

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Fort Gay High School

Name of Property

Wayne County, WV

County and State

N.A.

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100001903

Property Name: Fort Gay High School

County: Wayne County

State: WV

Multiple Name: N.A.

This property is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination

The following amendments are made to Section 8 of the nomination

Section 8, Statement of Significance

Criteria: C (eliminate A). This property is only nominated under Criterion C.

Area of Significance: Architecture (eliminate Education)

Period of Significance: 1931(original building); 1953 (east addition); 1957 (west addition)

Significant Dates: 1931; 1953; 1957

Summary paragraph to introduce Section 8:

Fort Gay High School is an exemplary building of the work of master architect Levi Johnson Dean (1878 – 1951), a prominent and prolific architect in West Virginia's history. Dean is known for his Revivalist work on large institutional structures such as churches, banks, and schools, many of which were located in the greater Huntington area. Despite the building's slight deterioration from years of vacancy, the former high school still exhibits the Revivalist Beaux-Arts style that Dean mastered and advanced through dozens of commissions in the early 20th century. The building's symmetry, large, arched entry portals, Neo-Classical detailing, and brick masonry details throughout the exterior are all essential features of the Beaux-Arts architectural style and are also archetypal of Dean's prowess in design. Fort Gay High School is significant as an exemplary work of a master architect and is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The period of significance is 1931, the year the school was built.

Distribution

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Fort Gay High School

other names/site number Old Fort Gay High School/Butler District High School

2. Location

street & number 675 Court Street

city or town Fort Gay

state West Virginia code WV county Wayne code 099 zip code 25514

not for publication

vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

 national statewide X local

Susan M. Pierce

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title

10/31/17

Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

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

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS - BEAUX
ARTS

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

roof: SYNTHETICS

other: STONE

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheets.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets.

Fort Gay High School

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1931-1957

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dean, Levi Johnson

Period of Significance (justification)

See continuation sheets.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

See continuation sheets.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See continuation sheets.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheets.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

See continuation sheets.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other
Name of repository: Fort Gay Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.5 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 North 360290 4219951
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

See continuation sheets.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheets.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Isabel Thornton, Historic Preservation Consultant

organization Restoration Housing

date July 25th, 2017

street & number 1116 Main Street, Suite B

telephone (540)797-0819

city or town Roanoke

state VA

zip code 24015

e-mail Isabel@restorationhousing.org

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheets.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Narrative Description

LOCATION AND SETTING

Fort Gay High School lies in the center of downtown Fort Gay, a rural town in Wayne County, West Virginia. The town is situated along the Tug Fork and Big Sandy Rivers and lies on the Kentucky - West Virginia border. The town, originally known as Cassville, was chartered in 1875 and currently has a population of 819. Typical for this region of southwest West Virginia, the town originally developed on the industries of timbering, coal and the railroad. The small town features one main thoroughfare, Court Street, wherein the Fort Gay High school is located as a centerpiece of civic architecture, situated between the Fort Gay Fire Department, the Post Office, and the Fort Gay Public Library. The structure commands attention as it is set back deeply from the road and contrasts with the smaller buildings which surround it. A narrow, paved walkway leads from a stone retaining wall up to the main entrance from Court Street. Several ancillary buildings, which once functioned as classrooms and are now operated separately by the Wayne County Board of Education, are situated due east of the former high school. Due south of the building is a gravel lot and due west is Vancouver Street.

DESCRIPTION

Exterior

Fort Gay High School, originally known as Butler District High School, is a remarkable example of early 20th-century institutional architecture, designed in the Beaux-Arts style. Constructed in 1931, the structure has many distinguishable architectural details, including its two large stone-carved portals which delineate the massive blonde-brick façade. Each portal features Beaux-Arts details such as dentil molding along the cornice and stone obelisks with large plinth bases supporting the elaborate entablature above the arched doorways. Also, throughout the front façade is a repeating pattern of obelisk-shaped pilasters serving to divide the façade's fenestration. The structure stands two stories high and is twenty-four bays wide including the original block and an additional four bays in each of the side additions. Two additions that flank the building's central block were constructed in 1953 and 1957. Although the additions are seamless and almost indistinguishable from the original block within the building's interior, the exterior finishes and treatments – such as the masonry and the windows - have a significantly less ornate and austere mid-century style.

Fort Gay High School was designed by the famed and prolific West Virginia architect Levi Johnson Dean. He executed the design for the high school in his signature Beaux-Arts style with some minor Neo-Gothic details, such as the vertically-defined entrance portals with parapet detailing. In adherence with the Beaux-Arts architectural movement, Fort Gay High School features a strongly symmetrical façade with two large portals, spaced equidistantly. In addition, the building has a flat roof with a parapet wall, stone pilaster elements serving as dividers to the three-part steel sash windows, brick banding details, and an elaborate arch above each of the two recessed entrance doors. The arches, flanked by stone obelisks resting atop large plinths, are faced with brick banding and surmounted by ornate cornices finished with guttae. A Palladian-style Demilune-shaped transom window sits above double-leaf entrances. All four entrance doors are replacements and each has a small pane of fixed, clear glass.

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Classical Revival details, as seen throughout the exterior of Fort Gay High School, were a fashionable design feature of buildings during the time of its construction. The original elevations for Fort Gay High School (enclosed as Appendices C & D), reveal the architect's dexterity in classical forms and design. He provided very detailed drawings for all of the masonry features of the front façade, including the front entrance portals and brick banding throughout. He also provided detailed drawings of each molding component, including door trim, handrails, and baseboards. Each feature exhibits a prowess in Classical design with its tension of cavetto and ovolo forms. The floor plan designs also reveal the configuration of the classrooms with a central corridor on each of the two floors and a large auditorium and gymnasium space to the rear of the first floor. Before the additions were constructed, the main form of egress was a set of stairs in the center of the structure. After the additions, there were two additional staircases situated at each end of the corridors (a very typical form of egress for school designs of the 1930s).

The elevation drawings for the main, central block reveal an almost exact replica of the finished structure except for the windows, which no longer appear to be original. The original designs for the windows were large, multi-paned windows of various sizes with hopper style openings (see Appendices E & F). While the openings are the same size and the brick banding headers are still intact, the extant windows of three-part steel-sash windows were evidently added later.

The overall condition of the Fort Gay High School exterior is fairly good with the expectant wear and tear of an older, vacant structure. The brick is in need of minor re-pointing throughout and non-abrasive cleaning where there is a build-up of soot and dirt along the roof parapet. The roof has recently begun leaking and is in need of an in-kind membrane replacement. The one notable section in need of significant repair is the portion of the exterior effected by a small fire in 2015. There are seven windows boarded up and larger sections of original brick are covered in soot.

Interior

As is evident in the building's interior configuration, the Fort Gay High School's design was influenced by the "open air school" movement, which placed an emphasis on air, light, easy circulation, and outdoor learning. This form of design, which began in the 1890's in an effort to design school buildings with an emphasis on improved overall student performance, was very much in fashion in institutional architecture of the late 1920s and 1930s. Studies from the late 19th century had shown that inadequate design on these features could be detrimental to the education of its inhabitants. Before this period, windows were often ill-placed and caused eye damage to the students. Additionally, the ratio of carbonic acid to air was often frightfully high and the air would have been considered polluted by most modern standards.¹ The subsequent designs that emerged in reaction to these studies emphasized a specific approach to lighting and ventilation that was meant to have a positive effect on the student's health and ability to concentrate on the lessons at hand, rather than feel distracted by physical discomfort.

To that end, the Fort Gay High School features two central corridors one on each floor (see Appendices A & B) with classrooms loaded on the exterior side of each floor (within the main building) and bathrooms and stairwells on the other side. Thirteen classrooms and five offices branch off from the two main corridors. Each classroom and office originally featured tall, multi-paned, steel sash windows for maximum light and a maximum effect of monumentality to the massing of the structure. Within each classroom, the original 20-pane steel sash windows were designed with hopper-style openings in order to allow for ventilation either through the top sash or through the bottom, depending on the weather patterns for a particular time of year or the sun patterns throughout the course of the day. The structure is remarkably well-ventilated with a well-considered design for air flow.

The interior doors throughout the structure appear to be original. The hardwood doors have nine panes of seeded glass in the upper half and a single hardwood panel carved in the bottom half. Windows throughout the building are three-part steel sash, with several sections exhibiting slightly smaller one-over-one steel sash windows (such as over the entrance portals and in the rear of the auditorium) and are not original to the building. The windows in the additions are comprised of both three-part steel sash and fixed windows with a grid of 18 glass panes. The interior doors of the additions are similar to the original structure and comprised of

¹ Warren Briggs, *Modern American School Buildings, First Edition*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1899.

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hardwood, yet they are slightly simpler with one glass opening on the top of the door as opposed to the nine panes of seeded glass of the original doors.

The rear section of the building consists of a large auditorium space which also served as a gymnasium and occasional cafeteria, though the food was always prepared off-site.

The current state of the structure's interior has suffered the wear and tear that is typical of a structure that has been vacant for several years. Much of the acoustic tile ceiling – a later interior alteration - has deteriorated in both the corridors and the classrooms. In the classrooms within the additions, the acoustic tile ceiling bisects the windows, which further demonstrate that they were added later and dropped from the original ceiling height. The composite tile flooring along the corridors is missing or peeling off in large sections. It is not immediately evident what the original ceiling material nor the original flooring material consisted of in these spaces. Sections of lockers that were original to the structure have been removed or stolen. Additionally, a fire in 2015 resulted in significant damage to one of the classrooms. The interior of this particular space requires more significant restoration efforts than the rest of the building, yet it still exhibits significant original features such as the flooring, walls, and door. The glass of the windows in this room has been completely removed and the frames are boarded up with plywood.

Within the corridors, the walls are constructed of a painted-over glazed brick, which appear to be original to the building, though the paint is likely not original and is also peeling off in many sections. Most of the classrooms in both the original block and the additions are in fair condition with flooring, walls, chalkboards, trim details, and lighting intact. The auditorium/gymnasium is similarly in fair condition with similarly painted glazed brick walls, composite flooring and acoustic tile ceilings. Sections of both the floor and the acoustic tiles are missing.

Additions

When observing the exterior detailing of the substantial structure of Fort Gay High school, it is immediately evident that the east and west wings of the structure were later additions. This is largely because the blonde bricks of the wings have a slightly lighter hue and there is also an overt simplicity in the ornamentation of the masonry that is in stark contrast to the original section of the building. Wayne County School Board Meeting Minutes revealed that the east addition was built in 1953 and the west addition was constructed in 1957. These additions are definitive examples of mid-twentieth century design in their apparent departure from the original building program, which included the integration of fixed windows with an 18-pane grid instead of the historic fenestration seen throughout the rest of the building.

Yet, even with these design diversions from the original building program, the additions to Fort Gay High School exhibit a historic significance nonetheless. As previously mentioned, the original floor plan for the high school revealed that Levi J. Dean designed the structure to expand over time and to have these additions constructed at a later date. The footings were not poured with the main building footings, but the main building was designed in such a way as to easily accommodate the later additions. In fact, the overall effect of monumental massing and symmetry of Fort Gay High School is achieved much more effectively with the additions than as a single, stand-alone structure. Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes below reveal details of the decision to construct the first of the two additions, dated in 1951.

Fort Gay High School Addition Contract Awarded

“On motion of Mr. Wellman and seconded by Mr. Queen, it was ordered that a contract for the addition of four rooms to the Fort Gay High School building at Fort Gay, West Virginia, be awarded to the contractor Jack W. Davis of Huntington, West Virginia, for the amount of his bid \$39,899. It was further ordered that the contractor work under the direction of the architect, Levi J. Dean & Son, and follow their drawing and plans for the part of the project.”

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Plans for Heating and Ventilating Fort Gay Addition

“On motion of Mr. Dewey Queen and seconded by Mr. E. D. Bunn, it was ordered that Levi J. Dean & Son, architects, be given permission to prepare plans for the heating and ventilating of the new addition at the Fort Gay School. Upon completion of the plans by the architect, an advertisement is to be run in the Wayne County paper in accordance with the state law. It was further ordered that if possible, the bids will be received at the October 1951, Board of Education meeting.”²

As evident in the paragraph above, the additions were based on the original drawings by Levi J. Dean and then further approved by the school board in a 1951 commission to the firm to draw plans for heating and ventilation that would be modernized from the original plans.

In reviewing the original drawings by Dean, the elevations reveal that the additions were meant to also exhibit many of the same stone and brick detailing of the main structure, though still considerably less in keeping with mid-century design tenets. Clearly, the outcome of the additions did not directly portray the intentions of the architect’s drawings as they do not have the parapet detailing with stone inserts and brick banding that were identified in the drawings. The additions do, however, feature brick pilasters, as indicated. Also of note, there is no indication of the placement or type of window that was intended for the additions. As the additions currently have more modern replacement windows within the 1950s-era configuration, it is not clear that these are an inaccurate representation of what the architect originally intended, although this style is much more sympathetic to a mid-century design sensibility than one from the 1930s.

