

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**SENT TO D.C.**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

3-22-2002

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

HISTORIC NAME: Roosevelt Junior High School  
OTHER NAMES/SITE NUMBER:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: 701 West Grand Avenue		NOT FOR PUBLICATION N/A
CITY OR TOWN	Decatur	VICINITY
STATE IL	CODE IL	COUNTY Macon
		ZIP CODE 62523

**3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

<u>William White, SHPO</u>	<u>3-20-02</u>
Signature of certifying official	Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency	
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 or other official	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	

**4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

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## 5. CLASSIFICATION

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OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Private

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:**

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
BUILDINGS	1	0
SITES	0	0
STRUCTURES	0	0
OBJECTS	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

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## 6. FUNCTION OR USE

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HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION: School

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: VACANT/ Not in Use  
Work-in-progress

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

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ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Late Gothic Revival

**MATERIALS:**

**FOUNDATION:** Stone

**ROOF:** Asphalt

**WALLS:** Brick

**OTHER :** Terra Cotta

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION: See Continuation Sheets





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**7. DESCRIPTION**

Situated at the southeast corner of Grand and Pine Streets, the Roosevelt Junior High School property now mostly fills the block bounded by Monroe Street on the east and Garland Avenue on the south, except for a portion at the southwest corner of the block. The building is placed on the western half of the lot, facing north onto Grand Street, with an empty lot on the east which, in 1921, contained houses. The school was constructed in a densely populated neighborhood of small single-family homes on lots approximately 35-foot wide. The school consists of the original building completed in 1921 and two additions dating from 1986. The original building is H shaped, with the north long leg of the H containing classrooms facing Grand Street, the parallel rear leg of the H comprised of the girls' and boys' gymnasiums, and an auditorium forming the connecting section. The connecting corridors are perpendicular to the primary east-west axis of the north section. In 1986 the east courtyard of the H was filled in, and a new gymnasium was constructed adjoining the girls' gymnasium at the southeast corner of the building. While the north facade is directly on the street, the west end is set in approximately 50' from the street, allowing for the teachers' parking lot, and the south and east elevations of the building also face onto empty lots mostly used for parking, though the east lot was intended as a playground area when purchased in 1938.

The Roosevelt Junior High School presents a Collegiate Gothic facade rendered in red brick and enhanced with cream-colored terra cotta details. It is a two-story building constructed on a raised basement. The topography of the site slopes down to the east so that the lower level (basement) is barely exposed on the west end, but is fully exposed on the east end where it opens onto grade. For purposes of this description, the floors will be referred to as the lower level, first floor and second floor. The original structure is of masonry load-bearing construction, faced in rough textured red brick that is laid in common bond with slightly tinted reddish mortar. The floors are reinforced concrete slab, and the roof has a wood truss framing system. In a few locations, such as in the theater and the gymnasiums, structural steel was added to enhance the spans of floor areas or openings. The hipped roofs are covered in asphalt shingles. There is one original brick chimney, rising approximately 30' from the roof of the boiler room, which remains in fair condition. The building additions are of steel and reinforced concrete construction, faced in brick on the exposed elevations to match the original. They have flat roofs with ballasted rubber roofing.

**North elevation**

The north, primary facade of the building is a symmetrical design with the central entrance bay defined by turrets and embellished with terra cotta ornament. The north facade has the greatest level of detail with intricate terra cotta features and trim details around windows, doors and crenellated parapet walls. The projecting three-bay entrance is flanked by five bays of windows on either side. At each end of the building, east and west, are solid projecting walls, two bays wide, that serve to book-end the design. Their terra cotta trim provides visual elements to anchor the building mass. The first floor is above the raised basement, which is defined by a terra cotta belt course. A more ornate terra cotta cornice further serves to delineate the second story from the crenellated parapet wall. This cornice, which extends around the east

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and west elevations of the classroom structure, features small brackets interspersed with ornamental medallions.

The most elaborate embellishment of the building is reserved for the entry. The three central bays are flanked with large octagonal turrets that rise for a full story above the second floor level, terminating in crenellations that extend across the entrance bays. All of the crenellations at the top of the building are capped with terra cotta trim that emphasizes the outline. The turrets each have one narrow window on the north facing side on each floor, though the top floor feature is actually a false window, where the brick opening is infilled with terra cotta. Terra cotta also heavily embellishes the surrounds of the windows at the first and second stories and the false window at the top. Seven risers lead from the sidewalk to the entrance level, which is between the lower level and the first floor. Each of the three entrance bays contains a set of double doors, no longer original, that are set into a segmental arch portal trimmed with compound moldings of terra cotta. Projecting piers, also of terra cotta, rise from between the entrance doors to the top of the parapet, terminating in finials that extend slightly above the parapet wall. At various levels the piers have geometric decorative features. The spandrel between the entrance level and the first floor features panels of terra cotta with gothic arches. Each bay of the first and second stories has a set of two windows, divided by slim terra cotta mullions that extend to the top of the second story windows and terminate in gothic ornament. The sills and lintels are also of terra cotta. Above the second story windows and just below the decorative cornice are the words "Roosevelt Junior High School," rendered in blue terra cotta. Above the cornice line is the false third story which only extends above the three central entrance bays between the turrets. In lieu of windows, it features elongated terra cotta panels with gothic arches between the piers, each bay capped with a rounded arch similar in proportion to those above the entrance doors. The crenellated parapet wall rises above the arches in a slight arched shape.

To the east and west of the turrets, each of the five bays has a large masonry opening with a set of tripartite windows. Slightly projecting piers articulate each bay beginning at the lower belt course and terminating just above the sill level of the second story windows, each with a geometric terra cotta pointed arch medallion. The bays are further delineated by a terra cotta band that extends along the top of the second story windows, dipping down between each set of windows so as to outline each bay.

