

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Delany School

other names/site number Virginia Avenue School; Maddox School

### 2. Location

street & number 6138 Virginia Avenue [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis (Independent City) code 510 zip code 63111

### 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).

Mark A Miles 10.15.04  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> 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): _____	_____	_____

Delany School  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

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

St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner

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

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Tudor Revival

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof SLATE

other LIMESTONE

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

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

- 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.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

- ARCHITECTURE
- ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black
- EDUCATION

**Period of Significance**

1911-1936

**Significant Dates**

1911

1936

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Itnner, William B., Architect

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Delany School  
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), MO  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 1.076 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 115 739620 42711580  
Zone Easting Northing

2 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  
Zone Easting Northing

3 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

4 [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

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 Karen Bode Baxter, Historian; Matthew Alvin Cerny, Paul Robert Porter, Mandy Ford, Research Associates

organization Karen Bode Baxter, Preservation Specialist date September 7, 2004

street & number 5811 Delor Street telephone (314) 353-0593

city or town St. Louis state Missouri zip code 63109-3108

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the complete 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.)

name Michael Curran, Sole Member, Delany School, LLC

street & number #5 Westmoreland Place telephone (314) 361-0151

city or town St. Louis state Missouri zip code 63108

**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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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

## Narrative Description

### SUMMARY

The Delany School is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Virginia Avenue and Bowen Street in Saint Louis, Missouri. The streets are oriented in a northeast to southwest (Virginia Avenue) and northwest to southeast (Bowen Street) configuration instead of the usual north to south configuration. The façade of the building faces to the west/northwest on Virginia Avenue. This two story with raised basement, ten classroom schoolhouse has a brown brick veneer in the Tudor Revival style and its floorplan is a modified H plan. The cross gabled, slate roof with clay tile ridges, wide eaves, and exposed rafters is supported by stick built timber framing on top of a concrete deck. This deck is the ceiling to the second floor, as part of the reinforced concrete framing for the building that characterizes it as fireproof construction. The building retains its terraced lawn, with a retaining wall that extends between the two wings to form a front patio, which is actually the roof over the basement. The rear and side elevations are surrounded by asphalt paving over brick pavers, which served as the parking lot and playground for the school. There is an iron fence along the public sidewalk at the perimeter of the property, except for the back of the property, which is defined by a high, poured concrete fence. The school is located in a residential neighborhood.

### EXTERIOR FEATURES

The west façade of Delany School has two stories and a raised basement with a cross gable roof over the projecting wings at either end of the building. Between the basement and first floor is a limestone water table that runs the perimeter of the building. A narrower, projecting limestone stringcourse also runs the perimeter (except for the rear center section) as a continuous lintel for the first floor windows. Together, these contrasting limestone courses divide the building horizontally into three sections. The fenestration pattern on the facade aligns the building vertically with seven bays in the center section of the building and two bays on the end of each wing. The raised concrete entrance patio conceals the basement level in the center section of the building behind the brick retaining wall that spans between the wings. There are two chimneys over the center section of the building. One is placed just below the ridgeline of the southeast façade and is centered over the center bay of the building. The rear chimney is offset to the south and extends above the front chimney.

The one story portico of the main entrance projects southeastward from the center of the façade. Two limestone columns frame the portico; they are fluted two-thirds of their height with Doric capitals and elevated on limestone plinths. The roof is a broken pediment with seven modillions on the cornice. A keystone is in the center of the brick baskethandle arch over the elaborate, double fanlight transom above the doorway. Matching decorative stones flank the base of the fanlight window on each side. The main entrance doors and windows consist of paired, wood, ten light doors with five light sidelights and a double fan shaped transom window. The interior doorway of the portico's vestibule also has paired wood doors with two-over-five lights, but its sidelights are more elaborate with five sections of alternating circles and five light designs. Its fanlight window has eight sections both in the outer half circle, but the inner half circle is a single light. In both transoms, a slight swag crests the arch of each section representing the influence of the Adam style.

Flanking the portico, the bays of the center section have two three-over-five wood pivot windows with three-over-three transoms above. The four outer bays of the center section consist of two three-over-six wood pivot windows with three-over-three transom windows. The second floor bays of the center section have fourteen three-over-four light, wood casement windows with three-over-two transom windows. Both first and second floor openings in the facade ends of the flanking wings have three-over-five casement windows. On the front facing gable end above the second floor of each wing is a decorative diamond pattern brick design. The end wall chimney is placed in the center of each front facing gable and punctuates the crest of the roof. The basement windows have two three-over-two casement lights on the wings of the front façade of the building.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

## Narrative Description (continued)

The south elevation facing Bowen Street has seven bays on the basement level, and two broad bays on the first and second floors. The roof displays the side gable to the street and chimneys at the each end of the wing. The basement level features a centered, one story, projecting portico with a gable roof. This entrance has paired doors with two-over-five lights with a brick fan shaped arch over them. One two-over-three casement window is on each side elevation of the portico, which provides an entry vestibule to the stairs to the basement level boys' manual shop/recreation classroom in the south wing. The six bays in the basement flanking the central entry have four-over-four double hung windows, while each bay on the first and second floors have five three-over-five double hung wood windows.

The east elevation (rear) of the Delany School is a partially exposed basement level with eleven bays including the two bays in each wing of the building. A large chimney for the boiler is in the center of the elevation rising well above the roofline. The basement windows are ten three-over-four double hung windows. The coal doors are in bay five (looking left to right). The ground level exits in bay three and bay nine (looking left to right) have three transom windows with three-over-two casements over the three exit doors. The wood exit doors feature two-over-four lights. The windows in the first, second, fourth, sixth, tenth and eleventh bays (looking left to right) of the first floor are single three-over-five casement windows. The fifth bay has five three-over-five double hung windows. Bay seven contains three three-over-five double hung windows. Between the first and second floors in bay three and nine are nine casement windows. They are three-over-four light windows. The configuration of the second floor windows in bays one, two, four, five six, seven, ten and eleven are the same as the first floor windows. The gable ends of the wings above the second floor windows is highlighted by the diamond pattern in the brickwork that matches the west elevation and utilizes the same treatment of the chimneys as well. On the roofline above the third and ninth bay are ornamental dormer windows featuring two three-over-two casements below a gable roof.

The north elevation is nearly identical to the south elevation. It features seven bays on the basement level with six four-over-four double hung windows flanking the center bay that contains the projecting portico. The entrance has paired wood doors with two-over-five lights with a brick fan arch above. The side elevations of the portico include a two-over-three casement window. The first and second floor windows are five three-over-five double hung windows. On the second floor above the center bay is the one major distinctive feature of this elevation, a three-over-four double hung window for the doctor and nurses office that is placed off center to the southeast.

## INTERIOR FEATURES

The interior of the building retains its original configuration and detailing, although it is in poor condition since the building has been boarded up and unoccupied since 1981. The modified H-shaped floorplan of the upper two floors includes two classrooms in each wing with another classroom and office along the east side of the center section between the stairwells. The hallway, with the characteristic bank of windows spans between the two wings, along the west side. The lower (basement level) has a large room in each wing along with the locker rooms. The north wing was used for the home economics/recreation room for the girls while the south wing was used a manual shop/recreation room for the boys. Between the two wings of the basement are the mechanical rooms and original boilers.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Description (continued)

The interior features include the painted, poured concrete walls and ceilings, with the windows and doors recessed into the exterior masonry openings. Classroom doors were originally transomed, although most transoms were boarded in years ago. The classroom doors appear to have been nine light, two panel doors, while auxiliary rooms (such as closets and offices) had six vertical paneled doors. The woodwork in the building is stained for the most part, and some windows have been painted. The window trim designs are devoid of ornament, and the lug sills are made of glazed brick. Baseboards were usually formed out of two rows of orange glazed brick. The lighting fixtures are old, nonhistoric, fluorescent tubes. The wood floors in the building are in solid condition, although heavily damaged through years of use and abuse. Half walls of orange or white glazed brick are used in various areas of the building, with plaster walls on the majority of the surfaces. In some areas, the original metal umbrella stands, mortared into a glazed brick wall, remain intact. The stairwells have stained wood railings on top of plaster half-wall banisters with concrete steps.

### ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

The property retains its original dimensions and layout, including the tiered front lawn, playground, iron fencing and rear concrete retaining wall. The integrity of the building remains at a high level, although the building has suffered from lack of maintenance since the school closed in 1981. Although the windows and doors were boarded over when the certified historic rehabilitation project began recently, many of the original windows and doors are still at least partially intact, except for some broken panes of glass and missing mullions. The brickwork of the building retains its original design and character. The distinctive slate roof and clay tile ridges are intact except for the roofs of the entry vestibules, which were badly deteriorated. The interior retains the original partitions. Wood floors, doors, chalkboards and wall materials are also original. Despite the years of neglect, this building has survived relatively intact and the current rehabilitation work is maintaining these distinctive features.

