

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 Central School

Other names/site number Central Grade School; PWA Proj. KANS-1173-DS; KHRI #005-1790

Name of related Multiple Property Listing Historic Public Schools of Kansas & New Deal-era Resources of Kansas

2. Location

Street & number 215 North 8th Street

n/a

not for publication

City or town Atchison

n/a

vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Atchison Code 005 Zip code 66002

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___ national ___ statewide x local Applicable National Register Criteria: x A ___ B x C ___ D



2-28-22

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

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:)

National Register of Historic Places listed - May 9, 2022

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Central School
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5. Classification

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

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input checked="" 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.)

| <u>Contributing</u> | <u>Non-contributing</u> | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | | buildings |
| 1 | | sites |
| | 1 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | 1 | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT/Moderne

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
roof: MEMBRANE
other: STONE

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Narrative Description

Summary

Built in 1938, Central School is located at 215 North 8th Street in Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas. The two-story blonde brick grade school features the Moderne styling introduced to Kansas schools during the New Deal Era. On the exterior, these features include simple geometric massing, emphasis on horizontality, blonde brick and cut limestone, grooved building corners, recessed light fixtures, incised lettering above the doors on the east elevation, and carved wings in a panel on the entry tower. As a City Graded School subtype described in “Historic Public Schools of Kansas,” Central School’s design follows the programmatic standards of the Progressive Era that organized rooms along double-loaded corridors, included classrooms for each grade, provided dedicated activity spaces for art, music, and library, and incorporated a spacious kindergarten room with fireplace. These buildings also featured auditoriums and/or gymnasiums; Central School included an auditorium that also functioned as a gymnasium. Interior materials include wood floors in classrooms, terrazzo floors in corridors, glazed structural clay tile walls, glass block along corridor walls, and plaster ceilings. The building retains a high degree of integrity as a New Deal-era City Graded School from its period of significance, 1938. The nominated property includes the building, a contributing playground, and a non-contributing parking lot.

Elaboration

SETTING AND SITE

As its name implies, Central School (215 North 8th Street) is centrally located within the city of Atchison, Kansas. Commercial Street, the spine of downtown, is one block south of the school (*Figure 1*). Because of its location at the northwest edge of downtown, commercial and civic buildings occupy parcels to the north, east, and south of Central School; a residential neighborhood, primarily consisting of turn-of-the-twentieth-century houses, stretches to the northwest and west.

The L-shaped parcel of the nominated property occupies the east end of the block bound by Santa Fe Street (north), North 8th Street (east), Kansas Avenue (south), and North 9th Street (west) (*Figures 2 & 3*). An east-west mid-block alley turns to the south at the west edge of the L-shaped school property; the adjacent property to the west creates the north half of the west boundary. Concrete sidewalks line the perimeter of the block, outside the nominated boundary (*Photos 1, 2, & 3*). Along North 8th Street, these connect to concrete steps and walkways that lead to the school building. A large asphalt-paved **parking lot** for approximately thirty vehicles fills the northwest quarter of the nominated parcel (*Photos 3 & 4*); a concrete retaining wall, post-dating the year of construction, lines the west and south sides of the parking lot. The parking area gives way to paved play areas along the west side of the building (*Photo 5*). The historic plot plan playground to the west of the building (*Figure 4*); it is currently unknown when the lot was constructed.¹ A curb cut along Santa Fe Street provides access to the parking lot (*Photo 2; Figure 3*). The parking lot is considered non-contributing because it post-dates the period of construction.

¹ The oldest aerial image (on historicaerials.com) from 1982 shows the parking lot in place.

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The nominated site is minimally landscaped. Manicured grass lines the east and north sides of the building. Mature trees line the east side of the building (*Photo 1*). Lawn covers the south **playground**, a contributing site (*Photos 5 & 6*). A non-historic set of play equipment occupies the south end of the playground (*Figure 3*), and a medium street tree occupies the southeast corner of the playground; a non-historic chain link fence encloses the playground. A flagpole sits at the northeast corner of the building and was installed at an unknown date.²

CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING - EXTERIOR

Constructed in 1938, Central School is a two-story masonry building designed in the Moderne architectural style common to the New Deal era. The building has asymmetrical massing and an L-shaped footprint arranged on a north-south axis and following the shape of its parcel. The main block of the building is a two-story, L-shaped mass with a partial basement. The rectangular, one-and-a-half-story auditorium mass is centered on the north side of the L. The one-story kindergarten extends from the south end of the building and has a curved south wall. Flat built-up roofs with short parapets cover the entire building. Blonde brick clads the concrete structure. Cut limestone clads the foundation up to the windowsills of the first story and caps the parapets. All windows and exterior doors are replacement aluminum units installed at an unknown date; historic masonry openings remain intact, and windows retain their cut stone sills.

Simple details provide ornament for the otherwise streamlined form. The corner bricks form vertical grooves that step back a single course at roughly each story. Brick notches in the parapets of the east and south elevations extend from the top of brick mullions to the coping. Cut limestone name plaques surmount the main entry and the kindergarten entry (*Figure 5*). Cut limestone wings ornament a rectangular panel above the second story windows of the entry tower.

EAST (PRIMARY) ELEVATION

The primary elevation faces east onto North 8th Street (*Photos 1, 2, & 6*). This elevation shows each of the three main functions of the building, with the one-story kindergarten mass at the south, the auditorium at the north, and the main classroom block in the center. The east elevations of both the kindergarten and auditorium sit back from the main plane of the façade, and a two-story entry tower extends east slightly from the classroom block; this tower also rises above the rest of the building. Scamell planned to cap this tower with a metal pyramidal roof (*Figure 6*), but that was not constructed (*Figure 7*); this is the only known significant alteration from the plans.

Two bays organize the east elevation of the kindergarten (*Photo 6*), which sits back nine feet from the classroom block. In the south bay, brick mullions separate three identical rectangular windows. The north bay contains the kindergarten entrance. A set of four concrete steps leads up to concrete stoop; a stone wingwall lines the south side of the steps. A pair of glazed aluminum doors with transom fills the historic masonry opening defined by a

² The pole does not appear in the 1938 photo of the building, see Figure 7, but this photo indicates the landscaping was still to be completed. An undated (circa 1960s?) photo housed in the Gene Pitts Collection (EA1002) at the Atchison County Library shows a flagpole in place.

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cut stone surround; the top of the surround steps up and features incised letters spelling out “KINDERGARTEN” in Broadway font (*Figure 5*).³ A historic recessed light fixture hangs in the wall to the south of the doors.

Four bays organize the main block of the east elevation (*Photos 1 & 2*). The entry tower fills the north bay and extends from the rest of the façade approximately three feet. The first story contains a centered pair of glazed aluminum doors flanked by tall rectangular window units. Cut stone clads the first story; “CENTRAL SCHOOL” is incised in Broadway font in the stone over the doors. Historic recessed light fixtures flank the doors. A tripartite window unit pierces the upper façade above the entrance; cut stone mullions separate the vertical windows and connect to a stone bulkhead. A carved pair of wings adorns a rectangular plaque above the window (*Figure 5*). The three bays to the south of the tower are identical. Each features a bank of windows at each story. Brick mullions separate three windows in each bank with a wide center unit (typical window on the building). The auditorium at the north end of the east elevation is recessed just over eight feet from the entry tower, which provides space on the north side of the tower for a single vertical window at each story. A single set of three windows, separated by brick mullions, pierces the center of the auditorium wall.

NORTH ELEVATION

The north elevation faces Santa Fe Street (*Photos 2 & 3*). This wall steps vertically to accommodate the fly gallery of the stage. Five identical vertical windows pierce the east end of the elevation; the outer two windows are spaced slightly farther apart than the middle three. A metal slab door to the west of these windows opens onto a concrete stoop and steps with a metal railing. A historic recessed light fixture occupies the wall to the west of this door. To the west of the fly gallery, the north elevation steps back almost twenty-two feet to the south to accommodate a steeply inclined driveway down to the basement boiler room; the driveway features a narrow set of stairs down the middle. A non-historic steel panel covers the entrance into the basement. A single window pierces the center of this wall at the first story above the basement entrance.

WEST ELEVATION

The west elevation overlooks the parking lot and faces the residences to the west (*Photos 3, 4, & 5*). The building’s massing organizes this elevation: the auditorium occupies the north end; the L-shaped classroom block comprises most of the façade, and the one-story kindergarten extends to the south. No openings pierce the west wall of the auditorium (*Photo 3*). The north portion of the classroom block extends over twelve feet from the auditorium and follows the L of the building footprint. An entrance pierces the center of this wall at the first story; formerly this masonry opening contained a pair of doors, but today a single aluminum glazed door system with wide sidelight and transom fills the opening. A concrete ramp leads up to the door from the parking lot. A vertical window pierces the bay to the north of the entry. A window pierces the second story above the entrance. To the north of this window, a typical tripartite window bank pierces the wall. The wall to the south of the entry contains no openings.