The east and west end bays of the north elevation contain no windows except for two narrow windows in the lower level at each end. The solid facades are relieved, however, by extensive terra cotta decoration that rises, at each end, in four vertical lines creating a tripartite mullion line that terminates at the top of the second story with a series of gothic arches. This feature is also outlined by a band of terra cotta above it. The parapet wall at each of these end sections also has a center gable feature between the crenellations.

The original wood windows throughout the building were replaced in the mid-1960's with aluminum sash and frames. The replacement windows, which were installed within the original masonry openings, are single-glazed units in which the upper sashes now have painted aluminum panels. While the original

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windows appear to have been double-hung, one-over-one windows. the existing aluminum replacements are have an additional horizontal mullion in the lower sash, so that only the lower portion of each window can be opened.

**East elevation**

The east and west elevations of the classroom structure each have five bays with the same fenestration pattern and design features of the north facade though without the turrets and three-story entrance bay. The classroom windows follow the horizontal banding design of the main facade. The east elevation, like the west, has a one-story projecting entrance portico that is embellished with crenellations and terra cotta details. Located in the central bay, its double doors are also reached by ascending stairs so that the entrance level is between the lower level and the first floor. The doors are set within an arch with a terra cotta surround. Decorative buttresses trimmed in terra cotta strengthen the corners of the entry, capped with gothic finials. A belt course extends around the portico above the entry doors, delineating a crenellated parapet that is also capped with terra cotta.

To the south of the classroom building's east elevation, the east courtyard of the "H" plan was infilled with a steel and concrete structure in 1986 to house a student lounge on the lower level and an enlarged library on the main level. It is one story less in height than the main structure. The exposed east wall of the new infill is faced in red brick which closely matches that of the original structure, but the wall is without ornament or relief. An entrance into the lower level student lounge, which is here at grade, consists of three metal doors set within simple frames with no other detailing. There is a fourth, single door to the south of these. At the upper level, there is one bay of tripartite windows matching those of the classroom structure.

To the south of the infill construction is the east elevation of the original girls' gymnasium, which is currently the only exposed wall of the gymnasium structure. The end of the gymnasium faces east with a stepped gable that is capped with terra cotta trim. The elevation is a solid brick wall of similarly textured brick as the original building, reinforced with two brick buttresses rising about 2/3 to the top. The buttresses are also capped with terra cotta. At the lower, grade level, there are two bricked-in windows with the terra cotta sills remaining. Near the top of the buttresses there are two metal vents that have been installed through the walls. Adjacent to the girls' gymnasium on the south is the new gymnasium, constructed in 1986. The facade of this addition is a plain blank wall of red brick extending approximately 80 feet to the south. The only openings are two sets of metal double doors, one at each of the north and south ends. This addition is 30 feet tall, the same height as the infill construction and rising to the top of the first story level of the main structure.

**South elevation**

The new gymnasium extends approximately the same distance (80 feet) to the west, forming the easternmost portion of the south elevation of the school. Like the east elevation, this wall has no ornament and openings other than two metal doors entering from the south, in metal frames. From the south, this

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addition obscures the original south elevation of the girls' gym. (Inside the new gym, however, this wall can be observed, where the large arched windows have been filled in with masonry but are still discernible.) Constructed in 1986, the new gym structure encompasses 8100 square feet. To the west of the new gym (at the rear of the auditorium) is a projecting two-story structure which houses the boiler room on the lower level and the music room on the first floor. The boiler room fenestration consists of tall narrow window openings that have been filled in with brick. The fenestration pattern is the same at the first floor level, but the original windows have been replaced with aluminum windows with metal panels covering all but a small horizontal area at the bottom of the masonry opening. This structure is topped with a 30-foot-tall square brick chimney that rises at its west end. To the west of the boiler room, and attached to it on the east, is the south elevation of the original boys' gymnasium, with the ridge of the gabled roof extending east to west. The original large (approximately 8' x 8') arched windows of the upper level have been bricked in, with the brick set-in to reveal the original shape and dimensions of the windows, retaining the terra cotta sills. On the ground level, trabeated masonry openings of about the same size that extend down to grade level have received the same treatment. These bricked-in openings are set between projecting buttress-like piers that are capped with terra cotta bands.

**West elevation**

The west elevation, which along with the north elevation remains much as original, appears much as the east elevation before the construction of the additions. The west facade of the classroom structure is almost identical to that of the east, except for minor differences in the entrance portico. Like the east elevation, the projecting portico with terra cotta detailing defines the west elevation secondary entrance to the classroom structure. Unlike the east portico, however, the west portico is entered from either the north or the south, with a solid wall facing west. Originally this wall featured an arched window with stained glass which has since been infilled with brick. The infill brick has been laid to leave a reveal outlining the original arch with the terra cotta sill intact. The entrances on the north and south of the portico are sets of double doors within a terra cotta arch. As this end of the building sets higher, there are few steps into this entrance which is also located between the lower level and the first floor.

To the south of the classroom structure, the original courtyard of the "H" plan is revealed. The west elevation of the connecting auditorium structure, which defines the east end of the courtyard, is very similar to the exterior walls of the original gymnasiums though with slightly different proportions. The large arched windows of this wall have been infilled with panels leaving only small windows, though the masonry openings are still clearly defined. Like the gymnasium elevations, these masonry openings are set between projecting, buttress-like piers that are capped with terra cotta just below the eaves of the gabled roof. Below the level of the windows is a terra cotta belt course. Facing into the courtyard from the south is the exposed north elevation of the boys' gymnasium, which repeats the design of the south elevation with its bricked-in arched masonry openings and terra cotta sills. At the westernmost bay, there is through-the-wall vent at the upper level, and a steel-framed exterior stair that ascends from the courtyard to an intermediate level. The west, gabled-end elevation of the boys' gym is flush with the west elevation of the



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classroom structure. It is a repeat of the design of the east elevation of the girls' gymnasium, except that there are three bricked in door openings at ground level, one with an attached vent. There is currently a chain-link fence across the courtyard.

