

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 4 1986  
date entered MAR 18 1986

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

1. Name

historic Booker T. Washington High School

and/or common same

2. Location

street & number 45 Whitehouse Dr. S.W. n/a not for publication

city, town Atlanta n/a vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Fulton code 121

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Atlanta Public Schools; Dr. Alonzo Crim, Superintendent

street & number 210 Pryor Street S.W.

city, town Atlanta n/a vicinity of state Georgia 30335

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Fulton County Courthouse

city, town Atlanta state Georgia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See continuation sheet has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

---

## 7. Description

---

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Booker T. Washington High School is a four-story building (three floors and a basement) of reinforced concrete with brick veneer walls built in a medieval-eclectic style. It contains forty classrooms, administrative suite, library, cafeteria, and science laboratories in the main block. The elaborate main entrance contains five arches in two tiers, using terra cotta and Venetian-style columns. Brick is used for detail, and brick corbeling is used for a cornice across the front facade. Classrooms on each floor are entered from the central hall. Most are of uniform size except for special-purpose rooms. Original roof or tile with mosaic floors remain except where replaced, as do original doors, high ceilings, and radiators. A mural depicting the dignity of manual labor, painted in 1928 by Wilmer Jennings, a student, rests at the top of the interior stairs inside the front entrance. There is marble wainscoting in the front entrance vestibule. A statue of Booker T. Washington by Charles Keck was added at the front entrance in 1927. It is a duplicate of the original at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama. The school sits in a residential neighborhood a block from a commercial area. The lot is flat in front and slopes down toward the playing fields in the rear. A row of oak trees and several magnolias provide landscaping in front. Wings housing the modern, brick gymnasium and theater/auditorium are attached to main building. Behind the main block is a detached, modern, one-story vocational educational building. Below that are the softball and baseball fields, the track and bleachers whose frames date from 1930. A fence surrounds most of the school property. Changes include the additions, as well as the conversion of certain rooms from one use to another.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1924; 1938; 1948      **Builder/Architect** Eugene C. Wachendorff

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Booker T. Washington High School is significant in architecture as a fine example of a medieval-style, modern school built in the 1920s during Atlanta's major school building program. Each school carried a unique design. This school continues to physically dominate the neighborhood into which it was placed, giving it the presence almost of a medieval cathedral in its impact as a cultural institution. The design is the work of Eugene C. Wachendorff (1880-1957), who also supervised the 1948 additions which continued his original design. His other major known works include the Lamar County Courthouse and several hospitals. It is also significant in education and black history as the first black public high school built in Atlanta. Because of this it became an important cultural institution in the black community, produced many of its future leaders, and was attended by many out-of-town students due to the quality of its education. It was built as part of Atlanta's school improvement program supported by a bond issue that created sixteen schools in the early 1920s. Its inclusion in the program was a result of political pressure from the black community. It is also significant in education for the role played by Charles L. Harper (1875-1955), the first principal, who was involved in educational organizations and was a champion for educational and civil rights. The school is significant in art because of the statue of Booker T. Washington by Charles Keck, a nationally known sculptor whose works are also found in the U.S. Capitol, and for the mural by student Wilmer Jennings which is a forerunner of the W.P.A.-style murals of the 1930s. These areas of significance support property eligibility under the National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Jackson, Kevan J. and Phillip Q. Smith. "Booker T. Washington High School." Historic Property Information Form, November 16, 1984. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 21.4

Quadrangle name Northwest Atlanta, GA

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	7	3	8	6	4	0	3	7	3	7	1	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

1	6	7	3	8	9	8	0	3	7	3	7	7	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

1	6	7	3	8	9	8	0	3	7	3	7	5	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

1	6	7	3	8	6	5	0	3	7	3	7	4	8	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is bounded by M.L. King Jr. Drive on the north, Whitehouse Drive on the east, Beckwith Street on the south, and consists of the entire school lot including all buildings, parking lots and playing fields. This has been the school grounds since the 1922 purchase. It is marked on the enclosed plat map.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