Because of the unique configuration of the 1930’s era main structure and the 1950’s era additions, there is an inherent tension within the design and appearance of Fort Gay High School. The original block is a distinctive blend of Neo-Classical and Beaux-Arts style while the additions represent 1950’s era institutional architecture. The additions’ architectural style could be described more accurately as “Mid-Century Modern” in their stripped-down aesthetic reminiscent of the International Style in architectural and industrial design, movements that both encouraged a lack of ornamentation and modern construction materials that were easily replicable and accessible.

There are four small, cinderblock ancillary buildings on the eastern side of Fort Gay High school. Although their dates of construction are unknown, they historically served as additional classroom space for the Fort Gay High School. However, they are presently owned by a separate entity and, as a result, are not included in the nominated parcel.

² “Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes.” Wayne County Board of Education, August 21, 1951.

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Statement of Significance

HISTORY

Early Fort Gay

Throughout its history, the town of Fort Gay has had several different names, each representative of different stages of its development. In its inception, the area was known as the “Fork of Big Sandy” or often simply “the Forks.” At the time, the Big Sandy River was the strongest economic driver for the area in the antebellum period. These names were used up until 1849, when the name Cassville slowly came into use and its use continued until after the Civil War. The name “Cassville” is attributed to Democratic Senator Lewis Cass from Michigan who ran for president in 1848. Although his presidential campaign was not successful, he did carry Virginia and had a lot of support from Wayne County. The town was first officially incorporated into Wayne County in 1852 (the oldest incorporated town in the county), yet it required re-incorporation after the state of West Virginia was created in 1863. On November 13, 1875, Cassville was incorporated under the laws of West Virginia and the first town election was held.³

The origination of the name Fort Gay is not entirely clear to area historians although many speculate that the “Fort Gay” nomenclature employed by the local post office had eventually become the most popular term used to describe the area and the Cassville name had lost its relevance. By 1932, the town name was officially recognized as “Fort Gay.” In the early 20th century, Fort Gay experienced a period of strong economic growth with significant advancement in lumbering, construction on the lock and dam system on the Big Sandy River, and developments of the railroad. In particular, Norfolk and Western (N & W) Railroad decided to extend its lines east from Kenova, WV to Williamson, WV following along the Big Sandy River. After this extension, Fort Gay became a much more vibrant and bustling community with the center of the town’s activity oriented around the N & W depot.

History of Education in Wayne County

In the early 20th century, West Virginia began moving toward a more modern public school system after a century of more provincial schooling options, dating back to the pioneer era. Public education in West Virginia officially began in 1810 when the Virginia State Legislature created the Literacy Fund to help educate less fortunate children who were unable to attend private schools or receive a private tutor.⁴ In 1863, following statehood, West Virginia held a Constitutional Convention that outlined a system of general education for the new state that called for entirely free public education for all with a plan financed through “state appropriations, income from a permanent school fund, and local taxes.”⁵ From thereon, and for most of the 19th century, public schoolhouses were comprised of a one-room structure constructed of brick, wood, or stone and they were often quite simple in ornamentation and interior design. The interior spaces typically featured one door and sometimes a few windows. These structures were functional to a degree, though they began to pose a problem as populations increased during the Industrial Revolution and larger and more diverse spaces were needed to accommodate greater numbers of students. Additionally, these small rural schools often suffered from lack of funding (usually specific to localities with fewer economic resources to support public education taxes) and subsequent lack of upkeep. Teachers often complained of the deteriorating structures and parents were expected to purchase books and materials.⁶ This began to change, however, beginning in 1907 when a new law (State Property Levy of 1907) allowed “voters in a school district to increase the teacher levy sufficiently...and the new building levy.”⁷

³ Robert Thompson, *Creating Cassville*. 2016.

⁴ David Taylor, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Marlowe Consolidated School, Berkeley County, WV.” 2005.

⁵ Stephen Brown, *West Virginia, A History*. 1993

⁶ Robert Thompson, *Uphill Both Ways*, 2016.

⁷ Brown, *West Virginia, A History*.

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In 1910, Wayne County began moving towards a more modern school system by consolidating the small rural pioneer-era school houses into more modern two-room buildings in order to accommodate growing populations from the surge in local industries. By the 1920s, a new ten-room structure was constructed for the Fort Gay Graded school and several other graded schools and high schools throughout Wayne County were constructed with larger quantities of classrooms and students alike.

The largest consolidated high school in the region was Wayne County High School, built in 1922 and also designed by Levi J. Dean. Located in Wayne, the school was a similarly large, masonry structure designed to accommodate the growing number of students in the region. Also within the Wayne County consolidated school system, Ceredo-Kenova High school was constructed in 1921, though the architect is unknown and it has since been demolished. These schools were originally celebrated for their largess and more modern designs. However, they were still not able to fully meet the educational needs for all high school students in the area.⁸

Fort Gay High School (1931- Present)

Fort Gay High School's formation was part of a pivotal decision by the Fort Gay municipality to break away from the Wayne County consolidated school system and to create a community-based school for Fort Gay. Much of the impetus for this move came from the growing appreciation for public education that was prevalent in West Virginia in the 1920s. Because of the mountainous terrain within Wayne County, it was often impossible for students to get to and from school if it was not located nearby. As cars were not common at this time, students were known to walk over seven miles or ride horses if the roads were in bad shape. In an effort to increase attendance and encourage education locally, the Fort Gay Chamber of Commerce embarked on an ambitious campaign to provide a local option for high school-level schooling that was centrally located within the community and they ensured that it was designed in such a way as to highlight its monumental grandeur and embellish the town around it.⁹

In early 1929, efforts began to create two new high schools in Wayne County to provide greater accessibility for the community. One such school was "Butler District High school", later known as Fort Gay High school, and the other was "Lincoln District High school", located in Crum, West Virginia. Bills were introduced to the West Virginia House of Delegates to establish both schools. The Butler District High School Bill called for a 30-cent levy on taxes and withdrew support for the consolidated system of Wayne County High School. Additionally, the bill created a new School Board that would usher in the new administration.

Following the 1929 General Assembly decision to allow the Fort Gay High School (then known as Butler District High School) to be released from the consolidated school system, the Board of Directors hired a prolific West Virginia architect, Levi Johnson Dean to begin designs for the new school. In its first year as a school (beginning in September of 1929), Butler District High School was located temporarily in a church and in the Knights of Pythias Lodge building. By September of 1931, the first cornerstone for the permanent high school building was laid. A large crowd congregated while Marshall College President M.P. Shawkey spoke and the high school orchestra played.¹⁰

The new school building was constructed by M.W. Zinne, a prolific contractor in the Wayne County area at a final cost of \$32,000. It opened with a total enrollment of ninety-six students and consisted of grades tenth through twelfth, as ninth grade was still part of Fort Gay Junior High school at the time. In many ways, the new school was quite similar to the existing Wayne County High School in its design and function, yet it served the important distinction of allowing a local and accessible alternative for schooling to students living in the Fort Gay area.

Fort Gay High School was one of four high schools built in Wayne County in the pre-World War II era. In addition to Ceredo-Kenova High School and Wayne County High School, there was also Buffalo High School, which was built from 1929 through 1931. Of these original four high schools, Fort Gay High School and Buffalo High School are the only ones still standing of the

⁸ Robert Thompson. Interview with Isabel Thornton. November 15, 2016.

⁹ Thompson, *Uphill Both Ways*.

¹⁰ "Wayne County Board of Education Meeting Minutes." Wayne County Board of Education. January 25, 1930.

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original Wayne County schools built in the prewar era. Wayne County High School's student population had outgrown the structure by the 1970s and it was completely dilapidated as early as 1980, when discussions began to potentially demolish it. It was destroyed in a 1989 fire. Ceredo-Kenova High School sat empty for almost twenty years and was finally demolished in December of 2014 because of a bond measure to build a new elementary school on the same site. While Buffalo High School is still standing, it has been functioning as a community center for the previous 18 years and lacks many of its original historic design features.¹¹ Fort Gay High School remains the only original high school in Wayne County with a relatively high percentage of its original architectural and historic integrity intact.

In the 1980's, West Virginia suffered from diminishing employment opportunities and subsequent population decline. Schools throughout the state began consolidating and closing in order to keep overhead low for the smaller student populations. Fort Gay High School suffered the same fate, and was consolidated in 1987 with Crum High school to form Tolsia High School, also located in Fort Gay. After consolidation, the substantial structure was used as a middle school before it closed in 2013 due to obsolescence and restoration needs. It has subsequently sat empty for the last four years.

Levi Johnson Dean, Architect

Levi Johnson Dean was known as a successful and well-respected architect in West Virginia both during his lifetime and posthumously. One of thirteen children, Levi was born January 9, 1878 on his parent's Braxton County farm. He attended local schools and later attended a formal architecture school located in Scranton, Pennsylvania. In addition to his interest in architecture, Dean spent a significant amount of his young adult life as a practical mechanic, allowing a greater understanding of structural relationships than many architects of the early 20th century could claim.¹²

On November 18th, 1901, Levi J. Dean married Ada Leonora Johnson (no relation) from Nicholas County, West Virginia. The couple had three children together (Wayland Ogden, Kildrae Pauline, and Creola Bliss) before her untimely death on September 12th, 1910. Dean remarried on March 13th, 1912 to Susie Ada Turner of Chesapeake, Ohio. The couple had three children, Jewel Marlowe, Keith and Brooks. Keith and Brooks both became architects as adults and practiced with their father in the Huntington-based firm Dean and Dean.

In February of 1906, Dean began his own architectural firm in Huntington, West Virginia. His firm was incredibly productive and successful with commissions throughout West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky. Some of his most notable works include the following: The United Woolen Mills Hospital in Pennsboro, WV; the Highland Baptist Mission Church in Huntington, WV; and the Nicholas County Courthouse in Summersville, WV. His structures all similarly exhibited traditional design elements, known as "revivalist", that were very popular during this era. Similar to other professional architects at the time, Dean would have been taught the revival styles as a method to connote tradition and democracy in institutional buildings. His revivalist design competency ranged from Romanesque to Colonial and all revivalist styles within this spectrum (Classical, Beaux-Arts, Tudor, Art Deco). His fluent use of historical motifs was a cultural indicator that he had a strong understanding of historic architectural design, a key feature that enabled him to receive so many commissions for buildings of higher education and municipal governments throughout West Virginia and beyond.

While reflective of traditional styles in their form, Dean's structures were still quite modern in their structural composition and in material choice. His buildings featured multiple stories with concrete foundations and structural compositions of steel and masonry. He was often known to use glazed Terra Cotta blocks to emulate the textures and colors of limestone that would have been popular in larger Beaux-Arts commissions at the time (particularly of those in Europe). Additionally, he followed contemporary design guidelines, which would have modern and evidence-based designs for circulation as well as planned forms of vertical egress for emergency evacuation.

¹¹ Thompson, Interview.

¹² Thomas C. Miller, *West Virginia and Its People, Volume 3*, n.d.

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Continuation Sheet

Fort Gay High School
Name of Property
Wayne County, WV
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Section number 8 Page 8

The Beaux-Arts architectural tradition evolved throughout America from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The academic training that students received at the Ecole placed a strong emphasis on the study of compositional theory and traditional principles of formal design.¹³ Monumental historic structures, in particular, were used for reference of best practices. Many of these structures were examples of Roman architecture and classical “idealism” in proportion and scale but there were also many immediate sources (for the practitioners in the early 20th century) found in the architecture of the High Renaissance and the Baroque.

Teachers within the Ecole focused on fundamental design principles as doctrine. These principles included “order, symmetry, harmony, and proportion rationally formulated on the basis of particular examples apprehended through the senses.”¹⁴ By this, the theory was that certain elemental objects found in nature are beautiful to our senses for their adherence to these principles and therefore they must be considered in all design principles. At the nascent stage of the Beaux-Arts architectural movement, these principles would dominate the overall design program. However, as the style evolved and, in particular, as it developed throughout American institutional architecture, the more topical aspects of style would emerge and distinguish various sub-categories of the movement. This included ornamental flourish (as seen in more Baroque examples), material use, structural design, and technological advances in engineering.

For many educated architects of the early 20th century, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts would have been the primary source of inspiration for large institutional commissions, largely because of the wide array of influential designs that came from the annual Grand Prix competitions. Levi J. Dean, from his schooling in Scranton, carried these principles with him in his countless revivalist designs that illustrated Classical, Beaux-Arts, Baroque, and Romanesque techniques.

Dean’s original design for Fort Gay High School (which includes the design for the additions) exemplified the Beaux-Arts design principles of the Ecole in its symmetrical façade and in the order and harmony of its pilasters, columns, and windows. The building is substantial in massing yet proportional in scale. In addition, the more cosmetic, stylistic components of its Classical detailing along its entrance portals and the roofline parapet wall are directly in adherence to the Beaux-Arts style (these are only evident in the ca. 1931 block of the building).

