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

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No.	1024-0018
Expires	10-31-87

received FEB 4 1983 date entered MAR 2 1 1986

For NPS use only

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

# 1. Name

historicSchool No. 27 (Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School)and or commonCommodore John Rodgers Elementary School

# 2. Location

street & number	2031 East Fayette Street		N/A not for publication		
city, town	Baltimore	N/A vicinity of	Seventh Congressiona	l District	
state	Maryland code	<sup>24</sup> county	independent city	<b>code</b> 510	
3. Clas	sification				
Category district X building(s) structure site object	Ownership X public private both Public Acquisition in process being considered X not applicable	Status occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible _X yes: restricted yes: unrestricted no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation tother: vacant	

## 4. Owner of Property

See Continuation Sheet No. 1

street & number

city, t	own	vicinity	of	state		
5.	Location of	Legal Descri	ption			
court	house, registry of deeds, etc.	Land Records,	Baltimore City C	ourthous	e	
street	& number	110 North Cal	vert Street, Room	611		
city, t	own	Baltimore		state	Maryland	21202
6.	Representat	tion in Existi	ng Surveys	•		
title	Maryland Historica Historic Sites Inv	h	this property been deter	mined elig	ible? ye	es <u>X</u> no
date	1985		federal	_X_ state	county	local
depos	sitory for survey records	Maryland Historica	1 Trust, 21 State	Circle		
<b>city</b> , t	own	Annapolis		state	Maryland	21401

## 7. Description

#### Condition

excellent	deteriorated	unaitered	$\underline{X}$ original si	ite	
X good	ruins	X_altered	moved	date	<u>N/A</u>
fair	unexposed				

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

Number of Reso	urces	Number of previously listed National
Contributing	Noncontributing	Register properties included in this
1	0 buildings	nomination: 0
0	0 sites	
0	0 structures	Original and historic functions and
0	0 objects	uses: education
1	0 Total	

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

The former Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School was built and opened in 1913 at the southwest corner of Fayette and Chester Streets in east Baltimore. Most of its lot is consumed by the roughly rectangular footprint of the building, leaving small open areas to the south and west. As the ground slopes gently down to the northwest, this free standing building rises  $3^{1}_{2}$  to 4 levels from a low granite base to its essentially flat roof and parapet. The exterior of the building is mostly brick with some granite and various artificial or cast stone features predominantly at the front and sides. Slight projections of the end and central sections and bands of multi-paned windows articulate the five-bay facade which looks north across Fayette Street. Particular embellishment appears at the facade's central bay where a double stair of granite leads up to the main entrance at the first floor of the building. Here, panelled wood doors with glass sidelights and transom are framed by a pointed, segmental archway of cast stone. Above, a similar but wider arch surmounts the upper of two levels of leaded glass windows which are flanked by blank windows of coursed cast stone. The parapet crowning this bay features a slight pediment, a triangular form that repeats at corresponding locations on the building's side and rear elevations. Secondary entrances are provided at each side of the building where the central of three bays contains double doors with sidelights and transom. At the upper floors above these doorways, large, multi-paned windows are flanked by flush arched panels of brick. At the otherwise simpler rear elevation of the building, most of the windows feature segmental brick arches. In plan, the building is symmetrical about its central north-south cross-axis, where the main entrance and rear stair are located. Perpendicular to this axis, on all floors except the basement, a wide corridor runs the length of the building providing access to eight classrooms and one teachers' room per floor, and cast iron and slate staircases at each end. Pressed metal ceilings and hardwood floors remain intact in these rooms. The basement level contains two specialized classrooms, toilets, storage rooms, mechanical equipment rooms, and an assembly room from which a stair leads up to panelled wood exterior doors directly beneath the building's main entranceway. The building retains an unusually high level of integrity.

For General Description, see Continuation Sheet No. 2

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School No. 27 Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 4

#### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY:

Mayor and Council of Baltimore c/o The Hon. William Donald Schaefer Mayor of Baltimore City Hall, Room 250 100 North Holliday Street Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Under contract to be purchased by:

School No. 27 Associates Limited Partnership 6813 Golden Ring Road Baltimore, Maryland 21237

# United States Department of the Interior<br/>National Park ServiceFor NPS use onlyNational Park ServiceFor NPS use onlyNational Register of Historic Places<br/>Inventory—Nomination Formreceived<br/>date enteredSchool No. 27<br/>Baltimore City, MarylandItem number7Page2

#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

About one-and-one-half miles east of Baltimore City's downtown central business district and at the northern edge of the Butchers Hill Historic District, the former Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School No. 27 stands vacant. Constructed in 1913 with minor setback from its property lines at the southwest corner of Fayette and Chester Streets, the building occupies most of its original lot, roughly 182 feet by 120 feet (see attachment A). With the construction of the new School No. 27 in 1971, directly south of the old building, the revised lot now measures 184 feet along Fayette Street by 112 feet at Chester Street. An appendage at the west, measuring 241 feet by 53 feet, is an existing parking lot that will be used for parking at the rehabilitated structure (see attachment B). The narrow area between the former and the current school, now partly excavated and overgrown, once served as a playground and will become passive recreation space, levelled to its lowest existing elevation to permit full use of basement windows in the proposed redevelopment (see attachment C). The simple iron fence that once bordered this area was removed several years ago; a chain link fence now defines the east and part of the south edges. As the site slopes down about ten feet from southeast to northwest, this free standing building rises  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 levels (three stories plus raised basement). The low granite base steps along the north and east elevations following the slope of the land. Granite sills appear at all basement windows. However, the exterior of the building is predominantly brick, laid in running bond.