Historic Preservation Section,

organization Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources date January 2, 1986

street & number 270 Washington Street S.W. telephone (404) 656-2840

city or town Atlanta state Georgia

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 1/23/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Ray Schaefer date 3/18/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Representation in Existing Item number 6 Page 1  
Surveys

---

- A. Historic Structures Field Survey: Fulton County, Georgia  
1975 x-State

Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources  
Atlanta, Georgia

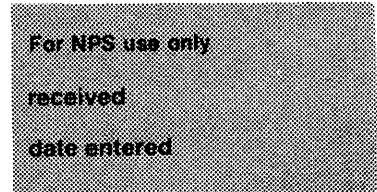
- B. Atlanta Historic Resources Workbook

1981 x-City

Atlanta Urban Design Commission, City of Atlanta  
Atlanta Georgia

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

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



Continuation sheet      Significance  
   Historic Narrative      Item number      8      Page      1

Public education in Atlanta started in 1872 and yet this, the first public secondary school for blacks did not open until 1924. It was the only black high school until 1947. At that time its enrollment had reached 4,797. Before that, blacks who wanted to attend secondary school enrolled in the high school departments of the colleges in the Atlanta University Center. These schools were private and charged a small fee. This tuition charge prevented a large number of black students who completed elementary school from getting a high school education.

The opening of Booker T. Washington High School was the culmination of several attempts on the part of black leaders who had unsuccessfully lobbied for bond funds to construct a high school building to educate black youths. In 1903 and 1910 the black community helped pass a school bond referendum and was promised a high school in return for its support; but did not receive one. In 1919, with the help of the NAACP, black leaders conducted a succesful voter registration drive. The newly registered voters helped to defeat a school bond referendum that year. In 1921 another bond campaign arose and this time it passed due to black support and a promise for more black schools. The school board then pledged \$1,290,000 for black schools. Booker T. Washington High School resulted from that effort-the first black junior/senior high school in Atlanta. The Board of Education approved the purchase of twenty acres of land for the school on June 13, 1922. Eugene C. Wachendorff was selected as the architect.

Eugene C. Wachendorff (1880-1955) was an Atlanta-born architect whose better known works all seem to be public buildings. Besides this school, he designed the Lamar County Courthouse, in Barnesville, Georgia in 1930; the City Hospital in Columbus, Georgia (now demolished) in 1914; the Alumnae Building at Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia; and in Thomasville, Georgia, the John D. Archbold Hospital in 1925 and the Three Toms Inn (now demolished) in 1927. Needless to say his long career covered all types of architectural styles and building types.

On November 14, 1922, a contract was awarded to the McDevitt Fleming Company of Chattanooga, Tennessee to construct the school building. The building was completed on January 29, 1924 at a cost of \$325,300. It opened September 8, 1924. The school was named for Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), a Virginia native who had been born a slave. In 1881 he founded and became first principal of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. He became the most influential black leader and educator in the United States.

Booker T. Washington High School offered a standard high school course in academic subjects and in vocational subjects such as automobile mechanics, tailoring, wood shop, foods, clothing, household management, home nursing and child care. From 1926 to 1930, courses in brick masonry, plastering and concrete were offered in the school. The building trades of Atlanta became inactive when the depression of 1929 occurred and the masonry shop was discontinued June 2, 1933.

Throughout the years, Booker T. Washington High School played an important part in the development of the black community, Atlanta and the nation. The excellent training provided at the school prepared many students who became local and national leaders in many professions. An example of some outstanding graduates include: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (civil rights leader), Romae T. Powell (judge), Dr. Asa Yancy (surgeon), Dr.

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

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

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet	Significance Historical Narrative	Item number	8	Page	2
--------------------	--------------------------------------	-------------	---	------	---

Mabel Smith Lott (psychologist), Lyndon Wade (Urban League director) and Lucile Palmer Perrino (educator). These individuals were the products of dedicated administrators and teachers who believed in quality education. The number of graduates of this school in the late 1920s was just over 100, and in the years when there were two graduating classes a year, January and June, as with most high schools, the total came to 350 to 400 a year. After World War II, the total annual graduates remained at about 400, and then in the early 1950s dropped down, as other black high schools began, to the low 300s, although the 1960s saw the annual average at 325-350.