Comparisons

Like Fort Gay High School, Dean’s designs for other high schools in the region, such as Wayne County High School, were similarly constructed as monolithic masonry structures with Neoclassical masonry details, large windows, and symmetrical facades. Wayne County High School also had a similar “open air” floor plan with a central corridor and large windows for ventilation. In later years, Dean received several commissions through the Works Progress Administration, which was a New Deal agency that encouraged public works projects throughout the country, many of which were large institutional structures such as schools and court houses. Dean’s designs during this period veered more towards the Art Deco style with much more emphasis on carved details such as bas-reliefs and fluted pilasters. Fort Gay High School exhibits early signs of Dean’s prowess in these design features as the stone portals, obelisks, and pilasters all display early traces of the Art Deco style with their rectangular forms and bold geometric abstractions.

¹³ Donald D. Egbert, *The Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

¹⁴ Ibid.

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Continuation Sheet

Fort Gay High School

Name of Property

Wayne County, WV

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N/A

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SUMMARY

Fort Gay High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C. The structure is significant because it is an iconic building, both to Fort Gay and the larger Wayne County community despite its slight deterioration from years of vacancy. Its formation was part of a pivotal decision by the municipality to break away from the Wayne County consolidated school system and create a community-based school for Fort Gay. For these reasons, the Fort Gay High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its contribution to the broader patterns of history within West Virginia's public school system.

Following the 1928 General Assembly decision to allow Fort Gay High school (then known as Butler District High school) to be released from the consolidated school system, the Board of Directors hired a prolific West Virginia architect, Levi Johnson Dean, known for his revivalist work on larger institutional structures such as churches, banks, and schools, many of which were located in the greater Huntington area. The former Fort Gay High School is significant for its association with a prominent architect in West Virginia's history and is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C.

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Fort Gay High School
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Section number 9 Page 10

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at a cotton gin spindle (set), at the intersection of the southeasterly right-of-way line of Court Street, with the northeasterly right-of-way of Vancouver Street, marking the northwest corner of Lot No. 51, of the L.W. Borders Addition to the Town of Fort Gay (D.B. 149, Pg. 347), now owned by the Board of Directors of the Butler District High School, (D.B. 166, Pg. 266), having a coordinate value of N. 410,655.423 and E. 1,509,828.122; thence leaving the northeasterly right-of-way line of the said Vancouver Street, and with the southeasterly right-of-way of the said Court Street.

Boundary Justification:

The aforementioned parcel is the boundary that is historically associated with the Fort Gay High School.

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Fort Gay High School
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PHOTO LOG

Name of Property: Fort Gay High School
Address: 675 Court Street, Fort Gay, WV 25514
Town: Fort Gay
County: Wayne
Photographer: Isabel Thornton
Date Photographed: 15 November 2016

Photo 1 of 14	North Elevation, showing front façade and entry Camera facing Southeast
Photo 2 of 14	West Elevation, showing side addition Camera facing North
Photo 3 of 14	South Elevation, showing rear façade of gymnasium Camera facing Northwest
Photo 4 of 14	South Elevation, showing rear of side addition Camera facing West
Photo 5 of 14	South and East Elevation, showing side of gymnasium Camera facing Southwest
Photo 6 of 14	South Elevation, showing rear of side addition Camera facing Northwest
Photo 7 of 14	South and East Elevation, showing side addition Camera facing Northwest
Photo 8 of 14	Interior, first floor corridor Camera facing Northeast
Photo 9 of 14	Interior, first floor classroom entrance door Camera facing Southwest
Photo 10 of 14	Interior, second floor corridor Camera facing Northeast
Photo 11 of 14	Interior, second floor classroom Camera facing South

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Section number Photos Page 13

Photo 12 of 14 Interior, second floor classroom
Camera facing South

Photo 13 of 14 Interior, first floor gymnasium/auditorium
Camera facing Northwest

Photo 14 of 14 Interior, first floor entry door and fanlight
Camera facing Northwest



Photo 1: North Elevation, Showing front façade and entry portal

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Fort Gay High School

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Photo 2: West Elevation, 1957 addition



Photo 3: South Elevation, showing rear elevation of gymnasium

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Fort Gay High School

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Photo 4: South Elevation, Showing rear of 1957 addition



Photo 5: South and East Elevations, Showing east elevation of gymnasium

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Continuation Sheet

Fort Gay High School

Name of Property

Wayne County, WV

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photos Page 16

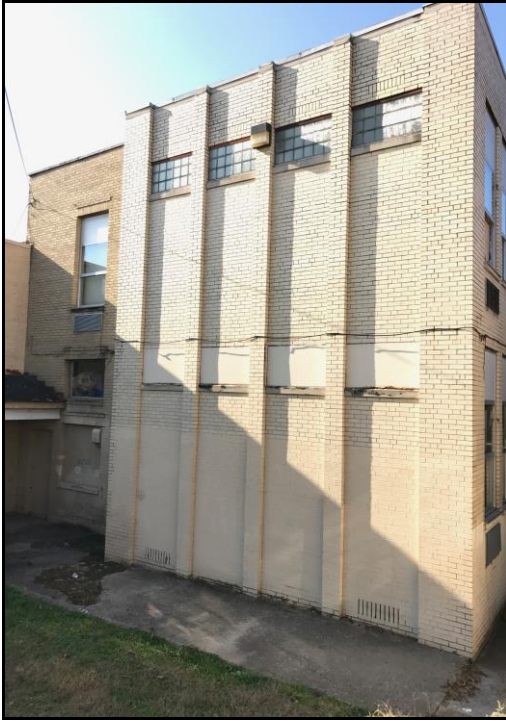


Photo 6: South Elevation (rear), 1953 addition



Photo 7: Southeast Elevation, 1953 addition

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Fort Gay High School

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Photo 8: Interior, First floor, Corridor



Photo 9: Interior, First floor, Classroom entrance door

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Photo 10: Interior, Second floor, Corridor



Figure 11: Interior, Second floor classroom

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Fort Gay High School

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N/A

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Photo 12: Interior, second floor classroom



Figure 13: Interior, First floor. Gymnasium/Auditorium, Stage shown on left

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Continuation Sheet

Fort Gay High School

Name of Property

Wayne County, WV

County and State

N/A

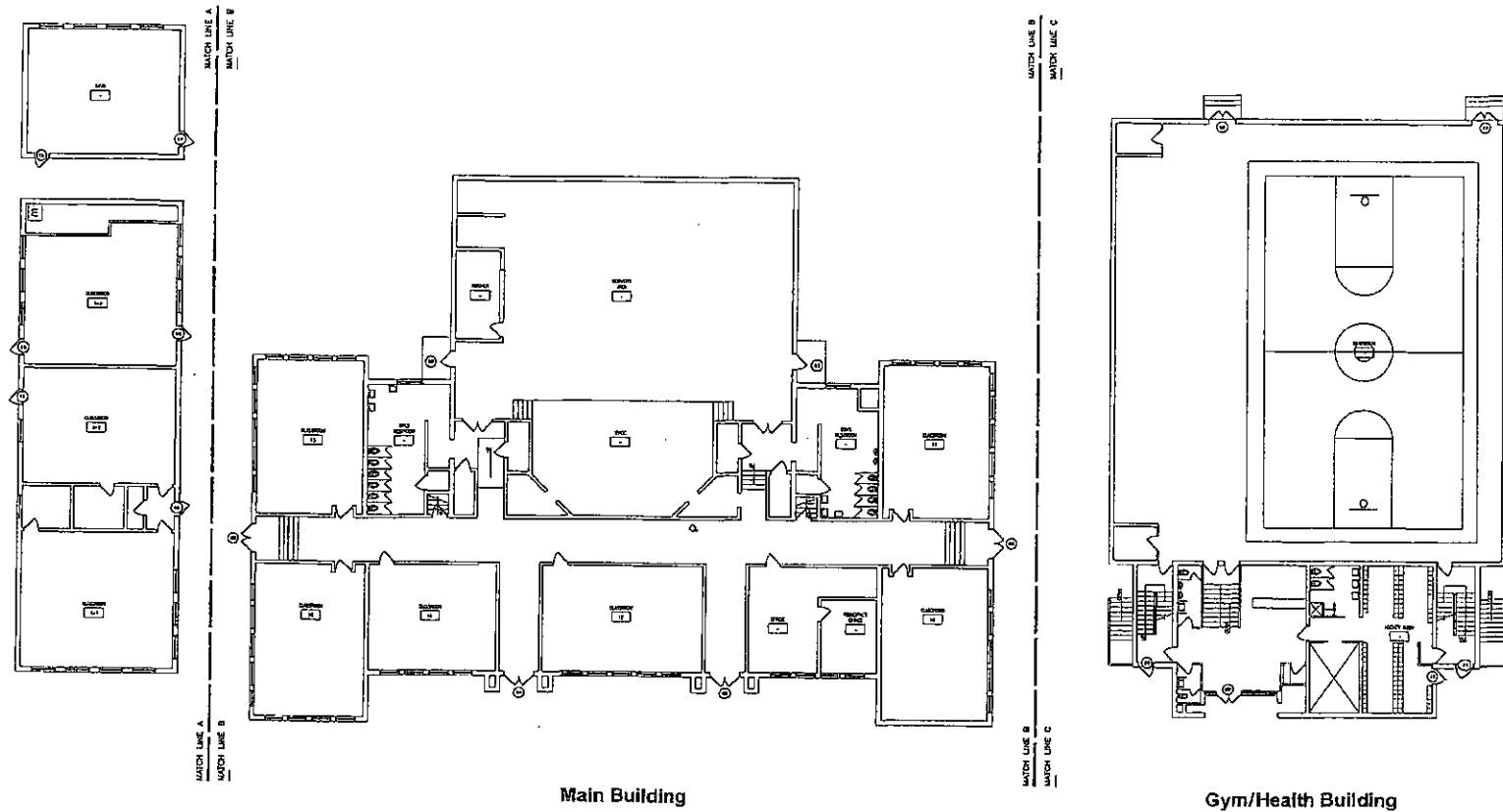
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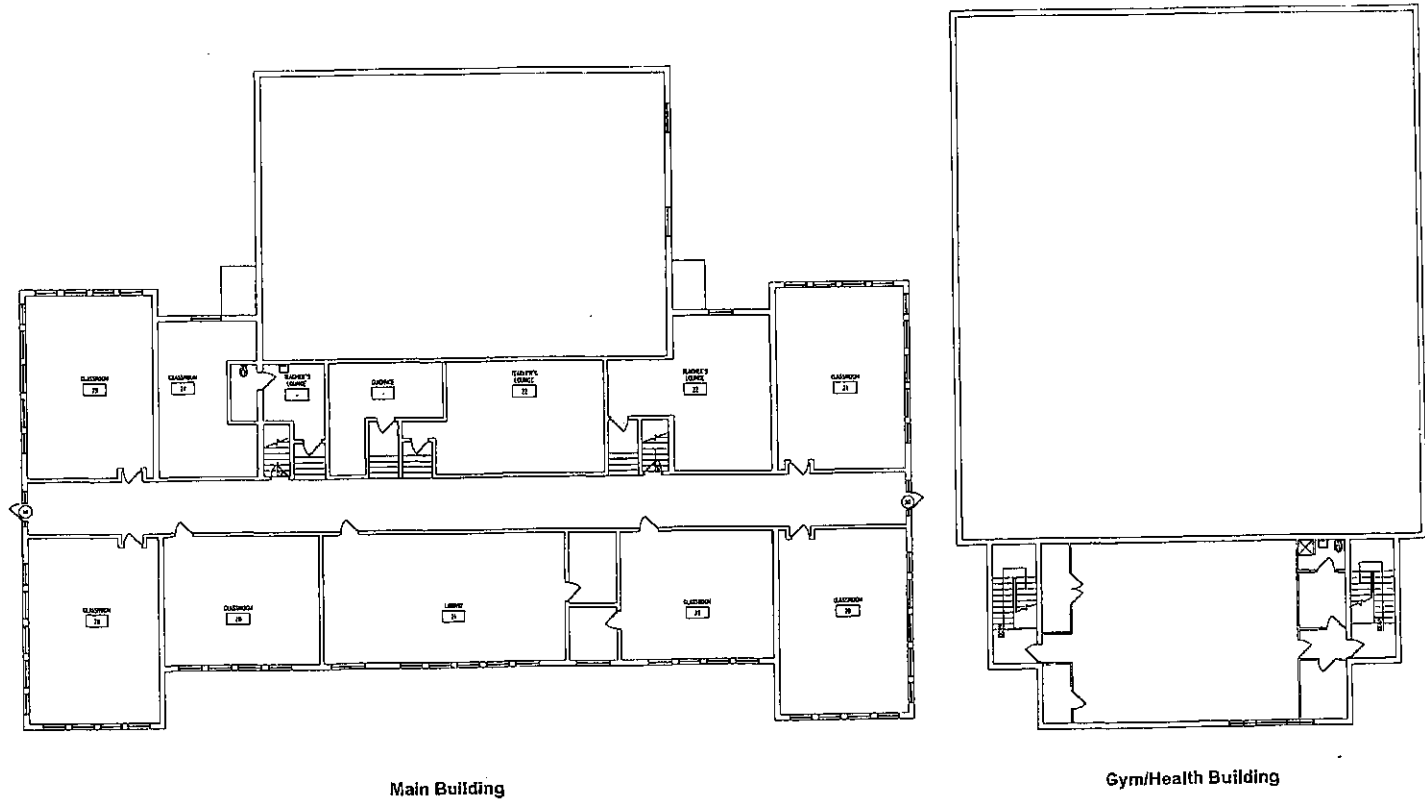