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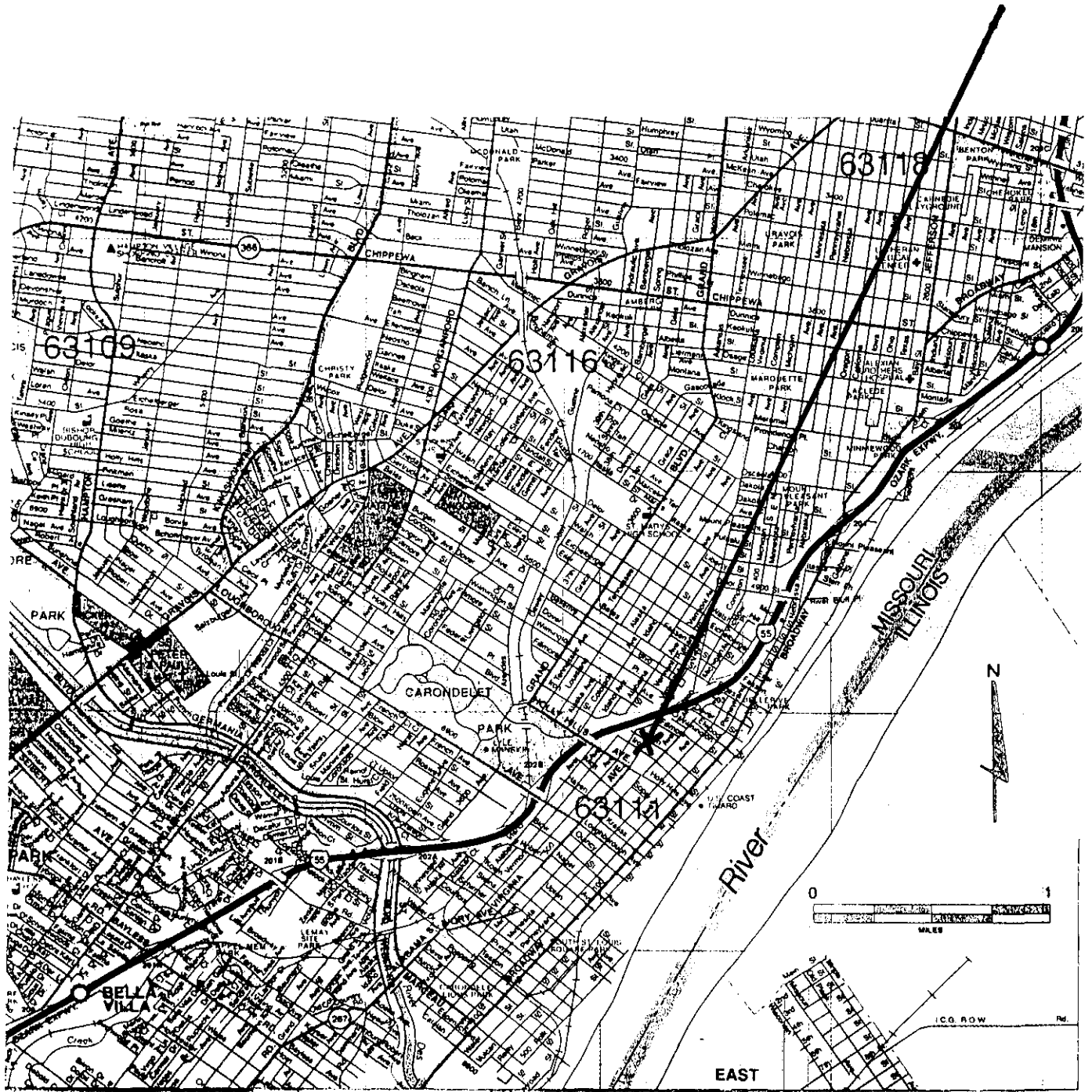
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Map of City of St. Louis, MO

Locating Property





United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

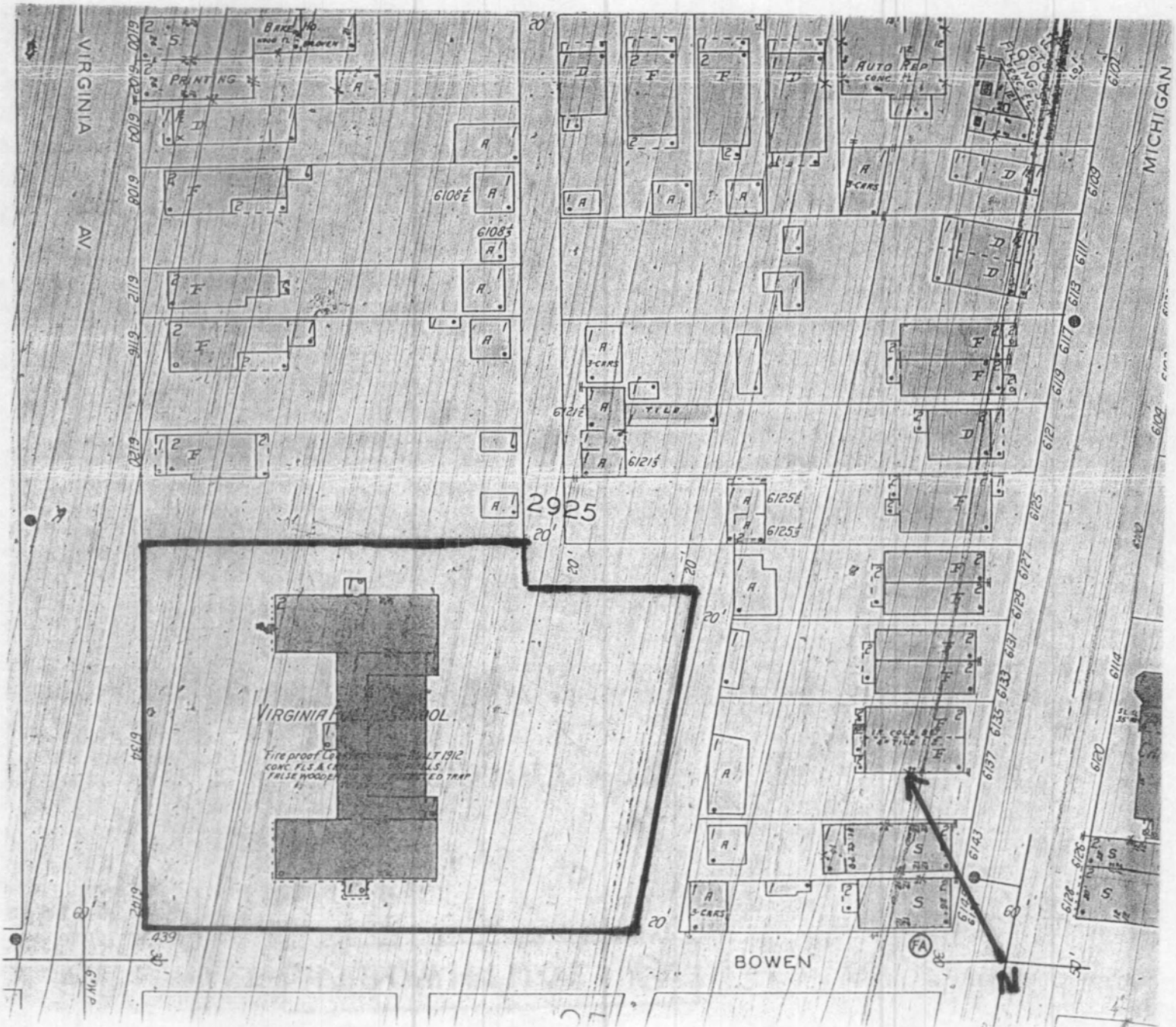
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1938) Vol.12, Sheet 23

Site Plan of Property



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

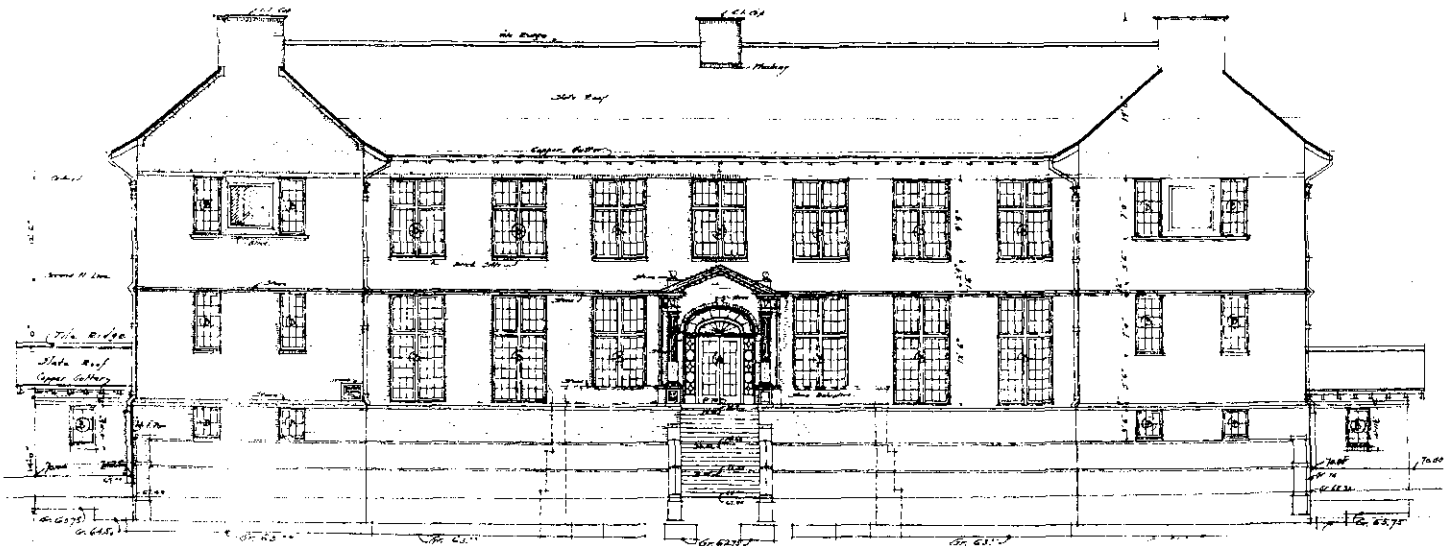
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Original Plans by William B. Ittner  
courtesy property owner

West Elevation



EXISTING  
WEST ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

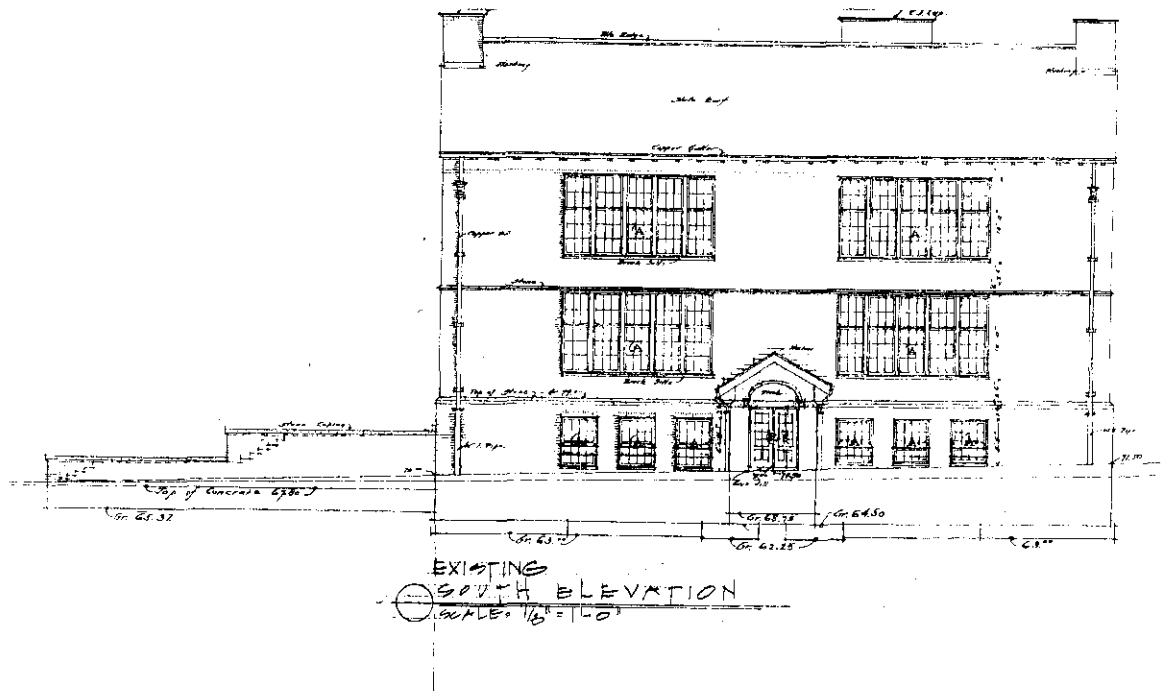
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Original Plans by William B. Ittner  
courtesy property owner