³ According to Linotype, typeface designer Morris Fuller Benton developed Broadway font in 1925. <https://www.linotype.com/342098/broadway-family.html> (accessed 22 July 2021). The letters contain remnants of red paint; this treatment is not on the original plans nor in the historic photo of the building (*Figure 7*).

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The main portion of the west elevation sets back from the north portion of the classroom block approximately forty-two feet (*Photos 4 & 5*). Eleven uneven bays organize this part of the classroom block. Single windows fill Bays 1 through 9 on the first story; at the second story, Bay 3 is blank. The wall containing the south two bays extends from the façade approximately two feet. Paired openings with stone mullions fill Bay 10 at both stories and cut stone panels separate the first and second stories. Bay 11 corresponds to an internal stairwell and shares the paired opening design of Bay 10. At the first story, a metal slab door fills the north opening and cut stone panels fill the south opening (a historic treatment); the second story windows are taller than those in Bay 10.

Four uneven bays organize the west elevation of the kindergarten, which sets back two feet from the classroom block to its north. The north bay of the kindergarten contains a historic entrance; a concrete slab extends from the brick above the masonry opening to shelter the pair of glazed aluminum doors. A recessed light fixture adorns the wall to the south of the doors, and three unevenly spaced windows pierce the wall to the south of the light (*Photo 5*).

SOUTH ELEVATION

The south elevation overlooks the south playground and sets back from Kansas Avenue. The south elevation of the L-shaped classroom block's north leg contains two typical tripartite window banks at the west end. At the east end, a metal slab door pierces the first story, and a single window pierces the wall above it. An open concrete stair with metal railing lines the wall under the first story window, providing access to the basement. The south wall of the kindergarten features a centered curved window wall with five pairs of windows. A pair of windows pierces the center of classroom block's second story.

CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING - INTERIOR

The form of the building follows the interior functions of Central School with kindergarten at the south end, auditorium at the north end, and classrooms between (*Photograph Keys 2 & 3*). Central double-loaded L-shaped corridors organize the two floors (*Photos 7, 8, 10, & 11 through 13*); some corridor doors are inset while others open directly into the hallways. Two switchback stairs provide access between the first and second floors (*Photos 9, 14, & 15*). The north stair is centered on the south side of the east-west corridor (*Photo 15*); the south stair occupies the southeast corner of the classroom block and exits into the south rear entry vestibule (*Photos 9, 12, & 14*). A partial basement fills the west end of the L footprint; the north stair accesses the basement.

Materials throughout the building primarily date to the initial construction in 1938. Terrazzo covers the corridor, stair, and restroom floors. Wood covers the classroom, auditorium, offices, and activity room floors. Glazed structural clay tile walls with integrated cove base, line the corridors and act like wainscoting in most rooms; above the tile wainscot, finished plaster is applied to cinder block (*Figure 8*).⁴ The blonde tile matches the exterior brick; it is laid in a running bond. The header course is a darker, orange color with blonde courses above. Glass block above header courses at some locations along the walls allows daylight into the corridors (*Photo 13*). Plaster

⁴ Cinder Concrete Products, Inc. of Kansas City, Missouri, supplied the name brand "Cinder Blox," according to a congratulatory ad in the 22 August 1938 *Atchison Daily Globe*.

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and patterned insulated board ceilings are currently covered by suspended acoustical grids in some rooms and corridors. Historic doors and trim remain throughout the building.

FIRST FLOOR

Four sets of doors provide entry into Central School, two from the east and two from the west. The doors each open into vestibules that open into the corridors. The primary entrance is through the pair of east doors within the tower. The rectangular vestibule has a checkerboard terrazzo floor, glazed tile walls, and patterned insulated panel ceiling (*Photo 7*). Windows and the entry doors pierce the east wall. The west wall features historic display cases atop glazed tile bulkheads, flanking three doorways into the corridor; the doors have been removed. The cabinets have three glazed sides with thin wood frames and horizontal muntins (*Figure 9*). Historic glass block comprises the remainder of the wall above the display cases and doorways. An inset panel fills the center of the south wall. A pair of historic glazed wood doors centered in the north wall leads into the auditorium. A window pierces the wall to the east of the doors, and an inset glazed tile panel to the west of the doors balances the window. The kindergarten entry at the south end of the east elevation leads into a small vestibule with glazed tile walls, terrazzo floor, and exposed insulated panel ceiling; the doors in the west wall of this vestibule have been removed (*Photo 8*). The two west (rear) entries align with the east entries. The north rear entry leads into a small vestibule with terrazzo floor, glazed tile walls, and suspended grid ceiling. A historic pass-through window into the kitchen pierces the north wall.⁵ The south rear entry opens into a larger vestibule, again with terrazzo floor, glazed tile walls, and suspended grid ceiling (*Photo 9*). The historic doors to the corridor remain; these are metal doors with wired glass and metal trim. An opening in the north wall of the vestibule corresponds to the south stair to the second floor.

The *auditorium and stage* occupy most of the north side of the east-west corridor (*Photos 16 & 17*). Doors from the main entry vestibule lead into the back of the two-story volume space, and a pair of doors at the north end of the north-south corridor lead into the center of the room. The raised stage occupies the west end of the room; the plaster proscenium has a simple grooved design terminating at raised plinths. Wood covers the floor of the stage and auditorium. Painted cinder block creates the walls and stage base. Patterned insulated panels cover the ceiling between plaster beams with recessed lighting. The beams connect to pilasters that each feature a historic recessed light fixture. Doorways at the west ends of the north and south walls lead to small wooden stairways up to the stage.

The *kindergarten room* is centered at the south end of the north-south corridor (*Photos 18 & 19*). The pair of doors open into a small vestibule with a closet in the west end and a mechanical room to the east. Within the kindergarten room along the north wall, a restroom occupies the northwest corner followed by a closet; the wardrobe (without doors) fills the east half of the north wall. Low built-in line the curve of the south wall (*Photo 18*). A brick fireplace with tile hearth is centered in the west wall and flanked by historic wooden built-ins (*Photo 19; Figure 10*). The room historically had a linoleum floor which is today covered by VCT. Walls retain their glazed tile wainscot and plaster, and patterned insulated panels cover the full-height ceiling. A non-historic

⁵ The current window unit may be a later installation, as it does not match what is on the plans (Sheet 15), but there was a serving window here historically.

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partition wall divides the room in half lengthwise today; although, the historic features of the room remain highly intact.

Three classrooms (101, 102, and 103) line the east side of the north-south corridor. Restrooms flank administrative offices along the west side of the corridor, each with a private toilet room. The restrooms have exterior access doors to allow for use outside of school hours. The former Nurse's Room, one of the administrative offices, retains its wood floors and full-height plaster ceiling that showcases the glass block of its east wall (*Photo 20*). Another classroom occupies the south side of the east-west corridor; the kitchen and stage are opposite this classroom.

SECOND FLOOR

The organization of the second floor generally follows the first floor. Three classrooms line the east side of the north-south corridor, with the former library occupying the north end of this side of the corridor, directly above the entry vestibule. The historic shelving was removed from this room; carpet covers the wood floor, and a suspended ceiling hides the historic paneled ceiling. The walls are plaster; glazed tile wainscot remains on the east wall. Restrooms on the west side of the corridor flank the former art/activity room. This long, narrow room includes a wardrobe (no doors or trim) at the south end and historic built-in cubbies at the north end of the room (*Photo 21*). Carpet covers the historic floor, and a suspended ceiling hides the historic insulated panel ceiling, but a portion of the glass block in the east wall remains exposed. The music room occupied the northwest corner of the floor. Glazed tile wainscoting remains on each wall; carpet covers wood flooring, and suspended grid hides the historic ceiling. Small closets and mechanical rooms line the north side of the corridor east of the music room because of the auditorium. A classroom occupies the south side of the corridor across from the music room.

Classrooms

Central School has eight classrooms, not including the kindergarten room. The six classrooms along the east side of the building share identical features (*Photos 22 & 23*). Windows span the east walls with historic radiators beneath; storage spaces line the corridor (west) walls. A closet with a canted door fills the southwest corner of each room; to the north is a built-in bookcase with glazed upper doors (*Figure 9*), and north of the bookcase is the door to the corridor. To the north of the classroom door, classrooms 101 and 201 feature a small built-in open shelf before the recessed wardrobe; all wardrobe doors have been removed. Finally, a sink/drinking fountain formerly filled the recess next to the wardrobe at the north end of the wall; these were also removed at an unknown date. Chalkboards and tack boards lined the front and rear walls; the glazed tile wainscot along these walls incorporate trays for chalk and tacks (*Figure 9*). Tack boards remain in most rooms, but dry erase boards have replaced all chalkboards with the exception of one remnant in 202. The historic maple flooring remains partially exposed in 101 and fully exposed in 203, but carpet covers the wood in the other classrooms.⁶ Similarly, the historic ceilings in the classrooms feature insulated panels laid in running bond with a wide border; suspended acoustical grids cover the historic ceilings all but 202.

