

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 PAYNE AVENUE HIGH SCHOOL

other names/site number George L. Lowry Middle School

name of related multiple property listing N/A

#### 2. Location

street & number 621 Payne Avenue [ ] not for publication

city or town North Tonawanda [ ] vicinity

state New York code NY county Niagara code 063 zip code 14120

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide  locally. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Raymond Daniel Markey  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/14/2008  
Date

DSY/PO  
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) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper  
[Signature]

date of action  
3/7/19

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

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

|              |                 |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 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)

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

\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_ EDUCATION/school (secondary school) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ VACANT \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_ LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY \_\_\_\_\_

foundation \_\_\_\_\_ Granite \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ REVIVALS/Georgian Revival \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_ Brick \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_ Rubber \_\_\_\_\_

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**Payne Avenue 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

**Areas of Significance:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

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SOCIAL HISTORY

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**Period of Significance:**

1925-1962

**Significant Dates:**

1925-6, 1928, 1939, 1962

**Significant Person:**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect/Builder:**

Tooker & Marsh

**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 #37,973**
- 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreege of Property** 9.82 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

|   |            |               |                |   |            |               |               |
|---|------------|---------------|----------------|---|------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1 | <u>117</u> | <u>673340</u> | <u>4767510</u> | 3 | <u>117</u> | <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> |
|   | Zone       | Easting       | Northing       |   | Zone       | Easting       | Northing      |

|   |            |               |               |   |            |               |               |
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| 2 | <u>117</u> | <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> | 4 | <u>117</u> | <u>      </u> | <u>      </u> |
|---|------------|---------------|---------------|---|------------|---------------|---------------|

**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 Joey Duggan, Kelsie Hoke M.A., Caitlin Moriarty, Ph.D.

organization Preservation Studios date 10/2/2018

street & number 170 Florida Street 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 \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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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Section 7 Page 1

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
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Narrative Description of Property

Payne Avenue High School is located at 621 Payne Avenue in the city of North Tonawanda, a suburb ten miles north of the city of Buffalo, New York. It is situated at about the center of the city, three-quarters of a mile east of the Niagara River and one mile northeast of the local downtown commercial corridor on a primary north-south traffic artery with smaller streets branching off to either side. Surrounding the school in each direction is a dense, residential neighborhood with housing stock ranging in date from the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century. The building itself has a park-like setting, occupying a deep nine-acre lot a full block in width and three blocks in depth, and sitting approximately one-hundred-and-sixty feet from the street on a planted grassy lawn. The lot is bordered by Hewitt Street to the north, Evans Street to the south, Taber Place to the west, and Niagara Parkway to the east. Across the street to the west is a city park with several baseball courts and tennis courts while behind the school to the east a large grassy field, formerly the high school football field, stretches out to occupy the full depth of the lot.

Constructed in 1925-6 to the design of the well-known architectural firm of Tooker and Marsh, the Payne Avenue High School is an immense, three-story, red-brick building which exhibits the efficiency and scale of a standardized early twentieth century school, but in a Georgian Revival style with a touch of Baroque detailing. This original portion of the school has an I-shaped plan, measuring approximately two hundred feet long by sixty-five feet deep and is oriented north-south with its long, primary façade facing west onto Taber Place. During construction, a natatorium was added to the plans and built at the northeast corner of the building, extending south. In 1939, a significant expansion campaign saw the addition of a large L-shaped wing to the center of the rear (north) elevation and a smaller rectangular wing to south end of the rear elevation, giving the overall building a roughly-E-shaped plan. Later, in 1973, an extensive maintenance and renovation campaign was carried out on the interior of the building, updating the finishes throughout; however, on both the interior and the exterior, the additions and renovations were quite sensitive. With the exception of updated windows and doors, the exterior elevations have been fully maintained while, on the interior, original details and finishes have been largely covered over by the new finishes and so remain in place, intact but currently obscured. From 1926 until 1962, the building functioned as the central high school for the city of North Tonawanda, and then as the central junior high from 1962 to 2004. As of late 2017, the building has been empty for thirteen years, but has remained secure and so is in quite good condition both inside and out.

**Exterior**

The large, I-shaped, 1925-26 portion of the building is the most visible as it is located at the front (west) end of the lot while the additions are located at the rear. The 1925-26 portion has a steel frame clad in variegated, dark red brick laid in English cross bond with details articulated in pale terra-cotta finished to look like limestone. It sits on a short, granite base and is wrapped by a stone cornice with patinated copper flashing and a brick and terra cotta parapet which conceals a flat roof behind. The main north-south wing of the school is three stories in

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height and thirteen bays in width, with a wide, highly articulated center bay, an articulated entry bay at each far end, and regular bays to either side in between. On the interior, it contains regular classrooms at each floor. To the north and south, the central wing is bookended by projecting, two-story, east-west oriented wings with pavilion fronts, containing the gymnasium and natatorium at the north end and the auditorium at the south end. The rear of the school is clad in the same red brick laid in common bond and, in contrast to the other elevations, is quite plain and unarticulated.

The natatorium is a one-and-a-half story rectangular volume, oriented north-south, located at the east end of the gymnasium wing. It, too, has a steel frame clad in matching red brick with terra cotta accents and a flat roof concealed by a parapet. Flush with the wall of the gymnasium to the north, the natatorium volume extends south, forming an L with the east-west volume of the gymnasium wing.

The 1939 addition consists of two volumes, one larger and one smaller. The larger of the two is a three-story, L-shaped volume which extends east from the center of the main wing and turns southward. It contains regular classroom space, the shop room, laboratory space, and the cafeteria and kitchen. The smaller of the two volumes also extends eastward and consists of a two-story portion projecting from the northeast corner of the auditorium wing with a one-story portion just to the south, projecting from the east wall of the wing. This smaller addition has music rooms at the first floor and regular classrooms at the second floor. Both volumes of the 1939 addition closely match the 1925-26 portion of the rear elevation and are steel-frame construction clad in red brick with a flat roof.

Primary (west) Façade

The primary façade is symmetrically composed and consists of the three-story, thirteen-bay main wing flanked at either end by identical, two-story, five-bay pavilions. At the main wing, each bay is framed by two-story brick pilasters with terra cotta bases and capitals that rise from a molded stone sill course at the first floor and visually support a terra cotta architrave, brick frieze, and terra cotta cornice that cap the second story. Shorter brick pilasters frame each of the third story bays and visually support a secondary stone cornice with a tall brick parapet and terra cotta coping above. Each of the bays contains a wide, triple window opening with a terra cotta sill, a soldier-coursed brick lintel at each story and a panel of brick diapering in a diamond motif between the first and second story. Originally, the openings each contained a pair of six-over-six, double-hung, wood windows but these were removed as part of a 1987 building maintenance campaign and the openings currently each contain a group of replacement aluminum windows with varying divisions and blank spandrel panels in the upper half.

At the center, the wide entry bay projects slightly and is highly articulated at each story with dressed terra cotta quoins at the full height of its corners. The entrance is centered at the first story and has a deep stone surround

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consisting of a crossetted architrave, Doric pilasters, and a detailed Doric entablature. A large Palladian window with brick pilasters, Ionic terra cotta capitals, and a pulvinated Ionic entablature is present at the second story just beneath a heavy stone entablature bearing *George L Lowry Middle School* in brass letters at the frieze. The third story has a single centered window with a beautifully detailed, Baroque-style, terra cotta surround featuring a crossetted architrave interrupted by voussoirs and a keystone at the lintel and ornate, scrolled consoles at the sides. Above, the central bay is crowned by a broken segmental pediment of terra cotta with a carved, foliate cartouche at the center. At the far ends of the main wing, each of the final bays has a double-door entry at the first story with a crossetted terra cotta surround, pulvinated frieze, and cornice. Just above the cornice sits an arched window with a voussoired brick frame lighting the intermediate landing of an interior stair. The third story has a single window opening wrapped by a stone architrave interrupted by voussoirs and a keystone.

The two-story wings bookending the primary façade are each five bays in width and are identical. At both, the three center bays are framed by two-story, fluted, terra cotta, Corinthian pilasters visually supporting a terra cotta entablature and crowned by a pediment with a blank tympanum. At the first story, a short flight of concrete steps leads up to a round-arched double doorway with a simple voussoired brick frame in each of the three center bays. A square window is centered over each of the doorways at the second story and has a terra cotta frame. The flanking outer bays of each wing are wrapped at the top and bottom by a water table and terra cotta entablature matching that of the main wing, and articulated at the corners by terra cotta quoins. A tall brick parapet with a terra cotta coping runs across the top of each wing, stepping up significantly at the center to frame the pediment and articulated at the sides by delicately carved terra cotta consoles and at the top by a slight terra cotta frieze and cornice.

North (side) Elevation

The north elevation consists of the two-story, eight-bay gymnasium wing to the west and the one-and-a-half story, four-bay natatorium to the east. To the west, the gymnasium wing is symmetrically composed and handsomely detailed. At the bottom and the top, it is wrapped by the same terra cotta water table, entablature, and parapet as the primary façade of the main wing. While the outer bays are each blank, the penultimate bays at either end project forward slightly and have a single window opening centered on the first floor with a terra cotta surround featuring a simple frame interrupted by voussoirs at the lintel, a triangular pediment, and a molded sill supported on small anconae. Both the final and the penultimate bays are framed at the edges by terra cotta voussoirs. The four center bays are separated from one another by brick pilasters with a terra cotta base and Scamozzi Ionic capitals, each with a double-height, rectangular window opening with a terra cotta sill and a terra cotta lintel interrupted by voussoirs. Currently, all of the window openings are infilled with modern red brick.

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To the east, the natatorium is divided into an entry bay at the west end and a group of three bays at the east end. The entry bay is simple and has a short flight of two steps leading up to a round-arched door opening that contains an original casing but a modern flush door, solid sidelight, and solid transom panel. Centered above the door is an octagonal terra cotta plaque set into the wall bearing a detailed relief of a pair of Classical dolphins encircling a trident and crown. The group of three bays to the east is framed at the edges by quoins and has three tall, arched window openings resting on a continuous water table that matches the water table elsewhere at the building. Each of the windows is currently filled in with modern brick. A heavy terra cotta cornice and brick parapet with a terra cotta coping complete the elevation.

South (side) Elevation

The south elevation consists primarily of the side elevation of the auditorium wing with the southern portion of the 1939 addition extending to the east, but set back. The auditorium wing is almost identical to the gymnasium wing with a few small exceptions. The three center bays on this elevation are not separated by pilasters and instead each simply contains a double-height, arched window opening with a replacement, tinted, multi-pane, aluminum window and the two single window openings to either side are blank. Additionally, a small, round-arched window is present in the easternmost bay lighting the intermediate landing of an interior stair and contains a replacement aluminum window with tinted glazing.

The two-story southern portion of the 1939 addition extends five bays to the east and has a single-story projection at the two westernmost bays. While the single-story portion is blank on its south face, the two-story portion beyond has a large window opening at each floor of each bay, matching the size of those at the primary façade and containing matching replacement windows. The final eastern bay has a double-door opening at grade with a pair of modern flush metal doors and a single window opening centered above lighting an interior stair.

Rear (east) Elevation

The rear elevation of the building consists of the several projecting volumes of the natatorium wing to the north, the large three-story portion of the 1939 Addition at the center, and the smaller one- and two-story portions of the 1939 Addition to the south. The original portion of the school is visible beyond, but is largely obscured by these volumes.

At the north end, the eight-bay natatorium wing is regularly and symmetrically composed. The outer bays each project slightly and are blank apart from a water table at the base and terra cotta quoins articulating the edges. The six bays at the center are framed by simple brick pilasters and each contains a tall, round-arched window opening with a voussoired brick frame and modern brick infill at the opening. Capping the elevation is a terra cotta cornice and parapet matching those at the north elevation.



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The remainder of the rear elevation is made up of the simply executed 1939 addition. The three-story central portion is eight bays in width and projects the furthest from the original building, making it the dominant element of the rear elevation. Its four southernmost bays have regular, large window openings at each floor, similar to those elsewhere on the building. Each has a flat brick lintel, concrete sill, and contains a group of three, one-over-one, replacement windows matching those elsewhere on the building. The second southernmost bay at the first story has been altered somewhat by the addition of a single door at the south end of its window opening while the northern half of the opening has been infilled with brick. At the northern end, the bays are more irregular. The two bays north of center each contain a single window opening at each story while the two northernmost bays are blank at the first two stories with a pair of windows at the third floor. The elevation terminates in a flush parapet with the words "*George J. Vetter Stadium*" at the center and a simple metal coping above. At the south end, the two-story portion of the 1939 Addition is blank brick and the one-story portion adjacent has a garage loading door at the center with a flush metal single entry door to the south.

Beyond, the rear elevation of the 1925-26 portion of the building is built of standard red brick with regular large window openings matching those of the 1939 addition and a flush parapet above with a simple metal coping.

### Interior

On the interior, the school has a roughly E-shaped plan. The main wing of the school is occupied by classroom space while the north wing contains the double-height gymnasium and natatorium and the south wing houses the double-height auditorium. The central, L-shaped, 1939 addition contains shop space and the cafeteria on the first floor and additional regular classroom space at the upper floors. To the south, the smaller portion of the 1939 addition has music rooms at the first floor and classroom space at the second floor.

