

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1326 Hopple Street
Cincinnati
Hamilton County
Ohio

HABS No. OH-2377

HABS
OHIO
31-CHIT
09-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HABS
OHIO,
31-DINT,
74-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HABS No. OH-2377

Location: 1326 Hopple Street, Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio
USGS Cincinnati West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 16.712770.4334690

Present Owner: City of Cincinnati
City Hall
801 Plum Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Present Occupant: Vacant

Significance: The original east wing of the school building was constructed in 1882. The building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 as part of a thematic listing of properties designed by the noted Cincinnati architect Samuel Hannaford.

The significance of the Washington Elementary School has been called into some question. Although the design of the original east wing has been attributed to Samuel Hannaford, documentation indicates that the design was actually that of the nineteenth-century Cincinnati architect Henry Bevis. Sources credit Bevis with the design of several schools in the city.

The building appears eligible for the National Register, although Samuel Hannaford was not associated with its design. A school has occupied this site since 1845, twenty years prior to the annexation of Camp Washington by the city. In terms of architectural style and historic association, the current building is a representative example of the rapid expansion of Cincinnati's nineteenth-century system of district schools. It has long served as a focal point in the community and is a highly visible landmark in the Mill Creek Valley. The school was formerly known as the Eighteenth District School.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. **Date of erection:** 1882-1916. The school complex was built in three stages. The school's eastern wing is the oldest and was constructed in 1882. This date is taken from three primary sources: annual reports of the Cincinnati Board of Education available in the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the year 1882 inscribed on the lower corner of the water table, and a plaque in the building noting the date of construction, local trustees, superintendent, building committee, and architect (see photographic documentation). In 1908 a major addition was added to the west of the original building, and in 1916 a boiler plant and additional classrooms were built (dates found in Cincinnati Board of Education Annual Reports). These additions more than doubled the size of the building.
2. **Architect:** The design of the school's eastern wing has been attributed to the Cincinnati architect Samuel Hannaford. Original building plans and a plaque in the school, however, attribute the design to another Cincinnati architect, Henry Bevis. The 1908 and 1916 additions were designed by Cincinnati architect Edward H. Dornette.

Samuel Hannaford may have designed an earlier Eighteenth District School, which could explain the attribution of the existing building to him. According to School Board records, an Eighteenth District School was constructed in 1869. Hannaford was known to have designed at least one other city school, the Cummins School, during this period. (The Cummins School, constructed in 1871, is included in the Hannaford Thematic nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.) The Cummins School and the 1869 Eighteenth District School were similar stylistically (see photocopied photograph later in this report). In 1882, a new building was constructed east of the 1869 building, and the two buildings shared the property. The 1869 structure was demolished prior to the construction of the large addition in 1908 in the same location.

An essay by Hannaford himself, published in two separate histories of the Cincinnati schools in 1900 and 1902, casts further doubt on the Hannaford association. Hannaford wrote that "the remuneration that has been doled out [by the Board of Education] for architectural services has been niggardly in the extreme, and it is fair to say that up to within a few years past the several buildings erected have been utterly devoid of architectural merit."

Henry Bevis was a well-known Cincinnati architect who was elected to the American Institute of Architects as an Associate on October 24,

1871. An obituary published in the March 15, 1884 edition of The American Architect and Building News provides biographical information on Bevis and confirmation that he designed a number of Cincinnati schools circa 1880:

"We regret to hear of the sudden death of Mr. Henry Bevis of Cincinnati, a very well-known architect, prominent both before the public and in the profession, to the honor of which he contributed both by his efforts and his example. He was one of the earlier members of the American Institute of Architects, and was always active in the affairs of the Cincinnati Chapter, the younger members of which looked up to him as a veteran in solid and intelligent constructive work. The same qualities which secured him the respect of those best able to judge of his professional character gave him the enduring esteem of his clients, and he acted for many years as architect to some of the largest estates in the city. More recently, he has acquired the confidence of the public authorities, and for the last five years had designed and constructed most of the public schools of the city. His death, occurring at the age of fifty, in the very prime of his professional life, was felt among his business associates as a sad shock. The Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects immediately met and passed resolutions of regret and condolence, and his funeral was attended both by the Chapter and by the members of the Builder's Exchange."

In 1898 the firm of Dornette and Sheppard succeeded Henry E. Siter as architects to the Cincinnati Board of Education. Dornette designed several Cincinnati schools (Hyde Park, Wm. H. Morgan, Central Fairmount, Clifton), the German Deaconess Home and Hospital, and the J.H. Day residence in Mt. Auburn. (The J.H. Day residence is a contributing building in the Mt. Auburn Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in March 1973.)