The first principal of Booker T. Washington High School was Charles L. Harper (1875-1955). He built a firm educational foundation for the school by hiring dedicated teachers who were concerned about the welfare of the students. These teachers required much of their students and did not tolerate mediocrity. The strong leadership of Professor Harper and the faculty had a tremendous influence on the students. Highlights of Mr. Harper's principalship include the erection of the Booker T. Washington statue at a cost of \$7,500; the expansion of the school building; the organization of educational tours for honor students; the initiation of student government; the purchasing of additional land, adjoining the campus, for athletic fields; the building of a stadium; and the organization of the Music Festival and Dramatic Association for Secondary Schools in Georgia. After he retired in 1942 as principal, he served as president of the Georgia Teachers and Education Association from 1941 to 1942. In 1943 he became its first Executive Secretary as well as president of the Atlanta Chapter of the NAACP. He served in both capacities until his death. In these capacities he was able to lobby for higher pay for black teachers, and more state aid for black graduate students.

The statue in front of the school was dedicated May 20, 1927. It is an exact replica of the same statue which shows Booker T. Washington "lifting the veil of ignorance" from the head of a former slave. The original is located at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, which Washington started. Both statues are the work of Charles Keck (1875-1951), a New York native, whose major works include statues in the United States Hall of Fame in New York, several in the United State Capitol in Washington, at Duke University, and many other locations and in many media.

The main block of the school sufficed for about a decade. Then in 1938, six classrooms and a laboratory were added as a WPA project. In 1948 came a major, half million dollar addition that filled out the original plan. This was handled by the original architect, Eugene C. Wachendorff. In 1952, the cafeteria was added and in 1954 the physical education/gymnasium addition. 1965 saw another large addition, costing \$600,000. This included more classrooms and the renovation of the science rooms. The vocational educational building was built in 1968, as was the teaching theater.

Today, Booker T. Washington High School serves the same educational purposes as was originally intended and is still an important black educational and cultural institution.

