

The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649 Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

Landmark NOMINATION Application

Name: Aki Kurose Middle School (current) / Caspar W. Sharples Junior High School (historic)

Year Built: 1952

Street and Number: 3928 S Graham Street, Seattle WA 98118

Assessor's File No. 333250-1090

Legal Description: Lots 1 through 38, inclusive, Block 10 and all of Block 9, Hillman City Division No. 5,

according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 10 of Plats, page 64, records of King County,

Washington;

Together with all of vacated South Bateman Street and all of the vacated alley in said Block 10, Hillman City Division No. 5, as vacated under City of Seattle Ordinance No. 78241;

Together with that portion of Lot 10, Sunnyside Five Acre Tracts, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 2 of Plats, page 120, in King County, Washington, lying Southerly of a line 125 feet Northerly of and parallel with the centerline of vacated South Bateman Street;

Except that portion thereof in roads;

(Also known as Parcel A of the City of Seattle Lot Boundary Adjustment No. 2402540,

recorded under Recording No. 20040702900002, records of King County, Washington).

Plat Name: Hillman's City Addition Div #5 Block: 10 Lots: 1-38

Present Use: Middle School

Present Owner: Seattle School District

Owner's representative: Rebecca Asencio

Seattle Public Schools

Mail Stop 22-336, PO Box 34165

Seattle WA 98124-1165

Email: rsasencio@seattleschools.org / Phone: 206-252-0551

Original Owner: Seattle School District
Original Use: Junior High School

Architect: William Mallis, architect

Builder: Poston Construction Company, general contractor

Submitted by: David Peterson Historic Resource Consulting Date: February 17, 2021

PO Box 115 / Seattle WA 98111 // (206) 376-7761 / david@dphrc.com

Reviewed by: Date:

(Historic Preservation Officer)

Aki Kurose Middle School 3928 S Graham Street Seattle Landmark Nomination





David Peterson historic resource consulting PO Box 115 Seattle WA 98111 P:206-376-7761 david@dphrc.com

 $\begin{array}{c} BOLA \text{ Architecture + Planning} \\ \textbf{Seattle} \end{array}$

February 17, 2021

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Cover: Historic photograph of the building, looking to the northeast in 1953 from the King County Assessor archival property record card (Puget Sound Regional Archives).

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

This report documents a Seattle public school property, located at 3928 S Graham Street in the Hillman City neighborhood. Known historically as Caspar W. Sharples Junior High School, it was renamed Aki Kurose Middle School in 1999. The building is a two-story reinforced concrete and veneer brick Modern-style structure constructed in 1952. This report was written at the request of Seattle Public Schools in order to ascertain its historic significance.

Research

This report was written and researched by historic resource consultant David Peterson in collaboration with Susan Boyle, AIA, of BOLA Architecture + Planning. Unless noted otherwise, all images are by the author and date from November and December 2020.

Sources used in this report include:

- Material on file at Seattle School District Archives, including complete sets of original drawings and repair/renovation drawing sets to the present time.
- Material on file at the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) microfilm library, including early permits and copies of drawings for alterations to the property.
- Newspaper, book, city directories, and maps referencing the property (see bibliography).
- Author's on-site photographs and building review.
- Historic photographs of the subject property to assess changes to the exterior to the building, including tax assessor photographs and images in the Seattle Municipal Archives.
- King County current and historic tax records; the former accessed online, and the latter obtained from the Puget Sound Regional Archives at Bellevue College in Bellevue, Washington.

Research also included several site visits to view and document current conditions of the neighborhood, site, and building.

Special thanks to Meaghan Kahlo, the Seattle Public Schools Archivist, for assistance with research.

Seattle's Landmarks Process

(Note: This section summarizes information for readers unfamiliar with the local landmark process.)

Historic landmarks are those individual properties that have been recognized locally, regionally, or nationally as important resources to the community, city, state, or nation. Official recognition is provided by listing in the State or National Registers of Historic Places and locally by the City of Seattle's designation of a property as historic landmark. The local landmarks process is a multi-part proceeding of three sequential steps by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board:

- 1) a review of the nomination and its and approval or rejection
- 2) a designation
- 3) negotiation of controls and incentives by the property owner and the City's Historic Preservation Officer and its approval by the Landmarks Preservation Board

BOLA Architecture + Planning / David Peterson Historic Resource Consulting

A final step in this landmarks process is passage of a designation ordinance by the City Council. These steps all occur with public hearings to allow input from the property owner, applicant, the public, and other interested parties. Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board is quasi-judicial, with the Board ruling rather than serving as in advisory capacity to another commission, department, or agency.

The City's Preservation Ordinance (SMC 25.12.350) requires a property to be more than 25 years old and to "have significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation." It must have integrity, or the ability to convey its significance. The ordinance also requires that a property meet one or more of six designation criteria:

- Criterion A. It is the location of, or is associated in a significant way with, an historic event with a significant effect upon the community, City, state, or nation.
- Criterion B. It is associated in a significant way with the life of a person important in the history of the City, state, or nation.
- Criterion C. It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.
- Criterion D. It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or of a method of construction
- Criterion E. It is an outstanding work of a designer or builder.
- Criterion F. Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.

More than 460 individual properties have been designated as local landmarks under the city ordinance, along with others located in one of eight historic districts. Anyone can prepare a landmark nomination. However, the Landmarks Board's review cannot consider future changes or uses, or other land use issues.

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2. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Caspar Sharples Junior High School

Current Name: Aki Kurose Middle School

Location: The property is located at the north side of S Graham Street, south of

Brighton Playfield, between 39th and 42nd Avenue S, in Seattle's Hillman City neighborhood. The playfield is owned by the Seattle Parks Department

and serves as the school's sports field.

Address: 3928 S Graham Street, Seattle WA 98118

Assessor's Parcel No.: 333250-1090 (school property); 811310-0530 (Brighton Playfield)

Plat/Block/Lot: Plat: Hillman's City Addition Div #5 / Block: 10 / Lots: 1-38

Legal Description: Lots 1 through 38, inclusive, Block 10 and all of Block 9, Hillman City

Division No. 5, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 10 of

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Construction Date: 1952

Original Designer: William Mallis, architect

Original Builder: Poston Construction Company, general contractor

Original Use: Junior High School

Present Use: Middle School

Original/Present Owner: Seattle School District

Owner's Representative: Rebecca Asencio

Seattle Public Schools

Mail Stop 22-336, PO Box 34165

Seattle, WA 98124-1165

Email: rsasencio@seattleschools.org

Phone: 206-252-0551

3. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Site and Neighborhood Context

Aki Kurose Middle School is located on the north side of S Graham Street between 39th and 42nd Avenue S, in the Hillman City neighborhood in southeast Seattle. Brighton Playfield, a City of Seattle park that also serves as the school's athletic fields, extends northward from the school as far as S Juneau Street—approximately three and a half blocks. [See Figs. 1 – 7 for current images of the site]

The school and playfield are on separate tax parcels—the former owned by the Seattle Public Schools, the latter owned by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. The tax parcel that serves as the school site is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 431 by 561 feet (approximately 5.5 acres), oriented eastwest. This parcel includes part of the vacated S Bateman Street right-of-way, as well as a 125 foot-wide strip of park property along the north side which is leased from the city. Within the school's parcel, on the north side of the school building, is an paved east-west access road connecting 39th and 42nd Avenues S. The school site is essentially level, except for the northwest property corner which is approximately six feet below grade and retained by a concrete wall. The building front is raised approximately five feet above the south sidewalk level with a gently sloped grassy berm in the setback.

The Brighton Playfield tax parcel is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 584 by 927 feet, oriented north-south. There is a considerable grade change across the site, dropping approximately 30 feet from northeast to southwest property corner. Running up the center of Brighton Playfield is a level, fenced football/ baseball/ soccer field oriented north-south. It has banked turf edges, and is surrounded by a tall chain link fence. Around the higher-elevation perimeter are tennis courts, a partly paved area with children's play equipment, a small masonry restroom building, and seating areas, all interspersed with grassy lawns and mature trees.

The neighborhood immediately surrounding the school and playfield is solidly residential in character, and situated between the busy arterials Martin Luther King Jr. Way S (one block to the west) and Rainier Avenue S (one and a half blocks to the east). These arterials are dominated by low-scale commercial buildings. The blocks of Martin Luther King Jr. Way S closest to the subject site are dominated by ca. post-1960s automobile-oriented shopping centers, which largely house small shops and services. Martin Luther King Jr. Way S also is the corridor for a light-rail train that links downtown Seattle with southeast neighborhoods, SeaTac Airport, and beyond. The residential blocks consist typically of ca. 1910s-1970s single family houses on 5,000 square foot lots. Across S Graham Street from the subject site are a row of eleven such houses, facing the front of the school. Some low-scale apartment buildings, garden apartments, or duplexes have been developed nearby along the arterials.

Rainier Avenue S, to the east, is a less-intensively developed commercial corridor, and carries less traffic. The modest historical commercial core of the Hillman City neighborhood is located half a mile northeast of the subject school, at Rainier Avenue S and S Orcas Street. Two blocks north of Brighton Playfield, at S Orcas Street and 42nd Avenue S, is the St. Edward Catholic Church and school campus, a long-time fixture in Hillman City, with a large Modern-style ca. 1957 church building and ca. 1961 school; a ca. 1911 ornate brick Tudor-style school, smaller church, and residence; and a ca. 1912 Craftsman-style parish office.

There are no designated Seattle landmarks in the vicinity of the subject site. The nearest are in the Columbia City Historic District, approximately one mile north of the subject property on Rainier Avenue S.

¹ Actual parcel measurements (rounded to the nearest foot) are 372 feet on the east and west sides, 566 feet on the north, and 558 feet on the south. Prior to 2004, the leased north strip measured 100 feet; that year, another 25 feet was added through a legal transfer.

Building Description

The subject building, Aki Kurose Middle School, was constructed as Caspar W. Sharples Junior High School in 1952 for the Seattle School District.² This large, 169,000 square-foot facility is contained within a single sprawling building which dates to the original construction. With the exception of free-standing portable buildings installed on the grounds, there have been no new wings or building additions constructed since that time. The structure was designed to accommodate approximately 1,500 students. [See Figs. 8 – 91 for current photos of the building]

Exterior and Structure

The building has an irregular, roughly U-shaped plan which measures overall 547 by 318 feet at its greatest dimensions, and is organized on the interior as a series of large and small rooms along connecting double-loaded corridors. Portions of the building are either one or two stories (there is no basement), but ceiling and roof heights vary depending on room function. There are three large, double- or triple-height interior volumes capable of accommodating all or most of the students at a time—the auditorium (or assembly room), the gymnasium, and the cafeteria. These volumes are spaced apart on the plan and serve as anchors, typically surrounded by corridors, classrooms, and support spaces. Specialized classrooms, such as art or shop, or rooms with unique functions, such as music rehearsal, are typically clustered together.

Roofs throughout are generally flat, but some classrooms and other spaces feature butterfly or shed roofs which slope gently upwards towards a window wall. However, these sloping roofs are not discernable on the perimeter and the roofline appears flat. Other flat roofs are amended with highly visible sawtooth roof monitor window assemblies, provided for additional interior light. For these reasons of use and interior arrangement, the exterior of the building appears as a complex series of boxy, interconnected masses of varying heights.

The U-shape plan extends along all three streets that adjoin the site. The front or south side of the building is composed as a two-story east-west bar, extending the full block width along S Graham Street, which presents a formal, primary facade to the neighborhood. This mass contains the main building entry and stairs, and a secondary entry, between which are two stories of classrooms. To the left of the main entry are the school offices on the first floor, and the library above them on the second floor. The easternmost portion of the bar is one story, but with higher ceilings than typical classrooms—these rooms were originally used for home economics.

An east wing, extending north-south along 42nd Avenue S, contains one story of classrooms and support spaces wrapping a double-height central cafeteria; and the large gymnasium at the north end of the wing. On the east side of this wing, facing the street, is the school's loading dock, custodial offices, boiler room, and a tapered brick smokestack towering over the buildings at approximately 80 feet high. The gymnasium faces north toward Brighton Playfield and features a bilaterally symmetrical facade, with the tall central gym flanked on the sides by boys' and girls' locker rooms.

The school's west wing extends north-south along 39th Avenue S, forking into two smaller wings at the north end. and indented to form a small west-facing courtyard with semicircular drive, along 39th Avenue S. The west wing contains two stories of classrooms wrapping the double-height central auditorium, and one story of specialized, high-ceilinged classrooms at the forked north end of the wing—art and shop classrooms on the west fork, and orchestra/music rehearsal spaces on the east fork.

The back or north side of the building presents a far less formally composed appearance, in contrast to the front. The open spaces between the building wings are largely paved and used for parking. In the past, these

² Caspar Sharples is frequently misspelled as Casper; Caspar is correct and was the spelling used on the school signage.

open spaces were occupied by over a dozen wood-frame portable classroom buildings; at present, only two portables remain. The open courtyards are enclosed by chain link fencing.

The building structure is reinforced concrete wall construction on concrete continuous footings, with reinforced concrete interior floors and floor beams, and roofs supported in most locations by a steel framing system. Exterior walls are clad with reddish-hued Roman brick veneer laid in a one-third running bond pattern. Walls are topped by a narrow, slightly projecting, two-part parapet cap with flashing, creating a crisp shadow line. Some parts of less prominent facades, such as the upper part of the gymnasium or auditorium which rises above the surrounding roofs, are simply finished as painted, rough, board-formed concrete. These were originally painted a white or light color, which emphasized the contrast between the materials and massing.

There are a large variety of window types on the building but few originals remain—almost all of the windows at present are non-sympathetic replacements installed in 2006. Original windows, where they remain, are single-glazed aluminum sash, glass block, or glass block with an operable aluminum sash component. Most typical classroom windows originally consisted of banks of high-set, glass block panels arranged over a horizontal strip of three or four clear glass lites of fixed and hopper-style operable aluminum sash. These were typically ganged together across a facade, giving significant character, for example, to the front of the building along S Graham Street. Most of these glass block window assemblies were removed in 2006, except in a few non-primary locations. At most non-classroom locations, original windows typically featured large regular grids of clear glass lites in fixed and operable sash.

Remaining original windows can be found primarily at all of the gymnasium facades; along receiving and custodial offices at the east facade; at the building entry/stair halls; and at the specialized classrooms in the northwest building corner. In one location—the orchestra room at the east upper fork on the west wing—the original glass block fenestration has been replaced by Kalwall, a translucent proprietary fiberglass wall assembly that somewhat resembles glass block.

The modern replacement windows are aluminum sash with muntin patterns that do not match original configurations. They are identifiable also by their green-tinted glass. These windows include energy efficient double glazing and integral interior canvas shades.

Windows are typically ganged together with concrete mullions at classroom elevations, creating highly glazed walls on the interior. At other locations, windows are expressed as punched openings on exterior facades for compositional effect. Some windows feature projecting concrete sills, or are separated by concrete mullions recessed from the wall plane. Others are wrapped by projecting concrete frames, such as on the primary south facade. These surrounds create a rhythmic, repeating grid effect.

Building Interior

Typical interior finishes throughout the building include painted plaster walls, vinyl tile flooring, wood baseboards, acoustical tile ceilings, and florescent lighting. Doors are solid wood with wood trim. Nearly all building entry doors feature three vertically-oriented square enframed panels of which the upper two are glazed. Interior ceiling heights vary by room and use.

Main Entry and Corridors – The main building entry features three double-doors with transoms which open to a vestibule and then to the main stair hall, connecting to a widened portion of the central corridor that serves as a foyer to the auditorium and the school offices. Beyond the foyer, continuous double-loaded cross-axial corridors, typically 14 feet wide and 9 feet high, connect all building wings, entries, and most interior spaces. Painted metal student lockers line both sides of hallways throughout the building. Corridor walls are lined with two rows of metal and cork tack strips, and drinking fountains are located at intervals. Classroom

doorways along the corridors are typically recessed, and some classrooms feature enframed window display cases adjacent to the door in the corridor for exhibits.