3. **Original and subsequent owners:** The Washington Elementary School was constructed for the Board of Education of the City of Cincinnati. The School Board closed the school in December, 1922. The City of Cincinnati obtained an option on the property in 1924 and acquired the property from the School Board in 1927.
4. **Builders, suppliers:** No reference has been found to document the builders or suppliers for any of the three phases of construction.
5. **Original plans and construction:** The City of Cincinnati acquired the original plans for all three phases of the Washington Elementary School from the Cincinnati School Board. These plans will be donated to the archives of the Cincinnati Historical Society. Several sheets of plans have been photographed as part of the HABS documentation of this building. Henry Bevis's plans for the

original 1882 structure are ink on vellum with water color washes. The building remains largely unaltered and accurately reflects the original plans.

The fifty-third annual report of the Board of Education for the City of Cincinnati, for the year ending August 31, 1882, described the Eighteenth District School as follows:

"This building is located on Hopple Street, Camp Washington. It is one of the finest and most complete school buildings in the city. It contains eighteen school-rooms and an office for the Principal, also four rooms for the Janitor. It will be ready for occupancy in September, and will cost, including walls, etc., \$56,000. This building has, also, an apparatus-room and a library room. It is also heated with the 'Grossius New Patent School-House Stoves.'"

The School Board Annual Report for the year ending August 31, 1883, described the school (including the 1869 building that is no longer standing) as follows:

"Built--1869; cost, \$6,700; has 11 rooms, and seats for 620 pupils. Lot 51 x 325 feet. Blong and Richardson lots (condemned, 136 5/8 x 200 feet; cost 7,965. New house built 1882; cost \$57,001.76.

6. Alterations and additions: Additions to the building were constructed in 1908 and 1916. Classrooms and an auditorium were added in 1908. In 1916 a boiler plant and additional classrooms were built onto the rear of the 1908 addition.

B. Historical Context:

The history of the Washington Elementary School can be traced to the establishment of the community. A school has occupied this site since 1845, over twenty years prior to the annexation of Camp Washington by Cincinnati. The current building is a representative example of the rapid expansion of Cincinnati's nineteenth-century system of district schools. It has long served as a focal point in the community and is a highly visible landmark in the Mill Creek Valley.

During the mobilization of troops for the Mexican War of 1846, the First and Second Ohio Regiments encamped in a portion of the Mill Creek Valley northwest of Cincinnati. The site was named Camp Washington, and the same appellation was given to a settlement that sprang up nearby, around the present intersection of Hopple Street and Colerain Avenue. All the territory in this vicinity was annexed to Cincinnati in 1870, but the name of Camp Washington still clings to the area.

A school occupied this site at the center of the community from its

inception. Written accounts state that the first school was constructed in 1845 and was replaced by a larger, brick building in 1869. After the area was annexed by Cincinnati 1870, the Cincinnati Board of Education created the eighteenth school district encompassing Camp Washington and surrounding areas.

The school has been known by a variety of names over the years. It was first called the Eighteenth District School, in reference to the district created by the Cincinnati Board of Education after the community was annexed by the city. When the new building was constructed in 1882, the nameplate over the front door announced the Washington Public School. During recent years, the school usually has been referred to as the Washington Elementary School.

The Camp Washington neighborhood business district is centered at the intersection of Hopple Street and Colerain Avenue. Colerain Avenue was historically the "Main Street" of the community; however, the population growth of the city's western suburbs in recent years and the resulting increase in east/west traffic on Hopple Street has shifted the commercial importance from Colerain Avenue to Hopple Street. The Washington Elementary School is now at the center of commercial activity.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General character:

1. **Architectural Character:** The Washington Elementary School is a good example of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century functional public school architecture. The east wing has 3 1/2-stories. It was constructed in 1882 and displays elements of the Italianate style. The design of the 3-story wing, constructed in 1916, is influenced by Renaissance Revival and vernacular Classical Revival design. The building is a landmark in the community and is visible through much of the Mill Creek Valley.
2. **Condition of the fabric:** The structure has been vacant since January, 1983. The building has been vandalized but remains in good structural condition. The walls and roof appear to be in good condition. Numerous windows have been broken out or left open.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** The Washington Elementary School has an irregular rectangular shape with dimensions of approximately 220' x 140'. The building is divided into two major wings, each having a full basement. The older, eastern wing is 3 1/2 stories high. It exhibits a symmetrical, 71' wide facade, with eight window openings grouped into three bays. The western wing is 3 stories high. It has an asymmetrical, 136' wide facade divided into four bays.