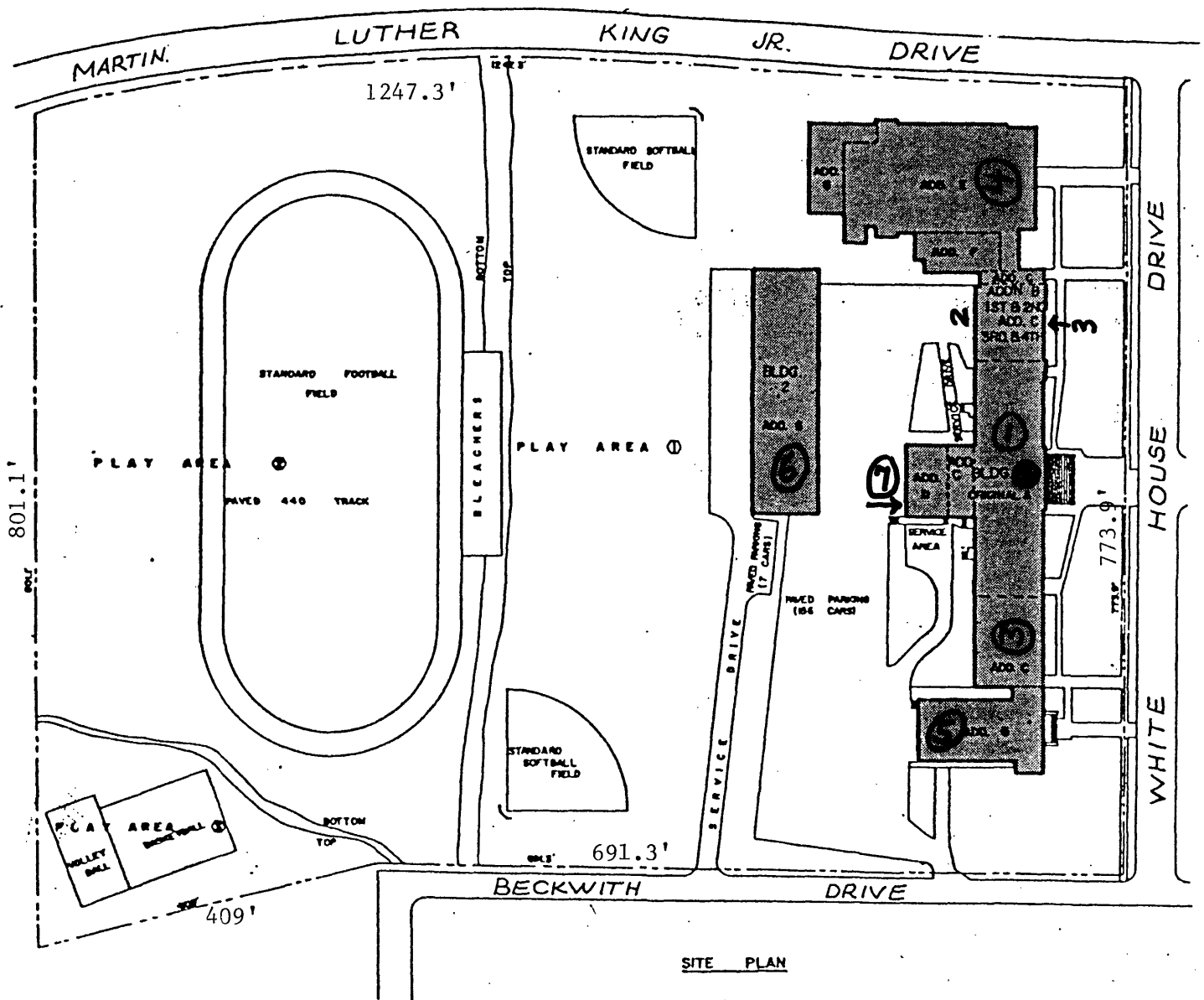
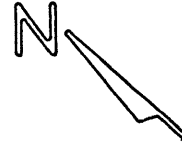
Sketch Map/Tax Map

Booker T. Washington High School  
 Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
 Scale: 1" = 165'

Source: Drawn by P.Q. Smith

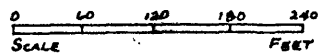
Date: 1984

- Key:
- 1-Original High School Building
  - 2-1938 additions
  - 3-1948 additions
  - 4-1954 Gymnasium
  - 5-1968 Theater
  - 6-1968 Vocational Education Building
  - 7-1952 Cafeteria

