NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

RECEIVED
2280
OCT 28 2016
Natl. Reg. of Historic Places
National Park Service

845

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 **BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOL #24 (PS 24)**

other names/site number Public School 59

2. Location

street & number 775 Best Street [ ] not for publication

city or town Buffalo [ ] vicinity

state New York code ___ county Erie code 029 zip code 14211

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Ruth A Pierpont DSHPO — 10/20/16
Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[X] 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 — date of action 12.13.16

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

[X] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-State
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

[X] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		**TOTAL**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20th CENTURY
REVIVALS/neoclassical

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone
walls Sandstone
roof Asphalt
other

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

[**X**] **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.

[**X**] **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)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance:

1901-1965

Significant Dates:

1901, 1960, 1965

Significant Person:

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder:

Charles Day Swan (Architect)

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):

[**X**] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. **NPS #33,032**
[ ] 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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .44 acres

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	678524	4752151	3	17		
2	17			4	17		

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Derek King, Matthew Shoen/Historians; Kelsie Hoke, M.A./Project Manager
[Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization Preservation Studios, LLC date 7/26/2016

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

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14208

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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

name Parkview Apartments of Buffalo, LLC c/o David Alexander

street & number 777 Brickwell Avenue, Suite 500 telephone 305-721-2773

city or town Miami state FL zip code 33131

Narrative Description of Property

The former elementary school known as Public School #24 (PS 24) is located on the East Side of Buffalo, New York, at the southeast corner of Best and Fillmore Streets in the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Directly across the street to the north is Frederick Law Olmsted's Humboldt Park, now named Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. The area to the east and west is primarily residential with a housing stock dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. South of the school, Genesee Street, a primary traffic artery on the East Side, runs southwest to northeast and contains a mix of commercial buildings as well as vacant lots. The school itself faces the park to the north and occupies a half-acre parcel at 775 Best Street. It is built almost to the lot line at the front with an approximately ten-foot-deep grassy lawn to the west. The area directly to the east and south of the school is paved in asphalt and used as the property's own parking space.

Designed by architect Charles Day (C.D.) Swan, the school building was constructed in 1901 as part of a two-building campus. Although the earlier part of the complex has been demolished, the nominated building alone is significant for its association with the themes documented in this nomination, as it is from a different era. It is I-shaped in plan and oriented north-south with the principal and rear elevations occupying the shorter bars of the "I" and the longer sides forming the side elevations. In style, the building is austere and stylized Neoclassical. It rises three stories in height over a raised basement and has a flat roof. The primary exterior material is red brick; however, the building also incorporates sandstone, terra cotta, and pressed metal details. On the interior, the building has a typical double-loaded corridor plan with staircases at each side and at the front of the building. In addition, almost all of the original features and finishes remain on the interior. Though some updates have been made to finishes in the past thirty years and the building has been empty since 2002, PS 24 is in a very good state of repair and retains its setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling.

Exterior

PS 24 is seven bays in width and eleven bays in length. The raised basement, set upon a short sandstone base, is clad in common bond brick and terminated by a rough-hewn sandstone belt course. At the first floor level, the brick is laid in a pattern that mimics rustication and is capped by a stone cornice. A rough-hewn sandstone sill course is present at the second floor. Stylized Doric brick pilasters define each of the bays in the second and third stories and have sandstone capitals which transition into a stone architrave wrapping the building. Above, a deep, denticulated, pressed-metal cornice wraps the building and has windows in the frieze and a pair of oversized brackets above each pilaster. A parapet three feet in height completes the elevations and breaks to respond to each of the pilasters below. Each of the window openings contains a pair of windows and, apart from those in the frieze, has a rough-hewn sandstone sill and lintel. The basement retains most of its original, two-over-two, double-hung wood sash windows. Those in the upper floors were replaced in the 1960s with double-hung wood sash with a three-over-three, horizontal light pattern. The full exterior of the building has been

painted with red and pink on the brick, pale grey on the sandstone elements, and a deep red on the pressed metal cornice.

Primary Facade

The primary façade facing Best Street is symmetrically composed of seven bays. Three regular bays as described above flank a slightly projecting and more articulated center bay. At the ground floor of the center bay is a double-story arch that encompasses the basement and first floors and contains the primary entrance to the building. It springs from rusticated piers with stylized capitals and has an archivolt intersected by voussoirs with a scrolled keystone at the center. A large spandrel panel divides the opening within, creating an arched, divided-light transom above and a double-door entry with sidelights below. Above the arch, paired, oversize brackets support a denticulated cornice. In the upper stories, the central bay is articulated with brick rustication and continuous sandstone sill and lintel courses. A Chicago-style window with molded brick mullions is present at the second and third floors. Small Chicago-style windows are also present in the frieze and are flanked by decorative stone paterae. The center bay is crowned by a slight pediment in the parapet with a carved oval plaque bearing the date of construction at its center.

West Elevation

The asymmetrical side elevation of PS 24 fronts onto Fillmore Street. Representing the longer middle bar of the I-shape, this elevation is composed of an eight-bay central portion framed by two-bay projecting pavilions. The northern pavilion is blank apart from framing pilasters at the corners while the southern pavilion contains two regular bays. In the central portion, the northernmost bay contains a projecting arched entryway at the ground floor. The brick arch springs off of simple brick piers with a stone frieze and cornice and has a voussoired brick archivolt above. Within the arched opening, a spandrel panel at the height of the frieze separates an arched, divided-light transom above from original wood double doors below. “Girls” is inscribed on the spandrel panel, indicating that this was the original entry for the school’s female pupils. The projecting entryway is capped by a stone cornice. Above, Chicago-style windows light intermediate landings of an interior staircase.

The remaining seven bays are disposed three to each side of a blank, central bay in the same plane as the pilasters. Each of the three, flanking bays are identical and as described above.

East Elevation

The east elevation is nearly identical to the west elevation. On this side the entryway has “Boys” inscribed in the frieze and the center blank bay has a single window opening at each floor. In addition, there is a non-original, single-story, flat-roofed, CMU coal shed in the three northern bays; it has two flush steel doors on its eastern face.

South (rear) elevation

The rear elevation is largely symmetrical. At the center is a slightly projecting central bay with a pair of window openings at each floor; on the eastern side, these have been filled in at the second and third floors. In the outer bays, a single window opening is present at each floor. The detailing is reduced on this elevation with a simplified cornice across all but the center bay and pilasters framing just the outside edges. At the ground floor, a single-story, flat-roofed, CMU addition has laterally expanded an original basement egress enclosure to the south. Its southern face has three, one-over-one windows set in a simple, jack-arched masonry opening.

Interior

As previously mentioned, PS 24 is I-shaped in plan (See Figures 1-4) and composed of a north-south central block, with two, smaller, east-west blocks at the ends. Each floor is arranged around a double-loaded corridor that bisects the building from north to south. In the central north-south block, the floor plans are flipped mirror images of one another. On the western side of the hall, a main stair in the northwest corner communicates with each floor as well as the Girls' entrance at grade. The remainder of the space is occupied by two classrooms with closets and a large airshaft located in between them. The plan on the east side of the hallway is similar. Here, the stair is in the southeast corner and two classrooms flank what was originally a large airshaft one bay in width and as deep as the classrooms. Additional classrooms occupy the corners of the northern east-west block, while the southern east-west block contains boys' and girls' bathrooms with adjacent coatrooms along their northern walls. Floorplans for the first through third floors are identical except for a slight variation at the first floor where a teachers' room and principal's office occupy the space of the classroom in the northeast corner of the central block. In addition, a staircase leads from the front entry at grade level to the first floor above the raised basement in the northern end.

PS 24 was designed to specifically house classroom spaces and, rather uncommon in school design, contained no large meeting spaces such as a cafeteria or gymnasium which would become standard features in later standardized schools. The original 1901 plans do specify that the main corridor in the basement was also an "Assembly Room" (see Figure 1); however, there were no details for a stage, seating, or other auditorium features, nor is there any evidence that these were built.

PS 24 retains a great majority of its original interior finishes. The building has large, airy windows and fourteen-foot-high ceilings throughout with original millwork surrounding almost all of the doors, windows, and chalkboards. The lower two-thirds of the walls are clad in an original ceramic tile with a non-original vinyl base while the upper portion is the original plaster. Above, all of original pressed tin ceilings are present along with pressed tin cornices. It is likely that all of the original hardwood flooring is also present throughout the building; however, it is only visible in the coatrooms and obscured by later finishes in the classroom and hallways.

Each of the staircases in the building is original and retains its original decorative cast-iron railings and wood handrail. The treads and risers are also cast iron but these have been covered with vinyl tile. Each of the hallways is twelve feet in width and would originally have been lit by large windows at both ends, but later partitions have enclosed the ends of the hallways in many cases. The classroom doors establish a consistent rhythm along both sides of the hallway and each has a large transom above it, though these have been filled in. Owing to generous enclosed plenum spaces between the hallway and classroom walls (see Figures 1 through 4), the doorways also feature deep entries paneled in original millwork. The walls in the hallways, including the tiled portion, have been painted and each of the hallway floors has been carpeted.

A typical classroom is thirty-two-feet wide and twenty-feet deep with three banks of paired windows and chalkboards on two of the remaining walls. Like the hallways, both the plaster and the tiled portions of the classroom walls have been painted. Modern fluorescent lighting is suspended from the ceiling in most cases, though with minimal impact to the pressed tin ceilings above. Each of the classrooms has either vinyl tile or carpeting over the original hardwood below.

Two large airshafts, mentioned above, were originally located in between the classrooms on the east and west sides of the building and played a large role in providing the air circulation required during this era of school design. On the eastern side of the building, the airshaft remains intact. On the western side of the building, only the eastern half of the shaft is intact as a later alteration converted the other half into small single bathrooms.

The basement (see Figure 1) is accessed by both of the corner staircases. A boiler room and mechanical space are located along the eastern side of the central hallway and have concrete floors with exposed masonry walls. In the eastern corners of the east-west blocks are boys' and girls' bathrooms, with playrooms and storage spaces occupying the whole of the western side of the building. In the finished spaces, the lower portion of the walls is tiled, as on the upper floors, but at this level they are also capped by a millwork cornice. Floors are of concrete throughout, but ceilings are a mix of suspended gypsum, pressed tin, and exposed beams with exposed ductwork.

The attic is also accessed by both of the corner staircases. Apart from masonry bearing walls that carry up from the floors below, the space is open and head heights are high enough to walk about. Currently, the space contains large ducting and smaller electrical and mechanical pipes and conduits. The plenum space in between the interior walls of the building is accessible from this space.

Statement of Significance:

Located at 775 Best Street in Buffalo, Erie County, New York, Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24) is significant as the first school to offer special education within the City of Buffalo school system. Beginning in the 1930s, PS 24 housed several "sight-saving" classes, and over the following decade the building not only became the "headquarters" of sight saving classes and courses for the blind but also for several programs designed for students with learning and intellectual disabilities, predating state and federal laws regulating education for all students with special needs. Prior to this era, children with special needs were often trained in separate school facilities or simply were not educated at all, so PS 24 played a key role in the integration of special education programs into the city school district. PS 24 is significant under Criterion A in the area of Education for its association with the city's implementation and expansion of these programs between 1930 and 1965.[1]

Architecturally, PS 24 reflects a transitional era in school design. Designed by local architect Charles Day (C.D.) Swan and completed in 1901, PS 24 combines elements of earlier school design from the late Victorian era with new and emerging scientifically based theories on school planning and function. The exterior of the building reflects a relatively elaborate, decorative Classical Revival scheme that seems akin to the high-style, individualistic schools common in Buffalo throughout the late nineteenth century. However, within this highly designed exterior envelope were contained many elements of the emerging scientifically studied standardized school planning that would dominate school design in the 1910s and 20s. The building reflects considerations to fire safety, heating, ventilation, and interior lighting, all intended to provide students with a quality education and better provide for their safety; concerns that would become hallmarks of standardized school planning. As a good representative example of the work of C.D. Swan and because it reflects the evolution of school architecture in Buffalo at the turn of the twentieth century, PS 24 merits consideration under criterion C in the area of Architecture.

The period of significance for PS 24 begins with its construction in 1901 and ends in 1965 with the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which prompted Buffalo to create a new special education "demonstration center" in Public School 28 at 1515 South Park Avenue in South Buffalo. This era encompasses all major architectural developments at the building, as well as marks the era in which the school was most active in serving the education needs of the local community.

[1] Please note that some of the sources referenced in this discussion use language that is outdated and may be considered inappropriate or offensive compared to the current understanding of intellectual and physical disabilities. The terminology used here is contemporary to the period of the nominated school, and the references remained unedited in order to ensure an accurate depiction of the development of special education in Buffalo and at PS 24.

History of Schools in Buffalo, New York, 1837-1901

In 1837, Buffalo became the first city in New York to enact legislation to create a public school system. This feat was organized by Oliver Gray Steele, who had moved to Buffalo ten years prior. Working as president of the Buffalo Waterworks and manager of the Buffalo Gaslight Company, Steele also served as superintendent of schools for three different terms.[2] By 1839, enrollment in city schools had increased from 179 to 1,500. The city encouraged further enrollment by making education free to all children under the age of sixteen. In order to facilitate this new system, Superintendent Steele divided the city into fifteen school districts and paid for its implementation through increased taxation, setting up Buffalo as one of the earliest cities possessing a free public school system.[3]

The Buffalo school system expanded again when the city annexed Black Rock in 1853 and experienced rapid population growth due to the city's industrialization near the end of the twentieth century. Throughout its first sixty years, the Buffalo school district went from serving the needs of 1,500 students in six schools to educating 56,000 in sixty schools.[4] In 1893 the city took another progressive step forward by providing textbooks, free of charge, to the student body.