2. **Foundations:** Both wings of the building have rock faced random coursed ashlar foundations. The eastern wing has a thick limestone water table. The foundation of the western wing projects beyond the wall plane and is capped by an 8" thick beveled water table. Building plans for the western wing show that it has 5' wide, reinforced concrete footings supporting the 17" thick foundation walls.
3. **Walls:** The school's east wing has running bond brick walls that have been painted oxide red. The wing is distinguished by a projecting central pavilion with the end of its gabled roof facing forward, Corinthian pilasters, and a central doorway. The side facades are similar in detail and have projecting pavilions. The west wing has unpainted brick walls that are laid in Flemish garden wall bond. The brick is laid in rusticated bands at the first floor level and as rusticated quoins at each corner. A limestone stringcourse runs along the top of the building's first floor base.
4. **Structural system:** Both major portions of the building have masonry bearing walls. There are differences between the two, however, in the floor systems and roof framing.

The structural system of the east wing includes a combination of steel I-beams, masonry vaulting, and wood trusses. The first, second and third floors are supported by 9" I-beams tied to the masonry walls. The I-beams are spaced 3.5' on center and have masonry vaulting filling the spaces between them. The ceilings for the basement, first, and second floor levels are supported by wooden truss systems that are 10" from top to bottom and tied into the bearing walls 2' 6" below the floors above. A single wood truss system, 18" from top to bottom, supports the ceiling of the third floor level and the attic floor. The roof is supported by a combination of triangular wood trusses, 8"x16" continuous wood beams, and a running wooden truss system that is 18" from top to bottom.

The details of the structural system of the newer, western wing are less clear. Existing project plans refer to beams supporting the floors. Although the material of these beams is unclear, they are most likely steel. These beams support a concrete floor, over which wood sleepers were installed. There are suspended ceilings throughout much of this part of the building. Project plans also show that there are reinforced footings and columns that extend from the basement through the original kindergarten area to the balcony of the auditorium. The composition roof is supported by a steel truss, similar to other school buildings designed by Dornette.

5. **Chimneys:** A notable chimney is located at the rear (north elevation) of the 1916 addition to the west wing. It extends from the ground floor above the roofline and has distinctive corbelled brick detailing.

6. Openings:

- a. **Doorways:** The doorways to the school are all boarded over. Most of the doors were altered during the years, including several that were reinforced inside and out with sheet metal. A primary door is located at the front of eastern wing's central bay. Five stairs lead up to this doorway. It is distinguished with rusticated limestone pilasters and a segmented arch and keystone. Another doorway leads into the easternmost bay of the western wing, near where the two wings connect. This doorway and a similar one on the west facade have smooth limestone architraves.
- b. **Windows:** The east wing has 6/6 double hung, wooden sash windows that are closely spaced together. The windows on the front facade have plain limestone lugsills and shaped lintels, but the windows on the side elevations have plain stone lintels. The west wing has 2/2 and 1/1 double hung, wooden sash windows. In five of its bays, the windows are grouped together in groups of four, providing ample light for the classrooms and offices inside.

7. Roof:

- a. **Shape, covering:** The east wing of the school has a gable roof running north to south that is intersected by the cross-gables of the three projecting side pavilions. It has a sheet metal covering with standing seams. The west wing has a flat, built-up roof.
- b. **Cornice and eaves:** The roofline of the east wing has projecting eaves, a wide entablature, corner brackets, and a stone stringcourse at the top of the wall plane. A limestone lintel-course runs along the cornice line of the west wing. The roofline of the west wing is delineated by a wide entablature and stone balustrades.

C. Description of Interior:

1. **Floor plans:** Excluding the basement, the structure contains 67,164 square feet. The basement contains a gymnasium, lunchroom, teachers' lunchroom, four classrooms (converted to other uses), and boiler and fan rooms. The first floor has ten classrooms and office space. First floor footage is 22,388. The second floor contains the main floor of a two-story auditorium, ten classrooms, and boys' and girls' restrooms. Square footage on the second floor amounts to 22,388. The third floor is identical to the second, except that it contains the balcony area of the auditorium. The square footage is also 22,388. The attic is semifinished and divided into seven

rooms. (Refer to the supplemental material section of this report for reduced floor plans.)