Photo 14: Interior, First floor, Entry door and fanlight

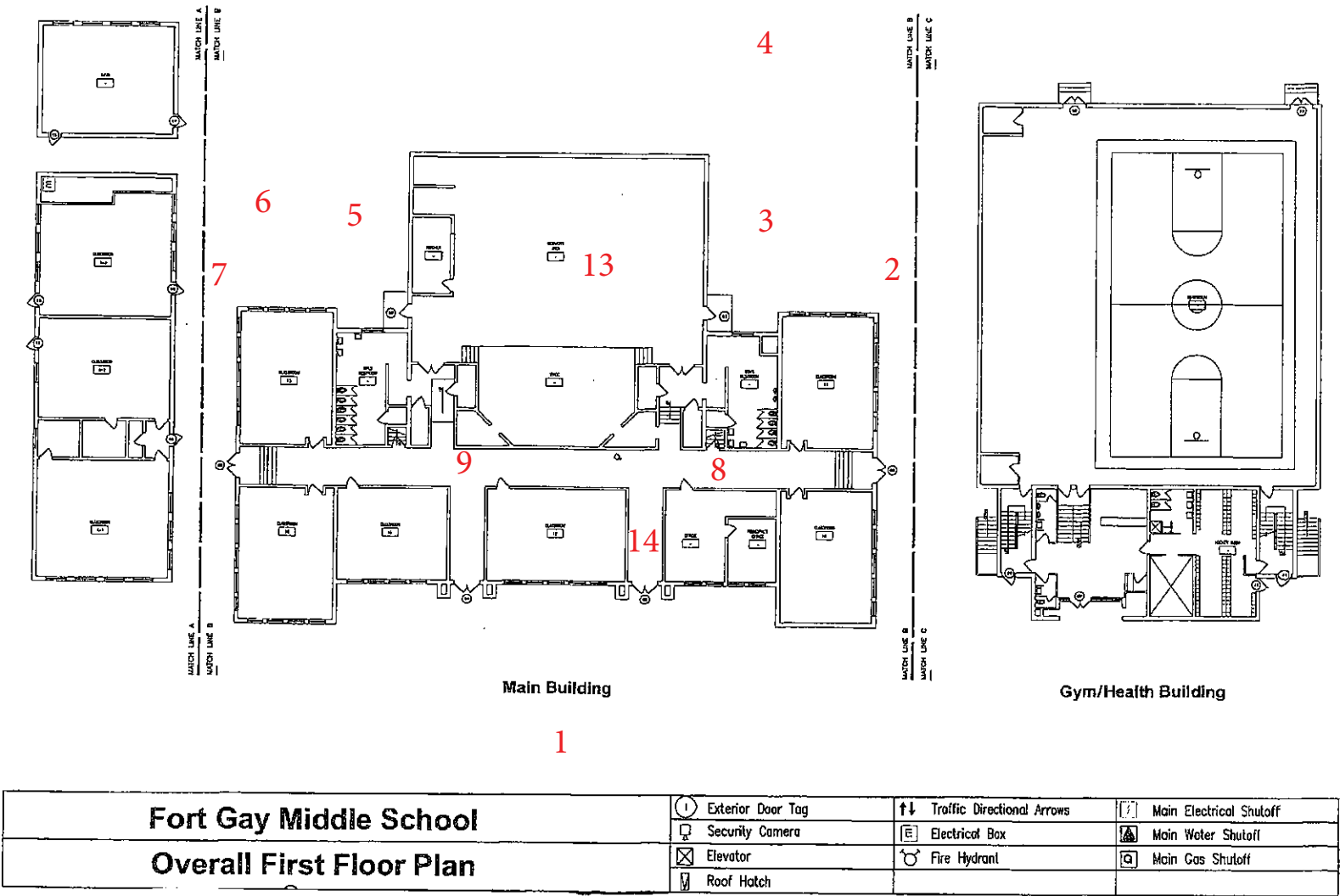
Fort Gay High School, Fort Gay, Wayne County, WV
 Floor plan, Page 1 of 2, Floor 1

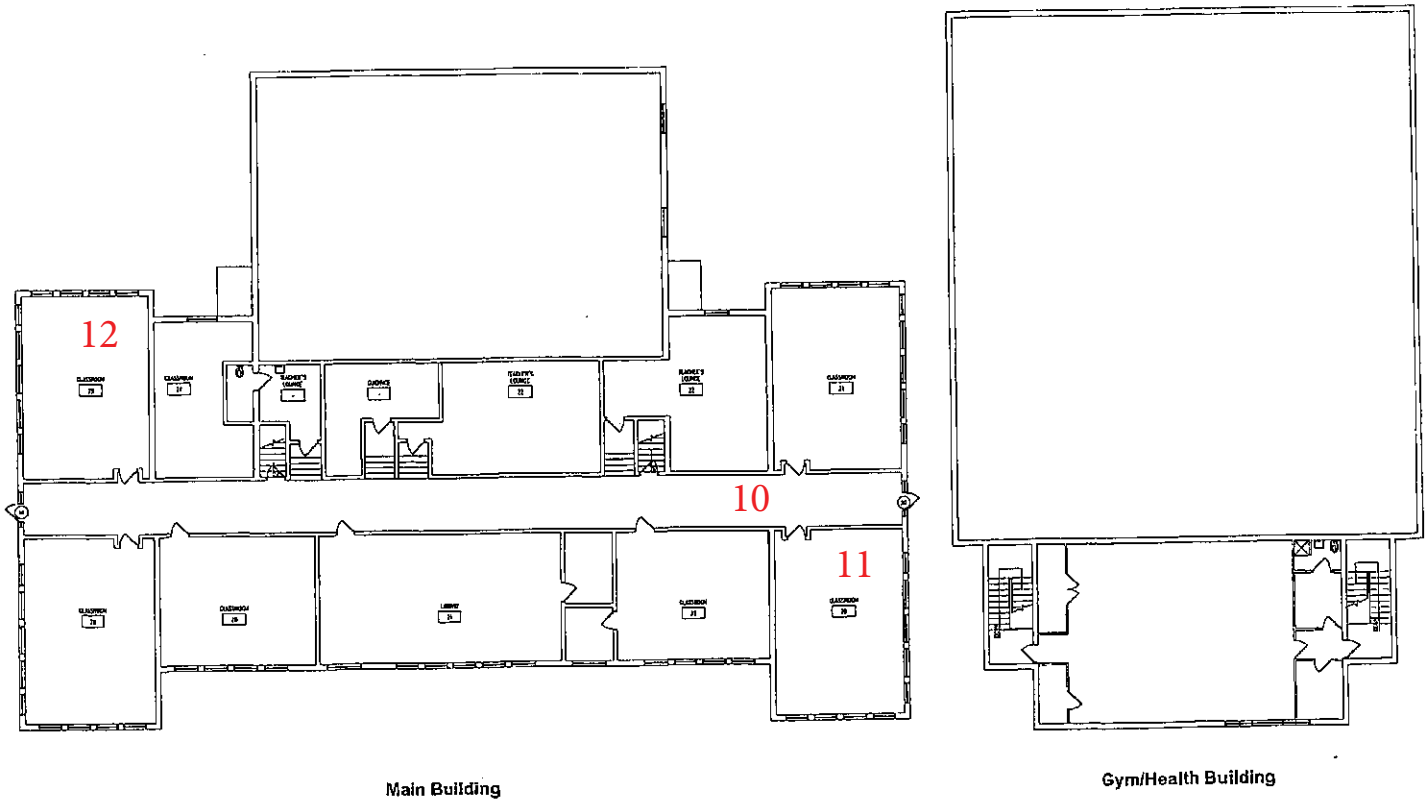


Fort Gay Middle School Overall First Floor Plan	Exterior Door Tag	Traffic Directional Arrows	Main Electrical Shutoff
	Security Camera	Electrical Box	Main Water Shutoff
	Elevator	Fire Hydrant	Main Gas Shutoff
	Roof Hatch		

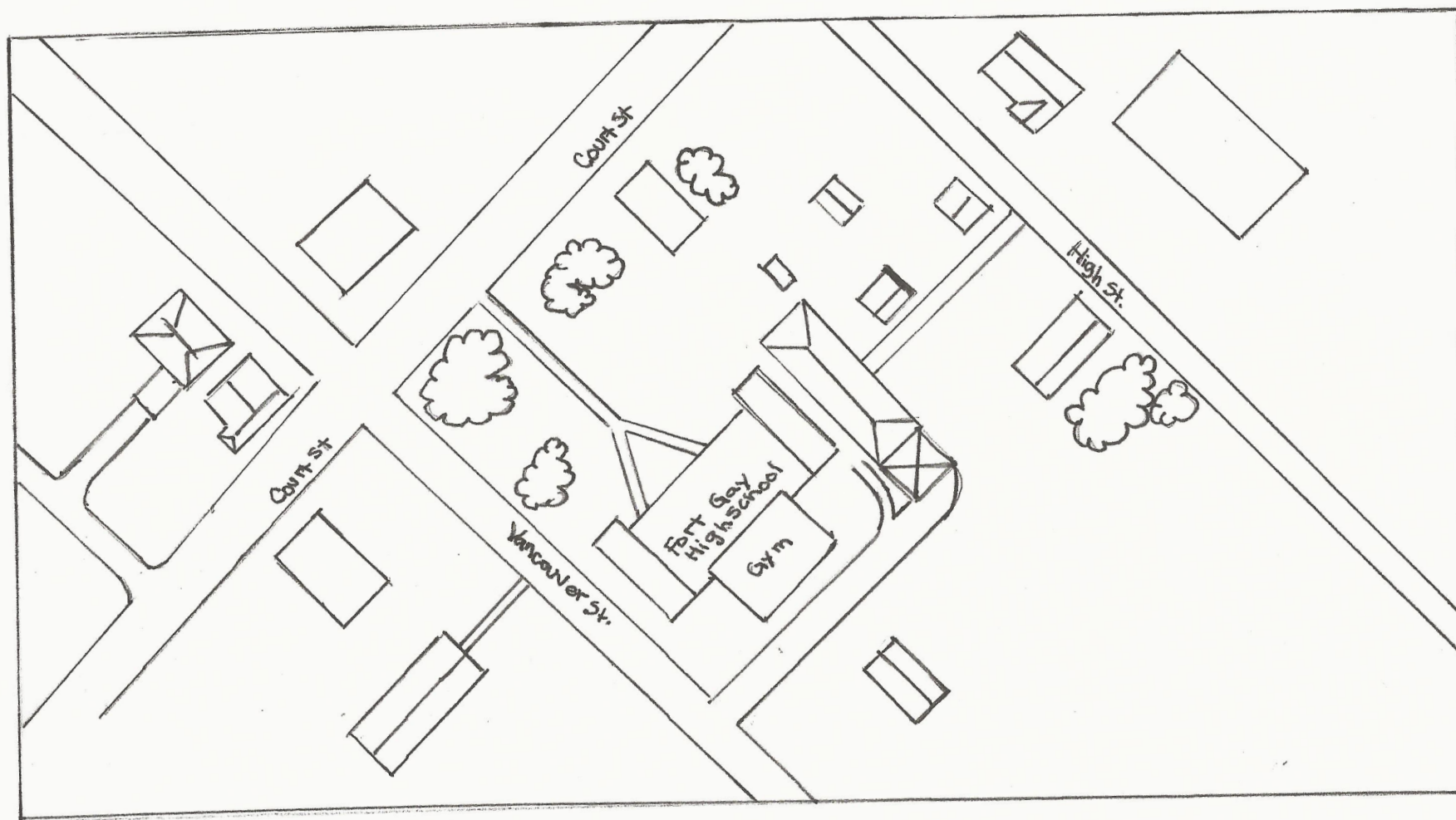


Fort Gay Middle School Overall Second Floor Plan	Exterior Door Tag	Traffic Directional Arrows	Main Electrical Shutoff
	Security Camera	Electrical Box	Main Water Shutoff
	Elevator	Fire Hydrant	Main Gas Shutoff
	Roof Hatch		