The main wing of the school is laid out as a double-loaded corridor with a wide hallway at the center and classrooms to either side; the north end of the corridor accesses the gymnasium while the south end opens into the auditorium. A long east-west corridor connecting to the main wing bisects the L-shaped 1939 addition and has classrooms to either side, while a second east-west corridor at the south end provides additional access to the auditorium as well to classrooms in the small southern 1939 addition. In the main wing, there are staircases at the northwest and southwest corners that access each floor, and a third staircase at the center of the west wall that runs between just the first and second floors. A fourth staircase for the building is present at the east end of the south wall of the L-shaped 1939 addition and accesses each floor.

At the north end of the school, the gym is fully intact. It has original, glazed, yellow brick at the lower five feet of the walls with plaster above, an original hardwood sports floor, and exposed metal trusses at the ceiling. The boys' locker room is located at the east end of the gymnasium on the first floor and the girls' locker room is

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located just above it at the second floor. Both have largely intact layouts with tile finishes throughout that appear to date to mid-century renovations. On the second floor, the girls' changing room retains its original wire basket cubbies that line three sides of the room.

In the natatorium at the east end of the north wing, the space has the original pool at the center and a walkway along the east wall bordered by a partial height wall. The pool is tiled in the original tesserae ceramic tiles and is surrounded on each side by an original beige-and-white ceramic tile floor in a basketweave pattern. All of the walls, including the partial height wall, are clad from top to base in a large format glazed ceramic tile. Overhead, the ceiling is corrugated metal with lay-in fluorescent lighting and does not appear to be original.

The south wing of the school is primarily occupied by the auditorium. At the west end of the wing, though, a large entry lobby is present at the first floor, flanked by a stair to the mezzanine level at either end. Above the lobby at the second floor is a hallway accessing the mezzanine seating area as well as bathrooms and some storage rooms. The lobby was renovated in the 1970s and has gypsum walls, a dropped acoustic tile ceiling, and modern terrazzo floors. Beyond the dropped ceiling, however, an original plaster ceiling remains in place and retains its original deep and denticulated plaster cornice. To either side, both of the enclosed stairs have plaster walls, an original cast-iron stair with marble treads, and terminate at an arched, plastered doorway at the second floor. The hallway at the second floor has plaster walls with picture rail trim and an original deep yellow terrazzo floor with terrazzo base. The bathrooms at this level retain their original hexagonal marble tiled floors, plaster walls, and painted wood base and casings throughout. The adjacent storerooms are similar, although they have a carpeted floor rather than marble tile.

Beyond, the auditorium is also quite intact although many of its details are currently obscured by an unsympathetic paint scheme. It is entered at the west end via two sets of doors from the lobby or mezzanine hallway with the stage along the east end. The auditorium has plaster walls, an original hardwood floor, and an intact coffered plaster ceiling. The ceiling is wrapped by a plaster frieze featuring oval paterae and anthemias and a deep plaster cornice incorporating dentils, an egg and dart course, foliate modillions alternating with recessed rosettes, and delicate curving acanthus leaves encrusting the final cyma recta. At the east end of the room, the curving wood stage is not original and appears to date to the 1975 renovation campaign, as do the replacement seats which occupy the first floor and the balcony at the mezzanine level. The seats at the mezzanine level, though, are original and have a cast-iron structure with wood seats and decorative pressed metal seat ends.

The cafeteria and kitchen for the school are located at the east end of the first floor of the large 1935 addition and both were remodeled in 1975. The cafeteria is a large open space that occupies the full width of the first floor and is punctuated by regularly spaced structural columns. Behind it, the kitchen and original cafeteria occupy the majority of the east wall with a faculty dining room at the north end and a staff break room at the south end. The cafeteria has a cream-colored terrazzo floor, dropped acoustic tiles at the ceiling, and walls clad

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in pale yellow tile for three-quarters of their height with gypsum above. The faculty dining area has a carpeted floor with a dropped acoustic tile ceiling and plaster walls. Adjacent to the south, the kitchen is quite intact and retains its original, square terra cotta tile floor and walls clad in large-format glazed white tile with adhered acoustic tile at the ceiling. In the connected staff break room, the original hardwood floor is present and the walls are the original plaster with picture rail trim and adhered acoustic tile at the ceiling.

As designed in 1925, the school had administrative offices located just south of center on the second floor and also had a large library located at the center of the third floor. Over the course of the building's history, however, both of these spaces were converted into additional classrooms to suit the changing needs of the school and little remains of their original appearance. At the third floor, though, original skylights which used to bring additional light into the library are still present above a dropped ceiling, giving a sense of the original volume and character of the space.

Classrooms at both the 1925-26 portion of the school as well as the 1939 addition appear to retain their original layouts and, though most were updated as part of the 1975 renovations, original details and finishes are still present throughout. A typical classroom measures twenty-four feet wide by forty feet long and is lit by two banks of windows on the long wall. Almost all retain their original plaster walls and plaster ceilings beyond existing dropped acoustic ceilings. Original wood casings at the interior of the window jambs and wood baseboards are also present in almost every classroom though they are currently obscured as they were painted black to match the aesthetic of the 1970s renovation campaign. Flooring throughout is primarily vinyl tile but original hardwood is present in some rooms, indicating that original hardwood may still be present underneath the later materials. Additionally, some investigation has revealed that original transoms and stained casings are still present in many locations above entry doors at the hallway and perimeter walls. At the first floor, the shop and industrial arts classrooms are very intact and have painted brick walls, concrete floors, and a flat plaster ceiling with expressed steel beams. The northern shop classroom also retains a full wall of original built-in wood cabinetry along the south wall, an adjacent built-in drawing cabinet, several chalkboards trimmed in the original stained millwork, and original peg-board wall cabinets for storing tools.

Hallways throughout the school were largely updated as part of the 1975 renovation campaign. All measure about ten feet in width and most have vinyl tile floors, dropped acoustic tile ceilings, and side walls that have been built out with gypsum to contain updated mechanical equipment. The original lockers appear to have been retained, however, and reinstalled in new cavities made at the furred-out walls. The southern east-west hallway at the first floor retains its original terrazzo floor in a yellow-and-green diamond pattern and, beyond its dropped ceiling, there are original transoms and original wood picture rail at the walls and a plaster ceiling above, indicating the finishes which originally characterized the hallways. In terms of vertical circulation, all four of the existing staircases are original. Each stair has a cast iron structure with a closed, panelized stringer, cast-iron risers, and terrazzo treads that are currently covered in non-slip rubber mats. In the 1925-26 portion,

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the stairs have a cast-iron railing with alternating, widely-spaced, straight and twisted spindles while, in the 1939 addition, the stair is similar but has a simpler cast-iron pipe railing.

The Payne Avenue High School retains a significant amount of its original integrity on both the interior and exterior. Currently the exterior of the school is intact to its original appearance, with the exception of its doors and windows that were replaced in 1987. On the interior, the school retains its original floorplan and circulation patterns with an intact gymnasium, and a largely intact auditorium complete with highly decorative plaster ceilings. In classrooms, original chalkboards, built-ins, and hardwood floors remain in some locations and original plaster walls and ceilings are present throughout. Further, selective removal of some of the modern finishes has revealed that additional historic elements, such as window casings, transoms, picture rail, and original flooring, remain intact though they are presently obscured. Altogether, then, the school is an excellent example of an early twentieth century school building and continues to exhibit the setting, character, design, materials, and craftsmanship which define significant and historic school construction from this era.

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**Statement of Significance:**

Payne Avenue High School is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as a good example of a Tooker & Marsh designed school building that reflects standardization principles in school design of the 1920s and attention to local context; it is also significant under Criterion A in Education for its connection to the growing education system in North Tonawanda. As a result of the growth of a successful lumber industry and major incremental developments in infrastructure which took place in North Tonawanda at the end of the nineteenth century, the city attracted a significant swell of settlement that extended into the twentieth century. Around the turn of the century, the North Tonawanda Board of Education undertook several building projects in order to accommodate students in the school district, who all required an education based on the compulsory education laws passed by New York State in 1894. By the 1920s, the still booming population of North Tonawanda mandated the construction of a school building capable of providing an education to the unprecedented number of students registered in the city's public school district. Payne Avenue High School opened in 1926, a culmination of the Board of Education's effort to keep pace with the city's growth, emerged as a monumental civic institution that served as a space for community events in addition to its primary function as a school. The school served as the sole high school in the North Tonawanda school district for four decades after its construction. Tooker and Marsh, an architecture firm based in Manhattan with a great degree of influence in the field of school building design, drafted the plans for Payne Avenue High School in accordance both with standards regularly adopted across the state and with the needs and conditions located within the community of North Tonawanda. The floor plan accommodates unilateral lighting in every classroom while the main entrance opens on the ground level, without the need for steps and the potential risks they pose to children during winter weather. The plan for the school building also exhibits Tooker and Marsh's attention to the expected growth in North Tonawanda's population: they deliberately designed the I-shaped school building to accommodate multiple additions in the future. The period of significance begins in 1925-6 with the construction and completion of Payne Avenue High School and ends in 1962, when the building was converted into a middle school. During this time, the building served as the only public high school in North Tonawanda.

**Settlement and Early Development of North Tonawanda**

The first American settlers established a permanent settlement in the area that eventually became North Tonawanda in 1809. During that year, George N. Burger built a log cabin, the first recorded building in the area.<sup>1</sup> Early settlers developed the waterfront beside the Niagara River, which they referred to as "the Village of Niagara," but the outbreak of the War of 1812 stunted progress.<sup>2</sup> The village recovered and eventually

<sup>1</sup> Tom Yots, "Ascension Roman Catholic Church Complex," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Preservation Studios LLC, Buffalo, May 26, 2016, 8.2.

<sup>2</sup> Yots, "Ascension Roman Catholic Church Complex," 8.2.

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prospered upon the completion of the Erie Canal, which efficiently linked Lake Erie to the Hudson river, and ideal proximity to the terminus of the canal yoked with the timber growth in the area bolstered a successful lumber industry.<sup>3</sup> This industry formed the backbone of the economy the area, with lumberyards attracting settlers in search of work, and the ready availability of resources attracting secondary industries.<sup>4</sup> The area north of Tonawanda Creek centered around Webster Street, where a number of settlers founded general stores, mills, and other small enterprises.<sup>5</sup>

The area underwent a series of municipal transitions as settlement intensified and industry boomed. The Village of Niagara straddled the border between Erie County and Niagara County, and in 1854, the community changed its name to the Village of Tonawanda.<sup>6</sup> The four wards of the original village functioned as one municipal entity for a few years after its renaming, but a dispute over the allocation of tax revenue split the community into two separate bodies in 1857.<sup>7</sup> The First Ward of the Village, located to the north of the Tonawanda Creek, temporarily functioned as a part of the Township of Wheatfield until it officially incorporated as a separate village in 1865 and changed its name to North Tonawanda.<sup>8</sup> North Tonawanda and the adjacent City of Tonawanda from which it split both take their names from the Tonawanda Creek, a tributary to the Niagara River that divides Erie and Niagara Counties.<sup>9</sup> In 1897, North Tonawanda incorporated as a city.<sup>10</sup>

The population of North Tonawanda boomed after its incorporation as a city. Multiple infrastructural advances account for this trend: the arrival of Tesla's alternating current from the Adams Power Plant in Niagara Falls facilitated a spike in industrial productivity, creating even more job opportunities to attract recent immigrants to the United States.<sup>11</sup> Improvements made to the canal system in New York State in the early twentieth century relocated the western terminus of the redesigned Barge Canal from the City of Buffalo to the confluence of the Tonawanda Creek and the Niagara River, and this intersection became the commercial hub of the city.<sup>12</sup> In conjunction with a recent expansion of railway service to the city, these commercial milestones bolstered the lumber industry and attracted large manufacturing companies, both of which promised employment

<sup>3</sup> Larry E. Gobrecht, "North Tonawanda Post Office," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Albany, November, 1986, 8.2.

<sup>4</sup> Caitlin Moriarty, "The Dick Block," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Preservation Studios LLC, Buffalo, September 28, 2012, 9. The more successful of these secondary industries include the Herschel-Spillman Carousel Company, manufacturer of the first carousel, "Tonawanda Machine"; the Richardson Boat Company; and the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, manufacturer of the Wurlitzer Theater Organ. All of these companies made ample use of the available lumber and attracted workers to North Tonawanda.

<sup>5</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," North Tonawanda Public Library, 1997, 3.

<sup>6</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," 4.

<sup>7</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," 5.

<sup>9</sup> Moriarty, "The Dick Block," 8.

<sup>10</sup> Moriarty, "The Dick Block," 8.

<sup>11</sup> Yots, "Ascension Roman Catholic Church Complex," 8.2.

<sup>12</sup> Moriarty, "The Dick Block," 9.