2. **Stairways:** There are two primary stairways in the building -- one in each of the wings. In the eastern wing, the stairway is located between the northernmost classroom bays on the east side. In the western wing, the stairway is located on the north side, between the classroom wing and the auditorium. These stairs were altered in mid-century. They have steel structures, railings, and treads.
3. **Flooring:** The floors are primarily wood. In recent years, some areas of the wood flooring have been covered with carpeting and linoleum tile.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Most of the wall surfaces in the school have smooth plaster finishes that have been painted typical institutional colors. There are also interior brick bearing walls that have been painted but not plastered. In recent years, students have painted several insignificant murals in the hallways. The classrooms have simple vertical wainscoting that terminates at the window sill line. Several classrooms have notable pressed metal ceilings, although many others have insignificant dropped ceilings.
5. **Openings:**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** Offices and classrooms have half-glazed wooden doors with two vertical panels below the lock rail. Most of these doors have glazed sidelights with wood kick panels and operable glazed transoms. Doorways leading into storage and other secondary spaces have wooden, six-panel doors with two vertical panels positioned above and below small square panels at level of the doorknob. The wood framing and trim around these openings is very simple and functional in design.
 - b. **Windows:** The trim around the window openings is very simple and functional in design.
6. **Decorative features and trim:** Two commemorative Rookwood Pottery fountains are located in the lobby of the east wing (see photographic documentation).
7. **Mechanical equipment:** The school's mechanical equipment has been completely replaced and upgraded since the buildings were constructed.
 - a. **Heating and ventilation:** There are two steam boilers; one was retubed in the summer of 1981. Old ventilation equipment is located in the attic. The spaces between the floors and

ceilings in the earlier eastern wing were tied to air stacks to provide for natural ventilation.

- b. **Lighting:** In 1959 plans were prepared for the current lighting scheme in the school. The primary sources of light in the building are suspended fluorescent tubes and natural light from the abundant windows placed in the classrooms.
- c. **Plumbing:** The plumbing in the building was reworked in the early 1970s. New fixtures included water service lines, water heaters, toilets, sinks, and locker room showers. Student rest rooms are located in the basement, second, and third floors, with the girls' room at one end of the building and the boys' room at the other. Restrooms for the teachers are located on the first and second floors in the center of the building by the original kindergarten and auditorium.

D. Site:

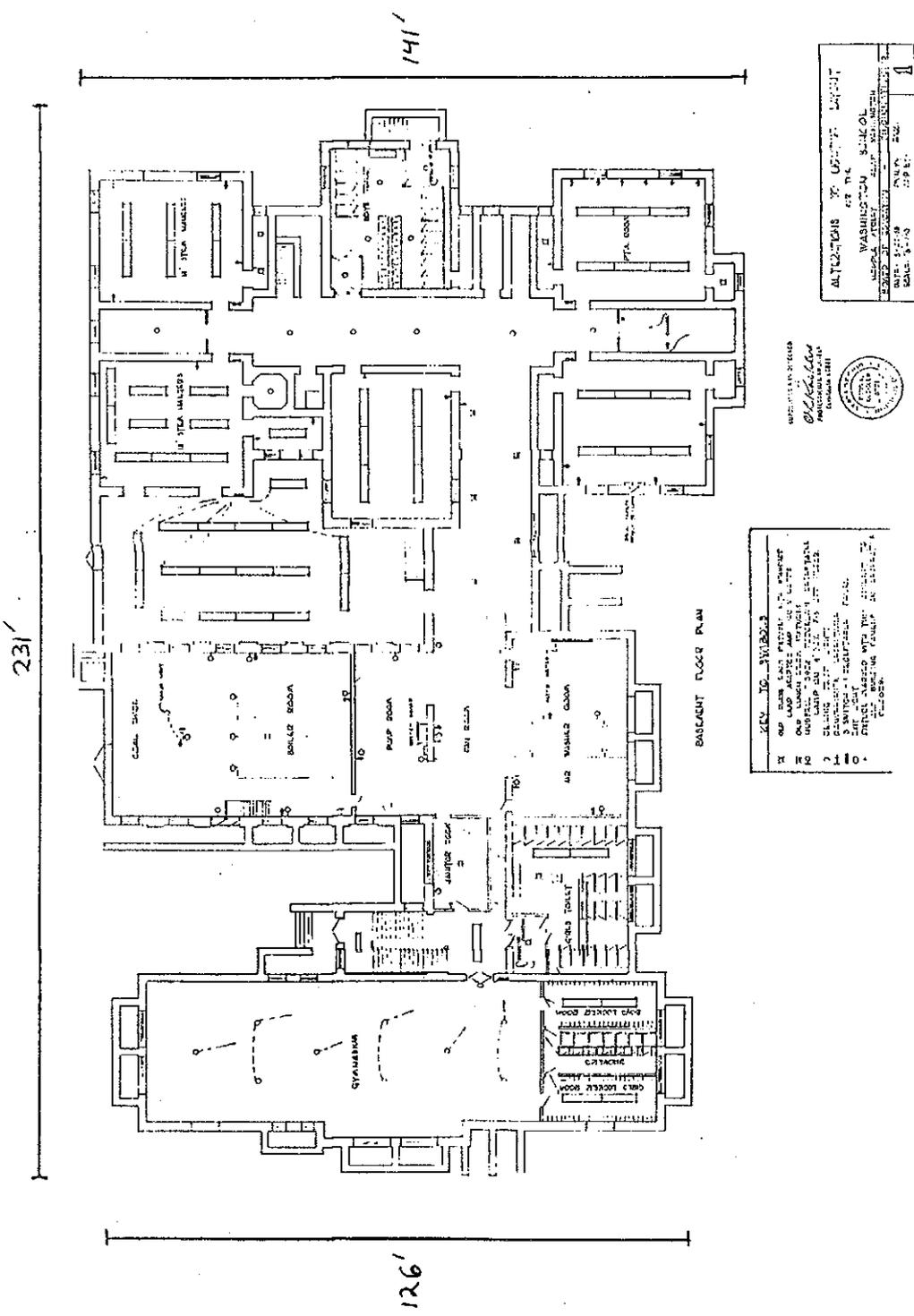
1. **General setting and orientation:** The Washington Elementary School is located approximately 20' from the north side of Hopple Street. It is situated at the northeast corner of Hopple and Garrard Streets, near the intersection of Hopple Street and Colerain Avenue. The building faces south. To the east is a small play yard and commercial properties facing Colerain Avenue. To the west is Garrard Street. North of the school is a cluster of late nineteenth-century houses, facing Elam Street, that have been determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
2. **Historic landscape design:** An original wrought iron fence between stone piers encloses the school property along Hopple and Garrard Streets. At the rear of the property, between the school and the Elam Street residences, there is a 5' high brick wall, laid in common bond, that has special curved brick units at its base and cap.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

