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**United States Department of 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**

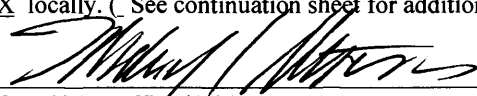
**historic name** West Side School  
**other names/site number** West Elementary School

**2. Location**

**street & number** 718 West Phillip Street N/A **not for publication**  
**city or town** Rhinelander N/A **vicinity**  
**state** Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Oneida **code** 085 **zip code** 54501

**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 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.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Date 1/23/09

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

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 commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

West Side School

Oneida County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**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.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

*Edson H. Beall*

3-5-09

*[Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	1 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	1 total

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

N/A

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

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School

Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals / Late Gothic Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Synthetics

other Limestone

**Narrative Description**

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

West Side School  
Name of Property

Oneida County  
County and State

Wisconsin

### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is 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 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- 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

1924 - 1958

#### Significant Dates

1924, 1939

#### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

#### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

#### Architect/Builder

Smith, Reynolds & Brandt, Architects  
Law, Law & Potter, Architects

#### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

West Side School  
Name of Property

Oneida County  
County and State

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### 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File** (National Park Service):

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

### 10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property 2.75 acres

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

1 16 310985 5057041  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

**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	Gary Tipler	date	August 15, 2008
organization	Tipler & Associates	telephone	(608) 286-1844
street & number	807 Jenifer Street	zip code	53703
city or town	Madison	state	WI

West Side School  
Name of Property

Oneida County  
County and State

Wisconsin

### 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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Louie Lange, III	<b>date</b>	August, 2008
<b>organization</b>	Commonwealth Development Corporation	<b>telephone</b>	(920) 922-8170
<b>street&amp;number</b>	79 East Division Street	<b>zip code</b>	54935
<b>city or town</b>	Fond du Lac	<b>state</b>	WI

**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, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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West Side School  
Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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**DESCRIPTION**

The West Side School is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Maple and W. Phillip Street, set atop the rise of land west of the Wisconsin River and northwest of downtown Rhineland. It occupies an extensive lot in a residential neighborhood. The building fronts on Maple Street, facing east toward the industrial area along the river.

The school building plan is L-shaped with the oldest portion and a north addition fronting on Maple Street and a later addition along W. Phillip Street. At the west or rear side, a former play field extended to the interior of the block. Much of the area of the play yard framed by the two sides of the rear of the building was paved with asphalt, and is now a parking area with lawns.

The oldest part of the building, closest to the intersection of Maple and Phillip streets, was completed in 1924.<sup>1</sup> It had a nearly square footprint with a hall that ran from the Maple Street entrance stair to the rear. The building footprint was more than doubled with an addition to the north along Maple Street in 1939. It was also expanded with another addition for a gymnasium along W. Phillip Street in 1988.<sup>2</sup>

The style of the 1924 building and its matching 1939 addition is a simplified Collegiate Gothic, built of reddish-brown brick with horizontal limestone header course above the lower level windows, sills and inset blocks above the second floor windows. The building rises a tall story-and-a-half above grade with the lower level a half story below grade. It is a flat-roofed building with parapet walls. Two entrances and stair pavilions project from the Maple Street façade, one for the 1924 building and the other in the 1939 addition. The pavilions have angled brick corners, parapets with cutouts that rise above the rest of the building height, limestone trim, and panels over the doorways. The masonry entranceways are trimmed with limestone pointed Gothic arches.

The original portion of the building was designed by Smith, Reynolds & Brandt of Manitowoc. The plan consisted of four classrooms on the main level. Half of the lower level consisted of a large playroom. The other half contained utility rooms and the boys' and girls' toilets. Rooms on both floors were connected by a single hallway that ran the width of the building.

The 1939 north addition reflected the original simplified Collegiate Gothic style forms and motifs of the older school building in a plan by Law, Law & Potter of Madison.<sup>3</sup> The renovation entailed creating a north-south hall to connect the old central hall to the new North wing addition. It included all new heating, ventilating and

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<sup>1</sup> Plans dated March 2, 1923. Grade School for Rhineland, Wisconsin, Smith, Reynolds & Brandt, Architects, Manitowoc.

<sup>2</sup> Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, A History of the School District of Rhineland, Rhineland Centennial: 1982. p.43. Plans dated April 4, 1938. Addition to the West Side Grade School for the Board of Education, Rhineland, Wisconsin. Law, Law & Potter, Architects, Madison, Wis.

<sup>3</sup> Rhineland Daily News, Jan. 11, 1938, p.2. Plans dated April 4, 1938. Addition to the West Side Grade School for the Board of Education, Rhineland, Wisconsin. Law, Law & Potter, Architects, Madison, Wis.

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West Side School  
Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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lighting for the old building. On September 5, 1939, the school, including the north addition, was opened.<sup>4</sup> This addition was built with help from a Public Works Administration grant, and cost approximately \$40,000. On the upper level was a large kindergarten, classrooms for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades, a library/principal's office, a workroom, health room, and teacher's office. The downstairs gained a large gymnasium/auditorium with a stage, and storage rooms, later converted to two classrooms.<sup>5</sup> The four existing classrooms were dedicated to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, with the extra classroom labeled "extra grade room." The crowning glory of the addition was the large kindergarten on the rear or west side of the second level of the addition. The open house publication, called it "the feature room of the entire building."<sup>6</sup> It has a large bay window with window seating, cork-paneled storage cabinets along the corridor wall, a fireplace and art tile ornamentation on the fireplace and around the drinking fountain of images from popular children's stories.<sup>7</sup> The beautiful hand-painted tiles were provided by the McClymont Marble Company of Milwaukee.<sup>8</sup> A similarly ornamental tile surround adjoining the drinking fountain in the upper level hall remains, as well. Originally, the kindergarten had a linoleum floor, with inlaid designs of birds, animals and fish, and an inscribed alphabet, and painted glass panels in the bay that depicted characters from Mother Goose.<sup>9</sup>

On the exterior, the wood double-entry doors have multi-pane lites, and transom windows with multiple lites filling the Gothic arch masonry openings. The entrances are raised a few steps above surrounding grade. A stone water table wraps the building above the lower floor windows. A horizontal belt course runs at the estimated roof level, perhaps three or so feet below the top of the metal trimmed parapet. In the 1939 north wing, the details copied those of the 1924 building faithfully. New clad wood multi-paned double-hung windows were installed in the recent renovation, replacing the bronze-colored aluminum windows and infill panning from the 1988 remodeling.

The building's facade has a subtle asymmetry. The original 1924 building consists of a central entry bay with its arched entry. Above the entry, with the top of the window at the height of the belt course, is a set of three double hung windows (four over four light). Between the door surround and the upper windows is a rectangular precast concrete panel. To either side of this entry are three evenly spaced pairs of nine over nine light double

<sup>4</sup> Rhineland Daily News, All Schools in City To Reopen Tuesday, Sept. 3, 1939, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, p.43.

<sup>6</sup> "The West School, Rhineland, Wisconsin: open house, December 8th, 1939." Rhineland, Wis.? : Rhineland Board of Education? 1939: Rhineland Office Supply Co., p.2.

