

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Wilkinson School

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 7212 Arsenal Street

N/A	not for publication
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City or town Saint Louis

N/A	vicinity
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State Missouri Code MO County Saint Louis [Independent City] Code 510 Zip code 63143

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B X C D


Signature of certifying official/Title

9/20/18
Date 09/17/18

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

Wilkinson School
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

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

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
1	0	objects
4	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/school

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Jacobethan
Revival

foundation: Limestone
walls: Brick
Concrete
roof: Slate
other: Cast iron

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Wilkinson School
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
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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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: Saint Louis Public Schools

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Areas of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1926-28

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Milligan, Rockwell (Architect)

Wilkinson School
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 1.6 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.609345 -90.312990 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ 4 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1 _____ 3 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ 4 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Andrew B. Weil

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date 4/23/2018

street & number 911 Washington Avenue, Suite 170 telephone 314-421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

e-mail aweil@landmarks-stl.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Wilkinson School
Name of Property

St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri
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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Wilkinson School
City or Vicinity: St. Louis [Independent City]
County: St. Louis [Independent City] State: Missouri
Photographer: Andrew Weil & Katie Graebe
Date Photographed: August 2-4, 2017

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo Log

All photos taken by Andrew Weil or Katie Graebe August, 2017.

Photo 1 of 39: Facing SW. Adjacent property to the west of the school.

Photo 2 of 39. Facing SE. Adjacent property to the east of the school.

Photo 3 of 39. Facing W. Brick bond detail of east wall.

Photo 4 of 39. Facing W. Attic level gable end detail of east wall. Photographed from schoolyard.

Photo 5 of 39. Facing SE. Primary Elevation.

Photo 6 of 39. Facing SE. Primary Elevation, emphasis on east end.

Photo 7 of 39. Facing S. Primary Elevation, gable ends and entry detail.

Photo 8 of 39. Facing NW. SE corner of building.

Photo 9 of 39. Facing NW. Wider angle of SE corner where 1990 addition connects to original building from school yard.

Photo 10 of 39. Facing N/NW. 1990 addition centered on rear wall of original building from school yard.

Photo 11 of 39. Facing NE. 1990 addition and south elevation of original building from school yard.

Photo 12 of 39. Facing NW. South elevation attic level and chimney above flat roof of 1990 addition.

Photo 13 of 39. Facing NE. West elevation.

Photo 14 of 39. Facing W. Second floor corridor.

Photo 15 of 39. Facing N. Ground floor entry hall taken from first floor.

Photo 16 of 39. Facing SE. Ground floor entry hall marble, plaque, and balustrade detail.

Photo 17 of 39. Facing SE. Ground floor entry hall newel post, balustrade, marble detail.

Photo 18 of 39. Facing E. First floor stair way.

Photo 19 of 39. Facing SE. Ground floor classroom.

Photo 20 of 39. Facing E. Ground floor classroom, glazed and enameled brick wainscoting detail.

Photo 21 of 39. Facing S. Second floor east restroom featuring marble, enameled brick, quarter-sawn oak.

Photo 22 of 39. Facing N. Second floor west restroom featuring marble, enameled brick, quarter-sawn oak.

Photo 23 of 39. Facing N. Second floor east restroom featuring marble, enameled brick, quarter-sawn oak.

Photo 24 of 39. Facing S. First floor west restroom featuring marble, enameled brick, quarter-sawn oak.

Photo 25 of 39. Facing E. First floor built in cabinet detail.

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Photo 26 of 39. Facing N. First floor landing door surround detail.

Photo 27 of 39. Facing W. First floor. Original door example.

Photo 28 of 39. Facing SE. Second floor classroom example featuring built in cabinetry.

Photo 29 of 39. Facing E. Second floor classroom example featuring built in cabinetry.

Photo 30 of 39. Facing S. First floor original storage closet.

Photo 31 of 39. Facing W. First floor original entry to kindergarten featuring red oak and leaded glass.

Photo 32 of 39. Facing S. First floor kindergarten art glass detail.

Photo 33 of 39. Facing SW. Ground floor classroom with glazed brick wainscoting.

Photo 34 of 39. Facing E. First floor hallway.

Photo 35 of 39. Facing NE. Second floor classroom.

Photo 36 of 39. Facing N. First floor office window.

Photo 37 of 39. Facing SE. West room, first floor addition.

Photo 38 of 39. Facing E. Wardrobe, west room, first floor addition.

Photo 39 of 39. Facing West. Wilkinson School Sign.

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1: Boundary Map

Figure 2: Setting

Figure 3: Gratiot School (1882)

Figure 4: Arlington School (1898)

Figure 5: Rock Spring School (1898)

Figure 6: Carr School (1908)

Figure 7: Hempstead School (1906)

Figure 8: Woodward School (1921)

Figure 9: Dewey School (1917)

Figure 10: Shenandoah School (1925)

Figure 11: Vashon High School (1931)

Figure 12: Stix School (1920)

Figure 13: Garfield School (1936)

Figure 14: Wilkinson School (1926)

Figure 15: Scullin School (1927)

Figure 16: Lindenwood School (1928)

Figure 17: Exterior site plan and photo map

Figure 18: Basement level plan and photo map

Figure 19: First floor plan and photo map

Figure 20: Second floor plan and photo map

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Wilkinson School
Name of Property
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary

Wilkinson School was designed by architect Rockwell Milligan and constructed between 1926 and 1928. The masonry and reinforced concrete school is an example of Jacobethan revival design featuring half timbering, bracketed eaves, garden wall bond masonry with fire-flashed headers, Bedford Limestone trim and ornament, and a roof of variegated Vermont slate. Interiors feature Tennessee marble, stained and leaded glass, a variety of glazed and enameled brick wainscoting as well as quarter sawn red oak trim, doors, and built in cabinetry. While the school's high quality and remarkable integrity are noteworthy, three aspects of Wilkinson's design, namely its asymmetric façade with offset entry and stair tower, long central balcony, and clustering of school support functions in centralized rooms off the transverse hall, are found only in Wilkinson and two other slightly later schools. Because these design features differentiate these schools from all other St. Louis schools of the period and do not correspond to any existing recognized typology for the city's schools, they are considered to a new "type" known as "Asymmetric Gable and Balcony" or AGB. The school is in outstanding condition both inside and out and possesses the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register.

Setting

Wilkinson School is a dominant presence in the Ellendale neighborhood of west St. Louis City (figures 1-2). The neighborhood is primarily composed of one- and two-family homes of both brick and frame construction built between the 1890s and 1920s (photos 1-2). As such, the school is surrounded by the homes from which it drew its student body for nearly eighty years.

The land surrounding the school rises to the west from the valley of the River des Peres affording significant views across the valley floor to the bluffs on the eastern bank. The school itself is situated on land that slopes downward into the valley providing dramatic views from first and second floor classrooms southward across the now channelized river and adjacent railroad tracks. The setting of the school has changed very little since it was constructed.

The school sits on its original lot (considered a contributing site) with a shallow front yard that rises above the grade of the street and sidewalk along Arsenal Street to the front door. Much of the school yard is surrounded by an original wrought iron fence with cast iron vertical supports and concrete parged brick piers flanking gateways to the school property on both the north and south sides (a section of fence is visible in photo 6). The fence is considered a contributing structure and its associated cast iron sign identifying Wilkinson School by name is considered a contributing object. The school yard itself (contributing site) has been paved with asphalt and two small rubberized play areas installed adjacent to the southeast and southwest corners of the building. While the asphalt and rubberized portions are not historic, the open nature of the school yard reflects the appearance of the compacted earth and gravel specified in the original plans.

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Wilkinson School
Name of Property
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Form and Materials

The form of Wilkinson School has similarities to both “H Plan” and “E-Plan” buildings as defined by the “St. Louis Public Schools of William B. Ittner” MPDF.¹ However, the building does not fit easily into either category. Unlike either recognized school type, Wilkinson has an asymmetrical façade, and an extended second floor balcony along its central axis, beneath which specialized support rooms (reception, nurse’s office, faculty room, mechanical and systems rooms etc.) are clustered. With the exception of two schools that followed Wilkinson (Lindenwood and Scullin), these features are not found in any other St. Louis City public schools. This unique group of characteristics has led to the assignment of a new typology termed Asymmetric Gable and Balcony (AGB) to describe Wilkinson and its two slightly later counterparts.