**Interior**

The main, north leg of the "H" which faces and is parallel to Grand Street is the classroom building with its central entrance. The entrance, reached by ascending seven steps from grade level, opens into an intermediate level between floors. A grand staircase, the width of the three sets of entrance doors, leads up to the first floor while a narrower stairs descends to the lower level. These stairs, like the stairs at the east and west ends of the classroom building, are of cast iron with enclosed risers and terrazzo treads. At the top of the stair leading to the first floor is a tripartite opening with three sets of double doors, an interior version of the exterior doors. All contained within a single low-arched opening, each set of wood and glass-paneled doors is topped with a transom that has been infilled with a solid panel. Dividing each set of doors with transom is a mullion. The encompassing arch has no ornament, but there is a horizontal wood molding decorating the wall surface of the stairhall at a height of about five feet.

The interior doors open into the double-loaded corridor which extends east to west down the center of this wing, with offices and classrooms on either side. At the east and west ends of the corridor are the stairhalls opening from the east and west entrances. Upon entering the first floor corridor from the main entrance, the principal's office is located to the immediate east, connecting to the octagonal-shaped turret room which is a restroom. To the west in the turret is the nurse's office. Directly across from the entrance are the doors leading into the main level of the auditorium. With slight variations, this floor plan is repeated on the lower level and the second floor. At the lower level, the turret rooms contain closets, and on the second floor the turret rooms are connected to either end of a large classroom that is located directly over the first floor entry area. The majority of the interior walls are of masonry construction. The reinforced concrete slab floors are finished with terrazzo surfaces in the corridors, generally tan with a light green border. The corridors are about 10' wide, and the openings at the ends of the corridors, and into side corridors, entryways and into the auditorium are generally tripartite designs with sets of doors flanked with sidelights set under transoms, all set within wood frames in a slightly arched top. While most of the classroom floors were probably originally finished with wood, they now have linoleum tile flooring. Individual doors to classrooms mostly have wood doors and frames, some topped with intact transoms. Access to the other wings of the building are through the stairs that flank the auditorium. Each floor contains its own group of boys and girls restrooms flanking the auditorium stairs.

**Auditorium**

The connecting web of the "H" plan is the auditorium, which is a theater space seating 800 people on the orchestra level and an additional 220 in the balcony. The wooden seats of the theater are extant, as is the stage. The ceiling has been covered with suspended acoustic tiles. Nearly intact, the stage proscenium is outlined in compound plaster moldings approximately 14" wide with foliated designs. The balcony of the

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auditorium can be entered from two doors on the second floor directly across the corridor from the entrance turrets. Below the auditorium in the lower level is the cafeteria, which now connects to the students' lounge which is in the lower level of the 1986 infill addition. It has been renovated over time. The upper level of the infill was used to enlarge the library. Of simple construction, on its walls can be seen the brick infill and outline of the original large arched windows of the east elevation of the auditorium and the north, courtyard elevation of the girls' gym.

**Gymnasiums**

The auditorium is flanked on either side by secondary stairs that serve to connect the plan elements vertically and horizontally to the south leg of the "H," which houses the original boys' and girls' gymnasiums at opposite ends of the leg. The girls' gymnasium is on the east, while the boys' is on the west. The gymnasiums appear to have been nearly identical in size and design, and retain the original wood floors. Across the gabled end of each is a small balcony. The walls are masonry. The boys gym has since been converted to use for shop classes, with little alteration. The new gym, constructed at the southeast corner of the building in 1986, connects to the south wall of the girl's gym. In the interior of the gym, the infill of the large arched window openings of the south wall of the girl's gym can still be seen. Otherwise, the new gym is simple in design, with a wood floor, basketball hoops and sets of metal bleachers that pull out from the wall. There are no windows.

**Integrity**

The Roosevelt Junior High School maintains its historic integrity of location, design, setting and materials, conveying its architectural significance. Most of the alterations have been mentioned above. On the exterior, the building retains its primary facade design, materials and details with little change. All of the character-defining gothic ornament, including the turrets, gothic panels, and terra cotta details remain. All of the masonry openings of the original structure either remain in place or were infilled in such a way as to clearly delineate the original size and shape, retaining historic sills and lintels. As mentioned, the original wood windows have been replaced with metal. The additions have filled in a portion of the east elevation, and added on to the rear south elevation. In the interior, there have alterations over the years but the basic floor plan with corridor, classrooms, auditorium and gymnasiums has been preserved. Most of the details of the corridors are also extant, including the staircases, terrazzo floors, arched openings, and wood door surrounds. The auditorium and gymnasiums have retained most of their original features, except the ceilings, which, like many throughout the building have been lowered with suspended acoustic tile to accommodate upgrades in heating and ventilation. Supplemental steel girding has been applied to reinforce the masonry and roof structures of the girls' gymnasium. Many of the classrooms have been altered with partition wall changes, new linoleum or vinyl tile floors, replacement of original chalk boards and some of the woodwork. At the lower level, the kitchen has been remodeled over the years, as have many bathrooms throughout the building.

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**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

**Summary**

The Roosevelt Junior High School is locally significant under Criterion C for architecture, as one of the best examples of Late Gothic Revival style architecture in Decatur. It is one of the few buildings in the city to exhibit the characteristics of the style, and represents the best example of the Collegiate Gothic type of Late Gothic Revival. Collegiate Gothic was chosen as the style for this, Decatur's first junior high school, in 1917 following the style that was popularized at Princeton, the University of Chicago and other universities and colleges. It was designed by the prominent and prolific architectural firm of Brooks, Bramhall and Dague, which designed fourteen schools for the city before 1930. The firm also designed many other prominent buildings in the city and the midwest during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Roosevelt Junior High School exhibits many characteristics of the Late Gothic Revival/Collegiate Gothic style in brick with ornament in terra cotta rendered to imitate stone. The elaborate detailing on the north elevation and the east and west elevations of the classroom building include large octagonal turreted towers flanking the elaborate central entrance with gothic arches and panels. Buttresses, arched portals, and gothic design terra cotta elements abound on the building, which is surmounted by a strongly articulated battlement that extends along the parapet. Simpler elevations of the secondary buildings also include buttresses, large arched windows, and terra cotta trim. The building has good integrity on the exterior and in the interior, which includes a nearly intact auditorium and gymnasiums.