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opportunities to another wave of settlers.<sup>13</sup> By 1890, North Tonawanda was one of the most important lumber ports in United States, shipping over 700 million feet of lumber annually.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the robust lumber industry, a number of manufacturing concerns shaped the landscape of the city. For example, the Niagara River Iron Company opened a factory in the northern portion of the city, earning the name of Ironton for the neighborhood.<sup>15</sup> The location of other companies had a similar effect on the layout of the city, including the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, which drew employee settlement to the northeastern neighborhood of the city.<sup>16</sup> The population of North Tonawanda grew at an impressive rate as a result of industrial progress in the early twentieth century: according to the data from the fourteenth U.S. Census, the population of the city increased from about 9,000 to almost 15,500 between 1900 and 1920.<sup>17</sup>

### Education in North Tonawanda

As more settlers arrived in the North Tonawanda area, a pressing need for a more formal education system for their children emerged. They organized a school district in August of 1836, and a Board of Trustees comprised of James Sweeney, James Lovell, and Loyal E. Evans raised the \$400 necessary to erect a brick schoolhouse on Tremont Street, present day Main Street, the following year.<sup>18</sup> This small schoolhouse, which accommodated no more than 100 students, served the entire community for several decades.<sup>19</sup> When North Tonawanda officially incorporated in 1865, an elected Board of Education replaced the original Board of Trustees as the governing body of the newly established Union Free School District.<sup>20</sup> This new school board immediately updated the education system, allocating \$4,000 for the construction of a new school building on Goundry Street.<sup>21</sup> These educational facilities served the entire North Tonawanda population, but the combination of many families' dependence on children as a source of income and a lack of compulsory education laws accounted for a reduced enrollment. Between the organization of the district and the turn of the century, the Board of Education constructed three more small school buildings within walking distance of growing neighborhoods spread out across Tonawanda. In 1882, the Board of Education constructed a school to serve the growing community north of Wheatfield Street, called the Ironton School (not extant).<sup>22</sup> The Pine Woods School (not extant), built in

<sup>13</sup> Gobrecht, "North Tonawanda Post Office," 8.2.

<sup>14</sup> Gobrecht, "North Tonawanda Post Office," 8.2.

<sup>15</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," 4.

<sup>16</sup> "City of North Tonawanda Centennial Celebration: One Hundred Years of History," 4.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, "Population of Incorporated Places 1920, 1910, and 1900, and Population of Wards of Incorporated Places Having 5,000 Inhabitants or More, 1920," *Fourteenth Census of the United States*, Number and Distribution of Inhabitants, Table 5.1.

<sup>18</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 1.

<sup>19</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 2.

<sup>20</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 2.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 2.

<sup>22</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 3-5.

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1892, served students east of Payne Avenue until the 1970s.<sup>23</sup> The Gratwick School (not extant), built in 1893, served students in the northern neighborhoods of North Tonawanda predominantly populated by lumber yard workers.<sup>24</sup>

In 1894, stronger compulsory education legislation passed by the state promised a surge in enrollment in North Tonawanda, and as the city's population increased, so too did the pressing need for an adequate high school education system. In 1901, the Board of Education commissioned Felton High School, the first high school in the district.<sup>25</sup> The construction of three additional grammar schools followed the completion of the high school. The first of these grammar schools, the Colonel Payne School built on Wheatfield Avenue in 1915, served the developed portion of the city located close to the harbor.<sup>26</sup>

Still, the growing population of the city mandated more facilities, and in 1923, just two decades after the completion of Felton High School, the Board of Education initiated plans for the construction of the another high school to be constructed at 621 Payne Avenue, an address in central location between more developed portions of the city.<sup>27</sup> The plan also included two grammar schools built in 1925 that served burgeoning communities at opposite ends of the city: the Martinsville School served the students to in the Northeastern portion of the city, an area populated by the employees of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company, while the Gilmore School on Gilmore Avenue served the Ironton neighborhood to west the between the Ironton School and the Gratwick School.<sup>28</sup>

### School Design and Standardization in the 1920s and Payne Avenue High School

The rise of industry and the population boom in North Tonawanda coincided with a nationwide educational revolution. Progressive discourses fed an evolution of beliefs about education, sanitation, and public health and safety in the United States during the early twentieth century. Most states and territories passed compulsory education laws around the turn of the century, which not only increased the age range of mandatory school attendance but also obligated a fuller attendance rate.<sup>29</sup> In 1894, New York State strengthened an antiquated and ill-enforced law dating back to 1853, and attendance in the state skyrocketed: between 1894 and 1910, the number of high school aged students enrolled in the public education system grew from 34,058 to 134,865.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 3-5.

<sup>24</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 3-5.

<sup>25</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 3-5, 7, 9. The building was in use until two years prior to its demolition in 1969.

<sup>26</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 9-12.

<sup>27</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 12.

<sup>28</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 9-12.

<sup>29</sup> Suzanne Warren, "Context Study: The Schools of New York State – Development of the School as a Building Type," (New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, 1990), 110.

<sup>30</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 110-111.



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The compulsory education laws also diversified the social strata represented in the pool of eligible students and offered children of immigrants and underrepresented classes as well as disabled students a greater chance to receive a public education.<sup>31</sup>

The reciprocal explosion in student enrollment that followed this Progressive legislation ignited a nationwide building boom as municipal authorities strove to accommodate unprecedented levels of school attendance. Communities across the country built new public schools, and between 1880 and 1910 the number of public schools in the United States increased from 800 to 10,213.<sup>32</sup> In New York State alone, this figure rose from 314 to 636, more than doubling in the decade following the passage of the state's compulsory education legislation in 1894.<sup>33</sup>

Progressive Era reform further contextualizes the architectural trends concurrent with this school building boom. While compulsory education legislation provided the impetus for the construction of these schools, public concern for the health and safety of students influenced their design. Late-Victorian ideas about lighting, ventilation, hygiene, and floor and classroom layout all shaped building regulations, and under the influence of National Education Association, states passed inspection laws to ensure that buildings lived up to the standards advocated by the public.<sup>34</sup> New York State passed the first of these laws in 1904, generating the first wave of statewide school standardization.<sup>35</sup> Architects strove to design the most amenable school buildings and participated in a comprehensive discourse about how best to incorporate school standardization practices into their designs.

The commonality of the fenestration patterns and the layouts of early twentieth century school buildings signal a pervasive responsibility for architects in the era of standardization. In order to palliate concerns about eyestrain and its effects on students, architects drafted floor plans and classrooms that maximized proper lighting.<sup>36</sup> In an influential handbook on school building design from 1889, entitled *Palliser's Common Sense School Architecture*, Palliser and Palliser recommended the following standards in order to ensure the ideal quality of light in a classroom: "unilateral light from the left, a sill height of 3 ½ feet, a distance of only a few inches from window top to ceiling, and a ratio from 1:3 to 1:6 of glass to floor area."<sup>37</sup> Architects adopted these and other fenestration standards that prevented the effects of glare on both students and instructors and

<sup>31</sup> Warren, "The American School Building," 112-113.

<sup>32</sup> Kelsie Hoke, Derek King, and Matthew Shoen, "Buffalo Public School #24," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Preservation Studios LLC, Buffalo, July 26, 2016, 8.7.

<sup>33</sup> Kelsie Hoke, Derek King, and Matthew Shoen, "Buffalo Public School #24."

<sup>34</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 116.

<sup>35</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 117.

<sup>36</sup> Hoke et al., "Buffalo Public School #24," 8.7.

<sup>37</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 124.

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accommodated the layout of desks in different rooms.<sup>38</sup> A dichotomy of typical building shapes emerged as architects maximized the number of windows and minimized dead wall space in each classroom: I-, H-, and E-shaped schools with double loaded hallways allowed architects the necessary leeway to provide more classroom with the recommended amount of natural light without the overuse of blank elevations.<sup>39</sup> These symmetrical building designs often precluded the centralized staircases prevalent in older school buildings, and multiple staircases placed at the terminus of each hallway replaced them as the convention. Tooker and Marsh selected the I-shaped template for Payne Avenue High School, and the existing building verifies the alignment of this decision with the ideals of school standardization: the fenestration of each classroom on either side of the original main hallway allows unilateral lighting, while the auditorium and the gymnasium on either end of this hallway preclude the overuse of blank elevations.

In addition to concerns about the quality of light in the classroom, school standardization pressured architects to focus on ensuring the safety of school buildings. The tragic mishap at the Collinwood School in Cleveland, Ohio propelled fire safety to the forefront of national school standardization concerns. When a fire broke out at the school in 1908, the design of the building prevented the children trapped inside from escaping.<sup>40</sup> The flames rapidly consumed the interior of the building, and only the brick exterior survived.<sup>41</sup> 170 students died as a result of the disaster.<sup>42</sup> Scrutiny of the event revealed that the same factors that exacted the level of destruction existed in many school buildings considered to be state of the art.<sup>43</sup> Dangerous attributes of the Collinwood School, including the layout, with a single central stairwell and narrow halls, as well as the flammable wooden materials and faulty furnace and boiler placement, pervaded schools across the country.<sup>44</sup> In reaction to the tragedy, the architects of school buildings began outfitting their designs with decentralized fireproof staircases and more flame retardant materials like brick, terracotta, and stone.<sup>45</sup> This concern for fire safety also placed a greater emphasis on the aforementioned symmetrical designs, which accommodated multiple decentralized staircases. In line with fire safety standards of the era, Tooker and Marsh placed the original staircases in Payne Avenue High School at either end of the north to south hallway and forwent wooden building materials in favor of cast iron framework. The emphasis on brick and terra cotta materials throughout Payne Avenue High School also aligns with these standards.

As enrollment in schools increased and more families drew ties to the schools in their neighborhood, community enthusiasm elevated the importance of school buildings as civic centers. Municipal authorities

<sup>38</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 125-126.

<sup>39</sup> Hoke et al., "Buffalo Public School #24," 8.8.

<sup>40</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 167.

<sup>41</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 167.

<sup>42</sup> Hoke et al., "Buffalo Public School #24," 8.8.

<sup>43</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 167.

<sup>44</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 167.

<sup>45</sup> Warren, "The Schools of New York State," 169, 171.

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responded to this energy by allocating considerable resources for school building projects and approved designs that included facilities for civic engagement.<sup>46</sup> Coupled with a New York State law from 1916 requiring a school building of eight or more rooms to also have an assembly space, this attitude had a profound effect on school buildings constructed after 1920.<sup>47</sup> Multipurpose facilities, including auditoria for evening gatherings and gymnasias and pools for community use, became the state of the art for school building design, indicating that the public no longer imagined the school as “simply a collection of classrooms in which instruction took place for six or seven hours a day, five days a week.”<sup>48</sup> The school building evolved into a distinguished place between the turn of the century and the 1920s, and given their allocation of funding for the expenses required to qualify school buildings as state of the art, municipal authorities generally endorsed their reimagination. Payne Avenue High School, with not only its auditorium and gymnasium, but also its stately presence on a developing thoroughfare, testified to North Tonawanda’s concentrating interest in the school as a central location for the growth of the identity of the community.

The increase in construction of gymnasias in school buildings of the 1920s corresponded not only with this paradigm shift regarding the import of school buildings, but also with a heightened concern for physical education. The events of World War I emphasized the importance of physical fitness, and as a response to a reported shortfall of able-bodied recruits for the military, New York State passed legislation in 1916 providing that school curriculum include at least twenty minutes of physical activity every day.<sup>49</sup> As a response to this legislation and to the popularization of basketball, architects began outfitting all school designs with gymnasias.<sup>50</sup> Municipalities also began allocating larger plots for school buildings in order to provide space for athletic complexes and playgrounds.<sup>51</sup> Payne Avenue High School, complete with a gymnasium and an added natatorium on the northern end, evidences the architects’ attention to this trend. Concurrently, the pomp and circumstance surrounding the building’s dedication reflected the concern for physical fitness professed by the North Tonawanda Board of Education: when Walter H. Wendell, president of the Board of Education, spoke at the ceremony, the *Tonawanda News* reported that “he urged care of the building by the students, encouraged them to do good work and urged their whole-hearted support of athletics.”<sup>52</sup>

By the 1920s, architects systemized many of the standardization practices adopted in the 1910s, and school designs reflected a relative confidence in established methods.<sup>53</sup> Because of this discourse, the school buildings constructed during this era exhibit similar noteworthy characteristics which can all be traced to concurrent

<sup>46</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 162-164.

<sup>47</sup> Hoke et al., “Buffalo Public School #24,” 8.9.

<sup>48</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 163.

<sup>49</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 222.

<sup>50</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 223.

<sup>51</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 223.

<sup>52</sup> “New North Tonawanda High School, Costing \$650,000, Opened Auspiciously September 7.” *Tonawanda News*, Sept. 16, 1926.

<sup>53</sup> Warren, “The Schools of New York State,” 200.

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progressive concepts. Yet the architects at Tooker and Marsh professed both an intolerance for complacency and rote implementation of school building plans as well as an innovative attitude, an outlook that informed their designs.<sup>54</sup> The school building at 621 Payne Avenue therefore represents the synthesis of regular school standardization practices and Tooker and Marsh's pioneering attempt to hone the design of school buildings of the era.