The school has two front gable wings (one of which is a pair of unique gables) situated at either end of a central, side gable section. The exterior is clad with red brick laid in “Garden Wall Bond” featuring vitrified or “fire flashed” header bricks (photo 3). The vitreous ends of the headers are darker than the stretcher bricks; combined with a light colored mortar, the bond itself is very noticeable and represents an important component of the building’s character. The only portions of the building that are not brick are the third story gable ends of the central section which are clad with plaster and faux half-timbering (photo 4).

The roof is of original green and purple slate with contrasting red terra cotta coping tiles at the ridgelines. Original copper gutters, flashing, and downspouts are largely intact although lower portions of some downspouts have been replaced with aluminum to deter thieves. Machine dressed limestone is used throughout to add visual and textural contrast to the building in the form of window and door surrounds, belt courses, dip molds, coping, exterior balustrades, and as cladding material for the ornate oriel window above the primary entrance. While most bays have flat steel lintels, the prominent windows of the primary elevation’s central block and entrance employ limestone in their pronounced, recessed Gothic basket handle arch surrounds. Throughout, wood window sash (a mix of historic and replacements fabricated by St. Louis Public School (SLPS) craftsmen) are complex with multi-light sash separated by heavy wooden mullions. Leaded glass with diamond shaped lights is employed in the high transom over the primary entrance and the transoms of the stone faced oriel window above it.

Primary Elevation (North Elevation), Figure 17

The primary elevation of Wilkinson School has three unique forward (north) facing gables (photo 5). The westernmost gable (on the right when facing the school) has slightly overhanging eaves and contains a band of five, 6/9 light double hung sash windows on the first, second and third floors. Each band of windows is situated in a single rectangular bay with a flat arch and projecting limestone lug sill. At the attic level centered in the gable end is an eight light casement window in a rectangular opening with a limestone lug sill and limestone drip mold.

¹ Cynthia H. Longwisch, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Document: The St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner. Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1992.p. 5.

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Wilkinson School
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The center balcony section of the building is recessed from the projecting gable ends. This balcony section is unique to the Asymmetric Gable and Balcony school type. The elevation of the central section rises through the raised basement and first floor levels to a parapet wall and then steps back across a balcony to the second floor of the central section of the school's main body. The parapet wall bears an inset limestone panel inscribed with the name "Melvin L. Wilkinson School" in V-Cut Lettering as specified by the architect.

The raised basement level of the central section contains four rectangular window bays each containing a pair of 3/6 light casement windows (photo 6). These sash are somewhat obscured by steel security mesh.

The first floor of the center section has four basket handle arch window bays containing composite arrangements of fixed lights and casement windows. The arches are constructed of limestone, and they project from the plane of the wall to form hood molds (photo 6). While some of the sash have been replaced with window air conditioning units, the original arrangement is essentially intact and is characterized by a row of three rectangular, six-light casement windows beneath a unique, curved arrangement of a central rectangular six light pivot sash flanked by 2/3 light, pivot sash quadrant windows (photo 6). All are separated by heavy wooden mullions.

The second floor of the center section has four flat arched rectangular window bays each containing a 3/6 light casement window looking out onto the second floor balcony (no photo; can't be photographed from public right of way). Space beneath the balcony provided room for school support functions, while the windows above it allowed additional light and air directly into the second floor hallway and classrooms.

Three rectangular engaged pilasters (evoking buttresses) rise to the midway point of the second floor of the center section and separate the four window bays. The pilasters are constructed of brick and have sloped limestone caps. A limestone belt course spans the elevation between the raised basement and first floors. This belt course surrounds the entire building.

The eastern end of the primary elevation is composed of two unique gables (photo 7) that together form the front gabled wing section. This pair of gables is countered by a single, smaller gable on the opposite end of the building creating the asymmetry that is characteristic of, and unique to the AGB Type schools.

The entrance and stair tower are offset left in a section of the wing that is capped with a curvilinear Flemish Gable with carved limestone coping. The plane of the Flemish Gable section projects beyond the plane of the central balcony section, but does not project as far as the adjacent front gable on the east end of the elevation. The entry bay spans both the raised basement and first floor level.

The entry is situated in a Gothic basket handle arch bay (photo 7). The surround and arch of the entry are constructed of machine dressed limestone within which is the doorway and a four panel leaded glass transom with diamond shaped lights in a fixed sash separated by heavy vertical wooden mullions.

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A triangular wooden pediment caps the doorway within the larger arch. The double doors each contain fifteen lights and are not historic. They are flanked by fixed, leaded glass side lights. The entry is approached by original "North River Bluestone" stairs with a machine carved limestone balustrade.

Above the entry on the second floor there is an ornate oriel window faced with machine tooled limestone and ornamented with a projecting drip cornice and relief carved stone panels above and below four window bays. Each window bay contains a fixed, diamond patterned leaded-glass transom above a 3/3 light casement window.

There is a rectangular window bay at the third floor centered in the Flemish Gable end. This bay contains a six light casement window with a limestone lug sill and a limestone drip mold.

Adjacent to the Flemish Gable entry and stair hall section is another projecting wing with a front gable end that terminates in a triangular parapet with limestone coping (photo 7). The raised basement, first and second floors of this gable end each contain a single rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. Each window bay contains a ribbon of five, 6/9 light double-hung wooden sash windows. At the attic level in the gable end is a single, 3x3 light rectangular casement window in a bay with a flat arch, limestone lug sill and a flat drip cornice.

Eastern Elevation, Figure 17

The eastern elevation has a smooth faced limestone water table at its base. It is divided into two bays (photo 8). The northern bay contains an entry beneath a shed roof supported by massive wooden brackets at the raised basement level. The entry contains a non-original steel security door. Above the entry there is a single horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and angled limestone lug sill formed by the belt course that encircles the entire building at this level. The window bay contains a ribbon of three, 6/6, double-hung wooden sash windows. Above this window bay at the level of the second floor there is a vertical rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. This bay contains a ribbon of three, 12/12 light, double-hung sash wooden windows.

The southern bay on the eastern elevation contains a single horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill on the levels of the raised basement, first, and second floor. Each of these bays contains a ribbon of five, 6/9, double-hung sash wooden windows. The roof has overhanging eaves above the second floor level running parallel to the plane of the elevation. Above these eaves is the gable end of the attic level of the central hall of the building. The gable end is covered with stucco and false half-timbering. Centered on the attic level gable end is a pair of vertical rectangular 12-light casement windows.

Southern Elevation, Figure 17

The southern elevation of the building faces the schoolyard and is comprised of two, two-story, front gable wings with cat slide roofs that project southward at the east and west ends (respectively) of the two story central block. The central section is obscured at the level of the raised basement and first floor by a brick veneer, masonry addition constructed between 1990 and 1991 (photos 9-11). This addition houses a multi-purpose room, kitchen, and storage areas. In an effort to integrate the addition

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with the original school, it continues the limestone belt course that surrounds the primary building, it is faced with variegated brick laid in garden wall bond, and its limited fenestration matches the historic rectangular bays and multi-light windows (photos 9-11).

1990 addition, Figure 17

The east wall of the southern addition (photo 9) contains a long, horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill at the raised basement level containing a ribbon of six, 3/3 single sash windows that may or may not be operational. At the first floor level there is a single, horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill containing a ribbon of six, 6/12 double hung wooden sash windows. A short section of the addition faces south at the point where it connects to the main body of the school. This section contains an entry beneath a flat, rowlock arch on the raised basement level and a single, vertical rectangular window bay on the first floor with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. This bay contains a 6/12 light, double-hung wooden sash window.

The southern elevation of the 1990 addition (photo 10) is a blank brick veneer wall with an angled limestone belt course at the level between the raised basement and the first floor.

The western elevation of the 1990 addition (photo 11) contains a long, horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill at the raised basement level containing a ribbon of six, six light single sash windows that may or may not be operational. At the first floor level there is a single, horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill containing a ribbon of six, 6/12, double hung wooden sash windows. A short section of the addition faces south at the point where it connects to the main body of the school. This section contains an entry beneath a flat, rowlock arch on the raised basement level and a single, vertical rectangular window bay on the first floor with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. This bay contains a 6/12 light, double-hung wooden sash window.

Eastern Wing and Western Wings, Southern Elevation, Figure 17

(photos 9-11) Both the eastern and western wings of the south elevation have front gable, cat slide roofs with a simple rectangular shaped parapet, machine tooled limestone coping. There are no windows on the first or second floors and a single, eight light casement window in a rectangular bay with a limestone lug sill and hood mold centered on the gable end of the attic level. The lack of fenestration on these elevations is presumably a defense against excessive solar heating from the south facing exposure.