**Architecture**

The Roosevelt Junior High School, the first junior high school in Decatur, was designed by the firm of Brooks, Bramhall and Dague, which was one of the most important and prolific architectural firms in Decatur for the first quarter of the twentieth century. Barkley Selby Brooks (1863 - 1954) was the elder founder of the firm, enjoying a 60-year career in Decatur. He was born nearby on a farm near Moweaque, worked for awhile in Hastings, Nebraska, and came to Decatur in December of 1894 at age 31 to establish his practice. While not formally trained as an architect, he qualified for registration based on experience. Four years after moving to Decatur he married Maude Ethel Peck, with whom he had a daughter and a son. Among his residential designs was Montgomery Place, which included his own home at number 7, constructed in 1924. In 1911, Brooks designed Decatur's first fire-proof building, the Morehouse and Wells Company building. Of monochromatic red granite, brick and terra cotta, it presented an elaborate classical Renaissance Revival facade. Also completed in 1911 was Brooks' design for the Decatur High School, the first modern, large high school for the city. Like the Morehouse and Wells Company building only much larger in scale, it was designed in the Renaissance Revival style incorporating stone trim. The symmetrical main facade with its rusticated first story had a deep overhanging cornice and an entrance portico with large detached Corinthian columns supporting an elaborate pediment that rose above the roof height.

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Soon after 1911, Barkley Brooks formed a partnership with the younger Arthur E. Bramhall (1884 - 1963) who had come to Decatur in 1910 after graduating from the University of Illinois in Champaign. He was born in LaPorte, Indiana, first married Florence Orr in 1913 and then Marjorie Young in 1936, with whom he had two daughters and a son. His obituary reports that he was a member of the Architectural Association of Decatur (formed in 1957) and "designed many Decatur buildings, including the National Bank of Decatur and Dawson & Wikoff Funeral Home during the time he was with Brooks, Bramhall & Dague." About England Dague, the third partner and the last to join the firm, little is known as he seems to have left Decatur at some point.

The firm was active for over 40 years, designing more than 175 buildings in the city (and several in nearby towns) by 1930, including five churches, three funeral homes, four hospitals, two banks, six office buildings, fourteen retail buildings, two lodges, a children's home, Aston Hall dormitory at Milliken University, a theater, two foundries, the city jail, a bakery, three warehouses, eight factories and plants, fifteen automobile related buildings, three apartment buildings, a fraternity at the University of Illinois, several miscellaneous buildings, over eighty residences, and twenty schools. Fourteen of the schools were for Decatur, and included ten elementary schools, the three junior high schools and the Decatur High School. Many of these buildings are extant, and exhibit a high degree of design quality and detailing rendered in various architectural styles. The firm worked in popular revival styles during the first quarter of the century, such as Tudor, Classical Revival, Renaissance Revival, and even Art Moderne, adapting them to the particular needs of the client with well-considered plans. Among the most prominent of their buildings, in addition to the Roosevelt Junior High School, were the Decatur High School (1911, demolished), the Decatur Post Office (1934, with Granger and Bollenbach), Woodrow Wilson Middle School (1931), Westminster Presbyterian Church (1920-28) the National Bank of Decatur, and the Decatur and Macon County Hospital (1918-28).

For the first junior high school, the firm chose the Collegiate Gothic version of Late Gothic Revival style. Sometimes referred to as "Gothic Survival" because of its almost consistent use since the middle ages, gothic has enjoyed many revivals, but all of them share certain characteristics such as a strong verticality, emphasized by pointed arches and usually featuring some type of tower. They tend to also have an emphasis on sturdy, fortress-like construction. The later revival buildings tend to be quieter and smoother in design than the High Victorian Gothic, which revived the flamboyant French and perpendicular English modes. The Late Gothic Revival also often incorporates the use of terra cotta for its ornamental features, as well as modern structural techniques. In the United States, it was Ralph Adams Cram and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue who designed the seminal Late Gothic Revival building in the church of All Saints, Ashmont, outside Boston in the early 1890's. While the style was initially most popular for churches, Cram went on to design other buildings in the style, such as the 1903 rebuilding of the United States Military Academy at West Point. In 1907, he reinforced the gothic for ecclesiastical architecture with his work on the completion of St. John the Divine in New York city.

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With the help of Ralph Adams Cram, Late Gothic Revival became popular for educational, institutional and commercial buildings, acquiring the name Collegiate Gothic. As a sub-type, it had been introduced in the United States in the early 1890's, at Bryn Mawr by architects Cope and Stewardson, who then used it in 1896 at Princeton University. At the same time, Henry Ives Cobb designed the quadrangles and other buildings at the University of Chicago in gothic style. The style was reinforced at Princeton by advocate Woodrow Wilson when he became president of the university of 1902, and Princeton became the standard bearer for the style when Cram became the supervising architect there in 1909, remaining until 1931. Collegiate Gothic is characterized by monumental proportions, battlements, a tall central tower, arched entrances and abundant window openings. It also combines with elements of the Jacobethan Revival style (or, more accurately, the Late Jacobethan Revival). Jacobethan, the combined term for the stylistic characteristics of the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, is similar in form but is also noted for abundant stone mullions and trim, steep and curved gables, bay windows trimmed with balustrades, and round arched doors. The Collegiate Gothic style became a way of asserting academic legitimacy and status. Cram wrote that, "Princeton was committed to the retention for all time of that collegiate style of architecture which alone is absolutely expressive of the civilization we hold in common with England and the ideals of liberal education now firmly fixed at Princeton." Princeton and the University of Chicago retain the some of the best collections of Collegiate Gothic buildings in the country, which influenced schools and colleges everywhere into the 1920's.