Facing north to a row of mid-to-late Victorian houses across Fayette Street, the symmetrical facade of the former school features five bays whose end and central sections project about 5 feet beyond the rest of the surfaces. From its projecting double stair to its slight pediment at the parapet, the central bay dominates the facade. Leading up several steps to the main entrance at the first floor, the granite stair is oriented so that one side abuts the building; the other side is a solid brick wall with granite cap and base. This wall is interrupted by centrally placed double doors of panelled wood which lead from the sidewalk down a few steps to the basement assembly room. Above, the main entranceway is a transition from the platformed summit of the granite stair to a shallow open vestibule leading to panelled wood double doors with multipaned plate glass lights and transom. A pointed, segmental archway of coursed cast stone frames this entrance. At the second and third floors of the central bay, bands of four double-hung leaded glass windows, twenty-over-twenty panes, are flanked by pilasters containing blank windows of coursed cast stone with arched heads. Just below the parapet, a wide pointed segmental arch surmounts the upper level of leaded glass windows echoing the other arches as well as the simple pediment directly above.

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#### GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

The other bays of the facade are treated more modestly though visually linked by cast stonework including coping at the parapet, a cornice, as well as string courses at first and third floor window sills and second and third floor window heads. Each of the upper three levels features bands of four six-oversix double-hung windows. Wood mullions separate individual window units. Panels of brick separate the first and second floor windows; a continuous brick spandrel marks the third floor level. Multi-paned basement windows vary in sill height according to the slope of the sidewalk and feature recessed brick frames.

The side elevations of the building are three bays each defined by brick pilasters. Of similar design, each side features wood double doors with glass sidelights and transom framed in brick headers. In the 1950s, the original panelled doors and glass lights were replaced with the flush utilitarian design seen today. A brick panel punctuates the space above the entranceway and below a bank of three nine-over-nine double hung windows. In turn, another brick panel separates these windows from similar window units that are surmounted by multipaned transoms and a single segmental arch. Flanking this area but still within the central bay, six-over-six double-hung windows appear at each of the building's upper three floors. The flanking bays contain tall blank windows of brick. According to the area of basement wall above ground, pairs of separate six-oversix double-hung windows flank the entranceways.

At the rear elevation, bands of four separate multi-paned double-hung windows with segmental-arched brick heads characterize the upper three floors of all but the central bay. Except for panelled wood doors that exit from the basement level of the end bays, similar but shortened versions of these windows appear at the basement.

In plan, the path from the main entrance to the rear stairway follows the north-south cross-axis of this symmetrical building. The upper three levels contain twenty-four classrooms, 26 feet by 32 feet, the size considered optimal and standard at the time. Each classroom features four 9-feet high by 4-feet wide windows, facing either north or south, and includes maple floors, pressed tin ceilings, slate blackboards, bookcases, a teacher's closet, and an adjoining cloakroom. There is one teachers' room per upper floor with a toilet and small closet provided near the entrances at the second and third floor levels. a 12feet wide corridor with two-toned terrazzo floor and border, slate base, and wood chair rails runs the east-west length of the building leading to stairwells at each end. All three of the building's staircases are fireproof, made of iron with slate treads. Originally open to the corridor, flush fire-rated doors were added to enclose the stairwells in the late 1950s. Also at that time, similar doors replaced panelled wood doors containing glass upper-lights at the second

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

and third floor classrooms. First floor classrooms retain their original doors. Each of the three stairways can be followed to the assembly room directly below the main entrance at the basement level. Manual training and cooking rooms, girls' and boys' toilets, storage and janitor's rooms, and boiler and engine rooms are also found at the basement level.

# 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture X architecture art commerce communications		ng landscape architectur law literature military music	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1912-1913	Builder/Architect	Clarence E. Stubbs Inspector of Buildings	s, Baltimore City

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C Applicable Exceptions: none Significance Evaluated: local

#### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

School No. 27, the Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School, is significant primarily for its association with an important phase in the progressive movement in public education in Baltimore in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The period from 1866 to 1900 was a time of "arrested development" for the city's education program. The reform of Baltimore's City Charter in 1899 resulted in the appointment of its first Board of Education separate from the pressures of local ward politics. Under the new system, the professional standards of teachers and principals were raised, a progressive curriculum was introduced and the city began to move its schools from the crowded and poor environment of rented spaces in warehouse structures to new school buildings, interior arrangements of which were those of a far more complex program and, being conceived as monuments to learning and respectability, the new schools had built into them the philosophy of health and productivity. By 1911, however, several politically motivated appointments had been made to the Board of Education and an adminstrative accident allowed the mayor to shift the balance against the progressives. School No. 27 is one of the first four schools designed and built after this shift. Whereas during the height of the progressive movement, schools were architect designed, the shift against the progressives brought a standardizing of school designs, particularly for elementary schools, that did not employ professional architects but utilized plans on file, with modifications. This trend continued until about the end of the decade. School 27 is an important example of these buildings because it retains a high level of integrity of its historic and architectural character. These buildings are generally characterized by streamlined Gothic decorative features and large expanses of windows for light and air.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet No. 7