Central Block, Southern Elevation, Figure 17

Above the 1990 addition, the second floor of the original central section of the south elevation has four window bays (photo 12). On either end of the section is a six light casement window with a three light transom in a vertical rectangular bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. Centered on the second floor on either side of a large brick ventilation chimney is a horizontal rectangular bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill containing a ribbon of five, 6/9, double-hung sash windows

A massive square brick chimney is centered on the elevation and rises from the former boiler in a space that is situated between the plane of the original south wall and the new addition. It is constructed of

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the same garden wall bond brick as the rest of the school. At the level of the attic it abruptly narrows at its corners and limestone coping blocks mark the transition. There is simple brick corbelling near its apex,

At the attic level on either side of this chimney, the roof has triangular dormers containing louvered vents. The dormers have slate roofs with terra cotta coping (photo 12).

Western Elevation, Figure 17

The western elevation (photo 13) is divided into two bays. The northern bay contains an entry beneath a shed roof supported by massive wooden brackets at the raised basement level. The entry contains a non-original steel security door. Above the entry there is a single horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and angled limestone lug sill formed by the belt course that encircles the entire building at this level. The window bay contains a ribbon of 6/6, double-hung wooden sash windows. Above this window bay at the level of the second floor there is a vertical rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill. This bay contains a ribbon of three, 12/12 light double-hung sash wooden windows.

The southern bay on the western elevation (photo 13) contains a single horizontal rectangular window bay with a flat arch and limestone lug sill on the levels of the raised basement, first, and second floor. Each of these bays contains a ribbon of five, 6/9, double-hung sash wooden windows. The roof has overhanging eaves above the second floor level running parallel to the plane of the elevation. Above these eaves is the gable end of the attic level of the central hall of the building. The gable end is covered with stucco and false half-timbering. Centered on the attic level gable end is a pair of vertical rectangular 12-light casement windows.

Interior, Figures 18-20 (photos 14-38)

Comparison of existing conditions with Milligan's book of specifications confirms that the interior of Wilkinson School is remarkably intact. The abundance of costly finishes such as marble wall treatments, quarter sawn oak doors, stained and leaded glass windows, glazed and enameled brick, terrazzo, and built-in cabinetry testify to the investment the SLPS was willing to put into its school buildings on the eve of the Great Depression.

The original layout of classrooms, offices, and special use areas has not been altered. Classrooms are arranged on the south, east, and west sides of a single central hallway which runs the length of the school on an east-west axis (photo 14). Unlike H-Plan school types, the hallway is not double loaded with classrooms on each floor. Instead, the rooms on the north side of Wilkinson's central hall only exist on the raised basement and first floor level. In addition, these rooms were not constructed as classrooms, but rather as space for mechanical, storage, and meeting functions on the basement level and as a reception room, principal's office, nurse's room, and faculty room on the first floor (figures 18-19, photo 36). This spatial arrangement also differs from E-Plan school types, which had single loaded hallways.

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Above the support rooms on the second floor is a balcony, overlooked by hallway windows that provide natural light and cross ventilation for classrooms on the north side of the building (photo 14, figure 20).

The primary entrance is offset on the east end of the north elevation (figures 18-19). The grand entry/stair hall makes extensive use of polished "Napoleon Gray" Tennessee marble for flooring and wall treatments (photos 15-16). The original ornamental wrought iron balustrade with marble and brass newel posts are intact along with a bronze plaque dated 1926 listing the names of the Board of Education and architect Milligan (photos 16-17).

Additional entrances and stairways are situated at either end of the central hallway (figures 18-20). These stairways also have original ornamental wrought iron balustrades and terrazzo flooring (photo 18). Classrooms are located on the south side of the central hallway as well as in the terminal wings on the first and second floors (figures 19-20). There are also classrooms and flexible space in the terminal wings at the raised basement level (figure 18, photos 19, 20, 33). Classrooms and hallways make extensive use of glazed amber brick wainscoting capped by a stringcourse of green glazed brick (photos 19-20). Restrooms have original white porcelain enameled "sanitary" brick wall treatments and polished gray marble flooring and stall partitions/doors of both marble and quarter-sawn oak (photos 21-24). Original quarter-sawn red oak doors, trim, cabinetry, mullions, wardrobes, and chalkboard surrounds are abundant (photos 25-30). Original leaded and stained glass windows are also intact, including the elaborate glazed entry to the kindergarten (photo 31-32).

Alterations (photos 33- 36) essentially consist of acoustic drop ceilings in some, but not all classrooms, some replacement of original quarter sawn oak doors with a mixture of steel security/fire doors and other kinds of wooden doors, replacement of some windows with wooden replica sash, covering of some windows with steel security mesh on the exterior, and covering of some floor treatments with newer tile products. A one story concrete block addition (faced with brick) was added to the center of the rear (south) elevation in 1990.

The 1990 Addition Interior, Figure 19

The addition is constructed of CMU (photos 37-38). Its construction added storage space, a kitchen, and multi-purpose room to the central section of the south side of the ground floor. It also added two offices and two classrooms to the same portion of the first floor.

Integrity

Alterations to the interior of Wilkinson School are minor. The original organization of space, most original details and finishes are intact. Windows are a mix of original wooden sash and replica multi-light wooden sash fabricated by SLPS staff craftsmen prior to the closure of the System's carpentry shop in the late 20th century. Windows seem to have been replaced on an "as needed" basis with wooden sash that copied the originals. Differentiation of historic and replacement sash is difficult in many cases as materials remain consistent and hardware was sometimes reused, but levels of "wear and tear" vary from sash to sash, which is interpreted as being indicative of variable dates of installation.

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While no historical photos of the building were located, there is no visible evidence to suggest that exterior of the school has been altered in any way with the exception of the addition to the rear (south) wall. The addition obscures an area where, historically, there would have been fenestration on the raised basement and central sections of the first floor. It should be noted that this fenestration may have been limited to begin with. The gable ends of the south facing wings, which are situated on either side of the later addition, each have only a single small casement window on the second floor level. The rest of the elevation is devoid of fenestration, presumably to limit the effect of solar heating. The school is in its original location surrounded by the historic homes of its former students. It is situated in the midst of its original schoolyard (a contributing site), which is surrounded by its original wrought iron fence (a contributing structure) and identified by its original cast iron sign (a contributing object). The school possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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Statement of Significance

Wilkinson School (7212 Arsenal Street, St. Louis [Independent City] Missouri, 63143) is eligible for listing in the National Register under **Criterion C** for **ARCHITECTURE** at the local level of significance. The school is the prototype of the "Asymmetrical Gable and Balcony" (AGB) type. Hallmarks of this unusual type include an asymmetrical primary elevation with offset entry and stair tower, a balcony running the length of the central block above the first floor, and the organization of space beneath this balcony for school support functions. These features are unique to AGB schools and do not correspond with any of the property type classifications that have thus far been used to categorize SLPS school types. The period of significance (1926-28) begins with the year in which construction began 1926 and ends with the opening of the school in 1928. This interval was situated at the end of architect Rockwell Milligan's career as Superintendent of School Buildings which lasted from 1914 until his death in 1929. For decades, ongoing research has been identifying and recognizing examples of St. Louis public school (SLPS) building types in order to create a record of the diversity of historical educational architecture in the city. The identification and documentation of the diverse school types in St. Louis moves us closer to a comprehensive understanding of the city's rich architectural legacy. While Wilkinson's high quality and remarkable integrity are noteworthy, the fact that it is the first and defining example of the AGB type is considered significant. After Wilkinson was constructed, two other schools were built that adhere to the same design: Scullin and Lindenwood. Lindenwood was listed in the National Register in 2005 as the work of a master architect for its exceptional Jacobethan design, but the nomination did not attach significance to the property as being an example of a unique and rare type. All three AGB schools were built between 1926 and 1929. It is tempting to speculate about how widespread the type may have become if architect Milligan hadn't died suddenly in 1929 and the Great Depression not put an end to the belle epoch of St. Louis' revival style school design. Still, despite the small sample size of AGB schools, they are consistent in their composition and stand up to scrutiny as a distinct type in comparison with the rest of the city's public school architecture. To paraphrase Ian Fleming, one such school is happenstance, two schools, coincidence, and three schools a pattern. Indeed, the rarity of the type is an argument in favor of recognition and preservation. Fortunately, Wilkinson School is in outstanding condition both inside and out and possesses the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register.