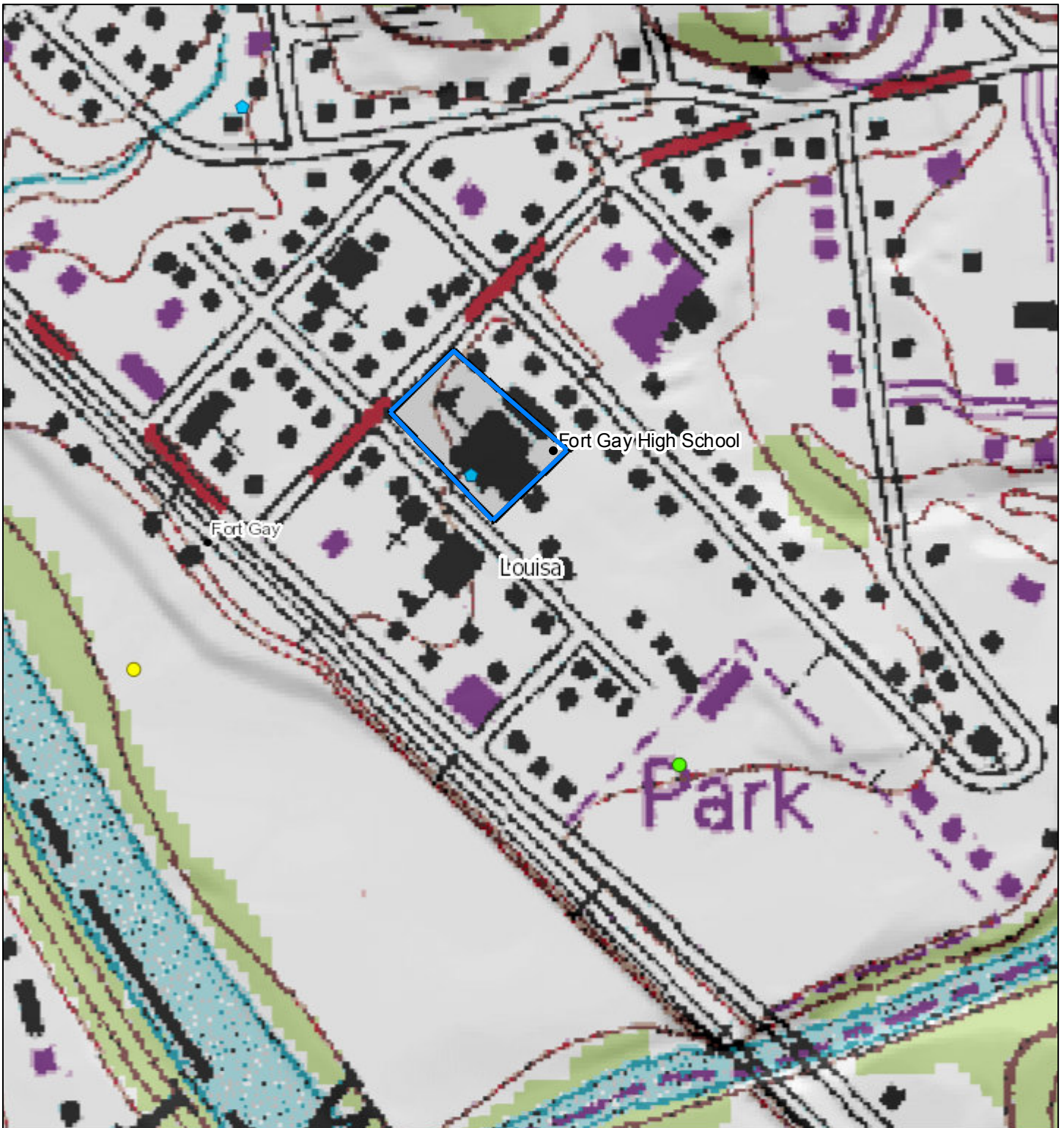


Fort Gay Middle School Overall Second Floor Plan	① Exterior Door Tag	↑↓ Traffic Directional Arrows	⚡ Main Electrical Shutoff
	📹 Security Camera	Ⓜ Electrical Box	🚒 Main Water Shutoff
	🚪 Elevator	🔥 Fire Hydrant	⛽ Main Gas Shutoff
	🚪 Roof Hatch		



Fort Gay High School Site Plan
675 Court Street
Fort Gay, WV 25514

FORT GAY HIGH SCHOOL, FORT GAY, WV



September 25, 2017

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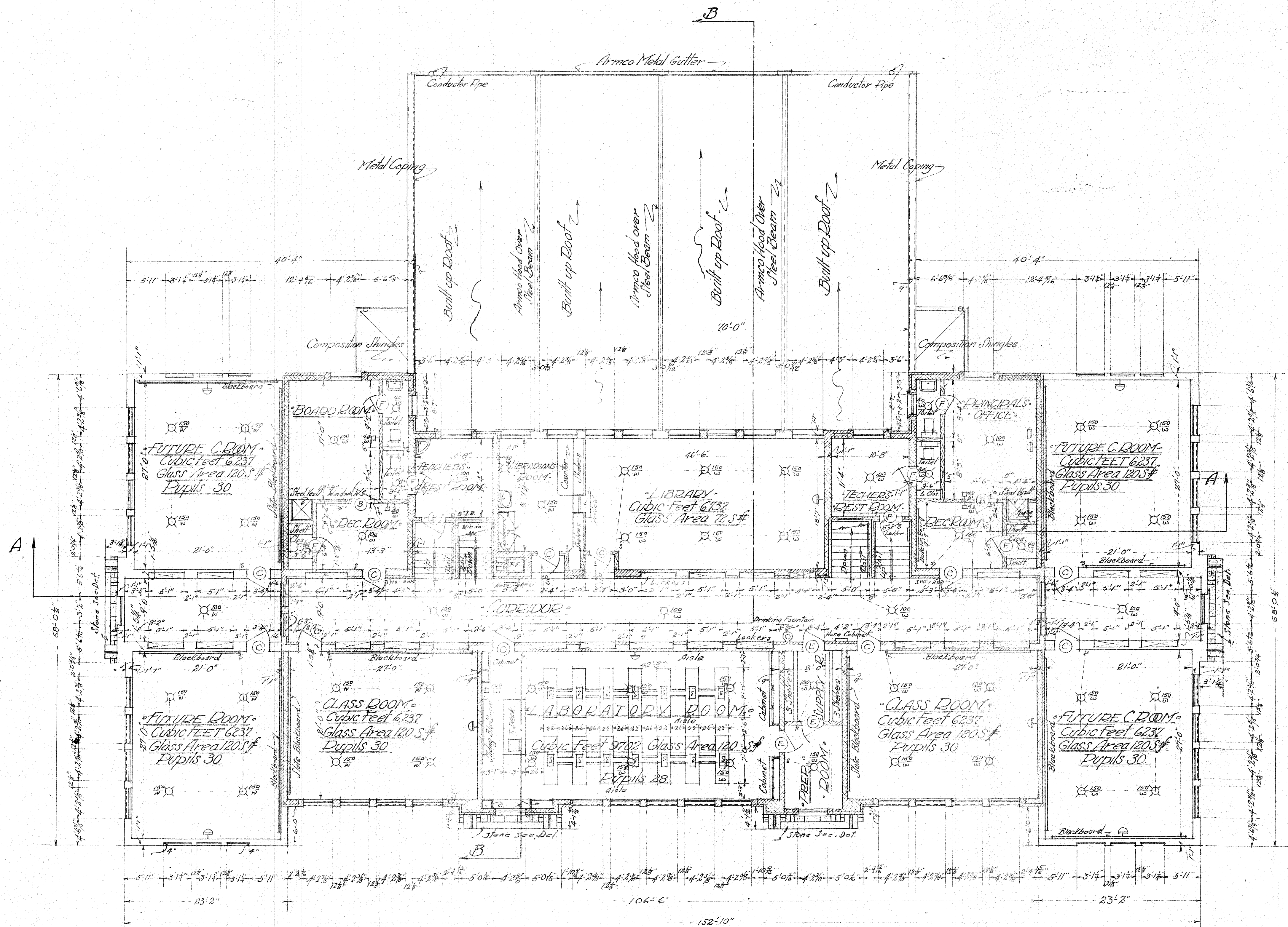
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- Restricted National Register - Point
- Civil War Sites
- Cemeteries - Point

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- Cemeteries - Area

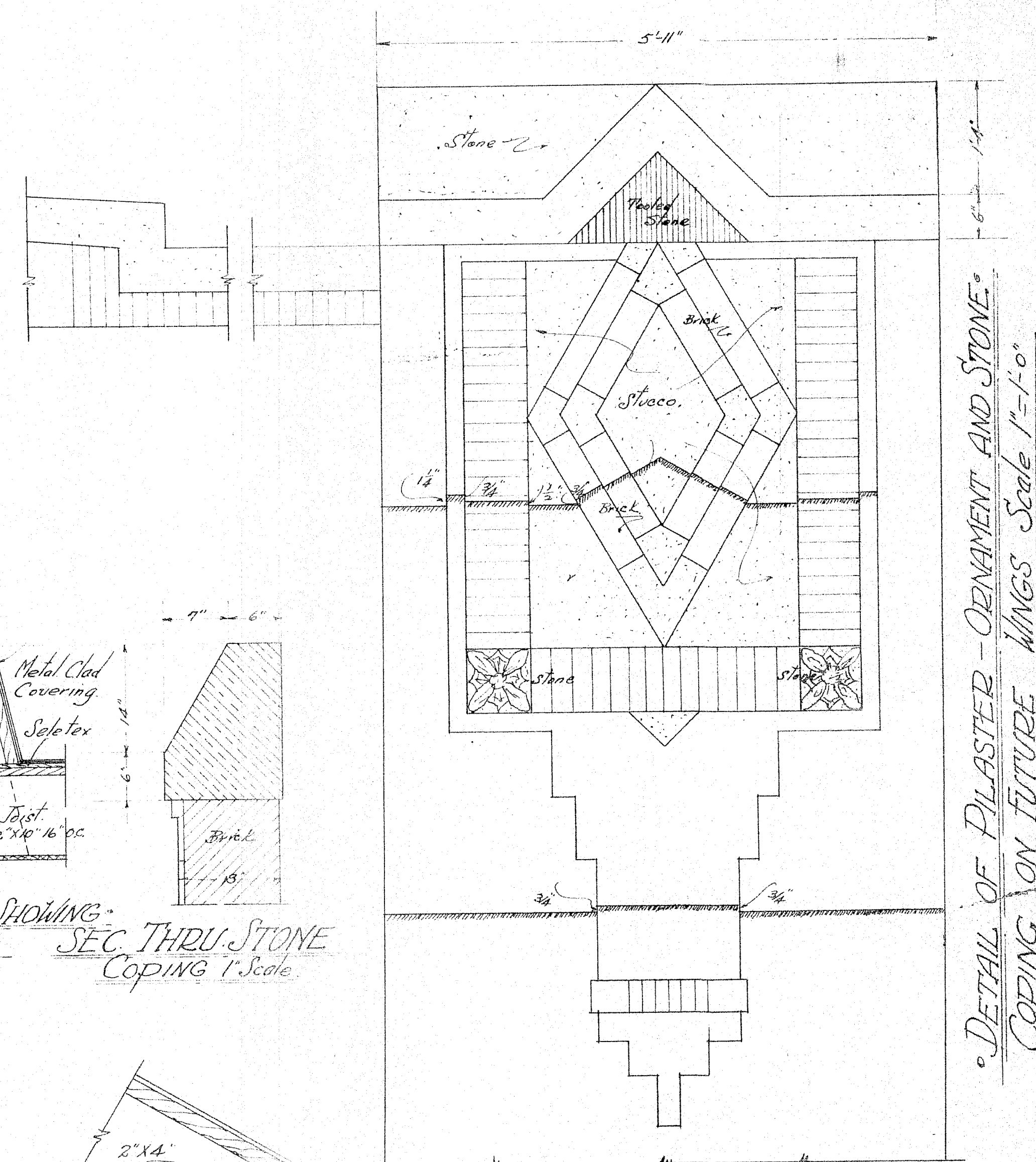
Notes:

Fort Gay High School
675 Court Street
Fort Gay, WV
Wayne County
LOUISA QUADRANGLE