#### 10. **Geographical Data** Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_473 acre Quadrangle name <u>Baltimore East</u>, MD Quadrangle scale <u>1:24000</u> **UTM** References 1,8 3 6,30,20 3 5 0 3 5 Zone Easting Zone Easting Northing С D G Verbal boundary description and justification See Continuation Sheet No. 7 List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries N/A state code county code state code county code Form Prepared By 11. Hattie Fields Russell name/title Gottlief Fostel, P.C., Architects 24 September 1985 date organization 100 East Biddle Street (301) 837-3355 street & number telephone Baltimore Maryland 21202 state city or town **State Historic Preservation Officer Certification** 12. The evaluated significance of this property within the state is: X\_ local national state As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. 1-31-86 State Historic Preservation Officer signature STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date title For MPS use only eby certify that this property is included in the National Register date Keeper of the National Register date Attest: Chief of Registration

GPO 911-399

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

In 1912, when plans for the new School No. 27 were approved by the Board of School Commissioners on recommendation of the Committee on Architecture, 163 buildings were occupied for school purposes, including converted rented structures. Although the School Board of 1872 favored the abandonment of rented properties and the Building Superintendent of 1900 considered such structures unfit for human occupancy, it was not until 1913, when Elementary Schools Nos. 27, 22, 6, and the Polytechnic Institute were built and occupied, that the City's dependence upon rented properties as educational facilities ended. These new buildings alleviated the overcrowding of schools in their respective neighborhoods.

Specifically for these purposes, the City Council passed an ordinance providing for the acquisition of property and the construction of a building to take the place of or serve as an addition to the original Primary School No. 27 of 1869. Prior to the 1890s, the School Board contracted with builders for the design and construction of school buildings. By 1896, however, the system was reformed so that the best architects available were commissioned for all new facilities. The use of architects ended briefly from about 1911 to 1920 when the progressives were no longer in the majority. The Municipal Architectural Commission and the School Board of 1912 authorized Inspector Stubbs to design the second School No. 27 which replaced the original, taking its corner parcel and those of an adjacent row of four houses and two stores along Fayette Street.

School No. 27 is similar to at least two schools designed by architects and under construction during the Inspector's term of office. As shown in the as-built drawings, the old Southern High School No. 70 of 1912, designed by architect Edward H. Glidden and the George Washington Elementary School No. 11 of 1913, designed by architect Alfred Cookman Leach, share unmistakable similarities to School No. 27. Thus, it may be assumed that Inspector Stubbs, educated in architectural drawing and carpentry, borrowed much of his design from those of trained architects. If so, a comparison of the respective costs of the three schools is warranted and reveals that, at approximately \$110,000, the old School No. 27 cost from \$15,000 to \$45,000 less than each of the other two buildings. Economy was achieved.

The City's Inspector of Buildings had a long-standing responsibility for selecting and purchasing buildings sites, preparing plans, awarding contracts to builders, and supervising construction. In this capacity, unlike the architects of individual buildings, the Inspector participated in the construction of each of the schools and, as such, may have influenced their designs as well as the establishment of a model program and plan for school buildings of the period.

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HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Clarence E. Stubbs, the school's designer of record, was educated in the public schools of Baltimore and graduated from the Maryland Institute at age 18, after completing an accelerated course in architectural drawing. Subsequently, he became a jouneyman carpenter and superintended the construction of several buildings. In 1904, he became District Inspector and after a period as Assistant

Building Inspector, Mayor James H. Preston appointed him Inspector of Buildings for the City of Baltimore beginning in 1911. According to the City's Charters of 1900 and 1915, the Inspector of Buildings was to be "...an architect or builder of ten years' experience in the active practice of his profession...." Heading a department of considerable staff, he was responsible for supervising construction and enforcing building regulations and ordinances. In 1913, his inspection responsibilities included City Hall, the Courthouse, public halls, market houses, fire engine and truck houses, schools, and other properties totaling 227.

Although the City's public school system was created in 1828, it was not until 1913, that the notion of adopting individual names for school buildings was referred to the Committee on Architecture for study. As a result of the Committee's recommendation, the names of people distinguished in Baltimore and Maryland history were given to the principals of each school for the purpose of selecting a name by vote of the students. Commodore John Rodgers, 1771-1838, was an American Naval hero who participated in the defense of Baltimore during the War of 1812.

When the present Commodore John Rodgers Elementary School No. 27 opened in 1971 this building was gradually phased out of service. For a while, some classes were held in the old building. Subsequently, in the mid-1970s when the City's Department of Education was decentralized, Regional Administrative Offices were located there. In July 1981, the School Board closed the building, declaring it surplus. Since that time, it has been vacant except for vandals who caused a minor fire in the summer of 1985.