Stairways – Six building entries feature adjacent stairways which provide vertical circulation to the central two-story core of classrooms surrounding the auditorium. The largest and most elaborate is at the main entry. This 30 by 37 foot stairhall features a U-shaped open stair lit by a large, 23 by 29 foot south-facing window and outfitted with decorative brushed aluminum stair rails. Secondary stairways are less elaborate, with decorative aluminum railing typically located only at the window landings. All stairways feature painted concrete steps with embedded slip guard tiles; metal pipe handrails, and some have wide painted wood trim topping the knee wall.

Offices – The school's suite of administrative offices are located on the first floor to the west of the main entry, lit by windows along the south facade. The suite includes multiple relites within partitions for interior lighting, and extensive original built-in cabinetry.

Library – On the second floor, located directly above the administrative offices, is the library. This large, 38 by 95 foot space features a completely glazed south wall, and a beamed, slanted ceiling which rises to over 20 feet at the highest point. Two double doors provide access to the adjacent hallway, between which is the original main desk. The perimeter interior walls are lined with wood bookcases, and there are two smaller work and conference rooms at the west end which are also lined with cases. Floors are carpeted. The library originally featured glass block windows. The current windows are aluminum sash replacements with greentinted glass.

Auditorium – On the north side of the main entry foyer is the auditorium (also called the assembly room), a large, triple-height interior space with a textured plaster ceiling approximately 35 feet high. This fully-equipped performance facility includes a banked floor with original, fixed steel and wood seating; a raised stage platform with overhead fly space; a projection booth; and a broadly curving second floor balcony. The simple, rectangular proscenium framing the stage has curved interior edges, and is flanked on both sides by a series of plaster wall panels and grilles.

Cafeteria – This large rectangular room is located in the east wing, and measures approximately 88 by 93 feet in plan, with a 17 foot high ceiling. Because it is surrounded by corridors, the ceiling flares slightly upward at the perimeter of the room, rising above the adjacent roof level, allowing a strip of original aluminum sash clerestory windows along the south and west sides. The center of the room has a flat ceiling, with six rectangular skylights, and is supported by a grid of six slender concrete columns. Floors are clad with vinyl tile. At the north side of the room is a bank of multiple doors that access the large skylit commercial kitchen, which features red quarry tile floors and white glazed tile walls up to seven feet.

Gymnasium – Occupying most the of east building wing is the large double gymnasium, with a clearspan interior space measuring 90 by 104 feet in plan, and approximately 30 feet to the ceiling. A network of deep steel trusses and girders support the roof of sawtooth monitor windows. The bilaterally symmetrical layout was designed so that an automatic folding partition (hung from the center, wood-clad steel truss) could separate the play court into boys' and girls' areas. Original glass block strip windows light the side walls, and there are original glass block windows and relites above the double entries at the north side foyer accessing Brighton Playfield. The floor is highly polished wood, tongue and groove court decking, and walls are painted concrete. Flanking the gymnasium court are boys' and girls' locker rooms and showers, which feature glazed tile walls, painted concrete floors, and glass block clerestory windows each with an operable center aluminum sash. Shower areas feature terrazzo floors, and low stem walls constructed of glazed structural clay tile.

Standard classroom – Classrooms are distributed throughout the building and vary slightly in size. They are typically rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 26 by 37 feet, and have a ceiling height at 13 feet 4 inches. Many classrooms have ceilings that slope towards the windows; in these cases, the ceiling high point is

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14 feet 2 inches. The perimeter wall is normally glazed with either three or four windows. Originally, these windows would have had glass block at the top and a strip of clear glass aluminum sash at eye level, but in all but a few classrooms, energy efficient green glass replacement windows were installed in 2006. Opposite the window wall, the classrooms typically have built-in wood and glass cabinets, shelves, drawers, counters, magazine racks, and other accourtements, ranging from basic to extensive, depending on the original intended use of the room. Walls are painted plaster, and doors and cabinetry feature wood trim. Floors are vinyl tile with rubber or vinyl base. Most rooms feature corkboards, dry erase boards, or tack strips on the walls, and at least one storage closet.

Specialized classrooms – Rooms requiring high levels of natural lighting and ventilation, such as art classrooms, wood shop, metal shop, or the like, are clustered at the northwest corner of the building. These have sawtooth roofs with clerestory windows and 14 foot high ceilings. These rooms are larger than typical classrooms, ranging from 40 by 50 feet to 50 by 60 feet. Most of these rooms have retained their original grid of aluminum sash windows. The wood shop also retains its original maple flooring.

Music-related rooms are located in the northeast portion of the west building wing. The orchestra room features concrete floors that are stepped and curved at the back, and 18 foot high ceilings, flanked by two walls formerly glazed with glass block but now replaced with translucent Kalwall. The choir room has a similar stepped concrete floor. A two-story suite of small, individual rehearsal rooms are clustered around an open stairway near the orchestra room.

Other specialized classrooms include two large, high-ceilinged classrooms at the southeast building corner, which originally housed the Home Management Center and the Foods Laboratory. The latter retains a series of original mock kitchens around the perimeter wall, which feature ca. 1952 cabinets, sinks, and laminate countertops. These rooms function now as the staff lounge.

Other – Boys' and girls' bathrooms are located throughout the building, and feature glazed tile walls up to 7 feet, tile floors, and sometimes period porcelain fixtures. The custodial offices are located at the southeastern and eastern side of the building, near the loading dock and boiler room. These offices feature finishes similar to the administrative offices. The boiler room is utilitarian, with concrete floors and original aluminum sash windows.

Summary of Primary Alterations

The school district and the city retain extensive records of permits and drawings for alterations to the subject property. Most are related to maintenance issues and are not significant. Many building and mechanical permits on file refer to the numerous portable classroom buildings installed, altered, or removed over the years.

Other minor alterations include interior renovations, such as the installation of partition walls to reorganize space (for example, Room 132, staff lounge; and Room 213E); technology and wiring upgrades to science rooms and the library; or alterations to bathroom plumbing.

The most significant alteration was the 2006 removal of original character-providing glass block windows on the primary south and west facades, and installation of green-tinted energy efficient replacements. The project was designed by Waldron Akira Architects. Not only did this alter the exterior appearance of the school building, it altered the interior conditions and qualities of the rooms affected, including most of the classrooms and the library.

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A. The Development of the Hillman City Neighborhood

The subject property is located on the north side of S Graham Street, between 39th and 42nd Avenue S, in the Hillman City neighborhood. Maps from the City of Seattle Municipal Archives categorize Hillman City as the southernmost part of the Columbia City neighborhood, rather than as a separate entity. S Graham Street serves as the southernmost boundary of Columbia City (and Hillman City), beyond which is the Brighton neighborhood to the south. Historically, the development of all of these areas was more closely tied to the development of the Rainier Valley, and the long north-south arterials Rainier Avenue S and Martin Luther King Jr. Way S (originally known as Empire Way), rather than to Beacon Hill which rises to the west. However, Beacon Hill and the Rainier Valley both share some overlapping histories by the mid-20th century due to patterns of residential development and the racial and ethnic groups that settled there. [See Figs. 92 – 94 for historic images of the neighborhood]

The Rainier Valley is topographically a broad valley floor extending southeastward from the east side of downtown Seattle towards Columbia City and Lake Washington beyond, encompassing an area roughly fifteen miles long and two miles wide.³ The area was initially surveyed in 1861, followed by a few sparse pioneer land claims. The valley was somewhat isolated and slow to develop, and was populated with small farmsteads in the 1870s and 1880s. Access to the northernmost part of the valley was cut off from early Seattle's downtown by the high ridge connecting Beacon Hill and First Hill. Beginning in 1890, the valley began to be opened up for development with the installation of the Rainier Valley Electric Railway, a streetcar which ran seven miles down the middle of the valley to the Columbia City vicinity. By 1894, the line reached Rainier Beach on the shores of Lake Washington, and by 1896, it extended as far as Renton. The streetcar line stimulated the first wave of residential growth in the valley from 1891 to 1910, in an area which had previously been occupied by scattered farmlands, timberlands, and a few saw and planing mills.

Columbia City was founded in 1890 as a speculative real estate development at the end of the streetcar line. The townsite consisted of 40 acres between Alaska and Hudson Streets, from 37th and 42nd Avenues, and was incorporated as a town in 1893. By 1905, the community had a population of 1,500 people, and featured a four-block commercial and civic core on Rainier Avenue centered around Ferdinand Street. Columbia City served as "downtown" for nearby settlements of Hillman City and Brighton to the south, and Rainier Beach to the southeast.

Hillman City was developed by Clarence D. Hillman (1870-1935), a prolific real estate speculator, whose career included platting and selling thousands of lots near Green Lake, Woodland Park, and other neighborhoods in Seattle, and parts of Kennydale and Mountlake Terrace in King County. Hillman's business model was to purchase logged-off land—believed to be of little value—and then subdivide it into residential lots, which he then audaciously promoted.⁴ Platting of the Hillman City began in 1903.

In 1907, the entire Rainier Valley south of Hanford Street including Columbia City, Hillman City, and Rainier Beach was incorporated into the Seattle city limits, and the Rainier Valley Electric Railway was renamed the Seattle Renton and Southern Railway as a sign of its enlarged service area.⁵

³ Historical context of the neighborhood primarily derived from Tobin, "North Rainier Valley Historic Context Statement," 2004, and Taylor, "Columbia City Historic District," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2004.

⁴ Wilma, David. "Hillman, Clarence Dayton (1870-1935)," HistoryLink essay 3080, March 10, 2001. Hillman sometimes overpromoted his properties. In 1911, he was convicted of fraud and was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison, after appealing his case all the way to the United States Supreme Court in 1912. Later, he moved to California and resumed real estate development activities in Paso Robles, Pasadena, and San Diego.

⁵ Dorpat, Paul. "Rails to Rainier," Seattle Times, Pacific Northwest Magazine, April 4, 2004.

Between 1907 and 1910, Jackson and Dearborn Streets downtown were regraded, lowering the Beacon Hill ridge by as much as 112 feet (at 12th Avenue and Dearborn). The regrades facilitated easier access to the Rainier Valley from downtown via Rainier Avenue S, encouraging development. In 1913, Rainier Avenue S was paved on either side of the streetcar tracks, and designated a primary state highway. The same year, the route of Empire Way (today's Martin Luther King Jr. Way S) was platted and designated a primary state highway. ⁶

In 1923, most of Rainier Avenue S was zoned for commercial use in Seattle's first zoning ordinance. Later, beginning in the late 1920s and 1930s, Rainier Avenue would begin to see automobile-related strip development. In 1937, streetcar service ended and the tracks were removed and replaced with pavement. Empire Way was also paved and extended in the 1930s.

By 1929, Sanborn fire insurance maps indicate that the Hillman City blocks around the subject site were more than half developed with houses. Many were clustered around Brighton Playfield, which provided an amenity to the area. The park site was logged-off land purchased by the city in 1913, but the presence of stumps and use of the site as a neighborhood garbage dump delayed for years the development a playfield. In 1928, funds were set aside for park improvements, and in the 1932 the shelter house and tennis court were built.⁷

By 1940, development of the Rainier Valley was still patchwork, and large areas of open land were still present. That year, Hillman City's population was described in demographic charts as consisting of 70-79% "foreign born white," with 20-24% having completed four years of high school, and 3-4% having completed four years of college. The area was one of several neighborhoods in Seattle with the highest percentage of craftsmen, manual, and industrial workers, and that they were 60-74% likely to own their home. At approximately the same time, ca. 1937 federal mortgage lending maps produced by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation—also known as "redlining" maps—classified Hillman City in general as "definitely declining" with the further description, "Very spotted residential district comprised of people of various nationalities. No typical price range of residential improvements—shacks to modern dwellings in this area... A mixture of old and new houses... Also has a transportation problem."

In the early 1940s, the United States entry into World War II led to extensive economic and construction activity in Seattle, particularly in the industrial areas near the Duwamish River. To house wartime workers and military personnel, two large federally-funded housing projects were constructed on Beacon Hill due to its proximity to Boeing—Rainier Vista and Holly Park. These were completed in 1943, the latter located approximately one-half mile southwest from the subject site.

The wartime influx of workers and military brought an increased ethnic diversity to Seattle's population, due to significant numbers of Filipino and African-American servicemen and industrial workers, many of whom found housing on Beacon Hill and in the Rainier Valley. On the other hand, in 1942, Japanese and Japanese-American residents were relocated to inland internment camps for the duration of the war; many were unable to retain their property while absent, and did not return to the area or moved to new neighborhoods.

In the postwar decades, the demographics of Rainier Valley and Hillman City began to change and become more diverse, and it became more densely settled. In the 1950s, areas along Rainier Avenue S and Empire Way were rezoned to allow extensive commercial development. Hillman City saw an increase in single family home construction. In 1953, the Holly Park housing development was transferred to the Seattle Housing Authority after the Korean War, and was converted to low-income housing.

⁶ Tobin, "North Rainier Valley Historic Context Statement," p. 19.

⁷ "Park Board wins, others must skimp," Seattle Times, August 2, 1928; and Don Sherwood park history files.

⁸ Schmid, Charts 44, 53, 70, 89 (pp. 127, 157, 187, 229).

⁹ Nelson et al., "Mapping Inequality," 2021.

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By 1970, African-Americans accounted for 14 percent of Rainier Valley, and Asians 17 percent, as the white population declined. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the end of the Vietnam War brought an influx of Filipinos, Vietnamese, and other Southeast Asian populations to Seattle and to this area. ¹⁰ Beginning in the late 1970s, the area had become home to increasing numbers of Ethiopians, Eritreans, and Somalis.

Between 1981 and 1984, the eight-mile long Empire Way was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Way S, after a multi-year effort by the community to honor the civil rights leader.

In 1996, the Holly Park subdivision was demolished and redeveloped as a mixed-income community, including re-orientation of streets and rights of way, and renamed New Holly.

In the 2000s, light rail was proposed on Martin Luther King Jr. Way S. It was finally installed and operational to the public in 2009.

Today, the Rainier Valley zip code (98118) is one of the most diverse in the state. In 2010, the population consisted of 32.6% Asian (approximately 14,000 people), 30.9% white (13,100 people), 25.9% African-American (11,000 people), and 8.1% Hispanic (4,450 people).

B. Historic Overview of Aki Kurose Middle School

The subject property originally opened in 1952 as Caspar W. Sharples Junior High School, during a period of postwar expansion for the Seattle School District. The school was intended to serve a large area in Rainier Valley and southeast Seattle. 12 It was renamed Aki Kurose Middle School in 1999. [See Figs. 95 – 118 for historic photos of the school].

Development of the Site

The need for a new junior high serving the Rainier Valley neighborhoods was recognized by early 1942, to accommodate a portion of the 80,000 war workers and their families that had moved to Seattle during World War II.¹³ However, a federal directive in 1942 prohibited any new permanent school construction for the war's duration in order to conserve critical materials. With the end of the war in September 1945, school planning and funding efforts began in earnest. That year, a building planning committee reaffirmed the junior high school organization plan adopted in the 1920s. In 1946, the first of a series of six bond issues over the next twelve years were approved for school construction.¹⁴

In autumn 1947, the school board established a site selection committee made up of community leaders to determine the site for a new junior high school for southeast Seattle, somewhere between Rainier Avenue S and Empire Way S (later known as Martin Luther King Jr. Way S). The proposed junior high was initially intended to accommodate all seventh and eighth graders from eight crowded area elementary schools, thereby eliminating the need for additional elementary schools to be constructed, and freeing up space in existing schools for increasing enrollment.¹⁵

In January 1948, the subject site was selected—an existing residential block between Graham and Bateman Streets, and between 39th and 42nd Avenues S, due to its proximity to a Seattle park, Brighton Playfield. The

¹⁰ Bryan, Zachariah, "The Rainier Valley—a neighborhood continually in flux," Northwest Asian Weekly, August 15, 2013.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Historic overview derived from Thompson and Marr, pp. 158-160, unless noted otherwise.