No longer just for universities and college, the style was emulated by many of the larger high schools in an effort to represent the same lofty educational ideals. In Illinois, one of the best examples is also one of the latest, the Evanston High School designed by Perkins, Fellows and Hamilton in 1926. The building is quite large, with twin towers flanking a projecting central pavilion. All the main facades are richly embellished with gothic panels and windows, and the towers feature turreted corners terminating in spires. The Roosevelt Junior High School embodies many of these same distinctive characteristics in both its form and stylistic details. The plan of the building, with its projecting central pavilion between flanking wings that terminate in perpendicular-facing end pavilions is very similar to the plan of many Collegiate Gothic buildings, including the quadrangles at the University of Chicago and the plan of the Evanston High School.

In the case of the Roosevelt Junior High School, the central entrance pavilion is also the occasion to strengthen the style with the strong vertical emphasis of the twin turrets and highly ornamented entrance bays. All of the terra cotta on the building is fabricated to resemble stone. The three central entrance bays, almost totally rendered in terra cotta, are divided by vertical piers that rise from the stairs to above the top of the battlement where they are terminated with pointed finials. The multiple gothic-arched panels of the lower and upper level spandrels further point upward. The continuous mullions of the first and second story windows enhance the richness of the design, and are framed by the octagonal tower turrets. The terra cotta surrounds of the tall, narrow turret windows feature irregular quoins.

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Between each of the classroom window bays of the building's north, east and west elevations are slightly projecting piers that rise to just above the second story window level, appearing as buttresses. They are topped with pointed arched terra cotta trim. The north elevations of the east and west end bay pavilions are also ornamented with terra cotta in various gothic designs. The entrance porticoes at the east and west elevations are mini-versions of the main entrance, with multiple corner buttresses trimmed with terra cotta caps and vertical spikes that rise to the crenellated parapets. The east and west elevations of the girls' and boys' gymnasiums, respectively, also feature buttresses capped with terra cotta trim. One of the most striking features of the building, in addition to the towers, is the roofline with its battlements. The deep crenellations are outlined with terra cotta, emphasizing the "castle keep" effect. The battlements continue along the wings of the building and around the east and west elevations of the classroom building.

Following the Roosevelt Junior High School, in 1925, Brooks, Bramhall and Dague designed Decatur's largest elementary school, the Washington School. Also faced in brick but trimmed in limestone, the building is similar in plan to the earlier building. It incorporates gothic details at the entrances in a more subdued manner, without turrets and crenellations. The second and third junior high schools that the firm designed for the city were both completed in 1929. The Johns Hill Junior High School also incorporates subdued gothic details and a similar floor plan with projecting, higher entrance and end bays. Here the entrance bay is wider and blockier with less vertical emphasis than that of the Roosevelt Junior High School. While it has no turrets or crenellations, it features gothic-arched windows at the top floor and above the main roof line. The Centennial Junior High School from the same year is, again, very similar in massing and form to the Roosevelt Junior High School with simplified ornamental details. There are gothic-arched panels above the entry and again at the very top of the facade where small crenellated turret-like corners rise above the main roof level.

Brooks, Bramhall, and Dague's other buildings incorporating gothic design were churches. Of these, the ornate Westminster Presbyterian Church completed in 1928 exhibits much of its gothic design in a manner somewhat similar to collegiate, though it is clearly ecclesiastical. Rather than a steeple or spire, the church is surmounted with a square gothic tower faced with carved gothic panels and topped with small turrets. The entrance, under a Tudor arch, is surrounded with stone and flanked with pointed buttresses. All exposed facades of the building have gothic windows.

Other Late Gothic Revival buildings in Decatur include the St. Patrick's Grade School at 407 East Eldorado, dating from 1909, with much subtler gothic features in a simpler design. In addition, there are a few residences which exhibit aspects of gothic, but would be characterized as Tudor Style. The Roosevelt Junior High School stands out as the most emphatic Late Gothic Revival building in Decatur.

Brooks, Bramhall and Dague designed a few buildings for Milliken University, a dominant institution in Decatur. It was founded by James Millikin when he provided land and a large cash gift on a matching basis with local citizens and the Presbyterian church. It was originally known as the Decatur College and

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Industrial School, as a sister institution to Lincoln College at Lincoln, Illinois, both under the auspices of the Presbyterian church. The cornerstone for the first buildings had been laid in June, 1902, and opened a year later, with plans drawn by Patton & Miller of Chicago. The style was described as "Elizabethan," which would now be considered Jacobethan Revival, including features that are also noted as Collegiate Gothic, such as the dominant square tower of the Liberal Arts Hall with its four narrow corner "turrets." Rooflines, curved dormers, and window details, however, distinguish it as Jacobethan. As subsequent buildings were added to the original four, they tended to be very similar in style. In 1906-07, Barkley Brooks designed Aston Hall, a dormitory, in a complimentary style.

**History**

Decatur was named for Stephen Decatur, one of the country's first naval officers and Commissioner of the Navy in the early nineteenth century. It was founded on the Sangamon River on the Illinois prairie in 1829, an area that was formed from the Pleistocene North American ice sheet which extended into the midwest nearly to the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, leaving behind the fertile soil of central Illinois. Local settlers, who had populated the area since 1821, had sought the formation of the county, named after Nathaniel Macon, a hero of the Revolutionary War, and Decatur was designated as the county seat. It is located just a few miles from the geographical center of Macon County which is located in the geographical center of Illinois. In the early years when industrial navigation was primarily by water, Decatur grew slowly because the Sangamon River was not navigable, and most other trails and roads at the time bypassed the city. When the railroads began coming through Decatur in 1854, the town started to grow. Early industry included brick and clay tiles which were used to drain the standing water on the prairie, reducing mosquitoes and malaria and allowing for increased tillage of the land. Agriculture and agribusiness have endured as the primary economic generators in the area.