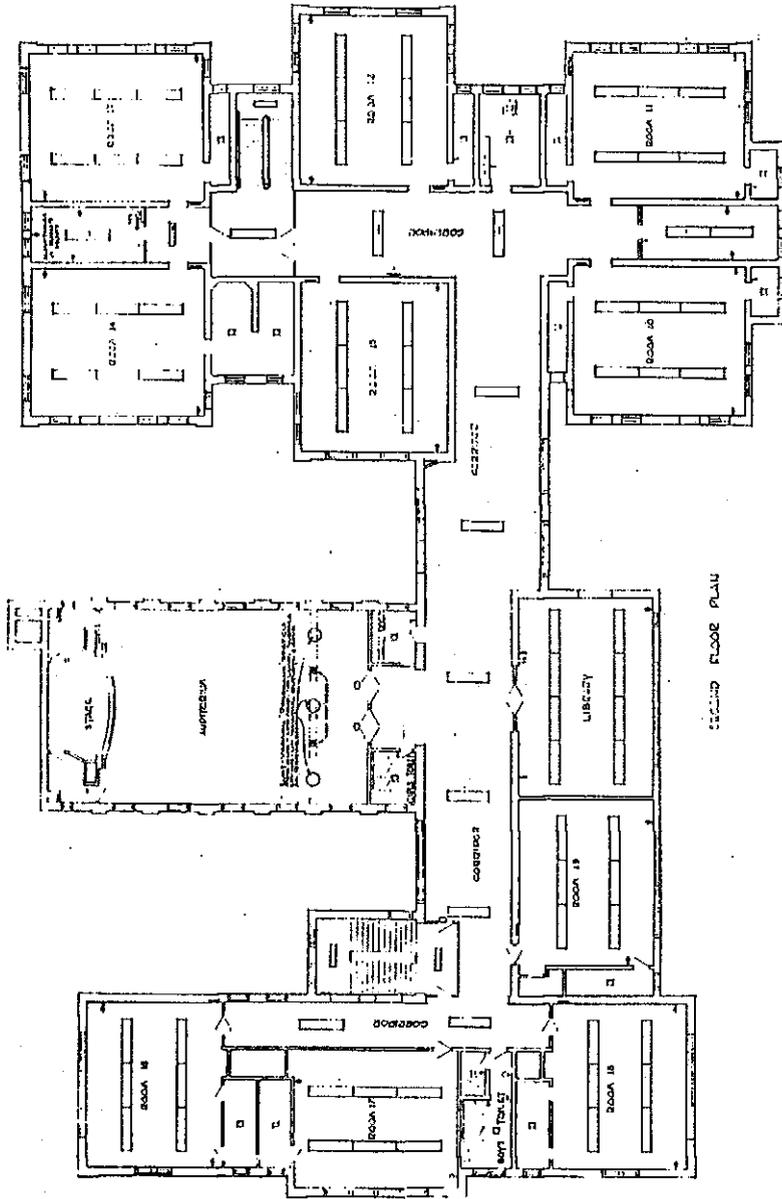
- A. **Architectural drawings:** Original drawings for all three phases of construction have been obtained from the Cincinnati Board of Education. These drawings will be donated by the city government to the architectural archives of the Cincinnati Historical Society.
- B. **Historic views:** The only known historic view was published on page 427 of A History of the Schools of Cincinnati by John B. Shotwell, published in Cincinnati in 1902. (Refer to the supplemental material section for a photocopied reproduction of this view.)