<sup>7</sup> Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, A History of the School District of Rhineland, Rhineland Centennial: 1982. p.43.

<sup>8</sup> Rhineland Daily News, Low Bids Total \$172,173 for Central and West Side Construction Work, July 29, 1938, p. 2.

"The P. and D. company, in its proposal for the general construction work, listed the following sub-bidders: Frank Johnson company, Inc., Milwaukee, plastering; Reinick and Krueger company, Madison, sheet metal; Noble Sheet Metal Works, Rhineland, roofing; T. Chimelewski and Son, Milwaukee, painting; and McClymont Marble company, Milwaukee, marble and tile."

<sup>9</sup> Law, Law & Potter. A monograph of the work of Law, Law & Potter, architects, Madison, Wisconsin / James R. Law, Edward J. Law, Ellis J. Potter. Madison, WI: Law, Law & Potter, 1937. "The West School, Rhineland, Wisconsin: open house, December 8th, 1939."

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West Side School  
Rhinelander, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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hung window on the main floor with six over six windows immediately below at the lower level. The new addition contained this exact repetition. However, at the joining of the sections is a bay containing two six over six light windows with stone panels above, with six over six light windows below. At the far right hand side of the front elevation is another single window of the same treatment. All of the triple sets of windows correspond to classrooms on the interior, while the single windows light specialty functions, including the health and teachers' room in the center of the building, and the girls' toilet at the end of the hall. All of the main floor windows have a single, square stone panel centered above it.

The north elevation consists of a projecting back entrance. A pair of widows is located above it, with a single double hung window placed to its left. Brickwork and the square panels of the façade demarcate large squares on the main level of the building. The main floor windows are centered in the second and third square form the left.

On the rear elevation the windows again reveal the room functions, with triple sets of windows corresponding to classrooms, and alternate configurations lighting other functions. The variant is a two-story projecting bay which houses the kindergarten of the second level with angled corners over a squared-out lower utility room. The brick boiler room chimney is located behind the 1924 building. From the area of the rear staircase of the original building, much of the lower back elevation is hidden by the later classroom addition.

The south side of the 1924 building is broken only with a pair of windows on each level. This elevation does not have the same brickwork squares that are found on the north elevation. Along this side, W. Phillip Street, the ground slopes away to reveal the lower level to the point where an entrance, now the main entrance for the building, is located, on the connector between the old building and the former gymnasium.

At the rear south corner of the 1924 building a one-story addition of reddish-brown brick and cast concrete contains a several class rooms and connects to a large plain boxy brick-clad gymnasium. On the upper level, a narrow enclosed hall connects the second level of the old building across the one story addition to a stair that is part of the gym addition.

The interior of the 1924 building and 1939 addition largely are characteristic of their original appearances, though were rebuilt to serve as apartments which incorporated original features. Classrooms, now apartments, flank the simple central hall. The upper level generally has a higher level of finish. Wood trim and paneled doors are found in all rooms of the second level, many of which are original and others built to closely match existing. Built-in cabinets are found in most of the former second level classrooms and are incorporated into the apartment room layouts. Blackboards with wood trim remain on several walls. The terrazzo flooring is found in the upper-level hallways and the stairwells and landings. A red art tile panel is set into the landing at the top of the stair of the 1924 part of the building. Wood floors are beneath the carpet in the classrooms. Coursed red tile flooring has been retained in the landing of the second level in the 1924 building. The 1924 entrance stair has a sweeping plaster and oak-trimmed banister. The lower level has some wood trim though in fewer rooms, and is painted. Plaster walls and drywall ceilings are found in almost all spaces. A stage in the auditorium room in the



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West Side School  
Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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lower level of the 1939 addition has been incorporated into a theatre and meeting room.

### ***Alterations***

The original building and the 1939 addition comprehensively retain their integrity with few exceptions. The relationships remain the same in relation to setting, surrounding landscape, and street views of the Maple and Phillip Street façades.

In 1988, the one-story addition for classrooms and a gymnasium, designed by The Stubenrauch Associates of Sheboygan, was built along W. Phelps Street at the rear of the original school.<sup>10</sup> The 1988 addition had a low impact on the integrity of the original building. To protect the windows of the primary upper level of the west side of the building, it was built with a lower level connector with classrooms, so the two-story gymnasium was somewhat distant from the old building. A narrow enclosed hallway connected the second level. The impact to the historic building was in keeping with the intent of the expandability promoted at the time the original building was built, as promoted by the highly respected school architect of the period, John J. Donovan.<sup>11</sup> The bulk of the 1988 gymnasium addition is set apart from the school and does not have a negative impact on the parts of the building dating from the period of significance.

On the interior the 1924 school and 1939 addition were altered in recent decades with the addition of ceiling tiles on the second floor and dropped ceilings in the basement, florescent lighting, carpet, some additional doors in the basement, and the gymnasium and classroom wing to the rear or west. However, the original features and materials remained in place including flooring, wood trim, wood doors, cabinets, blackboards, and the kindergarten fireplace and hand-painted tiles.

### ***2007 Renovation***

In 2007, Commonwealth Development Corporation of Fond du Lac, undertook the complete renovation of the building for apartments. They kept many of the identifying interior features: corridors, lockers, blackboards, built-in cabinets, doors, the upper-level terrazzo hall and stair floor finishes, the kindergarten fireplace, storage cabinets, and drinking fountains. The renovation restored the ceiling height for most of the spaces in the oldest parts of the building and installed new windows, which once again filled the masonry opening. The restorative window installation was the most noticeable change on the exterior of the old building.

The 1988 gymnasium masonry walls were altered to allow windows for apartments. The windows were placed to avoid conflict with the simple brick panels of the walls. The second level connector between the 1924 building and the old gymnasium was reclad with stucco to match the red brick of the old building. A simple

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<sup>10</sup> Plans for Gym addition to West Elementary School, dated July, 1987, by The Stubenrauch Associates of Sheboygan. The addition was completed in 1988. Interview with School Board and Oneida County Historical Society board member Merri Lee Orgeman, Dec. 15, 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Donovan, John Joseph. School architecture: principles and practices. New York: Macmillan Co., 1921. pp.279-282.

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Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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narrow garage building was added along the west edge of the lot, and paved parking and drives were installed. In the rear yard, parking and drives were installed and landscaped.

A new non-contributing garage shed was built as a part of the recent renovation. It has a low slung appearance and runs along the west end of the property. It is set back from W. Phillip, with a pinkish brick South end wall facing the street, garage doors facing East. The simple doors frame and trims are wrapped in white aluminum. The "lapped" sheathing is vinyl. The garage shed is accessed via an asphalt drive from W. Phillip.

New asphalt parking lot with concrete curbs and ramps is located in the former play yard and adjoins the garage shed.

***Integrity***

The original school and its 1939 addition retain good integrity. Other than the windows and some interior finishes, the original design elements, materials and workmanship of the original 1924 building and 1939 addition remain relatively intact. The building's integrity is generally superior to that of many remaining school buildings of similar vintage.