The combination of a more favorable school environment, the increasing population of Buffalo, and increased educational requirements from the state prompted two major building phases for Buffalo city schools. The first era lasted from 1881-1910 and saw the construction of 43 new elementary schools. The second phase lasted from 1921-1930 and led to the construction of twenty-four new buildings and twenty-six additions onto already existing structures.[5] Enrollment peaked in the 1930s when Buffalo claimed 95,000 enrolled students. That number would decline with overall population in the following years.

The 1890s in particular was a time of exceptional school growth, coinciding with the expansion of Buffalo. Industrial growth and an influx of immigrants necessitated the aforementioned first major wave of school construction. Prior to this expansion, classes were taught in rented spaces or annexes as schools struggled to accommodate a growing student body with ever diversifying needs. As a response to this, the city initiated construction in 1893 of seven new schools, each located south of Hertel Avenue.[6]

Superintendent Steele helped create the system that would carry Buffalo's education into the twentieth century, and his successors would implement practices mirroring national trends in education reform. Administrators all

[2] G. Morton Weed, *School Days of Yesterday Buffalo Public School History* (Buffalo: Buffalo Standard Printing, 2001), 5.
[3] Roysin Bennet Younkin and Albert Rex, "Public School #60," National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, MacRostie Historic Advisors, Boston, August 14, 2014, 11.
[4] Ibid., 12.
[5] Ibid., 13-14.
[6] Ibid., 15.

over the country were adjusting to a growing school population compelled by law to receive an education. Often these children were either not interested in classic education, or needed other ways to maintain interest in school.

New York State passed its first mandatory education law in 1853 but reenacted the legislation again in 1894 with stronger attendance laws.[7] As mandatory attendance laws developed, schools needed to cater to a wider range of student needs, prompting a diversification of the types of spaces found in schools, which had to contend with the more than doubling of the state's student population, which went from 34,058 in 1894 to 88,675 in 1904, and 143,865 in 1910.[8]

This dramatic increase in students also meant schools catered to children who previously would not or could not attend school (usually poor, immigrant, sick, or students with physical disabilities). This forced schools to accommodate a variety of students, not just the academically inclined. School designs began to incorporate bathing facilities for children who did not have running water, as well as lunchrooms for children to purchase food if they could not return home for lunch.[9] Curricula were broadened to meet the educational needs of students beyond the typical Latin and English courses, and "college preparatory," "commercial," "general," "science," and "teachers" fields were all added as a way to cater to expanding student bodies.[10]

Buffalo's Humboldt Park Neighborhood

PS 24 is located in the Humboldt Park neighborhood, an area that developed rapidly near the end of the nineteenth-century on Buffalo's East Side. The neighborhood grew quickly after the Civil War due to several factors, including: its proximity to the bustling Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood; its selection as the location of Olmsted's Humboldt Parkway and Parade; and industry along the railroads to the north, east, and west. Located on the eastern half of the city, the Humboldt Park neighborhood emerged out of the development of the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood to the south, and the "Fruit Belt" neighborhood to the west. It is centered along Fillmore Avenue and is roughly bordered by the Kensington Expressway to the west (formerly Humboldt Parkway), Genesee Street to the south, the New York Central Railroad's Belt Line to the east, and Ferry Street to the north. The neighborhood was originally settled in the 1850s and 1860s by German families moving away from the increased commercial development occurring around Broadway-Fillmore and downtown.

Genesee Street and Fillmore Avenue were major thoroughfares in Buffalo. When surveyor Joseph Ellicott laid out the original plan for Buffalo (then named New Amsterdam) in 1804, he designed a radial street grid with

[7] Suzanne Lichtenstein Warren, "The American School Building: 1890-1920" (master's thesis, Cornell University, 1985), 110.
[8] Ibid., 112.
[9] Ibid., 113.
[10] Ibid.

"spokes" extending out from the central Niagara Square in every sub-cardinal direction. Genesee Street extended off Niagara Square from the northeast corner and was named Busti Avenue until 1826, when the road became a public highway with horse-drawn streetcars running along the street as early as 1864.[11] Fillmore Avenue was surveyed as a public highway that would extend north and south of the city as early as 1831, and it was completed through the Broadway-Fillmore area in the late 1840s. When Frederick Law Olmsted was invited to Buffalo in the 1860s and 70s, the location at this key intersection, combined with the sparse population at the time, proved a great combination as he laid out his vision for the first "urban park system" in the United States.

Olmsted was invited to Buffalo in 1868, and over the course of the next three decades designed a four-component system, including the large primary park around a dammed Scajaquada Creek, a waterfront park at the mouth of the Niagara River, and "The Parade," the smallest of the three, but connected to both via long parkways.[12] The Parade was located at the intersection of Best, Fillmore and Genesee Streets, and served as the terminating point of the largest of the city's new parkways. Unlike, "The Park," which consisted of a large open field ("The Meadow") and a 46 acre lake, the Parade was intended for more active recreation, featuring a parade ground, an area for children's games, and a grand refectory, the largest of the buildings designed by Calvert Vaux for the park system. The refectory, modeled after the beer gardens Olmsted had seen in Germany's public parks, was incredibly popular among the German community that emerged around the Park.[13]

The neighborhood also benefited from its proximity to the New York Central Railroad's "Belt Line," a rail line that developed between 1871 and 1883 that encircled the city and passed through and around emerging neighborhoods. The Belt Line led to a rapid expansion of industry throughout Buffalo, creating new industrial and manufacturing nodes served by rail traffic throughout the city. The rail line connected portions of the former Buffalo and Niagara Railroad, the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway to form a complete loop around the city.[14] The loop had nineteen stations spaced one mile apart and lead to the expansion of industrial facilities throughout the northern and eastern quadrants of the city. This allowed workers to travel from any residential enclave to factories on the other side of Buffalo.

The Parade's German influenced architecture likely appealed to much of the city, as well as the nearby residents. The German community was one of the first large immigrant groups to settle in Buffalo, and with

[11] Christine Longiaru, Frank Kowsky and Martin Wachadlo, "Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey," City of Buffalo, last updated 2004, https://www.city-buffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey, Section 3-4.
[12] Ibid., Section 3-6.
[13] Ibid., Section 3-8.
[14] Aaron T. Heverin, "Past Tracks: A Queen City Built by Rail," Buffalo History Works, last modified October 1st, 2010, buffalohistoryworks.com/ptracks/.

31,000 German born or second-generation residents they composed nearly 50 percent of the city's population by 1855. This community originally settled east of Main Street in the area known as "The Fruit Belt," due to the streets bearing names of different fruit trees. Many of the German immigrants were skilled craftsman, the community quickly prospered with the successful growth of the city during the mid-nineteenth century. As immigration continued after the Civil War, the predominantly Protestant initial settlers moved further eastward along Genesee Street. Subsequent waves of German immigrants were largely Roman Catholic.[15]

The area around Genesee-Fillmore still bears the names of many of these early German families. Rich Street was named for Gaius B. Rich, founder of the Western Savings Bank; Wilson Street, named for Guilford B. Wilson, member of the Board of Trade, and Rohr Street, named after Mathias Rohr, President of *Volksfreund*, a Buffalo-German newspaper. Some of these early families began developing the land around their homes, including George Roetzer, who lived at Mills and B Street in 1870. An editor for *Volksfreund,* Roetzer began buying up land around Genesee and Fillmore, and by the time Olmsted and Vaux prepared their plans for "The Parade" the area was already rapidly subdividing and becoming another German enclave. The design for the refectory mimicked German beer gardens, and even the location of the Parade might have been chosen to win support from the German community for the park system as a whole.[16] George Urban, owner of the George Urban Milling Company, owned a large tract of land just north of the new Parade, on which he laid out "Urban Street" and subdivided for development. Similarly, Simon Fougeron (who, like Urban, was a refugee from Alsace Lorraine) cut "Fougeron Street" through a large farm he maintained along Fillmore Avenue.[17] In 1896 John Charles Olmsted redesigned the Parade, adding three axial water features, including a five-hundred-foot wading pool, named the Humboldt Basin, for general recreation.[18] The redesign turned the military parade ground into a center of general recreation and the park was renamed Humboldt Park to reflect that change.

Buffalo Public School #24

Over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth-century, the dramatic growth in the Humboldt Park neighborhood led to the establishment of PS 24, which occupied three different buildings near the corner of Fillmore and Best Streets from 1857 until 1976. The original PS 24 building opened in 1857 and was temporarily located at the southwest corner of Best and Adams Streets while construction finished that year on the three-story rectangular school building on the corner of Fillmore and Best Streets. The second building used by the school was constructed in 1888 directly across Fillmore Avenue (see: Figure 7). That building is no

[15] Longiaru, Kowsky and Wachadlo, "Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Survey," Section 3-11.
[16] Ibid., Section 3-12.
[17] James Napora, "History of Humboldt Park Area," Buffalo As An Architectural Museum, last modified 1995, http://www.buffaloah.com/h/humboldt.html.
[18] Jane Roy Brown, "A Buffalo Neighborhood Renews its Olmsted Legacy," *Library of American Landscape History, http://lalh.org/a-buffalo-neighborhood-renews-its-olmsted-legacy-2012/.*

longer extant, as it was demolished in 1955. In 1901, the district demolished the 1857 building and constructed the nominated building at the corner of Fillmore Avenue and Best Street.

The original 1857 school opened to accommodate the growth in Buffalo's East Side. In 1860 there were 16,291 residents in Wards 6 and 7, which included parts of the Fruit Belt, Cold Springs, and the northern half of "Polonia," between Broadway Avenue and Genesee Streets. By 1880, the proximity of Humboldt Parkway and Belt Line caused the population for the two wards to balloon to 36,495, leading to the construction of a long, two-story (with basement) school just across Fillmore Avenue in 1888. In 1890, the population for the two wards had doubled once more to 73,415, leading not only to the re-opening of the 1857 school but the construction of a one-story annex next to the 1857 school in 1893, and the use of the nearby "Floss Tavern" as an annex for two years.[19] In 1900, Wards 6 and 7 were divided into seven new Wards, and the population for the wards around PS 24 (11th, 14th and 16th) was 46,583.

In 1901, this rapid growth and the increased demand for more classrooms led to the demolition of the original 1857 school (and its 1893 annex) to make way for the extant three-story nominated building. While the City of Buffalo allocated $70,000 of bond money in 1900 for a new PS 24 school building, actual building costs neared $90,000 by 1903.[20] In 1931 proposals were put forward to expand PS 24 with additional classroom space. After a few months of debate, Mayor Charles Roesch rejected the proposed expansion when it became clear that the school's attendance did not warrant an addition and it was not constructed. The school had a capacity of 1,384 pupils and only 942 in attendance.[21]

During its first thirty years of operation, PS 24 featured the same curriculum as other schools in the city. However, by the 1930s PS 24 had developed into the Buffalo school district's primary location for educating children with special needs. These programs started with sight saving classes for the visually impaired and transitioned in 1960 to educating students with intellectual disabilities. The school had ample space to educate special needs students who were bussed to the facility from across Buffalo. Importantly, the design of PS 24 led educators to believe it was a modern and scientifically advanced institution of learning, the perfect setting for educating children with special needs.

[19] Weed, *School Days of Yesterday,* 47.
[20] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education of the City of Buffalo, 1889-1900* (Buffalo: Baker, Jones & Co. Printers and Binders, 1901), 34; *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education of the City of Buffalo, 1902-1903* (Buffalo: Baker, Jones & Co. Printers and Binders, 1904) , 109.
[21] "Mayor's Veto Forecast," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* May 15, 1931, 3.

Standardized School Design

Buffalo Public School #24 reflects the evolution of school design that occurred early in the twentieth century, specifically demonstrating the transition from late Victorian-era designs to Progressive Era school planning. Although New York State passed its first law regarding school design in 1904, many schools around the state were already being designed to incorporate solutions for fire safety, heating, ventilation, and lighting prior to the new legislation. PS 24 included many of these features, including an "I" plan that maximized exterior surface so that each classroom contained three bays of paired tall one-over-one windows, as well as a wide central hallway with stairwells at each end for fire safety measures. Although it contains many features that would become standardized by the 1920s, PS 24 lacks any sort of public space, which wouldn't become a state requirement until 1916. The school also contains holdovers from late-nineteenth century designs that would be obsolete or discouraged in the next few decades, including an ornate front entry and an elaborate air circulation system in line with later-debunked Progressive Era ideals about air purity.

As there were no state or federal laws regarding school design, many of the school's features were dictated by a series of standards that developed over the previous decades concerning lighting, air quality, heating, and fire safety. These needs and standards lead to the rise of an entire branch of architecture dedicated to designing schools that would be adapted to laws by towns, cities, and states at the turn of the twentieth century.