South Elevation



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

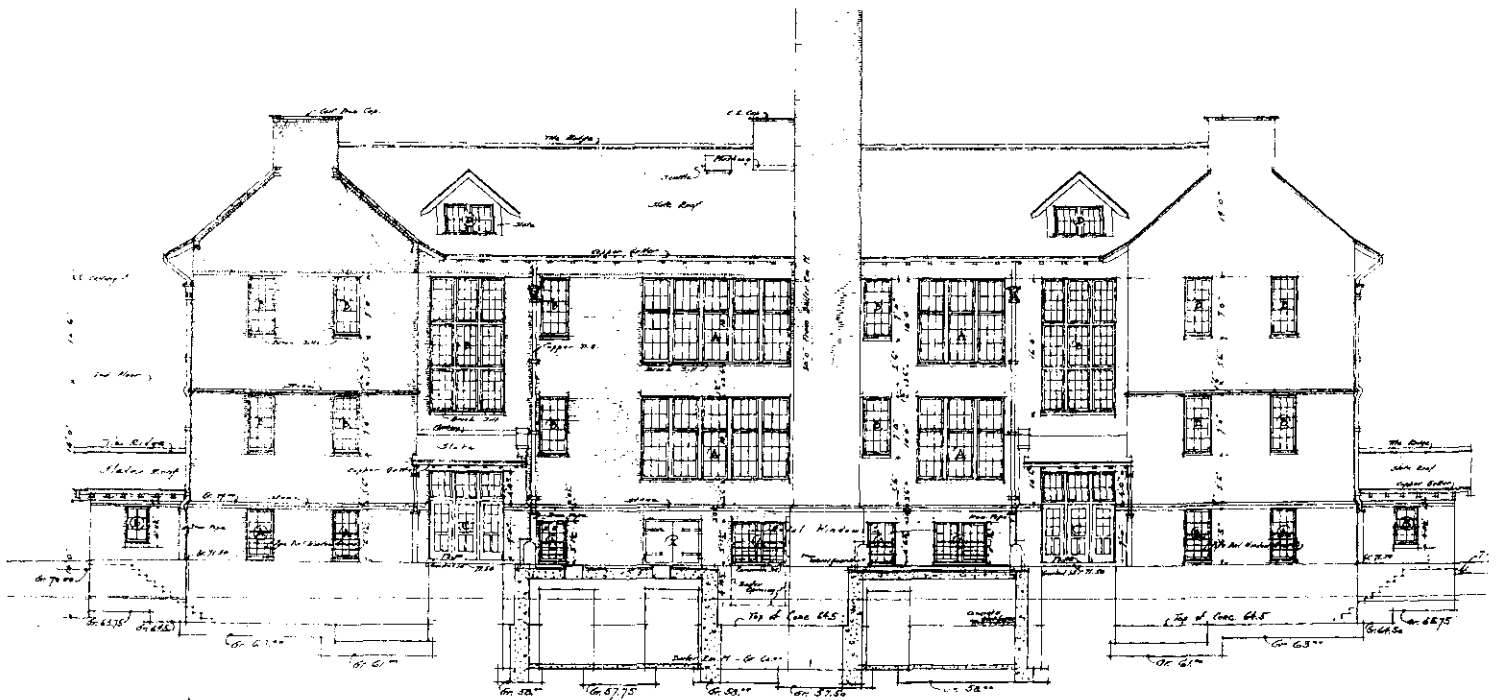
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Original Plans by William B. Ittner  
courtesy property owner

East Elevation



EXISTING  
EAST ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

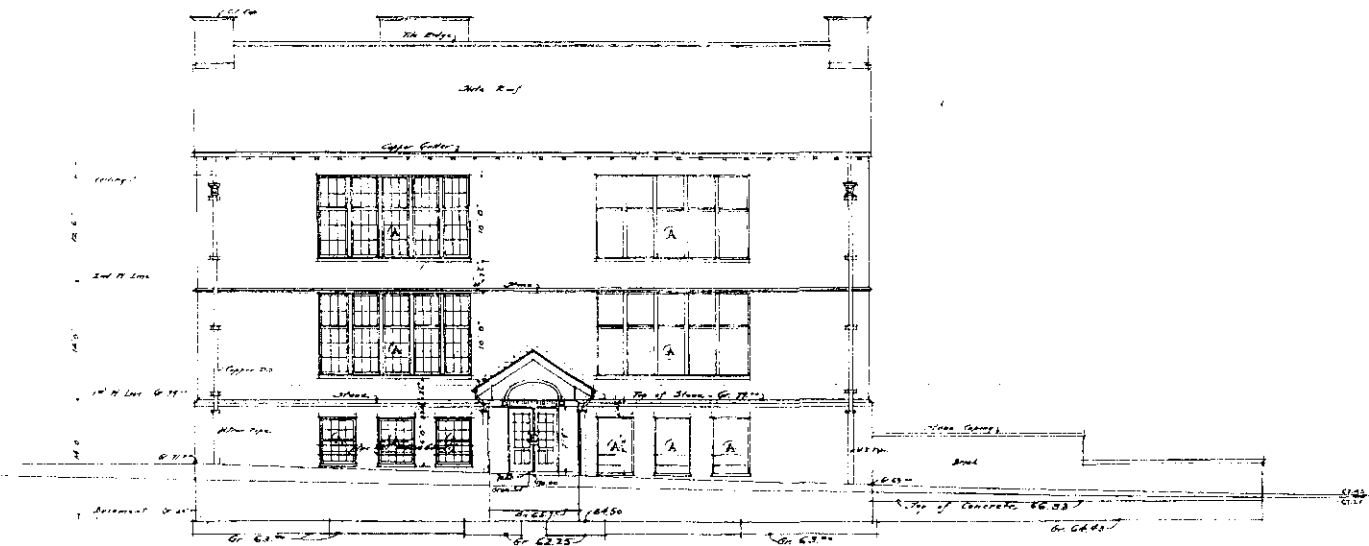
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 9

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Original Plans by William B. Ittner  
courtesy property owner

North Elevation



EXISTING  
NORTH ELEVATION  
66'-0" x 12'-0" LOT

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

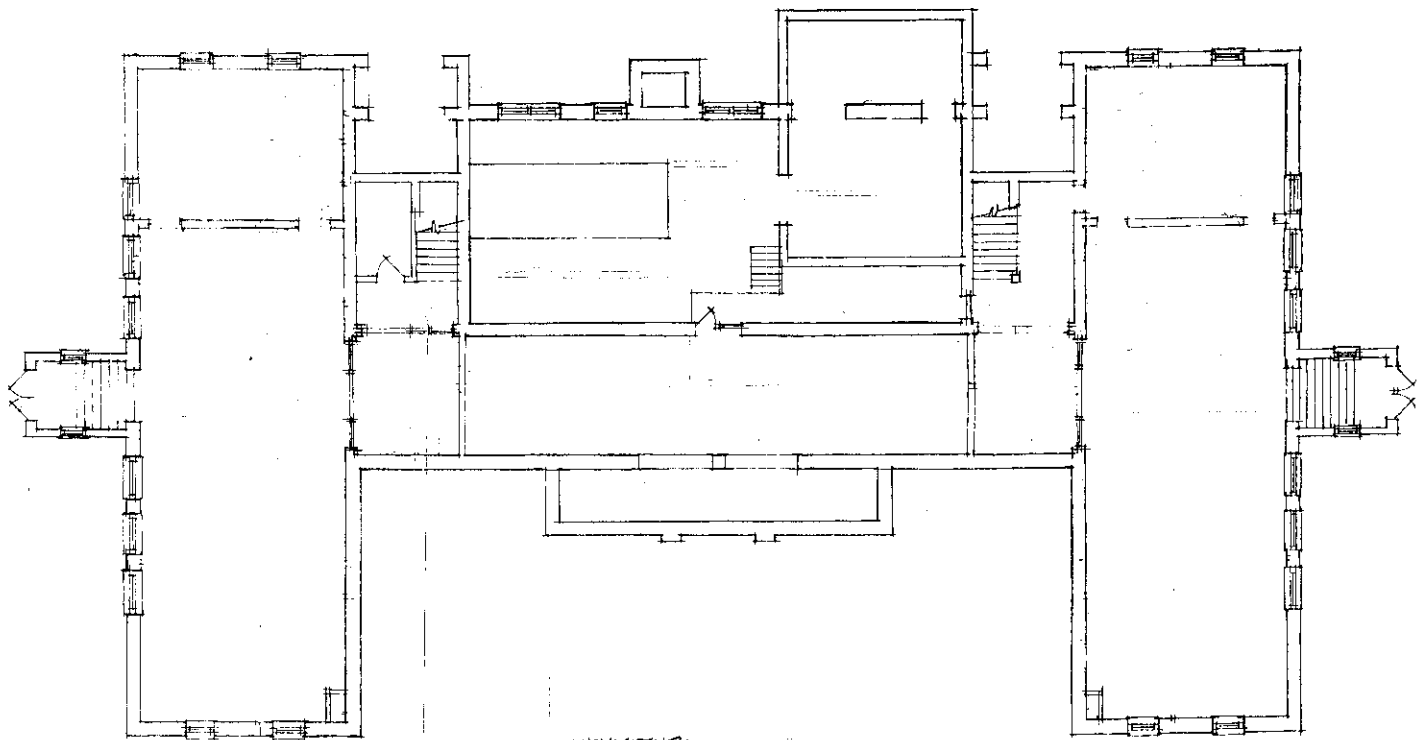
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 10