The renovation retained most of the best interior features. The doors, interior trims, and wood cabinets are largely intact from their original installations, where they remain. Few had been removed in previous or the recent remodelings. The spacious kindergarten in the North wing, an artistic product of the Public Works Administration, features a large windowed bay with built-in seating for reading, wood trimmed storage cabinets, a drinking fountain and a fireplace, both with late Arts and Crafts-styled tiles with illustrations depicting Grimm's fairy tales. The kindergarten space has been maintained as an integral space between the bay window and the fireplace. The door and wall panels still retain their original corkboard for attaching the paper and artwork of the pupils. The original cork flooring has long been covered.<sup>12</sup>

On the exterior, the replacement of the previous smaller replacement windows with infill panels (1988), with windows closely matching those of a historic photo, restored the historic appearance to the building.

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<sup>12</sup> Law, Law & Potter. Selections from the recent work of Law, Law & Potter, architects, Madison, Wisconsin / James R. Law, Edward J. Law, Ellis J. Potter. New York, NY: Architectural Catalog Co., 1941.

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West Side School  
Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The West Side School in Rhineland is locally significant under Criterion A for its association with primary education in the city of Rhineland and under Criterion C as a local example of an early Twentieth Century school building with a remarkably appointed kindergarten. It is one of only two remaining school buildings in Rhineland from the pre-modern era. The school was open from January 1924 until June 2005. The period of significance was from when the West Side School was completed in January 1924, until 1958, with respect for the 50-year-cutoff.

The new West Side School replaced a much older one room school that had served city neighborhoods west of the Wisconsin River. As such, in the area of Education the school reflects the expansion of public schools in Rhineland and changes in educational practice. In the area of Architecture the building is significant as an example of the school property type. The simplified Collegiate Gothic elements of its exterior, coupled with the high level of finishes on the interior make the West Side School a good representative example of the type.

**Historical Context in Rhineland**

From a trading post established by John C. Curran in 1855 near the confluence of the Pelican and Wisconsin rivers, grew the settlement known as Pelican Rapids. It grew to become a lumber mill town, deep in the white pine forests of northern Wisconsin. With the arrival of the railroad in 1878, the community boomed in the 1880s and 1890s and became an enterprising city. The growth of its school system matched the irregular markets for lumber over the following decades.

School was first taught in a room in John Curran's log home, which also served as an inn and his home. He hired a teacher, Miss Ella Finnessey, a relative of his wife to teach his children, those of a friend, as well as children of the Chippewa Indians. As the school outgrew his home, he built a one-room log schoolhouse nearby in the 1870s.

On November 27, 1882, a twelve-block plat was recorded at Merrill, then the county seat, and the settlement of Pelican Rapids became Rhineland, named for F.W. Rhineland, the president of the Lake Shore, Milwaukee, and Western Railroad, which had served the settlement since 1878. In 1883, Rhineland's first school board, under the jurisdiction of the county, then part of Lincoln County, was organized for which Curran served as clerk. The first order of business was to build a one-room schoolhouse, on the northwest corner of Brown and Frederick streets. By 1885 it was overcrowded, and moved to the site of the Curran School on S. Oneida Street. In addition, the three-story Central school on W. Frederick Street was built to house the three-year high school program, as well as an elementary school.<sup>13</sup> In January 1887 Oneida County became an entity and Rhineland was named its county seat, and the Oneida County School District was organized and the first Superintendent of Schools, Mary Howe Shelton, was appointed. (In 1887, Oneida County included the present Vilas and Oneida

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<sup>13</sup> Olsen, T.V. Our First Hundred Years: A History of Rhineland. Rhineland, WI: Pine View Press, 1981. pp. 42,43.

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counties. It was not until 1905 the Oneida County got its present boundaries by the formation of Vilas County.) In 1888, a one-room West Side school was built and a two-room school was built on the north side near the sawmills. In 1890, the four-room McCord school was built on Thayer Street at the north side of town. In 1894, the village became the City of Rhineland, the number of school board members grew from three to nine, and the high school program was expanded to a four-year course. The following year an addition was built onto the high school. In 1887, Superintendent of Public Instruction Shelton reported that Oneida County had five schools, six school districts, 302 children of school age, but an enrollment of 181 students. By the turn of the century, 24 school districts, 2,469 children of school age and 1,913 children enrolled in public schools were reported.<sup>14</sup> As the city quickly grew, differences called for the city to withdraw from the county school system in 1902.<sup>15</sup>

During Rhineland's boom from the 1880s until the early 1910s, four elementary schools, a junior high and high school were built and rebuilt to accommodate the growing programs and demands for education. Following World War I, enrollment increased and the growing economy allowed for the construction of a new West Side school.

### **Education**

The West Side School, later called the West Elementary School, represents the patterns and trends in small town primary education in Rhineland, from a time of rapid growth in the early 1890s to a time of school reform during the late-Twentieth Century. The West Side school first opened at the time of the broad integration of kindergartens into elementary schools, and that was later reflected in its handsomely appointed kindergarten in the 1938 North addition. The school was in service during the period of transition from local control of schools to a period of regional consolidation in recent years.

Set in a working class neighborhood high above West bank of the Wisconsin River and the paper mills, the school was one of four elementary schools in Rhineland. The students were from West Side families many of whom had emigrated from Kentucky to work in the nearby lumber mills and were known as "Kentucks."<sup>16</sup> When it was built in 1923-1924, it was a four-room schoolhouse built with a capacity of approximately two hundred students. It replaced a much older, frame one-room school building nearby.

The new school left behind the single room school house model. It reflected the state's encouragement of the "state graded" school, a term applied to school building that had more than one room and more than one grade of pupils. This change corresponded to the belief that larger schools would allow students of different ages and abilities to be taught in separate spaces. In 1905, the state legislature passed an act stating that schools enrolling more than 65 pupils had to provide an additional room and an additional teacher. The new building

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<sup>14</sup> Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction. Biennial Report of the Department of Public Instruction of the State of Wisconsin. Madison WI: 1886-1888, 1900-1902. Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, p.2.

<sup>15</sup> Olsen, pp. 79-80.

<sup>16</sup> Winifred Ahrens Spring interview, September 4, 2008.

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had four classrooms and half of the lower level was given over to a large playroom. With the remodeling and addition, each grade was assigned its own room, with special consideration give over to a large kindergarten room. The lower level contained a space for a future auditorium.

The growth in the city of Rhineland and the increase in the school age population led to overcrowding of the city's schools by the early 1920s. The September 12 edition of the Rhineland Daily News reported that the high school enrollment was up, while at the Curran school (an elementary school), two teachers were teaching 80 students. The article reported that the west area neighborhood school had 26 students in grades kindergarten to second, with an additional 20 kindergarteners being taught at City Hall. The article noted: "The boys and girls of this city are considered as being valuable property and future citizens and all efforts are being made as to avoid any overcrowded condition art any of the schools."<sup>17</sup> The new West Side School was a response to these conditions.