¹³ "Seattle fails to get school building fund," Seattle Times, June 13, 1942, p. 4.

¹⁴ Thompson and Marr, p. xii.

¹⁵ "New jr. high plan disclosed," Seattle Times, November 1, 1947, p. 7.

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School Board asked the Parks Department to deed use of the park to the proposed school, and in return the future gymnasium would be made available for use by not only the students, but by the Parks Department. In May 1948, the architect was hired and design of the building began. Later that summer, the purchase by the city from the individual owners of the dozen or so ca. 1910s-20s houses on the subject site was completed, allowing for their later demolition. In the November elections that year, a school bond issue was passed in order to fund the construction of the subject school building, as well as another junior high in southwest Seattle. In the November elections that year, a school bond issue was passed in order to fund the construction of the subject school building, as well as another junior high in southwest Seattle.

By summer 1949, the school board approved the architect's preliminary drawings for the subject building, and instructed them to draft final plan and prepare specifications. ¹⁹ Final architect's drawings were dated March 15, 1950, and the building permit (No. 405080) was issued shortly thereafter. Construction presumably began in late spring or early summer 1950, and the building was completed in late August/early September 1952, just in time for the school year to begin. The final building cost was reported as \$2,357,589.²⁰

In 1952, Sharples Junior High initially drew students from ten elementary schools: Beacon Hill, Muir, Whitworth, Hawthorne, Van Asselt, Emerson, Brighton, Dunlap, Columbia, and Rainier View. In the first year of operation, there were over 1,220 students enrolled in grades 7-9, and 130 sixth graders.²¹

The school was named after Dr. Caspar Wistar Sharples (1866-1941), a prominent early Seattle physician and the long-time Chief of Staff at Children's Orthopedic Hospital. His wife, the former Anne Goodrell, was the physical education supervisor for Seattle Public Schools. Beginning in 1922, Dr. Sharples served for nine years on the Seattle School Board.²²

Later Years

For school year 1956-57, enrollment increased to 1,839 students, but dropped the next year to 1,550 due to the opening of Asa Mercer Junior High next to Jefferson Park on Beacon Hill, which drew students from Beacon Hill, Muir, and parts of Van Asselt and Columbia Elementary Schools. Two years later, enrollment at Sharples peaked at 1,878 with 17 portables in use, some of which were installed in Brighton Playfield along 42nd Avenue S, as evidenced by historic photos. In 1960, Rainier Beach Junior High School opened for students coming out of Rainier View, Dunlap, and Emerson Elementary Schools, lowering Sharples' enrollment to 1,290.

The late 1960s through the 1980s were a period of change for the school. In 1969, it reportedly had a student body of 1,354, with approximately 200 African-American and 100 Asian-American students. Changing demographics resulted in some racial friction. That year, the school's principal in a newspaper interview described conditions there as "a racial battle zone...where black and white meet, not through force or anything else, but through the natural movement of people in the urban center," and said, "the Sharples area

¹⁶ "Teaching ban to be lifted," Seattle Times, January 17, 1948, p. 2; and "School plans near finish," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, August 7, 1949, p. 89.

¹⁷ "School men study at workshops," *Seattle Times*, May 22, 1948, p. 2; and "School Board OK's \$26,575 bid for old Fulton Building," *Seattle Times*, August 21, 1948, p. 3.

¹⁸ "School bonds to keep up Seattle building plans," Seattle Times, November 7, 1948, p. 24.

¹⁹ "Plans for three new schools approved; to cost \$4,200,000," Seattle Times, August 6, 1949, p. 10; and "School plans near finish," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, August 7, 1949, p. 89.

²⁰ "Delay not seen in completion of new schools," *Seattle Times*, September 17, 1951, p. 3; and "Three new junior high schools in Seattle system," *Seattle Times*, August 31, 1952, p. 72.

²¹ Historic overview derived from Thompson and Marr, pp. 158-160.

²² Sharples was named after his ancestor, Caspar Wistar (1761-1818), a physician and an anatomy professor at the University of Pennsylvania, in honor of whom the botanical genus Wisteria was named (the alternate spelling being an item of contention). For that reason, a wisteria bush was planted to the left of the main entrance in a ceremony in 1955, and the wisteria flower was designated the school flower. (Thompson and Marr, p. 159). The bush appears to no longer be there.

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is witnessing the struggle of the white middle-class person resisting what he considers the threat of blacks moving in." ²³

In 1974, enrollment dropped to its lowest levels, only 950 students in 1974. However, in 1975 the school was described as "one of the most racially mixed schools in the Seattle area," which staged a travelling, annual "multi-ethnic show of Filipino, Japanese, Chicano, Samoan, Chinese, Israeli, and African performances" by more than 100 students "to keep the customs and dances of the student's culture intact." Also in the mid-1970s, Mandarin Chinese began to be taught at Sharples as a foreign language.

In 1978, as part of the Seattle School District's mandatory desegregation plan, which went into effect that year, students from North Seattle's Woodrow Wilson Junior High (which closed that year) and Broadview Elementary were transferred to Sharples. The desegregation plan was controversial in North Seattle neighborhoods, but far less so in its southeast areas.

In 1981, the school board was dealing with declining district-wide enrollment as well as the shift from junior high schools to middle schools. The school board closed Sharples as a regular school, moving its students to the ca. 1973 South Shore Middle School, at Rainier Avenue S and S Henderson Street in the Dunlap neighborhood to the south.

Sharples then became the site for several special programs, including the Sharples Alternative Secondary School, which opened in 1981-82. It served students who began 9th grade, were under age 21, and were generally behind in credits. These students primarily came from central and southeast Seattle. The Alternative Secondary School also offered a reentry program for students who had dropped out or had been suspended. Other programs housed in Sharples in the 1980s were the Teenage Parent Program, and the Project Transition vocational program for youth with disabilities. As described in *Building for Learning: Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000*, the programs at Sharples "made an 'attempt to accommodate anything in their lives that might prevent them from finishing school—including children, jobs or brushes with the juvenile justice system.' In addition, it made 'an extra effort to make students aware of vocational training and job opportunities.' "25

Responding to demographic trends in southeast Seattle, Sharples also became home to a bilingual orientation program for a large number of newly arrived immigrants from varied countries who were in need of an intensive English language program. This program was designed to ready them for entrance to regular schools and to help them adjust to life in a new country.

For two academic years, between 1988 and 1990, Sharples was wholly given over as the temporary home of the students of Franklin High School, in the Mt. Baker neighborhood, while that sizable facility was being renovated. For that reason, the special programs established at Sharples a few years earlier had to be moved to new, temporary locations. They returned in the fall of 1990. A new program developed during that time, the Samoan Integration Services, was established to assist those who were having trouble in the classroom, and it also returned to Sharples. For one year in the early 1990s, the school provided an expanded home for the African American Academy, but that program was moved due to problems encountered in sharing the building with older students.

By the end of the decade, Sharples and South Shore Middle School traded programs again. In September 1999, the various special Sharples Alternative programs moved to South Shore, while the latter's middle school students moved to the Sharples building.

²³ Angelos, Constantine, "Principal outlines 'battle zone' tactics," Seattle Times, April 27, 1969, p. 24.

²⁴ "School's ethnic show to travel," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, February 1, 1975, p. 18.

²⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 159. The citation quotes sources that are not referenced.

Two months later, in November 1999, the Sharples property was renamed Aki Kurose Middle School, to honor an award-winning elementary school teacher who taught in the Seattle School District for twenty-five years. Kurose (1925-1998) was a peace and social-justice activist, and received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Education and the United Nations Human Rights Award for her efforts. However, the school renaming was not without controversy, as the Caspar Sharples name was retired and not reassigned.²⁶

The Original Designer, Architect William Mallis

The designer of the subject building was William Mallis (1883-1954), a Seattle architect who was active from the 1920s to the early 1950s and a prolific designer of public schools throughout the state. The subject property—one of several junior high schools designed by Mallis's firm—was developed and completed towards the end of his career. [See Figs. 119 – 128 for work by William Mallis].

Mallis was born in Auchterarder, a small town in central Scotland, in 1883, where his father owned a small boot-making factory.²⁷ As a young man, Mallis apprenticed for four years with an architectural firm in nearby Perth. In 1905, at age 22, he visited the United States for the first time, but returned to Scotland. He appears to have formally immigrated to the U.S. in 1908 and was naturalized as an American citizen in 1916.

In 1910 Mallis was working as an architect in Hutchinson, Kansas, then in 1912 he was hired by the architecture office of John H. Felt & Company in Kansas City, Missouri, where he gained experience working as a draftsman for five years. Felt & Company was a prominent regional firm, and was particularly associated with the design of schools, churches, and other institutional buildings in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. During the time that Mallis worked there, Felt & Company was actively involved in progressive education reform ideas and their impact on school building design. The firm developed a model small-school template to be used in rural districts. It was the only one endorsed by the State of Missouri's education superintendent and was widely built throughout the state.²⁸

Around 1917 to 1918, conflicting sources are unclear as to whether Mallis was living and working as an architect in the small town of Fallon, Nevada, or had moved to Seattle. He apparently did not serve in World War I during these years. In any event, by late 1918 Mallis was employed as a structural draftsman for the Pacific Coast Coal Company in Seattle, and by 1919 he had established his own design practice, sharing an office with architect and fellow Scotsman William Aitken in the Lyon Building downtown.²⁹

From the early 1920s through the mid-1940s, Mallis found work primarily designing schools for districts in the Seattle region and in Western Washington. He typically employed relatively simple Beaux-Arts plans with straightforward Tudor Revival or classically-inspired brick exteriors in his designs, following the historicist conventions of the time. During the Depression era of the mid to late 1930s, Mallis began to experiment with Art Moderne/Art Deco cast concrete structures.

Projects constructed during the period 1920s-1940s include:

- Union High School (1922-23, demolished), a two-story, boxy brick and terra cotta clad structure sited along the Lake Washington shoreline in Kirkland, demolished and now a city park
- Maple Leaf School (1925-26, demolished 1990), Seattle; a one-story modest Tudor Revival brick and cast stone elementary school

²⁶ Corr, O. Casey, "School Board's clumsy act embarrasses and annoys," *Seattle Times*, January 26, 2000, p. B4; and Shaw, Linda, "Sharples' relatives turn down offer to rename 'Old' Hay school for him," *Seattle Times*, January 6, 2010.

²⁷ Biographical information primarily from Krafft, Kathryn and David Rash, "Mallis, William," and Rash, David, "Mallis & DeHart," in Ochsner, p. 456; and Michelson, Alan, "William Mallis (architect)," Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD).

²⁸ Woodcox and Cole, pp. 7-17.

²⁹ 1919 Polk's Seattle Directory.

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- Renton High School (1930-31), a large, Tudor Revival style brick and terra cotta building with a prominent entry tower, still in use
- Skykomish School (1935-36), a three-story concrete Art Moderne/Art Deco building serving as both elementary school and high school in Skykomish
- Edmonds High School addition (1938-39, altered), in Edmonds, presently the Edmonds Performing Arts Center. This landmark Art Moderne/Art Deco concrete structure was an auditorium and classroom addition attached to an existing 1909 brick classical revival school building designed by Seattle architect James Stephen.³⁰

An atypical commission for Mallis in both style and use during this period was the city hall for Lynden, Washington, in 1927-28, for which he employed an Italian Renaissance Revival style for the stucco and cast stone clad building.

Mallis did not serve in World War II, but his practice in the 1940s was likely impacted by it, as no projects between 1940 to 1945 by him could be identified. Immediately after the war, construction activity began to increase to accommodate the pent-up demand for all building types, and especially schools. On September 14, 1945—just twelve days after the end of the war—the Seattle School Board awarded Mallis the commission for View Ridge Elementary School (1945-48), noting a significant increase in enrollment for grades K-3 over the previous year. This was the first commission by the school board to any architect after the war, and would be the first of several postwar school commissions for Mallis over the next decade. From the mid-1940s and for the rest of his career, Mallis's designs would be exclusively Modern in style.

In late 1946 or early 1947, Mallis received large commissions for school projects for the Shoreline School District as well, including Ridgecrest Elementary School (1949-50) and Jane Addams Junior High (1948-49, 1950-51). The latter was a 1,500 student facility described in 1948 as the largest school construction project in the state at that time, with a budgeted cost of \$2,000,000 (equivalent to almost 22 million dollars today). These and some other Shoreline schools would be absorbed into the Seattle School District in the early 1950s when Seattle's city limits expanded northward.

To manage this rapidly increasing workload, Mallis in 1948 formed the partnership of Mallis, DeHart & Hopkins with his long-time employees Joseph Henry Dillon DeHart and Robert Bruce Hopkins. DeHart (1899-1999) was born in Wisconsin and received an architecture degree from Montana State College. He was employed by Mallis's firm from 1927 to 1939, and was an associate with Mallis from 1939 to 1948.³³ Hopkins (1902-1967), from Deer Park, Washington, attended the University of Washington and had worked for Mallis almost continuously between 1935 and 1948.³⁴ The firm appears to have operated under this name until 1950 or 1951, when Hopkins left to start his own practice. Afterwards, the firm was called Mallis & DeHart.

In May 1948, Mallis was hired by the Seattle School District to design David Denny Junior High (1952, demolished) to serve the southwest section of the city, and Caspar Sharples/Aki Kurose Junior High (1952), the subject building, to serve the southeast section.³⁵

As these major projects were finishing, the firm designed three additional schools for the Shoreline School District in the early 1950s, including another junior high—Woodrow Wilson Junior High (1953, demolished)—and two elementary schools, Pinehurst Elementary (1953, demolished) and Viewlands Elementary (1954). All were absorbed into the Seattle School District within a year of completion. The firm

³⁰ Edmonds Center for the Arts (Edmonds, Washington), www.edmondscenterforthearts.org/who-we-are/our-history.

³¹ "Board trying to keep nurseries," Seattle Times, September 15, 1945, p. 2.

³² "New construction north and east of Seattle," Seattle Times, July 4, 1948, p. 58.

³³ Rash, David, "Mallis & DeHart," in Ochsner, p. 456.

³⁴ "R. Bruce Hopkins," obituary, Seattle Times, May 10, 1967, p. 42; and Ancestry.com.

³⁵ "School men to study workshops," Seattle Times, May 22, 1948, p. 2.

also designed Shoreline High School (1954-55), which remained part of the Shoreline School District until the facility was closed in 1985.

In December 1954, William Mallis died at age 71, apparently having never retired from work. Joseph DeHart continued operating the firm under the name Mallis & DeHart until 1968. Later significant projects include Whitman Junior High School (1959) in Seattle's Crown Hill/Blue Ridge neighborhood, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Bellevue (1958-59), Crawford Music Building at Seattle Pacific University (1959-61, demolished), and Nathan Hale High School (1962-64, altered) in Seattle's Meadowbrook neighborhood.

Mallis's Design of the Subject Building and Related Schools

Mallis was the architect of at least three other schools, besides the subject building, that incorporate similar design elements—strips of glass-block-over-operable-sash windows, glazed entry/stair vestibules, and a functionalist plan that integrates the entire program into one building: Lincoln Elementary School in Ellensburg, Nathan Eckstein Junior High in Seattle, and David Denny Junior High in Seattle. These buildings were designed in rapid succession and all produced within the span of a few years by his office.

In the post-World War II era, like many of his contemporaries, Mallis transitioned from period revival styles and Art Deco/Art Moderne to Modern style precepts in his designs. (The first Modern-style school for the Seattle School District was T. T. Minor Elementary, designed before the war by Naramore & Brady in 1939 and completed in 1941). The one-story View Ridge Elementary (1945-48) appears to have been Mallis's first Modern-style school. It featured a sprawling, single-building functionalist plan; asymmetrical, blocky massing clad in Roman brick and nearly devoid of ornamentation; and facades dominated by large banks of steel sash industrial windows.