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
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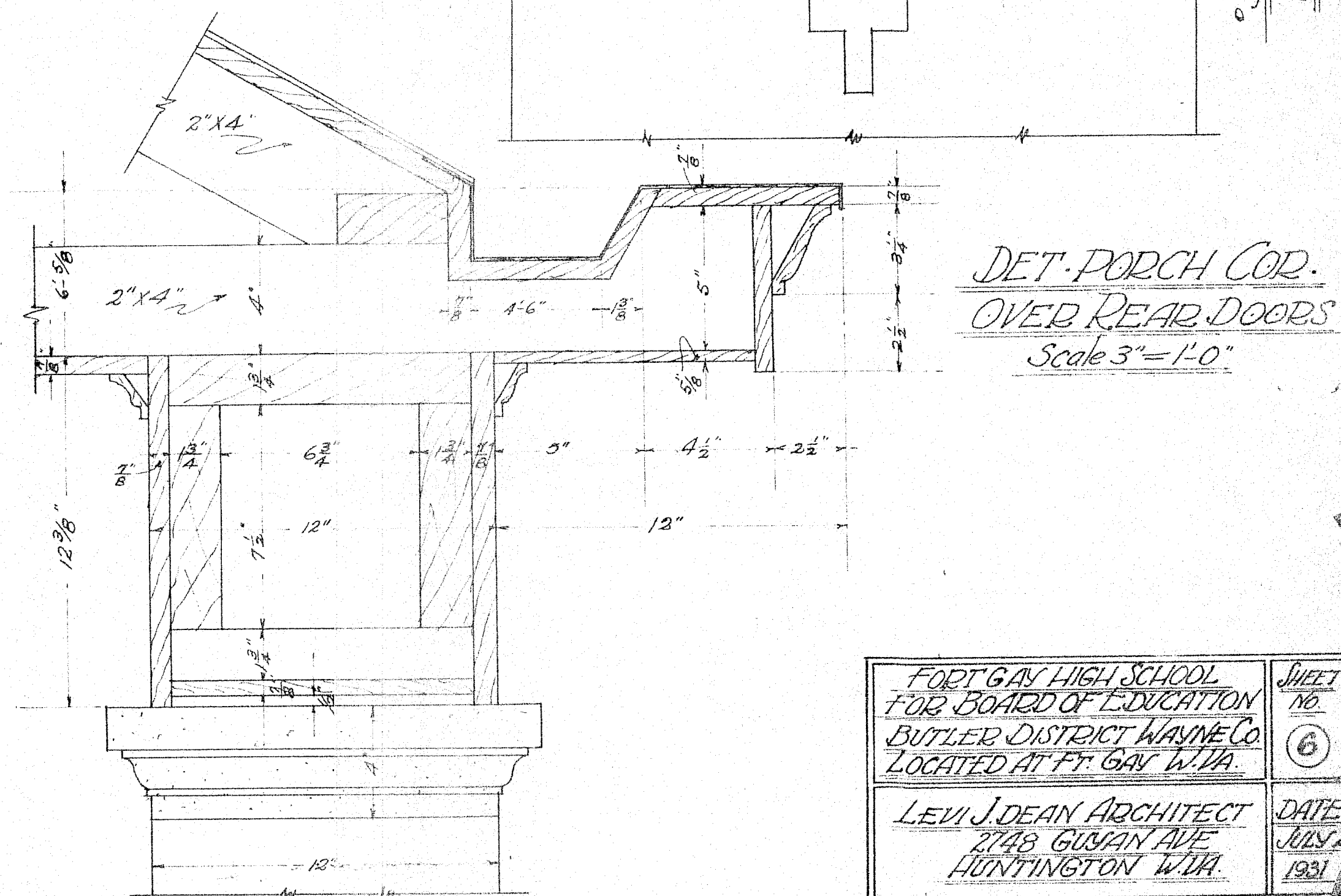
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LEVI J. DEAN ARCHITECT 2748 GUYAN AVE. HUNTINGTON W.VA.	DATE JULY 2 1931



1277

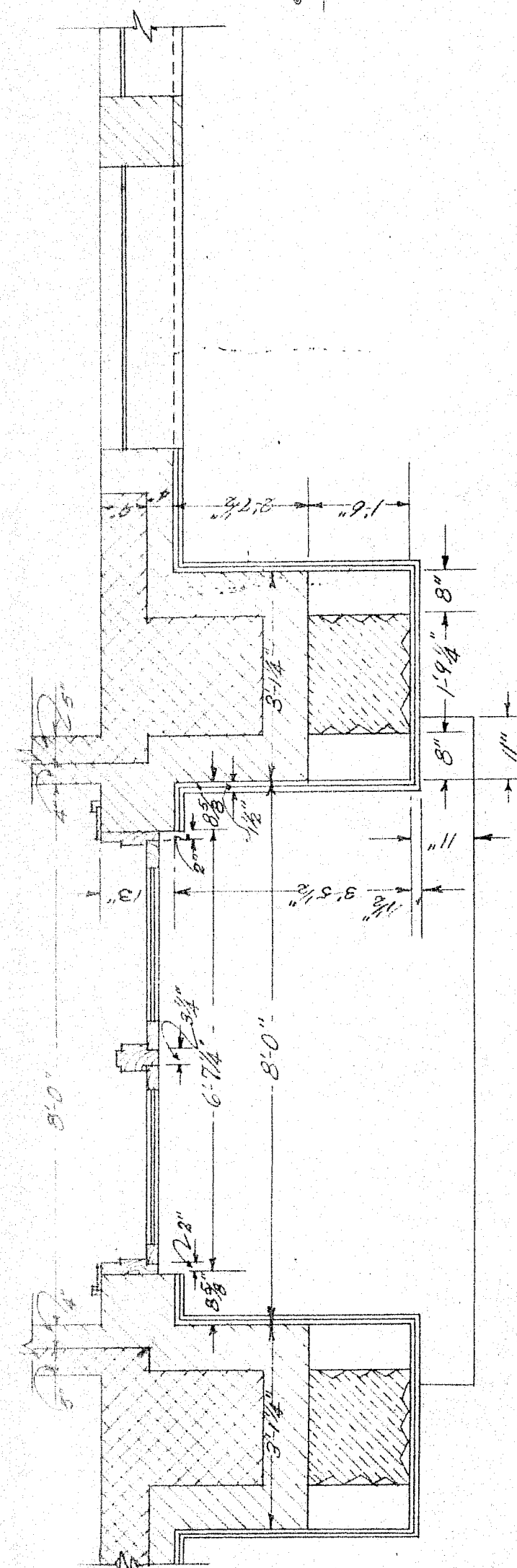
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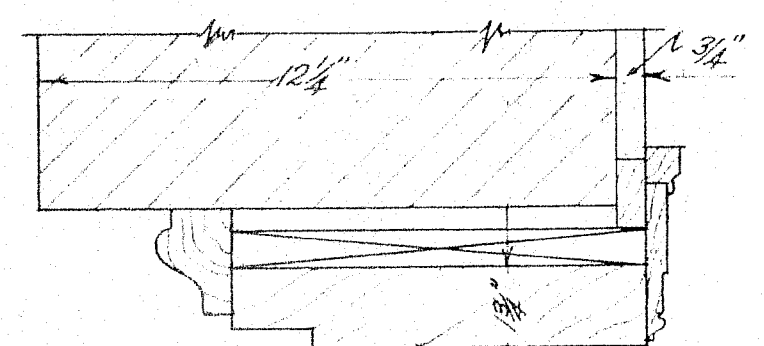
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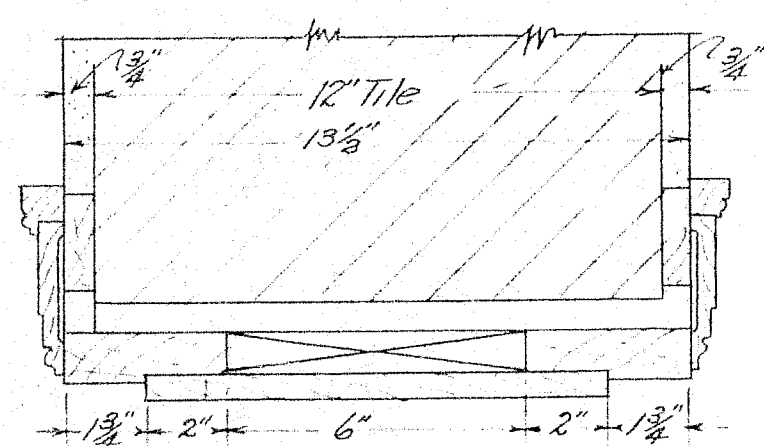
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FRONT DOOR WAY AND
WALL
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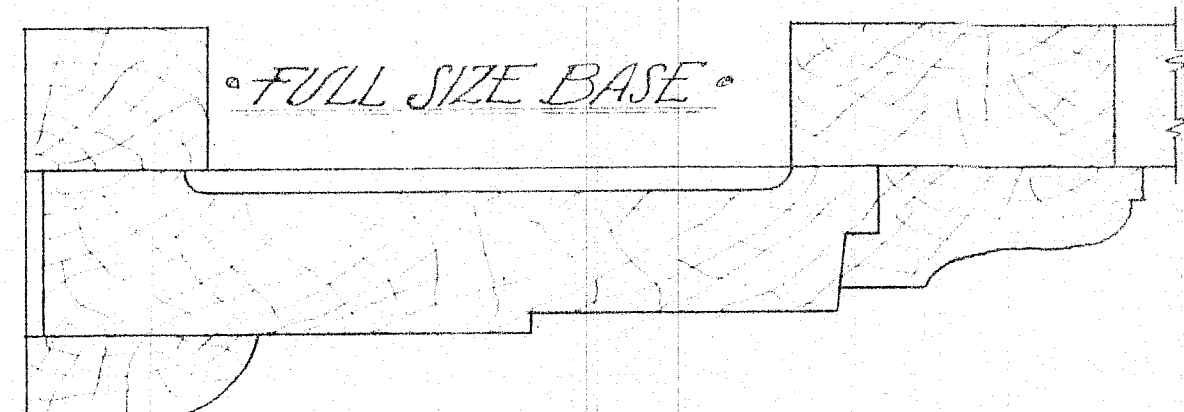
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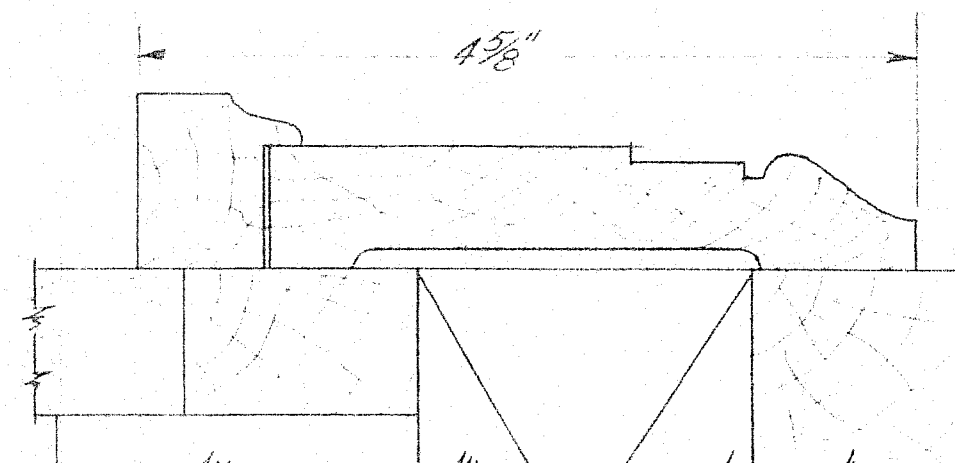
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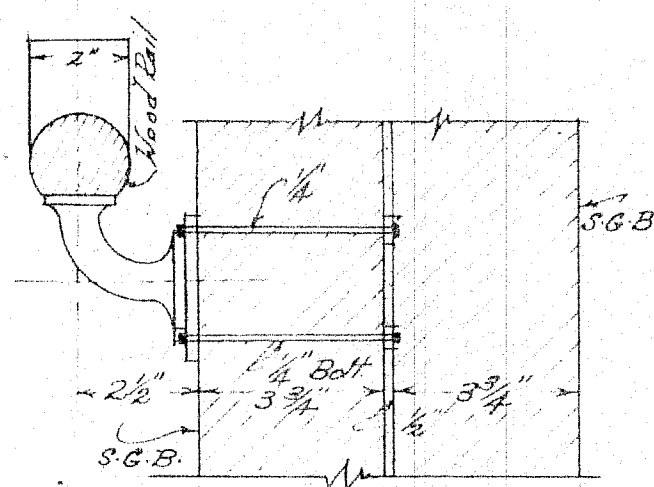
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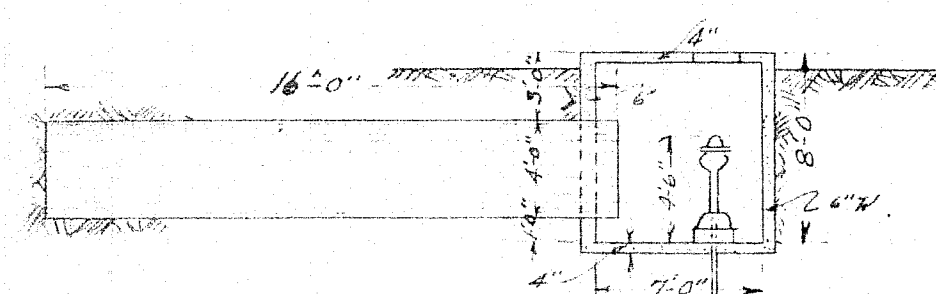
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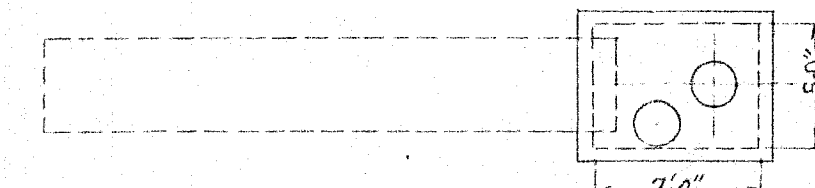
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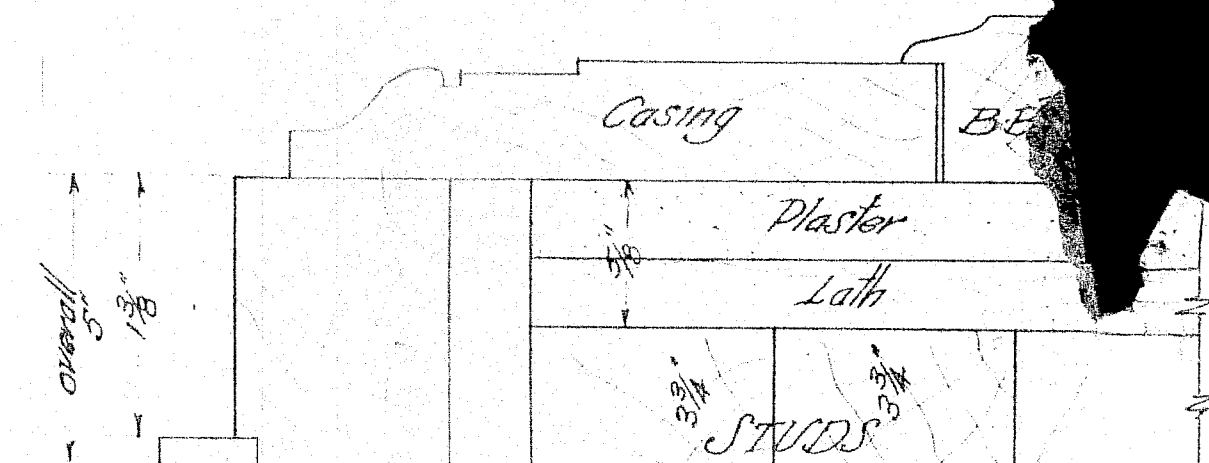
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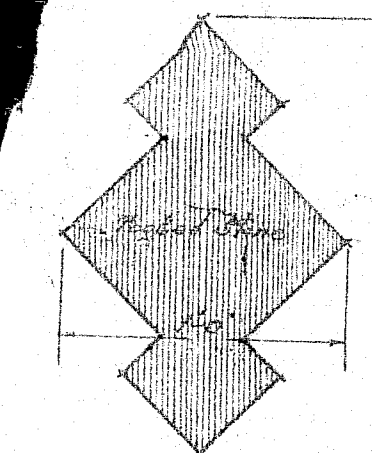
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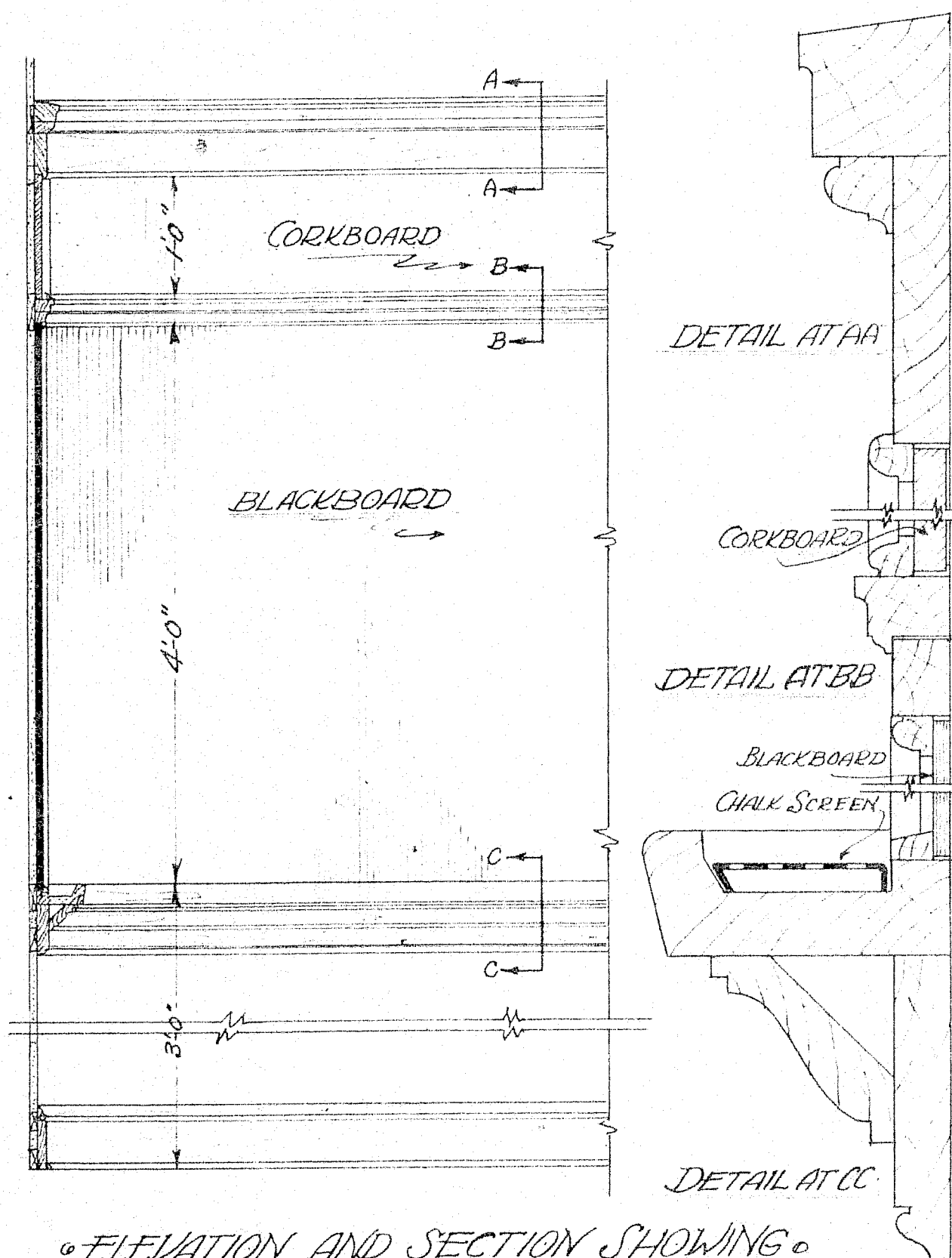
TOP VIEW OF PUMPHOUSE