The first changes to school design began during the Progressive Era, particularly with the passing of compulsory education laws. These laws impacted education practices in three ways; first it obligated municipalities to provide space in both elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age; secondly, it increased the age-range of students attending school; thirdly it placed the burden on school districts to provide safe and sanitary conditions for students attending schools.[22]

By requiring municipalities to provide school buildings, the law contributed to an explosive growth in school construction at the turn of the twentieth-century. Between 1880 and 1890, the number of free schools in the United States increased from 800 to 2,526. In 1900 there were 6,005, and by 1910 there were 10,213. In New York State the number of high schools doubled from 314 in 1894 to 636 in 1904.[23]

As the construction of schools increased, regulations emerged relating to a variety of safety and hygiene concerns, including ventilation, plumbing, heating, illumination, seating arrangements, general building cleanliness, and lastly, fire safety.[24] In order to enforce new progressive standards that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, the National Education Association advocated for increased inspection and government

[22] Warren, "The American School Building," 111.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., 115.

control over school hygiene and design.[25] New York State passed an act in 1904 calling for all plans for new school construction to be approved by the state's Education Department as a reaction to the calls for stricter regulation on school design over the previous decade.[26]

Lighting was an important issue raised by educators and architects in this era. Eyestrain was often attributed to poor lighting in classrooms, and reformers often advocated for higher lighting standards to be implemented. In their 1889 handbook, Palliser and Palliser recommended "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."[27] These standards resulted in a classroom size around thirty feet wide and 12.5 to 13.5 feet tall to maximize light exposure.[28] Classroom sizes still adhered to these standards well into the twentieth century, even once gas and electric light was available.[29] Public School #24 has thirteen-foot ceilings, three bays of paired eight-foot windows, and long classrooms (thirty-two and-a-half feet) for dimensions that match these standards perfectly, with 72 square feet of window space for 480 square foot classrooms, actually exceeding the 1:6 ratio recommendations. The classrooms also contain two walls for blackboards, and shelving units at the "rear" of the classroom that forced students to be oriented with their left shoulders toward the windows, also meeting these standards.

In order to accommodate these lighting standards, schools began to assume more symmetrical designs than in previous decades, often becoming H-, I-, or E- shaped in order to create longer elevations to support multiple unilaterally lighted classrooms. To achieve this, corner classrooms resulted in the creation of blank elevations in order to ensure lighting through only one wall into the room. It also resulted in multiple decentralized stairwells, which were moved to ends of hallways to maximize classroom space along the long elevations, but also had the effect of increasing fire safety in school designs.

Prior to these changes, most schools utilized large central stairwells for circulation, with classrooms surrounding it. This design created a chimney effect in the case of fires, and with a lack of decent egress, led to several traumatic deaths at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1908, a horrific fire at the Collinwood School in Cleveland, Ohio, caused 170 deaths and lead to legislators and school officials to dramatically rethink regulation of school design. The problems in Collinwood (a brick and timber building with a central hallway that led to two stairwells at either end of the building, with doors that opened inward, and a basement furnace built directly under the front stairwell) were also common in most schools built prior to 1910.[30]

[25] Ibid., 116.
[26] Ibid., 117.
[27] Ibid., 124.
[28] Ibid., 126.
[29] Ibid., 128.
[30] Ibid., 166.

In order to avoid tragedies like the Collinwood fire, schools began utilizing multiple staircases located at opposite ends of buildings, which was easy to accommodate in the H- and I- plans that had long double-loaded central corridors to maximize light exposure.[31] Public School #24, built prior to the 1908 tragedy, already incorporates the I-plan, with decentralized stairwells located at the north and south ends of the building. It was also built with fireproof materials, a steel and brick frame and sandstone exterior. It does, however, contain some hold-overs from the Victorian designs, with an ornate center entry on the primary elevation, and tall window openings at each end of the central corridor that would typically be incorporated into classroom spaces in later designs to save space.

In the years following World War I, schools had to adapt to a variety of new demands. In order to improve the fitness level of students, many designs incorporated gymnasiums, often to accommodate state and local requirements, such as New York State's physical education legislation in 1916.[32] Often, these spaces doubled as public meeting spaces, and in some cases states dictated that providing community space was mandatory for school designs; in 1916, for instance, New York State began requiring that any school building with eight or more rooms provide an auditorium or other assembly space.[33] As Public School #24 was built before these requirements, it does not include any large public space, not even a cafeteria, even though many schools during this period often included those features. The original plans for PS 24 note that the basement hallway doubled as an "assembly room," but it seems it was more of a formality as no stage, seating, or other features typical of gathering spaces were built. Indeed, it is identical to the corridors on the floors above in width and configuration.

The most pressing concern of architects and educators at the turn of the twentieth century was ventilation, driven by late-Victorian ideas regarding air quality, in particular, the Carbon Dioxide Theory, and the Toxic Organic Substances Theory. The Carbon Dioxide Theory suggested that there were negative effects to breathing carbon dioxide in expired air, and even when it was disproven, the theory was still widely circulated in architectural guide books regarding school design at the time. [34] Part of what contributed to the longevity of this misconception was the ability to calculate carbon dioxide. Presented with an actual value, architects advised that it was necessary to provide 1,500 cubic feet of air per person per hour to maintain a healthy atmospheric balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide. Within classrooms that often contained over 35 children, this required mechanical ventilation.[35] The Toxic Organic Substance theory had similar ventilation requirements, based on the assumption that exhaled air carried diseases, a mentality that prevailed even after "contact contamination" theories replaced this theory in health circles. Both of these theories resulted in education standards requiring

[31] Ibid., 132.
[32] Ibid., 222.
[33] Ibid., 223.
[34] Ibid., 117.
[35] Ibid., 118.

ventilation of 30 cubic feet per person per minute by 1900, which would hold as a standard long after most Victorian "germ" theories were disproven.[36]

Like many early twentieth century schools, Public School #24 has an elaborate ventilation system, with boilers along the eastern half of the building and a large fan on the western half that pumped warm air up through a system of large plenums in each load bearing wall (most with at least three, if not four or more, plenum spaces) that ran from the basement up to the attic. Although one of the large air circulation shafts has been repurposed as janitorial and utility space on each floor, the heating shaft adjacent to the boilers is intact and retains its original configuration between closets and the walls of the classrooms on each floor.

The school standards, and the specialization required to meet them, resulted in the development of an entire typology related to school design, and although schools still varied in style and appearance after these laws, they all began to feature similar principles, such as decentralized stairwells and concrete-reinforced walls, with classrooms built to maximize light-exposure. These requirements often led to repetitive fenestration, central hallways and decentralized stairwells, ventilation systems, and "H" and "E" building plans that maximized exterior wall space.[37] Public School #24, designed in the midst of this discussion, fully epitomizes the standardization of school design at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Buffalo Public School #24 and Special Education for the Blind and Intellectually Disabled

Buffalo Public School #24 housed several innovative programs from at least 1930 through the school's closure in 1976, including sight-saving classes, braille instruction lessons, and classes for students with intellectual disabilities, all of which predated state legislation requiring their implementation. The use of the programs at PS 24 reflect the changing views regarding disabilities in the United States, as well as the evolution of educational programs to treat students with special needs.

Prior to 1900, most students with disabilities (both physical and mental) were treated at individual facilities across the country, such as the State Institution for Blind Students located in Batavia, which opened in 1866.[38] In North America and Europe the prevailing nineteenth century belief held that blind, deaf, and intellectually disabled children were "biologically and morally inferior," and as a result many of the earlier institutions were religiously based.[39] Educators created raised print letters for the blind and sign language for the deaf. In addition, they established schools and institutions to help the blind, deaf, and cognitively and intellectually

[36] Ibid., 119.
[37] Claire Ross, "Former Niagara Falls High School," National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Waterford, January 24, 2002, Section 8, page 3.
[38] Margret A. Winzer, *The History of Special Education: From Isolation to Integration* (Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), 317.
[39] Ibid., 171.

disabled. However, their practices "clearly reflected the traditional perceptions of disabled persons as charity recipients. While the institutions provided educational services, they clearly were administered wholly as public charities."[40] This base assumption of unequal ability led nineteenth-century schools for the impaired to focus on spiritual improvement and vocational training rather than general education. Rather than nurture potential, these schools focused on ensuring that their pupils would be capable of contributing on some positive level to society and the workplace.

Dr. Margaret Winzer, a researcher and historian specializing in special needs and disabilities, argued that due to the emphasis on vocational training and developing children with disabilities into productive industrial workers that:

> The factory emerged as the governing model of institutional life; students were socialized to the work experience, and education became an increasingly refined training mechanism for the workplace. Literary accomplishments were restricted, deemed unnecessary and inappropriate for the disabled.[41]

This focus on trade education separated students with disabilities from public schools. The vocational regimen was combined with an intense emphasis on religious studies rendering the "handicapped" charity school a much different institution from the public school system, which focused on literacy and mathematics. Even blind students were trained for the working world. Blind students from the lower echelons of society went to school and, "focused solely on learning handicraft work…[they] manufactured doormats from Manila hemp in looms, produced various kinds of basketwork, made mattresses, and fabricated moccasins."[42] In the twentieth century as attitudes changed and society began moving to better integrate those with disabilities, these views changed and education began to be administered with greater equality to all students regardless of disability or impairment, particularly those with seeing and hearing impairments.

One of the biggest factors in this shift was the enforcement of compulsory education for all children as well as the passage of stricter child labor laws. New York State passed stronger compulsory education laws in 1894, and due to the influx of children with disabilities, by 1900, Buffalo and New York City began creating classes for "retarded or crippled students."[43] The creation of these courses signaled a shift from the previous morality based programs to more progressive standards. As Winzer stated, "Institutions became schools, albeit separate

---

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 173.
[42] Ibid., 180.
[43] James D. Folts, *History of the University of the State of New York and the State Education Department 1784-1996* (hereafter cited as New York State Education History), New York State Education Department, last modified November 1996, http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/edocs/education/sedhist.htm.

and special, with strictly educational goals."[44] This model changed yet again to a more integrated system as views, especially regarding blind and deaf students, changed. Although advocacy for the placement of deaf and blind students in regular classrooms gained a small degree of momentum in the nineteenth century, it wasn't until compulsory school laws were passed that the movement for greater integration of students with disabilities in public schools began in earnest.[45]

Once the integration began to be implemented, two models were advocated. Alexander Graham Bell encouraged full integration of the deaf and blind into 'normal student' classrooms. Due to a combination of factors, including untrained educators and a general lack of material aides for students with disabilities, Bell's method failed. [46] The alternative and more successful method was the creation of special classes within the public school, which provided more focused attention to students with disabilities. In creating segregated classes within the regular school system it is interesting to observe the ideas that governed the thought process of educators:

> They viewed the disabled population as a pool of potentially productive citizens whose problems most often stemmed from neglect, mistreatment, inadequate economic support, and inappropriate schooling. They saw special schooling as the only way to turn disabled dependents into productive, independent adults. Even though disabled children were unlikely to attain the academic standards of their normal peers, they could at least become contributing members of the community. [47]

Between 1910 and 1920, several key developments occurred regarding classes for the seeing-impaired. Cleveland was one of the first cities in the country to offer a class for the blind in 1911, providing textbooks and large blackboard instruction to students under the direct tutelage of "the school oculist." In 1913, Cleveland broadened this program, and removed all "semi-seeing" students from the blind classes for special classes designed for conservation of vision or "sight-saving classes." In the same year, New York City began its first "experimental" sight-saving classes, but the demand was so high that it immediately increased the number of classes offered.[48] As a result, in 1917, New York State passed statutes requiring city and union free school districts to identify children with "physical defects" or "retarded mental development" and to provide special classes for groups of ten or more, and in 1924 state aid was authorized for such classes for the first time.[49]

---

[44] Ibid., 314.
[45] In relation to PS 24, in 1866 noted advocate for the blind Samuel Gridley Howe gave the keynote address for the opening of the New York Institute for the Blind in Batavia.
[46] Winzer, *The History of Special Education*, 320.
[47] Ibid., 327.
[48] Robert Benjamin Irwin, *Sight Saving Classes in the Public Schools* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1920), 14.
[49] Folts, *New York State Education History.*

Buffalo held its first sight-saving class in April of 1918, with a class for eleven students as PS 18.[50] The class was intended for "the child whose eyes are unfit to the ordinary work required in school. The teacher explains and reads to the children, saving their eyes, and enabling the pupils to continue in their regular grades."[51] Buffalo expanded the program and operated two such classes by 1924. In 1925, an article in the *Buffalo Courier* titled, "Preventing Physical Waste," noted that one of the leaders in the National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness traveled to Buffalo and reported that there were,

> …only two classes for children handicapped by seriously defective vision, with a school population of more than 100,000. There is immediate need for at least two additional sight-saving classes and—unless the conditions of the eyes of school children in Buffalo is on the whole much more favorable than through the country at large, this city should have approximately twenty-seven sight-saving classes.[52]

Her arguments were echoed two years later in 1927, when another article noted that nearly one-in-twelve children suffered from defective vision "to such a degree as to constitute a handicap," and one in 500 were such serious cases that they could not justifiably be taught alongside their peers. Since it cost roughly ten-times as much to educate a student with severe impairment, there were only 264 sight-saving classes in the country in 1927, well below the recommended number of 5,000.[53]