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School No. 27 Continuation sheet Baltimore City, Maryland Item number 9 and 10 Page

#### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Andrews, Andrea R., "The Baltimore School Building Program 1870-1900, Study of Urban Reform". Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 70, No. 3, Fall 1975.

Annual Journal of Proceedings of the City Council Second Branch, Baltimore: Meyer & Thalheimer Public Printer, 1912.

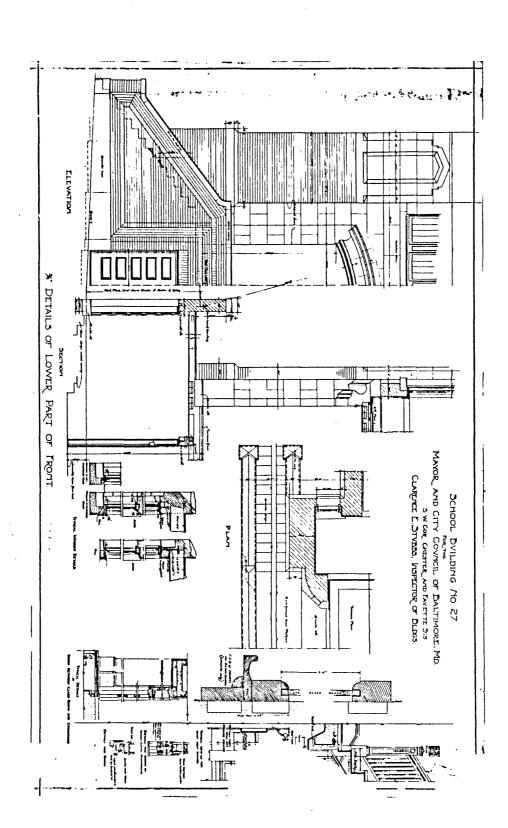
- Annual Message of the Mayor of Baltimore, Baltimore: Meyer & Thalheimer Public Printer, 1911, 1913, 1914.
- Annual Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners, 10 January 1912 to 23 December 1912 (Baltimore): Board of School Commissioners (1913).
- Annual Report of the Board of School Commissioners for the fiscal years ending 31 December 1910 and 1911, and the scholastic years ending 30 June 1912, 1913, and 1915. Baltimore: Meyer & Thalheimer City Printer, 1911, 1912, 1913, 1914, 1916.
- Cousin, Sydney L, Staff Director, Long-Range Planning, Department of Education, Baltimore, Maryland - Interview 20 August and 10 September 1985.
- Distinguished Men of Baltimore and of Maryland. Baltimore: Baltimore American 1914.
- Directory of Baltimore Public Schools. Baltimore: Department of Education, revised 1961.

"Will Use Old Drawings", The Morning Sun, 24 May 1912.

Sweeny, Raymond S. "Public Education in Maryland in The Progressive Era." Maryland Historical Magazine Vol. 62, 1967.