The Superintendent of Schools of Rhineland, Walter F. Kruschke, whose term spanned from 1928 until 1955, saw to the further addition and expansion of schools as the small city grew during those difficult years. He helped plan the replacement of the 1906 Curran elementary school destroyed by fire in 1932. It was replaced in 1935 with a new building at 315 S. Oneida Avenue, designed by the Madison architectural firm of Law, Law and Potter.<sup>18</sup> In 1938 Kruschke oversaw the development of plans for the addition to the West Side school, as well as plans for a new Central elementary school, built alongside the Old Central School High School and Junior High School complex in 1939 (418 N. Pelham St.). Both elementary schools were also designed by Law, Law and Potter, each in differing styles and appearance.<sup>19</sup> With the school board, he helped procure PWA funding. Kruschke received high marks from the State education inspectors W.A. Senty and J.F. Waddell in 1944: "Under the capable leadership of your Supt. W.F. Kruschke, your schools are carefully and efficiently organized and functioning in a very satisfactory manner."<sup>20</sup>

***Kindergarten and Winifred Ahrens***

The first kindergarten in the United States was begun in Watertown, Wisconsin in 1856 by Margarethe Meyer Shurz. Born in Hamburg in 1833, she was exposed to the teachings of Kindergarten founder and advocate Friedrich Froebel, whom she met in 1849. Froebel had founded the first kindergarten in Bad Blakenburg, Germany in 1837.<sup>21</sup> Shurz spent the next two years opening kindergartens in Germany. When she and her husband Carl Schurz came to Watertown, she started to teach her daughter Agatha and other children of relatives and neighbors through arts and crafts, music and play. This was the first modern kindergarten where young children learned the rules of social interaction during play. Her work attracted the attention of Elizabeth

<sup>17</sup> "Enrollment as Public Schools Totals 1594," Rhineland Daily News, September 12, 1922, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Olsen, pp. 79-80.

<sup>19</sup> Miller, Elizabeth. Intensive Survey of Rhineland Historic Resources. Prepared for City of Rhineland. 1997. pp.56, 57.

<sup>20</sup> Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, A History of the School District of Rhineland, Rhineland Centennial: 1982. pp.26,27.

<sup>21</sup> Froebel Web. <http://www.froebelweb.org/webline.html>

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Peabody, who in 1859 visited the Schurz home and was impressed by young Agatha Schurz's abilities and maturity. Mrs. Peabody immediately became an advocate of early education and opened many public and private kindergartens, beginning an effort that was adopted throughout the United States.<sup>22</sup> The movement grew slowly in Wisconsin, and the kindergartens were started in Baraboo and the first public one in Wisconsin in Manitowoc in 1873. The following year the first one in English was established in Milwaukee.<sup>23</sup>

By the early twentieth century, the kindergarten was seen as a vital part of the public education system of progressive cities. Many educators and social reformers saw kindergarten as a means of social reform, especially in urban centers that had concentrations of the poor and of immigrants. Advocates suggested that the proper training of these children might eventually lead to the elimination of urban poverty. The placement of a dedicated kindergarten classroom in the West Side School led to a petition among the Curran school's parents to open one in their school. This kindergarten opened mid-January, right after West Side opened.

Years later, when the north addition to the West Side school was being planned in 1938, the most prominent space was the generously finished and appointed kindergarten room. It featured a fireplace and drinking fountain, both decorated with art tile surrounds depicting fables, and a large bay window with seating on the west side of the building, overlooking the playground. The kindergarten was among five that were open to Rhineland students in September 1939, offering both morning and afternoon enrollment.<sup>24</sup>

When the new addition to the West Side school opened in September 1939, war had just been declared in Europe, Japan had invaded China, the Public Works Administration was being phased down in Wisconsin, and the Progressive movement was losing popularity. However, the educational system the Progressive movement had enhanced was bearing fruit among its teachers. Three new ones were hired to fill the four new classrooms in the north addition. One of them, Winifred Ahrens, the kindergarten teacher, had just attained an education at the Milwaukee State Teachers College. She thought the kindergarten "a very charming room for that date ... the architects were ahead of their time, trying to make it comfortable and inviting." Though she never was instructed on the use of the fireplace, she used it as a focus for story-telling and singing. Miss Ahrens discussed progressive ideas with her former instructor, Louise M. Alder, Director of Kindergarten-Primary Division of the Milwaukee State Teachers College. They discussed improving the methods of teaching to engage parents in their child's education, and to reach out to appeal to families in the surrounding "Kentuck" neighbors who might have Kindergarten age children at home.<sup>25</sup> Miss Ahrens flexed her progressive education and made a presentation to the PTA during her first few months, she took the initiative to become the first local teacher to provide free milk for her students, and the following year, was the first to sell Defense stamps in her school.<sup>26</sup> She went on to a career of teaching and serving as a principal at several other primary schools throughout the state, including Sheboygan.

<sup>22</sup> Froebel Web. <http://www.froebelweb.org/images/schurz.html>

<sup>23</sup> Campbell, Henry Colin. *Wisconsin in Three Centuries, 1634-1905*. New York: Century History Co.: 1906. p.174, 175.

<sup>24</sup> *Rhineland Daily News*, "All Schools in City To Reopen Tuesday," Sept. 3, 1939, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Alder, Louise M., Director of Kindergarten-Primary Division, Milwaukee State Teachers College, Milwaukee. Letter to Winifred Ahren Spring. February 8, 1940.

<sup>26</sup> Winifred Ahrens Spring interview, September 4, 2008.

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***A Time of Transition***

In 1951, the State Legislature passed an act, which directed every county board to elect a six-member County School Committee, charged with the task of studying all aspects of education and preparing a plan for the development of an Oneida County system by July 1, 1952.<sup>27</sup> City voters balked at a countywide school system, but in July 1955 a Union High School district was approved. Work on the new building began in 1957 and it was completed in April 1959. By May 1968 the Cooperative Educational Service Agency established by the county, ordered that a kindergarten through grade twelve district be formed, following a referendum, and the reorganization created a common school district with one school board, with schools in seven communities in Oneida County.

The late 1960s were a period of enormous change and reform, when the school system addressed integration, accessibility for disabled students, transportation and school lunches. In 1968, the K-12 school system was adopted in Rhineland and consolidated to include schools from surrounding towns in Oneida County and nearby counties.

Reflecting the continued growth, the West Elementary School (as it was by then called) was expanded in 1988 with additional classrooms and a large gymnasium. As a part of the Rhineland School District's further moves toward modernization and consolidation, the school was declared surplus and closed in June 2005.

**Architecture**

The West Side School is also locally significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of an early Twentieth Century school building. The building's hillside location, its layout with a central corridor and considerable window exposure, all embody the principals of maximizing ventilation and light for the ease of reading and writing and for promoting good health. Its kindergarten, prominent in the 1938 north addition by Law, Law and Potter, architects,<sup>28</sup> was exemplary in its design and detail. The school building is the oldest extant school in Rhineland and one of only two pre-modern school buildings remaining in Rhineland.

The modified or simplified Collegiate Gothic architectural references of the original four-room West Side schoolhouse by Smith, Reynolds & Brandt built in 1923-1924 were copied or further delineated on the exterior of the north addition by Law, Law and Potter, architects in 1938-1939. The exterior of the building is enhanced with simple Arts and Crafts stone details on its face. Architecturally it is uncomplicated, and the building is remarkably intact, though its windows have been twice replaced, most sympathetically to the original design and detail in the recent renovation.

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<sup>27</sup> Rhineland Area Retired Teachers Association, p.52.