### Payne Avenue High School

Payne Avenue High School embodies North Tonawanda's municipal effort to synchronize their education system with the ideals of the Progressive Era. Through Tooker and Marsh's design, the Town of Tonawanda School Board expressed an enthusiasm for meeting the contemporary standards of school design, which significantly transformed after the construction of the previous high school building in 1901. They went to great lengths in order to ensure the best facilities for their students, update their education system, and provide a civic center for their community.

Sometime between 1923 and 1924, the North Tonawanda Board of Education adopted a building program that included plans for the construction of a large school building at 621 Payne Avenue in addition to two grammar schools serving developing neighborhoods.<sup>55</sup> The municipality solicited a design for Payne Avenue High School from the architects at Tooker and Marsh, a Manhattan-based firm renowned for its proficiency at school building design.<sup>56</sup> Construction began in the spring of 1925 after unexpected weather delays.<sup>57</sup> Morris & Allan, a contracting firm from Buffalo, carried out the construction for the sum of \$65,000.<sup>58</sup> The following companies provided the building materials used in the construction of the school building: Cramer Hardware Company provided Sargent & Company builders' hardware; Buffalo Tile, Marble and Slate Co., Inc. in North Tonawanda provided the tile, marble, slate, and terrazzo work; Power Efficiency Corporation in Buffalo installed the heating system; and W. G. Palmer Inc. in North Tonawanda provided the lumber and millwork.<sup>59</sup> Fred Fargey of Kenmore, New York installed the hardwood flooring, and Grove Roofing Company of Buffalo roofed the building.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Reginald E. Marsh and E. Post Tooker "General Principles of School Planning and Construction," *Architecture* 42, no. 5 (1920), 317.

<sup>55</sup> "New H.S. Job to Start Soon," *Tonawanda News*, March 11, 1925.

<sup>56</sup> Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, "About the Architecture Firm of Tooker and Marsh," *Pelham Preservation Society, Ltd.*, accessed September 22nd, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> "New H.S. Job to Start Soon," *Tonawanda News*, March 11, 1925.

<sup>58</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School," *Evening News* (Tonawanda/North Tonawanda, NY), Oct. 27, 1926.

<sup>59</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School," *Evening News*, Oct. 27, 1926.

<sup>60</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School," *Evening News* (Tonawanda/North Tonawanda, NY), Sept. 28, 1926.

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Capitalizing on their years of experience in school building design, Tooker and Marsh designed the Payne Avenue building to meet the standard expectations and requirements of the era. The building's original I-shaped layout maximized the capacity for classrooms with ideal natural lighting and allowed the Board of Education to initiate renovations with ease. In accordance with the standards adopted in the early 1920s, Tooker and Marsh outfitted the school building with a gymnasium, complete with bleacher seating, on the northern end, as well as an auditorium, capable of seating nearly 1,000 audience members, on the southern end.<sup>61</sup>

The City of North Tonawanda's optimism during the 1920s defined the outcome of construction. The Board of Education initially allocated roughly \$500,000 dollars for the construction of the school building, signaling the community's investment in the project.<sup>62</sup> The elaborate school building predated most of the development of the neighborhood around Payne Avenue, which was lined with wooden sidewalks and only paved a few blocks past the site of the school.<sup>63</sup> The limited development around the site of the school amplified the symbolic resonance of the undertaking within the community, and in an article accompanying its completion, one writer from the *Tonawanda News* described the school building in the following terms: "As a structure it stands as a beautiful monument to the enterprise of the people of North Tonawanda."<sup>64</sup> The Georgian Revival landmark represented a civic center around which the expanding city grew, providing an epicenter for community activity and the impetus for a local identity.

Upon its completion in 1926, Payne Avenue High School became the definitive high school serving North Tonawanda. Overall, the project cost \$650,000.<sup>65</sup> The former high school, Felton High School, reduced its student body to serve seventh and eighth graders and became the Felton Grammar School.<sup>66</sup>

The Board of Education also adopted measures to ensure that the school building capably served the physical education curriculum mandated by the state. Prior to the building's completion, they drafted plans for a swimming pool addition behind the gymnasium, which contractor James O. Cristina completed in 1928 at the cost of roughly \$50,000.<sup>67</sup> The completion of the sports complex behind the school in 1930 not only provided an outdoor facility for physical education, it also capacitated the formation of the high school's football team.<sup>68</sup> In 1935, the Works Progress Administration completed a project that raised the entire football field by two feet.<sup>69</sup> The facility included a football field with iron goalposts and a quarter-mile cinder block track, all flanked

<sup>61</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 12.

<sup>62</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 12.

<sup>63</sup> *North Tonawanda: Historic Treasures*, ed. Donna Zellner Neal (North Tonawanda: Pioneer Printers, 2011), 426.

<sup>64</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School, Costing \$650,000, Opened Auspiciously September 7." *Tonawanda News*, Sept. 16, 1926.

<sup>65</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School, Costing \$650,000, Opened Auspiciously September 7." *Tonawanda News*.

<sup>66</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 13.

<sup>67</sup> "Contracts Awarded for Swimming Pool in North Tonawanda High School.," *Niagara Falls Gazette*, June 28, 1924.

<sup>68</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 14.

<sup>69</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 15.

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by two grandstands complete with restrooms, concessions stands, and garage storage.<sup>70</sup> The community referred to the field as “the Lumberyard,” after the district’s lumberjack mascot. The field continued to serve as the main athletic complex for the school district through the conversion of the school building into a middle school.<sup>71</sup> The last football game to take place at the athletic field occurred in 1995, one year before the completion of the stadium on Meadow Drive.<sup>72</sup> The grandstands have since been removed, but the iron goalposts still stand.

For the first several years of its occupation, double sessions ensured that the Payne Avenue High School served all of the high school aged students throughout a single school day.<sup>73</sup> Students split time of instruction until 1939, when an addition on the back of the building created enough space for every enrolled student during the regular school day.<sup>74</sup> The adequate space on the back side of Tooker and Marsh’s versatile design facilitated this addition, which optimized the school building’s service to the student body of North Tonawanda. The three story L-shaped addition included more classroom space for instruction on the second floor, as well as a cafeteria below and a study hall above.<sup>75</sup>

The school building served as the Payne Avenue High School for nearly four decades before the Board of Education adopted plans to construct a new school building on Meadow Drive.<sup>76</sup> That new building, completed in 1962, became the Senior High School, and Payne Avenue High School became Payne Avenue Junior High School, marking the end of the period of significance.

### Payne Avenue Junior High School and Lowrey Middle School

Almost a half a century after the construction of Payne Avenue High School, the North Tonawanda Board of Education initiated the last series of renovations for the building. In 1973, they accepted a proposal from the Buffalo architecture firm Foit and Maharan and allocated \$1 million dollars for renovations.<sup>77</sup> Consistent with a nationwide trend toward energy efficiency during the international energy crisis of the 1970s, the renovation included installing dropped ceilings and updated windows. In addition to an update to the interior, the remodel included the installation of equipment for an audio-visual learning center and the resurfacing of the onsite parking lots.<sup>78</sup> In addition to replacement windows throughout the building, the renovation included vinyl tile flooring in some areas over the original hardwood and dropped acoustic tile over the full height plaster ceilings.

<sup>70</sup> Evans, “The History of North Tonawanda Education,” 14-15.

<sup>71</sup> Joe Kraus, “T-NT Countdown #7: Jacks Close out Payne Avenue on Top,” *Logs from the Lumberyard* (Blog). October 16, 2015. <https://logsfromthelumberyard.wordpress.com/2015/10/16/t-nt-countdown-7-jacks-close-out-payne-avenue-on-top/>.

<sup>72</sup> Joe Kraus, “T-NT Countdown #7: Jacks Close out Payne Avenue on Top,” *Logs from the Lumberyard*.

<sup>73</sup> Evans, “The History of North Tonawanda Education,” 12.

<sup>74</sup> Evans, “The History of North Tonawanda Education,” 12.

<sup>75</sup> Evans, “The History of North Tonawanda Education,” 12.

<sup>76</sup> Evans, “The History of North Tonawanda Education,” 22.

<sup>77</sup> *North Tonawanda: Historic Treasures*, 426.

<sup>78</sup> *North Tonawanda: Historic Treasures*, 426.

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While obscuring original materials, these changes did not displace the original historic fabric. On October 12, 1988, Payne Avenue Junior High School was renamed George L. Lowry Middle School in honor of a distinguished former principal and retained the name for the remainder of its service as a school building.<sup>79</sup>

As the population of North Tonawanda declined, the functional necessity of Lowry Middle School depreciated. Following some internal debate and protest from the student body, the North Tonawanda School Board moved to close Lowry Middle School in 2003, citing prospective maintenance costs of \$1.6 million as well as estimated costs of necessary renovations, which ranged from \$3 to \$10 million.<sup>80</sup> The school closed on June 30th, 2004, and the community honored the school's seventy nine years of service with an open house event.<sup>81</sup> Of the 573 students enrolled at the Lowry School, the seventh- and eighth-graders moved to Reszel Middle School, which became the only public middle school in the district, while the sixth-graders dispersed among the elementary schools in the district.<sup>82</sup>

### Tooker and Marsh

In accordance with the City of North Tonawanda School Board, the architectural firm Tooker and Marsh drafted a design for Payne Avenue High School. This design signaled another accomplishment in firm's sequence of successful designs for school building across New York State. In an era of mass school building construction, the firm boasted a well-developed resume: one news report detailing the construction of Payne Avenue High School indicates that Tooker and Marsh's portfolio included over sixty school building designs in New York State.<sup>83</sup> The firm's experience in the field of school building design made it an attractive candidate for municipalities seeking state of the art facilities such as North Tonawanda.

The founding members of Tooker and Marsh, E. Post Tooker and Reginald E. Marsh, began working together in New York City sometime around 1914. Reginald E. Marsh was born in Saratoga Springs, New York, on May 29, 1885.<sup>84</sup> He received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Cornell University and began practicing in 1907, first working as a draftsman for the firm Taylor and Levi in New York City.<sup>85</sup> Prior to starting his own

<sup>79</sup> Evans, "The History of North Tonawanda Education," 13. George L. Lowry served North Tonawanda as a school principal for thirty five years. Beginning in September of 1934, Lowry acted as the principal of the Payne Avenue High School and engineered a more rigorous academic program for the school and its students. Under his direction, more students earned scholarships to college and the catalogue of courses expanded. Lowry retained his position when Payne Avenue High School became Payne Avenue Junior High School.

<sup>80</sup> Bill Michelmore, "Bells toll for two schools," *Buffalo News*, June 13, 2004.

<sup>81</sup> Sean P. O'Neil, "Lowry's last farewell," *Tonawanda News*, June 22, 2004.

<sup>82</sup> Bill Michelmore, "Bells toll for two schools," *Buffalo News*, June 13, 2004.

<sup>83</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School." *Evening News* (Tonawanda/North Tonawanda, NY), Oct. 27, 1926.

<sup>84</sup> Gina Dibella and Saralinda Hooker, "Lincoln School," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, preservation consultants, Canandaigua, September 17, 2015, 13.

<sup>85</sup> Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, "About the Architecture Firm of Tooker and Marsh."

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independent practice in 1913, Marsh worked for several more firms including McKim, Mead and White; Charles W. Leavitt Jr.; and Trowbridge and Ackerman.<sup>86</sup>

E. Post Tooker was born on November 7, 1886 in Port Jefferson, New York.<sup>87</sup> In 1907, he received his degree from Lehigh University and began work as a landscape designer. He worked for two firms, Dean Alvord Company in Belle Terre, New York, as well Charles W. Leavitt Jr in New York City, before beginning his own practice in Manhattan.<sup>88</sup>

Tooker and Marsh both maintained separate practices in the office building at 101 Park Avenue in New York City, and by 1914, the two architects combined their practices under the moniker Tooker and Marsh. The firm emerged as one of the leading firms for school building design in New York State, completing many contracts in Long Island as well in other parts of the state. The firm's portfolio of school designs secured an authority for the architects that carried through the dissolution of the firm in 1946: in 1960, Governor Nelson Rockefeller assigned Marsh to a committee in charge of drafting the standards for all schools in New York.<sup>89</sup> After his partnership with Tooker ended, Marsh worked with several other partners in firms including R. E. Marsh & Starret & VanVleck from 1946 to 1956, R. E. Marsh & Howard Snyder Associates from 1956 to 1965, and R. E. Marsh and Paul Wood from then until his retirement in January of 1966.<sup>90</sup> Few details about Tooker appear in the record after the conclusion of his partnership with Marsh in 1946.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to their well-developed record of school building designs, the firm's report includes the designs of other acclaimed civic and residential projects. Throughout their collaboration on such projects, Tooker and Marsh demonstrated their proficiency at design in a variety of styles. The firm earned recognition for their design for the Bear Mountain Inn (1915, NR 2002), a monumental rustic building that proved their architectural versatility.<sup>92</sup> In 1920, they designed the Studebaker automobile showroom, a gothic revival building in the Bedford Hill Historic District of Brooklyn, New York.<sup>93</sup> The firm also designed large residences in counties surrounding New York City, as well as the colonial revival Brookwood Apartments in Long Island (1938).<sup>94</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, "About the Architecture Firm of Tooker and Marsh."

<sup>87</sup> Dibella and Hooker, "Lincoln School," 13.