Classrooms 105 and 205 occupy the south side of the corridor on the west side of the north stair. Built-ins, wardrobes, and former sinks lined the east walls of these rooms; tack boards lined the north walls (with two doors

⁶ "Schools Open Here Sept 6," *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 1, 9. The maple flooring is called out in this article.

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into the corridor); chalkboards lined the west wall, and windows spanned the south walls. Carpet (105) and VCT (205) cover the wood floors, and suspended grids hide historic ceilings in these two rooms. Classrooms 103, 104, 105, and 203 are subdivided today to form offices or smaller classrooms; the non-historic partitions do not adversely impact historic material.

BASEMENT

Most of the basement level is a crawl space under the longest portion of the building from the auditorium to the kindergarten wing. A partial basement is located to the west of the north stair, beneath the southwest classroom, stage, and kitchen. A straight-run stair leads to a small stair hall at the east side of the basement. A door in the east side of this hall leads into the crawl space; a door in the north wall provides access into a mechanical room. A former *playroom* fills the southwest corner of the basement. An exterior door in the south wall of this room provides access to a stair leading up to the parking lot. To the north of the playroom is the *boiler room*, formerly accessed by the inclined driveway on the north side of the building. East of this driveway and north of the boiler room is a storage room. Utilitarian finishes throughout the basement include dropped acoustical grids and exposed concrete ceilings, concrete floors, and masonry or plaster/drywall walls.

CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING - INTEGRITY

Central School retains a high degree of integrity from its 1938 construction. The building remains in its central location within Atchison, Kansas, at the transitional area between residential neighborhood and downtown. Due to its location, the setting remains a mixture of single-family housing and commercial/civic buildings. The site itself retains its open play area to the south of the building, and although the west playground is now paved, the site remains open at this location. Central School continues to communicate its New Deal-era construction through its design that focuses on a streamlined form that emphasizes its horizontality. Additional character-defining features of its Moderne style include the use of blonde brick, the incised letters over the entrances using Broadway font, the carved plaque on the front façade, the grooved building corners, the flat roofs, and the recessed light fixtures. The school also continues to communicate its design as a City Graded School with double-loaded corridors organizing dedicated classrooms and activity rooms, its separate kindergarten room with separate entrance and fireplace, and its auditorium. Although some classrooms have been subdivided by later partitions, the original forms of the rooms remain legible through the retention of built-ins and chalk trays. The materials used in the building remain highly intact, even if covered by non-historic finishes (e.g., carpet, suspended ceiling grids). Glazed structural tile is pervasive throughout the building, as is the terrazzo flooring in high-traffic areas such as the corridors and stairwells. Historic built-ins and display cases remain, as do the glass blocks at the tops of corridor walls. Historic oak and metal doors and trim remain at almost every opening. On the exterior, doors and windows have been replaced, but the non-historic units fill historic masonry openings and do not detract from the historic design. The building clearly communicates its associations and feelings with both the New Deal era and public schools of Kansas.

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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

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1938

Significant Dates

1938

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Scamell, Ralph E.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for Central School is 1938, the year the building opened. Its significance is tied to its New Deal associations, both in its funding source (PWA) and its Moderne design. Its significance also directly relates to its role in alleviating the overcrowding of Atchison's public schools, an event that occurred when Central School opened for the 1938-39 school year.

Criteria Considerations (justification)

N/A

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The 1938 Central School in Atchison, Atchison County, Kansas is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of EDUCATION and ARCHITECTURE. The school building is an example of an Educational property type defined in “New Deal-era Resources of Kansas” and specifically, an example of the City Graded School property subtype defined in “Historic Public Schools of Kansas.” Because of its direct association with the historic contexts outlined in both multiple property documents, the school is nominated for its association with both. In the mid-1930s, the Atchison public school district determined the need for a new elementary school to alleviate overcrowding. Five grade schools and one high school housed all students in the district; one of the elementary schools and the high school also taught junior high level students. The opening of Central Grade School, centrally located within Atchison, provided additional classroom space for elementary school children and allowed Roosevelt Grade School to become the first dedicated junior high school. A grant from the Public Works Administration, a New Deal-era administration, provided matching funds to complete the new school building. Topeka-based architect Ralph E. Scamell, an Atchison native, designed the two-story masonry building using the programmatic standards of a Progressive Era school but in the Moderne style introduced during the New Deal Era. Design features of the building include simple massing, blonde brick, and ornamentation confined to name plates and a decorative plaque above the main entrance. On the interior, the school features eight classrooms arranged on double-loaded corridors, a large kindergarten room with a separate entrance and a fireplace, an auditorium with a stage, and dedicated rooms for art, library, and music. Scamell used glazed structural clay tile, glass block, and terrazzo throughout the building to increase fire resistance and ease of maintenance. Central School is the only New Deal-era school in Atchison and was the last elementary building constructed until the 1990s. When Atchison Elementary School opened in 1997, the remaining neighborhood schools, including Central School, consolidated and closed; Central School reopened as the alternative school for the district and functioned in this capacity until 2021. The period of significance for Central School is 1938; this represents the year the New Deal-era building opened, alleviating the overcrowding in the school district.

Elaboration

THE ATCHISON PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM AND CENTRAL GRADE SCHOOL

Established shortly after Kansas Territory opened in 1854, the City of Atchison is one of the oldest in the state. The town planners anticipated that Atchison would benefit greatly from its location on the west bank of the Missouri River, nearly equidistant from St. Joseph, Missouri, and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas Territory. In 1855, surveyors marked out four hundred eighty acres for the new townsite named for its founder, Missouri Senator David R. Atchison. The Territorial Legislature incorporated the town of Atchison in 1855 and the city in 1858. By the time of Kansas statehood in 1861, nearly three thousand people resided within the boundaries of the city.⁷

⁷ Sheffield Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas* (Lawrence, Kansas: Standard Publishing Co., 1916), 64-65, 68. According to the 1860 US Federal Census, the population of Atchison equaled 2,616.

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The education of Atchison youth paralleled the development of the town. The first educational institutions were private, but the establishment of a public school system in Atchison came in 1858. In September that year, the Atchison District 1 officers held their first meeting. Less than two months later, two rooms on the second story of a building at 4th and Commercial streets opened as the first public school classrooms. By 1916, the Atchison public school system included five graded school buildings with up to eight grades, one building with three grades, and a high school. The district employed sixty-five teachers for approximately two thousand students.⁸ The school district approved opening a kindergarten in Atchison in 1881, but not until 1910, did the district formally incorporate kindergarten into the school system. Funding for the district came primarily from school taxes, with the state providing some money to the county to distribute between all the districts.⁹

In 1930, over thirteen thousand people resided within the city of Atchison. Of these, approximately two thousand attended school, and most of the students were between the ages of seven and fourteen.¹⁰ The Atchison school district by this time included six buildings, five of which housed primary level students (*Figure 1*). Ingalls School (301 North 5th Street), opened in 1908 to serve as the district high school. The elementary schools housing kindergarten through sixth grade included: the 1915 Washington School (508 R Street), the 1916 John A. Martin School (507 Division Street), the 1922 Roosevelt School (304 North 6th Street), and the 1925 Franklin School (1328 Kansas Avenue). These elementary schools only served the white children of the district. Black students attended the 1921 Lincoln School (810 Division Street) from first through eighth grades before moving on to Ingalls for high school. Ingalls School also housed white seventh and eighth graders.¹¹

The growing school population in the 1930s spurred the school board to begin looking into options to provide additional classroom space. Despite the Great Depression, plans coalesced in 1936. Beginning in May of that year, the school board consulted unnamed architects about the cost to construct a new elementary school. The school board eventually expanded their plan to also include upgrades to existing school buildings. Funding would be provided in part by a 45 percent matching grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA). The city would furnish its matching funds through the sale of bonds, as the interest rates at the time were as low as 2.5 percent. In November 1936, the board unanimously approved a resolution requesting the mayor call a special bond election

⁸ US Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1910: Statistics for Kansas* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, ca.1910), 599, 619. According to these statistics, there were 5,571 students in the county, aged 6 to 20, 4,316 of whom were between the ages of 6 and 14. In the city of Atchison itself, there were 2,758 students aged 6 to 20, 2,091 of whom were aged 6 to 14.

⁹ Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 266-267, 270, 280.

¹⁰ US Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930: Population Vol. III, Part 1* "Alabama-Missouri (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1932), 855. According to these statistics, the greatest number of these students, 1,410, were between the ages of 7 and 13; 348 were 14-15 year olds; 271 16-17; and 126 18-20. These latter students may have been attending higher education schools rather than the primary and secondary schools in the city.