St. Louis Public School Building Types

Between 1987 and 1988, the Landmarks Association of St. Louis conducted a comprehensive architectural survey of all the city's extant public school buildings constructed prior to World War II.² This survey identified some defining characteristics, typologies, and periods that help to organize St. Louis' school architecture. The intent of the survey was to provide baseline data that future scholars could continue to use in their studies of St. Louis' school buildings. The following is a short overview of the manner in which the survey, the subsequent MPDF (narrowly confined to the work of William Ittner, but anticipating an examination of Milligan) and some national register nominations have classified the architecture of St. Louis' schools prior to World War II. Because architect William Ittner designed the largest group of extant school buildings (49), the survey was divided into three sections:

² Landmarks Association of St. Louis. St. Louis Public Schools Architectural Survey, 1987-1988. On file, Landmarks Association, 911 Washington Avenue, Suite 170, St. Louis, MO 63101.

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“Pre-Ittner designs,” “Ittner designs,” and Post-Ittner designs.”³ This overview relies upon those broad temporal categories.

Pre-Ittner Schools

The survey identified twenty six schools constructed prior to the beginning of Ittner’s career with the SLPS, which began in 1897. Prior to Ittner’s arrival, most of the city’s schools had been designed on a building by building basis (with instruction from the Board of Education) by a variety of different architects.⁴ Buildings dating to this period have frequently been listed based on a temporal typological classification as “Early St. Louis School Buildings.”

The surviving early school houses in St. Louis are two or three stories in height. They are universally constructed of local red brick and generally had four rooms per floor connected by a central hall.⁵ While the buildings are essentially rectangular in plan, their primary façades frequently have a projecting central section that either contains a door or is flanked by doors.⁶ The central section usually has a pediment and dentil cornice.⁷ As historian Ni Ni Harris notes, the early schools, or “school houses” as they were known were utilitarian, but they were also dignified and intended to be monuments to learning.⁸ Most of these schools survive in altered states because they were expanded by later architects as student populations grew, but have still been recognized as eligible for listing in the National Register as examples of early St. Louis school types.

Examples from this period include the original Lyon School, which dates to 1868 and is a contributing component of the National Historic Landmark campus of the Anheuser-Busch Brewery (NR and NHL 11/13/66). Des Peres School (NR 9/2/82, c.1873), Carondelet School (NR 3/21/07, c.1871), Irving School (a contributing resource in the Hyde Park Certified Local Historic District, c.1871) and the Adams School (c. 1878).⁹ Examples from the 1880s include two buildings that H.W. Kirchner designed in 1882: Blair (NR 2/10/83) and Gratiot (NR 4/19/16) (figure 3).¹⁰

Ittner Buildings

William B. Ittner is regarded as a highly influential architect of American educational buildings.¹¹ A native of St. Louis, he made significant strides in the evolution of school design while serving as Commissioner of School Buildings for the SLPS from 1897-1914. In all, he designed approximately forty

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cynthia H. Longwisch, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Document: The St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner. Washington, D.C.: US Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1992.p. f 2

⁵ Ni Ni Harris, “Rare School Houses.” Carondelet Historical Society Newsletter, Summer, 2014, p.1.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Andrew Weil. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Gratiot School. Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2016 p.9

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Longwisch, 1992 p. E 5-6

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nine schools in St. Louis as well as an estimated 500 other institutions nationwide.¹² Landmarks' School Survey led to the creation of a Multiple Property Registration Document in 1992 entitled "The St. Louis Public Schools of William B. Ittner" which identified a number of types and significant characteristics of Ittner's schools. According to the document:

William Ittner's St. Louis schools were designed in several categories or subtypes, beginning with the H-plan elementary schools and continuing with the cruciform, U-plan and finally the E-plan elementary schools. These were followed by high schools and colleges, in which he continued his basic tenets of design while significantly expanding the scale. While the first two plans were early concepts for Ittner and little used afterward, the U- and E-plans were employed extensively throughout the rest of his career. These subtypes were modified as Ittner refined his concepts according to need, becoming more sophisticated in conception as he evolved as a designer.¹³

The MPDF defines the following subtypes of Ittner Schools:

H Plan: Figure 4 "A three story block paralleling the front of the property. On either side, perpendicular wings provide the 'legs' of an H shape. Two smaller stairwells terminate the corridor replacing the single large center stairway...On each floor, two classrooms in the center block face the front of the building; on the opposite side of the corridor, the kindergarten room is centered on the first floor...Each wing is divided in two by stairwells with one classroom on either side (front and rear elevations)...The Primary Entrance is Centered on the front elevation with secondary entrances located in the centers of the side elevations..."¹⁴

Cruciform Plan: Figure 5 "[The three story cruciform plan]...was essentially a long center block paralleling the front of the property with a short center wing and a longer rear wing, also centered. Rooms have windows on three sides. They are 'stacked' one on top of the other in each of the four arms of the school. A center corridor receives natural light only through rooms and via north-facing windows in the two stairwells...the plan could potentially house twelve classrooms; on the first floor the east wing is divided into administrative offices...two entrances flank the front wing..."¹⁵

U Plan: Figure 6 "U-Shaped, the school has a one-story kindergarten attached to the rear elevation. A center block parallels the front of the property...the flanking wings are pulled forward to form a squared U shape...The three story school has two classrooms per floor per wing separated by a stairway...across the front of the center block [is] a corridor with exterior windows. On the other side of the corridor across the rear elevation are two classrooms and a kindergarten on the first floor; three classrooms cross the rear side on the second and third floors. The two stairways are located in the inside front corners formed by the U Shape..."¹⁶

¹² Longwisch, 1992 p. F 1

¹³ Longwisch, 1992, p. F. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2

¹⁵ Ibid., 2

¹⁶ Ibid., 4-5

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E Plan: Figure 7 “The basic idea [of the E Plan] is a long center block paralleling the street; three wings project from the body of the school. These are typically located one at either end and one in the middle...Two or three classrooms are typically located in each wing per floor; the center wing is often reduced in size and accommodates a kindergarten or entrance stairway. A one-sided corridor runs the length of the center block usually having stairwells at either end in the corners formed by the wings. Classrooms are located across the opposite side, also running the length of the block, usually four in number. The E Plan schools are usually two stories high...with raised basement. Entrances vary, the front elevation usually having either one...monumental entrance in the center, or two smaller entrances flanking the central wing.¹⁷

While Ittner preferred Jacobethan motifs for school exteriors, his schools employ a wide range of styles including Classical, Renaissance Revival, Craftman, Gothic, as well as eclectic mixtures of multiple idioms.¹⁸ Themes that run throughout Ittner’s work include the use of one of the aforementioned building forms, brick for exterior wall material, a mixture of limestone and terra cotta for detail work, and symmetrical arrangements of bays on all elevations.¹⁹

SLPS Schools under Rockwell Milligan

Having served as a draftsman in Ittner’s office at the start of his career as Commissioner of Schools buildings, Rockwell Milligan assumed the position of his mentor in 1914.²⁰ Following in Ittner’s footsteps, Milligan designed the second largest number of surviving school buildings in St. Louis (25).²¹ Like Ittner, he had a preference for stately schools of brick and limestone. He also usually designed buildings using one of Ittner’s earlier plans. He displayed a penchant for Jacobethan design (i.e. Woodward School, 1921 [figure 8], although, as noted by Carolyn Toft and Matt Bivens in their nomination of Lindenwood School:

“[S]everal of his designs combined Jacobethan Revival form with more exotic detailing such as Byzantine (Dewey School, 1917, [figure 9] and Kennard in 1928), Spanish Revival (Shenandoah in 1925, [figure 10]), and incipient Art Deco (Vashon Colored High School in 1925, [figure 11]). Only handful (Stix-1920, [figure 12]: razed, Michael-1924: razed, and Wade- 1929) favored either Classical Revival form or ornament.”²²

Like Ittner, Milligan designed individualized monumental schools that were embedded within the neighborhood contexts of St. Louis. While not a universally applicable rule, his commissions are more

¹⁷ Ibid., p.5-6

¹⁸ Ibid.,p. 11

¹⁹ Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 1987-88

²⁰ ²⁰ Walter B. Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri, The Center State 1821-1921. (St. Louis, S. J. Clarke & Co. 1921) p. 186.

²¹ Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 1987-88

²² Carolyn Hewes Toft and Matthew Bivens. *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Lindenwood School*. Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2005. Section 8. p.11

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often found in the outlying neighborhoods of St. Louis where the new subdivisions of the 1910s and 1920s necessitated the construction of new schools.²³

The legacy of Ittner and Milligan, 1897-1929

Today, the combined Ittner-Milligan legacy constitutes by far the largest number of extant St. Louis Public School buildings and defines the dominant character of the city's school architecture. Regarded as a belle epoch of school design in St. Louis, Ittner and Milligan worked for the City during a period of enormous growth and prosperity during which the design and construction of lavish, revival-style schools enjoyed financial support from the Board of Education. Designed to be landmarks within their neighborhoods, these unique schools are such recognizable features on the urban landscape that even today residents of St. Louis commonly utilize the buildings as navigational reference points and touchstones of neighborhood identity.