<sup>88</sup> Dibella and Hooker, "Lincoln School," 13.

<sup>89</sup> Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, "About the Architecture Firm of Tooker and Marsh."

<sup>90</sup> Dibella and Hooker, "Lincoln School," 13.

<sup>91</sup> Kathy Howe, "The Studebaker Building," National Register of Historic Places Inventory Form, Landmarks Preservation Commission, Brooklyn, Jan. 19, 2001, 4.

<sup>92</sup> Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, "About the Architecture Firm of Tooker and Marsh."

<sup>93</sup> Kathy Howe, "The Studebaker Building," 3.

<sup>94</sup> Kathy Howe, "The Studebaker Building," 3.



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*Tooker and Marsh's School Design*

In the decade leading up to their contract in North Tonawanda, Tooker and Marsh earned widespread esteem in the field of school building design. Many of their successful school designs preceded 621 Payne Avenue, including the High School in Port Jefferson, NY (1914), the High School in Cohoes, NY (1919), and the Lincoln School in Hornell, NY (1924, NR 2015).<sup>95</sup> According to a news report from *Evening News* in North Tonawanda, the firm had reportedly designed over sixty school buildings in the Northeast before their work on Payne Avenue High School.<sup>96</sup>

Tooker and Marsh consolidated their practice in an era during which the school building emerged as a unique typology, and the architects had a stake in participating in the dialogue shaping this typology. In 1920, Tooker and Marsh published an article in the magazine *Architecture* that details the successful principles of school building design. The article, entitled "General Principles of School Planning and Construction," provides a framework for architects undertaking their first school building to follow, and its publication reaffirmed the firm's credibility within this field of architecture.<sup>97</sup> Tooker and Marsh clarify their commitment to excellent school building design from the onset of the article: "The days of the dark, unsanitary, ill-smelling schoolroom are, happily, in the past. The end of the present era of progress is not in sight... There is no greater need to-day than correct information on the matter of school planning and construction."<sup>98</sup>

Tooker and Marsh cover several topics linked to standardization in the article, such as lighting, classroom design, heating and ventilation, and multi-use facilities such as gymnasias and auditorias.<sup>99</sup> Several of these topics directly pertain to the Payne Avenue building. For example, in their discussion of lighting, Tooker and Marsh declare their agreement with the general consensus of the era regarding unilateral lighting as the ideal.<sup>100</sup> They also identify the ideal window layout: "Groups of windows are advisable, thus avoiding shadows from piers."<sup>101</sup> The fenestration of each classroom in Tooker and Marsh's original I-shaped plan for Payne Avenue High School allows natural light to enter from only one direction, complete with bilateral grouping of windows designed to prevent unnecessary shadows.<sup>102</sup> The architects imposed specific restrictions on the entrance of natural light into their school buildings based on the following tenet in their article: "Exposures should be

<sup>95</sup> "Dinner to the Board," *Port Jefferson Echo*, Nov. 7, 1914; "The New Cohoes High School," *The American School Board Journal* 62, (1921), 47; Dibella and Hooker, "Lincoln School"; "New North Tonawanda High School," *Evening News* (Tonawanda/North Tonawanda, NY), Oct. 27, 1926.

<sup>96</sup> "New North Tonawanda High School," *Evening News* (Tonawanda/North Tonawanda, NY), Oct. 27, 1926.

<sup>97</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 315.

<sup>98</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 315.

<sup>99</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 315-318.

<sup>100</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 318.

<sup>101</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 318.

<sup>102</sup> Marsh and Tooker, "General Principles," 318.

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selected so as to eliminate north light as far as possible, except in special rooms.”<sup>103</sup> In a further application of the principles recorded in their article, Tooker and Marsh oriented their building in order to prevent the intrusion of northern lighting on any one classroom by orienting the double loaded main hallway from north to south.<sup>104</sup> This decision ensured that only the gymnasium at the northern terminus of this hallway received northern light.

The body of work they produced indicates Tooker and Marsh’s versatility in their commitment to satisfying the best interests of their commissioners. In their 1920 *Architecture* article, Tooker and Marsh record their paradigmatic approach to each individual contract: “Each locality has its own requirements... It is the exception, rather than the rule, that two school buildings can be built from the same set of plans.”<sup>105</sup> Even a cursory examination of their existent body of work reveals the multitude of styles in which they worked: from the Cohoes School in a Neo Georgian style, to the irregularly shaped Manhasset Junior and Senior High School (1936) in a Tudor Revival style, and to the Collegiate Gothic styled Greenport School (1932), Tooker and Marsh tailored their design style to best fit the context of construction.<sup>106</sup> The Beaux-Arts styled Payne Avenue High School, complete with Corinthian pilasters and a central Palladian window, demonstrates the building’s importance in the community. The neoclassical veneer of the northern wing of the building points to the effort of the architects to preserve the symmetry of the entire façade, protecting the school building’s status as a monument to civic progress in North Tonawanda.

The entrances of the Payne Avenue High School exemplify a number of other principles enumerated in the article. In their article, Tooker and Marsh prioritized accessibility to gymnasias and auditoria in order to accommodate community functions, and entrances allow direct access to both of these amenities on either side of the façade of Payne Avenue High School.<sup>107</sup> In order to maximize entry to these community spaces, each of these entrances consist of three doorways, which all remain articulated on the building’s façade. Steps lead up to these secondary entranceways, but the main entrance of the building opens at ground level. Tooker and Marsh’s discussion of entrances explains this notable aspect of Payne Avenue High School: “Exterior steps should be eliminated as far as snow and ice are

<sup>103</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 315.

<sup>104</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *North Tonawanda, Niagara County, New York*, 1926, sheet 33.

<sup>105</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 315.

<sup>106</sup> Anthony Opalka, “Cohoes Middle School,” National Register of Historic Places Resource Inventory Form, New York State Historic Preservation Office, October 24, 2006; Kurt Kahofer, “Manhasset Junior and Senior High School,” National Register of Historic Places Resource Inventory Form, Town of North Hempstead Department of Planning, Research, Development, January, 1989. Rosemary Skye Morritt, “Greenport Schools/Greenport Union Free School District,” National Register of Historic Places Resource Inventory Form, Southold Town Community Development, September, 1987.

<sup>107</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *North Tonawanda, Niagara County, New York*, 1926, sheet 33.

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possible.”<sup>108</sup> In line with the regular climate of Western New York, Tooker and Marsh designed a main entrance that minimized the potential danger associated with winter weather conditions.<sup>109</sup>

In the article, Tooker and Marsh also cover several significant insights into their methods when designing a building that impacted quality and longevity. These insights include their discussion of designs that accommodate future additions, an aspect of their design philosophy on display at Payne Avenue High School. The article ascertains that neglecting the potential for growth in a district leads to unnecessary expenses in the future: “Frequently the problem of enlarging old buildings is presented, and, more often than not, the architect finds that the original scheme has not been planned for this enlargement, and considerable alteration becomes necessary. This lack of foresight has cost many communities large sums.”<sup>110</sup> Tooker and Marsh intentionally avoided this pitfall with their design for Payne Avenue High School, taking projected population growth in North Tonawanda into account and planning a building with the potential to expand based on the community’s needs. In accordance with this forward-thinking approach, the addition on the eastward side of the original building enabled by the I-shaped plan clearly articulates the reasoning of the architects in consideration of North Tonawanda’s projected population growth.

The article as a whole presents an analytical view of school standardization. In their analysis, Tooker and Marsh recognize many of the fundamental tenets of contemporary school standardization, such as the need to outfit schools with facilities in line with their growing civic importance, as well as the placement of major importance on standardized ventilation.<sup>111</sup> On the other hand, they advise other architects to take precaution against complacency and advocate for school building designs that attune to the specific objectives of a project, citing their belief that “in many States [sic.], incorrect standardization is doing fully as much harm as under-standardization in others.”<sup>112</sup> The philosophy of school building design contended in the article indicates the careful attention that Tooker and Marsh lent to each of their projects, each of which demanded unique considerations based on the needs of the community it served.

In accordance with this principle, Tooker and Marsh tailored the holistic designs of their school building projects to fit the discrete necessities of the community at hand. A number of existing examples across New York State testify to this proficient inclination. They acclimated their design for the high school building in Cohoes based on the conditions of the selected plot, an irregularly shaped plateau bordering

<sup>108</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 318.

<sup>109</sup> Sanborn Map Company, *North Tonawanda, Niagara County, New York*, 1926, sheet 33.

<sup>110</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 317.

<sup>111</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 317.

<sup>112</sup> Marsh and Tooker, “General Principles,” 316-317.

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the main thoroughfare.<sup>113</sup> Foregoing the more prevalent school building shapes, Tooker and Marsh based the plan for the school on a y-shape, which afforded an angular leniency and a façade visible from multiple vantages.<sup>114</sup> They expected droves of tourists passing through Cohoes on their way to the Adirondack region to catch sight of the school and therefore created an ostentatious façade that signaled the municipal success of the Cohoes community.<sup>115</sup> Payne Avenue High School represents a similar moment in this pattern. Provided with ample space in the emerging Payne Avenue neighborhood of North Tonawanda, Tooker and Marsh designed a large building parallel to a thoroughfare with intensifying significance. The distinct landmark on Payne Avenue encapsulates the spirit of progress driving North Tonawanda in the early twentieth century.

### Summary

Payne Avenue High School embodies the trends that guided the municipal history of North Tonawanda and draws its significance from the architects' approach to its design. The school building signals the confluence of school standardization practices of the early twentieth century and Tooker and Marsh's paradigmatic approach to school design. The original I-shaped design in combination with the multiple additions to the building testify to Tooker and Marsh's proficient ability to take into account the anticipated needs of the community, while the classroom designs demonstrate their consideration of proper school standardization protocol. The monumental building served an integral role in the evolution of the North Tonawanda community, strengthening the local identity while serving multiple generations of students.

<sup>113</sup> "The New Cohoes High School," *The American School Board Journal* 62, (1921), 47.

<sup>114</sup> "The New Cohoes High School," *The American School Board Journal* 62, (1921), 47.

<sup>115</sup> "The New Cohoes High School," *The American School Board Journal* 62, (1921), 47.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated with a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

This parcel includes all the property historically and presently associated with Payne Avenue High School.



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Payne Avenue High School

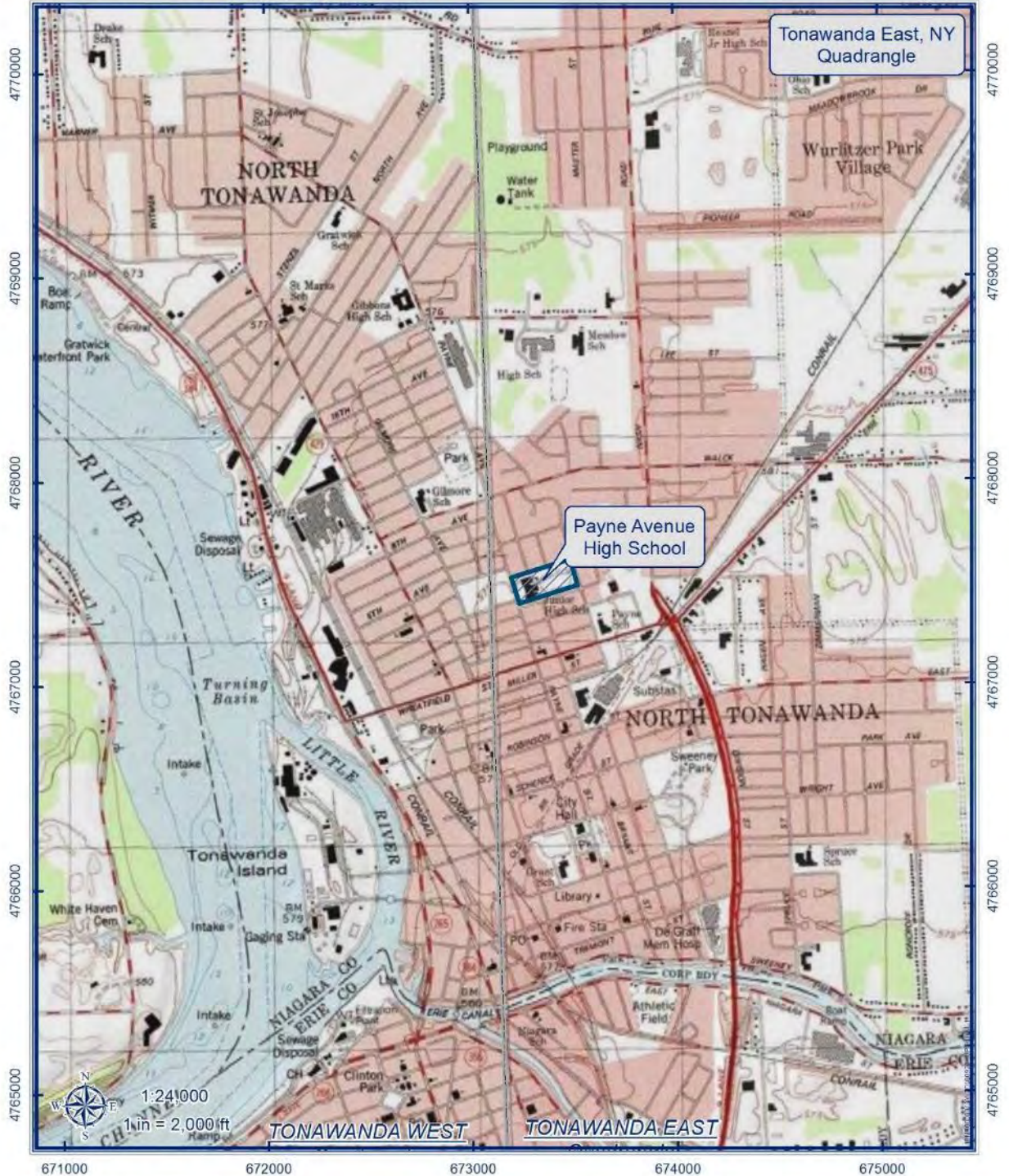
Name of Property

Niagara County, New York

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Payne Avenue High School  
North Tonawanda, Niagara Co., NY