At about the same time he was working on View Ridge, Mallis was hired by the Ellensburg, Washington school district to design Lincoln Elementary School (1947-48). For this project, Mallis again used a functionalist plan enclosed in a single building, and Roman brick cladding as he had at View Ridge. But his design emphasized the horizontality of the building with long rows of glass block windows along the two-story high primary facades, punctuated at a few locations by projecting, fully glazed entry/stair vestibules. The glass block windows featured a narrow strip of clear glass operable steel sash below, further emphasizing the horizontal nature of the building. While ultimately a Modern style building, the Ellensburg school retains some Art Moderne features, including a stylized, curved concrete stem wall at the main entrance; decorative brick quoins at the side entrances; and raised horizontal masonry bands linking the windows at the side and rear facades of the gymnasium.

The use of glass block windows in schools began to be a popular solution for lighting classrooms in the late 1930s, as it provided an abundance of daylight with no glare.³⁶ Glass block had only transitioned from a largely experimental product to a readily available building material with advances in manufacturing in 1934.³⁷ Locally, the product was known for its use in the Grand Coulee Dam, which began construction in 1933 and was one the largest applications of glass block in the 1930s. Glass block was also featured in the August 1937 issue of the trade periodical *Architectural Forum* for its extensive use in the new surgery rooms of Seattle's Swedish Hospital.³⁸ [See Figs. 129 – 130 for images related to glass block]

The introduction of light-directing blocks in the 1940s—which had prisms on the interior face that would direct light upwards towards the ceiling and diffuse it through the room—proved popular in schools. Most of the glass block installations for schools were used as large panels above a row of operable plate glass windows, as in the configuration used by Mallis.³⁹ Such a configuration appeared in trade catalogs in 1949,

³⁷ Fagan, p. 54.

³⁶ Fagan, p. 107.

³⁸ Fagan, pp. 112-113.

³⁹ Fagan, p. 123.

which may have been Mallis's inspiration.⁴⁰ This window configuration had also been used in NBBJ's Savidge Plymouth-Dodge dealership (now the Washington Talking Book Library) when it was constructed in 1947-48. NBBJ also used similar glass block windows for the drafting room at their own office on First Hill (NBBJ, 1948-50, demolished).

In Seattle, Mallis continued to use this design vocabulary, which he had first tried in Ellensburg, for Nathan Eckstein Junior High (now Middle) School (1948-50). He received the commission for that school in December 1946.⁴¹ The sizeable facility was intended to serve several Northeast Seattle neighborhoods, and was equipped with modern features that distinguished it from older junior highs built in the late 1920s.⁴² The building was also cited as the "first Seattle school to have lighting through the walls by means of directional glass block".⁴³

Although physically larger than Lincoln Elementary in Ellensburg, and with a more complex program, the two-story primary facades at Eckstein School are dominated by the same rows of glass-block-over-steel-sash windows, interspersed with fully glazed, often projecting, entry/stair vestibules. Located on a spacious, flattened hillside site at the corner of NE 75th Street and 30th Avenue NE, the building is sited towards the two streets in order to free up open space at the back, forming a rough "L" shape in plan. A wide, heavily glazed curving facade at the northeast corner serves as the school's main entry and houses the main offices, library, and auditorium. The functional plan also features a long double-loaded classroom wing extending along NE 75th Street; and a unique, projecting rear wing housing the orchestra room, with a curved rear wall reflecting the curved floor risers inside. The curve is repeated in a curved, glazed rear facade at the cafeteria, bridging the space between the gym and main school mass. Finally, the plan also features a 45 degree pivot where the gymnasium and specialized shop classrooms meet the rest of the building, which may have been in response to site conditions.

Nathan Eckstein Middle School was designated a Seattle landmark in 1981, recognized in the supporting nomination as a Modern-International Style work of architecture. 44 However, the school also appears to retain some hints of Art Moderne "streamline" styling, particularly the symmetrically curving main entry facade, curves at projecting entry/stair vestibules, a reeded parapet cap at the roof, the symmetrical gymnasium main facade, and minor ornamental details such as entry doors with porthole windows or the decorative reeding and fluting patterns around the stage proscenium inside the auditorium.

For David Denny Junior High (1952, demolished) and the subject building Caspar Sharples Junior High/Aki Kurose Middle School (1952), Mallis continued the design vocabulary used at Eckstein. The similar programs were developed on significantly differing sites—the Denny Junior High site was sloping and constricted, resulting in long, separate, one-story buildings which stepped down the slope. At Denny, Mallis continued to employ long strips of glass block windows. In the design of Sharples Junior High, Mallis began to break up the horizontality of the glass block windows with more prominent vertical window framing elements, emphatically separating the building from any remaining traces of Art Moderne.

Upon its completion in 1952, the subject building appears to be the last use of glass block windows and glazed entry/stair vestibules by Mallis. Two years later, for the one-story Viewlands Elementary School (1954) in Seattle, Mallis designed canted ceilings to allow high, steel sash clerestory windows opposite the typical classroom's large, standard "view" windows to establish balanced natural lighting. For Whitman Junior High School (Mallis & DeHart, 1959), designed and completed after Mallis's death, classroom fenestration and building facades are dominated by curtainwall-like grids of fixed and operable steel sash windows, and interior lighting balanced by artificial illumination.

⁴⁰ Pittsburgh Corning Corporation, unpaginated.

⁴¹ "Architects get school projects," Seattle Times, December 7, 1946, p. 3.

⁴² Thompson and Marr, pp. 85-86.

⁴³ "10 million building program for schools in next 2 years," Seattle Post-Intelligencer, January 2, 1949, p. 47.

⁴⁴ Thompson and Marr. p. 85.

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There are a few other examples of such use of glass block windows by other Seattle architects on contemporary Seattle schools (as well as in other institutional buildings). Examples include the one-story Van Asselt School (Jones & Bindon, 1950), where the windows line the long, street-facing facades at Beacon Avenue; or at the Lawton School addition (Young & Richardson, 1950, demolished) which featured a variant of the windows (with a wider operable sash) on a single side facade.

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Note:

UWSC

The abbreviations below are used in source citations for the following figures and images:

DON	Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, Seattle Historic Building Inventory
KCTA	King County Tax Assessor
MOHAI	Museum of History and Industry
PSRA	Puget Sound Regional Archives, historic tax assessor records
RVHS	Rainier Valley Historical Society
SDCI	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections
SMA	Seattle Municipal Archives
SPL	Seattle Public Library
SPSA	Seattle Public Schools Archives

University of Washington (Libraries) Special Collections

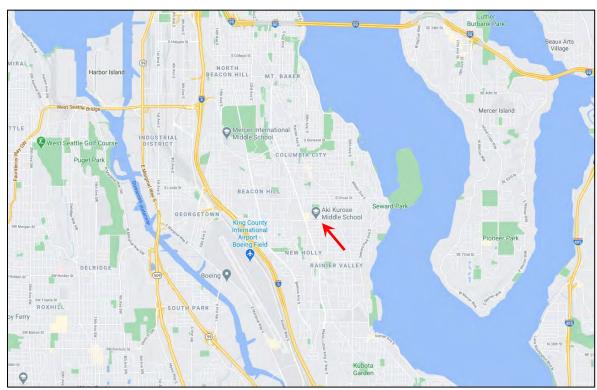


Fig. 1 – Approximate location of subject parcel indicated by marker and red arrow. North is up. (Google Maps 2019)

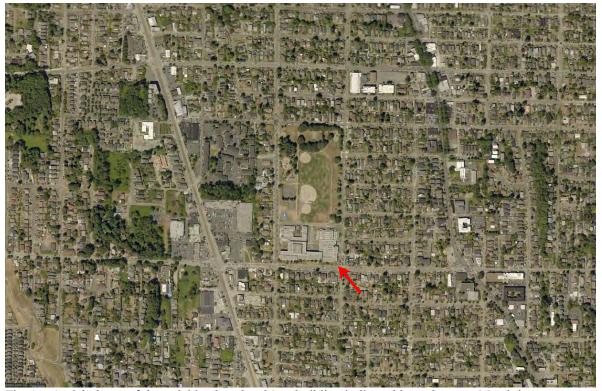


Fig. 2 – Aerial photo of the neighborhood; subject building indicated by red arrow. North is up. Martin Luther King Jr. Way S and Rainier Avenue S are the major north-south roads visible at left and right of the site. S Graham Street runs east-west on the south side of the school. (SDCI GIS)



Fig. 3 – Site plan of the subject site. North is up. Red dotted lines indicate two separate tax parcels, approximately, for the school and for Brighton Playfield. (SDCI GIS 2019)

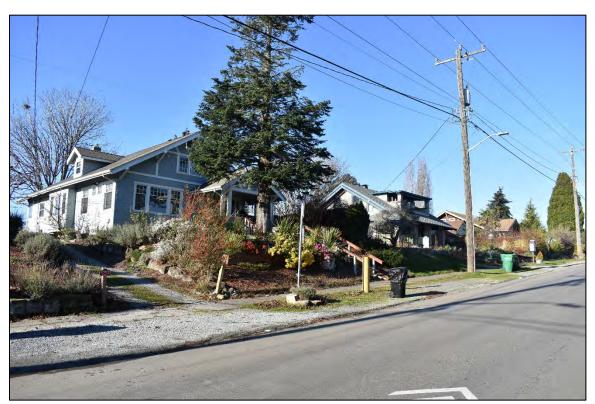


Fig. 4 – Context: View northwest on 39th Avenue S from subject site, showing houses across street.



Fig. 5 – Context: View east on S Graham Street from subject site, showing nearby blocks.



Fig. 6 – Context: Brighton Playfield, view south from S Juneau Street. Subject building visible in distance.



Fig. 7 – Context: Brighton Playfield, view north from school.



Fig. 8 – South facade, west part.



Fig. 9 – South facade, west part, view northeast on S Graham Street.





Fig. 10 – South facade, central part, showing main entry at left of center.



Fig. 11 – South facade, central part.



Fig. 12 – South facade, east part.





Fig. 13 – South facade, showing a secondary building entry (left) and the primary building entry (right).



Fig. 14 – South and east facades at southeast property corner.



Fig. 15 – East wing, east facade, south part, showing loading dock.



Fig. 16 – East wing, east facade, central part, showing boiler room.



Fig. 17 – East wing, east facade, central part.



Fig. 18 – East wing, east facade, north part, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 19 – East and north facades at northeast property corner, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 20 – East wing, north facade, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 21 – East wing, view west across north facade, showing gymnasium, access road, and playfields.



Fig. 22 – East wing, north facade, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 23 – East wing, north and west facades, distant view southeast from playfields, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 24 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; distant view south from playfields.



Fig. 25 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view south showing east, north, and west facades.



Fig. 26 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; west facade of east wing, north part, showing gymnasium.



Fig. 27 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view east showing west facade of east wing, south part.



Fig. 28 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view south showing north facade.



Fig. 29 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view east showing east facade of west wing, south part.

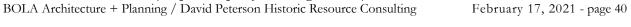




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Fig. 31 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view west showing east facade of west wing, north part, showing orchestra classroom.



Fig. 32 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; view west showing east facade of west wing, north part, detail of building entry near orchestra classroom.



Fig. 33 – Large courtyard between east and west wings; detail of window surrounds and masonry.



Fig. 34 – West wing, showing orchestra classroom.



Fig. 35 – West wing, north facades, distant view from playfields, view to southwest.



Fig. 36 – West wing, north facades, distant view from playfields, view south.



Fig. 37 – West wing, small north courtyard, showing portables.



Fig. 38 – West wing, small north courtyard, view southeast towards west and north facades. Portable at left.



Fig. 39 – West wing, small north courtyard, view southwest towards north and east facades. Portable at right.



Fig. 40 – West wing, north and west facades at northwest property corner, showing shop classrooms.



Fig. 41 – West wing, view south along west facade. Note sawtooth roof monitors.



Fig. 42 – West wing, west facade, north part, showing shop classrooms. Note sawtooth roof monitors.



Fig. 43 – West wing, west facade, central part, view northeast showing small west courtyard. Note sawtooth roof monitors.



Fig. 44 – West wing, small west courtyard, view north towards south facade.



Fig. 45 – West wing, small west courtyard, view east towards west facade.



Fig. 46 – West wing, small west courtyard, view east towards west facade, detail of entry.



Fig. 47 – West wing, small west courtyard, view southeast towards west and north facades.



Fig. 48 – West wing, small west courtyard, view southeast towards north facade.



Fig. 49 – West wing, small west courtyard, view northwest towards houses across 39th Avenue S.

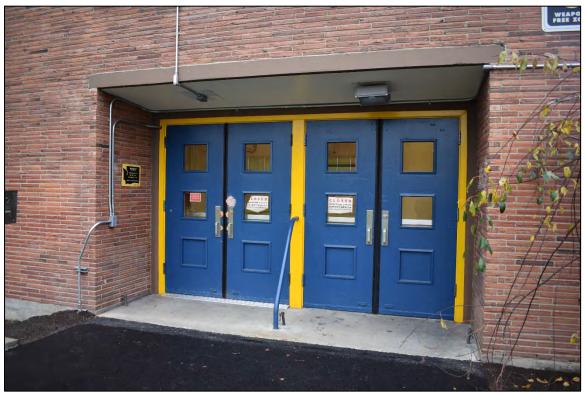


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Fig. 51 – West wing, west facade, south part.



Fig. 52 – West wing, west facade, south part, detail of windows, showing projecting window surround with flush sills, jambs, and headers.



Fig. 53 – West and south facades at southwest property corner.



Fig. 54 – Interior, main entry foyer, first floor, view south showing main stair.



Fig. 55 – Interior, main entry stair, second floor, view southeast.



Fig. 56 – Interior, main entry stair, second floor, view southeast showing large window at landing.



Fig. 57 – Interior, main entry stair, detail of handrails and guardrails.

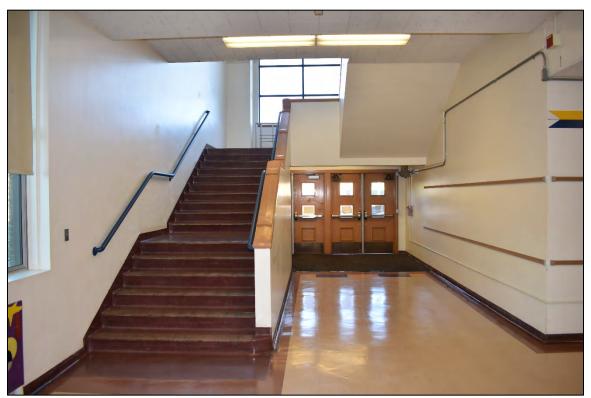


Fig. 58 – Interior, typical secondary building entry and stair.



Fig. 59 – Interior, typical secondary building entry and stair, showing stair landing window guardrail.



Fig. 60 – Interior, first floor corridor, view east at school offices and auditorium.



Fig. 61 – Interior, typical corridor, showing classroom entries and display windows.





Fig. 62 – Interior, first floor administrative offices.



Fig. 63 – Interior, auditorium.

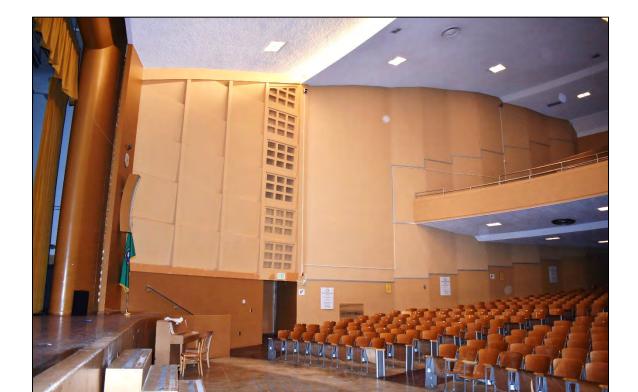


Fig. 64 – Interior, auditorium.