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Plans Courtesy Sutton Studios, St. Louis, MO

Existing Lower Level Plan



EXISTING  
LOWER LEVEL PLAN  
1/8" = 1'-0"



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

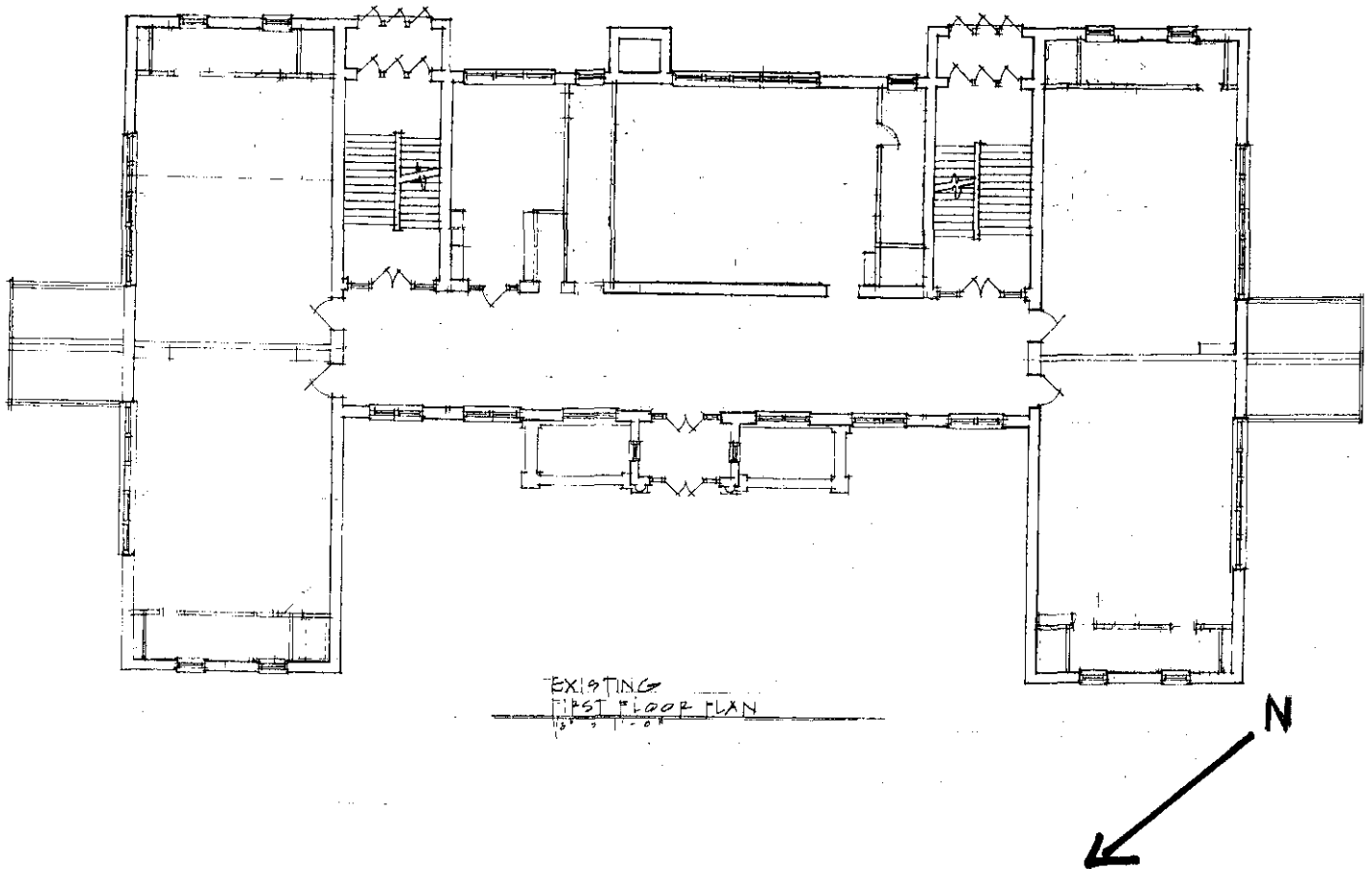
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 11

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Plans Courtesy Sutton Studios, St. Louis, MO

Existing First Floor Plan



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National Park Service

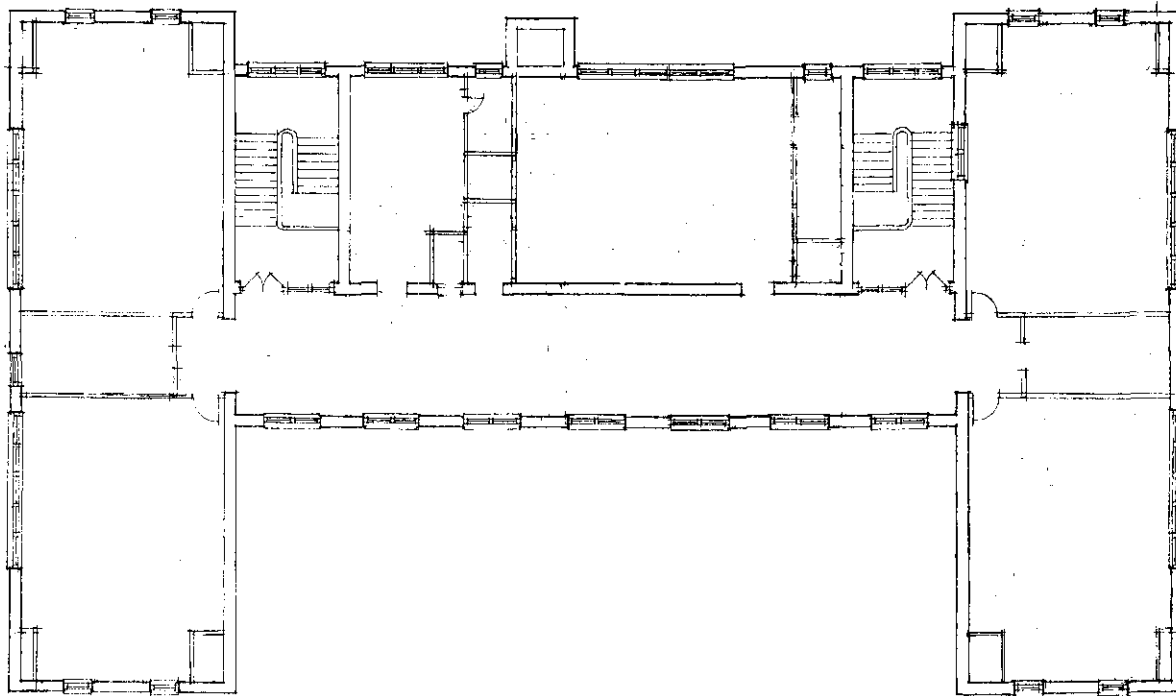
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 12

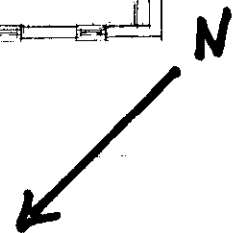
Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Plans Courtesy Sutton Studios, St. Louis, MO

Existing Second Floor Plan



EXISTING  
SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
1/27/07





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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 13

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### SUMMARY

The Delany School, located at 6134 Virginia Avenue in Saint Louis Missouri, is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture for its association with architect William B. Ittner and Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage: Black, as well as Criterion A: Education, for its association with the turmoil surrounding the color barrier in the Saint Louis school system. Built in 1911, and opened for classes on September 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1912, the school was designed using a modification of Ittner's H-plan, and it reflects registration requirements as laid out in the National Register's Multiple Property Listing for the Public Schools of William B. Ittner. The school, when designed, was intended as a "colored" school and was originally named for Major Martin R. Delany, an African-American physician, publisher, and soldier. In 1935, Delany students were moved to portable schools and the building became a school for the surrounding white working class neighborhood. These injustices relate the Delany School to the significant social history of racial segregation in Saint Louis Public Schools.

#### WILLIAM B. ITTNER

William B. Ittner's contribution to architecture centers around the work he did to synthesize a seminal innovation, often referred to as the "open plan" for school design. Ittner is credited with literally transforming the standards of school buildings, evolving from the H-plan elementary schools and continuing with the cruciform, U-plan and finally with the E-plan elementary schools. He used these innovations to create schools that achieved higher standards for light, ventilation, occupancy, and overall health for students.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to Ittner's contribution, schools in St. Louis and around the nation could hardly be considered places that inspired the mind. The standard floor plan was a basic square, with a center stairwell. Corridors were dark and rat infested; classrooms received light from only one source which made working conditions poor; stairways were unsafe and had too few exits; basement classrooms were dingy; and indoor plumbing was rare.<sup>2</sup>

During the course of his career, Ittner designed forty-nine public school buildings in St. Louis. Ittner had attended public schools in St. Louis, and so was keen to improve conditions when he became Commissioner of School Buildings for the St. Louis Board of Education. Ittner's first plan came in March 1898, when he provided for a three-story block paralleling the front of the property with perpendicular wings providing "legs" of an H shape. This design created more exterior wall surface and therefore more access to light and air in a greater percentage of classrooms. Basements, recognized as a major source of school fires, are raised to provide bigger windows and constructed so they can be sealed off into a tight, fireproof unit.<sup>3</sup> The Delany School, a modified H-shape, reflects these characteristics. The basement was raised, containing the northern and southern elevation recreational rooms that were brightly lit, as well as the boys and girls bathrooms, which were well ventilated. Like all of Ittner's schools, this school is of fireproof construction.

With the cruciform-plan school, Ittner sought an improvement for the H-plan. This second design, three stories in height, was essentially a long center block paralleling the front of the property with a short center wing and a longer rear wing, also centered. The cruciform school is regarded as less than satisfactory in use, although it is considered important in terms of following the logical course of Ittner's development. Ittner's development seemed to reach a point where he needed reflection and research, and soon after his experience with the cruciform plan he traveled to Europe.