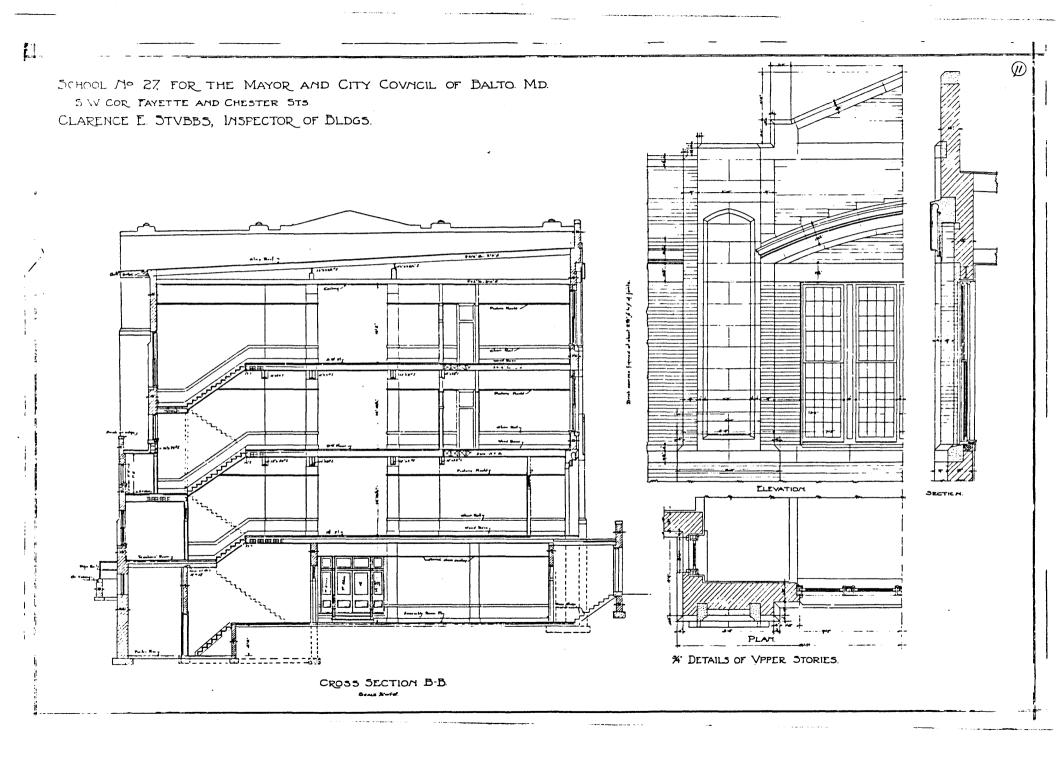
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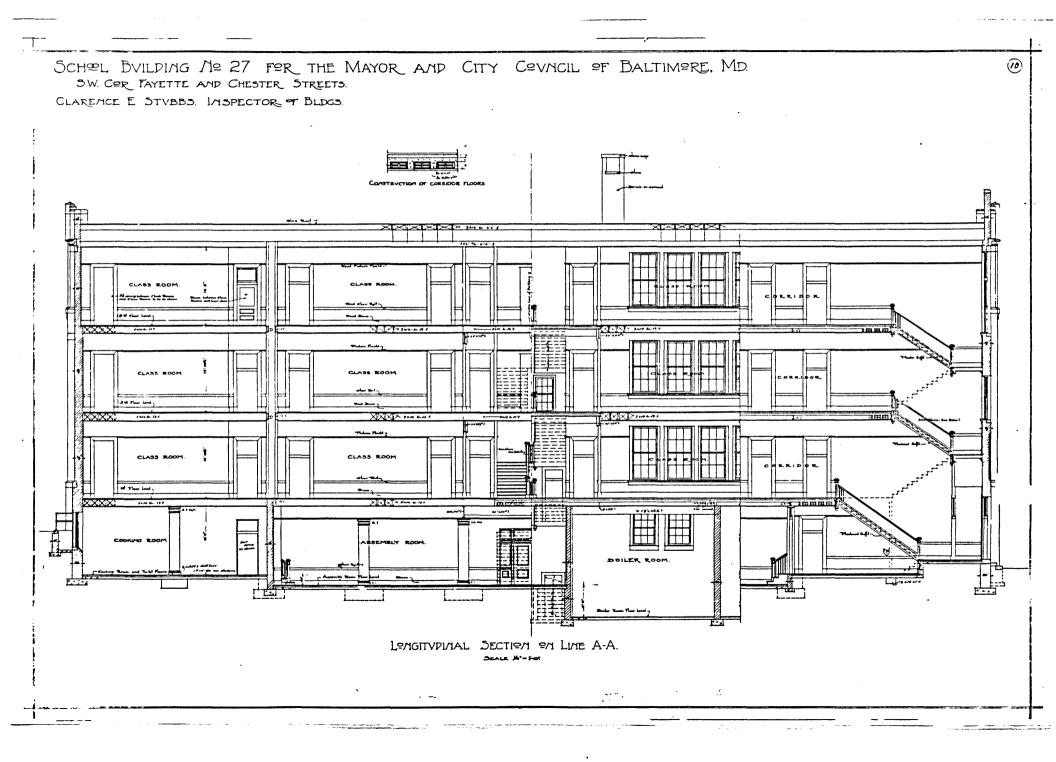
The boundary of the property is shown on the attached map. The property consists of the rectangular city lot, 184 feet by 112 feet, on which the building stands, roughly the original lot.