While it is unclear whether PS 24 offered sight-saving classes for elementary students prior to 1930, in that year the district's first sight-conservation class for high school students was offered at PS 24.[54] Additionally, in the same year, thirty students in grades four through eight were enrolled in sight saving classes at PS 24.[55] By 1934, Buffalo had increased its sight-saving classes from two to at least five, with classes for students with impaired vision at Schools #31 and #18 and three classes serving 72 severely impaired and blind students held at Public School #24, the "local headquarters of sight-saving classes." PS 24 emphasized integrated classes along with the sight-saving techniques. Students would do oral exercises with their classmates, before heading to special courses where reading and writing subjects would be taught with larger fonts and bigger writing implements. Starting in the fourth grade, students were trained to write on typewriters and were given exam questions written in a large font called 'bulletin.'[56] The school even offered braille classes for high school students.[57] The Buffalo Association for the Blind gave Dr. F. Park Lewis a tour of the school in 1934; Lewis was a noted

[50] "Saving Pupils Eyesight," *School and Community* 1, no. 7 (1920): 11.
[51] "From Special Classes to "People's University," *School and Community* 1, no. 4 (1920): 7.
[52] "Preventing Physical Waste," *Buffalo Courier,* January 27, 1925, 4.
[53] "Defective Vision Handicaps Education of Some Children," *Buffalo Evening News,* March 11, 1927, 26.
[54] "Many Children Registered in Special Classes," *The School Magazine: A Clearing House for the Various Departments of the Buffalo School System* 14 (1930): 319.
[55] "Typewriters Play Big Part in Strengthening Weak Eyes," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* April 20, 1930, 1.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Sight-Saving Classes for School are Given Praise by Group," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* February 22, 1934, 11.

ophthalmologist who had several published books about child blindness, including, *Infant Blindness, or Opthalmia Neonatorum,* and *What to Do For Blind Children.*[58]

In 1940, the program at PS 24 had evolved to include six classes, with bussing for students from all over the city that were selected through the district's screening process. The school grouped first through eighth grades into four classes with two grades each (first and second grade, third and fourth, etc.), and additionally offered a class for "visually handicapped children with mental retardation," as well as a final braille-only class for students "technically and totally blind."[59] Many of the classes provided accommodation for children with severe, but recoverable, near-sightedness, allowing them to pass from traditional classrooms to the sight-saving classes and ultimately to "regain normal or near-normal vision by adulthood." For other students, instruction was completely in the sight saving classrooms, where they began learning braille in fourth grade, mastering it by the sixth grade, including in the use of braille typewriters.[60]

Although early laws regarding special education were directed largely toward students with physical disabilities such as blindness, deafness, and physical handicaps (usually related to contracting polio), many school districts did offer classes for students with cognitive and intellectual disabilities as well. In 1919, Buffalo had "Classes for Mental Defectives" in twelve schools for 756 students, although it's unclear whether there was a true program of study, or just a mechanism to remove these students from the classroom. Literature from the era gives few clues to the seriousness of education, simply saying, "Children are kept until compulsory education requirements are met, or until removed to some other institution."[61] In the 1940s, New York State more actively addressed the higher numbers of students with intellectual disabilities that were entering the school system as a result of compulsory education laws. In 1944 a new law declared that the Education Department should, "Stimulate all private and public efforts designed to relieve, care for, cure, or educate physically handicapped children" and coordinate its efforts with other government programs.[62] The law was extended in 1957 to encourage the inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities into these efforts as well and enforced in 1961 with a law that required schools districts hold classes for all children with special needs.

PS 24 and Special Education in New York State

In this regard, Buffalo Public School #24's special education programming predates the state's law mandating such programs exist in public school districts. The program, begun in 1960, was highlighted in a 1962 article titled, "Buffalo's Program: School Training Benefits Retarded," which sought to clarify misconceptions about

[58] *The American Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Ophthalmology,* vol. 5*,* (Chicago: Cleveland Press, 1914), 3190.
[59] Luther H. Smeltzer, "Talking Books Give Education to Visually Defective Pupils," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* March 10, 1940, L 7.
[60] Ibid.
[61] "From Special Classes to "People's University," *School and Community* 1, no. 4 (1920): 7.
[62] Folts, *New York State Education History.*

students with disabilities. With nearly 1400 students with some sort of cognitive or intellectual disability, Buffalo formalized a plan that kept students with intellectual disabilities in mixed-classes up through third grade, and if a student had an IQ between 50 and 70, they completed classes and coursework separately from typical students, but were encouraged to participate in gymnasium, lunch, and other classroom activities to "become socially aware of the world around them."[63] In addition to this program, Buffalo held classes for "trainables," transporting these students from all over the city to Public School #24, where they were taught in classes of 10 to learn basic words and spelling.

In 1963, intellectual disabilities were evaluated largely on a child's IQ, with four "Intellectual Classifications" and their corresponding educational attainment abilities. The four classifications were "Mildly" (IQs 70-85), "Moderately" (50-70), "Severely" (30-50), and "Profoundly Retarded" (10-20) and corresponded with "Educable," "Trainable," and "Custodial" attainment levels. Although there was discrepancy throughout the psychological and education community about the exact IQ ranges, "educable" students typically had IQs over 50, with "trainable" students having IQs above 30.[64]

Prior to the 1960s, special education programs were often limited, and indeed, in 1949, the New York State Association for Retarded Children noted that, "there wasn't a single clinic for the retarded in the United States, not a single sheltered workshop, not a single class (except in New York City) for trainable mentally retarded."[65] While New York State had mandated services for children in the "educable" level (IQs above 50) beginning in 1917, it quickly developed better screening and classes for children with seeing or hearing impairments, as these disabilities often negatively affected a student's IQ score. Even as classes for "educable" special needs students became common throughout the country, courses for "trainable" student were often experimental and not usually required by state or federal law.[66] Indeed, up until the 1970s, some states allowed districts to "refuse to enroll a student it considered 'uneducable.'"[67]

Similarly, although New York State offered expanded funding for districts to voluntarily create special education programs in 1957 and mandated districts provide special education classes in 1961, the mandates only applied to "educable" intellectually disabled students. By offering classes in 1960 for not just "educable" students but for "trainable" students as well, Buffalo's program not only pre-dated New York State's legislation but went well beyond it. Indeed, in 1964, a *Courier-Express* article led the front page of the Sunday's "social section" with the headline, "School 24 Doing the Impossible with Mentally Retarded Children." Noting how PS

[63] Paul Wieland, "Buffalo's Program: School Training Benefits Retarded," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* January 21, 1962, 25.
[64] Joseph F. Rychlak and Ione Wade, "American Usage of the Terms "Educable," vs. "Trainable" Mental Retardates," *The British Journal of Mental Subnormality* 9, no. 17 (1963): 70-72.
[65] William T. Conklin, "Mental Retardation Legislation in New York State," *Journal of Legislation* 4, no. 1 (1977): 23.
[66] Ibid., 30.
[67] Edwin W. Martin, Reed Martin, and Donna L. Terman, "The Legislative and Litigation History of Special Education," *The Future of Children* 6, no. 1 (1996): 27.

24 was the "first public school in the city exclusively for 'trainables'—children below 50 but above 25," the article outlines how many of the students (aged 7-20, meaning some pupils were actually adults) had never received formal education in their lives.[68] The program at PS 24 focused on socializing the students, teaching them proper behavior and basic writing and reading skills, but also offering skills to allow the "children to participate in society in some way, no matter how slight." These skills included sewing, crafts, as well as ironing, making bed, cleaning, dusting, shoveling snow, preparing simple meals, and operating electrical appliances.[69]

With the passing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 (ESEA), several of the innovative programs implemented at Public School #24, including mandatory bussing of students with special needs to facilities that could accommodate them, became mandated at the Federal level for the first time. Unfortunately, it wasn't until the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1975 (and key revisions in 1986 and 1991) that many of the other features, including courses for students typically excluded from education (such as "trainables") were mandated across the country.[70] In Buffalo, the passing of ESEA allowed the city to tap into funding through "Title III," relating to supplementary education centers "which are innovative and experimental," to create a new "Demonstration Center" in Public School 28 for teachers across the city to learn how to instruct children with intellectual disabilities. This allowed many schools to offer instruction for their students in neighborhood schools rather than bus them to PS 24. [71] While PS 24 continued to offer Special Education classes until 1976, when it was closed, its significance as the primary center for Special Education in the Buffalo school district diminished after 1965.

Architect Charles Day Swan (1855-1914)

Charles Day Swan, known as C.D. Swan, was a notable Buffalo-based architect whose extant works can still be seen throughout the city. Between 1873 and 1881 Swan worked as a draftsman in the architectural office of Richard Waite, beginning when he was only eighteen years old. After 1881 Swan broke off and began his own practice. One of Swan's first major commissions was a brick store located on Main Street between Huron and Chippewa Streets (no longer extant: site of Fountain Plaza).[72] Additionally, Swan was the architect for PS 9 (1889) and the United Presbyterian Church on Richmond Avenue (1889).[73]

---

[68] Rita Smith, "School 24 Doing the Impossible with Mentally Retarded Children," *Buffalo Courier-Express,* March 15, 1964, 1D.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Martin, Martin, and Terman, "Legislative and Litigation History," 27.
[71] Nancy Gorman, *Buffalo Schools Meet the Challenge: the Impact of E.S.E.A. on the Buffalo Schools* (Buffalo: Buffalo Board of Education, 1966).
[72] Christopher N. Brown, *Historic Plymouth Avenue in the Kleinhans Neighborhood* (Buffalo: Kleinhans Community Association, 2006), 138.
[73] "Buffalo's Buildings," *The Buffalo Courier;* "The New United Presbyterian Church," *The Buffalo Courier,* March 13, 1889, 9.

Following his early successes, Swan expanded his firm and took on partners on multiple occasions. The first partnership with Newman Gardner lasted only a year; however, between 1884 and 1888, then later in 1894, Swan formed a successful partnership with John Falkner. The pair designed numerous buildings and specialized in "artistic dwellings."[74] However Swan and Falkner did not limit themselves solely to private dwellings, also designing commercial buildings, public schools, and churches.

Charles Swan proved himself capable of attracting national attention to his work. Twice, houses he designed were featured in issues of the *Scientific American Architect's and Builder's Edition* with color plates to highlight the features of Swan's designs.[75] Later, in 1890, Swan entered a competition for the right to design the Erie County Savings Bank. Although his design was not selected, it was featured in *American Architect*.[76] Developers in Canada also sought out Swan and twice he was tasked with constructing massive hotels around Lake Erie. The most prolific period of Swan's career was during the 1880s and early 1890s, and following 1896, Swan designed far fewer buildings, although a number of his structures from this period (including the Zink Building and PS 24) still stand.[77] Charles Day Swan passed away on May 4th, 1914 in Cambridge Massachusetts. He was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery and received a small obituary in *The Buffalo Express*.[78] Although Swan's later years lacked the energy of his busy period in the 1880s and 90s, he nonetheless contributed a number of beautiful structures to the skyline of Buffalo, New York.

PS 24 features ornate styling that balances Late-Victorian ideals with the emerging standardized school designs. Although the increased standardization of school design would also lead to more utilitarian and simplified Neoclassical and Colonial Revival designs by the 1920s, Swan incorporated a great deal of flourishes and detailing even as he adhered to growing national standards in school designs. The façade in particular shows this balance between ornate late-Victorian school designs and the more utilitarian twentieth-century design, with a center entry beneath a tall arched brick and stone entry and a projecting bay up to a parapeted cornice with inlaid stone bullseye. While still maintaining turn-of-the-century standards, such as blank elevations on the east and west elevations of each end of the "I," the building is capped with an ornate denticulated projecting metal cornice supported by metal brackets with decorative leaded glass windows throughout, before terminating with a projecting brick cornice that has projecting sections in line with the pilasters below.

[74] Ibid., 139.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid, 140.
[78] Ibid.

Recent History

PS 24 continued to operate and offer special education classes up until 1976, when it was closed as part of Buffalo Plan for Desegregation. After the 1954 Supreme Court case *Brown Vs. The Board of Education*, a similar lawsuit was filed in Buffalo due to the highly segregated nature of the district in the early 1970s. Prior to this, the school district attempted to solve the issues of segregation in 1967 with the development of the Quality Integrated Education program, which allowed students in the inner city (downtown) to attend predominantly white schools in the city's streetcar suburbs. Although popular, in 1973, Judge John T. Curtin ruled that the school district had failed to meet acceptable levels of integration, and required that all schools be desegregated on a percentage basis.[79]

Joseph T. Murray, Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services, devised the Buffalo Plan for School Desegregation as a result of the 1973 ruling. Implemented in 1976, it required an extensive bussing program, and reworking of current infrastructure. As a result of the plan, twenty schools were closed, including Public School #24, which reopened as "Public School 59" (the original PS 59 on Glenwood also closed in 1976), part of the Science Magnet School. The Science Magnet School constructed a new building in 1982 immediately adjacent to the science Museum, as well as an annex at Buffalo Zoo at 1 North Meadow Drive and operated out of all three buildings (including former PS 24) until it closed the 1901 Best-Fillmore building in 2002.[80]

Summary

Buffalo Public School #24 is associated with the evolution of special education practices and reforms from the turn of the twentieth-century through 1965. For more than thirty years, PS 24 was the center of Buffalo's nascent special education training programs, integrating new and expanded opportunities for visually and intellectually disabled students into the city school curriculum. Buffalo Public School #24 was not only the first school in Buffalo with classes for the severely disabled, but it also pre-dated New York State legislation with its program for all children with disabilities. The building additionally represents the architectural and programmatic evolution of school design at the turn of the twentieth century, containing elements that reflect the growing standardization of school design across the country and in New York State. While it pre-dates the first legislation in New York State regarding school architecture, the building incorporates many features that would define school design for the early part of the twentieth-century, including an "I"-form, classroom layout, and decentralized circulation for fire-safety, but still maintains some late-nineteenth century holdovers such as an incredibly complex air circulation system and lack of large public spaces such as an auditorium, gymnasium, or cafeteria, which would later become standard features for school design.