¹¹ Notes in the Gene Pitts Collection binder on Atchison Schools. September 1998, Atchison Public Library, Kansas Room. One other elementary technically within the city of Atchison was Branchton School, but it was within District 65 (Ingalls, *History of Atchison County, Kansas*, 280). Following school integration in 1954, Lincoln School became Martin-West Grade School and John A. Martin School became Martin-East Grade School. For more information about both schools, see their National Register nominations. Lincoln was listed in 2006; Martin in 2016. Division Street became Unity Street in July 2020.

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for the improvements to the school system.¹² The *Atchison Daily Globe* reported the following as proof for the need for additional space:

The Atchison school population has been increasing rapidly in the last few years. At the present time the enrollment in both the elementary schools and the Atchison High school is the heaviest in history. The high school plant [Ingalls School] was built to accommodate between six and eight hundred pupils. The 1936-37 enrollment stands at 1,060.¹³

Voters approved the \$118,000 bond issue in December 1936. The money, when combined with a \$65,000 PWA grant, would allow for the acquisition of a site, the construction of a new elementary school, and the remodeling of Ingalls, Lincoln, and Roosevelt.¹⁴ During the planning stage, the school board and its consultants determined that Roosevelt was unsuitably located as a grade school due to its proximity to the high school, but it was ideally located to be transformed into additional high school and junior high school space. The new grade school built to replace Roosevelt needed a be central to the district and accommodate play areas.¹⁵

The school board immediately implemented the expansion efforts. Voters approved the bond issue right before Christmas, and during the last week of 1936, the school board sold the bonds, hired Ralph E. Scamell as the architect, and secured a site for the new grade school. The selected property on North 8th Street was centrally located in Atchison, between Santa Fe Street and Kansas Avenue; it housed the private St. Louis College from circa 1887 until 1929 when the building was demolished (*Figure 11*).¹⁶ The city band had used the property for concerts since 1929, but the site was otherwise underutilized.

Ralph E. Scamell, Architect

Ralph Eugene Scamell (1888-1981) was born and raised in Atchison, where he attended public schools. Scamell studied engineering at the University of Kansas, graduating in 1911 with a Bachelor of Science degree; he also completed some graduate work while living in Lawrence. His first job out of college was as a draftsman for the American Bridge Company in Gary, Indiana; he quickly returned to Kansas, settling in Topeka as a design engineer for Capital Iron Works until circa 1920 when he established his own architecture firm. In 1921, Scamell helped organize the Kansas chapter of the American Institute of Architects. During his time in Topeka, his numerous commissions encompassed residences, churches, schools, and other civic buildings, mostly in Kansas. Some of his noted works include the Anton-Woodring House (1926) and Shiloh Baptist Church (1926), both in Topeka, the McPherson Community Building (1928) in McPherson, and Central School (1938) and City Hall (1938) in Atchison. By 1947, Scamell was living in the Kansas City area and working for both Wight & Wight and J. Gordon Turnbull before working for Neville, Sharp and Simon and Black & Veatch where he retired.

¹² "Building Boom Hits Atchison," *Atchison Daily Globe* (14 November 1936): 1.

¹³ "Building Boom Hits Atchison," 1.

¹⁴ Equivalent to \$2.3 million in 2021.

¹⁵ "Building Boom Hits Atchison," 1; "To Vote on Bonds," *Atchison Daily Globe* (17 November 1936): 1; "School Bonds Bring Premium," *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 December 1936): 1.

¹⁶ *Atchison Daily Globe* (27 June 1929): 16. Announcement in the paper indicated workmen had been employed to demolish the building.

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Scamell received Kansas architecture license A176 in 1949. The Atchison school board selected Scamell to design Central School based on his connection to the city and his prolific career.¹⁷

Scamell advised the board he would have plans completed by the end of February 1937. The *Atchison Daily Globe* reported in mid-February that the new grade school was to include ten classrooms, a kindergarten room, and an auditorium.¹⁸ The plans, dated March 1937, included eight classrooms, a kindergarten room, an auditorium with a stage, a library, a basement playroom, administrative offices, and two activity rooms. The school board was ready to begin construction by mid-April.

The PWA, however, was slow to approve the \$65,000 grant.¹⁹ In the meantime, the school board began the construction bid process, but when they reviewed the proposals in early June 1937, all were higher than expected.²⁰ The PWA grant was crucial to the success of the school projects in Atchison; therefore, the school board would not authorize any work to begin until the city received approval of the funds.²¹ This delay meant that a new grade school would not be available for the 1937-1938 term as hoped.

Finally, at the end of August 1937, the city received official word that the PWA would approve the grant. The *Atchison Daily Globe* shared the good news with its readers on August 25:

The \$65,000 PWA grant for a new Atchison school building has been approved. ... The PWA grant means that all the red tape has been cleared away and that actual construction will begin, possibly in a few weeks, just as soon as the contracts are let. ... Atchison is putting up something more than \$79,000 to match the PWA grant of \$65,000. This money will be used not only to erect the new elementary school but also to effect alterations [in existing school buildings]. ... The new elementary school will be comfortable, modern and roomy. It will contain a number of extra rooms for nurses, teachers and offices. It will replace Roosevelt school, which in turn will be transformed into a junior high school building to relieve the intolerable crowded condition in Atchison High school.²²

The PWA numbered the school building project KANS-1173. Among the other Kansas projects approved were schools in Basehor, Garnett, Newton, Oberlin, Pittsburg, Pratt, Topeka, Wamego.²³

¹⁷ "School Bonds Bring Premium," 1; Martha Hagedorn-Krass, "Anton-Woodring House," National Register nomination (1991): 8-7; Kansas Historic Resources Inventory; 1947 Kansas City, Missouri City Directory; his architecture license was issued 3 December 1949, Kansas Board of Technical Professions Licensee Details; "Ralph E. Scamell," Obituary, *The Kansas City Times* (11 November 1981): D-13. The Anton-Woodring House, Shiloh Baptist Church, and the McPherson Community Building are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

¹⁸ *Atchison Daily Globe* (17 February 1937): 7. The paper reported, "The new grade school building in Atchison is being delayed by red tape. The school board hoped to have construction started by this time, but the federal government is slow with aid and assistance."

¹⁹ *Atchison Daily Globe* (26 April 1937): 9. Roughly equivalent to \$1.23 million in 2021.

²⁰ *Atchison Daily Globe* (3 June 1937): 11.

²¹ *Atchison Daily Globe* (10 June 1937): 2.

²² "Atchison School Grant Approved," *Atchison Daily Globe* (25 August 1937): 1.

²³ "Atchison School Grant Approved," 1.

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The school district waited another month before the PWA passed final approval. In early October 1937 the construction of Central School was secured. Superintendent W.D. Wolfe expected work to begin within ten weeks or mid-December.²⁴ By the end of October, however, the school board still awaited PWA approval of the contracts before any work could begin.²⁵ This approval occurred soon after. On November 17, 1937, M.W. Watson Company began laying out the foundation lines for excavation at the selected site on North 8th Street.²⁶

Work progressed rapidly. By mid-January 1938, excavations had been completed, and the contractors began erecting the wooden forms for pouring the concrete foundations. Most of the brick of the first story was laid by the end of January. Optimistic estimates put completion of the new school between mid-July and end of August, in time for the 1938-1939 school year.²⁷ Throughout the spring, more than fifty men worked to complete the new school building.²⁸ Known contractors and suppliers for the school include: Brockett Lumber Company (Atchison), Equipment Manufacturing Company wardrobe manufacturers and installers (Kansas City, Missouri), Hayes Plumbing Company (Atchison), C.W. Bennett haulers and excavators (Atchison), Cinder Concrete Products, Inc. (Kansas City, Missouri), and Kaw Roofing Company (Kansas City, Kansas).²⁹

The *Atchison Daily Globe* reported on June 16, 1938, that Ralph Scamell, Central School architect, estimated the building would be complete within three weeks.³⁰ The same day, at their regularly scheduled meeting, the Atchison schoolboard authorized the purchase of school furnishings. Among the equipment to be purchased were: 140 classroom chairs, 366 wooden folding chairs for the auditorium, 12 teacher desks, and 6 teacher chairs.³¹ A slight set-back occurred a few days later when three boys were involved in a slingshot fight near Central School and broke a window, necessitating replacement.³²

The August 22, 1938, issue of the *Atchison Daily Globe* featured a photograph of the new Central School ready for students when the school term opened September 6 (*Figure 7*). Including the land, the new school cost \$134,500.³³ The building featured a radiant-heated floor in the kindergarten room, eight large classrooms, an auditorium with stage (four hundred person capacity), a small kitchen, wide corridors, and two activity rooms, all

²⁴ *Atchison Daily Globe* (4 October 1937): 1.