After the European trip, Ittner designed a school totally new to St. Louis: the U-shaped school. The three-story school is a center block that parallels the front of the property with flanking wings that are pulled forward to form a squared U shape. Significantly, this plan features the European concept of a one-sided corridor that allows light to come directly into hallways, allowing a more even illumination of each classroom. This transitional model is an important logical step in Ittner's development of the "open plan."<sup>4</sup> The Delany School draws upon this type, in that the truncated H-shape is nearly a U-shape. The Delany School reflects the innovations that Ittner made from his Europe trip in that it contains the one-sided corridor.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 14

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

The E-shaped plan was first used by William Ittner to realize fully the potential of the one-sided corridor technique. The basic idea is a long center block paralleling the street; with three wings projecting from the body of the school. Many variations on this model allow inseting of the end wings or extending the wings. The E-Plan is often regarded as the culmination of the development of his work and in some ways became the standard by which other schools were judged.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting though, that the E-Plan did not become his sole mode for design. Designs such as the H-plan often proved more appropriate for a particular instance, such as it did with the Delany School.

A survey by Columbia University Teacher's College in 1939 illustrated the "excellent features of the St. Louis Schools" that have earned its buildings "nation-wide approval as evidenced by their frequent reproduction in other communities."<sup>6</sup> This gave credit to architects who made "consideration to natural lighting and ventilating standards" with the "open pattern of the buildings resulting in excellent lighting for corridors and stair wells and ample provision for air passage."<sup>7</sup> The survey went on to point out that buildings constructed in the period prior to 1898, or pre-Ittner, have very inadequate sites, with little emphasis placed upon the health and physical standards of sites.

### BUILDING HISTORY

In 1873, the Colored School Number 6 was built on the same site as the nominated Delany School.<sup>8</sup> This structure was a square shaped school common prior to the innovations of William B. Ittner. It is assumed that the Number 6 remained in use until the new building was finished, but research uncovered no record of its demolition. The Board of Education approved the preliminary plans for the new Delany School on July 11, 1911. In the same report Ittner submitted plans for a two story building in the H-plan with a raised basement.<sup>9</sup> The fireproof building supported concrete decking slabs for floors, and a concrete separation from the slate tile roof. The school contains ten classrooms and administrative offices on each floor, and a doctor's office on the second floor. The basement contained a boys' shop and a girls' shop as well as well ventilated bathroom facilities, one for girls and one for boys. *Matron* is painted on the wall outside her office guarding the girls' north section of the basement, directing wayward young ladies to their disciplinarian. These basement facilities were well lit, ventilated, and fireproof. In the boys' shop, the Board of Education made provisions for "sixteen boys, with bench and Sloyd equipment, and printing press with type."<sup>10</sup> All these features, which seem standard today, were much yearned for facilities, for which African-American parents had to agitate tirelessly, in order to attain them for their children. The school was commissioned to receive 300 "colored" students from the 13<sup>th</sup> Ward of the 7<sup>th</sup> District. The district officially encompassed much of the south city, roughly south of Chippewa, bounded by the river to the east and the city limits to the south and east.<sup>11</sup> In reality, restrictive covenants barred African-Americans from moving into many of the areas of this district, such as the nearby subdivision of Holly Hills, among others. The school drew most of its students from the African-American neighborhoods along the river.

The school was named the Delany School from 1911 to 1935, when it served only "colored" pupils. The Delany School building was renamed the Virginia Avenue School when the "colored" students were moved to another location in portable school buildings, and the building served only white pupils under the name Virginia Avenue School for 1935 to 1952. The school was renamed the Maddox School from 1952 until it closed in 1981.<sup>12</sup>

### SCHOOLS FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS

In 1847 Missouri passed a law explicitly prohibiting the education of "Negroes" to be imposed by a \$500 fine or six months in jail. The law restricted the instruction of reading and writing, although it was difficult to enforce. For the next twenty years, black children attended "underground" schools around the city, often run in the basements of churches. The instruction of reading was of special concern to the religious community, who considered the chance to read the Bible to be of greater importance than the society's climate of racism. Notable early religious leaders committed to the education of African-Americans included Rev. J.M. Peck, an enthusiastic white Baptist Missionary, the Rev. John Berry Meachum associated with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Jesuits from the Catholic Church.<sup>13</sup>

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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

Under Reconstruction, the Missouri Constitution of 1865 required school boards to support black education, but St. Louis responded slowly. The July 1865 report by the Superintendent of the St. Louis Public Schools, Ira Divoll, noted the extent to which African-American citizens of St. Louis supported the education of white children through taxes of \$3 million worth of property. In February 1866, the board attempted to promote some sense of justice by authorizing the establishment of one or two schools. The difficulty encountered in trying to find a space proved remarkable. In January of 1867, the commission in charge of locating a space reported that every time it made an agreement for the rental or purchase of a suitable house, the owner would back out of the agreement upon ascertaining the proposed use of the property. It was not until December of the following school year that 438 African-American children attended school in St. Louis. Classroom conditions did not improve in the next decade, with an atmosphere of instability surrounding the system.<sup>14</sup> According to Missouri educational historian, Selwn K. Troen, "At best, blacks would inherit an old 'white' schoolhouse that had been abandoned. More likely, however, Negroes were educated in inadequate, inferior, and occasionally distant buildings, sometimes pursuing instruction at different locations each year."<sup>15</sup> Classes were repeatedly disbanded and moved from building to building, with standards for districts and graded curriculum suffering. By 1875, Superintendent Divoll claimed to have established twelve separate "colored elementary schools," usually to be found in horrible, dilapidated buildings. Many schools failed to stay open even for two months.<sup>16</sup>

In late 1875, Sumner High became the first high school west of the Mississippi for African-Americans, opening in its first building at 11<sup>th</sup> and Spruce next to a prison with a view of the execution scaffolding. Despite the odious location, Sumner became a source of pride for the African-American community, renowned for its caring teachers. However, in terms of opportunity and quality, even the opening of a new Sumner High at 15<sup>th</sup> and Market was only a slight improvement over the old one next to executioner's noose. The school was located next to Union Station, very far from the areas where African-Americans lived. The neighborhood was known for the shady characters and criminals hanging around before being arraigned and sent to another prison located near a "colored" school.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to concerns over neighborhoods, African-American parents also displayed concern over the physical features of the building. African-American schools at the time lacked facilities that enriched the cultural and social life of students. Known for their diligence in taking an interest in the educational standards, African-American parents yearned for the new, airy, spacious, open model of schools being designed by William B. Ittner. The parents filed a complaint against the Board of Education in 1907 that resulted in yet another Sumner High being built. This Sumner High, sitting in its present location, was in fact designed by Ittner, as the parents had agitated the board for, and was renowned as an "outstanding facility" with "a national reputation for excellence."<sup>18</sup> Four years after Sumner was built, these drives by parents to improve the facilities for students would result in the Delany School being built in the Carondelet neighborhood.

In addition to seeking to improve facilities, parents also pressured to have their schools recognized with honor and respect. An early practice for naming schools involved simply assigning them numbers and letters. This was the case for both white and "colored" schools. When the school board began the practice of naming the schools after prominent people, they assigned names like Pierre Laclede and Auguste Chouteau to African-American schools. In 1878, the Colored Education Association requested names for their schools that honored prominent "Negroes." The Board offered to name the schools after "white men who have distinguished themselves in the cause of the colored," a practice which was already being done, such as was the case with Sumner High, named after Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts senator who was an early supporter of emancipation.<sup>19</sup> The Colored Education Association persisted and the board finally approved honoring "colored" schools with the names of "distinguished Negroes" in 1890.<sup>20</sup> The Delany School in St. Louis was among the first to be honored with this practice.

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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)  
THE DELANY SCHOOL

In 1873, Colored School No.6 served the African-American students of South City, located at what was then Fifth and Market Streets of Carondelet. In 1890, reflecting the spirit of honoring "colored" schools with the names of distinguished African-Americans, the school received a new name, for Dr. Martin R. Delany. This original Delany School resembled other schools being designed prior to Ittner: a square plan with poor ventilation that was a fire trap and very uninspiring. Research found no record of its demolition, but the new Delany School would be built in its exact place. In the 1890s, the names of the streets bordering the original Delany School were changed to their present names, Virginia Avenue and Bowen Street.<sup>21</sup>

The new Delany School represented a convergence of the efforts to raise the educational and social status of African-Americans in St. Louis. The new school contained the excellent features common to Ittner schools and was a source of pride for the African-American community. Like the old Delany School, the new school was commissioned to accept "colored" students from its opening on September 3, 1912 and kept the same name, the Delany School after Major Martin Robinson Delany, M.D.<sup>22</sup>

A nationally recognized African-American, Major Delany was born in Virginia, but moved to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania by the age of 10. He began studying medicine in New York in 1835 and continued his studies for many years. Beginning in 1843, Major Delany first labored as editor of *Mystery*, a journal that advocated the rights of man and was devoted to promoting African-American interests, and is also credited with creating the Avery Scholarship Fund for African-American students. Delany also was associated with Frederick Douglass in the editorial management of Douglass' paper. Delany had finished his studies by 1850 at Harvard, and began a period of correspondence and travel.<sup>23</sup> His travels began in 1853, directly following the Dred Scott case, and he was considered one of the best informed black leaders in the United States and Canada. Delany certainly respected the appeal presented by Frederick Douglass but he also recognized the futility of the action. In 1859, disgruntled at the entrenched nature of race relations in American and at the age of forty-seven, he led the first black exploration from the United States to the Niger Valley. He had been raising money for the expedition for most of the 1850s. Later, Dr. Delany would publish an intensive study in his *Official Report* about the climate, soil, disease, and natural productions of West Africa. During the trip, Delany was greeted with great honors when he arrived in places like Monrovia, Liberia and he admired the business talents of Africans at the huge ports of Lagos, Nigeria.<sup>24</sup> When Dr. Delany returned to the U.S. in 1861, he quickly became involved in the Civil War, serving as an acting assistant recruiting agent and acting examining surgeon at the Chicago Post of the U. S. Army, and later as an Army Commissioner for Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. On February 8, 1865 Dr. Delany received his commission as major, the first of his race to be so honored,<sup>25</sup> obviously a worthy model for young students to recognize in their school's name.