Fig. 65 – Interior, auditorium.



Fig. 66 – Interior, auditorium.



Fig. 67 – Interior, library.



Fig. 68 – Interior, cafeteria.



Fig. 69 – Interior, cafeteria.

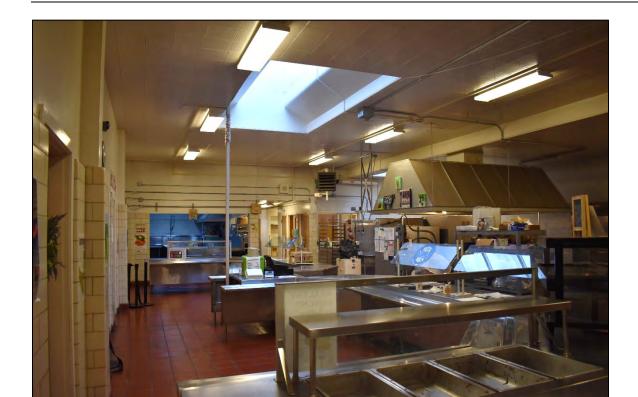


Fig. 70 – Interior, cafeteria kitchen.



Fig. 71 – Interior, custodial offices.





Fig. 72 – Interior, boiler room (left) and typical student restroom (right).



Fig. 73 – Interior, gymnasium.



Fig. 74 – Interior, gymnasium.



Fig. 75 – Interior, gymnasium, men's shower room (women's similar).



Fig. 76 – Interior, orchestra room. Windows are Kalwall replacements of original glass block.



Fig. 77 – Interior, suite of music rehearsal rooms next to orchestra room.



Fig. 78 – Interior, Room 115, representing a typical current classroom, with updated windows.



Fig. 79 – Interior, Room 108, an example of a typical original classroom.

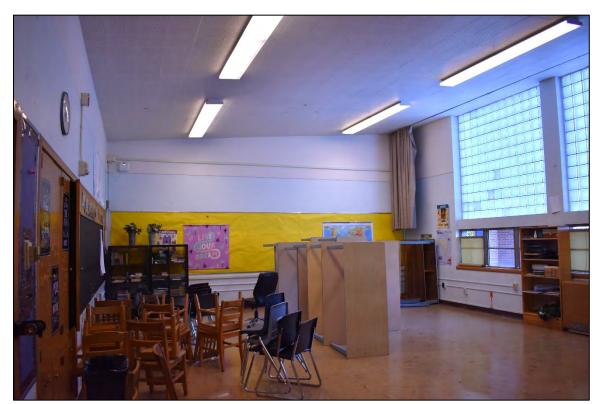


Fig. 80 – Interior, Room 108, an example of a typical original classroom.



Fig. 81 – Interior, Room 108, an example of a typical original classroom.



Fig. 82 – Interior, Room 110, originally the Drafting Room.



Fig. 83 – Interior, Room 110, originally the Drafting Room, showing built-in cabinets.



Fig. 84 – Interior, Room 111, which retains original aluminum sash windows.

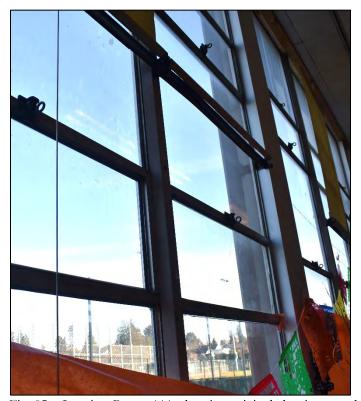




Fig. 85 – Interior, Room 111, showing original aluminum sash windows (left) and built-in cabinets (right).



Fig. 86 – Interior, Room 112, originally the Metal Shop (now Art Classroom).



Fig. 87 – Interior, Room 112, originally the Metal Shop (now Art Classroom).

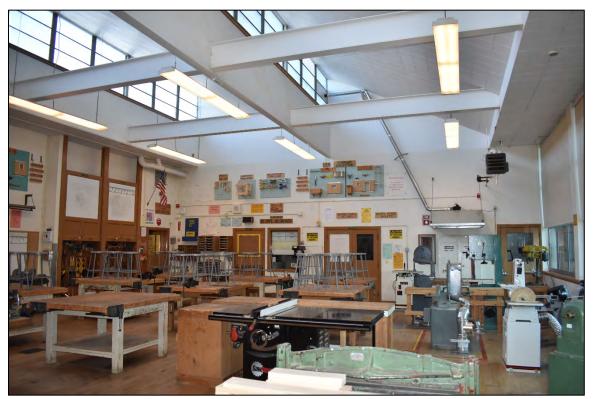


Fig. 88 – Interior, Room 113, originally the Wood Shop



Fig. 89 – Interior, Room 125W, originally a Science Room.



Fig. 90 – Interior, Room 132, originally the Food Lab (now Staff Lounge), showing high ceiling and sloping roof. Windows shown correspond to east part of south facade.



Fig. 91 – Interior, Room 132, originally the Food Lab (now Staff Lounge), showing one of ten ca.1952 kitchens in the room, originally used for student instruction.



Fig. 92 - 1917 map of south Seattle, showing Rainier Avenue extending southeastwards. North is up. Approximate location of subject site indicated by red box.



Fig. 93 – Circa 1910 view west at Orcas Street and Rainier Avenue S, the heart of Hillman City. St. Edward Catholic Church visible in the distance, at left. (RVHS 93.001.498)



Fig. 94 – Circa 1925 view eastward across the Rainier Valley near Orcas Street. Hillman City in distance. Lines drawn on the photo show the proposed route of the Empire Way extension. (RVHS 93.001.630)



Fig. 95 - 1936 aerial photo of the neighborhood. Subject building site indicated by red dotted line. At this time, much of the site was occupied by single family houses and a street right of way. (KCTA GIS)

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Fig. 96 – Aerial view of subject building and Brighton Playfield, ca. 1960. (SPSA 112-37)

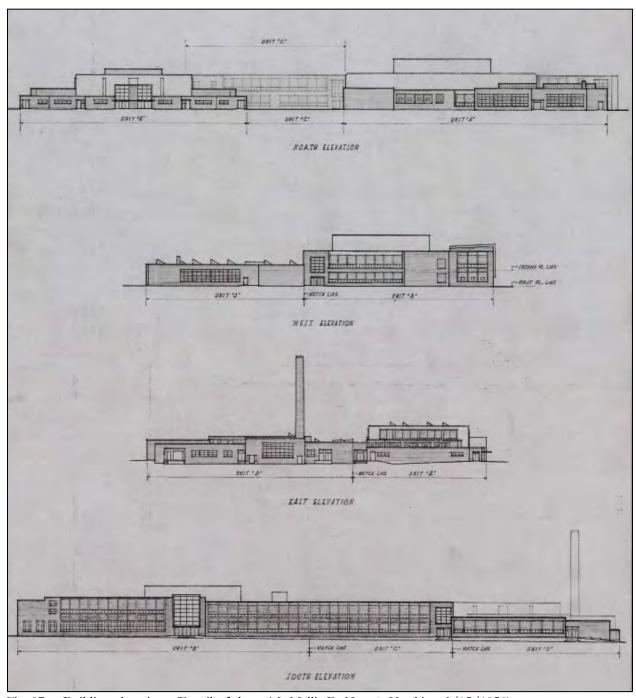


Fig. 97 – Building elevations (Detail of sheet A3, Mallis DeHart & Hopkins, 3/15/1950)



Fig. 98 – 1952 view east of south facade. (SPSA 112-35)



Fig. 99 – 1958 view east of south facade. (SPSA 112-1)



Fig. 100 – Circa 1970s view east of south facade. (SPSA 112-845)



Fig. 101 – Circa 1952 view of main entry. (SPSA 112-3)



Fig. 102 - Circa 1960s view west of south facade. (SPSA 112-843)

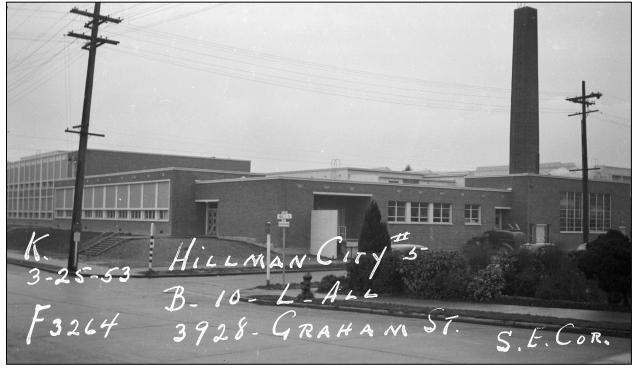


Fig. 103 – 1953 Tax Assessor photo showing southeast building corner. (KCTA)



Fig. 104 – 1953 Tax Assessor photo showing north and east facades of gymnasium. (KCTA)



Fig. 105 – Circa 1960s view of north facade and playfield. (SPSA 112-844)

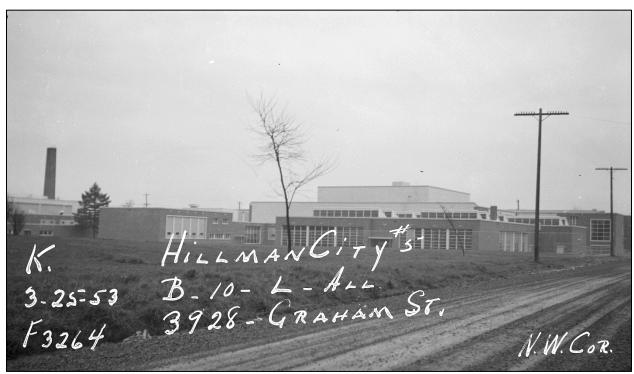


Fig. 106 – 1953 Tax Assessor photo showing a distant view of the north and west facades. (KCTA)



Fig. 107 – 1960 distant view of north side of building and playfields. (SPSA 112-36)



Fig. 108 – A typical classroom interior in 1952. (SPSA 112-41)



Fig. 109 – A chemistry classroom interior ca. 1955. (SPSA 112-489)



Fig. 110 – Language Lab interior ca. 1960s. (SPSA 112-182)



Fig. 111 – The library ca. 1955. The glass block windows and light fixtures are no longer intact. (SPSA 112-70)



Fig. 112 – Main entry stair in 1952. Original light fixtures are no longer intact. (SPSA 112-220)



Fig. 113 – Circa 1960s photo on main stairway (SPSA 112-104)



Fig. 114 – A typical corridor in 1953. (SPSA 112-51)



Fig. 115 – The cafeteria ca. 1952. (SPSA 112-50)



Fig. 116 – The auditorium in 1953. (SPSA 112-52)



Fig. 117 – The auditorium in 1952. (SPSA 112-217)



Fig. 118 – The gymnasium in 1952. (SPSA 112-216)

Other work by architect William Mallis



Fig. 119 – Kirkland High School (William Mallis, 1923, demolished), Kirkland, Washington. (Lake Washington High School)



Fig. 120 – Maple Leaf Elementary School (William Mallis, 1926), Seattle. (SPSA 253-69)



Fig. 121 – Renton High School (William Mallis, 1931), Renton, Washington. (Joe Mabel)



Fig. 122 – Edmonds High School addition (William Mallis, 1939), Edmonds, Washington, now the Edmonds Performing Arts Center. (City of Edmonds)



Fig. 123 – View Ridge Elementary School (William Mallis, 1948), Seattle. (SPSA 227-3)



Fig. 124 – Lincoln Elementary School (William Mallis, 1948, altered), Ellensburg, Washington. (Google Streetview)



Fig. 125 – David Denny Junior High School (William Mallis, 1952, demolished), Seattle, in 2011. (Google Streetview)



Fig. 126 – Nathan Eckstein Middle School (William Mallis, 1950), a Seattle landmark. (SPSA 104-45)



Fig. 127 – Nathan Eckstein Middle School (William Mallis, 1950), a Seattle landmark. (SPSA 104-47)



Fig. 128 – Nathan Eckstein Middle School (William Mallis, 1950), a Seattle landmark. (SPSA 104-48)

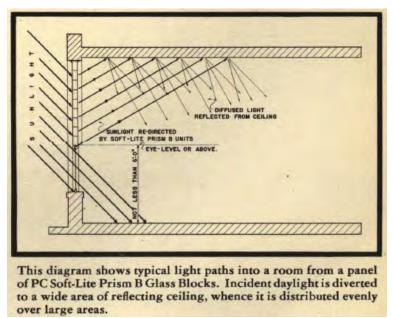
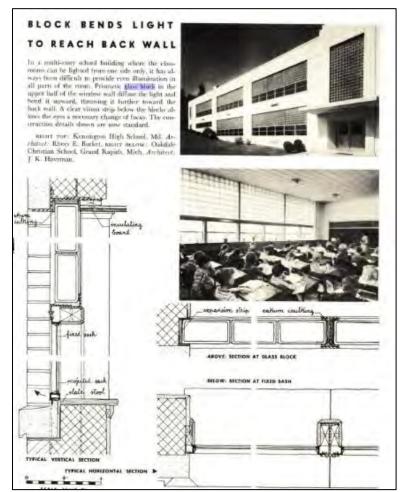


Fig. 129 – 1949 Pittsburgh Corning Corporation catalog, showing subject building's window type in section (glass block over clear glass).



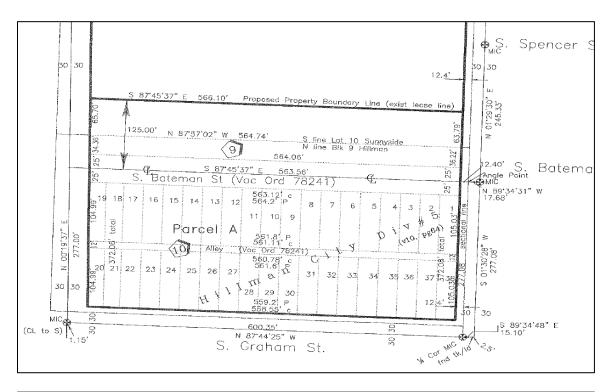
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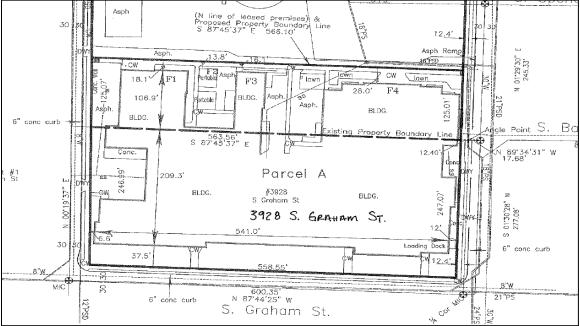
"Block bends light to reach back wall—"

'In a multi-story school building where the classrooms can be lighted from one side only, it has always been difficult to provide even illumination in all parts of the room.

Prismatic glass block in the upper half of the window wall diffuse the light and bend it upward, throwing it further toward the back wall. A clear vision strip below the blocks allows the eyes a necessary change of focus. The construction details shown are now standard."

Fig. 130 – From Windows in Modern Architecture, by Geoffrey Baker & Bruno Funaro (1948).





SITE PLAN

(Detail of Sheets 3 and 4, "Brighton Play Field," Lot Boundary Adjustment No. 2402540, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, King County Recording No. 20040702900002, James A. Stone, surveyor, 2004).