WOOD 5\"/>

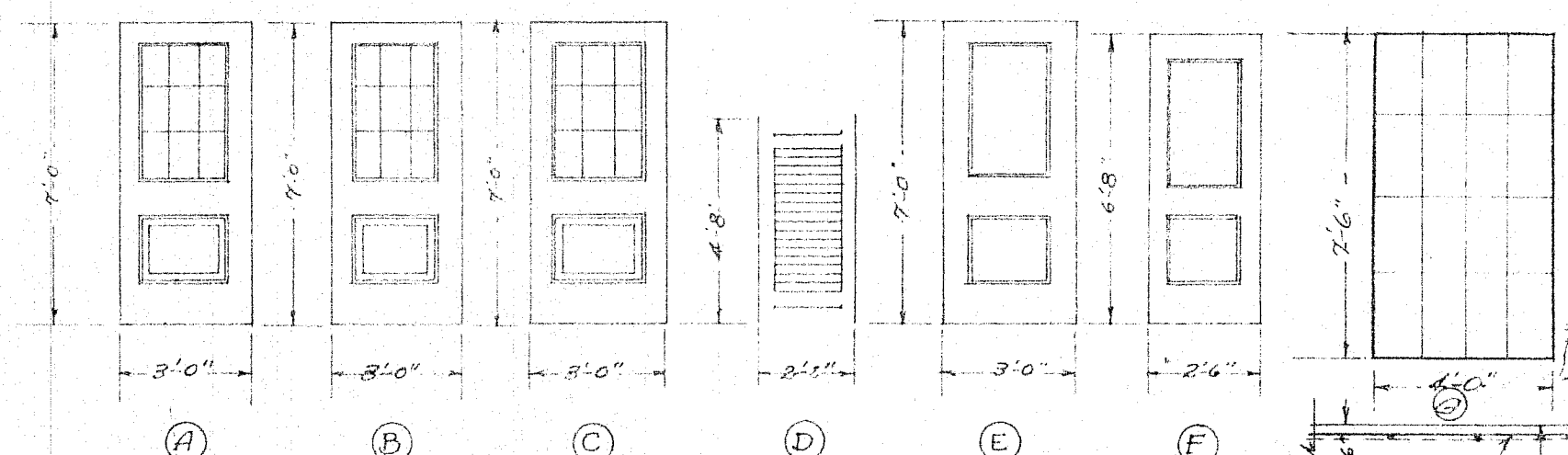


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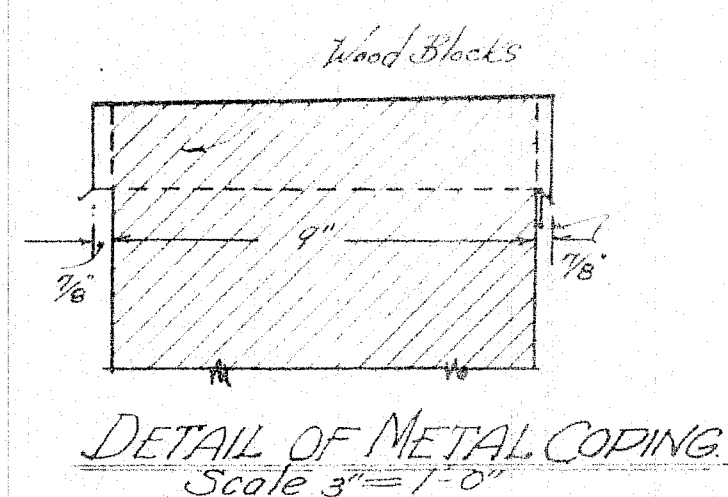