²⁵ *Atchison Daily Globe* (30 October 1937): 5.

²⁶ *Atchison Daily Globe* (17 November 1937): 6.

²⁷ *Atchison Daily Globe* (12 January 1938): 8 & (24 January 1938): 8.

²⁸ "Work on School Projects Here Progresses Rapidly," *Atchison Daily Globe* (19 March 1938): 7.

²⁹ Congratulatory ads in the 22 August 1938 *Atchison Daily Globe*.

³⁰ *Atchison Daily Globe* (16 June 1938): 11.

³¹ "Equipment for Schools Bought," *Atchison Daily Globe* (17 June 1938): 1. Among other purchases were steel folding chairs for Lincoln School. Wooden chairs were determined to take up less space, so they were purchased for Central where storage space was at a premium. Atchison Furniture Company supplied the wooden chairs for \$1316 (\$25,358.29 in 2021). Lockwood-Hazel provided the student chairs for \$360.28 (\$6,942.31 in 2021).

³² *Atchison Daily Globe* (24 June 1938): 10. According to the paper, "The youngsters were turned over to their parents."

³³ Equivalent to \$2.6 million in 2021.

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well-lighted. The glazed tile, glass brick, and terrazzo used throughout the building added to the fireproof qualities of the building, and they also were expected to reduce maintenance costs and cleaning time.³⁴ Unlike the other school buildings in Atchison, Central School featured Moderne architectural styling. The style is defined by the simple geometric massing, an emphasis on horizontality, and blonde brick. Ornamentation is limited to a carved pair of wings in a plaque above the main entrance, carved name plates using Broadway font above the main entry and kindergarten entry, vertically grooved corners of the building, and recessed aluminum light fixtures.

Of the \$65,000 granted by the PWA, \$50,500 went towards Central School. Reporting about the new school in August 1938, the *Atchison Daily Globe* noted several unique features of the building. The kindergarten room at the south end of the building had a separate entrance to reduce the need of these students from being in the main corridors. Ground floor restrooms included exterior access for use during summer or other after-hours recreational uses of the property. Each classroom had its own heating and ventilation system (radiators), and glazed tile chalk trays and windowsills were integrated into the structure of the building. Each room also featured a drinking fountain and sink. The classroom fountains eliminated the need for them in corridors, but they also were meant to eliminate wasted time by students, as the newspaper noted, “an educator has estimated that 200 school children will spend a grand total of 3,000 school hours in ‘getting a drink.’”³⁵

The construction of Central School occurred simultaneously with improvements to the district’s existing schools that went above and beyond the yearly repainting and repointing. The PWA grant and bond issue supplied the needed funds. At Washington Grade School in south Atchison, the playground was enlarged, and new steps, sidewalks, and curbing installed. John A. Martin School in north Atchison received new toilet fixtures. Lincoln Grade School received a new addition that provided an auditorium and gymnasium space, an enlarged manual training room, and a music/assembly room. The school board repurposed Roosevelt School from its original role as a grade school into additional space for the high school. Shower and locker rooms were remodeled and reconditioned, and an additional one hundred lockers were installed. Atchison High School (Ingalls) received almost two hundred new lockers and its library new furnishings.³⁶ The total cost of all the improvements, including the construction of Central School, was \$213,388.³⁷

When Central School opened for the 1938-1939 term, the boundaries for the five elementary schools shifted a bit. Franklin Grade School continued to serve students in west Atchison. South Atchison students continued attending

³⁴ “New Central School,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 1; “Many School Improvements,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 12.

³⁵ “Schools Open Here Sept 6,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 1, 9.

³⁶ “Many School Improvements,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 12.

³⁷ “Cost to Taxpayers,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 12. This total is derived from the \$118,000 bonds plus \$30,388 in interest and the \$65,000 from the PWA. The total in 2021 is equivalent to \$4.11 million.

The construction of Central School was part of a building campaign in Atchison not seen at least since 1933. One of the major on-going New Deal-era construction projects was a new bridge across the Missouri River. “Building Activities Continue in Atchison,” *Atchison Daily Globe* (2 April 1938): 5. This bridge, which became known as the Amelia Earhart Bridge, was a Works Progress Administration project, opened in 1939; it was demolished in 2013.

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Washington Grade School. Martin Grade School served the students in north Atchison, while Lincoln School continued to serve the city's African American elementary students, most of whom lived in north Atchison. The boundaries of Central Grade School incorporated most of Roosevelt Grade School's area and expanded to the northwest and southeast (*Figure 12*); the boundaries of Central School covered the greatest area in Atchison.

CENTRAL SCHOOL AS A NEW DEAL-ERA RESOURCE OF KANSAS

Central School was one of thirty-five projects and one of the twenty schools in the state of Kansas funded in part by the Public Works Administration (PWA). By February 1939, the PWA assisted in the construction of over nine thousand buildings. Over seven thousand of these were education-related, mostly secondary schools. Central School was one of the education buildings, and one of the 834 non-secondary school buildings constructed in the United States by the PWA. In 1938, the year Central School opened, the PWA provided \$457 million for school construction alone. Financing through the PWA required local governments to provide matching funds.³⁸

Congress authorized the creation of the Public Works Administration in 1933, shortly after Franklin Roosevelt assumed the presidency. Its focus was job creation in the building industry, including the construction of public schools. Cities like Atchison received a 45 percent matching grant to cover project costs and, if needed, a loan to cover the balance.³⁹ Atchison voters passed a bond issue to help finance the matching portion of the PWA loan received to construct Central School.

Central School is an example of an Educational property type, as defined in the "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas" Multiple Property Document (MPD).⁴⁰ According to the MPD, public school buildings "were constructed, added on to, or remodeled in many communities in an effort to modernize facilities and enhance educational opportunities. ... Many educational buildings and building additions included restrained elements of Moderne styling. Often these elements were limited to decorative cast stone plaques with stylized imagery or lettering."⁴¹ The new, modern Central School enhanced the educational opportunities of Atchison students by alleviating the overcrowded elementary schools and enabling an existing school to be reused for secondary education.

The school meets the registration requirements of a New Deal-era Resource because it was planned, constructed, and opened in 1938, during the period defined by the MPD, 1932-1943. Further, financing for the building partly came from a grant from the Public Works Administration, a New Deal-era administration. Central School is significant under Criterion A for EDUCATION because the PWA funding allowed the construction of this facility that alleviated overcrowding in Atchison's public schools. Designed by notable Kansas architect Ralph E.

³⁸ Elizabeth Rosin, et al., "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (2002): E11; Brenda Spencer, "Historic Public Schools of Kansas," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (2005): 50.

³⁹ Rosin, et al., "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas," E9-E10. Initially grants were 30 percent; this increased to 45 percent in 1935.

⁴⁰ Rosin, et al., "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas," F29.

⁴¹ Rosin, et al., "New Deal-era Resources of Kansas," F29.

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Scamell, the building is also significant under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE as Atchison's example of a New Deal-era school building with its restrained Moderne styling that includes decorative stone plaques and name plates, as well as the use of glass block and the horizontality of the structure itself.

CENTRAL SCHOOL AS A HISTORIC PUBLIC SCHOOL OF KANSAS

As an example of the City Graded School property type, Central School relates to the historic contexts developed in "Historic Public Schools of Kansas" Multiple Property Document (MPD).⁴² Central School opened in 1938, during a period of significant school system growth in Kansas, between 1880 and World War II. The planning, construction, and opening of Central School corresponded with, as the MPD states, "the beginning of the modern era of Kansas education."⁴³

New Deal-era schools like Central School followed the programmatic and design guidelines of earlier Progressive Era city schools. Features of these schools included double-loaded corridors, windows on one side of the room, flat roofs with parapets, auditoriums and gymnasiums, and an emphasis on safety and sanitation. According to the MPD, "kindergarten rooms were frequently distinguished by special treatment or forms and were embellished with interior features such as fireplaces and tiled drinking fountains."⁴⁴ Classrooms within grade schools had standardized features and sizes; additional rooms were customized for art or music. The most notable difference between Progressive Era and New Deal Era schools was the architectural styles employed. While certainly some districts continued to use historical revival styles, Moderne and Art Deco styles introduced into school buildings during the Depression years became the predominant styles employed by school architects of the era. The New Deal Era school are today considered the first modern schools in Kansas with their simplified forms and minimal ornamentation.⁴⁵

Central School is an example of the City Graded School subtype of the City School property type. This property type occurred in cities of the first (populations over fifteen thousand) and second classes (populations over two thousand) with at least one separate high school. As a city of the second class, Atchison's high school received students from all primary schools.⁴⁶ Graded schools were typically one-to-two story masonry buildings that featured individual classrooms for each grade up to Grade 8, and a separate kindergarten room. Central School is a two-story blonde brick building with eight graded classrooms and a separate kindergarten with built-ins and a fireplace at the south end of the building. Schools constructed during the New Deal Era most often featured Art Deco or Moderne architectural styling with clean forms and little ornamentation. Materials included blonde brick,

⁴² Spencer, "Historic Public Schools of Kansas," E3-E28.