For the opening of the school in 1912, John Boyer Vashon was transferred to assume the position of principal. Vashon was a prominent African-American in the Saint Louis area. Like Dr. Delany, Vashon's family was highly educated and devoted themselves to educating African-American school children, despite numerous obstacles. His father, George Boyer Vashon was a lawyer, linguist, and educator who spoke and wrote well in Sanskrit, Hebrew, Persian, and Greek. He taught Modern Languages in Pittsburg, New York, Washington D.C. and Port Au Prince, Haiti. When George Vashon died in 1882, his widow, Susan Vashon, moved her family to St. Louis, where John Boyer Vashon flourished as a student and soon became an educator like his father.<sup>26</sup> He first served at Attucks School and then transferred to Delany for its opening in 1912, and remained principal until his death in 1923, when the Delany School was listed among eighteen "colored" schools in the City of Saint Louis.<sup>27</sup> Upon his death, Vashon High was named in his and his family's honor, and Jessie O. Wells was appointed principal of Delany.<sup>28</sup>

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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

### Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

In 1935, the fortunes of Delany students were dealt a blow as they were moved from their well-ventilated, spacious Ittner-designed school to portable classrooms at 6121 Minnesota. Their old Delany School located at 6138 Virginia was changed to a "white" school, and the name of the school became the Virginia Avenue School. The portable schools were prefabricated wood frame structures placed on a grassy property adjacent to a chapel.<sup>29</sup> These barrack-like structures were not intended to be permanent and were horribly uninspiring, especially when considering the quality of the students' former Ittner-designed school building and campus on Virginia. Having their source of pride actually taken away deepened the injustice of segregation.

In 1939, the Teachers College at Columbia University surveyed all St. Louis public schools and rated the buildings superior, good, fair, poor, and inferior based on a point system from 0 to 1,000. The recently commissioned "white" Virginia Avenue School, formerly the Delany School, rated 500 points, giving it the second highest survey rating of good. During the period when this school was a "colored" school, it was one of only three "Negro" schools even to be rated above fair, with Vashon High School as the only "colored" building rated superior. Astoundingly, in a city that was gaining national recognition for school building design, eight of the eighteen elementary schools for "Negro" children rated less than 300 points, meaning they received an inferior rating.<sup>30</sup> The brand new Delany portable school on Minnesota was among these schools rated inferior. The generous scholars from Columbia University went on to recommend that Delany portable school be phased out before 1950, with no plan for a replacement school in the area.<sup>31</sup> This in fact became the case in 1943, when the portable classrooms were removed and the pupils from the Delany portables were moved to other schools.<sup>32</sup>

In 1952, the school was recommissioned as the Maddox School.<sup>33</sup> This time it was named after John J. Maddox, a dedicated educator for the public schools of St. Louis. He served continuously in St. Louis Schools after his appointment as principal of Blow School in 1910 until his death. He worked as a respected principal at several other schools, including Wyman High School and Cleveland High School and taught at Harris Teachers College. From 1921 to 1929, he served as Superintendent of Instruction.<sup>34</sup>

Within two years of renaming the school, the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision ruled the separate but equal policy to be unconstitutional and inherently unequal. Mandatory segregation of black and white children was officially abandoned by the St. Louis Board of Education within a month. The Board merged the Harris and Stowe teachers colleges, desegregated the high schools, the two technical schools, and kindergarten through eighth grade schools. In 1955, *Time* magazine recognized St. Louis as a model for desegregation efforts.<sup>35</sup>

The acclaim for St. Louis was premature. Amy Stuart Wells and Robert L. Crain illustrate the shift from *de jure*, or state-sanctioned, segregation to *de facto* segregation. Wells and Crain wrote of the neighborhood school policy of gerrymandering that "allowed segregated housing to guarantee segregated schools," and the school board even went so far that it "drew attendance zones to exclude black neighborhoods."<sup>36</sup> The segregated Maddox School continued to serve only white working class neighborhoods of Carondelet. Wells and Crain noted that "behind the praise for the 1954 plan...no changes were made for forty-one white elementary schools [to include black students], and in the remaining twelve, boundaries were redrawn to exclude black neighborhoods."<sup>37</sup> Schools like Maddox School, that were white before *Brown*, were allowed to stay so and they illustrate the failure of *Brown*. The Maddox School is especially poignant, even deeply ironic, because it was once the proud, Ittner designed, Delany School that served African-Americans.

### CONCLUSION

The Delany School in the Carondelet neighborhood is significant as an example of William Ittner's innovations in school construction. It draws from numerous elements of his design, as well as illustrating different periods of his development as an architect. The building's significance is enhanced by its place in the racial tumult of St. Louis Public School history. Its conception as an African-American school illustrates the diligent efforts of African-American parents to improve educational facilities, just as the African-American students' removal to inferior portable buildings illustrates continued

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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

## Narrative Statement of Significance (continued)

injustices in the St. Louis Public School System well into the latter part of the twentieth century. The Maddox School would be permanently closed in 1981,<sup>38</sup> marking the end to a school whose history provides an illustration of tumult and injustice surrounding the segregation of races for instruction in St. Louis public schools.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cynthia H. Longswich, "St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner," National Register of Historic Places—Multiple Property Documentation Form, Prepared for Landmarks Association of St. Louis (St. Louis, January 1987): section F, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., section E, 2-3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., section F, 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., section F, 4.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., section F, 6.

<sup>6</sup>Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, *A Report of a Survey of the Public Schools of St. Louis, Missouri* (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939), 409.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>"Colored' School No. 6 (Delany)" [Photo no. FM075], 1885 ca, School Building Photographs Collection, St. Louis Public School Records Center/Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>9</sup>Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, *Printed Record of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis. Vol. XVIII. July 1st, 1911 to June 30th, 1912. With an Index* (St. Louis: St. Louis Public Schools, [1912]), 79.

<sup>10</sup>Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, *Printed Record of the Board of Education of the City of St. Louis. Vol. XVII. July 1st, 1910 to June 30th, 1911. With an Index* (St. Louis: St. Louis Public Schools, [1911]), 1007.

<sup>11</sup>Board of Education of the City of St. Louis, *Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of President and Directors of the St. Louis Public Schools for the Year Ending June 30, 1894* (St. Louis: Buxton and Skinner Stationery Co., 1895), Appendix, clxiv.

<sup>12</sup>John A. Wright, *Discovering African-American St. Louis: A Guide to Historic Sites* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1994), 116.

<sup>13</sup>J. W. Evans, "A Brief Sketch of the Development of Negro Education in St. Louis, Missouri" ([1938]), Manuscript in "St. Louis Public Schools Named for Negroes" Folder, Black History File, Local History Vertical Files, History and Genealogy Department, St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>14</sup>Sesquicentennial Committee, *Commemorative History of the St. Louis Public Schools, 1838-1988* (St. Louis: CPI Corp., 1986), 28.

<sup>15</sup>Selwyn K. Troen, *The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838-1920* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1975), 85.

<sup>16</sup>Sesquicentennial Committee, *Commemorative History*, 36.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Endnotes continued)

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 31.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>"'Colored' School No. 6 (Delany)" [Photo no. FM075]; William B. and Marcella C. Magnan, *The Streets of St. Louis: History of St. Louis Street Names*, 2nd edition (St. Louis: Virginia Publishing Co., 1997), 100.

<sup>22</sup>"Delany School" [Photo no. FM200], 1912, School Building Photographs Collection, St. Louis Public School Records Center/Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.; Longswisch, "St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner," Property Types.

<sup>23</sup>Julia Davis, "Biographical Sketches: Major Martin Robinson Delany M.D." (July 1971), Manuscript in "St. Louis Public Schools Named for Negroes" Folder, Black History File, Local History Vertical Files, History and Genealogy Department, St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>24</sup>Victor Ullman, *Martin R. Delany: The Beginnings of Black Nationalism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 211.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 297.

<sup>26</sup>Julia Davis, "Biographical Sketches: George Boyer Vashon" (September 1967), Manuscript in "St. Louis Public Schools Named for Negroes" Folder, Black History File, Local History Vertical Files, History and Genealogy Department, St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>27</sup>*Gould's St. Louis Red-Blue Book, 1922* (St. Louis: Polk-Gould Directory Co., 1922), 21.

<sup>28</sup>\*BOE archives on Vashon High naming for John and family and on Jessie Wells as principal of Delany

<sup>29</sup>\*BOE archives photo/file on prefab Delany; "Insurance Maps of St. Louis, Missouri" (Limited, NY: Sanborn Map Co., 1938, corrected to 1950).

<sup>30</sup>Division of Field Studies, Institute of Educational Research, *Report of a Survey*, 409.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 424.

<sup>32</sup>"Delany Portable School" [Photo no. FM067], 1936, School Building Photographs Collection, St. Louis Public School Records Center/Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>33</sup>"Maddox School (Virginia Avenue) (Delany)" [Photo no. FM165], 1956, School Building Photographs Collection, St. Louis Public School Records Center/Archives, St. Louis, Missouri; "Virginia Avenue School Is Renamed Maddox," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (10 April 1952), Clipping in *St. Louis Schools Scrapbook III*, 71, Missouri Historical Society Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>34</sup>"Maddox, John J.," *Missouri Historical Review* (April 1946), Clipping in the Card Catalog, History and Genealogy Department, St. Louis Public Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>35</sup>Amy Stuart Wells and Robert L. Crain, *Stepping Over the Color Line: African-American Students in White Suburban Schools* (Concorde, NH: Yale University, 1997), 85.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 86.

<sup>38</sup>"Maddox School (Virginia Avenue) (Delany)" [Photo no. FM165].

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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Courtesy of St. Louis Public Library

Photograph of Major Martin R. Delany, M.D.