ELEVATION AND SECTION SHOWING BLACKBOARD-CORKBOARD AND TRIM

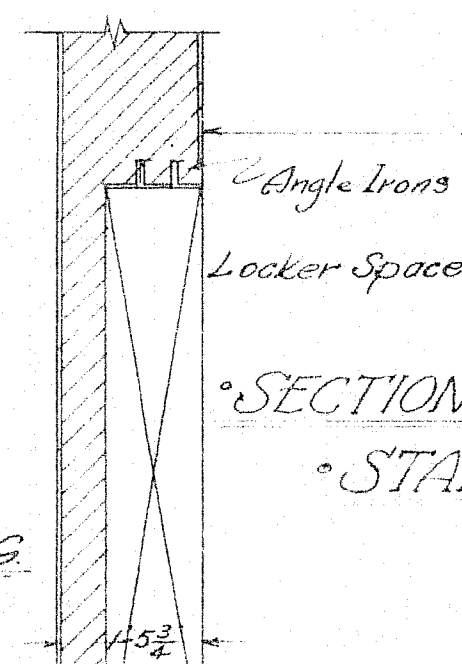
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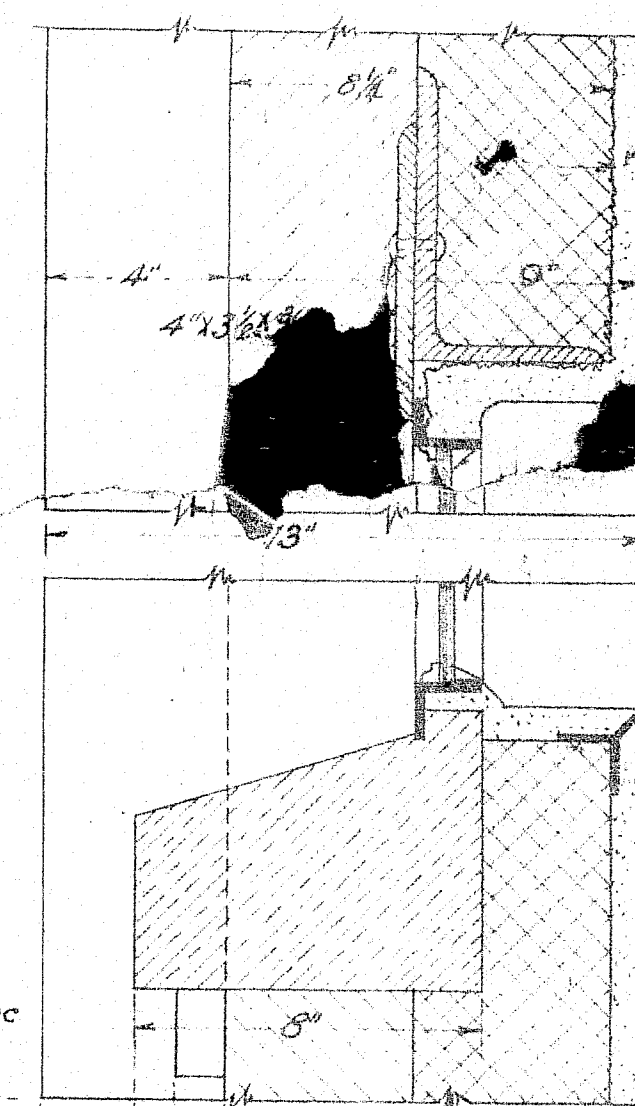
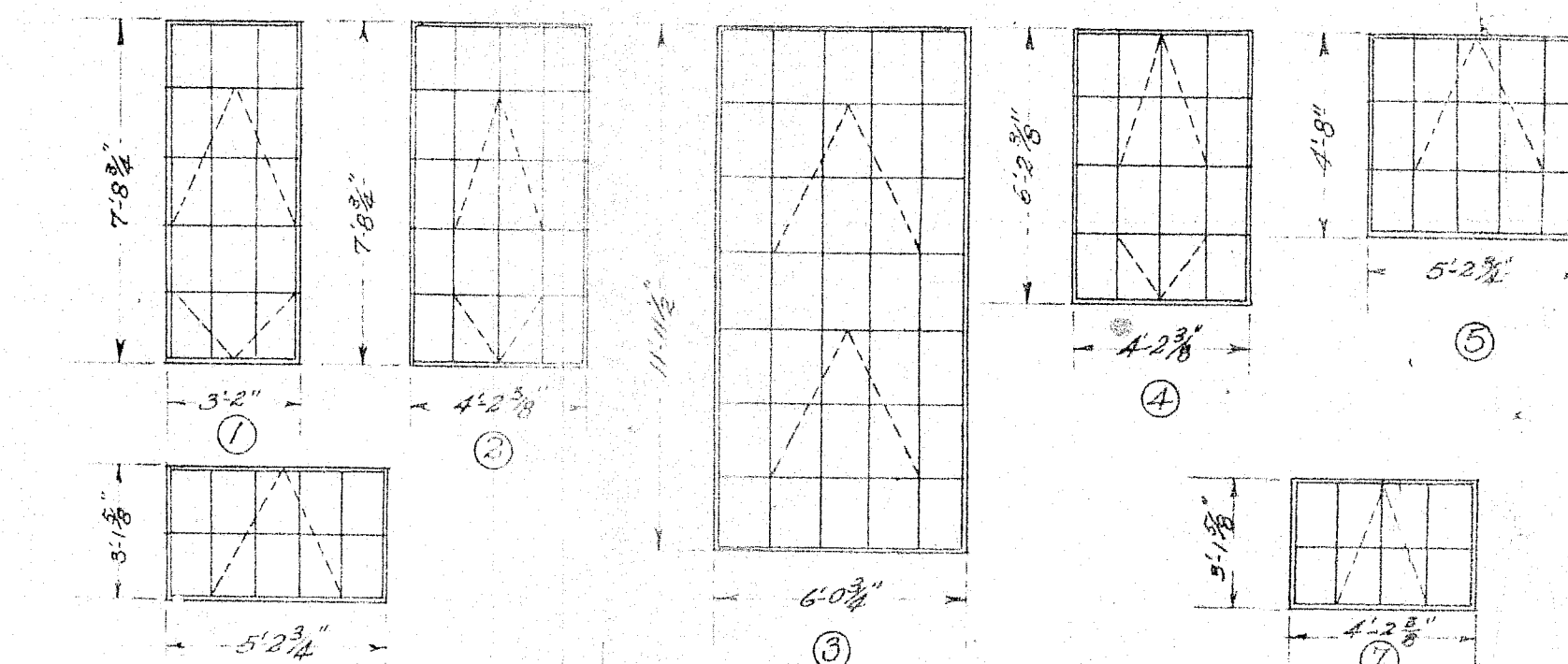
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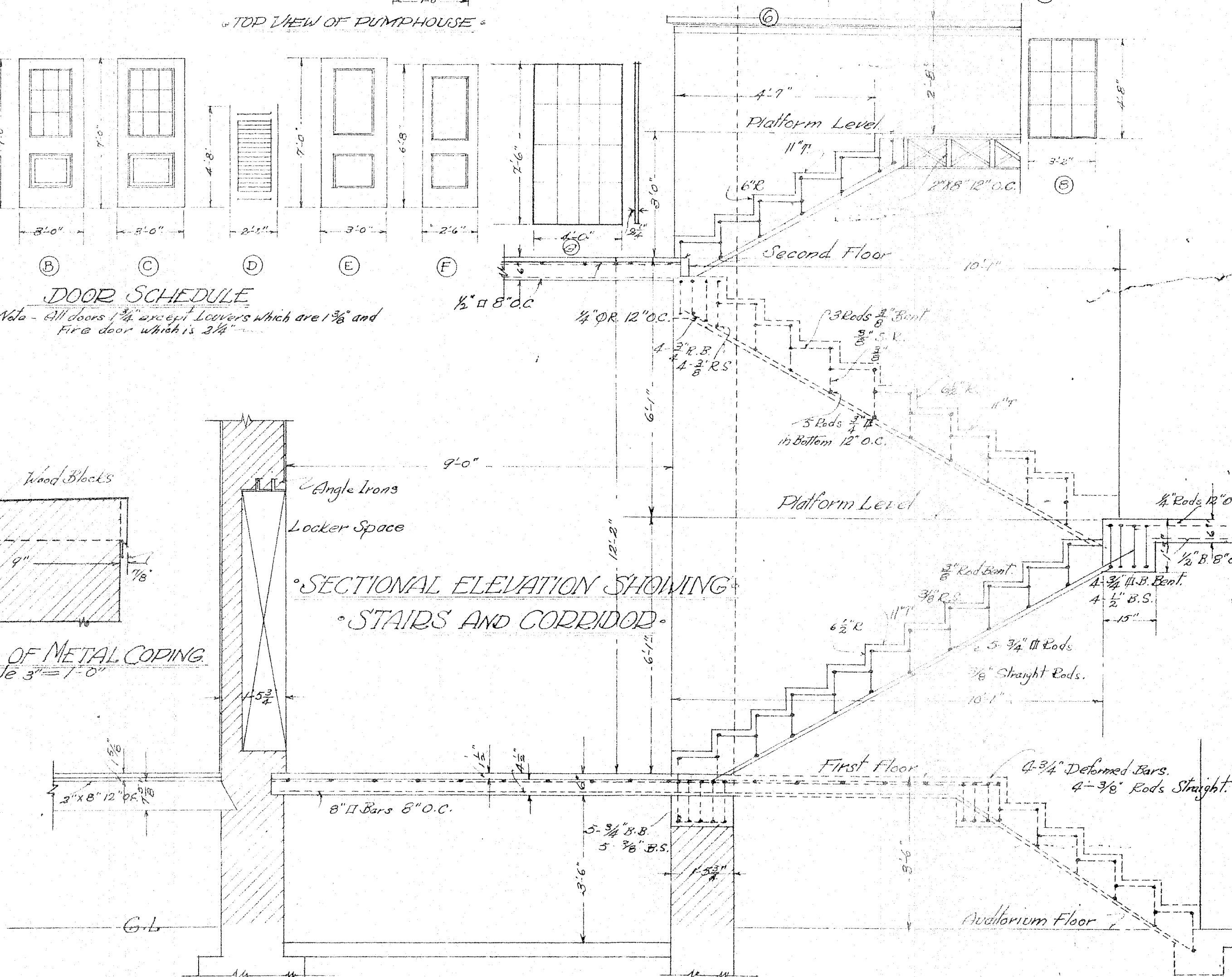
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SECTIONAL ELEVATION SHOWING STAIRS AND CORRIDOR



DETAIL WALL AND STEEL SASH 3\"/>



FOOT GAY HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION BUTLER DISTRICT WAYNE CO. LOCATED AT FT GAY W.VA.	
LEVI J. DEAN ARCHITECT 2748 GUYAN AVE. HUNTINGTON W.VA.	SHEET NO. 9 DATE JULY 2, 1931

Partial List of Architectural Commissions for Levi J. Dean, as compiled by the architect in 1940:

Churches:

Parkersburg Baptist Church - Parkersburg, W.Va.
Second Presbyterian Church – Huntington, W.Va.
Backus M.E. Church – Huntington, W.Va.
M.E. Church, South – Huntington, W.Va.
Baptist Temple, Sunday School section – Huntington, W.Va.
M.E. Church, remodeled – Huntington, W.Va.
First Baptist Church – Huntington, W.Va.
Jewish Temple (Orthodox) – Huntington, W.Va.
First Baptist Church – Kenova, W. Va.
South Charleston Baptist Church – Charleston, W.Va.
Baptist Church, Sunday School section – St. Albans, W.Va.
M.E. Church – Richwood, W.Va.
M.E. Church – Sutton, W.Va.
Hurricane Baptist Church – Hurricane, W.Va.
Highlawn Baptist Church – Huntington, W.Va.
Presbyterian Church, remodeled – Pikeville, Ky.
Iaeger Baptist Church – Iaeger, W.Va.
East Williamson Baptist Church – Williamson, W.Va.
First Presbyterian Church – Williamson, W.Va.
Grantsville Baptist Church – Grantsville, W.Va.

Banks:

First National Bank – Ripley, W.Va.
First National Bank – Hurricane, W.Va.
First National Bank – Oak Hill, W.Va.
First National Bank – Stone, Ky.
State Bank – Fayetteville, W.Va.
State Bank – Wayne, W.Va.

Court Houses:

Jackson County Courthouse – Ripley, W.Va.
Pikesville Court House – Pikesville, Ky.
Jail & Jailer's Residence – Grayson, Ky.
Court House Addition – Wayne, W.Va.
Court House & Jail – Summersville, W.Va.
Municipal Building – Gassaway, W.Va.

Schools:

Cowan High School - Cowan, W. Va.
Guyandotte Grade School Addition - Huntington, W. Va.
Rome High School - Rome, Ohio
Chesapeake High School – Chesapeake, Ohio
Grade School – Kenova, W. Va.
Grade School – Wayne, W.Va.
High School – remodeled – Wayne, W.Va.
High School – Lenore, W. Va.
Grade School – Nolan, W. Va.
High School – Chatteroy, W. Va.
High School – Burch, W. Va.
High School – Matewan, W. Va.
Grade School – Thacker, W. Va.
High School – Gilbert, W. Va.
High School – Harrisville, W. Va.
High School – Ripley, W. Va.
High School – Crown City, Ohio
High School – Mason City, W. Va.
Girls' Dormitory School Building – Pikeville, Ky.
Guyan Valley High School – Branchland, W. Va.
Lavalette High School – Wayne County, W. Va.
Hurricane Grade School – Hurricane, W. Va.
Richwood Gymnasium – Richwood, W. Va.
Fort Gay High School – Wayne, W. Va.
Two (2) School Buildings, remodeled – Kenova, W. Va.
Wheelwright High School
Weeksbury Grade & High School
Betsy Lane Grade & High School
Wayland Gymnasium – Wayland, Ky.
Martin High School – Martin, W. Va.
Maytown Science Building
Additions to Wayland Grade, McDowell Grade & High School
Garrett High School & Auditorium
Lackey Gymnasium
Grade School Building – Drift, Ky.
Fed's High School
Phelp's High School
Maytown High School
Wheelwright Science Building
Allen Grade School
Grade & High School – Grahn, Ky.
Grade & High School – Upper Tygart, Ky.
Douglas High School Auditorium Addition – Cabell County, W. Va.

Galliherville Grade School Addition – Cabell County, W. Va.
Jefferson Avenue School Addition – Cabell County, W. Va.
Cox Landing New School – Cabell County, W. Va.

Apartment Houses:

University Apartments – Keyser, W.Va.
Dinkin's Arms – Huntington, W.Va.
Frank Starcher – Huntington, W.Va.
Lonnquist Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Elieca Court – Huntington, W.Va.
Colonial Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Mossman Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Abraham Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Dr. Reynolds Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Ashworth Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Vickers Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Lunaford Apartments – Huntington, W.Va.
Thabet Apartments – Williamson, W.Va.
McNemar Apartments – Logan, W.Va.
Baer Apartments, Huntington, W.Va.
Rose Apartmetns, Huntington, W.Va.

Commercial Buildings:

O.J. Morrison – Huntington, W.Va.
Lewis Arcade Building – Huntington, W.Va.
United Woolen Mills, Huntington, W.Va.
O.J. Morrison – Logan, W.Va.
Lewis Furniture Company – Logan, W.Va.
O.J. Morrison – Fairmont, W.Va.
O.J. Morrison – Charleston, W.Va.
O.J. Morrison – Point Pleasant, W.Va.
Summers Buick – Huntington, W.Va.
G.M. & Dan Mossman – Huntington, W.Va.
Mossman Bros. – Huntington, W.Va.
Warnock Drug Store – Huntington, W.Va.

Office Buildings:

Simms-Keller – Huntington, W.Va.

Hotels:

Park Tower – Huntington, W.Va.
Biltmore – Huntington, W.Va.

Gymnasiums & Theaters:

Gymnasium – Richwood, W.Va.
Star Theater – Richwood, W.Va.
Masonic Temple – Kenova, W.Va.
Dr. Kessler Club House – Greenbriar County, W.Va.

Hospitals:

Kessler's – Huntington, W.Va.
Guthrie's – Huntington, W.Va.

Residences:

John G. Ricketts – Huntington, W.Va.
Mrs. Cook – Huntington, W.Va.
Druggist Shand – Huntington, W.Va.
Marcum's – Huntington, W.Va.
Dan A. Mossman – Huntington, W.Va.
Chas W. Starcher – Huntington, W.Va.
Dr. A.K. Kessler – Huntington, W.Va.
Dr. Geiger – Huntington, W.Va.
Good's – Huntington, W.Va.
George L. Titus – Huntington, W.Va.
Sam Starcher – Huntington, W.Va.
W.L. Reese – Huntington, W.Va.
Oxley's – Huntington, W.Va.
John Ingall's – Huntington, W.Va.
Jeff Newberry – Huntington, W.Va.
Mr. Walker - Huntington, W.Va.
C.M. Gohen - Huntington, W.Va.
Sam Biggs - Huntington, W.Va.
Cam Thompson - Huntington, W.Va.
Hans Watts - Huntington, W.Va.
H.O. Thornburg - Huntington, W.Va.