[79] Weed, *School Days of Yesterday,* 13.
[80] Ibid., 64.

Bibliography:

The American Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Ophthalmology. vol. 5. Chicago: Cleveland Press, 1914.

Brown, Christopher N. *Historic Plymouth Avenue in the Kleinhans Neighborhood*. Buffalo: Kleinhans Community Association, 2006.

Brown, Jane Roy. "A Buffalo Neighborhood Renews its Olmsted Legacy." *Library of American Landscape History. http://lalh.org/a-buffalo-neighborhood-renews-its-olmsted-legacy-2012/.*

The Buffalo Courier. "Buffalo's Buildings," June 30, 1889, 5.

The Buffalo Courier. "The New United Presbyterian Church," March 13, 1889, 9.

Buffalo Courier. "Preventing Physical Waste," January 27, 1925, 4.

Buffalo Courier-Express. "Mayor's Veto Forecast," May 15, 1931, 3.

Buffalo Courier-Express. "Sight-Saving Classes for School are Given Praise by Group," February 22, 1934, 11.

Buffalo Courier-Express. "Typewriters Play Big Part in Strengthening Weak Eyes," April 20, 1930, 1.

Buffalo Evening News. "Defective Vision Handicaps Education of Some Children," March 11, 1927, 26.

Conklin, William T. "Mental Retardation Legislation in New York State." *Journal of Legislation* 4, no. 1 (1977): 23-38.

Folts, James D. *History of the University of the State of New York and the State Education Department 1784-1996.* New York State Education Department. Last modified November 1996, http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/edocs/education/sedhist.htm.

"From Special Classes to "People's University." *School and Community* 1, no. 4 (1920): 7.

Gorman, Nancy. *Buffalo Schools Meet the Challenge: the Impact of E.S.E.A. on the Buffalo Schools*. Buffalo: Buffalo Board of Education, 1966.

Heverin, Aaron T. "Past Tracks: A Queen City Built by Rail." Buffalo History Works. Last modified October 1, 2010. buffalohistoryworks.com/ptracks/.

Irwin, Robert Benjamin. *Sight Saving Classes in the Public Schools.* Cambridge: Harvard University, 1920.

Longiaru, Christine, Frank Kowsky and Martin Wachadlo. "Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Intensive Level Historic Resources Survey." City of Buffalo. Last updated 2004, https://www.citybuffalo.com/Home/City_Departments/Office_of_Strategic_Planning/RegulatoryBoards/Preservation_Board/HistoricResourcesIntensiveLevelSurvey.

"Many Children Registered in Special Classes." *The School Magazine: A Clearing House for the Various Departments of the Buffalo School System* 14 (1930): 319.

Martin, Edwin W., Reed Martin, and Donna L. Terman. "The Legislative and Litigation History of Special Education." *The Future of Children* 6, no. 1 (1996): 25-39.

Napora, James. "History of Humboldt Park Area." Buffalo As An Architectural Museum. Last modified 1995, http://www.buffaloah.com/h/humboldt.html.

Ross, Claire. "Former Niagara Falls High School." National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form. New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation, Waterford, January 24, 2002.

Rychlak, Joseph F. and Ione Wade. "American Usage of the Terms "Educable," vs. "Trainable" Mental Retardates." *The British Journal of Mental Subnormality* 9, no. 17 (1963): 70-75.

"Saving Pupils Eyesight." *School and Community* 1, no. 7 (1920): 11.

Smeltzer, Luther H. "Talking Books Give Education to Visually Defective Pupils." *Buffalo Courier-Express.* March 10, 1940, L 7.

Smith, Rita. "School 24 Doing the Impossible with Mentally Retarded Children." *Buffalo Courier-Express.* March 15, 1964, 1D.

Weed, G. Morton. *School Days of Yesterday Buffalo Public School History.* Buffalo: Buffalo Standard Printing, 2001.

Wieland, Paul. "Buffalo's Program: School Training Benefits Retarded." *Buffalo Courier-Express.* January 21, 1962, 25.

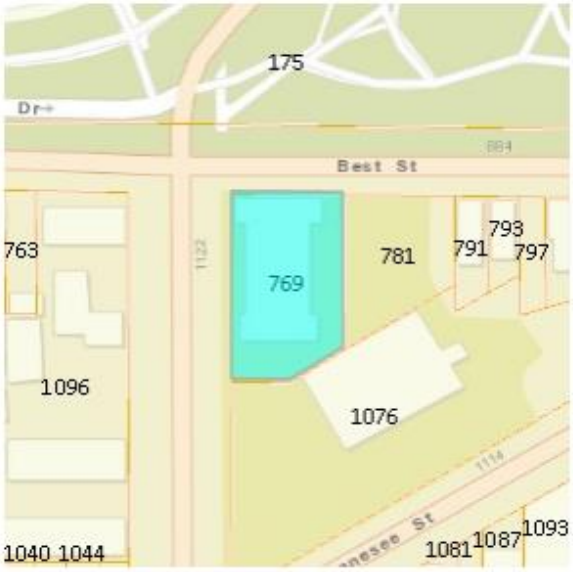
Winzer, Margret A. *The History of Special Education: From Isolation to Integration.* Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993.

Younkin, Roysin Bennet and Albert Rex. "Public School #60." National Register of Historic Places Inventory/Nomination Form. MacRostie Historic Advisors, Boston, August 14, 2014.

Verbal Boundary Description
The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the attached maps with scale.

Boundary Justification
The nomination boundary encompasses property currently associated with the nominated resource. This boundary includes all extant buildings related to PS 24, and only a small amount of land at the south has been excluded when parcels were apparently redrawn.

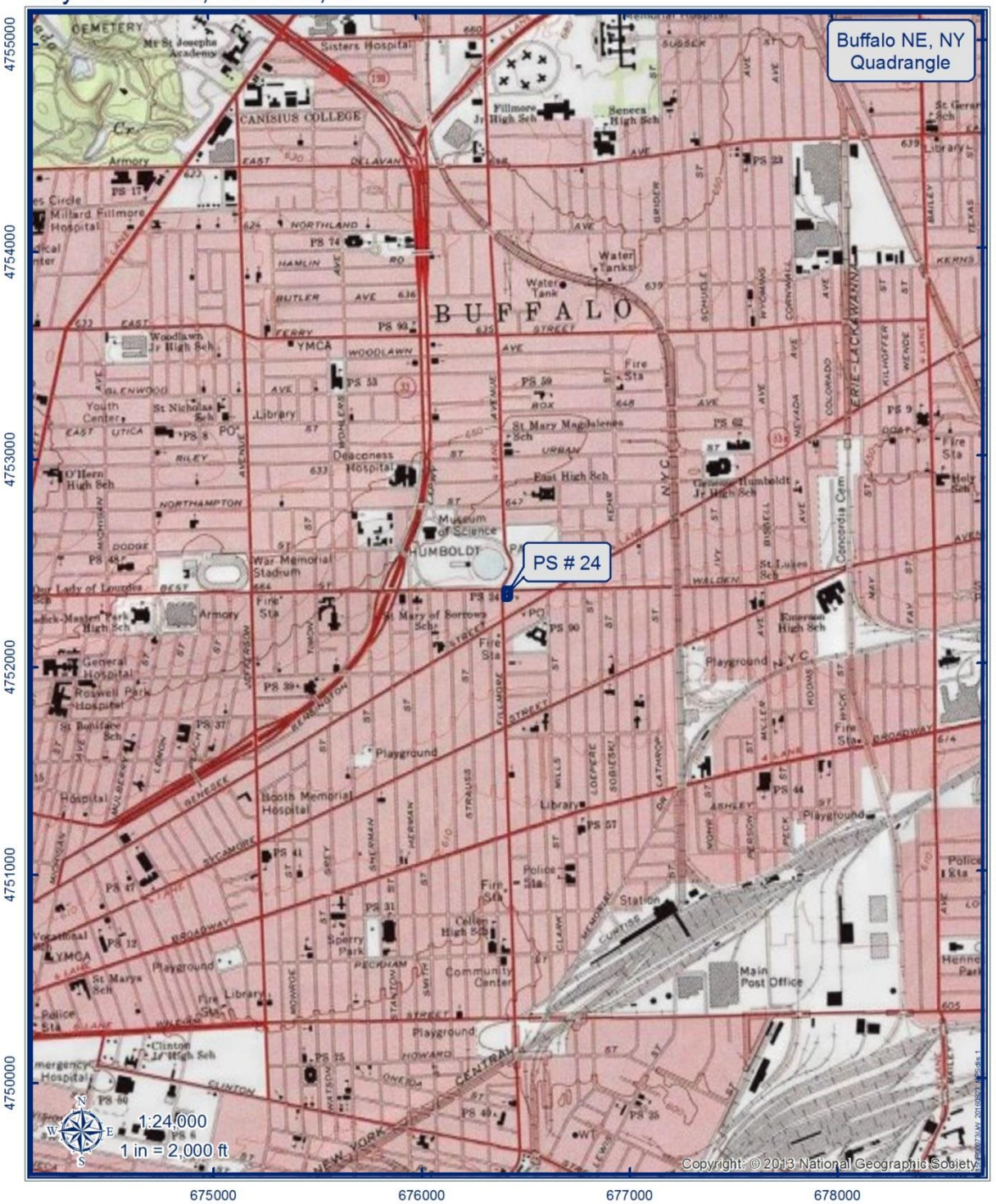
Parcel Overview Map



Parcel Detail Map

Buffalo Public School # 24 (PS 24)
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

775 Best St.
Buffalo, NY 14211



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

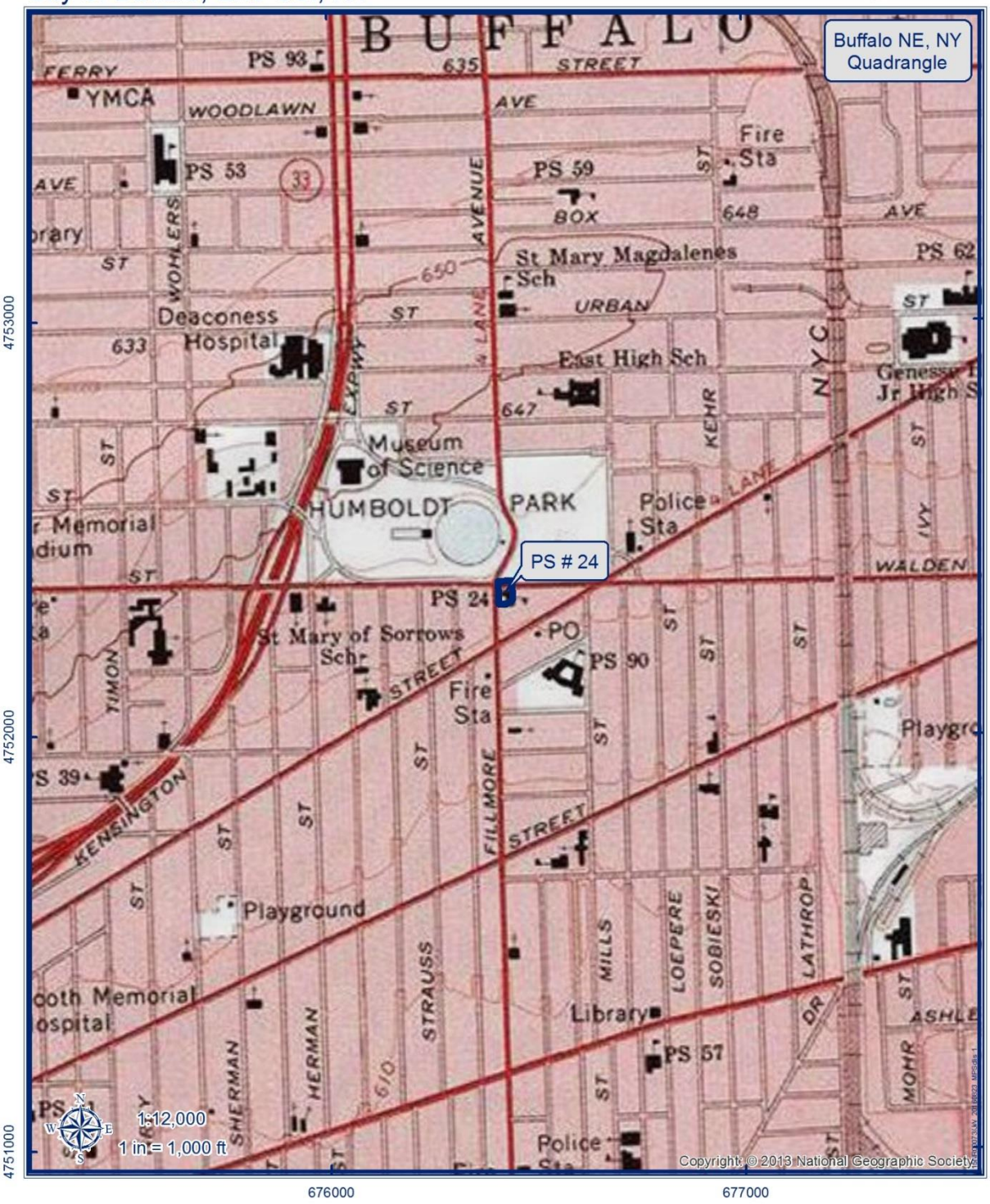
Feet
0 5501,100 2,200

PS # 24

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Buffalo Public School # 24 (PS 24)
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