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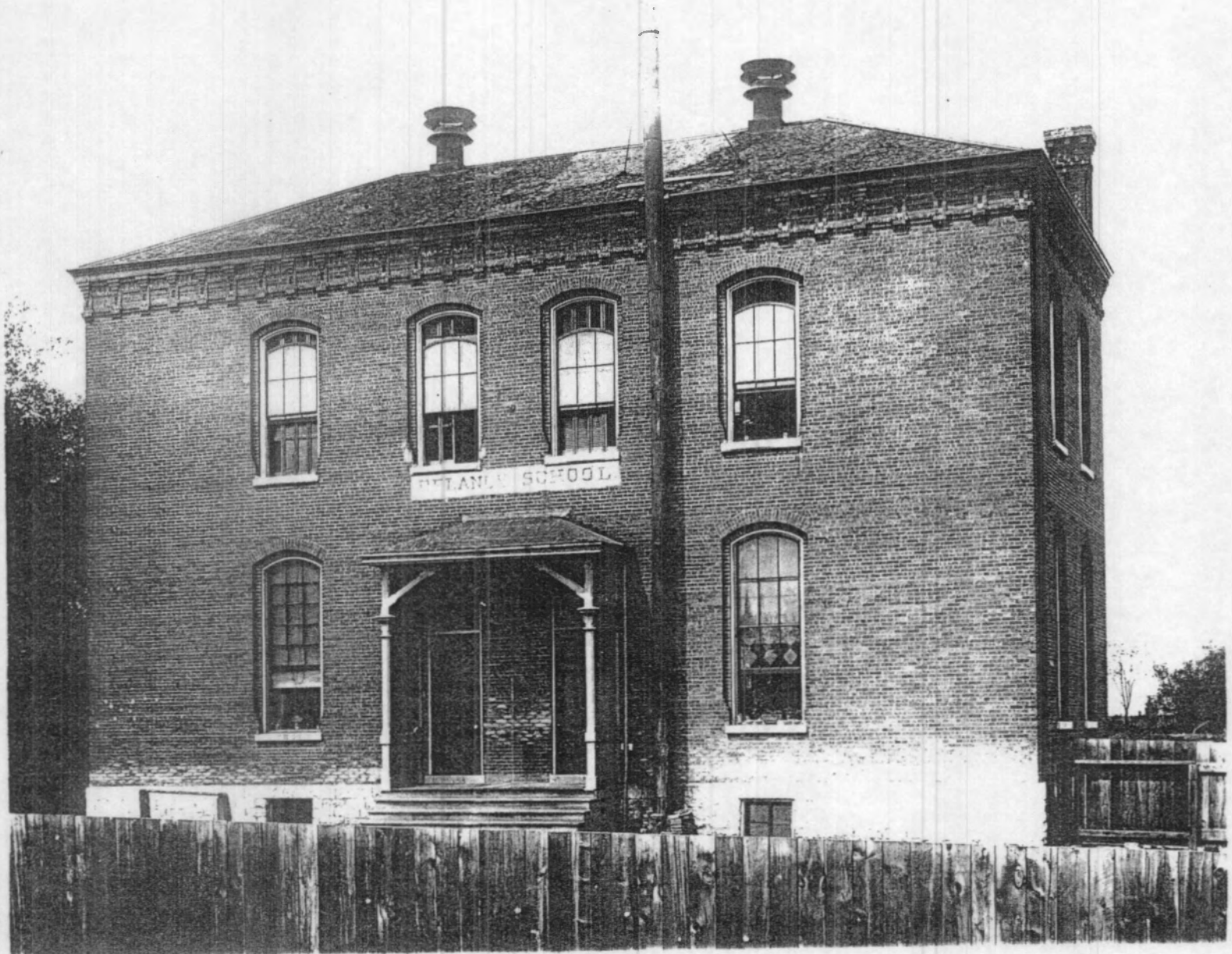
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Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Courtesy of the Missouri Historic Society (St. Louis)

Photograph of Colored School No. 6, c. 1890-1911



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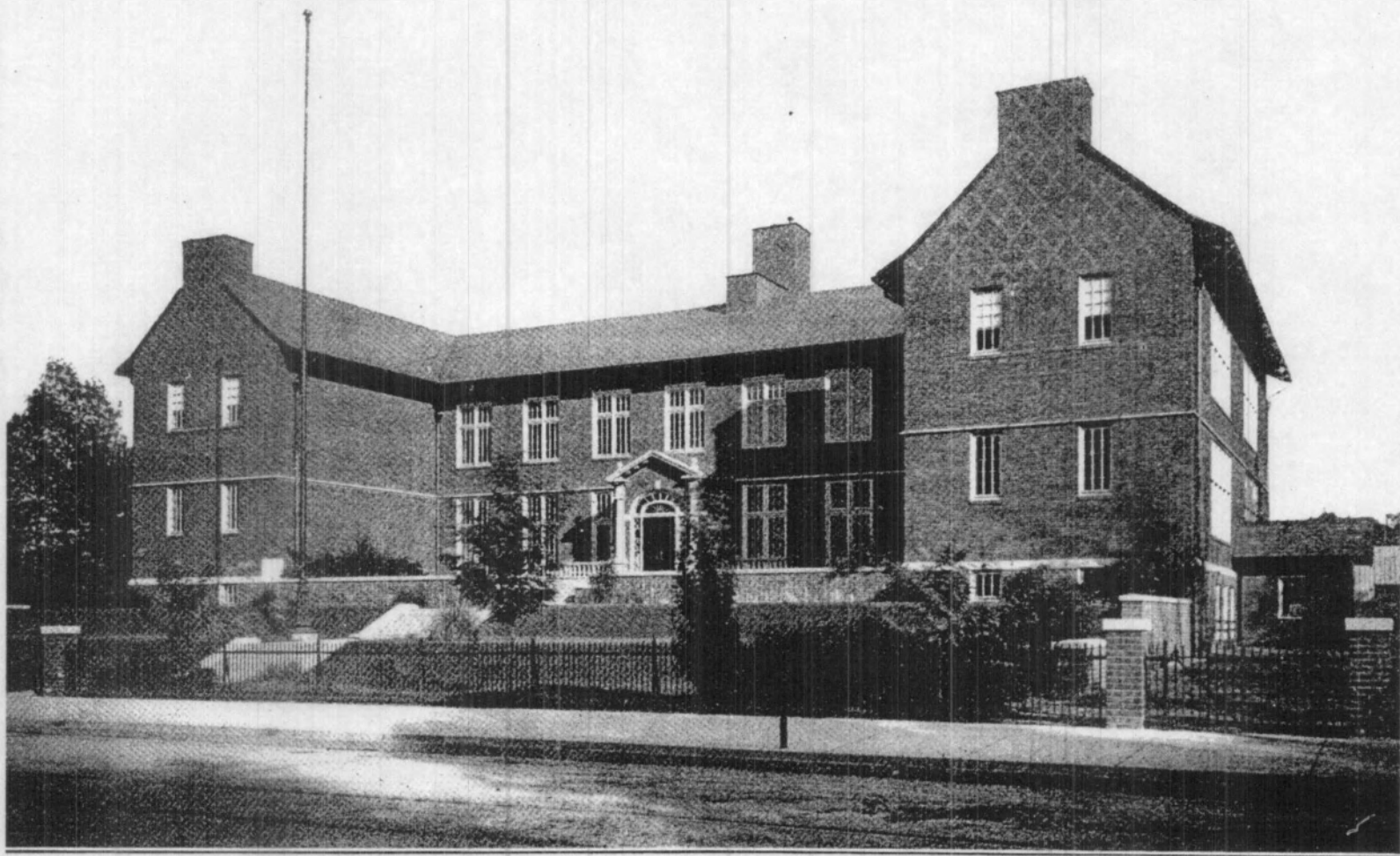
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Delany School  
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Courtesy of the St. Louis Public School Archives

Photograph c. 1912



Delany School. Opened September 3, 1912.

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Delany School  
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Courtesy of the St. Louis Public School Archives

Photograph 1956



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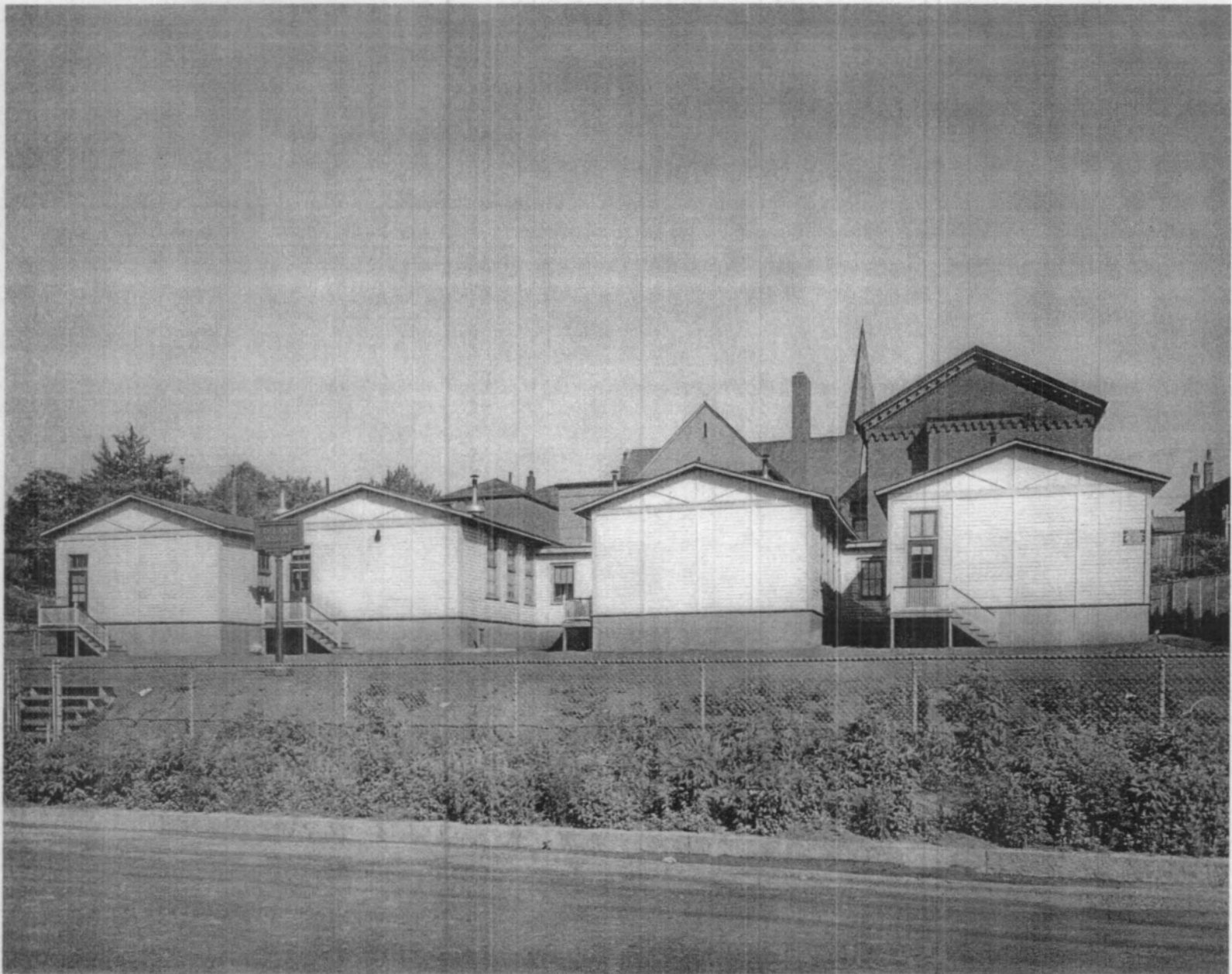
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Delany School  
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Courtesy of the St. Louis Public School Archives

Photograph of new (portable) Delany School, 1936



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Delany School  
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### Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the northeast corner of Virginia Avenue and Bowen Street in the City of St. Louis, Missouri, proceed northeasterly along Virginia Avenue 189 feet 9 and 5/8 inches, thence easterly 187 feet 4 inches to an alley, thence southeasterly 20 feet along the alley, thence easterly 95 feet 1 and 5/8 inches along line of alley, thence southerly along alley 172 feet 5 and 1/2 inches to Bowen Street, thence westerly 237 feet 11 and 3/8 inches to the point of beginning.