C. Bibliography:

- American Architect and Building News 14 (March 15, 1884): 121. Unsigned obituary about Henry Bevis. Boston: James R. Osgood & Company.
- Board of Education for the City of Cincinnati. Fifty-third Annual Report for the School Year Ending August 31, 1882. Cincinnati: W.B. Carpenter and Co., Printers, 1883.
- Board of Education of the School District of Cincinnati. Fifty-fourth Annual Report for the School Year Ending August 31, 1883. Cincinnati: W.B. Carpenter and Co., Printers, 1884.
- Gordon, Stephen C. and Elisabeth H. Tuttle. Buildings and Structures in Hamilton County, Ohio, Designed by Samuel Hannaford/Samuel Hannaford & Sons, 1858-1900. National Register of Historic Places Inventory -- Nomination Form. Cincinnati: Miami Purchase Association, 1978.
- Hannaford, Samuel. "School Architecture." In History of the Schools of Cincinnati and Other Educational Institutions Public and Private, edited by Isaac M. Martin, 188-192. Cincinnati: Under the official endorsement of the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools, 1900.
- Hannaford, Samuel. "School Architecture." In A History of the Schools of Cincinnati, edited by John B. Shotwell, 317-329. Cincinnati: The School Life Company, 1902.
- Mason, Geo. C., Jr., ed. Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the American Institute of Architects held in Cincinnati, Ohio - October 25th and 26th, 1882. Newport: Oavis and Putnam Printers, 1883.
- Ohio Writers' Project. Cincinnati: A Guide to the Queen City and Its Neighbors, edited by Harry Gaff. American Guide Series of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration. Cincinnati: City of Cincinnati, 1943; reprint, Cincinnati: The Cincinnati Historical Society, 1987.
- Withey, Henry F., A.I.A., and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (deceased). Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.