<sup>28</sup> Rhineland Daily News, Jan. 11, 1938, p.2. Plans dated April 4, 1938. Addition to the West Side Grade School for the Board of Education, Rhineland, Wisconsin. Law, Law & Potter, Architects, Madison, Wis.

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The interior features were extremely simple in the original building, though given more attention to detail in the Arts and Crafts style in the North addition. The greatest stylistic attributes of the building are the interior details, particularly in the kindergarten. The large bay window with window seats, the fireplace for story-telling, the ornamental tiles, the built-in cabinets, the door and wall panels were finished with corkboard for attaching the paper and artwork of the pupils. The original flooring found in the kindergarten featured an inlaid alphabet, according to an early photo published by Law, Law & Potter (1941), though it has long been covered or replaced.<sup>29</sup> The original kindergarten bay windows, removed in 1988, had several glass panels with hand-painted storybook characters. Slate blackboards and corkboard panels are found throughout the old classrooms. The original terrazzo flooring remains in the corridor.

The West Side School reflects the Progressive design concepts which were promoted in the early Twentieth Century. These were based on renewed interests in health and delineated in school design concepts that provided natural ventilation, natural lighting, sanitary facilities, and spacious floor plans for ease of circulation – all of which promoted physical and mental health and maximized the learning potential for children. The tall, easily-operable windows were set high, close to the high ceilings to take full advantage of natural light and maximize cross ventilation using central corridors.

For kindergartens, standards had been promoted by leading school architect John J. Donovan, among others -- kindergartens were to be located on the primary level, be exposed to natural sunlight, the rooms were to be at least one-and-a-half times the size of a standard classroom size, they were to have story-telling areas including fireplaces, play circles, inspirational artwork such as illustrated nursery rhymes, views of the natural environment, and be sanitary.<sup>30</sup> The Progressive designs such as the hearthside focal point for engaging children in learning, open floor plan to maximize circulation and flexibility in teaching, and a strong emphasis on integrating the classroom with the outdoor world while maximizing natural lighting and ventilation is evident in the projecting bay window.<sup>31</sup> The projecting bay window was often a prominent feature in the kindergartens of Progressive architects including William B. Ittner, William Templeton Johnson, Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton of Chicago<sup>32</sup> and Law, Law and Potter of Madison.<sup>33</sup> The bay window is a prominent feature in many of the kindergartens of Law, Law and Potter.

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<sup>29</sup> Law, Law & Potter. Selections from the recent work of Law, Law & Potter, architects, Madison, Wisconsin / James R. Law, Edward J. Law, Ellis J. Potter. New York, NY: Architectural Catalog Co., 1941. Note that the photo of the kindergarten was mislabeled, since the interior features and bay window do not match those of the old Central Elementary school, built at about the same time, and on which page the kindergarten view was located (unpaginated).

<sup>30</sup> Donovan, John Joseph. School architecture; principles and practices. New York: Macmillan Co., 1921. pp.279-282.

<sup>31</sup> Dobbin, Clarence E. & Harrison, Wallace K. School buildings of today and tomorrow. New York: Architectural Book Pub.c1931. p.64.

<sup>32</sup> Perkins, Dwight. Educational buildings, by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton, architects, Chicago. Chicago: Blakely Print. Co., 1925. p.15.

<sup>33</sup> Law, Law & Potter. A monograph of the work of Law, Law & Potter, architects, Madison, Wisconsin, 1937. Law, Law & Potter. Selections from the recent work of Law, Law & Potter, architects, Madison, Wisconsin, 1941.



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Dwight Perkins, a progressive architect noted for his design of schools, promoted other ideas pertinent to the design of the West Side School. He stated that elementary schools were best suited to be one-story in height in order to be a "more harmonious and welcome structure in a neighborhood of detached residences". He noted that schools were generally intended to be expandable, to be flexible in plan, "beginning with only four class rooms but providing for a well regulated and orderly expansion by many stages until a school of twenty or more class rooms with assembly hall and gymnasium is reached."<sup>34</sup>

The oldest part of the school, built closest to the intersection, was designed by the architectural firm of Smith, Reynolds & Brandt of Manitowoc, in the winter of 1923.<sup>35</sup> The school opened in January 1924, and had four classrooms. A large playroom, toilet rooms, and the furnace room and service rooms were in the basement.

To address the shortage of primary school facilities in Rhineland, the addition proposed by Ellis Potter of Law, Law & Potter architects was approved for the West school in a joint meeting of the school board and the city council in January 1939.<sup>36</sup> In March, two additional residential homes and lots to the north of the school were acquired and the houses removed.<sup>37</sup>

In late July 1938, when bids were finalized, it was announced that the Board of Education had received a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant for the Central and West schools project, which entailed the construction of a new Central elementary school and the north wing addition for West elementary school.<sup>38</sup> The Rhineland school project was the first PWA project in the Chicago region to have received bids and possibly the first to start construction.<sup>39</sup> The Chicago region included Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia. Ellis Potter of the Law, Law and Potter, architects, facilitated the quick start of construction following the approval of bids.<sup>40</sup>

The Rhineland schools project was funded with a \$99,900 PWA grant, a state loan, and a \$75,000 local bond sale.<sup>41</sup> The schools construction project was further underwritten at the same time, with the approval of a \$50,000 loan from the state trust fund to the Rhineland school board for work on the Central and West Side schools.<sup>42</sup> The general contractor was the P. and D. General Contractors, Inc. of Milwaukee.<sup>43</sup> The numerous subcontractors were from throughout Wisconsin.

<sup>34</sup> Perkins, p.15,16.

<sup>35</sup> Plans dated March 2, 1923. Grade School for Rhineland, Wisconsin, Smith, Reynolds & Brandt, Architects, Manitowoc.

<sup>36</sup> Rhineland Daily News, Jan. 11, 1938, p.2.

<sup>37</sup> Rhineland Daily News, March 15, 1938, p.2.

<sup>38</sup> Rhineland Daily News, July 28, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Rhineland Daily News, July 29, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Rhineland Daily News, July 29, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Rhineland Daily News, "Low Bids Total \$172,173 for Central and West Side Construction Work," July 29, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Rhineland Daily News, \$50,000 Loan On School Job Has Approval, July 29, 1938, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Rhineland Daily News, July 29, 1938, p. 2

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Completed in September 1939, the North addition, designed by Madison architects Law, Law & Potter, extended the school along Maple Street and copied the original simplified Collegiate Gothic style forms and motifs of the older school building.<sup>44</sup> The most impressive room in the addition was, and remains, the spacious kindergarten -- a handsome product of the thoughtful and artistic works and craftsmanship of the Public Works Administration.

Decades later, in 1988, a one-story addition for classrooms and a gymnasium was built along Phelps Street at the rear of the original school, designed by The Stubenrauch Associates of Sheboygan.<sup>45</sup>

**The Context of Rhineland's Schools**

The West Elementary School was the fourteenth school building built in Rhineland and is the oldest remaining school building in the city. Its 1938-1939 north addition has the best remaining interior of that period, including its exceptionally appointed fine kindergarten.