### Boundary Justification

These boundaries incorporate all of the property that has been historically associated with this building and the property's legal description.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Additional Page 28

Delany School  
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

## Photo Log

Photographer: Paul Porter

December 2003

Negatives with Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo # 1: West façade looking east

Photo #2: Front door looking east

Photo #3 West façade and south elevation looking northeast

Photo #4: East elevation and south elevation looking northwest

Photo #5: North elevation looking southeast

Photo #6: Entry on north elevation looking southeast

Photo#7: Second floor windows on east elevation looking west

Photo #8: South elevation brick detailing on gable end

Photo #9: Interior, south staircase looking at steps to the east

Photo #10: Interior umbrella stand in first floor, south classroom, west wall

Photo# 11: Interior, Matron's Quarters in basement, north end

Photographer: Todd Owyong

October 2002

Negatives with Karen Bode Baxter, 5811 Delor Street, St. Louis, MO 63109

Photo# 12: Interior, first floor hallway looking south

Photo# 13: Interior, second floor hallway looking south

Photo# 14: Interior second floor classroom looking northwest

Photo# 15: Interior second floor classroom looking southeast

Photo# 16: Interior second floor classroom looking northeast

Photo# 17: Interior second floor north office looking south down hall

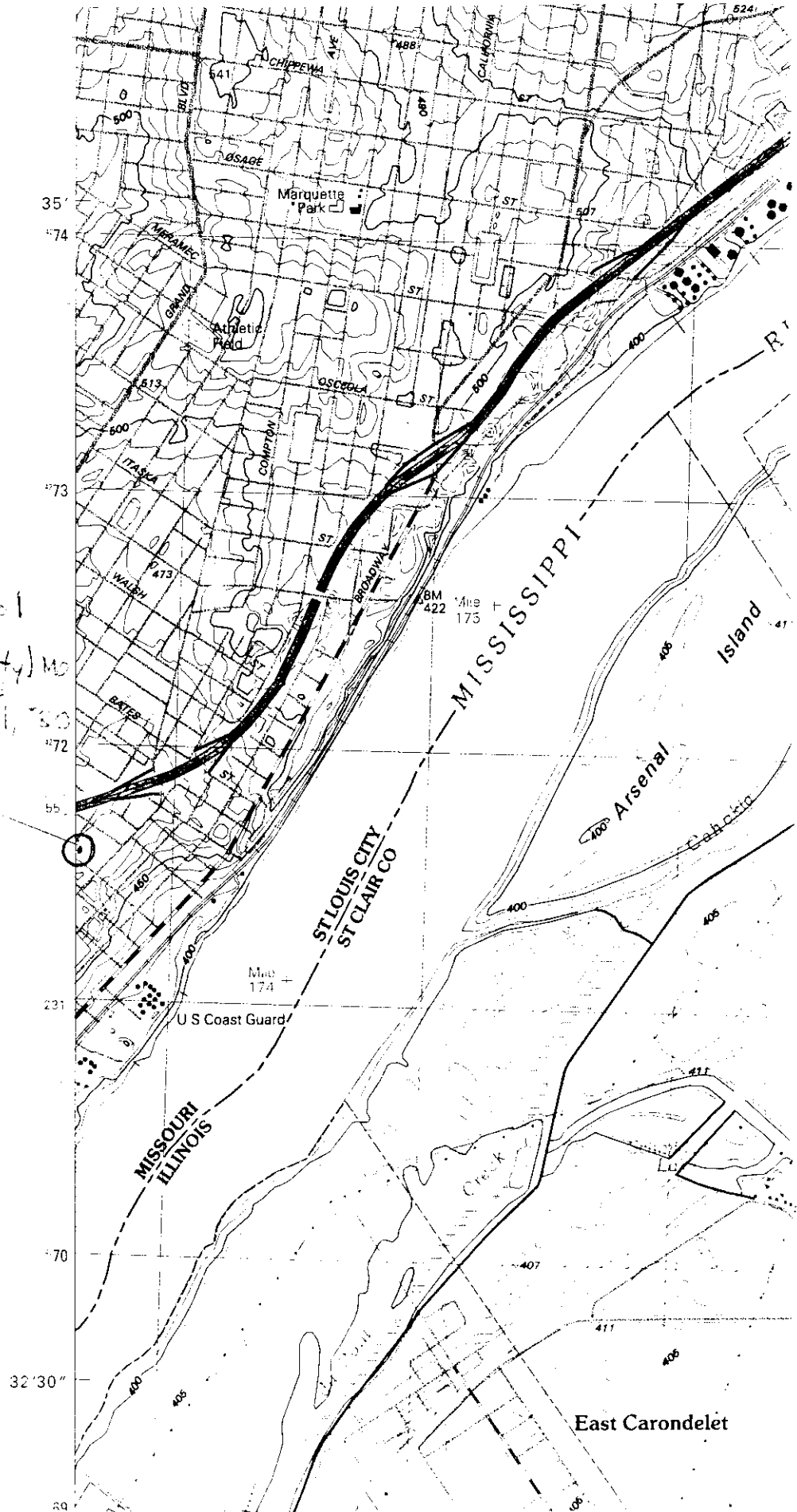
Photo# 18: Interior basement south room (Boys' Shop) looking southwest

Photo# 19: Interior basement south room (Boys' Shop) looking south at exit





Delany School  
St. Louis  
(Ind. Student City) MO  
UTM reference  
5/24620/4231730



East Carondelet







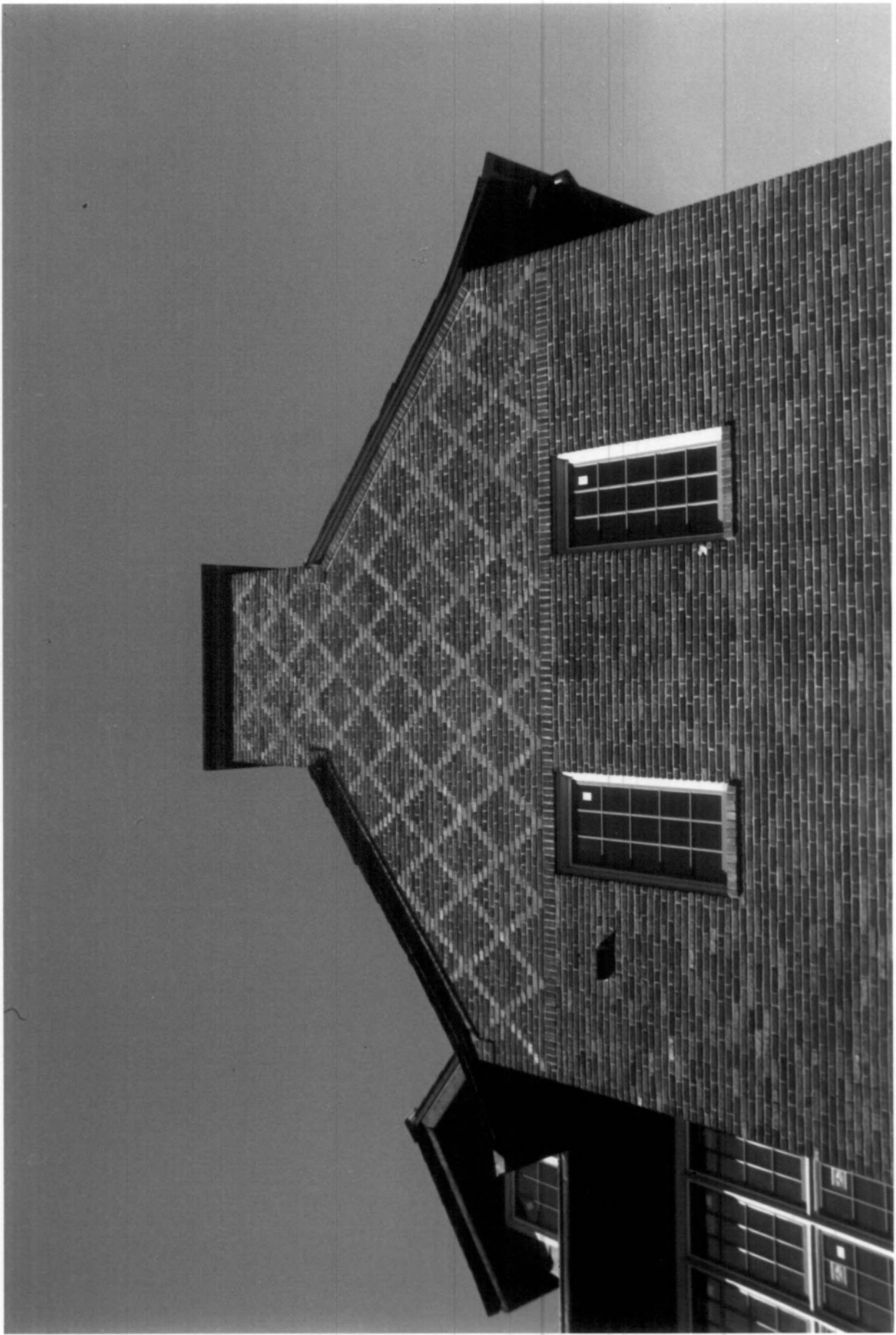


















*MATRON*