(See the complete full size survey sheets, attached)

S 88°08'34" E 627.73' sectional line

S. Juneau St. s 88°00'15" E 645.33' ML

11/e co,

12.4'

od intox Mic

LOT BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT NUMBER 2402540

GRANTOR (Owners): A. Seattle School District # 1

B. City of Seattle

GRANTEE: CITY OF SEATTLE KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON All 9&10 Hillman City #5
Lots Block SubDivision 10/64 Vol/pg 2/120 10-12 N/A Sunnyside 5 Ac
Lots Block SubDivision Vol/pg

CONTACT PERSON:

JoAnn Cowan or Marcia Flynn

Dept. of Parks & Recreation 800 Maynard Ave. South 3rd Floor

Seattle, WA 98134-1336

(206) 684-8064 or 233-3879 FAX: (206) 233-7038

E-MAIL: joann.cowan@seattle.gov marcia.flynn@seattle.gov



Parcel B Parcel Dif811310-0530 Owner: City of Seattle, Dept of Parks & Recreation Site Address: 5948 39th Ave S. Seattle, WA 98118 Zoning: SF5000 Area: 533,433.2 sf / 12.25 acres

12 S. Kenney St Parcel B 11 Raymond St ()Ave. 7 39th 5 42nd 10 S. Spencer St S 87'45'37" E 566.10' Proposed Property Boundary Line (exist 125.00' N 87'57'02" W 564.74' S line Lot 10 Sunnyside
N line Blk 9 Hillman 9 564.06' 12.40' S. Bateman St S 8745'37" E 563.56' Bateman St (Vac Ord 78241) N 89*34'31" W 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 563.12 c 8 600.35 N 87°44'25" S. Graham St.

Parcel A Parcel ID#333250-1090 Owner: Seattle School District #1 Site Address: 3928 S Graham St Seattle, WA 98118 Zoning: SF5000 Area: 209,156.5 sf /4.80 acres



SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATE

This map correctly represents a survey by me or under my direction in conformance with the requirements of the Survey Recording Act at the request of Seattle Park Dept. Property & Acquisition Services

Certificate No. 33137

RECORDER'S CERTIFICATE

James A. Stone

Sell M Supt. of Records

CITY OF SEATTLE

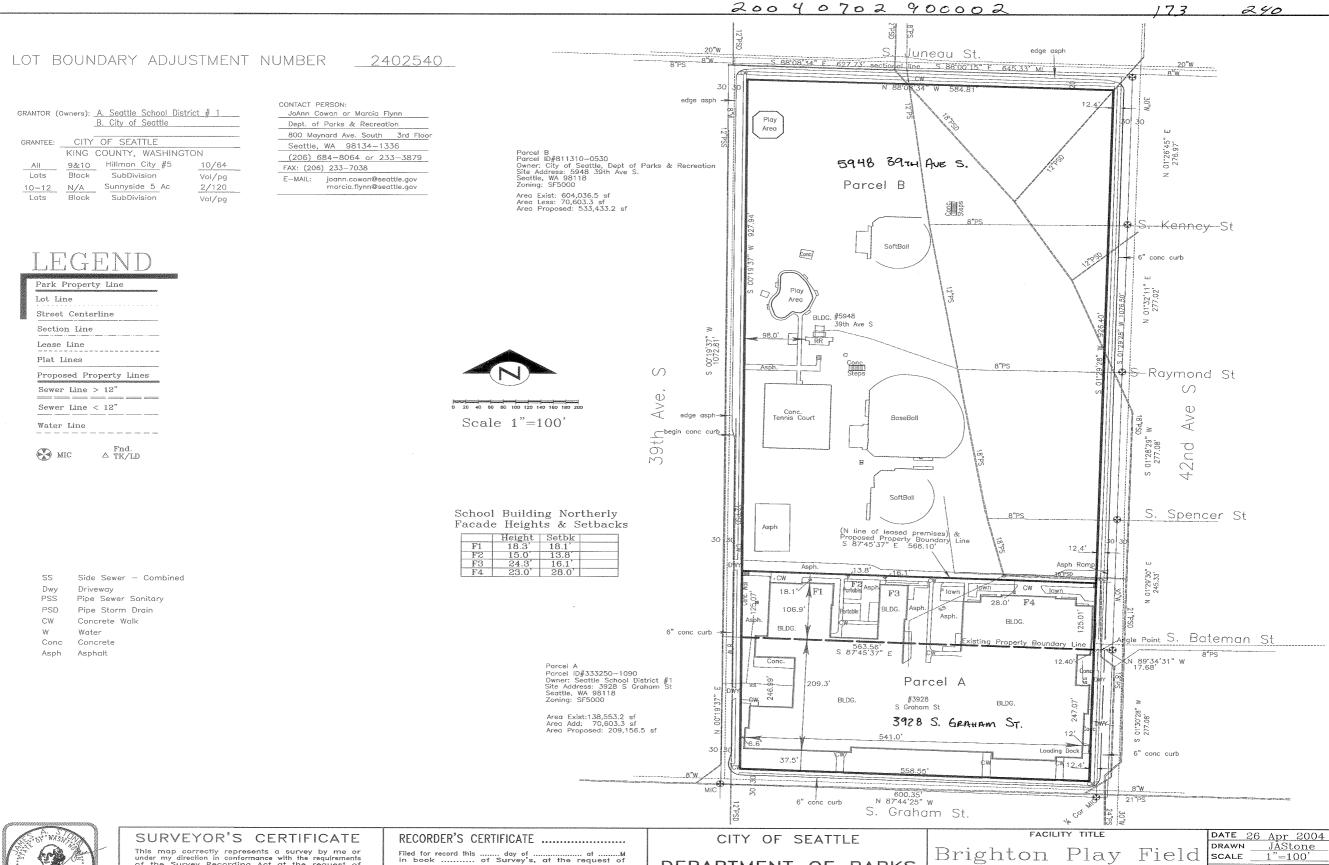
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

FACILITY TITLE Brighton Play Field Lot Boundary Adjustment Proposed Parcels

 DATE
 26
 Apr 2004

 DRAWN
 JAStone

 SCALE
 1" = 100"
 Survey In SE¼ of SW¼ 22-24-





This map correctly represents a survey by me or under my direction in conformance with the requirements of the Survey Recording Act at the request of Seattle Park Dept. Property & Acquisition Services