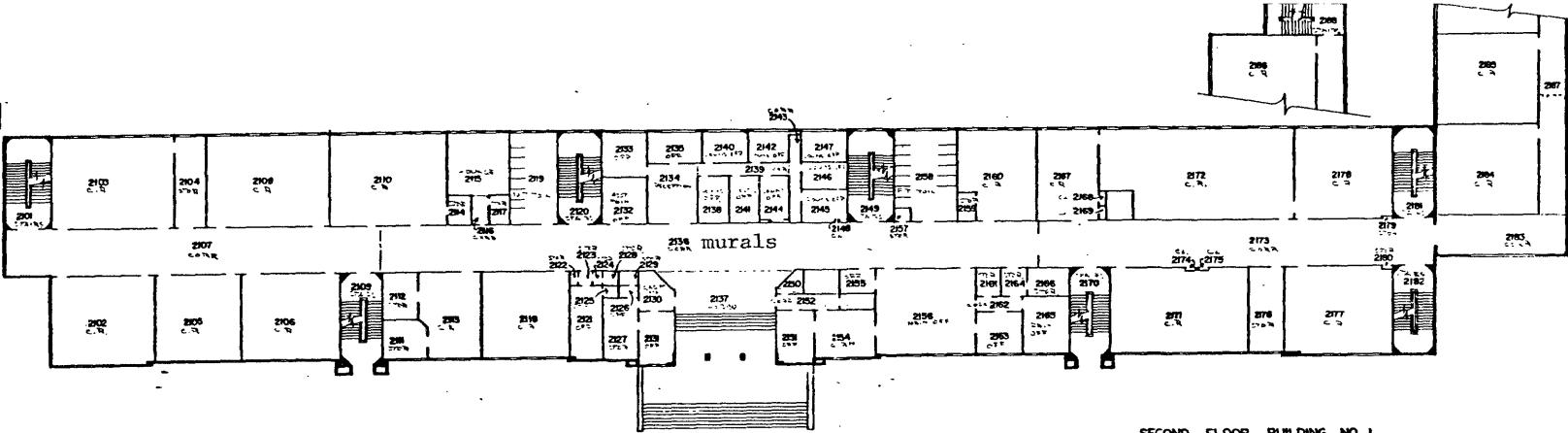


SITE PLAN

DRAWN BY: P.Q. SMITH



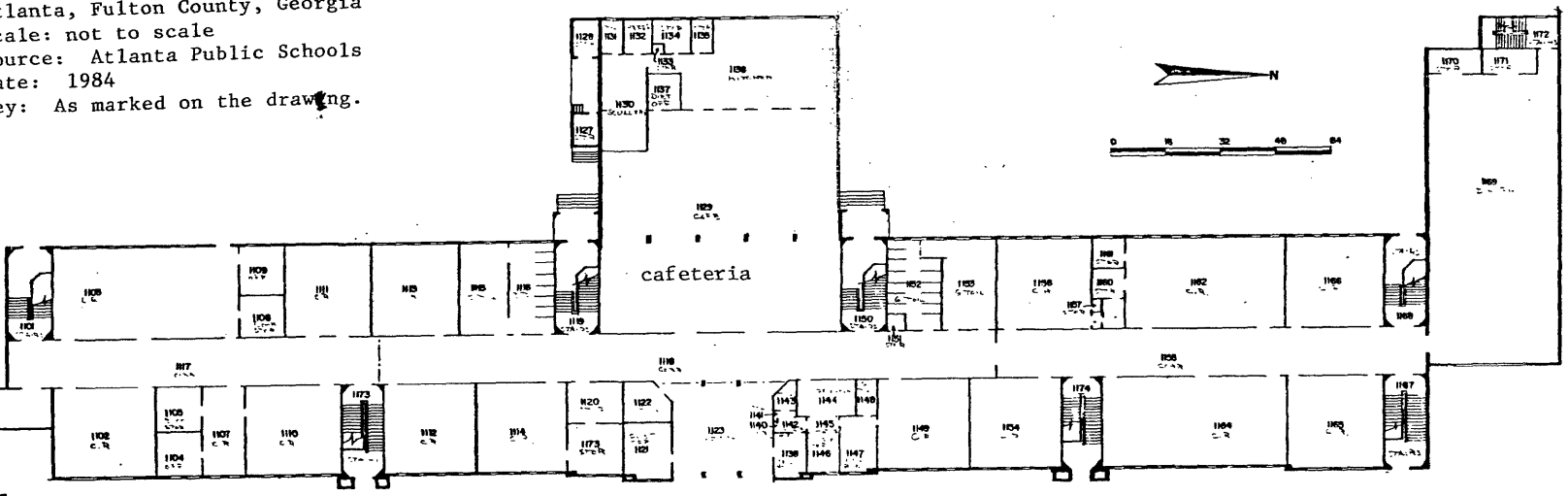




SECOND FLOOR BUILDING NO. 1

Floor Plans

Booker T. Washington High School  
 Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia  
 Scale: not to scale  
 Source: Atlanta Public Schools  
 Date: 1984  
 Key: As marked on the drawing.



FIRST FLOOR BUILDING NO. 1

(or basement)

DATE	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
B. T. WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL 45 WHITE HOUSE DR. S.W.		
P&C N. 128		
A.P.S. N. 50865		
SHEET		
<b>3</b>		
OF 5		
PAGE		