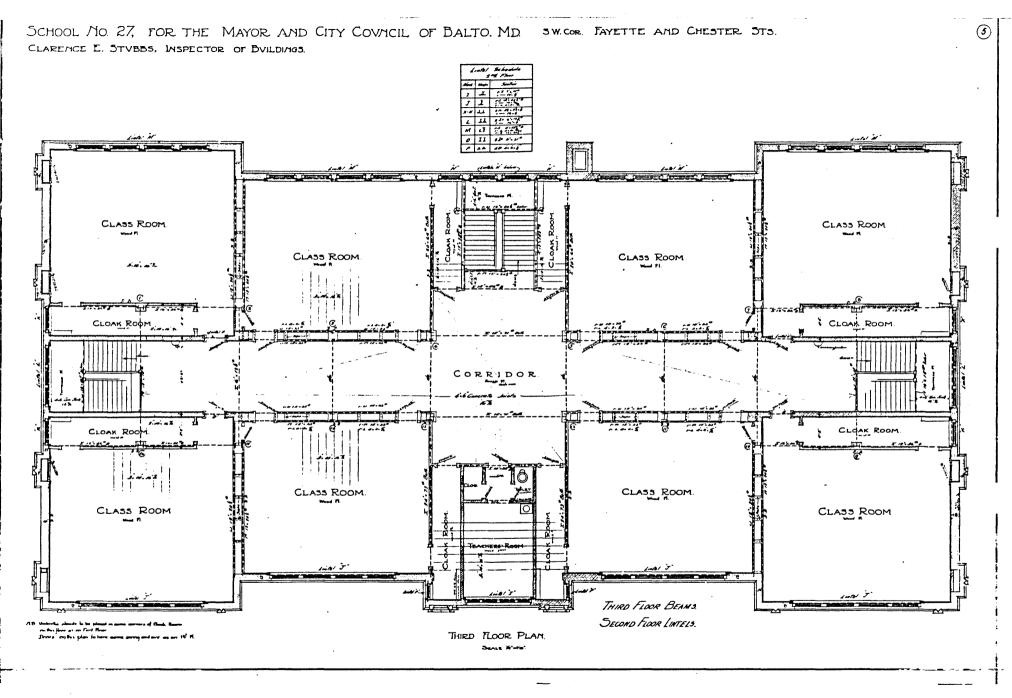


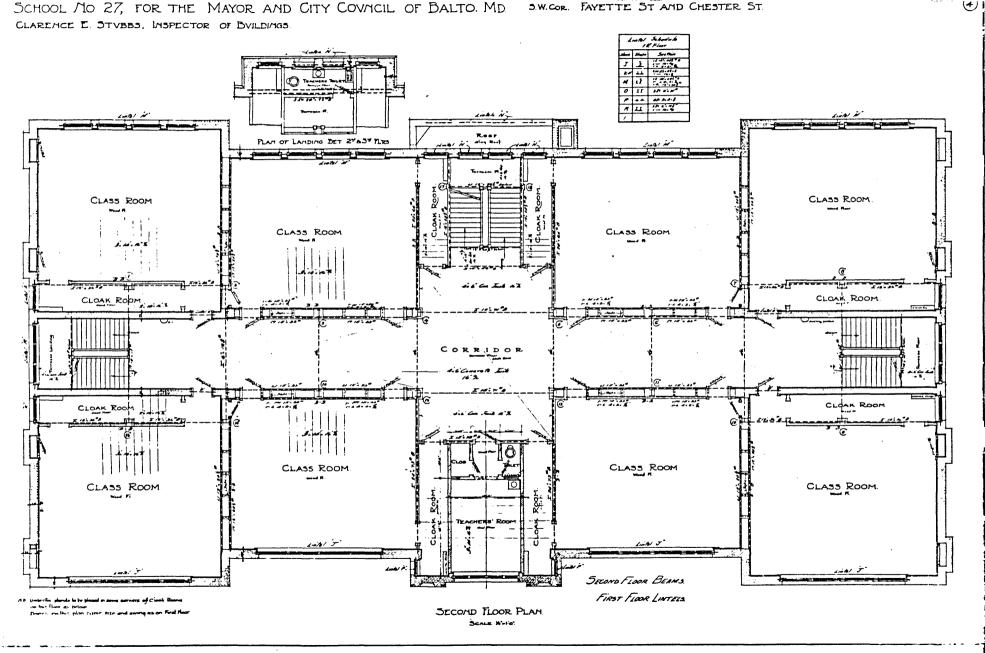
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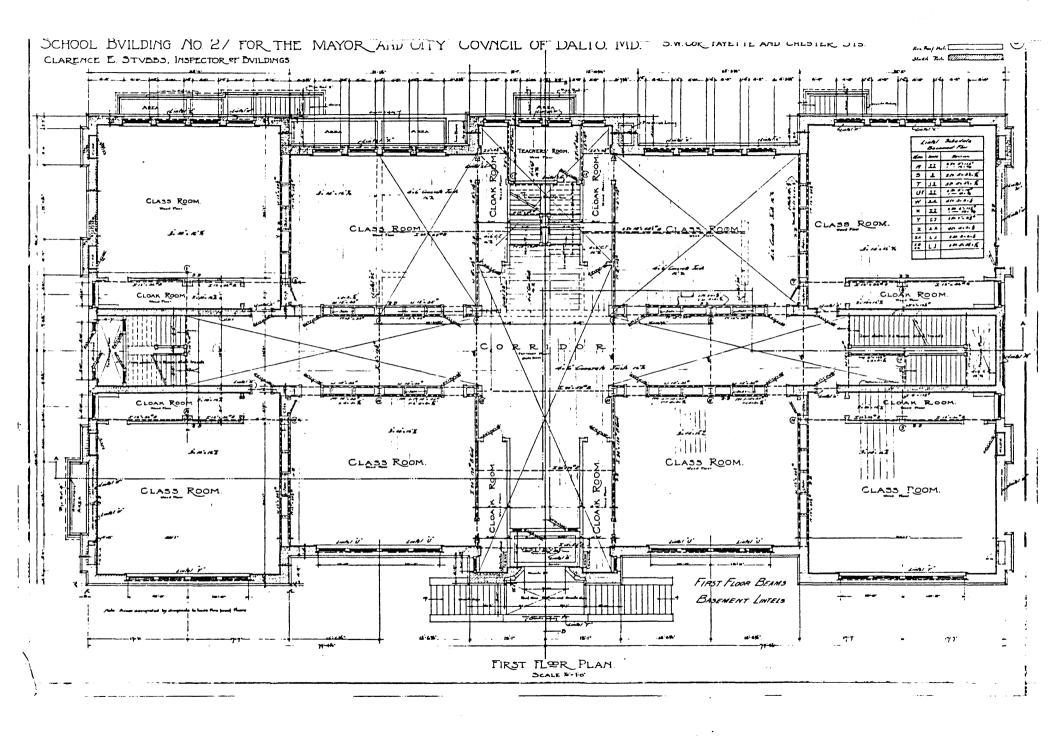