621 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120



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

0 5501,100 2,200 Feet

Payne Avenue High School



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Payne Avenue High School

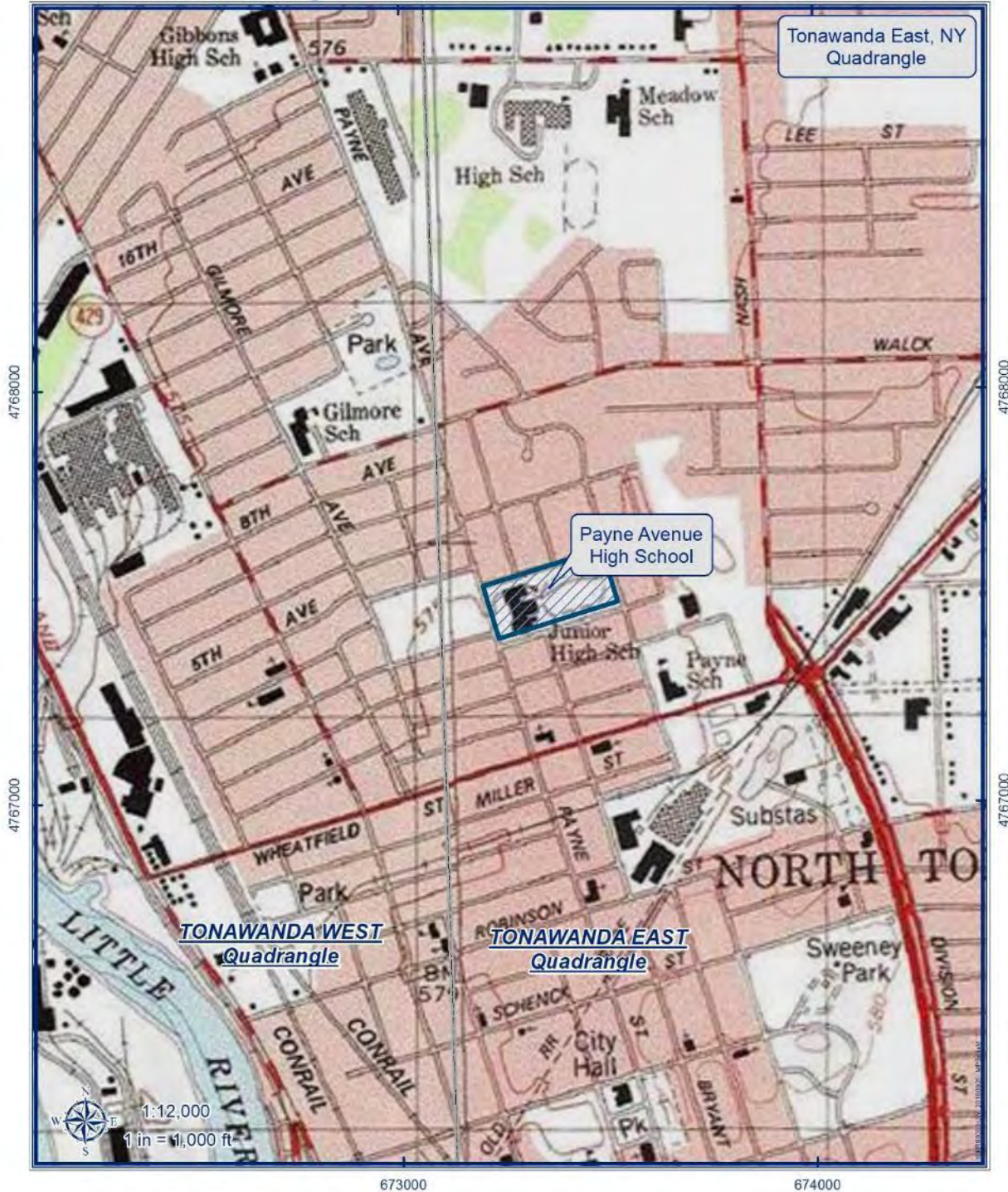
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Niagara County, New York

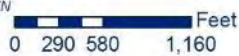
County and State

Payne Avenue High School  
North Tonawanda, Niagara Co., NY

621 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
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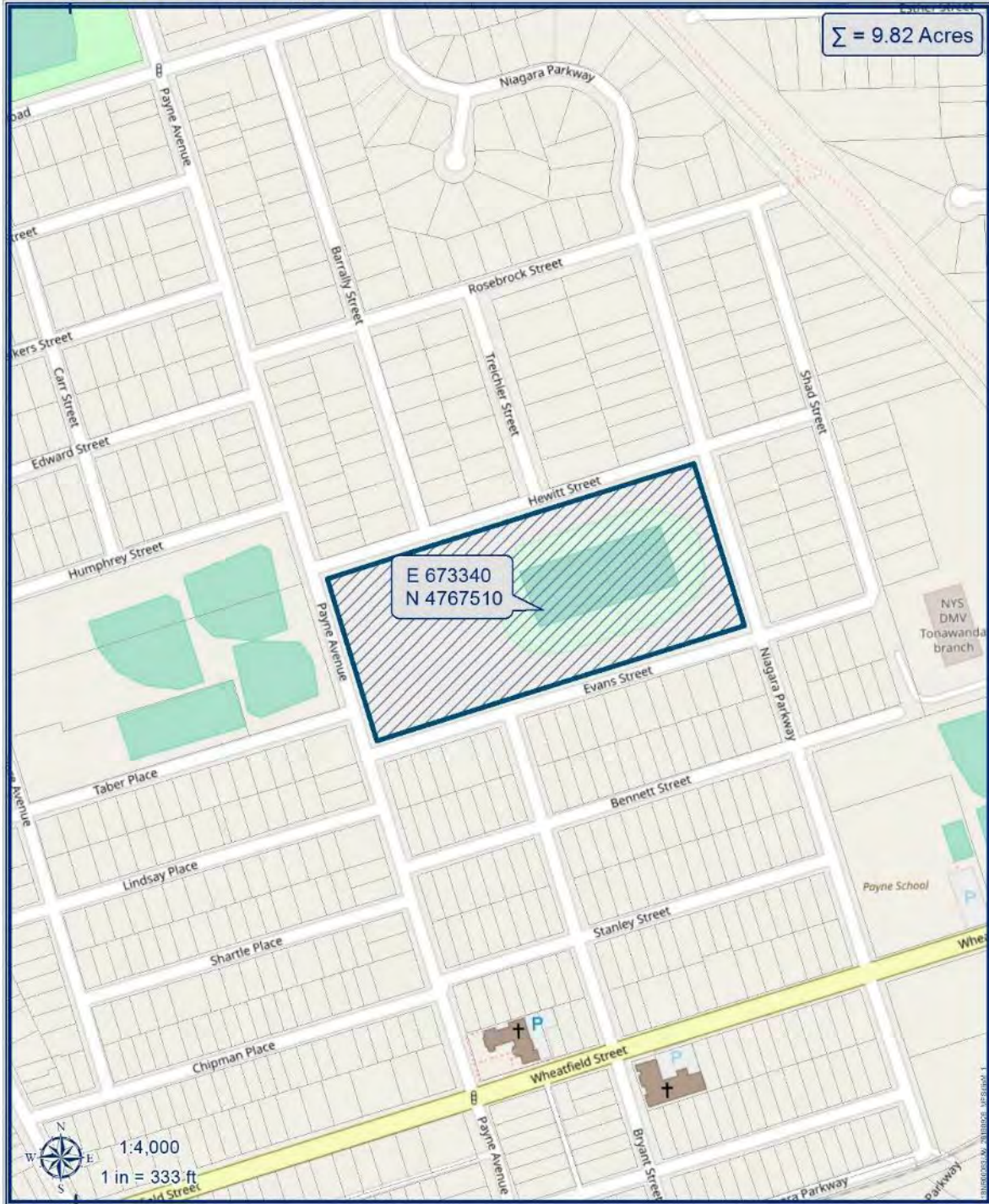
Name of Property

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Payne Avenue High School  
North Tonawanda, Niagara Co., NY

621 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120



673000

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



Payne Avenue High School



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621 Payne Ave.  
North Tonawanda, NY 14120



673000

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



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List of Photographs

Name of Property: Payne Avenue High School  
City or Vicinity: City of North Tonawanda  
County: Niagara  
State: NY  
Name of Photographer: Derek King, Michael Puma  
Date of Photographs: August 2017  
Number of Photographs: 13

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_001

West elevation, camera facing east.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_002

Northwest corner and west elevation, camera facing southeast

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_003

West elevation, main entry detailing, camera facing east, up.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_004

West elevation, detail, cornice above entry, camera facing east, up.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_005

West elevation, camera facing northeast.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_006

South elevation, camera facing northwest

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_007

East elevation, camera facing northwest

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_008

Interior, auditorium, camera facing southwest.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_009

Interior, gymnasium, camera facing southeast

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_010

Interior, first floor hallway, camera facing east.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_011

Interior, first floor, classroom, camera facing northeast.

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NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_012  
Interior, second floor, classroom, camera facing south.

NY\_Niagara County\_Payne Avenue High School\_013  
Interior, first floor, classroom, camera facing southwest.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

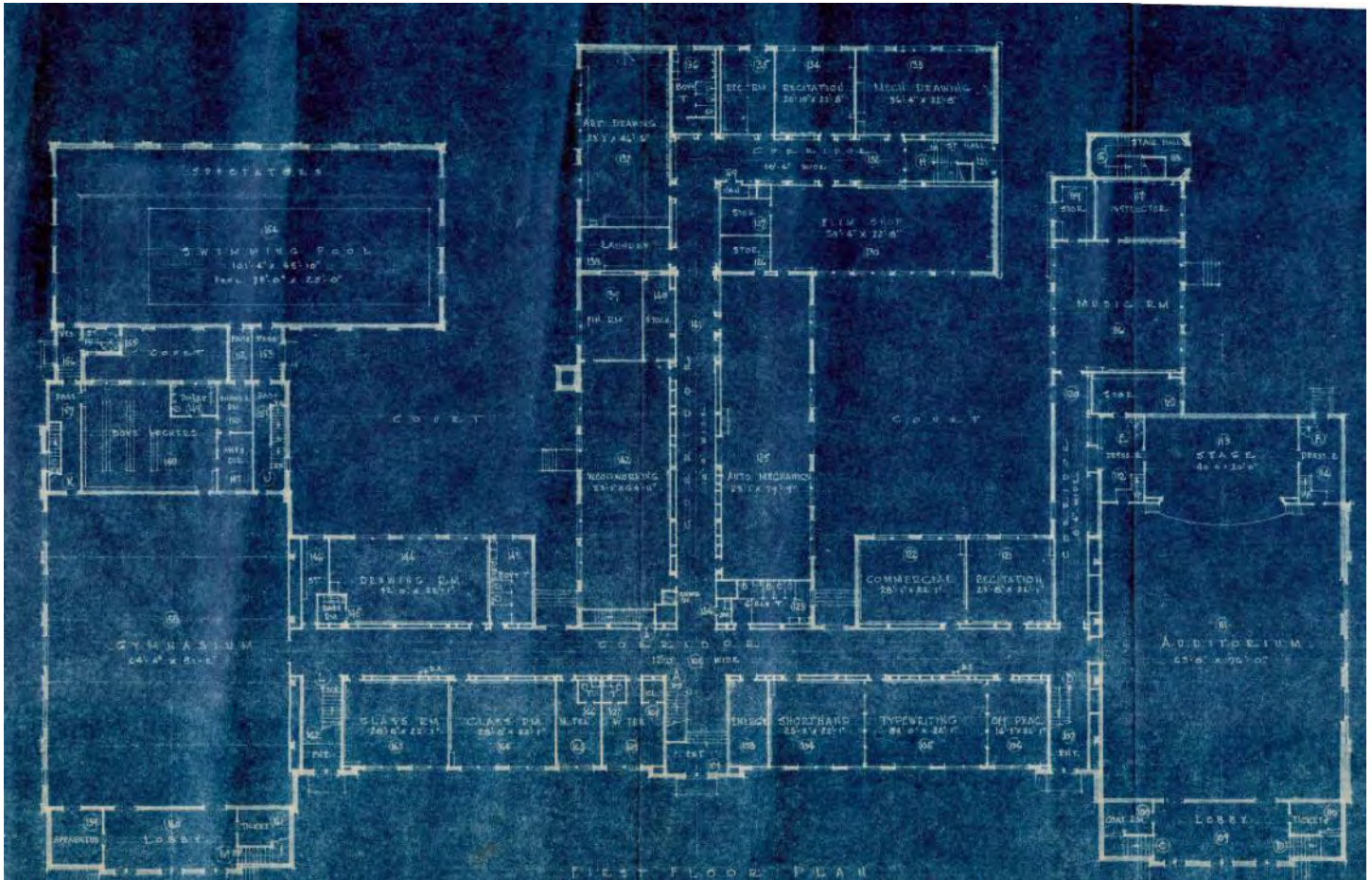
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 3

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State

Additional Information

The following plans are from the 1925 plans prepared by Tooker & Marsh for the addition of the swimming pool.