BASMENT FLOOR PLAN

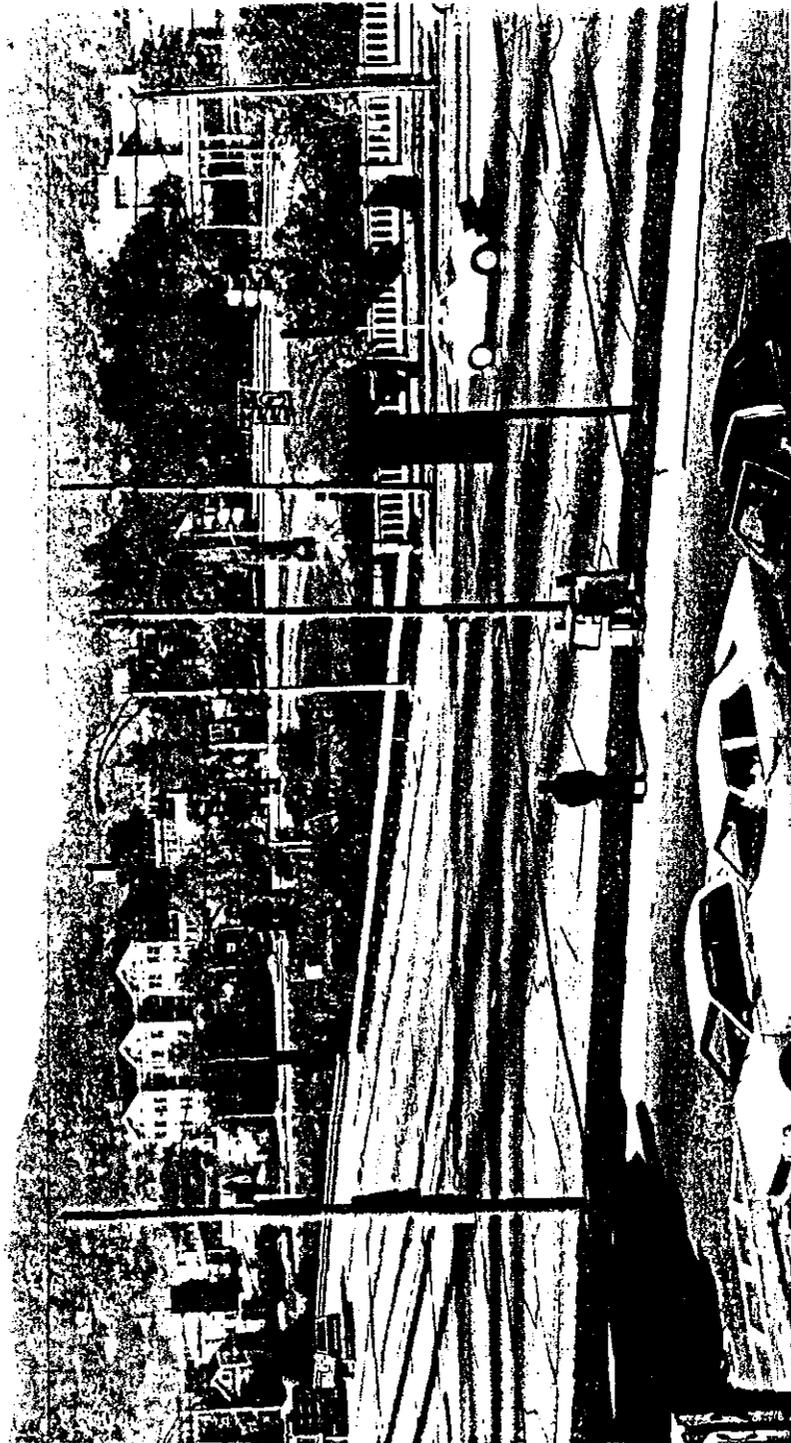


SECOND FLOOR PLAN

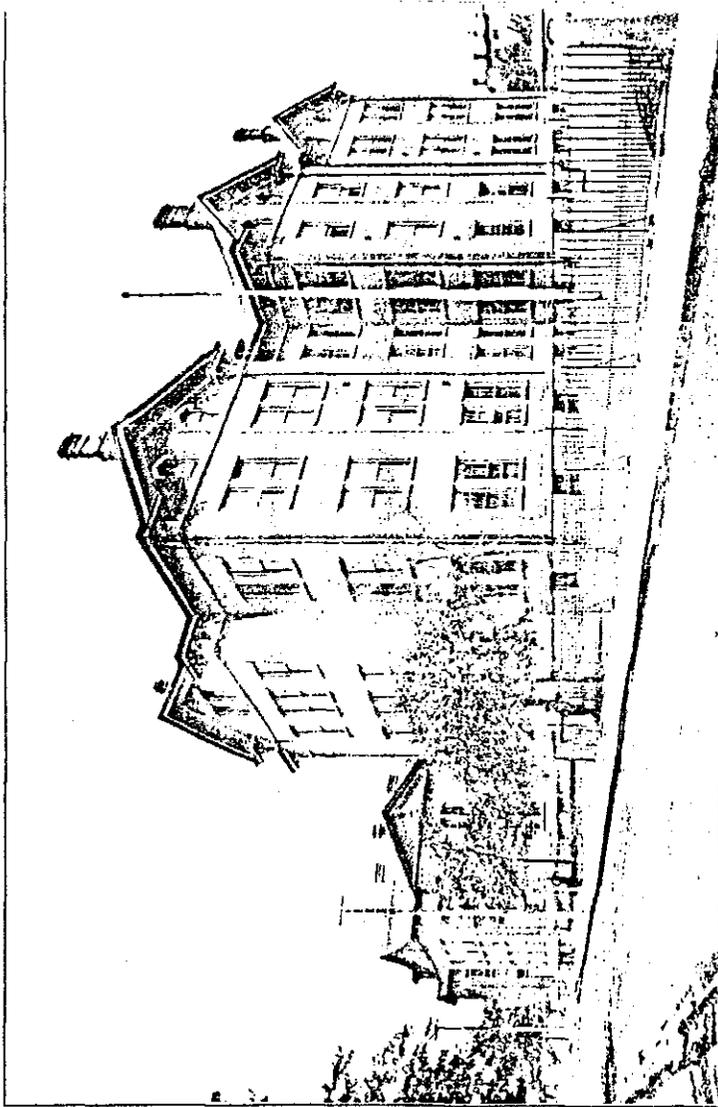
UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
 300 N. ZEEB RD.
 ANN ARBOR, MI 48106