⁴³ Spencer, "Historic Public Schools of Kansas," E12.

⁴⁴ Spencer, "Historic Public Schools of Kansas," E21-E22.

⁴⁵ Spencer, "Historic Public Schools of Kansas," E22-E23.

⁴⁶ According to the US Decennial Censuses, Atchison's population in 1930: 13,024 and in 1940: 12,648. Second class cities had a population of between 2,000 and 15,000.

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concrete structures, glass blocks, terrazzo floors, plaster walls, glazed block walls, and metal detailing, all of which occur at Central School. Common alterations to these schools seen at Central School: suspended ceilings, replaced windows and doors, covering of historic flooring materials with VCT or carpet.⁴⁷

The building meets the registration requirements of a City Graded School, as detailed in the “Historic Public Schools of Kansas” MPD. Built in 1938, Central School falls within the period of significance outlined in the MPD, 1884 and 1955. As discussed in Section 7, the building retains a high level of historic integrity. Central School remains in its original, historic location, and the relationship between the school building and its site continues to be visible from the public rights-of-way to the east, south, and north. No additions have been constructed, allowing the school to retain its historic massing and basic exterior form; similarly, the historic flat roof with parapet remains unaltered. The exterior cladding (blonde brick and limestone) and ornamentation (plaque and name plates) are not covered by non-historic materials or removed. Although all windows and exterior doors have been replaced, the historic fenestration pattern remains intact; replacement units fill historic masonry openings, and no masonry openings have been infilled. Further, the clear anodized finish on the replacements simulates the material of the historic units. On the interior, the historic double-loaded corridor configuration remains intact. Minor alterations to interior partition walls have occurred through the subdivision of classrooms; these alterations are minor and reversible, and the original function of the rooms remains legible. Finally, no historic walls—be they corridor or classroom walls—have been furred out.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The aptly named Central School in Atchison opened in time for the 1938-1939 school year. From the fall of 1938 until the spring of 1997, the school continued to function as one of the elementary schools for the city; no additional elementary schools were needed in Atchison until the 1990s. In 1997, the school district opened a new building, consolidating the remaining grade schools into the new Atchison Elementary School at 825 North 17th Street at the northwest edge of the city. Central School reopened as the Atchison Alternative School for all students (K-12) in the district; the alternative school moved out of Central School in 2021. Central School is locally significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of EDUCATION and ARCHITECTURE for its association with the historic contexts discussed in both “New Deal-era Resources of Kansas” and “Historic Public Schools of Kansas” Multiple Property Documents; the building is an example of an Educational property type, specifically as a City Graded School.

⁴⁷ Spencer, “Historic Public Schools of Kansas,” F31-F32, F34.

⁴⁸ Spencer, “Historic Public Schools of Kansas,” F37-F39.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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U.S. Federal Decennial Censuses [digitized online] available from Ancestry.com

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: _____

Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 1.41

Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.
(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | <u>39.563751</u> Latitude: | <u>-95.123862</u> Longitude: | 3 | _____ Latitude: | _____ Longitude: |
| 2 | _____ Latitude: | _____ Longitude: | 4 | _____ Latitude: | _____ Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Atchison County, Kansas appraiser describes the nominated L-shaped property as follows: LC CHALLISS, REPLAT, BLOCK 17, LTS 25-26 & VAC ALY ADJ & BEG 12'E NE COR LT 26, E150' S315' W150' N TO POB. The property is generally bounded by the rights-of-way of Santa Fe Street to the north, North 8th Street to the east, and Kansas Avenue to the south. Midblock alleys form the south half of the west boundary while the property lines of the adjacent single-family dwelling at 824 Santa Fe Street forms the north half of the west boundary. Perimeter sidewalks are within the public right-of-way and within the boundary.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The nominated property includes the building and land historically associated with Central School.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda K. Loughlin/National Register Section Head
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date July 2021
street & number 1712 Holmes St. telephone 816.472.4950
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108
e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.com

Property Owner: (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name On file with SHPO
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 100 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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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Photographs

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

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Central School

City or Vicinity: Atchison

County: Atchison County State: Kansas

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date
Photographed: June 2021

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

- 01 of 23:** Full east elevation, looking west across North 8th Street
- 02 of 23:** View southwest at east and north elevations
- 03 of 23:** View southeast and north and partial west elevations
- 04 of 23:** West elevation viewed from adjacent alley, looking east
- 05 of 23:** South elevations, looking northeast
- 06 of 23:** View northwest of partial south and east elevations
- 07 of 23:** East (primary) entry vestibule, first floor, looking southwest
- 08 of 23:** First floor corridor, looking northeast
- 09 of 23:** First floor, south rear entrance from west parking lot and south stair, looking west-northwest
- 10 of 23:** First floor corridor, looking southwest
- 11 of 23:** Second floor corridor, looking southwest
- 12 of 23:** Second floor corridor, looking northwest
- 13 of 23:** Second floor corridor, detail of door, wall, and glass block
- 14 of 23:** South stair, looking northeast from landing between floors
- 15 of 23:** North stair, looking south from second floor
- 16 of 23:** Auditorium, looking northwest toward stage
- 17 of 23:** Auditorium, looking southeast from stage
- 18 of 23:** First floor, east half of Kindergarten Room, looking southeast
- 19 of 23:** First floor, west half of Kindergarten Room, looking north
- 20 of 23:** First floor, former Nurses Room (108), looking north, showing extent of glass block
- 21 of 23:** Second floor, former Activity Room (204), looking north, showing glass block and historic storage bins
- 22 of 23:** Typical Classroom (201), looking northwest
- 23 of 23:** Typical Classroom (201), looking southeast

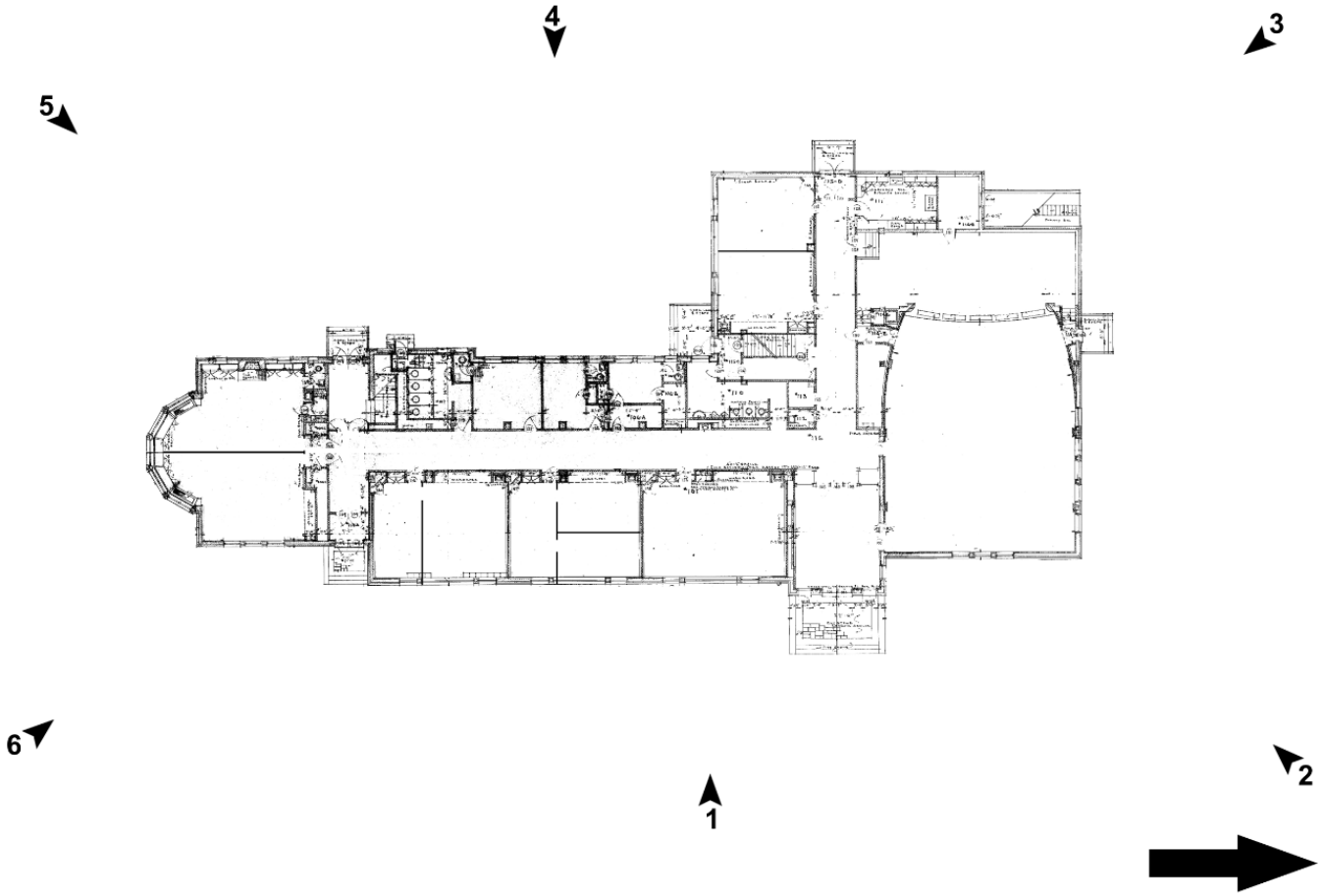
Figures

Include GIS maps, figures, scanned images below.