775 Best St.
Buffalo, NY 14211

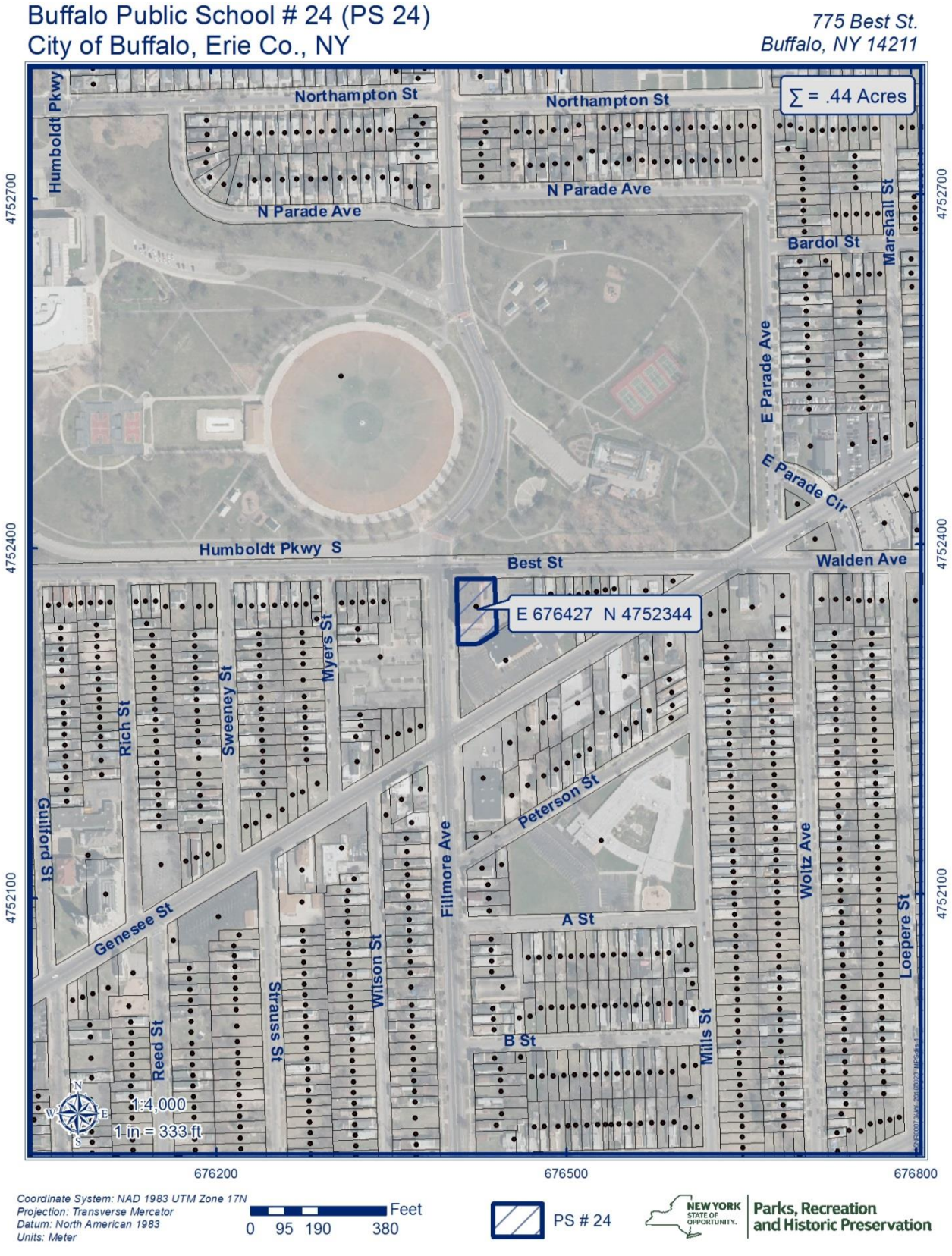


Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter

Feet
0 295 590 1,180

PS # 24

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation


Buffalo Public School # 24 (PS 24)
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY
775 Best St.
Buffalo, NY 14211
∑ = .44 Acres
E 676427 N 4752344
Northampton St
N Parade Ave
Humboldt Pkwy
Humboldt Pkwy S
Best St
Walden Ave
E Parade Ave
E Parade Cir
Bardol St
Marshall St
Myers St
Sweeney St
Rich St
Guilford St
Genesee St
Peterson St
Fillmore Ave
Wilson St
Strauss St
Reed St
A St
B St
Mills St
Woltz Ave
Loepere St
4752700
4752400
4752100
676200
676500
676800
1:4,000
1 in = 333 ft
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 95 190 380
PS # 24
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation


Buffalo Public School # 24 (PS 24)
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY
775 Best St.
Buffalo, NY 14211
∑ = .44 Acres
E 676427 N 4752344
Northampton Street
North Parade Avenue
Fillmore Avenue
East Parade
East Parade Avenue
Bardol Street
Marshall Street
Martin Luther King, Jr. Park
East Parade Circle
Best Street
Genesee Street
Peterson Street
Public School 90
A Street
B Street
Mills Street
Woltz Avenue
Loepere Street
Myers Street
Sweeney Street
Rich Street
Guilford Street
Saint Mary of Sorrows School
King Center Charter School
Wilson Street
Strauss St
4752700
4752400
4752100
676200
676500
676800
1:4,000
1 in = 333 ft
© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
Projection: Transverse Mercator
Datum: North American 1983
Units: Meter
Feet
0 95 190 380
PS # 24
NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Additional Information

List of Photographs

Name of Property:	Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)
City or Vicinity:	Buffalo
County:	Erie
State:	NY
Name of Photographer:	Mike Puma
Date of Photographs:	May 2016
Number of Photographs:	10

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0001
Façade (north elevation), camera facing slightly S

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0002
East elevation, camera facing SW

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0003
West and rear elevation, camera facing NE

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0004
Front entrance (north elevation), camera facing S

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0005
First floor hallway, camera facing N

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0006
Staircase landing between first and second floors, camera facing W

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0007
Second floor classroom, camera facing NE

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0008
Third floor classroom, camera facing W

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0009
First Floor classroom, camera facing NR

NY_Erie County_ Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)_0010
Second floor hallway leading to bathroom.

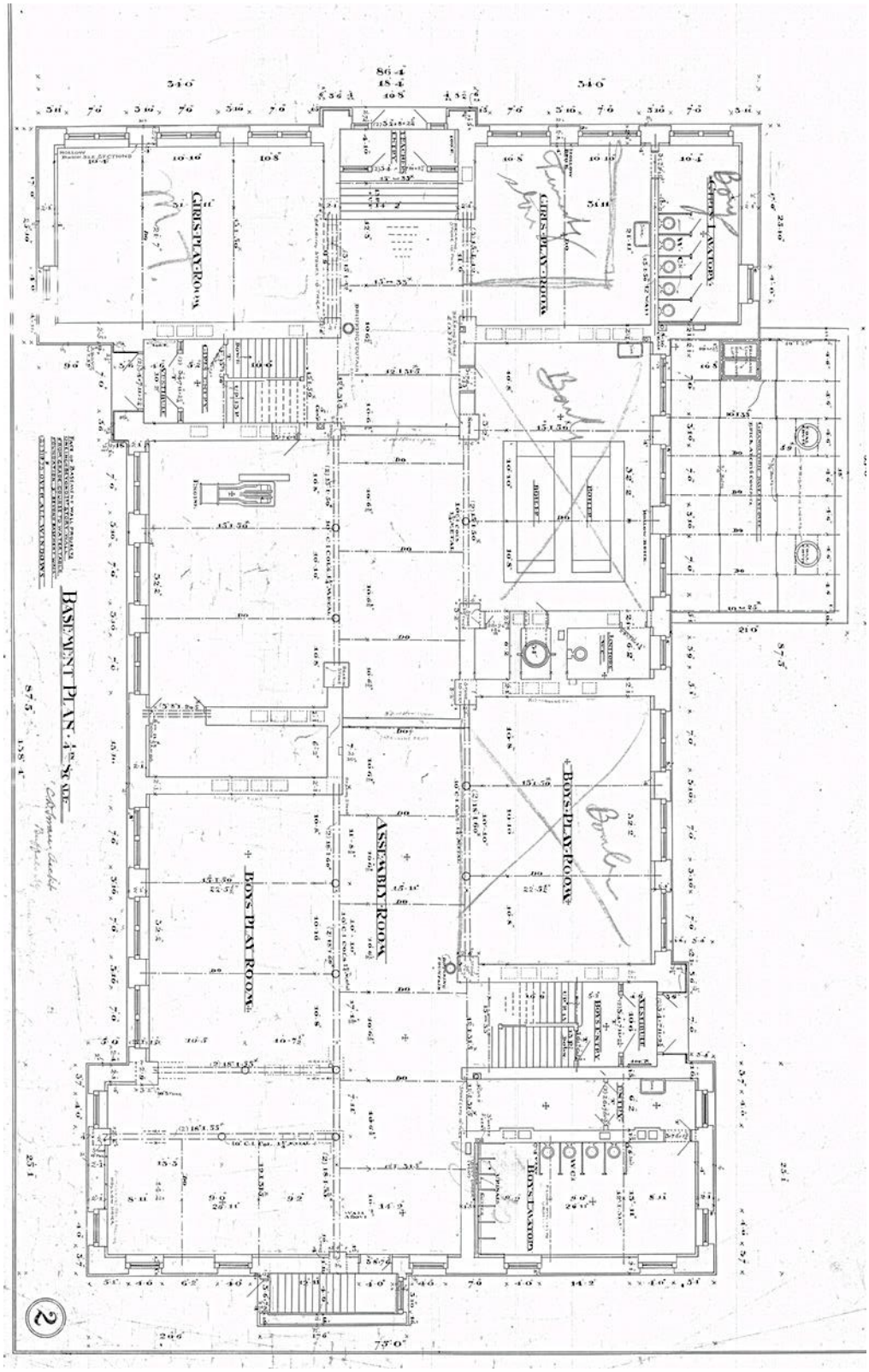


Figure 1: Basement Plan
Architectural Drawings for
Public School 24
C.D. Swan 1901

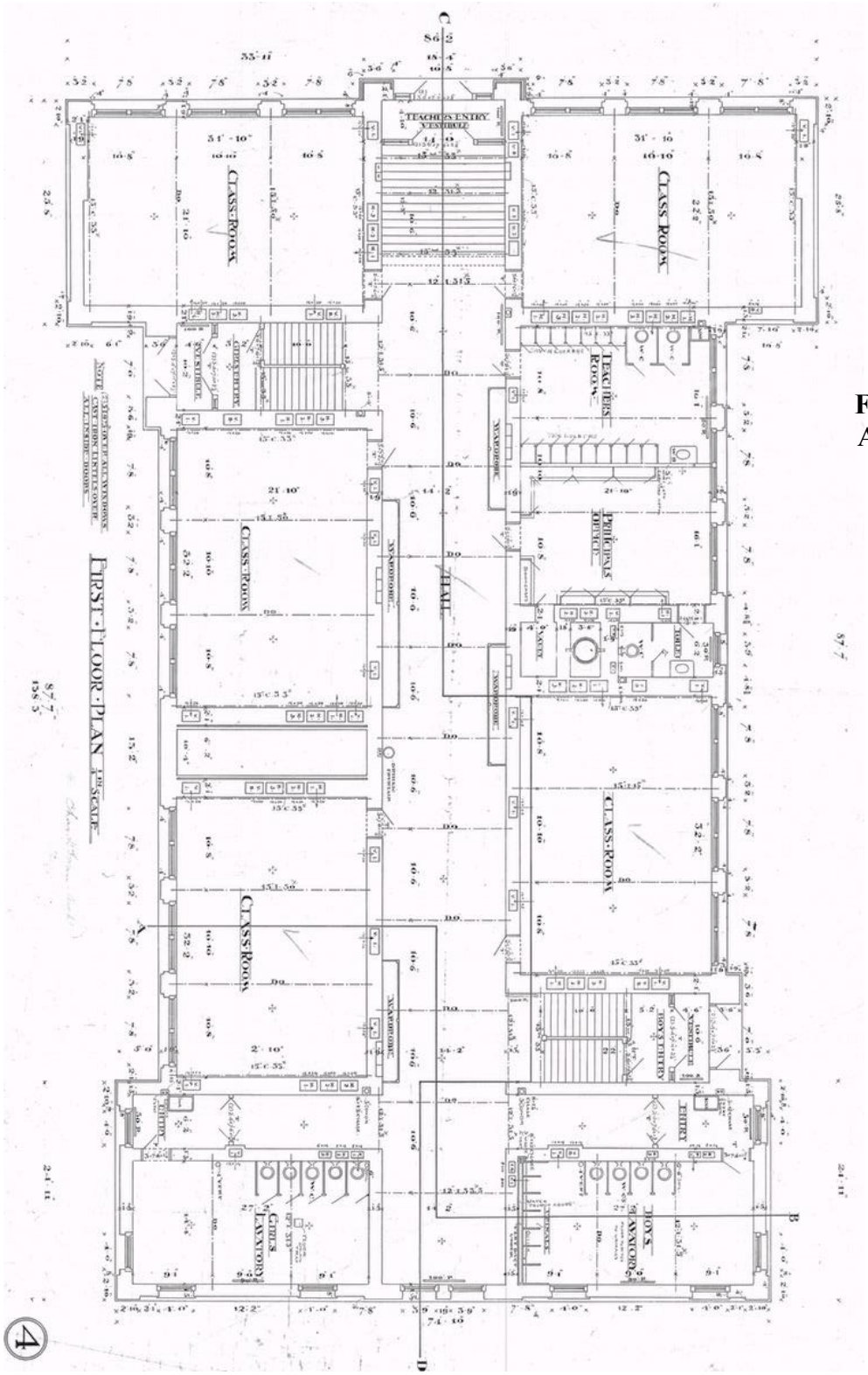


Figure 2: First Floor Plan
Architectural Drawings for
Public School 24
C.D. Swan, 1901