Over the years, many substantial school buildings of some longevity and historical interest were built in Rhineland, though most have been demolished. One of the oldest substantial school buildings was South Park Elementary which was built in 1883, and replaced in 1952 (511 S. Pelham).<sup>46</sup> The second was McCord Elementary, built in 1905 to replace the first one, which had been destroyed by fire, closed in 1981 and was demolished.<sup>47</sup> The High School which was built in 1912, and later became the Junior High School, was demolished (328 E. Frederick St.).<sup>48</sup> Old Central School, which became the Junior High School after 1912, was demolished for the police and fire station about 1977 (116-128 W. Frederick St.).<sup>49</sup> The second Curran Elementary School, built in 1906, burned in 1932 and was rebuilt in 1935 (Law, Law & Potter)(315 S. Oneida Ave.).<sup>50</sup> Central Elementary was added to the Old Central School High School and Junior High School complex in 1939 (418 N. Pelham St.).<sup>51</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Rhineland Daily News, Jan. 11, 1938, p.2. Plans dated April 4, 1938. Addition to the West Side Grade School for the Board of Education, Rhineland, Wisconsin. Law, Law & Potter, Architects, Madison, Wis.

<sup>45</sup> Plans for Gym addition to West Elementary School, dated July, 1987, by The Stubenrauch Associates of Sheboygan. The addition was completed in 1988. Interview with School Board and Oneida County Historical Society board member Merri Lee Orgeman, Dec.15, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> Olsen, pp. 43,44.

<sup>47</sup> Olsen, pp. 43,44; Jones, George O., History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties, Wisconsin, Minneapolis: H.C. Cooper Jr. & Co., 1924, pp. 121-122.

<sup>48</sup> Jones, pp. 121-122.

<sup>49</sup> Olsen, pp. 108-109.

<sup>50</sup> Olsen, pp. 79-80.

<sup>51</sup> Miller, Elizabeth. Intensive Survey of Rhineland Historic Resources. Prepared for City of Rhineland. 1997. pp.56, 57.

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The West Side School is one of only two pre-modern styled, twentieth century elementary school buildings remaining in Rhineland. The only other remaining pre-modern styled school building in the city is the red brick Collegiate Gothic styled Curran School, also designed by architects Law, Law & Potter of Madison and built in 1935.<sup>52</sup> The Curran School had large front window bays that have been partly altered with infill panels and replacement windows. Law, Law & Potter had also designed the existing modernist Central Elementary School at 418 N. Pelham, built in 1938-1939. Central Elementary also had a kindergarten, which was similar to the one at West, though it has been made into an interior room with additions and retains only the fireplace and no windows, nor other character-defining features.

In conclusion, the West Elementary School is locally significant under Criteria A and C in representing the education history and architecture of Rhineland's early twentieth century schools. It represents, in particular, the fruition of the kindergarten movement integrated into the primary school in both its history and its architecture.

The school building was renovated with care to protect its architectural character, and is an excellent example of Rhineland's historical and architectural heritage associated with education. The integrity of the building remains strong. The interior features most of the original Arts and Crafts details and appointments in the old building, particularly those of the former kindergarten.

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<sup>52</sup> Miller, Elizabeth. Intensive Survey of Rhineland Historic Resources. Prepared for City of Rhineland. 1997. pp.56, 57.

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Plans dated March 2, 1923. Grade School for Rhineland, Wisconsin, Smith, Reynolds & Brandt, Architects, Manitowoc.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary corresponds to the legal description of the school's parcel: Section 6, Township 36, Range 9 City of Rhineland, Oneida County, Wisconsin; Legal Description: Lot 1 Certified Survey Map, Vol. 15, page 3389. G.S. COON ADD, LPTS 1-12 BLK 8, (EXC S20' LOTS 1-7) & PT O. L. C N/K/A LOT 1 CSM V15 P3389 INCL RH-2008 & PT 2024 (08)  
Tax ID no. parcel number 2009

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary corresponds to the current legal parcel of the property. The school grounds once included a large play field extending into the center of the block and running north. In the recent reconfiguration, most of the play field was separated from the parcel when the building was sold and is now under different ownership.

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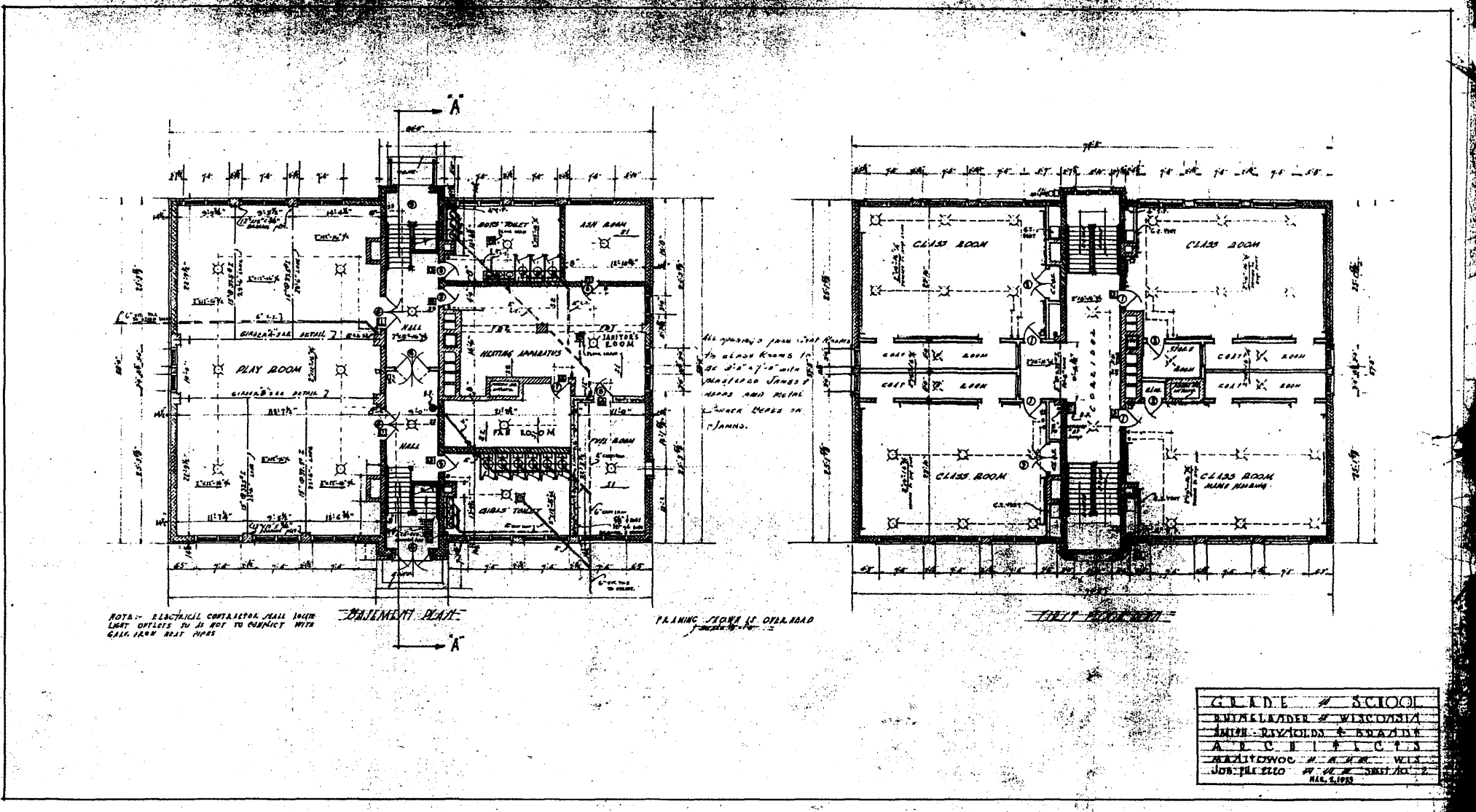
**West Side School**