From 1900 to 1929, the year of its centennial, the population of Decatur almost tripled, showing a population in the 1930 census of 57,511. This was assisted by turn-of-the-century improvements such as the founding of James Milliken University and improvements in transportation such as the interurban lines by the Illinois Traction System, extension of the street car and bus system, and the paved roads connecting it to other cities. In 1909 the city experienced a disastrous fire in the business district which led to the rebuilding of that part of the city with larger and better structures like Barkely Brooks' new Moorehouse and Wells Company building. The early part of the century also brought a number of major manufacturing concerns to the city, including several iron and steel works such as Mississippi Valley Structural Steel, and lumber and construction businesses. Also prominent is Staley Manufacturing which began in 1909 as a starch works, and Faries Manufacturing Company. Brooks, Bramhall and Dague designed plants for both Faries and Mississippi Valley Structural Steel. A major addition to the facilities of Decatur was the Decatur and Macon county hospital, with its Milliken Wing completed in 1918, followed by tuberculosis sanatorium in 1923, and Nurse's home, power plant, and other buildings designed by Brooks, Bramhall and Dague. Like many cities, Decatur experienced a building boom in the 1920's, and the automobile grew in

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importance. During this time, Brooks, Bramhall and Dague designed over a dozen automobile-related buildings in Decatur including garages, showrooms, filling stations and the Pan American Motor Car company plant. Lake Decatur was created to provide a more plentiful water supply for industry. Into the 1930's, Decatur was important as a railroad center with extensions by the Wabash, the Baltimore and Ohio, and the Illinois Central, Pennsylvania and Illinois Terminal railroads.

The Decatur school system, which was flourishing by 1930, dates to 1849 when the first law was passed to allow for the levy of a tax for the support of free public schools, although it wasn't used until 1851. At that time a tax was levied and the money used to repair the brick building that was then used as a school, jointly with the Masons who had their lodge in the upper floor. In 1855 the state school law was passed, which provided for taxing statewide for a public school system and required that all districts maintain free schools for at least six months of each year. In June, 1855, the district purchased land for a school at the corner of Church and North streets, and the brick building opened in 1857. At this time the population of Decatur was about 2,000, and by 1858 there were fourteen teachers in the system. The system steadily grew, and in 1907 the course of study was lengthened from seven to eight years, and the eighth grade students were housed elsewhere until the Decatur High School, designed by Brooks in 1910-11, was opened. (After the Roosevelt Junior High School was completed, the Decatur High School became known as the senior high school, and the students spent six years in elementary school, three years in junior high, and three years in high school.) From 1910 until World War I, several elementary schools were built in the city to educate the growing population, including the Dennis and Oglesby elementary schools completed in 1911, the Ullrich and Mary W. French elementary schools completed in 1914, and the Lincoln Elementary School completed early in 1918, all designed by Barkley Brooks and Brooks, Bramhall and Dague.

Beginning in 1916, the city saw the need for a separate junior high school, and commissioned Brooks, Bramhall and Dague to design it. The site was acquired and construction began, but was halted in 1917 due to scarce materials and labor problems at the end of the war. Throughout its construction, there were many delays. The boilers lay on the streets in front of the incomplete building for months, with the fear that they would be rusted before they were ever put to use. Finally, in late 1921 construction was completed on the school, which was to accommodate 800 students. The original building included twenty regular classrooms, ten special rooms, two gymnasiums with separate shower rooms for the boys and girls, an auditorium, metal working shop, wood working shop, and "fireproof corridors and stairways." Construction costs itemized in 1921 included site work, \$18,043.18; structure, \$239,388.53; heating, ventilating, plumbing and lighting, \$63,336.13; building equipment, \$8,753.33; lab and shop equipment, \$25,975.62; furnishings, fixtures and equipment, \$15,019.62, bringing the total project cost to \$370,516.06, which was the most spent for any school building in Decatur to that time.

Soon after the Lincoln Elementary School was completed in 1918, the school board had adopted a policy of naming schools only after presidents and national heroes rather than local citizens - a policy that remained in place for many years. Therefore, the new junior high school was named Roosevelt Junior High School



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after Theodore Roosevelt. Probably indicating a disagreement or controversy, the faculty in 1921 corresponded with President Theodore Roosevelt and his family to request the correct pronunciation of the name "Roosevelt."

Roosevelt Junior High School served as a main source for community entertainment through the 1940's, with sporting and recreational activities as well as community use of the auditorium. Into the 1930's movies were shown once a week in the auditorium. The gymnasiums were also used for dances. The school was distinguished in the county for having the highest attendance and enrollment record. In 1946 the school was chosen as the first site in the Decatur school system to test the efficiency of an early recording device known as the "sound scribe," with Guidance, English and Music classes selected to demonstrate its capabilities. Also in the 1940's, Eleanor Roosevelt made an appearance at the school while passing through the city. Perhaps partially as a result, in 1949 the name of the school was officially changed to "Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School," to distinguish it from all the other schools being named "Roosevelt" in honor of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The school served the city of Decatur for seventy-nine years, until it was closed in May, 2000. By then it was known as Roosevelt Middle School. Current plans for the school building include its rehabilitation for moderate income apartments, in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