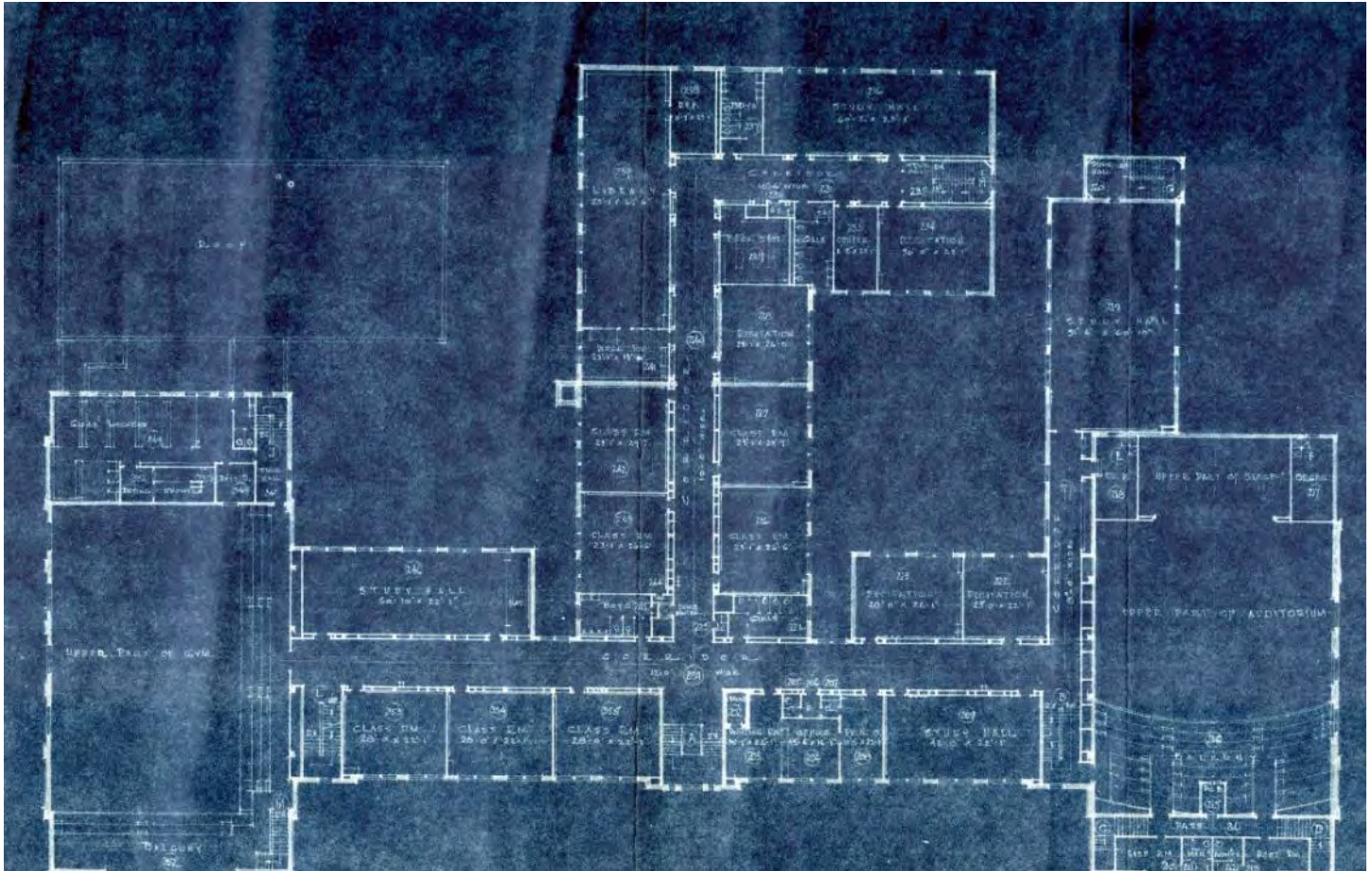
First Floor Plans

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 4

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



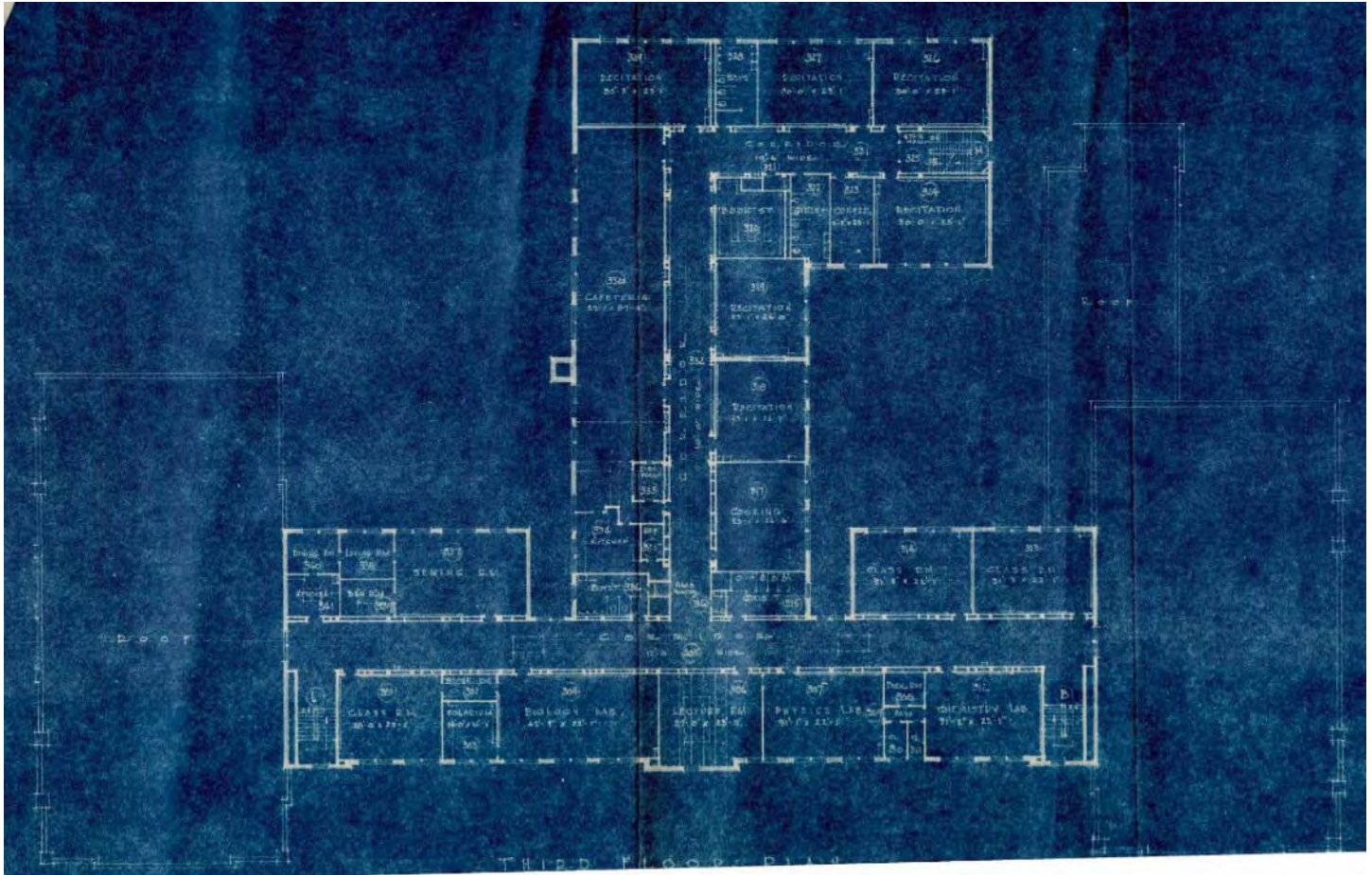
Second Floor Plans

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 5

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



Third Floor Plans

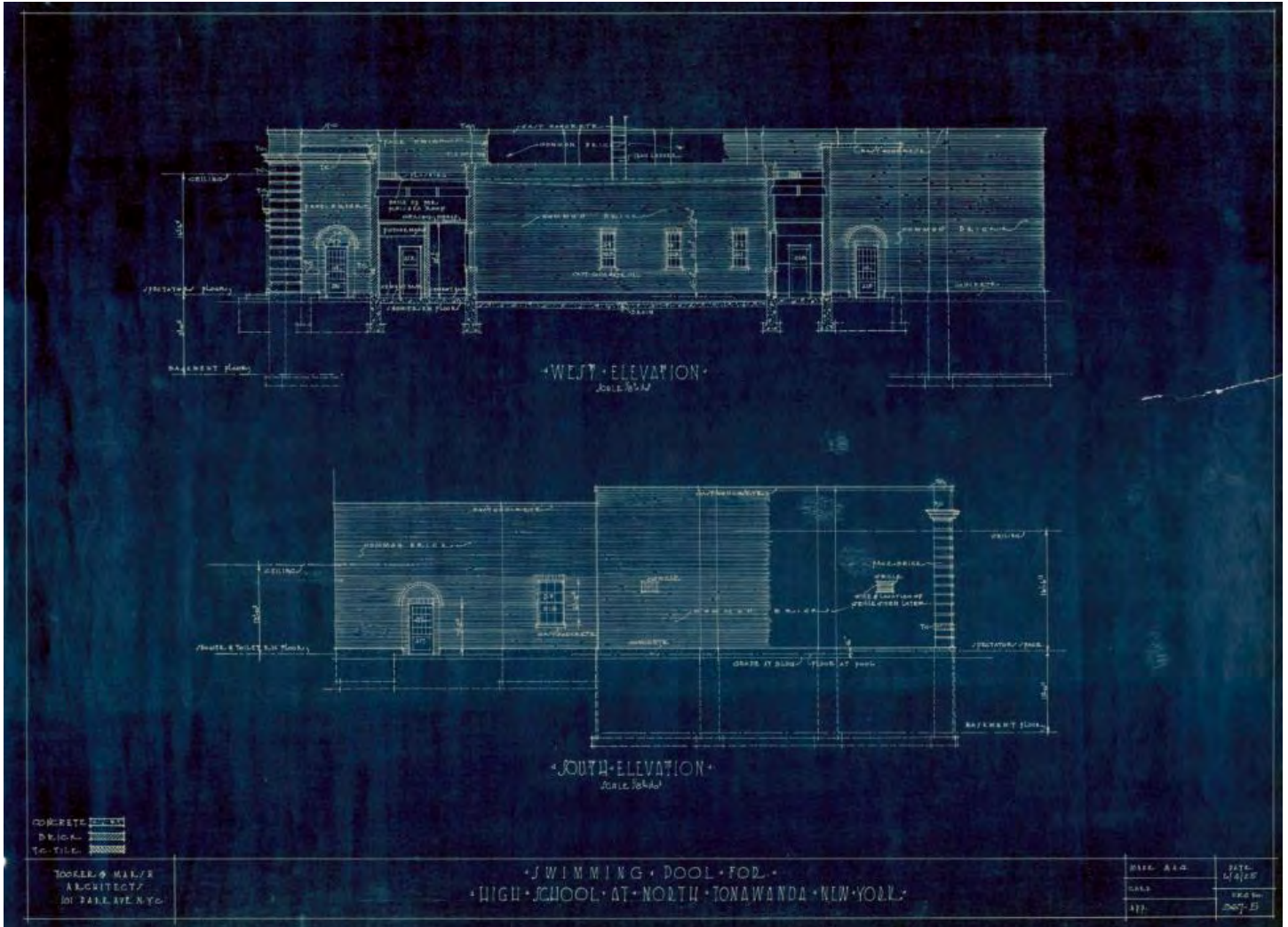


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 6

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



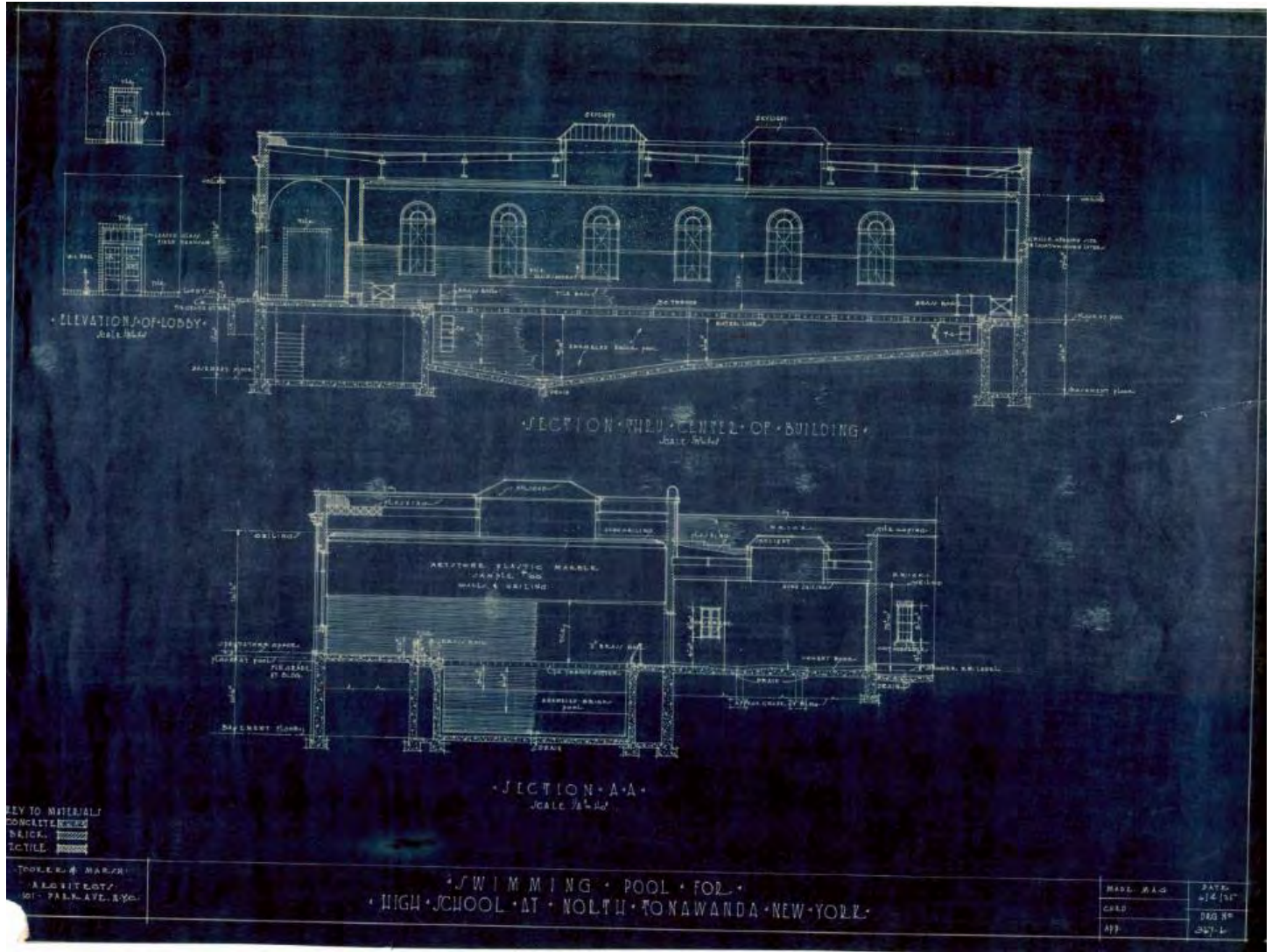
Pool Addition

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 7

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



Pool Addition

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 8

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



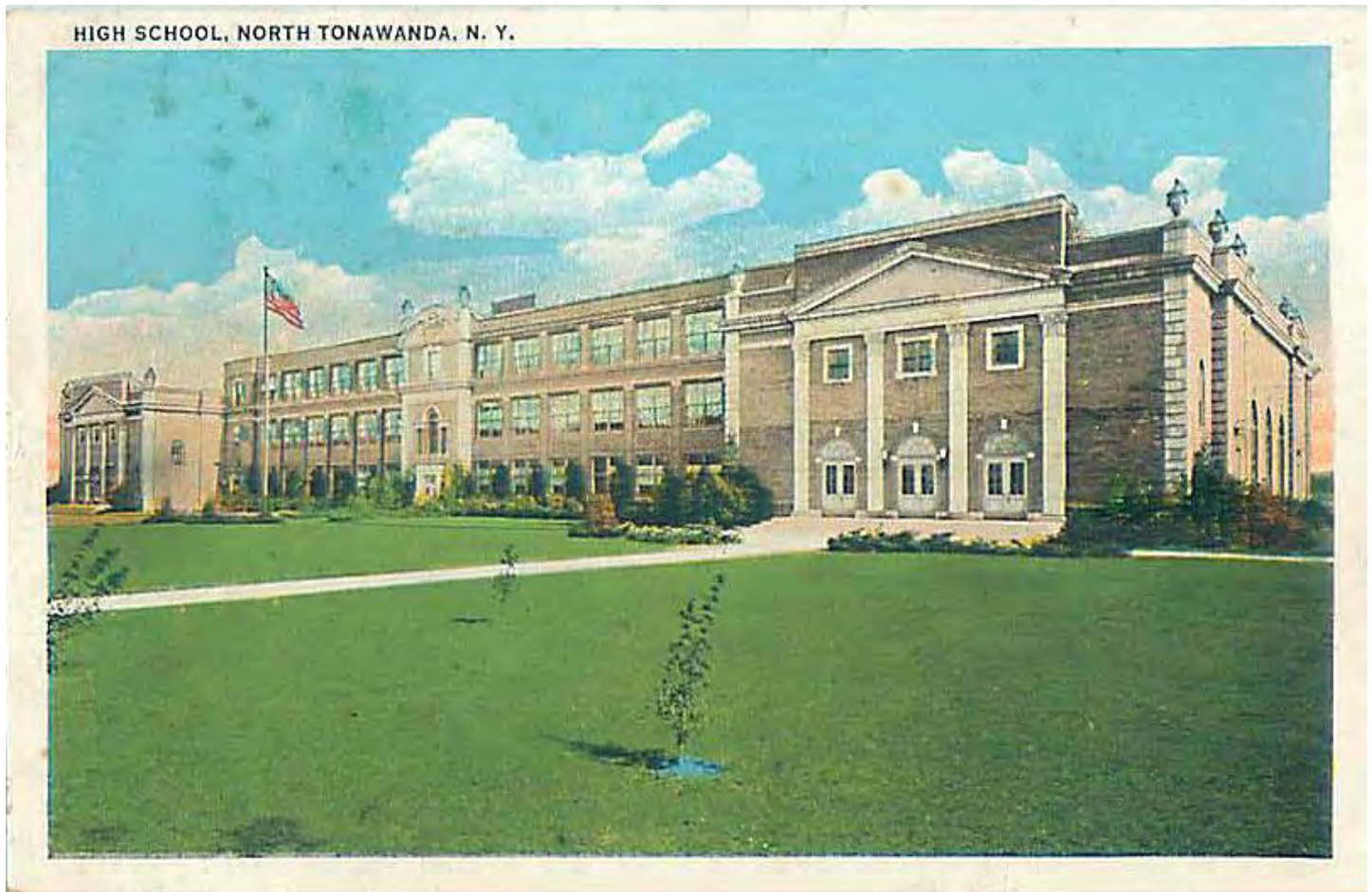
Payne High School, c. 1940, showing the school and athletic fields. Note also the vacant land to the north and east of the school. Available at [nthistory.com](http://nthistory.com).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 9

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
Niagara County, New York  
County and State



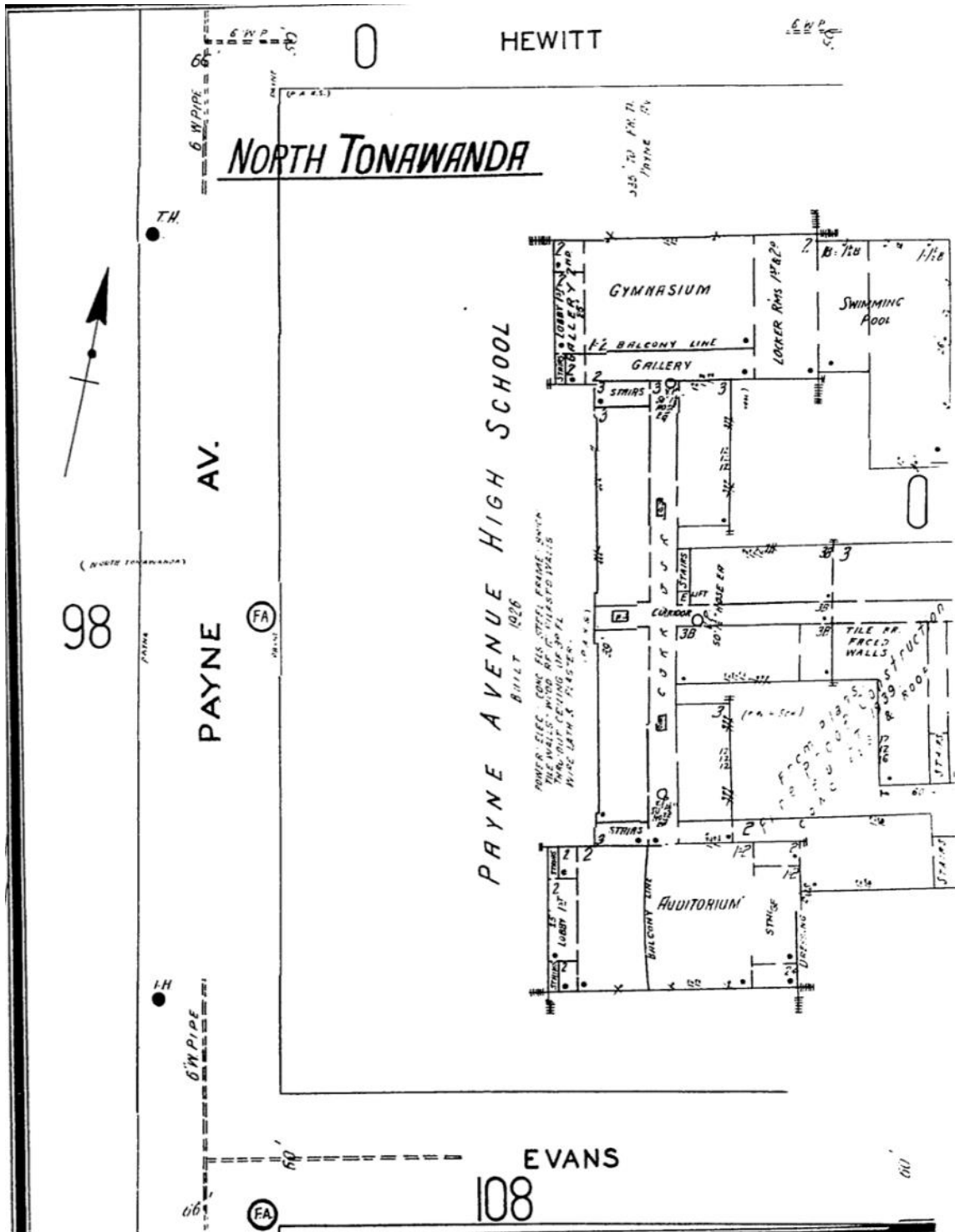
Payne High School, c. 1950, nthistory.com

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 10

Payne Avenue High School  
Name of Property  
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Payne Avenue High School, 1910 Sanborn corrected to 1951, Sheet 33.



GEORGE L. LOWRY MIDDLE SCHOOL





GEORGE L. LOWRY MIDDLE SCHOOL







GEORGE L. LEVINE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Two people walking on a path in the foreground.





GEORGE J. VETTER STADIUM







EXIT

FIRE EXTINGUISHER



DARKROOM  
IN USE