**718 W. Phillip Street, Rhineland, Oneida Co., WI**

**Photos by Gary Tipler, August 2007.**

**Negatives on file at the Wisconsin Historical Society.**

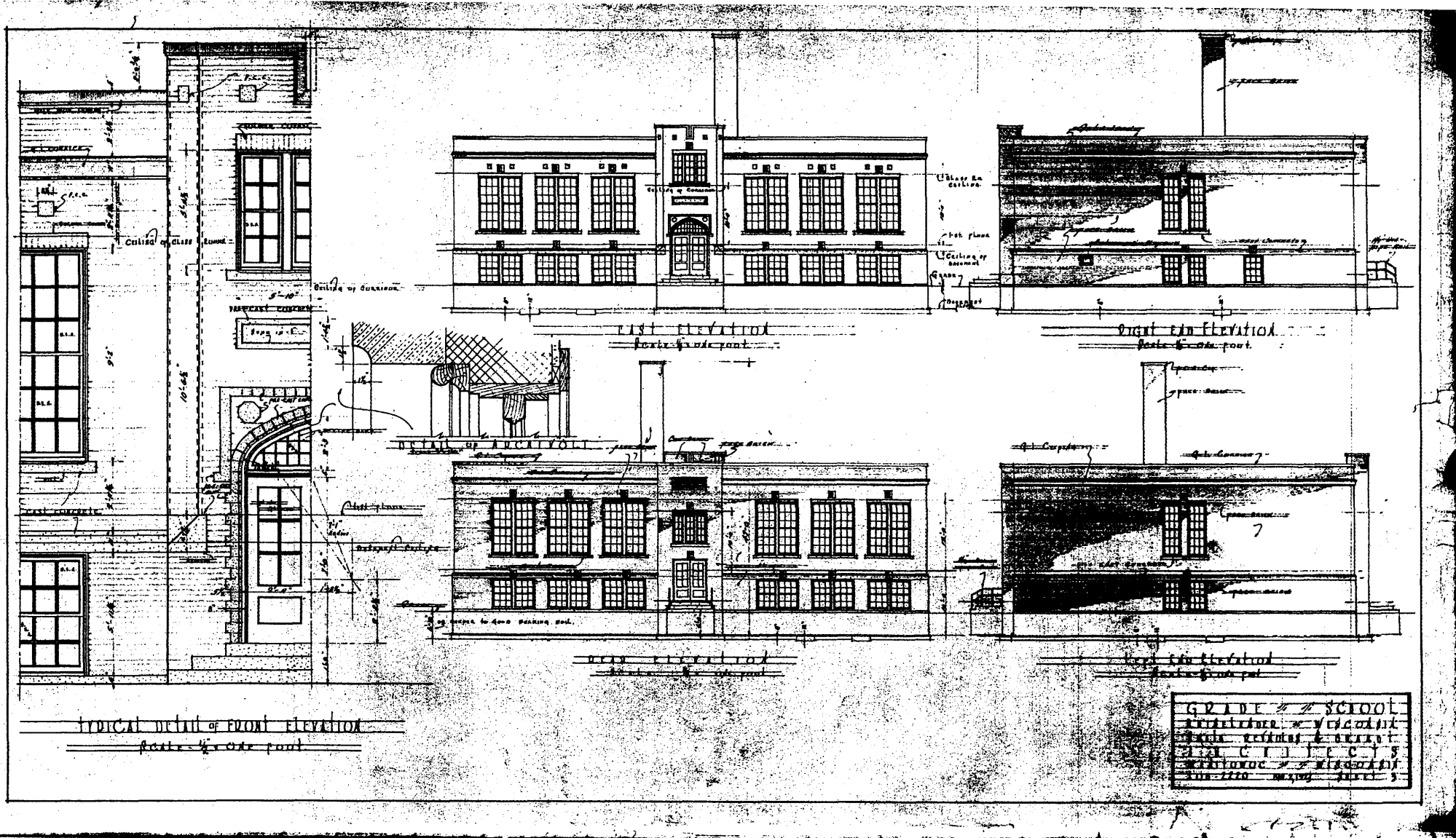
- Photo 1/15. View looking SW at N entrance, N addition on Maple Street.
- Photo 2/15. View looking SW at N end of N addition on Maple Street.
- Photo 3/15. View looking NW at 1923 and 1938 Maple St. facades.
- Photo 4/15. View looking NW along Phillip Street at old and 1988 addition.
- Photo 5/15. View looking NE along Phillip Street.
- Photo 6/15. View looking NE along Phillip St at 1988 addition rear & garage.
- Photo 7/15. View looking SE from drive at 1988 addition.
- Photo 8/15. View looking SE from park north of site of West side, 1923 bldg.
- Photo 9/15. View looking SW at N entrance, Maple St. façade.
- Photo 10/15. Upper level stair landing of 1923 Maple St. entrance.
- Photo 11/15. Kindergarten looking W. Fountain tile, cabinet, window.
- Photo 12/15. Kindergarten fireplace looking NE.
- Photo 13/15. Kindergarten window looking W.
- Photo 14/15. Hall, upper level looking S past N entrance.
- Photo 15/15. North addition Maple St. entrance, looking E.