Certificate No. 33137

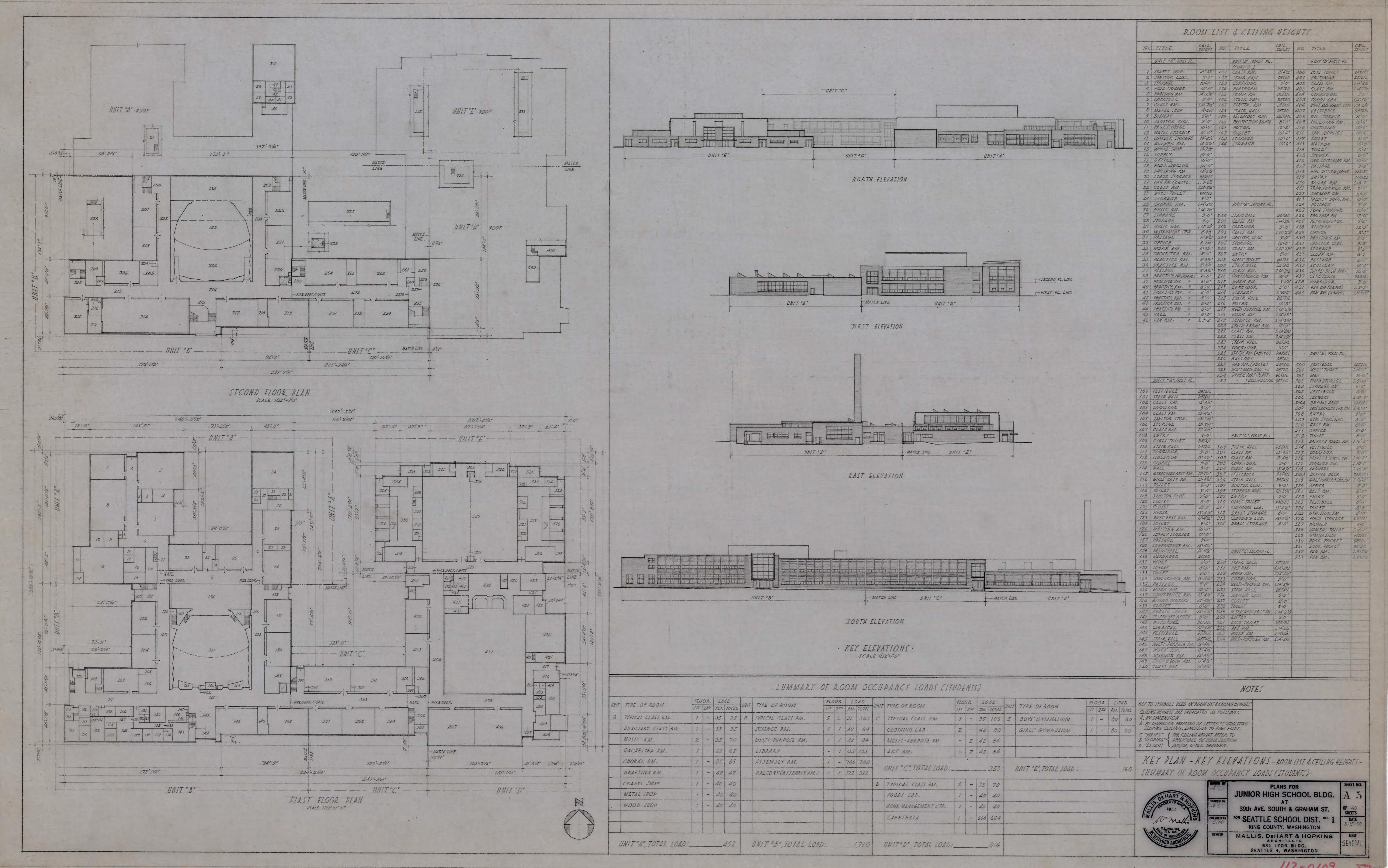
James A. Stone

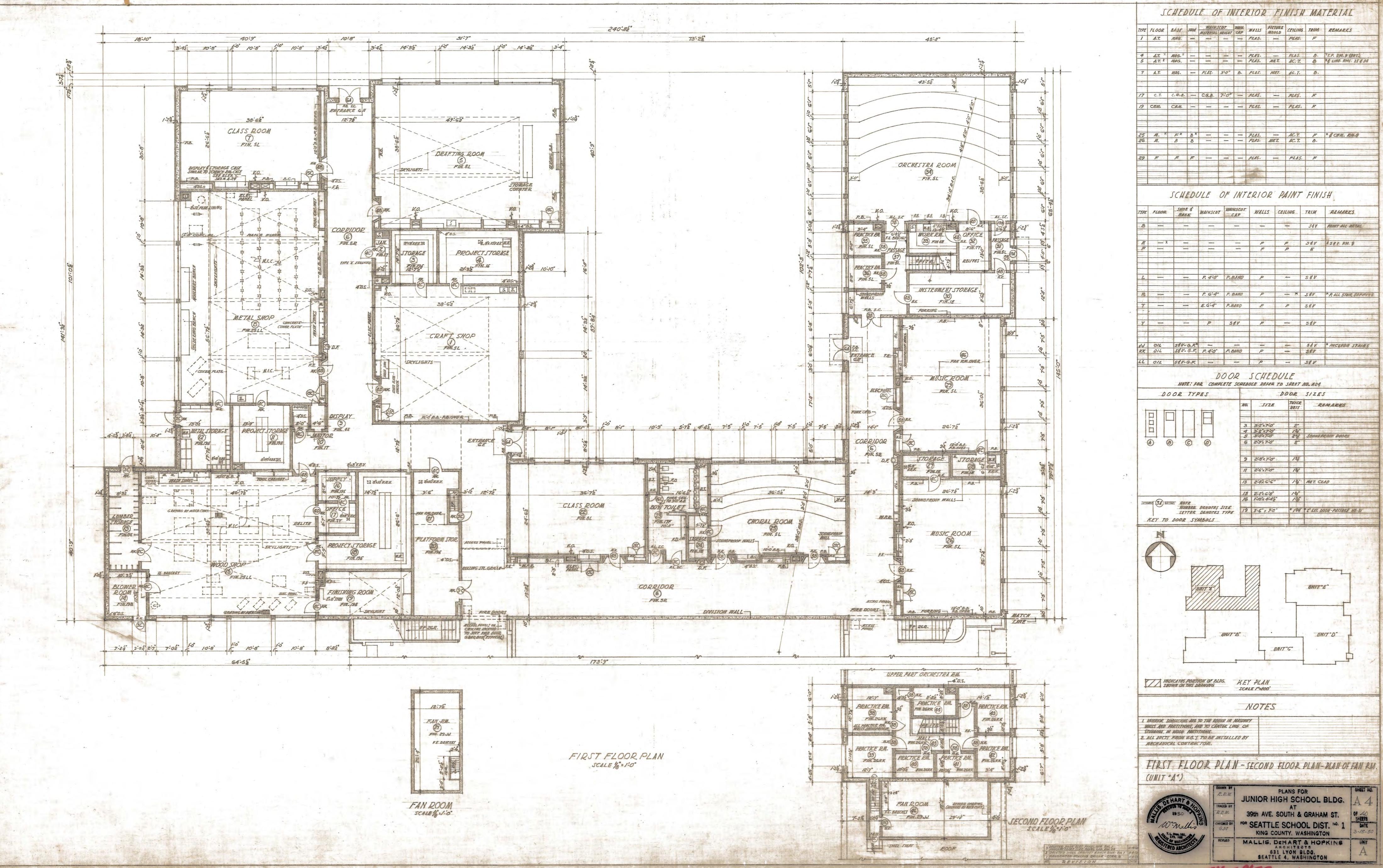
Mgr. Supt. of Records

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

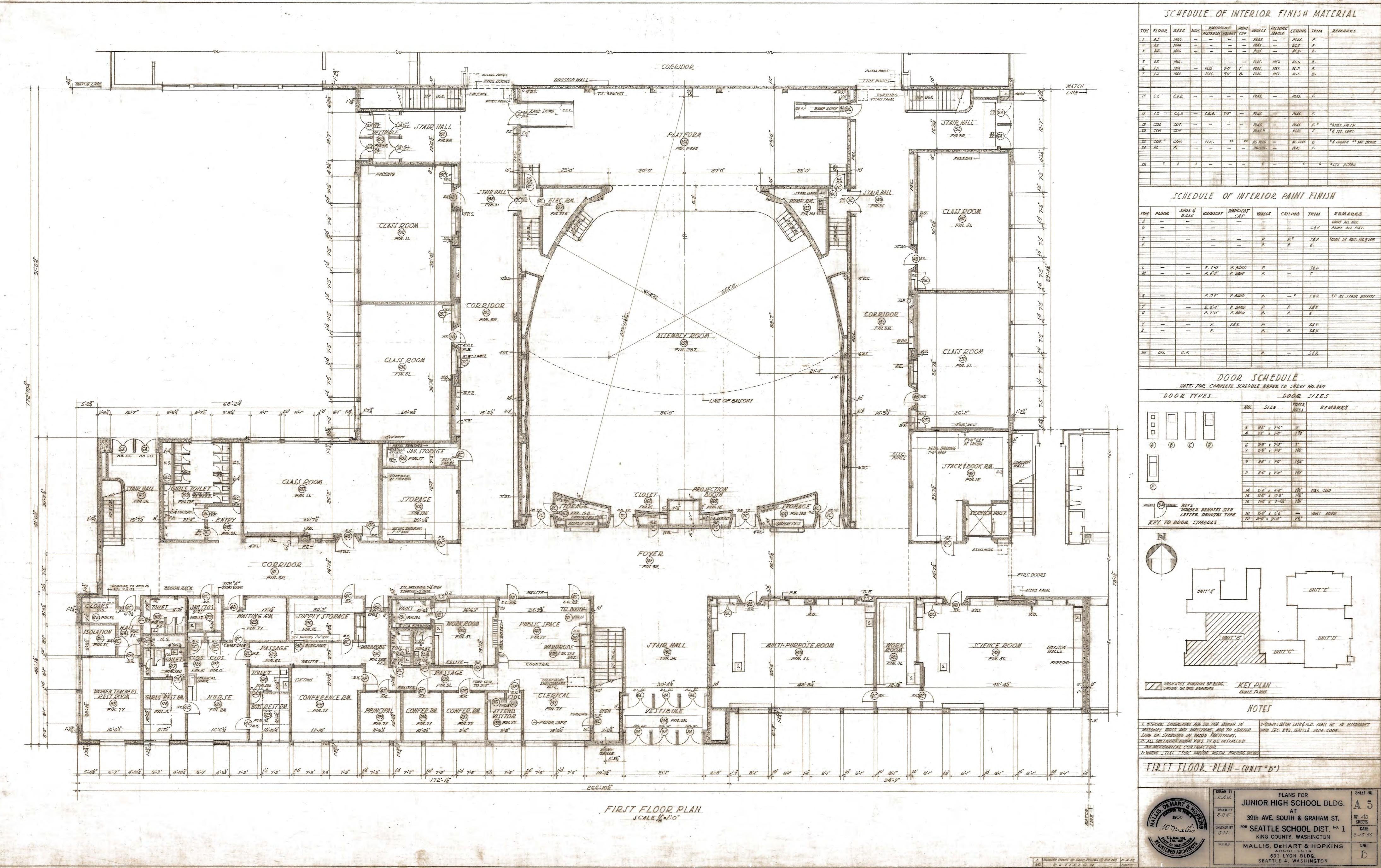
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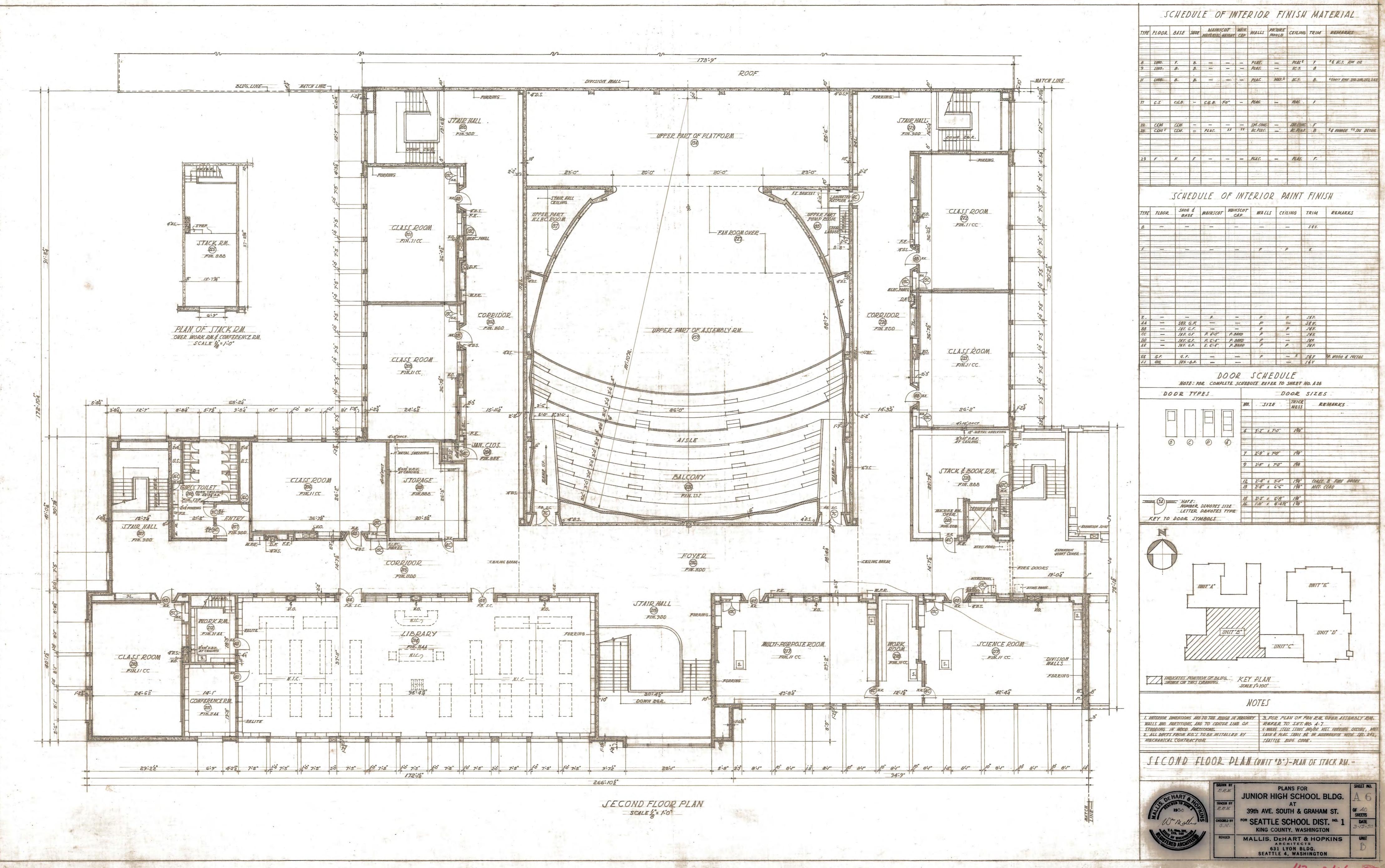
SHEET OF Survey In SE¼ of SW¼ 22-24-4



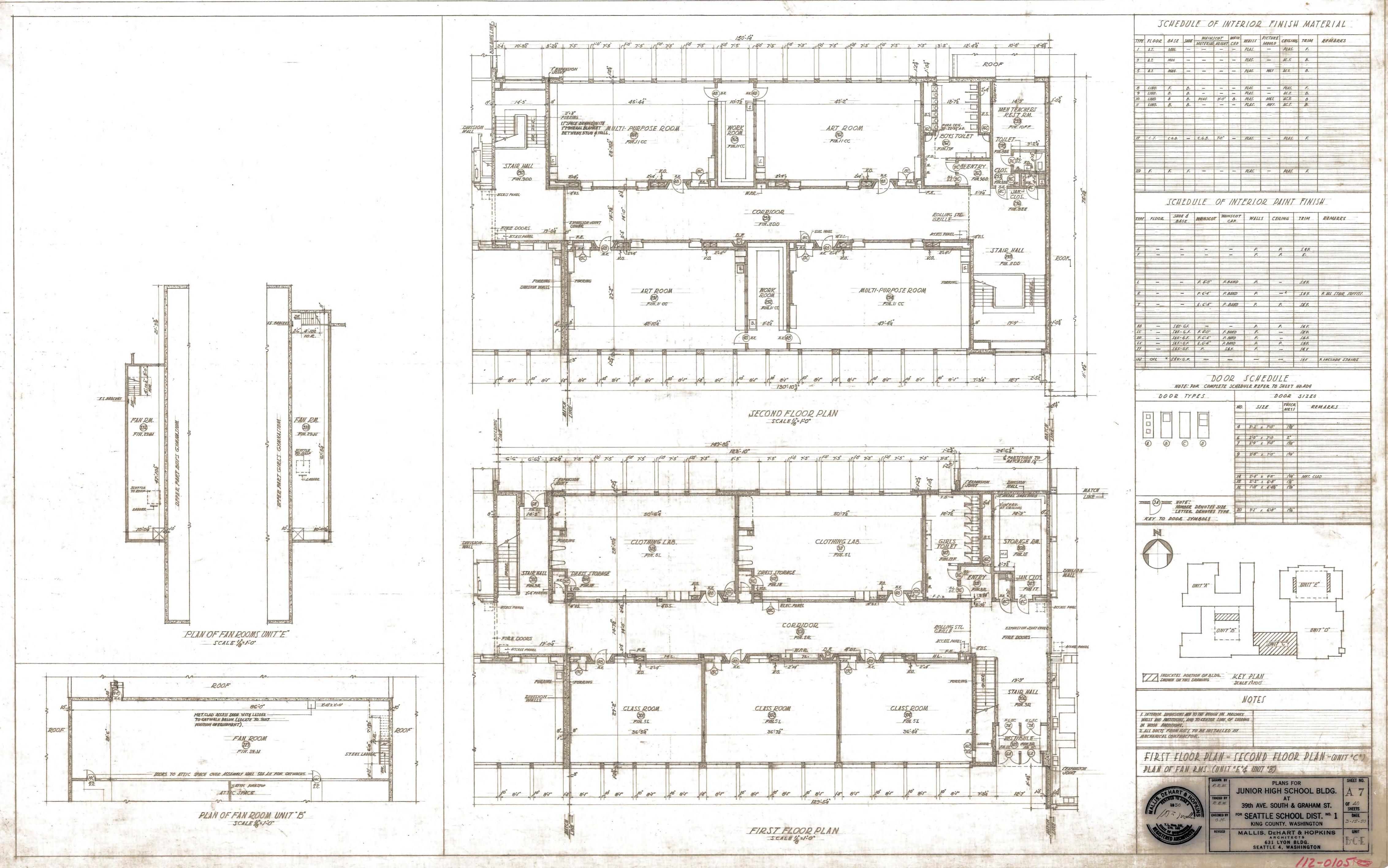


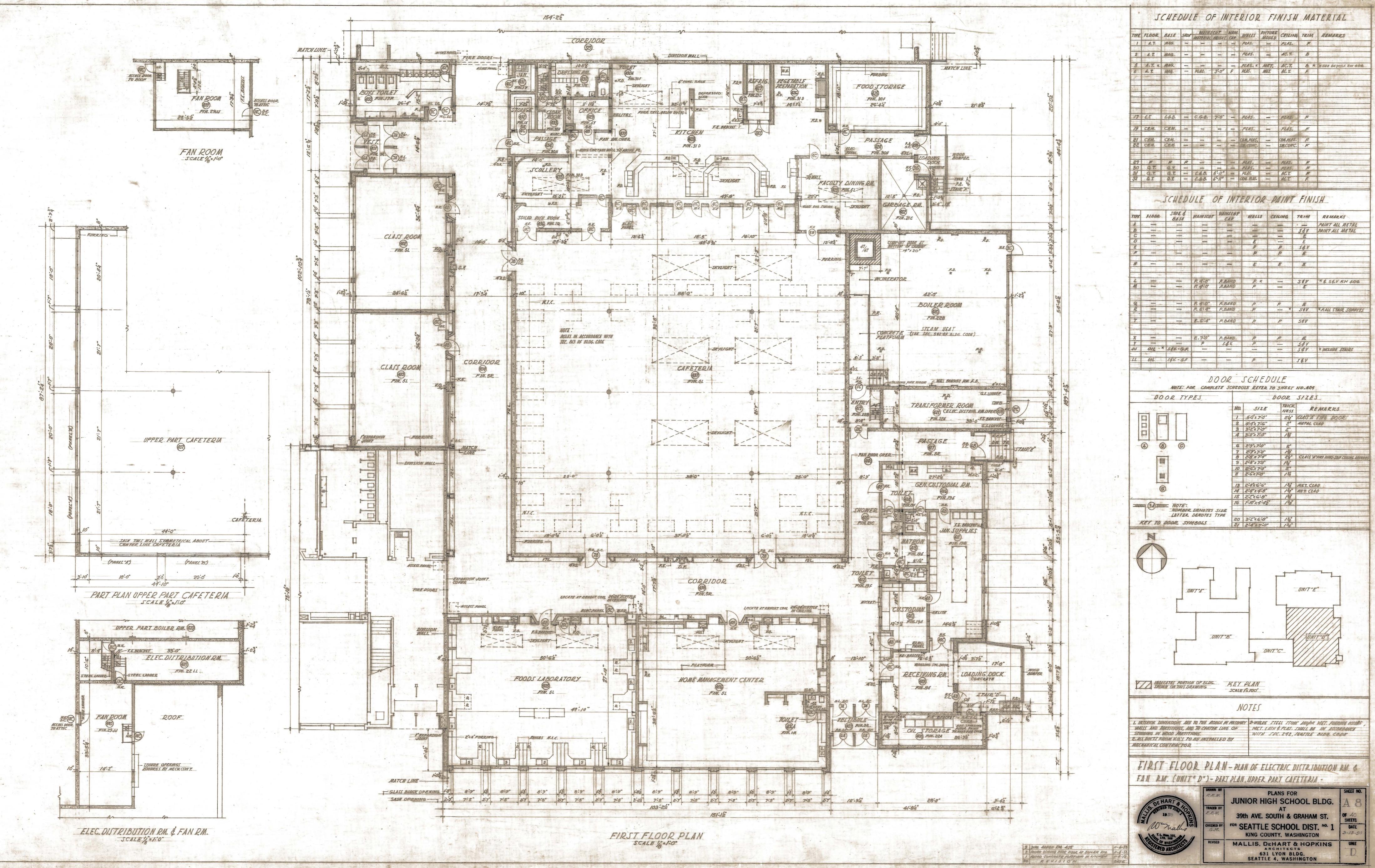
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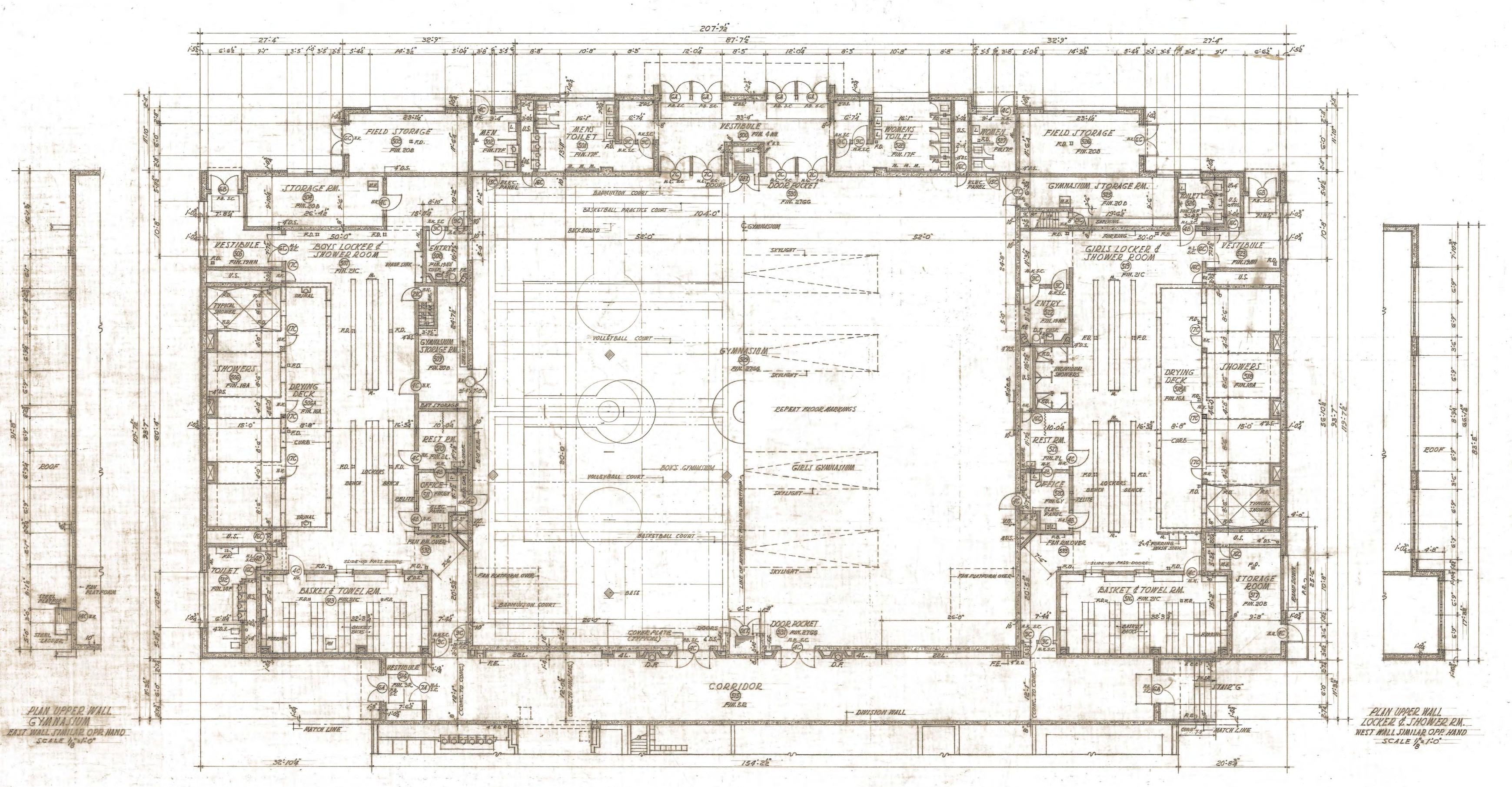