Central School
Name of Property

Atchison County, Kansas
County and State

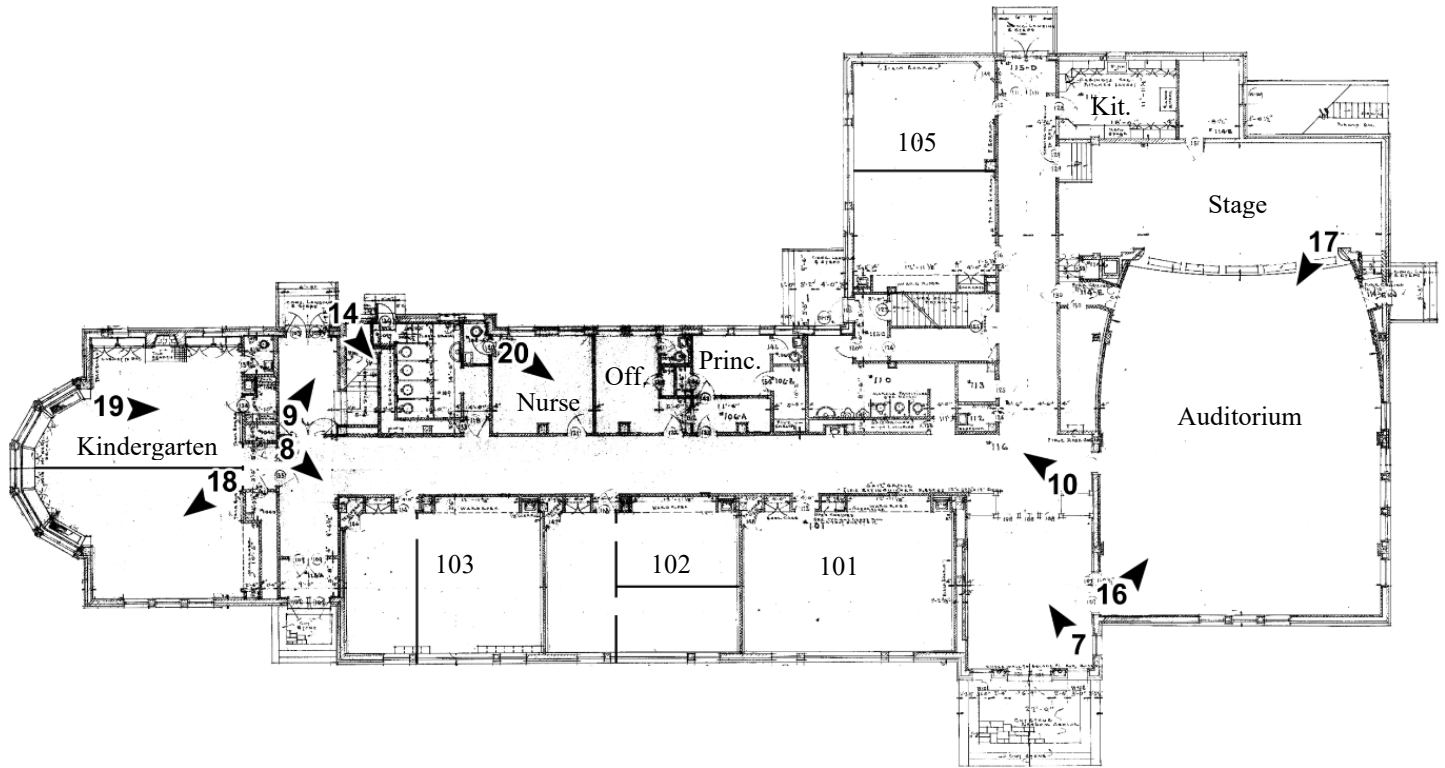
Photograph Key 1. Exterior photo key. Not to scale.



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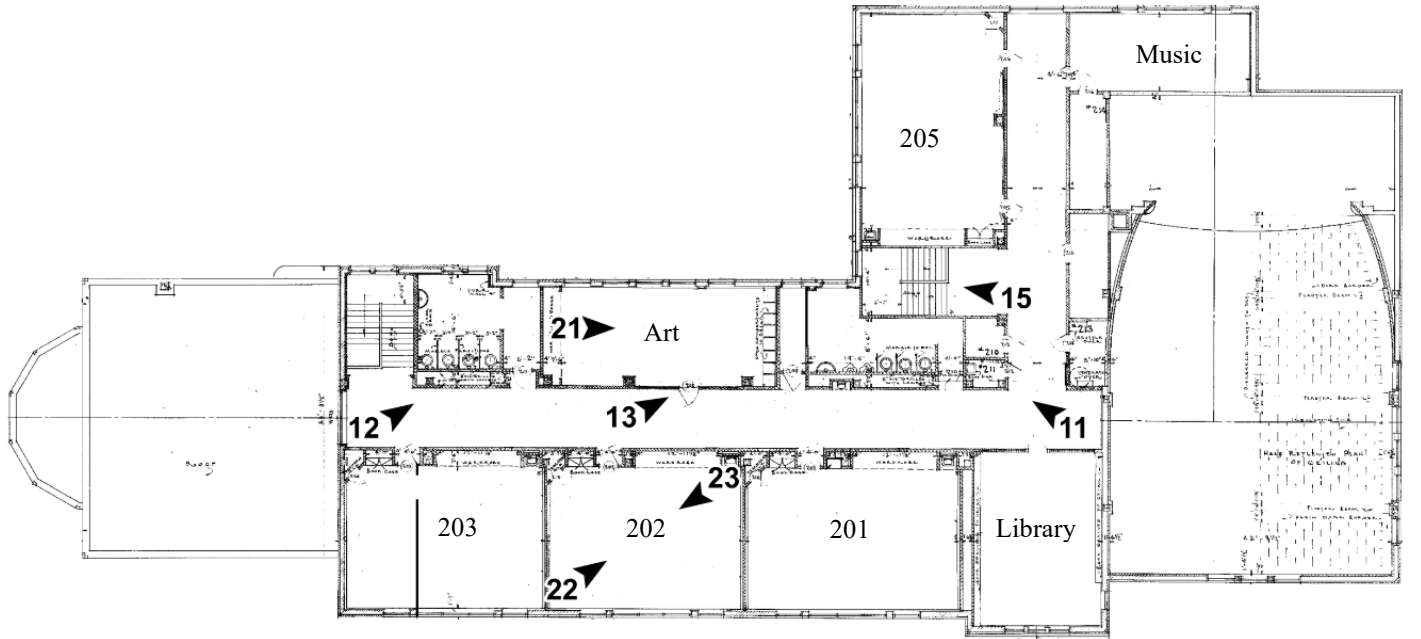
Photograph Key 2. First floor plan and photo key. Not to scale. Base plan is from Ralph Scamell, 1937 and represents current conditions with some new walls added.