**FIGURE #1:**  
**WEST SIDE SCHOOL**  
**RHINELANDER, ONEIDA COUNTY, WI**

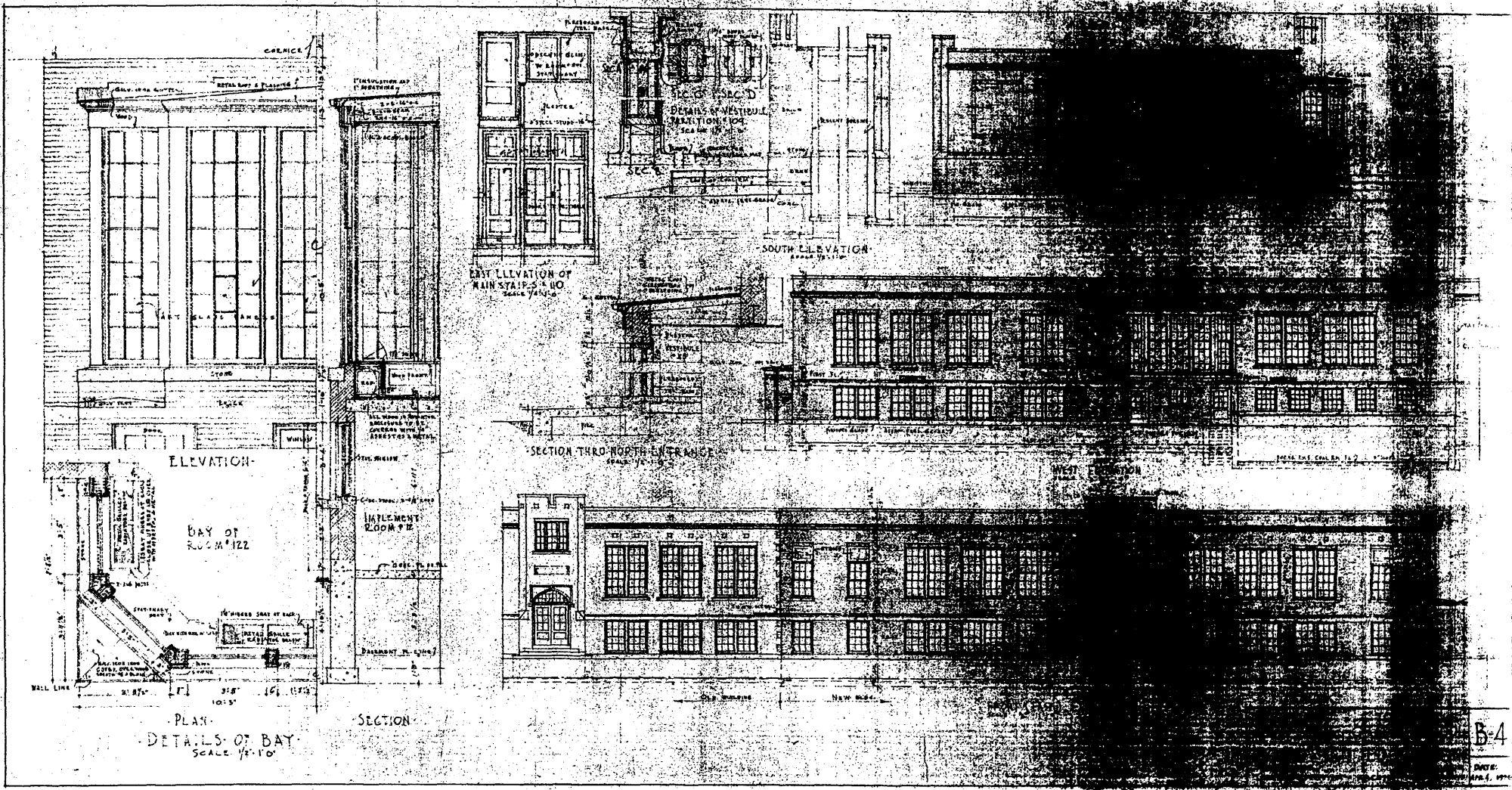
1923 Smith Reynolds & Brandt





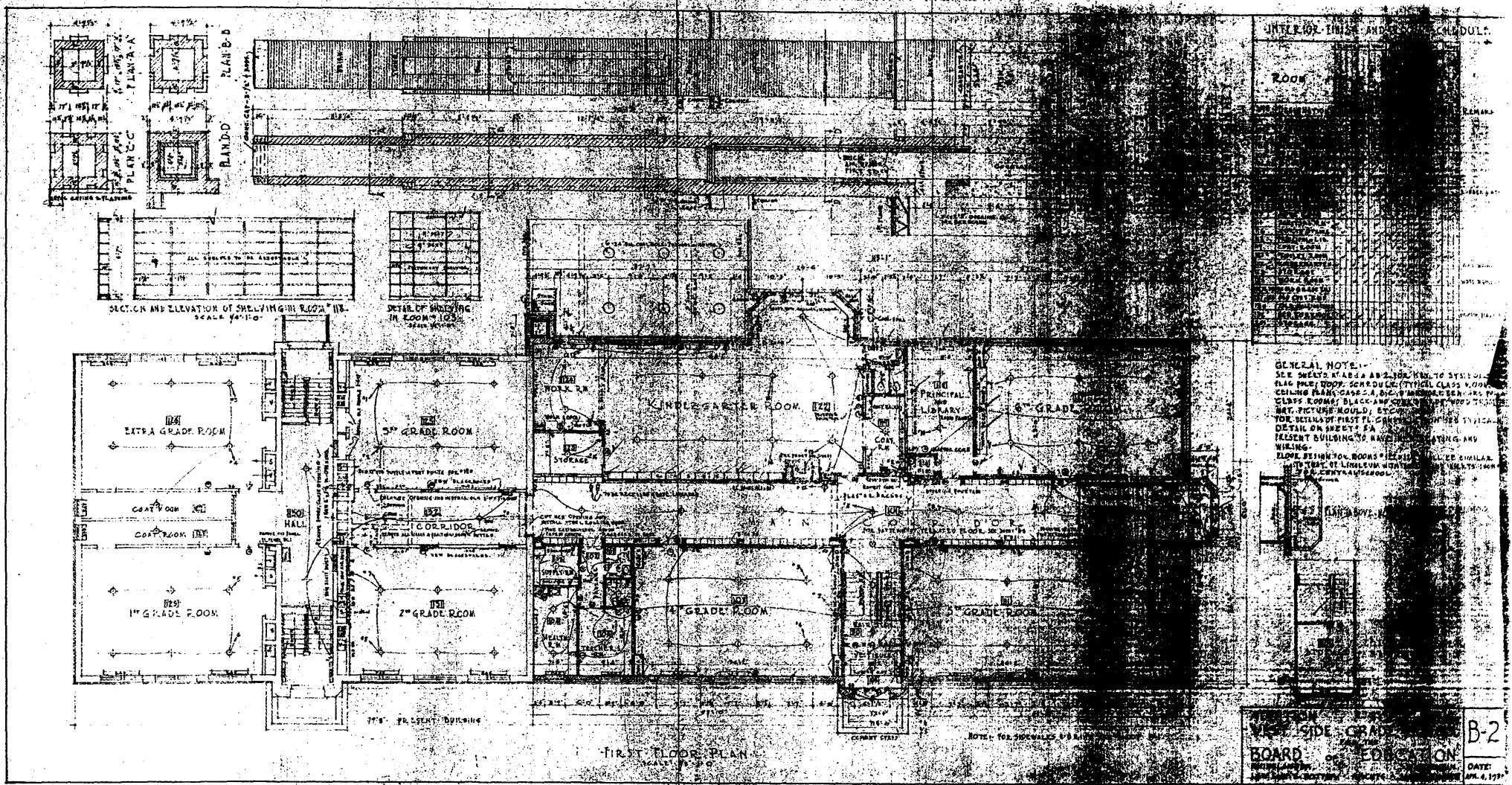
**FIGURE #2:**  
 WEST SIDE SCHOOL  
 RHINELANDER, ONEIDA COUNTY, WI

1923 Smith Reynolds & Brandt



**FIGURE #3:**  
**WEST SIDE SCHOOL**  
**RHINELANDER, ONEIDA COUNTY, WI**

1938 Addition Law, Law & Potter



**FIGURE #4:**  
 WEST SIDE SCHOOL  
 RHINELANDER, ONEIDA COUNTY, WI

1938 Addition Law, Law & Potter