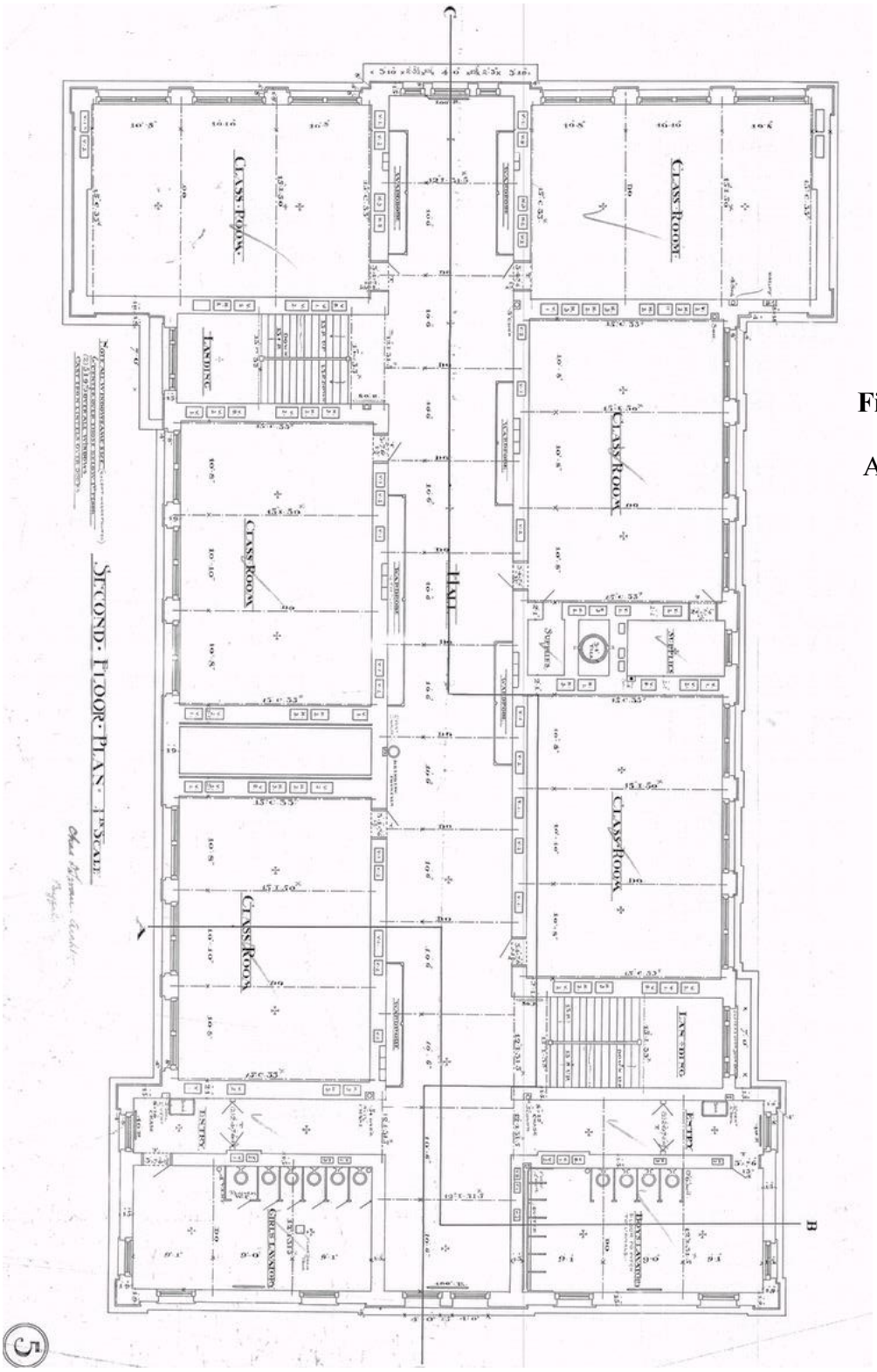


Figure 3: Second Floor Plan
Architectural Drawings for Public School 24
C.D. Swan 1901

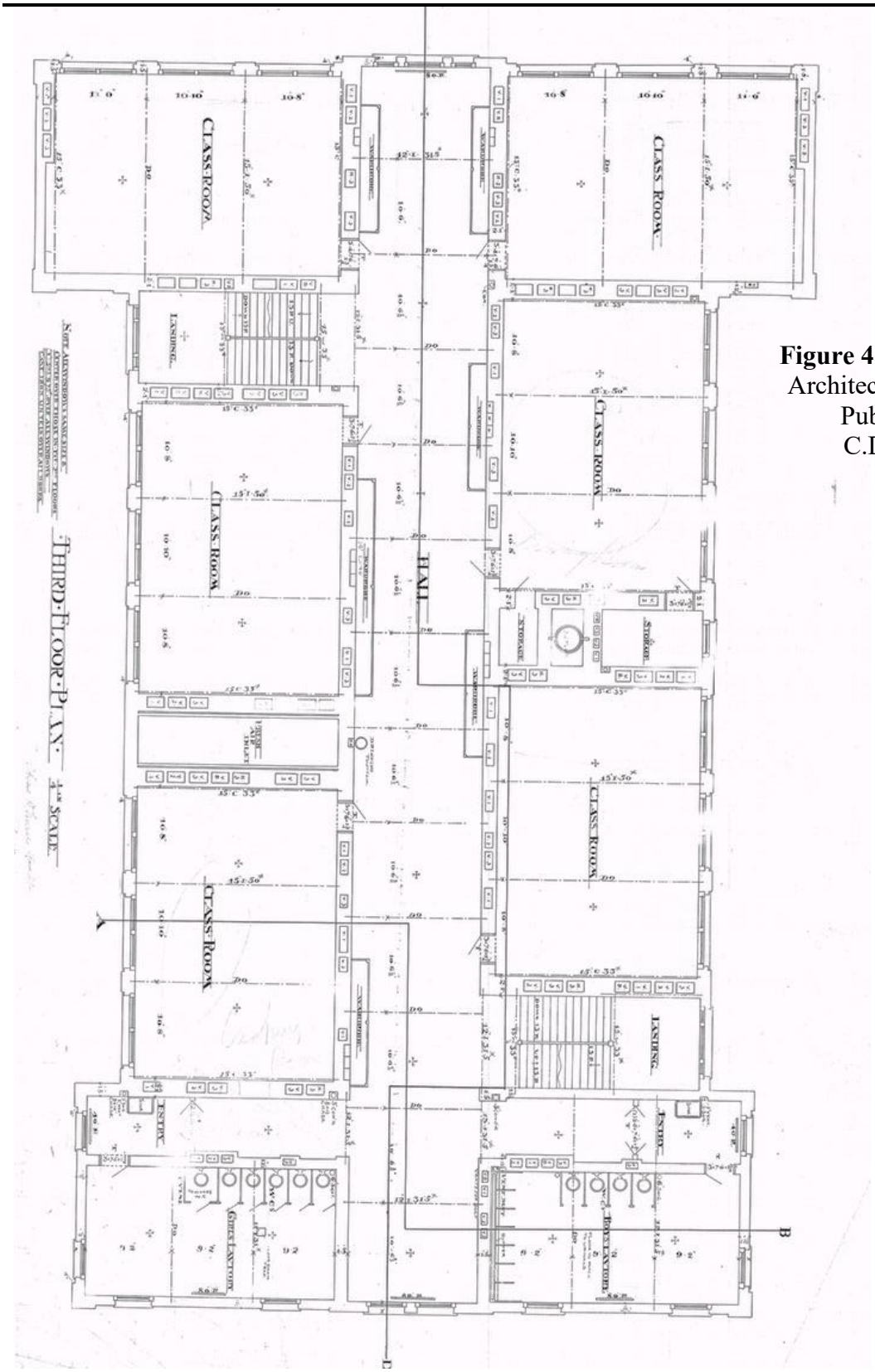


Figure 4: Third Floor Plan
Architectural Drawings for
Public School 24
C.D. Swan 1901

SCHOOL No. 24.

Figure 5: Scanned Photo of PS 24
Department of Public Instruction
Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education of the City of Buffalo: 1903-1904
(Buffalo: Buffalo Hausauer-Jones Printing Co, 1905), 47

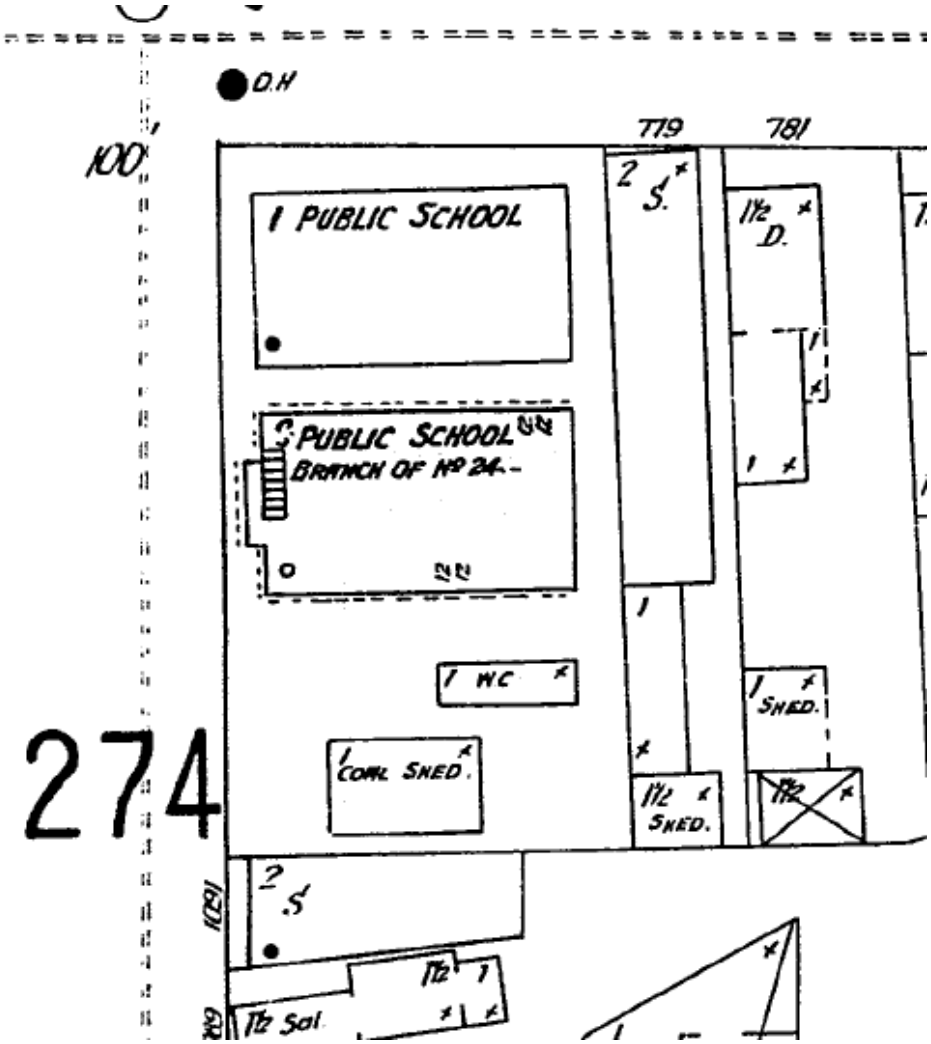


Figure 6: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1899)
Showing 1857 School and circa 1894 Annex
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Buffalo NY, 1893-1899, (1899 Adjusted)