As a body of work, the schools of the Ittner-Milligan period share many characteristics such as impressive scale, walls of locally produced brick laid in ornamental bonds, gable roofs of slate or terra cotta tile, elaborate entryways, generous fenestration, and the use of Bedford Limestone for columns, belt-courses, quoins, window surrounds etc.²⁴

Depression Era Schools

Rockwell Milligan died in 1929, the year global investment markets crashed and the United States was plunged into the Great Depression. Like the rest of the country, the economy and thus the tax base of St. Louis suffered enormously during this period. One way the City's government attempted to save money was to reduce the budget of the SLPS by eliminating positions, slashing salaries, and paring back funds for new construction.²⁵ Architects Ernest Friton and George Sanger took over for Milligan during this difficult time and the few schools they were tasked with designing were constrained by financial considerations and by the need to answer to both the SLPS and the Public Works Administration of the Federal Government.²⁶ The buildings that were produced during this period were utilitarian, minimalist, boxy and a far cry from the lavish revival designs of previous years.²⁷ (figure 13)

Historical Context for Wilkinson School

The land where Wilkinson School is situated was originally part of a Spanish land grant awarded to a man named Charles Gratiot in 1785.²⁸ Born in Switzerland to parents of French extraction, Gratiot served in the early years of the American Revolution and came to St. Louis in 1780.²⁹ Through his

²³ Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 1987-88

²⁴ Cynthia H. Longwisch, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: "The St. Louis, Missouri, Public Schools of William B. Ittner."* (Washington, D.C.: US Department of Interior/National Park Service, 1992). Section G. p. 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.12

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*; Landmarks Association, 1987-88.

²⁸ Bob Corbett, *The Gratiot League Square. Dogtown*—(Webster University, n.d. Web. 06 Nov). <http://faculty.webster.edu/corbette/dogtown/history/gratiot.html>

²⁹ McCune Gill, *The St. Louis Story, Library of American Lives.* (St. Louis: Historical Record Publishers, 1952), p.266.

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marriage to Victoria Chouteau, he secured a relationship with St. Louis' founding family which, in turn, provided him with valuable political and economic advantages. With Chouteau support, Gratiot successfully petitioned the Spanish government for a contiguous tract of nine square miles in the rolling countryside to the west of the town. While the grant encompassed a "square league" in contemporary syntax, the property was historically known as the "Gratiot League Square."

Wilkinson School is situated on Arsenal Street just west of present day McCausland Avenue at the western edge of what was once the Gratiot property. A significant amount of the western portion of the old "Square League" was purchased from Gratiot by James Sutton in 1826.³⁰ Sutton was a blacksmith by trade who came to St. Louis from New Jersey around 1819. Within less than a year he had acquired enough wealth to purchase 334 acres of countryside approximately seven miles southwest of the city center. Sutton relocated from St. Louis to this property where he and his wife Ann Wells built a cabin and eventually a fine home in what is today the City of Maplewood, Missouri.³¹

In 1853, the Missouri Pacific Railroad was constructed through Sutton's land facilitating the growth of clay and coal mining in the valley of the River des Peres to the south and east of the present site of Wilkinson. The presence of such natural resources and transportation led to the development of heavy industry and by the last decades of the 19th century, thousands of people in the area were employed making brick, terra cotta, tile, brass, and steel.³² The presence of so many jobs in the area led to demand for residential development, which in turn attracted the attention of the St. Louis Public School System.

James Sutton died in 1877 and his land was divided among his heirs. The land where Wilkinson is located today was passed to his daughter Kate and her husband W. Lyman Thomas who later subdivided the "Ellendale" subdivision.³³

Building permits give some insight into the development of the area and in particular the block surrounding where the school stands today. The earliest permit on the school block is for a single family residence in 1889. Three more homes were built in the 1890s followed by 23 homes between 1900 and 1910. A slight lull followed between 1911 and 1921 when only 17 homes were constructed, followed by another 23 permits issued in the following decade.³⁴

While it is unclear when the SLPS purchased the land on which Wilkinson would eventually be built, the district certainly owned the land prior to 1910. In that year, an article appeared in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* describing how several "temporary school buildings" on the future site of Wilkinson had been

³⁰ Early Maplewood History <https://patch.com/missouri/maplewood-brentwood/bp--the-sutton-family-settled-in-maplewood>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Primm, James Neal. *The Lion of the Valley*. (St. Louis, Missouri Historical Society Press. 1998). p. 438.

³³ "Early History of Maplewood Shows Progress from Wooden Nails in House to Busy City, From 1752 to 1953" Unknown newspaper, October 8, 1953. Local history clippings file, Maplewood, MO Public Library.

³⁴ City of St. Louis Building Permit Records. St. Louis: City Hall, Records Retention Division, Office of the Comptroller.

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impacted by a huge explosion caused by the improper storage of dynamite by a contractor working on channeling efforts for the nearby River des Peres.³⁵ At that time the temporary facility was referred to as the “Canterbury School,” a name that referenced Canterbury Avenue which borders the current school yard to the south. This explosion resulted in the condemnation and demolition of multiple homes in the area, which may be why sixteen years later Milligan’s specifications for the preparation of the site for Wilkinson called for the removal of “old foundations.”³⁶ Indeed, the condemnation of buildings resulting from the explosion might have created the opportunity for the SLPS to assemble a contiguous site large enough to accommodate the permanent school. A Sanborn Map published in 1926 shortly before construction of Wilkinson began indicates that the Canterbury School consisted of six “temporary” buildings at the south end of the current school yard.³⁷ These buildings along with at least one home were demolished to accommodate the needs of the new school.³⁸

Rockwell Milligan

Architect Rockwell Menotti Milligan was born January 10, 1868 in Centreville, Ontario Canada.³⁹ He received his higher education at Lewis Academy and Garfield University in Wichita, Kansas which he attended until 1888.⁴⁰ He then moved to Denver, Colorado and worked in the office of an unknown architect before relocating to St. Louis in 1890 where he joined the firm of prominent architect Isaac Taylor.⁴¹

After working under Taylor for three years, Milligan joined the firm of another highly prominent architect named George R. Mann, who at the time was overseeing the construction of St. Louis’ City Hall.⁴²

In 1897, William B. Ittner was hired as Commissioner of the St. Louis Public Schools and Milligan joined his staff as Chief Draftsman.⁴³ He continued in this position under Ittner for approximately two years before striking out on his own with a practice specializing in hospital and institutional design. He worked independently between 1899 and 1905, when he entered a partnership with Charles H. Wray.⁴⁴ Between 1899 and the dissolution of Milligan’s partnership with Ray in 1914, he is credited with having designed between 35 and 40 hospitals nationwide.⁴⁵

³⁵ “300 Houses in County Shaken by Explosion” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 18 November, 1910.

³⁶ Rockwell M. Milligan, Specifications for Melvin L. Wilkinson School, Arsenal Street Between Ellendale and Greenwood Boulevard. (St. Louis, Building Department of the St. Louis Board of Education.1926). p. 22

³⁷ Sanborn Map Company, (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1926, revised through 1964).Volume 15, p. 54.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ M.L. Van Nada (ed.), Book of Missourians. (St. Louis, T. J. Steele & Co., 1906) pp. 240-241.

⁴⁰ Walter B. Stevens, Centennial History of Missouri, The Center State 1821-1921. (St. Louis, S. J. Clarke & Co. 1921) p. 186.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

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Following the departure of William Ittner from the SLPS in 1914, Milligan was elected as his replacement.⁴⁶ In taking over for Ittner, Milligan was charged with continuing a seventeen year tradition of exemplary school design, which had garnered a national reputation for St. Louis' prosperous and growing district. For the next fifteen years with the SLPS, Milligan designed twenty seven public schools, twenty five of which survive.⁴⁷ While Milligan's work in many ways continued in the Ittner tradition, he also continued to refine ideal school design by experimenting with massing, fenestration, the organization of space, and the use of new technologies like telephone systems and ozone air purification.