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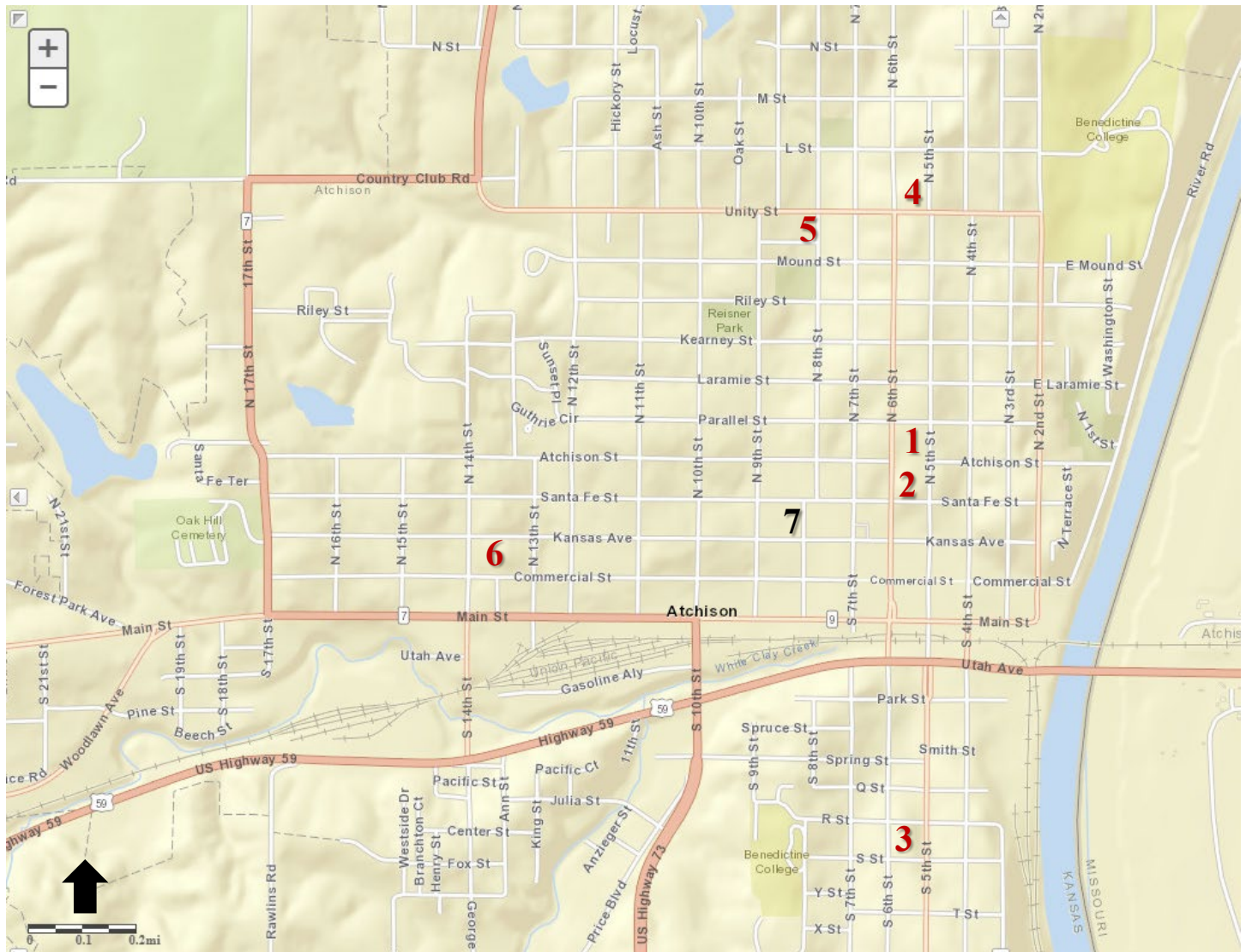
Photograph Key 3. Second floor plan and photo key. Not to scale. Base plan is from Ralph Scamell, 1937 and represents current conditions with some new walls added.



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Figure 1. Central School (#7) within the city of Atchison. The locations of Atchison's public schools when Central Grade School opened in 1938 shown in numbers. Base map from the Kansas Historic Resources Inventory (KHRI).



Upper Grades Schools

1. Atchison High School (Ingalls School), 301 N. 5th St., 1908
2. Roosevelt Junior High School, 304 N. 6th St., 1922

Elementary Schools

3. Washington Grade School, 508 R St., 1915
4. John A. Martin Grade School, 507 Unity St., 1916
5. Lincoln Grade School, 810 Unity St., 1921
6. Franklin Grade School, 1328 Kansas Ave., 1925
7. Central School, 215 N. 8th St., 1938

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Figure 2. Site and boundary map. Boundary shown by bold dashed line. Base map from Google Earth, 2019 aerial.



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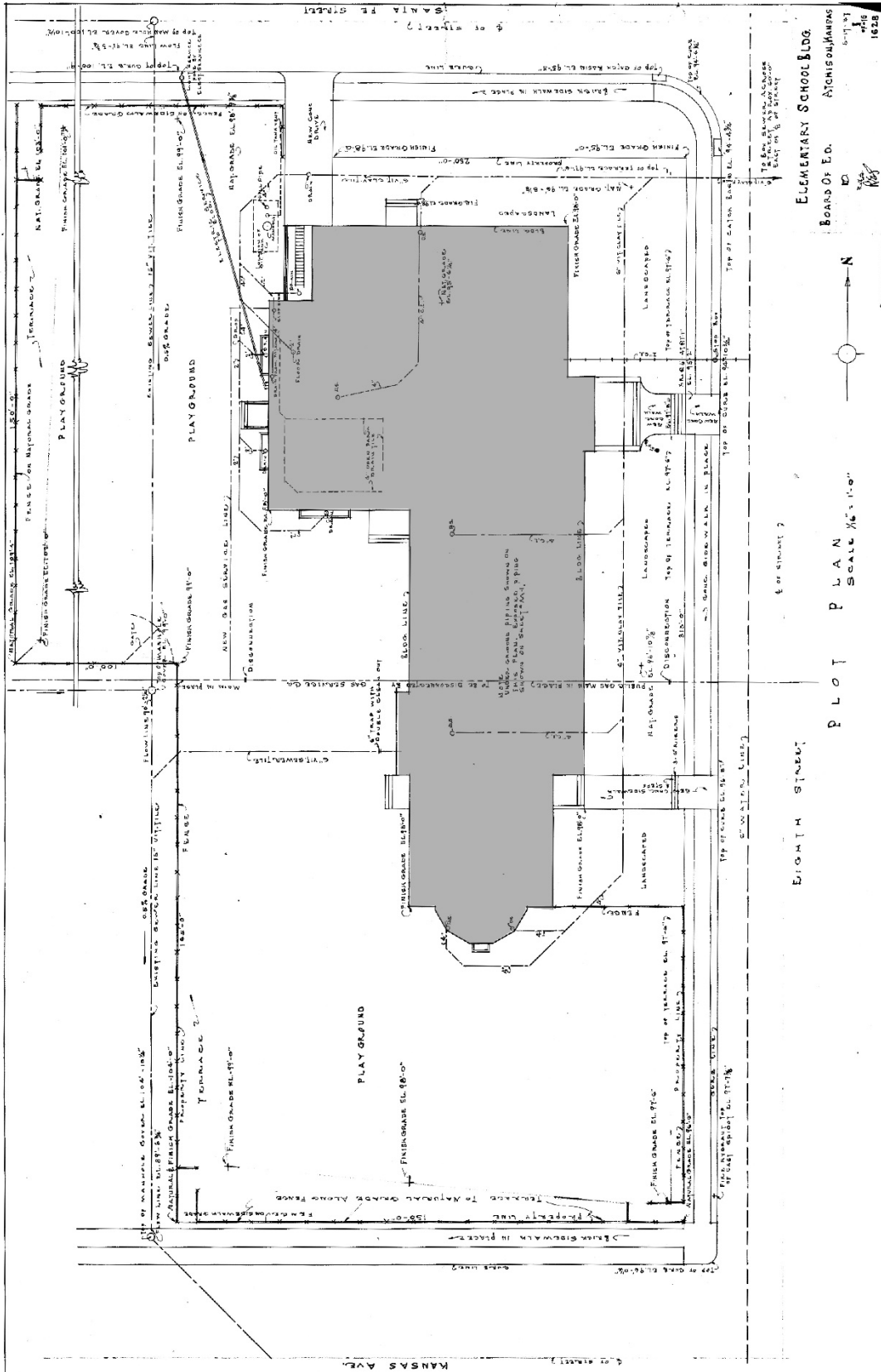
Figure 3. Contextual images. Top: View SW from Santa Fe St.; Bottom: View NW from Kansas Ave & N. 8th St. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 4. Plot plan, showing playgrounds to the west and south of building. Source: Ralph Scamell, May 1937, Sheet 1.



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Figure 5. Stone details on the east (primary elevation. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 6. Detail of the east elevation, showing the hipped roof of the entry tower as designed. Source: Ralph Scamell, May 1937, Sheet 6.



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Figure 7. Central School, August 1938. View of east elevation, looking southwest. Source: Lotus Engraving Company, Commercial Photographers, Atchison, Kansas; photograph in Gene Pitts Collection, Kansas Room, Atchison Public Library. This photo also appears in the *Atchison Daily Globe* (22 August 1938): 1.



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Figure 8. Detail of wall construction, showing structural clay tile below and Cinder Blox (name brand) above; plaster applied to the cinder blocks on the room-side of the wall. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 9. Details of corridor display case (left), classroom built-in (right), and chalk/tack tray (bottom). Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 10. Kindergarten room fireplace and built-ins on west wall. Source: Brad Finch, June 2021.



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Figure 11. Snippets from the March 1924 (top) and July 1941 (bottom) Sanborn maps, showing the change of the site. Dashed line represents the current boundary of the site. Sources: March 1924, Sheet 2; July 1941 update, Sheet 2.