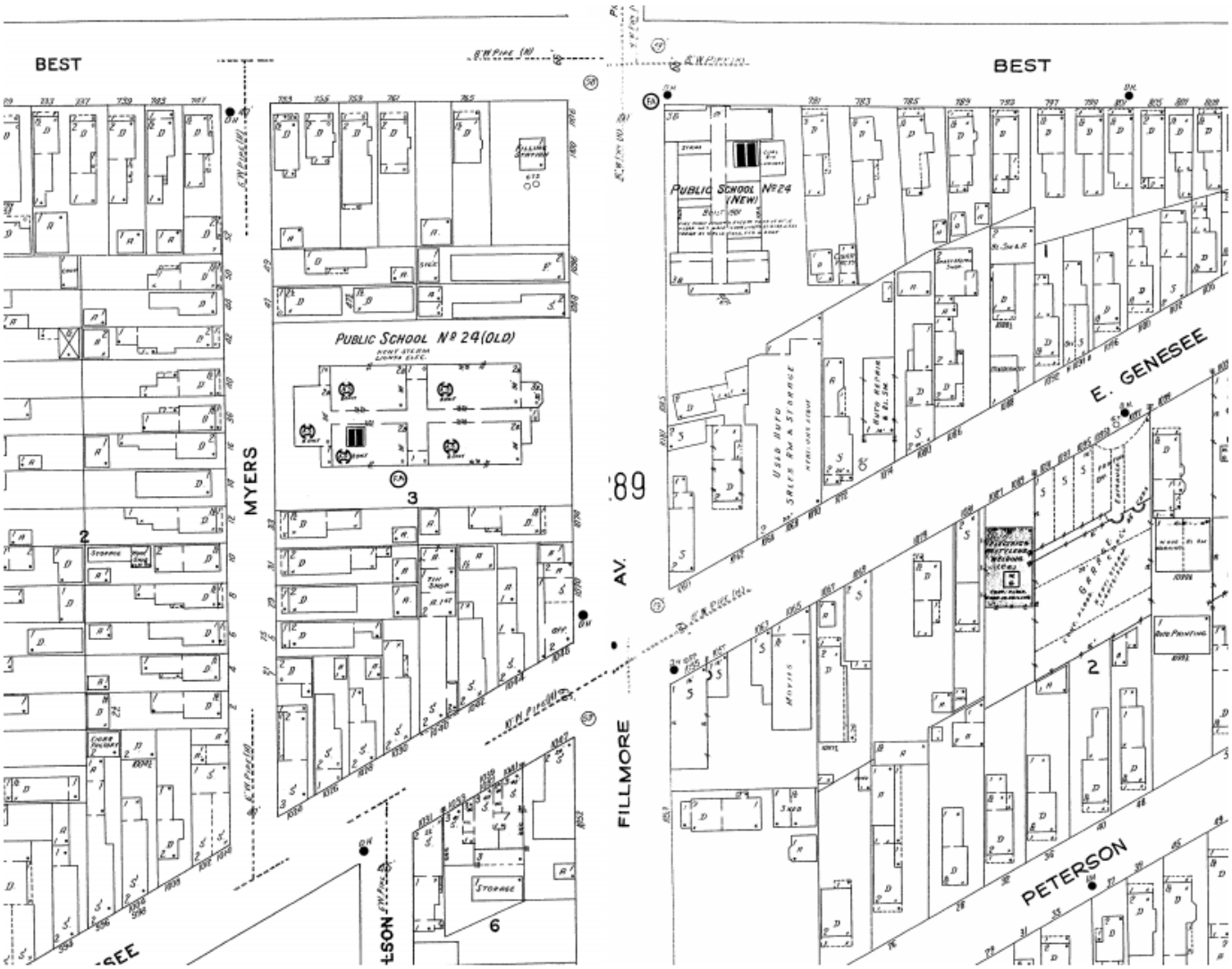


Figure 7: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1926)
Showing 1888 School Building and Current School
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Buffalo NY, 1916-1940 (1926 adjusted)

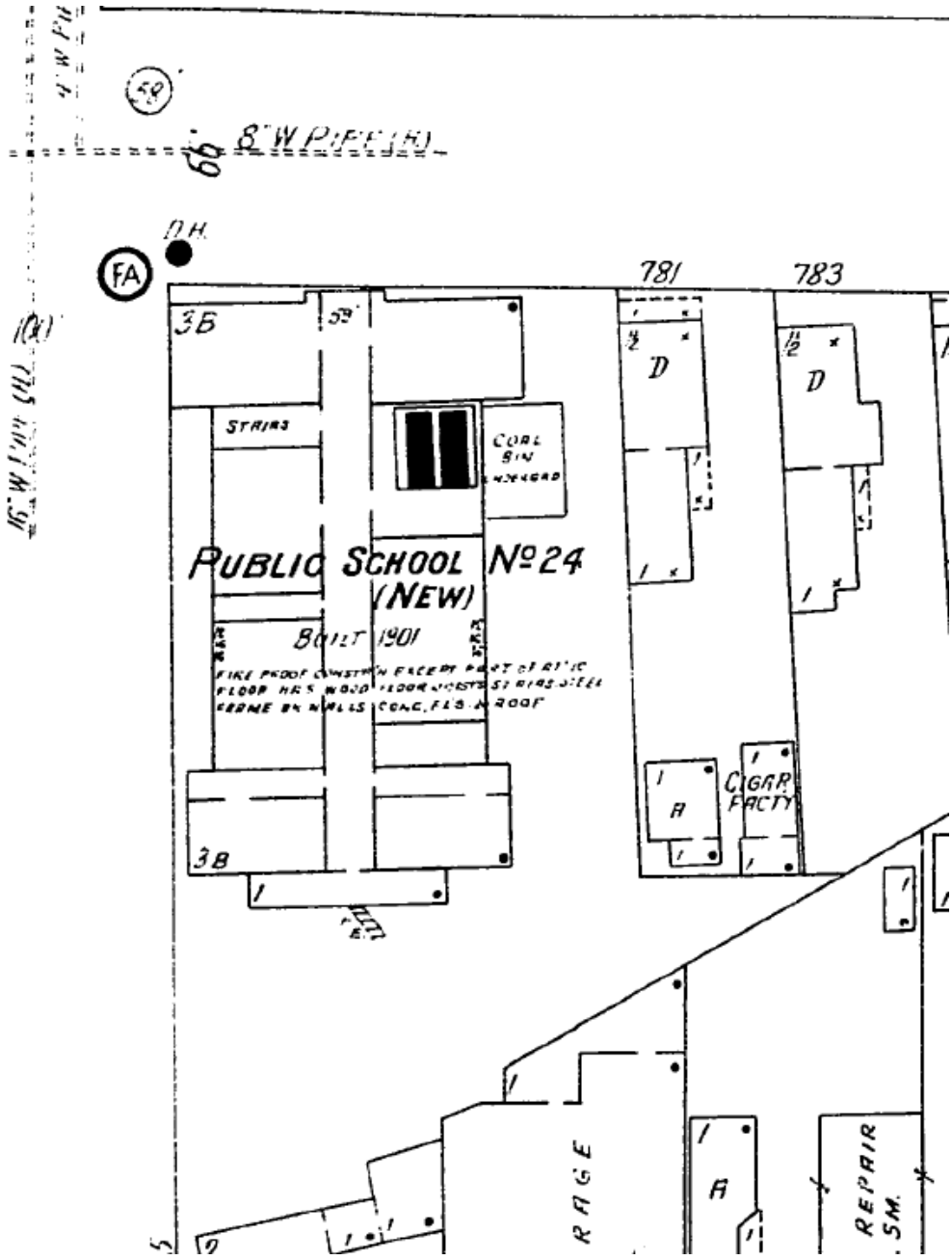


Figure 8: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1925)
Showing 1901 School Building
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Buffalo NY, 1916-1940 (1925 Adjusted)


HIGHGATE HEIGHTS - 60 ANNEX
POLICE


HIGHGATE HEIGHTS - 60 ARKEY

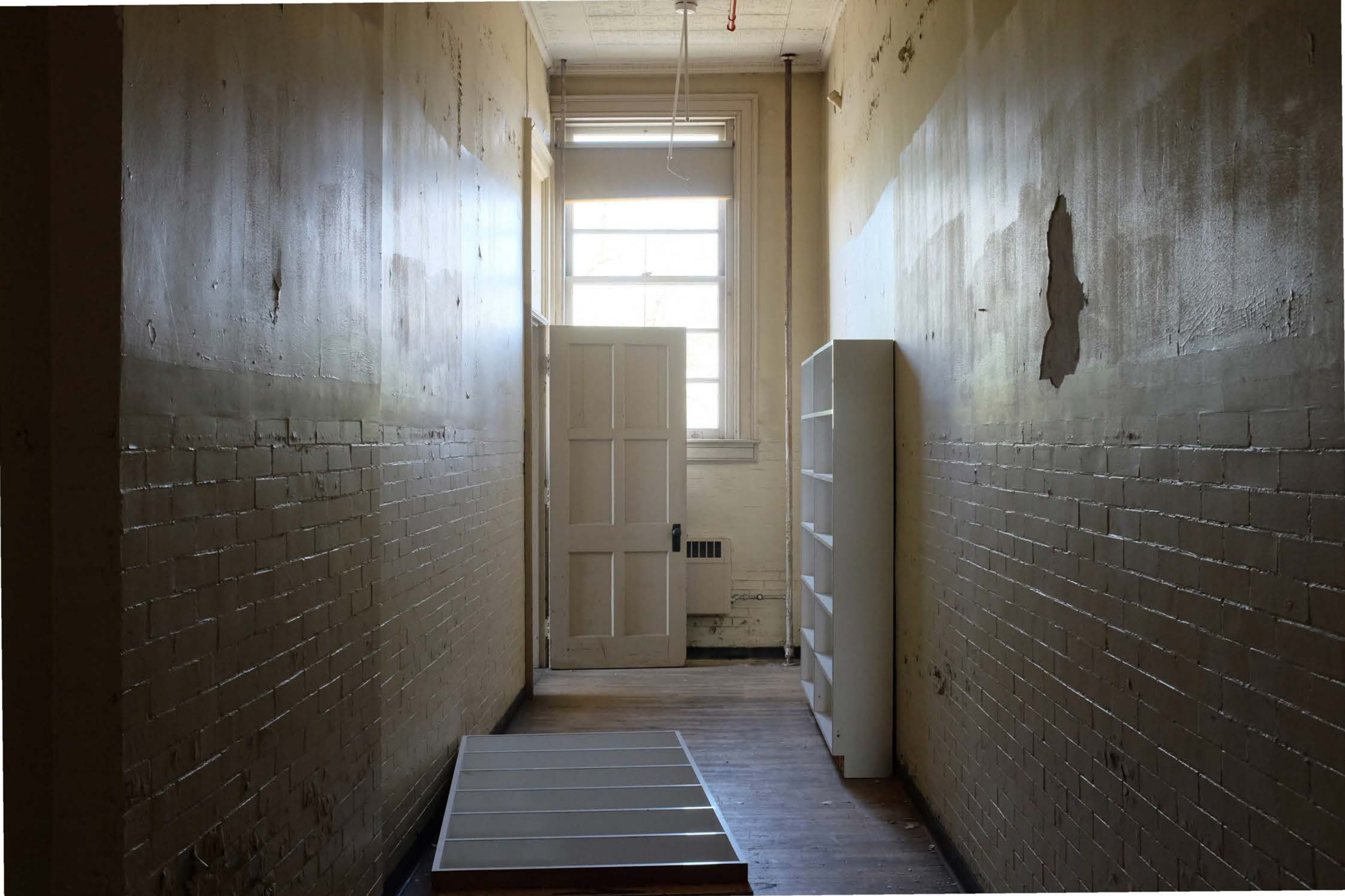

HIGHGATE
HEIGHTS
80 ANNEX
TRUCK
ROUTE
WRONG WAY
DO NOT ENTER

HIGHGATE HEIGHTS '80 ANNEX


EXI


Ideas


Play Doh
Writing



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:	Nomination
Property Name:	Buffalo Public School #24 (PS 24)
Multiple Name:	
State & County:	NEW YORK, Erie

Date Received:	Date of Pending List:	Date of 16th Day:	Date of 45th Day:	Date of Weekly List:
		12/13/2016	12/13/2016	12/22/2016

Reference number:	16000840
Nominator:	State

Reason For Review:

__ Appeal	**X** PDIL	__ Text/Data Issue
__ SHPO Request	__ Landscape	__ Photo
__ Waiver	__ National	__ Map/Boundary
__ Resubmission	__ Mobile Resource	__ Period
__ Other	__ TCP	__ Less than 50 years
	__ CLG	

X Accept _____ Return _____ Reject **12/13/2016** 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.

NEW YORK
STATE OF
OPPORTUNITY.

Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

ROSE HARVEY
Commissioner

21 October 2016

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

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

The Rae Flats and the Raleigh, Erie County
The Karnak Flats, Erie County
Buffalo Milk Company Building, Erie County
Buffalo Public School 24, Erie County
Oak Knitting Mill, Onondaga County

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