Milligan died following a "paralytic stroke" on September 30, 1929.⁴⁸

Construction of Wilkinson School

The "Official Proceedings of the Board of Education of St. Louis" indicate that Milligan was authorized to solicit bids for the building, for which he had already prepared plans, in the summer of 1926.⁴⁹ The architect's approach toward bidding school buildings was incredibly thorough, and his preparations for Wilkinson were no exception. In order to solicit proposals for the work, Milligan composed a fully indexed book of specifications for every component of the required work, which provides a rich illustration of his attention to detail.⁵⁰ Indeed the survival of this spec book (not a common occurrence) allows comparison of current conditions to historical instructions and establishes that the school continues to embody the characteristics its designer intended. No such document exists for Milligan's other National Register listed design (Lindenwood School) making Wilkinson a unique (to date) window into the architect's thoughts on everything from aesthetics to materials to techniques to systems.

Over the course of 256 fastidious pages, Milligan outlined the details of how he wanted the school to be built by his contractor.⁵¹ He requested specific species of wood and types of stone, and even the states from which they were to be sourced.⁵² He specified companies and types of brick and terra cotta that had to be used and provided formulas for mortar and concrete mixes. He made allowances for unusual costs including leaded glass and colorful stained glass medallions to enliven the kindergarten, and included progressive technologies like an extensive internal telephone network and even an ozone air purification system.⁵³ The latter may be reflection of Milligan's career designing hospitals prior to joining the SLPS.

Reflecting the costs that school management was willing to incur in the construction of its facilities during the last days of its golden age, polished "Napoleon Grey" Tennessee marble was specified (and is

⁴⁶ "R.M. Milligan, School Board Architect Dies" *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 1 October, 1929.

⁴⁷ Milligan & Wray. Architects Files. On file, Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

⁴⁸ "R.M. Milligan, School Board Architect Dies" *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 1 October, 1929.

⁴⁹ St. Louis Board of Education. Official Proceedings of the St. Louis Board of Education. Vol. 33. (St. Louis, St. Louis Board of Education. 1926). p. 366

⁵⁰ Milligan, 1926.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 210.

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still intact) from the entry hall to the bathroom stall partitions. Throughout the building, the most common wood used for finishes like doors, built-in cabinetry, wardrobes and chalkboard surrounds is quarter-sawn red oak, which Milligan insisted must be “hand smoothed.”⁵⁴ An ornamental wrought iron balustrade was fabricated for the “pupils’ stairways,” Vermont mottled green and purple slate covered the roof, and the building’s cornerstone was hollowed out to receive a “document capsule.”⁵⁵ When completed, Wilkinson was a model of contemporary educational architecture and reflected both the decades that Ittner and Milligan had devoted to perfecting school design as well as the application of the most up to date technological improvements.

The building permit for Wilkinson School was issued on November 5, 1926. At Milligan’s recommendation, the SLPS awarded William McDonald Construction Company the general contracting position, Henry O.M. Doerner the plumbing, H.V. Sodeman heat and power, and electrical work to Gamp Electric Co.⁵⁶ The building was completed in January, 1928 at a cost of \$250,000 and dedicated at a ceremony on the evening of March 9, 1928.⁵⁷

After eighty years of use as an elementary school, Wilkinson closed prior to the 2008 school year.

Criterion C: Wilkinson School and the Asymmetric Gable and Balcony Type

With Wilkinson School, the new AGB type emerged. Certainly the building cannot be understood as one of the “Early” or “Pre-Ittner Public School” schools. It also cannot be classified as an example of a “Cruciform” or “U Plan” type. While it bears some resemblance to both “H Plan” and “E-Plan” types as defined by the Ittner MPDF, the AGB type differs in meaningful ways.

Wilkinson and the other AGB buildings (figures 14-16) are two stories high with a raised basement. The primary facade of the AGB Type is intentionally designed for asymmetry and has two primary defining features: the first is an imbalance created by a pair of differentiated gables (one recessed behind the other and containing the primary entrance and stair tower) forming a wing on one end of the central block, while on the other end of the block, a wing is formed by a single front gable section. While it may seem to be a simple feature, the asymmetry of these designs and the offset location of their primary entrances and stair towers are completely unique among St. Louis City public schools of this, and earlier periods.⁵⁸

The second defining characteristic of the AGB Type is the presence of a second floor balcony running the length of the central school block, a feature that is found in no other St. Louis City public schools of this or earlier periods.⁵⁹ The balcony section serves two purposes. Internally, the area beneath the balcony provides rooms in the raised basement level for mechanical purposes and meeting space, while serving as designated first floor space for support and administrative functions including the principal’s

⁵⁴ Ibid., 88,200.

⁵⁵ Ibid.,35,69,80.

⁵⁶ St. Louis City Building Permit Records.

⁵⁷ “Wilkinson School Dedication” *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 9 March, 1928.

⁵⁸ Landmarks Association, 1987-88.

⁵⁹ Landmarks Association, 1987-88

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office, reception, healthcare, and faculty common area/restrooms (figures 18-19). Where these functions are located in a variety of different areas in other St. Louis school buildings, the AGB type centers them in a predictable and accessible location with doors opening onto the school's main hall and windows overlooking the student's primary approach to the school. On the second floor, windows overlook the balcony, allowing light into the hallway as well as cross ventilation through classrooms on the opposite side of the building.

In contrast, "H Plan" type buildings are three stories high with symmetrical facades and symmetrical end wings. They have a central entry with secondary entrances centered on the side elevations. They also have classrooms along both sides of a double loaded central corridor, and school support functions (offices, healthcare, faculty rooms) are distributed differently in different buildings.⁶⁰

AGB Type buildings contrast with "E Plan" type buildings as well. E Plan schools have a long center block with three projecting wings symmetrically arranged (one on each end, one in the middle). The central wing either accommodates an entrance or a kindergarten. While E Plan schools are two stories with a raised basement, they possess a single loaded corridor on each level in contrast with the AGB balcony component.⁶¹ Again, school support functions (offices, healthcare, faculty rooms) are distributed differently in different buildings.

Wilkinson School is the first example of the Asymmetric Gable and Balcony school type constructed in St. Louis and its characteristics not only embody the type, they define it. The school is also exceptional for the integrity of its exterior appearance and retention of interior finishes. Finishes such as original doors, trim, marble wall treatments, balustrades, and built in cabinetry/woodwork typically degrade with decades of heavy use, but Wilkinson retains much of this original detail and conveys a strong sense of its original appearance.

Conclusion

Wilkinson School (7212 Arsenal Street, St. Louis [Independent City] Missouri, 63143) is eligible for listing in the National Register under **Criterion C** for **ARCHITECTURE** at the local level of significance. The school is the prototype of the "Asymmetrical Gable and Balcony" (AGB) type. Hallmarks of this unusual type include an asymmetrical primary elevation, a balcony running the length of the central block above the first floor, and the reservation of space beneath this balcony for school support functions. These features are unique to AGB schools and do not correspond with any of the property type classifications that have thus far been used to categorize SLPS school types. Construction of the school began in 1926 and was completed in 1928 at the end of architect Rockwell Milligan's career as Superintendent of School Buildings (1914-1929). From 1897 until 1929, Milligan and his predecessor William Ittner created an enduring legacy of educational architecture for St. Louis. During this period, a variety of unique school typologies evolved. For decades, ongoing research has been identifying and recognizing examples of St. Louis public school building types in order to create a record of the diversity of historical educational architecture in the city. While Wilkinson's high quality and remarkable integrity are noteworthy, the fact that it embodies the distinctive and defining characteristics of the AGB type is

⁶⁰ Longwish 1992 F.2.

⁶¹ Ibid., p.5-6

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considered significant. The identification and documentation of the diverse school types moves us closer to a comprehensive understanding of this aspect of St. Louis' architectural history. After Wilkinson was constructed, two other schools were built that adhere to the same design: Scullin and Lindenwood. All three AGB schools were built between 1926 and 1929. It is tempting to speculate about how widespread the type may have become if architect Milligan hadn't died suddenly in 1929 and the Great Depression not put an end to the belle epoch of St. Louis' revival style school design. Still, despite the small sample size of AGB schools, they are consistent in their composition and stand up to scrutiny as a distinct type in comparison with the rest of the city's public school architecture. To paraphrase Ian Fleming, one such school is happenstance, two schools, coincidence, and three schools a pattern. Indeed, the rarity of the type is an argument in favor of recognition and preservation. Fortunately, Wilkinson School is in outstanding condition both inside and out and possesses the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Register.