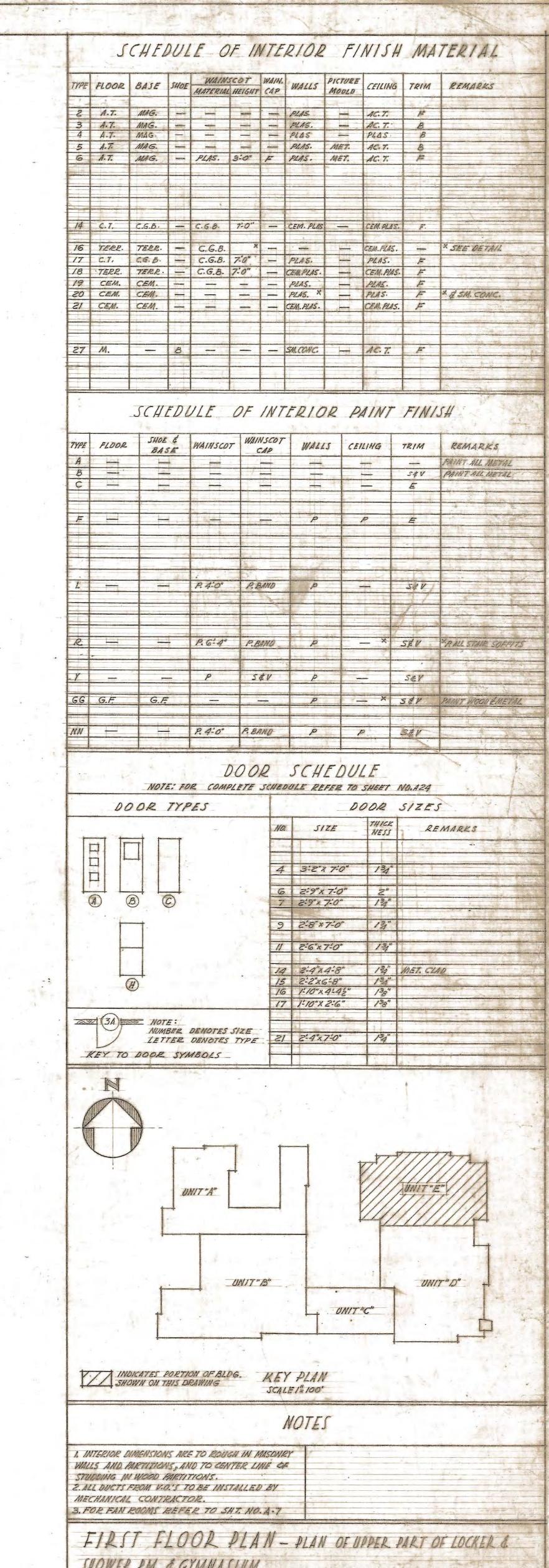
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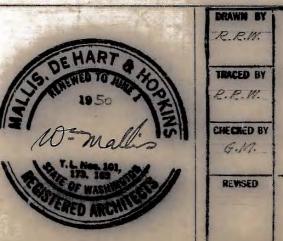




FIRST FLOOR PLAN

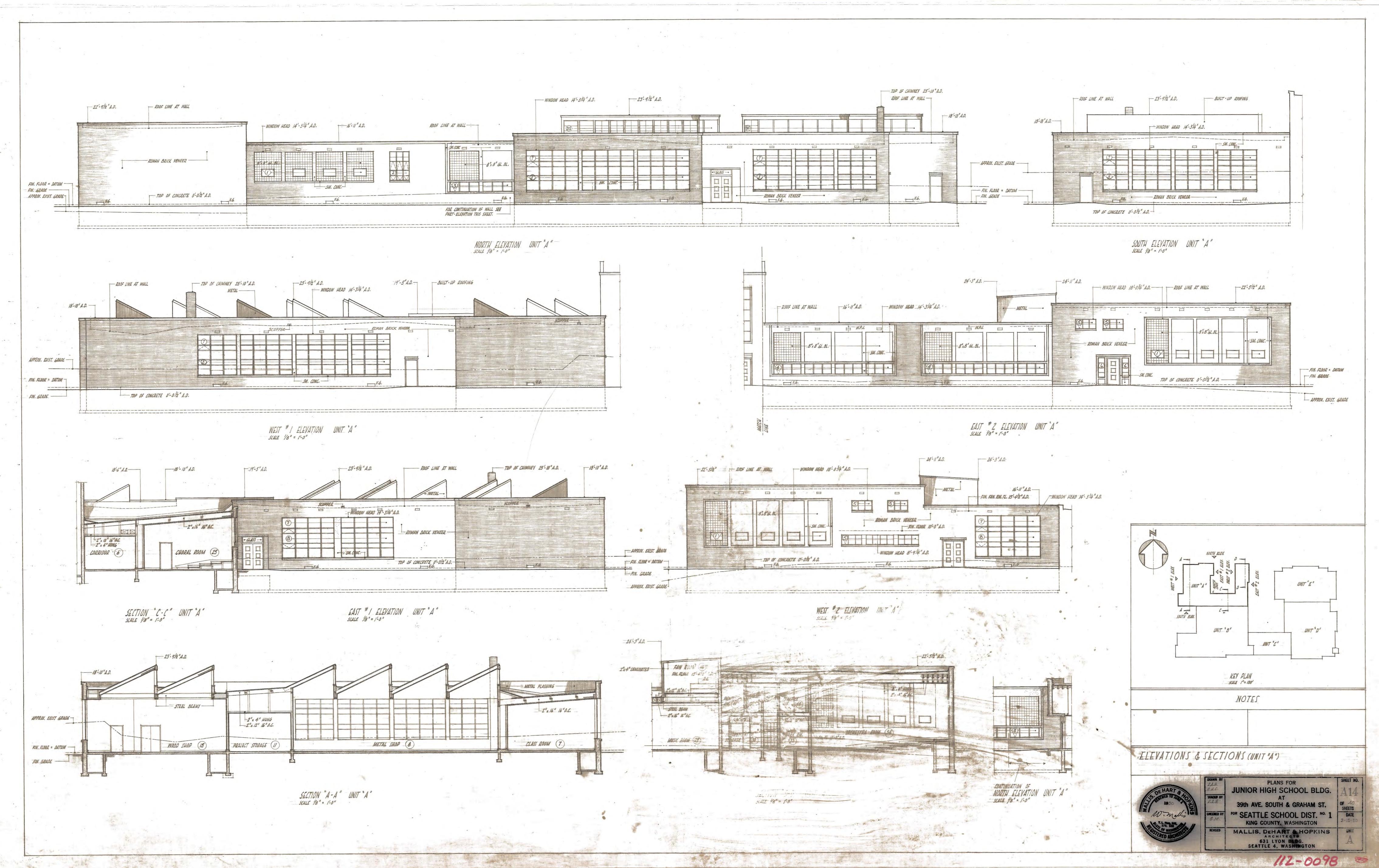


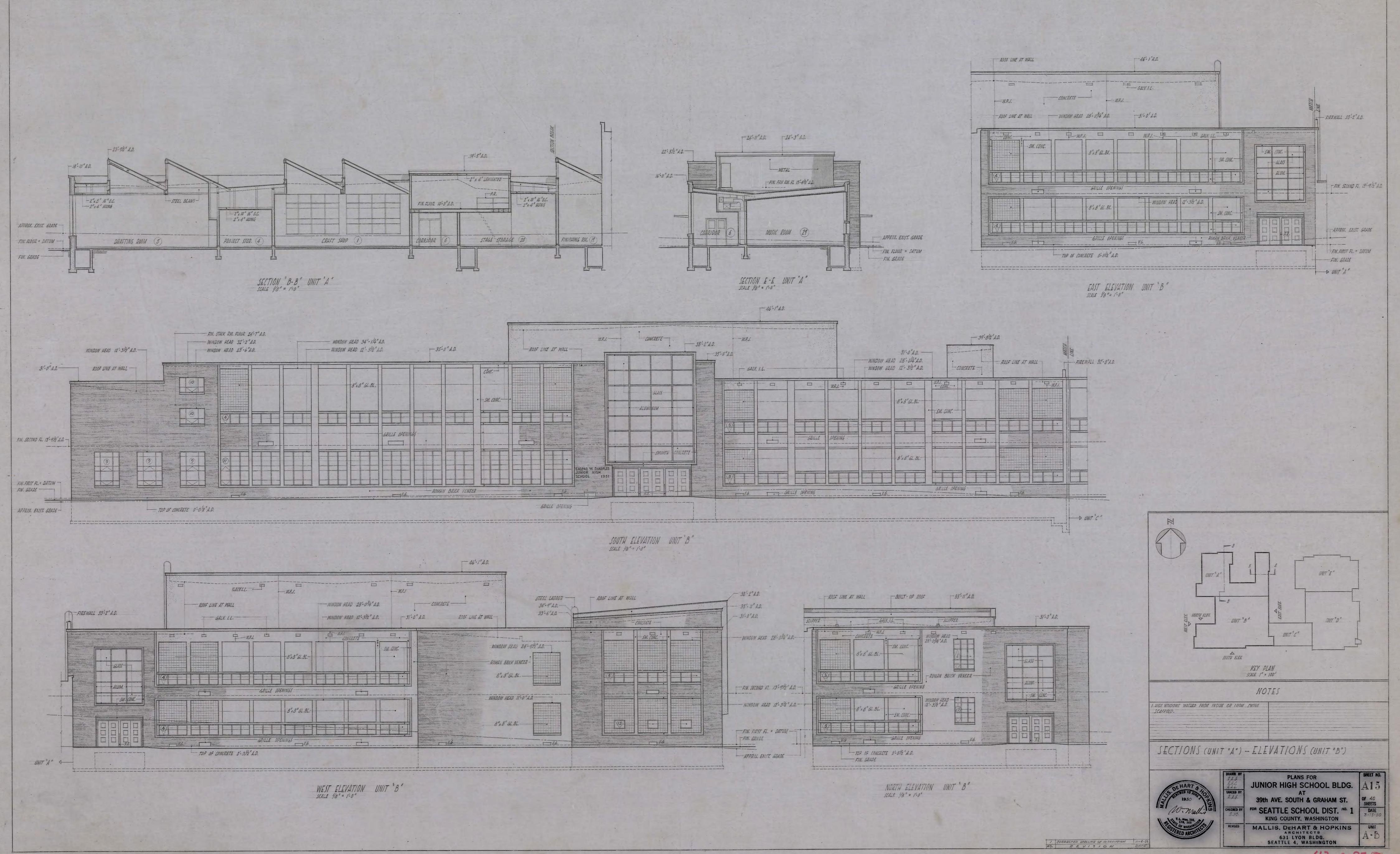
SHOWER RM. & GYMNASIUM

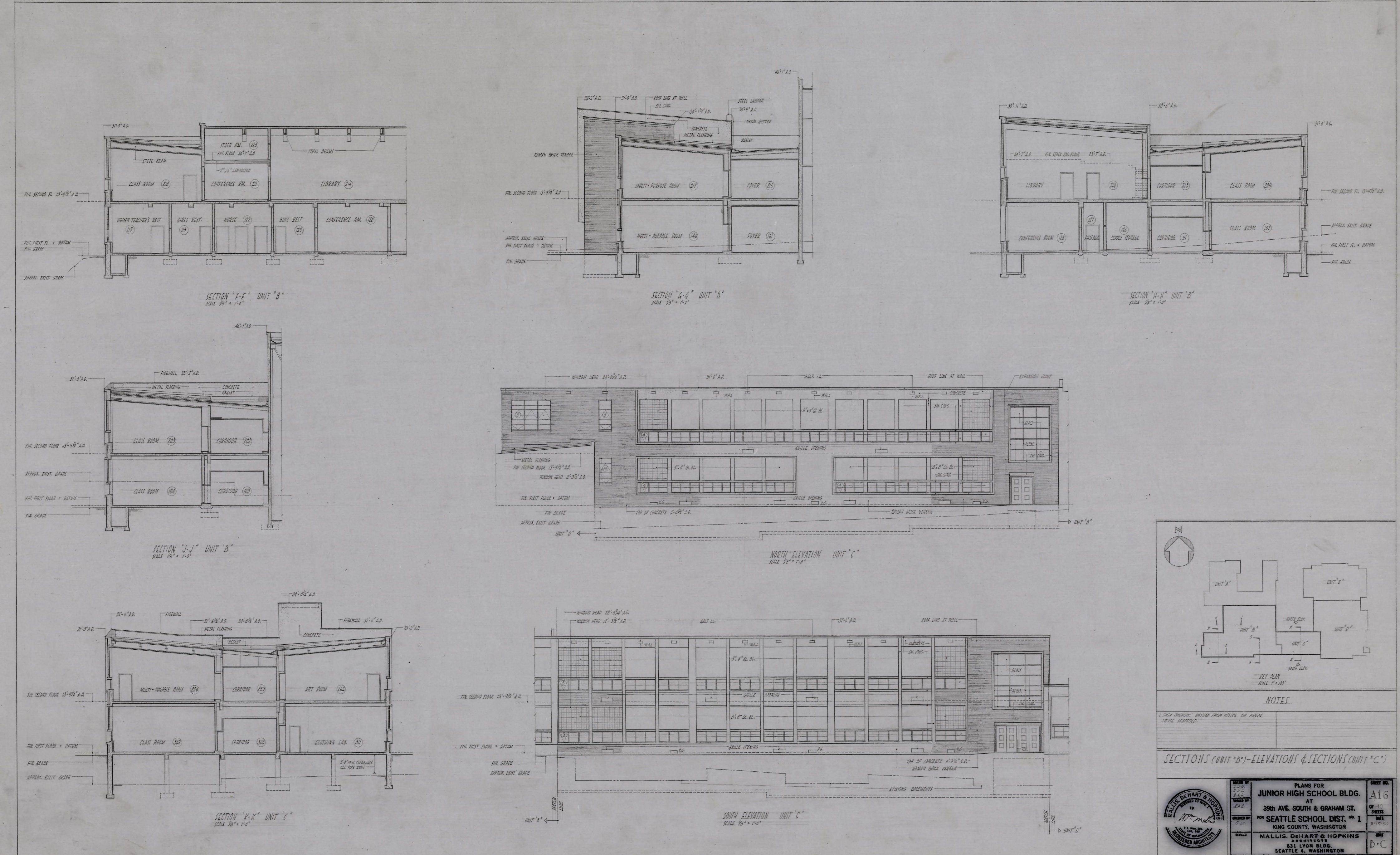


AWM BY	PLANS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL BLDG.	- August - A
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EVISED	MALLIS, DEHART & HOPKINS ARCHITECTS 631 LYON BLDG. SEATTLE 4, WASHINGTON	Distanting of the second state of the second

3 RELOCATED INH RM 513
2 INCREASED DOOR SIZE RM 509-527
1 PASS DOORS ADDED RHS 513-516
NO REVISION







112-0096