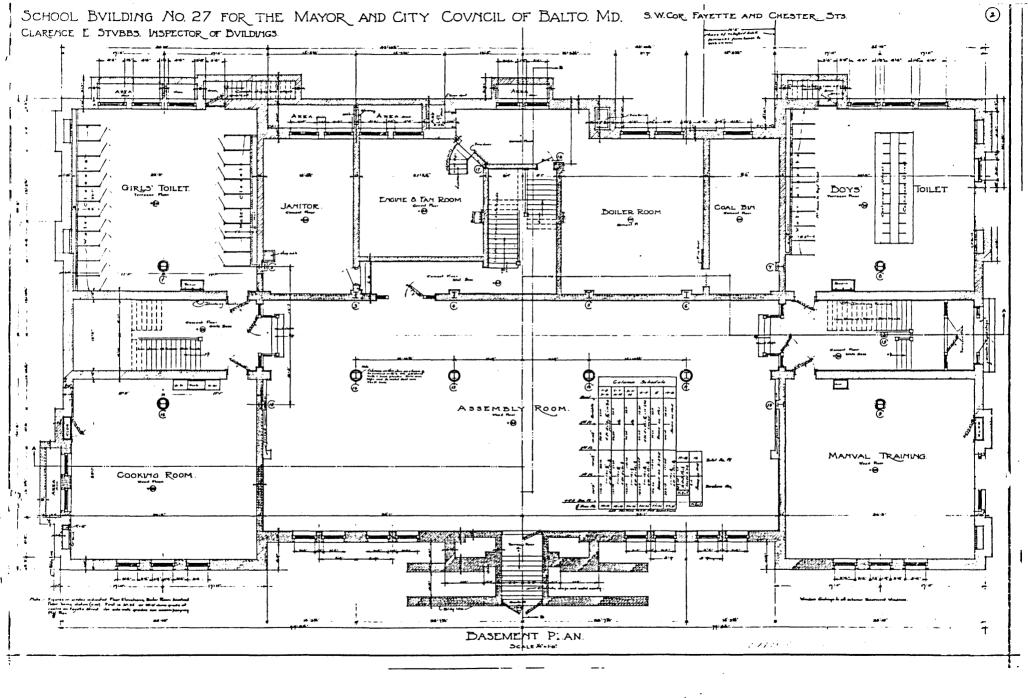




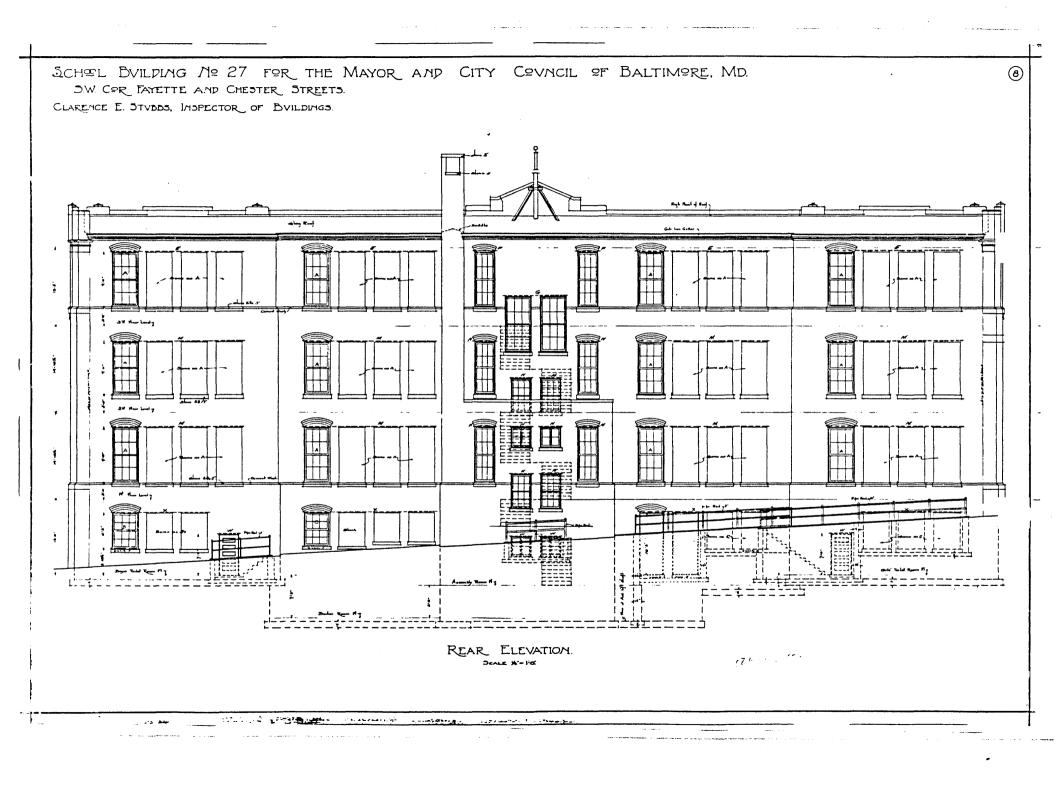


SCHOOL NO 27, FOR THE MAYOR AND CITY COVICIL OF BALTO. MD S.W.COR. FAYETTE ST AND CHESTER ST.