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Wilkinson School
Name of Property
Saint Louis [Independent City] Missouri
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N/A
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Wilkinson School
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the nominated resource is defined by the City of St. Louis as two parcels. The first parcel containing the school building is described as City Block 4857 Arsenal. "225 Feet x 150 Feet Ellendale Subdivision, lots 48-49-40." This parcel encompasses the addresses 7202-7220 Arsenal Street. The second parcel containing the school yard is described as "240 Feet x 140 Feet Canterbury, Greenwood Addition." This parcel encompasses the addresses 7135-7311 Canterbury Avenue.⁶²

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the nominated resource is the original property line surrounding Wilkinson School and its associated school yard.

⁶² St. Louis City Assessor's Office database. <http://dynamic.stlouis-mo.gov/citydata/newdesign/index.cfm> Viewed 1/18-4/18.

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Figure 1: Wilkinson School (7212 Arsenal) Boundary Map

38.609345 -90.312990

Latitude **Longitude**

Nominated Parcel (and approximate location contributing structure)

Source: St. Louis City Assessor

Contributing Site ☆ Contributing Object △

*Note: building rear wings do not project to the east and west as depicted. These projections as displayed account for non-historic padded play areas of the school yard.



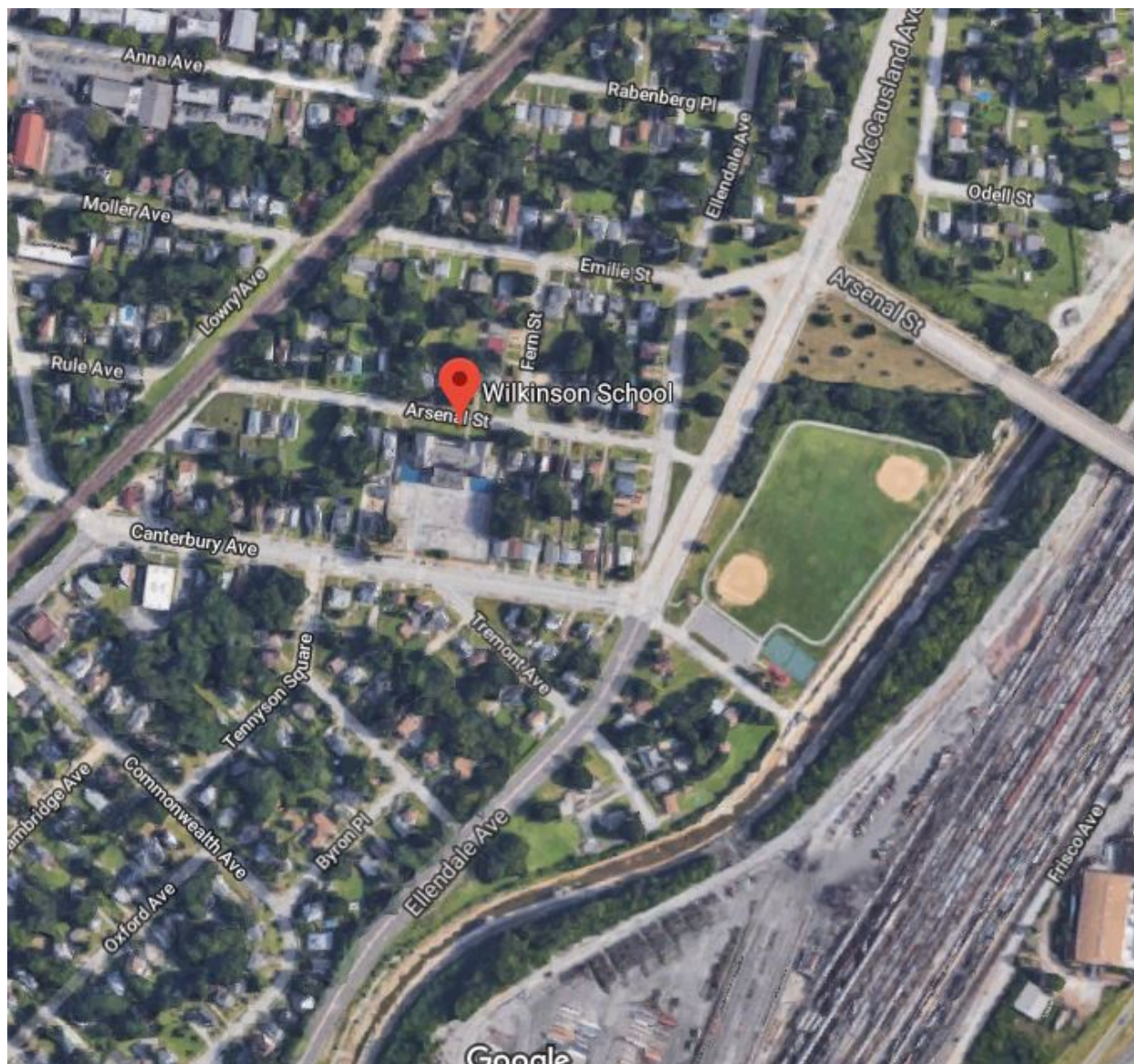
National Register of Historic Places
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Figure 2: Setting of Wilkinson School

Source: Google Earth



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Figure 3: Gratiot School (1882), Missouri History Museum



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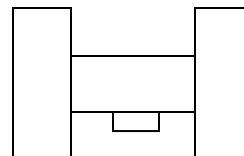
Wilkinson School

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Figure 4: Arlington School (H Plan, 1898), Landmarks Association of St. Louis



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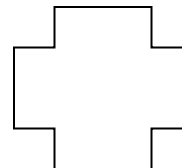
Wilkinson School

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Figure 5: Rock Spring School (Cruciform Plan, 1898), Distilled History



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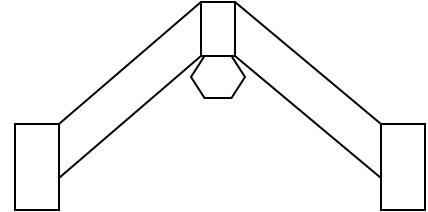
Wilkinson School

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Figure 6: Carr School (U Plan, 1908), Landmarks Association of St. Louis



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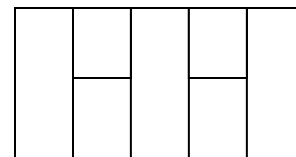
Wilkinson School

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Figure 7: Hempstead School (E Plan, 1906), Landmarks Association of St. Louis



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Figure 8: Woodward School (1921), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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Figure 9: Dewey School (1917), St. Louis Public School Photo



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Figure 10: Shenandoah School (1925), St. Louis Public School Photo



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Figure 11: Vashon High School (1931), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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Figure 12: Stix School (1920), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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Figure 13: Garfield School (1936), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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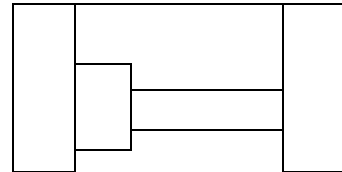
Wilkinson School

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 14: Wilkinson School (1926), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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Figure 15: Scullin School (1927), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88



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Figure 16: Lindenwood School (1928), Landmarks Association of St. Louis School Survey 1987-88