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 1/28/2019      Date of Pending List: 2/12/2019      Date of 16th Day: 2/27/2019      Date of 45th Day: 3/14/2019      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      3/7/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Alexis Abernathy  Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2236 Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ROSE HARVEY**  
Commissioner

17 December 2018

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places

Mail Stop 7228

1849 C Street NW  
Washington DC 20240

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

St. Anthony of Padua Church Complex, Onondaga County (2owners, 0 objections)  
Fort Wood Creek Site, Oneida County  
Monarch Knitting Company Factory, Erie County  
Payne Avenue High School, Niagara County  
Buildings at Niagara and Seventh Streets, Niagara County (1owner, 0 objections)  
Richmond Hill Historic District, Queens County (189 owners, 0 objections)

The Richmond Hill district is located within a certified local government (New York City). In response to our initial letter and copy of the draft, the New York SHPO received a letter from the local commission (New York City LPC) stating that the LPC had concerns about whether or not the district met the criteria (letter enclosed). After receiving this letter, we wrote to and then called the LPC to determine whether the commission believed that the district should not be nominated. In conversation and written communication (also enclosed), the commission's director of research assured me that the commission had no objections to it being nominated to the National Register and would defer to the opinion of the SHPO. Please note that this district also has support from the Historic Districts Council and the New York City Department of Parks. The district is widely supported in the community. There was no communication from the mayor's office. 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