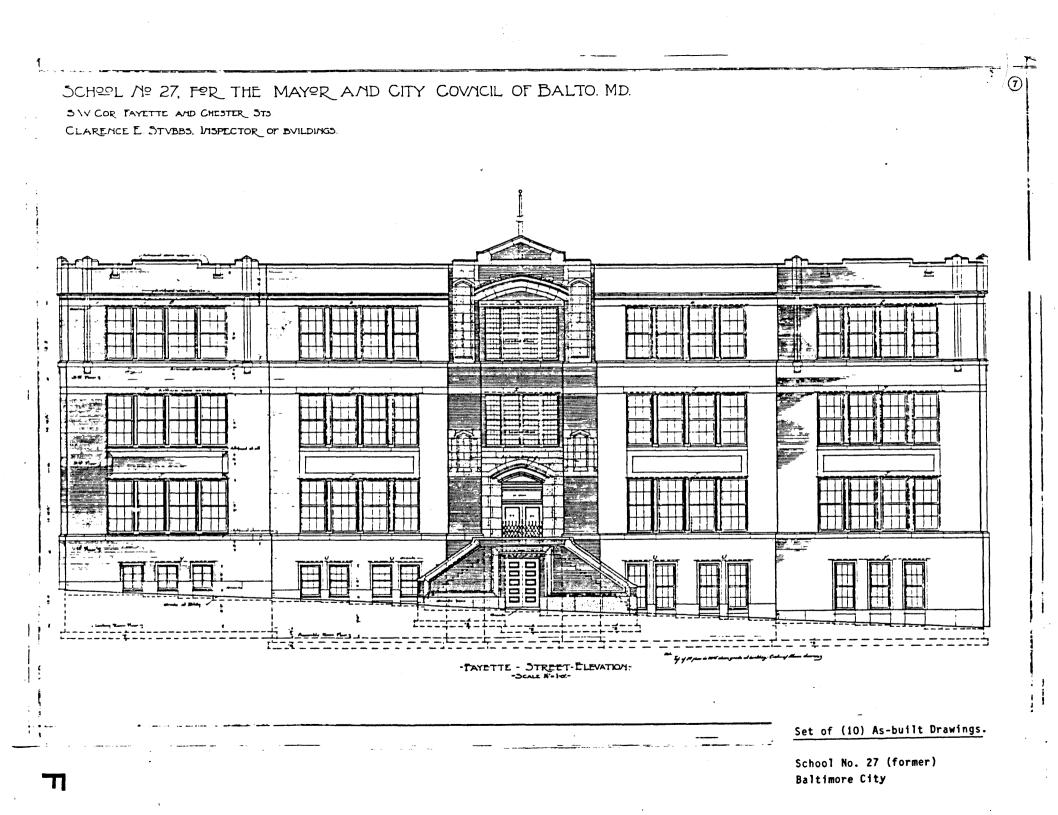


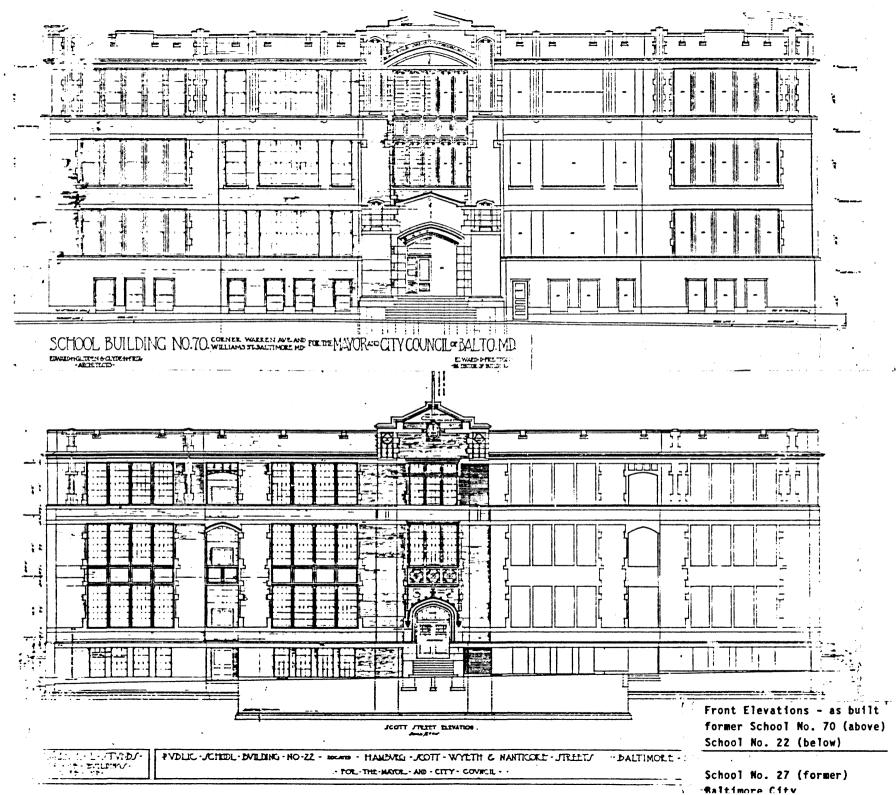


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