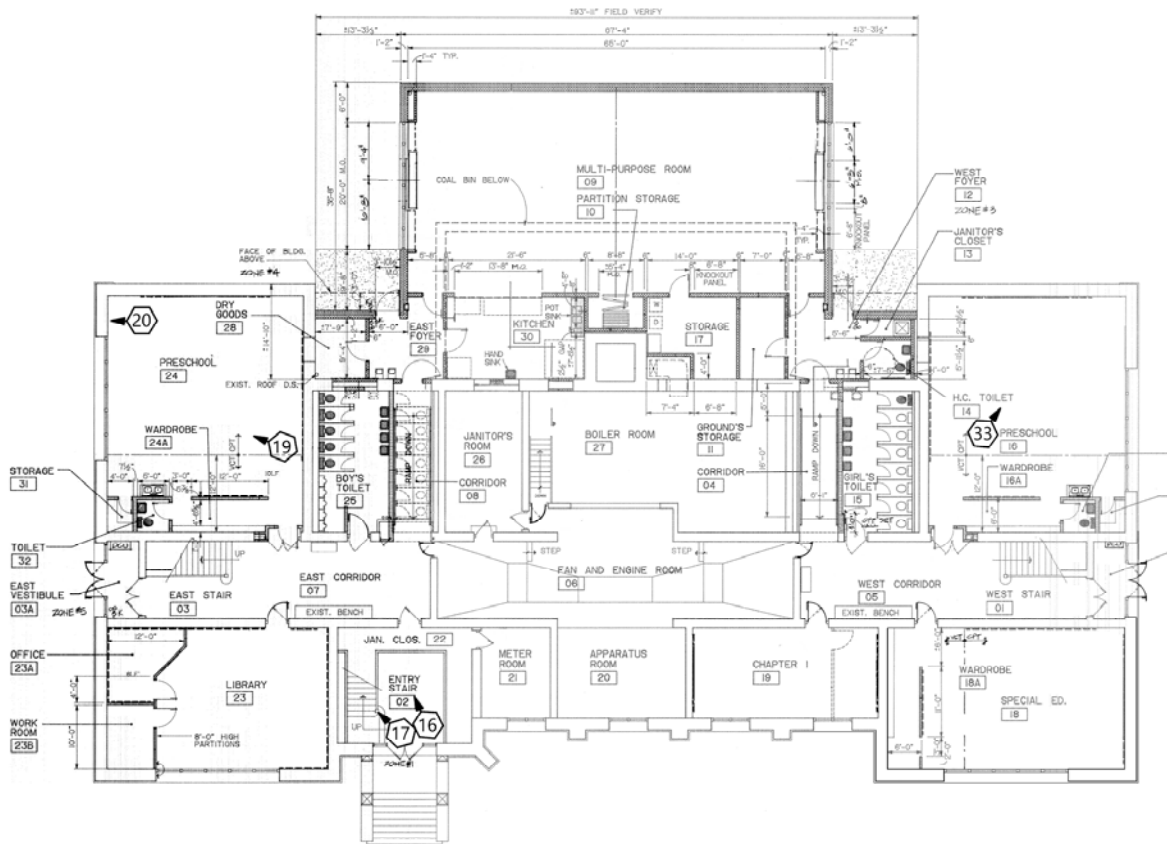


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Figure 18: Basement Level Floor Plan and Photo Map, St. Louis Public Schools



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Photo Identification and Orientation

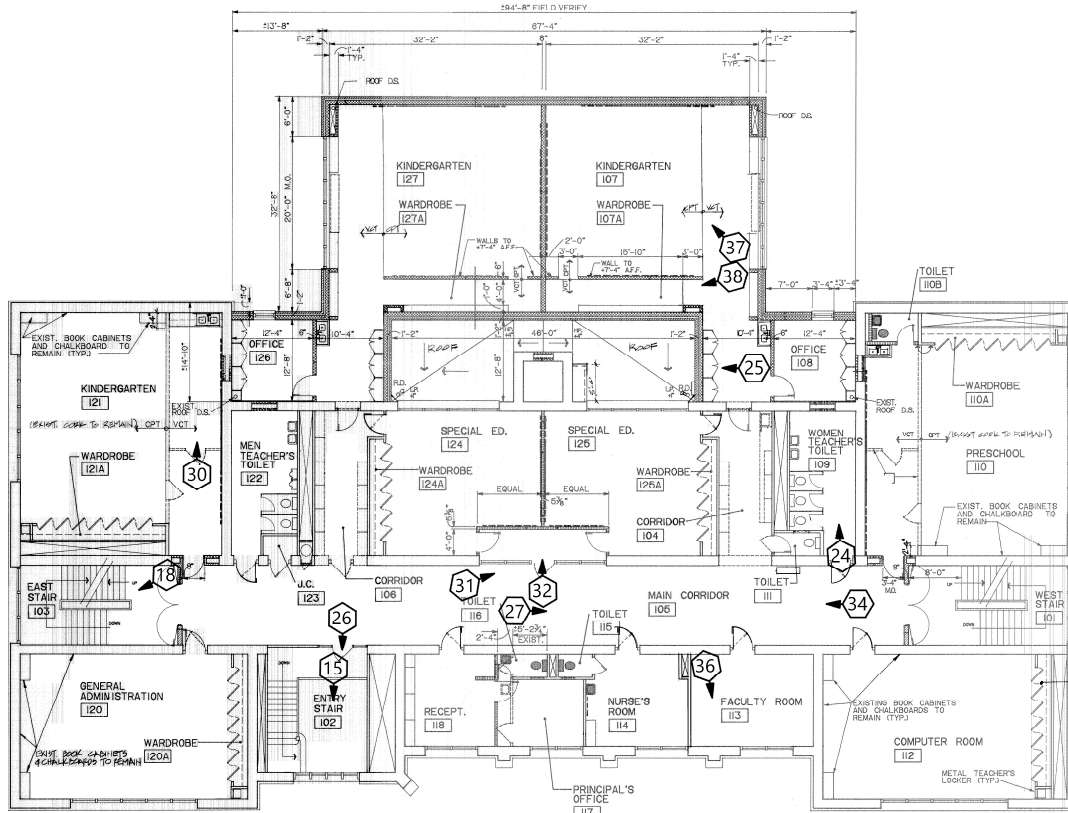


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Figure 19: Level 1 Floor Plan and Photo Map, St. Louis Public Schools



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Photo Identification and Orientation



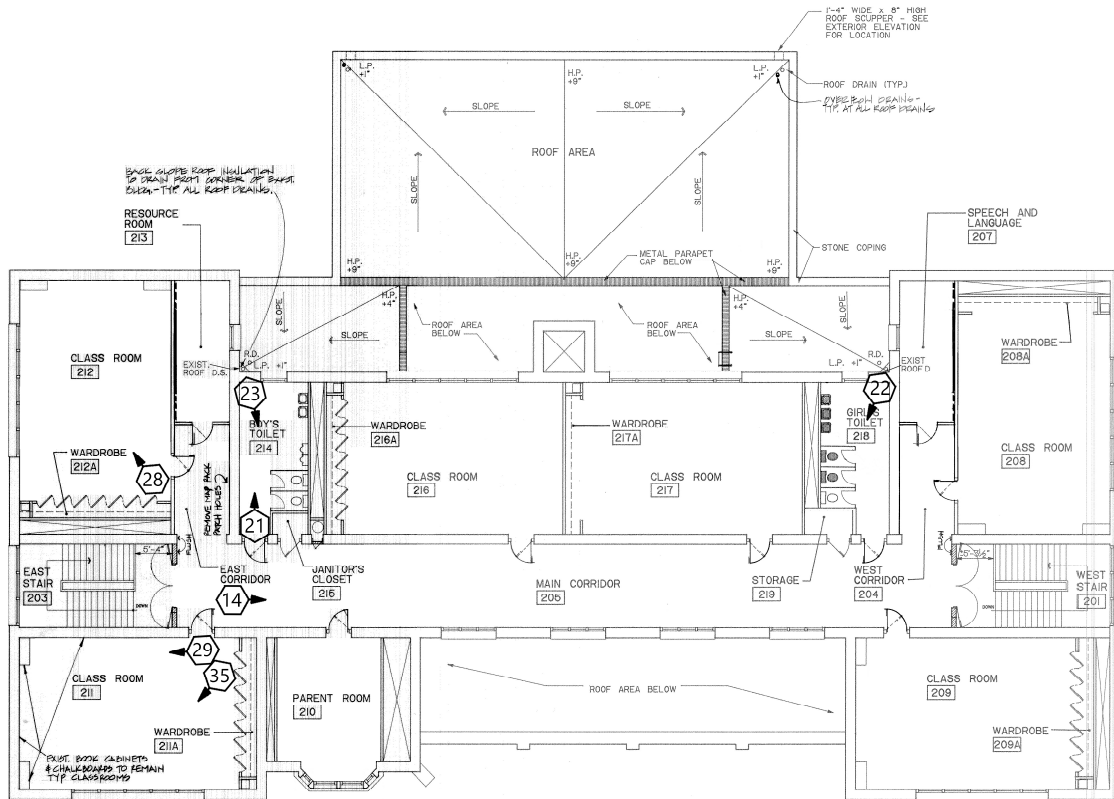
NORTH

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Wilkinson School
Name of Property
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County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 20: Level 2 Floor Plan and Photo Map, St. Louis Public Schools



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Photo Identification and Orientation



NORTH



WILKINSON
SCHOOL











MELVIN L. WILKINSON SCHOOL

WARNING
DRUG-FREE
SCHOOL ZONE

No Parking
8:30 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.























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SAVE US

















Helping Others



How do you help others at home?
What can you do to be a good helper at school?

A collage of four photographs showing children engaged in helpful activities. The top-left photo shows a child watering plants. The top-right photo shows a child helping another child. The bottom-left photo shows a child reading to another child. The bottom-right photo shows a child helping another child. The text "Helping Others" is at the top, and the questions "How do you help others at home?" and "What can you do to be a good helper at school?" are at the bottom.



MATH FUN







WILKINSON
SCHOOL