DATE	BY	NO.
1974	J. H. ...	3

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



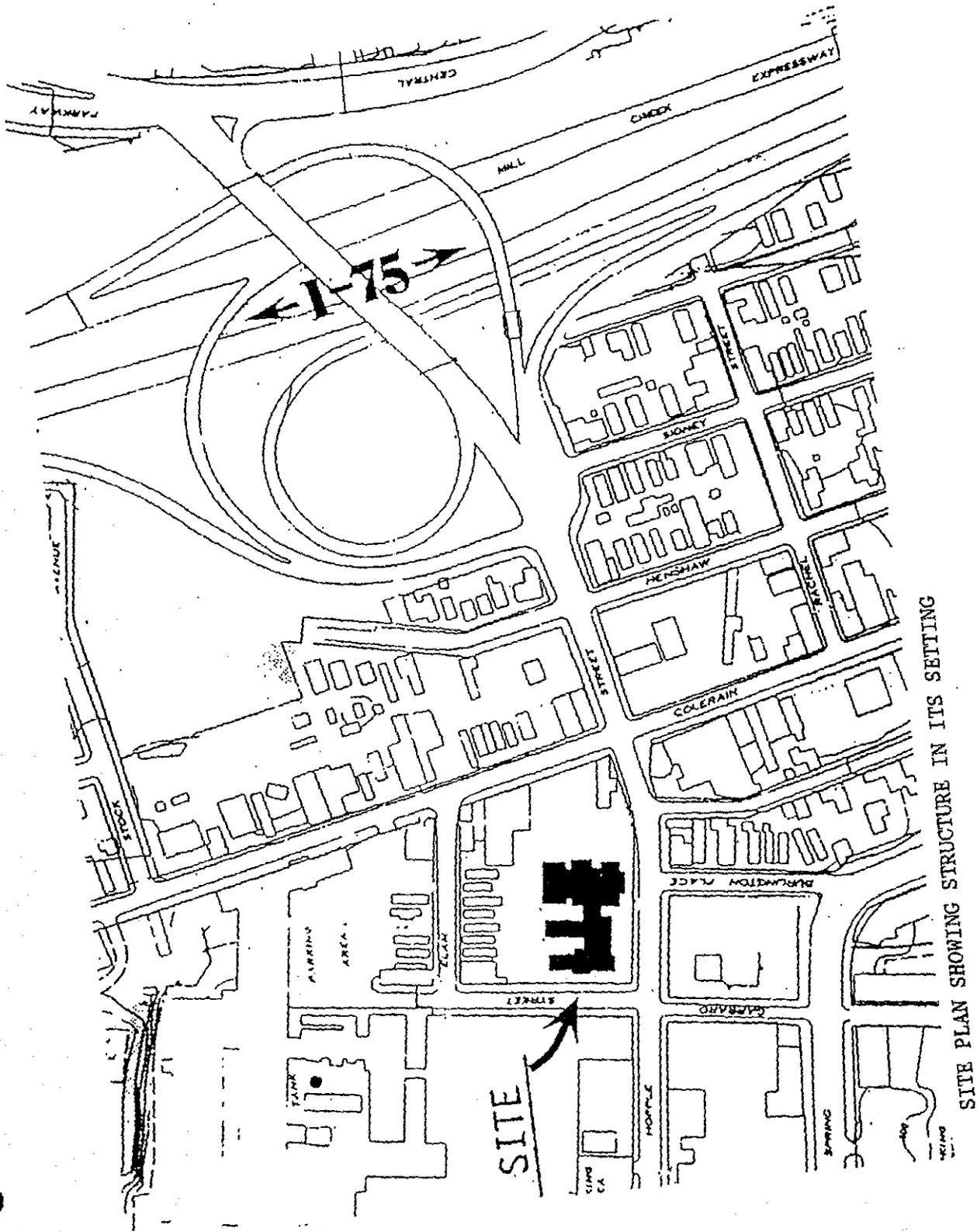
CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF THE MILL CREEK VALLEY AND WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL, LOOKING WEST



EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT SCHOOL.

Largest in the city; Located on Hopple Street, Camp Washington; Erected 1869-72. Cost \$63,700
(\$18 per pupil); 27 Rooms; Seats 1,100; G. W. Burns, Architect; Joseph E. Campbell, Sculptor.

HISTORIC VIEW OF WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, LOOKING NORTHWEST
YEAR UNCERTAIN, PRIOR TO 1908



PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The redevelopment of the Washington Elementary School site will entail the demolition of the school building and the construction of a new quick-service restaurant on the site. The City of Cincinnati has used Community Development Block Grant funds to finance the acquisition of the school and the subsequent search for a developer. This documentation has been prepared in compliance with the Memorandum of Agreement that was enacted for this project.

Prepared by: Daniel W. Young
Title: City Planner
Affiliation: Historic Conservation Office
City Planning Department
City of Cincinnati
Date: August 30, 1990
Revised: October 24, 1990