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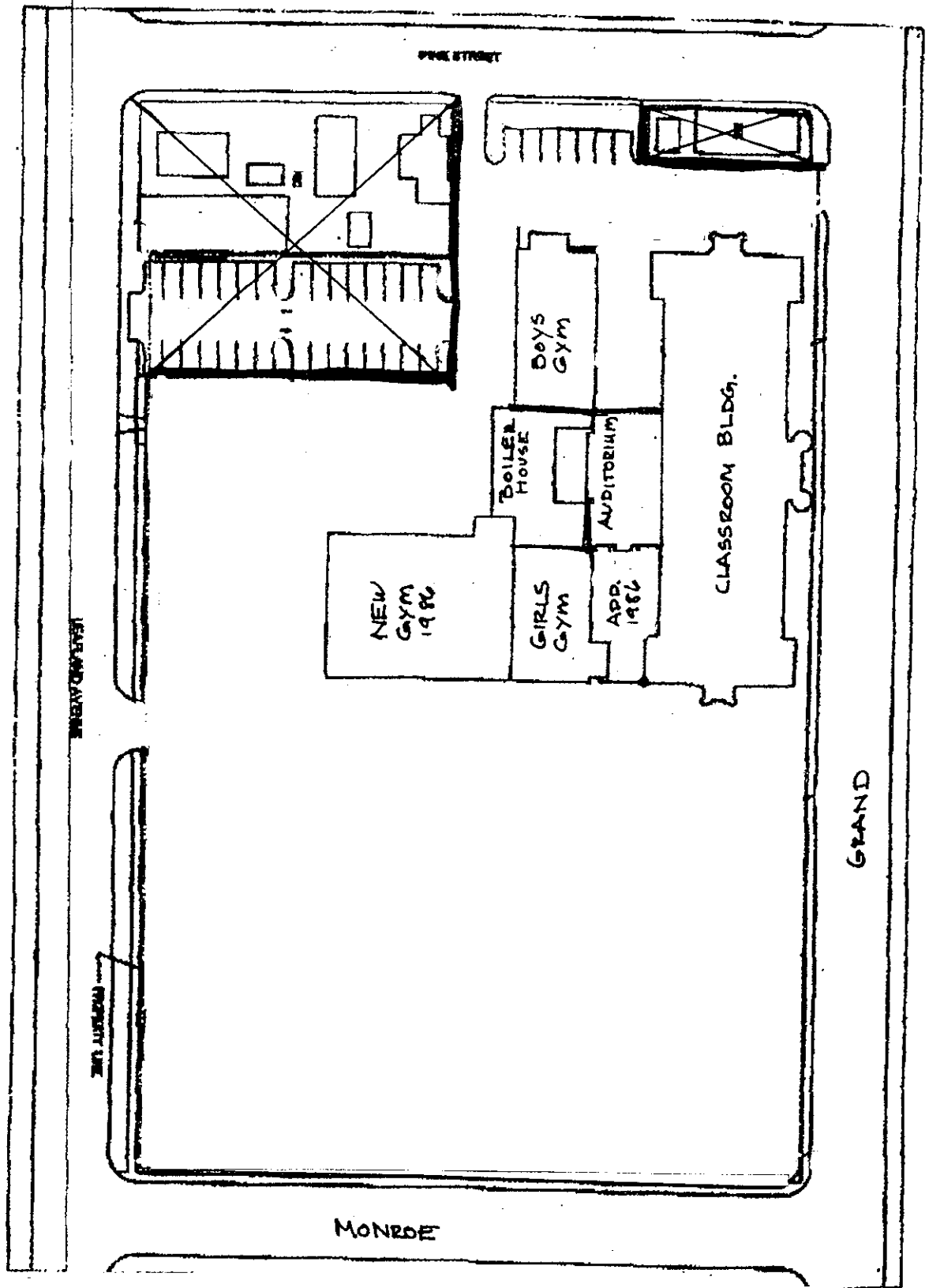
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots 1 through 15 and lots 18 through 30 in Roach's Addition, East ½, South West ¼, of Section 10,  
Township 16 North, R. 2 East.

