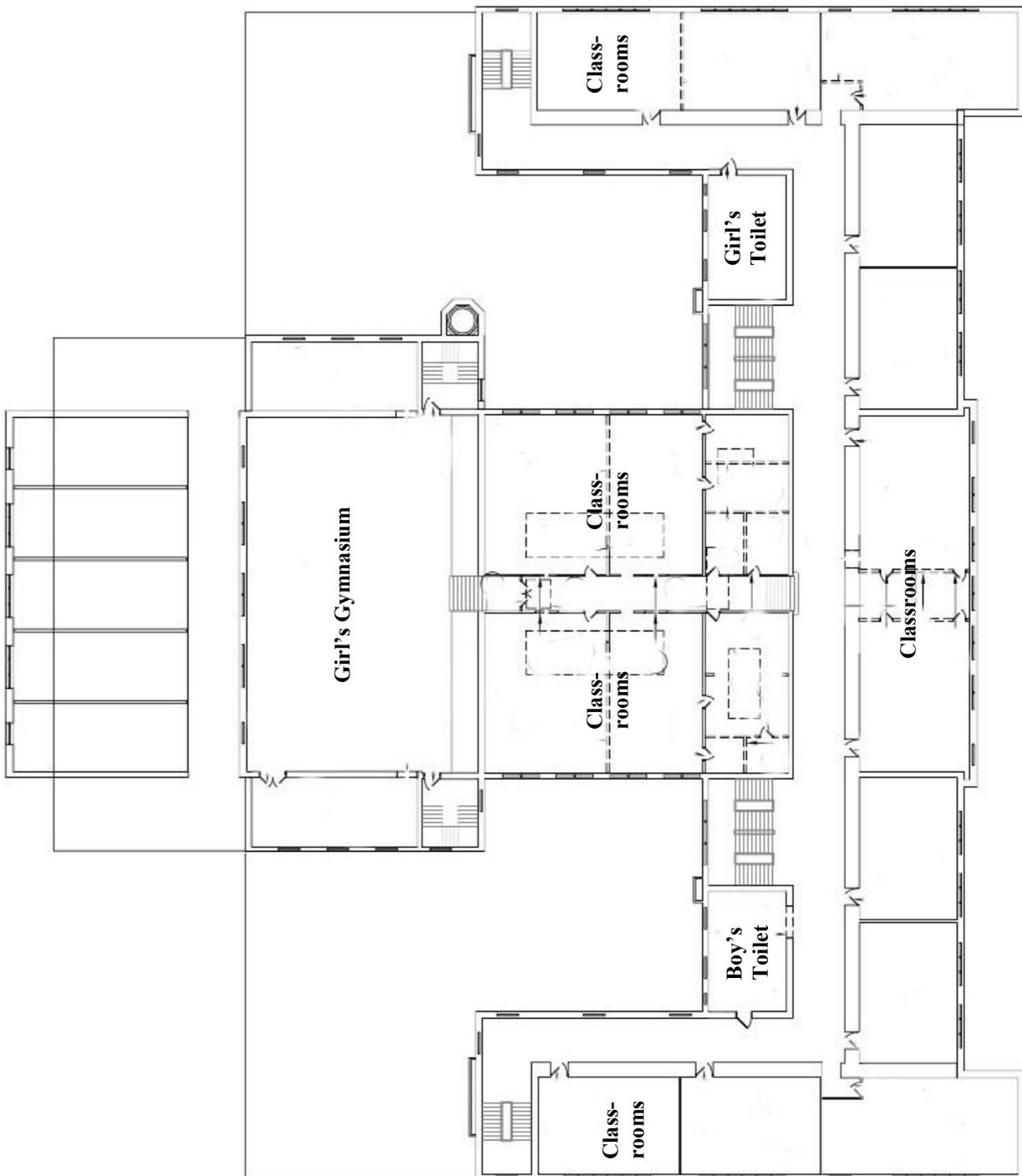
**SOUTH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

Name of Property

**Niagara County, New York**

County and State

South Junior High School, third floor plan.











NO TRESPASSING  
OR PLAYING ON  
SCHOOL PROPERTY

5

NO TRESPASSING  
KEEP OUT

NO TRESPASSING  
KEEP OUT



6



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EXIT

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7 FEET DEEP











UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY South Junior High School  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Niagara

DATE RECEIVED: 4/22/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/25/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/09/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/07/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000344

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: Y PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 6-7-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner

RECEIVED 2280

APR 22 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

15 April 2016

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following two nominations, both on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

South Junior High School, Erie County  
Canandaigua Historic District Boundary Amendment, Ontario County

The latter nomination is an extremely complicated project that included an expansion to the period of significance, additions to the listed district, corrections to boundary errors made when the district was listed, and the elimination of so-called "donut holes" from the previously listed district. We attempted to make this information as clear as possible in the enclosed maps and documentation; however, please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office