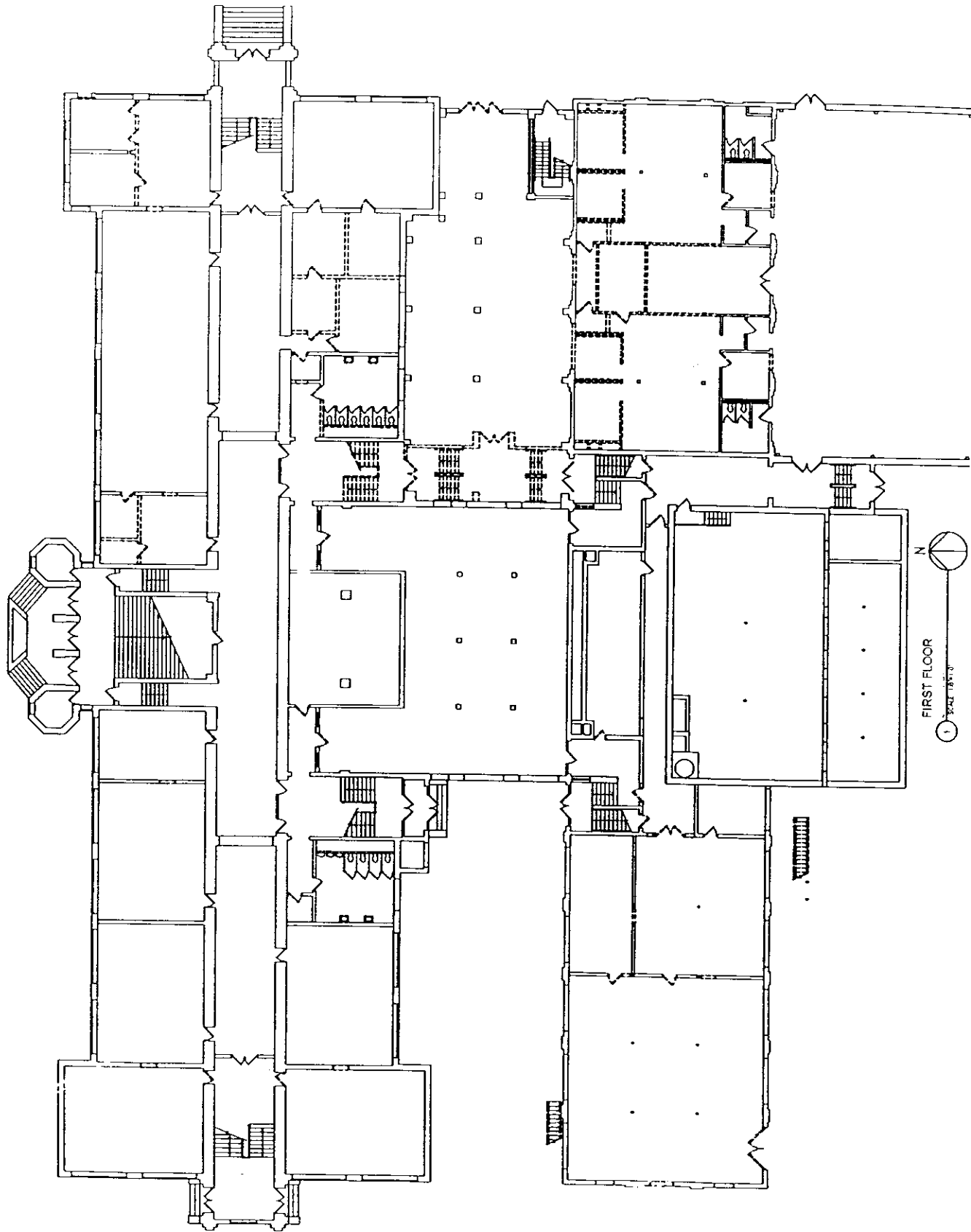
**Boundary Justification**

The nominated property includes the parcel historically associated with Roosevelt Junior High School

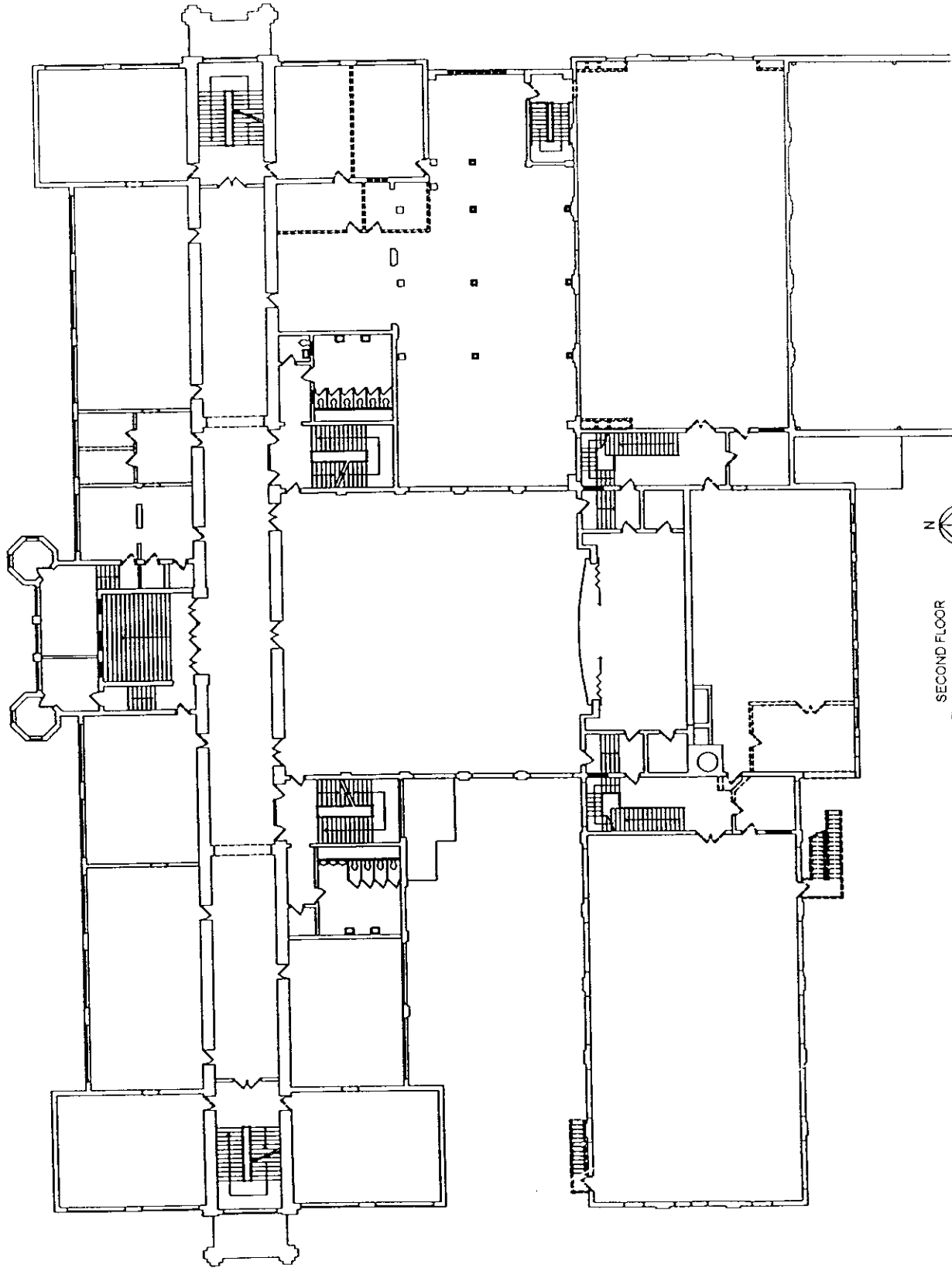


ROOSEVELT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Roosevelt Junior High School



Roosevelt Junior High School



SECOND FLOOR

Roosevelt Junior High School

